



HEXHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Newsletter 61	Editor: Mark Benjamin (01434) 607746	Autumn 2011
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Hexham Historian binders

The binders for your *Hexham Historian* back issues are now available to purchase. Those members who have not seen the sample shown at recent meetings can get some idea from the illustration although, sadly, we cannot reproduce the very nice maroon and gilt colouring in this newsletter. Costing £6 (+p&p) each, the binders hold ten issues of HH so, if you have a complete back run, you'll need to order three binders – **available for only £16(+ p&p) if ordered together!** The binders are available from our Publications Officer, Ted Wall, and if you have any copies of HH missing, Ted will be more than happy to supply these, too! Ted will bring some binders to our meetings but can be contacted at tandtw@hotmail.co.uk or on (01434) 600422.



The Anna Rossiter Prize for Local History

September saw the launch of a new annual history prize for Hexham's Queen Elizabeth High School sixth form students in honour of the late Anna Rossiter, stalwart of the Society and history teacher at Hexham Middle School. £100 in cash and book tokens will be awarded by the Society for the best new essay on a local history topic, and the winning essay will be published in *The Hexham Historian*. Students taking part will gain access to our online members' library of research materials, in addition to the wide range of records in Hexham Library and the Butler Border History Trust collection at the Old Gaol. Students who have signed up were taken on a tour of the two libraries by Mark Benjamin and Janet Goodridge.

The Anna Rossiter Prize will be offered within the school's Sixth Form Enhancement programme, which offers a range of activities to complement core academic studies, participation in which helps students stand out in university or employment applications. Programme co-ordinator Tim Burdon says "we're delighted to work with the Hexham Local History Society on this new scheme. Aside from the prospect of a cash prize and publication, all students who enter will have another impressive point to make on application forms towards their future careers. And any students taking part in their Year 12 will have the option to pursue their topic further towards the Extended Project Qualification, on which universities are increasingly keen."

Proceeds from sales of Anna's book, *Hexham in the Seventeenth Century*, are being used to fund the new prize thanks to the generosity of Anna's widower, Dr Nick Rossiter. The prize is intended as a practical way to remember the contribution Anna made to history in Hexham by encouraging the next generation of historians to develop an interest in the subject through exploring and researching their own heritage. Here's hoping for a successful start and that it will flourish for years to come!

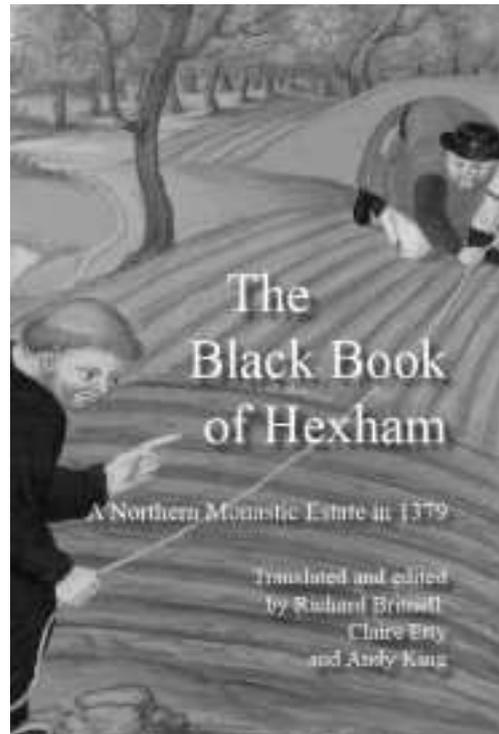
The Black Book is coming!

Many readers will be aware that we've been planning to publish the first ever full English translation of the 'Black Book', a detailed survey of Hexham Priory's estates in 1379, since the idea was first mooted as a Millennium project by Society member Dr Jim Hedley. We're pleased to say that publication of *The Black Book of Hexham* is now imminent. In addition to the many properties in and around Hexham itself, as shown on this illustration, the Priory had property elsewhere in Northumberland and in Yorkshire and Cumberland too. The translation, and preparation of extensive supporting commentary and an authoritative Introduction has been completed by Richard Britnell, Emeritus Professor of the University of Durham. A highly regarded expert on English medieval economic and social history, he has built on the initial translation and collation of additional material by Dr Claire Etty and Dr Andy King. In addition to the Black Book, the publication also includes translations of a large selection of additional medieval charters, grants and other records of the Priory's property alongside the Dissolution survey of 1536. A separate section brings together the evidence from all these sources for each of the places owned by the Priory and there is also a

glossary of English terms used in the Black Book. It will be produced in a 9" x 6" format, will be 300 pages long, fully indexed and accompanied by maps locating all the Priory's properties.

This long awaited work, to be published in both hardback and paperback, will doubtless be of great interest to members. We also expect high demand from students, lecturers, libraries, archives and the wider public across the northern counties in which the Priory had estates. The exact date of publication is not yet confirmed but we expect it to be within the next few months, possibly before Christmas.

It will be on sale at £18 (paperback), and £30 (hardback with dust-jacket), which represents excellent value compared to similar publications of this calibre. Occasional Publications are usually offered to members at a discount of 10%, but this time we are offering members the chance to buy a paperback copy for £15 and/or a hardback copy for £24, representing up to 20% savings. (If postage and packing is required there will be an extra charge). Expressions of interest are now sought from members. Please let us know if you would like a copy. This will help us manage our printing costs in order to keep member prices low, and means you will be among the first to obtain it on publication.



To reserve your copy please contact Ted Wall, who handles our Publication Sales either by phone (01434 600422) or email (tandtw@hotmail.co.uk) or by writing to him at 6 Park Avenue, Hexham, NE46 3EN as soon as possible, giving your name and indicating whether you would like a hardback copy, paperback or one of each.

Vanishing Hexham revisited

A revised and enlarged edition of Colin Dallison & David Jennings 2001 publication that lists all the historic place names of the town that have either disappeared or been renamed has been produced. It will not be published in paper format but as a paid for download from the website for £2.00. Members who would like a copy but do not have access to the Internet should contact our Publications Officer, Ted Wall, on 01434 600422

The Hexham Timeline

Work continues on the on-line version of the Hexham Timeline, now viewable on the public pages of the website. All known clerics (Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Catholic) have now been added. Special thanks are due to Peter Wright and Philip Clark for their help with this. Also added have been census figures since 1841, the head teachers of Queen Elizabeth Grammar/High School, the Bailiffs & Stewards of Tynedale/Hexhamshire, and the visits to the town of Buffalo Bill and William Joyce, "Lord Haw Haw" – not at the same time!

Do have a look at the timeline – all suggestions for additional events are welcome. Can anyone tell me when Sir Oswald Mosley gave a talk to Hexham Rotarians? I remember seeing a report in the Courant whilst looking for something else but have no idea when it was; presumably sometime between 1931 and 1939!

Hexham Historian Index

The cumulative index, covering issues 1-21, is now available as a free download from the website. Many thanks to Hilary Faulkner for her continuing efforts in providing this invaluable service.

So, farewell to The Riot

Some people have commented that the Society should have made more of the anniversary of the Hexham Riot. The committee considered that everything that could be said about the Riot had already been said in various publications, most noticeably in Tom Corfe's book *Riot: the Hexham militia riot, 1761* and we added Robert Lowe's letter to the record in our last Newsletter. However, to

finish off the 250th year since the bloody events in the Market Place we reprint three poems from the pen of north-east poet, Keith Armstrong, who co-operated with Tom on the book.

TUESDAY MARCH 10th 1761

'The Market Place was a tragic sight. Bodies of the dead and wounded lay scattered. The ground was stained with blood and the cries of the wounded were pitiful. The following day it rained, washing away the traces.'

Wash away the day,
wash the pain away,
sweep the remains of yesterday
into the racing river.
Beat the Dead March,
bang the old drum,
heal Hexham's bust bones
and cry me a river,
cry the Water of Tyne.
Wash away the day
and wash this pain away.

A PITMAN DEAD

With blood gushing out of his boot tops,
a well-dressed man
leaves town
along Priestpopple.
Thirteen men lie inside the Abbey,
not owned.
Numbers are found dead upon the roads.
Big with child, Sarah Carter shot,
the musket ball found in the child's belly.
Thrice into a man's body
lying at James Charlton's shop door
it's said they ran their bayonets;
and a pitman dead,
a weaver:
al those broken days of history,
all the slain hours in our diaries.
Sound the Abbey's bells!
Let them toll the severed minutes.

Let them celebrate
the end of torture.
Let them gush
with rejoicing
for more peaceful times.

THERE'S A RIOT

These streets,
in this Heart of All England,
are swept clean of blood.
But the stains still soak our books.
Death upon death,
we turn the pages;
in between the lines,
we read about the screams,
time's bullets
tearing flesh away.
There is terror lurking in this Market Place,
just scrape away the skin
and, deep down,
there's a Riot:
a commotion boiling
a terrible turbulence,
a throbbing pain.
It is a Riot of gore,
a torrential downpour,
a weeping,
a seeping sore
that is Hexham's History.

All three poems © Keith Armstrong

The Website Peter Rodger

The website continues to be well used, with an average of 9 visitors each day, looking at an average of 37 pages. However, and we don't know what prompted it, but on September 25th a mere 7 visitors looked at 170 pages – hope they found what they were looking for!

Baby Boomers – those born after the end of the Second World War are now beginning to retire and are tagged with the word 'pensioner'. The title, however, has very different implications today from when it described previous generations of older people. In 2011, pensioners have very different expectations, aspirations and lifestyles, much of it centred on how technology has changed their lives. Whilst they may have been brought up on the Light Programme and BBC Spectrums, technology now is much more accessible to everybody and those without a computer and an Internet connection are, to some extent, at a disadvantage. Statistically, about a half of people over 50 years of age have access to the Internet (this appears to be reflected in our membership) and make good use of it to enhance their lives. The dovetailing of computers and telephony has inspired cheap and efficient

ways of communicating with family and friends, pursuing new interests and knowledge and the plethora of search engines (dominated, of course, by Google) has opened up completely new worlds for some. The number of web sites in existence is simply incredible. Netcraft.com monitors the number on a monthly basis; in October 2011 they reported 504,082,040 websites worldwide. (Source: [http:// http://news.netcraft.com/archives/category/web-server-survey/](http://news.netcraft.com/archives/category/web-server-survey/))

For the Society, the web site (www.hexhamhistorian.org) and the Internet are increasingly essential tools. Not only is it our public face and a way of communicating our activities to members and the outside world, but is becoming a valuable resource base for local information through the Society's publications. Not only do we sell books online, but many of them are becoming available in digital format – available for download at a lesser cost than the paper versions. The web site is gaining importance as a serious research tool; Anna Rossiter's database of local records is available online in a searchable format and is available to members and outside researchers alike, our 'Notes & Queries' pages continue to attract questions about local history matters from around the globe.

Maintaining the web site has very little cost, but many benefits. More members are now requesting access to the 'Members' restricted area where the Society has a splendid selection of reference documents and access to digital libraries around the world.

You may have received this and earlier editions of the Newsletter by email. There are now 132 members who have shared their email addresses with us, most of whom have opted to receive the larger part of the Society's mail through email. It represents a huge saving in the cost of stationery and postage. Reminders for monthly meetings are sent out by email and almost certainly have contributed to larger audiences. This year we've been able to deliver 95 sets of AGM papers by email and, as though an incentive were needed, email recipients generally receive mailings a few days before those sent by post!

For aspiring 'Silver Surfers' there are local courses to help you 'bring the future to history' and if you are interested I'll be happy to tell you about them. I can be contacted on 07550011001.

**Work, walk
or Wark?: a
dialectal
query**

Susanne Ellingham writes: "One comment on *Two Hexham ballads* (HH21): where it says 'from Wall Town work and Simonsburn' do you think it could refer to Wark? Some of the other spellings are not the modern ones eg Warden for Warden, the place references seem to be grouped by location and the use of capitalisation was only regulated in comparatively modern times. While local printers/transcribers would easily recognise the term as a place name this is less likely if copies were made even as close as Newcastle."

I've gone back to the original document and the word is definitely 'work' but I'm inclined to agree that Susanne is correct in suspecting that it should be "Wark" - Editor

**18th Century
Letters
Transcription
Project**

Greg Finch

This year has seen a great deal of progress with our plans to transcribe and publish the letters written by the Reverends George Ritschel and Thomas Andrews to their superiors in York, commenting on many aspects of life in the early 18th century town. Volunteers have completed transcriptions of the vast majority of the 163 letters, and cross-checking is now underway. Our intention is to collate the transcribed letters, add supporting commentary and an introduction with a view to publication at some point next year. We are still looking for a suitable book title. '18th Century Letters from the Curates of Hexham' might be accurate but it hardly conveys the fascinating content of

the correspondence in a catchy way! The team would be delighted to hear of any suggestions from members. Please contact Greg Finch by email at gregfinch@hotmail.com if so.

**Transcription
Project
Slightly Earlier!**

If any member has been inspired by the work of Greg's team but would like to go further back, the opportunity has arisen to help transcribe some Ancient Egyptian documents. Go to www.ancientlives.org/transcribe and try your luck with the hieroglyphs!

Prison Conditions 18th Century Style

Liz Sobell

An interesting insight into prison conditions, long before G4S had anything to do with running them!

*"To His Majesties Right
Worshipful Justices of the Peace in Public Sessions
Assembled at Hexham*

*These
The Humble petition of all the poor prisoners in Morpeth
goal
Humbly Sheweth*

*That one Ann Moor a poor Cripell woman belonging to
Midfoord parish & there carried from house to house on a
barra; and she being so mischeivous & troublesome
amongst these parishioners; they made their application
to some of our Justices of the peace, and prevailed with them
to send her to this goal about 4 or 5 years ago, where she
is maintained at the charge of the parishioners of Midford;*

*however she hath been since she came to this goal so mischeivous and troublesome that we your
poor prisoners hath had no quietness with her: and especially they that where she did most reside,
was disturbed with her both night and day to their great ditterment [sic] ; nay our keeper Mr Grey was
often troubled to see what disturbance she made and often put him in passion yet she doth not regard
his reprimands but is dayly worse and worse in her mischeivous ways: therefore we your humble
petitioners humbly prayes your worships will be pleased seriously to consider the great unquietness
your poor petitioners groans under by the forwardness of this ill-natured woman; and grant an order
that she may be removed to such a place as your worships shall think fit that your poor petitioners
may be quit of her: and we shall ever pray as in duty bound*

*Further we poor prisoners where this ill natured woman resides amongst us we are made very uneasy
with her filth and Cannot get ourselves kept clean from vermin; nay she spoyles us in every place with
her excraments"*



Northumberland Record Office, Quarter Sessions Bundles, Midsummer at Hexham 1719, page 75.

Talking Bones and All Seeing Stones

Local storytellers let loose in the countryside.

The Newcastle based storytelling group A Bit Crack are using two special performances to give the local communities fictional insights into local history.

The group, which is part funded by the Arts Council, has investigated seven sites around the region. They have now created their own original stories drawn from the history and archaeology of the area. A Bit Crack are presenting Talking Bones in conjunction with Archaeologist Paul Frodsham of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Harry Beamish, Archaeologist with the National Trust as part of their Talking Bones project. The Archaeologists will tell the known History, the Storytellers the unknown

On Friday 11th November at Haydon Bridge Community Centre at 7.30pm Tickets: £2

Listen to original tales of masons marks at Langley Castle, a reivers tale from Staward Pele and the buried treasure at Sewingshields Crags – all three are landmarks associated with local artist, John Martin.

Storytellers Chris Bostock, Malcolm Green and Pat Renton are joined by Archaeologist Harry Beamish.

On Saturday 12th November at Alston Town Hall, both at 7.30pm Tickets £6.

Hear the story of the recently discovered Celtic stone Head of Ayle dislodged from a wall near Alston, the tale of a child burial in Ingram Valley and the mystery of the oak trunk coffins at Wyden Eals.

Storytellers Chris Bostock, Malcolm Green and Pat Renton are joined by Archaeologist Paul Frodsham

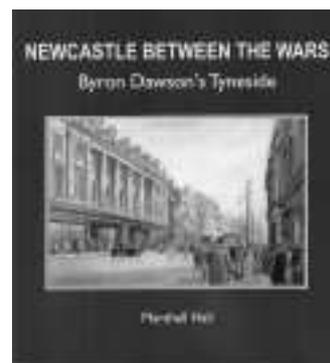
Talking Bones is an ongoing project and has received a huge amount of press coverage in the North East.

The Riding Surnames of North Tynedale & Redesdale

Christopher Robson will be giving this talk, at Bellingham Heritage Centre on Wednesday 9th November at 7pm, in which he will consider the factors which led to the rise of the reiving names in what were termed “The Northumbrian Liberties” of the English Middle March, and differentiate between the “grayne” and the “surname” or “clan”.

Book Review
Rosemary Marsh

Hall, Marshall. **Newcastle between the wars: Byron Dawson's Tyneside** (Tyne Bridge Publishing, 2011) ISBN 978 1 857952 02 5 £7.99



This soft backed, seventy-two page book filled with illustrations both in colour and black and white, is a welcome addition to the excellent series produced by Tyne Bridge Publishing.

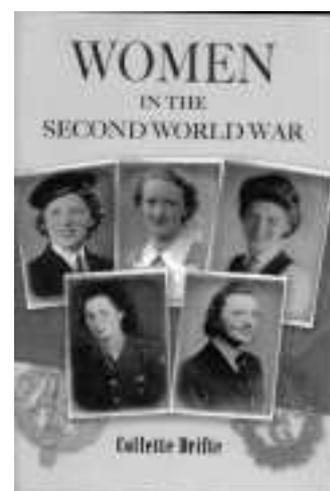
Byron Dawson was a Geordie by adoption. Born in Oxfordshire, he was brought north in 1910 at the age of fourteen following his mother's death, to live with his uncle and aunt. He was to spend almost all the rest of his life living and working in Newcastle although after WW2 he taught Art to boys at Hexham's Queen Elizabeth Grammar School so there may be a member, or friend of a member, somewhere out there who remembers him.

By some standards he was an eccentric - he cared nothing for appearances or worldly goods; did not bother about food or the comforts of life. Quite simply, he loved recording the city around him and responded with alacrity when, in the late 1920s, he was commissioned to produce a weekly illustration for the North Mail & Newcastle Chronicle. He had to work very fast in pencil and pen and ink and the illustrations in this book show how skilful he was. Each one is accompanied by a brief description of the scene depicted and an explanation of how it relates to the city as it is today. The text by Marshall Hall, who is surely something of a 'regional treasure' as far as art in the North East is concerned, perfectly complements the illustrations.

This book is a very worthwhile addition to anyone's collection, be it library or just a shelf of books on the North East.

Book Review
Trisha Wall

Drifte, Collette. **Women in the Second World War.** (Pen & Sword, 2011) ISBN 978 1 84468 096 2 £19.99



Having been asked to review this book just prior to the articles about it and the author, Colette Drifte, in the Hexham Courant I did wonder what I could add. However, as you may know it is about the exploits of women from all the Services during the 2nd WW. It starts with a list of 31 women who were *Mentioned in Dispatches* followed by an Introduction and then chapters on individual women in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) and the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS). Then there is a chapter headed 'They also Serve' about women in the Women's Land Army, The Timber Corps, The Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD), the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS), The National Fire Service (NFS), the NAAFI and other reserved occupations. The final chapter is about three women who served in the Special Operations Executive (SOE) one, called Violette Szabo, the subject of the film 'Carve her name with pride'. The book is full of very personal accounts and memories of war time experiences by women doing all manner of war work from being in the Battle of Monte

Cassino to farming in Co Durham. The author has given, where necessary, short explanatory pieces but otherwise it is the words and pictures of the women themselves that make this such an enjoyable and interesting read. Colette Drifte is known for her educational books and this is described as her first 'non-educational' book – it certainly educated me and is just the sort of book to have at your bedside; easy to read, in any order, and very inspiring.

Book Review

Jim Hedley

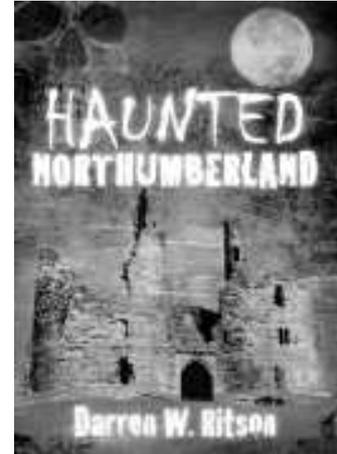
Riton, Darren W. **Haunted Northumberland** (The History Press, 2011)
ISBN 9780752458618 £9.99

Apart from the Roman wall, in Northumberland it would be hard to find a more popular subject for authors to write about than ghosts. Most of the old favourites are mentioned (apart from the first recorded, the Hedley Kow), as well as previously unpublished experiences of the author and his ghost hunter friends. Sites are listed alphabetically and are accompanied by many photographs of sites, including one ghost and drawings.

With so many ruined castles in Northumberland it is not surprising that believers encounter plenty of ghosts including multiples at some sites, but why is it that so many public houses are haunted? Could it have something to do with the sale of alcohol or the marketing skills of the innkeeper?

The enthusiasm of the author for his subject limits exploration of alternative explanations for the recorded phenomena. The Hexham heads, two round stone Celtic objects dug out of a local garden in 1972 are suggested in the book as being responsible for the appearance of werewolf-like manifestations in Hexham and Southampton, but no mention is made of the later claim by the previous owner of the garden that they were made by him out of cement and sand for the amusement of his daughter. (Paul Screeton, *Tales of Hexham heads*, Outlaw press, c1981). Also, the post hole next to the Victorian reincarnation of Winter's gibbet stated to be the original gibbet is said by archaeologists to be the base of the Steng cross.

If you are a believer in ghosts then you will find this book to be a useful addition to the many other books, newspaper articles and media coverage on the subject. If you do not believe, then you are unlikely to have your mind changed.



Books to review

Pen & Sword Publishers have offered the following books for review. If any member would like to do so, please get in touch with Mark on (01434) 607746 or enquiry@hexhamhistorian.org

- Bishop, M C. Handbook to Roman legionary fortresses
- Breeze, David. Frontiers of the Roman Empire
- Featherston, Donald. Bowmen of England
- Reid, Stuart. Culloden
- Westlake, Ray. The Territorials, 1908-14: a guide for military and family historians.

Notes & Queries

Many of these queries are posted on our website, often anonymously. If you can help with any that do not give direct contact details, or you don't have access to the Internet, please get in touch with Mark Benjamin on (01434) 607746.

1. David Franks is trying to locate **Nunsbrough House/Farm**, thought to have been somewhere in the Shire. His ancestors, John Dodd and his wife, are buried at Whitley Chapel in an unmarked grave; their place of residence is given in a listing of unmarked burials at the church. If anyone knows where it might have been, please contact David on davidjfranks4@gmail.com
2. Mrs H Doble of the Loders LHS writes: I saw your website for Hexham, and just wanted to enquire whether the 2nd Baronet **Sir Molyneux Hyde Nepean** who died at Lee Hall, Hexham, on 4 June 1856 was buried nearby, as he owned a property at Loders, Dorset

where both his father and son were buried in the family vault but he was not buried there himself. I did wonder whether he was just staying at the Hall when he died. Molyneux married twice first to a Charlotte Tilghman and secondly to a Lydia Wright just four years before he died. Lydia was the daughter of William Wright of Wallsend, Northumberland, so perhaps she is the connection to the Charlton and Ridley families. Do you know anything about Lee Hall at this time, was it owned by Sir Nepean etc. helencausewayfm@talk21.com

3. Does anyone have memories of the houses at the southern end of **Burn Lane**? These are now knocked through to a single residence and next door, a joiners shop. I'm in the house which has been knocked through and extended from a smaller pair but the evolution is hard to trace. Any photos or recollections of the development of this part of town? (Web)
4. David Lowery writes: I am looking for information regarding **Lead Mining activities in the Slaley area**, and the families involved, in the period up to 1840. One of my ancestors was a William Lowrey, born in Slaley in 1828. His parents, John & Sarah (nee Nixon) Lowrey were married in 1815, at St Mary the Virgin Anglican Church in Slaley. The Lowrey family members were involved in Lead Mining in Slaley, until about 1840, when they moved west to the Allendale/Allenheads area to continue mining there. Any records of mine locations/ employees would be appreciated.
5. Norma McCallum of Waikanae, Kapiti, New Zealand, writes: My great great grandmother **Ann Swinburne is recorded in the 1841 census as being a beerhousekeeper in Hexham**. She was widowed in 1837, reverted to her maiden name of Swinburn and presumably took up the 'calling' to feed her seven children. My great grandmother Mary was her illegitimate daughter (no father given.) Does anyone have knowledge of Ann and her parents? She was born in 1799 or 1800 in Hexham, married at Hexham Abbey in 1820; died Stannersburn 1864.
6. Billy Mollon has heard that an owner of **Blindburn Hall, Wark** in the late 19th/early 20th century was a Governor of the Bank of England. Can anyone confirm this? Billy is also interested in Richard Charlton of Corbridge and his wife, Isabella Mathieson of Bywell, who were on the staff of the hall at the time. They are ancestors of Eleanor May Milburn, born in Hexham in 1911. Billy can be contacted on billymollon@yahoo.co.uk

Second-hand books offer

New to the Bennor Books catalogue, these books are offered at a 10% discount to HLHS members until the end of December. Contact Mark on 07879263848 if you would like to take advantage of this offer.

Backhouse, Janet The Lindisfarne gospels
96pp, lavishly illustrated throughout in b&w and colour. £8

Bateson, Edward A History of Northumberland, Vol 2: The Parishes of Embleton, Ellingham, Howick, Long Houghton and Lesbury
571pp, indexed, b&w illus throughout. A good reading copy that would rebind very well. £40.00

Craster, H H E A History of Northumberland, Vol 8: The Parish of Tynemouth
457pp, frontis., illus throughout in b&w, indexed. A good reading copy that would rebind well. £45.00

Craster, H H E A History of Northumberland, Vol 9: The Parochial Chapelries of Earsdon and Horton
410pp, frontis., illus throughout in b&w, indexed. A good reading copy that would rebind well. £30.00

Jamieson, James Northumberland at the opening of the 20th century
Pike's New Century Series, No.14. 497 pen and photographic portraits of the great and the good of the county at the beginning of the 20th century. Considerable wear to gold-embossed maroon leather covers and front board is separating from text, although not from spine. £85.00

And finally

Don't forget our final talk of what has been a fascinating programme. The meeting, on November 11th, will also include the Society's AGM, but don't let that put you off coming to hear Liz Sobell's talk entitled "**King Killers, Kirk Sellers and Roguish Rumps**". These were among the insults directed at supporters of the Whig candidate in the hotly contested 1722 Parliamentary election in Hexham. The campaign, amidst national and local corruption led to mob violence in the town.