

BLYTH u3a

**LOCAL HISTORY
NEWSLETTER**

**March
2026**

**June
2027**



**‘You don’t stumble upon your heritage.
It’s there, just waiting to be explored and shared.’**

Robbie Robertson

So, join us for more opportunities to explore and share with a huge variety of topics delivered by enthusiastic and knowledgeable guest speakers

**We meet the first Wednesday of the month
at
St Mary’s Church Wanley Street Blyth NE24 1DP.**

**Doors open at 1pm for refreshments
followed at 1.30pm for the talk of the month.**

Your comments/questions/concerns/queries are always welcome!!

Contact me at: u3amarie@gmail.com

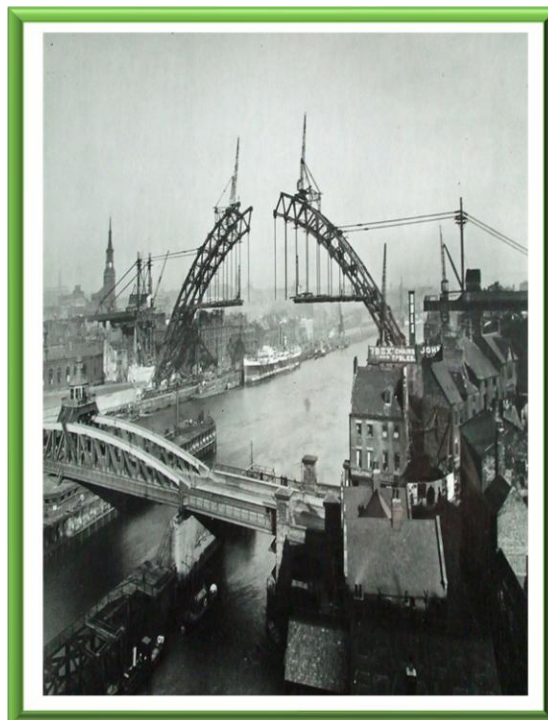
I look forward to hearing from you.

**NEWCASTLE AND NORTHUMBERLAND
BETWEEN THE WARS
MARCH
WEDNESDAY 4TH
1.30pm**

Guest Speaker: Neil Storey

This period has been described as one of the most tumultuous in English history with the country seemingly on the brink of civil war and the North East was at the very heart these events.

Join us for this talk that looks at the despair and the triumphs that mark these decades.



**Cowpen Hall
Blyth**

Demolished 1958



**THE DISAPPEARING
LANDSCAPE: THE COUNTRY
HOUSES OF NORTHUMBERLAND
APRIL
WEDNESDAY 1st
1.30pm**

**Guest Speaker: Sarah
Littlefear**

(Northumberland Archives)

Continuing our occasional series of talks around the changing landscape of Northumberland.

Approximately 76 country houses have been lost to the county. Using records from the archives, Sarah will explore the history surrounding these lost architectural treasures

‘WHEN DEATH COMES CALLING’

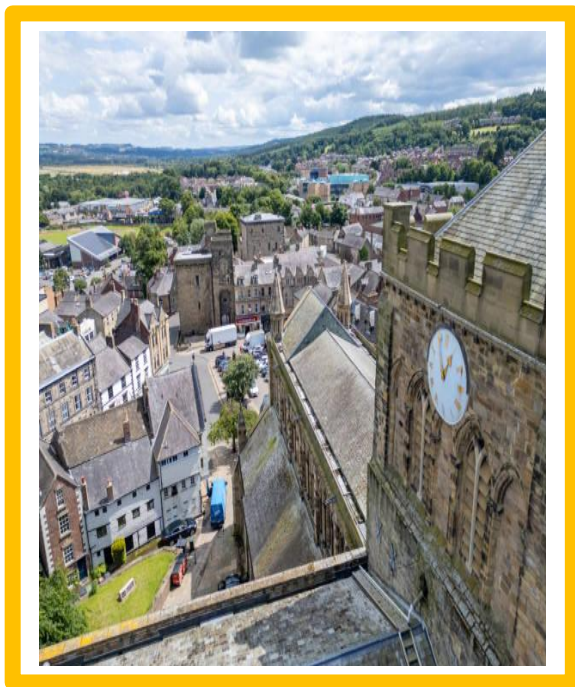
**MAY
WEDNESDAY 6TH
1.30pm**

Speaker: Marie

In this talk I investigate North East England’s criminal past – because crime always reveals something more than the act itself. It exposes the fears, pressures, and values of the community that lived through it!!



JUNE 3RD 2026 THE BIG REVEAL



**A DAY OUT IN HEXHAM
THAT INCLUDES:**

**A Guided Tour of
Hexham Abbey**

Lunch

and a

**Gruesome Tour of
Hexham Town**

Heaven and Hell in One Day.

Discover the serene, soaring beauty of Hexham Abbey and explore the town’s darker, more turbulent past – two sides of Hexham’s remarkable story.

And yes, there’s time for lunch... you’re going to need it!!

DETAILS NEARER THE TIME



**THERE WILL BE NO LOCAL HISTORY SESSIONS IN
JULY AND AUGUST**

**BACK AGAIN IN
SEPTEMBER...**



...and after the summer break, join us for a year-long journey into Northumberland's remarkable past – the tales you know, the ones you've never heard, and the ones you won't forget.

Don't miss it.

**A GLOBAL PANDEMIC
NORTHUMBERLAND AND THE
SPANISH FLU**

**SEPTEMBER
WEDNESDAY 2ND
1.30pm**

Speaker: Marie

In 1918, the Spanish Flu swept across the globe – but what did it look like in Northumberland? This talk uses rare contemporary accounts to uncover how local communities faced the pandemic and the hidden struggles that shaped their experience.



**A VISIT TO CRESSWELL
PELE TOWER**

**OCTOBER
WEDNESDAY 7TH
1.30pm**

An opportunity to explore Cresswell Pele Tower and its walled garden in the company of the volunteer team. Over the past five years the tower has undergone extensive restoration, and the volunteers will share their stories of its history and transformation. It's a chance to enjoy one of Northumberland's most characterful sites in the company of people who know it

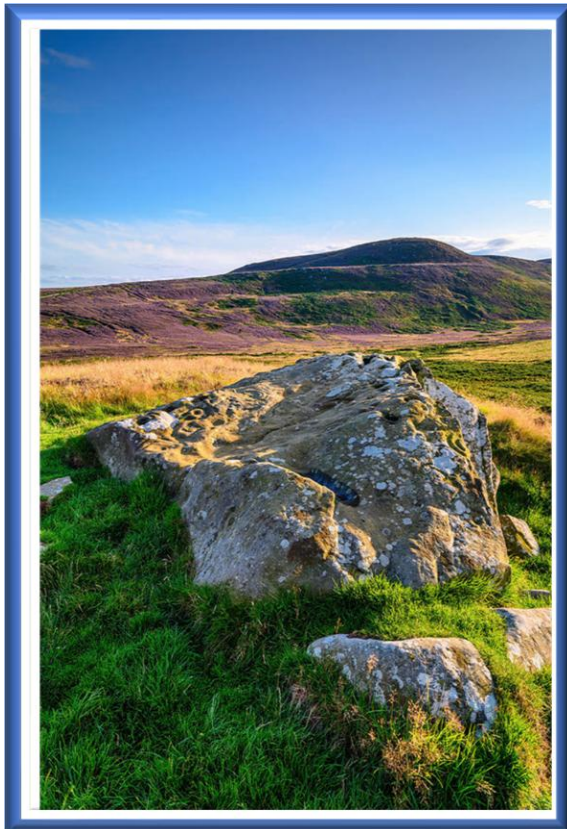
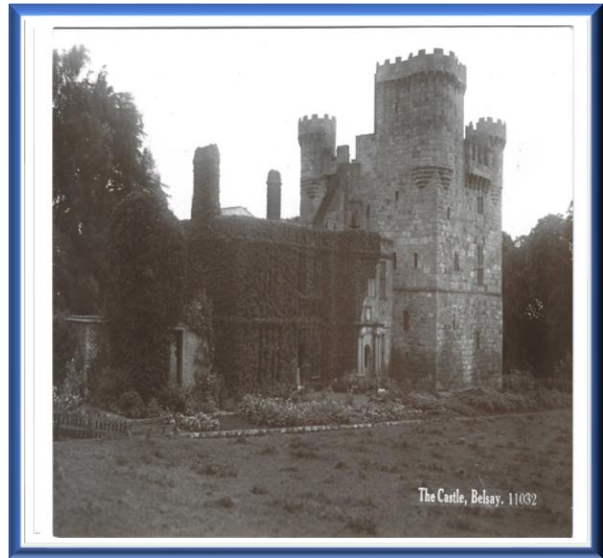


The day will include an opportunity for lunch at the Drift Café and a walk along one of the most beautiful beaches in Northumberland – a perfect outing before we all slip into winter hibernation.

BELSAY CASTLE

**NOVEMBER
WEDNESDAY 4TH**
1.30pm

Speaker: Tony Lamsdale
The well-known castle nestled at the heart of the Belsay Estate. When was it built? Who lived there? What is its significance in relation to the family, the landscape and how it survived? All these questions and much more will be looked at using historical records, archaeological studies and a dash of interpretation!



DEFINED BY STONES

**DECEMBER
WEDNESDAY 2ND**
1.30pm

Speaker: Ian Jackson
In his book
'Defined by Stones',
Ian Jackson argues that we cannot understand the North's earliest inhabitants without first understanding the geology they lived upon. In this talk he explains how essential stones were to the lives of our ancestors and how they provide prehistory's most

**BACK IN TIME
17TH CENTURY BLYTH
JANUARY
WEDNESDAY 6TH
1.30pm**

Speaker: Alan Fryer

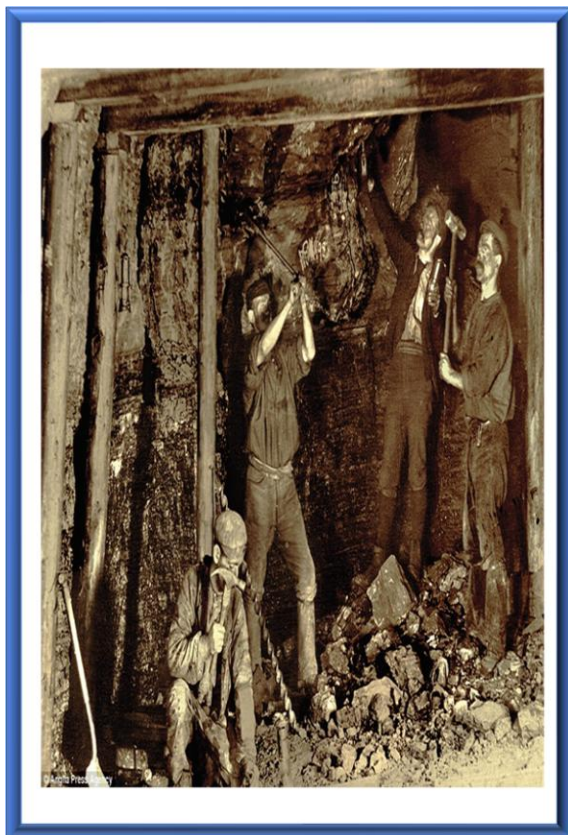
Alan takes us back in time to when Blyth was a tiny and largely insignificant hamlet of a few fishermen's cottages and salt pans at the mouth of a yet undeveloped river and harbour. How did such an unlikely place become the focus of an international war? Join us and find out.



**GREAT MINING DISASTERS IN THE
NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM
COALFIELDS
FEBRUARY
WEDNESDAY 3rd
1.30pm**

Speaker: Brian Godfrey

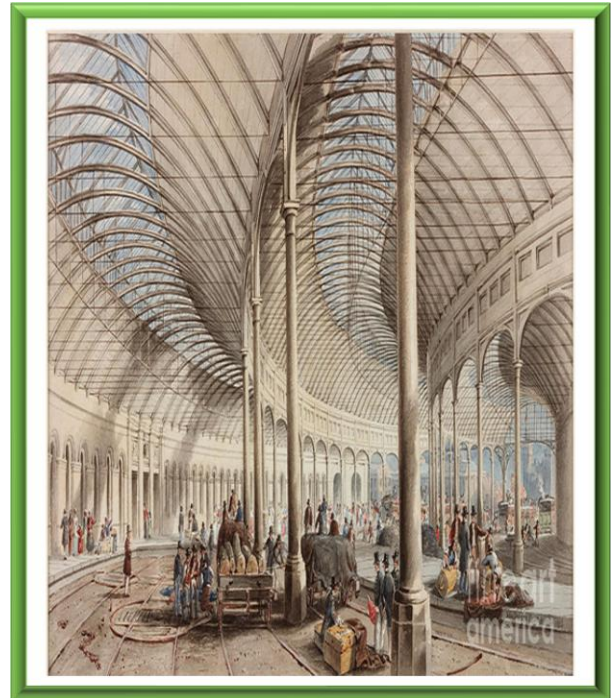
The mining industry has left an indelible mark on the history of the North East – a hard, dangerous world where disaster was an ever present threat. This talk looks at the major mining catastrophes that shaped the Northumberland and Durham coalfields. Brian will explore not only the events themselves but also the human stories behind these tragedies.



**THE MAKING OF NEWCASTLE:
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
JOHN DOBSON
MARCH
WEDNESDAY 3rd
1.30pm**

Speaker: Chris Tipple

John Dobson transformed nineteenth-century Newcastle through his architecture and planning. This talk outlines his life, his major works and the developments that helped shape the city we know today.



**HEROES AND VILLAINS
APRIL
WEDNESDAY 7th
1.30pm**

Speaker: Michael Gatherar

In this talk, Michael explores the history of the Victoria Cross – the highest award for bravery in the face of the enemy – and shares the stories of several local men who received it during the Great War. He also reflects on the experiences of local soldiers who were ‘Shot at Dawn’, including Robert Gillis Pattison of Cramlington.

**THE MAKING OF
NORTHUMBERLAND
MAY
WEDNESDAY 5th
1.30pm**

Speaker: Marie

A journey into Northumberland's deep past, revealing how fire, ice, and water shaped the landscape we know today. From ancient volcanoes to drowned forests and Mesolithic footprints beneath the waves, this talk uncovers the hidden stories written into the land itself. By the end, you'll never look at Northumberland's scenery in quite the same way again.



**JUNE 2ND 2027
A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY**

