

RECORDS & RECOLLECTIONS

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Many of our members will be aware of the death, in March this year, of Major Robin Cowen of Shawdon Hall. Major Cowen was in his 97th year and his passing represents the end of an era at Shawdon.

In 1988 Records & Recollections published a long article about Shawdon Hall and its history. The photograph shows the Hall in the 1930s.

SOCIETY NEWS

We need first to record the very sad news of the loss of two of our longstanding members. Sarah Wilson from Ingram and Mike Maunder from Edlingham are both much missed by many in our local area.

We have had a successful 2015/16 talks season so far. As this issue of R&R goes to press we still have David Dickinson's talk on Bookbinding and Andy Walker's insight into Alnwick Castle to come.

Looking ahead to the autumn, our 2016/17 season (*details on the back page*) seems to have a particularly military feel, but the focus of the military-based talks is very different. The article on pages 7 & 8 of this issue relates to the presentation in November, although it was written before we knew about the DVD (*details on page 10*). The September talk is concerned with the 1939/45 War; while the two talks in the Spring of 2017 concern, respectively, military history and battlefields of the more distant past.

Members will realise that we are not a large Society, but the work involved in producing a talks programme and publishing Records & Recollections is significant, while the number of members who play a part in those activities is slowly reducing. Thanks are due here to Doreen and Walter Carruthers who remain involved with the Society, but have retired from the committee.

So please ask yourself, "Is there anything more I could do to ensure our Society continues to provide a focus of real interest in our local history?" All offers of help will be most gratefully received!

Meanwhile this issue of R&R is a mixture of historical records and personal recollections – which is exactly what it is intended to be.

Richard Poppleton



A COUNTRY PARSON

By Sheila Richards (née Mackie)



My father, Bill Mackie (1913 – 1980) was a founder member of the Aln & Breamish Local History Society. He was ordained as the Presbyterian Minister at Harbottle in September 1937 (*see Ordination notice at end of article*). He was born in Wallasey, Cheshire and educated at Liverpool University and Westminster Theological College, Cambridge.



Bill Mackie in about 1936

The Coquet valley in 1937 must have seemed an alien territory to a man who had lived entirely in towns and cities. To

add to this new experience was the fact that the Manse had neither electricity nor gas. Standard lamps, electric fires and irons remained unused during his thirteen years in the house. Paraffin lamps, Tilley lamps, augmented by the occasional candle or an 'electric torch,' provided light,



The Manse at Harbottle

while cooking and hot water were sourced by a coal fire or a paraffin stove. The art of ironing with a box iron heated in the fire and using a poss tub and wash board in the scullery must also have been skills to learn before he married in 1939.

The week before the long drive from Wallasey to Harbottle, he bought a blue Austin Seven and passed his driving test. AMB 809 became a familiar sight, its high clearance enabling it to ford rivers and tackle tracks up into the hills, long before bridges and surfaced roads were built. Throughout his life he was always willing to transport elderly people to a variety of destinations. On one occasion, soon after his arrival, he was completely thrown when one of his passengers attempted to sit on the top of the back seat placing her feet on the actual seat.



The Austin 7 in 1937

The car was maintained by Adam Beattie at Hepple, unless Bill could correct a problem himself. The toolbox under the back seat could be the cause of an uncomfortable ride if something had been carelessly put away. The faithful vehicle ended its days in Hexham being sold to a stock car racing enthusiast. Its replacement, a black, bull-nosed Morris, didn't have the same appeal, but he must have been relieved to get rid of the starting handle.

Many of the ways of remote rural Coquetdale were strange to him, although he rapidly began to enjoy the new opportunities opening up. Horses were to be ridden for a purpose and not just to be admired, but try as he might, Rev Renwick, the Vicar of Alwinton, could never persuade his friend Bill to ride round his parish as he did. The Manse was equipped with a stable but this was one facility firmly declined. However, the ferocious snow storms of 1946-7 forced him to accept Mr Renwick's offer when a death on a remote farm required his presence. He vowed afterwards, never to repeat the experience. As he was only five foot six inches tall, one of the vicar's thoroughbreds must have been a challenge.

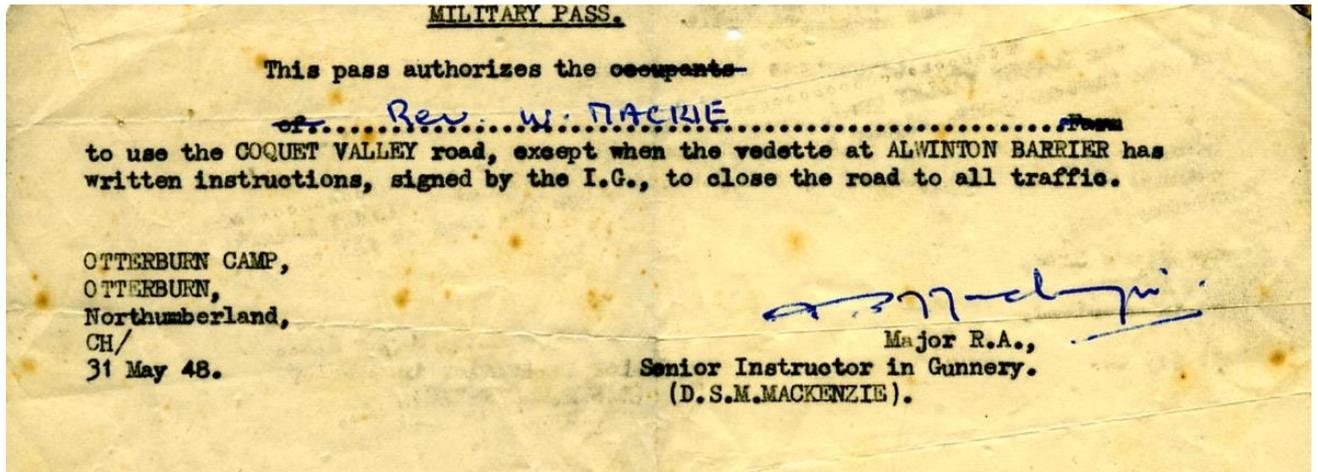
Next to the stable was a pig sty. During the war, a local farmer gave him a pig which quickly became his friend. When the time came for the animal to fulfil its purpose, he couldn't face the thought of eating his companion so exchanged carcasses with a neighbour.

The war years brought many challenges to a city man. Bill joined the Royal Observer



Harbottle ROC. Bill Mackie and Adam Foster, 3rd and 4th from left, front row

Corps, spending many hours perched on the hill above the Harbottle Castle ruins looking for planes en route to bomb Glasgow. One of his fellow observers was Adam Foster. As well as running Harbottle Post Office, he bred Border Terriers. The only real effect of the war was a jettisoned bomb which killed some sheep and narrowly avoided setting fire to an ammunition dump opposite the Manse. This same dump later escaped a similar fate through the efforts of local men extinguishing a heather fire near the Drake's Stone.



Post-war the Valley road was not freely open to the public

Entertainment in the area was provided by a dance band where my father played either violin or piano; both self-taught. Soldiers stationed nearby were always ready to join in. Forestry workers billeted at Wilkinson Park were also available as participants in local festivities. Timber Corps workers lodging in the village were ferried to the big house on the hill to be served porridge on tin plates by Italian prisoners of war. The Manse had an Italian gardener for some time who was an expert at making clothes-peg dolls.

The Harbottle Wrestling Academy also featured in his activities; presumably as a featherweight. Learning how to stook corn and pike hay at Netherton North-side farm, under the watchful eye of Mr Pringle and his manager Cyril Healey, also contributed to his war effort. Gifts of butter churned by Violet in the dairy, sides of bacon and dozens of free eggs helped to maintain the family. Eggs, wrapped in newspaper collars and buried in sawdust in biscuit tins were exported to Merseyside. The Manse garden was filled with vegetables to be stored in tea-chests packed with sand for winter consumption. The slate-slatted larder was full of jars of jam, bottled fruit and pickled eggs in huge crocks.

The entire valley was paralysed by the snow of 1946-7. Everyone helped to try to



A sled on the frozen River Coquet

keep the community fed. As the drifts topped the telegraph poles, getting supplies became a huge problem. Someone provided a solution by using a cart-horse pulling a sled up the frozen Coquet from Rothbury to Harbottle. The village was virtually cut off for twelve weeks. The only water available to the Manse was from a spring well outside the village. Water was carried in a variety of containers inside a tea-chest pulled on a sledge.

The usual water supply was from a spring on the hill above the house. One day some sheep's wool came out of the tap; a sheep had fallen into the collecting tank on the hill and died there.



Windyhaugh School in the 1940s

The population was large enough to support a school at Kidlandlee as well as one at Windyhaugh. Harbottle school was led by Miss Martin assisted by Miss Dyson; fortunately it is still functioning today. Church services were regularly held at Windyhaugh. (Now a camping barn). In farm houses, village halls, anywhere where Presbyterians requested a service, Mr Mackie was always willing to oblige. The Barrowburn farmhouse was a frequent venue.

Enormous cart-horses worked the hill farm which stretched to the Scots border. Crowdy was cooked in a pot swinging from a hook over the fire as bacon joints hung from the ceiling hooks and tea was drunk from a saucer by the grandmother of the family. A ladder led to the loft where the shepherd slept.

An early experience with the ways of a rural community gave rise to much amusement. Asked to visit a family regarding a christening, he arrived in his normal tweed jacket and flannels. Unfortunately he was confronted by a battalion of friends and relations in their

best attire and a buffet topped by a glistening christening cake. He had to drive home quickly, change into his gown and cassock and then return to perform the ceremony. It took a few years to persuade his congregation that christenings would be more appropriately held in church with a celebration at home afterwards.

The church was well attended with extra activities held in the adjacent hall. An enormous pot-bellied coke stove was positioned beside the gated Manse pew so while we were warm, the congregation must have been cold. The church is now a private house.

In 1950, we all moved to Glanton where the church was twinned with Branton. Here the Manse was equipped with electricity and hot running water with an immersion heater.

Another attraction was the musical talent in the village led by the Pagan family. After



**A Recorder Quartet (sans recorders!)
Bill Mackie left and Bob Pagan right**

several years of travelling to Glanton to take part in choral works, recorder trios and a concert party formed by Bob Pagan to entertain local groups, life for my father became easier. Glanton was a much larger village with a better bus

service, several shops and Alnwick schools within reach after the age of eleven.

Becoming a Scout Master, founding a carpet bowls club, a youth club, campaigning for and then supervising the building of gravel tennis courts at Powburn, were some of the projects he became involved in. He was also

instrumental in organising the task force when Glanton won a Best Kept Village trophy a few weeks before he died in 1980, aged sixty seven.

standing in the middle of the Coquet was yet another country pursuit he enjoyed. From a town man he had evolved into a complete countryman.

Although semi-retired, he had continued to conduct services and spent several years overseeing Harbottle church during a vacancy there. We often returned to the valley to visit friends and especially enjoyed swimming in the river at Linbriggs in a pool he discovered when trout fishing. Tying his own flies and spending hours

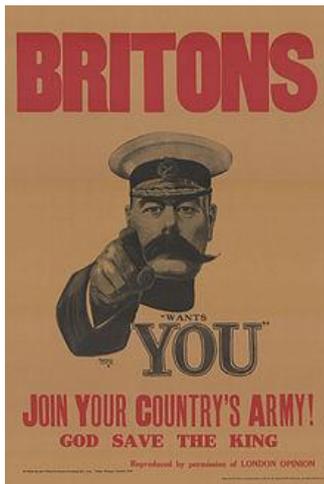
THE ORDINATION
OF
MR. WILLIAM MACKIE, B.A.
and his Induction to the Pastoral Charge
of the above Congregation
WILL TAKE PLACE ON
WEDNESDAY, Sept. 29.
ORDINATION AND INDUCTION SERVICE
will be held in the Church at 3-30 p.m.
The Moderator of the Presbytery of Northumberland,
REV. J. W. DOWNIE, M.A.,
will preside
The Charges to Minister and Congregation will be given by
REV. JAMES MITCHELL,
Wooler
TEA will be served in the Church Hall at 4-45 p.m.
WELCOME MEETING
IN THE CHURCH AT 6-30 P.M.
Chairman, **REV. A. C. BAWTREE, Interim Moderator**
SPEAKERS:
Rev. A. C. Don, M.A., Rev. A. L. MacArthur, M.A., Rev. Gibson Smith
M.A., Mr. James Pringle.
Soloists - MADAM JEAN WILSON and MR. GEORGE HILL.

LOCAL CONNECTIONS WITH THE PAST

By Richard Poppleton

When you come to live in a new area you are always on the look-out for things that might be connections from your past life to your new home. In my case, born and schooled in deepest Sussex; at university and all my working life in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, I thought I'd never find those connections. True my wife Jane was born in Hetton-le-Hole in County Durham, but that's not quite the same as having one's own links to this area.

Then, after 19 years living in North Northumberland, I stumbled across some old family photographs that made me realise I can claim some links to the Northumbrian past.



My maternal grandfather, Henry Preston, was in the British Army in India in the early years of the last century and my mother was actually born there, in a district called Muzaffarpur in the Bihar province of northern India in 1905. Henry Preston had risen through the ranks to become a Sergeant Major and, sometime before the outbreak of WW1, he had been commissioned and had risen further to become a Captain.

By this time he was getting on in age, having married late, and he and his family returned to England. Unlike some of his colleagues he stayed in the Army and when the war broke out he became involved in the

training of some of the units of 'Kitchener's Army'. These were the volunteers inspired by the recruiting campaign posters created by Horatio Kitchener, Secretary of State for War. Many of the hastily-formed brigades were made up of young men from the same streets or the same work places and were sometimes referred to as 'Pals Brigades'.

In Alnwick The Duke of Northumberland provided land at the Pastures below the Castle to allow a training camp to be constructed in January 1915. It appears largely to have been used to train the men of the Tyneside Scottish Brigade of the Northumberland Fusiliers, before, in 1916, being converted to become a military hospital.

Capt. Henry Preston (right) was posted to Alnwick to organise the training and he stayed when the camp became a hospital. The other photographs show him and colleagues. I think the crown insignia on his right sleeve shows that by 1918 he had been promoted to Major – at least that was his rank when he retired at the end of the war.



Major Henry Preston

In the group photo with the regimental mascot sheep Major Preston, on the left, looks exactly to me like the Sergeant Major in the old BBC TV comedy *It Ain't Half Hot Mum!*

Records & Recollections

All in all the gentle civilised tone of these photographs entirely belies the appalling World War to which they were connected. But I am glad that I have some personal record of a family connection with our adopted home area.



17 January 1918



ALNWICK, MAY 23, 1917

THE JOYS OF 19th CENTURY DENTISTRY

In 2014 the Hexham Courant published a facsimile copy of their first edition of 2nd August 1864 on its 150th anniversary. A surprisingly large amount of the content was not even related to the North East of England, let alone to the Hexham area. Much seemed to have been lifted verbatim from the London newspapers and covered national and international news.

However, some of the advertisements were more local and the one on the right is both typical of its type and rather scary to modern eyes. Its relevance to our Society's journal is that this "Surgeon Dentist" from London and Newcastle held regular surgeries in, amongst other places, Alnwick.

Messrs Ephraim Mosely & Sons were clearly happy to hire premises wherever they could find them and Mr Snowdon's Gunmaker's shop in Narrowgate was able to provide a spare room on Fridays.

The advertisement is aimed at trying to sell false teeth embedded in a flesh-coloured India-rubber mould, but presumably this dentist would also have been able to carry out other dental services such as extractions. You have to wonder how good the cleanliness and sterile conditions were like in the Gunmaker's back room. Extraction was probably the only treatment available for decayed teeth since this would have been before the advent of electric dental drills and suitable amalgams for filling cavities.

Ephraim Mosely was happy to advertise his book on "*The Teeth and the best Means of Supplying their Deficiencies*" for one shilling, but fails to tell potential customers the cost of their false teeth.

We may not enjoy visits to our modern dentists, but spare a thought for those with toothache 150 years ago.

DENTAL SURGERY.

THIRTY-FIFTH  OF
YEAR ATTENDANCE.
(IN NEWCASTLE AND ITS VICINITY)
IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENT IN ARTIFICIAL
TEETH, AND GREAT REDUCTION IN
PRICES.

MESSRS. E HRAIM MOSELY AND SONS, SURGEON DENTISTS, 9, GROSVENOR STREET, LONDON, and 10, ELDON SQUARE, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, Newly-invented and patented application of prepared India Rubber in the construction of ARTIFICIAL TEETH, Gums, and Palates. A new, original, and invaluable invention, consisting in the adaptation with the most absolute perfection and success of prepared gum-coloured India-Rubber, as a base for Artificial Teeth. Entire or partial sets may be made with the greatest facility in a very short space of time. Only one visit is required to fit them, it being done with the greatest accuracy and comfort by means of a soft base placed, while in a state of fusion between the teeth and gums, which, upon becoming hard, possesses the greatest power of self adhesion ; the teeth are also immovably fixed in the sockets formed by it without fastening of any kind. One set will last for many years, and on any of the natural falling out by absorption of the gums or from decay, they may be added to the India rubber in use with the greatest ease, and at a very trifling expense. The acids of the mouth exert no agency in the chemically-prepared India-rubber, and (as it is a non-conductor) fluids of any temperature may with thorough comfort be retained in the mouth, all unpleasantness of smell and taste being at the same time wholly provided against by the peculiar nature of its preparation. Just published, price 1s., Ephraim Mosley on the Teeth, and the best Means of Supplying their Deficiencies. Robert Hardwicke, 192, Piccadilly, London, and the author, 9, Grosvenor Street, London, and 10, Eldon Square, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

MESSRS. EPHRAIM MOSLEY AND SONS,
SURGEON DENTISTS,
9, Grosvenor Street, London, and 10, Eldon Square,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, may be consulted in

Hartlepool—Every alternate Monday, at Mr. Taylor's, Prissick Street, August 8, 22
West Hartlepool—Every alternate Monday, at Mr. Rawling's Grocer, 35, Church St., August 1, 15, 29
Sunderland—Every Tuesday, at 34, Bridge Street, Corner of High Street.
Durham—Every alternate, Wednesday, at 82, New Elvet, August 3, 17, 31.
Stockton—Every alternate Wednesday, at Mr. Bowes's, Upholsterer, High Street, August 10, 24.
Hexham—Every alternate Thursday, at Mrs. Toppin's, opposite White Hart Hotel, Fore Street, Aug. 4, 18.
Darlington—Every alternate Thursday, at Miss Cowl's, Bondgate, August 11, 25.
Alnwick—Every Friday, at Mr. Snowdon's Gunmaker, Narrowgate Street.
Berwick—Every Saturday, at Mr. Paxton's, Saddler, Hide Hill.

OUR NOVEMBER 2016 MEETING

As you will see from our programme (on the back page of this Journal), our meeting on 16th November is rather different from our usual pattern. In January Helen Dinsdale, our Secretary, received a letter with an accompanying DVD. The letter is self-explanatory and its main content is transcribed below. We hope it will whet your appetite for that meeting.

ALNWICK DISTRICT WW1 CENTENARY COMMEMORATION GROUP

A collaborative venture between members of the Northumberland Branch of the Western Front Association, the Alnmouth & District Branch of the Royal British Legion, & others

Contact details: - Website: www.bailiffgatemuseum.co.uk/WW1

Email: ww1alnwickproject@yahoo.co.uk

27 January 2016

Dear Madam

'Alnwick 1915 – An Armed Camp' DVD

You may have seen the first (of two) features in last week's edition of the Northumberland Gazette reviewing and evaluating the success of the programme of activities & events organised by Alnwick District WW1 Centenary Commemoration Project Group during the last 18 months or so.

The Group has completed an ambitious project made up of five areas of activities carried out in 2014 and 2015. These focused on schools & education; IT, including building a searchable database of casualties from the area; heritage; events in 2015 commemorating the Northumberland Fusiliers' Tyneside Scottish Brigade's time at Alnwick; & production of a Western Front Association-sponsored DVD relating to the story of the camp on the pastures opposite Alnwick Castle where the Brigade carried out its training.

The DVD is the subject of my letter. Copies have been provided to those organisations and individuals who either had some involvement in the project or who may have some interest in the historical context & the impact the camp had on the wider Alnwick area.

Please make your members aware of the DVD. It runs to 45 minutes, plus 5 – 10 minutes for the slide show at the end, so it may even be suitable for showing at one of your group's meetings. Do look at the slide show which I think is especially moving when you know what later happened to many of the men shown.

Your complimentary DVD is free, paid for by the WFA grant. When obtaining permissions to use photographs and music we made it clear to copyright holders that the DVD would not be sold. The Project Group holds the copyright to the DVD and we shall not be able to give permission for further copies to be made.

Members of the local WFA branch would be happy to provide additional information about the Project Group's activities and the background to the DVD if this would be of interest to you or your members, with particular reference to the men in your area who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country during WW1. The WFA branch will continue working on the database throughout 2016, which may provide opportunities to share information. The database will continue to be available for the foreseeable future via the Bailiffgate Museum's website at www.bailiffgatemuseum.co.uk/ww1.

I do hope you enjoy watching the DVD.

Yours sincerely

David Thompson – Treasurer and IT/Search Database Project Manager

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, EDLINGHAM

By Richard Poppleton

As many of our Society's members will know, Mike Maunder died earlier this year. His wife Peggy was our Treasurer until a couple of years ago and they often used to attend our meetings in Whittingham. Mike and Peggy's home is in the old vicarage at Edlingham, next door to the church. A few months before his death Mike kindly provided some information about St John the Baptist Church, which has formed the basis for this article. In our last issue we published a piece about the beautiful East Window in Edlingham Church, so there will be little further mention of this feature.

At this point an editorial apology is in order. In the Winter 2015 issue the article about the Church window said throughout that it was the West Window. The editor clearly had problems with his compass directions because the window is at the East end of the church. Sorry!



Perhaps the fact that so many of our local villages are stone-built can lead to an over-familiarity with old buildings and a tendency, in the mind, to lump them all together as 'old'. But of course there's a significant difference between farmworkers' cottages that may have been built in the 18th Century and genuinely ancient structures such as Edlingham

Church. Even if we can date some parts of the existing church to as early as 1050, it is certain that there would have been a church on this site much earlier still.

Edlingham in Anglo Saxon times was written as Eadwulfintham – "the homestead of the Eadwulf family". It was given to the monks of Lindisfarne in the year 737 by King Ceolwulf of Northumbria.

Probably very unusually for the time, this king not only survived his kingship but was able to abdicate his throne to join the Lindisfarne monks. It is assumed that there would have been a wooden church at that time and there is evidence that a further Anglo-Saxon structure was built on the same site in 840, because that is recorded as having been consecrated by Bishop Egred.

The suggestion is that the church of 840 was stone-built and that its remains lie beneath the current building and at least partly formed the foundations of the 1050 church, a few parts of which still exist in the west wall of the nave.

The key noble family at the time was that of Gospatric, Earl of Dunbar and Baron of Beanley. It is of some note that this was not a family that arrived with the Normans and it seems that it was Gospatric's marriage to a noblewoman, perhaps a princess, from Northumberland that will have extended the family's influence southwards from Dunbar. The Barony of Beanley included the village of Edlingham and despite some ups and downs of family fortunes they were around for five generations. They built both the 1050 church and a large hall house which became the now-ruined castle next to the church (*pictured below*)



Churches, as well as being places of worship, had considerable value because of the tithe income they attracted. So

finding them being passed around from owner to owner was less surprising than it might seem. By 1130 the ownership had passed to the monks of St Oswin's Priory at Tynemouth, which was a branch of the order of monks far south at St Albans. Then in 1174 ownership changed again and was transferred to the Prior and Convent at Durham. The Gospatric house finally ended in 1296 when the Barony of Beanley passed to William de Felton.

There is some evidence that initially the dedication of the church was to St Helen, but in 1358 its dedication to St John the Baptist is first recorded. It was also in 1358 that William de Felton died and was buried in the church. The building we see today is predominantly Norman and so must have been re-built or at least added to well after the 1050 date and the name of the de Felton family certainly suggests that they were of Norman origin. The tower, perhaps rather massive in relation to the rest of the church, was added in about 1300. The fact that it had no proper windows but just narrow slit openings suggests that it was built as a refuge for the villagers whenever the Border skirmishes threatened to affect Edlingham.

In the 1400s the north wall was rebuilt and an earlier doorway was blocked up, but can still be seen from the outside. In 1519 the estates of Beanley passed into the hands of a family called Swinburne. They were Roman Catholic and remained so after the Reformation (in the first half of the 1500s) and did not spend much money on refurbishments. We should perhaps be grateful for that because it means we still have what is essentially a Norman church with some later additions.

Real evidence of the goings-on at St John the Baptist are rather hard to come by because the first church registers that have survived date only from 1658. So upsets such as controversy over the proof of ordination of the 25th vicar - one Richard Warren (or Warrinell) - and the fate of requests made by the congregation in

1610 - they wanted, amongst other things, 'a table of the Ten Commandments; a box for the poor; decent stalls in the church; a register book in parchment and a chest with three locks' - are not the subjects of locally available documents. They have to be researched through less easily accessible sources.

What is sure is that during Oliver Cromwell's Puritan rule the parish of Edlingham fell into considerable decay. Perhaps this was partly because it was in the hands of a Catholic family. There were certainly Presbyterian vicars during this period and the last of these, John Murray, who was the 29th vicar, refused to take the oath required by the Act of Uniformity of 1662 that accompanied the restoration of the Stuart monarchy under Charles II. Nationally more than 2000 clergymen refused to take the oath and were expelled from the Church in what became known as the Great Ejection.

John Murray eventually resurfaced as a preacher in Edinburgh.

No self-respecting rural village will have been able to escape occasional troubles with claims of witch-craft and in 1685 a local woman called Margaret Stothard was tried for the offence and was acquitted, although it is not clear whether the acquittal happened at her trial or later on. It is also not clear whether she underwent 'trial by ordeal' in which the accused was subjected to a life or death test – such as drowning – and for which the proof of innocence was survival.

There then follows a period of nearly 200 years during which little of consequence seems to have happened or been recorded at Edlingham. Then in 1879 occurred the notorious Edlingham Burglary. The burglary was at the Vicarage and two local men, Michael Brannaghan and Peter Murphy were tried

CRIMINAL LAW – EDLINGHAM BURGLARY – THE CONVICTS BRANNAGHAN AND MURPHY

House of Commons Debate 03 December 1888 vol 331 cc829-30

Mr Milvain (Durham) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Her Majesty's pardon has been extended to the men Brannaghan and Murphy, now released on licence, who were in 1879 convicted and sentenced in respect of the burglary at Edlingham Vicarage in the County of Northumberland, to the commission of which offence two other men have recently confessed and have been convicted and sentenced; and whether any, and if any what, sum of money has been offered to Brannaghan and Murphy by the State as some reparation for nearly 10 years of penal servitude for an offence of which they were innocent?

The Secretary of State (Mr Matthews) (Birmingham E.) Yes, sir. A free pardon has been granted to these men. I have obtained the sanction of the Treasury, under the exceptional circumstances of this case, to offer to each of these men a pecuniary compensation amounting to £800. I shall be glad to consult with my hon. and learned Friend as to the best mode of investing and applying this sum for their benefit.

Mr Pickersgill (Bethnal Green S.W.) asked the Secretary of State whether his attention has been called to the fact that the magisterial inquiries which preceded the committal of the two prisoners for trial were conducted with closed doors and that it is believed in the locality that this circumstance contributed to the miscarriage of justice; and whether the inquiries which have been made to the Government into the case have disclosed the reasons which led the magistrates to exclude the public?

Mr Matthews I understand that the Justices, in the exercise of the discretion vested in them by law, conducted this inquiry with closed doors; but I am not aware of any grounds for believing that this circumstance contributed to the miscarriage of justice. The prisoners were defended by a solicitor, who cross-examined on their behalf. My answer to the second part of the question is in the negative.

and convicted and given lengthy jail sentences. Due solely to the efforts of the vicar of St Paul's Parish Church in Alwick and an Alwick solicitor, it was eventually shown that there had been a total miscarriage of justice. However it was not until Brannaghan and Murphy had served nearly ten years that their innocence was proved and they were released.

The injustice reached the House of Commons in 1888 and part of the Hansard record of an exchange between MPs and the Secretary of State for the Home Department is shown in the text box on the previous page.

So now let us move from the historical record to the church itself in 2016. If you have not been, do consider a visit. If you have been, perhaps there are aspects of the church that you may not have noticed.

Externally the two most interesting stones are immediately to the east of the



entrance to the porch on the south side of the church (*pictured left*). One is an obviously worked stone whose shape and size are reminiscent of a concrete trig point, but whose role here is far from clear. The other appears to be a socket carved to hold the base of a standing stone cross, the sort of thing which elsewhere (for example at St Mary's Church on Lindisfarne) has been dated back to the 9th or 10th Century.

The porch itself is barrel-vaulted and lined with stone benches. This porch protects the 12th Century Norman doorway. Another stone, dating back to the 1300s, and carved with a sword and a pair of shears (*above right*), has been set into the floor immediately inside the door from the porch. To modern eyes this seems less



than respectful to the person whose grave this would originally have marked before it was moved into the church from the churchyard; and it also seems a location subject to considerable wear.

Once inside the church the earliest stonework, from 1050, can be seen on the left in the west wall of the nave. When the tower was built the original west doorway had to be sealed up, but it is still visible. At its sides are the holes which would have allowed the main door to the church to be barred from the inside, confirming that, along with the tower with its slit windows, security was a major concern

The chancel arch is typically Norman in design and dates to the early 1100s. This is also the date of the chancel itself, which may have replaced an earlier and smaller structure attached to the church that was built in the 1050s. In the south wall of the nave is an arched tomb recess. The shield (*below*) set in the wall above it is that of Sir William de Felton, who died in 1358. It is very likely that a stone effigy of him, probably in full armour, would have



occupied the recess until, presumably, its removal after the Reformation. Today the recess houses several pieces of stone, including part of the shaft of a stone cross which may be the cross that originally stood in the socket outside the porch.



There are other traces of the early use of the church on view. At the east end of the aisle is a broken early cross slab (*above*), apparently dating from before the Norman Conquest.

For Society members who are particularly interested in the architectural details of the church interior, there is an excellent and detailed description of the main features in a small booklet which can be purchased for a minimal price inside the church.

There are, of course, more recent additions to the fabric of The Church of St John the Baptist to admire. Most of the current windows were installed during a restoration in 1902. The window at the east end of the chancel is a little older and is especially glorious.

Finally, the photograph below shows some of our Society members inside the church where they had been attending a talk about St John the Baptist, Edlingham in 2007.



FORMER ALNWICK TO CORNHILL RAILWAY BRANCH

In the December 2015 issue of Records & Recollections we published Part 1 of the full text of Mary Brown's article about the history of the Alnwick to Cornhill railway. We are indebted to Mary's nephew Alan Brown who lives in the USA for providing this material for publication. We left the story at the "digging of the first sod in 1884".

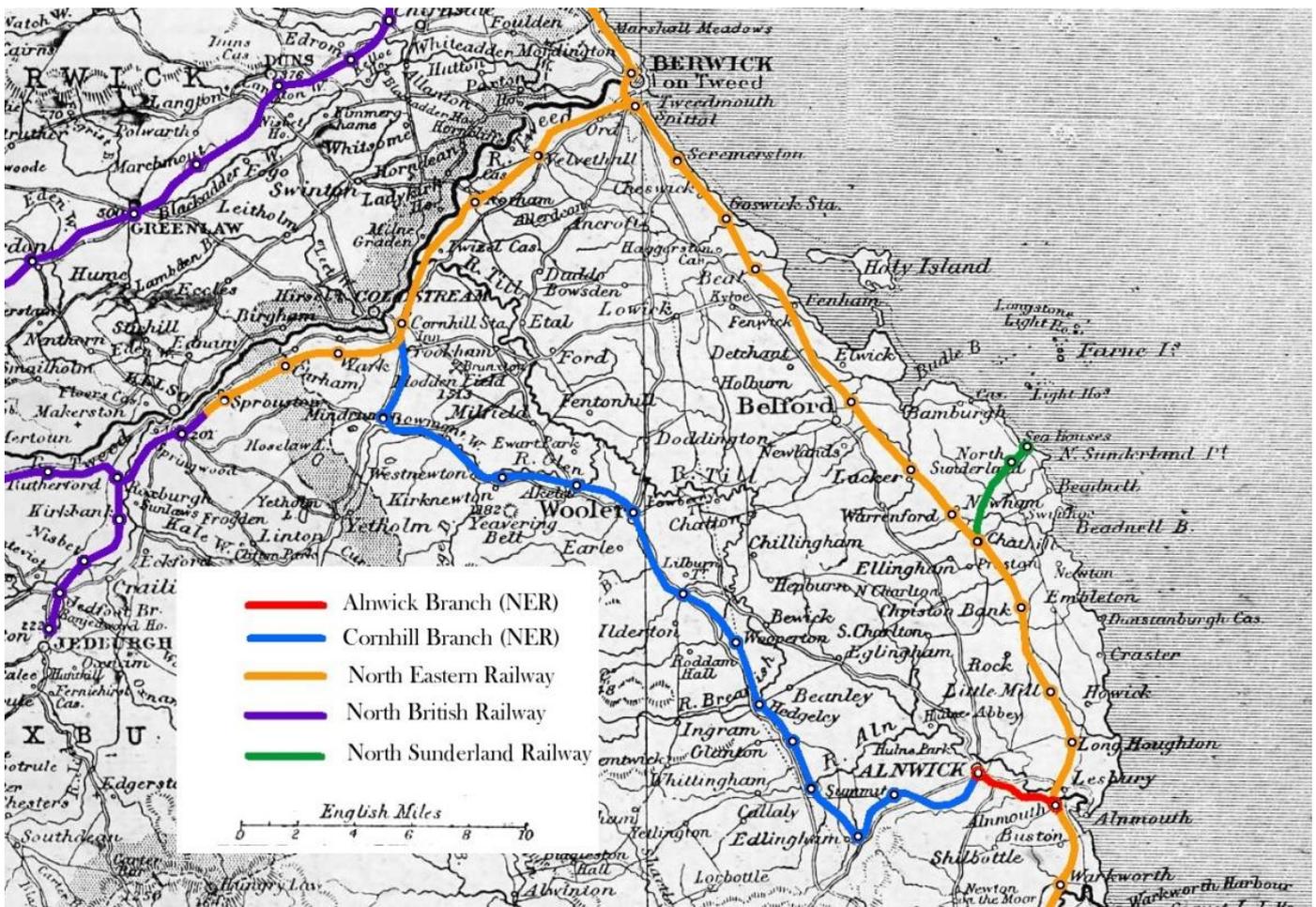
PART 2

This part of the story deals with the building of the railway. Most of the information was extracted from a Scrap Book kindly loaned by Miss K. E. Darling of Beanley, which includes a Newcastle Daily Journal reporter's account of his journey along the line in 1886.

The work on the proposed branch line was divided into two sections under one firm of contractors, Messrs. Meakin and Deane, with one manager for each section. The Branch architect was Mr. W. Bell of York. The dividing line was a little north of Hedgeley Station. There were to be 12 stations on the Branch Line.

NORTHERN SECTOR (Manager, Mr Philip Ayres)

The work started at Cornhill, then on to Mindrum, Kirknewton, Akeld and Wooler. The sixth



station was originally called Lilburn (due no doubt to its proximity to Lilburn Tower), but most of us knew it as Ilderton. Wooperton became the seventh station in that sector.

From Cornhill to Mindrum

- a) Substantially built bridges composed of stone from Twizell Castle. (Twizell Castle, begun in 1770, was never finished. It had to be pulled down a few years before the railway was built).
- b) There was a huge embankment at Learmouth Bog, to carry the line over the peaty area.
- c) A little north of Mindrum, the road between Kilham and Cornhill was carried over the railway by a substantial iron bridge. Large stones were obtained from a quarry at Doddington (on the Earl of Tankerville's Estate, near Wooler). These were said to be a very good class of stone. Other stones from "poor old" Twizell Castle and Twizell Quarry were also used.

At Mindrum Station there was a Station Master's house, booking office, first, second and general waiting rooms and convenience. The design was said to be most tasteful. The waiting rooms were lined with cream colored glazed bricks. The station was constructed of (guess what?) Twizell Castle stone! Also there was a spacious goods shed plus 4 cottages each with a sitting room, kitchen, scullery and 3 bedrooms.

After Mindrum the first river bridge on the line goes over the Bowmont Water. In the construction of this bridge, a great obstacle was found in the quantity of water percolating through the gravel. As a result the foundations had to be laid 12 feet below the bed of the river.

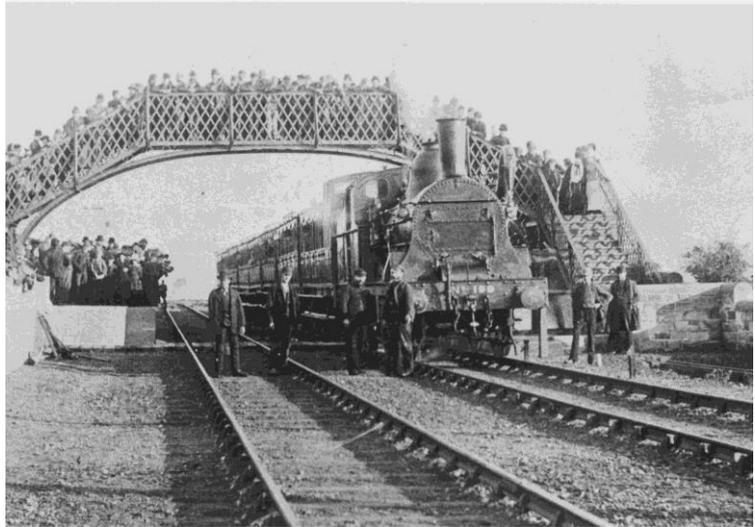
At Kilham sidings were provided for coals and goods. 1½ miles past Kilham sidings, there were heavy cuttings at Kilham Hill, with wild scenery. These were the heaviest cuttings on the northern sector; 100,000 cubic yards had to be excavated near the estate of a Mr. Morton, one of the Railway Directors.

At Canner Mill Bog many tons of earth were swallowed up before a firm foundation for the railway was obtained, which moved on via West Newton to Kirknewton where the united waters of The Bowmont and College formed the River Glen.

From Kirknewton the railway passed in sight of the monument erected on Lanton Hill by the late Sir William Davidson, in memory of his brother, Captain Davidson. Also in the locality were Coupland Castle and Yeavinging Bell.

Three miles from Kirknewton came Akeld station. The buildings were of a "pretty" kind of stone, obtained from Doddington Quarry. From there it was expected at one time that the railway would follow the Till Valley to Ewart Park – instead, it followed the River Glen. South of Akeld there was a slim bridge, the foundations of which are 20 ft. below the level of the rails. It is then 2½ miles from Akeld to Wooler.

(Unfortunately there was no description given of Wooler Station, the largest on the northern sector, but we do have a photograph (right) taken in 1887 of what is probably the first train standing under the passenger bridge over the line at Wooler.)



In 1886 – The Tankerville Arms was better known as The Cottage. The chief means of communication between Wooler and places on the railway had been by the mail coach – one traveled between Alnwick and Wooler, and back, once a day

A little south of Wooler, Wooler Water, which later joins the River Till, was crossed by a wrought iron girder bridge of two spans.

At Middleton a heavy cutting and some swampy ground necessitated an embankment.

4 miles further to Lilburn Station (known as Ilderton Station), near Lilburn Tower, and the nearest station to Chillingham Castle, which was 3 miles to the East.

To the North of Lilburn, the railway crossed The Lil Burn by a wrought iron girder bridge. The Wooler/Glanton road was carried over the line also by a wrought iron girder bridge. Other bridges crossed The Roddam and The Lil. 4 miles further was Wooperton and further south the sector ended about 1 mile north of Hedgeley. In this Northern Sector were:

19 culverts and 39 bridges

The weight of ironwork in the bridges was about 700 tons

About 5,000 tons of rail were used for the main line and sidings

About 600 men were employed together with 70 horses

5 engines carried workmen to and from their homes as well as conveying materials

There were camps for the men at Mindrum and Middleton.

SOUTHERN SECTOR (Manager, Mr J. Weston)

The Newcastle Daily Journal reporter who made the journey along the two parts of the line, as it was in progress in 1886, stated that this was the most difficult part of the branch. He thought some of the cuttings, from their depth and size, were somewhat startling, and that the amount of work required for the laying of the 14½ mile stretch of railway would be seldom equalled. While the cuttings might obstruct some pleasant views, he felt that they would add considerably to the wild appearance of some parts of the countryside.

There were five stations in the sector, including Alnwick, which were all of the same substantial, commodious and elegant character as those in the northern sector.

While the work was actually carried out from Alnwick to Hedgeley, to meet up with the other part of the branch line, I thought I would continue my story on the “UP” line, from Hedgeley to Alnwick.

Hedgeley Station was on land owned by Capt. R. Carr-Ellison – this would, I believe, be the same gentleman who had objected strongly to the branch line a few years previously. It also adjoined property owned by Mr. F.J.W. Collingwood at Glanton Pyke.

By the way, the Newcastle Daily Journal reporter stated that, “...while, in my opinion, the southern sector is not quite so rich in historical interest, the country through which the line passes has undoubtedly a great attraction to those who love to dive into the memories of the past. To those who love magnificent views and the breathing of pure country air it has many recommendations. Apart from that, it is a fine agricultural district which hitherto has been inconveniently removed from rapid communication with market towns. It is, of course, in connecting large and prosperous farms with market towns and seaports that the railway will be chiefly valuable. It will, however, tend to develop the neighborhood in other respects. It would not be rash to predict that in the not too distant future some of the lovely seclusions, presently invaded by the navvies, and some of the hills will soon echo back to the hoarse cries of the “iron horses”, and will resound to the merry laughter of tourists and pleasure seekers of all kinds....”

Rather sadly, from our society’s point of view, the press man did not describe the buildings at either Hedgeley or Glanton Stations although one of the photographs at the end of this article shows Glanton Station.

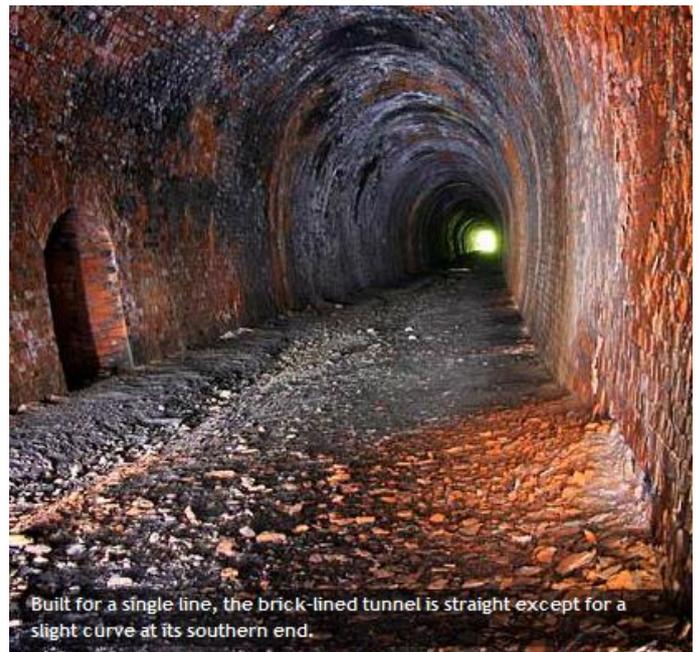
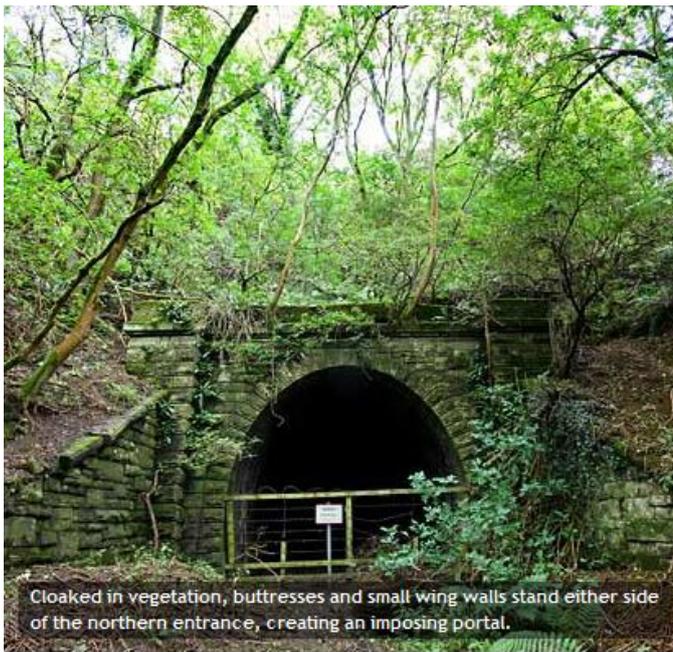
South of Glanton, the engineers had problems in Shawdon Dene where there was the largest embankment on the line. Due to the existence of boggy ground, up to 120,000 cubic yards of material had to be put in before that part of the track could be laid.

Approaching Whittingham Station from the north, the line had to cross the River Aln, and a very fine iron bridge of 60 ft. span, set on cylinders to a depth of 40 ft. was built. The extreme depth of the foundation was essential as some 35 ft. of soft loamy sand was found.

At Whittingham there was an island platform, the only one between Alnwick and Wooler, and the reporter described the station as the most important on the southern sector. Praise indeed! They built a Station Master’s house, five cottages, a large goods shed, coal drops, lime cells, a carriage landing and a cattle landing. It was also there that the engines could take on water. (*The 1887 photographs we have of Whittingham, Glanton and Edlingham Stations are at the end of this article.*)

Onwards to Alnwick, from Whittingham, the Hill Head Tunnel was the next obstacle – 341 yards long. A ventilation shaft still (in 1972) stands in a field above the tunnel which should perhaps be photographed in case the farmer decides to demolish it some day in the future. It is possible to walk through the tunnel to this day, and I believe, that while it is very wet, the condition of the tunnel is not too bad, as the two fairly recent photographs on the next page show.

On again, towards Edlingham Station where the line had to cross the burn. They erected a lovely 5-arch viaduct to span the water. This viaduct is curved, which I understand is a very rare feature.



The two entrances to the Hill Head Tunnel

I will tell you about Alnwick Station before we think about the work involved in getting there.

For the branch line to be accommodated they built a new platform at Alnwick, 600 ft. long, with an iron and glass roof over it. Various additional sidings were also built, and Alnwick Station became three times its original size. The existing building was used as offices, and large waiting rooms were added. The general entrance was to be from the south turn-pike, and there would be a footpath from the station to the road to the town.

Now to the work between Edlingham and Alnwick. A description of the scene was printed in the Alnwick Gazette at the time:

“Everything was topsy-turvy and smelt of coal tar. There were little huts along the line, beginning with Shanty Charlie’s on the site of the present Alnwick Station. Hundreds of navvies were accommodated in them – big, brawny, rough-hewn fellows. Most of them were Welshmen or men who had worked on railways or at other contract jobs in Wales”.

As one can see by travelling over Lemmington Bank by road, there were tremendous cuttings made to bring the railway across from Alnwick to Edlingham. The largest extended about 1½ miles from Mossy Ford over Alnwick Moor. The men had to dig and cut through solid rock, and in places the railway was closed in on either side by high walls of jagged stone. I have been told that the presence of so much stone prevented the use of steam navigators, and the whole of this work was done by hand, except where it was thought advisable to use some blasting powder. In this, the largest cutting was the highest point on the line, known as the summit.

In this sector, huts for the workers were put up across Alnwick Moor and over Lemmington. These huts were wooden, and they were neat, clean and spacious. One had a spirit license. It was occupied by a Mr. William Limb who gave it the rather grandiose name of Pavilion Hotel (*pictured on the next page*). It was in what is now a small croft near the bottom of Corby Bank.



The "Pavilion Hotel"

One can imagine that with 700 men engaged on such a back-breaking work during the day, the Pavilion Hotel would not be short of customers in the evenings!

The southern sector was remarkable, not only for the number and size of cuttings, but also for the number of bridges.

There were no fewer than 44 between Alnwick and Hedgeley, besides the culverts and drains.

It was reported in the

Newcastle Journal that all the bridges on the line (83 in total) were said to have been constructed to admit doubling of the line "whenever such shall be found necessary".

Stone from the cuttings was of very good quality, and was chiefly used for the various buildings in the southern sector. The Rugley Wood cutting stone was used for the new premises at Alnwick.

If anyone has walked the track, or actually traveled on the old railway, they will appreciate the many curves which were necessary to preserve an even gradient. In a few places, the line almost appeared to go back in the direction from which it had come.

For those who like statistics, there were 700 men, 50 horses and several locomotives used on this sector. The work at Alnwick Station alone was expected to cost about £35,000.

The cost of the entire branch was reported to be in the region of £500,000, and I have been told that the firm became bankrupt, mainly because of the excessive blasting and cutting of rock between Alnwick and Edlingham.

The actual length of the railway was 35 miles. Had it been a straight line, the length would have been only 27 miles, as the crow is supposed to fly!

In certain areas, additional land was taken in, usually rented, by the Railway Company as a fire precaution. One of these areas was from the Summit to Lemmington Bank, where there was the possibility of fires being started as a result of sparks from the engines. I have been told that there were no major fires on the ducal property on the Alnwick to Cornhill line - but some time ago there was a series of fires in the Birtley (north Tyne) area, much to everyone's concern. After a great deal of investigation, it was discovered that one of the fireman had quarreled with the local forester, and every time he was on the train in that particular area, he shoveled out hot ashes among the trees, with quite disastrous results!

The Company was responsible for fencing off their land and making it stock-proof.

Where water to the railway premises was from a private water supply, the Company would have to pay rent for it. Not all the Alnwick to Cornhill property had piped water supply. To this day, I believe, the two cottages at the Summit (now weekend cottages) are served with water from a nearby well.

I am told that the drainage along the railway land was very well looked after while the line was in use. Since the gangs (of men) have been removed after the closure of the branch, drainage problems have appeared. This is particularly so from the Summit to Lemmington Bank.

[Editorial Note: In "The Northumbrian", issue #146, Page 64, June/July 2015, Barter Books made mention of "Masons Marks" found on stonework within Barter Books that are 130 years old.

"The 19th Century mason's mark reveals much about the way Alnwick Station was built. It was uncovered during work to extend the Station Buffet kitchen when a lintel had to be inserted into the wall. Temporarily removing some surrounding stone work, this ancient mason's mark again saw the light of day, and when the new lintel was in place, the mason's mark was again covered over.

The man who made this mark was one of several hundred masons working on the construction of the Alnwick to Cornhill line in the mid 1880's. To modern eyes, this was a breathtaking project, but was not unusual for Victorian times.

Over a period of two years, an army of around two thousand navvies, using mainly picks, shovels and gunpowder, built not only the 37 miles of new railway, but all 12 station buildings and bridges. The astounding fact is that all of these stone buildings and bridges were built using sandstone blasted out of the route of the new railway. This in turn leads us to appreciate the skill of the original surveyors, who expertly set a course for the line with gentle gradients suitable for steam engines, deliberately aligning the route through cuttings and tunnels to produce enough excavated stone to build the stations. Alnwick Station itself was built using stone from the cuttings at Rugley and Lemmington.

As the route of the new line was blasted through rock using gunpowder, the army of masons picked over each piece of dislodged stone, selecting pieces which could be squared off to use for building. The dressed stone was used to erect graceful Victorian buildings such as Alnwick Station. Masons were paid according to the work done for each fortnight, and the way for the generally illiterate workmen to show how far they had got was to put their mark on the last piece of stone laid."]

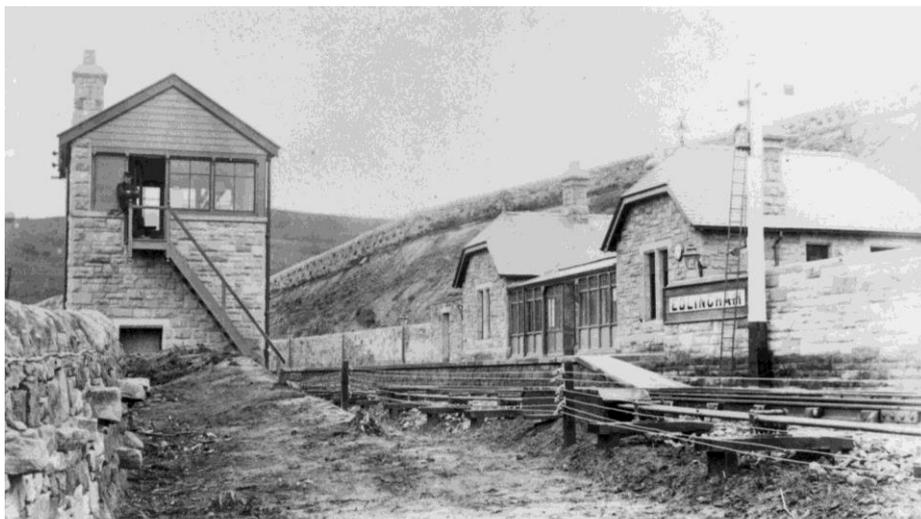
The photographs on the next page are from the Society's archives and were all taken in 1887



GLANTON STATION



WHITTINGHAM STATION



EDLINGHAM STATION

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

The Aln and Breamish Local History Society offers members programme of historical lectures and publications. A minimum of seven lectures a year are arranged, four in the spring and three in the autumn. The May meeting also incorporates a very short AGM.

All talks take place in the Whittingham Memorial Hall at 7.30pm (unless otherwise indicated in our programme details) and are followed by coffee, tea and biscuits.

Occasionally walks may be arranged in the spring and summer months to look at local places of historical interest.

TALKS PROGRAMME 2016/17

21 September 2016	<i>Keeping Hitler out of Northumberland</i>	Phil Rowett
19 October 2016	<i>The Dixon Brothers of Rothbury</i>	Hugh Dixon
16 November 2016	<i>The Alnwick Camp of WW1</i>	DVD Presentation
15 March 2017	<i>The History and Gardens of Glanton Pyke</i>	John Swanson
19 April 2017	<i>Wallington and the Trevelyans</i>	Geoff Hughes
17 May 2017	<i>Military Traditions of North East England</i>	Dr Dan Jackson
21 June 2017	<i>Battlefield Northumberland</i>	Michael Thomson

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Helen Dinsdale	(Hon. Secretary)
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Contact details:

The Secretary, A&BLHS, Sunnyside Cottage, The Lane, Whittingham, Alnwick NE66 4RJ
Tel: 01665 574319 jim.dinsdale@btinternet.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are £10 for a single member and £15 for two people at the same address – due on 1st September each year.

You can pay at meetings of the Society by cash or cheque or by sending your cheque, made to Aln & Breamish Local History Society to:
The Treasurer, A&BLHS, Greystone Cottage, Titlington Mount, Alnwick NE66 2EA

If you wish to pay by Standing Order with your bank please contact the Treasurer (see above) or 01665 578346 or rich.titlington@btinternet.com

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

How can you help to ensure that A&BLHS remains a vibrant and interesting organisation that people enjoy being involved with?

- Encourage friends and neighbours to join
- **Come to meetings whenever you can!**
- Seek out potential speakers
- Think about writing short (or long!) items for Records and Recollections

RECORDS & RECOLLECTIONS

Records & Recollections is published in June and December and is free to A&BLHS members.

We need your memoirs of life in your village and in earlier times, old photographs (to be copied and returned) and anything else which recalls life in past times.