



# HEXHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



<b>Newsletter 72</b>	<b>Editor: Mark Benjamin</b> <b>(01434) 607746</b> <b>editor@hexhamhistorian.org</b>	<b>Summer</b> <b>2015</b>
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## Thoughts from a Chair Peter Rodger

I've been thinking about war recently. Hexham Heritage was recently supported financially by the Society to stage a re-enactment of the shenanigans before and after the Battle of Hexham in 1464 resulting in the execution of Henry, Duke of Somerset in Hexham town. Music and readings in the Moot Hall, a beheading at the Old Gaol and a procession, (complete with Henry's 'head'), to the Abbey where we musically acknowledged that 'here lyeth a knight'. For those who missed the event there is a selection of photographs at [www.hexhamheritage.org](http://www.hexhamheritage.org).

Over the last few months there's been plenty of First World War coverage in the press and like most of us I have family stories connected with it, both good and bad. Our local association with that war was recently highlighted with the discovery of diaries and poetry written in the trenches by what appeared to be a local man. Some serious sleuthing by Yvonne Purdy and David Walton revealed the author to be a local teacher, Tom Watson. His writings are particularly interesting because Tom was not in the mud and blood of Flanders field, but in Cairo and Jerusalem, arenas of war not often mentioned. Tom survived and returned to Tynedale to become Headteacher at Bagraw and, later, Lowgate schools. A living relative of Tom's has been found and with the family's permission I hope we will be able to publish his work soon.

In Hexham, led by local Quakers, plans are in hand to mount a First World War exhibition focusing on a comparison of the contemporary wartime lives of those living in Hexham, Metzingen and Noyon (Hexham's twin towns in Germany and France). This promises to be a particularly interesting and innovative event. For further details, see the article by Caroline Westgate on page 3

Moving to slightly more recent history, I had planned a short trip to Guernsey to coincide with the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the island from the Nazi occupation. Sadly the airline let us down and our flights were delayed by 24 hours; we arrived as the events all came to a close. It was, nevertheless, fascinating to see the bunting bedecked streets during the following few days populated with MGs, Austin Sevens, Morris Eights, Willys jeeps, Bedford personnel carriers and all manner of uniforms and civilian dress creating a quite memorable 1940s atmosphere.

So, four arenas of war in as many paragraphs; lives lost, hopes dashed, cities and towns destroyed. What have we learnt?

## HLHS on Facebook

Our newly-launched Facebook page continues to attract attention. At the time of writing we have 189 people "following" the activities of the Society, many of whom are not – as yet – members, so it is definitely achieving its primary purpose of widening the awareness of HLHS!

## New Publication

The latest in the Society's Occasional Publications series is now out! *Dirty Old Town* is a facsimile, with a new introduction by HLHS member, David Jennings, of Robert Rawlinson's 1853 report into the appalling sanitary conditions prevalent in the town. £5.00 for members; £7.50 to the wider world!



**J B Jonas,  
1930-2014**  
Mollie Telford

The death, last October, of James Bryan Jonas (known to all as JB) deprived the Society of a valued member. Retirement from his career as a Classics teacher enabled JB, and his wife Mary, to settle in Hexham and pursue some of his varied interests. One of these, his love of the countryside, resulted in the publication of several delightful little books, guides to walks around Tynedale; another, an interest in Hexham and history, led to him joining the Society with Mary.

It was not too long before his interest and enthusiasm was recognised and his name went forward as a committee member. He took on the job of Summer Outings Organiser and, no doubt, many members will remember with pleasure the trips which he arranged, some to unusual places such as the old POW camp at Featherstone and the new Northumbrian Archive centre at Woodhorn. He even achieved the unprecedented feat of making a profit on one of his outings, a surprising addition to their success in other ways!

He later became Chairman of the Publications Committee, resigning from this post when elected Vice-Chairman of the main committee. Just at this time, 2006, the Society suffered the first of a series of shocks – the sudden death of Tom Corfe, the founder of the *Hexham Historian* and this newsletter and a leading light in the work of the Society. This was followed over the next three years with unexpected losses, through death and relocation, of further prominent figures in the Society – two successive chairmen, a treasurer, and the active and knowledgeable Anna Rossiter. This was a sad and worrying period for all the members as to lose so many important figures so quickly could have proved disastrous for the Society.

It was largely JB, now elevated to Chairman, who quietly but steadily saw the Society through, ensuring that all its activities functioned as normal, and easing the way for both remaining committee members and those newly-elected. It is thanks to JB that the Society has emerged from that time stronger and looking forward to the future with a new team at the head. He was indeed “the right man at the right time” and we owe him a great debt of gratitude.

Sadly, JB did not live to see the fully revived society as, in 2012, his own health deteriorated and he felt it wise to resign. So we remember him with thanks and remember, too, that his was a good life well lived. He was a generous man, particularly with his time, and did much for the community of Hexham as a councillor and mayor, and also worked for the Abbey. It was always a pleasure to be in his company for, erudite but unassuming, he made an ordinary conversation into something to be savoured and treasured. JB was indeed one of those rare people who, simply by their presence, make the world seem a better place, and we are all the poorer for his passing.

**Special Offer!**

In an attempt to return some loft space to certain members of the Publications Committee, we have a special limited offer of five full sets of *Hexham Historian* (1-24), complete with our smart maroon binders for only £35.00 (**a saving of approximately £115.00!**). Please contact Terry Eccles by emailing

sales@hexhamhistorian.org or 07828880107 to reserve your set as this offer is open to members only: first come, first served!

Terry also has single back numbers of the *Hexham Historian* available, to fill any gaps in your existing collections.

**New to the Members' Library**

1. *From City to Country: evacuees to Tynedale in World War Two.* An unpublished work by Sheila Carter.
2. First annual account of Hexham Subscription School, 1814
3. Two reports, dated 1779 and 1825, relating to the proposed canal from Newcastle to Carlisle.
4. Randal, Thomas (1779) *A state of the churches in the Archdeaconry of Northumberland, and in Hexham Peculiar Jurisdiction*
5. Hexham Abbey *The Aldine*, Vol 7(1 Jul 1875)
6. Ridley, J (1832) *Reasons for refusing to pay tithes...*
7. *The Smiddy catalogue of Hexham in art* (1992)
8. *Hexham Abbey memorials.* The transcriptions originally catalogued by Colin Dallison and Tom Corfe in 1995, with an expanded and corrected index.

**Calling all  
Barnfathers!**

Lee Bridge Cognetta is the organiser of the Barnfather Family Reunions and maintains a One-Name Study of the surname Barnfather. She writes: "We meet every two years in some place that has been of importance to the family, and our 8th reunion will be held this coming October, from the 22nd to the 25th of October in Hexham. We are coming to Hexham as there have been many Barnfathers in the area and, most importantly, William Barnfather was the 2nd editor of The Hexham Courant

We are, at present, a group of 39 people and will be staying at The Beaumont Hotel. Our roster this time includes Barnfathers from Argentina, Canada, South Africa, Sweden, the US and from all over the United Kingdom.

We hold a 2 - 3 hour 'Family History Morning' at the hotel on the first morning of our event (in this case, Friday, 23 October), during which we have the opportunity to discuss family connections, sort out problems with family trees, etc.

As a point of information, our itinerary also includes a dinner and brewery tour at the High House Farm Brewery on the evening of the 23rd of October and an all-day coach trip on the 24th to Vindolanda and Prudhoe. People who cannot join us for the entire event are welcome to do so for the Research Morning, the dinner trip to the Brewery or the coach trip. We are always happy to see Barnfathers stop in at the hotel to meet us and see if they can find a connection - and it is possible for those to join us for meals, etc." Lee can be contacted at [daycogs@earthlink.net](mailto:daycogs@earthlink.net)

**World War 1:  
Voices &  
Choices**  
Caroline  
Westgate

This is a projected exhibition linked to the commemoration and remembrance locally, nationally and internationally, of the First World War. It will take place in the Prior's Hall in the Visitor Centre at Hexham Abbey from Friday 6th November to Friday 20th November 2015.

We have the approval and support of Hexham Quaker Meeting and Northumbria Area Quaker Meeting, and are working in partnership with the Northumberland County Archive at Woodhorn, Hexham Abbey, Hexham Community Partnership, Hexham Town Twinning Association and Hexham LHS.

The Exhibition will look at the war through the eyes of individuals who were caught up in that conflict. As well as men and women from our own region it will feature people from our twin towns of Noyon in France and Metzingen in Germany. We aim to show the impact of the war on some of those who enlisted but also on civilians and non-combatants from the three locations. Members of the organising group have already visited Noyon and Metzingen and have gathered a rich selection of material from their archives, none of which has previously been exhibited in Britain

The first part of the exhibition will describe the impact of the war on individual men, women and children living in Hexham, Noyon and Metzingen. Each town will be contributing from their archives a selection of personal stories of those involved in the conflict.

The second part of the exhibition will present examples of choices made by men and women in the three towns during World War I, relating to their involvement in the conflict.

In Britain these choices were: to be a soldier, to contribute to the war effort as a non-combatant, or to be an absolute conscientious objector. The different contexts in France and Germany, by contrast, afforded other choices.

True remembrance connects the past to the present. Since 'The War to End All Wars', there have been many more conflicts, which have claimed the lives of millions of combatants and civilians. Accordingly, the third part of the exhibition will present material intended to encourage visitors to reflect on the legacy of WWI and its relevance to the present day.

We are working in partnership with the Northumberland County Archive, which holds a rare survival: the contemporary records of the Military Service Tribunals in the Tyne Valley. The Tribunals considered applications from men wishing to be exempted from conscription. In the exhibition, extracts from these records will be made public for the first time.

It is clear that the majority of applications to the Tribunal were made on behalf of agricultural labourers by land-owners seeking to hang on to their work-force, but a few men sought exemption on grounds of conscience, which they were entitled to do under the 1916 Military Service Act.

We know of eight such Conscientious Objectors from our area and would like to be able to tell one or two of their stories. We are therefore seeking any personal items such as photographs, letters or diaries which are connected to the men listed below.

- **Tom (or John) Bell**, age 35, of 5 Jubilee Buildings, Hexham, a cartman and warehouseman. Exempted from combat service, he served with the Non Combat Corps.
- **Arthur Henderson** of The Hope, Allendale. He served in the Friends Ambulance Unit.
- **George F Lamb** of Hexham, a civil servant who applied for exemption on religious grounds. He is known to have believed that 'all forms of militarism are in direct opposition to the teachings of Christ'. He accepted to do unspecified 'work of national importance'.
- **W W Parker** of 1 Alexander Terrace, Haydon Bridge. He served in the Friends Ambulance Unit.
- George Robert Shield, age 33, of Stocksfield, highway surveyor, eventually discharged unfit due to TB.
- **John William Carrick** of Haydon Bridge, an estate mason.
- **William De'ath** of The Leazes, Hexham, a stud groom
- **George Campbell** from Stocksfield, a bank cashier, is also listed in the Tribunal record. He made an application for exemption but subsequently withdrew it and enlisted in the Navy.

If anyone is willing to share their memories of these men, or would be prepared to lend us any memorabilia connected with them, please contact Caroline on (01434) 604747 or email [caroline@quatrebras.co.uk](mailto:caroline@quatrebras.co.uk)

**The ANLHS –  
can you  
help?**

The Association of Northumberland Local History Society is appealing for members to join its committee. *“Currently we have no Secretary, no Programme Secretary and, after the AGM next year, no Editor for Tyne & Tweed. Members of the current committee have served long periods and some wish to retire having held a number of different committee offices. Without new volunteers we will soon have no committee and there will be no*

ANLHS.

*We are aware that some of our member societies are small and are struggling to keep going but we are also aware that there are a number of member societies who have almost a hundred or more members. Surely out of these hundreds of members there are a few who would be willing to serve on the committee. Serving is not onerous and the more active committee members we have the easier the tasks become. The committee meets on an evening about five times a year. We are flexible about the meeting place – currently some of our meetings take place at Woodhorn Archives and the rest in the homes of one or two committee members. Car-sharing is a possibility!”*

If you are an individual member please think about volunteering. If you would like to know more about what the committee does and how to get involved please contact Eleanor George on (01670) 783612 or email [mail@nlhs.org.uk](mailto:mail@nlhs.org.uk)

**Dukesfield  
documents  
Greg Finch**

The fruits of the transcription work carried out as part of the 'Dukesfield Smelters and Carriers project', part-funded by our Society, are now available in the project's website. 'Dukesfield Documents' is an important new research resource for the study of North eastern history between the 17th and 19th centuries, and contains a great deal of material on Hexham. Thanks to the work of 30 project volunteers over 5,000 letters and other documents have been transcribed from original sources to create a free, fully searchable, online collection of more than a million words. It brings together digital versions of manuscripts held in local archives alongside much more obscure material in distant collections and recently discovered documents in private hands. Full transcripts of each source document, most comprising many individual letters or other items, can be downloaded, and each item is also held separately within the searchable online database. This structure and search capability means, for example, that correspondence long separated into halves between different physical

archival locations can now be re-united on your screen. It is centred on the lead business of the Blackett and Beaumont families but extends beyond that into many other aspects of life and work in Newcastle and the region in the early modern era.

The initiative had its origins in the Society's transcription project that led to publication of 'A Pack of Idle Sparks' two years ago. Realising what fantastic records were kept by the Blackett business the team thought it would be great if something similar could be done to complement the conservation and archaeology plans centred on Dukesfield. The sheer amount of work carried out over two years meant publication on paper was unrealistic. However, by developing an online database the material can be searched in many different ways. This database should stimulate and support future research into varied aspects of social, economic, political and family history of the Northeast of England and beyond for many years to come.

Take a look for yourselves by going to [www.dukesfield.org.uk/documents](http://www.dukesfield.org.uk/documents). And keep coming back – work continues!

And: A touring display of the project's ongoing work will be on show at Hexham Library (26<sup>th</sup> May – 6<sup>th</sup> June), Killhope Lead Mining Museum (9<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> June) and Slaty Show (8<sup>th</sup> August)

**From Hexham  
to New  
Zealand: the  
further  
adventures of  
Hercules  
Ian Hancock**

Last summer we received an unexpected letter. A lady in New Zealand had read Ian Hancock's article about Hercules Burleigh in the 2012 edition of the *Hexham Historian* and realised that not only was she a direct descendant of Hercules but her father had been named after him.

The latest descendant of Hercules shown on the family tree in the *Historian* article was Henry Charles Burleigh, the great-grandson of Hercules's eldest son and executor William Burleigh. Henry (born in Carrickfergus, Ireland in 1832) was one of the early British colonists of NZ and Anthea Brookhill, now in her eighties, is his granddaughter. What follows is Anthea's account of

this NZ branch of the Burleigh family.

*At the age of 12 Henry Burleigh entered Dartmouth Naval College as a cadet and midshipman, and subsequently spent a year as Mate on a succession of naval vessels. Before his 20th birthday he was commissioned as Lieutenant, serving on four vessels, the 'Bermuda', 'Daring', 'Boscawen' and 'Charybdis' in North America and the West Indies over the next 10 years before promotion to Commander in 1862. 9 months later he married Emily Stott in Ballymoney, County Antrim, and was granted a three-year shore post, as Customs Officer at Ballycastle near his old home in Carrickfergus. At the end of this time the navy was unable to assign him a posting, so he and his brother Arthur George decided to look at the prospects in New Zealand, arriving in Auckland, North Island, on the 'Siam' on September 27th, 1867. Due to the long voyage, Henry was unaware that he had been offered command of the Mediterranean fleet flagship - the message finally reached him too late for acceptance. Instead he obtained a grant of 640 acres of land at Okaihu on the far northern tip of North Island, where he and his brother cleared the bush for a house. Arthur subsequently returned to the UK, but Henry stayed on and was joined in 1868 by his wife, their daughter Kathleen and Henry's sister, Elizabeth Burleigh (they were dismayed to find that their transport from Auckland consisted of an ox-cart).*

*The couple subsequently had two sons, Cecil Wills Burleigh and Hercules Sandford Burleigh. Henry farmed his land, acted as postmaster and established a shop on his property. However, by 1897 financial difficulties and Henry's ill-health obliged him to sell the store, let the farm and move to a new house in Paihia, the main coastal town in the far north of North Island, where the first church in NZ had been built in 1829. There, Henry died the following year. His widow promptly returned to England, where her children Kathleen and Cecil were already living, and she died in Holt, near Wrexham, Wales in 1919. Hercules, however, stayed on in NZ where, like his 18th century namesake, he seems to have led an adventurous life. He was married three times and Anthea was his daughter by his third wife, born when he was 60.*

**Artistic  
mysteries of  
Hexham: 2  
Peter Rodger**

Following the story of the mysterious JP in the last issue, we have a tale of an artist who definitely did visit Hexham.

A couple of weeks ago I had a phone call from my neighbour, David Dixon at Anick Grange. He had received an email enquiring if the building in an attached watercolour sketch was the Anick Grange farm house. It wasn't, but David thought that it was my house in Anick Village. He was right; it was Anick Farm and he passed the correspondence on to me. I contacted the American correspondent, Dick Haijnes.



It transpires that Dick had acquired a sketchbook in the belief, (and, I imagine, hope), that it might have been the work and property of a well-documented American artist, Harvey Dunn whose work is highly collectable. Dunn was born in 1884 in South Dakota and studied at the Chicago Art Institute before being selected as one of eight official artists for the American Expeditionary Forces in World War One. His work is renowned not only for its contribution to American illustration but for its documentation of the hardships of prairie life. His reputation is such that the South Dakota State University built a museum specifically to house the Harvey Dunn collection of works. His work is evocative, his paintings burst with emotions, as you can see if you Google his name. His sketch of Anick Farm by comparison, is exactly that, a sketch, a note, an observation drawn in the blink of an eye, not a carefully considered piece rendered in a studio.

The sketchbook is dated 1917 and contains other small drawings and paintings of St Mary's lighthouse and holidaymakers on the beach at Whitley Bay.

Dick's question is, I think, answered; my question lingers on... what was an acclaimed American War Artist doing in Anick in the last years of the war? Answers on a postcard please.

**Dates for  
your diary**

May – 11<sup>th</sup> October. A temporary exhibition at Woodhorn, **The Lost World of Norman Cornish** features not only his instantly recognisable bar scenes and pit road paintings characteristic of the County Durham mining communities, but poignant images of his family sensitively captured in charcoal and pastel.

3<sup>rd</sup> June. 6.30pm. **Running for your life in wild west Durham: a personal history of North-East non-league football.** Harry Pearson. The Long Room, Auckland Castle. £6.00 enquiries@aucklandcastle.org or call 01388 743750

30<sup>th</sup> June – 4<sup>th</sup> July. **Princes of the Church and their palaces: an international conference and public lectures.** Bishop Auckland Town Hall & Auckland Palace. For further details and a full programme, contact enquiries@aucklandcastle.org or call 01388 743750

5<sup>th</sup> August. 6.30pm. **Wartime bishop: Hensley Henson and World War One.** Rev Canon Rosalind Brown, Durham Cathedral. The Long Room, Auckland Castle. £6.00 enquiries@aucklandcastle.org or call 01388 743750

2<sup>nd</sup> September. 6.30pm. **Material culture in exile: the English convents in Europe, 1600-1800.** James Kelly, Durham University. The Long Room, Auckland Castle. £6.00 enquiries@aucklandcastle.org or call 01388 743750

7<sup>th</sup> October. 6.30pm. **Soli Deo honor et Gloria: reinterpreting the art and architecture of the Cistercians in Northern England in the Late Middle Ages.** Michael Carter, English Heritage. The Long Room, Auckland Castle. £6.00 enquiries@aucklandcastle.org or call 01388 743750

12<sup>th</sup> September, 10am-4pm. **An introduction to Roman epigraphy.** A day-long conference presented by Dr Lindsay Allason-Jones. Great North Museum: Hancock. £125.00 (includes buffet lunch) Further details from Catherine@hands-on-latin.com or 07759 020885

17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> November, 7pm. **Mine: the musical**, part of a programme of events commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Heaton Main Colliery disaster of 1815. Heaton Manor School Details of all events can be found at [www.underthefieldsofheaton.com](http://www.underthefieldsofheaton.com) but we are highlighting this as the music has been created by Len Young, formerly and much-missed music teacher at Queen Elizabeth High School

### Notes & Queries

1) Via Facebook: My name is Nicholas James Bell. During World War 2 me and my elder brother Charles Peter were evacuated to Hexham Camp where my father James Bell was a teacher. I am eager to learn when **evacuation** started and finished. Although only a small boy at the time I have many happy and sorrowful memories of the time that we were there. I was born at Fenham, grew up in Whitley Bay where I was trainee Photo Journalist on the 'Whitley Bay Guardian', and lived in Darras Hall during the World War-2 when not at Hexham Camp. In 1956 I emigrated with my parents younger brother Terry and sister Tess to Australia, and visited Hexham on five occasions. *If anyone can help Nicholas with information about evacuees at the Hexham Camp, please respond direct or through the Editor.*

2) Via the website: I am trying to find some information for **J Guthrie**, ale and porter bottlers Hexham. They may be associated with the Sun Inn, Hexham. I have a stone porter from the firm. *John Guthrie is listed as the licensee of the Sun Inn in 1886. Does anyone know anything of the bottling business? – ed.*

3) Peter Oliver is Chairman of the Hexham Town Council Built Environment and Transport Group and the group has been conducting an audit of **road signs** in the conservation area of Hexham with a view to repairing, repositioning or removing signs that, in the group's opinion, require this action. The group is curious as to the significance of some signs it has located. Can anyone shed any light on these illustrations? It has been suggested that the SH refers to Sewerage Hydrant but we're uncertain as to what this would be; any other ideas and suggestions welcome! Peter can be contacted at [peteroliver@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:peteroliver@mypostoffice.co.uk) or through the Town Council.



### Book Review Helen Rutherford

Platt, Jane – ed. **The Diocese of Carlisle, 1814-1855. Chancellor Walter Fletcher's 'Diocesan Book', with additional material from Bishop Percy's parish notebooks.** (The Surtees Society and Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society. The Boydell Press, 2015) ISBN 9780854440740 £50.00

The Surtees Society is “dedicated to the publication of manuscripts illustrative of the history of the ancient kingdom of Northumbria, principally of County Durham and Northumberland in North East England.” In this handsome hardback volume it has joined forces with the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society to produce a resource that will be invaluable to scholars of canon law or study of the Anglican Church in the early nineteenth century.

The book will appeal to a specialist audience, as is the case with many of the Surtees Society's publications, however there is much of interest to a general reader (although it at this price, it might be a text to borrow from the library). The manuscripts, Fletcher's Diocesan Book' written between 1814

and 1845 and two parish notebooks, compiled by Bishop Hugh Percy between 1828 and 1855, were originally created for the bishops of Carlisle and not for general consumption. Fletcher was Chancellor of Carlisle between 1814 and 1846 and Percy was Bishop of Carlisle from 1827.

Percy used Fletcher's account to help familiarise himself with the diocese and the extracts from his account omits passages copied from the earlier book. The introduction to the volume sets the historical background and puts the Diocesan Book in context. The Book is a detailed account of 130 churches and chapels within the diocese of Carlisle, including the name of the priest, the situation and state of the fabric of the Church and an overview of the other facilities available in the area for religious observance. The information in the main section of this volume follows the order of Fletcher's book and then adds details from Percy's notes. For example, with reference to Brampton, Fletcher notes "I visited this Church May 4th 1816 and found it very good but not large enough...Church Yard Already full." Then Percy's notes observe "The Church will contain about 700 persons".

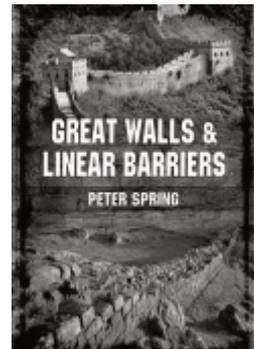
The entries include information about tithes, stipends and the wages of the parish clerks and the Communion plate for each church is listed. There is often information about the parish registers, for example "*Orton...Registers began in 1596 but are imperfect. After 1654 very perfect*". I picked this book up expecting it to be worthy and, perhaps, dull, but in fact it is full of interesting and colourful snippets and detail. For example: "*Martindale Chapel...The Curate's house formerly stood in a small field adjoining the Chapel yard where Gooseberry Trees still grow.*" and "*Ormside...Ordered all the old Mats removed...Pigeons to be banished*".

The knitting together of the two texts provides an interesting and useful account and overview of the state of the churches in the Carlisle Diocese in the early nineteenth century and there are plenty of interesting asides and details that will add to knowledge about specific churches and settlements as well as providing a spark to encourage further investigation.

**Book Review**  
Jane Brantom

Spring, Peter **Great walls and linear barriers** (Pen & Sword, 2014) ISBN 9781848843776 £25.00

Peter Spring gives a very thorough survey of wall and linear barriers through time in this new publication. He delves into an analysis and theory of relationships between nomads and settled states as being the main driver for barrier construction. The book is full of original research and fills a gap in the many publications that tend to focus on one particular wall or period (Hadrian's Wall and the Great Wall of China spring to mind).



The biggest section of the book is the survey. Here the author sets out a summary by geographical area of walls and linear barriers going back to over 2000 BC. The main focus is on the 2000 years between the seventh century BC to the 17 and 1800s. It is staggering to read about the vast amount of barrier construction, the fascinating names and details described and illustrated with maps and diagrams. It certainly puts Hadrian's Wall into perspective. He takes us through centuries of nomadic incursions from Central Asia to the Middle East and movements through Europe and North Africa. He describes the greatest period of wall building in history during the Chinese warring state from the 7th to 3rd century BC. The time of the Qi wall, 685 BC, and 620 km long, 5m high and 25m thick. To Iran in AD224 – 6654 and the Sasanian Empire, the greatest builders after the Chinese. To Europe and the establishment of the Bulgars, the wall building tendencies of the Angles, Goths and Germanic people rather than others in Europe. There is constant reference back to the theories of barriers emerging through that relationship between nomadic and settled states and examination of other theories for construction.

The book is peppered with caveats and theories as he delves into motivations for construction. The questions and speculation are at times subjective and there are occasional questionable comments that might benefit from judicial editing, such as the bracing air of northern Britain having a remarkable effect on invading people. However, the book is an easy read, provides an impressive and unique catalogue of walls and linear barriers, and makes a valuable and thought provoking contribution to this area of our history.

The book is available as a download via various internet sites as well as a hard copy.