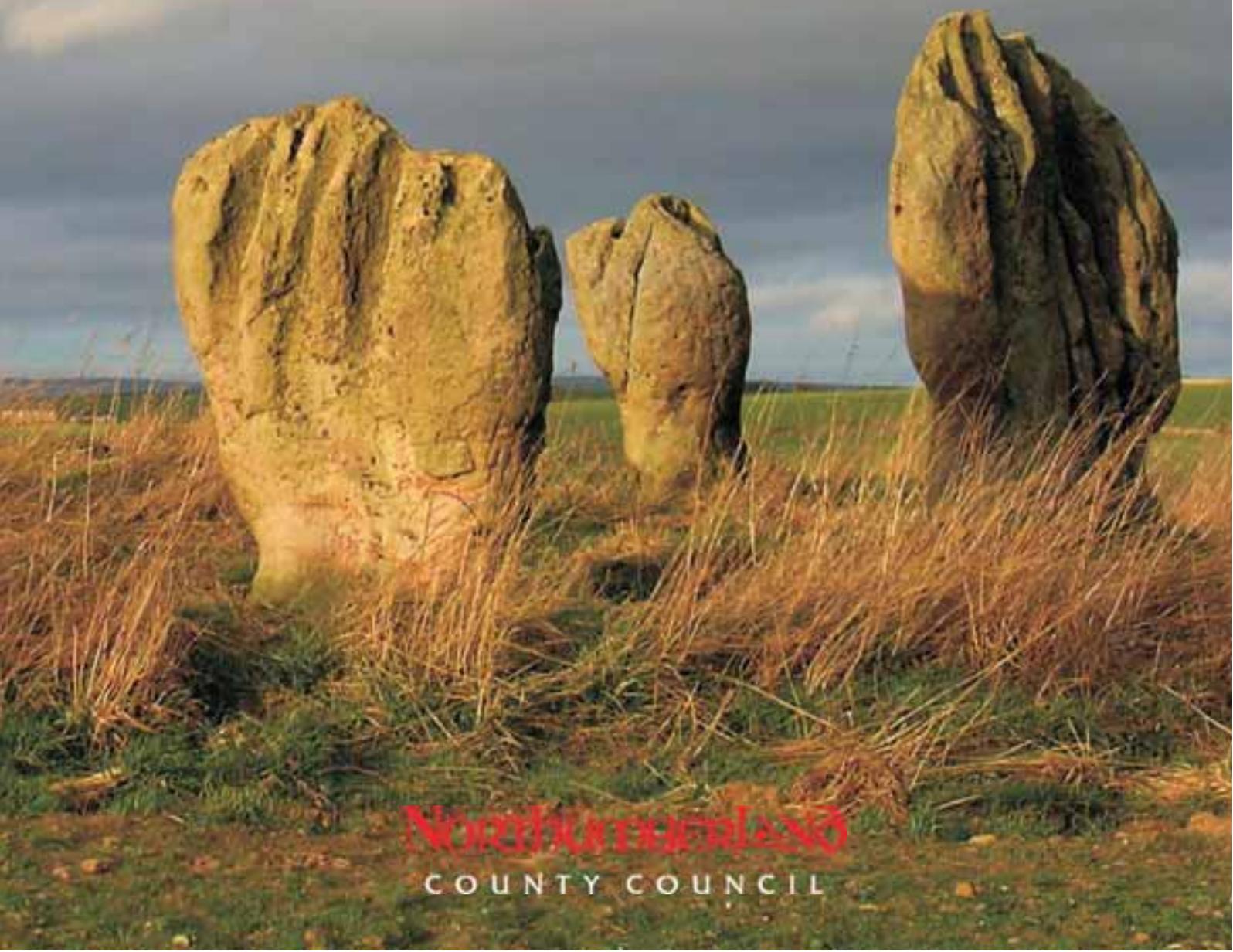


Archaeology
in
NORTHUMBERLAND
VOLUME 15: 2005



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Cover: Duddo Stones. Photo: CB

This Page: Anti-tank blocks, Alnmouth. Photo: CB

Welcome to our fifteenth edition

Welcome to the biggest and, we hope, the best edition of *Archaeology in Northumberland*. To celebrate our 15th edition we have produced a bumper issue which demonstrates the vitality of the historic environment in Northumberland. With articles covering topics from prehistoric stone circles, and the Chillingham Cattle conservation project, to the reminiscences of emigrant leadminers in the 19th century, this edition reflects the diversity and breadth of interest to be found in the history of Northumberland.

Several of the projects reported demonstrate just how relevant the past is to people living in the Northumberland of today. In particular, the extremely successful start of the Northumberland and Durham Rock Art Project (page 8), and the inception of the National Park Upper Coquetdale Community Archaeology Project (page 11), show how strong is the desire of people from all walks of life to engage with and understand the past. We also felt it was timely to mark our

15th anniversary by including, for the first time, an index of the entire series of *Archaeology in Northumberland*. This index has been created for us by Roger Miket of the Maclean Press, who donated their services and took considerable trouble to make it as comprehensive as possible, for which we are extremely grateful.

Archaeology in Northumberland is produced primarily to report on work resulting from the activities of the Conservation Team (see page 3) but it also acts as a show case for the great range and number of individuals and organisations involved in understanding and protecting the historic environment.

We would like to thank all those who have taken the time and trouble to provide articles for us. We hope you enjoy this edition but, as ever, if you have any comments or suggestions please do contact us.

**Sara Rushton & Chris Burgess,
Conservation Team Managers**

FOREWORD



It is a great pleasure to be asked once again to introduce *Archaeology in Northumberland*. This, the 15th edition of the newsletter is the most comprehensive yet published. Within the following 58 pages you will find articles ranging from investigation into Neolithic rock art near Alnwick to the discovery of a Victorian zoo near Berwick. It will

be of great help to those of you, who like me, have enjoyed the magazine since its inception to have an index to all articles published since 1990.

Fifteen years ago the original newsletter was a slim production. The growing interest in archaeology in the County and the expanding range of projects being undertaken has resulted in this substantial 2005 production. Inevitably, costs have also increased and I appreciate the contribution of our partners and advertisers in making publication possible. I would also ask you to read the flyer enclosed about the cost of producing *Archaeology in Northumberland* and consider donating towards next year's production to ensure that these high standards are continued.

**Alan Cutter
Executive Member
For the Environment
Northumberland County Council.**

Stop Press

Historic Landscape Characterisation

The Conservation Team has been successful in securing funding from English Heritage to undertake Historic Landscape Characterisation of the County. The grant of £82,000 will allow us to move beyond our understanding of individual buildings, designed landscapes or archaeological sites and gain a better understanding of the whole historic landscape. Working with our colleagues in the National Park, the Conservation Team will manage a project that will produce interactive GIS-based descriptions of the historic dimension that characterises our rural landscape. The project will not only broaden our understanding of the landscape we live in today but will create a context for our knowledge of the rest of the historic environment. The results will feed into many areas of land planning, from development control to agri-environment schemes. A more detailed description of the scheme and its progress will appear in next year's *Archaeology in Northumberland*.

Awards

Recent repair and improvement work undertaken by the County Council, with funding from the Historic Environment Regeneration Scheme partners, on the Chantry Bridge at Morpeth has been shortlisted for one of the prestigious International Green Apple Awards for the Built Environment. Projects at Morpeth Market Place and Falstone Tea Rooms in the National Park, both of which the Conservation Team have advised on, have also gained Civic Trust Awards.

Coastal Research Project

The Conservation Team in partnership with Archaeological Research Services Ltd, Durham County Council and the five Tyne and Wear Councils are preparing a community based project to address the issues of coastal erosion, and conservation outreach and management. Funding applications will be made to English Heritage and Heritage Lottery Fund in the next year

... Where the buffalo roam. Where the deer and the antelope play...

Few people may know that Northumberland was once home to a zoo, albeit a private one. Haggerston Castle, the ancient home of the Haggerston family, was rebuilt in 1893 by the then owners the Leyland family. However, this seems to have been just the beginning of their plans for the Castle and its grounds. Thomas Leyland is credited with building a chapel, an Italian garden, and a windmill, as well as establishing a private zoo.

Leyland seems to have built a series of enclosures with shelters or animal houses in them. A "Zoological Garden" first appears on the second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1897. Two groups of fenced enclosures are shown along the western edge of the castle grounds, separated by a track or path that runs towards Haggerston Barns. The northern group are relatively small and have small buildings standing in them. The southern group of enclosures are larger and most of the buildings have been built in pairs on each side of a common boundary. Further east is another area of parkland called a "Deer Park", which is divided by a series of boundaries and has two rectangular buildings on the north side.

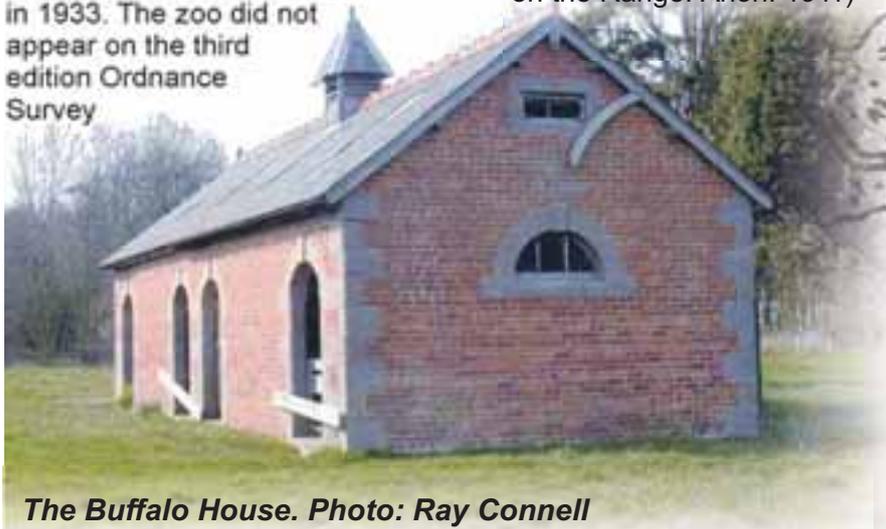
Unfortunately, the zoo was not much of a success. The Leyland family fortunes declined in the early 20th century and the estate was eventually sold off in parcels in 1933. The zoo did not appear on the third edition Ordnance Survey

map of the 1920s, although some of the boundaries remained for a few more decades. Yet, by the 1960s, the boundaries too have been swept away.

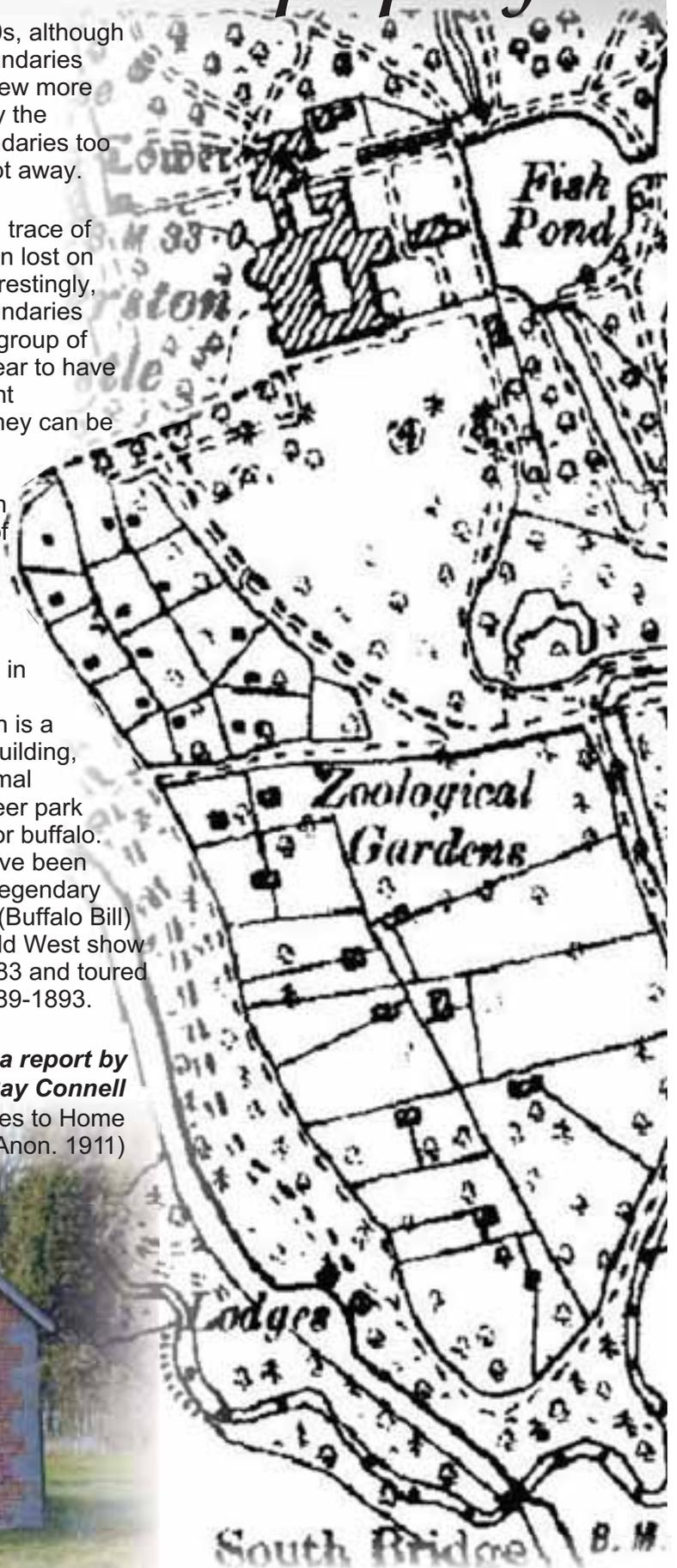
However, not all trace of the zoo has been lost on the ground. Interestingly, some of the boundaries of the southern group of enclosures appear to have survived as slight earthworks as they can be traced on aerial photographs taken in 2000. In addition, three of the zoo buildings are still standing, including an Antelope House in the southern enclosure, which is a Grade II listed building, and the two animal houses in the deer park reputedly built for buffalo. Leyland may have been inspired by the legendary William F Cody (Buffalo Bill) who took his Wild West show to London in 1883 and toured Europe from 1889-1893.

EW, based on a report by Ray Connell

(With apologies to Home on the Range. Anon. 1911)



The Buffalo House. Photo: Ray Connell



1st Ed. OS Map, ca. 1866

The Conservation Team: protecting the County's Heritage

The Conservation Team is a small specialist team based in Countryside Services in the newly formed Environment and Community Services Directorate. The Team is multi-disciplinary; it employs archaeologists, an historic buildings expert and an ecologist and can offer advice and undertake work on almost every aspect of conservation and environmental management. In addition to its core staff, it is highly successful in securing external grant aid for projects which protect and promote the environment. This includes employing a marine biologist to help with the management of the County's internationally important marine environment, a Local Nature Reserves Officer to manage and promote the County's publicly accessible wildlife areas, and project officers for 'one off' high profile projects such as Past Perfect and Keys to the Past.

The work of the Conservation Team forms the basis of much of *Archaeology in Northumberland*. Although the Team carries out a wide range of functions, by far the greatest part of what we do is related to the planning system. We provide planning advice on the probable impact of proposed developments on

archaeological remains and we provide historic building and Conservation Area advice to the National Park and the districts of South East Northumberland.

If a proposed development will damage or destroy an historic site or building we advise on an appropriate response, which can include refusal, full scale excavation of a site, building recording or a watching brief. The Sites and Monuments Record (see page 35) contains a record of archaeological sites and other historic features and is the first port of call when assessing these impacts. This information also underpins the advice we offer to a wide range of other organisations, such as public utilities (eg Northumbrian Water, Transco and Northern Electric) or Forest Enterprise. This ensures that schemes can be planned to cause as little damage as possible. Where damage is unavoidable, we advise on the most appropriate method of recording information that would otherwise be lost. We are also consulted by organisations such as DEFRA, who administer environmental improvement schemes to ensure that the historic environment benefits from the

funding and improved management that they can ensure (see page 19).

The Conservation Team is heavily involved in outreach, educational and research projects. In addition to providing a valuable service to planners and developers, the Sites and Monuments Record is a resource available to members of the public, students and researchers. As part of a commitment to make this information more accessible we secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop the highly successful Keys to the Past website (www.keystothepast.info) which has made all our historic records and other supporting information freely available over the internet. As part of this educational role we also bring out publications (such as *Archaeology in Northumberland* and *Tides of Time*), organise events and fundays and try, wherever possible, to allow public involvement in research projects (see the Northumberland and Durham Rock Art Project on page 8-9). The Conservation Team represents a resource for the whole County, if you have a view on what we do, or what you think we should do, please contact us.

SR

Kielder Viaduct: the new parapet

Kielder Viaduct was designed for the Border Counties Railway in 1862 by a local man, J F Tone. It is a fine long bridge of skew arches with a castellated parapet and Gothic touches in the spandrels.

Located close to Kielder Village it is a notable example of Victorian engineering and a scheduled ancient monument. It is also considered to be the finest example of the skew arch form of construction, which required that each stone in the arches should be individually shaped in accordance with the method evolved by Peter Nicholson of Newcastle upon Tyne, a pioneer geometrician in this field.

When the railway closed in 1965 the viaduct was regarded as a liability rather than an asset. With no local purchaser coming forward, the Northumberland and Newcastle Society acted to secure its preservation, taking over ownership and carrying out essential repairs.

Today the former track bed is a popular footpath well used by walkers and cyclists. However, this presented the Society with a new problem of how to meet current safety standards regarding the height of the parapet. Over most of its length this was carried out in a simple utilitarian industrial fashion with mesh panels and a raised tubular rail. To add a

touch of local distinctiveness it was decided that six of the grilles should be replaced with decorative metal panels designed by local children and based on themes associated with the railway. In April 2004 several artist blacksmiths descended on Kielder with their mobile forges for a popular public event at which they constructed the panels and demonstrated their skills. The project was instigated at the suggestion of the Conservation Team, designed by the Chairman of the Northumberland and Newcastle Society, Robin Dower and coordinated by the Kielder Access Project Officer. It was funded with a grant of £22,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Local Heritage Initiative.

PR

Recent Archaeology in the Otterburn Training Area

Otterburn Training Area (OTA) occupies over 23,000 hectares of moorland and rough hill country within the Northumberland National Park. It is the largest single live firing area in the UK and has been used for military training since 1911. It is also a working estate with 31 tenanted farms practising traditional hill livestock farming.

It has been a busy year on the OTA with longstanding projects drawing to a close, on-going work producing excellent results and new projects being initiated.

AS90 Mitigation works

The AS90 (Self-propelled 155mm Artillery) proposals included

measures. The project included excavations at Bellshiel Roman Camp, Bellshiel Layby, Bellshiel Road (north and south), Potts Durtrees, Todlaw Pike, Dere Street and Outer Golden Pot; topographical surveys at Yatesfield East Settlement, Watty Bell's Cairn and Bellshiel Law Long Cairn and cairnfield; and building recording at Ironhouse bastle, Craig bastle and Raw bastle.

A corn-drying kiln adjacent to the medieval/post-medieval Davyshiel settlement was excavated before tree-planting to screen the new Central Maintenance Facility. The kiln is likely to date to the early post-medieval period.

evidence for a roof structure was found nor were any artefacts. Little environmental information was recovered as it appears that the kiln was thoroughly cleaned out after its last use.

The stonework is to be preserved *in situ*, in an open area within the tree-screen belt. The site will prove an interesting comparison for other excavated corn-dryers, such as Loaning Burn 4km to the east.

The Raw Bastle; murder, hanging and conservation

The Raw Bastle, on the south-east side of OTA, some three miles north of Elsdon, is an excellent example of this most evocative of Border structures - a fortified farm building. Standing two storeys high, the insertion of later doors and an outside staircase reflect its 19th century use as a farm building. Inside, however, the massively thick stone walls, the single original door with twin draw bar holes, and the stone vaulted ground floor roof with its tiny ladder hole stair, all tell a different tale when this was a refuge for cattle and family against border reivers. Unusually for such structures there is a carved feature described as "a woman's head with a sort of halo, and something like a portcullis" on the jamb of the only original window.

The Raw Bastle also has a murderous association. One of its occupants, Mary Crozier, was murdered here in 1792 and a local criminal, William Winter, was hanged for the crime. His remains were hung within sight of the bastle at what became known as Winter's Gibbet, now on National Trust land and a local landmark.

Detailed building recording has been undertaken by ASUD and, as a part of ongoing stewardship, a scheme of consolidation works has been prepared by Defence Estates with assistance from the Northumberland



Corn-drying kiln at Davyshiel. Photo: ASUD

widening approximately 50km of existing roads, laying 10km of new road and creating gun spurs to enable training with the AS90 guns. Archaeological Services, University of Durham (ASUD) were commissioned by Mowlem to undertake watching briefs and excavation as part of the mitigation

The stone-lined bowl of the corn-dryer was built into a natural slope and survived with between four and eight courses of stone; each course was slightly stepped back to form the bowl. Two small stoke-holes or flues were found, one in the north-east wall and one in the south-west wall next to an annexe or fuel store. No

National Park and Northumberland County Council. This will see the building re-pointed, structural cracks and problems repaired and the roof replaced by natural materials. To complement the repairs there will be interpretation, and public access will be encouraged.

Branshaw Bastle and settlement

Branshaw Bastle, together with the wider settlement and related field systems, has recently been surveyed by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA).



Branshaw Bastle from the air.

Photograph: Tim Gates. Copyright Reserved

Branshaw has been farmed for nearly 700 years, from medieval times to its abandonment in the 1940s. Today there are the remains of at least six buildings, ranging from medieval building platforms to 17th and 18th century buildings. The settlement had reached its present form by the mid 19th century and appears to have changed very little until the 1940s, after which the buildings fell rapidly into decline. Surrounding the settlement are extensive areas of ridge and furrow cultivation, together with sod-cast dykes and stock enclosures. The survey has shown how upland agriculture developed over this period from mixed arable and pastoral, with crops on the in-field ridge and furrow and livestock on the open upland beyond, to the rearing of sheep and cattle with the fields subdivided, stock enclosures and temporary structures such as shielings. This shift has been put down to local climate change.

OTA Archaeological and Historic Environment Management Plan

For the past five years a management plan has provided the framework for the conservation and management of the archaeological resource on the OTA and it will continue to be updated and guide future work. In 2005 a condition survey of archaeological monuments will be undertaken and the information fed into a new action plan which will provide a framework for the continued, successful management of the archaeology on the OTA.

Further initiatives arising out of the current plan include: the intention to offer each farm tenancy advice and guidance on the management of archaeological sites on their holdings; a detailed survey of Linbrig Deserted Medieval Village; works to improve drainage of the Silloans Burn to

prevent flood damage to the north-west corner of Silloans Roman Camp; evaluation of the World War I practice trenches at Silloans by a volunteer group called No-Mans Land working with Defence Estates archaeologist Martin Brown.

... look out for next year's *Archaeology in Northumberland* to see the results of all this work.

Acknowledgements

The author is grateful for contributions provided by Duncan Hale (ASUD), Niall Hammond (Defence Estates) and Penny Middleton (NAA). The support and assistance of the staff of Otterburn Training Area, Colonel Rennie, Duncan Glen and Mike Bell and the OTA Archaeology and Historic Environment Management Group is gratefully appreciated.

Phil Abramson
Defence Estates

Discovering our Hillfort Heritage

This major five-year project, largely funded through the generous grants from the HLF and LEADER +, effectively came to a close in December 2004. Under the management of Project Officer, Iain Hedley, the project has undertaken research, conservation and interpretation work relating to the hillforts and associated ancient landscapes of the Northumberland Cheviots. This work has involved partnerships between many different groups, and hundreds of people including professional archaeologists, amateurs and students have taken part.

The project has included:

- Opening up of 16 hillforts to the general public as part of waymarked heritage trails, and the provision of interpretive material (panels, leaflets and booklets) for these sites.
- Completion of management agreements with landowners to ensure the long term conservation of extensive archaeological landscapes, including 13 hillforts.
- In partnership with English Heritage, the detailed survey of 13 hillforts within their landscape settings. This work demonstrates that many hillforts are complex, multiperiod sites.
- Completion of a detailed air photographic archaeological survey of the 4900ha College Valley estate.
- Completion of the Breamish Valley Archaeology Project (see page 20).
- Setting up of the People of the Breamish Valley exhibition at Ingram.

The project has achieved a great deal, but has also laid the foundations for more work in future. The National Park Authority will be pleased to talk with anyone who may have suggestions regarding possible follow-up projects, and will be delighted to forge new partnerships to enable such projects to take place.

Paul Frodsham
Northumberland National Park

Hadrian's Wall Cycleway

Sustainable transport charity Sustrans has been working on establishing its 'Hadrian's Cycleway' route for several years. Part of the successful 10,000-mile National Cycle Network, Hadrian's Cycleway, runs from Ravenglass to Tynemouth, passing many of the most important archaeological and historical sites of the region on the way, and paralleling the Wall itself as far as possible.

Similar to the now well-established 'C2C' route further to the south, it is hoped that Hadrian's Cycleway will bring many of the benefits of that route, to the new alignment. These include significant increases in tourism income, decreases in the tourist vehicular traffic which often clogs rural areas, and of course provision of a safe route for cyclists (and walkers) amongst the local population.

Thanks to the efforts of the local authorities through which the route passes, most of Hadrian's Cycleway is already open and signed. Much of the cycle route uses minor roads and lanes, with traffic-free routes being pursued where appropriate.

In the far west of Northumberland, Sustrans has been negotiating for some time to establish a traffic-free route between Gilsland, Greenhead, and the Wrytree junction of the Military Road, as it is felt that the highway on this sector is not attractive or very safe for many cyclists. This route involves two sections: one following the northern edge of the railway line between Gilsland and Greenhead, and the other a traffic-free path on the north side of the very steep Greenhead

Bank. While clearly benefiting cycle tourists, these links would also be very useful for local residents, and also provide a safe route for schoolchildren wishing to travel under their own steam to one of the schools in Gilsland or Greenhead. Sustrans believe that lifelong improved fitness and a sense of independence are amongst the most important outcomes of promoting car-free travel amongst the younger generation.

This whole area is of course archaeologically very sensitive and the route will involve crossing the line of Hadrian's Wall itself near Thirlwall Castle, and running through Carvoran Roman Fort up Greenhead Bank.

Through early involvement, positive co-operation and good communications with the relevant archaeological authorities, Sustrans was able to make successful planning applications for a walking/cycling path up Greenhead Bank, and receive Scheduled Monument Consent from the DCMS, in just 6 weeks over the Christmas period of 2004. Particular features of this project included:

- * a digging depth of 180mm maximum, with careful attention to drainage pipes
- * a full-time 'watching brief' by a qualified archaeologist
- * specific methods for erecting the posts for a boundary fence
- * a base layer of quarry chippings rather than the more typical reused road 'planings', thus reducing any possible long-term contamination by bituminous materials

- * insertion of a 'Terram' geotextile sheet beneath the base layer
- * replacement of embedded fence posts with a surface-mounted gabion structure across the sensitive Maiden Way path
- * meetings with tenants and agreement for alterations to the path design, to take into account agricultural needs.

At the time of writing, negotiations with landowners were still ongoing, but it is hoped that the Greenhead Bank path will be under construction by March 2005, lasting about 6 to 7 weeks. The section from Gilsland to Greenhead is at an earlier stage but we hope that this will proceed in due course.

Acknowledgements

Sustrans are very grateful to the County Council for funding the construction of the Greenhead Bank path, and to archaeologists Mike Collins, Chris Burgess, Karen Derham and Rob Young for their support in getting the necessary permissions. Other supporters include the local Parish Councils, District and County Councils, the Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership, and One North East. Of course we are also grateful to the landowners involved, for granting permission to cross their land.

For further details on Hadrian's Cycleway, or any other aspect of promoting cycling and walking, please contact Sustrans on 0191 2616160, newcastle@sustrans.org.uk, or visit our website at:

www.sustrans.org.uk.

Stephen Psallidas
Sustrans

From Blanchland to Australia: correspondence 1859-1883

The late 19th century was a period of great hardship and social disruption in the North Pennines lead mining field. With the majority of lead mines approaching final closure the large population of the lead mining dales faced stark realisation that their native area no longer offered the means for their survival.

Experiences of a disintegrating way of life are brought vividly to life in the remarkable correspondence between two North Pennine families and their relatives in Australia which is described on page 12 and 13 by Dorothy Soulsby. Part of the correspondence is from the hamlet of Shildon near Blanchland, a community which was almost wholly dependent on the local mines and whose population crashed from 158 to 40 during the period in which the letters were written. Working as a master

week. At the same period the price of flour is recorded to have risen to 2s per stone (10p) and lamb to 1s (5p) per pound. Conditions in the hamlet resulted in a scarlet fever epidemic of which 'lots of little children have died' and conditions in the mines result in the death of William's brother. In 1868 a strong revival of primitive Methodism is recorded in Shildon as a new young travelling preacher comes to the hamlet but in 1870 spiritual hope is matched by material decay as the James family house is 'getting so bad' and is abandoned. William's sister Thomasin leaves Shildon as her husband, also engaged in the poverty work of lead ore washing, dies in his early 50s. From Weardale are reports that the condition of the mines is such that the half-yearly pays result in no income for William Gibson working at the Killhope Mine and physical attacks and rape are recorded as the Dale goes from 'worse to worse.'

As a descendent of the correspondents, Dorothy however brings out a rather different and more optimistic theme from these letters. This was the end period of the North Pennine lead mining industry and a time of many personal tragedies, it was also a time when previously closed communities began to open and younger members sought new opportunities outside the area. During previous depressions in the lead industry

outside observers were astonished at the behaviour of mining families who remained rooted to the area despite relentless hardship. In 1834 for example the Poor Law Commissioners were told that,

The leadminers in this district ... cherish extraordinary attachment to the place of their birth, occupation and habits ... (The depressed state of the lead industry) throwing up on the surface of the soil a population which had previously drawn sustenance from its bowels, it would seem must end in a state of things unparalleled in wretchedness, amongst a people obstinately clinging to their native place, and in a tract of country quite unable to feed its own inhabitants.

By the mid 19th century this historic bond between people and place was clearly breaking. Within an apparently poor lead mining family with roots in a small mining hamlet a son was to seek work in both America and Australia and a daughter to establish a new life in Australia. Always an astute observer of his workforce, the Chief Agent of the Beaumont mining estate, Thomas Sopwith, noted in 1866

The old and infirm must linger. The young and active depart. ... (The railway works afford demand for labour when they are in construction, and when finished will give facilities for movement and for interchange of opinions respecting wages such have not hitherto been known in these secluded dales.

It seems as well that the fervour for education within the mining communities had brought rewards in terms of the ability of the young to adapt to new work. The 1871 Census reveals that Thomasin's 13 year old son was employed as a lead washer, yet a letter from her in the same year shows that he has attained an educational scholarship. In 1881 he has moved with his mother to the burgeoning railway town of Shildon near Bishop Auckland 'New Shildon', where he was employed as a draughtsman in the locomotive works. The apparent movement of a considerable part of the mining population of 'Old' Shildon to industrial opportunities in 'New' Shildon seems a metaphor for hope.

With the permission of surviving family members it is intended that this correspondence from two North Pennine families during a period of radical change may be made publicly available.



Shildon in the early 20th century. The James family had a room in one of these houses.

washer, preparing the lead ore for smelting, William James records that he is earning 3d (a little over 1p) per day in 1860. Within one of the small terrace houses in Shildon, William's mother is taking in three lodgers to supplement a meagre parish relief of 2s 6d (12.5p) per

The living Rock Art landscape of Northumberland and Durham



Chatton Park. Photo: CB

Prehistoric rock art is arguably one of the more neglected types of archaeological monument in Britain. The engravings, generally known as 'cup and ring marks' because the majority of them comprise cup-shaped carvings (often with one or more concentric rings around them) are prolific features of the landscape in certain parts of the country. The distribution of recorded rock art sites is particularly dense in Northumberland, southern County Durham, Yorkshire and parts of Scotland, with more limited clusters in Derbyshire, Cumbria, Wales and the Isle of Man.

Although rock art sites have been documented for over 200 years, there has been little public awareness of their existence until now. The study of rock art has been gathering momentum over the past 30 years or so, first with the extensive work of a handful of dedicated amateurs collecting information on the sites, then with a trickle of academic interest in the 1990s, followed by the English Heritage Rock Art Pilot Project (RAPP) in 1999, and from 2002 until the start of 2005, the Newcastle University project to digitise Stan Beckensall's archive of rock art sites in Northumberland. This latter project has been the first attempt to bring

the rock art to the public (see page 48-49). The website was launched in January 2005 and received over 2 million visitors in its first week, a graphic illustration of the how eager we all are to learn about this fascinating and obscure part of our heritage. The Northumberland and Durham Rock Art Project is now taking these developments a stage further and actively bringing rock art into the public domain.

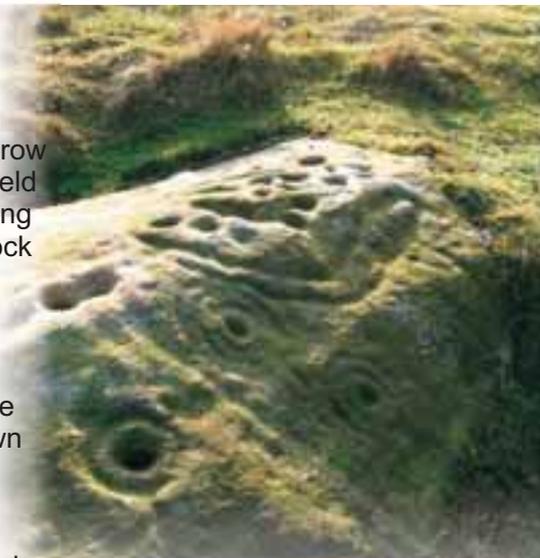
The project, launched in August 2004 for two years, is funded by English Heritage and run collaboratively by Northumberland and Durham County Councils. Its key aim is to recruit and train volunteers who will then record all known engravings in Northumberland and County Durham using a standardised methodology. The information will then be entered into a specially designed database. This database which, it is hoped, will build on the work undertaken by the Beckensall Archive project, will form the basis of a new national rock art archive that will be accessible to everyone through the internet. This will enable anyone from anywhere in the world to interrogate information on British rock art, be it for research, for conservation and management, or for general interest. This national rock art archive will provide a

fantastic resource that for the first time puts British rock art into a global context.

Recruitment of volunteers started in October 2004 and, despite using a low-key approach, the response was overwhelming. Over 50 people have signed up as field work volunteers, with a further 30 people wanting to contribute to data entry and associated aspects of the project. The first task of the project has been to train the field work volunteers in recording and survey techniques. Up to 20 experts from English Heritage, Durham and Northumberland County Councils, and the University of Durham have come together to provide a thorough training programme. The programme was completed in January 2005 and the volunteers have been co-ordinated into five teams, each of which has been fully equipped for field work. The volunteers have so far put up with driving rain, freezing winds and full-on day-long lectures. After being systematically drenched, frozen and overloaded with information, they have responded with boundless enthusiasm and eagerness to get to work. As the success of this work depends largely on the volunteers, the commitment and goodwill they have shown so far is a very positive indicator for a great project.

The first recording phase will run between February and May 2005, during which any wrinkles in the recording procedure will be ironed out and the field work teams will grow in experience. The second main field work phase will be completed during the autumn and winter 2005-6. Rock art sites have been recorded in different ways by different people over the years, with the record for some engravings more complete than for others. The first task of the field work teams is to visit all known sites and ensure that they are all documented to the same level of detail in the same way. For some sites, the volunteers may only need to gather data on the condition of the engravings and assess to what extent they might be at risk - information which is crucial for future conservation and management programmes. For other sites, particularly many of the engravings in County Durham, a detailed written and visual record will need to be compiled. Once we have a full record of all known sites, the teams will start to work in areas where no engravings are currently known but might expect to be found - areas that turn up blank are interesting also for our understanding of rock art distribution and the factors that may have influenced it.

In addition to developing community-led recording and archiving, the project is exploring new approaches to data capture, conservation and interpretation of rock art. For example, as new digital technology becomes applied to the heritage sector, there are exciting changes taking place in



The Horseshoe Rock, Lordenshaw. Photo: CB

how we document and visualise our past. Rock art is an ideal candidate for piloting digital innovation in a heritage context because it is very visual but can be difficult to access and can present severe conservation and management challenges. Techniques such as 3D laser scanning, remote sensing and photogrammetry are being used to capture precise, digital information from selected rock art sites which can then be manipulated and explored in different ways. These digital data can form the basis of research and conservation programmes and can provide new ways of presenting the engravings to the public.

The project is providing an exciting, unprecedented opportunity both to involve the community in a hands-on, ground breaking study of rock art and to test out an array of new techniques and ideas from which we can make recommendations for future rock art projects.

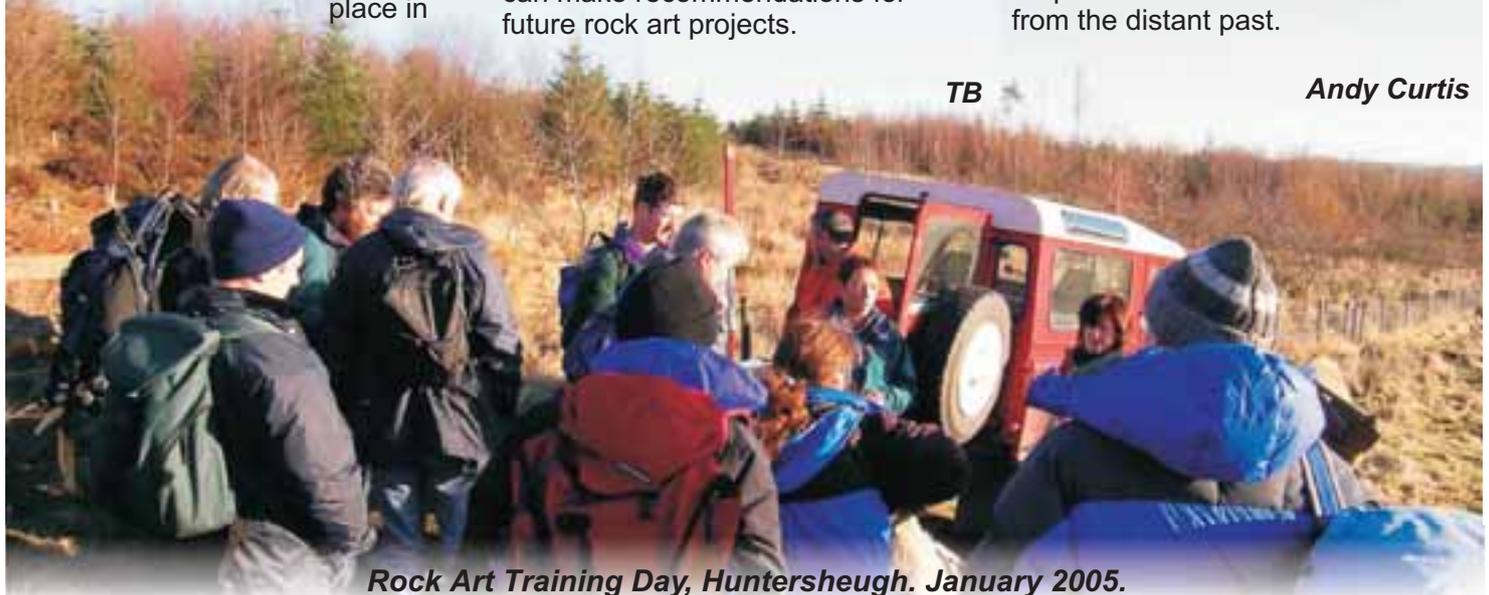
Rock Art: a personal perspective

My interest in rock art was rekindled 2-3 years ago with the publication of two more of Stan Beckensall's books and, having a bit more free time on my hands, visiting more of the sites. Often I would go to an area and have the creepy feeling of *deja vu*. Had I been there 15 years before or was it some hidden memory from prehistory? After all, my ancestors had carved these rocks. The carvings provide more questions than answers. What do the strange cup and ring motifs mean? Are there more out there to find? Has Stan looked at every rock in Northumberland?

Having now got involved with the Rock Art project there is the opportunity to perhaps answer some of these questions. Of primary importance is making sure we have a complete record of the location and condition of all the marked rocks. New sites need to be found to get a clear view of their overall distribution. New technologies can be used (now or in the future) as a means of visualising and analysing the motifs. Preservation and conservation for the future are of the utmost importance as this is an irreplaceable resource and record from the distant past.

TB

Andy Curtis



Rock Art Training Day, Huntersheugh. January 2005.

The Bamburgh Research Project



The Castle, West Ward from the south. Photo: Bamburgh Research Project

The 2004 season at Bamburgh was memorable for many reasons, not just for the poor summer that we had to work through. Despite this it was easily our best season yet, with discoveries in Bamburgh Castle, the Bowl Hole burial ground and also new insights into the archaeology of the village area.

Further work in Bamburgh Castle

Our work within the west ward of the castle has continued in two open area excavations. A trench at the northern end of the ward, near to St Oswald's Gate, has been ongoing for a number of seasons now and has reached what we believe to be relatively early deposits. Numerous pits and post-holes have been revealed, concentrated adjacent to the castle wall. These features, which are clearly not all from the same period, have produced very little pottery. We believe that they represent timber post-settings for a number of phases of defensive ramparts to the fortress dating back to the 12th century and earlier.

On the south side of the trench two sides of a robber trench were seen; the robber trench represents the slot left when the stone from a wall is removed. Most of this building lay beyond the limit of excavation but, despite this, some idea of its possible size can be worked out from the area available between the corner of the building and the rock cleft that led down to St Oswald's Gate. A

rectangular building 9m by 4.5m would fit neatly into this space and we can speculate that it may have been related to the gate, representing a guard chamber or the base of a defensive tower.

The second excavation area finally reached the bottom of a massive medieval midden layer that we have been patiently excavating for a number of seasons. At the base of the midden we have discovered the foundations for timber walls,

probably storerooms or other ancillary buildings, which we believe to have been in use during the 13th century.

It was also a good season for finds and by far the most remarkable of these was the discovery of the upper part of a jet crucifix recovered from the medieval midden.

Our "Your Heritage" grant

We were fortunate during the summer to be awarded a Your Heritage grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The grant is to fund a project researching burial practice at Bamburgh through the ages and will run for two years concluding in the

spring of 2006. As part of the first phase of this work we have commissioned a geophysical survey by TimeScape Surveys. Seven areas around the village have been identified for survey. They were selected to investigate three potential burial barrows, the field to the west of St Aidan's Church and the south-west edge of the village to see if we can

identify the location of a medieval leper hospital known from records. Six of the proposed seven areas of investigation have so far been



13-14th Century Jet Cross Fragment (width 31 mm)

surveyed and the results have surpassed our most optimistic expectations. A clear candidate for the hospital site has emerged and many other potentially fascinating features as well.

Excavation in the castle chapel

The Your Heritage grant has also allowed us to excavate two trenches in the castle chapel to investigate the resistivity and radar surveys previously undertaken there. A trench was sited in the west end of the chapel on the site of a radar anomaly that, in 3D projection, had the form of an underground vaulted

chamber. We believed that this feature could represent a partly collapsed crypt. However, the excavation has proved that this was sadly not the case. Part of the radar signal that fooled us seems to have been generated by the end of a substantial stone wall which extended into the eastern part of the chapel. This wall lay on a very different alignment to the chapel above it, but did appear to be parallel to the external boundary to the inner ward.

It has been proposed since the 19th century that the Basilica of St Peter, an Anglo-Saxon church recorded by Bede, lay beneath the castle chapel. It seems unlikely that this early stone wall represents part of the basilica as it deviates too far from an east-west alignment. Since our excavation within the chapel identified no other structural features it would appear that the Anglo-Saxon church lay elsewhere within the inner ward.

This leaves us looking for an explanation for the wall. We know that a 12th-century chapel was constructed on top of it, so



2 cm



**Iron spear point
from Trench 3**

it must have been no later than the 12th century in date. It was cut into a dark soil layer that contained a single sherd of Roman pottery. This leaves us with a long period during which it could have been constructed. We know from the work of Brian Hope-Taylor that the castle was occupied in the Roman period but it is very unlikely that stone buildings were constructed at that time. Stone construction was not re-introduced into Northumbria until the later seventh century, which means that we may have a middle or late Saxon building or part of the Norman castle, demolished in the later 12th century to make room for the chapel.

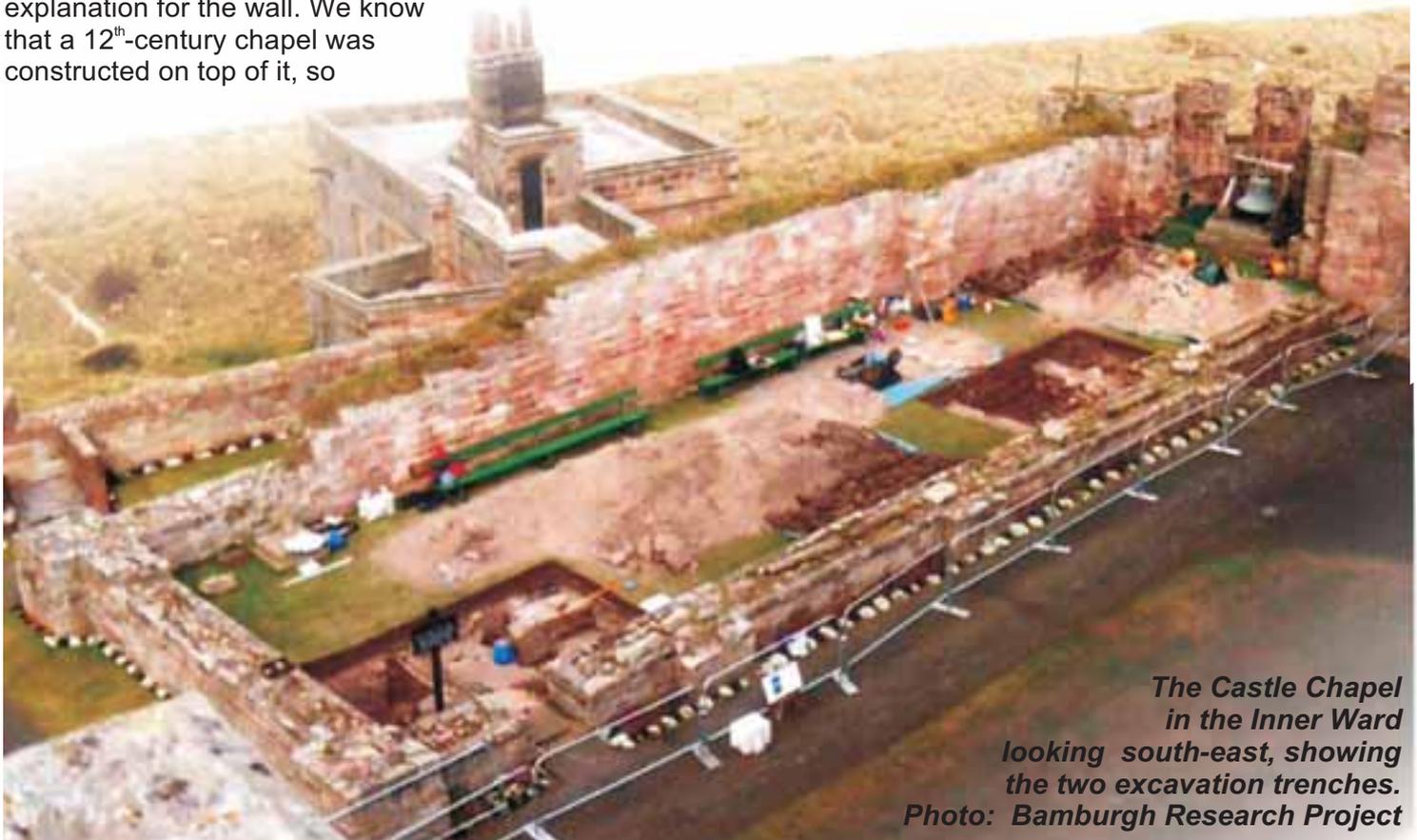
One thing that the 2004 season has clearly shown us is that the archaeology of Bamburgh is even more exciting than we had expected. We still have very much to learn and can confidently expect further surprises in future seasons.

**Graeme Young
Bamburgh Research Project**

Community Archaeology in Coquetdale

The Northumberland National Park Authority, in partnership with the Rothbury and Coquetdale History Society, has obtained funding (from the HLF and Leader +) for an exciting new venture to enable professional archaeologists to work alongside amateurs to complete a programme of archaeological work in Upper Coquetdale. Over a two year period, starting in spring 2005, a Project Officer will train local people to undertake programmes of survey, fieldwalking and excavation, and events will be organised including pottery-making and flint-knapping classes. Training opportunities will be open to all, although priority will be given to residents of Upper Coquetdale. The NNPA welcomes enquiries from local people who might like to take part in the project (for information please contact paul.frodsham@nnpa.org.uk after May 2005).

**Paul Frodsham
Northumberland National Park**



**The Castle Chapel
in the Inner Ward
looking south-east, showing
the two excavation trenches.
Photo: Bamburgh Research Project**

From Shildon to Shildon: letters of a lead mining family



Tamar Lucas and Family. The Author's grandfather is far left in two generations.

Following on from two articles in last year's newsletter about lead mining in the North Pennines, Dorothy Soulsby has written a contribution from a much more personal perspective. Born and brought up close to Shildon in County Durham, through her research she discovered that her family's origins actually lay in another Shildon, that near Blanchland in Northumberland, and that she had first hand accounts of life in the lead mining industry. Here Dorothy recounts some of her family history.

...My grandfather had been born in Victoria, Australia, and had arrived in Shildon via the sugarcane plantations of Queensland, the gambling gangs on the docks in Sydney, and then round Cape Horn aboard a sailing ship - the real stuff of Boys' Own Annuals! His grandparents, Ralph Gibson and Mary James, had eloped to Australia from Shildon in the Ballarat Goldrush in 1858. They raised a family and kept in touch with those in England through an address in Shildon, County Durham, which was what my grandfather successfully sought out in 1908. He met my grandmother there, and until his death in 1954 was happily confident that it had been Shildon to Shildon (like clogs!)

After his death, my mother began corresponding with aunts and cousins in Australia. My grandfather's sister was a tremendous source of family history and put my mother in touch with a cousin in Melbourne. He had found, and this is the exciting bit, bundles of letters in his grandfather's home that had been sent from England. They dated from 1859 through to the beginning of the Second World War.

My mother never divulged that she had been sent typed transcripts of all the letters. However, we were told that the Shildon of origin was in fact a small village in Northumberland. The connection between the two Shildons was not explained, nor was the extent of the social and family history contained in the letters ever revealed.

After my mother died in 1996, I discovered the transcripts among her papers. I could not have been more excited if I had discovered buried treasure, and I desperately wanted to see the originals. This I achieved last October during a trip to Australia and it was a very emotional moment indeed. The daily joys and sorrows, even tragedies, of family life are told

with candour and freshness. Certain names become real, rounded characters - above all Susanna, Mary's widowed mother. She had married William James in 1823, and at that time neither of them could write their own name. On their marriage certificate it simply shows "their mark" in place of signatures. Yet by April 1859 Susanna was able to write fluently to her son William, Mary's brother, in Australia with lots of family and local news.

In their recent book *Blanchland's Lead Mining Heritage*, Clive Crossley and Kevin Patrick talk about Methodism in the North Pennines and the burgeoning literacy among the lead miners in the 19th century. Clearly, it was not just the children who were learning; there must have been a Sunday School attended by the miners and their wives.

Susanna's strong Christian faith must have helped her through the difficult financial situation she found herself in as her family departed from their home in Shildon, near Blanchland. Her daughter Mary had eloped, and her son, William, single and clearly a staple breadwinner, had emigrated with them. Susanna tells him not to worry about her:

I have 3 lodgers at present. They bring me 4 shillings per week and I have 2s.6d parish money so you see I am not taking any hurt as yet...

What fascinates me is how she managed to house three lodgers. I had originally thought that the cottages in Shildon had two rooms each, one up and one down, but I was amazed to discover that each family had just one room, either upstairs or down, with a fireplace, or range, in each. The 1851 census returns for Shildon lists all the members of the James family in their one room: father, mother, six children and a lodger.

Add to all that the harsh weather conditions of the North Pennines and the hellish conditions in the lead mines. Is there any wonder that so many emigrated to the USA or Australia?

There is a Company of Gentlemen who have taken a lease of Readin and Beldon Veins, writes Susanna. Operation is expected to commence shortly....but the prospects under the old Company are only very dull. Wages are not allowed to be more than 15 shillings per week...

I have no doubt at all that when son William read that, he felt lucky to be out of it and prospecting for gold, despite the guilt and sadness at

leaving his family. Yet William returned to Shildon and to work in the mines, his letter recounting, *After a pleasant voyage of 88 days we landed at Liverpool about 12 o'clock of the day and next night about eleven o'clock I got home... but it was a meeting!. ... So after I got home I commenced work in Derwent mines where I intend to stay with my mother. Brother George and I are working together masters work at 3d per day each and he and my Mother and I are living together very comfortable at the old house at home.*

It was clearly emotionally satisfying for him, but the situation still caused him to have mixed feelings. The summer of 1860 was wet and miserable, with the corn still green in October, and the potato crop blighted. Meat and flour prices were at an all-time high, and William thought wistfully of the sunny shores of Victoria where he might feel the hot winds blowing and smell the peppermint bush.

Susanna obviously enjoyed having her son home again. She writes, *He is very kind to me and tells me many a droll story about a foreign land. William was also at pains to update his brother-in-law Ralph's parents with details from "down-under" I can see your father and mother a good deal failed since I last seen them but by all appearances they fret a good deal about you a wandering son.*

And he really had been a wanderer. Before sweeping Mary off her feet and whisking her off to Victoria, Ralph had already been to the USA. Indeed, there appear to have been quite a number of comings and goings round the globe to judge from references in the letters. But the real pull, for William at least, was *Shildon, near Blanchland, Northumberland, Old England (sweet home).*

Others too were glad to be back after crossing the

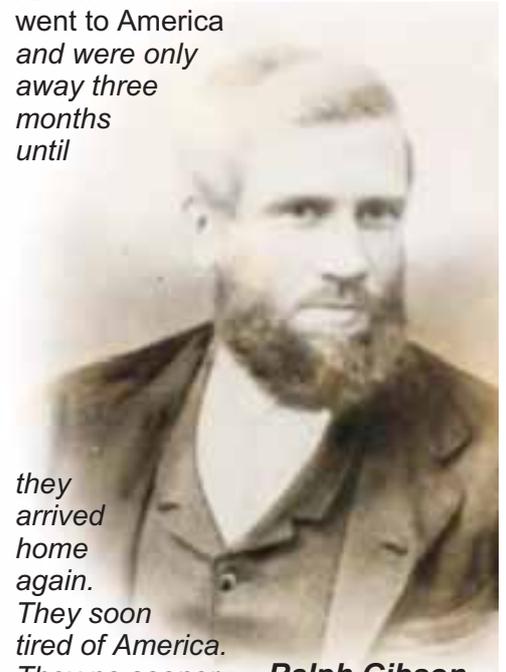
Atlantic to seek their fortunes. Sister Ann wrote that some friends went to America and were only away three months until

they arrived home again. They soon tired of America.

*They no sooner **Ralph Gibson** land in America than they were only given nine days notice either to take up arms and fight or quit the place so they turned right round and came home to Old England. The Civil War held no attractions for them.*

What about the other Shildon, near Bishop Auckland in County Durham? It is certainly referred to in a number of letters as New Shildon and, with its flourishing railway works, it was attracting more and more friends and relatives as the lead mines declined. So it was that William James, my great-great-uncle, left the Blanchland area after his mother Susanna's death. He bought a four-roomed house in New Shildon after finding a position at the railway works. He married, had a daughter, and was followed to New Shildon by sister Thomasin and her family. It was their children in New Shildon that my grandfather located when he arrived fresh from Australia.

So did he complete the full circle? Well, no. So close, but not quite the whole way. It took another generation to close the gap when my Australian cousin and I visited Shildon near Blanchland to read the names of the James family in the 1851 census and realised we were sitting only feet away from where Susanna and her family had lived and loved.



Mary Gibson (née James)

Dorothy Soulsby

Spotlight: CORBRIDGE

a tale of two towns

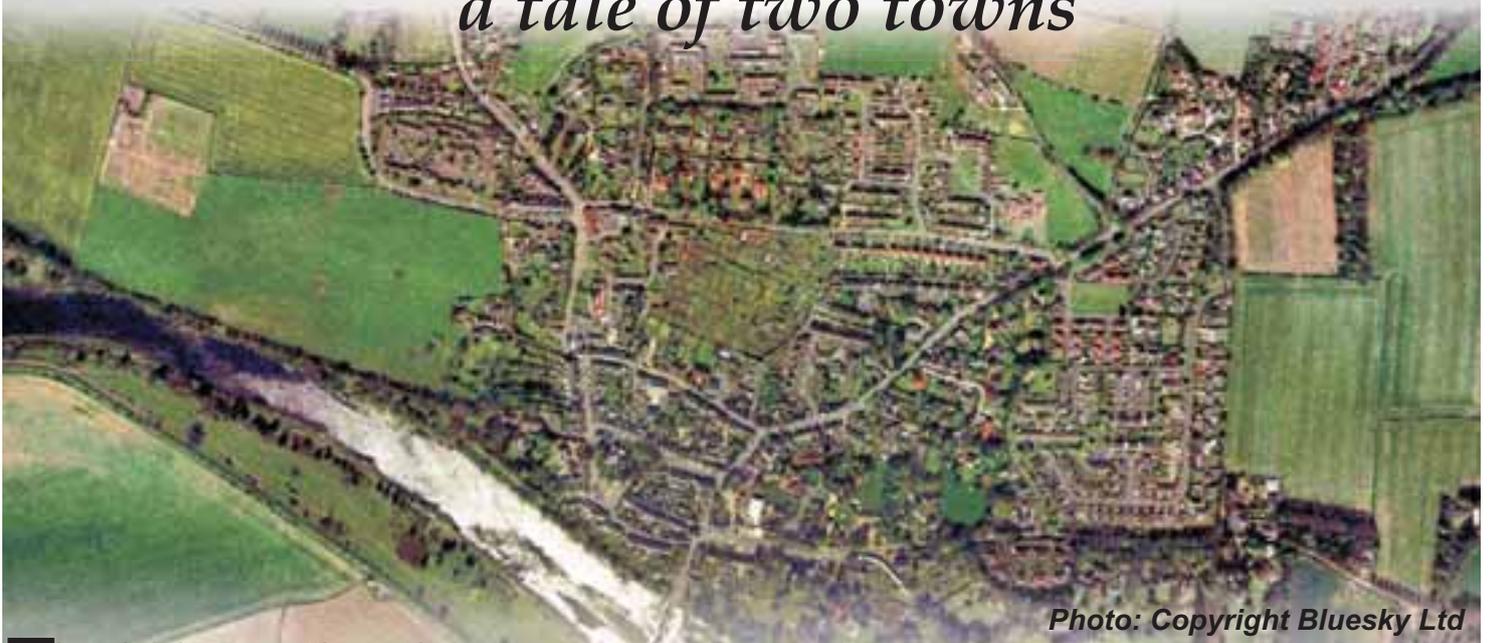


Photo: Copyright Bluesky Ltd

There has been a settlement in the area around Corbridge since at least Roman times when the Roman fort and garrison town of Corstopitum was constructed to the west of the modern town. The fort was served by the two principal Roman roads of Stanegate and Dere Street. Dere Street was carried over the River Tyne by means of a bridge, the stone remains of which are still visible in the river banks today. A significant civilian settlement, or *vicus*, grew up around the military site which appears to have become a defended market town by the mid-second century AD and continued to be occupied until at least the late fifth century.

The relationship between the collapse of the Roman infrastructure and post-Roman settlement is still not clearly understood. Traditionally it is thought that following the abandonment of the Roman town, the Anglo-Saxon settlement was set up to the east, using the fort as a source of building stone. Archaeological investigations and chance finds across both the fort and the modern town are increasingly showing that the story is not quite as clear cut and it is anticipated that further archaeological work will add to our understanding of this interesting interim period.

Although the finer details concerning the shift in settlement to the east is

unclear, documentary sources refer to a monastery at Corbridge in AD 786 and some surviving architectural features within the Church of St Andrew appear to be late seventh century in date. The reference to the monastic origin of the church is not supported either by the surviving architecture or by excavations in the 19th century.

Documentary sources indicate that the town developed from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards, being at its most prosperous in the 13th century, when it was the second largest borough town in the region, next to Newcastle.

The medieval town layout, which is thought to have been established in the 13th or 14th century, is still reflected in many of the roads and properties boundaries in the centre of modern-day Corbridge. It shows a town centred on the market place with houses along the street frontages and narrow property or burgage plots to the rear. It is also likely that the early medieval town was focused around the church and market place although no definite settlement evidence from that period has yet been uncovered.

While the medieval layout of the town is reflected in the modern town, many of the buildings referred to in documentary sources have

subsequently been lost, although their location appears to be reflected in modern street names. The Chapel of St Helen and the manorial hall it was built to serve are thought to have been located on St Helen's Street, while Trinity Church, which lay to the north-west of the medieval town, probably stood in the area around Trinity Terrace.

Documentary and map evidence give us a broad understanding of the location and development of the town and a tantalising insight into the the range of establishments and activities which once took place. In addition, archaeological investigations help to enhance our understanding of the extent, nature and development of the settlement and the finer details of land-use and the day to day life and diet of the people living in Corbridge throughout the different periods of settlement.

With the exception of the Roman bridge excavation, the archaeological investigations carried out in and around Corbridge in 2004 have resulted from planning conditions requested by the Conservation Team and carried out in accordance with briefs supplied by the Team. They have added greatly to our knowledge of the range and location of activity in Roman and medieval times.

The Roman Bridge

Fieldwork to record and display the remains of the southern access ramp leading up to the Roman bridge at Corbridge began in July 2004. The project, funded by a grant of £303,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, commissioned and supported by English Heritage, and carried out by Tyne and Wear Museums, was urgently needed because of the threat to the remains from the encroaching River Tyne.

The ramp and bridge took the major Roman road of Dere Street across the river on this part of its long journey from London to Scotland. The whole structure was constructed with large stone blocks (measuring approximately 1m by 0.5m and 0.3m in depth), using techniques developed in Greek architecture and adapted by the Romans. In addition to the functional nature of the bridge, the structure also served to act as a monument to the grandeur and extent of imperial power. As one of the few formal crossing points of the river it would have carried a large amount of traffic, north and south, thereby ensuring that many travellers would have seen the architecture and associated sculptures or inscriptions.

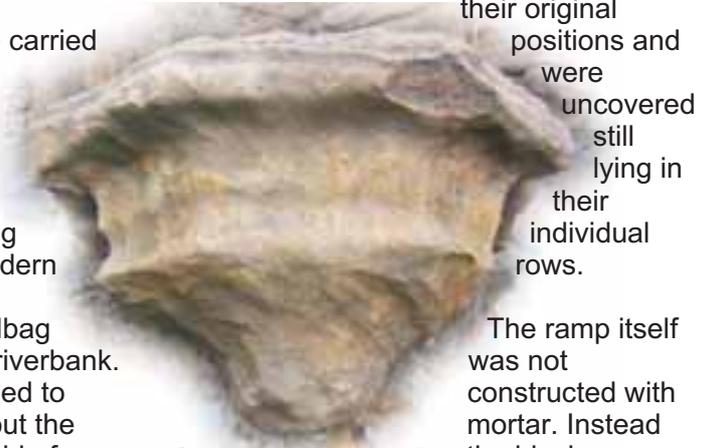
The eventual (probably post-Roman) collapse and robbing of the structure had resulted in the archaeology being largely hidden beneath the modern landscape. For those who have known where to look, however, the southern abutment and several of the piers that once held the massive structure of the bridge are still visible during times when the river is low

and water conditions are clear. The present project began when, following damage caused to the southern riverbank by flooding in 1994, trial excavations uncovered several large blocks that were interpreted as being part of the road ramp leading up to the bridge.

The excavations were carried out by staff from Tyne and Wear Museums, with the invaluable help of enthusiastic teams of volunteers and trainees. Following the removal of the modern overburden, the construction of a sandbag wall began along the riverbank. This defence was added to continuously throughout the project and, with the aid of pumps, allowed us to excavate to a depth below the adjacent river level. As the excavation progressed it soon became apparent that far more of the road ramp survived than had previously been expected. Measuring nearly 12m in width, the ramp was composed of a rubble core held between massive retaining walls. The eastern retaining wall of the ramp survived for a length of 22m and had been cut into the contemporary riverbank (though the changing course of the river through time meant that this area was now partially inland). This wall was three blocks in width (approximately 1.5m) and survived *in-situ* to a height of four courses (averaging 1.5m in total).

At some point in the late Roman period, the river began to undermine

the ramp. Eventually, a scour pit formed along the face of the eastern retaining wall and the resulting instability caused much of the structure to collapse into the river. Part of the remains had shifted out of position, and five upper courses had slid *en masse* into the scour pit from



Octagonal capital, first noted in 1994

their original positions and were uncovered still lying in their individual rows.

The ramp itself was not constructed with mortar. Instead the blocks were carefully shaped and positioned so

that the weight of the masonry itself worked to hold the revetment walls in place. Laying-out lines carved into some of the blocks, as well as crowbar slots for their final precise placement, were recorded as the ramp was excavated. A small number of the blocks towards the northern end of the ramp were tied together with metal clamps.

Also recovered from the excavation were several clues as to the elaborate decoration of the ramp and bridge. A large octagonal stone, first partially recorded in 1994, seems to have formed the decorated capital of an octagonal pillar, and several carved cornice blocks had slots in their upper surface which would have held upright stone slabs forming a



Excavations of the Roman Bridge Abutment at Corbridge. Photo:TWM

parapet along the edge of the ramp. A block with a decorated finial probably also came from the parapet.

Re-used blocks were found in the revetting wall of the ramp, and a fragment of a cornice block came from the core of the road ramp. Stratified Roman pottery showed that the ramp was built no earlier than the end of the second century. It almost certainly replaced an original ramp that had been destroyed by the action of the river.

Over time, some of the stones of the collapsed ramp were robbed and taken off-site for inclusion in structures elsewhere. The lead ties originally set in some blocks were also robbed, leaving characteristic extraction holes in the blocks themselves. Research suggests that masonry from the bridge was used in the construction of the crypt of St Wilfrid in Hexham in AD 674, and this element will be further researched as part of this project.

The course of the river has changed since Roman times, and continues to change now. Because the river was threatening to wash away the remains of the road ramp, a significant part of the project involved the individual cataloguing, recording, and removal of the blocks themselves. This phase of the project was no small undertaking given the sheer size of the blocks involved, and through it those involved gained a deeper respect for the abilities of the original builders. The removal process involved the careful use of a winch and straps and resulted in approximately 260 blocks being stored adjacent to the excavation area. As a result of the detailed recording of these blocks both before and after their removal, it will be possible for a substantial portion of the masonry to be put back together. Tyne and Wear Museums are presently in discussion with various agencies as to how a permanent display could be created on the site. This would provide a rare and valuable opportunity for visitors to appreciate this monumental example of classical architecture.

It was most certainly a test of determination to excavate beside the banks of the Tyne during the course of this project, which saw the wettest

June since 1944, the wettest August since records began, and the biggest floods in living memory at the turn of the New Year. Yet, through all developments, team spirits remained high and there was a steady flow of inquisitive visitors to the site, where a combination of an information tent, illustrated notice boards, and explanations by staff helped to pass on the enthusiasm for the project and the significance of the findings.

Analysis of the results of the excavation will be carried on throughout 2005. We will also be carrying out our research in the crypt in Hexham, along with a survey of the piers on the riverbed. The excavation report will be published in 2006.

Terry Frain
Tyne and Wear Museums

A new footpath to the Roman Fort

Works to build a new footpath along the southern edge of Corchester Lane, between Corbridge and the English Heritage visitor centre at the Roman fort, were watched by The Archaeological Practice. The line of the footpath crossed the Roman *vicus*, or civil settlement, as well as the line of Dere Street Roman road.

Two trenches were excavated to build the footpath: one 0.15m deep by between 1m and 1.5m wide along its length, and the other 0.3m wide and 0.3m deep for curbing adjacent to the road. The groundworks did not exceed the depth of ploughsoil along much of the area, however two areas of archaeological significance were recorded at the eastern and western ends of the watching brief.

At the western end of the footpath an area of cobbles was revealed, thought to represent an area of field clearance or levelling of uncertain date. At the eastern end of the watching brief area, four courses of an east-west orientated unmortared stone wall were uncovered laid on a cobble base. Although the south face of the wall had been removed by later services running parallel to the road, it was evident that this had been a substantial wall. Although no datable

artefacts were found in association with this feature, the form of its construction, location and orientation suggest a likely Roman origin.

**KD based on a report by
The Archaeological Practice Ltd**

Bishops Garage

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by North Pennines Archaeology on land behind Main Street, Corbridge, within a car park owned by Bishops Garages. The site lies within the medieval town, on the site of a burgage plot. Map evidence since 1841 revealed the site had not been significantly built on and as a result the potential for discovering previously undisturbed archaeological remains was high.

Three initial trial trenches were excavated, trench 1 was located within the car park and trenches 2 and 3 on land at the rear of the site. The latter trenches revealed no significant archaeological remains, the former, however, revealed an interesting large, sub-circular, stone built feature at the north end of the trench. The structure has a radius of 0.80m and consists of a drystone superstructure around a flagged floor. A homogenous black, silty loam deposit was contained within. The structure appears consistent with that of a corn-drying kiln. Environmental sampling of the residue within the 'kiln' produced a considerable amount of both coal and charred material, as would be expected with a deposit recovered from inside a hearth or kiln. The fact that the sample produced an appreciable amount of grain as well as the magnetic material seems to verify its multipurpose use. This site is probably part of a larger complex, which may be industrial in context or a combination of industrial and domestic.

Two further trenches were then excavated within the car park area (trenches 4 and 5). Cut linear features were observed within both trenches, each oriented approximately north-west to south-east. A number of fragments of 13th-15th century pottery and small-medium fragments of animal bone

were recovered from the fill of one of these features.

The pottery assemblage was made up of nine sherds of medieval pottery, which dated to the 12th-15th centuries. Although small in quantity, the assemblage confirmed the presence of medieval activity on the site, which corresponded to the current state of knowledge regarding the medieval settlement of Corbridge. The majority of the pottery came from

Trench 5, from within the fill a ditch, comprising oxidised red gritty ware and partially reduced green glazed greyware. Traditionally, the red gritty wares originated in the 12th century and are the earliest of the ceramic wares found on the site, although they were used throughout the later medieval period. Green glazed greyware fabrics date from the mid-late 13th century and span to the 15th century.

Chris Jones
North Pennines Archaeology Ltd

Eastfield House

A second archaeological evaluation was undertaken by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd on land to the rear of the Smiths Gore Offices at Eastfield House, Main Street, Corbridge, immediately south of the Bishops Garage evaluation. The site is situated at NY 9908 6435 and also lies within the medieval town, on the site of a burgage plot. As with the Bishops Garage car park site, map evidence since 1841 revealed the site had not been significantly built on and as a result the potential that the development would impact upon previously undisturbed archaeological remains was also high.

A single evaluation trench was excavated, oriented east-west at the



Remains of the kiln at Bishops Garage

heart of the site. The natural subsoil was observed at a depth of 1.10m and consisted of mixed postglacial till. Archaeological features were cut into this postglacial till, and were sealed by a layer of garden soil approximately 0.50m thick, and were consequently difficult to observe.

These features consisted of a series of linear and circular features of medieval date. They included a narrow gully 0.20m wide and oriented north-west to south-east, a second gully was also observed at the opposite end of the trench and running in a north-east to south-west orientation. Two large circular postholes of a similar size were also observed. A single sherd of later medieval pottery and an iron arrowhead were recovered from within the fill of the easternmost posthole. In addition to these features a series of small, undated pits were also observed.



Iron arrow point found at Eastfield House

Nine sherds of 13th/14th century pottery were recovered from all contexts, consisting of partially reduced wares with a white buff surface and traces of a pale yellow glaze.

In addition to the finds a number of environmental samples were taken and analysed by NPA Environmental Archaeologist Patricia Crompton, under guidance from Jacqui Huntley, English Heritage Regional Scientific Adviser. According to the analysis of these samples, evidence for human activity in the area is demonstrated by the presence of charred grain, charcoal and charred wood. Uncharred seeds may have entered the soil matrix by natural means, with the charred grain deposited through soil improvement with ash spread on the soil to improve fertility.

It is difficult to interpret the results of the evaluation from such a small sample. However, it is clear that a number of cut features of likely medieval date were present within the trench, probably comprising the remains of one or more timber structures.

Chris Jones
North Pennines Archaeology Ltd

Other work

Further archaeological evaluations were also carried out within the medieval and later settlement of Corbridge in 2004.

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd executed a watching brief on Trinity Church while *The Archaeological Practice Ltd* carried out an evaluation to the rear of Anchor Cottage, 30 Princes Street, immediately to the north of Bishops Garage. This revealed that modern land-use and disturbance had removed all trace of earlier post-medieval or medieval activity. *Archaeological Services University of Durham* carried out an evaluation in the terraced burgage plot to the rear of the Tynedale Hotel and found modern build up and garden soils forming a series of terraces down the slope to the river.

KD

Hidden Treasures: Hartburn Vicarage



Dr Sharp, vicar of Hartburn, 'improved' his vicarage grounds in about 1760. A splendid lancet-arched footbridge can be seen en route to his grotto next to the Hart Burn. It consists of a chamber partly cut into a cliff, with a fireplace and "a covered passageway for bathers along which they may pass unperceived by the impertinent eye of vulgar persons." The path continues through a delightful wood owned by the Woodland Trust before emerging at the west end of the village.

National Grid Reference:
NZ 0875 8646.

Directions:

Start at the village car park, cross the road and walk through the village. Shortly after passing Dr Sharp's Old Schoolhouse of 1762 with its castellated tower and external steps follow the marked footpath to the river.

PR

Flint Assemblage Found at Akeld

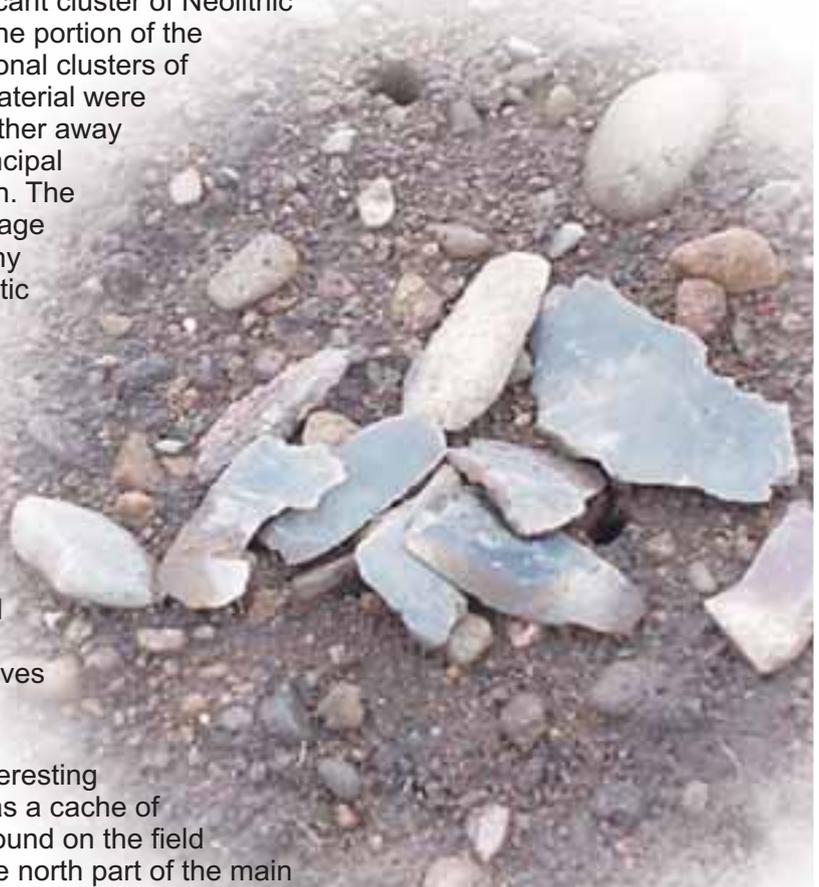
Fieldwalking over a large area of land near Akeld Steads was undertaken by Archaeological Research Services Ltd in advance of planned gravel extraction on the site. This work was kindly funded by Tarmac who were keen to understand the archaeological importance of this area particularly as it lies close to two henge sites, pit alignments and ring ditches.

Flints typical of the Mesolithic and Neolithic-Early Bronze Age periods were recovered from the main area, with a significant cluster of Neolithic material in one portion of the field. Occasional clusters of Mesolithic material were observed further away from this principal concentration. The flint assemblage includes many fine, diagnostic pieces such as a leaf-shaped arrowhead, chisel arrowhead, barbed and tanged arrowhead, Neolithic and Mesolithic scrapers, knives and cores.

The most interesting discovery was a cache of flint blades found on the field surface in the north part of the main area indicating where a sub-surface feature had been clipped by the plough and archaeological remains brought to the surface. The cache comprised ten large blade and flake tools. It was decided that a small one metre square test pit should be opened above the cache and a further 48 large flints were found in a cone directly beneath. This included scrapers, utilised and retouched blades and a spear point. All these

pieces can be ascribed to the Neolithic-Early Bronze Age and comprise one of the best-preserved caches of Neolithic flint material so far discovered in the county. Part of a buried archaeological feature was visible in the base of the test-pit cut into the sand and gravel substratum demonstrating the presence of buried archaeological features.

It is likely that the spread of flints indicate an area where prehistoric settlements may have existed. The dates associated with the various types of flint suggest occupation may



have taken place over a considerable period from at least the Early Neolithic through to the Later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. As work progresses at this site, our understanding of the first farming groups in Northern England should be greatly enhanced.

**James Brightman
and Clive Waddington
Archaeological Research Services**

Agriculture aids Archaeology



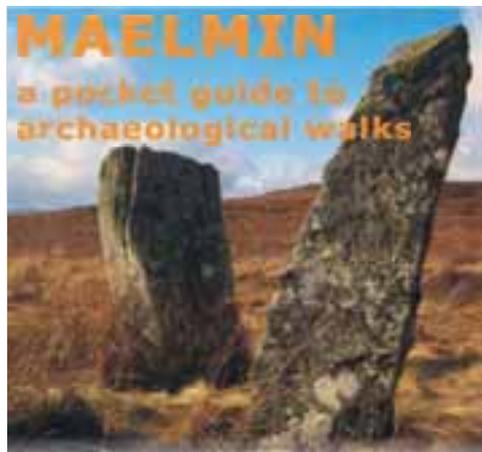
Duddo Tower

The DEFRA-funded agri-environment scheme Countryside Stewardship (relaunched in March 2005 as Environmental Stewardship) has become a major player in the conservation and promotion of the historic environment. Under this scheme, farmers are paid to manage their land in an environmentally sensitive way and the scheme can provide benefits to the archaeology, ecology and landscape of the region. In a period of diminishing resources

the funding that DEFRA can provide has made a significant difference to the future of our archaeological heritage. Acting with the advice of the County Council and English Heritage, a number of successful schemes allowing improved public access and/or better management of archaeological sites have been undertaken since the scheme was started over 10 years ago.

Recent examples of this include open access to the Iron Age hillfort and earlier prehistoric rock art on Chattonpark Hill (grid ref NU 075 295), and vegetation clearance and open access on the Iron Age hillfort at Westhills, Rothbury (grid ref NU 038 021). Formal public access has also been permitted for the first time at Duddo Stone Circle and, in addition, an area of permanent grassland has been established around the site to protect it from the damage which can be caused by cultivation.

DEFRA have also teamed up with English Heritage to help fund other, more ambitious, projects, including the repair of Doddington Bastle (in reality a 16th century strong house) and Duddo Tower. Repairs to both sites are expected to begin early in 2005. These projects are great examples of what can be achieved when different organisations undertake joined-up working and we look forward to what can be achieved under the new Environmental Stewardship scheme.



Including five walks, each with an itinerary and a detailed Ordnance Survey map, Clive Waddington's new book *Maelmin a pocket guide to archaeological walks* will lead you to some of the most interesting archaeology in the north of the county. The book concentrates on routes around the Milfield Plain and the north-eastern fringes of the Cheviot Hills. Available for £2.95 from www.designdesk.co.uk, it is a must for anybody, new to the area or otherwise, wishing to see some of the best archaeological landscapes of the county.

CB

Morpeth Market Place

The high standards achieved in the refurbishment of Morpeth's historic Market Place have been recognised in two prestigious award schemes run by the Civic Trust and the Royal Town Planning Institute. Over £600,000 has been spent making the Market Place more pedestrian friendly with an enlarged area of stone paving, a new home for the repaired Hollon Fountain and improved lighting. The installation of the Lumsden's Lane Arch, a metal sculpture to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Market Place, by local artist blacksmith Stephen Lunn, completed the project.

Civic Trust Awards assessors commented, *it requires a long hard look at the photographs of the Market Place pre improvement, to understand the breadth of enhancement this scheme has given to Morpeth town centre. It simply looks "right" and yet has addressed a multitude of problems that plague most small towns.*

SR

PR

The Breamish Valley Project



Summer 2004 saw the eleventh and final season of the Breamish Valley Archaeology (BVA) project, a collaborative venture between the Northumberland National Park Authority, the University of Durham and the Northumberland Archaeological Group (NAG). The project, which has included the excavation of Early Bronze Age burials, Iron Age and Roman period settlements, and multi-period field systems, represents the first long term excavation project of its kind in the Northumberland Cheviots. The results have provided a suite of about 50 radiocarbon dates which have helped to create an informed overview of the development of the landscape from the Stone Age through until post-medieval times. Post excavation work is now largely complete, and full academic publication of the work will be prepared over the next few years. For those who want to find out more in advance of the full publication, two chapters specifically about the BVA project are included within the book *Archaeology in Northumberland National Park*.

The NAG excavations, focusing on the hillfort and surrounding multiperiod landscape of Wether Hill, were completed during 2003. The University's 2004 excavations were focused on a parchmark site known as Ingram South, in a field overlooking the village hall. Although no surface traces of this site survive, and the field has been regularly ploughed in modern times, many features survived beneath the topsoil. The site seems to have begun life as an unenclosed settlement, possibly during the Iron Age, around which a large rectilinear enclosure was

constructed during the late Iron Age. During Roman times, this enclosure seems to have been substantially remodelled and a second, adjacent enclosure of similar size was constructed. Speculation as to exactly why these enclosures were built here must await the completion of post-excavation work.

In August 2004 a new visitor centre exhibition entitled *People of the Breamish Valley: a decade of discovery* was opened at the Ingram National Park Centre. This proved popular during the few months that it was open last year, and will be open to the public from mid-March until the end of October 2005. Admission is free. The exhibition includes many artefacts found during the BVA excavations, including five complete Early Bronze Age pots. The exhibition also features a 20-minute video about the project which includes archive footage of the excavations in progress, and computerised interactive displays as well as conventional interpretive panels. The exhibition now represents a fundamental element of the local archaeological landscape, and can be visited along with many of the nearby sites which featured in the project. A self-guided trail and accompanying leaflet entitled *The Breamish Valley: walk in a landscape of ancestors*, has been set up for visitors who wish to experience some of the splendid hillforts and other monuments for themselves. A 48-page full-colour souvenir guide, which discusses the BVA project excavations and provides an overview of the archaeology of the valley, will be available from Easter 2005.

Paul Frodsham
Northumberland National Park

Hidden Treasures: The Royal Tweed Bridge

Designed by LG Mouchel and Partners between 1925 and 1928, the Royal Tweed Bridge was the first new road crossing of the Tweed at Berwick since 1626. Constructed of concrete it is typical of designs in Europe during the interwar years. Consisting of four arches, each with four ribs. The bridge was famous for a short while before World War 2 as one of the arches was the longest concrete span in the world when it was built. The importance and beauty of Royal Tweed Bridge has long been overlooked, not least because Pevsner is scathing of its design in his assessment of Berwick.

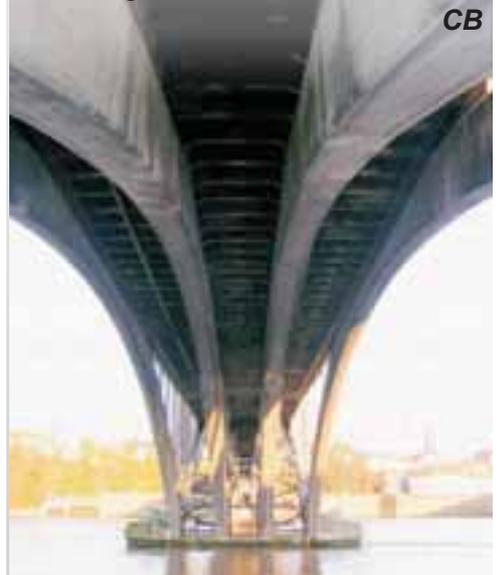
It does, however, have much going for it, and though perhaps best viewed at night when it is frequently lit up, it now also forms a vital part of the Berwick townscape, resting easily between the lower Old Bridge and higher Royal Border Bridge (the rail viaduct) when viewed from the east from vantage points such as the Life Boat Station.

National Grid Reference:
NT 9950 5278

Directions:

By car it is best to park in Tweedmouth and walk to see the structure's underside. By foot the bridge can be viewed both from the Quayside in Berwick and from the Old Bridge.

CB



Excavating Cup and Ring Marks



An excavation at Hunterheugh Crags in Spring 2004 investigated a remote site on the Fell Sandstone escarpment 7km north-west of Alnwick, where a small stone cairn overlay a carved rock outcrop. The principle aim was to date the cairn and obtain a *terminus post quem*, before which the rock art must date. In the event the investigations proved more complex and informative than could have been anticipated, demonstrating the potential of excavation at rock art sites.

A persisting view is that rock art is a phenomenon of the Early Bronze Age, despite the absence of any clear dating for this period. The Hunterheugh excavation has revealed a fascinating sequence of activity which demonstrates that the first carvings on the rock must date back well before the Early Bronze

Age into the Neolithic. This direct dating of a rock art panel corresponds with the implied dates from Neolithic long mounds and dolmens where cup marked rocks have been deposited.

The carvings at Hunterheugh showed two distinct phases, with the earliest on the natural rock surface displaying heavy weathering. The second phase, of much fresher carvings, had been applied to new rock surfaces formed by quarrying, which in some cases had broken the earlier carvings. The difference in condition between the two phases was so dramatic that the inescapable conclusion is that their construction was separated by a substantial period of time. Two large quarried boulders, one of which had been broken across a phase one panel of rock art, had been moved together to form a cavity where a small cist was

found below the cairn. Although no human remains survived, no doubt due to the acidic soil conditions, a plano-convex knife segment was recovered from the collapsed cist material - an artefact commonly associated with Early Bronze Age burials.

Other sites in Northumberland show evidence for secondary phases of carving such as those at Dod Law main rock, the North Plantation site at Fowberry and West Horton 1b. As research continues in other regions of the British Isles it will be interesting to see if they too show evidence of secondary episodes of rock carving and whether that too manifests itself as a pre-occupation with cairns and burial in the Early Bronze Age.

**James Brightman
and Clive Waddington
Archaeological Research Services**

Fitting In

The redevelopment of sensitive sites in conservation areas often leaves much to be desired. Quite simply many new buildings do not 'fit in' due to problems with scale, massing, materials or poor design. Contemporary design is to be welcomed but it needs to respect and add to the quality of its surroundings.

At Pottergate in Alnwick there is a splendid example of redevelopment that fits like a glove. In place of a 20th century concrete garage complex, itself an example of failed redevelopment, is a new housing scheme, recognisably of the 21st century yet embracing local distinctiveness. This is an innovative development which has significantly improved the medieval heart of Alnwick and should be an object lesson to others.

A multi award winning scheme like this does not happen by accident. Credit is due to Northumberland Estates which owned the site and produced a development brief for the architects, Jane Darbyshire & David Kendall. Alnwick District Council was responsible for planning permission and Rivergreen Developments delivered the scheme. It also demonstrates that good design and commercial success are compatible when the right development team is brought together.

PR

Castle Terrace, Berwick

On the outskirts of Berwick-upon-Tweed lies the suspected site of St Lawrence's Church. It was discovered when Cheviot House was built on the north side of the road to Duns in the mid-19th century. Not only were foundations of the church exposed but also several graves. It has been interpreted as the parish church of the deserted medieval village of Bondington, one of the burgh's medieval suburbs, which is believed to have been abandoned in the 14th century during the Anglo-Scottish wars.

Excavations in 2000, in the north-east corner of the Cheviot House plot, revealed two articulated skeletons and some disarticulated human bone. An ornate grave slab, thought to be of 12th century date (Cambridge et al 2001), has also been found in the grounds. A new proposal in 2004 to develop the gap site immediately to the north and west of Cheviot House, which map evidence shows has been open ground since at least the 17th

century, presented the opportunity to investigate whether further remains of the church and cemetery, or indeed Bondington itself, survived below ground. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Headland Archaeology on behalf of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Corporation (Freemen) Trustees in advance of proposals to develop the site for housing.

Some 17 trial trenches were excavated across the site. In two long trenches immediately to the west of Cheviot House were found a series of rubble spreads, possible paved surfaces, as well as un-mortared stone wall foundations, up to 0.8m wide. One was aligned east to west; fragments of others were aligned roughly north to south and NE to SW although no coherent structures were identified.

Significantly, however, these deposits and features, associated with medieval pottery and a piece of lead window, came did not continue into a third long trench to the west,

suggesting that medieval settlement on the site is clustered around the site of the church.

In the trench immediately to the north of Cheviot House, excavation revealed a stratified sequence of demolition deposits, including mortar and rubble deposits and layers rich in charcoal, bone and medieval pottery. Meanwhile, fragmentary dry stone walls and ditches, possibly plot boundaries, were identified in a handful of the trenches in the field behind Cheviot House; however, most were archaeologically sterile.

Although the evaluation has successfully identified the nature and extent of the archaeology at the site, further work will be required in advance of development. If excavation cannot be avoided, the site will offer a very real opportunity of examining the medieval expansion of the burgh as well as its subsequent decline in the 14th century.

Dr Chris Lowe
Headland Archaeology

Pictures of the Past

Anyone who has taken photographs of the sights and landscapes of Northumberland is bound to have some stunning images in their collection as well as a priceless historic record of the changing face of the county. This is exactly what local historian Harry Rowland has amassed during his years of touring Northumberland.

In 2004, Harry decided to donate much of his collection of slides and photographs to several local bodies, including Newcastle University and Northumberland County Council. The slides and photographs are in various different formats and condition and it is hoped that by passing them on to such organisations they can be preserved and made more widely available.

One of the main uses that the Conservation Team is putting the images to is illustrating many more of the records on our online Sites and

slides and some can already be seen online.

Amongst the many hundreds of slides, some of the most important are of old excavations for which we previously had no visual record. These include a medieval iron working site near Longframlington (SMR 4290), the chapel of St Mary Magdalene at Warkworth (SMR 5410), West Whelpington (SMR 9556), and a prehistoric settlement at Hartburn (SMR 10449).



St Mary Magdalene Chapel at Warkworth.
Photo: Harry Rowland

Monuments Record: Keys to the Past (www.keystothepast.info). So far we have scanned over 100 of Harry's

The Conservation Team is extremely grateful to Harry for donating part of his collection to us. Many of the slides are still to be catalogued and we will continue to add images to our website for some time to come.

EW

Duddo Stones

Around a thousand years after the introduction of farming, and a thousand years before the first use of metal, new forms of large public monuments began to appear across the British landscape. Erected by collective endeavour, these included the large ditched enclosures known as henges, and settings of stone and timber uprights, arranged in circles, set singly, or running in linear fashion across the landscape.

The stone circles range in size from the great rings of Stonehenge and Avebury to quite small settings just a few metres in diameter: the presence of associated burials indicate a clear expression of religious belief and, perhaps, an interest in the heavens. An analysis of size, shape (not all circles are indeed circular), disposition and number of the stones deployed, demonstrate not only considerable regional variation, but also possible chronological differences.

Among the Northumbrian examples, although those at Hethpool and The Threestone Burn may impress by their size, undoubtedly the most complete and dramatically situated is that at Duddo (NT 9305 4370). There is no trace today of the outer circle of stones reportedly discovered in the 19th century, and all interest now focuses upon those that encircle the summit of the small knoll overlooking the Tweed Basin. Originally the circle was formed of six sandstone uprights, but sometime before 1852 two stones standing in the south-west quadrant toppled over, and

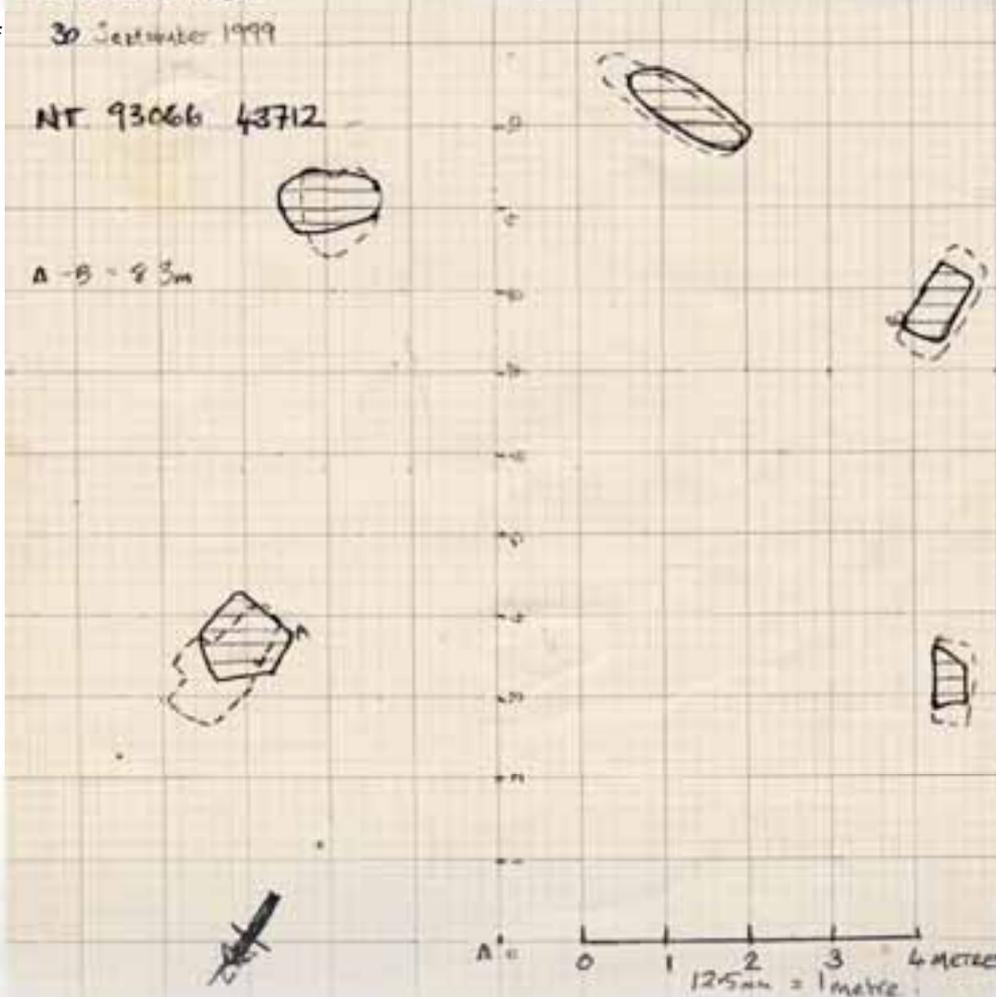
Duddo Stone Circle

30 September 1999

NT 93066 43712

A-B = 8.3m

Tape survey of Dudo Stones. 1999

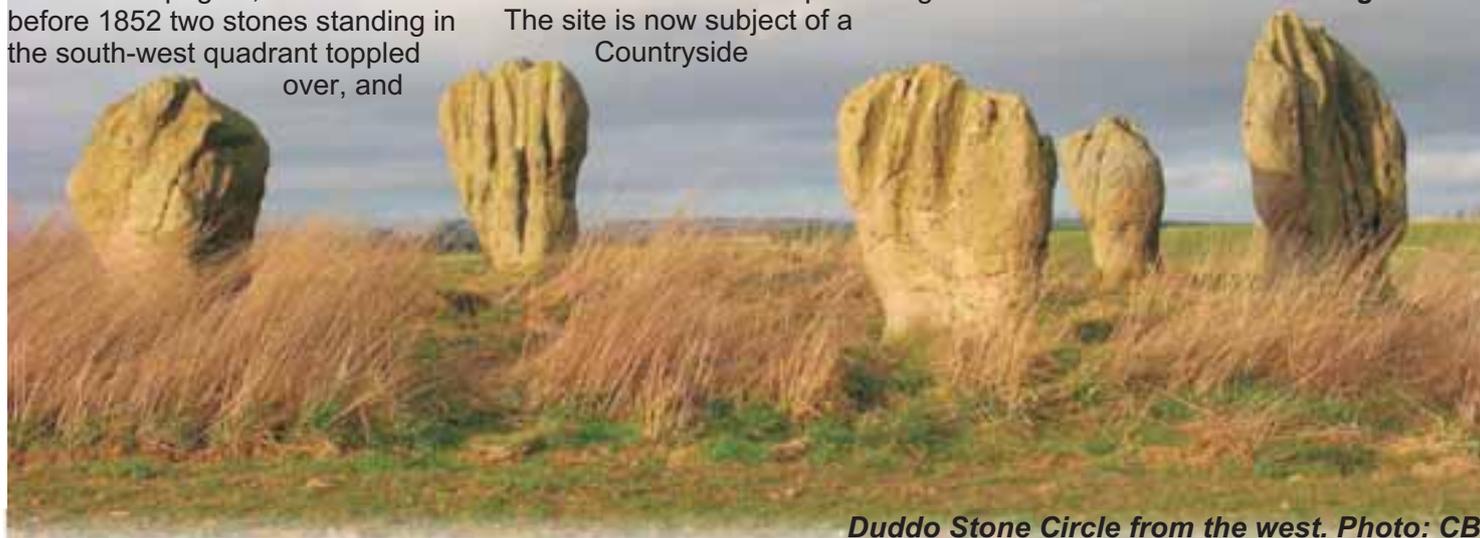


one broke. The other was re-erected in the 1890s, following excavation that revealed a central pit containing a single fragment of pottery and, 'much charcoal and bone'.

Time-sculpted by wind and rain into fantastical shapes, the east-facing stone bears a row of cup-markings. The site is now subject of a Countryside

Stewardship scheme and is freely accessible by foot from the gates at NT 9322 4259 and NT 9284 4457. Discussions are currently underway with DEFRA and the landowner to arrange the preparation of a new interpretation panel.

Roger Miket



Duddo Stone Circle from the west. Photo: CB

Excavations at Salters Nick Shaftoe Crag 2001-2004



Salters Nick rock shelter from the south. Photo: J Davies

Background

Salters Nick is a south-facing rock shelter lying close to a seasonal stream and a permanent spring, at an altitude of 188 metres above Ordnance Datum. It is one of a number of known or suspected rock shelters in this area that have evidence of occupation.

The site has been known for 20 years and is under significant threat from livestock, walkers, quad bikes and off-road motorcycles. The collection of unstratified Early Mesolithic and Late Mesolithic tools from eroding surfaces around the site over a number of years eventually lead to the decision to excavate.

The excavations were funded by the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne and Morpeth Antiquarian Society and ran over three seasons from 2002 to 2004. The site was directed and supervised by John Nolan and John Davies and all the excavators were Northumberland

Archaeological Group members: Chris Bond, Sheila Day, Barbara Esselmont, Jacqui Hutton, Jill Inglis, Gordon Moir, and Steve Tams. The site was excavated entirely by hand with deposits and features recorded on plans and a north-south section. A photographic record was maintained in black and white print and colour transparency. All finds were three dimensionally recorded and the spoil was dry-sieved through a 4mm mesh.

Excavation

The area of excavation was established in 2002. It covered 29 square metres of which 4 square metres lay below the surviving roof slab of the shelter. The remainder extended southwards across the platform and down the natural slope.

The latest deposits were the first to be removed and produced a range of late 19th - 20th century material, including sherds from glass bottles, stoneware jars and other ceramics, as well as fragments of World War II

Spigot mortar bombs a legacy of Home Guard training. A small collection of 30 lithic artefacts was recovered from these disturbed upper deposits. A barbed-and-tanged arrowhead and Early Mesolithic truncated blade being the most diagnostic artefacts. The second season removed layers of probable hill-wash that contained only prehistoric artefacts. Some 150 flint tools and burnt stones were recovered.

The third and final season, in 2004, recovered 1250 flint artefacts, burnt stones, and fragments of ochre. Much of the assemblage came from material redeposited in antiquity either by hillwash or possibly periodic clearance within the rock shelter. However, concentrations of artefacts were noted in sandy soil amongst loose sandstone rubble in the north-east corner of the site (close to a modern dry stone wall) and, at the entrance to the shelter, there was evidence of a fragmentary hearth deposit and a Bronze Age scraper.



Barbed-and-tanged flint arrow head

Post excavation

Soil samples from the site are being processed at Durham University and a sample of charcoal, from the hearth, will be submitted for radiocarbon dating. It is hoped to submit a short report to *Archaeologia Aeliana* in 2006.

Conclusions

The site, though disturbed, has produced a substantial assemblage of worked flint from the Early Mesolithic to the Bronze Age. There is no evidence for use of the shelter between the Bronze Age and the post-medieval period when there may have been some quarrying of the outcrop for building field walls. Finds of late 19th - 20th century material, however, suggest that the shelter was then being used by picnickers and as a target for wartime training.

John Davies and John Nolan

A tale of two Morpeth Bridges

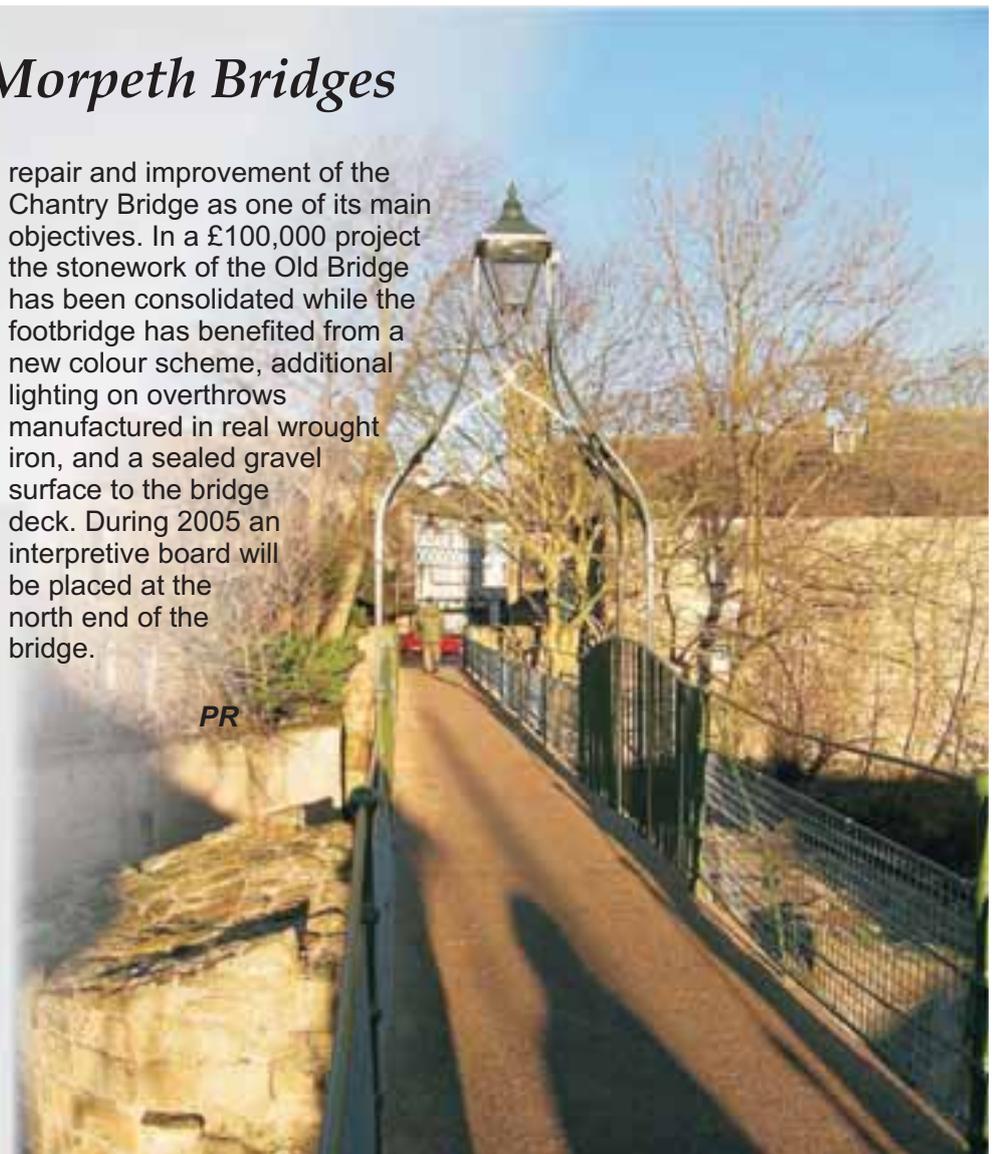
Morpeth's Chantry Bridge is an unusual case of two bridges in one. Basic support is provided by the central pier and abutments of the medieval Morpeth Old Bridge. Resting on this structure is a Victorian iron footbridge originally known as the Mayor's Bridge. It was designed and manufactured by the local firm of Swinney Brothers in 1869.

Hodgson's *History of Morpeth*, written in 1831, commented of the Old Bridge, *For the present rapid mode of travelling it is inconvenient and dangerous the Mail and Wonder coaches having each, within the last 3 years, once carried away the south end of its west battlements, and been thrown with their passengers and horses into the river - fortunately without loss of life.* In the same year the new Telford Bridge became the principal crossing of the River Wansbeck, but the Old Bridge survived for a further three years before its arches were blown up.

Morpeth's Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme identified the

repair and improvement of the Chantry Bridge as one of its main objectives. In a £100,000 project the stonework of the Old Bridge has been consolidated while the footbridge has benefited from a new colour scheme, additional lighting on overthrows manufactured in real wrought iron, and a sealed gravel surface to the bridge deck. During 2005 an interpretive board will be placed at the north end of the bridge.

PR



Defending Elswick: the Blyth Battery

Searchlight emplacements, North Fort

The strategic and tactical value of Blyth has been recognised since at least the end of the 18th century when, as a port, the town was rapidly expanding, mostly due to the trade in coal. During the war with France that started in 1793 and rumbled around Europe and Russia until Napoleon was finally defeated at Waterloo in 1814, a battery was established in Blyth. Thirteen regiments of infantry were also stationed along the Northumberland coast to prevent French invasion of the strategically important coalfields. As is often the case, once the perceived threat was removed in 1814 these defensive measures were abandoned.

It was not until after the Crimean War (1854-56) that the fear of a resurgent France as a true European power led to a re-assessment of Blyth's defences. By this time the port was exporting 145,000 tons of goods, mostly coal, every year. It was of major strategic importance to a country that was coming to rely on coal to drive its industrial expansion and to power the Navy's newest ships. As part of Lord Palmerston's assessment of Coastal Defences it was decided to re-establish the Napoleonic period battery and build a new battery on the Snook consisting of three 68-pound guns.

It is not clear from surviving records whether this battery was ever built but, by the turn of the century, a considerable military presence is recorded on the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map in the area of the current battery (NZ 321 793) This consisted of a hatted camp, where the modern road now lies, and two earthwork (or sand-work) forts, one where the searchlight emplacements now stand, and the other to the south where the Battery itself is located. The remains of these large glacis forts can be seen on the ground underneath the later concrete structures.

Whatever the situation, at the outbreak of the First World War it was patently clear that Blyth was grossly under defended; a point driven home when the German High Seas Fleet bombarded

Hartlepool with impunity during December of that year. Now, however, Blyth's strategic importance had increased immeasurably as not only was it a major coal port, but its beaches were clearly suitable for an invasion north of the Tyne. The true significance of this related to the small community of Elswick, on the west side of Newcastle, 15 miles inland, where Armstrong was now producing much of the country's heavy artillery pieces, and would later build the first tanks.

The need for modern defences was recognised and 18 months later, in the summer of 1916, work was commenced by Durham Fortress Engineers Battalion R.E. on the two installations, the Search Lights and the Gun Battery, that can be seen today at South Beach, Blyth. The process took two years to complete, with the defences going operational in February 1918, manned by 4 officers and 75 men. Its career was short lived however, as within twelve months the war had ended and the need for the battery had dissipated again. The searchlights were the first to go, in January 1919, and although the guns remained operational for a further five years, they too were eventually decommissioned and the site was returned to the local council.

Thus it remained until just a few weeks before the outbreak of the Second World War when perhaps the strategic value of Elswick and the dockyards at Wallsend was a greater concern than the defence of Blyth itself. The Battery (then known as the Seaton Battery) was

recommissioned with two 6-inch naval guns. These guns proved to be unsuitable for mounting in the original structures and were sited temporarily in the dunes. Early in 1940 work commenced on re-opening the original battery structure which had been filled with concrete in the mid 1920s. Once this was complete two new 6-inch Mark 7 guns were mounted on the site and the temporary battery was removed. By June of that year the site had been renamed Blyth Battery to avoid confusion with other Seaton Batteries on the Tees and in Devon. The site now formed part of a wider defensive landscape that included the Gloucester Battery about a mile to the south and the Gloucester heavy Anti-Aircraft Artillery site just inland.

The defences remained operational until shortly after D-Day, when they were placed in "Care and Maintenance" and effectively mothballed against a potential future threat. They remained in that state until April 1949 when, after almost 150 years of intermittent military presence, they were finally decommissioned for good.

Today visitors can park on the quiet road behind the site and walk around all of the buildings. The gun emplacements themselves survive pretty much as they were abandoned, with the notable addition of a wall on their south side to prevent people falling off a high edge. The toilet block is still in use, as is the magazine building and the Second World War fire control tower which is now used as a life guard station. The First World War rangefinder building (with its circular iron cupola) is a rare survival and attracts international visitors interested in researching the buildings of the period.

To the north of the playground (where the Second World War barracks stood) the searchlight buildings also survive intact and can be viewed from the outside. Finally, the Gloucester AAA battery, about a mile to south can also be seen and is a very rare survival. It is visible from the road and from a bridle path that runs along its southern side. The field itself is privately owned and there are no access arrangements to it.



*WW1 (left) and WW2 (right)
Rangefinder and Fire-control Towers*

Norham Castle Face Lift

For the second time in fifty years, major conservation repairs have been carried out at Norham Castle, one of the strongest of the Border castles with a massive 30 metre high 12th century Keep towering over the river Tweed.

Mortar samples were taken from both the original lime mortar core and the modern pointing material and sent to the Scottish Lime Centre for analysis. Their reports concluded, from visual and chemical interpretation, that the original mortar may have been made and used as a Hotlime mix (where the sand and quicklime were slaked together and allowed to mature). The modern mortar used in the post-Guardianship consolidation was composed of one part cement to three parts sand (with quite heavy aggregate mixed in). This hard, dense and impermeable material was very commonly used in conservation in the 20th century in Northern and Scottish

areas and is colloquially referred to as "Scotch Pointing". It appears from widespread evidence here and at other monuments that its use has, quite unintentionally, contributed to an accelerated stone decay by preventing the natural movement of moisture through the stone and creating pockets where trapped water could freeze and destroy the sandstone bonding.

To compound the problem, during first time conservation work it was also common practice, where deep open cavities existed, to pour a liquid neat cement grout into the structure in order to re-consolidate the core of the wall. Today, Heritage Grout is used for void filling where low strength grout and absence of Portland cement hydrates are desirable. Hydraulic lime is used as the key binder. The product has been designed for World Heritage site projects and in particular, church, cathedral and other ancient structures that require repair using traditional

materials and techniques. During the course of this project and to slow down the decay process, the contractor removed as much as possible of the cementitious mortar without damaging the stone and repointed using a hydraulic lime based recipe which is sympathetic to the stone and should not cause further decay.

Included in the work was the selective replacement of a number of stones so far decayed that their structural integrity was in doubt. English Heritage was helped by a local quarrymaster to find a Northumbrian stone of good colour and texture to match the original stone. A stone from his own quarry in Scotland was declined because it seemed unlikely that the original builders of the castle would have sourced their material from hostile territory.

Ray Stockdale
English Heritage

Hidden Treasures: Ford Moss

Coal mining in Northumberland is traditionally associated with the south-east of the County and the Tyne valley and it is in these areas indeed that the most important mines were to develop. Beyond the Cheviot Hills, accessible coal seams are to be found widely within the sedimentary rock strata. Poor roads, which hindered the import of fuel, made it worthwhile exploiting coal measures in the most rural of locations.

While the depressions of long abandoned bell pits are all that remain of many small rural coal fields, at Ford Moss there are far more impressive remains. This mine dates back at least to the 17th century and evidence of workings

is widespread. The most impressive features date from the 19th century when coal seams were exploited beneath the peat bog which forms the Moss. A fine boiler house chimney made of curved bricks, a beam engine house, and a small explosives store are prominent amongst the remains. At one time this mine supported its own community and the foundations of about thirty small houses can be found in rows around the Moss. The most distinct remains (the last occupied) are the row of six dwellings at the east of the site which form Blue Row. These small houses, which have good quality surviving stonework and evidence of long gardens, each with a pigsty, may have been model houses built to a design reflecting Lady Waterford's architecture within Ford Village.

Although once prosperous, supplying both the major local lime burning industry and domestic

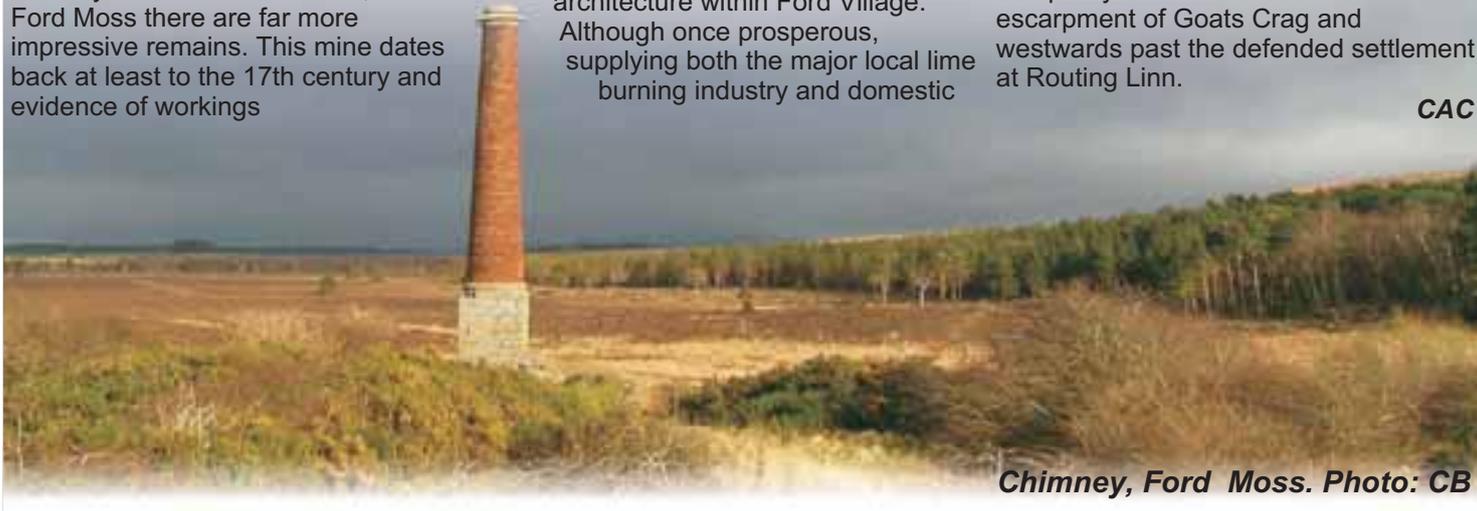
market within an area extending as far as Kelso, the mine had become uncompetitive in the 20th century and did not reopen after the First World War. Some of the miners found alternative work in the sandstone quarry to the south-east, within which there is still discarded equipment including the quarry crane.

National Grid Reference
NT 965 375

Directions

A public right of way provides access around Ford Moss. Access at the west end (at NT 963 377) is via a small road to the east of Ford Village, the footpath can be followed past the remains of the old quarry on to the sandstone escarpment of Goats Crag and westwards past the defended settlement at Routing Linn.

CAC



Chimney, Ford Moss. Photo: CB

The Chillingham Cattle. Unique Conservation.



A Juvenile Bull, solitary from the herd. Photo: CB

The Chillingham Wild Cattle, sole survivors of their species to remain pure breeding and uncrossed with any domestic cattle, still roam in their natural surroundings over about 300 acres of Chillingham Park in Northumberland.

Though their origin is uncertain, the existing herd is thought to have been at Chillingham for at least the past 700 years. Before that, it is probable that they roamed the great forest which extended from the North Sea coast to the Clyde estuary; and it is presumed that when, some time in the 13th Century, the King of England gave permission for Chillingham Castle to be "castellated and crenulated" and for a park wall to be built, the herd was corralled for purposes of food. The successful capture of a number of wild cattle in those days

would not only have eased the local food situation, but would also have made it impossible for raiders to take such cattle back with them across the border since, being wild and extremely fierce, they could not have been driven like their domestic cousins.

As to their ancestors, the shape of the skull and the manner in which the horns grow out from it are similar to the Aurochs (*bos primogenius*) and quite different from the skull of the Roman importation (*bos lonifrons*). It is thought by many therefore that the Chillingham Wild Cattle are the direct descendants of the original ox which roamed these islands before the dawn of history. How they came to be white is another interesting matter for speculation. They invariably breed true to type and have never been known to throw a coloured, or even partially coloured, calf.

In recent years, it has been possible to obtain live blood samples from several of the wild cattle just prior to their deaths. Dr J G Hall of the Edinburgh Animal Breeding Research Organisation has analysed these samples from the genetic point of view and has found the blood grouping to be unique amongst western European cattle. Their origin therefore still remains a mystery.

Scientific Importance

The genetic aspect is also of interest. For the past 700 years they have been inbreeding and, as far as one can tell for records of their distant past are scant, the only effect has been that they are now somewhat smaller than they used to be. Old skulls found in the park have shown this. Their remarkable survival may be due to the fact that the fittest and strongest bull becomes "King" and the leader of the herd. He remains

King for just as long as no other bull can successfully challenge him in combat, and during his term of kingship, he will sire all the calves that are born. Nature seems thus to have ensured the carrying forward of only the best available blood. Alone among the 1,200 million cattle in the world today, they live without human interference. Bulls fight in competition for mating opportunities; calves grow up in companionship with each other and live out a natural lifespan. The social life of the herd goes on as of eternity.

Research published in the world's leading scientific journal *Nature*, January 2001, confirmed that the cattle are genetically identical. This reflects their long history of inbreeding. Yet no two adult animals are the same; the differences being purely due to the environment. The fertility and viability of the herd have not deteriorated since herd records began, at Charles Darwin's insistence in 1862, suggesting that long inbreeding has purged harmful genes.

Many scientific papers have been published on

the Chillingham Wild Cattle, in many countries. All over the world specialists in veterinary and zoological sciences study the herd and everyone enjoys the pleasure and pure fascination of watching

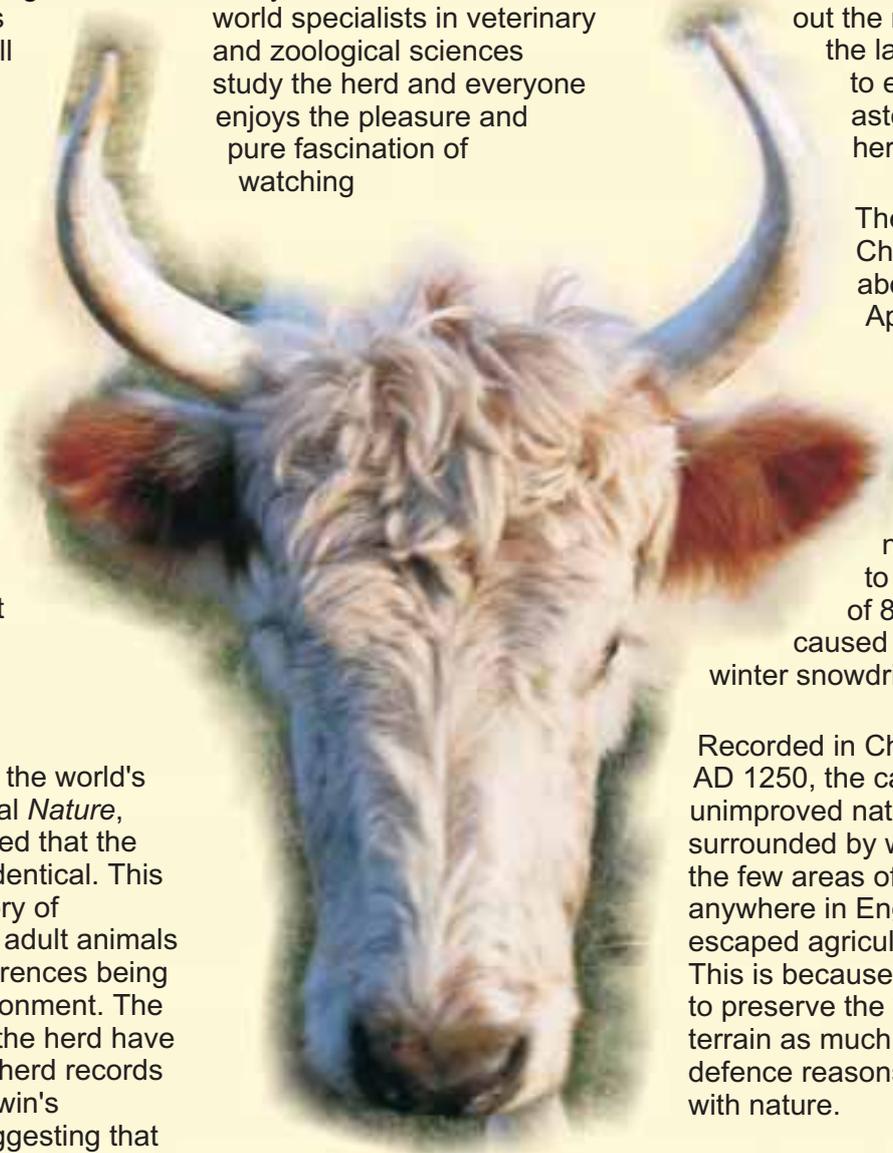
their wild behaviour patterns. Visitors ask the Warden to point out the reigning King Bull, or the latest new born calf, or to explain the astonishing rituals of the herd under threat.

The present herd at Chillingham remains at about 50 animals. An Appeal is underway to help maintain the Park in such a way that herd numbers are sustained at this healthy level ~ never again must numbers be allowed to fall to the all time low of 8 cows and 5 bulls, caused by the disastrous winter snowdrifts of 1947.

Recorded in Chillingham Park since AD 1250, the cattle graze an area of unimproved natural grassland surrounded by woods. This is one of the few areas of historic parkland anywhere in England to have escaped agricultural 'improvement'. This is because past owners wished to preserve the Wild Cattle and their terrain as much for security and defence reasons as for sympathy with nature.

Speckled faces, curving horns and red ears are characteristic.
Photo: CB

Philip Deakin and Austin Widdows



Cow and Calf with the herd. Photo: CB

Alnwick Castle Gardens

The initial results of archaeological work at the site of The Alnwick Garden, at Alnwick Castle, appeared in *Archaeology in Northumberland 2000-2001*. Since then, Pre-Construct Archaeology has been working on a post-excavation assessment of the findings which has revealed some interesting results and helped fill in more details about the development of the Castle Gardens.

The Alnwick Garden lies on the site of the historic walled Castle Gardens, occupying about 4 hectares to the south-east of Alnwick Castle. Walled gardens were initially set out in this area by the 1st Duke of Northumberland around 1760, and saw major re-development by the 4th Duke around 1860. In recent years the site had fallen into disrepair, before the Duchess of Northumberland's visionary redevelopment from 2000.

The archaeological work comprised excavations in two areas

(northern and southern) of the central corridor of the site, where groundworks for the new 'Grand Cascade' were to impact upon buried remains. In addition, building recording was carried out on historic standing structures. Earthwork survey was carried out on 19th century earthworks, which were to remain in place.

Remains pre-dating the Castle Gardens

The northern excavation area revealed traces of medieval soils with some evidence of medieval or later field systems. A pre-garden soil with evidence of ploughing was identified in the southern area, but

could only be dated broadly to before the creation of a garden in this area, about 1860.

The Formal Gardens of the 1st and 2nd Dukes

The earliest evidence for development of the land as a formal garden was found in the northern excavation area, where the remains of a central ornamental pond with brick and sandstone surround were recorded. Traces of paths and garden soils were recorded and these probably derive from the garden of the

have given the garden symmetry. Historic sources suggest that the 2nd Duke promoted the cultivation of exotic fruits and indeed such activity appears to have been a major preoccupation throughout the garden's history. It is known that the 2nd Duke invested in new hothouses, two vineries, a mushroom house and a fruiting pine stove. These buildings were designed by John Hay of Edinburgh and built between 1808 and 1811 by local masons Nesbitt and Shepherd. The earliest phases of hothouse construction at Alnwick may have

employed 'hot wall' technology, a technique that became popular in the mid 18th century and increased in complexity throughout the 19th century. This was primarily used to extend fruiting seasons, force fruit and protect fruit blossoms from frost.

The 3rd Duke's Garden

The 3rd Duke began redevelopment of the gardens in 1817. Map evidence shows that by 1826 the gardens had three central structures along an

east-west axis. The middle structure, possibly a glasshouse, was indicated by much demolition debris identified towards the northern limit of the northern excavation area. To either side were the existing two hothouses, and a metallic frame. A third hothouse was constructed to the east of the excavation areas. Water supplies were extended to the garden from the castle and evidence for the use of this new water supply was recorded. There was also evidence for the resurfacing of several paths and a substantial cobbled pathway appeared to surround a central feature, probably an existing pond. The Duke's involvement at Syon (also part of the Northumberland Estates) resulted in



The Castle Gardens from the south. Photo: Northumberland Estates

1st Duke of Northumberland (1755-1786). His influence may be reflected on a map of 1788 which shows a garden apparently divided into a series of rectangular beds with a central pond.

A second major phase of garden re-design was noted in the archaeological record in the northern area, following infilling of the pond and general levelling. Garden soils were developed or introduced across the excavation area. Drainage measures were undertaken and some of the water used to irrigate the site may have derived from a stone-lined well that was exposed. Parallel paths recorded on a north-south axis would

many new plant varieties, from all over the world, being cultivated and this was no doubt reflected at Alnwick.

The archaeological evidence suggests a formally laid out garden at this time, defined by paths with ornamental flowerbeds and a central pond in front of a conservatory and two hothouses. The Duke also provided a water tower to supply the gardens (and his new pond). Reworking of the soils, restoration of borders and resurfacing of paths were all dominant themes in the archaeological record.

The 4th Duke's Redesign

The 4th Duke succeeded his brother in 1847 and by 1859 had purchased land to the south of the existing walled garden and plans were drawn up for a new, extended and largely decorative garden. William Andrews Nesfield (1794-1881) was apparently commissioned to draw up designs in 1860 although his proposals were probably not fully carried out. In the end, a more Italianate garden was constructed, reflecting the Duke's taste and current fashions.

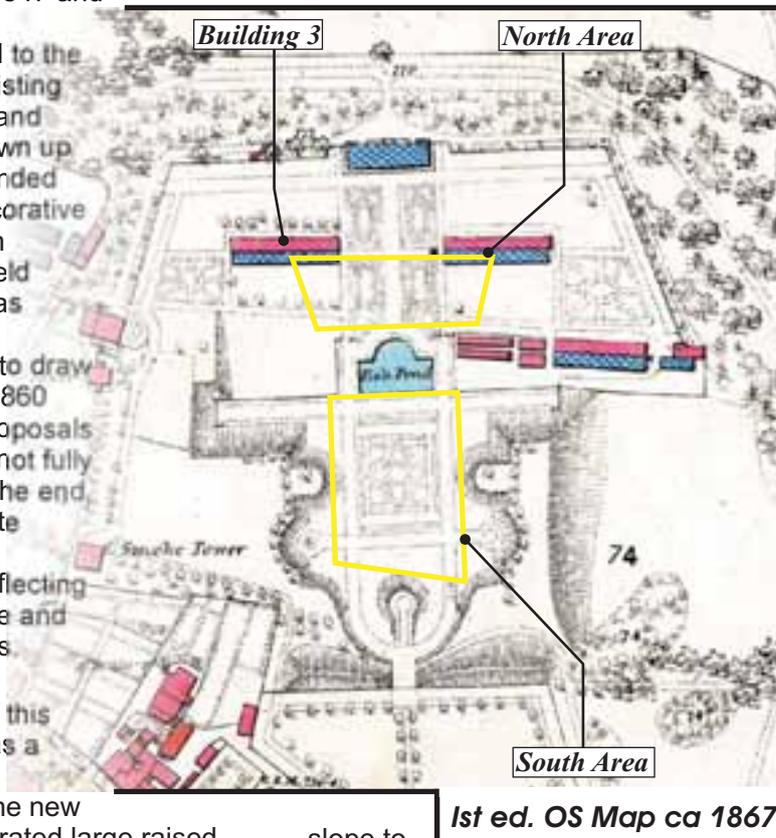
The creation of this new garden was a substantial undertaking. The new garden incorporated large raised mounds to the south, with associated terracing and the construction of a large central pond. This entailed considerable excavation and level changes, reflected in the archaeological record, especially in the southern area where a significant depth of what appeared to be imported sand was encountered below garden deposits. The Ordnance Survey map of 1867 shows this garden as originally laid out, with mounds to the south, a large sloping parterre, central ornamental pond, terrace walls and parterre gardens, hothouses and a conservatory to the north.

In the northern area, a symmetrical, formal garden was laid out, with

parterres defined by cobble borders flanking a broad central path, with smaller north-south paths to either side. A central east-west path crossed the garden, and was identified at the northern limit of excavation.

The three hothouses remained and evidence for substantial modification, at least to Building 3, was recorded. Some internal doorways were blocked up and the central portion appears to have been converted for domestic habitation, presumably providing gardeners' accommodation.

In the southern excavation area, new formal garden parterres, set on a



slope to maximise views out over the garden and beyond, are shown on the 1867 map. While very little of the original layout of the parterres survived in the archaeological record, the remains that did survive closely reflect the layout shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1897. I

n 1862, a new conservatory was built adjacent to the northern wall of the Castle Gardens. The surviving remains of this structure were recorded, comprising a small, formal garden, surrounded by a stone balustrade, with a small central pond.

Later usage

There were evidently few modifications to the Castle

Gardens after the 4th Duke's redesign, until the time of the current project. A correspondent for *The Garden* visited the head gardener at Alnwick in August 1881 and when shown 'the fruit room' reported:

The fruits stored in this house in the season include a great variety of Pines and Grapes and Melons (which average from 3lbs to 5lbs each, and sometimes reach 6 and a half pounds weight). Bananas (which are in favour here), and passing from the stove to out door fruits, such a variety of Pears, Apples, Plums, Peaches, Apricots and Nectarines as one would hardly expect to find on the east Coast, five or six miles only from the North Sea and 350 miles north of London.

The garden was turned over to intense vegetable growing during World War II and archaeological evidence was found for digging over of the parterres in the northern excavation area. The garden subsequently declined further and the remaining glasshouses were dismantled in 1953. Later uses of the garden included as a tree nursery, stone yard, car park and rubbish dump.

Finds

The ceramic material from the site was principally horticultural pottery and only a very small quantity of domestic pottery was recovered.

The faunal remains that were recovered, including a peculiar combination of cattle horn cores, dismembered horse bones and sheep feet bones, suggests specialised dumped debris from a knacker's yard or tannery. The prevalence of tanneries within the town of Alnwick is indicated on a map of 1827.

It had been hoped that examination of plant macrofossils from the site would be very informative with regard to planting schemes and plant varieties. Unfortunately, preservation of such remains in bulk samples was particularly poor. However, among the small finds recovered from the site were 19 lead plant identification tags, of a type commonly found in 19th century gardens.

Robin Taylor-Wilson
Pre-Construct Archaeology

Ad Gefrin: A new way forward for conservation management



Ad Gefrin (foreground) and Yeavinger Bell from the north. Photo: Mel Clarke. Copyright: AirFotos Ltd.

Ad Gefrin (pronounced yefrin), or literally “at the Hill of the Goats”, is better known today as Yeavinger. Located 5km west of Wooler, on the northern edge of the Cheviots, the site is famous for its towering dark hill, “Yeavinger Bell”. The hill is crested by a stone rampart, forming one of the most impressive forts in Northumberland, and is home to a herd of feral goats.

Less well-known is the field that stands at the foot of the “Bell”. Yet, for a few short decades, from the mid sixth century AD until the last years of the seventh century, this featureless meadow was an epicentre of power in northern England and the scene of one of the most important ministries of the Christian world. It was here, at the junction of the main routes from the north, south and west (Scotland, Yetholm and Kelso) overlooking the fertile Milfield Plain to the east, that

the pagan King of Northumbria, Edwin and his Christian Queen, Aethelburga, came with their court to be seen by their northern subjects. It was also here that Aethelburga's priest, the Bishop Paulinus, converted and baptised large numbers of Northumbrians. In AD627, Edwin himself became a convert to the new religion.

Yet, as with all great centres of power, Ad Gefrin's influence eventually waned. For reasons that today are unclear, during the last decades of the seventh century AD a new palace was built several kilometres to the north-east at Milfield. Over the next few years the buildings “at the Hill of the Goats” fell into decay. Since that time, for almost 1300 years the field has lain silent and empty, to be used for both pastoral and arable farming and latterly only for grazing sheep.

And so it remained until 1949 when the site was rediscovered through aerial photography. Since that time there have been a number of investigations “at the Hill of the Goats”, most notably the excavations of Brian Hope-Taylor between 1953 and 1962. These were published in a comprehensive volume: *Yeavinger, An Anglo-British centre of early Northumbria* (HMSO 1977). It is through Hope-Taylor's research and subsequent smaller interventions that we know so much about Edwin and Aethelburga's palace on the southern shore of the River Glen. Yet, despite the startling revelations, the site remains little-known by the public and, with the exception of it being scheduled as an ancient monument, it has remained vulnerable to its agricultural regime and attendant erosion.

During the spring of 2003 the field “at the Hill of the Goats” was offered for

sale. This opportunity led to expressions of interest not only from agricultural quarters, but also from various archaeological interests including, unbeknown to each other, several private individuals as well as Northumberland County Council and Northumberland National Park. The final successful bidder was Roger Miket, a local archaeologist who had himself, together with Colm O'Brien of Newcastle University, excavated at the nearby contemporary Anglo-British settlement at Thirlings. Roger's aim for the site was to place its management on an even footing before transferring its ownership into the hands of an Independent Charitable Trust.

So began a year-long process of negotiations, including agreements with the sitting tenant to reduce the levels of grazing and to allow public access. Having completed this delicate dialogue successfully Roger then turned to various interested experts including Professor Rosemary Cramp of Durham University, the County Council and the Northumberland National Park to seek advice for the best way forward to establish the Trust.

This trust would be constituted of representatives of not only local government and English Heritage but also the local community and the summit of the academic world (a full list of members can be seen at the end of this article). It would also have the ability to co-opt other members to address specific management issues.

In the spring of 2004 the proposed Trust members met for the first time and since that date have been meeting every four months to discuss the future of the site, a management plan, and ongoing works there. Progress has been swift: an application to DEFRA for Countryside Stewardship has seen funding become available for the re-fencing and stone walling of the site and for improvements to access. Plans have been made for new gates, a path that eventually will allow full disabled access, and, as an interim measure, four interpretation panels that will allow visitors to visualise the Great Hall and Palace of Edwin's reign and the Cuneus (the

theatre) within which Paulinus preached to Edwin's subjects.

The Trust, now incorporated as a company, exists beyond its current membership to manage the future of this nationally important site, not only ensuring that it is saved from any further deterioration, but finding sympathetic ways to allow access and understanding of this little-known national treasure.

For those wishing to visit the site, take the A697 north through Wooler towards Milfield, then turn left (west) onto the B6351 at Akeld and follow the road for 3km. As the road rises over a low crest (and with Yeavinger Bell on your left) the Gefrin Monument (erected after Hope-Taylor's excavations) will be visible on the right. There is parking at the monument and 200 metres further on where the road takes a sharp turn to the right and a farm track turns off to the left. By the Summer of 2005 the access gates and interpretation should be in place.

Further information about Ad Gefrin can be found on the Web at

www.pastperfect.info
www.gefrintrust.co.uk
www.Gefrin.com

The Gefrin Trust's contact details can be found on their site. While Hope-Taylor's site report is out of print copies should be available in main and university libraries.

Members of the Gefrin Trust

Chair: Professor Rosemary Cramp
 Secretary: Roger Miket
 Northumberland County Archaeologist (currently Chris Burgess and Sara Rushton)
 Northumberland National Park Archaeologist (currently Paul Frodsham)

Glendale Gateway Trust representing the local community (currently Tom Jonstone)

Co-opted members

English Heritage Inspector (currently Kate Wilson)
 Dr Chris Gerrard (University of Durham, Department of Archaeology)

Hidden Treasures: The Union Chain Bridge, Horncliffe



There can be no finer way to cross the border into Scotland than over the Union Chain Bridge. Its deck seems to float over the dark waters of the Tweed. Closer inspection of the first suspension bridge in Europe to carry vehicular traffic reveals its slender wrought iron chain links, the technology which led to the development of long span suspension bridges. On the Scottish side a freestanding support tower gives the impression of a defensible structure guarding entry to the Country. Built in 1820, to the designs of Captain Samuel Brown, it cost about a third of an equivalent masonry bridge.

National Grid Reference:
 NT 9340 5104.

Directions:

The bridge is located 4 miles west of Berwick-upon-Tweed close to the village of Horncliffe. Park on the roadside at the Scottish end of the bridge.

The National Trust acquires Rothley Castle



Rothley Castle. Photo: Harry Rowland

After 126 years, a missing piece of Wallington's history has been reunited with the rest of the estate.

The "vast ruin'd Castle built of Black Moor Stone" on Rothley Crag appears on the skyline from a wide area to the north of Cambo (grid reference NZ 043887). The Castle is actually a folly designed by Daniel Garrett in the 1740s as an eyecatcher within Sir Walter Blackett's newly created deer park at Rothley. In its heyday the building was decorated with giant figures (including the fragments from the City of London gates, now at Wallington) and whalebones! In 1879 the Castle, Crag and surrounding land were sold off and remained in private ownership until earlier this year when the land was put up for sale. The National Trust quickly sought to secure its purchase and was delighted when its offer, funded by a generous donation, was accepted.

The acquisition came at a critical time - the Castle, a Grade 2* listed

building, was in a perilous state and one of the first tasks will be to carry out substantial stabilisation work.

The purchase also brings other important archaeological remains into the protection of the National Trust. On top of the Crag there is a prehistoric hilltop enclosure. The inner area of this enclosure was reused as a defensible nightfold to protect livestock from Reiver attack. Rothley Crag was also one of a chain of beacons maintained along the Border Watch Line to give warning of approaching danger. The land is crossed by old "cast" boundaries, perhaps dating from the medieval period when Rothley was a Grange belonging to Newminster Abbey at Morpeth. There is also a fine rock-cut drinker, presumably from the deer park era, which channels rainwater from a natural outcrop slab into a trough cut into the rock. Agricultural use following the disparking of Rothley after Sir Walter's death in 1777 is represented by fine stone walls and the stone posts of a late 18th or early 19th century sheep pen.

The 242-acre acquisition is roughly the western half of the original area of Rothley Deer Park, enclosed by Sir Walter in 1741. The surviving historic plantings reflect the original ornamental plantations in the deer park and include some good veteran trees.

The National Trust has entered the land into DEFRA's Countryside Stewardship Scheme which is contributing to the costs of consolidating the Castle and restoring the impressive parkland walls. The scheme is also helping to fund the conservation management of the heathland vegetation on the crags and the pastures to the south. This land management is being undertaken in partnership with a tenant farmer who will graze the land with sheep and cattle, including native breeds. The Trust is also looking carefully at ways to improve public access without losing the drama and solitude that makes visits to this historic site so special.

**Harry Beamish
The National Trust**

Hareshaw Iron Works

Every year thousands of walkers follow the route of one of Northumberland National Park's most popular walks from Bellingham to Hareshaw Linn. On the way to the waterfall, few will appreciate that they are passing through the site of a 19th century ironworks (grid reference NY 842836). A closer inspection will reveal some evidence of its remains including workers cottages, waste heaps and the ruins of a dam. The latter is now a scheduled ancient monument in the ownership of Northumberland National Park Authority and included in English Heritage's Buildings At Risk Register. During the Autumn of 2004 it was repaired in a £40,000 scheme designed and project managed by the Conservation Team and Operational Services Directorate on behalf of the National Park Authority.

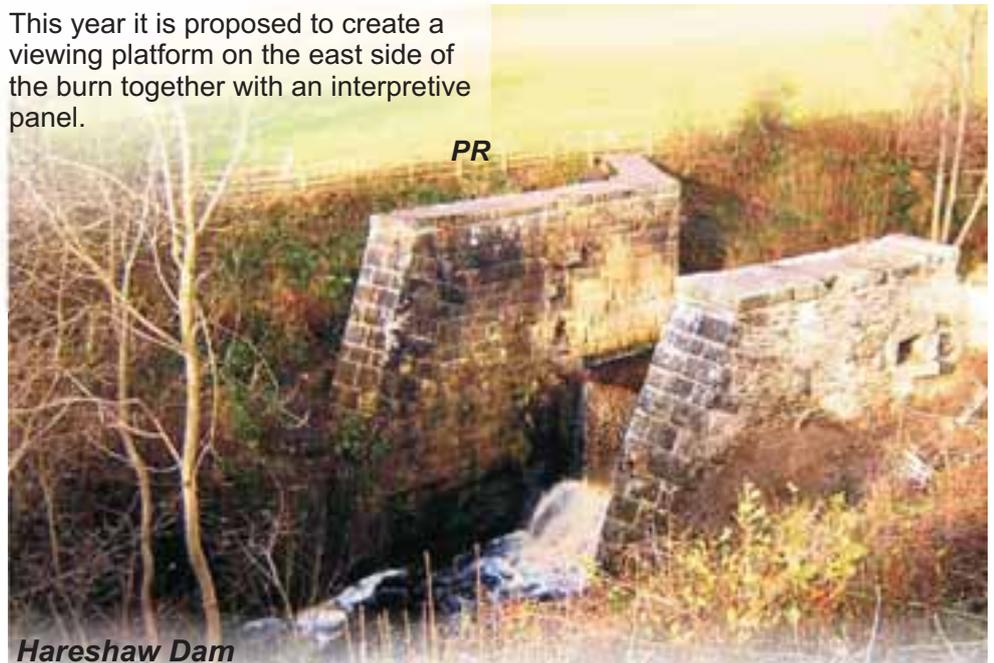
Hareshaw Ironworks and the nearby Ridsdale Ironworks (*Archaeology in Northumberland 1996-97*, p38) were part of the short-lived rural iron industry in Northumberland which sprang up in the early 19th century at sites where the raw materials were available. Established in 1838 by Messrs Bigge and Partners, Hareshaw had two blast furnaces with a further one added in 1840. At the peak of its operation the site also contained 70 coke ovens, 24 large roasting kilns for calcining the iron ore, a range of coal stores, a blacksmiths shop, wagon shed, stables and stores. The works were in continuous production until 1848 and were maintained by the Union Bank of Newcastle upon Tyne for a further ten years in anticipation of the proposed Borders Railway. By the time it arrived the bank was in financial difficulties and the limitations imposed by local sources of supply resulted in the plant being auctioned and many of the buildings demolished.

The dam, which can be found in the steep valley of the Hareshaw Burn, contained a sheet of water 30m by 200m. In the east wall is a large rectangular opening which would have contained a sluice gate to control the flow of water to a stone-lined channel or head race that connected to the ironworks. Here it powered a 70hp waterwheel which,

together with a 120hp steam engine, provided the air blast for the furnaces. The dam wall appears to have been partly dismantled after the final closure of the works to a level below the sluice gate, though the lower courses survived until the late 1960s when they were swept away in a severe flood. The stress cracks on the inner wing walls and the sockets of the dam wall are clearly visible. It is thought that the pressure of water, or impact damage on the dam wall, forced out the wing walls and that the subsequent loss of compression resulted in the collapse of the dam wall. The stone blocks can be found in the burn as far away as the Redesdale Road Bridge.

The ravages of time can exert a heavy toll and major structural problems led to English Heritage designating the dam as being 'at risk'. Collapsed masonry needed to be rebuilt, wall tops protected, and vegetation removed. Of further concern was the water flow in the burn undermining the bedrock supporting the east wing wall. Draining of the pool below the dam revealed the extent of the problem which was solved by the introduction of stainless steel rods to tie the unsupported rock to the bank side. This 'invisible' repair has no impact on the appearance of the dam. Although the structure is now in good condition it will need to be regularly inspected and maintained.

This year it is proposed to create a viewing platform on the east side of the burn together with an interpretive panel.



Adding to the Record

Over the last year work on updating and enhancing the Sites and Monuments Record has concentrated largely on the built heritage of the County. More than half of the 5500 listed buildings in Northumberland have been added to the SMR and the remainder will hopefully be completed by the end of 2005. As well as listed buildings, a survey by John Grundy, in the 1980s, of historic buildings of local interest in the Northumberland National Park has also been included.

The SMR not only records sites and monuments, but archaeological events as well. Since 2000, all watching briefs, trial trenching, geophysical surveys, etc, have been recorded on a database and on a geographic information system (GIS). In 2005 we are starting a programme of plotting older 'events', from the 1990s, to make this information more complete.

The GIS system has been greatly enhanced this year with the addition of seamless digital aerial photography. This layer of information has already proved very useful in identifying new archaeological sites and further study is likely to prove just as rewarding.

EW

A prehistoric site at Milfield Village



Diggers mark post holes on the site. Photo: ARS

A small site in Milfield village, near Wooler, was fully excavated during summer 2004 in advance of a house construction. An earlier investigation of the site had indicated that post holes existed in the area of the building plot, but their date and form remained unknown. The excavations revealed a series of eight archaeological features that included six post holes, one stakehole and one pit. This triangular arrangement of features suggested the presence of a fairly substantial

structure, and pottery finds from two of the post holes indicated a Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age date (4000-2000 BC). The pottery can be assigned to the 'Impressed Ware' style of pottery which is normally associated with the mid and later Neolithic periods. Subsequent radiocarbon dating of a hazelnut shell from the same pit that contained most of the pottery returned a date of about 2100BC.

Preserved organic material indicated

that wheat was being grown in the vicinity of the site and that the surrounding landscape comprised mixed woodland of oak, hazel, birch and alder. Other plants identified included grasses, clover and nettle, the latter being an indicator of disturbed ground, possibly for agriculture or grazing. A flint flake and a chert flake were found on the site together with some struck agate, including one bladelet and a core that are indicative of earlier, Mesolithic, activity on the site.

These structural features are thought to represent the remains of a short-lived dwelling, and the date for the site shows that it was in use at the same time as the nearby henges. In fact the Milfield South henge lies just 500m south-east of the site and would have been in full view from the settlement. This site provides some of the first evidence we have for where the henge builders lived, however more data is necessary if we are to know whether these nearby settlements were occupied permanently, or for short stays only, when gatherings took place at the henges.

**James Brightman
and Clive Waddington
Archaeological Research Services**

Weetwood Bridge (is falling down)

If Weetwood Bridge is falling down, falling down, fill it with lightweight polystyrene. It might sound like a perverse nursery rhyme but it's actually a structural engineer's solution for the repair of a scheduled ancient monument.

The narrow hump-backed bridge over the River Till near Wooler dates from the 16th century and consists of an elegant single arch flanked by pilasters, each of which contains a niche. It was partly rebuilt in the 18th century but structural problems have led to traffic

restrictions and its inclusion on English Heritage's Buildings At Risk Register.

After a thorough archaeological investigation of the rubble fill material within the bridge, it was decided to remove and replace it with polystyrene foam which is a lightweight material, resistant to rot and with a high compressive strength. The outer walls will then be tied together with stainless steel anchors to provide additional strength. Although it is regrettable to lose the historic fill it will be fully recorded and the bridge will benefit from an 'invisible' repair due to take place in 2005.

PR

Falstone Tea Rooms

Falstone Village near Kielder Water is not the sort of place that you would expect to find leading edge building design. Yet Northumberland National Park Authority's Falstone Tearooms has been short listed for the prestigious Civic Trust Rural Design Award for the best development designed to enhance sensitive landscapes.

The former village school, which dates from the 1870s, is of local architectural and historic interest. It was purchased by the National Park Authority in 2002 with the intention of creating a modern tea room, shop, visitor and community facility featuring a number of energy saving measures. With assistance from the Conservation Team, a challenging development brief was agreed and internationally renowned architects RMJM appointed. It was recognised that the original school room was of such importance that works should be restricted to careful repair and restoration. A series of 20th century extensions of no particular merit offered the opportunity for redevelopment to provide additional facilities in a sustainable manner. Rather than copy the features of the Victorian building it was decided that the clear application of contemporary design was the best way to complement the old school. This should demonstrate that a modern design approach is nothing to be afraid of and can offer plenty to delight. Not everyone was



comfortable with this 'radical' approach and the local community and National Park Planning Committee harboured some reservations before the proposals were finally approved.

The new tearooms now has photovoltaic cells on the roof to convert daylight into electricity, the first of its kind in the National Park; a biomass wood pellet boiler to heat the radiators and water, which is publicly viewable; a tank to harness rainwater to use for flushing the toilets; and a log burning stove from a site in Kielder similar to the one which would have been used in the old school. When the sun shines the play of light on the roof casts an ever changing shadow pattern on the walls of the building and the fully

glazed front wall helps to integrate the interior with the external tea bar. Close by, the grade II listed Jubilee Drinking Fountain has been incorporated into the scheme and given a more dignified setting. The building work was undertaken by local contractors TK Builders and even the photovoltaics were manufactured in Consett. But the salutary lesson is that there is an important place for good modern design in sensitive landscapes. It is fitting that such an exemplary scheme should come from the National Park Authority at a time when it prepares to update its building design guidance. Even if modern design is not to your taste the wonderful cakes and scones surely will be.

PR

Flint Arrowhead from Callaly

One of the more attractive artefacts to have been donated to the Museum of Antiquities this year is a fine barbed and tanged arrowhead, of typical Bronze Age type, which was found at Callaly. The arrowhead has been knapped from a light grey, almost white, flint with a few darker grey inclusions.

The craftsmanship is not of the finest as one nibbled edge has a nick in it, formed by a natural inclusion, whilst the wide tang is at a

slant. Whilst the arrowhead would have functioned, despite these flaws, there may still be some suspicion that it was discarded before use.

The arrowhead was found at a field edge at NU 05182 09100 by a walker and brought in to the Museum initially for identification. Its accession number is now 2004.19.

Lindsay Allason-Jones
Museum of Antiquities



The Tweeddale Press Building

Northumberland County Council and Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council are jointly developing the Berwick Town Workspace Project aimed at facilitating the start-up and survival of small businesses in the area. The site of the now disused Tweeddale Press Buildings, a mixed group of structures lying between Walkergate and Marygate in the centre of the town, is the favoured location for the project.

Northumberland County Council commissioned an archaeological and historic buildings assessment of the site to establish the significance of the standing structures and of the potential archaeological deposits below them. The assessment noted that the site lies within the centre of the 700-year old core of the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed and showed it to be very likely that it would contain significant archaeological deposits from the medieval period which could be impacted by any ground works on the site. The assessment also noted that of the standing buildings, none of which are likely to date from before the 18th century and none of which are

listed, the least worthy of retention is the block fronting Walkergate. Prior to the mid 1930s, this was a substantial sandstone terrace incorporating a range of shops. In the middle of that decade, Walkergate was widened, the face of the building cut back and its internal divisions removed. The standing

structures to the south of Walkergate facing on to Boarding School Yard, a large commercial building and a smaller residential property, both of sandstone construction, were incorporated within the Tweeddale Press complex.

Recommendations within the assessment were for the archaeological evaluation of the site to locate and characterise any archaeological deposits.

The evaluation consisted of the excavation of one 5m-long trench within the courtyard of the range, the cutting of two new test pits within the

building along the Walkergate frontage and the deepening of six existing engineers' test pits in the buildings along the eastern edge of the courtyard.

The evaluation showed that relatively little damage had occurred to early deposits beneath the standing structures; that the deposits within the Walkergate block (seen within test pits 6 and 7) included substantial structural remains, probably relating to a late medieval or early post-medieval building; that thick bands of loam, seen within the trench and the six engineers' test pits, will have formed within late medieval gardens or yards, and that structural remains earlier than the yards or gardens (also of medieval date) underlie these deposits in at least some areas.

The lack of damage to early archaeological deposits is a common theme in Berwick, largely because of the shallow, sometimes non-existent foundations of 18th and 19th century structures. One of the walls of a building on the site was constructed directly over a pre-existing brick floor and then material backfilled against it to floor level.

At the other end of things, the deepest excavations during the evaluation went down to 1.8m in the courtyard trench. Subsequent engineering boreholes, monitored archaeologically, show that archaeological deposits over the site reach a minimum of 4m deep and up to 6m deep in one area.

Alan Williams
Alan Williams Archaeology



2 cm



**Green glaze
ceramic boss**

National Park Boundary Survey

The Brigantia Archaeological Practice has carried out a field and documentary survey of traditional boundaries (dry stone walls, hedges, banks etc.) in four sample areas of the National Park. The work was carried out to help in the production of a Conservation/Management Plan for Traditional Boundaries within the Park area, as part of a bid to secure funding for a

long term training programme entitled 'Traditional Boundaries/Traditional Skills'. The larger bid has just been successful and the pilot survey has provided a set of data which will allow a fuller understanding of the nature and development of traditional boundaries in the National Park.

The survey indicated that over 50% of the walls and possibly as much as

90% of the stock of hedges and hedge banks in the Park may be in need of serious repair work. The Traditional Boundaries/Traditional Skills Project will attempt to arrest the decline in fortunes of these historic landscape features.

Rob Young
Northumberland National Park

Blakehope Roman Fort



Photo: Copyright, Bluesky Ltd

The buildings of Blakehope Farm, near Otterburn, lie in the south-eastern corner of the scheduled site of Blakehope Roman Fort (and putative temporary camp) which was positioned on the line of Dere Street. Mr and Mrs Todd, the owners of the farm, applied in 2003 for the construction of a livestock building adjacent to the farm ranges, for the over-wintering of cattle and other stock. As little is known about the site, an assessment and evaluation of the proposed location of the building was requested by English Heritage, the archaeological advisors to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and by the County Conservation Team, acting as advisors to Tynedale District Council. This work was carried out in summer 2004.

The earthworks of the Roman stations at Blakehope were first described and surveyed by the antiquarian MacLauchlan in the 1850s (map sheet 5). Although he thought the fort probably originally had four entrances, he could identify only three. His plan shows an annexe projecting from the south of the fort, along with an encompassing but ephemeral enclosure of approximately 12 acres, of which he could trace only the north, east and west sides.

After no real interest in the site for 80 years, in 1938 Ian Richmond and J K St Joseph relocated the earthworks

of the fort, surveyed them, and interpreted the site as 'a cohort fort with single ditch, massive rampart, at least two gates and an annexe to south'. Their survey shows the fort to measure 420 ft by 390 ft across the ramparts and to enclose an area of around 3.25 acres. In 1955, aerial reconnaissance by St Joseph led to his interpreting the outer earthwork, already partly delineated by MacLauchlan, as a large temporary camp measuring approximately 720 x 930 ft and possibly earlier than Dere Street.

The only archaeological excavation at Blakehope was carried out in the early 1960s by Eric Birley. This amounted to one trench across the fort rampart, which showed that it had been constructed of turf and, at some stage, burnt. Pre-Hadrianic pottery was found, although insufficient to be conclusive about whether it was Flavian or Trajanic in date. Walking the site today, the ramparts of the fort are very reduced by medieval or early post-medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, and the plan is traceable only with some difficulty. The interpretation of the outer earthwork, parts of which are quite marked, as a temporary camp, has remained problematic.

The proposed location of the livestock shed, up against the standing ranges of the farm, lies within the area of the fort annexe. The function of these compounds is

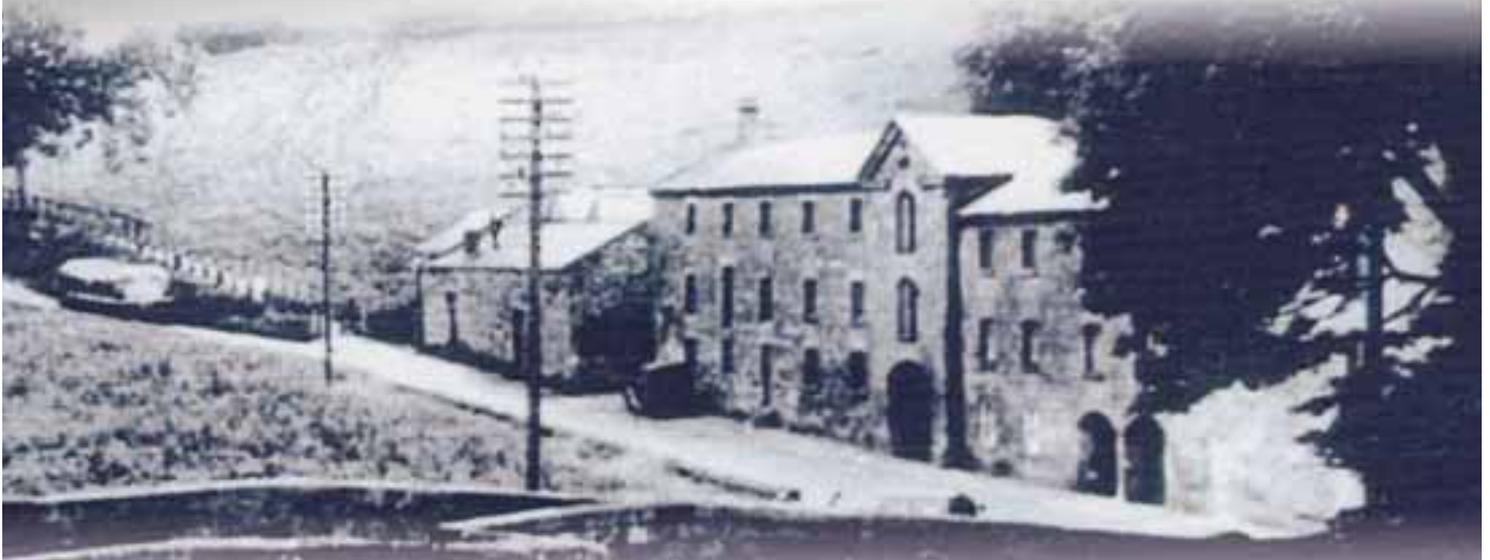
uncertain as little large scale archaeological excavation has been carried out to clarify their military role. One 20m-long trench was excavated within the intended footprint of the shed.

The evaluation trench showed that the ridge and furrow cultivation had cut down to subsoil in all areas, leaving no undisturbed floors or occupation deposits from Roman times. The depth of the ploughsoil (on average only about 0.3m), and the lack of artefactual material within it, did not suggest that there had been lengthy occupation. Archaeological features did survive, however, below the level of subsoil. The surviving pattern of these features - one long slot with a large post hole at its northern end, a slot at right angles to this, and a gully, possibly an eaves drip, tracking along the western edge of the first slot - suggested the presence of at least one timber structure. No associated artefacts were found.

Given the truncated nature of the archaeological remains, only surviving where cut below the surface of subsoil, a detailed archaeological scheme to accompany the construction work for the livestock building has been approved and scheduled monument consent granted for the livestock shed.

Alan Williams
Alan Williams Archaeology

Recording Lesbury Mill



Lesbury Mill in the 1950s

A programme of archaeological work was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA) on the site of the former Lesbury Mill, Lesbury (grid reference NU 2330 1157). The project was commissioned by Northumberland County Council, on the advice of the Conservation Team, in advance of the construction of a new bridge over the River Aln. The investigations involved recording archaeological remains within the footprint of the bridge abutment, along with a watching brief on various groundworks. In addition, historic building recording of the remaining standing elements of the former Lesbury Mill was undertaken. An earlier archaeological evaluation, undertaken by PCA in 2002, had indicated the high potential for the survival of important archaeological remains associated with the former mill and their likely

destruction as part of the development scheme.

Lesbury Mill is referred to in medieval documents, the earliest of which date from about 1350, when estimates of its yield were listed.

Documentary records of repair work undertaken in the 15th century also exist. While the precise location of the medieval mill is not identified, it is traditionally believed to lie beneath the later mill. A 16th century survey of the manor does, however, imply that Longhoughton Mill may have served

on the present site was constructed in 1523. Surveys of the 16th and 17th centuries make reference to Lesbury Mill. The mill appears to have gone out of use in the mid 17th century, possibly because flood damage was not repaired, although a map of 1624 suggests that it had already gone out

of use. The mill that occupied the site until 1964 was probably built in about 1770 and map evidence shows it was added to over the next 70-80 years. During this period the overall plan of the mill altered considerably, and an aqueduct was constructed

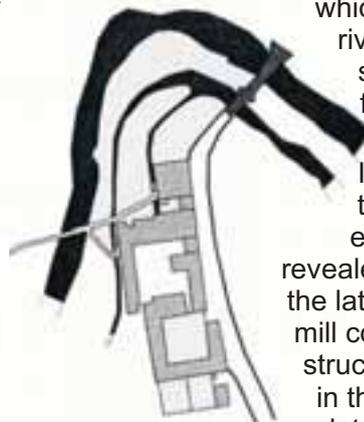
which spanned the river and fed the site from a dam further upstream.

In 2002 five trial trenches were excavated, which revealed evidence of the late 18th century mill complex and later structures, demolition in the 1960s, and later use of the land. The structural

remains included sandstone walls and footings from three phases, as well as surfaces of a yard and a flagstone floor (see photo opposite). They are probably the remains of mill buildings shown developing in form on the Ordnance Survey map series, including part of the wheelhouse of the watermill. A massive iron bracket/



Plan, pre-1844



Tithe Map 1844



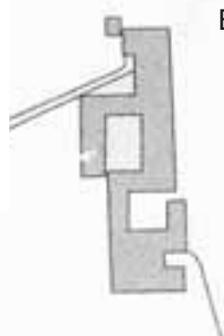
Elevation of the northern section of the east wall of Lesbury Mill. Photo: PCA Ltd

/fixing associated with the flagstone floor may be related to the mill wheel itself. One trench contained a



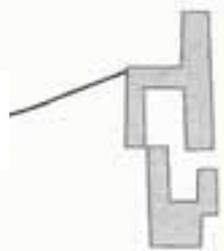
OS 1st Ed. 1868

became obsolete, and so this feature may be associated with a relatively early phase of the mill after its reinstatement in the late 18th century.



OS 3rd Ed. 1920

rebuilt or repaired during its lifetime and there was also evidence to suggest that it may have been extended or re-aligned before falling out of use and being abandoned.



Plan ca 1966

Remains of another building were also found, which appeared to have been built after the tailrace had become obsolete. A substantial sandstone culvert recorded during

the watching brief, may have bridged a second, eastern tailrace during a later phase of use.

As well as excavation, both elevations of the eastern wall of the mill were recorded using rectified photography; only the lowermost parts of the wall survived demolition in the 1960s. The wall can be divided into three sections (north, middle and south). The northern section (see below) comprised a portion of wall from a building in the north of the mill complex with a



Wall and floor identified in Trench 2. Photo: PCA Ltd

partially blocked double arched entranceway, two single doorways and two windows, all of which were blocked. The mid section contained the lower parts of four blocked windows and an entranceway, and was more eroded than the northern section, suggesting it was earlier in date. The southern section survived for a maximum length of 5.5m beyond which the line of the wall continued as the modern roadside wall. A photograph of Lesbury Mill taken in about 1950 from the north shows the eastern face of the three mill buildings with its entrances and windows as described above. This

photograph shows that the northern and middle buildings originally stood three storeys high, whilst the southern building was single storey.

The investigations at Lesbury Mill revealed substantial and significant archaeological remains associated with the complex of buildings or watercourses from the post-medieval mill at Lesbury. It is anticipated that the results will be published in appropriate journal.

**Jennifer Proctor
Pre-Construct Archaeology**



LAND LINES

THE PINWELL PROJECT

2003

The Land Lines project was conceived and initiated by Olivia Gill in 2003, its realization made possible by funding from the Local Heritage Initiative. The focus of the project is a small valley, with no proper name, located near Wooler and just outside the boundary of Northumberland National Park (NT 986 271). Called Horsdenside, or The Kettles, this valley contains many of the elements for which Northumberland is rightly famed, perhaps most notably, the Pinwell - a small wishing well where for generations people have come to throw in bent pins for luck - particularly young ladies who wished to be married.

Overshadowing the well is an Iron Age hillfort which, along with the valley below became part of an 18-hole Victorian golf course. Whilst many such heritage assets might normally be confined to the realms of a National Park, or available with only limited access, the Pinwell is located less than a mile from Wooler High Street, with a circular route running through the Valley from one lane to another.

The Pinwell itself is a small spring surrounded by a small circle of stones, filled by a spring deep within the hill. Whatever the significance of the heritage aspects of this special place, it has not prevented more recent invasions into the landscape. In 2000 a pipeline was run through the valley, bringing the site abruptly into the 21st century with the introduction of fibre-optic cables underground. The valley is still recovering from the diggers and uprooting of trees.

It was this which caused Olivia, a professional artist, to conceive of a project for some of the local young people to help regenerate the area, using art and design to learn creatively about heritage. The success of the project has depended on the vital support of Lilburn Estates, Forest Enterprise (who own and manage the land), the National Park, local community members - most notably Matthew Fairnington

organisations mentioned above. The project was designed to re-introduce the place to the younger residents of Wooler through the mediums of text, drawing and collage and their work stands as testimony to how successful such initiatives can be. Whilst further funding will be required to mount what Olivia hopes could be a touring exhibition of the young people's work, we will be looking for a local and prestigious venue to

display the centrepiece an 8 feet by 8 feet drawn and painted map of the area concerned, intricately painted, stitched and collaged by the students to form an illustrative artwork that would stand up in any professional gallery.



Old Postcard of Pin Well and Kings Chair

MBE and James Redpath and, from further afield, a distinguished Australian Aboriginal poet and writer Herb Wharton. Through visits from these individuals the young people were able to learn about the heritage and environmental aspects of the area, its past and how it is managed today. The students also had the opportunity to collaborate with Forest Enterprise re-designing footpaths and fencing plans. The National Park has administered the project through their local Project Officer Suzanne Wilson, as well as organising surveys and site visits by their Education Officers.

Over the last year Olivia has worked intensively with a small group of extremely talented young people who have produced a wealth of drawn and written material based on their site visits and the input from our various visiting experts from the

As far as we know the area has never been explored archaeologically and we would welcome some professional input or information from archaeologists or researchers who might be interested. Whilst Phase I of the project is nearly complete, with a report and booklet due to be published this Spring, there is a possibility that further work may be carried out in conjunction with the National Park and Forest Enterprise.

For any further information or enquiries please contact Suzanne Wilson, Bridging the Border, Northumberland National Park Authority, The Cheviot Centre, 12 Padgepool Place, Wooler, NE71 6BL. Tel: 01668 283 669, or contact Olivia Lomenech-Gill by e-mail:

oliviagill@macunlimited.net

Olivia Lomenech-Gill

The Great North Museum

An exciting new project to create a new 'super museum' in the region has gained approval from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The aim of the project is to bring together the existing Hancock Museum, the Museum of Antiquities, the Shefton Museum of Greek Art and Archaeology, and the Hatton Gallery, all based at the University of Newcastle, within the redeveloped and extended Hancock Museum Building.

The project partnership of Newcastle University, Tyne and Wear Museums, Newcastle City Council, the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon

Tyne and the Natural History Society of Northumbria has secured £496,000 development funding to draw up detailed plans and a further £8.75 million of HLF money has been set aside to help fund the agreed project.

The museum will provide a well designed and exciting space in which to display collections which will cover everything from the Big Bang through to the present day. Additional fundraising is continuing and it is hoped to submit detailed plans to the HLF for approval in September.

Lindsay Allason-Jones
Museum of Antiquities

Lesbury Old Bridge

Following the construction of the new road bridge, Lesbury Old Bridge has been spared from the ravages of heavy traffic. The handsome 15th century structure over the River Aln is a scheduled ancient monument and will now be used as a footbridge. To enhance its setting the ground surface materials have been improved and new lighting introduced. Repairs have also been carried out to the nearby remains of Lesbury Mill.

PR

Portable Antiquities

The Portable Antiquities Scheme is a voluntary recording scheme for archaeological objects found by members of the public. Every year many thousands of objects are discovered, many of these by metal detector users, but also by people whilst out walking, gardening or going about their daily work. Such discoveries offer an important source for understanding our past.

The scheme is run by a team of Finds Liaison Officers (FLO) and has recently secured funding from the government until 2008. Here in the North East, some of you will have met our FLO, Philippa Walton, at meetings of local clubs and societies. Since August 2003, she has recorded 200 finds from Northumberland. Finders have included farmers, divers, school children, and of course metal detectorists. The range of finds has been equally varied: from Neolithic barbed and tanged arrowheads to clay pipes. One of the most interesting was the discovery of another 150 Saxon stycas from a site near Bamburgh in April 2004. This area has already yielded a significant

number of these late Saxon coins. The metal detectorists from Ashington and Bedlington Metal Detecting Club acted responsibly and reported their find quickly as the coins qualify as Treasure. The stycas are now being studied at the British Museum but hopefully will return to the North East sometime in 2005.

Other interesting finds include a 12th-century lead papal bull found by a

The challenge for the PAS in the North East for 2005 is to achieve better find spot details for finds. Philippa is keen to stress that the context in which an object is found is extremely important and can give us interesting clues as to the archaeology of a particular area. At present, all records give details of the parish in which the object was found, but only 50% have grid references.



Lead Papal Bull from Berwick

met al detectorist from Border Reivers Metal Detecting Club in Berwick-upon-Tweed. The bull is very worn but would originally have been decorated with an impression of Saints Peter and Paul as well as the Pope's name Honorius. Bullae were used to seal official documents issued by the papacy.

If you have anything you would like identified or recorded, or would like Philippa to come and talk to your club or society about the scheme, you can contact her at

The Museum of Antiquities, University of Newcastle, NE1 7RU (0191 222 5076), or at the Archaeology Section, Durham County Council, Durham, DH1 5TY (0191 383 4212). Her email address is p.j.walton@ncl.ac.uk. The Portable Antiquities Scheme website is at:

www.finds.org.uk

Philippa Walton
Portable Antiquities Scheme

Assessing the Past

The following list contains details of archaeological assessments, evaluations and related work carried out in Northumberland during the past year. They mostly result from requests made by the County Archaeologist for further research to be carried out ahead of planning applications being determined. Copies of these reports are available for consultation in the Archaeology Section at County Hall.

ALNWICK

Alnham: Alnham, Northumberland. An Archaeological and Historical Study of a Border Township, The Archaeological Practice Ltd for Northumberland National Park (2004)

Alnwick: Archaeological investigations at Lesbury Mill Bridge, Lesbury. Post-excavation assessment report, Pre-Construct Archaeology for Northumberland County Council (November 2003)

- Extension at Rear of 29 Bondgate Within, Alnwick. Archaeological evaluation, Alan Williams Archaeology on behalf of Ridley Properties (November 2004)
- Land at Clive Nurseries, Howling Lane, Alnwick. Archaeological evaluation, Alan Williams Archaeology for Patrick Parsons Ltd (November 2004)
- 29 Fenkle Street, Alnwick. Watching brief, Archaeological Services University of Durham for Michael Drage (December 2004)

Alwinton: Alwinton, Northumberland. An Archaeological and Historical Study of a Border Township, The Archaeological Practice Ltd for Northumberland National Park (2004)

Amble: Hauxley Links, Amble. Archaeological watching brief, Tyne and Wear Museums for NEDL (November 2004)

Eglington: Watching Brief on Land Adjacent to the Tankerville Arms, Eglington, Biblioresearch for Mr Swindle (September 2004)

Embleton: Land at Station Road, Embleton. Archaeological evaluation, Archaeological Services University of Durham for Nomad Housing Group (February 2005)

Elsdon: Elsdon, Northumberland. An Archaeological and Historical Study of a Border Township, The Archaeological Practice Ltd for Northumberland National Park (2004)

Harbottle: Harbottle, Northumberland. An Archaeological and Historical Study of a Border Township, The Archaeological Practice Ltd for Northumberland National Park (2004)

- Holystone, Northumberland. An Archaeological and Historical Study of

a Border Township, The Archaeological Practice Ltd for Northumberland National Park (2004)

Hedgeley: Low Hedgeley Quarry, Powburn. Geophysical survey, Archaeological Services WYAS for RMC Aggregates (UK) Ltd (May 2004)

Lesbury: Land East of Church Cottage, Lesbury. Archaeological watching brief, Archaeological Services University of Durham for Jane Darbyshire and David Kendall Ltd (November 2004)

Longhoughton: 46-48 North End, Longhoughton. Archaeological evaluation, Archaeological Services University of Durham for Nomad Housing Group Ltd (December 2003)

- 30-34 North End, Longhoughton. Archaeological evaluation, Archaeological Services University of Durham for The Northumberland Estates (May 2004)

Newton-by-the-Sea: Link House, Newton-by-the-Sea. Archaeological assessment, The Archaeological Practice Ltd for Link House Farm Ltd

Rothbury: Rothbury Motors site, Rothbury. Palaeoenvironmental investigations assessment report, Archaeological Services University of Durham for County Life Homes (December 2003)

Tosson: Great Tosson, Northumberland. An Archaeological and Historical Study of a Border Township, The Archaeological Practice Ltd for Northumberland National Park (2004)

Warkworth: Proposed Access Road to Water Intake Works, Warkworth. Archaeological watching brief, Tyne and Wear Museums for Northumbrian Water (November 2004)

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED

Till-Tweed Fieldwalking, Archaeological Research Services and University of Newcastle (November 2003)

Adderstone with Lucker: Air Photo Mapping and Interpretation for the A1 Upgrade Scheme: Adderstone to Belford, Alison Deegan for Ed Dennison Archaeological Services Ltd (January 2005)

Akeld: Akeld, Northumberland. An Archaeological and Historical Study of a Border Township, The Archaeological Practice Ltd for Northumberland National Park (2004)

Bamburgh: 3 Friars Court, Bamburgh. Archaeological evaluation, data structure report, AOC Archaeology Group for Design Workshop Ltd (April 2004)

Beadnell: Coach House Inn, Beadnell. Archaeological evaluation, Archaeological Services University of Durham for Reid Jubb Brown Partnership (June 2004)

Berwick: Geophysical Survey of The

Stanks, Border Archaeological Society for Edwardian Walls Project, Berwick-upon-Tweed (September 2002)

- Castle Terrace, Berwick. Results of an archaeological evaluation, Headland Archaeology for Edwin Thompson on behalf of Berwick Freeman (March 2004)
- Dewars Lane Granary, Berwick. Geotechnical ground investigation archaeological watching brief, Northern Archaeological Associates for Berwick-upon-Tweed Preservation Trust (June 2004)
- Land at Tweeddale Press Buildings, Berwick-upon-Tweed. Archaeological and standing building assessment, Alan Williams Archaeology for Northumberland County Council (March 2004)
- John Dewar's Granary, Dewars Lane, Berwick-upon-Tweed. Results of an archaeological evaluation, Headland Archaeology for Berwick-upon-Tweed Preservation Trust (August 2004)
- Geophysical Survey Report 2004/51 North Road Industrial Estate, Berwick-upon-Tweed, GSB Prospection for Northern Archaeological Associates (August 2004)
- Love Lane, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Tyne and Wear Museums for Transco (January September 2004)
- Development of Night Club and Restaurant on Former Garage Site, Golden Square, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alan Williams Archaeology for Border Asset Management (August 2004)
- Proposed Tesco Foodstore, Ord Road, Berwick-upon-Tweed. Archaeological desk based assessment, CgMs Consulting for Tesco Stores Ltd (October 2004)
- Proposed Tesco Site, Ord Road, Berwick-upon-Tweed. Geophysical survey, Archaeological Services University of Durham for CgMs Consulting (November 2004)
- Watching Brief at 4 The Elms, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Biblioresearch for Dr Knight (November 2004)
- Sanson Seal House, Berwick-upon-Tweed. Data structure report, AOC Archaeology for Mr Marshall (September 2004)
- Land at 6 Eildon View, Tweedmouth. Archaeological watching brief, Archaeological Services University of Durham for T W Cockburn (November 2004)
- Land at Tweeddale Press Buildings. Interim archaeological evaluation, Alan Williams Archaeology for Northumberland County Council (May 2004)
- Bankhill, Berwick-upon-Tweed. Archaeological evaluation, Archaeological Services University of Durham for G M Craig (Building

- Contractors) Ltd (February 2005)
- Branxton:** Outbuilding at Well House, Branxton. Archaeological watching brief, Alan Williams Archaeology for Mr and Mrs Shackleton (April 2004)
- Cornhill-on-Tweed:** An Archaeological Evaluation at Main Street, Cornhill-on-Tweed, Headland Archaeology for Cherrywood Investments Ltd (November 2004)
- Ewart:** Woodbridge Quarry. Scheme of archaeological work to discharge condition 30, Wardell Armstrong for Tarmac Northern Ltd (June 2004) incorporating reports by TimeScope (June 2003) and Tyne and Wear Museums (October 2003)
- Ilderton:** Ilderton Lodge, West Lilburn. Archaeological watching brief, Tyne and Wear Museums for NEDL (October 2004)
- Ilderton House, West Lilburn. Archaeological watching brief, Tyne and Wear Museums for NEDL (November 2004)
- Holy Island:** Lindisfarne Gospel Garden, Marygate, Holy Island. Archaeological evaluation, Archaeological Services University of Durham for Thomas Stewart - Architect (April 2004)
- Ingram:** Ingram, Northumberland. An Archaeological and Historical Study of a Border Township, The Archaeological Practice Ltd for Northumberland National Park (2004)
- Kilham:** Kilham, Northumberland. An Archaeological and Historical Study of a Border Township, The Archaeological Practice Ltd for Northumberland National Park (2004)
- Kirknewton:** Hethpool, Northumberland. An Archaeological and Historical Study of a Border Township, The Archaeological Practice Ltd for Northumberland National Park (2004)
- Kirknewton and Westnewton, Northumberland. An Archaeological and Historical Study of two Border Townships, The Archaeological Practice Ltd for Northumberland National Park (2004)
- Milfield:** Archaeological excavation report for 3 Whitton Park, Archaeological Research Services for Mr J Darlington (July 2004)
- Watching Brief at 2 Whitton Park (Braemar), Milfield, Biblioresearch for Mr Madden (August 2004)
- North Sunderland:** Village Farm, North Sunderland. Archaeological evaluation and building recording, Archaeological Services University of Durham for Blue Reef Developments Ltd (December 2004)
- Ord:** Land Adjacent to Ord Road, Berwick-upon-Tweed. Archaeological desk-based assessment and walk-over survey, CFA Archaeology Ltd for GVA Grimley (April 2004)
- Land Adjacent to Ord Road, Berwick-upon-Tweed. Archaeological evaluation, CFA Archaeology Ltd for GVA Grimley on behalf of ASDA Stores Ltd (November 2004)
 - Land Adjacent to Ord Road, Berwick-upon-Tweed. Archaeological evaluation, CFA Archaeology Ltd for GVA Grimley on behalf of Kilmartin Property Group (November 2004)
- Wooler:** Development at 27-33 High Street, Wooler. Desk-based archaeological assessment, Alan Williams Archaeology for Home Housing and Glendale Gateway Trust (January 2005)
- Land to the rear of Nos 5 and 6 Market Place, Wooler. Desk-based archaeological assessment, Alan Williams Archaeology for Mr Close (November 2004)
 - Land to the rear of Nos 5 and 6 Market Place, Wooler. Archaeological evaluation, Alan Williams Archaeology for Mr Close (December 2004)
- BLYTH VALLEY**
- Blyth:** Archaeological Appraisal for Blyth Links, Archaeo-Environment Ltd for Insite Environments (December 2004)
- Cramlington:** Cramlington, Northumberland. Archaeological evaluation, Tyne and Wear Museums for Bellway Homes (January 2004)
- Nelson West Industrial Estate, Cramlington. Archaeological watching brief, Northern Archaeological Associates for White Young Green (November 2004)
- Seaton Delaval:** Wheatridge. Plant macrofossil assessment, Archaeological Services University of Durham (July 2004)
- CASTLE MORPETH**
- Capheaton:** A Mesolithic Rock Shelter at Salter's Nick, near East Shaftoe Hall, first season of excavation, John Davies and John Nolan (June 2002)
- Heddon-on-the-Wall:** An Archaeological Evaluation at Granville House, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Pre-Construct Archaeology for Mr N Fagents (April 2004)
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Hidden Treasures: Wether Hill

Visit Wether Hill, not just for the site itself with its impressive double ditched ramparts, but also for the views of the surrounding archaeological sites which show some of the quality and density of the archaeology in the area.

There is a steepish climb to the top of Wether Hill, but at the top there are tremendous views of prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval settlement and farming remains spreading out across the landscape. The beauty of Wether Hill is that having

visited one archaeological site, it spurs you on to visit the sites you can see.

National Grid Reference
NT 953 285

Directions

On the A697 north of Powburn take the Ingram turn and follow signs to the Ingram Visitors' centre. At the centre there are a number of leaflets recommending archaeological walks in the area. Take the track to the south of the visitor's centre for the climb to Wether Hill.

KD

Medieval Cornhill-on-Tweed

The village Cornhill-on-Tweed (NT 8606 3936), in north Northumberland, is documented from 1208/10 when it was part of the Bishop of Durham's estate of Norham. Maps from the 17th century onwards show the existence of the village, with Armstrong's 1769 map of Northumberland showing a main street with houses on both sides. The proposed development of an open area of ground at the east end of the village provided an opportunity to investigate how far the medieval village extended and its survival in this area. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Headland Archaeology Ltd.

Of the seven trial trenches excavated across the site, three revealed medieval walls relatively close to Main Street. Despite only the foundation level surviving in one trench, the other two contained walls that stood

several courses high. Unfortunately there was no evidence of any floor surfaces or stratified deposits, but several pieces of medieval pottery were found in association with them.

The walls were first thought to be part of one long building, with an attached enclosure. However, it may be more likely that there are at least two, or possibly three, buildings present here. The nature of the walls is such that they must belong to a relatively substantial building or buildings but, disappointingly, a small pit and

ditch seen in two of the trenches gave no other clues about their function.

With the discovery of these medieval features further work will be necessary before the development proceeds. This will allow a more complete understanding of the function of these buildings and how they relate to the medieval village of Cornhill-on-Tweed as a whole.

Trench 4 and edge of knoll at Main Street, Cornhill-on-Tweed.
Photo: Headland Archaeology.

Kirsty Dingwall
Headland Archaeology

Hidden Treasures: Monday Cleugh



For sheer drama, the site of the Iron Age hillfort on Harehope Hill is hard to beat. The hillfort is perched on the edge of the massively steep cliff of Monday Cleugh, which provides a very strong defence on the eastern side. Peering down into the gloomy depths of Monday Cleugh on a windy day is an exhilarating experience - but don't stand too close to the edge!

The hillfort is defended by up to three substantial ramparts. Within the interior are the foundations of the round houses built by its prehistoric occupants, as well as the rectangular foundations of later buildings which reused the site in the medieval period.

National Grid Reference:
NT 953 285

Directions

Monday Cleugh Hillfort is situated just south of Akeld, near Wooler. It can be accessed from the footpath which leads westwards from Humbleton towards Akeld Hill or from the footpath which runs south from Akeld past Akeld Bastle. The whole area is rich in archaeological remains, including another very impressive defended site on the north slope of Harehope Hill (NT 959289) and other more elusive features such as round houses and ancient trackways. The site is a steepish climb and rough underfoot, so good footwear, warm clothes and emergency rations would be sensible precautions. For more information on these sites check out www.keystothepast.info or consult the SMR.

SR

Already in the 19th century, famous Northumberland antiquarians such as Tate and Collingwood Bruce appreciated that a rich storehouse of ancient rock carvings existed in the county. A hundred years later, Stan Beckensall, in his first gazetteer of Northumberland rock art, commented, 'A glance at the map of the British Isles shows that Northumberland is among the richest rock areas for rock-carvings.' The full extent of this richness has come sharply into focus during the University of Newcastle's Arts and Humanities Research Board-funded *Web Access to Rock Art: the Beckensall Archive of Northumberland Rock Art project*. At the beginning of the project there were estimated to be between 250 - 450 rock panels in Northumberland, but at its completion around 1060 panels were known.

Established by Professor Geoff Bailey, Dr Clive Waddington and Glyn Goodrick, the project, which ran from July 2002 to December 2004, had the primary aim of making Stan Beckensall's extensive Northumberland rock art archive, collected over 40 years, widely available on the internet. Key objectives included: creating a user-friendly, database-driven, interactive website that would be of interest to a diverse range of users; encouraging further rock art recording and research; ensuring a comprehensive record of drawings and photographic images; improving our understanding of the vulnerability of the rock art to damage, erosion or being obscured by natural and artificial processes; developing an appreciation of the requirements for future management and conservation; and promoting educational outreach and public understanding of rock art. Ultimately, the challenge was to produce an attractive

and academically sound website with wide appeal that would act as a showcase for Northumberland rock art.

To begin with, the focus was on establishing the extent of Beckensall's archive, developing a list of the known rock art panels and the types of data to be recorded during the project, designing a panel reporting form, and clarifying the target audiences for the website. Thereafter, attention turned to the fieldwork programme.

Actively supported by Stan Beckensall, this involved first visits to 720 panels, during which they were photographed and had their locations fixed with a Global Positioning System (GPS), and second visits to 560 panels to complete panel report forms, which included making observations about environmental setting, surface of panel, panel type, art, and management and conservation. The success of the fieldwork programme was highlighted by the location and recording of some 90% of the panels known to exist in the countryside.

One of the most gratifying aspects of the project was the steady growth in panel numbers from a starting point of 790 (at the completion of the first site list in February 2003) to around 1060 panels at the end of the project.

Accounting for growth in panel numbers was the rigorous interrogation of Stan Beckensall's archive, the provision of additional site information by colleagues and farmers, and discoveries made during fieldwork. For example, information provided by Philip Deakin and Manuella Walker (Border Archaeological Society) led to the recording of 28 new panels at Chatton Sandyford and surrounding areas; we were shown seven new panels at Scrainwood by Thomas Snaith (who kindly transported Stan Beckensall and myself across his farm on the back of his quadbike); while in two days fieldwork, we increased the number of known panels at Goatstones from three to 17!

In tandem with the fieldwork programme, the office work involved the scanning and filing of thousands of drawings and photographic images; double checking records with Stan Beckensall and other colleagues; entering the data and images into the purpose-built interactive database that would underpin the website; conceptualising how the website would be arranged; developing an Interactive Zone; and the graphic design of the website. The database was developed by Horacio Ayestaran, who was also responsible for the implementation of the website, and Jess Kemp and Marc Johnstone (Heritage Media) undertook the graphic design.

The different strands of the website were consolidated in December 2004 and with some trepidation the website, named *Northumberland rock art: web access to the Beckensall archive*, went live in mid-January 2005. The website is believed to be the most detailed regional rock art website in the world boasting reports on over 1050 panels and close on 6000 images.

Highlights include:

- * panels having their own entries, with information relating to location and access, archaeology, environmental aspects, management and conservation
- * forty-four 360° bubbleworld photographs showing panels in their landscape settings
- * the ability to browse the website according to parish, map, panel type, location, access (including suitability for wheelchairs), image type, and art motifs
- * simple and advanced interactive search facilities, enabling searches on multiple criteria
- * an Interactive Zone, which includes learning journeys covering various aspects of Northumberland rock art, a tribute to Stan Beckensall, a conservation message, video and audio clips, recommended visits to panels, games, photo galleries and more!
- * interactive mapping facilities, allowing users to see exactly where panels are located in the countryside, as well as to the ability to view the search and browse results on a map at different scales
- * an extensive bibliography of Northumberland rock art.
- * the ability to download data directly from the website

The data from Stan Beckensall's Northumberland rock art archive, together with that gathered during the project probably constitutes the largest and most detailed body of information assembled for a rock art region in Britain. Placing this information on the internet means that it can now be enjoyed by Northumbrians as well as people elsewhere in Britain and other parts of the world. It is our hope that the website will also inspire the creation of new knowledge and insights into Northumberland and British rock art and lays the basis for the effective management and conservation of this ancient heritage resource for future generations. In doing this, we hope to have ensured that Northumberland rock art continues to play a key role in the development of British rock art studies for many years to come.

Aron D Mazel
University of Newcastle

An unusual exhibition

The Museum of Antiquities is developing a reputation for hosting rather quirky exhibitions - remember *Scraping the Bottom*? The display called *Written in Stone* followed this trend whilst being firmly in the Museum's tradition of using its collection for educational projects.

This particular project began when a grant of £11,250 from the Heritage Lottery Fund enabled a group of artistically gifted and talented 14-year old children at Greenfield School Community and Arts College, Newton Aycliffe, to explore the prehistoric rock art of Northumberland under the guidance of Stan Beckensall, the internationally known authority on the subject.

Stan first took the children to visit rock art sites at Roughting Linn and Chatton Park Hill.

'We specifically asked the students and their teacher not to do any previous research,' recalls Stan.

'The whole idea of the project was to get the students' immediate response to the landscape and the rock art. The symbolism is very powerful, and when you encounter rock art for the first time, there is a great sense of discovery.'

The group then met cultural geographer Dan Knox of the University of Sunderland who took them on an exploratory visit of their own Newton Aycliffe. Leading them through their local shopping centre, Dan helped the group take a fresh look at familiar surroundings, examining modern signs and

symbols that we all take for granted. Were the symbols on the rock art understandable to the prehistoric people of Northumberland in the same way that traffic directions and street signs are intelligible to us today?

The group recorded their experiences through drawings, paintings, photographs, maps and beach art, and then took part in a workshop with glass artist Kathryn Hodgkinson at the National Glass Centre at Sunderland. Here, their research and new ideas were turned into both cast and etched glass sculptures.

According to teacher Sharon Simpson, 'What was really interesting was that none of the pupils simply created a two-dimensional replica of the prehistoric rock art they saw. They each interpreted it differently, some affected by the location, others by the circular markings. They were intrigued that we no longer know what these marks mean, what they are meant to signify or why they were placed in specific locations.'

The Museum of Antiquities, with the pupils' help, put a selection of the sculpture and paintings on display in the Second Gallery from 28th October 2004 to 8th January 2005. The display was a great success as, not only did it make the Museum look very colourful, but the reflections from the glass impacted on the ancient sculpture and pottery, giving them an added dimension. Bringing modern art and ancient art together, in a way which explored the meaning of both, was very exciting and, hopefully, will lead to similar projects in the future.

Lindsay Allason-Jones
Museum of Antiquities

A new inscription from Chesters

On 23 May 2004, an inscribed stone was discovered lying about six feet out from the western bank of the river North Tyne, just downstream from the bath house of Chesters Roman Fort. It lay face upwards, and was probably visible because of the extremely low level of the river. The landowner, Mr George Benson, has presented the stone to the Trustees of the Clayton Collection, and it is now on display in Chesters Museum.

The stone is a fragment of a buff sandstone slab, 0.32 m by 0.48 m, 0.21 m thick, and was intended for insertion into a masonry structure. Only the bottom edge of the original stone survives. The inscription was cut into a recessed panel defined by a plain moulding, part of which remains at the bottom. Seven lines of text, now quite badly worn, are present. Only the lower halves survive of the letters in

Line 1, but from the content, it is likely that this was the original first line.

The stone was examined by R S O Tomlin in Chesters Museum in September, with a view to publication in *Britannia* for 2005. This work is still in progress, but it can be said that, although the text is very fragmentary, it appears to be a dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus dated by the consuls Maximus and Aquilinus to AD 286, and there is a reference to the god's temple. This is the latest consular date to be recorded in a Romano-British inscription.

The Dolichenus cult is already attested at Chesters by another dedication slab (RIB 1452), and the base of a statue of the god (CSIR 118), both in Chesters Museum. The fine statue of Juno (CSIR 117) almost certainly portrays her as the consort of

Jupiter Dolichenus, because of the statue's stylistic similarity to the Jupiter Dolichenus statue base. These two life-size statues would have been housed in an area of considerable space, and it is no surprise that the new stone confirms the existence of a temple to Jupiter Dolichenus. However, the late date is notable, as this stone joins the small body of

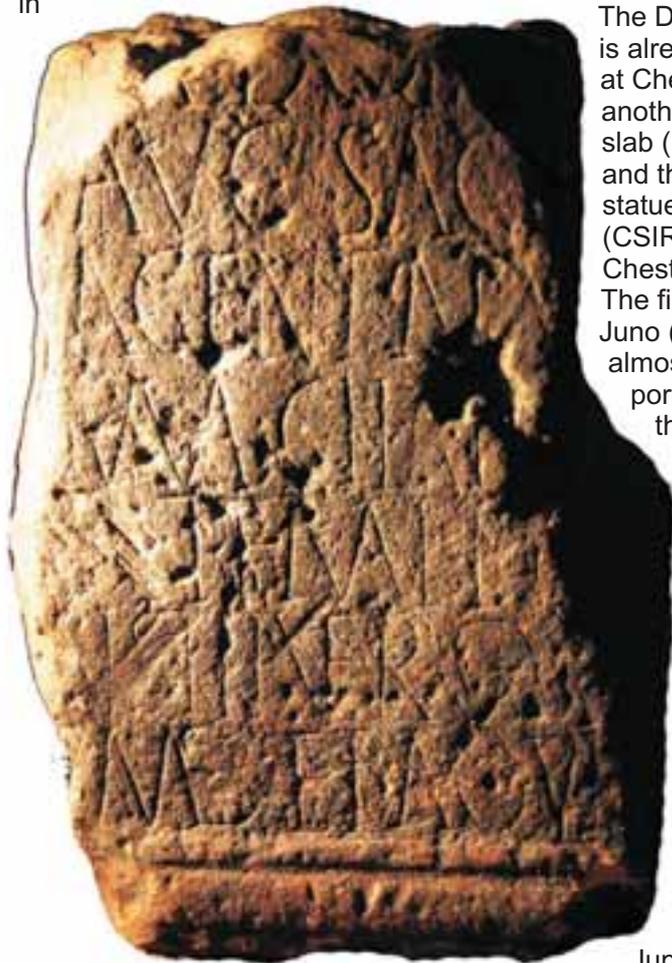


Statue of Juno

Photo: Copyright English Heritage

evidence suggesting that the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus survived later than AD 252, when Doliche was sacked and the cult was eclipsed.

**RSO Tomlin, University of Oxford
and
G Plowright, English Heritage**



The new engraving.

Photo: Copyright English Heritage

Hidden Treasures: Berwick Walls



Having spent a number of years travelling through Berwick-upon-Tweed on the way to Scotland, the town defences came as an impressive surprise. While the walls along the quayside could almost be mistaken for quayside walls, it soon becomes obvious as you walk around the town that they form part of a massive system of medieval and post-medieval wall and earthwork defences. Even after centuries the town defences remain an imposing testament to the effort taken to defend this frontier town.

Directions

As the town defences encircle and in places dominate the central part of modern Berwick, it should be easy to access them from one of the car parks in the town. The car park at the junction of Wallace Green and Church Street allows access to the walls, either past the Council Offices or to the rear of the parish church of the Holy Trinity, for a picturesque circular walk around the historic core of the town. For more information on the sites around Berwick check out www.keystothepast.info or consult the SMR. **KD**

Wylam Waggonway

The first Wylam Waggonway was built in the 18th century to carry coal from Wylam Colliery to staithes at Lemington. A proposal by NEDL in 2003 to lay a high voltage electricity cable along its route gave archaeologists an opportunity to assess its preservation under the Wylam Railway embankment between Wylam and Street Houses. The evaluation was carried out by the Archaeology Department of Tyne and Wear Museums.



A stone sleeper
Photo: TWM

The waggonway, thought to date from 1748, was laid to a broad gauge of 5 feet 0.5 inches and has been attributed to Thomas Brown, consulting engineer to various Tyneside collieries. The rails were replaced with iron plate-way rails in 1808 and attached to stone sleepers. In 1815, as demand for coal increased during the Napoleonic Wars, some of the first ever locomotives (the Wylam Dilly and the Puffing Billy) were established on the line. Replacing the single wagon pulled by a horse-drawn team, each locomotive could pull ten coal wagons but needed a more stable rail-system. So between 1827 to 1830 the old plate-way was replaced by four

feet long cast-iron fish-bellied edge rails that were attached to iron 'chairs' pinned to the sleepers.

Through trial trenching and a watching brief, the remains of the Wylam Waggonway appear to be well preserved under the present bridleway embankment. The waggonway was revealed as stone sleeper blocks set into a track bed of compact small-coal. Each sleeper had holes drilled into its upper surface to affix the plate-way and/or a chair for the fish-bellied rails. In two of the trenches the full gauge of 5 feet 0.5 inches was revealed by two rows of sleepers and one cast-iron fish-bellied rail was retrieved out of context.

Following the closure of Wylam Colliery in 1868 the waggonway saw little use until it was incorporated, still as a single line, into the Scotswood, Newburn and Wylam Railway in 1876. The new railway embankment was constructed out of colliery waste directly over the partially dismantled waggonway remains and the track laid to the standard railway gauge. The line was eventually closed in 1966 and the track removed in 1972.

Gary Brogan
Tyne and Wear Museums

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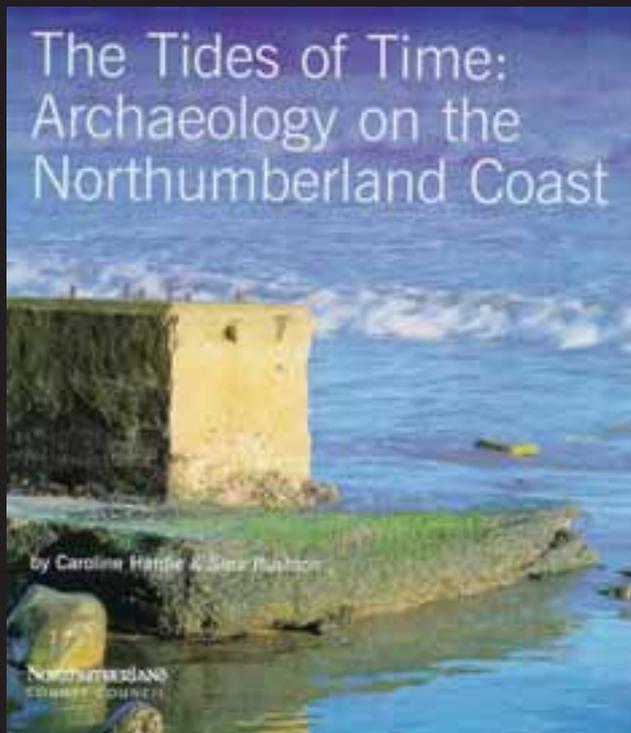
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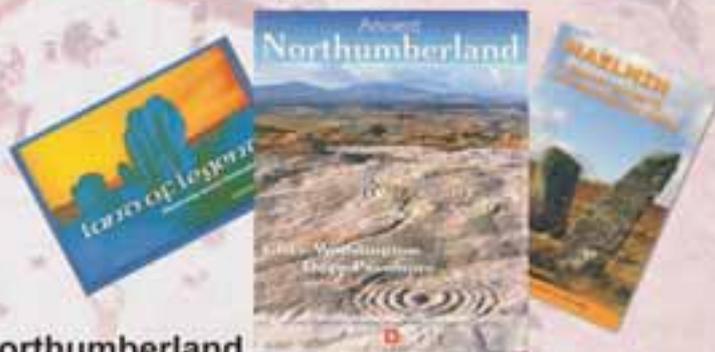
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