

NEWS BULLETIN



THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

No.65 December 2018

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WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne promotes the preservation, study and enjoyment of historical and archaeological heritage in general, and of the North East of England in particular. We have nearly 800 members, and always welcome new ones. We are the oldest provincial antiquarian society in the country.

We have a full programme of public events, lectures, walks and visits, and social activities. We are also guardians of world-class collections of antiquities and archives, and of a library of over 30,000 books and journals. We sponsor and publish research into North East history and archaeology of all periods.

For more information, look at our website, www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk or contact us at SANT, Great North Museum: Hancock, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT, phone 0191 231 2700, e-mail admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The months since the last *News Bulletin* have been busy ones for our Society. We held our final meeting (for the moment at least) in the Mining Institute at the end of May, and are now peripatetic. Summer meetings were held in the Arts Centre on Westgate Road, and we have now migrated to Newcastle University. Details of the lecture room we will be using for each meeting are in our programme card, and will be on the website also. Many thanks to Frances McIntosh for organising this. She outlines our exciting lecture programme for 2019 elsewhere in this *News Bulletin*.

Other elements in our programme are also changing in 2019. Our 'country meetings' – trips out by coach – have had falling numbers for a while, and of the two planned for 2018, one had to be cancelled due to lack of bookings. With the retirement of Denise Heslop from the post, it



The front page of our new publication *Capital Newcastle*

seems appropriate to pause these meetings for the moment, with much thanks to Denise for her past work. Our website, and the regular weekly e-circulars, make it possible to be more spontaneous than in the past, with opportunities for visits or other events to be announced at much shorter notice than in the old days of postal mailings only.

The summer also saw the Great Exhibition of the North, which took over much of the Great North Museum: Hancock, for the duration. Our collections formed the backdrop to the Exhibition, which celebrated the innovative spirit of northern England. Sadly, the follow-on small exhibition of some of our treasures and those of the Natural History Society of Northumberland had to be deferred, owing to damage to the display cases during the Great Exhibition, but we hope it will take place in due course. Meanwhile, some of our members enjoyed being 'talking labels' during the Museum's re-launch event, as described by David Goldwater in this edition.

Also in the summer we published *Capital Newcastle*, a fold-out pamphlet providing a self-guided walk around the architecture of Newcastle. This was written by Alan Beale and Grace McCombie, and based on a similar pamphlet produced by the Sir John Soane Museum in London. It has been widely distributed among members of other societies, in public venues, and on request to anyone interested. Members are receiving a complimentary copy with this mailing, and our January walk will help people enjoy this fresh look at familiar scenes. Many thanks to Cate Davies of Pre-Construct Archaeology for the design, which has been much praised.

The HLF-funded *Unlocking the Archives* project, led by Sue Ward, ended in July. All the material, and the fruits of research round it, is available on newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk/uta. No sooner was that finished than the transcribers set to work on another project, *Edwarde Potter's Boke of Physicke*, a manuscript volume dating from the 1600s, filled with recipes and medicinal remedies. The pages and the first transcriptions are on the website, and volunteers who want to work their way through the difficulties of seventeenth-century handwriting will be welcomed.

In September we had a 'Challenge' day with students from Newcastle University. As Frances McIntosh explains later in this *Bulletin*, they came up with a number of good ideas to make the Society more appealing to their generation. Both Activities Committee and Council have discussed the ideas, and we will be taking forward quite a number – watch this space for developments.

Our new editor Don O'Meara is making good progress with *Archaeologia Aeliana* 2018, although it will not emerge until spring 2019 because of various setbacks. At around the same time, the digitised version of past AAs should reach its final home within ADS's servers at York. Access is already available, however, via our website and production editor Roger Fern's personal Dropbox account, and this has recorded over 6,000 hits in the last year.

The big event of 2019 will be the Fourteenth Pilgrimage of Hadrian's Wall from 20 to 28 July 2019. Preparations are well advanced, and anyone who has not booked yet for the week is well-advised to do so soon.

On a sadder note, we are sorry that there have been several deaths of long-standing and active members of the Society, noted on our final pages, including our former Membership Secretary Bernard Bird. One death which was not that of a member, but still deserves noting with regret, is that of Robin Birley, one of the founder-trustees of Vindolanda. He undertook his first excavation there in 1949, and when he stepped down as full-time director in 2005 it was to become Director of Research. He was also Chair and Leader of Northumberland County Council, a Deputy Lord Lieutenant, and a senior magistrate in his time. He will be much missed.

Finally, this is my last *Bulletin* contribution as the President. The President is the figurehead of the Society, but there is a great company of talented people to steer, staff and keep the ship afloat and on course. Thank you to everyone in the Executive, Council, committees and administration who give their time and expertise so freely and generously to provide the exciting and educational activities that we all enjoy as members of the Society.

Richard Pears, President

2019 LECTURES

Our monthly meetings in 2019 will be on the campus of Newcastle University, though not in the same lecture theatre throughout. From January to May we will be in the Herschel Building, Lecture Theatre 3, where the November 2018 lecture was held. After that, we move around a bit,



Headagee Hole on the Northumberland coast, one of the names that perplexed the OS surveyors. Picture Graham Robson, Geograph)

so please check your membership card and our website for the venue for any particular lecture.

The move also means a change of venue for the social event after the January meeting. This is now going to be in the Gallowgate Lounge at the Irish Centre on Gallowgate, a short walk from the Herschel Building. Contributions of food will be most welcome (and can be dropped in beforehand or brought with you after the lecture), but we will be purchasing drinks from the bar.

As for the speakers, as usual I have tried to cover all periods, and this year we have ventured outside of the North East a few times. In January, we have Diana Whaley's cancelled lecture from February last year, about the Ordnance Survey and Northumberland names. February stays in the nineteenth century, with a summary of archaeological work at the workers' houses next to

Derwentcote Steel Furnace. Then with a change of gear, Thea Ravasi in March will tell us about underground spaces in Pompeii.

Our AGM in April will celebrate a hundred years of the Women's Engineering Society with a paper from Henrietta Heald, biographer of Lord Armstrong. Richard Carlton and David Petts are giving a joint lecture in May about the excavations around Lindisfarne Priory on Holy Island. Moving further north, Louisa Campbell's recent project investigating colours on Roman stones on the Antonine Wall is our June lecture. In July, John Castling will bring us up to date on the community excavations at Auckland Castle. Our member Rosie Serdiville will tell us why 1918 was not the end for suffragettes and suffragists in August.

September's lecture by Maya Hoole will tell us about how science has been used to find out about a Bronze Age woman buried in Caithness. In October, Sue Wood from Northumberland Archives at Woodhorn will talk about the Manorial Documents Register and the outreach project related to it. For our Public Lecture, in November, we have enticed Prof. Keith Wrightson from Yale University to talk to us about Ralph Taylor, the 17th century scrivener in Newcastle.

Frances McIntosh

TIME WALKS



Walkers outside Holy Jesus Hospital in September, picture Rosie Serdiville

After a successful series of summer walks, our jaunts climaxed in September with a look at Newcastle's Ancient Hospitals led by Lawrence Bryson. His tour round Newcastle's early hospitals was full of surprises and delights.

2019 will begin with Alan Beale leading a winter walk based on our latest publication, *Capital Newcastle*. We are meeting at the Moot Hall in Castle Garth, at 10.30 on 5 January, for a stroll of around two and a half hours.

On 13 April we will have a chance to explore the region's industrial

heritage, as we go down Nenthead Mine. The visit is being welcomed and guided round by the Friends of Nenthead to whom we are very grateful. We will be meeting at the Information Centre at 10.30 and allow three hours for the trip. Coffee and cakes are available but bring sandwiches for lunch. Come prepared to go underground, but there is plenty to see overground as well. There is no charge but a suggested donation of £5 would be much appreciated.

On 6th July, freelance poet, historian and broadcaster Katrina Porteous will introduce us to the history of women in the fishing industry on the Northumberland Coast. We will meet in the pay and display car park at the north end of Beadnell Bay at 11.00 am. Katrina's book on Old

Beadnell, *Limekilns and Lobster Pots*, is available from Northern Heritage (www.northern-heritage.co.uk)

Please let me know if you plan to attend so we can plan accordingly. Full details of the walks can be found on the website. Anyone who needs more information or who needs (or can offer) transport should contact Rosie Serdiville on 0774 979 8023 or email rosie.serdiville@gmail.com

A LITTLE GEM HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT



St Ann's Church from across the Tyne, picture Graeme Stobbs

Our Summer Social this year was at St Ann's Church in Breamish Street, Newcastle. I've passed this church hundreds of times, as I drove along City Road towards Walker and beyond. I knew I was crossing the mouth of the Ouseburn I saw various old buildings and I wondered about the common sense of having the entrance to Hoult's Yard pass beneath the railway line. What I never saw was St Ann's, in its elevated position and its tree-lined grounds. When I went along Breamish Street to a former vehicle-hire premises, hurrying either to pick up a vehicle or drop one off in time, I only vaguely noticed my surroundings, though the juxtaposition of the modern flats with an older church in its churchyard did stand

out in my mind. However, I did know the shape of the church from looking across from the Gateshead side – it was part of a familiar vista of Newcastle from that perspective, especially its striking tower and steeple, silhouetted above the quayside. But I'd never put two and two together and placed it as St Ann's.

So I was thoroughly surprised when I saw it close up – a little gem hiding in plain sight! This Grade One Listed church, built in 1764–8 by William Newton, has seen much re-ordering, refurbishment and restoration. The most recent work (2007) involved improvements to the churchyard. Much of this was due to a group of supporters, the Friends of St Ann's. Mike Greatbatch, its Secretary, led us on a tour of the nearby quayside, from the mouth of the Ouseburn westwards. At the church itself, Mike could tell us about some of the problems associated with preserving its fabric. The interior, entered through the pedimented Doric portico, is very bright and appealing, and more spacious than it appears from the outside. The church is used by various groups and is loved and cared for: do visit if you have not done so before. There is a display about its history inside, or you can visit its website: saintannbattlefield.org.uk

Graeme Stobbs

CWAAS TRACKING DOWN THE ARCHIVES

Our sister society, the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2016. As part of its activities, the honorary archivist Adrian Allan made great efforts to track down the CWAAS archives, and in the process found a number who were prominent in the lives of both CWAAS and SANT. John Collingwood Bruce's papers, for example, are scattered between the Arbeia Museum offices, the Discovery Museum, Liverpool Record Office and elsewhere, including the archives of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle. The collections of glass negatives and papers of Gerald Simpson (1882–1955) are held by Carlisle Archive Centre and Historic England. Barbara Harbottle's extensive collection of slides, copies of publications and other papers are held by SANT and in Northumberland Archives.

Adrian would welcome information about the archives of CWAAS and its members that he has failed to track down. The current list is on the Society's webpages, cumbriapast.com (click on 'Research' on the home page and follow the link to 'Our Archives'). Now in its fifth 'edition',



'Dr Bruce's House, Percy Street' from an album of photographs of 'Old Newcastle', in Dr J Collingwood Bruce's papers held by the History Department, Discovery Museum (Image courtesy of Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums).

the list may be found on the Society's webpages, cumbriapast.com (click on 'Research' on the home page and follow the link to 'Our Archives'). He can be contacted on adrianallan61@yahoo.co.uk. As he says, 'Given the staffing cutbacks that many record offices have suffered, acting as the eyes and ears of their local communities, members of both Societies have a vital role to play in the field, in alerting their local record office to the whereabouts of archives, whether of their members or other bodies, whose future may be endangered.'

STUDENT CHALLENGE FOR THE ANTIQUARIES



The successful team at the Student Challenge, picture Frances McIntosh

In September, Denise Heslop, our president Richard Pears, and I spent the day with the 2nd year Archaeology students at Newcastle University. We worked with the Enterprise Team from the Careers Service to set the students a task as part of a Challenge Event. They were asked to consider what would help SANT to recruit, and retain younger members, in particular students. This is something that has been an issue for the Society for a very long time, and we thought, who best to ask to solve this, than the target audience themselves.

The format of the day was planned by the Enterprise Team, to introduce the students to business models and different ways of thinking.

This is something that the University is keen for as

many students as possible to take part in, as they feel it benefits students to learn about something outside of the academic sphere. It was a pleasure for SANT to be invited to help with this event and provide them with their 'challenge'.

Broken into groups, the students came up with a whole range of ideas of things which might help to attract younger members. Some of them would not surprise you – for instance, socials, lectures in the pub. However, they did think a little deeper too. Many of the students noted that the expertise of the current members of SANT is an attractive part of becoming a member, since having the chance to meet and learn from these members would help them in their studies. Look out for more about this event and the changes we hope to make to enact some of the ideas the students came up with.

Frances McIntosh

STAFFORD LINSLEY'S MAPS: REVEALING WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

In any city, and certainly in Newcastle, the townscape revealing itself as we walk around might originally have been intended as something quite different. Among Stafford Linsley's recent generous donation of maps to SANT are some late nineteenth century plans, formerly the property of Newcastle City Engineer's Department, relating to proposed developments within



The 1873 proposals for St Mary's Place, picture Mike Barke

the city. These include street layouts, transport improvements, quayside infrastructure and new housing developments, and are a contemporaneous representation of the changing city.

Several concern developments that either never happened at all or were substantially modified. The St Mary's Place area is a good example. The illustration shows the proposed eastward extension of St Mary's Place, submitted in 1873. It shows huge semi-detached villas in St Mary's Place itself, with large terraced houses in connected or surrounding streets, linking to the already developed upper middle class residential streets around Lovaine Place.

Clearly, the intention was to consolidate the north east corner of the central area of the city as a high status residential area, stretching from Ellison Place up through St Mary's Place and beyond to the Lovaine Crescent/Place area.

As we now know, it didn't quite happen like that! What gradually developed in the area was a totally different city centre 'fringe' mixed land use of entertainments, institutions, municipal services, and even some industrial premises (carriage works, saw mills), subsequently to be redeveloped for the Civic Centre and grounds and Northumbria University.

Mike Barke

HELP WITH THE GRAVEYARD?



John Buddle's Grave after restoration, picture courtesy Judith Green

St James' Heritage and Environment Group is looking for help and advice. The Group is based in Benwell, in the West End of Newcastle. Among other things, it maintains the historic graveyard attached to the parish church of St James' in which are buried Richard Grainger, John Sowerby, Isaac Cookson, John Buddle and other significant figures in the history of Tyneside. (For more information see the Group's website www.stjamesheritage.com)

Over the past nine years the Group has transformed the graveyard from a rubbish-strewn wilderness into a well-kept and accessible site for visitors, mapped the visible memorials and also produced a range of interpretation materials. The original graveyard plan has been lost, but we have created a complete database of all the visible memorials and have been able to reconstruct a picture of the various sections by cross-referencing the burial records with this. The only way to identify now whether there is actually a gravestone rather than just a body is physical exploration. In the process of their maintenance work, the volunteers continue to find 'new' gravestones below the surface of the soil, including a recent discovery of gravestones belonging to members of the Buddle-Atkinson family.

The Group is seeking advice and help with the task of identifying further hidden gravestones and other stone features. We are wondering whether it would be possible to use Ground Penetrating Radar or some other method to scan the ground? Could this be a learning opportunity for students?

All advice and help welcome. Contact Judith Green, e-mail stjamesbenwell@gmail.com

NETHERWITTON HOARD

The Society has been successful in acquiring the Netherwitton Coin Hoard through the

Treasure Trove process for £2,600. The hoard consists of 73 coins, mostly English silver pennies of the 'Short Cross' type which was introduced in 1180, during the reign of Henry II, and continued in use until 1247.

These coins appear to have been struck mostly in the south of England by moneyers in London, Canterbury, Bury St Edmunds, Chichester and Norwich. The rest of the coins include pennies of King John's Irish series, coins of the Rhuddlan coinage thought to have been struck by one of the Welsh princes and examples of the Short Cross and Stars coins, which were struck in the name of William I of Scotland. There is also one imitation coin thought to have come from mainland Europe. A deposition date of the mid to late 1230s has been suggested.

BEING A TALKING LABEL



The Carrawbrough Altar in the Great North Museum, picture David Goldwater

In June 1960, on a day out with my Dad and some friends, we came across the excavation of a well preserved Altar inscribed 'To the Nymphs and the Genius Loci, Marcus Hispanius Modestinus, Prefect of the First Cohort of Batavians...' near Carrawbrough (Brocolitia), and not far from the Mithraeum discovered in 1950. There it was, in situ, standing where it had been for almost two millennia. It took on a special and memorable quality, especially this brilliant summer day turned out to be the last outing by my Dad, who took ill and passed away some weeks later.

It was he who inspired me to follow 'Res Romanae' and I was excited to find the altar in the old Museum of Antiquities many decades later, and now in the Great North Museum: Hancock. When the GNM re-opened, back to its normal state after a fortnight's closure for the Great Exhibition objects to be removed, I was one of six volunteers agreed to act as Talking Labels for one day, near their selected favourite object, to engage with passing visitors and explain the object and why they had made it their personal choice.

As a result I spent four hours next to the altar on September 25, and was able to wax lyrical about it. Visitors who stopped to listen included a Chinese family whose son was starting at Durham an Australian visiting friends, and a Professor from Vancouver looking forward to visiting Vindolanda and the Wall.

David Goldwater

HADRIAN'S WALL PILGRIMAGE



The Pilgrimage Logo

Places are going fast on the fourteenth Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimage, this July. The pattern of these weeks was set in 1949, and has not changed. Four coaches convey 200 or so Pilgrims along the Wall, alternating the direction, east to west one time, west to east the next Pilgrimage. The focus is on new research in the previous decade, and each Pilgrim receives a handbook detailing this research. There is always a tension between revisiting the well-known places and engaging with the sites which offer a new perspective on the frontier, and it is sometimes difficult to find a location where a point made in a publication can be discussed in the field! Eight guides look after the Pilgrims, who are encouraged to move from coach to coach in order to discover the different views of their guides. We visit museums with new exhibitions and displays, and there are evening receptions where ideas can be exchanged.

We will be examining the evidence relating to the building of Hadrian's Wall, and the material remains of its later centuries. This will involve looking at sites in different ways, in particular the fugitive evidence for their occupation in the fourth century. We will also walk stretches to examine features such as the putative marking out bank and the slighting of the Vallum and the

Turf Wall. We will be appreciating the Wall in its landscape setting, and the impact of the landscape on the Wall.

Bookings will close when all the places are taken, and the full joining fee must be paid by 1 June. Joining instructions will be sent out about a month before the start of the Pilgrimage.

For further information: contact: Ian Caruana, 10 Peter Street, Carlisle CA3 8QP. Tel 01228 544 120. E-mail: elizabethallnutt@btinternet.com

David Breeze

NEW HLF GRANT FOR HADRIAN'S WALL



The WallCAP logo

The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £1.7m to the Hadrian's Wall Community Archaeology Project (WallCAP). The project is based at Newcastle University, and will run for 3 years until Autumn/Winter 2021. It focuses on improving the heritage of Hadrian's Wall, part of the UNESCO Transnational Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site. One strand of the project is to identify, survey and where appropriate, intervene at key locations along the Wall deemed 'At Risk'. A second is to try and

understand and map where all its stones have gone. We will conduct fieldwork across 26 sites in the World Heritage Site. At the moment, the project is just recruiting staff and volunteers, and you can volunteer or find more details from our website (<https://wallcap.ncl.ac.uk>).

Rob Collins

MONTHLY MEETINGS

May 2018



The Tyne Improvement Commissioners' office, picture Leona Skelton

Dr Leona Skelton of Northumbria University spoke about *Tyne after Tyne: five centuries of negotiation between a river and its people*. Leona analysed the two-way, socio-environmental relationships between the River Tyne and the humans which interacted with its seaward flow from source to sea over five centuries. She explained that by answering two principal questions (what have we done to the river and what has the river done to us?), we could see clearly how and why the line between acceptable and unacceptable interactions with the river has shifted in historically important ways as local institutions, central government and the people who worked, lived and played on its riverbanks

reconceptualised their relationships with the river in new and different economic, cultural and political contexts.

There were, she said, three distinct turning points – 1529 (when the Crown appointed Newcastle Corporation as oligarchic conservators to maintain a navigable river), 1850 (when central government appointed the Tyne Improvement Commission to widen and deepen the river to maximise coal exportation and riparian industries) and 1968 (when the Tyne Commissioners were disbanded, and the Northumbrian Rivers Authority set in motion plans to build an interceptor sewer network to divert deoxygenating domestic and industrial waste from the over 270 sewers which drained directly into the river estuary). Leona looked particularly at the minority of people who disagreed with the prevailing concept of how to interact with the river, and the ways in which the river itself kicked back and thwarted human plans to change and dominate it. The river's stewards, commissioners and managers have only ever been capable of negotiating with the Tyne's flow.

By analysing the river's history from the perspective of an active, natural system of water,

tides, channels and the riverbed itself, Leona suggested, we could see more clearly how and why the Tyne moved from an early modern liquid highway, to an industrial, infrastructural and heavily polluted re-engineered river, and then to the recreational, biodiverse, cleaner river we know today.

Leona can be contacted on leona.skelton@northumbria.ac.uk

June 2018

John Griffiths' subject was *The 1929 North East Coast Exhibition*. This ran, he explained, from 14 May to 26 October 1929, in Exhibition Park in Newcastle. It attracted 4 million visitors, with an average daily attendance of 30,000.

The purpose behind it was to stimulate the economy of the North East coast. The idea had originated with the Newcastle and Gateshead Chambers of commerce, to counter the depression which had taken hold of most of the North East throughout the 1920s. The cause was taken up vigorously by Arthur Lambert, Lord Mayor of Newcastle, who persuaded the Federation of British Industry to come out in favour, and the Prince of Wales to promise to open it.

The main poster for the exhibition, however, provided a confused message, with a healthy young man pointing towards a golden city on the exhibition site, dissociated from smoky urban Tyneside. What had been intended to be about economic stimulation evolved into an exhibition bringing commodities, and especially consumer goods, in and telling people about the world. It did, though, have a strong North East content, presenting the region as a single entity. The local shipbuilding and engineering industries were well represented, with Sir Charles Parsons appointed as President of the governing body. It was an example of collective salesmanship, with a rare degree of co-operation among local authorities – except for Sunderland, which refused to pledge any money or even let their teams play in the football tournament.

There was much propaganda afterwards about what a success the event had been. It had even made a small profit, unlike the 1924 Empire Exhibition at Wembley. However, it closed two days after Black Thursday on the New York Stock Exchange, whose catastrophic effect on industries such as shipbuilding far outweighed any stimulus there might have been. Memories, though, were positive, and many local people treasured souvenirs bought there.

John Griffiths can be contacted on johnfrancisgriffiths@hotmail.com.



John Clayton, portrait 1863 by E. Sawyer, death, being Vice-President from 1856. Owned by English Heritage Trust

July 2018

John Clayton (1792–1890) deserves to be better known amongst our members, and Frances McIntosh's talk aimed to remedy this. He was Town Clerk of Newcastle for 45 years, his family law firm was the largest in the North East of England, and due to this his influence in the region was extensive.

Frances explained that her PhD focused on his role as an antiquarian, collector, land-owner and excavator. Clayton grew up with the fort of Chesters in the front garden of the family country home and was a keen student of Latin and Greek at school. He joined SANT in 1832 and was a member until his

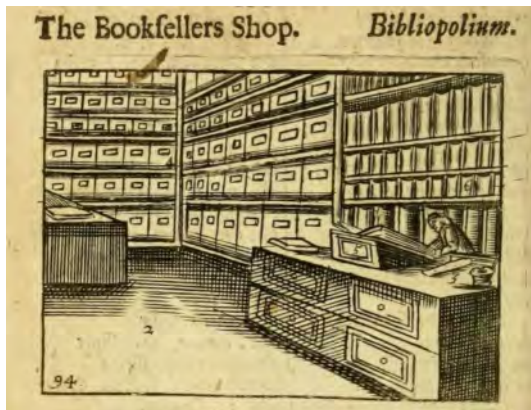
death, being Vice-President from 1856.

He bought stretches of Hadrian's Wall whenever a farm or plot of land which contained the monument came up for sale. By the time he died in 1890, Clayton owned 5 forts along Hadrian's Wall Chesters, Carrabrough, Housesteads, Vindolanda and Carvoran, as well as around 20 miles of the Wall itself. From 1840, Clayton excavated at one of his sites, amassing a very large collection of Roman artefacts.

After Clayton's death in 1890, the collection and estate were inherited by his nephew, and successive family members. In 1928 the estate was broken up and the collection was put at risk. Fortunately the Clayton Trustees were formed and saved the collection and museum. The museum you see today at Chesters Roman Fort very much reflects the history of this collection and tells the story of Clayton's efforts to save, excavate and research the Wall throughout his long life.

August 2018

Claire Boreham spoke on *William Corbett's bookshop: a seventeenth-century Newcastle bookseller and his books*. She had worked on this as part of the *Making the Archives Public*



Woodcut of a bookseller, from *Orbis sensualium pictus* by Johann Comenius, via the Internet Archive

project at Newcastle University in 2014/15, creating a website (corbettsbookshop.omeka.net). William Corbett was a bookseller in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the seventeenth century. When he died in December 1626, an inventory of his stock of over a thousand books was made, mentioning around two hundred of them by name.

During Corbett's lifetime, trade in printing and selling books was very much concentrated in London, with important provincial centres also in Oxford and Cambridge, and clusters elsewhere. Corbett's stock was valued at £35 at his death, but there was no trace of any other bookshop in Newcastle. There was however one in Gateshead, with a more valuable stock than Corbetts' but with no detail in the inventory.

Corbett's will left specified legacies to his wife and son, and to a Robert Wolfe, who was perhaps his assistant. Barbara, the wife, was specifically left the bookbinding equipment, and might have been in charge of that side of the business. At the time of his death, Corbett owed substantial sums to London printers, but this might well have been simply trade credit, with him receiving stock and paying for it after it was sold.

Claire had managed to identify a large number of the books named in the inventory, through the invaluable English Short Title Catalogue, which lists close to half a million items printed before 1800. Many of the texts were religious, including a number of bibles and psalters. The sermons and treatises, it was suggested in discussion, had a distinctly Calvinist tinge to them. There were also educational texts, including those intended for the teaching of Latin, and some music, but no fiction unless one counted the chivalrous romance *Amadis of Gaul*.

Claire can be contacted at corbettsbookshop@outlook.com

September 2018



The Capricorn cameo. Picture © Claudia Wagner (2017) & the Duke of Northumberland

Dr Claudia Wagner of Oxford University, spoke about her work on the Beverley collection of engraved gems at Alnwick Castle. This had been assembled, she explained, by Algernon Percy. In 1750, when Algernon was only a month old, his father Sir Hugh Smithson had inherited the Earldom of Northumberland as a result of his marriage to the heiress of the ancient Percy family, and had assumed the name Percy as a result. Algernon was the second son, so never inherited the title, but was given that of Earl of Beverley in 1766. The collection of about 300 gems had been started by his mother, now Duchess of Northumberland, in the early eighteenth century, but was then much increased by Algernon. It had been guarded by the family since then, and indeed bought back into the main branch of the family

when inherited by a cousin in the mid-nineteenth century.

The most spectacular was a sardonyx, with the image in white on a brown background, of a naked young man riding a mythical Capricorn (a hybrid goat/ dolphin), star sign and symbol of the Roman Emperor Augustus, who might have commissioned the cameo. It was later owned by Cardinal Grimani. He had encouraged artists to copy the gems, and this particular design could have served as the inspiration for Michaelangelo's depiction of Adam on the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

Claudia explained that Algernon had kept a careful list of what gems and fragments he bought, and where. Many had been purchased during his Grand Tour of Europe, in preference to the large sculptures and paintings many of his contemporaries bought. Collecting was a fashionable pastime, with Catherine the Great of Russia, hoovering up gems and encouraging her ladies to do engraving. Untypically, Algernon had sold some of his collection to her, perhaps because he had come under diplomatic and political pressure to do so.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Nevil Story-Maskelyne invented a way of making electrotype copies of engraved gems. Claudia had brought some of these with her, and at the end of her lecture she gave audience members the opportunity to examine them at close quarters.

Claudia can be contacted on claudia.wagner@ashmus.ox.ac.uk

October 2018

Our annual Public Lecture in October, from William Lindesay, carried the intriguing title of *The Great Wall Story – The Way I Have Discovered It*. William explained that he had spent 27 out of the last 30 years in China, and been dubbed the Guardian of the Great Wall by the Chinese media.

He had walked many lengths of the Wall in this time, and in 2016 he and his sons had spent 60 days doing so with a drone, taking some amazing footage on the way. The well-known and much-visited stretches of the monument that appeared on most maps were only a small part of the story, and even that had changed in the course of the last century. It had been built between the 14th and 16th centuries, with a massive expenditure of manpower first to construct and then to man it, after the Han Chinese wrested back the country from a century of Mongol rule. This stretch of Great Wall had played a key part in the Sino-Japanese war of 1937–45. It had been a line of resistance, bombed and occupied by the Japanese as they marched south. A 1909 book with photographs by William Gall showed towers and other fortifications that had completely disappeared.

There were other Walls too, much older, built by the original Han dynasty in the second century BC. One could see on Google Earth long stretches the Gobi Desert in what is now Mongolia. It was described as the Genghis Khan Wall in Mongolian atlases but when William had visited he had been able to date wood found there to 1040–1160. This was, he believed, evidence of an episode when the Tangut people, whose territory straddled the Silk Road in that region, were reconstructing it and later in 1207 re-used it in their defence against Genghis Khan. It was not recorded historically – probably because as a result of their resistance Genghis had destroyed them and all their records. William's website is www.wildwall.com/the-lindesays.

DEATHS

Bernard Bird



Bernard Bird, picture courtesy Sally Bird

Bernard, our former Membership Secretary, died on 22 October at the age of 83. He was born in Wisbech in Cambridgeshire where he lived while his father was away in World War Two. His family returned to Lincolnshire after the war and he attended school in Louth. Bernard came to Newcastle to study botany at university. Qualifying as a teacher, most of his career was across the river in Gateshead where he became a head of science. However, he lived his entire adult life in Newcastle.

He joined SANT in 1989 and soon became its membership secretary. With the diligence and thoughtfulness he showed in all aspects of his life he set about rationalizing and updating the membership records. Bernard enjoyed gadgets, especially computers and so he began the process of transferring the membership records onto a database. He spent many solitary but happy hours in a cold office in the Black Gate working on this. He welcomed visitors to the office sharing his knowledge and encouraging new members. Bernard enjoyed the activities of the Society attending President's Evenings and going on the Country Walks as well as attending the lectures. Late onset rheumatoid arthritis, diagnosed at 60, meant that Bernard could no longer climb the stairs in the Black Gate and so reluctantly he had to relinquish his role as membership secretary. He maintained his interest in the Society's activities even though ill health prevented him from attendance at events. He was always supportive and encouraged the organizers of the bid to apply for Heritage Lottery funding to catalogue the Society's records.

Bernard had a lively interest in people and the world around him. Among other groups, he was an early member of the Northumberland Environmental Association a teacher-based organisation researching the local environment.

Sally Bird

John le Gassicke

John was born in Romford Essex, spent his childhood and went to school in Caterham, Surrey, followed by Westminster medical school. His interesting and fulfilling career took him to many places and he finally settled in Morpeth in 1963 where he was a Consultant Psychiatrist at St Georges Hospital for 25 years.

John always had an keen interest in art, literature, philosophy and especially local history and Northumbrian antiquities. He was a SANT Council member during the 1980s, an active member of the Morpeth Antiquarian Society and a founding member of Friends of Morpeth Museum in 2001. Always interested in anything 'Morpeth', in particular John was a strong supporter of restoring Emily Davison's grave and recognising the artist Joseph Crawhall as a Morpethian. He also conducted Historic Morpeth walking tours where he pointed out architecture and historic sites.

John also had a great love for the countryside and led family and friends on many expeditions and visits to notable local (and not-so-local) points of historical interest. He was highly respected by all who were fortunate enough to meet him and enjoy his sense of humour, interesting character, curiosity and relaxed demeanour.

Simon le Gassicke

Dorothy Henderson

Although Dorothy was born in Arbroath, and was very proud of her ancestry and the 'Declaration' she lived most of her life in Felling. She was educated in Jarrow and after a spell working in Canada joined the laboratory of Newcastle General Hospital where she qualified as a Laboratory Technician. After retiring she continued to work in the reception several days a week in a voluntary capacity and also gained a degree from the Open University. She kept in touch with her ex-colleagues with monthly meetings of the 'Pathogens'.

Her interest in Archaeology was kindled by attending the evening classes run by George Jobey and Barbara Harbottle, leading to her joining SANT in 1965. When our library came to be run by volunteers she filled one of the slots usually with Albert Gilmour on a Thursday night. In those days of card files she photocopied all the library records as a security copy.

For almost fifty years she also had a property in Westgate in Weardale, and led a separate life there several days a month, where she was well known in the local Women's Institute.

She joined the Lit & Phil in 1965, was a founder member of the book binding group, and was renowned for her cheese straws at the tea break, and even more for her meticulous book repair work. Dorothy led an active life, relying on public transport to get to the remotest parts of UK and didn't ever get the hang of computers, mobile phones or microwaves, and had a constant battle with the authorities who could not grasp that one could live a life without TV. Dorothy did just that for almost 90 years.

Denis Peel

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I am always glad to have readers' comments or suggestions for the content of the Bulletin. I am also happy to receive contributions from members, but pressure of space means that articles frequently have to be cut, deferred, or dropped altogether. My address is 5 Goldspink Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1NQ, phone 0191 232 2968, or e-mail me at sue.ward@phonecoop.coop.

Copy deadline for the next edition is May 3, 2019. The mailing date will be June 8. All inserts must be delivered to the Membership Administrator by June 1. If you want an insert included, please contact the Membership Administrator in good time for details of the requirements. An electronic copy of any insert must also be provided (as a Word or pdf document) so that it can be included in the electronic mailing.

Printed in England by yourPrintDepartment