

Wheatley Hill History Club

Volume 12 Issue 2

April 2010

WWII AUXILIARY UNIT OPERATIONAL BUNKER

PHOTOS OF OUR GRANDMOTHERS

Photos have started to appear thick and fast since my last appeal - don't feel left out on the night - pass your grandma photo on as soon as possible.

OUR 15th BIRTHDAY

Our celebration meeting proved to be a very good night, in January 2010.

We met earlier than usual to enjoy a pie and pea supper provided by a Peterlee catering company. The two ladies set the tables, served us and provided an excellent meal with tea and cream cakes!

Margaret Maddison donated a large, iced spice cake which we didn't cut as everyone was too full after our meal. However, it will provide refreshments for the next few meetings!

Arthur Dodds, one of our members gave an excellent talk on the History of Aerial Surveillance which was well illustrated via slides with photographs/maps etc.

Members were full of praise for the evening - the food and the talk - most thought Arthur was a bit of a dark horse, with all this knowledge at his fingertips!

We'll have to start planning for our 20th anniversary!

WHEATLEY HILL PARTNERSHIP

As many of you will know, the above partnership ceased to exist on 1 February this year.

It was the end of 13 years of an organisation that helped Wheatley Hill in a number of ways, and many are very sad to see it go.

To mark the end of the Partnership, a tree was planted in the Cemetery on Friday 19 February 2010.

ACQUISITIONS

Letter from Prudential Assurance Co Ltd., Peterlee, 1969

Renewal receipt from Prudential, 1972

HERITAGE CENTRE

Will be closed during April for redecorating

Just before Christmas, the History Club had some exciting news passed on to them from Mark Smith of the Thorpe Thewles History Group, who told us of a Aux. Unit OB (see heading) which was situated in Wheatley Hill during the 2nd World War.

Mark's information was that it was situated in the East of the village, and after consulting maps etc, we think it was in the woods on the Durham Road. This is Mark's information:

"It is possible that the 184th Special Tunnelling Group may have been billeted in Wheatley Hill and during the time, constructed several OB's in the immediate district. An internal military memo (marked SECRET) dated 10 October 1942, exists in the unit's war diary to the effect that a 'sketch plan' was found in a house called 'Valdigarth' in Granville Terrace. This was realised to be a sensitive document and was therefore handed in at the Headquarters of Durham Police."

The information also tells us that the nominal roll of members of the Wheatley Hill Auxiliary Unit were:

Sgt T Lawlor, 5 Jack Lawson Terrace

Cpl W Barron, 4 Third Street

Pvt T Barker, 3 Second Street

Pvt Carr, 9 Wingate Lane

Pvt Hall, 23 Wingate Lane

Pvt O'Connor, 48 Wheatley Terrace

Joan Scott, a member of our History Club committee, remembers her mother saying that Joan's grandfather was a member of the Secret Seven during the war, and no-one believed her - he was in fact Cpl W Barron, mentioned above!

The following appeared in the Thornley Parish Magazine in October 1901, it appears to be a sarcastic message from the Vicar!:

HOW NOT TO HELP YOUR CLERGY

- 1 Absent yourself from morning Service.
- 2 Stay at home whenever it rains on Sunday, or is too hot or too cold.
- 3 Never let your clergy know if they have ever done you any good, but take every opportunity to injure them if they have had the courage to rebuke you for your wrong-doing.
- 4 Take a class in the Sunday School, never be punctual, and frequently be absent, and finally, when you find the work hard, leave the School without any notice.
- 5 If a stranger be near you in Church, never hand him a Prayer Book or Hymn Book, and never tell him you are glad to see him at the Church.
- 6 If you are ill, do not send to the clergy, but let them find it out for themselves. They will then probably call by the time you are well enough to go out to work. In the meantime, take every occasion to tell other people that your Clergy are negligent; that they do not seem to know who are sick; that they have not been to see you for centuries; that you are worthy, but you are not allowed to occupy the chief places; that your clergy take more notice of others than of you.
- 7 Always grumble; look as miserable as possible and take every opportunity of making other people miserable.

While all was not well at Wheatley Hill - a further article from an early Church magazine:

SEWING MEETINGS

The Sewing Meetings are being held at the Curatage every pay Monday from 2 o'clock to 8. We are somewhat disappointed that more are not turning up. Some who promised have not yet put in an appearance. Workers need not stay all the time, they can come or go early or late as convenient. The object is one that ought to appeal to all interested in the work of the Church. The Parish Hall is most urgently needed for many purposes. We earnestly hope therefore, that all who can do ever so little will at once set to work. Some who may not be able to come to the meetings can perhaps do something at home. Mats, quilts, picture frames or smaller articles will be acceptable. Let each do as he is disposed in his heart for the works sake. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of our inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ".

I think we can assume, that the work of the sewing club was raising money for a new church/parish hall.

CONTACT DETAILS

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wheatley-hill.org.uk

MINERS PERMANENT RELIEF FUND

The traditional view of English coal-miners during the second half of the 19th Century suggests that they were notorious for their lack of thrift and, in particular for their failure to insure against the many risks of a dangerous occupation. A Mining Journal in 1857 reported:

"It is the first duty of every man to make provision for his family, and upon no one of the labouring classes is the duty more incumbent than upon the miners, for their lives, to use a technical phrase, are doubly hazardous; yet, according to the official returns they would appear to be far behind the rest of the population in providing for themselves and families against accidents".

Possibly miners were reluctant to become involved in making provision for families in the event of accident, as a result of the cost of the weekly premium which was between 2d and 4½d depending on the type of cover required, and their distrust of the organisation responsible for collecting premiums.

The first Permanent Relief Fund opened in 1862 and for a specified weekly payment could provide pensions and medical relief, but was designed more specifically to insure miners and their dependants against the financial loss to their families, caused by the death of the bread winner.

The benefits by the fund were:

Between 4s-10s per week following an injury at the pit

Cash Allowance of between £5-£23 for death

Weekly allowance for widows of 5s

Weekly allowances of between 2s/2s.6d for orphans

The Fund quickly gained its reputation amongst the mining community, as it never failed to meet its commitments and was well supported by employers who deducted the subscriptions at source. By paying into this Fund, members could be sure that their wives and families would be provided for in the event of an accident and by 1880 the movement claimed to have ¼ of British Miners as its members. In the North-East, two-thirds of mineworkers had joined the Scheme and by 1890 this figure had risen to 90% in Northumberland and Durham.

Alongside the Permanent Relief Fund, the Trade Unions were trying to promote self-help amongst the miners. They were keen to get the message to the men that they needed to rely on themselves to provide financial help in the event of accidents, as the coal owners had demonstrated again and again, no financial help would be forthcoming from them.

The Aged Miners Thanks

Our day will soon be over, our race is nearly run,
We thank you altogether, for all that you have done;
We hope some day to meet you, upon that blessed shore
Where toiler and employer will meet to part no more

Receive now, in conclusion, the thanks of Haswell Moor
For all your gracious actions towards the needy poor.
The Lord will bless your kindness and give you plenteous store,
For all your great attention to them at Haswell Moor.

The Union therefore promoted self-awareness of the social satisfaction that combined action could bring and were keen to improve family life, greater working stability, fewer children and higher wages. As a result of this new awareness, most miners took up membership of the Permanent Relief Fund.

The following is a list of women and their children from Wheatley Hill who had lost their husband at the pit but who were benefiting from the Permanent Relief Fund:

COLLINS	Christina	MILLER	Mary
COUGLAN	Alice	MILLER	John Wm
DOBINSON	Elizabeth	MILLER	Mary E
DOBINSON	Isabella	QUIN	Isabella
DOBINSON	John Dixon	QUIN	Thomas
DOBINSON	Lancelot	THOMPSON	Isabella
GRIMWOOD	Ann	THOMPSON	Jane
GRIMWOOD	John	THOMPSON	Isabella
GRIMWOOD	Richard	THOMPSON	William
HANBY	Catherine	WALKER	Mgt Ann
HANBY	Elizabeth	WATSON	Ann
HANBY	Hannah	WATSON	Mary
HANBY	Jane	WATSON	Thomasina
HANBY	Mary Hannah	WETHERALL	Joanna
HANBY	Sarah	WETHERALL	John
HANBY	Sarah	WILLIAMS	Elizabeth
HANBY	William	WILLIAMS	John
HEARD	Elizabeth	WILLIAMS	Stephen
JACKSON	Mary		

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

26 May **History Club Meeting**
A Talk on the History of Brancepeth Castle

5 June **Sunderland History Fair**
All Day Event held at Seaburn Hall

30 June **History Club Meeting**
A Talk on "The Last Mechanic"

29 July **History Club Meeting**
Our Grandmothers - a presentation by history Club members on the uniqueness of their grandmothers

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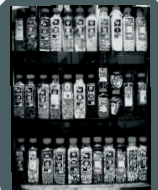
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Hello everyone at the History Club,

Let me introduce myself. My name is Cherry Robinson and I live in Leeds. Both my mother and father come from your part of the world.

As a child I spent quite a lot of time in Thornley and know Wheatley Hill too as my Maternal grandparents and great grandparents were probably your parents neighbours. My Grandma was Emily Burrell married to John Thomas (Jack) Burrell and his parents (my great grandparents) were Garrett Burrell and Elizabeth Ingleby and a second wife I think was Sarah Walton. My grandparents lived in John Street and Gable Terrace, before moving to Dunelm Road, when my grandad bought a Scheme House. A lot of things I have pieced together for myself, fortunately my mother kept everything including her school report and references from the vicar and headmaster before she went into service about 1928/9. However a lot of things remain a mystery to me some I may never fathom out but some you may hold the key to and we might unravel unspoken memories.

I see photos on your website that remind me of when I was a child running across an almost traffic free road to Baldaseras I think, with a dish for ice cream for Sunday tea or playing out with my cousins and maybe some of you in the back streets of the terrace houses. Apart from my cousins I can only remember one name and I think it was Graham Armstrong.

There's a picture of a lady called Dorothy Burrell and Gladys Peacock on your website. Interestingly my uncle John was engaged to a lady called Hetty Peacock maybe it was her sister-in-law and was Dorothy a relation of mine I wonder? I know Hetty died young because I have a letter from my gran telling my mum that Hetty had passed away. My other uncle John died in 1943 in the 2nd World War in Egypt and I know his name is on the Memorial stone in Thornley, the one on the bookmark you sent. Is that also his picture on the cover of one of your publications? Also one of my recent discoveries was of Leslie Walton who also died about the same time born 1914 making him my grandfather's stepbrother. His name may be on the Wheatley Hill one

My mother's sister and her husband died relatively recently and were possibly known to you. They lived in Asquith Street almost at the end of Thornley. My mother was Kate Elizabeth Burrell and her sister of whom I speak was Violet, my uncle Sid Cotton, many knew him as he was wheelchair bound. They died within 10 weeks of each other about 2004 I think time passes so quickly and my other uncle, their brother Norman died around the same time. He lived in Gable Terrace with a lady called Belle.

WHEATLEY HILL BOYS SCHOOL CYCLING CLUB - TRIP TO THE ROMAN WALL (part 2)

After a long period of riding we came to an old ruined Roman Fort. It wasn't much so we went straight on. The leader saw the old ruined Roman Fort at Housesteads and told us to stop. The price to go and see it was 6d a person. The leader told us the hostel was about 3 miles away. It took us about a quarter of one hour but it wasn't open so we went straight down to the cafe where we had a cup of tea and two cakes each. After that some lads got two bottles of lemonade; others got one. After we had drunk it we went back to the hostel which still wasn't opened so we took our bags off and put them in a pile. The leader took a party back to see the Roman Fort, Borcovicium at Housesteads and off they went while we watched our cycles and the bags. It was about half past four when they came back. After a half hours wait it opened and we picked our bags up and on we went into the hostel for the best beds. When we had done that we got our tins of stuff out and started to make the dinner. When it was ready we served it out and after we had eaten it we washed up.

Next morning it was frosty but fine. When we got ready, we made our breakfasts. When we had eaten them we washed up started off again. The first village we stopped at was Bardon Mill where we had a cup of tea in an inn. After we had finished, we started off for Hexham. We followed the Tyne for a good way. When we got about 9 miles and a half out of Bardon Mill we stopped because Leslie Alderton thought he had a puncture. He blew it up and it didn't go down, so we went on again but it went down again so the leader stopped and took the tube out. When he had taken the tyre off there were two holes in the tube, so he started to put patches on. When he had done that he put the tube back into the tyre. Then the leader started to open the sardines for our dinners and we ate them with some bread. After we had eaten them we started off towards Hexham which was about 2 miles away. It was an easy 2 miles and we got to Hexham in good time. There we stopped and had a cup of tea and a few cakes. We had a look around the town and some of us bought some telescopes. After we had a look round we went to our bikes and started off again. The next village was Riding Mill it was about 4 miles from Hexham. On the road to Riding Mill we saw some other cyclists and passed them, then they came and passed us. When we reached Riding Mill we passed straight through there because we were so keen in racing them. Mr Brown stopped and got his map out and said we had passed the road where we should have turned off. So we all turned back for Riding Mill and there we saw the road. We took it and found our way to the Minster House. It was starting to snow and it was very windy but the trees sheltered us. We soon reached the main road and took a short cut down to a farm. Mr Brown asked the farmer if we could walk through the field and he said, "Yes". We therefore pushed our bikes through the field and came to an old swing bridge which, however rickety it was, we all got across safely. After about a quarter of an hours walk, we came to the Edmundbyers road and following it, soon reached the hostel. We had a good dinner and soon were off to bed. The next morning our breakfasts were provided for us.



Acomb Youth Hostel



The Boys at Housesteads

After we had eaten our breakfast we got ready and left Edmundbyers for home. Throughout the ride we had the help of a strong tail wind and the first six miles which were mostly downhill were covered in about 25 minutes. When we were passing through Consett we saw a big steel works where there was a lot of scrap lying around in the yards. We passed straight on to Leadgate and onto Lanchester, some 4 miles from Leadgate. It was an easy ride and it took us about half an hour. When we reached Lanchester we looked for a place to get some tea. After we had eaten we noticed some Lanchester lads playing football and asked if we could have a game. Soon we left for Witton Gilbert which was about 3 miles away and reaching Witton Gilbert, went straight through onto the Durham. The road descended into Durham and from there in fine weather we rode on to Shincliffe. Our way home now lay along the familiar six mile stretch of the A181 road so ending a successful tour; the first tour when the club passed the 'hundred up'

Total Mileage: 138

By E Fulcher, 1951

Messages from the Web Site

Hi

I've recently found out that my grandmother's surname was Errington. From her marriage certificate to my grandfather (dated 1916) I can see that her father was John Errington, described as a Grocer (Master). Her address was 5 Hirst Street, Wheatley Hill. I've been looking at the history website but I can't find anything about anyone called Errington. I would have thought a grocer would be well-known in the area so I wondered if any of your members have encountered John Errington before this. My grandmother was born in 1894.

Regards (*From Margaret R Milburn*)

Looking for Avril Dobbin and Leslie Carr. Went to school with Leslie and lived near Avril in the early 70s. *From Wendy Lee*

From Steve Wadsmore:

Hi

Does anybody know anything about my mother, Noreen Holland who was born in Wheatley Hill 1928 Patton Street I believe she came from a large family her father was a miner she moved to London during the war and completely lost touch with her family would love to know more.

I'm researching my family history, which shows my granddad Thomas Paisley Dunn was born in Wingate Lane in 1903, He went on to be a blacksmith in the area trimdon and Kelloe, his family also lived in Trimdon at some stage. Thomas moved to Teesside around 1949 to become a succesfull business man. I would like to hear from anybody with information or photos about this family.

Regards **Ian Dunn**. PS brilliant site