

Regional News

★ 19

History detective leaves no stone unturned in quest

By Tony Henderson
Environment Editor

HISTORY sleuth Christopher Goulding has turned to video to reveal some of the more off-beat survivors of Newcastle's long past.

Former tax inspector Christopher, currently on the last year of an English degree at Newcastle University, has already written a book, *Hidden Newcastle*, on little-known relics dotted around the city.

Now he has scripted the video *A History of Newcastle* which has been produced by the Video by Design company. Included on film are oddities such as the Dike stone, hidden away among housing in North Gosforth.

The stone, which carries the date June 1828, marks the conquest of the Main or 90 Fathom Dike, a geological fault which caused great problems to early 19th Century coal mining.

Beating the fault was such a great event that when the shaft and tunnel of the local pit were completed in 1829 the owners held a party underground.

"It was such an achievement they decided to erect the stone memorial. But like many of the lesser-known relics from the city's past, the stone takes some finding," said Christopher.

Also featured on film is a Roman shrine in the back garden of a house in Benwell, and the Blue Stone in the Castle Keep.

This was once part of the medieval bridge over the Tyne and marked the boundary



Stone me: Christopher Goulding with the Dike stone, hidden away among housing in North Gosforth.

between Northumberland and Durham.

But two-thirds of the stone was in Northumberland to mark Newcastle's superior claim to control of the river.

"This stone has been worn smooth by the feet and hooves of generations and has been trodden by kings and invading armies," said Christopher, who can be seen playing the part of a hardware

store owner in the forthcoming Catherine Cookson film *Colour Blind*.

This follows a previous appearance as a butcher in another Cookson film *Tide of Life*.