

## The Holmes trail by John Holmes 2014

Starting at our home address near Cockermouth Cumbria would seem to be a bit unnecessary as the Holmes trail is designed for people to learn a bit about the Holmes ancestry in an enjoyable way over a reasonable time period. It can be driven very quickly in a few hours but to enjoy it properly allow a day and if you have the choice choose nice weather as the views can be spectacular.

Starting at **Penrith** would seem logical to me as it provides Road, Motorway and rail access. Once you have decided how to transport your group around the trail the first thing to do is find the road A686 to Alston this starts at Carleton, Penrith which is at the South end of town you should find it at the traffic light controlled roundabout in which case it is the first turn off left. Follow this road all the way to Alston. If you want to stop on the top there is a Café called Hartside café 1904 feet above sea level with fantastic views back down into the Eden valley from where you have just come. If you think you are short of time they do a very reasonable take out tea, coffee and snacks right through to good wholesome home cooked meals you decide but if I were doing this on my own I would collect a take out coffee to drink in the Alston cemetery.

To get to the cemetery carry on down the main road and as you are entering Alston go over the river bridge of the south Tyne River. Turn first right up a lesser road then turn right again onto a track to NY 71727 46074 (map ref). Enter the cemetery and within a few yards the group of headstones you will be interested in are on your left. Walton Holmes's headstone is white marble and stands next to Thomas Arthur Holmes's granite headstone. Very close and on the junction are further headstones which may be of interest, another Thomas Holmes headstone and some from the Simpson family.

Leaving the cemetery proceed back to the main road turn right and pass through Alston town foot turning right onto and up the A689 road, as you go up the cobbled street Saint Augustine's church is on the left then the market square possibly the steepest around and claimed to be the highest market town in England, Alston is surely a town for the hardy. In the narrows further up the street is the shop where Simpson and son traded first with the Simpson family then William (Bill) Holmes and lastly by Ian Holmes before being sold on. It has been trying to trade as a general haberdashery lately and as of 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2013 is to let.

There are further houses of interest from the Holmes family just up the street at the junction where the imposing police station stands there is Clairmont on the right where Walton Holmes lived after 1911 until his death in 1920. Left at the same junction and on the left set back is Ashley House where the Simpson sisters lived until Bill Holmes took over and moved there with his wife Edith and had three children Glenys, Jillian and me.

Carrying on up this road A689 you leave Alston behind and head towards

Nentsberry where you will first pass Foreshield on your left and Hudgillrigg on your right stay on the main road round a sharp right and next on your left is the former Wesleyan chapel where we know lots of the family had been active members. Just before the bridge ahead is a small rough pull off on the right where if you have time would allow you to look up directly south and the farm you see there is Grassfield. Back in your transport proceed up the hill with Grassfield on the right and turn right towards the farm. There are various photo opportunities around here and if you stop please allow room for locals to pass without problem to ensure we remain on friendly terms with these people. From Grassfield you can see Hudgillrigg where Walton's wife Ann Nicholson was brought up. I think it is nice that they grew up within view then married and then went on to raise so many children who went on to ever far places. Walton's brother John went to New Zealand but returned and died at Grassfield, Of Walton's children Charles died in South Africa, Cameron went to South Africa and returned, Frederick Walton died in Durban South Africa, Herbert Sidney died in New Zealand, Mable Edna died in South Africa, Richard known as Harry died in New Zealand.

Moving off from Grassfield area continue along this narrow road enjoying the views and you will pass Low Galligill on the right and as you reach the right sharp corner Hudgillrigg is now on your left set back quite a way and facing back to Grassfield.

When you reach the main road again turn right to go through Nentsberry for a second time and on past the chapel and up past Grassfield to Nenthead. Decide now depending on your time, time of day, time of year and feelings about lead mine museums. The Nenthead Mines site is 200 acres of rugged Pennine landscape at the heart of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - is the largest and most important single site associated with the lead mining industry of the North Pennines. The Heritage Centre tells the story of this unique and dramatic site - now a Scheduled Ancient Monument - where history and landscape have been forged together.

There is however an alternative which we tend to favour probably based on the excellent soup but also it is a more hands on museum. To get to this continue up through Nenthead turning neither left or right staying on the A689 climbing up to the county boundary and enter Durham county. Down now into the valley and you will find the Killhope mining museum on your right if you have picked reasonable weather you turn right, cross the stream and enter the museum car park.

The choice is up to you, there is a small charge to enter the museum unless you only want the café and a further charge to experience a lead mine on a guided tour well worth a look.

Rejoin the main road turning right and you now travel down the Weardale valley and the first of many places of interest is Ireshopeburn where just after a sharp left on the left is a small museum that has local history at its heart and the Wesleyan chapel is also part of the museum one specific item

of interest is the large sized photo of Harthopeburn cottages.

Continue down the road to St John's Chapel where you need to turn right just before the square signposted to Langdon Beck 5. Up this road on the right is Harthopeburn cottages where at least 7 children were born to parents Richard Holmes and Jane Little. Just past the cottages on the right is a turning area where you can turn to return to St John's Chapel. Turn right and park up if you want to explore the chapel you cannot miss the spire as the chapel faces the main road.

Continue down the road and you will pass onto the Daddry shield area where almost all the farm houses on the right had Holmes families living in them Pinfold house, Front street Daddry shield (has a house known as Holmes castle), Fieldstile, High Saugh House, Hillhouse and Windyside (now known as Glenwhelt) are all known Holmes places in this area. Do not be fooled! the places they lived in were nearly all one up and one down with animals living at ground floor level and the family above, up to 11 children and their parents in a single room so we hope they all got along. Without exception all have had a more modern farmhouse attached since.

Leaving Daddry shield you now pass through Westgate and Eastgate which is where the lord of the manor had the area walled off to contain deer for his personal use. Next place on the road is Stanhope (the Weardale Tearooms above the bakers is very nice, it has a spar box just in case you did not stop at the museum and have never seen one) Stanhope is where a lot of baptisms happened for Holmes children and on down the valley to Wolsingham where again there are lots of Holmes church records but we have never found any headstones containing any relevant information. Just past Wolsingham you should find Bradley Burn on the left pull off the main road as there is a loop of the old road here. This is where John Holmes is recorded as from in the marriage records to Rachel Appleby in 1699. On the opposite side of the valley is Wiserley Hall and High and Low Wiserley. John's father Richard died in 1696 and his will states that he is of Wiserly. This makes Wiserley the furthest back record we can find and prove to be of our Holmes family.

Turn back now along the A689 back to Stanhope where you need to look for a left turn onto the B6278 signed for Middleton in Teesdale the roads are a bit narrow up here so take your time. Once over the summit of Middleton common you need to watch out for a turn right. Take the right turn and pass three farms on your left after which you will find Stotley Grange on your right. Immediately after Stotley Grange you are looking to turn left and downwards (the land on your left is Stotley Carrs and at the bottom adjacent to the main road is Stotley Quarry). When you reach the main road turn right along the B6282 Stotley Hall is now on your right. Keep going and around the corner you will find West Stotley. We do not know for sure which Stotley our ancestors lived in we have a theory but you try and decide of the last three places visited which might have been lived in the sixteen hundreds by

Richard Holmes and his wife Elizabeth who had all their seven children registered as born in Stotley. 1654 to 1667.

Keep on the B6282 until you get to Middleton in Teesdale and turn left onto the B6277 and follow the signs for Romaldkirk. Just before you arrive in Romaldkirk you will see a graveyard on your left where we have not found any headstones of ancestors. Turn left then right and you should now be entering Romaldkirk around the back of the church which is on your right and usually open. We did not find any headstones here either nor any record of a headstone which is quite surprising as there were a lot of Holmes's here Baptism, Marriage and Burial records from the Romaldkirk registers.

The Kirk Inn Pub has a really eccentric fellow who will cheerfully supply you with Coffee although you may need to tell him how much you are going to pay in 2012 our going rate was £1.50 a mug if he was being nice which I have to say he always has been.

Go up from the church and turn left this is now the B6277 again and this road will take you to Cotherstone where you need to enter the village go around a right hand corner then turn right up past a church on your left (nothing to do with our family as it was not here when our Holmes family lived at Crookbeck farm. This takes a little bit of finding. Leave the village and you will see a farm on your right on top of a small hill. Slow down and turn right where you see a dirt track to the right almost on a corner. This track takes you to Crookbeck farm I do not advise you to drive to the farm even in a hire car as you might get stuck as you will see when you walk to the farm. It is here that you will find a very nice Lady and her son who farms here. There is a date stone in what looks like the middle of the wall behind a downspout. This we believe to be the date stone of the building of the earlier farmhouse built by John Holmes and Rachel Appleby. The stone reads RAJH 1704 but because it is sandstone and weathering you might have to rely on our photo record as it is deteriorating quite quickly.

Leave the farm and continue on this road which takes you over Currack Rigg from where Cotherstone beck flows and on over Battle hill towards the main road the A66.

Just before you reach the main road you will need to turn right and go under the main road before turning right towards Penrith join the A66 and return to Penrith discussing at lengths what you have seen and hopefully how much you have enjoyed following our little trail of ancestry.

That section was a west to east and return trip. **The following section is for those of you approaching from the east side of the UK.**

Teesside International Airport is the nearest to this start but you can access the start point from the A66 which is the road from the main road A1 junction Scotch Corner in the East to Workington on the West coast. However you get there you will need to find the Minor road from the A67 just north of a town called Bowes signposted for Cotherstone. (15.5 miles from Scotch Corner about 20 minutes). Follow the minor road towards Cotherstone you will know you are on the correct road if you are passing the military ranges at Battle Hill all red flags and warning signs as well as Nissan huts and rifle ranges laid out. Before you arrive in Cotherstone there is a sharp left back on yourself onto a dirt track farm lane. The dirt track farm lane is also situated between to public footpath signposts which might help in trying to find it. This is not yet signed as the start or finish of the Holmes trail. The turn is easy to miss so try to follow this. After the rifle ranges there will be two farms together on the right side of the road as you head downhill. Towards the bottom of this slope the farm track you are looking for is on a right hand corner or perhaps more accurately a right hand curve and is a turn back on yourself to the left. I repeat the dirt track farm lane is also situated between to public footpath signposts which might help in trying to find it.

This track takes you to Crookbeck farm, I do not advise you to drive to the farm even in a hire car as you might get stuck as you will see when you walk to the farm. It is here that you will find a very nice Lady and her son who farm here. There is a date stone in what looks like the middle of the wall behind a downspout. This we believe to be the date stone of the building of the earlier farmhouse built by John Holmes and Rachel Appleby. The stone reads RAJH 1704 but because it is sandstone and weathering you might have to rely on our photo record as it is deteriorating quite quickly.

When you go back to the road turn left which takes you into Cotherstone then turn left at the road junction and you are now on the B6277 which will take you on to Romaldkirk. As you enter the village turn right and you will see the church on your left opposite the Kirk Inn.

We did not find any headstones here either nor any record of a headstone which is quite surprising as there were a lot of Holmes's here Baptism Marriage and burial records from the Romaldkirk registers.

The Kirk Inn Pub has a really nice but eccentric fellow who will cheerfully supply you with Coffee although you may need to tell him how much you are going to pay, in 2012 our going rate was £1.50 a mug if he was being nice which I have to say he always has been.

When leaving Romaldkirk you can go back up to the road you came from and turn right or go around the church turn left then turn right. You are now on the B6277 again following the road and any signs for Middleton in Teesdale

go past the auction mart on your left (big tin shed with animal pens) and turn right at the main road. This is the B6282 and after a climb up the hill look for West Stotley on your right followed shortly by Stotley Hall on your left. We do not know for sure which Stotley our ancestors lived in (we have a theory but you try and decide) of the Stotley places which might have been lived in the sixteen hundreds by Richard Holmes and his wife Elizabeth who had all their seven children registered as born in Stotley. 1654 to 1667. Turn left at the next junction and you will be going up Stotley Carrs, at the tee junction turn right Stotley Grange is now on your left.

Follow this road turning left onto the B6278 which can take you to Stanhope or if you are feeling adventurous turn off right from that same road to go to Frosterley (lovely run on a summers day) If you have gone on to Stanhope turn right onto the A689 or If you have taken the scenic route directly to Frosterley turn right onto the A689 and go on to Wolsingham where again there are lots of Holmes church records but we have never found any headstones containing any relevant information.

Just past Wolsingham you should find Bradley Burn on the left pull off the main road as there is a loop of the old road right here. This is where John Holmes is recorded as from in the marriage records to Rachel Appleby in 1699. On the opposite side of the valley is Wiserley Hall and High and Low Wiserley. John's father Richard died in 1696 and his will states that he is of Wiserly. This makes Wiserley the furthest back record we can find and prove to be of our Holmes family. Turn back now along the A689 back to Wiserley, Frosterley, Stanhope, Eastgate then Westgate before arriving at the Daddry Shield area where almost all the farm houses on the left had Holmes families living in them. Pinfold house, Front street Daddry shield (has a house known as Holmes castle), Fieldstile, High Saugh House, Hillhouse and Windyside (now known as Glenwhelt) are all known Holmes places in this area. Do not be fooled the places they lived in back then as they were nearly all one up and one down with animals living at ground floor level and the family above up to 11 children and their parents in a single room so we hope they all got along. Without exception all have had a more modern farmhouse attached since.

Continue up the road towards Saint John's Chapel the actual chapel is on the right just as you arrive and there is ample parking in the square if you want a closer look. Continue up the road a few meters where you need to turn left signposted to Langdon Beck 5. Up this road on the right is Harthopeburn cottages where at least 7 children were born to parents Richard Holmes and Jane Little. Just past the cottages on the right is a turning area where you can turn to return to St John's Chapel.

Turn left and continue up the A689 the next place of interest is a museum in Ireshopeburn adjoining the Wesleyan chapel on your right, the museum has local history at its heart and the Wesleyan chapel is also part of the museum one specific item of interest is the large sized photo of Harthopeburn

cottages.

We tend to favour the Killhope Lead mining centre probably based on the excellent soup but also it is a more hands on museum. To get to this continue up the A689 you will find the Killhope mining museum on your left if you have picked reasonable weather you turn left cross the stream and enter the museum car park.

The experience is up to you, there is a small charge to enter unless you only want the café and a further charge to experience a lead mine on a guided tour well worth a look.

There is however an alternative in Nenthead which is left out of the Killhope centre up over the top of the fell where you leave Durham and enter Cumbria which was the old county of Cumberland continue down to enter Nenthead Turn left and immediately left again to enter The Nenthead Mines site which is 200 acres of rugged Pennine landscape at the heart of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - is the largest and most important single site associated with the lead mining industry of the North Pennines. The Heritage Centre tells the story of this unique and dramatic site - now a Scheduled Ancient Monument - where history and landscape have been forged together.

From Nenthead continue down the A689 you will pass the modern cemetery on your right then turn next left Grassfield is on the right. There are various photo opportunities around here and if you stop please allow room for locals to pass without problem to ensure we remain on friendly terms with these people. From Grassfield you can see Hudgillrigg in a north westerly direction (it's the furthest away place you can see on a fine day) where Walton's wife Ann Nicholson was brought up. I think it is nice that they grew up within view then married and then went on to raise so many children who went on to ever far places. Walton's brother John went to New Zealand but returned and died at Grassfield, Of Walton's children Charles died in South Africa, Cameron went to South Africa and returned, Frederick Walton died in Durban South Africa, Herbert Sidney died in New Zealand, Mable Edna died in South Africa, Richard known as Harry died in New Zealand.

Moving off from the Grass field area continue along this narrow road enjoying the views and you will pass Low Galligill on the right and as you reach the right sharp corner Hudgillrigg is now on your left set back quite a way and facing back to Grassfield.

When you reach the main road again turn right to go to Nentsberry where you will find the former Wesleyan chapel where we know lots of the family had been active members. Just before the bridge ahead is a small pull off on the right where if you have time would allow you to look up directly south and the farm you see there is Grassfield.

Turning around you are now headed for Alston with first Hudgillrigg on your left and Foreshield on your right. Keep going until you reach Alston you are arriving at townhead Alston where there is set back on the right Ashley

House where the Simpson sisters lived until Bill Holmes took over and moved there with his wife Edith and had three children Glenys Jillian and me. Clairmont house on the right just around the junction to the left where Walton Holmes lived after 1911 until his death in 1920. Right at the same junction and on the right in the narrows down the street is the shop where Simpson and son traded first with the Simpson family then William (Bill) Holmes and lastly by Ian Holmes before being sold on. It has been trying to trade as a general haberdashery lately and as of 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2013 is to let. Down the cobbled street the market square is possibly the steepest around and claimed to be the highest market town Alston is surely a town for the hardy Saint Augustine's church is on the right just past the square. To get to Alston cemetery carry on down the cobbled street and turn left at the Junction townfoot. Turn first left after the garage and shop up a lesser road then turn right again onto a track to NY 71727 46074 (map ref). Enter the cemetery and within a few yards the group of headstones you will be interested in are on your left. Walton Holmes's headstone is white marble and stands next to Thomas Arthur Holmes's granite headstone. Very close and on the crossroad junction are further headstones which may be of interest another Thomas Holmes headstone and some from the Simpson family. Returning to the main road turn left go over the river bridge of the south Tyne river and continue climbing up to the top of Hartside where you will find a café and magnificent views depending on weather and daylight. Follow this road all the way down until you arrive in Penrith at a roundabout where you can enter Penrith (turn Right) go to the M6 Motorway (straight on) or come and visit us, straight on down the A66 over the Motorway and A66 all the way until you see our village signed on the left just after a roundabout at Cockermouth.