

spring 2015

President's letter



Dear Members, Over the last few months our lectures have ranged widely from the Mesolithic archaeology of the Hebrides to the trenches of the Battle of the Somme during the First World War. Each one was a treat. I do hope you will be able to take advantage of the equally varied programme of activities over the next few months which are detailed elsewhere in this newsletter. Amongst those activities is the AGM in May when some committee members will be standing down. If you have a few hours a month which you can devote to helping to run the Society, perhaps you could think about filling one of those vacant places? Please contact me if you are interested.

These newsletters only come out twice a year, but there are many lectures, tours and other events relating to archaeology, architecture and history for which the society receives notices. We try to advertise these at our monthly lectures but often we hear of them at short notice. The best way to keep abreast of these events is to sign up to receive an email with Arch and Arch news, typically about once a fortnight. If you are not already on the list, please contact Belinda Burke in order to be added.

Andrew Millard President

Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland

Final season of excavations at 'the Pompeii of the North'



The 2015 season at Binchester will take place between 1 June and 17 July.

If you would like to take part, please contact David Mason at david.mason@durham.gov.uk or phone 03000 267 012.

Volunteers recording in Trench 2 at Binchester
Photo Belinda Burke

Nairn's County Durham

In 1964, the architectural writer and broadcaster, Ian Nairn, wrote a Townscape Gazetteer for County Durham in the February edition of *The Architectural Review*. His text described seventy-six villages and towns in the county, but Durham itself was excluded 'because everyone knows about it'.

In an editorial Nairn introduced the piece and reinforced his, and the *Review's*, commitment to Townscape. 'Townscape is something far bigger than individual buildings, modern architecture or indeed the whole professional idea of architecture and planning. It is simply the visible expression of collective life – not collectivized life – man growing together to make a higher organism, enhancing rather than destroying the individual lives comprised within it. In a century which bandies the word around like a shuttlecock, it implies true freedom.'

What follows is simply some of the best twentieth century writing, not only on County Durham, but on Townscape – what makes all places work and why they are important. It is as relevant now as it was in 1964. So, to commemorate its fiftieth anniversary, the editorial and gazetteer are now being published for the first time in their own right.

This re-publication is a personal initiative by Martin Roberts. All copyright holders have generously



Ian Nairn in the early 1960s at Westminster Abbey
© Architectural Press Archive / RIBA Library Photographs Collection

given permission to use text and photographs without charge. Consequently all profits will go to the Friends of Old Durham Gardens, a community group devoted to maintaining and developing the restored seventeenth century gardens just to the east of Durham City.

Nairn's County Durham

Card cover, A5, 68 pages

To buy your copy, please send a cheque for £7.00 (includes p&p), made out to 'Martin Roberts', to Old Fleece House, 20B Front Street, West Auckland, Co Durham DL14 9HW. Or you can email Martin at martin@fleece.wanadoo.co.uk and pay by BACS. Copies can also be bought direct from the Society for £5.00, as there is a small stock for sale at lectures.

Hornby Castle excavations

Work has re-started earlier than usual at Hornby following the unexpected discovery of a substantial brick-vaulted tunnel shortly before Christmas 2014.

Recording of the tunnel has started, together with the area of collapse which betrayed its existence. The tunnel is approximately 1.6 metres high and 1.2 metres wide and runs downhill from the site of the medieval castle kitchens to the site of the artificial mere depicted on an estate plan of 1650. It is constructed in carefully selected and re-used building stone, including pieces of architectural detailing, with a brick vault above.

The area of collapse has been partially excavated and the brick

vault has yielded sherds of mid-15th-century pottery made further south in the Vale of York. At some time shortly after construction a 1.2 metre wide stone wall was erected across its course to form a 'privy garden' to the south of the St Quentin Tower and the Great Hall. Finds of painted plaster suggest that this had been deliberately white-washed and further sherds of 15th-century pottery were excavated from its core. The wall was demolished sometime between 1650, when it is depicted on an Estate Plan, and 1720, and subsequently the remains began to collapse into the tunnel beneath.

The tunnel appears to be the medieval castle's foul drain, with the stone element possibly an early



The brick-vaulted tunnel

Photo Erik Matthews

phase. It was de-commissioned in the 1770s after the refurbishment of the castle for the Fourth Earl of Holderness by James 'Athenian' Stuart and John Carr. Evidence of this has been found in the form of part of a rabbit carcase, an 18th-century lady's dress button and sherds of a Royal Worcester ointment jar, and a Chinese Export Ware saucer from the tunnel floor.

Further recording will take place before the main season starts at the end of March.

Erik Matthews

New Gallery at Oriental Museum

In mid-February Durham University's Oriental Museum opened a brand new gallery devoted to the museum's Himalayan, Indian and Southeast Asian collections, the latest stage of a major redevelopment programme that has been ongoing since 2009, which has also seen the creation of totally new displays showcasing the Museum's outstanding collections of art and archaeology from Egypt, China, Japan, Korea, and the early Islamic world.

Occupying a whole floor of the museum, the completely refurbished gallery showcases a dazzling array of objects such as early Buddhist sculpture from the kingdom of Gandhara; exquisitely carved Indian jades; and a magnificent Neolithic stemmed bowl from Ban Chiang in Thailand. The objects on display range in date from ancient Indus valley ceramics dating back to 2,500 BC to modern works.

Sponsored by the Arts Council England and the DCMS/Wolfson Foundation Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund, and named the Roberts Gallery in honour of Dr and Mrs JT Roberts from

Northumberland who donated a significant collection of Southeast Asian art to the museum in the 1990s, The new gallery represents the culmination of an eighteen month-long programme of intensive research into the museum's collections. The curators have re-examined thousands of objects and re-evaluated their importance with the assistance of leading academics and members of local South Asian and Southeast Asian communities from Newcastle, Sunderland, Durham and Middleborough.

Every year the Oriental Museum hosts an ambitious series of events and exhibitions. Forthcoming exhibitions include:

A walk announced 16 April to 31 May An installation in the Oriental Museum's West Asia gallery by artist Zoe Anderson.

The Enlightened One 2 April to 7 June Images of the Buddha from across Asia drawn from the Oriental Museum's collections.

Pilgrimage: pathways to Enlightenment 22 May to 24 September An exhibition by students studying for the MA in Museum Studies exploring pilgrimage in Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.



The new gallery

Footprint modulation 6 June to 5 July Curated by Metaceptive Projects, as part of a multi-venue display project in Durham exploring themes of climate change, global justice and human displacement.

Nissan: 30 years on 11 June to 18 October Reflecting the impact of 30 years of Nissan on the North East, capturing portraits of the people behind the machinery. A collaboration between photographer James Sebright and writer and audio artist Rachel Cochrane.

The Oriental Museum is open from 10 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday, and from noon to 5 pm at weekends and on bank holidays. Entrance charges: £1.50 adults, 75p children (5–16 years) and over 60s, children under five and students free.

For more details visit www.durham.ac.uk/oriental.museum or phone (0191) 334 5694.

No-man's-land at Cocken Hall

In September 1914, shortly after the outbreak of war, a recruiting committee in Durham City raised a battalion that became 18th Durham Light Infantry. One of the committee, Earl Durham, offered a vacant country house called Cocken Hall as headquarters for the battalion.

The house, which was between Durham and Chester-le-Street, is not well documented and appears to be 18th century although possibly with an earlier core. The building was of no architectural significance but was well known for its ornamental gardens and walks.

It had been empty for some years before the war and was immediately occupied by 18th DLI. The officers had a mess in the house and the orderly room was in the south wing, but it became clear that more accommodation was needed for the men. The recruiting committee contracted for fourteen wooden huts to be built in the field to the south and later ordered a miniature rifle range, drying rooms and a recreation hut.

The 18th DLI left the camp in March 1915 and the later history of the site is obscure. It was certainly in War Office occupation in June 1918 but all trace of the camp had disappeared by 1920 and the house was very thoroughly demolished in 1928.

No-man's-land is an archaeology group with long experience of Great War excavation. Both Durham County Record Office and Durham University Library's Archives and Special Collections contain records relating to the 18th DLI. The County Record Office holds a superb collection of photographs, many of the Cocken Hall camp, and the University Library's collections include the papers of William Lowe, adjutant and later commanding officer of the battalion.

No-man's-land is planning a joint project with the County Record Office, Archives and Special Collections, and the Northumbria Gardens Trust; if a current bid for Heritage Lottery Fund money is successful the group intend to conduct an excavation of the house, the camp and the trenches in June 2015.



The two rows of seven huts and the latrines in the field east of Cocken Hall, in late 1914. The house was off to the left. Reproduced with permission of Durham County Record Office



The same location during the geophysics investigation in February 2014. Photo Alistair Fraser

Geophysical survey has located remains of the north-south block of the house, one of the outbuildings, hut bases and what are probably the latrine drains. A hitherto unsuspected trench system was found and may be in relatively good condition. There are features that could be machine gun positions or dugouts, thus raising the interesting possibility of an authentic replica of the Western Front in rural County Durham.

Anybody interested in further details or who has information on the camp at Cocken Hall should contact Alastair Fraser at a.h.fraser@durham.ac.uk.

Books

Durham Cathedral History, Fabric and Culture
Edited by David Brown 2015. Published for The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, in association with the Chapter of Durham Cathedral
ISBN 978 0 300 20818 4. Rrp £75.00

This sumptuous volume brings together the work of thirty contributors in a series of essays, beginning with the origins of the cult of St Cuthbert before the arrival of his body in Durham, and tracing the history of the building and those associated with it up to the present day. The work is divided into four parts: historical overview; architecture, art and setting; worship, spirituality and social change; and letters and learning. It is lavishly illustrated throughout.

Hadrian's Wall A History of Archaeological Thought
David J Breeze 2014. Published by Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, Extra Series no XLII
ISBN 978 1 873124 67 3. Price £18.00, including postage

Interpretations of the function and history of Hadrian's Wall have been offered for 1,800 years. In this book, David Breeze considers these interpretations in order to understand how our present beliefs have been acquired, and why we interpret Hadrian's Wall in the way that we do. He undertakes this by examining eleven topics which illuminate our understanding of this great Roman frontier.

To order, please contact Ian Caruana, 10 Peter Street, Carlisle CA3 8QP, tel (01228) 544120.

Lecture Programme 2015

All lectures will be held at Elvet Riverside, Room 140, New Elvet, Durham, at 2.30 pm unless otherwise notified. Everyone is welcome to attend. For further details please contact the Society or visit our website.

- Saturday 18 April **Trading places The Salcombe Bronze Age shipwreck**
Dr Ben Roberts Archaeology Department, Durham University
- Saturday 16 May **AGM** in Bishop Auckland
For details, contact the Secretary
- Tuesday 14 July 6.30 pm **Roman altars The Roman Temples Project, Maryport**
Prof Ian Haynes Newcastle University and **Dr Tony Wilmott** English Heritage
note To be held at Elvet Riverside, Room 201, Durham (building next-door to usual venue)
- Saturday 26 September **Shining light on medieval manuscripts**
Prof Andrew Beeby Chemistry Department, Durham University
- Saturday 17 October **The Tyne Brewery site, Newcastle Beer, industry and moral turpitude**
Richard Annis Archaeological Services, Durham University
- Saturday 14 November **Identifying ephemeral human colonisation events in the North Atlantic islands**
Dr Mike Church Archaeology Department, Durham University
Rescheduled from January
- Saturday 5 December **Members Meeting**
Details to follow
- Excursion** **Excursion to Ipswich** led by **Dr David Mason**
The itinerary will include most, if not all, of the following: Colchester, Framlingham Castle, Grimes Graves, Ixworth House, Lavenham village and Sutton Hoo. Price £320 per person for two sharing, £400 for a single room. If you are interested, please contact David Mason as soon as possible on tel 03000 267012 or at david.mason@durham.gov.uk.
- Friday 12 to Tuesday 16 June

2014 excursions



◀ Members outside the Morritt Arms on an excursion led by David Mason in September

Excursion to Scargill Castle in October ▶

Photos Jon Healey



Officers 2014–15

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