

HEXHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Newsletter 45

Summer 2006

The Three Ages of a Garage *Dennis Hill*

For about 40 years the Newcastle motor engineering firm of George and Jobling had a garage on Priestpopple, Hexham. The principal of the

firm was Arthur George, born in 1875 in Dorset. Among his accomplishments he was an international standard swimmer and ice skater, a highly successful motor racing driver (1905-1920) and a pioneer aviator who designed, built and flew his own aeroplane (1909-10). Branches of George and Jobling were spread over the North of England and Glasgow. They were major Ford dealers but sold many other brands, including luxury and sports cars from Britain, France, Italy and America. Coming to Hexham for a holiday and research trip, I was surprised to find the old George and Jobling premises still standing and recognisable. In the library I found many adverts for the Firm in the Courant. I then found a picture in a book on Old Hexham by Morton Charlton showing the garage in 1914, as owned by Johnson's. George and Jobling came to the town just after the Great War. The premises back then looked much smaller, just the archway and charity shop front of today's building. Evidently some buildings were demolished to enlarge the premises. Two postcards sent to me by Colin Dallison show the garage c1939 and c1950. From these we see it almost as it is today. In fact, apart from the cars and names above shops, the pictures of 1950 and 2006 are almost identical. Arthur George died in 1951 but George and Jobling lived on. In the mid 1960's it looks like they expanded, cars being sold from Priestpopple and agricultural machinery from Gilesgate. This continued until about 1970, when the firm either went out of

business or were taken over by Fewster's. The Gilesgate premises continued as a garage too, eventually becoming Gilesgate Ltd now situated in Dene Park.

This is just scratching the surface, I need to come back to do further research to clarify dates and other details. Should anyone have any information on George and Jobling in Hexham, please get in touch. (See information wanted p.2)

Editorial

Anna Rossiter is taking a break from editing the newsletter. We should like to extend our best wishes for a speedy recovery and thank her for all the work she has carried out for the Society.

Helen Rutherford has taken on the role of editor and can be contacted at 4 Hackwood Park Hexham NE46 1AX, Telephone 601990 or by e mail on h.j.rutherford@fsmail.net

Any contributions for the next letter are always welcome. Please let us know what you are researching or interested in. Pictures or interesting snippets of local information are always welcome. The Society has over 250 members and therefore requests for help will reach a wide audience. This issue includes reviews of the Society's 2006 outings, news of new publications and much more.

STOP PRESS....

Hexham Lives

...includes 164 profiles of the great, the good and not so good of Hexham. Marvel at our entrepreneurial forebears... be amazed at the acts and antics of the clergy... be astounded that all this is available to members at a discounted price of £10. Buy early for Christmas!

Information Wanted

If you have any information for any of the requests below please either

email the person named direct or send via the editor Helen Rutherford.

1. Hexham Iron works.

Meryl Heirons (mchirons@tiscali.co.uk) is researching her family history and in particular William Dean owner of the Iron Works 1832. Any information would be gratefully received.

2. The Home Front

Dr Craig Armstrong of Newcastle University (CraigArm@aol.com) is researching the social history of the Home Front in the Second World War in the Northern United Kingdom (Northumberland, Durham, Cumbria and Scotland)

Anyone willing to be interviewed for a Tyne Tees Television series, *The North East at War*, or just for the purposes of Dr Armstrong's archive should contact him at the email address above or at 1 Brunswick Road, Shiremoor. Newcastle Upon Tyne NE27 0TP

3. Slaley Hall Rockery

Clifford Elmer of Cheadle (acombsboys@yahoo.co.uk) is researching his family history. His great grandfather John Radband worked for Backhouses, a landscape and Alpine garden company, who worked on the rock garden at Slaley Hall which was built around 1910. Mr Elmer can be contacted at 8 Balmoral Avenue Cheadle Hume Cheadle Cheshire SK8 5EQ

4. Hexham Mart

Phil Huntley (phil@coquetdale.net) is looking for information on the history of Hexham Mart for an article for *The Northumbrian*. Mr Huntley can be

contacted at 9 Allerburn Lea, Alnwick NE66 2NJ

5. Stublick Colliery, Langley

Fiona Wooler (fionawooler@talk21.com) of North Pennines Archaeology Ltd is looking for information about records relating to Stublick Colliery, Langley, Haydon Bridge. Anyone with knowledge of the site or any records relating to it

6. Round the County

The ANHLS is looking for photographs taken at their *Round the County* events, for display at the October Members Day and AGM. Please contact Mrs E Richardson c/o The Black Gate Castle Garth Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1RQ. All pictures will be scanned and returned.

7. George and Jobling



Dennis Hill, the author of the article on the front page, (DHill@stephensoncoll.ac.uk) can be contacted at 107 Manor Road Coalville Leicestershire LE67 2FW.

News

***Hexham Historian* No 16**

The next issue of *Hexham Historian* will be ready at the start of September, available at the 12th September meeting and delivered to members soon afterwards. It will be packed with the usual variety. There are articles by Rodney Higgins on Hexham clockmakers and on the story of a house in Alexandra Terrace; by Anna Rossiter on Hexham suffragettes; and by David Jennings on the numbers involved in the Militia Riot. There is also a piece by Charlie Coombes on the medieval wayside cross remains of the area. Members have kindly supplied photographs to illustrate this, and one set has arrived anonymously. I've forgotten who it was generously offered these, and I can't acknowledge; so if you sent an envelope packed with cross photographs and haven't heard back, please let me know. *Tom Corfe*

David Jennings' files in the Border Library. A complete index of these files is now available from Rodney Higgins. In addition to the extensive files David donated to Hexham, he also deposited with the Library a large number of books on local history and related subjects that is currently being catalogued. The catalogue will be available later this year.

ANLHS News

Tyne and Tweed will be published as a double bumper edition in September/October to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Society. Cover price is £2.50.

Diary Dates

Programme for remainder of 2006
All held in the Trinity Methodist Hall
Beaumont Street at 7.30pm
12th September George Thornton
(Fenham) *The Miracles of St Cuthbert*

10th October Harry Beamish (National Trust Archaeologist) *The Dunstanburgh Castle Survey*

14th November Peter Ryder (Historic buildings Consultant) and Tom Corfe (HLHS) *Walls and Gates of Hexham*.

Friday 8th September to Tuesday 3rd October in Hexham Library. Display from the mining section of the *Wor Language* project run under the auspices of Northumbria University. Further information on the project can be found at: <http://www.billygriff.sathosting.net/hlf/> Members with a particular knowledge of or interest in local dialect can contribute to the project through the website.

Tuesday 3rd October: Bill Griffiths, project leader, will talk on the *Wor Language* project and north-east dialect in general at Hexham Library; time to be confirmed so watch out for posters nearer the date. *Mark Benjamin*

The Arbeia Society

Conference: Understanding Hadrian's Wall. 3-5 November 2006 in the Customs House Theatre South Shields.

The conference begins on Friday 3 November with a reception at South Shields Town Hall followed by a lecture by Professor David Breeze. The main themes of the conference over the weekend will be the building and history of the Wall; comparisons with other European frontiers; the significance of small finds and ceramics and new potential in the study of the Wall. There is a conference dinner on Saturday night.

The conference is to mark the publication of the fourteenth edition of the *Handbook to the Roman Wall* and the speakers are leading Wall scholars or experts on Roman frontiers. It is a wonderful opportunity to ask questions and take part in discussions and anyone with an interest is welcome.

For further details, or to reserve a place, please contact the secretary of the Society Liz Elliott (liz.elliott@twmuseums.org.uk)
Arbeia Roman Fort Baring Street South Shields NE33 2BB.

Publication News

Hexham Lives

The Society's latest project got under way last autumn, and has now reached completion. Occasional Publication No 7, *Hexham Lives*, is ready. A score of members have contributed towards this collection of 164 short biographies, of people who were involved in the development of Hexham and others who made little perceptible contribution but whose quiet lives show what manner of place Hexham was. Others, who left Hexham behind early in their lives, earned fame that reflected on their home town, and yet others visited only briefly but left their mark.

Hexham Lives starts with Flavinus, who lived long before there was a Hexham, and whose tombstone arrived in the town six centuries after his death. Most of the assorted saints, bishops, kings and queens, warriors and nobles who appeared in Hexham's earlier centuries make an appearance. These were times when Hexham played an important part in the history of the North and of England as a whole, and, arguably, of all Christendom. Later residents may have performed on a narrower stage, but their lives were no less fascinating: there was Reynold Carnaby who served Henry VIII; Thomas Tillam who was sadly misled by a 'False Jew'; Ann Cook who served gargantuan meals at the Black Bull and squabbled with the powers that be; William Chapman who planned a canal and then a railway; Joseph Catherall who set up a newspaper... And so on. In Victorian times a host of hard-working, God-fearing men made a new Hexham. The book finishes with their 20th-century successors, an assortment that includes parsons, poets, politicians and everything else from shopkeepers to builders and garage-owners. You will find Savage and McVitie, Gibson and Pescott,

Robb and Rippon, Loftus Bates alongside Joe Newman.

Hexham Lives will be of interest to everyone who takes an interest in Hexham and its people. HLHS members should take advantage of their opportunity to purchase at the special price of £10. *Tom Corfe*.

Publications Storage

The Society is seeking a new home for its stock of publications, which up to now have been stored at no cost.

The stock is in boxes occupying a total space of about 100 cubic feet (for example a cube 4ft. 9in. high, but the boxes can be arranged to suit the space). It needs to be accessed about four times a year. Any member who can volunteer to provide storage would be saving the Society a considerable sum at commercial storage rates.

We would welcome any possibilities and if you can help please contact Ted Wall on 01434600422.

History Matters- pass it on.

A national campaign was launched in July to promote the study of history on the basis that "a society out of touch with its past cannot have confidence in its future". A passionate speech by Stephen Fry launched the initiative, which aims to raise public awareness of history and heritage and their importance to the present. Whilst there is an increasing public interest in history, the study of history in schools and universities is being undervalued as against more fashionable and vocational subjects. The dynamic nature of history and its relevance must be communicated to children and young people. As Fry eruditely explains "History is not the story of strangers... it is the story of us had we been born a little earlier. History is memory... History is not abstraction, it is the enemy of abstraction."

There is a website at www.historymatters.org.uk giving more details and Stephen Fry's speech was published in *The Observer* 9 July 2006.

Outings

Kirkleatham and the James Cook Museum.

A trip to Middlesbrough in the pouring rain is probably not most peoples idea of a fun way to spend a Saturday however they would be wrong (well, perhaps not about the rain) The more intrepid members of the society braved the unseasonable weather and set out for a hidden corner of Teesside to visit Sir William Turners's Hospital at Kirkleatham. After a journey through the industrial centre of the North East, past the rotating turbines at Nissan and the industrial sprawl of Middlesbrough, the party was welcomed into a different century by The Chairman of the Trustees of the almshouses, Peter Sotheran in picturesque Kirkleatham. The Hospital, using the term in its archaic sense meaning a place offering hospitality, was founded in 1676 and still provides sheltered accommodation to a number of residents with " a definable need" (two of whom provided an excellent buffet, including home baked pie, for lunch) Mr Sotheran gave an entertaining an informative talk in the Chapel, overseen by the (strangely lifelike) death mask of William Turner himself.

There was then time to explore the nearby Church of Saint Cuthbert, also conducted by the Zelig-like Mr Sotheran.

The party then moved on to the James Cook Museum in Middlesborough which was an interactive journey through Cook's life and voyages set in a beautiful park, which would have afforded plenty of opportunities for walks if the weather had been kinder (have I mentioned it was raining?)

Donald the coach driver then drove everyone home, via a different route, variety being the spice of life etc.

The trip was a success and thanks are due to JB for his organisation (no points for the weather) and certainly a similar trip, to include the museum at Kirkleatham, would be well worth a day of anyone's time. *Helen Rutherford.*

North Tynedale Bastles

On a beautiful evening in July a group of Local History Society members gathered at the new Heritage Centre in Bellingham. After a good look at this small but fascinating museum the real business of the evening began with a short drive to the west of the village to view the Bastle known as The Hole. Here HLHS member Peter Ryder gave a most interesting account of the history of Bastle Houses (which are not the same as Pele Towers) after which members were free to explore the building, including climbing up the outside staircase to the second floor.

From here the convoy of cars moved south to the gatehouse Bastle where we were met by Mrs Waddington, who owns the property. She obviously was delighted to show us around, and carefully pointed out the features of the building. Most memorable of these were the huge tree trunks, which form the ceiling of the lower storey and the outside staircase, shorter but more alarming than that at the Hole. Not all the group risked the climb!

The third and final Bastle to be visited was Black Middens, which differs from the previous two in being roofless and standing alone in open country. It is, however, under the protection of English Heritage. Once again Peter Ryder's comments on the building proved most helpful, and he was thanked by Marjorie Dallison for his contribution to our understanding of these historical remains, once so important a feature of Northumbrian life.

Thanks must also go to JB Jonas for his organisation of what was in every respect a thoroughly enjoyable outing. *Mollie Telford*

Hole Bastle (taken from www.borderreivers.co.uk)



**Gift Aid: a message
from the Treasurer**

If you are a taxpayer, by signing a Gift Aid form the Society can reclaim 28% of your subscription from the Inland Revenue. I have just submitted our returns for 2006 and will be getting a cheque for £388.80 from the taxman. This is of huge benefit to the Society and helps to keep our subscriptions low. If you are a taxpayer and have not completed a Gift Aid form I will be delighted to send you one. If you are not sure, give me a ring on 01434 602941, or drop me a line at Munro, 49 Leazes Park, Hexham, NE46 3AX or contact me at the next meeting.
Rodney Higgins