

# ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## OF DURHAM AND NORTHUMBERLAND

Newsletter **27**

spring 2017

### President's letter



**Dear Members,** Our Society is active in many different ways as you can see from the news and events in this Newsletter. However, these activities do not run themselves. Many of them are organised by the Committee along with other volunteers. One critical role is that of Secretary.

Belinda Burke has served for many years and has indicated her intention to step down at this year's AGM. Despite approaching some people and publicising the vacancy we do not have a volunteer for the substantive part of this role, without which many of the Society's activities simply will not happen. Due to two volunteers coming forward, Belinda has already been relieved of management of our exchange journals and organising the speaker programme. Do please get in touch if you would be interested in the post, or any aspect of the job, since it could be split further. We would be particularly interested in recruiting someone with computer skills who could take over the task of setting up a new email account and then taking responsibility for monitoring it, sending out emails to members (Arch & Arch news) and fielding enquiries. As always, at the AGM we shall also be electing two new

committee members to serve for three years without any specific portfolio. Do consider standing for those posts as well.

**Andrew Millard** President

Architectural and Archaeological Society  
of Durham and Northumberland



A drone image  
of two of the project's  
trenches in the course  
of excavation © Aerial-Cam

### Fieldwork on Holy Island

**In the summer of 2016, David Petts of Durham University and DigVentures carried out the first season of a three-year campaign of excavation and research on Holy Island (Lindisfarne).**

Building on an earlier geophysical survey carried out in 2014, we excavated three evaluation trenches targeted to identify the possible remains of the early medieval monastery founded by St Aidan and King Oswald in AD 635. Two of our trenches lay to the east of the remains of the later medieval priory. These produced a number of early medieval objects, including a silver coin of King Eadberht (AD 737–58) and a number of fragments of early sculpture, as well as scatters of human bone.

The evidence from one trench hinted at possible metalworking nearby, whilst in the other, the presence of the bone, a fragment

of a small gravestone belonging to someone named Ytfrith and a scatter of rounded quartz pebbles pointed to the presence of a badly disturbed cemetery in the vicinity. This latter trench also revealed a number of possible structural features, potentially stone-lined gullies, but inevitably these only appeared on the final couple of days and were not fully excavated.

Our third trench lay on the west side of the village overlooking the sound between the island and the mainland. Here, rather than discovering early medieval remains, we hit substantial later medieval occupation deposits, including walls, pavements and large pits. These produced lots of artefacts and environmental remains, reminders of the importance of the sea in the lives of the islanders.

An important feature of the excavation was the use of cutting-

edge digital technology throughout. All on-site recording was carried out using tablet computers and the data was immediately uploaded to our publicly available on-line archives at <http://www.digventures.com/lindisfarne/ddt/browser.php>.

We also made extensive use of digital photography to create easily accessible 3D images of our most important finds, as well as of our trenches. We even used drones to take multiple aerial photographs of the village to create a 3D image of the topography of the island.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Society we were able to extend this to St Cuthbert's Island (<https://skfb.ly/Q66E>), where further archaeological recording and topographic survey will take place this summer when we return to the island to continue our explorations to the east of the Priory.

**David Petts**



**The new fieldwork season at Hornby Castle will start on 1 April with further work to remove the post-medieval garden path previously exposed in Trench 6 and to extend Trench 7 to uncover more of the later medieval chamber cut into the moat bank with its rich deposit of small finds.**

It is hoped also ultimately to investigate the substantial medieval rubble deposit lying beneath the garden path, which appears to be identical to the material previously uncovered in the adjacent Trench 4 and identified as being from the collapse of a first-floor hall of later medieval date. Subject to good weather and ground conditions it is hoped to open a small trial trench to the north east of the current focus in early March to locate the gate house for the moated complex which hopefully will reveal further clues to the development and demise of the site. It is also hoped to shortly obtain grant aid to establish a pottery reference sequence for the site which already includes an unusual range of imported fabrics covering its early history as a hunting lodge for the Dukes of Brittany.

The Castle Studies Group are planning to hold a study day to explore the results of the fieldwork so far, based at Hackforth Village Hall, with a visit to the site in the early afternoon on Saturday 21 October. Please contact Erik Matthews for further details.



Excavator Tricia Smith considers the likely layout of the moat bank chamber © Erik Matthews

## Excursion to the Portsmouth area via Hardwick Hall 22–27 September 2016

Last September David Mason again organised an extended excursion for the Society, this time exploring Hampshire and West Sussex.

Over four days there were visits to the Weald and Downland Museum, Butser Ancient Farm, Arundel Castle, Chichester, Fishbourne Roman Palace, Portchester Castle and Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. There were also talks in the evening from David on the Roman aspects of Chichester, Fishbourne and Portchester, and from Katrina Burton, of the Sussex Archaeological Society. On the final night we were treated to a poetry reading by Janet Ball, who subsequently immortalised our adventures in verse, (Newsletter 26).

Because we were venturing further than previously, there were also stops at Hardwick Hall on the way down and Bolsover Castle on the return trip, both properties that showcase the work of building designer Robert Smythson. Smythson and Bess of Hardwick would have worked together on the layout of her Elizabethan mansion. Unusually

the most impressive rooms, the Great Chamber, Gallery and accommodation for distinguished visitors, were on the second floor, with the lodgings of Bess and her family on the first floor and service rooms on the ground floor, flanking a great two-storey entrance hall. This hierarchy of rooms ascending from floor to floor was reflected in the increasing height of the great glass windows of the facade, staring haughtily down on the approaching visitor.

This year's extended excursion is planned for 8–12 September, when we shall be visiting north-west Wales. Any Society members interested in joining the group should contact David Mason (details on the back of this Newsletter).



▲ The Muniment Room at Hardwick Hall, fitted out in the mid 17th century, where all the documents and title deeds relating to the Cavendish estates were kept

Visit to Fishbourne Roman Palace

Entering the medieval hall house, which was brought from North Cray in Kent, at the Weald and Downland Museum



**I have been Membership Secretary now for two years so I thought it was time to write something about the membership and subscriptions for the Newsletter.**

First of all, thank you to all the members who pay their subscriptions promptly, this makes my job much easier. This year we are issuing membership cards so, when the reminders go out to non-payees, you will know that, as long as you have a membership card, this does not apply to you.

The subscription rate for an associate member, available to

retired and student members is £10. Full membership is £20 and joint membership for two people living at the same address is £25.

Only fully paid-up members will receive the Newsletter in future. Full members will also receive the Journal when it is published.

The excursions in the summer months, the Annual General Meeting and our Members Meeting are open to paid-up members; you will receive invitations for these events either by email or post. The lectures on Saturday afternoons are open to anyone who wishes to come.

If you have any questions about membership, please contact me and I will try to sort out any problems as soon as possible. I know some of you still contact Belinda, but a direct contact to me would be preferable and would ensure a speedier response. My details are on the back of this Newsletter. It would help if I could have members' current email addresses; the best way to do this is to send me an email confirming your address. Postage is getting increasingly expensive and we like to save money wherever possible.

**Janet McDougall**

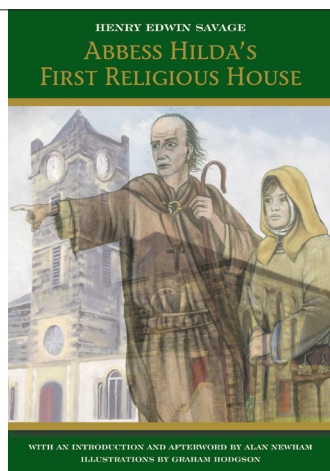
**From the Bishop's Mill – a view of life, work and Durham City**

Rosemary Zakrzewski

This booklet commemorates the existence of a humble water mill, located downstream from Framwellgate Bridge, that ground corn for the Bishop of Durham and for local people from the 12th century to the 20th, when it became a generator of electrical power.

Life and work in and around the mill during that long period of history are outlined. The reader is asked, in his/her mind's eye, to stand where the mill once stood at various dates from the past, to look around, watch what was going on nearby and consider what occurred in the years preceding that date, while taking into account how life at the mill was affected (or not) by powers beyond the miller's control, such as the Bishop, the flow of the river or even national events.

Copies are available, price £4.95, from Palace Green Library and the World Heritage Site Visitor Centre. Proceeds from the sale of the booklet all go to support the work of the Durham Museum and Heritage Centre, a charity which focuses on the life of the citizens of Durham City.



**St Hilda's First Religious House**

Henry Edwin Savage

Introduction and afterword

by Alan Newham

Illustrations by Graham Hodgson

This booklet contains a facsimile reprint of a paper written by the then vicar of St Hilda's Church in South Shields, the Reverend Henry Edwin Savage, and published in the journal of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries, volume XIX, 1898.

Savage brings together two episodes recorded by Bede. First, that of Bishop Aidan and the giving of a hide of land to Hilda in c AD 647 in order to live the religious life and, secondly, that of Cuthbert performing a miracle relating to a monastery on the south bank of the River Tyne near the harbour. Further supporting evidence is provided by Savage that results in a fascinating argument to suggest that the



Conjectural reconstruction of Hilda's monastic settlement © Graham Hodgson

present site on which St Hilda's Church stands today is the very ground that Aidan arranged to give to Hilda.

The exact whereabouts of the actual site, however, is unknown. Today the Latin translation of Bede's text into English refers to a site somewhere on the north bank of the River Wear; here Savage claims a mistranslation that shifts the possible location further north to the south bank of the River Tyne.

The short introduction includes contemporary and later criticism of the paper and an afterword wherein there is a discussion of the possible subsequent development of the religious site; an illustrated appendix shows this conjectural evolution.

This sixty-five-page booklet is on sale at St Hilda's Church for £3. It can also be purchased by contacting Alan Newham at [alannewham47@gmail.com](mailto:alannewham47@gmail.com).

## Binchester 2016

The work at Binchester Roman fort was the first season of an archaeological research and training project in an area beside the vicus near where *Time Team* discovered mausolea a few years ago. AASDN volunteers worked with the Durham University students, and were provided with training in archaeological fieldwork techniques. For some it was their first experience.

Twelve burials were identified. Some of the remains were in a very poor state, with just colour changes in the soil marking their position. I was pleased when a Roman coin was near the knee of the remains I was excavating. Unfortunately I had to leave the site to go to a dig on Lindisfarne and Jonathan Goldberg continued the excavation and found a lovely pot at the feet!

Jackie Snow was very excited when she excavated a gold pendant set with a ruby or glass. It looked good when conserved.

Some interesting finds were taken back to Durham University, and some of our members have already been processing some of the pottery at our regular sessions.

In June this year we will have the opportunity to take part in the excavations when the project resumes. You never know what you will find, but you will have fun as you learn.

Tony Metcalfe



A skeleton excavated by students  
© Tony Metcalfe



Students carefully working on leg bones  
© Tony Metcalfe



Tony Metcalfe working on the skull of the skeleton found with a pottery vessel © Tony Metcalfe



The pottery vessel found near the feet of the skeleton  
© Johnathan Goldberg



Pendant excavated by Jackie Snow  
© Tony Metcalfe

## Officers 2016–17

### President Dr Andrew Millard

1 The Terrace, Meadowfield, Durham DH7 8RU  
email a.r.millard@durham.ac.uk

### Editorial Dr David Mason

Principal Archaeologist, Archaeology Section, Durham County Council, 5th Floor, County Hall, Durham DH1 5UQ  
telephone 03000 267 012 email david.mason@durham.gov.uk

### Honorary Secretary Mrs Belinda Burke

Broom Cottage, 29 Foundry Fields, Crook, County Durham DL15 9JY  
telephone (01388) 762 620 email archandarch.dandn@durham.ac.uk

### Honorary Treasurer Mr Simon Alderson

27 Findon Hill, Sacriston, County Durham DH7 6LS  
telephone (0191) 371 0427 email simon@simonalderson.co.uk

### Honorary Membership Secretary Mrs Janet McDougall

66 Brackenbeds Close, Pelton, Chester-le-Street, County Durham DH2 1XJ  
telephone (0191) 370 0591  
email janet@mcdougall5.wanadoo.co.uk

### Fieldwork Officer Mr Erik Matthews

1 Chapel House, 5 The Green, Brompton, Northallerton DL6 2QT  
telephone (01609) 773393 email rubyna.matthews@btinternet.com

### Publicity Officer Ms Christina Unwin

Holly Tree Lodge, Hall Lane, Shincliffe, County Durham DH1 2SY  
telephone (0191) 374 1077 email christina.unwin@icloud.com

### Design Christina Unwin

email christina.unwin@icloud.com

### Printing Alphagraphics UK, Stockton-on-Tees

telephone (01642) 525 100  
www.agnortheast.com

