try to do too much. Learn the alphabet first as it’s easier if you read what you see. It’s not like English, e.g. why is vegetable pronounced as it is and not “veej-eetable”? In Greek, once you have learned the alphabet, it is easy if you then take it slowly. It’s the same approach as to children’s reading – you don’t want to put them off learning.

My favourite Greek place is Crete, on which my son is an expert; and, of course, Cyprus in particular where my family come from. Limassol, there are a lot of very high buildings there now but the old town is still nice. It is 44 degrees there at the moment.

My favourite Greek poet is Cavafy. Years ago, I used to have a very good friend who was a writer, and in the times of the Colonels it was terrible. We would sit at a table chatting over coffee and look around in case anyone overheard. Government bans affected authors’ employment. There was also Theodorakis, who is a wonderful composer, and Ritsos, who set his words to music. My mother and I brought back with us from Greece a lot of the poetry that was banned there.

My favourite Ancient Greek author is Herodotus because he liked travelling, as do I. Homer is also fantastic.

My husband, Frederick, was in publishing. He worked for Cambridge University Press and used to sell books to me when I was in Charing Cross Road. Everyone said I only married him so that I could get bigger discounts! We never bore each other. He’s 94 and he still drives our van to exhibitions.

Once a schoolteacher brought her whole class into the shop. It was fantastic. The children couldn’t get over it. It was a local school. The children were sitting on the floor and all over the shop – I loved it. I do need schools to use me!

ARGO is a lovely magazine. The covers are beautiful – they really make you want to read it. It has some wonderful contributors. One of my favourites is Paul Cartledge. I remember sitting behind him at the Cambridge Greek play, which is always performed in Ancient Greek, and joking with him, “Do you actually understand what they are saying?” I have been privileged to have met so many wonderful people. David Raeburn came up to me once Morwood was another fabulous man. At the summer school, James used to come up and ask me if it was alright if he brought his students in before anyone else, while I was still setting up, which of course I allowed him to do!

If I were hosting a symposium and could invite anyone from the ancient world, it would be Plato. I’d also invite Virgil. I knew David West who translated Virgil’s Aeneid. I did an exhibition in Newcastle and there was a special room which belonged to one of the librarians with little bits of art everywhere. David was a quiet man but I remember he came into this room and put his book on top of one of the statues on purpose because he wanted to see the librarian’s reaction. When the librarian asked what was going on, David started giggling. I also remember that David always used to wear sandals.

I still really enjoy what I do. I love people. I don’t want to give up. But I do like holidays!

My mother used to like holidays, too. I don’t have one booked at the moment as I am busy preparing lots of orders for the new school year.

My secret? I’ve been doing water aerobics for years. Plus, Greek food. I love Greek yoghurt and I have every morning for breakfast with fruit.

My hopes for the Hellenic Bookservice for the future, as well as just keeping going, are to do some book launches, and perhaps shopping evenings. I am open to suggestions!

As told to Caroline K. Mackenzie, August 2023.

The Hellenic Bookservice is at 89 Fortress Road, London, N5 1AG. www.hellenicbookservice.com enquiries@hellenicbookservice.com

Charles Thomas Newton (1816–1894) was a well-known figure of authority on archaeology and the Mediterranean in the mid to late Victorian period in Britain and beyond. Astonishingly, however, he is often overlooked today, and a scholarly account of his work and its impact has long been overdue.

In June this year, University College London and the British Museum co-hosted a workshop on his life and career. Organised by Lucia Patrizio Gunning (UCL), Debbie Challis (Portico Library / University of Liverpool) and Thomas Kiely (Department of Greece and Rome, British Museum), it featured presentations and discussions as well as visits to examine the antiquities Newton brought to the British Museum and his published and administrative work.

During the workshop, we examined Newton’s map of Roman Yorkshire (1846), his published account of his excavations in Halicarnassus and western Turkey, and other writings housed at the Combined Classics Library in Senate House. A second visit took us to the Greek and Roman reserves in the basements of the British Museum and to see the archive material in the Department of Greece and Rome. Seeing the sculpted items and fragments from Halicarnassus, Didyma and Cyprus, among many other places, helped us to understand the unique importance of this material in changing the perception of the classical world in the nineteenth century.

Newton travelled to the Aegean in 1852 without a formal request by the museum’s trustees to seek antiquities, but made this aim the focus of his work and career. Organised by Lucia Patrizio Gunning, Charles Thomas Newton reflect on the life and times of the classical archaeologist and curator

Newton was a key figure in the history of the British Museum. After serving for ten years as a relatively junior assistant in the department of Antiquities, he requested a position in the diplomatic service in the Eastern Mediterranean to look for classical antiquities. He had observed the potential of a consular appointment while working in the museum. Some of the most important acquisitions housed there, including the Parthenon and Lycian Marbles, had been obtained by diplomats. Yet these acquisitions, sporadic and obtained through the determination and personal financial input of a handful of people, had happened almost by chance. Newton understood how diplomats in the Aegean and other areas of the Ottoman Empire could be trained to look for and procure antiquities for the British Museum, including how to advance their careers.
Newton was also instrumental in the creation of the British School of Archaeology in Athens, furthering the study and excavations of classical antiquities in Greece and Cyprus. His advice and actions thus not only shaped the collecting history of this country during the Victorian period and influenced the way the British Museum developed into the institution we know today, but was also key to the development of a number of other institutions and networks, including the Hellenic Society, as we learned from its current secretary Dr Fiona Haarer. Newton’s work promoted change in areas such as women’s education at university and inspired the revival of the Hellenic ideal in British painting. He also lobbied politicians, including Gladstone, for better state support for museums.

It is high time Newton’s work received recognition and critical reflection. A

We are grateful for the invitation from ARGO to record this day as we could not have done it without the support of colleagues at the British Museum, financial support from the ICS and UCL and the academics and curators who presented and asked questions. We’d also like to thank David Gill – who couldn’t attend, but offered support and advice.

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