



HON PRESIDENT:
Mr John Grundy
CHAIR:
Marian Morrison



COUNTY DURHAM FORUM for HISTORY & HERITAGE

www.durhamweb.org.uk/

Issue 2: April 2025

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FORUM COMMITTEE

Chair: Marian Morrison

Vice Chair: Margaret Hedley

Secretary: Jan McGraw

Treasurer: John Banham

Sylvia Hall
Sarah Hillier
Mark Smith
Win Stokes

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Marian Morrison

The chilly weather didn't dampen the spirits of your committee. They have had a busy start to 2025 preparing for the AGM and exhibition, which if I say so myself, was a great day. Our two speakers did a grand job of pulling in an audience that weren't disappointed by their excellent talks. The buzz amongst the tables and exhibitors reminded me that there is a lot of energy in the history and heritage community. I am sure this is something which can be difficult to remember when all our member committees are struggling for support for day to day running of the groups.

We, the committee, have even fitted in a meeting to prepare for the year ahead. We hope that our plans support the direction your feedback is pointing towards. You are telling us that our strength is in providing opportunities for networking and sharing your groups activities and where possible involving the general public and allowing a showcase of history and heritage associated activity in the County. If we create the opportunity all you have to do is turn up and show your projects. This seems be a good way for us to currently support you.

Another item from the AGM, was the Zoom Talks programme, also raised in the last newsletter where I asked for your views on them continuing in 2025-2026. Sadly very little feedback has resulted in the committee coming to the decision that they will not be continued (see Sarah's report below).

So as an end note, since no one rushed forward to join the committee we have to be selective and use our time where it can maximise our objectives. Keep up to date with what's happening by going to the Facebook page "County Durham Forum for History & Heritage – Let's Talk Heritage". It's there for you to "post on" as well as catch up on what's going on across the patch.

OUR ZOOMING SEASON 2024 – 2025

Sarah Hillier

Having just completed County Durham Forum for History & Heritage (CDFHH) zoom series of talks, this seemed a good opportunity to take stock.

First of all, I should like to thank our excellent speakers! Once again, we have been educated and entertained by excellent and very varied talks.

Chris Lloyd had some fascinating and quirky tales of how Darlington's nineteenth century entrepreneurs reacted to a time of economic and social change. We have also looked at both ends of the social scale, within the country house from Richard Pears and a dissection of the high class shenanigans of a possible Northern Hellfire Club from Tony Nicholson. And who could forget Margaret Hedley's inspirational history of the Man they Named a Town After?

In archaeology, Richard Annis took us to the Tyne Brewery site, with its history of coal mining, fallen women and high level horses, while David Petts explained the research based on the latest archaeological surveys on Lindisfarne.

So what next? I have decided to take a year out from hosting CDFHH zoom talks as I have been doing it since 2020. However, I do hope that the talks continue. Our audiences still reach an average of around 25 and the talks fulfil the aims and objectives of the Forum.

HELP NEEDED FOR PhD

We first heard from Sandra in the October newsletter

Her PhD contemplates the inclusion/exclusion, not only in terms of individuals, but also organisations, and she has divided it in terms of business areas, like art, heritage etc so she can learn what people think or require not only in terms of jobs, but also for different areas of their lives.

"I am sure you have been noticing the cuts on museums and other venues, but organisations are still very reluctant to use digital tools to make their collections and exhibitions more attractive, either because they are not comfortable with digital, or because they do not have the money or resources to do so"

Your opinion matters, please take the survey
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CYQTPWH>

HOPETOWN

- DARLINGTON -

OUR NEW MEMBERS

Formerly known as the Head of Steam Railway Museum, Hopetown features a collection of railway artifacts and exhibits. It showcases the history of railways in Darlington and the North East region from 1825 to the late 20th century.

Forum members have been invited to a FREE guided tour of the museum at:

10.00am Wednesday 4 June 2025

and we have a limited amount of places available that will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis

If you would like to take part, please email me at:

history.club2@btinternet.com

ARCH & ARCH

Lecture Programme 2025

Face to face meetings held at 2.30pm in
 Room ER140
 Elvet Riverside, New Elvet DH1 3JT

8 June	Marrying the Old and New looking back to look forwards—recent projects at Newcastle City Pool, Morpeth Railway Station and Low Newton Rocket House	G Dodd
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Afterwards, for those who would like to join us we will go for a drink (tea/coffee/or stronger) at the public bar, Royal County Hotel

Email: archandarch.dandn@gmail.com



WHEATLEY HILL HISTORY CLUB

2025 MEETINGS

Celebrating 30 Years in 2025

Meetings are held in
 Wheatley House, Woodlands Avenue
 at **11.00am** £3.00 includes tea/coffee/raffle

28 May	Remembering the north east's department stores	G Soult
25 June	A Splendid Rogue: The Life & Times of Harry Benson, Master Criminal	T Nicholson
30 July	Mary Ann Cotton	T Hutchinson

Latest newsletter:

<https://wheatley-hill.org.uk/newsletters/>

For more information:

history.club2@btinternet.com

SEDGEFIELD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

2025 PROGRAMME

Meetings are held in
 Ceddesfeld Hall at 7.45pm

First Monday of the Month

5 May	From Castle to Country House in County Durham	R Pears
2 June	The Women's Land Army	C Dean
7 July	Visit to Hartlepool Heugh Battery	

For more details:

Suzanne 01429 882250



EGGLESCLIFFE

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

2025

22 May	Hackfall: a garden back Ffrom the brink	D Winpenny
26 June	The Creation of the Medieval North	R Daniels

Meetings are held in
 St John's Church, Butts Lane, Egglecliffe
 at 2.00pm

Admission £3.00

For more details:

david_j_bate@ntlworld.com

Hartlepool Headland Local History Group

Headland Baptist Church
Baptism Street
HARTLEPOOL TS24 0QN

2025

19 May	How My Family Story Became A Book	M Hedley
16 June	Take a Look at the History Group Photos	
21 July	Social Night	
No Meeting in August		

Meetings are held on the
Third Monday of the month
6.45pm—9.00pm



Drop In Sessions are held
Second Tuesday of the month
11.30am—3.30pm



COXHOE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

2025

MEETINGS HELD THURSDAYS 7.00pm
St Andrew's Church Hall, Church Street

1 May	Durham City & Surrounds	M Richardson
5 June	Durham City & Its Walls	R Annis
3 July	A Guided Walk through Coxhoe	

Website:
coxhoehistory.org.uk

Contact:
Jack Turton: 0191 3770771
Barbara Leo: barbaraleo88@googlemail.co

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Durham Postcard, Cigarette Card & Stamp Fair

Bowburn Community Centre DH6 5AT

Disabled Access

10.00am—3.00pm

Entrance £1.00

Accompanied children FREE

Saturday 19 July 2025

Free Valuations

FRAMWELLGATE MOOR & PITY ME LHS 2025 Programme

Meetings held in
Fram Community Centre, Front Street
DH1 5BL

at 7.30pm
(on selected Thursday evenings)

22 May	Women of the Durham Coalfield in the 19th Century	M Hedley
19 June	Treasure of Memories	J Harrop

For more information on meetings:
E: FramLocHistSoc@gmail.com

Guests welcome
There will be a small charge for non-members

NORTHUMBERLAND & DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY



Check out the following website
for details of:

Branch meetings
Regional Meetings

NDFHS
Branch Meetings held at:

Blyth
Belmont, Durham
Consett
Hexham
London
Newcastle
Wansbeck
North Tyneside
South Tyneside

<https://www.ndfhs.org.uk/diary/>

R A B Y

Castle, Park & Gardens

A Stroll Through Time: Raby's Historic Parkland

Monday 12th May | 11am - 12:30pm

Join us for a guided walk and discover the fascinating history embedded in the landscape of Raby's parkland. From visible structures to the stories hidden beneath our feet, this walk offers a unique opportunity to explore the estate's rich past.



Slow Art at Raby Castle

15th May, 10th June & 7th July | 10:00am - 11:00am

Each month, different artworks will be selected from Raby's significant collections and participants will be able to venture beyond the rope barriers to get closer to these historic treasures, with a chance to discover some of the detail and intricacy that cannot be seen from a distance. The castle team will reveal details about the artist, subject or symbolism that might totally change your first impression.



Voices of The Past: Women of Raby

Sunday 8th June | 3:00pm - 4:00pm

Join us by crackling open fires for a very special afternoon where original letters, documents and poems will shed light on some key female figures in Raby's history and their personalities, experience and beliefs.



Behind the Scenes Tour of Raby Castle

14th June, 5th July & 26th July | 10:00am & 2:00pm

Join us for a journey into the heart of history as we unveil the hidden stories and treasures of Raby Castle. Step beyond the velvet ropes and immerse yourself in the captivating world of this centuries-old architectural masterpiece. Our exclusive behind the scenes tour offers a unique opportunity to unlock some of the hidden parts of the castle to reveal rooms, stories and treasures not usually seen by the public.



Exploring the Archives: New Dixon Discoveries

Friday 4th & Saturday 5th July | 11:00am - 12:30pm

Join Raby's Archivist for an enlightening session looking at plans newly-identified as being by Jeremiah Dixon, including his earliest known works, and explore the close links shared between the Vanes of Raby and the Dixon family.



Philippa Langley MBE - The Princes in the Tower

Tuesday 8th July | 6:00pm

We look forward to welcoming Philippa back to Raby Castle in conversation with Curator Julie Biddlecombe-Brown about how discoveries since her last visit helped to conclude the project. Always popular with Raby audiences this event will appeal to all history lovers, whether you are new to The Missing Princes Project or have heard Philippa speak on the subject before.



Visit our website for more information and ticket booking | www.raby.co.uk/whats-on

Scan the QR code to sign up to our newsletter and receive event updates and exclusive promotions directly in your inbox!

Invitation to take part in a research project



Do you live or work in East Durham?

If you do and are 18 years old or over, then we would like to talk to you about life in East Durham.

You will be asked to share your views on the history and identity of the area and what you think are the current issues, challenges and priorities for East Durham.

If this is something you would like to take part in, please contact Carol on c.devanney@tees.ac.uk or 01642 383858, for further information.

The Story is keen to offer County Durham History and Heritage Forum group members a space to host events, to share research and open up their work to a wider audience. There will be no charge for such events for the duration of our National Lottery Heritage Fund grant (this runs until December 2026.) The room available has capacity for up to 40 people. The aim of such events should be, at least in part, to involve a wider range of people in heritage and enable more people to learn about their heritage”.

If you are interested in hosting an event at The Story, please email:

Ruth, Community Engagement Officer:

ruth.chittenden@thestorydurham.org

with a brief event proposal and a few suggested dates



CLEVELAND AND TEESSIDE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

“Research on the Rails” Prize Essay Competition

Our Society was founded in 1968 as the result of a conversation between Barry Harrison, a university lecturer, and Tom Sowler, the Stockton historian, so naturally we are looking forward to celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 2025.

At the moment, we are working in partnership with the Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in planning a prize essay competition, open to the general public. We are looking for essays based on original research on any subject connected to the history of the Stockton & Darlington Railway up to 1863, including its impact beyond that date. It can be about people, technology, events, archival research - the choice is yours. The final date for entering this competition will be **31st August 2025** so there's plenty of time for research and writing.

A sizeable cash prize will be provided jointly by Cleveland & Teesside Local History Society and The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. You don't have to be a member of either group to take part, so why not have a go?

You can find more details on either of these links:

<http://ctlhs.co.uk/research-on-the-rails-prize-essay-competition/>

<https://www.sdr1825.org.uk/events/sdr-200-research-on-the-rails-prize-competition/>



2025 Programme

19 May	Winterton Hospital Part 2	J Turton
16 June	The Pubs of Shincliffe	G Stout

All meetings are held in Shincliffe Church Hall
Starting at 19.30

Contact & Website Details
E: contact@SLHS.uk
W: www.slhs.uk

READING OLD DOCUMENTS

an online session hosted by:

Archivist, Francis Gotto

Attendees will, together, be able to transcribe English documents in various hands illustrating County Durham's history.

There will also be an opportunity for you to share (good quality) images of your own research documents where help is needed deciphering the text.

The event is offered in order to support people struggling with hunger and violence in Sudan and voluntary contributions will be encouraged at the end of the event to a variety of charitable organisations now operating in that war-torn country.

If you would like to attend, please email:

francis.gotto@outlook.com

and indicate your preference for a weekday evening or a weekend session

and if you have a document you'd like help with you can also email this in advance

TEESDALE RECORD SOCIETY

2025 Programm

2 April	The Stainmore Road—From Iron Age Routeway to Roman Road by Mike Haken Meeting in Cotherstone Village Hall	7.30pm
7 May	Visit to Hopetown, Darlington	2.00pm
4 June	Visit to The Story	2.30pm
2 July	Visit to St Mary's Church, Barnard Castle to see the new King Richard III window	6.30pm

Visitors are welcome. Please check with the Secretary

Further information: Judith Phillips: E: judyphillipsnott@hotmail.com M: 07816327209



FOUR SEASONS OF A HILL FARMER

Photographs

By

Elaine Vizor

Soundtrack by Marie Gardener

This exhibition features farmers

Anna Wood & daughter **Elizabeth Scott** from Teesdale
and the hard but rewarding life of **Sue** from Weardale

The Fitzhugh Library

Mon & Tues 10.30 – 2.30, until May 27th

51 Market Place, Middleton-in-Teesdale, DL12 0QH

fitzhughlibrary@gmail.com

A Newcastle Local History Fair for 2027?

Would you be interested in taking part in a Newcastle Local History Fair in 2027? It is suggested that on the alternate years when Sunderland is not running theirs, we could use The Common Room (near Central Station) to hold a similar event. This idea is being led by David Bell, Hon Treasurer of the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers (NEIMME) who are based within The Common Room.



Whilst Newcastle Libraries has organised a Local History Month in May for years, it does not include a "fair" element for mixed organisations like the bi-annual Sunderland History Fair. It would naturally make sense to keep the event in May as part of the wider **Local and Community History Month** (<https://www.history.org.uk/historian/resource/1567/local-and-community-history-month>). We are considering the 3rd weekend (15th May 2027) but we are keen to know if that date would suit other organisations and if there is sufficient interest.

There are photos overleaf of the rooms available including a lecture theatre that can seat 100. The presentations in the lecture theatre can be recorded and streamed to YouTube. There is one large rooms and a number of smaller rooms.

So the questions are:

Organisation Name: _____

Would you (provisionally) like to take part in a Newcastle History Fair? Yes / No
(No commitment at this stage)

Would the third weekend of May 2027 suit your organisation? _____

Or another date be better? Month: _____ Weekend: any / 1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th / last

How many tables would you want (Approx £25/table +£10 Commercial)? _____

Power required? Yes / No / Maybe

Would you be interested in giving a presentation in the lecture theatre? 10 / 25 / 40 mins?

You can also email your answers to History2027@mininginstitute.org.uk after discussing with others



Join Our History Course on Memory in the Medieval & Early Modern Worlds!

Interested in history? Want to learn about cutting edge academic research? Join the Durham MEMSA course on Memory in the Medieval & Early Modern Worlds!

May-June 2025

Memory played a central role in shaping individual and collective identities in the medieval and early modern worlds. Across Europe and beyond, practices of remembering were deeply intertwined with religion, politics, culture, and the arts. This course offers a unique opportunity to explore how memory was constructed, preserved, and utilised in various aspects of life, from dynastic legacies and religious traditions to folklore, historic sites, and everyday domestic practices.

Over six weekly sessions, we will explore medieval and early modern myths and local folklore, kings, queens, and dynastic memory, memory in historic sites and monuments, supernatural beliefs and ghost stories, family traditions and domestic life, festivals, rituals, and public commemorations, forgotten voices and erased histories, as well as feasts, food, and cultural traditions.

Course Details:

When? Wednesdays, May – June 2025

Where? Durham University

Format? Engaging evening sessions led by different experts, featuring talks and discussions

Cost? £15, but concessions available

Who Can Join? Anyone! No prior knowledge needed – just curiosity!

How to join? Just [use our signup link](#) or scan the QR code below!

This course is a collaboration between researchers and the local community, making history accessible and enjoyable for all. Sessions are designed to be engaging, welcoming, and thought-provoking.

Organised by The Medieval and Early Modern Student Association (MEMSA) at Durham University.



Groups Holding Regular Monthly Meetings

Architectural Archaeological Soc of Durham & Northumberland 2.30pm Second Saturday in month Elvet Riverside DH1 3JT www.aasdn.org.uk/	Aycliffe Village LHS Second Wednesday in month 7.00pm Aycliffe Village Hall www.aycliffehistory.org.uk/	Bowburn LHS Second Monday in month 7.00pm Bowburn Com Centre DH6 5AT www.bowburnhistory.co.uk
Brancepeth Archives & History Grp First Saturday in month 9am—1pm Brancepetharchive@outlook.com 17vivienne@gmail.com	Chester-le-Street Heritage First Wednesday in month 7.00pm Lambton Arms www.chesterlestreetheritage.org	Cleveland Family History Society See Website for Zoom meetings https://clevelandfhs.org.uk/meetings/
Cleveland & Teesside LHS Saturday mornings Sept-Apr 10.30am Dorman Museum, Middlesbrough See www.ctlhs.co.uk for dates	Coxhoe Local History Group First Thursday in month 7.00pm St Andrew's Church Hall DH6 4DD coxhoehistory@gmail.com www.coxhoehistory.co.uk/	Crook & District Local History Soc Fourth Monday in month 7.00pm for 7.30pm Meth Church Hall, Dawson Street Dennis Scarr 07745018272
Egglescliffe Local History Third Thursday in month 2.00pm St John's Church, Butts Lane david_j_bate@ntlworld.com	Framwellgate Moor & Pity Me LHS Framwellgate Moor Community Centre Some Thursday Evenings 7.30pm E: FramLocHistSoc@gmail.com	Hartlepool Headland LHS Third Monday in month 6.45—9.00pm Headland Baptist Church TS24 0QN eileen.manners@ntlworld.com
Howden-le-Wear History Soc Third Monday in month 7.00pm, Village Hall www.howdenlewearthistsoc.co.uk joan.topsat@gmail.com	Hetton Local & Natural History Last Monday in month 7.00pm Hetton & Eppleton Com Hall DH5 5HR www.hettonlocalhistory.org.uk/	Lanchester Local History First Friday in month 7.00pm Lanchester Com Centre DH7 OJQ www.durhamweb.org.uk/historyforum/cdfhhlanchester
Middleton St George Local History Third Thursday of month 7.30pm Community Centre DL2 1JG www.msglocalhistory.wordpress.com	Newcastle Antiquaries Last Wednesday in month Check website for details events@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk	NE Vernacular Architecture First Saturday in month Mar-Oct Guided walks etc various times & places throughout the region https://northeastvernaculararchitecturegroup.wordpress.com/
Northumberland & Durham FHS See website for individual group meetings www.ndfhs.org.uk/	NEW GROUP Peterlee Local History Group https://peterleehistory.co.uk/ E: flossienoah@gmail.com	Sedgefield Local History First Monday in month 7.45pm Ceddesfeld Hall, TS21 2AE 01740 620912
Shincliffe Local History Society Third Monday in Month 7.30pm Shincliffe Church Hall E: contact@SLHS.uk W: www.slhs.uk	Teesdale Record Society First Wednesday in month 7.30pm Cotherstone Village Hall DL12 9PG https://www.teesdalerecordsociety.org.uk/	Thorpe Thewles History Group Contact below for meeting dates 1.30pm Grindon Parish Hall TS21 3JN www.thorpe-thewles.org.uk
Tudhoe & Spennymoor LHS Fourth Monday in month 7.30pm St David's Church Hall DL16 6LL www.durhamweb.org.uk/tslhs/	Wheatley Hill History Club Last Wed in month Mar-Nov 11.00am Wheatley House DH6 3JX www.wheatley-hill.org.uk	SPECIFIC INTEREST GROUPS
The Auckland Project www.aucklandproject.org/	Blanchland Abbey Project Blanchlandcommunity@gmail.com	Altogether Archaeology E: altogether.archaeology@gmail.com W: Altogetherarchaeology.org
Durham County Council Archaeology Department archaeology@durham.gov.uk	Durham County Local History Soc www.durhamweb.org.uk/dclhs DAFT www.thedaft.org.uk/	City of Durham Trust E: trust@durhamcity.org NEW TO THE FORUM
Durham Victoria County History Trust s.m.hingley@durham.ac.uk	The Fitzhugh Library Open 10.30—2.30 Mon & Tues www.thefitzhughlibrary.co.uk	Durham University Special Collections www.dur.ac.uk/departments/library/archives-and-special-collections/
History of Consett Steelworks www.historyofconsettsteelworks.com/ juddrichard1976@gmail.com	Memories of Leadgate www.memoriesofleadgate.com/ juddrichard1976@gmail.com	Friends of Vindomora www.friendsofvindomora.com/ juddrichard1976@gmail.com
North East Methodist Society northeastmethodisthistory.weebly.com	Picture the Past Postcard Collector g.l.nairn@btoopenworld.com	Raby Castle www.raby.co.uk
Sunderland Volunteer Life Brigade admin@sunvlb.com	Tees Archaeology https://teesarchaeology.com/	The Story www.thestorydurham.org/
Weardale Railway www.weardale-railway.org.uk	Weardale Museum www.weardalemuseum.org.uk	Hopetown Darlington NEW TO FORUM hopetown@darlington.gov.uk https://www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/