

President's Letter

As in every year, spring sunshine and new leaves brings optimistic thoughts of the year ahead. Notwithstanding my rather gloomy remarks about the weather elsewhere in this edition of the Newsletter, there is a good deal to be cheerful about. We have made progress on the project to digitise past issues of the Durham Archaeological Journal and the preceding series of the AASDN's Transactions. This will make the earlier material much more accessible for everybody, members and non-members alike, and will help our indefatigable Secretary deal with the requests that come in from time to time for a copy of an article in a back issue. As I have said before, we have no plans to make the DAJ a digital-only publication: this will perhaps come as a relief to those who like to see their shelves gradually filling with rows of familiar spines.

Earlier in the year, it was very good to see the return of County Durham Archaeology Day, in its new location at Bishop Auckland Town Hall. As usual, there was an eclectic range of topics and an entertaining range of speakers. We should congratulate our Editor, David Mason, who set up the first Archaeology Day back in 2005, on the success of the day; especially as it was David's last as the county's Principal Archaeologist, because he plans to retire at the end of 2024.

Committee members have been busy, as always, in arranging lectures for the forthcoming season, in keeping track of membership, subscriptions and the Society's finances, looking after our presence in the world of social media, preparing this Newsletter and the next issue of the DAJ, and in many

other things: and Adrian Green is working on the publication of the papers of last year's very successful River Wear conference. As always, our Secretary Jenny M is an example to us all in her ability to keep many balls in the air simultaneously - even while going through the trauma of moving house - and keeping a smile on her face at the same time.



Richard Annis

President | Architectural & Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland (AASDN, aka Arch & Arch)

Membership Secretary's Message

A big thank you to everyone who has taken the trouble to set up a new standing order, paid by direct debit or sent me a cheque or cash to pay for the 2024 subscription as we navigate our banking from Barclays to Virgin Money this year. Particularly appreciated are all those of you who anticipated that your subs might not begin until next year and have sent interim payments to cover this current year. Your loyalty is hugely appreciated.

If you are wishing to remain a member for this year and are yet to get round to paying, there is still plenty of time to do so. You can send your payments to me in the post or hand them over at the next meeting or social outing, and I will receive them with open arms.

Jenny Parker

Membership Secretary | AASDN

Professor Dame Rosemary Cramp: **GROUND-BREAKER**

Jarrow Hall Anglo-Saxon Farm, Village, and Bede Museum (formerly Bede's World) is marking its 50th anniversary with an exhibition celebrating the life and career of Professor Dame Rosemary Cramp. Rosemary will be remembered fondly by many in Arch and Arch as an active member who led many Society excursions and as our President from 2000 to 2003.

Rosemary's excavations of the monastic site at Jarrow (1973-8) led to the development of the Bede Monastery Museum starting in 1974, initially based in Jarrow Hall, and the story of the dig forms the basis for the exhibition. The museum aims to highlight people's memories of Rosemary and the dig, and they would like to hear from anyone with personal recollections of her, to reach out. For those interested, contact jarrowhall@groundwork.org.uk, call 07966 330 022, or visit Jarrow Hall, at Church Bank, Jarrow, Tyne and Wear, NE32 3DY.

Belinda Burke
Member | AASDN



The opening of the first exhibition at the museum in 1978; Dame Rosemary with Kenneth Pearson (Art Director of The Times), Sir David Wilson (Director of the British Museum) and Père Vincent, a monk from Lérins, where Benedict Biscop, the founder of the monastery of Wearmouth / Jarrow, took monastic vows.

Creating datasets in the Northumberland Archives

Some members of the Society know me as a regular participant in David Mason's excellent excursions, and occasionally I attend meetings from my home in Northumberland. Recently, I have taken over as Chair of the Northumberland Archives Charitable Trust, which was established in March 2020 to



NRO 01876/JJ3668 Photograph of Michael and Elizabeth Bulmer and two girls, outside their small thatched cottage, Kit Shield, near Henshaw, Northumberland, nd. [c.1900]. Photograph by J.P. Gibson, photographer, of Hexham.

support the Northumberland Archive Service. The Trust primarily serves as a fundraising body, with our main sources being charitable trusts and foundations.

The internet and digitisation have transformed archives. Before the Trust was established, the Service acquired a digital preservation system to upgrade digital images as formats change. They set up LEARN (Learning and Educational Archive Resources from Northumberland), an online platform providing teaching materials for schools, universities, and lifelong learners. The online catalogue is now well and truly up and running.

Most Trust-funded projects are linked to these tools. Examples include:

- Cataloguing, conserving, and digitising the photos of Photo-Centre, a Berwick photo-journalism business. These images, taken between 1951 and 2012, stimulate much reminiscing when displayed in Berwick.
- Work in Blyth schools to help children understand the town's history and reimagine its future, broadening their horizons and increasing their interest in STEM subjects and pride in their community. The project is being repeated in Ashington.
- At least three new modules added to LEARN.
- A project with Newcastle University to develop an Online Palaeography Module to help students and volunteers decipher old manuscripts.

A core aim of the Trust is to improve access. I have heard mutterings from some quarters that Northumberland Archives do not give access to all their holdings. This occurs when collections are uncatalogued. As highlighted by the recent problems at the British Museum, uncatalogued material cannot be publicly accessible for security reasons.

Northumberland Archives hold one of the richest collections of estate records in the country, many of which are uncatalogued. They pertain not only to landed families, providing information about agricultural and other activities on the estates, but also about all those who lived and worked on them.

The Trust has started to raise funds to recruit more archivists to catalogue this material at pace. It will not be easy; there are so many more fashionable causes. Of the major heritage funders, one has recently revised its funding criteria away from heritage, and in 2025, the Foyle Foundation will complete its grant-giving programme after 25 years.

The label 'cataloguing' does not help. Staff at The National Archives have even suggested rebranding it as 'creating a dataset'. An online catalogue is available to the world, providing brief descriptions and some digital images. It unlocks collections for all researchers interested in social, economic, cultural, or family history, as well as the history of communities. Catalogued material can and will be used for educational and outreach purposes, including new topics for 'LEARN.'



NRO 00876/246 Photograph of two agricultural workers standing before a haystack, Mitford area of Northumberland, nd. [c.1900]. Photograph taken by Canon MacLeod, Vicar of Mitford.

In an archive, cataloguing is fundamental. My principal goal as Chair is to make substantial progress in reducing the backlog. Please wish us luck and have a look at the Trust's [website](#).

For a deeper dive, here are links to the Northumberland Archives' [website](#) and [catalogue](#).

Sue Shaw
Member | AASDN

A Pilgrimage to the Monasteries in Romania

Recently, I joined a small pilgrimage group of ten to visit the painted churches, monasteries, wooden churches, hermitages, and other sites in Romania's northeastern provinces of Moldova and Bukovina. Seven of the twenty or so sites we visited were impressive UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the working monasteries of Probota, Rasca, Sucevița, Humor, Moldovița, Voroneț, and the church in Arbore.

These monasteries, with their painted monastic churches, were founded mainly in the Middle Ages by local aristocrats.



Voronet Monastery. Photo credit: Aupaelfary, [CC BY-SA 3.0 RO](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/ro/) via Wikimedia Commons.

The exterior paintings seen today date from the sixteenth century onwards. They are surrounded by a perimeter wall lined with domestic buildings and workshops, which helps preserve the exterior paintings. The buildings are usually of stone, often deeply carved outside, with striking timber roofs that project and flair outwards for two or three yards, protecting paintings and keeping visitors dry.

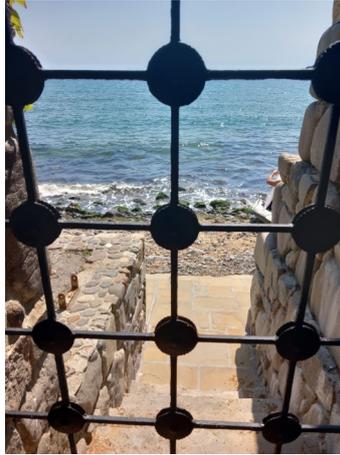
Popular subjects for paintings on the exteriors include depictions of Christ's ancestors between the patriarch Jesse and Joseph, and the Virgin Mary, often rendered with expensive and spectacular lapis lazuli. Another common motif is the ladder from earth to heaven, portraying all conditions of mankind ascending, while on one side devils pull people off the ladder, and on the other, angels sustain and encourage them. The siege and fall of Constantinople are also prevalent themes, as well as vast judgement scenes where those destined for hell are named, such as Mohammed II, who captured Constantinople in 1453.

Inside the churches, near the entrance, one encounters scenes depicting numerous graphic martyrdoms. Deeper within, paintings illustrate the traditional Byzantine sequence portraying biblical stories and the life of Christ. One scene that particularly delighted me was a unique depiction of an archaeological excavation, which is the only one I have ever seen in church paintings. It portrays Helen, the mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, overseeing a trench where two excavators, wielding large shovels, are uncovering the cross, which Helen is typically depicted as holding, during her religious pilgrimage to Palestine to discover biblical sites.

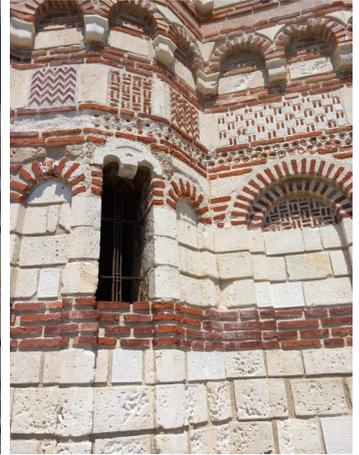
Within the monastic curtain wall, the ruin of a mansion house built for the monastery's founder can sometimes be found. Inside the church, there would be a painting of the founder with his richly clad family, presenting a model of the church to Christ, providing good evidence for later building alterations. Outside the monasteries, an older, simpler parish church would have stood.

Seventeen of the monasteries were populated by monks or nuns who showed us round their simply furnished bedrooms,

dining rooms, and workrooms. In the workrooms, they made woven goods, including mats, hangings, expensive commissioned carpets with many knots to the inch, wood carvings, metalwork, knitting with machines, hand embroidery, church vestments, banners. Outside, the monks and nuns tended to their gardens, fields, vineyards, stills, and forests, which were well integrated with local life.



The Black Sea from Sozopol fortification.



Nessebar church façade.

The monastic museums showcased long traditions of teaching and scriptoria. Even in the nineteenth century, texts were produced as manuscripts for presentation copies. Luxury clothing adorned with jewellery had been crafted for royalty. At Probota, we found ourselves in the monastic cellars (where they sell wine and spirits) during a spectacular thunderstorm. In Agapia, we discovered that the nuns' bakery served the entire village.

The hermitages we observed were either built among rocks or excavated. It is believed that some recluses still reside in the extensive forests of the mountains.

We enjoyed participating in church services and listening to the moving singing in harmony and chanting. Romania is a devout country, and many people visited the monasteries with us, being treated to refreshments or meals, just like us.

This pilgrimage was organized under the auspices of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association. Anyone seeking more information about next year's pilgrimage is welcome to visit the [AECA website](https://www.aeca.org/). In April to May 2024, we will be in Kerala and South India to visit sites associated with St. Thomas (the doubter) and other shrines, rock-cut temples, the wooden palace at Padmanabhapuram, colonial architecture in Cochin and Fort Cochin, St. George British Fort at Chennai (built in 1640), a synagogue, and more. All are welcome to join!

Linda Drury
Member | AASDN

Roman water pipes from Red House Baths, near Corbridge

In 2021, independently of one another, Martin Crapper, Professor of Civil Engineering at Northumbria University, and I

published articles in AASDN newsletters. Martin had been applying modern hydraulic engineering to gain further insights into how Roman water systems actually worked. This involved testing lead pipes excavated from Red House Baths in the 1950s, which had subsequently been curated by the Great North Museum.

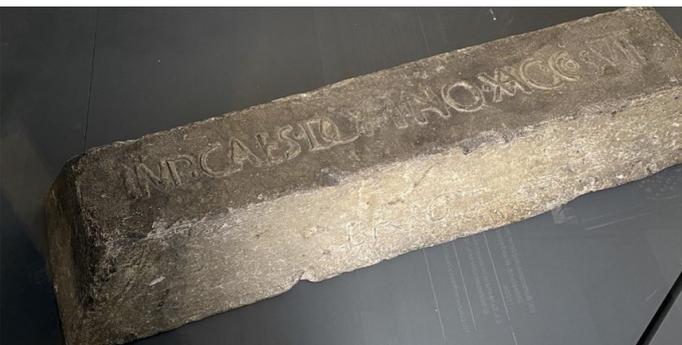


Lead pipe from Red House (Photo credit: Martin Crapper)

For my part, I am researching Roman lead mining near the fort in the north Pennines. It had long been thought that lead from this area had been used at the Hadrian's Wall forts and Corbridge [1]. However, there was no evidence from the archaeological record to substantiate this supply-chain theory, and because the melting point of lead is low (327.5°C), and it is easily recyclable, artefacts' biographies are inherently insecure. Furthermore, of the seventy-four inscribed lead pigs (ingots) recorded in the Roman Inscriptions of Britain 1990 edition, not one has been found in the northern frontier zone. The lead pipes, however, had remained undisturbed since the baths were used between 80AD and 98AD [2].

In 2023, working in collaboration with Martin, the pipes were subjected to lead isotope analysis at the British Geological Survey, in an attempt to identify their provenance by connecting their chemical signature with the origin of the ore source. Dr Frances McIntosh, English Heritage's curator for Hadrian's Wall, also provided a selection of Roman sling bullets, a weight, and scrap metal from Corbridge and Chesters fort (both of which postdate Red House Baths).

The lead (Pb) isotope results show that these artefacts come from a range of different sources, including the Mendips, Lake District, and SW England ore fields. However, there was compelling evidence that the lead from the pipes at Red House Baths came from the north Pennines [3].



Inscribed Domitianic Lead Pig (81AD). Find spot: near Aldborough (Isurium) in 1735 (RIB 2404.1). Craven Museum, Skipton (Photo credit: Pete Savin)

Previously, water pipes at other forts were used as a proxy due to their secure dating within broader archaeological stratigraphy afforded by buildings. It appears a distinct possibility

that lead was subsequently engineered out due to the unsuitability of sourcing 'Alston' lead as a fabrication product. Wood and clay were used as alternatives at Carlisle and Vindolanda during the 1st and 2nd centuries [4].

This inevitably questions the scale of lead mining and processing in the north Pennines and the function of the fort at Whitley Castle. Ongoing palynological and archaeometallurgical research should shed more light on this question and, by extension, supply chains to Hadrian's Wall and Corbridge (van Asperen and Chenery, in preparation).

Regarding Crapper's earlier research [5], this adds yet further evidence as to the pipes' likely provenance.

Reference:

- Pashley V & Evans J. (2023) Lead isotope analysis of lead-based artefacts from the area around Hadrian's Wall, Unpublished report.
- Rudge, D. (2021), Were the Romans engaged in large scale mineral extraction and processing in the North Pennines near the Roman fort at Whitley Castle? Newcastle university, unpublished MA.

Damian Rudge

Archaeology MPhil student | Newcastle University



Photo © ASDU

Water, water everywhere

Monthly rainfall figures for Durham have been between 117% and 125% above average so far this year; according to the University's meteorological records, there were 23 rainy days in March. I realise that many people will only be surprised that the number isn't higher: it has certainly been a wretchedly wet start to the year. As you contemplate the soggy garden or the wet walk to work, spare a thought for those commercial archaeologists who are busy with fieldwork. Dealing with fugitive features and fragile artefacts is all the harder when you also have to deal with waterlogged trenches and sodden soil.

Of course, the sad fact is that the whole world's weather is now affected by climate change. The relatively minor inconvenience of flooded excavation trenches is dwarfed by other, more long-term, impacts on all of our lives, the result of past and present human activities. Those impacts include some serious effects on the historic environment. Despite com-

plaints above about the rain, a lack of wetness can be one of the most damaging problems. Groundwater that has, for centuries or millennia, preserved organic materials and environmental evidence is being lost to the combination of land drainage, soil acidification and changed patterns of rainfall.

Perhaps the most troubling loss is that of peat, evocatively described by Seamus Heaney in his poem *Kinship* as “Earth-pantry, bone vault, sun-bank, embalmer of votive goods and sabred fugitives: insatiable bride: sword-swallower, casket, midden, floe of history.” Some of the most celebrated archaeological discoveries in the country have been found in waterlogged ground or peat: the Sweet Track and the Meare lake settlement in the Somerset levels, Must Farm and Flag Fen in East Anglia, the Vindolanda writing tablets and the Mesolithic settlement site at Star Carr. All of these places are, to a greater or lesser extent, at risk from climate change and other human activity. In the Vale of Pickering, peat has shrunk by as much as two metres and below-ground preservation is vastly less safe than it ever has been before.



Photo © ASDU

It isn't all bad. Decent red wine grapes are being grown in the south of England nowadays; but set alongside the prospect that wooden objects that have lain undisturbed, perhaps since the Neolithic, are now beginning to dry out and to rot, that's rather a small consolation.

Richard Annis
President | AASDN

Faith Museum in Bishop Auckland

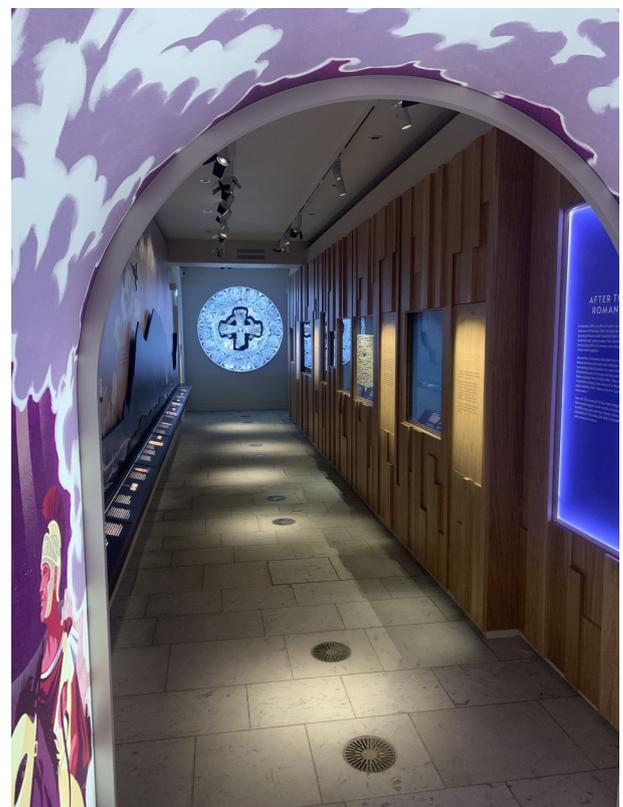
Faith, as George Michael famously sang, is something you 'gotta have'. The reality is that although a faith or belief in the supernatural is something that some of us have and others don't might seem a purely personal decision, the collective influence of a nation of 'faithful' or 'faithless' individuals has held force in shaping the history of our country. It has mobilised wars and charitable movements, been a basis for great persecutions and freedoms, and left behind remarkable objects and monuments of personal belief and corporate religion. Any museum trying to explore this elusive and often controversial topic of Faith has got its work cut out to present something compelling, interesting and provoking without being twee or overly biased. But it is what we set out to do at the new(ish) Faith Museum in Bishop Auckland, which opened in October last year.

'Faith' (as the museum is referred to) is an ambitious project, exhibiting over 250 archaeological objects and contemporary art spanning 6,000 years of British history, set within both the Tudor 'Scotland Wing' and a striking new wing of the Bishop of Durham's official residence at Auckland Castle. The galleries start in the bowels of the Bishop's Palace's basement with the deep past, looking at prehistoric acts of faith and belief, before moving through examples of Romano-British religion and early medieval Paganism and Christianity. The visitor journey then moves into the new wing – built from a similar local stone as the Castle and designed to imitate a medieval tithe barn, where a great but ordinary treasure would have been stored.

The displays continue to move through time with a consistent 'time-line' highlighting key local and national moments of our past, while the rest of the display pick up individual topics or vignettes that use a range of objects to explore some aspect of faith more closely. This takes us up to the end of the twentieth century, before inviting visitors to either head upstairs or outside to have a break from 'museum-fatigue' and explore the courtyard where the foundations of Auckland's remarkable lost (but recently rediscovered) two-storey medieval chapel is laid out on the ground.

Upon reaching the first floor of Faith, the tone switches and visitors can reflect on what they've seen in two changeable exhibitions, currently occupied by Roger Wagner's artwork and a captivating light and sound installation by Mat Collishaw. The final gallery houses a number of contemporary artworks reflecting on faith in modern multi-cultural Britain.

With over 250 objects, I could never hope to tell you about even a fraction of them – but I do have some favourites from the archaeological items. There are a number of objects dug by Durham University and The Auckland Project from Auck-



land Castle which tell the story of the opulence, power and faith of the Bishops of Durham and are displayed only metres from where they were discovered – including a double-sided silver gilt crucifix and an enamelled band that may have adorned the Auckland Castle chapel pyx.

The Binchester Ring – an extremely early, pre-Constantine symbol of Christianity is highlighted in its own bespoke display, and is probably the star local object amongst several other finds from Binchester – some of which may be familiar to AASDN members who dug at the fort. Another is the Morton Frontal – episcopal vestments altered to hide some of the Catholic imagery, which has only recently been rediscovered by painstaking research.

I particularly like the early medieval cross from Lindisfarne – now reconstructed and displayed with projections bringing it to life on the end wall of the first gallery. The cross languished in store for many years having been smashed when it toppled over during a storm in Holy Island's marketplace.

To see such an ancient object from an internationally significant site restored and displayed publicly is a great joy. The so-called Cottingham tank – a lead vessel with remarkable symbols showing the syncretism between Scandinavian Saga and Christian imagery, and a wonderfully detailed bronze of the Roman god Mars excavated from Oxshott in Surrey are two of the recent additions to the Faith collections. The museum contains a large number of loans from museums such as the British Museum, the V&A, the Ashmolean, the Fitzwilliam to list only a few of the well-known ones, so over the next few years the displays will change and new treasures will be brought to the North East.

I have yet to meet any visitor who hasn't found at least one object that drew them in and fascinated them, and the range and quality of items is genuinely comparable with a national institution. Details of the opening hours etc., are on The Auckland Project's [website](#).

Perhaps you won't agree having visited that you 'gotta have' faith, but I think that the Faith Museum is somewhere you've certainly 'gotta go.'

John Castling

Archaeology & Social History Curator | The Auckland Project
Committee Member | AASDN

The Childhood of Bacchus

During the 18th Century, an intimate knowledge of Classical myth was seen to be an important element of good taste and education, and a characteristic of being a member of the elite. Allusions to Classical myth were at various times placed centrally within schemes of interior decoration.

Such is what happened with the "modernisation" of Hornby Castle for Robert Conyers-Darcy, 4th Earl of Holderness, in the 1760s. He was a close friend of the King George III, serving as tutor to Prince George, the future Prince Regent and King George IV, and Home Secretary to the Prime Minister, the Earl of Bute, in 1763. Having first negotiated with Giacomo Leoni, the architect of Lymm Park in Cheshire, the Earl of Holderness employed the York architect John Carr to im-



prove the Castle, giving it all the up-to-date features and layout of a country house between 1763 and 1769. It was largely the structure built between 1449 and 1481 with additions of 1503 and 1615-1617.

The eccentric architect James "Athenian" Stuart was responsible for the redesign of the interiors, including the furniture. Themed designs, including ceilings, wallpaper, and furniture, graced each of the state rooms in the four wings. Most of these were lost in the destruction of the 1930 partial demolition and auction. However, gardening work on the site of the destroyed North Wing, probably more famous as the site of the Hornby Portal of 1503, now in the Burrell Collection Glasgow, has recovered an embossed lead fireback from one of the state rooms showing a depiction of the childhood of Bacchus. Visitors would have been in no doubt of the quality of the work or the good taste of their host!

Erik Matthews
Fieldwork | AASDN



Overall CGI view of the site of The Rising.

Raby Rising: The importance of Architecture in Raby's new developments

Summer 2024 sees the culmination of a project many years in the making at Raby Castle in a development known as The Rising. Under the direction of the owners Lord and Lady Barnard, 18th century buildings and gardens to the north of the castle have been refurbished and repurposed to give them an exciting future, opening many areas free-of-charge to visitors for the first time in their history.



Undated, likely 19th century plan showing layouts of glass houses.

This article focuses on the work on the buildings to the north of the walled garden rather than the gardens, which have themselves received considerable investment and for any garden-lovers will be well worth a visit. The key buildings that have been the focus of this project have equestrian or horticultural links and many had long fallen out of use.

The Rising is a significant investment in tourism at the castle, driving revenue that will sustain the historic environment in the future. The work has been carried out by a team of skilled craftsmen, including specialist contractors and the workforce directly employed to maintain buildings across Raby Estate, including Gainford Hall, which was recently taken off Historic England's Buildings at Risk Register. Landscaping and excavation work was carried out under a watching brief from Durham University Archaeological Services, whose report is awaited with interest.



The first change visitors will notice is that the relocations of the entry point, aimed at maximising the impact of their first glimpse of the castle—a vista that has awed first-time visitors for over 600 years. The new entrance from the car park opened in 2023 is further west, near to the Old Vine House. The remains of this old vinery, abandoned for around a century, have been rebuilt and extended to closely resemble the earlier structure depicted in plans found in the castle archives, in order to house a new, stylish **Vinery Café**. The original vinery was built around 1843 for Duke Henry, one of a number of glasshouses heated by stoves and a 'hot-water apparatus' for cultivating tropical plants. Various attempts

were made to find optimum growing conditions, including the use of animal carcasses as fertiliser, as reported in 1846. The *Gardener's Chronicle* reported in 1882 that there was a mistaken belief that the vine, being a hungry plant, 'would feed upon and digest any form of garbage.' Once this myth was dispelled, the beds were dug out and filled with a more appropriate material, and a rich variety of vines began to thrive under Raby's then Head Gardener Mr Westcott, including Muscats and other sweet varieties grown for the table.

The only new-build on site, is situated to the south of the Vinery. '**The Roundhouse**,' is inspired by a circular field barn not far from the castle in Staindrop and will serve as the starting point for visits. It will include a staffed information point and will be decorated with murals by illustrator Lucy Roscoe, inspired by drawings in the Raby archive.



To the east, Raby's magnificent Grade II listed **Stables and Coach**

House designed by John Carr in the late 18th century, demonstrate his characteristic classical symmetry and crenellations. Carr was no stranger to high status equestrian buildings having worked on York Racecourse and stable blocks in other notable houses including Wentworth Woodhouse and Castle Howard. The original plans for his buildings at Raby are in the castle archive, although they may not have been carried out under the architects supervision – Carr's drawings are slightly more elaborate than the finished result!

The buildings remain impressive and although the 4th Duchess writing in 1870 laments the reducing number of guests who came by carriage due to the expansion of the railways, the buildings grandeur and beautiful fittings are a testimony to the importance of the horses and carriages they once housed.

The Stables and Coach House were most recently used for displaying equestrian collections including the magnificent carriages, and providing shop and café facilities. It was of utmost importance that these buildings retained their historic character and fittings, and the scheme has made significant repairs to the fabric and infrastructure, including reinstating blocked-in doorways to reveal the intended interconnectivity of the spaces. The buildings will continue to house free-to-enter displays relating to the castle's equestrian past, plus new exhibitions relating to the wider estate and castle history. The eastern side of the building will house an expanded shop, making use of historic features from original tiles to wooden stalls and brass fittings.

Behind the stables sits **The Riding School**; marked on historic maps as the less glamorous sounding 'Riding Shed'. Built of sandstone and of different proportions to the earlier and better-known riding schools of, for example, Bolsover Castle, this long, thin sandstone building (49m x 9m) was built as a space for safely training and exercising the thoroughbred horses associated with the hunting stables rather than for

displays of classical dressage. It has been suggested that the building was designed by John Carr, although its awkward position between his beautiful Coach House and the impressive Dutch Barn may suggest a later date. The Riding School, used in recent years for storage has been re-roofed and floored to enable the space to be used for markets, conferences, exhibitions and other events. A central lobby will continue to display some of Raby's impressive carriage collection with new doors from the north and south to connect the spaces to the rest of the site.



Behind the Riding School, the late 18th century **Dutch Barn** is an architectural gem which has never been open to the public. Over the last 18 months this particularly fine Grade 2 listed building has been consolidated and re-roofed. Its open sides and brick ventilation stacks have been retained and the floor has been re-levelled and paved so that it can be used as a unique partially-undercover events space.

But it isn't just the equestrian buildings that have had a new lease of life. The old **Motorman's Garage** has been restored as a space for schools and groups – giving all of the buildings a future in inspiring the next generation of architectural historians and archaeologists! This unlisted but nevertheless historic building has mainly been used in recent years for storage. The building was first shown on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1896 and converted for use by the Motorman and Chauffer in the early years of the 20th century when the 9th Baron Barnard brought Raby its first motor car. The glazed canopy with timber and steel beams and cast-iron columns, added around 1914 to provide added cover, has also been refurbished to provide a sheltered area for packed lunches and a meeting point for groups – complete with the old petrol pump that has been retained.

It is also interesting to note that the castle architecture has also been referenced in a light-hearted way in other developments at Raby. The **Plotter's Forest** is a creative play area

for children in the former Christmas Tree plantation, on the theme of Raby's rebellious past from The Rising of the North to the Parliamentary cause in the Civil Wars. The brief to the designers was to subtly reference some of the recognisable features of the castle in the design but without overwhelming the areas purpose in inspiring accessible, creative play. Thus, the historic Neville Gateway became as inspiration for one of the key structures (complete with high level crawl cage), the castle's nine towers are reflected throughout and the many walkways a nod in the direction of the former drawbridge from the days when the castle was fully enclosed within a moat.

With the opening of *The Rising* fast approaching (the actual date is tantalisingly still to be announced), the final touches are being made on the conservation, restoration and re-purposing of these incredible historic buildings. This work is important for many reasons but here are just three. Firstly, they have been given the care that they really needed which takes them to my second reason; they have been given a new lease of life. This in turn leads me to my third reason, that by sharing them with visitors to Raby we not only provide access to these buildings to visitors regardless of income (other than for special events they sit before the pay barrier), and this in turn is important because they form part of a growing visitor attraction which will provide enjoyment and inspiration for local people, attract visitors from further afield and will provide sustainable revenue to enable the castle and other historic structures to be similarly conserved, maintained and enjoyed by future generations.

For more information and to book a visit [here](#). All images all © Raby Estate.

Julie Biddlecombe-Brown
Curator | Raby Castle & Vice-President | AASDN

North East Publications of Interest

Journal Articles

Bohling S, Croucher K, Buckberry J (2023) [Understanding Disability and Physical Impairment in Early Medieval England: an Integration of Osteoarchaeological and Funerary Evidence](#). *Medieval Archaeology*, 67(1):73-114.

Brown AG, Fallu D, Cucchiario S, Alonso-Eguiluz M, Albert RM, Walsh K, Pears BR, Scaife R, Langdon C, Tarolli P, Cockroft D (2023) [Early to Middle Bronze Age agricultural terraces in north-east England: morphology, dating and cultural implications](#). *Antiquity*, 97(392):348-366.

Brown AT (2024) [Social security in late medieval England: corrodies in the hospitals and almshouses of Durham Priory](#). *Historical Research*, 97(276):199-217.

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Ambrose Edwards' House, Barnard Castle

You know how it is. You're looking at a panorama, a photograph or even a painting and instead of looking at the main subject – the mountain, the cathedral or the central figure – your eye is drawn away, to the side, to the margins, where you've spotted something....well.... really quite interesting. It draws you in, totally absorbed, and you rather ignore the main subject completely.

Samuel and Nathaniel Buck's engraving entitled 'The West View of Bernard Castle in the Bishoprick of Durham' was published in 1728. Lots of useful detail of walls on the north side of the Castle, but on the left, just visible above the ruins, are some of the buildings of the town. Notable amongst them, on the extreme left is one building, head and shoulders above the rest, and the only one identified and labelled – 'Ambr. Edwards Esqr' (Fig. 1.). A tall square building, probably three-storeys at least, with lots of smart chimney stacks and, best of all, a fine polygonal domed cupola sitting in the middle of its flat roof. In its rear wall it also had a long semi-circular-headed staircase window.

An immediate response of 'Wow, that's posh!' needs to be reworded for the purposes of an 'Arch and Arch' newsletter, so let's say for starters that this is clearly a high-status town house or public building. And we can say more, even at first sighting. Possibly late 17th or early 18th century if regional parallels for that cupola



Fig. 1. Ambrose Edwards' house, as illustrated in Nathaniel and Samuel Buck's engraving of north side of Castle, 1728.

are considered. The fine restored example of c.1690 surmounting Alderman Fenwick's House in Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne comes immediately to mind. But Alderman Fenwick's survives and from my many visits to Barnard Castle I knew there was nothing in the town like Ambrose Edwards' house, so this would regrettably be a study of a lost building, but no less valuable for that.

But this is jumping the gun. First things first. Who is 'Ambr (ose?)'. Edwards you may ask? I didn't know either but, as I often say, 'It's not what you know, but who you know.' So, a 'round robin' email to wiser heads, knowledgeable on all matters Barney. Jonathan Peacock and Niall Hammond enlightened me – Ambrose Edwards was a wealthy tanner, born 1676, married to Ann Norton and their only child Ann was born in 1726. Ambrose was a man of some status, often referred to in documents as 'gentleman,' he continued to live in the town up to his death in 1745.

Niall's initial trawl through the Durham County Record Office's (DCRO) online catalogue was invaluable and produced some good results, principally that in 1723 Ambrose had taken the lease of a burgage plot on the west side of the Market Place. Amongst the other documents listed there was also a document detailing an agreement Ambrose had made in 1718/9 with William Blakiston Bowes of Streatlam Castle to take bark (for tanning) from Streatlam Park. At the time I thought it was of only marginal interest, so I passed over it. Big mistake.

Before I received these documents, I had begun to play with Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, trying to identify the Bucks' viewpoint, vaguely around Scar Top, the open green area north of the castle. From there lines fanned out on my map to pick up other landmarks but I made little progress, only identifying that the house must have been in the general area of the west side of Market Place where Ambrose had taken a leasehold property. Then David Butler of the County Record Office, and one of the Barnard Castle email cognoscenti, provided a copy of John Wood's 1827 map of the town. Scanning the properties on the west side of Market Place, a large square-plan building stood out labelled as owned and/or occupied by 'George Edwards Esq.' Surely this was too much of coincidence. Right location, right plan, right name?

The building's square plan stood out amongst the town's narrower medieval burgage plots and cross-referencing to modern OS maps, quickly established that the building's footprint survived as No. 28 Market Place, at first glance a two-storey and attic, Grade II listed Victorian bank. Some disappointment set in now, maybe it was just a complete 19th century rebuild on the old plot, something that initially looked to be the case when viewed from the front (Fig. 2).

Long experience of poking around old buildings has taught me that personal or corporate vanity will always triumph with building owners, and that a building's front elevation will always be the most up to date, the most impressive. So if you are looking for an earlier concealed building then as a general rule look at the back, in the roof, in the basement.... any-



Fig. 2. No. 28 Market Place, Barnard Castle, Front elevation in 1959. Note the tell-tale stump of the demolished second floor above the cornice at the left end of the building. NatWest Archives Ref D7160

where but on the front elevation or in its principal ground floor rooms.

To view the rear of the Market Place you need to enter the castle grounds, and from there the story gets far more interesting. Firstly, the rear elevation of No. 28 does not resemble at all its Victorian frontage to the Market Place. Granted there are Victorian sash windows, but they are set in early-mid 18th century window surrounds and best of all, there is a fine semi-circular-headed staircase window running through the main floors – a decidedly Georgian feature - and the one very evident feature that links this building to Buck's engraving of Ambrose Edwards' house. But though such staircase windows are relatively common in the 18th century, all this points towards it being at least, in origin an early-mid 18th century town house.

Next, still at the rear, and a bit more tangled as architectural evidence goes, something wasn't quite right at roof level. The flanking south wall of the building didn't end at the roof line, but continued up another storey, clear evidence that this property was once much higher and had been reduced. Returning to the Market Place confirmed this, its southern party wall clearly higher than it needed to be (Fig. 2). All this conclusive evidence shows that the Victorian bank was a drastic remodelling of a larger three storey early-mid 18th century building, whose rear elevation closely resembled that in the Bucks' print. This was Ambrose Edwards' house, built c. 1723-28, hiding, so to speak, in plain sight.

I had by this stage assumed that the Victorian bank remodelling would have savaged the original interior and so all we had left of Ambrose's house was the remnants of its outer shell. Sharing the news with friends prompted Howard Coutts, one of those Barney worthies, to recall that he once went into the Victorian building and was surprised to discover an 18th century panelled room on the first floor.

Enthused by this response a visit to the interior was arranged and together with most of my email correspondents we were delighted to discover that bar a totally gutted ground floor (as expected) much of the first floor remained intact with one splendid, panelled room just as Howard recalled it (Fig. 3). It was one of two such rooms overlooking the Market Place, and though the second room had been stripped of its paneling and subdivided, both rooms were approached from the staircase (a later 18th or early 19th century replacement) through their original lobbies with finely carved and moulded doorcases. The vaulted basements were largely intact too and there were even traces of the lost second floor in the attics.

Reflecting afterwards on that cupola, that first alerted me to the building, my first thoughts of Alderman Fenwick's house were with hindsight quite 'distant' thoughts. A much more relevant example was near at hand.

Streatlam Castle was being rebuilt by William Blakiston Bowes, c. 1717-25, just outside the town, a large and handsome country house, replete with three roof-top cupolas. That, of course, triggered renewed interest in that 1718-19 lease, so casually dismissed earlier, an interest prompted by Jonathan Peacock's extensive knowledge of the estate. Just

when Ambrose Edwards was contemplating his new house in the Market Place, he was visiting Streatlam and saw the great house taking shape and topped off, around 1723-5, with those cupolas.



Fig. 3. First floor panelled room, with later Frosterley marble fireplace.

Quite reasonable to assume that Ambrose, a wealthy and respected tradesman, might want to emulate the local aristocracy by completing his house in much the same way. And he may have had the same man to guide him. Streatlam Castle lacks a known architect, but Thomas Shirley, a joiner made good as a clerk of works, architect and landscape designer to the county gentry worked at Streatlam in 1720-6. He also had strong Teesdale roots through his wife. Ambrose almost certainly knew of Shirley from his Streatlam visits and later, in 1733, they were co-defendants in a Durham court case. Might he have asked Shirley to design his new town house? A plausible hypothesis that just prompts more research into this engrossing building.

Martin Roberts
Member | AASDN

2024 Major Excursion

A few spots remain for this year's main excursion, running from June 5th to June 11th. This seven-day trip to South West Wales will highlight Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. Based at the modern Ty Celtic hotel on the Milford Haven waterfront, the itinerary includes visits to St. David's Cathedral, Pembroke town and its castle (birthplace of Henry VII), Picton Castle, Dinefwr and Newton House, Carmarthen town, and the historic Stackpole estate. Expect impressive historic sites, stunning coastal views, and great company.

Excursion dates: Wednesday, June 5th, to Tuesday, June 11th.
Prices: Singles = £1,250, two sharing = £997 per person.

For more information or to express interest, please contact [David Mason](#).



Lumley Castle. Image from page 52 of "Antiquities of Great Britain: illustrated in views of monasteries, castles, and churches, now existing." (1807)

AASDN 2024 Annual General Meeting

Join us for at the 2024 AGM and a guided tour of Lumley, plus two talks.

Date: Saturday, 11th May

Time: 10:00 to 13:00

Location: Lumley Castle, Ropery Lane, Chester-le-Street, DH3 4NX

Transport: A bus will depart from Freeman's Place (opposite swimming baths) in Durham at 9:30, returning from Lumley Castle at 13:30.

Our guided tour, led by Dr Heidi Richards, will commence at 10. Discover hidden gems such as the clocktower and former Durham University residential rooms. Please note, some spaces may not be accessible to all due to steep or spiral staircases, but alternative arrangements will be provided.

Following the tour, join us in the Scarborough Room at 11 for tea, coffee, and biscuits. The AGM will commence at 11:20, followed by talks from our President, Richard Annis, and Heidi Richards.

The event concludes around 13:00. Lunch is not provided, but you can purchase lunch in the Library Bar. Pre-booked afternoon tea is available in the Library Bar or Knights Restaurant.

This event is exclusively for members. The tour/talks/AGM cost £5 per person and the bus from Durham is an additional £8 per person. Make sure you have paid by **Wednesday, 8th May**. Booking forms are available from [Jenny](#).

AASDN Society Research Award 2023

The committee has decided to award the £500 2023 Research Award to a project called "Discovering more about river crossings at Shincliffe." The aim of the project is to establish the role of finds in the River Wear in the historical sequence of river crossings at Shincliffe. The AASDN money will go towards dendrochronological dating of timbers, which are positioned in the riverbank below the water level, and an assessment of a number of pieces of submerged dressed stone which display tool marks, to ascertain if they are from

one of the medieval bridges. The timbers were first recorded by divers in 2008. Gary Bankhead, underwater archaeologist and AASDN webmaster, will assist the project. Ground-penetrating radar of the riverbed will be undertaken by Prof. J Warburton of the Geography Department, Durham University. The project is also supported by Shincliffe Local History Society. We look forward to hearing about the results of this exciting project, which will be reported in a future newsletter. Image below provided by Gary Bankhead.



Archaeology of Waterways Conference 2024

Join the Nautical Archaeology Society for a captivating exploration of the archaeology of waterways at #ArchConf24, hosted at the Teaching & Learning Centre, Durham University, DH1 3LS. AASDN is one of the co-organisers along with Durham University and the Finds Research Group. This two-day conference promises an enriching experience for all attendees; places are limited.

Dates: 16th & 17th November 2024

Call for Papers: Submit your abstract by 31st May 2024.

Associated Events: Extend your experience with associated events on the 15th and 18th November 2024.

For more details check the Nautical Archaeology Society conference [page](#).



Favourite Objects & Special Places:

I am asking members to share objects and places that they hold dear. I'll kick off the show-and-tell with an experience of my own. I was fortunate to catch the sun filtered through the stunning stained glass at Brinkburn Priory, near Longframlington, Northumberland. It was rather magical, filling me with a sense of peace. Well worth a visit, especially on a sunny day.

Myra Giesen
Newsletter Editor |
AASDN



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Committee members' biographies are available [here](#).
 You can reach committee members by emailing archandarch.dandn@gmail.com.

Newsletter Contributions

We are happy to receive news articles and items of interest related to archaeology, architecture, and/or heritage in North East England, encompassing County Durham, Northumberland, and Tyne & Wear. Both members and non-members are welcome to submit items, but please make sure to read our [submission guidelines](#) beforehand. We publish biannual, with submission deadlines falling around: **mid-April** for early May and **mid-October** for early November. Note, you can submit items at any time. Find previous newsletters [here](#).

Membership

Membership subscription are due **January 1st**. Download the [membership application](#) and email it, along with any membership inquiries, to our [Membership Secretary](#) to ensure you receive the journal.

Subscription rates for 2023 are: **Ordinary**, includes Journal — £20.00; **Joint** (two people at same address), includes one Journal — £25.00; **Associate** (senior citizens, students, unwaged), Journal not included — £10.00; **Institutional**, includes Journal — £25.00; and **Overseas**, includes Journal — £30.00.

AASDN Upcoming Events

- 11 May 2024** [Annual General Meeting] **Lumley Castle** [DH3 4NX] - (10:00-13:00). Talk by **Heidi Richards**, 'From Romance into Reality in the English Medieval Castle and Landscape' See details on page 12.
- 5-11 June 2024** [major excursion] seven-day visit to South West Wales focussing on Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. Limited spaces; see details on page 10.
- 8 June 2024** [lecture] **Paul Howlett**, York Archaeology, 'Micklegate and Guildhall - The results from recent excavations by York Archaeology'
- 21 September 2024** [lecture] **Natalie Swann**, Senior Archaeologist, Archaeological Services, Durham University, 'Recent excavations on Durham peninsula and within Durham City'.
- 12 October 2024** [lecture] **Jules Brown**, Historic Places Adviser, Historic England, 'Bishop Auckland Heritage Action Zone'
- 9 November 2024** [lecture] **Tim Bailey**, Xsite Architecture and Chair of Northern School of Art, 'Hartlepool Conservation Area'
- 14 December 2024** [lecture] **David Mason**, Senior Archaeologist, Durham County Council, 'What the Romans did for Durham and Northumberland'
- 11 January 2025** [lecture] **Dr Rob Young**, consultant (Former English Heritage Inspector), 'Community Archaeology in Teesdale'
- 8 February 2025** [lecture] **Professor Emeritus Peter Rowley-Conwy**, Durham University, 'Early Farming in Britain'
- 15 March 2025** [lecture] **Josh Gaunt** and **Claire Christie**, Headland Archaeology, 'Defining Spaces in Iron Age Northumberland: Excavations at Morley Hill and Lower Callerton'
- 12 April 2025** [lecture] **Kylie Buxton**, Excavation Project Officer, West Yorks Archaeological Services, 'Recent excavations at Buxton Lane, Ryhope'
- 8 June 2025** [lecture] **Graeme Dodd**, RIBA SCA Specialist Conservation Architect at Napper Architects, 'Marrying the old and new, looking back to look forwards - recent projects at Newcastle City Pool, Morpeth Railway Station and Low Newton Rocket House'

Lectures: in-person at 14:30, [Elvet Riverside](#) room ER140, Durham University (DH1 3JT). Post-lecture socialising at County Hotel. Many of the lecture abstracts are available online [here](#). We still are exploring livestreaming options.

We're planning summer day excursions, though none are confirmed yet. Stay updated via email or [here](#). Feel free to suggest excursions to us [here](#).

NE Riddle 1

In moorland mist, I stand tall,
 A circle of stones, weathered and all.
 Aligned with stars, ancient rites to call,
 Whispers of history, within my thrall.

NE Riddle 2

I am a fortress of old,
 Guarding the river's hold.
 Beneath my stone walls, tales do abide,
 Of battles waged and tides of pride.

2024 AASDN Research Award

Are you doing research in the North East of England (Durham, Northumberland, or Tyne and Wear) and a paid-up member of the Society? If so, but in a bid for the Society's annual research award (£500 maximum). This year's application deadline is **31 December 2024**, but apply anytime. Consult [application guidelines](#) for more details or email [Jenny](#) with any questions.