

President's letter

Dear Members,

As most of you will be aware, Andrew Millard stepped down as President of the Society at the AGM in May. The Society expressed its appreciation by presenting Andrew with an engraving of Durham Cathedral tower. He has done a sterling job as President for the last six years – thank you, Andrew! This is not the first time that I have followed in his footsteps as President of an Archaeology Society, as we were both involved with the Oxford University Archaeology Society. Andrew came to Durham a year ahead of me – to take up a lectureship at Durham University in archaeological science. When I arrived to study for an MA in Archaeology at Durham the following autumn, Andrew and Julia welcomed me with a meal at their home in Meadowfield. Little did I know that, twenty-three years later, I would be following Andrew in this role.



As a professional historian and archaeologist, I spend most of my time thinking about how things changed in the past, but it is always a bit of a shock when the world changes around me. And members will have already noticed that this newsletter is the first in a new format. Our Society has been in existence since 1861, and this is not the first time we have moved with the times. As communication increasingly occurs online, the Committee has decided to produce the newsletter in a form that can more easily be circulated by email and viewed on the Society website. Members who wish to receive a printed newsletter will continue to do so through the mail. We will continue to print term cards with information about the lecture programme and the Committee. Anyone with access to the internet should also expect to find up-to-date information on the Society website, which acts as a notice board for details of upcoming events, excursions and the lecture programme. And we have, as ever, an interesting line up of lectures, excursions and events planned for 2019.

Adrian Green President

Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland

The Codex Amiatinus and its sister manuscripts

Bede tells us of the establishment of the library of the twin monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, and of how, at the behest of their abbot Ceolfrith, the monastic scribes created three magnificent copies of the bible; one for each of their monasteries, and a third – the famous

Codex Amiatinus – destined for the Pope in Rome.

But what became of these manuscripts in later centuries? Whose hands did they pass through, how were they perceived, used and recycled, and what evidence have they left behind? This booklet sets out to follow the trail.

Published by the Friends of the World of Bede. Available from the Bede Museum, Jarrow Hall; or from Belinda Burke, Broom Cottage, 29 Foundry Fields, Crook DL15 9JY email bel.burke@gmail.com.

Price £5 (cheques to be made payable to 'Friends of the World of Bede').

Friends of the World of Bede supports and promotes a wider knowledge of the educational and cultural importance of the world of Bede and the values of scholarship, innovation and community which his monastery practiced. There is now a web page which can be found at either of these links:

<http://friendsworldbede.org>
<https://friendsworldbede.wordpress.com/>

Dorset excursion 19 to 24 September 2019

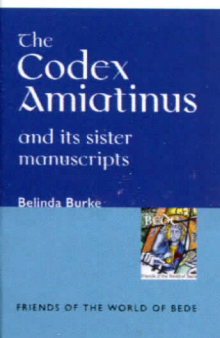
The main excursion in 2019 will be based at the Best Western Royal Chase Hotel in Shaftesbury, Dorset. Transport will be by the extremely comfortable Barnard Castle Coaches, with Wayne at the helm once more. The itinerary will include Henry VIII's Portland Castle, Corfe Castle, Dorchester, Kingston Lacy (Italianate palace in the countryside), Montacute House (wonderfully unaltered early 17th-century stately home), as well as at least one Iron Age hillfort – so some strenuous walking!

The excursion is open to Society members only, cost around £675 per person (two sharing) and £825 (single). Places may be reserved by phoning me on (0191) 371 1434 on Friday 26 April, between 9.30 am and 5.30 pm. Places are likely to 'sell out' quickly, but you may enquire after this date on 03000 267012. Reservations then need to be confirmed, by sending me a deposit of £150 per person, to the address below by 5.00pm on Friday 3 May (cheques made payable to 'AASDN'). The balance must be sent to me by Friday 2 August. **Dr David Mason** 14, St Cuthbert's Drive, Sacriston, County Durham DH7 6XE

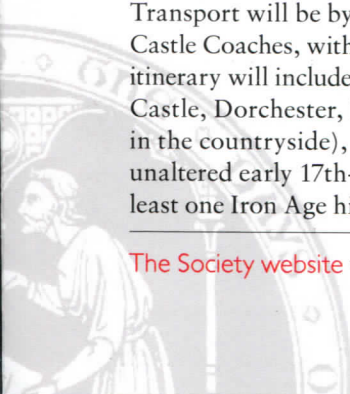
The Society website www.aasdn.org.uk

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FRIENDS OF THE WORLD OF BEDE



Binchester 2018 Upgraded facilities and a new excavation

Visitors to Binchester in recent years have been impressed by the well-preserved remains of Roman buildings uncovered by the campaign of excavation but less so by the 20th-century structures constituting the visitor centre. However, at long last I am able to report that there have been major improvements to the latter.

The timber building protecting the remains of the late Roman bath-house near the centre of the fort has been replaced by a far sturdier and more attractive structure. It is a very solid but sympathetically designed construction equipped with a roof covering imitating Roman tiles rather than the translucent sheets used in its predecessor. The smooth finish to the new wall panels also presented an opportunity to upgrade the decoration of the interior and a scheme of Roman style painting now gives the visitor an impression of the original interior's appearance.

In addition the old reception hut has been replaced by a much larger demountable classroom suitably adapted for its new function. Finally, the visitor centre has been provided with an electricity supply for the first time which will bring a wide range of benefits to the site for visitors, school-groups and – not least – the visitor assistants.

The new excavation

Regular readers will recall the results of the major excavation project at Binchester encompassing parts of both the fort and the vicus which ran from 2009-2015 and that which examined part of the cemetery lying east of the fort in 2016-17. This year saw a new fieldwork initiative, this time funded by the Auckland Project (formerly the Auckland Castle Trust). Many will know that the Project purchased Binchester Hall Farm a few years ago which includes most of the fort site apart from a small land parcel owned by Durham County Council.

To continue the tradition of public engagement with Binchester's archaeology established over the previous decade, and also to progress the research agenda for the site, discussions between Project staff and the writer took place to identify potential fieldwork projects. It was eventually decided to conduct an investigation centred on an area a short distance outside the north-east gateway and defences of the later fort (most probably established in AD 15). The reasons for selecting this spot were twofold. Firstly, it was to confirm the existence of a roadway heading out from the gateway indicated by aerial images and geophysical survey, its alignment, and whether it was lined by buildings or structures. Secondly, to locate and examine the defences of the earlier and larger fort (built AD 75-80) located by *Time Team's* geophysical survey of 2007 and briefly sampled by them. As in previous years, the workforce was composed entirely of volunteers but for this project Northern Archaeological Associates were commissioned to provide the supervisory staff (led by Steve Collinson) and all necessary support acting under the overall guidance of the writer.



The new visitor facilities at Binchester

The existence of the road surface was soon confirmed although it took most of the six-week-long season to expose it completely within the 30-metre-square area excavated. Given the high temperatures during the summer this was something of an arduous experience. The road is approximately 10 metres wide and appears to be heading directly for an enclosure at the eastern end of the high ground that Binchester occupies. This could though be coincidental and the road might continue beyond in an easterly direction. Repairs were evident in places but the fine metalling of the upper surface of the road was well preserved.

There is clearly a backfilled cut-feature running along the northern side of the principal road. Yet to be sampled, this might be a drainage culvert filled in during the later history of the area. One section of this feature was found to be overlain by an area of paving or hard-standing which had subsequently subsided into its soft filling. These may have formed the base for simple timber structures possibly of market-stall dimensions. At the western end of the exposed section of road four post-pits belonging to another timber structure were found which had reduced the width of the road by approximately 50%. An extensive area of cobbling lay south of the road. On removing the latest layer of cobbling it was found to have incorporated a small and much-weathered sculpture of a Mother Goddess, very similar in style to one found at Carrawburgh. Other fragments of worked stone found throughout the excavation area raise the possibility that a roadside shrine may have once existed in the vicinity. The bulk of the pottery associated with these latest forms of activity dates to the second half of the fourth century.

The cobbling just mentioned exhibited severe subsidence into a linear feature of ditch-like dimensions with another similar feature beside and parallel with it. These underlying features seem likely to be ditches belonging to the north-east defences of the earlier and larger fort; an interpretation supported by the discovery of the probable base of a turf rampart to the west. All of these features, as well as – hopefully – the foundations of the contemporary timber gateway will be fully investigated during a second season of excavation planned for June–August 2019.

David Mason

Principal Archaeologist, Durham County Council

Excursions 2018

Sunniside and Fawcett Estates, Sunderland

On 23 June members enjoyed an informative guided walk around Sunniside Conservation Area in Sunderland, led by John Tumman, co-author of Sunderland Heritage Forum's town trail, 'A walk around Historic Sunderland: the Fawcett and Sunniside Estates'.

In 1810 the Wearmouth Bridge Commissioners paid the Fawcett family £500 for a road, now Fawcett Street, to be taken across their fields to serve the new bridge, which had been built in 1796. The development of this part of Sunderland then accelerated rapidly. Four-storey terraced houses with private gardens were built on Fawcett Street for the middle classes and it became the principal residential street in town.

In the 1830s the laying-out of a turnpike road and the opening of the Fawcett Street Railway Station began the transformation of Fawcett Street into a commercial rather than a residential thoroughfare, and a wide range of shops and offices appeared. John described the changing fortune of Fawcett Street, which is now a shadow of its former self.

Our walk took in some impressive buildings, such as the 'Hindoo-Gothic' Elephant Tea Rooms of 1873-7; the Baroque York City and County Bank of 1862 (now HSBC); Lambton's Bank of 1889-91 (now Lloyds Bank), which emulates an Italian Renaissance town palace; and Corder House and Sydenham House, a mixture of Gothic and Baroque styles, built 1889-91. The Athenaeum, with its now lost portico of Ionic columns, was built for the Literary and Philosophical Society in 1839-41 as a 'temple of culture', providing a museum, reading room and meeting halls. We learnt about the tragic Victoria Hall disaster of 16 June 1883; the original winter gardens, which were destroyed by an air raid in 1941; the laying-out of Mowbray Park from 1857; and the construction of the Museum and Library in French

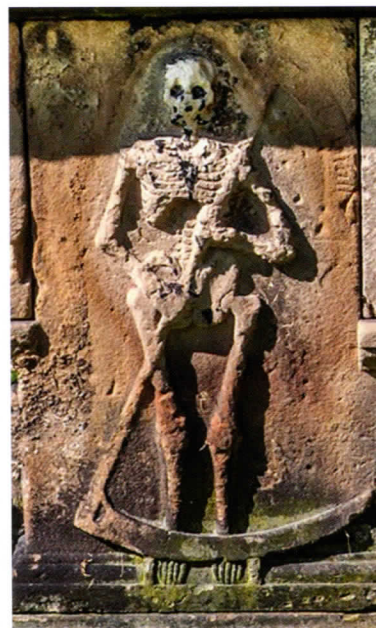
Renaissance style. After viewing fine houses in Athenaeum and Foyle Streets, we admired Sunniside Gardens with its reused medieval archway from Bishopwearmouth Rectory and the Old Post Office of 1902-3.

Barnard Castle

On Saturday 18 August we had an enjoyable trip to the market town of Barnard Castle, led by Caroline Hardie. The town was founded in the 12th century.

We explored the maze of streets and alleyways behind the main street. Amongst the lesser known architectural gems of the town, we saw weavers' cottages on Thorngate, with their characteristic row of windows directly beneath the roof eaves; Thorngate cloth mill; the former Methodist chapel on West View, now converted into apartments; and the richly-carved chest tomb of George Hopper, who died aged 23 in 1725. The tomb depicts the grim reaper and the deceased dressed in a sidecoat and hat. Caroline told us that Charles Dickens stayed at the King's Head Hotel while he was researching *Nicholas Nickleby*.

We finished our day, of course, with a visit to the castle itself, with its 12th-century cylindrical tower,



The tomb of George Hopper, 1725

Photo Jennifer Morrison



Mosaic at Aldborough

Photo Jennifer Morrison

14th-century great hall, and the medieval chapel of St Margaret.

Roman Aldborough

Our last excursion of 2018 was to Aldborough. Rose Ferraby and Professor Martin Millett guided us around Roman *Isurium*, the capital of the Brigantes tribe. *Isurium* was probably founded in the late 1st or early 2nd century. The Roman road through *Isurium* formed a leg of both Dere Street and Watling Street. The modern village retains part of the Roman street plan and the church stands on the site of the forum.

In the 19th century Andrew Lawson of Aldborough Manor encouraged excavations in his grounds; the uncovered structures were left on display in the gardens and the family established a museum in which to present the Roman artefacts. The English Heritage site is still laid out like a pretty Victorian garden, with lawns, paths and mature trees.

Our members saw the impressive mosaics (one has a star, and the other a lion, at its centre), the foundations of Roman buildings and the town wall.

We learnt about the geophysical survey and ground penetrating radar that has been carried out by the Aldborough Roman Town Project to locate Roman buildings. The Project has demonstrated that *Isurium Brigantium* was a significant town, with major hillside terracing and sophisticated and decorated grand houses with mosaic pavements. The location of the amphitheatre has now been confirmed. For more information, visit <http://aldboroughromantown.wordpress.com/>.

Jennifer Morrison

Stirling Excursion Major excursion 2018

This year's long weekend excursion was based at Stirling and took place between 13 and 18 September. The group of thirty-five members of the Society stayed at the Stirling Highland Hotel and the coach was provided by Barnard Castle Coaches.

The outward journey was broken by a stop for a guided tour of Thirlstane Castle, near Lauder, and lunch. A second stop – at Linlithgow Palace – had to be omitted, owing to time pressures, but this was incorporated in the itinerary for the following Monday. Friday began with a visit to the new 'Bannockburn Experience' centre, close to the site of the battle, which features impressive high-quality virtual reality presentations. Next was Doune Castle, which attracts visitors not only because of its imposing battlements but also because it featured in the 1975 film, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. The rest

of the afternoon was devoted to a coach tour around the shores of Loch Lomond. Saturday began with a walking tour of Stirling itself, led by Council Archaeologist, Dr Murray Cook, who also gave the group a guided tour of Stirling Castle in the afternoon. On the Sunday we headed west to Glasgow and, fortunately, in view of the inclement weather, spent the day visiting the Hunterian Museum and the Kelvingrove Art Gallery. Monday commenced with a visit to the innovative Falkirk boat-lift, including a short but exciting boat trip, followed by a brisk walk to the remains of a nearby section of the Antonine Wall and Rough Castle Roman fort. Viewing the stately ruins of Linlithgow Palace concluded the day.

The homeward journey on Tuesday was punctuated by a stop at 'Abbotsford', the home of Sir Walter Scott, followed by a tour of Floors Castle near Kelso, the 18th-century stately home of the Duke of Roxburgh.

Lecture series updates

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Heidi Richards Peach and I am in the third year of my PhD in archaeology at Durham University. I began organizing the lecture series after the AGM in May and wanted to recap and share a bit about the lectures we have had thus far.

On 9 June **Dr Stephanie Piper** discussed Mesolithic archaeology in the Western Isles of Scotland, focusing on lithic materials excavated on the Isles of Harris and Lewis.

On 21 July **Dr Sonia O'Connor** gave our summer lecture on the non-destructive analysis of artefacts by using x-ray techniques. This was followed by a reception in the Museum and Heritage Centre.

Emma Watson spoke on 29 September about her research on unknown and neglected stone circle sites and her efforts towards publicity, conservation, and protection.

Peter Ryder spoke on 20 October about the 'Ebenezer Project', recording Nonconformist chapels of the North East.

Dr Kayt Armstrong spoke on behalf of **Dr David Petts** on the 'Landscapes of the Great Depression in North East England' project on 10 November.

Our annual **Members Meeting** took place on 1 December at Ormesby Hall in Middlesbrough with a guided tour and tea and cake following presentations by Society members.

On 19 January **Dr David Shotten** spoke on the Battle of Brunnenburgh and discussed some of the contested

arguments for identifying the location of the site.

Dr Emily Hanscam spoke on 23 February about her research on Romania's Roman archaeology and relationship to the past, along with its development of nationalism.

We have an exciting lineup of speakers for the remainder of 2019, which is detailed on the current lecture programme cards and on the AASDN website. I would also like to highlight a special summer lecture we have scheduled as part of the Festival of Archaeology, which will be given by **Professor Marilyn Palmer** on 20 July.

I hope to see you at the next lecture!

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