



## REMEMBRANCE 2020

2020 will be a year none of us will forget. The year that caused major disruption to every aspect of our lives and the year in which all major celebrations were cancelled, including the Remembrance. Wheatley Hill has had one of the most successful Remembrance Day parades and attendances in the local area for many years, but in common with the rest, we weren't able to carry out our usual well-organised, fitting tribute organised by Mr W Oswald of the Royal British Legion. Instead, wreath-layers visited the cemetery individually to lay the wreath of their organisation. George Cook laid one for The History Club and by 8 November, the large number of wreaths representing the village were there, proud and defiant of Covid. We might not have had the church service, the parade led by a brass band, the Last Post, a Scottish piper etc **but Wheatley Hill still remembered.**

## HISTORY CLUB ZOOM QUIZ

The local history quiz held in November was quite well attended and enjoyed by everyone who took part. George Cook spent long hours of planning, making sure the questions were appropriate and practicing his (and our) Zoom skills. We thank him for a very successful evening spent in the comfort of our own homes, and giving us the opportunity to chat to friends.



Unfortunately it doesn't look as if 2021 is going to be much better than 2020 as far as meeting in groups is concerned. The History Club committee have taken the decision therefore to invest in a subscription to Zoom so that the speakers we have already booked, can do their presentations online. Online speakers still have to be paid, so we were very grateful to the Parish Council for providing funds for the Zoom subscription and the speaker fees for 2021.

We didn't collect any subscriptions last year, but there were a few people who paid before our March meeting and it was very much appreciated. We don't plan to collect subscriptions formally this year either, but we are doing our best to keep The History Club alive in the minds of our members, and if anyone would like to pay a subscription for 2021 it would be a great help to our bank balance!!

As you know, the cost of membership is £6.00 per household and this can be paid by cheque or through our bank account.

### Payment by bank transfer

<b>Bank:</b>	Barclays plc
<b>Account Name:</b>	Wheatley Hill History Club
<b>Account Number:</b>	30056227
<b>Sort Code:</b>	20-82-18

**Cheques to: Wheatley Hill History Club**

## ZOOM MEETINGS IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY

**Wednesday 27 January**

**11.00am**

**"Women of the Durham Coalfield  
In the 19th Century"**

You will receive an email giving instructions  
of how to join this meeting  
*(you may forward the email to anyone you think might be interested)*

**Wednesday 24 February**

**11.00am**

**"The Winding Engine at Wheatley Hill Pit  
Working in 1968"**

You will receive an email giving instructions  
of how to join this meeting  
*(you may forward the email to anyone you think might be interested)*

### CONTACT DETAILS

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

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



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### ZOOM MEETINGS FOR 2021 *All Meetings Start at 11.00am*

- |               |   |                       |
|---------------|---|-----------------------|
| <b>27 Jan</b> | "Women of the Durham Coalfield in the 19th Century" | <b>Margaret</b>       |
| <b>24 Feb</b> | Footage of the Wheatley Hill winding engine in 1968 | <b>History Club</b>   |
| <b>31 Mar</b> | Death in our Area                                   | <b>Frances Wilson</b> |

### RESIDENTS OF LYNN TERRACE IN THE SHADFORTH PARISH IN 1939 *(includes householders & their wives and lodgers)*

House Number	Residents	Occupation	House Number	Residents	Occupation
Colliery Hotel	Robert Winter Sarah Winter	Licensed Victualler	13	Thomas Brown Lilian Brown	Boot Repairer—Shop Manager
1	George Beddell Freda Beddell	Wagonwayman	14	David Donkin Eleanor Donkin	
2	Richard Ward Phoebe Ward	Coal Hewer	15	William Johnson Elizabeth Johnson	Driller
3	Unoccupied		16	Unoccupied	
4	George Lapwood Lilian Lapwood	Cinema Operator	17	John Metcalfe Constance Metcalfe	Colliery Filler
5	William Clish Ethel Clish John Goyns	Colliery Filler Colliery Shifter	18	Albert Dodsworth Edna Dodsworth	Colliery Stoneman
6	John Cooke Mary Cook	Foreman Joiner at Colliery	19	Thomas Smith Margaret Smith	Colliery Shifter
7	William Gibson Maud Gibson	Assurance Agent	20	Unoccupied	
8	James Havelock Caroline Havelock John Christopher Hannah Christopher	Coal Hewer Colliery Timber Leader	21	Frances Luke	Widow
9	Norman Lowes Eveline Lowes	Colliery Electrician	22	William Hagan Alice Hagan	Coal Cutter
10	George Laverick Ethel Laverick	Colliery Blacksmith	23	Lily Johnson	Widow
11	James English Elizabeth English	Colliery Clerk	Caravan In field	John Willis	Retired Stoneman
12	John Natrass Emma Natrass	Puller up at pit	Lynn Hut	George Wilkinson	Unemployed Miner

### The History Club is part of the Co-op's Community Fund until October 2021.

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*The following interview is in the archives of the Imperial War Museum  
Thank you to History Club member Tom Tunney for bringing it to our attention.*

**INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE DENNIS ELLIOTT OF WHEATLEY HILL  
Born 6 September 1913 at Sunderland Street, Wheatley Hill**

**HOME LIFE**

George was the eldest of 7 children. His father had been injured at the pit so George and his family lived in the home of his widowed grandfather.

My father was a coal hewer at Thornley pit and joined the Royal Navy as a Stoker in the First World War and served on the vessels HMS Acasta and HMS Cumberland. He used to tell the tale that on both of these vessels, any broken glass on the ship was often thrown into the furnace to keep it going. Others who I have told this to, say it wasn't the case, but my father was adamant it was, on the vessels on which he served.

He was de-mobbed in 1919 and went back to work at Thornley pit where he suffered an injury. During the 1930's he was one of the first men to sign up for the Air Raid Wardens Patrols in Wheatley Hill in the Second World War. I fell out with my father in 1932 and joined the Army and rarely spoke to him after that time.

It was my grandfather Westgarth's house in Sunderland Street and we lived with him. It had four rooms – two upstairs and two downstairs. The lads slept in a double bed in one room upstairs and the girls in another. Our parents slept in the front parlour. The other room was the kitchen where everything else happened. It was the cook-house, the dining room, sitting room. We needed two tables and at meal times the men got served first and the women got what was left. There was a water tap in the house but no drainage, so you had to make sure you kept the pail under the tap in case anybody forgot to turn it off properly. In winter the kitchen tap often froze and when this happened people from all over the village had to walk to the show field beside the infant and junior school where there was a stand pipe. The show folks used to visit this field two or three times a year with their fairground rides, and the standpipe was for them.

My grandfather paid 1s (25p) a week for the doctor. This money was kept off his pay note. That 1s covered all members of the household. He also had 1d a week kept off his pay towards the hospital fund and whether you needed it or not the money was taken off your pay every week. Wheatley Hill pit supported the Hartlepool Hospital and Shotton pit supported Durham. Every miner paid this and some never needed the hospital.

When I was in a Sunderland hospital in 1960 for a serious operation, I was in the next bed to a shipyard worker and he says, "You miners always get preferential treatment to everybody else in the hospitals". I said "Aye we do. Do you and your mates support the local hospital by having money taken off your note every week? Cos the miners do and that's why they get preferential treatment". He says, "I didn't know that".

The men also had 1d taken off their pay for the colliery welfare facilities.

**THE VILLAGE**

Everybody knew everybody else in the colliery villages, they were close communities. Nearly all the men were employed in the pits, either in Wheatley Hill or neighbouring pits. I left school in 1927 when I was 14. At that time Wheatley Hill School day ended at 3.30pm, other schools ended at 4.00pm. There was no vacancies at Wheatley Hill pit but I knew there were taking on at Shotton. So as soon as school ended on that Friday, I ran from the school all the way to Shotton and was first in the queue when they gave jobs out to start on the Monday.

**EDUCATION**

I enjoyed all aspects of school. I enjoyed arithmetic, English, dictation, spelling, mathematics, painting and drawing but I was no good at algebra and logs. I was always in the A stream, right through school.

In the Infant and Junior department, we were mixed with the girls during lessons but not at break time but when we got into the senior school we were segregated during lessons and at break. There was a big wall between the girls and the boys playground.

The teachers were strict, but you expected them to be and no matter what went on at school you wouldn't dare tell them at home or you would get much worse.

Wheatley Hill Community Association T: 01429820214



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