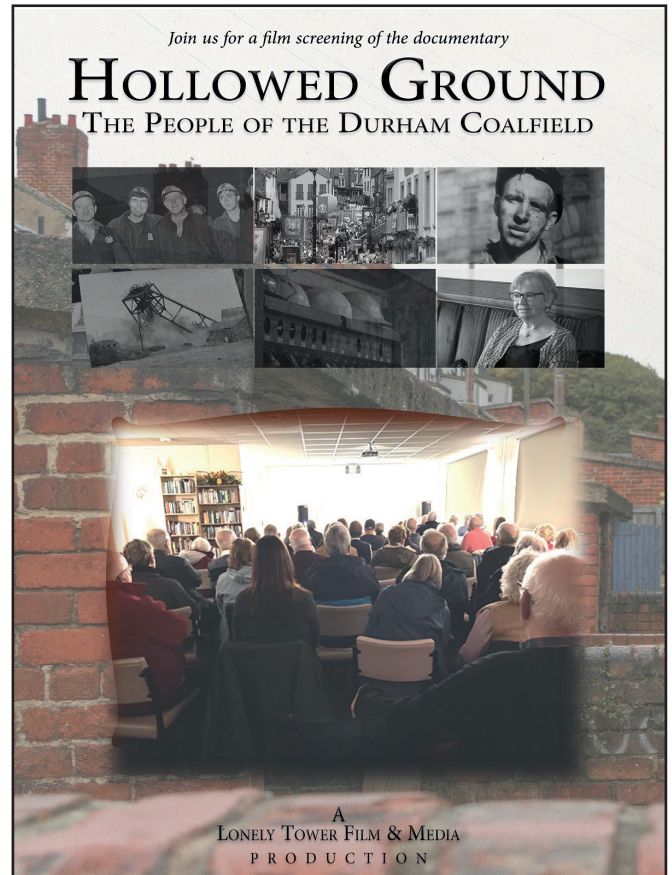


The Man They Named a Town After

Below is an article in East Durham Life about our project to honour the name of Peter Lee through a series of workshops held in 11 primary schools around the area, which will culminate in a drama production at The Lubetkin Theatre, Peterlee at the end of the year.



Joan Scott, Colin Robson, cultural engagement officer for Durham County Council, Sheila Brown, and Keith Newton, Members of the Wheatley Hill History Group. Photograph by Michael Gant. Inset, Peter Lee



68 people attended our special screening of the Hollowed Ground DVD presented by Mark and Marie from Lonely Tower Film and Media on Wednesday 21 February.

It was enjoyed by everyone with many shedding a tear at what we've lost.

The film company sold out of DVDs and sold more a few days later when they visited the Heritage Centre. Eventually, this film will be available on YouTube for those of us without DVD players.

Hannah Hauxwell Exhibition

Bowburn Community Centre
Saturday 16 March 2024

Thank you to our members who supported the above exhibition which was held after the Forum AGM on Saturday.

The History Club have been members of the County Durham Forum for History & Heritage for many years and take part in their monthly Zoom talks and other events such as this one.

It was a unique opportunity to see the personal effects including photos etc of a much respected woman during Womens History Month.



Hannah Hauxwell

Local Labour Party Pioneers Number 2 William Snaith Part 2

by Tom Tunney

As a much more privileged and extremist local Labour Party leadership took over in the aftermath of Peter Lee's death in 1935, William Snaith voiced his disquiet with this March 1937 letter to his one-time Thornley colleague on the Easington Rural District Council, Hubert Tunney:

'I have watched very closely the recent elections with disgust. I feel very much for you after years of loyal service for humanity, you have been subject to such foolish abuse. One thing that to me stands out in your life is your unblemished character which in the future will be your strong rock. I have admired your stand for right, ever since we became acquainted you seemed to me to stand out above your fellows in administration of all local government work and I trust that you will not be downhearted....'

(The full letter can be seen here: <http://oldthornley2.awardspace.co.uk/page37.html>)

Though he had been re-elected ***unopposed*** as Chairman of Thornley Miners' Lodge earlier that same year and had served on the ERDC since 1919, Tunney had just been forced to run, and lose, as an independent 'Trade Union Socialist' candidate after Thornley Labour Party chose Thornley school headmaster E F Peart (also the Secretary of the Seaham Division Labour Party) and his 23-year-old Durham University graduate son Fred (who later became the long-serving MP for Workington and Leader of both the House of Commons and the House and Lords) as their candidates for the ERDC. The Labour Party's truly bizarre -- and successful -- 1937 choice of candidate to oppose Tunney for Peter Lee's old DCC seat, Wheatley Hill miner Frank Quin, born in 1867 and out of politics since his 1931 ERDC defeat, will be the subject of a future profile. *

In 1938, Snaith was one of the many Wheatley Hill men to receive a 'pioneer diploma' for over 50 years membership of the DMA (HM 14/11/38, p7). Frank Quin was another while, at Thornley, Peter Lee's brother John was another notable recipient. (SE 17/11/38 p 4).

On January 1st 1947, on Vesting Day, aged 77 and still employed as a pick sharpener, Snaith was the oldest employee at Wheatley Hill Colliery and had the honour of raising the NCB flag to celebrate the nationalisation of the mine. He was one of 114 older men made compulsorily redundant later that year. (YP 21/10/47 p 1)

He was living at 11 Gowland Terrace, Wheatley Hill when he died, aged 82, in 1951. A newspaper obituary noted that he had lived in the village since 1889.

There is no street in Wheatley Hill named after William Snaith. Perhaps there should have been, but his memory still shines, ever so faintly, every time a new reader turns to Chapter 12 of Jack Lawson's grand old book:

'In August 1914, Peter Lee was in Edinburgh on one of his cycling tours with his friend William Snaith. They, like the rest of the working masses had left work far behind and put it out of mind...'

* When the DCC boundaries changed in 1937, Louis Martin continued to serve for Wingate and Frank Quin was elected to the revised Thornley and Wheatley Hill seat. Teddy Cain took over in 1946 and E F Peart in 1949, both peacefully uncontested.

CONTACT DETAILS

CHAIR: 01429 820813
TREASURER: 01429 823198



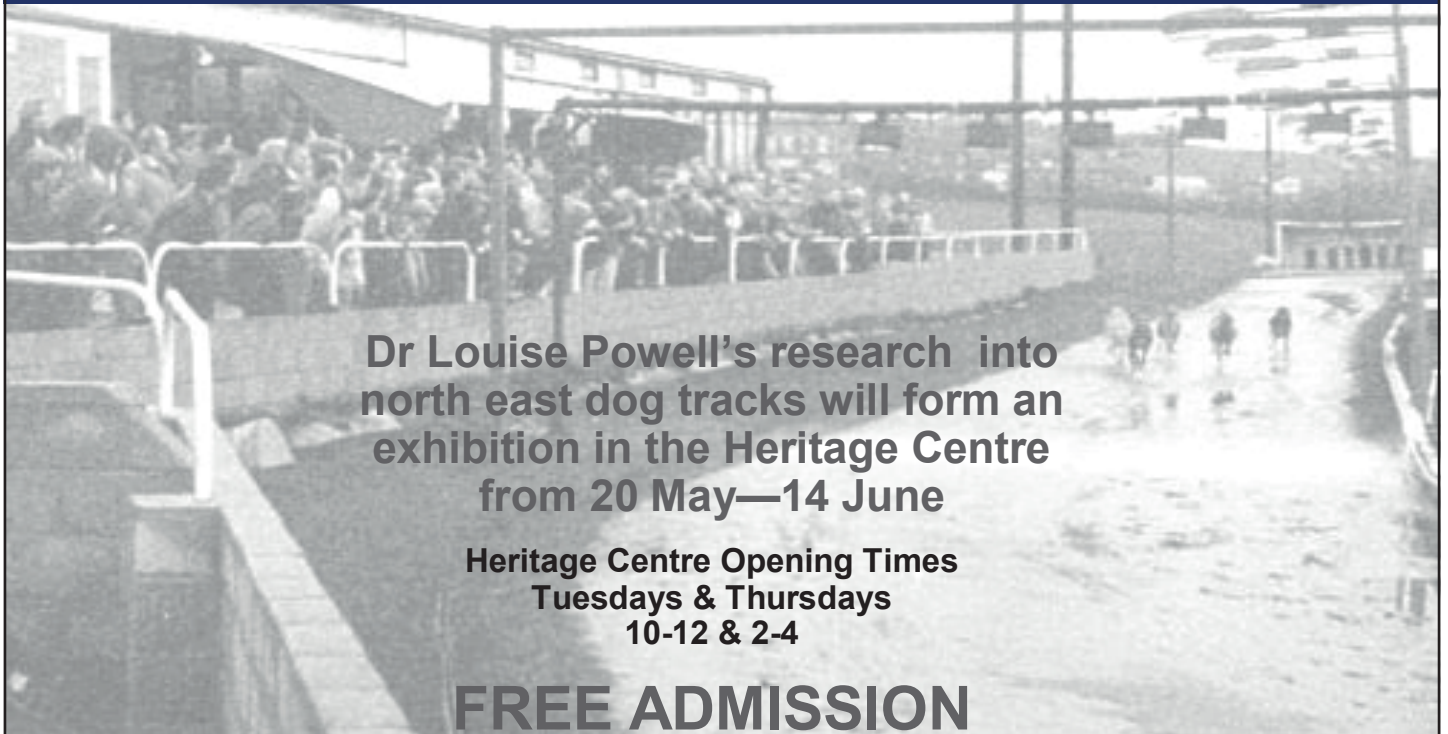
E: history.club2@btinternet.com
W: wheatley-hill.org.uk

MEETINGS IN WHEATLEY HOUSE

Start at 11.00am

29 May	Historical Helmets	I Craggs
26 June	The Miss Crimdon Competition	C Lloyd
31 July	Writing Historical Fiction Set in Old Ryhope	G Young

Wheatley Hill Heritage Centre DOG PEOPLE EXHIBITION



Dr Louise Powell's research into north east dog tracks will form an exhibition in the Heritage Centre from 20 May—14 June

**Heritage Centre Opening Times
Tuesdays & Thursdays
10-12 & 2-4**

FREE ADMISSION

CHANGES TO OUR MEETINGS CALENDAR

One of the best decisions the History Club committee has made over recent years, was to change the time of our meetings from evenings to mornings.

This small change has resulted in more people attending our meetings and travelling from further afield to do so.

Left over from the days of evening meetings, we continued to only offer eight meetings a year, avoiding the dark nights of November, December, January and February and therefore avoiding the inclement weather those months can sometimes bring.

However this year, our new followers, and some of our old ones too, have questioned why there isn't a meeting in November and after discussing this in our recent committee meeting, we decided it made good sense to hold an extra meeting and so in November 2024 we will hold a meeting making nine per year.

The speaker for November will be Sharon Vincent who was due to talk to us last year about The Suffragettes.

HISTORY CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Will be held on

Wednesday 31 July

at 9.30am

Before the
History Club meeting

All AGM materials will be
distributed beforehand.

Wheatley House Moving Forward

Wheatley House was formerly the men's hostel within the aged miners homes complex, opened in 1924. It is now a community hall managed by a committee to provide a gathering place for the people of Wheatley Hill and surrounding area to hold a range of functions

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