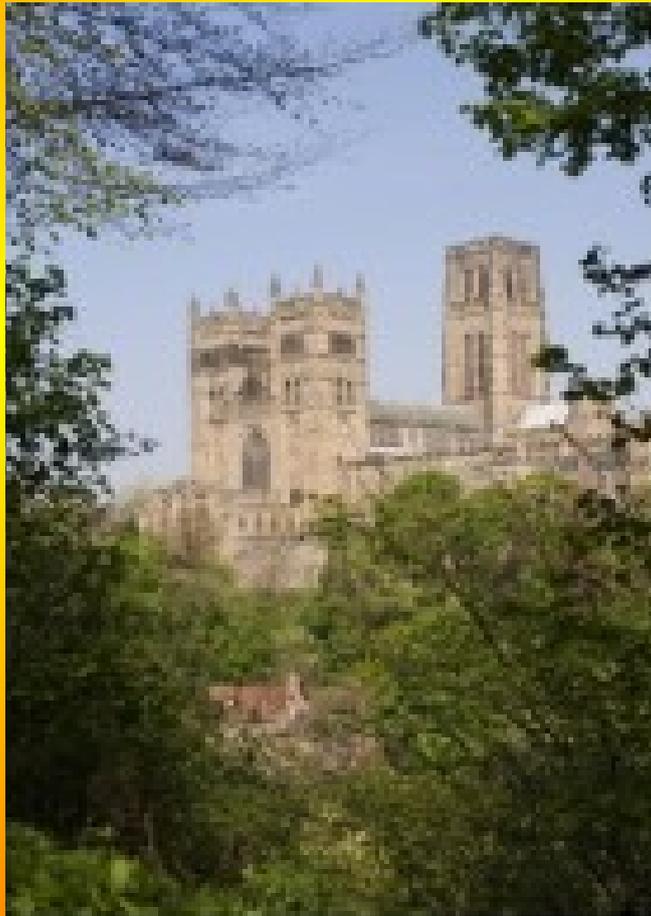
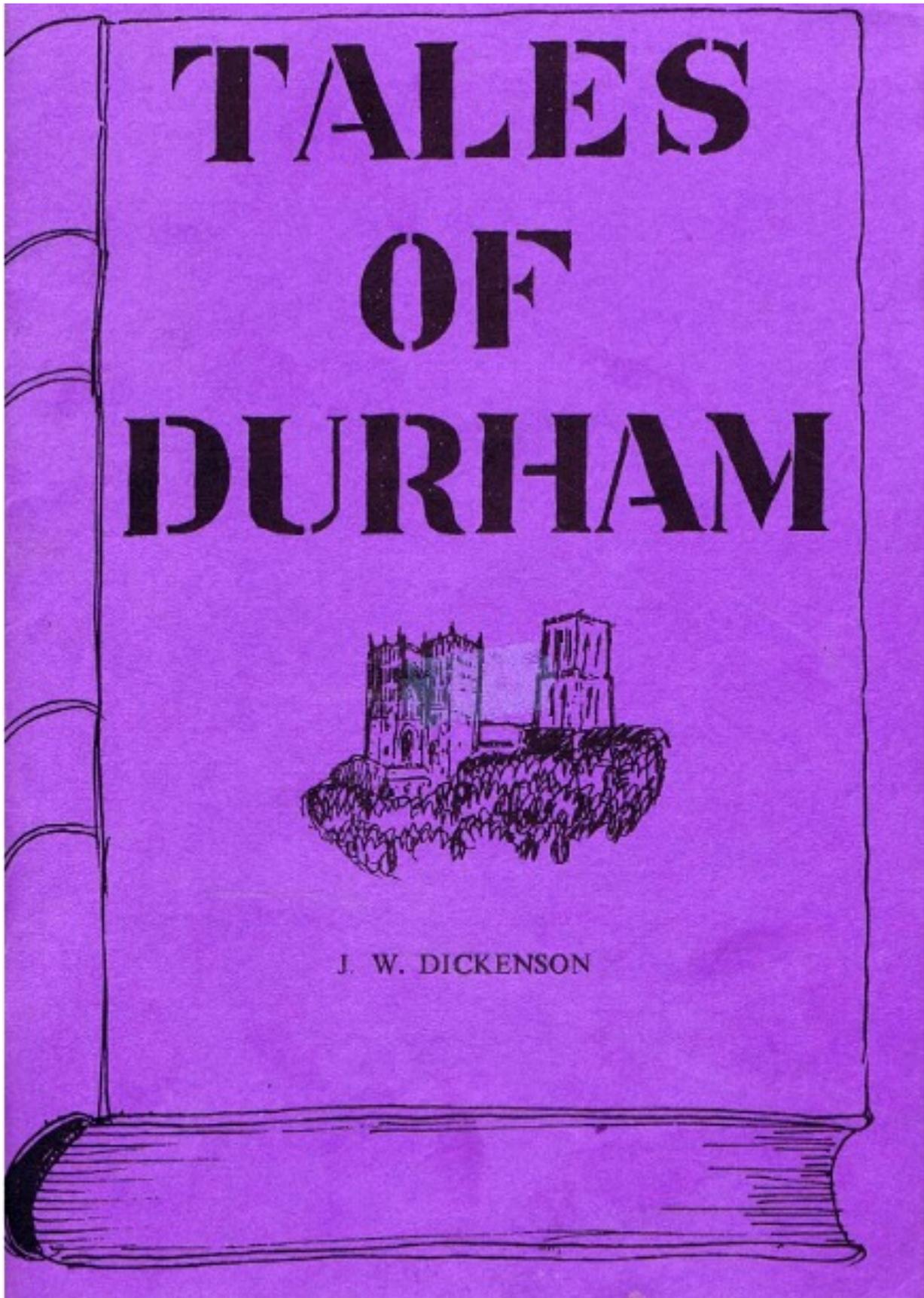


# **Tales of Durham**



**J. W. Dickenson**

**1988**



**The Original Cover**

# TALES OF DURHAM

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## Acknowledgements

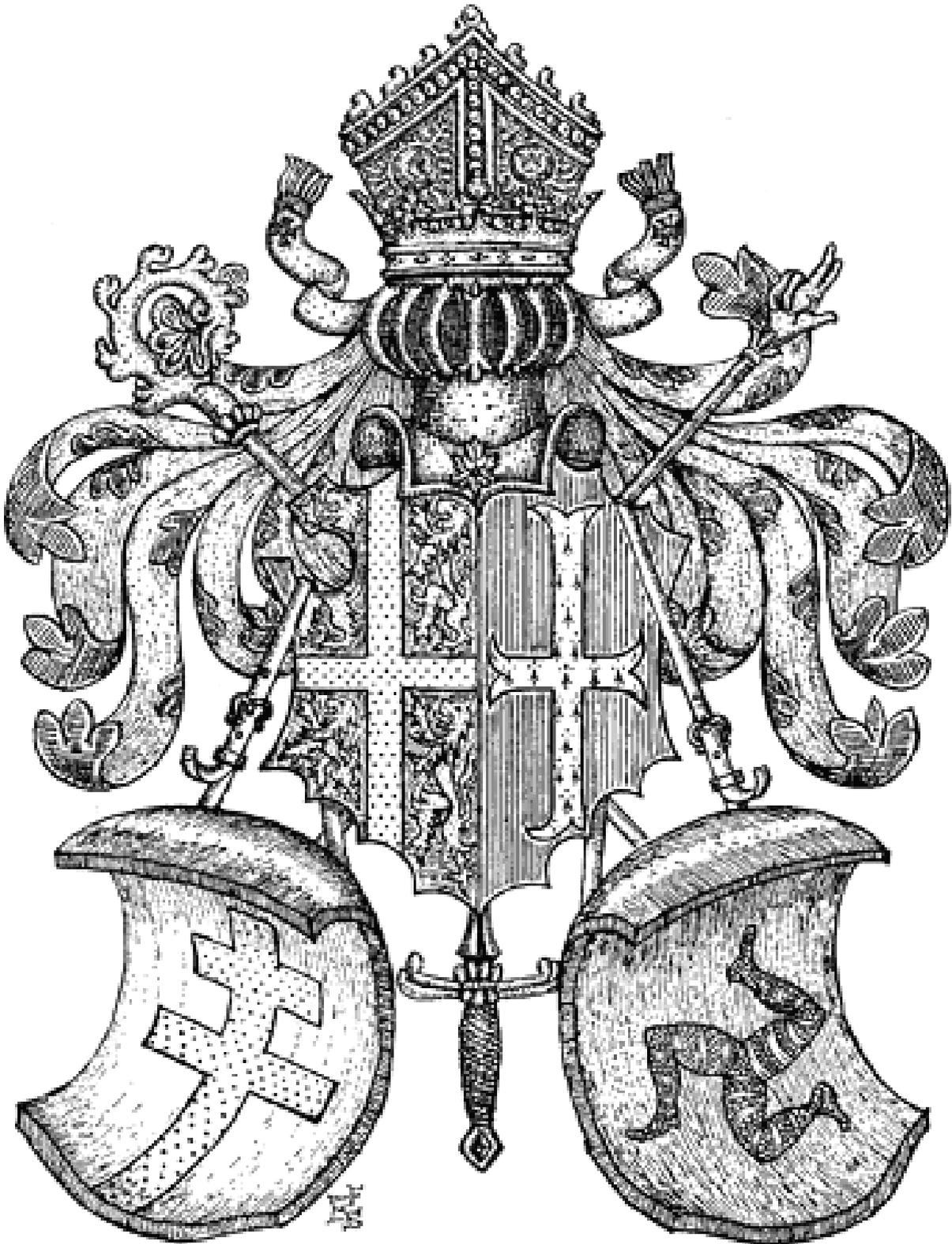
To; -

E. H. whose help was invaluable and wishes to remain anonymous.

The Copingers for their goading scepticism.  
Mrs. C. Nimmins who illustrated the booklet.  
John Richardson for the title.

**J. W. DICKENSON**





**ARMS OF BISHOP BECK AS PRINCE-BISHOP OF  
DURHAM, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM,  
AND KING OF THE ISLE OF MAN**

# TALES OF DURHAM



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# TALES OF DURHAM

## A.D. 687-995.

### SAINT - INVENTOR - MISOGYNIST.



**T**HE Venerable Bede was 15 when St. Cuthbert died. Bede worked with and talked to men who had known St. Cuthbert so when he wrote the "Life of St. Cuthbert" his stories had a basis of truth which cannot be denied. He attributes miracles to the saint which today would be far-fetched but miracles seemed to happen more often then than they do now or they were more easily explained.

One of the miracles often repeated was the saint's invention of the duvet.

At one point in his monastic life St. Cuthbert decided to become a hermit. Not for him some convenient cave in a river bank near civilisation. He insisted that the place for him should be one of the Farne Islands. After much argument about what should be taken with him, some monks insisted that they should join him to help build a suitable shelter but this help was refused. He landed with nothing but the usual clothes of a monk. It can be cold and wet on the North East coast and having dug a hole as shelter against the shore wind Cuthbert began his first night as

a hermit. He had of course forgotten that he was a Saint and as such had miracles to perform that he never intended to happen. During the night a flock of "Cuddy's Ducks" came to the saint and began to pluck the soft under feathers from their bodies and covered the saint completely ensuring that he was snug and warm in the world's first duvet. When it is revealed that a "Cuddy's Duck" is an eider duck and that "Cuddy" is the Northern abbreviation for Cuthbert the whole miracle has an authentic ring to it.

A minor miracle in the same island occurred in Cuthbert's early days as a hermit when he had no means of feeding himself and it was only the kind ministrations of a fish eagle which brought him a daily fish that made life bearable on the rocky isle. Another miracle concerned this island, the abode of devils and evil spirits whose sole occupation was to prevent anything growing, and to this end had amassed rocks with which to cover the island. Cuthbert wasted no time in dismissing these evil creatures, cleared the rocks and plants began growing where nothing else had grown.

It was early in his life that the scene was enacted which brought about the story that he hated women. He spent some time in the borders, the land of the Picts, converting the heathen and

comforting the afflicted. At that time the daughter of one of the Pictish kings became pregnant by some youth in her father's court. The king noticed her condition and asked who the father was. She replied that a religious young man in monk's habit had taken advantage of her in the name of religion. The king immediately took his daughter and an armed escort to look for this despicable monk.

At the hermitage Cuthbert was faced with an angry father who castigated the monk for the foul deed which had been perpetrated under the cloak and habit of a hermit of religion. The daughter saw that her father was beside himself with anger and that it would be difficult to stop him dealing out justice. She stepped forward and boldly affirmed that this was the man who had seduced her.

Cuthbert, quite amazed by this outburst and realising that no pleas for mercy would save his life, knelt down and entreated God to show some token to disprove the words of iniquity spoken by this girl.

At his prayer the earth around them shook and hissed, it became dark and where the king's daughter had stood appeared a great crack. She had disappeared. The king, seeing that he had witnessed a miracle, at once asked forgiveness from Cuthbert and offered to grant any favour asked of him. Cuthbert forgave him on condition that no woman should ever be permitted to enter any church within the kingdom dedicated to St. Cuthbert. This was carried out in all the churches of the Picts and later in Durham Cathedral where a blue marble cross in the floor at the west end marks the line beyond which no woman was ever allowed to pass in medieval times.

One of the major miracles of St. Cuthbert concerns the siting of the Cathedral itself. The story begins in 687 on the island of Lindisfarne with Cuthbert's death-wish that he should not be left buried there if ever the monastic community were overrun by its enemies.

"If you are forced to choose between two evils I would much rather that you lift my bones from the tomb when you leave this place and carry them with you to rest wherever God may decree than that in any way you should consent to evil and put your neck under the yoke of schismatics". When the Danes attacked the North East coast in 875 the monks left Lindisfarne taking with them St. Cuthbert's body, which after 11 years had been found to be in an incorrupt condition.

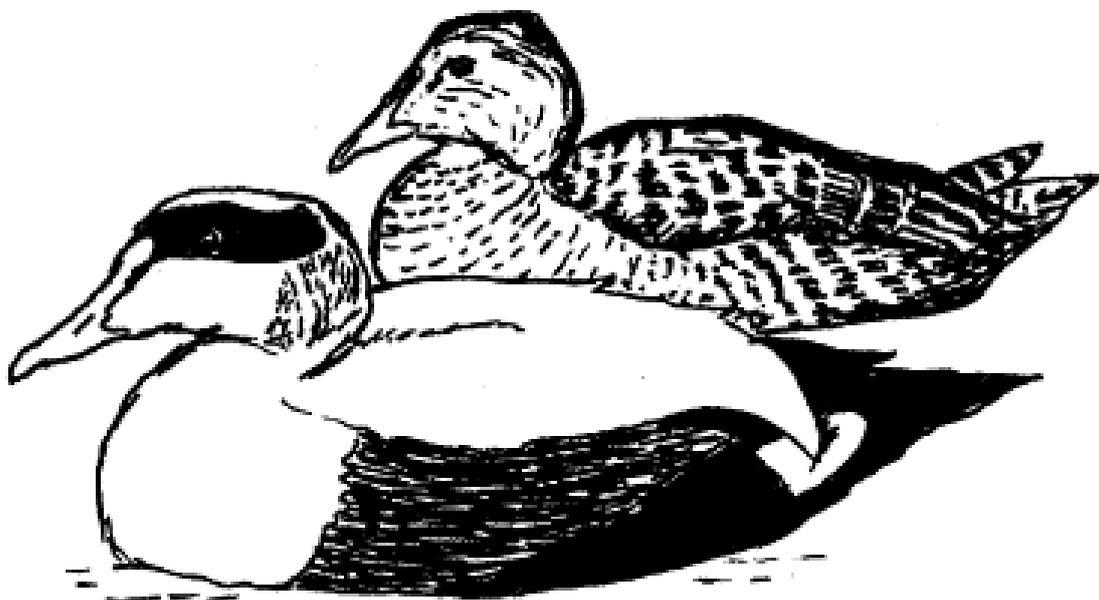
They wandered all over the Northern area in - search of safety leaving behind, it is said, a string of churches dedicated to the saint wherever the body had rested. At one stage they even set sail for Ireland but were forced back by a violent storm. Even in these conditions miracles of St. Cuthbert were in evidence. The copy of the Lindisfarne Gospels was lost overboard during the storm but St. Cuthbert appeared to the monks and gave directions of where to search for the book, subsequently found undamaged by the water. The monks settled in Chester-le-Street until 995 when, under threat of Danish attack, they set out for Ripon where they found a safe place to hide. On the return journey towards Chester-le-Street, the miracle took place.

Following the old Roman road which crosses the Wear at Maiden Castle and Kepier, at some point in this area called "Wrdelaw", the carriage bearing St. Cuthbert's body could not be moved, indicating to the monks that the Saint did not wish to proceed and that they must await further instructions from him. These were not long in forthcoming. A monk had a dream and in it St Cuthbert stated that he wished to be laid to rest at 'Dunholm' and that a girl would guide them.

That morning the carriage would only move in one direction - down towards the river. At that point they met a girl who was looking for a 'dun' cow. This was the sign the monks had been told to seek. They offered to help to find the cow and were not surprised when another girl informed them that the dun cow was on a hill overlooking the river at a place called 'Dunholm'. The monks knew that their wandering days were over and proceeded to build a magnificent church - the 'white' church. This was the forerunner of the present Norman Cathedral.

The miracles of St Cuthbert did not cease with the passing of years. Even as late as the second world war his work is evident.

A Baedeker raid by the German Air Force during the Second World War at one time was aimed 'at the historic city of Durham. The bombers failed to drop any bombs on either the Cathedral or, for that matter, on the city itself. This was due, the story went, because St Cuthbert caused a mist to rise from the river and shroud the cathedral so as to make it invisible from the air. Facts show that this was not the case and the night in question was a clear moonlit if, as is stated, St Cuthbert did not create a mist, that it was a clear moonlit night, a 'Bombers Moon' in fact, why did the bombers fail to identify the cathedral on the peninsula. and the tell-tale bend in the river? If nothing else St Cuthbert was, after 13 centuries, an experienced miracle worker and a few bombers arriving to bomb him would be easily taken care of, without a mist.



**Eider Duck and Drake**

## A.D.1025 -ASK A SILLY QUESTION.

**In 995 A.D. Bishop Aldune came to the conclusion that Chester-le-Street was no longer safe for the relics of St. Cuthbert.**



**S**WEYNE, King of Denmark, and Olaus, King of Sweden, had taken advantage of King Ethelred's youth to invade England, encouraged no doubt by stories of bribes given to invaders to quit the land. It seems that a party of these new invaders was attacking the North coasts and this news induced the Bishop to leave Chester le Street.

Aldune, the last Bishop of Chester-le-Street, with the other monks, their vassals and dependants set off for Ripon. They carried with them the remains of St. Cuthbert, the head of King Oswald, a stone cross and other holy relics, the riches of the Church, their personal goods, cattle and books which they had amassed. They reached Ripon without any mishap, stopping en route at manors and villages owned by St. Cuthbert.

They stayed at Ripon for three years during which period King Ethelred of England bound himself by treaty to pay the Danes a large sum of money at a stipulated time on condition that they left the kingdom. The tax for raising this money was called "Danegelt" which, it is to be noted, the clergy and monks always found means to evade.

It was during this peaceful period that the Bishop and his train of attendants took up the holy relics and all other effects and left Ripon intending to return to Chester-le-Street. It is at this point that the story of the "Dun Cow" was enacted. A monk travelling with the bishop had a dream in which St Cuthbert insisted that he wished to be buried where a girl finds a lost dun cow. This discovery of 'Dunelm' as a fitting resting place for the body of St Cuthbert was accepted by the bishop and the Saint was laid to rest. The importance, however, of Durham's strongly fortifiable position might well have influenced the monks.

Whether miraculous or purely practical, the building of a church of boughs was completed and after three years a stone church called the "White Church" was built to house St. Cuthbert and the other relics. On 4th September 999, Bishop Aldune dedicated the nearly completed church and St Cuthbert's body was placed in it with all due ceremony.

After Bishop Aldune's death in 1018 the See remained vacant for three years. Nothing, it seems, prevented a nomination for a new bishop to be put forward. There were no wars, no invasions

and the Danes seemed satisfied, for the time being at least, with the Danegelt. Only one reason could be found for the lack of nominations.

It had been the custom for the Chapter to elect a successor who was always a monk. Over a period of years the number of monks had declined and the secular clergy had taken their place so that now there were the same number of clergy as monks.

Both sides were perhaps anxious to appoint one of their own number to the position of Bishop. From their divisions and delay it became apparent that there was not a man amongst them of such character capable of filling that high office or with virtues comparable with previous Bishops.

While the ecclesiastics sat in Chapter to consider the appointment of the next Bishop, a priest called Eadmund, a descendant of a noble family, and prone to practical joking, entered the church. Upon being informed of the serious nature of the deliberations and the recurring divisions, he exclaimed to a friend in a jesting manner, "Why cannot you make me Bishop?" The question coincided with a complete silence of the Chapter sitting nearby.

Laughingly Eadmund went on his way out of the church to attend to his own business not knowing the result of the silly question.

The assembly, when the remark had been passed to all members, became silent yet again.

The outrageously simple question had been made by a man known to them as a strictly pious, deeply religious priest even if his practical jokes were out of place though they were simple and without malice. He tended to laugh and Joke with his fellow clergy but not one of the clergy present could fault him in his religious devotions nor could the monks challenge his deeply religious convictions. So his name was immediately put forward as a nomination. The assembly took his question more seriously than he had intended for they actually believed that his coming into the church and asking that question at that particular time was by divine impulse. This is not surprising as many decisions of that age were influenced by superstition. They argued that the will of Heaven had been pronounced to them by an involuntary messenger and all agreed to elect Eadmund as Bishop.



**THE DUN COW**

He was brought before the assembly and told of the decision but his sense of humour got the better of him and he assumed that they were mocking him for his tactless question. It took some time for the truth to dawn on this happy priest and when it did, he protested that he must refuse the nomination as he was sure he would not make a good Bishop.

At this point, so it is said, a confirmation of the act of the Chapter was distinctly heard coming from the shrine of St. Cuthbert itself. Eadmund was presented to Canute; King of England, who approved the choice and demanded that Eadmund be consecrated. Before becoming Bishop, Eadmund had one final scruple.

All preceding Bishops had been monks and so that their tradition should not be broken Eadmund insisted he would not be Bishop until he had become a monk. Then and only then did Eadmund become the second Bishop of Durham in 1021 A.D. It is written in the history of Durham that Eadmund carried out his duties as a bishop with dignity, piety and humour. What could have been a better answer to a silly question?

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## A.D. 1153- PRINCE BISHOP No 1

**An early and flamboyant bishop instrumental in creating the title Prince Bishop was Hugh Pudsey 1153 - 1195.**



**Left: William de Longchamp  
Chancellor arresting Hugh Pudsey  
Bishop of Durham**

**A** medieval whiz-kid, at the age of twenty-five, he was the Bishop of Winchester, Treasurer of York and Archdeacon of Winchester. He was also said to be the nephew of king Stephen and noted for his personal accomplishments. A monk of the Cistercian order of great religious fervour, a strict disciplinarian, never yielding to personal indulgence and constant-

ly wearing sackcloth next to his skin, he was austere, distant and reserved. Curiously enough he also had three sons, born, history hastens to assure us, before his elevation to the bishopric.

Usually either the prior or archdeacon of the Convent of Durham was chosen to become the next bishop unless the king had any preferences. He had none but the intense Jealousy between the two applicants caused the convent to bypass them both and elect Hugh Pudsey. The nomination was opposed by the Archbishop of York. He always did. He maintained that the See of Durham came under the Jurisdiction of York from the time of Cuthbert and Wilfrid and no bishop could be appointed without his consent, also, he said that this nominee was too young. Because of this objection it was thought advisable for Pudsey to Journey to Rome, accompanied it is said, by a

splendid train of ecclesiastics and vassals enough to impress the Pope who consecrated him on the Vigil of St Thomas 1153.

Pudsey returned to Durham where he proceeded to fall out with the very people who had elected him, the monks. A monk, Geoffrey of Coldingham, described him as a great con-man whose character was affected, his virtues hypocritical, and he had a weakness for gossip, especially from the monks concerning the prior. The mistrust became so bad that eventually he and the convent formed a mutual dislike for one another and he turned from the convent and involved himself in national politics.

His first venture was disastrous. He backed the rebellious sons of Henry II and whilst the king was in France allowed a Scottish army to cross the bishopric unmolested and five hundred Flemish auxiliaries to land at Hartlepool. Henry returned from France triumphant and called for Hugh to explain these treacheries. The con-man in Hugh came to the fore. He talked his way back into favour but with the payment of a hefty sum of money and the surrender of his castles at Durham, Norham and Northallerton. The latter Henry razed to the ground.

In 1189, Hugh Pudsey came into his own. Henry had made him a commissioner saddling him with the Job of levying a tax on the Scots to pay for a crusade. Henry died before the crusade could begin and the crusade was taken over by his son Richard I who, fired by religious fervour, began to sell all sorts of assets to fund the venture. He sold crown lands, mortgaged others and even sold titles. Pudsey saw his chance. He could become a favourite with the new king and do himself a great service. For the earldom of Northumberland, granted for his lifetime only, and the earldom of Sadberge, granted in perpetuity to the See, he paid the 'princely' sum of £11,000. It is said that the young king, when conferring the titles upon Pudsey with a military sword, was heard to mutter under his breath 'I have made a young earl of an old bishop.' In consequence of the grant of the earldom of Sadberge to the See, the bishop and succeeding bishops could have, gracing their crests, the mitre of Durham with coronet and sword crossed with pastoral staff (crozier).

These new possessions did not satisfy Pudsey for long. He made lavish preparations to attend the king on the crusade: vessels to convey his attendants, a beautiful galley built for the bishop with a throne of silver erected in it and a full set of silver plate for banquets on board. Here the story becomes confused. Some say the king, with his eye on the riches amassed by the bishop, persuaded him to give up the crusade by making an offer he could not refuse, and took possession of them. Others say that the bishop offered them all to the king for a position of trust and high honour at home. This position was granted on a further gift to the king of 1,000 marks. The office granted was Judiciary of England, North of the Humber, and Governor of Windsor. This grandeur did not last. Longchamps, Bishop of Ely, Papal Legate and Judiciary of Southern England, had greater plans. He lured Pudsey to London on some pretext and put him in the Tower. For his release he had to transfer his position of Judiciary to Longchamps, forfeit his governorship of Windsor, the town of Newcastle, the earldoms of Northumberland and Sadberge and two of his sons remained as hostages for the observance of his good behaviour. Subsequently Longchamps was deposed by the barons but Pudsey did not have his possessions restored.

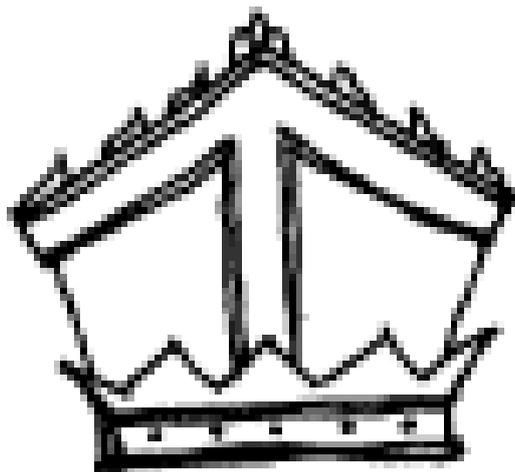
Worse was to follow. When Richard I returned to England he did not seem to listen to or to be influenced by Pudsey even though Pudsey had given 2,000 pounds of silver, church plate and ornaments towards the king's ransom and paid 2,000 marks for the restitution of the earldom of Sadberge. At the expectation of new and grander honours from a now contrite and grateful king,

he undertook the journey to London but got as far as Craike and was taken ill. He died at Howden and was buried in the Chapter House of Durham Cathedral.

Pudsey had ideas of grandeur but no more than other bishops before or after him yet he did not stint the See as some self-seekers did. Look around and you will find evidence everywhere in Durham of his legacy to the church and the people. He added the Galilee Chapel to the Cathedral; erected a rich shrine for the relics of the Venerable Bede; contributed to the ornaments of the church, a cross and chalice of pure gold. He restored the Borough of Elvet which had been destroyed by the usurper Comyn. He built Elvet Bridge and completed the City Wall from the North Gate to the Water Gate. He founded and liberally endowed the hospitals of Sherburn and St James, near Northallerton. He restored the Collegiate Church of Darlington and built the beautiful church there with a mansion for the occasional residence of his successors.

He ordered the compilation of the 'Baldon Buke' the Domesday Book of the County of Durham, which contains an exact account of all the lands and tenures throughout the Bishopric. It was once thought that the name 'Baldon Buke' was given to it because it was the first place mentioned but this theory has been abandoned. The compiler of the Baldon Buke received, returns from many places which were exactly the same as Baldon and to simplify the system he made the entry 'like Baldon'

He granted the first Charter to the citizens of Durham and incorporated the Boroughs of Gateshead and Sunderland. He ratified the possessions of the priory at Finchale. The grants or confirmations to his lay vassals were more than those of any of his successors. For con-man, not a bad record.



## A.D.1200 - POLLARD'S LANDS



**R**ICHARD POLLARD of Pollard Hall was a champion knight in the service of the Bishop of Durham. It is said that he slew a wild boar, or brawn, somewhere near where the hall stood. Pollard's Lands, which Richard Pollard held of the Bishop of Durham, is a small township on the eastern side of the river Gaunless and now forms part of the township of Bishop Auckland.

It was not always thus. Before the slaying of the boar and the holding of land Richard Pollard 'was a landless, penniless knight in the service of the bishop with little hope of promotion, gift of land or marriage to an heiress. The only possible enrichment came from tournaments where the victor in the Jousts claimed horse, weapons and armour of the vanquished. To save embarrassment the vanquished usually paid a magnificent sum to have his property returned. Richard Pollard was quite a proficient Jouster but had the good sense to realise that the life of a successful Jouster could be short and might even result in a crippling wound, a result too horrible to contemplate.

There was, however, a possible answer to his lack of land and wealth. The bishop had been inundated with complaints from lords of the manors of Evenwood, West Auckland and Copley concerning a boar, or brawn, of gigantic size causing untold damage. The bishop had therefore issued a writ offering a reward, of unknown magnitude, for the killing of the brute, which rumour said, had killed numerous-brave souls who thought fit to claim the reward.

Richard Pollard carefully made plans to kill this brawn. He listened to all the first-hand stories of encounters with the beast,- at least from those living to tell the tale. The more he heard of the creature the more it seemed to grow in size, fierceness and shape until he hardly knew whether he was supposed to be attempting to kill a wild boar or a venomous serpent similar to the Lambton Worm.

He then had fashioned several small stabbing spears. Instinct told him that former hunters of the brawn had tried with only a lance or long spear and failing to kill with the first blow, had been

defenceless against such an agile and ferocious foe. He would have been happier to use a hound on the hunt but did not own one.

He then plotted the sighting of the brawn and found that within a certain area it had a fixed pattern of movement, which when studied, enabled the hunter to find it in places of less danger to the hunter than others.

Richard Pollard, early one spring morning, sallied forth on his quest for fame and fortune, lightly clad in doublet and hose and carrying six small spears in a specially designed sheath. He tried several places where the brawn could be but it was not until he had covered some miles that he caught sight of his quarry at a place called Wackerfield. The stories were true. It was huge, as big as a young cow but wider and heavier, built of solid bone and muscle. It looked formidable.

Upon catching his scent the brawn made for a thicket where it remained whilst Richard rode around looking for an opening in the dense growth. Before he could dismount the brawn broke cover and went with great speed to another cover some three hundred yards away. Richard followed it. Dismounting and finding a trail in the undergrowth he carefully picked his way through the thicket. The brawn charged him suddenly and Richard, who had not seen the beast until it was almost on him, just managed to leap to one side as the huge tusks missed his leg by inches.

Once again the brawn was clear and away and in what direction Richard could only guess. He found his horse and looked around for some sign of the brawn.

The area was broken by thickets each about two to three hundred yards apart and to chase the brawn from thicket to thicket and then to enter them blind was asking for a terrifying death, for the brawn was in its element and he was not. He wished he had a hound.

At this point a flurry from a thicket to his right drew his attention and a number of pheasants flew out. That, thought Richard, is the quarry. Now for some tactical thinking. He rode slowly towards the thicket and around it seeking an easy way into it without force. He came to a few bushes then an open area. The very situation he had hoped to find. He dismounted, tied his horse to a bush well away from the chosen patch and picked up several stones. He loosened his spears and walked warily through the bushes. When he was in the open area he threw a stone to his right, grasped a spear and waited. Nothing happened. He threw a stone ahead and waited. He was about to throw the next stone when a crashing sound ahead made him crouch and grip a spear firmly. Out of the undergrowth came the brawn, its small red eyes gleaming with hate, the saliva dripping from each side of its mouth. He sidestepped and as did so he plunged the short spear into what he thought was the neck but it was the skull of the brawn and the spear slipped off the bony head as off a solid rock and slipped from his hand also.

The brawn went three paces past him when it turned and lunged for him again. He hardly had time to reach for another spear, or aim it, as the animal came for him. He leaped to one side and managed to thrust the spear with a thud into the neck of the beast where it stuck fast. The brawn passed him without harming him. It turned again suddenly and was back at him. Pollard's spear was halfway out of the sheath as he swung around. Too late, the wicked tusks bit into his leg making a nasty gash as it carried on past him. He was prepared for it the next time it turned. With his spear ready for the next attack he sidestepped the boar's charge, went down on one knee and thrust his spear through its throat so that it came out the other side of its neck, blood gushing

out of the wounds. It continued to attack again and again getting slower and slower but Just as strong. Richard now had time to place his spears but he himself was slowing, the leg wound taking its toll. The brawn now paused before attacking, the pauses getting longer and longer which was Just as well for Richard, as his legs began to buckle and the ground was getting slippery with the brawn's blood. The last of his spears went two charges ago. One was lying not two yards away but he dared not pick it up. His concentration was on the wane but the brawn, although weaker, was as aggressive as ever.

Just when he thought he might have to turn and run for it, a suicidal act he knew-, the brawn rushed at him but after two paces sank down on its knees, coughed up a clot of blood and keeled over, its beady eyes fixed on Richard. Richard, nearly sobbing with fatigue, moved cautiously over to the spear on the ground, picked it up and thrust it through one eye of the brawn and saw the life fade out of the other eye. At that Richard sank to the ground exhausted.

Minutes later when he had recovered enough to bind up his leg he took his knife and cut out the tongue of the brawn. He knew he would have to forfeit the carcass to the bishop but he might as well keep a tasty tit-bit for himself. He dragged himself out of the thicket to his horse, drank some wine from a leather bottle and sank down beside it. He fell fast asleep clutching the bottle.

Not long after two men came by and seeing Richard asleep and all bloodied, investigated and found the brawn. Knowing it to be the brawn worth a reward, without a word and without waking Richard, they took the carcass, first taking out the spears, and swiftly rode to Auckland Castle where the bishop was residing. Telling the gatekeeper that they had killed the brawn, they demanded to see the bishop to claim the reward. The bishop saw them, looked at the terrible brawn, rewarded them with a small fortune and sent them on their way rejoicing.

Meanwhile Richard awoke refreshed, found the brawn missing, the spears scattered around and with the evidence of other horses having been near guessed what had happened. He sadly but rapidly made his way to Auckland Castle with little hope of catching the thieves as it was early evening, hours after the kill. He hoped to convince the bishop that thieves had robbed him of his just rewards.

The bishop was enjoying his evening meal with his senior knights when the unusual message arrived stating that one of his knights requested audience with him about the killing of the brawn. The bishop was in a jovial mood and thought a talk with a knight claiming to have killed the brawn when the dead beast was even now in his stables would provide some light entertainment.

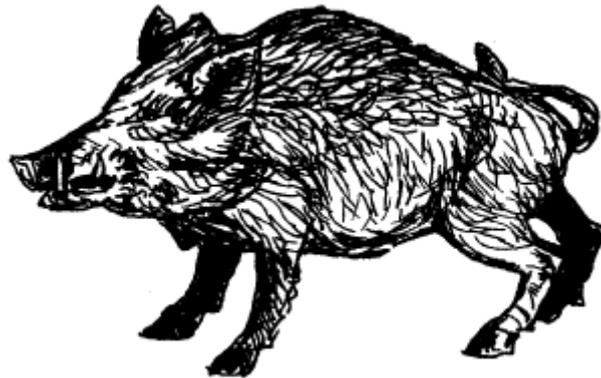
Richard approached the high table containing the bishop and knights, told his tale and showed the bishop his gashed leg. The bishop heard him out then asked where the brawn was which he was supposed to have slain saying that without the body no proof existed that his claim was genuine. This brought laughter from the knights and a smirk on the face of the bishop. His expression soon turned into one of doubt when Richard produced the tongue and suggested that whoever had claimed the killing had forgotten the tongue and insisted that to possess it was proof that he had first killed it. The bishop ordered the brawn to be brought and the laughter turned to cheers when the brawn was seen to be without a tongue.

The bishop disliked his entertainment to turn sour on him and ordered the men who stole the brawn from Richard found and imprisoned. Again, thinking to amuse his guests, the bishop told Richard that indeed the reward was his but it might prove a little hard to collect. The reward, he

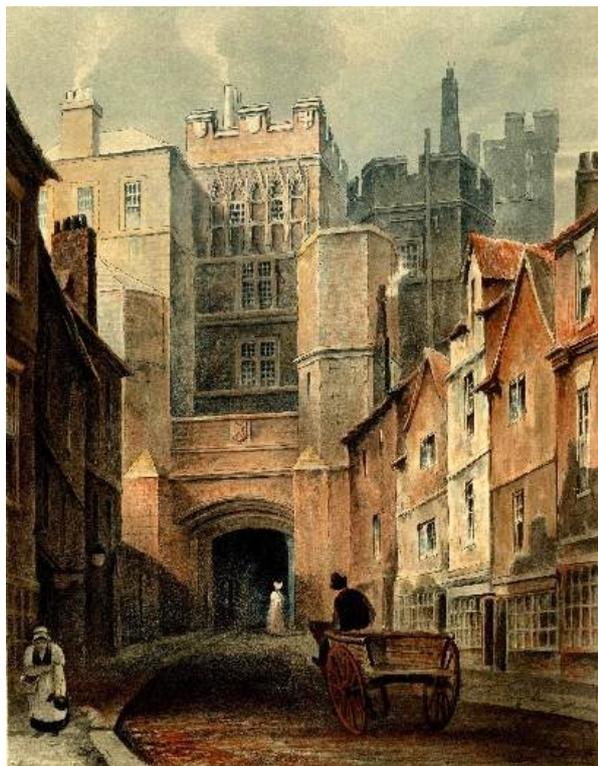
said, was the amount of land that Richard could ride around whilst the bishop and his guests finished the meal. With that the bishop dismissed Richard. Slightly taken aback Richard left the hall accompanied by a knight who had been sent to corroborate the resultant claim, if any.

About ten minutes later a grinning Richard and an embarrassed knight returned to the hall to the amazement of the bishop, who asked if he had given up the impossible task. Richard replied that, on the contrary, he had returned to collect the reward. Asked what land he had ridden around, Richard replied that he had ridden around Auckland Castle walls. The knight who had accompanied him, red facedly, nodded his head and the bishop, without rancour, made an alternative offer amid the genuine laughter of the knights.

The bishop congratulated Richard upon his wit and ingenuity and gave him all the fertile land now known as Pollard's Lands.



## 1424-1820 - WHAT A WAY TO RUN A JAIL



**T**HE NORTH GATE, the main jail of Durham, was also known as the Jail Gate. It spanned the upper end of Saddler Street and was the main gate of the defensive wall around the peninsula enclosing both the Castle and the Cathedral. Before the 15th century prisoners of the Bishop and the city had been held in the vaults of Durham Castle but in 1424 Cardinal Langley found that prisoners were housed in very bad conditions and moved them to the North Gate. To do this he had to practically rebuild the gate more as a formidable defence than as a prison and therefore the result was neither.

The North Gate was last used as a Jail on 4th. August 1819 when the inmates were transferred to the new prison in Old Elvet. Before it was demolished, the site and materials being sold for £823, it must have been a impressive structure.

The upper gate facing the Bailey was a double gate. The gate facing Saddler Street consisted of an iron studded gate and a portcullis. In between the gates was a "murder passage" associated with barbicans. A series of galleries and ports was constructed along the passage for the 'annoyance of assailants who might force the first gate'.

In 1773 when workmen were repairing the lower gate, the portcullis, which had been raised for so long that its existence had almost been forgotten, came thundering down in its grooves and embedded itself so deeply in the ground that movement between the Bailey and Saddler Street was completely stopped until workmen had chopped to pieces the iron-clad wooden obstruction, a long and laborious task.

The inmates of this jail and the House of Correction, situated in the North-West corner of Elvet Bridge, must have suffered horrifying conditions up to the beginning of the 19th century. There was no sanitation, no yard for exercise and the food supplied frequently consisted of boiled stale bread. Jail fever was at times rampant and it is easy to see why, when many had been imprisoned for debts and had little chance of being able to pay. The payment of all outstanding debts was the only condition of release. They sent out piteous appeals for help to anyone willing to listen. Some prisoners could vary the prison diet by means of bribes and could gain other privileges to the material gain of the jailer.

An aristocrat, Howard, Earl of Surrey, in 1774 wrote a terrible report on Durham Jail.

"The debtors have two damp unhealthy rooms ten feet by four feet square and have no sewers. At more than one of my visits I learned that the dirt, ashes etc., had lain there many months. The felons are put at night into dungeons, one seven feet square for three persons; another, the 'Great Hole', Sixteen and a half feet by twelve feet, has only a little window. Through this I saw these

prisoners chained to the floor. In that situation they have been for many weeks and are very sick. the straw on the stone floor was about worn to dust (this dungeon was a punishment for attempted escapees). Commonsense debtors in the low jail (house of correction) whom I saw eating bread and water told me that this was the only nourishment some had lived on for nearly twelve months. At several of my visits there were boys thirteen and fifteen years of age confined with the most profligate and abandoned."

The various jailers of early times were a strange crowd to judge from the little information left to us. These jailers were appointed by the Bishops of Durham. Not that the Bishop would interview and appoint them personally but his was the ultimate responsibility.

Under Tobias Mathew (1595-1606) Christopher Glover held the post. Mrs Glover it is said was the amicable lady who tried to poison Father Palasor and his companions while they were imprisoned in the North Gate. In 1613 Nicholas Hodgson alias Makeshift was Jailer. A man named Thomas Sankey built a house in Gilesgate called "Sankey's Folly", whether from the appearance of the house or the amount he paid for it is not known. After his death in 1629 Ann, his widow, was Jailer until 1632. Her daughter, Dorothy, married a clerk, Samuel Martin, nicknamed Boggs. John Peacock, skinner of Gilligate, (Gilesgate) followed Mrs Sankey. On his death Mary, his widow, continued in the post. She married John Joplin who was jailed until his execution at York in March 1674/5. Quite why he was hanged or whether he was married in Jail is not now known.

The most amazing Jailer of the North Gate on record, although his name is not mentioned, is made known in a letter written by Bishop Morton (1632-1660) to Justice Hutton. He wrote, "My gaoler of Durham I find to be utterly unworthy of his place; he hath lett one felon escape about the last assizes, and another now about a week ago, beside Mr. Brandling, who was remanded to prison by His Majesty after that he had been put in by the High Commissioners, and two of these are thought to be wilful escapes. You know there will be many eyes upon me upon all such notorious occasions, and therefore I desire to send me a warrant for a Commission to enquire of the matter"

There is one other aspect of the North Gate Jail which needs to be mentioned. Where Hatfield College now stands was once the Red Lion, a coaching inn and also a staging post for the Royal Mail, amongst other stage coaches, travelling between London and Edinburgh. The coaches turned up Saddler Street through the North Gate and along the Bailey into the Red Lion yard at speed, being timed all the way between stages. These coaches would on numerous occasions be met by the Bishop of Durham or other Church dignitaries in their coaches using the same road which was wide enough for only one coach at the North Gate.

The North Gate had to go. Even though Prebends bridge, which was built in 1777 for the use of the clergy going to the Cathedral. eased the traffic, it was no short cut to the city. To eliminate the bottleneck might have been one reason why the Bishop contributed £2000 towards the building of a new Jail in 1809.

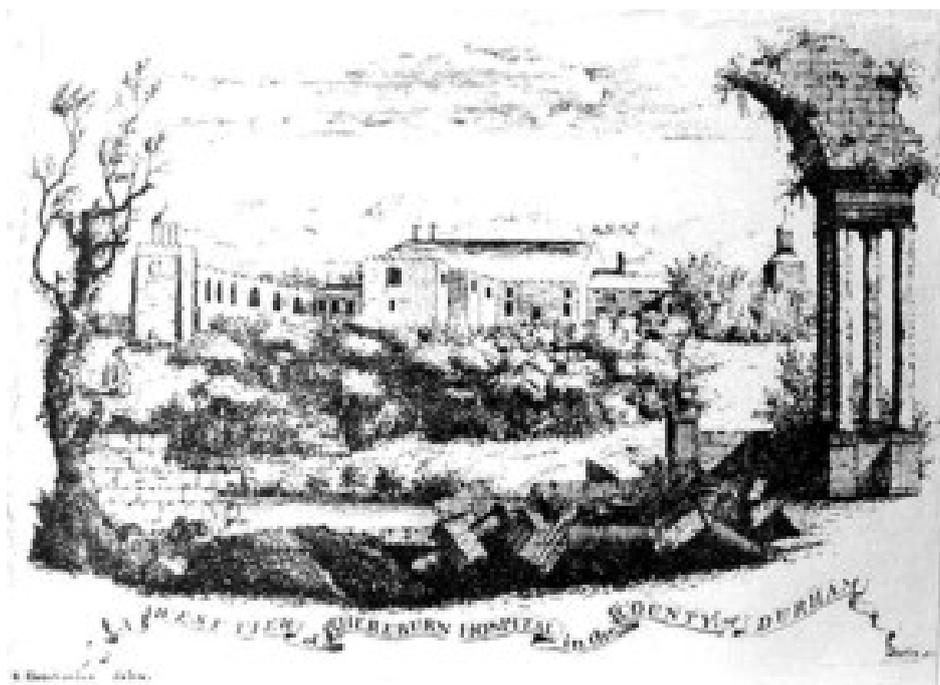
A final note on the new Jail which, whilst not a comfortable place to be in, was infinitely better than the old North Gate.

A report dated 1838, some 18 years after it was opened, describes "Durham County Gaol and House of Correction. The situation is excellent, and the prison stands very favourably for ventilation; a considerable space of ground is enclosed by the boundary wall. There is a

handsome court house and offices, Governors house and buildings capable of receiving from seventy to eighty prisoners. The work carried out by the male prisoners is weaving, making mats and beating and preparing English flax. The method used to do this is a newly invented machine requiring great bodily exertion."

This 'newly invented machine' was the dreaded tread-mill.

## A.D.1557. - FIDDLING AT SHERBURN HOSPITAL



**S**HERBURN HOSPITAL was founded by Bishop Pudsey 'the joly Byshop' for the maintenance of sixty five poor lepers, over whom he placed a steward, to defend them and their possessions. The original endowment must have been made before 1181, comprising the vill, the mill and pasture of Sherburn. Other endowments of Sherburn Hospital of the that date were Ebchester, Garmonsway, Raceby, Sheraton and the churches, including the vicarages, of Kelloe, Grindon, Sockburn and Bishopton. Other charters adding to the income followed, usually given by barons and knights of the Palatinate. Neville, Blakeston and Harpyn were names often found on the deeds.

Like all establishments of a similar nature, Sherburn Hospital changed considerably from the original purposes of its institution. The original regulations of the founder were added to and revised by Bishop Kelloe in 1311. It appears that five convents of lepers (sixty-five persons of both sexes) with a guardian at their head was added to the establishment to provide three priests and four attendant clerks, one of whom was required to be a deacon.

The steward made up his accounts four times a year. He was required to be a priest of a religious order and if such a person could not be found then a religious and highly principled secular

might be chosen. He was required to be modest and temperate in the exercise of his office and not to possess more than three horses.

Priests and clerks slept in a dormitory adjoining the chapel and with the steward dined together in the Common Hall. In winter the priests rose at midnight for mass then slept till morning but in summer the mass was sung to finish at twilight. The brethren whose health permitted were expected to attend Matins or say Matins whilst in bed if they were bed ridden.

The daily food allowance was a loaf weighing about two and a half pounds and a gallon of ale for each leper and one dish of meat three days a week with fish, cheese or butter the remaining four days between two. On Festival days a double portion of these were given, and, in particular on the feast of St Cuthbert in Lent, fresh salmon, if available or other fresh fish. On Michaelmas Day four brethren shared a goose and a number of apples. When fresh fish were not available, red herrings were served or cheese or eggs. During Lent each inmate was given enough wheat to make fermenty, and beans to boil; sometimes greens or onions. On Sunday pulse was given to make gruel. Red herrings were prohibited between Pentecost and Michaelmas.

Each leper had a yearly allowance for his clothing made up of three yards of woollen cloth, six yards of linen and six of canvas. Four fires were allowed for the whole establishment. On Christmas Eve they had four yule logs, with four trusses of straw on All Saints' Eve and Easter Eve and four bundles of rushes on the Eve of Pentecost. On the anniversary of Martin Sancte Cross, third master of the hospital, every leper received five shillings and five pence in money. All of which represents a large amount of wealth in those days bequeathed to the inmates and administered by the master of Sherburn Hospital.

Discipline was harsh as in all church run establishments. Disobedient inmates were punished at the discretion of their Prior and Prioress by corporal punishment and offenders who refused to submit to the usual form of discipline were given bread and water. After the third offence they were liable to be expelled from the hospital, a sorry plight for a leper of whatever sex.

Yet even before the 14th century was over some abuses were commonplace: lepers were neglected, their revenues diverted into private channels and the whole establishment rotten with graft and seething with discontent, so much so that Bishop Langley insisting upon his right to visit the hospital, sent in his commissioners, and received a report confirming his suspicions. He at once applied to the Pope for permission to make new rules for the better management of the hospital. These new rules included the appointment of a master who should be a priest. On account of the falling revenues - no reason was given for the reduction - the master was allowed to have as inmates thirteen poor brethren and two lepers ( leprosy nearly extinct by 15th century), each to receive ten pence weekly or six shillings and eight pence per year for fuel and clothing. These new statutes continued to be followed until 1557 when all previous fiddling of the hospital allowances detected by Bishop Langley paled into insignificance.

The master appointed to the hospital in 1557 was Anthony Salvin under Bishop Tunstall. This was during the reign of Queen Mary when an effort was made to return to the old religion. Anthony Salvin was the younger son of the ancient house of Croxdale, a man, it was said, 'of little learning but well beloved in his own country'. He was scrupulously honest, a brave man and had the comforts of the inmates of the hospital at heart.

Upon his appointment he persuaded Bishop Tunstall to petition Philip and Mary to set up a commission of enquiry. This was done in 1557. Its major complaint was that two previous

masters had, to their personal gain, leased possessions of the hospital and granted patronage of several vicarages owned by Sherburn Hospital.

The two masters concerned, Sir Thomas Liegh and Dr Anthony Bellasis, had been Thomas Cromwell's Visitors for the Repression of Religious Houses which told its own tale as to what happened during their terms of office. Witnesses were called to give evidence and told of the wholesale stripping of the assets of the Hospital. One result of the two masters mismanagement was that, 'like King Lear's attendants the poor brethren continued to shrink in number, whilst the revenues continued to increase, from sixty-five to thirteen, from thirteen to eight'.

Sir Thomas Liegh was accused of leasing the whole of the possessions of the hospital to relations or friends; contracting leases for the maintenance of only eight poor men and a woman; and of granting the patronage of the vicarages of Grindon, Bishopton and Kelloe belonging to, the Hospital. One priest of the institution proved that Sir Thomas Liegh leased the hospital to Thomas Gargrave and Thomas Leghe reserving forty pounds for the Master, Priests, Brothers and sisters. The lease was drawn up in Newcastle and sent sealed to Sherburn for the inmates to sign, a requirement needed to make the document legal. They all signed, the priest said, because of fear of reprisals from Sir Thomas Liegh. He made other individual grants and leases, again sealed, and brought to the brethren who signed the documents unseen.

Dr Anthony Bellasis seemed to have been less crude and vicious than Thomas Liegh. He had the decency to ask the inmates to sign the documents without explaining the contents but insisted that 'he would not seal anything that belonged to the Hospital without their consent'. Bellasis was proved to have leased the tithes of corn from the villages of Sockburn, Grisby, Dinsdale, Bishopton, Kelloe and Warrington. He also leased certain houses in Gateshead to Christopher Carr.

It appeared that these two villains had amassed fortunes over the years they had been masters and retribution was near. Unfortunately it was not to be. Before anything could be done Mary died and Elizabeth ruled in her place, the religious climate changed and the 'good' Protestants Sir Thomas Liegh and Dr Anthony Bellesis breathed again.

As a Roman Catholic Anthony Salvin was deposed and the Enquiry dropped. The post of Master was filled by a Thomas Lever, who, because of his puritanical fervour, was unable to make any impression on the more moderate church when he tried to emulate Anthony Salvin. It was not until 1595 that a new set of Ordinances and Rules were made for Sherburn Hospital which made it impossible for any master to fiddle.

The villains of the piece? Like modern fiddlers of public funds some get off scot free.



**Gateway to Sherburn Hospital**

## **A.D. 1563 - DURHAM CATHEDRAL: DEMOLITION EXPERT AND CON-MAN.**

**He was an intellectual, highly educated man and he must have been very proficient in literature.**



**T**HIS is borne out by the fact that he was a Commoner of Brazenose College, Oxford (left) in 1540 when he was 16 years of age. He became Bachelor of Arts and was elected Fellow of All Souls in 1545 and two years later was made one of the Seniors of Christ Church College on its foundation by Henry VIII. All this at the age of 23. He was William Whittingham, soon to be the 6th Dean of Durham and whose name has been almost forgotten and if it is remembered at all it is with horror and anger.

Had he remained in academic life all would have been well but in 1550 he obtained leave to travel abroad and for three years stayed at the University of Orleans where he married the sister of John Calvin. He returned to England in the reign of Edward VI but because of his wife's family he became a fugitive during Queen Mary's reign and travelled to Geneva where Calvin asked him to become a minister of his church in that city. When Queen Elizabeth came to the throne and Protestants were once again accepted in England he returned and was employed by the Earl of Bedford and later the Earl of Warwick. It was while in the employment of the latter that William Whittingham's real nature took over and set the scene for the future suffering of Durham. He preached to the people of Newhaven advocating the throwing aside of conformity and moving away from old religious views.

The Earl of Warwick, either to be rid of Whittingham or because he was blind to his disruptive attitude, obtained for him the Deanery of Durham from the Queen on the death of the previous Dean. This post was given to him even though the Queen had promised the post to a Dr. Wilson, one of her secretaries of state.

Whittingham was Dean for 16 years and in that time used his energies to oppose the excessive powers of the priesthood and matters touching the sacerdotal vesture or official garments of ordained priests. He pursued this argument, with the support of Bishop Pilkington, at times with vehemence and coarse language.

He was called "the false and unworthy Dean of Durham" by a contemporary. An archbishop having heard of some irregularities began a visitation. The Dean, he was given to understand, was not an ordained minister according to the order of the Church of England, having received his orders at Geneva in the English congregation there. At a commission ordered by the archbishop, the dean's certificate produced at the hearing read, "that it pleased God, by lot and election of the whole English congregation to choose W. Whittingham into the office of preaching". When this was objected to he produced another certificate stating, "that it pleased God by the sufferages of the whole congregation orderly, to choose W. Whittingham into the office of preaching". This was also objected to as there was no election of lot in any church in

Europe. It was agreed that as many clergy of popish orders were allowed into the church it was not felt that clergy of orders of reformed churches should be refused. Until his death nothing was finalised about his fitness for the office.

Nevertheless his greatest crime during his term of office was the destruction of some of the treasures of the cathedral. He committed crimes as great as those of the commissioners and even of the Scottish prisoners in later years. It was not the destruction, which was bad enough, but his methods of employing religious artefacts in a mean and contemptuous manner.

Most of the priors and priests of Durham had been buried in coffins of stone or of marble with marble covers which lay level with the paving in the church. Whittingham had these taken out of the church, the bodies removed and the coffins used as troughs for horses to drink from or hogs to feed from. All the marble and freestone which had covered them and the other graves were taken away, broken up and used as paving in his own house. Those which had brass inlays on them were stripped and the stones broken to build a washing house at the end of the cemetery garth. In time, the area could not be seen as having been used as a burial place. It was said the he could not abide anything that appertained to a Godly religiousness or monastic life.

Within the cathedral beside the pillar in front of the north door and the pillar beside the South East door were two holy water stones. These were basins of stone containing holy water for use by monks and worshippers. They were of fine marble, beautifully carved with hollow bosses and curiously worked outer carving. Not only were they both very old and had been carved by the same craftsman but they were built into the pillars. One was larger than the other and the pillar at the North door still shows marks of its position. Dean Whittingham hacked them from the pillars and handed them to his wife who seems to have shared her husband's gift for putting religious objects to profane use. She had them placed in the deanery kitchen where they were used to steep beef and salt fish, the drain holes in the bottom being very useful. Without doubt they were the most elaborate and beautifully carved kitchen sinks in England.

The Dean further searched the cathedral for any image which could be destroyed and many fine carvings were mutilated, one being an image of St. Cuthbert taken from its proper place by a former dean and erected outside the cathedral. This and others were broken into pieces in order to obliterate the memory of saints and other holy men, images which could be construed by this ultra-Protestant as idolatry.

After much destruction within the cathedral and the promotion of his Calvinistic opinions within the See he died on 10th June 1579 and was buried within the cathedral.

It was written of him and his Protestant contemporaries that;

Wood, Williams, Whittingham and Sutton.  
Valued the prayer book not a button;  
The liturgy they grudg'd to say,  
And threw the surplice quite away;  
Alter'd confession, changed the hymns,  
For old Jack Hopkin's pithy rhimes.

Soon after his death a tomb stone was laid over his grave with a versed epitaph engraved on a brass plate. It was perhaps poetic justice to a demolition expert that this monument was itself demolished by the Scots in 1610.

## A.D. 1592 - THE PLIGHT OF THE EGYPTIANS



### OLD TYNE BRIDGE NEWCASTLE

**T**HEY met at Newcastle Fair at Easter in 1591. One of them, Fenwicke, had been born and bred in Newcastle and knew most of the tradesmen and merchants of the city. It was he who unwittingly started them off on the path to the gallows. He understood the law and pointed out to them the dangers of begging and the painful consequences. He showed them how to circumvent the law by becoming servants or porters to tradesmen and merchants and how to make extra money by selling trinkets as he had observed Egyptians (Gypsies) do during the markets or fairs. This way, he explained; they would be classed as gainfully employed and in no way could they be looked upon as beggars or vagabonds, a most dreadful crime in those days.

The other four men, Simpson, Arrington, Featherstone and Lanckaster were of simple peasant stock, willing to be led by such a knowledgeable man and the work more pleasing than farm work. Two of the men, Arrington and Lanckaster were extremely good with wood and at certain times had been employed as carpenters by various landowners and had shown their worth at fairs doing odd jobs where no such guild existed. It was they who showed the others how to rough carve wooden statues, mostly of a religious nature, crucifixes and saints. The demand for these had increased since the dissolution of the monasteries in 1540 and the North had not wholeheartedly accepted the new type of worship imposed by Henry VIII but still clung to the old religion.

It was at Newcastle Fair that the five men made their first move in the adventure. They bought a cart and set off on a circuit of the markets and fairs in Cumberland, Northumberland and Yorkshire hiring themselves out to traders and merchants and in between times strolling around the crowded stalls selling their goods. When the market or fair closed they would take to the roads again with their cart bound for the next fair.

Most times they would link themselves to a group of travelling merchants for safety. The safety aspect was most important in those days with so many vagabonds and robbers roaming the roads but equally important was their own fear of being accused of being vagabonds.

On occasions they would meet gypsies on the road, usually in the countryside, and pick up a few ideas for trinkets. They spent their time on the road building up their store of trinkets and carvings for the next fair or market.

The men made their usual rounds of the fairs and at the Newcastle fair of Easter 1592, prepared wares for Durham. These items would include Carvings of fish eagles, in recognition of the miracle associated with St. Cuthbert and how he was fed by these birds, and of eider ducks, and even of the saint himself.

Eventually on the Thursday after Trinity, 14th June, the group arrived in Durham, took their cart to the Sands and began their usual task of assisting the merchants to set out their stalls.

The opening of the Corpus Christi fair was quite a sight. It was preceded by the guilds in procession from the town to the cathedral with banners flying and accompanied by the town dignitaries. It had been much grander, they said, before the monastery was dissolved. Eventually the fair was in full swing and all would have been well had not the five men, seeing such a crowd, become greedy. They argued that, instead of walking around amongst the crowds selling their wares, they would pull their small cart nearer the stalls and sell from there. The idea of a large collection of wares that would entice the crowds seemed a better method of selling than having a few items on a tray around their necks. They agreed to this move and were indeed selling goods much faster from the cart when disaster struck in the form of Richard Raw, Bailiff and Clerk to the Market. He asked if they had paid the toll for their stall. They replied that it was not a stall but a cart and for a while this seemed to satisfy the official. Some stall-holders, however, who resented paying tolls for stalls at fairs Joined in the argument. Richard Raw had no option but to arrest the five and take them before the Court of Pied Powder (literally 'dusty feet').

Fenwicke, who did most of the talking, expected only to be fined and the toll money taken. This would have occurred except for a few discrepancies in their individual stories of how they came to be selling trinkets and of their own origins. Two things cast doubt on their stories. One was the similarity of the carvings to gypsy art and the other was the vague outline of their wanderings and lack of evidence of employment which marked them immediately as vagabonds. The bailiff had them imprisoned until the Assizes on 4th August 1592 when they were brought before the Judge in the Court House on Palace Green. He questioned them about their background, their trades and where they had worked recently. It was a chance remark of Fenwicke to the Judge concerning the selling of trinkets as practised by the Egyptians (Gypsies) that caused the Judge to question them concerning their association with any Egyptians. Fenwicke said that indeed in the course of their travels they had known many such people and only last week they had met some by the roadside.

Little did Fenwicke realise that because of this rather innocent remark he had signed the death warrant of himself and his partners. The tone of the court became grave and in minutes the sinister questioning of the Judge became apparent to Fenwicke. He had made a mistake which he could not erase.

Eventually the Judge announced a verdict of death by hanging to all five prisoners under a little known law. Fenwicke had no knowledge of it and indeed, apart from the Judiciary, very few people knew of its existence.

An Act passed in the Fifth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth stated that, "Every person associating in any company or fellowship of vagabonds Called or calling themselves Egyptians, and who shall continue or remain in the same either at one time or at several times by the space of one month, shall therefore suffer pains of death".

All five were considered guilty by association and were executed at Dryburn and buried in St. Leonard's Churchyard.



## **Dryburn Moor**

## A.D. 1600 - CATHOLIC PERSECUTIONS



### Ravensworth Castle

**J**OHAN NORTON lived with his wife at Ravensworth. He was a Catholic which in the reign of Elizabeth It was a dangerous thing to be because Catholicism was an outlawed religion. You could pay a fine now and again for not attending your local Protestant Church but you must not attend a service of the old religion. To do so you must have a Catholic priest and therein lay the danger, for these priests were considered enemies of England and, as such, had to be hunted, caught and executed as were their congregations.

John Norton had considered the laws against Catholics from all angles and could not understand the logic of this persecution. He knew of the efforts of the Pope and the King of Spain to bring England back to the Catholic faith. It was made a political issue by the assassination attempts on the life of Elizabeth and the unrest it caused especially in the North which culminated in the 'Rising of the Northern Earls' just 30 years earlier in 1569.

Catholics, it was said, were persecuted not because of their religion but because of their treachery! John Norton, like most Catholics was as patriotic as any Protestant Englishman and wanted nothing more than to practise his religion in peace. It is doubtful that he knew of the actual situation. All priests available were Jesuits, specially trained, and smuggled into the country to further the plans of the Roman Catholic Church by intrigue. Therefore to harbour a priest was to render oneself open to the charge of treachery, punishable by death.

He knew then that to make available his house at Ravensworth for Catholic services was dangerous but Catholics wanted the consolation of their religion and could always find a priest to supply that need. In June 1600 he was put in touch with a priest and made arrangements for a service to be held in his house. He informed his wife who immediately recognised the dangers

and pleaded with him to re-consider but he was adamant. He invited his friend John Talbot to attend who, in accepting, asked if he could bring along a friend whom he could vouch for.

John Norton then made the final arrangements with the priest but said that he could not provide the facilities of a 'priest hole' which could be used as an emergency hiding place for the priest. Most large Catholic houses had them, - the most famous still in existence being at the Lord Crewe Arms at Blanchland - but others were at old Esh Hall, and at the Waterhouse, Thornley House, Hardwick Hall and Pontop Hall.

The priest, Father Palasor, arrived at Ravensworth and was greeted by John Norton who introduced him to his wife, John Talbot and the other man whose name is now forgotten. The gathering moved into the room prepared for the service but before the service could be conducted a group of men broke into the house and arrested the priest, John Norton, his wife his friends, who were taken to Durham to be remanded in custody. His wife, after interrogation, was released and allowed to return home. The unnamed person, known only to Talbot, agreed to attend Protestant services and was released. The other three were kept in the jail awaiting the Assize.

Were it not for his friends and his wife, John Norton could not have endured the time in jail. He and his two fellow prisoners were brought extra food and clothing from outside but the conditions were terrible. They were isolated in a dungeon 7ft. square and during their stay they were all very ill indeed. It was thought that the jailer's wife, a Mrs. Glover, had tried to poison them in a fit of religious zeal. The jail in which they were housed, known as the North Gate, and part of the Castle defences was situated at the head of Saddler Street. It was removed in 1820 when the new jail was opened in Old Elvet.

The Assize was held in the old Bishop's Court House. It was situated in those days at the South-West Corner of the Palace Green close to the walk leading to the North door of the Cathedral. Next to it a narrow passage leads to the river banks known for centuries as 'Windy Gap' and originally known as 'Windy Hole' because of the draught which can be felt when walking in it. It was formerly a lane leading to a postern gate in the castle walls.

The Assize Courts of the Bishops were part of a larger building housing the Courts of Justice. The upper chamber was where the Assizes were held, a mean and melancholy setting for so important a purpose. Underneath this room were the Bishop's stables.

It was here then that the three men were taken to from the jail, up Owengate, around the Palace Green and into the court room in August 1600. There could be no defence. They would again be offered the opportunity to recant, and if they refused, as they did, the only thing left was for the judge to pronounce sentence which, as in all these cases was to be taken to the place from whence they came, that is back to jail and from there to a place of execution.

Executions had taken place at various locations around Durham, on the Palace Green, in the Market Place, and just outside the City on the Newcastle Road. On August 9th 1600 the three men were fastened down on hurdles at the jail gates. They were drawn by horses down Saddler Street, through Fleshergate into the Market Place, then into Silver Street and down over Framwellgate Bridge. There was no North Road then. The road divided at this point between South Street and Crossgate on the left and Milburngate on the right. The procession moved down Milburngate followed by a throng of people, the windows on either side full of enemies, sympathisers or the curious. Following the old steep Framwellgate they turned left through the

'peth' along the Newcastle road to the place where the executions were to take place. It is difficult to pin-point exactly where the executions were held but from old sources it is possible to give a general outline of the area concerned. Old inhabitants maintained that an area of ground North of St Cuthbert's in the shape of a triangle, above where the Garden House now stands, was where the executions took place.

Surtees had it that Gibbet Knowle was the high ground North of Springwell. An old map indicates that Beaulah House was situated in Gallows Field and it was here that executions were carried out. The mention of Gibbet Knowle requires some consideration. Executions of a serious nature required that the public be shown examples - by bodies of murderers being left on a gibbet and this also applied to spies and enemies of the Queen. The position of the gibbet was perhaps the arch of high ground to the east of West Lodge known as Aykley Gardens.

It was just below Gibbet Knowle that the men were hanged, one at a time, and before each died he would be taken down and drawn, that is the intestines cut out and his body quartered. Whether their heads were placed on Framwellgate Bridge while their quartered bodies were hung in baskets on the gibbet at Gibbet Knowle is not known. No records exist now to whether they suffered this fate but the possibility of three baskets with their grisly contents hanging on Gibbet Knowle cannot be ruled out as a 'minder' to Catholics not to worship the God of motherly Love.



**The North Gate**

## A.D. 1636 - WHEN THE WATER STOPPED



**Left: The Pant, Durham City, Market Place**

**I**T was just another market day and Rolf Allanson, Bailiff and Clerk of the Market was making his way to the Market Place to carry out his normal duties. Passing the two troughs called the "Pant" he was struck by an unusual sight. The water usually pouring into the Pant had stopped. In living memory it had not stopped. Since the water had been given to the City in 1450 by an ancestor of the Lord of the Manor of Crook Hall it had come from the Fram Well in pipes and filled these two troughs. Why should it stop now?

As Rolf considered his next move he was joined by the master of the Barkers and Tanners Guild who complained bitterly about the lack of water for tanning and gave the opinion that the pipes from the Fram Well were broken. Rolf went to the Toll Booth just inside the Clay Gate and arranged for his duties to be carried out by one of the market officials while he checked for the possibility of a broken pipe.

He left the Market Place by way of Silver Street. He had no way of knowing where the pipe might be buried, but then no one else knew either, since no plans existed. He assumed it would follow Silver Street but found no fresh running water to suggest a broken pipe, but only plenty of thick sludge in the centre gutter. At Framwellgate Bridge he walked down Broken Wall steps and looked under the first arch. Seeing no water dripping from the bridge he crossed the bridge and turned Milburngate checking the other arches. Again no water there or in Milburngate as far as the Clock Mill on the Milburn. At this point the pipe was visible as it crossed the stream but showed no break. Following the road up Framwellgate he could see no running water which was strange as overspill from the spring should have been visible by now as he was nearing the spring head.

When he reached the Fram Well the reason for lack of water in the Market Place was very plain indeed. The water was flowing in a completely different direction. The pipes which should have led down to Framweligate were broken and laid on the surface. A new deeper culvert had been dug leading in the direction of Crook Hall. A man was working on the culvert further down Sidegate and Rolf approached him asking his name, occupation and employer. The man replied that his name was Taylor, a labourer employed by Cuthbert Billingham of Crook Hall. When asked why the water was being diverted, Taylor explained that this was to go to the mill near Crook Hall to help power that mill. Rolf Allanson then went to Crook Hall, found Mr. Billingham and told him that he was causing considerable inconvenience to the City and asked why after the water had flowed for so many years into the City he was acting in such a high-handed manner. Cuthbert Billingham replied that he was under no obligation to the City and that it was his will since the rent had not been paid within the time specified in the original grant.

The Bailiff having no means of proving or disproving this statement returned to the City in great haste to report to John Heighington, the Mayor, and the Aldermen. They immediately sued Cuthbert Billingham in the Bishop's Chancery Court. The date of this move was October 14th and the long wait for the law to take its course began. Meanwhile the water no longer flowed into the City. The people of Durham reacted in the only way possible. Down to the river for water. There had always been access to the river and even now between Milburngate Bridge and Fowlers Yard can be seen the steps used for centuries by the citizens of Durham. Other steps on either side of the river are no longer in existence. The population of Milburngate, Framwellgate, Crossgate and South Street had never used the Pant so no loss was felt by them. Claypath and Elvet had access to the river and the city centre could use the river via Walkergate and no doubt used St. Cuthbert's Well situated on the river banks just below Windy Gap. It is not known whether they were able to use the Galilee Well.

This lack of water continued until 29th March in the following year when Cuthbert Gillingham was brought before the court. The Chancellor of the Chancery Court, Sir Richard Hutton, heard evidence from Gillingham that, contrary to the original grant, the rent of 13 pence to be paid before forty days after Martinmas had not been paid. He also complained that people from Framwellgate were going to the well and damaging his crops and grass. He reiterated that he had broken the pipes lawfully. The Mayor and Aldermen were not entirely without blame as they had not paid the rent but they stated that no reminder had been received from Gillingham. The Chancellor adjourned the court and reserved his judgement until 10th May when he declared that he found for the Mayor and Aldermen.

Mr. Cuthbert Gillingham was ordered to repair any pipes that had been cut and he was to be imprisoned until he entered into a bond to perform the order and pay for all the damages done. The Chancellor also emphasised that in future years the rent should be duly paid without the need for reminders.

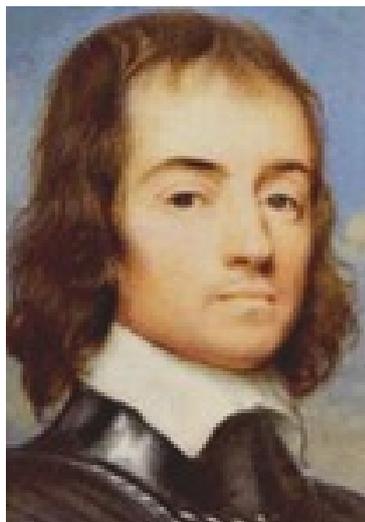


From this date the water flowed without further interruption but the 'Pant' changed a number of times. In 1726, Charles Talbot, later Lord Chancellor, on his re-election to Parliament for the city, generously consented to defray the expense of a new and larger pipe after the city had subscribed £120 for the purpose. In 1729, the Pant had the statue of Neptune placed over it. Presented by George Bowes Esq., to celebrate the formation of a company which intended making the River Wear navigable up to Durham. The Pant was renewed in 1863 and again

in 1900 and remained until 1920.

The position of the Pant with its underground cistern holding water for emergency uses is now shown in the Market Place by a hexagon of red sets in the parking area in front of the statue to Lord Londonderry (above). The stone indicating the Framwell is still to be seen below the railway bridge in Framwellgate.

## A. D.1636 - TRIAL BY WAGING BATTLE



**I**T started with an ordinary legal case of re-possession of land from a tenant by a landlord. The two men were members of famous families. The tenant was Richard Lillburne whose son (left) would become famous during the Commonwealth. The landlord was Ralph Claxton whose father had been in the Rebellion of Earls in 1569 and had had his life and estate saved by the intercession of his wife's sister. The family had fallen on hard times and had to sell the estate, Burn Hall, in 1587 but still retained land in other parts of the County including the City.

Both families were noted for their rather eccentric behaviour and the aspersions cast by each of the contestants leading up to the court case were expansive to say the least. Each was heard to say things about the other which created great interest in their eventual appearance at the August Assizes in the Court House next to Windy Gap on Palace Green. The judge was Judge Berkeley whose traditional welcome with fanfare and escort, And his stay in the Castle both lavish and comfortable, did nothing to warn him of the singular spectacle to be presented before him the next day.

The court was opened on 6th August 1638 and the judge must have noted the rather full court before him. At 10 o'clock the clerk of the court heralded the first case, that of Ralph Claxton, demandant, and Richard Lillburne, tenant, to decide the right to lands at Thickley.

The defendant appeared accompanied by his attorney and with them a character who made the court gasp, the public cheer and the Judge knock in vain for silence. The person accompanying Ralph Claxton was in full knightly armour, breast plate, helmet and chain mail. He carried a stave, xxxxx? and his gauntlets. When near silence had been obtained, the attorney for Claxton explained to the court that his client, with due respect to his Lordship, demanded not trial by the court but trial by combat. Ralph Claxton then stepped forward, faced the judge and with a straight face and clear voice declared, "I, Ralph Claxton, do hereby damned trial by combat against Richard Lillburne and do hereby nominate George Cheney as my champion. I mean that I will accept the result as a fair verdict of my case". Whereupon George Cheney clattered his way to the centre of the court and threw down his gauntlet with five small coins in it. The immediate uproar in the court took some time to subdue.

Up to now nothing had been seen of the tenant, Richard Lillburne, but the uproar had hardly died down when he appeared with his attorney and yet another man in mediaeval armour.

The judge hardly heard Richard Lillburne repeat similar words earlier uttered by Ralph Claxton. Lillburne stated that his champion was William Peverell who then moved to the centre of the court to throw down his gage etc. There was pandemonium in the court at this turn of events. It was clear that the two eccentrics had conferred with each other. Being old families of Durham had a bearing on their actions as was to be discovered much later.

The judge, as can be imagined, was much taken aback by such blatant contempt of court but had the good sense not to lose his temper or make any foolish remarks. He made a brave show considering the circumstance. He came down into the court, thoroughly inspected the champions and ordered them into the custody of two bailiffs of the court till 8 o'clock the next morning

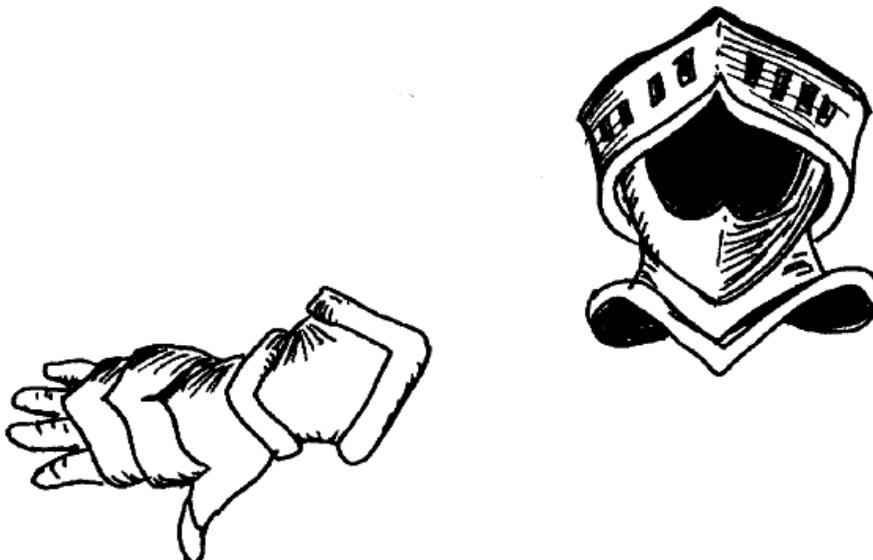
when they were ordered to put in pledges to appear at the Court of Pleas on the 15th September. No word was spoken to Lillburne or Claxton as the Judge rightly presumed that the two champions now represented them. The Court of Pleas sat in due course with no solution to the case and deferred it until 22nd December when the King intervened, ordering the Judges of the Northern Circuit to hold a conference and consider how the case might be tried some other way. The result of the conference was that Judges Branton, Davenport, Denham, Hutton, Jones and Crooke over-ruled the objection by Judge Berkley that the champions were hired, and that in fact Lilburne was entitled to his trial by battle if he persisted.

The success of Lillburne was a triumph of the law over common sense. Trial by Fire, Trial by Water and Trial by Combat had been abolished and trial by jury introduced by Henry II. Yet these worthy judges had weighed the case carefully and still acknowledged that Trial by Battle be accepted. The case, however, was deferred year after year by a simple method of Judicial subterfuge. The judges were at great pains to go Through the motions of hearing the petitions and statements concerning the appointment of the champions. Then after careful inspection of each champion, his armour, his weapon and his bearing the judge would pronounce the verdict that, as the staves carried by each champion were unequal in length it would be an unfair contest and defer it for another year. The following year the judge would find some trivial error in the records of the case and so defer the conflict.

Eventually a Bill had to be taken through Parliament to abolish this archaic method of settling a legal case in Durham.

But why, in the first place, had Lillburne Claxton introduced this bizarre method of justice? Why had the judges not initially recognised the proceedings as a farce? Finally why was the matter so serious that parliament had to pass an Act before anything could be settled?

The answer lay in the fact that as old families of Durham, the Lillburnes and the Claxton knew the importance and the power of the old Prince Bishops of Durham. It was said that as the King's writ ruled England so did the Bishop's in the Palatinate. The fact that King Henry II had abolished Trial by Combat in England was of no consequence, for no such abolition had been carried out by the Bishop of Durham and hence the Act of Parliament was required to bring Durham into line with the rest of England.



## A.D. 1649 - DURHAM'S DICK WHITTINGTON



**A**CCORDING to legend, London's Dick Whittington was unwanted, had an animal for a friend, used his business acumen well and married a rich man's daughter. The only difference between Dick Whittington and John Duck of Durham was that Duck's friend was not an animal but a bird. His place of birth is unknown and his parents' name is unknown since in his will he mentions the daughter of his late brother but appeared to be uncertain of his name or where the daughter could be found. He came to Durham to be a butcher's apprentice, but only one butcher was willing to accept him. Either the fact that he was unable to give a satisfactory explanation of his birth and parenthood or that he could be a Scotsman, were reasons given for others refusing to give him work. A Mr. Heslop, butcher, was willing to take him on but an order in the Butchers' Guild stated: "John Heslop must forbear to set John Ducke in work in the trade of a butcher". As to the possibility of his being a Scotsman, another rule from the book of the Company stated: "No brother shall teach any Scottish man the craft on pain of twenty shillings to the Bishop and twenty to the crafts", John Heslop eventually considered it far too expensive to keep him on and sacked him.

It is at this point that facts become interwoven with pantomime fiction. As John Duck strayed by the riverside - so the story goes - miserable and downhearted, watching the beasts being driven to Fleshergate in Durham where the butchers plied their trade, a raven appeared hovering in the air, and, from chance or fright, dropped a gold Jacobus at the foot of the astonished boy. From that amazing piece of luck an orphan made a fortune, became a prominent citizen, a master butcher and a baronet.

It is hard to follow his rise to greatness precisely but some particulars are available for inspection.

On 30th July 1655 John Duck and Anne Heslop were married in St. Nicholas' Church. No doubt he had become a member of the Butchers' Company either before his marriage or just afterwards and he could have been made Master of the Guild very soon after that. He rose to the top of his trade and at least one of his many dealings in the trade shed a rather lurid light on his character.

Bishop Cosine in a letter to Miles Stapleton in 1670 wrote: "The seven oxen which the Northumberland thief brought to Durham and sold to Mr. Duck for fourteen pounds ten shillings

were extremely cheap and would make others suspect that Mr. Duck knew they were stolen beforehand, and played booty with the thief, thinking himself safe enough by buying them openly and tolling in the market".

The thief was convicted for stealing the seven oxen, The Bishop argued that, as he had lost the oxen, the monies received by Mr Duck on the re-sale of the oxen should belong to him, or the oxen should be restored to him as the rightful owner. Mr. Stapleton replied, "To talk to Mr Duck of fair means - try this first - then talk of the law after". Between the thief, the Bishop and Mr. Duck, what became of the owner's claim to the oxen was lost in red tape to the advantage of John Duck. As was pointed out the vendor was convicted and it was known where he got them but the buyer bought them openly and in good faith and that was an end to it. The whole incident leads one to believe that Mr. Duck made some very shady deals and when one considers the origin of his wealth the raven could have been another dark bird.

Nevertheless John Duck went from strength to strength. Before 1680 he purchased the manor of Haswell on the Hill from William Belassye Esq., and in 1688 lands at Rainton and Great Lumley. At Rainton he became lessee of the mines under the Dean and Chapter of Durham and won the valuable seam of coal known as the "Old Duck Main". In 1680 he became Mayor of Durham and was nominated as Justice of the Peace by Lord Crewe, but he had some enemies and it was said that a fellow J.P. refused to sit on the bench with him. His greatest reward however was his commission for Baronet which came by post from London on 3rd April 1687.

He was a Tory and assisted the Members of Parliament during re-election and was at that time to be seen in the Rose & Crown which he owned in the Market Place (where Woolworths now stands). It was from there that the election campaign was directed. He endowed a hospital at Lumley and built a splendid museum in Silver Street which contained a magnificent staircase (now in the City Hotel, New Elvet) and which later became known as the Black Lion Inn. In one of the principal upper rooms a painting on a panel records his happy rise to fame and fortune. It shows the baronet, then humble John Duck in the dress of a butcher boy cast out by the butchers standing near a bridge in an attitude of despondency while in the air a raven is seen bearing in its bill a piece of money which, according to tradition fell at his feet and which, being "put out to use", was the pivot on which he won a splendid fortune. On the right is a view of the mansion house in Silver Street and on the left the hospital at Lumley.

Just to make sure that the name remains prominent two ducks are shown in the river. This panel is still in existence in the City. He died without issue and was buried at St Margaret's on 31st August 1691. Anne Duck was buried 18th December 1695.

Unlike the ending of Dick Whittington there was a certain bitter taste left when the estate was distributed after the death of Lady Duck. Many people were disappointed as contemporary letters show. The bulk of the estate she left to her eldest niece, a Jane Wharton whose first marriage was to James Nicholson who died a year afterwards. To her other niece, Elizabeth, she only left a 'rotten olde house' at the bottom of Silver Street. A colliery and two farms were claimed by a partner to the Ducks, a Mr. Salvin, who also received £500.

The story of John Duck, whilst a remarkable story of rags to riches, does not end there. It extends to the present century. John Duck can lay claim to be related, on his wife's side to the Queen. Lady Duck, the daughter of John Heslop had an elder brother William Heslop whose daughters, Jane and Elizabeth, were mentioned in the will. Jane married James Nicholson and had a son, another James Nicholson who married Anne Allan by whom he had four children:

James who died young, Jane, Anne and Mary. At Houghton-le-Spring, in 1763, Jane married Thomas Lyon, 6th Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorn. At West Rainton in 1737 was born a son and heir John Lyon who became the 7th Earl of Strathmore on his father's death at Glamis Castle in 1753. In 1767 he married a Durham girl Mary Eleanor, daughter of George Bowes of Street lam Castle and Gibside. Her third son Thomas became Earl of Strathmore in 1820 and took the name Lyon-Bowes.

His grandson, Claude the 11th Earl of changed the name to the more familiar Bowes-Lyon His son Claude George, the 12th Earl, was the father of the Queen Mother.

In addition the same Jane Nicholson, whose husband died the year of their marriage, remarried a Richard Wharton and had a daughter to him called Jane who married John Tempest in 1706 and had many famous and distinguished Durham descendants, including the Vane Tempests,

From the marriage in 1819 of Frances Anne Vane-Tempest to the 3rd Marquess of Londonderry, descend a number of famous people the most famous being Winston Churchill, the present Marquess of Londonderry, two Dukes, two Earls, four Viscounts, all of whom are kinsmen of Her Majesty the Queen.

All of these have as their ancestor a Durham butcher who in all probability was fined for employing John Duck but who allowed him to marry his daughter.

Beat that Dick Wittington!



## Sir John Duck

## A.D. 1650 - VANDALISM IN THE CATHEDRAL



**O**N July 14th 1650 Cromwell came to Durham as General of the Parliamentary Army on his way to Scotland to oppose David Leslie who was preparing to invade England under the banner of Charles II.

The opposing armies met at Dunbar. The English, short of food and exhausted by constant marching, were in danger of defeat. Had it not been for the Scottish Army attacking too soon and Cromwell's astute use of his magnificent cavalry, all might have been lost. As it was, late in the afternoon of September 3rd 1650, the Scots suffered a major defeat with 3,000 killed and 10,000 captured.

Cromwell decided to make an example of the captured Scots and arranged for them to be taken to various towns in the North and held to await his final judgement. On his way South he ordered that nearly half of them should follow him into England. Following behind Cromwell and the bulk of his army trailed the wretched Scots, many of them wounded and carried by their comrades. They were harried by their soldier guards and given little if any food on the march. The going was slow and a number died of wounds or starvation on the way from Dunbar. The country folk of Northumberland were a little bewildered at this new turn of events. Here were their old enemies who had over the centuries raided the countryside and had, during the recent civil war, fought on the side of Parliament and yet now they were captives of Parliament and on the King's side. It would seem likely that they would feel some sympathy towards these poor wretches as the North had always been a Royalist stronghold.

It was at Morpeth, after some time on the road from Dunbar that the Scots were allowed to rest. But under what conditions? They were herded into a settled down as best as they could. The exact number involved is not known. Some said 3,000 and yet a Colonel Fenwicke wrote that there were about 3,500.

It was a cold October. Some of the windows were broken in the Cathedral and the Scots could find no comfort. For warmth they made fires of the wooden pews, the choir stalls and the wooden partitions. Prior Castell's clock in the South Transept they left unharmed, either because it was their only indication of time, or because the Scottish emblem of the thistle on top of the clock made them think it originated from Scotland. There was no sanitation, no bedding and little medical care.

They wrought a vengeance on their captors in their helpless position by vandalising the interior of the Cathedral, being for the most part Presbyterians they had no love for the English Church, but they especially vented their spite on the tombs of the Nevilles whose participation in the Battle of Neville's Cross was bitterly remembered by some of the Scots. The incarceration was to end very soon.

Sir Arthur Haselrigg in an address to the Council on 31st October 1650 stated that the defacing of several monuments in the Cathedral had been attributed to these unhappy sufferers, many of whom were later sold to the English planters in the West Indies. What happened to the others is not known.

The interior of the Cathedral was totally wrecked. Even now, the vandalism of the Scottish prisoners is evident as one walks down the nave. It is claimed that the effects of prolonged and insanitary occupation are still detectable especially in the N.E. corner of the Chapel of the Nine Altars which, they say, was used as a lavatory by the prisoners.

## A.D.1662 -THE MUGGLESWICK CONSPIRACY



**M**UGGLESWICK on March 22nd 1662 was an unlikely setting for a conspiracy capable of shattering the peace of England after the restoration of Charles II. The portents were to be found in London the year before when the Fifth Monarchy Men staged a wild and hopeless rising. The City of London had reacted strongly and had good reason to feel bitter against dissenters in general. The rest of the country watched and waited for a similar uprising sifting rumours and keeping guard.

Who were these plotters? They were a Puritan sect which had achieved notoriety out of proportion to its numerical strength. They had exerted influence over Cromwell in 1653 and had caused anxiety to the Restoration Government. Members of this sect, Fifth Monarchy Men, were veritable revolutionaries, fearless soldiers of Christ ready to trample down man-made laws and set up a fanatical government if they were allowed to do so. In fact, apart from the Fifth Monarchy Men, most Nonconformist sects were singularly peaceful and law-abiding. Any serious plotting to restore the republican cause took place amongst the disbanded soldiery. The ordinary chapel-goer may have attended these meetings but reform not revolution was his aim. The Anabaptists were linked with the plotters and suspicion was rife here in the north east - and Muggleswick

At Durham that March day, one John Ellerington gave information of treasonable goings-on in Muggleswick to four justices of the peace. He informed them that he had known of numerous seditious meetings in Muggleswick Park within the last six months, sometimes in the house of John Ward, --one of the chief preachers,- sometimes at the houses of John Readshaw, Robert Blenkinsop or Rowland Harrison. He then gave a list of names of persons who attended these meetings, most of them prominent men of the area.

At these meetings they mutually took an oath of secrecy, The intentions of the group, Ellerington said, was to rise in rebellion against the government, to destroy the present parliament which had made a law against liberty of conscience (The Clarendon Code), to murder all bishops, deans and chapters and all ministers of the church. They intended to break all organs into pieces, to destroy the commonprayer books and pull down all churches. Further, to kill the gentry who opposed them, fall upon Durham and seize any armaments and money and to plunder the town. They boasted of many thousands of Anabaptists and Independents that were to join them in the country, with whom they had daily communication by letters and messengers. Ellerington had

many times been employed as messenger and had taken letters to many people. He said he had heard the plotters say lately that some Papists were joining them in their plot.

He further told the justices that the plotters had plenty of arms or could lay their hands on them through Lewis Frost of South Shields. He also warned the justices that the word had for some time been spread that the plotters intended to rise up on the 25th March, but had lately agreed to a postponement for a month until they saw what parliament would do concerning tender consciences and toleration of their party. This delay would increase the numbers flocking to them daily. The plotters were then re-baptised by John Ward who then made all present repeat the oath.

Ellerington said that he had been at most of the meetings but his conscience had been pricked by the horror of such a bloody rising and he could not rest until he had told someone of importance.

This was not the only piece of information that John Ellerington gave to the justices. Later he accused several people of high rank of being involved in the plot: Sir Henry Witherington of Northumberland, Edward Fenwick of Stanton, Timothy Wittingham of Holmside and Captain Lilburne of Sunderland. The last named was a relative of John Lilburne of the Dissenters and was a prime suspect. Both he and Whittingham were arrested and detained in custody for three months but set free for the want of any evidence to incriminate them.

Nevertheless the fear of civil unrest fired by Ellington's disclosures caused some panic in the County. Bishop Cosin called out the trainbands under Sir Thomas Davison and the gentry of the county with their retainers formed in different wards under both ex-Cavalier and ex-Roundhead officers. Nothing happened.

John Ellerington was not the only person giving information to the justices regarding the plotters and again from the same area of Muggleswick. On the 1st December 1663 a George Proud stated that John Suirtis of Highfield had told him that, about five or six weeks ago at a place called Hollins, he had seen two troops of horse bearing arms. The local people had asked the leader of the troop why they were there and the troop adopted a threatening attitude and dispersed. George Proud said he had seen two men with broad swords cross the Derwent ford and when he had returned home his daughter said that she also had seen the two armed men and that one of them looked like their neighbour Joseph Hopper who had been away for some time.

Joseph Hopper's wife, when asked, said that her husband was not at home and that the two men had only stayed for a pipe of tobacco and left. Then the plot thickens. A Thomas Richardson declared that he told Thomas Marshall that John Wilkinson told him that Joseph Hopper was abroad with horse and arms and that some men on horseback with swords had been seen riding by Ebchester and Shotley Bridge and he feared Joseph Hopper was with them.

Thomas Marshall, when asked if he had told Thomas Harrison that several of his neighbours had been from home in arms, said that only Joseph Hopper was away but whether with arms he did not know. Eventually Joseph Hopper turned up and confessed that he had been abroad five weeks in Ireland to see some friends. He had not told his wife because she would not have let him go.

Thus two troops of Anabaptist horses and men, who forded the Derwent with glittering swords and threatening attitudes bent on massacre and civil war, melted away, to be reduced to Joseph

Hopper, who sneaked away on a five-week Jaunt to Ireland and had reasons for not telling his wife.

Why these two rumours of nationwide unrest and civil bloodshed should have their beginnings at the unlikely place of Muggleswick is hard to fathom, yet there was nothing else to do in Muggleswick, at the time, but gossip. Remembering the results of Titus Oates' gossip, it could have been worse.

## A.D.1745. - THE JACOBITE REFUGEE



**I**N the year of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, the Earl of Perth encouraged by his mother, Lady Jean Gordon, only daughter of the Duke of Gordon, a woman of great convictions and a strong Jacobite, joined the chieftains. He commanded the left flank of the army at the fateful battle of Culloden and was severely wounded.

He fled from the battlefield on horseback and had many adventures and escapes, each preventing him from gaining safety. He wanted to find a ship to take him to France where most of his friends had, by various means, managed to reach. The Earl did escape from Scotland, however, and waited his chance to leave the country.

To lull suspicion he had previously spread the story that he had indeed embarked from Scotland about three weeks after Culloden and died during the voyage from his wounds and loss of blood. His story was believed in England and allowed him time to plan and recover from his wounds.

The Earl had made his way to the coast of Scotland and found a coaster which landed him at South Shields. Not wanting to rouse suspicion, instead of trying to board a ship there he moved down the coast to Sunderland and continued up the river wear to North Biddick, a place he selected as an ideal place to bide his time. It was an ideal spot, inhabited exclusively by colliers and keelmen, a lawless lot having sympathy for all men who were persecuted and sought for any crime morally short of murder. The Earl of Perth thought that he would wait until he was fit and certain that it was safe to move on. He became known as James Drummond, his family name.

He considered the nearness of the coal mines would give him added security. As a fugitive, in the case of an alarm, he could, with help from his mining friends, disappear down the mine and hide in one of the many seams where the possibility of discovery was remote.

The fugitive arrived at Biddick and found accommodation in the warm and friendly home of a pitman, John Armstrong, who extended a welcome to him. The house, although unlike his former dwellings, was warm and James Drummond settled in as a lodger. He was admitted into the family circle and became to all intents and purposes an inhabitant of Biddick. This temporary stay was to change his life and fix his destiny.

John Armstrong had a daughter, Elizabeth, a lively girl, only twelve years of age at the time of the earl's move into the family house. Drummond took great delight in giving her the benefit of his knowledge and assisting her to achieve greater awareness of life. He realised that she had a remarkable interest in all aspects of life and he became engrossed in the teaching this pitman's daughter.

The years seemed to fly past and yet the earl lingered at Biddick long after it was safe enough to leave. It was a safe and secure retreat but that was not all. Elizabeth was now sixteen and Lord Perth became enamoured of this lovely, lively lass and felt that the question of leaving her was impossible. The Jacobite cause was lost; he despaired of ever recovering his estates, or of resuming his place in Scottish nobility but Elizabeth would make up for all these losses.

On her seventeenth birthday he asked John Armstrong and his wife for the hand of Elizabeth in marriage, and having obtained their blessing was married in the parish church of Houghton-le-Spring in the month of November, 1749.

After the marriage they settled down in a cottage called the Boat House, granted to Drummond by one Nicholas Lambton of Biddick Hall. Even at this stage it seems his identity was known, or partly known. Mr Lambton knew some, at least, of the past of the lodger of John Armstrong who had mysteriously appeared in the district and settled in. Belonging to the cottage, which was close to the river, was a ferry boat, and from the profits of this boat the exiled Perth tried to make a scanty livelihood for himself and his growing family. His wife managed a small shop and between the earnings of the ferry boat and the shop they survived. The family grew in size to seven children and the earl liked nothing better than to teach them the fundamentals of education, not being able to afford to send them to school. He would have liked to put the two boys into the same way of life as befitting their origin and descent but did not have the means nor did he dare declare who he was.

William, his youngest son, who frequented the keels at Sunderland, had a yearning for a seafaring life and was later placed with the master of a trading ship out of Sunderland.

James, his eldest, a quiet and studious lad, stayed at home, sometimes taking over from his father in the ferry boat. Without his father's knowledge, he started work as a miner through his grandfather's influence, and gave his mother, with great pride, his small but significant first week's wages.

The lowly occupation chosen by his son was a bitter blow to the pride of the Earl of Perth. The lad was too young to be entrusted with the knowledge of his true status and yet the unfortunate Drummond wished that he could do something to give his son the start in life that his position deserved.

By then the hue and cry for the Earl had died down. The story of his death had been believed and it had been so long since Drummond, the ferry boat man, had been accepted as one of the lowly inhabitants of Biddick. The Act of Attainder had been passed by Parliament and he was

dead in law as well as dead to the world, although one or two of his friends in France and Scotland knew of his existence but would not expose him. He had resigned himself to his lowly position in the community of Biddick but the thought of resigning his children to the same destiny was more than his aristocratic pride would tolerate. He tried to persuade his eldest son to leave the unsuitable occupation of pitman and at least follow the example of his younger brother as a merchant seaman. But the lad had no desire to leave the mines and his mother was against the move as it meant both sons would be away in a most hazardous occupation.

Drummond had, at this point, to confess to his wife his true identity, his former rank and fortune which she had only partially understood. Elizabeth felt deeply for her husband in his dilemma but could think of no way to help him. There was no immediate remedy. Young James continued to accompany John Armstrong down the coal mine.

It was at the end of 1771 that a flood, the like of which had not been seen on the Wear in living memory, struck the north. The Tyne lost all of its bridges except the one at Corbridge and many houses and buildings on the banks of both rivers were destroyed, including the Boat House of the Drummonds. The cottage was reduced to rubble and a greater part of their furniture floated down the river to be broken up as it was flung against debris. The ferry boat saved their lives during the early moments of the flood. The ill-fated Perth was now in worse straits than ever before, but for the help given him by his former friend and patron Nicholas Lambton. This kind friend not only rebuilt the Boat House but assisted in replacing the furniture.

Some things, however, could not be replaced. One of the things carried away by the flood was a wooden box or chest containing various family papers, letters and documents, amongst which was the original royal patent granted by James II to Drummond's grandfather, the fourth Earl of Perth, advancing him to the dignity of a Duke.

Drummond's daughter remembered seeing her father wandering along the banks of the river Wear day after day, after the floods had abated. The hope of finding the box or at least some of the contents, even the royal patent, receded over the weeks and years but still he searched. It was never recovered. The Earl of Perth died in the lowly home of his adopted village of Biddick in the year 1782. Not for him the tomb next to that of his renowned and noble ancestors. He lies interred in the little chapel of Peshaw. Thus ended the ill-fated life of James, sixth Earl of Perth.



## **DRUMMOND EARL OF PERTH**

## A.D. 1804 - TROUBLE INT' SALVIN'S MILL.



### Croxdale Hall Seat of The Salvin Family

**T**HERE had been many attempts to introduce industry into Durham City but with little success. Numerous mills lined the River Wear, most left over from the times of the monastery and one of them had been turned into a fulling mill but none employing more than two or three people. As early as 1614 the Corporation used part of its charity funds to establish a Company of Cloth makers in New Place. The first partners in this venture failed in 1616 and after another unsuccessful attempt the works were abandoned in 1619. In 1756 a woollen manufactory was resumed in Back Lane by a Mr Start forth. This too failed.

The success of the cotton industry in Lancashire re-awakened this desire to make Durham City the industrial centre of the North.

This possible future for Durham brought to the fore the Salvins, a respectable Durham family whose seat was Croxdale Hall. They had been involved in industry and commerce for generations and one ancestor had been a partner of Sir John Duck whose death left the Salvin family richer by a mine and two farms. So it was not surprising that William, George and Humphrey Salvin should be caught up in the new industry of cotton. They built a mill for the spinning and weaving of cotton in a field at the south end of Church Street which was completed, opened and operating in 1796.

The factory was an imposing structure, six stories high, had 365 windows and the ridge of the roof was level with the top of the tower of St Oswald's Church. It faced South and the back of the factory was about twelve feet from the south wall of the church yard of St Oswald. Its frontage was remarkable too. It extended east and west from South Road to the very edge of Elvet river bank. The stone was quarried from the south west corner of the field in which it was built. Elvet Colliery was very close to it, a little to the south of Anchorage Terrace.

The siting of the mill about 200 yards from Elvet Colliery cut the cost of transporting coal and the river at the western end ensured a convenient supply of water. The machinery for the spinning of the cotton was of the latest design and run by a newly-built steam-engine situated on the ground floor at the western end of the building.

The raw cotton was processed by a series of machines also situated on the ground floor and the spinning of the cotton was carried out in the upper' floors. Later the spinning was so successful that looms for the weaving of muslin were installed. The majority of the factory's workforce were women, usually young girls.

This huge mill, whose front with the figures 1796 carved on an oval stone set at the top centre of the building, confronted the traveller as he entered Durham from the South Road into Church Street and must have given the impression that this was the first of many Satanic Mills situated hereabouts.

Alas, its history was short-lived. On the Saturday morning of the 6th of January, 1804 at about half past one, disaster struck. A pitman going to work at the nearby Elvet Colliery chanced to look towards the factory and noticed a light in the upper story where no light should have been since the factory was permanently on day shift. The light did not remain steady but flared up and died down in such a manner as to create, in the pitman, a more than casual interest. He watched it for a while and was alarmed to see the flicker of a naked flame in one of the windows. He immediately gave the alarm but by then the fire had taken hold of the roof and was showing through in parts of it. Fire bells began to ring in the town and drums began beat 'to arms' signalling the Volunteers to duty. By then the whole of Durham was alerted and droves of people converged on the scene of the fire as well as the fire engines and the volunteers.

The shortage of water was felt immediately and a chain was formed to bring water from the river by buckets and by pails. The building was supposed to have a system of pipes for use in such a situation as this and it was said that it did not act in time. Also a huge reservoir for water situated at the top of the building under the bell tower could not be used either. When the roof caved in the reservoir fell into the flames and caused not the slightest difference to the conflagration so intense was the heat.

In about six hours the fire had reached the ground floor, and the spinning machines and looms were unable to be saved. Fire engines concentrated on the west end of the mill in a bid to save the steam engine and with an enormous effort they succeeded. Most of the machines on the ground floor were saved and brought out with great difficulty and stored in St Oswald's churchyard, after part of the wall had been knocked down to enable them to do this. Most of the portable goods were stacked inside the church amongst the pews.

By now the whole of the mill was a huge sheet of flame, the heat melting metal parts, aided by the materials inside the building such as casks of oil and bales of cotton. Flames were shooting higher than the church tower and in the vicinity of the fire it was as light as day.

The Volunteers formed a cordon around the area, preventing the crowds from getting too near the fire, making sure that the roads to the fire were not blocked and diverting traffic around Hallgarth Street from New Elvet. They were faced with a difficult task especially when it became obvious that the south front was about to collapse. They tried moving the people away from the fire and it was fortunate that the huge front face of the building fell inwards otherwise a large number of people would have been injured if not killed. The rest of the walls disintegrated in a shower of sparks and flames at about eight o'clock on Saturday morning and by falling inwards put out the main fire leaving the fire engines to pour water on to the smouldering ruins which continued to burn all day.

The most prominent fire engine on the scene belonged to the parish of St Mary-le-Bow which did valiant work at the west end of the building and was instrumental in saving the steam-engine. It was easily the most effective engine at the fire and was used later to damp down the ruins. Afterwards it was said to have been mutilated by boys trampling on its leather hoses to the extent that for some time it was laid up in the porch of St Mary-le-Bow out of commission. A fireman by the name of Thomas Wearmouth, a joiner by trade, was seen standing in a fifth storey

window of the north wall playing water over the steam-engine area until ordered down for his own safety.

One of the Volunteers, a man named Strong, died, not because of the fire, but as a result of a severe cold caught during his tour of duty. The weather at the time was frosty and there was over a foot of snow on the ground but because of the heat no one felt the cold. The Volunteers who reported for duty at such short notice were an ill-dressed crew. For the most part they wore regulation red jackets and caps but the rest of their garb was of motley colours, mixed black, grey and blue trousers and stockings. It was as well they were out in force as many spectators turned thieves in the confusion, one woman being found to have a web of muslin and other stolen articles under her cape.

After the fire came the reckoning. The mill had been insured through three insurance companies for a grand total of nine thousand pounds. It was unfortunate that for some unknown reason the Salvins had let the premiums lapse. The premium owing to one insurance company was well overdue so no claim could be made. The other two premiums were within the fourteen days of grace given after the date of their becoming due. One agent, Mr. N. Proud had for some time urged the Salvins to renew their insurance with the Sun but they had informed him that they would not be renewing. He had asked more than once, had given up trying and struck them from his books. As the fourteen days of grace had not expired the Salvins went to the law against the Sun Insurance to claim the three thousand pounds. The law gave its verdict that they had refused numerous personal requests of the agent to renew within the period of grace and the agent was entitled to strike their name from the books and refuse the claim.

The agent of the other insurance company, the Phoenix, was visited by the Salvins the Sunday after the fire with the premium, in cash, ready to renew. The agent's son informed them that his father was away. He was unable to make a decision for his father but looked up the books and found that only twelve days of grace had expired. They returned the next day and, because they had given no previous indication that they were not renewing the insurance, the company agreed to pay the three thousand pounds.

The venture was a financial loss to the Salvins. Not enough machinery had been salvaged and the three thousand pounds would not rebuild the mill so the firm was dissolved.

The Manchester of the North was a non-starter but the evidence of the attempt to create an industry in Durham other than coal is there for all to see.

The ruins of the western corner of the mill with bricked-in windows can be seen in the south-west corner of St Oswald's Churchyard and the hole in the field, left after the stone for building was removed, can also be found behind The Anchorage.



**Salvin's Mill**



## A.D. 1810 - THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN PIPE

**I**N Durham on a November day death came as a merciful release to a poor, asthmatically crippled old man who had for the past seven years been serving a life sentence for horse stealing. In those days a life sentence meant literally imprisonment for life.

Seven days later the Prince Regent (left) signed a free pardon which, had it reached Durham in time, would have set him free. But for Jimmy Allen, the famous Northumberland piper who was then in the neighbourhood of 90, and an incurable thief, it was too late. He was dead.

Many were those who pleaded on his behalf during the trial. It was said that his unusual life, his lack of education and his illness were responsible for his crimes and that due to his advancing years he was deserving of pity. As a result of these pleas and also because the judge must have heard him play in one of the great houses of the North the sentence of hanging was commuted to imprisonment for life in the North Gate jail at Durham. However it was not in the North Gate jail that he died.

His career of adventure in many foreign lands came to an abrupt end when he was apprehended in Roxburghshire after stealing a mare from a stable in Gateshead. He was remanded to the Assizes at Durham and condemned to death which was the sentence for horse stealing in those harsh days.

Jimmy was born in Northumberland near Rothbury Forest in, according to his own memory, 1720 and he hoped to be buried within sight of his favourite hills. It was fate that dealt him two severe blows at the end of his life. After years of luck, fame and fortune, his reprieve came too late and his friends heard of his death too late to bury him at Rothbury as his body had already been interred in the churchyard at Elvet.

His ability to play the Northumbrian pipes was phenomenal as all who heard him testified. Jimmy Allen and his golden pipes made many friends, some of them among the most influential in the land. His habitual roguery lost him most of them yet even to the last there were some, who, in spite of his unstable character, wished him well.

It was the Duke of Northumberland who persuaded the Prince Regent to sign the papers for Jimmy's reprieve. There was also a woman called Ann Bennett who travelled round the North East begging money from his former friends so as to provide for him while he was in prison. Comforts were needed in the case of prisoners in the Jail at Durham at the beginning of the nineteenth century. There was no sanitation and the food supplied to those without the means to provide better consisted of boiled bread. Most inmates sent out piteous appeals for some assistance to alleviate their plight.

Jimmy Allen, condemned to exist in such misery in the North Gate prison, must, besides his physical suffering, have been revolted by the filth and squalor in which he found himself. He had in his youth been noted for his appearance. He wore white linen and fashionable clothing.

His confinement after a lifetime of travel, freedom and open air wandering lowered his resistance and the asthmatic attacks, recurring more frequently, must have made his life a misery. Towards the end he became so ill that even the most callous of men in that callous age came to the conclusion something had to be done and that a place a more open aspect had to be found. They removed him to the House of Correction. This cannot have been much of an improvement because before he was transferred a survey by the Grand Jury had stated that the place was "unwholesome".

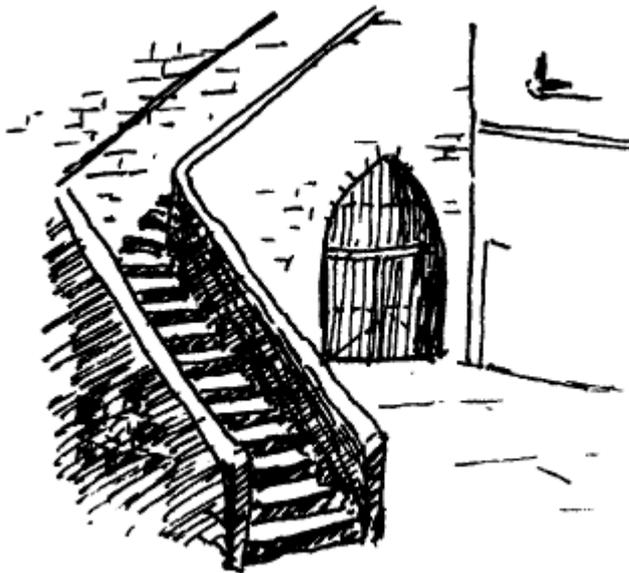
It was whilst in one of these cells that he wrote or dictated his "Life" which was published in 1817. In it he described his earlier days. He had travelled extensively. He had been in France, Holland and even Arabia. As a gypsy he had been all over England playing his pipes at fairs, in markets and above all in stately houses. He had been engaged in many a theft of horses and even some of the contents of the stately houses.

His prowess with his fists was known and he could hold his own in the dirtiest of fights. Because of his pipes he had been a favourite with high society and he was welcomed by the lowest. Over the years he had tried to raise himself up intellectually but had eventually sunk to the lowest level. It was because of his pipe playing that much was forgiven him and by his musical genius he won his way out of many a scrape. He was at one time piper to Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle and it was through this connection that his reprieve was arranged.

The Duke of Northumberland was a companion of the then Prince of Wales and no doubt his wife had informed him of the plight of the ex-piper. The Duke had dutifully passed on the news to the Prince who stated that he would sign a free pardon for the said Jimmy Allen. Whether the news of his death had not reached London or that there had been some delay is not known but the pardon was too late.

If your curiosity is aroused as to where Jimmy Allen died, you can satisfy that curiosity by walking to the market place end of Elvet Bridge just below the premises of Bramwells, opticians. If you go down the steps set against the side of the bridge you will find yourself in a paved area out of character with the Durham you have just left, for, built into the side of the bridge which used to be the House of Correction is an arched doorway guarded by an iron-barred gate. Looking through bars you will see, in the gloom, a nail-studded door thick with iron

bands. Behind this door is one of the old cells. Perhaps this was the cell in which Jimmy Allen died.



## **The House of Correction - Durham**

It is said that if you stand in this paved area, beside Brown's Boathouse, near the House of Correction cells, sometime near midnight, the enchanting sounds of the Northumbrian pipes can be heard echoing under the arches of the Old Elvet bridge. He was, as I said, an excellent piper.

## A.D. 1821 - ROAD ACCIDENT AT SUNDERLAND BRIDGE



### Sunderland Bridge Durham

**T**HE London Mail had made good time from Edinburgh that morning. It was a beautiful day on 16th June 1821 and after breakfast at the Turk's Head, Newcastle, the driver, James Auld of Newcastle was ready to drive the mail coach to Darlington. He had taken possession of the timepiece and had checked the newly hitched horses and their harness. He had also checked the time schedule, the mail and the passenger list. Having made sure that everything was to his liking he swung up into the driving seat and awaited the arrival of the passengers and the guard.

First the guard arrived. He was new to the run and unknown to James Auld but James had no doubt that he would soon make himself known. His last guard had been a quiet, taciturn man who had spoken very little. However James did not mind a silent journey; he had enough to do driving the coach.

From the Turk's Head trooped the inside passengers, four in all. They were helped into the coach by servants from the coaching inn. The women boarded with great difficulty because of their voluminous skirts. Next from the inn came the "cheaper passengers", so called because they were travelling at the cheapest possible terms, riding on the roof or on the box at the rear of the coach.

There were two passengers on the roof. Mr Thomas Donaldson, a grocer from Perthshire was travelling south to find work clutching his few belongings. Mr. Samuel Whittaker, a builder from Bingley, was on his way home after completing a job in Edinburgh. The passenger on the box was Mr. Chater, a solicitor from Newcastle, carrying a case containing papers to do with his law practice. He could have afforded the extra fare which would have allowed him to travel inside but he had made the trip to Darlington on numerous occasions and enjoyed the open-air journey. Seeing that the passengers were accounted for and his time-piece was indicating the exact time of departure, (a most important procedure laid down by no less a person than the Post Master General so that all coaches would leave punctually), James Auld raised his whip and with a flourish left the Turk's Head for his journey South.

The stop at Chester - le - Street was uneventful and the horses changed to his satisfaction. No new passengers boarded and none left so the collection of mail was made and once again he was

on his way South. His new guard was pleasantly spoken, but there was not too much conversation to distract him from his driving.

The roof passengers, too, had very little to say. He reached Durham by Framwellgate, crossed Framwellgate Bridge and drove slowly up Silver Street to the Market Place. This was the worst part of the whole journey and it was not over. From the Market Place up Saddler Street it was narrow and at the head of this awkward street were the remains of the North Gate demolished the year before but now consisting of about fifty yards of rubble and rutted road. After this stretch it was easy travelling up the Bailey towards Mary-le-Bow Church and the entrance to the Red Lion lay just before the Church itself.

The horses were ready and waiting for the coach and he announced the usual fifteen minute wait to the passengers and busied himself with the mail. At the end of the fifteen minutes, James glanced at his timepiece, checked that his guard had herded the passengers back to their seats and swung himself up onto the driving seat.

With a crack of the whip he turned the coach out of the forecourt of the Red Lion back into the North Bailey. He retraced his progress through the rubble of the North Gate and down Saddler Street and was faced with the bad right turn at the bottom of Saddler Street into Souterpeth, the approach to Old Elvet Bridge.

It was an awkward turn which tested all drivers of the Royal Mail but James negotiated it with ease as his experience and ability enabled him to drive both horses and coach around this steeply graded acutely angled turn. It had been different when he had been a boy on this route. In those days coaches had to retrace the route back to the end of Framwellgate Bridge, turn up Crossgate into South Street, a narrow slippery road which led into Quarry Heads Lane and onto South Road. Now of course it was much easier since the Stockton Turnpike had been built. He crossed Elvet Bridge, recently widened, along New Elvet, Church Street and into South Road. This route took no time at all and the Royal Mail was soon passing Farewell Hall on the way to Sunderland Bridge. It was at this point that James Auld noticed that one of the horses had turned a bit skittish. As an experienced driver this did not really worry him. The drive through Durham was the most difficult part of the journey but on the open road a skittish horse should be no problem.

It was just before crossing the bridge over the Wear, called Sunderland Bridge, that he gave all his attention to his driving. To enter the bridge the horses had to negotiate a very acute left turn on a steep incline. As James was urging the horses forward to negotiate the slope he caught sight of a horse and groom crossing the bridge from the opposite direction but obscured from view at first by the parapet. A quick appraisal of his own speed and the speed of the oncoming horse made him realise that they would meet just at the point of the acute turn. He gave a pull on the rein to swing the horses to the left, then realised with a sickening dread that although he had missed the horse and groom he had overdone the manoeuvre. The horses swung into the bridge clear of the parapet but the coach was swaying wildly. The skittish horse was pressing too far to the right. To overcome this he hauled heavily on the left rein again. This caused the coach to sway even more, and after a few yards it overturned against the parapet.

Both Mr. Donaldson and Mr. Whittaker were catapulted from the roof over the parapet wall on the upstream side of the bridge and were dashed against the framework of one of the buttresses, which, as the river was low, was left high and dry. The height from the top of the coach to the buttress was over thirty-five feet, Mr. Donaldson was killed outright and Mr. Whittaker survived

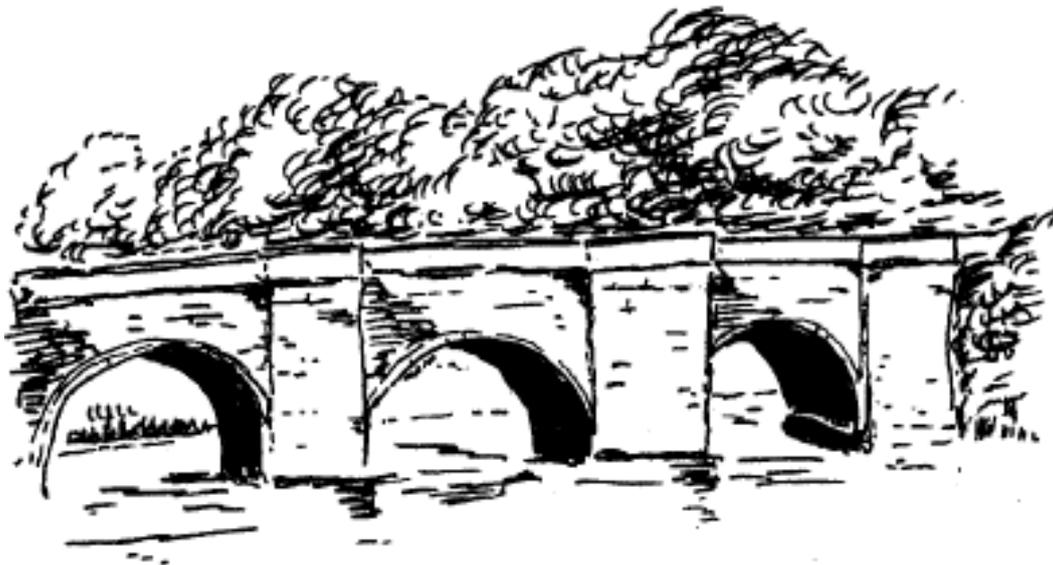
for only four hours. The guard, sitting next to James Auld, was thrown from his seat against the parapet inside the bridge and was severely injured.

James Auld was thrown forward between the horses but was not hurt. Mr Chater, on the box witnessing the manoeuvre and realising from experience that the least that could happen would be a severe shaking up, managed to hold on and escape being flung off but his case flew over the parapet scattering papers as it burst open on impact below the bridge.

Help quickly arrived from the public house on the Brandon Estate next to the bridge. The passengers, the Mail and the dead were returned to Durham.

It was at the August Assizes in 1821 that interest in the accident was revived when James Auld, the driver of the Mail coach, was found Guilty of manslaughter but with mitigating circumstances. Because of Mr Chater's evidence and the fact that the bridge was known to be dangerous he was liberated in February 1822.

As a postscript to this event, a few years later the Wellington Coach was overturned on the North end of the same bridge and one of the horses killed. A Mr. Hoult of Rushyford then told the Sessions that the bridge was inconvenient and dangerous.



**Sunderland Bridge Durham**

## A.D. 1850 - WATERHOUSES - A PITMAN'S UTOPIA



**I**N the 1850's Waterhouses was dragged into the Industrial Revolution or rather eased by a philanthropist in the same mould as Robert Owens whose cotton mill in New Lanark had set a new relationship between owners and workers. The Waterhouses' introduction to coal mining was taken care of by the Quaker family of Pease from Darlington.

Edward Pease had been involved with George Stephenson (left) and the creation of a steam engine to run a line from Stockton to Darlington. The major consideration was whether it could possibly transport coal and ironstone. That it did so and also introduced the carriage of passengers as a bonus is another story.

After the Stockton and Darlington Railway had become the spearhead of a frantic railway building programme, Joseph, the brother of Edward Pease, was involved in the extension of the railway to Middlesbrough to link with the iron-works built there. The need for more coal encouraged Joseph to extend the railways even further west and by 1843 Crook had joined Billy Row and was transporting coal and coke to Middlesbrough.

The need for coal and the nearness of a railway prompted Joseph to become a coal owner and he arranged to have a test boring, on Viscount Boyne's estate, Just north east of High Waterhouse Farm, by the Dearness, The test showed that coal was there and a shaft was sunk.

At first the going was not easy but by 1860, good quality coal was being produced. The mine at Waterhouses called Peases West Brandon was now established and the question of housing a greatly increased workforce had to be considered.

This is where Joseph Pease differed from the majority of the coal owners of that period. Instead of hurriedly built rows of unplanned, and in some cases, basic hovels, consisting of one room upstairs and one room downstairs, with no gardens, no sanitation and one central water point for the use of a number of rows of cottages, Pease introduced what Robert Owen had done in Lanarkshire and what George Cadbury, a Quaker, in Bournville would achieve later: he built not only houses for his workforce; he built a model community.

The first cottages, in 1874 were spaciouly planned terraced houses with ample room on either side of the terraces for the movement of horses and carts. This consideration was important as the miner received a coal allowance delivered to him regularly at the rear of the house. The movement of furniture and family had to be provided for at the front of the house as no self-respecting bride left the house by the back door. The terraces were arranged with a village in mind, not the stacking of the workpeople into row after row of squalid, mean cottages.

The " Colliery Guardian" of the day describes the" almost Utopian Village" with its" model cottages and premises dry, healthy and comfortable". The two-storeyed houses with two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs were built of distinctive white bricks made from "seggar clay". To ensure that the name of the founder should not be forgotten each brick was stamped with the Pease imprint, indicating the owner's total possession of the houses of the workers.

Who were the workers designated to occupy this Utopia? What sort of lifestyle did they enjoy? The majority were miners who had moved from other collieries, not an easy task in those days. Experienced and capable, they would be lured by the thoughts of working at a new pit with new surroundings, Later they would be joined by local rural workers who would be .eager .to earn a higher wage as a miner. These newcomers would soon learn the ways of the miner, becoming unrecognisable from their fellow pitmen. Miners were a close-knit breed, a law unto themselves and their new cottages at Waterhouses would, in most cases, show their distinct style of life in the similitude of contents.

The interiors would be remarkable for their neatness and cleanliness. Upstairs, the two bedrooms would not be complete without handsome four-poster beds or at the very least ornate brass bedsteads and mahogany chests of drawers. The two ground floor rooms of these novel cottages were the "parlour" or front room, and the other room classified as the living room. The parlour, it was said, was used only for christenings, funerals and weddings. It was also said that some pitman's wives allowed the parlour to be used on a Sunday but these reactionaries were few and far between. The furniture, often expensive, would not be considered faultless without a horsehair sofa, a dresser and an eight-day clock. The floor would be covered by linoleum and over this a number of "hooky or proggy" mats would be laid and as each newly made mat was introduced, the oldest would be banished to the other ground floor room. This room, the kitchen-cum-living room had its fire-place with the fire in the centre of one wall flanked by an oven on one side and a set-pot or boiler on the other. In front of the fire was the tidy-betty, fender and fire -irons. The rail above the fire was for drying the pit-clothes which had to be warm ready to be worn. Above this, the mantelpiece held prized possessions, such as souvenirs of outings and charabanc trips, brass ornaments, delicate china pottery and other trinkets including the huge pot dogs at the ends. A plain wooden table with plain wooden chairs filled the room apart from a large easy chair usually a rocking chair, on one side of the fireplace. This was the chair of the man of the house. The floors were covered in faded, well used "hooky" or "proggy" mats, shaken daily. A new mat would be in a mat frame. Outside the back door hung the large bath tin, without which no pitman's house was complete.

Each house apart from its capaciousness had an ample garden attached to it with a purpose-built pigsty. Someone had told Joseph Pease that "miners kept pigs" so he saw to it that all houses in Waterhouses had a pig sty in the garden. This was a partial truth in that, given room in the garden or allotment, most miners kept a pig to fatten for Christmas. The miner's wife had the unenviable job of meticulously saving all the food scraps for the pig. It was unusual for the miner to kill the pig; a butcher or ex-butcher, in exchange for coal, was given the task but before the killing of the pig the miner-owner invited his friends and neighbours to bid for the various cuts of the pig, not forgetting the black pudding. Naturally the best cuts were kept for the family and the second best for those who also had a pig who, when their pig was killed, would repay in kind.

The gardens were cultivated down to the last square yard. Potatoes, onions, cabbages and cauliflowers were the favourites but crops able to be kept for a long period through the winter were the essentials. Leeks were of two varieties, the ordinary pot-leek for use in the making of the leek puddings,-a delicacy that could be perfectly made only by a miner's wife-, and the show leek. Each miner had his own personal formula for the huge leeks which were exhibited at the annual village leek shows.

Added to the personal comforts enjoyed by the miners living in the model village of Waterhouses, was a commercial bread oven, located near Dale Street, and fired by the coke workers. Two

considerable advantages possessed over other pit villages, were drains and outside ash closets. Education was not neglected. A school was built for the village and educational facilities for adults were provided." As J. W. Pease said concerning his workmen. The human mind was so constituted that it must bear good or evil fruit, and if it were not carefully trained, and provided with material for the good crop God intended it to have, it would bring forth a crop of thorns".

This utopian village lasted some years but like others before it, the ideas were in advance of their time. In 1898 Pease and Partner became a limited company and with the introduction of profits and shares, the family concern gave way to the corporate and the writing was on the wall. From 1907 to 1909 came hardening of managerial attitudes. Workers were asked to work harder for less,

After 1909 the Utopia that was Waterhouses did not disappear overnight: a concession was taken away here, a privilege stopped there and a small imposition introduced now and again over the years until the village eventually became no better than hundreds of other mining villages except for the vastly superior living conditions. Even these would be eroded when repairs were refused by the management as being too profit wasting.

It is ironic to think that a relative of Joseph Pease, Sir A. F. Pease made a statement in 1923 "I cannot understand the great reluctance of the men to work slightly longer hours I cannot see why they object so much to working an extra half hour when they have nothing to do with the time".

In 1926 it was all over. The strike had brought about a result that old J.W.Pease dreaded. He knew something of human nature when he said "If it comes to a struggle between owners and workers, it would be catastrophic if either wins outright." His worst fears were realised. After the 1926 strike, the fears were realised. After the 1926 strike, the owners won.

All that remains of J. W. Pease's utopian village is the idea. The "seggar clay" bricked cottages are no more, the village struggles on without a colliery ( it closed in 1966) but Waterhouses was a valiant effort by a man who put human dignity before money.



**The Miner's Institute Waterhouses**

## A.D. 1867 - PIECES OF EIGHT - VIA HARTLEPOOL



### The Cleveland Coastline

**S**TORIES of pirates, hidden gold and treasure maps are part of growing up. "Treasure Island" has thrilled more people and made them aware of the possibility of finding treasure than any other book before or since. But the treasure at Hartlepool puts all other tales of treasure in the shade, because it is perfectly true, it has a happy ending and its existence was not even regarded as possible up to the time of its discovery.

Unlike other buried treasure there were no maps, no sinister man with a wooden leg lurking in the background waiting for others to find it, and no fiends or mythical monster guarding it. It was a story of incredible luck and freak assistance given by the elements. Not only did the whole town of Hartlepool benefit but very few, even the youngest, did not get to handle it.

The site of the treasure trove was Seaton Sands. It was well known in the town that the beach between Hartlepool and the Tees mouth was the scene of many a wreck. The reason is quite plain as a glance at a map will show. The north coast at this point is a mass of rocks whilst the Cleveland coastline south soon becomes sheer cliffs. The only harbour near is Hartlepool with a tricky entrance.

The Sands themselves are in the form of a 'U', each side overlooked by forbidding cliffs. The sands run north east and if a gale blew from this direction any sailing ship with sails storm-rigged would be driven helplessly, slowly but surely towards the Sands unless, by good seamanship or good luck, it managed to hit the mouth of the harbour of Hartlepool.

The number of wrecks were such that after really heavy storms it had been known for wrecks to be stretched next to each other for hundreds yards off the Old Town Pier. It was the centre of Seaton Sands where the greatest number of wrecks 'congregated'. One particular spot infamous for its collections of wrecks above all others was marked on charts as 'Wreck Hole'.

Today if a ship is wrecked on the coast, and cannot be re-floated, it is gutted and the shell sold for scrap, but in the days of sail a wreck did not necessarily mean the total loss of the ship. If it came aground on sand it could be re-floated at high tide after any hole had been plugged. The spars could be repaired or replaced and the ship sail on its original course within days.

If, however, it was badly holed or broken on the jagged rocks the hull contained valuable timber which could be sold to builders, farmers and timber merchants. Even early railways benefited by using such timbers as sleepers. It was normal, in the first few days of the wreck, for an auctioneer to sell it to the highest bidder, usually a local man. This man was taking a gamble, because he would only be able to sell the timber and fittings at a huge profit if the weather allowed him to board and dismantle the ship. The weather could turn nasty destroying and scattering the wreck over a wide area, or worse still the rough seas could shift the sand and cover the wreck completely.

The method of salvaging the wreck of a sailing ship was the same in all cases. All cargo and moveable fittings were taken first: ropes and canvas, anchors and chains, ironwork, brass work and wood carvings. Then began the rough work of prizing off the planking, and cutting off ribs and framework level with either the low water mark or the sand. The rest was left to rot.

The Wreck Hole contained many such skeletons under the sand and one particular wreck had been dealt with in such a manner in 1863 or 1864. It was rumoured that some gold and jewellery had been found in it by the salvage firm but as no one had seen them and the firm had kept a discreet silence, interest in it waned.

By 1867 even the few spars jutting out of the sand had disappeared and the ship's existence forgotten. One Saturday night in March of that year a great storm blew up and its direction was such that, instead of building up sand on the beaches as was usual, it swept the sand into the mouth of the Tees to such an extent that it emptied the beach of sand down to bed-rock.

Along this sandless beach, one Sunday morning, walked two men from Hartlepool on their way to Middlesbrough to seek work using the quickest way along the beach (Port Clarence Road was a marsh then). They came to the Wreck Hole, now without sand, and were puzzled to see masses of what, in the dawn light, looked like sea-coal in front of them.

Playfully and without thought, one of the men kicked a smaller piece of 'sea-coal' and saw it disintegrate into a number of black discs about the size of a half crown. Picking up one of these discs the man saw he was holding a Spanish Pillar Dollar, and looking down saw smaller brighter coins scattered around. His amazement turned to delight when, upon investigation, he found that these were golden doubloons.

What to do when you find a treasure and you were only going to seek work? You do not carry any form of container in such conditions except your pockets. These the two men filled to overflowing and were faced with masses still left to be picked up and taken away, To go home and return with bags was a risk which might result in their losing all, so they improvised, using their overcoats as make-shift sacks. These they filled and retraced their steps home staggering under the weight of the coins and determined to return and reap the harvest of riches.

Returning to the beach accompanied by their families complete with buckets, sacks, pillow cases, barrows and perambulators, they found that they were not alone. Others were scratching and riddling for the silver and gold coins, soon to be joined by other Hartlepudlians until the beach was covered by ever-increasing numbers scraping and searching for ever-decreasing numbers of coins. The tide halted this mad scramble but the bounty hunters returned again at low tide. By now it was dark and the beach was lit up by bonfires, lamps, flares and even candles. People refused to leave the beach whilst the remotest possibility remained of finding a single coin.

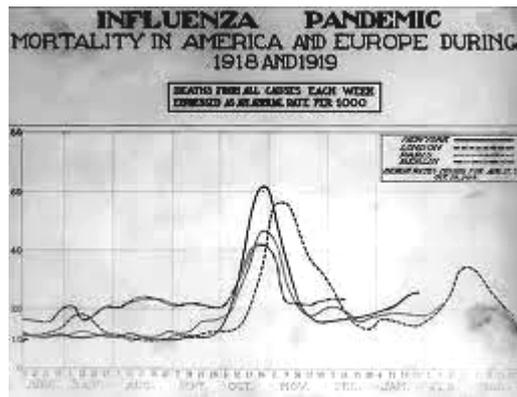
The treasure dried up as might be expected under such a concentrated search. Odd coins were discovered and as the days changed to weeks even a single coin was an unusual occurrence. For weeks afterwards, notices appeared in the shops stating 'Spanish coins changed here'.

Months later a woman paddling in the sea off this beach stubbed her toe on an oblong shaped object made of metal which later was found to be a golden ingot.

What the Inspector of Wrecks, or for that matter, Customs and Excise, did about the matter is not known. The number of men sporting doubloons on watch chains and wives and sweethearts showing off necklaces and brooches with coins attached must have been a common sight in Hartlepool. The coins were secretly disposed of, though some turned up in family bequests.

One thing remains a mystery. What happened to the two original finders of the treasure? The town of Hartlepool was a close-knit community then but neither they, nor the other treasure seekers, ever disclosed their finds.

## A.D. 1918 - A FOREIGN EPIDEMIC



**I**N the latter part of the First World War Durham had its last epidemic. It was nationwide and it would have been surprising if it had not made an appearance in Durham considering the movement of troops at the time, especially with the majority of local soldiers returning to Durham from camps in the South. Local epidemics had appeared before. A snippet of news from the Chester-le-Street Medical Officer dated 6th July 1917 stated that in the town were 458 cases of Measles resulting in 129 deaths, yet the same newspaper gave Durham as having a low rate of certifiable diseases and a normal incidence of deaths.

The first mention of the epidemic was found, curiously enough, in an advertisement for - "Veno's Cough Cure" in the Durham Advertiser dated 4th October 1918. In large letters it spelt out "SPANISH FLU" and indicated that Venos could combat it. At the council meeting Dated 8th November Dr. Vann the medical officer, gave the figures for the past month as 19 deaths, which was quite normal and showed no increase over the previous months' figures. He did, however, make a statement; "Within the last week a very universal epidemic of influenza has occurred, largely amongst children. I would advise that the present week's holiday for children be extended to a fortnight".

At a meeting of the Durham Rural District Council on 22nd November leaflets from the county medical officer were distributed outlining the seriousness of the Spanish Flu epidemic in the County of Durham. The medical officer for health for Durham Rural District reported that influenza was prevalent in the district and requested that the schools should remain closed. This brought a storm of protest from the members of the council. One council member asked why schools should remain closed when picture halls were allowed to open as they were obvious places where the influenza could be spread. The M.O.H. indicated that the council had no power to close picture houses. A Mr Gowland commented: "I was in Durham Cathedral yesterday and there were thousands of children there. I thought it was a grand method of spreading influenza and came out". This was greeted with laughter. The Clerk of the Council agreed to write to the Magistrates suggesting that picture halls be closed when schools were closed for the duration of the epidemic. A Mr. Gray gave his opinion that the cause of the flu was due to the food people were getting, as the flour they were supplied with recently was terrible.

The news on 6th December was worse. At the Durham City Council meeting the health statistics showed that there were 66 deaths, 28 from influenza and pneumonia. Dr. Vann in his report stated that he was afraid that as yet this most serious epidemic showed no signs of abating. In consequence of the danger from infection it was moved that the city baths be closed. On 13th December 1918 the Durham City Education Committee was informed that no school attendance returns were available for November owing to the closure of schools and the absence of certain teachers in consequence of influenza. It was resolved that head teachers be instructed to forbid children standing in cemeteries at funerals. This resolution was criticised as impractical as most of the schools were closed owing to a shortage of teachers. A further resolution was passed arranging for all schools to be disinfected during the Christmas holidays and before re-opening. Dr. Vann recommended that Christmas holidays be extended to 6th January.

At the meeting of the City Council on 10th January 1919 some indication was given that the disease was losing its grip on Durham. The statistics were still high, showing 54 deaths, but Dr. Vann stated that in the latter part of December 1918 the influenza epidemic had rapidly declined and that he had every reason to hope that the City would soon be free of the terrible plague.

His optimism was borne out. The meeting of the council on 7th February 1919 heard that there were no new cases of influenza to report and the Education Committee business was taken up not by school teachers' absences or the closure of schools but by an increase in teachers' salaries, the majority to receive an increase of £2.10s.0d. per annum.





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