

President's Letter

You may have seen a recent news story from Historic England about an addition to their air photograph collections. The images in the Portleven Collection were taken in the 1930s by Arthur Hobart, who hung over the sides of biplane cockpits to capture towns, landmarks, and industrial sites. As with all these collections, coverage is by no means comprehensive; many of Hobart's flights originated from Croydon Aerodrome, also known as 'The Air Port of London.' He didn't venture much into the North-East, and the Portleven pictures only depict a handful of sites in our area. These include images of work underway at Smith's Dock shipyards on the Tyne at North Shields and at South Bank on the Tees.

Although this is a minor addition to the Historic England collection, it serves as a reminder of the wealth of material available online for free. Air photo collections intended for non-archaeological purposes can be very helpful if you are interested in the development and earlier forms of familiar landscapes, or if you are simply curious about how places used to look. If you have access to the internet, this treasure trove (or, depending on your point of view, this opportunity for endless, time-consuming journeys down rabbit holes) is available at [Historic England Aerial Photos](#).

The collection of old Ordnance Survey maps available through the National Library of Scotland at [National Library of Scotland Maps](#) is equally accessible, free, and fascinating. In County Durham, we are particularly fortunate to have Pictures in Print, a vast online collection of printed maps and

topographical prints created before 1860, all available at the click of a link: [Pictures in Print](#).

In previous editions of the Newsletter, I have mentioned our plans to make the AASDN's publications more accessible. The University Library's Archives & Special Collections team has made the entire run of Transactions and the Durham Archaeological Journal (DAJ) except for the most recent editions, which are currently available only to subscribers) accessible online. You can find the Transactions of the AASDN, which span the period from 1862 to 1982, here: [Transactions](#) and the DAJ is available here: [Durham Archaeological Journal](#).

There is still work to be done to make articles available as individual PDFs and to enable searching of the collection of journals. We are in a position to fund this work thanks to a generous bequest to the Society. This came from someone whom many members will remember: Roger Norris, a long-time member and past president of AASDN, who died in December 2021. Roger was a Cathedral and University Librarian, historian, author, and a kind, knowledgeable, and generous man. We are very grateful for his gift to the Society, which he supported for many years.

Richard Annis

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



2023 AASDN Research Award Update—*Discovering More About River Crossings at Shincliffe*

Low river levels during the latter part of summer enabled us to carry out the diving part of this project, assisted by half a dozen stalwarts from Shincliffe Local History Society helping to plodge, haul, record, and photograph finds. Currently, we are awaiting the dating of the recovered timber samples and dressed stones, as well as the ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey, which has been delayed by equipment repairs.

Gary Bankhead's assessment is that at least 60% of the timber assemblage has vanished since it was first recorded in 2008. One promising timber disappeared in the space of 18 days between dives! Four samples of the timbers were



recovered, but only one large brick-shaped piece of oak (26 cm x 12 cm x 7 cm) has been assessed as being dateable. The result is delayed due to the need to slow-dry the sample. Efforts to find documentary evidence of the location of the temporary wooden bridge (c. 1824) to link it with these timbers have drawn a blank.

Ten pieces of stone of varying shapes, dressing styles, and sizes have been recovered and recorded. One piece has a mason's mark. The Cathedral Archaeologist and the Head of Works will be examining the photographs shortly and hopefully will be able to provide an opinion regarding rough dates, etc. Some stone from the last bridge was reclaimed during demolition because a record has been found of it being reused to build an oven in the



prison in which to burn verminous clothing! Why these dressed stones have collected in this 9-meter-deep hole awaits an explanation. Hopefully, the GPR survey of the riverbed may help to show how accretions of material from the old bridges and a late 19th-century water main affected the bed over the years.

Towan Hancock

Member | AASDN & Shincliffe Local History Society

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, put 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.

Research Project on Archaeological History of Raby Estates

Brett Ostrum, a PhD student at Durham University, is undertaking a work placement research project with Julie Bidlecombe-Brown, Curator at Raby Estates, on the archaeological history of the current and former Raby land holdings. The project is collating information on known archaeological sites and features, modern and antiquarian archaeological excavations, and details about stray finds discovered both on estate grounds and in nearby areas to increase our understanding of life in the past within areas currently under estate stewardship.

The project seeks to include local knowledge of archaeological sites, finds, and excavations that may never have made it into published sources and would welcome any research suggestions or leads from Arch & Arch members, particularly regarding the archaeology of Teesdale. Please contact Brett at brett.c.ostrum@durham.ac.uk with any information or research recommendations. Thank you!

An Early Medieval Timber Hall at Hornby?

After recording of the robbed foundations of the 12th-century chapel apse, it was decided to investigate what lay beneath the extensive remains of other ancillary buildings, which rested on a mortar raft on their exterior. During excavation of the foundations, two residual sherds of a pre-Conquest Pingsdorf ware jar from Northern Germany had been recovered, suggesting the possibility of pre-Conquest occupation.

At an early stage in removing the mortar, a series of voids began to appear. Upon closer examination, these voids were found to relate to a sequence of paired post holes that partially overlapped, indicating they predated the chapel foundation. The voids were created as the timber partially rotted where it had dried out. However, most of the post holes still retained posts, either entirely or in part, with the outer, wider posts averaging 60 to 65 cm in diameter. A sample post, when cored, was found to reach an impressive depth of 1.5 metres. The post holes formed one quadrant of the stern end of a bow-sided building, likely of considerable size and possibly two storeys tall .



The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle from the 960s recounts a miracle of St Dunstan, in which a two-storey timber hall at Calne in Wiltshire partially collapses during a feast, leaving St Dunstan suspended in mid-air yet unharmed. This building lies on a completely different alignment from the later medieval structures above it and rests on a mortar raft, likely intended for flood prevention, of a different composition than the later medieval material. A dense arrangement of post holes in one corner suggests an internal lobby, and a small section of timber-planked floor was preserved in the later mortar, showing what appear to be the ghost marks of a pair of chair legs. A reconstructed timber hall of similar dimensions may be seen at the Danish Viking-period site of Fyrkat.

A further trench has been opened a short distance away, within what should be the hall's interior, to yield further information.

Erik Matthews
Fieldwork | AASDN

2024 Excursions

Major Excursion: South West Wales, 5-11 June

This year's major excursion focused on Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, featuring a week-long stay at the new Ty

Celtic hotel located on the quayside at Milford Haven. Transport was provided by Shaw's Coaches Ltd, which took over Barnard Castle Coaches following the retirement of owner Wayne Taylor in 2022. The principal stop during the nine-hour outward journey on June 5th was Croome Court, a mid-18th-century neo-Palladian mansion near Upton-upon-Severn in South Worcestershire. The landscaped grounds were Capability Brown's first major project. Despite the journey's length, we arrived at the hotel only fifteen minutes later than the target time.

The natural harbour of Milford Haven has served as a safe port and was exploited for several military operations throughout the second millennium. Notable campaigns from the Haven included Henry II's invasion of Ireland in 1171 and Cromwell's operations in 1649. In 1485, the future Henry VII landed close to his birthplace in Mill Bay before marching on to England. The modern town was laid out in a grid pattern of streets in 1790 by Sir William Hamilton, initially intended as a whaling centre, later becoming a Royal Navy dockyard until 1814. After the dockyard's transfer to Pembroke, Milford Haven developed into a commercial dock, and by the 1960s, following the construction of an Esso oil refinery, it transitioned to logistics for fuel oil and liquid gas. By 2010, the port had become the fourth largest in the United Kingdom in terms of tonnage, continuing its crucial role in the country's energy sector with several oil refineries and one of the biggest Liquid Natural Gas terminals globally.

Thursday was dedicated entirely to a visit to Pembroke and its magnificent castle at the mouth of the River Cleddau. A walking tour of the town, led by our guide Griff Harries, whetted the group's appetite for lunch at the delightful river-



In the Wogan cave beneath Pembroke castle

side inn, The Waterman's Arms. The afternoon featured a guided tour of Pembroke Castle, founded by Norman baron Roger de Montgomery in 1093 after he defeated and killed the Welsh king Rhys ap Tewdwr. The castle, standing on a rocky limestone headland surrounded by water, served as the seat of the powerful Earls of Pembroke and was the birthplace of King Henry VII of England. As a good defensive position, it may have been the site of an Iron Age fort, and the cliff below is pierced by a deep cavern known as the Wogan. Artefacts indicate that this cavern was occupied

around 12,000 years ago during the Palaeolithic period, continuing intermittently for many millennia thereafter, including in the early post-Roman period.

The original castle had earthwork ramparts and timber walls, taken over by Henry I in 1102 after crushing a revolt by the Montgomery family. Henry also founded the town of Pembroke, encouraging colonists from Somerset, Devon, and what is now Belgium to settle. In 1189, the renowned soldier William Marshal took control of the castle and initiated a reconstruction in stone, beginning with the cylindrical tower or keep, regarded as the largest and finest example of its type in Britain. The outer ward received stone defences in the mid-1200s, and the town walls were built in the early 1300s, with many original medieval burgage plots surviving today.

Friday's itinerary included a visit to Picton Castle, which originated as a medieval castle almost 700 years ago before being transformed into a sumptuous home in the mid-18th century. The exterior still resembles a formidable fortress with impressive towers and arrow slits, while the interior boasts a comfortable stately home filled with works of art and antiques collected over centuries. Built in 1280 at the behest of Sir John de Wogan, the castle and its estates passed to the Dwnn family in the 15th century. In 1491, Joan Dwnn married Sir Thomas Phillips of Cilsant in Carmarthenshire, and the castle remained in the Phillips family until 1987, when the family ceased living there and created the Picton Castle Trust, gifting the property and its gardens to the people of Wales. Lunch was enjoyed at the castle's café, which provided truly high-quality fare.



Approaching St David's Cathedral.

In the afternoon, the group travelled to St David's, enjoying impressive coastal scenery along the way. Saint David, or Dewi Sant, was born in the year 500 to St Non and a prince of Ceredigion. Legend states that Non gave birth to him on a cliff during a violent storm. The present cathedral stands on the site of the monastery he founded in the inhospitable area known as 'Glyn Rhosyn.' David and his followers lived a simple life, refraining from eating meat or drinking beer. His symbol, now a national emblem of Wales, is the leek. David became a bishop and made several pilgrimages, including one to Jerusalem, during which he supposedly brought back a stone now housed in an altar in the cathedral's south transept. He

died in 589, and the monastery is said to have been 'filled with angels as Christ received his soul.' His final words were: 'Be Joyful. Keep the Faith. Do the little things that you have heard and seen me do.'



Bishop Wyn Evans addressing the group.

In the 12th century, Pope Calixtus II declared St David's Cathedral a place of pilgrimage, establishing a medieval shrine situated close to the High Altar. He proclaimed that two pilgrimages to St David's were equivalent to one to Rome, and three to one to Jerusalem. Though the shrine's destruction during the Reformation caused a decline in pilgrimage, visitors continued to arrive through periods of religious and political turmoil. The restored Shrine of St David was unveiled and rededicated by The Right Reverend Wyn Evans, Bishop of St David's, during a Choral Eucharist on St David's Day in 2012. The group was pleasantly surprised to discover that our guided tour of the cathedral would be led by Bishop Wyn Evans himself, who decided to give the tour due to his connections with the North East and archaeology, having started his career as an archaeologist, excavating alongside notable individuals like Brian Dobson and Mike Bishop.

The cathedral, as it stands today, began construction under Norman Bishop Peter de Leia in 1181. The central tower collapsed twice over the next century. In the 14th century, Welsh Bishop Henry Gower oversaw repairs and extensions in his remodelling programme, which included the nave, the choir, and a major stone screen. This ornately carved Gothic screen, located in the nave, houses his tomb effigy. Several bishops' croziers from this period and earlier remain displayed in the Cathedral Treasury.

On Sunday morning, the group arrived at the Stackpole Estate, situated between Stackpole and Bosherton within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. The estate encompasses 5 square miles (13 km²) of farmland, lakes, woodland, beaches, and cliffs, and is owned and maintained by the National Trust. Stackpole Court mansion was demolished in 1963, leaving behind the estate's outbuildings, parkland, and beaches for public enjoyment. The site is designated Grade I on the Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales. The 100 acres (0.40 km²) of lakes, now known as the Lily Ponds, were created by damming three narrow limestone valleys between 1780 and 1860 by the Cawdor family. Unfortunately, the lakes currently demonstrate the detrimental effects of nitrate run-off from agricultural land, resulting in massive algae growth on the surface, severely restricting the areas where water lilies can flourish.

After lunch at the Stackpole café, we journeyed to Carew Castle. The Carew family has owned the castle for more than

900 years, and it is leased to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park for administration. The present castle, built almost entirely from local Carboniferous limestone, replaces an earlier stone keep. Although originally a Norman stronghold, the castle maintains a mixture of architectural styles due to modifications over the centuries. The castle stands on a limestone bluff overlooking Carew inlet, part of the tidal estuary of Milford Haven Waterway. The site has been recognised as strategically valuable since ancient times, with recent excavations revealing multiple defensive walls of an Iron Age fort.

The Norman castle has its origins in a stone keep built by Gerald de Windsor around the year 1100. In the middle of the 12th century an enclosure with stone walls incorporated the original keep, and a "Great Hall" inside it. The current high-walled structure with a complex of rooms and halls around the circumference was created in about 1270 by Nicholas de Carew (d.1297), concurrent with (and influenced by) the construction of the Edwardian castles in North Wales. At this time, the outer ward was also walled in. The de Carews fell on hard times in the post-Black Death period and mortgaged the castle. It fell into the hands of Rhys ap Thomas, who made his fortune by strategically changing sides and backing Henry VII just before the battle of Bosworth. Rewarded with lands and a knighthood, he extended the castle with luxurious apartments with many Tudor features in the late 15th century. The castle was abandoned in the late 17th century and allowed to decay. Much of the structure was looted for building stone and for lime burning. Since 1984 Cadw has funded a substantial amount of restoration.

An added attraction at Carew is the Tidal Mill, the only restored example in Wales. Though its origins are undocumented, evidence suggests a mill existed on the site by 1542. Often called the "French Mill" due to its use of French burrstone millstones, its causeway walls and floodgates were restored by Sir John Carew around 1615. One of the mill wheels dates to 1801. The mill ceased operation in 1937, after which the building fell into dereliction.



Entrance to Roman amphitheatre at Carmarthen.

On Monday, the final full day of exploration, we travelled to Carmarthen, where Robert Lea provided a guided tour of the town, including the remains of its Roman amphitheatre. Carmarthen (Welsh: Caerfyrddin, meaning "Merlin's fort" or "Sea-town fort") serves as the county town of Carmarthenshire. It stands on the banks of the River Towy, 8 miles (13 km) north of its estuary in Carmarthen Bay. During the 16th to 18th centuries, it was the most populous borough in Wales, described by William Camden as the "chief citie of the country".

The town's history began with the establishment of a Roman fort around AD 75. Subsequently, likely during the reign of Hadrian, Carmarthen became the administrative centre or civitas capital of the Demetae tribe, known as Moridunum Dematarum. It may be the oldest town in Wales, recorded by Ptolemy and mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary. In the medieval period, the settlement was known as Llanteulyddog. The strategic importance of Carmarthen led the Norman William fitz Baldwin to build a castle here, probably around 1094. The current castle site has been occupied since 1105. The castle itself was destroyed by Llywelyn the Great in 1215 but was rebuilt in 1223 when permission was granted for a town wall and crenellations, making it one of the first medieval walled towns in Wales.

Following a delightful lunch provided by The Plough Inn at Rhosmaen, the group travelled a short distance to Dinefwr Park and Newton House. Dinefwr has a history of occupation spanning at least two millennia. The Romans built a pair of successive forts here, with one partly overlapping the other. Traces of Roman roads and tracks exist, some of which may have been part of the Carmarthen–Llandovery Roman road. Dinefwr Castle, a ruined castle overlooking the River Towy, was once the chief seat of the Dinefwr dynasty of the Kingdom of Deheubarth, whose most famous member was Hywel Dda, its first ruler and later king of most of Wales. The castle passed into English hands around 1300 and underwent extensive rebuilding towards the end of the 15th century. In 1660, Newton House was built nearby, and the castle keep was modified as a summer house.

Newton House, a country house partially owned and maintained by the National Trust, lies within Dinefwr Park and the grounds of Dinefwr Castle. The park and gardens are listed on the Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales. The current house was built on the site of a medieval predecessor by Edward Rice in the Jacobean style in 1660, though extensive changes were made in the 1850s in the Venetian Gothic style. It was sold in 1974 and later fell into disrepair; squatters and thieves removed beams and furniture.

The house and Dinefwr Castle have been restored by the National Trust and Cadw, respectively. This three-storey, castellated grey stone structure has four tall corner towers and sloping slate roofs, with a grand central porch at the front. Two rooms, including a tearoom and an exhibition on the basement and ground floor, are open to the public, featuring displays on the estate's history and its occupants. The surrounding deer park was landscaped by Capability Brown in 1775, with woodland of mainly oak and wych elm. Newton House, said to be one of Wales's most haunted, is especially noted for the ghost of Walter the Butler, a former employee whose tobacco smoke purportedly wafts through the air.

Tuesday began with an early start for the return journey. Our principal stop was at Hanbury Hall, built by the wealthy chancery lawyer Thomas Vernon in the early 18th century and now run by the National Trust. Hanbury Hall is thought to stand on the site of the previous mansion, Spennall Hall, with Thomas Vernon first describing himself as 'of Hanbury Hall' in

1706. When the heiress Emma Vernon (1754–1818) married Henry Cecil, 1st Marquess of Exeter, in 1776, he remodelled the interior (other than the great hall), creating larger rooms and enlarging the north-east pavilion. On the south façade, having removed a doorway, he repositioned all the windows to lie under their first-floor equivalents, improving the symmetry. The house was added to the National Trust's property portfolio in the 1960s.

We achieved our target arrival time of 7:00 pm back in Durham within a minute or two, an accomplishment due to our young yet highly competent coach driver, Oliver. Images © author.

David Mason

Journal Editor and past President | AASDN



Excursion: LV50 Lightship at Blyth

On 6th August, a small, select group of Arch & Arch members enjoyed a fascinating tour of this historic lightship in Blyth's South Harbour. I must confess that I knew very little about these floating lighthouses before our visit.

The history of lighthouses is fascinating. Although there is insufficient room to explore the subject fully here, I will outline a few key dates, primarily relating to North-East lighthouses. Themistocles reportedly established a stone column with a fire beacon at the harbour of Piraeus, near Athens, in the 5th century BC. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, Egypt's Pharos of Alexandria, was constructed around 280 BC. The Romans built several lighthouses, with surviving examples including the Farum Brigantium (now the Torre de Hércules) in A Coruña, Spain, and the one at Dover Castle in Kent. One of the oldest still-operating medieval examples is Hook Lighthouse in Ireland, which dates back to the 12th century.

In 1566, Elizabeth I granted Trinity House permission to build lighthouses, with Lowestoft being established in 1609. In 1669, Charles II authorised Edward Andrew to construct a pier and lighthouses at Sunderland; and in 1673, he permitted the establishment of a lighthouse on Inner Farne Island, which featured a beacon fire atop Prior Castell's tower.

The first lighthouses on the River Tyne were built in 1540, but the existing Old High and Low Lights at North Shields date to 1727. Arch & Arch visited the Old Low Light a few years ago. A lighthouse existed at Bamburgh Castle from 1757. Remains of a cottage lighthouse built circa 1776 survive on Staple or Pinnacle Island, and another from circa 1791 stands on Brownsman Island, Northumberland. The earliest lighthouse in Blyth was constructed in 1729, with the High Light being initiated in 1788.



The first lightship, The Nore, was built in 1732, designed by Robert Hamblin, and moored on a sandbank in the Thames estuary. By 1819, nine lightships lined the English coast. Without engines, these vessels were towed out to sea and moored in perilous waters where traditional lighthouses could not be built.

Constructed in 1879 by Fletcher, Son and Fearnall of Union Dock, London, at a cost of £5,650, LV50 was designed by Bernard Waymouth. It is one of the oldest surviving floating timber lightships in the UK and is included in the National Historic Fleet. Measuring 100 feet long, 21 feet wide, and weighing just over 205 tons, its wooden hull features wrought iron bracing for reinforcement. LV50 also showcased a state-of-the-art revolving oil lantern and a windlass powered by compressed air to lift the anchor.

Manned by seven crew members around the clock, LV50 needed large tanks for fresh drinking water, refilled monthly, as crew members stayed on board for one to two months.

Conditions were cramped and work perilous, with crew members sleeping in hammocks and cooking on a small stove. Weekly provisions included 8½ lb of meat, 7 lb of bread, 2 lb of flour, 7 lb of potatoes, 1 lb of suet, 2 oz of tea, ¾ lb of sugar, and ¾ lb of butter. In 1880, Able Seamen earned 55 shillings per month, while Fog Horn Drivers and Lamplighters received higher pay. The Master earned £80 per year.

LV50 was first moored in 1879 at Seven Stones, a cluster of rocks between the Isles of Scilly and Land's End. In 1891, it moved to Shambles, a sandbank south-east of Portland Bill in Dorset. It then relocated to Outer Gabbard, off East Anglia, in 1909, and later to Nore sandbank at the mouth of the Thames, where it sustained damage from a torpedo boat during World War One. LV50 ultimately ended up at Galloper sandbank off Felixstowe, and in 1935, it was stationed at Warner sandbank off the Isle of Wight. Its final assignment was at Calshot Spit off Southampton from 1944 until decommissioning in 1952, during which it guided part of the D-Day invasion fleet out of the Solent.

After over 70 years of service, LV50 was acquired from a breakers' yard by the Royal Northumberland Yacht Club, restored, and transformed into their clubhouse at Blyth. The Friends of LV50 formed in 2014 to research, promote, and preserve the ship. AASDN is very grateful to the Friends of LV50 for our wonderful day out.

The information for this article is largely taken from "A History of LV50, The Blyth Lightship," a booklet produced by The Friends of LV50 in 2022. For more information, please visit their website at www.friendsoflv50.org.uk.

Link House, Blyth

After our visit to the LV50 lightship, we reconvened at Blyth Links. Our President, Richard Annis, showed us a listed Grade II late 17th or early 18th-century sandstone gate pier, which formerly stood at the entrance to Linkhouse Farm on Links Road. The other gate pier was apparently relocated to Wallington Hall.

Link House is first mentioned in 1683 as being occupied by Thomas Lewin. It later belonged to Matthew Robinson, who left his estate to Richard Ridley in 1748, and by 1785 it was in the hands of Nicholas Ridley. Richard and Nicholas Ridley profited from coal while also establishing



fourteen salt pans, a brick and tile works, quarries, and a brewery in Blyth. A new malting building was advertised at Link House Brewery in 1744. By 1745, Link House was occupied by a tenant, Robert Jobson.

In 1751, Nicholas Ridley constructed a new Link House, with formal gardens laid out by 1796. However, by 1827, an academy (school) operated from the house. The Ordnance Survey map of 1865 depicts Link House and its formal garden, alongside the Half Moon Inn to the rear and a home farm (labelled Linkhouse Farm by 1896) to the south. A WWI military camp, Linkhouse Camp, appears on the 1920 map, south of the farm. The house was demolished in the 1960s, but the farm remained until recently.

This information is sourced from two archaeological reports produced prior to the farm site development. Graeme Young and Gerry Twomey from the Bamburgh Research Project assessed the site and farm buildings in 2009. In 2022, Richard Annis of Archaeological Services Durham University conducted detailed building recording of Linkhouse Farm, see reports online: [A](#), [B](#), [C](#), & [D](#).



Blyth Battery

Next, we explored the exterior of Blyth Battery, a coastal artillery battery protected as a Scheduled Monument and also Listed Grade II. Construction of the battery commenced in August 1916 and was completed in February 1918. Its purpose was to prevent enemy landings, engage enemy torpedo boats, and protect the submarine depot ship *Titania* in Blyth.

During the First World War, the battery was armed with two six-inch Quick Firing guns and two searchlights manned by the Tynemouth Royal Garrison Artillery. Officially known as Blyth Battery, it was also referred to as Coulson Battery (after the Royal Engineer Captain responsible for its con-



struction) and Link House Battery. After the War, the battery was decommissioned and handed over to Blyth Corporation.

The battery was re-commissioned during the Second World War. In February 1940, the emplacements were re-excavated from the sand dunes, and two six-inch B.L. Mk. 7 guns were installed. Initially called Seaton Battery, it was renamed Blyth Battery in June 1940. The site was initially manned by A Battery, 510 Coast Regiment R.A. (TA), and later by the Home Guard by April 1944.

Key structures include:

- ◆ A pair of gun emplacements facing the sea (replica gun).
- ◆ A magazine and shell store.
- ◆ An officers' and men's shelter block.
- ◆ **A Defence Electric Light director station**—a two-storey, six-sided tower with a metal-sheeted rangefinder housing on the flat roof and a rotating turret roof.
- ◆ **An engine house**—single-storey, brick with a concrete roof, housing two dynamos powered by Crossley engines to energise the Defence Electric Light emplacements (now public toilets and separately Listed Grade II).
- ◆ **A blockhouse**—five-sided with nine loopholes for riflemen and machine guns.
- ◆ **A WW2 Observation Tower**—a two-storey flat-roofed building with a Regimental Plotting Room and signallers' post on the ground floor and a Depression Range Finder on the upper floor, featuring an external staircase.
- ◆ **Twin searchlight buildings**—one equipped with a replica searchlight.

Images by author. Read more at [Blyth Battery](#), [Coastal Artillery Battery on Blyth Links](#), and [Fort on Blyth Links](#).

Jenny Morrison
Honorary Secretary | AASDN

The Journey of Cuthbert 995 AD—The Legend of the Dun Cow

Most Durham folk know the legend of the Dun Cow: how, in 995, monks led by Bishop Alduin were wheeling the cart bearing the coffin of St Cuthbert back to the then Cathedral in Chester-le-Street after a few months' sojourn in Ripon to avoid a Viking attack. Near what is now the City of Durham, the cart suddenly refused to budge, and



only Divine intervention enabled it to move—not to Chester-le-Street but to ‘Dunholm,’ a location unknown to the monks. The place became known after a local milkmaid mentioned seeing another’s lost cow wandering towards Dunholm. Lo and behold! The coffin-cart could now move and was indeed taken by the monks to what would become its permanent home on the Durham peninsula, where the first Durham Cathedral was built and later rebuilt.

Speculation has lingered as to where the Dun Cow incident actually occurred. Tradition places it at Mountjoy, yet for several reasons, I find this unlikely. A cow would hardly stray to the peninsula by descending a steep bank, crossing the river, and climbing up the other side. I believe the Dun Cow incident occurred in Gilesgate. Here are my reasons:

The historian Symeon of Durham, writing in the early 12th century in *Libellus de Exordio atque Procurso istius hoc est Dunhelmensis Ecclesie*, recounted the journey from Ripon towards Chester-le-Street. He mentioned a place called ‘Wrdelau,’ where the coffin on its cart refused to move. This place, he noted, lay to the east of Durham and was described as being in the middle of a plain—fitting Gilesgate, but not Mountjoy. While the exact location of ‘Wrdelau’ remains debated, ‘Wrd’ in Anglo-Saxon refers to a lookout point.

Interestingly, many years ago, there was a stone structure in Gilesgate at the ‘V’ formed by the junction of Sunderland Road and Sherburn Road, known as “Maiden’s Bower,” which appears on 19th-century O.S. maps. (A Sainsbury’s mini-market currently occupies this site.) In 1782, the antiquarian John Cade described this stone structure as follows:

“The ground-plot and ramparts of the watch-tower which served for signals to this station are visible and almost entire at the entrance to Gilesgate Moor, and exactly correspond in form with those on the Roman wall in Northumberland.”

The structure later served as a milking parlour for local milkmaids, causing some annoyance to the Parish of St Giles, which was responsible for its upkeep. Parish records mention frequent repairs due to damage from cows. Gilesgate Moor was evidently excellent pasture-land and may well have been so in the 10th century, making it a plausible site for an encounter with a Dun Cow.

A Roman watch-tower here would have been strategically located, as the Roman road from Brough-upon-Humber to the Chester-le-Street fort likely passed nearby. This road may have provided the best conditions for Bishop Alduin and the monks bearing St Cuthbert’s coffin; Roman roads were still optimal for travel in Anglo-Saxon times. This particular road, ‘Cade’s Road,’ was named after John Cade, who first described it in the 18th century. After much exploration with Robin Walton, I believe its route descended from High Shincliffe, avoided the river, then ascended high ground beyond Old Durham’s Roman Villa, crossed Pelaw Beck at a shallow bank, and passed near ‘Maiden’s Bower’ before being ‘fossilised’ in Green Lane, possibly leading to a river crossing at Kepier or near Frankland Farm.

Earlier generations may have identified this as the place where St Cuthbert’s coffin turned towards Durham. H.E. Graddon’s *The Ancient City of Durham* (1883) mentions:

“a beautiful marble cross with sculptured figures of the twelve apostles which once stood in the Maiden’s Arbour at the head of Gillygate, where the two roads to Sherburn and Sunderland diverge.”

Another angle to this story is that, in 995, Bishop Alduin—recently married with a family, rather than a monk—had acquired the Dunholm peninsula as part of his daughter’s dowry. Perhaps he knew its location, yet a heavenly vision would have helped persuade the monks to accept this site for their new Cathedral. Dunholm offered a significantly safer stronghold than Chester-le-Street.

The image is from [Durham Cathedral Facebook Page](#).

Jean Woodward
Member | AASDN



Culross, Fife: A Scottish Gem

Culross is a small town nine miles west of the Queensferry Crossing, the newest of the three great bridges across the Firth of Forth. Located near the vast Grangemouth petrochemical plant, the Rosyth naval base, and the remains of Scotland’s last coal-fired power station at Longannet, it may seem an unlikely spot for an ancient site. However, Culross is an unusual and beautiful place, representing the most complete example of a 17th- and 18th-century burgh surviving in Scotland.

An old story links a monastery founded by St Serf at Culross in the 6th century with the city of Glasgow. According to the tale, a princess named Theneva displeased her father, the king of Lothian, when she became pregnant by her cousin Owain, king of North Rheged. Enraged, Theneva’s father had her thrown from the top of Traprain Law, yet she miraculously survived. Set adrift on the Forth in a coracle, she was carried to the northern shore, where the monks of Culross took her in. Her son, Mungo, was born and raised there before journeying west as a missionary and establishing a monastery at a site that would later become Glasgow. Mungo is buried in the cathedral and is revered as the city’s patron saint.

Culross owed its early prosperity to coal, salt, and iron. The most significant figure in the coal trade was Sir George Bruce, who took over a mine in the area during the 1570s. In 1590,



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he began the Moat Pit, the world's first coal mine to extend under the sea. In a daring feat of engineering, miners constructed a shaft below the high-tide line. Although a storm destroyed the pit in 1625, remains of the shaft's stone wall can still be seen on the foreshore. Sir George also built a grand residence, now known as the Palace, with its oldest part dating back to 1597.

As in other places along the Forth (and the Tyne), salt was produced using coal to boil seawater. Ships carrying coal and

salt to markets in Europe returned with ballast of Dutch pan-tiles, which have become part of the town's architectural character. Culross was well-known for its iron-work and held a monopoly on manufacturing iron girdles for baking. These trades declined in the 18th century, leading to an ebbing of Culross's prosperity. While this decline negatively impacted the town's inhabitants, it proved fortunate for us, as many early buildings were left largely unaltered. The newly founded National Trust for Scotland purchased Bruce's Palace in 1932 for £700 and has cared for it ever since.



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In a town filled with attractive buildings, the Palace, with its beautiful yellow ochre walls, stands out as the finest. Inside, timber ceilings are adorned with paintings and geometric patterns. Nearby, the Town House, built for the town council in the 1620s, contains a former lock-up for debtors and an attic room used to imprison women accused of witchcraft. The combination of stunning buildings, exquisite gardens, wide views, and a fascinating churchyard makes Culross an ideal place to spend a weekend.

Images by author. Captions 1) The Palace at Culross, 2) Gardens and Sir George Bruce's Palace, 3) Gardens behind Sir George's Palace, 4) A pink-washed house in Tanhouse Brae has a Greek inscription above a former door, 5) The Palace, with the tower of the Town House, the old harbour and the Firth of Forth beyond, & 6) The Study, c. 1610.

Richard Annis
President | AASDN

Ballast Hills Burial Ground Project Update

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all members who completed the *Burial Space Survey* last month. Your contributions enabled us to gather 301 responses, providing valuable insights into community perspectives.

In case you missed our previous article, here's a brief overview: The Ballast Hills Burial Ground (BHBG) project, led by Newcastle University (NU) and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Curiosity Award, serves as a unique case study in community engagement, heritage preservation, and innovative research methods. BHBG is one of Newcastle's oldest nonconformist burial grounds, and our aim is to uncover and document its historical and cultural significance, which has been largely overlooked in recent years. By bringing together expertise from archaeology, history, heritage studies, and education, the BHBG project creates rich learning opportunities for everyone, demonstrating the power of interdisciplinary collaboration.

Looking ahead, the BHBG project will continue to evolve as a transdisciplinary case study, making a lasting impact both within the academic community and by enhancing public access to heritage through future events, publications, and digital platforms.

This autumn, we will conduct site mapping to better understand the burial ground and define its boundaries. We will employ various techniques, including ground penetrating radar, gradiometer surveys, GPS, electrical resistance measurements, terrestrial laser scanning, and geographic information systems.

In March or April, we plan to record over 600 headstones, including 3D scanning and condition assessments, with the help of volunteers. If you are interested in contributing to this effort or exploring other volunteer opportunities within the project, please get in touch with me.



Additionally, we are currently mapping our stakeholders and would appreciate input from individuals interested in shaping the project's direction. If you would like to contribute, please fill out this brief two-question [survey](#) and include your contact details.

For more information about the project, please visit our [web-site](#) or follow up on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#). Email us at bal-last.hills@newcastle.ac.uk if you wish to discuss how this project might align with your own research or engagement activities.

Myra Giesen

Project Lead | Newcastle University

North East Publications of Interest

Journal Articles

Halldórsdóttir HH, Williams R, Greene EM, Taylor G (2024) Rapid deterioration in buried leather: archaeological implications. *RSC Advances*. 14(6):3762-70. <https://doi.org/10.1039/D3RA07020D>.

Harvey CA. (2024) A Ceramic Mould from Vindolanda: Craft and Industry along the Roman Frontier. *Britannia*. 2024:1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X24000308>.

Holliday D, Tymon A, Tymon B (2024) George Tate (1805–71) of Alnwick, an amateur Victorian polymath, and his contribution to geology in Northumberland and SE Scotland. *Proceedings of the Yorkshire Geological Society*, 65(1-2):pygs2023-010. <https://doi.org/10.1144/pygs2023-010>.

Holt Y (2024) Helen Sutherland in Interwar Northumberland: Patronage and Place. *Modernist Cultures*, 19(1), 33-57, 10.3366/mod.2024.0417.

Jones L, Jenkins J, Foltier L, Nielsen S (2024) [Electrical resistivity tomography of a masonry bridge: assessing water infiltration on Prebends Bridge, Durham, UK](#). *Journal of Architectural Conservation*, 6:1-20.

Morelli L, Mazzacca G, Trybała P, Gaspari F, Ioli F, Ma Z, Remondino F, Challis K, Poad A, Turner A, Mills JP (2024) The Legacy of Sycamore Gap: The Potential of Photogrammetric AI for Reverse Engineering Lost Heritage with Crowdsourced Data. *The International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences*, XLVIII-2-2024: 281-288. <https://doi.org/10.5194/isprs-archives-XLVIII-2-2024-281-2024>.

Parkin A (2024) Roman Britain in Colour—Roman Altars from Hadrian's Wall Reimagined. *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal*, 6(1):1-19. <https://doi.org/10.16995/traj.10192>.

Roberts AJ, Petrelli D (2024) Experiencing Roman religion on Hadrian's Wall: embodied interaction in an antiquarian Museum. *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal*, 6(1):1-21. <https://doi.org/10.16995/traj.10600>.

Salama AM, Patil MP (2024) A mobile application tool for co-assessing urban open spaces – a test case of the Grey's Monument, Newcastle, UK. *Journal of Urban Design*, 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2024.2363818>.

Santos M, Wainwright J (2024) [River\(s\) Wear: Water in the Expanded Field](#). *cultural geographies*, 3(4): 447-471 (4744740241233699).

Sharrocks PD, Hill J. Evaluating the impact of the Storegga tsunami on Mesolithic communities in Northumberland. *Journal of Quaternary Science*, 39(3):473-87. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jqs.3586>.

van Asperen EN, Kirby JR, Shaw HE (2024) Multi-proxy evidence for woodland clearance in northeast Northumberland (England) during the Iron Age. *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany*, 33(4):559-75. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00334-023-00979-1>.

White SD, Newman SL, Primeau C, Mahoney P, Deter CA (2024) The impact of urbanization on growth patterns of non-adults in medieval England. *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 7:e3347. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oa.3347>.

Books/Book Chapters

Arnold D (Ed.) (2024) *Women and Architectural History: The Monstrous Regiment Then and Now* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003224662>.

Ashbee J (2024) *Newcastle and Northumberland: roman and medieval architecture and art*. Taylor & Francis.

Collins R, Harrison J (2024) *Excavations Along Hadrian's Wall 2019–2021: Structures, Their Uses, and Afterlives*. Oxbow Books.

Collins R, O'Donnell K, Kille I (2024) *Fabric of the Frontier: Prospection, Use, and Re-Use of Stone from Hadrian's Wall*. Oxbow Books.

Fairclough G (2025) *A Medieval Life: William de Felton and Edlingham Castle, 1260–1327*. Windgather Press. <https://www.oxbowbooks.com/9781914427435/a-medieval-life/>

Greaves I (2024) *Lost Country Houses of the North East*. Amberley Publishing Limited.

Hislop M (2024) *A Guide to the Medieval Castles of England*. Pen and Sword History.

Johnson M (2024) *Great Public Buildings of the North East*. Amberley Publishing Limited.

Offler HS, Doyle AI (2024) *North of the Tees: studies in medieval British history*. Taylor & Francis.

Pace A (2024) Game as cultural bridging: The case of the Batavians of Vindolanda. *LIMES*, 3:249-255, https://air.unimi.it/bitstream/2434/1102468/2/29_Pace%202024.pdf.

Rodgers C, Hammersley R, Zambelli A, Cheatle E, Clarke J, Collins S, Dee O, O'Neill S (2024) *English urban commons: the past, present and future of green spaces*. Taylor & Francis.

PhD Thesis/MA Dissertation

Bell Holmström I (2023) *Disparity of resident ontological security and sense of place between two neighbourhoods in Newcastle upon Tyne*. Thesis, University of Padua.

De Cloedt L (2024) *The Disassembly of Architecture as a Patriarchal Tool: An exploration of how sacred architecture exemplifies the built environment created by men, challenged by women*. BA dissertation, London Metropolitan University.

Kitching P (2024) *Raising Terror? A Systematic Analysis of Archaeological Evidence and Interpretation into the Purpose of Hadrian's Wall*. Doctoral thesis, Durham University. Author-imposed embargo until 16 April 2027.

Lindsay HF (2024) *Vikings in North East England: A Re-Assessment of the Place-Name Evidence*. Doctoral dissertation, Newcastle University.

In the News (descending by date)

Cultured. North East (2024-10-22) [Excavating history on Hadrian's Wall](#).

Coulson A (2024-10-17) [Northumberland Estates unveils new plans for Duke's School site](#). *Northumberland Gazette*.

Hall D (2024-10-11) [Way marker for Camino de Santiago unveiled at historic Durham landmark](#). *Chronicle Live*.

Coulson A (2024-10-11) [Destination Tweed launches £360,000 community archaeology project to uncover area's hidden history](#). *Northumberland Gazette*.

Holland D (2024-10-11) [Funding boost for Newcastle's Keelman's Hospital](#). *Rayo*.

Hall D (2024-10-10) [7,000 glass shards uncovered in Northumberland could hold key to building Roman Empire map](#). *Chronicle Live*.

Newcastle University (2024-10-04) [Funding Boost for Heritage Science Expertise](#).

Current Archaeology (2024-09-28) ['Lost' Parliamentary house uncovered at Auckland Castle](#). *The Past*.

Hall D (2024-09-23) [Rare early grave markers discovered in Holy Island archaeological dig](#). *Chronicle Live*.

Hall D (2024-09-20) [Holy Island 'bucket list' archaeological dig location as 'charnel pit' uncovered at new site](#). *Chronicle Live*.

BBC (2024-09-20) [Remains at 'lost cemetery' removed for tests](#). *BBC, Tyne*.

Northumberland City Council (2024-09-18) [Holy Island dig casts light on 'lost' medieval cemetery](#).

Anderson G (2024-09-11) [Arbeia South Shields Roman Fort goes back in thyme!](#). *The Shields Gazette*.

Northumberland County Council (2024-09-11) [Hexham's historic heart restored](#).

Jepson K (2024-09-06) ['It's like being in Tutankhamun's tomb' - Teesdale dig uncovers trading links with Romans](#). *ITV News*.

Durham University (2024-09-05) [Durham archaeologist wins prestigious British Academy medal](#).

Henderson T (2024-08-30) [Hadrian's Wall chosen for study of impact of climate change on historic sites](#). *Chronicle Live*.

Hall D (2024-08-16) [Five Roman coins found in Northumberland field declared treasure](#). *Chronicle Live*.

Hall D (2024-08-15) [Gateshead detectorist's joy as Bronze Age Northumberland find declared treasure](#). *Chronicle Live*.

Durham University (2024-08-06) [Northumbria Region U3A visit the Department of Archaeology](#).

Durham University (2024-07-29) [Digging at Auckland Castle: Archaeology students meet Durham University Vice Chancellor and Warden and Pro-Vice Chancellor \(Global\)](#).

Raine M (2024-07-26) [Archaeologists make 'phenomenal' discovery after community dig on Hartlepool's Headland](#). *Hartlepool Mail*.

Durham University (2024-07-22) [Archaeology and Community: Archaeological Investigations of Flass Well](#).

Janiszewska S (2024-07-20) [Beamish Museum Named North East's Top Attraction in VisitEngland Report](#). *Newcastle Magazine*.

Henderson T (2024-07-19) [Major Roman artefacts found in Northumberland still a puzzle after 60 years](#). *Chronicle Live*.

Hall D (2024-07-17) [Archaeological dig to kick off project to uncover history of coastal Northumberland village](#). *Chronicle Live*.

Northumbria University (2024-07-16) [Northumbria creators collaborate with English Heritage for exhibition](#).

Buchan G (2024-07-16) [Archaeology project makes discoveries about history of Cambois with help from primary school pupils](#). *Northumberland Gazette*.

Morton D (2024-07-15) [The vanished Newcastle building which became one of the most unpopular in the city](#). *Chronicle Live*.

Coulson L (2024-07-11) [Last set of tenter frames in England at Otterburn Mill to be restored thanks to National Lottery funding](#). *Northumberland Gazette*.

Northumbria University (2024-06-27) [New North East cultural partnerships announced](#).

Newcastle University (2024-06-17) [Birdoswald Final Excavations](#).

BBC (2024-06-10) [Structures in cliff are centuries-old 'fishing tanks'](#). *BBC, Tyne*.

Henderson T (2024-05-25) [Huge Newcastle photo archive provides lookback at 150 years of the city](#). *Chronicle Live*.

Durham University (2024-05-24) [Under Durham: The Untold Stories](#).

Newcastle University (2024-04-12) [Funding boost for Great North Museum: Hancock and Hatton Gallery](#).

University of Sunderland (2024-03-27) [Sunderland story to set sail centre stage on BBC Radio 4](#).

Lonsdale J (2024-03-18) [High tides expose stone 'graves' at cliff collapse](#). *BBC News, North-East and Cumbria*.



AASDN Committee Members

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*annually re-elected, [◇]elected

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

Newsletter Contributions

We welcome news articles and items of interest related to archaeology, architecture, and heritage in NE England, including County Durham, Northumberland, and Tyne & Wear. Submissions are open to members and non-members, but please review our [submission guidelines](#) first. We publish biannual, with submission deadlines around: **mid-April** for early May and **mid-October** for early November. Items may be submitted at any time. Find previous newsletters [here](#).

Membership

Complete the [membership application](#) and email it, to our [Membership Secretary](#) to ensure you receive the journal (DAJ).

Subscription Rates (due annually on **January 1st**)

- **UK Membership:** £20, includes a DAJ
- **Joint UK Membership:** £25, includes a DAJ
- **Associate Membership:** £10, senior citizens, students, & the unwaged; does not include a DAJ
- **Institutional Membership:** £25, includes a DAJ
- **Non-UK Membership:** £30, includes a DAJ

Payment Options

1) Standing Order; 2) Cheque; 3) cash; & 4) PayPal [coming soon]

AASDN Upcoming Events

- 9 November** [lecture] **Tim Bailey**, Xsite Architecture and Chair of Northern School of Art, 'Hartlepool Conservation Area'
- 15-18 November** [conference] Nautical Archaeology Society Annual Conference. Discount tickets for AASDN members. See below.
- 14 December 2024** [lecture] **David Mason**, Senior Archaeologist, Durham County Council, 'What the Romans did for Durham and Northumberland.' Taking place in Chemistry Building room CG83.
- 11 January 2025** [lecture] **Dr Rob Young**, consultant (Former English Heritage Inspector), 'Community Archaeology in Teesdale.' Room CG83.
- 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 Burton Lane, Ryhope.' Room CG83.
- 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.' Room ER201.

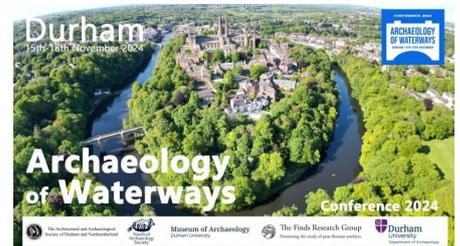
Lectures: in-person at 14:30, [Elvet Riverside](#) room ER140, Durham University (DHI 3JT), unless otherwise noted. Post-lecture socialising at County Hotel. Many of the lecture abstracts are available online [here](#). We still are exploring livestreaming options.

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](#).

Nautical Archaeology Society Annual Conference

This co-sponsored conference at Durham University focuses on *The Archaeology of Waterways*, featuring talks on sites from Turkey to India, Scandinavia, and the River Wear.

Sessions will take place at Durham's Teaching and Learning Centre on South Road, Saturday and Sunday, 16–17 November, with additional activities on Friday and Monday. For details and last-minute booking, click [here](#).



In the News, continued

Newcastle Magazine (2024-03-10) [North East's Past Preserved: The Cullercoats Watch House Restoration Campaign](#).

Durham University (2024-03-07) [Professor Dame Rosemary Cramp to be honoured with a Blue Plaque in South Tyneside](#).

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.

Answer: Duddo Five Stones

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.

Answer: Tynemouth Castle and Priory