

Wheatley Hill History Club

Volume 15 Issue 1

January 2012

SALE OF BOOKS

Our History Club books are being offered for sale to our members for £5 each in order to try and clear some space in Owen's spare bedroom!!

This is a fantastic offer and whilst it is a bit annoying for those of us who bought them when they were full price, it's what seems to happen in the way of retail!

The books are available from history club meetings, The Heritage Centre, Steven's and via our website.

ADVERTISER

You will notice from our adverts page that member Bob Waite is not there this month. Bob has retired and has hung up his brushes(??)

We would like to thank Bob for his support with advertising since our scheme began. We wish him well for his retirement.

ORAL HISTORY

If anyone would like their memories recording as part of the Limestone Landscape project please let Margaret know and she will arrange for you to be interviewed.

EXHIBITIONS AT COUNTY HALL

(in the corridor outside of DCRO)

Mon - Wed 8.45 - 3.45

War Horse

(a man and his horse in the DLI)

Charles Dickens

CHANGE TO THE CALENDAR

The June meeting this year will no longer feature "Our Grandparents" instead we have booked local historic films from "Reel History" as seen on TV recently.

MEMBERSHIP DUE THIS MONTH

£6.00 FOR ALL

LIMESTONE LANDSCAPE

The above project is progressing well and the specialists are still looking for volunteers to show an interest in the rare wild flowers and wildlife that surround our area.

Geologists and Biologists will be organising walks in the summer to look at these aspects and also at the exciting glacial meltwater channel which is a unique feature of Wheatley Hill/Thornley.



Mrs I Andrew of Market Rasen has sent this image to the History Club together with a newspaper article about the dedication of the church gates. The gates were made by Mrs Andrew's grandfather - local blacksmith Robert Hardwick who lived at No 2 The Avenue Wheatley Hill.

There is an article about the dedication in one of our books. The dedication was carried out by Rev S R P Mouldsdale of St Chad's College, Durham University and he asked the people of Wheatley Hill to always remember the generosity of Mr Hardwick. After the dedication, 300 people took tea in the Church Hall and Mr W Turnbull (warden) proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Hardwick who suitably responded.

HISTORY CLUB BOOKS

The History Club has donated two sets of our books to each of the primary schools within the Thornley, Ludworth and Wheatley Hill areas. Thornley Primary, Wheatley Hill Community School, Ludworth Primary and St Godric's primary have all been given books - one set for their library and one set for their year 6 classroom. Wingate Secondary School were offered class sets of the books but did not show any interest.

LUDWORTH SCHOOL 1910

Middle Row L-R: David Hughes, ?, ? Miller, ?, Joe Grey, Lily Maitland, Sally Winter, Mary Tulip

Front Row L-R: Bella Jopling, Frances Johnson, Lucy Jones, Lizzie Lister, Lizzie Hartley, ?, Lizzie Greener

Boys at the Front: Joe Hartley, ?, Robert Champley Simpson



CONTACT DETAILS

Chair: 01429 820813

Treasurer: 01429 823198

E: history.club2@btinternet.com

Web Site: wheatley-hill.org.uk

FROM THE THORNLEY CHURCH MAGAZINE 1900

(1)

The Members of Mr Allott's Class will meet in the Parish Church on Wednesday Evening 26 September at 6 o'clock. The following are entitled to prizes (to be presented that night) for good attendance for year ending Whitsuntide 1900: Clara Hunt, Edith Dunn, Christopher Tunstall, Christopher Hunt

(2)

Whit Monday morning the members, numbering about 50 of Mr Allott's class assembled in the Parish Church at 10 o'clock, and afterwards proceeded in conveyances to Hart. The weather was all that could be desired, and the drive via Castle Eden, was very much enjoyed. Tea was provided at a farmhouse near the sea. After tea a most enjoyable time was spent in games etc. The return journey was commenced at 6 o'clock. The treat was greatly enjoyed by all. We may add that the Rev D Allott kindly defrayed the expenses of the above treat.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 29 February **The Pitman Painters**
Dr J McManners
- 28 March **The Victorian Funeral**
Mr G Martin
- 25 April **The Man Who Wrote Alice**
Mr M Bute

MEMORIES OF MR T W THOMPSON

Mr Thompson was a resident of Wheatley Hill who passionately believed in progress and science. He started to jot things down which were of interest to himself in January 1900. Reproduced here are his Wheatley Hill Jottings:

- 25 October 1902 Cage accident at Wheatley Hill Colliery No 1 Pit when winding men
24 men were injured in the descending cage
- 12 July 1906 Haswell Co-op Society conducted tour to London for two days. Stayed at the Manchester Hotel in Aldersgate Street
- March 1907 Cemetery opened in Wheatley Hill. Caretaker H Staddon
- October 1907 Curatage at Wheatley Hill occupied - Vicar C J Gray
- August 1908 Road straightened and improved at Throstles Nest on the Wingate Road
- 1908 Haswell Co-op Society excursion to London 4 days when the Franco-British Exhibition was opened
- 11 February 1908 Walter Willsons shop in Wheatley Hill opened in Church Street
- 5 December 1908 William Fenwick, Foreman Mason at Wheatley Hill Colliery died
- 8 December 1908 Thomas Hutchinson, Land Agent to the Wilkinsons Estate, Wheatley Hill died
- 8 December 1908 H Winter and J Chapman of Wheatley Hill were killed on the railway goods yard at Thornley Colliery
- 1 January 1909 Old Age Pensions 5s per week, age limit 70 years
- 12 February 1909 Dr Ryan and Dr Russell commenced their practice at Wheatley Hill
- 20 September 1909 Catholic School on the Thornley Road opened

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

The Raffle Raised £61.50

- | | | |
|------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1st Prize | Denise Waite | Wine |
| 2nd Prize | John Hedley | Book |
| 3rd Prize | Billy Middleton | Xmas Pud |
| 4th Prize | Sandra Cammiss | Biscuits |
| 5th Prize | Joan Scott | Wine |
| 6th Prize | Margaret Hedley | Mugs |
| 7th Prize | Speaker | Book |
| 8th Prize | Joan Gowland | Bath Set |
| 9th Prize | Denise Waite | China Mug |
| 10th Prize | Bill Burrell | Notelets |
| 11th Prize | Joan Brown | Wine Glasses |
| 12th Prize | Joan Brown | Notelets |
| 13th Prize | Owen Rowland | Biscuits |

Thanks to everyone who bought a ticket

PETER LEE

by Jack Lawson MP

With a Foreword by Rt Hon C R Attlee

The above publication was first released in 1949 and is in much demand, commanding prices of up to £100 on Internet book sites, however Margaret has 4 copies which are reproductions of the original book which were produced by the Methodist Publishing House in 1998.

These copies are £6 each and will be sold on a first-come-first-served basis.

If you would like a copy of this book, please contact the history club and let Margaret know as soon as possible. Obviously if you would like the book sending to you, then postage and packing costs will need to be added.

The following is the transcription of an interview carried out with Mr Roger Richardson of Peterlee in 1979 as part of the "People Past and Present" initiative:

"At the junior school my widowed grandmother was the caretaker. These were the days of the oil lamps, hanging from the ceiling on chains which were lowered down for lighting when the dark nights came in. The days of huge coal fires with big fire guards in each classroom, festooned or draped with wet clothes. Our boots weren't always the stoutest made you know, we always had wet feet and chilblains incidentally. No-one went to school barefoot but many went in adult-size boots with the toes stuffed with newspaper. I always wanted to go to school barefoot but my grandmother wouldn't allow it.

My grandmother never described days by their names - she would say Sunday and War Days - by which she meant all other days in the week. I don't know why she did this but it was a common interpretation at the time - I think it was significant that "war day" was used for the other six days, which they may have seen as a mini-war for them. I think that's how it came about.

The strikes of 1921 and 1926 gave me the two most gorgeous summers in my life!! The weather was gorgeous, much to the dismay of the coal owners. I remember being fed, handsomely fed, for 13 weeks, off trestle tables in the play yard at school.

My grandfather Richardson had died quickly of pneumonia after a chill he caught at the London Coronation of George V in June 1910. He passed away on 6 July. He had lost an eye whilst working as a coal hewer at nearby Thornley Colliery, but kept it until he died, aged 64. I don't think he got any compensation for that accident. They tried some new special ophthalmic surgery at the hospital which eventually destroyed the eye altogether with the new probes they had. In fact he was virtually a Guinea Pig, my grandfather. He would never have a photograph taken full face after that, every photo of my grandfather was in profile. He would not show anyone that damaged eye, the rest of the family would look forward on the photo.

After the junior school I went to the 'big lads' senior school up the farm. In Wheatley Hill this means up the Front Street that was based on the idea that Gregory's farm stood on an outcrop of rock, the very highest vantage point in Wheatley Hill at that time, it was the only focal point. At the big lads school I remember the retirement of the Headmaster, Mr Bowhill who received a leather wallet containing £3, Mrs Bowhill received a handbag. Then came the spruce and great Mr Arnold, so brisk and new with that fascinating waxed moustache of his. It was the first military moustache that I had seen, I believe Mr Arnold had carried rank during the War, he was certainly a very distinguished man, a very capable teacher and likeable and had a very marked interest in us boys and I think one of the people who helped to fashion my present way of thinking.

Mr grandfather Maughan served as a Wesleyan Methodist local preacher on the plan, which meant I must attend both Sunday School and evening service. I could choose either Wesleyan which was next door to our beloved Peter Lee, who was colliery checkweighman and patron of Patton Street Methodist Chapel. This is why I favoured the Sundays at Patton Street rather than Wesleyan. The Wesleyan is now an anorak factory which is a better fate rather than demolition. Mr Morton was Minister here and officiated at the funerals of both my grandfather and grandmother. At the age of 68 my grandfather had four ribs fractured by a fall of stone at Wheatley Hill pit. He never went down any more, but I remember him afterwards as billiard marker at the institute and the new wooden club for discharged Soldiers and Sailors. Later he was evicted from 25 Emily Street and had to live in with his namesake son at Shotton until 1923.

As to recreation, there was the emerging cinema, namely the Miners Hall where Mrs Westerman ran the pictures as we called them. When the occasion arose that there was no film, and remember this was during the First World War with all its scarcities, we had to settle for standing pictures or 'slides'. At the Palace, later the Royalty I remember the spic and span Mr Bocca who had enough contacts apparently to get films that the Miners Hall couldn't get, our favourites were William S Hart, Tom Mix, Thomas Meigham, Wallace Reid and others, Pearl White, Chrissie White (no relation to Pearl), Alma Taylor, Clara Kimball Young, Pauline Frederick and many others too numerous to mention. There was an old orchestra pit in the Palace and we had some very qualified musicians playing for various bands and they would follow the pattern of the story on the silent movies and provide incidental music. There was the inevitable piano player, one of the greatest I remember was Mr Steve Evans. A very poetical looking figure with hair right down to his shoulders.

To be continued

ADVERTISING

Wheatley Hill Community Association T: 01429 820214



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