

### President's letter



**Dear Members**, this is the first newsletter since I was elected as President of the society, so I would like to start by giving a big vote of thanks to David Mason for his service as President and leading the Society through six successful years.

This summer has been another successful one for our Society, with the two ongoing excavation projects producing interesting results, which you can read about elsewhere in this newsletter, and a series of excursions, including our first venture into an extended trip – to Chester. This went so well that your Committee are considering organizing another weekend trip.

The sad news of the summer was the death of our former president, Dr Brian Dobson, on 18th July. Over two hundred people attended his funeral at Belmont church on 1st August, with Eric and Maureen Smith formally representing our Society. Brian was president of the AASDN 1983–87, and edited several volumes of the Society's *Transactions*. We intend to include an obituary in next year's *Durham Archaeological Journal*. If you have memories of Brian you would like to see included in that obituary, please send them to me.

This coming winter and spring we have a full programme of interesting lectures, which I hope you will be able to attend. In particular, can I encourage you to contribute something to the Members Meeting in December? This is an opportunity to talk about, or display, anything you have been investigating relating to archaeology or architecture. It doesn't need to be a big research project, just come and let fellow members know what interests you.

**Andrew Millard** President

Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland



A walk through the Victoria Tunnel, Ouseburn, with Roger Fern, on 15 September 2012

Photo Belinda Burke

### Proposed long weekend excursion next year

It has been suggested, in the light of this year's successful long weekend excursion to Chester, that a similar event be organised for May 2013.

The proposal is for a five-day trip to Chepstow in South Wales, staying at the Beaufort Hotel in the town centre.

In addition to guided tours of the town and the magnificent castle perched high above the River Wye, the itinerary would also include Tintern Abbey, Berkeley Castle, the impressive remains of the Roman town of Venta Silurum (Caerwent), the tribal capital of the Silures, and the Roman Legionary Museum and amphitheatre at Caerleon.

The overall cost of the excursion, per person, based on two persons sharing a room, will be in the region of £290.

A group of around 24 is needed to make the trip viable, so it would be most helpful if those interested could contact Dr David Mason, former President, at:

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tel 03000 267012  
e-mail [david.mason@durham.gov.uk](mailto:david.mason@durham.gov.uk)

### New website

Please visit our splendid new website if you haven't already done so at [www.aasdn.org.uk](http://www.aasdn.org.uk). We are very grateful to Gary Bankhead for building it for us, and for taking on the role of Webmaster for the Society.

We hope that the site will continue to develop, and Gary would like to receive any high resolution images of Society activities, with captions, for the Gallery page. If you are on Twitter, please follow us @ArchandArch.

## Hornby Castle Fieldwork Season 3

Work has been on-going with trench 3 at Hornby over the summer, despite problems caused by the unseasonably wet weather. Evidence was initially found of the early 19th-century rose garden, in the form of a series of regularly arranged red-ware planters and two very large and very deep stake-holes. Unlike the results from trench 2 in 2011, there was little other evidence of post-medieval activity.

Medieval deposits, in the form of demolition debris and a series of seemingly unrelated and different sized timber stake-holes, came to light very quickly. As in trench 2, significant quantities of pottery, food bones and glass ware suggest a form of elite entertainment. Other small finds suggestive of elite usage include a bone chess piece of 14th-century date in the form of a shield with a finely carved cross, and a substantial horse shoe of 15th-century date of a form commonly associated with tournaments.

Most recently, two more substantial timber posts, set into what is clearly a floor surface, suggest a supporting superstructure for a mezzanine floor above, as was noted by Andrew Saunders in relation to the surviving contemporary tower at Hopton Castle in Shropshire. The remains of another building, in the form of a



Bone chess piece,  
14th-century  
Scale 1:1



Horse shoe, 15th-century  
Scale 1:2

Photos Erik Matthews

substantial stone foundation yielding early 12th-century imported pottery, has been found tracking beneath the later floor surface and on a different alignment.

Work will be on-going with Season 3 until early November and an interim report on work so far will be published in the *Journal of the Society for Medieval Archaeology* towards the end of the year.

Please contact Erik Matthews at [rubyna.matthews@btinternet.com](mailto:rubyna.matthews@btinternet.com).

## A Church for All Time

A free exhibition compiled by Society member Alan Newham and entitled 'A Church for All Time' is to be held in the church of Saint Hilda, Market Place, South Shields, every Monday and Saturday between 10 am and 3 pm, from Saturday 6th October until Monday 26th November.

The exhibition, consisting of eleven large panels, begins by looking at the possible early establishment of St Hilda's Church by summarising the argument – put forward by The Reverend Henry Edwin Savage in his paper, entitled 'Abbess Hilda's first religious house', published in *Archaeologia Aeliana* vol xix in 1898 – that the present site of the church was given to Hild[a] by Bishop Aidan c AD 647. The exhibition attempts to trace the possible architectural development of the church. Also included are the results of a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey, a dowsing survey and



Brian Donnelly of Northumbrian Surveys carrying out his GPR survey in the visitor centre of St Hilda's Church

a recent archaeological excavation of an area formerly inside the churchyard boundary wall. The exhibition is illustrated with reproductions of archive documents, paintings, sketches, plans, maps and photographs.



The upper order of the tower arch. This walling is now hidden behind a false wall at gallery level.

Photos Alan Newham



The east face of the tower arch in the bell-ringing chamber, perhaps be dated to the 18th-century 'Gothick' revival period.

## Excursion to Chester 18–21 May 2012

Photos Belinda Burke

View of Eastgate Street from the Eastgate ▶



The walk around Chester with David Mason. A well-preserved stretch of the medieval wall



Erddig house and gardens



The Roman amphitheatre, altar to Nemesis



Guided tour of Chirk Castle

## New excavations at Binchester Results of the 2012 Season

**Fort** This year saw major clarification of the latest phase of Roman buildings and the features inserted into their remains. In Trench 1 – inside the east corner of the fort – the suspected late medieval building overlying the *intervallum* road has been confirmed as such and its remains removed. Further examples of the very late Roman / early medieval pits were encountered. Their purpose and date may only be revealed by chemical analysis of samples from their filling and radiocarbon dating respectively.

The latest surfacing of the *intervallum* road in Trench 1 was fully revealed along with the kerb and drain on its outer edge. Another substantial drainage culvert was revealed beside the eastern gable wall of the barrack. The northern wall of the building clearly exhibits two phases of masonry separated

by a layer of soil, indicating that the building had been demolished followed by an interval when its site remained as open ground before rebuilding occurred.

In the area between the gable end of the barrack and the adjacent section of rampart, two lines of small post-pits were uncovered, seemingly belonging to a timber building *c* 3.5 metres wide erected partly on the tail of the rampart and partly on the *intervallum* road. Its date is unknown, but it is obviously no earlier than the late Roman period.

**Vicus** In the trench outside the fort further details of the two small buildings lying to the east of Dere Street were revealed. A late furnace

constructed towards the back of the southern building appears to have been used for iron-smithing. Set into the surface of Dere Street are a number of stone blocks about 0.25 metres square with a shallow square recess cut into their surface, clearly designed to receive a timber post. It would seem that these buildings had a covered walkway along their frontage. Similar blocks were found in front of the buildings on the opposite side of the road during the excavations of 1878–80.

Further details were revealed of what is assumed to have been part of the regimental bath building at the south end of the trench. The long narrow chamber appears to have functioned as an entrance corridor and, in an early phase, was equipped with a pair of opposed semi-circular niches at waist height in its side walls. Perhaps these contained sculptures of deities appropriate to the building, such as the gods and goddesses of Hygiene, Good Health and Healing.

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## Programme 2012–13

All lectures will be held at Elvet Riverside, Room 141 New Elvet, Durham, at 2.30 pm unless otherwise notified. Everyone is welcome to attend

- Saturday 13 October  
2.00 to 4.00 pm  
**Tell Mutubis and Karnak Spring fieldwork in Egypt**  
**Dr Penny Wilson and Angus Graham** Durham University  
Joint lecture with the North East Ancient Egypt Society
- Saturday 27 October  
**From Djoser's Pyramid to Durham's Cathedral Radiocarbon Dating for Archaeology**  
**Dr Andrew Millard** Durham University
- Saturday 17 November  
**Utter karma in the Atacama Mummies and giant llama herds**  
**Dr Paul Bahn** Archaeologist, writer and broadcaster
- Saturday 8 December  
**Members Meeting**  
With Gary Bankhead and his finds from the River Wear, and a visit to Bishop Cosin's Library with Dr Adrian Green  
For details contact the Secretary
- ## 2013
- Saturday 12 January  
**The Antonine Wall as place Towards broader perspectives of past and present**  
**Darrell Rohl** Durham University
- Saturday 9 February  
**Current Research at Star Carr Dr Barry Taylor and Ben Elliott** York University
- Saturday 2 March  
**John Lewyn of Durham and the castellated architecture of the northern counties**  
**Dr Malcolm Hislop** Hislop Heritage
- Saturday 11 May  
**AGM**  
Details to follow

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