



HON PRESIDENT:
Mr John Grundy
CHAIR:
Marian Morrison



COUNTY DURHAM **FORUM** for HISTORY & HERITAGE

www.durhamweb.org.uk/

Issue 1: January 2025

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FORUM COMMITTEE

Chair: Marian Morrison

Vice Chair: Margaret Hedley

Secretary: Jan McGraw

Treasurer: John Banham

Committee:

Sylvia Hall

Sarah Hillier

Mark Smith

Win Stokes

Annual General Meeting followed by

Exhibition and Speakers

County Durham Forum for History & Heritage

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held at

Bowburn Community Centre
 Durham, Road, Bowburn DH6 5AT

on

Saturday 29 March 2025

9.30am—10.30am

- 1 Welcome to the AGM by the Chair
- 2 Apologies for Absence and retirements from the committee throughout the year
- 3 Minutes of the last AGM
- 4 Annual Reports From: The Chair
 The Treasurer
 The Membership Secretary
- 5 Nominations and Election of Officials and Committee 2025/26
- 6 General Business

A full set of AGM papers will be circulated at the beginning of March

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I trust you have all made it through the festive season without too many seasonal challenges. The winter months may be quiet for some of our groups however looking at the activity on our Facebook page many organisations take the opportunity to tidy up the projects from the previous year and plan new projects for the coming year. In some cases it may be the coming years, should that project require such dedication.

Our AGM is almost finalised and the planned exhibition should be very interesting and well worth a visit.

I have been saddened to hear of so many groups struggling and mostly due to a decline in membership. My own group in Lanchester is one where getting folks to join the committee is proving impossible. The members are all folks who volunteer for many groups around the village and just haven't time to take on more work. This is a similar situation for the Forum committee. We are struggling to sustain the level of workload required and may have to cut back on some of our activities in the year ahead.

However on a lighter note our draft activity plan for 2025 is looking positive and we will try to find something for everyone in the future. Please do consider joining the committee if you have time. We have reduced the number of committee meetings a year by half so less time talking more time in action.

See you at the Exhibition and hopefully the AGM Bowburn Community Centre Saturday 29th March.

Does your Group or Project have a top-notch website?

by *Mark Smith*

Thorpe Thewles Local History Group

In collaboration with Thorpe Thewles History Group the County Durham Forum for History and Heritage are pleased to announce the availability of a limited number of free training places on a series of IT and heritage related skills development courses and workshops to be presented throughout 2025.

The first of these courses will provide attendees with the skills and confidence to allow them to build and maintain a professional website using what is arguably the world's most popular and easy to use platforms, ie WordPress.

The timing for the delivery of this first training course is presently under discussion with the professional organisation presenting it. However, it is likely to begin within the second quarter of this year and comprise a series of up to 10 weekly sessions, each of between 1 and 1½ hours duration.

The course will probably take place in a location either in the southeast or northeast of County Durham. The regular weekly timings for the delivery of each training session has not yet been fixed. However, to enable the widest possible age group and demographic of attendees, the organisers believe there is merit in holding them outside of normal working hours, possibly at weekends.

Those attending the course need no prior knowledge of website design, only basic IT skills and the requirement to provide their own Wi-Fi enabled laptop computer. Attendees of the course will be provided with course notes and a WordPress users guidebook.

While this website design and maintenance course will be totally free, the organisers will request each attendee pays an upfront attendance guarantee deposit. This will be fully redeemable on completion of the course and will help ensure that all its limited spaces will be actively used.

If you would like to know more about the aims and scope of the course and/or register your interest in taking part in it (on a totally noncommittal basis for now) please contact:

Margaret Hedley:

e-mail: history.club2@btinternet.com

When replying please state any preferences you may have for the final selection for the weekly timings of the training sessions and their venue in either of the above two mentioned regional locations.

To qualify for selection to attend this course prospective attendees must be able to prove their current membership of one of the Forum's 40+ membership group or must be a registered private/individual member of the Forum. They are also encouraged to provide basic details of their group's or project's need for a website.

We will announce more about the final detailed plans, timing and venue for above course in the Forum's next quarterly newsletter and at its AGM in March. A further list of the other heritage related skills workshops, referred to above, will be announced in due course. These are being planned for the second half of this year.



2025

COXHOE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

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

6 Feb	Geordie Doon the Pit	B Haddon
6 March	Trouble at the Gate (Turnpike Roads)	D Butler
3 April	Myths & Legends of the North East	D Dean

Website:

coxhoehistory.org.uk

Contact:

Jack Turton: 0191 3770771

Barbara Leo: barbaraleo88@gmail.com

CROOK & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY 2025 PROGRAMME

27 Jan	The Landlord's Daughter and The Norwegian Sailor - Unravelling a family history story	T Young
24 Feb	The Reverend and the Railway Creator of Thomas the Tank Engine	I McArdle
24 March	From Telegram Boy to Bomber Boy	L Defty
28 Apr	Workhouses in Weardale	C Ruskin

Meetings held at

Methodist Church Hall, Dawson Street, Crook

Doors open 7pm for 7.30pm start

Admission – Members £5.00/Non Members £6.00

More information:

Dennis Scarr – 07745018272

ARCH & ARCH

Lecture Programme 2025

Face to face meetings held at 2.30pm in
Room ER140

Elvet Riverside, New Elvet DH1 3JT

8 Feb	Early Farming in Britain	P Rowley-Conwy
15 March	Defining Spaces in Iron Age Northumberland: Excavations at Morley Hill and Lower Callerton	J Gaunt & C Christie
12 April	Recent excavations at At Buxton Lane, Ryhope	K Buxton

*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*



WHEATLEY HILL HISTORY CLUB 2025 MEETINGS

Information: history.club2@btinternet.com

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

No Meetings until March
When we Celebrate our 30th Birthday

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

For more details:

3 Feb	Annual General Meeting	
3 March	History of Stockton & Darlington Railway	C Hardie
7 April	The Last Women of the Durham Coalfield Hannah's Granddaughter	M Hedley

Suzanne 01429 882250



EGGLESCLIFFE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

2025

27 Feb	Revising Pevsner in North Yorkshire	J Grenville
27 March	Heroes and a Villain Darlington in WW1	C Lloyd
24 April	Waterloo: Next to a battle lost the saddest thing is a battle won, when one has lost so many friends	P Brunyee

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

Admission £3.00

For more details:

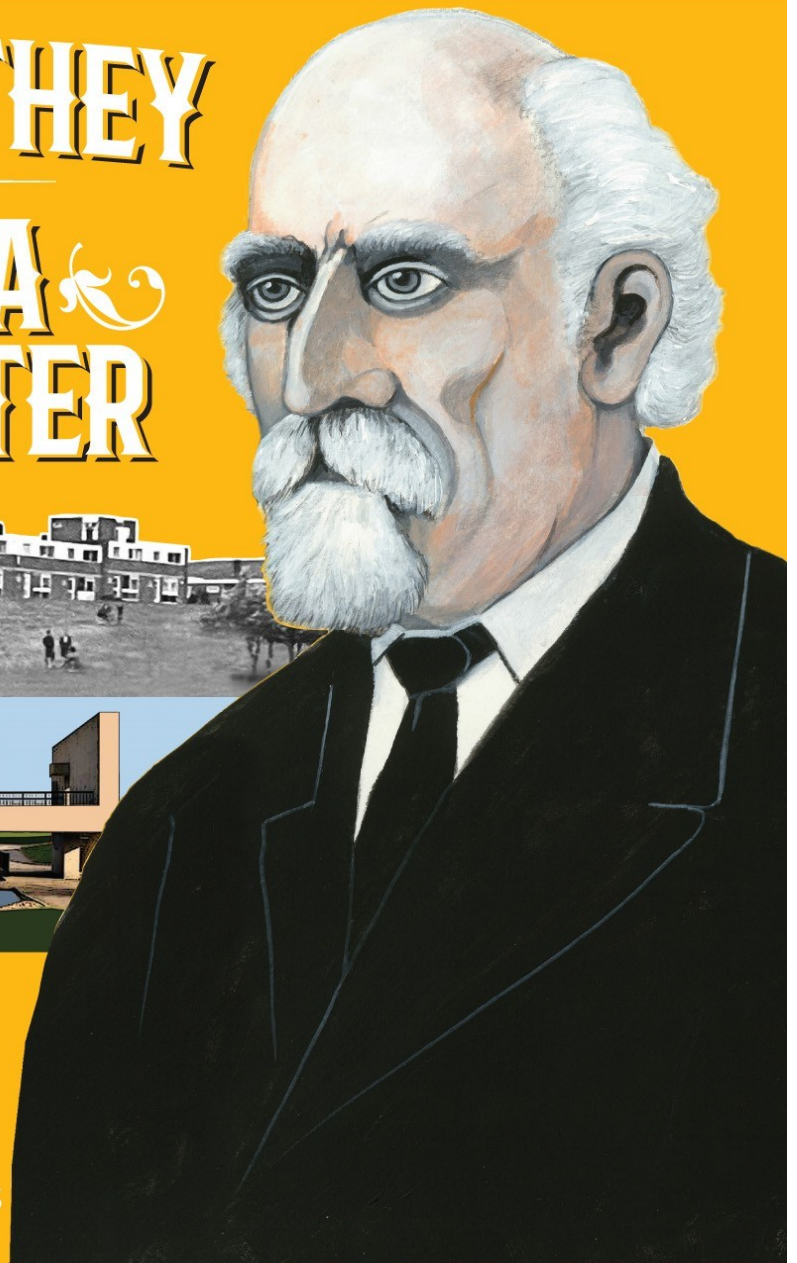
david_j_bate@ntlworld.com

New History Group Setting up in East Durham

Opening Day Activities at the NEW Peterlee History Group

In association with Wheatley Hill History Club, Peterlee History group proudly presents a play about the life and times of Peter Lee...

THE MAN THEY NAMED A TOWN AFTER



Plus local history talks:

Women of the Durham Coalfield 11.00am

by Margaret Hedley

A Capital for the Miners

by Colin Robson 12.00

Saturday 1st February, 11am - 3pm

Peter Lee Memorial Methodist Church

4 Broadclose Court Castle Dene, Peterlee SR8 1AJ

Free entry. Donations warmly welcomed.



Creating a Giant Glass Book

Wheatley Hill History Club have been working with a Light Installation Artist to create a giant glass book reflecting our local and personal history. Local schools have also been involved in this intergenerational activity.

The project has been taking place at the time the History Club is celebrating its 30th birthday and this will no doubt appear on one of our glass pages.

There are plans for the book to be displayed at The Story and other venues around east Durham.



CLEVELAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY SEDFIELD & HARTLEPOOL

5 Feb	The History of the Toilet	R Pears
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For more information on
Joining the CFHS & Zoom Talks:

Contact Sylvia Hall
sylvia.hall2@googlemail.com

BRANCHES

Our Zoom meetings are open to all Cleveland
Family History Society members

Held First Monday in the Month

FRAMWELLGATE MOOR & PITY ME LHS 2025 Programme

Meetings held in
Fram Community Centre, Front Street
DH1 5BL
at 7.30pm
(on selected Thursday evenings)

16 Jan	Members Evening & Launch event
27 Feb	Dive into Durham G Bankhead
27 Mar	Local Mining History I Wright
24 Apr	Members Evening

For more information on meetings:

E: FramLochHistSoc@gmail.com

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



2025 Programme

17 Feb	The Fatfield Victoria Viaduct	P Welsh
17 March	Old OS Maps of Shincliffe	S Bryan
14 April	The Ouseburn Trust & Victoria Tunnel	H Bryan

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:

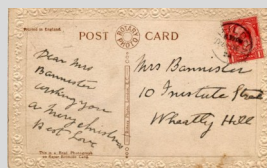
francis.gotto@outlook.com

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

Durham Postcard, Cigarette Card & Stamp Fair

Saturday 15 February 2025



Free Valuations

**Bowburn Community Centre
DH6 5AT**

**Disabled Access
On Site Parking**

**10.00am—3.00pm
Entrance £1.00**

Accompanied children FREE

TUDHOE & SPENNYMOOR LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

2025 Programme

MEETINGS AT ST DAVID'S CHURCH HALL, TUDHOE LANE
7.00pm for 7.30pm (unless otherwise stated)

24 Feb	The Showmen's Guild Of Great Britain	J Culine
24 March	Climbing Everest with Bentley Beetham of Barnard Castle	S Livingstone
28 Apr	The Portable Antiquities Scheme [@ArcDurham]	C Smith

VISITORS : £4.00

**For more details:
SECRETARY: 01388 816850**

www.durhamweb.org.uk/tslhs

DCLHS NEWS

**JOURNAL 89 IS NOW AVAILABLE PRICED £5 + p&p
PLEASE EMAIL THE SOCIETY'S SECRETARY FOR DETAILS :
jdbdclhs@gmail.com**

CONTENTS

Mark Egan <i>Editorial</i>	3
John Banham <i>'A Maritime County' – reflections on Durham's coast</i>	5
David Miller <i>The Coast of County Durham – A Personal Recollection</i>	22
Liz Bregazzi <i>A Life in Archives</i>	31
Glen Lyndon Dodds <i>A Tale of Two Towns – Aspects of the history of Sunderland and South Shields in the years 1831-68</i>	40
Win Stokes <i>When beehives made the world go round</i>	60
Stefan Szablewski <i>Dame Elizabeth Bowes: pioneer of early coal mining?</i>	69
Win Stokes <i>The Ebenezer Project</i>	73

Emma Yeo's article in DCLHS Journal 87 on 'Living and Dying with the Plague in Civil War Durham' was chosen as one of the winners in the short article category in the British Association of Local History publication awards 2024. Emma, a research student at Durham University, will be speaking to her article at a Day School entitled *Stockton-on-Tees 1600-1835: Urban History in Regional Context*. (See Page 8 of this newsletter)



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

Our Seaside

A history and memories of days at
Crimdon, Seaton and the Headland



Frances Wilson

OUR SEASIDE

This book has been written by Forum member Frances Wilson from the Cleveland Family History Society.

She has researched the post World War 2 boom years of our local seaside areas when there wasn't much money and holidays abroad were something in the future, when local people flocked to Crimdon, Seaton Carew and Hartlepool Headland either for their holidays or for days out.

Holidays were taken, regardless of the weather and this book describes the history of the three areas as resorts and is packed with the memories of the many who enjoyed simple but very happy and memorable seaside days out in the past.

The book is available from Frances or The cost if £6 (p&p extra) and £1 from each sale will be donated to the Hartlepool and District Hospice.

wilsonfm895@gmail.com

GEORGE STEPHENSON 200TH ANNIVERSARY- TRIBULATIONS, TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS

Article submitted by David Williams

I am an author and playwright from the North East. Some years ago, I wrote a novel *Mr Stephenson's Regret*, inspired by a visit to George Stephenson's birthplace in Wylam, Northumberland. The novel, which took me three years to research is historically accurate, as far as we can know these things, and is particularly focused on the sometimes turbulent relationship between George and his son Robert, and with the women in their lives, so often largely neglected in the histories. I'm pleased to report my novel was well received by readers and critics alike. (I have reprinted a quote below from *Publisher's Weekly* as an example.)

I was delighted when my publisher Wild Wolf, proposed an anniversary edition of my novel to mark the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, the world's first public railway, in 1825.

This news was opportune, as I had recently completed a full-length stage play *Geordie* as my celebration of the 200th anniversary. This play is to have its maiden performances in the first week of November 2025 by Cliffe Theatre in Stockton, a community theatre company who have enjoyed some previous success with another play of mine, *Marrers*.

When my novel was originally published, I gave talks and readings around the region which seemed to go down well, so I have revived and refashioned my talk for the anniversary year and beyond. This time, I also intend to bring along some pages of dialogue from my play in the hope that I may find some willing volunteers among my audiences to join me in a few lines of dialogue, to be included in the presentation. The talk is entitled *George Stephenson: Tribulations, Trials and Triumphs*.

I hope you will be able to catch one of my talks around the region over the coming months, or perhaps invite one for your organisation (reach out to me at davidwilliamshome@sky.com.) You may also like to join the audience at one of the performances of my play, which will be at Eaglescliffe Community Centre in November, or read my novel, which will be published in its new edition in March 2025. I hope to meet some of you soon.

***"This richly detailed and meticulously researched storyline breathes life and a palpable sense of intimacy into these historical figures and immerses readers in an England embroiled in political and social upheaval as it teeters on the cusp of the Industrial Revolution."* (Publisher's Weekly)**



The Surtees Society and Cleveland & Teesside LHS

are holding a Day School:

Stockton-on-Tees 1600-1835: Urban History in Regional Context

Saturday 5 April 2025

River Tees Watersports Centre, Stockton on Tees

To mark the publication of:

Book of Orders and Accounts for the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees

edited by John Little for the Surtees Society, as volume 228 of its publications

Speakers will include established specialists in the topic and research students exploring new ideas and themes.

There will be an opportunity to view digital copies of pages of the original Book of Orders held by Preston Park Museum.

**Admission is free, to Members of either the Surtees Society or
the Cleveland & Teesside Local History Society**

Those who are not members of either the Surtees Society or the Cleveland & Teesside Local History Society are welcome to attend on payment of a fee of £5 (refundable against the membership fee should they decide to join either society).

PROGRAMME

- 9.45 am Reception and Registration
10.20 Welcome
10.30 Philip Withington, 'New Directions in Early- Modern Urban History'
11.30 John Little, 'Typical Town or Unique Trajectory? Urban Development in Early- Modern Stockton '
12.30 pm Lunch Break
1.30 Amanda Herbert, "Sea Cures at Scarborough: Urban Medicine in North and South in the Early-Modern period"
2.30 Rachel Anderson, 'Plague Nursing in 17th century Newcastle and Durham'
and
Emma Yeo, 'Surviving Plague on Tyneside: Gateshead in 1636'
3.30 Panel discussion and questions
4.00 Close

TO BOOK A PLACE

Please contact Martin Peagam for further information and to reserve a place:

martin@peagam.co.uk

In The Veins

“A Story of Hardship and Hope, Division and Defiance, Perseverance and Pride. This film is an emotional journey that digs deep into the heart of a community built on coal”

This film has been produced by the Yorkshire and North East Film Archives and the University of Teesside. If you would like a screening of the film for your group, please contact:

B.Lamb@tees.ac.uk



IN THE VEINS
PRODUCED BY THE YORKSHIRE & NORTH EAST FILM ARCHIVE

WATCH 'IN THE VEINS' AT
THE GRAND CINEMA
SCREENING ON THE HOUR, EVERY HOUR

'In the Veins' is a short film that resonates through time, using over a century of archive footage to shine a light onto the face of the mining heritage of Yorkshire and the North East of England.

A story of hardship and hope, division and defiance, perseverance and pride; this is not a history lesson, it's an emotional journey that digs deep into the heart of a community built on coal.

From villages, towns and communities that grew from the industry, the bonds and friendships fostered, to the formation of activist groups such as 'Women Against Pit Closures,' 'In the Veins' celebrates the success, commiserates the demise and is a timely reminder about the need for a 'just transition' from fossil fuels to cleaner energy.

EDITOR ANDY BURNS PRODUCER GRAHAM RELTON EXECUTIVE PRODUCER BEN LAMB
COMMISSIONED BY TEESSIDE UNIVERSITY FUNDED BY ARTS AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL IMPACT ACCELERATOR ACCOUNT

Teesside University
YORKSHIRE FILM ARCHIVE yfa nefa NORTH EAST FILM ARCHIVE
yfanefa.com
UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council

R A B Y

Castle, Park & Gardens

The Secrets of the Castle Spring Clean

Saturday 1st & Tuesday 4th February | 11am - 12:30pm

Join our Head Housekeeper, Sandy and Conservation Officer, Davina to gain an exclusive insight on how the team protect the historic site through essential cleaning, preventative conservation and environmental monitoring. Observe conservation in action and a sneak peak at some behind the scenes collections care.



Kintsugi Ceramic Workshop

Sunday 16th February | 10:30am - 12:30pm | 2pm - 4pm

Embrace the art of imperfection with a Kintsugi ceramic repair workshop, guided by our experienced Conservation Officer, Davina. In this hands-on session you will learn the art of embracing imperfection, turning broken pieces into beautiful, one-of-a-kind works of art. Followed by a tour of the castle with one of our wonderful guides.

Women of Raby Tour

Saturday 8th & 22nd March | 10am - 12pm

This exclusive tour of Raby Castle highlights stories of some of the fascinating women who once walked our halls, from the familiar history of Cecily Neville, known as the 'Rose of Raby', to the lesser-known experiences of the women who worked in the household. Join our senior guides for a behind-the-scenes glimpse into rooms beyond the public route.



Behind the Scenes Tour of Raby Castle

15th March & 6th April | 10am - 12pm

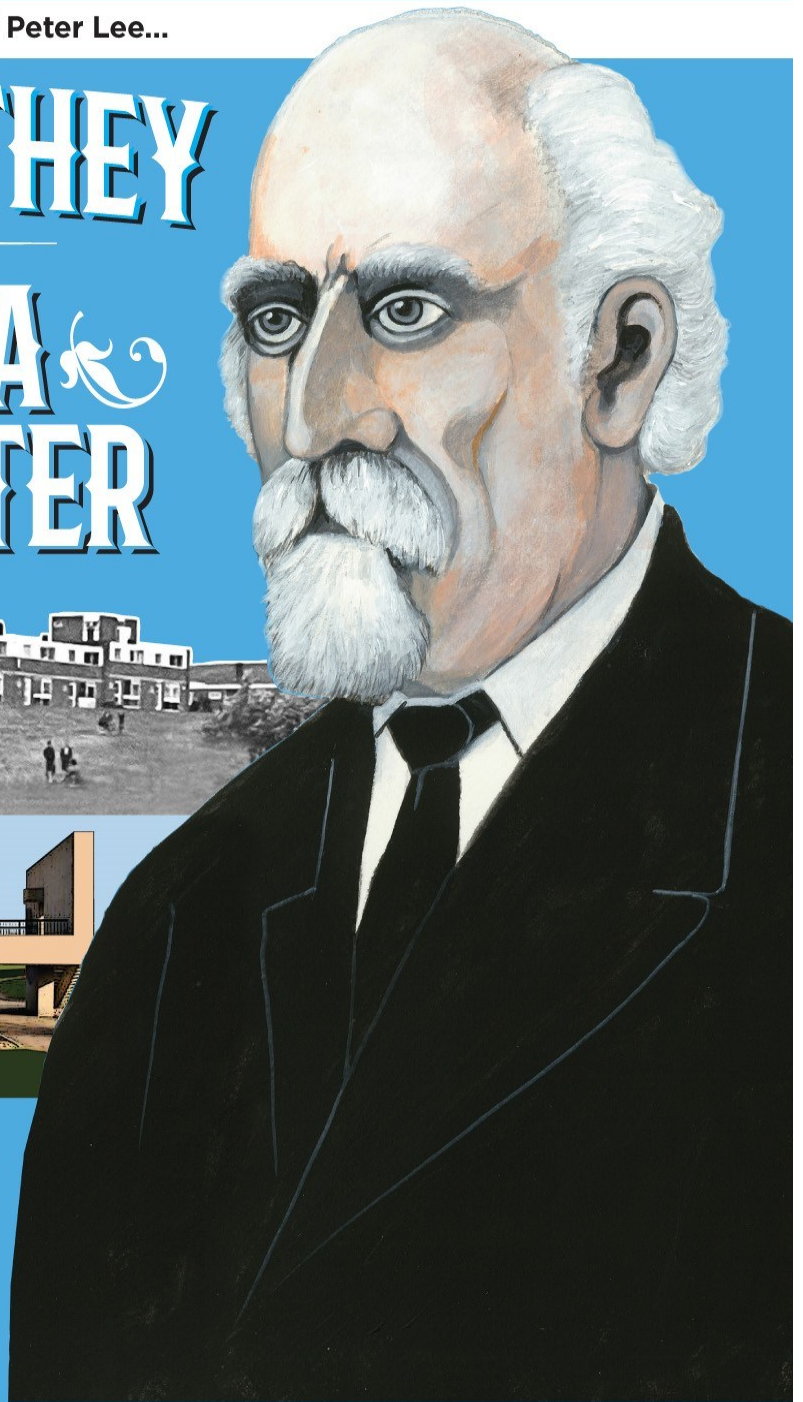
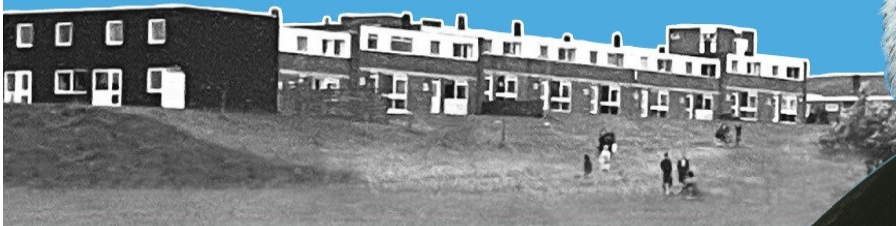
Join us for a journey into the heart of history as we unveil the hidden stories and treasures of Raby Castle. Step beyond the velvet ropes and immerse yourself in the captivating world of this centuries-old architectural masterpiece. Our exclusive behind the scenes tour offers a unique opportunity to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



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!

A play about the life and times of Peter Lee...

THE MAN THEY NAMED A TOWN AFTER



Performance times:

11.00am / 12.30pm / 2.00pm

Plus:

Stanley Youngman

Comedy Street Theatre:

10.00am / 11.30am / 1.00pm

Bell & Bullock's Victorian Time Travellers:

10.30am / 12.00pm / 1.30pm

Saturday 22nd February & 1st March

The Chare, Castle Dene Shopping Centre, Peterlee

FREE



Produced by Wheatley Hill History Club in association with Durham County Council Community Arts