

NEWS BULLETIN



THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

No.73 June 2022

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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. We are 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.

OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Our April AGM saw changes at the top of the Society. Nick Hodgson stood down as President after his three year term, but rather than taking a well-deserved rest, he resumed his old role as Secretary after Graeme Stobbs' retirement. The Society owes many thanks to Nick and Graeme for seeing us through this difficult period of lockdown.

Our new President is David Heslop, who has been a member ever since he moved up to Newcastle with his young family to take up the position of Assistant Field Archaeologist for Newcastle City Council in 1991. He directed a number of excavations and



David Heslop beneath St Giovanni in Laterano in Rome, picture Denise Heslop

building surveys in the city, which are all published in *Archaeologia Aeliana*. He became the County Archaeologist for Tyne and Wear in 1997.

He graduated from Leicester University in 1978 and worked for both Cleveland County Council and North Yorkshire County Council.

As a teenager his interest in local history led him to join Teesside Archaeological Society and go on his first dig at the Iron Age site of Roxby near Whitby. Thus began his love of the Iron Age, especially the study of beehive querns, which has provided a great source of amusement to his family over the years (and taken up a lot of garage space!) but which has resulted in a comprehensive monograph on beehive querns in the North East of England.

Today, David has his own consultancy which specialises in computer visualisations. His recent projects include Rome Transformed with Newcastle University and the Common Ground in Sacred Spaces project with Newcastle Cathedral, where David is the Honorary Cathedral Archaeologist, a post he also holds with Carlisle Cathedral.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DIRECT DEBITS

2022 subscriptions fell due in January, at which point we discovered that Lloyds Bank was withdrawing use of its direct debit facility. SANT has banked with Lloyds for many years, while they and other banks have been steadily increasing the size of organisation for whom they are willing to collect direct debits. We had been given the impression that our 'legacy' status was secure, but our move to a new bank account last year, required by our move to Charitable Incorporated Organisation status, triggered this change without any prior warning.

Fortunately, other organisations have sprung up to fill the gap left by the banks. After much research, I signed us up to GoCardless. It is now providing us with a transparent and efficient direct debit system, which is suitable and affordable for an organisation of our size. It's very easy to sign up. It just needs your name, address, e-mail, bank sort code and bank account number. Once you have done it, you get a confirmation e-mail; you'll also get an e-mail a few days before any money is taken from your account. The only drawback is that you need internet access and an e-mail address.

We had around 400 direct debit subscribers at the beginning of the year, many of whom had been paying in this way for many years. I have contacted them all by e-mail circular and/or by post, and the vast majority have now either signed up or shifted to one of the other payment methods (cheque, standing order, PayPal or bank transfer).

This does, though, leave quite a number who have yet to take action. Under our Constitution, membership 'lapses' if a subscription remains unpaid six months after it is due. 30 June will soon be upon us, so if you haven't yet made arrangements to pay, please do so. This will ensure that you continue to receive the many benefits of membership. If you don't, that may leave a serious hole in our finances and limit what we can do. We rely on membership income to carry out our mission of publishing, disseminating, supporting research and acquiring items related to the history and archaeology of the North East of England.

So, if you are someone who hasn't yet signed up with GoCardless or opted for an alternative method, please do so! Feel free to contact me with any queries, at treasurer@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk or by post via the office.

Simon Pallett
Hon Treasurer

The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled "Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne". The form is for setting up a direct debit. It includes the following fields and links:

- Form title: "Set up a Direct Debit with Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne"
- Fields: "First name" and "Last name" (both with input boxes)
- Link: "Click here to use a company name"
- Fields: "Your sort code" and "Your account number" (both with input boxes)
- Link: "Click here to enter IBAN"
- Field: "Post code" (with an input box)

Part of our GoCardless direct debit form

COMING EVENTS IN 2022

Summer Activities

Two dates for your diaries this summer. On 22 July, our Summer Social event will be at Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade Watch House. This iconic building, overlooking the mouth of the Tyne from the Spanish Battery since 1886, houses a museum dedicated to maritime history



Part of the Galloway Hoard, the subject of our Public Lecture in October. Picture, courtesy National Museum of Scotland

and life-saving since the Brigade's foundation in 1864. There will be a buffet and drinks after our exploration of the museum collections.

On 20 August we have a coach trip from Newcastle to Healey Church, Minsteracres Retreat Centre, and Blanchland. The nineteenth-century church at Healey has three windows from the 1950s by L.C. Evetts. Minsteracres was the home of the Silvertops, a recusant Catholic family heavily involved in the Tyneside coal industry. Around 1750 they built a country house at Minsteracres, to which the architect Joseph Hansom added a chapel dedicated to St Elizabeth of Hungary in 1854. This was bought by the Passionist Order in 1949 and converted into a monastery. It is now a retreat

centre. There are two murals by Consett artist Sheila Mackie and extensive grounds. In the afternoon, we will head to Blanchland to hear about recent investigations of the church, monastic site and the picturesque village formed from the monastic buildings by Lord Crewe, bishop of Durham in the early 18th century.

Monthly meetings and events

With the lifting of Covid restrictions this spring, we began holding physical meetings once more, in Newcastle University's Herschel Building. We have taken up the challenge of livestreaming and recording our live lectures as well, and are getting there, despite a number of teething problems. Thanks to everyone for their patience! We now have as many people in the virtual audience, if not more, as in the live one each month.

As you may indeed have noticed, this is the 1900th anniversary of the building of Hadrian's Wall, and it has been the subject of six of this year's lectures. We have opened these up to non-members as well as members, as our contribution to the HW1900 Festival.

However, the Wall has not completely stolen the show. David Petts will tell us about early medieval remains on Lindisfarne in July. In August, Greg Finch will talk to us about the rise to power of the Newcastle dynasty of the Blacketts, during the 17th and 18th centuries.

On 9–10 September, we are joining with the Medieval and Early Modern Studies network at Newcastle University for a conference to commemorate the first issue of *Archaeologia Aeliana* two hundred years ago. It's too early to have final details, but they will all be on our website, so look out for them.

For our student members, we are planning a special event on 14 October, in the Digital Lounge at Tyneside Cinema and online. We'll be inviting students and early career professionals to give 15-minute presentations on their area of research or job role. Talk subjects need not be confined to the North East of England. We'd like to hear from any of our members (especially new ones) on their areas of interest.

Our annual public lecture is in cooperation with the Newcastle University Insights programme. Martin Goldberg from the National Museum of Scotland will join us to discuss new research on the extraordinary Galloway Hoard. The November meeting, an appropriate finale to the anniversary year, is on Death on the Wall, with Trudi Buck as speaker.

Planning for the 2023 monthly meetings has already begun. We will want to diversify our topics, and are on the look-out for under-represented research and researchers. If you would like to suggest a speaker or a theme, or even volunteer a talk, please e-mail SANTlectures@gmail.com.

Richard Pears and Marta Alberti

FROM THE LIBRARY

I was delighted to be offered the role of Library Co-ordinator at the Great North Museum last November. I am very grateful for the warm welcome I have received from SANT, especially Denis Peel and Howard Cleeve. My first few months in the job were quite challenging, as we dealt with reopening under government restrictions. We now seem to be on more of an even keel.

I have returned to the heritage sector after spending the last 3½ years working for an adult education charity in Newcastle. I completed my PhD in medieval liturgical history at the

University of Exeter in 2010 and enrolled on a heritage management programme at Worcester Cathedral Library the following year. I then joined Ironbridge Gorge Museums as a collections development curator before taking on the Library and Archives in 2014. Although I call myself a medievalist I am also interested in a whole host of other topics, from prehistoric rock art to industrial heritage. It is therefore a thrill to be working with SANT's book collection, and I look forward to meeting more members as we go through 2022.

We are open now from 10.00 to 2.00, Monday to Thursday. You can contact me via e-mail at tamsin.bapty@twmuseums.org.uk or by phone on 0191 208 555.

Tamsin Bapty



Tamsin Bapty in the Library

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In the eighteenth century, parliamentary elections were popular events which engaged a wide section of the population – both those with votes and those without. *Eighteenth-Century Political Participation and Electoral Culture* (ECPPEC) is a project based at Newcastle University, in collaboration with the University of Liverpool, which aims to shine a light on these extraordinary moments of participation, ritual, and (sometimes) carnival.

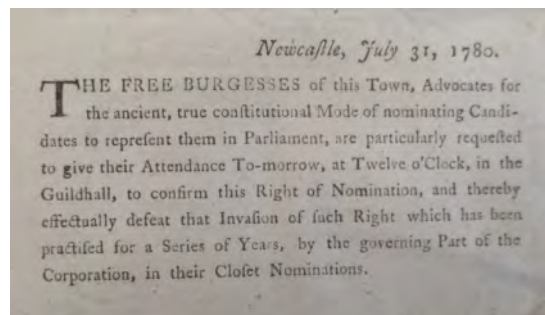
One strand of the project has involved transcribing poll books for twenty case study constituencies. Another has been exploring the various cultural productions associated with elections: the explosion of print and song; ceremonies and entertainments; modes of dress and decoration. The project's website (currently under construction) will link the polling data with these cultural materials and events.

Newcastle Antiquaries have assisted the project from the beginning. A volunteer group had begun transcribing Newcastle poll books for 1774–1780 even before we came on the scene. They have helped to formulate the project's aims and methodologies. This year, the same group of volunteers has transcribed two Northumberland poll books for 1705 and 1716.

These poll books record each elector's name, vote and 'abode' (where he lived). By identifying the modern place names, the Society's researchers will enable the project to use digital tools to map the geographical spread of Northumberland voters. The poll book data can also be linked to wider political events. For example, the 1716 by-election was held after one of Northumberland's MPs was expelled for supporting the 1715 Jacobite rising. The poll book shows that many voters were asked to swear an oath. Was this the oath of allegiance, pledging loyalty to the Hanoverian dynasty?

We are hosting a conference at Newcastle University on 7–9 July, open to all. It will explore how people from all social groups were involved in eighteenth-century elections. Many thanks to the Society for generously funding four bursaries to support unwaged delegates attending the conference. Details, including how to register, are on our conference website <https://ecppec.wordpress.com/>.

James Harris, Newcastle University



A handbill from the 1780 Newcastle election from the SANT collection

HAC VIA IBANT ROMANI

Thanks to the HW1900 Festival, most of us now know a lot more than we did about Hadrian's Wall. But how many walkers on the Hadrian's Wall National Path are aware that from Heddon-



Roman soldiers by the petrol station on Shields Road, picture Judith Green

on-the-Wall eastwards, it does not actually follow the route of Hadrian's Wall? That ran along the West Road and down Westgate Road, to outside the Castle, and then to Segedunum, through twelve miles of Newcastle.

With support from the City Council and help from experts on Roman history and archaeology such as our own Nick Hodgson, St James Heritage and Environment Group has made a new film about the actual route of the Wall and the 300-year Roman occupation.

The film, *Gannin' Alang the Wall*, illustrates where the Wall went through the city by showing scenes of how places along the route look today. Its production has been a real community project, involving more than a hundred people of different ages in bringing to life scenes at different localities along the route of the Wall. Our member Judith Green, leading light of the whole project, is adept at 'volunteering' people for work they never knew they wanted to do. At one point I was responsible for asking an eminent member (who wishes to remain nameless) what would have been a reasonable price-list in a brothel in AD122!

Judith has described it as 'a combination of serious history and Monty Python'. Many of the scenes are played for laughs, but it is grounded in scholarship. The guide for the journey is Julia Lucilla, the ghostly wife of the commander of Benwell Roman fort, aka art historian Gail-Nina Anderson who acts as narrator. The film is being launched in May at City Library, just as this *News Bulletin* goes to press. It will be available on the St James Heritage and Environment website and the HW1900 Festival website in due course, and DVDs are being printed for any organisation which wants to show it.

Sue Ward

EXCAVATIONS AT THE CATHEDRAL

St Nicholas' Cathedral has recently undergone one of those major transformations that happen to ecclesiastical buildings every couple of centuries. The nave of the church was last renovated by George Gilbert Scott in the 1860s, so we were due a shake-up. The plans evolved over a number of years and the final scheme involved laying a new nave floor, and a programme of landscaping that has completely transformed the South Churchyard and the East End.

The project began in February 2020, and then the pandemic initially stopped work and went on to affect all aspects of the programme. By the summer of 2020, the interior of the nave, with dustsheets on the wall monuments, and stones laid in lines like beds in a hospital ward, created an eerie atmosphere.

Trial excavation had shown that there were no shallow burials in the nave and so work here involved recording the 'ledgerstones', floor grave markers which once covered the burial plots of the better-off townfolk who could afford the 6s.8d. cost. We know the stones were first moved in the 1780s, when most of the monuments in the church were cleared out, and then again in the 1860s.

In all, 78 new ledgerstones were uncovered. The best were incorporated into the new floor and the rest, together with the worn, fragile or illegible stones already known, were recorded in 3-D with photogrammetry and laser-scanning and then buried beneath the new floor. When initial research has been completed, the team working on the stones hope to produce a popular book on the stones and the people they commemorate.

Elsewhere in the precinct, there were surprising discoveries. There was a stone drain, possibly Roman or pre-Norman Conquest, in the basement of the Cathedral Hall. The early graveyard wall was uncovered in the South Churchyard, along with metal surfaces from earlier lines of the medieval road known as Low Bridge, which ran close to the South Transept.

Despite the difficulties, the project was completed in the summer of 2021, and the building joins the Castle as a major destination for visitors. It is now equipped to host talks, tours, exhibitions, conferences and concerts in the Heart of Newcastle.

David Heslop



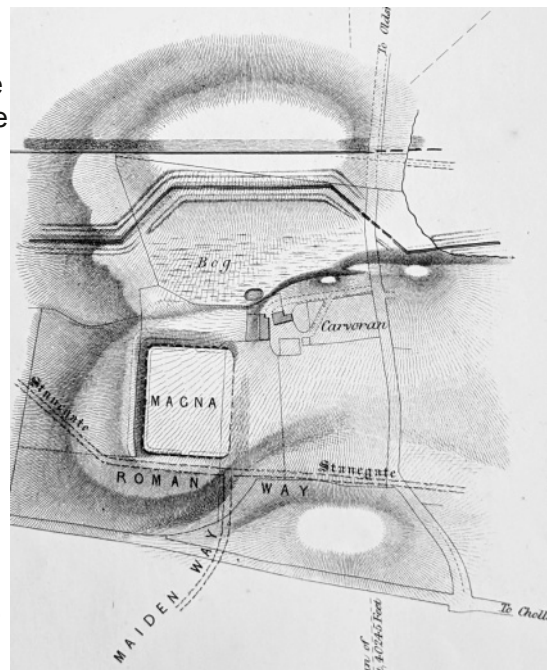
The shrouded Cathedral during its refurbishment, picture David Heslop

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE REMAINS OF MAGNA

The Roman landscape at Magna has been looked after by the Vindolanda Trust since 1972, when the dairy farmer who owned it retired and put up the site for sale. Buying it allowed us to protect and preserve its landscapes for future generations. The site includes Stanegate settlements, a Hadrian's Wall fort, extensive extramural settlement and cemeteries, a 400m section of the *vallum*, and the eastern half of Milecastle 46. As at Vindolanda, wood and leather were preserved in its rich and deeply buried soils.

Over the last 50 years very little intrusive archaeology has taken place there. In the last decade, the Trust's archaeologists have started to notice significant alterations to the vegetation cover, depth of soil and erosion, notably in areas that had been covered in wet marshland and reeds. In response, we commissioned several aerial surveys, so that we could compare images from the 1940s to the present day with new mapping, lidar and other non-intrusive geophysical work. We found that features which had remained hidden for centuries were starting to appear as the soil shrank or dried out. The tops of Fort ditches, Roman masonry and archaeological deposits are now under threat.

Working with scientific colleagues and the specialist scientific monitoring company Van Walt, we have now installed a deep monitoring probe to record rainfall, temperature, soil moisture, reduced oxygen, Ph, and water levels at Magna. Increasingly extreme periods of drought followed by heavy rainfall are changing our confidence in the long-held belief that 'if it is buried it remains safe'. Alongside a 5-year archaeological project which the Trust hopes to start in 2023, the data will create more robust management strategies for the site and other vulnerable parts



The Magna site on Henry Maclaughlan's map of 1857, picture Vindolanda Trust

of Hadrian's Wall so that it is has a chance to survive the next 1900 years.

All this would not be possible without the support of the wider Wall archaeological community and the wonderful generosity of the friends and volunteers who fundraised to enable the Trust to purchase and install the scientific probes to monitor the site's health.

You can learn more about the project on <https://www.vindolanda.com/appeal/revealing-magna>

Andrew Birley

SAFEGUARDING VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPHS AT WOODHORN



Some of our photographic collection nestling in its new packaging at Woodhorn, picture Northumberland Archives

Northumberland Archives at Woodhorn is the home of Newcastle Antiquaries' fine collection of small, and very fragile, glass photographic negatives, dating from the nineteenth century. The original cardboard or wooden storage boxes have a high acid content which over time accelerates the rate of physical deterioration of the glass. The negatives were generally packed very tightly, so the boxes were very heavy, with a big risk that they might be dropped when taken off the shelves. Moreover, the negatives were packed glass on glass with no primary level of protection, which increased the risk of scratching.

So over the last few years, we have been using the Antiquaries' annual grant to buy conservation grade packaging materials and rehousing the negatives properly. Packaging in conservation grade envelopes makes handling easier and provides an extra level of protection. Each envelope completely encases a negative, so that no area is exposed to the environment nor is any part of the negative placed directly against the next slide in the box.

The pandemic of course slowed down the project, but in total 6,611 glass transparencies have been re-packaged. Each slide is now also individually referenced and labelled. We can also now pack the new boxes more effectively on the shelving, so we have even created some additional storage space in our photographic store!

A bonus is that we have now been able to provide individual listing for some parts of the collection. This includes some images by renowned Tyneside photographer Edgar G. Lee, and pictures of the family of Christopher Baldwin of Cowpen Grove House, Northumberland.

Sue Wood, Northumberland Archives

A NEW LOOK FOR A VENERABLE JOURNAL

Our learned journal, *Archaeologia Aeliana* (AA), reaches its 200th birthday this year, and the current series, the 5th, reaches volume 50. Members will see that volume in the coming few weeks, but meanwhile, the Publications Committee has been discussing and agreeing on a new series, the 6th, to start from the next edition with some important changes.

The first change is that AA will move to regular printing of colour images. Printing in colour does come at an extra cost, so will still be reserved to cases where colour is regarded as important to the presentation of information. We are sure this will be welcomed by both authors and readers.

Another change will be an improvement in the digital offer to institutional members, such as libraries and universities. This is important as more and more institutions move towards a system of online access for their content.

Finally, to mark this change we have decided to change the colour of the journal cover to purple. This was chosen for two reasons. As 2022 falls on the 1900th anniversary of the formal initiation of Hadrian's Wall, and as the journal is named in the honour of the Emperor Hadrian (a member of the Aelii family), purple was seen as a representation of the importance of the Roman past for our region. Additionally, the purple hard-back, with gold lettering, will be another

nod to the medieval history of the region. The Venerable Bede, in *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, described the flag of Saint King Oswald of Northumbria as being of purple and gold.

We hope that these changes will add improvements to the journal, which will benefit both our readership, and our core mission, which is to promote the history and archaeology of our region to as wide an audience as possible.

Don O'Meara
Editor of Archaeologia Aeliana

THE TRIBLEY SHIELD

The Tribley Shield, in the Technology case in the Ice Age to Iron Age gallery of the Great North Museum is about 2,700 years old, and I find it one of the most intriguing objects in our collection. It was discovered intact in 1802 in a peat bog in Tribley, near Broomeyholme in County Durham. Only about twenty others have been found across the UK and Ireland, and it is one of the finest. It is made from a thin bronze sheet, repeatedly heated, hammered, and quenched. Replicas are remarkably resistant to blows from replica spears and swords. Some experiments by The Bronze Age Combat Project (sites.google.com/site/bronzeagecombat) had to be concluded early as the replicas were suffering too much!

Why was it in the bog? As our past president Lindsay Allason-Jones has explained, 'It could have been to appease a pagan god – or it could have been lost in a fight and the warrior decided to save himself from the bog rather than die trying to retrieve his shield'.

We now have two fragments mounted on a resin base, and three different stories about its discovery. The nearest contemporary account is that three agricultural workers were fencing off an area of common land. One found the shield and, 'wishing to gratify all his friends, cut it up like a cake and gave to each a piece'.

However, a report in the 1822 volume of *Archaeologia Aeliana* says that 'a fragment... was found by the late Matthew Forster, Esq', at Broomeyholme, and that Mr T Watson, Silver-Smith, Newcastle, donated it to the Society in August 1814.

But then in 1846 John Bell, the Society's first Librarian, wrote to eminent archaeologist Charles Roach Smith that 'In 1802 ... in cutting through part of a morass, an ancient shield was discovered quite perfect, the front or face of Brass or Bronze lined or backed with wood or leather, which latter when it became dry soon fell to pieces and the Bronze being kept by the Farmer untill it got broken was given by him to a friend of his, a silversmith in Newcastle, who after keeping it for some years as a show in his shop, gave it to the Antiquarian Society of Newcastle....'

None of the accounts make clear whether both fragments arrived at the same time, or perhaps by different routes. Nor did it ever have a backing.

The fragments were kept in our museum at the Black Gate, and the part-replica was created for the new Museum of Antiquities in 1960. It has been on display, there and in the Great North Museum, ever since.

Howard Cleeve



The part-replica Tribley Shield on display, Great North Museum: Hancock, from the SANT collection

RECENT MEETINGS AND EVENTS

November 2021

Our past president Professor David Breeze spoke on the planning, surveying and building of Hadrian's Wall. This was our Horsley



Hadrian's head on a coin in our collection

Memorial Lecture, and he explained that John Horsley (1684–1732) was commemorated because in 1732 he had published *Britannia Romana*, the first comprehensive and systematic description of the Wall. (A facsimile edition was published by Frank Graham in 1974). Horsley had made careful measurements, though not all of these were completely accurate, and subsequent authors such as David Woolliscroft had taken the research much further.

David broke down the process of creating the Wall into a series of stages. The early decisions to build the Wall, where in the north it should go, and its general line, were high-level decisions to be taken by the emperor himself. There were already military installations on what became the line of the Wall, but it was decided to build it in front of the older forts, rather than incorporating them.

Once the position in the Tyne–Solway gap had been decided, decisions could generally be taken at a much lower level. The line of the Wall was surveyed from the ends inwards, with the milecastles and turrets determined as a separate exercise, and probably marked out eastwards from the North Tyne. Hadrian's visit in 122 offered the opportunity to improve the design.

The Stone Wall east of the North Tyne was then divided into five-mile lengths, with each length assigned to a different legion. There was some discretion for officers to move the wall, milecastles and turrets for practical reasons, for example taking account of watercourses and sightlines. Each legion was able to design its own milecastles and turrets, leading to many small differences.

It was a highly complicated engineering project, David concluded, but there was no sign that it was undertaken under pressure, nor that the army paid any attention to the enemy; in any case, it was completely in command of the field.

David can be contacted on davidbreeze@hotmail.co.uk.

Winter Walk

Our Winter Walk in mid-January 2022 explored what remains of the area that pioneering woman surgeon Ruth Nicholson (1884–1963) would have known. It began beside the plaque recently erected by the City Council in Kenilworth Road where she had lived in her twenties. As explained by our walk leader Judith Green, this is one of the few patches of nineteenth century housing which is left in the area.

Ruth Nicholson's father was the Vicar of St Stephen's Church in Low Elswick, a building of which now only the spire remains. In 1904 she became a student – the only woman in her class – at the College of Medicine in Newcastle, then part of Durham University. She then worked in Newcastle Dispensary, before moving to Edinburgh where she worked with Dr Elsie Inglis, founder of the Scottish Women's Hospitals. When the First World War broke out, she was accepted as a field surgeon by the War Office, but the doctor in charge of the unit that she was sent to join refused to have a woman doctor. Instead, she joined Elsie Inglis as second-in-command of the Scottish Women's Hospital Unit at Royaumont, staying there until its closure until 1919.

She had a distinguished career in medicine after the war, and was a founding member and one of the first Fellows of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. She was, according to the College of Midwives, 'one of the foremost medical women in the North of England'. She finally retired to Devon in 1945, but members of the Nicholson family remain in Newcastle, and have done much research into her life.

January 2022

Past president Lindsay Allason-Jones' talk was about *A Scandalous Trough and other tales of Romano-British Sculpture*. Lindsay has spent much of the past twelve years working on the *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani*, an international effort to catalogue all the sculpture of the Roman world. Her remit was to cover sculpture in over 6,000 square miles of Northern Britain, including Northumberland south of the Stanegate, parts of Tyne and Wear, County Durham, Cumbria, and modern Lancashire. Derbyshire was also included, having been left out of previous sections.

The work involved not only researching, tracking down, and describing sculptures, but also co-ordinating with other members of a team to photograph and scan the pieces. It meant climbing ladders, scrambling around under staircases, squeezing behind exhibits in museums, and in one case waiting for a Cumbria piggery to be empty of pigs, so that she could get in and have a look. Some stones were newly discovered, while lost ones were re-discovered. Lindsay's years of making local contacts stood her in good stead. For example, archaeologists had searched in vain since 1970 for an altar, possibly to Minerva, originally from Burrow Walls near Workington, but she tracked it down through friends of friends of friends. Others were hidden in plain sight; Derbyshire Archaeological Society had assured her that there was no Roman sculpture in their county, but she had found several unrecognised examples in museums and private properties.



The Ravenglass Venus, picture courtesy Lindsay Allason-Jones

Early antiquarians might take a sculpture along to a dinner party, as a gift to the hosts when we might take a bottle or a bunch of flowers. One altar was given to Mussolini in 1935, and remains even now in an Italian museum. The 'scandalous trough' of Lindsay's title was an altar in the parish church at Lund, with three (probable) mother goddesses on one side, and three scantily-dressed dancing females on the other. It had shocked the church elders in the seventeenth century, so that there had been serious disquiet when it was placed in the church as its font.

Lindsay can be contacted at lindsay.allason-jones@newcastle.ac.uk

February 2022

Daniel Riddell of Northumbria University spoke about German and Scandinavian merchants in Newcastle between 1860 and 1920, the subject of his thesis. Historically, he explained, there had been good connections between Newcastle and the Baltic ports, but few foreign-born merchants settled here. By the later nineteenth century, however, there were large groups of North Germans, Danes, and other Scandinavians. Family connections were hugely important. Young men would follow relatives who were already established in offices in Newcastle, and finance for start-ups also came from relatives, including women.



The entrance to the Steenberg warehouse on Newcastle Quayside, picture Sue Ward

The expatriates required both local and international contacts to be able to carry out their business. They were able to develop British ties through marriage and employment, with an element of integration both necessary to this process, and being caused by it. They would be accepted as useful members of the business community because of their language skills and international networks. At the same time, many had strong contacts with co-ethno-religionists, in the local branches of their national Lutheran churches.

Most naturalised as citizens, and a majority married British spouses, took part in local societies, and hired at least some British servants. At the same time, they maintained bastions of their culture, faith and language in ethnic churches and clubs. Some level of integration was necessary to become accepted as part of the Newcastle community, but the mere maintenance of middle-class norms of respectability and domesticity was sometimes enough. They did not form separate geographical communities, but lived in the type of houses, and the areas, appropriate to their status.

Some became very important, like the German ironmaster, Henry Bolckow, the first Mayor and MP for Middlesbrough. The Dane Christian Allhusen owned Newcastle Chemical Company and was a Gateshead councillor, while his fellow-countryman Andrew Andersen was mayor of Newcastle in 1903. Much changed with the First World War, and there were few traces of the

Anglo-Baltic connections visible today, though there was still a German Lutheran Church (in Shieldfield) and a warehouse entrance on the Quayside.

Daniel can be contacted at daniel.riddell@northumbria.ac.uk.

Museum Visit



Hazel's artwork from Birdoswald, picture courtesy Katie Mountain

March saw an after-hours visit for around twenty members to the Hadrian's Wall Gallery in the Great North Museum, to hear about *Reimagining the Sights and Sites of Hadrian's Wall*.

Keeper of Archaeology Andrew Parkin discussed the joint project between the Museum and WallCAP to show how the seven Roman altars on display in the Gallery might have looked originally. A local creative studio, NOVAK, had produced a very impressive animated light projection on the altars. Andrew explained how the altars would have been used and what they represented, and also the research behind these artistic interpretations. He pointed to Louisa Campbell's lecture to the Society on the Romans' use of paints and pigments (covered in *News Bulletin 67*, for December 2019). The light projections had been received enthusiastically by visitors, he said, and he hoped to do more for other Roman stonework in the Museum.

Hazel Barron-Cooper, from Newcastle University, showed artwork produced during her visit to the Birdoswald excavations in 2021. There she drew and painted 'en plein air' as the site was

slowly exposed, and had the exclusive opportunity to record some of the fascinating finds as they came fresh out of the earth. One project director had suggested that having an artist on site brought quite a civilised feel to the excavations! Hazel had also recorded the student archaeologists' thoughts on the excavations and incorporated their words into her paintings. She is also in the process of painting and recording on three other archaeological sites in the North East – Heavenfield, Beltingham and Brocolitia (with Coventina's Well).

After the talks there was a chance to look more closely at the paintings and altars, and both speakers were very happy to answer questions – until the lights went out at the Museum and we realised that was the signal to leave.

Katie Mountain

March 2022

Rob Collins, of Newcastle University, challenged preconceptions in *A most Egregious Misappropriation: The Wretched Coupling of Hadrian and Wall*. Rob's premise was that the combination of Hadrian and Wall has affected the whole field of Wall studies, and how the Wall is perceived more largely. He explained that he was basing his challenge of the status quo on the changing historic names for the Wall, alongside the development of Wall studies as a discipline. It was important to note that the Wall's post-Roman history was far longer than its Roman history.

Historic names for the Wall varied, but Roman sources refer to 'the Wall'. In the Middle Ages and early modern period, it became either 'Roman wall' or 'Picts Wall' (in variant spellings). Recognition of Hadrian as the builder only triumphed in the nineteenth century, through antiquarian John Hodgson. Francis Haverfield, at the end of that century, had emphasised proper archaeological investigation, but along with this had gone what Rob described as an 'idolatry of the original plan' and the building sequence. This was linked to the issue of the purpose of the Wall, and also subjugated other specialisms, such as those concentrating on artefacts or the environment.

Rob gave an analysis of articles in *Archaeologia Aeliana* about the Wall published between 2010 and 2020. There was a substantial bias in terms of page counts for papers concentrating on the first 20 years of the Wall, and within this group authors over the age of 40 were heavily represented, with a striking absence of gender diversity also.

He concluded with two 'what if' proposals: first, what if we rebranded the Wall – what would we call it? And second, what if there was a temporary stop to all research that concentrated on the Hadrianic era, instead focusing energy and resources to research challenges covering other periods?

Rob can be contacted on Robert.Collins@ncl.ac.uk

April 2022

Our scheduled speaker, Dr. Alexandra Makin, was unable to attend owing to family illness. Council member Marta Alberti stepped in to talk about *Hadrian's Wall: Exploring the Past to Protect its Future*, the forthcoming book edited by herself and fellow-member Katie Mountain.

She explained that a group of 'stakeholders' on Hadrian's Wall, including archaeologists, curators, re-enactors and walkers had come together to consider what would be the pressing issues and opportunities for them in the future.

The first of these issues was the effect of climate change, and especially soil erosion and peat degradation. Erosion had dramatic effects at Birdoswald, with a landslide into the Irthing which had prompted rescue excavations. At Vindolanda, an ancient peat bog and lake could be one of the reasons behind the Vallum diversion. [editor's note; see the article on Magna above.]

Considerations of climate change and land erosion fed into the question of how to make tourism sustainable and not harmful to the World Heritage Site. Contributors to the book included people managing the Hadrian's Wall Trail in the past and currently. The Trail passed through four different landscape types – urban, lowland, highland, and tidal – which even had different levels of sunshine – and so maintenance needs were different.

The volume also focused on the many opportunities, such as those presented by using digital techniques. These might mean that people could, for example, see the Wall's extraordinary finds in online exhibitions. Digitisation might allow for much more detailed cataloguing and analysis. Researchers would be able to work on the database of finds from anywhere in the world, without coming to Northumberland.

Opportunities for cooperation also arose from the prominent place Hadrian's Wall takes in the international Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage site.

In discussion, Graeme Stobbs pointed out that a complete gazetteer of who owned what land, right along the Wall had been drawn up when the Hadrian's Wall National Path was created, but it had never been updated since.

Marta can be contacted at martaalberti@vindolanda.com. The book, published by Archaeopress, is available on pre-publication offer at £24.50 + p&p until 30 June.



Part of the front cover of the new book, designed by illustrator Mark Richards

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 9 November 2022. The mailing date will be 7 December. All inserts must be delivered to the Membership Administrator by 30 November. If you want an insert included, please e-mail the Administrator on admin@newcastle-antiquaries 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.