

NEWS BULLETIN



THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

No.78 December 2024

CONTENTS

President's Address.....	1
Our New Secretary.....	2
An Important Acquisition.....	2
Lemington Gut.....	3
Cullercoats Watch House.....	4
Blackett Street Name.....	4
Amendments to Major Sanderson's War.....	5
Durham Day: Croxdale Hall and Brancepeth Castle Visit.....	5
Our City, Our County. An Anthology.....	6
The Rocks at the Edge of Empire.....	7
Monthly Meetings.....	7
Notes from the Library.....	10
Professor Norman McCord, 1930–2024.....	11
Editorial.....	12

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 North East 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.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk or contact us at SANT, Great North Museum: Hancock, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT, phone 0191 231 2700, email admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

It is good to be writing the winter '24 Presidential Address immediately after our Annual Public Lecture, on recent work at Birdoswald, which saw a record attendance for a monthly meeting in recent years of over 190, with a further 31 attendees on Zoom. It is equally heartening to see evidence that our forthcoming move to the Herschel building lecture theatres will not deter members and potential members from attending our monthly meetings, and we can use the proximity to the University to spur our efforts to increase membership among students, post-graduates and staff. We trust that our forthcoming free Conference at the University (morning of 1st February) on exciting new research will generate a high level of interest.

On the down side, we are facing above-inflation increases for many of our fixed costs and commitments. Overall membership has not recovered from the Covid downturn, and the move from the old-fashioned direct debit to the new subscription payment system. Over the next few years we must constantly review our operations, and be innovative about how we

provide the best range of member benefits, in line with our charitable aims, as befits the oldest provincial archaeological society in the country. We have deferred any increase in Society subscriptions for several years and will do so again in 2025, but we cannot sustain long-term losses to our finances and difficult decisions lie ahead. On a more positive note, I thank Ian Jackson for his very generous offer to donate the royalties from his new book *Rocks at the Edge of Empire* to the Society, so please add this to your Christmas list.

Many of you will have heard the sad news of the passing of our oldest member, Norman McCord. We have a short notice in this bulletin, and we will provide a fuller obituary in *Archaeologia Aeliana*.

Finally, we are seeking volunteers who can assist Irwin Thompson in the live streaming and recording of our monthly lectures, Full training will be given. I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

David Heslop

SHOES TO FILL: OUR NEW SECRETARY

As the recently appointed Hon. Secretary of the Society, I have a heightened sense of the weight of history upon my shoulders – be it the 200 year history of this illustrious Society or the shorter, yet immensely valuable, twenty-eight year tenure of my predecessor, Nick Hodgson. The challenge? To affect as seamless a join in the discharge of the Secretarial role as I can muster.

Since completing 'A' levels at Kings Priory School in Tynemouth, I have undertaken voluntary roles in conservation, curation and archaeology with both English Heritage and the National Trust. I have also supported Heritage Open Days and currently work part-time for Tyne and Wear Archives & Museums. My passion is Roman archaeology, history and literature – alongside my undergraduate studies in the Classics with the OU, I study Latin in my own time.

Prior to my appointment, I volunteered in the SANT library sifting through our substantial collection of valuable maps and engravings, a project of seemingly indeterminate duration which has confirmed to me the breadth of SANT's interests beyond archaeology. Indeed, alongside my own subject interests, it was my keenness to contribute to the preservation of such an important collection that prompted me to consider the Secretarial role within the Society.

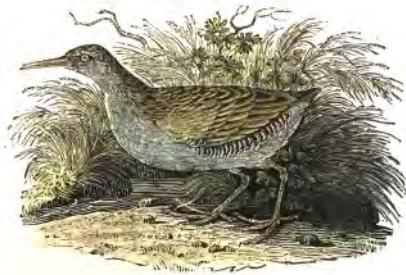
As an incumbent of tender years, I have a clear sense of 'shoes to fill' and am tentative yet undaunted. Importantly, I understand the responsibility associated with this role and I am fortunate to be afforded substantial support from Nick Hodgson. Indeed, I take this opportunity to thank him for supporting my transition, and for providing me with very useful guidance. I would also like to thank David Heslop for his endorsement, and Mike Barke for helping to instil the confidence I needed to accept this important role.

Charles Dodds



AN IMPORTANT ACQUISITION

The Natural History Society of Northumbria has recently received an important gift of Bewick material from the Friends of National Libraries (F.N.L.). There are only 28 books, but they include early (1779 and 1784) editions of *Fables*, large-paper copies of *Quadrupeds* and *British Birds*, books owned (and coloured) by Thomas Bewick and his family and others, and about 50 drawings and watercolours. Among the books is a volume of 25 hand-coloured figures of Quadrupeds given by Thomas Bewick to his daughter Isabella as a New Year's gift in 1800. There is also a copy of *British Birds*, printed by Hodgson for use in the Bewick workshop and heavily used; later owned by Richard Wingate and with some of the figures coloured by him.



WATER RAIL.

BILCOCK, VELVET RUNNER, OR BROOK OUZEL.

(Rallus aquaticus, Lin.—Le Rale d'Eau, Buff.)

From *Bewick's British Birds*.
Reproduced by kind permission of
the Natural History Society of
Northumberland.

in *Bewick Bookplates* – a late harvest, a supplement to his 1999 work on the bookplates by Beilby and Bewick.

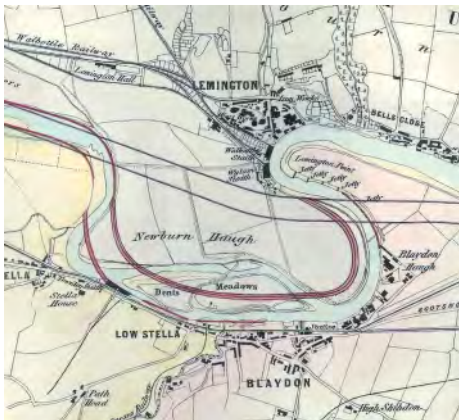
Les Jessop

The books had been originally assembled in the late 1800s by William Law (1836–1901), a mill owner from near Oldham who brought together an exceptional library that had the Brontës at its heart but also included significant items of Jane Austen, Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and others. William Law bought material from the Newcastle bookseller Robert Robinson, but also got drawings from Thomas's daughters. Various material was added to the books, including dozens of pencil sketches and watercolours. One particular highlight is a sketch of the Chillingham Bull and Cow, intended to be worked up as a copper engraving but rejected in place of the famous woodcut.

In 2021 the F.N.L. raised £15.3 million to buy the collection and place the books in publicly accessible libraries. Half of the sum was donated by Sir Leonard Blavatnik.

The collection is rich in material for research, already some of the drawings have been used by Nigel Tattersfield

LEMINGTON GUT



Lemington. Detail of J.T.W. Bell's Map of the River Tyne, undated but 1852-53, showing proposals for the river course by W.A. Brooks (red) and J.M. Rendel (purple). Source: Northumberland Estates.

The glassworks cone is the most obvious remnant of the Lemington area's industrial heritage. But Lemington has an industrial history that stretches back to the eighteenth century if not longer, and that history has left marks on the landscape that survive, but are endangered, not least because they are so little known.

The glassworks at Lemington opened in 1787 followed in 1797 by the Tyne Iron Works, The latter's Grade II listed Manager's House still stands but is inaccessible to the public and is in a parlous state. Other remnants still exist, all inaccessible and hidden by undergrowth. In recent years the remains of a furnace were demolished to build a supermarket.

Both glassworks and ironworks were served by a quay along Lemington Gut, which until the later realignment of the Tyne formed the main channel of the river. The area can be seen from Newburn Haugh to its south. Impressive sandstone quay walls still have iron mooring chains and two large apertures, possibly to provide ventilation for the nearby ironworks furnaces. Some wooden structures survive in the Gut itself. One is the remnant of coaling staithe but has deteriorated considerably in recent decades. A further structure formed part of a footbridge linking Lemington to Newburn Haugh, erected to allow workers to reach a WWI explosives factory erected on the Haugh by Armstrongs.

Apart from the GII listing of the cone and the manager's house, none of this has statutory protection. Members of local history groups, including John Taberham of the St James History and Environment Group and Andrew Curtis of the Heddon on the Wall LHS are campaigning for protection of the area's historic heritage. As Conservation Officer of SANT, I have been doing my best to help them, particularly by bringing the riches of this area to wider attention.

John Griffiths

CULLERCOATS WATCH HOUSE

Built in 1879, Cullercoats Watch House stands as an iconic landmark on a cliff top facing the worst of the North-East region's weather. Intended as a haven and lookout for fishermen, their families, and the volunteer life brigade's second established station, the building, superseded by the RNLI station, fell into disrepair and disuse. With no public funding, a Charity Commission registered charitable trust took over ownership of the building in the 2000's, its object being:

'To preserve for the benefit of the people of North Tyneside and the nation at large, Cullercoats Watch House and its associated cultural history. To advance education and provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.'



Cullercoats Watch House. Photo: Colin Edwards

Lacking funds and with a diminishing membership, deterioration of the fabric of the building meant that the catslide roof, its main supporting timbers and external brickwork were in danger of collapse, its scissor beam vaulted roof was hidden by an ugly 1970's false ceiling, its internal structure was rotting through ingress of damp, and its array of mullioned windows were obscured by anachronistic kitchen units. Nevertheless, in under two years a reformed trustee board, committed volunteers, a flourishing membership, and our wider community have started to turn round the fortunes of this Grade II listed Victorian gem.

Despite the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and post covid issues, the campaign to save this much-loved building and create a heritage hub and community venue worthy of its cultural significance, has drawn massive support from all sections of our community. Events, activities, and successful funding bids have financed emergency underpinning to secure the roof, repair the stonework and conserve the building until further capital funding can be raised for full renovation (donations can be made to our Cullercoats Watch House 'justgiving' page).

Alicia R. Ward

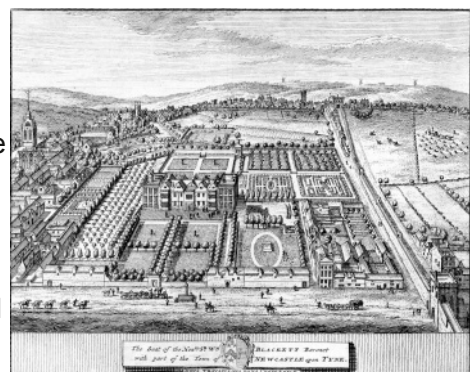
BLACKETT STREET NAME

Blackett Street is widely believed to be named after John Erasmus Blackett (JEB), four times mayor of Newcastle. Recent research, however, suggests that this is unlikely.

In 1824, about ten years before the construction of Grainger Town, Richard Grainger began building thirty-one houses in what was to become the thoroughfare of Blackett Street, formerly an unpaved street running along the northern section of the old town wall, west of Pilgrim Street. Adjacent to this section of the town wall was the vast former Blackett mansion, Grey Friars, owned by the Blackett family from 1675 to 1782.

Hutton's map of 1770 simply shows a linear open area, following the line of the wall. Early publications, including Eneas Mackenzie's 1827 *Historical Account of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, confirm that the 'street' was formerly a muddy lane, but none states that Blackett Street was named after John Erasmus Blackett. Intriguingly, Mackenzie gives the derivation of several other street names, but not that of Blackett Street. Indeed, the first publication attributing the name to John Erasmus Blackett appears to be *Men of Mark Twixt Tyne and Tweed*, by Richard Welford, published in 1894!

Evidence has now emerged from parish records and directories that the earlier street also bore the same name, at least from 1803, and probably at least as far back as the 1780s, when it was known as Blackett's Lane. Since the original Blackett Lane/Street ran alongside what was



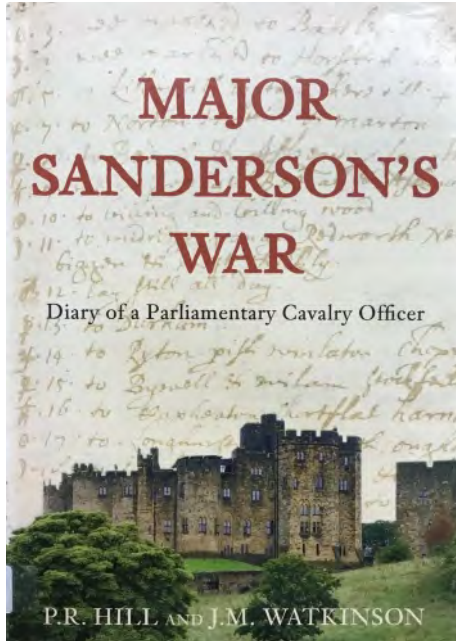
The Seat of the Hon. Wm. Blackett: Grey Friars (later Anderson Place). Source: Pieter van der Aa (1659 – 1733).

still then Grey Friars (later Anderson Place), it seems far more likely that the name was actually derived from the adjacent mansion and was retained after Blackett's Lane became Blackett Street and was then redeveloped by Richard Grainger in 1824.

For more details of the research please see www.theblacketts.com/node/210

Al Kirtley

AMENDMENTS TO MAJOR SANDERSON'S WAR, (P.R. HILL & J.M. WATKINSON, STROUD: SPELLMOUNT, 2008)



Front cover of *Major Sanderson's War*. By permission of the author, Jane Watkinson

Recent findings have suggested that amendments to the text of *Major Sanderson's War* (available in the SANT Library) should be made on pages 66 and 125. The book was based on the diary of a Parliamentary cavalry officer for 1648. The diary was exhibited at the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1919, written on an interleaved copy of William Lilly's *Merlini Anglici Ephemeris*.

In his manuscript diary for 1648 Major John Sanderson writes the following entry for 29th September:

*my Collonell with all his officers came to the lord
^Twedall^ yesters house at Bothomes. Capt: Lilburnes
& Capt: Bradfords Troopes quarterd in garuett*

þish y^e other foure troopes in Bothoms þish

A footnote in the transcript of the Diary published in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne* 3rd ser. IX, 1921, identified Bothoms as Abbey St Bathans, and 'garuett' is there transcribed as 'garnett'.

Having had access to the original manuscript, the authors Hill and Watkinson in their edition *Major Sanderson's War* (Stroud, 2008) accepted these versions

but were unable to identify 'garnett þish'. However, a recently purchased copy of Charles E. Green's *East Lothian* (Edinburgh 1907) includes an extract from Blaeu's map of 1654 showing Bothams near Yester, and an illustration of St Bothan's Church in the grounds of Yester House, near Gifford in East Lothian. This is clearly an entirely different location from Abbey St Bathans.

Furthermore, *The Minutes of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale 1648–1659* (Scottish History Society, 6th ser., 11, 2016) record 'garvett' as an early form of the name of Garvald, a village south east of Haddington in East Lothian. This makes it clear that all the troops were quartered in the same small area in the Eastern Borders of Scotland.

Jane Watkinson

DURHAM DAY: CROXDALE HALL AND BRANCEPETH CASTLE

On Sunday 9th June 28 members of the Society visited two historic sites near the city of Durham. Croxdale Hall has been owned by the Salvin family since 1402, and we were given an entertaining history of the family and his home by Mr Gerard Salvin. The ancient Croxdale Chapel, parts of which date to the 12th century, including a fine tympanum over the south door featuring a Tree of Jesse, was bought by the Salvins in 1845. Nearby is a huge Dutch barn, a reminder of the agricultural income of the family, and the Priest's House. The Salvins stayed loyal to the Catholic Church after the English Reformation. The Hall comprises an enclosed courtyard on the end of a peninsula above the River Wear. Behind a restrained exterior there is lavish plasterwork of the 1760s by the Italian stuccoist Giuseppe Cortese, and a private Catholic chapel of 1805. A picnic lunch was taken in the enclosed private gardens beside the Hall.

In the afternoon, we visited Brancepeth. St Brandon's Church was reborn phoenix-like after the disastrous fire in 1998 that incinerated the fine woodwork of the 1660s and is a wonderfully light, contemplative place. Nearby Brancepeth Castle hides its antiquity behind Georgian and Victorian alterations, but is one of the region's largest castles, with impressive medieval interiors in its cluster of towers. The owner Mr Hobbs recalled the illustrious ownership of the Nevilles, once the most powerful family in Durham and Yorkshire, before their Catholicism led to rebellion against Queen Elizabeth I in 1569 and the loss of their estates. Subsequently, the Castle was owned by the Russells, super-wealthy colliery owners, who remodelled the Castle in the 1820s to the designs of John Paterson of Edinburgh, and Anthony Salvin in the 1840s. The Castle was the Durham Light Infantry headquarters until after the Second World War, then bought by Margaret Dobson in 1978. Her daughter Revd Alison Hobbs and her family are restoring the Castle and opening it to visitors.



Brancepeth Castle. Photo: Richard Pears.

Richard Pears

OUR CITY, OUR COUNTY: AN ANTHOLOGY

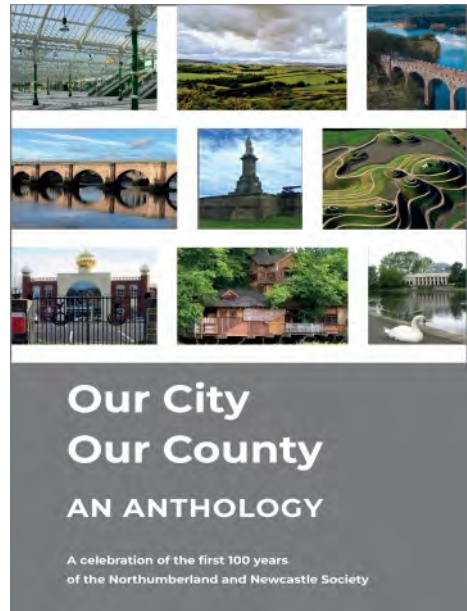
The Northumberland & Newcastle Society, having hit the respectable age of 100, decided to celebrate its history in a book which would also reflect current concerns and interests. The result is a well-illustrated compilation of personal views of Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland. In his Foreword, Matt Ridley remarks on the visitor appeal of our landscape, but adds 'fabulous as the beaches and hills of our region are, they would be greatly less alluring without man-made embellishments: Bamburgh without a castle, the Whin Sill without the Roman wall, the Tyne without bridges would all be much the poorer'. His point is borne out: we asked Society members for contributions about buildings, features (such as public sculpture) and landscapes, and it's noticeable that buildings and other man-made structures form by far the greater proportion of entries.

There are plenty of standard guide books already, so we hoped to direct readers away from the obvious much-travelled highway of architectural excellence, and onto the byways where less familiar treasures lie. Inevitably, many famous buildings are here, because people do have strong associations with them, and because it would be perverse to leave them out of a book representing our region. But most of all, we wanted contributors' stories, and they are a delight to read. The common theme is personal geography, our individual responses to the area in which we live, and the result is varied and illuminating, revealing the rich hinterland of personal and professional experience that supports our Society and enables it to contribute effectively on planning and conservation issues.

Our city, our county: an anthology: a celebration of the first 100 years of the Northumberland and Newcastle Society. The Society, 2024. ISBN 978-1-3999-9792-8. Hardback, 128 pages. £20.

Order direct: www.nandnsociety.org.uk or 0191 281 6266.

Suzanne Stanley, Editor



THE ROCKS AT THE EDGE OF THE EMPIRE



From the front cover of Ian Jackson's new book. Photo: Ian Jackson.

The Society is delighted to announce the publication of Ian Jackson's new book, *The Rocks at the Edge of the Empire*. Ian has generously insisted that all proceeds from the book will go to SANT so this is clearly a 'must buy' for your Christmas present lists. The official publication date was 1st November so the book should be available in the region's bookshops very soon. Alternatively, it can be obtained from the address below.

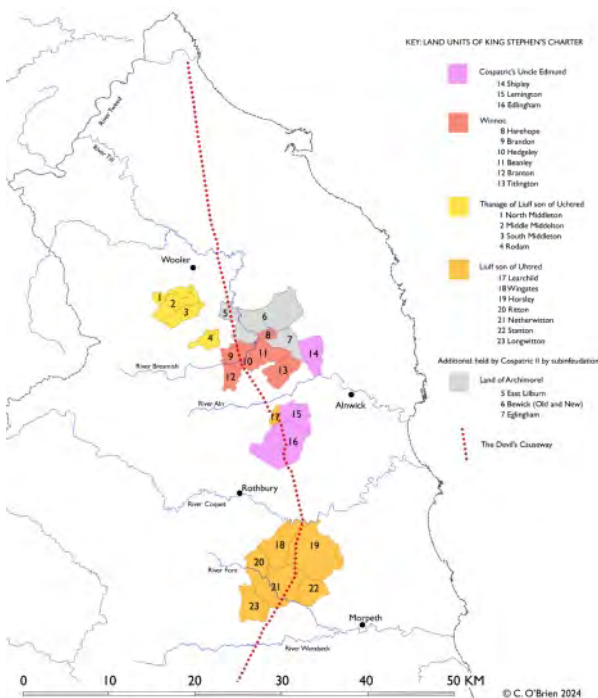
Through 50 sites this book explores how the rocks of the Roman frontier in northern England shaped its history. It reveals how the landscape and its natural origins connect to its archaeology. The book explains how the landscape the Romans first encountered came to be, how rocks determined their decisions about their defences and how the Romans exploited and traded the resources the natural environment offered. It examines the challenges faced by the Roman army as their commanders, surveyors, craftsmen and quartermasters plotted effective route lines through difficult terrain and sourced building materials, energy, mineral and water resources. What did rocks ever do for the Romans? The answer is pretty much everything. From the siting of their defences, to providing building stone, metals for their

swords, slingshots and tools, coal for their heating and cooking, pigments for their clothes and paints, and semi-precious stones for their jewellery.

The Rocks at the Edge of the Empire, price £12.00, will be available from: Northern Heritage Services Limited Units 7&8 New Kennels, Blagdon Estate, Seaton Burn, Newcastle upon Tyne NE13 6DB Telephone: 01670 789 940 www.northern-heritage.co.uk and all good booksellers.

MONTHLY MEETINGS BY SUE WARD

May meeting



King Henry I's land grants to Cospatic II, from the confirmation charter of King Stephen. Map: Colm O'Brien.

Colm O'Brien talked about *The Northumberland Landholdings of the House of Cospatic*. He explained that where medieval and early medieval records were scanty, it was often possible to reconstruct the history to some extent by working backwards from the later records.

Cospatic I was descended from the Anglo-Saxon earl Uhtred, being appointed Earl of Northumbria by William the Conqueror in 1067, but subsequently deprived of the office in 1072. He was also a cousin of Malcolm III, king of Scotland. Henry I had then appointed Cospatic II to the sergeanty of Beanley, with a core of lands which the family held onto for 200 years. This was the beginning of a prominent cross-border lordship, with important responsibilities.

Detailed information on the tenurial history of Northumberland villas had been brought together by county historians, but within ecclesiastical parishes, meaning that information about any particular landholding was scattered. Colm's

intention was to bring this together. He found that part of the lands held by Cospatric I after the Norman Conquest belonged originally to the Lindisfarne estates but had then come under the Bamburgh lordship from the 9th century onwards. They were then briefly passed to Cospatric I post-Conquest, and then removed to be given instead to Malcolm III, king of Scotland. The earldom and its lands had been forfeit to the king in 1095 after a rebellion, and Henry I had prudently allowed pre-Conquest forms of tenure, thegnages and drengages, to continue. He drew on these lands to support the grand sergeanty to manage cross-border matters for him, turning to the well-connected Cospatric II and forming a composite estate from lands previously held or still held by members of the family. Being so near the Scottish border he needed safe hands, and was sensitive to local circumstances and family pedigree.

For full details of Colm's research, see his article in the 2023 volume of *Archaeologia Aeliana*. Colm can be contacted at colm.francis@hotmail.co.uk.

June Meeting

Roger Miket and Sarah Semple spoke on *New Discoveries at Yeavering*, the Anglo-Saxon site near Wooler. Aerial photographs taken by Kenneth St Joseph had shown a series of buildings on a plateau, interpreted by archaeologist Brian Hope-Taylor as the Ad Gefrin 'palace' described by Bede. The site had been threatened by sand and gravel workings in the early 1950s but a local campaign led to the *Ministry of Works* financing 4 years of excavation by Hope-Taylor's team.

Hope-Taylor's Report was not published until 1977 but was very influential. However, after his death in 2001 critical attention led to a reassessment of his techniques and interpretations. The chronological framework for the site and his 'British' phase in its architectural development was questioned. Hope-Taylor did not use carbon-14 dating (available by the time he published his Report).

Sarah explained that, following Scheduled Ancient Monument consent, a research project began in 2021, continuing until 2026–7. This planned to use geophysical techniques on the whole area, re-excavate some of Hope-Taylor's trenches, explore the archaeological evidence, and use modern dating techniques on both archived material and new finds.

An important finding from the first seasons was that Hope-Taylor had dated the Great Enclosure wrongly – it was Iron Age, and at some point the surrounding ditch had been filled in by material, perhaps from an inner bank being pushed into the second ditch. Initial findings suggest the outer ditch and bank may not have been visible features to the Anglo-Saxons. Other buildings on the site could now be securely dated to the 550s to 640s. While evidence for British activity may be forthcoming in future seasons, the C14 dates so far fall neatly within the sequence for Anglo-Saxon rule in Northumbria.

Sarah and Roger can be contacted on s.j.semple@durham.ac.uk and yearlemill@yahoo.co.uk

July Meeting

Jules Brown and Clare Howard spoke about their book, *Bishop Auckland: The Growth of a Historic Market Town*. Jules explained that Bishop Auckland was one of a number of 'Heritage Action Zones' (HAZs).

The study area focussed mainly on the historic town centre. 'North Auckland' (the settlement's name before the 14th century), was documented only in 1109, when Henry 1 granted land to Bishop Ranulph Flambard. Recently, Durham University archaeologists identified 12th century activity at both ends of the market place and medieval burghage plots can be identified today.

Following the Restoration and reinstatement of the Bishops in 1660, Bishop Cosin sought to restore the castle and town. Some tall, steep gabled 17th century houses remain from this period. The town was described in 1738 as 'one of the best in the county' and the turnpike



Yeavering: Aerial View of Terrace and Bell. Photo: Gefrin Trust



Bishop Auckland, Aerial View. Source: 34095_026, Emma Trevarthen@Historic England.

road was established in 1747. This led to the construction of larger buildings, including the Assembly Rooms.

In the 19th century there were 14 pits within 3 miles of the town and the population increased rapidly. The railway arrived in 1843 stimulating some industrial development and considerable investment in the town's architecture. However, by the 1930s many of the pits and ironworks had closed and the town declined.

Jules explained that an active Civic Society had campaigned for the listing of buildings and to save landmarks such as the Town Hall, but in 2001 the Church Commissioners had effectively closed Auckland Castle and proposed selling off the contents including the Zurbaran paintings. After much campaigning, the Castle had been bought by the Auckland Trust, chaired by financier Jonathan Ruffer. Work is now being done in the Castle and surrounding area with volunteer activity. Grants of £2.5m through the HAZ helped leverage a further £2.5m of investment. However, property vacancies and derelict buildings in the town continued to increase.

Jules and Clare can be contacted on: Clare.Howard@historicengland.org.uk.

August Meeting



Front Cover of Jessica's Book

Dr Jessica Cox, from Brunel University, talked about *Pregnancy and Childbirth in Nineteenth-Century Tyneside*. From her recent book *Confinement*, she chose case studies of three women, in very different circumstances. Mary Stephenson, born 1793, gave birth to her fourth child in the Lying in Hospital, Rosemary Lane, in October 1724. She was married and therefore 'respectable' enough to be admitted to the Hospital, while still desperately poor. She probably suffered from rickets, meaning that two of her previous three babies were delivered via the destructive operation known as an 'embryotomy', while the third had been stillborn. Mary died of an infection shortly after giving birth and was buried in St John's Churchyard. Institutions like the Lying in Hospital had a high rate of infection because of a lack of basic hygiene, and even resistance from some in the medical profession to measures such as hand-washing.

Mary Graham's (1853–77) circumstances as an unmarried barmaid were even worse. She gave birth and subsequently died in a midwife's house in Dawson's Court, Westgate Road. The coroner at her inquest criticised the midwife severely for lack of care. While seemingly justified in this case, it fitted into the contemporary pattern of denigrating midwives as ignorant, in contrast with the virtues of 'man-midwives' or obstetricians.

Third came Eliza Hunter (1826–1909), the wife of Newcastle's Mayor when Eliza's eighth child was born at home in 1867. Use of contraception was criticised on moral and religious grounds and, if the mother employed a wet-nurse, even the contraceptive effects of breastfeeding would be lost (as was the case with Queen Victoria). Eliza however had servants to carry the burden of child-care, and she herself was at little risk of infection. But giving birth remained dangerous, and wealth and status conferred no guarantees of safety.

Jessica's book, *Confinement: The Hidden History of Maternal Bodies in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, was published by History Press in 2023, and is available in our library. She can be contacted on jessica.cox@brunel.ac.uk.

September Meeting

Christina Cowart-Smith spoke about *Lindisfarne and Archaeological Approaches to Britain's High Crosses*. She had been working with David Petts and *DigVentures* throughout their 3-week summer dig and expected to be with them again in their month-long September dig in 2025, their final season.

Excavations had disclosed a large number of burials of men, but also women and children – suggesting either a lay community, or a group pilgrimage. One recent find was a 'shrine burial' with standing stones clearly marking it out. Within it was the skeleton of a woman, wrapped in a shroud woven with gold, and around it were graves of other women and children. On display at the Priory Museum on the island were other sculptural finds but material found in the later 19th and early 20th centuries lacked detailed find spots. Archaeologist Charles Peers had written a

detailed article in *Archaeologia Aeliana* in 1924 without ever visiting the island, drawing instead on reports from Ministry of Works employees. Thus, the sculptures unearthed during the recent cycle of excavation were the only ones for which real detail was available.

Fragments of high crosses occurred all over the country, but were most common in Northern England, particularly on Lindisfarne. Many could be dated to the 9th century onwards, disproving – as did many of the burials – the assumption that Lindisfarne was abandoned after the Viking raid of 793. A new find, a cross-arm fragment, had been discovered on the last weekend of the dig embedded in the wall of a Norman lime-kiln.

Cleaning had revealed some very fine interlace, including carvings of a bird. These high crosses were not found in funerary contexts. They possibly marked a significant event at the location where they were placed, such as a holy person dying there. Alternatively, they might have marked boundaries or sanctuaries. Possibly, many were destroyed due to 'Norman iconoclasm' – the conquerors wanting to replace them with their own monuments.

Christina can be contacted at csmith17@alumni.stanford.edu.



The New Lindisfarne Find. Photo: Edwin Lambert.

October Meeting

Tony Wilmott and Ian Haynes spoke about their 2020–24 excavation campaign at Birdoswald Roman Fort. This was our annual Public Lecture, and the audience included many who had worked on the dig.

Previous excavations had mainly concentrated on the interior of the fort. However, a geophysical survey in 1999 had shown that the extra-mural settlement was twice the size of the fort itself, and that there was a pattern of 'strip houses' – long narrow buildings fronting onto a road. This survey was also used to select suitable areas for trenches. One of these had shown that when the fort's East Gate had been narrowed in width, the road too had been narrowed and these houses had been extended to meet it, suggesting that they were in active use as shops or workshops.



Hypocaust and flue viewed from the east. Photo: Historic England

The most interesting discovery was a bath-house, north of the fort, supplied by an aqueduct that went through a culvert in Hadrian's Wall. The building's interior had been filled with rubble from the demolished walls, but remains of the stoke hole, the boiler, and the pipes leading in from the aqueduct could be excavated. A find unique across the Roman empire was three heavy iron firebars *in situ* above the furnace hole. The supply and circulation of water to bath houses was well studied but we know little about the engineering needed to bring it into the building. At Birdoswald, this could be clearly seen.

The size of the extra-mural settlement, and the absence of finds dating later than the late 3rd century, raised other questions. During the later years of Roman rule, such settlements shrank or disappeared, usually attributed to the civilian population moving inside the fort. With an estimated population of 1,500–2,000 – the numbers usually defined as a 'small town' by Romanists – there was not enough space for all of them. Where, then, did this population go?

Tony can be contacted on tony.wilmott@historicensland.org.uk and Ian at ian.haynes@newcastle.ac.uk. The recording of the lecture will be on the Insights lectures website.

NOTES FROM THE LIBRARY

The SANT Library has recently been augmented by several substantial book donations, mainly due to older Members 'downsizing' their personal libraries. Inevitably, these additions reflect their own research interests. There are two main subject areas where the Library has benefitted – architectural history and maritime history. It will come as no surprise that, in the case of the former, Grace McCombie is the chief source. We are extremely grateful to her son Michael for facilitating the process of collecting her books. Grace is particularly anxious that her splendid



collection of several editions of Pevsner's (and his successors') authoritative 'Buildings of...' series, should come to the SANT Library. These (over 100 volumes) are currently being processed in the SANT Office. Long-standing member John Penn has also donated several architectural history books, mainly concerned with his professional specialism of rural architecture. But pride of place must be given to his gift of Andrew Saint's biography of Norman Shaw, containing a huge amount of material on Craggside.

Naval history constitutes a surprisingly small proportion of the SANT book collection, but thanks to three scholars, it is now larger! Tony Barrow donated volumes on the fascinating history of whaling which, in the UK, had a highly significant east coast presence. Adrian Osler has provided a number of detailed case studies of several aspects of maritime history relating to the Northumbrian coast, and lastly, Norman McCord, better known publicly as a social and political historian, was fascinated by naval warfare and the strategic role played by warships throughout history. His donations reflect these interests, but he has also filled a number of gaps in the SANT Collection with the gift, for example, of Joe Clarke's two volume *Building Ships on the North East Coast, 1680–1980*.

The online catalogue, containing all these new additions, will soon be updated and be available on the SANT Website.

Mike Barke

PROFESSOR NORMAN MCCORD (1930-2024)



Professor Norman McCord, 1930–2024

The national history community and those associated with the regional history and archaeology of N.E. England were saddened to learn that Professor Norman McCord died in Cramlington Hospital on 25th October aged 94. Few historians acquired his significance or have contributed more to the development and popularisation of historical study in this region. Norman McCord was a giant of historical scholarship whose legacy of teaching, research and publication was recognised by his election as a Fellow of the Royal Historical Association and a personal chair as Professor of Social History at the University of Newcastle. Uniquely, in addition to his national status as an eminent historian Norman continued to pursue a lifelong interest in all aspects of archaeology and at his death had been a member of SANT for 75 years and was its President in 1988–89.

Norman was born at Boldon Colliery on 14th April 1930 the son of a pitman. As an infant he moved with his family to North Shields where his parents owned a small corner shop. At the outbreak of the Second World War he was evacuated to Millfield in Northumberland returning to Tyneside in 1941 after passing his 11+ examination. He attended Tynemouth Municipal High School 1941–48 where he was taught history by George Jobey, a teacher who had a profound influence on Norman's professional life and career.

As a first-year undergraduate at King's College in 1949 he attended the First Congress of Roman Frontier Studies and fondly recalled an incident-packed summer vacation visiting Roman archaeological sites in French North Africa in 1950. Subsequently he participated in numerous excavations including some on the Antonine Wall and acted as site supervisor at Corbridge in the 1960s. He was a pioneer of aerial photography, initially, according to Norman, on the rather doubtful grounds that he had served in the RAF during his National Service and the History Department had obtained a small grant and a decent camera! His extensive collection of aerial photographs, now digitised in the SINE archive, captured many previously unrecorded archaeological sites. The SINE archive and the multi-disciplinary McCord Centre for Landscape are legacies for which he was justly proud.

After completing his Ph.D at Cambridge in 1956, Norman held various academic posts before his appointment as Lecturer in Modern History at King's College (later Newcastle University) in 1960 and taught there for the rest of his career. Paul Kennedy, later Professor of History and International Relations at Yale, was one of Norman's early students; hundreds of others benefitted from his knowledge and expertise over the years.

Norman McCord actively supported the development of Adult Education throughout his career. He contributed to extra-mural courses, was an external examiner for the Open University, and an early advocate of the value of integrating fieldwork with academic study. Along with other well-known academics Norman contributed to the expansion of Victorian Studies in the 1960s and 70s. The quality and range of his published work inspired many others to research and write in the fields of Public Health, Poor Law Reform, Regional Politics, Maritime History, Labour and Industrial History. His collaboration with David Rowe led to important articles on the economic development of North-East England. As an empirical historian, Norman was often critical of the influence of political theory on historical writing and a tendency to view the past with the prejudices of the present. He warned his students to beware anachronisms and the dangers of crudely labelling ideas and institutions of the past. Yet for all his eminence and relaxed authority as a historian, for those who knew him he was simply 'Norman'. He will be remembered for his warmth and generosity of spirit, his sociability and sense of fun. Even as his health declined, he never tired of sharing his knowledge or spending time with those who sought his advice. He will be sadly missed.

Tony Barrow

EDITORIAL

The preparation of my first News Bulletin has encompassed a roller-coaster of emotions. The sadness felt at the passing of Norman McCord, one of our oldest and most distinguished members, has been palpable. But this has been offset to some degree by the promise for the future represented by one of our youngest members, Charlie Dodds, accepting the role of Hon. Secretary of the Society. Furthermore, the support given by my predecessor, Dave Heslop, has bolstered my confidence in my ability to undertake this challenging role. My thanks are due to the contributors to this edition of the Bulletin and to those who have promised items for the future! On that note, I would like to remind members that the Bulletin plays a fundamental role in maintaining and creating interaction within the Society and beyond. It is instructive and a little humbling to realise how far-flung is our membership and that, for many people unable to regularly attend our activities, it remains a vital mode of connection. To this end, I promise to maintain the broad-based character of the content and, if possible, to enhance it. The title News Bulletin may seem an anachronism in the 21st century when 'news' communication is almost instantaneous, but reflection and comment on that 'news' is more valid and important than ever. So, I see the content of the Bulletin as a continuum from straightforward announcements of events of all sorts of interest to students of the history of our region – meetings, lectures, displays, publications etc. – through to comment and appraisal of such activities. But further, I believe that the Bulletin plays an important role in communicating what are often 'unconsidered trifles' – short articles (300 words plus one illustration) on little known but often quirky and highly instructive topics that throw fresh light on aspects of the region's history. I look forward to receiving your contributions!

Mike Barke