



Shincliffe Local History Society

July 2025

Newsletter

Number 15

Next Meetings

**Monday 15th September at 7:30
p.m.**

We welcome:

Amanda Stobbs

My family beyond Shincliffe

Members will be familiar with Amanda's publication of her grandfather's memories of Durham and Shincliffe, *Durham Memories by J Landt Mawson*, in 2013. Her talk this month will centre on her family beyond Shincliffe which will take in Germany and other connections to the continent.

Monday 20th October at 7:30 p.m.

We welcome:

Margaret Ray

Thomas Croudace (1838-1906)

'Downunder': from Shincliffe Grange to New South Wales

Thomas Croudace lived in Shincliffe Grange and his family had links with John George Lambton, the Earl of Durham. He went to Australia as a mine manager at the age of just twenty-three. He became a hugely influential figure in New South Wales where his legacy lives on.

Reflections from the Committee

Welcome to the last edition of the Newsletter for the academic year 2024/5. Thank you for your invaluable support. At the time of writing, we stand at seventy-one members. Once again, it has been an interesting and lively year, full of unexpected surprises and turns which have brought us into contact with people from around the globe and unearthed stories that have provided unique insights into the lives (and loves) of former residents of Shincliffe. Some of those stories are featured in the following pages and we hope you gain as much pleasure from them as we did researching them. Some of these characters will also be featured on our website in due course.

We are always keen to add to the knowledge and information of residents and, to this end, we have mounted a series of Shincliffe maps in the Church Hall which have been supplemented by an information board. This board seeks to provide some context for the maps, particularly the development of the Ordnance Survey which began in response to the insurrection led by Bonnie Prince Charlie. We all take the maps for granted these days and, indeed, they can be accessed via the OS Maps app, but the journey was a complicated and difficult one with Durham and Northumberland (there's a surprise) amongst the last counties to be surveyed. Those seeking to extend their knowledge of the local area can investigate further via the [National Library of Scotland](https://www.nls.uk).

We have also been in contact with Durham University regarding the erection of an information board about the spigot mortar which was mounted on the north side of the river. To locate it, cross Shincliffe Bridge and turn right towards Durham and it is immediately on the left. By the time you read this, the board may well be in position.

We look forward to seeing you in September. We have another exciting programme for you and we hope that there is enough stimulus and variety to keep you coming back.

Past speakers

15th April 2025

Kev Byrne – The Victoria Tunnel, Newcastle

Such is the appeal of the Victoria Tunnel that our speaker, Kev Byrne, has even made a presentation about it to the good people of Lutterworth in Leicestershire.

The need to build the tunnel was conceived by the mine owners of Spittal Tongues colliery, Porter and Latimer. For reference, the mine was situated near to the current BBC studios in Barrack Road, Newcastle. They hired an engineer by the name of William Gillespie who appears to have disappeared from public view after the completion of the tunnel in 1842. A raucous party in the Bigg Market marked the celebrations of its opening. Some things never change. There was even an after-party held in the Assembly Rooms opposite Newcastle Station. The good times for the mine and the tunnel were not to last as it closed in 1860.

It was reopened in 1939 as a base for people to use during air raids in WW2. 9,000 people could fit into it at one point. If you wish to find out more about its origins and its modern incarnation as a tourist attraction, please go to the [website](#) to book your place.

It is a testament to the work of The Ouseburn Trust that the tunnel now features in TripAdvisor's top ten attractions in the world. The Ouseburn area itself is well worth a tour.

Jack Turton

19th May 2025

Winterton Hospital – Part 2

Jack returned to give us another perspective on Winterton Hospital, in Sedgefield, following his initial appearance back in October 2023. His insights were particularly welcome as Jack was, for many years, employed at Winterton and clearly cares passionately for the patients and ethos of that establishment which ceased to exist in the mid-1990s. It is now a mixture of a technology park as well as housing.

The focus of Jack's speech was the Newsletters that were produced from the 1960s onwards for the benefit of the patients and staff. Much like our own SLHS Newsletter as well as the SCAN, they were designed to inform and entertain the audience with articles, letters and observations. The Shincliffe parish magazines from the earlier part of the twentieth century performed a similar function and can also be accessed through our website.

There was an editorial board and the magazine reflected the life of what was clearly a lively community with a sense of humour. We learned that Winterton was highly flammable as the floorboards had been waxed so many times over the years that they were considered a fire hazard. To this end, the hospital had its own fire brigade.

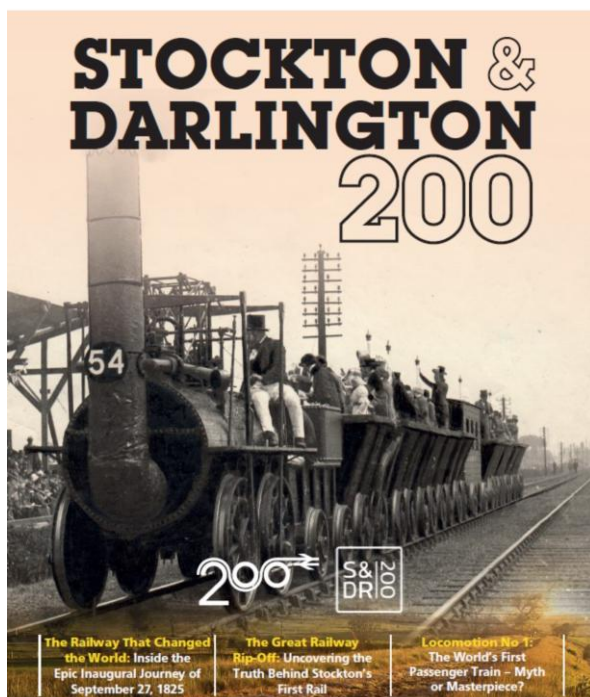
Shildon and Hopetown Museums

It is with great excitement that we look forward to celebrating the 200th anniversary of the inauguration of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. It is no exaggeration to say that this event transformed the world and made possible some huge social and economic changes from that point. The fact that these changes were initiated in the north-east of England should be a source of huge pride for us all.

We are lucky enough to have not one but two museums in the region that will help us to see for ourselves the impact that railways had on our own part of the world but also the rest of it. Shildon can rightly claim to be the first “railway town” and the [Locomotion Museum](#) goes some way to explain the town’s role in developing engines and rolling stock.

There are also a number of events planned at the [Hopetown Museum](#) to highlight the importance of Darlington’s role in the growth of the railway system.

Finally, Chris Lloyd, Editor of The Northern Echo’s Memories section, has produced a commemorative booklet and it can be ordered [here](#) for £9.95. Chris will be visiting us in April 2026 to give us a talk about spas in and around Croft.



7 Wood View

Members will recall that we gave a talk about the some of the former residents of Wood View from its building in 1895 to its full completion to the current seven houses in about 1897.

The first to be built by Charlton Robson was his own house, the current Number 7, although it was No. 1 until a change occurred in the 1930s. Why this should have been the case we have not been able to ascertain. After being in the same family for over one hundred years, the house is up for sale at the time of writing. Before its sale, we were allowed to photograph some of the original features which, we hope, will be retained by the new occupants.



It is easy to imagine a successful businessman, as Charlton Robson was, sitting back in his comfortable chair, reflecting on another hard day’s work and deals in front of a roaring coal fire.



Another feature is this beautiful window which was part of the “ladies’ boudoir” when the house was first built. We are still seeking a photograph of Charlton Robson himself.

Victorian and Edwardian Society comes to Shincliffe

A chance meeting at a presentation on Wood View in the village has led us to another figure who lived in the terrace for about five years from 1915-1920. At the end of the talk, given to our friends from Ferryhill Station LHS, we were approached by Pat Atkinson who informed us that her ancestor, Sylvia Kingsley Hunt, had lived in what is now Number 2 during this period. She let us know that she had shared some details of Sylvia on Ancestry.com and that an exploration of her life and times would add to our store of knowledge of someone who moved in artistic circles and had connections to Lord Barnard at Raby Castle.

Sylvia Kingsley Hunt was the daughter of Alfred and Margaret Hunt and she was born in Durham in 1865. Her father was a renowned artist as well as the author of the poem, *Nineveh*. He first came to prominence in 1847 when his illustrations of the Dee Bridge disaster, near Chester, (he was in the following train) were picked up and published by the Illustrated London News. Her mother, Margaret (nee Raine), born in Durham, was the daughter of James Raine, an antiquarian and topographer. He served as a librarian to the Dean and Chapter at Durham and was a serving clergyman at Meldon in Northumberland. The Raines lived in Crook Hall in Durham which now belongs to the National Trust. Margaret went on to be an author and translated the definitive version of Grimm's Fairy Tales. This artistic, intellectual, and independent streak transferred itself to her daughters, Sylvia, Violet, and Venetia.

Sylvia married a Durham man, John Walton Fogg Elliott, who became a land agent and who lived in Bedburn Hall in County Durham. He is pictured below with his wife, Sylvia, sister-in-law, Venetia, and sister, Alice.



Sylvia and John Walton Fogg-Elliott, Venetia Hunt & Alice Fogg-Elliott

The marriage, however, was to end in an acrimonious divorce following Mr Fogg Elliott's affair. After the divorce, Sylvia moved into Wood View.

Her sisters, Violet especially, were just as well-connected, if not more so. Violet was a published author and founder of the Women's Writers' Suffrage League. She had affairs with HG Wells, Somerset Maugham and Ford Madox Ford. Venetia Hunt married William Arthur Smith Benson, a British designer active in the Arts and Crafts movement and whose main exponent was William Morris.

Sylvia must have remained on good terms with her brother-in-law, Charles Thurston Fogg Elliott. He was a renowned rower and Cambridge Blue, his caricature appearing in *Vanity Fair* in 1894. He served Lords Barnard and Curzon (the latter a Viceroy of India) as well as being a Captain in the Durham Light Infantry in WW1. Sylvia left her will to Charles and she is buried in St. Mary's graveyard having died in 1920.

The Halls of Manor House

Earlier this year we received an email from Jon Wyand who was making an enquiry about his grandmother, Gertrude Elizabeth Wyand (nee Leinster) who was born in 1881 and died in 1947.

The copies of the correspondence that Jon has shared with us indicate that Gertrude was very friendly with Marian Hall, daughter of James Hall. It appears that the two enjoyed a game of tennis or two during her visits to Shincliffe and she was also friendly with Marian's brother, John Gibson Hall, who would go on to carve out a career for himself in South Africa and what was then Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe.

Mr Hall (born in 1836) was the successful Headmaster and proprietor of Old Elvet School before moving out to Shincliffe and Manor Hall following his retirement in 1905. He still maintained a vigorous involvement in various affairs in Durham and it was this that probably led to his sudden demise, in June 1907, at the age of 70. The Durham County Advertiser of 5/7/1907 informs us that he began his working life as a railway clerk in Darlington, but his attention soon turned to education and the establishment of his own school. We believe the picture below shows the building, next to The Royal County Hotel in Old Elvet, but further clarification is needed.



Mr Hall was a firmly established member of Durham Liberal Club. His daughter, Marian (born in 1861) participated in The Primrose League, an organisation devoted to the dissemination of Conservative principles and values. It had been set up in 1883 in honour of Benjamin Disraeli whose favourite flower was the primrose. It was only finally disbanded in 2004. Marian was also heavily involved in church activities in the village. Her death due to pneumonia and pleurisy on 25/1/1914 must have been a tremendous shock to her family and friends.

Noel Bramwell Hall (born in 1891) was James' grandson and nephew of Marian. Following attendance at his grandfather's school as well as Scorton Grammar School near Richmond, North Yorkshire, Noel emigrated to Canada. He was with the Canadian Forces on the Western Front in 1916 when he was accidentally killed by an exploding shell. More can be read about [Noel Hall](#) on our website.

We are grateful to Jon for helping us to delve deeply into such an interesting family. His own family and their links to the Halls are extraordinary and we will be able to explore these in more detail via our website. As always, if you have any information about your family connections to Shincliffe, please let us know and we will endeavour to feature them on these pages or our website.

Please, sir, may I have some more?

Our last Newsletter (No 14, April 2025) highlighted the fact that a new house is being built on the playground of the Old School in High Shincliffe. St. Mary's Church was looking for a new teacher for its school in 1859. Whether or not Thomas Fielding Hoyle (1831-1903) was the man eventually appointed we cannot be certain. However, he was certainly undertaking his duties as a schoolmaster in the 1861 census. He was originally from Ripponden, near Halifax, and he lived in School House with his wife, Mary (26), nee Bottomley, from Watton in Glocs., and his mother, Agnes (55). They had married in St. Mary's on 27/12/1860. The Hoyles' first child, Frances Mary, had died aged just eleven months on 29/10/1862. His first son, Thomas, was born in 1864 and Mr Hoyle was still in the village in 1868 when he featured as a registered voter.

He returned to Yorkshire (Marston, near Wetherby) for the 1871 census but was back in Durham to undertake duties as a schoolmaster in Oakenshaw, near Willington, in 1881. He was still working in that position in 1894 according to the Durham County Directory.

Thomas Jr. tried his hand at teaching for a while, even ending up in Chipping Sodbury, but he must have realised that the profession was not for him, and he became a railway audit clerk in Bradford. He had three other brothers, none of whom became a teacher. The Hoyles' only surviving girl, Agnes Mary Hoyle, never married. She worked for John Foster and Son in the Black Dyke Mill in Queensferry, near Bradford, in the 1920s. Its brass band, formed in 1855, continues to be famous to this day and provides musical entertainment across the country.

Shincliffe Maps

We are always proud to add to the public realm in the village and our latest addition will, we hope, attract the interest of young and old alike in Shincliffe's Church Hall.

Our very own Steve Bryan was responsible for a highly entertaining talk in March 2025 about the development of the Ordnance Survey maps and their relevance to Shincliffe. It attracted a large audience.



The maps had been gathering dust in a cupboard in the Church Hall. Already laminated, they provided the perfect opportunity for us to brush them down and have them framed by our friends at the St. Margaret's Centre in Durham. Following a quick call to a local handyman, they were erected, and the three maps show the progression of the village over a momentous period in its history during the nineteenth century. This saw the development of new housing e.g. Wood View, as well as the closure and opening of mineworks in the area.

The accompanying piece to the maps highlights the role of the Ordnance Survey and how mapping the country became such an important task in the face of both internal and external threats. As mentioned in our editorial, [The National Library of Scotland](#) is a useful source if you wish to conduct your own research.