

Teesdale u3a

Ronnie Tempest was the speaker at the September meeting. His topic was the history of his family which he referred to as 'the turbulent Tempests, the volatile Vanes and the stormy Stewarts. The Tempests came to England in 1080 after the Norman conquest and settled in the Craven District of Yorkshire. Over centuries their descendants occupied important military and civil positions throughout the UK and Ireland. They also took part in many of the major battles and conflicts although they were often on the losing side. However, despite this, they managed to survive and retain or regain their assets and positions, often when the heir to the estate married into a wealthy family. In the North, they developed extensive interests in commerce and in the exploitation of coal. Locally, they purchased the Wynyard Estate in 1742 for £8,000. The house became the family seat of the Vane - Tempest - Stewart family, Marquisses of Londonderry, an Anglo - Irish aristocratic dynasty. They also bought Brancepeth Castle in 1777 for £40,000. These estates were initially lost, but then regained again by 'good' marriages. The Wynyard estate remained in the Londonderry family until 1987, when the estate was sold to Sir John Hall, the well known North Eastern entrepreneur. The estate is still in his family.

Ronnie Tempest's talk was a very entertaining roller coaster ride through the centuries.

The next meeting is on Thursday 24th October, when the speaker will be

Professor Andrew Beeby, speaking about mediaeval manuscripts.

Ian Reid

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