

Our 2021 seasonal display celebrates the 130th anniversary of the birth of Roderick James Thompson (1890-1982). This is the cover of the new book on this well known Bellingham figure.

BELLINGHAM FACES & PLACES 1910 ~ 1925



The photographs of Roderick J. Thompson of Bellingham

The name of Rod Thompson still raises a wistful smile among the older residents of Bellingham. Everyone knew him. Everyone has a story to tell about him. He is remembered, above all, as the proprietor of Rod's Snack Bar, who regularly supplied the buffet for dances held in the Town Hall.

Few, however, will appreciate that he was an enterprising photographer who, in the first quarter of the 20th century, produced some fine studio portraits, photographs recording local events and a series of local postcards.

Our 2021 seasonal display and a new book pay a tribute to the work of Roderick James Thompson who has preserved the Faces and Places of bygone Bellingham.

BELLINGHAM YOUTH CLUB

Invite you to

DANCE

to the Music of

**TERRY'S RHYTHMIC SERENADERS
(NEWCASTLE)**

in the

**TOWN HALL,
BELLINGHAM**

on

Friday, 28th May

Commencing at 9.30 p.m.

ADMISSION 2/6

BUFFET BY "ROD"

**COME AND BE SURE OF A
GOOD NIGHT'S DANCING**

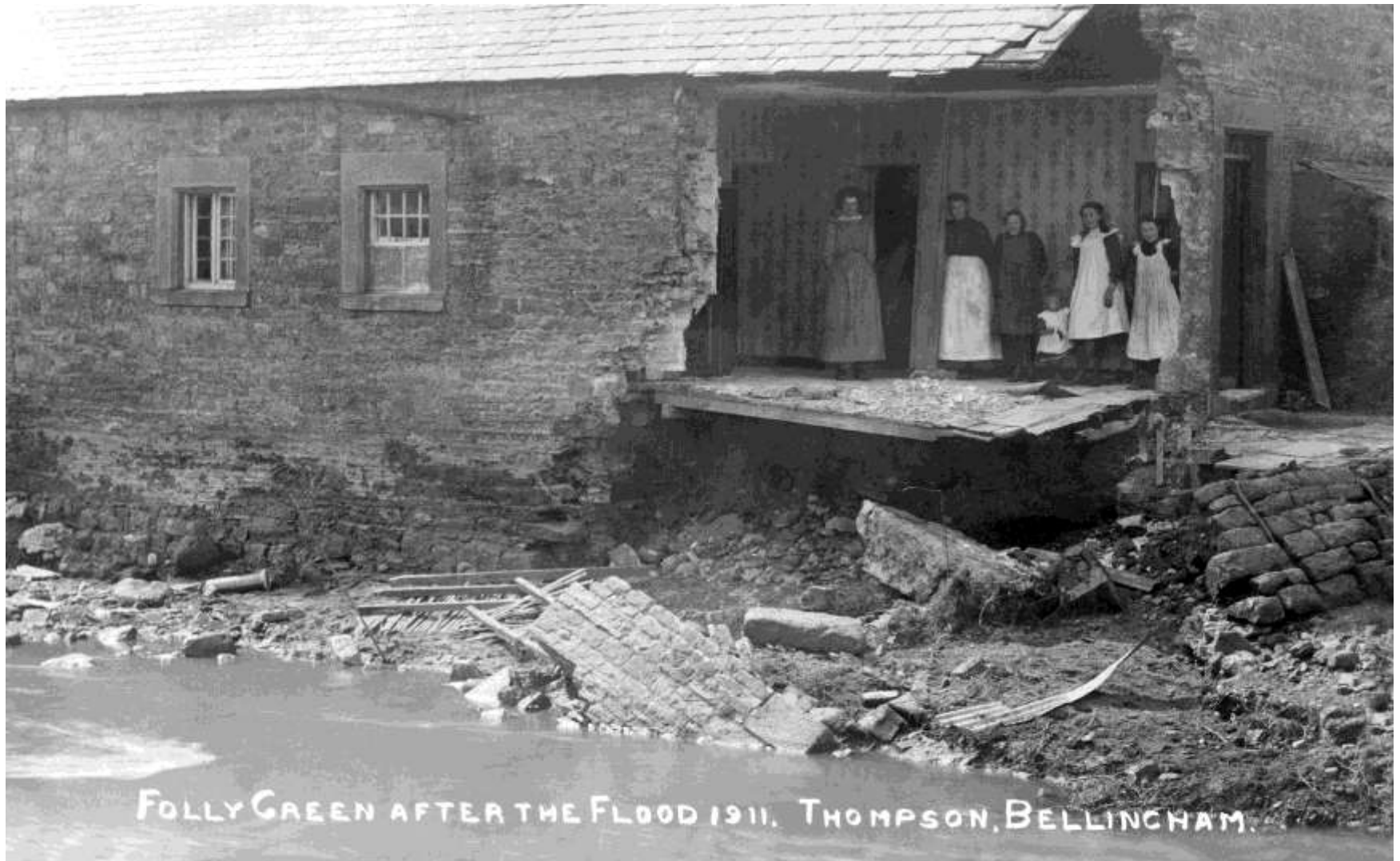
This poster from 1954 advertises the buffet that Roddy Thompson and his wife Eunice would supply at the dances held in the Town Hall. It was hard work.

“Roddy and Eunice would serve a buffet supper around midnight and it would regularly be three o’clock in the morning before they were finished. They would bring the food over in a trunk on a pram chassis – with one of their children frequently curled up asleep in the empty trunk on the return journey.”

Although Roddy was taking photographs from around 1910, his first major collection concerned the Great Flood of 1911 when he recorded the scenes both during and after the deluge.



The members of this family at Folly Green stand on the floorboards of their house, which hang precariously in the air because the foundations have been swept away by the waters.



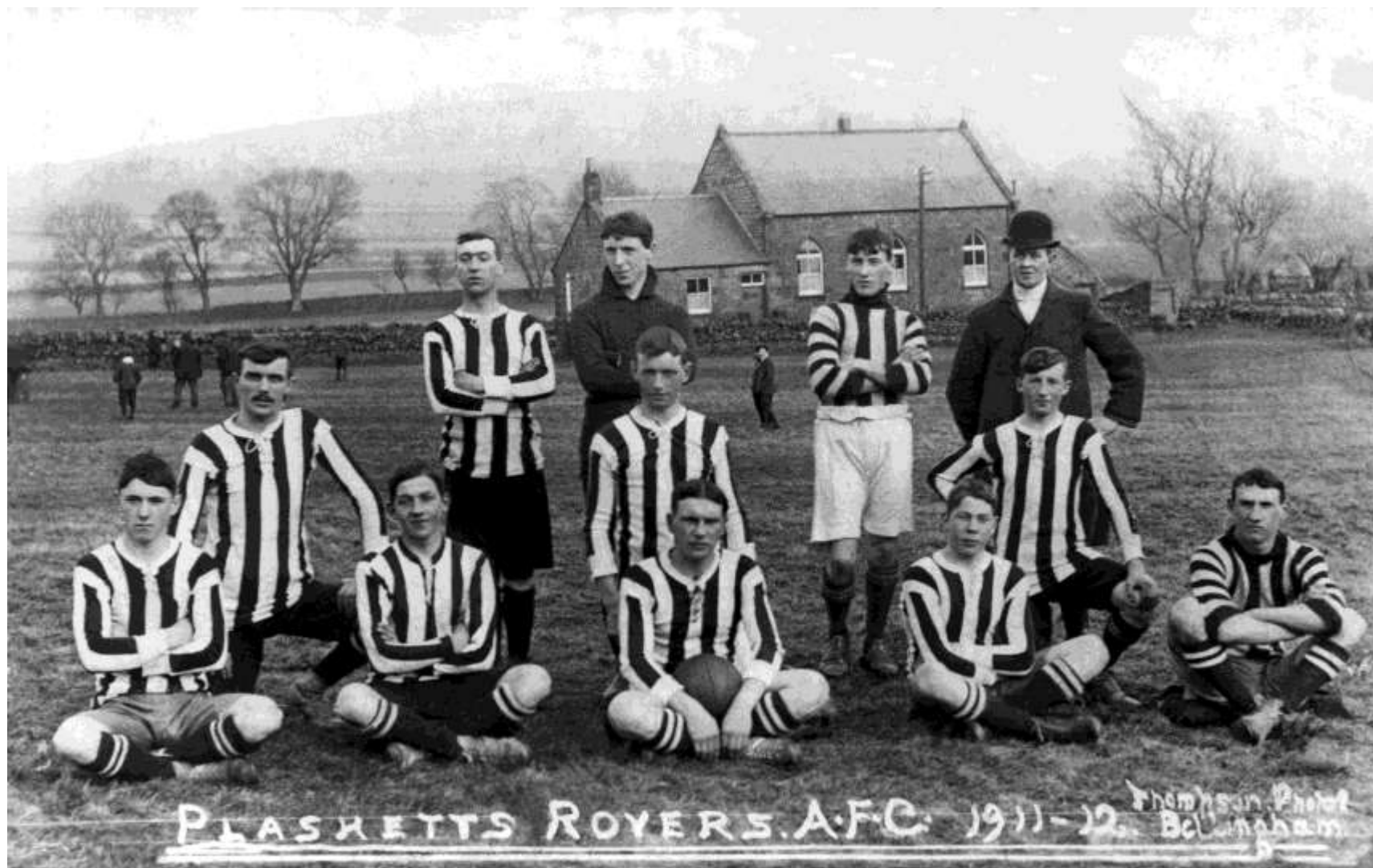
Roddy took many flash photographs and this scene of the local elections night in 1913 shows the crowded room where the counting was taking place and emotions were running high.



On 7th August 1915, a garden fete was held at Wark Rectory to provide comforts for soldiers. The fete included 21 soldiers and nurses from The Chesters, which was now a military hospital.



The isolated location of Plashetts did not prevent this mining village from fielding two football teams and Plashetts Rovers had enjoyed a particularly good 1911-1912 season.



If you want to see more, you'll have to come along and see our seasonal display for yourself! The Heritage Centre is open Wednesday to Sunday, closed Monday and Tuesday.

You'll be able to see this and all our displays, including a celebration of the 150th anniversary of the postcard and the 120th anniversary of the unveiling of the Bellingham Boer War memorial, which is now in Manchester Square.

You'll see a reconstruction of Roderick Thompson's studio and perhaps take a snap in a vintage motor car that he used as a prop. Many of his studio portraits will be on display and you might even recognise one or two of your distant relations!