

## MINUTES OF THE TRUSTEES MEETING



Northumberland  
& Durham  
Family History  
Society

A Charity Registered in England No. 510588

**HELD AT PERCY HOUSE, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE  
ON TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2019 AT 2PM (11/2019)**

**PRESENT:** Joyce Jackman (Chairman), Harry Aitchison, Douglas Burdon, Niamh Cunningham, Dudley George, John Heckels, Julie Hewitt, Rhoda Lee, Michael Murphy, Glenice Reed, Joan Smith, John Ward

**APOLOGIES:** Richard Calasca, Ann Franklin, Pat Franklin, Julie Hewitt, Carol Trinder

### **11.1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (10.9.19)**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> September were accepted as a true record – proposed by Douglas Burdon, seconded by Glenice Reed and signed by the Chairman Joyce Jackman.

### **11.2 MATTERS ARISING**

None.

### **11.3 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

It was agreed unanimously that no useful purpose would be served in acquiring a cash machine.

The Research Centre will be closed over the Christmas period from 4pm on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019 until 10am on Thursday 2nd January 2020.

The Chairman has been informed that Percy House is now "5G ready".

### **11.4 SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Attendances at Percy House during September were 194 of which 110 (57.3%) were volunteers, and in October 223 of which 107 (48.0%) were volunteers.

The Charity Commission Annual Return was submitted in September.

### **11.5 TREASURER'S REPORT**

The accounts for September and October were circulated to the meeting. Income to date is £3,000 up on budget but it must be remembered that royalties are received irregularly through the year. It is estimated that the end of year deficit will be in the order of £8,000, last year's figure being £11,000. Service charges have risen, a consequence of the greater efficiency of the present landlords.

### **11.6 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT**

In the absence of the Membership Secretary, the Chairman commented that as subscriptions were being received at present, more useful figures would be available at the next meeting.

### **11.7 EDITOR'S REPORT**

Given the shortage of contributions of articles, despite the appeal in recent journals, the Editor may be obliged to reduce the number of pages in the forthcoming Journal. He is nevertheless grateful to those who responded to his request. The Winter Journal will be distributed in the second week of December. Branch Secretaries are requested to check the draft Branch Diary.

### **11.8 NDFHS WEBSITE/IT**

It is proposed to include a list of benefits to membership on the home page of the website. A discussion of the ways people looked for genealogical information on the internet and how best they could find their way to the NDFHS website. It was suggested that also an article be prepared for inclusion in the Journal.

### **11.9 OFFICERS REPORTS**

#### **A. LIBRARY**

No report.

#### **B. VOLUNTEERS**

No report.

#### **C. PROJECTS**

The Durham Wills Index with 44,597 entries has been completed and the Morpeth Index is underway. These indexes are proving both useful and popular.

It was suggested that ways must be sought to provide material that volunteers can prepare for publication at home.

#### **D. PUBLICITY**

No report.

#### **E. EVENTS**

2020 Conference. Four speakers have been found. The programme will be finalised in consultation with them. Publicity of the conference will be prepared in time for inclusion in the Spring Journal and the website and for distribution to neighbouring societies, libraries and archives, supermarkets, Metro stations and local papers. Branches have been requested to prepare display material.

### **11.10 JOB DESCRIPTION – Publicity Officer**

No change was proposed.

## **NDFHS BRANCH REPORTS – OCTOBER 2019**

### **ALNWICK**

At the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 35 people attended to hear Dr James Perry's excellent talk on the website [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) which is free to use and offers worldwide information. Family Search was the first family history database, and now boasts over 3 billion records. Input of basic data (indexing) to the site is conducted under a strict regime of using two separate individuals to input the same information, with a supervisor to check there is consistency between the duplicate records. Every online user is also encouraged to input any information they can regarding their ancestors. It is important, however to note that this user-added information is not moderated in the same strict way that direct input is.

As well as the basic births, marriages and deaths records, Family Search offers other information on people and communities. For example inputting the search word "Alnwick" into the Memories section brings up 102 entries. These include the life story of Sir Henry de Percy b 1341, the story of the Battle of Alnwick and the wedding photo of Ida Aileen Cameron and Neville Alnwick Hebblewhite Randall. The "Catalog" section of Family Search is another interesting feature. Again using Alnwick as

an example, this brings up 56 different documents, usually on microfilm, that detail potentially thousands of relevant people or events, many of which may not be addressed on the other family history sites. It can hence be an invaluable source to overcome “brick walls” in family history research. In some instances these records will be accessible at the nearest Family Search Family History Centre and also the online help centre is always keen to help you with any particular requirement.

### **BELMONT**

16 people (11 NDFHS members) attended the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> October which was a power point presentation by Dr. John Banham entitled ‘Medomsley to Mirachichi’; the life of General Sir Martin Hunter.

### **BLYTH**

There were 12 members present at the meeting on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September. Due to the unforeseen death of our Chairman Ian Hickey, we had a minute’s silence before the talk started. Everyone enjoyed the presentation given by Professor John Heckles on “Chirupula Stephenson, the explorer”

### **LONDON**

No meeting in October.

### **NEWCASTLE**

We had 22 present for our October meeting. Our speaker was Susan Lynn; her subject was the History of Dockway Square in the centre of North Shields. She presented a number of interesting old maps showing how the area developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. To start with the houses were large well-appointed dwellings often on five floors with accommodation for large families and servants. Many had stables for several horses. Interestingly these houses were built using stone robbed from the nearby Tynemouth Priory.

Susan went on to discuss some of the famous people who lived there including the celebrated Stan Laurel. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the houses were too big for most families and many became lodging houses or broke up into separate dwellings. As a result the social standing of the area changed. Eventually the old houses were demolished and replaced with more modern houses, however the open grassed area has been reinstated. A well-presented and interesting talk.

### **NORTH TYNESIDE**

14 members including 3 new ones and a guest enjoyed a talk from Dr Jo Bath about Medicine in Newcastle. She passed around a number of artefacts and explained how they were used such as scraping your eyes to remove cataracts to electric treatment to rejuvenate you. Thankfully she hadn't brought Larry the leech. She then went on to explain the origin of medicine was based on the four humours, blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm. Any imbalance in these would affect your behaviour. Blood was associated with your social nature, yellow bile with aggression, black bile with melancholy and phlegm with apathy. These were treated in a number of ways such as bleeding, hot cups on the body or herbal concoctions.

St Mary Magadalen leper hospital near Barrass Bridge was built in the 12th century. Edward 1st granted extra land to it and the area became known as Spital Tongues. In 1681 Newcastle Corporation raised funds for Holy Jesus Hospital TheKeelmans Hospital was built in 1701 from money raised from the rivers keelmen. In 1753 Newcastle Infirmary opened but patients could only go if they had a letter of recommendation from one of the benefactors. The same system was used for the lying-in or maternity hospital opposite the Laing Art Gallery but all women had to produce a marriage certificate. The Fever Hospital built in 1804 was built outside the city walls in what is now

Bath Lane. The Infirmary operated for 150 years but it was becoming obvious that a new hospital was needed and it was decided to commemorate Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. £100,000 was raised by public subscription and in 1906 the RVI opened.

Previously anyone could set up as a doctor even if they had no great knowledge of medicine so in 1834 Newcastle Medical School opened to actually train doctors. In 1854 John Snow who had worked as a young doctor in Newcastle discovered the link between contaminated drinking water and cholera and Newcastle was one of the first cities in the country to vaccinate people against smallpox. The members enjoyed an interesting and amusing talk but were left even more grateful for the NHS.

### **SOUTH TYNESIDE**

We had 7 members attend the meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> October plus 1 apology, being a presentation by Julian Harrop 'A Snapshot of the North East in the 1950s and 1960s'. Julian is Collection Resources Co-ordinator at Beamish Museum and he brought along to the meeting a selection of photographs from collections which are held at the museum such as the Durham Advertiser. There was something for everyone to enjoy a 'trip down memory lane' such as photographs of Newcastle RVI, the Oxford Galleries dance hall, Hedley's Soap Works in City Road, the old Redheugh Iron & Steel Company, Stella Power Station, Huwoods on the Team Valley, the old Scotswood (Chain) Bridge and of course Newcastle Breweries. Long before computers were invented, we were reminded of how office staff worked with manual typewriters and comptometers and how people travelled to work on trolley buses etc. The way we shopped was also represented, e.g. mobile shops, Walter Wilsons, Ringtons Tea and Tait's Radio & TV. Julian concluded his talk by giving an up-date on how the development of the 1950s town at Beamish Museum is progressing.

### **TYNEDALE**

11 Members attended the meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> October which was a Members Forum on Wartime Stories. This was another lively discussion with everyone joining in, if only to add an anecdote to some else's story. Some stories were about the speaker's own experiences. In one case this involved a "reverse evacuation" as the younger son got taken to London for a couple of years during the Blitz because of both parents' work. Meanwhile his cousins were sent to Hexham. More memories were evoked by the paperwork saved from that period and brought along: Ration Book, Identity Card, Emergency Rest Centre duties, a newspaper from the day war was declared. One set of photographs was of ships coated in thick ice on the Arctic Convoys or docked in Russian ports. Several people brought photographs of their father, grandfather or uncles in their war uniform, at least two in kilts.

A query came up as to why men were often drafted from Tyneside into Scottish regiments in WW2. It was decided that the authorities wanted to make sure that the fate of the 'Pals Battalions' in WW1 where whole streets of men were wiped out, would not be repeated. Much of the information we all had about our relatives' wartime activities came from our later research into records and books. The men themselves tended to say very little or just mentioned incidents not directly related to the fighting. However, one little diary gave detail, for a few months, of the everyday life of a new conscript. This mostly consisted of details of travel by train or on foot and the meals they were given. Much less mundane was the account given of one man who was caught up in the Salerno Mutiny when men invalided to Tunisia were asked to volunteer to go back to Italy, then found out it would not be with their own regiments but with Americans on the opposite coast. They were court martialled and sentenced to prison before higher authorities intervened. Not all the talk was about the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One ancestor took part in the Battle of Algiers in 1816.

One person's mother was a student at Durham and did fire-watching duty on top of the Cathedral. One night she heard German planes, presumably coming to bomb the Cathedral as a

propaganda coup. However, a mist came up and instead the area around Finchale Abbey, with a similar loop in the river, was bombed. The watchers were convinced St Cuthbert created the mist.

#### **WANSBECK**

The meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October was attended by 23 members which was a talk on Irregular Border marriages.

Gerry Langley gave a short talk introducing us to the various crossing points for these irregular marriages. He also pointed out that not all irregular marriages took place at the Border, quoting the Fleet Prison. There was discussion among members for the reasons that such marriages took place and examples were quoted from various members.

Next meeting 6th November when Wendy Stafford will be holding a workshop on the Parish Chest. All welcome.

#### **11.12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Relocation Committee continues to seek new premises.

#### **11.13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 2.00pm in Percy House.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 3.10pm.

Signed as a correct record:

Date: