To join the Natural History Society of Northumbria (NHSN) or for more information visit www.nhsn.ncl.ac.uk, email nhsn@ncl.ac.uk or call (0191) 208 2790.

To join the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne (SANT) or for more information visit www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk, email admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk or call (0191) 231 2700.

Both of these learned societies operate membership schemes which offer a range of benefits. These include the right to loan items and join a range of events.

Please donate. Entry to Great North Museum: Hancock library is free but we welcome donations. You can donate in person at Great North Museum: Hancock, online www.twmuseums.org.uk/supportus or call (0191) 277 2196.

If you are a UK tax payer please Gift Aid your donation.

This leaflet can be made available in a variety of formats. Please call (0191) 208 6765

Lose yourself for hours ... 
With books on natural history, local history, Roman Britain, archaeology and architecture
The Natural History Society of Northumbria (NHSN) library

This library has been housed in the museum since the original Newcastle Museum was opened in 1884. Focussing on the wildlife of northern England, this library has 10,000 books and over 500 journal titles. The library has books on zoology, botany, ornithology, geology, biodiversity and ecology and includes the entire Collins New Naturalist series.

Image: The New Naturalist Library series (Collins 1945–).

www.newnaturalists.com. Natural History Society of Northumbria Library

The Natural History Society of Northumbria (NHSN) archive

The archives hold the Society’s own records, dating from its foundation in 1829 and including the history of the museum. Also manuscript letters, diaries, notebooks and other material relating to renowned northern naturalists such as Abel Chapman, and original watercolours, drawings and proof engravings by naturalist Thomas Bewick. The archive material is available to view by appointment; please contact the library.

Image: Watercolour of a nudibranch by Albany Hancock (1806-1873). Natural History Society of Northumbria Archive

Newcastle University’s Cowen Library

This unique library includes around 9,000 books and a range of journals and offprints on archaeology, ancient history and classics. It includes books on local archaeology, Roman archaeology, Egyptology and the archaeology of the Mediterranean, especially the Byzantine Empire.

Image: Map detail from J. Warburton’s Vallium Romanum (J. Millan, 1753). Newcastle University Cowen Library

The library of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne (SANT)

Cherished by its members, SANT is the oldest provincial society of antiquaries in the UK. This library has 10,000 books, 300 journal titles and 1700 tracts on local history, architecture and archaeology, with a particular emphasis on north east heritage. The library has many books dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries, and includes treasures such as Henry Bourne’s The History of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 1736 and Joseph Crawhall’s beautifully illustrated Chapbook chaplets from 1883.


The Great North Museum: Hancock has a unique library on the 2nd floor of the museum, which is made up of the library and archives of the Natural History of Northumbria (NHSN), the library of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne (SANT) and Newcastle University’s Cowen Library.

The libraries of SANT and NHSN can be traced back to the early 19th century, shortly after both societies originated from Newcastle’s Literary and Philosophical Society.