

President's Letter



All societies such as ours depend on the efforts of volunteers to keep the show on the road. The "Arch & Arch" (aka AASDN) committee recently has been renewed, with two new Vice Presidents – Richard Annis, of Durham University's Archaeological Services, and Julie Biddlecombe-Brown, of Raby Castle. The main burden of administration falls on the Secretary, and we are now in the very capable hands of Jenny Morrison, with Jo Shoebridge assisting with correspondence and communications and Shella Hingley taking minutes. Many thanks to our journal editor, David Mason, long standing treasurer, Simon Alderson, webmaster, Gary Bankhead, and fieldwork officer, Erik Matthews. We are delighted that Myra Giesen has taken on the newsletter, and are

grateful to Wendy Morris for her work as Membership Secretary. However, we now need a volunteer to take up the membership secretary role as well as someone to review planning and conservation matters, where the Society might usefully comment on local authority policy (such as the County Plan) and particular planning applications. With publicly available online resources, it is surprisingly easy to access all the relevant information. There is a great deal of expertise in heritage conservation on the committee and across the Society, so anyone interested in taking this role would not be acting alone. If you are interested, please contact me (a.g.green@durham.ac.uk) about what the role would involve.

Adrian Green President

Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland

Hornby Castle Fieldwork summer 2019

The on-going fieldwork at Hornby Castle has concentrated on the area of the moat and the adjacent Great Tower identified in the 2018 Season. The size and internal layout of the previously unknown Great Tower has proved of particular interest with the trench being extended three times in order to gather as much information in respect of the internal layout as possible.

The outer western foundation of the tower is some 2.8 metres in width and 1.2 metres in depth. It is further set within a wide mortar embankment with evidence of large pieces of stone having been loosely applied in the manner of a stone gabion. Traces of the northern and eastern wall foundations have also been identified but there is evidence of more extensive stone robbing in the 18th Century. The north wall contains evidence of in-turned entrance to the tower basement about 1 metre wide leading into an internal passageway; it also includes traces of an internal alcove or cupboard. The floor of the passageway yielded a knife that had become embedded blade down as though thrown with a section of the hilt surviving. The extent of rubble from collapse and also robbing makes other deductions in terms of the internal layout quite difficult. In terms of dating evidence, the construction cut for the foundations as well as several of the internal



Figure 1a



Figure 1b

Figure 1a and 1b. Internal basement passageway from the tower under excavation along with the robbed stone foot bridge abutment. © Erik Matthews

surfaces have yielded sherds of early 12th Century pottery, some of which had been imported from Northern France.

Evidence suggests a building of some opulence with a section of roofing lead with lime slurry on the reverse recovered together with sections of ashlar cladding. Also recovered had been a complete looped window with iron barring in situ and the splayed base of an arrow slit of Late 13th/Early 14th Century style. The partially robbed stone abutment of a footbridge heading in a westerly direction from the base of the tower also have been recorded jutting into the moat. Parts of a timber base plate also have been seen continuing in the moat silts beyond. The surface of the abutment has yielded several sherds of early 12th Century pottery including imported sherds once again although it is considered along with the adjacent extension of the tower out into the moat as being later work possibly associated with the ownership of the site in the early 14th Century by the Nevilles of Redbourne.

The implications of the discoveries are highly significant with the dating evidence for initial construction in the early 12th Century. The most secure documentary reference to the site is in a Charter of Duke Stephen of Brittany dating to 1115 and the structure when finally analysed can usefully be compared to the other great towers associated with the Dukes Bowes, Middleham (P. Dixon pers comm) and Richmond itself.

Erik Matthews

AASDN Fieldwork Officer

Discover Brightwater Landscape Partnership summer 2019

The Society is a partner in this three-year National Lottery Heritage Fund supported scheme, which includes a suite of archaeological projects conceived and designed by Durham County Council's Archaeology Section (DCCAS). DCCAS oversees the projects that were put out to tender in batches and professional archaeological contractors appointed to run them. Designed as 'community archaeology' projects like many previous endeavours, they afford local people the opportunity to get directly involved in the investigation of their heritage. The first season of excavation at two of the sites selected for investigation occurred in June-July. The contract for these was awarded to DigVentures Ltd and details of the results can be found on their website www.digventures.com.

Previous work at the Romano-British settlement at East Park, Sedgefield, had revealed it to consist of blocks of large ditched and fenced enclosures extending for around 1 km along the Roman road known as Cade's Road. The latter originated at Brough-on-Humber, running north to Newcastle. The East Park settlement is unique in the North East as it does not appear to be associated with any form of military installation. The pattern of enclosures is far more complex to the east of the road and appears to continue beneath the modern village of Sedgefield. Excavation in 2020 focused on part of an enclosure on the west side of the road at the south end of the site. Earlier geophysical survey indicated the presence of a ditch running across the entire area on a NW/SE alignment for around 400 metres and continuing beyond in both directions. As it did not appear to have any association with the Roman layout it was assumed it likely pre-dated it. However, it too proved to be of Roman date. Too slight and devoid of any other accompanying features to be defensive in nature, and the presence of a free-draining subsoil making a drainage function unlikely, a working hypothesis is that at some point in the settlement's development it was decided to provide it with a formal boundary marked by a ditch. It was subsequently back-filled, possibly in the 3rd century, when changes were made to the layout of the neighbouring enclosures.

The second site to be targeted was Middleham Castle, Bishop Middleham. Once a medieval fortified manor-house belonging to the Prince Bishops of Durham, it had been largely demolished by 1700. No previous systematic investigations had taken place here and little is known about the layout of the internal buildings or indeed the full extent of the fortified area. A modest area at the north and south ends of the site was selected and building remains were found in both a little below the surface. Despite extensive and thorough stone robbing when the establishment had become redundant sufficient remained to enable several structural phases to be defined. What is probably the enclosing wall was uncovered at the south end of the area while the discoveries at the north end suggest the complex may extend farther north than previously suspected.

A longer (six weeks) season of work is planned for both sites in 2020.

Binchester Roman Fort summer 2019

Members also participated in the second season of excavation of the community archaeology project at Binchester Roman Fort funded by The Auckland Project (formerly the Auckland Castle Trust) and managed by Northern Archaeological Associates. The area of excavation was located to reveal and investigate the defences of the primary fort (founded ca 75 AD) at the site of its north-east gate. In this it was successful with the base of the rampart and lengths of a pair of ditches, each about 5m wide and 2m deep, uncovered. A gap in the latter indicated the position of the road exiting from the gate. A section through the inner ditch revealed it to have a classic V-shaped profile with a cleaning or ankle-breaker slot in the bottom. The ditch had been allowed to silt up gradually proving that the early fort had not been abandoned and the defences demolished but had continued to be occupied in some form until the construction of a new and smaller fort ca 158 AD.

Overlying these features were the remains of small stone platforms, probably supporting timber structures of some sort as well as industrial features belonging to the later second and third centuries. These lay beside a road exiting from the gate of the later fort which formed a crossroad with a continuation of an 'easterly by-pass' road found during the Time Team investigation of 2007.

Talks on the above will be included in the programme for the County Durham Archaeology Day to be held at County Hall on Saturday, **21 March 2020**.

David Mason

current Journal Editor and previous AASDN President

Excursions summer 2019

The megalithic monuments of Cumbria June 2019

Following her fascinating talk to the Society on 29th September 2018, Emma Watson, PhD researcher at Durham University and Archaeology Assistant at Durham County Council, led a tour of some of the 'forgotten' prehistoric monuments of Cumbria in June 2019.

We were blessed with fine weather. After an enjoyable refreshment stop at the Llama Karma Café (yes there are real llamas there and you can take them on a trek!) we began our visits to the archaeological sites.



Our first stop was **King Arthur's Round Table**, a henge, dating to the Late Neolithic, ca 2000 BC. The monument comprises of a low circular platform surrounded by a wide ditch and earthen bank. It had two entrances and is 90m in diameter.

During excavations in 1937, evidence for two large stones at the north entrance was found. Around 1820, the internal bank was removed, the ditch was deepened and the inner 'table' was raised to create a scenic picnic spot. The site probably gained its Arthurian name in the 17th century when it was thought that this was King Arthur's jousting arena.



Mayburgh henge, which lies only 400m away, is of a similar date but has only one entrance and its external diameter measures 117m. Its imposing banks are up to 6.5m high and comprise of a staggering 20,000 tons of cobbles – all brought here by hand. Only one standing stone now survives inside the henge, but there were formerly four (according to Thomas Pennant in 1769) and possibly more at the entrance. William Stukeley recorded a now lost inner henge in 1725. Bronze and stone axes were found inside.



Trainford Brow is an impressive but enigmatic monument. The huge earthwork is 104 m long, 13-24 m wide and 1.5-3.5 m high. It was noted by Phillips in 1933 and visited by Phillips & Crawford in 1938. They thought it was a long cairn. However, the RCHME said in the 1930s that it was 'nothing more than a spoil heap'. Only archaeological excavation could determine its function and date.



Gunnerkeld stone circle dates to the Late Neolithic. The monument comprises a 32 m by 29 m outer circle and a 15.8 m by 14.6 m inner circle. The stones (21 in the outer circle and 31 in the inner) are all of local red granite. Gunnerkeld circle stands on a slight ridge, enclosing a low mound. Although this is an upland location, the circle sits in a valley, with higher land all around it. The outer stones form almost the exact size and layout of Castlerigg stone circle. Gunnerkeld was excavated by Dymond in 1880. Its internal cairn contained a stone cist, which is still visible. Dymond unfortunately left no record of its contents.



After a picnic lunch, our next stop was **Shap Stone Avenue**, which is formed by a two-mile long avenue of standing stones. The original extent of the complex is uncertain as some stones have been lost (there are big stones built into the drystone walls) and others were added later. The first stone is the Thunder Stone - a massive pink granite boulder. The next stone is the Goggleby Stone, which is around 3 m high and has a cup mark on its north face. This setting of this stone was archaeologically excavated by Tom Clare, who suggested that there were originally two avenues. Asper's Field Stone is about 2.7 m high by 1.5 m wide and has one cup and one cup and ring mark on it. The avenue runs past Skellaw Hill barrow, also known as the Hill of Skulls.

It seems that the avenue ran between two stone circles. That at the north end at Carl Lofts is lost. But we visited that at the southern end - **Kemp Howe**. This stone circle was badly damaged by the Victorian railway. Only six pink granite stones remain of a circle, which once measured some 14 m in diameter.

Oddendale stone circle was our last stop of the day. This site was excavated by Turnbull and Walsh in 1997. The monument started life as two Neolithic concentric circles of oak wooden posts, which were later replaced with pink granite stones. In the Early Bronze Age, a ring cairn was built over the inner circle. Inside, cremated bone, pottery and other grave goods were found. Finally, a pink granite platform with a kerb of red stones was built onto the side of the cairn.



We had a wonderful [but tiring!] day out with Emma, visiting some well-known but under-researched monuments and other lesser known monuments. East Cumbria is rich in megalithic monuments, which seem to form three main groupings, and all lie close to a river. The Shap Avenue runs to the east of the River Lowther. Mayburgh and King Arthur's Round Table sit next to the River Eamont, close to its junction with the Lowther.

Piercebridge and Stanwick July 2019

On a lovely sunny day in July, AASDN members Neville Cross and Keith Elliott led our tours around the Roman bridge at Piercebridge and the Iron Age fortifications at Stanwick.

The remains of the large bridge at **Piercebridge**, which is an English Heritage guardianship site, once carried a Roman road



Piercebridge

over the River Tees. The river has moved northwards since Roman times and so the Roman remains now lie on the south bank of the river. The remains were found in 1972 during gravel extraction.

The archaeological discoveries during the excavations at Piercebridge fort and bridge are described in the beautifully illustrated AASDN research report 7 by Cool and Mason. See <http://www.aasdn.org.uk/monographs.htm> for more details.

Neville has been researching the bridge for many years and gave us an engaging account of who he believes built the bridge and why he thinks the structure displays evidence of deliberate failings.

After lunch in the sunshine, we headed off to the 13th century Church of St. John the Baptist at Stanwick, to examine the pre-Conquest sculpture built into the porch.



Piercebridge

Some of the carvings are part of a frieze which would have adorned a stone building, assumed to be an early Christian church of 8th or 9th century date. The semi-circular churchyard, in which a decorated Anglo-Danish cross shaft stands, may be Saxon in origin. Inside the church there are some beautiful post-medieval memorials including the marble tomb and alabaster effigy of Sir Hugh Smithson, who died in 1610.

Keith then led a walk around the Iron Age fortifications. Stanwick is an oppidum, a nucleated settlement dating to the Late Iron Age. An area of 310ha is enclosed within a substantial defensive bank, once revetted in stone, and a ditch. The interior has two enclosed compounds within it, also defined by an earthen rampart. Stanwick flourished during the first century AD, but declined after 70 AD due to increased Roman authority. Oppida are thought to have been the focal centres for economic, political and religious activities. Around only ten of this site-type are known in England and most are in the south. Stanwick is thus of national significance; see <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1016199>.

Jenny Morrison
AASDN Honorary Secretary
(Photos by Derrick Gwynne and Jennifer Morrison.)

Excursion to Dorset September 2019

A party of 23 Society members, led by David Mason, embarked on a tour of sites in Dorset from the 19th to the 24th of September 2019. Accommodation was in Shaftesbury, the town famous for the Hovis advert filmed at the very steep Gold Hill some years ago. The major stop during a full day travelling down (and also on the return journey on Tuesday) was at Calke Abbey, captioned on the National Trust's web-site as 'the un-stately home' because they have left some rooms exactly as they were found including peeling wallpaper and water stains to demonstrate the challenges the Trust of-ten faces when taking on an historic property. Friday began

with a genteel stroll around Shaftesbury including the well-presented ruins of its abbey and associated museum.



Sherborne Castle and lake

Lunch was taken at the lovely White Horse Inn at Stourpaine with its wonderful food after which the party had to rouse themselves for a walk up the impressive remains of the Iron Age hillfort at neighbouring Hod Hill.

Saturday was essentially a late 16th century day beginning with a tour of Sherborne Castle, begun by Sir



north defence of Maiden Castle

Water Raleigh in the 1590s, followed by a visit to Montacute House just across the border in Somerset where construction also began in that decade.

Sunday morning involved a trip to the coast to see the Tudor artillery fort at Portland followed by a wind-swept walk around the iconic site of Maiden Castle hillfort overlooking Dorchester. Finally, the group toured the impressive remains of Corfe Castle on Monday morning followed by a visit to the successor residence of the Bankes family at Kingston Lacy in the afternoon.

The excursion next year will run from September 17th to the 23rd and will be based in Canterbury. Details will be posted on the Society's web-site shortly inviting expressions of interest.

David Mason
current Journal Editor and previous AASDN President



View of the bailey from the keep at Corfe Castle.

Visit to Killerby Quarry Excavation 21 August 2019

I had got wind of this open day via an Arch & Arch newsletter and decided to bowl along as it was in my neck of the woods, Darlington/N.Yorks. The site is a couple of miles north of Leeming Bar, just to the east of the A1.

Tarmac are preparing a quarry for sand and gravel extraction and this is the first time they have operated round a kettle hole. Depressions in the ground formed as a result of glacial advance /retreat and are quite numerous in this area. The archaeological work is being done by Archaeological Research Services, Ltd.

I arrived to find a small exhibition with finds and a vast site, around the edge of which large earthmovers were doing their thing. We donned our safety wear, including those helmets, which always give me a headache, and headed out into the centre of the kettle hole. An ARS archaeologist from Leeds explained everything really clearly. The kettle hole is lined by a clay layer, which enabled the build-up of a watery area after the last Ice Age. Over time, vegetation in the depression formed peat, almost black in colour, which any gardener would die for. However, this peat is going to be replaced after the quarrying ends and the whole place will be landscaped. Having partly dried out, it was like walking on a slightly bouncy mattress.



Timber from a prehistoric platform found in the kettle hole. Photo credit to Archaeological Research Services.

The exciting thing about this project is that evidence of human activity has been found at every layer right back to the end of the Ice Age – mainly in the form of worked flint and tools of various types, right up to Romano-British artefacts. Humans literally followed the ice. I thought it warranted a TV spot, but our guide pointed out that TV prefers skeletons and gold.

The most striking find was still lying in the peat ready to be lifted – two forked rough-cut poles lying across each other, rather like old-fashioned clothesline props. These had obviously fallen and were possibly part of the roofing structure of a seasonal fishing shelter built on a platform in the boggy area.

Returning to my car, I spotted a tall, distinguished-looking man in an expensive suit underneath his safety gear – the epitome of a Tarmac bigwig come to check on proceedings. Nice to see co-operation between the very different worlds of archaeology and big business, the latter so often maligned in the popular imagination.

To find out more, google Tarmac or ARS.

Linda Chadd
AASDN Member

The Deserted Settlement of Linbrig

On the west bank of the Coquet, in a curve of the river about 3 km from Alwinton at NT 893 069, is a two-hectare plateau on which lie the remains of some 20 structures. There is no discernible village layout, and in the absence of unambiguous contemporary records the settlement is believed to be medieval. First recorded in Hodgson's notebooks in the 1820s, one structure was partially investigated by Barbara Harbottle in 1967, and the landowner, the MoD, commissioned a survey from NAA in 2005.

The site is scheduled and, in 2018, Coquetdale Community Archaeology obtained consent for a three-year investigation of up to four structures. The first of these involved the full excavation of the 1967 structure, whose location was only identifiable from photographs taken at the time.

The building, once exposed, was 13m long from south-east to north-west and 6m wide, with walls 0.8m thick in places and surviving to heights of up to 0.5m. The four quoins were substantial, with the largest estimated to weigh about 350kg, and appeared to be re-used dressed stones. Between the quoins, the quality of the walling was variable, ranging from roughly worked blocks to several large boulders.



The 2019 trench. The unopened quadrant at lower left is the 1967 trench, which was only re-opened in 2018. Photo credit Coquetdale Community Archaeology.

Rubble piles at each end of the building represented collapsed gables and the remains of a slit window were retrieved from the one at the south-east end. The layout of internal walls suggested several phases of construction, with the most substantial one being placed across the building about 4m from the north-west end. It butted up against an already-blocked doorway and covered flagstones which had presumably been part of an earlier, more extensive, floor.

As well as phasing of the building itself, even earlier activity on the site is probable. Some of the walls exhibited signs of subsidence - either into a pre-existing ditch or else following the contours of rig and furrow, of which there are indications outside the scheduled area.

The majority of small finds consisted of pot sherds – typically from green glaze jugs and pitchers and some cooking vessels, all probably dating from the 14th or 15th century. The absence of tobacco pipes suggested that the building had been abandoned by the early 17th century. More precision about dates and phases may be provided by analysis of charcoal, which was retrieved from below the internal wall described above, but on top of the flagstones, and from the fill in the ditch or furrow below one of the subsiding walls.



The length of keel moulding. Photo credit Coquetdale Community Archaeology.

Equally interesting was the recovery of worked masonry from the building and its immediate surrounds, with some showing re-use. These blocks varied from those with simple chamfering (as on the quoins mentioned above) to more elaborate carving - including an impost block with roll moulding, a block with a chamfer decorated with raised pellets, and a piece of high quality keel moulding.

Such blocks are out of place in such an environment, and some have been identified as being ecclesiastical in origin, perhaps from the 13th century, while the weight of the larger ones suggests a nearby source. Medieval documents mention a now-lost chapel on a nearby manor called Aldensheles, and 17th century records equate this manor with a farm called Quickening Cote. During the 20th century the manor's name became associated with a group of structures on the current farm, but research into land ownership and boundaries indicates the site under investigation was itself once part of the farm, and hence perhaps the manor of Aldensheles. However, none of the structures on the site has an east-west orientation, and geophysics reveals nothing new, so the search continues.

The work on this building is now complete. In 2020, excavation will continue on a corn-drying kiln, which was partly opened this year, and investigation will start on a third structure.

David Jones

Coquetdale Community Archaeology

A Romano-British Enclosed Settlement at Rattenraw near Otterburn

Over two years ago, the farmer at Rattenraw invited members of Tynedale North of the Wall Archaeology Group (NOWAG) together with Chris Jones, the National Park Archaeologist, to examine some new finds he had made.

Following this preliminary visit, volunteers from NOWTAG carried out a Level I Landscape Survey of a large area of the farm, mostly rough grazing partly covered in dense reeds. Despite choosing the week when the 'Beast from the East' rolled in hiding the land with a layer of snow, several features were surveyed, described, and mapped. These included a new enclosed settlement with three

roundhouses, surrounded by an elaborate and well-preserved field system delineated by low stone walls. Two larger settlements of similar type already were known on the farm, both Scheduled Monuments, but if these too had field systems, they had been lost to later ploughing. Both had been described by Beryl Charlton and John Day in 1978, along with a detailed report of their excavation of a well-preserved similar site at Woolaw (Archaeol Aeliana ser. 5, vol. 6, p. 61-86).

In several of the fields, given suitable light conditions, cord rig ploughing, 1-1.5m between furrows, can be seen on the ground as visible earthworks. It is thought to have been hand-made using primitive tools and is known in several places to predate Roman occupation although probably also extends well into the Roman Iron Age.

In October 2018, under the auspices of the Lost Redesdale component of the Lottery funded Revitalising Redesdale Project under its Heritage & Engagement Officer, Karen Collins, 16 volunteers led by NOWTAG carried out a detailed Level 3 survey of the enclosed settlement using an optical theodolite and laser distance measurement.

The settlement is some 4km SE of Woolaw in a similar situation on a level terrace at 195m altitude below Kellyburn Hill, 500m to SW, which rises to 239m, a lower spur of Brownrigg Head. The River Rede is 500m to the north, crossed by the former line of Dere Street (and its putative Roman bridge) about 1km ESE. This location is near to the Roman Fort at High Rochester (Bremenium). Could the settlement have had some relationship with the Fort, perhaps set-up to provide grain to the Roman Army, and then abandoned when the Romans left?

In May 2019, another feature of the Level I survey, a putative medieval farmstead was also subject to a detailed survey this spring and may also merit excavation in the future. Above both sites near the top of Kellyburn Hill, three oval structures were found, delineated by low stony walls with no clear entrance. With archaeologists in the dark of what these were for, or from what period, they were humorously dubbed, 'Viking Ship Burials'.



Volunteers uncover Romano-British Enclosed Settlement on Rattenraw Farm. Photo credit A Curtis.

In summer 2019, the enclosed settlement was excavated, with funding by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Northumberland National Park Authority as part of Revitalising Redesdale. It was directed by Richard Carlton of Newcastle's Archaeological Practice.

A mass of stonework was uncovered with large flagstones laid on what may have been an early cobbled floor, extending both within and outside the roundhouses, suggesting the settlement was lived in by successive generations and was altered and updated over time. Perhaps seeking dry feet in a still today wet landscape. Unusually, the tumbled walls of one or two of the roundhouses appear to have been erected on top of the flagstones.

Small finds in such sites are often rare, but fragments of crudely made Iron Age pottery were found along with a broken quern-stone, a sharpening stone and ironworking slag. One afternoon, towards the end of the dig, Karen found a single red-coloured glass bead, only 2-3mm in diameter. Sharp eyes over the last two days increased the number of beads to over 50, in colours: blue, yellow, red, and green. A few appeared to have been decorated with gold leaf. Had someone snapped the string of a bracelet or necklace in the dark interior of a roundhouse, the beads falling and lost on its stone flagged floor? Glass beads are a common find on Iron Age sites, and it is possible that these could have been traded over an extensive distance.

Richard Carlton said, "The investigation has confirmed the results previously carried out on similar enclosures in Redesdale, but has also found significant differences, including a richer array of finds.

The significance of these, in terms of dating the site and understanding its function, will be more apparent following full analysis of artefacts and other materials found there, but it certainly has the potential to make a very significant contribution to the understanding of the later iron age in this part of the Borders. The excavation was made particularly enjoyable and worthwhile by the participation of many local people as well as the encouragement and full support of the landowners.”

Andrew Curtis

written on behalf of Tynedale Archaeology Group

Historic railway signal boxes in Northumberland

Controlling trains on Britain’s railways from c.1860 onwards was the ubiquitous signal box. These small, quasi-standardised structures were an integral part of most wayside stations such that even if the station closed, the signal box would invariably remain, succumbing only to the progressive march of control by distant panel signal boxes. However, many signal boxes survived long enough to gain recognition as an integral part of the traditional British railway. Britain’s railways own one of the largest collections of buildings listed for historic significance and a good proportion of these buildings are signal boxes, with eight listed in Country Durham and Northumberland.

Unfortunately, the morphology and location of the typical railway signal box makes it a very difficult building to conserve. The morphology does not easily lend itself to an alternative use. This is a simple, sometimes disconcertedly small, two storey building, with the ground floor a ‘locking’ room with minimal natural light and the upper operating floor a heavily glazed, usually timber, structure giving the signaller a good view of train movements. Exacerbating the problems of effective reuse is a location which, if the railway is still open, will be immediately adjacent to the nearest running line along which heavy trains may pass at considerable speed. Effective conservation becomes difficult.

Research in the Department of Architecture and Built Environment at Northumbria University is looking at the challenges presented in trying to conserve these small, now increasingly historic buildings as exemplars of other functional building from the Industrial Revolution. This is a national project, taking account of the many regional variations for buildings that usually predate British Rail and, in many cases, predate British Rail’s immediate predecessors. Issues identified are a circular argument regarding conservation. It is axiomatic that relocating a conserved building degrades the heritage value, as location is part of the building’s ethos. Yet, the changing environment around a signal box represents locations changed so much that the context is no longer viable. Whereas once the signal box was part of a thriving railway station with a multiplicity of buildings, now the goods yard is gone and passengers shelter in a simple, prefabricated



‘bus’ shelter that replaced once extensive station buildings. In this, the signal box stands alone, as out of context as Virginia Lee Burton’s ‘Little House’, so breaking the rules by relocating the signal box to a more welcoming environment might be a kindness.

In County Durham and Northumberland, surviving signal boxes range from the derelict closed, such as Broomielaw near Barnard Castle, to the Tyneside Signalling Centre opened in 1989. Epitomising the problems of conserving these buildings with a function that dates from the Industrial Revolution are the Grade II listed signal boxes at Chathill and Wylam.

Chathill is to a standard North Eastern Railway ‘N1’ design in stone, although with a slightly unusual variation of dropped window at the southeast corner to allow the signaller to have a clearer view of the level crossing, and possessing a group value with the attractive main station building. As originally built, c.1873, there was a balcony around the windows. Closed as a signal box, the ground floor locking room remains in use containing equipment for the modern power signalling. Although listed and part of the station grouping, the building is partially degraded. Necessary changes include removal of the balcony as it would be too

close to the 25 kV cables for electric trains and replacement of the original timber staircase with a galvanised steel. Conserving historic buildings is a dynamic process and these changes represent a way of keeping this historic building in use. At least the original timber window frames are in place, as there are many instances of even listed signal boxes receiving replacement uPVC frames.

Wylam is one of three surviving over-track signal boxes. Built c.1897 to a North Eastern Railway ‘N5 overhead’ design, this signal box is still in use, albeit with closure expected by 2022. In terms of conserving signal boxes, the ‘Wylam Question’ represents the impossible contradictions in achieving successful conservation. Out of use, Wylam Signal Box will merely be a small wooden hut on an iron frame over a busy railway line. However, this location, attractively alongside the River Tyne and prominent in the village, also provides a context to the building. Relocation would be technically challenging and, judged by events surround the relocation of other



signal boxes, it is possible that the articulate residents of Wylam will have a vigorous opinion. Providing a stable future for this almost unique building is going to be a challenge.

Christopher Reeves

Senior Lecturer in Building Surveying, Department of Architecture and Built Environment, Northumbria University



Empathy Architecture – The Northumberland and Newcastle Society

Having been born and raised in Newcastle, I spent more than three decades in the South East until the lure of Northumberland drew me back in 2016. Much has changed in this part of the world in that thirty years, but thankfully the North East retains its unique cultural soul and pride in outstanding heritage. This region's historic architecture is a profound, visible representation of centuries of stylish creativity and pride in a unique cultural identity envied throughout the UK and abroad.

My interest in heritage led to my joining the Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) in 2017, where I became chair of the N&N's Tyneside Committee in 2018. Since its formation in 1924, the Society has a history of determined campaigning to secure the future of architectural gems, such as Bessy Surtees House on Newcastle Quayside in the 1930s.

The N&N's Tyneside Committee holds the Society's remit to protect built heritage in Newcastle and North Tyneside, its membership includes experienced professionals and those with passion for the area's architecture. We particularly welcome sensitive renovation and innovative use of old buildings as well as promoting good design for new developments. The Committee challenges inappropriate development through formal objections and holds planning authorities to account accordingly.

We have nurtured the concept of 'Empathy Architecture' as a constructive response to what seems like a habitual lack of sympathy for heritage and cultural identity in bland and unsuitable building designs. All too often, we review applications where proposed developments will have a substantial negative impact, frequently wiping away buildings at the very soul of a community's cultural identity and it is difficult to understand why a more empathetic design has not been considered.

Empathy architecture is not just about how a building affects its environment today, it is as much about sustainability and value for money in the longer term. Good design endures because it adds to the visual environment assimilating into an area's attraction, whereas ill thought out bland buildings have the reverse effect. Character properties in the domestic market regularly attract a price premium because they are so appealing.

People really do care about their heritage, culture and environment irrespective of social background and upbringing and



View of Bessy Surtees House, Newcastle Quayside. Image courtesy of Tim Wickens.



View west of Newcastle's city skyline from just above the Ouseburn, capturing a range of buildings, 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly'. Image courtesy of Roger Jones.

it's not just the N&N whom believe this. In 2019, we contributed evidence to the UK Government appointed the 'Building Better Building Beautiful Commission' in response to its three primary aims:

1. To promote better design and style of homes, villages, towns and high streets, to reflect what communities want, building on the knowledge and tradition of what they know works for their area.
2. To explore how new settlements can be developed with greater community consent.
3. To make the planning system work in support of better design and style, not against it.

In reality, we must consider making better use of existing buildings in urban centres given not just the critical economic challenges facing traditional businesses but crucially to better use finite natural resources. Recent debate around the 'Climate Emergency' adds further context to reducing the negative impact of construction industry practices such as:

1. demolition of structurally sound buildings;
2. environmental degradation and harmful emissions attributable to the production of unsustainable materials;
3. insufficient recycling of existing materials; and
4. the need to seek more sensitive construction methods.

As a Committee, we want to dispel the perception that renovation represents poor value for money in comparison with demolition and reconstruction. Innovative conservation incorporating good design and using quality materials may cost slightly more in the short term, but these costs are invariably insignificant in the real estate value and enduring appeal of the completed building.

An empathetic approach is much more likely to receive early planning approval and therefore reduce developers' submission costs, where these often involve complex multiple revisions to inappropriate plans. There is a clear financial benefit to developers in getting an earlier return on their investment rather than having to maintain and fund vacant buildings during drawn out planning processes with uncertain outcomes.

The decline in traditional high street businesses has left many character commercial buildings vacant, presenting a generational opportunity to substantially alleviate housing shortages and reenergise city and town centres. There are many fine examples of innovative, sympathetic design being incorporated into existing vacant buildings where the outstanding original character architecture has been respected, protected and enhanced.

Our aim is to promote and embed 'Empathy Architecture' as this regions' response to making 'Building Better, Building Beautiful' a reality. We already work with local heritage partners to help achieve this and will continue to develop relationships with others to deliver a more joined up strategy.

Tim Wickens

Chair-Tyneside Committee, Northumberland & Newcastle Society

Finchale Priory and an Appeal for Help

In September, Barbara Hargreaves led a Society visit to Finchale Priory, an historical delight nestled in a bend of the River Wear a few miles downstream from Durham. We learned that the site was originally colonised in the early twelfth century by a hermit called Godric, by permission of Bishop Ralph Flambard. Godric died there in May 1170 and in 1196 a stone priory was constructed, becoming a focus of pilgrimage to Godric's tomb. Finchale remains a pilgrimage destination (on the Camino Ingles) and the timing of the Society's visit could not have been more opportune: 21 May 2020 sees the 850th anniversary of Godric's death.

Thanks to his biographer, Reginald, a Durham monk who looked after him, we know a great deal about Godric and Finchale but the Latin text was never fully translated and the French epitome from Meaux Abbey never published. That will change soon: the French text will soon be published by the Anglo-Norman Text Society and next year OUP will publish the first translation of the only extant manuscript, in Oxford. This should be good news to scholars of medieval Northumbria, providing a rich source of information on medieval material culture and religious and political life in the area.

There are descriptions of building techniques, food and drink, religious practices, songs, native plants and animals, weather, toilets, apples, people and places. Pilgrims flocked to Finchale after Godric died and over 250 miracles were reported there, making this the biggest known miracle collection after Thomas Becket. Since Cuthbert's tomb was inaccessible to women, it is not surprising that the nearby shrine at Finchale attracted mostly female pilgrims. Indeed, there is a local tale that apparently barren women would sit on a stone in the abbot's chamber, say prayers and go home pregnant! The Life tells more mundane, but sometimes heart-wrenching, miracles of cures for blindness, post-natal depression, vertigo, lameness, and much more.

It also records the places from which the pilgrims came, and these add enormously to our knowledge of the historical connections and spheres of influence of Durham nationally and of the bishop and

monks locally. Many are still recognisable and significant; others are now lost. I have travelled the byways of former Northumbria and received clues from local people to attempt to map the sites, but 7 have eluded my efforts. These are: Pichelave/Pichelawe; Fesceresce; Mulum; Gudedestunia (an area, not a town); Nedrintun; Bedefeld and Kenneswic.

If anyone can help, I am at margaret.coombe@lmh.ox.ac.uk.

Margaret Coombe

WallCAP: Hadrian's Wall Community Archaeology Project

One of the considerable challenges facing Hadrian's Wall is that it is part of a living landscape. Much of the eastern length of the monument lies beneath the urban communities of Tyneside, while the Wall is incorporated into or framed by agricultural landscapes in the central and western sectors. In this regard, it is excellent it is not isolated – the monument and the landscape support each other, intellectually and aesthetically.

WallCAP – the Hadrian's Wall Community Archaeology Project – hosted by Newcastle University and made possible by the generous support of Lotto players through the Heritage Lottery Fund, was established to further understand the Wall as it relates to historic and contemporary landscapes.

WallCAP has two primary aims:

1. What are the risks facing the Wall, and how can we (communities, researchers, and heritage professionals) ensure that the Wall will be enjoyed by future generations?
2. Where has the Wall (or at least the stones that once made it) gone?

Over the course of three years (2019-2021), WallCAP will be examining sites designated as Heritage At Risk to better understand the range of threats and dangers to the Wall and its attendant features. For example, what is the long-term effect of arable agriculture over 100s of years on the earthwork features of the Wall, the ditch and the Vallum? Can we hinder environmental and

weathering damage to uneven or irregular lengths of the curtain through selective turf capping? In some instances, understanding these risks to the Wall will require survey and excavation, while other circumstances will require conservation work to be undertaken.

One of the historic threats to the Wall has been robbing and quarrying of its building fabric. But where have all the stones ended up? We know of certain cases of historic reuse of the Roman building stone, for example at Thirlwall Castle, or the farmhouses built on top of or beside the Wall. But to what extent are the communities along the Wall built from the Wall? How do we better understand the post-Roman life of the Wall? And can we identify exactly where

the Romans quarried the stone to build the Wall?

These are some of the many questions that WallCAP seeks to answer, but to do this, we need your help.

WallCAP is recruiting project volunteers

to assist in research and contribute to the long-term benefit of Hadrian's Wall. No training is required – we'll ensure that any training needed is provided. The only prerequisites are an interest in history and a willingness to contribute.

Volunteers will be working alongside professional archaeologists and a geologist from Newcastle University to deliver this exciting project. Opportunities will include: working with archives; learning tradition and digital survey methods; excavation; undertaking buildings survey and archaeological assessment; identifying geological materials; and analysing and interpreting evidence/results.

If you would like to participate in this exciting project, register your interest at <https://wallcap.ncl.ac.uk/> by clicking on the Volunteer Portal. Our team will then contact you shortly to help you get involved with Hadrian's Wall!

Rob Collins
Newcastle University



Membership News

All Members benefit from access to the AASDN excursion programme, digs, and subsequent associated activities. Full (Joint/ Ordinary) Membership offers in addition a personal copy of the AASDN Journal. Members can invite friends and family to lectures without cost.

Some interesting statistics about AASDN - there are circa 200 members listed as active. With 89% of the membership using email, which is helpful to speed communication and keep costs low. Subscriptions are due annually on **January 1st**.

It would be also helpful if subscriptions could be paid by Standing order or Bank Transfer (at a branch, phone or online).

To contact Membership, please initially email archandarch.dandn@durham.ac.uk.

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Contribute to the Newsletter and note from the Editor

First apologies for not getting this newsletter out in 2019; events beyond our control were in play. Incidentally, this is the first time the newsletter has been distributed by email as a pdf, with a limited print run. This change reduces costs, is 'green', and allows more content to be included in the newsletter. Special thanks to Christina Unwin for providing design elements for this newsletter.

I welcome submissions relating to current activities relating to archaeology and architecture in North-East England. I'd like articles to be no more than 500 words in length, with one or possible two images, if appropriate. Fewer worded items are all welcome. I'm happy to consider a wide range of material from archaeological project briefs, events, fieldwork, exhibitions, and conferences to any news our readership might find useful or interesting. I definitely want some architectural content too. Maybe you'd like to provide a book review or maybe promote a book or article on archaeology or architecture that you've recently published.

If you do want images to be included, then please 1) confirm permission has been given for reproduction and include 2) a caption and 3) to whom to give credit for the image. Please do not embed pictures in Word/text files, but send pictures/plans as separate high quality (photos should be supplied at 300 dpi and line art at 600 dpi tif), but if in doubt please email me.

We plan to have two more editions in 2020. The submission deadlines are:

Next 2020 Newsletter: **1 June** for distribution in July

Final 2020 Newsletter: **1 October** for distribution in November

Please email me with questions and/content at myra.giesen@ncl.ac.uk.

Myra Giesen
Newsletter Editor

Save the Dates

Be sure to check online (<http://www.aasdn.org.uk/lectures.htm>) for updates and corrections to these events. All lectures will be at 14:30 in Elvet Riverside, room 140, New Elvet, Durham, DH1 3JT, unless otherwise notified. Everyone is welcome to attend lectures, but excursions, the AGM, and Members Meeting are for AASDN members only.

2020 Lectures:

22 Feb Perry Gardner

Finding Crin's Fremlington

14 Mar Myra Giesen

CAREing for rock art in the UK and Ireland

18 Apr Tony Metcalf

Medieval pottery of Tees Valley

May

AGM: Further details to follow

18 Jul Margaret Coombes

St Godric and Finchale Priory: Festival of Archaeology. 16:00 at Ritson Hall, Alington House to be followed by a wine reception in the Heritage Centre

26 Sept Paul Brown

TBC

10 Oct Arwa Badran

Heritage is More Precious than Oil: Teaching pupils about the past in Jordan

14 Nov Christoph Doppelhofer

Fire, War and Flood – Destructions and Reconstructions of World Heritage Sites

Excursion:

5 September 2020 — Guided Visit @ Historic Lightship LV50, at Royal Northumberland Yacht Club, South Harbour, Middle Jetty, Blyth, NE24 3PB

Finds washing Autumn Term 2019

Finds washing will take place in room D133 (Dawson building, Durham University) on the following Wednesdays from 13:00 to 16:00 in March — 4th, 11th, and 18th. During these sessions, the plan is to process the Auckland Castle material, from the Walled Garden area (AWG16) and the area of Bek's chapel and medieval castle kitchen.