

Northumbrian Cambridge Association Newsletter

President: Dr William Telford

Hon. Secretary: Dr. Andrena Telford



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In my report for the NCA January Newsletter I expressed the hope that our members were looking forward to “an active and interesting year” and promised a year of “varied and interesting events”. Little did we know then how “interesting” the year was going to turn out to be. In one particular respect we were fortunate – we managed to squeeze in our 90th anniversary celebration dinner on March 11th, shortly before lockdown descended. Prior to that, in February, we had enjoyed guided tours of not-always-seen parts of the Discovery Museum in Newcastle. But after March 23 our planned and organised events ground to a halt, as did so many other aspects of our lives.

The events we had to cancel were a Spring Outing behind the scenes at the Kirkley Hall Zoological Garden, just outside Ponteland, a Castle tour and Spring Walk in May, centred on Raby Castle, County Durham, and a Summer Outing to the Farne Islands in June, with a lunch beforehand at the Olde Ship Inn in Seahouses. Fortunately, we have been able to re-schedule these for the equivalent dates next year, and trust that by then we shall be able to reinstate a full programme of events. In the meantime refunds have been issued to those who had booked in advance.

Our Freshers' Party and our AGM and Annual Lecture in September are still in the programme, though we await further developments. Our scheduled speaker for the lecture, Dr David L. Gosling, has generously agreed to be our speaker in 2021, should this year's event have to be cancelled. The Christmas lunch at the County Hotel and the Festive Afternoon Tea and Film are still in the diary, as is our Freshers' Welcome Party at Mincoffs and our dinner and concert at the Sage, and we very much hope that these will go ahead. Flyers and booking forms are being sent out as usual, but if we have to cancel, we'll inform you and issue reimbursements. If the AGM is unable to take place at the end of September, we will be working on a 'virtual' basis and will be contacting members by email for their comments and votes on particular issues. Documentation, in either case, will be made available beforehand.

As I mentioned in the January newsletter, Andrena and I will be standing down in September, and a new President and Secretary will be taking over. As you will see later in this newsletter, the Committee has agreed on nominees for each of these posts, Professor Heather Cordell for President

and Professor Gilbert Cockton for Hon. Secretary, and we will be seeking ratification of these positions whether at an actual or as part of a virtual AGM. Both candidates have been loyal and active members of the NCA Committee, and we are publishing in this newsletter their short biographies as a reminder (and also a thanks for their services to date). We are, however, open to any other nominations for these posts, as well as for the two non ex-officio vacancies left by our departure. Robert M. Tindall (St. John's, 1961-65) and Andrew Young (Jesus, 1972-75) have kindly agreed to stand for the Committee, but we are also keen to recruit more active members, if you or anyone you know might be interested.

This year has been a significant one for Andrena and myself, since it marks the 50th year of our marriage (on July 4 – Independence Day!). We had planned an anniversary dinner for family and friends in the Captain's Cabin of HMS Trincomalee in Hartlepool (which NCA visited in June, 2012), followed by a 3-week expedition voyage to Greenland. Alas, neither was to be, but since July 4 was also 'coming out' day in England we managed to have an enjoyable local celebration, including a tour of a splendid exhibition at the Aviary Gallery in Jesmond featuring paintings (of Northumberland and the Outer Hebrides) by Ruth Bond, daughter of long-standing NCA members Wendy and Mick Bond. We were fortunate to meet and chat (in social distancing mode) with the artist herself, and you can see some of photographs of her work later in this newsletter.

Can I say again, on behalf of Andrena and myself, what a pleasure and privilege it has been to serve the Association for all these years. I, myself, joined the Committee in 1993, Andrena, ten years later, becoming Hon. Secretary in 2010. We look forward to many happy further years as members and to continuing the many valued friendships we have made.

I hope you, your families and your friends have managed to remain safe and well over this trying period, and I look forward to meeting up with you again once we are able to resume our normal activities.

With best wishes,
Bill Telford

Dr William Telford
Christ's College, 1972-77



WINTER OUTING, February 8, 2020

On Saturday, February 8, just before 10 am, 28 of us gathered at the Discovery Museum in Newcastle upon Tyne, just in time for its early opening for our group. One of our new members, Malcolm Duff (Peterhouse 1962-65), attended for the first time, was introduced to members, and had a warm reunion with long-time member, Teresa Saunders, whom he hadn't seen since the 1970s. After morning tea and coffee at the Museum's cafeteria on the second floor, we split into three alternating groups for specialist tours, one to see the building, led by Neville Hails from the Museum's Front of House Team and the other, led by Helen Vasey, Assistant Keeper of Collections, to visit the Museum's extensive costume store. Highlights included the Museum's majestic wood-panelled and tiled Great Hall and its ironwork ceiling, as well as the series of costumes on display in the costume store from the Georgian to the present era. Everyone had time also to explore the Museum on their own. A soup and sandwich lunch was laid on for us in the Carpathia and Northumberland Rooms. Those who attended were enthusiastic about the visit, a number saying that the visit had been most worthwhile and that they would return again.



IAN FELLS' Reminiscences of Cambridge in the 1950s

A special feature of our 90th Anniversary celebrations at the Annual Dinner were the reminiscences offered by Professor Ian Fells of his time at Cambridge in the 1950s. Ian served as Past President of the Association between 1984 and 1990. He spent 1950-52 in Army National Service before going up to Cambridge in 1952 to study Natural Sciences at Trinity College. 1952-53 was also one of Britain's coldest winters, and Ian remembers the Cam being frozen and the opportunity thus afforded to skate all the way to Grantchester. Rationing was still in place then, with supplies of coal being strictly limited (editor's note: a fact that might explain his later future in fuel science!). The Chaplain of Trinity at that time was the Rt Rev. Simon Phipps, confidant to Princess Margaret (then struggling with both conscience and constitutional issues over her love for divorcé, Peter Townsend), and Ian remembers her frequent visits to the College. Ian stayed on to do research in reaction kinetics at the Chemistry (Physical) Department, studying the fourth law of thermodynamics and taking his PhD in 1958—the year that undergraduates managed to get an Austin Seven car on to the roof of the Senate House. These were the days, too, when you could go into lunch at the Eagle on Bene't Street, and have an encounter with James Watson and Francis Crick discussing the structure of DNA and discovering 'the secret of life'! Thank you, Ian, for all the wonderful stories with which you regaled us on this very special occasion.



ANNUAL DINNER, March 11, 2020

Wednesday, March 11, at the Northern Counties Club in Newcastle upon Tyne, was a very special evening, for it was then that we celebrated the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Northumbrian Cambridge Association. 32 members and guests registered, and 30 (20 members, 2 Associate members, 8 guests) attended. Member David Herbert and special guest John Naylor, Chairman of the Cambridge Society of Edinburgh, had sadly to send their apologies. The evening went extremely well. The Club had been given the numbers, seating plan and programme in advance, and the tables were all set up for us. On hand in the vestibule was our new celebratory NCA banner and upstairs was our special anniversary cake on a table provided in



[photo gratia Liz Atkins]

the dining room (along with a copy of Tim Hayward & Alison Wright's recent book on *Fitzbillies*, and the Association's early Minute Books). Each table had 90th Anniversary programme-menu cards (with a list of past Presidents on the back), copies of the quiz, a copy of the Calendar of Events for 2020 and the flyers/booking forms for the events up until June (Spring Outing, Spring Walk, Summer Outing). People began arriving around 6.15. Our special



guest, Ian Roberts (member of the Cambridge University Alumni Advisory Board for Scotland and former Chairman of the Cambridge Society of Edinburgh) joined us from Edinburgh, and stayed overnight at the Club. Following a reception in the lower vestibule, we went upstairs for our meal just after 7 pm. The President welcomed everyone, gave the apologies, explained the programme, and circulated a 100th birthday card for our oldest member, Dr Betty Schofield, which everyone signed (her son-in-law, Stephen Lawson attended the dinner, and passed it on to her afterwards). There followed an excellent meal,



washed down with bottles of white and red wine. We then had a ceremonial cutting of the cake, with photographs, and the Secretary gave the results of the quiz (featuring 25 photographs of excursions made by the NCA in the last 10 years). There followed the Toast to the Queen, and our two excellent

after-dinner speakers, Past Presidents James Wright, who gave a history of the Association, and Ian Fells, who gave his reminiscences of Cambridge in the 1950s. Ian Roberts conveyed the congratulations of the Cambridge Society of Edinburgh and of Cambridge University, and offered the toast to Cambridge University, and Margaret Wilkinson (who was born in the same year as the Association was founded) the toast to the Northumbrian Cambridge Association. The President gave farewell announcements, thanked the staff of the Northern Counties Club, as well as the Secretary, and outlined the programme for the remainder of the year. All in all, it was a fitting and most enjoyable way to celebrate the birth of the NCA.

INVITATION FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Your editors would love to have contributions to the Newsletter from members, whether photographs, personal reminiscences or current points of view. The next Newsletter will appear in January 2021. If you have a contribution you can offer, please send it to the new editor by December 15. The address for the new editor: Professor Gilbert Cockton, 1 Osborne Gardens, Whitley Bay, NE26 3PG; Tel.: 0191 253 3079. Email: gilbertcockton@gmail.com

JAMES WRIGHT'S History of the Association

At the Annual Dinner this year celebrating our 90th Anniversary, Mr James Wright, who served as our President between 2001 and 2015, presented us with a brief history of the Association. The Minutes of the first meeting of the Association, the President noted in introducing him, were dated December 19, 1931, but being a Classicist and an expert in conjectural emendation, James was of the opinion, and the President agreed with him, that this should probably be 1930, since the meeting was convened to plan the programme for 1931 and the following minutes were dated 10 July, 1931—see the July 2018 Newsletter. James had been



going through the Minute Books, copies of which were available to members at the dinner and presented us with 'musings' on some things in our history. Apart from these preliminary Minutes (December 19, 1931->30), the first thing of note in the Minute Book was the record of the second annual dinner in 1931, which was recorded in the Newcastle Journal of April 23, 1931. Reflecting the constitution

of Oxbridge at the time and the society of the day, a reply to the toast to 'The University' by a Mr A. B. Adams voiced the bold opinion that 'Varsities' were 'rather too expensive' and 'affected most nearly, not the upper, middle or scholarship classes as those of the Navy and Army officers, with one, two or three sons to educate'. Universities have obviously changed since this time, as has the Association. Presidents were originally members of the local aristocracy (Lord Armstrong was our first President) and Bishop Cecil Wood, Vicar of St. George's, our first Chairman, with successive 'declines', said James, 'into academics'. The Association has had a chequered history, with gaps, for example, in its activities during World War II, or between 1957-62. There was an ongoing concern over numbers. The main event was the annual dinner, with some social visits, for example, to Lord Armstrong's home at Cragside. There were also tea parties. One recurrent theme was the attempt to work with the Oxford Society, which often failed! The roles of President and Chairman have been amalgamated. Now there are many more meetings, a regular programme of events, and a much greater variety of people attending. The opportunity to visit places is one of the Association's main attractions, as James observed in recalling his own first experience of it. We'd like to thank James for these 'musings' from our Minute Books. It might also be worth mentioning that an approach has been made by the President to Newcastle University to establish the feasibility of having these valuable records digitised. Covid-19 has interrupted this initiative but it is hoped that the new Committee will take this up again.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS, 2020

Freshers' Party, Mincoffs Solicitors, Newcastle

Monday, September 14, 2020, 5.30 pm

Again we will be welcoming freshers from the North East just before they go up to Cambridge. As last year, Tim Gray and Mincoffs will be our hosts, and the freshers, as well as having the opportunity to meet fellow undergraduates, will be introduced to the NCA.

AGM and Annual Lecture, Royal Grammar School, Newcastle

Friday, September 25, 2020, 6 pm

The AGM and Annual Lecture will take place again at the Royal Grammar School, with a buffet supplied by Epicurus, and wines by Michael Jobling. The lecture will be given by Dr David Gosling, Clare Hall, Cambridge, on the topic of 'Violence and hope on Pakistan's border: an educational encounter.'

Pre-Concert Dinner and Concert, Sage, Gateshead

Sunday, November 1, 2020, 8 pm (dinner, 6 pm)

Join us for a Nordic Fiddlers Bloc concert, featuring Olav Luksengård Mjelva (Norway), Anders Hall (Sweden) and Kevin Henderson (Shetland), at the Sage, the North's premier music centre, with dinner beforehand at the Bistro.

Christmas Lunch, County Hotel, Newcastle

Friday, December 4, 2020, 12 noon

Christmas lunch at the County Hotel has become a fixture in our calendar – a testament to the food, the ambience and the efficient and welcoming service. Join us for a delicious meal, festive cheer and excellent company in the lovely County Suite.

Pre-Christmas Freshers' Reunion, Revolution, Newcastle

Wednesday, December 9, 2020, 5 pm

An invitation will be sent out to freshers as usual, along with the offer of free associate membership. This will follow up the contacts made at the Welcome Party in September.

Festive Afternoon Tea & Film, Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle

Saturday, December 12, 2020, 3 pm

Another tradition which has now established itself is the Festive Afternoon Tea and Film at the Tyneside. With the Digital Lounge all to ourselves, a scrumptious afternoon tea and a film of our choice, what better way to spend a winter afternoon in the run-up to Christmas! This year's film will be *Meet Me in St Louis* (1944), the celebrated star vehicle for Judy Garland.

REQUEST FOR EMAIL ADDRESSES

If you could receive this newsletter in electronic form, it would be a saving to the society. Email the new editor at: gilbertcockton@gmail.com.

PHOTOGRAPHS in this issue are by Bill Telford, unless otherwise credited.

WEBSITE

Please remember to consult our NCA website, which can be found at <<http://www.northumbrian-cambridge.co.uk>>. The website describes our Association and gives information about its events and activities, along with downloadable booking forms. You can find information on our Committee and its members, copies of our newsletters and AGM Minutes and an Archive of past events and meetings, along with photographs. There is a How to Join section, to which you can direct anyone who wishes to join us. The Website is managed by Professor Gilbert Cockton, and any queries or suggestions should be directed to him.

We also have a second site, a University of Cambridge Alumni group page managed by CUDAR, which also advertises the Association and our events and activities. It can be found at <<https://www.alumni.cam.ac.uk/group/northumbrian-cambridge-association>>. Any queries or suggestions concerning this can be sent to Professor Cockton.

COMMITTEE: NOMINATIONS OF OFFICERS

Professor Heather Cordell (President)

The Committee would like to nominate Professor Heather Cordell as our next President to succeed Dr William Telford. Heather is Professor of Statistical Genetics and a Wellcome Senior Fellow in the Population Health Sciences Institute in the Faculty of Medical Sciences at Newcastle University. She obtained her undergraduate degree in Mathematics from Cambridge (Jesus College) and this was followed by an MSc in Applied Statistics and DPhil in Mathematical Genetics from Oxford University. After this, she spent three postdoctoral years in Cleveland, Ohio, USA. From 1999-2006, she was once again back in Cambridge, working in the Department of Medical Genetics, before moving to Newcastle to take up the newly-established Chair of Statistical Genetics. Outside work, Heather enjoys singing with the Ovingham and District Choral Society and with the Chorus of the Royal Northern Sinfonia. She also enjoys travelling (both for work and pleasure!) and walking/cycling in Northumberland. Heather has been actively involved in the Northumberland Cambridge Association since 2011, and has been a member of the Committee since September 2015. She has regularly made the arrangements for our annual concert at the Sage and the dinner beforehand.



Professor Gilbert Cockton (Hon. Secretary, Editor of Newsletter)

The Committee would like to nominate Professor Gilbert Cockton as Hon. Secretary to succeed Dr Andrena Telford, and to take over the editorship of the biannual newsletter from the current President and Secretary. Gilbert Cockton retired in 2019 and is now Professor Emeritus at Northumbria University. He currently works two days each week for Sunderland University. He lives in Whitley Bay with his wife Ros, with adult children in Vienna and New York. A Johnian, he read History Part I and Education Part II, graduating with a BA and a PGCE a few weeks later as a very fresh postgraduate. He taught in a Derbyshire Comprehensive, where he wrote computer programs to support learning. This led to a PhD in Computer Science from Heriot-Watt University, and progression via Glasgow and Northumbria Universities to a Research Chair at Sunderland. During this period, he worked within and on behalf of companies in the digital sector. He was awarded a NESTA fellowship to develop strategic approaches to software design, with support from Microsoft Research. From 2009 he was Professor of Design Theory in the School of Design at Northumbria. His interests include cycling, art, reading and wine. He joined the Committee in 2017 and is currently our Web Manager.



NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Executive Committee is on September 16, 2020. If you would like any items added to the agenda for this, please notify the Hon. Secretary, Andrena Telford, beforehand. While two members have signalled their willingness to stand for the Committee, Robert M. Tindall (St. John's, 1961-65) and Andrew Young (Jesus, 1972-75), to serve from September 25, 2020 onwards, we are always looking for more members to do so. If you would like to join the Committee, or wish to nominate someone, please contact the President before September 16.

WELCOME

We are pleased to welcome another new member to the Northumbrian Cambridge Association: **David Bateman** (Selwyn, MB BChir, 1969-72). David's interests are fly fishing, walking and classical music.

FAREWELL

We were saddened to hear recently of the death of Nick Jackson (Caius, 1958-61) on August 29, 2019. Nick was a long-time member of the Association until his resignation in 2017, and a valuable member of the Committee up until 2016. He and former Treasurer, Christopher Beadle, regularly organised our Spring Walk each year, and he was a faithful attender at many of our events, such as our Christmas Lunch here in 2015 (Nick at right). Our condolences go to his wife Anke.



ALUMNI GROUPS' DIGITAL LEADERSHIP FORUM, Thursday, July 30-Saturday, August 1, 2020

Cambridge University's Alumni Engagement Team hope that alumni group office bearers, committee members and convenors, as well as any alumni who are thinking of volunteering their time for their alumni group, will join them for an Alumni Groups' Digital Leadership Forum on 30 July and 1 August. This will take the place of the Alumni Groups' Leadership Conference at Cambridge. This year's forum is designed to address and engage with the changing landscape of virtually connecting with your alumni group. On Thursday 30 July, there will be an update and Q&A with Vice-Chancellor, Professor Stephen J Toope and a discussion about digital events. On Saturday 1 August, there will be a session about building online communities. Recordings of each session will be made available shortly after the event. Register on their event webpage by midnight on 19 July.

RUTH BOND Exhibition

Award-winning interior designer and Northumbrian artist, Ruth Bond, daughter of long-standing NCA members Wendy and Mick Bond, recently had an exhibition of 'Northumberland in Oils' at the Aviary Gallery, Jesmond (June 15-July 6). We met her there on July 4, and here are some photographs of her work.



Left: Croft with Montbretia Flowers, Isle of North Uist.



Right: Bathing House, Howick, Summer.

REMINDER

Annual membership subscriptions were due on March 1. If you have not already done so, 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 mailed to the Treasurer, Mrs Susan Austin, 116 Queens Road, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3AU. May we ask you to alter existing standing orders so that payment is made on March 1 each year, or inform the Treasurer when she might expect it. Please make sure to keep subscription and excursion payments separate.