

# Archaeology at... ...Newhailes

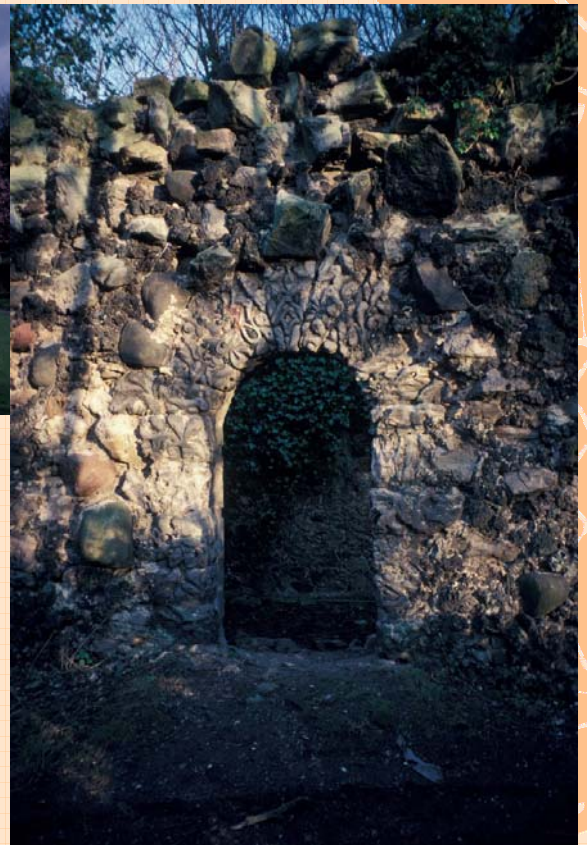


When the Trust took on Newhailes near Musselburgh, the house and estate were in various stages of dilapidation. It was this very 'sleeping beauty' effect that so enchanted visitors, and this was something the Trust wanted to retain. The careful conservation of the property was preceded by extensive documentary research, and archaeologists were active throughout the process of making the place suitable for the public to visit. This entailed detailed recording of the main house itself, but also of the principal features of the estate – through a Historic Buildings and Landscape Survey.



*Newhailes House – an 18<sup>th</sup>-century villa for the Edinburgh elite*

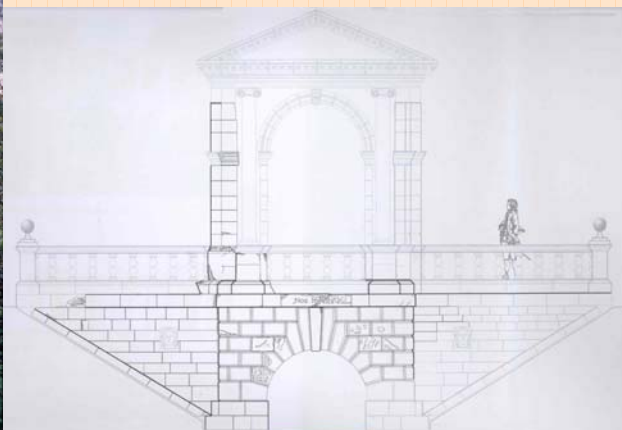
Built in the second half of the 18th century, the amazing Shell Grotto was adorned with shells from near and far. Semi-precious stones, stems of wine glasses, pieces of mirror, and fragments of fine porcelain were used to create a glistening effect in the Grotto walls. Within the walls was a series of flues which would have been used to give a smoke effect round the building. In front of the Shell Grotto archaeologists discovered a cascade – an artificial waterfall – that ran into a large ornamental pool. From across the pool, visitors would have marvelled at the shimmering Shell Grotto in the smoky mist.



*Newhailes Shell Grotto*



*The ruinous  
Tea House*



*Tea House  
reconstruction  
drawing*

The Tea House, built over the burn, is unique in Scotland. Archaeologists have matched the standing remains and the fragments that now lie in the burn with similar structures at Stowe and Wilton House in England, both designed by architect Roger Morris. This would suggest a mid-18th-century date for its construction.

For more information about the NTS, visit our website at: [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).



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