

# Wheatley Hill History Club

Volume 19 Issue 4

October 2015

## Local History Day—Saturday 26 September

As usual our now annual event was very successful. In the local history community we rate as one of the leading clubs operating within Durham County and as such attracted the usual out-of-area audience who were all very complimentary about the work involved in hosting such an ambitious event year after year.

The Northern Echo's Chris Lloyd did us proud with a two-page article outlining our theme for the day—"After the Second World War" the week before the event and local radio, social media, leaflets and word of mouth accounted for the range of people who visited from near and far.

We had agreed at this event to donate all door takings to The Last Shift campaign and were able to hand over to the organisers a massive £340.30.

Displays by Beamish Museum, the DLI Museum and ourselves caused a lot of interest during the morning and we made good use of the new projector, showing 1950's images on the wall. George Hetherington entertained with his excellent piano music throughout the event playing tunes from the 1940's and 50's.

Visitors were served afternoon tea in the morning on retro crockery provided by Jemma from Little Cup of Love and my granny would have been delighted that her bone-handled knives got an airing. They were still in their original Co-operative Society box, having been purchased in at least the 1940's!

Publication sales, especially calendars and books of poems, were brisk. We only ordered 100 calendars this year and sold well over half on the day.

The new venue of Wheatley House was much more convenient for our needs.



Thanks to Fred Bromilow, honorary member of the History Club, his mother's poems were offered for sale for £2 at our local history day. The selection provides us with an insight into Mrs Bromilow's life in Thornley and her observations of all around her.

### **A Selection of Poems influenced by life in a mining village - Thornley, County Durham**

by

**Gladys Bromilow**



### **SPONSORED BOXING DAY DIP**

History Club member Bob Waite has offered to walk into the North Sea on Boxing Day 2015 and immerse himself in the icy water in order to raise money for the projection equipment the History Club have had installed in Wheatley House.

In order to support Bob we are asking our members if they can raise £10 sponsorship each—£1 from ten friends or £2 from five friends etc. A sponsorship form is attached to this newsletter. The money will be collected at the first meeting of 2016—March.

The dip takes place at about 11.00am on Boxing Day on the small beach near the Lookout Café at Seaham if anyone would like to come along to cheer Bob along and make sure that he actually gets into the sea!!

Your support would be appreciated.

### **ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS**

are held at £6 again for 2016

and will be due

March 2016

## CONTACT DETAILS

**CHAIR:** 01429 820813  
**TREASURER:** 01429 823198

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W: [wheatley-hill.org.uk](http://wheatley-hill.org.uk)



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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### No Meetings until March 2016

- 30 March** History of TV Game Shows
- 27 April** Growing up in a Pit Village in the 1930's (a talk by an ex-resident)
- 25 May** Postcards of World War 1

## BURIALS CARRIED OUT BY TONKS OF WINGATE LATE 1800'S

**30 May 1885**—Mrs Johnson of Wingate  
Best Silk Coffin—**£3.0s.0d**

**2 Feb 1890**—Frances Wright of Wingate  
Polished Coffin, Hearse, 2 Coaches and preparation of the ground—**£8.4s.6d**

**21 June 1891**—M Stephenson of Wingate  
Pitchpine coffin and shroud—**£2.10s.0d**

**22 June 1891**—A Liddle of Wingate  
Pitchpine Coffin, 2 coaches, brake, wagonette and shroud to Hallgarth, Pittington—**£10.4s.6d**

**10 July 1891**—W T Goldsworth (3 weeks old)  
Yellow coffin with four handles—**£0.6s.0d**

**20 July 1891**—W Rending (9 weeks old)  
Yellow coffin with four handles—**£0.7s.0d**

**11 Sept 1891**—J Fisher—1 year old  
Coffin covered in black velvet —**£1.6s.0d**

**19 Dec 1892**—Mrs Longstaff (76 years)  
Black Coffin, brake and hearse **£5.5s.0d**

**8 June 1893**—Mrs Metcalf—for two children  
2 best black coffins **£5.15s.0d**

**8 July 1894**—Marley from Thornley to Castle Eden.  
Coffin, Wreath, Preparation of Ground, Hearse, Brake,  
2 Wagonettes **£11.19s.0d**

**1899**—Mrs Faith's Mother  
Hearse and Coffin to Coundon **£4.10s.0d**

**December 1899**—Mrs Turner  
A nice coffin—**£3.0s.0d**

## CALLING FAMILY HISTORIANS

About ten years ago two members of the Wheatley Hill History Club obtained permission from the Parish Council to transcribe the grave index held by the cemetery superintendent. The index holds a record of every person that has been buried in the cemetery since 1907 when it opened until the present day. The information is held in big ledgers. The transcription was saved electronically and sorted alphabetically so if anyone was looking for a relative who may be buried in Wheatley Hill cemetery it was easy to look at the details.

This differs from many other cemeteries who have an alphabetic index, as most only record those with headstones, whereas in Wheatley Hill we have recorded everyone in the cemetery whether or not they have a headstone.

Two years ago, Keith Gilson of the Heritage Centre, decided as a result of the high number of queries being received by the Centre about burials, that it would make things a lot easier if staff could tell quickly if the grave had a headstone or not without having to trek through the cemetery to find out. Consequently Keith and his grandson (as part of his work experience from his University course) set about photographing every headstone and marker in Wheatley Hill cemetery and altering our existing transcribed record to include whether a headstone was present or not.

This is a massive resource for family historians with ancestors buried in Wheatley Hill as alongside the computerised listings there is now a photographic image of headstones which can easily be sent to enquirers from around the world for a very small fee.

We are proud of our cemetery in Wheatley Hill—it is beautifully kept by John Davies and contains a wealth of social and family history. If you are interested in searching the index for the final resting place of family members, visit the Heritage Centre and ask to see the index. Email enquiries to:

[wheatleyhill.heritagecentre@btinternet.com](mailto:wheatleyhill.heritagecentre@btinternet.com)

A free booklet is also available "*The Stories Behind the Headstones*" which gives information about some of the graves.

## THE LAST SHIFT—UPDATE

Since the last update in the April newsletter, the fund has really taken off and is well on the way to raising the £10,000 target set by the Mothers Club representing local fundraising. They have a continuing programme of fundraising and are making weekly contributions to the fund.

The Co-operative Funeral Care held a car wash and coffee morning and raised £305, Ena Robson held a coffee morning in her house and raised £581, Simon Lowther carried out the Coast to Coast bike ride and raised almost £200, the Conshies Club and Heritage Centre have both made substantial contributions alongside £585 raised by online funding. There has also been a large number of private contributions from people to whom Wheatley Hill pit held special memories. All contributors names are being placed on a list and will be buried in a time capsule under the statue.



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*The following is a transcript of one of three letters written by Lewis Proudlock of Wolmerhausen Street, to his sister Mary Jane living in West Virginia. Mary Ann and her husband Walter Buckley emigrated to West Virginia in 1863. I will include the other two letters in future newsletters. The letters and photograph have been supplied by Lewis' great-granddaughter, Valerie.*

Wheatley Hill  
6 May 1891

Dear Brother and Sister

I now take the pleasure of writing to you a few lines to let you know that we are all well and hoping to find that you are all well. We have had an increase since we wrote last . We have got another daughter and we are going to call her Jane and your brother John's wife has got a son. You will see by the heading of the letter that we have moved since I wrote to you last time. It is a place that we lived at 9 years ago and we have made a better move for moneys part so far as we have two boys working.

We have got fine weather here now but we have had some cold. I have got no garden now so I have got nothing to do now but look after my pigs. I have one to pig in one or two days time.

We have enclosed your mothers likeness and you can send us word if it is damaged or not as I have insured it as I insured the last I sent you.

So no more this time and kind love to you all from your affectionate brother and sister Martha.

Lewis M Proudlock and A Smith

Lewis Proudlock  
Wolmerhausen Street  
Wheatley Hill  
Trimdon Grange

At the time of the 1891 Census Lewis Proudlock and his family were the only family of Proudlock's living in Wheatley Hill—in Wolmerhausen Street, as the above letter states.

The census lists the family as follows:

PROUDLOCK	Lewis	42 (born 1849)	Coundon	Miner
	Ann	39 (born 1852)	Belmont	
	Mary	19 (born 1872)	Trimdon	
	Robert	15 (born 1876)	Dene Bridge	Miner
	Nicholas	13 (born 1878)	Trimdon	Miner
	Lewis	10 (born 1881)	Wheatley Hill	
	Isabella	9 (born 1882)	Wheatley Hill	
	Thomas	6 (born 1885)	Wheatley Hill	
	John	4 (born 1887)	Station Town	
	Ralph	2 (born 1889)	Station Town	
SMITH	Nicholas	71 (born 1820)	Low Fell	
	Widower	Father-in-Law		



**Lewis Proudlock  
1916**

We also know from the above letter that they had another daughter after the census in 1891 and they called her Jane.

The Proudlock's neighbour's in 1891 were William Marley, a joiner at the pit and his family and John Heppinstall a coal miner at the pit and his family.

Wheatley Hill Community Association T: 01429 820214

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

OPENING HOURS  
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Fri 8.30am-7.45pm  
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Wheatley Hill  
History & Heritage

2016 Calendar



Includes images of Thornley