

# NORTHERN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

[www.northernarchitecturalhistory.org.uk](http://www.northernarchitecturalhistory.org.uk)

## DAY COACH TOUR TO SOUTH-EAST NORTHUMBERLAND

Visiting Newbiggin and Widdrington churches, Cresswell Pele Tower & Garden and Stephen Lunn's Forge

**Saturday 17th August 2024**



St. Bartholomew's Church, Newbiggin



Holy Trinity Church, Widdrington



Cresswell Pele Tower



Cresswell Walled Garden

We will be visiting two remarkable medieval churches with multi-layered archaeological evidence of the vicissitudes of history. On a windswept promontory surrounded on three sides by the North Sea, St. Bartholomew's Newbiggin dates mostly from the 13<sup>th</sup> century though its origins are earlier. Internally the quality of light and the grandeur of its arcades come as something of a surprise whilst externally its rather curious thin square tower with stumpy spire will have been a valuable aid to coastal navigation in times past. Inland, Holy Trinity Widdrington's unexceptional exterior conceals a fascinating and complex medieval structure dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries with somewhat wayward 19<sup>th</sup> century restorations.

Winner of Best Coast and Countryside Project in the 2022 Love Northumberland awards, the 14<sup>th</sup> century Pele Tower at Cresswell has been restored magnificently by the Cresswell Pele Tower Project. They then went on to restore what remained of the adjacent Walled Garden associated with (the long-since demolished) Cresswell Hall. The completed garden was formally opened in June this year.

If time – and weather – permit, we will take a short detour to see the ruined stable block also associated with Cresswell Hall.

For a final highlight of the day, members who were able to attend either in person or on-line will remember the inspiring talk given by Northumbrian artist blacksmith Stephen Lunn back in March. As a follow-up we will be treated to a live demonstration of Stephen at work in his forge at Red Row, and examples of the craftsmanship of Stephen and his daughter Ashlee may be purchased from their adjacent shop.

More detailed architectural/historical information will be handed round on the coach.

## ITINERARY

- 09:00 Prompt Coach leaves Bewick Street, Newcastle (over the road from Central Station)
- 09:10 (If requested) Pick-up at bus stop at south end of Gosforth High Street  
(between Moor Crescent and The Drive)
- 09:45 Arrive at Newbiggin. Exploration of the church (with short talk by our chairman)  
followed by time for tea/coffee (own flasks or café in the adjacent Maritime Centre)
- 11:00 depart Newbiggin
- 11:30 arrive Cresswell. Visit Pele Tower & Walled Garden, guided by Steve Lowe and Barry Mead
- 12:30 approx. Picnic lunch in Cresswell (bring your own – ice cream shop in village for afters) on the village green if fine, on the coach if wet.
- 13:15 approx. (if weather permits) visit roofless ruin of stables associated with (long-since demolished) Cresswell Hall
- 14:00 arrive Widdrington. Exploration of the church (with short talk by our chairman).
- 14:45 depart Widdrington
- 15:00 arrive Stephen & Ashlee Lunn's forge in Red Row  
– working demonstration; on-site shop (with tea/coffee machine)  
If it's open, there's also the Gingerbread Coffee House (with excellent cakes!) nearby.
- 16:30 depart Red Row
- 17:15 approx. arrive Newcastle Bewick Street
- All timings except the first are approximate.

**Cost: £34.00 to include the coach fare and driver's tip, entrance to Cresswell Pele Tower & Walled Garden, something for the blacksmith and group donations to the churches we visit (please feel free to add personal donations in addition).**

Members should note that no refreshments will be provided – please bring your own flasks and hampers! There may be opportunities to purchase refreshments at or near the venues – as noted above.

The coach will have an on-board toilet.

All of the venues are reasonably easy to reach with short walks from the coach but stout footwear is advised. Please check the weather forecast for the day and come equipped with sunscreen/hats or waterproofs/wellies accordingly.

Stephen and Ashlee Lunn with the new seat they have just made and installed at Alnwick.

