



may you have many words on a cold evening, a full moon on a dark night and the road be downhill all the way to your door

# Wheatley Hill History Club

Volume 17 Issue 1

January 2014

## HISTORY CLUB AWARDED FUNDS TO UPDATE WEBSITE

The following article appeared in the Northern Echo with regard to our successful funding application from the Durham County Foundation:

### Local history group wins funding to keep history alive

#### High Haswell Wind Farm Community Fund

Residents of Wheatley Hill can now step back in time and see how their village has developed over the past century thanks to the hard work of local enthusiasts and support from their local wind farm.

Wheatley Hill History Club successfully applied for funding from the High Haswell Wind Farm Community Fund to update their website with history of the local area during World War I. This is a part of a larger project to mark the start of the war, to be launched next year.

Wheatley Hill History Club is the first group to benefit from High Haswell Community Fund, established with the development of the High Haswell Wind Farm.

The donation will support the development of an interactive map of the village, allowing website visitors to click on different areas of the map to see the streets, the houses, and the people during war time. The club, running since 1995, and has published seven local history books but hopes that the updated and interactive website will help them reach a younger audience.

Club Chair Margaret Hedley said: "We are thrilled to receive this funding from the High Haswell Community Fund to commemorate the beginning of the First World War and the impact it had on Wheatley Hill. We hope to engage more local people to learn more about the rich history of the village."

Operator REG Windpower donates £16,000 per year to support good causes in the local community. County Durham Community Foundation administers the fund, and a panel of local people decide which applications are most deserving of support.

Claudia Richard, REG Windpower's Community Relations Manager, said: "The Wheatley Hill History Club is a wonderful organisation and we are delighted that the wind farm could support their efforts to preserve local history. "We hope residents of Wheatley Hill and beyond make use of the website".



### CATHERINE GOODRUM

It is with sadness that we announce the death of History Club member Catherine.

Catherine has been a member for several years and attended many of our events

Unfortunately she passed away on 2 January and we pass on our condolences to her family.

**CALENDARS  
ON SALE £1.00**

### CHRISTMAS RAFFLE 2013

Thank you to everyone who bought a ticket or donated a prize for the Christmas Raffle - your contributions, as always, are greatly appreciated.

#### WINNERS

- 1st Billy Middleton
- 2nd Vera Dunn
- 3rd Billy Middleton
- 4th Arthur Dodds
- 5th Marion Wigham
- 6th Joan Gowland
- 7th Joan Gowland
- 8th Marion Wigham
- 9th Jean Dobson



Anybody know where this shop was? Let someone from the committee know and we'll announce the location in the next newsletter





### CONTACT DETAILS

**Chair:** 01429 820813

**Treasurer:** 01429 823198

**E:** history.club2@btinternet.com

**Web Site:** wheatley-hill.org.uk

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

26 Feb A Stroll Through France Neil Straughan  
& Spain

26 Mar Advanced Driving Jim Muter

30 Apr The Work of a Magistrate Chris Bell JP

### GRANNY BROWN

**I received the following from a lady in Gateshead. It's her memories of her grandmother, and it reminded me of the work we did a few years ago, remembering our granny's. Whilst Gateshead is not really our area, I thought her contribution was worthy of publication in our newsletter:**

My grandma was born on 3 July 1867 - she was christened Elizabeth Jane Woof. Her father's name was John Woof and her mother was Elizabeth Richardson. Grandma had four brothers and two sisters.

Grandma married my grandfather, William Brown on 4 June 1895. They had six children - Alice (my mother), Thomas, William, Joseph, Hannah and Peter. Both Thomas and William were involved in the First World War - Thomas was killed in action in 1916 - he was 21. William died shortly after from a disease which he had contracted in the trenches. Joseph died aged 5, Hannah died aged 1. That left my mother and Peter.

Grandma lived in 35 Charles Street which was an upstairs flat leading from Gateshead High Street. Their back yard wall was adjacent to a piece of land called the quarry. Showmen used to use the quarry at various times for their roundabouts, swings and sideshows accompanied by loud music. They lived in their caravans on the site. Grandma, who owned a sewing machine, made curtains for the showmen's caravans, dresses for their small girls and blouses for the older girls and their mothers.

Sometimes a woman would ask my grandma on the Saturday before Easter Sunday if she would make an Easter Sunday dress for her daughter and grandma would oblige, even if it meant she sat sewing all night. The people in the street also called upon my grandma to help midwives deliver babies and to help with laying out, and also for a shoulder to cry on.

Whenever I called she was very rarely at home. I would ask a neighbour, "do you know where me granny is?" They in turn would come out into the street and shout, "anybody know where Lizzie Jane is?" Then my granny would appear from somebody's house where she had been giving a helping hand.

For entertainment granny had a gramophone. I can only remember having heard only two records, namely Miss Otis Regrets and When Father Papered the Parlour.

Granny also made Granny Toffee (I used to think it was called after her). She would put some pieces into a blue sugar bag for me to take home.

She very rarely went farther than Gateshead High Street to do her shopping, though saying that the High Street had every shop you could wish for. Grandma died on 18 February 1954 aged 86.

### INFORMATION ABOUT CHARLES STREET, GATESHEAD

Charles Street was akin to a cottage industry. Up and down the street women would be sitting on their doorsteps. One would be selling winkles, another sticks and another selling toffee cakes (in paper cases) for a hapenny each. If you were lucky you would be a hapenny under the toffee (no Food Hygiene Laws in those days!) One woman made clippy mats and the idea was that whoever wanted to buy a mat would pay a shilling or two a week, their names would go into a hat and the first one to be drawn out would get the first mat made and so on. The draw was quite an occasion - all the women would gather in the mat makers house to oversee the draw, have a cup of tea and a natter. Yet another woman in the street made pies, peas and boiled potatoes. You went to get them with your basin and they were delicious!!





## 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 that were of interest to himself, in 1900. Reproduced here are his Wheatley Hill jottings:**

- April 1944 The Ritz picture house at Thornley burned down
- 17 Sept 1944 The 'black out' restriction was cut and the streets lights were put on
- 1944 The worse Autumn for 36 years for rain and bad weather. Rain falling for three months, harvest late and a large quantity spoiled with rain etc. Potatoes could not be got out of the fields and large quantities spoiled and farm work a lot behind time
- 14 Nov 1944 Thornley Welfare Hall, the largest and best public building in the district burned down - estimated Damage £20,000
- Jan 1945 One of the worst winter months for many years with storms of snow, wind, thunder and lightning. The snow caused the pits to be idle two days. Bad weather all the month
- 15 Oct 1945 Horden Colliery, the largest in the County of Durham exceeded the coal drawing - 22,885 tons of coal drawn in one week
- 10 Apr 1946 Blackhall Colliery exceeded the coal target drawing 12,000 tons
- 20 July 1946 Revival of the Durham Miners Gala. The Gala had not been held for six years owing to the war. The Prime Minister, Mr H Dalton, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other speakers attended
- 1946 A late and cold spring and a very wet summer causing a lot of damage to corn and the harvest
- 1 Jan 1947 Nationalisation of coal mines in England, Scotland and Wales. The State now owned all working coal mines
- 15 Apr 1947 Owing to the stormy winter with plenty of snow and rain, no farm work or gardening done until now
- June 1947 Mr J A Simpson, manager at Wheatley Hill Colliery removed to Crook
- 5 July 1948 The National Insurance for free medical, unemployment, sickness, old age pensions etc commenced
- 5 Oct 1948 Mr Culine, Show & Amusements visited Wheatley Hill show ground adjoining the recreation ground and stayed for four weeks
- 30 Nov 1948 Mr T Kenny, aged 66 of Wheatley Hill. The first person to win a VC for the DLI during the 1914-1918 War. Mr Kenny won the award on 4 November 1915 when he made a vain attempt to save his commanding officer's life while under rifle fire from the enemy
- 28 Nov 1948 Mr T Waters, steeplejack, killed at Shotton Colliery whilst repairing the colliery chimney, the second steeplejack to be killed at Shotton since the pit commenced in the year 1900
- Jan 1949 Haswell Colliery is being demolished and the winding engine houses, beam pump engine house pulled down. Records for the colliery show that it was sunk in 1838 just before the big strike of 1844. There was also a big explosion at Haswell in 1844 with a loss of 95 lives. Haswell was the first colliery to use pit cages in the shaft for lowering men and coal drawing
- 27 Apr 1949 Timber fire caused £1,000,000 damage to 30 acres of pit timber at Seaton Carew, Hartlepool. The fire lasted two days. 45 fire engines, 200 firemen, 400 soldiers, 200 policemen involved in trying to contain the blaze. 20 miles of hose piping was used before the fire was under control. No lives lost.
- 18 Aug 1949 The new coal motor, Rolly End Tipping, carrying 4 loads of wokmen's coal commenced
- 18 Aug 1949 Death of Rev P T Casey, Vicar of Wheatley Hill for 40 years
- Xmas 1949 Rev A Preston, new Vicar of Wheatley Hill commenced his duties
- 4 May 2950 Death of Lord Bradbury, the man whose signature gave the name of 'Bradbury' to the Treasury Notes issued in 1914 when gold coins were withdrawn. Lord Bradbury was 77
- 19 July 1950 An electric clock in Front Street, Wheatley Hill and two small brass tablets containing the names of the men who lost their lives in the 1939-45 war, was erected. A service conducted by Rev A Preston, Vicar of Wheatley Hill and Mr Thursley, resident Methodist Minister. The clock was unveiled by Miss A Hutchinson
- 29 May 1951 One of the worst accidents of modern times occurred at Easington Colliery when 81 miners lives were lost and two rescue workers. This was followed a few days later by another explosion at Appleton Colliery with a further 10 lives lost
- 1952 Trams which commenced in the large towns such as Newcastle, London etc in 1900 have been discontinued and replaced by buses for the service of the public. All tramlines have been pulled up and scrapped. With motor buses being used in most public places, all passenger trains ceased to run and most passenger stations closed - only main lines remained open.

**This is the end of Mr Thompson's memories - they have given excellent historic information**





## ADVERTISING

Wheatley Hill Community Association T: 01429 820214

**Greenhills Centre**  
 For the Community

**OPENING HOURS**  
 Mon-Thurs 8.30am-8.45pm  
 Fri 8.30am-7.45pm  
 Sat 9.30am-11.30am  
 Sun (Church only) 9am-12

**Meals on Wheels Service**

**OUTSIDE CATERING**

**NEARLY NEW SHOP**

**CAFE**  
 Get Kidz Active  
 Story Time  
 See our facebook for details

**FULLY LICENCED**

**Gym**

**Social and recreational facilities & activities for ALL ages**

Like us on Facebook

# PastUncovered

## All types of family history research

Are you curious about your family tree?  
 Pre-1837 records difficult to find?  
 Have you come to a dead-end?  
 Do you have missing ancestors?  
 Would you like your research organising?

**Margaret Hedley MA, B.Ed(hons)**

**Experienced & Reliable Researcher**  
 Talks & Workshops on Local and Family History

*No Obligation Quotes & Discussions*

W: pastuncovered.co.uk  
 E: margaret@pastuncovered.co.uk  
 M: 07977546332

Like us on Facebook



## CHIMNEY SWEEP

**0191 5865809**  
**07963749732**

Traditional Sweep  
 Domestic and Commercial  
 Blockages Cleared  
 Smoke Tests  
 Annual Contracts  
 All Areas Covered

**HETAS**

W: [www.waitesweep.com](http://www.waitesweep.com)  
 E: [sales@waitesweep.com](mailto:sales@waitesweep.com)

## C I MOTOR SERVICES

**STEPHEN GIBBINS**  
 AUTO ENGINEER

**Pick up & delivery service available on request**

**Unit 2, Industrial Estate**  
**WHEATLEY HILL**  
**County Durham**  
**DH6 3QZ**

**07989358179**



**Are you sick of driving into town to your office?  
 Or perhaps you are trying to work with kids round your feet? Wouldn't it be wonderful to have an office just 6 minutes away from where you live with a prestige address that will help your business grow?**

## The Old Brewery Business Centre at Castle Eden

Call Francesca now on **01429 839250** [www.oldbrewery.biz](http://www.oldbrewery.biz)

You may have noticed that we've attracted another advertisement to this page. It costs £25 per year (4 newsletters) to advertise on here, and that income is crucial to the history club. If you know of anyone else who would like to place an advertisement please pass on our contact details.