

Haltwhistle History and Heritage Group Newsletter

All your history group news, reports, upcoming events and information FREE in your inbox after every meeting.

Edition 10, 10th May 2024

Edited by Steve Gibbon

Our website: <https://history.haltwhistle.org/>

Our Wiki(pedia) <https://haltwhistle.org/history/>

Hello everyone, here is the ninth newsletter of the History Group with a reminder that I am very much dependent on two sources to make this work:

1. My notes taken at a meeting and any other information people can supply, particularly from those people who may have contributed to a discussion or presentation.
2. You, the reader. If you have anything you would like to see in this newsletter, please provide me with information.

I can't do all of this on my own, so all contributions welcome please.

Please note that the group meetings have moved to the second Wednesday of the month. We meet in the Community room of the Hospital which at the moment is provided for free, is on the ground floor and accessible. It is an excellent venue with a small kitchen for tea and coffee preparation. We meet at 1030 for a prompt start. We finish by 12 noon.

I can be contacted via email at steve@stevegibbon.co.uk or by phone on 01434 344 383.

Also feel free to mail this on to anyone else who might be interested or print a copy for them. If you did not receive this directly from myself then I do not have your email address. If you want to ensure you are on the circulation, please contact me by email and ask to be put on it. Equally if you do not want to be on the circulation let me know and I will remove you from it. Thank you.

In this newsletter:

1. Digital News
2. Summary of meeting held at Haltwhistle Memorial Hospital – 10th May 2024 – Memory Boxes
3. Wanted – your Memories and Anecdotes.
4. Date of Next Meeting
5. Library

Digital News

Steve is happy to receive any stories, anecdotes or recollections you may have of Haltwhistle and the surrounding area so that he can record it in the Wikipedia for posterity. You can find the wiki at <https://haltwhistle.org/history/> (i.e. via the Haltwhistle Partnership website) with some initial information but it can hold any amount of information whether text, images, video or audio.

Summary of Meeting held at Haltwhistle Memorial Hospital – 10th May 2024 – Memory Boxes

Steve Gibbon brought in some memory boxes from the Heritage Centre Bellingham for us all to look at and handle, but also to trigger some of our own memories. Many memories were collected, thank you, but one in particular caught my eye as I remembered it from my own childhood although it is a Victorian hangover.

*Monday was washing day
Tuesday was ironing
Wednesday was bedrooms
Thursday was shopping day
Friday baking day*

And this half-remembered partial proverb:

*Wash on a Friday – washing in need
Wash on a Saturday – slut indeed*

Well, that last line in particular grabbed my attention and urge to research more, so I looked these rhymes up on reputed sources. Let's find out what people used to say about washing habits of the industrious housewife.

*They that wash on Monday,
Have all the week to dry.
They that wash on Tuesday,
Are not so much awry.
They that wash on Wednesday,
Are not so much to blame.
They that wash on Thursday,
Wash for shame.
They that wash on Friday,
Wash in need.
They that wash on Saturday,
Oh, they're sluts indeed!*



There is an alternative to this last rhyme:

*They that wash on Monday have all the week to dry
They that wash on Tuesday are not so much awry
They that wash on Wednesday are not so much to blame
They that wash on Thursday wash for very shame
They that wash on Friday wash in sorry need
They that wash on Saturday are lazy folk indeed.*

That last line is nearer the original definition of the word 'slut', rather than a sexually promiscuous person (usually a woman) in its modern usage where the word is used differently. Although the ultimate origin of the word 'slut' is unknown, it appeared in Middle English in 1402 as 'slutte', with the meaning of 'dirty, untidy, or slovenly woman' hence the above use in the rhyme. The word was used as early as the 1300s, in the form of an adjective, 'sluttish', referring to a man's untidy appearance, by Geoffrey Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales*. An interesting change of meaning of a word over time and now far removed from its original meaning.

As for the rhyme: "*They that wash on Monday have all the week to dry...*"

Victorian advice on housekeeping routines set in stone the idea that Monday should be wash-day, so that everything could be dried, pressed, aired and folded well before Sunday, the day of rest and clean clothes. The rhymes shows there's a long tradition of a "virtuous" weekly laundry cycle starting on Mondays.

But that's not the whole story. We may wrinkle our noses at the thought of washing done every few months, as it was in Elizabethan England, but in some well-to-do households this pattern of laundering continued for centuries.

It wasn't a simple question of hygiene, or lack of it. (Well off) People took pride in having enough linen to manage without washing frequently. And the process was such a huge disruption to other domestic routines, taking up to four days even in good drying weather, that there were advantages in spacing it further apart. A visiting washerwoman might come for a couple of days every few weeks to undertake some or all of the work.

In 1760 Hannah Glasse discussed methods for a successful "great wash". It sounds as if she expected this to happen every few weeks, though she realised that "Different Countries and different Places have all a different Manner or Way of preparing for the great Wash" - as opposed to little interim "slop-washes" of things that had to be laundered in between times. (See Glasse's *The Servant's Directory, or House-keeper's Companion*.)

The custom of a great or grand wash lasted longer outside big cities. It was still favoured by some English people right up to the late 19th century.

Finally: 1. These rhymes took on variations round the country and were also exported to America on the Mayflower where they then had their own variants. They are also seen elsewhere in the world possibly by the spread of Empire. 2. Can you spot the connection into the Heritage Centre Bellingham shop and our own locality via Hannah Glass? Answers on a postcard.....

As for the rhyme that started me down this path:

Monday: Wash Day ~ Tuesday: Ironing Day ~ Wednesday: Sewing Day ~ Thursday: Market Day ~ Friday: Cleaning Day ~ Saturday: Baking Day ~ Sunday: Day of Rest.

Of course, in bygone days, each of these tasks took the better part of a day so it was wise to devote an entire day to each.

Wanted – your Memories and Anecdotes.

What are your memories of the 40's, 50's, 60's and 70's or even more recently. What anecdotes and stories can you tell? One of our objectives is to capture this information before it is 'lost'. If you have anything you can share and any images to go with it please don't hesitate to forward it to me when I can then incorporate it into future newsletters as well as our Wikipedia of information about Haltwhistle and its surrounding parishes.

I captured many memories at the Memory Box talk and many thanks for them. I will transpose them on to the Wiki in due course.

Thanks, Steve Gibbon steve@stevegibbon.co.uk 01434 344 383

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 12th June 2024. 10:30 in the Community Room of Haltwhistle Hospital. Stan Owen will be talking about the Temperance Movement, Band of Hope and reference a hotel in Haltwhistle linked to these movements.

Ideas for Future Talks

We now have a full programme for this year and some ideas for next, but nothing yet set in concrete for 2025. Do you have any ideas for a future meeting talk? If so, could you let a member of the committee know so we can keep a full programme developed, many thanks.

Library

You can also find this information on the website at <https://history.haltwhistle.org/>

A reminder from Jan that some people may have borrowed books from the library and may not have signed for them or returned them. If you have a book from the library, could you please just let Jan know that you have it and whether you will be hanging on to it or returning it. Thank you. Jan can be contacted at janmillward@btinternet.com

A small reference library of books, maps and pamphlets has already been built up. For now, it will be available at each meeting or via Jan Millward. A sign in/out book will be used to record who has what so books can be kept track of. The list of available publications is provided below.

Title

Author

265 Years of a Dissenting Congregation in Haltwhistle	Roberta Wood
A Haltwhistle Christmas	Tony Storey
A Walk Along the Wall	Hunter Davies
Altwesel at the First Millenium 1000 AD	Tony Storey
Bishop Ridley and the Reiving Ridleys	Tony Storey
Carnival News 2002	
Castle Hill Methodist Church Centenary Brochure	
Church of the Holy Cross, Haltwhistle	
Featherstone Castle	John Cornforth
Haltwhistle 8th Walking Festival	Haltwhistle Partnership
Haltwhistle and South Tynedale (1973)	Tony Storey
Haltwhistle and South Tynedale (Pamphlet)	Tony Storey
Haltwhistle and the Great War	Northern Cultural Projects
Haltwhistle Methodist Church Centenary Brochure	
Haltwhistle Methodist Circuit Souvenir Programme	
Haltwhistle Station	Tony Storey
Haltwhistle, Haydon Bridge and South Tynedale	Frank Graham
History of Gilsland	
Holy Cross Church (Pamphlet)	
In Nancy's Memory	Matthew Parker
Legends of Haltwhistle and the South Tyne	Richard and Susan Sim
Letter from Haltwhistle	Brian Lee
Medieval Castles, Towers, Peles and Bastles of Northumberland	T H Rowland
My History of Featherstone Castle	John Clark
Northumberland Folk Tales	Rosalind Kervan
The Church at Hautwysel	Tony Storey
The Reivers, The Story of the Border Reivers	Alistair Moffat
Towers and Bastles	P F Ryder
Tynedale Songster	Frank Graham
War on the Banks of the Tyne	Haltwhistle Partnership

Deadline for contributions

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome – even short stories or anecdotes. You may also provide an image with your contribution for inclusion in the newsletter and email it to me. Please make sure the image is your own or you have copyright permission for it.

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