

Records & Recollections

Newsletter of the Aln
and Breamish Local
History Society

New Series Volume 1 No. 2

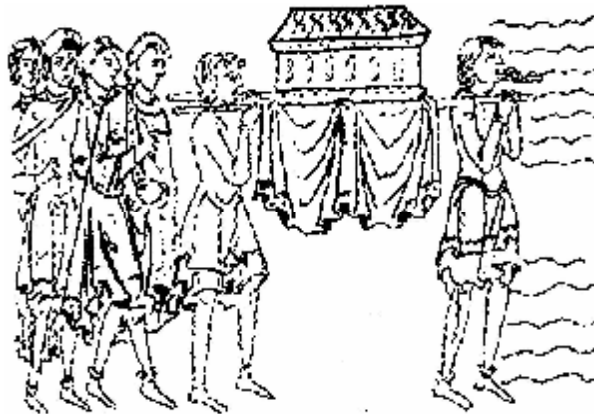
June 2004

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Society has got off to a good start. So far we have had four evening lectures and have issued our first *Records and Recollections* which was well received despite a printing error which cut off the final sentence of my last report! We now have 50 members and an interesting programme of speakers to take us into 2005.

Earlier this year we applied for a grant from the *Awards for All* Lottery agency to purchase audio-

visual equipment and to help with printing costs. We were awarded £2005 and with this we bought a screen, a projector, amplification equipment and an induction loop. This equipment is portable so we are not tied to holding talks in Whittingham and can use venues in other villages. We still have some of the grant remaining to help with printing costs. On behalf of all members I would like to thank Norman Dunn for putting together this application.



"posthumous wanderings"

This equipment was used

for the first time on 10 March when Steve Bangs addressed the Society on "The life and posthumous wanderings of a great Northumbrian" – a talk and slide show on St Cuthbert, viewed from a historical rather than a religious point of view. (See illustration) Steve set the scene by describing the extent of Northumbria in the 7th century: a kingdom which stretched from the Humber to a line north of Edinburgh. Cuthbert was probably born somewhere in the Cheviot Hills and spent his early life as a shepherd. He was called to be a monk and joined the monastery at Melrose which, like all Christian institutions in the kingdom, adhered to the Celtic tradition of Christianity. Cuthbert was called upon by the king to start a new monastery at Ripon. It was here that he first showed his gift for loving and being loved by the common people. His desire for solitude led him to Lindisfarne and later to the Farne islands. During his lifetime,

the marriage of the King to a Kentish princess who adhered to the Roman tradition led to the Synod of Whitby and the acceptance throughout the kingdom of the Roman version of Christianity.

This most interesting talk was enjoyed by about 25 people who braved the inclement weather to attend.

About 30 people attended the talk on 21 April by John Almond on "A History of the Border Country". This well illustrated talk ranged over a considerable period beginning with the Pleistocene Ice Age and prehistoric settlements and stone circles and going on to describe the many incursions to our region by for instance the Anglo Saxons, the Vikings and the Normans. The talk became a guided tour to the many fine buildings in the area – the churches, the castles and the pele towers. All in all a most interesting talk which was much enjoyed by the audience.

I hope we will have a good turn out for our Annual General Meeting on 16 June when we will reconstitute the Committee to build on the good start that has been made.

George Winstanley

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Special points of interest:

- Lottery award for our Society (Chairman's report)
- Bessie Clark's memoirs continued
- A visit to Whittingham in the 1940s
- a policeman's life in Glanton in 1905
- Plus—news of the Reticulum Project and two new publications on Whittingham Church

RETICULUM PROJECT SHORTLISTED FOR GULBENKIAN PRIZE 2004

Jo Catling (seen right), Education Officer for the Reticulum and Flavinus Projects, is one of our members and lives in Whittingham. The Reticulum Project was short-listed for the 2004 Gulbenkian Prize for Museum of the Year. The Museum of Antiquities is the first university museum to be shortlisted for the award, the largest arts prize in the UK. Reticulum started in 2000 as a joint venture between the Museum of Antiquities and the first schools in the Blyth Valley to explore the use of IT in teaching history, particularly the history of the Romans in



Northumberland. Since then, it has developed into a completely new method of engaging children's interest in their past in a way which has delighted the children, their teachers, the Museum staff and the wider archaeological world. Now the Reticulum website and Teachers' Pack have been launched so the rest of the world can see what has been exciting the children of Northumberland. For those of you who wish to look at the Website, the address is:

<http://museums.ncl.ac.uk/reticulum/>

NEW PUBLICATIONS ABOUT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH, WHITTINGHAM

Geoffrey Peberdy lived in Whittingham village for fifty years and after retirement from medicine devoted his time to writing about subjects of local historical interest. Two manuscripts on which he was working at the time of his death in 2001 are now being published thanks to the co-operation of his family and Richard Verrill of Glanton who had been working with Dr Peberdy on the illustrations. Bridget Winstanley is editing them and preparing them for publication. They will shortly be available from the Church at a price which has still to be decided upon, but will be reasonable as it will be set to cover costs only. Here is an excerpt from the first, *Hatchments at St Bartholomew's Church, Whittingham*:

"The black-edged, six-foot, diamond shaped paintings hanging in this church along the nave and chancel are framed heraldic insignia. They are called "Hatchments". Each

commemorates some arms-bearing person after whose death it was put onto the house wall for several months before final placement, usually in the parish church of the deceased. The custom was mainly followed from the 17th to 19th centuries.

*Hundreds of hatchments still exist. The major compilation *Hatchments in Britain* by P. Summers (1980) includes details of these in fifty Northumbrian locations and is prefaced by an informative introduction. Whittingham's six are exceptionally well preserved and cleaned. Their dates are from 1784 to 1855. Other churches in this area that have hatchments are Bamburgh, Cornhill, Embleton and Lindisfarne."*

The second publication on the church does not yet have a title, but it is designed to fill out a great deal more historical and architectural detail than that contained in the *Visitor's Guide* (also written by Dr Peberdy).

"The black-edged, six-foot, diamond shaped paintings hanging in this church along the nave and chancel are framed heraldic insignia. They are called "Hatchments".

(Continued on page 11)

BESSIE CLARK'S MEMORIES OF GLANTON 1918— 1937 Part Two



We conclude Bessie Clark's memories in this issue. Part One was published in R & R, New Series, No. 1 in December 2003.

Let us now think of Glanton School. It was well-filled in my days. The young children occupied what was called "The Little Room", whilst the older children, feeling very important, were ensconced in "The Big Room". There was also a little classroom leading off "The Big Room" which was used occasionally. I commenced school at four years of age. The teacher's name was Mrs. Gregg and we all loved her. I remember a song she taught us younger ones called "Squirrel Town" but when I went home and told my Mother I called it "Squiddling Town". (Well, after all I was only four!). After her retirement a year or two later, we used to pick little bunches of wild flowers and hand them in as we passed her house which was at the top end of the village just before the road turns up the incline towards Greenville and Powburn. She always took the flowers from our hot little hands with a smile. Mrs Gregg was succeeded by Mrs Devine (mother of my music-teacher!). She was a very strict lady, but fair.

The Headmaster was

Mr. Anderson (he ruled the Big Room). A nice man, but when he began to twirl his waxed moustaches we knew someone was in for a wiggling! He played the piano with gusto – it was placed in the Big Room where we always had a little service to start the day. He would lift his hands high in the air then crash them down on the keys, whilst at the same time moving his shoulders along with the music. ("Shewin' off" we used to think, but maybe it was just his way). There was also an assistant teacher called May Thompson whom we liked. Mr. Anderson was inclined to pontificate on occasions, and every Armistice Day I used to feel acutely embarrassed when he said, "There are two children in this school (meaning me and Henry) who mourn the loss of a Father because of that dreadful conflict." I was a very shy and self-conscious child and I so wished that he wouldn't keep on saying it. He meant well but ...

Nothing has been said yet about the Glanton Churches. I'll start with the Presbyterian Church. In my young days the Minister was Mr MacDonald, a most respected and well-loved gentleman. He visited many homes in the village, not only those of his own 'flock'. I remember so well his visits to us. (We identified with the Brethren in the Alndale Hall). He would sit down and have a good chat, and then when he was about to leave he would say, "Let's

have a word of prayer" and down on his knees he would go. In 1932 he wrote a book called *Glanton Meetin'* (The story of the Presbyterian Church at Glanton, Northumberland). It is certainly well worth reading.

There was a small Church of England at the end of the village (I don't know if it is still in use), and of course Alndale Hall still stands just down the Whittingham Road whilst the Roman Catholic Church was not much farther down the same road in a grove of trees and is presumably still in use. The priest's name was Father Tait then.

More memories keep flooding back. Glanton Show was held in a field off the Station Road at the end of the village. I think I must have been a bit of a tomboy because on one occasion I got on a horse which took off suddenly and careered round the field with me clinging on for dear life. I didn't fall off but felt very mortified and it was the first and last occasion that I got on a horse in all my life, although I like them.

Another memory is of a school concert held in the Presbyterian Church Hall (there being no community hall then). A number of the little girls, including myself, sang a song called The Japanese Fan. We had paper chrysanthemums and paper fans and paraded round the stage singing and swaying to a very lilting tune played on the piano. The chorus (mostly tra-las) is all I can bring to

mind, but I can sing it even yet! Here it is:

"Tra la la, tra la la, the Japanese Fan,
"Tra la la, tra la la-a-a, the Japanese Fan,
Tra la la la, la- la la la, la-a-a-a
We sing of the Japanese Fan."

At that same concert my brother Henry recited a poem about shopping. It is meant to be funny because the shopper is supposed to get the names of the various items (foodstuffs) in a mix. (For example "a jar of strawberry ham " and so on). Well, next day there came an old lady into our shop and she was talking about the concert to my Auntie Annie. "Oh, it was a grand concert" she said, "but I was that sorry for little Henry. The poor bairn gat aal mixed up when he was sayin' his poetry." "Oh" said Auntie Annie, "but that was how it was meant to be." "Oh no, hinney" said the old lady, "iverybody was laughin'. I was that sorry." (Actually "the poor bairn" made quite a hit)!

Another feature was the Sunday School outings. The Presbyterian Sunday School members went off for lovely picnics in beautifully decorated carts pulled by similarly decorated farm horses, and the Brethren (Alndale Hall) outings, when not held nearby, involved trips to Alnmouth or Bamburgh in a charabanc! My Pringle friends occasionally accompanied us, whilst Henry and I sometimes went with them on their Presbyterian Sunday School outings. I might add that most of the grown-ups came along too. They were very happy

occasions.

The Christmas parties for all the village children were held in the Presbyterian church hall. Wonderful parties! I remember a tall "Christmas Tree" was brought in from the woods and afterwards decorated with sparkling ornaments and glowing with real candlelight. A great heap of toys was piled around the base. We had games, then a grand teaparty before the entrance of Santa Claus (he covered his identity very well) who distributed a toy to every child. Not one was overlooked. We ended with one or two Christmas carols and made our way home with stars in our eyes and an orange and some sweeties in our pockets.

In wintertime we would go sledging down what was known in those days as "Whittingham Bank" (that steep bit at the top of the road leading down to Whittingham). I also remember sledging down the School field (not advisable but we did it regardless). On one occasion at least four of us, or five at a pinch, were on a toboggan and I'm afraid it was overweighted for we came down the steep field by the side of the school at a great speed and carried on straight through the hawthorn hedge onto the road. Traffic, thankfully, was at a minimum then and there was no accident, although we were all somewhat scratched and shaken. But we enjoyed it and carried on.

We made our own simple pleasures in my young days at Glanton. Sometimes Granny Pringle would invite us over for an hour or two and Doad (George) would get out

the fiddle and make merry music. This was usually in the winter evenings when work on the farm was over for the day, the lamps lit, the fire burning and all of us sitting very cosily laughing and chatting together. In our own homes there were board games on those dark evenings (Ludo, Draughts, Dominoes, Snakes & Ladders and so on). Occasionally our friends from next door would join us in a game of charades, or we would sit around the fire in a circle (plus Tommy the cat who always had a special chair to himself) playing I spy with my little eye, or Jack's alive, and so on. A great joy was the gift of a Magic Lantern from a friend. It was set up in the "Back Kitchen" of our house and was a source of great pleasure.

In the Summer evenings after school was over we would play outside or cultivate our little garden plots. Oh yes, we did our little "gardens". (I'm talking now of our Pringle friends and Henry and myself). As well as the front and rear gardens of the Town Farm, there was a large area up at the end of the farmyard where the pig sties were located. The greater part was planted out with vegetables and fruit bushes, particularly gooseberry bushes. But there was quite a lot of spare ground too, and one of the menfolk kindly dug and made up five small plots for us, approximately five feet by four feet each. What we sowed was entirely our own affair. My plot consisted of marigolds (nice and easy to grow), and I still remember the occasion when I proudly carried home a bunch for my mother. At weekends in

"Oh, it was a grand concert" she said, "but I was that sorry for little Henry. The poor bairn gat aal mixed up when he was sayin' his poetry."

" ... my mother said, "Annie, I've just seen Mr M. coming out of the Bar as drunk as a lord. We'll get the bill paid to-night"

the Summertime we would go off for picnics along the Breamish valley (we walked for miles), or up on Titlington Mount. Crawley Dene was a favourite resort. We went to Crawley Dene very often, even in the wintertime, and we filled our little baskets with brambles in autumn for jam-making. There was a certain place in Crawley Dene where there were some exceptionally fine bramble bushes near the railway line. Henry and I had a little Border Terrier called Judy, and, like Mary's Little Lamb, everywhere that we went Judy was sure to go. But there was one area on Titlington Mount that she didn't like. Her hair almost stood on end when we came to Shepherds' Law and she would whine and cringe until we left. We never understood why this happened, because it was a truly lovely place. We visited it on many occasions and poor little Judy just had to put up with it or stay at home which of course she would not do. I only once saw an adder on our pilgrimages. It was sunning itself on a slab of rock up there in the heather and we kept clear.

I must not omit Glanton Station from these notes. The Stationmaster was Mr. Carr, and as far as I remember he worked alone. We loved to watch him pulling down the levers that worked the signals controlling the in-coming or out-going trains (very few!). We sensed 'power' behind his actions and admired him greatly. I have special memories of Glanton Station, because on rare occasions, as a special treat, my mother would take us on the train 'for a ride'. We would walk

down to the station where she bought tickets to Hedgeley Station (the next stop). The train ran very slowly through Crawley Dene and we were able to view our playground from a different angle. I think Mary and Jeannie Pringle may have accompanied us too. From Hedgeley Station it was a short walk to 'The Stores' a large building standing alone by the roadside. It seemed to us to sell everything, but we always made straight for a pile of paper-backed story-books at the rear of the shop. They were lovely little books and we each selected the one we fancied (price one penny I think). Then, feeling very important, we would pay our bits of money to the lady behind the counter. We walked home through Powburn and up the Greenville road then down into Glanton. We loved the Greenville road (sometimes called the Branton road). My Mother used to point out the various shrubs and bushes and tell us their names. The wild roses were beautiful, as were the hips and haws of autumn and winter.

I remember one or two 'characters' in Glanton. I recall Job and Bess Angus, an elderly couple who used to drive about the roads sitting very upright on what appeared to be an extremely high seat on some sort of horse-drawn vehicle. I didn't know their background or business, but had the idea that they might have been pedlars! There was also a certain gentleman (a widower with a grown-up son and daughter) who must remain nameless for the simple reason that he never paid his grocery bills until he had 'drink taken' if I

may use the phrase. He would run up an enormous amount 'on tick', extending over a number of weeks, and my mother couldn't really afford to be out of pocket for so long, but he was a very nice and honest man and she knew that he would always pay up in the end. I had very sharp hearing in those days and I can remember an occasion when my mother said, "Annie, I've just seen Mr M. coming out of the Bar as drunk as a lord. We'll get the bill paid tonight." Sure enough, after the shop had closed (8 p.m. in those days), there would come a loud knock on the side door and in would walk a very jolly gentleman, still swaying a little on his feet, and pulling a wad of notes out of his pocket. "I've come to settle me bill, Mrs Clark, ha ha ha". He never questioned anything, just paid up and went merrily on his way home.

There was also a young man called 'Pikey Jack' who was not quite 'with it' as one might say. As his nickname indicates, he lived up at Glanton Pike. I like to think that he was quite harmless, but he used to roam the roads gazing up at the sky, and on one occasion when we were rambling we met him with a hayfork in his hand, held at a very odd angle. We just passed quickly by and nothing happened. I don't suppose anything would have occurred, but it was better to be safe than sorry. It was rather sad really.

More memories in connection with "the shop": the commercial travellers. There was a very nice gentleman called Mr. Punton who came from Newcastle and represented his own

family firm. He took orders for various products including fruit and confectionery. Punton's boiled sweets were extra special, especially the pineapple drops! On one occasion he took us in his delivery van to Coldstream where he had some business to do. (My mother came along to keep an eye on us). It was in Coldstream that I tasted ice-cream for the first time. It was served between two wafers, sandwich fashion, and the day was hot so we had to eat it very quickly because of the drips. Mr. Punton dropped us off at Glanton on his way back to Newcastle.

Another commercial traveller (name forgotten) used to visit the shop, and doubtless other shops in the village. After one of his visits there was great excitement a few days later when we heard (officially) that he had developed smallpox! We all had to be vaccinated but thankfully no-one in the village caught the disease.

There was another gentleman called Mr. Hay who came from Wooler at intervals to display and take orders for articles of clothing and so on. This Mr. Hay was a jovial man with quite a loud voice. On one occasion he was sitting in our living room having a cup of tea after his business was concluded. He began to talk about a new scheme which he and others were contemplating. I think it was maybe a group of some kind (singing and carrying on). My granny said, "And what are you calling it, Mr. Hay?" to which he replied, in ringing tones, "Hay's Rollicking Roisterers". Henry and I thought this sounded very grand indeed and after he had departed we marched

around the room waving our arms and shouting "Hay's Rollicking Roisterers, Hay's Rollicking Roisterers" until we were roundly told to hold our tongues or else ...

I must mention "the wireless" ... well, that's what it was called in my youth! It was talked about but we knew nothing about it. There was something called a "cat's whisker" which those in the know used to fiddle about with on a wall fixture of some kind and, if they were lucky, managed to "tune in". But we couldn't cope with that. However, something wonderful occurred! Our next-door neighbour Miss Aitcheson got some sort of connection eventually and invited Henry and me to come in to "hear Big Ben striking in London!" That was followed by a play called "Oranges and Lemons" and we were enthralled. "All the way from London! My!" Well of course knowledge increased rapidly and in our early teens we got a PYE radio set. It was controlled by large batteries which had to be filled at the local garage from time to time. (As a matter of interest the really aged folks used to remark "Aye it's the work o' the Devil!")

After that we got second-hand bicycles and life took on a new dimension. Our Pringle friends had moved out of the Town Farm up to Pennylaws near Alnham. How we loved those bicycle rides up to Alnham! I felt free as a bird and sometimes when I was on my own I would vary the route and return via Eslington Park and round by Whittingham. Yes, it added a mile or two to the

journey, but what did that matter? I was on wheels!

Well, I could go on with my little tales, no doubt to the boredom of anyone who has the patience to read this far, so I will desist. The world around us is changing. With the advent of a regular passenger bus service to Alnwick and Newcastle, and delivery vans coming from Alnwick with products of all kinds at discount prices, the days of the small shops were numbered. We were, in effect approaching the end of an era. Looking back to those times, it seems to me that we were living in a sort of "sandwich of years" between two terrible conflicts, and life as we knew it was soon to change and never be the same again. Very briefly, our jobs took us to London. The shop was closed, and the rest of the family, including little dog, Judy, followed soon afterward. We made a home together in Chiswick, and less than a couple of years later came the Second World War. But I have my memories of those very happy years in Glanton and they cannot be erased.

Just a thought. When I was a little girl and heard folks talking of the "passing of time", I used to wonder what the world would be like in the year 2000. It seemed so far away and I remember thinking, "I'll never know because I'll be dead then". Here I have no comment to make. Well, maybe one. Time doesn't march on, it absolutely gallops.

*"I must mention
"the wireless" ...
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Around and about Northumberland by Glen Aln (Richard Logan). Printed by Northumberland & Alnwick Gazette, published by Richard Logan, Amble, 1943.

The author of this extract had spent his childhood in Whittingham. He describes a visit back to his childhood home after many years.

"The dungeon [of the tower] was intensely interesting. It was used for drunks in the old Fair days and was known as the "kitty" when the village constable was the authority, but not always versed in handcuffs".

EXTRACTS FROM *AROUND AND ABOUT NORTHUMBERLAND* BY "GLEN ALN" (RICHARD LOGAN): A VISIT TO WHITTINGHAM IN THE 1940s

The first place to be seen was the Havannah and the old fireside and where the box-beds stood, under which I hid for a whole afternoon following a little harmless amusement that ended disastrously and I was told that the policeman would want to take me to the "kitty." In the storm of October 14th, 1881, known as "Windy Friday," the old red pan-tiled houses shook like leaves in the wind and had to be steadied with stout timber at the back of the houses.

Additional to the fight the old houses put up cluster many memories. There is still the garden at the north end and beyond the slow-flowing Aln. In front of the houses a privet hedge has replaced the old stone dyke. Along the side of the Aln, towards the bridge, traffic is less and it is not so well kept. And there was no evidence of the "devil's rhu-barb" that grew so plentifully aforetime. Then its tall leaves spread like so many umbrellas. It was a fine place to play "hide-and-seek." With these memories, and many more, came rushing again the merry laughter of other days never to be forgotten.

There was the bridge on which many an hour was spent watching "th' troots wi' a watery mooth." Above the bridge lay a couple of trees blown down with the gale of November, 1940, recalling the greater gale of 1881. Passing over the bridge, one's eye wandered to the Hole-in-the-Wall, now a dwelling house but at one time a public house

kept by Tom Dickenson. a character the villagers often referred to as "Dang it." At one time Tom was game-keeper to Lord Ravensworth, and to keep the association he had a "pointer" on his sign. The Aln divides the village and so, doubling back from the bridge, the south side was explored. The farmer now is Mr William Pringle, who lives in the house built in 1863.

The Castle Inn, which was there in the old coaching days, carries on still, but the buses, of course, don't call. In the coaching days horses were changed in the late forenoon for Edinburgh and in the late afternoon for Newcastle. According to ancient history two families owned the village, Heron on the south side of the river and Hesilrigg on the north. In the croft, a little field north of the Castle Inn and in front of the Havannah, bordering the road on the west, have been built two or three blocks of houses with gardens in front and back.

Near the bus stop there is the Fountain to the memory of Athole third Earl of Ravensworth, with the figure of the Earl resting on his stick and his faithful collie sitting on its haunches with face upturned to its master. Water runs for man and beast and while I admire, a couple of house sparrows fly down to the trough to drink. At the other side of the road there is now the up-to-date telephone. From the Fountain we proceeded up the street, if it may be so called. Ah! well, there are houses on either side of the

road leading to Callaly. On the left side continues the extended business established over a century ago by the Dixon family, with their roots in Rothbury. Higher up is the butcher shop, also of long standing, where Walter Scott had a good business, now managed by his son Robert, who used to have a great reputation as a step-dancer and a nap hand at a horn-pipe. The red-tiled roof was as of yore.

Near the door lay a collie, a bonny black and white animal. It rose and wagged its tail and pricked its ears on our approach, but I always keep a weather eye on a strange dog. The wagging tail was an indication of friendship, but it is the other end that scares me. However the beast was harmless and just watched us past and lay down again.

The two cottages that were in the field near the shop in which lived Barbara Coupland and her nephew Tommy Darling, who had an accident and lost a foot, are no more. And there was Mrs Ferguson, wife of the mason, who had a wood mangle and everyone went to get the "claes mangled." It was an old fashioned mangle with square wood top and worked with a rope. At the top of the village half a dozen Council houses have been built about a decade ago; nice looking houses with garden in front.

John Rogerson, the blacksmith, is no longer there. Kit Thompson's shop, too, is only a memory; it was the shop where sometimes on a Monday morning we spent our "hap-an-nees" on our way to school. Pennies were scarce in those days when 15/- was a

hind's wage for a whole week. Christopher, to give him the name everybody refused to do, was originally a cooper and always spoken of as "Kit the cooper." He was a decent fellow and allowed the big laddies to play in his shop at the back on winter nights, a bit of good social work for the lads and it kept them out 'of mischief.

One J. Ewart has a like business near the old shop, but I looked in vain for the aniseed balls, big as pen-kers, and one was a mouthful. Gilbert Brown the saddler and his shop are alike gone, more's the pity. Behind the cooper's shop there used to be four or five houses with a public house at the end of them.

The police station now stands on the site of the Mason's Arms. The houses are now a workshop, and a stable in a dilapidated condition, but then the hands that built them have long since been clasped on the breast. The police buildings have been added to and are now the most substantial structure in the village south of the river. Just opposite is the post office, which has been in the hands of the Henderson family for generations and the present post-mistress, Mrs Lane, is daughter of Mr Luke Henderson, at one time the village tailor.

In front of the police station there is still the Fountain erected in 1805 by the Rt. Hon. Henry Thomas Baron Ravensworth. The inscription reads:

"May the pure fount
perpetual streams supply

"To every thirsty soul
that passeth bye

"And may the crystal
water ever run

"Unchanged by winter's
frost or summer sun.

The first continual flow



Left: the Havanah today.

is now controlled by a tap.

Next the Pele Tower was visited and the good offices of my enthusiastic guide and the considerate kindness of the two inmates made the look through the tower which is now a beneficent abode, exceedingly pleasant and informing. On the front door there is this inscription

"By the munificence and piety of Lady Ravensworth, this ancient tower which was formerly used by the villagers as a place of refuge in times of rapine and insecurity was repaired and otherwise re-embellished for the use and benefit of deserving poor, AD. 1845. 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy. The Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble.'

The inmates have an allowance from the Ravensworth Estate. There are rooms, very spacious, for four residents, but two were vacant. One of the good souls who showed me through had an aunt who had lived 20 years in the tower and reached the age of 94, and when I suggested my informant looked like breaking the record, she smiled and said, "Git away wi' ye."

The rooms are for spinners or married couples. And a condition is that they must be sober and

not quarrelsome. The dungeon was intensely interesting. It was used for drunks in the old Fair days and was known as the "kitty" when the village constable was the authority, but not always versed in handcuffs. Cows, too, were kept in the dungeon; now it is a general hold-all and coal house.

Time was on the wing, so we hurried "doon the aad road" and over the bridge. The road used to be spoken of as the "brae" and at the bottom stood the village stocks in distant days. Over the bridge the cottage on the left had a lovely show of bloom that almost covered the front of the house. It was a fine sight.

The school was naturally a magnet and a memory, because it was my first school. There was the window through which "Heddy" Ternent (son of the master) came on a "barring out day," and there was the doorway I entered to learn my ABCs. It was all so realistic and there I stood, a little frightened laddie, mother gripping one hand and an older brother the other. And there was Mr William Ternent, with high brow and cheek bones, spare side-whiskers and billy-goat beard, eyeing me over his spectacles which had slipped a little down his



*"May the pure fount
perpetual streams
supply"*

nose.

He clapped soothingly my head and tickled me under the chin, but I was still "feared" and I fear I never liked going to school.

Near the school and facing the road has been built a strong, stone structure, intimating to the world and his wife that it is the Whittingham Memorial Institute. It cost over £2000 and is used for games, dances, concerts, and has a spacious billiard room. It must meet the needs of the village and immediate district and fill a much wanted need.

Hard by there used to

live Mary Biggs, who lived to be a centenarian. She died in 1889 in her 102nd year. Mary was a character and usually walked with her basket to Alnwick to do her marketing, a distance of around sixteen miles, until she was about eighty years old. The cottage where she lived has been razed, but descendants live in a one close to the old one.

It was a pleasure to meet an old school fellow, Mr William Suthren, the village joiner. W looked each other up and down seeking signs of face and form, but the intervening

years had made great changes since we rollicked round the school yard playing at horses. But there is something indescribably pleasant in gripping the hand of an old school mate and recalling incidents of unforgettable days.

From friends seen, it was natural to go to the place where some rest and are held in grateful remembrance, and we sauntered through the churchyard, where words were few and memories mellowed the spirit. Truly an afternoon of choice and hallowed memories.

JOURNALS OF A COUNTRY POLICEMAN— GLANTON, 1905

We are grateful to a member for supplying this wonderful account of a policeman's life in Glanton at the turn of the last century. Unfortunately it came as pages torn out of a magazine, name and date unknown. All we know is that David Gillan (who we have not been able to trace) bought the original diaries at a Manchester auction. If anyone knows any more, please let the editor know.

Sunday, January 1, 1905 was a cold and snowy morning. Police Constable No. 69, William Smiles left home at 10 o'clock to begin another year of upholding law and order in the village and surrounding countryside. New Year's Day was just another day for P.C. Smiles. On the previous Sunday, Christmas day, he had completed a nine-hour tour of duty and had since been out on his beat on every day of the week. Until 1908 police officials worked a seven day week without any rest days and only a few days annual leave.

His late start on New Year's day was perhaps a concession to the fact that his New Year's Eve patrol had not ended until 2 a.m. although P.C. Smiles' entry "Patrolled the village outskirts. Nothing to report", indicates that Glanton had seen in the New Year peacefully. Each day, in his officer's duty book, P.C. Smiles was required to enter the hour of going on duty, the hour of returning from duty, the names of the

places visited, the hour they were visited, persons seen and spoken to, the number of miles travelled (separate columns for bicycle and on foot), the state of the weather and remarks about any incidents occurring on his beat.

The filling in of the daily journal was taken very seriously. Copperplate writing was expected, together with good grammar and spelling. On Thursday, January 5, P.C. Smiles cycled to Alnwick to have his book inspected. Senior officers were instructed that: "Whenever a senior officer examines an officer's journal he should observe the spelling (including the stops or want of them) and call the officer's attention to any errors, personally seeing that they are corrected." P.C. Smiles escaped correction on this occasion although both he and his senior officer seem to have problems with "description"!

As well as having his book inspected, P.C. Smiles received his pay for the month which was £6.19.10d, or

well under £2 per week. Conditions of service for the job seem to have been open-ended. At the end of the first week of 1905, P.C. Smiles had been on duty for seven days, had spent 73 hours on patrol and covered 88 miles on foot and 18 miles by bicycle. There is no mention of overtime payments.

Typical of these long days of duty was Tuesday, January 10. The morning was spent routinely patrolling the village. However, at 2 p.m. the constable received a report of a sudden death at Powburn. On cycling there, he visited the deceased's home and made inquiries. He then cycled to Whittingham to report the matter to Sgt. Hettle. Next, he was on his bike again, travelling to Alnwick to report the death to Supt. Bolton at 5.45 and the coroner, Charles Percy, at 6 p.m. Finally, after cycling back to Glanton, he signed off at 10 p.m. having covered 24 miles by bicycle and three miles on foot. He had been on duty for 13



Left: The Court House,
Whittingham

hours!

But not every day was as onerous. A more relaxing evening took the constable on visits to the Queen's Head Hotel (at 7 p.m.), the Red Lion Hotel (7.30 p.m.) and the Plough Inn at 8.30 p.m. "for the purpose of seeing that there was no infringement under the Licensing Act". The landlords were no doubt pleased at the journal entry "found all right". A fine afternoon in early February finds P.C. Smiles at Whittingham where he records that "from 1.30 to 4 p.m. assisting Sgt. Hettle in cleaning police station window".

Violence rarely appears in the record but is not totally absent. On April 6 P.C. Smiles was himself assaulted while arresting Thomas Angus of Alnwick, labourer, for being drunk and disorderly. A special court was called the next day at Whittingham. The magistrate sent Angus to the next petty sessions where he was fined 1s with 12s costs for being drunk and disorderly and 9s with 7s costs for assault. However it was violence of a more serious nature which accounts for

the longest entry in P.C. Smiles' journal. Murder! On October 18, 1905 his entry reads:

"Proceeded in company of Sergeant Hettle, George Brown and Annie Brown to a hemmel near to New Bewick and there found the dead body of Jane Brown lying in the hemmel. The deceased was lying on her back, the left hand lying across her chest, the right arm by her side. We examined the body and found the head cut and bruised and several finger marks on the throat. We also found a log of wood lying by her side. We had the body removed to Powburn. I also assisted Sgt. Hettle to apprehend George Brown charged with murdering his wife Jane Brown in a hemmel near to New Bewick on the night of October 17, 1905 and conveyed him to Whittingham.

Brown was committed for trial and appeared before Newcastle Assizes on November 15 and 16, 1905 where P.C. Smiles and Sergeant Hettle gave evidence.

After the excitement of attending the assizes the constable returned to the

gentler pace of life around Glanton. For some people, however, things were not moving fast enough and this led to P.C. Smiles' next arrest. On December 4, while on patrol, he "found William Symington driving a horse and cart faster than a walking pace on the highway at Bolton Hall between one hour after sunset and one hour before sunrise, to wit, at 6.30 p.m. "without having any lights attached to it". Symington was fined 10s with 5s costs on December 11.

As might be expected in a rural community, poaching kept cropping up in P.C. Smiles' reports. Co-operation with the local gamekeepers was close. On November 15, 1904, P.C. Smiles received a letter:

Middle Steads
Nov. 15 1904

P.C. Smiles
I should like if you could come out tonight as I expect poachers. There has been some snaring going on lately and I have found some set today.

Yours truly,
John Rough, Gamekeeper

P.C. Smiles' report for the night of November 15 reads,

"Proceeded in company of Sergeant Hettle, George Brown and Annie Brown to a hemmel near to New Bewick and there found the dead body of Jane Brown lying in the hemmel. The deceased was lying on her back, the left hand lying across her chest, the right arm by her side. We examined the body and found the head cut and bruised and several finger marks on the throat. ..."

"New Year's Eve was spent investigating the theft of eight ferrets (seven white and one dark) from the ferret house at Shawdon Hall ..."

"... also cycled to Whap Moor, spoke to Mr Rough, gamekeeper and accompanied him to a field near Branton and found John Lee, Branton, farm labourer, trespassing in pursuit of game, to wit, conies, at 7.15 p.m. on land belonging to Mr Fawcett".

John Lee appeared before the magistrate on December 12 and was fined 2s 6d with 5s costs.

As Christmas approached again all was quiet but on Christmas Day 1905 P.C. Smiles was out on patrol at 7.30 a.m. He spent 11 hours on duty and walked 14 miles. New Year's Eve was spent investigating the theft of eight ferrets (seven white and one dark) from the ferret house at Shawdon Hall and New Year's Day making the 20 mile round trip to Alnwick, via Whittingham, to report the ferret theft to

Sergeant Hettle and Superintendent Bolton.

Cats were apparently less important. On Monday May 14, 1906, George Sordy of Titlington, farmer, reported: "that on May 6, John Lambert of Bolton Hall, gentleman, had killed his cat by allowing three dogs to worry the same". It was not until Friday, May 18 that the constable got around to cycling to Alnwick to report this case of cruelty to Superintendent Bolton. The journal does not report the outcome of the case.

P.C. Smiles' book ends on May 25, 1906. A later book (September 26, 1910 to February 14, 1912) shows that he had been replaced at Glanton, first by P.C. Samuel Smart and then by P.C. James Gray. The list of poaching, drunkenness and petty thefts continues but things are changing and

this is epitomised by the entry for Monday, July 25, 1911:

"Proceeded to Glanton Hill in company with P.C. Blackie for the purpose of watching any accidents while the flying machines were crossing Northumberland on their way to Edinburgh."

Time was marching on. Flying machines heralded in the new mechanised age which was eventually to deprive Glanton of its police constable and close the police station at Whittingham. The only record of the fine policing enjoyed by the Glanton people would be the faced copperplate of P.C. Smiles and his colleagues.

New publications on St Bartholomew's Church, Whittingham (Continued from page 2)

The following paragraphs are taken from the opening chapter:

"The ancient stone cross now set up near the eastern churchyard gate was found built into the boundary wall. It is possible evidence of Christian worship at this site before any actual church. In his much consulted book of 1895, Whittingham Vale, David Dippie Dixon provides a comprehensive account of the church. He surmises that a first church of "wood and wattles" had existed. In 684 A.D. a religious assembly took place here for the election of Cuthbert of Lindisfarne to be bishop. There is a record of the consecration of a church at Whittingham in 735 A.D. This is assumed to be a stone building.

The only source of information on the assembly of 684 is Bede. W. Bright, in his English Church History interprets Bede as follows: "A Synod, a body of

ecclesiastics and laics met at 'Twyford' – perhaps where the Aln is crossed by two fords near Whittingham. Many envoys were sent by the hermit sat inaccessible in his cell. At last the King himself, with a Bishop and powerful men, crossed the Fairway Strait and landed on Farne. They knelt at the feet of Cuthbert and with tears abjured him to accept election. At last, with tears also, he yielded, went with them to Twyford and bowed his neck to the yoke of the episcopate."

In his first edition of 1878, Bright had written that the Synod was "At Alnmouth, on a spot afterwards called the Church Hill." Bright does not say why he came to decide on Whittingham in his second edition of 1888.

Alnmouth's continued claim has been to tradition, on the basis that it is on the Aln, once had a Saxon church and there were fords. Presumably

Alnmouth relies on Bright's first edition.

Bede says of the Synod only that it was 'Ad Tuifyrði'. Symeon, a monk of Durham, later transcribed this as 'Ad duplex vadum' – at the double ford. To modern transcribers 'Ad Tuifyrði' loosely became 'Twyforde' and was thus erroneously taken simply as two fords, not as two fords crossed successively as 'double'.

The confluence of Callaly Burn and Aln, with an upstream ford successively over each, making a 'double', is shown in the sketch plan in the Visitors' Guide The plan also shows the conjunction of Roman roadways close to Whittingham – roads that would have been travelled by dignitaries from York, Hexham and Bamburgh in to attend the Synod of 684 A.D.



Members and Office Holders, 2003/4

President: Tony Henfrey
Vice-President: John Rutherford.

Committee:
George Winstanley (Chairman)
Penelope Bayley
Doreen Carruthers
Norman Dunn
Anne Hunter
Neil MacKichan
Michelle Macaulay
(Hon. Treasurer)
Bridget Winstanley
(Hon. Secretary)

About the Society

The Aln and Breamish Local History Society provides a lively programme of historical lectures and publications. A minimum of four lectures a year, two in the Spring and two in the Autumn, are arranged. In addition, there is a speaker in a more light-hearted vein for 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.

Programme 2004/5

16 June 2004 AGM with a talk by Mary Pinder: "Where are you going to, my pretty maid?".

25 August 2004 The Venerable Bill Thomas on "What Whittingham Church means to me" - a historical tour of the church and churchyard. Meet at the east gate of the churchyard (Saint Bartholomew's—just beyond the Memorial Hall) at 7.30.

8 September 2004 Lindsay Allason-Jones, Director of Archaeological Museums, University of Newcastle upon Tyne on "People on Hadrian's Wall".

10 November 2004 Peter Clark on "Air Crashes in the Cheviots".

8 March 2005 Thomas Tokely on "Lives of the Kirk Yetholm Gypsies" (with slides).

13 April 2005 D.J. Skinner on "The Devil's Causeway" an illustrated talk on a walk along the old Roman road from Corbridge to Berwick on Tweed.

11 May 2005 Paul Frodsham will give a final report on a decade of digging in the Breamish Valley. This will take place in the Ingram Village Hall and the Visitor Centre, Ingram.

8 June 2005 Annual General Meeting—speaker to be announced.

Please watch your local notice board for possible changes to this programme and for additional information and events.

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