



Tyne & Wear Heritage Forum, engaging communities in the conservation of their local heritage

ANNUAL REPORT, April 2021- April 2022



Introduction:

The period has seen the ending of the very successful partnership with Northumberland Libraries. **'In My Footsteps'** gave us the chance to extend the concept of personal heritage trails working with Diane Wright, Senior Librarian and Kate Saint Claire Gibson, local studies director with very positive sessions in Ashington and Haltwhistle through funding from the 'Northumberland Caring Community Project'.

Libraries make a very positive contribution to history and heritage work and are often the place where information on the past heritage of a community can be found. It is hoped to be able to renew this collaboration in the future and hopefully, to extend this to work in North Tyneside where TWHF has had good contact with Wideopen Library, associated with the waggonways, a continuing engagement as detailed below.

A special thanks needs to be given to Denise Lovell who is retiring as trustee and has been a key member of the Tyne & Wear Heritage Forum over many years, a most efficient secretary and long-term trustee. Ged Parker also needs to be thanked for his contribution, a key and founder member of the trust, vice-chairman and more recently treasurer and trustee. We thank them for their commitment and enthusiasm.

TWHF; objectives and purpose: This is a useful time to consider the stated purpose of TWHF: *'engaging communities in the conservation of their local heritage'*. To drive around the North East today is to be aware of the large scale developments taking place with new housing estates being built throughout the region. Post pandemic, there is a new phase in these new builds with many rural villages being extended to include new housing, to answer an increased demand for country living. While there are many positives from this new housing in terms of more customers and clients for any commercial ventures - such as local shops and pubs and often increased number of children to attend local schools - something of the past history and culture of a community may disappear, drowned out by the scale of new developments.

In this rapidly changing world it becomes important to be able to identify and conserve those significant local heritage features which enhance a sense of place for a community and the work of TWHF has been associated with projects of this kind around the region. The *'HeritageACT! Guide, conserving local heritage features'* is designed to help communities identify and conserve key local heritage features which enhance a sense of place in this rapidly changing world.

The two current projects with which TWHF have begun involvement over this period are both concerned with putting back an element of the past history of communities, the Lowick Pilgrim Project in North Northumberland and the Tyne View, creating the final section of the North Tyneside waggonways working with NTRthe North Tyneside Regeneration Team.

Lowick Pilgrim Project

This is about extending and developing a welcoming church, linking the building to its important medieval past as one of four chapels of the monastery on Holy Island, where there was a hostel and guides for pilgrims before their final, dangerous causeway crossing. A TWHF project working with the Parochial Parish Council and Lowick Heritage Group.



There are two parts to this proposal: Developments taking place within the church, creating a heritage centre; providing information on the history of St John the Baptist Church and in particular the important narrative of its fascinating medieval past; placing existing historic artefacts in a prominent position on the back west wall of the church. A final element to make the church more welcoming, would be the replacement of the existing interior wooden door of the church with a glass entrance to the nave.



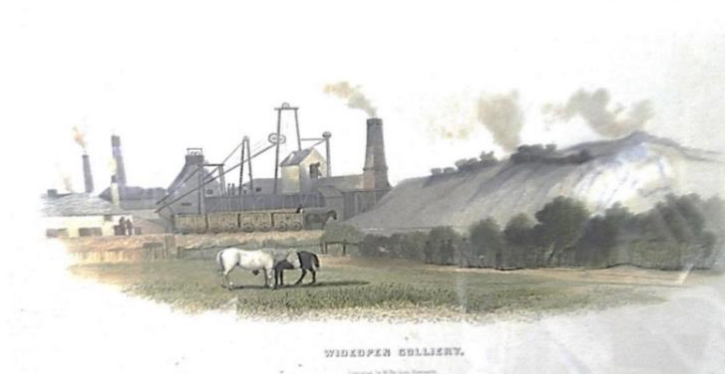
12th Century Grave cover one of the monuments to be place on the wall at the back of the church

Linking Lowick to the existing St Cuthbert's Way as an additional route to be taken by pilgrims following the historic path through the village to Holy Island.

Tyne View Project

TWHF has been working with Wideopen History group and North Tyneside Regeneration Team to put in place information boards on the history of the waggonway in this area over a number of years with the support of Wideopen Library where meetings have been held. The

work of NTTR in initially saving the waggonways in the past and now working on improving the stretch of waggonway from Wideopen to Camperdown has been essential for the survival of this internationally important industrial heritage site which includes Killingworth colliery where Robert Stephenson first developed the steam locomotive to transport coal and the North Tyneside Railway Museum with working locomotives. The sketch below from the 1840s shows how horses were originally pulling the coal wagons.



Thomas Hair's sketches (1840s) of Wideopen Colliery with horse drawn coal wagons

The Tyne & Wear Heritage Forum has been looking over this period at how the final section of the waggonways can be restored and given the prominence it deserves. This has considerable importance from the view it provides looking down from a height onto the Tyne where the coal was loaded through the use of special equipment onto the waiting colliers for transport to London. James Cook at one time skipper of a Whitby collier working out of the Tyne, later a navigator and explorer associated with the discovery of Australia is an important figure associated with this site.



and showing how the wagons delivered coal through special machinery to waiting colliers for transport to London..

Alan White, TWHF member and architectural designer has produced illustrations to suggest what a specially constructed view-point could look like and where it might be placed. This would provide the finale for a waggonway visit, a key site to demonstrate the importance of the industrial revolution and the contribution of Tyneside to this innovative time.

Conclusion: There has been change in the workings of TWHF since the pandemic. Our role seen more as a consultative body of experts available to help out on community heritage and history projects. There are unlikely to be the same regular meetings as before but zoom sessions when required, to discuss current and future business. However, as can be seen from the two major projects reported here the forum can act as a catalyst to bring to fruition heritage projects which sometimes take a good deal of time to implement.

We thank all our colleagues and supporters and look forward to continue working with you in the future.

Dr John Daniels

Chairman TWHF

Tyne wear Heritage Forum Accounts 21-22					
Date	In	Out	Description	Notes	Balance
					£1,292.57
21/07/2021		£15.00	Framed print	To Allan white	£1,277.57
07/02/2022		75	Membership BALH		£1,202.57
Financial yr	£0.00	£90.00			£1,202.57