

25 YEARS OF WALLSEND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Wallsend by Charter of Incorporation became a Borough in 1901 & in 1972 had a population of 48,000.

In 1973 a preliminary meeting convened by Mr Ian Brown, Mr & Mrs Robert Graham was attended by several including Mr Jim Robinson, Mr & Mrs V Wallace in Battlehill Community Centre, agreeing to hold an inaugural meeting in Oct at St John Ambulance Brigade Headquarters, Warwick Rd., then at Vine St. Drill Hall where it was decided to form WALLSEND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY to study & promote the town's history.

Shortly afterwards Mr Harry Domoney joined the Soc. which greatly benefited from his keen interest, organising the first talk on Drove Roads given in St Luke's Scout Hall before Mr Brown was elected President, Mr Graham, Chairman, Miss Joyce Tierney, Secretary whilst Mrs Mamie Wallace was responsible for the cash collected on a saucer for refreshments. A young man joined & appointed Programme Planner, still carrying-out that function but now our Secretary, Mr John Stephenson.

A Constitution was formally agreed, a grant (£100) was received from the Council but the high point of the year was the excitement generated by the planned exploratory dig at Greenchesters on the northern boundary of Wallsend near the A19 spine road where a large mound was thought to have been either a Roman Settlement or an Anglo-Saxon site, as shades of pottery had been found. However heavy rain postponed the dig but later surveys proved inconclusive, so Greenchesters retains its secrets.

The committee met at Beamish Close then Collingwood Ave. whilst the monthly meetings were held in the Arts Room at Ferndale Ave Library, where we are still made most welcome on the second Monday of each month except July.

The Soc. affiliated to the Association of Northumberland Local History Societies (ANLHS), Wallsend Arts Federation, supporting the Wallsend Festival in the Civic Hall and Mr Robinson modelled Segedunum, which was accepted by North Tyneside Libraries for Ferndale Ave. Library. Mr Domoney was elected Chairman with the other officers unchanged. The committee met in Mr John Jackson's (Vice Ch), Mr Domoney's before supporting the Lion's Club of North Tyneside in their cavalcade with a Celtic chariot, a Roman chariot & Ox Wagon drawn by Exmoor ponies (nearest to native ponies of the time) along the length of Hadrian's Wall. Members of the Roman Army Study Group (Ninth Legion, Warwickshire & Ermine Street Guard, Gloucestershire) wearing replica Roman armour, carrying replica weapons, accompanied them. The president, Mr Ian Brown acted as First Aid Attendant under the auspices of the St. John Ambulance Brigade when his recollections involved camping under the stars with the "legion" near Once Brewed but no injuries were reported.

On the demolition of housing on the north side of Buddle Street, Mr. Charles Daniel's, Archaeologist at Newcastle University began excavating the site of Segedunum (financed by NTMBCo. & Tyne & Wear Museum Service) in which members of the Society were whole-heartedly involved, recording activities on slides while Mr J.Robinson showed annual progress on plans and Mr. Daniels talked of the finds at monthly meetings. To store these artefacts, members campaigned to have a local museum, considering such buildings as the Colliery Chapel which was being vandalised or the unused Memorial Hall but could not use either. Several members contributed experiences to the book "Where The Wall Ends".

Mr Roy Mann was president when a vivid presentation of the Battle of Otterburn by Mr C. Wessencraft thrilled members while other speakers included Dr. C. M. Fraser, Mr Domoney (an entertaining well filmed visit to Canada) so on to Dec. when members really felt they HAD visited Bethlehem via Canon Donnelly's slides & talk.

Mr Domoney resigned as Chairman then Mr V. Wallace was elected before the Site was landscaped after Mr Daniels had updated the Society on his finds and the new chairman was awarded the B.E.M.

After a terrible winter the very enthusiastic committee were thanked by the Chairman on behalf of the members for protests at motor-cyclists using the Monk's Steps at Holy Cross for Trials: congratulating Victor Products (the MD was our president!) on their 50th year: hearing a most interesting talk by Mr Mann querying "Who Am I?".

Members also enjoyed three day tours but decided to increase subs. the following year when the president received his OBE & we attended a Public Meeting on "WALLSEND, THE LOCAL PLAN", (well covered by the media, but with nothing to recruit members to the LHS!) chaired by Alderman Bill Rickleton, NTMBC.

Some members gave talks to other groups including schools. Talks at meetings were on Roman Wall, Anglo Saxon Burials, Kirkharle, Segedunum, Famous Northumbrians, Great Bavington before the Society. visited this village guided through the mist by our host Mr Ian Buchanan, where we were provided with first class hospitality and on our return in even thicker fog, were reminded of Brigadoon which only appeared, was it every 100 years? Tours were made to Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, Cragside and a visit to Abbotsford was thoroughly enjoyed despite the inclement weather.

Mr Jack Wylie was awarded B.E.M. this year.

Articles of Historical Interest to Wallsend were seen in an exhibition although WLHS had been enquiring about these without any success.

The following year the Sec. arranged tours to Traquair, (where a Carnival in Peebles was enjoyed before the visit!), Mellerstain & York while the evening visit to Simonburn St. Mungo's surprised us as the Vicar had served an engineering apprenticeship at N.E.M. before working at Carville Power Station then being in charge of a CEGB Midland P.S. and being ordained on his retirement.

Talks were on Morpeth, Borders, River Tyne, Archaeology, Coastguards & Life on the Ocean Wave by eminent speakers but the Soc complained of not attracting visitors to Segedunum and seeking a local museum was becoming a saga!

Mr Ian A Buchanan (Head of that Clan!) was elected President attending many meetings despite living so far away (Great Bavington) but the committee was depleted through illness in the year Ark Royal was launched from Swan Hunter's by the Queen Mother while close by on the south side of Buddle Street, Segedunum was being excavated.

Mr Alf Senior wrote "The Folks Along the Road"; Stephenson's Centenary was celebrated at Wylam; ANLHS Spring Conference held at Blyth & the AGM of ANLHS at Stannington, the Chairman & Treasurer representing the Soc. at the latter three.

Following meetings with a Sub-committee of NTMBCo, Planners, NT Libraries Local Studies, a ray of hope was seen when Tyne & Wear Museum Service applied to British Shipbuilders for a building to be used as an Interpretation Centre.

Mr Daniells reported recent finds on Segedunum, south of Buddle Street & it was noticed that Simpson's Hotel was 'For Sale'

A new projector was purchased for members giving talks & for speakers at monthly meetings as a grant of £50 had been received and thanks sent.

A TV programme had been made of Segedunum

In 1982 a talk on 'Springtime' took us from the bad winter for a night & equally pleasing was 'Wor Dialect'.

At the AGM Mr Ian A Buchanan was re-elected President & Mr Ian Brown took members along Hadrian's Wall without leaving the Library. Other talks were Segedunum, Delaval's, Romans in Northumbria, a BBC Assignment, Wallsend & Mrs J Brusey guided the LHS round St Nicholas Cathedral giving everyone a new insight.

Another social visit was paid to Great Bavington (without the mist!) where the ladies of the village provided a truly 'Egon Ronay' buffet.

Drumlanrig was visited as was Castle Howard (more notable for the eventful return journey than the house!), Manderston where we were honoured to be shown round by the owner Mr (now Lord) Palmer of the noted Biscuit Firm.

The members were looking forward to a talk by Harry Domoney, but were shocked & saddened to learn of his sudden death towards the end of the year. Having been a Boy Scout, Harry served an engineering apprenticeship before 'going to sea'. Coming ashore he worked for both Gas then Electric Companies; was a Wallsend Councillor and on joining the Society, worked whole heartedly campaigning to have a museum in Wallsend especially to house the finds of the excavations in which he encouraged so many to take part. He gave talks to several groups including schools and had an enormous infectious pride in our heritage. The Chairman conveyed the condolences of the membership to Mrs. Mary Domoney and Mr George Hopewell gave the talk prepared by Harry at the December meeting.

The Chairman attended the AGM of ANLHS (addressed by Alan Beith MP for Berwick), reporting to the members & thanked the Treasurer, Secretary, Minute Secretary, Committee who had worked so hard this year & the members who regularly attended.

Simpson's Hotel was demolished before WLHS hosted (as promised) a Spring Conference on the 10th anniversary greatly assisted by Mr I Buchanan, our President and ANLHS Hon Sec., Mrs Janet Brown. Some 120 delegates from other societies attended NT Civic Hall, enjoying the venue, the refreshments served by the ladies of WLHS. (There were 16 but only three of them are still members!). The ANLHS News Letter produced by the Sec. described the event: - "What a fascinating day this was! We were met with a superb array of flowers put there for the occasion by Wallsend Council. There were three talks; first by Charles Daniells on the Roman Excavations at Segedunum; then we saw slides of old Wallsend by George Hopewell and finally a fascinating talk by Norman Gilchrist about the Birth and Rise of Swan Hunter's Shipyard (that story would make a good serial, something like the Onedin line!). The day was dedicated as a memorial to Harry Domoney, who's widow was present, but this in no way detracted from the warm friendly welcome we received. A lot of work had been put into the arrangements and they paid off; many thanks Wallsend and many happy returns of your tenth anniversary."

A presentation was made to Mr Ian Buchanan, who'd done so much for WLHS and he expressed his & his wife's (Kato had been given a bouquet) gratitude.

After the Spring Conference & talk on 'Northumbrian Families', the local MP, Ted Garrett became President receiving correspondence from Lord Belwyn, indicating a feasibility study could be made of Salisbury House.

Our knowledge was increased via the 'Manor of Byker', 'Hartburn Church', 'Bede's Monastery', 'Wallsend', 'Archaeology', (by Director of T & W Museums), 'Industrial Archaeology', (Dr Stafford Lindsay), 'River Tyne' and 'Wallsend in 17th century' (Dr C M Fraser)

Members visited Jarrow Museum, Harewood House, Dove Cottage, Bowhill, while one evening at Hartburn Church Canon A F Donnelly showed a Baptismal Font with magical powers (?) until one noticed the thin wire to a counterweight. All well attended.

The Committee were as diligent as ever and the Interpretation Centre was still a live project but not of high priority and Corbridge Museum was opened in September.

Salisbury House was purchased by NTMBCo. & a director of TWMuseum Service reported the intention to use it as an Interpretation Centre.

The following year Ted Garrett was re-elected President and Mrs Beatrice Clark was welcomed onto the committee.

The Chairman met Mr Robin Birley (Chairman of Northumberland County Council and of Vindolanda) at Morpeth who advised on a museum as did our President and Councillor Jim Cousins (Deputy Leader T&W Council).

Visits were made to Wylam Railway Museum, Blackfriars but Dr Alex Campbell showed the Chemical Industry (long gone from Wallsend) in a new light. Talks followed on Where Railways were Born, Dove Family of Cullercoats, Delaval Hall, whilst Fr. W. Nicholson's Golden Age of Northumbria enlightened all but on a speaker failing to turn up, Cllr Sam Ingles gave an impromptu talk on Councillors & Mayoral Duties quite entertainingly.

The Roman Fort of Segedunum was landscaped except for the Headquarters Building.

The Chairman again gave members a report of ANLHS AGM. The Dec. talk was given by the Chairman on Wallsend Electricity followed by a film on loan from CEGB, "Safety in Mind" about Nuclear Power.

A member gave several books & glass slides of Thermal Syndicate Limited.

After Dame Muriel Stewart had given an outstanding talk - '300 years of St. James Church' - (a foretaste of interesting educational talks), Mrs Brusey spoke of the Percy's as though they were neighbours, 'Romans in Northumbria', was 'reported', Captain David Armstrong told of the "Armstrongs" & later J S Stephenson discussed W.T.Stead before Dr.D Aldridge showed a marvellous collection of slides on the raising of the "Mary Rose".

Although at the 1985 A.G.M. Cllr. Sam Ingles was elected president, he was congratulated on becoming Mayor of North Tyneside in May; and a few members set up an exhibition (seen by many) in Barclay's Bank Window..

A number of books were presented to the Society from St. Columba's Church (100th anniversary) St Luke's Church, the Wallsend Social Club, N.E.M., Slipway Engineering Coy. and of Charles Parsons, showing the interest of other than members.

Cllr. Mary Lavery presented a cheque for £100, as a grant from T&W Co. which was to be abolished and George Hopewell, Jim Robinson continued to give talks supplementing the funds.

The Chairman & Deputy acted as tutors on Local History Courses at Willington High and Burnside Schools from which some members were recruited ..

The good news in Industry Year, 1986, was the opening, in February of Wallsend Heritage Centre (the officials of the Soc. had a preview) by Cllr. Jim Cousins when Mrs.M.Domoney was able to attend but no new members resulted.

The past president Mr. I.Brown was congratulated on his B.Sc.

Members visited the Byker Wall; noted the recent Rising Sun Trail; the abolition of Tyne & Wear, (except as a postal address), requested the Council to protect the Monk's Steps. Eloquent speakers gave talks on Soap Boilers, Old Northumberland Bridges, (Dr C Fraser), Further Aspects of Stead (J Stephenson), Whitley Bay (E Hollerton), but three members presenting Wallsend Churches, (G Hopewell), Collieries (K Hutchinson) and superb slides of Tall Ships on Tyneside (G Crennell) were also well received.

Several attended a Public Meeting in NT Civic Hall which was in favour of demolishing The Stadium on The Green.

NTMBC purchased Holystone Hospital as part of Rising Sun Countryside Park in which the popular Rising Sun Trail was placed.

The Chairman & Deputy attended meetings on the Wallsend Dene Project.

The Soc was still financially sound thanks to the treasurer despite her accident in May & with the diligence of the Secretary, Committee, members enjoyed a couple of day tours.

Another Bank Window Exhibition was held whilst the Chairman & Treasurer reported to the members after attending the AGM of the ANLHS. .

1300 years after the death of St. Cuthbert (although the Soc. did not participate in events about this!), St Lukes, "Shipyard Church" with its noted War Memorial Stained Glass East Window by Wilhelmina Geddes, celebrated a centenary.

Members researched Holy Cross Church (c.1150) & the Burn Closes with the guidance of Mr Iain Watson WHC manager.

All WLHS members were saddened to learn of the death of Mr. Jimmy Robinson, a founder member, inventor, whose model of Segedunum was accepted by North Tyneside Libraries for Ferndale Ave Library. His family donated several of his models to the Society in his memory.

When Cllr Jim Cousins was president, after the AGM it was noted that a plaque was to be placed in St Peter's Church to the memory of the victims of the Heaton Colliery Disaster but there was no recognition of the 102 victims of the Wallsend Colliery Disaster of 1835. How could this anomaly be corrected?

Barratt's made application to build 3-Storey Flats on The Green so WLHS opposed this and any encroachment of this area as Miners had done in the last century. This was supported by Capt. David Armstrong of the Newcastle Society.

Talks were educating, entertaining, thought provoking on The Siege of Newcastle, Coquet Valley, Burrell Collection, The Tall Ships Race & Mr Roland Bibby's query "Must Northumbrian Die?" was quickly answered "Nee feor!"

The John Wesley Clock from Carville Chapel was found to be in Brunswick Methodist Church, Newcastle.

Many were able to attend the Stead Memorial Conference (filmed by the BBC) - organised by Mr J. Stephenson whose talk had whetted appetites! - 138 years after Stead's birth. William T Stead was a renowned journalist, editor of the Northern Echo and later the Pall Mall Gazette & was involved in all campaigns against injustices. Mr P. Brooks (Chairman of ANLHS) welcomed the International Delegates. The conference continued in Alnwick Castle, then at Embleton where the eulogy by Mr Stephenson was so moving (75 years after the Titanic disaster). On the final day British Ropes hosted a lunch after a visit to Stead's parents grave in Preston Cemetery and the conference closed with talks in the Civic Hall with refreshments served by Ladies of WLHS and each delegate being presented with a copy of "Where the Wall Ends."

Mr Ken Hutchinson wrote a paper on Portugal Place, querying why "Portugal" but has not had a satisfactory answer to date.

Discussions were held with ANLHS on the printing of the eulogy to W T Stead.

The Chairman reported the ANLHS AGM.

During the second year of the Presidency of Jim Cousins he was congratulated on being elected MP for Newcastle North.

The eulogy to W T Stead was printed & was much in demand.

A Public Enquiry was held in the Town Hall where NTMBCo. Planning Officer (Mr K. Hutchinson) put the case against Barrett's application (fully supported by WLHS via the Chairman). The Inspector from the Department of the Environment who held the enquiry visited The Green & surrounding areas accompanied by some members of the Soc., to get what he described as "the feel".

On the formation of Wallsend Heritage Guides, June 1987 two members trained to show visitors round Segedunum on Wed & Sat afternoons or parties on request. On an early tour one member was able to publicise te Soc. when interviewed by BBC Radio Newcastle Outside Broadcast. Most locals claimed they had put off learning about the end of the Wall after leaving school but most visitors were keen to know Roman History.

Most members were at studios of TTTV for a version of Tom O'Connor's "Cross Wits" but few set up and manned a stand in Newcastle Civic Centre on a local history Day "Its Your Past" which was visited by over 2000.

Two members were able to enjoy the ANLHS re-enactment of the Battle of Otterburn 600 years after the event which was so realistic as the Army combatants were expecting to be on leave that weekend!

. Two lady members gave a talk each as well as the Society hearing of Industrialists of the North; Heraldry; Ulgham: Glass Industry and Shipbuilding.

Later in the year Barrat's appeal was rejected, one of the deciding factors being that NTMBCo. considered The Green "...only example of a mediaeval Green in the country".

Both the Duke of Northumberland & Fr. William Nicholson (President ANLHS) died this year when White Mews were built on the site of the demolished Stadium (cf. Public Enquiry above.).

Mr Hutchinson was able to have British Gas place a Mural depicting the history of Wallsend on their building next to WHC close to Segedunum.

NTMBC were thanked for a generous grant.

Jack Jones (President of the National Pensioners Convention) unveiled a plaque at Elton Court to Herbert Stead for his work 80 years previously to have a pension of 5/- paid to 70 year olds ("no thanks to Lloyd George!")

A new Health Centre was opened on The Green and the stone from Camp House garden was safely stored in WHC.

WLHS was represented at the AGM of ANLHS at Stannington but did not recruit any new members this year.

The Committee was depleted on Mrs M Maghie leaving the district & the illness of Mrs M Thompson (the ladies who gave talks last year), meeting in the Burnside School or the Town Hall.

After Mr Iain Watson, Manager of Wallsend Heritage Centre, explained his work & programme, talks followed on histories of Scotswood, North Shields (Mr Eric Hollerton of the North Tyneside Local Studies Unit), Swan Hunters (the expert on that subject, Mr Norman Gilchrist) giving members further local knowledge.

But perhaps the highlight to many was Mr Ken Hutchinsons account of the Wallsend Colliery Disaster of 1835, researched by his wife Pauline too, proving to be thought provoking while much happier memories were revived by Mr Frank Manders recalling Newcastle Cinemas.

At the AGM Dr Gordon Adam the Euro MP was elected president while the Soc. was still involved in the War Memorials Project of ANLHS.

The Treasurer Mrs M Wallace held a healthy balance (audited by Miss Rose Henderson) and they, the Secretary, Committee earn the thanks of the members who regularly attend the monthly meetings.

Co-operating with Blandford House WLHS exhibited artefacts in Ferndale Avenue Library before the Chairman attended the AGM of ANLHS and reported this to the members who assisted in identifying places & buildings on some of the many slides in our collection.

Another exhibition was placed in Barclays' Bank window and a grant was again received of £100 from NTMBCo. for which they were thanked.

The visit to BBC's Pink Palace Studios was both educational & entertaining although not appearing on Television!

Two members still regularly acted as Heritage Guides at Segedunum.

WLHS was still involved in War Memorials project of ANLHS whose AGM was attended and reported.

Into the '90's the committee was again depleted, only three attending an early meeting, adopting a "roving commission" but mainly at Burnside school.

The talks this year began and ended with accounts of holidays in Italy & Australia but local and useful facts were learned from Stephenson's Railway Trail, Trams and Buses, Old Howdon Churches, Bede's Museum, Records (how to use them!), Genealogy, which had been thoroughly researched by the speakers.

A visit was made to the Lit & Phil where a great deal of information was shown, about Wallsend and associated industries.

NTMBCo gave another grant of £100 for which they were thanked as was Dr. Gordon Adam for his enjoyable "Presidents Night" although the Treasurer was unable to attend through being in hospital.

Concern was expressed at the winter closure of the WHC as the Heritage Guides were unable to operate without an assembly point for tourists and visitors.

The Society was noted as "one of the most active in ANLHS" whose AGM was attended and reported to WLHS members.

The Chairman gave an illustrated talk to students of Second Chance Learning in the People's Centre, Charlotte Street and the Soc was still able to assist students enquiries on Local History, Social History, as well Industrial and Local Workers.

Once again the Committee were thanked for their diligence in keeping the Society interested in another year & being involved in Mrs Janet Brown's War Memorial Project for ANLHS.

It was noted that Mr Ken Hutchinson had run in the New Year Morpeth to Newcastle Race.

Although the February meeting, 1991 was cancelled owing to snowstorms, the Annual Meeting saw the re-election of Dr. Gordon Adam, the Euro MP as President of WLHS.

The Director of Tyne Wear Museum Service explained why the WHC was closed for the winter but the Soc felt it should be publicised more and used for easy access to Tynemouth (Priory & Castle), Jarrow (Bede's World), South Shields (Arbeia) as well as Newcastle and as a start/finish of Hadrian's Wall.

Several meetings were held in the Town Hall.

At the excavations at Segedunum it was exciting to find traces of ditches, whilst the Guides had restarted their tours of the fort.

Following a Quiz by Mr Norman Grainger finding how much (or how little!) we knew of Northumberland, talks were about Shipbuilding, Charles Mitchell, Garibaldi, (Professor P J Yarrow), 16th Century Northumberland (Mr R Bibby), Beamish, whilst Mr J Stephenson presented a true "Apostle of Peace", W T Stead.

NTMBCo. was thanked for the £100 grant keeping the Society solvent; so members appreciated the hard work of the Treasurer, Mrs M Wallace (despite some time in hospital) & the Officers.

Mrs Janet Brown gave members a most interesting tour of Edlingham Castle.

Reps. attended the ANLHS AGM at Stannington and reported the changes of Officers and members enjoyed the refreshments at the Dec. meeting.

As forecast earlier the WHC closed for the winter & the transparencies were taken to Stephenson's Railway Museum, Middle Engine Lane.

Ten years after the Falklands War the Carville Infants school celebrated a centenary and as NTMBCo. were seeking a name for a new school, the Society suggested "W T Stead Memorial" but it was called "Denbigh"!

Again Wallsend Peoples Centre was thanked for printing for WLHS.

After an excellent visit to Blandford House where we were shown a great deal of information especially of Wallsend by Mr Simms, Councillor Stephen Byers, Deputy Leader NTMBCo. was elected President whilst officers & committee were re-elected at the AGM.

WLHS was noted as "one of the most active in ANLHS" in whose War Memorials Project WLHS was still involved.

Another successful W T Stead Memorial Conference was held with the LHS Chairman introducing Cllr. Jim Conway, Mayor of North Tyneside to welcome the International Delegates in North Tyneside Civic Hall.

When the Branch Wall (a listed building) was returned to Segedunum, another listed building N.E.M. Crane (erected 1909) was dismantled!

Tyne Wear Museum Service held a Roman Day attended by c 150 and Mr Bill Griffiths, the archaeologist had a portion of the Wall reconstructed.

Members appeared to prefer talks arranged by the Secretary, including I Had a Dream, Wallsend Revisited (Ken H.), On The River (Gordon C.), Border Rievers, Tyneside Songs (several sung!), NE Fishing Industry, Edwardian Glass.

Members then visited St. Peter's Church to view their noted stained glass windows, (There was some doubt as to the future of the Church owing to damage from subsidence).

Another grant was gratefully acknowledged from NTMBCo.

A new member, Mr Peter McGrath, an ex-miner, ex transport Inspector, organised a visit to Woodhorn Colliery Museum where Wansbeck Council were receiving an award from Europe for "...their harmony and understanding between people of Europe" by an early twinning with a German town; this was quite a bonus for local historians.

A local Inn was called the 'Jolly Bowman' as the lady who suggested the name thought that her husband had worked in that seam whereas it was the "Beaumont" seam.

Messrs Stephenson, Wallace met Mr David Wright (NT Director of Leisure & Tourism) about the lack of publicity for Segedunum, asking whether the Council would assist us to place a memorial to the victims of the 1835 Disaster? Could WHC be kept open to assist the Heritage Guides and to be used as a base for tourists to visit the historical sites in the area via Metro?

In November the President was congratulated on being elected MP for Wallsend.

The Society noted that although a plaque had been placed in St. Peter's Church (1987) to the memory of victims of the Heaton Colliery Disaster, 102 victims of 1835 Wallsend Colliery Disaster interred in that Churchyard had no memorial. It was decided that WLHS should finance such a memorial & immediately Mr Ian Lavery with lodges of NUM supported our efforts financially despite many of their jobs being in jeopardy owing to threatened pit closures.

At the AGM of ANLHS at Gosforth John Derry spoke of "Lord Grey of the Reform Bill" and after attending, the Chairman reported this to members of WLHS.

Discussions on the Memorial were held with Mr William Strettle (ex Bevin Boy!), Monumental Sculptor, Shiremoor, Mr Ian Lavery (Sec. Northumberland NUM), Ashington, with Church officials of St Peter's, the Rural Dean and the DAC.

Wallsend Nursing Association had 'operated' for a hundred years so were congratulated.

Chairman wrote to Prime Minister reporting that WLHS supported "Save Our Swans" Campaign and to the Home Secretary to have the area revert to 'Northumbria' instead of the postal address of Tyne and Wear.

As 1993 was WLHS 20th anniversary, it had been agreed to host ANLHS Round-the-County, so arrangements were proceeding with the support of local firms eg. AMEC, Swans, TSL, William Press.

A special meeting in February discussed the Memorial to victims of the Wallsend Colliery Disaster 1835 and during the year several meetings were held. Visits were made to Mr William Strettle (Monumental Sculptor, Shiremoor) (he had been a Bevin Boy!), Mr Ian Lavery (NUM Northumberland Secretary, Ashington), as well as Church Officials to discuss how to have a memorial at St. Peters where a plaque had been placed to the memory of victims of the Heaton Colliery Disaster.

The Society was still taking part in ANLHS War Memorials Project.

At the AGM, the resignation of the Treasurer of 20 years (from collecting coppers in a saucer to handing over a balance of almost £300!) was reluctantly accepted and later a bouquet was presented to Mrs M Wallace for her long and dedicated service.

Stephen Byers was re-elected President.

Letters were sent to the Boundary Commission objecting to proposed changes which could endanger the identity of Wallsend and to the PM re WLHS support to "Save-Our-Swans" Campaign.

The programme for the Round-the-County was made with the approval of Swans which included a visit to the Shipyard. However on May 11th, Trade Union Officials were summoned to an emergency meeting where Directors of the Company stated that the Bank had been instructed to appoint Receivers. After a further meeting the TU Officers met the workforce then Price Waterhouse (Receivers) in the evening.

This proved to be one of the worst years in the Town's history but it was noted that the previous yard, Schlesinger, Davis & Co. had closed in 1893!

An order for a LPH, 20,000 tonnes had been brought forward, supposedly to keep Swans workforce intact but a firm of Submarine builders tendered £ms less (later declaring an overspend of £800ms on Trident!) than Swans but then subcontracting the hull to Kvaerner a Norwegian Company on the Clyde and completing the vessel at Barrow.

On the eve of Round the County, Swans declared further redundancies, so for Safety & Security reasons the Yard visit had to be cancelled. However after the ladies of the Soc had catered at lunch time, Wallsend Heritage Guides gave delegates an instructive tour of Segedunum and the reconstructed Wall.

1993 was also European Year of Older People and Solidarity with Other Generations when Tyneside Pensioners Association arranged to involve the Community in a week entitled "Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow" with the bases of three Industries, Coal, Fishing and Shipbuilding. Two members of the Soc. assisted in the preparation & Exhibition of photographs & historical information. Entertainment was provided by school children (many parents attended!), while Tom Hadaway, Ripyard Cuddling (Jack Davitt) gave talks with a video taken of the week long event.

Our knowledge of the area was increased through talks on Northumberland, Whitley Bay, Jesmond Dene, English Heritage, (Mr D Jones), Borough of Wallsend, Earsdon as well as on Charles Parsons, Northumbrian Verse, (Mr Roland Bibby) & Musicians of the North.

Further discussions took place about the Plaque when Church DAC advised that a faculty was needed too, but after been given the cost by Mr Strettle, it was ordered to be placed in the south churchyard wall after other formalities were completed.

The following year 1994 it was found necessary to increase subscriptions before the artefacts were filed and recorded thanks to Mr Bill Griffiths.

At the AGM Councillor Michael Huscroft was elected President (he'd been a Councillor for 25 years!) attending several meetings most of which were taken to discuss the Plaque. The Treasurer warned of the expenditure being more than the income.

The decision of the Boundary Commission to remove the Constituency of Wallsend but create North Tyneside and Newcastle East AND Wallsend (this despite objectors including the President and Chair of WLHS) was regretted.

By April the "faculty" was applied for, quickly followed by a solicitor's bill for the faculty and memorial.

Talks were about The Best of Northumberland, Norman's, Shipbuilding, (by the expert on this, Mr Norman Gilchrist), Wallsend Colliery Disaster 1835 (researched jointly by Ken & Pauline Hutchinson), G & R Stephenson, holding the interest of members and the presentation of 'Tall Ships' displayed some excellent photography.

Ken and Pauline Hutchinson's first class account of The Wallsend Colliery Disaster 1835 was published and keenly sought.

Thanks were due to Committee, newly elected Treasurer, Speakers, in fact all who had contributed to the success of WLHS.

The Wallsend Heritage Guides were again showing visitors Segedunum.

With the support of Messrs Strettle, Lavery the plaque to the memory of the 102 victims of the 1835 Wallsend Colliery Disaster was unveiled (Mrs M Wallace had hastily made a curtain!) by the Mayor of North Tyneside, Cllr Bob Usher, dedicated by the Rev John Ross on the 18th June. It was placed in the South Wall of the St Peter's Churchyard where the victims had been interred by the Rev John Armstrong 159 years previously. Mr Tom Jones a member videoed this event.

Further grants of £200 from NTMBCo., £164.88 from Wallsend Heritage Guides were gratefully received.

As this year was the Society's 21st Anniversary refreshments were enjoyed at the August meeting Chat Night thanks to Mr & Mrs H Hoy and assistants.

A donation was made to St Peter's Church on learning that it was to be restored to its former glory when English Heritage was to supply 80% of the cost.

Noting the risk of Swans closing WLHS considered how to protect the plaque marking the end of the Wall.

This year it was noted how the traditional Industries of the town had been decimated and the Wallend Heritage Centre was no longer open to the public but the "Wallsend Mystery Boat", Turbinia was permanently placed in Blandford House.

H.M.S. Richmond sailed from what had been the greatest shipbuilding river in the world as the last naval vessel to be built at Swan Hunters.

While refreshments were enjoyed at the December meeting, (21st anniversary!), as was the free raffle with prizes supplied by Mrs. M Wallace, it was agreed to support any challenges to our heritage, although failing to convince the Boundary Commission that their decision put the identity of Wallsnd at risk.

Officers were concerned that the cupboards, contents would have to be removed during the Library refurbishment. However this was not necessary but on returning to the library for February meeting several members had to be "shepherded" from the Town Hall to hear Professor John Derry's account of Earl Grey and the Reform Bill.

As normal the AGM was held in March, Councillor Michael J Huscroft was still President with the Committee & Officers being re-elected, the Chairmans printed report accepted with the approved balance sheet.

A portion of the Wall was being reconstructed.

ANLHS was seeking Wartime Memories of people of the north, whilst St. Peter's Church held "History and Hymns" on St George's Day when several members were able to attend.

The committee now met in High View Residents Rooms where a letter from Mr Wylie Wright of New Zealand was discussed because of his interest in Wallsend.

North Road Football Ground, previously used by Wallsend Town (North Eastern League), St. Luke's, Newcastle United 'N's, Lindisfarne Catholic Club, was now being built on as a housing estate off West Street.

Wallsend Peoples Centre hosted V-Day celebrations 50 years on with wartime meals, Pathe News Reels, Glen Miller music and other entertainment. Chairman & his wife manned a small exhibition there collecting Wartime Memories.

Members took advantage of an 'in depth' tour of the area with Wallsend Wanderers Mr Edmund Hall acting as courier in scenic, interesting places were it often appeared coaches had never ventured before.

Among the talks were 'Bede's World', 'Our Swans on the Tyne', 'Cooperative Society', 'Local Studies Unit' 'Stead and the Echo', 'Crusades' and 'Wallsend Slipway & Engineering Company' which resembled a works re-union.

Mr & Mrs Wylie Wright from New Zealand visited the Society as a result of reading P & K Hutchinson's book "Wallsend Colliery Disaster 1835" amazing members with the coincidences between our area and Tyneside in New Zealand. Both had mines near a railway and a church close to a river where coal had been found at 600-700 feet while the last mines had closed about the same time leaving both areas without any coalmine! Thanks to a few volunteers refreshments were enjoyed.

The Mayor of North Tyneside MB Council, Cllr. Tom Cruickshanks, held a reception for the visitors & LHS, which he considered to be one of the most active groups in the voluntary sector.

Several members visited Shiremoor HS in CAB there to see a fascinating selection of old toys, film of a coalmine, noting they gave talks in schools which apparently were thoroughly enjoyed by the school children.

Mr Ray Browning convened a meeting of a Liaison Committee to consider an Archaeological Park, Museum and a Roman Bath House to which the Chairman of WLHS was invited. Letters were sent to Councillors of all Parties seeking their support. Later Messrs Browning, Paul Bidwell (Tyne Wear Museum Service) and Wallace applied to Northumbrian Water Kick Start Board for an award to build the only useable Roman Bath House in Britian (who else would grant cash for a bathhouse?)

Unfortunately for the first time in 20 years the Chairman was unable to attend the ANLHS AGM.

Again in December the members were able to enjoy seasonable refreshments.

Another year and Mr John Ramsey (an authority on Churches) resigned from the WLHS reminding the Soc. of others who were missed eg Mr Jack Wylie who as a Cllr. with Ald. Bill Rickleton was responsible for purchasing what is Wallsend Sports Centre, Mr Peter McGrath who'd emigrated with his wife, Mary but did so much during his brief membership leaving many excellent photographs, Monty and Alf Senior, Harry Domoney etc, etc.

Committee met in the Memorial Hall (erected in 1925 by the Directors, workmen of Swan Hunters in memory of employees who lost their lives 1914-18) where Mr Bill Griffiths reported that an award of £5.3ms had been obtained from the National Lottery. Northumbrian Water Kick Start Board had previously granted £150,000 to the Bath House.

The chairman attended ANLHS Executive Council Meeting & reported this.

In corresponding with the Leisure, Tourism Board, its chairman had been instructed to advise WLHS because of its interest in Tourism to the Town.

On a very stormy night the AGM had Nick Brown MP elected as President, Officials, Committee re-elected, Chairman's printed report issued and the Balance Sheet approved. The Treasurer warned that as the rent had been increased as well as the insurance, speakers fees would also increase so the Soc. had a financial crisis looming.

Members had a delightful day thanks to Mr E Hall when visiting Bewick's Cherryburn. Several also visited BT's Future World in July.

Attempts were still being made to have schools in Wallsend New Zealand & England correspond but were further delayed by School holidays.

At an Open Day at St. Peter's, their archives proved to be most interesting.

The Committee continued to meet in the Town Hall and heard a report of the very interesting talk on "Dirty Dick" the herbalist, given at the ANLHS AGM at Stannington.

People-to-People NE held a function in the Civic Hall but despite having a display there WLHS did not recruit any members but thoroughly enjoyed both the first class entertainment & the various dishes provided from a variety of countries.

'Age Takes Centre Stage' was visited by some members before seeing the 'wonders' at BBC's Pink Palace.

Members heard talks on Trade Unions, Railways, Wallsend Electricity, Coalmining, History of Fleet Street, as well as being told "Anyone can do anything!"

One can hardly believe that although WLHS was founded in 1973, members would still be learning more of the areas history at present. A Mr Bernard Day of Middlesborough researching Baseball discovered that Wallsend were World Champions and traced the Cup to Dr. H Aitchison. The doctor lived at Park Villa at the north end of The Avenue but no descendants were traced. Mr Day had his book on Baseball published.

On the failure of a speaker to arrive, a fascinating impromptu talk on 'Transport Wallsend' was given by Mr E. Hall after which all enjoyed the socialising with refreshments.

(1896
Wallsend
on Paper)

Although the next year was the 1400th anniversary of St. Augustine of Canterbury, St. Columba (died 597), there were a number of tragedies. Children shot in a Dunblane School, a schoolmaster stabbed in defending a pupil and a bomb explosion in Manchester.

As Bill Steel arrived late (he'd attended a Charity Function previously) several members missed his brief entertaining talk of TV experiences.

Mr Bill Griffiths reported excavations at Segedunum and a grant from the National Lottery of £5.3m for an Archaeological Park, Museum and useable Roman Bath-house. Previously Northumbria Water Kick Start board had granted £150,000 towards the Bath House.

WLHS supported Jim Cousins MP's appeal to have the Lindisfarne Gospels returned to the North.

At the AGM the President, Officials, Committee were re-elected and thanked for their diligence. Bill Griffiths told of the Industrial Archaeology following the discovery of "B" Pit. Mr McGrath 'took' members to Canada.

LHS learnt of Village Greens, Bede's World, Surnames, History of Wireless The Bayeux Tapestry, The Green Wallsend and was honoured by the President, Rt. Hon. Nick Brown, discussing Political Morality Now and in the 17th Century.

A change of government saw Tony Blair as Prime Minister.

The ANLHS Round the County at Alston was enjoyed by three members.

Several members attended the launch of Segedunum 2000 before visiting Bede's World where it was seen so close to the modern industry of Nissan.

H.M. the Queen opened a Siemens Factory at Wallsend.

Because of the cash crisis several meetings discussed ways of reducing costs, raising funds, increasing contributions, recruiting members, meeting during the day or at different venues.

The Treasurer resigned handing the accounts to the Chairman.

With the rest of the world, the LHS was shocked at the tragic death of Princess Diana and shortly afterwards of Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Noting a grant of £250 from NTMBCo. the committee decided to convene an Extraordinary Meeting to make recommendations to the members. This meeting was held in November when members agreed the recommendation of the committee that subs remained the same but that the finances would be reviewed in June 1998.

Many members were sad at Kevin Keegan leaving Newcastle United, but most were cheered at the Angel of the North erected at Gateshead and noted the talks of an "Eyelid Bridge" between Newcastle and Gateshead for the Millennium

SEGEDUNUM 2,000 is well in hand with the 'Conning Tower's prominent landmark.

It was sad to end the year without a Treasurer but members enjoyed the talk on The Green Wallsend and some seasonal refreshments.

The WLHS 25th year began without a Treasurer so the Chairman had the Committee check the accounts and the first meeting was given a first class update on Segedunum 2000 by the Archaeologist Mr Bill Griffiths.

After the Chairman reported attending ANLHS Executive Council meeting, our committee considered seeking sponsors noting War Memories were still being sought.

The AGM saw members confidence in President, Officials & committee with re-election but adding Mrs Joyce Smith, Mr Edmund Hall. The printed Chairman's report was accepted and the accounts approved and a talk on "Wallsend Mystery Boat" was given. Following the meeting the volunteering, as Treasurer of Mr W R Baxter was very much appreciated

A talk about a visit to New Zealand was followed by Mr Roger Oram's brilliant description of the importance of the industrial finds at "B" Pit so close to Segedunum.

St Luke's Church News letter gave WLHS some publicity.

On a terrible night on what is supposed to be 'flaming June' the innovative auction was made entertaining, money making by Mr Edmund Hall (on loan from little known Auctioneers!) when all bidders considered they received bargains.

The decision at the November meeting 1997, was to review the finances in June 1998 and this was done. They proved satisfactory to the membership.

Visits were enjoyed first at Manderston (arranged by Mr Hall) then to the Lit & Phil where again a great deal was learnt.

Mrs Sylvia Murray's talk was an eye opener when she came in her Sheriff's "uniform" giving LHS a description of a year of office in that capacity.

After consideration of how the Soc could celebrate the Millennium, several had a grand night on a Tyne Boat Trip.

Several meetings were spent in preparing for a celebration of the 25th Anniversary of WLHS, such as who would sell tickets? What type of publicity, posters would be needed?

A visitor to a meeting reported that her daughter was to visit Mr & Mrs Wylie Wright in New Zealand, who the Soc. had been enquiring about..

In the North Tyneside Civic Hall the Chairman gave a brief history of the area, & of the WLHS, thanking NTMBCo. for many grants and the aim of preserving our heritage before Mr E. Hall introduced OPUS 6. This talented group rehearsed for months to present an outstanding musical programme to celebrate 25 years of the Wallsend Local History Society to a most appreciative audience. One finds it difficult to find appropriate words of thanks to all who made this such a memorable, succesful evening through catering, raffle (with donated prizes), with a financial gain of almost £400 to the funds. Although special thanks were due to Opus 6 and Mr E Hall.

A number of speakers earn thanks for a variety of talks over the years: Dr.C.M.Fraser, (Hon. Sec of ANLHS), the late Roland Bibby, Ken Hutchinson, Bill Griffiths, John Stephenson, while our voluntary Treasurer must also be thanked.

Slide shows of the Border Reivers, Curiosities of Northumberland were entertaining but Wallsend Electricity, History of Railways and Coalmining were educational and the Social Evening in December was both.

Most towns or cities are noted for a single feature or a personality, but Wallsend must be unique in having Roman connections (End of Hadrian's Wall), for its Coal ("Wallsend" was world famous), Shipbuilding (RMS Mauretania held the Atlantic Blue Riband for 22 years) (250,000 tons Oil Tankers) (HMS Illustrious for the Falklands War). Whereas Mr W.T.Stead ('the father of Modern Journalism') was known world-wide, as was Sir Charles A Parsons of Turbinia & turbine fame, Sir George B Hunter for his magnificent Shipbuilding, as well as the Stephensons with a host of others even now in entertainment.

A town which had five railway stations (now 3 on the Metro line), six cinemas (now none), the Borough (no longer a theatre) and a High Steet of Grocers, Butchers, Drapers, Tailors, Shoe Shops, Greengrocers, China Shops, Bakers, now has mostly Estate Agents, Solicitors, Charity Shops, Take-aways, Betting Shops although several Pubs still trade!

However a Society founded in 1973 to learn more of local history, progressed to campaign for a museum, assisted in excavating Segedunum (the only fort on a navigable river on Hadrians Wall) strove to attract tourists to "wor canny toon", organised two Round-the-County for ANLHS, with a heritage of Glass, Chemicals, Coal, Shipbuilding find now only TSL make a special kind of glass. There is no Chemical Industry, no coal mine, no Powere station and despite efforts to retain Shipbuilding (Save Our Swans) this ended with HMS Richmond. Perhaps efforts, should be made to have Shipbuilding returned noting that both Local M.P.s are Secretaries of State.

With the advent of Segedunum 2000, the anticipated influx of visitors, students, Tyne Wear Museum Service, Wallsend Heritage Guides, NTMBCo., WLHS will attempt to have them and the residents of the town do as members of WLHS have done for 25 years, take a great deal of pride in preserving Our Heritage.
