

## **SENHOUSE ROMAN MUSEUM**

### **An overview of current collections**

The bulk of the material housed in the Senhouse Roman Museum is contained within the Netherhall Collection which is the property of the Senhouse family. This collection is generally Romano-British in date and originates from West Cumbria. The collection was originally loaned for seven years by agreement signed in January 1990; by further agreement in 1996, the term of the loan was extended for a period of 125 years. This is believed to be the oldest collection of antiquities surviving in Britain, having been started by the Senhouse family in the 1570s. The collection includes 12 Roman funerary monuments, 24 military altars and votive slabs, 9 Celtic religious sculptures, 19 other fragments of sculpture and a number of miscellaneous items, including a prehistoric cup-and-ring stone, Roman pottery, glass and bronze artefacts.

The Museum also holds important collections relating to the Cumbrian Coast, notably the Richard Bellhouse archive, material from Milefortlet 21 (Swarthy Hill) and finds from Beckfoot Roman fort and cemetery.

Further artefacts have been transferred to the museum from the Senhouse family following the signing of a letter in 1993 and donations have been received from other individuals and organisations. The majority of these objects are archaeological material from the Romano-British period and West Cumbria. The collections also include supporting documents, photographs and artefacts associated with the Battery and the Senhouse family of a post-Roman date.

From 2011 material resulting from excavations carried out by the University of Newcastle at the findspot of the 1870 cache of military altars was gifted to the museum by the landowners Hadrian's Wall Trust.

Most of the collections derive from sites within the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site which was designated a World Heritage Site in 1987 and is now part of the multi-national Frontiers of the Empire WHS. The Roman fort and civil settlement at Maryport and the Cumbrian Coastal sites are part of the WHS and the immediately surrounding area lies within its buffer zone.

### **Themes and priorities for future collecting**

- Material recovered from the adjacent Roman fort and civilian settlement and its environs. In particular material recovered from Camp Farm.
- Material that will enhance the long-term loan agreement on the Netherhall Collection of Roman altars, sculptured stone and associated non-Roman items.
- Material that will further the aim of presenting an interpretation of the Roman heritage of Maryport and the associated coastal defence system of Cumbria of the Roman occupation period.
- Material artefacts that will assist in presenting an interpretation of the history of the Battery building. This material will include documents, photographs and artefacts from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.
- Material artefacts that will assist in presenting an interpretation of the history of the Senhouse family with particular reference to the Netherhall Collection. This material will include documents, photographs and artefacts from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards.