

**WELCOME TO THE E-NEWSLETTER**  
**OF THE**  
**NORTHUMBERLAND & DURHAM**  
**FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**  
**ISSUE 17 – JULY 2020    Editor: Joyce Jackman**

Hello everyone,

This pandemic is challenging us all, in ways that we would never have thought possible in times past. All we can do is learn to live with it, until such time when there may be a vaccine.

As family historians, the quest to find out more about our ancestors is at the moment dependent upon internet websites. Members I have talked to have been very busy researching and a substantial number have taken the lockdown time to pull together and collate their researches.

Some good news our Library and Research Centre at Percy House re-opened on Monday 13 July 2020, after a thorough clean and a new protocol for making the centre safe to use. A word of thanks to the Volunteers for wishing to support Monday – Friday, with the proviso that if ever they felt uncomfortable about coming in to support, then they could withdraw and would be welcomed back at a future time. At the moment only a small number of members/visitors are coming in to research. The numbers of research visitors before the pandemic was very low and a review will have to take place in a few weeks time as to whether the Library & Research centre should stay open five days a week.

Hopefully, there will not be a local lockdown in the near future.

Please read the Autumn Journal, our AGM this year will be held on Tuesday 27 October, 11 am. It has been possible to arrange this by using the empty half of the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor. This will enable there to be safe distancing at the meeting, however, this will place a restriction on the number of members who will be able to attend. With the attendance of the trustees, an additional number of 20 members will be able to attend. A list will be placed in the reception area of our premises, please phone in and say if you wish to attend. Tele: 0191 2612159. Once the list is full, your request to attend will be politely declined. Please note, this year, there will be no refreshments served, please bring your own, and obviously, this year there will be no guest speaker. All who attend must wear a mask, unless there is a medical reason for not doing so. Again, hopefully there will not be a lockdown at the time, causing the meeting to be cancelled.

The search for new premises has been ongoing and the information from Estate/commercial Agents has now resumed.

**The following vacancies have still to be filled:** Sales Officer, Membership Secretary.

**SALES**

**The special offer of all 1851 census indexes for Northumberland and Durham is still open £2.00 per index.**

## BRANCHES

**Alnwick** – the numbers who attend the venue, do not make it possible to safely distance, however other virtual activities are being used.

**Belmont (Durham)** – Discussions are taking place at the moment, dependent upon the accommodation in the meeting place, more information will be made available as and when it happens.

**Blyth** - Meetings will resume 19 January 2021, AGM and Members Forum

**London** – Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November - Members Forum

**Newcastle** - Meetings resume 3rd February 2021 -AGM, Members Forum

**North Tyneside** – Meetings resume 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – AGM, Members Forum

**South Tyneside** – Meetings – dependant on the re-opening of St Hilda's Church

**Tynedale** – No information about future meetings is available at this time

**Wansbeck** - Meetings will resume 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021, AGM , Members Forum

## WILLS

James Bonner, formerly of Calcutta, India, now Tweedmouth 1/1824/B9

**Jane Hepburn** of Woolwich (lives with Testator at Tweedmouth), **Elizabeth** wife of William Adams of Maldouin, Essex, Carpenter, **John Bonner and Thomas Bonner** who all of them are my reputed natural children by Magdalina Johnson of Calcutta, and of **Margaret Bonner, Janet Bonner and Ann Bonner** by **Anna Depse** also of Calcutta and **Emma Bonner, Jane Bonner, Isabella Bonner and Charlotte Bonner** who are my reputed natural children by the said **Jane Hepburn**. The sum of one guinea which I bequeath to my wife **Elizabeth Dudley Bonner** who now resides at Erith in Kent (she already otherwise provided for).

Later on the will records the dates of birth of the reputed natural children, the will records the inheritances the children were to receive.

There are also Chancery Records related to this Estate – National Archives UK

## Rothbury

For more than a century and a half after the Norman Conquest, upper Coquetdale remained in the hands of the Crown until, in 1205, King John granted his manor and forest of Rothbury to Robert Fitz-Roger, Baron of Warkworth. This grant included all the rights and privileges of the manor. The Fitzrogers of Warkworth, who eventually assumed the surname Clavering from their manor of Clavering in Essex, held Rothbury until 1332 when John de Clavering, the last Clavering baron of Warkworth, died without an heir. The barony was then granted by Edward 111 to Henry de Percy, second Lord Percy of Alnwick, since which time the manor has continued in the Percy family, the Dukes of Northumberland being also the Lords of the manor of Rothbury.

In remote valleys such as Upper Coquetdale, old names die hard, and family names that have been in the parish for centuries are still found today. The names of the Duke of Northumberland's tenants in Rothbury in 1569 were Thomas Swanne, Willims Mawevyn, Robts Teylor, Edwardus Dytchen, Rogerus Grene, Cuthbertus Bettyman and Georgius Carre, most of whom held a few acres of land with a house. Towards the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century freeholders began to appear in Rothbury; the rentals and rates show the Duke of Northumberland as the largest landowner, but there are three other freeholders – Henry Pott, Thomas Ogle and George Gibson.

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Rothbury was described as a poor town of two streets, which were not paved and the houses mostly thatched with heather. The "Three Half Moons" was the principal inn where public meetings, courts of justice, and excise sittings were held. Under its roof the ill-fated James Radcliffe, third Earl of Derwentwater, slept on the night of 6 October 1715, having marched from Greenrig on the North Tyne to Plainfield Moor at Coquetdale at the head of a small band of Northern Jacobites. The little army spent the night in Rothbury before proceeding next day to Warkworth, and on towards ultimate defeat at Preston some five weeks later. The political leanings of inhabitants of Upper Coquetdale had been mostly Royalist during the Civil War; evidence of this can be found in the Parish Church Vestry Books. Seventy years later, a large part of the Catholic gentry of Northumberland supported the Jacobite Rising of

1715, among them were Lord Widderington and his two brothers, Charles and Peregrine, William Shaftoe of Bavington, and several Ordes, Forsters, Riddles, Thorntons, Claverings and Scotts. James Radcliffe, Earl of Derwentwater, and William Gordon, Viscount Kenmure, who had commanded the forces raised in the Scottish Borders, were beheaded on Tower Hill on 24 February 1716, the only members of the nobility to die for their part in the ill-fated Rising.

In the middle of the village green stood the old Market Cross, which was erected in 1722 and became the centre of commerce of the district. It was demolished in 1827 by the freeholders of the village who considered it to be in a dangerous condition. Many mourned its loss and an old woman composed a rhyme in memory of the Cross which not only records its destruction but preserves the names of several old Rothbury families. The following two stanzas gives the names of many of the freeholders who were at the time threatened with legal proceedings for removing the cross:-

*"Ye ancients inhabitants mourn for the loss*

*Of that venerable pile, I mean Rothbury Cross,*

*Where oft in my childhood I happy did play*

*With youthful companions, long since away.*

*There were the Grahams, and the Milburns, the Stors and Storeys,*

*The Clennels, the Snawdons, the Todds, and the Dores,*

*The Mathews, and Mavins – that's just half-a-score;*

*Believe dear neighbours, there are very few more"*

A new market cross now marks the spot and was erected on 2 August 1902, to the memory of Lord and Lady Armstrong of Cragside – of munitions fame – who had contributed much to Rothbury and who had helped to preserve the impressive countryside surrounding the village. The Cragside home of the Armstrongs, with its beautiful full of beautiful rhododendrons, is now in the care of the National Trust, and still attracts visitors from all over the world.

The earliest surviving parish register of All Saints Church, Rothbury begins in 1658 and runs to 1724, it is obviously a home-made book, consisting of 105 leaves of hand-made vellum in brown parchment. It contains a variety of items, vestry meeting minutes, excommunications, church collections, a short history of Rothbury and a list of Rectors. There is an entry on the first page of the register to the effect that “this register was revised and placed in order by John Shotton (for many years curate) from rags of rotten paper”. After the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the registers became much scantier in details and of much less interest.

The old Church stands high above the rippling River Coquet and in the churchyard are the headstones and memorials worthy of more than a passing interest. Along with the Armstrong family there are memorials to many well known characters such as Walter Mavin “the Coquet Angler”, whose headstone depicts the hills, streams and wildlife of Coquetdale.

Today Rothbury is a charming country town, with farming and forestry still the main occupation of its inhabitants. The population of the town in 1871 is quoted as 2,750 and by 1971 this figure has only risen to 2,800. Much of its historical interest remains to attract visitors. West of Rothbury is Tosson Tower, the ruin of a pele tower which once belonged to the Ogles. It was one of a line of towers extending from Harbottle to Warkworth as a defence against the reiving Scots. Still in a good state of preservation is nearby Brinkburn Priory, founded in the reign of Henry 1 and once the home of the pious Augustinian or Black Cannons. After the dissolution of the monasteries, Brinkburn was granted to John, Earl of Warwick, and has since belonged to various notable families.

As most of the land was owned by the Duke of Northumberland, many valuable records are in his private collections at Alnwick Castle and are unfortunately not available to the public. However, one particular document was recently loaned to the Northumberland County Record Office and a photocopy may now be consulted there. Entitled “*Special Report of the State of Cottages held immediately under his Grace the Duke of Northumberland, 1866*” This Document (reference number NROM/48) lists the state of all the cottages under the Duke’s ownership, the details of the occupants, and the conditions under which the families were living, and covers the villages of Hollinghill, Hesleyhirst, Row (or Raw), Lee Ward, Newtown, Pauperhaugh, Rothbury and Mount Healey. Another interesting source on the topography of Rothbury is “Upper Coquetdale” by David Dippie Dixon in his “History of Northumberland” Vol. XV, which can be consulted at the Northumberland Record Office.

### **RAF Operations Book Records**

More than half a million RAF records are available online at The Genealogist.

Primarily for afterWW1 although there are a few early squadron records from 1911 to 1918.

## Answers

### Quiz in last edition of the news letter.

1. July 1837
2. Lancelot Brown
3. 1538
4. Kirkhaugh
5. England & Wales 8.9 million, Scotland 1.6 million
6. Grace Darling
7. A person who is the keeper or owner of a wharf. The wharfinger takes custody of and is responsible for goods delivered to the wharf, typically has an office on the wharf or dock, and is responsible for the day-to-day activities including slipways, keeping tide table and resolving disputes.
8. Norwegian
9. Newcastle All Saints
10. Bishop Shute Barrington

Joyce Jackman, e-Newsletter Editor

Feedback is welcomed and do not be shy, if you wish to contribute please get in touch.

A Reminder:

The deadline for submission of items for inclusion in the newsletter will be 1st September 2020

Items must be in form of WORD RTF or ODT file, to be attached to an e-mail and sent to:

[ndfhsnews@ndfhs.org.uk](mailto:ndfhsnews@ndfhs.org.uk)

Photographs and other images should be attached separately as JPG files.