



Newsletter of the South Shields Local History Group



Issue 181
December 2022

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Introduction

In this month's edition of the newsletter, we've some fascinating articles on William Fenwick, a Master Mariner & Ship Owner and more on 'A Harton Hero'. We've details of our Christmas Party/Quiz and our Chairman has all the news from our Informal Meeting. Peter Leech is looking for a home for a couple of amazing models and David Whale has all the news from the Wednesday Heritage Club including the book launch for 'A Beautiful Journey' on 14th December at The Word. Our 'Appeals for Information' include 'The Tyne Contingent, Tyne Flotilla or Tyne Section during WW2', Blue Plaques, author Francis Daniel, Westoe Cemetery and Woodside, Harton. And finally, if you're looking for a last minute Christmas present we've details of a wide range of local history gifts.



Christmas Party / Quiz

The Committee would like to invite everyone to our Christmas Party / Quiz on Monday 12th December from 5.15pm - 6.45pm at Cleadon Park Library. Please arrive from 5.15pm onwards. There will be a buffet and a multiple choice 'Local History Quiz' featuring photographs of the town. As usual prizes will be awarded for the top scores and there will be a FREE raffle. The usual entrance fee applies i.e. nibbles; sweet and savoury. Soft drinks will be available but no alcohol can be consumed on the premises, since the library does not have a license. However, there will be plenty of good cheer. So, please join us!

Last year, the final question of our Christmas Quiz was a fun photographic question which raised a few eyebrows. *Who is this son of South Shields aged approx. 2 years old?* Unfortunately, our Chairman didn't give us any options A, B or C and not surprisingly no-one got the right answer.



(See page 16 for the answer)

Incidentally, I came across a website that published school exam questions with written answers. The following answer (in an English test) brought a wry smile to my face.

5. Write a question, using *why*.

Why?

Submitted by James Mulholland



William Fenwick, Master Mariner & Ship Owner (1809-1888)

I was interested to read the article written by James Mulholland in the October newsletter relating to the Yarmouth Roads and the connection between Wells Next to the Sea and South Shields exemplified in this ship-listing:-

4689 **WILLIAM THE FOURTH** (1859-1861)
Schooner 57 tons 56-9 x 16-6 x 8-1 feet
1830: Built Wells.
P/R: Wells.
Owner, 31.1.1859: Zaccheus Raines (m.m.), South Shields,
formerly of Clay.
On 31 October 1861, when bound from the Tyne to Lowestoft,
the *William the Fourth* foundered in Yarmouth Roads after being
in collision with the *Jane* of Hartlepool. Her crew were saved.

(1)

There were frequent requests to Trinity House to install lights down the perilous Norfolk Coast from the members of the *South Shields Free Library at The Law (1788-1802) Exchange Subscription Room in the Old Town Hall in the Market Place (1800 -1855)*. In 1790 there was particular concern about the Haisborough Gattway, it was not only for humanitarian reasons but also as a commercial issue for the members; many of whom owned or part-owned the colliers sailing from the town to ports in the South east, to discharge their cargoes of coal and return with grain.

Wells Next to the Sea

Initially it was a fishing port with small boats sailing to Iceland and by the Mentioned in Domesday Book, the town derives its name from the many clear spring wells, at one time over 180 of them, in the town. Early on it became both a fishing port, sending its small ships as far as Iceland, and a supplier of grain to London as long ago as the 1300s. From the 1500's it was a major importer of coal from the north east supplying in return grain, wheat for bread and malt for beer.

Ship building of large wooden sailing vessels was a significant industry during the first six decades of the 19th century at the two shipyards on the east end of the town. A hundred and seventy were constructed with some of over 300 tons. It had ceased to operate as a port by 1859 with the reclamation of 800 hectares of salt marsh by the Holkham Estates (2) coupled by the development of the railway in 1857.

Coastal Trade from the Tyne

For hundreds of years the coal trade of the rivers Tyne and Wear in NE England was dominated by the wooden sailing colliers 'Black Diamonds' which carried their cargoes of



coal southwards to London and to the other ports of Britain and beyond. By the end of 1592 a total of 91,420 tons of coal was exported from the Tyne rising to 2 million tons by 1820.

It is estimated that almost 3,000 of these vessels were owned by Tyneside-based entrepreneurs (3). This has relevance to my research of 2013-2017 emanating from a booklet of ship insurers I found in South Shields Library in St George's Square *Warranties & Rules Etc. 1834-35* (2014). I identified in this 237 South Shields based vessels each registered with one or more of ten River Tyne maritime insurers with three located in South Shields Town Centre. Extrapolating the statistical data enabled me to compile an Excel database of classification, measurement, capacity, and valuations. I also profiled the owners and ownership with 148 of the vessels registered to residents. Of the 237 vessels, 27 were lost during this period, an attrition rate of 11%.

My Ancestors in North Shields



(4)

1 Prudhoe Street & 1 Prudhoe Terrace in 1905

Over a period of twenty years, this was the home in North Shields of my maternal grandmother, great grandparents, and great grandfather. In this substantial terrace house located on the corner of Prudhoe Street and Prudhoe Terrace, four of the extended family died and five Fenwick children including my grandmother Thomasina Johnston Fenwick (1880-1974) were born. From an early age, I recall some intriguing stories about life at this house from my grandmother Thomasina Fenwick (1880-1974); the poignant death of her gorgeous blonde-haired baby sister Ethel Maud, and more especially the description of the oldest resident, William Fenwick (ship-owner), a seemingly terrifying Dickensian character who wore a 'Wee-Willie-Winkie hat with a striped nightshirt and slept in an enormous four-poster bed'.



It was almost 40 years ago that at North Shields Library I obtained a copy of a grave inscription from the Old Cemetery near Rosella Place with the precise record of the relocation site in Preston Cemetery in 2022.

*'In memory of **ELIZABETH** the beloved wife of **WILLIAM FENWICK** of North Shields, Ship Owner, died Oct. 28th 1872 aged 59 years. She was an affectionate Wife, a loving Mother and a sincere friend. **WILLIAM**, son of the above, died Oct. 15th 1849 aged 12 years. **MARY**, daughter of the above, died Dec. 20th, 1854, aged 19 years. **ETHEL MAUD FENWICK**, granddaughter to the above died July 21st, 1887, aged 10 months.*

*The above **WILLIAM FENWICK** departed this life July 9th aged 79 years. He was an affectionate Husband, a loving Father and a sincere friend'. (5)*

In 1999 the 1881 British census became available on CD-ROM in the format of eight decorative discs; sold by the *Church of Latter-Day Saints* responsible for coordinating the transcription of the records over an eleven-year period. The data provided confirmed the birth places of the residents, William Fenwick at All Saints Newcastle upon Tyne and John Fenwick at Wallsend.

However, as Elizabeth had died almost a decade earlier, I had to wait until the release of earlier censuses. It was in the 1851 Census, living in Chancery Row, North Shields, a Mariner's wife that I discovered her birth place was Wells Next to the Sea, but without her maiden name it was impossible to progress. The 1861 census was the breakthrough. Living with her husband, an Agent at Whitehill Point there was also listed my great grandfather John Fenwick and John Kitwood, her nephew. The revelation of the name '**Kitwood**' enabled me to research via the excellent *Wells Next to the Sea Local History Society*. Members had compiled databases from records at the Norfolk Archives in Norwich.

Elizabeth Kitwood (1813-1872) and William Fenwick (1809-1888)

They were my gt gt grandparents. Elizabeth was born in Wells Next to the Sea, the daughter of Elizabeth Wabon (1779-1852) and John Kitwood (1782-1840), a mariner. William was born in the All-Saints area of Newcastle in 1809, the son of Mary Ann Moulden (1781-1857) and William Fenwick (1782-1857). He was christened in the magnificent church and died in North Shields in 1888.

William Fenwick Snr was a ship owner living initially at Hebburn Quay close to the prominent shipbuilder of thirty-nine ships and ship-owner William Boutland (1818-1854) at Bill Quay (6). William Fenwick Jnr. following his apprenticeship was a master mariner and eventually also a ship owner. He presumably met Elizabeth Kitwood whilst he was in Wells discharging a cargo of coals before his ship '*Three Brothers*' was loaded with grain.



(7)

An old grain hopper on the Quay at Wells Next to the Sea

William jnr. was an apprentice on this Whitby-built vessel in 1829 when it was owned by his father and then from 1831, Master until the 6th February 1835 (8).

'During the late high winds, the brig 'Three Brothers', of Newcastle came on shore on the Burnham sands, and she has become an entire wreck-cargo of coals lost-crew saved'(9).

William had married Elizabeth Kitwood at St Nicholas's Church, Wells on the 13th May 1834; at the time of the ship-wreck Elizabeth was pregnant with their first child.

Part 2 to follow.

References

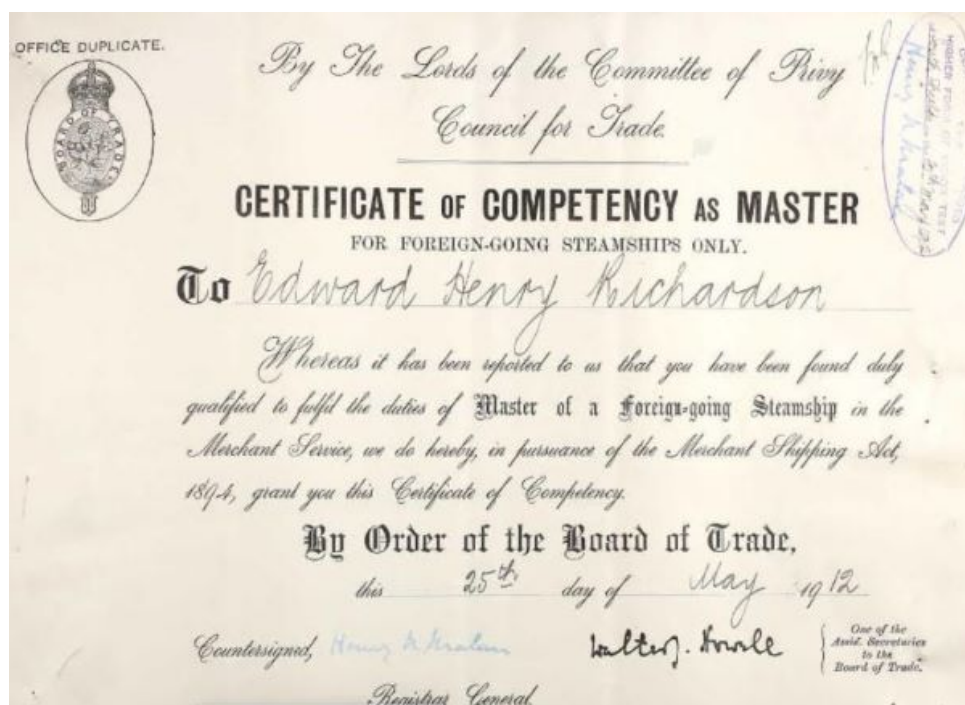
- 1 Dictionary of Tyne Sailing Ships 1830-1930 by Richard E Keys, 1998, p.734
- 2 Newsletter of the South Shields Local History Group, p.5, Issue 179, Oct. 2022
- 3 *Black Diamonds by Sea, North East sailing Colliers 1780-1880* by Dick Keys and ken Smith ISBN: 1 85795 0194 Newcastle Libraries and Information Service, 1998.
- 4 Courtesy of North Tyneside Libraries
- 5 'Tynemouth General Cemetery Monumental Inscriptions' Ref: 929.3, Joyce Marti, North Tyneside Libraries,
- 7 Mike Adcock Collection and Norwich Heritage Projects, January 20, 2021
- 8 Dictionary of Tyne Sailing Ships 1830-1930 by Richard E Keys, 1998, p.687
- 9 BNA: Bury and Suffolk Herald - Wednesday 18 February 1835, p.4

Submitted by Heather V Thomas

A Harton Hero (part 2)

Edward Henry (Harry) Richardson was born in South Shields on 5 March 1885, the son of Leonard (a mariner) and Matilda Ann Richardson (nee Freeth). At the time of the 1891 census his father was at sea and the family lived at 20 Regent Street, South Shields. His mother (b. Gilesgate, Durham) was aged 39; Edward was 6, while his brother Leonard was 12 and his sister Marian Freeth was 10.

On 8th September 1900 (age 15) Edward was indentured as an apprentice for four years to the Stag Line Ltd to learn seamanship and undertake a career in the Merchant Marine service. On 28th July 1909 he married Mary Richardson (nee Dunn) at Saint Nicholas' Church, West Boldon. Three years later the conscientious Edward gained his certificate as Master for foreign going steamships at the comparatively young age of 27 and spent much his working life at sea.



In January 1914 Mary gave birth to their daughter Margaret and come WW1 the family lived at 9 South Avenue, Harton. As an experience ships Master he was given a Temporary Commission as a Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve (R.N.R.). As previously stated Edward was awarded a rare Albert Medal in November 1916 for helping to extricate trapped and wounded seamen from a burning ammunitions ship in the Port of Archangel, despite small arms ammunitions exploding all around him.



Above: Lt. Edward Henry Richardson in uniform and civilian attire

Promoted to Lieutenant-Commander, he was appointed commanding officer of the Russian Gunboat Advokat in 1918, one of three paddle-steamers each armed with a 12-pounder and 'a pom-pom' that formed the bulk of the Anglo-Russian Naval Brigade in North Russia, under the command of Commander P. H. Edwards. He participated in operations up river on the Dvina, including engagements at Bereznik, Troitsa, Borka and Chamovo, and took part in defensive skirmishes when Bolshevik gunboats sometimes ventured down river, but was later hit by shore batteries. However, with the advent of winter, and the arrival of ice, the flotilla was withdrawn in November 1918, and for his services Richardson was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) (*London Gazette 12 December 1918*). He was also, awarded the Russian Order of St. Stanislas 2nd Class (with Swords) and the Russian Order of St. Anne.



DSC Albert Medal British War Victory St. Stanislas St. Anne
 (The Oak Leaf on the Victory Medal ribbon signifies his Mention in Despatches)



Edward was presented with his Albert Medal, together with his Distinguished Service Cross, by H.M. King George V at Buckingham Palace on 17 May 1919. Finally he was Mentioned In Despatches “*for good services during Naval operations in North Russia*”. (*London Gazette 8 July 1920*). He subsequently served as a transport officer 3rd grade in H.M.S. President.

At the time of the 1939 Register the Richardson family were living at 5 Warkworth Terrace, Tynemouth - Edward (a marine engineer), Mary (his wife) and their daughter Margaret Richardson, a teacher of the deaf.

Edward died in The General Hospital, Newcastle, on 8 October 1953 (Probate), aged 68; at the time residing at 5 Warkworth Terrace, Tynemouth. He left ‘effects’ valued at £3,402, 12s & 3d to his widow, Mary. Her death was registered in Tynemouth in March 1963, aged 69 and they are buried together at Preston Cemetery, North Shields.



The gravestone inscription reads “Edward Henry Richardson A.M, D.S.C.” referring to his award of the Albert Medal and Distinguished Service Cross.



Newsletter of the South Shields Local History Group



Peter Hoy writes “Edward Henry Richardson is one of 12,108 people from South Tyneside who served in the Armed Forces, Mercantile Marine or ancillary support services who are currently on my Great War Database. The 12,000th entry was reached in early April. Since then the database has been undergoing a major reorganisational overhaul to make it more readily susceptible to statistical analysis and to more readily enable the production of bar charts, pie charts and the like once a copy of it has been converted to Microsoft Excel. I have photographs of almost 3,000 of these people which I am currently creating hyperlinks to on the database to make these more readily accessible.”

In the meantime, Joyce Bell will add Edward’s service details to the ‘South Tyneside Remembers WW1’ website <https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/4090/Record> , Terry Ford will include him in the Local Hero’s section of our new website and I’ll produce a Local Sand-dancer leaflet. Finally, a bound copy of our research will be kept in our cupboard and made available to members at our informal meetings. My thanks go to everyone who has helped uncover this fascinating story of an ‘Unsung Harton / South Shields Hero’.

Submitted by James Mulholland

(with research by John Lightfoot, Jean Stokes, Sue Wilkinson, Joyce Bell and Peter Hoy).

Local History Gifts for Sale

A variety of books penned by members of South Shields History Group are now on sale at group Meetings, The Word and/or South Shields Museum and Art Gallery. They include The ‘Westoe’ book (by Dorothy Fleet) - a fascinating history of the village and its residents (It costs £15.00 and all proceeds go towards our Local History Group); Peter Chapman’s lavishly illustrated book A Tyneside Heritage (Price £10.); Harton Township 1921 (by Jean Stokes) - commemorates the existence of Harton Township. (It costs £15 and all profits go towards St. Peter’s Church). South Tyneside Pubs (by Eileen Burnett) looks at the history of the drinking hostelrys from South Shields through to Hebburn, while Terry Ford’s excellent double DVD ‘The Pubs of South Shields’ is also on sale, priced at £10.00.



Our Informal Meeting

December's Informal Meeting provided an opportunity for members to 'get involved' with a number of group activities, help with our appeals for information and pursue their own local history interests.

During the course of the evening, Joyce Bell used one of the libraries computers to assist Robb Archer with his family research, while Val Parkes (the group's glass making expert) was busy with her historic research on another computer. Our 'displays' table was a hive of activity with Eileen, Pam and Jean leading the way in cataloguing photographs from our old 'Pubs' and 'Shops' displays for storage in our cupboard.

As well as revamping our website, our IT officer Terry Ford, was busy specifying upgrades to our technical equipment, while Lynn catalogued old copies of our newsletter. Once again, Pete Hampson came along with some fascinating books, maps and photographs of old South Shields which caught the interest of everyone especially Dorothy and Jim.

Please Note: Due to the Bank Holiday our next Informal Meeting will take place on the second Monday of the month, the 9th January from 5.15pm-6.45pm at Cleadon Park Library and will include a special preview of our new website, as well an opportunity to to chat to your fellows members regarding your own local history interests.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Submitted by Alan Newham
(alannewham47@gmail.com)

Home needed for historic models.

During lock-down I made a number of large models of South Shields (circa 1900-1910), 1 to 150 scale - mainly in card, and I'm looking for a home for them. Hopefully they can go to a local organisation/club that can put them on permanent display so members of the public can see them. If you can be of assistance, please have a word with our editor or email me at peter172leech@gmail.com



The original Long Row between Fairles Quay and Thrift Street (Size 4ft x 3ft)



South Shields Railway Station (Size 26 by 36 inches overall)

Submitted by Peter Leech



Appeals for Information

The Tyne Contingent, Tyne Flotilla or Tyne Section during WW2

Hello Everyone,

I'm a (very) mature student (student card and bus pass), doing an MA in naval history through the University of Portsmouth. Being from the NE (I live in Morpeth), for my research project I'm investigating the WW2 East Coast convoys and particularly the colliers and collier-men who sailed in them. For your interest, here's the paragraph from an academic journal that caught my eye and inspired me to do this project:-

As Captain Champion (Naval Control Senior Officer Thames and Medway) commented to the Admiralty's Trade Division in September 1942: 'The behaviour of ships ex-Tyne ports is proverbial and no conference orders have any effect'.

References to the 'Tyne contingent', 'Tyne flotilla', 'Tyne Section' can be found across the convoy reports for the duration of the war. Despite the years of practice, Commodores were still complaining about the inability of Tyneside colliers to keep station in convoy as late as October 1944.

I couldn't let that kind of thing pass! So, I want to discover whether this might be true or not. Was there some kind of prejudice against Geordies? Was there a class and/or cultural difference between the RN (and RNVR) and the collier crews? Or were the masters and crews of these small colliers, shall we say, a little bit "individual"? Of course, the colliers themselves were not exactly the fastest or handiest ships in the seas.

I'd like to give a voice to the collier crews. Admiralty records consist of reports by Commodores (normally WW1 ex-RN) and escort commanders. What's eluding me at the moment is any real evidence of what those Tyneside (or SE Northumberland – as you may know Blyth was an important coal exporting port in WW2) seamen. If any of your members have any relevant documents or artefacts that they could share with me to give the true feel of maritime WW2 Tyneside, I would appreciate it very much indeed.

Please contact your editor or email me directly at brian.pinkstone@outlook.com

Submitted by Brian Pinkstone

Cont...



Newsletter of the South Shields Local History Group



Newcastle University want to place a blue plaque in each of the five Tyne and Wear boroughs honouring a woman in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths). We have recently completed the installation of a plaque in North Tyneside honouring naval architect Susan Mary Auld, and have other plaques in the pipeline. As yet, they have not identified a candidate in South Tyneside. If you have any suggestions please have a word with your editor or email Josh.Ansell@thecommonroom.org.uk

Pete Hampson is researching the South Shields author and playwright Francis Daniel and hopes to produce a book with his works in soon. His most famous book (and play) was The Angel of Comical Corner but he wrote numerous other books and plays. For anyone interested Pete has set up 'The Angel of Comical Corner' facebook page with some more background. Finally, if anyone has any information about him, or copies of his books and plays, please contact Pete at hampson-p@sky.com or come along to our informal meeting for a chat.

'The Friends of Westoe Cemetery' are looking for information about the following graves:- John Christie, Slate Merchant, Died 1883, Cuthbert Peel (relative of Dolly Peel), Robert and Sarah Imearly and their children aged 7, 11, 16, 19. We also have plans to restore the graves of Dr. Thomas Winterbottom and John Readhead but before we can do so, we need the permission of whoever now owns the graves! We're also interested in any pictures of Dr. Winterbottom's tomb, to show to the stone masonry, as the carving is very badly corroded. Has anyone done any research and knows of any living relatives of these two gentlemen? If you can help or would like to join our group, please contact Fay Cunningham, Secretary, faycunningham1@icloud.com

Your editor is still trying to get in touch with the descendants of the Hellyer and Fair families, since I'm convinced that the descendants of the occupants of Woodside, 15 North Ave, Harton hold the key to obtaining old photographs of this fascinating building. So, if you or someone you know is a Hellyer, Wood, Gibson, Fair or Field; or your family is connected to the household via marriage, business or employment (such as a servant or gardener), please get in touch. Any information could result in a definitive 'list of occupants' and ultimately a photograph of them, proudly standing outside the house. If you can help, please have a word with your editor or email sslhg999@gmail.com



Wednesday Heritage Club @ The Word

Hello everyone and welcome! As we said in the November edition – this month we will see the launch of a book entitled ‘The Beautiful Journey’. This will be @ The Word, this coming Wednesday - December 14th at 2.00pm. Having just checked - there are still tickets available, but hurry! Tel. 0191 427 1818. Tickets cost £2.00.

The book is in part the story of the history over almost 20 years of the Wednesday Heritage Club, but it is also a book about the changes in Libraries and it is very much the story of the role my wife Hildred played in these events, so it also very much her story.

Copies of the book will be available to purchase - price £10. There will be a further launch in January - but the details have not yet been finalised so I will let you know as soon as I have them. I am also very pleased to be able to tell you that copies of the book will be on sale from January at SSLHG events, and my thanks to them for their assistance

Then – in January we will have Terry Ford talking about the Riverside Pubs of Shields. Many of you will already be familiar with Terry and his work in this area, his research and knowledge but also the humour – a good way to start off the year. This will be on Wednesday January 11th @ 2.00pm and tickets will be available at The Word from Wednesday December 14th.

I have received considerable support in the publication of this book about my wife, Hildred from SSLHG members, and I take this opportunity to thank them for all their support.

Compliments of the season!

David Whale

e-mail tyneholme@btinternet.com

(For more details about ‘What’s On’ at The Word including Christmas Opening Times, please visit see <https://theworduk.org/>)



Notice Board

Our next Informal Meeting takes place on Monday 9th January, while our Speaker Meeting is a talk on St. Hilda's Colliery Mining Disaster on Monday 16th January. In the meantime, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We hope you can make our Christmas Party / Quiz. "The more the merrier".

To access a wide range of fascinating local history photographs and to browse amazing historical documents, please visit <https://southtynesidehistory.co.uk/>

Film-maker Gary Wilkinson's website/blog is a fascinating mixture of music, arts, culture, interviews and local history. Please visit or click on <https://garyalikivi.com/>

Heather Thomas' family history website contains a wealth of information on the history of South Shields. <https://heathershistoricalsociety.neocities.org/posts/barnard-castle.htm>

The little boy in last year's quiz question was none other than our Chairman Alan Newham.

And finally, on behalf of the group, I'd like to thank Gary Wilkinson for last month's 'Film Night'. The event was very well attended and the feedback has been excellent.

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 any of our group meetings or email sslhg999@gmail.com Membership of the group is only £5 per year and this entitles you to free entry to the group's monthly speaker meeting and a copy of our monthly newsletter. We hold all of our meetings at Cleadon Park Library, The Primary Healthcare Centre, The Nook. An Informal Meeting of the group takes place on the 1st Monday of the month, while our monthly Speaker Meeting is on 3rd Monday - both take place between 5.15-6.45pm (Except for Bank Holidays when the meetings take place the week after) In December we don't have a speaker meeting on the 3rd Monday of the month - instead, we have a Christmas Party/Quiz on the second Monday of the month at the usual time). For details of our activities, please visit our website www.southshieldslhg.org.uk

Chairman: Alan Newham, Library Officer: Catrin Galt, Museum Officer: Adam Bell, President: Dorothy Fleet, Patron: Janis Blower