

# CUPOLA

## TYNE & WEAR Building Preservation Trust NEWSLETTER WINTER 2021

What a busy year so far. 2021 is already keeping us on our toes and the team is operating on a wide range of projects at completely different stages of delivery. Kari is focusing on our three projects in Dunston, Corrina is organising our office move and managing the end of the financial year, whilst I am busy completing the shell and ground floor units at 170-175 High St West, Sunderland; developing the detailed proposals to restore 177 High St West; and leading on the regeneration of the John Marley School in Scotswood.

If you have any queries about projects or membership, please contact our Office Manager  
Corrina at: [corrina@twbpt.org.uk](mailto:corrina@twbpt.org.uk)  
Yours, Martin Hulse, Trust Manager.

## TRANSFORMING DUNSTON PARISH SCHOOL



### This may be the oldest building in Dunston.

Built as a National/Church of England School, founded under the National Society for Promoting Religious Education. Opened on 4th November 1818, only a few years after the National Society was established in 1811, making this a relatively early example of a National School.

Established on the initiative of the then Rector of Whickham, Honourable and Reverend Edward Grey, as Dunston had no Anglican church of its own at this time. Reverend Grey was the

son of the First Earl Grey, and later became Bishop of Hereford.

### Can you spot the dedication stone on the end of the building?

In 19th Century England, the demand for education increased. More public and charitable schools were built as industry grew and towns expanded, more children survived infancy, and Factory Acts required the provision of education for child workers.

Church schools were typically modest, plain buildings due to limited budgets. Usually a single classroom, up to a maximum of three classrooms when pupil numbers meant boys, girls and infants were separated. Often built near the Parish Church, with the teacher's house located next to the school building.

This school closed in the late 1930's. In World War Two, a barrage balloon was anchored here. It was then used as workshop for many years, before falling into disrepair.



### School Life

Children aged from 5 to 14 years were taught here. Records suggest that in 1851 there were 80 pupils, rising to 143 in 1884, and 222 in 1909. The school was often so overcrowded that some classes had to be taken over the road in the Mission House that once stood there. New rooms for the infants were added to the school in 1879 and 1899 which helped, but these extensions left 'practically no playground'.

Due to local poverty and high unemployment many families could not always afford the weekly subscription fee 3d (1p) required for children to attend or

shoes for them to wear, so attendance varied week to week. School inspections describe 'earthen floors' and log facilities as 'inadequate, cramped and gloomy', '...dark and there is no adequate protection from the cold winds'.

Records indicate that in 1850 there were two teachers, Mistress Mary Ann and Master Joseph Atkinson. In 1886, Miss Mary Paisley was Mistress. By 1906, Edward Saunders is noted as being the Master and Miss Lily Donkins, the Infants' Mistress.

For a time pupils used sand tables, literally using sharpened sticks to practice handwriting and arithmetic in the sand. In addition to weekday lessons, a license for worship was held and a Sunday School also ran.



Grade II listed, Gateshead Council are working with Tyne & Wear Building Preservation Trust to save this significant building from demolition.

A phased approach to restoration is proposed saving the old school room, replacing the annexe with a sympathetic new build. Salvaged materials will be reused where possible and significant features retained. You can see a sketch of a design idea showing how it could look here.

**TYNE & WEAR**  
Building Preservation Trust

Tyne & Wear Building Preservation Trust raise funds through grants, lottery, trusts and donations to bring new life to old buildings and historic structures.



If you have any photographs or information about this building - please let us know:  
[kari@twbpt.org.uk](mailto:kari@twbpt.org.uk)

## Dunston: Parish School and Staiths

Possibly the oldest building in Dunston (opened in 1818), the Parish School was purchased last year by Gateshead Council from the Crown Commissioners to save it from demolition.

We are working to find it a new purpose - last used as a school in the 1930's, it anchored a barrage balloon during World War 2 and was finally a workshop before it became derelict. Having been granted planning permission, trees and vegetation threatening to destabilise the school were cleared last autumn, uncovering a wonderful challenging project.

Despite the current difficult funding climate, a successful application to the Architectural Heritage Fund (Cultural Recovery Fund) enables us to move forward on the School and our two other Dunston projects:

- At the School the funds allow us to commission the next phase of detailed design, which includes the production of accurate costs for future funding applications.

- At the Staiths Car Park it supports the transfer of ownership from the Council to TWBPT. The car park will continue to be for public use, with electric vehicle charging points also being explored.
- And finally it helps to transform the operation of Dunston Staiths with the objective of creating some much needed revenue. Plans include a small container hub that is being designed to include a kiosk with potential to generate income for the restoration project.

Since the Trust were gifted the Staiths in the 1990's, we have been trying to find a way to sustain the vast structure, a big job for our small team. Staiths Friends support has proved invaluable, and now working in partnership with the National Trust brings additional skills and expertise to the table. An exhibition of the artwork 'GAP' (Wolfgang Weileder's interpretation of the gap in the structure burnt out in 2003) is planned for Gibside in the spring, examining the role of Heritage at Risk.

**AHF** Transforming  
Heritage





Emergency funds from Historic England will enable a scaffold bridge to be purchased to cross the Staiths burnt top deck targeted by arsonists last year. This will allow us to open the walking loop again at the West End, once Covid restrictions lift. While emergency COVID-19 funds purchased the container for Staiths Friends (pictured) currently in the car park, which will move to the Staiths itself for use as a workday hub, visitor reception, and event storage.

Staiths is now on Instagram [savethestaiths]; we'd love to see your photo's, and we'll also be updating the website [www.dunstonstaiths.org.uk](http://www.dunstonstaiths.org.uk)

## High Street West Sunderland

The transformation of these buildings is incredible.

The central section was the home of the original Binn's department store from 1810 to 1880 and has been inaccessible for over a decade.

The space was created by removing the first floor from the terraced house and then extending backwards. Whilst this created a lovely space it was also a structural nightmare that has taken a huge chunk of time and resources to resolve.

We are working with two social enterprises, Pop Recs CIC and Sunshine Co-operative to bring the ground floor units back into operation. The funding for the projects is based on heritage enhancements and creating activity on the High Street.



Do you know you can become a member for only £24 per year? Visit us at [www.twbpt.org.uk](http://www.twbpt.org.uk) for more information.



## So long Alderman Fenwick's...

**We are moving office at the end of March.** Alderman Fenwick's House has been our base since 1997 and it is a big step in the development of the Trust. As part of its sale, we have undertaken extensive repairs and have worked with the new owners to help them learn how to maintain an historic building.

## Hello The John Marley Centre

The John Marley Centre in Scotswood (formally Whickham View School) will be our new home.... more about this in our next newsletter. We would love to hear from you if you've any connections with the school or were a past pupil.



## NEWS ON OTHER PROJECTS.... NEWS ON OTHER PROJECTS.... NEWS ON OTHER PROJECTS....

We continue to work on a future pipeline of projects in Newcastle, Hexham and Gateshead. There is an objective to introduce a residential element to a future project in order to diversify the portfolio. If you know of a ruin in your local community then please send us the details.