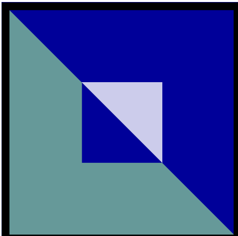


Records & Recollections

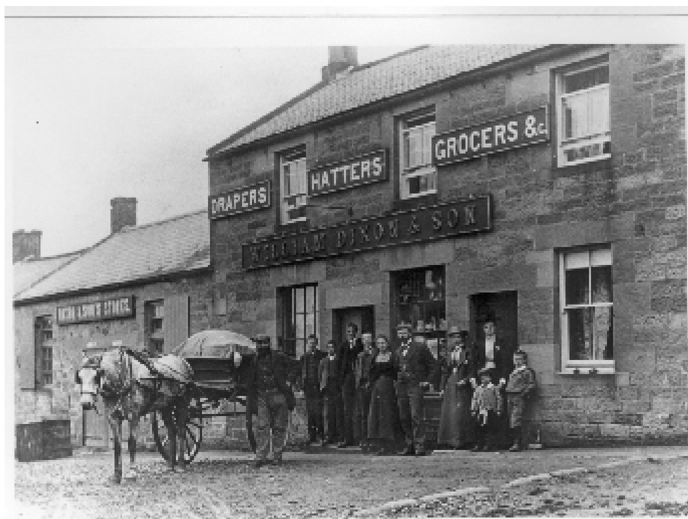
Aln & Breamish Local History Society

New Series Volume 1 Issue 6

June 2006

Photographs of Glanton and Whittingham

The Aln and Breamish Local History Society now has a good collection of historic photographs of people and places in Glanton and Whittingham. They are held in digital form and it is proposed to print and laminate a set for display purposes. Not all have been identified, but we are hoping that people will come forward and help with identification when they are put on display.



The picture at right showing Dixon's shop on the green at Whittingham is a good example— and probably the oldest—of the pictures we have. The author of *Whittingham Vale*, David Dippie Dixon, whose father established the shop, may be somewhere in the group of Dixon family members and shop assistants shown here. Does anyone know whether he is seen here? David was born in 1842 and went to school in Whittingham, after which he and his brother went to Rothbury to run the family shop there. We would also like to know the date of the photograph. If you have any knowledge or even an informed guess, please let the editor know.

Chairman's report

The Society continues to flourish. We now have 51 members and a satisfactory credit balance of £412. We have a full programme for the remainder of 2006 and this is set out at the end of this newsletter. If any members have any suggestions for talks in the future the Secretary would be most grateful for these.

We now have a complete collection of past issues of *Records and Recollections* from 1974 to 1985 and the Secretary, ably assisted by Richard Freeman, is transferring the articles to disk to create an easily accessible and permanent record. These articles contain a unique record of the history and personalities of the Whittingham Vale area and it is intended to select articles of particular interest and re-publish them in a combined edition. However, this is a painstaking task and it will be some time before it is finished. (Cont. on back page)

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A note from the editor

Apart from the article on Sir Raleigh Grey, which is related to an earlier article on the Browne family of Callaly Castle, the theme of this issue is the second world war and the period which immediately followed it.

We are very grateful to Mr James Foggon of Glanton for sharing his recollections of the Home Guard and prisoners of war, as well as some of his photographs. We also thank Neil McKichan who recorded the facts about a displaced person, John Daugal, now deceased, who became a well-known character in the area.

We hope that you will enjoy this issue and if you have any recollections of earlier times in the area, the editor would love to hear from you!

BW

Sir Raleigh Grey: Whittingham's Connection with the Jameson Raid by Bridget Winstanley

"Among the officers who rode with Dr Jameson was Colonel Raleigh Grey, Commandant of the newly formed Bechuanaland Border Police, on secondment from his regiment, the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons".

The Jameson Raid

The Jameson Raid of 1895/6 was an armed incursion under Dr Leander Starr Jameson into the sovereign territory of the South African Republic. Its purpose was said to be to come to the aid of foreign nationals (mainly British) in Johannesburg allegedly suffering wrongs under the Boer Republic. Dr Jameson, a close friend and associate of Cecil John Rhodes, had been appointed Resident Commissioner of a strip of land along the eastern border of the Bechuanaland Protectorate recently awarded by the British Government to the British South Africa Company, a chartered company, for the purpose of building a railway.

The raid came to nothing – the force was captured before reaching its objective and the officers were returned to England for sentencing while the plotters in Johannesburg were sentenced to death for treason but ended up by spending various lengths of time in Pretoria jail. Most were released early on bail and promises of good behaviour. None actually paid the ultimate penalty. So it all seemed to have fizzled out, but the judgment of history is more severe.

Elizabeth Longford writes in her book *The Jameson Raid*

> When naked aggression does occur two things must be examined, the consequences and the occasion. The consequences are always disastrous. Those of the Jameson Raid are nowhere painted more vividly than by Sir Winston Churchill in the fist few pages of his *World Crisis.* …"I date the beginning of these violent times to the Jameson Raid". Abroad, the Raid had much to do with the outbreak of the Boer War, made its small but poisonous contribution to World War I and bedevilled the development of a multi-racial society in Africa. People felt that the Raid had lowered British standards. This in turn poisoned the climate of morality all over the world.

Sir Raleigh Grey in Southern Africa

Raleigh Grey is the figure at top right in this photograph of Jameson and the officers who took part in the Raid.

Among the officers who rode with Dr Jameson was Colonel Raleigh Grey, Commandant of the newly formed Bechuanaland Border Police, on secondment from his regiment, the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons. Grey was born in 1860, the eldest son of Colonel Alfred Grey and a great grandson of the first Earl Grey. He was a kinsman of the fourth Earl Grey who was Administrator of Rhodesia from 1894 to 1897 and afterwards Governor General of Canada.

By the time of the raid, he had seen service in the Zulu War of 1877/8 as a very young man. After that conflict, along with a number of officers from his regiment, he came under the influence of Cecil John Rhodes, diamond magnate, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, founder of the British South Africa Company, and passionate advocate of the extension of the British Empire. Grey continued his service (under Rhodes's chartered company, the British South Africa Company) in Matabeleland and Mashonaland, later to become Southern Rhodesia, and later still, Zimbabwe. He commanded a column in the Matabele War of 1893. No doubt, if he had not been in jail for his part in the Jameson Raid, he would have taken part in the Matabele War of 1896.

As we have recounted, the raiders, a force of some 500 men and officers, got no further than Doornkop, near Krugersdorp in the Transvaal, where Grey was wounded in the foot

Sir Raleigh Grey

and, with the rest of the force, taken prisoner. Back in England six of the leaders were received with rapturous acclamation by crowds waiting outside the courtroom but were sentenced to prison for between fifteen and five months – Grey received a five months' sentence. These were served initially in Wormwood Scrubs and later in Holloway.

By the time of the South African (Boer) War of 1899 to 1902 he had been restored to his regiment and commanded Australian and New Zealand regiments. He was twice mentioned in dispatches. He retired from the army in 1904. His obituary in *The Times* describes him as a leading figure in politics, mining and farming in Southern Rhodesia. His company Rhodesia Lands Ltd included mining interests. He grew maize, tobacco, oranges and cotton. His step-great granddaughter, Mrs Olga Kerr wrote (personal communication):

> [He] owned extensive lands in the Mazoe (now Mazowe) Valley. He also had a farm called Borrowdale (now a "posh" suburb of Harare (Salisbury). There were ranches as Mayo and Bainwick. These were all concessions, given by, I presume, Rhodes. All virgin bush!

In 1922 Southern Rhodesia was emancipated from the Company and had to decide whether to joint the Union of South Africa or become a separate self-governing state. Grey favoured joining the Union of South Africa, but he lost his Salisbury seat in the election of 1923 over this issue. He was created KBE in 1919. He was already CMG and CVO.

Marriage and death

Towards the end of the South African War (in 1901) Raleigh Grey had married Mary Isabell Browne, widow of Alexander Henry Browne of Callaly Castle. They made their home at Lorbottle Hall which at that time was part of the Callaly Estate. Mary Isabell was ten years his senior – fifty-one years old to his forty-one. His step-great granddaughter remembers that he always carried a rather bad-tempered parrot on his shoulder. In his obituary he is described as "a handsome man with a bluff military manner". He is remembered by his wife's family in a somewhat different way. Anecdotal evidence draws a picture of a man who was doted upon and indulged by his older wife whose financial resources were much greater than his and who could deny him nothing. This did not make for happy relationships within the family. It is said that when he died, in a London nursing home in 1936, his step-grandson Alexander Simon Cadogan Browne, refused to let the body lie at Callaly Castle before his burial in Whittingham churchyard and it spent the night rather ignominiously in an Alnwick auctioneer's premises.

Mary Isabell died later in the same year and the couple are buried together in Whittingham churchyard.

" ...Raleigh Grey had married Mary Isabell Browne, widow of Alexander Henry Browne of Callaly Castle. They made their home at Lorbottle Hall which at that time was part of the Callaly Estate".

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Longford, Lady Elizabeth *The Jameson Raid: the prelude to the Boer War.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982.

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James Foggon's Memories

Recorded by Mike Bridges

Schooldays

I was born at Grange Moor just outside of Scots Gap in 1921 and came to Cartington Bankhead farm before I was a year old. At the age of five, I began school at Thropton in the same place that it is today and walked there by myself. I left home at 8 o'clock in the morning in order to walk the 3 miles by 9 o'clock. On very wet or snowy days my mother let me stay at home. When I first started at school the postman was a man called Jack Donkin who delivered mail to all the outlying farms on a bicycle from Thropton. In the winter, when the roads were heavily blocked with snow, he made the journey on foot between the farms straight over the fields. Even in the worst conditions, the mail always arrived, even though it had been posted with a halfpenny stamp the day before in London. Anyhow, eventually Jack was given a motorcycle with a side-car and he used to pick me up a little way up the road from school at a place we called Luke's Farm. He used to stop there for a cup of tea and then he put me in the sidecar with all the letters and parcels. He said that if an Inspector saw me in it, he would get into trouble, so I always had to have the lid closed with just a little gap for me to breathe but at least I did not have the long walk back to the farm. As soon as I got back to the farm, I used to rush off and milk one of the cows sitting on a three-legged stool. My headmaster, Mr Slater, let me out of school a little before the others, so that I could get the lift. At school there were only two classes for children from five to eleven and between fifteen and twenty in each class. Mr Slater took one class and Mrs Murray whom we called Ginger Murray took the other. I remember that we had a combustion stove in the school and we used to take a tin can of cold tea with us to school and heat it on the stove. Once, every two or three months, the attendance officer used to come to the school and peruse the register and if he thought that any of us were swinging the lead, he would visit our parents. None of the children was held back to work on the farms but every year, in October, we used to get one week's holiday called Blackberry week or Tatty week when we used to help the farmers pick the potatoes. Discipline was very strict and the headmaster used to use a garden cane to punish us. Often my hands were bruised black and blue, so when I went home I hid my hands in my pockets. However my mother used to tell me to take them out or I would split the seams and when she saw the bruises she would give me another thrashing and send me to bed with no supper.

"When I first started at school the postman … used to pick me up … then he put me in the sidecar with all the letters and parcels. I always had to have the lid closed with just a little gap for me to breathe …".

At eleven years of age I went to Tomlinson's High School in Rothbury where I remember we wore a badge with three greyhounds on it. I still had to walk to Thropton School where a bus took me to Rothbury. There were three different age group forms there and the boys had to do woodworking whilst the girls did domestic science. We boys were allowed to buy the produce that the girls had made.

Farm Life

Back on the farm, my father looked after the four shire horses. He had two for ploughing, one for carting and usually a young one which he would have bred and would be breaking to the harness after eighteen months. First of all, they would soften the horse's mouth by putting a chain snaffle into its mouth which it chewed on. Then the horse would be made to walk in front of two men who each held one of its two long reins behind it. At this time, it would learn the commands like Heck for left and Gee for right. Then it would be tied up in the stable and my father would gradually lower himself onto the horse's back from the rafters to get it used to having things on it's back before it was put into the shafts of a cart. He started work at half past five in the morning. At that time he fed the horses and cleaned them out, came back for a quick cup of tea and then started work at half past six, either ploughing or carting. At eight-o-clock my mother always took him a bacon and egg sand-

James Foggan's Memories

wich and a cup of tea to wherever he was working and at half past eleven, the horses were brought back to the stables and fed and watered. My father then had his dinner at 12 o'clock and started work with the horses at 1 o'clock, only after the horses had had at least two hours' rest. At half past three, my mother took the tea out to my father and he finished work at 6 o'clock but still had to groom the horses. After his supper he again went out at eight-o-clock to give the horses a final feed of the day. By Jove, the horses were well looked after!

Farming with horses lasted right up to the Second World War although by then some contractors had tractors and were hiring themselves out to the farms. My brother and I did that and we were paid piecework but got a bonus if we ploughed more than four acres in a day. A good horse ploughman could only plough one acre a day.

Pig Day

A part of my father's wages was in perks. He got one hundred yards of potatoes as he dug them or he could have half a ton of potatoes dressed – that is with all the little ones taken out. We could get our milk, butter and eggs off the farm but we had to pay for those. Another perk was that he was allowed to keep one or two pigs. He paid between ten shilling and a pound for a pig. They were put into the hemmels in May after the cattle had been turned out from their winter homes and ran around there through the summer. Just before the cattle came back, they were put in the pigsty. All farm cottages had a pigsty. Then my mother took over the feeding. She firstly boiled a big pan of all the little potatoes that had come up in my father's hundred yards and fed them to the pigs with meal. Some of the pigs by this time were thirty stone. Then came Pig Day. In the cottage we had an open fire with a boiler on one side to do the washing and an oven on the other. My mother boiled up a big pan of water. The farmer, Mr Murray, arrived at 10 o'clock and the pig was lead out into the middle of the yard and he killed it with a four-pound axe with a blow to the top of its head. Then he cut its throat and as the blood spurted out it was collected in a big brown bowl and it was my job to stir it with a brown spoon. They all shouted at me to do it quickly so that the blood would not curdle but even then half of it got thrown away, as it had gone hard. One day an old farmer came to watch and he asked me what I was doing with the spoon. I told him and he said "Get your sleeve up, man and use your hand!". And it worked because all the vein-like things in the blood stuck to your fingers and you could flick them away and you lost hardly any of the blood then. Then my mother took the bowl inside and put it on the hearth to keep it warm. Later she would add barley, mint, sage and the fat of the pigs' intestines which we called the pudden reddins. This mixture was put in the oven and out came beautiful black pudding. The boiling water that my mother had prepared was poured over the back of the pig and the hairs were scraped off with sharp knives. We erected a shearleg, a three-legged hoist and the pig was lifted up and the insides were cleaned out into a big bath. Then my father took out the heart and liver and kidneys and the rest was taken into the cottage in front of the fire to produce the pudden reddins. My mother took out the long intestines and scraped them three or four times in salt water and they became the skins for the sausages. My father cut the cheeks of the pig's head which we ate but my mother would never use the ears although a lot of people did. The head was known as potted head or brawn. The rest of the pig was eaten as sausage or bacon or as joints. We used the trotters to make jelly to go in with the sausage meat. At eight-o-clock at night, the carcass was still hanging and the farmer would come with his killing stool and a hand saw and saw the pig right down the middle. It was taken into our back kitchen and all the joints and muscles which we called cliers were taken out of the meat. They then rubbed a mixture of salt, sugar and pepper into the skin and it was carried into the pantry and put on a board. The board

"Get your sleeve up, man and use your hand! ".

James Foggon's Memories

was covered in straw and a thick layer of clean sheets. The other side of the pig was laid on top and the whole lot was turned over in about ten days. At that time, my mother or father used to go in and stick a skewer into the shoulder bone and smell it as this would tell them if it was going off. It lay there for three weeks and then it was taken out, the salt was wiped off and it was divided into big joints and hung on the hooks in the ceiling.

The Home Guard

From left: Bill English, Alistair Tait, Bob Short. Mr English appears to have an air rifle and Mr Tait a shotgun. His tin hat seems to be of the type worn by Italian soldiers. Photograph taken about 1940.

At fifteen I left school and worked with the cows at Cartington Bankhead but in 1939 the farmer retired and we moved to Titlington Hall in 1940. I joined the Home Guard as soon as it started at Bolton Village Hall and on the first night, we went down with nothing but our suits and caps. A man called Bill Mather who had been in the army was sergeant and Colonel Milvain of Eglingham Hall was the CO. A schoolmaster from Whittingham, Teddy Robson was the captain, Mr Hicks a vicar from Eglingham was the second lieutenant and Holderness Roddam from Roddam Hall was the major. We were told the next time to bring whatever weapons we had but some people had nothing. Eventually we got two rifles between us so that we could practise drills and finally we were issued with 300s not 303s. We had to wear an armband with LDV on it; we used to say that this meant Look, Duck and Vanish! After a while, we got rid of the armbands and they gave us khaki denim uniforms that were so big, you could have got another man in beside you. We had drill once a week and every night two of us were on all night duty at Jenny's Lantern above Bolton. One man was off duty while the other was on and we had to observe everything that was happening in the skies to the east and report it on forms that we were given. We used to see some great aerial combats, it was terrific and we got paid about two shillings a night! We used to save up all our wages to put on a dance at Bolton Hall and all the proceeds went to the Red Cross. One night we were told that the Germans had landed on the Kent coast and we had to pull old farm carts onto the roads to stop the German tanks! We also had a platform up a tree near Bolton Hall where we were supposed to go, to drop Molotov Cocktails on the enemy tanks. I remember that most of the halls in the area had army stationed in them and there was a searchlight battery at the T-junction just past Mile End farm on the road to Great Ryle. In spite of my Home Guard service, most of the time we felt untouched by the war apart from the rationing and the blackouts. Even so we were better off than the people in the towns were because we could always kill a pig, as long as the government did not find out!

The World of Work

1947 Fordson Major tractor.

Anyhow, after we moved to Titlington, I decided I did not want to work on a farm anymore and I got the worst job that I ever had. I worked for the County Council, painting white lines in the middle of the road! A day was like a week! So it was then that I started as a tractor contractor on the farms, on a Standard Fordson tractor – the best tractor ever made – even though at first the seat was completely exposed to the elements! I was working at Rothill one day and the farmer, Mr Rogerson, came up to me and asked how it was going. I told him well and he said, "Well, I've just come to tell you that I've bought the tractor, I've bought the binder, I've bought the plough and I've bought you and you start for me on Mon-

James Foggon's Memories

day". Whilst I was ploughing at Rothill one day, the army drew up with a 25 pounder set it up in a field, fired some shots at Thrunton Crag and drove off again. They were a common sight around Whittingham firing up at the crag, without any notice.

From left:
Sid Coe, Mr Blythe, Tom Robson, Bob Short

Prisoners of War

After Rothill, I went to work for the Ministry of Agriculture who had a farm at East Bolton and whilst there, I heard that they needed drivers for the prisoners of war at Whittingham, to take them out to the farms. Although people did not need to sit a driving test during the war, I had to have a test for the Ministry. I used to drop the prisoners off at the various farms and at the last one, I used to work for the day before making the return journey at night. During the war there were armed guards on the lorry but after the war, the prisoners were unguarded. There used to be about twenty prisoners in the lorry. The first prisoners were Italian and were useless workers. Picking potatoes was about all they could do and if they saw a woman coming along the road, that was that for the rest of the day! Callaly Castle was a Battle School where the troops trained under live ammunition and one day the soldiers managed to set the hillside of Long Crag on fire with incendiaries. The fire spread in the heather right over Thrunton Crag and left only a small cluster of larch trees at one end. The German prisoners were used to replant Thrunton Crag and I was in charge of them on my own but they were very good workers and never tried to escape or even get off work sick. Not many of them spoke much English so conversation with them was very limited other than them telling me the names of trees in German. But they were all very friendly. In 1947, we had a dreadful winter of snow which lasted from the beginning of January to April and there were rabbits starving everywhere as all they had to eat was the bark off the trees. The Germans found them very easy to catch, so they skinned them and took them back to the camp to be boiled but there was hardly anything on them. There was a chap called Peter Hornsby from Whittingham Grange who was a rabbit-catcher and he got all the skins from the prisoners and made a great killing from the sale of them! I noticed one of the German prisoners, one day, leaving a farm with a hessian sack. When I asked him what he wanted it for, he said he would make me a present. He made me one of the most comfortable and waterproof pair of slippers that I have ever had! After a while I was promoted to labour officer and spent the day in the office sorting out schedules and talking to farmers about what they needed doing. The prisoners were sent out each day with time sheets so that we knew how much to charge the farmers for the work. Lord Ravensworth employed a lot of prisoners as did Mr Beaven of Shawdon Hall. The camp at Whittingham had barbed wire around it but that was taken down in 1946 but the prisoners stayed in the camp. They did not come out to mix with the villagers. After the Germans were repatriated there were Polish displaced persons in the camp. They arrived with several large wooden barrels of soused herrings which seemed to be all they ever ate. After they left, there were Latvians and Estonians in the camp. I remember them mainly for the silver birch wine that they made and how they showed me the way to tap the birch trees for the juice. They finally left and they brought in the holiday campers. These were ordinary people from all walks of life who came for their holidays to the camp to be fed and have a bed and went and worked for the farmers through the day. The camp closed in the early fifties. My last contact with the German prisoners of war came only a few years ago, when on answering a knock at my door at Glanton Pike, I found one of the prisoners who was on holiday in England and had come to renew our acquaintance.

Home Guard, Alnwick Castle,1943

Back row, left to right:
1. Coulson Smith 2. Unknown – Alnham? 3. Jack Denham 4. Robinson (Alnham) 5. R. Herdman 6. Farrow 7. T. Laidler 8. Moscrop 9. T. Sprot 10. Fred Thompson 11. Adam Pringle 12. John Hall 13. James Foggon
Middle row:o
1. B. Mather 2. B. Beatie 3. Rufus Clark 4. Inglis 5. Jim Smith 6. Riddle 7. Unknown 8. K. Campbell 9. E. Mather 10. Sinclair 11. J. Weallens 12. George Hardy (Pyke) 12 J. Sinclair
Front row:
1. Frater 2. Turnbull (Broome Park) 3. D. Frater 4. Frater 5. J. C. Blythe 6. Lorrimer (Major) 7. H. Sordy 8. J. Drummond 9. Dennis Riddle 10. Fred Patterson 11. Bobby Rogerson (Scrainwood) 12. Matt Wilson 13. Bill Bland 14. Alex Bland 15. Unknown.

John Daugal—"John the Pole"

Recorded by Neil McKichan

" … at that time there was precious little to choose between the German and Russian armies".

The late John Daugal, familiarly but incorrectly known in and around the Whittingham as "John the Pole", was born in 1923 on a farm near Riga, the capital of Latvia. He had a sister living there with whom after the end of the Cold War he was able to re-establish contact and keep in touch by letter. When last heard of, sadly she was in poor health. So also was John with the scars of war-wounds but particularly failing eyesight, and he never felt able to make the journey for a re-union. He had two brothers in Siberia, but heard from them only once in slightly mysterious circumstances. John was reluctant to enlarge upon this but a European diplomat discretely handed him a small note written in pencil. John was able to recognise the handwriting and phraseology which could only have been that of one of the brothers. Thus a scrap of paper remained his one contact with those brothers since the second world war ended.

The circumstances leading to John living in retirement in Alnwick, so far away from and with so little contact with his relatives arose from the situation in Eastern Europe prior to and during the early years of the Second World War. Shortly before the outbreak of war in 1939, there had taken place the signing of the infamous Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of non-aggression between Germany and the USSR This pact included secret clauses, not then known to the outside world, in which part of Poland and the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were to be annexed by the USSR and the remainder of Poland, principally Danzig and the 'Polish Corridor" by Germany. The Latvian Government, as much in the dark as anyone else with regard to the secret 'carve-up' of Eastern Europe, sent a delegation to Moscow in 1940 to sign a pact of non-aggression and negotiate some trading agreements with the USSR. This delegation was hardly home when Russian tanks and troops began the invasion, cleverly timed to coincide with a national folk festival and public holiday which greatly impeded the mobilisation of such resistance as was possible. John, having served his apprenticeship, was at that time working as a cheese maker on the farm. He joined the resistance to the Russians, as did his brothers. In 1941, Germany launched Operation Barbarossa – the invasion of Russia – so that, though in fact for very different reasons, both the three Baltic States and Germany were fighting the Russians. As John said, at that time there was precious little to choose between the German and Russian armies.

John was badly wounded, principally having shrapnel in his ribs, lungs and one leg. He was evacuated by boat along the Baltic coast to Germany. This was designated a hospital ship, although without too much in the way of facilities. John had little faith in this fact for if the Russian planes or warships had located the vessel, Russia and Germany were not signatories to the Geneva Convention and in Russian eyes it would have been a bona fide target. However, the journey was safely made to Hamburg where he was in hospital for eleven months. Whilst John had great praise for the hospital working under difficult conditions, including allied bombing, he eventually took his own discharge for no better reason than that he couldn't stick the hospital routine any longer! Amongst treatment he had at that time was surgery from a Czech professor who removed shrapnel from close to John's heart by the use of magnets, it being considered too risky to operate by conventional techniques. In all he had four operations, three in the years before he came to England and one afterwards, (details of the whereabouts of the British hospitalisation are not known – John was rather vague about anything geographical – but it would have been interesting to have had details of this). He was left with some paralysis which slowly improved through time.

During and after his time in German hospitals he was able to meet up with some fellow Latvians and also with the Red Cross from which he got help, for example with clothes, but he was quite unable to obtain shoes anywhere. Eventually he entered a DP (displaced persons) camp at Gestaht in Schleswig-Holstein, between Lubeck and Hamburg in the British sector of occupied Germany. He was there for several months in overcrowded and unpleas-

John Daugal—"John the Pole"
recorded by Neil McKichan

"John struck up a particular friendship with the chauffeur to an English army captain, Eustace Smith, now deceased, of Titlington (who had a nephew at Thrunton)".

ant conditions. One average-size room might have had to do for four families and three single persons, there being 3-tier bunks in each corner and often in the middle as well. There were not enough bunks to go round so sharing had to take place. In his room some attempt was made to offer family privacy by means of screens made from old blankets, although these themselves were in short supply so it was only the ones in deplorable condition that were put to this use. Food consisted of soup and bread with one cup of milk per day. John told me that he would never eat a turnip again for this was the main constituent of the soup.

John struck up a particular friendship with the chauffeur to an English army captain, Eustace Smith, now deceased, of Titlington (who had a nephew at Thrunton). Through the good offices of Captain Smith he obtained a post in the British Military Fire Service, but he was found to be too unfit for this or any related work other than that of telephonist which itself was not easy because English was not his natural language. DPs were offered the chance of classes in occupied Germany which were pretty basic but better than nothing. John elected to attend those in horticulture because he didn't want to go back to cheese making. More importantly, he knew that as a DP if he were sent anywhere he would probably end up doing basic farm labouring in conditions that would bear no resemblance to those that we have grown used to during our lifetime. He had an interview with a person from the United Nations Organization and because his papers showed him to be employed by the British Army as a fireman, he came to England.

This happened in 1947. He crossed to Hull overnight and went to a former army camp in Yorkshire, probably at Sutton, which was now being used as a transit camp for DPs. From there he chose to come north because of the previously mentioned Titlington connection with Captain Smith. He was sent to an ex-German POW camp at Low Lynn, near Beal where he spent the winter. He was then transferred to another ex-POW camp at Wooler which he described as decidedly upmarket from Low Lynn.

From there he went to work as a gardener for Lord Ravensworth at Eslington Park. There were then seven full time gardeners at Eslington but most of these were paid off after the tragic death of the Earl in a car smash. John had moved to the Whittingham camp in 1948 and was able to travel to work by bike (which he thought might be one reason why he retained his job). At that time there were about thirty DPs in the camp, mainly Latvians and Poles with one or two Estonians. This is where his local nick-name John-the-Pole originated. Of the other inmates and staff John remembers John Storey, the Warden, the Assistant Warden Tommy Green "who married the sister of Raymond Johnson". (Why did this scrap of information stand out in John's recital of anecdotes, all told with much cheerful good humour, one wonders). He recalls the Estonian cook who got the job not because of his culinary skills but because he was a cripple!). Jimmy Foggon was the foreman and George Anderson and Dryden Dodds were the drivers delivering and collecting the DPs to and from work. John often wondered what happened to Freddie the Latvian who was the camp cleaner and who he recalled with affection.

In 1951, John went to Glen Aln as gardener to Mrs Cawley. He was there for several years and only left because he now felt sufficiently self-confident to go self-employed. His self-reliant nature stood him in good stead not just then but in later life when failing eyesight began to make life difficult for him. During his time at the camp the Immigration Officer called on him only once, when in fact he should have been under reasonably regular supervision. John did not recall the camp closing for by that time he had long left and gone to work at Glen Aln and lived on Lemmington Bank.

John worked for a long time at Callaly Castle. He recalls only one altercation with "The Major" who he thought a good employer. To the end, he described his sense of pride and achievement in maintaining to a special standard those parts of the garden which were open

John Daugal—"John the Pole"
recorded by Neil McKichan

to the public. Prior to a visit to Whittingham arranged for him in 1990 when he re-visited several old friends including Miss Robson, formerly of the Castle Inn, Norman Fatkin, Doug and Joan Breeze and Dryden and Rose Dodds, he had only been back to the village once to attend the funeral of Major Browne. Although he lived by now in Alnwick, the tone of John's voice was such that one felt he would have attended Major Browne's funeral if he had had to walk all the way.

Space does not permit the recording of all the people, places and events John recalled. He spoke with affection of Mrs Ropner with the meals-on-wheels. One believes it to be really true when he said with pride that there was not a house in the locality that he had either not been in or whose door would be opened to him if he knocked. His happiest moments were probably in the Castle Inn when under the auspices of Miss Robson. They must have been happy times for him after the horrors of earlier times - the singing and the stories, of the times when the bar was so full folk were having to sit on the stairs, of the shepherd's suppers ... but one could go on and on with his reminiscences

It was a privilege to bring him back to Whittingham in 1990 when a tight timetable of visits to friends would have filled a second volume of Dippie Dixon's "Whittingham Vale" For John wasn't just a friend to everyone, he was something of an historian even if his geography was a bit weak. It was far into the night before he was returned safely to his trim little flat in Alnwick and then only after promises that he would return to visit others he had missed. One is left with the feeling that beginning on a humble cheese farm, if fate had been kinder to John, he had the potential to do much. It is sad that so little of his life has been recorded but John would say "Yes, but that applied to so many of my friends and relations". Could we say the same about his brothers in Siberia? I guess so.

Callaly Castle in and after the War

The following is an extract from a talk given by Major ASC Browne and published in *Records and Recollections*, volume 2, no. 7, Spring 1979:

"Quite early in the war I was called up and went to Darlington. I came home on leave to find a policeman waiting for me. He told me that soldiers had been to Chillingham Castle and that they were coming to Callaly. I would have to clear out.

I was a bit upset, but they came. They belonged to the East Lancashire Regiment. They pulled everything out of the stables and settled in. Nissen huts were built round about. I think we must have had some 50,000 troops at Callaly during the war – there was among others a Battle School, a Battery of Gunners and Tanks, and soldiers were there until the end of the campaign.

Sometime after I came back from the war, we were out with a shooting party, and suddenly a battery of gunners came charging up and started shooting in the middle of our beat. Of course they frightened everything off.

I said to the man in charge, "Really, you might have waited until after we'd gone". To which he replied there was a war on. I said that there was no war going on here, but he replied, "Ah, but there is still a war going on in Japan". So he finished his exercise and spoilt our shoot.

The castle was a hospital during the war with about 110 beds".

"I said to the man in charge, "Really, you might have waited until after we'd gone". To which he replied there was a war on".

The Aln & Breamish Local History Society

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About the Society

The Aln and Breamish Local History Society provides a lively programme of historical lectures and publications. A minimum of six lectures a year, three in the Spring and three in the Autumn, are arranged. In addition, there is a speaker at the Annual General Meeting in June.

Talks take place in the Whittingham Memorial Hall at 7.30 unless otherwise indicated and are followed by coffee or tea and biscuits. If there is sufficient demand, meetings may be held in other villages in the Aln and Breamish valleys.

Excursions

We try to arrange excursions to places of historical interest within our region. Do contact the Secretary if you have any ideas for places to visit.

Bulletin

We provide members (as part of their subscription benefits) with a newsletter called *Records and Recollections* which appears twice a year in Winter and Summer. Please let us have your memoirs of life in your village in earlier times, old photographs (to be copied and returned) and anything else which recalls life in past times. The magazine also carries news of all the Society's activities.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions have been set at £8 per individual member and £12 for joint members living in the same household. Visitors may attend meetings on payment of £2 per meeting. These payments include the tea and coffee with biscuits provided at each meeting.

2006 / 7 Programme

25 June Social event with visit to Whittingham Tower

13 September JM Almond on History from Gravestones.

11 October Steve Bangs on History from Folk Songs.

8 November – Alistair Sinton on A walk from Tynemouth to Berwick upon Tweed

2007

14 March John Field on the History of Durham Cathedral

11 April Tony Henfrey on the Zulu War and the Atkinsons of Lorbottle Hall

9 May To be announced

13 June AGM

Chairman's report (cont. from p. 1)

Some members have reported difficulties in hearing speakers at our meetings. We will experiment with the placing of the amplifying equipment and if necessary acquire a more powerful microphone so that this problem can be overcome.

Next year we begin the programme with two local speakers. John Field of Callaly Mill is writing the official history of Durham Cathedral to be published in November. We look forward learning more about this beautiful building and its rich history when he speaks to us in March. In April we will hear from our President, Tony Henfrey, who is an expert on the Zulu War and in particular, the Battle of Isandhlwana. The area has an unlikely connection with this battle (in which the British were soundly beaten by the Zulus) in that a young man, Charles Atkinson, who lived at Lorbottle Hall, was killed there—his memorial is in St Bartholomew's Church, Whittingham.

George Winstanley

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