



Northumberland
& Durham
Family History
Society

A Charity Registered in England No. 510538

**MINUTES OF THE TRUSTEES MEETING
HELD AT PERCY HOUSE, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
ON TUESDAY 11 JUNE 2019 AT 2PM (06/2019)**

PRESENT: Joyce Jackman (Chairman), Douglas Burdon, Richard Calasca, Pat Franklin, John Heckels, Ian Hickey, Julie Hewitt, Rhoda Lee, John Ward, Joan Smith, Ann Franklin, Harry Aitchison, Dudley George, Glenice Reed

APOLOGIES: Wendy Stafford

The Chairman opened the meeting by introducing Michael Murphy who will be joining the Trustees as the representative of the Wansbeck branch.

6.1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS (14.5.19)

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th May 2019 were accepted as a true record – proposed by Ian Hickey, seconded by Pat Franklin, and signed as a true record by the Chairman Joyce Jackman.

6.2 MATTERS ARISING

None.

6.3 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A date has been set for the 2020 Conference which will take place on Saturday 6th June. As yet there is no title but the theme will centre around the impact of the various churches etc on the community. The venue is yet to be decided.

On the 30th & 31st May a presentation was made on behalf of the NDFHS at an event held by Newcastle University Humanities Research Institute, which was also attended by representatives of Beamish Museum, Tyne & Wear Archives and Northumberland Records Office. It is proposed a similar event will be held in the future.

6.4 SECRETARY'S REPORT

Attendances at Percy House during May were 180 of which 99 (55%) were volunteers. It was recognized there were two bank holidays during the month, but there were a few days when there were no visitors at all.

It was noted the heating control panel situated on the 7th floor landing has been removed by the landlords and locked in the boiler cupboard. Therefore the heating of the Centre can only be controlled by switching on the individual radiators when needed.

6.5 TREASURER'S REPORT

The monthly accounts were circulated to the meeting on which the Acting Treasurer commented we are still showing a deficit, with subscriptions and royalties being slightly down on budget. Expenditure was up by some £400 and also sales were down on last year. The predicted deficit at the end of the financial year is currently £18,000.

Concerning a query raised on the increase in service charges for the building, it was felt it was likely due to these charges being billed on a 3 monthly basis and it was expected they would level out during the course of the year.

The Chairman expressed concern that FMP royalties have still not been received for April. In response the Acting Treasurer advised that whilst a cheque has been received, FMP have not sent the relevant statement. This is being chased up with FMP.

6.6 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Membership continues to be down on last year, there being 138 fewer UK members. Current Membership is: 1449 UK members, 154 overseas, 7 life members, 1 life member overseas, 11 complimentary and 5 exchange giving a total of 1627 members who receive a copy of the Journal. In addition there are 139 UK joint memberships, and 5 joint overseas members. The number of members opting to receive E-Journals has increased to 232.

6.7 EDITOR'S REPORT

The Editor advised there has been a minimal delay in distributing the Summer Journals. Articles are required for the next Journal, the deadline for which is the 1st August. This issue will also include the 'subscription wrap-around' which will require slight modification before going to print.

6.8 NDFHS WEBSITE/IT

A meeting has been held to discuss the on-going problems being encountered with the Membership Section of the website, which are believed to stem from the updates. Transcendit have agreed to investigate as soon as possible. Also discussed was the feasibility of creating a Members Directory on the website whereby members can, if they wish, input their interests directly on to this section of the website. It was confirmed that should this go ahead, GDPR is in place.

6.9 OFFICER REPORTS

A. LIBRARY

Nothing to report.

B. VOLUNTEERS

No report received.

C. PROJECTS

Nothing further to report.

D. PUBLICITY

Nothing to report.

E. EVENTS

The York Family History Event is on the 22 June 2019 and the NDFHS A.G.M. is being held on Saturday 29th June at Brunswick Methodist Church. Looking further ahead there will be another Family History Day at Newcastle City Library on 9th May 2020 and, as previously mentioned, the Society's Conference is on the 6th June 2020.

6.10 JOB DESCRIPTION – a) SECRETARY

b) CASHIER

It was confirmed that as these roles were re-vamped in 2018, there were no changes to be made to the Job Descriptions for the Secretary or Cashier.

6.11 BRANCH REPORTS

ALNWICK

The meeting held on the 7th May was attended by 12 people and commenced with the AGM when all four existing committee members were re-elected

This was followed by a member's discussion on "My Most Interesting Discovery" which unearthed tales of fascinating ancestors and methods of gaining information such as a member who traced a family member who owned a coffee shop in London at the time of the Jacobite rebellions and another who traced their ancestry back to a family who were so desperately hungry in the terrible agricultural times of the 1840s that the father stole some grain, but was found not guilty by a sympathetic jury. Emboldened, he later stole and butchered two sheep and was not so lucky, being sentenced to 15 years transportation to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). Undaunted, he not only escaped from there but made his way back to England, was re-united with his family, had 3 more children, lived to 94 and left the equivalent of £40,000.

BELMONT

The meeting on the 15th May was attended by 18 people, 12 of whom were members. David Butler gave an informative and amusing talk "Drunken Midwives and Common Strumpets" on information he had found in parish registers from the Durham diocese. He gave a brief history of the regulations which were responsible for the variation in information recorded over time. Durham was particularly fortunate in the additional details required during the "Barrington" period 1798-1812 but sadly subsequent legislation designed to standardise registers meant that the information was reduced.

He then gave examples of additional information that the incumbents had decided to include about the background to some register entries. These included comments on the morals of their parishioners including the drunken midwife and the "strumpet". Records of burials could include details of natural disasters, shipwrecks, drownings, colliery disasters and even executions. In one case a woman retired to the loft to smoke her pipe which caused an explosion on gunpowder. Illustrating that there is nothing new one burial reports recorded that the person who had lived her life as a man, married, but was found to be a woman when she died.

BLYTH

No report received.

LONDON

No Meeting..

NEWCASTLE

We had 23 present at our May meeting. Antony Atkinson gave a superb talk about Ellen Wilkinson. Amongst other nick-names Ellen was often called Red Ellen owing to her politics, flaming red hair and matching temper. This talk was a potted history of Ellen's life in early 20th century politics when she had been a suffragette, Communist and Labour Party member, Jarrow March organiser, MP for Middlesbrough and finally the Minister for Education in the post-war Labour Government. She was an active campaigner for social justice and although tiny she had a huge presence and was an outstanding orator. The talk is recommended to other Branches.

NORTH TYNESIDE

At the May meeting, 10 members enjoyed a very informative talk by John Heckels entitled 'Explosions, Strikes, Riots and Royalty : my relatives life in the Durham Coalfields.

SOUTH TYNESIDE

The meeting held on 15 May was attended by 12 members and commenced with the Branch AGM when all existing Officers were re-elected. The speaker was George Nairn who gave an interesting angle on the history of WW1 as seen through postcards. We saw some fascinating examples of events and scenes from not only our local area in the North East but also occurrences in France, Belgium, Switzerland and Germany.

TYNEDALE

The meeting on the 9 May 2019 was attended by 10 members, which was a Members Forum and talk by Branch member John Parker on 'How to improve your old photographs'. He began with many examples of how and why photo improving software can be used and also the importance of the quality of the scanner. The major problems are tears, scratches, spots and pictures that are too dark or light. Missing sections can be 'painted in' by copying a similar area across to the missing or damaged section, which can be a very slow process, especially in removing or blurring many tiny spots or creases.

Once the photo has been restored to as near the original as feasible, it is then possible to compare the photo with others of the same era or area, in order to identify people, places or changes in location.

WANSBECK

The Meeting held on 1st May was Susanne Ellingham talking about Billy Bell the Roadman Poet. There were a number of members missing because of ill health and holidays but those attending found the talk very interesting. They particularly enjoyed the recordings of Billy's work. Billy was a remarkable man who, with little education, produced a large volume of work. There is a book about him in Percy House Library: The Redesdale Roadman, The Border Bard.

6.12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Anthea Lang will be giving a talk at the AGM entitled 'From Here to Eternity' and Trustees are to confirm to the Chairman their contribution towards the refreshments.

Durham Belmont branch are continuing to hold 'drop-in' sessions at their local library, and are pleased with the outcome as attendances are continually increasing.

6.13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 9 July 2019 at 2.00pm in Percy House.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 2.30 pm.

Signed as a correct record:

Date: