

# Watch out, there's a vampire bunny about



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Environment Editor

**TONY HENDERSON**

went on a voyage of discovery.

FORMER tax inspector Christopher Goulding has reaped a handsome return on his ability to ferret out secrets.

Christopher has spent the past three years uncovering the surprises hidden above, on and below Newcastle's streets.

They are revealed in a new book launched today called *Hidden Newcastle*, published by City Libraries and Arts at £4.99.

And Christopher asks how many of the thousands of people who visit, live or work in the city would know where Newcastle's vampire rabbit is to be seen.

It can be found, perched and snarling, above an office door-

way behind St Nicholas Cathedral. Then there is the tiny Jewish cemetery sandwiched between the Tyne Theatre in Westgate Road and buildings in Thornton Street, Peel Street and Peel Lane.

The story of the plot of 55 square yards begins in 1835, when the city's Jewish community bought what was then an undeveloped plot as a burial ground.

But as the city expanded, the plot was earmarked for development, and despite a plea to Lord Palmerston, the community lost the fight to save the cemetery - apart from the area which had already been used for five burials, and which can be visited through the Newcastle Lighting Centre shop.

Another of Christopher's favourites is the series of four statues above a shoe shop in Northumberland Street, representing the engraver Thomas Bewick, Harry Hotspur, John Marley, who was mayor of Newcastle during the English Civil War, and Roger Thornton, former mayor and MP from 1399 to 1417.

"It is amazing how many people don't know about the statues," Christopher said.

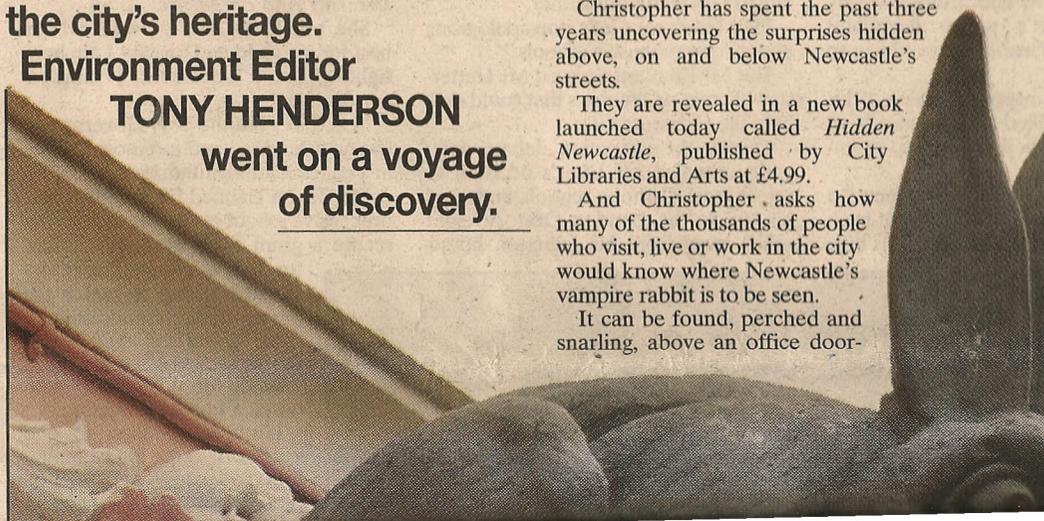
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man's Derby in 1753, and samples of dagger money, handed out to judges at the end of the city Assizes so they could buy protection as they rode through the unruly North.

And how many people, asks Christopher, have spotted the little locomotive peeping out from the statue to railway pioneer George Stephenson at the foot of Westgate Road?

"The book is an invitation to people to take a closer look at what is a marvellous city and which has many secrets and surprises," he said.

■ Christopher will give a talk on *Hidden Newcastle* at the Laing Art Gallery on Wednesday, October 11, at 12.30pm.



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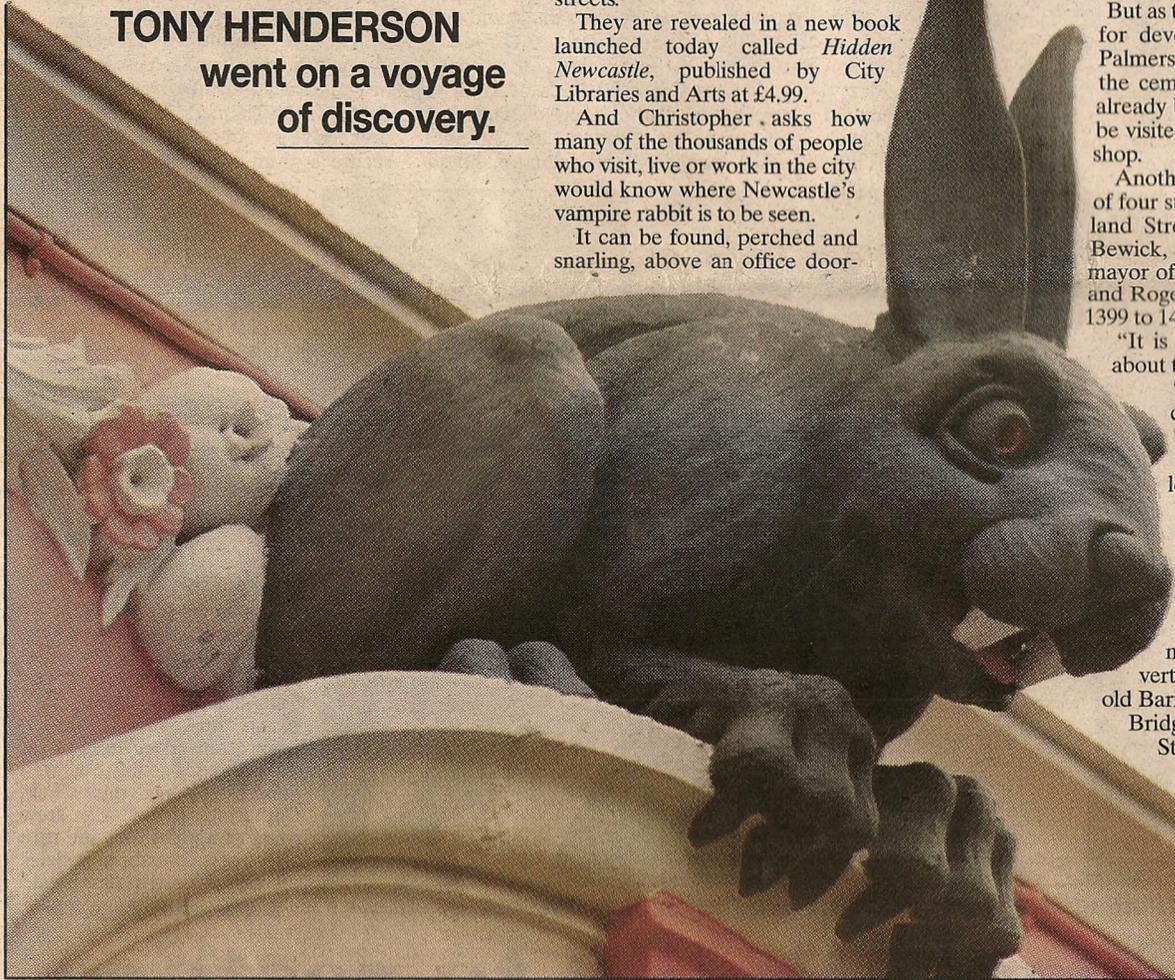
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"It is amazing how many people don't know about the statues," Christopher said.

"Thousands of people who shop in the city centre each day are oblivious of the rich collection of statues, busts, carvings and friezes just a few yards above street level. People don't look up."

If they did they would see the pitman on the top of Burt Hall, opposite the City Hall, and the two dozen carved faces gazing down from the junction of Worswick street and Pilgrim Street.

Underground, Newcastle also has its novelties. Various streams are now culverted and buried beneath the streets, as is the old Barras Bridge near the Haymarket and High Bridge, which once crossed what is now Grey Street.

Also running under the city is the Victoria Tunnel, which carried coal from Spital Tongues to Newcastle Quayside.

Also hidden from sight is the glass time capsule placed under the foundation stone of Grey's Monument in 1838.

Even Newcastle Civic Centre has its hidden treasures, which include the original Northumberland Plate awarded to the winner of the first Pit-

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# Taxman reaps

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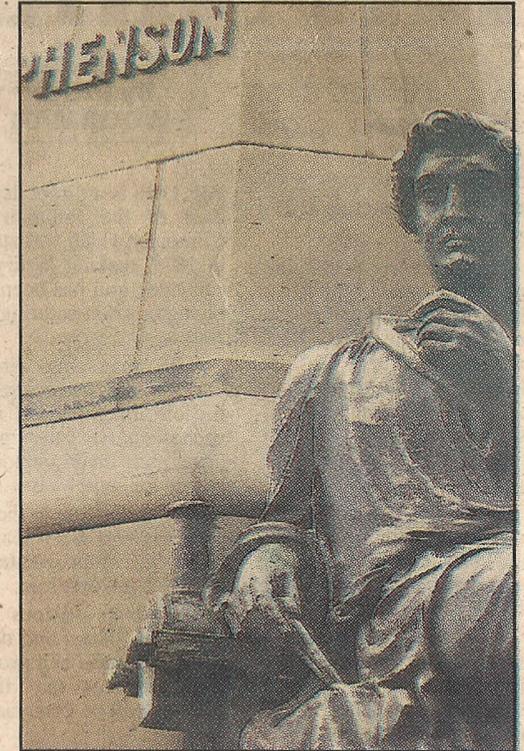
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■ **Super sleuth:** Author Christopher Goulding who unearthed Newcastle's small, concealed Jewish cemetery, right.

## Taxman reaps new rewards

CHRISTOPHER Goulding, 36, who is based in Jesmond, has just left behind 16 years in the tax business to take up a new career as a writer and actor.

He has long been involved with the People's Theatre, where he has played a variety of roles, and has also written the organisation's history.

Christopher has now received his Equity card, and has been seen in TV's *Byker Grove*.

Forthcoming screen appearances are in a Catherine Cookson serial and as a local guide during a visit to Newcastle by Michael Barrymore.

"I love Newcastle and I wouldn't live anywhere else in the world," Christopher said.

"I hope the book makes the point that the city's heritage is very important and should be protected as much as possible."



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