

# Up!

ISSUE 10 JULY 2021

History  
Edition

Accentuating the Positive

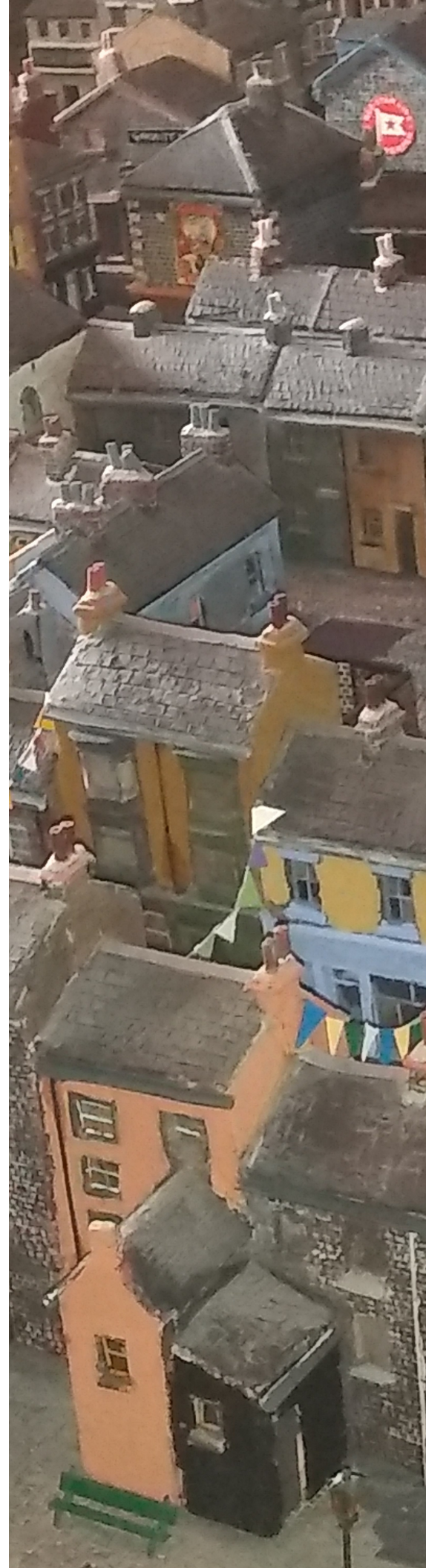
Making the world a  
better place -  
one page at a time



Photo Pixabay

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Part of Jonny Hannah's Northumberland Folk exhibition at Woodhorn Colliery

# Up Front!

Hello, and welcome to the latest issue of Up! For anyone new to our magazine, each month we choose a broad theme to guide some of our content and this month it's History. Here at Up! we're all about the here and now – making the very best of every day – and also planting seeds for better tomorrows. But as we're lucky to live in a country with such a wonderfully rich history, it'd be a crime not to occasionally look back at where we have come from.

So this month we get the lowdown on archaeology from a regular digger, we talk to a historical novelist, we visit the museum at the world's largest pit village, there's a feature on a newly restored and reopened 15th century castle and we meet the man who the papers have dubbed 'The Michelangelo Of Middlesbrough'!

All that, plus all your regular favourites on the great outdoors, the world of books (from a new Up! team member) – plus an opportunity for you to test your knowledge with our special one-off quiz.

Climb aboard, dive into the past and we'll catch you on the other side!

Bridget & Harry x



# Digging Up!

ROBERT NICHOLS

Up! talks archaeology and the past with historian, regional ambassador and football fanatic, Robert Nichols

Thanks for agreeing to talk to us Robert. You're obviously passionate about history. Has this always been the case?

Yes, very much so. Maybe it stems from attending Captain Cook School in Marton where we were brought up on tales of the explorer. As kids we often used to go to play football in Stewart Park and we would pause to step into the giant Victorian conservatory and walk up to the granite vase that marks Cook's supposed birthplace.

I remember that I used to prefer non-fiction books and particularly history and even encyclopaedia style magazines, like *Look'n'Learn*. Also, my granddad gave me a very rare book about great explorers that included a chapter about Scott and his failed bid for the South Pole. He had been given it as a prize when he was a boy, and it was actually published not that long after Scott's death in Antarctica. Imagine that?! How could I possibly not be passionate about history with all those things around me?



We know you were involved with the so-called 'Teesside Saxon Princess' dig. That must have been a real thrill....

Oh yes, very loosely. As in I sometimes used to assist my good friend Dr Steve Sherlock in little archaeological projects. I would carry some of the tools and furnish him with Boro football news. He showed me an aerial photo of a field near the cliffs close to Loftus. It appeared to show a V shaped line that his trained eye reckoned was an iron age ditch.

He was absolutely right and within that V were tell-tale circular shapes marking the sites of former iron age round houses. So, that was good but what was totally unexpected was that those circles were sliced through by little rectangles all in rows. He had witnessed this before at Norton Anglo Saxon cemetery. I think I only worked for a day or so on that chapter of the dig but it was such a thrill. They say all that glitters isn't gold but it was at Street House. Amazingly rich finds of jewellery and other lavish grave goods were unearthed and it was a complete surprise.

Just down the coast, Hild was holding a conference to determine, among other things, when we celebrate Easter. That is all part of written history but just a few miles away at roughly the same time a princess and her band of people were living and dying whilst completely evading the pen of the historical record. What a rediscovery! So good that these finds from the mid-7th century can now

# Digging Up!

ROBERT NICHOLS



be viewed in Kirkleatham Museum in their own gallery. It is so rewarding for everyone involved that people can look and learn from exhibits that are internationally important and not have to travel outside of Teesside.

## Tell us about some of your other favourite projects?

My first archaeology experience was as a 21st birthday present, a week's field course on the North York Moors where we were filling in a gap on the Ordnance Survey Map by searching for prehistoric burial mounds from the Bronze Age. Look at ridges across the moors and you can often pick out little bumps, like hard boiled eggs with the tops cut off. Chances are they are 4000-year-old round barrows, aka burial mounds. Again, history or pre-history is all around us.

I have been a very on and off digger over the years, fitting it in around football, but my passion for history and archaeology has always burned deep. Probably my dream job offer came in September 2015 when I was invited to take part in an archaeology and art project at what once was the home of former league club, Bradford Park Avenue. Right in the heart of Bradford, half of a football

ground had been abandoned to time and the elements. A full-on wood of trees had grown through the concrete of the kop end terrace. Around the still standing perimeter wall prices were still chalked up in shillings and old pence (d). What an amazing survival!

They used some fancy ground penetrating radar geophysics and it actually picked up the white lines from the pitch as last painted in the 1970s - like ghost lines. We dug into the pitch and found the drainage channels, goalposts and even the discarded hooks that once held down the goal net.

This was very recent archaeology, but the community of Bradford was absolutely fascinated and every day there was a stream of people wanting to see what we were finding. And what might surprise you was how emotional it was for them. While for some it unlocked loads of memories of misspent youth on the old terraces, for others it brought anger at the club having folded and that the ground had been allowed to be demolished. But for one lady it was particularly moving. We were filming Susan Farr, daughter of Chick Farr, a long-standing Park Avenue goalkeeper whose funeral cortege had slowed down passing the former ground. There was one infamous incident when Chick almost lost his shorts when the elastic failed. Immediately the trainer threw him a nappy pin. Apparently, he never lived this



down as it became a tradition for the fans to shower him with pins ever after. Quite unbelievably just at this minute an archaeologist unearthed a

# Digging Up!

ROBERT NICHOLS

nappy pin from the former goalmouth and presented it to the camera. What a moment!

Someday we hope to excavate at Ayresome Park. I can just imagine the scene as the Holgate resurfaces. For kids of the nearby schools it will be like ancient history, long before they were born - and yet their parents, or more likely grandparents, will be able to provide so many memories as well as photos and news cuttings. I think it will fire up their imaginations and could well give many of them a love of history that might just stay with them for life.

**You've covered all sorts of different periods in your work. If you could choose another time to be around, when would it be and why?**

A couple of years ago I was in South Wales to watch Boro play at Cardiff. Pre-Covid I would stay over whenever possible to run a new parkrun and mooch around the local area and attractions. Anyway, just outside Cardiff there is a kind of Welsh Beamish - St Fagan's National Museum of Wales. You can explore rebuilt houses from all periods from prehistoric, through medieval to Victorian and early 20th century. Seated next to a smoky fire in a dark, dank, draughty former farm building, an elderly volunteer guide was talking to some kids. He was basically spelling out one of the lessons from all these buildings - that unless you were the Lord of the manor or the King in England you would not want to live in the past. Life was hard, or very hard. Brutal and short. That goes for any age or era. We might fancy living in a TV historical drama, but I wouldn't fancy a time before proper

dentists or the NHS. Someone might stick leeches on me or try and cure me by blood-letting!

Archaeology is usually about digging up the lives of ordinary people. So, maybe it can knock the romance out of the past. You see the bricks and mortar and maybe clues to the meagre diet. Then again, I would quite like to have been in the party of the antiquarian vicars that knocked the tops off the burial mounds all over the moors in Victorian times. They were searching for hidden treasure and that is what they found in burials from thousands of years ago. Those cremated remains in hand-thrown pots with all sorts of once highly valued jewellery and possessions were no doubt the source of legends of kings buried in the underworld.

Just to complete a circle. A couple of weeks ago I was digging near Redcar and in the final hour on the final day we unearthed some stone footings from the old Kirkleatham Hall. I couldn't help thinking about two special guests invited for dinner here in the 18th century, Captain James Cook and Polynesian islander, Omai. That is one *Come Dine With Me* invitation I would love to have received!



# Digging Up!

ROBERT NICHOLS

**Going from the past to the future, as a strong advocate for your hometown, what are your hopes for the future?**

Maybe it sounds corny but if the past tells us anything it is that Middlesbrough is resilient and always finds ways of reinventing itself and bouncing back. People often knock Middlesbrough, in many ways we are an easy target. Sometimes, we can't help joining in.

Yet, we often draw real pride from the achievements of the football team. Time and again we have punched above our weight. The same can be said of the town, our relatively recent ancestors were responsible for building so much of the infrastructure of the world. From rail lines to chemicals.

We are still a relatively new town and at the end of this decade we will be 200 years old. The town's anniversary has been cancelled in the past due to economic strife. Yet, due to hellish hard work and innovation, times very soon improved.

I hope by the 2030 bicentenary there is renewed pride of place and a stronger community spirit binding us. I feel confident that will be the case because when parkrun begins again there will be crowds of people out supporting each other around our parks. At the Riverside the support will flock back to see the Boro, hopefully on the way to a promotion season. In recent years we have developed a national reputation for our love of music and now visual arts. Bands really look forward to performing in front of Middlesbrough audiences. I know when we stage the next *Discover Middlesbrough* in October there will be people drawn from all generations devouring the history, their history.

When we finally get funding to excavate Ayresome Park it will be like cracking open our own Egyptian tomb. A few reasons there why I feel lucky to be sticking around in Middlesbrough as we open up post-Covid.

[www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/visiting/see-and-do/attractions/kirkleatham-museum-and-grounds](http://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/visiting/see-and-do/attractions/kirkleatham-museum-and-grounds)



*An archaeologist is the best husband a woman can have.*

*The older she gets, the more interested he is in her*

**Agatha Christie**

*Archaeology is like a jigsaw puzzle, except that you can't cheat and look at the box, and not all the pieces are there*

**Stephen Dean**

# Up North!

STEVE LOWE

Up!'s Outdoor Man on an encouraging step ...

I wonder what my hero, John of the Mountains (John Muir), would think about the recent announcement that Norway is dismantling their last Arctic coal mine, on the Svalbard Archipelago, and turning the area into a national park?

Coal has been mined there under state monopoly for 100 years but, despite mounting climate change awareness, it took until 2016 for the government to announce a moratorium.

The aim is “to turn the Svalbard Archipelago, in particular the Van Mijenfjord, into a howling wilderness once again—the best managed wilderness in the world where polar bears, seals, and countless other Arctic species can thrive in what experts say will be one of the most resilient areas under threat from climate change”.



The Van Mijen Fjord has permanent sea ice and as such it is an important hunting ground for polar bears. At the throat of the fjord, the Svea Mine loaded ships with coal for generations, but is now being dismembered rather than abandoned. This should ensure the area returns to a pristine natural state (although the word “managed” suggests



intervention not wilderness).

The area is formed by a 23,500 square mile (61,000 square km) archipelago of islands, fjords, mountains, and glaciers. It is thought that 3,000 polar bears inhabit the area, and during the late summer more than 20 million birds of 80 different species nest on Svalbard. By contrast, Northumberland National Park covers 405 square miles (1049 square kilometres).

All in all, I think Muir would feel this met his test, exalting wild nature over human culture and civilization - it is a small but important step forward and one that surely has to be applauded.



*An experienced wildlife professional, Steve currently works freelance with Northumberland Rivers Trust as well as undertaking work with volunteers on local heritage and archaeology projects. His hope is to leave the world a better place.*



# Word Up!

## YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF HISTORY

### Engagement

Sometimes I hold it up to the light,  
imagine Mum turning her hand  
this way and that: smiling,  
blushing, basking in oohs and aahs  
from the girls in the works canteen.

She'd gazed into different jewellers,  
always returned to one in the Arcade,  
sparkling eyes window-reflected.  
I picture her and Dad linking arms,  
stepping inside the hushed shop.

Dad's counting out £15.7s.6d.  
Mum chosen a diamond solitaire  
on eighteen-carat gold and platinum  
hallmarked with an anchor: made  
in Birmingham, their home.

Sometimes I try the ring  
on my finger, remember when  
it was it crusted by soap, flour, coal dust.  
It sits loosely, slips quickly  
off my slender bones, my soft skin.

*Shiela Jacob*

Next month's theme is 'The Sea'

Feel free to interpret the theme as you see fit  
and send up to 3 poems (no more than 20  
lines each) to: [TalkToUp@gmail.com](mailto:TalkToUp@gmail.com)

### An Ordinary Day - 1348

An ordinary day:  
No portentous thunderstorms  
attend the coming of an ordinary ship  
into a normal harbour.  
Upon the ship, among the ordinary barrels,  
jars and boxes, secreted  
in their sly but ordinary way  
the small, unpaying passengers  
that carry, in their smooth black fur  
yet smaller, ordinary fleas  
who in their turn bear microscopic guests:  
not quite so ordinary.  
A sailor bends to lift a bale of cloth  
and, cursing, staggers with it to the dock.  
He lowers it, and rests.  
Glad to be unburdened of its weight  
he smiles, wipes his brow  
and stoops to scratch an itch upon his leg.  
An ordinary man,  
already passing into history.

*Tim Taylor*

### A Cold Night in Boston

Bitterbite wind scours harsh along the streets.  
Brash ice in the harbour washes white  
against the wood of the ships.

Familiar current thickened with the cargo  
that those so-called Sons of Liberty  
scattered so thoughtlessly.

A political point?  
A pointless gesture.  
The British won't take heed, they never do.

Wasted words. Wasted tea.  
The night a little colder  
for the want of a cuppa's warmth.

*Penny Blackburn*

# Writing Up!

JENNIFER C WILSON

**Up! meets a historical novelist with a penchant for a certain infamous king**

**You're a historical novelist with a quite particular interest. Tell us where your fascination with Richard III started ...**

A "particular interest" – that's such a polite way of saying "obsession", thank you! It's odd, it was never intentional... I had been reading a lot about the Tudors, but having devoured everything Hexham Library had, in terms of both fact and fiction, I thought I wanted to read about a different era. I didn't want to move 'forward' as it were, so went back instead, and discovered the Plantagenets. I had never really twigged that the Princes in the Tower were in fact, the uncles of Henry VIII, and the stories fascinated me.

From there, I read about Richard III, and the story really struck a chord with me, as another king who has had their reputation ruined by Shakespeare (Macbeth being the other classic). That was it. I had found my favourite king.



Your dedication to the cause even got you in to Leicester Cathedral didn't it? Tell us about that. Yes! That

was crazy. So, a couple of years into my fascination, there was talk of starting the Leicester dig, in the now-famous car park, and of course I was hooked, desperately waiting for any news. When it was confirmed in February 2013 that it was indeed Richard's remains they had found, it was incredible.

I read about the public ballot being held to attend the various funeral services which were being held in March 2015, and I entered, really only to say I had been part of this amazing story, not imagining for a moment I would be successful. When the letter arrived with the Richard III dig logo, it took me a while to be brave enough to open it, but there it was – an invite to compline. I didn't even know what compline was!

The weekend of the event was brilliant. There was such a strange feeling, both at the lectures the university arranged, and the services themselves. Naturally, everyone was very respectful of the situation, and the place, yet, we couldn't really be sad, could we? I mean, he was obviously dead, and I remember sitting chatting happily to the people I ended up sat with, almost a celebratory feel to things.

After the service, I sat in the hotel bar, and starting making notes on two novels I had been

# Writing Up!

JENNIFER C WILSON

working on: *The Last Plantagenet?*, and the first of the *Kindred Spirits* series, both of which 'star' Richard. I credit that whole weekend with kick-starting my writing.

And really, how many writers can say they attended part of the funeral services for their leading man? Especially historical fiction writers?



**As a writer of historical novels, how much research does it require? Is it important to visit the locations you write about in order to get a real feel for them?**

I think, if you can, physically visiting a place can be so important. The *Kindred Spirits* series are contemporary in

setting, and I visited each location, to be sure I knew the lay of the land. I'm sure I'm not the only person who watches a TV show or film, and gets frustrated when somebody turns a corner in a place you know, but ends up in completely the wrong place thirty seconds later? Anything like that in a book can be enough to turn a reader off, so I used my own knowledge from visiting places, as well as maps, clips on YouTube, or documentaries to make sure I got things as right as I could.

For the historical aspects, many places are either totally different now, or simply don't exist anymore, so that does need research. Although you can be creative. For example, one sixteenth century castle can be a lot like another sixteenth century castle, if you are writing about an entirely fictional location (like I have with my historical romances). Likewise, wandering down the Shambles in York can give you an idea what a lot of medieval towns would have been like. And there are so many brilliant books, articles and documentaries from which you can get a sense of a time or place.

The most important thing is to check any specific details you want to include. I've just written a short story, which features the ghost of an old woman from the 1400s. I gave her a knitting needle to use as a weapon, but then woke up at stupid o'clock the next morning, wondering if they would actually have had knitting needles back then. Thankfully, with the internet, these things are easier to check now, than they would have been years ago. And yes, she could use her needles.

And don't forget, research can take many different forms. I love nothing more than taking myself off to a historical building or museum, and losing myself there for the day, making notes, taking photos and soaking up the atmosphere. Not everything I learn will make it onto the page of a writing project, but fragments always end up being useful somewhere down the line. Likewise, reading books about the era; random nuggets of information will stick around, and prove themselves useful at some point.

**How did you end up as a writer? Tell us a bit about your journey...**

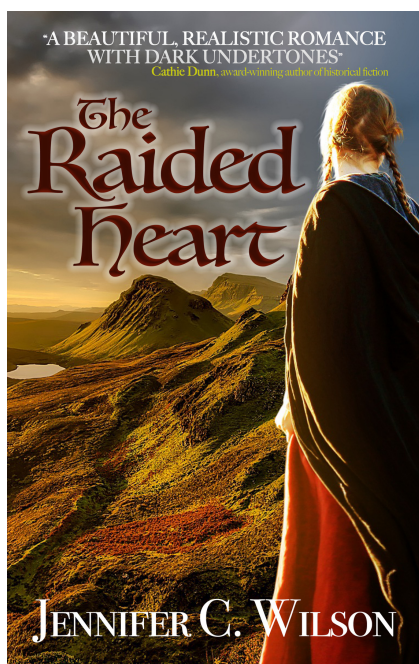
I've always loved making up stories. Every so often I'll find an old exercise book with a story in it from when I was at school, and as terrible as those stories are, they do make me smile. I stopped writing at university, but when I moved back to the north-east for work, my mum suggested an evening

# Writing Up!

JENNIFER C WILSON

class at the local high school as something to do in the evenings, and a way to make friends in a new town. Creative writing seemed a fun choice, and luckily, it was a lovely group, some of which I'm still really good friends with now, over ten years later.

When I moved to Newcastle, I found other groups and workshops, and really embraced it all, getting involved as much as I could.



Winning North Tyneside Libraries' *Story Tyne* competition gave me a huge boost, and inspired me to focus even more, and as I said above, being in Leicester inspired me to look again at a novel I'd written during National Novel Writing Month the year before. I submitted it in spring 2015, and couldn't believe it when Crooked Cat, as they were then, accepted *Kindred Spirits: Tower of London* for publication. Since then, it's just been amazing, with four more *Kindred Spirits* books, and some self-published romances as well.

As well as writing novels, you are also a regular book reviewer, you run a writers' group and are a marine biologist! How on earth do you find the time to fit it all in?!

Yes, I suffer from terrible Fear-Of-Missing-Out, and can never turn down a good opportunity if something sounds fun or interesting!

North Tyneside Writers' Circle came out of a one-off session at North Shields Library for *Age Takes Centre Stage*, and it's just been fantastic. We have a great core of members, and I really hope that once 'this' is all over, we can get back to the library, and meet up again, as well as welcoming new people.

The last six months have been challenging, but I live by lists, and as long as something gets written down, it will happen. I'm also trying really hard to stop watching as much television, as I can be addicted to murder mysteries, easily losing a day in front of *Midsomer Murders* or *Vera*.

**Jennifer C. Wilson – Historical Fiction With Spirit!**

Find me online at:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Jennifer-Wilson/e/B018UBP1ZO/>

<https://twitter.com/inkjunkie1984>

<https://jenniferwilsonwriter.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/jenniferwilsonwriter/>



# Word Up!

## YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF HISTORY

### **The Repulse of the Rainbow**

We'd seen Dutch sails, all summer, chasing moonlight through our water,  
heavy with plundered herring. And now, the English Rainbow  
is broadside in our shallows, gun decks so close,  
her wide-eyed ports flirt with watchers on the shore.

There'd been whispers over ale: Sir Thomas of Haggerston taken,  
words curling through pipe smoke: Sir William's plague-ridden bones  
not coming home, and so the old man leads the Marske men.  
Pikemen make a stand by upturned cobbles, boot-top deep in windblown sand,

Musketeers line the narrow howle with shot; to the right, to the left,  
and from above. There is no way for Parliament today, as little terns patrol  
the tideline, turnstones patter in the pebble wash, and a lone crow  
caws and claws the skittering sea foam, seeking carrion.

The Rainbow waits, at anchor, sails still furled, with two more ships beside her,  
beyond the black rock scarres and clarty ooze seeping longshore from the Tees.  
Parliament plodges through the shallows, muskets and halberds held shoulder high,  
stumbling on rolling stones between the twisted rivulets, and deep cut fleets.

until these other Englishmen begin to feel their impotence,

and the cry goes up,

'Retreat!'

We watch from the howle, as the sails unfurl.

### **Janet Philo**

*Royalist James Pennyman of Ormesby Hall led a small force to prevent Parliamentary troops from landing at Marske beach in late summer 1643.*

*Further background from The Battlefields Trust video by Phil Philo at:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T--t3JXfV4g>.

# Opening Up!

STEVE LOWE

Up!'s outdoor man on a community-led rescue mission

Archaeology is rubbish - literally - it's all rubbish.

It's mainly bits and pieces that have been lost or discarded, waiting for later generations to bring it back into the light and to make sense of the puzzle in which it sits.

Heritage is slightly different because it's all around us, in our homes and gardens, our workplaces, places we visit on maps, photographs, in books and film and, often, in the ground beneath our feet and the shape of our landscape, its woods, fields, settlements.

It's something we are all part of, and it forms the multi-cultural society in which we live. In our relatively small country, everywhere and everyone bear the marks of our predecessors' efforts to sustain life and satisfy their needs. What one person regards as heritage may be less important to another individual, but collectively the part of our surroundings that displays the interaction between people and places through time is known as the historic environment.



Heritage is also found in our moveable possessions, from national treasures in our

museums, to our own family heirlooms, and in the intangible such as our history, traditions, legends and language. It has therefore long been accepted that we, as a society, have a responsibility to look after them.

That has not always been the case and even today the origins and "ownership" of certain artefacts can be cause for argument and even conflict, especially when driven by patriotism and bigotry. There was an outcry when *Notre Dame* was damaged by fire in 2019, but less so about aboriginal rights during atomic bomb tests in Australia, for instance.

I will nail my colours to the mast (defiantly displaying one's beliefs and opinions - or stubbornly refusing to surrender during a naval engagement when all my masts have been destroyed and I fix my flag to the remains as a gesture of defiance).

I am fully absorbed by history, archaeology and heritage and I believe it is important to conserve and preserve it wherever we can - not in dusty old museums (although I love a good museum), but by living it, touching it and feeling it.

I am really lucky in that regard, because I am working at Cresswell Pele Tower, a fortified tower built in 1380, to defend its residents from the incursions of raiders - Border Reivers - who would

# Opening Up!

STEVE LOWE

steal, burn and kidnap in the lawless part of the “borders” between Scotland and England.

This fascinating building (a scheduled ancient monument), located on the coast of Northumberland at the southern tip of Druridge Bay, was listed on English Heritage’s ‘Buildings At Risk’ register. About to fall down, roofless and weather-worn, it became further degraded through neglect, vandalism and fly-tipping.

That was until a group of locals decided to take up the challenge of, at the very least, tidying it up. That initial effort sparked into life a full and total restoration, led entirely by volunteers who did the fund-raising, the spadework and carried all the stress of red tape, paperwork and delays. Leading it all was the tireless Barry Mead, an honorary northerner despite his support for Luton Town!

And on 25th July 2021, the landmark building will open for explorers to delve into its past, its present and to be part of its future. A result of all that hard work can be visited for free.



The story isn’t about the building, although it holds the template for the tales that come with it. Tales of domesticity, of strife, politics, wealth and demise, of wars and skirmishes, love and loss. Tales of yore and of childhood spent exploring the ruins, ethereal visits, risk, naughtiness and laughter. It’s a part of localness and has been “forbidden” - until now.

I’m excited! I really am. I will be very jealous of all the children who will get to dress up as soldiers, reivers, princesses, ghosts or gardeners.

I will drink in the colours, sights and sounds of the emerging, secret walled garden, which is being transformed into a community space where people can come and sit, read, volunteer and grow plants and food. I will share my own story of the 200 bin lids we have found, pretending they are shields.

I will bathe myself in the birdsong, whether that be the croaky rookery or the melodic goldfinches and robins. I will joust with questions, tilt at vandals and love this place as much as the people with whom I get to share it, the friends and volunteers, the visitors, the schools.

I hope to gather more tales, facts and fictions to stimulate and inform. I will thrill from all the “wows” uttered upon entry. And I will curse the door lock and its lengthy key every single time I have to put my shoulder to it!

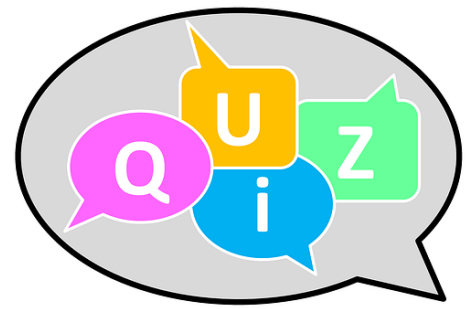
Sadly, there are many locations where our past is in danger of disappearing or being forgotten. There are dialects that are being lost, buildings demolished, hedges torn up in a disposable society where change is quick, and nostalgia replaces heritage. But for each of those, there is a Cresswell Pele Tower. See you there soon! (Weekends 11-4 until end August 2021).

[www.cresswellpeletower.org.uk](http://www.cresswellpeletower.org.uk)

# Think Up!

Okay, it's time to test your knowledge of the past. What did these obsolete jobs entail, what did the words mean, and what were these historical characters famous for?

(You can find the answers on page 22)



## Obsolete Jobs:

Herb Strewer  
Daguerreotypist  
Toad Doctor  
Breaker Boy  
Link Boy  
Night Soil Man

## Obsolete Words:

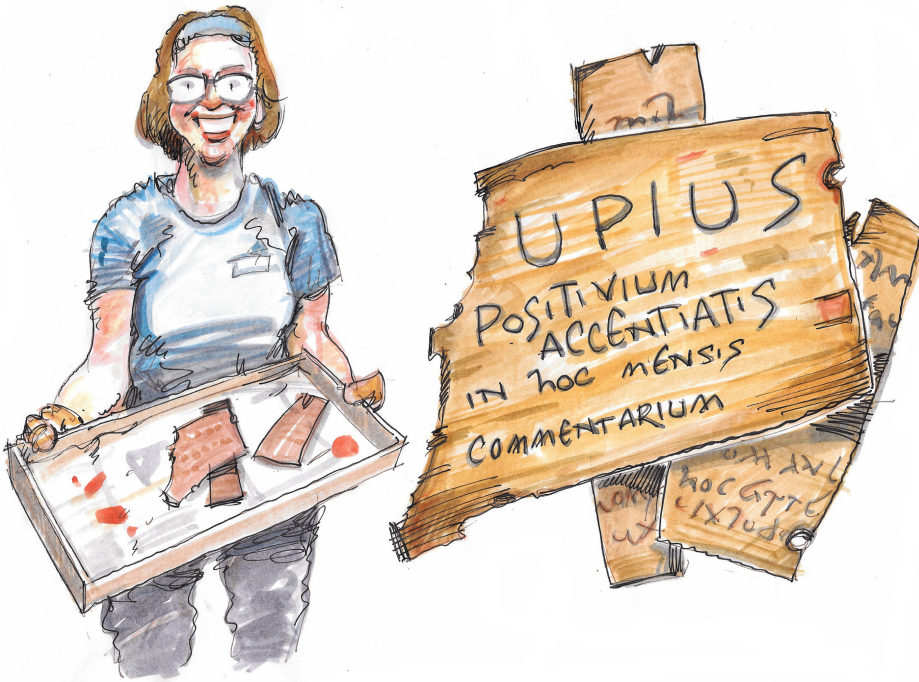
Apricity .  
Quockerwodger  
Houppelande  
Bawcock '  
Jargogle  
Lunting

## Historical Characters:

Geoffrey Of Monmouth  
Agripinna The Younger  
Edward Teach  
Frank Wills  
Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu  
Mary W Jackson



## Cartoon Corner



Breaking news – unique writing tablets found at Vindolanda Roman fort dig. A spokesperson for the excavation said “These fragile pieces of wood appear to be part of a monthly magazine. We are still trying to decipher the fragments but I think they are a collection of up beat stories and poetry. This is a fascinating find. Imagine a legionary, after a long day on the Wall, relaxing in the barracks with his favourite fermented fish snack and a copy of *Upius* magazine”.

*Up's* resident artist John Pickin says: “I am and always have been a compulsive doodler. During April '20 I set myself the challenge of drawing an ape-a-day. And in January this year – renamed Buguary – the task was an insect cartoon each day. I just love knocking out those ‘toons ..”

You can contact John at [pickinjohn@gmail.com](mailto:pickinjohn@gmail.com)



# Building Up!

STEVE WALLER

Up!'s Harry Gallagher meets the man who the press have dubbed 'The Michelangelo Of Middlesbrough'.



Meet Steve Waller. Or rather, meet Steve's wonderful hand-built model of his hometown, as it was over 100 years ago. Over the 11 years it's taken him to build – and it's still not quite complete even now – Steve has researched and gradually filled up a whole room in his home with streets containing hundreds and hundreds of tiny buildings. Each one has been painstakingly measured, constructed and painted, and together they are a nigh-on perfect model of old Middlesbrough in the mid-late Victorian period, when it was a veritable boomtown, producing about a third of the UK's iron.



As Steve explains, "It all started with a back injury from playing cricket!" He'd been interested in history since thumbing through his grandmother's old black & white photos as a child,

and this was reinforced when at the age of 14, a teacher had spoken about Urban Planning. He also has a memory of working for a time as a steeplejack, looking down from great heights and thinking "It looks just like Toytown!"



So when his unfortunate and severe back injury occurred, a new journey began, plotting the streets – most now long gone – and alleyways of his birthplace. And as if that wasn't enough

to be going on with, Steve has also researched and plotted a forgotten cemetery, now buried underneath modern Middlesbrough. He's even been able to find the names and plots of the many hundreds of bodies – lots of whom were infants.

# Building Up!

STEVE WALLER



As you might expect, Steve is something of a walking encyclopaedia on his subject and if pushed he might even tell you about the town's original proposed name - Port Darlington - or wax lyrical about the New York-modelled grid layout of the streets, But we think the best thing to do is just look at his work and marvel...



# Prop Up!

## WOODHORN MUSEUM

**Up! visits a museum mining the rich seam of the past and hauling it to the surface**

In South-East Northumberland, next to the beautiful QE2 country park – unbelievably, once Europe’s biggest spoil heap – sits Woodhorn Museum, the cause of said former heap! The scale of what happened here is now almost unimaginable. The spoil heap alone took nearly a decade of solid work to level and reclaim. The colliery itself was open for the best part of a century, producing 600,000 tonnes of coal every year, at its height employing almost 2,000 men. In summary, it was the largest pit village in the world. Even in this area of the country, where coal has been mined since Roman times, those figures are quite something.



Now landscaped away from the main road, just follow the signs down a small side road, round the corner and walk around the bones of a dead mine. Except it’s far from dead. The coal may have all gone – and times having changed, most would realistically say that’s a good thing – but on a good day the place still teems with people!



But the Woodhorn experience isn’t just about the old winding house – which incidentally in 1941 survived a direct hit from a bomb – or the head gear. Step inside the main museum building and you’re spoiled for choice. Not only are what you might expect – old NUM marching banners, coverage of the 1984/5 strike (which effectively signalled the end of coal mining in the UK) and documentation of the many mining disasters in Northumberland – but there’s a permanent exhibition of the work of the famous Pitman Painters. Yes, they came from here too!



The museum also hosts a myriad of events, from the splendid annual Miners’ Picnic Day, when an array of top musical acts play for the crowds in the open air, and right now there’s a jaw-dropping art exhibition by friend of Up!, the wonderful Jonny Hannah (see our April 2021 issue).

# Prop Up!

## WOODHORN MUSEUM



Let's be honest here, I'm a terrible history bore and could send you to sleep from half a mile away, waffling on about old industries! But I defy anyone to come away dry-eyed from the section covering the Hartley Pit Disaster, where the final, desperate farewell messages to mothers and sweethearts, scrawled on tin tags by the trapped miners are now on the wall for all to read.



But you can always come outside afterwards, have a cup of tea and a scone in the sunshine and be thankful that we don't have to do what they did just to put bread on the table.

<https://museumsnorthumberland.org.uk/woodhorn-museum/>



*Way down, black diamonds to be found,  
Shining in the lamplight a mile beneath the ground*

**Jez Lowe**

*History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be un-lived,  
but if faced with courage, need not be lived again*

**Norman Cousins**

*History is a vast early warning system*

**Norman Cousins**

## Holdout

The hostilities began  
when you lost your only boy.  
You were the adult, held the power,  
made we girls feel like the enemy,  
never understanding  
what code we'd broken to merit war.

We were powerless against the might of you.  
To move in for close contact—  
not even a hug,  
just to stand next to you  
as you prepared tea—was futile.

Your eyes, permanently trained  
on the day they lowered the coffin,  
never looked at us. We hunkered down  
in the bunker of our sisterhood,  
praying for some kind of peace.

But even when a fragile peace was agreed  
you were like one of those Japanese soldiers  
who refused to surrender,  
holed out in the jungle of your grief.

**Rachel Davies**

### ON CLEOPATRA'S NOSE

It was Lenin in his night train rattling over borders  
Chamberlain at Munich  
Flodden field where rain stopped play and the floer of Scotland fell.  
Hannibal's elephants making molehills of the Alps  
Mark Anthony, torch-bright at Actium  
Jones in his kitchen mixing kool-aid in bucket, fixing to fight or die  
It was Bosworth Field shaping up for a draw before Richard squared up to Stanley  
L'Ami du peuple at peace in his tub, not suspecting this hour was his last.  
It was Wolsley, strutting in his cardinal's hat, upstaged and outflanked by a harlot  
Luther banging on Leo's front door with a grievance, a hammer, and some nails.  
It was Charles I at Marston Moor confronted by a new-fangled army  
Xerxes at the Battle of Salamis, Themistocles, too clever by half.  
Our relationship was always you against me, a turning point in history.  
The first time played as tragedy; the second time as farce.

**Abigail Elizabeth Ottley**

# Word Up!

## View from Hadrians Wall

From Wallsend to Bowness,  
a rollercoaster line of defence  
slithers the ridgetop,  
riding the contours  
to dip and rise.

A significant stretch of stones.  
One mighty feat by pining Romans  
whose weary bones patrolled  
unsheltered miles with wistful  
temperate dreams of home.

Folk travel from all corners  
to follow its crumbling course,  
to see what remains, and what has fallen.  
Walls divide, then tumble,  
their purpose mislaid in time.

So we pilgrims of history walk its length,  
wearing a deep parallel from where  
we can see for miles, a barrier no longer.  
A view from the past to common ground:  
the Romans, we travellers, and all.

**Gerda Pickin**

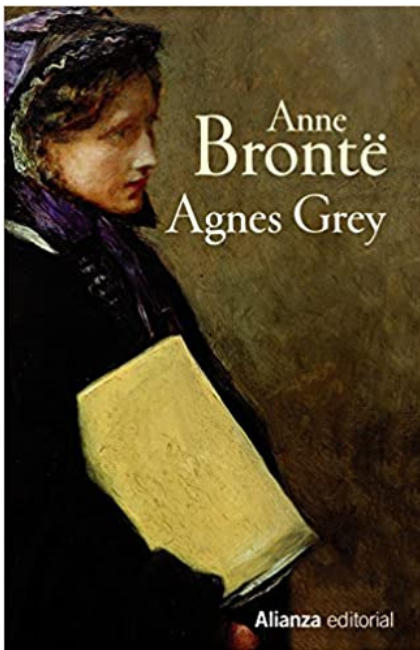
# Read Up!

MEGAN PATTIE

Up!'s newest team member on the enduring attraction of classic novels



What makes a classic? You could say that what defines “The Classics” is their endurance. Out of everything that was written at a particular time, it is *this* book that has continued to draw readers, these words that still reach us. But what is it about these particular books that has allowed them to endure in such a way?



Recently, I have been thinking a lot about Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey*. The main character, Agnes, is a young, educated, unmarried woman, who takes up a position as a governess. Brontë wrote the novel to illustrate the impossible position such young women

found themselves in – higher than the servants, lower than the family – and Agnes suffers a great deal of disrespect and even bullying from the family she serves. But Agnes is a strong character, and gets through this period of adversity to eventually find happiness.

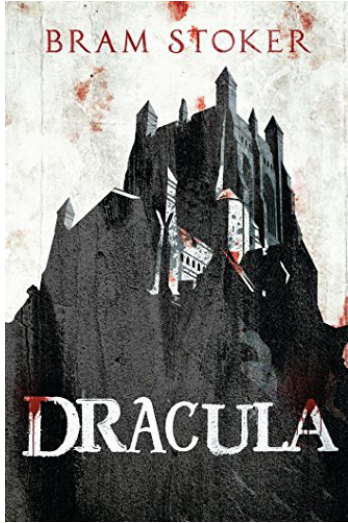
I first read *Agnes* at university, at the age of around 19 or 20, and I was going through my own young woman's trials. *Agnes* came along at just the right time. I felt that her struggles mirrored my

own, and that if she could make her way through, then so could I. There is much to be said for timing when it comes to discovering the classics: just look at the phenomenon of women who first read *Wuthering Heights* as teenagers and still count it among their favourites. All that passion and wildness; it's no wonder Emily Brontë's novel sticks with us far beyond our teenage years, inspiring us to return to it again and again. I am soon to take *Agnes Grey* on holiday with me to reread, and I wonder if I will take something different away from it this time, nearly a decade after I first read it.

Of course, it is Cathy from whom the passion of *Wuthering Heights* comes, and the character of Agnes from whom I drew fortification all those years ago, and it can be said that it is the memorable characters who live in the pages of the classics that sustain their popularity throughout the years. Strengthened through rereading and constant sharing, the characters of the classics come to us fully-formed, displaying traits we recognise and that we can perhaps identify with or aspire to, and they refuse to be forgotten. I am sure there are many readers who carry Elizabeth Bennet, or Bilbo Baggins, or any one of literature's vast cast of characters, as friends and as talismans throughout their lives.

# Read Up!

MEGAN PATTIE

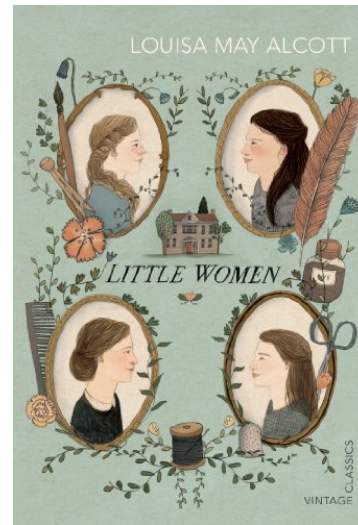


When I put the question of favourite classics to friends, *Dracula* came up a couple of times, in part because it reads as if it could have been written today. The urgency of books like this one perhaps comes from the fact that, at least in the case of *Dracula*, the novel looks beyond its own

time, not only because of the extended life of its titular character, but also because of his concerns with the scientific and technological developments which were occurring at the time the book was written.

*Dracula* is also a good example of another thing that lends the classics their constant popularity: film adaptations. These are contentious, with book lovers remarking, “The book was better!” (Admittedly, sometimes with very good reason!) But adaptations also allow for a novel’s particular themes to be brought forward or pushed back as the director wills, and can revive a story’s relevance to a modern audience, allowing them to reconnect with a familiar tale in a new way.

One of my favourite adaptations is Greta Gerwig’s *Little Women* (2019), which “remixed” the original story to focus particularly on feminism, and masterfully uplifted the character of Amy. Contrary to how she is often remembered, as the brat of the story, Gerwig instead recasts Amy as ambitious and practical; a woman who is able to recognise how the world is skewed against her and use that knowledge to do her best for herself.



Italo Calvino said, “A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say.” I would suggest that the reason the classics continue to speak to us, why they are never finished speaking, is that, while they remain the same, each time someone picks up an old favourite, or a new pair of hands picks an old book from the shelf, readers continue to change, and what they find within the pages of the classics changes with them. That is how a book written about a governess in 1874 could rescue a troubled student in 2012. The classics wait patiently to be picked up once again from the shelf, but within their covers, the words guide and enchant each and every reader as compellingly as they did on their first publication.

Which books are being written today, I wonder, that will achieve the potency of our favourites from the past, so that the readers of the future will cling to them as we do our Austens, our Hardys, and numerous others? Which novels of the twenty-first century will be the enduring classics of centuries to come?

**Megan Pattie is a poet and bookseller who enjoys real ale and collects dragons. She lives on the north east coast with her partner, two cats, and a rabbit. You can find her on Twitter @pattiepoetry.**

# Think Up!

## HOW DID YOU DO? ANSWERS HERE!

### OBSOLETE WORDS:

**Apricity** – c.1620's. Warm sunshine on a cold winter's day.

**Quockerwodger** – A Victorian insult. Someone with no thought or action of their own, a human puppet.

**Houppelande** – Medieval. A cloak. We think they should have kept this word and ditched its unimaginative replacement!

**Bawcock** – 1500s. A fine fellow. From the French 'beau coq'

**Jargogle** – 1690s. To confuse or jumble up. A bit like how your brain might feel right now!

**Lunting** – mid 1500s. Walking while smoking a pipe!

### HISTORICAL CHARACTERS:

**Geoffrey Of Monmouth** – Wrote the stories of King Arthur, in the 12th Century – some 600 years after the death of the real King Arthur (if he really existed at all!)

**Agripinna The Younger** – The mother of Emperor Nero and the wife of Claudius

**Edward Teach** – He was Blackbeard, the infamous pirate

**Frank Wills** – The security guard at The Watergate Hotel in Washington DC who noticed a piece of tape on a door lock and called the police, leading to the uncovering of the biggest political scandal of the day.

**Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu** – Well that's quite a mouthful, so let's just say Mother Teresa instead!

**Mary W Jackson** – The first African American female engineer at NASA.

### OBSOLETE JOBS:

**Herb Strewer** – 1600s. Someone employed to spread herbs and flowers throughout royal family residences to mask the scent of repulsive odours

**Daguerreotypist** – mid 1800s. An early photographer

**Toad Doctor** – 1700s. Does what it says on the label! Someone who dispensed toads as a cure for scrofula

**Breaker Boy** – 1800s, USA. A child aged 8-12 years, employed to break up coal into manageable pieces. Unbelievably, this 'job' continued until it was made illegal in the 1920s.

**Link Boy** – Middle ages. Out for a walk on a dark night? No problem, London's streets were teeming with young men equipped with flaming torches to light your way.....for money.

**Night Soil Man** – 1800s. Right, how can we put this? Bluntly is the only answer. Men employed to carry away human faeces in the middle of the night so you didn't have to smell it the next morning.



# Round Up!

AND COMING UP ...

So there we go, we've spent the last few weeks digging into the past and we don't know about you, but we've learned loads. It's been such fun putting this issue together and we hope you've enjoyed reading it.

If History teaches us anything it's that no matter how dire things seem to be, hope lives eternal. Our mission when we started Up! was to bring communities together by sharing all the great stuff that's out there, and that hasn't changed.

We'll be here next month and the month after that and the month after that. As long as you keep reading, we'll keep writing!

See you next month for our special 'Sea' themed edition.



Much love  
Bridget & Harry xx



As always, if you have any suggestions for future articles or features, we'd love to hear from you.

Just email us at [TalkToUp@gmail.com](mailto:TalkToUp@gmail.com)