



We were contacted by Amanda Stobbs who shared her views of the village, and particularly Wood View, a place she has known as a child and as an adult. Her grandfather, Joseph Landt Mawson, bought a house in the terrace in the 1920s.

I was chatting to a neighbour, and she remarked that I am, "the only person who calls it the 'Back Street'". That's because I've lived in both number seven and (when I was little) number one; my grandparents lived in number seven all their married life; and my great-grandmother lived at number six after her husband's death - and it's *always* been called the Back Street.

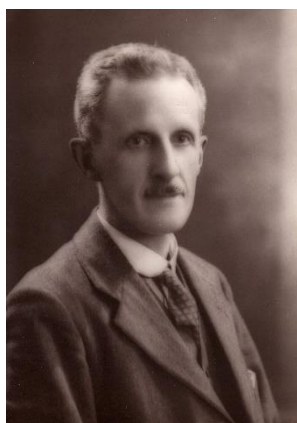


Fig 1 Joseph Landt Mawson in 1934

My grandfather bought number seven (which was then called number one¹) in March 1921 from Charlton Robson (the architect/builder of both Wood View and Robson Terrace), and *he* called it the Back Street. It is also marked as "Back Street" on his original plans after the demolition of Houghall Houses, four rows of fourteen terraced miners' cottages. Just imagine: fifty-six houses on the site of the fourteen houses of Wood View and Robson Terrace. The current North Garage (*in the garden of number seven at the time of writing - Ed*) is the last miner's cottage left, along with a fireplace in the garden wall between numbers seven and six.)



Fig 2: The remains of the miner's cottage fireplace in the gardens of 7 Wood View

Up 'til the end of the Second World War, the Back Street was used mainly by tradesmen, who called at the back door. Family, friends, and visitors got off the bus at the bus stop near Hall Lane corner and walked up the front path (which was then wider and better maintained), calling at the front door. (And never the twain shall meet, presumably!)

Before and during the war, my grandfather used to open his gardens regularly during the summer months, to raise money for good causes (often for things such as St Mary's Church Restoration Fund in peacetime, and - especially during the war years - the County Hospital). My mother and her elder sister used to sit at a little table in the front porch and sell tickets for 6d to arriving sightseers.

Electricity only reached Shincliffe a year or two before the war and the Blackout; so, for a very brief period, my grandfather had the garden floodlit for evening garden tours.

He was lucky that his garden was so big. He let out about eight areas as allotments; had fruit trees both in the orchard and scattered throughout the garden; grew all his own vegetables and other things in a large vegetable patch, plus a huge greenhouse and a small sheltered "bedding out" area; and kept hens. Despite all that, he still had a large enough area to make it worthwhile for people to come out from Durham and surrounding villages to see his "formal flower gardens" to raise money for the war effort; and he was able to supply flowers regularly to a couple of florists in town (it being difficult at that time for florists to source flowers, with so much land being given over to food production).



Fig 3 The extensive gardens of 7 Wood View

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1 The houses were renumbered sometime in the 1930s. We have not been able to ascertain why this was the case.