

Northumbrian Cambridge Association *Newsletter*

President: Mr. James Wright

Hon. Secretary: Dr. Andrena Telford



From the President:

This is my last contribution to the Newsletter as President, and some reflection on our past and where we now stand may be in order. Those who attended the dinner know that I had done a little work on the story of our 85 years of existence as revealed in the Minute Books. Unsurprisingly, the history reflects the changes in society and the University. We no longer provide a milieu for young graduates arriving in the North-East from Cambridge to meet the Trevelyan, and other members of the local gentry - but we do give a friendly send-off to the young people going up to Cambridge from all over the region and every type of school at our party for each year's Freshers in September. We may marvel at the numbers attending some past functions - 85 at the 1950 Annual Dinner, whose menu survives in the Northumberland Archives and is reproduced here, and up to 130 on other occasions. Yet, at the same period, there would be only two gatherings a year (the AGM and Dinner), rather than the varied programme of events we have today. Attendance has been a recurring issue, with the Association even going into suspension for five years from 1957 to 1962.

Our current healthy state, of which this Newsletter is an excellent example, has been created by the hard work of my Colleagues on the Executive Committee over the past fourteen years, and I thank them warmly on behalf of the Association and for my own part. It has been a great pleasure working with them, and I look forward to continuing to see them and the other members of the Association at future meetings.



AGM and ANNUAL LECTURE

This year's AGM and annual lecture will take place on Friday, 6th November, at the Royal Grammar School in Newcastle. The lecturer will be John Pickard, Emeritus Professor of Neurosurgery in the University of Cambridge and Fellow of St Catharine's College. John's research has covered many aspects of the subject, including the treatment of acute brain injury, the use of imaging, and the detection of awareness in the 'vegetative state'.

The date is rather later than usual because the School's facilities are being used in connection with the Rugby World Cup, and there was a subsequent backlog of events to be accommodated before we could find a date that worked for us.





ANNUAL DINNER 2015

This year's Annual Dinner was held on March 11 in the elegant surroundings of the Northern Counties Club in Newcastle. At 185 years old, the Club is one of the oldest private clubs in the world and includes among its founder members Earl Grey (whom we encountered again at our Summer Meeting). Forced to move in the 1970s from its original home in Old Eldon Square, the Club now occupies what was the Tyne Temperance Hotel on Hood Street, but the austerity that this suggests was not evident in the splendid three course meal and fine wine we enjoyed on this occasion. Following the meal, our President, who had been looking at the old Minute Books of the Association, stretching back over the eighty-five years of its existence, gave a thoughtful summary of the continuities and changes in the Association and the wider society which they reflected. The evening's activities also included a quiz, which was won by Dr Bill Telford, who swore that his wife (the compiler) had forbidden him even a neek at it



SPRING WALK

This year's Spring Walk, organised by our Treasurer, Christopher Beadle, was based upon Howick Hall Gardens, in Northumberland. The ancestral home of the Grey family since the 14th century, the Hall itself is not open to the public at present, but the gardens, primarily the work of Charles, 5th Earl Grey, his wife Mabel, and their daughter Lady Mary Howick, between 1920 and 2001, are rated by the BBC Gardeners 'World magazine as "one of the top 5 coastal gardens in the country" and by the Independent magazine as "one of the best 10 gardens to visit in spring". So our group was there at just the right time to enjoy the spring bulbs, as well as rhodendrons and azaleas. We met for morning coffee in the Earl Grey Tearoom before having a guided tour of the gardens. Lunch in the tearoom (formerly the ballroom) followed, and then we separated for an afternoon walk, the most energetic following the Long Walk from the hall to the sea, then along the coast to Craster and returning over the fields. The rest of us enjoyed more exploration of the garden and the splendid Arboretum – and afternoon tea with cake and the eponymous tea! We were intrigued to learn that although the tea we know as Earl Grey had bergamot added to it to disguise the lime taste of spring water on the estate, subsequently becoming the rage in London, the Grey family neglected to register the name and so never profited by so much as a penny from its sale.



SUMMER MEETING

We had a varied and enjoyable summer outing to Woodhorn Colliery Museum and the Northumberland Archives on a pleasant Saturday in June. Organised by Judy Vigurs and Nick Jackson, the day began with a fascinating tour of the Archives, where we learned a great deal about the acquisition, conservation, storage and cataloguing of the county's historical documents. To our delight, the archive staff had looked out some Cambridge-related material, including an album of photographs from the 1930s and an annual dinner menu from 1950. After lunch there was time to see the exhibition on coal mining, on the mining communities of the north east, and on Woodhorn Colliery in particular, and to view the gallery of paintings by the group popularly known as the Pitmen Painters. The winding house and other colliery structures are Grade 2 listed buildings and there was time to explore some of these before the afternoon was over.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Freshers' Party

Monday, September 21, 17.30-19.00

Sintons, The Cube, Barrack Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 6DB

If you'd like to help out and have a chance to meet the Freshers, please contact Nadine Strettle-Brown (nad4nu@aol.com; tel.: 01661 823129).

AGM, Buffet and Annual Lecture

Friday, November 6

Royal Grammar School, Eskdale Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear, NE2 4DX

6.00: AGM

6.30: Buffet

7.30: Annual Lecture

Christmas Lunch

Friday, December 4, 12.00-14.30

Thistle County Hotel, Neville Street, Newcastle, Tyne & Wear, NE1 5DF

Festive Afternoon Tea and Film

Saturday, December 12, 15.00-18.00

Tyneside Cinema, 10 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE1 6QG

A MUSICAL VENTURE

Last year a suggestion was made that members might enjoy attending a musical event together. An exciting and time-appropriate event is taking place at the Sage, Gateshead, on Sunday, October 25, when the bands of the Royal Air Force present an evocative and rousing evening of musical entertainment entitled *The RAF in Concert: 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain*. The music, it is said, "captures the essence of 1940s Britain. and tells the story of how the spirit and capability of those who took part endures in the professionalism of the people who make up today's RAF."

The concert is at 7.30 in Concert Hall 1, and we have provisionally booked 15 seats at a cost of £25.00. We have also made a provisional booking for a pre-concert meal at the Sage Brasserie (£12.95/£15.95/£18.95 for 1/2/3 courses).

If you would like to be part of what promises to be a wonderful musical (and history-rich) event, please register your interest with NCA Secretary, Dr Andrena Telford (telephone: 01661-825437; email address: andrena.telford@btinternet.com) by **Friday, August 28**, at which time payment will be required.





TIMES PAST

Our President has drawn attention to an interesting documentary (forwarded to him by a Johnian friend) which he thought it might be of interest to members. It is a 23 minute film, made by the British Council in 1945, showing the life of Cambridge university and its undergraduates in that year. Despite the background of the war, it paints a surprisingly cosy picture – although the masculine bias (the commentary constantly refers to ‘man’, ‘men’, ‘he’ ‘him’!) may be off-putting to female viewers. It is a fascinating piece of social history and can be viewed online at: <http://vimeo.com/album/2895588/video/46194145> and at <http://film.britishcouncil.org/cambridge>

Some notes from the British Council website add: “Several renowned academics appear in *Cambridge*. Sir Lawrence Bragg (seen at 6:00), in his capacity as Director of the Cavendish Laboratory, would play a part in the discovery of the structure of DNA in 1953. Historian George Trevelyan (seen at 7:00) had earlier been approached by the British Council to write the script for experimental film *Magna Carta*. Others seen in the film include Sir William Spens, composer Patrick Hadley, and Sir John Sheppard. “Women appear throughout *Cambridge* and might seem to be ordinary members of the university, but this is not the case. Though women were allowed to study courses, sit exams, and gain degrees, they were not admitted as full members of the university until 1948.”

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Twice a year NCA sends out its Newsletter to all members, as well as notifications of upcoming events. When paper, printing and postage are taken into account, it can be seen that this cost is not covered by the membership subscription. A good number of members currently receive electronic communications, and we would encourage more to do so. If you would be happy to receive the Newsletter and other material in electronic form, we would be grateful if you would send your email address and notice of your willingness to be an electronic reader to the Newsletter’s editor at: andrena.telford@btinternet.com

BECOME A CONTRIBUTOR!

We would love to have contributions to the Newsletter from our members. Whether it’s reminiscences of your own time at Cambridge, or memories of NCA activities of past years, or your thoughts on Cambridge today, they are sure to be of interest to fellow Cambridge graduates and friends. Photographs would be very welcome. Please send any contributions to the Editor, Dr Andrena Telford (contact details below) by December 15 for the January 2016 Newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP

At the last meeting of the Executive Committee, there was discussion of the annual membership fee, which has remained at £5.00 for a good number of years. A proposal for an increase will be brought forward at the AGM, so if you’d like to have your say on the matter, do make sure to be there on November 6 at the Royal Grammar School.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee is on Tuesday, September 15. If you would like to put forward any matters to the Committee, please notify the Secretary beforehand (contact details below).

CONTACT DETAILS:

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Thanks to Dr William Telford for the photographs of Cambridge and of NCA people and events. See more of Bill’s photographs on the Northumbrian Cambridge Association website: www.northumbrian-cambridge.co.uk