

Northumbrian Cambridge Association *Newsletter*

President: Dr William Telford

Hon. Secretary: Dr. Andrena Telford



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

May I begin by wishing all our members and associates a very happy and healthy New Year. I hope you have had an enjoyable Christmas break and that you are looking forward to an active and interesting year in 2020. This year represents the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Northumbrian Cambridge Association, and so it is a very special one for us. We will be celebrating the occasion during our Annual Dinner at the Northern Counties Club in Newcastle on Wednesday, March 11. The Cambridge University Development and Alumni Relations team are preparing a special banner for us, we will have some invited guests, James Wright will giving an account of the early history of the Association, and Professor Ian Fells will be regaling us with some of his reminiscences of Cambridge in the 1950s.

Looking back for the moment, we have had a number of successful events in the autumn of 2019, beginning with the Welcome to Freshers party held on September 16 at Mincoffs Solicitors in Newcastle. This event continues to grow from year to year. On this occasion seven NCA members were there to welcome 44 first year students, a new record. This was followed by the Annual General Meeting and Annual Lecture at the Royal Grammar School on September 27. Our speaker this year, Professor Tony Badger, formerly Paul Mellon Professor of American History and Master of Clare College, Cambridge, gave a fascinating talk on "The Kennedys and the Gores", brought right up to date by the fact that he had recently shared a platform with Al Gore. Our November musical event at the Sage was a concert by the Pitmen Poets, who told the story of the North East mining industry in poetry, picture and song. This followed on from a convivial meal in the Sage Brasserie and was much enjoyed by all. Our year finished with our now traditional Christmas events: a splendid Christmas lunch at the County Hotel and our festive afternoon tea and film at the Tyneside Cinema.

We can now look forward to a year of varied and interesting events, detailed in the Calendar which you will find later in this Newsletter, but just to whet your appetite, in February we will visit the Discovery Museum, where we will be given two guided tours, one of this historic building and the other of the museum's excellent costume collection. Our Spring Outing in April is one with a difference; we will be welcomed to Kirkley

Hall Zoological Garden, on the outskirts of Ponteland, where we will learn about the zoo's programme of conservation, will meet some of the animals and can choose a woodland walk and/or a visit to the walled garden. Our Spring Walk will be incorporated into a visit to Raby Castle, following on from a guided tour of the castle itself. As usual there will be a shorter and a longer walk for you to choose from. The Summer Outing will see us heading north again, to Seahouses, where we will have lunch together at the Olde Ship Inn and then will embark on a Serenity Cruises catamaran for a visit to the Farne Islands and a stopover on Inner Farne. On a preparatory excursion, Andrena and I saw not only seals, cormorants, gulls, puffins, etc., but also a school of dolphins that tracked our boat as we sailed back into Seahouses Harbour. After the summer break, we will have repeats of the Freshers Party, the AGM and Annual Lecture, a November musical event, the Christmas lunch and the increasingly popular Festive Afternoon Tea and Film (details in the July newsletter). We do hope you will join us for as many of these events as possible.

In conclusion, I have to inform you that this is the last year in which I and Andrena will serve as President and Secretary respectively of the society. We have served on the committee, and subsequently in these posts, for a considerable number of years and we feel it is time for us to step back and allow others to take over the running of the organisation. Fortunately we have an active and involved committee, including a very competent and hard-working Treasurer, and two members of the committee have agreed to stand for appointment to the positions of President and Secretary. These will be proposed for ratification at the Annual General Meeting on September 25, at which point Andrena and I will step down. Other nominations are of course welcome. Also, the July 2020 newsletter will be our last, and the publication will be taken over by Professor Gilbert Cockton, who currently handles our website. We can truly say that it has been an honour and a pleasure to serve the society. We have made many friends through its activities and we look forward to continuing to participate as members.



With best wishes,
Bill Telford

Dr William Telford
Christ's College, 1972-77

FRESHERS' PARTY, September 16, 2019

The event was held at Mincoffs Solicitors again, *gratia* Tim Gray, and went very well, with a record attendance. 44 freshers attended, with one student volunteer, Kieron Spoors (Law, Homerton), who assisted, and two parents who came as guests. Seven members of the NCA were present: the President, Hon. Secretary, Membership Secretary, Judy Vigurs, Treasurer, Susan Austin, and Heather Cordell and Gilbert Cockton. After registration, the President welcomed them and spoke on behalf of the NCA, Kieron Spoors told them what his first year at Cambridge had been like, Heather described her own experience at Cambridge and Gilbert told them what to expect in the way of support, and gave them some useful advice. We had drinks and refreshments, and the freshers spent most of the evening getting to know each other, especially those with colleges and subjects in common. The evening went with such a swing that we had some difficulty nudging them out when it was time to end! We are keeping in contact with them while they are at Cambridge, and have extended free associate membership of the NCA to them.

**AGM AND ANNUAL LECTURE, September 27, 2019**

The Annual General Meeting of the association took place at the Royal Grammar School on Friday, September 27. The continuing officers and committee members were duly elected, two new Committee members were appointed, Dr Peter Cleland (Selwyn, 1966-69, Medicine) and Arnold Fairless (St. John's, 1964-67), and the President warmly thanked Professor Peter Atkins and his wife, Elizabeth Atkins, who were stepping down. The buffet was supplied by Boldon Farmhouse Pantry, as usual, and the wines by Michael Jobling. Professor Tony Badger, former lecturer in the History Department of Newcastle University (1971 to 1991), Paul Mellon Professor of American History at Cambridge and Master of Clare College until 2014, and currently Professor of American History at Northumbria University in Newcastle upon Tyne, gave an excellent lecture on 'The Kennedys and The Gores' and this was followed by lively questions, and a vote of thanks from Professor Ian Fells.

**AUTUMN CONCERT, November 24, 2019**

Thirteen members and guests joined us for dinner at the Sage Brasserie this year, and 17 attended the Pitmen Poets concert afterwards. The meal at the Brasserie was excellent, and the concert was a lively one. In the course of the evening, we were treated to folk music from the North East mining tradition by four splendid musicians whose playing of guitars, and other stringed instruments, as well as accordion and even spoons, combined with North East humour, made for a memorable occasion.

**CHRISTMAS LUNCH, December 6, 2019**

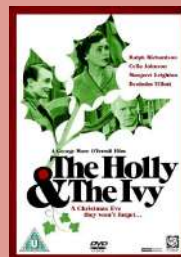
45 members and guests registered for this event, a record for us! After drinks in the upstairs Bar at 12, we moved through to the Mozart Suite for our traditional 3-course Christmas lunch. The President welcomed everyone, introduced the Committee members present and outlined our 2020 programme. The staff were all very attentive, and we were particularly impressed by the fact that each course was brought unerringly to each member and guest in line with their pre-ordered menu choices. After lunch, Prof. Heather Cordell gave out Christmas Carol song sheets and led us in communal carol singing, with the aid of her recorder. The occasion went with such a swing that people were reluctant to leave!

**PRE-CHRISTMAS FRESHERS' REUNION, December 11, 2019**

Ten of us turned up for this now traditional Freshers' reunion at Revolution, one of Newcastle's liveliest social venues, and although student numbers were thin, the students who came to meet Committee members were very enthusiastic. Cocktails and mocktails were chosen from the festive selection, and much enjoyed, and with the 2 for 1 deal, the whole evening was surprisingly inexpensive.

**FESTIVE AFTERNOON TEA AND FILM, December 14, 2019**

29 members and guests registered for this now regular festive event at the Tyneside Cinema. The Tyneside provided an excellent afternoon tea in our own private studio, complete with bar, digital fire and serving staff. The President welcomed everyone, including the guests, outlined the NCA programme for 2020, and introduced the film. Popcorn was given out before the film started. The film was the post-war classic *The Holly and the Ivy* (1952), and was much enjoyed.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2020**Winter Outing, Discovery Museum, Newcastle**Saturday, February 8, 2020

Join us for this very special visit to one of Newcastle's outstanding museums. We shall meet at 10.00 am at the Museum, which will be opening up early especially for us. After morning tea/coffee and biscuits at the Museum's cafeteria, we shall split into alternating groups for specialist tours, one to see the building and the other to visit the Museum's extensive costume store. In addition, there will be time for everyone to explore the Museum on their own. We have also arranged a soup and sandwich lunch in a private room, the Carpathia room, at 12.45.

Annual Dinner, Northern Counties Club, NewcastleWednesday, March 11, 2020

This year's annual dinner of the Northumbrian Cambridge Association will be a special occasion, celebrating the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Association. Once again it will be held in the elegant surroundings of the Northern Counties Club in the centre of Newcastle, and will be a black-tie affair as usual. The Club's excellent young chef will provide a three-course meal, followed by coffee/tea. After the dinner, past President, James Wright, will speak about the history of the Association, and there will be Cambridge reminiscences, from long-time member, Professor Ian Fells. And, of course, there will be another challenging quiz! We hope also to have some special guests join us for this significant event.

Spring Outing, Kirkley Hall Zoological Gardens, near PontelandSaturday, April 18, 2020

Our spring outing this year will be to Kirkley Hall Zoological Gardens. We will meet at 10.00. Morning coffee will be available in the Orangery Tearoom, after which, at 10.30, we shall have a talk on the zoo's conservation policy in the elegant conference room of Kirkley Hall. With the expertise of a Kirkley guide, we will be introduced to some of the zoo's inhabitants in the discovery room, with the opportunity to hold some of them. From about 11.30 onwards, we shall explore the zoo for ourselves, and at 12.30, we'll have lunch in the conference room. To follow in the afternoon (13.45-14.45), we shall have an optional woodland walk (of approximately 1 hour), led by the President and Secretary, after which you can visit the walled garden, and/or return to the Orangery Tea Room for afternoon tea.

Spring Walk, Raby Castle & EstateSaturday, May 16, 2020

Our spring walk this year will be to Raby Castle and its estate. We will meet at the Castle entrance at 9.45 am, whence we shall be escorted to the Grand Hall by Raby guide(s) for refreshments prior to a tour of the Castle (for approximately 90 minutes), followed by a soup and sandwich lunch in the canopied area outside the Stables Café. After lunch, you will have the option of a short walk, guided by Bill and Andrena Telford, through the walled garden and around the perimeter of the castle, with views of Raby's famous herds of red and fallow deer. A longer walk will also be available, ranging further through the 200 acre estate.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2020 (continued)**Summer Outing, Farne Islands Cruise**Sunday, June 21, 2020

Our trip to the Farne Islands will begin with lunch at 11.45 at the Olde Ship Inn in Seahouses. Following lunch we will join a Serenity Cruises catamaran at 13.45 for a trip round the Farne Islands, with an hour's stop-off on Inner Farne to see the bird life nesting on the cliffs, the old lighthouse and St Cuthbert's Chapel. On board our boat will be a wildlife expert who will be able to point out the main features, both animate and inanimate, of the islands. Expect to see the Farnes' colony of grey seals, along with cormorants, kittiwakes, gulls, terns and the loveable puffins. If we are lucky we may also see dolphins in the waters between the Farnes and the Northumberland coast.

Freshers' Party, Mincoffs Solicitors, NewcastleMonday, September 14, 2020

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, NewcastleFriday, September 25, 2020

The AGM and Annual Lecture will take place again at the Royal Grammar School, with a buffet supplied by Boldon Farmhouse Pantry, and wines by Michael Jobling. As in previous years, we hope to have a distinguished Cambridge academic to address us.

Pre-Concert Dinner and Musical Event, Sage, Gateshead
October/November, 2020 (tbc)

Join us for dinner and a concert at the Sage, the North's premier music centre.

Christmas Lunch, County Hotel, NewcastleFriday, December 4, 2020

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 and good company in the lovely Mozart Suite.

Pre-Christmas Freshers' Reunion, Revolution, NewcastleWednesday, December 9, 2020

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, NewcastleSaturday, December 12, 2020

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!

NCA 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 the President and by Committee member, Gilbert Cockton, and any queries or suggestions should be directed to them. 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 the President.

EXTRAORDINARY DONS: Kathleen Raine (1908-2003)

Wendy Bond writes: With a membership as large as that of NCA, we must span not only many colleges, but many interesting if not astonishing Dons that we have known, shared a staircase with, etc. Could this become a regular short feature in the Newsletter?

Wendy kicks off with this interesting portrait of Kathleen Raine, 'the poet, whose happy childhood in Great Bavington shines through much of her poetry. I met her first at a Girton English department drinks do, clad in a surely hand-dyed stiff green cotton robe hand printed with leaves. She gave a seminar on Blake in her faraway gentle voice that hovered way above our heads, and could occasionally be seen wafting along the corridors or through the trees in Girton's great gardens. She was much more down to earth in the tiny cottage just over the Cumbrian border where I met her again many years later. We had a great friend in common, too: the painter Winifred Nicholson who features in a couple of her very accessible local poems. But her Girton presence - and most of her criticism and thought were impressive if incomprehensible at the time. It would be good in these times when universities are reduced to businesses rather than seats of intellectual learning, to hear of other legendary Cambridge dons.



Wendy Bond (Girton, 1958-61)

SWEET STORY OF A CAMBRIDGE INSTITUTION!

The venerable Fitzbillies in Cambridge will be celebrating its 100th birthday in 2020. To mark the occasion, the much loved Cambridge institution has published a book: *Fitzbillies - Stories & Recipes from a 100-Year-Old Cambridge Bakery*. The authors (daughter and son-in-law of former NCA President James Wright and his wife Jenny, to whom we owe this information) rescued Fitzbillies from

receivership in 2011

—abandoning a life in London to rebuild this legendary bakery. The Fitzbillies book celebrates a

centenary of the shop, staff and cakes that have fed generations of undergraduates. It includes recipes for many of the traditional favourites, and while some details of the

Chelsea bun recipe made at the bakery remain secret, there is a version you can make at home. Signed copies are available to buy online:

www.fitzbillies.com

(did you know you can order Chelsea buns by post too?). It's also available from bookshops.



Photographs above courtesy of James Wright. Photo of Kathleen Raine from Wendy Bond. All other photographs by Bill Telford.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The Association welcomes two new **Committee members**, Dr Peter Cleland and Mr Arnold Fairless. When we asked them to supply some information about themselves, they wrote as follows:

(Peter, left in photo) My family come from Australia but I was born and brought up in the UK. I studied medicine at Selwyn College from 1966 to 1969 and then did the clinical at the Middlesex Hospital. After various training posts I worked in Northern Nigeria from 1976 to 1978. I then trained in Neurology in Newcastle, becoming a Consultant in 1984. I worked in Newcastle and Sunderland. I retired from full time work in 2016 but still do medicolegal and some NHS work. My hobbies include tennis, gardening, fishing and bridge as well as travelling in the tropics.



(Arnold) It's quite disturbing to think that my old college (St John's) is now being run by people half my age, and that the dons I knew are probably now lecturing in Heaven – the University of the Fourth Age? Hmm... Getting older throws up curious perspectives. I shouldn't be surprised at the march of time. I spent most of my professional life teaching history, usually to young and old in colleges of further education, although latterly I did a few years in private schools. At the tail end of my career I discovered the joys of office life, working for an exam board, and realised how stressful teaching had been. Now I research, repair and restore old clocks – the mechanisms that measured history.

We also welcome **New Member** Malcolm Duff (Peterhouse, 1962-65) and **New Associate Member** Fiona Douglas.

We were saddened to hear of the death of Monica Cheale, wife of NCA member, David Gregory, in September last. Monica regularly attended events with David and will be much missed.

REMINDERS!

Please don't forget your annual **Membership Subscription**, which is due on March 1. 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. If you normally pay by standing order, may we ask you to alter your standing order so that payment is made on March 1, or inform the Treasurer when she might expect it. Please keep subscription and excursion payments separate.

The next **Newsletter** will appear in July 2020. If you have a contribution you can offer, please send it to us by June 15. The address for the editors is: Bill & Andrena Telford, Ladywell Cottage, 24 West Road, Ponteland, Northumberland NE20 9SX; Tel.: 01661-825437; Email: aeandwr.telford@btinternet.com. We would love to have more **contributions** to the Newsletter from members, whether photographs, personal reminiscences or current points of view. Also if you could receive this newsletter in **electronic form**, it would be a saving to the society.

The next meeting of the **Executive Committee** is on March 4, 2020. If you would like any items added to the agenda for this, please notify the Hon. Secretary, Andrena Telford, beforehand. We are looking for two **new members** of the Committee to serve from September, 2020 onwards. The committee remits can be found on the NCA website. If you would like to join the Committee, or wish to nominate someone, please contact the President by September.