

WM. WHEATLEY & SON
(EST. 1863) TELEPHONE 3287 & 2186
MANUFACTURING WHOLESALE &
RETAIL CONFECTIONERS
HANDONside WORKS,
SUNDERLAND STREET,
HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING,
COUNTY DURHAM.
SHOPS SUPPLIED — ENQUIRIES INVITED
BRANCHES



*With all good wishes
I should have*

WHEATLEY

G. WHEATLEY,
CONFECTIONER,
HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING.

THE WHEATLEYS OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING THE SWEET SUCCESS OF A FAMILY BY PAUL LANAGAN



THE WHEATLEYS OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

THE SWEET SUCCESS OF A FAMILY

MUCH OF THE RESEARCH for this article on the Wheatley family was done while consuming a bag of sweets and at the same time watching old black and white flicks. The sweets were of course black bullets and helped to invoke the history of the Wheatleys' confectionery factories in Houghton-le-Spring; the movies were *The Lady Vanishes* (1938) and *The Stars Look Down* (1940), both starring Linden Travers, great-granddaughter of the confection founder, George Wheatley.

A visit to Beamish Museum was also called for and afforded the opportunity of seeing the traditional method of making sweets and candy rock. I was disheartened, however, to see that the modern recreation involved the use of protective gloves, unlike in the days gone by (see photo page 7) where the factory workers' fingerprints made the sweets truly unique!

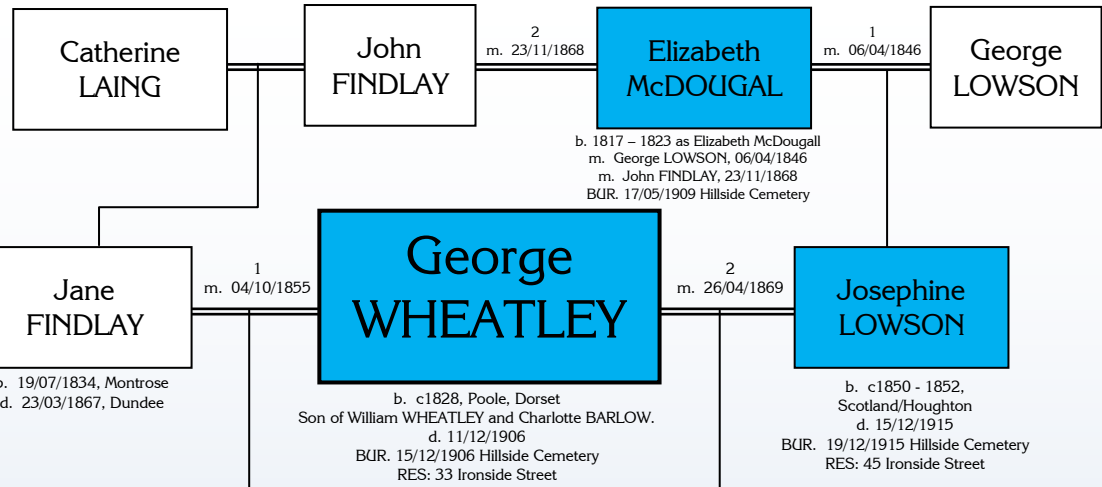
It is hard to study any area of Houghton's history without it being punctuated by a Wheatley. They were a large family and it is not surprising that their history is as equally fascinating as the flavours of the sweets in their numerous shops.

Linden Travers is often described by movie aficionados as being out of synch with the industry, that she was before her time and should have been a bigger star, but it is comforting to know that a light still shines on her name in Houghton-le-Spring for there are two large sumptuously framed photographs of Ms Travers in the new Wetherspoon's Wild Boar public house.

Paul Lanagan
PAUL LANAGAN
HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING
HERITAGE SOCIETY, 2011

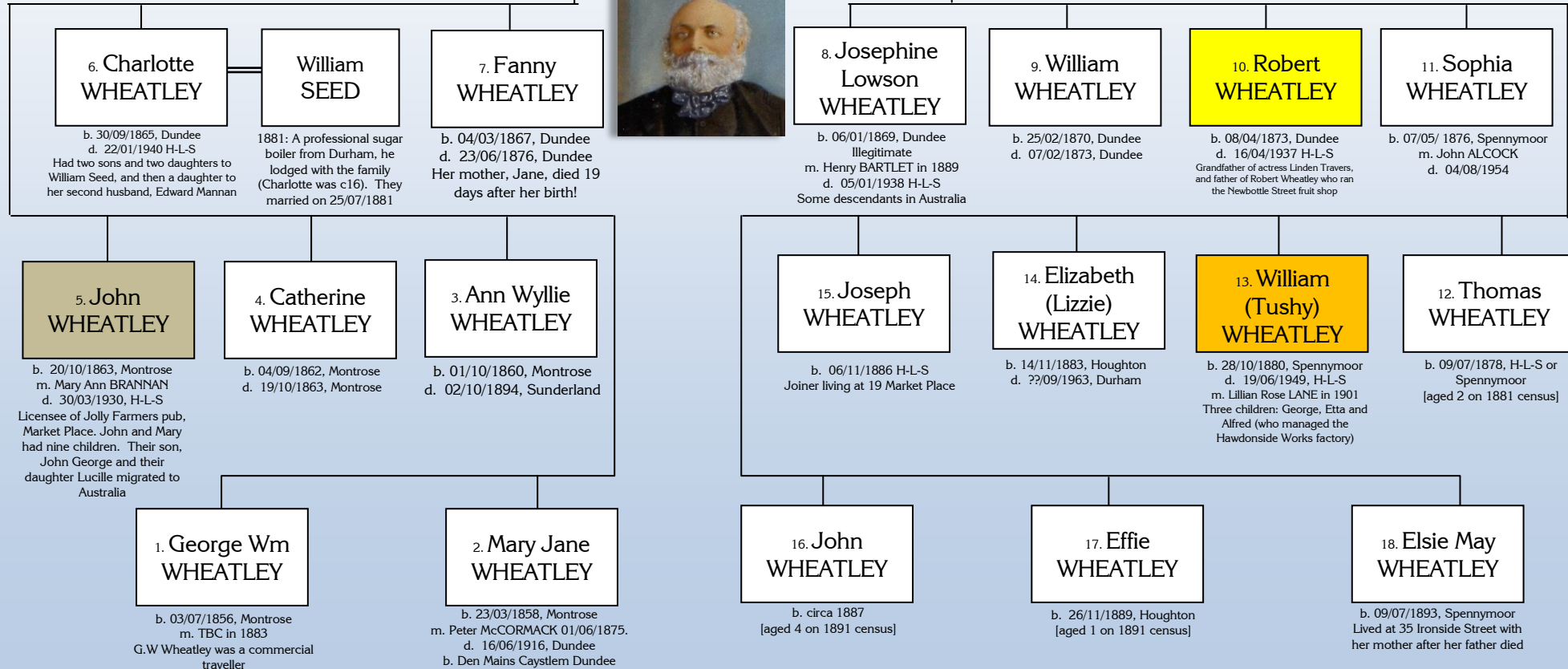


THE WHEATLEYS OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING



CATHOLIC SIDE

PROTESTANT SIDE



THE WHEATLEYS OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

George WHEATLEY

b. c1828, Poole, Dorset
 Son of William WHEATLEY and Charlotte BARLOW.
 d. 11/12/1906
 BUR: 15/12/1906 Hillside Cemetery

Josephine LOWSON

b. c1850 - 1852, Scotland/Houghton
 d. 15/12/1915
 BUR: 19/12/1915 Hillside Cemetery
 RES: 45 Ironside Street



Lindon TRAVERS

b. c1851
 d. 09/11/1918 aged 67
 BUR: Jesmond Old Cem
 Manager of the Olympia Theatre, Newcastle, and the Grand Theatre, Byker

Alice

b. c1861
 d. 23/02/1933 aged 72
 BUR: Jesmond Old Cem

Jane Ann SWALES

b. 1871
 1881 - living at 53 Newbottle St

m. c1894

10. Robert WHEATLEY

b. 08/04/1873, Dundee
 d. 16/04/1937 H-L-S
 Took over the Mill House factory, H-L-S, when his father died

See siblings on Main Tree

William Halton LINDON-TRAVERS

b. 1889, Barnsley
 d. 16/11/1965 aged 76
 BUR: Jesmond Old Cem
 Manager of the Stoll Theatre and the Tyne Theatre



Florence WHEATLEY

b. 1895
 d. 1956, Cornwall

Olive Millicent WHEATLEY

b. 1900

Robert WHEATLEY

b. 1902
 d. 1959
 Robert WHEATLEY Jnr ran Corner Shop at 41 Newbottle Street

Elsie Mary WHEATLEY

b. 1904

Stephen Hewitt WHEATLEY

b. 1907

George WHEATLEY

b. 1909
 In 1967 he was Manager and Chief Sugar Boiler at the Hawdonside Works toffee factory

Pat RAINS

William LINDON-TRAVERS

b. 03/01/1922, Newcastle
 d. 29/03/1994
 Acted under the name Bill TRAVERS

Virginia A McKENNA OBE

b. 07/06/1931, London
 BAFTA winning actress
 OBE for services to wildlife
 Founded the Born Free Foundation in 1984. Now a trustee.

Ken TRAVERS



Alice TRAVERS

b. 1915, H-L-S
 m. Clifford WILTON
 d. 1976
 Taught at La Sagesses School, Jesmond

Pearl TRAVERS

b. 1918, H-L-S
 m. 1940 to Philip MORANT

Guy LEON

Linden TRAVERS

b. 27/05/1913, H-L-S
 d. 23/10/2001, St Ives, Cornwall

James HOLMAN

d. 1974

1 daughter

Will TRAVERS

b. 1958
 Known as Bill TRAVERS Jnr
 Chief Executive Officer of

2 other sons & 1 daughter

Penelope Alice WILTON

b. 1946, Scarborough
 m. Daniel Massey in 1975 (div)
 m. Sir Ian Holm in 1991 (div)
 OBE in 2004 for services to drama.
 Appeared in many familiar shows, including Doctor Who and Downton Abbey. Mother of Alice MASSEY

Lindy WILTON

b. 1948, Chelsea
 m. 1972 to Arthur C BARKER

Rosemary WILTON

Richard MORANT

b. 30/10/1945
 d. 09/11/2011
 m. Melissa Fairbanks in 1969 (div) and had 2 children
 m. Valerie Buchanan in 1982 and had 2 children

Jennifer Susan LEON

b. 1939, Chelsea, London
 m. Cornel LUCAS, British photographer
 Daughters: Sophie Hardie & Charlotte Lucas.
 Acts under the name Susan TRAVERS

Sally Linden HOLMAN

b. 1949

ACTORS

THE WHEATLEYS OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

DECEMBER 11TH 2006 WAS the 100th anniversary of the death of George Wheatley, founder of the Wheatley's confectionery business in Houghton-le-Spring. George was a Crimean War veteran having fought at the battle of the Alma at the siege of Sevastopol (a port and naval base in the S. Ukraine, in the Crimea, on the Black Sea) for which he had received two medals with clasps. It was here, while aboard the Agamemnon, that his right leg was blown off by a cannon ball – he was only nineteen years old. Sevastopol was captured and destroyed by British, French and Turkish forces during the War, but George was discharged from the Navy, lucky to be alive after his injury.

George established a successful confectionery business in Spennymoor, Durham, but soon relocated to Houghton-le-Spring where he founded the Mill House sweet factory in Houghton's Market Place. He did not allow his disability to hinder him and his confectionery business prospered. He became known as 'Sticky' and there are tales of him using his wooden leg to stir the hot toffee mixture! Another tale states that George would stand in the same spot in his factory, watching over the workers, resting his wooden leg in a worn hole in the floor! The leg can be seen on the right with George's descendant and fellow confectioner, David Wheatley.

One tale, which is fact, saw George before South Shields Police Court in September 1879; he was fined for selling sweets which had inadvertently been made with yellow leaded paint. An employee had mistakenly added paint which had been intended for painting a cart barrow into the ingredients of a batch of sweets, several of which were purchased by Mr J. J. Hindmarch, sanitary inspector for the borough.

George was married twice and had many children, some of which died in infancy, as was common in families of the Victorian era. His first wife Jane passed away nineteen days after giving birth to their daughter Fanny in August 1867. Six sons and seven daughters survived him.

GEORGE WHEATLEY



THE WHEATLEYS OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING



CRIMEA ALMA SEVASTOPOL IN LOVING MEMORY OF
GEORGE WHEATLEY WHO DIED 11TH DEC. 1906 AGED 78
YEARS ALSO ELIZABETH FINLAY, WHO DIED 17TH MAY
1909 AGED 88 YEARS "AT REST" ALSO JOSEPHINE
LOWSON WHEATLEY WIFE OF THE ABOVE WHO DIED
15TH DEC 1915 AGED 65 YEARS

GEORGE WHEATLEY 1828 - 1906

IT IS WITH REGRET that we have to announce the death of Mr George Wheatley of Houghton-le-Spring at the advanced age of 78 years. The deceased was a man-o' warsman aboard the Agamemnon. He was a Crimean veteran having fought at the battle of the Alma at the siege of Sebastopol for which he had received two medals with clasps. At the storming of Sebastopol one of his legs [the right] was blown off by a cannon ball, this misfortune occurring at the early age of nineteen. On several occasions he was commanded to appear before the late Queen at Buckingham Palace. After he lost his leg he was discharged from the Navy with a pension. He then tried his fortune in Dundee where he entered the spirit trade, undertaking the management of four public-houses in which he was very successful.

About thirty years ago he crossed the Borders into England, first settling at Spennymoor where he built a large factory and commenced in the confectionery trade. His principal business was by vans which covered a great part of North Durham. As however Spennymoor was not well situated for reaching the larger towns on the Wear and Tyne he removed to Houghton-le-Spring, first taking a wooden building which has been gradually converted into a first-rate factory and is now occupied by his son Robert.

George Wheatley soon began to cultivate a trade in count goods amongst the merchants along the Tyne and Wear and this so increased that he gave up his vans altogether and passed them on to his sons. He regularly visited Newcastle on Tuesdays where up to a few years ago he was a well-known figure on market days. The deceased was twice married and leaves a widow and grown up family of six sons and seven daughters to mourn his loss.

He was buried at the cemetery of Houghton-le-Spring and the funeral was attended by a large following which stretched for about 300 yards. The confectionery trade was represented among others by Mr Sam Adams, Durham, Mr Henry Pringle, Chester-le-Street, and Mr GW Smith, Spennymoor. Mr Wheatley was a quaint character and had a personality all his own and if space permitted many racy anecdotes could be told about him.

One incident of rather a dramatic kind took place in Durham County Court, the writer being a witness on behalf of Mr Wheatley. A well known doctor in Houghton-le-Spring sued Mr Wheatley for a sum of money owing which was disputed and the case was tried before Judge Maynell in the Durham County Court. After the proceedings had gone so far the doctor's solicitors retired from the case. The doctor then took upon himself to conduct his own case and was several times pulled up by the Judge for asking offensive questions. At last he told Mr Wheatley that what he was saying was nothing but lies. George at once rose up to his full height in the witness box and throwing open his overcoat displayed to the Court his medals saying in dramatic style whilst pointing to his breast, "Your Honour, would a man who had received these medals be guilty of telling untruths?" Judge Maynell, with a kindly smile he so often wore, replied, "Well, I have no doubt the medals are a good evidence of the parlour you have displayed but I should hardly like to go so far as to say that uncorroborated they are in an evidence of a man's truthfulness."

THE WHEATLEYS OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

GEORGE WHEATLEY'S CHILDREN ESTABLISHED a host of businesses in Houghton-le-Spring:

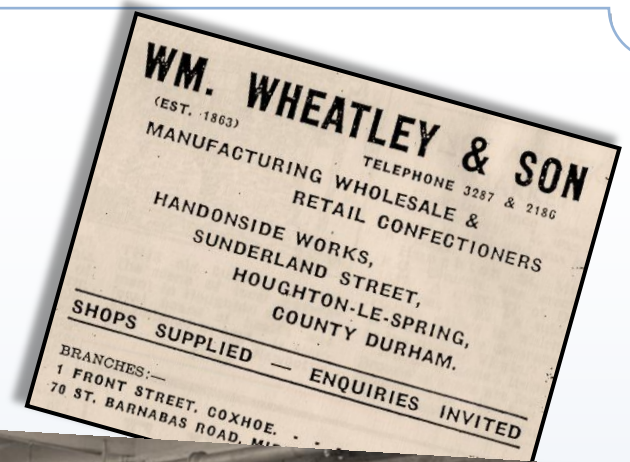
:: John Wheatley was licensee of the Jolly Farmers Inn opposite the Mill House sweet factory, which was managed by his younger half-brother, Robert, following George's death in 1906. It appears to have still been a family concern, despite John and Robert being half-siblings, as Robert provided employment to John's sons, Albert and John, at the factory. Between 1913 and 1915 Robert sold the factory to Joe Gibson, former head of Houghton Tramways.

:: John Wheatley had a confectionery shop at 51 Newbottle Street in 1914 and it was owned by the family until 1998. At the time of the shop's closure, it was manned by eighty-four year old widow, Elizabeth Wheatley, who retired in April 1998 after 45 years in the confectionery trade. The premises were empty for many years until it was occupied by LD Bridal and most recently Subway. John also had a confectionery shop at the south-east end of Newbottle Street, in one of the arched shops which backed onto Cox's indoor market.

:: Robert Wheatley Junior had a fruit, vegetable and confectionery shop on the corner of Mautland Street at 41 Newbottle Street between circa 1938 and the 1970s. In later years, the premises were occupied by Grayson & Son, butchers, who had moved out of the indoor market. The shop is now a Peters bakery and cafe.

:: After the 1914-1918 War, George's son William 'Tushy' Wheatley set up a sweet factory in an old Salvation Army Citadel in Pottery Yard. Tushy was joined by his son Alfred in 1922. The firm outgrew the premises and moved to the larger Hawdonside Works, on Sunderland Street at the top of Houghton Cut, in 1947. The firm continued to prosper and Alfred's son, Keith Harvey, joined the ranks in 1958. The business produced over one-hundred lines, including boiled sweets, lollipops, Easter eggs, and large batches of seaside rock for resorts such as Blackpool, Edinburgh and even nearby Seaham! Many photographs exist showing the workers rolling long sticks of mint rock by hand. As always, the firm was a family concern and also provided employment for: Alfred's wife, Maud, in the office; Alfred's cousin, George Wheatley, as manager and chief sugar boiler, and his wife, Vera, who had worked at the factory since leaving school; along with Alice Surtees, a long serving member of staff who was trusted enough to be the sole preparer of fudge using the original Wheatley recipe. The premises were compulsory purchased and demolished when the A690 dual-carriageway was put through the middle of Houghton in 1968.

:: Following the demise of the Hawdonside Works, George's grandsons, Keith Harvey Wheatley and David Ian Wheatley, formed a company called Harvian Foods (based on their middle names) and sold sweets from a property in Pottery Yard. Around 1972, the brothers purchased the Mill House factory back from the Gibson family and were based there until 1987. Before the firm closed, a range of their sweets were photographed by Beamish Museum and included: Tyne mints; sarsaparilla tablets; and black bullets.



THE WHEATLEYS OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

1913 – LINDEN TRAVERS WAS BORN Florence Lindon-Travers on May 27th 1913 in Houghton-le-Spring, Co Durham. Her parents were: Florence Wheatley, granddaughter of confectioner George Wheatley; and William Halton Lindon-Travers, a manager of theatres in Tyneside. Linden attended the La Sagesse Convent School, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne.

1933 – Linden made her first stage appearance at Newcastle Playhouse (now known as Northern Stage) at the age of 20. Her paternal grandmother, Alice Travers, passed away in February 1933 and was buried at Jesmond Old Cemetery.

1934 – Linden played the lead in 'Murder in Mayfair' at the Glove Theatre in London's West End. She met a gentleman called Guy Leon, whose sister was in the cast. Linden later married Guy.

1935 – Linden starred in her first movie, 'Children of the Fog'. Around this time, Linden was the centre of attraction at the Houghton Film Society, which met in a building on Robinson Street, when she made a visit home.

1937 – Linden's maternal grandfather, Robert Wheatley, passed away in April 1937.

1939 – Linden's first child, Jennifer Susan Leon, was born in Chelsea in February 1939.

1948 – Linden married James Holman.

1949 – Linden's second child, Sally Linden Holman, was born. She played the part of Beatriz de Peraza in her last film, 'Christopher Columbus', which was released in October 1949. She continued to appear in television plays.

???? – Linden lived at a house called Lorraine, St Ives, Cornwall, where she spent her time as an artist.

1969 – Linden and her sisters, Alice Wilton and Pearl Morant, opened the Travers Gallery in Kensington, London. It was open until 1972.

1974 – Linden's husband, James Holman, passed away. Linden spent the years afterwards travelling around Asia and Africa.

1980s – Linden studied psychotherapy in the early 1980s and qualified as a hypnotherapist.

1999 – Linden made her last television appearance in a BBC tribute to Alfred Hitchcock, celebrating the centenary of his birth.

2001 – Linden Travers passed away on October 23rd 2001 in Cornwall at the age of 88 years old. Her funeral service took place at St Ives Parish Church.

LINDEN TRAVERS



THE WHEATLEYS OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

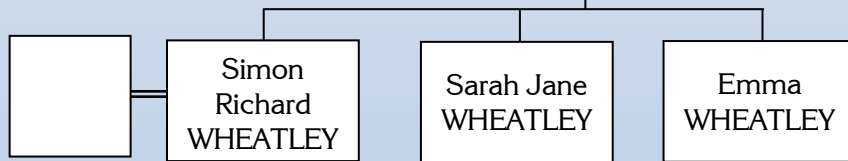
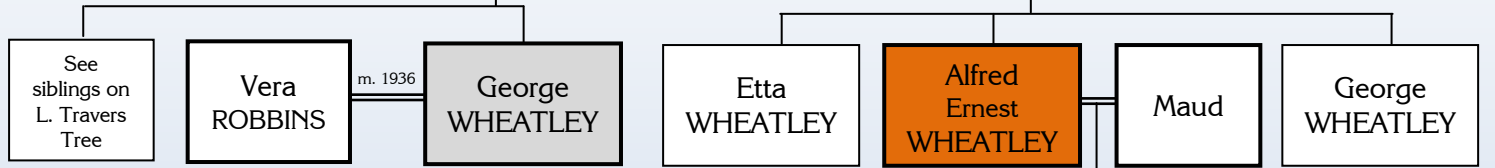
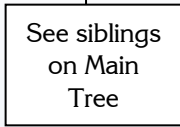
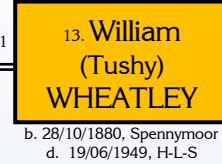
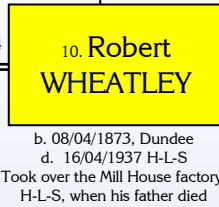
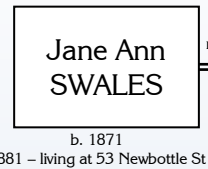
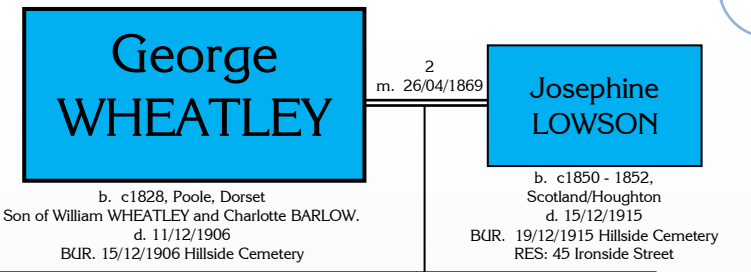


FILMOGRAPHY & STAGE ROLES

- 1933 Cynara (stage role, Newcastle upon Tyne)
- 1934 Murder in Mayfair (stage role)
- 1935 Children of the Fog
- 1935/6 Repertory theatre in Birmingham
- 1936 Wednesday's Luck
- 1937 Against the Tide
- 1937 Brief Ecstasy
- 1937 Double Alibi [short]
- 1937 London Melody
- 1937 The Last Adventurers
- 1938 Almost a Honeymoon
- 1938 Bank Holiday
- 1938 The Lady Vanishes [Dir: Alfred Hitchcock]
- 1938 The Terror
- 1938 Three on a Week-End
- 1939 Inspector Hornleigh on Holiday
- 1940 The Stars Look Down
- 1941 South American George [with George Formby]
- 1941 The Ghost Train
- 1941 The Seventh Survivor
- 1942 No Orchids for Miss Blandish (stage role, Richmond)
- 1942 The Missing Million
- 1943 Ten Little N*ggers (stage role, London), [Writ: Agatha Christie]
- 1945 Quality Street (stage role)
- 1946 Beware of Pity
- 1946 Dear Murderer (stage role, tour)
- 1947 Jassy
- 1947 Master of Bankdam
- 1947 My Friend Lester (stage role)
- 1948 No Orchids for Miss Blandish
- 1948 Quartet
- 1948 The Bad Lord Byron
- 1949 Don't Ever Leave Me
- 1949 Christopher Columbus
- 1955 The Big Show (TV)
- 1955 The Vise (TV series)
- 1960 Sea Hunt (TV series)
- 1988 Game, Set and Match (TV)
- 1999 Reputations (Alfred Hitchcock tribute)

THE WHEATLEYS OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

THIS PAGE IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION



HAWDONSIDe WORKS

THE WHEATLEYS OF HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The main Wheatley Family Tree was produced in early 2006 and updated in 2012. The Linden Travers extension was created in 2012 using information from the BMD records, IMDB and various obituaries online, including the *Guardian.co.uk* and *Scotsman.com*. The Hawdonside Works extension was created in 2006 with information from confectioner David Wheatley.

Thanks are extended to the following for their contributions:

- The late Keith Wheatley, for meeting with me in the summer of 2005, and his brother David Wheatley, both descendants of George Wheatley's son, Tushy Wheatley;
- Dr Jack Morley for sharing his memory of meeting Linden Travers in the 1930s at Houghton Film Society, for perusing the censuses for the Wheatleys, and also for clarifying the history of his Uncle Joe Gibson whom purchased the Wheatley's Mill House factory;
- Barry Wheatley and his father Sydney Wheatley in Australia, descendants of John Wheatley;
- Tia McCombes in Australia, descendant of Josephine Lowson Mackay (nee Wheatley);
- Dot Fenwick, descendant of Mary Jane McCormack (nee Wheatley);
- Bill Graney for memories of rolling the gooey material into hard sticks of Blackpool and Seaham rock;
- Mary Irwin for memories of J.J. Gibson Limited;
- Ray Hayes and the Friends of Jesmond Old Cemetery for information on the Lindon-Travers family grave;
- Linden Travers entry on *Wikipedia.org* accessed on 01/01/12;
- The Turner Classic Movies Movie Database accessed on 01/01/12;
- Linden Travers entry on IMDB accessed on 01/01/12;
- Linden Travers' stage roles from the George Formby Society;
- B/W image of Linden Travers and image of Penelope Wilton from *Wikipedia.org*;
- Image of Bill Travers from *www.fatheroflions.org*;
- B/W toffee works image from the People's Collection, Beamish Museum;
- All other images from the Paul Lanagan Collection.

Further information about the burial place of George Wheatley (1833-1906), Crimean War Veteran, can be found on the Houghton Heritage website in the Hillside Cemetery section (quick link: www.houghtonhillsidecemetery.co.uk).



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