



HEXHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Newsletter 79	Editor: Mark Benjamin (01434) 607746 editor@hexhamhistorian.org	Autumn 2017
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Thoughts from the Chair
Peter Rodger

Having spent most of the last week snorting, snuffling, coughing and feeling completely lacking in energy and motivation but overwhelmed by indecision, I began to wonder what might have been the outcome if Hitler had suffered such a cold in the days leading up to his decision to invade Poland. Or if King Harold had decided that he just didn't feel well enough for a day's skirmishing in Hastings in 1066. It's highly unlikely that anything I might have done this week (ailments aside) would have any historical significance - for that we can probably be grateful.

More seriously, or less so depending on your stance, Mark Benjamin and I have been working on a publication based on a private collection of local photographs taken in mid to late 19th Century. The images represent many well-known places in the locality and we hope to publish *Two Gentlemen Photographers* in time for it to be an ideal stocking filler. Publication will be announced by email, on Facebook and, with any luck, in the *Courant!*

Mary Isobel "Mollie" Telford
1928-2017

It came as a great shock to members of HLHS to learn of Mollie's sudden and unexpected death on 16th August 2017, at the age of 88. In recent years, she had overcome serious illness, and had seemed to be well on the way to recovery.



Mollie was born in High Spen, Co. Durham, the only daughter of Stanley and Eva Telford, both of whom were teachers and Methodists, a path that Mollie herself would follow. The family soon moved to Haydon Bridge, the birth place of her father. Mollie started school at Shaftoe Trust School, Haydon Bridge, and she was taught by her beloved Aunt Betty, the half-sister of her father, living in West House, at the end of the Alms houses.

The family moved to Hexham, and in time, she attended Queen Elizabeth Grammar School where she progressed to becoming a teacher for a short time. She went on to teach at Durham Girls' Grammar School, and Northallerton Grammar School, which she loved. In time, she was appointed History Lecturer specialising in Anglo Saxon Studies, at the College of Westminster, Oxford, a teacher training college for Wesleyan Methodist Schools, and a college of higher education. She was particularly happy in this post, staying until retirement, returning home to her beloved Hexham for holidays. Mollie had a very wide circle of friends, some of whom travelled down each year to meet Mollie, when they would visit Stafford to see the plays of Shakespeare. She was also a phenomenal and intrepid traveller, and loved nothing more than visiting far flung places all over the globe, in company with her close friends including Russia and China, to name but two.

She never forgot her roots, and was immensely proud of her northern heritage, and Armstrong forebears. On retirement, she returned to Hexham, and was a devoted and caring daughter to her widowed mother.

Mollie was a stalwart and passionate member of Hexham Local History Society, attending meetings and outings, serving on the Committee as both Secretary and as Archivist, and was given Honorary

Membership in recognition of her sterling service. She had an extraordinary knowledge of the Society's own history and had recently completed a written version for publication in the Hexham Historian. She was also a great supporter of Trinity Methodist Church in Hexham. Mollie and her mother were long time members of the Inner Wheel, and Mollie was a member of the William Temple Society.

Always a keen traveller, even in later life, Mollie loved nothing better than journeys out and about around Northumberland, re-visiting places where she had spent her younger days. She was a most interesting, sociable, loyal companion and friend, who maintained contact with her colleagues, and students over so many years. She will be very sadly missed.

Events for your diary

Monday 13th November. Landscape, memory, and senses of place

Rob Cowen, prize-winning author of Common Ground, and Professor Andy Wood, Department of History, Durham University. The Learning Centre, Palace Green Library, Durham Cathedral. 6.30pm **Entry is free but places can be reserved at Eventbrite www.eventbrite.co.uk**

Saturday 9th December. Abbey Christmas Fair. As in previous years, we shall have a bookstall at the very popular fair. **If you would like to help out for an hour or two, Terry Eccles would love to hear from you** (sales@hexhamhistorian.org or 07828880107). If not, do drop by on the day to say hello!

Outing to Lanercost & Brampton Lorna Armstrong

As the History Society outing grew close we scanned the forecast to see what the weather

promised: but a grey damp day dawned for 43 members as we climbed into the coach to drive to Lanercost Priory church.

We arrived within an hour to the beautiful complex of red Cumbrian stone buildings to find John Lee, our guide, waiting for us. He speaks well and is clearly steeped in the history of the mainly 13th century priory. Before we entered Mr Lee pointed out the niche of St Mary Magdalene, the church's dedicatee, above the door, fronted by the monk-like figure known as a 'donor', something of a rarity in this country. We sat whilst our guide recounted the founding of this Augustinian house and its Canons by Robert de Vaux in c. 1169, the visits by Edward I, the wars with Scotland, the Dissolution of the Monasteries and, finally, border warfare. By the 16th century the Dacres entered the stage followed by the Howards of nearby Naworth Castle.



My own favourite item in the church was the cloth, known as a Dossal, hanging behind the Altar, which was designed by William Morris, one of the founders of the Arts & Crafts movement in the late 19th century. This hangs beneath the massive clear glass window of the East wall, showing the outside roofless buildings. A little faded now, but the reproduction at the back of the church showed the glorious colour and design of the original work. Chris Britton was invited to play the organ, which was soothing as we walked around. Outside, we spread out into the ruins with the splendid roofs and tombs of the Dacre and Howard families. Lunch

was served in the 16th century Dacre Hall with its fireplaces and oak overmantel and we completed our meal with John Lee drawing our attention to the traces of the wall painting, an important survivor of the time in the north-west.

The bus carried us the short journey to Brampton where, guided again by John Lee, we were to visit St Martin's Church which was the idea of the then Vicar, Henry Whitehead, in 1874. It was designed by the Arts and Crafts architect Philip Webb and the stunning stained glass windows, all memorials to local people, were made in 1878 – 1880 by William Morris & Co, and designed by the pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne Jones.

This mid-summer outing left us all with a strong desire to return very soon to learn more of this area as we sampled the refreshments of Brampton before returning to Hexham in the mid-afternoon. I feel sure we are all grateful to our organiser for the work involved in planning and execution of these visits, so thank you Jennifer for providing us all with such enjoyment.

The "Hexham Abbey Bible"
Bruce Martin

A few years ago, I bought a 1629 Bible at auction, sight unseen.

When I received it, I was astounded! There, before my eyes, was a perfectly preserved first edition Cambridge edition of the King James Bible – the small folio edition – the New Testament (NT) and the Book of Common Prayer (BCP). In near-pristine condition! Not a mark or stain on it anywhere — okay, maybe one! A remarkable find to be sure.

But my amazement was compounded by the discovery, throughout the NT, of over 110 full-page Old Master engravings dating, it turns out, from the later half of the 1500s! Wow, I thought, this must be important! And indeed it is. I took the Bible to the Portland Museum of Art which put me in touch with an art historian professor at Willamette University, Dr Ricardo De Mambro Santos, who specializes in this era of engravings. When he saw the engravings, he nearly fainted from joy. To see up close and handle so many historic engravings was overwhelming. "My friends!" he said, tapping his chest. There are works by Heemskerck, Galle, Cock, Wierix, Sadeler, de Vos, van den Broeck, and many more. We immediately agreed to an Exhibit and Lecture Series as soon as possible. But many questions needed to be answered regarding the Bible's provenance and choice of engravings.

As it turns out – and this is the truly astonishing thing – to our knowledge, this is the only English Bible with engravings dating from the 16th century! [There are just a handful of early English Bibles with 17th century engravings.] 1660 marks the legalization of "pictures" in English Bibles, due no doubt to Charles II return to the throne. Our investigation showed that the BCP/NT was "married" to the engravings, very likely in 1660 or 1661, just prior to the introduction of the new BCP in 1662 which effectively made the "marriage" passe. Since it could no longer function as a bona fide "Prayer Book," it was probably put back on the shelf for the next 350 years, which explains its near-pristine condition.

Internal evidence shows that the book, as it now stands, was likely "created" by George Ritschel, a Lutheran turned Anglican, and the first named "Lecturer" of Hexham Abbey in Northumberland, UK. The Bible was then passed down through the Clarke family of Lecturers at Hexham Abbey during the early to mid 1800's. This historic Church, founded in 674, was at first a notable Benedictine Abbey, then in 1170 it became an Augustinian Priory, and then in 1534 at the time of Henry VIII's purges, it transformed itself into the parish church of Hexham, to this day.

Because of this venerable provenance, we have dubbed the book "The Hexham Abbey Bible".



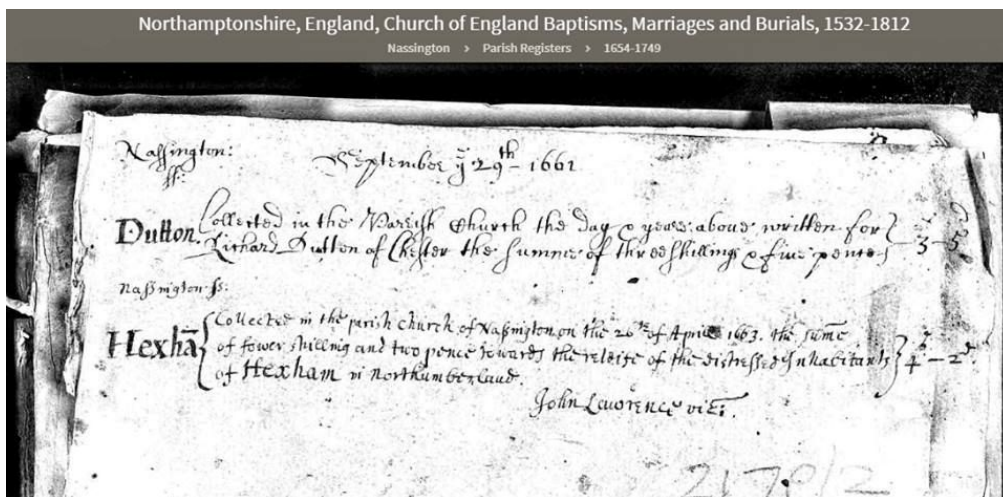
An Exhibit and Lecture Series is scheduled for February 11 – April 29, 2018 — the first outing of this Bible. After much research by Professor De Mambro Santos and Dr. Bruce T. Martin, The Hexham Abbey Bible, along with 35 or so similar engravings of the period, will be exhibited at the Hallie Ford Museum in Salem, Oregon, under the title: Holy Beauty: Northern Renaissance Prints Discovered in an Early English Bible. Several world-renowned scholars will participate in the Lecture Series.

Notes & Queries

a) On searching the parish registers of Warden, Rob Tindall came across an address for a place of death for an infant given as “**Baby’s Welcome**” in St Cuthbert’s Lane, Hexham. Our best guess is that this is not actually part of an address, but an indication that the baby who died, along with his mother, at birth, was given an informal baptism, known as a Baby’s Welcome, either by the midwife or local minister. If anyone knows different explanation, please get in touch.

Interestingly, the Warden registers also include a note regarding an infant burial where the vicar has refused a burial service as the child had not been baptised – whether this refers to the child mentioned above, has not been verified.

b) Via Facebook, Clive Reedman asks: “I am interested to know why the villagers of Nassington in Northants would have collected and sent the princely sum of 4s and 2d in 1663 to send to help the 'distressed inhabitants' of Hexham. If anybody has any clues/thoughts I would be very appreciative.”



Although the plague struck the North East two years later, there are no indications that Hexham had suffered any particular catastrophe to prompt the then rector to appeal for funds.

c) Rita Carter writes: I shall be Tynedale golf clubs Lady Captain in March. I want to compile information about our Ladies competitions, and the origin of the trophies we play for. This I can do from current and past members. I wish to add to this information about the history of **Tynedale golf Club** and this is where I could use any help you may be able to give me.

If anyone has any information about Tynedale Golf Club’s history and trophies, please contact the editor

Book Review
Terry Eccles

Tilley, Brian **Tynedale at war, 1939-45** (Pen & Sword, 2017) ISBN 9781473863958 £12.99

This book is a companion volume to the author’s 2015 account of the people of Tynedale both at home and serving in the forces in the Great War.

He has captured many untold stories from his extensive research in the Hexham Courant archives. Many of us have never before heard of the everyday life and bravery of ordinary folk in Tynedale laying down their lives to defeat the Nazis. He has also drawn on other research, such as *Land Girls*

of *Northumberland*, by Muriel Sobo, who shows us what an important role they played in helping to give us the basic essentials of food year after year.

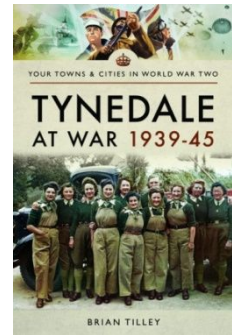
This readable book intersperses accounts from abroad with local stories, putting them in a wider context and reinforcing the debt we owe for the freedoms we have today. The accounts of the brave men and women are spread among stories of everyday happenings of enforced 20 mile per hour speed limits and rationing. As there were many broadcasting and media restrictions, reports in the Hexham Courant may often have been the only means by which local people would know the latest news.

So here we are, 70 years on, learning in many cases for the first time of the community effort that was taking place in Tynedale to support the war effort: of the Comfort Parcel provided by the Hexham Group Hospital Supply Depot bringing great pleasure to troops; of Tynedale district not only saving £1000 per day through the National Savings Movement, but also planning a fundraising War Weapons Week in April 1941, and Hexham Warship Week in February 1942 by the end of which £325,099 was banked. In addition the district received upward of 4,000 evacuee mothers and children from Newcastle and Gateshead.

On convoys over dangerous waters, local men's lives were at risk bringing food and supplies to our shores. One Robert Johnson survived the wreckage of HMS Fiji and went on to become chair of Tynedale Council, living until the age of 99. Air raids frequently flew over Tynedale, giving those at home some understanding of the daily fear of those on the Front.

The author describes life carrying on as normally as possible, in spite of the effects of the war, in schools and in sport and entertainment. The rule of law continued to be enforced, for example a Bellingham woman was fined for overpricing her eggs. It was also interesting to read of the range of nationalities which came to the area with Allied troops being stationed and prisoner of war camps being established locally. Most were eventually welcomed and treated fairly by the communities of Tynedale.

This is a worthwhile read of times not so long past.



Book Review

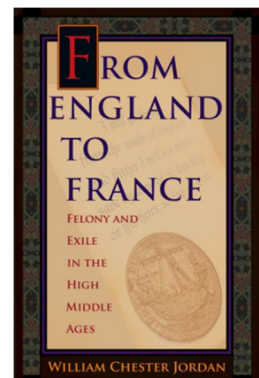
Helen
Rutherford

Jordan, William Chester. **From England to France: felony and exile in the High Middle Ages** (Princeton UP, 2015) 223pp £32.95

In recent times, the movement of English people from England to France has been encouraged by a search for a romantic chateau to renovate or, perhaps, to fulfil the dream of treading grapes in the Loire sunshine. This book examines a more intriguing movement of English citizens to France, which took place in the long thirteenth century. The discussion centres on a form of punishment, at the heart of medieval English law, which was the fate of more than seventy-five thousand English souls between 1180 and 1350: abjuration.

Abjuration was a form of exile chosen by a criminal to avoid the harshest penalties available to the medieval judiciary. The men and women who chose exile were either those who were innocent of the specific crime in hand, but had such bad antecedents that they were obliged to flee to Europe to avoid conviction, or criminals who had sought sanctuary, confessed to a crime, and then chose to abjure rather than face a trial. These individuals had not been convicted. By choosing to leave the King's realm the accused could avoid the rigours of the law and, in addition, the law enforcers could get rid of troublesome ruffians without proving guilt. The abjurer was a clear passage to a port (usually Dover) where he (or she) would board a ship and leave England forever. Although some who took this passage returned to England at a later date, this was a perilous choice because the consequence of being caught could be summary execution.

Jordan, who is the Dayton-Stockton Professor of History at Princeton University, sets out that the aim of his research is to establish the importance of abjuration as a key pillar of medieval legal control. This aim he achieves admirably. He examines the legal structure of abjuration in the first chapter and the subsequent chapters consider examples of crimes and specific abjurers in addition to discussing



the journeys taken by the exiled and the lives enjoyed by those who settled in France. Chapter 5 analyses the outcomes for those who returned to England.

Abjuration allowed England to off-load its hardened criminals and anti-social citizens and send them to France- almost an early form of transportation. The practice continued until the Hundred Years War when it was decided that sending criminals to France where they could join the French army was probably not a wise move.

This study provides an intriguing and detailed analysis of a particular facet of medieval justice by reference to the lives of identifiable individuals. It is a compact book, although the 43 pages of notes underlines the meticulous research that underpins the narrative, and the short length belies the detail and “breath-taking historical tapestry” within. *From England to France* is a fascinating examination of a little understood aspect of the medieval justice system. It establishes the importance of an appreciation of the role of abjuration to an understanding of law and control of criminality in the thirteenth century. It is written in an accessible style and will appeal to readers of medieval crime fiction, such as Edith Pargeter’s *Brother Cadfael* series, in addition to legal scholars.

And perhaps those worried by Brexit will gain inspiration and see a move to France as the continuation of this medieval practice of *abjurare regnum*.

Book Review
Elizabeth Bell

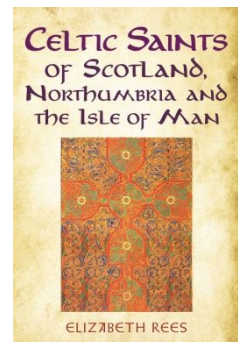
Rees, Elizabeth. **Celtic saints of Scotland, Northumbria and the Isle of Man.** (Fonthill Media, 2017) ISBN 9781781556016 £16.99

Those for whom the subject matter of this book is of particular interest will find this book extremely informative. For others there is a lot to be learned about our Christian heritage, and I certainly found it fascinating.

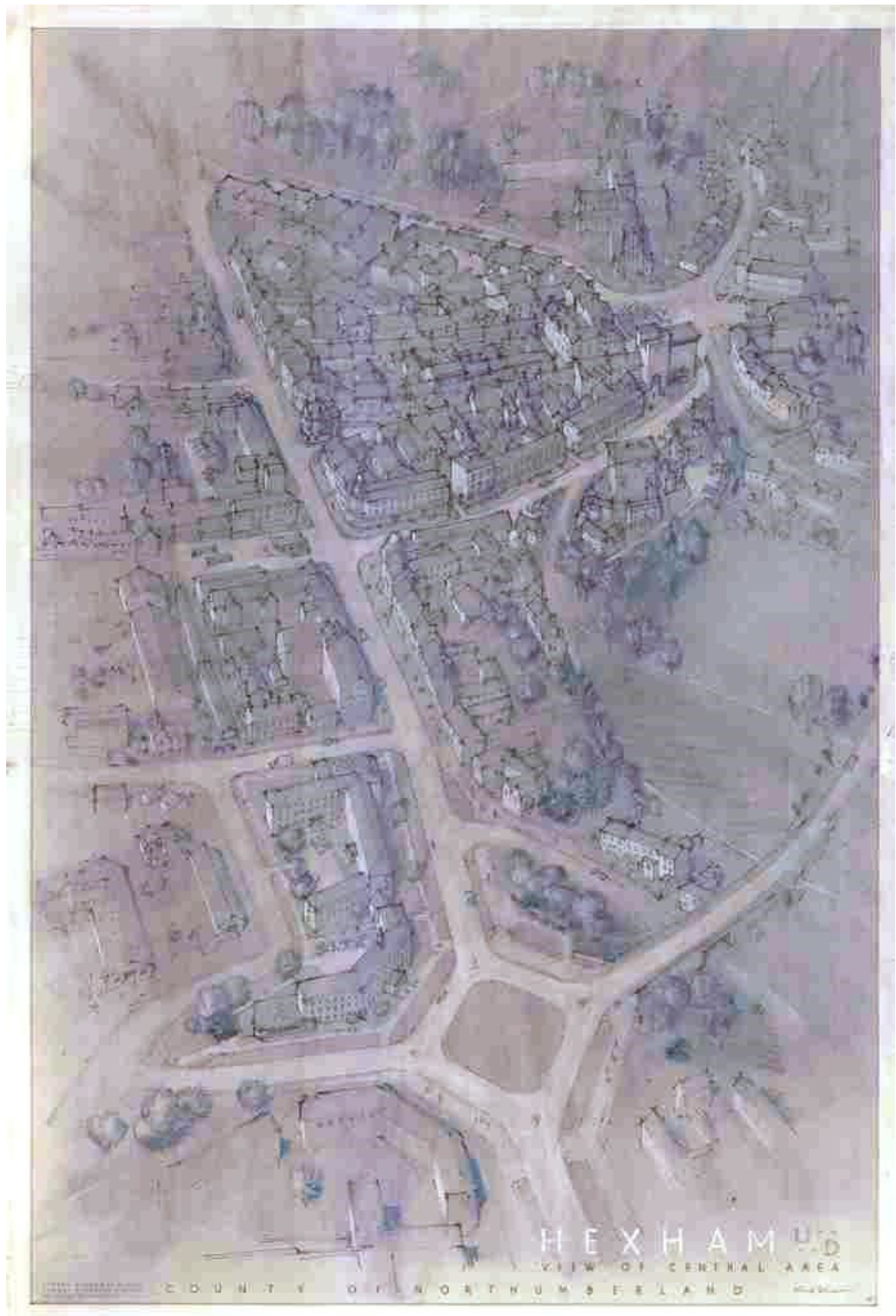
Elizabeth Rees has produced an extremely comprehensive and incredibly detailed book. The sheer amount of time she has devoted to research is quite amazing and her dedication is commendable.

It is an excellent reference work with lots of photographs of sites visited. I found that it could only be read in short bursts as there is so much information and so many facts on each page, but all credit to the author for providing such a detailed work.

To sum up - the book will be of interest to those who are interested in Northern history in general and our Christian roots in particular.



We have recently acquired this fascinating plan of what the County Council had in mind for the centre of Hexham in 1951. An enlargeable copy of this image will be added to the Members' Library in due course but we thought you might like to have a look at it in the meantime.



The view is from the east, the large roundabout at the foot being roughly where the new bus station stands. Of particular interest is the cutting through of the road behind the Moot Hall through where Beales now stands, and the enlargement of the Market Place by the demolition of the island currently containing Fatface, Bin21 etc.

HLHS on Facebook

Our Facebook page continues to grow in popularity, with over 1000 people regularly following us and posts often being seen by well over twice that number! Unsurprisingly, the majority of these are from the UK and from the North East, although there are 4 in Brighton. The next largest contingent is from the USA but we also have a following in Sweden, Denmark, Indonesia and Russia!



If you're on Facebook and haven't "Liked" or "Followed" us, it's an excellent way of keeping up with what's happening in between Newsletters. We also regularly post historic images from the Society's collection and share posts from a variety of sources that we think will be of interest. We also field queries such as this one, just received from Penny Little: *Would love to know exactly where and when this was taken. It's Bridge End so somewhere near the end of Hexham.* As usual, any suggestions welcome – even if you're not on Facebook!



Bridge End Cottages

And, finally: an amendment

Unfortunately, the gremlins got into this year's *Hexham Historian* and removed a vital passage from Martin Green & Greg Finch's article on a Roman road. The missing text from the start of the third paragraph reads:

✂.....

A lidar-based landscape survey of 250 square km in East and West Allendale and Hexhamshire was undertaken between 2013 and 2015, as part of the Heritage Lottery funded North Pennines AONB Altogether Archaeology programme, and led by Prof. Stewart Ainsworth.³ Following on from this survey the authors looked at lidar images of the area immediately north of the survey zone. Examination of the images showed a clear straight linear feature running east-west for 5km, 8km WSW of Hexham, in two parts, 3km and 1km long, separated by a 1km gap where the feature is lost in an area of medieval arable cultivation (see Figure 1). The feature runs across rough pasture at an...

[³] The missing footnote reads: The final report of this project is also available from the same AA website page as indicated above