

# **‘Our folk on twilting in our parlour’: The Pragmatic Emotional Networks of the Quilt Stampers of Allendale, 1870-1920.**

Deborah McGuire. Authors final agreed copy. January 2023.

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Fig. 1. *The Wedding Quilt*, by Ralph Hedley. Print of Oil Painting. 1883.  
Beamish: The Living Museum of the North. NEG19405.

In March 1833, the Weardale smelter Thomas Dixon wrote in his diary of a regular event when he recorded ‘our folk on twilting in our parlour’, probably a visit from his wife Jane’s family, perhaps a similar scene to the painting the artist Ralph Hedley made in 1883 (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> On other occasions, when Jane and their daughter ‘twilted’ with family, Thomas recorded his own collaborative work; making a barrow with his father or helping his folks to kill and salt their pig.<sup>2</sup> In doing so he formed a rare record of a common occurrence, the shared familial labour of female quilt making, occurring alongside a similar network of cooperative male labour.

Thomas worked as a lead ore smelter in upland County Durham, and he and Jane farmed a smallholding as part of a typical complex network of family and friends who shared farming labour, the financial risk and reward of mining, and thrifty sociable textile making for the home. These networks were both pragmatic and emotional. Thomas recorded the work of quilting as equal to the labour of the farm or mine in its value to the family unit.<sup>3</sup> Yet, we only see Jane’s work in the shadowy background of Thomas’s diary. Women’s labour was long underexplored by historians, especially the domestically sited labour of provincial working-class women in communities where men’s work in heavy industry garners most scholarly focus.<sup>4</sup> This paper explores quilt making as paid labour through the lives of George Gardiner (1852 -c.1900) and Elizabeth Sanderson (1861-1933) in the decades around 1900. Gardiner and Sanderson’s lives sit at the centre of a mythologised history of quilt pattern markers in this area. This research reconstructs their emotional networks, asking what more we might learn about the societal importance of quilt making when we consider it a binding agent in a wider emotional and economic network.<sup>5</sup>

## **The Quilt Stampers**

Fig. 2. Quilt Marking Templates of Ann Matthewson and her mother Mary Cookson. Card with pencil. c.1915. Ashington Village. The Quilt Collection. 2012T-26-A.

George Gardiner and Elizabeth Sanderson are celebrated firstly, not as the stitchers of quilts but as significant quilt pattern markers and designers - colloquially known as 'stampers'- from the Allendale Valley, near Hexham, Northumberland (Fig. 4). Stitching complex patterns in the quilt frame required a marked design for the needleworker to follow, and in common with practices like embroidery this was sometimes a paid-for service.<sup>6</sup> Quilt pattern marking had been a commercial undertaking in England for more than a century before Gardiner and Sanderson.<sup>7</sup> One local quilt designer Joe Hedley (c.1750-1826) of nearby Warden, is only known due to the newspaper appeals to identify his murderer, after his violent death at the hands of an unknown assailant in his home.<sup>8</sup> The *Newcastle Courant* recorded the importance of good pattern design at the time; 'He [Joe] was quite a genius in his line, and the taste which he displayed in the invention of his figures, and the care and dispatch with which he drew them, were very astonishing'.<sup>9</sup> The phrase 'stampers' is a colloquial misnomer. In embroidery, paid-for patterns were stamped in ink but in quilting the term 'handlaid' better describes the process, where patterns cut from brown paper were placed on the stretched material of the quilt 'top' and marked around' (Fig. 2).<sup>10</sup> The resilient folk tradition of quilt making in the area supported the trade as needleworkers availed themselves of a service to create a design in pencil, that they then went on to sew at home (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3. North Country Wholecloth Quilt (Allendale Style), Cream with pink cotton reverse. c.1900-1920. The Quilt Collection. 2009-9-A.

Marking as a trade appears to have died out in England during the nineteenth century, but after 1870 a new commercial flourishing occurred in the northeast of a unique complex decorative quilting genre, often referred to as 'Durham' or 'North Country' style.<sup>11</sup> The genesis of this creative transformation is attributed to an Allendale draper called George Gardiner. Later, his 'apprentice' Elizabeth Sanderson is credited with further popularising the designs.<sup>12</sup> The distinctive Allendale look was characterised by complex central roundels of free-form luxuriant blooms and wide complex borders (Fig. 3).<sup>13</sup> Yet the accuracy of their story, much repeated and embellished, has been questioned by scholars such as Dorothy Osler in 1998, who queried the fulsomeness, veracity, and exactitude of these accounts given that so little verifiable evidence existed around their professional relationship.<sup>14</sup> Further, the numbers of 'stamped' extant quilts that have survived in museum collections and private hands suggested a much larger network of skilled quilt stampers and makers was also active.<sup>15</sup>

## Key Research Objectives

Four specific objectives were set to manage the wide scope of this research, to:

- i) Establish the nature of the relationship between Elizabeth Sanderson and George Gardiner.
- ii) Interrogate the canon history of the Allendale quilt stampers by returning to the twentieth-century sources of their story.
- iii) Assess the significance of emotional connections in this trade.
- iv) Explore the emotional and pragmatic network of quilt stampers connected to Gardiner and Sanderson, using objects, genealogy, and geography.

## Methodological Approach

This study is a geographical, matriarchal, microhistory – locating Gardiner and Sanderson in familial place and time. Gardiner's history was poorly defined and, whilst Sanderson was more securely located in the census records, her connection to Gardiner remained opaque.<sup>16</sup> Previous paper-based researchers struggled with the ubiquity of the names Elizabeth Sanderson and George Gardiner, both common in Allendale and Weardale in this period. George Gardiner's grandmother was identified by Osler as one of the many Elizabeth Sandersons, but no direct family linkage could be made.<sup>17</sup> It seemed possible, given the shared name and George and Elizabeth's alleged professional connection, that there may be a familial link between them, but this was not clear through patrilineal inheritance mapping. Gardiner was variously spelled Gardner which also further complicated searches. To attempt to break this impasse, I returned to a technique used previously in my MA research - the mapping of matrilineal networks - to uncover significant female relationships other than just those marked by male surname.<sup>18</sup> This 3D 'web' approach allowed me to travel sideways and diagonally, mapping women to their sisters, aunts and nieces, and revealed matrilineal connections between families, which were previously invisible.

Fig 4. The Allendale and Weardale valleys. Google Maps by Creative Commons Licence.

Unexpectedly, the study also offered an additional approach, that of geographical place or 'neighbourliness'.<sup>19</sup> By 'walking along the street' of the census and recording who lived in the neighbouring houses in these small settlements it also opened up new avenues of research into influence and sociability, revealing that an emotional network might just as easily be fictive as kin based.<sup>20</sup> The study limits its geography to two connected upland valleys in the North Pennines west of Durham (Fig. 4), stretching from the town of Hexham in an 'L' shape, up the Allendale Valley (including the centre, Allendale Town to the high village of Allenheads and its hamlets) and then across the moorland watershed and down into the valley of Weardale (through Stanhope and as far east as Wolsingham). Whilst on a map these areas appear less connected (and stretch over the county boundary

between Northumberland and County Durham), the valley geography of the region meant that they shared significant practical linkage and thus family connections. I used the 1866 and 1903 Ordnance Survey maps at a scale of 1 inch to a mile and local archive land sales documents to accurately place my historical actors in geographical place.<sup>21</sup>

I revisited the original diaries of Muriel Rose, the Rural Industries Bureau Officer for Crafts and Industrial Art, held by the Farnham Craft Study Centre and Beamish: The Living Museum of the North. Rose's 1952 diary is the only remaining record of the research trip for Mavis FitzRandolph's 1954 book *Traditional Quilting* – this book is the original published source of the names Gardiner and Sanderson.<sup>22</sup> I drew on the accession records and extant quilts of museum collections such as The Bowes Museum, Beamish and The Quilters' Guild Collection and on the records of local history societies such as the Allen Valley History Group. I used local newspaper archives such as the *Newcastle and Hexham Courants*; local history archives such as the Northumbrian Records Office for oral histories, ephemera related to quilt making, family wills and legal papers, and the records of male mining participation. Women are notoriously underrepresented in the formal paper documents of economic history, particularly working-class women.<sup>23</sup> I used archive sources of men's wills, legal tenancy agreements which reflected miner's 'bargains', and business transactions to map women through their male family members when no other means was possible.<sup>24</sup> I overlaid oral history and incomplete accession records of the past (often referring only to Mrs Husbands-Christian-name Patriarchal-surname) to cross-reference the identities of women who were involved in this complex web. I will refer throughout the rest of the paper to women using both their own birth family then married family names to better illustrate their shared connections.

## **The History and Historiography of North Country Quilting**

The history of quilt making across Britain has, until recently, remained a neglected subject. The quilt stampers of the North Country - far from London, outside of prevailing fashions in needlework and unrecognised by art historians - pass wholly uncommented upon in published literature until 1935, by which time Elizabeth Sanderson and George Gardiner were both dead.<sup>25</sup> The social historian Dorothy Hartley asserted in 1939 that quilts were used in this region 'as commonly as blankets'.<sup>26</sup> Yet, no formal published account of the practice of quilt making in Durham or Northumberland occurs until the Dryad author Beatrice Scott published *The Craft of Quilting in the North Country* in 1935 (Fig. 5).<sup>27</sup> It is likely that the scholarly and commercial interest in north country quilting in the 1930's was stimulated by the handicrafts exhibitions of the newly formed National Federation of Women's Institutes in London, where intricate North Country wholecloth quilts were a surprise public draw.<sup>28</sup>

Fig. 5. Beatrice Scott, *The Craft of Quilting in the North Country* (The Dryad Press, 1935). Mavis FitzRandolph, *Traditional Quilting* (Batsford, 1954).

Scott, the daughter of a draper and wife of a coastal Durham miner wrote in 1935 of a diffuse and vibrant community of needleworkers across the area, 'You often hear today the words "the revival of quilting", but the fact is that quilting has never been dead in the northern counties of England. It is a craft which we northerners look upon as a very ordinary household occupation'.<sup>29</sup> Although Scott described a community that she was part of, and Sanderson survived until 1933, neither Gardiner nor Sanderson were mentioned in her booklet and do not appear in accounts in print until twenty years later in a 1954 book *Traditional Quilting*, by Mavis Doriel Hay FitzRandolph (Fig. 5).<sup>30</sup>

In 1922 Mavis Doriel Hay (1894–1979), a well-connected middle-class Oxford graduate and later crime novelist with an interest in 'traditional peasant art', was recruited to work, with a colleague Helen FitzRandolph, on the first survey of rural industry for the Agricultural Economics Research Institute.<sup>31</sup> After the First World War, The Rural Industries Bureau (RIB) was set up as a government funded body tasked with supporting the economy of rural areas. By 1928, as the economy fell into recession and then depression, Hay was appointed to assist the committee to develop and market quilting in Durham and South Wales to metropolitan audiences through London-based galleries promoting 'modern craft'.<sup>32</sup> Hay went on to marry her colleague Helen's brother. Her work bought her into contact with gallery owner Muriel Rose (1897-1986) who accompanied her on research trips to the northeast to interview quilters; in 1934 with a view to commissioning them to produce commercial quilts for the RIB to sell in Rose's gallery, and in 1952 as a research trip for the planned book by FitzRandolph.<sup>33</sup> FitzRandolph's genuine interest in quilt makers, coupled with her own social status and elite connections were crucial factors which enabled her to collect invaluable sociological information on these trips.<sup>34</sup> Her published account of the interviews has informed much British quilt history since, although this information bears further scrutiny.

### **George Gardiner and Elizabeth Sanderson: The source of the legend**

Fig 6. Sanderson Star Quilt. Red and white cotton. Pieced and hand quilted. 1900-1925. The Quilt Collection 1992-17-A.

Like all good legends, the transference of the names Gardiner and Sanderson from parochial history to published history is cloudy. When Rose and FitzRandolph first visited the northeast in 1934, Sanderson and Gardiner do not appear in Rose's diary notes of the quilter's accounts, even though Sanderson had died just months previously.<sup>35</sup> The two women returned to these interviewees again in 1952 to research FitzRandolph's book. Again, Rose's diary is extant, but no known research notes by FitzRandolph exist.<sup>36</sup> The names George Gardiner and Elizabeth Sanderson first appear in print in

the subsequent 1954 book *Traditional Quilting* by FitzRandolph, sourced from a conversation which is now only captured partially in Rose's 1952 diary. The diary records fragmentary details of the conversation with Mrs Fletcher, of Ireshopeburn, Weardale, who suggested George Gardiner as the source of Sanderson's training (Fig. 7). The note says that Sanderson was apprenticed to Gardiner. It then tentatively suggests that George Gardiner, may have been a shop keeper (? the note includes a question mark) in the village of Allenheads.

Fig. 7. 'Mrs Fletcher'. A page from Muriel Rose's extant diary of her research trip to Durham with FitzRandolph. 1952. Collection of Beamish: The Living Museum of the North.

In the 1954 book FitzRandolph writes up the interview into the canon which would become associated with both stampers. On 'Miss Sanderson' there is more detail in quilter's accounts and FitzRandolph says that she lived with her maiden sister who ran the farm at Fawside Green, Allenheads, while she quilted. FitzRandolph proposed a plausible chronology of apprenticeship, saying that 'Miss Sanderson probably started her apprenticeship about 1875' and that 'George Gardiner had died shortly before the turn of the century' suggesting a significant period of c.25 years of possible collaboration.<sup>37</sup> Whilst acknowledging that Gardiner was 'mysterious' based on the sparse second hand accounts of women born after he was assumed to have died, FitzRandolph attributed him the role of designer/ teacher/ patron/ apprentice-master saying that;

He had many followers, but I have been unable to discover whether he had any immediate predecessors...he kept the Allenheads village shop at Mill Cottages, Dirt Pot...He also trimmed hats and girls would walk up from Allendale Town to get their hats trimmed by his master hand. He introduced a new style of design for quilts, which became very popular in Weardale and throughout Northumberland; he taught his wife's two nieces, who were brought up by the Gardiners, to quilt and mark patterns, and one of them is still active, but his most notable pupil was Elizabeth Sanderson, who served her time with him as apprentice and became even more famous than he as a 'stamper'.<sup>38</sup>

Further details of George Gardiner's life history have eluded researchers, although genealogical research by Osler located him in the 1861 census, living as an eight-year-old child with his grandmother, also called Elizabeth Sanderson, in the Allenheads hamlet of Dirt Pot, and recorded his subsequent marriage in 1876.<sup>39</sup> Despite the lack of information FitzRandolph reconstructs events before Sanderson's alleged apprenticeship in 1875, stating that 'presumably Mr Gardiner had by then been drawing quilt tops for some time'. He was unconfirmed in census records after 1891.

The quilt stamper Elizabeth Sanderson was a mature woman at the height of her quilt designing powers when FitzRandolph's interviewees knew her (Fig. 6). She is identified by Osler and others in census records of 1901 and 1911 living with her adult siblings and her death is recorded in 1933 aged 72 in Fawside Green, Allenheads. Personal accounts suggested that she was training apprentices, certainly in the period between 1901 and 1920, but her own 'training' before 1900 had been unclear. Despite research by Osler and others into nineteenth-century trade directories of the area no formal evidence of any established business by Gardiner has been uncovered, or evidence of his connection to Sanderson.<sup>40</sup> Yet, the mythology of Gardiner's influence grew steadily from these sparse roots to become a key feature in every story of the region's quilting past since.<sup>41</sup>

The conventional story of the artistic or commercial male 'genius' and the conscientious spinster apprentice, supporting herself virtuously through the needle, is pervasive. This paper's genealogical research coupled with a new reading of the source diaries casts significant doubt over this neat conception and suggests that the relationship between Sanderson and Gardiner was not so straightforward, and neither lived lives as sanitised as the 1950s account suggests. In uncovering new information about the lives of Elizabeth Sanderson and George Gardiner, this paper seeks not to diminish the power of their story. Instead, it argues that through the study of quilting in this region we might better understand its significance as an economic, social and societal tool.

## **Pragmatic and Emotional Networks**

To unpick the connections of the quilt stampers of Allendale we need to explore a three-dimensional web of familial and friendship connections. The complex family tree (Fig. 8) will help readers to unpick these connections, but in the interests of written clarity I will unfold this story through the family connections of firstly George Gardiner and then Elizabeth Jane Sanderson.

Fig. 8. A Working Diagram of the Simplified, Extended Matrilineal and Patrilineal Family Trees of George Gardiner and Elizabeth Sanderson.

### ***George Gardiner and the emotional networks of his grandmother Elizabeth Curry Sanderson and wife Sarah Stokoe Gardiner***

Like all good dynastic yarns, this family story begins a long time ago. In 1791 Jacob Sanderson married Hannah Coates in Allendale and through the children of their sons John (b. 1806) and Thomas (b.1802) they would become the great grandparents of both Elizabeth Jane Sanderson and George Gardiner.<sup>42</sup> A family of farmers and lead miners for generations; sons John and Thomas married and worked locally and the complex kinship network that grew through the bonds of women in this family in the nineteenth century would disguise the familial connections between the two 'stampers'.

The circumstances of George Gardiner's birth contributed to the 'mystery' of his life.<sup>43</sup> George first appeared on a census return in 1861, aged 8 living with his grandmother Elizabeth Curry Sanderson (1809-1873) and grandfather Thomas Sanderson (1802-1862) and their adult children, but none are identified as George's parents.<sup>44</sup> A search of birth records reveals George's mother as their eldest daughter Jane Sanderson (b.1830), who was working in 1851 as a servant with the family of Thomas H Bates, a solicitor in Wolsingham in Weardale.<sup>45</sup> George Gardiner was born in 1852 just 25 days after his parents wedding. His father, Thomas Gardiner's (b.1829) family were neighbours of the more prosperous Bates family where Jane worked.<sup>46</sup> Jane Sanderson and Thomas Gardiner then disappear from the historical record and George was raised by his maternal family at Cornfield Cottage in the Allenheads hamlet of Dirt Pot.<sup>47</sup> Was George an orphan? No death certificates for his parents can be found, but the matrilineal extended family took responsibility for George and certainly by 1862, when his grandfather died and left him a bequest of £30 in his will, it was clear he had benefitted from familial support (Fig. 9).<sup>48</sup>

Fig 9. The Last Will and Testament of Thomas Sanderson (Grandfather of George Gardiner). Velum and ink. 4<sup>th</sup> July 1862. Northumberland Records Office. O6004/1/13.

George's trade as a draper is remarked upon in later accounts as unusual in a place where most men worked as lead miners.<sup>49</sup> In 1871, aged 18, he appears on the census as a 'draper and shopman' still living with his widowed grandmother. The explanation as to George's profession lies in the neighbourly networks of his maternal grandmother Elizabeth Curry Sanderson. By the 1870's employment in lead mining was insecure. In 1878 there was a partial closure of the Allendale mines and by 1880 the Wentworth Blackett-Beaumont company relinquished their long colliery lease.<sup>50</sup> Outward migration to the lowland coalfield collieries in coastal Northumbria and to lead mining areas overseas was common.<sup>51</sup> Grandmother Elizabeth's lifelong neighbours were the Stokoes and the Stephensons, both families with commercial interest in drapery.<sup>52</sup> Drapery and dressmaking/millinery were vibrant industries. Neighbours, the Stephenson's, ran the grocers and drapers at Shield Street in the centre of Allendale Town and Joseph Stokoe was a draper and milliner in Allenheads.<sup>53</sup> In 1876, aged 23, George married Joseph's daughter Sarah Stokoe who was a 25-year-old dressmaker and milliner. In the 1881 census the newly married couple lived in a row of rented cottages dominated by workers in cloth retail (Fig. 10).<sup>54</sup> Their neighbour Ann Watson and neighbour Emerson Liddle were drapers and grocers, another was a sewing machine agent, whilst Mary Stephenson and her cousin Mary Scott were dressmakers.<sup>55</sup>



Fig. 10. 1881 Census, Ropehaugh Cottages, Allenheads, Allendale. The Census of Great Britain 1881. Kew Records. RG11/5105.

Fuller details of George's professional life remain unresolved, but further research has revealed why that may be. Did George and Sarah then set up shop as draper and milliner or were they associated with the business attributed to Joseph Stokoe? Later accounts were tentative at best. Unlike Joseph, George appears in no trade directory as the named proprietor of an establishment. Sarah Stokoe Gardiner was an experienced milliner when they married, so perhaps the girls were walking over the dales to get their hats trimmed by her rather than George? Their marriage was without issue and by the 1891 census 43-year-old Sarah Stokoe Gardiner, still recorded as a milliner and dressmaker, was living alone in her marital home, next door to her widowed mother Isabella Varty Stokoe.<sup>56</sup> George was a border with another family.<sup>57</sup> After 1891 George Gardiner, like his father before him, disappears from the records. A newspaper report from the year before the census - *The Newcastle Courant*, Sat 11 October 1890 - suggests why;

George Gardiner, draper, Roperhaugh [sic], in Allendale, was charged with assaulting his wife. The evidence went to show that the defendant, under the influence of drink, not only struck his wife, but seized her by the throat and ill-used her. She screamed "Murder," and her mother, who lives close by, came to her assistance. As Gardiner threatened [the] complainant's mother, she called in the aid of two men named Parker and Smith. Parker said he found Mrs Gardiner vomiting froth and blood, her face was black and blue, and she seemed in a very exhausted condition. He did not see Gardiner do anything to his wife, but as the women were afraid of him, and as they (the men) could not stay, he, with the help of another man named Smith, tied Gardiner's feet and hands so that he could do no further harm. Mr Isaac Baty appeared for the complainant and asked for a separation order. Mr T. W. Wolford, for the defendant, thought the Bench should not make a separation order, as it was the first time his client had been before that court. The Chairman (Mr Wallis) said the Bench were unanimously of opinion that it had been a very serious assault, and defendant would be fined 40s and costs, or in default one month. They also ordered a separation, defendant to pay 10s a week towards his wife's maintenance.<sup>58</sup>

Whilst this may have been the first time George was before the court, it seems unlikely that this was the first assault on his wife Sarah. Unusually, in cases of marital violence in this period, the court sided with Sarah.<sup>59</sup> The women's reported fear of him, his drinking, and the seriousness of the violent assault (which remains visceral to read), caused Sarah's council, to petition for the separation of the marriage, which was decreed. Sarah Stokoe Gardiner remained living in her home and by the census in 1911 she is described as a

widow and the head of household in nearby Hexham, living with her widowed brother and niece and nephew. Sarah was sufficiently financially independent to head the household in 1911 and her 22-year-old niece Elizabeth Jane Stokoe was listed as working as a 'Quilt Designer' in a profession she was still maintaining in census records of 1921.<sup>60</sup> The continuation of a quilt stamping tradition into the next female generation of Sarah's family suggests that she was not a passive bystander in any business that George may have built up before their separation or his death. In fact, given her family associations with the drapery trade, it seems more convincing that she might have held a more central role in this story. FitzRandolph's account describes George raising and training his wife's nieces, but this was clearly Sarah, some 20 years after the couple's separation.<sup>61</sup> It is not possible to map any professional connection between George Gardiner and his second-cousin Elizabeth Sanderson through these records either. To find out more about Elizabeth's life we need to explore a second matrilineal network.

### ***Elizabeth Jane Sanderson and her matriarchal Dickinson and Coates family network***

Elizabeth Jane Sanderson (b.1861) was a Sanderson by birth but a Dickinson by association - the family of her mother Mary Dickinson Sanderson. Matriarchal bonds were strong and Elizabeth Sanderson's connection with her matrilineal Dickinson family was established through the fortuitous visit on census day 1861 that her mother Mary Dickinson Sanderson paid with her infant daughter, Elizabeth Jane, to her own mother Elizabeth Parker Dickinson.<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth Jane Sanderson was the eldest daughter of William and Mary Sanderson, (and William was the cousin of Gardiner's mother Jane).<sup>63</sup> Elizabeth grew up at Rise Green in Allenheads with her mother, six younger brothers and sisters, and stonemason father.<sup>64</sup> Despite the Sanderson family connection the census links Elizabeth more tightly with the bonds within her matriarchal Dickinson family.

FitzRandolph's estimate that Elizabeth began an apprenticeship with George Gardiner in 1875 is made doubtful by the census facts. In the 1881 census 20-year-old Elizabeth was living outside the village in the household of John Coates, an established entrepreneurial draper from Allendale, who now also ran a shop in Shotton.<sup>65</sup> This was the family of Isabella Dickinson Coates, who had died in 1877 leaving husband John and two children.<sup>66</sup> As matriarchal kin, Elizabeth, a 16-year-old eldest sister of six siblings on Isabella's death, must have been an ideal candidate to help raise the children in a common practice of female domestic apprenticeship.<sup>67</sup> The resourceful Allenheads Coates family had matriarchal roots intertwined with the Dickinsons and the Sandersons (Hannah Coates Sanderson united the families with the original marriage to Jacob Sanderson in 1791).<sup>68</sup> Through his uncle George (an Allenheads draper in 1881) and the extended women of his family, John had access to premises, textile know-how and capital; his sisters were dressmakers

and his mother was described as a 'Provider of Money'.<sup>69</sup> When Elizabeth was living in the household John was described as a 'Draper and Master', a term usually reserved for the teacher of apprentices. Perhaps Elizabeth's role included a training in the drapery shop?

Fig. 11. Allenheads Village, The Post Office, Draper and Grocer shop is on the far right with sign above. Also published as a postcard. c.1920. Image courtesy of the Allen Valleys Local History Group.

Further, in the 1952 Rose diaries, elderly Mrs Coulthard, 'the first apprentice' of Elizabeth Sanderson, and therefore perhaps the commentator closest to the events in time, said... 'Miss S[anderson] learnt from a man at Dudport (Dirtpot) (*original authors addition*) half a mile further along (from Allenheads). She offered more information as she recalled events at least 60 years before the interview, "Let me study her married name, Ruth Coat[sic] was her name in the post office in Allenheads" (see Fig. 11 & 12).<sup>70</sup> Genealogical information identifies that Ruth Coates Graham, the sub post mistress at Allenheads Post Office in the 1939 register, was born Ruth Coates in 1883 to the family who had also employed Isabella H Sanderson, Elizabeth's younger sister, as a servant.<sup>71</sup> Coulthard suggests that the Coates family are significant in this history. This research reveals that the family kept an Allenheads shop, were drapers, Sanderson and her sister lived with them for periods, and they are mentioned by name by Sanderson's eponymous 'first apprentice' Coulthard.

Fig. 12. 'Mrs Coulthard, Wolsingham'. Muriel Rose Diary. 1952. Courtesy of the collection of Beamish: The Living Museum of the North.

The critical decade of 1881 – 1891, where we know that both George Gardiner, Sarah Stokoe Gardiner, John Coates and family, and Elizabeth Sanderson are all active in the drapery trade, remains opaque. No formal business or genealogical record connects Coates or Sanderson with Stokoe and Gardiner.<sup>72</sup> Yet the hamlet of Dirtpot and village of Allenheads were small (Fig. 13), each of these protagonists were connected by family and almost certainly neighbourliness. The origin of the stamping trade most likely sits within this community network rather than singularly associated with any one person.

Fig. 13. Detail from Old Ordnance Survey Maps, England, *Alston Moor and Upper Weardale*, England Sheet 25, 1903.

Some of the gaps in this story are silences. None of the respondents when questioned in the 1950s about events in the 1890s alluded to George's violence or marriage breakdown, and his wife Sarah Stokoe is never mentioned by name as a quilt stamper. In an often-overlooked circumstance, in 1893, 32-year-old unmarried Elizabeth Sanderson gave birth to a son. She named him for her now widowed Father, William. He was given her mother's maiden name, Dickinson, as his middle name, and her own birth

surname of Sanderson. She continued to live with her child in her father's home in Fawside Green alongside her 84-year-old grandfather John, and unmarried adult brothers and sister Mary.<sup>73</sup> The 1954 FitzRandolph book omits Elizabeth's illegitimate son from its account. After 1890 John Coates moved with his adult daughter to North Yorkshire, remarried and started another business. After 1891 George Gardiner disappeared from the records - it is claimed he died before 1900.<sup>74</sup> Neither Sanderson nor Sarah Stokoe appears in any census return identified as quilt stampers, even though Sanderson is named as an employer on the returns of others, and Stokoe's niece must surely have learnt from her.<sup>75</sup> Records suggest that Stokoe and Sanderson both trained nieces, and in Sanderson's case also the daughters of neighbours and friends, both into the second decade of the twentieth century. FitzRandolph states that there was a cascading network of stampers training stampers. She says, 'I have heard of seven "stampers" who were apprenticed to Miss Sanderson or to her pupils, and there may have been more'. This paper now seeks to uncover the circumstances of the women and girls amongst these networks who worked in the stamping trade.

### **Apprenticeship: Gifting Agency in Emotional and Pragmatic Networks**

Historians now recognise that the economic participation of women in rural industrial landscapes was constrained, and that commercial quilt making was a pragmatic response to this limitation.<sup>76</sup> In reviving the previously masculine employment of pattern stamping, Elizabeth Sanderson - an unmarried mother, and Sarah Stokoe - separated from a drunken and violent husband, might gain the capacity to sustain themselves economically. Vulnerable women who found themselves outside of the traditional patriarchal structure of provision had long supported themselves with the needle. Yet, their needlework skills only offered bounded and often meagre, independence.<sup>77</sup> Pattern marking was potentially more lucrative than the labour of stitching quilts, and certainly less labourious, but analysis by Osler suggested that even full time it only equated to half a male weekly wage.<sup>78</sup> Widows like Jane Tarn, from nearby Copley, applied in 1883 for poor relief to help support her large family when her wages from stitching quilts in a two roomed cottage could not support them all.<sup>79</sup>

Jane Tarn's cottage was judged as 'spotless' by the poor law inspector. Domestic order and moral order were often conflated in Victorian judgement of the deserving poor. Work with the needle had long had a morally improving reputation for women as it was deemed appropriate 'feminine' work, particularly in a region where the few other options included outdoor farm work.<sup>80</sup> Whilst Sanderson's illegitimate child may have been accepted by her family and close-knit community, she remained vulnerable to judgement from wider society if she lacked economic resource and needed support from the unsympathetic system Jane Tarn navigated. The moral association with sewing that quilt stamping offered might reinforce the social

respectability of Sanderson and Stokoe, as well as gaining them a more secure economic freedom than stitching alone could offer.<sup>81</sup>

The customs of quilting facilitated the cultural transference of the pragmatic community values clearly shared by these networks of women, and described by John Lee from Weardale in his memoir; <sup>82</sup>

To go prossing [chatting] to each other's houses was almost a regular thing...should a quilt be in the making (and what pieces of art they were both in design and work, especially the patchwork ones) with two or three quilters helping them the talk would be a little harmless gossip on the ordinary doings of village life.<sup>83</sup>

Historians of the emotions such as Barbara Rosenwein define an 'emotional community' as group who recognise a shared set of feelings and values which forge a collaborative identity.<sup>84</sup> These gatherings around the frame facilitated and bolstered this shared identity. Built around shared labour in working class mining and farming labour, nineteenth-century north country communities are often identified by adherence to values associated with non-conformist religious groups such as hard work and perseverance through communal and familial based endeavour.<sup>85</sup> Yet alongside this patriarchal religious set of values we see a subtly different set of matriarchal ones which fostered pragmatic community support of the vulnerable or marginal.<sup>86</sup> This 'emotional community' of women is revealed through their actions in relation to their shared quilt making practice.

An examination of the often-vulnerable situations of Sanderson's stamper apprentices reveals these values at work within this flexible and pragmatic 'emotional community'. When descendants told the stories of Sanderson's apprentices in the middle and end of the twentieth century, it is significant that they focussed on their emotional and social connections in these nostalgic accounts.<sup>87</sup> Acknowledgement of apprentices economic or social precarity was subsumed. Quilt making was done domestically and so firstly, both Sanderson and Stokoe worked with family at home. Sanderson, with her unmarried sister Mary, who was also 'a very good quilter', and Stokoe who taught her unmarried niece Elizabeth Stokoe, who lived with her and sustained the trade until at least 1921.<sup>88</sup> However, emotional networks extended beyond a single household and Sanderson's matriarchal family tree reveals a web of vulnerable nieces and neighbours who also appear in the census returns listed as quilters.<sup>89</sup> From a family of 10 children, Sanderson's matriarchal niece, 15-year-old Edith Dickinson, earned an important additional wage working at 'Quilt Drawing' in 1911, and probably also 1921.<sup>90</sup> Unusually, the 1921 census lists Sanderson as the employer.<sup>91</sup> Vulnerability might be experienced beyond girlhood, Sanderson's middle-aged nieces Mary Ellen and Hannah Elizabeth Sanderson are first recorded as 'quilters' after their elderly mother Sarah Sanderson (Elizabeth's cousin) was widowed. The deliberate extension of this agency becomes clear in the census record

of their family situation, Hannah described as 'partially deaf and dumb' and her adult brother recorded as 'imbecile from birth'.<sup>92</sup>

These networks were also neighbourly, and economic vulnerability was visible in the histories of apprentices outside of the family too. <sup>93</sup> Elizabeth Bright was apprenticed to Sanderson in 1912 at the age of 14, her mother was Elizabeth Sanderson's neighbour at Fawside Green who worked as a 'charlady' after her husband's death and the loss of two other daughters in their teenage years.<sup>94</sup> Jennie Liddell, described in the 1901 census as a 'quilt stamper', was apprenticed to Sanderson in 1899, and lived next door to the Coates family.<sup>95</sup> Just one photograph of Sanderson in c.1910 exists, a conventional image showing her in her 'old fashioned long black dress' (as a later oral history would also record) in the doorway of the cottage at Fawside Green, perhaps with girl apprentices (Fig. 16).<sup>96</sup> The framing of Sanderson as the 'spotlessly clean and just-so' spinster fed into the nostalgia visible in the accounts of her trade when they were collected in the 1950s and 1980s.<sup>97</sup> But this nostalgia disguises the radical intent of Elizabeth Sanderson by subsuming it behind the domestic respectability of her quilting.

### ***Centring Women in the Story of the Quilt Stampers of Allendale***

Given this deeply female-centric history, why was Gardiner given such unquestioned prominence in the story for so long? Of course, old stories often become simultaneously threadbare and further embroidered over time, but it is important to ask why. Did the story of Master and Apprentice fit more neatly amongst the social norms of the 1950s when this story was formally recorded? That decade is acknowledged as an era of patriarchally centred social conservatism after the Second World War, particularly in relation to women's roles. Maggie Andrews, a historian of the Women's Institute (WI), claimed that women in the WI movement in that decade, suffered 'a regressive shift' in how they saw themselves and their place.<sup>98</sup> Mrs [Florence] Fletcher (1904-1991), the original recorded source of the name George Gardiner in the 1952 diary, was not an impartial witness.<sup>99</sup> A Women's Institute stalwart and professional Weardale quilting teacher when she was interviewed in 1952, Fletcher had learnt to quilt in Ireshopeburn after marriage, (taught by Mary Lough). She was an intermediary for FitzRandolph and Rose and opened doors for them with other quilters in this close-knit area.<sup>100</sup> Where did she hear the name George Gardiner? We may never know, but no one else interviewed in the diaries referred to him. Gardiner's history was told many decades and a generation or two after his supposed death. These mid-century quilters were talking to women outside of their community in an often-unequal economic power dynamic, at a time when class and regional distinction was significant.<sup>101</sup>

Fig. 14. 'Mrs Sanderson', wife of Willy Sanderson, son of Miss Sanderson. Muriel Rose Diary. 1952. Courtesy of the collection of Beamish: The Living Museum of the North.

Perhaps Rose and FitzRandolph were the censors; after all, the local women interviewed clearly stated that Miss Sanderson had a son and Rose and FitzRandolph even visited his wife at Fawside Green (see Fig.14). Yet Elizabeth Sanderson is characterised as a spinster in their account (and most other since) rather than a woman with the economic responsibilities of a single mother. It is curious that two women who lived outside of the stifling expectations of ordinary women in this decade such as Rose (a bohemian unmarried business owner) and FitzRandolph (who married late and was independently wealthy) chose to champion Gardiner as the centre of a classically patriarchal narrative.<sup>102</sup> Whether due to a moral sense of propriety or privacy or a class-based didacticism it is clear that the sanitising of the story, rather than preserving feminine power, denudes it. Their response to the lack of support of a marital breadwinner caused Elizabeth Sanderson and Sarah Stokoe Gardiner to radically merge the classically feminine skills of quilt making with the economically viable skill of marking. In doing so they created a domestically sited, often mail-order trade which offered an alternative form of independent economic agency than that which marriage (at least, was supposed to have) provided.<sup>103</sup>

The legacy of these women is important as we consider a female recentring of rural experience. Their transference of emotionally binding and economically sustaining quilting skills through family generations in this region was a significant contributor to regional culture. Without exception, every quilter interviewed in the Rose diaries had learnt to quilt from her mother, grandmother, aunt, or neighbour in a powerful example of intangible cultural capital. Further, the tangible assets of patterns, frames, and templates – largely disregarded by social or art history – were important inheritances, but their material fragility was under perpetual threat – Elizabeth Sanderson's daughter-in-law recounts in 1952 that Elizabeth's now legendary archive of patterns were 'prob[ably] destroyed'.<sup>104</sup>

## Conclusion

In 1927, the ambiguous beauty and bleakness of the dark 'fell-folds' of the Allendale valley beguiled the poet W.H. Auden, who immortalised men's mining labour as 'man's handiwork' in a poem, 'The Old Colliery', which eulogised Ropehaugh (Fig. 15).<sup>105</sup> In dismissing the single-male-'genius' origin story linked to George Gardiner, this paper instead encourages us to recognise the long-subsumed history of the handiwork of women in this rural landscape.<sup>106</sup> This research asserts the power of matrilineal inheritance in the flowering of the characteristic style of north country quilting. It was an evolution rather than a revolution that derived from multiple sources with its roots in the perpetuation of a rich older community and family based folk art tradition. This history of the quilt stampers challenges assumptions of rural conservatism and remoteness, instead presenting a vibrant, pragmatic, and connected network which was flexible in the face of moral, economic, and

social change. This paper argues that Elizabeth Sanderson was the most significant innovator in this story, turning a classical tradition of quilting design once widespread across the UK, into a specific identifiable style. In her use of the Sanderson Star (see Fig. 6) and its characteristic patterns she harnessed a form of modernist branding that chimed with the changing times.<sup>107</sup> In the abundant materiality of the objects attributed to her network we see the breadth of her creative influence. No firm evidence exists of George Gardiner ever taking an apprentice (even Sanderson?), yet there are cross-referenced accounts of her generations of apprentices. Her familial legacy of quilt stampers attests to the widespread dissipation of her agency across a region already brimming with skilled creative female, domestic quilters.

Fig. 15. Ropehaugh or 'Dirt Pot', Allenheads showing Mill cottage. c.1950. Image and caption courtesy of the Allen Valleys Local History Group

This research not only elevates the influence of Elizabeth Sanderson and, indeed, Sarah Stokoe Gardiner, it also reveals a complex and resilient network of women kith and kin who necessarily turned a domestic skill into an economic one.<sup>108</sup> Their historical significance has been undervalued outside of quilt study for too long.<sup>109</sup> Despite the prominent quilt focussed art historical exhibitions of The Bowes Museum and the rich social history of quilt making held at Beamish, many wider scholarly accounts of the artistic and working-class culture of the Northeast remain bare of references to quilt making, either as a domestic or female-centric entrepreneurial labour.<sup>110</sup> The recentring of women's domestic and economic experiences in the rural and industrial landscapes of the north-east continues; this paper contextualises the influence of these women as an important example of regional and rural intangible culture.<sup>111</sup> In Elizabeth Sanderson and the women who surrounded her, this paper celebrates a unique form of female economic participation and brings to life a resilient 'emotional community' which gave rural provincial women a pragmatic domestic tool which they used to buy rare sororal independence for the most vulnerable.

Fig. 16. Elizabeth Sanderson (right) and two apprentices (indoorway) outside Fawside Green, Allenheads. c.1910. Courtesy of the collection of Beamish: The Living Museum of the North.

<sup>1</sup> Linsley, S. M., *The Life and Times of Thomas Dixon 1805-1871* (Wagtail Press: Hexham, 2006), 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Newcastle Chronicle*, 2 June 1894 'Northumberland Words by R D Oliver Heslop' records "Twilt" "Twult" (North), a quilt. "Twilt," to quilt. to stitch over a quilt, "Twitted" quilted. "Her fine twilled petticoat" "Twilting frames" the stretching frames used in quilting. "Twilter" a quilt maker. For an example of the use of the vernacular to describe the verb 'quilting or quilted' see *Morpeth Herald* 11 September 1886 which refers to a 'Patched twilted quilt'.

<sup>3</sup> Jackson, D., *The Northumbrians: North-East England and its People*, (London: Hurst & Co, 2021), 152.

<sup>4</sup> Strange, J., *Death, Grief, and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 21.



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- <sup>5</sup> McGuire, D., 'Emotional Journeys. The British Quilt in Space and Time 1770-1920', unpublished PhD thesis, Oxford Brookes University, forthcoming 2026.
- <sup>6</sup> Blencowe, R.W. (ed), *Extracts from the Journal of Walter Gale, Schoolmaster at Mayfield, 1750*. (Sussex Archaeological Collections 9, 1857)
- <sup>7</sup> For example, see Letter from Elizabeth Ensole to William Ensole, 1742, outlining instructions for ordering patterns drawn for 'Plain Working and Quilting'. Hereford Records Office, BG11/11/216.
- <sup>8</sup> For more details see Osler, D., *North Country Quilts: Legend and Living Tradition*, (Barnard Castle: The Bowes Museum, 2000), 10.
- <sup>9</sup> *Newcastle Chronicle*, 14 Jan 1826, 2.
- <sup>10</sup> Scott, B., *The Craft of Quilting in the North Country* (Leicester: The Dryad Press, 1935), 2.
- <sup>11</sup> Osler, D., *Traditional British Quilts* (London: Batsford, 1987), 97.
- <sup>12</sup> FitzRandolph, M., *Traditional Quilting* (London: Batsford, 1954), 38.
- <sup>13</sup> McGuire, D., 'Wholecloth from the Hills' podcast episode for *Haptic & Hue*, Sept 2021 <https://hapticandhue.libsyn.com/whole-cloth-from-the-hills>
- <sup>14</sup> Osler, D., "The Quilt Designers of North-East England" in *Uncoverings: The Research Papers of the American Quilt Study Group*, 19 (1998) pp 43.
- <sup>15</sup> For example, see the extensive collections of extant quilts in The Bowes Museum and Beamish: The Living Museum of the North.
- <sup>16</sup> Osler, "The Quilt Designers", 58.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.
- <sup>18</sup> A matrilineal genealogical approach was employed in research for Tullie House Museum. See McGuire, D., Remember Me. Love, Loss and Legacy, *Quilt Studies*, 23 (2022) pp. 24.
- <sup>19</sup> For example, see methodological themes of the London Group of Historical Geographers at the Institute of Historical Research. <https://lghgseminar.wordpress.com>
- <sup>20</sup> Tadmor, N., *Family & Friends in Eighteenth-Century England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- <sup>21</sup> Old Ordnance Survey Maps, England Sheet 19 *Allendale and Hexhamshire*, Sheet 19, 1866 and *Alston Moor and Upper Weardale*, England Sheet 25, 1903.
- <sup>22</sup> Museum of English Rural Life. British Council Collection 60/430-791: General Information Folder. Muriel Rose Archive, Crafts Study Centre Archives, University for the Creative Arts, GB 2941 MRA. Rose, M 1954 Diary accessed by Dorothy Osler for BQSG 2014 Seminar at Beamish. FitzRandolph, M., *Traditional Quilting*.
- <sup>23</sup> Dixon, H., *An Allendale Miscellany*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: J & P Bealls, 1974) whilst full of fascinating miscellany evidences the invisibility of women's history in local accounts. Even contemporary accounts such as Milburn, T.A. *Life and Times in Weardale 1840-1910* (published by the author, 2020) are largely male histories.
- <sup>24</sup> 'Bargains' describe a system whereby groups of 4-6 lead miners contracted their labour, a mechanism which reveals emotional and economic connections between families, see Dixon, H., *An Allendale Miscellany*, 57.
- <sup>25</sup> Jackson, *The Northumbrians*, 119.
- <sup>26</sup> Hartley, D., *Made in England* (London: Meuthan & Co, 1939), 236.
- <sup>27</sup> Scott, *The Craft of Quilting. The Embroideress Magazine*, 1926 No. 17 pp.13.
- <sup>28</sup> The 1927 exhibition is reviewed in *The Embroideress Magazine* 1927 No. 21 pp. 9. Scott mentions this event as significant in *The Craft of Quilting*, as does FitzRandolph in *Traditional Quilting*.
- <sup>29</sup> Scott, *The Craft of Quilting*, 2.
- <sup>30</sup> FitzRandolph, *Traditional Quilting*.
- <sup>31</sup> Osler, *Traditional British Quilts*, i.
- <sup>32</sup> Crawford, L., 'Muriel Rose and Peggy Turnbull's The Little Gallery: Elevating the profile of modern craft through interwar shop displays' in *The Journal of the Decorative Arts Society*, 46 (2022), pp.103 – 115.
- <sup>33</sup> Osler, D., 'Muriel Rose, the Little Gallery and Interactions with Durham's Rural Industries Bureau Quilters' *Quilt Studies* 22, (2021) pp. 7. Also see original dust jacket biography insert 'The Author' for FitzRandolph, *Traditional Quilting*,
- <sup>34</sup> For example, Rose was socially connected to Harry Peach, the founder of Dryad Press who published Scott's and later FitzRandolph's booklets on quilting and with Eric McLagan who published the 1932 *Notes on Quilting* whilst Textiles Curator at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. Crawford, L., 'Muriel Rose and Peggy Turnbull's The Little Gallery', 111.
- <sup>35</sup> Rose's diary of the 1934 trip is extant, but FitzRandolph's papers were destroyed during the 1940 Blitz on London. Bailey, C., 'Progress and Preservation: The Role of Rural Industries in the Making of the Modern Image of the Countryside.' *Journal of Design History* 9: 1 (1996), pp. 36.
- <sup>36</sup> In the collection of Beamish: The Living Museum of the North.
- <sup>37</sup> FitzRandolph, *Traditional Quilting*, 40.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 39. See Hubert, *An Allendale Miscellany*, 22 for a discussion of the evolution of the name.
- <sup>39</sup> Osler, "The Quilt Designers", 43.

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>41</sup> For example, see repeated references in every decade since to FitzRandolph's original story in; Ward, A., *Quilting in the North of England in Folk Life*, 4:1 (1966). Colby, A., *Quilting* (London: Batsford, 1972), 43. Rae, J., *The Quilts of the British Isles* (London: McDonald Books, 1987), 10,18. Brears, P., *North Country Folk Art*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1989). Allan, R, E. *Quilts and Coverlets* (Durham: Beamish, 2007),44-55, 156. ed. Pritchard, S., *Quilts 1700-2010* (London, V&A Publishing, 2010), 72. Audin, H., *Patchwork and Quilting in Britain* (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2013), 48.

<sup>42</sup> With grateful thanks to Anne Jeater whose tireless genealogical research confirmed the authors hypothesis, based on legal documents at Northumberland Records Office, that Thomas and John were brothers.

<sup>43</sup> FitzRandolph, *Traditional Quilting*, 130. FitzRandolph calls Gardiner 'the mysterious Mr Gardiner'

<sup>44</sup> 1861 England Census. Class: RG 9; Piece: 3861; Folio: 4; Page: 2; GSU roll: 543197

<sup>45</sup> 1851 England Census Class: HO107; Piece: 2388; Folio: 349; Page: 2; GSU roll: 87066

<sup>46</sup> Personal correspondence with Anne Jeater, November 2022.

<sup>47</sup> 1871 England Census; Class: RG10; Piece: 5147; Folio: 10; Page: 14; GSU roll: 848479.

<sup>48</sup> Probate of the Will of Mr Thomas Sanderson, 1862. Northumberland Records Office O6004/1/13. £30 was around 6 months wages for a skilled man in 1860. Source: The National Archives Currency Converter Tool.

<sup>49</sup> Osler, "The Quilt Designers", 44.

<sup>50</sup> Dixon, *An Allendale Miscellany*, 54. Although mining continued in Allendale until the 1980s.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>52</sup> 1851 England Census, Class: HO107; Piece: 2415; Folio: 130; Page: 21; GSU roll: 87093.

<sup>53</sup> In the general list for Forest High township (Allenheads) there is a 'Joseph Stokoe, draper and milliner, Mill Cottages'. 1886 Historical Directory. Northumberland Records Office.

<sup>54</sup> 1881 England Census. Class: RG11; Piece: 5105; Folio: 11; Page: 13; GSU roll: 1342233.

<sup>55</sup> Listed in the 1886 Historical Directory of Businesses in Allendale Mary Stephenson, Dressmaker. Her father Matthew Stevenson is listed as 'Agent of the Manchester Fire Assurance Co and Grocer and Linen and Wool Draper and Milliner with a shop at Shield Street, Allendale Town. NRO.

<sup>56</sup> *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891*; Class: RG12; Piece: 4248; Folio: 4; Page: 1; GSU roll: 6099358.

<sup>57</sup> *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891*; Class: RG12; Piece: 4248; Folio: 16; Page: 7; GSU roll: 6099358.

<sup>58</sup> *Newcastle Courant*, 11 October 1890 with grateful thanks to Anne Jeater who uncovered this vital information to explain why George and Sarah Stokoe separated.

<sup>59</sup> Bailey, J., 'I dye [sic] by Inches': locating wife beating in the concept of a privatisation of marriage and violence in eighteenth-century England', *Social History*, 31:3, (2006) pp.273-294.

<sup>60</sup> *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911*. Kew, Surrey, England Reg 561. ED:19.Piece:30928.

<sup>61</sup> FitzRandolph, *Traditional Quilting*, 39.

<sup>62</sup> 1861 England Census. Class: RG 9; Piece: 3861; Folio: 76; Page: 1; GSU roll: 543197

<sup>63</sup> Osler, "The Quilt Designers" 58. 1841 England Census, Class: HO107; Piece: 837; Book: 32; Civil Parish: Allendale; County: Northumberland; Enumeration District: 8; Folio: 50; Page: 21; Line: 19; GSU roll: 438894. 1851 England Census. Class: HO107; Piece: 2415; Folio: 121; Page: 3; GSU roll: 87093

<sup>64</sup> 1871 England Census; Class: RG10; Piece: 5147; Folio: 16; Page: 25; GSU roll: 848479

<sup>65</sup> 1861 census lists him as a Draper in Allendale.

<sup>66</sup> 1881 England Census. Class: RG11; Piece: 4966; Folio: 55; Page: 4; GSU roll: 1342194

<sup>67</sup> 1871 England Census; Class: RG10; Piece: 5149; Folio: 06; Page: 25; GSU roll: 84824 Our working assumption is that Isabella was Elizabeth's first cousin on her mother's side of the family – she was identified in the 1871 census by a similar visit to her own mother (Elizabeth's aunt) Mary Dickinson with 3-year-old Sarah Ann and baby John Coates jnr. More genealogical research into the links between the Coates family and Dickinson/Sanderson's are still ongoing at the time of publication. An update will be presented to the autumn conference.

<sup>68</sup> 1841 England Census. HO107; Piece: 837; Book: 32; Civil Parish: Allendale; County: Northumberland; Enumeration District: 5; Folio: 7; Page: 7; Line: 11; GSU roll: 438894. Also see 1881 Census for Mill Cottages.

<sup>69</sup> 1861 England Census. Class: RG 9; Piece: 3861; Folio: 76; Page: 1; GSU roll: 543197. Also see Dixon, Hubert, *An Allendale Miscellany*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: J & P Bealls, 1974),74 on Widows and Toll Keeping "Providers of Money" in Allendale Town.

<sup>70</sup> FitzRandolph, *Traditional Quilting*, 43.

<sup>71</sup> *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891*; Class: RG12; Piece: 4248; Folio: 17; Page: 9; GSU roll: 6099358. *The National Archives; Kew, London, England; 1939 Register; Reference: Rg 101/3029k.*

<sup>72</sup> Oral Interview by June Freeman also dated the apprenticeship with Miss Sanderson as 1899.

<sup>73</sup> 1901 England Census Class: RG13; Piece: 4825; Folio: 6; Page: 4.

<sup>74</sup> Further emerging research on the fate of George Gardiner will be presented at the 2023 seminar.

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- <sup>75</sup> See Edith Dickinson census below.
- <sup>76</sup> Mood, *Employment, politics and working-class women*, 50. Unlike in other northern industrialised region, female economic participation was lower in the NE. Begiato, J., A ‘master-mistress’: revisiting the history of eighteenth-century wives’, *Women’s History Review*, (2023) 32:1, pp.1-20.
- <sup>77</sup> Davidoff, L., and Hall, C., *Family Fortunes* (London: Routledge, 1987), 272.
- <sup>78</sup> Osler, “The Quilt Designers” 60. Similar remuneration patterns can also be seen in the lead industry in the region.
- <sup>79</sup> *Northern Echo*, 23 November, 1883.
- <sup>80</sup> McGuire, *Remember Me*. Long, J., *Conversations in Cold Rooms: Women, Work and Poverty in Nineteenth-Century Northumberland* (London: Royal Historical Society; 1999), 37.
- <sup>81</sup> Long, *Conversations in Cold Rooms*, 124.
- <sup>82</sup> Also see Purches, M., and The Weardale Museum, *Tommy’s Notebook: The Notes of Thomas William Thompson of Stanhope, Weardale* (The Weardale Museum, 2021), 46.
- <sup>83</sup> Lee, J, *Weardale Memories and Traditions* (published by the author, 1950), 212. Boddice, R, *The History of Emotions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).
- <sup>84</sup> Barclay, K., et al, (eds) *Sources for the History of the Emotions*, (London: Routledge, 2021), 8. Rosenwein, B and Cristiani, R., *What is the History of Emotions?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2018).
- <sup>85</sup> Jackson, *The Northumbrians*, 104.
- <sup>86</sup> Mood, *Employment, politics and working-class women*, 303.
- <sup>87</sup> Freeman, oral history. Also see Walker, M, *The Passionate Quilter* (London: Ebury Press, 1990), 16.
- <sup>88</sup> Freeman, oral history. Although Mary was given a less central role in FitzRandolph’s account.
- <sup>89</sup> McGuire, D., *Maintaining ‘the importance of aunts’: textiles, emotions and the matrilineal family* presentation for The Inheriting the Family Network. <https://inheritingthefamily.org/resources/>
- <sup>90</sup> The 1921 census is unclear as the enumerator appears to have misaligned the information, attributing ‘quilt drawing’ to her younger brother’s entry, yet he is then also given a second employment. I suggest that this is a recording error and that the entry belongs to Edith, listed above on the return.
- <sup>91</sup> *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911*.: Series RG14, Reg 561, ED 01, Piece; 30931.
- <sup>92</sup> *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911*. Reg 561, ED, 01, Piece 30931.
- <sup>93</sup> *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911*. Reg:561.ED:01.Piece:30931 Elizabeth Prest lived just 6 houses from Sanderson in a two roomed home with her widowed mother Hannah, and is described as a ‘needleworker’, it seems possible that she too, may have worked with Elizabeth.
- <sup>94</sup> *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911*. RG14, Reg: 561,ED, 01, Piece 30931.
- <sup>95</sup> *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1901*. Class: RG13; Piece: 4825; Folio: 22; Page: 5
- <sup>96</sup> Osler, D., *North Country Quilts*, 29. Freeman, J. oral history.
- <sup>97</sup> Freeman, J. oral history.
- <sup>98</sup> Andrews, M., *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: The Women’s Institute as a Social Movement*. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997), 43.
- <sup>99</sup> She went on to co-author the book *Quilting: Traditional Methods and Design* (Leicester: Dryad Press, 1955) with FitzRandolph.
- <sup>100</sup> See Allan, R., *Quilts and Coverlets: The Beamish Collections* (Beamish Museum, 2007), 57-59 for more detail on Lough and Fletcher.
- <sup>101</sup> Griffin, E., *Breadwinner: An Intimate History* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2020), 11.
- <sup>102</sup> See Crawford, L., ‘Muriel Rose and Peggy Turnbull’s The Little Gallery, 111 and Shay, J., “The Little Gallery and the RIB Quilts: Findings from the Muriel Rose Archive” in *Quilt Studies*, 2021 (22) pp.33 for discussion of the lesbian community of artists who surrounded Rose and Turnbull’s The Little Gallery.
- <sup>103</sup> Mood, *Employment, politics, and working-class women* 84.
- <sup>104</sup> Rose 1954 Diary, Beamish: The Living Museum of the North.
- <sup>105</sup> Bucknell, K. (ed), *Juvenilia. Poems 1922-1928 W.H. Auden* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 70 ‘Allendale’ and p.59 ‘The Colliery’.
- <sup>106</sup> Strange, J-M., personal correspondence, discussion on Feminising the Countryside, January 2023.
- <sup>107</sup> An argument first made by Osler, “The Quilt Designers”, 64.
- <sup>108</sup> For example, see Wildman, C & Moss, E., Challenging domesticity in Britain, 1890-1990: special issue introduction, *Women’s History Review* (2021) which explores why women’s domestic histories require new focus.
- <sup>109</sup> Osler, D., *North Country Quilts: In Celebration of New Acquisitions by the Bowes Museum* (Barnard Castle: Bowes Museum, 2021), 5 and Mood, *Employment, politics and working-class women*, 4.
- <sup>110</sup> The distinct regional history of women’s quilt making in the NE does not appear in accounts such as Colls, R., *Northumbria: History and Identity 547-2000* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2007) or Jackson, D., *The Northumbrians*, or even in explorations of women’s work, for example, in Long, *Conversations in Cold Rooms*.

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<sup>111</sup> For example, see Anson, N., *Nostalgia, and the transformation of working-class heritage*, forthcoming unpublished PhD Thesis, for The University of Durham with Beamish: The Living Museum of the North.