

## from the parish mag

**125 YEARS AGO:** The restoration and re-opening of the church is now complete. We have a beautiful church now, and the appointments are too; may it be a blessing to us all and to future generations. —December 1891

**120 YEARS AGO:** A parish meeting was held for the purpose of adopting the Lighting Act. We all know, and I suppose many of us are also ashamed of the fact, that the village is in total darkness from early hours in the evening, and it was hoped that by adopting the Act a small rate would have given us a few lamps. It would mean to most of those who voted a rate of about three-pence a year, and it was mentioned that all the neighbouring villages were lighted, but the proposal was negated, as 10 voted for and 10 against, and it required a two-thirds majority. —December 1896

**100 YEARS AGO:** Special Constable William Coates has felt obliged, through ill-health, to resign, and the Chief Constable has appointed Mr George Hutchinson, of Sanders House, in his place. —December 1916

**90 YEARS AGO:** The Rector has started his journey from house to house to obtain promises of offerings in 1927. A church as large as ours costs a great deal to maintain. Even people who hardly ever come to church expect it to be there and to be warm and comfortable when they do come. Somebody must pay for this all year round, and that somebody is each one of us. —December 1926

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*Ad from December 1916*

**80 YEARS AGO:** We sincerely thank the six ladies who went round with their poppies, bracing horrible weather as usual. The Service of Remembrance was very well attended. The amount raised from poppy sales in Barningham, Newsham and Scargill was £615s7d. —December 1936

**70 YEARS AGO:** We congratulate Mr and Mrs John Thomas Bainbridge on attaining their golden wedding commemoration, which was celebrated with a family party. —December 1946

**25 YEARS AGO:** Very many thanks to the gallant gentlemen Ted Andrews and Roger Winter, who spent time and effort removing an aged tree in the Rectory garden to allow light to penetrate the dark corner, and to the above and Don Day, John Hay, Tom Peace and Jon Smith who gave up time to run the recent car boot sale. —December 1991

**20 YEARS AGO:** Funerals at Barningham: Amy Etherington aged 84 years, on November 2nd; Hilton Nicholson aged 78 years, on November 13th. —December 1996

**Barningham  
Local  
History Group**

[www.barninghamvillage.co.uk](http://www.barninghamvillage.co.uk)

Covering Barningham, Newsham, Dalton, Gayles, Kirby Hill, Whashton, Kirby Ravensworth, Hutton Magna, Greta Bridge, Rokeby, Briggall, Scargill, Hope & beyond.

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# Archive 54

THE MAGAZINE OF BARNINGHAM LOCAL HISTORY GROUP  
NATIONAL AWARD-WINNING LOCAL HISTORY NEWSLETTER

[www.barninghamvillage.co.uk](http://www.barninghamvillage.co.uk)



## MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY 2017 TO YOU ALL



*Festive greetings from a century ago: a card from Christmas 1916, when Santa wore blue breeches, hung his presents on the tree, and seems to have come in via the window*

### contents



**INSIDE:  
FULL UP-DATED  
INDEX TO ALL  
THE ARCHIVES**

and...

**MINUTES OF LAST  
MEETING:** Page 2

**LATEST ON THE  
LEGGETTS:** Page 3

**BOWMANS AND  
WAISTELL:** Page 4

**CENTURY-OLD  
SECRETS:** Page 5

**NEWSHAM TITHE  
MAP:** Page 11

**FROM THE PARISH  
MAG:** Page 12

**NEXT BLHG MEETING: TUESDAY MARCH 21st, 6pm**

## Social plans, grants hope, and a firing squad boot

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday November 29th 2016 at 6pm.

**Present:** Phil Hunt, John Hay, June Graham, John Prytherick, Neil Turner, Margaret Stead, Doug Anderson, Ann Orton, Andrew and Sue Watson.

**Apologies:** Jane Hackworth-Young, Sheila Wappett.

**Minutes of the meeting** on April 19th 2016 were agreed.

**Matters arising:** The annual social event would be held at the Milbank Arms on Sunday January 8, starting at 12.30pm. At the AGM Ann had been asked to look into the grants given by the Lottery Heritage Fund as there had been a query about the availability of the group's archive. It was agreed that June would liaise with Jon to get some idea of the size of the records he has and what form they take: paper, digital, etc. Grants were available from £3,000 to £10,000.

**Finance:** Income £127, expenditure £153 (£118 *Archive* printing and postage, £20 *Archive* Trophy prize, £15 Durham History and Heritage Forum).

**Publications:** *Archive 53* has been distributed.

**Transcriptions:** Ann had completed the Reading Room Minute Book and was just going to do a final check before sending it to Jon.

**WW1 & 2:** John would shortly be sending his information to the Bowes Museum.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday March 21st 2017 at 6pm

**Any other business:** We had

### minutes

been approached by Auckland Castle re the possibility of someone coming to talk to us. It was agreed that we would prefer to visit the Castle and have a talk there. Phil will follow this up.

**Display:** Following the meeting Sue and Andrew Watson kindly shared with us memorabilia of Andrew's grandfather's war-time service. His great-grandfather had worked as an ostler for the Tiffany family in New York but when he died his mother returned to England with him. He joined the Suffolk Yeomanry and served in the trenches in Palestine. In 1917 he was a member of a firing squad who shot a Turkish spy. They drew lots for his clothes and he got one of his shoes. This was one of the items that we passed around, it seemed a bit ghoul-ish! There were also lots of badges, buttons, coins and photos as well as papers showing his pay (11d a day) and his will.

**Knights:** John Hay then spoke to us about the knights from our area and the rules about what clothes people were allowed to wear, all related to income. He also gave us an insight into the money that a knight was expected to spend on his armour and weapons, a very costly business. Even the lowest serfs were expected to have a rudimentary weapon available if called upon to fight.

Phil thanked Sue, Andrew and John for a most enjoyable evening.

ANN ORTON, Secretary

## History Group Publications

**Where Lyeth Ye Bodies\*** Guide to Barningham church, graveyard map, memorial details and list of all known burials.

**Barningham Baptisms\*** Listed by date, name and parents. Vol 1: 1580-1800; Vol 2: 1800-1950.

**Barningham Brides\*** All marriages 1580-1950, listed by date, groom and bride.

**Counted\*** A-Z of census returns 1841-1911, arranged so that families can be tracked through 70 years. Vol 1: Barningham, Scargill, Hope; Vol 2: Newsham, New Forest. Vol 3: Brignall, Rokeby. Vol 4: Dalton, Gayles & Kirby Hill.

**Jam Letch & Jingle Potts\*** History of Barningham farms, fields and fieldnames.

**A Child of Hope\*\*** Journal of Mary Martin, born on a local farm in 1847.

**A Fleeting Shadow\*** The diaries of young Newsham schoolmaster James Coates, 1784-85.

**A Farmer's Boy\*** Memoirs of life in the area in mid-Victorian days.

**Aback to Yuvvin\*\*** 1849 Glossary of Teesdale words & customs.

**Barningham Vestry Minutes 1869-1894, Parish Minutes 1894-1931\*\*** Transcripts of meetings, with background history, index and lists of named parishioners.

**The Archive\*\*\*** Group newsletter. Back issues available.

**Barningham Memories 1 & 2\*** DVDs of cine film of Barningham in the 1960/70s.

\* £10 each + £1.50 p&p

\*\* £5 each + £1.50 p&p

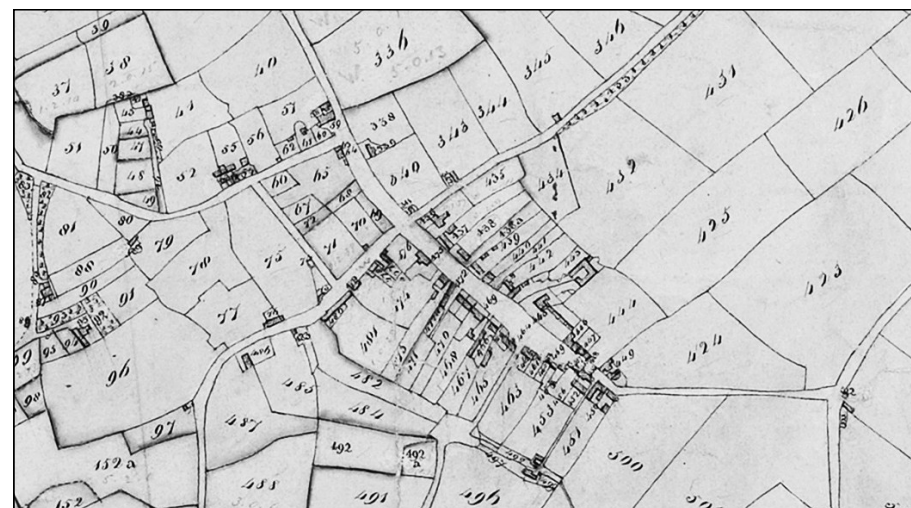
\*\*\* £2 each + £1 p&p

Discounts for group members.

We can also supply copies of **As Time Passed By**, a history of Barningham by Merryne Watson.

More information on our website:

[www.barninghamvillage.co.uk](http://www.barninghamvillage.co.uk)



Newsham village, 1837, as shown on the tithe apportionment map

## Newsham tithe map now available for study

THE history group has acquired a digital copy of the 1837 Newsham tithe apportionment map which, when linked to the schedule already in our possession, means we can now draw up a detailed picture of exactly who owned what and who lived where 180 years ago.

The map has been purchased from the North Yorkshire County Records Office in Northallerton, where the original is held.

It shows and numbers every property in the

village; the schedule — laboriously copied by history group member Linda Sherwood (see *Archive 32*) — fills in all the details.

It is hoped to produce a publication combining all the information from the two, similar to the booklet *Jam Letch and Jingle Potts* produced from similar documents from Barningham.

Meanwhile, we can supply a digital copy of the map to any member interested in seeing it: contact the *Archive*.

## A1 finds on show at the Bowes

ARTEFACTS found during archaeological digs at the site of A1 motorway works are on display at the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle.

Sixty archaeologists have been working between Leeming Bar and Barton for the past three years, uncovering more than 200,000 prehistoric and Roman artefacts.

History group members saw examples when dig members gave a talk in Barningham Village Hall in March (see *Archive 51*). The exhibition runs till March 5.

## Bev Peach

WE'RE saddened to record the death on November 16th of history group member Beverley Peach, of the Hollies, Barningham.

Bev, 59, was a talented and much-loved member of the village who will be greatly missed by all who knew her. Our condolences go to Mike, Claire and family.

## Ron Catton

RON, who died on November 9th at the age of 93, was a former Barningham resident who maintained a keen interest in the history group. He, too, is sadly missed.

## History talks at the village hall

THE latest series of Winter's Tales talks being held at Barningham village hall include two which may prove of particular interest to history group members.

Gordon Henderson will be the speaker on Wednesday January 18th, talking about the Roman fort at Binchester, and on Wednesday March 15th Jen Deadman returns to look at more of our local farm buildings.

The talks start at 7.30pm. Admission is £5 advance, £6 on the door.

## mother's memories

Whitley Bay. My mother was just nine years old. In order to help look after the six children, their spinster aunt, Margaret Jane McArthur (1882-1955?) travelled from Newcastle — she was their mother's younger sister. After the year of mourning was over, my grandfather felt it was the 'right-thing-to-do' and married her, causing the children's aunt to now become their stepmother.

On the quiet the children called their stepmother 'The Black Crow' because she was thin and wore a lot of black. It could not have been easy for her to suddenly have six children to look after. My mother remembered that she had a good voice and loved to sing — mainly religious songs, presumably Presbyterian hymns — whilst she sat in the rocking chair, knitting and singing away. Once a week she would make bread, quite a mammoth task for such a large family. When the bread had all been eaten before the next batch was made, they bought it from the baker's boy who came around selling from baskets strapped to a donkey.

Fruit was very scarce in those days and as a special treat an orange was cut up into six pieces and each child was given a piece. There was much 'weighing up' of each other's piece to make sure none were bigger. My mother remembered a boy in the street having a nice red apple, which he took great pride in polishing on his trouser leg for effect in front of everyone until it was really shiny. The other children watched in silence as the apple was eaten with relish and then one boy

said, "Can I have your core?" The reply was "There'll ain't be no core" and with that he continued eating every bit of the apple core too.

In 1918 the school leaving age was raised from ten to 14. As my mother and her siblings were now outgrowing the village school it meant they would have to travel to Richmond or further for their education. So my grandfather decided to take the family back to Newcastle and with heavy hearts they left Barningham and made their way by horse and cart to Barnard Castle, from where they caught the train to Newcastle.

Being their first train journey it caused much excitement and my mother said that as they sped through the countryside they recited Robert Louis Stevenson's poem *From a Railway Carriage* — "Faster than fairies, faster than witches. bridges and houses, hedges and ditches..."

After their freedom and peaceful life on the Yorkshire moors and the little village school it took a bit of getting used to living in big, industrial Newcastle and attending a formal school. Instead of the coal fires and oil lamps in Barningham, they now had gas for heating, cooking and lighting.

Some of the names my mother remembered whilst living at Barningham were Mary Hutchinson, Ralph Leggett, Walter Brass, Eva (Mary) Brass, Ralph Lowes, Willie Coates and the farmer Mr Bainbridge. Dr Welchman of Barnard Castle was the family doctor and the Nicholson family were joiners and undertakers.

## The case of the missing machinegun

HISTORY group members John Hay and Marian Lewis are trying to find out what happened to a vicar's machinegun.

Their quest began when Marian spotted an article in the *Teesdale Mercury* of October 15th 1919 which said that the gun, a German weapon captured during WW1, had been presented by Startforth Council to the Rev Arthur Close, vicar of Hutton Magna, as a memento of the village's sacrifices during the war.

"Stangely the gun has disappeared, and there are no records that exist mentioning its fate," says John. "The archivists at Durham are trying to check if anyone knows what happened to it.

"My guess is that the Home Guard appropriated it in WW2, but there are no records to that effect."

Anybody any suggestions?

## Join us at our New Year Social

THE history group holds its traditional New Year Social on Sunday January 8th, and all members are invited to come along.

The venue is the Milbank Arms, Barningham, and kick-off is at 12.30pm. There will be various refreshments available, and it's a good opportunity to meet other members (especially if you can't get to the evening meetings) and maybe hand over your 2017 subs!

We look forward to seeing you.

## Unearthing long-hidden family secrets

OVER the years the *Archive* has mentioned the Leggett families on several occasions.

There were two of them in Barningham at the end of the 19th century. One was headed by Joseph Leggett, butler at the hall for the best part of three decades; the other was the family of George Daniel Leggett, a Hartlepool fishmonger who moved to the village in the 1890s and ran the Black Bull pub (now Elim Cottage) for several years.

It seems a coincidence that there should be two un-related Leggett families here at the same time, but nobody has yet discovered anything to link them.

Martin Watson of Teddington, south London, is descended from the second of the Leggett families, and contacted us recently to ask if we knew anything about them. We sent him details and asked for more about his family ties with Barningham. Here's part of his reply:

WHEN my 'grandmother', Kate (nee Loughborough), died I became fascinated by the middle name (Sedcole) of her late husband James Watson, due to its obscurity and mentioned their names on my website.

I was contacted by an Australian called Carol, who told me that they were her great-grandparents as well. Together we discovered the lady I had always thought of as my grandmother Kate (my dad's mother) was actually his grandmother, and that one of Kate's daughters, who even my dad thought was his sister May, was actually his mother.

Dad's father was one Thomas William Leggett (TWL), a son of Barningham's George



*The Black Bull, pictured shortly before closure in 1916*

## letters & emails

Daniel. Furthermore I just recently discovered that another ancestor was a wife-beating drunkard who died drunk in police custody, and many other black sheep in the family.

In conjunction with my new cousin Carol (we have become really good friends, and email almost daily!) I discovered that my late grandmother's grandmother Isabella Frazer married the wife-beater, while her sister Maria married a James Sedcole, son of John Willie Sedcole, a ship's master. So that explained why my ancestor James Watson had the middle name Sedcole. Carol's parents emigrated to Australia in the early 1960s.

James and Kate brought up my father, in Hartlepool, keeping it all a secret, in the late 1920s-1940s. May died in 1973, probably thinking she was taking the secret to the grave.

I lost contact with all my family in 1982, but recently got back in touch with one of my sisters. I was wondering if and how to tell her about all this, but she brought it up, by telling me there was a mistake on my

website, which showed Kate as my grandmother. It seems that my dad, after retiring, applied for a ten-year passport in 1983, at the age of 57, and discovered that his birth name wasn't Watson, but Leggett. May and Mr Leggett had briefly married in the late 1920s, before abandoning my dad to Kate and James.

May subsequently had two more children by two more boyfriends in the next ten years, both of which she abandoned outside the family. One of these was the mother of my cousin Carol.

Recently this all happened again, when I was contacted by the grandson of Thomas William Leggett, who found my website, telling me that he was also doing similar research, and that his own father is still alive. We have been sharing information, and I came across Barningham. TWL's mother seemed to use her maiden name Adamson, also Thompson, the name of a man aged 71 who she married at 29 (she gave birth soon after, to a son, Henry Thompson, Jr), and also Leggett.

She seems to have had five children with George Daniel Leggett, but the birth certificate for the last, TWL, shows her name as Thompson, and



the father as George Thompson. We are still working on that one. Oddly, one of the children had her birth registered in the 1890s by the very same James Sedcole whose name had fascinated me for nearly 50 years.

I don't know why George Daniel Leggett, formerly a Hartlepool fishmonger, tried to run a pub in your village, but if he had possible relatives there...?

MARTIN WATSON  
Teddington, South London  
martin@martinwatson.co.uk

● *We've put Martin in touch with Jean Ashley and Eleanor Smith, two Archive correspondents who are also related to his Leggett family. See Archives 37, 38 and 42, among others.*

## I delivered to Hutton garage

FURTHER to the article in Archive 53 by Marion about Bob Jackson: In the early 1940s I worked for Percy Hunter (grocers) of Barney and one of the country journeys was via Whorlton, Hutton, Newsham, Barningham and various farms in-between (including Mainsgill).

We delivered to the garage for Bob, and one day I had to cycle to Hutton to deliver him a quantity of cigarettes.

My father-in-law was Stanley Croft, a butcher to Tom Longstaff who also delivered there, and he bought a lady's cycle from Bob for my late wife who would then have been about 12. The blacksmith's shop was working at that time.

BERT TRAVIS,  
Northallerton

## letters & emails



## Looking for the Bowmans

I WAS entertained one recent evening in Neil's pub, having spent the previous day looking round Barningham churchyard.

I would be very interested in buying some of your publications.

MADDIE HANDLEY

Dover

● *We managed to get in touch with Maddie before she left the area. She was here researching her family history, which includes Bowmans, Bowrons, Nicholsons and (in her words) "many others of fine Northern descent". Among them was Francis Bowman of Brignall, whose photo appears above.*

*We spent a couple of hours with Maddie poring over her family tree and digging through our records to fill in gaps, and she took £140-worth of history group books and Archives back home.*

*Thanks, Maddie!*

## Waistells were gamekeepers in the dale

I HAVE been given some further details on Hanby Waistell (see my letter in Archive 50) which were in a newspaper and a will.

At one time he was the gamekeeper for Hope and New Forest for the Lords of Arkengarthdale. His brother Jeffrey was gamekeeper for Scargill, Wycliffe, Hutton Long (now Hutton Magna) and Ovington.

Hanby was stated to be of Arkengarthdale but at the time of his death in 1834 Hope was part of Arkengarthdale so it is possible Hanby and his wife Jane (nee Wilkinson) were living there.

I know that Hanby was buried at Bowes but I still do not know where or when Jane was born or buried. Neither do I know when or where her father William was born, married or buried but he was a farmer at Brignall in 1822. It is possible that William was born at Elland near Halifax and Jane born at Barnoldswick.

Are your members interested in my recent ancestors from Banks farm and Holgate etc? My grandfather worked at the copper mine at Melsonby. I have photos.

Also does anyone know where 'No Mans Land' was exactly? I know it was on Feldon at the entrance from the main Richmond to Marske road but I cannot find it on a map or how big it was. The army have no record.

KEN LONGSTAFF

Alcester, Warwickshire  
longstk1@yahoo.co.uk

cooked in a little water, and then taken off the bone and returned to the stock, to be cooked with cubed potatoes and onions, seasoned with salt and white pepper and finally thickened with gravy.

Bubble and Squeak was leftover potatoes and cabbage when fried up with white pepper and salt. Nicest of all was just leftover potatoes fried in butter with a good sprinkling of white pepper and salt.

Good broth/vegetable soup on its own was a health-giving meal. Made with the scrag-end of lamb or mutton cooked first until soft enough to be removed from the bones, cut up and put back into the pot with sliced, diced or grated vegetables – carrots, parsnips, turnips, celery, peas, leeks, parsley and a cup of barley and cooked until done.

Beef suet was used to make the dough for a steak and kidney pudding or pot pie. The basin was lined with the dough and the uncooked meat was tossed in flour and added with a little stock and seasoning and then a lid of dough was placed on top and boiled and steamed for three hours. After a lot of physical work in bitterly cold weather, the men expected to come home to a good wholesome meal – "summat that'll stick to yer ribs".

There was always a pudding to finish off the meal and suet puddings were great favourites. Made in a basin or pudding clout (cloth) and boiled or steamed. Spotted Dick with currants was said to be a 'man's pudding' – a real pudding, usually eaten with loads of custard, although some preferred it with butter and sugar!



Catherine, John and twins Angus and Daisy, c 1914

## mother's memories

Bread and butter pudding was another favourite and it was a good way to use up a couple of slices of old bread: cut off the crusts, butter the bread well, place in a buttered ovenproof dish with a handful of candied lemon peel, sultanas or raisins on top; beat two eggs and mix in two cups of heated milk and pour over the bread; sprinkle a little ground nutmeg on top and cook in a moderate oven for 30 minutes; serve with milk.

I was told that Barningham village shop was a small low-ceilinged structure crammed with everything from pans to food, hairnets to sewing materials, and when one opened the door there was a nice mixture of aromas. Most foods like flour and sugar were weighed out into brown paper packets. Cheese, butter, and bacon were sliced as required. Biscuits were sold loose from big square tins – broken ones were cheaper at 4d lb. Not having refrigerators meant people did their

shopping daily, and enjoyed a friendly chat. Most had lived in the same area for generations, so were usually related to each other somewhere along the line.

Post was delivered to Barningham by pony from Darlington at 11am and despatched at 2pm – a trip of over 22 miles.

After the Armistice was signed Barningham church bells rang once again, telling everyone the war was over. There was much rejoicing and a community party called a Victory Tea was held, everyone bringing something to eat or drink from their meagre rations.

Many men, having survived the carnage of the trenches, returned home to hear that their wives and sweethearts had died in the horrific Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918. My grandmother was one of those for whom the flu took its toll. She died when the pandemic was nearly finished, on 27th February 1919. Her body was taken to Newcastle and interred in the family graveyard at St Paul's Church,

Rithmetic — as well as so many other little things — passages from the Bible, hymns and the Lord's Prayer. My mother could recite the full six-verse poem *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.

They learnt about the Northern counties of England and the rudiments of English history, colouring in maps of the world with countries belonging to the British Empire coloured in red.

Nature walks on the heather — clad moors above the village were happy times. Notes were taken of all they saw and wild flowers were picked to be taken back to the classroom for nature study and drawing. Whilst the boys were taught carpentry the girls learnt to knit, crochet and sew.

Mother told me how she read *Little Women* and *Anne of Green Gables*, but her favourite was *Seven Little Australians* written by Ethel Turner in Sydney in 1894. When I first came to Australia I just had to read it and enjoyed it very much.

Let's get back to Barningham. At that time the girls wore black stockings and buttoned boots, starched white pinafores (pinnies), usually with frills around the neck and armholes over their dresses, to protect them.

The children played outdoors a lot, mostly on the green or down by the stream, plodding barefoot in shallow water. In winter they were bundled into their coats, hats and button boots and off they would go. One never had to look far for a playmate with all those large families; there was always someone in the street waiting for a game.

My mother remembered a game called 'Wall Flowers' that they would play — the

## mother's memories

children stood facing the wall and sing. As each one's name was called that one turned round until all the girls had their backs to the wall. The song went:

*Wallflowers, wallflowers — growing up so high*

*All pretty maidens, they've all got to die*

*Except (name) — she's the only one,*

*Oh, for shame — oh, for shame*

*Turn your back to the wall again.*

While the children had a few books, there weren't many toys. My mother had one much-cherished doll called Little Red Riding Hood because of its red cape. Her brother John had been given a special present of a Noah's Ark set made of wood, complete with animals in pairs. The animals were finished off with pieces of leather or fur.

Toys were mainly from nature — stones, pieces of wood, conkers. They also put large buttons or discs on a piece of string that became whizzers, hummers and whirligigs. Girls would play finger games — Baby's Cradles etc — from pieces of string. Hopscotch scratched out on the ground with stones; long-rope skipping with accompanying rhymes, Oranges and Lemons, the Bells of St Clemens... there was always something to do.

'Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise' was what their parents told them and they had no trouble with my mother — she loved going to bed early, and also getting up early. At Barningham she would get up early and sit in

the kitchen next to the oil lamp on the table and watch her father prepare the fire in the big iron stove, so that it would be ready by the time the maid arrived, for she did not live-in.

My mother said he was a good father, always there for the children. He liked giving them little treats — particularly delicate little condensed milk sandwiches, made with thinly-sliced bread and crusts cut off.

Something, which the children liked was Milk Sop, made of white bread cut into small squares with warm milk and sugar. For breakfast there was oats porridge, no cereals like we have today. The children would go and buy milk from the farm down the road and on the way back they would have a game of swinging the pail up and down and then do a complete turn and (hopefully) not a drop would fall out. Young John had his own vegetable patch and took great delight in producing a few fresh vegetables and salads for the kitchen.

My mother said that the food of her youth was good and wholesome and on Sunday there was always a roast.

Monday was usually the left-over roast meat minced up in the big iron mincing machine, finished off with an onion and a piece of bread and then heated up carefully with left-over gravy. Eaten with mashed potatoes and peas, it was something they all enjoyed. It could also be turned into shepherd's pie (lamb) or cottage pie (beef). Stew was also a good tummy filler — made only with meat, potatoes, onions and gravy, no other vegetables. The lamb or mutton was cut up,

## Magical mum's memories of a century ago

JEAN BINGLE emailed us from Sydney, Australia, asking if Neil Turner was still running the Milbank Arms.

Jean's mother Catherine lived at South View (now Gillbeck House) in Barningham when a young girl during World War 1, and corresponded with Neil for many years until her death. Jean continued the correspondence and met Neil when she and her husband Paul visited the village in the 1990s.

We replied, assuring her that Neil was still very much with us and asking for more details, and she sent us a long and fascinating

story of her family history and her mother's recollections of life here a hundred years ago. Excerpts appear below.

Catherine, born in 1909, was the second of six children of John and Mary Macfadyen, who moved to Teesdale from Tyneside just before the outbreak of war in 1914 and remained here until the mid-1920s.

Catherine (a magician — see below) and her husband emigrated to South Africa in 1947, five years after the birth of Jean, who she lived there for 55 years before retiring with her husband to Australia in 2002.

## Mother crossed the road so she didn't have to curtsy

MY grandparents moved to Teesdale in 1911, living first in Lartington and then, from 1913, in Barningham (*writes Jean*).

Whether the move was to get away from the army camps at Barnard Castle or because it was now time for the children to go to school, I don't know. Anyway, Barningham village school was right across the road from their new house South View.

Sir Frederick Milbank was the Lord of the Manor. The Milbanks were obviously highly respected in the area and for those who met them in the village the men would doff their hats, whilst the women would give a little bob with the right degree of deference. The young boys would stop and bow their heads and the girls would curtsy.

Girls were taught to curtsy at school and my mother said she suffered such agonies of self-consciousness when she saw Lady Milbank in the village that she would cross the road so that she would not have to curtsy.

When my mother told me this little story I was so taken with it — it made me realise just how much we have

## mother's memories

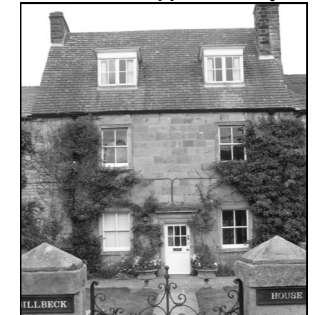
changed over the years. I vowed to write it down for my children and grandchildren — and that was the beginning of writing the family story many years ago.

In the autumn the Milbanks would hold a Shooting Party, with surplus guests accommodated at The Milbank Arms. After the shoot the birds were hung in the woods of the estate until they were properly matured and 'ripe' for cooking. My mother said that no one would ever dream of stealing one.

At Christmas time Lady Milbank gave a party for all the village children, an event



South View — now called Gillbeck House — in the 1920s and, below, as it appears today



that was the highlight of the year. Each child was given a small present. Being wartime they were given useful presents and one Christmas my mother received a piece of brown serge material, for making into a pinafore dress.

My grandfather preferred



to be at home with his family living a quiet, peaceful life, rather than the fancier lifestyle his four brothers kept in Newcastle and London.

As a director of the family business he received a private income, which seemed to be sufficient for his needs. Every now and again he would go to Newcastle for a board meeting looking very smart wearing a three-piece suit and white spats to protect his shoes and stockings from mud splashes.

He enjoyed eating high game (high meaning slightly tainted) as was vogue at that time, and considered a delicacy by the epicurean. My mother remembered the big Stilton cheese, with the top sliced off and used as a lid, standing on the sideboard under a glass dome. Slices were taken off and cut up when needed, and when it had been around a bit and 'ready to walk off the table' liquor was added to help preserve it. One time pure

### mother's memories

white maggots were seen crawling under the lid and my astonished mother watched her father scoop them up and swallow them with a glass of port!

My mother told me that there was much excitement for all upon seeing the first car travelling through the village and also an aeroplane flying over Barningham.

Unless they hired a horse and cart, they had to walk everywhere and my mother remembered her very young brother Neil complaining bitterly that his foot was sore on one long walk, but no one took any notice until they got home and took off his boot and found the body of a baby mouse in his shoe. Presumably it had been born there. Living near the moors meant that field mice were often around the house looking for food and even having their young in a cosy boot in the house. Another brother, An-

gus, was the wild, happy one of the family — he had a daredevil attitude towards life. His favourite pastime was going to watch animals being slaughtered at the back of the butcher's shop. He would dress himself in his oldest clothes and anything else he could find like pieces of leather or brown paper which he would tie to his legs with string, calling them his 'gaiters'. His parents did not seem to worry about him watching something so gruesome, just accepting it as a normal everyday happening.

Another time Angus managed to get a wild horse that normally roamed the moors into the schoolyard, causing all the children to flee in fright. He was only about eight at the time, and how he got the short length of rope around the horse's neck no one knew. Of course he was holding the other end of the rope for all he was worth and every time the frightened horse reared up Angus went

up too. My mother recalled that one day when she was ill in bed the children decided to make a special treat for her and tried to pluck a chicken found hanging in the scullery. They weren't very successful, so they just stuck it in the oven and when it looked cooked they took it upstairs on a platter with a few feathers still sticking out. They were so happy with themselves, until they saw their mother's face...

Today we are so used to buying chickens that have been plucked, trimmed, cleaned and trussed, but in those days in the country it all had to be done by the cook or housewife. My mother told me about one newly-married girl who was given a rabbit to cook but did not know how to skin it, and started by plucking out each hair.

Before public sewage systems, all toilets were outside. The horse-powered 'sewerage cart' would come around once a week at night to remove the night-soil. In the bedrooms there were commode cupboards holding chamber pots for night use.

The four eldest children — John, 7, my mother, 6, and 5-year-old twins Angus and Daisy — went to school in Barningham and they were straight away put into different classes, though they shared the main hall, each having its own corner.

One little girl in my mother's class was Martha Usher (always known as Matty) who lived on a farm way out on the moors and came to school on a pony, except when it snowed, when she could not come at all. My mother was to meet

**John Macfadyen and family: Neil, Daisy, Hector, John junior and Angus.**



### mother's memories



**Catherine's schoolmate Matty Usher, pictured some 20 years ago. She died in 1999, aged 88.**

Matty again in 1992 when she re-visited Barningham. Neil Turner introduced them and to my mother's astonishment Matty remembered her,

calling her by her maiden name, which was quite amazing for the family had only lived in Barningham about eight years.

The school day started with the hymn *New Every Morning is Thy Love* and ended with *The day thou gavest Lord is ended*. The young ones started with slates and chalk, and only got books once they could write well. Upon being suitably proficient in writing with a pencil, they advanced to a nib pen with the ink in an ink-well. They were taught the finer points of holding the pen correctly in order to do 'a thin upward stroke and thick downward stroke' in true copperplate style. Mom said her teacher, Miss Alderson, would rap their fingers with a ruler if they did not hold the pen properly.

Children were taught the good old-fashioned 'Three Rs' — Reading, Riting and

## It's magic — how Catherine's dream came true

As a child in Barningham my mother believed that there were 'fairies at the bottom of the garden', and remembered praying for a magic wand so she would 'be able to do anything'. She also had an ambition to fly on a witch's broomstick.

Her wishes would come true many years later in South Africa when she became a member of the Transvaal Magic Circle and later President of the South African branch of the International Brotherhood of Magicians. She loved children and was Johannesburg's best-known birthday party entertainer, performing her magic show to thousands and particularly known for the animals and birds that she used in her act: rabbits, curly guinea-pigs, doves and a fantail pigeon.

She appeared on early South African television and told the producer how she'd longed to fly on a broomstick. The cameramen were brought in and between them managed to delight my mother and arrange the effect of her and her assistant, granddaughter Jonnette, flying in on a broomstick to do the show.



**Magician Catherine with rabbit and top hat in South Africa**

















