

Through Forty Years = 1887-1927

Pages from the History of the
Northumberland & Hexham Branch
of
The Surveyor's Institution

by

Allan Mentz (Professional Associate)

Read before a meeting of the branch on
9th December 1927

Through Forty Years = 1887-1927

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Northumberland & Hexham Branch

of

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Preface

In the midst of all our varied activities, it was a pleasing thought which prompted the Secretary to arrange for us to turn aside from the consideration of the more contentious professional matters and to devote an evening to a subject possessing such a particular fascination and interest as the one which is to be dealt with tonight.

I do not know the reason why a senior member of the Branch was not asked to prepare this account, but, you will readily admit, I am heavily handicapped at the start. I had not been thought of forty years ago!

The title of this paper has been chosen because it is only an attempt to give a somewhat cursory account of the history of the Branch. I realise the imperfections of my effort, but, at the outset, I do wish to express my indebtedness to all those who have in any way helped me to get together the material for its preparation, and especially would I mention the following gentlemen:-

The Institution's Librarian

Mr W J Heskett

Mr A W Lofthouse

Mr C H Sample

Mr T E Tomlinson

Although the period of forty years may have no particular significance in history, it is nevertheless one which has received a good deal of recognition. In the life of the individual it certainly affords a most appropriate occasion for treatment in the retrospective sense.

In commemoration of forty years' service, gifts are made to employees, and the period is fittingly observed in the case of societies which have survived a similar number of years.

Transactions
Vol XLII

Our institution was no exception in this respect. It was during the preliminary stages in the preparation of these Notes that I was introduced to that classical work of Mr Julian Rogers, the last Secretary of The Institution.

His forty years' Review of The Institution History would, I feel sure, amply repay the time taken to read it by any member who has not already done so.

Like everything else the Branch had its beginning. A growing desire on the part of provincial members for some form of local organisation sufficient to bring members in all parts of the Country into more direct relations with the Council, had made itself felt in that body.

20th Annual
Report of
Council

The large committee which was appointed to advise as to the steps to be taken to secure the objects in view, reported to the Council in October, 1887, recommending inter alia, the grouping of the Country Fellows into Provincial Committees as far as possible on a County basis.

Each Committee was to elect its own Chairman to come by virtue of his office upon one of the Standing Committees of The Institution.

Adoption of
Committee's
Recommendations

The Council adopted, in the main, the Committee's recommendations, but before committing themselves to their general application throughout the Country, decided to test their operation in six widely separated districts.

The Districts selected were:-

- (1) Kent
- (2) Devon & Cornwall (combined)
- (3) Norfolk & Suffolk (combined)
- (4) Somerset & Dorset with Bristol (combined)
- (5) Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland
- (6) Leicestershire, Northamptonshire & Rutland (combined)

Map of first
selected
Districts.
Appendix 1

It is interesting to look at a map illustrating these selected Districts. There seem to be striking omissions and one wonders, for instance, why Yorkshire was not amongst the selected few.

The Branch with the largest membership today is:

“Bedford, Essex, Hertford & Middlesex”

But it found no place in the experimental areas.

Of the above mentioned six districts, three of them, viz:-

Kent
Devon & Cornwall
Leicestershire, Northampton & Rutland,

Remain to this day unchanged – the others have been mutilated by subsequent revisions.

Notice
Convening
First Meeting

This brings me to the first the original Northern Counties the opening pages of which, written and legible hand, appears a copy(corner of page missing).....

Mr Jacob Wilson, as he then was, to all the Fellows – 25 in number – to consider the Council’s proposals.

Inaugural
Meeting

The first meeting was held at the County Hotel Newcastle upon Tyne, on the 21st April 1888 and was attended by eleven members – nearly half of the number who had received notice of the meeting.

At this inaugural meeting, Mr Julian Rogers, the then Secretary of the Institution, was present, and he explained in detail the Council’s proposals with reference to the functions of the proposed Provincial Committees.

Universal satisfaction was expressed by the members with regards to the action of the Council in this matter, and there does not appear to have been any difficulty in arriving at the decision to approve the proposals. Thus our branch actually came into existence bearing the title of: -

Title

“The Northern Counties Provincial Committee”

Appendix 2
First Provincial
Chairman

The Committee comprised all the then Fellows in the four Counties and Mr (afterwards Sirs) Jacob Wilson, was elected its first Chairman.

“Transactions”
Vol XX

“The new arrangements (said the Council in their 20th Annual Report) have been received with great satisfaction by the members in the various districts, and will be extended to other parts of England should experience seem to justify the step. It only remains to add that the utmost care has been taken to give these arrangements a character purely ancillary to the existing Constitution and By-laws of the Institution, and the Council hope and believe that they will have the effect of greatly

strengthening and consolidating the Institution throughout the Provinces, and especially in the more distant Counties.”

Objects

The objects of these new arrangements have remained constant throughout the subsequent years, and they bear quotation, viz:-

- (a) To establish a system of succession to the Standing Committee and, as far as possible, through them, to the Council, on the basis of local selection and of a service rendered to The Institution.
- (b) To secure a fuller representation of the members upon the Standing Committee of The Institution.
- (c) To bring the members generally into closer touch with the Council, and to assist the Council in ascertaining their local wants and wishes.
- (d) To give the country members an extended influence over the admission of new members from their own districts, and to provide them with additional means of furthering the interests of The Institution.
- (e) To provide machinery for holding Local Examinations and occasionally Country Meetings of The Institution, and for generally increasing the interest of all classes of members in its welfare.

Of the men who formed the first Committee, three are still alive, viz:-

Surviving
Members of
original
Committee
Then and now

Mr Wm Heskett, Penrith
Mr Stanley D Stanley-Dodgson,
Whitehaven,
and Mr Thomas Tomlinson, Derby

Before coming into more intimate contact with the men who formed the original Committee, may I be allowed to digress at this point in order to say something about the times in which this decentralisation occurred, together with a word or two on the changes which have taken place

generally since then.

The Institution's Session of 1886/7 not only marked the establishment of Provincial Committees, but, in addition, the publication of the first issue of the well known "Professional Notes."

Forty years ago Small Holdings and Allotment legislation occupied a good deal of time both in and out of Parliament, and whilst the question of keeping the agricultural labourer from rushing into the towns, by giving him additional comforts and convenience on the land, was then being freely discussed, the problem today appears to be not one of prevention but of cure.

The Arbitration Act codifying the general law regulating arbitrations was not passed until 1889.

It is interesting to turn to the pages of "Transactions" for 1887/88 and to observe the record therein of discussions on Rating matters, especially on the problem of how far machinery was to be taken into consideration in estimating the Rateable Value of premises. Only in the previous year (1886) had the Courts decided the noted Tyne Boiler Works case.

The year 1887 witnessed the celebration of the Jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria.

Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister then and Mr Gladstone was 80 years of age.

In addition to these celebrated figures, there were others – Mr Joseph Chamberlain, Mr Randolph Churchill (father of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer) and Mr Parnell. All these have gone and their successors are now in, at least, middle age.

Income Tax stood at 6d. in the £ in 1888, and the author of the "Peoples budget of 1909" had not then entered Parliament.

Big changes have taken place in housing and household furniture.

The vast increase in small houses with small rooms has made the need of small furniture absolutely necessary.

The articles which surround us in our modern homes are different from those which were in vogue forty years ago.

The Victorian Drawing Room with its antimacassars, whatnots, and its tales full of

rickety little ornaments, is a relic of the past.

Well may it be said that “the whole trend of our time is towards simplicity, economy, compactness and utility, combined with beauty.”

Tremendous progress has been made in the use of electrical energy and remarkable development has occurred in the means of communication.

In an ever increasing manner all these changes are bringing multifarious problems and tasks to the community, but perhaps to no one more than to the Surveyor. In this connection take, for instance, the subject of “Compulsory Purchase” which has loomed so large in our life of recent years. The professional practitioner is now particularly concerned with the acquisition of land for general public purposes such as road construction and improvement, slum clearance, housing, and town planning, and the mention of the:-

Development and Road Improvement
Funds Act, 1909.
Acquisition of Land (Assessment of
Compensation) Act, 1919.
Town Planning Act, 1925.
Housing Act, 1928.

are only a few of the many Acts of Parliament which did not trouble the Surveyor of forty years ago.

I do not say that in the past Surveyors were not concerned with this subject, but adopting the language of another – promoters of an undertaking, including the State, the Local Authorities, Railway Companies, etc, were looked upon as lawful plunder, and claims for land taken had very little relation to Market Value.

The men

To return from my wandering.

As the County Branches have now become such a definite and essential part of The Institution’s organisation, I feel sure that you would like me to linger for a while on the names of the men who put the Council’s original proposals into operation so effectively.

To do this again I mention my handicap for I did not know these men personally. Notwithstanding this, however, I have managed to get into touch with those who could speak from personal knowledge and their observations are all the more illuminating.

Sir Jacob Wilson, the first chairman, was one of

the most prominent agriculturalists of his day.

At the time he became Provincial Chairman he was living at Chillingham Barns, near Chatton, and was agent to the Earl of Tankerville and other landowners in the North of England.

On the formation of the Board of Agriculture in 1989 he was appointed Agricultural Adviser and Director of the Land Division.

He appears to have been best known in connection with the Royal Agricultural Society.

The energy which he displayed in everything connected with agriculture, combined with his good nature, kindness of heart and courteous manner, endeared him to all who came into contact with him from the highest to the lowest.

Mr Tomlinson of Derby, was one of Sir Jacob's contemporaries in the late eighties and he has very kindly written the following to me:-

“He was a most genial and kindhearted man, and could never do too much for anyone who asked him for any help. He was heart and soul in his Directorship for the Royal Agricultural Society, and there can be no doubt that this absorbing interest turned him aside from the less interest of a Land Agent's routine life, and his continual absence in London and elsewhere, where he had heaps of friends, rendered it necessary for him to be much from home.

He was a man who thoroughly enjoyed the good things of life, and I think he liked London almost better than the country.”

Appendix 2

No one looking down the list of the names of those who formed the original committee can do so without being struck by the sight of the names which are familiar in our present ranks. Amongst such are Mr Thomas Sample whose two sons are honoured members of The Institution today.

Then Mr Theodore Hedley gives us a link with the past. The names of his grandfather, father and uncle figure in that list of forty years ago.

Still another link; the late Mr A W F Eade was in that company, and our Branch today is the richer for the presence of his son.

Thomas Sample

Mr Thomas Sample followed the professional footsteps of his father and carried on the agencies of the Northumberland Estate of the Duke of Portland, Sir Edward Blackett, Bart., and many

others.

He was largely employed in Arbitration cases in connection with Railways, Water Companies, and other public bodies and also as a Commissioner in the division of Commons.

He had a large practice as a valuer of agricultural properties.

He was a Justice of the Peace for Northumberland, a keen sportsman, his chief recreations being shooting and fishing.

He was very strongly in favour of the Surveyors' Institution and especially welcomed the formation of the Provincial Committees.

In addition to the foregoing, Mr Tomlinson says that Mr Thomas Sample was quite a different sort of man from Sir Jacob Wilson though a great friend of the latter.

“Mr Sample loved to be at home in the country, and never more than being amongst his friends at Matfen and Bothal. He uses to make it a rule to answer all letters in his own handwriting. He wrote a beautiful hand and you could always depend on getting an answer to a letter.

He was one of the best judges of land in the North of England, and was a most likeable man by tenant farmers, though pretty severe on bad farming.”

Cumberland
and
Westmorland
Members

As I have already mentioned, the areas covered by the old Provincial Committee included Cumberland and Westmorland, and because of the specially interesting contents of a letter I have received from Mr Wm J Heskett relating to men from these Counties, I beg leave to quote it in its entirety.

Mr Heskett says –

“of the six original members of the Northern Counties Provincial Committee, Mr Stanley Dodgson and myself survive and are both still in practice. We were elected as Fellows in the same year 1888.

Stanley-
Dodgson

“Mr Stanley-Dodgson is agent for Lord Lonsdale's West Cumberland Estate.

During the war years he was Chairman of the War/Agricultural Executive Committee in connection with which he did an enormous amount of work and rendered his County and Country

splendid service.

He is still hale and hearty, Chairman of the County Agricultural Committee and doing a great deal of useful public work.

Taking those who have 'gone before' :-

James Hudson

James Hudson whose address you gave as Whitehaven. At that time he was Agent for Lord Lonsdale's West Cumberland Estates but later he lived at Penrith and was Agent for Lord Lonsdale's East Cumberland and Westmorland Estates.

Besides this important appointment he was often engaged in valuation and compensation cases, one of the most famous being that of the 'Countess Ossalinsky and the Manchester Corporation' which all surveyors accustomed to that kind of work are familiar with.

Alexander Webster

Alexander Webster of the firm of Webster Son and Banks of Kendal, had a very large practice in Westmorland and Lancashire but retired some years ago.

Frederick Puchard

Frederick Puchard was for many years Agent for the late Lord Becteve at Underley and afterwards until the time of his death acted in that capacity for Lady Henry Cavendish Bentinck, Lord Becteve's daughter. He was largely responsible for the building up of the Estate and held the confidence of the many tenants to such an extent that a common saying amongst them was 'anything Puchard says is right'.

John Holme

John Holme was agent for the Dallam Tower Estate and acted for other owners as well. He was Chairman of the Board of Guardians for the Kendal Union and Chairman of the Assessment Committee and had considerable experience in Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire and Yorkshire.

It is interesting to note that these two last named families are now united. Mr. Puchard's eldest son - Mr. F.B. Puchard - now agent at Underley, having married Mr. John Holme's daughter - Miss Constantine Holme - the gifted authoress who writes under her maiden name.

Wm J. Heskett

As regards myself, I am still in practice (Senior partner of the firm of Wm. Heskett & Son).

I well remember the meeting at Ambleside jointly with the Lancashire Committee on June the 5th 1891, and the visit to Thirlmere on the following day.

The meeting was followed by a very festive dinner and the visit to Thirlmere was of special interest as several of us had been engaged either for or against the Manchester Corporation in their numerous cases in connection with the properties and rights which the Corporation had acquired.

I assisted my father fifty years ago in the valuation for the owner of the first property acquired by the Corporation, namely, the Dale Head Hall Estate, Manor of Legberthwaite and extensive rights in the lake. After that was settled, we acted for the Corporation in most of the other cases at Thirlmere.

These were the 'good old days' before surveyors were cramped by the Acquisition of Land Act, and when the skilful manipulation of Special Adaptability and eloquent pleading of the hardships of compulsory purchase, resulted in prices that would now seem fabulous.

I certainly thought I should never live to be engaged in another Manchester Water Scheme, as everyone thought Manchester was supplying herself with water for almost all time to come. I however happen now to be engaged in most of the cases relating to the Reservoirs of the Corporation's Haweswater Scheme, and have had the pleasure in being associated in the largest of these cases with my old friend and your esteemed member – Mr John M. Clark.

During my year of office as Chairman of the Northern Counties Committee, the Summer Meeting was held at Edinburgh, when a fair number of members attended from Cumberland, Westmorland, Northumberland and Durham.

In addition to visiting the many places of interest in Edinburgh, the members drove out to the Forth Bridge to see that colossal structure which was then new to many and was examined with great interest by all who attended. We had the usual dinner dear to the hearts of all Surveyors and everyone enjoyed themselves.

Division of
original District
into two
Committees

I should mention here that in 1894, the Northern Counties Provincial Committee was split into two Committees – one comprising the counties of Cumberland & Westmorland and the other – Northumberland and Durham.

A.W.F. Eade

Mr Arthur W.F. Eade, who was a member of the original Committee, for many years practised as a Land Agent in the Darlington and Sunderland

Districts where he had the management of several private estates including those belonging to the Backhouse, Pease and Stobart families.

He was an M.A of Cambridge University and a son of the late Canon Eade.

He was very much interested in the improvement of fat and dairy stock, had control of the Home Farms of:-

Arthur Pease, Esqr., at Tees Grange, and Mrs. R. Backhouse at Hurworth-on-Tees and was one time President of the Darlington Chamber of Agriculture of which he was a keen supporter.

Forestry matters claimed his interest and attention, and a good deal of the planting over the Wolsingham Estate stands to his credit.

Although of a retiring disposition, he was a regular attender at the meetings of the Committee and was Chairman in 1904.

In passing, it may be added that several well known members of the profession served their articles with him including Mr Punched of Kirby Lonsdale and Mr A.W. Lofthouse, District Valuer, Middlesbrough.

Henry John Curry

Mr. Henry John Curry was a Land Agent and head of the firm of Henry J. Curry & Co.

He was a Justice of the Peace for the County of Durham and was an expert agricultural valuer.

John Walton Taylor

Mr. John Walton Taylor had a large business as an Architect and Building Surveyor in Newcastle.

He practised in Newcastle from 1881. And among the most notable of the buildings he designed there, are the Young Men's Christian Association and the Soldiers Home.

He took a very active part in the work of the Committee.

Robert Brydon

Mr. Robert Brydon was the well known horse breeder.

He was agent to Earl Vane, afterwards the Marquis of Londonderry, on whose behalf he established the celebrated stud of Clydesdale at Seaham.

He took an active part in the organisation of agricultural matters of every description.

John Hunt
Hedley

Mr. John Hunt Hedley (father of Mr. Theo. F. Hedley) was perhaps the most prominent Rating Surveyor in the North of England.

His ability as a valuer of Collieries and of all kinds of manufacturing concerns was recognised and his service were in demand in all parts of the Country.

Constitution
and
Regulations

It is said "we live by changing" and one is not surprised to find that the Constitution and Regulations of the Branch have been modified from time to time to meet the needs of changing conditions.

Time was when Professional Associates were only allowed to attend meetings of the Provincial Committee, and it was not until 1906. that they were given the right to become full members of it.

Our present Executive Committee took the place of the former Consultative Sub-Committee as it was called.

For many years this Sub-Committee consisted of only two members and was formed to simplify the method of dealing with applications for membership.

Provincial Committee ceased to be so called when the new Rules in 1919. reconstructed the provincial organistaions, and took on the name of "County Branches."

Finance
(1909-10)
Act, 1910

In 1910/11. the Branch may be said to have experienced a new birth. Hitherto its meeting had been held annually, but the passing of the Finance (1909-10) Act, 1910. marked a new era in its life. Henceforth regular meetings of the Committee and Branch took place.

The provisions of the above mentioned Act of parliament relating to the Land Taxes provided plenty of material for consideration and much of the Committee's time was spent in dealing with matters relating to the same which had been referred to them by the Institution.

Finance

One of the most surprising things I observed in reading through the Minute Book, was the complete absence of any reference to the expenses of the Branch until seven years ago (1920) when a Banking Account was opened consequent upon the receipt of the Institution's grant of Five Shillings (5/-d) per head of the Branch membership.

Prior to this I understand the Honorary Secretary presented his account each year for payment, and a Five Pound (£5) Note usually covered the expenses. Of course the activities of the Branch were not so great in the early days as they are now.

Branch Dinners The year 1912. marked the innovation of Branch Dinners which, since the Great War, have become a recognised annual function of no little importance.

Papers Ignoring the splendid contributions made by members of the Branch during the last say ten years, very few Papers or Addresses have been made at Branch Meetings.

Only one member of the Branch appears to have read a Paper an Ordinary General Meeting of the Institution in London, and this was in April 1892. when Mr. E.G. Wheler of Alnwick, read a Paper on :- “Leases and Limited Liability Companies.”

Institution's Country Meeting at Newcastle In May 1904. the Annual Summer Meeting of The Institution was held at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in response to a joint invitation from the Northumberland & Durham and Cumberland & Westmorland Provincial Committee.

The programme on this occasion included a Paper on :-

“The Agriculture of Cumberland.”

By Mr. John Smith Hill, an Associate of the Institution and Principal of the Agricultural college at Aspatria.

This Paper was awarded the first Council Gold Medal for the best Sessional Paper.

Representation on Council No Paper of this description would be complete without a reference to the representation of the Branch on the Council of the Institution. It is Mr. J. McClare Clark has been and still is the only member of the Branch on the Council and that in 1922. he was President of the Institution as well as Chairman of the Branch to which latter office he has been elected on more than one occasion.

Appendix 3

Conclusion In conclusion, it may quite rightly be said that the establishment of Provincial Committees was an act of far sighted policy and, endorsing the opinion of Mr. Julian Rogers, was one which, next to the examinations, has done more than anything else to out The Institution on a footing of permanent prosperity.

Durham	Newcastle.	*Armstrong, T.J. Bolam, Wm. T. Parmeter, Frank *Taylor, John W.
	Darlington	Dent, Ralph J. *Eade, Arthur W.F. Minter, Wm. &Scarth, Wm. T. Waistell, Wm.
	Durham	Wall, Geo. Y.
	Gateshead	*Wallace, Henry
	Seaham Harbour	*Brydon, Robert
	Stockton	Curry, Hy. J.
Cumberland	Sunderland	*Hedley, John Hunt Hedley, Thos Fenwick Hedley, Thos, Fenwick, Jnr Potts, Joseph, Jnr
	Penrith	*Heskett, Wm. J.
	Whitehaven	*Hudson, James Stanley-Dodgson, Stanley D.
Westmorland	Kendal	Webster, Alexander
	Kirkby Lonsdale	*Punchard, Fredk
	Milnthorpe	Holme, John

NOTE :-

The names of these Fellows who have been Provincial Chairmen are distinguished thus *

-:-:-:-:-:-:-

Appendix 3

THE SURVEYORS' INSTITUTION.
Northumberland and Durham Branch
formerly
The Northern Counties Provincial Committee.

Year	No of Members of Branch	Chairman	Vice-Chairman	Secretary
1887/88	25	Jacob Wilson		
1888/89	29	-do-		

1889/90	35	W.T. Scarth		J.J. Bowman
1890/91	40	F. Runchard		Alex. Webster
1891/92	48	W.J. Heskett		Jas. Hudson
1892/93	49	Thos. Sample		Wm. C. Sample
1893/94	50	Hy. Wallace		Nath'l Clark
1894/95	31	(Jas. Hudson (T.J. Armstrong T.J. Armstrong		(J.J. Bowman (Chas. Sample
1895/96	31			
1896/97	34		-do-	
1897/98	32		-do-	
1898/99	30		-do-	
1899/00	27		-do-	
1900/01	28		-do-	
1901/02	29	C. Rowlandson		
1902/03	25		-do-	A.W.F. Eade
1903/04	26	J.M. Clark		C.H. James
1904/05	29		-do-	C.H. Sample
1905/06	49	A.W.F. Eade		S. M. Rowlandson
1906/07	48	C.E.Carr		D.F. Aynsley
1907/08	53	R. Brydon		J.A. Robinson
1908/09	51	Sir F.E.Walker, Bt		A.P.Ker
1909/10	53	H.T. Peirson		-do-
1910/11	54	C.H.Sample		-do-
1911/12	75	J.H.Hedley		-do-
1912/13	97	J.W.Taylor		-do-
1913/14	110		-do-	-do-
1914/15	110	Wm. Towend		Chas. McGhie
1915/16	107		-do-	-do-
1916/17	105	G.T. Brown		-do-
1917/18	102		-do-	-do-
1918/19	102	W.Waite Sanderson		-do-
1919/20	107		-do-	-do-
1920/21	114	J.Extra Miller	F.J. Edge	-do-
1921/22	124	F.J.Edge	W.J.Cochrane	Wilfrid Turpin
1922/23	126	J.M. Clark	-do-	-do-
1923/24	125	W.J.Cochrane	Jas Scott	-do-
1924/25	129	Jas Scott	J.P. Allen	-do-
1925/26	132	J.P. Allen	Chas. McGhie	(-do-
				(W.Jennens Hackett
1926/27	133	Chas. McGhie	Jos. Spain	W.Jennens Hackett
1927/28	139	Jos. Spain	John Scott	-do-

* Nov. 1894. District divided into two committees, viz :-

Northumberland & Durham
and Cumberland & Westmorland

Note :- No Vice-Chairman elected until 1920

“THROUGH 70 YEARS”

Brief History of the Northumberland & Durham Branch of the Royal Institution of Chartered
Surveyors
by

IAN N. SWANSON, F.R.I.C.S., A.A.I. Hon. Secretary.

The records which the Branch holds consist only of Minute Books, which go back to January, 1922 and the only other information that is immediately available is a paper written by Mr. Allen Mertz and read before the Branch in 1927. At that time previous Minutes and records must have existed but they have disappeared and none of the then Branch Members who are still in the Branch know what has happened to them.

Prior to 1887 there was a growing desire on the part of Provincial members for some form of local organisation sufficient to bring members in all parts of the country into a rather more direct relationship with the Council. The Council appointed a Committee to advise on the steps to be taken and in October 1887 a recommendation was made that country Fellows (not Professional Associates at that time) should be formed into Provincial Committees as far as possible on a County basis. Each was to elect its own Chairman to come by virtue of his office upon one of the standing Committees of the Institution. That privilege still continues though this year ten members were on such Committees. The Council adopted the Committee's recommendations, but before committing themselves to a general application throughout the country, decided to test their operation in six widely separated districts, The districts were:-

- (1) Kent
- (2) Devon & Cornwall
- (3) Norfolk & Suffolk
- (4) Somerset, Dorset & Bristol
- (5) Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland & Durham
- (6) Leicestershire, Northamptonshire & Rutland.

The boundaries of three of the above districts, Kent, Devon & Cornwall and Leicestershire, Northamptonshire & Rutland, remain unchanged to this day. The formation of the Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland and Durham District persists to the extent that our Member of Council still represents Cumberland and Westmorland as well as this Branch.

This action on the part of the Council led to the formation of the branch and Mr. Jacob Wilson (later Sir Jacob Wilson) one of the most prominent agriculturalists of the day and agent to the Earl of Tankerville and other land owners in the north of England, convened a meeting of the Fellows in the four Counties. They numbered 25 and a copy of the convening letter appeared in the original Minute Book, every letter having been written to each member in Sir Jacob's own hand. The first meeting was held 21st April, 1888, at the County Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne, where we are meeting tonight, and was attended by 11 members – nearly half of the number over the four Counties had received notice of the meeting. The Secretary of the Institution was present and as a result of this meeting, the Branch actually came into existence under the title of “The Northern Counties Provincial Committee.” The Committee comprised all the then Fellows in the four Counties and Sir Jacob Wilson was elected its first Chairman.

“The new arrangements (said the Council in their 20th Annual Report) have been received with great satisfaction by the members in the various districts, and will be extended to other parts of England should experience seem to justify the step. It only remains to add that the utmost care has been taken to give these arrangements a character purely ancillary to the existing Constitution and Bye-laws of the Institution, and the Council hope and believe they will have the effect of greatly strengthening and consolidating the Institution throughout the provinces, and especially in the more distant counties.”

The objects of these new arrangements have remained constant throughout the subsequent years, and they bear quotation, viz:-

- (a) To establish a system of succession to the Standing Committees and, as far as possible, through them, to the Council, on the basis of local selection and of service rendered to the Institution.
- (b) To secure a fuller representation of the members upon the Standing Committees of the Institution.
- (c) To bring the members generally into closer touch with the Council and to assist the Council in ascertaining their local wants and wishes.
- (d) To give the country members an extended influence over the admission of new members from their own districts, and to provide them with additional means of furthering the interests of the Institution.
- (e) To provide machinery for holding Local Examinations and occasionally Country Meetings of the Institution, and for generally increasing the interest of all classes of members in its welfare.

Of the men who formed the first Committee, Mr. William J. Heskett of Penrith, Mr. Stanley D. Stanley-Dodgson of Whitehaven and Mr. Thomas Tomlinson of Derby were still alive in 1927, but unfortunately none of them are with us now.

When the Institution was formed legislation was chiefly concerned with small holdings and allotments and one of the great questions of the day was to stop the drift of agricultural labourers into the towns.

The year 1887 was the Jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria and Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister. There were no typewriters or telephones, no cars or trams so that all travelling for professional work had to be done by train, horse vehicle, horseback, or bicycle. Income Tax stood at the then alarming figure of 6d in the £. The subject of Compulsory Purchase did not then loom large in the profession, but where Surveyors were concerned with it the promoters of an undertaking, including the State, the Local Authorities, the Railway Companies, etc., were looked upon as lawful plunder. Now the pendulum has swung very much the other way.

It may be of interest to give a brief account of a few of the leading personalities of the Branch in 1887.

Sir Jacob Wilson, the founder of the Branch, who lived at Chillingham Barns near Chatton, and as stated above, was agent to the Earl of Tankerville and other landowners in the North of England. On the formation of the Board of Agriculture in 1889, he was appointed Agricultural Adviser and Director of the Land Division. He was best known through his work in building up the Royal Agricultural Society, of which he was a Director.

Mr Thomas Sample was agent of the Northumberland Estate of the Duke of Portland, was largely employed in Arbitration cases in connection with Railways, Water Companies and other public bodies and also as a Commissioner in the division of Commons. He had a large practice as a valuer of agricultural properties. Like Sir Jacob Wilson, he had a practice of answering all letters in his hand writing. He was considered to be one of the best judges of land in the North of England.

Mr. Stanley-Dodgson was agent for Lord Lonsdale's West Cumberland Estate.

Mr. James Hudson, of Whitehaven, was agent for Lord Lonsdale's East Cumberland Estate. He was often engaged in valuation and compensation cases, one of the most famous being that of the 'Countess Ossalinsky and the Manchester Corporation.'

Mr. Alexander Webster, of the firm of Webster Son & Banks, of Kendal.

Mr. Frederick Punchard, agent for Lord Bective of Underley.

Mr. John Holme, agent for the Dallas Tower Estate

Mr W.J.Heskett, senior partner of the firm of William Heskett & Sons.

Mr. A.W.F. Eade, a prominent land agent in Darlington and Sunderland, who acted for the Backhouse, Pease and Stobart families.

Mr. H.J. Curry, land agent, head of the firm of Henry Curry & Co.

Mr. J. Walton Taylor had a large practice as an architect and building surveyor in Newcastle.

Mr. Robert Brydon was agent to the Marquess of Londonderry and was leading agriculturalist.

Mr. John Hunt Hedley, was thought to be the most prominent Rating Surveyor in the North of England.

In 1894 the Northern Counties Provincial Committee was split into two Committees, one comprising the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland and the other Northumberland & Durham, so really 1894 is the date of the founding of the Branch as we know it today. At that time Professional Associates were only allowed to attend meetings and it was not until

1906 that they were given any rights of representations on the Committee or of taking active part in the business of meetings.

At first the Executive Committee which took the place of the former Consultative Sub-Committee of the Provincial Committee, consisted only of two members and was formed to simplify the method of dealing with applications for membership. Provincial Committees ceased to be so called when the new Rules in 1919 reconstructed the provincial organisations, and they then took on the name of "County Branches." Up to 1910 the Branch only met annually, but after the passing of the Finance Act, 1910, it was imbued with a new life and henceforward regular meetings of the Branch and Committee took place.

There were no records of any Branch finances until 1920 when a banking account was opened, consequent upon the receipt of the Institution's grant for 5/- per head of the Branch membership, a figure which until a year ago was not increased except of an extra 5/- per head for the first 100 members. In those days a £5 note usually covered the expenses of running in the Branch.

The first Branch Dinner was held in 1912 and ever since the first world war, our Dinner has always been considered to be one of the best of the season in Newcastle.

In May 1904 the Annual Summer Meeting of the Institution was held at Newcastle in response to a joint invitation from the Northumberland & Durham and Cumberland & Westmorland Provincial Committee. I have not been able to find out what activities were undertaken on this occasion.