

Ponteland Historian

Newsletter of Ponteland Local History Society

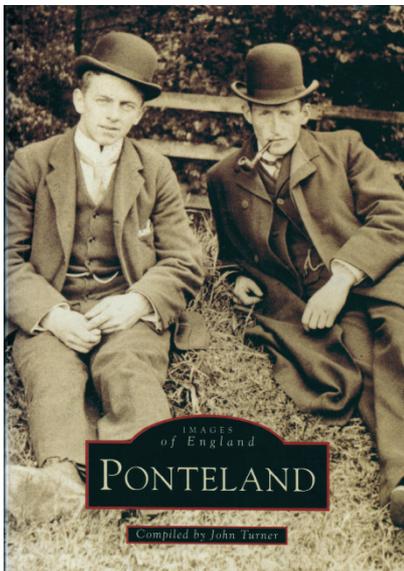
October 2020

JOHN TURNER, PRESIDENT PLHS

The News of the death of History Society President, John Turner has been met with great sadness not only by Society members but by the many local organisations which he supported and the community in which he was so active.

John was Chairman of the Society for 25 years and contributed a great deal to the recording of local history through his meticulous research and numerous entertaining and detailed publications. His 'Ponteland: Images of England' is a local best seller with all royalties being donated to Ponteland Local History Society. He promoted local history widely and was Secretary of the Group which facilitated restoration work on the Ponteland Vicar's Pele Tower as a Millennium project.

His passing leaves the whole community poorer and it is hoped that his family and friends can take comfort in the fact that John's life has been appreciated by so many.



SEPTEMBER MEETING

The Online meeting "PARSONS: GENIUS OF POWER; the untold story of the Parsons family" was attended by 45 people.

Some feedback remarks: Thought that Zoom worked very well and that the talk was excellent. Just a note to say we both thoroughly enjoyed the zoom meeting..... I thoroughly enjoyed the talk..... Yes, a really interesting talk, well delivered and with great enthusiasm..... A superb talk with a minimum of technical glitches.....

PIONEERING MINDS

Many members will have enjoyed Septembers talk on 'Parsons' by Ruth Baldasera. Now there is a chance to delve further into stories of the North East's industrial heritage and learn something new with our heritage podcast series - Pioneering Minds.

Working in partnership with "The Common Room" Ruth presents this series of podcasts, themed on the eminent engineer, Charles Parsons. Charles became an associate member of the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers in 1886 and a full member in 1889, which he remained until his death.

The Common Room's extensive archive and collection includes the Institute's transactions, to which Charles contributed.



This series shines a light on the 'magnificent women' in Parsons' family and their contributions to diversity and inclusion within the engineering sector.

<https://thecommonroom.org.uk/programme/explore-online/pioneering-minds-podcasts/>



Pioneering Minds Podcast Series:

Episode 1: Introducing Charles Parsons

Episode 2: Introducing Lady Katherine Parsons

Episode 3: Introducing Rachel Parsons

Episode 4: Turbinia

Episode 5: C.A.Parsons & Company

In addition, here is some further reading and links provided by Ruth:

1. An album of 4 very short films including Armstrong, Parsons, and Arup.

<https://vimeo.com/album/5310574>

These four videos were made as part of a project initiated by Shoe Tree Arts in the summer of 2018. It includes the multi-media performance Heaton! at the People's Theatre, an exhibition Brains, Steam and Speed, the culmination of the work of five artists in local schools and three films, 'Parsons', 'Armstrong' and 'Arup' made in collaboration with Heaton History Group and Northumbria University.

2. A recording of the church service held in Kirkwhelpington to dedicate the graves in 2018:

Password is 'ohohohoturbinia'
<https://vimeo.com/318046495>



3. Ruth is currently collaborating with Viscount Devonport and Kirkwhelpington Village concerning tourist information boards to contain detail about Charles Parsons

4. Recommended reading - From Galaxies to Turbines (G Scaife) and, Magnificent Women & their revolutionary machines (H Heald)



GEORGE CLARKE VISITS NATIONAL TRUST PROPERTIES

Filed for Channel 4 while these properties were closed to the public due to Covid19, the unique conditions offered George the opportunity to get under the architectural skin of these extraordinary places, meet the people who care for them and find out what happens when the doors are closed.



George Clarke with Clara Woolford of NT at Cragside

And George showed his love of the North East by visiting Washington Old Hall, Gibside, Cragside and Penshaw Monument.



In the Channel 4 series George also explores some of the National Trust's stunning gardens and parklands together with his husky Loki

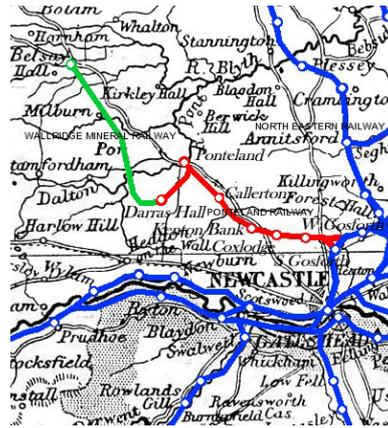
Gibside also featured in the recent talk on *Eleanor Bowes* given by Anthony Andrews to Ponteland U3A

NATIONAL TRUST REPORT

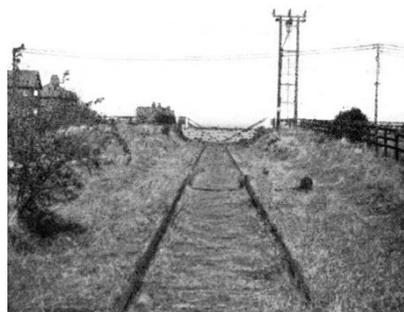
Perhaps a little more controversial than the Channel 4 series was the publication of the 'Interim Report on the Connections between Colonialism and Properties now in the Care of the National Trust, Including Links with Historic Slavery' details the connections 93 historic places in our care have with colonialism and historic slavery. <https://nt.global.ssl.fastly.net/documents/colonialism-and-historic-slavery-report.pdf>

DARRAS HALL TO KIRKHEATON RAILWAY

The eccentricity of the Railway branch to Darras Hall was compounded by its short-lived extension to Belsay Colliery, four miles SW of Belsay village. The colliery, which opened in 1923 to extract household coal, was operated by Kirkheaton Coal Company. (This firm's nearby Kirkheaton Colliery and Drift closed in 1924.) The workforce never reached a hundred, production was limited, and the colliery closed in 1930.



For some of the colliery's working life, an untimetabled passenger train service for miners was provided on the 7½-mile single-track route for the final mile between Belsay Colliery and a row of miners' cottages at Wallridge. It is unlikely that platforms were built either at Belsay Colliery or Wallridge. Motive power was an ex-Glasgow & South Western Railway 0-6-0, and there were six trucks, two passenger coaches and a guard's van.



1931 Picture of Belsay Station.

The line was known as the Wallridge Mineral Railway after the almost uninhabited parish where it terminated: the population in 1901 was two and in 1931 there were 37.



E. Glasgow & South Western Railway 0-6-0 - Kirkheaton Colliery Co.'s "Edmund"

KENTON STATION DESTROYED BY FIRE

On Saturday 13 September 1913 Kenton station, on the Ponteland branch, was burned to the ground by militant suffragettes. As well as the timber buildings, some £1,000 worth of stored luggage was destroyed.

A note was found nearby which said, "Asquith is responsible for militancy. Apply to him for damage". A few weeks later there was an attempt to burn down Heaton station. In October 1913, there were fires at Hadley Road and Northfield Stations in Birmingham, and at Oldbury Station where a note was left saying "Militancy will go on." In November there was an arson attempt at Streatham Hill, when petrol was used to light a fire in the booking hall. Another Birmingham station, Newton Road, was also set alight, as was Castle Bromwich station.



Kenton Station 1905

Kenton station was renamed Kenton Bank in 1923 by LNER to avoid confusion with its station on the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway. There was a single platform with the standard station building. It had a single storey with pitched roof containing a booking hall, general waiting room, and ladies' room. In front was an enclosed, glazed verandah, with a small cross-gable above the door. A passing loop was provided, with a signal box at the level crossing. The station was intact 30 years after passenger closure, but was demolished by 1973



Kenton Station 1906



Kenton Station 1959

PONTELAND TO AIRPORT RAILWAY BRIDLEPATH

Ponteland Community Partnership has arranged the installation of three educational pedestals describing local history along the route of the old railway line. They offer information on the former explosives depot, Prestwick Colliery and the original Woolsington Airfield.



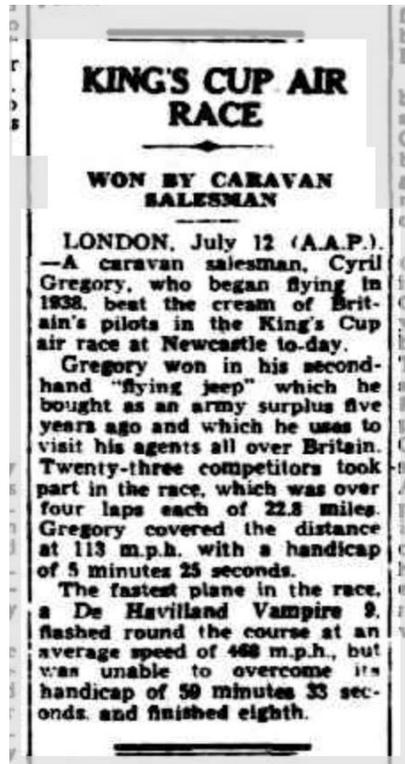
KINGS CUP AIR RACE

The Kings Cup Air Race was held at Woolsington Aerodrome (Now Newcastle International) on 12th July 1952 and won by Cyril Gregory.

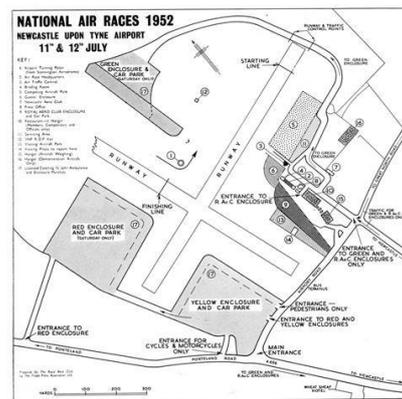
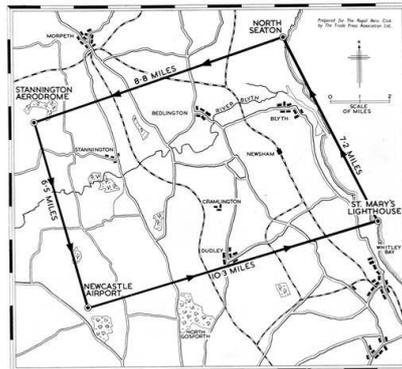
The Race is an annual British handicapped cross-country air race, is run by the Royal Aero Club Records Racing and Rally Association was first contested on 8th September 1922.

The Race covered 4 laps of a mile each, flying east from Woolsington to St Mary's Lighthouse, turning north to North Seaton then west to Stannington Aerodrome before turning south to return to Woolsington.

A History Society member who recalls the event was impressed with the effectiveness of the handicapping. The Vampire jet took off an hour after the first plane but all seemed to arrive on finish line within seconds of each other.

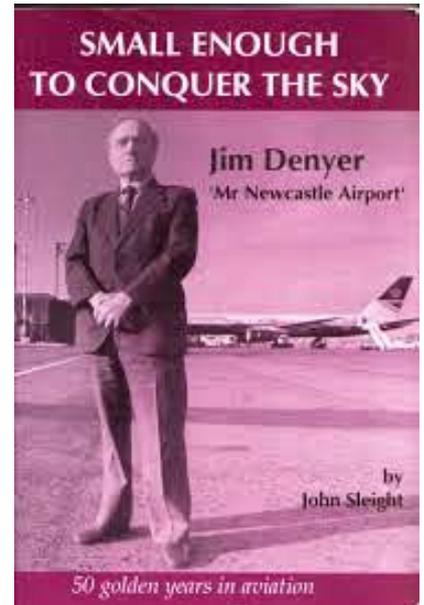


The event was attended by Guest of Honour, Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery. KG, GCB, DSO, PC, DL nicknamed "Monty".



Whilst the race has only been held once in Newcastle it has been won twice by former RAF pilot and Ponteland resident Jim Denyer who was appointed the Aero Club's chief flying instructor in the summer of 1951. Just a year later in 1952, he was appointed Airport Commandant, then Manager, establishing himself as the driving force behind the development of the airport until his

retirement in August 1989 after an incredible 37 years in charge.



Both his victories were at Baginton in Warwickshire. First in 1956 when he flew an Auster J/1N Alpha and again in 1958 when he flew a DH 2A Tiger Moth.

See:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4X-UF0umosY>

THE LITERARY & PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF NEWCASTLE

Margaret Bozic MBE will give her illustrated talk about the history of the building and what it offers to everyone at present at 6.30pm on 'Zoom' on Thursday 19th November.

The Lit. & Phil was founded in 1793 and moved to its present premises in 1825.



Margaret Bozic has for last six years been a Board Member of the Lit and Phil Newcastle, a Trustee of the Tyne and Wear Buildings Preservation Trust and a Trustee of Sherburn House Charity. She is a retired Chartered Surveyor, having worked as a Ratings Caseworker in the Valuations Agency in Washington and was awarded the MBE in 2003

If you would like to join the presentation on Thursday 19th November please register your interest with:

mike@brownponteland.co.uk