

NEW TUB & ROLLEY FOR THE HERITAGE CENTRE



Image by Keith Gilson, Heritage Centre

The tub and roley outside the Heritage Centre has been in need of repair for some time and at the end of last year, John Thornton of Trimdon was commissioned to make a new one.

I think you'll agree that he's done a really excellent job.

It has been admired by visitors to the cemetery and on social media and provides a great tribute to our industrial past.

If you haven't been to see it yet, it's well worth a visit.

HISTORY CLUB MEMBERSHIP 2023

DUE NOW

We are very grateful to everyone who continues to support the History Club by paying an annual membership fee.

This is our only source of regular income and will remain at £6.00 per household.

We are the only group that we know of who offer the 'per household' option.

BACS PAYMENTS

Bank: Barclays Bank plc
Account: Wheatley Hill History Club
Sort Code: 20-82-18
Account No: 30056227
SWIFTBIC: BUKBG822

CHEQUES PAYABLE TO:

Wheatley Hill History Club
The Treasurer, 16 Gable Terrace
WHEATLEY HILL, DH6 3JT

Remembrance



Remembrance Day images by Keith Gilson



CONTACT DETAILS

CHAIR: 01429 820813
TREASURER: 01429 823198



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

MEETINGS IN WHEATLEY HOUSE

All Meetings Start at 11.00am

Wednesday 29 March

“The Lambton’s”

A talk by Peter Welch

RAISING THE MEETING FEE

Over the 28 years of The History Club, our meeting fee has only risen once—from £1.50 to £2.00 per meeting.

This fee covers refreshments (which are often provided personally by the committee and not from History Club funds), a raffle (prize often donated) and a contribution to the speaker fee and venue hire.

Ideally the door charge should cover the cost of the speaker, but as speakers are charging between £40 and £50 per talk in line with their increased fuel costs, we would need to attract an audience of 20/25 people to each meeting, which has proved difficult over recent years, and the fee is being subsidised by our funds which cannot be allowed to continue.

In order to continue to attract good quality speakers, it is necessary to find a way in which to cover their costs through the audience at the meetings.

The committee has decided therefore to keep the annual membership fee at £6.00 per household, and to raise the door fee to £3.00 instead, which means we stand more chance of covering speaker fees when we have a lower attendance rate. Of course it is always our aim to attract as many people as possible to our meetings, and we work hard at doing this. We are looking at ways in which we can attract people to our meetings and if you have any ideas, we would love to hear them.

Most local history groups charge a higher rate at the door for those who are not members of the History Club, and this is something we have discussed but decided to leave the charge at £3 for all.

We hope you will understand our reasons for making this change in the door fee and feel able to continue to support our work.

PLATINUM JUBILEE PROJECT PART 2

You will remember that as part of our contribution to the above celebration last year, we had a plan of Wheatley Hill Front Street in 1953 produced. It was displayed at our exhibition at the Workingmen's Club in June and also at the Heritage Centre for Heritage Open Days in September.

The second part of the project is to produce blue badges for properties marked on our 1953 plan and ask the residents/business owners if they will display them on the inside of their front-street-facing window.

Our scheme is based on the English Heritage Blue Plaque scheme which honours notable people who lived or worked in a particular property. Our scheme is marking a property for what its purpose was in 1953 Wheatley Hill.



This is an example of our blue badges that will be displayed on the inside of a property facing the street, with the permission of the occupiers

We still have some work to do, speaking with those occupying the property etc but hope that this unique scheme will be up and running by the end of the summer.

HETTON BICENTENARY

The Hetton Conference

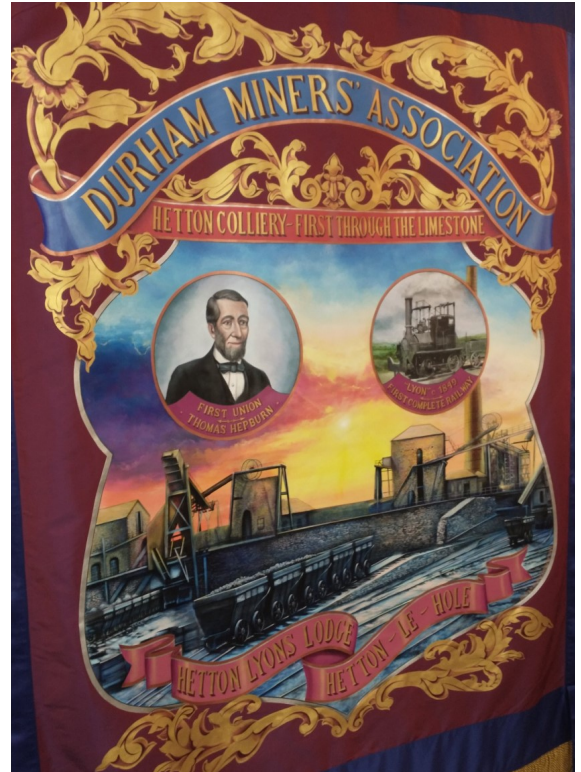
19 & 20 November 2022

By Margaret Hedley

After several years of planning, meeting, negotiating etc, eventually it all came together on the weekend of the Conference held in Easington Lane. The Conference celebrated the educational, cultural and historical importance of the Hetton Colliery Railway and in doing so left an important legacy for future generations. Several of us from The History Club attended the conference, some over the two days.

The Hetton Story is unique and represents many 'firsts', one of which features on the stunning new banner they commissioned for the event which states **"First Through the Limestone"** referring of course to the first time that coal was extracted from beneath the magnesian limestone plateau at a depth of 109 fathoms.

"There are certain special events in life, like the landing of the Apollo 11 spacecraft on the moon, which change our perception of the world in which we live. The winning of Hetton Lyons Colliery in County Durham between 1820 and 1822 was another such event. Both these giant leaps for mankind were the outcome of years of technical development often carried out despite the scepticism of the scientific establishment of the day". ***Les Turnbull in Hidden Treasures, a souvenir publication to celebrate the bicentenary of the winning of Hetton Lyons Colliery and the opening of George Stephenson's first railway***".



The conference was opened by Lord Joicey whose family did have links to Hetton pit, but not at the beginning, and his words set the tone for the rest of the weekend. Every aspect of the development of pit and railway was covered in presentations by local man John R Cook who used his local knowledge and images of Hetton and surrounding area to create a perspective, this was followed by John Banham who introduced us to the early partners of the Hetton Company and Bill Lancaster brought two pioneers of deep coal mining to our attention — Nicholas Wood and George Elliott.

Michael Bailey, recognised as a world-leading specialist in the field of locomotive investigation, talked us through the early locomotives that served Hetton colliery, all built by George Stephenson and called the Puffing Billies and then Anthony Coulls from the National Railway Museum in York explained the job of the museum in conserving steam locomotives built before 1900.

Les Turnbull in his closing remarks of the conference set out the importance of the Hetton story. He reminded us that the Northumberland and Durham Coalfield was the cradle of the railway and the steam locomotive which revolutionised land transport worldwide during the 19th century and also that the Great Northern Coalfield fired the Industrial Revolution which created the carbon economy. For these two reasons the bicentenary of the winning of Hetton Lyons Colliery and the opening of the transport system in 1822 needed to be celebrated, not just locally but as events of international importance. (p84 Hidden Treasures).

As well as the conference, a banquet was held at The Hallgarth Manor Hotel, Pitlington on the evening of 19 November when guests arriving were greeted with the sight of a renovated chaldron wagon and the premier debut of not one but two commissioned pieces of art; Hetton Lyons Banner and an illuminated steam locomotive. Marty Longstaff aka The Lake Poets, composed a nine-minute piece of music to represent Hetton and performed it at the banquet accompanied by Sunderland Male Voice Choir and Houghton Area Brass Band.

The Hetton Colliery Railway 200 committee have celebrated the bicentenary in a range of ways, all of which reflected its importance to the local community and they are to be congratulated.

Wheatley Hill Community Association T: 01429 820214



OPENING HOURS

Mon - Thurs: 8.30am - 8.45pm
Fri: 8.30am - 7.45pm

Available for functions outside of these hours - please ask for details

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CAFÉ OPEN DAILY



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