

President's letter



Dear Members, I hope you have had a good summer. The Society certainly has. As the evenings draw in our fieldwork and excursions are coming to a close for the year and the new lecture programme begins.

Our fieldwork has been very productive over the summer. At Binchester a whole series of discoveries were made. Although the media has focussed on the head of a god found during the university training dig, I find the fact that it came from a room where plastered walls still stand above head height to be more impressive. The excavations at Hornby have also produced a range of exciting finds which show more and more clearly the high-status nature of the site.

Over the summer our excursions have been to some fascinating places and some were fully booked – so make sure you book early next year! The new lecture programme includes the traditional members meeting, for which we will return to the Bowes Museum. There will be an opportunity for you to make an advance request for an object that particularly interests you to be brought from the store.

Since the last newsletter we have had the AGM with the annual changes to the committee. We welcomed Sheila Hingley, Pauline Butler and Derek Gwynne, and said farewell to Niall Hammond and Charlotte Spink. Niall's departure has left vacant the position of Planning and Conservation Officer, and, as your committee would like to expand our activities in this area, we would like to set up a group of members to monitor planning proposals and their impact on historic buildings. Could you help with this? Involvement does not require any particular expertise, but could involve monitoring weekly emails, visiting buildings or writing letters. We also need someone to coordinate the group. Once we have some volunteers we will arrange some training.

I do hope you continue to find something amongst our varied activities to interest and engage you. If you have ideas for lectures, excursions or other activities then please do contact me or another committee member.

Andrew Millard President

Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland



Brian Dobson

Maureen Smith, the Society's Membership Secretary, is keen to receive any photographs or reminiscences of our late President, Brian Dobson.

Excursion to **Chepstow** 31 May to 4 June 2013



A walk around Chepstow with Keith Underwood Photo Belinda Burke



◀ The Romano-Celtic temple at **Caerwent** or **Venta Silurum**
Photo Anne McKenzie

In the latrine at **Caerleon** ▶
Photo Tony Metcalfe

Hornby Castle fieldwork Season 4 update

Season 4 at Hornby commenced in early April after a slight delay due to a hangover of the severe weather problems that had dogged our work last year! Thankfully the summer has been a steadily improving picture enabling significant progress to take place in both Trenches 3 and 4.

On recommencement of activity in Trench 3 a significant amount of material has come to light from each of the key phases of the site's occupation. The apse which was previously thought to be Medieval turned out to be a short-lived Georgian garden feature and to be resting on top of the 14th-century floor and wall associated with the horse's skull discovered towards the end of Season 3. At the south-east corner of Trench 3 a short section of 18th-century drain was discovered associated with the landscaping work of Capability Brown. This joined with the Medieval pipe in Trench 2 suggesting a re-cutting of the original channel. A significant residual deposit of 12th-century and earlier pottery in this area suggested disturbance of an earlier structure by the 18th-century work. The robbed mortar core of the 14th-century wall located in Trench 2 was found running through the middle of Trench 3 with a very large number of timber stake holes rising through its core suggesting a timber framed superstructure. Other isolated timber stakes elsewhere suggested evidence of furnishing. A timber platform about 1 metre square at the north-western corner of the wall suggested the possibility of a bench or seat.

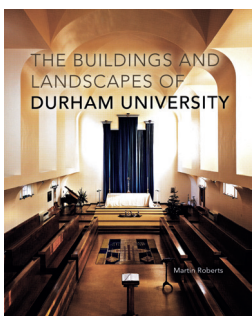
The most significant discoveries have been at the northern edge of the Trench and it is hoped eventually to go back and explore these further. Several heavily compacted mortar floors incorporating stake holes were found. A series of walls tracking east-west and north-south were also located. That running east-west was found to be 14th-century in date by associated pottery and contained a void at its western end which held the horse's skull. Directly to its north lay a section of the Medieval ceramic pipe with evidence of an inspection chamber at its eastern end. The eastern north-south wall which bridged the pipe could be dated by associated pottery to the 14th-century. That to the west was cut by the pipe and a sherd from a lobed bowl of early

12th-century date was recovered from its core. A small section of mortar floor to the northeast of the pipe had a heavy scorch mark as though a fire had been lit on it.

Trench 4 was initially located in order to identify the edge of the complex, though discoveries from the middle of August onwards suggest something much more interesting! At first a substantial deposit of rubble was found which curiously retained water after rain at a higher level than the surroundings. It then became clear that in addition to what was clearly rubble there were panels of masonry retaining mortar which had simply been pushed over. Large sections of pottery and also metalwork artefacts of medieval date started to appear from between the sections of rubble and it became clear that they had been broken by having the building remains fall on top of them. Also from within the rubble a mortar floor surface became clear including timber columns which had been broken off by having masonry fall against them. Evidence for a tower, in the form of rather finer larger stonework, was also discovered towards the western end of the trench. Separating the 'tower' from the remainder of the structure was a line of timber that may represent panelling. A mix of food bones and vessel glass also suggests elite occupation. Quantities of a curious yellow stone suggest the deliberate use of colour in the external walls similar to that surviving in the north range at Middleham Castle.

The metalwork and pottery from Trench 4 have been dated by the YAT to the 14th and 15th centuries, with occupation ceasing abruptly towards the end of the 15th century. This raises the question of a possible context. Sir William Conyers was fined heavily by the Tudor regime in 1493 for failing to prevent Perkin Warbeck from rallying his forces at Hornby and Margaret Tudor was entertained at the main Castle site on her visit in 1503. It is intended to expose as much as practicable of the collapsed building and to probe beneath to see what may remain on the original floor surface. Curiously, above the level of the Medieval building, some evidence of activity in the Civil War period has been found in the form of a single sherd of imported Westerwald Stoneware and a bone handled dessert fork made in France. Work continues until the first weekend in November and Season 5 commences at the end of March 2014.

Erik Matthews Fieldwork Officer



Books

The Buildings and Landscapes of Durham University

Martin Roberts

2013 Third Millennium Publishing

ISBN 978 1 908990 16 7

Price £15

Martin Roberts has long been involved with our society, both as a committee member and as a speaker and guide. He is also known to many of us for his work with the North East Vernacular Architecture Group.

In his latest book he leads us on a personal journey in space and time through the buildings and landscapes of

Durham University, from its establishment in 1832 within the historic setting of the castle and cathedral to the construction of Dunelm House, 'brilliantly reconciling the domestic with the heroic', and on to the most recent additions to Lower Mountjoy and the search for a new future for Ushaw College.

There are separate panels on 'Staircases', 'the largest collection of historic staircases in the city'; 'Doorcases', 'entrances are always the subject of improvement'; and 'Moving through the Landscape', 'the beckoning vision of Claude's landscapes, through darkness to light, and in Durham it happens in the most unexpected places'. Lavishly illustrated throughout, it combines new insights into familiar architectural vistas with glimpses of tranquil, hidden spaces.



New excavations at Binchester Results of the 2013 season

Although it was clear right from the first season that the remains of a long, narrow barrack-like building lay within Trench 1 in the east corner of the fort, it is really only during the recently completed fifth season that the details of its latest phases have become clear. Aligned with its long axis north-east–south-west, the building was 12 metres wide and divided internally into compartments (*contubernia*) 4.20–4.40 metres wide. Each *contubernium* had an inner and outer room separated by a timber partition in an arrangement very similar to the cavalry barracks at Wallsend. The outer rooms at Binchester face out on to the intervallum road and clearly provide accommodation for the horses. Featuring rough surfacing with a slot or drain, an area of large slab paving afforded a path to the troopers' living room at the rear which contained a hearth. The outer 12 metres or so of the building, next to the north-east defences, contained the troop commander or decurion's living quarters. In a later phase the barrack was reduced to a width of around 7.5 metres. Neither phase is as yet closely dated but both are likely to belong to the 4th century. Elements of earlier phases are also beginning to appear, while the undulating form of the outer wall of the building on the north-west side again testifies to significant subsidence.

At the east corner of the fort the inner face of the fort wall has been exposed to reveal finely dressed masonry. Part of the angle-tower has also been uncovered, though its masonry has been heavily robbed. Immediately north of the tower a small latrine building attached to the fort wall has been exposed.

In the trench outside the fort, work this year concentrated on the portion of the building at the south end thought to be part of the regimental bath-building. This has a spectacular degree of preservation resulting from an unusual combination of circumstances. The building appears to have been partially terraced into a sloping ground on this side of Dere Street. Over the course of several centuries the floor levels inside the building remained more or less the same but successive reconstructions of neighbouring buildings and numerous re-surfacings of Dere Street resulted in the ground surface around it rising by several metres. At a late stage in its

history – not yet precisely dateable but almost certainly after AD 350 – the building became redundant and, with its superstructure still standing, was used thereafter as a giant refuse receptacle. The consequence of these factors is that the fabric of the building survives to a height in excess of 2.25 metres above floor level with large expanses of wall-plaster surviving *in situ*. An object recovered from this fill that was the subject of much publicity was the approximately half life-size sculpture of the head of a Romano-Celtic deity.

Working out the structural development of this building is still in its early stages but the following can be offered as an interim statement. Two rooms of the original building lie within the trench; a large room measuring 6 by at least 10 metres and, to the south of this, a long, narrow corridor-like chamber a little over 2 metres wide. The large room featured two splayed window embrasures in its west wall and a doorway in the north wall. This could well have been the *apodyterium* or changing-room. Two doorways in its south wall gave access to the 'corridor'. The eastern of these was immediately adjacent to a chamber projecting into the large room but accessed from the 'corridor' which would have led ultimately to the circular chamber found by Hooppell. His findings indicate further chambers lie to both the east and the north. Doorways both blocked and still in use in the south wall of the 'corridor' indicate further chambers in this direction.

A subsequent addition to the west side of the building extended the 'corridor', or created a new chamber at this end of it, with a small recess opening off to the north. At the front of the latter the springing of an arch is still extant. The rear wall of the recess incorporated a very small splayed window embrasure with a larger one in the wall of the extension directly opposite the 'corridor'. All the exterior window embrasures mentioned so far were later blocked up, presumably replaced by others at a higher level, a modification possibly implemented in response to the rise in the surrounding ground level. A doorway in a new cross-wall inserted into the corridor has monolithic stone jambs and the surviving doorway into the *apodyterium* was modified in similar fashion. Whether the building, or this part, was still functioning as a bath-building after these changes is open to question.

Dr David Mason

Principal Archaeologist, Durham County Council

The possible bath house, with the benches

Photo Tony Metcalf



?bench

Peter Carne explaining the excavation of the latrine, drain and wall Photo Tony Metcalf



large stone trough

**Programme
autumn 2013
to spring 2014**

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 28 September **New perspectives on the archaeology of Anglo-Saxon Lindisfarne**
A lecture to celebrate the presence of the Lindisfarne Gospels in Durham
Dr David Petts Durham University
- Saturday 26 October **Landscape to lostscape The archaeology of West Heslerton, the Vale of Pickering, and its hinterland**
Professor Dominic Powlesland Director, Landscape Research Centre, Yedingham
- Saturday 23 November **Roman Wales** **Dr David Mason** Principal Archaeologist, Durham County Council
- Saturday 7 December **Members Meeting Bowes Museum**
note Prior booking essential – for details contact the Secretary
- Saturday 11 January **Licking and rolling Early Christian Exegesis and the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses**
Dr Eric Cambridge
- Saturday 8 February **Coasts, cairns and Carnac The Neolithic archaeology of Brittany** **Prof Chris Scarre** Durham University
- Saturday 15 March **Ireland in the Virginia Sea Comparative archaeologies of the early modern Atlantic world**
Dr Audrey Horning Queen's University, Belfast
- Saturday 5 April **Creating Segedunum** **Bill Griffiths** Senior Manager,
Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums
- Saturday 10 May **AGM Alnwick**

**Extended
excursions**

Following the success of this year's excursion to Chepstow, we are delighted to learn that **David Mason** is planning to lead the following long-weekend excursions for the Society

2014 Based in Leominster, the weekend would include **Ludlow** town and castle, **Bridgnorth** town with its amazing leaning castle keep, **Stokesay Castle**, the best example of a medieval fortified manor house in Britain, **Wroxeter** Roman town and **Ironbridge** World Heritage Site

2015 **Portsmouth** dockyard with HMS Victory and the new Mary Rose Museum, **Fishbourne** Roman Palace, **Butser** Iron Age experimental archaeology centre, **Chichester** and the new Novium Museum, **Lewes** town, **Portchester** late Roman fort, **Arundel Castle** and perhaps **Petworth House**, staying at a hotel either on the outskirts of Chichester or on Hayling Island

Planning and environment

Since the committee currently lacks a Planning and Environment Officer, we propose to set up a small group to consider planning applications and other issues brought to our attention. Please let the Society know if you would like to be part of this, or could comment on planning applications for your area.

Research grants

After a gap of several years, the Society proposes to re-instate the awarding of annual research grants of sums up to a maximum of £250 for projects within the North-East of England. For a copy of our guidelines for applications please contact the Secretary, or visit our website.

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