

THE DONCASTER ANCESTOR



Clock Corner 1890s

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DONCASTER AND DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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continued on the back cover

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THE DONCASTER ANCESTOR

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Free to Members

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Editor: Jenny Ellis
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Editorial Team: Karen Walker, Richard Cuell

Chair's Report

Welcome to another great Ancestor Journal.

So far summer has shown its face briefly, but we are back to wearing pullovers and considering the heating.

By the time you read this, the UK parliamentary elections will be decided, and the closing stages of the European football championships will be over. I am writing this on the 4th of July, with the TV switched off!

Amidst this turmoil we have dared to ask our members what they think about DDFHS, with our very recent questionnaire, which so far, about a fifth of the membership have taken the time to complete.

It is important that we ask you what you think, as our survival is linked to our ability to keep members and to attract new ones. Once the results are in, I will publish the findings so you can all see what has been said, and if you have not yet completed the questionnaire, we would be grateful if you could take the time to do so.

It was decided to send out the questionnaire in this format, as postage costs would have made a postal questionnaire extremely expensive. We thought it was better to try to save our valuable funds on providing services to our members, but I appreciate it is a compromise.

On the 1st of July we started another Research Help Day, this time at Conisbrough Library. The enthusiasm from the staff at the library was outstanding. Local and family history in Conisbrough is in a healthy state and it is not difficult to see why. The people of Conisbrough are in safe hands with the volunteers running their library and the services they offer.

One of the questions we have asked in our questionnaire was whether we should push to have our own research centre, which has been the driving factor in the help day based each month at the City Archives, at Armthorpe, Sprotbrough and now Conisbrough libraries. We have enjoyed plenty of support at all the libraries and this has been true at the Archive event, albeit mainly from members of the public. I will soon be writing to the Council to seek their views on what space may be available at the Archives and will keep you posted.

On a final note, the support we have from members is great, but

occasionally I do think that some members do not know that we are all retired volunteers, carrying out our duties in our own time, often at our own expense. We know we don't always get it right, but it is not for the lack of effort, and I simply ask that you remember this when you make contact.

I thank you all for your continued support.
Andy

Chair and Member 4461

From the Editor

I usually start with welcoming people to the current Ancestor but I don't want to put the "A" season word when today is one of the few sunny days that we have had this summer.

Thank you to everyone who has sent in articles this time, which have been very few. I am really struggling at present to fill the pages and unless I get more articles, then we will have to seriously think about reducing the number of journals that the Society produces each year.

Next year will be the 45th Anniversary of the Society, so perhaps you would like to share your memories of the Society over the years you have been a member. Why did you join the Society? How has it changed over the years. As I said in the last Ancestor, we couldn't organise anything for the 40th Anniversary due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, so we need to celebrate this one.

More information will be made available in the coming months.

Philip Langford requested the picture of Clock Corner on the front cover to go with his article about the William Clark diaries that are featured on page 20.

If there is a picture that you would like featured on the front cover, then do let me know. The Society has quite a few old photographs, which older members will have seen over the years.

I believe that there have been comments that there aren't many articles from outside of Doncaster, but I can only display articles that have

been sent to me. In this issue we have a Nobel Prize winner from Stainforth.

I can't believe that after this copy has been checked and sent to the printers, I will be setting up the Winter Ancestor. I wonder what the weather will be like then. Watch this space!

**Jenny Ellis,
Editor
doncasterancestor@doncasterfh.co.uk**

Deadline for the next edition is 1st Oct 2024 at the latest.

**Please send in any articles, preferably as a Word Document.
You can send articles in at anytime.**

**The Doncaster Ancestor is published in February, May,
August and November each year**

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Monthly Meetings via Zoom / Hybrid

Roomers and Zoomers Unite Hybrid Members Meetings 2024

You are invited to join us at the Ripon Suite, **Earl of Doncaster, Bennetthorpe, Doncaster DN2 6AD** 7pm for 7.30pm start. ZOOM link open from 7.15pm via email.

These will be Hybrid meeting where members can also join us on Zoom, so why not join us at this excellent venue. There is plenty of well lit parking and the venue has a lift to the first floor. Refreshments will be available from the bar downstairs.

August 28th 2024

Publican, Labourer, Porter or Soldier? How Our Ancestors Earned A Living by Karen Walker

How discovering the cause of death of an ancestor led to re-writing his life story.

Via Zoom

September 25th 2024

Old Doncaster by Philip Langford & Malcolm Barnsdale

We take a trip around old Doncaster with their old photos & much banter between the pair and a great deal of knowledge. See the Doncaster of our younger days and those of our ancestors
Philip & Malcolm will be in the room

October 30th 2024

The Trolley Bus Museum, Sandtoft by David Chick

A volunteer tells us more about this fascinating place. He is also hoping to have some recordings of people with memories of their ancestors.

David will be in the Room

November 27th 2024

The Victoria Cross by Paul Grimley

Former Soldier & ex prison officer Paul tells us about the Victoria Cross holders from around our area. Did you know for example how many are actually buried here in Hyde Park Cemetery, hear about the medal and those who were awarded it.

Paul will be in the room

If you are interested in attending the venue in person (Roomer), then you can do this via the email link that you will receive, or contact June Staniforth either by telephone: 07901 523529 or email: **events@doncasterfhs.co.uk**

D&DFHS History Fair

12th October 2024

10.00am - 4.00pm

The Old Art College, Church View

Speakers will be Helen Slade who will give a talk from 11.15a.m. to 12.15pm on the History of Hyde Park Cemetery.

Chris Tapster (who will be in costume) will give a talk from 2.15 pm to 3.15pm on the Falklands War.

We have a lot of Heritage Societies attending, and we will have our Help Desk plus raffle prizes. **First prize is kindly donated by Find My Past and is a year's subscription.**

There will be something for everyone so please do come along and join us.

Entrance fee will be £1, children under 16 will go free.

Marion Baxter, Secretary

Publications by D&DFHS

**Society publications can be purchased by post (see inside back cover or our website for full details) or through GenFair at www.genfair.com
Please allow 21 days for delivery.**

Goods can be returned within 14 days of receipt of order only if found to be faulty, or if you have been sent a different item from that requested.

Projects Report April 2024

Hatfield Woodhouse Cemetery Burials 1886 – 1998

Hatfield Woodhouse Cemetery Register is currently being checked and prepared by Trevor.

It will be added to the Hatfield St Lawrence download.

I intend to contact Hatfield Parish Council to view entries on the Register that are difficult to read.

Then we will contact Edlington Parish Council to try to get images for their Registers as these have not yet been transcribed. Trevor is advising me on this.

Philip and Trevor have almost completed 4 of the 5 Diaries for the Archives.

Margaret Jackson, Projects Co-ordinator

You can read an excerpt from the diary of William Clark on page 20.

Editor

From the Postbag / via email

In the summer Doncaster Ancestor, there was a book review by Angela Hartley. I received an e-mail from Jean Renwick, asking me to forward a message on to Angela thanking her for her kind review.

Hi Jenny

Philip Langford suggested that I let you have a definition of 'boot' which I sent him following his piece in the May issue of 'The Doncaster Ancestor'.

According to 'The Yorkshire Historical Dictionary', 'boot' was 'the right of a tenant to take wood or timber from the lord's estate for certain specified purposes'. So, 'house boot' was 'the liberty the tenant had to cut wood on the lord's estate for building and repairing his house', 'cart boot' was 'the right to take wood for the making or repairing of carts and wains' and 'plough boot' was 'the liberty to have wood for making a plough or its wooden parts'. The Dictionary was compiled by George Redmonds, edited by Alexandra Medcalf and published by The Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society in 2021 in two volumes A-K and L-Y.

Best wishes

Hazel Moffat, Member 1790

Hello Andy & Jenny,

Having read the article about the Plant Works Registers, I thought I'd introduce you to my Grandad **Aspinall** because he's in there. I know because I still have both CDs that Doncaster FHS produced.

I was lucky enough to have my lovely Grandad until I was in my middle twenties so knew most of his story before I got interested in family history. **William Gathorne Aspinall** did his apprenticeship at the Plant Works and his occupation was given as blacksmith on his marriage certificate when he married **Lucy Emily Butler** in St James' Church on April 8th, 1909. In 1912, William, Lucy and baby Phyllis (my mother) emigrated to South Africa. The stay was short. William contracted malaria and was seriously ill. The doctor told him that he wouldn't survive another attack and so, before the doctor would allow

him to leave hospital, he sent Lucy, Phyllis and baby Jean home before him. They arrived back in February 1915 and William arrived in June. That would agree with Plant records, of him returning to work again. The leaving date of 1918, would be when the family moved to Rossington.

Best wishes,

Pauline Stainton, Member 4573



Many thanks, Jenny for forwarding Jean Renwick`s kind email.

I shall look forward to Part Three of "The Mourning Brooch" and the sequel to "Mahler Five".

Thank you for your hard work in producing a most interesting magazine.

Best wishes,

Angela Hartley, Member 4221

Dear Jenny,

I suddenly realised that, for a variety of reasons, family history had taken a back seat and that I had not read "The Ancestor" carefully for some time. I decided to take several back issues and read them again.

The references to the **Swaby** family reminded me of the barber's shop in St George Gate (I don't recall them being "Gentlemen's hairdressers" in my youth in the fifties"). It was a long, narrow establishment on the left as you faced the church, with a row of barber's chairs, from memory between four and six, down the left, and seats, possibly benches, for clients down the right. It could well have

been the setting for a barbershop choir. As an early teenager I was treated on the “cab rank” principle, but I'm sure some customers had their favourite practitioner.

The other item was the Glyn hotel, which I remember as “Priestnall's corner as member John Walton pointed out in the Autumn 23 issue. A phrase in his note “the in crowd” made me wonder if he is the John Walton I remember as living on Bentley Road but moving to London in the early sixties where I visited and last saw him in 1964 or 5. He had a musician brother in a group calling themselves “The in crowd”. I see he is member 4287 and it would be interesting to know.

The third was the reference to a poacher shot on Brodsworth estate. My grandfather was a keeper on the neighbouring Hickleton estate and my father told of the two sets of keepers organising against poachers. On one occasion, he must have barely a teenager, he was given a revolver and told to shoot anyone who attacked his father. We don't have a common ancestor but we do have links.

Best wishes,
Norman Day, Member 1847

I contacted John for Norman, but neither he nor his brother lived on Bentley Road.

Editor

GRO Price Increases

Certificate costs £12.50

PDF £8.00

Digital copy £3.00

Digital copy is only for births 1837-1923 and deaths 1837-1957

Help Wanted

From a Research Enquiry:

The medallion / fob was found amongst some WW1 & WW2 medals of **Walter Nixon** and family.

Walter was born in Tamworth in 1894 and moved to Edlington c1925; he was in Edlington in 1939 registration.

This object was made in Birmingham, of sterling silver, in 1931. The obverse has the blazon for Doncaster Borough. The significance of the letters **D.D.S.S.A** is unknown.

The reverse has the maker's mark W G & S.

Can anyone shed any light on its purpose and what the letters stand for.

The object is about 30 mm in diameter, so I reckon it is a fob, probably for a watch chain.

Trevor Betterton

researchenquiries@doncasterfhs.co.uk



The Plant Work Registers and the Secrets they Hold

Part Two

The pdf file helpfully lists 3 of the registers in name order, but for some reason the Carriage and Wagon Department register, dated 1908 to 1915, orders the employment by date the workers started. From the single page I have for my grandfather it is clear the original registers were ordered this way and the alphabetical lists have been created by DDFHS for easy reference in the pdf.

One disappointing omission is the missing column 'Age at Starting'. Most employees at the Plant provided their date of birth so this can be worked out, but it is a missed opportunity.

It would have been useful as in the case of Archie Thomas Wright. Can you spot the error in the record, which could be from the original or in the transcribed record?

Surname	Forename	Classification	DOB	Start Date	Rate
Wright	Archie Thomas	Wgn Bldr & Repairers App	08 May 1918	10 June 1918	6/-
Wright	Archie Thomas		08 May 1918	24 September 1928	

The Registers and Their Hidden Secrets

The first task I did was to start looking at why people left the Plant.

Excel allows data to be sorted and filtered easily. This is essential when dealing with a spreadsheet with thousands of rows of information, and the Locomotive register alone has 9066 rows of information, some repeat entries for the same worker. You can see this on the page for my grandfather above, with row 4145 Leslie Walter Cary, who first started on the 26.1.1923 (age 15 years) as a Body Maker and was re-engaged as a Body Maker Tempy 2 (age 26 years) on the 5.2.1934. In this example, LW Cary has 2 rows of information in the Excel spreadsheet with name and date of birth repeated to allow systems to sort and find both periods of employment easily.

Political events and other social issues played a big role in what work and how many personnel were available, for example during the two world wars, when military recruitment and equipment needs played a significant part in this.

The example below shows an example of **George Ledger** leaving the Plant to join HM Forces in 1915 (there are many many more):

Sur-name	Fore-name	Classification	DOB	Start Date	Leaving Date	Reason
Ledger	George Wllm:	turner	9 Jan 1898	25 October 1912	09 March 1915	joined the Royal Navy

The registers also show when it didn't go as they or their families would have hoped: -

Sur-name	Fore-name	Classification	DOB	Start Date	Leaving Date	Reason
Wright	William	lab	5 Jun 1886	14 July 1913	17 April 1915	died whilst POW in Germany

You can now see how these registers could be very useful, but they can throw up a few anomalies, such as Archie Wright's record above. He couldn't be recruited at 1 month old, even in the early part of the 20th century. I don't think Great Britain was quite that short of labour post the 1st World War.

The Excel spreadsheet makes it easy to see events that you would normally have had to read through lines and lines of data and would therefore, be easy to miss.

Those who were sacked through behaviour of course are the most interesting and I have picked out the following record as an extreme example. There are others who were sacked for a wide range of issues and as the Plant was one of Doncaster's biggest employers of men women and children, with that came all the social problems of the day, ill health, poverty, stress, incompetence, thievery, and death, either

accidental or deliberate.

Dixie - The following record in the Locomotive register is one that no-one would really want to find.

Surname	Fore-name	Classification	DOB	Start Date	Date of Leaving	Reason
Dixie	Stanley Edward	lab	1 Jul 1898	04 Jan 1924	27 Oct 1926	charged with murdering wife-found guilty

Stanley Edward Dixie's crime has 47 newspaper articles about his brutal slaying of his wife, Evelyn Eliza Dixie, within the newspaper archive via the Find My Past website. The articles provide a lot of detail including the fact that he wasn't from Doncaster and although he was living at 21 Balby Road at the time, his wife and child were in their family home at Kesgrave near Ipswich, Suffolk. This is where the crime took place when Dixie was visiting his family on holiday. He was declared insane at his trial and subsequently ended up in Broadmoor Hospital, and there are several records on Find My Past tracing his life, his 2nd marriage, and his death in 1960.

Foreign Workers - The Plant didn't just recruit people from our country either. The following records show at least 4 workers were originally from Belgium, and they all left to join their army:

Surname	Fore-name	Classification	Date of Leaving	Reason
Deschamps	Victor	Temp yd labr (wgn)	17 July 1915	Joined Belgian army
Meulemans	Francois	Temp finisher	14 April 1917	
Somers	Juon	Temp yard lab (carr)	14 April 1917	
Van Steen - Wegman	Felix	Temp yd lab (wgn)	17 July 1915	

Finally, and with the tragic events in the middle east in the forefront of our daily news, Palestine is a very different place today than it was in

1921, when John York left the UK for a job on the railway in that country. Only a year later Palestine was under British rule.

Surname	Fore-name	Classification	DOB	START DATE	Leaving Date	Reason
York	John Duncombe	turner	2 Feb 1895	18 Sep 1911	05 Jan 1921	accepted post on Palestine Railways

Other reasons from leaving are many and varied and quite a few show men leaving for other careers such as John York above. A Joseph Camm left the Locomotive works in 1926 before Dixie, to join the West Riding Constabulary.

Conclusion

This article shows some of the secrets held within the Plant Work employment records, following my work to extract the information, and it mustn't be forgotten what the workers at the Plant achieved.

The very skilled workforce built the best steam locomotives that Britain had and still has, and at least one, The Mallard, made history in 1938 breaking the steam locomotive speed record, driven, and fuelled by 2 great Doncastrians, Joe Duddington and Tommy Bray.

This continued into the diesel era and the loss of the works has had a significant impact on the growth of our city.

The Plant Works however made great history and are a very important part of Doncaster's heritage.

Andy Harbon, Member 4461

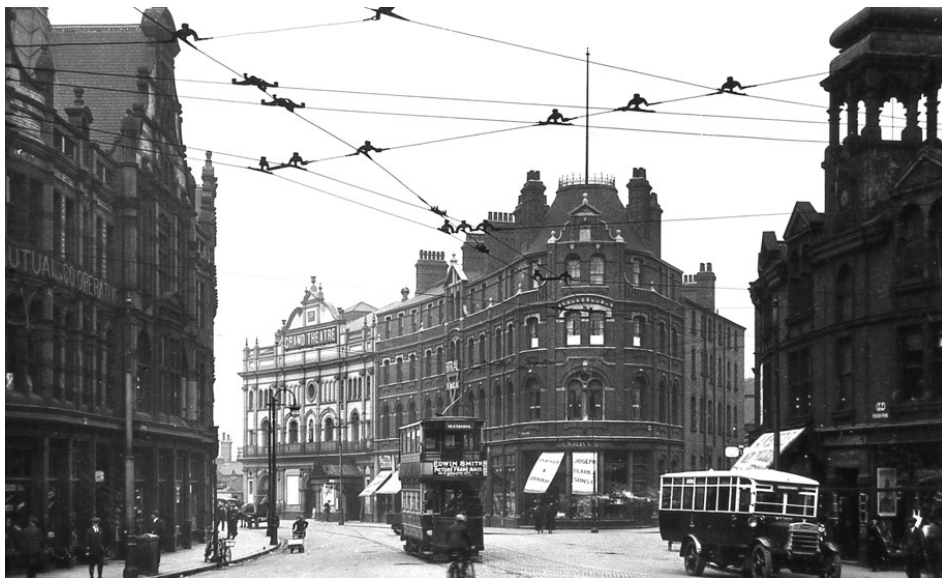
Doncaster Grand Theatre

This is the auctioneers description of the Grand Theatre that was recently sold for £77,500.

The substantial and imposing former Doncaster Grand Theatre located in the heart of the city centre, adjacent Frenchgate Shopping Centre and bus and train stations on Frenchgate and Trafford Way. The Grade II listed Victorian building which dates back to 1899 has stood empty for some 30 years and is an extremely rare opportunity to acquire this historic building. The property provides a unique conversion and development opportunity for alternative uses, subject to planning permission, much like other period properties within the city centre which have undergone development in recent years, such as the nearby Wool Market, which underwent huge renovation, development, change of use and now provides a social / leisure / dining venue - a prime example of regeneration of old historic buildings of this nature within the city centre.



This shows the brick construction, before trams were introduced



A couple of old photos of the Grand Theatre in Station Road .

Somerset House

Taken from Doncaster Ancestor Winter 2008

Hazel Moffat gave a talk at the August meeting on Somerset House. She told her audience that the four main wings of the building were completed almost 200 years ago, on land between the Strand and the River Thames, with the intention that this building would be an ***object of national splendour and official convenience***.

Why was this extraordinary building in the centre of London called Somerset House?

When Henry V died, his brother-in-law, Edward Seymour, became King in all but name. He was officially Lord Protector, but he also took the title of Duke of Somerset. In keeping with his senior status, he needed to have a grand palace. The land between the Strand and the

Thames was already occupied but this did not deter him. The all-powerful Lord Protector decided to clear the site, including the Bishops' Houses, the Church of St Mary, and the graveyard. Bones were removed from the cemetery and taken north to be re-buried in unconsecrated ground, much to the outrage of many people. Stone was needed to build the Palace. There was some available from the houses that had been demolished, but that wasn't enough so the cloisters at St Paul's were demolished to provide the stone. The Duke of Somerset was only in power for two years and just as the Palace neared completion, he was executed.

The Palace was now seized and became Crown property and was later used for Cromwell's "lying in state". In the 17th century, Stuart queens used the palace as a dower house, but the accommodation later used for diplomats, fell into a degree of disrepair. The garden was also neglected. George III and Charlotte didn't use Somerset House, favouring Buckingham House.



George III wanted rid of Somerset House at the time that Government Departments were in need of better central accommodation. The estimated cost of demolishing the old house and building government offices which would reflect the style typical of the reign of George III was a quarter of a million pounds. The cost doubled.

Sir William Chambers, the Architect, went to China where he did drawings of Chinese architecture. When he came back to England he came to the attention of the royal family and worked with the Dowager Princess of Wales. He built a Pagoda in Kew Gardens and became Surveyor General of Crown lands. Somerset House became his life's work, but he died before the building was finished. It was a difficult site to build on because the land sloped downwards 40 feet from the Strand to the river.

To reflect the glory of the monarch, sixteen sculptors were employed. Viewed from the Strand side, no-one would imagine there was anything grand on the other side, but all the keystones had carved heads. The building was the largest purpose-built home for civil servants in the world at that time. It also houses three other organisations – the Royal Academy of Art, The Royal Society, and the Royal Society of Antiquities.

Hazel showed some pictures and from the Courtyard it could be seen how much bigger the building was. A pair of Sphinx and a Roman altar hid the chimneys and there were four statues representing the four continents of America, Africa, Europe and Asia. The building was, and still is very decorative and has one of the most exciting staircases – so expensive that they could not afford another one. It is called Nelson's staircase. From the riverfront the grandeur becomes more obvious, and this is why the Navy was keen to have their offices by the river.



The site was convenient because they could also sail direct to Greenwich before the Embankment was built as the Thames was a very busy river. The terrace was the most magnificent Promenade in London, but people were eventually stopped from using it in 1855 because of the graffiti appearing on the stonework.

Hazel listed all the different offices that had been housed there. She recognised that some members of the FHS members may have visited Somerset House in recent years, as family historians, to look at Wills. Today it is still an extraordinary home for civil servants and the Arts. The Courtyard is no longer a car park and is used for exhibitions and events.

Stella Vessey, Member 38

Barbara Wood, a member from Australia read the above article via the website, and thought it would be of interest to newer members.

Editor

The Diary of William Clark

A small group of us have been helping Doncaster Archives by transcribing a diary written by a **William Clark** in 1837 and these brief extracts illustrate how some of the unpublished works available at the Archives can help with not only your family history but also how your ancestors may have been involved in Doncaster's social and local history.

The diary covers a period between the 1st January 1837 and 27th June 1839 when **William Clark** was a grocer with premises in the High Street. He was a Quaker and married **Mary Hawley** in 1809 in Oakham, County of Rutland. They had a number of children including a son, **Richard Ecroyd Clark**.

A few of the many entries that I found interesting include:

In February 1837 there was a countrywide outbreak of influenza which in William's words "removed" **Joseph Lockwood** senior. He was at one time the mayor and one of Doncaster's prominent builders who built Belle Vue House, now The Grand St Leger, prominent on the corner of Bennetthorpe and Carr House Road (Racecourse roundabout).

On the 21st February 1837 William says there was the news of the death of King William IV and on the 28th the proclamation of Queen Victoria took place in the town.

His wife Mary & daughter Ann were in Harrogate when Ann became ill. The doctor's advice was to stay a while longer but not to take the Water. Also in February he goes on to say that sister Payne had an attack of the croup and had 30 Leeches applied to her throat.

In the days before electric lighting he says "We have again received the benefit of the Gas Lights after being deprived of it one week owing to an obstruction in the Pipes, they being filled up with Gas Tar". Then later "We are again deprived of all benefit from the Gas, the above obstruction not having been sufficiently removed".

The photograph on the front of the Ancestor, taken about 1890, shows the old clock corner. William says that on the 3rd April 1838. "The workmen commenced operations this morning for fixing the Clock at our opposite Corner" This suggest that his shop is the one in the photograph on the corner of High St and Baxter Gate. He then goes on to say that "on the 16th the Public Clock was exhibited this evening at six and illuminated at half past eight o'clock, it has taken two weeks to

fit it up". Clock corner was demolished in 1894/95 when Baxter Gate was widened.

William also mentions the weather in detail as this affected his business on the market and at harvest time. At this time, travel between towns was by coach usually carrying 4 passengers inside and 3 or 4 on top. His son Joseph once travelled to London on the "outside" when it rained all the way.

In July 1838 his wife and daughter Ann went to Scarborough for a holiday, he later joined them and says when he returned to Doncaster he left Scarborough at 8am got to York at 1.10pm left there at 2pm and was well home by 7.20pm. A journey of nearly 12 hours!

However, things were beginning to change which would eventually affect the whole of the town and businesses in it, for on the 1st Nov 1838 he says that the Rotherham & Sheffield Rail was opened and later that year the family bought shares in the London & Birmingham Railway.

Although his son Richard E. eventually took over the shop in High St he also became a stockbroker and by the 1881 census had moved and was living in Rutland House, a house he probably had built and named after the county of his birth. A house & street that is well known to this day.

Amazing what you can find in Doncaster Archives.

Philip Langford, Member 1702

George Porter: The Nobel Prize-winner from Stainforth

Peter Dumville looks at the life and achievements of Lord Porter of Luddenham

"You must be joking! Did I hear you say that there was a Nobel Prize winner born and educated in Stainforth?", No, I am not joking, you did hear me correctly, George Porter was his name, and he was a true son of Stainforth!"

George Porter was born on December 06th 1920 in Silver Street, Stainforth. His father, John Smith Porter, originally from Worsborough

Dale, was a general dealer, member of Stainforth Parish Council, trustee of Stainforth Methodist Church and Chairman of the Thorne Education sub-committee for nine years. He was associated with all the big improvements in Stainforth, including the building of the Parish Church.

The young George was educated at Junction Road School, Stainforth and Thorne Grammar School. From reports he was a very bright, lively, ordinary lad. He made chemical experiments, (mostly explosions!) in an old bus away from the house. He “laiked” in the streets, got his knees scruffy on the rugby pitch, took roles in amateur dramatics and was involved in as many school scrapes as anyone!

The Porter family lived in various houses in Stainforth but whilst at Thorne Grammar School George lived in Oldfield Lane, and the record card from the school states he entered the school on September 15th, 1931, and left on July 28th, 1938. He sat examinations in 1935 and was awarded a distinction in physical chemistry – the first sign of future success.

In 1938 George entered Leeds University where he was an Ackroyd Scholar. The teaching of M G Evans inspired his interest of physical chemistry and chemical kinetics and he graduated with honours in chemistry in 1941. During the Second World War, he was a Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Radar Officer, and his wartime training proved useful later in formulating new approaches to chemical problems. After the war, with the help of a resettlement grant, he entered Cambridge to carry out research in physical chemistry and was awarded his PhD. In 1955 he moved to Sheffield University as Professor of Physical Chemical and became head of the Chemistry Department.

George became Director of the Royal Institutions in 1966, and the following year he was the joint winner of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry for his work in Photochemistry. He was knighted in 1972. George became Chancellor of Leicester University in 1984 and President of the Royal Society in 1985. He was made a member of the exclusive Order of Merit in December 1989 and a Life Peer in 1990, taking the

title Lord Porter of Luddenham.

Throughout his life he was acknowledged as an excellent communicator and a pioneer of scientific programmes on television: he was the driving force behind the BBC Young Scientist of the Year Award and presented the Royal Institution's Christmas lectures. He told one interviewer that the teaching of science was most important at the age of five and the teachers must be properly qualified. He continually stressed the need for better teaching of science and accused successive governments of deliberately downgrading scientific research. When he was elected President of the Royal Society, he was seen as the right man to put science back on the map in Britain and try and stop the brain drain.

In recognition of his early links with Stainforth, a plaque was unveiled in Stainforth Library in 1999, when, unfortunately, George was unable to attend. In November 2003, Mayor Winter of Doncaster and Mayor Riley of Stainforth were present at the opening of an estate in Stainforth in which the avenue was named Lord George Porter Avenue. In honour of its former Chancellor, The University of Leicester name its chemistry teaching building the George Porter building in 2001 and he unveiled a commemorative plaque.

George Porter died in Canterbury in August 2002 and a service of thanksgiving was held in St Margarets Church, Westminster Abbey in January 2003. At the service, Sir Aaron Klug OM FRS stated that George had retired full of honours and with the satisfaction of having fulfilled his early ambitions of advancing our understanding of the natural world. We mark the passing of a great figure in the 20th century chemistry and in British science.

And it all started in Stainforth!

Peter Dumville, Member 4574

Sir Herbert Nigel Gresley

Mystery of Shillington, Avenue Road, Doncaster

One of our followers on our Facebook page wanted to know about the house called Shillington, Avenue Road where **Nigel Gresley** and his family lived. I looked on the 1911 census, and it confirmed the address.

Another follower of ours on our Facebook page asked if there was a chance of a blue plaque being put on Sir Nigel Gresley's house on Avenue Road.

After Easter I contacted Doncaster Archives to see if they could help to shed some light on the house called Shillington. They had a look at various street directories for Avenue Road unfortunately it just said Shillington.

I contacted Doncaster Civic Trust regarding Sir Nigel Gresley and having a blue plaque for him; however, it is not that straight forward, and they needed a lot more information. So, I started to do some research to find out a bit more about him.

Herbert Nigel Gresley was born on 19th June 1876, Edinburgh, Scotland. Son of Reverend Nigel Gresley and Joanna Beatrice. His grandfather was Sir William Nigel Gresley, 9th Baronet. In 1901 he married **Ethel Frances Fullager**, in Fylde, Lancashire. They had four children, Nigel, Violet, Roger, and Marjorie. Also, in 1901 he was a mechanical engineer for Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway (L&YR). In 1904, he then became Assistant Superintendent of the Carriage and Wagon Department of the L&YR. A year later he moved to the Great Northern Railway (GNR) as Carriage and Wagon Superintendent. GNR controlled the line from London to Doncaster and allied itself with the North Eastern Railway and the North British Railway.

In 1911 Herbert Nigel Gresley was an Engineer Superintendent, and according to the West Yorkshire Electoral Register, the family were still living at the same address Shillington in 1913.

Richard Bell also got involved along with a couple of others to solve the mystery and to find out what number Shillington, Avenue Road was. I had a look on Google and another person did as well. Richard compared the consecutive house names as they appear on the 1911 census with those that remain legible on Google Street View. After Richard looked at the other houses in order Holly Garth, Linacre, Kenilworth, Cromer House, Shillington. Holly Garth, Kenilworth and

Cromer House can still be read on gate posts on Street View. The house after Cromer House is Shillington. The mystery of Shillington has now been solved Shillington, Avenue Road is No. 24.

I passed this information onto Doncaster Archives and Doncaster Civic Trust.

The search was now on for the deeds. I contacted West Yorkshire Wakefield Archives to see if they held the deeds for No. 24 (Shillington), Avenue Road, Doncaster. West Yorkshire Archives could not find the deeds for Shillington, in 1911 however, they found one deed for Herbert Nigel Gresley in 1919 which was Avenue House, Thorne Road. I must say West Yorkshire Archives, Wakefield were brilliant. Then I began to search the Electoral Registers for the Gresley family. Between 1907-1910 the family lived at 80 Thorne Road. In 1911 the family lived at Shillington, Avenue Road. In 1913 the place of abode for the Gresley family was Avenue House, Thorne Road. Also, Description of Qualifying property was Shillington, Avenue Road and Avenue House, Thorne Road. From 1914-1923 the Gresley family lived at Avenue House, Thorne Road.

With all this information and having a copy of the Deeds which I sent to Doncaster Archives and all the information I was able to gather including the Deeds I sent to Doncaster Civic Trust. At this point I hoped I had done enough for Sir Nigel Gresley to get recognition and hopefully a Historic Plaque.

Unfortunately, and sad to say, our request was denied as it falls outside their criteria. Reason being is that Historic Plaques on buildings should be in Doncaster City Centre within walking distance of existing plaques.

Sir Nigel Gresley was knighted in 1936. He died on 5th April 1941, Watton, Hertfordshire.

I have done a lot of research and stories on the Forgotten Women from Doncaster and also other stories on the inspirational people from the past. Doncaster has a lot of history which should never be forgotten and many of their stories I have brought to the forefront and back to life. They need to be recognised.

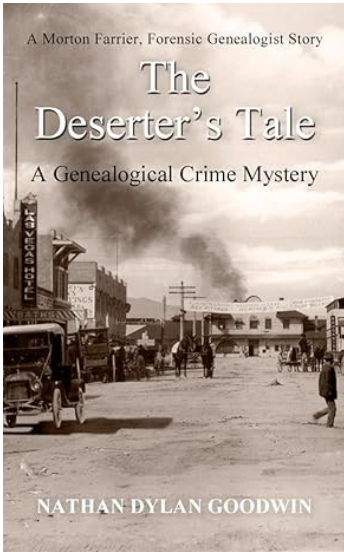
Marion Baxter, Secretary

The Deserter's Tale

A Genealogical Crime Mystery

By Nathan Dylan Goodwin

In this book Morton Farrier is invited to Salt Lake City, Utah, to speak at the RootsTech genealogy conference. After he accepted, he found out that one of his co-panellists was going to be his former girlfriend, who he hadn't seen for twenty years. He is hoping to discover why she ended their relationship so abruptly, all those years ago.



Whilst there, he starts researching his wife's great grandfather, who deserted his family soon after the First World War. Morton uncovers some shocking truths.

This book is easy to read and I like the way that Nathan manages to involve you in his research. He explains resources that he uses and why, so you think you are on the journey with him.

This is the tenth book in the series and over this time we have shared the ups and

downs of Morton's life.

He has a very forgiving wife but I am not sure how she will feel when he tells her the reason his former girlfriend ended the relationship.

You will have to read the book to find out.

ISBN 9798866987764

Jenny Ellis, Member 2901

Dearne Valley Collieries, Communities and Transport

By Dave Fordham

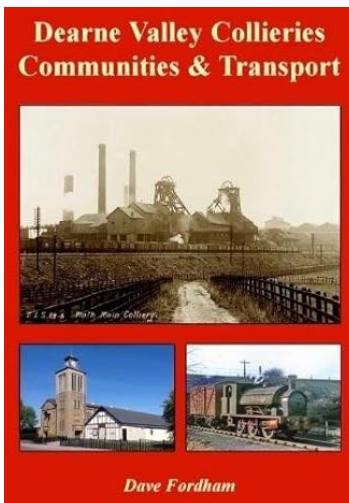
For those of who have had the pleasure of living within the area of Dearne Valley, or had ancestors living there, this is a book more about the social history of the area. Although there is mention of land and mine owners of the past.

It is split into three main areas as you can gather from the title.

Collieries - this gives details of those within the area giving details as to who the original money people were and the land that they owned together with the mining royalties they agreed with other land owners. Some of the collieries include Hickleton Main, Lundhill, Grimethorpe, Wombwell Main and others. Although the author tends to use both the Barnsley Bed and Shafton coal seams there were others such as Melton Field, Beamshaw and Parkgate to mention a few. Within the book there is details of when various collieries began to sink their shafts and started to produce coal. There is also details of the tonnage at their peak and the dates when they were finally capped.

Communities - areas around the collieries are described some dating back to before the Magna Carta together with their original names and the sources of those names. Land within the Dearne Valley was given to knights who assisted William the Conqueror way back in 1066. It is interesting to read who developed the communities. Was it the colliery owner or was it the local authority or even individual builders? Where were these new estates, how many houses were built, were they good or not? Some of these questions can be found within.

Transport - this was vital to the colliery owners to get their product of coal to markets out side the Dearne Valley area. Details of the early methods used from the horse and cart, through canals and eventually the railways. Background information can be used from within to fol-



low how the railways developed from early wagonways to The Swinton and Knottingley Railway, Dearne Valley Railway through to British Rail. But not let us forget public transport as communities wish to move around and visit other places. Many of the communities developed their own electric tram systems such as the Dearne District Light Railways which have sadly disappeared. But with the increase in roads came an increase in private operators not only to move miners to and from their place of abode to their place of work but to other places of interest. So early pioneers came along such as Yorkshire Traction now part of Stagecoach, Burrows of Wombwell, Camplejohns of Darfield and Larratt Pepper of Thurnscoe. One of the earliest trolley bus systems was operating in and around Mexborough and Swinton.

At the price of £9.95 I believe it is good value and would recommend it. Incidentally I am not related to or even know the author.

Trevor Stenton, Membership No 3126

An Ode to Volunteering

I have been doing this job for eight long years,

And sometimes my pleas fall on deaf ears,

It is not an easy job being editor for the Society,

And lack of articles can increase my anxiety,

Like most people these days I carry my phone,

And get excited when I hear “that tone”,

that tells me there is a message just for the editor (Society)

Only to find out it is just an enquiry.

If you have a story that you would like to share,

Then please do send it, this is a dare,

We can help you with queries and brick walls,
If you need to speak to us, we can even take your calls.

This Society is run by several volunteers
and just for a moment I need to bend your ears,
We aren't getting any younger and parts start to fail,
So, we need some help please, as some are getting frail.

To continue as a Society, we need more volunteers
Which can be rewarding, so have no fears
So why don't you join us, we are a friendly bunch,
And volunteering has many benefits, that could include lunch. *

*On 17th October the Society is having a meeting for all volunteers, which includes sandwiches and drinks. It will be held at 1pm at The Old Art College, Church View, Doncaster. If you would like to volunteer, you could always come along and meet us if you are local., otherwise please contact me on the email below.

Numbers of volunteers have dwindled since Covid for a variety of reasons, so it is important that we meet up in appreciation of all the people that give so freely of their time, to keep the Society running.

Wherever you live in the world you could help, but obviously would need access to the internet. All help gratefully received.

Jenny Ellis, Editor

ddfhseditor1@outlook.com

Walter Owen Bentley

My husband was reading a book called "Rolls Royce the Magic of a Name", the first forty years of Britain's most prestigious company 1904-1944, by Peter Pugh. He knew that I had been working on some of Doncaster Plant Registers and he found the name Bentley in this book, who had worked at The Plant, so I read the page.

That name was W O Bentley, which didn't really mean much to me, although some people will know he was the man responsible for creating Bentley Motors Ltd. Like several other early carmakers (including of course, Henry Royce), W O Bentley had served his apprenticeship in the railway workshops for Great Northern Railways (GNR), in Bentley's case in Doncaster, and Royce was at Peterborough.

W O Bentley served a Premium Apprenticeship, which meant that he paid for it himself. According to the records held by DDFHS, Walter Owen Bentley, who was born in 1888, started his apprenticeship at Doncaster Plant Works on 19th April 1906 earning between 10d and one shilling and sixpence. The record also states that Walter Bentley transferred to a pupil on 4th January 1909. I wasn't sure what that meant, so consulted one of our rail experts. Using Ancestry I found the UK Mechanical Engineering Records, which show that Walter Owen Bentley was elected on 15th January 1909 to a Premium Apprenticeship, as a graduate and was proposed by **Henry A Ivatt** and **Francis Win-tour**. Rail enthusiasts will be aware that **Henry Alfred Ivatt** was appointed locomotive engineer after the death of **Patrick Stirling** in 1895.

This record also gave his address at the time as 12 Highfield Road, Wheatley Doncaster.

The skills and knowledge gained from his apprenticeship at The Plant Works in Doncaster, helped Walter Owen Bentley to follow his dream, and Bentley Motors was established in July 1919. This was also the year he was also recognised for his contribution to the war effort and he was awarded an MBE.

The company was bought out by Rolls Royce in 1931

Walter Owen Bentley died in August 1971.

If I had just seen the name W O Bentley in the Doncaster Plant Registers, it wouldn't have meant anything to me. Do you have stories to tell?

Jenny Ellis, Member 2901

New Members

Listed below are the names, and membership numbers of members who have recently joined the Society. We extend a warm welcome to them and wish them good luck in their personal research.

Mem ID	Title	Initial	Last Name
4601	Mrs	S	Roebuck
4602	Miss	J	Laws
4603	Ms	K	Wilson
4604	Ms	C	Doubleday
4605	Miss	T	Drysdale
4606	Mr	J	Burke
4607	Mr & Mrs	A & P	Cawkwell
4608	Mrs	C	Mcglone
4609	Mrs	P	Horsfield
4610	Mr	M E	Lambert
4611	Miss	L	Boleyn
4612		K	Faulkner
4613	Mr	B	Kenyon
4614	Mrs	A	Watson-Lee
4615	Mr	G	Middlehurst
4616	Mrs	J	Hunter
4617	Miss	K	Dennis
4618	Mr	P	Marfitt
4619	Ms	K	Hague
4620	Mr	R	Bell
4621	Mr	A	Birtles
4622	Mr	J	Abson

Members' Surname Interests

Surname	Code	Place	Dates	Mem ID
Darwent	WRY	Whiston / Aston	1500 - 2000	4595
Chambers	WRY	Ulley / Treeton	1900 - 2000	4595
Chambers	NTT	Sutton-In-Ashfield	1800 - 1950	4595
Chambers	DBY	Ilkeston / Pinxton	1600 - 1800	4595
Rawson	WRY	Sheffield / Whiston		4595
Waterall	NTT	Selston / Mansfield	1600 - 1850	4595
Machin	DBY	Alfreton	1700 - 1900	4595
Hempstock	NTT	Ragnall / Dunham / Warsop	1600 - 1950	4595
Dewick	LIN	Newton On Trent	1600 - 1880	4595
Ball	NTT	Selston	1850 - 1930	4595
Ball	DBY	South Normanton, Blackwell, Morton, Woolley	1600 - 1900	4595
Wade	WRY	Rotherham / Leeds	1700 - 1900	4595
Townsend	WRY	Kirstall / Leeds	1800 - 1920	4595
Moreau	LAN	Leyland / Preston / Huyton	1600 - 1750	4595
Markham	NTT	Worksop	1830 - 1970	4607
Bowles	NTT	Worksop	1860 - 1945	4607
Mckeen	CLA	Ennis	1800 - 1940	4607
Casey	WAT	Cappoquin	1850 - 1970	4607
Galpin	NTT	Worksop	1815 - 1960	4607
Cawkwell	WRY	Woodsetts	1880 - 1950	4607
Bolyn	WRY	Doncaster	1600 - 1800	4611
Boylim	WRY	Doncaster	1600 - 1800	4611
Boylenn	WRY	Doncaster	1600 - 1800	4611
Bylin	WRY	Doncaster	1600 - 1800	4611
Boyling	WRY	Doncaster	1600 - 1800	4611
Boiling	WRY	Doncaster	1600 - 1800	4611
Boleyne	WRY	Doncaster	1600 - 1800	4611
Boleyn	WRY	Doncaster	1600 - 1800	4611

Members' Surname Interests continued

Surname	Code	Place	Dates	Mem ID
Briggs	WRY	Doncaster	1932 - 1934	4620
Hague	WRY	Doncaster	1914 - 1940	4620
Lumby	WRY	Doncaster	1900 - 1940	4620
Senior	WRY	Doncaster	1825 - 1940	4620
Crosley	YKS	Doncaster	1750 - 1900	4450
Heath	WRY	Doncaster	1870 - 1935	4584
Fowler	WRY	Doncaster	1870 - 1935	4584
Abson	WRY	Doncaster	1500 - 2000	4622
Abson	WRY	Wakefield	1700 - 2000	4622

Doncaster Archives Events

Details of specific times and how to book places on workshops will be released via our social media and website.

6 Sep

Heritage Open Days:

Family History Workshop

Heritage Open Days:

Palaeography Workshop

9 Sep

Heritage Open Days:

‘Horsing Around’

**Exhibition of documents relating to
horse racing in the borough**

DDFHS Family History Research Days

**Armthorpe Community Library
Armthorpe
DN3 3AL**

**Please note these days are the 2nd Monday of every month
throughout the year, except Bank Holidays**

10.00 - 13.45

Entrance free, Tea & Coffee 50p

**Experienced volunteers will be on hand to help with your
research and it is free**

**Sprotbrough Library
Sprotbrough Rd
Doncaster DN5 8BA**

**Please note these days are the 4th Wednesday of every month
throughout the year, excluding December**

10.00 - 2.00

Entrance free, Tea & Coffee free

**Experienced volunteers will be on hand to help with your
research and it is free**

**Doncaster Archives
Chequer Road
Doncaster
DN4 0NA**

**Please note these are on the 3rd Tuesday of every month
throughout the year, excluding December**

10.00 - 2.00,

Entrance free, no refreshments available

**Experienced volunteers will be on hand to help with your
research and it is free**

doncasterfhs.co.uk for further details

**Conisbrough Community Library
Old Road, Conisbrough,
Doncaster DN12 3ND**

**Please note these days are the 1st Monday of every month
throughout the year including December 2nd**

10.00 - 12.00

Entrance free, Tea & Coffee by donation

**Experienced volunteers will be on hand to help with your
research and it is free**

Dates For Your Diary 2024

Saturday August 10th 2024

**Lindholme Hall Summer Open Day
Lindholme Bank Rd,
Hatfield, Doncaster DN7 6DT
10.30 - 4.00**

Saturday 12th October 2024

**Doncaster and District Family History Society
Local Family History Fair**

**at the Old Art College (opposite the Minster)
Doncaster, DN1 1AL
10.00 – 4.00**

Surrey Family History Fair

**Woking Leisure Centre, Kingfield Road, Woking Surrey
GU22 9BA**

Saturday 9th November 2024, 10.00 am – 4.30 pm

D&DFHS Subscription Rates

01 Apr 2024 - 31 Mar 2025

Paper Journal / e-Journal

Individuals	£10.00
Family in same house	£12.00
Institutions UK	£12.00
Overseas via Air Mail	£15.00

Please make cheques etc.
payable to:

**Doncaster & District
Family History Society**

and send to Membership
Secretary: see back page
or www.genfair.com

**New Members who join the Society between
January - March will receive up to 3 months
membership free**

DDFHS Research Enquiry Service

The Research Service is primarily a “look-up” service and is limited to one surname search of the Society’s over 1.6 million transcriptions database.

Any additional research will be at the discretion of the Society’s Research Enquiries Coordinator, Trevor Betterton:

researchenquiries@doncasterfhs.co.uk

If you are not a member we will endeavour to assist, but ask you to consider joining the Society as an appreciation of the time spent by our volunteers.

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office hours*



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