



# Public Pasts Forum

27 MARCH 2023

Hosted by the Public Pasts Research Strand  
School of History, Classics and Archaeology  
Newcastle University

Convenor: Dr Anton Caruana Galizia

## Program of speakers

9:45-10:00 – Welcome refreshments and introduction Anton Caruana Galizia (Convenor)

10:00-10:30 – Sara Bird (Robinson Library)

10:30-11:00 – Greg Finch (Dukesfield Documents)

11:00-11:30 – Rob Collins (Wallcap project)

11:30-12:00 – Beth Elliott (Northumberland Archives)

12:00-12:30 – Christine Seal (Occupational Alms houses NE)

Lunch

13:00-13:30 – Lizzy Baker (TWAM)

13:30-14:00 – Kate Gill (Weardale Museum)

14:00-14:30 – Steve Mayes (Brick This)

14:30-15:00 – Sally Waite (Shefton Collection)



## Sara Bird

Sara Bird is an Education Outreach Officer at Newcastle University Library. An ex-History teacher she specialises in working with secondary school children, developing workshops and online resources. With a particular interest in project-based learning, she encourages students to develop creative responses to rare books and archives within Special Collections e.g. poetry, stop motion animation, plays, etc.

Please see: <http://archivesalive.ncl.ac.uk>

### ABSTRACT

Archives Alive! How collections can inspire students of the future!

The Library Education Outreach department use the rare books and archives of Newcastle University's Special Collections to raise the aspirations of local school children by widening their horizons and encouraging them to challenge themselves. This talk will provide a brief overview of what the Education Outreach team do before focussing upon the Farrell archive collection. Starting with the archive the talk will explain how the team will work with The Farrell Centre and colleagues from Architecture, Engineering and Bio-Technology to challenge two groups of Year 9 students to create model houses of the future to help combat climate change. Their houses will be on display at the Farrell Centre and the students will invite family, friends and teachers to a launch event.



## Greg Finch

After a D.Phil in English economic history from the University of Oxford, Greg Finch worked in IT and business consulting for over 20 years. He has written widely on aspects of early modern and modern English history. In the early 2010s he helped to develop, promote and run the award-winning Dukesfield project. Research for this was a starting point for his book *The Blacketts; A Northern Dynasty's Rise, Crisis and Redemption*, which won the Business Archives Council's Wadsworth Prize for 2022. He lives near Hexham.

See: [Dukesfield Documents | DUKESFIELD - Smelters and Carriers Project](#)

### ABSTRACT

Dukesfield Documents – an online research resource

Dukesfield Documents is a free web-based collection of transcripts of original records from the 17th to the 19th centuries centred on the lead industry but covering wider aspects of the social, economic, political and family history of Northeast England and beyond. It presently contains over 13,500 individual items, containing some 3.3 million words of fully searchable text. Greg's talk introduces the background, content and features of the collection, its emergence from the Lottery funded 'Dukesfield Smelters and Carriers' community-based conservation and heritage project and how an informal group of researchers and transcribers continues adding to the collection today, eleven years on.



## Rob Collins

Rob Collins is a Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at Newcastle University, and the Project Manager for WallCAP. His research focuses on Roman frontiers and material culture (specifically Hadrian's Wall), as well as public archaeology.

See: <https://wallcap.ncl.ac.uk>

### ABSTRACT

Community Archaeology along Hadrian's Wall – What are the benefits?

The Hadrian's Wall Community Archaeology Project (WallCAP) was supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver on three key aims. First, the project would address priority sites along the Wall on Historic England's Heritage-At-Risk register. Second, work would advance the agendas of the World Heritage Site management plan and also the research agenda. Third, local communities would be more informed and involved with the Wall. A series of activities and events across the project, which ran from 2019-2022, delivered against these key aims, and has demonstrated that a community facing project can still deliver serious research while also benefitting the public and heritage management.



## Bethany Elliott

Dr Bethany Elliott is currently working at Berwick Record Office in two roles, the first involves running the Everyday Life in a Northumbrian Manor Project, and the second is as a Project Archivist. Prior to these roles she completed the Manorial Documents Register Projects for Lincolnshire and Cheshire and completed a PhD on the topic of manorial documents and the Lincolnshire MDR Project. In addition to this she has worked as an archivist and an associate lecturer, and completed an MA in Archive Administration, an MSc in Forensic Investigation and a BA in Archaeology and Ancient History.

See: [Everyday Life In A Northumbrian Manor - Northumberland Archives](#)

### ABSTRACT

The Everyday Life in a Northumbrian Manor Project: Reflections on Year One of a County-wide Transcription Project

The Everyday Life in a Northumbrian Manor project began one year ago, with the aim of making Northumbrian manorial records more accessible. To do this, volunteer groups from across the county have been creating transcriptions of these records, which will eventually form an online resource. We currently have four transcription groups involved in the project, all of whom have had training and have begun to create transcriptions of Northumbrian manorial records. This talk will examine how we have been working to make these records more accessible, by reflecting on the processes involved in recruiting and training volunteers, highlighting the early findings of the project, and showcasing some of the volunteer's work.



## Christine Seal

Dr Christine Seal BA (Open), PhD (Leicester) is an independent researcher who took early retirement from her Oxford University administrative officer post. Her wider interests are in almshouses and aged miner homes, nonconformity in Weardale and Hexham, Methodism and Local Preachers. She is Secretary of the NE Methodist History Society and a volunteer member of Hexham Abbey Conservation Group, helping to record the Abbey contents, including textiles and gravestones.

### ABSTRACT

The Occupational Almshouses and Aged Miner Homes in the North East

The NE had a number of almshouses for various occupations including seamen, miners, keelmen, widows of clergy and workers on large estates. In the main these were for retired workers or their widows. 53 almshouses or hospitals were found in the NE counties but only 7 of these alms accommodated seamen, mariners or their widows and dependents. Almshouses for seamen, mariners or their widows dominate the north-eastern coastal towns, and accommodated mainly elderly population in the 19th century. Almshouses usually accommodated small numbers of people, for eg the Marine Institution accommodated 10 residents, but the Trafalgar Almshouses accommodated 145 alms people in 1881. This presentation takes a selection of almshouses and aged miner homes to illustrate the social care the alms people and aged miners received.



## Lizzy Baker

Lizzy Baker is the Archives Lead at Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, Based at the Discovery Museum in Newcastle, Tyne & Wear Archives is the local authority archive service for Gateshead, Newcastle, Sunderland and North and South Tyneside. After a history degree, Lizzy qualified as an Archivist in 2004 at the University of Aberystwyth. and has worked in local authority archives for 18 years in both the North East and Yorkshire. At Tyne & Wear Archives she is responsible for the delivery of the Archive service including collections development and management, in person and remote access to the archives and working on community and academic projects. Lizzy is a Peer Reviewer for the Archives Accreditation scheme, and sits on The National Archives Public Records Places of Deposit Reference Group and the Chief Archivists in Local Government Group Executive Committee.

See: <https://twarchives.org.uk/about-us/lahav-jewish-heritage-project>

### ABSTRACT

The Unlocking North-East Jewish Heritage project is an innovative 2 years project to digitize the records of the Jewish communities of the North East and host them on a digital platform that enables the stories of the Jewish communities of North-East England to be told through documents, maps, oral histories and publications.





## Kate Gill

History and genealogy are my passions and I am able to spend time on both of these in my position as Curator of the Weardale Museum. This is a volunteer post, we have no paid staff.

Most of my working life was in local government but following my passions I studied for an M.A. in North East History which I completed at Newcastle as a mature student. I run a Family History Research Service Northumbria Roots.

See: [Weardale Museum & High House Chapel](#)

### ABSTRACT

Time for Change – The Redevelopment of the Weardale Museum

The Weardale Museum has a wealth of information on the history and heritage of Weardale but it is a small museum with no space to grow. Our ability to tell the stories of Weardale is restricted and we have to use other premises for events and exhibitions. In 2019 when the adjoining building became vacant the decision was made to purchase it and develop a new Museum and Heritage Centre. My talk sets out our vision for the future and looks at the ways in which we can bring Weardale and its people to life for our visitors in telling the Weardale stories in new ways.



## Steve Mayes

Steve is an independent LEGO artist who is based in North Shields. He creates display models and custom kits, with a strong focus on architecture and the built environment, and on the North East of England. Previous projects have included a 3m long Metro train, a 100,000 piece recreation of Alwick Garden and a 2m model of the Bowes Museum.

See: <https://www.brickthis.co.uk/>

### ABSTRACT

Building the North East in LEGO

This presentation complements that delivered by Kate Gill on the Weardale Museum. Steve will be presenting images of various LEGO builds from the North of England and bring the work-in-progress Weardale project. And maybe a few other things!



## Sally Waite

Dr Sally Waite is a Senior Lecturer in Greek Art and Archaeology at Newcastle University. She has worked extensively with the Shefton Collection of Greek and Etruscan Art and Archaeology in the Great North Museum, and is co-editor of *On the Fascination of Objects: Greek and Etruscan Art in the Shefton Collection* (2016). Her research focuses on the iconography on Athenian red-figure pottery, particularly in relation to questions of gender and the histories of collections. She is co-editor of *Shoes, Slippers and Sandals: Feet and Footwear in Classical Antiquity* (2019) and has recently completed an AHRC-funded project 'Shining a Light on Women and Children in Antiquity'.

See: <https://www.storiesfromthearchive.org/>

### ABSTRACT

You Echo through Time: Reimagining the Display of Athenian Painted Pottery through Lived Experience

Newcastle University's Shefton Collection of Greek Art and Archaeology, now housed in the Great North Museum, contains some significant examples of Athenian red-figure pottery. The display is thematic with very little interpretation. In recent years we have been working, through a series of interdisciplinary gallery interventions, to make the Collection more relevant and accessible to museum visitors allowing for a multiplicity of narratives. In this presentation I will focus on a recent exhibition *You Echo through Time* (2022) which was co-produced through a series of workshops with intergenerational groups of women and non-binary people. This display combined painted pottery with Natural Science Collections to shine a light on women in Antiquity through the lived experience of the workshop participants.





For information on the Newcastle University Public Pasts Forum and the Public Pasts Research Strand please see:

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/hca/research/themes/public-pasts/>

For information on the School of History, Classics and Archaeology see:

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/hca/>