

Bamburgh Ossuary Outing: 18th January 2020

On Saturday 18th January around 25 members and friends of Glendale Local History Society visited Bamburgh on a sunny but cold and breezy morning. We met up at St Aidan's Church where Jessica Turner gave us a brief resume of the salient points from her recent talk to the Society.

Inside the beautiful Church are to be found a number of display boards, a short video presentation and a digital interface providing detailed information on each skeleton interred in the ossuary.

We then made our way back outside and down a few steps to the crypt, the former Forster family mausoleum. Here Jessica filled us in with further details of the history of the crypt and how it came to house the remains of around 120 individuals dating from the seventh and eighth centuries, contemporaries of St Aidan himself, now contained securely in Italian charnel boxes. She also pointed out a number of medieval stone gravestones that would have laid flat on top of graves – a carved sword indicating a man, and a key, a woman. We then watched the rather novel video presentation cleverly projected onto the side wall of the crypt. Finally we were able to crouch down and peer through a low ornate gateway to see the collection of boxes contained within the inner sanctum.

Several members of the group then made their way to the Castle Inn for some social time and refreshments before heading homeward. An interesting and enlightening time was had by all, and many people left planning to return on a later date to study the material more closely.

Allan Colman