

NEWS BULLETIN



THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

No.68 June 2020

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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 have a full programme of public events, lectures, walks and visits, and social activities. During the current Coronavirus crisis these are curtailed, but we will be resuming normal life as soon as it is safe to do so. 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 e-mail admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk. Our office at the Great North Museum is currently closed, and no phone number is available. If you have sent anything into the office by post since mid-March, it will not have been collected; please re-send by e-mail.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope that all our members, and their relatives and friends, stay safe through these troubled times. One past president, Richard Bailey, wrote to me that 'Every past president will remember that we all had one big crisis during our term of office – but never anything like this! My sympathy and good wishes to everyone who is keeping our great Society going through this horrendous period.' I can only echo his words and thank those who continue to work to keep things going and our members for their patience.

Some historians and archaeologists are in the lucky position of having projects they can pursue at home, myself included. Having retired from Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums at the end of 2019, I am working with colleagues to publish the results of long-running excavations at South Shields Roman fort and to catch up with other writing projects. For some



Nick Hodgson at Segedunum

others, I appreciate, the situation will be far more difficult. The Society has set aside some funds to assist research or publication projects in its area of interest (archaeology and history of the historic counties of Northumberland and Durham) that have been developed while it is impossible to carry on normal work during the lockdown – see our website for details.

As members will appreciate, it is extremely difficult to make firm plans for anything given the present uncertain times we are experiencing. We had hoped to resume our monthly meeting programme from the middle of the year, but it now

looks unlikely that it will be possible to hold any lectures in Newcastle University for the rest of 2020. Our first Zoom lecture will take place on June 24, in place of the scheduled one, and more are being arranged for the rest of the year. We are also looking for short contributions from our members to our YouTube channel. Several online contributions are already available. We will almost certainly have to further postpone our AGM, which we had hoped to hold in September. In the meantime, members can find the annual report and accounts for 2019 on the website.

The *News Bulletin* and the weekly *Exchange* newsletter of information and resources have become a vital means for the Society to keep its members informed, and I am grateful to Sue Ward for her hard work in keeping these channels of communication open. Work is also continuing on the production of our journal *Archaeologia Aeliana*, with the aim of having both the late 2019 volume and the 2020 volume in members' hands by the end of the year.

Please keep an eye on the website and e-bulletins for updates, and best wishes to you all at this difficult time.

Nick Hodgson, President

THE ROAD TO CIO

The Charity Commission has now approved our application to convert from an unincorporated association to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), and accepted the new constitution as a CIO which we agreed at the Anniversary Meeting in January. The plan is that the Society should start operating as a CIO from 1 January 2021, and the assets will be transferred to the new body as of that date.

The move brings some real advantages. The Trustees will have the benefit of limited liability under a CIO, and the Society will be able to contract and hold assets in its own name rather than rely on holding trustees to do this, which can be cumbersome. We also will have a rather more comprehensive legal document for our constitution which covers a wide range of eventualities.

However, very little fundamental will have changed. The name and charitable objects remain exactly the same; the Society will remain a member-led organisation with members electing the Members of Council or charity trustees as at present. Council will be a little smaller with 17 members, however, and Past Presidents won't have to shoulder the burdens of trusteeship for life, although they can choose to stand as members of Council.

The new constitution names the initial Members of Council who will take office on 1 January 2021, but all will have to stand for re-election at the first AGM of the CIO in April 2022. Thereafter two officers and two ordinary Members of Council will stand down each year, but can put themselves forward for re-election.

Simon Pallett, Hon. Treasurer

A HAPPY DISCOVERY

In November last year, the membership certificate of Bridget Atkinson of Temple Sowerby, our first (honorary) female member, elected in 1813, came up for auction as part of a bundle of papers to be sold at Boldon Auction Galleries. Alerted just in time, we arranged for Lindsay

Allason-Jones to bid for them on the phone. She was successful, and I collected the bundle from Boldon the next day.

There was more than we expected in our new acquisition. There were 22 items, ranging from a late seventeenth or early eighteenth century account of the 'Distribution of the Papists Horses within the County of Northumberland' to a 1993 autographed ticket to an 'Evening with Dean Martini & his Ding a Lings'. Because of very proper auction house confidentiality, there was no provenance. Was this a recently assembled miscellany, or were we dealing with a homogenous group?

We have found out that the papers can be linked to Robert Blair, who was elected to the society in 1874 and served as its secretary from 1883–1923 and editor from 1884–1923. Hence, presumably, the presence of the membership certificate.

The bundle includes material relating to Robert's Blair, Watt and Stevens ancestors. The Blairs were Tyne pilots, and were energetic in promoting the interests of their profession. Some of the Stevens ancestors were sailors during the Napoleonic wars, and their letters home provide an insight into that period. Their prize money seems to have provided the wherewithal for the family's move up the social scale. There is considerable stimulus and ample material for further research. Some intriguing mysteries remain, especially concerning papers which joined the group after Robert's death.

The papers are currently in the Society's office, but will be transferred to Woodhorn when normal service is resumed. Digitised copies of them all, with transcripts and explanations where needed, are on our website.

Derek Cutts



The seal on Bridget Atkinson's membership certificate, picture courtesy Derek Cutts

JOHN DOBSON'S BIRTHPLACE

The foremost architect of North East England in the early nineteenth century, John Dobson, was born in the Pineapple Inn, Chirton, North Shields. At a windswept gathering on the morning of 17 March, just before the beginning of the lockdown, a blue plaque to him was unveiled by Andrew Greg outside the current Pineapple Inn, a successor to the original building. Along with Tom Faulkner, Andrew organised the influential John Dobson bicentenary exhibition at the Laing Gallery in 1987, and co-authored both the accompanying exhibition catalogue and a subsequent book, *John Dobson: Architect of the North-East* in 2001.

Andrew talked about Dobson's roots in High Chirton, where his father ran the Inn and was also a respected market gardener, and his apprenticeship with David Stephenson, architect of All Saints' Church, Newcastle. In his long career, Dobson designed many country houses, churches, public works and monuments, not to mention industrial and commercial buildings including Newcastle Central Railway Station. He was one of Grainger's principal collaborators in the Victorian redevelopment of central Newcastle. Pragmatically, he worked in the various architectural styles fashionable in his day, notably Greek and Gothic revivals, Italian Renaissance and English Tudor, as then considered appropriate to the building type in question. Eminently practical, he was also involved in adapting, modernising, repair, restoration and structural stabilisation of older buildings. Although centred in Newcastle, his work encompassed the whole of the North-East and well beyond. As Andrew commented, you might think Dobson deserving of a plaque for his work in North Tyneside alone, never mind the wider region.



The current Pineapple Inn with its blue plaque, picture courtesy Catherine Mackereth

Andrew concluded with a tribute to Tom Faulkner, his co-author, who sadly died in 2014. Tom would have wanted to join him in congratulating North Tyneside for publicly recognising their hero's birthplace.

Chris Downs

NEW YORK: LOCKED DOWN, NOT OUT

Editor's note; In our current lockdown situation, we are in danger of seeing no further than the end of our street. But we have members in other parts of the world who are living through their own lockdowns. So I thought it would be interesting for readers to hear from Ellen Martin, who lives in New York, about her experience there.

Delight and disease compete for us. In Riverside Park, New Yorkers run, read, walk dogs, and swerve six feet from each other, wearing masks store-bought or home-made. On the grand outcropping of the Manhattan Mica Schist at 84th Street, sparkling ancient lava reworked by glaciers, a sunbather stretches, and a man shows his son how to climb, where Edgar Allen Poe sat at night to gaze at the wilderness of New Jersey. But the City has removed the hoops from lonesome basketball courts, where kids kept gathering. The statue of Eleanor Roosevelt, with sensible shoes and observant eyes, sports a red scarf wrapped around her nose and mouth. Central Park's statue of Balto, a sled-dog who ran serum to Nome in the 1925 diphtheria outbreak, likewise wears a mask.



Balto in Central Park, picture Ellen Martin

In my walk back up Broadway, eight ambulances whir by in 40 minutes.

Panhandlers seek money from fewer passers-by. I'm relieved to see the gap-toothed regular at 99th Street after three weeks. He says he's homeless, or that he's going home to eat... It's not for me to ask, just good to exchange a few words, give him more than usual. For all his inconsistencies, he makes more sense than (non)leaders I could name.

Millions of solitaires jammed together, New Yorkers link their projects to fellow-feeling. Writers and Chinese take-out guys rely on each other. When we can't hurry, we talk.

'Where'dja get that mask?' We miss tourists, because we love giving directions. We chat up our postmen, and they like it.

We clap nightly at 7: a treat for those with a history of demonstrating ('We used these bells during the Iraq War'), or tambourines ('We lost two friends last week'). It's not only appreciating others, but a way of saying: We are. Still. Here.

Ellen Martin

THE HANDBOOK TO THE WALL GOES EAST!

Archaeology Plus Ltd is one of the few booksellers specialising in archaeology, with some 8000 titles. Some years ago, we acquired all the remaining stock of the fourteenth edition of *The Handbook to the Roman Wall* from SANT, and we are now the official distributors David Breeze wrote this in 2006, twenty eight years after the appearance of the thirteenth edition in 1978. Given the amount of new work and research on the Wall, its hinterland and counterpoint structures on other parts of the Roman Limes (particularly in Europe during that period), a new edition was essential.

We were amazed when we heard last year that a Chinese edition was in progress. What a compliment to David Breeze, SANT, and Unesco for enrolling the Wall and subsequently parts of the Limes in Germany as World Heritage Sites. Fortunately, we still have a limited number available for sale. To commemorate the launch of the Chinese Edition, we are offering the

English edition of the *Handbook* for £10 including UK postage, as long as stock lasts.

Despite Covid-19, we are working on undaunted. As there are only two of us running the business, we are able to work from home, where our stock is kept. The Royal Mail is still delivering as normal, so orders placed by 3pm will be processed on the same day and posted 1st Class. Orders placed from 3pm on a Friday until the following Monday will all be posted on the Monday. Our website address is <https://www.archaeologyplus.co.uk/>

Wishing you all good health,

Chris Snook and Julia Galvin, Directors

And a message from the *Handbook's* Chinese translator

In 2017, I had the honour to meet Humphrey Welfare, Chairman of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site Partnership Board, and to visit Housesteads Fort and wall-mile 37, and some other sites for the first time, under his guidance. I went away with a copy of the 14th edition of *The Handbook to the Roman Wall*. I don't know if I was the first Chinese citizen, but I was definitely among one of the earliest Great Wall researchers, to read this outstanding work.

Following in John Collingwood Bruce's footsteps, two years later I joined the pilgrims to get close contact with the British frontier of the Roman Empire. Chinese and British scholars have been making remarkable efforts at interpreting the Walls of the two most powerful ancient empires for more than a century at each end of the old continent, yet we still know so little of each other's achievements, even in this era when the world is so tightly connected.

I was curious about how 2000 years ago, these two peoples carried out their great plans under such homologous ideas before they had any direct contact with each other. Then into my mind came the idea of translating the *Handbook* into a language used by the nation who built the Great Wall.

It is tough work to explain all the Latin names of ancient celebrities and places and archaeology terms to native Chinese speakers, but thanks to generous assistance from Humphrey and from David Breeze, the translation has currently been promoted in a smooth way.

I sincerely expect that the coming Chinese version of the *Handbook* can not only be able to introduce the Hadrian's Wall and its archaeology to China, but also enlighten Chinese scholars to recognize and examine the Great Wall from an archaeological perspective rather than consider it as a cultural symbol.

At the same time, I also hope our British colleagues will pay more attention to Great Wall study, and benefit from it.

Yimeng Zhang

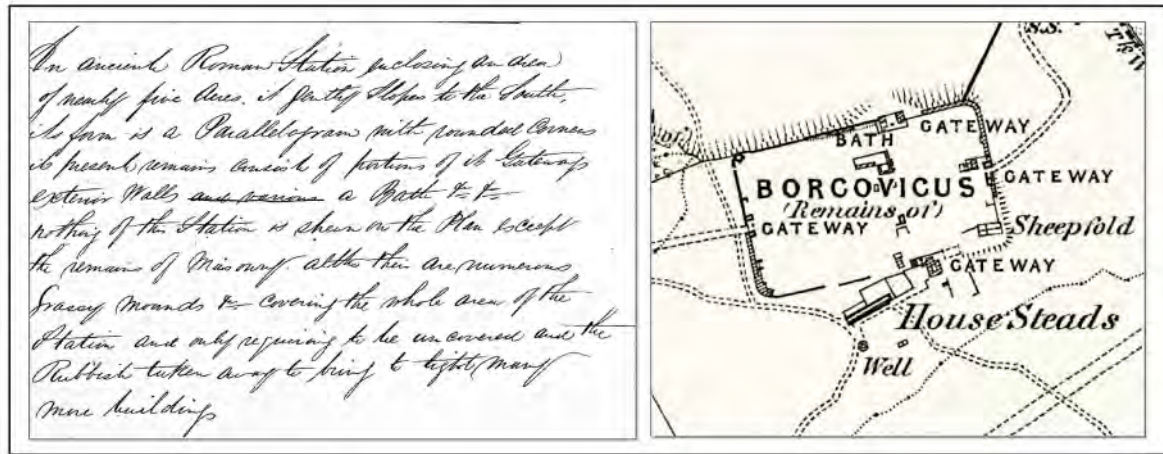
Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, Beijing



The Handbook's translator, Yimeng Zhang

NORTHUMBERLAND NAME BOOKS GO ONLINE

A new resource, providing a wonderful overview of the historic county of Northumberland in the mid-nineteenth century, will shortly be available online and celebrated in a public launch event. As I explained in my lecture to the Antiquaries in January 2019, Northumberland shares with Cumberland, Westmorland, Durham and part of Hampshire the luck of having its Ordnance Survey Name Books preserved almost intact (as OS 34 in The National Archives, Kew). As records of the fieldwork for the First Edition Six Inch maps, the 104 Northumberland Name Books contain entries for almost 20,000 places, from Follydean Burn and Steps of Grace in



BORCOVICUS (now more usually known as VERCOVICIUM) as described in one of the two Name Books for Haltwhistle parish. The entry cites 'Bruce's Roman Wall' and 'McLauchlan's Memoir'. Photo: Diana Whaley; map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

Berwick parish to Broad Mea and Grey Nag in the far south-westerly Knarsdale. These reveal the processes by which the county was mapped, its antiquities recorded, and its place-names preserved for posterity, as well as shedding invaluable light on life and landscape at a time of rapid change.

Since our project began in 2016, the documents have all been photographed and transcribed by a team of dedicated volunteers, many of them SANT members, to whom deep gratitude is due. The transcription is now complete and final checking well advanced. A website is being developed, and an event has been planned to celebrate the completion of the project, publicise the name-books and launch the website. Distinguished speakers from within and outside the project will introduce the Name Books by following trails into social, agricultural and industrial history, name studies, dialect and archaeology, as well as putting them in their mid-Victorian context and viewing them alongside the Name Books for Scotland. We hope to welcome many SANT members to this celebration. Originally planned for Saturday 25 July 2020, this date is in doubt in present circumstances, but there will be further information and booking details as soon as a safe date can be found.

Diana Whaley

VINDOLANDA VIA ROMA

The Vindolanda Trust turned 50 in 2020 and was set for one of its most important years, with plans for research excavations, a new archaeology centre on-site, the hosting of several scientific conferences and cutting-edge research projects. A new research project was being formed to protect and explore the remains of Magna Roman fort, adjacent to the Roman Army Museum. This is partially preserved below a marshy bog which formed once the Roman garrisons no longer managed the local water supply. However, the bog is drying out, and the archaeology of the site is now vulnerable and at risk.

To raise money to help assess the situation at Magna, and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Vindolanda Trust, CEO Andrew Birley and Vice-Chair Gary Calland set themselves a formidable task. The plan was to deliver a letter to Rome and come back to Vindolanda again in the same time it might have taken the *Cursus Publicus*, the Roman postal system, to deliver a writing tablet to Rome from the site almost two thousand years ago, in 13 days.

To make it a challenge, Andrew and Gary would attempt the journey on the Italian icons, Vespa scooters. Vespas have a range of under a hundred miles on a full tank, the equivalent of the hundred miles or so a day a letter might be able to travel by horseback (including changing mounts and riders) in Roman times. Unlike their Roman counterparts, Andrew and Gary cannot change their mounts and instead must push the Vespas well beyond their service intervals. Vindolanda via Roma will traverse up to 20 major Roman highways, mountain passes, congested roads and 600 miles of the Roman *limes*. They expect to be in the saddle for up to 12 hours a day, and will take everything that they might need with them on the scooters

including tents, water, provisions, and clothes. The route takes them from Vindolanda through the length of Britain, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands before they can return to Hadrian's Wall.

The Covid-19 crisis has made this journey even more challenging. The trip was originally due to start on 10 August and this has been postponed to 20 September. If that is still not possible, they will take on the challenge at the first time available in 2021. Meanwhile, Covid-19 has decimated the resources of the Vindolanda Trust. It relies on the income from visits to its sites to pursue its research and preserve the sites, and welcomes around 150,000 people a year. Between the end of March and the end of June, the Trust will lose over half a million pounds of income and with a suppressed economy, social distancing, and other measures we expect that figure to be closer to £900,000 by Christmas. Birthday celebrations are postponed until 2021, the research excavations are on hold, but the issues of climate change at Magna has not disappeared and the Vindolanda via Roma project and other fundraising activities will be vital to rescue valuable organic remains from that site before this precious resource is lost forever.



Andy and Gary and their trusty Vespas

For more information, see www.vindolanda.com/fundraisers/vindolandaviaroma

For more information, see www.vindolanda.com/fundraisers/vindolandaviaroma

Andrew Birley

NEWCASTLE HOUSES

Philip Brooks, who sadly died in 2018, was for many years Chairman of the Wylam Local History Society, and a keen historian of all things local. He left a house packed with treasures. Recently a set of handwritten index cards on Newcastle Houses, listing many of the larger houses in the city, with details of their history and ownership, has come to light. Denis Peel has scanned these, and Mike Barke is going through them, transcribing and researching; in due course the images and transcriptions will be made more generally available.

Demolished 1901 ish

GOLDSPINK HALL
(overlooks Ouseburn at junction of Springbank R / Greystoke Gardens)

1827		Robert Clayton
1841	1836	Thomas + William Ferrarich
1851		merchant
1855		Peter Hansen (+ Ship broker) Norway
1861	Not 63	" " (1846 in 1861) (1850 cc 38 leaves Ter)
1865		? (Not Hansen)
1871	67 at 11 Rowlands Terrace	C. H. Young (Provision merchant)
1873		Chas H. Young (Commission agent)
1887/88		C H Young died (1873)
1889		1888 Ascott Villa, Ryton
1893		J. E. Joel (Barrister) 1895 SR
1895+1897+99		H. Fownes - 1902 At Osborne RD
		1894 'J. Edward Vale Home

Illustrated above is the card on *The Newcastle Houses card for Goldspink Hall, photo Denis Peel*

to the lane leading down to it.. The house was situated just above the steep bank leading down to the Ouseburn. Probably the most interesting owner was the first; Robert Clayton is recorded as resident at Goldspink Hall in 1827. He was the brother of the town clerk, Nathaniel Clayton (and so uncle of John Clayton), a member of the Common Council from 1801 to 1830, and mayor in 1817. Born around 1759, he died in 1832. He was on the committee of the Newcastle Savings Bank, the Dispensary and the Fever Hospital, and his place of business was as a linen draper in Sandhill.

Some might say the area has gone downhill since; the bank of the Ouseburn is now covered with terraced allotments.

Sue Ward

NORMAN MCCORD AT 90

Norman McCord reached his 90th birthday in mid-April, and Nick Hodgson sent him a birthday card on the Society's behalf. But in stark contrast to Norman's 80th birthday which was celebrated in style at the Grand Hotel in Tynemouth, his 90th occurred in isolation. So this brief tribute, based in part on the anecdotes and reminiscence of friends and former colleagues, is an attempt to acknowledge his 90 years by 'virtual' means. Norman has been a member of SANT since 1972, and was its President in 1988–89.

He attended Tynemouth Municipal High School 1941–48 where the history master was George Jobey. Norman became Lecturer in Modern History at the then King's College in 1960, and taught at Newcastle University for the rest of his career. He became a pioneer of aerial photography, according to him, initially on the flimsy grounds that he had served in the RAF during his National Service and the History Department at Newcastle had obtained a small grant and a half-decent camera! His aerial photographs, now digitised in the SINE archive, captured the crop marks of many previously unrecorded archaeological sites in the region. The SINE archive and the multi-disciplinary McCord Centre for Landscape based in the Armstrong Building are legacies of which he is justly proud. One of his many successful research students in the late 1960s, Maureen Calcott, recalled that some of Norman's seminars were held at the Turks Head in Newcastle, and that he had a propensity for enjoying what she called Lucullan Feasts with his students. Maureen was one of several to mention Norman's warmth and generosity of spirit; others recalled his dry wit and facility for the 'one-liner'. Maurice Milne remembered 'returning a copy of Barchester Tower to Cullercoats Library [when] by happy chance Norman was driving down the road towards me and paused to have a chat. Winding down the car window he could only have had a split second to spot the cover of my book... "walking the streets of Cullercoats with a Trollope I see" came his swift opener'.

Norman regularly contributed to extra-mural courses, was an external examiner for the Open University, and advocated the value of integrating fieldwork with academic study. His guided walks around Newcastle Quayside and his Newcastle to Shields river excursions are remembered by many. Research in the fields of public health, poor law reform, regional politics, maritime history, labour and industrial history have all benefitted from his writing over the years. After I acknowledged the contribution Norman made to a book about the maritime history of the region, he sent me a postcard, written with typically self-deprecating humour, 'Just a note to thank you for the gift of the book, for your kind words in the preface and to reassure you that my capacity for absorbing flattery is almost infinite.'

Perhaps the most succinct appreciation of Professor McCord's reputation and status appeared in a History Today review of his *Britain 1815–1914* (OUP 2007) written in conjunction with his long time friend Bill Purdue, 'McCord's work has a relaxed authority and individuality'. Few would disagree with that.

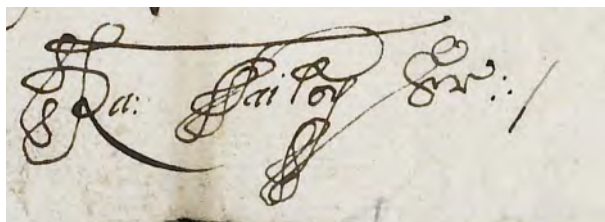
Now virtually housebound and in poor health, Norman remains resilient and enjoys the support of close neighbours and friends.

Happy Birthday Norman.

Tony Barrow

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

November 2019



Ralph Taylor's signature, picture courtesy Professor Wrightson

With what might seem now like prescience, in the Public Lecture, Finding Ralph Taylor, Professor Keith Wrightson, of Yale University, described the process of researching and writing his book *Ralph Taylor's Summer* (2011), a 'microhistory' of the Newcastle plague of 1636 and the part played in that event by the young scrivener Ralph Taylor.

The epidemic of 1636 had been catastrophic at the time, killing 47% of the population of the town. But it rapidly became eclipsed by other events and is remembered principally through a pamphlet by Robert Jenison. Professor Wrightson's own interest in it had been aroused when he came across Ralph Taylor's elaborate signature beneath a deposition

describing how Tailor had climbed up on the Town Wall to take down the will of Thomas Holmes, spoken from the window of the attic in which he was confined. The project had then proceeded in stages. First he surveyed the surviving records. The burial records, though incomplete, allowed him to trace the course of the epidemic through the town. Wills, inventories and depositions revealed how people behaved in times of stress. Some spoke through doors, to witnesses coming 'as nigh as they durst'. The records suggested the potential for a 'microhistory' – the close study of an individual, group, or event from which larger meanings might emerge. Their analysis alongside other records then 'thickened' the story by examining the response of the town's governors, how the coal trade had continued, though at a lower rate, the flight of some of the 'best sort', the place of the plague in the religious controversies of the time (being viewed as a punishment for sin), the economic impact on households, and the role of Ralph Tailor, who did more than any other individual to create the records of the event.

Prof. Wrightson concluded by reflecting on the writing of the book and how he tried to braid together an analytical narrative of the plague with its place in the life of Ralph Tailor. Arguably it proved the making of him. 1636 had been the beginning of his professional life. By 1669, when he died, he was a Notary Public and a substantial citizen.

Prof Wrightson can be contacted on keith.wrightson@yale.edu.

Winter visit; St Nicholas Cathedral

Fifteen of us gathered in St Nicholas Cathedral on the morning of 27 December for a new take on our usual post Christmas urban walk. This time we were to be wholly indoors: an excellent decision given how cold it was outside!

David Heslop talked us through the ledger stones project which has occupied a team of volunteers at the Cathedral for the last few months. There are hundreds of these stones identifying the burial spots of Newcastle residents interred over the centuries. Names, dates, biographical details are all there. The story of our City can be gleaned from the stones themselves. The materials used to make them can be sourced, and location information can add detail to a life. For example, one rather grand black granite stone comes from the Low Countries, where its owner traded.

Irwin Thompson went through the process of identifying and logging where each stone had been in relation to the others and how they have been moved around. A floor plan, plastered with Post-it notes, demonstrated just how meticulous the process has been, and explained why Irwin's wife was so relieved to get her kitchen table back in time for Christmas.

The most unexpected aspect of the tour was discovering elements of the original structure of the building which had been incorporated into renovation work over the centuries. David literally shone a light into gaps in pillars to reveal a blocked window still visible inside a column.

The morning was a delightful reminder of how much there is to learn about a building we all think we know so well.

Rosie Serdiville

January 2020

Derek Cutts spoke about satire in mid-nineteenth century Newcastle. Recently, he explained, he had come across a number of large lithographs from the 1870s. They were political cartoons, mostly with radical local MP Joseph Cowen in them.

Derek explained that the famous cartoonists of the Georgian period were producing for a moderately affluent and well-educated audience. Everything was printed in London though sent all over the country. From the early 1830s, the introduction of lithography made such images easier and cheaper to produce. At the same time, a change in manners meant that satire became gentler, with no images of defecation or of sex. Often in Newcastle, mid-century satirical drawings were small in scale and one-off, produced by amateurs to illustrate the slip songs which were circulated in the streets. The large lithographs, quite out of step with the rest, were published by John William Chater.



The group in St Nicholas Cathedral, picture Rosie Serdiville



One of Chater's cartoons of Joseph Cowen, picture courtesy Derek Cutts

1871. Marcke's Newcastle work began with a series around the School Board elections of that year; in one print he depicted John Collingwood Bruce, a defeated candidate, sitting disconsolately on Hadrian's Wall. In the 1880s he showed the Parliamentary elections as horse-races, something local buyers would have understood because there was controversy about the future of the Town Moor, where racing took place. Marcke sustained his output for 15 years, but died in 1884. He was, Derek concluded, a flash in the pan. After him, the production of satirical cartoons returned to London, and used the newer technology of chromolithography.

Derek can be contacted on derekcutt914@gmail.com

February 2020

The February lecture was given by Jenny Proctor, on the archaeological investigations in Alnwick Castle Gardens between 2000 and 2018. Jenny explained that in 2000, Pre-Construct Archaeology had done fieldwork and recording of the remaining buildings, in advance of development. They had taken photographs and stitched them together, tying up the still-visible modifications with the map and plan evidence. In 2004 there had been more recording at the top of the site, and in 2015, as well as being site supervisor, she had done some intensive research within Alnwick Castle Archives.

Hugh, the First Duke of Northumberland, had moved to Alnwick after his marriage in 1750. He called in Capability Brown to renovate the then-dilapidated garden. At one point, nearly 150 people had worked there. The first walled garden, 300 metres away from the Castle, had heated walls and a vinery, and acted as a tree-nursery for Brown's landscaping work.

In 1786 the second Duke, also Hugh, inherited. In accord with the current fashion for exotic fruit, new hothouses and furnace rooms were built, including a short-lived special building for growing pineapples. The third duke inherited in 1817 and he and his wife saw the garden as a place for entertainment and flower-growing. Kitchen gardens were planted elsewhere to supply the castle, and there was more investment in hot houses, with a grand stone structure to present a unified aspect, and a spectacular glass conservatory, using technology similar to the surviving and recently renovated one in Felton. However, the Alnwick one survived only until 1856, when the fourth Duke, who had inherited in 1847, made sweeping alterations including much earth-moving, to create an Italianate garden, including a fountain in pink granite. Developments continued until the mid-twentieth century, but during World War II the garden was used for food-production, and later fell into disrepair.

The Castle archives, Jenny continued, included the pay lists of the gardeners, of whom there could be as many as 30 at any one time, both men and women, with information about their regular garden tasks. There were also a number of plans, both of what was on the ground and what was proposed. One large-scale one, for the 4th Duke, had been found in a plumber's box, and had since been digitised at Woodhorn.

Jenny can be contacted on JProctor@pre-construct.com. Her monograph, *Parterres Bright with Flowers*, is available from Pre-Construct Archaeology.

Country Walk, March 14

Only a few members were able to make it for what turned out to be the last Antiquaries event before the Coronavirus era. The theme of the walk was Man(kind)'s effect on nature. What would have been a wide braided river channel, bounded by wet lands and oak woods, has for a brief moment in time been transformed into an organised landscape. Now Nature is in many

areas reclaiming it.

We followed the route of the 1876 railway and eighteenth-century waggonway to High Street House, better known as George Stephenson's cottage where we discussed the reasons for its location and function at the junction of the waggonway and the road. The Wildlife Nature Reserve contains some unique plants which tolerate the heavy metal contamination from waste from the now defunct Allendale Lead Mines, and a remarkable regeneration of oak trees. The Tide Stone, erected in 1783, marked the limit of Newcastle's claim to the Tyne and the then high tide mark. In the nineteenth century the Tyne Commission dredged the river to this point, lowering the river bed by twelve feet.



Coke Ovens near Isabella Pit, picture Denis Peel

This led to erosion upriver, as far as Wylam Bridge, and the river banks have collapsed in several places with much loss of land.

Ryton Island has a row of colliery houses now on dry land north of the dredged Tyne. At Blayney Row there are more colliery houses, and behind them the remains of coke ovens from the Isabella Pit, which employed at times almost a thousand men. The Keelmen pub is a former pumping station established to supply Newcastle with water following the cholera outbreaks in the middle of the nineteenth century. The now closed Boathouse Pub displays the heights of all the floods since the big one of 1771, almost equalled in 2005 and 2015, despite the change in the level of the river bed.

Ryton Willows was a popular leisure area between the wars with boat landings, railway station and shuggy boats (fairground swing boats). Curling, the winter game in which players slide stones around on a sheet of ice, took place here in shallow brick structures flooded by a covering of water, which froze to give the smooth surface required. Between the wars this was a popular sport, and local clubs played in the Caledonian league. At the ferry house the last of the boats is slowly disintegrating on the bank, while Ryton's 'Fiery Fields' is brush wood which has been burning on an old colliery spoil heap for around seven years and is slowly moving into the golf course. Our last sight was the recent severe river erosion east of Wylam Railway Station.

Denis Peel

March 2020

The March lecture... didn't happen, as life came to an abrupt halt with the lockdown. However, our expected speaker Nick Hodgson provided an alternative e-lecture, now available on our website (follow the link on the home page) on the all-too-apposite topic of a Roman pandemic.

From the fort of Housesteads on the Wall comes a fine inscribed slab now in the Great North Museum. It is dedicated 'To the gods and goddesses according to the interpretation of the oracle of the Clarian Apollo – set up by the first cohort of Tungrians'. We now know of at least twelve almost identical dedications from various regions of the empire. These dedications were a general initiative probably ordered by the emperor Marcus Aurelius (reigned 161–180), who had perhaps himself consulted the oracle at Claros (western Turkey) about what could be done to protect cities and military bases throughout the empire from devastating pandemic disease.



The dedication from Housesteads, now in the Great North Museum; picture RIB 1579

The great 'Antonine plague' reached Rome in 166 and the infection was rife in the western provinces by 167. A recently published inscribed pewter amulet, found at on the Roman foreshore of the Thames in London, invokes magical protection against, specifically, the Antonine plague.

In 2017 another dedication erected in accordance with the Clarian oracle came to light, this time at the fort of Ravenglass, on the Cumbrian coast (the stone was found re-used at nearby Muncaster Castle). This suggests that probably every military unit in the empire, or in certain

areas, was directed by the emperor to make such a dedication in accordance with the oracle. The inscription from Ravenglass and our own collection item from Housesteads therefore belong to a time when the empire had been brought to its knees by a combination of military crisis and pandemic disease.

And after that....

There were no lectures in April or May. Ronan O'Donnell's 'Landscapes of the Great Depression in the North East' has been rescheduled for the February 24 2021, while Andrea Dolfini will open the dances in person at the January 2021 meeting. Plans are now being laid for virtual lectures on Zoom until we can get back into the University lecture theatre. The first will be on June 24 – check the website for details.

OBITUARY; DR FRANK ROGERS

Frank Rogers died on 10 January aged nearly ninety-two. He joined the Society in 1962. Born in 1928 into a naval family of unusually long generations (his paternal grandfather was born in the reign of William IV) and brought up in Low Fell, Frank attended Gateshead Grammar School from which he won a scholarship to Oriel College, Oxford. His undergraduate years profoundly shaped the rest of his life; unfortunately, however, his scholarship seldom stretched to train fares, often obliging him to cycle between home and college.

Most of Frank's professional career was spent in teaching. He rose to be head of history successively at Wallsend Grammar School, Willington High School, and the King's School, Tynemouth. Boundlessly energetic, while still in post he studied for an external London PhD (awarded in 1971) on nineteenth-century local government and politics in his native Gateshead; an abridged version (*Gateshead: an Early Victorian Boom Town*) was published in 1974. His sardonic view of the leading politicians was perhaps informed by his dealings with their twentieth-century successors as a local councillor, first in Gateshead itself and later in North Tyneside. A devout Anglican and a lay reader for over six decades, most of his ministry was centred on Nenthead, where he and his late wife Peggy kept a cottage for many years. He produced a meticulously researched history of the church there (*England's Highest Parish Church*) in 1995.

A small, wiry man with a thick shock of hair that, like its progenitor, seemed destined to pursue an independent course, Frank relished nothing more than a good argument, his characteristically controversial views ensuring a ready supply of adversaries. His lively and entertaining occasional lectures to the Society encapsulated many of the qualities that made him such an inspiring teacher.

Eric Cambridge

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

events@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk

Copy deadline for the next edition is 12 November, 2020. The mailing date will be 9 December. All inserts must be delivered to the Membership Administrator by 2 December. If you want an insert included, please e-mail the Administrator on admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk 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.

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