

DERBYSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 102

AUTUMN 2026

DERBYSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

www.derbyshireas.org.uk

Registered charity no. 225031

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Hon. Secretary	Susan Peberdy, E-mail: secretary@derbyshireas.org.uk Tel.: 01332 517762
Programme Co-ordinator & Webmaster	Ian Mitchell, E-mail: webmaster@derbyshireas.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Mary Graham, 68, Myrtle Avenue, Long Eaton, Derbyshire NG10 3LY. E-mail: membership@derbyshireas.org.uk
Hon. Editor (Journal)	Philip Riden, E-mail philip.riden@nottingham.ac.uk
Editorial Team (Miscellany)	E-mail: miscellany@derbyshireas.org.uk
Hon. Editor (Newsletter)	Maxwell Craven, 19, Carlton Road, Derby DE23 6HB. Tel: 01332 382200. E-mail: maxwellcraven@btinternet.com
Hon. Librarian	Anne Allcock, E-mail: librarian@derbyshireas.org.uk
Publications (back numbers)	Derbyshire Archaeological Journal E-mail: publications@derbyshireas.org.uk
Elected members of Council: Dr. J. Ainsworth, Dr R. D. Annable, Mrs. D. Grace and Mrs. J. Jackson.	

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The Newsletter of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society is normally published twice a year by the Society's editor, Maxwell Craven and is printed by John E Wright, printers, 15-17, Brick Street, Derby DE1 1DU, Tel.: 01332 344743.

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Cover picture: *Castle Donington, the parish church of St. Edward, King & Martyr, east end, 21st May 2026.*
[John Morrissey]

FROM THE SOCIETY'S COUNCIL

I am pleased to report that good progress has been made in the past six months on a number of current projects.

In December 2025 Phase 1 of the Repton Project was completed by Archaeological Research Services Ltd, an important project that the Society is undertaking in partnership with Derby Museums, to facilitate the publication of the excavations undertaken by Martin Biddle and the late Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle at Repton from 1974 to 1988 and which has been generously funded by one of our members. Phase 1 provided a review of the archaeological archive and an overview and plan for future work. On the basis of this review, the Repton Committee decided that the critical next stage of work is to complete the phasing of the site, which had been completed for some trenches but not for all, including the most complex. This phase, under the direction by Dr Francis Morris of ARS Ltd., is now underway. Derby Museums' volunteers will help to transcribe information from the site notebooks and the original site plans are being scanned at the Midland Railway Study Centre (MRSC) so that copies can be used elsewhere. We are most grateful to Dave Harris, Coordinator of the MRSC for this support.

In April the land at Hill Square, Darley Abbey owned by the Society was successfully registered with the UK Land Registry and, as with the Society's other properties, is vested in the Official Custodian for Charities.

The Council has continued to review the Society's existing Rules with a view to becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. A short presentation summarising the main changes that this will involve (details of which were sent to members with the AGM papers) was given at the AGM. The aim is for this change to be made by 2028 when the Society will mark the 150th anniversary of its foundation, providing up-to-date governance for its continuing work.

The Society was again represented at Derbyshire Archaeology Day at Chesterfield in January. This provides an excellent opportunity to show-case the wide range of the Society's interests and to publicise that the winter talks can be viewed on Zoom and are also recorded, which is an incentive to those who live beyond Derby to become members. It is encouraging to see, as noted in the Annual Report for 2025, that we have had an increase in the number of members.

In January Becky Sheldon stepped down as designer of *Derbyshire Miscellany* to which she made such a major contribution with a completely new look in 2022. We shall very much miss her expertise. Our new designer is Mark Glover and the next issue of *Miscellany* should be out shortly. Meanwhile members will have recently received a very substantial issue of the *Journal*, for which we are most grateful to our editor Philip Riden.

My three-year term as chair has now ended and the Council will choose a new Chair at its meeting in early June. My thanks go to my fellow Council members for their work over the past three years and to the many members who contribute, in so many different ways, to support and promote the aims and work of the Society

Rosemary Annable

OBITUARIES

Patricia Ann Haldenby **5 February 1950 - 9 February 2026**



Pat Haldenby, who died in February, was well known to many members of the Society, as a regular participant at winter talks at St Mary's and on summer visits. From 2019 she was a much valued and ever reliable member of the Architectural Section committee and played an active role in arranging the section's contribution to the Society's programme.

Pat Haldenby, picture courtesy of the Haldenby family.

Pat was born in 1950, the eldest of four children of Ann and Alan Haldenby (1916-2007) – the latter a Derby lawyer, partner in Partridge, Haldenby and Cawdron, based in Henry Franceys' old mansion in the Market Place at Derby. She was also grand-daughter of Sir Henry Royce's greatly valued engineer, post war general manager and early apprentice, Tom Haldenby. Alan had been commissioned into the Hertfordshire Yeomanry (RA) in 1941 but had spent much of his service as a prisoner of the Japanese, working on the Burma railway. Pat was also sister to Ruth, Mark and Michael. She attended St Wystan's School in Repton, followed by Homelands Grammar School at Normanton.

Pat's chosen career was as a primary school teacher and, after qualifying with a B.Ed. at Doncaster College of Education, she returned to Derbyshire, working first at Dale Primary School before moving to Gayton Primary in Littleover, where she spent the rest of her teaching career until, having contracted ME, she was forced to retire at the age of 42.

Her interests were wide ranging and Pat was always committed, active and involved. In the 1970s she was a member of the Derby Crown Morris team, went to the Sidmouth Festival each year and for many years took part in dance displays, there and around the country. She had even danced at the Arctic Circle! Her interest in theatre, with a particular love of Shakespeare, saw her as a front of house volunteer at Derby Playhouse, too. As a member of the Churches Conservation Trust, she volunteered at St Werburgh's Church in Derby where she was head organiser, co-ordinator and a fount of knowledge.

Her home for the whole of her life, other than the four years when she was away at Doncaster College, was the family home at Whitaker Road where she was brought up and where she was in her turn the home maker for her brothers Mark and Michael. Family was all to Pat and as a

devoted aunt, she continued the nurturing role she had once enjoyed as a teacher, with her sister Ruth's children, Kate and Abby.

A stoic, no-nonsense person, Pat faced her health problems and more recently her cancer diagnosis and treatment without fuss or complaint. Her e-mail in January letting her fellow members of the Architectural Section committee know that she was receiving end of life care was typically straight forward and unsentimental, saying how much she had enjoyed being part of the committee and its activities.

Pat died at home with her family as she had wished, four days after celebrating her 76th birthday. Modest, unassuming and practical, her main instruction for her funeral was 'not to pad things out': her choice of music at the end of the service that unmistakably up-beat Morecambe & Wise Show song, 'Bring Me Sunshine'.

Rosemary Annable

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Patrick Strange
1933 – 20th June 2026

It was with great sadness that the Society heard that our long-standing member, council member and Vice-President, Pat Strange died peacefully at home in June aged 93. Although by training and profession an electrical engineer, Patrick, once ensconced in Derbyshire rapidly involved himself in numerous heritage-based activities. He was already a member of the



Archaeological Society and its council before I joined in 1974, and indeed, that year marked his co-founding, with Derek Latham and others, of the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust, on the Council of Management of which he served from then until very recently. He oversaw the DHBT's first county-wide survey of buildings at risk and served as chairman of the Trust from 2011 to 2015. It was his exhortations on that founding occasion – delivered before a good turnout of curious would-be supporters gathered in the south aisle of the Cathedral at Derby – which persuaded me, newly appointed to the Museum, to join up.

Pat Strange, in typical pose, with his dog.
[Courtesy DHBT]

Even before that, in 1971, he had joined Chris Charlton in co-founding the Arkwright Society and, although he eschewed membership of its committee (claiming to be ‘a doer not a debater’), he rapidly began to get his hands dirty in the long campaign to rescue the Cromford Mills and bring them back to productive life. Their present flourishing state is an enduring monument to his efforts over all those decades and to his leadership, which motivated all those other willing souls who were prepared to join in with him and Chris.

Patrick Strange was born in 1933 and graduated BSc, later obtaining his PhD and going on to become a member of the Institute of Electrical Engineers. he was also, in 1975, elected FSA. His great expertise (away from electrical matters, that is) was in the vernacular buildings of Derbyshire, on which he was a notable authority. He lived at Bakewell, and his funeral was held at the parish church at Bradbourne on 24th July last.

He will be greatly missed by a wide circle of friends, colleagues and collaborators. He leaves a widow, Ann and a daughter, Bridget, to whom our condolences, belatedly, go.

MC

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

Derventio: Laura Parker
Friday 5th December 2025

Laura is the Community Archaeologist with York Archaeology (formerly Trent and Peak Archaeology). Over the last 15 years she has worked on over 30 community projects; she was heavily involved in the excavations at Darley playing fields during the flood alleviation scheme in 2016. Laura also ran a training dig that took place in the Summer of 2025.



Little Chester: well and column bases, 24th March 2018.

[M. Craven]

Last August, York Archaeology returned to Little Chester for the first season of *We Dig Derventio*, a community training dig on the site of Derventio, the Roman walled small town that was in some senses the forerunner of modern Derby.

Excavations first had to cut through nearly a metre of 20th century dumped material (bottles, pottery, metal waste, and foundry ash) deposited in a series of east-to-west pits whose purpose remains unclear. Below it, at around 80cm (2ft 7.5in), the team hit what appeared to be a Romano-British rubble demolition layer, possibly the remains of a structure associated with the settlement. Finds included coins, a possible hairpin and a quantity of Derbyshire ware pottery. York Archaeology returned this August for a second season.

Chris Seddon

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**Abbeys and Industry: the legacy of medieval Premonstratensian houses
in the North Midlands: Colin Merrony
27th February 2026**

The Premonstratensian monastic order was a late arrival in Medieval England. One result of this is that the order struggled to develop large agricultural estates and focused much of their economic effort on Industry. The choices made by their monasteries in the Midlands and southern Yorkshire had a significant effect on the development of late Medieval iron working in the area.

Founded by St. Norbert of Xanten in 1120, they were canons regular rather than monks in the strict Benedictine sense. They lived under the rule of St Augustine, combining the contemplative life with active pastoral work: hearing confessions, burying the dead, maintaining roads and bridges; the industry they promoted has come to light through archaeology.

They were very organised, soon to expand: they had abbeys at Haughmond, Lilleshall, and Buildwas in Shropshire, along with Newstead, Welbeck and Beauvale in Nottinghamshire, which formed a network that shaped the religious and intellectual landscape of the region for four centuries. After the dissolution, the religious houses were stripped of their roofing lead and most of their dressed stone, which was carted away to build the country houses of the local gentry who bought their sites and estates from middlemen.

Colin went on to describe the way iron working had related significantly to the economies of the Abbeys of Beauchief (now in Yorkshire) and Dale and how decisions made in the 13th century changed the geography of industry in this area in ways which still affect us today. Beauchief Abbey is now mainly part of a golf course, still has a church with a church hall and the Pegge-Burnell family chapel with its box pews which is still a functioning place of worship and, as you walk around, you can still find evidence of medieval barns and agricultural work; furthermore, if you look carefully, you will see the area is stuffed with medieval assets. Consequently, we hope to arrange a visit through Colin.

Janette Jackson

ARCHITECTURAL SECTION

A Tour of Castle Donington 21st May 2026

John Morrissey kindly sent some excellent photographs with captions, for this event, which took place practically on the (original) Newsletter deadline. which are presented here. Some additional information, where I have it to hand, has been appended where appropriate.



Castle Donington, the party outside 16th century embedded cruck framed Nos. 29-31, Bond Gate, 21st May 2026.

Our tour began with tea and coffee in the dining room of the Castle Donington Manor Hotel, a Regency town mansion of 1794 with particularly good stucco work inside, especially in the dining room.

Donington Manor House, the dining room.



The stucco here is the work of John Sutton, a particularly talented *stuccadore* who worked at Donington Hall under Wilkins and at Elvaston Castle under Robert Walker. His delightful Gothick House, 102 Bondgate of 1818, built as a showcase for his ability, appears to have been omitted from the tour. The Manor house itself was the last recorded work of Derby-born architect William Harrison of Leicester (1742-1794) whose (now lost) Ravenstone House of 1788 was extremely similar.



Castle Donington, Manor House, street façade.

The small Castle Donington Museum on Apiary Gate opened for us, too. Unusually for Castle Donington, this seventeenth century building is of stone that, it is speculated, was quarried from the castle, although the ashlar main façade is clearly Regency, with four over four paned sashes.



Castle Donington Museum

Thereafter we ascended to look at the remains of the eponymous Castle; the view below is looking eastwards over the moat with the inner bailey to the left.



Above: Castle Donington, castle moat.



Right: Key House



Many buildings in Castle Donington have a stone base with the house above being constructed of a different material, for example, the Key House, dated 1636. Later owners have dated the alterations they have made, each accompanied by a key.

Left: Hall Farm

Hall Farm has 16th century origins although the High Street frontage is c.1700, brick on high stone base.



Above: *Dalby House, 70-72, High Street*

Dalby House, No. 70-72 High Street, with rusticated gate-piers embellished with pineapple finials, is one of the grandest farmhouses in the Midlands. It was built in 1736-1737 for the Earl of Huntingdon's steward, William Dalby; the architect, the late Professor Andor Gomme discovered, was Francis Smith of Warwick: hence its excellent proportions and build quality.

William Dalby's grandson, Revd. John Dalby, was vicar of Castle Donington from 1807 to his death in 1852, appointed by the 1st Marquess of Hastings, from whose estate – much of it lost, it is said, by a failed last-gasp bet of £120,000 on the Derby by the 4th Marquess – his son-in-law and cousin, Revd. Robert Dalby (formerly Blunt) was able to purchase the freehold with 100 acres in 1868. His descendant, Cdr. Robert Dalby RN married Mercia Meynell of the Meynell Langley family there in 1934. The wall of a relatively inconsequential downstairs room was in the 1980s found to have been decorated with rather fine *trompe de l'oeil* frescoes.

John Morrissey

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ARCHITECTURAL SECTION

A Walk round Ticknall Tuesday 30th June 2026

We were very fortunate to be guided in our tour of Ticknall by Janet Spavold and Sue Brown, stalwarts of the Society, who have an encyclopaedic knowledge of the village as authors of the Landmark book *Ticknall Pots and Potters*, as well as being the founders and chief officers of the Ticknall Archaeological Research Group.

Fourteen members gathered at the village hall on a warm and rain-free day, to look primarily at vernacular architecture. Nearby, in Chapel Street, is the Methodist chapel a pedimented and grade II listed building, dating from 1815, with good quality brickwork and still looking in good condition. Conveniently close is a water pump, one of several in the village that reflects the presence of many springs in Ticknall and a legacy of the improving Sir George Crewe, 8th Bt. Nearby there is a former farmhouse, brick built but with a more decorated stone end gable. Chapel street turns into the open grassy area of the Market Place whose size was sufficient for three pairs of oxen to turn on their entry to what was once common land.



Across Main Street from the Market Place is the main entry to Calke Abbey, home of the Harpur-Crewe family from the mid-17th century but now in the care of the National Trust. The lodge is by William Wilkins, who added the giant portico to the main house. Crossing Main Street to the west, is an elegant single arch bridge that once carried a tramway, opened in 1802, connecting the Calke lime quarries to Ashby and the nearest canal; a much cheaper alternative than building a branch canal! It became disused from 1913.

One of Sir George's 'pillar fountains' set in an attractive stone aedicule, opposite The Chequers, April 2014. [M. Craven]

Further along Main Street, at the corner with Banton's Lane, is another former farmhouse, now prominently whitewashed, with the original recessed sash windows that date it to 1690-1701. Across the road, at the corner with Ingleby Lane, is a tallish three-story brick house. Janet drew our attention to the gable wall ends rising above the current roof level probably indicating it was originally thatched. Also, the chimney is offset from the centre ridge, a feature common to almost all the older buildings along Main Street. Opposite Ingleby Lane is the 16th century *Wheel Inn* whose width is that of a burgage plot. Another noticeable feature of the limestone walled cottages here is that despite some with quite rough stonework, their chimneys are in brick and quite tall, to ensure burning embers were carried well away from the thatch.

One striking building on Main Street, close to Church Lane, is the polygonal beehive shaped Lock-up, dated to 1809. It seems barely big enough for one delinquent (illustrated in *Newsletter* No. 100, p. 20). Adjacent is a cottage with a very long burgage plot that had been an area associated with some of Ticknall's pottery working. Main Street ends at a corner with the High Street, known as The Nook, where two streams meet.

The High Street has several interesting buildings including two inns, *The Staff of Life* and *The*



Chequers. The latter is 16th century, originally single storey with attics, but a second storey, also in stone, was added before brickwork was used to replace the thatched roof with tile – all once hidden beneath stucco, injudiciously removed about 30 years ago.

The Chequers and Sheffield House, 1992 [MC]

Beside wonderfully unspoilt and friendly *Chequers* inn is a three-storey late Georgian brick building with two prominent string courses and a cartouche above the parapet which boldly displays the owners name, Sheffield. Apparently, local vet Thomas Sheffield – grandfather of George Henry Sheffield, (1843-1882), prolific Derby architect – intended this as a provocation to the Harpur Crewes with whom he was in frequent dispute. The asymmetrically placed front door rather detracts from its symmetry, but provided a more spacious dining room!

Close to the churchyard, our final destination, stand the Harpur Almshouses, a long two storey brick building with a central pediment and dated to 1772. In the churchyard is an early preaching cross alongside the ruins of the mediaeval church that was dedicated to St Thomas Becket and begun soon after his murder. The parish is now served by a Victorian gothic revival church with tall spire, designed by Henry Isaac Stevens of Derby and built in 1842 for Sir George Crewe, with a (coincidental) dedication to St George. We thanked Janet and Sue for a really interesting and informative tour of the village delivered in their usual lively and friendly style, despite their own challenging physical circumstances.

D G Jones

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INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SECTION

Industrial History Online: John Suter
Friday 16 January 2026

Industrial History Online is a free, publicly accessible, volunteer-maintained website that was originally developed by members of the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society to communicate information about industrial heritage sites through text, maps and images. It now aims to cover the whole of the UK mainland and holds over 30,000 site records. John Suter, who is the administrator of the website, gave members of the section an online demonstration of how it works and examples of the information it contains.

The Society is joining this initiative to preserve and enhance the information that we previously published in our series of IA Gazetteers, that are becoming out of date and out of print. If you

would like to help with initiative, look on our website at www.derbyshireas.org.uk/iho where you can find links to the IHO website, to John's talk and information on how to get involved.

IHM

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Coal Mining in the Faroe Islands and other international

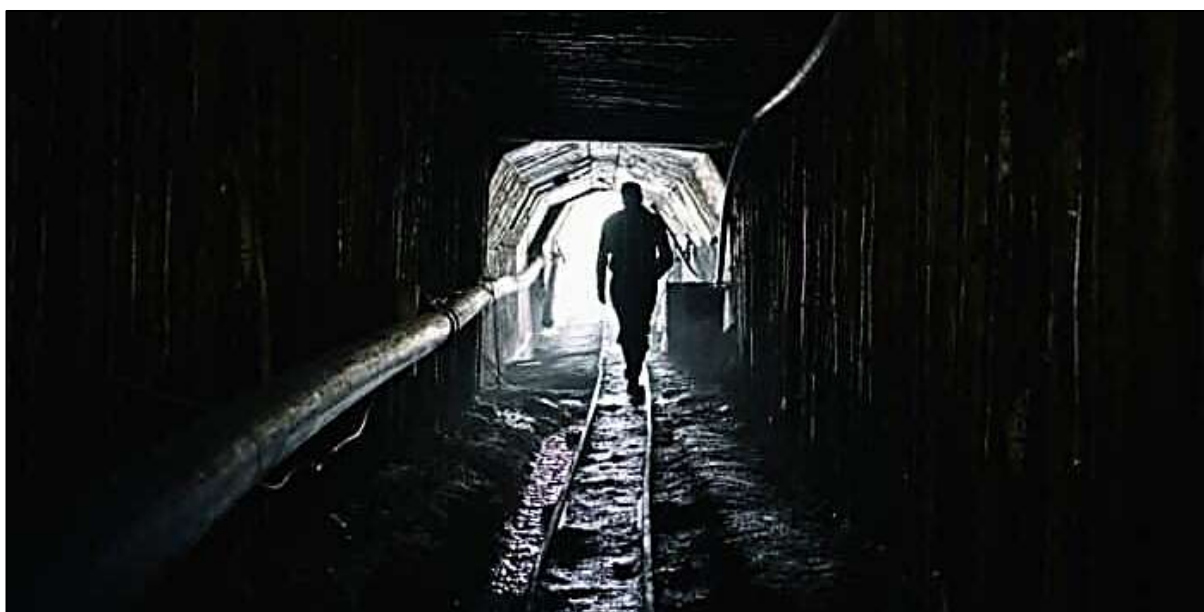
IA adventures: Ian Mitchell

Friday 17 April 2026

It used to be a tradition of the IA Section to finish the programme with a session of members' slides, to share information on sites of industrial archaeological interest. This talk revived that tradition, with selection of images from Ian's trips abroad in recent years.

Two of these were organised by a specialist tour operator in conjunction with the Association for Industrial Archaeology. In 2024 this was to Belgium, guided by members of the VVIA, the Flemish Association for Industrial Archaeology, visiting an exceptional range of sites, covering industries such as coal mining, brickmaking, paper, flax and brewing. There were some excellent industrial museums and even a row of preserved cranes in the Antwerp docks. The guides had been responsible for restoration of equipment at a number of the sites and they enthusiastically took the opportunity of the UK group's visit to fire up some of the steam and diesel engines to demonstrate them.

The equivalent tour in 2025 was to the Catalonia region of Spain. The guide on this occasion was an English architectural historian based in Barcelona. This trip included some impressive waterworks and power stations, an early 20th century cement works in the mountains north of the city, and examples of *colonia*: company towns established in rural areas to exploit water power for the textile industry. The church in one of these settlements was designed by the famous architect Antoni Gaudi in his characteristic fluid style, constructed from stone and concrete which apparently included metalworking slag.



Adit in the coal mine in Hvalba, Faroe Islands.

[Klara Johannesen/Faroe Is. Tourism]

By contrast, another trip in 2025 had more of a family history element to it. When Denmark was occupied by the Germans in WW2, the British took control of the Faroe Islands to prevent them being used as an U-boat base. Ian had inherited a set of photographs taken in 1942-43 when his father was there with The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) and this trip sought out places that appeared in these, even meeting up with the granddaughter of a local couple who regularly invited the Scots soldiers for Sunday lunch. However, there was also some IA. to find, including exploring a small-scale coal mine adit high on a hillside and a short inclined 60cm gauge railway, built to hoist cargo from boats moored below a cliff-top village.

IHM

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**Model Communities. Architecture Politics and Social Improvement
in the North Midlands Coalfields: Mike Pollard
Friday, 6th February 2026**

This very interesting and well-illustrated talk on the Model Communities of Bolsover, Cresswell and Mansfield from 1890 to 1930, was given by Mike Pollard from Sheffield. He began by looking at the ethos behind them and their place in the social and political context of the time. The leading figure behind them was Emerson Bainbridge (1845-1911), entrepreneur and industrialist, whose philosophy of Philanthropy, Methodism and Liberalism was the driving force behind his work. Already known for his work in Sheffield – the YMCA and the constructive use of leisure time, the Albany Temperance Hotel and the Children's Shelter in memory of his late wife – the model communities were very much in line with his thinking. Mike described the communities as sites of genuine innovation and social purpose and the interaction of high political ideals and architectural trends.

Bainbridge founded The Bolsover Colliery Company in 1893 and he saw the need for the provision of good quality housing for the workforce. The Arts and Crafts architect Bainbridge employed was Chesterfield-based Percy Bond Hufton (1873-1926). The concepts were clear in Mike's illustrations – 3 sides of housing with generous space allocation and a fourth side for the community facilities – a Co-op, Miners' Welfare and school. In addition, there would be a green space, one of the most important assets. Bainbridge did, however, exert an element of control; these communities were to be 'dry'; families would be carefully selected by interview; Bible Classes and Sunday school attendance were deemed essential. Other model communities e.g. Cresswell (1904) followed similar patterns, though often determined by size.

Although set out with high ideals these communities were not immune from illness and disease as Health inspectors found. The early houses lacked indoor sanitation (normal for the period) and overcrowding was also an issue with extended families combined with a mobile population.

Mike also mentioned the Brodsworth Colliery model village built by Arthur Markham, again with Percy Hufton as architect; these were considered some of the best housing for the cost. Attention was paid to size, ventilation and sunlight. Markham described it as 'a landscape of social reform'. It too had community spaces and a social services centre, run by Arthur's sister

Violet, a key social reformer of the time and the first female mayor of Chesterfield. Mike showed us how the communities fitted in to the political and social thinking of the time.



New Bolsover, part of a terrace of Percy Houfton's excellent artisans' cottages. [M. Craven]

The concept of model villages was not new, having been around for some 300 years, but the context of these innovative coalfield communities was a reflection of the political scene of the late 19th century and left a diverse legacy. Mike explained that housing was a key political issue for the liberal reformists of the early 20th century and these early communities contributed to the development of town planning and the debate on affordable housing. The Miners' Welfare was considered a very important part of these communities too, providing a social service in many ways, not only to the locals but extending to their holiday camp in Skegness. They continued to thrive until the decline of the pits.

This extremely informative talk made us realise the importance of Bainbridge's vision and the impact it had on later social trends. If you haven't already done so, it is worth watching the talk, for it contains a wealth of detail which is impossible to cover in this *resumé*.

Anne Allcock

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Visit to Magpie Mine, Sheldon Sunday 10 May 2026

Half a mile south of the village of Sheldon in the Peak District, is one of the best-preserved lead mining sites in the country, with evidence of mining activities spanning more than three centuries. The buildings and other structures on the site demonstrate the changes in technology over time, from the days when everything had to be done by hand, through the horsepower and then steam power eras, to the use of internal combustion engines in the mid-20th century. Members of the Peak District Mining Historical Society gave us a guided tour of the site,

pointing out the unusual wildflowers that have adapted to the mineral rich soil as well as the numerous mineshafts, earthworks and buildings.



Members trying not to fall into a (flimsily covered) shaft!

[Ian Mitchell]

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Visit to look at coal mining in South Wingfield and Oakerworth Saturday 8th August

Wingfield station, the last surviving original station on the 1840 North Midland Railway between Derby and Leeds, has been beautifully restored by the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust and is now operated as a café and heritage centre by the Wingfield Station 1847 group. They have diversified from their original focus on the station to the wider industrial history of the area. Hence, David Smith and John Abbott led us on a 3-mile guided walk to learn about coal mining in the area around the station. The coal outcrops alongside the River Amber and was being extracted in small drift mines and bell pits in the 18th century and possibly earlier. The arrival of the railway in the 19th century was the trigger for deeper mines on a much larger scale, which continued up until the early 1960s. Much of the area affected by mining is now woodland, which gave us welcome shade on a hot sunny day. Our guides were well equipped with maps and photographs, including a colliery steam locomotive named after a Scottish castle and a LiDAR image showing the hillside pockmarked with bell pits under the tree cover. Very

few buildings remain, but we were intrigued by a circular feature carefully constructed with curved bricks which didn't seem quite right for a mineshaft or a chimney base.



The mysterious circular feature on the site of Hollybank Mine

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**Visit to Ruddington Framework Knitters' Museum
Tuesday 25th August.**

Members of our Society were joined by three members of Ripley branch of U3A on a private visit to the Ruddington Framework Knitters' Museum. The group of volunteers, who guided us around in three groups, were all very knowledgeable and fully versed in either the operation of the machinery, the history of the actual site or about the framework knitters in general. A short introductory film gave us an overview of the importance of Revd. William Lee's new machine in the 16th century and the development of the machines, from home working to workshops and the often grim lives led by the knitters and their families.

The museum houses extensive historic framework knitting machines as well as the circular stocking machines that came into use later in the industrial revolution. The museum is housed in part of what was once Mr Parker's set of workshops and knitters' houses, the former being used to demonstrate the knitting machines and the latter being faithful reconstruction of workers' living conditions – in fact, research by the great grandchildren of the Waldram family,

who lived in the cottage displayed, helped to recreate their forebears' house when it was remodelled, following the pandemic.

The heyday for the framework knitters was around the middle of the 19th century but, even then, working conditions meant that whole families found it difficult to earn a living wage, having to pay rent for the frames, rent for the space for the frames in the workshop, for candles, needles, rent for their homes and for their finished goods to be taken to wholesalers in Nottingham or London. A Parliamentary enquiry in 1844 found that knitters in Nottinghamshire had to survive on 8/11^d (44¹/₂p) after all these expenses.

One of our guides told us of research she had been undertaking with Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, which had been one of the first to pay players at the end of the nineteenth century. It showed that teams often included framework knitters, who would be better paid for a day playing cricket than for knitting. Their work made them dexterous and fit. The last of the Parkers who had lived on the site died in 1933, still living with no main sewage. Charming as the site is now, it would have been noisy, often smelly and crowded. The Museum contains a small shop and a café which is often open outside of normal opening hours of the museum and was much praised for its offerings by those who sampled it.

Jane Heginbotham

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LOCAL HISTORY SECTION

Almshouses, Past, Present and Local: Robert Mee.

Friday 20th March 2026

There is an ancient tradition in the establishment of almshouses, although they come under different names – hospitals, bede houses or poor houses, for instance. Indeed, almshouses continue to be built today, some by charities set up a hundred or more years ago. The giving of alms is something embedded in all religions. The earliest attested setting up of an almshouse by St. Zoticus (d. 350) in Constantinople dates from AD330 under the Emperor Constantine I (306-337); also, in 361 emperor Julian the Apostate ordered each city in empire to set up such an house for those who needed it.

These houses were generally set up for the sick, elderly, needy or for pilgrims; they were often associated with religious houses. In 910, in the west, the monastery at Cluny set up a hospital for those outside its own house. During the Crusades, hospitals were established in Acre by the Teutonic Knights and The Knights Hospitallers established one in Jerusalem, which of course, moved to Rhodes after the fall of Acre and the end of Outremer in 1291. Later still, it moved to Malta, after the Turks captured Rhodes in 1522, which latter survived up to the time of Napoleon's conquest of the island. Since then, the knights of the Sovereign and Military Order of Malta have been headquartered in Rome, in the Via Condotti, and their passports – very sparingly issued & only to professed knights – still carry international diplomatic validity.

The Rule of St Benedict required its religious houses to make provision to look after all travellers as if they were Christ himself and so began a rise in the growth of hospitals attached to religious orders. The earliest in England was established in 986 by Athelstan at York. Leper

Hospitals – usually dedicated to St. Lazarus – were set up, too, even before the Crusades. There was one in Derby – St. Leonard, in Litchurch (hence Leonard Street) – and Locko was once an outlying Lazar-hospital of that at Burton Lazars, in Leicestershire.



Ashbourne, Spalden's almshouses, 10th August 2020.

[M. Craven]

Private individuals also endowed almshouses, often requiring inmates to make daily intercessions on the benefactor's behalf. This form of charity increased after the dissolution of the monasteries, when most conventual almshouses disappeared. Queen Elizabeth established the first Poor Law, which required parishes to look after their own destitute folk but she also encouraged the wealthy, including the burgeoning cadre of newly enriched middle-class merchants and lawyers to establish charities for the poor. After the Civil War, large military-style hospitals were established, such as those at Chelsea and Greenwich.

In spite of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, there was still a need for the establishment of benevolent charities to provide housing for the deserving, poor, widows, the elderly and sometimes specified as having been employed in certain occupations or adhering to a particular religious denomination, like Large's Hospital, Derby for parsons' widows in 1716.

In Derbyshire, there are still very many charitable trusts running almshouses today. In Derby itself, the Liversage Trust, set up in 1529 under the will of merchant Robert Liversage, built almshouses in St. Peter's church yard, renewed in 1722, later replaced by a complex of Gothic almshouses on London Road, designed by John Mason in 1832. The Trust continues to augment these dwellings to the present, for example the five streets of the Nottingham Road Liversage Estate (with pub, workshops and shops) designed in high arts-and-crafts style by

Alexander MacPherson in 1902 (see back cover). It has also grown to include the provision of rental property and a care home. Inmates of almshouses occupy under licence rather than pay a rent, although they may be required to pay a maintenance fee. This must be proportional and oversight of the governance of almshouses falls under the Charity Commission.

A commission set up in 1853 in the wake of a particular scandal of misappropriation of endowed funds, came long after Sir John Port had established almshouses in Etwall, the Countess of Shrewsbury in Derby (1608) and 46 almshouses in Ashbourne, which are now run under the auspices of The Old Trust. Mr. Mee gave us details of 43 almshouse trusts in Derbyshire but his may not be the final tally.

These almshouses are often in small rural villages and today play a vital role in helping people to remain in the area in which they have lived but in which there may well have been no properties they could afford to buy or rent. Almshouses are often refurbished to a high standard with central heating, solar panels and even social amenities.

Janet Jackson

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Visit to Tickhill in South Yorkshire: Vicky Wilde
14th June, 2026

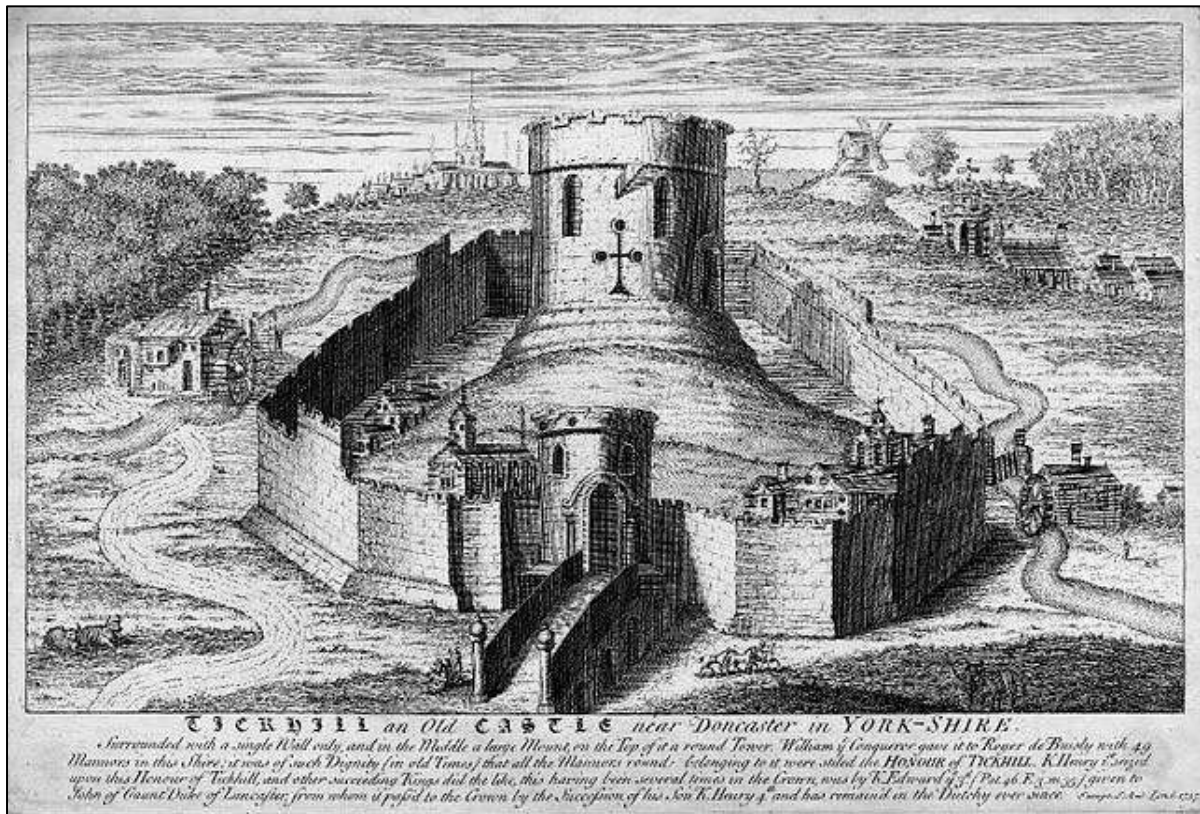
A group of Society members met at Tickhill after traversing various diversionary routes, the main road from Maltby being closed. Society member Vicky Wade who has researched the history of the settlement led, her interest having been ignited by family connections in the town.

We were first treated to a detailed history of the settlement, which is conjectured to have been an important place in Anglo-Saxon times. The settlement is mentioned in Domesday but under the name of Dadesley, the name surviving in that of an estate now on the northern edge of the town. Its first mention as Tickhill came in the 12th century. William I gave land around Tickhill to Roger de Busli in gratitude for his support during the Conquest and he established a castle here, about which more later.

Tickhill grew to be the second most important town in South Yorkshire after Doncaster and was a thriving market town. Today it still boasts 100 grade II listed buildings and 2 of grade I. Apart from the castle, the church is very fine, containing some medieval glass and an ornate tower. What are now the parish rooms were once a leper hospital, a foundation of the monastic settlement; one of its early leaders was named Tickhill and from whom the town is believed to have acquired its name.

A meander around the town demonstrated its planned nature, being centered around the castle and church with radiating streets, still today bearing witness to the Medieval burgage plots. Damming water courses on the moors enabled the town to be supplied with water, too. This, in due course, enabled the establishment of corn mills, tanneries, a worsted mill and paper mills, the latter producing heavy paper for packing cutlery produced in Sheffield. The town's

decline was the result of a better road network being built around Doncaster and a shift from a market being the hub of an area to one where individual traders drove the economy.



Tickhill Castle, pre-1648 slighting

[Mick Stanley]

The castle has one of the tallest mottes still standing in the country. Such was its strength and strategic position it was hailed as the gateway to the North (Richmond being the gateway to the South). Atop the motte are the foundations of an unique eleven-sided keep built by Henry II. The site was moated and much of the 11th and 12th century curtain wall remains to some height and shows fine stonework. The Norman gatehouse, dated 1070-80, is a rare survivor from the period and is finely decorated, too. On the exterior are four triangles formed above a string course, which are decorated with small squares of stone, each in turn with an incuse cross motif, forming a diamond pattern, being a mode of decoration from Anglo Saxon times. There are also five small statuettes, some in the form of a *Sheela-na-gig* (Celtic fertility figures). Within the gatehouse, an upper chamber was built in the 14th century. The hooded fireplace and stone lampstand can still be seen. During modernisation in the Elizabethan period, a large mullioned window was inserted which would have given magnificent views over the bailey and surrounding countryside.

Within the bailey is a house of 14th century foundation, much altered and extended. This has been home to the Moss family for some 30 years and they have steadily been overseeing the restoration of the site. Our thanks go to Vicky for organising our visit on the one day of the year that the castle grounds are open to the public.

Jane Heginbotham

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LIBRARY NOTES

We are extremely pleased to have received from the family of Gladwyn Turbutt some 20 books. In response to an advert about his library, we were invited to his house in Brackenfield where Patrick and Michael, his nephews, generously allowed us to have any books we wished from Gladwyn's Derbyshire collection. As a result, we have added some 20 books to the collection including the 1st and 2nd editions of his Commonplace Book. The family were very pleased that we had contacted them, given Gladwyn Turbutt's connection to the Society. There will be a full report in the next edition of the Library Newsletter.

The Library was open at the Belper Model Railway Exhibition in March for the display of the Cromford and High Peak Railway drawings and these drew a great deal of interest – it was of course a very appropriate audience! Two models of the C&HPR from the Belper Group were also there, which gave an interesting context for the drawings. We gained one or two more members to the DAS on the back of that event, too.

Meanwhile,

- Books issued this year, 76.
- Books added to the collection, 81.

The majority of these have been generous donations by the families of the late Gladwyn Turbutt (see above), Jane Steer, Margaret Campbell-Wilson, David Ling and Frank Robinson all of whom had all been members of the Society. Other donations have come from current members.

- Some newly published books added the Collection include:

Nathaniel Johnston's History of the Foljambe Family Parts 1 & 2, ed. Philip Riden, Derbyshire Record Series Vols. 50 & 51, 2024

John Walker's Commonplace Book. A Traveller in the 1670s, ed. Anthea Jones, Hobnob Press 2025

Robert Bakewell, Britain's foremost Livestock Breeder, The New Dishley Society, Brewin Books 2025; Janet Spavold is one of the contributors

The Strutt Mills of Belper and Milford. Belper North Mill Volunteers, 2026

Tax Assessments for Scarsdale and High Peak Hundreds Parts 1 & 2, ed. Philip Riden for Derbyshire Record Society, Chesterfield, 2025.

Medieval Bridges of Middle England, Marshall G. Hall, 2024

Colliery Stables and the Nottinghamshire Pit Pony, Janine Buckley 2024

Book sales this year have raised £471. A significant amount of this came from the sale at the very successful History Fair in June which brought in people from many different societies and which gave them a chance to visit the library. Many thanks to Richard Finch who organises the book sales – it is not as simple as it sounds!

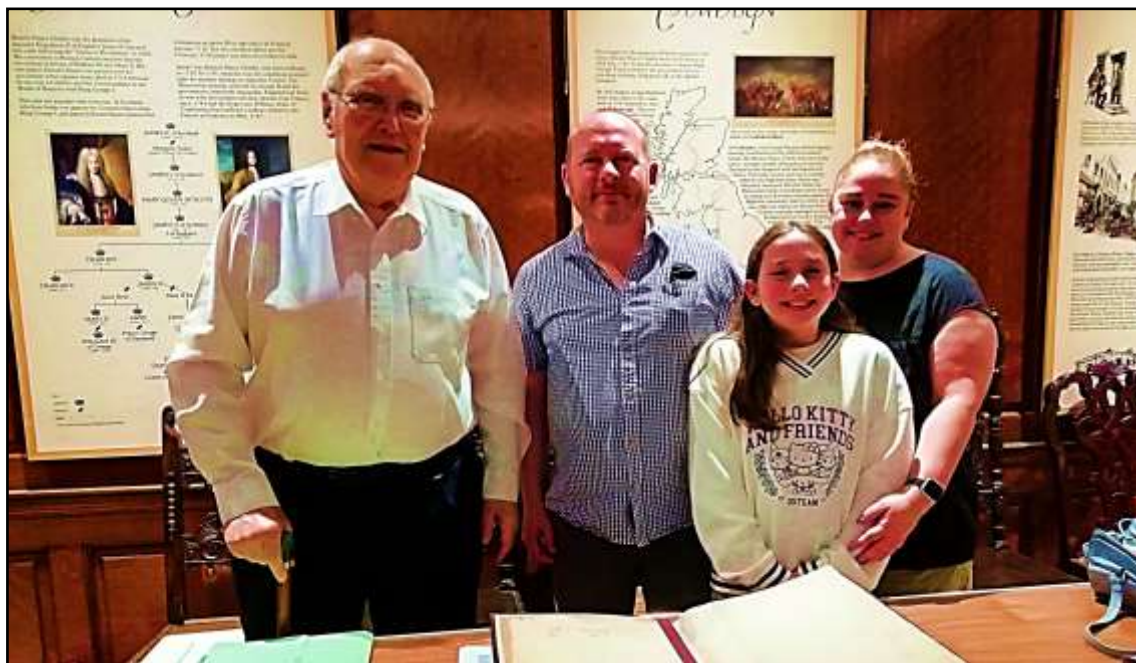
With thanks to Richard, Jane and Trevor for their ongoing help over the year.

Anne Allcock
Hon. Librarian

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ABRAHAM DENSTON[E] – an update

Since the last Society Newsletter, we had a visit in autumn last year from the Denston family from New Zealand. An interesting e-mail had arrived in the winter regarding the James Gibbs book ‘Rules for Drawing the Several Parts of Architecture’, donated by Jane Steer, which is held for us in Derby Museum and Art Gallery.



The Denston family with Peter Steer

[With permission]

On researching their ancestors, a family found reference to the book in the Society’s Newsletter with a mention of Abraham Denstone. It turned out that Mr. Denston [*sic*] is a seventh generation descendant of Abraham. The family were coming to the UK and were keen to see the volume. It was all arranged and, together with Peter Steer and Matt Edwards (the Joseph Wright Study Room curator at Derby Museum, who had also repaired the book), we had a lovely morning with Hamish, Jessica and Roya Denston. It was a special moment for them to see the signature of an ancestor in a book not far off 300 years old. The family very kindly left gifts and generously gave a donation to the Society.

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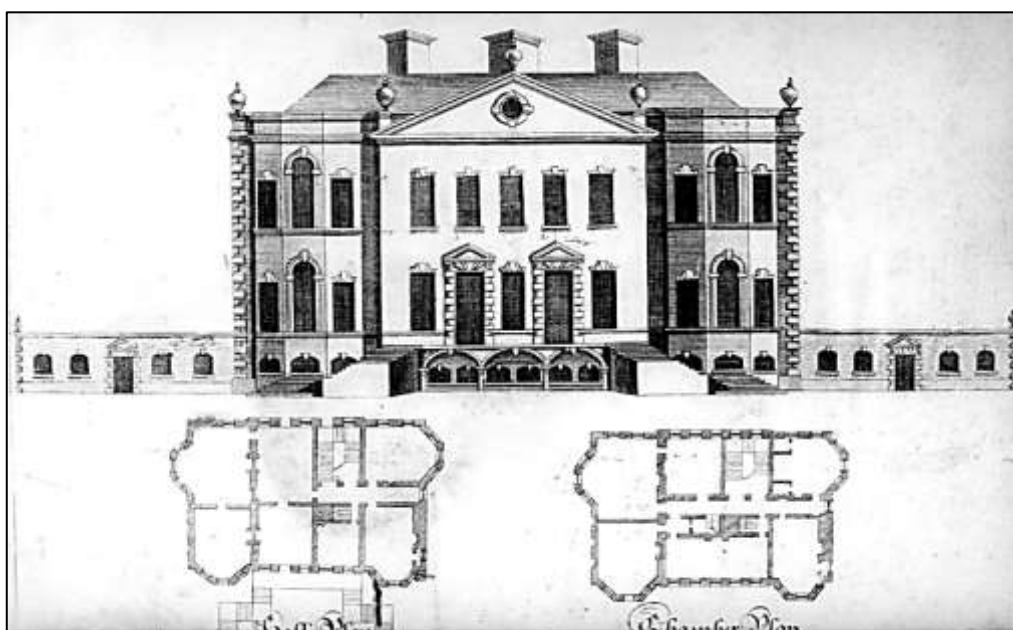
ABRAHAM DENSTONE: A QUICK REFRESHER

Why Denstone’s book matters

Derby by the beginning of the eighteenth century had a long tradition of producing national standard workers in ornamental plasterwork, or stucco – hence together termed plaisterers or *stuccadori*, the latter term reflecting that a new style of the art had come into Britain from Italy after the Restoration. Samuel Mansfield of Derby (1633-1698) had been a partner of Richard Huss (creator of the reredos in St. Werburgh’s, Derby) and had worked under the finest Italian craftsmen at both Sudbury and Chatsworth. His son, Isaac Mansfield (1670-1740) had been taken up by Lord Burlington and worked under many of the great Palladian architects as well

as James Gibbs.¹ Samuel Mansfield had also been the master of Derby-born Joshua Needham (1689-1735), a favourite plaisterer of Francis Smith of Warwick, who is recorded as having worked, *inter alia*, at Sutton Scarsdale.

To this distinguished tradition belonged Abraham Denston[e] who was born in Derby in 1723, son of another Abraham Denstone (1687-1753). The father had been a skilled *stuccadore*, a pupil of Isaac Mansfield, who had been much favoured by James Gibbs, which indeed suggests a possible reason for the younger Abraham to have ended up owning one of Gibbs' books. The father was responsible for the ornamental plasterwork – from the size of his bill, fairly lavish – in the 1731 Guildhall (designed by Richard Jackson of Armitage) and that in All Saints' (now Derby Cathedral).² The family were also clearly upwardly mobile, too, the elder Abraham's brothers including two attorneys and another plaisterer, Joseph (1704-1728). Furthermore, young Abraham's younger brother was James Denstone (1724-1780) who practiced as a builder/architect and designed Markeaton Hall in 1755, before succeeding Samuel Wyatt as clerk of works at Kedleston.



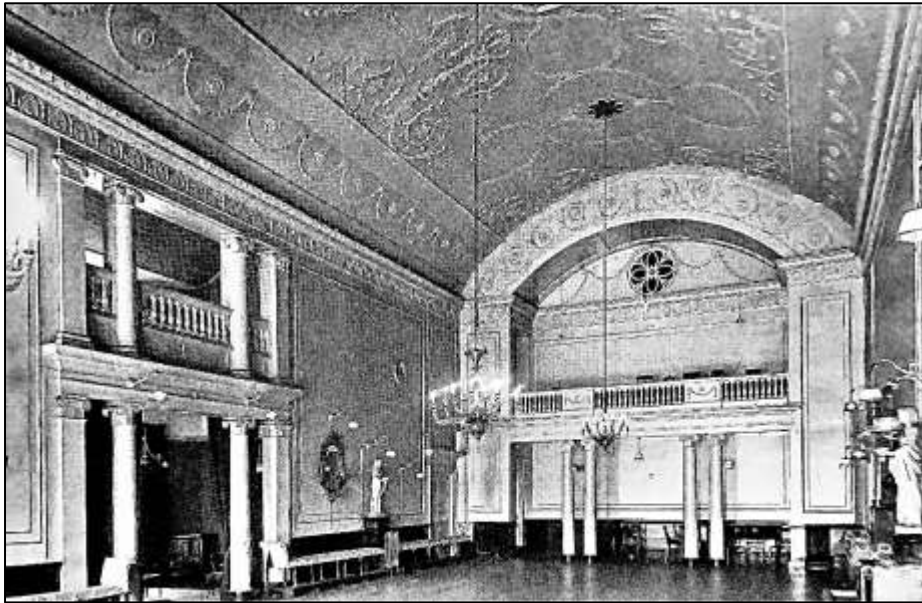
James Denstone: south elevation of Markeaton Hall, 1754. [Derby Museums Trust]

The younger Abraham Denstone, who was apprenticed to his father 1737-1744, is most notable for having worked with architect Joseph Pickford of Derby (1734-1782), whom he encountered in 1763 and under whom he worked at Kedleston when Pickford was clerk of works there 1774-1782 (having succeeded Denstone's brother, who was sacked in 1774 by Lord Scarsdale 'for aireing his Whiggish views.') He was recruited by *stuccadore* Joseph Rose, who had come to Kedleston with Robert Adam; he was paid £412 – 5s – 9¹/₂^d in 1764 for work done from 1759.³

¹ *Daily Post* obit. 4/1/1740

² DLSL Mayor's Account Book 1731-1732; Cox, J. C. & Hope, W. H. St. J., *Chronicles of the Collegiate Church of All Saints' Derby* (London & Derby 1881)

³ Kedleston Archives Book 3R 60-63; bills 1759.



Abraham Denstone the younger: Derby Assembly Rooms, interior stucco, 1771. [M. Craven]

Abraham executed the stucco work at the Derby Assembly Rooms, in 1771 possibly to Robert Adam's design, although this was convincingly questioned by the late Sir Howard Colvin and is now doubted, with Pickford the likely replacement. He also worked under Pickford at Etruria Hall for Josiah Wedgwood, at Sandon for the future Duke of Hamilton and without doubt at Pickford's own house (1763-64) as well as at St. Helen's, Derby (1766-67).



All Saints' Church Yard (now Full Street) The Mitre (later the Bath Inn) corner of Amen Alley, 1768, after a drawing by Peter Burdett (who did not live there – pace Dr. Leach!) [Mellors & Kirk]

Denstone also owned *The Mitre*, Amen Alley – just as illustrious China painter, William Billingsley owned the *Sir John Falstaff* pub in Bridge Gate – and, at his death in 1779, also owned houses in Walker Lane, St Mary's Gate and held the lease of the brickworks at Rowditch Farm from the Bateman family.⁴ Plainly, he died a reasonably wealthy man and possessed of the copy of James Gibbs' *Rules for Drawing the Several Parts of Architecture*, now kept at Derby Museum, which the late Jane Steer happily acquired. One can well imagine his father having acquired this when working on All Saints, Derby.

⁴ Will pr. May 1779, DRO 919C/CT17-18

Thomas Denstone (1690-1764), Abraham's uncle, also a *stuccadore*, had a career which to some extent overlapped that of his nephew. He tendered for plasterwork at Yoxall Lodge c. 1760-61 for 1st Lord Scarsdale, then being rebuilt under Samuel Wyatt.⁵ It was, of course, sold on to John Gisborne, who had Pickford build him St. Helen's and for whom he further enlarged Yoxall Lodge, where later on, Joseph Wright used to visit his son, the anti-slavery campaigner Revd. Thomas Gisborne, whom he taught to paint *en plein air* in William Emes's park there.

Thomas Denstone's son Joseph (1726-1789), was a mason and married Mary, daughter of John Trubshaw of Iron Gate, a member of the Staffordshire dynasty of builders; Trubshaw was both builder and architect, being paid £56 for making alterations to the house in Iron Gate of Anthony Tissington FRS in 1767. To further embed the Denstones in the *élite* of Enlightenment Derby, Ann, daughter of John Trubshaw's brother Thomas, married John Whitehurst's brother (and works manager) George in 1759.⁶

On James Denstone's death in 1780 without issue, the combined brickmaking and building interests of the brothers devolved to Abraham's third son, Charles, who inherited the house in Walker Lane and established a builders' yard in Friar Gate. From him, the building business passed to Abraham Denstone's grandson John Bridgart, son of his daughter Keziah and framework-knitter Seth Bridgart.



Abraham Denstone yr., stucco trophy, Pickford's House, Derby 1764. [M. Craven]

Seth's son, John, carried on the building business founded by the Denstone brothers, buying a former bowling green by the *Wheel* inn, Friar Gate, in March 1839 where the firm's headquarters were thereafter set.⁷ He was succeeded by his son Robert (1803–1860) and he by another Robert (1838–1881) whose brother George designed most of the buildings built by his firm.⁸ The business passed – on the extinction of the Bridgarts – to Joseph Parker, an ex-employee of Bridgart's in 1887. This firm continued on the site until the retirement of its last proprietor, Howard Parker in 1969: over two centuries of tradition of high-quality building and craftsmanship in direct succession from Pickford's *stuccadore*, Abraham Denstone and his architect brother: a quite remarkable survival from an era of massive achievement: the world of Wright, Pickford, Whitehurst, Darwin and the Strutts.⁹

MC

⁵ Beard, G., *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England 1660-1820* (2nd Edn., London 1986) 141, 172, 270.

⁶ Craven, M, *Inns & Taverns of Derby* (Derby, 2002) 108; Craven, M. John Whitehurst (Stroud 2015) 36 n. 8 & 162 n. 71

⁷ Deeds in the possession of the late D. J. Montague; to whom, with the late Roy Christian, I am obliged for the information.

⁸ *Modern Mayors of Derby*, Vol. I (Derby 1909) 27

⁹ Ex info. from the late Howard Parker for this information and from his and other family records.

LEONARD WHEATCROFT OF ASHOVER: A DERBYSHIRE BARD

by Chris Francis

In the Commonwealth era, Leonard Wheatcroft (1627-1706) was clerk of the parish of Ashover, tailor, poet, songster and landlord of the *Hound and Shears* inn. The London *Hound and Shears*, in Cloth Fair, Smithfield, played an important part in the opening of the annual Bartholomew Fair.

Wheatcroft is best remembered for his poetry, though. An example of his work was *The Art of Poetry*, in which he praises Cupid. Little is known of his family, however, for the early registers of Ashover were destroyed by the Puritans but, in the Cromwellian register he found some details of his forebears, who no doubt derived their surname from a family of freemen from Wheatcroft, nearby in the parish of Crich. He was also a creditable scholar, an accomplished bell-ringer and his son, Titus Wheatcroft, thought his father sang superbly, inserting into a copy of *The Art of Poetry*, the lines:

‘A right good voice he had, which did appear
Right clear to sing that ev’ry one might hear.’

Wheatcroft was an ardent Royalist; he enlisted in the army in his teens. In the Civil War, the Puritans damaged Eastwood Hall nearby, the ancient seat of the Reresbys, but then the seat of Revd. Nathaniel Bourne, Ashover’s rector, who sought to remain neutral in the conflict, consequently pleasing no-one with the result that his house was sacked twice, once each by contingents from each faction!

Aged 17, Wheatcroft fought at Marston Moor (1644), in which the Royalists, under the command of the William Cavendish, Marquess of Newcastle (after the Restoration created 1st Duke of Newcastle) and in which they were defeated by the Parliamentary forces.

‘Mourne, mourne, our colours are all torne
And our State is most folorne
Since last we fought in field
Let’s all be gone everyone
Run your Way!’

wrote Wheatcroft.

After the conflict, he wrote many poems about bell-ringing:

‘You ringers all within this County
That minding are to hear me sing
I pray draw near and show your bounty
And I will make your fame to ring’.

[William McGonagall, eat your heart out! – Ed.]

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ALMSHOUSES: THE DEVONSHIRE HOSPITAL, DERBY

Amongst the works undertaken from 1774 to 1782 for the 5th Duke of Devonshire, Joseph Pickford of Derby's second additional commission was to replace the Devonshire Hospital, Bess of Hardwick's early 17th century almshouses in Derby's All Saints' Church Yard – now the northern end of Full Street – which had supposedly reached the end of their structural lives and which offered accommodation deemed mean even by the standards of the 1770s. The commission came in 1777, just as work was being completed by him on the Trinity Hospital at Leicester and indeed, the latter may well have prompted the duke to improve his own almshouses and thus to employ the experienced Pickford, then working at Edensor, to undertake the work.

There are no complete accounts for this undertaking, only fragmentary ones. Early in the year a payment was made to Pickford of £15 – 3s – 8d to house the inmates – allowed 8d (3p) per week – whilst the work went on. A later voucher, dated 18th December, marked a payment to Pickford on account of £70, paid through Heath's bank at Derby via borough grandee Charles Hope.¹⁰ We can only presume that the task was complete early the following year and the fortunate inmates moved back in.



Derby, Full Street: Devonshire Hospital, photographed by Richard Keene in 1856.

[Derby Museums Trust]

The building consisted of twelve single storey cottages grouped either side of a courtyard, open to the Derwent and protected from the street by a grand Doric screen, built of fine ashlar. The centrepiece was marked by a pair of entrances, one for each row of cottages, flanked by pilasters, the pier between them being crowned by the shield, supporters and coronet of the

¹⁰ Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth, receipted account amongst unsorted papers.

duke. At either end were three bay pedimented pavilions ornamented by niches, behind which lay the rows of cottages. The pediments, supported on paired Doric engaged columns and the appropriate frieze, had overtones of Pickford's friend James Gandon's façade of Nottingham's Shire Hall, although the effect at Derby was later diminished by the provision of a chimney stack behind each pediment, sporting a pair of pots like rabbit's ears. Furthermore, each penetrated a wider, lower and plainer pediment, in classic Palladian manner, no doubt at the insistence of the duke, a keen Whig patron (although he had thrice refused an appointment to the ministry at this period). It made for a very dignified façade and well complementing the east elevation of Gibbs's All Saints' church, which stood exactly opposite. Not that the more radical and non-conformist local commentators appreciated this, William Hutton commenting:

'Who dresses a pauper in lace, instead of that modest elegance which ought to have dignified the front?...we are treated to an ostentatious display of the Duke's Arms and Crest as the leading objects.'¹¹

The grand architectural set piece that faced the street certainly was there to mark out the pride that the Duke had in his munificence in up-grading the hospital, but even in the same year that Pickford died (1782), Pastor Karl Moritz passed through Derby, generally expressing enthusiasm for the town. Yet, being a keen Prussian Lutheran and an admirer of Milton (he travelled with a copy of *Paradise Lost* in his pocket), he was of a similar cast of mind to Hutton, writing of the Hospital:

'Near the great church which is much admired are built some almshouses by the Duke of Devonshire. The front has more the appearance of magnificence than charity and opens onto a courtyard surrounded by small apartments. In the middle of this court opposite the entrance a flight of steps leads to the lower rooms which is the only mean of communication with the upper chambers. This I believe cannot be but inconvenient to the aged and decrepit. But our surprise at this was much heightened by our enquiries after the objects of this benefaction, who scarcely appeared to be under the necessity of claiming such a bounty from age or visible infirmity. We were then informed that their abode was optional and that they had the discretionary powers of letting their apartments or gardens to others. How far this is an abuse of the charity must be determined by the original intention of the founder.'¹²

If this account is correct (and the sub-letting tendency is attested elsewhere) it appears that the new accommodation was much sought after and that the bedesmen of the foundation were thus stirred to enterprise – in spending extended time with their able-bodied relatives whilst collecting a no doubt useful income in rent – it seems to epitomise the spirit of the age and effectively explains the jaundiced view entertained by these two rather different but equally reform-minded commentators. Hutton went further, in opining that the previous hospital on the site had been a 'building of stone which would have stood the blasts for five hundred years to come', suggesting to Edward Saunders that any credit the duke might have accrued from the project was lost in the high-minded scorn heaped upon the design. This, however, would be to

¹¹ Hutton, W., *History and Antiquities of the Borough of Derby* (Derby 1791) 62-63

¹² Moritz, K., *Travels...Through Several Parts of England*, (London 1782) 37

overlook the lack of any subsequent criticism from later commentators, including Stephen Glover in 1829 or the unbiased visitor Sir Richard Phillips of the year before.¹³

The late Edward Saunders, in his 1993 monograph on Pickford, opined that the duke had been badly advised and that Pickford lost credit thereby, hence losing the plum commission of building the Crescent at Buxton for the duke, but this is to miss the point. The duke had done his bit for his pensioners in Full Street and as far as he was concerned had, in the process, beautified the town; it is doubtful if he was even aware of the middle-class hectoring being directed at his project. As for employing Carr at Buxton, this was surely because Pickford had his hands full at Edensor in the years either side of 1780, when Carr first manifested himself; the duke merely needed two first-rate architects. It was, after all, not for nothing that he enabled Pickford to be co-opted as a Burgess of Derby in 1778, which much enhanced his status.¹⁴

As a coda to this, it is worth noting that a later generation also failed to appreciate the magnificence of Pickford's Devonshire Hospital or the social benison of the charity itself, for the building was unceremoniously demolished in 1917. By the summer of that year, they almshouses were in a ruinous condition:

‘The courtyard is dirty and neglected and the houses are mere storage places and the ancient gardens a dumping ground.’¹⁵

They were to be knocked down imminently to extend the Corporation of Derby's intrusive new electricity generating station, itself happily removed in 1972. The site now forms part of Cathedral Green, a pleasing oasis overlooked by the Cathedral and the historic silk mill, presided over by the City's equestrian bronze statue of Bonnie Prince Charlie by Anthony Stones, erected in 1995.

MC

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PUBLISHED IN JANUARY

Your editor, keen to extend active life for as long as possible, keeps writing, when not at work. Last year we had the *Lost Houses of Nottinghamshire* (see Newsletter 100), which followed 2024's similar tome on Derbyshire.

This year, however, we have had a return to the author's other enthusiasm: classical history. In 2017 Fonthill Media published the *Complete Imperial Families of Ancient Rome*, but it was noticed that there was no biographical dictionary of the emperors themselves apart from academic works like the 2nd edition of *Prosopographia Imperii Romani* and the four volume *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*. What seemed to be needed as well was a quick affordable but referenced alphabetical guide to them all, including pretenders and usurpers, from Julius Caesar to AD 602 for use by students and interested lay persons.

Hence, Amberley of Stroud published *The Roman Emperors: A Biographical Dictionary of*

¹³ Phillips, Sir R., *A Personal Tour Through the United Kingdom* Vol. XI, *Derbys. & Notts.*, (London 1828) 111f.

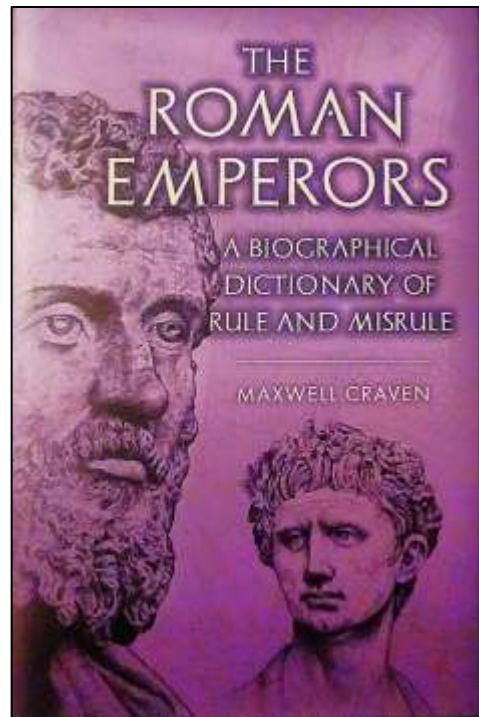
¹⁴ Derby Local Studies Library, pamphlet *A list of the Honorary Burgesses of the Borough of Derby made since the last Election*, dated 7th September 1776.

¹⁵ *Derby Mercury*, 15/6 and 31/7/1917

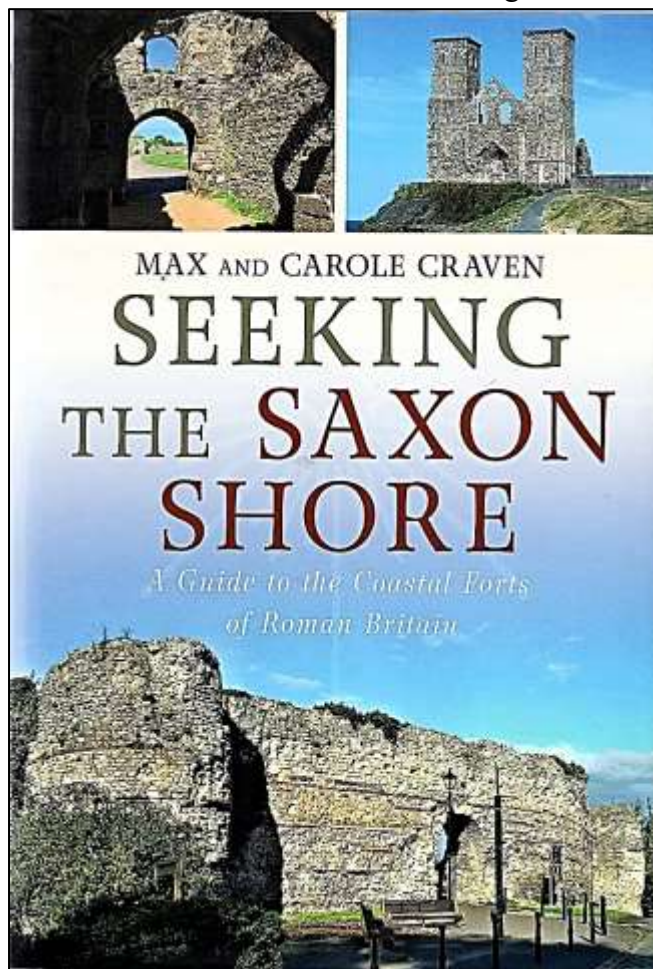
Rule and Misrule to satisfy that need. One hopes that it is readable; one has tried to ensure that it is accurate; one had wanted sculpture or coin portraits of most of those listed, but this was not viable, although there are 15 portraits. The book is octavo, 352pp and the list price is £25. Should any reader wish to acquire a copy, I am sure that copies can be found via an internet trawl at something under that. The author has a few copies left, too, available at £15 each should anyone be prepared to call for one.

And, not content with that...

Your editor and his wife, at a loose end in June 2017 after having driven their daughter all the way to Luton Airport so she could jet off to Italy for a holiday – which we fondly thought would provide cultural uplift to boost her university studies – decided almost spontaneously to spend a week looking at the Saxon Shore forts which the Romans left us along the south and east coasts of England, all subject of a lecture to the ARG next March (qv *infra*).



This somehow translated itself into a guidebook for any layman wishing to repeat our epic journey, which we thought so enjoyable.



Unfortunately, the book was delayed with the publisher, Fonthill of Stroud, until the plague broke out in March 2020, causing a further hiatus until spring 2021. It was then delayed by repeated unexpected events (like the publisher being taken over by Pen and Sword), so that it did not finally hit the shops until this April. It is royal octavo, 190pp, lavishly illustrated in colour with plans and maps too and beautifully produced on glossy paper. As well as showing how one might tour the Saxon Shore forts from Portchester to Brancaster (Norfolk), there is also an appendix on four other similar forts elsewhere in Britain that we felt were sufficiently related to deserve a mention. List price £25, but doubtless cheaper via the internet.

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The Society's Stand at the Riddings Local History Fair, 27th June 2026.

[Ian Mitchell]

AUTUMN/WINTER PROGRAMME

When you receive this newsletter there may still be a chance to book on the following visits, but please be mindful that coach trips may be cancelled if there are insufficient bookings, and walks with limited numbers are often fully booked.

All visits should be booked online using Eventbrite. Full details and booking links can be found on the DAS website <https://www.derbyshireas.org.uk/diary/summerprogramme/>. If you cannot book on-line, please contact Rosemary Annable (01773) 828141 (evenings) who will do this for you.

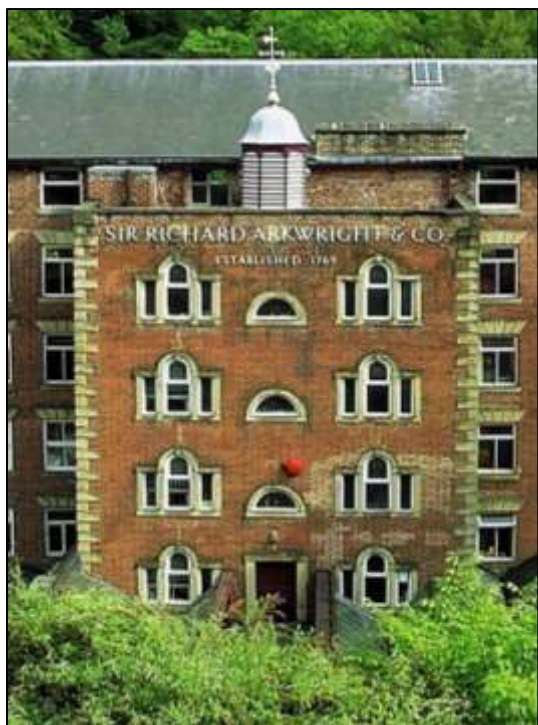
Unless otherwise indicated, our talks are hybrid events that can be attended in person or online via Zoom, but in most cases the speaker will be present in the room and you will get a better experience by attending in person. Friday evening events are at **St Mary's Church Hall, Darley Lane, Derby, DE1 3AX**, starting at 7.30pm. Saturday events are at the **Strutts Centre, Derby Road, Belper DE56 1UU** at 11.00am unless otherwise indicated. Members who have supplied an e-mail address will receive the link to register to attend via Zoom by e-mail a week before the meeting. Non-members are welcome to attend in person and a limited number of places for non-members to attend via Zoom can be booked via [Eventbrite](#). Most meetings will be recorded & available to watch online via a link from the [DAS website](#).

Saturday 26 September 2026 at 11.00am at Strutts, Belper

Weaving: an Exploration of Masson Mills in the Derwent Valley (IAS)

Speaker: Sue Russell

Sue Russell is in the final stages of a doctoral study of Masson Mills at the University of Derby. Her findings have coalesced into four threads, the building, the river, the people and



the cotton, each of which have been woven together to provide an insight into the evolution of this historic industrial heritage site. The talk will add more texture to each of these elements and their interdependence.

The original Palladian façade of Masson Mill, thought to be the work of Sir Richard Arkwright's architect, George Rawlinson of Matlock Bath – From a post-card.

[M. Craven]

Friday 9 October 2026 at 7.30pm at St Mary's Derby

Prehistoric Lives in the Trent Valley (ARG)

Speaker: David Knight

Dr David Knight, who is currently Head of Research at York Archaeology and an Honorary Research Fellow in the University of Nottingham's Department of Classics & Archaeology, has curated the exhibition on Trent Valley pre-history with his colleagues Kristina Krawiec and Steve Malone. His talk will provide an introduction to the free exhibition – open Thursday to Sunday, noon to 16.00hrs, and continues until Sunday 10 January 2027 – which includes a selection of prehistoric artefacts recovered from recent excavations in advance of quarrying in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Finds have been selected with the aim of shedding light upon the changing valley environment and the transition from hunter-gatherer to agricultural societies. It includes a variety of stone artefacts, pottery and metalwork and rare organic finds such as a wooden Iron Age shovel from Hoveringham in Nottinghamshire.

Friday 16th October 2026 at 7.30pm at St. Mary's, Derby

The French Napoleonic Prisoners of War in Derbyshire and beyond

Speaker: Dr. Mark Barnard.

Saturday 31 October 2026 at 11.00am at Strutts, Belper

Simon Goodrich in Derbyshire 1799 (IAS)

Speaker: John Kanefsky

Simon Goodrich was one of the key players in the engineering and economic history of England. His work at the Portsmouth Dockyard, where *inter alia* he created the first production line in the world, the Block Mills, is justly celebrated. Yet surprisingly little is known about him as a person. He was appointed in 1799 at the young age of 26 as Mechanist (chief engineer) of the Royal Dockyards under Sir Samuel Bentham and one of his first acts was to undertake a month-long tour of the Midlands and North of England to observe the new technologies that were being developed at this seminal stage in the Industrial Revolution, with an eye to applying them to improve the capabilities and efficiency of the Dockyards and the Navy.

He documented his travels in a number of long letters, comprising a journal sent to Bentham, the most important covering the first week of his itinerary, in and around Derby and Belper, where he met and talked to key people in the area whilst viewing their works and factories. This journal has been referenced by many historians, but none have transcribed the whole and put it into context. Today's talk explains what he saw in Derbyshire; the unparalleled insights his reports give into the importance of the area at the time; and highlights the transition from hand- and wood-based ways of working, to mechanisation and iron as the medium of machinery. It also illuminates the people he met in the County, including William Strutt and his family, Erasmus Darwin and others.

Dr John Kanefsky studied and taught at the University of Exeter and then joined the National Coal Board, subsequently worked at the Coal Authority and elsewhere. His research focuses on 18th century steam power and on Devon in the 18th and 19th centuries. He is also the author and curator of the Early Engines database of all known 18th century steam engines.

Friday 6 November 2026 at 7.30pm at St Mary's Derby

New Light on the Hinton St Mary Mosaic and its place in Roman Britain (ARG)

Speaker: Peter Guest

The mosaic from Hinton St Mary is one of the most celebrated survivals from Roman Britain. Discovered (accidentally) in 1963, its central tondo features the bust of a man with the Christian Chi-Rho symbol behind his head, which most scholars have concluded is among the first representations of Jesus Christ from the ancient world and probably the first to be found on a mosaic. It is one of the icons of Roman Britain and has an important story to tell about the



earliest Christian communities in the British Isles. Despite the mosaic's obvious significance, however, very little was actually known about the buildings to which it belonged, or the people who commissioned it and enjoyed it.

Head of Christ, from the mosaic: pre-iconoclast period images of Our Lord were often un-bearded; it cannot be a portrait of Emperor Constantine I, due to lack of a diadem, which was de rigueur.

[M. Craven, from a BM postcard]

The talk will present some of the important results of the British Museum's recent archaeological excavations at Hinton St Mary that aimed to answer the many questions that remain about the mosaic and to provide a better understanding of its wider context in the history of late Roman Britain.

Friday 13 November 2026 at 7.30pm at St Mary's Derby

A short history of artist blacksmithing, including Robert Bakewell's 'English Style', his influence, and what followed.

Speaker: David Hawkins (speaker on Zoom)

Although for most of its history, blacksmithing has been predominantly a practical art, there is a rich tradition of work with clear cultural and visual intent: artist blacksmithing. This talk briefly reviews the origins and development of this craft and in particular the role of artist blacksmiths from the 17th century to the present day. Derby's Robert Bakewell became known for the 'English Style' during the 18th century, combining traditional influences and practices with styles and ideas from the Baroque; his work maintained a strong influence over practice until the 1980s. Blacksmithing practice has expanded in the last 45 years, to produce a new generation of innovative artist blacksmiths whose practice is very much of the 21st century, but reflecting the influence of exemplary practitioners such as Bakewell. Examples of work, along with insights into techniques and practices, are used to illustrate this short history.

Dr. David Hawkins has worked in various academic roles across design and ergonomics-related subjects at universities in the UK, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia and Egypt. His family have been blacksmiths in Mid- and North Devon for more than 250 years, so he learnt to work in the forge from youth and has significant practical experience of creating ironwork.

Friday 20 November 2026 at 7.30pm at St Marys Derby

The only way is Ethics! From burials to building projects: how do we do the right thing as archaeologists? (SL)

Speaker: Anna Welch (speaker on Zoom)

The process of archaeological excavation is never straightforward and we have to think carefully about when, why, how and should we do it. What do we do with the things that we find, especially in the case of human remains? Navigating an ethical path through the landscape of historical environment can be full of twists, turns and tricky situations. In this talk, we'll explore what we mean by 'professional ethics', why they matter and how they differ from morals and laws. How do we make the best decisions for archaeology whilst considering the needs and opinions of an increasing number of stakeholders – and can we please any of the people any of the time?

Anna Welch has a BA in Archaeology and an MA in Museum Studies and worked for several years as an archaeologist with Southampton Archaeology Unit. Now she works for the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists centering on degree accreditation, training and careers.

Friday 11 December at 7.30pm Zoom only

Slavery in Ancient Rome (SL)

Speaker: Jerry Toner

Rome was a slave society which relied on enslaved labour to maintain many aspects of its empire. This talk looks at how the institution functioned and how it differed from later slave

systems. It explores how slaves were incentivised and controlled, how they could push back, and how early Christians adapted their ideas to accommodate the world in which they lived. Dr Jerry Toner is a Roman historian at Churchill College, Cambridge, whose works look at the Roman world from below, focussing on ordinary people and other subordinate groups.

Friday 22 January 2027 at 7.30pm at St Mary's, Derby

The Story of Whitle (ARG)

Speaker: Ian Parker Heath

In 2015 the Tudor Farming Interpretation Group took the next step on their research on the story of a small farmstead in the Dove Valley. With the help of a lottery grant, this involved a programme of archaeological work, historical research and a lot of community engagement. The results were impressive, including revealing a late 17th century house. In 2022, a further NHLF grant helped the group undertake more archaeological work, including attempting to discover more about the past environment. A small peat bog on the valley side held the key to this and the initial analysis of its pollen showed exceptional levels of preservation. A more detailed look at the pollen resulted in one of the richest such records in the country in considerable detail. The latest research shows how the site's field system has developed over centuries by dating the soil buried under features such as banks, boundaries and ridge & furrow.

Saturday 30 January 2027 Derbyshire Archaeology Day

Winding Wheel, Chesterfield

Booking via the Chesterfield Theatre's website.

Friday 19 February 2027 at 7.30pm at St Mary's, Derby

First World War Battlefield Archaeology in France and Belgium (SL)

Speaker: Alex Sotheran

This talk will highlight archaeological works carried out in France and Belgium since 2003 on various First World War battlefield sites. The talk will centre on a number of specific sites; a look at the material excavated in those works and discuss some of the personal outcomes for the remains of fallen soldiers that were also recovered.

Alex Sotheran has worked as a professional archaeologist for 25 years, of which over 20 were spent on battlefield sites; he is currently working as an archaeological advisor to the Ministry of Defence, covering the north of England, Scotland and the overseas estate.

Saturday 27 February 2027 at 11.00am at Strutts, Belper

Prosecution of Felons 1703-2014

Speaker: Robert Mee

Felons' Societies sprung up all over the place in the 1700s and some are still going today. In Derbyshire, virtually every parish was covered by one. But what were they, and what did they do? Robert Mee is a local historian based in Heanor who has spoken to us on several occasions before this talk is based on his M.A. dissertation.

Friday 5 March 2027 at 7.30pm at St Mary's, Derby

Seeking the Saxon Shore (ARG)

Speaker: Maxwell Craven

In 2017 Max and Carole Craven undertook a Roman-themed voyage of discovery, taking in the more obscure but unjustifiably neglected sections of the southern and eastern coasts of England on which stand some of the most impressive vestiges of Roman Britain, interspersed with sections on basic facts, location, access and contact details of each, interspersed with enjoyable non-Roman interludes.

In the later 3rd century, the outer reaches of the Roman empire were being threatened on all sides by hostile actors. Along the southern and eastern coasts of Britain, a series of ten, possibly twelve, vast fortified enclosures were built. Through sixteen centuries, impressive vestiges of most of them have survived, although three have vanished, virtually without trace. Several became the sites of Norman castles; others have associations with early Christianity; all have a story to tell. In describing the origins of the forts, their ancient settings, their functions and subsequent histories, this lecture will, we hope, enable those listening to travel through a modern landscape but well briefed to recognise and visualise the distant past.



Friday 12 March 2027 at 7.30pm at St Mary's, Derby

"Forced to leape out at a windowe in nothinge but your shirte..."

The people of Derbyshire and the Lichfield Consistory Court c. 1550-1750.

Speaker: Ann Hughes

The title comes from evidence given in the church court at Lichfield against the Rector of Sudbury who was accused, amongst other things, of a sexual relationship with a married parishioner. In the early modern period, many crucial aspects of people's lives were dealt with by church courts rather than secular bodies; for the people of Derbyshire this meant the Consistory Court of Lichfield Diocese, often known as the 'bawdy court', for much of the business included sexual transgressions, marital disputes and slander or 'defamation', which also often involved sexual accusations. The court also dealt with behaviour in church, care for church buildings, clerical standards, wills and heritance. A cataloguing project by Staffordshire Archives and Heritage has made the fascinating records of this court available more widely, and the talk will explore its workings with particular use of Derbyshire examples.

Ann Hughes is retired from Keele University where she was Professor of Early Modern History for almost twenty years, working mostly on the mid-17th century English political & religious upheavals. She was academic advisor to the 'Bawdy Courts of Lichfield' project.

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Rear cover: *Derby, Nottingham Road, Alexander MacPherson's main range of the Liversage Trust almshousing, 1902, photographed 23rd April 2011. The separate part, far left, is the Liversage Arms pub (now, regrettably, closed).* [M. Craven]

