

# Hetton-le-Hole Herald

The Newsletter for Hetton Local History Group

Volume 3 ..... Issue .6..... Date..May/June 2012.....

## Information & Calendar

**Notes** :- In 2011 Archaeological Services of Durham University undertook a survey of Hetton House on behalf of Sunderland City Council, the owners. The building which is grade 2 listed is at present for sale and the report provides a lot of detail about the house. We are grateful to the City Council & Durham University Archaeological Services for providing details of the Report and this article describes much of the detail of the history and architecture of Hetton House.

## THE BUILDINGS OF HETTON

### 1. Hetton House

Hetton House, situated in Park View is one of the principal houses of Hetton. Hetton has not got many important or noteworthy buildings so Hetton House stands out as probably the oldest building and one to be proud of.

It is important to the people of Hetton since, for many years, it served as the building where Hetton Town Council had their offices prior to their recent move to the Hetton Centre a short distance away.

Hetton as a village is relatively recent with the majority of houses being built after the opening of the Lyons Colliery in 1822. No one knows who built the original Hetton House or even the precise date when it was built. The earliest map of 1776 shows the building marked in the centre of the hamlet that was Hetton in the Hole. The estate at that time was owned by the Countess Dowager of Strathmore having been bought by that family in 1746. Much of the family estates were in Scotland and she passed the Hetton estate

to her youngest son Thomas Lyon. The estate continued in the ownership of the Lyons family then the Bowes Lyon family for many years after purchase. They also owned Hetton Hall, believed to be the principal mansion house and situated close to Hetton House on the site of the present Hetton Centre. Hetton Hall was demolished in 1923 following many years of being unoccupied and consequently becoming semi-derelict.

Hetton House, shown on the 1776 map was a single rectangular building situated within a garden of some size.

It is shown as the largest building in the village, even larger than Hetton Hall. A later map, made in 1839, by John Laverick, a land surveyor shows additional buildings attached to the house and a range at the rear in the garden. By the time of the Ordnance Survey map of the 1850s various changes and additions had been made to the property and there appeared to be two small cottages at the west end of the main building. Apart from the establishment of a formal garden at the rear during the late Victorian pe-



Hetton House showing the 3 stages of development

riod there appears to have been few changes made to the property right through until recent modern times.

#### Owners and Occupiers.

It seems that Thomas Lyon was born in 1741 and there is a reference to suggest that he was born in Hetton House. He was an M.P. for Montrose in Scotland in 1774 and for Forfarshire from 1774-1779. He was married to Mary Elizabeth Wren, her family living at Binchester near Bishop Auckland. They had eight children and one, their son John succeeded to the estate and it was on his land that the first deep coalmine was sunk in 1821. He signed leases to allow Archibald Cochrane, who lived in nearby Hetton Hall, and his Partners in the Hetton Coal Company to proceed with the Lyons, and Eppleton Collieries. Following the death of John in 1829 the house was sold and the Tythe Map of 1839 shows the occupiers to be the Hetton Coal Company, the first of many varied owners.

By the time of the 1851 census the house was occupied by the Rev. John Nichol who was the first rector of St Nicholas' church in Hetton. The church, initially built in 1832 and six years later a parish was formed in its own right. There is a possibility that Rev. Nichol ran a school in the house as there was in residence at the time an Assistant Tutor, a Governess and 13 boy pupils aged between 10 and 13. Following the death of Rev. Nichol in 1877 his position was taken by the Rev. Thomas Rudd. He lived at Hetton House until he had built a new rectory in Station Road in 1885.

It seems that by 1901 the house was occupied by medical men. The census of that year shows that an Irish doctor, James Anderson MD lived there and the property was used for the medical practice of Dr. Anderson and a colleague, Dr. Allan Stewart Watson who lived across the road in The Cottage, Park View. It was during this time that the St Johns Ambulance occupied a building at the rear

of the house as their headquarters and their tenancy was to continue for more than 50 years.

Following the creation of Hetton Urban District Council, part of Durham County in 1885, the staff moved to offices in Front Street in 1911 while many of their meetings were held in the Miner's Union Hall in Richard Street. As Council business developed during the early decades of the 20th century it was found necessary to locate larger premises for the council staff and in the middle decade of the century the council bought Hetton House and moved their staff to that location. The building was enlarged at its eastern end and the house improved outside while many internal changes to the rooms took place to accommodate the office functions.

By this time Hetton House had changed not only its function but it also only vaguely resembled its early building structure. Windows and doors had been replaced, roof lines altered. Some at-

tached buildings had been demolished and removed while other extensions had been added. Outwardly the rough stone early building was covered with painted roughcast rendering. Modern metal framed windows were used on the new eastern extension and modern windows replaced the old Victorian sash windows elsewhere.

The building comprises three separate sections, an eighteenth century western element of two storeys and two ranges under two parallel roofs with a valley in between. This is connected to a 19th century middle addition, again two storeys but having a lower roof line. This middle section contains the principal entrance to the property.

The 20th century easterly extension is also of two storeys with a low parapet on top hiding a flat roof. Perhaps this addition is the least impressive of the three elements. The rear of the building has undergone many changes over the years and the outbuildings belonging to

the house are generally in a poor state of health with the exception of a small brick-built, single storey building currently occupied by Hetton Art Club and which in the past has served as an office, probably for the Hetton Coal Company. Nearby stands another brick and rubble stone building which probably in the past has served as a stable for horses and a store for a carriage. The roof of this building is hipped but in need of immediate remedial action before it collapses. Architecturally the out buildings are not so important.

Generally the main building is in a very sound condition. Internally the conversion of rooms to offices and other public spaces such as waiting areas and toilets may add to the difficulties of implementing a change of use for the building. Also the status as a Grade II listed building means that any changes both internally and externally have to receive approval before they can take place. Hopefully any new owners will respect the im-

portant history attached to the building and any changes which are deemed necessary will be treated sympathetically within the spirit of the building. It is unlikely that it will however revert to a formal home for a family for a number of reasons, not least that as a building it is probably too large to change back to that use. There are elements which need immediate attention and these include the buildings at the rear of the property which in one case may have to be demolished to remove any danger of accidents.

Probably the greatest threat to the building is continued disuse as this could lead to further deterioration. At the moment conservation seems possible and proper management is essential during this period while its future is being decided. If it cannot be sold, then it may be necessary to find a suitable communal use which will ensure its life into the future and be used in a useful way by the population of Hetton.

**Timeline of Hetton House by Kind permission of Sunderland City Council, Hetton Council and Archaeological Services Durham University**

1740s	Hetton House is built, perhaps by John Spearman or the Countess Dowager Strathmore Owners and occupiers of hetton Hall.
1776	Thomas Lyon owns Hetton House, which was called 'Mansion House'.
1802	Hetton House is occupied by Mary, Thomas Lyon's widow
1810	John Lyon's son John Lyon starts Hetton Colliery
1821	John Lyon signs leases to the Hetton Coal Company at Hetton House
1839	Hetton House is owned by Cochrane et al., The Hetton Coal Company.
1830s	Hetton House becomes the rectory. Rev. John Nichol and family live there.
1851	John Nichol is using Hetton House as a school for boys
1877	Nichol dies, he is succeeded by Rev. Thos Rudd and family
1885	Rudd moves to new rectory. Formal garden moved before 1890
1891	Hetton House occupied by Dr. James Anderson & Fam.
1895	Hetton UDC formed
1901	House occupied by Dr. James Anderson, his wife & 2 daughters. Hetton Hall is unoccupied
1914	Hetton House listed as the premises of Anderson &

	Watson, doctors.
1920s	A small building is added to the SW corner of the house. Hetton Hall is demolished in 1923.
1934	Hetton House is occupied by Dr. Allan Watson & fam.
1940s	A new house is built on the south end of the garden.
1950s	Hetton House is taken over by Hetton-le-Hole UDC. The central block is remodelled and the east block and Council chamber are built. A large detached out building is removed from the rear of the east part of the house. Two cottages adjoining the west end of the house are demolished and replaced.
1970s	The attached buildings at the west end of the house are demolished by Nu Holme
1974	Hetton UDC is absorbed into Sunderland Metropolitan Borough as a Town Council. Hetton House is used by the Borough Council.
1992	Sunderland BC is succeeded by City of Sunderland Council. Outbuildings at Hetton House are used by street cleaning team.
2010	Hetton House is disused



Recent research into Hetton House shows that the detail given on the plaque is incorrect, the building being much older than at first thought. It probably dates back to the middle of the 18th century



Rear of Hetton House showing the three stages of building development, L. to R. 18th century, 19th century and 20th century.



This rubble stone building probably dates back to the very early 19th century. It has a hipped roof (4 surfaces) covered with 20th century asbestos. It was probably originally used to house a horse(s) and a carriage with a hay loft above.

A late 19th century brick built building at the rear of Hetton House. It was probably used as an office by the Hetton Coal Company when they owned the property. It has for many years been used by



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