



Newsletter of the South Shields Local History Group



Issue 103

August 2016

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Introduction

In this month's edition we've details of our latest display at the Old Town Hall (as part of Heritage Open Days) and an appeal for information regarding Shipbuilding & Repair on the River Tyne. We've some fascinating articles on 'Russell Bowlby – The MP that never was', the History of the Tyne Dock and Ernest Bristow Farrar – a talented composer and organist at St. Hilda's Church. Malcolm Spence has penned another Jack Horner Mystery and Hildred Whale has details of the Wednesday Heritage Group's final presentation at the Central Library. We've details of a Family History Course for Beginners, a WW1 Centenary Conference & Exhibition, and finally our Chairman's Challenge.



River Tyne Reflections

As part of 'Heritage Open Days' we'll be premiering our latest display 'River Tyne Reflections' at the Old Town Hall, the Market Place, South Shields, on Friday, Sept. 9th and Saturday, Sept. 10th from 10.00am – 3.00 pm (both days). Admission is free and all are welcome.

Our exhibition includes a photographic display, maps and books. Topics include the Customs House, Mill Dam, Tyne Dock, Shipbuilding & Repair (including Readhead's & Jarrow Palmers), the Tyne Pilots, the Wellesley Training Ship and various industries associated with the riverside.

The display provides an excellent opportunity for members to share their interests and to 'get involved' with the groups activities. So, if you can spare an hour or two, please add your name to the list which is circulating at tonight's meeting. Alternatively, please support the event by coming along as a visitor and bring a friend (or two).

Finally, please take the attached publicity poster and see that it's displayed in a shop window, church, community centre, bingo hall or pub near you. Thank you!

The History of the Tyne Dock (Part 1)

Plans to construct a dock on the south bank of the Tyne were first proposed by Simon Temple, the owner of Jarrow Colliery, who applied to Parliament in 1803 to convert Jarrow Slake into a dock. However, his scheme together with several others was to end in failure, primarily because of the influence of 'Newcastle'.

Prior to 1850 navigation on the Tyne and all other matters relating to conservancy of the river had been the exclusive responsibility of the Corporation of Newcastle. They had collected 'the duties' on all imports and exports, even though cargoes may have been landed or loaded at North or South Shields, Gateshead, or anywhere else on the river.

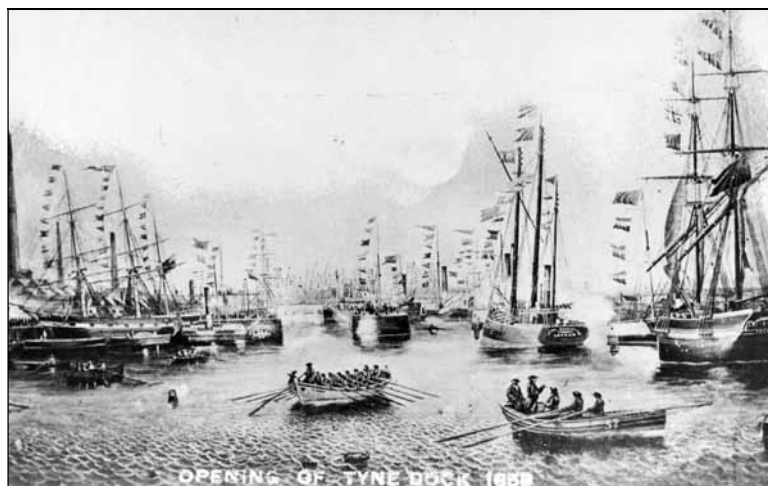
It had been recognised from the time of Oliver Cromwell that although 'Newcastle' took all 'the dues', it had neglected the upkeep of the river and spent the money improving the City. Navigation became increasingly difficult and hazardous, since there was no dredging and 'sand bars' particularly at the mouth of the river caused vessels to run aground at low tide.

In the 1840's it was stated that 'Newcastle' had so neglected their responsibility as conservators that instead of improving the river they had actually allowed it to deteriorate. Consequently, a Bill was presented to Parliament and an Act was passed on 15th July 1850 for "the improvement and regulation of the River Tyne and the navigation thereof, and for other purposes". It contained the instruction that

“Commissioners be appointed for carrying into execution some of the provisions and purposes of the act”, and so the Tyne Improvement Commission (TIC) was born. The commissioners wasted no time. The Tyne Improvement Act was passed in 1852.

In the meantime, George Hudson, known as ‘The Railway King’ had been busily acquiring land and local railways systems to form what was to become the North Eastern Railway (N.E.R.). The contract for the construction of a dock was let to Messrs. Jackson, Bean & Gow for £23, 149 and the first pile of the permanent work was driven on March 3rd, 1856. The excavation of the dock involved the removal of over 2 million cubic yards of earth, chiefly silt.

By December 26th 1858 the work was so far completed that the water was let into the dock by the Chairman of the North Eastern Railway, Mr. H.S. Thompson, in the presence of the company’s Directors. The dock was decorated with flags and the opening of the sluices was saluted by a discharge of cannon. The Directors and their invited guests, subsequently lunched at the contractors’ offices, whilst the workmen were entertained at the various inns in the neighbourhood. The first vessel to enter the dock was the brig ‘Recovery’ for a cargo of coals on January 22nd 1859.



The opening of Tyne Dock

(Image courtesy of www.southtynesideimages.org.uk)

The formal opening of the dock by Lord Ravensworth and the Earl of Carlisle took place on March 3rd 1859, the occasion being observed as a general holiday in South Shields. At high tide the dock gates were ceremoniously opened to admit the S.S. Bevedale which loaded 200 tons of coal in 54 minutes. Originally, the loading process from siding to ship was achieved by a series of inclines, and the discharged railway wagons returned in a similar manner without the need of a locomotive. This was considered a marvel of Victorian engineering, but as we will see in next month’s newsletter, the process was soon improved upon and the revolutionary staithes of Tyne Dock would eventually export more coal than any other shipping dock in the world.

Submitted by Norman Paxton



Russell Bowlby (1792-1865) The Life and Times of the MP that Never Was!

Part 1: The Build up to South Shields Parliamentary Election of 1832

Whenever I ask anyone if they have heard of Russell Bowlby, one or two may imply that he was a figure of disdain because he polled only two votes in the South Shields Parliamentary election of 1832 or that he fought a duel before the election, accounting for his disastrous result. Although both are facts, they are misconstrued and there is no correlation between them.

With two creditable means of securing nomination for the Whig Party and the Reform Party he received neither I suggest because of the untimely death of Nicholas Fairles and the unscrupulous actions and the vested interests of a few of the leading men of the joint townships of South Shields and Westoe. *'At the outset of the contest, I certainly looked forward to a very different termination, having been taught to suppose that; the "proud situation of the first representative of our maiden borough" was within my grasp.'* (1). He finally took a third option to be an Independent Radical candidate, perhaps to ensure that for posterity his name was on the ballot paper. He withdrew his candidature on the day of the election. This will form part of the content of Part 2 of my research.

Russell Bowlby was a proud resident of South Shields living in what is now defined as South Tyneside for almost 50 years; a man of the people committed to social justice, a reformer, a visionary who appears to have wanted to increase the significance of the town through trade and improved communications. Yet unlike his adversaries there is no street named after him nor is there an image of him in any form.

Born in Shincliffe, Durham in 1792 he was Christened at St. Oswald's Church, Durham on the 9 Jul 1792. He was the eldest son of Sarah Elliott (1774-1855) and John Bowlby (1766-1835) who later became Registrar to the Dean and Chapter of Durham; By 1798 the family had moved to the South Bailey, Durham City. Russell was a pupil at Durham School until 1808 when he was indentured as an Articled Clerk moving to South Shields in 1813 to practice as a solicitor.

My initial knowledge of Russell Bowlby was in the writing of a dissertation 'The South Shields Mechanics Institute' in 1969. I was impressed by the fact that as a subscriber, he made his contribution in perpetuity and that it exceeded the payment made by other contributors. He was proposed by James Laing, a ship builder and owner in 1813, the year he settled in South Shields as a member, of the South Shields Exchange Subscription Room Library held in the Town Hall. It was in 2012 that I transcribed the minutes and since then I have profiled over two hundred of the members, the leading men of the day which has provided me with an insight into their connections with one another with regard to business, politics and not least of all, family marriages.

I have been unable to establish when Russell Bowlby first became politically active although there was a significant turning point in his career in 1818 when acting for Robert Green, the leading Magistrate for South Shields & Westoe and Nicholas Fairles (his deputy and brother-in-law), the representatives for the townships of South Shields & Westoe, he made an application to the New Courts at Durham for the acquisition of land from Isaac Cookson (a glass manufacturer) of 246 yards which was required to add to the land owned by Robert Green for the development of the Mill Dam. (2). Both Green and Fairles were affiliated to the Whigs, the Liberal Party, although there was no parliamentary representation.



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With the death of Robert Green in 1819, Nicholas Fairles became the leading magistrate. On the 28th December 1820 he convened a meeting at the Town Hall of the Magistrates, Clergy, Gentry, Ship Owners..etc, unanimously resolving that representation should be made to the King regarding the establishment of South Shields and Westoe as a parliamentary borough (3). This was followed a week later by a more substantive meeting 'for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety adopting an address to the King. Our correspondent informs us, that the meeting was the most respectable and the most numerous he ever witnessed in that town. Many spirited and well-delivered speeches were made on both sides the question the principal speakers were — Henry Heath of Westoe; Philip W. Buckham of Laygate; George T. Fox of Westoe; and Russell Bowlby, of South Shields '(4). The petition submitted in 1821 did not meet with success.

At the age of only thirty, Russell Bowlby was already at the centre of political life of the two townships as a campaigner and orator; it was from this point and for the next decade that he was considered to be the potential Whig Party candidate once parliamentary representation had been granted. There are several references of Bowlby's credibility as a Whig party candidate in the newspapers during this period.

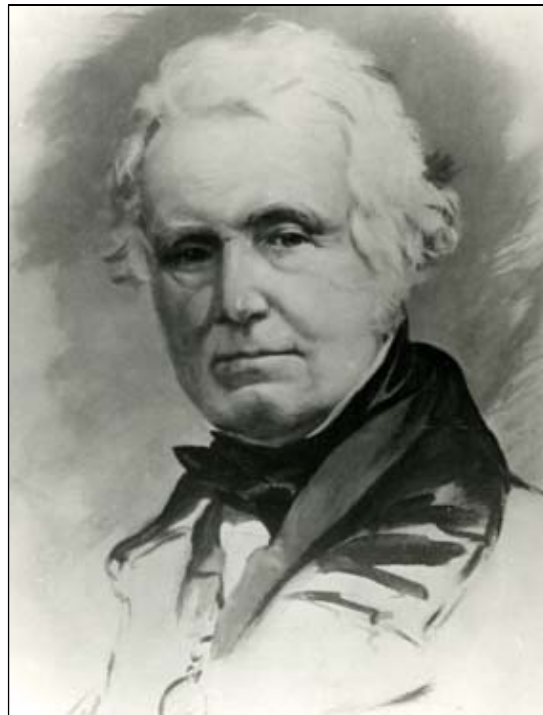
This was addressed at a meeting chaired by Nicholas Fairles in the Town Hall on the 31st December 1830 to again consider petitioning Parliament. Since the previous petition of 1821, the population had increased considerably from the 16,500 recorded then. The meeting was attended by many of the significant gentlemen not only of the joint townships but also of the greater area. It was unanimously resolved to proceed to petition both the Houses requesting that the Lord Lieutenant of the County should present the Petition to the House of Lords, and the MP's for Newcastle upon Tyne, to the House of Commons (5). This was part of a massive country-wide campaign where e.g. there were 30,000 signatures from Manchester alone.

Russell Bowlby prepared to represent South Shields in the first parliamentary elections for the borough standing as a Liberal Candidate with Thomas Salmon as his Election Agent; he promoted Free Trade and campaigned for Reform of the State and Church. He perhaps embodied the political ambitions of Nicholas Fairles, and Robert Green who for twenty years prior to his death had campaigned for the townships to have independence from the Palatinate of Durham and from Newcastle to be a separate parliamentary borough. Working in South Shields between 1813 and 1828 with homes in Barrington Street and Chapter Row, he purchased one of the properties of Robert Green, Cleadon Meadows and by 1831 it was his main residence.

Nicholas Fairles's aspiration that South Shields and Westoe should combine and receive royal assent to be an independent parliamentary borough was within his grasp with the passing of the Great Reform Bill on the 4th June 1832. Sadly, seven days later two men attacked him whilst riding on horseback towards Jarrow to investigate an insurgency at the colliery. The murder of this senior Magistrate in the fulfilment of his duties has in recent times been the subject of much debate, demonising Fairles because of one of his attackers. Robert Ingham was one of two prosecuting barristers when the case went to trial at Durham on the 3rd August 1832 who secured the conviction of Robert Jobling for the murder of Nicholas Fairles although Fairless himself, prior to his death on the 21st June, identified Robert Armstrong who escaped

prosecution, as the perpetrator. Robert Jobling was found guilty of Mr. Fairles's murder, hanged and gibbeted at Jarrow Slake (6).

It is perhaps churlish to consider that in securing this conviction, Robert Ingham would gain popularity. He was unscrupulous in his quest to be the first MP for South Shields. In a letter purported to be written to the *Newcastle Chronicle* on the 8th June to the Electors of South Shields and Westoe he declared his interest in being the parliamentary candidate *'At the proper Season, I shall present myself my Brother Electors under a deep Sense of their past Kindness to me, and respectful Hope of their Favour. In the mean while, it shall my Study, it has hitherto been, to profit by every Opportunity of learning the Wishes and Interests of the town, and of explaining my Opinions the Electors'*. The other correspondence in the newspaper was written within days of publication on the 30th August whilst that of Robert Ingham's seems to be out of cinque. My suggestion is that this letter was written after the attack on Nicholas Fairles and that it was withheld from publication awaiting the inevitable death of Nicholas Fairles and Ingham's attempt to endear himself to the electorate. (7).



Robert Ingham

Robert Ingham was a barrister residing at 10 The Bigg Market in Newcastle holding a judicial office, the Recordship of Berwick on Tweed, which should have been his primary home. There was a family home in Westoe Village where he occasionally stayed. Owned by his late mother and which his sister then inherited. He was ambitious and was one of 3 candidates for the position of Recorder ('judge or magistrate') of Newcastle; however, James Losh, the President of the Literary and Philosophical Society in Newcastle, a more esteemed candidate was appointed. Having failed to achieve this ambition, Robert Ingham turned his attention to being the first MP for South Shields.



A statue of James Losh at the 'Lit. & Phil.'

Prior to 1830, Robert Ingham had little involvement in the life of either township. It was not until Wednesday, 29th June 1831 that he was proposed by Dr. M. Winterbottom (by which time Russell Bowlby had been a member for 28 years) to join the Exchange News Room; he was accepted but only attended this meeting whilst Dr. Winterbottom attended sixty nine.

As to Bowlby, he appears to have maintained his aspiration to be the Whig candidate and there are references to his attendance at political events and his association with confirmed Whig candidates for neighbouring constituencies. It was in late July that in the *Morning Post* the following comment was written relating to South Shields - Russell Bowlby '*ventures upon very unsafe ground in this borough*' (8).

The de-selection of Russell Bowlby as the Liberal Candidate and the adoption of Robert Ingham, an occasional resident of Westoe as his replacement appears to have happened with undue haste following the death of Nicholas Fairles. This may well be attributable to the ascendancy of James Kirkley assuming the position of Senior Magistrate. Although he was no stranger to Russell Bowlby, having attended several committee



meetings at the Subscription News Room with him he soon showed his allegiance to Robert Ingham. He chaired several meetings in promotion of him; the most significant of which was a dinner for 100 held in Mr. Oyston's assembly-room with tables 'tastefully ornamented with evergreens, flowers, etc.' (9). Thomas Salmon was subsequently appointed his agent.

I can't find any evidence of James Kirkley's political affiliation, which is not surprising as it is only to be found in his obituary 'on the 18th inst. after a few hours' illness, James Kirkley, of Dene Villa, near South Shields. ..who had recently taken an energetic part on the liberal side of public questions, and had thereby secured the gratitude of many', died under an attack of cholera (10).

Supporting Russell Bowlby in his campaign to be the Whig candidate was Hedworth Lambton, himself a candidate for the North Division of Durham and he visited South Shields' Town Hall on the 7th September 1832 (11) the day before the endorsement of Robert Ingham. Perhaps a last ditch attempt to secure Bowlby's candidature. Lambton's rival representing the Conservatives was Edward Richmund Stanley Bagot Gale Braddyll aged only 25 years at the time and sponsored by the Marquis of Londonderry. There was animosity between the landed gentry representing the main two political parties in County Durham especially between Lambton and Londonderry who was opposed to the Great Reform Bill and therefore the status of South Shields as a parliamentary borough.

Bowlby, said of Bradyll "*as a chicken newly hatched, which the pious clucking hen, Mother Church, was invited to shelter under he dingy wings*". Bowlby, spoke on impulse but was driven by his dislike of the establishment and the support of the Conservatives by the Church of England in the county was matched by Bradyll who railed against the Liberal party. Hostile correspondence between Bowlby and Bradyll pursued as a result of this political slander (12) and Bradyll challenged Russell Bowlby to a pistol duel which took place twenty days later on the 27th September at Offerton Lane, Herrington on 27 Sept; Captain Peter Bowlby of the 4th Regiment of Royal Artillery attended him. After he fired a shot, Mr Bradyll discharged his gun in the air. Russell Bowlby declared his regret for his utterances & Mr. Bradyll apologised for his adverse comments. Later that day, at 12.30pm, Mr Braddyll was involved in another dual at the Hare and Hounds on the Sedgfield Road with Sir Hedworth Williamson, 7th Baronet who had said that he was "*a nominee of the Marquis of Londonderry*" whilst in the ensuing correspondence Mr Braddyll charged Sir Hedworth with "*wilful misrepresentation*". After they each fired two shots, the confrontation ended with Sir Hedworth sending a written apology (13).

The incident at the Town Hall on the 7th September leading to the duel with Bradyll was not the cause of Russell Bowlby's demise and it is disingenuous to suggest otherwise. Sir Hedworth Williamson already an MP in 1831 was elected as MP for North Durham in 1832, the subsequent duel with Bradyll having no impact on his political career. The grand banquet on the 8th September to endorse Robert Ingham as the Whig candidate, would have been weeks in the planning and may have been a source of information for the *Morning Post* on the 31st July suggesting that there were machinations a foot to destabilise Bowlby's candidature. Some of the protagonists especially in later years, made important contributions to the development of the borough.

Part 2 to follow: The Rise of The Radicals and the 1832 Hustings



References

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2. Durham County Advertiser, 6th June 1818 p. 1 (British Newspaper Archive)
3. Durham County Advertiser - Saturday 06 January 1821 p.2 (British Newspaper Archive)
4. Durham County Advertiser - Saturday 06 January 1821 p.3 (British Newspaper Archive)
5. Newcastle Chronicle, 8th January 1831 p. 2 (British Newspaper Archive)
6. Newcastle Journal - Saturday 04 August 1832- p. 1-2 (British Newspaper Archive)
7. Newcastle Chronicle , Saturday 30 June 1832, p.3 (British Newspaper Archive)
8. Morning Post - Tuesday 31 July 1832 (British Newspaper Archive)
9. Newcastle Chronicle - Saturday 08 September 1832 (British Newspaper Archive)
10. Newcastle Chronicle - Saturday 22 September 1832 (British Newspaper Archive)
11. Herald of Peace, Vol. 8, p.521
12. Herald of Peace, Vol. 8, p.521
13. Historical Register of Remarkable Historical Events, John Sykes, p. 397-398

Submitted by Heather Thomas

Wednesday Heritage Group Celebrates 11 Years

The last Wednesday Heritage Club session to take place in the Library Theatre, before the move in October to The Word, was held on 27th July. This special 'Gala' event also celebrated 11 years of the Wednesday Heritage Club at the Library. There were contributions from Heritage Club stalwarts, Janis Blower, Angus MacDonald and Tom Kelly with a new film by Gary Wilkinson, 'Home From Home,' looking at Working Men's Clubs in South Tyneside. The afternoon concluded with several songs from local actress and 'Dirty Duster,' Helen Russell, who had also written a song especially for the occasion.

The Club began in 2005 since when there have been nearly 200 presentations of talks, films and entertainment relating to the local area and heritage, giving rise to over 16,000 attendances. The regular monthly sessions will continue at The Word beginning at 2.00pm on the 26th October with a talk by local writer and broadcaster, Michael Chaplin. He has been commissioned to create the 'theming' of the new building, internal and external, around the borough's 2000 year history of trade with every continent around the globe.

Tickets for this talk, 'Travelling the World From My Front Room: the Stories in The Word.' are £1.00, and are available from the Reference Dept. at the Central Library, or, Tel. 0191 424 7864 to book a ticket or for further information.

Submitted by Hildred Whale

Ernest Bristow Farrar (1885-1918)

Of all the 4,250 men from South Tyneside who lost their lives in The Great War perhaps the man with the most illustrious career and, most certainly, the most artistically talented man was Ernest Bristow Farrar, sometime organist at St. Hilda's Church, in the years immediately preceding the war.

The son of the Reverend Charles Druce Farrar – an Anglican clergyman - and Rose Alice Farrar (née Handyside) of Micklefield Vicarage, Leeds, he was born in Lewisham, London, on 7 July 1885. He was educated at Leeds' Grammar School before winning a scholarship to the Royal College of Music in 1905 where he studied with Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. Later, he was himself the teacher of the composer Gerald Finzi. Frank Bridge, Benjamin Britten's teacher, dedicated his Piano Sonata to the memory of Farrar.

In 1909 he was appointed Organist at St. Hilda's Church, South Shields, a post he held for several years prior to his becoming Organist at Christ Church, Harrogate, Yorkshire, in 1914. He married Olive Wilhelmina Mason, the only daughter of Mr. T.H. Mason of Westoe Village, in St. Hilda's Church on 8 January 1913.



Ernest Bristow Farrar organist at St. Hilda's Church and WW1 soldier

When the war began he initially enlisted as a Private in the Grenadier Guards (26434), eventually being offered a commission in the Devonshire Regiment in the early months of 1918. He was killed in action during the Battle of Epehy Ronssoy on 18 September 1918 while serving as a second-lieutenant in 3rd Battalion Devonshire Regiment. He had been at the front for only two days. He left 'effects' valued at £60 1s 8d, a gratuity of £8 10s and £441 12s 10d in his will to his widow, Olive. He was buried at Ronssoy Communal Cemetery (B.27) and was locally commemorated on the St. Hilda's Church Memorial Cross.



Despite his short life, Farrar wrote a large body of music for orchestra, voices and organ. His works include *'The Blessed Damozel'*, the *'Celtic Suite'* and his song cycle *'Vagabond Songs'*. However, apart from a few songs his works are now rarely performed. For a week, starting on Monday 1 August 2016, BBC Radio 3's 'Composer of the Week' featured music composed by George Butterworth (13th Battalion DLI) and four other young composers who lost their lives during The Great War – including Ernest Farrar. There was five days' worth of music written by these men, and a different piece composed by Ernest Farrar was played each day. In over thirty years of listening to Radio 3, I had previously only ever heard one piece by Farrar played. His music played that week can still be accessed over the next month by looking up 'Composer of the Week' on BBC radio's website or by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07m85y8#play>



The sheer variety and quality of his work came as a major revelation and a delight to me. I proceeded to see if any of his compositions were accessible on 'Youtube' and was extremely pleased to find that six of his pieces have been recorded there. Two pieces that are well worth listening repeatedly to are his '*English Pastoral Impressions*', Opus 25, of 1915, click on the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Jf3LYjkh0Q> and his '*Heroic Elegy*', Opus 36, of 1918 – his last completed work – click on the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywxOZrz46JU> .

It is such a shame that Ernest Farrar's talent was 'snuffed out' in the Somme Valley when he was only 33 but South Shields can be justifiably proud of its close association with him.

Submitted by Peter Hoy

The House on Lizard Lane: A Jack Horner Mystery

On a pleasant July afternoon in 1898 Mr Charles Oakley checked into the London Hotel at Corstorphine Town to conduct an audition for a play he intended to produce. Two hours later he was found dead – horribly murdered – with his face so badly disfigured that he was almost unrecognisable.

A killer was on the loose and it was to take all of Jack Horner's years of experience and detective skills, together with his understanding of the darker side of human nature to bring the perpetrator to justice.

Read all about it in the fourth novel from Local History Group member Malcolm Spence – using the pen-name Malcolm Thomson – chronicling the exploits of Jack, his partner and solicitor friend, William Barker and their intrepid – if, at times, over-eager – office boy, twelve-year-old Ned Murphy – a trio of private investigators working in South Shields at the end of the nineteenth century.

'The House on Lizard Lane' is now available on loan from the local studies section of the central library.

Submitted by Malcolm Spence

WW1 Centenary Conference & Exhibition



The Western Front Association Durham Branch

1916 - 2016 FIRST WORLD WAR CENTENARY CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

Prof. Eric Grove
(Liverpool Hope University)
The Battle of Jutland

Prof. Holger Afflerbach
(University of Leeds)
Verdun

Prof. William Philpott
(King's College London)
The Last Day of the Somme

Prof. Sir Hew Strachan
(University of Oxford)
The Strategic Importance of 1916

Conference Chairman
Prof. John Derry
(Newcastle University Retd.)



1916

Saturday 1 October 2016

09:30 - 16:30
(Doors open 09:00)

Cornerstones, Chester-le-Street
Methodist Church,
North Burns,
Chester-le-Street
DH3 3TF

Ticket Price £25
(includes tea/ coffee, buffet lunch)

For Tickets Please Contact:

Phone: 07594964930

E-mail: wfadurham.events@live.co.uk



In Association with
Beamish Museum



Family History Course for Beginners

The Northumberland & Durham Family History Society present a 5-week course:-

14th September 2016 (Week 1) - Introduction to the course; Civil Registration

21st September 2016 (Week 2) - Parish Registers

28th September 2016 (Week 3) - Census Returns 1841-1911

5th October 2016 (Week 4) - Trade Directories, Electoral Registers, and Newspapers

12th October 2016 (Week 5) - Wills

Timetable:

10.30 am to 12.30 pm—Instruction as above

1.00 pm to 2.00 pm—Using the Society's Percy House facilities with support

Course Fee: £35.00 payable by cheque to "NDFHS"

To make a booking, please contact The Librarian by email: librarian@ndfhs.org.uk or by phone: 0191 261 2159 or 0191 284 1678, Northumberland & Durham Family History Society, Library and Research Centre, 7th Floor, Percy House, Percy Street, Newcastle NE1 4PW (next door to Milligan's) Website: www.ndfhs.org.uk

Heritage Open Days 2016

Heritage Open Days take place between Thursday 9th - Sunday 10th September 2016. This is a national event that sees buildings of every age, style and function open their doors to the public. It is a once-a-year chance for members of the public to discover architectural treasures and enjoy a wide range of tours, events and activities that bring local history and culture to life. The events involve guided tours/open days in which the public call into specific buildings and have a look around. Our group will be at the Old Town Hall between Friday and Saturday, 9th -10th September (10.00am – 3.00pm) with a display entitled River Tyne Reflections. Admission is FREE and all are welcome!

For a complete list of venues (with dates and opening times) pick up a Heritage Open Day booklet from your local library or visit the website link below

<http://www.southtyneside.info/article/22078/Heritage-Open-Days>

Submitted by Catrin Galt



Chairman’s Challenge

Last month’s Challenge concerned the panning for salt which was carried out on both sides of the River Tyne, and they were the biggest producers of salt in the country by the 16th century. At that time there were more than 150 salt pans between the two harbour towns, using sea water collected in pits at high tide and boiled off until the brine had been reduced to dry granules. The resulting smoke and fumes from these pans was famous, so much so that it was said the vapour could be seen some distance away.

The Challenge was how far away could the vapour be seen? Was it 20 miles, 30 miles or possibly 40 miles away? The correct answer was 40 miles away but sadly no-one guessed it.

This month’s Challenge follows on from last month, and concerns one of the routes taken to transport the salt to places to the south of South Shields, passing through the Cleadon area, Whitburn and on through Sunderland. This route was named the Salters’ Trod and parts of it can still be followed to this day. At one point on this route it became very narrow but it is still visible to this day. The Challenge is where is this very narrow part of the Salters’ Trod?

As per usual, answer by e-mail to myself at jadog08@gmail.com or in writing to James our Newsletter editor.

Submitted by Jim Smith

Notice Board

The next meeting of the group will take place on the 3rd Monday of the month, the 19th September at our new venue the **CUSTOMS HOUSE**. We will meet downstairs in the Green between 5.00 - 5.20pm, before going upstairs to the Dalton Suite for our ‘History Talk’, which starts at 5.30pm. By way of thanks for the venue, I hope you will support the Customs House by purchasing a coffee or a tea (in a take away cup, if you wish to take it up to the room). See you all there.



Newsletter of the South Shields Local History Group



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YOUR LOCAL HISTORY GROUP NEEDS YOU! Group project meetings will take place at Cleadon Park Library between 5.05pm - 6.45pm on Monday 22nd August and Monday 5th September to complete our new display 'River Tyne Reflections'. We are particularly interested in hearing from members who have an expertise in Shipbuilding and Repair (e.g. Tyne Dock Engineering, Brigham & Cowan, etc), since we have lots of photographs requiring identification.

Your Treasurer would like to thank all those members who have paid their subs and to remind those who missed our AGM that your annual £5.00 subscription is now due. Payments should be made to our Secretary Lynn Wilson. Thank you!

A wide range of local history books are on sale at the Central Library incl. 'South Shields Through The Ages' and 'South Shields: The Postcard Collection' (by Caroline Barnsley) 'South Shields in the 1950's' and 'South Shields Pubs' (by Eileen Burnett) and 'John Simpson Kirkpatrick: The Untold Story of the Gallipoli Hero's Early Life' (by J. Mulholland). The library also stock a variety of local history DVD's made by Gary Wilkinson and many of them include contributions from group members.

And finally, I'd like to thank Dr. Malcolm Grady for his very interesting and entertaining talk on Chuter Ede's Diaries at last month's 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 monthly meeting or email jim.mulholland@blueyonder.co.uk Membership of the group is £5 per year and this entitles you to free entry to the group's monthly meeting ('a history talk') and a copy of our monthly newsletter. Up until June 2016 the group met at the Central Library, Prince Georg Square, but our August, September and October meetings will take place at the **Customs House**, Mill Dam on the 3rd Monday of each respective month, for a prompt 5.30 start. In November we hope the new Library 'The Word' at the Market Place, will be our regular meeting place. To keep up-to- date with our activities, visit our website www.southshieldslhg.org.uk

Chairman: Jim Smith Library Liaison Officer: Catrin Galt Patron: Janis Blower President: Anne Sharp