ROSEMARY CRAMP

Rosemary Jean Cramp

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elected Fellow of the British Academy 2006

by

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Summary. Professor Dame Rosemary Cramp was an exceptionally energetic and charismatic scholar, who reviewed all the surviving examples of Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture, undertook large-scale archaeological excavations, greatly enlarged the Department of Archaeology at Durham University, and was a prominent figure in heritage governance in a working life of over seventy years. Drawing on both material remains and the extant Anglo-Saxon literature, she created a glittering new vision of Early Christian England.

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Rosemary Cramp

Formative years

Rosemary Cramp (henceforward Rosemary) was descended from three generations of Leicestershire farmers, a highly appropriate basis for an archaeologist. While still a teenager she famously found a Roman villa near her parents' home at Ivy House Farm, Glooston near Market Harborough. She wrote about it to Kathleen Kenyon, the eminent excavator of Jericho and Roman Leicester – who told her to be careful not to destroy it.[1] After this auspicious start she went to Oxford, but not to do Classics or archaeology – the latter wasn't yet taught there – but to read English, so doing us a service by bringing into archaeology some of the subtle forces of literature. Rosemary was at St Anne's College as an undergraduate, took a BLitt, and was a teaching fellow there until 1955.

David Smith's history of the college notes that life for St Anne's students of the postwar 1950s was still pretty austere: 'Houses were cold, food was terrible, and, as all students were still living in hostels or in digs, College was more a state of mind than a physical entity … Students dressed neatly and conventionally and in most respects were indistinguishable from their mothers … careers advice for female undergraduates had nothing to offer beyond secretarial work and teaching'.[2] Memories of meetings with tutors were more agreeably sprinkled with alcohol: neat gin with Margaret Hubbard, madeira with Marjorie Reeves, gin or sherry with Elaine Griffiths.[3] Reminiscing in 1985, Penelope Lively noted the large numbers of St Anne's graduates in the arts and journalism, testament to the College's historic tendency to choose 'eccentric, provocative, unpredictable' students.[4] They were certainly a brilliant bunch – Elizabeth Jennings, three years older than Rosemary, wrote Catholic metaphysical poetry, Iris Murdoch, brightest star in the constellation, was a fellow at St Anne's from 1948, ostensibly teaching philosophy. She went on to draw the crazy map of love for our generation in twenty-six novels, and dedicated her 1978 Booker prize-winning novel *The Sea, The Sea* to Rosemary. U.A. Fanthorpe (born the same year as Rosemary) reported 'coming to life at St Anne's', took to poetry and produced charming sketches of people. In one of these she imagines herself a college cleaner:

[1] Recorded in the *Journal of Roman Studies*, 36 (1946), 142, and 38 (1948), 89. Kenyon's letter said: 'This is evidence, and you must not destroy it. You must stop what you're doing, report it to a museum and leave it for the moment'; recorded in interview of Rosemary in *British Academy Review*, 35 (Spring 2019), 26.
[2] David Smith, *St Anne's College: 1952–2012*. https://www.st-annes.ox.ac.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2019/08/St.Annes_History_Brochure_David_Smith.pdf
[3] Ibid., 11.
[4] Ibid., 19.

> These girls, mind,
> They're not all as innocent as you'd think.
> Twenty stubs in the ashtray.
> I can tell a lot from that.[5]

Rosemary's tutors were Dorothy Whitelock and Christopher Hawkes, as rich a gallimaufry of Anglo-Saxon literature and analytical prehistory as one could wish. From it emerged her BLitt dissertation entitled 'Some aspects of Old English vocabulary in the light of recent archaeological evidence', and from this flowered her first published work. It is hard for us now, and especially for the latest generation of Anglo-Saxon archaeologists, to envision the place occupied by our subject in the 1950s when Rosemary's '*Beowulf* and Archaeology' was published in the first number of the new journal *Medieval Archaeology*.[6] As a subject, Medieval Archaeology itself scarcely existed, and academic studies of the post-Roman occupants of the British Isles were divided, it seems irredeemably, on nationalist grounds between the Celtic and the Saxon realms. In the preface to his own translation of Beowulf forty years later, Seamus Heaney still found it necessary to explain – with characteristic charm – why the languages and peoples of the two islands of Ireland and Britain belong together.[7] And for him, as for Rosemary, Beowulf and archaeology, the British, Irish, Scottish and English, Christian and pre-Christian ideas were different windows on the same world; they all mattered.

A job came up in Durham in 1955, and in her own words Rosemary 'became a Northumbrian', and set about exploring early medieval sculpture and the world of Bede 'because those were the opportunities that presented themselves …'. This seems overly modest. In the same vein, she remarked, 'My life in archaeology has advanced with the subject', but maybe it should be the other way round: archaeology itself advanced thanks to her initiatives; she was no bystander. She was the first female professor at Durham, developed its Department of Archaeology, designed undergraduate as well as postgraduate courses, invested in scientific archaeology, launched a corpus of Anglo-Saxon sculpture, brought to life the joint monastery of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow known to the Venerable Bede – and much else besides. In her exploration of the past, she rediscovered the space where literature, archaeology, religion and landscape met.

[5] Fanthorpe, *The Cleaner* (1984).
[6] R. Cramp, '*Beowulf* and Archaeology', *Medieval Archaeology*, 1 (1957), 57–77.
[7] Seamus Heaney, *Beowulf* (1999), pp. xxiv, xxvii.

A life in early sculpture

If it was really chance that brought Rosemary to Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture**,** then one has to say that chance did us a favour. While still lecturing at Oxford she met V.E. Nash-Williams who had just published *The Early Christian Monuments of Wales* (1950). He remarked to her that 'something like that [his catalogue] needs to be done for England. You should try it.' In Durham, the incumbent (since 1931) was the Romanist Professor Eric Birley, who was revealing the social life of the forts along Hadrian's Wall. He encouraged his new lecturer to find a research project in the north – which became the 'Anglian Sculpture of Dumfriesshire'.[8] In short order, Rosemary produced her first paper featuring the Ruthwell Cross, perhaps the greatest of all extant Anglian monuments. Explaining why she considered Dumfriesshire to be part of the Anglo-Saxon cultural zone she remarked: 'the evidence purely of the sculptured monuments would lead one to suspect here a large enough Anglian population, at least as early as the 8th century, to give some point to the [runic] inscriptions on the Ruthwell Cross, unless one supposes that they were never meant to be read'. This paper, published in 1960, shows how quickly Rosemary had become adept at art-historical analysis and her ability to combine insight with commonsense.[9]

The ambitious project that became the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* began in 1964, Rosemary noting that while some grand monuments still stood in the open, and choice pieces were in museums, fragments of early medieval carvings could be found here, there and everywhere, in gardens, in graveyards, on the windowsills and in the broom-cupboards of churches. In addressing the task of putting this material in order and publishing it for all to study, she resolved to see all surviving sculptures before writing her first book on the subject. She began in the south-west and worked her way east and north, taking numerous photographs, at first with the aid of lights powered by a car battery and mounted on a pushchair.[10] This period of intensive study was underpinned in 1972 by the formation of an Advisory Committee at the British Academy, whose embrace of the project from its beginning to its end has been determinant.[11]

[8] Derek Craig, pers. comm.

[9] R.J. Cramp, 'The Anglian sculptured crosses of Dumfriesshire', *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 3rd ser., 38 (1959–1960), 9–20. (The unfortunate misprint of 'Anglican' for 'Anglian' has been rectified here.)

[10] R.J. Cramp, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, Vol. VII, *South-West England* (2006), acknowledgements.

[11] https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/projects/academy-research-projects-corpus-anglo-saxon-stone-sculpture/

That first book duly followed in 1984, initiating the *Corpus* in a volume focused on her adopted homelands of Northumberland and County Durham.[12] The book's 'General Introduction' laid out the method for the assembly of the whole *Corpus*, prescribing the form of catalogue entries, the classification of formal types (free-standing crosses, cross heads, cross shafts, tombs, grave markers and architectural sculpture), techniques of carving (modelled, humped, grooved, incised), and an illustrated encyclopaedia of decorative motifs (mouldings, plant scrolls, leaves, berries) and more than a hundred varieties of interlace, enlivened with animal head types and body types and their stances (addorsed, affronted, enlaced, enmeshed, kicking, prancing, rampant, rearing or sprawling). The petrography of the stones, mapped to the local geology, would form part of the record. Dating was to be achieved by inscriptions, in Roman script and runes, and by organising the daunting repertoire of ornament. To this end Rosemary seriated twenty-six variables in more than 500 pieces, taking as landmarks the principal motifs known to have originated in the Mediterranean region (e.g. the plant scrolls), the documented dates of foundations at Hexham (AD 673–674), Monkwearmouth (AD 674) and Jarrow (AD 682–685), as well as ornamental comparanda in dated Insular manuscripts and metalwork. In this way she armed the cadre that was to marshal the vast and varied body of Anglo-Saxon carvings (eventually numbering over three thousand), and provided it with rules of engagement. Sixty years on, fourteen of an anticipated total of sixteen volumes have been completed, by a stellar cast of researchers, mainly her postgraduate students, all of them already (or soon to be) important figures in early medieval art and archaeology.[13] Rosemary's approach, both inspiring and critical, was to build a team, allocate tasks to its members and allow new ideas to emerge, so creating pathways that led well beyond the material to new knowledge.

Volume VII, on *South-West England*, which she authored herself as a professor emerita in 2006, gives an idea of the immense amount of work, administrative as well as intellectual, that these magisterial overviews and catalogues required. The volume begins with two-and-a-quarter pages of acknowledgements, featuring many people and many institutions, and implying the range of diplomatic and collegiate skills applied in the service of recording the sculpture in this sample region of Wessex: AHRC (two research

[12] R.J. Cramp, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, Vol. I, *County Durham and Northumberland* (1984), including 'General Introduction'.

13 Rosemary Cramp (Vol. I, 1982, and VII, 2006); Richard Bailey with Rosemary Cramp (II, 1988); James Lang (III, 1991, and VI, 2001); Dominic Tweddle, Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle (IV, 1995); David Stocker and Paul Everson (V, 1999, XII, 2016, and XIV, 2023); Elizabeth Coatsworth (VIII, 2008); Richard Bailey (IX, 2010); Richard Bryant (X, 2012); Ann Preston Jones and Elisabeth Okasha (XI, 2015); Jane Hawkes and Philip Sidebottom (XIII, 2018). The number of contributors is of course greater than this. Rosemary had done a great deal of work towards Vol. XV on her native East Midlands at the time of her death; the volume is being completed by Jane Hawkes and Jo Story. The final volume (XVI) is in the care of Sarah Semple, the succeeding general editor of the *Corpus*.

fellows), a Visiting Fellowship at All Souls for herself, photographers and loans of photographs, postgraduate students, companions on the trail, permissions from museum curators, vicars and wardens providing access to locked churches, and a community of private citizens, thanked for their hospitality and access to their homes to record sculpture. It finishes with typical generosity with a salute to the research fellows (Derek Craig and Ken Jukes): 'this is very much their book as well as mine'. The work of releasing the stones into the public domain was realised in a 446-page book with 565 photographic illustrations, published with outstanding design and quality, thanks in no small part to the British Academy.

She was to reprise her principles in 1992 when her collected papers were published, noting the correlations drawn from newly excavated pieces at Gloucester, Lincoln and York and her satisfaction with the process of meticulous and objective recording.[14] She commented: 'this may appear an arid approach to those who would like to see more exciting speculation about the significance of Anglo-Saxon sculpture, but the systematic gathering and recording of all the evidence … is a necessary preliminary to more far-reaching analysis'. Did this empirical strategy seem old fashioned? Some would say yes, but others would say that it was wise to start by exploring, defining and evaluating the surviving data before releasing interpretations that might prove premature. Her measured pace may actually be judged by posterity as among her greatest strengths.[15]

All the same, it was a noble, if unusual, resolve in a post-19th century archaeologist, one unlikely to be adopted by the modern academic for whom eye-opening conjecture attracts publishers and wins grants. Nor did she always follow her own prescription, as her dazzling interpretative output makes clear. She wrote about ornament with a descriptive flair that was anything but arid. The process of ornamental sequencing developed a language of its own, which, to the non-specialist, has a dash of poetry: sprawling beasts, leonine quadrupeds, dog-headed bipeds and rampant winged creatures climb the shafts of one cross and transmogrify in the next: leaping dog-like creatures become increasingly flat or 'take on the typical Danelaw posture with one paw raised stiffly in salute'. The destiny of these deconstructions was often to resolve the chronology of complex patterns: 'such animals as those from Gainford or Nunburnholme in Northumbria are on crosses which are clearly of the Viking period and could date from the first quarter of the 10th century; however, their origins are clearly with the 9th-century Anglian beasts'.[16]

[14] R.J. Cramp, 'Introduction', *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture* (London: Pindar Press, 1992).

[15] Thanks to Sarah Semple for this observation. In-depth studies of Rosemary Cramp's research and the role of the *Corpus* will be found in the forthcoming monograph *Early Medieval Sculpture in Stone*, edited by Sarah Semple and Jane Hawkes.

[16] R.J. Cramp, 'The Anglian tradition in the ninth century', in J.T. Lang (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon and Viking Age Sculpture and its Context: Papers from the Collingwood Symposium on Insular Sculpture from 800 to 1066* (British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 49; Oxford: BAR, 1978), pp. 1–32.

Her descriptions were also seasoned with charm. On Jarrow 20, 'an athletic barefoot young person heads through branches pursued by a beast. His hair falls in a lock behind his ear. His features are conveyed lightly, his eye by a single punch mark. He is dressed in a short kirtle with what seems to be a fold around the waist, which passes over his shoulder and flies out behind him'.[17] In a famous passage about the Ruthwell Cross, she sees beyond the stone, the setting, the images, the sculptor and into the soul of the age: 'the explanatory Latin inscriptions with the figural panels combine in a great theological meditation on the recognition of the divinity and power of Christ, and the runic poem framing the animated scrolls emphasizes, with birds and beasts in the vine, the relation of creation to God, and man's position in the hierarchy of creation. No other cross illustrates so perfectly the intellectual background of Northumbrian Christianity'. In the same paper, she revealed some of her thoughts on the origins of this achievement: 'It was indeed the love of earlier Christian culture, such as Bede relates of Benedict Bishop, which produced that special contribution from the British Isles, that so early brought Christ and his saints out of the surroundings of the Church and majestically mounted them as a symbol of Christ's victory in the wild open places of Northumbria'.[18]

The *Corpus* has given birth to a new generation of art historians and archaeologists, inspired by Rosemary and following in the footsteps of the British Museum giants – Thomas Kendrick, Rupert Bruce-Mitford, David Wilson, Leslie Webster. The agenda has broadened with the times, not only to provide a chronological framework and map the valencies of influence, but to discover the roles assigned to carved stone monuments at the time. From the security provided by the *Corpus*, its authors have been able to map the changing force of sculpture, from the early grave markers dedicated to men and women at Hartlepool and Lindisfarne, to the architectural sculpture used in the foundations of the first Northumbrian monasteries, to the great explosion of standing stone monuments emerging from Jarrow in the mid-8th century. 'In this unique sign', reads the Latin inscription on Jarrow 16, 'life is returned to the world'. The proselytisation of northern, western and south-western England that followed could be tracked by the tall crosses featuring the apostles, some like Bewcastle clearly labelled as 'Victory' crosses.[19] The spread of Northumbrian monasticism with its continental affiliations reached Gloucestershire in the west and Lincolnshire in the east before it was halted by the Viking wars. But in these later centuries too the sculpture also offered important historical messages: in east Yorkshire, the carved stones clustered in the monasteries were superseded by a landscape of private churches containing monuments featuring carvings that celebrated their martial owners: '... the Vikings introduced a secularization of taste

[17] R.J. Cramp in Vol. I (1984), p. 115.
[18] R.J. Cramp, *Early Northumbrian Sculpture*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1965), pp. 9, 13.
[19] J.T. Lang, 'The Apostles in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture', *Early Medieval Europe*, 8:2 (1999), 271–82.

in art, as they also secularized landholding'.[20] Carved stone monuments are vehicles of art, and liturgical pulpits, but they also describe society. Rosemary's own passing comment on the significance of the *Corpus* is worth recalling: 'It is a sign of achievement if you look at Europe as a whole. My Italian friends are absolutely amazed by Anglo-Saxon sculpture. In Italy and in parts of France, professional carvers carried on working after the Roman period, and they kept on turning out the same stuff. But in England there is a real break, and a true vernacular in stone carving develops, producing a much greater variety.'[21]

Rosemary's successor at Durham, Professor Sarah Semple, believes that the response to the release of the whole dataset of the *Corpus* will be instantaneous – 'it will set alight Rosemary's achievement and usher in a new era'.[22] Personally, I suspect its influence will build slowly, but last longer; it could be many years before its value to wider scholarship and to the public at large is fully realised. Much will depend on a new generation integrating the fine detail of the record with its political and ideological implications at the time, and their inheritance today. In some ways it is unfortunate that the *Corpus* deals only with the territory of modern England, when so many of the British monuments lie outside it: the Anglo-Saxons came late to stone carving. Nevertheless, taking on the whole of Britain would probably have been impractical. Meanwhile Wales has had its own updated corpus and the early 20th-century corpus of Scotland has been reprinted together with a growing number of regional and local catalogues and discussions and a new comprehensive study on the art of the Picts.[23] Much of this is owed to Rosemary's lead.

Major archaeological excavations: Monkwearmouth and Jarrow

As an excavator, Rosemary was largely self-taught, but had some initial training combined with down-to-earth intelligence, a farmer's familiarity with the soil, and the insight, or even second sight, with which successful excavators are endowed. She attended a training course at the Roman fort of *Coria* at Corbridge as an undergraduate, and when she came to Durham in 1955 her previous experience had all been on Roman

[20] R.J. Cramp, 'The Viking Image', in R.T. Farrell (ed.), *The Vikings* (London: Phillimore, 1980), pp. 8–19 at p. 18.
[21] Interview in *British Academy Review*, 35 (Spring 2019), 31.
[22] Sarah Semple, pers. comm.
[23] To appreciate the interrelated variety as a whole, readers should consult Ian Fisher (Iona and the North-West), Katherine Forsyth (Scottish Borders), Nancy Edwards and Mark Redknap (Wales), David Wilson (Isle of Man), Isobel and George Henderson (Pictland), Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson (Scotland and Pictland, 1903, reprinted 1993). Many of the recent authors were Rosemary's colleagues or students.

or prehistoric sites, 'under the dour tutelage of Richard Atkinson'.[24] Roman archaeology could be guided by access to ruins of mortared brick and stone and extensive previous knowledge, written, pictorial and archaeological. This was not the case with the exploration of the post-Roman world, still then termed 'the Dark Ages', when structures were largely built in timber and the imprint of their remains had to be discovered by luck or from the air. Up close, the mantra was 'expect the unexpected', and luckily a group of talented and innovative diggers were on hand to take the subject forward, many like Philip Rahtz associated with the group led by David Wilson that was setting up the Society for Medieval Archaeology, of which Rosemary was a prominent member.[25] A noted, if less clubbable, innovator was the artist-turned-archaeologist Brian Hope-Taylor, who, with the guidance of an air photograph by J.K. St Joseph, was teasing the palatial timber buildings of 7th-century Yeavering out of the ground. Rosemary visited the site in 1956 or 1957, remembering later 'it was the first time I had seen a large open area excavation and it was a revelation'.[26] When the report eventually appeared twenty years later, she was subtly critical of the delay, and of 'a tendency to grandiose hyperbolic statements which can irritate', but declared that the report 'would survive as a work of rare genius'.[27] Yeavering was identified with the *Ad Gefrin* in Northumbria mentioned by Bede,[28] and revealed at the site was the reality of the temples, shrines, assembly places and massive halls where Edwin held court, Paulinus baptised and Penda raided. The shades of Romans and Britons also lurked at Yeavering. They would be even more present at the joint monastery that Rosemary was to resurrect, chronicle and make into a major monument.

The joint monastery of Wearmouth and Jarrow was well known to Bede, who was a monk at Jarrow and wrote his *History of the English Church and People* there. Remains of the late 7th and 8th century survived as stone churches containing the inscribed and figural stone carvings with which Rosemary was already familiar. Jarrow's nearly intact church on the south bank of the Tyne was incorporated into a later medieval Benedictine monastery founded by Aldwin, an 11th-century monk from Winchcombe in Gloucestershire. What remained of Anglian Monkwearmouth was a two-storey porch, attached to a later church, standing in slumland next to the docks, and it was here that her

[24] R.J. Cramp, 'Brian Hope Taylor – A personal reminiscence', in P. Frodsham & C. O'Brien (eds), *Yeavering: People, Power and Place* (Stroud: The History Press, 2005), p. 212.
[25] The group included Donald Harden, John Hurst, Rupert Bruce-Mitford, Charles Thomas, Leslie Alcock and R.B.K Stevenson. Rosemary was a council member from 1958. See R. Gilchrist & A. Reynolds (eds), *Reflections: 50 Years of Medieval Archaeology 1957-2007* (London: Society for |Medieval Archaeology, 2009).
[26] Ibid., n. 22.
[27] R.J. Cramp, Review of B. Hope-Taylor, *Yeavering: An Anglo-British Centre of Early Northumbria*, (London: HMSO, 1977), *Antiquity*, 54 (1980), 63–5.
[28] Bede, *History of the English Church and People* (*HE*), II.14.

campaign of excavations began. The summary that follows is designed not only to relate Rosemary's achievement for those outside the field, but to use the interim reports to convey something of the excitement of discovery and her thinking as she went along.

In 1959, the local authority invited Durham University to investigate the Wearmouth site before slum clearance began, and Rosemary set off to dig reconnaissance trenches between the buildings, whether derelict or still occupied.[29] A cemetery was soon located as expected, including a mass burial with evidence of violent death 'presumably from a Viking raid'.[30] Excavations resumed in 1961, east and west of St Peter's church, where there were undisturbed burials in wooden coffins, but here earlier walls were glimpsed amid rubble; this included tantalising pieces of lathe-turned stone balusters and fragments of an Anglian name-stone. The following year Rosemary unearthed a narrow corridor built with walls made of shuttered concrete, originally plastered with red and white stripes, and associated with the remains of *opus signinum* floors, broken stone baluster shafts and lead roofing strips. There were also many fragments of window glass, some coloured blue, amber or red, identified as Anglo-Saxon by D.B. Harden; moreover, glass waste showed it was being worked on site.[31] This was a sensational archaeological entry into the reality of a vanished legend, under the tight control of its 33-year-old excavator. We should not underestimate the nimble thinking that led her to identify the fragments of a past civilisation turning up in the debris of a 19th-century dockland square in Co. Durham as belonging, not to Roman Britain, but to Northumbrian England two centuries after the Romans had abandoned their northernmost province. In 1964, more excavation of the debris from early buildings further increased confidence, as she wrote: 'this year's work has amply confirmed Bede's statement that Benedict Bishop wished to build "in the Roman manner"'.[32] Many years later in the final report, Rosemary noted of Wearmouth: 'there are obvious parallels to be drawn with Roman corridor villas, as well as with liturgical corridors or porticus joining two churches, or a church and domestic buildings'.[33] The documentary evidence, as in many of the medieval excavations at the time, anchored chronology, but the chronology was also informed by powers of precise observation as acute as any she brought to the study of sculpture.

While architects from Gaul had assisted the building of the Monkwearmouth monastery in AD 674, seven years later a team from Monkwearmouth began building the monastery at Jarrow, 11 km north, to a more local prescription. In 1963, 'Miss Cramp for the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works' began excavations there, in the guardianship area of

[29] R.J. Cramp, *Wearmouth and Jarrow Monastic Sites*, Vol. 1 (WJMS, I) (Swindon: English Heritage, 2005), fig. 7.2.
[30] R.J. Cramp, in 'Medieval Britain in 1959' (Med. Brit. in 1959), *Medieval Archaeology*, 4 (1960).
[31] Med. Brit. in 1962.
[32] Med. Brit. in 1963.
[33] WJMS, I, 112.

St Paul's Church. A trench revealed that the builders of the later medieval monastery had cut through earlier burials; and below the floor of the medieval monastic kitchen, a gravel floor was encountered, overlaid by a destruction level from a stone building. This contained 'fragments of bone combs, a mid-ninth century *styca* and part of a small bowl of a hard red fabric with incised decoration and a heavy glassy brownish glaze. Also on the gravel floor were fragments of glass slag and the stump of a millefiori rod ... with transverse pattern of a red saltire with a white centre on a blue ground. Below this level were traces of a timber building perhaps put up while the Saxon monastery was being built between 681 and 685'.

The eventual layout of Jarrow featured two stone churches joined end-to-end, running east to west, and a range of two rectangular buildings (A and B) end-to-end to the south.[34] Here, for the first time, the associated buildings of Bede's monastery came brilliantly alive. In distinction to Wearmouth, Jarrow's buildings were founded on river cobbles set in clay, laid in foundation trenches, and raised with sandstone ashlars bonded with mortar. Building A was provided with a floor of imitation *opus signinum*, glazed windows and a roof of stone slabs with lead flashing.[35] It featured a hexagonal stone column set into the floor, plausibly intended to support a lectern where readings were made,[36] and was interpreted as a refectory, with a kitchen added to the south, and a dormitory above. Building B was also stone-built and glazed; it had a main hall space with a clay floor and an eastern cell divided by a partition into two rooms.[37] It was seen as a multi-purpose hall, also with a dormitory above, and two private rooms at the east end perhaps assigned to the abbot.[38] Rosemary commented that stone buildings such as these would have been 'an awe-inspiring if chilly reminder to their inmates as to how far the northern English had made themselves the inheritors of what was left of the Roman technological achievement'.[39]

Further south were Building D and a contiguous building, their joint plan reflecting the curve of the River Don leading to the Tyne. Finds suggested an initial domestic function, and the building was interpreted as a guesthouse, 'for the entertainments of the lay nobility of the sort of which Bede so disapproved'.[40] The monastic phase was ended by Viking raids, initiated in AD 793 at Lindisfarne. In the later 9th century, Building D and

[34] WJMS, I, 21, fig 16.37.
[35] WJMS, I, 187–201.
[36] Jarrow 22; WJMS, I, 195.
[37] WJMS, I.
[38] WJMS, I, 205-7.
[39] R.J. Cramp, 'Excavations at the Saxon monastic sites of Wearmouth and Jarrow, Co. Durham: an interim report', *Medieval Archaeology*, 13 (1969), 21–66 at 57.
[40] R.J. Cramp, 'Monkwearmouth and Jarrow: the archaeological evidence', in G. Bonner (ed.) *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede* (London: SPCK, 1976), pp. 5–18 at p. 7.

Rosemary Cramp at Jarrow showing visitors around in 1966. Accompanying her, far right, is David (later Sir David) Wilson (Director of the British Museum 1977-1992; FBA 1981). Photograph by Tom Middlemass, courtesy of Professor Sarah Semple and the Department of Archaeology, Durham University.

its adjacent riverside building showed evidence for a new phase of use as a workshop, where items of dress were made or lost and crucibles were used to melt glass and lead. While the detailed post-use of the Anglian site was obscured by the construction of the medieval monastery, 'it is not excluded that in Building D, Jarrow's window glass and lead flashing were being recycled for the benefit of more secular clients of the ninth century and later'.[41]

The campaign at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow ran over twenty-nine years between 1959 and 1988, or forty-six if you count the analysis phase. Local people, children, adults, students, and some professionals, all worked in her team, and sometimes there were two shifts a day to allow local volunteers to help after their daytime work was done; it was truly a community archaeology.[42] Although the official record is not liberally

[41] WJMS, I, 226–9.
[42] WJMS, I, 15.

sprinkled with anecdotes, one gets a sense of the excitement of a dedicated workforce and the challenges they faced. Rosemary had the natural leader's ability to identify with her workforce; the testimony of one digger must stand for all:

> As well as a brilliant archaeologist and academic, Rosemary was also a complete people person who knew and could identify by sight all her diggers and students in later random encounters. In the appropriate weather conditions a rum ration or strawberries and ice-cream appeared at tea-break at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow. She also recruited as her nightwatchman the toughest of the gang of horrible little boys who were vandalising the site after the diggers left.[43]

Rosemary's role as commander of the operation was both inquisitive and courageous. She was nearly killed when a photographic tower collapsed with her on it, causing a life-long injury and later the need to walk with a stick, something she shrugged off as an 'archaeological wound'. She was quizzed about her wound in an interview with Ruth Addicott of the *Northern Echo* in 2011, on which occasion she was also asked the inevitable question about which was her most exciting find. What she revealed must have been thrilling indeed – hundreds of coloured sherds of window glass 'like jewels lying on the ground'. Rosemary saw excavation as 'damned hard work' and an archaeologist's place as being in the front line. Here's a nice quote from that same interview: 'One of the oddest things I did was an excavation in the middle of Catterick Camp over a very snowy four days', she recalls. 'I had no idea of the hierarchy present on the camp or that you shouldn't wheel your wheelbarrow across the parade ground. The commanding officer came out and said, "I've never seen women so tough". There was a lot of rain and mud at times. Digging is hard physically, but it is also hard mentally because you are looking for clues and little traces.'[44] Here was a curious empathy between three armies – Rosemary's diggers, the Catterick garrison, and long, long before that, the 300, 3 score and 3 men of the Gododdin who came to fight at Catraeth in the early 7th century.

It was hardly surprising that the full publication of the joint monasteries (in 2005) only followed the completion of the excavations after an interval of twenty-seven years. The surprise is that it didn't take longer – a lesser person would have been overwhelmed by the size of the assemblage, so much previously unknown or unrecognised and the detailed analyses expected of it, all to be studied in a period of rapid professional innovation. The excavation had endured and adapted over the key period in which the doing of archaeology transmogrified from a recreation and a rescue operation to a profession with employees and standards of practice. A professional team handled the post-excavation using their expertise in wresting new information from the site record. Nevertheless, Rosemary remarked 'it was a bonus that volunteer help continued to the end'. That end

[43] Pam Irving, available at https://trowelblazers.com/rosemary-cramp-from-trowelblazing-teen-to-dbe/
[44] Quoted by Ruth Addicott, 'Digging Detective', *The Northern Echo* (11 July 2011).

was a detailed report of 1116 pages, in which the only disappointment (for Rosemary as well as her readers) was the poor standard applied by the publisher (English Heritage). This two-volume paperback, which combines a research report with an archive, deserved a little more money spent on its production, especially as numerous specialists gave their expertise for nothing. Two hardback volumes in a slip case, as with York Minster (a Royal Commission publication), would have shown more clearly a government commitment to invest long-term in the exploration of the monastery where the first history of England was written.[45]

The content of the report will nevertheless come to be regarded as a turning point in early medieval archaeology, with Rosemary's fingerprints on every page. One example is the bringing into the public domain the reality behind those jewel-like sherds of glass at Jarrow. In an era in which specialists were rare, an excavation director had to learn the technology of manufacture, the chemistry and the vocabulary before testing an interpretation in the appropriate forum. Rosemary was something of a virtuoso in this regard. By 2001 she was ready to report on the use of window glass in the British Isles during the 7th to 10th centuries.[46] Subtle colours, dark and light, had been found, in shades of green, turquoise, blue, brown and amber. Using the shape of the glass quarries and their colours and conjoining lead cames, alongside models provided by standing figures of Christ on sculpture and in illuminated manuscripts, the Jarrow assemblage came together as a 7th-century stained glass window – a triumphant reward of observation, deduction and imagination. The window was included in a 2013 exhibition featuring the use of colour in 7th-century Northumbria, where Rosemary evoked the effect that window glass and painted sculpture, accessible to all (unlike the precious gospel books) would have on the lay community – a new world of light and colour.[47]

The architectures of the two monasteries also opened a window on the wider history of monasticism: by overlaying their plans, Rosemary convincingly revealed the outlines of Roman-style planned quadrangles, and from them identified Wearmouth/Jarrow as the key link in the chain that connects the Roman villa to the Carolingian monastery (depicted in the St Gall plan), and thence to all the later cloistered abbeys of medieval Europe.[48] For her, the architecture implied a state of mind: in their heyday the

[45] Both volumes are now available online and open access at ADS https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/eh_monographs_2014/contents.cfm?mono=1089010

[46] R.J. Cramp, 'Window-glass from the British Isles 7th–10th century', in F. Dell'Acqua & R. Silva (eds), *Il colore nel Medioevo. Arte, simbolo, tecnica. La ventrata in Occidente dal IV all' XI secolo. Atti delle giornate di studi, Lucca 23–25 settembre 1999* (Lucca: Instituto Storico Lucchese – Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa – Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi Italia, 2001), pp. 69–85.

[47] R.J. Cramp, *Kaleidoscope. Colour and light in the World of Bede. An exhibition for Bede's World* (Jarrow, 2013).

[48] WJMS, I, fig. 24.3.

Northumbrian monasteries displayed an ideology that 'succeeded in freeing their inmates in some measure from the old bondage of status, family inheritance, and dependence on royal favour … Northumbria could now claim an inheritance from the antique world, could even transmit this as a legacy to succeeding generations'.[49]

Her intellectual landscape

Rosemary was a Catholic convert working on a period in England when Christianity triumphed over paganism, moreover in Northumbria, and in sculpture, in an especially magnificent way.[50] Did this perhaps restrict her to a purview of Christian interpretation? I would say not, in that she could express both admiration for the victor and sympathy with the vanquished. In 1994, when she joined Éamonn Ó Carragáin on the first University College Cork tour of Rome, he described how she entered the early medieval basilica of Santa Maria in Cosmedin for the first time, 'electrifying' the medievalists present by explaining in vivid detail how the basilica gave one a good impression of what the church at Wearmouth must have looked like in the eighth century. We can truly apply to her the words which Bede used of Benedict Biscop: "As often as (s)he crossed the sea, (s)he never returned, as is the custom with some people, empty-handed and without profit"'. A year later she published a contribution to *The Sense of the Sacramental*, a 1995 collection edited by D. Brown and A. Loades. The editors announced their conviction at the start: literary and artistic survivals from the Anglo-Saxon world suggest that a transformation of consciousness occurred as the new faith gained a foothold: 'pagan fear of the natural world was replaced by a vision of its unity under the Christian god, whereby animals became docile or even joined in worship, while a tree became the pre-eminent symbol of nature's harmony of its creator'. Pagan fear of the natural world would surprise the Irish, whose reluctance to abandon the companionship of nature on conversion is well documented;[51] and would surprise most archaeologists too, for whom humans, animals and plants formed an endemic alliance in prehistory. Rosemary dealt expeditiously with the premise: 'We know practically nothing about the religious beliefs of the pagan Anglo-Saxons who had occupied the eastern part of this island since the

[49] R.J. Cramp, 'Monkwearmouth and Jarrow: the archaeological evidence', in G. Bonner (ed.), *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, (London: SPCK, 1976), pp. 5–18 at p. 16.

[50] As a postgraduate, Professor Nancy Edwards remembers a supervision at Rosemary's house (as always accompanied by supper), when she discussed her conversion at university and her faith. It was clearly very important to her and perhaps to the way her research interests developed (pers, comm.).

[51] For example, J. Carey, *A Single Ray of the Sun: Religious Speculation in Early Ireland: Three Essays* (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 1999).

mid-fifth century: the Church made a good job of obliterating them ... Their cults probably had much in common with those of the Celts who preceded them on the European mainland or were their neighbours in Britain'.[52] Pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon animal art was not always explicit but celebrated animals as spirits and protectors. Pre-Christian beliefs remained in the minds of those to whom they gave comfort. Raising the wooden cross before the Battle of Heavenfield, she noted, 'would remind Oswald's soldiers of "the cult posts familiar to them from their pagan religion"'.[53] In one of her last works she drew attention to the ease with which pre-Christian and Christian ideas could share a medium, as exemplified by the right side of the Franks casket: the three mothers feature in both Celtic and Germanic religions, as does *Epona* the horse goddess, the smith god, and creatures that are half-human, half-beast.[54] In AD 797, after hearing about a local interest in legendary northern heroes, such as Ingeld, an exasperated Alcuin protested to Bishop Higbald of Lindisfarne, 'what has Ingeld to do with Christ?' Rosemary showed more understanding, noting that the bold carving of an armed man, a recumbent figure and a wolf excavated from the demolition level of the Winchester Old Minster was being interpreted as part of the story of Sigurd, and thus reflecting the pride of the Late Saxon kings in their pagan and northern ancestry. She decided: 'certainly it transports us a long way from the types of Jewish and early Christian history which Bede so admired at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow. [But] at least it does seem to have been believed that Ingeld could have something to do with Christ'.[55] She was willing to get inside early medieval heads, attributing to them an understandable pragmatism, even in matters of religious practice**.** She noted that kings and aristocrats who founded monasteries in the 7th–8th centuries used them for visitations, councils, or to house relatives or attendants. Royals paying their respects to the gods were now more conveniently served by visits to monasteries with a dining room and all mod cons, 'as opposed to a remote moorland and the bloody carcase of an ox'.[56]

[52] R.J. Cramp, 'Nature redeemed', in D. Brown & A. Loades (eds), *The Sense of the Sacramental: Movement and Measure in Art and Music, Place and Time* (London: SPCK, 1995), pp. 122–36 at p. 123.
[53] R.J. Cramp, 'The making of Oswald's Northumbria', in C. Stancliffe & E. Cambridge (eds), *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint* (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1995), pp. 17–32 at p. 30.
[54] R.J. Cramp, 'Northumbria, a kingdom', in S. Semple, C. Orsini & Sian Mui (eds), *Life on the Edge: Social, Political and Religious Frontiers in Early Medieval Europe* (Neue Studien zur Sachsenforschung, 6; Braunschweig, 2017), pp. 29–44 at p. 42.
[55] R.J. Cramp, 'The furnishing and sculptural decoration of Anglo-Saxon churches', in L.A.S. Butler & R.K. Morris (eds), *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers on History, Architecture and Archaeology in Honour of Dr H.M. Taylor* (CBA Research Report, 60; London: Council for British Archaeology, 1986), pp. 101–4.
[56] R.J. Cramp, 'New perspectives on monastic buildings and their uses', in G. Thomas & A. Knox (eds), *Early Medieval Monasticism in the North Sea Zone: Proceedings of a Conference Held to Celebrate the Conclusion of the Lyminge Excavations 2008–15* (Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History, 20; Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2017), pp. 27–42 at p. 38.

If her philosophical platform was not specifically religious, neither was it dogmatically theoretical. In 1997 she delivered a pithy verdict on processual archaeology as a synthetic instrument and was particularly withering about post-processual (or post-modern) archaeology describing it as an 'empathetic study of the past ... a matter for the heart not the head'; and went on, 'I really do not believe we can recognise the individual will in our type of data ... I do not believe that an archaeologist can offer more than an opinion as to *why* events in the past which produced their evidence took place. What they can offer is an increasingly clear account of *how* events took place ...' Behind this apparently negative stance of a progressive scholar probably lies opposition to a tendency that she found reprehensible – namely the loss of rigour. She questioned the trend to go beyond the evidence as invalid and even disrespectful, even in the well documented faith that she shared: 'When we reach the period of Christian iconography, ... can we ever know that interpretations did not differ from one background to another, informed by a substratum of belief which we have not been able to retrieve?'[57] Nevertheless, to speculate on what things might mean is a natural human desire, and has other practical benefits – it keeps students awake and supports a large publishing industry. In my hearing, what she showed was not unbending belief, but rather an admiration for the holy men and women of the age she studied, but without ever losing the steady hand of scholarship. She mourned the passing of Northumbria's golden age with a kind of sober regret: 'Nothing is better for demonstrating the breakdown of the international monastic network than the plethora of small monuments with localised patterns, which imitate wood and metal-work motifs, but lose the link with late antique figure sculpture and its subtle Christian iconography'.[58] A glory had clearly passed away from the earth.

The strategy that gathers data with precision and entertains synthesis with caution, that also allows several arguments for cultural behaviour to present themselves before proposing a multiple, as opposed to a singular conclusion, can result in enriched reality. The past is permanently under construction and there are no forbidden zones. Such an approach of competing models would become ever more necessary as her Durham department built up its science credentials, spawning yet more versions of the past to reconcile, and in which to seek convergence.

[57] R.J. Cramp, 'Not *why*, but *how*: The contribution of archaeological evidence to the understanding of Anglo-Saxon England', in P.E. Szarmach & J.T. Rosenthal (eds), *The Preservation and Transmission of Anglo-Saxon Culture* (Studies in Medieval Culture, 40; Kalamazoo MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), pp. 271–286.
[58] Ibid., 42.

Leadership in learning: the Department at Durham

Rosemary famously lifted many young women and men out of a passive state, unsure of their talents, knocked them into shape and launched them anew as lecturers, excavation directors, art historians, writers and professors. As students one of our treats was to take off in a small group and visit 7th- to 9th-century churches and monuments, and monuments in churches, and take it in turns to expatiate to the group on a cross shaft and its context. The responsibility of those first deliveries to a tiny public felt immense, one's dead brain failing to light up in the cold wind of exposure. The result, often wishful or muddled, was received by Rosemary with the expression of an interested hawk, curiosity tempered with pity for its victim. Having corrected errors, she would deliver a tingling description in a sequence of salient points, so that even the monument felt better about itself. The mixture of affection and terror which Rosemary inspired in her students always had a remedial result, like a visit to the dentist.

Something more of her leadership in learning can been gleaned from a dossier compiled by her successor at Durham, Professor Sarah Semple, who invited former students to send in anecdotes in celebration of her 90th birthday. These say a lot about what she meant to those she taught. I offer a few of them, mostly for fun (they are not untypical), but also in the hope they will contribute some extra shades of colour to a remarkable personality.

> (At interview) I remember my initial interview very well. It was with some trepidation I entered her office. Having taken a seat Prof Cramp viewed me over her glasses for what seemed an eternity and then said: 'Mr Jeynes, would you regard yourself as an observant person?' I replied I thought I was, so she responded with, 'Then can you describe the staircase you have just come up?' I was so stunned (and nervous) as I had no recollection of ever climbing a staircase! [R.P. Jeynes]
>
> (In the classroom) Her gaze fell on me and my turn came to talk about the windows in the library – it was terrifying; nevertheless, under a stern exterior, she was an incredibly warm hearted and engaging teacher. I have never forgotten her, and I don't suppose anyone who was taught by her has either. Her lectures were inspiring, and her laugh was truly infectious. [Alison McQuitty]
>
> Once Iris Murdoch, I think invited by Rosemary, came to give a talk which I went to with a friend, Susan Cottingham. Rosemary and Iris engaged in clever conversation while throwing a cigarette packet to and fro and smoking numerous cigarettes (or was that just Iris?). We were impressed but did not feel inspired to become like Iris, a fierce intellectual woman with short blue hair and a meek husband. Rosemary had more warmth and energy, a better role model. [Catherine Hills]
>
> I have two very strong memories of being taught by Rosemary. The first relates to a tutorial, the topic I do not recall, but in those days of small group teaching there were

only two students in that group – myself and Paul Glover. Paul had to present first and then I should make erudite comments. My mistake was to admit to agreeing with what he had said and had little to add. Rosemary rounded on me, definitely with a raised voice, and telling me that I should NEVER lack for an opinion. Anyone who knows me, realises just how significant that admonishing became – I have never lacked an opinion on almost anything since that date! The second memory relates to an artefacts class. We gathered around a large table with trays of mystery objects from which we were to choose an example and tell the rest of the class about it. Terrifying in prospect, and I regret to say I still use that same method with my own students! I had an object which I had no clue about – I described it as best I could and then plumped from a wholly unlikely suggestion for its function. To say I was chastised, is perhaps too gentle. It was, by the way, a Georgian wig-curler – who knew! However, I now am an artefact specialist and will always remember that vital training of describing what you can see before you, even if function is harder to determine. [Colleen Batey]

Miss Cramp would begin by asking, 'What do you know about the Anglo-Saxons?' Silence. Someone would eventually mention Alfred burning the cakes. 'Very well, can you tell me his dates?' Silence. 'Or even what century he was?' Silence. Today my grandchildren's generation is doing projects on the Anglo-Saxons and making model Sutton Hoo helmets, and they know all about it, and part of the reason is Miss Cramp's contribution. And yes, I was there. [Trevor Ogden]

When I was in the last year of my degree she went on a cultural mission [to China] with the British Council and struck up a friendship with Prof Guo, the head of the Bureau of Cultural Relics. In time, he came to the UK and since I was interested in Chinese archaeology, she roped me in to help look after him. Ultimately this contact led to me getting a place at Peking University to study Chinese Archaeology – an experience that was life-changing and has led me to live pretty much ever since in China/Hong Kong. [Robert Stoneley]

... we were in the pre-personal computer age. I did manage to type up my dissertation on Durham's mainframe, which occupied an entire floor on the science site. There were no backups. It crashed three times and so I had to type up the dissertation three times. We used Letraset and Rotring pens for diagrams, SLRs and film for images (which still persist, I guess), and there were never enough photocopiers! ... After Durham I did periodically suffer from insecurity nightmares where I never seemed to have actually graduated; perennial rounds of revision, floating in shadows, finding somebody else in my tiny college room. So, I contacted Prof Cramp a few years back to see if she would entertain a conversation with an old alumnus. After a really good natter, fine coffee (and a single malt), I can now confidently declare myself free of that particular bad dream. I was there. And I did (somehow) graduate. [Spencer Carter]

(On tour) Two particular memories are very vivid: on a study trip to Poitiers in my third year seeing Professor Rosemary Cramp and Dr David Wilson (British Museum) sitting together in a dodgem car whirling around the floor. And the other: squeezed into

> the back of Rosemary's sports car driving at top speed as part of a field trip and her turning over her right shoulder to shout at the three of us in the back 'what can you tell me about the changing vernacular architecture?' [Becky Pane]
>
> (And digging) During the excavations at the Hirsel in 1984, we had a visit from a local historical society, who in the main were of pensionable age. They were led up to the site and then Rosemary addressed them via a loud hailer. Normally Rosemary had no problem making herself heard and, on this occasion, the use of the loud hailer resulted in a large number of visibly shocked visitors reaching to turn down their hearing aids or clutching their chest/pacemakers! [Susan McNeil]

I came to Durham in 1972 as a postgraduate, ex-army, to seek an introduction to my new profession. On offer was a 'Diploma' created by Rosemary that combined Anglo-Saxon literature, art, history and archaeology, a vocational course requiring immersion in the study of a people for their own sake. It was perfect for me. The Archaeology Department was then in the Old Fulling Mill on the banks of the River Wear, a tottering construction built of ancient timbers and hollowed out inside to make a three-storey home with lecture rooms, offices, a library, a sitting-about place and a kitchen. It didn't actually have bedrooms, but people did sleep there. When Rosemary came to work, early as far students were concerned, there was a scuffling noise like that made by surprised mice, and various persons were noted by their professor as standing unsteadily upright. *Good morning* she rapped out and gave a laser look. *How are you?* More a statement than a question. The subject of the inquiry was not quite conscious or dressed, or dressed in typical 1970s day/night apparel, let's say pyjamas and an Afghan coat.

Rosemary reacted more in sorrow than in anger. 'Here, get yourself some breakfast' she said, and handed out a five-pound note. She knew perfectly well that many students, especially postgraduates, had no money and no grant, but would not go away – because they were enslaved by their passion for a segment of the past. In those days Durham had a small following of acolytes living in vans, moving from room to room, surviving on a subsistence diet of beer, potatoes and curry. Rosemary's generosity tipped the scales between destitution and joy on countless occasions – Mars bars were handed out on site, wine in her Durham house or in her cottage up Weardale where we quizzed her on her life and asked her if she wanted to write a novel (she didn't). She had no favourites, only confused, blundering, rumbustious, would-be colleagues, many of whom stayed with her agenda and tried to live up to her ethos. In this sense she has been to so many an inspiration, not just a bundle of inspiring instances, but inspiration in depth, useful all through life's challenges.

As it expanded, new premises for the Department were found on Saddler Street, which were speedily converted into a scientific enterprise, with a new emphasis on the environmental archaeology being developed by Peter Addyman at York. The building was opposite the rescue excavation which I got to direct in 1974, and my companion

Madeleine Hummler and I visited in 1976 to move along the analyses and meet Yvonne Brown who was drawing our finds. We met Janey Cronyn, leading on conservation, and James Rackham, creating his faunal reference collection (and smelt his seal rotting on the roof). In 1977 Madeleine brought with her a study tour from her university in Basel, including Professors Ludwig Berger and Elizabeth ('Großmutti') Schmid, the legendary bone expert, together with twenty students. Madeleine remembers the convivial mood as they sat on the stairs with the staff at coffee break and Rosemary's delight as she showed the visitors round, opening drawer after tidy drawer of archaeological records. No nostalgia there for the Fulling Mill.

The future was bright, and the Department continued to expand, acquiring prehistorians, another Romanist and more early medievalists, and Rosemary embraced the new scientific techniques that eventually prompted a move to the science site. In 1995 the University rewarded her with an honorary DSc (and another followed from the University of Bradford in 2002). She was also awarded honorary degrees by the Universities of Cork, University College Dublin, Cambridge and Leicester, and appointed Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and the Medieval Academy of America. In 2006 she was elected a Fellow of the British Academy, breaking into a citadel then long dominated by male doyens of the academic 'Golden Triangle'.

Leadership in heritage

Rosemary served the wider heritage outside the university as an advisor in numerous institutions of high and low estate: as a Trustee of the British Museum, as a Commissioner of the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (now part of Historic Scotland), and of English Heritage (now Historic England), as president of the Society of Antiquaries, the Council for British Archaeology, and the Cumberland and Westmoreland, Durham and Northumberland and Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Societies.

None were too grand or too lowly for her mission, which was to win support for a leading discipline of the Humanities and its threatened resources. She urged her colleagues to do the same by giving their time to raising political awareness; she was appalled by the low esteem given to the scientific study of the past, commenting, 'On the three islands I have studied in detail (St Cuthbert's Isle, Lindisfarne, Farne Island and Coquet Island), there is much better protection for the seabirds than for the surviving archaeology'.[59]

[59] R.J. Cramp, *The Hermitage and Offshore Island* (Second Paul Johnstone Memorial Lecture, Occasional Lecture 3, National Maritime Museum; London: National Maritime Museum, 1981), cited by C.D. Morris,

As a noted public figure, with a rich record of public service in the University and beyond, Rosemary championed global heritage and urged political action when it was needed. Here is an extract from her presidential address to the Society of Antiquaries at a troubled time (2003), which every new president of that society should read:

> It is easy in times of financial stringency to feel that the historic environment must inevitably have a low priority in public spending, but if we believe that it forms an important element in the general welfare of our society then we must be prepared to say this strongly, and, I fear, over and over again. ... I hardly need to remind Fellows of recent horrific events that demonstrated very clearly the low esteem in which the historic environment can be held. The sacking and looting of the National Museum in Baghdad and the burning of the National Library in an uncontrolled frenzy during the Iraq war was brought vividly into our homes almost as it was happening. I read again Sir Alfred Clapham's solemn roll call of the historic buildings lost in London after the Blitz and his sorrowful speculations as to what had probably been lost on the continent. In those pre-television days, when war correspondents were not beaming back news from the centre of the action, there was widespread ignorance as to what had been destroyed by either side in conflict ... There is little excuse for such ignorance now, and in a world where global issues are part of our everyday concerns, educating politicians, and the military, to value and respect the heritage of all nations must form part of the efforts of a Society like ours.

Indeed it must. And after Palmyra, a decade ago, one hopes it still does.

Rosemary built and maintained her own tribute to heritage at *Bede's World*, a visitor centre at Jarrow partially constructed 'in the Roman manner', which presented the dig, recreated an Anglo-Saxon farm, and celebrated Northumbria's place in intellectual history. The farm was created for families of the urban environs to make their acquaintance with nature and history in a direct way, combining animals – cattle, sheep, pigs and geese, and vegetables – with reconstructed Anglo-Saxon timber buildings. A review in 2013 showed that almost every schoolchild in Durham and Newcastle had visited the centre and its exhibitions, instilling knowledge and pride on the North East's remarkable early medieval heritage.[60] All this was achieved in the face of considerable inertia. The high quality of such ventures wins many friends for archaeology, but is weakly supported by their politicians. Do even academics rate these shopwindows as generously as they should? Communicating with the public is not the same thing as being popular. The pure gold of our discoveries does not improve by being turned into tinsel. *Bede's World*

'From Beowulf to Binford', in H. Hamerow & A. MacGregor (eds), *Image and Power in the Archaeology of Early Medieval Britain. Essays in Honour of Rosemary Cramp* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001), pp. 147–61 at p. 158.

[60] Sarah Semple, pers. comm.

remains an icon of the struggle of the heritage to be heard above the material uproar of industrial Britain. And Rosemary never gave up on it.[61]

A counsellor and friend

Great scholars sometimes remind you of those they study. For Rosemary, Hild is an obvious pre-echo:[62] converted to Roman Christianity in her twenties (by Paulinus), living a life divided equally between secular service and the love of learning, Hild was first abbess of Hartlepool in AD 649, then abbess of Whitby, which 'she set in order with great industry, where all things were held in common and no-one had any private property' (I am not sure this last aligned with Rosemary's politics, but the next bit is definitely her); 'so great was her prudence that not only ordinary people, but kings and princes sought and received her advice'.[63] Other models may be cited. Aethelflaed, lady of the Mercians, wasn't a Mercian but she married one, Ethelred of Gloucester. As Alfred's daughter, she grew up in a cultured household which saw the Romans as a high point of civilisation and order, and studied their works in books and on the ground. When she and husband Ethelred and brother Edward began their push to wrest Britain from the Vikings, they did it like the Romans, moving north with a pincer movement, each using a chain of forts. After her husband died, Aethelflaed was the sole commander in the west, and, in my opinion, was early England's most systematic and successful general, taming the Danes, repelling the Norse, pushing back the Welsh and teaching them to respect her bishops.

I also wonder if King Oswald of Northumbria (AD 633–642), whom Rosemary clearly admired, was often in her thoughts. She said of him 'the swift development of Oswald's cult as a saint should not blind us to the fact that he was trained as, and lived as, a war leader of his people ... No other Northumbrian king extended his power so far from base as Oswald did ... it is surely no exaggeration to say that, without the contacts established in Oswald's reign, the development of Insular art in the later seventh century would not have been possible'.[64] Bede's characterisation of Oswald is appropriate to

[61] Now called *Jarrow Hall*, https://jarrowhall.com. On the continuing struggles for recognition, see R. Morris, *Evensong; People, Discoveries and Reflections on the Church in England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2021), pp. 176–181, and https://www.worldheritagesite.org/tentative/former/The+Twin+Monastery+of+Wearmouth+Jarrow/

[62] Cf. P.R. Brown, 'Professor Rosemary Cramp (1929–), The Hild of Durham', in J. Chance (ed.), *Women Medievalists and the Academy* (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), pp. 885–900.

[63] Bede, *HE*, IV.

[64] R.J. Cramp, 'The making of Oswald's Northumbria', in C. Stancliffe & E. Cambridge (eds), *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint* (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1995), pp. 17–32 at p. 32.

Rosemary too: 'Though he wielded supreme power over the whole land, he was always wonderfully humble, kind and generous to the poor and to strangers'.[65]

Her way of communicating fellow-feeling was neither overly inquisitive nor admonitory. In the essays dedicated to her, Richard Bailey wrote of 'her characteristic combination of personal kindness, academic rigour, and outrageous sense of fun'. Chris Morris noted her insistence on the importance of reading widely and of lecturers taking an interest in the politics of their day; but the lecturers were equally her colleagues, and she kept them on 'a long rein'.[66] On the other hand, signs of a lack of rigour provoked sanction on student, colleague and friend alike. Here is a comment from her deft dismissal of Charles Thomas' *Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*: 'This survey began as the Hunter Marshall Lectures delivered in 1969 at Glasgow University, and it still bears the clear imprint of the spoken word directed at an audience for whom the southern limit of North Britain is the Tweed ... The limits to human endeavour which Professor Thomas is loath to admit in the introduction, are noticeable in two ways in this book: in the geographical limits of his discussion, and in the cultural bias, both of which make nonsense of the term Northumbria used in the publisher's blurb and in the text. I will not therefore take issue with Charles Thomas that he leaves out all that Hexham, Ripon, Wearmouth/Jarrow, Whitby/Hackness, York and Hoddom contributed to the material culture of Christian Northumbria in the period before 850'. And she added, as a sop to Cerberus: 'Nevertheless as a compendium of information which cannot be gained anywhere else, the book is invaluable for all scholars in the Early Christian period'. Even this was a barbed compliment, since his excavations were then largely unpublished.[67]

She never married but was much loved by many with the kind of happy affection kindled by the resolute holy men and women whom she so admired. However, living on one's own is only freedom up to a point. Small asides stick in my mind: on getting on a train going the wrong way (and missing the meeting), 'I know, I shouldn't be allowed out on my own'; on overwork, 'don't you sometimes feel you are going to explode?'; on an inconclusive consultation, 'on these occasions I often suspect the real conversation never took place'; on divorce, 'it has happened to so many of my friends'. Rosemary well understood the kind of turbulence that goes on inside the head of a student or a young researcher – or even an ex-soldier. But she meant business, and wanted you to do likewise. And that's how we think of our best teachers: they make their subject relevant,

[65] Bede, *HE*, III.6.

[66] C.D. Morris, 'From Beowulf to Binford', in H. Hamerow & A. MacGregor (eds), *Image and Power in the Archaeology of Early Medieval Britain: Essays in Honour of Rosemary Cramp* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001), pp. 147–61 at p. 148.

[67] Review of C. Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1971), in *Antiquity*, 46, 250–251.

quotidian; not only driven by curiosity, or fascination, or mere entertainment, but by power: it has to matter. Her journey from Beowulf to sculpture to excavation to archaeological science has been impressive and pretty exciting; and all of it touched with a special Cramp magic that combines exhilaration with acumen – a smiling severity; it can be fun, but it has to be true. Compassion, certainly, but reality is preferred.

Rosemary's 90th birthday was celebrated on Friday 10 May 2019 at Durham University in the Rosemary Cramp Lecture Theatre with more than 150 attending, followed by a reception with no fewer than six cakes made by the Department of Archaeology staff, one of Jarrow church, one of the stained glass from Jarrow, and even one decorated with the Lichfield Angel. Her memorial service took place in Durham Cathedral on Friday 14 July 2023, at which there was standing room only.

She is commemorated with two blue plaques. The first at Jarrow Hall – a Blue Plaque raised to Dame Rosemary Cramp by South Tyneside Council – accompanied by an exhibition on her life and work, and the second in Durham City at her former home at 12 Church Street.

I am under no illusion that I have offered this remarkable woman anything like the memorial, the plaudits and the gratitude that her memory deserves. I cannot write for hundreds of archaeology students ranging from the brilliant to the mildly eccentric, or for the stalwart members of the volunteer excavation teams at Jarrow and Monkwearmouth, Catterick or the Hirsel, or for the noble phalanx of *Corpus* authors, especially the late Jim Lang, or for her many friends and followers in Europe and the USA, or the thousands grateful to have had such a champion for their heritage. But I can offer an opinion, that in inspiration and humanity, and above all in new knowledge, she enriched a great many lives.

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