



Newsletter of the South Shields Local History Group



Issue 95

December 2015

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Introduction

In this month's edition we've some fascinating articles including a festive piece entitled 'Christmas Stories', a special souvenir from the Australian Post Office, details of our informal meeting on the Marine School and our Chairman looks back at 'The Highlights of 2015'. On the 13th January the Wednesday Heritage Club hosts a talk entitled 'Famous People Who Made the North East Great'. The Central Library has a wide range of Xmas gifts for sale, including books & DVD's by group members. And finally, for a bit of fun we've a crossword based upon Notable Sanddancers.



The Highlights of 2015

This year has seen our group going from strength to strength with more members becoming involved with the groups activities at the Central Library; attending meetings, helping with displays and contributing to our Newsletter – and long may it continue!

Among the highlights of 2015 were our displays at the Old Town Hall in partnership with South Tyneside Library Service for local history month and the ‘South Tyneside Remembers’ event at the Central Library. Our displays focused on the story of John Simpson Kirkpatrick and the local men who served in the Royal Naval Division during the Gallipoli Campaign.

We also had stalls (with mini displays) at the Westoe Fair and The Armed Forces Covenant Exhibition at Bents Park. The latter event also focused on the Libraries WW1 project ‘South Tyneside Remembers’ and proved a big success with the public.

Group members, library volunteers and the staff at the library have continued their work cataloguing and scanning images for the libraries excellent website:

www.southtynesideimages.org.uk

Our website www.southshieldslhg.org.uk is proving popular with members of the public. The aim of the site is to promote the group and our activities; the history and heritage of the town; heritage related events; publications and other websites of interest.

Throughout 2015 we were treated to some fantastic talks, and both our monthly and informal meetings were well attended. Steady progress is being made with our Glass Negatives Project and the WW1 database, but there’s still plenty to do in the New Year!

Finally, a big thank you goes to Catrin and the staff at the Central Library for their help with our activities and to the Lightfoot Foundation for their continued financial support.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

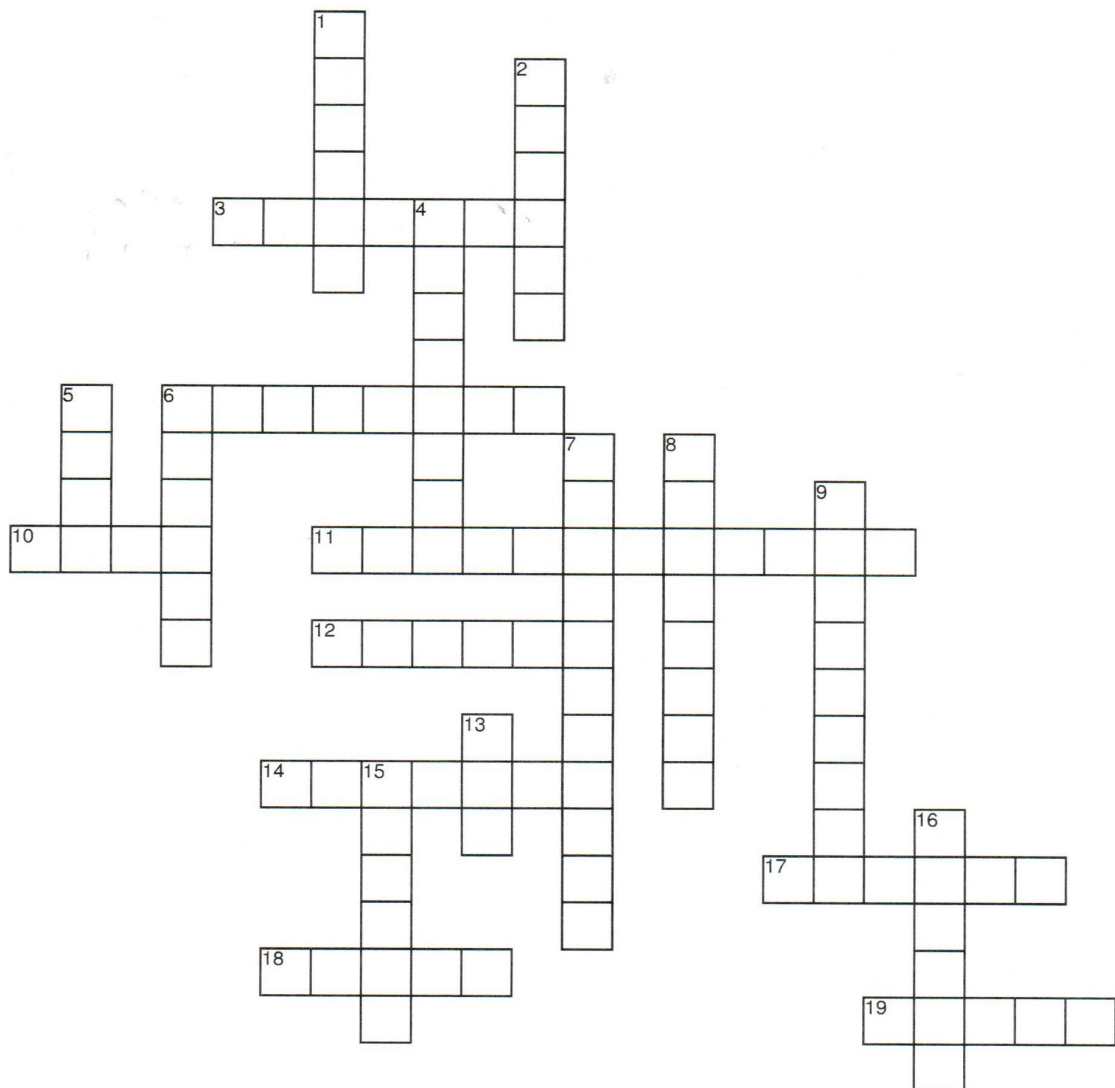
Submitted by Jim Smith



Crossword

For a bit of fun I've created a crossword based upon Notable Sanddancers.

I hope it gets people thinking and inspires them to do some research in the New Year.



Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

Across

3. A soldier, mayor and MP
6. John (the actor)
10. A friend to smugglers
11. Founder of the Marine School
12. A man of words
14. Jacket maker
17. The British Army's first VC winner of WW2
18. A film maker
19. Founder of the scout movement

Down

1. The town's first MP
2. Royal Photographer
4. Funny girl
5. Python born in South Shields
6. A South Shields shipbuilder who broke a monopoly
7. A Tyneside and Australian hero
8. A theatrical impressario
9. Scorer of FA Cup Final hat-trick
13. A Prime Minister of New Zealand
15. A soldier or actress
16. A friend to all coal miner's

Christmas Stories

It was early on Christmas Day 1922 when six year old Vera Young (my late Mother) ran downstairs at her home in Roman Road, South Shields, to see what gifts Father Christmas had left for her. She had so dearly wanted a pram for her much loved doll Dulcie and so it was with great disappointment that there was no sign of one amongst the other gifts. However, all was not lost (or so she thought) for as she hurriedly unpacked her stocking, she found a note from Father Christmas. It explained that the pram was too large to push down the chimney and so the old gentleman had left it at Saville's Music Store in King Street for Vera to collect.



Saville's Music Shop (photograph probably taken in 1940's)

An hour later Vera was walking along Ocean Road to King Street with her sister Muriel, aged thirteen. They passed J. W. Pollard, the shop and builder's merchant, paint manufacturer and glazier owned by their father Alfred Ernest Young, which, like most other shops, was closed. Soon they arrived at Saville's, whose proprietor, being Jewish, was one of the few shopkeepers to stay open over the Christian festival. I can hardly imagine little Vera's dismay when a shop assistant told her that the pram was not in the



shop - and of course never had been. Needless to say, Vera cried bitter tears all the way home.

However it was Vera's sister, my aunt Muriel, whom I always felt the most sorry for. She was old enough to know that Vera would not find the pram in the shop and yet she had to console the sobbing Vera whilst suffering her own embarrassment, for she, as an accomplished pianist and later music teacher, was well known at Saville's, where she frequently purchased sheet music.

This sad story was related to me many times and was always treated as a huge joke, especially by my grandfather, Alfred Ernest. However I could never see the funny side. Alfred Ernest was a successful businessman and could have well afforded to buy his beloved little daughter a pram.



Vera Young in 1927, aged 11



Why he did not do so, is even more difficult to understand in light of his earlier experiences of a tragic Christmas. It was on Christmas Day 1884 that his thirty-seven year old widowed mother Sarah Young (née Pollard) died at 98 Livingstone Street, South Shields. I often heard the poignant story of how the family immediately went into mourning and her children Alfred Ernest (aged six), his sisters Sarah (13) and Ann (8), and his brothers Henry (10) and Thomas (4) had to take down the Christmas tree. According to her death certificate Sarah died of Phthisis Pulmonalis (now better known as Mycobacterium Tuberculosis) after two years of lung-related illnesses. I was always told that she had died of a broken heart, which I suppose sentimentalised in true Victorian fashion the tragic fate of a broken family.

My great grandfather, Thomas Young, a Tyne Pilot, had drowned when his coble 'Pilot' capsized on the Black Midden Rocks at the mouth of the Tyne during a severe storm on the 14th October 1881. He was subsequently pronounced dead in the medical room at the Lifeguard Station on the Pier. My grandfather Alfred Ernest, five years old at the time, often related this tragic event to me, even when I was very young. He remembered seeing his father laid out in his coffin at the family home, 3 Blumer's Terrace, his head padded with cotton wool to conceal the shocking fracture across his skull. Thomas and Sarah are buried in Westoe Cemetery together with their youngest child Thomas Young, who died in 1901 aged 21, of the same disease as his mother. The grave is numbered 1248 in Section 13 D of the cemetery and the gravestone includes a relief of the coble, 'Pilot'.

On a happier note, my grandfather, Alfred Ernest loved Christmas and ensured that I together with my sister Lynda shared in all its joy and excitement. He spent months planning the celebration and spared no expense, but more than anything else, he always gave generously of his love and time to us and was well supported by his wife Cissy, my grandmother. Right until his death in 1961, when I was fourteen years old, my parents, sister and I always spent Christmas Day with them at the family home in Clifton Avenue. Although Vera never received her doll's pram, my grandparents did buy one for me when I was six years old!

Submitted by Heather Veronica Thomas



The History of the Marine School

The group's special informal meeting on Monday the 7th December was well attended and a splendid time was had by all. Members listened to an audio tape made by Dr. David Turnbull (ex principal of the Marine & Technical College) outlining the story of Dr. Winterbottom and the building of the Marine School in Ocean Road.



The Marine School in Ocean Road (www.southtynesideimages.org.uk)

Group member Alan Johnson has kindly donated a number of items to the group regarding the history of the South Shields Marine School and these will be made available to members at future informal meetings.

Submitted by James Mulholland



Famous People Who Made The North East Great

The guest at next month's Wednesday Heritage Club on 13th January will be retired teacher, Geoff Hughes. An experienced speaker across the local area, Geoff has a number of interests including singing, the National Trust and school governing duties and his enthusiasm for anything connected to the north east is well known.

His illustrated talk, 'Famous People Who Made the North East Great' will show how the North East has developed into a wonderful region through the influence of some 'greats' such as Grace Darling, St. Cuthbert, Catherine Cookson, Emily Davison, Earl Gray and Bobby Thompson among others.

Tickets for the event, which begins at 2pm in the Central Library Theatre, South Shields are £1.00 and are available from the Reference Library or telephone 0191 424 7864 for further details or to reserve a ticket.

Submitted by Hildred Whale

A Century of Service – Animals in War

I'm delighted to report that I've been sent an Australian Post Office souvenir depicting the work of 'The Man with the Donkey' at Gallipoli. The Shields' lad is known as Simpson in Australia because he enlisted under the name 'Simpson' for reasons outlined in my book 'John Simpson Kirkpatrick - The Untold Story of the Gallipoli Hero's Early Life'.

The souvenir consist of envelope with two stamps and inside is a copy of a letter written to his mother in South Shields, dated February 1915. The photograph on the envelope doesn't depict 'Simpson and his donkey', but one of the stamps does.

The Australian troops were sent to Egypt to train, prior to taking part in the Gallipoli Landings of April, 1915. However, 'Simpson' and his Aussie mates didn't know this at the time.



TRANSCRIPT OF SIMPSON LETTER

28.2.15

Dear Mother

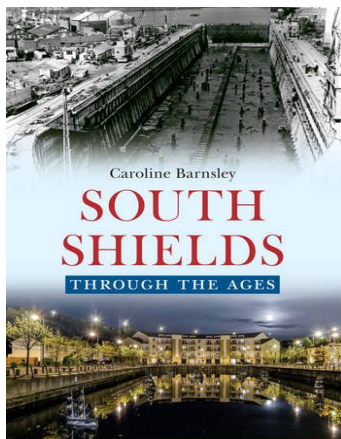
Just a line to let you
 know that we are leave
 ing Egypt today I dont
 know where we are bound
 for but hope that it will
 be England or France
 Now Mother you will have
 to excuse short note as
 we are all in a hustle
 and bustle to get the
 transports waggons packed
 and leave this afternoon
 So with love to you and
 Annie

I remain
 Your Loving Son
 Jack

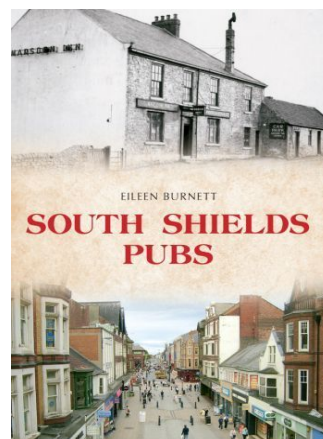


Xmas Gifts at the Library

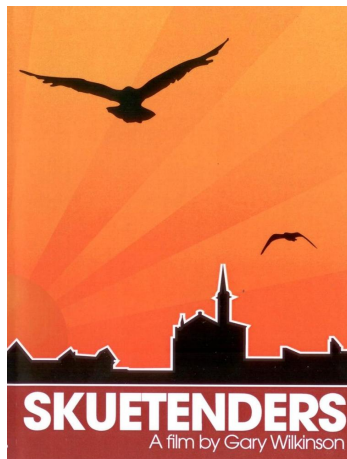
A wide range of local history books, DVD's, maps and Christmas cards are available for sale at the Central Library. These include books written by group members, such as 'South Shields: The Postcard Collection' and 'South Shields Through the Ages' by Caroline Barnsley, 'South Shields Pubs' by Eileen Burnett & 'John Simpson Kirkpatrick – The Untold Story of the Gallipoli Hero's Early Life' by Jim Mulholland.



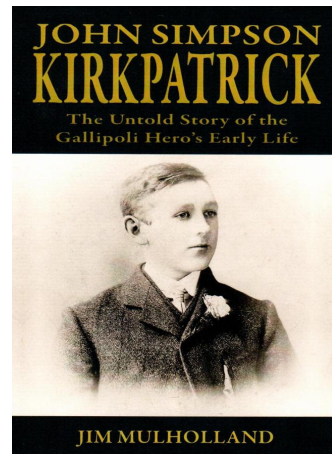
Caroline Barnsley



Eileen Burnett



Gary Wilkinson



Jim Mulholland

Group member Gary Wilkinson has produced some excellent local history films and most are available as DVD's. Titles include WAR ON SOUTH TYNESIDE, SKUETENDERS, LIZARDS, TYNE DOCK BORDERS, THE HILLS OF HOLBORN, TYNE STORIES, VANISHED and SHIELS. Many of these feature members of our group including Jim Smith, Heather Thomas, Chris Phillips, Hildred Whale and our patron Janis Blower.



Thank You

I would like to say a special thank you to group members and library volunteers involved in the Digitisation, Glass Negative and World War One projects at the Library. I would also like to thank you all for your enthusiasm and support for the events at the library throughout 2015, and to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from everybody at the Library.

Submitted by Catrin Galt

Chairman's Challenge

Last month's Challenge concerned a property on the Westoe Park Estate, and the Challenge went as follows. In the late 1800's it was decided that there was a demand for more large residences forming an extension to Westoe Village in an easterly direction. One of these mansions, completed in 1887, was bought by a Mr. Henry Chapman, a member of the well-known Chapman family. He lived in the house until 1920, when it was sold to George Readhead, a member of another well-known family. Subsequently it was rented out for several years from Lady Readhead by the Missions to Seamen as accommodation for cadets training at the Marine and Technical College. In 1953 the house was bought from the Readhead family by another organisation, and the Challenge is what was the name of that organisation?

The organisation which occupied the house as its local Headquarters was the Boys Brigade, and they occupied the premises until the late 1970's.

Once again there were no attempts at the solution.

As our December meeting is the annual quiz at the Westoe Cricket and Rugby Club's club-house, there is no Challenge this month, just the annual quiz which, this year, is slightly different. So put on your thinking caps and I'll see you there.

Submitted by Jim Smith



Newsletter of the South Shields Local History Group



Notice Board

December's monthly meeting of the group is our Xmas Quiz and will take place on the 2nd Monday of the month, the 14th December. This event takes place NOT at the library, but at Westoe Rugby Club. Please get there from 7.30pm onwards and don't forget to bring your entrance fee, i.e. some nibbles for our buffet table. See you all there! PLEASE NOTE: There will be NO meeting of the group on the 3rd Monday of December at the library.

Our next monthly meeting will take place on the 18th January 2015, at the library for a prompt 5.30pm start in the theatre. Our first informal meeting of the New Year will be on Monday th January at the library. The latter provides an opportunity for members to share their interests, 'get involved' with group displays / projects and contribute to the newsletter. Finally, I'd like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Over the years the BBC, Tyne Tees Television and local film makers have covered a number of stories relating to the history of South Shields and video clips are available on the YOUTUBE link below, or via a search for "South Shields"

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLHU_WENYRRovYpDA7mB-G59mzG_6dd4zP

And finally, on behalf of the group, I would like to thank Peter Hoy for his very interesting and moving tribute to the local men who served in the Great War, at last months meeting.

Contacts / Membership Details

If you have an article, a request for information or anything to do with South Shields' History that could be included in the newsletter, please leave details with our Editor James Mulholland at the group's informal or monthly meeting at the library; or email jim.mulholland@blueyonder.co.uk Membership of the group is £5 per year and it entitles you to free entry to the group's meetings and a copy of our monthly newsletter.

The group usually meets on the 3rd Monday of each month after 5.00pm at the town's Central Library for a 'history talk' which starts at 5.30pm in the libraries theatre.

PLEASE NOTE: November & December 2015 Meeting's are special events and take place on the 2nd Monday of the month. 'December' is our Xmas Quiz at Westoe Rugby Club.

To keep up-to-date with our activities, please visit our website www.southshieldslhg.org.uk