

# NEWS BULLETIN



## THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

No.76 December 2023

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### ABOUT US

*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 over 600 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 worldclass 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.newcastleantiquaries.org.uk](http://www.newcastleantiquaries.org.uk) or contact us at SANT, Great North Museum: Hancock, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT, phone 0191 231 2700, email [admin@newcastleantiquaries.org.uk](mailto:admin@newcastleantiquaries.org.uk).*

### EDITORIAL

As we enter the winter months, we can look back on a year of steady progress in the life of the Society, with the monthly meetings being nicely bedded-down in our old home at the Mining Institute, now known as the Common Room, and our excellent Activities team is adapting and evolving our wide-ranging programme of events in the aftermath of the lockdowns and in light of the increasing strains on the Society and its members by the ever-rising costs of doing business. Among the highlights were trips to visit the new *Ad Gefrin* museum and distillery (where we have museum objects on loan) and a walk by the riverside to view the industrial archaeology of Lemington, (see picture). Lemington Gut is currently undergoing a programme of redevelopment and regeneration, which requires the planning authority to ensure the heritage significance of the area is preserved, and promoted through active conservation and research the Society has written to Newcastle Council to voice our

concern that these important sites are managed sympathetically.

As we struggle with rising costs, Council has agreed to follow the Honorary Treasurer's advice to freeze the annual subscription cost to members and institutions, making the Society even better value for money, but encouraging us all to strive to keep costs down and look into ways of delivering our various services even more efficiently. One of innovations has been the launching of the new series of *Archaeologia Aeliana*, which have now been delivered, reducing the delay in publication date that accrued over the past couple of difficult years. I hope members like the new softback cover colour which marks the inauguration of the Sixth Series. It contains several excellent articles, including a major piece of scholarly research on Chesters Bridge by the late Paul Bidwell, which reminds us how much Wall Studies will miss Paul's technical skill, knowledge and wisdom.

David Heslop

## HOWARD CLEEVE, 8 MARCH 1946 – 17 JULY 2023

Howard Cleeve was SANT's Assistant Hon Librarian and a member of Council from 2014 until his sad death in July this year.

He was born and brought up in Bristol and had a degree in Chemistry from London University, and then a career in teaching and as an education officer. He and his wife Kate moved to Newcastle on his retirement twenty years ago. As Kate says, 'we appreciated its access to theatres, cultural societies and keep-fit activities as well as the countryside around and, of course, the friendliness of its people. It is where Howard found a second home in the Hancock Museum's library.'

Howard began volunteering in the library about 12 years ago. Until he was taken ill, he was working on the reorganising and boxing several thousand miscellaneous tracts. He also had the role of keeping tabs on books on loan, tactfully reminding borrowers when it was time to renew or return their books.

As a respite from this, Howard researched and wrote articles on some of the more interesting items in our library, which are available on our website. His article on the 1817 publication of Volume 1, Part 1 of *Archaeologia Aeliana* appeared, appropriately enough, as the first piece in Volume 46 of the 5th series, 200 years later.

More recently, he was working on a project to provide more details of some of the objects belonging to us in the Great North Museum, at three levels – a printed leaflet, short background summaries online, and longer carefully-researched explanations also online. This project is not complete and volunteers to take it over and finish it would be very welcome.

Our condolences to his wife Kate, who is also a SANT member, and to his family.

Sue Ward



Howard Cleeve: 1946–2023

## WEST ROAD PILLAE

In July 2023 four sandstone hypocaust pillars and fragments of Roman roof tile were recovered from a narrow service trench excavated in the south footpath of the West Road as it passes through the site of *Condercum* Roman Fort in Benwell. The roughly-hewn *pillae*, ranging in height between 0.59–0.66 m with upper surfaces averaging 0.26 by 0.21 m, were of a form known from other sites on the frontier, including Chesters and *Vindolanda*, narrow in the middle but bulging towards the base and capital ends. Within the same, localised find-spot numerous red-earthenware *tegulae* fragments were found within a dark silty deposit some 0.40 m below current footpath level. One carried graffito identified by Alex Croom as part of an *Ala I Asturians* tile stamp known from others at Benwell and South Shields. The position of the find-spot closely accords with that of similar remains noted in 1751–2 'about the time when the military road



The West Road pillae after cleaning (R Carlton)

leading to Carlisle was made', by Robert Shaftoe, then owner of the Benwell site, who recorded the outline of the fort and displayed particular interest in its water supply, also describing the different types of stone *pillae* used in hypocaust systems associated with the Commanding Officer's house and a set of baths uncovered some 250 m south-west of the fort. In the key to his Plan of *Condercum (Britannia Romana 89.3)* he records 'The visible Remains of a Roman Sudatory and near it a Spring,..from whence probably both this and the Hypocaust below were supplied with water..' The remains uncovered in July, 2023 undoubtedly relate to Shaftoe's earlier discovery and remind us of the rich potential for archaeological discovery in urban areas.

The Roman *pillae* were uncovered by the excavator, Mick Coates† whose significant but largely unrecognised contribution to the archaeology of the North-East is respectfully acknowledged.

Richard Carlton

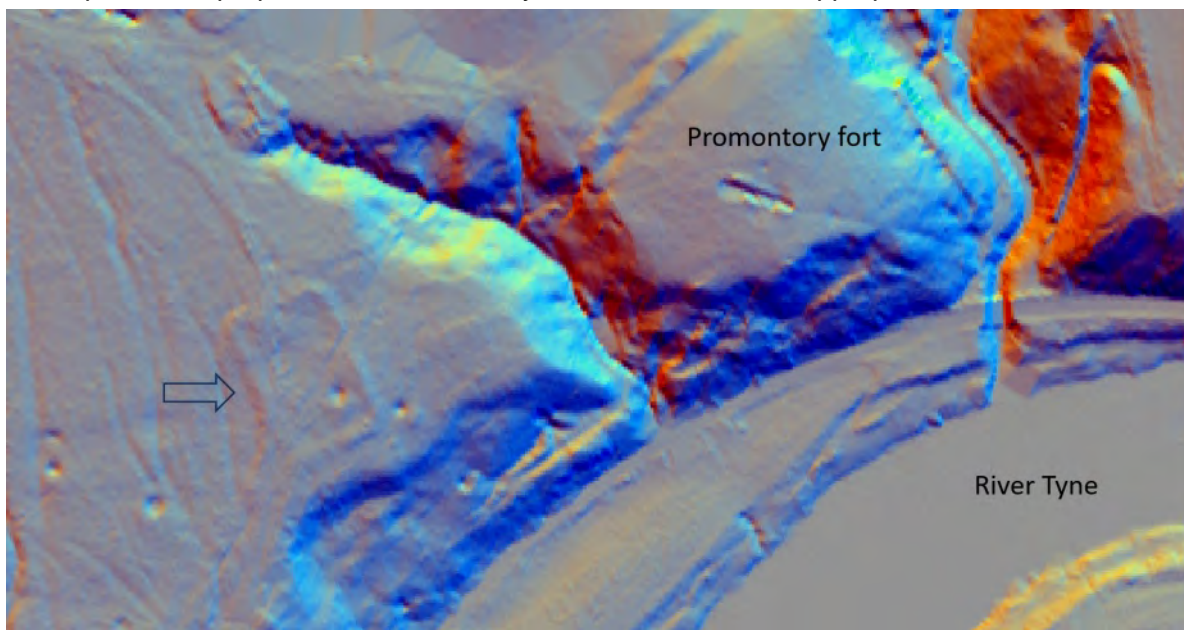
## A POSSIBLE ROMAN EARTHWORK AT HORSLEY WOOD, OVINGHAM

On new year's eve 2022, while examining LiDAR imagery for possible evidence of a Roman road to the east of Corbridge, the first author spotted a playing card-shaped enclosure on the north bank of the river Tyne at Horsley Wood, roughly midway between Ovingham and Wylam (centre point at NZ 10243 64797). Enquiry with the Heritage & Historical Environment Office of Northumberland County Council revealed that the earthwork is on record as 'a rectangular enclosure of uncertain date' (HER record number 28957). Ensuing email correspondence with the second author resulted in this short note.

Based on the LiDAR data (DEFRA 1m DTM, 2020), the enclosure measures about 38 by 57 m over the ramparts, the latter surviving as c. 5 m wide and 0.3 m high mounds, with a c. 0.2 m deep hollow in front. With rounded corners and proportions of approximately 2:3, the enclosure has prompted questions about its date and classification – an obvious possibility being that it is a Roman military installation. Confidence in addressing these questions is greatly constrained by the lack of access to this private land.

The position, 25 m above the river, would be an unusual choice for the Roman army and the contours suggest that the site may have been rather more vulnerable from the North than would be typical or desirable. Siting it on the East of the local burn, close to the curving earthworks of the undated promontory fort (AA, 5th ser 25, 145–6), would have been much better tactically, although that might have obscured whatever the builders might have been focusing on. The site, dropping some 7 m from North to South, directly overlooks a possible ford in the river Tyne.

The position close to the steep descent to the river is broadly similar to that of the fortlet at Longshaws (AA, 5th ser 40, 117–30), but the proportions there are very different, being more or less square. The proportions of the Horsley Wood enclosure are appropriate for a Roman



The promontory fort at Horsley Wood (arrowed)

camp, but the rampart seems to be more substantial than would be expected. In a fortlet there would normally be more in the way of a ditch, and certainly a berm the lack of this, and the rather irregular nature of the external ditch suggested by the LiDAR imagery more resemble the profile typical of camps.

The proportions and the apparent presence of rounded corners are encouraging in any wish to see this as a Roman site but there are no clear signs of gates, the best attribute in terms of classification. Nevertheless, the position of the later routes associated with the intensive industrial use of the land, may suggest that they were utilising breaks in the bank of the enclosure, a relationship often encountered in Roman camps.

Throp, Haltwhistle Burn, and Castle Hill, Boothby are all close to the line of the Stanegate, but Longshaws was not beside the Devil's Causeway, so the fact that Horsley Wood would be well away from any known early road does not bar it from being Roman. In terms of horizontal stratigraphy the enclosure is clearly earlier than the latest phase of these industrial remains (mainly coalmining). However, rectangular enclosures are not uncommon in industrial landscapes and this introduces further caution over date and classification.

*Erik Graafstal and Humphrey Welfare*

## SYCAMORE GAP AND ITS TREE

We have lost the tree in Sycamore Gap but we should remember that the most iconic section of Hadrian's Wall changes over time. In the second half of the 19th century, it was Walltown, usually looking east towards the Nine Nicks of Thirlwall, itself a name not popularised until the artists got to work. My paper for Paul Bidwell's Festschrift deals with half-a-dozen artists who drew or painted the wall at Walltown. Then quarrying started and Walltown fell from favour, to be only resuscitated after quarrying ended and Alan Sorrell, when seeking a location for his reconstruction drawing, realised how good that section of Wall was for the artist.

With quarrying damaging the Walltown sector, Cuddy's Crag became the iconic view, appearing on chocolate boxes, etc.

It was only Kevin Costner's film in 1991 that brought serious attention to Sycamore Gap, which until that point had no name, and that tree took over as the iconic view. I wonder how many times in the previous 25 years that I walked past the tree barely giving it a second glance.

So, my comfort to those mourning the loss of the tree is that another iconic view will come to the fore. Our challenge is to give consideration of where it might be. This is not an easy challenge.

*David Breeze*



*Sycamore Gap, 29/09/2023  
(Photograph: Tony Wilmott, Historic England)*

## JARROW WEARMOUTH

Research is underway on collections recovered from the Anglo-Saxon monastic site of Jarrow, first excavated by Professor Dame Rosemary Cramp in the mid to late 20th Century. As part of a collaborative PhD project supported by Newcastle University, Durham University, and Jarrow Hall the animal bones from the site are being re-examined. This research hopes to assess the impact of Viking raids and subsequent Scandinavian settlement on the animal husbandry practices at the site.

Radiocarbon dating is being utilised in order to securely assign contexts to the Mid-Saxon or Late-Saxon phases of the site, (previously categorised as Monastic and Abandonment phases). A generous research grant from the Society covered the cost of two of these dates, which focus



*Part of the sheep/goat pelvis showing cut marks. Image with the kind permission of Jarrow Hall and Jarrow PCC*

on reconstructing the diet at different phases of the site. A pelvis from either a sheep or goat was selected from under the foundations of Building D, generally believed to have been the monastic guest house. This bone shows cut marks, potentially from butchery or other human processes. Dating it will not only give a *terminus post quem* for the construction of Building D, but also contribute towards Bayesian modelling of the building's stratigraphy.

It is generally believed that Anglo-Saxon monastic houses followed the Benedictine Rule, indeed Bede himself refers to it. Analysis between different phases and of tightly dated deposits will allow for more secure conclusions to be drawn regarding how the diet changed over time. Building D in particular will provide a useful comparison to other areas of the site, potentially revealing if guests or others on the site consumed different animals.

*Megan Leake*

## LINBRIG 2018–2023



*Linbrig: South side of the south wall*

Since 2018, Coquetdale Community Archaeology has been working at Linbrig, a medieval settlement by the Coquet upstream from Alwinton.

Until 2022, excavations involved a 14th-century domestic building, a grain-drying kiln of the same period and ruins with medieval origins which were repurposed in the late 17th century, probably for stock management.

Every year CCA identified material that was ecclesiastical in origin – such as an impost block, voussoirs and a length of keel moulding. A highlight of 2022 was a piece of flashed ruby glass – an import from mainland Europe.

Research showed that Linbrig had once been on a medieval manor called Aldensheles, and that there were references in documents from 1317 to a chapel somewhere on that manor. Although most sources placed it about 1 km away, LiDAR suggested that the chapel might be represented by faint remains near the centre of the settlement.

A trench across these remains revealed two well-built side walls of a building. The north wall had a chamfered plinth, typical of a late-medieval ecclesiastical building. While the south wall, shown here, was mortar-bonded with better foundations than the north wall.

Between these walls lay parts of a flagstone floor with the remains of over 100 stone roofing tiles. There was little pottery, but about 30 rebated or chamfered stones, some of which originated in windows.

Parallel with the south wall, and just downhill from it, was another wall: less of this remained but like the north wall it had a chamfered plinth.

As a heavy building constructed on a slope with inadequate foundations it's likely that the original structure suffered from soil instability, and was rebuilt to be narrower and perhaps more stable. The exercise was probably fruitless: records suggest the chapel was sacked by the Scots between 1318 and 1325 and never rebuilt.

*David Jones*

## GAINFORD BRUCE

The Society has recently received the generous donation from Tim Sykes of the *Vanity Fair* caricature of Sir Gainsford Bruce.

*Vanity Fair* was a society magazine which was printed between 1868 and 1914. Each weekly issue included a caricature of a well-known figure, reproduced by the then new process of

chromolithography. On 28 May 1892, the person so depicted was Sir Gainsford Bruce.

Gainsford Bruce was born in 1835, the elder son of Rev. Dr. John Collingwood Bruce and his wife Charlotte (nee Gainsford). He was educated at Glasgow University and called to the bar in 1859, practicing mostly in Durham and Newcastle. He was appointed as Queen's Counsel in 1883, having married Sophia Jackson in 1868, a marriage which it was reported 'was unburdened by children'. He stood for Parliament a number of times before being returned as the member for Finsbury in 1888. In 1892 he was returned for Holburn division but had to resign almost immediately on being appointed a judge. He was knighted in 1892 and appointed a Privy Councillor in 1904, the year he had to take early retirement due to ill health. He spent the first year of his retirement writing his famous biography of his father. He died in 1912.

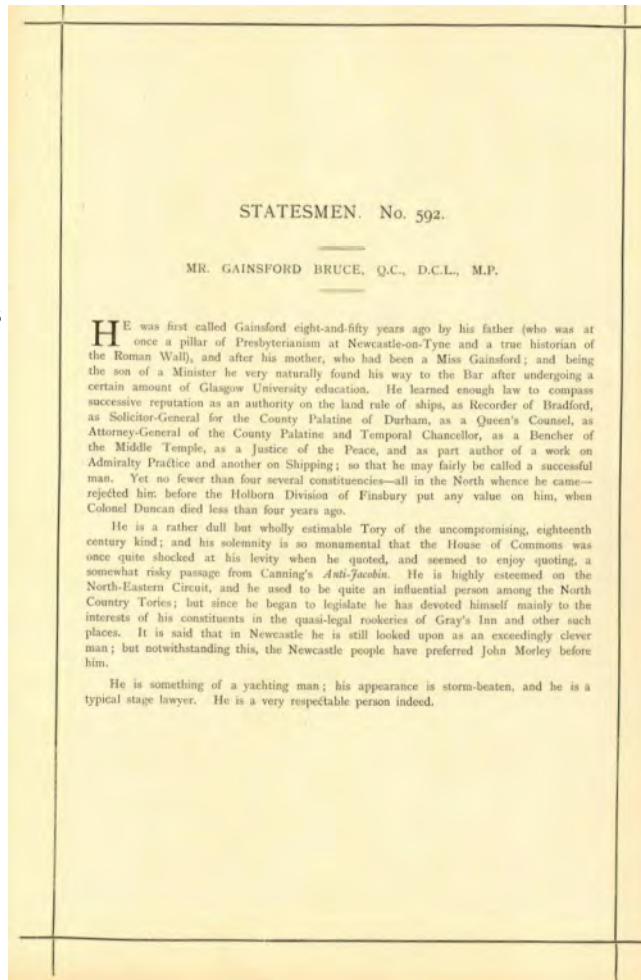
Whilst a barrister he specialised in shipping and equine law, the former probably due to his practice having started in Newcastle, the latter following a case when, as a young barrister, he prosecuted a man for obtaining a mare by deception at the Newcastle horse fair. Whilst sitting in court he was famed for always having a cup of tea brought to the bench at 3.30pm precisely.

In 1897 he founded the Inns of Court Mission, later to be called the Inns of Court Gainsford Trust, for the relief of poverty of those living within the vicinity of the Inns. Its headquarters housed, amongst other clubs, the Gainsford Amateur Boxing Club. As a result of Covid, the Trust has now disbanded, and its assets transferred to the Barristers Benevolent Fund

*The Times* offered the opinion that Gainsford Bruce was neither a brilliant man, nor a profound lawyer, but he was a sound judge with 'an earnest desire to do right and [with] unflinching courtesy'.

If you happen to be in the robing room of Durham Crown Court, his name, written in pencil in his own hand, is still clearly visible on the door of his old locker.

*Lindsay Allason-Jones*



## THOMAS HEPBURN REMEMBERED

Each autumn, the annual Thomas Hepburn memorial service takes place at St Mary's Church, Heworth, Gateshead. Hepburn, who is buried in St Mary's Churchyard, was the pioneer leader of mining trade unionism in the North-East in the early 19th Century. A man of courage and peaceful intent, he led the strikes of 1831 and 1832. Hepburn advocated improved education for miners and their children.

The 1831 strike succeeded in securing a reduction in the hours boys worked in the mines and the abolition of 'tommy shops'.



*A wreath is laid at the graveside of Thomas Hepburn in St Mary's Churchyard, Heworth, Gateshead. (Photograph: Dr Tom Yellowley)*

These were shops owned or controlled by their employers and the pitmen were forced to buy provisions from them, the money being deducted from their wages. This resulted in the miners losing out financially.

In 1832, the mine owners refused to employ members of Hepburn's union and this resulted in the strike of that year. The stoppage led to evictions of pitmen and their families from colliery-owned houses and defeat for the union. Hepburn was reduced to extreme poverty. He was eventually forced to give up union activity in order to obtain employment – at Felling Colliery.

The annual memorial service is attended by former miners, their families, friends and well-wishers. Pitmen's banners are on display inside the church, adorning the walls and creating a colourful and thought-provoking backdrop. After the service they are carried outside to Hepburn's graveside where *Gresford*, the miners' anthem, is played by a brass band and wreaths are laid.

Hepburn's gravestone carries the words: 'Shorter hours and better education for miners.' A further inscription states that he led the 1832 strike with 'great forbearance and ability'.

Also buried in the churchyard are 91 men and boys who died in the Felling Colliery disaster of 1812. A 92nd victim was never found.

*Ken Smith*

## SUNDERLAND BEEFSTEAK CLUB

Phil Thirkell has drawn attention to the substantial collection of journals held in the Society's Library. Most journal articles are, of course, written by and for academic specialists. Inevitably, their broader appeal is likely to be limited. But many journals in the Society's collection actually have a much wider interest and their contents can be extremely entertaining and informative, especially if they refer to local personalities and events.

One example, concerns the 1909 edition of the *Sunderland Antiquary* and an account of the History of the Sunderland Beef-Steak Club, established in 1828. Voluntary associations of all types were a conspicuous feature of nineteenth century towns and cities, including social and dining clubs such as this. The Club was formed by John Kay, then landlord of the Golden Lion in Sunderland's High Street, famous for being the location of the assault on the Marquis of Londonderry by a mob. The club was select, consisting of 13 'town' members and 3 'country' members but 'strangers' could be introduced to the club as guests. In June 1828, Mr Richard Grainger was invited. The Club later appears to have moved to Fawcett Street but then also to have met in private residences. The President for many years was Sir Cuthbert Sharp. Members had to 'be at Table at 5 o'clock precisely' and was normally 'Soup or broth, fish, beef steaks or beef steak pie.' Wines were to consist of 'port and sherry, the allowance in the proportion of two bottles for three persons.' No doubt conversation grew more animated as the evening progressed.

Although the main function of our journal collection is to report on the latest academic research, time spent browsing through early editions can not only be entertaining but also give a brief glimpse into social and cultural life in the past.

*Mike Barke*

## MURDER CLEUGH – WHAT MURDER?



Tucked away in the Cheviot Hills, some five miles north-west of Alwinton, a modest stream flows through a small wooded ravine to join the Usway Burn. The ravine is called Murder Cleugh (Grid Reference NT8613), and anyone approaching it with trepidation or curiosity will be intrigued to see from a memorial stone raised there in recent times that 'Here in 1610 Robert Lumsden killed Isabella Sudden'. Further, disturbing, details of this crime have been found by David Jones in the Northumberland quarter sessions records for July 1610 (*The Old Tracks through the Cheviots*, 2018, p. 71): 'Robert Lumsden of Horsholes, "Scotchman" at Oswaiford, murdered Isabella

Sudden f. of Oswayford, with stones worth 1d, struck against her stomach so that she languished and died on 28 July'. Further records over several years reveal evidence of Lumsden's violence and adultery, though he gets away with very light penalties.

The curious thing, though, is that the brutal killing of Isabella Sudden cannot be the reason for Murder Cleugh's name, not so much because the farmstead of Uswayford stands a mile upstream, but because the cleugh already had this name in 1542. Within the post-Dissolution Border Survey, 'the murder cleghe, the well clewgh' appear in a list of 'hoopes, graynes & valleys' in Kidland, among the former lands of Newminster Abbey, and the ordering of the list and the location of Well Cleugh leave no doubt that *this* Murder Cleugh is meant – not the tiny, remote one up near the border at NT8817, also in Kidland. The 1861 Ordnance Survey Name Book for Kidland (at <[namebooks.org.uk](http://namebooks.org.uk)>) merely states 'Origin of this name unknown' for both Kidland examples, but three more Murder Cleuchs appear in Scottish Borders on modern Explorer maps and for these the OS Name Books (at <[scotlandspplaces.gov.uk](http://scotlandspplaces.gov.uk)>) record local explanations that may or may not be correct. The Murder Cleuch at NT4841 (Melrose) takes 'murder' in the most obvious sense: 'A small ravine across the middle of which, the drove road passes, and where – tis said – a murder was commit[ted] many years ago, to the west of Wooplaw Steading', but the others at least offer less horrible explanations than homicide. The one at NT8817 (Morebattle parish) is merely 'a rocky watercourse', but the one at NT3046 (Innerleithen parish) is explained first as 'owing to its rugged appearance' but then as 'owing to Sheep having been Smothered in a Snow drift' there.

Returning to Murder Cleugh near the Usway Burn, we have gone from apparent certainty about the origin of the name to complete uncertainty. We may never know whether it was the site of an earlier killing, or whether it is just that some cleughs, being narrow, secluded valleys, lent themselves to fear of danger and dark deeds.

*Diana Whaley*

## PERIODICALS IN THE SANT LIBRARY

Most members will be aware that in the Society's library at the Great North Museum: Hancock there is a complete set of *Archaeologia Aeliana* from the first volume published in 1822 and the *Proceedings*, produced between 1855 and 1956. What they may not realise is that the library also holds journals, transactions, and other publications of over 150 societies and organisations. These have been donated, purchased and exchanged and cover the history and archaeology of counties and regions of the UK and Ireland as well as some overseas societies.

The library holds journals and proceedings for large international societies such as the *Societies of Antiquaries* for both London and Scotland, and the *Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*. The publications of societies covering many counties are held including: Birmingham & Warwickshire, Sussex, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Suffolk, to name just a few.

The collection is strong on local societies, including the *Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, the *Sunderland Antiquarian Society*, and the *Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*. Some smaller local history societies have, over the years, published some interesting bulletins, not least the now, unfortunately, discontinued *Association of Northumberland Local History Societies* which produced *Tyne & Tweed* until 2016. Since 1991 *Hexham Local History Society* has produced an interesting annual journal of articles relating to the history of the town and surrounding 'shire'. In addition, there are a number of occasional publications such as those of the *Surtees Society*, the *Harleian Society*, the *English Place-Names Society*, and the *RCHM* volumes for England, Wales and Scotland.

The periodicals are not currently included on the library catalogue but a project to list all the holdings is well in hand and it is hoped that soon we will be able to include a listing of them all on the society's website. In the meantime, next time you visit the library, browse around the shelves behind the librarian's desk. You might be pleasantly surprised at what you find!

*Phil Thirkwell*

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

### May lecture

Barbara Crosbie spoke about Anne Fisher, '*Not Just a Printer's Wife*'. She explained that Anne



Image Courtesy of Newcastle City Library

was an innovative teacher and author who established a printing business with her husband in eighteenth-century Newcastle. After her death, it was said that she would be 'respectfully mentioned to all succeeding Generations', but in fact she had been largely forgotten until recently. She was an exceptional woman, but looking at her life gave valuable insights into the experience of all women at the time. The subordinate legal status of married women meant that they could not enter into contracts in their own right, so that their business life was conducted in their husbands' names.

However, Anne Fisher left considerable evidence of her life. Born in Cumberland in 1719, by the age of 26 she had moved to Newcastle, and in 1745 she issued her *New Grammar*, designed for use in all types of school. Her preface waded into controversies about the teaching of English grammar, which until then had been seen largely as an adjunct to the learning of Latin, and so taught to wealthier boys. Fisher wanted it available to all, and recommended that children would learn more effectively if they enjoyed lessons, rather than having

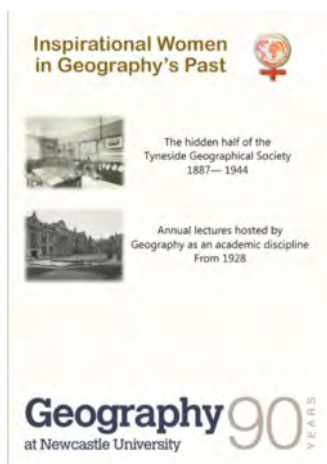
knowledge beaten into them. She ran a school for a time, and advertised evening classes for young ladies who could not attend during the day – working women, in other words.

In 1751 she married the printer Thomas Slack, and went on to have nine daughters, six of whom reached adulthood. She wrote other educational books, running to a total of 33 editions by the time she died. She also produced *The Ladies Memorandum Book*, which was published annually until 1805.

She worked with her husband in the family printing business, and together they established the *Chronicle*, the most radical of Newcastle's three weekly newspapers. The business was carried on by their daughter, Sarah Hodgson initially with her husband, and then in her own name between 1802 and 1822. Sarah printed the Antiquaries' early publications, among many other things.

Barbara can be contacted via [barbara.crosbie@durham.ac.uk](mailto:barbara.crosbie@durham.ac.uk)

## June lecture



Helen Jarvis, from Newcastle University talked about *Recovering Herstory: the Hidden Women in Geography at Newcastle*. She explained that although she was not a historian, she did have a commitment to social justice and bringing in a feminist perspective that was different from 'malestream' history. The Inspirational Women in Geography's Past project had begun in March 2018, to commemorate 90 years of the Geography Department at Newcastle University, with research carried out by student Grace Heavey.

The Tyneside Geographical Society (TGS) had been founded in 1887 by a group of businessmen. TGS had its own premises in St Mary's Place, and a series of regular lectures. Its Visitors' Book had survived, and included the signatures of prominent individuals such as Churchill and Ernest Shackleton, but also those of a number of women explorers whose achievements had been largely forgotten.

For example in 1897 there were lectures from American authoress and explorer May French Sheldon, and Josephine Diebitsch Peary. The latter was an Arctic explorer, who travelled alongside her husband Robert Peary on his Arctic explorations but had been overshadowed by him. Mary Sheepshanks, who lectured about her travels in Peru in 1925, was an active campaigner for women's suffrage, unlike the more famous Gertrude Bell who was strongly anti-suffrage.

Turning to Newcastle University (then Armstrong College), Helen explained that the Geography Department had been founded in 1928, with 22-year-old Margaret Tyrrell holding the fort for the first 18 months. She had never lectured before, but now found herself teaching all the courses that were not being taught by geology lecturers, and with a seat on the University Senate. The following year, Henry Daysh arrived from London University to head the Department. He was very respectful of her work, but it was sad to see that while he was

commemorated by a building on the University campus, her name was nowhere to be seen.

Helen Jarvis can be contacted on [helen.jarvis@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:helen.jarvis@newcastle.ac.uk). The Tyneside Geographical Society's Visitors Book is available on <https://tinyurl.com/3fz5zk89>. A copy of the booklet about the Inspirational Women project, published 2018, is in our library.

### August Meeting

Scott Vance talked about *Hadrian's Wall in urban Newcastle – excavating Turret 3a*. He explained that the site was on Crawhall Road, opposite the Red Barns housing estate and on the line of Hadrian's Wall. Trial trenching in 2015 had found Roman remains. As a result, the company Scott worked for, Pre-Construct Archaeology, was commissioned to expose the remains of Hadrian's Wall before a developer could build on it. They were only allowed to excavate the ditch north of the Wall and any obstacle pits in the berm. The Wall itself was to be hand-cleaned and mapped, so the development could be designed to avoid it.



Recording the Wall ditch, photo courtesy PCA

John Horsley when he made his way through Newcastle in 1732, had seen some very clear remains of the wall here, but later travellers found less and less. By 1863, John Collingwood Bruce could only say that 'If the pilgrim can detect any traces of the Wall or fosse... he will be fortunate'. Since then, there had been no fewer than 26 investigations in the immediate area.

Scott and his PCA colleagues had had to work round a very large heap of demolition rubble. They found the north wall of Turret 3a, and some of the east and west walls, but could not find the southern one, although as most turrets on the Wall are square they could infer where this was.

It had turned out to be around 300 metres north-east of where it might have been expected to be, and also about twice the usual size. Its position at the top of the Ouseburn valley meant that from the top, soldiers could have seen right across to Pons Aelius on one side, and along two navigable stretches of the Tyne on the other. It was well-protected, with 'cippi' pits (filled with pointed sticks or thorny branches) on the berm, and a wide ditch. Sadly, there were no remains by which any of the Roman history could be dated, though there was plenty of material from the post-medieval history.

Scott can be contacted on [scottjamesvance@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:scottjamesvance@hotmail.co.uk). The recording of his talk is on our YouTube channel, and there will be a lengthy article in *Archaeologia Aeliana* in due course – meanwhile, there is a much shorter feature article in *Current Archaeology* issue 400.

### September meeting

Professor Michelle Brown spoke about *Bede and the Theory of Everything*, the title of her latest book. Bede, she said, was the only Church Father to come from British Isles. We knew about him from an autobiographical note at the end of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. He was born 673, and was entrusted as a little boy of 7 to the new Northumbrian twin monastery of Wearmouth and Jarrow. There he would have seen pictures brought back from Rome by Benedict Biscop and Abbot Coelfrid, and many books, some of them possibly from the great library of the sixth-century scholar Cassiodorus, his *Vivarium*.



A 12th Century Manuscript of the Venerable Bede writing his *Ecclesiastical History of the English people* (Public Domain: Wikimedia Commons)

Throughout his life, Bede's guiding principle, Michelle said, was to look for harmony and unity, acknowledging differences and anomalies, but with an integrated experience of faith, art and science. He had intervened in the doctrinal controversy tearing the church apart, on the nature of Christ. The human and divine elements were indivisible, he said, because the human nature always obeyed the divine will. This view had been fed into the discussions of the Council of Hatfield held in 680, and from thence into the great Ecumenical Council of Constantinople.

He could be said to have invented the footnote, after being accused by Wilfrid's coterie of the heresy of innovation, and

from then on had put the initials of his source in the margins of his texts, along with little lightning flashes – originally a Roman symbol – to show when he was quoting.

Michelle suggested that she had identified Bede's own handwriting, in the *Codex Amiatinus*. Greek letters in the margins of certain sections suggested his work, as did the colophon at the end of the preface to the Book of Kings (f 221r, column 1). In the 1950s, she added the scribe Aldred had preserved Bede's 'lost' translation of St John's Gospel, by writing it into the pages of the Lindisfarne Gospels. He was asserting the primacy of Old English, at a time when it was probably no longer the first language of the aristocracy of the Northern Danelaw.

Michelle's book is available from Reaktion Books, at £16.95, and the recording of her talk is on our website (click on the YouTube icon on the sidebar for this and other recordings on our channel). She can be contacted on [michelle.brown@sas.ac.uk](mailto:michelle.brown@sas.ac.uk).

### October meeting

Pam Graves, from Durham University, spoke on *'The Way, the Word and the Water'*. She explained that the title came from an early 18th century proverb about Newcastle, where 'the ministers are maintained, the streets pav'd, and the Conduits kept up, at the publick charge of the Town'. She was concentrating on The Word, and the links between Puritan ideology and the way the merchant houses in Sandhill, numbers 32–44, had been re-fronted with large glass windows during the 1650s. The houses were inhabited by a close-knit group of wealthy Puritan merchants, part of the new oligarchy which had displaced the old and was ruling the town under the Commonwealth.

The Puritans' preferred translation of scripture was the 1560 Geneva Bible, which came with extensive marginal notes explaining terms and concepts. In particular, Psalm 122 referred to 'a city that is at unity with itself', and the marginal note said that, 'by ye artificial ioning & beautie of the houses, he meaneth ye concord & love yt was betwene the citizens'.

by Dr Robert Jenison (1584?–1652), son of former Mayor Ralph Jenison, held the role of 'lecturer' (that is, preacher) at All Saints Church, had developed this idea. His 1630 book of sermons, *The Cities Safetie*, addressed the role of magistrates and ministers in creating a godly town, requiring each to fulfil the role of watchman at the city gate. The watchmen set on the walls of Jerusalem were to watch 'not so much for, as over our soules'. The windows of the Sandhill houses would have allowed a very good view of goings-on in the street, the new Guildhall opposite (completed 1655) and indeed the neighbours. In external decoration, the fluting on the pilasters between the windows of the houses had pointed heads and tassles, like a watchman's staff or even more, like an Alderman's staff of office.

This close-knit group, Pam concluded, had assumed the role of moral and spiritual guardians of the town, and their house-designs were meant to show that they were maintaining a real watch over townspeople's behaviour. What might they have produced if they had not lost power with the fall of the Commonwealth?

Pam can be contacted at [c.p.graves@durham.ac.uk](mailto:c.p.graves@durham.ac.uk). A recording is on our YouTube channel.

## REMEMBERING ROSEMARY

The writing of obituaries is a genre in its own right. The deceased has to be correctly represented, if necessary, warts and all (read Tam Dalyell's obituaries in *The Independent*). That is the formal element and in it the personality has to shine through. But there is another personal element, that of the writer. Some personal anecdotes help relieve the citation of the career and its achievements. When Dave Heslop got in touch to ask me to write a short (300 word), obituary of Rosemary Cramp for the *News Bulletin* at a few hours notice, it was easy to check my memory against *Wikipedia*, but which anecdotes – which personal elements – to include? I was quick to realise that I wanted to emphasise that she had not only been president of the Society of Antiquaries of London, but the most northerly president to date, a tick for the north as well as Rosemary in my view. *Wikipedia* mentioned her excavation on a Roman villa on her family farm. In 1966, I joined Rosemary's team when she undertook a brief excavation at Catterick. She had hoped that it would reveal Anglo-Saxon remains, but they were Roman. It seemed to me appropriate to mention that the great Anglo-Saxon archaeologists had worked on 2 Roman sites, but there was a deeper reason. I was present that March, when we had to clear the snow out of the trench each morning, observing Barbara Harbottle clean the sides of the trench with exquisite care, and watch the results of Harold Wilson's landslide victory in the Officers' Mess in Catterick Camp, a somewhat surreal experience. So, in this brief anecdote, there was something for Rosemary and something for me, in mentioning this little-known event

which matches my two seasons at Jarrow in my memories of my second university teacher who, in 1962, told me to buy *Beowulf*, and I still have it.

*David Breeze*

## LIBRARY UPDATE

It has been great to welcome members new and old to the Library over these past few months. University students are back too, and finding the SANT collection of interest.

We've had lots of subjects looked into: from Armstrong's arms and Swan's lights to excavation plans at South Shields and Council for British Archaeology bulletins. We're always stumbling upon little treasures to keep our interests running high. With that in mind, and with the season nearly upon us, allow me to share this old New Year's custom as written in *In the Troublesome Times: The Cambo Women's Institute Book of 1922*:

Ton-night, to-night is old year's night,  
To-morrow is New Year's Day.  
Get up, old wives, and shake your feathers.  
And don't you think that we are old beggars.  
We are only girls and boys come out to play,  
Please give us a piece and we'll away.  
We haven't come to your house to beg or to borrow,  
But we've come to your house to wash away all sorrow,  
With our pockets full of money and ourselves full of cheer  
I wish you've had a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.  
We in the Library wish you all a very merry Christmas and New Year, when it comes!

The Library has a new-look website, which sets out how you can use the space as well as featuring some highlights from the collections. Take a look: <https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/collections/library-and-archives>. Please check the website in December for our Christmas closure dates.

*Rebecca Knight*

*Library Co-ordinator, Great North Museum: Hancock Library*

## A NOTE FROM THE NEW EDITOR

*This is my second stab at producing the Bulletin, and I am happy to report that we are receiving a wide range of items which go some way to reflect the scope and variety of the Society's activities. As ever, I entreat you to think about how you could contribute to the mix, and send me text and an illustration by the next deadline, which will be 1st of May, 2024. It is very helpful if the contribution is no more than 300 words long, and that there are no copyright problems with the illustration. My e-mail is [david@new-visions.co.uk](mailto:david@new-visions.co.uk)*

*The Society is still looking for a new, permanent editor for the News Bulletin. I can assure the hesitant that it is not an arduous or very time-consuming task, and that it enables the editor to keep a finger on the pulse of the life of the Society. I am very happy to co-edit the next edition, to help ease the transition and show the new editor the ropes.*

*The next mailing date will be 5th Jun, 2024, and any inserts for inclusion in the mailing must be delivered to the Membership Administrator at least 7 days before. If you want an insert included, please email the Administrator on [admin@newcastleantiquaries.org.uk](mailto:admin@newcastleantiquaries.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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