

Wheatley Hill History Club

Volume 19 Issue 1

January 2015

HAPPY 20th BIRTHDAY

It is 20 years ago since the History Club started in Wheatley Hill and I have outlined below our major achievements during that time. Wheatley Hill History Club is a very successful organisation and very highly thought of in the local history arena of County Durham.

1995

- Publication of our first Wheatley Hill Census courtesy of Margaret Hedley
- First History Club Calendar produced

1996

- Acquired a copy of a cine film showing the Wheatley Hill winding engine working in 1968

1997

- Publication of a book of photographs supported by Durham County Council

1998

- A number of history club members were interviewed by Radio Cleveland for their Cleveland Voices project planned to be launched for the Millennium

1999

- £500 received from Age Concern

2000

- Celebration of Colliery Village Weddings in All Saints Parish Church—recorded for posterity on video
- Purchase of an attractive village display stand
- First History Club newsletter

2001

- First Local History Day to support the Mothers Club play park scheme. The day was so successful it has become a regular date in our calendar
- Publication of Thornley census courtesy of John Eyre

2002

- Publication of Ludworth census courtesy of Joan Mills in Canada
- Launch of our first Coal Company book

2003

- History Club wreath laid for the first time at the Remembrance service by Owen Rowland

2004

- Launch of two CD roms containing our photograph collection
- Launch of the 2nd book in the Coal Company series

2005

- Launch of 3rd book in the Coal Company series

2006

- Launch of our World War 1 book looking at the contributions of local people
- Our website was mentioned on the BBC website advising similar groups to use the Wheatley Hill site as an example of good practice

2007

- Launch of "Around Wheatley Hill" photo book

2008

- Launch of our World War 2 book

2009

- Very successful and well supported project on "Our Grandma's"
- Launch of the 4th Coal Company book

2010

- Launch of the 5th Coal Company book

2011

- History Club became involved in the Limestone Landscape project initiated by Durham County Council

2012

- Presentation to all members of a mug commemorating the diamond jubilee of Elizabeth II
- History Club planted a tree in the Jubilee Woods project

CONTACT DETAILS

CHAIR: 01429 820813
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E: history.club2@btinternet.com
W: wheatley-hill.org.uk



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THERE WILL BE NO MEETINGS
January, February 2015

NEXT MEETING

March 2015:
20th Anniversary Celebration featuring
“What Fettle” - music & tales from the North East
Pie and Peas

Places need to be booked in advance

2013

- Two members of the History Club committee were invited by Phil Wilson MP to the anniversary dinner celebrating 30 years of Sedgfield Constituency
- History Club joined social media—Facebook
- Commissioned 12 banners charting the history of the village from Roman times to present day

2014

- Funding acquired to upload all WW1 records to our website

Alongside this impressive list of achievements which are measurable by their outcome, the history club committee have given up their time over the last 20 years to attend local history exhibitions around the region therefore raising the profile of our village and our commitment to local history and heritage.

It is sad that numbers continue to fall at our monthly meetings whilst at the same time our online Facebook profile is very high, although this does not transfer into attendance at meetings. It is expensive to hold a monthly meeting—speaker fees range from £30-£50 and this is rarely covered by the admission fee and on top of that, whilst we have never been asked for it, we pay a venue hire fee to Wheatley House which is covered by the advertisements in our newsletter. It may be that in the future our meetings stop altogether but we continue our work through online promotions with our website and social media and continue dedicate ourselves to research and attending local history fairs around the region to spread the word.

We are very grateful to the people who have taken the time to continue to attend our meetings and those who have given their time to be members of our committee over the years—George and Betty Bean, Joan Brown, Jenny Taylor, Mary Walker, Connie Gregory, Owen Rowland, Fred Bromilow and our present committee members - Arthur Dodds, Sheila Brown, George Cook, Florence Richardson and Billy Middleton. Only two committee members still exist from that first meeting back in 1995 — Joan Scott and Margaret Hedley—dedicated to local history or completely unengaged? — I'll leave that up to you to decide!!

WHEATLEY HILL CHURCH, MARCH 1915

The sacred rite of consecration was performed at All Saints Church, Wheatley Hill on Saturday afternoon by Dr Quirk, the Bishop of Jarrow. The Bishop delivered a striking sermon.

Until recently Wheatley Hill was in the ecclesiastical parish of Thornley but has now been established as a separate parish. The Rev Philip T Casey who was curate-in-charge, has been appointed vicar.

20 YEARS

The History Club will be celebrating its 20th birthday in January, but as we will not be meeting then, our celebration will be held at the March 2015 meeting at 6.00pm—9.00pm.

We intend to hold a pie and pea supper and have booked a man and wife duo who perform stories and songs of the area—they call themselves “What Fettle”.

If you would like to come to the event, please let us know beforehand (numbers are needed for catering) by phoning one of the committee.



Annual subscriptions will be due at this meeting or before

£6

Following the article in the October newsletter concerning a lost watch, member Bill Luke has provided us with another ‘lost’ watch story from his family:

GRANDFATHER’S WATCH

William Luke, grandfather to our member William Luke, was a deputy at Wheatley Hill pit and was given a solid silver watch with gold lettering as a twenty-first birthday present.

He too lost his watch in the pit for over a year until he dreamt where it was and got it back!!

The watch was passed on to his son, John Luke when William died and John in turn loaned to his brother William (of Luke Terrace fame). Uncle Bill forgot to take the watch out of his pit trouser pocket and his wife, Aunt Bella, not knowing this, did as she always did to remove the excess dust, dadded the trousers viciously against the wall with the watch in the pocket. The watch was returned to John Luke and it cost him three weeks wages to have it repaired!

Bill, who sent this article, still has the watch and reports that it still going strong!!

INTERESTING HEADSTONE

During the summer, of 2014 a headstone in the Thornley churchyard was brought to my attention by Fred Bromilow. The words on the headstone read:

**Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Holloway, Comedian,
Died 28 May 1902 aged 36 years**

The name 'Holloway', especially with the description 'Comedian' made us both think that maybe Thomas was related to the famous comedian, Stanley Holloway.

I quickly discovered that Holloway is a very common name in the Midlands and South of England and that Thomas was born in 1864 in the Coventry area, four years after George Augustus Holloway, the father of Stanley who was born in London. Further research indicated that Stanley Holloway's family were mainly from the London area but not involved in entertainment or the theatre until he became an entertainer. On the other hand, Thomas' great grandfather, Joseph Holloway, born in London in 1797 described himself as a 'comedian' on the 1841 census and every subsequent census until his death in 1881. This show-business link carried through Thomas' family, his grandfather, also Joseph was the proprietor of a 'Travelling Theatre' which was obviously passed on to Thomas through his father. On the 1901 census Thomas was described as "Proprietor of Portable Theatre" and Elizabeth as an actress—they were based at West Herrington, Sunderland at this time.

Thomas married Elizabeth in Battersea in 1885 and interestingly on their marriage document Thomas was described as a comedian as were his father and Elizabeth's father, Samuel Hudson, so there is no doubt that this family were firmly rooted in the world of entertainment.

An article in The Era, a weekly theatrical newspaper on 2 March 1879 may throw some light on why Thomas and Elizabeth were in the North East at the time of Elizabeth's death in 1902.

WANTED!

An entire company
to open 8 March 1879
for tour throughout the UK.

Write to:

Mr T N Leslie, Acting Manager,
Hartlepool Street, Thornley

(Proprietors Messrs Lynn & Bagnell, Arthur Keand, W Harling)

It appears that one of the theatres in Thornley was advertising for such acts that the Holloway family could provide and it may be that they responded to the above advertisement and continued to visit Thornley on a regular basis over the years. In all census returns, the family are always living in a caravan so that their show was portable to be taken around the country. Each of Thomas and Elizabeth's three children were born in Kettering, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire over a 4-year period, giving an indication of the amount of travelling that they did. Elizabeth states that her place of birth is Dewsbury, Yorkshire, but given that she too came from a theatrical family, there is no evidence to suppose that she had real roots there. It is sad though that her descendants probably don't know that she is buried in a church yard in Thornley, County Durham and that she has a headstone.

So whilst there is no family connection to the family of Stanley Holloway, the headstone has highlighted some interesting facts about the entertainment industry, Thornley and the Holloway family. Sadly, Thomas died only two years after Elizabeth in 1904, in Newark, Nottingham.

HELP NEEDED

The Heritage Society will be holding a fund-raising coffee morning

On Saturday 28 February 10.00—1.00 at Wheatley House

and are looking for contributions for the tombola and cake stalls



**If you think you could make a donation
please drop it off at The Heritage Centre
or let one of us know**



Wheatley Hill Community Association T: 01429 820214



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

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YESTERDAY BELONGS TO YOU 2015

will be held at

NEW COLLEGE, DURHAM

on Saturday 9 May 2015 10.00am - 4.00pm

Displays by local history groups (inc Wheatley Hill)
Outside Attractions

**Major local &
family history
event in
County Durham**