

RECORDS & RECOLLECTIONS

SOCIETY NEWS

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This issue has something of a Transatlantic feel. We have had significant contributions from members of the Dixon and Brown families, both of whom live in the USA. Pam Prindle (nee Dixon) lives near Chicago and Alan J Brown lives in Macon, Georgia.

I do, however, need to renew my plea, as Editor, for our local members to come forward with new material, new ideas, new photographs, new articles. Even with only two issues each year it is becoming a struggle to find new interesting material for Records and Recollections. You don't even need to write pieces yourself - just contact the Editor (details in the 'Subscriptions' panel on the final page).

We are now in the middle of another good season of talks with four fascinating topics to come in the March to June period. Again, see the details on the final page. We all enjoyed the Grace Darling talk by Jack Arrowsmith and Chris Davies' extraordinary knowledge of Northumbrian air crash sites. As you receive this R&R we shall be hearing about the Bailiffgate Museum from two of its Trustees, with exhibits from some of its displays brought for our inspection.

Your Committee (still hoping for new volunteers!) hopes to see you at the meetings. Richard Poppleton (Editor)

Our picture shows the brand new Glanton Station in 1887.

In this issue we are starting to revisit Mary Brown's detailed and fascinating account of the birth, life and death of the Alnwick to Cornhill railway, courtesy of her nephew Alan Brown



Henry Dixon

(The last Dixon and his family at Dixon's Village Shop in Whittingham)



This article has very kindly been written by Pamela Prindle of the town of Crystal Lake, Illinois, USA, about 25 miles north west of Chicago. Pam uses the soubriquet 'cannylass' in her email address, so it's clear where her roots still are.

My name is Pamela Prindle (nee Dixon). This is an affectionate look back at my grandfather Henry Dixon who ran the general store in Whittingham from the early 1920s to 1953. I remember him as a kind, gentle man who always had a smile and a twinkle in his eye. We liked to talk about history, sitting together in their living room. He was the one that taught me the poem about the wives of Henry VIII – “divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived.”

He was born on the 6th May 1892. He was the younger son of William Dixon and his wife Dorothy (nee Layton). William, like his father before him, ran the Whittingham village store. Dorothy was the daughter of the gamekeeper to Lord Ravensworth at Eslington Hall and Ravensworth Castle. Henry had an older brother named William, but was commonly known as Will. The two brothers were



Henry Dixon



L to R Henry, Dorothy, William, Will

very close.

My father told the story of the two brothers playing in a cave down by the river. The roof collapsed trapping Dad inside and Uncle Will ran all the way back to get help. I know the river bank and it is quite a distance, he must have been trapped for some time, good job there was some air there.

Henry was the quieter, shyer one of the two. Both sons grew up planning to join their father in the shop one day. They settled everything by tossing a coin. As remembered by Henry's daughter Margaret:



Henry and Will

They both were destined to follow in the shop, and were duly apprenticed to a store in Newcastle after being at school at Barnard Castle. Then the war came and in all the initial excitement they wanted to enlist. But one had to stay behind to help their father...they tossed a coin and Uncle Will won. So he went off and trained in the Engineers and was commissioned. Later as the war went on Dad too went off and was a dispatch rider, and ended up a corporal.

He was on his way home from the war when he arrived at Whittingham station to hear that his Mother had died, he was devastated. I'm not too sure of the dates but I think Uncle Will was already married and living in Newcastle and starting a career in engineering. Dad never wanted to run the shop, he would have loved to study history but times were different then and he followed on. So Dad returned from the war and lived in the house part of the shop with his father and was looked after by his Aunt Lizzy, his mother's unmarried Sister. At various intervals dad's two step-uncles, David Dippie Dixon (local author) and John Dixon (painter) joined the household.

On June 17th 1924 Henry married Elizabeth Green. They met while Elizabeth was housekeeping for her two eldest brothers at Wandon Farm near Chatton. From what I have been told, while Henry and Elizabeth were courting there were some rather lengthy deliveries from the shop to the farm. After marrying, they lived on the edge of Whittingham village in a house named Hawklemass. Two children followed – William Maxwell born 22nd of October 1925 and Margaret Dorothy born 13th of December 1927. While Elizabeth was busy with the children, Henry continued to run the shop. As remembered by Henry's daughter Margaret:



Henry and Elizabeth with family on their wedding day



William (Bill) and Margaret

After the war the shop must have expanded, the system of having a traveller call on customers with samples to take orders followed by the lorry delivering a few days later grew and covered quite an area. The Christmas delivery up the valley beyond Alwinton was quite an event and Dad tried to go. The last two farms before the Scottish border were old customers and their two orders filled the lorry with tea chest after tea chest full of sugar, flour, jam, dried fruit, clothes, china, Christmas presents and everything. They were expecting to be cut

off for months by snow and flooded rivers, there were two fords on the way.

Records & Recollections

The actual building also grew, it was a real warren of a place...Health and Safety would have had a field day! As kids we used to play in the various nooks and crannies. The shop proper led to what had been the house but was gradually taken over for storage of clothes, shoes, etc. Towards the garden at the back there was what had been a kitchen then a back kitchen and an even darker, spookier place for more storage. Auntie Lizzie lived upstairs after Grandfather died, in a converted flat. Then after that Dad moved his office up there. On the other side, to the left, there was the warehouse that held all the non-perishable groceries and that also had a big door for deliveries where there was tea, jams, tins, biscuits etc. It was jolly cold in winter with only the odd paraffin heater. Even colder was the back warehouse which was up a ramp and was a corrugated building tucked onto the back. It held big bulky food stuffs, dog biscuits, and sacks of sugar and stuff of little interest to young folks...nothing to eat. Further to the left another cottage had been taken over and that was mainly china, kettles, and house goods. They employed nine staff. Billy Clark drove the lorry to deliver monthly orders, Tommy Jackson and Sandy Fairburn drove the cars around taking along cases of samples and getting the orders in. The rest worked in the shop, serving customers, making up orders etc.

World War II messed it all up, everything was rationed and staff went off to the army. Petrol was allowed for the lorry but not for the cars. Distant customers sent orders by post and the farmers were allowed some petrol. Anything he could buy in sold! That wasn't a problem. He had always gone to Newcastle each week to order at his favourite wholesalers and still did during the war, but by bus. It was a long weary day. After the war he could see the end of this kind of business. Cars were becoming common and folks could drive to the bigger towns to shop and Bill and I were earning so he sold up.



William (Bill) Dixon at the Shop in the 1980s

Henry was an active member of the local community. As remembered by Henry's daughter Margaret:

Dad was a church warden and in fact he was also a vicar's warden. That meant he was responsible for finding a replacement vicar if there was a gap between incumbents, or I suppose illness. I believe he would be expected to take service if all else failed! I guess he made sure of a replacement because I never remember that happening. But we often had one of the stand-ins for Sunday lunch etc. Dad was also a school manager. He inherited those two jobs from his father.

Henry retired in 1953 bringing an end to Dixons running the Whittingham shop. He and Elizabeth moved south to Weybridge, Surrey to be near their children and grandchildren. Henry passed away on the 17th of May 1966. I remember his funeral, first at the Whittingham church and then afterwards at the Mountain Farm at Glanton. It was very well attended and there was lots of warm reminiscing about a man well regarded in the area.

MARY BROWN of WHITTINGHAM

In the early days of the Society, Mary Holland Brown was the Secretary to whom members and others were asked to address correspondence. She lived at 7, The Croft in Whittingham. Her nephew, Alan Brown, now lives in Macon, Georgia USA and he has very kindly sent this brief biographical note about Mary as a precursor to the following article..



Mary Holland Brown – 10th February 1916 to 21st December 1990

Mary Holland Brown

Born in Whittingham in 1916 Mary Brown was the fifth child of George and Caroline Brown. She lived in The Croft in the village virtually the whole of her life. Nothing was more important for her than the doings of the village nor for her could there be a more wonderful place to live. Mary attended the Duchess School in Alnwick and on leaving school worked for a number of firms in the area. These included the Northumberland Gazette and the railways, hence her fascination with the history of the railway.

During and immediately after World War II, she was a clerk at Hedgeley and Whittingham Stations. It was during this period that she experienced perhaps her greatest adventure – a winter's day ride in the cab of an engine of a goods train to Hedgeley, when all other transport had been brought to a halt by the snow.

Subsequent to working on the railways Mary spent the greater part of her career with the Alnwick Castle Estates Office where she remained until her retirement. She never learned to drive, and never married, relying totally on public transport all her life, first the trains and subsequently the buses. Summer vacations were spent "on tour" in Europe with her elder sister Margaret, until she passed away in 1980.

Mary's activities in Whittingham spanned the Women's Institute where in the early days she was a leading light in the drama group, the Church Parochial Council, the Parish Council and the Memorial Institute. She also was a long time member of the choir at St. Bartholomew's Church.

She was a founder member and secretary for 23 years of the Aln and Breamish Local History Society of which she became President in 1990. She was also a vice-president of long standing of the Northumberland Association of Local History Societies. In her later years the History Society was her greatest preoccupation publishing its magazine and carrying on country and even worldwide correspondence with people seeking to maintain local connections and research family history. Mary would always help – whether it was a child looking for information on a project, a local newspaper wanting articles on local events or the Vicar looking for a copy of the Church magazine.

Mary Brown was constantly immersed in the customs and traditions of the area, following very much in the footsteps of her father Mr. George Brown who was clerk to the Parish Council for 35 years, raised many hundreds of pounds for charities, helped gathering funding for the erection of the Memorial Institute, the bus shelter, council houses, and of course was secretary for the Whittingham Games for many years. His slogan was "Whittingham on Top", and his favorite phrase was "we must keep Whittingham on the map." Mary Brown followed very well in those footsteps.

FORMER ALNWICK TO CORNHILL RAILWAY BRANCH

On 12th January 1972 Mary Brown gave a talk to the Society and in Volume 1, Nos. 3,4,5 and 6 of the original series of Records and Recollections abridged extracts of her talk were included as a series of articles. Alan Brown has taken the full text of Mary's talk, converted it to an electronic document, edited it appropriately and let the Society have the file. The document runs to 26 sides of A4 (without any photographs) and so we intend to re-publish the full text over the next few issues. We are most grateful to Alan for his initiative with this.

The Editor, who is new to A&BLHS since 1972 (!) and even since some of this material was collected as a booklet about eight years ago, hopes that longer-time members will forgive the risk of repetition.

PART 1

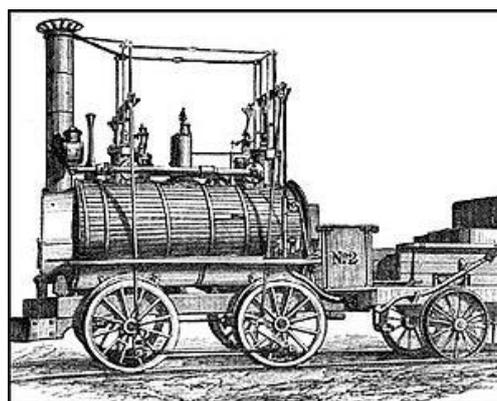
If there had been a memorial stone erected to the Alnwick and Cornhill Railway Branch, I suppose it would have read:

BORN 5 th September 1887 DIED 2 nd March 1953 AGED 65 Years

Because of my recent research, I would have wanted to add: "DIFFICULT BIRTH" and "A LONG LINGERING ILLNESS BEFORE DEATH", because for our railway life did not begin at 40 – quite the reverse.

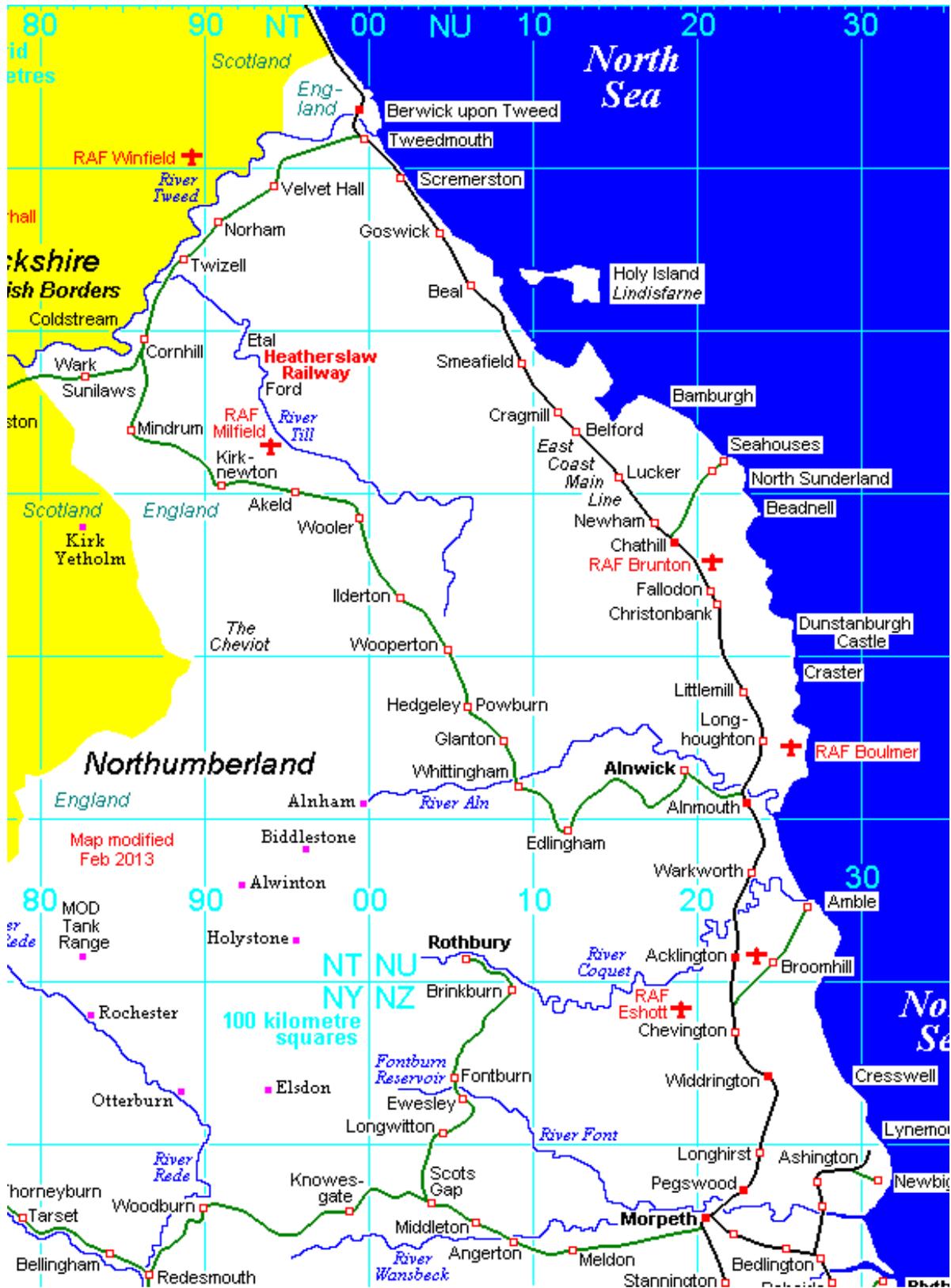
Before I talk about the building and life of the line, we should think a little of what was going on in the county before the branch line was in operation. I have been fortunate in having been able to read letters and papers in the Estates Office – mostly dated 1880 and 1881, and they deal with the activities of the Railway Companies and the North Northumberland Landowners who, at that time, were all most anxious to have the County opened up for development.

However, like Julie Andrews – "let's start at the very beginning". George Stephenson, born at Wylam on 9th June 1781, was the person destined to initiate one of the greatest events of the Industrial Revolution – the Golden Age of Railways. He it was who transformed the horse-drawn railways, by improving the steam engine. Speaking of George Stephenson, financed by Lord Ravensworth he built the first engine at Killingworth, and the engine (pictured) was called "My Lord" in Lord Ravensworth's honour.



This was a long time before the Alnwick to Cornhill branch came to life, for it would appear that in the 19th Century, as today, this part of Northumberland was at the end of the queue for innovations and development.

There was of course no such thing as British Rail. As the years passed from the beginning of steam railways, small railway systems evolved up and down the country. They gradually amalgamated to form larger companies, until in Northumberland we had the North Eastern



Railway and the North British. The North Eastern had been formed as a result of the amalgamation of the York, Newcastle and Berwick, the Leeds Northern and the York and North Midland Railways. The North Eastern then had the main coast line between Newcastle and Berwick as we know it today.

In 1863, Parliamentary sanction was given to the Northumberland and Central Railway to build a line from Scots Gap, northwards through Rothbury, over to Whittingham and on to Wooler and Kelso. Now Kelso was already on the North British system, so here was a chance for the North British to get a foothold in the south of Northumberland which is what they very much wanted.

Despite the fact that landowners, business people and farmers were greatly concerned that the wide expanse of Northumberland was still without railway provision, the great delay in getting anything done was mainly due to the fact that they could not agree on the route. Rothbury got their line (the Wansbeck Valley Railway) in 1870, and this was eventually taken over by the North British who then had a line of communication from Edinburgh down the western side of the County to Hexham and to Morpeth.

If the Central Railway enthusiasts had had their way, then Alnwick would have been completely by-passed, certainly in the first instance. The proposals for a Central Railway therefore were fought vigorously by the townspeople and many others. So about 1880 we had the position of the Railway Companies themselves in opposition as well as many of the landowners of North Northumberland, when in stepped the Alnwick Local Board of Health, who were Alnwick tradespeople, with real positive action. They had been supporting the North East Railway for a branch line from Alnwick to Cornhill, or Kelso, for some time – now they really got going!

From the papers (in the Estates Office) I discovered that the Board of Health arranged a meeting in Newcastle, at the offices of the North Eastern Railway Company, on the 4th November 1880. The directors of the company met with some of the principal landowners in the district between Alnwick and Cornhill and Kelso to consider the necessity of making a railway between these places. The Directors spoke favourably of the scheme, provided that the landowners, through whose land the railway would pass, would dispose of their land at a price based on Agricultural Value. The few landowners present agreed immediately, but as they were few, it was decided to hold another meeting, this time in the Northumberland Arms (White Swan in Alnwick), at 1 o'clock on the 4th February 1881. The notices for this meeting were sent out by Mr. Robert Middlemas, an ancestor of our present Alnwick solicitor – Robert Middlemas.

[Mary Brown's notes at this point state that reading the old letters and papers in the "Office" (which would be the Estates Office of Alnwick Castle where she worked for many years), makes for a really fascinating story. These papers emphasize the varying views the Landowners had regarding the route that any railway should take. All she could say was that those firmly in favour of a Central Railway were Capt. Carr Ellison of Hedgeley Hall and Major Browne's grandfather, who had just a year or so before purchased Callaly Castle.

She also wondered why Major Browne's grandfather would support the Central Railway as opposed to the branch line from Alnwick to Cornhill, but then realised that the Central Railway would come over from Rothbury to Whittingham, past the doorstep, as it were, of Callaly Castle. If the Branch Line was built after the Central Line, the junction would probably be at Whittingham, so Major Browne was going to have the best of both worlds.

Mary's notes also state that the supporters of the Branch Line were Lord Tankerville, with property at Wooler, who wanted the line to by-pass Cornhill and go direct to Kelso. Also supporting the Branch Line was the Duke of Northumberland, and Major Browne's great grandfather from Doxford. It was Major Browne of Doxford who proposed at the meeting of 4th February, 1881 that direct application be made to the North Eastern Railway Company to make a line from Alnwick to Cornhill.

So here are the full details of the 4th February, 1881 meeting, as discovered by Mary Brown.]

At that meeting, Mr. R. Carr Ellison had a great deal to say, and it is obvious from the start that he was a Central Railway enthusiast. His argument was – and I quote:

“The question ought to be considered by the landowners in all its magnitude and not as a mere local question affecting their own immediate neighbourhood. They ought to take a comprehensive view as regards the County at large.”

He went on to say the railway accommodation in the southern division of the County was miserable – north of Rothbury matters were still worse. Looking at the map, he said, few Counties in England were better fitted for a through line of railway than was Northumberland – for a line connecting Cornhill and Kelso through the heart of the County with Newcastle. It appeared to him that the Alnwick railway ought in reality to be the Alnwick branch, but it could be considered to be the branch of a tree and not the tree itself. A branch, as they knew, said Mr. Carr Ellison, never grew until there was a trunk!

His opinion was that they should give every facility to a through line of railway for Central Northumberland, and when they were once assured of that, then, and only then, should they do their best to secure a branch line from the Vale of Wooler to Alnwick. He would most heartily co-operate with such a branch line when the proper time came, but they must look for a trunk line through Central Northumberland first. He would part with his land on the easiest possible terms for a Central Railway; and he would do the same for the Alnwick branch when the proper time came.

The 6th Duke of Northumberland's Commissioner at that time was Mr. J. Snowball of Seaton House, Dudley. He acted for the Duke and for Lord Percy at the meeting on 4th November 1880. He said that the Duke was prepared to support the Alnwick/Cornhill branch line in every possible way. He (Mr. Snowball) agreed with Mr. Carr Ellison about the necessity for a through line, but he thought they could attempt too much and in the end get nothing. His opinion was to go entirely for the Alnwick to Cornhill line, then take up the question of a through line.

Lord Tankerville had interests at Wooler as well as Chillingham at that time. His agent was Mr. Jacob Wilson of Woodhorn Manor, and they were in favor of an Alnwick to Wooler line, but could see no advantage of carrying it to Cornhill. He would have missed out Cornhill and taken the line direct to Kelso. He thought the traffic from Cornhill to Wooler could not be very remunerative, and if such a line were built it would preclude the possibility of any line being made further west, at any rate for some time to come. This opinion, said Mr. Wilson, was shared by many gentlemen in the north of the County and by Lord Tankerville himself. He went on to say that he had attended the meeting to say that, on the understanding that the line should be continued up the Bowmont, Lord Tankerville would offer every facility to the Company, by placing any land required for railway purposes upon his property at the disposal of the Company at a fair Agricultural Value.

Mr. Wilson went on to say that he felt that they would not be fulfilling their duties if they stopped there. No system of railway, he said, that comes short of making a line from the Tyne to the Tweed, and thence to Edinburgh, would supply the requirements of the agricultural trade of the district. The question of railway accommodation, he said, should be treated as one large scheme, of which the line to Alnwick was only a part. He revealed that he had three interviews with the Chairman of the North East Railway Company, and he thought the Railway Directors wished to know the feelings of the people in the district and they were disposed to consider what was best to be done.

Major Browne of Doxford (the present Major Browne's great grandfather) was the first to put forward a resolution. He also agreed that it was desirable to have a Central Railway from Newcastle to Kelso, but he felt they ought to be looking to themselves, and not dictating to others in the County. His proposal was: "That direct application be made to the North Eastern Railway Company to make a line of railway from Alnwick Station to Cornhill, or Kelso."

Mr. Rea of Middleton Hall, Wooler (a relative of our Major Buckle at Glanton Pike) seconded the resolution. He said he spoke for the inhabitants of Wooler who were in favor of a line from Alnwick to Cornhill, continuing up the Bowmont Valley to Kelso.

Mr. A.H. Browne, the new owner of Callaly Castle (Major Browne's grandfather) gave preference to the Central Railway, but said he would agree with a branch line connecting the proposed Central Railway with the East Coast line.

Mr. Snowball (the Duke's Commissioner) wondered what prospect there was of a Central Railway. He saw no possibility of the North Eastern Company doing it. He suggested having the Alnwick to Wooler and Cornhill, or Kelso, proposals agreed as he believed that the Company would lay such a line.

Mr. Carr Ellison thought the wants of the County were so great for a Central Railway and that the money market was so favorable, that there was every reason to hope that they would get a central line. If the North Eastern Company did not build it, he believed that some other Company would – (of course, he meant the North British). He for one could not give any assistance to the Alnwick branch until he saw the County safely in possession of a through line. He even went so far as to say he would be disposed to oppose the Alnwick/Cornhill line, because he thought it may turn out to be a formidable obstacle to a through line.

(As we know, there never was a Central Line, and who can say that had Mr. Carr Ellison won the day, we may have had a railway operating today).

Well, after more discussion, Major Browne's resolution was carried, and I quote: "Only two gentlemen voted against it".

A further resolution was also carried: "That no railway facilities for the centre of the County would be completed without a through line from Tyne to Tweed, and that this should form part of the proposal to be submitted to the North Eastern Railway Company".

Then Major Burrell of Broome Park moved that the Landowners would be prepared to offer the necessary land at fair Agricultural Value – subject to the route being approved by the respective Landowners. This motion was also carried.

[Mary Brown's notes state that the Central Railway enthusiasts countered with a meeting in Newcastle to try to get a through line from Newcastle to Kelso, touching many stops on the way to Wooler and Yetholm.]

The meeting I have been telling you about was on 4th February 1881. The following day, a circular letter dated 5th February, 1881, was sent out by Leadbetter, Harvey and Bigge of Newcastle and Mr. Charles D. Forster of Morpeth, calling Landholders who were interested in a railway for Central Northumberland and South of Scotland, to a meeting of the Noblemen and Gentlemen Landowners in the Counties of Northumberland and Roxburgh, in the Central Station Hotel, Newcastle, on Saturday 12th February 1881. They were to consider the means of providing a through line from Newcastle to Kelso, giving railway facilities to Ponteland, Stamfordham, Belasy, Rothbury, Alnwick, Whittingham, Glanton, Powburn, Wooler and Yetholm. The circular letter concluded: "As the time is now ripe for decision, your attendance at the meeting is earnestly requested".

In another printed circular – asking Landowners to sign it showing their agreement to a Central Railway, it was pointed out that, after passing the Vale of the Tyne, not a single cutting, embankment or bridge of any consequence would be required as far as Scotts Gap, while from Rothbury to the Tweed – and I quote again: The ground is so level that little more would be necessary than to lay down the rails". The construction of the Central Railway was not expected to cost more than £5,000 a mile.

They appealed for support, as they felt that it was impossible for farmers to compete with either America or the Continent, unless every facility was given to them to obtain, at the least possible cost, manures, oil cake, etc. and their means of sending their grain and stock to the best markets either in the north or the south. It was especially important at that time, as farmers in the County were not only exposed to competition of foreigners, but such competitors were unfairly favoured by the imported corn, cattle and dead meat being carried by Railway Companies at much lower rates than the agricultural produce of this country.

A letter dated 9th May 1881 from the Railway Company at York gives the North Eastern Railway Company Directors' views on the various proposals, and states quite clearly what they were and were not prepared to do:

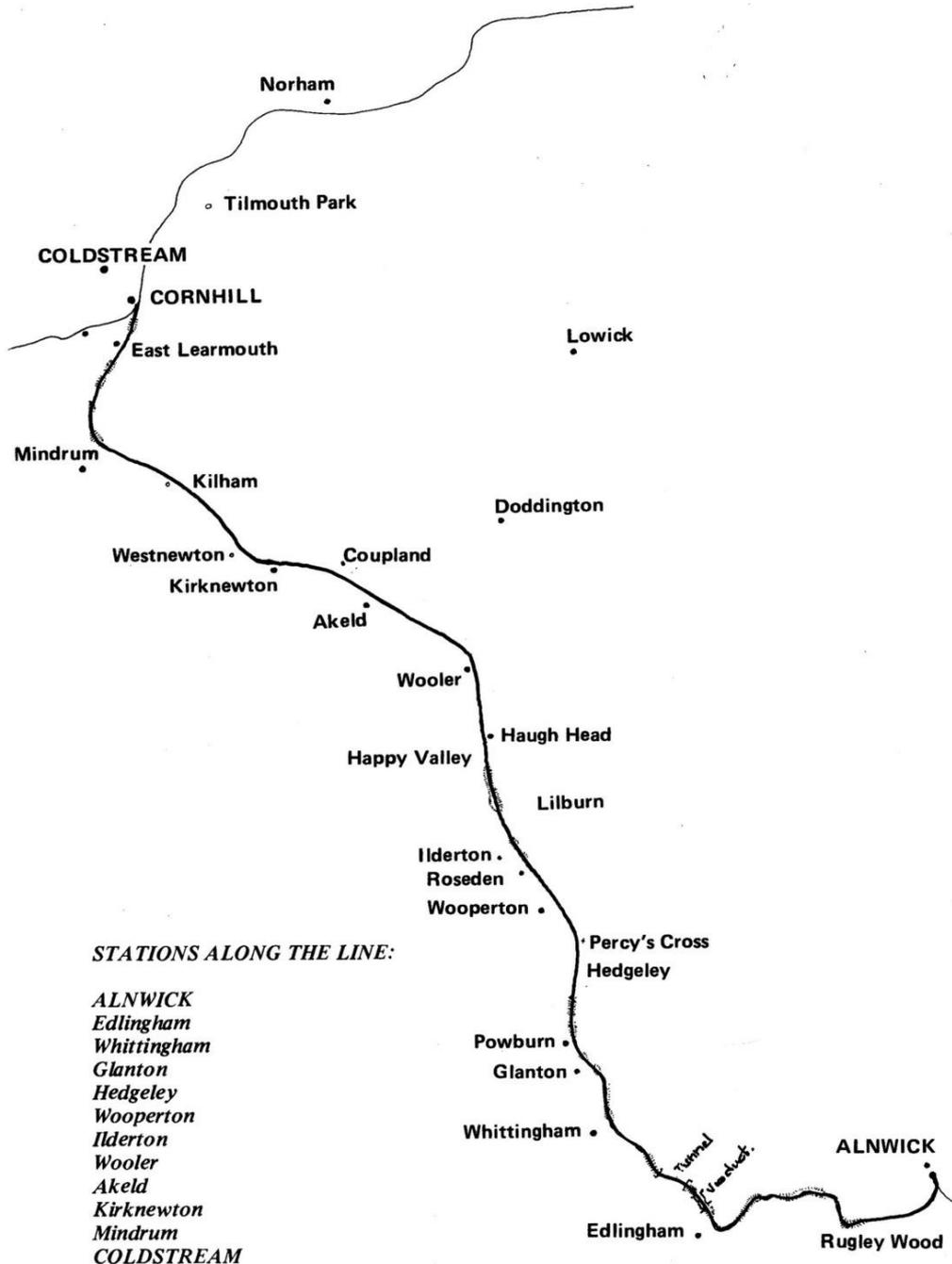
- (a) They could see no profitability in an extension from Rothbury northwards.
- (b) They were prepared to recommend to their shareholders to undertake the construction of a railway from Alnwick to Cornhill – via Whittingham – on condition that the Landowners in the district agreed to sell the land necessary for the line, stations and works, at a price not exceeding 25 years' purchase calculated on the existing rental, and to subscribe, or cause to be subscribed, 2/7ths is the Capital required – it being understood that such subscription should not be called for to a larger amount than £100,000.

In August of 1881, the Directors of the North Eastern almost blotted their copybooks! There seems to have been ample proof that they were planning to take the line from Alnwick through Hulne Park and the Duke's private grounds, despite the fact that they knew the Duke was against any such route. A letter from Mr. Snowball to the Railway Company brought a reply that they had never considered such a plan!

Mr. George Lambton, a Civil Engineer and Architect from Newcastle tried hard to throw another spanner in the works, when he produced a scheme for a Light Railway. He was

another Central Railway enthusiast, and was not interested in Alnwick whatsoever. He was however most anxious to get the support of the Duke for his proposals. His trains would be the standard gauge – 4 ft. 8½ ins. And they could travel at a fair reasonable speed of 25 mph. Construction cost would be only £3,000 per mile, and his estimated cost from Gosforth to Cornhill was £164,000. His effort was in vain.

THE ALNWICK TO CORNHILL RAILWAY



On 15th September, 1881, Robert Middlemas sent out a printed letter with the Resolution passed by the Directors of the North Eastern Railway Company. It read as follows: "That, subject to satisfactory arrangements being made with the Landowners, with respect to the land which will be required, the Directors will be prepared to recommend the Shareholders to sanction an application by the Company to Parliament for a line of railway between Alnwick and Cornhill." It was also proposed that several landowners sign an Agreement to sell the land through which the line passed at 25 years' rent purchase, including severance.

The phrase "25 years' purchase" means that the Landowner would be paid a total of 25 years' rent for the area of land sold. The phrase "including severance" is important. This refers to compensation paid to Landowners for the inconvenience of splitting farms, and even fields, as a result of the railway line passing through a holding. Today, because of the value of land, compensation for severance is a major item. A farm can be divided by a motorway, or say the Alnwick by-pass, and considerable sums of money are involved for severance only.

Well, the approval of the resolution was by no means the end, but the Alnwick to Cornhill branch promoters were decidedly more cheerful.

On 17th October 1881, Lord Tankerville's Agent wrote to Mr. Snowball, the Duke's Commissioner, saying that things looked much more hopeful. If possible he would attend yet another meeting, but he had a Rent Day at Wooler (he always seemed to be having Rent Days at The Cottage at Wooler!). He had written a private letter to Mr. George Grey expressing a wish that Lord Grey and Lord Tankerville should "sail in the same boat".

A copy of the Agreement by the Landowners concerned unfortunately was not dated, but some of the signatures were:

Northumberland
Ravensworth
Watson Askew
Thomas Ilderton
M. T. Culley
George Skelly for Alnwick Freeman
Bryan Burrell
Tankerville (subject to Bowmont route)

In 1882, an Act of Parliament entitled "The North Eastern Railway Act, Alnwick and Cornhill Branch" was passed.

Correspondence apparently continued to flow.

A letter dated 15th August, 1883, from Mr. C. A. Harrison of the North Eastern Railway stated that there would be a bridge, not a level crossing, at Greensfield Farm – but there will be points in abeyance which it would be desirable to have settled. They eventually got the points settled, and the first sod was dug in 1884!

THE HOMECOMING OF MAJOR R H CARR-ELLISON

Thirty six years ago our Society was given a copy of a remarkable slim volume produced in 1903 for the Carr-Ellison family of Hedgeley Hall. It was donated by Mrs D Brown of South Charlton. It chronicles in great detail the celebrations that accompanied the return of two local men from the Boer War in 1902. There is no record of who was responsible for recording the almost verbatim accounts of the speeches by many local worthies.

In South Africa the Boer War was fought between October 1899 and May 1902. Actually there had been a previous Boer War in 1880/81 but the British lost and so perhaps it tends to be conveniently forgotten. So, strictly, the one we are talking about was the Second Boer War. When it ended in 1902 the Boer republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State became part of the British Empire. The war cost 75,000 lives. 22,000 of these were British soldiers, although fewer than 8,000 of these were battle casualties, the rest were deaths from disease. Following the end of the war the surviving British troops came home. Among them were two members of the Carr-Ellison family, Major R H Carr-Ellison and his cousin, Captain H A Carr.

To our modern eyes the home-coming welcome given to these officers seems extraordinary. It was not just that there was a big party at the White Swan in Alnwick, with formal presentations, but that this was followed in short order by two big dinners at The Plough in Powburn; a banquet in Newcastle and a formal dinner of the Newcastle Farmers' Club. At other points in the period between summer 1901 and summer 1903 major home-coming events were held for other members of the Carr and Carr-Ellison families as they returned from their roles in the war.

One of the main features of the welcome was the presentation of ceremonial swords to the officers. The list of those who had contributed to the ceremonial gifts was also remarkable. No fewer than 245 donors are listed. Most are local or from the Newcastle area, but some are from as far afield as London and Bournemouth.

Below are extracts from the account of the initial party and the dinners at The Plough. The language and punctuation are very much of their time, as is, for example, the common tendency not even to acknowledge that a wife had her own Christian name, but was known solely by her husband's name with 'Mrs' appended.

Major Carr-Ellison arrived at Hedgeley Station on Friday morning the 26th December, 1902 and drove to the Hall. The entrance gates were tastefully arched over and decorated, and a striking motto, "Welcome Home", hung over the centre on the top of which hung a Union Jack. Also on top of the Hall hung a Union Jack and a Boer flag on one pole. The genial squire of Hedgeley and his wife and members of the family welcomed the Major home. Hearty cheers were given by all assembled.

Willing hands soon unyoked the horses at the entrance and pulled the carriage to the Hall, where the Major thanked all for their kindness in giving him such a hearty welcome. He regretted the absence of Mrs Ralph Carr-Ellison through her illness in London, and also regretted the absence of Master Jock, but he trusted they would not be long in coming north. Mr Wm. Lyall welcomed the Major and hoped the time was



MAJOR R. H. CARR-ELLISON,
1st (Royal) Dragoons.

not too distant when they would be able to give Mrs Ralph Carr-Ellison and Master Jock a similar reception. Liberal refreshments were handed to the workmen and others assembled.



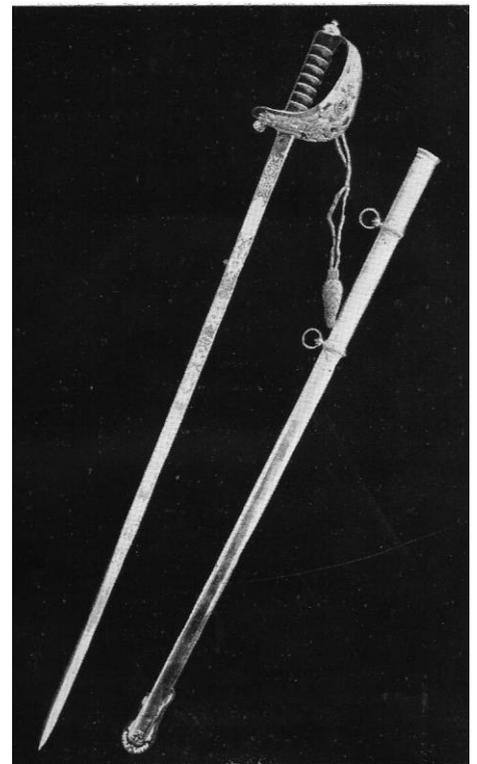
Captain H A Carr

The Old White Swan at Alnwick was the scene of an interesting gathering on the next afternoon, when Major R H Carr-Ellison, of Hedgeley, and Captain H A Carr, who have recently returned from South Africa, after serving with distinction throughout the campaign, were made the recipients of swords of honour at the hands of their numerous friends in the district. The occasion was all the more interesting from the fact that some 46 years previous the fathers of these gallant officers and cousins were similarly honoured on their return from the Crimea.

Major Carr-Ellison belongs to that famous regiment, the 1st Royal Dragoons, which he joined in 1884. In 1894 he was appointed adjutant to the 12th Yeomanry Brigade, with headquarters at Newcastle, and for the following five years he figured most popularly all over the Borders. Rejoining his regiment, he was promoted Major in 1899, and in 1901 was granted the local rank of Lieut.-Colonel in the army. He went to South Africa with the Dragoons in the autumn of 1899, and from October, 1900, till July of the following year held the command during the illness of Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Basing. He was afterwards given the command of the 4th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, but in November, 1901, was recalled to the Royals, and came home at their head a few weeks ago. The Major has since had the Order of Kronen conferred upon him by the German Emperor, who is colonel-in-chief of the regiment.

Mrs R H Carr-Ellison soon followed her husband to South Africa, and she was to have been presented on Saturday with a beautiful bracelet, but unfortunately she had not sufficiently recovered from her illness, contracted while she was overseas. Captain Carr, it may be added, saw a lot of hard service in Africa as an officer of the 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment, and on the staff of Colonel Kekewich and other commanders.

[There follows a list of those who were present at The Old White Swan. In addition to members of the immediate Carr-Ellison and Carr families, the list includes many local names, such as Chrisp from Prendwick, Wylam from Broome Park, Storey from Beanley, Lyall, Short and Wilson from West Hedgeley, Potts from Powburn, Robertson, Craik, Turnbull, Wallace and Purvis from Alnwick. It is not clear whether the guests were all male, but there is no mention throughout the accounts of any women present.]



Major R H Carr-Ellison's Sword and Scabbard

The presentations of the ceremonial swords and Mrs Ralph Carr-Ellison's bracelet were made by Mr W A Watson-Armstrong, who said that he had: "the very pleasant duty of asking Major Carr-Ellison, on behalf of his friends and neighbours, to receive a presentation sword as a small tribute of their affection for him, and their admiration for the distinguished service that he had rendered to his country. (*Applause*) They were deeply interested in his progress in South Africa, and no-one rejoiced more when his name appeared in despatches than his Northumbrian friends. (*Hear, hear*)

Mr Watson-Armstrong remarked that he had alluded to the fact that Major Carr-Ellison was receiving the same honour that was conferred on his father nearly 50 years ago and also to the pleasant fact that a son of Captain Carr-Ellison's brother was also being honoured in the same way. Then, turning to Capt. Carr, he spoke of the great pleasure it afforded to all present to welcome him back to Northumberland, and to present him with a handsome sword as a mark of their appreciation of what he had done in South Africa. (*Applause*) He hoped he would long be spared to keep the sword and hand it down to his children that they might know of the services he had rendered and go and do likewise.

[Then followed several other speeches of thanks and acceptance from Major Carr-Ellison and Captain Carr, plus toasts to various people who had been involved with the foundation of the regiment and the organization of the presentations]

The presents were on exhibition in Messrs. Wilkin and Dickman's shop window at Alnwick on January 5th and 6th, and in their shop window in Glanton on January 7th and 8th and in the Jubilee Hall, Hedgeley, on the afternoon of January 10th, 1903.

Celebrations at Powburn

On Tuesday evening, Jan 6th, 1903, the first of a series of dinners took place at the Plough Inn, Powburn, and to which a large number of the tenants and workpeople on the Estate, as well as of the subscribers to the sword of honour were invited. The most ample provision had been made by Mr Carr-Ellison for the entertainment of his guests. A large outbuilding was requisitioned as a dining hall, and decorated for the occasion in a most elaborate style. The *menu* was varied and choice, and champagne and other wines and liquors were there *ad lib.* The 5th Northumberland Fusiliers' Band under Bandmaster Cordial, discoursed excellent music throughout the evening and Mr Jas. Hall and Sergt. J Byrnes on the Northumberland pipes also enlivened the proceedings.



MRS. R. H. CARR-ELLISON.



Mrs R H Carr-Ellison's Bracelet

Toasts were raised to His Majesty the King; to Her Majesty the Queen, Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales and the rest of the Royal Family; to the Navy, Army and Reserve Forces; to The Bishops, Clergy, and Ministers of all Denominations; to Major Carr-Ellison and other members of the family who had served in South Africa; to the Tenants; to the Subscribers to the Testimonial Fund; to the Agents; to the Committee of the Testimonial Fund; and to the Chairman.

[An exhaustive and perhaps exhausting list, you might think, given that each toast was proposed and responded to appropriately.]

There was a repetition of the enjoyable proceedings at Powburn on the following Wednesday evening. Great credit is due to Mr J W Robson, of the Plough Inn, the caterer, for the successful way in which he accomplished these two great events, over 60 guests having sat down on each night.

As we are a Local History Society it seems a reasonable move to print the list (as printed at the time) of those attending the two Powburn events since there is a fair chance that some of our readers will know of some of those named. These cannot be complete lists as each is preceded by the words "Amongst those present were:"

Jan 6th

Rev J Blades, Branton Manse; Robt. Huggup, Wm. Douglas, J Davidson, Brandon; W Robson, Ingram; Jas. Weir, Bewick Folly; S Reay, Ilderton. J Rough, J Crearer snr., J Crearer jnr., A Crearer, Wm. Lyall, J W Taylor, Walker Wilson, J Newton, Thos. Carr, W M Lyon, J Clark, T W Taylor, Thos. Potts, And. Dodds, W S Short snr., R Short, A Thompson, Wm Thompson, O McDonald, J Armstrong, A Hall, Jno. Dodds, J Robson, Thos. Anderson, Jno. Fulton, A Fulton, S Woodcock, Thos. Woodcock jnr, Jno. Woodcock, Ed. Jack, Jas. Mullin, Jos. Mullin, M Shell, Jas. Hall.

Jan 7th

Rev W Sheild, Whittingham; Colonel Collingwood, Glanton Pyke; Mr F O Chrisp, Prendwick; Mr A Thompson, Glanton;. R F Robertson, C Turnbull, J Walker, J Wardhaugh, Alnwick; W Thompson, Beanley; E Burn, T B Burn, Eglington; W Kitchen, G Foggin, Glanton. Walker Wilson, R Wilson, J Wilson, W Wilson, J Hall, E Brown, F Brown, T Johnson, R Todd, A Rough, R Dunn, R Elliott, R Oliver, W Gray, J Dixon, T B Bolam, W Lyall, W Hogg, T Miller, J Southren, W M Lyon.

RECOLLECTIONS OF GEORGE ROBSON OF MORPETH

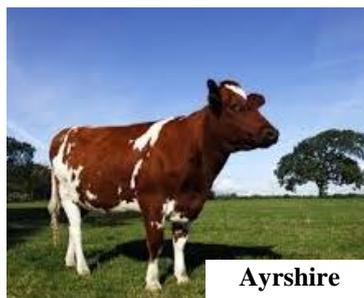
George Robson was a drover who was aged about 80 in the mid-19th Century. In an article entitled "The Old Cattle Market at Morpeth" it is recalled that sales of cattle at Morpeth began to take place all year round from the 18th Century onwards. Initially they began as sales "off the grass" and were smaller in winter with fewer numbers, but, as the cultivation and feeding on turnips increased, so the winter trade became stronger with more cattle being brought forward. The article goes on to describe the main supply of stock to the market.

"The cattle and sheep supplied to Morpeth market came principally from the counties of Roxburgh, Berwick and North Northumberland, with a few at certain seasons from Cumberland and East Lothian. Of course the stock were all driven by road, being lifted from Roxburgh and Berwick on the Fridays, crossing the Tweed at Kelso or Coldstream, and generally stopping at some place near there on the first night.

The next night's stopping place was at Bender, a small inn north of Wooler, 33 miles from Morpeth, with fields attached for the accommodation of stock. As regards the stock coming from Berwick, some came on by Barmoor and Doddington, joining the Kelso and Coldstream lots at Wooler, while some went on the Great North Road by Belford and Alnwick. The next stopping places for the Wooler and Bender route were Glanton, Powburn or Whittingham. By that time it was Sunday night, but we were not so advanced in civilization at that time as to pay much regard to the Fourth Commandment, and if at all remonstrated with in this respect, we readily pleaded the works of necessity and mercy.

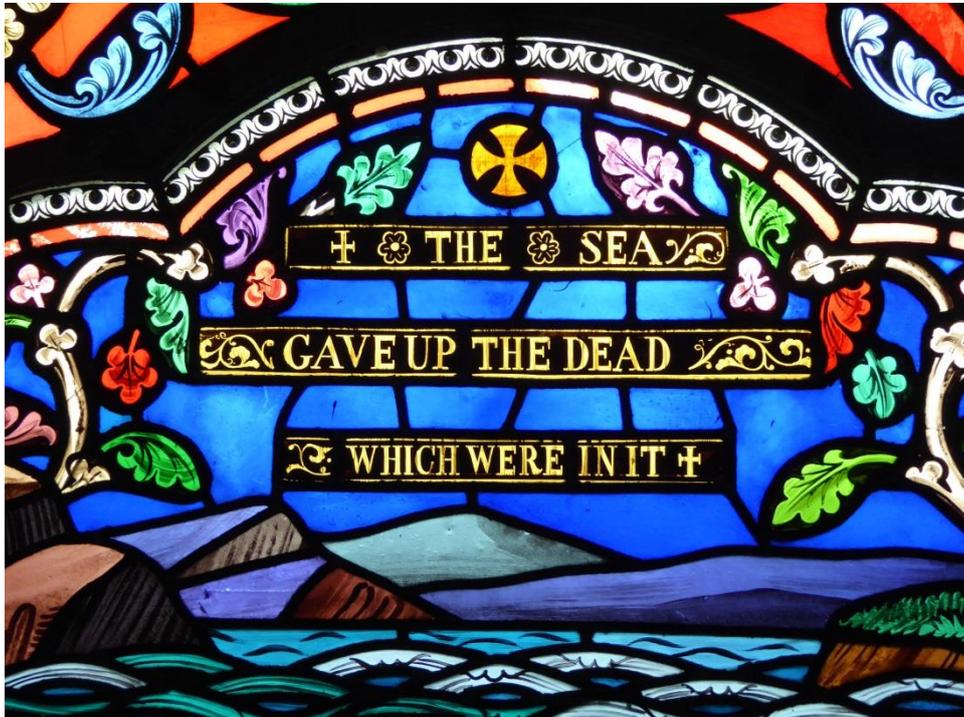
On the Monday morning large quantities of sheep and cattle might be seen laid off for an hour's rest among the heather at the old inn and farmhouse on Rimside Moor, well kept by Mr and Mrs Wardle, while the drovers were supplied with a good breakfast. Then the road was taken again from Longframlington and that night's resting stations were Weldon Bridge and Longhorsley. Next morning (Tuesday) the seven miles to Morpeth were easily performed, where the stock generally arrived between 10 and 12. They were then put into fields and fed and rested until next morning – Wednesday – which was Market Day."

A gallery of the main cattle types that might have been involved in the droves to Morpeth



THE EDLINGHAM WEST WINDOW

The Church of St John the Baptist at Edlingham has a rather splendid West Window above the Altar. It is clearly a comparatively modern window and the inscription that forms part of the window's design is intriguing.



Fortunately the Church provides a small leaflet that explains the window and tells a sad tale. The text below is taken from that leaflet.

The following letter was printed in the Newcastle Journal on 15th February 1864:

FATAL ACCIDENT TO MR LEWIS de CRESPIGNY BUCKLE

The following extract from a letter to Admiral Buckle states the particulars of a fatal accident which occurred to the above promising young gentleman on board HMS Nemesis. He was eighteen years of age and was the fourth son to the Rev M H G Buckle, Vicar of Edlingham. We are sure the friends of Mr Buckle will deeply sympathise with him at the severe loss he has sustained:-

Ship Nemesis, nearing Point de Galle, Jan 4, 1864

SIR, I have the painful duty of communicating to you, and to his parents through you, the sad news of the death of your nephew, Mr L Buckle, who fell from the main truck into the sea at 5.50pm yesterday.

In a boyish freak he had resolved to climb to the vane of the masts, and though ordered down from the foremast by the officer on duty, as passengers are strictly prohibited from going up the rigging, he managed to get up the mainmast before he could be prevented. I think it right to mention this, that you may know that not a

shadow of blame attaches to any officer in this ship. I believe that he had, on at least one occasion since he left England, climbed to the vane of one of the masts. As it was known that he had been at sea and was quite at home in the rigging, there was little alarm when he was first seen. He was known to have complete confidence in his own power to do the feat which he attempted.

He managed to get up to the truck of the mainmast with perfect safety, but in descending, as he slid down, holding the starboard mainroyal-buckstay with his right hand and foot, and the larboard by the left, it appeared to us, watching him with bated breath, that he had slid too far down before determining which to come down by. His arms and legs being now too far apart, he was not able to seize the larboard backstay as he tried to do, with both hands, after he had resolved to come down. The consequence was that when his whole weight was thrown upon his right hand he had not the strength to keep himself from sliding down. He accordingly came down with fearful velocity on the leeward side of the ship, striking the rail before plunging into the sea.

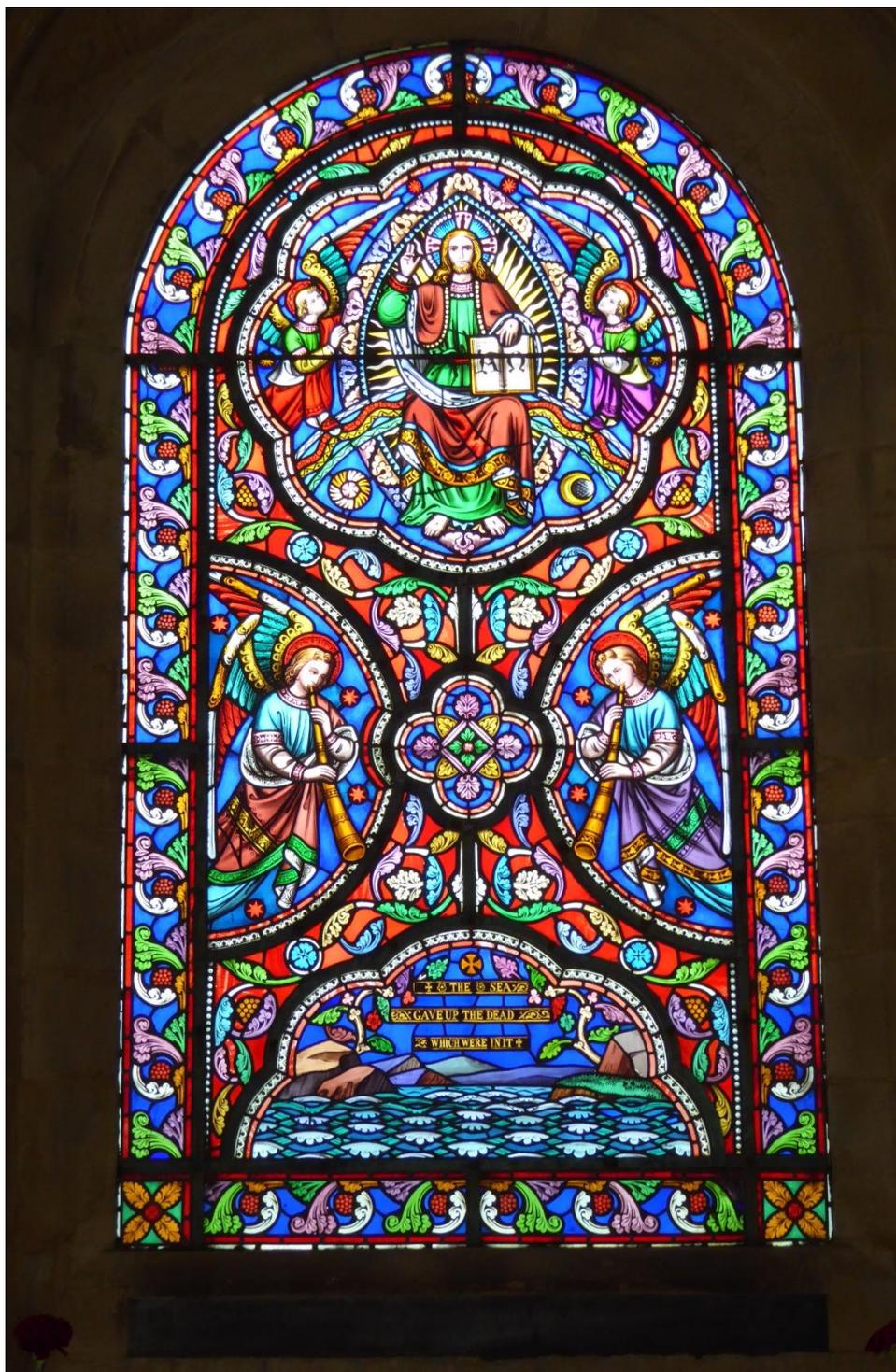
The instant he began to fall the engine was stopped and a lifebuoy dropped before he reached the sea. The steamer was backed so that, in ten minutes at the utmost, a boat was lowered near the buoy which had fallen near him. We saw him striking out for the buoy, apparently with perfect command of his arms, but he disappeared before he could reach it. We suppose that one or both of his legs must have been seriously injured and that insensibility or exhaustion came on at once.

After doing everything that humanity could suggest and rowing about upwards of half an hour, the boat was recalled, having picked up the lifebuoys and we proceeded on our voyage very sadly indeed. Those who knew him all liked him very much and speak so well of him. I think it is my duty to testify that Captain Castle did everything which his humane heart and prompt and skillful seamanship could do and that, had it been possible for human skill to save your nephew, he would have been saved.

It will be gratifying for you to know that a subscription has been made among the passengers for a memorial to your nephew's memory in his father's church.



The Reverend Matthew Buckle, father of Lewis who died in this accident, was Vicar of Edlingham for a long time, from 1839 until 1893. Lewis is not the only Buckle who is commemorated locally. His nephew, Dudley Francis de Crespigny Buckle, is the subject of a memorial stone in Bolton Chapel. He was badly wounded leading his Battalion at Arras in 1918 and died of his wounds at Bolton in 1919.



The West Window in Edlingham Church

Programme for Spring/Summer 2016

16th Mar Dr Tony Henfrey – *Callaly Castle*
20th Apr Clive Hallam-Baker – *Battle of Flodden*
18th May Short AGM, followed by:
David Dickinson – *Bookbinding*
15th Jun Andy Walker – *A Guide's Tour of Alnwick Castle*

We do hope to see many of our members and guests at our talks

Office Holders and Committee 2015

Tony Henfrey	(President)
Bridget Winstanley	(Vice President)
Jim Dinsdale	(Chairman and Membership Secretary)
Helen Dinsdale	(Hon. Secretary)
Richard Poppleton	(Hon. Treasurer)
Doreen Carruthers	

Contact details:

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

- Renew your membership each year
- Encourage friends and neighbours to join
- **Come to meetings whenever you can!**
- Let our Secretary know about potential speakers
- Think about writing short (or long!) items for Records and Recollections
- Look out old documents or records or photographs and be willing to lend them to be scanned and saved for use in Records and Recollections

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

The Aln and Breamish Local History Society provides members with a programme of historical lectures and publications. A minimum of six lectures a year are arranged, three in the spring and three in the autumn. In addition there is a speaker or an exhibition at the Annual General Meeting in June.

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. If there is sufficient demand it would be possible to hold meetings in other locations in the Aln and Breamish valleys.

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

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.

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*

The option is available to pay by Standing Order with your bank and if you would like to pay by this method, please contact the Treasurer at the address above or by phone 01665 578346 or email rich.titlington@btinternet.com