



HEXHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Newsletter 68	Editor: Mark Benjamin (01434) 607746	Spring 2014
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Message from the Secretary Yvonne Purdy

I would like to thank all those members who have already renewed your memberships – and give a gentle nudge to those who have yet to do so! Renewals can be posted to me at 31 Dukes Road, Hexham NE46 3AW or handed to me at the next available meeting.

Over the past year we have been joined by a gratifying number of new members, bringing our membership to just less than three hundred and consolidating the Society's position as the largest in Northumberland. I'd like to welcome all new members and to encourage your involvement in all aspects of our activities, whether talks, projects, publications, website or committees! If you would like to get actively involved, please contact me or any member of the committee (contact details are on your calendar card) or have a word at the next meeting.

New to the Members' Library

- 1) The cumulative index to the Hexham Historian, issues 1-23 is now available in both Word and PDF formats. Thanks again, to Hilary Faulkner for undertaking this task.
- 2) The Hexhamshire & Allendale Inclosure Act. A transcript of this Act, authorizing the enclosure of much of the Shire and Allendale area, has been created by Yvonne Purdy for the trustees of Allendale Stinted Pasture.

Hexham connections: a puzzle

So, who lived in this Tokyo temple from 1859 and what is his connection to Hexham? The answer can be found at the end of this newsletter!

Volunteer for the Star Chamber!

There are perhaps 15,000 Elizabethan Star Chamber cases and they are full of details of events and everyday life in every part of England and Wales. Unfortunately, the catalogue doesn't say from where any of the cases come. A new wiki has been created on a University of Houston web server and this now includes a 'Names' index and a 'County' index. The 'County' index is still practically empty. Because it is a wiki site, anyone who recognises any of the cases from the 'Names' index can supply a note of the place from which it comes. The idea is that once a case has been ascribed to a county, the local history and county record societies will eventually want to transcribe and publish them. Well, anyway, that's the theory. The address is http://www.uh.edu/waalt/index.php/Elizabethan_Star_Chamber_Project



Thomas Spence Trust Keith Armstrong

It's good to welcome the establishment of The Thomas Spence Trust, founded by a group of Tyneside activists intent on celebrating and promoting the life and work of that noted pioneer of people's rights, pamphleteer and poet Thomas Spence (1750-1814), who has born on Newcastle's Quayside in those turbulent times.



Spence served in his father's net-making trade from the age of ten but went on later to be a teacher at Haydon Bridge Free Grammar School and at St. Ann's Church in Byker under the City Corporation. In 1775, he read his famous lecture on *The right to property in land* to the Newcastle Philosophical Society, who voted his expulsion at their next meeting. He claimed to have invented the phrase '*The rights of man*' and chalked it in the caves at Marsden Rocks in South Shields in honour of the working class hero 'Blaster Jack' Bates, who lived there. He even came to blows with famed Tyneside wood-engraver Thomas Bewick over a political issue, and was thrashed with cudgels for his trouble.

From 1792, having moved to London, he took part in radical agitations, particularly against the war with France. He was arrested several times for selling his own and other seditious books and was imprisoned for six months without trial in 1794, and sentenced to three years for his *Restorer of society to its natural state* in 1801. Whilst politicians such as Edmund Burke saw the mass of people as the '*swinish multitude*', Spence saw creative potential in everybody and broadcast his ideas in the periodical *Pigs' Meat*.

A book and launch events are planned for September 2014, the 200th anniversary of Spence's death, in Newcastle upon Tyne at the site of the commemorative plaque and in the Red House on the Quayside and in London near the site of the Hive of Liberty, Spence's bookshop in Little Turnstile, Holborn.

Further information from: Dr Keith Armstrong, The Thomas Spence Trust, 93 Woodburn Square, Whitley Lodge, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3JD. Tel: 0191 252 9531.

Pruddah print of Hexham

This little-known coloured print was sent in by Clive Cookson of London. He inherited it from his grandfather who had lived in Warden. Interestingly, it appears in none of the various books containing old images of Hexham. It is undated but the title and the costumes of the figures included would seem to indicate sometime in the mid-nineteenth century; the printer, therefore, being Edward Pruddah the father and not the better-known printer and publisher son of the same name.



George Fenwick, ironmonger Jim Hedley

It was common practice in the nineteenth century for book collectors to purchase text blocks and have them bound to their own specification. The more dedicated collectors would combine pamphlets, broadsheets, leaflets and other ephemera on a specific subject and have these specially bound and given a title such as tracts or museum. One such enthusiast of North East local history was John Oxberry (1857-1940) known during his lifetime as the 'Historian of Gateshead'. At the age of 21 he left Gateshead to go prospecting for gold in New Zealand and Australia but having failed to make his fortune after five years he returned home to take up the post of school inspector at Felling. Over the next 60 years he

accumulated a large library of local books and numerous albums containing thousands of newspaper cuttings, now in Gateshead library.

Among a number of his books in my own collection there is a volume entitled *Hexham Tracts* (see bookplate) which contains Ridley's *Hexham Chronicle* (1862), *The conservation and dedication festival of Hexham Abbey* (1899), *The ancient cathedral of Northumbria and notable Hexham families* (1907) and Mate's *Illustrated Hexham* (1907). On the rear flyleaf under the signature of John Oxberry there is a handwritten old advertisement in rhyme promoting the business of a Hexham ironmonger, George Fenwick. John Oxberry copied this from a collection of local rhymes in the British Museum, which had been amassed by Thomas Bell of Newcastle, probably at some time between 1825 and 1830, although recent enquiries as to its whereabouts have failed to confirm this.

If John Oxberry can be characterised as a bibliophile then Thomas Bell and his brother John were bibliomaniacs. Their father John senior, was a bookseller and land agent for the Duke of Northumberland. John junior (1783-1864) took over the bookselling business and proposed the formation of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle. After receiving an apathetic response he eventually received the support of the Duke of Northumberland, which prompted a stampede by the local gentry to join, including some who had previously declined. John was subsequently sidelined and treated shabbily. His collecting mania for local history led to bankruptcy, which alienated the local gentry even further. His brother Thomas (1785-1860), the original collector of the poem took over the land agency business from his father. He was slightly more discerning in his collecting passion, but even then his library of 15000 volumes took 15 days to auction off. His bookplate is taken from the auction catalogue.

The poem heading is "*George Fenwick, Ironmonger and Hardwareman, Hexham, sells the following articles wholesale and retail on the most reasonable terms*".

*In Hexham if you walk the street,
Apply to whomso'er you meet:
Ask for GEORGE FENWICK and he'll try
To suit your use or please your eye:
Here's buttons, buckles, spoons and knives,
Fit for young men or maids or wives:
Shoe buckles, pinchbeck, silver, black,
And shoe clasps too we do not lack
Tea kettles, iron, tin or copper,
Hardware down t'a tobacco stopper,
Here's bolts and bands and locks and snecks,
Such as will please your architects.
Glass bottomed porter pots you'll see,*

*Punch ladles, metal pots for tea.
All kinds of pencils, paper, slates
That oft' perplex poor stupid pates.
We've patent balls for leather breeches,
Which them renew, nor hurt the stitches.
Snuffers, extinguishers and dishes,
With candlesticks to suit you wishes.
And at the shop from five to seven
You'll find there's due attendance given.
We scorn for to impose on any,
So fix each price, ne'er bate a penny
Then deign to call if passing by,
If we can't please I'm sure we'll try.*

Little is known of George Fenwick. An apprentice indenture records that he was apprenticed to John Fearney of Newcastle, a hardware pedlar and ironmonger by his widowed mother Anne on 7th July 1798, making a birth date circa 1784. He later owned No.5 St. Mary's Chare where his ironmongery and hardware business was located. His wife Anne is recorded as owning the Grapes Inn next door, then called the Grapes and Barleycorn. George Fenwick is my 3x great grandfather. He died in 1834 and Thomas Hedley, a joiner from a family of joiners in Acomb moved into the rear of the premises and married George's daughter Mary Anne Fenwick. The



photograph, probably taken at some time between 1895 and 1900, shows James Armstrong Hedley, great grandson of George Fenwick and my grandfather standing in front of what was George Fenwick's shop. For the next 150 years four generations of Hedleys ran a cabinet making business

with an antiques showroom at the front. The names George Fenwick were subsequently used as Christian names for three generations of Hedleys.

The Landscape of North East Labour History

The North East Labour History Society, as part of its People's History of the North East project, is seeking to create a guide to the physical evidence of the history of the labour movement in the region. The Society would like your help in this undertaking. You can help by nominating somewhere that you think should be included in the guide

This can be:

- A building, either standing or demolished, that has played a role in labour history. Such as mechanics or miners institutes or as a centre for working class learning.
- A site or place that has witnessed a significant event, such as a major meeting, demonstration or celebration by the labour movement.
- A place associated with someone prominent in the labour movement such as birthplaces and graves
- Places containing important artefacts of the labour movement such as banners, petitions and such like.

They are seeking to cast the net wide, covering not only the whole of our region but also all aspects of the labour movement and will include sites which have significance for the political struggle, both radical and mainstream, the Trades Union movement, the Cooperative movement, women's rights, political movements such as the peace movement or international struggles, places of working class learning, places associated with key events and places connected to prominent people in the labour movement.

The places that you nominate will be central to this exercise. To help with compiling this guide they ask you to use the nomination forms (you can submit as many as you like) and if possible supply them with any photographs or illustrations you may have of your nominated site. To obtain nomination forms, please contact Mark on 01434 607746 or enquiry@hexhamhistorian.org

Completed nominations can be emailed to: Diptonlad@blueyonder.co.uk or posted to NELandscape, 95 Dinsdale Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1DP

Dates for your Diary

In preparing for the summer 2014 opening of the Abbey's new exhibition centre, scores of local people have been involved in cataloguing and recording the Abbey's enormous number of treasures. Much has emerged which will come as a complete surprise even to those who know the Abbey

well. On Saturdays in February and early March, three different speakers will give short talks about their discoveries and the audience will be able to examine the objects at close hand. From the 2nd Century to the 20th, from new digital photographs to exotic silver...there's something here for everyone. The talks will take place in the north transept of the Abbey, and are free and open to all:

Sat Feb 15th, 4pm-5pm

Eric Cambridge
Hugh Dixon
Tom Kelsey

Hexham's forgotten church: some capital pieces of evidence
What Furniture!: moving seat of worship
Abbey history revealed by the Gibson photographs

Sat Feb 22nd, 4pm-5pm

Rob Collins
Richard Bailey
Greg Finch

No small change: the Hexham Coin Hoard
Beauty or the Beast: Hexham's Anglo-Saxon bucket
Mrs Beaumont and her builders: Abbey House in the 1790's

Sat March 1st, 4pm-5pm

Peter Ryder

Janet Goodridge
Stan Beckensall

Secret stairways and other structural surprises: the Abbey House revealed
Town and surplice: Hexham and its abbey
Hexham before the Abbey

March 4th – 8th: Tyne. Journeying in time and space along the banks of the river, *Tyne* maps the epic history, atmosphere and soul of this mighty river in story, music and images. Originally commissioned as part of Live Theatre's 40th birthday celebrations, the play dramatizes extracts from Michael Chaplin's book *Tyne View*, woven together with stories from Tom Hadaway, Julia Darling, Alan Plater and Sid Chaplin, some of the greatest writers from the North East who have collaborated

with Live Theatre since it began in 1973. Tyne features live music inspired by the river compiled by the show's musical director, Kathryn Tickell, including from Sting's most recent album, *The Last Ship*, songs written by Jimmy Nail, Alex Glasgow and traditional tunes. Theatre Royal, Newcastle

Sun March 30th

Hexham Book Fair. Torch Centre, 10am-4pm. Over 18 second-hand booksellers from across the north-east. All proceeds go to funding events promoted by Hexham Community Partnership. Entry £2

Tues April 8th

Two Eliots, Peter Lee and a Penshaw pit: the Geordies in South Africa. The Mining Institute, Westgate Road, Newcastle. 7pm Free

Tues May 20th

Pitmatic: the language of the coalfield. The Mining Institute, Westgate Road, Newcastle. 7pm Free

**Answers
please**

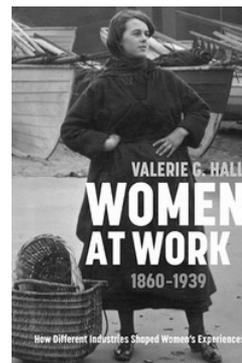
- 1) David Morgan writes: My deceased dad, **William Henry Morgan**, stood as a **Christian Democrat** in the 1950s in Hexham – I was born in 1958 in Hexham – so I assume it was around that time. He didn't win a seat/council election – I wondered where to look for a record of his attempt or any newspaper coverage at that time. I believe one/both my parents may have run/assisted in a post office at that time and my dad was a part-time chapel minister. I think he was inspired to run as Christian/Social/ Democrat as he went walkabout in Scandinavia after the war. Contact David on adword@gmail.com (No candidate stood under this banner in any of the General Elections of the decade so it seems likely to have been a local government election – Ed)
- 2) We have researched our family history both in Durham and at Woodhorn but cannot verify the early facts. The earliest confirmed fact is an Edward Stobbs bap June 1781 at Whitley Chapel from Heckley House, father also Edward. There is also a sister bap 31 Aug 1783 also from **Heckley House** called Elizabeth. From the book 'Memories of Hexhamshire' there is mentioned a **William Stobbs** who rented the farm in 1736. Has anyone any information about the family Stobbs that lived on that farm or the farm itself. Replies via Mark please
- 3) On Saturday 16th November I was at **St Oswald's Hill Head**, which I know to be the birthplace of **William Bell Charlton**, my grandfather's half brother. I was informed by the owner that I was the second person that day to be looking for the birth place of William Bell Charlton. We missed each other by two hours! I would be delighted to share information with that person on our ancestors. Contact via Mark please
- 4) I am trying to find information about the family of **George Elliott Benson**, I have looked at the Census records on line and know his father was William Benson (born 1812), mother Jane, but would like to know if there is any information available about his parents, or brothers and sisters. Contact via Mark please
- 5) American John Dickinson has traced a **Dickinson** of Hexham with a **coat of arms** listed in a 1915 index held at Newcastle Central Library. The coat of arms is: *Argent, a cross between four eagles' head erased gules.* He would like to establish who this Dickinson was. John can be contacted at riverland@clearwire.net or via Mark
- 6) Carolyn Wood asks: Does anyone know the name of a "**furniture manufacturer of Hexham**" who conducted a business during the mid 1920's? If you have any information please email Carolyn Wood at woodrica7@bigpond.com or via Mark

Book Review

Trisha Wall

Hall, Valerie G **Women at work 1860-1939: how different industries shaped women's experiences**
Boydell Press (2013) £60.00 ISBN 9781843838708

This very well researched book examines the lives of women whose husbands or fathers worked in the three main industries in Northumberland at the time: coal mining, inshore fishing and agriculture. The miner's wives and grown up daughters had a very restricted life outside the home, although the men themselves usually had allotments to work on and social clubs to go to after work. Because of this the women were intensely house proud, and raised their families of many children and looked after the needs of their husbands and working sons as best they could, in awful conditions of poverty and depravation. Despite this the women were the backbone of the families. A minority of women from mining families turned to politics and over time became a serious force in the Labour Party, successfully working for better conditions for the workers and their families. The fishermen's wives and daughters spent up to seven hours every day baiting lines so their husbands and sons could go out fishing the next day. They also sold fish away from home, so they had a huge impact on the finances of their families. Life for them was a joint enterprise. The fishing industry was a closed community and marriages to outsiders were rare and frowned on and it was often said they were rather strange people. As for agriculture, women played an important role, as a labourer with a wife was more likely to be employed than one without. The distances from towns and villages of the large estates, meant each worker had to be given a cottage to live in, so the farmer got two workers or more if the man had a wife and possibly grown up children who could work. The women were given the 'dirty jobs' and consequently paid less. However, later, when different jobs became available elsewhere and men turned away from farming, single mothers and widows with children were also taken on, and a lot of employers found that women worked harder than men.



All the women involved in these industries had extremely hard lives, but the women in fishing and agriculture did at least have clean air to breathe and were away from the very unhealthy atmosphere that surrounded the miners and their families, so they and their children tended to be healthier and better fed. Despite the sheer physical and mental hardships of day to day life I got the impression that the women were strong and possibly not as downtrodden as we may think and some of them, particularly the politically minded were the first 'feminists'.

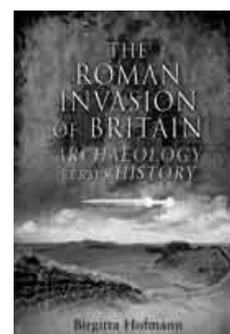
At first I thought this book would be hard going but, in the event, thoroughly enjoyed reading it and certainly recommend it.

Book Review

Chris Andrews

Hoffman, Brigitta **The Roman invasion of Britain: archaeology versus history** (Pen & Sword, 2013)
£19.99 ISBN 9781848840973

Hoffman has successfully accessed the merits and shortcomings of history and archaeology for relating the sequence of military engagements between Rome's armies and the hostile tribes of Britain. She commences with Julius Caesar's first, brief foray onto the south coast of England, in 55BC, explores the various imperial campaigns across four centuries and ends with Britain's abandonment in the early fifth century AD.



She provides a useful academic resource, for both the disciplines of history and archaeology studying Roman Britain, with her critical interrogation and analysis supported by a comprehensive bibliography. The difficulties of drawing firm conclusions from ancient historical sources, not contemporary with described events and incomplete, are identified. She alerts the reader to the original context and purpose of sources which would not fall within the modern concept of historical narration, often as politically expedient as the campaigns themselves. For the archaeological perspective, Hoffmann emphasises the suitability of the evidence for longer term events and periods of military constraint rather than shorter military engagements.

Despite these caveats, the author has drawn together credible scenarios from the evidence and assessed the likelihood, or not, of resolution by future research. Without Caesar's own narrative, it is unlikely that archaeology could have demonstrated Rome's early attempts at expanding north from Gaul. Similarly, the paucity and unreliability of the late ancient historical sources, on their own, would

have contributed only an incoherent end to the narrative. Hoffman makes a credible case for interrogating the evidence from both disciplines in pursuit of a cohesive narrative of military activity throughout Britain for this period. This academic book would have benefitted from the inclusion of maps and cross-referencing of the illustrative material provided.

Book Review
Chris Britton

Turner, Sam, Semple, Sam & Turner, Alex
Wearmouth & Jarrow: Northumbrian monasteries in an historic landscape (Herts UP, 2013) £20.00
ISBN 9781909291133



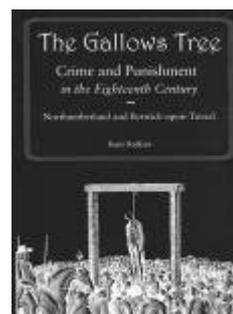
This book is not simply a reworking of existing material but adds in the results of extensive multi-discipline research carried out between 2009 and 2011. It is not really a history of the monasteries, nor of the surviving buildings and archaeological remains. It sets out to discover the landscape into which they were planted, their influence on that landscape through the medieval period and the place of the remaining churches in today's post-industrial setting. There is also a chapter on people's perception of these two sites today, given the vastly changed circumstances in which they now exist. There is also investigation of the churches and remains using all the latest techniques.

On first flipping through its pages I was afraid it might be heavy going, but each chapter is broken down by subheadings, which makes for easy 'bite sized' chunks and facilitates later reference. It is profusely illustrated in colour and black and white, with numerous maps, plans and 'geophys' printouts and interpretations which will be familiar to Time Team devotees. All are printed to a high standard and only a few have been necessarily reduced to the point where a magnifying glass is helpful for the finer detail. One or two could have been slightly improved with greater distinction between colours for easier reading, but these are minor quibbles in a book so full of information and interest at such a modest price. There is also analysis of the standing Anglo-Saxon remains to determine the source of the stones used, both from their original quarries and the various plundered Roman sites in the Tyne-Wear valleys.

Much new and interesting material has come to light, some of which needs further physical excavation to confirm. This is particularly true of the discovery of a possible crypt, similar to our own in Hexham Abbey, beneath the Saxon chancel at Jarrow. There is an extensive bibliography and index, but no glossary. Terms are defined at their first appearance but you then have to remember that for the rest of the book! All in all a good read and useful reference source.

Book Review
Ian Hancock

Redfern, Barry **The gallows tree: crime and punishment in the 18th century, Northumberland & Berwick-upon-Tweed** (Tyne Bridge, 2013) £7.99
ISBN 9781857952131



Ex-Chief Superintendent Redfern's latest book on the history of law and order in the North East is well up to the standard of his previous two works on the subject. It is a good read, written for laymen with enquiring minds, and manages to be thoroughly entertaining while keeping a solid base in original research. As the title implies, the author focusses on capital crime, though he puts this in perspective by pointing out that despite the extraordinary range of offences that carried the death sentence there are records of only 31 executions in the county in the eighteenth century and that three quarters of all death sentences were commuted to transportation. A crucial feature of the prosecution of crime in the eighteenth century was that it had to be instigated by the victims or their friends. With no investigative police force, and given the potential cost in time and money to the complainant, it is hardly surprising that reporting of crimes, and their prosecution, was haphazard. The book examines the roles of the local justices at Quarter Sessions on the one hand and the Coroner and the Assize Court on the other, in prosecuting different types of crime. The records of these two courts are the author's primary sources. Remarkably, Berwick was not covered by the Northern Assize Circuit, but had its own Recorder who conducted a court of General Gaol Delivery for the prosecution of serious offences, and this has generated a further set of legal records for the period.

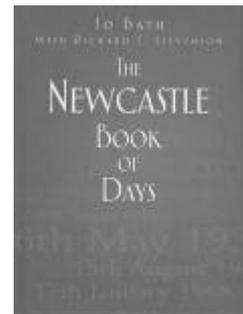
A fascinating selection of well referenced examples provides a useful guide to what our criminally-minded ancestors were up to, and to the historical sources. The story of the pursuit and prosecution of the roving bands of criminals known as the Faw gangs makes fascinating reading, while a substantial section on the prosecution of those involved in the Hexham Riot effectively complements Tom Corfe's account. There is a useful review of the Northumberland gaols and their histories, and of the sometimes surprising places of execution.

The general historical background is based on well selected secondary sources that are listed in a bibliography, but from a historian's point of view the absence of specific referencing to them means you will have a lot of outside reading to do, to track down the sources of specific aspects. Also, disappointingly, the only index is of personal names (many of them simply names of magistrates and jurymen). However, the illustrations are good and relevant, and the standard of production is excellent. At such a reasonable price the book is well worth adding to your bookshelf.

Book Review
Mark Benjamin

Bath, Jo & Stevenson, Richard F **The Newcastle book of days** (History Press, 2013) £9.99 ISBN 9780752468662

Without this book I would never have known that I shared a birthday with the Newcastle-born film director, Neil Marshall! How enriched my life is by this knowledge is debateable but, nevertheless, this is an amusing little book listing events relating to the city's history day by day. Occasionally, the compilers have obviously been stretched to find a relevant entry; also on our birthday is listed the Arctic crash of the airship *Italia*. Her crew were eventually rescued by the Walker-built icebreaker, the *Krassin*!



Google's Field Trip
Gijs van der Hulst

Google has recently launched a new smartphone app called Field Trip, which reveals unique things around you when you are on the go. After you install the app, Field Trip will send you notifications about interesting things right around your location, by using your phone's GPS. Those 'interesting things' can be anything from historic buildings, art, great places to eat, or historic facts about specific locations - you can select which things interest you. This content is shown in 'cards' on your smartphone (see illustration). This content is sourced from publishers and individuals who are specialised in their field. For example, in the US, one of our large partners is Arcadia Publishing, but we also work with individual history writers who provide local content.



The Field Trip team is very interested to get in touch with historians, writers and publishers who have produced content that specifically describes historic content of single locations. Suitable content describes historic facts, events or stories about single locations in a few paragraphs, preferably accompanied with an image or drawing.

If there is mutual interest, Google would like to obtain a non-exclusive license to show your content to Field Trip. Content in Field Trip always has explicit attribution to the publisher or writer. If you are interested or would like to learn more, please contact gijs@google.com. The Field Trip app is available for iPhone and Android.

And finally!
Hexham connections:
the answer

From 1859 to 1865, Tokyo's Kozenji temple was the site of the first British delegation to Japan. Sir Rutherford Alcock was the first resident Consul General and a major figure in the opening of both China and Japan to Western trade and influence. Although born in Ealing, the young Rutherford was sent north upon the death of his mother to live with his aunt in Stamfordham, from where he was sent to study at Hexham Grammar School! We are indebted to the Kyoto academic, Mayuko Sano, for bringing Alcock's

Hexham connection to our attention when she visited Hexham last year as part of her research into Alcock's life for her forthcoming biography.