

**WELCOME TO THE E-NEWSLETTER**  
**OF THE**  
**NORTHUMBERLAND & DURHAM FAMILY**  
**SOCIETY**

**ISSUE: 21 -August 2021**

**EDITOR: JOYCE JACKMAN [ndfhsnews@ndfhs.org.uk](mailto:ndfhsnews@ndfhs.org.uk)**

Please accept my apologies for the news letter being later than usual. The shaded parts of the garden have proved a lure during the recent heatwave. For those who have not heard the sad news: Geoff Nicholson, one of our founder members, (no.4) passed away on 28 June 2021. Geoff will be remembered for the tremendous contribution he made to the society and to the world of family history in particular.

The opening up of our library and research centre has got off to a slow start. Many people are still nervous about travelling on public transport into the city. It is not surprising considering the restrictions we have been living under for the last 16 months. The Society has signed up to Smile Amazon and would like to urge our members to do the same, as it will bring in an extra bit of income.

- a. Before starting to explain, you will be pleased to know that the log in for your Smile account is the same as your ordinary Amazon account.
- b. Once in the [smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk), click on the 'get started button'.
- c. Next page invites you to pick your charity. Simply type our name into the search box and click on search. On the next page select the Society.
- d. Next page there will be a box to tick to say 'I understand that I must always start at Smile Amazon to support Northumberland & Durham Family History Society' once ticked, click on start shopping.
- e. The range of goods and offers are the same as the normal Amazon site, but we get 0.5% of the value of everything purchased.

One of our Officers reports that it does not matter whether you put Smile Amazon or Amazon Smile on your browser either works.

Despite appealing for Volunteers, both in the last newsletter and on our website, only one person has come forward to become a volunteer. Our Library and Research Centre cannot function every day without volunteers and it is unfair to ask the same people to double up so that the centre can stay open.

The Society is launching a new Membership System in the near future please refer to the Autumn Journal for more details about this.

A Family History Beginners Course has been planned to begin in January next year. Please read the Autumn Journal for all the details about the course. We are all optimists and the hope is that our branches will be able to meet face to face from the autumn onwards.

However, we are all in the hands of the current situation and the restrictions there may be at different venues.

***APPEAL: The Editor of our Journal would welcome articles to include in the Winter Journal***

**BRANCHES**

**ALNWICK** – Bailiffgate Museum, 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in month, 7.30 pm, Contact: Dudley George.

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

5<sup>th</sup> October The amazing Lady Emma Tankerville, Speaker: June Watson.

**BELMONT (DURHAM)** - Belmont Community Centre, Sunderland Road, Gilesgate, Durham DH1 2LL

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in month, 1 pm. Contact: John Balmer. [durham-belmontbranch@ndfhs.org.uk](mailto:durham-belmontbranch@ndfhs.org.uk)

Please refer Autumn Journal

**BLYTH** – St Mary’s Church Hall, Wanley Street, Blyth NE24 1DP 3<sup>RD</sup> Wednesday in month, 7 pm.

Contact: Carol Trinder, [blythbranch@ndfhs.org.uk](mailto:blythbranch@ndfhs.org.uk)

21<sup>st</sup> September, Members Forum

**LONDON BRANCH** - new location for meetings to be announced.

**NEWCASTLE** – Room 3, Brunswick Methodist Church, Northumberland Court, Newcastle NE1 7BJ,

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday in month, 2pm. Contact: Kevin Riley, [newcastlebranch@ndfhs.org.uk](mailto:newcastlebranch@ndfhs.org.uk)

Next meeting: to be announced

**NORTH TYNESIDE** – 1st Floor, North Shields Library, Northumberland Square, North Shields NE30 1QU, 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in month, 1.30 pm. Contact: Sheila Hall, [northtynesidebranch@ndfhs.org.uk](mailto:northtynesidebranch@ndfhs.org.uk)

Next meeting to be announced.

**SOUTH TYNESIDE** – St Hilda’s Visitor Centre, Market Place, South Shields NE331AN, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in month, 1.30 pm. Contact: Gerry Langley, [southtynesidebranch@ndfhs.org.uk](mailto:southtynesidebranch@ndfhs.org.uk)

Next meeting: to be announced

**TYNEDALE** – Community Centre Gilesgate, Hexham NE46 3NP, 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday in month, 7 pm.

Contact: John Parker, [tynedalebranch@ndfhs.org.uk](mailto:tynedalebranch@ndfhs.org.uk)

Next meeting: to be announced

**WANSBECK** – Pegswood Community Hub, Longhirst Road, Pegswood, Morpeth NE66 6XG. 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday in month, 1.30 pm, Contact: Wendy Stafford, [wansbeckbranch@ndfhs.org.uk](mailto:wansbeckbranch@ndfhs.org.uk)

1<sup>st</sup> September, Members Forum

In remembrance of Geoff Nicholson

### **Know Your Parish – X1V Washington, County Durham. Vol.9. no.2. Summer 1984**

Washington parish originally comprised of Washington, Barmston and Usworth but in 1832 Usworth township was formed into Usworth parish, taking with it North Biddick, a detached area to the south. The boundaries of the modern Washington New Town, however, approximate quite well to those of the original parish, the main difference being that the new town also includes Fatfield and Harraton, both of which were in Chester-le-Street parish to 1850, then in Birtley until 1875 when, with North Biddick, they became the parish of Fatfield.

Washington New Town now proclaims itself on road signs as “the original Washington”, and so it is. It seems originally to have been an estate of the Bishop of Durham but in 1180 William de Hertburn obtained it “by exchange”. He and his descendants thenceforth called themselves “de Washington” – or more correctly “de Wessington”. It is interesting that in the local dialect - a variety of Wearside – the town is often referred to as “Weshington”, which is much nearer to the mediaeval spelling than to the modern.

The Washington family produced a noteworthy Prior of Durham, John de Wessington (prior – 1416 – 1446), which goes a long way towards making up for the fact that a descendant of a branch which left the area at an early date for Westmorland, Northamptonshire and ultimately the American colonies became leader of those in rebellion against their lawful king. The direct line of the de Wessingtons failed before 1400 and, after passing through the Mallory and Tempest families, the manor was bought in 1613 by William James, Bishop of Durham and was eventually split up among his daughters. Washington Old Hall, a place of pilgrimage for American visitors, contains fragments of the home of the de Wessingtons but as it stands now it is mainly the work of the Tempest and James families. It eventually degenerated into a multi-occupied slum and was in danger of demolition earlier in this century before being saved by transatlantic interests.

Washington’s early industry, apart from agriculture, was coal mining, although until the 19<sup>th</sup> century the depth of the coal meant Washington was on the edge of the worked coal-field. One early mine of local importance was Oxclose, which flourished in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the 1960’s there were four working pits in what is now the New Town- Usworth, Washington “F” Pit, Glebe and Harraton; today all have closed and only the “F” pit winding gear still stands as a monument, with the winding engine preserved in its winding house.

The River Wear was once a busy area of Washington, with a concentration of coal staites and some boat building ‘cheek by jowl’ on a short stretch of waterside. Until quite recent times the only non-mining in Washington was Washington Chemical Works, founded in the 1840’s by Hugh Lee Pattinson. Pattinson built his mansion almost adjacent to the Old Hall – it is now “Dame Margaret’s Hall School”. His daughters married local industrialists, one of whom, Isaac Lowthian Bell, lived at Washington before moving to Rounton Hall, North Yorkshire, to be nearer his extensive iron works at Middlesbrough. Another son-in-law was Robert Stirling Newall who ran the chemical works for many years, the name Newall only recently being dropped following a take-over.

Washington’s records include a fair amount of “Parish Chest” material, including records of the Triplett charity. This was founded the Will of Rev. Thomas Triplett, a 17<sup>th</sup> century Rector who left the interest on £300 to be spent on apprenticing poor boys from Washington, Whitburn and Woodhorn (Northumberland). The Parish Registers are in Durham County Record Office, Baptisms 1612-1974, Marriages 1603-1977 and Burials 1600-1900. The Bishop’s Transcripts are in the Durham University Department of Palaeography and Diplomatic for the period 1765-1847, as are the Wills to 1858. The pre 1851 monumental inscriptions have been recorded, and Washington registers to 1812 are included in the H M Wood transcripts and in Boyd’s Marriage Index. The town’s population today is of mixed origins – the

inevitable result of the rapid development over the last fifteen years. Of the “original” families – i.e. those there since as long ago as, say, 1965 – many are of Irish origin, reflecting the large influx of Irish miners in the late nineteenth century. Usworth Colliery, for instance, was started (sinking) in 1845 and the 1851 Census shows that labour was drawn in from the surrounding coalfield. Expansion later in the century, however, brought in so many Irish workers that Usworth Colliery became virtually a Catholic village – one possible source of the friction which undoubtedly existed between Usworth and the “F” pit workers.

Washington’s place names have been much affected by the development of the New Town. This has happily given a new lease of life to some old names, such as Oxclose, Glebe, Barmston, but the writer regards as unfortunate the naming of so many areas after places or persons having some slight connection with the later Washington family, whose connection with the town was really very tenuous – among them Concord, Sulgrave, Albany and Columbia. Some of the innovations, such as Donwell, are suitably ethnic; however, similar comments can be made about local pub names. The Commercial Hotel on the village green changed its name to the Washington Arms (the original Stars and Stripes) before the New Town was designated, but recent years have given us the ‘Honest Boy’, the ‘Duke of Albany’, the ‘George Washington Hotel’, the ‘White House Club’, and even the ‘Silver Dollar’, all of which the writer hopes will one day be re-named!

This is one of the many articles that Geoff wrote for the Journal over many years.

NAMES IN DURHAM WILLS.

Mary Wood of Ryhope, Widow 1817

**Son John Wood**, Messuage & Tenement, Garth Gardens, Ryhope, **Son William Wood**, Messuage & Tenement Burleigh Street, Sunderland. **Son Thomas Wood**, Messuage & Tenement, Boadle Well Lane, Sunderland.

New Online Genealogical Index. Free to use database [www.https://ogindex.org](http://www.https://ogindex.org)

For more details about the above please read about it in the Autumn Journal.

E-newsletter Editor: Joyce Jackman

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 the 1<sup>st</sup> day of October 2021.

Items must be in the 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

