

NORTHUMBRIAN CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

President: Prof. Heather Cordell

Hon. Secretary: Em.Prof. Gilbert Cockton

And so we meet again

After a few months of online events, some NCA members met for the first time in over a year in June, when we organised two co-ordinated walks down the Ouseburn Valley and back by alternative routes. Details of the talks and walks are in the centre spread.



2021 AGM, September 17th

The AGM and Annual Lecture will be our first face to face meeting since 2020's Annual Dinner. The lecture will be given by Dr David Gosling. His work in world religions is of particular interest, especially following the publication of his *Frontier of Fear: Confronting the Taliban on Pakistan's Border*.

The booking form and AGM papers will be placed on the NCA website and also sent out via email. For members without email, we have included the booking form with their paper copy of this newsletter. AGM papers can also be mailed to members on request.

We currently have only the minimum five ex-officio committee members and would like to recruit a few further members. If you are interested in joining the executive committee, please email EnquiriesNCA@gmail.com.

Calendar for 2021-22

With the expectation that we can return to our previous pattern of events, planned NCA meetings for 2021-22 are:

Friday September 17, 2021

AGM & Annual Lecture, RGS Newcastle

Late October/early November, 2021

Autumn Concert, Sage, Gateshead

Friday December 3, 2021

Christmas Lunch, County Hotel, Newcastle

Saturday December 11, 2021

Festive Afternoon Tea & Film,
Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle

Early February, 2022

Winter Outing, Sage, Gateshead

Wednesday March 16, 2022

Annual Dinner, Northern Counties Club,
Newcastle

Saturday, April 23, 2022

Spring Outing, Kirkley Hall Zoological
Gardens, Ponteland

Saturday May 14, 2022

Spring Walk, Raby Castle, County Durham

Mid-June 20, 2022

Summer Outing, Farne Islands

For a few meetings, we still cannot currently finalise dates. As we do, booking forms for each meeting will be placed on the website and distributed via email or post once we know that it will be going ahead.

In addition, we will host our annual Freshers' Party before the AGM and their Reunion in December.

Talks

We have held two online talks, to which we invited alumni from the Yorkshire and Edinburgh associations.

Ruth Dodds and Tyneside in the 1920s

On Thursday February 2nd 2021, Margaret Bozic MBE gave a fascinating talk on the formidable Ruth Dodds (1890-1976), a playwright, Quaker, volunteer, and local politician. She joined the Labour Party after the First World War and was one of the first women to be elected to Gateshead Council in 1929. Her political activity largely ended after 1939 when she resigned from the Labour Party in protest at its support for war (although she later rejoined). She was made the first (honorary) woman Freeman of Gateshead in 1965. Together with her sisters, Hope and Sylvia, Ruth helped to found the Little Theatre in Gateshead.



Left to right Sylvia, Hope, and Ruth

Margaret's talk provided a revealing window onto a range of social and political issues in the years between the two world wars. Ruth Dodds' liberalism, pacifism and feminism placed her on the front line of much political activism. Ruth kept diaries, which this interesting and inspiring talk drew on, placing them in the context of 1920s Tyneside. Margaret's selection of extracts from the diaries gave an authentic and engaging voice to Ruth's political activism.

The Work of the HALO Trust

On Wednesday 31st March 2021, Chris Loughran, Senior Policy & Advocacy Advisor at the HALO Trust, joined NCA members by Zoom from Manchester. He was welcomed by NCA President Heather Cordell and introduced by Colin Dunnighan.

The HALO Trust, an international humanitarian NGO, works in 25 countries affected by conflict, instability, and humanitarian crises. It specialises in clearing landmines and addressing human suffering caused by small arms and ammunition, but also engages in helping countries recover after conflict and continues to work with those communities that are too often forgotten once fighting has ended.

Chris leads HALO's global advocacy strategy and its policy change agenda. He is also responsible for leading political engagement in the UK. He has a decade of experience of high-level representation at the United Nations and over thirteen years of senior management and leadership experience, including three years as Country Director in Iraq.

Chris gave a comprehensive presentation - not only on HALO's day-to-day activities across the world, but also on the many complex geopolitical factors impacting upon their work. The environment, preventing biodiversity loss and addressing climate change increasingly being priorities. Chris illustrated this with several examples demonstrating the links between environment, resilience, and conflict.

HALO's recently established Action on Conflict campaign – supported by an alliance they have formed with other NGOs – is aiming to influence the UK government to ensure that conflict prevention, response and recovery sit alongside Covid and climate change at the heart of the UK's new international strategy.

HALO's view is that the UK should maintain an international outlook, despite the current crisis at home, and argues for the government to take a more proactive approach to address the suffering caused by conflict and the world's protracted crises, and act as a 'force for good'.

More information on the HALO Trust can be found at: <https://www.halotrust.org/>

Walks

On June 18th, NCA members met face to face for the first time since our March 2020 annual dinner. Although just over a dozen in total joined one of two walks, it was wonderful to meet up again.

We co-ordinated two walks down the Ouseburn with returns via different routes. The shorter walk set off from Armstrong Bridge at 10.30am, led by Peter Cleland. The longer walk set off from the metro bridge on Moorfield near to Ilford Road Metro Station at 10:00am, led by Gilbert Cockton.

Spirits had risen somewhat as the prospect of rain appeared to be receding; earlier in the week the forecast had been rather dismal but, as is often the case, was unduly pessimistic.

The shorter walk group set off through Armstrong and Heaton Parks. They were fortunate to have David Smith with them. He took them via an interesting route (new to the walk leader) along the Ouseburn to its culvert.



David told the group about the building of the culvert which was completed in 1911 at a cost of £23,000. It is 655 metres long and was covered by industrial waste. In 1939 it was converted into an air raid shelter.

Both groups met at The Cycle Hub by the mouth of the Ouse for coffee in the sun. The shorter walk group returned a slightly different way to Armstrong Bridge. They then went their separate ways for a well-earned lunch.

The other group of six walked via Jesmond Dene and Jesmond Vale, over the Ouseburn culvert, and then under the Byker bridges to walk along the Ouseburn to the Cycle Hub

where they enjoyed the sun and Tyne views while waiting for the other group.



After discussing alternative ways back, this group took a longer route along the Tyne to Forth Banks, entering Newcastle University territory from the Centre for Life, then along Bath Lane's city walls on to the new Helix campus, returning to Moorside across Castle Leazes, Town, Duke's, and Little Moors. There were brief heritage pauses for the earthworks of the former racecourse grandstand, Kenton Lodge (originally the home of Max Holtzapfel, head of what is now AkzoNobel), and the former Armstrong's aeroplane factory (now a Kwik Fit). Most of our 8-mile circuit was in a sylvan valley, open moorland, or along a monumental quayside. Few cities can offer that.



Online Dining

NCA executive committee member Colin Dunningham shares his recent experience of maintaining traditions in the face of continued restrictions on large face-to-face gatherings.

Wolfson's 56th annual Foundation Day dinner, celebrating its history, achievements and its people, was held on June 30th.

This year however, because of pandemic restrictions, alumni were asked to celebrate the College at home by creating their own Formal Hall. Menus and recipes were provided, and we were encouraged to take a stab at recreating the same three course meal being served in College. We were also challenged to create a Wolfson themed cocktail (or mocktail) and this celebratory drink had to reflect Wolfson's rich connection with pineapples through their long-time supporter Dr Lee Seng Tee. Dr Lee Seng Tee gave the College generous funding in its early years for research into pineapple diseases to help to save his plantations.

Usually attended by UK-based alumni, Zoom allowed members from around the world to attend this commemorative event, and share memories of Wolfson, prior to enjoying their culinary efforts (the photo below shows our attempt at the dessert and the cocktails).



Members' News

There have been two resignations: Alex Faludy (Peterhouse 1998-2001, History of Art) has relocated to Budapest; Judith Lund (Newnham 1954-57, Modern Languages) has resigned following her move into a nursing home.

Sadly, we must report the deaths of Mike Gaunt (Fitzwilliam 1968-71, Law) and Nick Robson (Caius 1954-57, Law).

Mike was a former NCA committee member until 2016. He had attended NCA events, including the annual dinner with his wife Jean, until several years ago. Mike died last July after a short illness.



Nick Robson

Nick Robson died in February, from Covid with underlying health conditions. His son told us that Nick enjoyed attending NCA meetings. Nick returned to his family home in Sunderland in 1989 and was active in several organisations.

Subscriptions – Reminder

Thank you to our many members who paid their £10 on time. Annual membership subscriptions were due on 1 March. If you have not yet renewed your membership, you can make your payment of **£10.00** by cheque (made out to Northumbrian Cambridge Association, not NCA, please), by standing order or by bank transfer (HSBC sort code 40 34 18; account number 60618446). **Please include identification**, e.g. SUB/[YOUR SURNAME]). Cheques should be posted to the Treasurer, Mrs Susan Austin, 116 Queens Road, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3AU. A standing order form for 2021 can be found in the How to Join section of the NCA website; please arrange payments beyond 2021 for 1 March each year.

Please keep subscription and event payments separate.