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CONTENTS

Mark Egan <i>Editorial</i>	3
<i>Dorothy Meade 1924-2023 — An Appreciation</i>	5
Neil Fleming <i>PATERNALISM, CONFLICT AND DECLINE: The seventh Marquess of Londonderry and the Coal Industry, 1906–1947</i>	7
Margaret Armstrong <i>Smallpox Vaccinations in Durham’s Unions</i>	44
Win Stokes <i>Iron, Coal and Cinders</i>	65
Naomi Booth <i>The Disappearance of Violet Hunt</i>	76
Reviews	83
The Society’s Officers	86
<i>The Durham County Local History Society Journal</i>	86
The Society and Subscription Rates	87
Membership Application Form	88
Gift Aid Declaration Form	89

EDITORIAL

I am delighted to present the latest *Journal* of the Durham County Local History Society, again with a varied range of articles covering aspects of the county's history.

The first article is a magnificent study of Lord Londonderry's career as a coal owner in the thirty years or so leading up to the nationalisation of the pits in 1947, submitted by Professor Neil Fleming of the University of Worcester. The role of the coal owners during the inter-war period is a little-studied subject which this article brings to life, showing how Londonderry tried to find ways of maintaining private ownership while also listening to the concerns of his workforce.

Moving back to the nineteenth century, Margaret Armstong has contributed a fascinating study of smallpox vaccination in County Durham, contrasting urban and rural areas. This is particularly relevant given our recent experience with Covid and the continuing debate about the ethics and effectiveness of compulsory vaccination.

Win Stokes has provided us with a second instalment of her history of coke-making in the county. Spoiler – the third instalment is already with me so there will be more to come next year. Breaking up research into discrete time periods is an effective way of tackling big subjects so if any reader has a similar ambition to write a comprehensive history of a subject, take note. I'd be happy to publish further series of articles.

Finally, last year we published a piece on the author Violet Hunt, who was born in Durham. A reader alerted me to a piece on Hunt written by Naomi Booth and she has kindly agreed for it to be republished here. I am very grateful to New Writing North for allowing us to republish this article.

I am grateful to all our contributors and please do get in touch if you would like to write for us – I am happy to provide advice and guidance.

MARK EGAN
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