

OSWALD HOUSE Durham City

The Wilkinson family took ownership of the Wingate Estate in 1699. This is the land on which the villages of Wheatley Hill and Wingate stood. They didn't live in the area, preferring Durham City as their home. In 1866 George Wilkinson Esq was accidentally killed, with his own gun, in a shooting accident in the Wingate Lane woods.

The living conditions of Mr Wilkinson were far removed from those of people in the villages on his East Durham estate. He lived at Oswald House, on South Road, Durham City which should not be confused with Mount Oswald, another mansion owned by the Wilkinson family on the same road as Oswald House.



When Oswald house came up for sale in 1875, full particulars of its accommodation was reported in the Durham Advertiser:

FOR SALE BY PRIVATE CONTRACT **The Valuable FREEHOLD ESTATE "Oswald House" near the City of Durham** **and distant about 1½ miles from Durham Station on the main line**

Entrance hall
Dining Room/Drawing Room/Morning Rooms
Ten bed and dressing rooms
2 kitchens/larders/butlers pantry/servants hall
Four servants bedrooms
Store Rooms

Cellars and other conveniences
Gas and water laid on
Hinds and Coachman's houses
(the latter being the lodge)
A two-stalled stable
Two loose boxes
Coach House
Harness Room/Cow Houses

The Property Comprises: **A substantially built stone mansion house with**

The pleasure grounds and gardens are extensive and well stocked with shrubs, fruit trees and a splendid assortment of the newest roses. There are also vineries, a conservatory, peach house, cucumber house, fish pond, two good springs and an abundance of water.

The house and grounds are beautifully situated fronting the south approach by a lodge entrance with carriage drive and surrounded by old grassland in a ring fence. The whole is about 22 acres.

If required the furniture, which is quite new, can be taken at valuation.

The purchaser may also have the option of taking on lease **the game on the Wingate Estate (1200 acres)** **Distant about five miles from Durham City**

The Wilkinson family didn't own any coal mines, but as a result of owning land on which coal mines were built they were made very rich from the coal industry by receiving royalties from all coals mined from under their land and all coals transported over their land to its point of sale.

CONTACT DETAILS

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No meetings until 2021

HISTORY CLUB MEETINGS IN 2020

I think everyone will agree that Covid-19 has provided our country with its biggest challenge probably since the Second World War, but certainly with different restrictions placed upon us all. A closure of leisure, employment and education provision has never been heard of in this country, but that's what it took to keep us isolated from this killer virus.

We are now seeing some relaxing of the restrictions, but naturally people are still worried about socialising in groups. The History Club hasn't had any meetings this year and after discussions with the committee, we have decided to cancel our meetings for the rest of the year.

All 2020 speakers have been transferred, where possible, to the same month in 2021.

The History Club celebrated its 25th year in 2020 and we still haven't had an appropriate celebration. It is fully intended that this will go ahead during 2021 and I will keep you informed through the newsletter.

There will be no membership fees collected for the 2020 season, and if you have already paid, then you will not be asked to pay in 2021. The same applies to our advertisers, who will not be asked for a payment for adverts that appeared in 2020.

Thank you to our members and advertisers for your continued support.



Mrs Taylor accepting a cheque on behalf of the History Club from Age Concern, 1999

SARA JANE (Jenny) TAYLOR, NEE FRANKLIN

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Mrs Taylor. She was one of the founder members of the History Club and served on our committee for many years, keeping us entertained at our committee meetings with her own historical stories.

Mrs Taylor was in her 100th year and died only weeks before the big day.

Her family have made two very generous financial donations to the History Club in memory of Mrs Taylor's involvement with our work over the years and we are very grateful to them. RIP Mrs Taylor.

BILL LUKE

Another of our members who has passed away since our last news letter was Mr Luke. Born and brought up in Wheatley Hill, and a member of the chapel, he has been a member of the History Club for quite a few years and often contacted me from his home in Easingwold, North Yorkshire. He became increasingly frustrated over recent years as his eyesight failed him and he couldn't do as much as he would have liked. He never forgot his Wheatley Hill roots. RIP Mr Luke.

AGED MINERS HOMES, THORNLEY

The following is from an unknown source but it has obviously been written by someone who could remember the opening of the aged miners homes.

"The 37 tenants of Thornley Colliery Aged Miners Homes can look back with pleasure and satisfaction today because they were all pioneers in building the first 12 free houses and bachelors quarters, the foundation stone of which were laid on Saturday 6 June 1914.

It was a red letter day in Thornley on that perfect summer day. The streets were covered with flags, streamers and bunting. A procession lead by Thornley Miners' Lodge banner, Hartlepool Operatic band, a company of Durham Territorials, Durham Industrial School Band and 2000 children who were provided with free tea.

The foundation stone ceremony was conducted by:

- (1) Mr George Alexander Curry, manager of Thornley Colliery and Chairman of Thornley Aged Miners Committee. Other stone-layers were
- (2) Mr Evan Hayward, MP
- (3) Mr J H B Foster, Managing Director Weardale Steel, Coal & Coke Co
- (4) Mr Woof in place of Mr J Wilson, Miners Agent
- (5) Mr J R Croft, Treasurer of Durham County Aged Miners Homes
- (6) Mr S Galbraith in place of Mr T Cann, Miners Agent
- (7) Mr J W Charlton, Durham Enginemens Association
- (8) Rev E Coltier-Biggs, Vicar of Thornley
- (9) Rev Martin McDermott, Catholic priest
- (10) Mr R Richardson, Thornley Workingmens' Club
- (11) Mr J Wilkinson, Checkweighman, Thornley Colliery

Today there are a total of 37 homes and a hostel for 9 bachelors with reading room and television. Each year over 200 aged people have a day trip to the seaside and are given £1 spending money and at Christmas a gift of £2.00 is given to the old people, all paid for from the Aged Miners Homes fund.

The Thornley homes are the exclusive property of Thornley Miners' Lodge and only retired workmen of Thornley Colliery are eligible for accommodation. On two occasions, in 1921 and 1926 when the pit was locked out, the homes were mortgaged for £3000 and £3700 to help the miners with their living expenses".

The first Aged Miners Homes in County Durham were opened at Haswell Moor in 1899 when 112 dwellings were provided for those miners who were unable to work by virtue of their age. Before this scheme was introduced, retired miners were dependant upon their families for a place to live. The Aged Miners Homes Scheme was financed by working miners agreeing to a small amount being taken from their fortnightly pay, realising that in the future, they may need somewhere to live. Properties were provided by private landlords at a reasonable price, or coal owners often offered their dilapidated colliery houses, for a reduced price, to be renovated. The Haswell Moor homes were flats provided by the renovation of a large building.



Thornley Aged Miners Homes

The Durham coalfield was recognised throughout the country for its scheme of helping miners who had devoted their life to the coal industry.



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