

Wheatley Hill History Club

Volume 16 Issue 4

October 2013

LOCAL HISTORY DAY 2013

Coal Under the Limestone was the focus of the above event this year and the very attractive banners that we invested in were well admired by visitors. We previously held a media launch to which all history club members were invited along with representatives from village organisations. The result of this was that we received excellent press interest which culminated in Chris Lloyd's article in the Memories supplement of The Northern Echo on Saturday 21 September and of course the result of that was the turn-out on Saturday 28th.

As usual visitors came from far and wide to this unique East Durham event which is firmly on the County Durham local history calendar. We were once again supported by Northumberland & Durham Family History Society and the Cleveland Family History Society. Both Rock Farm and Thornley Hall had interesting exhibitions of their history and Billy Middleton borrowed a model winding engine which created a lot of interest. Tracey Fox from the Constitutional Club committee put on a display of that Club which is celebrating its centenary this year and our dvd of the Dunlop and Meredith Vertical Winding Engine at Wheatley Hill pit, still working in 1968, caused much comment.

The classic cars organised by Bob Waite outside the Club, once again created lots of interest, particularly as it was such a beautiful, sunny day. Our resident photographer, Pauline Carr was kept busy inside and out with both moving and still images this year!

Our local MP, Phil Wilson also paid a visit to the event and was impressed with the displays. He took to Twitter on the same afternoon singing our praises and asked to be kept informed of future events.

It takes hours of organising and stress to stage an event of this size and of course when one event is successful, the next one has to be the same or better which increases the stress levels for next year!



MONTHLY MEETINGS

As I pointed out in the last newsletter, because our monthly meetings are suffering from falling numbers, we are trying to change the amount of times we meet each year and to this end in 2014 meetings will be held from January to October (**including August**).

After October 2014 there will be no further public meetings until March 2015 and further information will appear during 2014.

Everything else will remain the same including the membership fee and the door fee. We will continue to produce this newsletter of course.

**2014
MEMBERSHIP
DUE
JANUARY 2014
£6.00**

REMARKABLE MEETINGS by W LUKE

Just after the War in 1946 and whilst still in the Army, I attended a church service in Karachi and the preacher was Flt Lieut Jack Rutter. After the service I told him not to be shocked at what I was about to say, which was: "Your mother in law is Mrs Piercy, you have a ten-year-old daughter and they live in Henderson Avenue, Wheatley Hill". The result was remarkable! We met frequently after that at the Allies Cafe in Karachi, in a cubicle behind a curtain. Officers and Corporals did not mix at that time!



CONTACT DETAILS

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

31 July	The Story of the Graf Spee
25 Sept	North East Witchcraft
28 Sept	LOCAL HISTORY DAY
30 Oct	The Gunpowder Plot
27 Nov	Orange, Green and in Between - the story of the Irish in North East England

SCHOOL REUNION - CLASS OF '64 - WHEATLEY HILL GIRLS MODERN

On Friday 18 October the girls who left the above school in 1964 got together for a reunion in Wheatley Hill Community Centre.

It came about as a result of Joan Scott (nee Cowell) being asked by several of the 'old' girls about meeting up again, and in May this year, Joan started to write down the names of the girls leaving in 1964 and she remembered 53, then with the help of Ann Clarkson and Carol Walton, tried to contact them, with a lot of success.

Joan, Ann and Carol managed to contact 80% of the 1964 leavers and three teachers who wanted to be involved. Girls from as far away as Hampshire (Eva Burrell) and West Sussex (Brenda Harper) were keen to be present at the event. Sadly, six of the 1964 year group had died and some couldn't be contacted but 30 were present on the night.

There was a buffet, bar, 60's music and a cake with a picture of the school on it. Pauline Carr from the Heritage Centre kindly agreed to take photos and a video of the evening. Joan says, "A good night was had by all and it was nice meeting everyone again".

The girls in 1961...



Barbara Murray
Jean Bradshaw
Ellen Thomson
Lesley Gargett
Anthea Bosomworth
Carol Walton
Ann Clarkson
Doreen Blacket
Linda Peters
Judith Hoy
Elaine Smith
Elaine Day
Dorothy Collinwood
Carol Carr
Shirley Craggs
Pauline Hummerston
Margaret Ryan
Eva Burrell
Hazel Laverick
Elizabeth Appleby
Valerie Wilson
Lesley Parsley
Margaret Henderson
Joyce Wood
Joan Cowell



.... and at their reunion in 2013

STORIES BEHIND THE HEADSTONES



This free booklet is available from The Heritage Centre. It contains information about some of the headstones in the cemetery in order to illustrate how much social history exists within any site of mourning.

The booklet was launched on Heritage Open Days and has proved popular with locals and visitors to the area, who all remark on how well kept the cemetery grounds are.

If you would like a copy, call in at The Heritage Centre and collect one.

Wheatley Hill History & Heritage 2014 CALENDAR

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR 1914-1918



The Contribution from the Communities of
Thornley, Ludworth & Wheatley Hill to WW1

ON SALE £3

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:

- 9 July 1935 Thornley Colliery celebrated their Centenary of coal drawing, when the first coal drawn from Thornley Colliery was shipped at Hartlepool Docks, which was newly opened on 9 July 1835. The Colliery Company in former years had bad times and the company went bankrupt and failed and could not pay the miners wages due to them and there was Putt Pay - no wages in the year 1884 and after the colliery was idle for about a year, it was opened by the Weardale Steel Coal & Coke Company
- 14 July 1935 The public urinal for gentlemen only, situated on the site near the Rock Buildings, Wheatley Hill was rebuilt and opened for general use
- Summer 1935 Was the hottest on record according to the Royal Observatory, Greenwich The summer was late in coming after a late and cold spring, snow and cold weather till the end of June but when the heat came it lasted till the end of August with no rain for six weeks. Haytime and harvest were finished by the end of August
- 19 Oct 1935 Great storm of wind and hurricane at the rate of 90 miles per hour and lasting two days, doing great damage all over the north of the country
- 1935 The public telephone box transferred from the General Post Office at Wheatley Hill to a site in the main street for the public to use at any time
- January 1836 Great change at Wheatley Hill Colliery Power Station. The colliery company scrapped the turbine electric engines and commenced to buy all the electric current for machinery and everything on the colliery site. All engines had to have new motors for the new current and the new steam turbine compressed air engine commenced and the colliery buzzer to be blown by compressed air
- 1 Jan 1936 Street lamps improved at the colliery places and coloured lamps of 1000 candle power at the busiest crossings in County Durham. The big lamps were lit in Wheatley Hill on 1st January
- 10 Jan 1936 The worst storm of wind and rain on record in the north east at up to 100mph. Much damage done to houses at Wheatley Hill colliery with roofs being blown off and many people injured
- 12 Jan 1936 New electric driven engine, and cotton ropes to the fan shaft at Wheatley Hill Colliery
- 10 April 1936 The worst Easter Holidays on record for snow, frost and cold north winds after a long and severe winter. Holiday resorts deserted with a great loss to their trade
- August 1936 Wheatley Hill Colliery slum clearance commenced when Patton Street, Webb Street etc were closed and the tenants moved to the council houses
- Summer 1936 The illuminations and floodlights, the first of any importance in the North East of England, were visited by many people at Roker
- 1 May 1937 Durham County surface workers commenced a 48 hour week, exclusive of meal times at a basic wage of 4/3d per day
- 5 March 1938 The new workmens club opened on the council estate after transferring from the Crows House estate in Wheatley Hill
- 21 April 1938 No 2 Winding Engine replaced with a new drum, new steam brake and overwinding apparatus. The pit was idle 5 days over the Easter weekend so that the work could be completed. Coal work resumed on this day
- 1938 Durham County Miners and all surface workers, mechanics, enginemen etc commenced a summer holiday of 6 days with pay - 3 days in the summer of 1938 and 6 days holiday each year afterwards commencing in 1939
- 19 Sept 1938 New picture hall "The Regal" situated on the Wilkinsons Estate near the workmans club opened today
- 17 Oct 1938 New school for senior girls situated on the Wilkinsons Estate at Wheatley Hill opened today
- 1 Dec 1938 The Palace Theatre in the Front Street, Wheatley Hill, remodelled, improved and named "The Royalty" opened
- 30 Mar 1939 The new picture house at Thornley Colliery "The Ritz" opened today
- 16 Sept 1939 Wheatley Hill pit head baths opened
- Aug 1940 Old Age Pensions increased to £1.15s per week
- May 1941 Wheatley Hill aerial flight changed to the new standards for the tipping of stone etc
- The Five-Quarter seam at Wheatley Hill re-opened and commenced work
- 1942 The cage guides repaired at No 1 pit and keps and cage guides repaired and new kep bunting at the No 2 Pit Hutton Seam

ADVERTISING

Wheatley Hill Community Association T: 01429 820214

Wheatley Hill Community
**Greenhills
Centre**
For the Community

CAFE

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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MEETINGS IN THORNLEY

(subsidised by Thornley Parish Council)

Our next meeting will be held in Thornley on Monday
2 December 2013 at Youll House.

The speaker will be Geoff Wallis who will talk about Ludworth Tower.

The meeting will start at 7.00pm and everyone is welcome to attend.

As usual, Sheila will ask the Northern Echo to publish details of the meeting in the paper a few days beforehand.

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Remembrance 2013



The Heritage Centre will be open

10.30 - 12.30

Sunday 10 November

Refreshments will be available

OPEN
Tuesdays &
Thursdays
10 - 12 & 2 - 4
Saturdays
2-4

WHEATLEY HILL HERITAGE CENTRE

NEW EXHIBITION - EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN WHEATLEY HILL BEFORE 1968

2nd Wedding DVD on Sale £5

Refreshments
Publication Sales
Photo copying