



50TH ISSUE SUPPLEMENT

Longhoughton Heritage Group:

What we've gleaned from the church graveyard so far

Our group has been working together as long as the newsletter, so to mark the 50th newsletter we wanted to look at some of the favourite things we've found in that time. We initially researched lots of different aspects of the village's history, including the schools, the railway stations and the Jubilee and Coronation events. However when Churchwarden Andrew mentioned that family historians often didn't know where to look in St Peter and St Paul's churchyard, we decided to record the gravestones. This has led to us looking further into the history of its people, places and plans.

No plan of the oldest gravestones existed, so we recorded them from scratch, initially using a plane table, and later a baseline. This helped us create a map of where gravestones were, which we then linked to a recording of its text and condition. We were surprised recently to find a notebook on the gravestones from 1928 in the Northumberland Archives, which gave us more of the oldest inscriptions that have crumbled in the last century! We have just completed the last gravestones in the 1908 extension, and won't look at the modern section. Our current map and the file of records is kept in the church; our next plan is to make them into a bound reference book and display. Drop us an email at longhoughtonheritage@gmail.com. Here are some highlights from the stories we uncovered while researching the gravestones.

Longhoughton Village

Before the Burnside Inn (1985 to 2014), there were at least three pubs in the village. By the 1870s all had ceased to trade and the village remained "dry" for over a century. The location of the Blacksmith's Arms (publican Henry Bell) was in North End, on the corner of Eastfield. The Rock Hotel was marked on the Ordnance Survey map as a public house, at the top end of North End. A license was granted to Jane Forster to sell beer. In 1873 it was not renewed, according to the newspaper, for her trade "not being of the value required by law".

The Blue Bell Inn was likely the largest, with space to hire for functions and inquests, and for travelers to sleep. It was referred to as the "old" Blue Bell Inn long after the pub was turned into a private house. There are several instances in old newspapers of men in Longhoughton going up before the Petty Sessions in Alnwick for drunk and disorderly behaviour and fighting, often involving a drinking session at the Blue Bell.

Stormy Seas

Just imagine what it would have been like to be on the seas in a storm, with only sails to power you, no life jackets and no RNLI. It is a grisly fact that sailors were washed up onto local beaches, often unrecognisable due to the effects of being in the sea water for a time. The newspapers of the time were not squeamish in reporting the details.

The headstone has a relief carving of a draped female figure, anchor, ropes and shrouds above the motto "Anchoram Spei Quiesco" (I rest the Anchor of Hope)

The inscription reads: "David Williams, aged 32 years, Master of the Brig Epsilon of Blyth, who drowned off Dunstanborough Castle with the whole of his crew Jan 4 1857.

"Toss'd in the troblous voyage of life by many a raging wave, my weary frame at length has found a harbour in the grave, moor'd on the Christian's Rock with hope at anchor safe I lie. Be thou Lord Christ in that great day my pilot in the sky."



This is the ordnance survey map for 1861. It shows how small the village was then.
1861 Ordnance Survey map, reproduced with the Permission of the National Library of Scotland



The churchyard records the fate of the crew of the Epsilon.

A Puzzle and a Picture

Throughout our gravestone survey we've struggled with stones that have very little information for us to go from. One, just next to the Vicarage wall, gave us simply: 'JMD AET23 RIP'. A puzzle!

AET is a shortened form of the Latin word 'aetatis', meaning 'aged'. This gave us the age of the person buried there. Andrew did a lot of detective work, looking for anyone buried aged 23 years old with the initials JMD, and revealed Jessie Mabel Dickinson. From there we learned she was born in Jersey, the daughter of Sir Francis Cunynghame of Milncraig.

Jessie Mabel Cunynghame married Henry Dickinson, Longhoughton's Vicar, in 1891. After arriving at the village by train, their carriage was pulled from the station to the vicarage by local boys, with cheering and celebration to welcome them. She settled into village life and became well thought of, but died a few weeks after giving birth to their son, Francis, in 1893. Henry, grief-stricken, created the cross next to the Vicarage garden wall, and a stained glass window of St Damaris in the church dedicated to her, made using her photograph. The window (see right) was reported to be a good likeness of her.

Starting with just a few letters, we could connect the gravestone to Jessie herself!

Isaac Milburn the Bonesetter

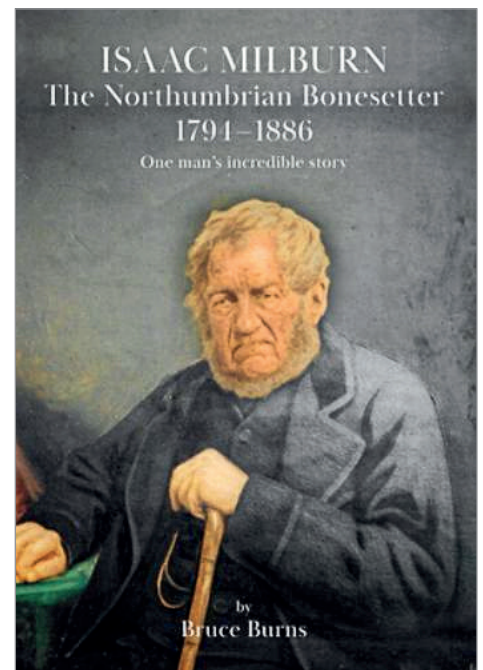
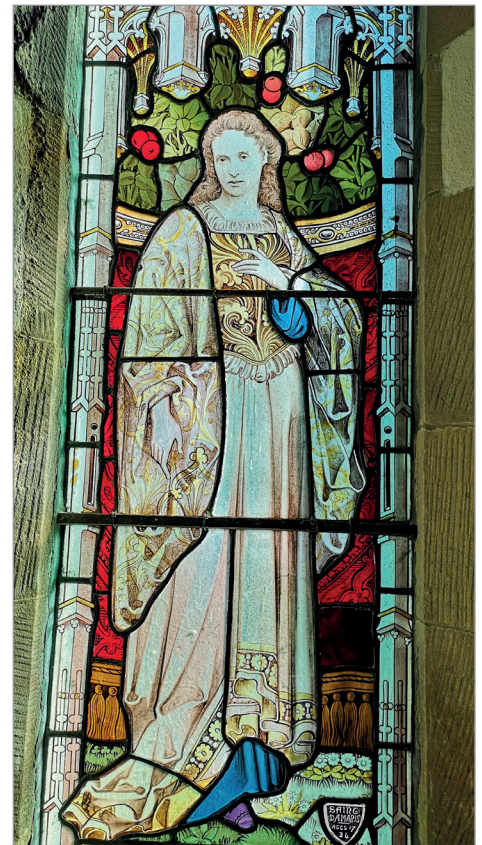
Before hospitals and doctors' surgeries, local bonesetters were in great demand - people mainly had manual jobs and injuries were common. Bonesetters could fix dislocated bones much more cheaply than a doctor. Isaac trained during his youth by practicing on rabbits, and worked as a gardener at Wallington, honing his skills outside of work on people who asked for help. He eventually became so well renowned that people visited by train, walking from Longhoughton Station to his post-retirement home at Drive Cottage, just past Longbank Farm on the road to Lesbury.

Isaac Millburn is buried in the churchyard, the cost of his four ton marble headstone being paid for by public subscription. He is the subject of a book written by a descendant of his, Bruce Burns, who kindly joined us for our first Heritage Open Day in 2023 to talk about him. Cover reproduced with kind permission of the author.

War graves in Longhoughton

One of the four Commonwealth War Graves in the churchyard is that of George Philip Back, the son of Charles Back, of 45, Guinness Buildings, Chelsea, London. He served as a telegraphist on HMS G11, under the temporary command of Lieutenant Commander George Fagan Bradshaw, DSO. HMS G11 was a steel, diesel-powered submarine, and on the 22 November 1918 was returning to her base at Blyth, from patrolling Dogger Bank after the Armistice.

The submarine's crew were disorientated by a band of fog obscuring the coast, and passed Blyth. Lieutenant Bradshaw was unfamiliar with the G class boats, and underestimated their speed. The crew also believed the compass to be faulty. The submarine ran aground on the rocks near Howick, to the north of the Bathing House. Two of the 31 crew were killed in evacuating to the shore; while the body of George Philip Back was recovered and buried in the churchyard, the body of Stoker Pliny Foster was never found and he is remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial. The wreck of HMS G11 was left for some time before being salvaged and blown up in 1923.



G.P. BACK
TELEGRAPHIST. RN J/40179
HMS 'LUCIA'
22nd November 1918
Aged 19
One of the bravest
One of the best
God grant him eternal rest
Mum



50 NEWSLETTER EDITIONS IN PICTURES


We hope you'll enjoy this visual trip down memory lane since the community newsletter began in January 2018.

2018

There was an intense political crisis in Britain over how we should leave the EU, and the small boat crossings began in the English Channel. Issue 1 in January was four pages. The contents were largely as they are today, covering parish council work, notices, news from the villages and opening communications between the parish council and the community. There were very few pictures in these editions. The numbers printed and circulated were modest but have increased gradually to 1000 copies in 2026.

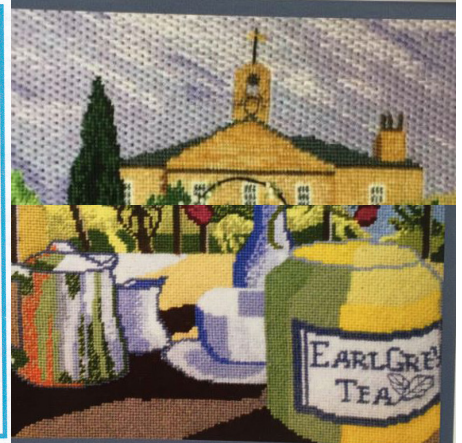
Are You a Stitcher?

Howick Church has received a lottery grant of £6000 to support the making of new embroidered kneelers, depicting the flowers, animals, buildings, history and community life of the parish. Local painters have provided the images (on view in Howick Church) and now we're seeking help with the stitching. **To find out more ring Avril Meakin 01665 577597**



Equaliteas
Celebrating Democracy in the Earl Grey Teahouse
10.30-5.30pm Friday 22nd June

Make it a day to remember the hard-won fight to extend the franchise. At two thousand venues across the country the centenary of votes being granted for women and the 90th anniversary of the universal franchise is being marked, and where better to celebrate the occasion than Howick? A cup of Earl Grey Tea or lunch with friends in this most historic setting will be a reminder of the efforts and sacrifices made by previous generations in the battle for equality.
NB The usual Garden entry applies.



2019

The year was characterised by record breaking temperatures, heatwaves, fires, floods and drought around the world. At home, Theresa May resigned as Prime Minister and Boris Johnson became PM. He later won the the election on 12 December with a huge majority of 80 seats. Issue 7 April. The first mention of many of traffic and parking issues in Lacey Street. The regular complaints about unharvested dog poo had also begun. Issue 9 June. A housing needs survey is announced.



2020

The pandemic hit the world early in the year and on 24 March Boris Johnson announced the regulations and restrictions designed to frustrate the virus. A Covid-19 vaccine appears in record time and a vaccination programme begins. A miserable and tragic year followed, finishing with the end of the Brexit Transition Period. In the parish, there was a swift response and the setting up of a volunteer force to support the community in a variety of ways. Medicines and foodstuffs were delivered and the NHS was regularly saluted from doorsteps.



2021

Trump supporters attack the Capitol on 6 January. Global inflation sparks a cost of living crisis which lasts through to 2024. SNP win the Holyrood election and Scottish Independence hopes take a step forward. UK suffers industrial action and there is a huge rise in demand from the food banks. 26/7 November Storm Arwen hit us and Howick residents lost power for up to ten days. Northern Powergrid are publically shamed. Issue 24 in December rises to six pages.

SPACE FOR SHOREBIRDS




A ringed plover feeding on the mud at Boulmer



The first fifty community newsletters, starting in January 2018, have taken place in some truly extraordinary times. During this period, the world has experienced a pandemic, two major wars, rising geopolitical rivalry, economic instability, accelerating climate change, and a rapid technological shift driven by artificial intelligence. The country experienced Brexit, 200,000 deaths owing to Covid-19, extreme political instability, economic hardship, the end of the Elizabethan

era, Storm Arwen and a major change of government. Closer to home and through these events, remarkably, the parish council have led some demanding projects, like Covid-19 support, the development and passing of the Neighbourhood Plan and the bridge over Howick Burn in Cushat Wood, along with its more routine responsibilities. This period in Boulmer, Howick and Longhoughton has seen the residents becoming ever more active in servicing local environmental, health, wellbeing and social activities, despite setbacks like the withdrawal of the Alnwick Medical Group surgery and the pandemic. It is surely worth recording and celebrating as a very special time in our history.

2022

Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February, inflaming the cost of living crisis further. Most Covid-19 restrictions were lifted on 4 July. Around the world political opinion polarises and it sees elections in Europe, Latin America and Asia. Artificial Intelligence is released. Boris Johnson's Partygate leads to Liz Truss' brief and disastrous time as PM. Rishi Sunak is PM to 2024. Issue 28 August. The leading article reported the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Queen Elizabeth dies on 5 September.

2023

Following the pandemic there is long Covid in the population, and a mental health crisis, particularly around children and young people. King Charles is crowned on 6 May. Hamas attack Israel on 7 October and shock the world. Israel's response continues to the present. Issue 31 February. The coronation of King Charles prompts a parish celebration on 7 May. Issue 32 April. MGL Group resurface Boulmer car park. The gardening group are in full flow as they populate Longhoughton with planters and plant them.

2024

January saw Donald Trump hint at a possible return to the White House. The Northern Irish Assembly was restored on 3 February. 4 June saw Labour return to government under Sir Keir Starmer as Prime Minister. David Smith becomes North Northumberland MP on 4 July. Longhoughton Primary School has a new Headteacher. Issue 38 April. There was a public meeting about Alnwick medical services in Longhoughton in March. An Easter Extravaganza takes place at the Community Centre on March 31.

2025

Trump becomes US President for the second time. Artificial Intelligence booms. The Bridge church and community magazine ceases to operate. Issue 47 October. The now regular summer fete features. The Community Centre signs the Armed Forces Covenant. The Neighbourhood Plan passes into law. Issue 48 December. The King's Award for Voluntary Service is awarded to the Community Centre and the 261 volunteers are recognised and thanked. Issue 44 in April rises to eight pages.

