



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 14 JANUARY 2020 AT 2PM (1/2020)**

PRESENT: Joyce Jackman (Chairman), Douglas Burdon, Richard Calasca, Niamh Cunningham, John Heckels, Julie Hewitt, John Ward, Pat Franklin, Michael Murphy, Glenice Reed, Joan Smith, Carol Trinder, Ann Franklin

APOLOGIES: Dudley George, Rhoda Lee

1.1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (12.11.19)

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th November were accepted as a true record – proposed by John Heckels, seconded by Glenice Reed and signed by the Chairman Joyce Jackman.

1.2 MATTERS ARISING

None.

1.3 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman opened by advising sadly Harry Aitchison has resigned as both a Trustee and Durham Branch Officer.

The next e-newsletter has been completed and is ready for distribution. A few people have enrolled for the 'Beyond the Basics' course and it is anticipated this will go ahead. All the electrical equipment in the Centre has been PAT tested.

1.4 SECRETARY'S REPORT

Attendances at Percy House during November were 173 of which 100 (57.8%) were volunteers, and in December 122 of which 79 (64.7%) were volunteers. The total attendances for 2019 were 2278 of which 1230 (54%) were volunteers compared to 2018 when there were 2605 of which 1280 (49.1%) were volunteers. The Secretary added that there were some days when there were only volunteers in attendance.

Research requests have also fallen: 2019 there were 122 requests by e-mail and 5 by letter compared to 2018 when there were 182 requests by email and 9 by letter.

1.5 TREASURER'S REPORT

The accounts for November and December were circulated to the meeting. Unrestricted funds for December indicate subscriptions, publications and sales are all down but on a positive note, donations and royalties are up on the previous year. Expenditure increased, mainly due to the subscription for Ancestry and also an increase in the service charges for Percy House.

Although final figures for the year-end are awaited, it is anticipated the Society will be marginally better off than in 2018, showing a £16k loss. Rent and service charges are the major cause of the continuing losses. It was noted matters regarding a move are in hand.

1.6 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Due to continuing problems with the website, the Acting Membership Secretary was unable to give accurate membership figures but felt there could possibly be around 500 non renewals. The Chairman is to arrange a meeting with Transcendit in an attempt to resolve the problematic issues.

1.7 EDITOR'S REPORT

The Editor reported a number of articles have already been received for inclusion in the next Journal.

1.8 NDFHS WEBSITE/IT

Windows 10 has been downloaded onto a CD and it is proposed this will be tried out on one of the existing computers. However, in order to achieve this it may be necessary to add more memory to the computers.

Problems are currently being encountered with the MailChimp for the e-newsletter and to a lesser extent the e-journals. To resolve this problem, the relevant volunteers are looking for a reasonably priced programme.

1.9 OFFICERS REPORTS

A. LIBRARY

There is very little to report other than a few books have been received in the last few months. The Librarian is proposing to start checking the data base and valuation of the Library contents within the next few weeks.

B. VOLUNTEERS

Nothing to report.

C. PROJECTS

The Durham Wills Index for Northumberland has been completed and work has started on Sunderland & Bishopwearmouth. MIs for Heworth have now been completed.

D. PUBLICITY

As last year, it is hoped the local newspapers will give publicity to the Family History Day which is being held on Saturday 9th May at the Central Library

E. EVENTS

Events which are due to take place during 2020 are:

25 th April	Cleveland FHS Conference, Scotch Corner
9 th May	Family History Day, Newcastle Central Library
16 th May	North Tyneside Local History day, North Shields Library
20 th June	York Family History Fair
27 th June	NDFHS Conference, Brunswick Methodist Church

With regard to the Conference, and in answer to a question raised, it will be acceptable for displays from the Branches to be 'blue tacked' on the walls of the Conference Room.

**1.10 JOB DESCRIPTION – a) EDITOR
b) EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR**

No changes were proposed.

1.11 BRANCH REPORTS

ALNWICK

The November meeting was attended by 48 people when Andy Griffin enthralled the branch with his talk, 'A Posse of Percys'. The presentation centred upon the tortuous, and sometimes even tortured, relationship that our leading local family has had with the crown over time. This tale begins with William de Percy who became a right-hand man of King William I, how the Percys held King Richard II imprisoned until he mysteriously died and how Henry Percy, was secretly betrothed to Ann Boleyn, but was forced to sign a denial, leaving Henry VIII free to marry her. When Henry VIII died, Queen Mary restored Catholicism, gave the son of the Blessed Thomas back his lands and all was well but then King James I of England broke his promise to tolerate Catholicism. A cousin, another Thomas Percy funded and part-led the Gunpowder Plot against him, but the plot was foiled and Thomas was killed as a result. By 1688 the family fortunes had risen once more. Elizabeth Percy married the fabulously rich 6th Duke of Somerset, and had become a bosom companion of Queen Anne.

Andy Griffin has promised to give us Part 2 of this fascinating tale, with so many twists and turns, at a later date.

BELMONT

At the meeting on 20th November, 16 people attended of which 12 were NDFHS members, which was a talk 'The guests of Queen Victoria 1851 Durham Jail' by David Butler. David gave an interesting power-point presentation about life in Durham Jail in 1851. Using 1851 census David discussed the inmates of Durham Jail. He also discussed the buildings and their usage, e.g. there was a special wing for debtors who had to stay there until they paid what they owed.

No meeting in December. Branch Christmas lunch.

BLYTH

Regarding our meeting on Tuesday 15th October. Our speaker for the night was unable to come, so we had a discussion about our venue. Members have decided it would be better to move so from November we will be at our new venue St Marys Church Hall, Wanley St, Blyth. We had 14 members present.

Late reports received for November and December which will be included in the next Minutes.

LONDON

9 members were present at the meeting held on 9th November. Unfortunately due to railway engineering works John Banham, the proposed speaker was unable to attend and it was necessary to change our focus at short notice. Instead we held a very enjoyable and interesting Members' Forum which included contributions from all present. Members shared information about the family names in their research, outlined some fascinating discoveries, conundrums and "brick walls". All of this stimulated some lively conversation and helpful suggestions which might aid further research.

Officer positions were reviewed at the beginning of the meeting and a new chairperson and secretary were elected. There was no change in the office of treasurer.

NEWCASTLE

We had 24 plus 2 apologies for our November meeting. Our speaker was Ross Hamilton his topic was Georgian and Victorian Christmas. At the start of the 19th century Christmas was a quiet event very much celebrate at home around the fire, however as Charles Dickens wrote in "A Christmas Carol" this was not the case for many poor families. Ross quoted from local newspapers of the 19th century on how the gentry held fund raising events to provide for poor and worthy citizens at Christmas time. Worthy citizens would be selected by the churches and many deserving cases were often omitted. Ross emphasised that newspapers often held list of people attending these events and was a valuable source for family historians. Originally stay-at-home Christmas was essential because of bad weather and horse transport, this was to gradually change with the advent of the railway later in the century. Other changes were the introduction of Santa, the emphasis on children's toys and shopping. Newspaper adverts are worth looking at.

No meeting in December – branch Christmas lunch.

NORTH TYNESIDE

13 members enjoyed a talk by Mike Greatbatch about Life in the Ouseburn.

The Ouseburn had always been a hive of industrial activity. It was tidal up to Stepney Bank which meant keels and wherries could come up it from the river to deliver materials and take the finished products away. Industries included glass and pottery makers, ironworks, flax mills, tanners, slaughterhouses and haulage. This amount of industry required workers and as the population increased tenements were built to house them. Most of the dwellings were only one or sometimes two rooms. They were squalid and overcrowded with no running water or proper sanitation. The 1861 census shows that at the bottom of Lime St there were 57 dwellings housing 372 persons. Their water had to come from the Ouseburn which was like open sewer. The industries were also dangerous not only for the worker but also the residents especially children playing near them from explosions fires and noxious fumes. They did have a school, doctor and 15 public houses. In the 1930s after a number of cholera outbreaks the City Council began to clear the housing and build new houses away from the river. Over the years the businesses began to move away and the residents rehoused In recent years the area has become a centre for cultural and creative activities and a desirable place to live.

SOUTH TYNESIDE

The meeting held on the 20th November was an 'Estate Papers' workshop by Joyce Jackman.

The meeting on the 11th December was a Members Forum 'Christmas Memories', which was attended by 5 members plus 1 apology. The group recalled and discussed their own fond memories of childhood Christmases over a cup of coffee and a mince pie.

TYNEDALE

14 members attended the meeting on 14th November on 'Tudor Life', a talk by Deborah Bell and Margaret Tindall. This fascinating talk combined description, some powerpoint slides and handling of objects. Starting with the surnames of the main Border families Deborah and Margaret moved on to the buildings that would have been lived in by rich and poor with information about several of their occupants. Among the objects handed round were a

replica Reiver helmet, a wooden pepper grinder and wooden pattens that were strapped to ladies shoes to keep them above the dirty streets. Deborah and Margaret, having worked at the Old Gaol, were able to describe the use of the gaol before James I and VI banned the idea of a Border. They also described the way of life of people like Reynold Carnaby who acquired most of the Abbey lands, including the Moot Hall. They then went on to look at the clothes worn by different members of society with examples and descriptions of the rules for what could be worn according to status and age. After the talk everyone circulated and had an opportunity to discuss and handle the objects and clothing they had brought along.

11 members and 7 guests were present on the 12 December to hear Sarah Geissler gave a very interesting, comprehensively illustrated presentation titled "The Story of Costume at Beamish Museum". She explained the context of Beamish Museum being as a living museum, with relevant areas populated with costumed storytellers, or interpreters. Beamish has received donations of many items of clothing, but these are kept in storage for several reasons and the costume department creates replica garments for each area of the museum within which the interpretive staff are active. When creating replica garments, the Costume Department carry out research using a number of sources in order to create "style packs" which the staff and volunteers follow when making items of clothing. Items from the garment collection may be used in compiling the style packs, as well as detailed analysis of relevant photographs in Beamish's archive and wider research.

WANSBECK

The meeting held on 6th November concerned the Parish Chest when 23 members +2 visitors were present. We heard about the history of the Parish Chest illustrated by pictures of various chests still held in churches. One of the pictures of a damaged chest in Wells illustrated clearly why all Church Records not currently in use are now deposited in CROs and Archive Collections. We then looked at copies of original documents held in CROs. These included a Glebe Terrier, Churchwardens' Accounts, Constable's Accounts, Tithes Record and Map, Vestry Minutes and School Records. We then discussed other records that could be found in Parish Chest Collections and concluded by looking at a chest carved with the name of one of the speaker's ancestors who was a Churchwarden in 1762.

20 members were present at the meeting on the 4th December. There was a short presentation about the legend and myth of Santa Claus. This was followed by our annual Christmas Quiz composed by one of our members.

1.12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There are two unused fiche readers currently located in the Sales Office which are free to a good home should anyone want one. Alternatively it is proposed they will be placed for sale on Ebay.

1.13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 10 March 2020 at 2.00pm in Percy House.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 2.50pm.

Signed as a correct record:

Date: