

LOOK BACK IN WONDER

Disaster glasses revisited

A catalogue of known engravings within the 'northeastern
disaster glass' genre

William Cowan

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PREFACE

The interest engendered following the publication of the book *An Alarming Accident - or every glass tells a story* (John Brooks and William Cowan, Tyne Bridge Publishing, 2008) and, in particular, the number of 'new' glasses that have come to light since, has prompted the assembly of this catalogue raisonné, listing every glass known to John and me at the time of writing. Some details of the event or person commemorated follow each item, or group of items, and the reader seeking more background information is often directed to an appropriate source, or sources.

Exact descriptions of glass types and line breaks of inscriptions are, in some instances, missing. This is sometimes because the glass was seen in the early days of our interest, perhaps 20 years ago and long before this work was imagined. In other cases, data has been extracted from articles, private collection descriptions or auction catalogues that lack these precise details.

I hope that glass collectors, together with enthusiasts of northeastern and mining history, will find this catalogue of interest and value.

William Cowan
April 2013

INTRODUCTION

There is a longstanding association between glass and the northeast of England. As early as the late 17th century the development of flint glass (or lead crystal) led to an expansion in manufacture of domestic table glass and, by the middle of the 18th century, Newcastle-upon-Tyne was producing arguably some of the finest drinking glasses in Europe, most notably those later engraved in Holland and those decorated locally by the famous Beilby family.

In the 19th century, this trade had declined in the face of European competition but northeast firms such as Sowerby and George Davison embraced the new technology of press-moulding. Tyneside and Wearside were once again major centres for producing domestic glassware but this time moulded, not blown, glass and aimed at a wider, less wealthy market.

Visitors to the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens can see and admire examples of this locally manufactured glassware representing, like coalmining and shipbuilding, an industry for which the northeast of England is justly famous.

Drinking glasses, whether elegant 18th century examples or more mundane pressed glass items from the 19th century, were produced in quantity in the region and this fact is relatively well recognised.

What is less well appreciated is that there existed another genre of glass, spanning the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and (with very few exceptions) unique to the northeast of the country. These are the so-called ‘disaster glasses’.

What were disaster glasses?

Over a period commencing somewhere between 1840 and 1860, or possibly a little later, and ending in 1916, there was a custom in the northeast of England of engraving glassware with inscriptions that were memorial, commemorative or celebratory.¹ These pieces (typically very inexpensive glass) were sold or distributed to a market that was predominately working class and, since many of them commemorated accidents or disasters in the coalmines of Northumberland and Durham, they came to be known as ‘disaster glasses’. However, as is

¹ When was the first disaster glass produced? The answer is, we just don’t know. The glasses catalogued here, in Parts One, Two and Three, are engraved with dates ranging from 1796 (Robert Burns) to 1916 (Lord Kitchener) – but we must beware of assuming the date on the glass is the date of the engraving. For example, the Robert Burns glass is almost certainly an anniversary souvenir, most probably produced to mark the centenary of the poet’s death in 1896. John Books says: “I have always had reservations about the actual time of production of glasses bearing dates before 1862 (Hartley Colliery). Either, the same style of glass was available and the same engravers were working as early as 1832 (see the William Jobling glass in Part Two) or, they were produced as 25th or 50th anniversary glasses and would then fit into the main time frame. In an odd way, I feel this opinion is reinforced by the fact that we still have no glasses bearing dates between 1867 and 1879 after which they multiply rapidly.”

apparent from the following pages, their terms of reference were much wider than pit disasters and glasses in the same style were engraved to commemorate accidents and disasters unconnected with the coal mines. Other events, both notable and not so notable, including deaths of individuals, famous or not at all famous, were also subjects for commemoration and promotion, as were simple sentiments such as '*Peace and Plenty*' and '*Health and Happiness*'. The outbreak of the Transvaal (Boer) War in 1899 prompted the engraving of several different glasses and thereafter events of national, as well as local, interest also became subjects for commemoration.

There were a lot of disaster glasses about. Judging by the number that survive it is likely that they were engraved in very considerable quantities; indeed it is said that by the end of the 19th century there were few working class homes in the northeast that did not have one of these glasses on the mantelpiece or windowsill. Some, such as those commemorating the deaths of individuals, cannot have been created in large numbers and others, like those engraved '*A present to...*' are presumably unique but events such as the Hartley Colliery and Victoria Hall disasters clearly resulted in a large output.

The glasses were of indifferent quality; aimed at the least affluent end of the market, they cannot have been sold - if sold they were - for more than a few pence each. They came in a wide variety of styles. The most typical example is a pub rummer, a glass about 100mm tall with a bowl that is either rounded or straight-sided. Tumblers were also engraved, often thinly blown barrel-shaped vessels, but moulded tumblers of various designs are also seen. Small wine glasses on stems are common and tankards are represented, either as a glass of about a half-pint capacity or more often as a miniature tankard, about 25mm high - just a cheap souvenir not intended for drinking out of.

Occasionally one comes across items such as jugs, bowls and dishes but what links all these artifacts, apart from a frequent association with the northeast of England, is the style of engraving. Once you are familiar with it, it is almost always recognisable. Unless the subject is of national interest (wars or coronations, for example) we have not - with very rare exceptions - found similar glasses commemorating incidents or individuals outside the northeast. It is this, together with the idiosyncratic style of the engraving that, in our opinion, places this genre of glass firmly within Northumberland and County Durham.

With only one exception so far identified, the items are wheel-engraved. Engraving with a diamond point and etching using acid are time-consuming processes whereas engraving with a copper wheel driven by a foot operated treadle, whether in a workshop or as an itinerant trade, would be a task quickly executed.

When enough glasses are examined certain features of the engraving become apparent that allow us to identify different hands at work. For example, many inscriptions commence '*In Memory of...*' but there are two distinct styles of the capital 'M' pointing to two different engravers. Again, another engraver punctuates his inscriptions with full stops after every word and another spells *Success* in the 18th century fashion as *Succefs*. Towards the end of the period cursive script made way for capital letters, suggesting yet another hand at work.

Spelling mistakes are common. ‘*Lost there lives*’, ‘*Shure to thrive*’ and ‘*Hees a jolly good fellow*’ were engraved by people who were less than fully literate and inaccuracies of ages and dates point to a certain lack of attention to detail. A common feature on the reverse side of glasses is a fern or a clover leaf, and two styles of the latter can be identified. For a fuller examination of these aspects of the engraving, the reader is referred to *An Alarming Accident*.²

There is evidence that glass engraving was pursued as an itinerant trade. But other glasses must have been engraved on premises open to those who wanted glasses engraved immediately, for example, to commemorate a death in the family. And such workshops would be more appropriate for engraving glasses produced in quantity, such as those commemorating major pit disasters.

Why were these glasses engraved and how were they acquired? Ask people in the northeast whether they have ever heard of ‘disaster glasses’ and it is likely that, if they have, the one certain thing that they know about them is that they were sold in the pubs and clubs to raise funds for the relief of those injured in pit accidents and for the bereaved families. (This was in the days before insurance, employers’ liability or national social security.)

Whether or not this is the case, there were obviously other reasons for commissioning or acquiring so-called disaster glasses since we now recognise that many glasses have no relevance to mines or mining, let alone to accidents or disasters. But let us first address the question of fundraising. If glasses were sold for this purpose one might expect a Miners’ Union Lodge to be involved. I have scrutinised the minutes of several bodies such as the Miners’ Mutual Relief Society for Northumberland and, in particular, the minutes both of the Hartley Colliery Disaster Relief Fund and the Usworth Colliery Miners’ Lodge for the period following the major disaster in 1885, and I have failed to find any mention of funds raised by the sale of glasses. Nor in reading local newspaper accounts of accidents and disasters that sometimes mention relief funds have we encountered any reference to glasses. However, despite this absence of any documentary evidence, so firmly established is the belief that glasses were sold for charitable purposes that it would be unreasonable to dismiss it totally. For it seems unlikely that such a conviction, handed down through generations, would be fabricated. And if the sale of glasses raised money for *colliery* disaster relief, we cannot dismiss the idea of similar relief for the Victoria Hall disaster or the accidental deaths of fishermen. Let us accept, then, the likelihood that the sale of some glasses raised money for the relief of victims and relatives, but the evidence suggests that this was not a major source of money for established relief funds.

What is certain is that some glasses commemorating colliery accidents were given to members of the rescue brigades, including volunteers recruited from neighbouring pits. John Brooks and I have interviewed a gentleman who has several glasses presented to his grandfather who acquired them in this fashion.

Several glasses are associated with the election of local Members of Parliament and it is likely that these were distributed in pubs to drum up support for

² John Brooks and William Cowan: *An Alarming Accident - or every glass tells a story* (Tyne Bridge Publishing 2008 ISBN 978-185795-124-0).

candidates. We can also imagine glasses commemorating events connected with mining, such as strikes and advances of pay, to find a market in pit villages.

I have interviewed a lady who was confident that, when she was a small girl, a man came to the door and engraved three glasses for herself and her two sisters bearing their names and the year. And I have spoken to another lady who donated three dated glasses to Beamish Museum that were, she says, engraved and purchased at successive Durham Miners' Galas. We may be 50 years or more too late to obtain direct testimony but there is no reason to believe that such information, handed down within a family, is other than correct. We can, therefore, be confident that many glasses were engraved by itinerant workers, either at people's homes or at a booth set up at miners' galas, picnics or other public meetings and celebrations, such as the opening of a bridge.

Many glasses commemorate the death of an individual, often from natural causes. We have no evidence, either documentary or hearsay, explaining the purpose of these engravings but it seems possible that it was a custom to distribute such glasses among mourners at funerals. This custom, if such was the case, has died out but we still commemorate coronations with plates and mugs, as they did on glass. But unlike our ancestors, we do not seem to issue souvenir items commemorating royal deaths.

To summarise: 'disaster glass' is somewhat of a misnomer since what we are studying here are items that were the product of a custom to commemorate on glass a wide variety of people and events. A first impression is that any person or any event could be an excuse for engraving a glass, yet the field is narrowed a little by the Victorian preoccupation with death and by the frequent association with coalmining. Shipbuilding was another major industry in the region at the time that must have suffered accidents, some fatal, yet no glasses connected with shipbuilding have come to light. It is therefore difficult to escape the conclusion that disaster glasses represent a tradition that was firmly rooted in the mining community of northeast England at that time.

It was a custom that appears to have died out rather abruptly in 1916. Perhaps, like juvenile jazz bands (another northeastern tradition) they just went out of fashion. Or perhaps at this time we were left with only one engraver, the man who commemorated the sinking of the *Lusitania* (May 1916); the death of Lord Kitchener (June 1916) and the Woodhorn Colliery disaster (August 1916), all in his characteristic capital letters. Was he enlisted into the First World War - the outbreak of which he possibly commemorated on a glass very similar to the *Lusitania* specimen?

Unlike their 18th century cousins, disaster glasses, crudely engraved on poor quality vessels, are not objets d'art. Some people will collect anything but the fascination of these glasses, apart from the thrill of discovering one hitherto unrecorded, lies in the fact that they are documents of social history. For many it is not so much the glasses themselves that are of interest but rather that, when they research the backgrounds to the inscriptions, they are brought face to face with the lives and deaths, the hardships, courage, fortitude and humour of the men and women who lived in northeast England at that time.

This publication is not just about 'disaster glasses', although I believe it to be a unique catalogue of the genre. It is more akin to a book of picture postcards illustrating a way of life far removed from that which we experience to-day.

Browse through these pages and look back in wonder.

PART ONE

MINING DISASTERS & ACCIDENTS

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HILDA COLLIERY (sic) 1839

Inscription(s) and details

Hilda Colliery Explosion June 28th 1839

Glass of unknown type recorded by E.L.Thornborrow (see 'Further information' below.)

Historical context

St Hilda's Colliery (to give it its full and proper name) was situated some six miles NNW of Sunderland and the pit entrance was a short distance from St Hilda's Church, near the centre of South Shields. It opened in 1810 and closed in 1940. The owners in 1839 were W & J Brandling.

At about 8.45am on Friday, 28 June 1839, when about 150 men and boys were underground, an explosion took place some two miles from the bottom of the shaft and smoke was seen to ascend up the down-cast shaft³.

Soon after the explosion about 100 men and boys were brought to bank⁴ but rescue efforts were much impaired by the accumulation of large amounts of afterdamp (carbon monoxide/CO).

By 11am, bodies were starting to be retrieved; some were burned but the majority of the victims had died of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

On Monday, 1 July a public meeting was held in South Shields town hall to promote a relief subscription and this was followed by the resumption of the inquest.

Evidence was given to the effect that the mine was well run and, in general, considered safe - so safe, in fact, that candles, rather than Davy lamps, were used routinely. 'When there was no apprehension of danger there was no such thing as getting the men to use Davy lamps.' Although one witness stated that 'the pit must be worked by candles or not at all' several agreed that had Davy lamps been used throughout, the explosion would not have occurred.

It appeared that one area was known to be 'foul' and had been stopped ('nipped') some three weeks previously but that, despite this, one man had entered the area with a lighted candle in search of a shovel, causing the explosion.

The jury recorded a verdict of accidental death but added a 'special recommendation that the practice of working coal mines with candles be abandoned and that lamps be adopted in their stead as ... it plainly appears that the explosion had been caused by the incaution of one of the men going with a lighted candle into [an area] which had been foul.'

51 men and boys lost their lives.

³ The shaft down which fresh air enters the mine or workings.

⁴ To the surface.

Further information

This glass is one of several listed under 'Local events commemorated on engraved glasses' at the end of an article: E L Thornborrow: Some Late Victorian Wine Glasses from South Shields District (South Shields Archaeological and Historical Society Papers, 1959; Vol. 1, No.7: pp25-29). The author does not specify the type of glass and the inscription is unlikely to be exactly recorded.

This disaster was covered in some detail by the 29 June and 6 July 1839 editions of the Gateshead Observer and the 2 July edition of The Times. All these accounts are reproduced in full on the Durham Mining Museum website.

See also Killed by Candle a booklet by G L Atkinson. (South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council, June 1989. South Tyneside Libraries: Lp 622.33).

HASWELL COLLIERY 1844

Inscription(s) and details

Haswell Colliery / Explosion 28 Sept 1844 / 95 Lost Their Lives [reverse] fern
Pub rummer with ovoid bowl. 108mm high. Private collection: Nottingham.

Haswell Colliery / Explosion 28 Sept 1844 / 95 Lost Their lives [reverse] *Not forgotten*

Pub rummer. Beamish Museum (2004.40)

Historical context

Haswell Colliery lay some 10km east of Durham City. It was opened in 1835 and closed in 1896.

On the afternoon of Saturday, 28 September 1844 the 'Little Pit' area of the colliery was the site of one of the most fatal disasters on record in the north of England. Following almost immediately after a fall of stone, an explosion occurred resulting in the deaths of 95 men and boys, either from the explosion itself or from afterdamp (carbon monoxide/CO). On Monday, 30 September 54 bodies were interred at Holy Trinity Church, South Hetton and 31 at Easington; the remaining ten people were buried elsewhere. The youngest victim was ten years old and the oldest 61; the average age was 24. There were only four survivors. A relief fund raised £4,269. There is a small memorial at the site of the colliery.

Further information

The Durham Mining Museum (www.dmm.org.uk) gives a short account of the disaster, including a list of all the deceased and where they are buried. It also reproduces a commemorative poem printed in the Illustrated London News and has some pictures of the memorial.

The disaster was doubtless reported in the The Durham Chronicle but the relevant issue is not available on microfilm in Durham Clayport Library. The Durham Advertiser, published fortnightly, first reported the incident in its issue of 11 October and lists the donors to the relief fund, as well as reporting in some detail the resumed inquest.

MURTON COLLIERY 1848

Inscription(s) and details

Murton Colliery / Explosion / 15 aug 1848 / 15 Lives Lost [reverse] fern
Pub rummers x2, both 104mm high. Beamish Museum (accession no. unknown)
and Sunderland Museum (TWCMS:E7369).

Historical context

Murton was a large colliery in County Durham, a short distance southwest of Seaham. The first sod was cut in 1838 and the pit closed in 1991.

'Blowers' of methane gas were a particular hazard in the early years of Murton. During the sinking of the West Pit, a blower was encountered which was so strong that it had to be sealed and piped to the surface where it continued to blow for two years. Since this operation had to be carried out in the absence of any lamp, a giant mirror was erected above the shaft and the operation was done by reflected light.

On 15 August 1848 Murton suffered its first major disaster. A lighted candle ignited a firedamp (methane) blower in the Polka (Middle) Pit, killing 15 men and boys. The youngest two boys were just 12 years of age. Several others were badly burned. About 100 men and boys were in the pit at the time and but for the presence of mind of one of the workmen, who was able to lead the others to the shaft, many would have suffocated.

Further information

See David Temple: The Collieries of Durham, Volume I (TUPS Books, London, 1994, pp53 et seq.) and Robert L Galloway: Annals of Coalmining and the Coal Trade, Volume 2 (David & Charles Reprints, London, 1971, p52).

15 deaths are recorded on these glasses and also by Galloway - although the more recent text, Temple, quotes 14. Meanwhile, the Durham Mining Museum (www.dmm.org.uk) seems confident that 16 men and boys lost their lives but is only able to quote the names and ages of 14 of them.

WASHINGTON COLLIERY 1851

Inscription(s) and details

Washington / Colliery Explosion / 1851 / 35 Lives Lost [reverse] fern
Pub rummer, 111mm high. Sunderland Museum (no accession number).

Historical context

According to the Durham Chronicle: 'This pit has always been considered dangerous, and to use the phrase of the pitmen, a "fiery" one, an appellation which it certainly seems to deserve, when we consider that there have been no less than three explosions in the last three months.' Two men were killed in the first explosion; no lives were lost in the second that occurred only three weeks before the third, the disaster of 19 August 1851, and all three were in different parts of the mine.

At the inquest on 20 August 1851 it was stated that although the colliery owners supplied lamps and oil, the pitmen preferred to work by their own candles that gave better light. Several miners testified that in their opinion the mine was not safe, the appearances of their candles on several occasions indicating the presence of gas. Matthias Dunn, Government Inspector of Mines, who examined the mine, expressed the opinion that there was a deficiency of ventilation in parts of the pit. At the time of the explosion about 40 men and boys were underground. Of these, 32 were killed by afterdamp (carbon monoxide/CO). When the pit was cleared, a search was made for the dead and injured but it was several hours before the dead and the living were all brought to the surface. Two of the exploring party, George Hutchinson and John Errington, both furnacemen, went down to extinguish the furnace but shortly afterwards were found beside it, unconscious. They were immediately 'brought to bank'⁵ but in a short while both were dead from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

The verdict of the inquest jury was that the deceased died by a fire caused by the ignition of gas by a naked light. They recommended that safety lamps should be used instead of candles. There was evidence that the top of a Davy lamp had been removed at the presumed site of the explosion. 34 men and boys (not 35 as engraved on the glass) died. They included the two members of the rescue team, four fathers and their sons, one father and his two sons and two brothers, aged 16 and 14. 'Ten widows and thirty-three children were left destitute by this melancholy catastrophe, but a handsome sum was raised by subscription for their relief.'

Further information

See the Durham Chronicle of Friday 22 and 29 August 1851 and the Durham Mining Museum website (www.dmm.org.uk).

⁵ 'Raised or brought to bank' is a local dialect expression meaning 'raised to the surface or the pit surface area'.

BURRADON COLLIERY 1860

Inscription(s) and details

Burradon / Colliery Exp / 2nd March 1860 / No 76 [reverse] clover

Miniature tankard, 59mm high, 51mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Burradon Colliery Explosion March 2 1860 / 76 lives were lost

Pub rummer. Woodhorn Mining Museum (no accession number) - and a further pub rummer recorded by John Brooks.

BURRADON COL / EXPLOSION / 76 LIVES LOST / MARCH 2 1860

Pub rummer. Beamish Museum. This glass is unusual for the use of capital letters.

In memory of / Burradon Colliery / Explosion 2 Mar 1860 / 96 lives lost [reverse] clover ***Not / forgotten***

Pub rummer, 96mm high. Private collection: Nottingham.

Burradon Colliery / Exp March 2. 1860 / 76 lives Were Lost [reverse] fern

Straight-sided pub rummer. Private collection: Oxford.

Burradon Colliery / Exp 2 March 1860 / 76 lost thine (sic) lives [reverse] fern

Pub rummer with straight sides. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO 09138/1).

Historical context

Burradon is in Northumberland, just north of Killingworth and, at the time of this disaster, the colliery was owned by the Coxlodge and Burradon Coal Company Ltd.

On 2 March 1860 an explosion at a hewing place sent haulage boys running for the shaft bottom where Thomas Alderson, the back overman tried to send them back, saying the danger was now over. They ignored him and were saved; Alderson himself died.

The fore-overman immediately went down into the mine and met 15 lads at the shaft bottom when a second explosion was heard; they all ran back and were saved.

Severely traumatised bodies and severed torsos were recovered but there were more men who survived both explosions only to die of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning or suffocation when they left their 'district' or area and passed through fatal fumes.

At the inquest it was revealed that men had complained for months about poor air and ignitions of blowers (methane gas). They had travelled in the dark over a

stretch of roadway rather than risk igniting gas known to be there and one hewer had transferred to West Moor pit, fearing a disaster any day.⁶

Further information

In 1895, 35 years after the disaster, a commemorative scroll bearing the names of the 76 men and boys who died was commissioned by the National Union of Mineworkers.

After the pit finally closed in 1975 the scroll hung in the local Miners' Institute and, later, in the Burradon Club - but by then it was badly damaged by staining, fading and tearing.

Happily it was restored at the Conservation of Fine Art Department, University of Northumbria, and now hangs in the village primary school that was built with money from the Memorial Fund. (Newcastle Journal, 4 July 2000.)

⁶ From Roy Thompson: How long did the ponies live? The story of the colliery at Killingworth and West Moor (Beacon House, North Shields, 1997. ISBN 0-9530600-0-4).

HETTON COLLIERY 1860

Inscription(s) and details

Hetton Colliery / Explosion 20 Dec 1860 / 22 Lives Lost

Short stemmed wine glass, 100mm high. Sunderland Museum (C1898).

Hetton Colliery / Explosion 20 Dec 1860 / 22 Lives Lost [reverse] ferns

Thinly blown tumbler, 95mm high. Sunderland Museum (J17325).

Historical context

The Newcastle Daily Journal of Saturday 22 December 1860 reports:

‘Much painful interest was excited yesterday morning by a report which reached town from Hetton-le-Hole of the firing of one of the workings of the far-famed Hetton Colliery.

‘... twenty-two persons had fallen victims, not improbably to the recklessness or carelessness of some of their number, or it may be to hidden causes which are inexplicable. The explosion took place on Thursday evening, about eight o’clock, in the Hutton shaft when the night-shift men were at work, and the air brattice was blown out in the main seam, which is about 40 fathoms from the mouth of the shaft ... Of those saved (20 in number) 11 are much scorched.

‘... We would only add that all that was possible to be provided for in so hideous a calamity was anxiously and immediately rendered by the proprietors, agents and assistants on the spot.’

Further information

The Durham Mining Museum (www.dmm.org.uk) states that the disaster was due to an explosion of accumulated firedamp (methane) when boiler fire doors were left open. The website lists the names and ages of all the deceased and includes a picture of the pit.

HARTLEY COLLIERY 1862

Inscription(s) and details

Hartley Colliery / Disaster Jan 16 1862 / 204 lives were lost [reverse] fern.
Pub rummer. The bowl has vertical sides but a rounded base. The glass is 111mm high and 62mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Hartley Colliery / Disaster 16 January / 1862 / No 204 [reverse] clover leaf.
Miniature tankard, 58mm high and 48mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Hartley Colliery / Disaster 16. 1862 / 204 Lives Lost [reverse] clover
Wine glass on stem, 110mm high. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Hartley Colliery / Disaster Jan 16 . 1862 / 204 lives Were Lost / 1862 [reverse]
three-leafed clover
Small, rounded bowl rummer, 96mm high. Private collection: East London.

Hartley Col Disaster / 204 lives lost 1862
Miniature tankard, 50mm high. Advertised for sale on eBay in December 2009.

Hartley / Colliery Disaster / Jan 16 1862 [reverse] fern
Wine glass – two examples. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO 07615/1 and NRO 09138/2).

Hartley / Colliery Disaster / 16 January 1862 [reverse] fern
Tumbler. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO 08841/1).

Hartley Colliery / Disaster 16 Jan 1862 / 204 Lives lost [reverse] clover
Pub glass with rounded bowl. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO 09012/1/1)

Probably because of the sheer scale of this disaster, there are numerous other glasses on record commemorating Hartley:

- Woodhorn Mining Museum has seven further items: three pub rummers; two miniature tankards; a pint tankard and a tumbler. None is identical to the examples above. The inscription on one of the miniature tankards is in capital letters.
- Beamish Museum holds four examples: a rummer and three pint tankards, two ornamented with gadroons around the rim (1996-15.1).
- The Broadfield House Glass museum has a tumbler.
- John Brooks has seen a miniature tankard probably identical to the Woodhorn miniature tankard (referenced in the first bullet above) engraved with capital letters. This suggests, he feels, that it dates from the 20th century – possibly created to commemorate the 50th anniversary? He has also seen and photographed a wine glass and has seen a pub rummer, unusual in that the inscription reads: **204 Men and Boys / Lost their Lives** (as opposed to ‘Men’).

- An Oxford collector has a straight-sided rummer with an inscription identical to the first item listed above but the glass is 151mm high. He also holds a pub rummer with ***Not Forgotten*** on the reverse and a large (45mm high and 228mm diameter) bowl with a scalloped edge inscribed ***Hartley Colliery Disaster / 16 January 1862 / 204 Lives Lost***.
- A private collector in Nottingham holds four Hartley glasses: two miniature tankards; a pub rummer and a wine glass that is 110mm high on a thin stem (but with an inscription different from the one listed above).

Historical context

Hartley, south of Seaton Sluice, was an Anglo-Saxon settlement and mining there dates back to 1291. But, being so near to the sea, the mines were subject to flooding and in 1844 work began sinking the New Hartley pit further west. Hence this 'Hartley Colliery' disaster of 1862 occurred, in fact, at the *New Hartley* pit. The colliery finally closed on 20 February 1959.

The incident commemorated on these glasses resulted in 204 men and boys losing their lives as well as 43 unfortunate pit ponies. The Illustrated London News of 25 January 1862 opined that: 'So great a misfortune attended by such horror of circumstance is not recorded in the history of mining.' It was an incident evoking nation-wide concern at the time (Queen Victoria herself sent two telegrams) and one that changed mining legislation.

In 1862 Hartley Colliery had only one shaft in which was a fixed set of pumps. This single shaft was partitioned by a brattice. The mine was ventilated by a flow of hot air up one side of the shaft produced by a furnace in the pit bottom that heated the return air. Water was pumped from the mine by the largest engine in the north, developing 300 horsepower and capable of pumping 1,500 gallons a minute. The beam of the pumping engine weighed 42 tons and was made exclusively of cast iron with no wrought iron component. On 16 January 1862 this beam broke in two. One half plunged down the shaft, ripping off stone and timber and carrying hundreds of tons of debris in its descent. The accident happened just after the back-shift had gone down to relieve the fore-shift. A cage containing eight men was ascending the shaft at the time and four were killed instantly. Of the four survivors, one fell to his death out of the rope loop in which he was being brought to the surface but the three others were rescued. 199 men and boys and 43 ponies were trapped underground. It was six days before a way could be made through the debris and by then all had died of suffocation. Only 34 workmen connected with the colliery (and fortunately not in the pit at the time) remained to mourn their colleagues. A few victims were buried at Cramlington, Seghill or Cowpen but the majority of the dead were buried at Earsdon where the churchyard had to be extended to accommodate the graves. About 30 bodies could not be identified. Some 60,000 people came to Hartley on 29 January for the mass funeral; the procession to Earsdon was four miles long. There is a memorial in the Earsdon churchyard recording all 204 names.

Nine days after the accident, a public meeting was held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and a petition was drawn up demanding that two shafts to every pit be made a compulsory requirement by law. As a direct result, an Act of Parliament was

passed to that effect later that year. Many enterprises sank drifts underground between mines to comply with this legislation.

Further information

The Hartley disaster probably generated more commemorative glasses than any other event and, as is apparent from the above, there are many examples around. But they probably include some forgeries. We have reliable evidence that Hartley glasses were being engraved in Northumberland in the early 2000s.

The information above has been taken largely from www.blythevalley.gov.uk (click Blythe valley council / choose destination / heritage / industrial history / coal mining). An illustrated book, The Hartley Colliery Disaster by John Elliott McCutcheon (published privately in 1963) covers the disaster in some detail. Copies are in the Blyth Reference Library (622.8 locColl Ref) and in the Robinson Library, University of Newcastle (622.8 MCC).

SEAHAM COLLIERY 1880

Inscription(s) and details

Seaham Colliery / Exp Sept 8. 1880 / 164 lives were lost [reverse] clover
Bucket bowl pub rummer, 111mm high and 61mm diameter. Tiny chip to outer aspect of rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Seaham Colliery / Explosion / Sept 8 1880 164 lives lost
A vase and a tumbler in the Science Museum, London.

Seaham Colliery Disaster / 8th September 1880 / 169 killed
Tumbler in Woodhorn Mining Museum, Northumberland.

Seaham Colliery / Explosion / 164 lives lost / Sept 8 1880
Two small tumblers: one at Beamish Museum (196.15) and one in a private collection in Durham City.

Seaham Colliery / Explosion 164 lives lost / Sept 8 1880
Bucket bowl goblet, Beamish Museum.

Seaham Colliery / Explosion 8 Sept 1880 / 164 Lives Lost
Dark green glass tumbler, 90mm high, in Sunderland Museum (TWCS:E5365).

The same inscription is on two similar bowl-on-stem glasses. Private collection: Oxford.

Seaham Coll Exp / Sept 8 1880 / 164 lives were lost
Glass; no details. Private collection: London.

Seaham Colliery Explosion / 8 Sept 1880 / 164 lives lost
Small wine glass, 111mm high, with a dark blue glass bowl. Sold on eBay in July 2012 by a seller in Cleveland for £102 including postage. The blue glass bowl is very unusual.

The 1880 Seaham disaster is recorded on a large jug commemorating also the later Washington and West Stanley disasters, of 1908 and 1909 respectively - in Beamish Museum.

Historical context

In 1810 the village of Seaham, on the coast between Sunderland and Hartlepool, had a population of 22. After buying the land, the third Marquis of Londonderry built Seaham Harbour and a connecting railway to his expanding east Durham pits. Previously, coal had been transported by hand to the coast and sent by keel boats to Sunderland. Seaham expanded and in 1909 Seaham Colliery was the largest in the country and arguably, the world. It closed in 1988.

In 1880 the colliery comprised two pits, the Seaham (or Low Pit) and Seaham High Pit or “Nicky Nack”. About 1,400 hands were employed, raising 2,500 tons of gas coal a day, mainly from the Hutton seam, although Maudlin, Main and

Harvey were also worked.

On Wednesday, 8 September 1880, 231 men and boys were underground, 169 in the Hutton, Main and Maudlin seams. A small group of men were enlarging refuge holes in the curved roadway between the two shafts. (Refuge holes are cut in the sides of roads to allow men to stand aside from passing tubs.)

At about 2.20am, a shot was fired at the Curve and the pit exploded with such force that it was heard at Murton Colliery, some distance to the south-west. 164 men perished, some in the first blast but the majority of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning when afterdamp spread slowly through the pit. The explosion was heard at both the High and Low pit heads and the ground shook, waking people in the village and bringing crowds to the scene. The shaft and cage had been damaged and tons of debris had to be cleared before rescuers could descend on ropes. At the Maudlin seam the engine house and stables were found to be on fire; all the pit ponies had suffocated and further through the seam were mutilated bodies and debris. It was one week later that the team located George Dixon, a shifter who had been entombed. He was able to tell them, from his trapped state, that a driver-boy lay injured with him and could not move. Two days later rescuers broke through and found the child clasped in the shifter's arms. Both were dead.

When the body of Michael Smith was brought back to his wife she found a tin water bottle under his arm. On it he had scratched, at different times:

'Dear Margaret, There was forty of us altogether at 7am. Some was singing hymns, but my thoughts were on my little Michael. I thought that he and I would meet in heaven at the same time. Oh dear wife, God save you and the children, and pray for myself.'

'Dear Wife, farewell, my last thoughts bout (sic) you and the children. Be sure and learn them to pray for me; Oh what an awfull (sic) position we are in.'

Michael's son was ill when his father left for work for the last time and died the same day as the explosion.

Fire in the Maudlin seam was sealed off with stoppings and work in the pit was resumed in November but in December the men refused to work any longer until the stoppings were taken down and bodies recovered. Londonderry imported blacklegs and riots, arrests and evictions followed. The strike continued until March.

At the inquest conflicting theories as to the cause of the explosion were put forward. Londonderry's agents suggested that a fall in the Hutton district had allowed escape of gas and that this gas had been ignited by a lamp. This would be 'an act of God' and the verdict would be accidental death(s). The theory supported by the Durham Miners' Association and the Mines Inspectors was that the firing of a shot in the Curve had created a coal dust explosion and there was much evidence in favour of this. But the jury was unable to come to any decision on this issue, concluding only that an explosion had occurred. Only five of the men in the affected seams survived, one of whom had experienced four previous

underground explosions. And one of the deceased had survived an earlier explosion in 1871 that had killed his son.

The recorded death toll varies. In two modern books, Emery gives 168 and Temple 164. '164' is the figure in the list appended to the account in The Durham Chronicle of the Brandon explosion of 1899 and is also '164' in the Durham Mining Museum database. And most glasses favour 164. although one records 169.

Further information

See David Temple: Above and Below the Limestone and Norman Emery: The Coal Miners of Durham. See also the extensive reports in the Durham Chronicle of 10,17 and 24 September 1880.

TRIMDON GRANGE COLLIERY 1882

Inscription(s) and details

Trimdon Grange / Colliery Explosion / 16 feby 1882 / 72 Lives Lost [reverse]

vertical fern

Small, straight-sided tankard, 80mm high and 56mm diameter. Private collection: Winchester.

Trimdon Grange / Explosion / 73 lives lost / Feb 16 1882

Miniature tankard, 55mm high. Sold on eBay, August 2009 (£105.50p).

Historical context

Trimdon is in County Durham, on the B1278, a few miles north of Sedgfield and seven and a half miles south east of Durham City. Trimdon Grange lies on the same road, immediately down the hill to the north, and the village of Trimdon Colliery is adjacent to the northeast. Due west of Trimdon Grange is the village of Kelloe.

The shaft of Trimdon Grange Colliery was sunk in 1845 and in 1882 the pit employed about 700 men and boys. The output was 7,000-8,000 tons of coal per week and the Kelloe pit, some two miles distant, yielded rather less. Both pits were the property of Mr. Walter Scott of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Trimdon Grange Colliery finally closed in February 1968.

Two seams were worked at the colliery, the Low Main and the Harvey, each having its own shaft. The Harvey seam lay above the Low Main and they were connected by a staple (internal shaft). There was also communication with the Kelloe pit via a passage from the Harvey seam that was usually closed by a door.

At about 2.40pm on 16 February 1882, a huge explosion occurred in the Harvey seam and was heard throughout the village. Flames were seen to issue from the Harvey shaft, the wire ropes operating the cages in the shaft were destroyed and the staple between the two seams was blocked.

Efforts were directed towards clearing the Harvey shaft but, meanwhile, an under viewer called Herman Schler volunteered to lead an exploring party into the Harvey seam via the Kelloe workings. They found that the force of the explosion had destroyed the door between the two pits allowing afterdamp (carbon monoxide/CO) to pass into the Kelloe mine. Mr. Schler at the head of the party was followed by Thomas Blenkinsopp and, as they approached the connecting passage, Blenkinsopp was overcome by a rush of afterdamp and collapsed. Schler, in attempting to rescue Blenkinsopp, was himself overcome. They were dragged away by other members of the party but were found to be dead and four miners who had been working in the Kelloe pit were later found dead from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

30 workers in the Low Main seam were unaffected by the explosion and returned to bank (the surface) via their own shaft. But with access to the Harvey seam blocked by debris, both in the shaft and in the staple, and by gas via the Kelloe

pit, all the efforts of the rescuing party were now concentrated on clearing the Harvey shaft since any survivors in the seam would probably make their way in that direction.

The cage was jammed about 30 yards from the shaft bottom that was filled with debris but this was eventually cleared and 32 survivors were brought to the surface. Further exploration was hampered by concentrations of afterdamp but by 11am the next day 29 bodies had been recovered, many badly burned or mutilated by the explosion. The final death toll was 74 men and boys. Two families lost three members each and several families lost two.

The inquest lasted for several days. But despite a large number of witnesses giving evidence and being questioned by barristers, no clear conclusion was arrived at regarding the precise cause of the explosion. It was alleged that a deputy, William Day, had fired two shots but had failed to check for gas before firing the second. Indeed, one hewer stated that he had seen both Day and another deputy, William Robinson (who was among those killed) 'repeatedly neglect to examine for gas before the shots were fired.' This allegation was denied by Day. The jury concluded that the deceased had died by an explosion of gas but 'from what cause the said explosion took place we have no direct evidence to show.'

Identical monuments to the disaster are at Trimdon Cemetery and Kelloe Churchyard, listing the names of those who died in those locations - and the following song was reputedly written by Thomas Armstrong.⁷

Let's not think of tomorrow,
Lest we disappointed be;
Our joys may turn to sorrow,
As we all may daily see.
Today we're strong and healthy,
But how soon there comes a change.
As we may see from the explosion
That has been at Trimdon Grange.

Men and boys left home that morning
For to earn their daily bread,
Little thought before the evening
They'd be numbered with the dead;
Let us think of Mrs. Burnett,
Once had sons and now has none -
With the Trimdon Grange explosion,
Joseph, George and James are gone.

⁷ Thomas or 'Tommy' Armstrong (1848-1919) lived in Tanfield Lea, a mining village in County Durham. Known as the 'Pitman Poet' or the 'Bard of the northern coalfield', he was a miner who wrote songs and poems that tell of life in the Durham area in the late 19th/early 20th centuries. He wrote to keep himself in beer money – and he also had 14 children to support. He had his work printed and sold around local public houses for a penny a copy.

February left behind it
What will never be forgot;
Weeping widows, helpless children
May be found in many a cot.
Little children kind and loving
From their homes each day would run;
For to meet their father's coming
As each hard day's work was done.

Now they ask if father's left them,
And the mother hangs her head,
With a weeping widow's feelings,
Tells the child its father's dead.
Homes that once were blessed with comfort
Guided by a father's care
Now are solemn, sad and gloomy,
Since the father is not there.

God protect each lonely widow,
Help to raise each drooping head;
Be a Father to the orphans,
Never let them cry for bread.
Death will pay us all a visit;
They have only gone before.
We may meet the Trimdon victims
Where explosions are no more.

Further information

The disaster is covered in very considerable detail in the 24 February, 31 March and 7 April 1882 editions of the Durham Chronicle. See also The Times for 17 February 1882. The Durham Mining Museum (www.dmm.org.uk) lists the names and ages of those killed, and includes photographs of the colliery and of the memorials. It states that 74 victims died as a result of explosion and firedamp and that ignition was probably by shot-firing. The number 72 engraved on one of the glasses perhaps refers to those who were working in the mines at the time and excludes the deaths of the two rescuers?

USWORTH COLLIERY 1885

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / Usworth Colliery / Explosion March 2nd / 1885 [reverse] fern
Five small wine glasses. Beamish Museum collection (1988-28.3, 1988-28.9, 1988-28.etc, 1988-28.2 and one unlabelled).

In Memory of / Usworth Colliery / Explosion March 2nd 1885
Pressed glass dressing table tray 230mm x 160mm. Beamish Museum collection (1988-28.6)

In Memory of / Usworth Colliery / Explosion March 2nd / 1885
Vertical-sided tumbler, 115mm high. Inscription within ferns with stylised ferns on reverse. Private collection: County Durham.

In Memory of / The 42 Men and Boys / Who lost their lives at / Usworth Colliery / Explosion March 2nd / 1895 Inscription surrounded by multiple ferns
Jug, 193mm high, 110mm diameter (base) and 85mm diameter (lip). Offered for sale on e-Bay, November 2009.

A present to Barbara Meek From her Mother Usworth Colliery Explosion March 2nd 1885⁸
Glass seen by John Brooks.

Mrs. Night / Usworth Colliery Explosion / March 2nd 1885
Pressed glass large sugar or sweetmeat bowl, 160mm high and 145mm diam. Beamish Museum (1976.549).

T Teasdale / Usworth Colliery Explosion March / 1885
Wine glass. Private collection: Lanarkshire.

J.J.Gordon / Usworth Colliery / Explosion March 2nd / 1885 [reverse] fern
Three identical, small wine glasses. Beamish Museum collection (1996-93.4, 1996-93.5 and 1996-93.6)

Usworth Colliery Explosion March 2nd 1885 / I. S. Hopes [or it may be J. S. Hopes]
Comport or cake stand, about 10cm high. The engraving is on the undersurface. Details obtained from a glass dealer, January 2011.

⁸ Newspaper accounts of the time record the names of the dead and injured, as well as mining and union officials, rescuers, doctors and others who ‘assisted in the operations’ but nowhere is there mention of a Meek; a Night (or even a Knight); a Teasdale; a Gordon or a Hopes. It is possible the inscriptions on these glasses simply record the name of the individual who commissioned them – possibly from an itinerant engraver – as part of a donation to the disaster fund? This may also explain the slightly odd choice of glassware in the case of ‘I S Hopes’ (a cake stand) to commemorate a disaster. Meanwhile, a basic search of the census records for ‘Little Usworth, County Durham’ at the end of the 19th century reveals there was a family called ‘Hopes’ living there – so further research may find an ‘IS’ or ‘JS Hopes’.

***I M LOWDON IN MEMORY OF USWORTH COLLIERY EXPLOSION MARCH 2ND
1885⁹***

Liqueur glass, 111mm high. Sold on eBay in July 2012 by a seller in Cleveland for £43.64 including postage.

There is an Usworth commemorative miniature tankard (inscription unclear) in Sunderland Museum (1994.401).

Historical context

Usworth lies five miles west of Sunderland in the northeast of England. The colliery opened in 1845 when the first shaft was sunk and did not close finally until 1974.

Over the years, it saw a number of disasters – most notably in 1850, when 13 lives were lost, and again in 1885. (In 1891, a boiler explosion killed a young man, William Bell – and this death is commemorated on a jug recorded later in this catalogue.)

In 1885 Usworth Colliery was owned by John Bowes Esq. and Partners. There were two main shafts, Wellington East and West, divided by bratticing and a back shaft (by which the uninjured men were brought to the surface) mainly used as a downcast shaft. The seams of coal worked were the Maudlin, the Low main (where the explosion occurred) and the Hutton, one of the deepest pits in the county. About 600 men and boys were employed, producing 1,000 tons of coal a day.

The colliery was worked by three regular shifts: the night-shift, the fore-shift, and the back-shift. The night-shift worked from 9pm to 4am; the fore-shift from 4am to 11am and the back-shift from 10am to 5pm. In addition, what was known locally as ‘the four o’clock shift’ went down to prepare the workings for the night-shift and so at the time of the accident there were fewer men in the mine than at any other time of day.

On Monday, 2 March, the first batch of night-shift men was stepping into the cage when ‘a loud report’ was followed by a cloud of dust rushing up the shaft. It was immediately realised that an explosion had occurred ‘and then the intelligence was spread far and wide, and notwithstanding the late hour ... there was soon a large gathering of anxious and sorrowful people at the pit mouth. A hasty survey ... showed that the West shaft was blocked to such an extent that but very little hope was even then entertained that the entombed miners could be reached in time to save their lives.’

Between 30 and 35 people were in the East Pit and 45 in the West Pit where the

⁹ No ‘Lowden’ is listed among the dead or in any newspaper article connected with the disaster. As with ‘Hopes’ and the other names above, could the name be the name of the person who paid for the glass i.e. the person who contributed funds? Very basic research shows that Loudens, along with a Hopes family, were living in Usworth in the late 19th century, so this is a possibility.

explosion had occurred. Although the West shaft was blocked, it was possible to bring men in the East pit safely 'to bank' (the surface). Soon after entering the pit, three of the rescue party were overcome by afterdamp (carbon monoxide/CO); one managed to return to the surface in a semi-conscious state but both his companions perished. The work to clear the blocked West shaft proceeded with difficulty and, meanwhile, the colliery carpenters were set to work making coffins.

It was at first stated that no shots were scheduled to be fired on the day of the explosion and it was, therefore, suggested that the explosion had followed ignition of gas that had reached the boiler of an engine working the coals out of the Maudlin seam. Later it was stated that a shot was to be fired in a new drift and 'supposing this shot was fired, the accident would be easily explained.' The cause of the disaster was eventually stated as 'a result of explosion, firedamp and coal dust [and] ignition caused by shot-firing.'¹⁰

By midnight on Tuesday 3 March rescuers had only been able to penetrate about 400 yards from the shaft. At 8am on Wednesday 4 March the first body was found. Recovery of the bodies was delayed by fire in the workings and on Wednesday 3 April, 17 bodies remained unrecovered.

Including the two members of the rescue party, 42 men and boys died in the disaster. Their ages ranged from 14 to 75. 72 pit ponies also perished.

Further information

Much of the account above is taken from The Durham Chronicle, 6 March and 3 April 1885. See also the Durham Mining Museum site (www.dmm.org.uk).

¹⁰ Details given on the Durham Mining Museum website.

ELEMORE COLLIERY 1886

Inscription(s) and details

Elemore Col / Explosion / 28 lives lost / Dec 2nd 1886 [reverse] fern
Miniature tankard. Beamish Museum (1979.528).

Elemore Colliery / Explosion / 2 Dec 1886 / 28 Lives Lost
Thinly blown tumbler, 95mm high. Sunderland Museum (J17324).

Elemore Colliery Explosion / 2 December 1886 / 27 lives lost [reverse] *Still in memory*
Pub rummer. Private collection: Durham City.

Elemore Colliery / Explosion 2nd Dec 1886 28 Lives lost [reverse] *All Gone But Not Forgotten* above a fern
Pub glass with rounded bottom, 101mm high. Sold on eBay for £118.15 in December 2009.

A miniature tankard commemorating the Ellemore Colliery disaster is in a private collection in Alnwick.

Historical context

The Hetton Coal Company was formed in 1820, not without opposition since the Lords Londonderry and Lambton jealously guarded their near monopoly of coal production in the area. But, despite protests from the noble lords, the newcomers started sinking the Lyons colliery in 1820.

They were soon locked in another battle with water issuing into the shaft at a rate of 3,000 gallons a minute but determination and continuous pumping were rewarded in 1823 when coal was reached at 988 feet, below the magnesium limestone layer.

The company next acquired the help of George Stephenson to design a rail link between the colliery and Sunderland docks. This railway, which employed five of Stephenson's 'puffing billies' was the first purpose-built railway for steam engines in the world and served the colliery until the 1950s.

In 1825 Mr. George Baker, the owner of Elemore Hall, joined the company and a new, two-shaft colliery, Elemore, was planned. Baker named the first shaft 'Isabella' after his daughter and the second 'George' after himself. Both shafts reached the Hutton seam in 1827.

At 2.55am on 2 December 1886 an explosion occurred when there were 41 men and boys working at various parts of the pit. The seat of the explosion was in the George Low Main area where three men, Johnson, Appleby and Luke, were working widening the roadway. They were equipped with a type of Davy lamp housed in a tin can with a glass window known as the 'Tin-can Davy'. Blasting

stone at this time was a perilous business since the only explosives available were black powders that had to be detonated by naked flame.

The men had drilled a hole in the side of the roadway and, after charging it with powder, Johnson (he said later) opened his lamp and lit the fuse.

The explosion ripped through the pit both in-by¹¹ and back towards the shaft and at the surface a flash was seen issuing from the shaft followed by dust that discoloured the snow around the shaft area. 25 men were killed in all parts of the intake airways, either by the initial blast or by carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Three men died later of their injuries.

Johnson, although badly injured, was able to give evidence at the inquest held on 18 January. Luke survived three days, long enough to make a statement that was accepted at the enquiry as a true version of the events against the conflicting evidence of Johnson.

Although the enquiry was unable to determine the cause of the explosion, the evidence suggests that the disaster was a classic example of a coal-dust explosion following the firing of the shot by Johnson. At the time (1886) the risks of coal-dust as an explosive agent, as postulated by the Atkinson brothers in their book, Explosions in Coal Mines, were not fully appreciated.

Further information

The above information is taken from David Temple: The Collieries of Durham, Volume I (pp33-38).

There is a good account of the disaster on the Durham Mining Museum website (www.dmm.org.uk) that includes the names of the dead with digital photographs of some of their tombstones and a diagram of the site of the disaster.

The third glass listed here was presumably engraved shortly following the disaster and before the final death (Luke's).

¹¹ Coalminers' jargon, pertaining to direction – when underground, it means 'towards the coalface'. When above ground, it means 'towards [the miner's] house or home'.

DEATH OF ROBERT BARR – SEGHILL COLLIERY – 1888

Inscription(s) and details

Robert Barr / Who lost his life / Seghill Colliery / 1888 [reverse] clover
Wine glass, 100mm high. Private collection: Nottingham.

John Brooks noted that a glass engraved with the above inscription was entered in the Palace to Parlour exhibition mounted by the Glass Circle at the Wallace Collection, London, in September 2003.

Historical context

Seghill is in Northumberland, a little southwest of Seaton Delaval.

This death is listed in the Index of North of England Mining Accident Victims, 1880-1889 (microfiche, Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central Library) that gives Robert Barr's age as 28 and the date of death as 10 November 1888.

More details are to be found in The Blyth Weekly News:

TWO MEN KILLED AT SEGHILL

Two stonemasons, Thomas Finlay and Robert Barr, together with a boy named Gibson, had been employed clearing out a new way in the High Main Seam, which had not been worked for many years. Shortly after 8am John Douglas, under manager, went to the spot and found that a large fall of stone had taken place, under which the boy was partially buried. Help was soon at hand and the boy was got out unhurt. Work was then directed towards rescuing the men, who were suspected of being under the fall, but it was not till eleven o'clock at night that they were got at, when life in each case was found to be extinct. The body of Finlay was ... much bruised, but no mark was found on that of Barr, in whose case death seemed to have resulted from suffocation [i.e. traumatic asphyxiation]. Finlay, who leaves a widow and two children had resided in the village all his life, while Barr had only been a short time at the colliery, and leaves a widow and family of four. The coroner held an inquiry on the two bodies ... at the Bee Hive Inn, Seghill, when the jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

The mining accident Index, mentioned above, gives the cause of the accident as 'Fall of overhead ground, caused by a prop giving way and permitting balks and spiling [i.e. timber beams and stakes] to come down.'

Further information

The Blyth Weekly News of Saturday 17 November 1888, page 5.

DEATH OF MATTHEW LEE – MARY PIT, BEAMISH - 1889

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / Matthew Lee / Who lost his life at the / Mary Pit Beamish / Dec 11th 1889 / Aged 23 years [reverse] fern

Three identical goblets. Beamish Museum (1990-2.8, 1995-101 and 1996-15).

In Memory of / Matthew Lee / Who lost his life at the / Mary Pit Beamish / Dec 11th 1889 / Aged 24 years [reverse] fern

A goblet identical to the above – apart from the age of the deceased given. Beamish Museum (1996-3.2).

In the spring of 2003, a member of the public brought a goblet with an inscription identical to the first of the two versions above into Broadfield House Glass Museum, Kingswinford.

Historical context

There is no mention of this death either in The Durham Chronicle of 13 or 20 December 1889 or in The Durham County Advertiser of 15 or 22 December 1889.

The database of the Durham Mining Museum records that Matthew Lee was a blacksmith who was killed by crushing while erecting new screens. There is no more information.

DEATH OF WILLIAM BELL - USWORTH COLLIERY - 1891

Inscription(s) and details

In. Memory of / William. Bell / Who. lost. his. life / By. an. Boiler. Explosion / At. Usworth. Colliery / April. 11 1891 / Aged. 23. Years

Large jug, decorated with ferns. Beamish Museum (no accession number).

Historical context

This accident was reported in The Durham Chronicle: 'Shortly after noon on Saturday, the little colliery village of Usworth was the scene of one of those melancholy occurrences which, unhappily, within recent years, have too often brought gloom and sorrow into many a home. ... Just, in fact, at the very moment when all connected with the Colliery were hopefully anticipating the usual weekly relaxation from labour, when for one day at least they might turn their backs upon the gloom and dreariness of the pit, and enjoy the pure and invigorating air of the outside world, three of the employees were suddenly launched into Eternity, whilst two others were fearfully maimed - it may be for life.'

At the top of the Low Main staple (a 'staple' is a shallow shaft within a mine) were three boilers used for raising steam to the underground hauling engines. At the time of the accident No. 1 was laid off for cleaning and Nos. 2 and 3 were at work, under the charge of 22-year old¹² William Bell, with Joseph Armstrong working under him. Thomas Mitchison, Joseph Greener and Thomas Tate were also present, sent down to clean the flues of the laid-off boiler.

The explosion was heard and felt at the surface. At the top of the up-cast shaft large, heavy battens and cement were flung high into the air while at the bottom all five men were caught by either scalding water or flying debris. When rescuers were able to reach the scene they found the dead body of Mitchison trapped by debris; the others, badly injured, were evacuated 'to bank'¹³ but Armstrong died two hours later and Bell at 10.30pm the same day. Greener suffered two broken legs and other injuries and Tate, badly scalded, had a severe facial wound.

The inquest was opened on Tuesday 14 April. A witness who had arrived at the scene stated that three plates of No. 2 boiler had ripped and been turned back. George Elwen, engineer in charge of the boilers at Usworth, stated that some months before he had found the boiler plates at the water line over the fire had deteriorated a little. He estimated that they had wasted about 1/8 inch from an original thickness of 1/2 inch. Under questioning, he said that he did not know whether he put this in writing but that he told the pit manager, Mr. Stokoe, verbally. The Coroner, examining the boiler book, expressed the opinion that some of the entries had been written over erasures, a fact at first denied by the witness. (Coroner: "We may not happen to know much about boilers, but we do happen to know something about pen and ink.") When the entry: "Examined this boiler (No.

¹² William Bell's age as recorded on the glass (23) disagrees with the press report (22) but such discrepancies are not unusual.

¹³ 'Raised or brought to bank' is a local dialect expression meaning 'raised to the surface or the pit surface area'.

2) and found to be all right” was read out, the witness stated that the boiler was considered to be safe since it was still 3/8 inch thick. At this point, the witness retired to examine one of the plates of the exploded boiler, rent at the water line, and found that it measured slightly less than 1/8 inch. Asked for his opinion as to the cause of the accident he could only think that cold water had been turned on suddenly into a red-hot boiler.

William Bell, the boiler-minder, would be responsible. Evidence was given that in January Bell had been suspended for a period after No. 2 boiler had been found to be overheated and short of water. After adjournment, one of the jurymen produced a small piece of boiler plate. Coroner: “I think I know it. It is a carefully chosen piece, nothing thinner could be found.” A Juror: “I shall be glad to have it back. I want it for my watch chain.” (Laughter in court). Mr. Elwen, re-examined, admitted that he had now found the thinnest part of a plate recovered from No. 2 boiler to measure 1/16 inch.

When the inquest resumed on 21 May, Mr. Elwen said he had examined the boiler two months before the explosion and again a fortnight before. On the first occasion he found that the plates had wasted in places on the water line to 1/8 inch. Mr. Forrest (solicitor for the miners): “When you found that they had deteriorated, did it not strike you that something was going seriously wrong?” Witness: “No.” Evidence was submitted from an analyst who had examined a sample of the water entering the boiler and found it to contain a level of corrosive, rendering it unsuitable for steam boilers. Robert Wraith, foreman enginewright, said that he, together with Mr. Elwen, had examined the boiler a fortnight before the explosion with a hammer at the water line. They concluded that the plates were deteriorating but that they were still safe. Mr. Jackson, a surveyor to the Board of Trade, had carefully examined the boiler following the explosion and found corrosion along the water line that he concluded was due to the unsuitable water, an opinion supported by a Mr. Hauxwell, an engineer of great experience. John Stephenson, a boilerminder, testified he had seen the plates “eating away at the water line” and noting “a great amount of leakage” had pointed this out to both Mr. Wraith and Mr. Elwen. Mr. Wraith thought the boiler “would last the time out, which was about two o’clock.”

The Jury found the deceased had died of scalds and other injuries. They were of the opinion that the water being of such a corrosive nature, the boiler needed more than ordinary attention. When further deterioration was found the boiler should have been laid off for repairs. They thought the engineer (Elwen) and enginewright (Wraith) were equally culpable in not ascertaining and reporting the true nature of the boiler, which must have been unsafe at the time of the last examination, to the Manager. The Manager was, therefore not to blame but Elwen and Wraith, although not guilty of criminal culpability, exhibited great want of judgement and care. No blame was attributable to William Bell, the deceased, as there was no want of water in the boiler at the time.

Further information

The Durham Chronicle, 17 April, 13 May and 21 May 1891 from where the above historical details are taken.

DEATH OF WILLIAM OLD – CRAGHEAD COLLIERY - 1894

Inscription(s) and details

A Present. To. Kate. Lumsdon / In. Memory. of. William. Old / Who. lost. his. life. At. Craghead. Colliery / Jan. 18th 1894. Aged / 57 Years

Large tumbler. The inscription occupies most of the circumference; the beginnings and ends of the lines are separated by a vertical branch of a fern that also lies underneath. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Presented. To / Kate Lumsdon / Upon her 19th Birthday / from Mrs. Old / 1894
[reverse] three ferns

A tumbler identical in size and shape to the above. These two glasses are each of one pint capacity, rather thinly blown, and are 150mm high with straight sides expanding slightly to rims of 85mm diameter. The engraving is somewhat more elaborate than the standard 'disaster' glass; the word 'Presented' has a particularly flamboyant capital P. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

Craghead Colliery (also known as Holmside) lay about 10 km northwest of Durham City, close to the village of Craghead. It was opened in 1839 and closed in 1969 and was made up of three pits - Oswald, Busty and Edward. William Old was a stoneman and also a 'shifter' - paid by the shift, not on piecework, an arrangement usually reserved for older men, past their physical prime.

On the night of 9 January 1894 Old was working in the Oswald pit, taking down stone in gateways and setting up timber joists. He fired a shot in one of the gateways that did not bring down sufficient stone to allow the hewers to work. As it was near to the end of his shift he did nothing more but returned the next night. While setting timber, a large stone measuring about 8 x 6 x 1 feet fell upon him, killing him instantly. At the inquest, held at the Punch Bowl Inn in Craghead (it is still there) three days later, a verdict of Accidental Death was returned.

Catharine (Kate) Lumsdon was born on 9 March 1875 at Browney Bank Colliery, near Brandon, about 4 km southwest of Durham City and thus about 11 km, as the crow flies, from Craghead. Her father was a miner at Browney Bank Colliery, a pit that opened in 1871 and closed (due to flooding) in 1938.

One can only speculate on the relationship between the Old and the Lumsdon families. Kate Lumsdon's mother was not a sister of William Old (her maiden name was Irving) although Mrs. Old could have been a Miss Lumsdon? But if Mrs. Old was Kate Lumsdon's aunt she would surely identify herself on the glass as 'Aunt Mary' or whatever her name was, rather than 'Mrs. Old'? Maybe the families were friends and Mrs. Old was Kate Lumsdon's Godmother, although the geographic distance between the two families, significant at that time, (assuming that the Olds were living at Craghead when Kate was born) would make this supposition less likely. Perhaps Kate moved to Stanley, just up the road from Craghead, and worked there as, say, a domestic servant? Or she could have been a barmaid at the Punch Bowl Inn where she befriended the Olds? Another possibility is that Kate was William's fiancée – she was 18 at the time of his death

and, although the glass gives his age as 57, the Durham Mining Museum says he was just 37 – so young enough to be marrying, perhaps for a second time? Was old Mrs. Old giving the girl who might have been her new daughter-in-law a sad memento?

Kate Lumsdon's 19th birthday was some eight weeks after William Old's death and it is reasonable to assume that both these glasses were given to her at the same time.

Whatever the circumstances, the glasses illustrate two points:

- Glasses were engraved, and presumably sold, as souvenirs commemorating events such as coronations, the opening of a dock or an advance of miners' pay. But many commemorated the deaths either of groups of people ('disaster glasses') or of individuals. These latter glasses may have been sold but in some instances were certainly given to people, presumably relatives and friends, and sometimes the recipients were identified on the item - as was Kate Lumsdon. Compare also 'A present to Barbara Meek from her mother. Usworth Colliery explosion March 2nd 1885' with nobody called Meek among the dead or injured.
- The engravers were frequently inaccurate – and not only in spelling: ('They will be done' and 'Lost there lives') but also in dates. William Old did not die on 18 January, as is unmistakably engraved on the glass but on 10 January. Compare the jug and glass both commemorating the death of Mary Cook but recording two different dates – see page part two.

William Old's death is briefly covered in the Durham Chronicle of Friday 19 January 1894 (page six) and there are more details on the Durham Mining Museum website - www.dmm.org.uk. His death was registered on 13 January (Certificate No: 39 District and Sub-district of Lanchester). Kate Lumsdon's birth was also registered in Lanchester (Certificate No: 212, 1875).

Inscription(s) and details

An Alarming / Accident Occurred / at / Barrington Colliery / 13 July 1894

[reverse] three-leafed clover

Bucket bowl pub rummer, 98mm high and 57mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne. An identical example exists in a private collection in Nottingham.

An Alarming / Accident Occurred / at / Barrington Colliery / 13 July 1894

[reverse] three-leafed clover surrounded by random squiggles

Small straight-sided rummer, 117mm high. The '13' looks very like '19'. Private collection: East London.

Woodhorn Mining Museum also has a pub rummer (no accession number) commemorating this event; the wording of the inscription is identical to the glasses listed above, but it is set out differently.

Historical context

Barrington Colliery was in Bedlington, Northumberland. This incident was not alarming enough to merit the attention of either The Morpeth Herald and Reporter or The Blyth Weekly News but The Newcastle Daily Journal of 14 July 1894 (page eight) reported:

'An alarming accident occurred at Barrington Colliery yesterday morning, just after the "back" shift men had descended, and while the "fore" shift men were waiting to ascend. It appears that the cages were set in motion before a tub at the bottom of the shaft had been got properly in. The result was that the tub caught the sides of the shaft, and did such damage that it was found impossible to get the men up. The cage was broken and a new one had to be put on in its place.

'The first of the men did not get to the surface until shortly before three o'clock in the afternoon. Fortunately the accident did not occasion any injury to life or limb, yet the damage will be very considerable to the owners, the Bedlington Coal Company.'

In compliance with legislation following the 1862 Hartley disaster, the Barrington pit had two shafts – the Henry and the Molly - and was, in addition, connected to the Sleekburn pit via the Low Main Seam.¹⁴ Why, following the accident, did the men not return to the surface via an alternative route?

Ms Moffat explains that one of the shafts, the downcast shaft, would be open at its mouth to draw in fresh air to the workings pulled by a mechanical device at the top of the other (upcast) shaft. It would be the downcast shaft that was used to transport the men; the air in the upcast shaft would be too poor to allow this.

¹⁴ Information from Deborah Moffat, Woodhorn Mining Museum.

Hence the 'alarming accident' would not only block the normal exit to the surface but might also have compromised the ventilation of the workings. So it would be foolhardy of the men to walk around the workings either to the upcast shaft or to the Sleekburn pit, risking suffocation or gas accumulations.

Further information

This glass is illustrated in *An Alarming Accident – or every glass tells a story*¹⁵ (p14 and back cover).

¹⁵ John Brooks and William Cowan: *An Alarming Accident - or every glass tells a story* (Tyne Bridge Publishing 2008, ISBN 978-185795-124-0).

DEATH OF WILLIAM BEATTIE – CAMBOIS COLLIERY - 1894

Inscription(s) and details

In memory of / William Beattie / Who was killed at / Cambois / Colliery / 14 Sept 1894 / Age 32 years [reverse] clover

Pub rummer, 96mm high. Private collection: Nottingham.

John Brooks has seen another example with an identical inscription but with different use of capital and lower case letters (e.g. 'In **M**emory' ... 'who was **K**illed' ... '**a**ge 32').

Historical context

No account of this death is to be found in the Morpeth Herald and Reporter of 15, 22, or 29 September 1894. The Blyth Bi-weekly News and Wansbeck Telegraph of 18 September 1894 reports merely as follows:

A CAMBOIS MINER KILLED

On Saturday, an inquest was held at Cambois, on William Beattie (32) who was killed in Cambois Pit the preceding day. Thos. Beattie, deceased's brother, said that on Friday deceased was carving coal when the *jud* suddenly fell on him. There were plenty of *sprags* ready at hand. A verdict of 'Accidental death' was returned.

The Shorter OED defines a *sprag* as: 'A prop used to support the coal or roof during the working of a seam' but does not recognize a *jud*.

However, reference to Glossary of Terms used in the Coal Trade in Northumberland and Durham by G C Greenwell (1888, reprinted 1970, Frank Graham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) explains that a *jud* is 'a portion of seam, kirved, nicked and ready for blasting. Also a portion of a pillar in the course of being worked away'.

Kirving is undercutting the coal before wedging or blasting down and *nicking* is vertical cutting to give a clean cut side to the subsequent roadway. Nicking was not popular with hewers and it was usual to pay extra for it. There was a strike at Cramlington over non-payment for nicking.

DEATH OF EDWARD WILSON – NORTH SEATON COLLIERY - 1894

Inscription(s) and details

*In Memory of / Edward Wilson / who was killed at / North Seaton / 16 Nov 1894
age 23 [reverse] Remember Me [clover]*

Pub rummer, Woodhorn Mining Museum (ASHM: 1992.39).

Historical context

This 'Shocking Mine Accident' was reported in the Saturday, 17 November 1894 edition of The Morpeth Herald and Reporter.

The back-shift men at North Seaton Colliery were travelling in-bye¹⁶ to their work and Edward Wilson was accompanied by Philip Grieves, J Harrison and G Spooner along the rolley¹⁷ (sic) way. Then a large stone fell from the side, striking Wilson and Grieves who were in the middle of the party, the other two men narrowly escaping.

'The men were soon extricated, and upon examination it was found that Wilson's right knee and thigh were severely crushed. Grieves's left foot was also badly hurt, and he sustained wounds in the back and head. Ambulance aid was soon sought and J Love and J Gibson, the back overmen, prevented the flow of blood, and also severed one of Grieves's toes, which hung by a thread. The men were both conveyed home, where Dr Evans and Dr Booth awaited Wilson and amputated the injured limb at the hip, but the poor fellow subsequently died. Wilson was 23 years of age. Wilson had no father and Grieves no mother.'

¹⁶ Underground, towards the coalface.

¹⁷ A rolley is a truck without sides used in mines (Shorter OED).

DEATH OF JOHN WHITLOCK – NEW DELAVAL COLLIERY - 1895

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / John George Whitlock / Who was accidentally Killed / at New Dalaval (sic) Colliery / 8 April 1895 / Age 13 years 11 months [reverse] fern Gone But Not Forgotten

Bucket bowl pub rummer. Private collection: Blyth, Northumberland.

Historical context

This tragedy is briefly reported in the Morpeth Herald of 13 April 1895. At the inquest, held at the Percy Arms Inn in Kitty Brewster¹⁸, William Whitlock said he had identified the body as that of his son, John George. James Tanny of Cowpen Village who was employed at the New Delaval Pit said the accident occurred about 10am the previous day. He went on to describe how he and some of his 'marrows'¹⁹ were at work when they heard 'a set'²⁰ coming behind them. They stepped aside to let it pass and then, almost immediately afterwards, heard a crash as though the tub had 'got off the way'. They also heard a groan and 'on examining the spot' they saw that the tub had left the way (or track) and the deceased was lying across the 'limmers'²¹ with his head towards the horse's hind feet. Blood had 'gushed from his nostrils' and he was 'quite dead'. According to Tanny, the boy was 'going faster than he ought to have gone' when he passed him and his marrows. Mary Burn of Kitty Brewster reported that she was in the dead boy's house when he was carried there. A verdict was returned that the deceased had been accidentally killed by being thrown off the top of the tub whilst driving a set on a wagon way at the New Delaval Pit. After the incident the pit was 'cleared for the day'.

Further information

The report of the inquest, if not the inquest itself, seems somewhat perfunctory. The report in the Blyth Weekly News is even briefer. The boy had clearly suffered a massive traumatic cerebral haemorrhage but had he sustained this after the wagon left the track or had he hit his head on the roof, a common hazard for drivers? If he had hit his head on the roof, one might have expected him to be lying in the opposite direction.

¹⁸ An area of Blyth - not to be confused with the more famous Kitty Brewster area of Aberdeen, Scotland.

¹⁹ Northeastern word (pronounced/sometimes written 'marra') meaning (work)mate.

²⁰ A number of coal tubs or skips connected together as a train.

²¹ A limber pronounced limmer (and spelled as such in the newspaper) was a piece of equipment made of two wooden shafts linked by an iron bow to a hinged hook that connected to a coal tub. Limbers were permanently fastened to the pit ponies during their shift. In the army a limber is a two-wheeled cart designed to support the trail of an artillery piece, allowing it to be towed.

DEATH OF MICHAEL LENNEHAM – DINNINGTON COLLIERY - 1895

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / Michael Lenneham / Who was killed at / Dinnington Colliery / April 25th 1895 / Age 22 Years / 1895 [reverse] Hold / The fort for I / Am Coming

Pub rummer. Private collection: London.

In Memory of / Michael Lenneham / who was killed at / Dinnington Colliery / 25 April 1895 / Aged 22 Years [reverse] Not a day to call our own

Pub rummer. Private collection: London.

In memory of Michael Lennahan (sic) / who was killed at Dinnington Colliery / April 25 1895 age 22 [reverse] Rest in Peace with a clover leaf design

Pub glass with a rounded bowl. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO 08944/1)

In memory of Michael Lennahan (sic) / who was killed / Dinnington Colliery / 25 April 1895 / Age 22 years [reverse] Thy will be done with a clover leaf design

Pub glass with straight parallel sides and a flat-bottomed bowl. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO 08944/2).

Historical context

Dinnington is in Northumberland, north of Wideopen. This accident was not reported in either the Morpeth Herald and Advertiser or the Blyth Weekly News and was covered only briefly in the Newcastle Daily Journal of Friday, 26 April 1895:

FATAL ACCIDENT AT DINNINGTON

Yesterday a coal hewer named Michael Lenneham, 22 years of age, was killed by a fall of stone whilst following his employment in a portion of Dinnington Colliery known as 4th West.

Subsequent editions of the newspaper give no account of any inquest.

Further information

"Hold the fort for I am coming" (see first glass listed above) is a quotation from a poem by Philip Bliss (1838-1876) called 'The Charm Ho, my comrades, see the signal!' (Oxford Dictionary of Quotations). This, in turn, was probably inspired by 'Hold the fort!' - an exhortation immortalised by General Sherman during the American Civil War (1861-1865) when, in 1864, he signaled this message to General Corse from the top of Mount Kennesaw (Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable). We have also seen this engraving on an Andrew Colvin glass (see 'Andrew Colvin 1895' in Part Three). Dinnington is not all that far from Blyth. Had the person who commissioned *this* glass, a parent perhaps, heard Andrew Colvin preach?

BROOMHILL COLLIERY 1895

Inscription(s) and details

Gas Explosion at / Broom Hill Colliery / Hall was severely Burnt / and O Brian escaped with his life / 12 July 1895 [reverse] clover leaf within scrolls

Round bowl pub rummer. Private collection: Leicestershire.

Historical context

Broomhill Colliery was situated in Northumberland, a little southwest of Amble. There were probably so many accidents in the pits at this time (as perusal of the contemporary press confirms) that minor incidents - although generating the engraving of glasses - were not thought remarkable enough for reportage in the major newspapers. Thus this accident finds no place in the Newcastle Journal, the Newcastle Daily Chronicle, the Morpeth Herald or the Blyth Weekly News and it is not in the database of the Durham Mining Museum that, despite its name, covers Broomhill. However, the Alnwick and County Gazette of 20 July 1895 reported briefly as follows:

BROOMHILL - EXPLOSION OF GAS AT THE COLLIERY

On Friday an alarming report was spread abroad at Amble and district for several hours, that owing to the explosion of gas a large number of men were possibly hurt, and were detained down the pit; but fortunately the report was greatly exaggerated for only two were sufferers from the accident; one, a youth named Hall, residing at South Broomhill, who was severely burnt around the body, and the other a workman named O'Brien (sic), living at the Stone Row, Broomhill, who narrowly escaped being suffocated by the fumes from the explosion. Dr Smyth was promptly on the scene and attended each case, and the patients are now showing signs of recovery.

Further information

The manager of Broomhill Colliery in 1894 was Andrew Scott whose death that year was commemorated on a pub rummer on which Broomhill is spelled 'Broom Hill' and which has, on the reverse, a clover leaf within four wiggly scrolls.

BRANCEPETH COLLIERY 1896

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of Brancepeth Colliery Explosion April 13th 1896 [reverse] fern pattern
Pub rummer in the Science Museum, London.

Historical context

Brancepeth is a village in County Durham, on the A690 between Willington and Durham City. Three of a series of seven pits, leased by Messrs Straker and Love from the owner, Lord Boyne of Brancepeth, were at Willington and designated 'A', 'B' and 'C' pits. 'A' pit was the Brancepeth pit. It closed in July 1967.

The explosion commemorated here occurred in the Brockwell seam, the lowest of four worked by the colliery, shortly after 10pm on 13 April 1896 but was not heard at the surface. At about 10.15pm an engineman at the mouth of the pit noticed a strong upward rush of air in the shaft followed by smoke and dust. Three men raised to bank²² confirmed that there had been an explosion in the workings of the Brockwell seam; 25 men and boys had been underground at the time, working the 'Four o'clock shift' i.e. the maintenance shift that worked in between the two main shifts of the day.

By 11pm a rescue party had been assembled. At the bottom of the shaft they found shattered wagons and beyond were falls that had to be cleared. 100 yards from the shaft they found separately the arms, legs, head and torso of a waggonwayman. He had lived with his sister, herself widowed a few months previously when a fall of stone in the same colliery had killed her husband. A little farther on a second body, badly burned, was found and beyond that many falls and obstructions. Knocking and shouting was heard from a blocked side gallery where it was known that two boys had been working. Both were found alive but suffering from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning; one had no recollection of his return to the surface. More bodies were found, one by the victim's father, but the recovery efforts were delayed by falls and foul air.

By 6pm on Tuesday 14 April eight bodies had been found. About a mile into the workings the air was so contaminated by carbon monoxide (CO) that one of the rescuers collapsed. He was almost unconscious but recovered after reaching the surface.

The 'Full Descriptive Account' in The Durham Chronicle, printed four days after the explosion, does not state the total number of fatalities but it is known that 20 men died.

Shocking as this is, there is a table of 'Memorable Calamities' appended to the account of the Brandon Colliery disaster in the Durham Chronicle of 18 August 1899 that lists the 'principal local colliery disasters' in the previous 60 years. Of

²² 'Raised to bank' is a local dialect expression meaning 'raised to the surface or the pit surface area'.

the 19 catastrophes listed, Seaham²³ with 164 dead was by far the worst but 95 were killed at Haswell²⁴ and 74 at Trimdon Grange²⁵. Only nine of the 19 incidents, including Brancepeth A Pit, claimed 20 or less lives. (The table incorrectly gives the loss of life at Usworth²⁶ as 12, and as 41 in the text, but in fact 42 people lost their lives in that disaster).

The loss of life at Brancepeth would almost certainly have been greater had the explosion occurred during one of the two main working shifts when about 300 men and boys would have been below ground.

Evidence given at the inquest suggested that the explosion was due to ignition of coal dust following the firing of a shot.

Further information

The information about Brancepeth given here is mainly from The Durham Chronicle of Friday, 13 April 1896.

For background information on Brancepeth Colliery, see the Durham Mining Museum (www.dmm.org.uk)

²³ See Seaham 1880

²⁴ See Haswell 1844

²⁵ See Trimdon Grange 1882

²⁶ See Usworth 1885

KELLOE COLLIERY 1897

Inscription(s) and details

Kelloe Colliery / Disaster 6 May 1897 / 10 Lives Lost [reverse] diagonal fern
Pub rummer, 111mm high, with a vertical-sided bowl 59mm diameter and a slightly rounded base. The glass is poor quality, with bubbles and blemishes. The capital K of 'Kelloe' is in the idiosyncratic style seen in the King Edward VII glasses (see Part Three) but the downstrokes of both the K and the capital D of 'Disaster' are decorated with cross hatching not seen elsewhere. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

Kelloe Colliery, also known as East Hetton Colliery, lies at Kelloe, southwest of Durham City. In 1897 it was owned by Messrs Walter Scott & Company and was one of the largest collieries in the district, employing in 1897 more than 1,000 men underground. It was opened in 1836 and closed in 1983.

At about 3.30am on 6 May 1897 the mine was flooded by water bursting through from the adjacent disused Old Cassop Pit, fortunately before the fore-shift had descended. There was some warning but some of the victims may have lost their lives by delaying their evacuation by putting on their clothes. Initially eleven men were unaccounted for and the newspaper of 7 May announced 'Eleven lives lost'.

Efforts were made to plug the defect by filling in the shaft of the Old Cossop mine. An old engine shed was demolished and tipped into the shaft together with large quantities of clay. Meanwhile the water was being pumped out.

The rescue party led by the manager, Mr. Chipchase, was hindered by quantities of gas but on 11 May (five days after the flood) they thought they heard somebody calling and encountered a deputy, Wilson, confused but wading through the water towards them. His first words were: 'My word, Master, I'm bonny glad to see you!' Finding his escape cut off by the flood and trapped in an area under some three feet of water, he had climbed on to some wooden beams and remained there until the water level subsided. Cold, hungry and disorientated, he thought that he had been trapped for about 24 hours but in fact he had been isolated for about 100 hours. He made a good recovery and was back at work in three months.

This was the second disaster that Wilson had survived: he was the last person to be brought out alive following the explosion at Trimdon Grange pit in 1882. His experience is very similar to that of Robert Richardson, trapped by water breaking into the Sacriston Colliery from an adjacent disused pit in November 1903 and rescued after 91 hours, but Wilson's escape did not achieve the notoriety enjoyed by Richardson's.

Four bodies were recovered on 12 May and a further five on 13 May but it was not until 26 May that the tenth was brought to the surface.

At the inquest the jury exonerated the company and the mining officials from any blame.

Further information

This disaster must have been reported in the Newcastle Journal but the bound volume for 1897 is missing at Newcastle Central Library. However, the Newcastle Daily Leader is on file and the incident is covered in considerable detail in the editions of 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15 May. See also the Durham Chronicle of 7 May 1897. The Durham Mining Museum (www.dmm.org.uk) lists the names of the deceased and gives an extract from the 1897 Mines Inspectors' Annual Report relating to the disaster, as well as the usual details of the mine itself.

BRANDON COLLIERY 1899

Inscription(s) and details

Brandon Colliery Explosion 15.8.1899 6 lives lost

A tankard and a tumbler, Science Museum, London.

Brandon / Colliery Explosion / 15th aug 1899 / 6 Lives lost [reverse] fern

Tankard, about half-pint capacity, 118mm high, Sunderland Museum (E 4811).

Brandon Colliery / Explosion 15 Aug 1899 [reverse] horizontal fern

Tumbler, one pint capacity, with fluting. Private collection: Nottingham.

Brandon Colliery Explosion / 1899 6 Lives Lost [reverse at rim] horizontal fern or possibly palm leaf

Pressed glass tumbler, with banded fluting, 145mm high and 95mm diameter at the rim. The glass, which is heavy and quite crudely made, has a distinct purple tinge – said to be a reaction of manganese (which was used in the glass making process) to sunlight. Private collection: East London.

Historical context

Brandon lies southwest of Durham City. The explosion in August 1899 occurred in the Brockwell seam of Messrs Straker and Love's Meadowfield Colliery, Brandon. Brandon is only three miles from Brancepeth pit, the scene of an explosion on 13 April 1896²⁷.

This report of the Brandon explosion is taken from The Durham Chronicle of Friday, 18 August, 1899: 'Preparations having been made for blasting away some of the roof in the Jubilee way ... situated about a mile and a half from the pit mouth, [William] Carr ... fired a shot, gunpowder being used for the purpose. Immediately a terrific explosion occurred, throwing down the men who were in this particular section of the mine.'

The newspaper reports that Thomas Elwen, manager of the collieries, was underground at the time and soon on the site. The rescue party found Carr, badly burned, and, not far away, the body of Frank Murphy, a putter who had been 'crushed between two waggons' (sic) derailed by the explosion. The force of the explosion killed Enoch Griffiths, a hewer, as he was working at the face. In addition to the two immediate fatalities, seven men suffered injuries. Of these, Ralph Broadbent, a hewer, died of his injuries at his home the next day (Wednesday, 16 August). The following day, George Robson, a putter, died and, later, William Carr, whose condition had been critical throughout.

The account given in The Durham Chronicle on 18 August states that the condition of a sixth man, Frank Robson, a putter, was 'very bad'. He died on that day, bringing the total death toll to six, as recorded on the glass.

²⁷See Branspeth 1896.

CHESTER MOOR COLLIERY 1903

Inscription(s) and details

Boiler Explosion / at Chester Moor / Colliery / april 12th 1903 [reverse] vertical fern

Rounded bowl pub rummer, 105mm tall. Private collection: East London.

Historical context

Chester Moor Colliery was situated 4 ½ miles (7 km) NNW of Durham City. It opened in 1889 and closed in 1967. In 1902 it employed 285 men. It suffered 25 fatalities in its lifetime but there were no 'disasters' i.e. more than five killed (Durham Mining Museum definition).

The incident commemorated on this glass was reported in the *District Intelligence* section of the 17 April 1903 edition of the Durham Chronicle, as follows:

CHESTER MOOR – BOILER EXPLOSION

On Sunday a serious explosion took place at Chester Moor Colliery, near Chester-le-Street, by which one of the boilers used for the purpose of supplying steam for the colliery engines and for those employed in connection with the extensive coke ovens was blown up. The force of the explosion was very severe, a considerable portion of the boiler top being wrenched off and smashing all the steam connections between the other boilers and the engines. Large portions of the boiler and of the stonework were hurled to a considerable distance, and caused damage to the property in the immediate vicinity. Fortunately, however, no one was injured, though some four or five small cottages close by were severely shaken and their occupants much alarmed. Mr. Holt, manager, and Mr. Chrisp, engineer, were quickly on the scene, and measures were taken for the immediate repair of the breach in the steam connection, which will be completed in time to prevent any serious stoppage of work.

SACRISTON COLLIERY 1903

Inscription(s) and details

Robert / Richardson / Rescued alive / after 91 hours / Peril [reverse]

unidentified plant with ferns on either side

Jug with a star-moulded base, 100mm high to lip and 55mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The / Sacriston / Disaster / 3 / Miners Entombed / Nov 16 1903 [reverse] fern
Tumbler. Beamish Museum (1997-484.8).

Sacriston / Disaster / 16 Nov 1903 [reverse] fern
Miniature tankard. Beamish Museum (1974.231).

Sacriston / Disaster / 3 miners entombed / 16 Nov 1903 [reverse] vertical fern
Half-pint tumbler. Private collection: Nottingham.

Sacriston / Disaster / 3 miners entombed / 16 Nov 1903 There are two parallel engraved lines with a row of opaque circles between them just below the rim of this glass and this decoration is repeated about one third of the way down the glass. Horizontal ferns are engraved between these two sets of lines and the citation is beneath the lower lines.

Straight-sided tumbler, 110mm high. Private collection: northeast England.

Historical context

This incident occurred on 16 November 1903 at the Victoria Pit, Sacriston, northwest of Durham City. Water had accumulated in the Fulforth district of the mine, which had been abandoned in 1895. This district was at a higher level than that in which the men had been working and separated from it by a hitch i.e. a slight fault or dislocation of strata. The hitch had operated as an impervious dam for the water that was allowed to accumulate until the pressure was such that the dam was breached at a weak spot. The Busty seam, where 200 men were working, was inundated. Although the vast majority of the men were able to scramble to safety, the rising water left three of them trapped.

William C Blackett - a mine agent, colliery engineer, explosives expert and a captain in a volunteer regiment - led a relief operation. A temporary dam was erected to hold back the water and pumps were rushed from neighbouring collieries. As the water level dropped Blackett was able to penetrate the mine until he could hear one of the trapped men, Robert Richardson, shouting. Finding himself in an air pocket, Richardson had turned a coal tub upside down and constructed on it a platform of planks clear of the water before his lamp went out. Unhappily, the two other trapped miners, Thomas McCormack and John Whitaker, did not survive.

This was not the only occasion that Blackett was involved in rescue operations and he kept a scrapbook recording his exploits. In a long letter detailing his

rescue of Richardson, he relates that when he found him he considered him too weak to take soup so he returned to the surface to fetch him a flask of 'Bovril'.²⁸

The incident made national news and prompted an article in World Wide Magazine. Blackett was hailed as a hero. Recommended, with five others, for the silver medal of the Royal Humane Society, he received the gold medal in April 1904. He went on to become a colonel in the Territorial Army; command a regiment in the First World War; receive an honorary degree from Durham University and be Deputy Lieutenant of County Durham in 1918. (A glass recording Blackett's name would be appropriate; perhaps one day a specimen may turn up.)

Further information

Information from John Brooks and from David Temple: The Collieries of Durham, Volume I (TUPS Ltd. and Index Books, London, 1994, pp95-96. ISBN 1-871518-11-3). The incident is also illustrated in Norman Emery: The Coal Miners of Durham (page 86). See also the Durham Chronicle of 27 November 1903, 11 December 1903, 22 January 1904 and 14 April 1904; the Durham County Advertiser of 11 December 1903 and the Durham Mining Museum website (www.dmm.org.uk).

²⁸ Bovril is the trademarked name of a thick, salty meat extract developed in the 1870s by John Lawson Johnston and sold in a distinctive, bulbous, brown glass jar. Still widely available today, Bovril can be made into a drink by diluting it with hot water or, less commonly, with milk. It can also be used as flavouring for stews, or spread on bread or toast. The first part of the product's name comes from Latin *bos* (genitive *bovis*) meaning 'ox' or 'cow'. Johnston took the *-vril* suffix from Bulwer-Lytton's then-popular 1870 'lost race' novel *The Coming Race*, whose plot revolves around a superior race of people, the Vril-ya, who derive their powers from an electromagnetic substance called 'Vril'. (From Wikipedia.)

BESIDE COLLIERY 1905

Inscription(s) and details

Beside Disaster / 15 July 1905

Tankard, about half-pint capacity - one of two glasses brought by a lady to a talk given by William Cowan in Morpeth, in September 2003.

Historical context

In the early hours of Saturday 15 July 1905, advantage was taken of the holidays to extend the haulage system at Beside and a number of deputies and others were working under the direction of the mine manager, Mr. Davis. A 'sheave' wheel i.e. a large pulley wheel about four feet diameter, lying horizontally on a vertical axle fixed to the roof and floor, had been erected at a curve in the underground road. Its purpose was to guide the endless rope, driven by an engine some distance away, that pulls coal tubs around the curve.

The newly installed wheel was being tested with several men and two boys nearby and for a few minutes it appeared to be functioning satisfactorily but, shortly before 2.30am, the wheel suddenly collapsed, bring down timber and iron beams and burying three men.

Joseph McLean and William Grand, both deputies, were killed instantly although a third deputy, Mr. Davison, who was standing between them, was able to jump clear of the falling timber and escaped injury. Robert Bland, a skilled mechanic, was trapped on his knees under tons of debris and for some hours was able to speak to his rescuers. An official was able to crawl near enough to give him a mouthful of brandy and Dr Fairlie managed to administer morphia. Three further falls occurred during the course of the rescue operation but Bland was eventually brought to the surface severely injured and shocked. He was able to speak to his family but died at about 8pm.

At the inquest held on Monday 17 July evidence was heard that the rope had become jammed in a hanging pulley wheel and with the engine running a strain had thereby been exerted on the sheave wheel severe enough to dislodge it.

Thousands of people attended the funerals on Tuesday. Among the messages of condolence was one from the Mayor of Blackpool who, in his early life, had worked at Beside Colliery.

Further information

The accident and the proceedings of the inquest are reported in some detail in the Morpeth Herald and Reporter of 22 July 1905.

DEAF HILL COLLIERY 1905

Inscription(s) and details

Wording of inscription unknown

A pub rummer with an inscription commemorating a fatal accident at Deaf Hill Colliery on 12 September 1905. This item is owned privately by someone in County Durham, who has told us it is stored in his attic. Since it has proved to be inaccessible, we have no further details - but we record it here as being the only 'Deaf Hill' example we have ever heard of.

Historical context

Deaf Hill is about seven miles south east of Durham City. Opened in 1877, the mine finally closed in 1967. Although there are no recorded 'disasters' for this pit throughout its 90-year history i.e. no occasions when more than ten (or even five) people were killed, there was a serious accident there on 12 September 1905 that resulted in the death of a John Pugh.

Pugh was a 41-year old hewer at the pit. When he was six year old, his family had come north from Worcestershire (where he had been born) – presumably looking for work in the mines.

The records at the Durham Mining Museum tell us that, on 12 September 1905, there was a fall of stone at the coalface while he was hewing in a jud²⁹. Without any warning 'a very large fall of 20 or more tons came away from a slip, knocking out the timber and killing [the] deceased on the spot.'

John Pugh is buried in Easington cemetery. His father, Willam, died aged 74 - less than five months after his son - but his mother, Ellen, did not die until 1923, aged 93.

²⁹ In English mines and quarries, a 'jud' is defined as 'a block of coal or stone, about four yards square, holed, undercut and nicked and ready to be thrown down'.

Inscription(s) and details

Wingate Grange / Explosion / 14 oct 1906 [reverse] fern

Wine glass on stem, 110mm high. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Identical items are in (i) Beamish Museum (1985.151); (ii) Sunderland Museum (TWCMS:E4214 [1] & [2] and (iii) the Science Museum, London.

The same engraving is also on a short-stemmed bowl glass, 135mm high and 120mm diameter, in Beamish Museum (1989. 353).

Wingate Grange Explosion / 14 Oct 1906 24 Lives Lost

Sweetmeat or bon-bon dish, blown glass on stem with shoulder knop. Shallow bowl decorated with 15 tear-drop facets. 128mm high. Bowl diameter of 125mm. Foot diameter of 81mm. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.³⁰

Wingate Grange Explosion / 14 Oct 1906 24 Lives Lost [reverse] fern

Tumblers bearing this inscription are in Beamish Museum (1996-15.3) and in Sunderland Museum (TWCMS:E4814 [1] & [2]).

Wingate Grange Explosion / October 14 1906 24 Lives Lost [reverse] *In the midst of Life We are in death*

Tumbler in the Science Museum, London.

Wingate Grange Explosion / oct 14th 1906 24 Lives Lost

A thinly blown tumbler, 103mm high. Private collection: Durham City.

Wingate Grange / Explosion / 14 oct 1906 [reverse] fern

A pub rummer in Beamish Museum (1986-35.1). An identical engraving decorates a straight-sided pub rummer held by a private collector in Oxford.

Wingate Grange Explosion / 14 Oct 1906 24 Lives Lost

A pressed glass cake stand, 115mm high and 245mm in diameter, in Beamish Museum (1996-65.8). It is engraved on the under surface.³¹

³⁰ This item is unusual within the 'disaster glass' genre. It could be a sweetmeat dish or sugar bowl, although the latter are more usually of pressed glass. It could have belonged to an individual, perhaps given it as a wedding present, who years later gave it to an itinerant engraver who came to the door offering to commemorate Wingate Grange on any glass item. A lady who attended the launch of *An Alarming Accident* on 25 September 2008 supports this theory. She stated with confidence that her grandmother had a non-specific glass tankard that was decorated with her name by a man who called at the house to enquire if she would like any glass item engraving. Certainly this engraving, placed rather awkwardly on this particular glass item, seems something of an incongruity.

³¹ See note above. This is also an unusual and seemingly not very appropriate item to be engraved with the details of a disaster and may also have been engraved years later in return for a charitable donation for the Wingate Grange families?

Historical context

Wingate is in County Durham, west of the A19 and just south west of Peterlee. In 1906 the colliery employed 1,338 hands of whom 1,116 worked underground. There were two shafts, the Lord and the Lady. On Sunday, 14 October 1906, the stonemen and shifters had gone down during the evening and a man called Maddison had been sent by the master-shifter to clear a small roof-fall. Maddison was an experienced pitman and a licensed shot-firer. For some unexplained reason, he decided to remove a projecting area of stone on the side of the main haulage road, a piece of stone that had been there for 25 years without hindrance. Without removing the prop beneath it, he placed a charge of Geloxite (basically nitroglycerine) on top of the stone and stemmed it with greasy coal dust.

At 11.40pm a low rumbling sound was heard in the village and for several miles around. The blast had extended up the staple (underground shaft) to the Five Quarter, also damaging the Hutton and Harvey seams, entombing the men there. The explosion killed those in the Low Main, while those in the Five Quarter were caught by the afterdamp (carbon monoxide/CO). Ben Johnson, a shifter in the Low Main, felt the blast and, realizing that afterdamp was coming through, shouted "Run for your lives, lads!" Terror-stricken, they ran, tripping over the body of a pony that had been blown from its limbers only to find that one route was blocked by a collapse. The gas was rising; a man called Harry Pace fell and though dragged by his friends, died in their arms. They fled by another route and reached the upcast shaft as the rescue team arrived.

24 men died, with an average age of 51, but the Durham Mining Museum (www.dmm.org.uk) states that the death toll was 26, listing one man who died in February 1907 as a delayed result of the explosion. A sandstone memorial now stands in Wingate village.

Further information

Much of the information above is taken from Norman Emery: The Coal Miners of Durham. The disaster was also reported in the Durham Chronicle of 19 October 1906.

URPETH COLLIERY 1906

Inscription(s) and details

Urpeth / Colliery Explosion / 17 Dec 1906

Pub rummer, Beamish Museum.

Urpeth / Colliery Explosion / 17 Dec 1906 [reverse] fern

Small wine glass, 102mm high. Private collection: Durham City. (Almost identical glasses, one 95mm high and the other 100mm high, are held by an Oxford collector.)

Urpeth / Colliery Explosion / 17 Dec 1906 / 4 Lives Lost / Edward Greenwell 39 / Robert Burnes age 31 / Charles Suggett age 31 / Harry Winn 21 [between ferns]

Blown jug. Private collection: Oxford.

Historical context

Urpeth is in County Durham, close to Ouston, itself about halfway between Stanley and Birtley. The explosion of 1906 occurred in the Urpeth B pit, on Monday, 17 December where earlier that day a deputy had made the usual examination before the men began work and found everything to be satisfactory. He came out-by (away from the coalface) at 6am to meet the men and direct them to their places of work.

At 10.15am the back-shift hewers who were making their way out-by felt, rather than heard, a concussion and realised that there had been an explosion. On going in-by (towards the coalface) they met a terrified boy, a driver, who had sustained some injuries to his hands and head, making his way out. Continuing their journey they found an uninjured pony, the one that the boy had been driving. The tubs were under a fall of stone and thus the driver, sitting on the limbers and partially protected by the first tub, had had a near escape. Some distance beyond the fall a second fall was found and the rescuers were beaten back by afterdamp. Shortly after 2pm a further attempt to reach the face was abandoned due to the levels of carbon monoxide (CO) and it was decided to wait three hours while a fan, working at its highest capacity, sent 120,000 cubic feet of air per minute into the mine.

At 6pm another attempt brought the rescuers to within 60 yards of the coalface but some were seriously affected by afterdamp and had to be assisted 'out-by'. At 10pm all hope of finding survivors was abandoned, it being considered impossible that anyone could survive the levels of gas. Some of the members of the rescue party were brought to the surface suffering from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, including Mr. A.P Stoker, the manager, who was in a state of collapse. At about midnight the bodies of the four victims were recovered.

The explosion was due to the firing of gas but its force was limited, extending to between 400 and 500 yards. Marks on the roof and sides made by the blast indicated that the explosion originated at the coalface. The explosive used was westphalite, ignited by electric battery and cable.

At the inquest it was stated that all the victims had suffered carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning and that, in two cases, burns had also contributed to the deaths. Mr. Stoker stated that in his opinion the explosion had followed the firing of a shot at the coalface. He thought this because to the left of Mr. Suggett, the deceased deputy overman, wires were still in the end of a hole. There were also indications of a shot being fired in the right hand corner. The witness thought that the left hand shot had liberated some gas which was ignited by the firing of the second shot. After firing the first shot, the deputy should have examined for gas. The shots had been improperly stemmed. Instead of being stemmed with clay they were stemmed with a mixture of small stones and coal dust. This was an offence both against the Mines Act and the Explosives Order.

Further information

Much of the account above is from The Durham Chronicle of 21 December 1906.

See also the records at the Durham Mining Museum for the detailed report on the accident by the Mines Inspector (J B Atkinson). In this report (and contrary to the third item catalogued on the previous page) Edward Greenwell's age is given as **38**, as opposed to 39, and 'Robert Burnes age 31' is recorded as 'Robert **Barnes**, age **36**'.

DEATH OF RICHARD KIRK - BENWELL COLLIERY - 1907

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / Richard Kirk / who lost his life / in Benwell Colliery / Explosion / March 19 1907 / age 55 years [reverse] fern leaves and a (?) palm tree
Tumbler, Science Museum, London.

Historical context

This incident finds no mention in the [Newcastle Daily Journal](#) but was reported in some detail in the [Newcastle Daily Chronicle](#). Benwell Colliery employed at the time some 420 men and boys but, by chance, most had returned to the surface when the explosion occurred. This was in the Brockwell seam, 127 fathoms down and 1,850 yards in-bye³² with 14 men and boys still underground.

Richard Kirk was a married man living at 98 Gill Street, Benwell, and had been employed at the colliery for 20 years. He died together with Archibald Robson and two boys, both aged 16.

At the opening of the inquest the good safety record of the pit was emphasised. There were no naked candles and all the safety lamps were numbered and checked.

When the adjourned inquest was resumed on 4 April, evidence was heard that Richard Kirk's lamp, No:105, was found to have no gauze and the presumption was that this had fallen to the ground when he substituted red glass for white in the lamp. (Lamps with red glass were used by deputies as warnings, indicating points beyond which it was not safe to pass - usually because of the risk of high gas concentrations - and lamps without a gauze were more liable to ignite gas.) It is possible that the type of lamp used at Benwell in 1907 was the same as the large lamp that was thought to contribute to the West Stanley disaster two years later (Deborah Moffat, Woodhorn Mining Museum).

The bodies of both Kirk and Robson were badly burned but all four of the deceased had died from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. The conclusion was that the explosion had been caused by ignition of firedamp (methane, CH₄) and coal dust by the naked flame of Kirk's lamp.

Further information

See: [Newcastle Daily Chronicle](#) (bound copies exist in Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central Library) for 20 and 22 March and 5 April 1907.

³² Coalminers' jargon, pertaining to direction – when underground, as here, it means 'towards the coalface'.

WHITBURN COLLIERY 1907

Inscription(s) and details

After five weeks / Whitburn Colliery / Mystery solved / Missing overmans body / found / May 7th 1907 [reverse] vertical fern

Thinly blown tumbler, slightly waisted, 110mm tall. Private collection: Nottingham.

Whitburn Colliery / Mystery Solved / Overseers Body Found / 1907

Glass of unrecorded type seen by John Brooks.

Daniel Mark Bence / after five Weeks / Missing overmans body / found / May 7 1907 [reverse] vertical fern

Thinly-blown tumbler, straight sides but tapering to the base, 108mm high, 73mm diameter at rim. Private collection: North Yorkshire.

Historical context

Whitburn Colliery was in County Durham, about 1½ miles north of Whitburn itself, between Sunderland and South Shields. It was opened in 1879 and in the early 1900s, it employed more than 1,500 men and boys. The colliery closed in 1968.

These glasses bear witness to a tragic story. In summary, 45-year old back-overman, Daniel Mark Bence, died after apparently losing himself in the mine and dying of starvation. The records of the Durham Mining Museum tell us that 'he was last seen alive in the mine about 9.15am on Tuesday, April 2nd, and nothing was seen of him again till his dead body was discovered at 9.15am on May 3rd.'

An overman was a general foreman underground, in charge of the working of a seam. As a back-overman, Bence was in charge of the back-shift. He was subordinate to the fore-overman who supervised the fore-shift.

As the Durham Mining Museum records: 'At 7.30 a.m. on the morning of April 2nd [Bence] arranged with the fore-overman to visit the men working in the Fourth West Cross-cut. ... The fore-overman accompanied Bence into the district, which is about 1½ miles from the pit bottom, and whilst walking there, he said he would show Bence a short cut from the one set of men to the other, and took him through two manhole doors into the return airway and along it to the Barrier Flat where the first set of men were working. They parted company at some separation doors leading into another district and before doing so, the fore-overman asked Bence if he knew the place and the road back and Bence said he recognised where he was, and knew the way back, and he would go and visit the men in the barrier and then return by the way he had come in, viz., the short cut and thence on to the other set of men, Bence then visited all the men in the Barrier Flat and was last seen alive ... about 9.15am.'

Bence should have come back to the pit bottom about 1.30pm. When he did not return, a search party was mounted but no trace of him was found and systematic searching over the following days and weeks was in vain.

On the morning of 7 May, the smell of a decomposing body was noticed in a disused working about a mile from the shaft and in the opposite direction to that which Bence had intended to go. After timbering the area, the search party found Bence's body lying on its back with the arms folded. He had been trapped behind a fall of stone and a further fall had occurred, but no stones had fallen directly upon him. The area in which he was found was, in some places, only two or three two feet high. The deceased's lamp was found some 35 yards away. It had been taken to pieces and all the parts laid out neatly on the floor. It was found that Bence had also had a pencil and a notebook with him – but he had not written any message.

The body was brought to the surface and three doctors performed an autopsy. They agreed that the external injuries to the body had been sustained *post mortem*. The examination was compromised by the decomposition of the body but the findings were basically those of a healthy man. The heart was wasted but 'not diseased' and in the opinion of the colliery doctor, who had known Bence over the years and had treated him for sciatica, the deceased appeared to have lost much weight. The conclusion was that death was due to starvation. Questioned by the coroner as to whether "he might have suddenly lost his mind whilst wandering about", the doctor stated: "I think he would be a man who would be liable to lose his presence of mind from what I know of him".

Reviewing the evidence, the coroner said that he could only conjecture that Mr Bence had died of starvation as the result of getting lost in the old workings. The verdict of the jury was that the deceased had died of starvation but how, or for what purpose, he had got into the old workings, there was no evidence to show.

Further information

This tragedy was not reported in the Sunderland Echo but was covered by The Shields Daily Gazette (CRAWLED INTO A DEATH TRAP WHITBURN OVERMAN'S TERRIBLE END STARVED TO DEATH).

See The Shields Daily Gazette & Shipping Telegraph of 8 and 9 May 1907 (on microfilm at South Tyneside Central Library, as are the Whitburn burial records, listing Bence's burial on 9 May 1907).

A full account of the tragedy is on the database of the Durham Mining Museum (www.dmm.org.uk) - see Mines / W / Whitburn Colliery / Disasters / Bence / more information.

WASHINGTON COLLIERY 1908

Inscription(s) and details

Washington Colliery / Disaster / feby 20 1908 / 14 Lives Lost [reverse] clover
Port wine glass, on stem, 102mm high. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Washington Colliery / Disaster / feby 20 1908 / 14 Lives Lost [reverse] fern
Tumbler, half-pint capacity, 131mm high and 77mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Washington Colliery / Disaster / feby 20 1908 / 14 Lives Lost [reverse] clover
Two thinly-blown tumblers, each 110mm high and 68mm diameter at the rims.
Private collection: Chester-le-Street. Beamish Museum also holds a similar tumbler (1996-15.6).

Washington Colliery Disaster / February 20 1908 14 Lives Lost [reverse] ***In the Midst of Life / We are In Death***

Two large, straight-sided jugs, both in the Beamish Museum collection (accession nos. 1976.512 and 1978.9). Both jugs also list the names of the deceased - e.g. John Clark Hewer, Robert Cowen Stoneman - seven names on each side. The jugs are identical except that Edward Ascham is listed as 'Overman' on one and 'Deputy Overman' on the other. And although the engraving looks like 'Ascham', his name is listed as the more plausible 'Ashman' in the Durham Mining Museum database.

Another example of the same straight-sided jug, 197mm high, is held by the Shipley Art Gallery in Gateshead (TWCMS: J7991). In March 2004 another, identical, jug was for sale in a Newcastle-upon-Tyne antique shop.

Historical context

This disaster happened at the Glebe Colliery in Washington – owned by the Washington Coal Company Ltd. Glebe Colliery was the last pit to be sunk in Washington. Work began in 1901 and the first coal came up in 1905.

On 20 February 1908 a permitted explosive, Bellite No:1, with a No:7 detonator, was being used. A hole was properly drilled in the pavement and the charge was inserted. There had not been any watering of the area and the surroundings were dusty. The shot-firer, using an electric battery, fired the Bellite, causing a flame that ignited firedamp and coal dust. The explosion killed nine men and five died of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. The disaster is commemorated on the Glebe Colliery banner.³³

³³ Information from Norman Emery: The Coal Miners of Durham (Allan Sutton Publishing Ltd., Stroud, 1992, pp.94-96. ISBN 0-7509-0030-X, Durham County Libraries: 333.762233). See also the Durham Mining Museum (www.dmm.org.uk) and the Durham Chronicle of 28 February 1904.

NORTH FALLINGSBY COLLIERY 1909

Inscription(s) and details

Explosion / at North Fallingsby Colliery / White Mare Pool / Wardley / William Moor / Who Lost his Life / Saturday January 9 1909 [reverse] fern

Barrel-shaped tankard, Beamish Museum: accession number 1996-93.1.

Historical context

The Newcastle Daily Journal of 11 January 1909 reports that:

‘An explosion occurred in the new pit workings being carried out for Messrs Bowes and Partners at Whitemare Pool, near Wardley Colliery, on Saturday night, and as a result a married man, William Moore (sic), who resided at Bill Quay, lost his life.

‘The report of the explosion was heard for some miles around, and a large number of people, including colliery officials, miners and police officers were attracted to the place. So far as can be gathered, the explosion occurred in a cabin which contained explosives used in connection with the sinking of the pit shaft.

‘Dr McKie was summoned and he had Moore removed on an ambulance. One of Moore’s feet was blown off, and he was otherwise injured. On the way to the infirmary death took place and the body was taken to Moore’s home.

‘Moore was a sinker, and was employed in connection with the sinking of the shaft. Two cabins and a pump cabin were destroyed, and, it is stated, a son of Mr. Taylor, the master sinker, who was in the workings, suffered from shock, and also that a fitter was injured by being blown from the roof of the pump house.

‘No information was obtainable as to the nature of the material stored in the cabin where the explosion occurred.’

Further information

The Newcastle Daily Journal, after its report of 11 January 1909, does not report any inquest or other investigation in subsequent issues.

HARTON COLLIERY 1909

Inscription(s) and details

Pit Cage Falls / Serious accident / at Harton Colliery / Several Men Badly injured / Feby 4 1909 [reverse] clover

Thinly blown straight-sided tumbler, slightly less than half-pint capacity, 107mm high. The glass is affected considerably by "bloom". Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

A Serious Accident / at Harton Colliery / Several Men Badly Injured / Feby 4 1909 [reverse] fern

Thinly-blown tumbler. Beamish Museum: accession number 1996.16.

Historical context

This incident is reported in the 5 February 1909 edition of the Newcastle Daily Journal:

‘An accident of alarming character, but fortunately unattended by any loss of life occurred at Harton Colliery, South Shields yesterday morning.

‘About 24 shifters and stonemen were being drawn to bank³⁴ shortly before six o’clock, when by some means the engine reversed, with the result that the cage and its occupants were suddenly precipitated to the bottom of the shaft. The other cage, which was empty, at the same time shot into the pulleys.

‘Falling a distance of about twenty fathoms, the cage containing the men landed with great force upon the scaffolding at the shaft bottom, all its occupants sustaining a violent shock.

‘There was a good deal of confusion and excitement for a time. Some of the younger men scrambled out of the cage, and assisted to extricate others who had suffered more severely than themselves.

‘Several of the older men were in a state of collapse from severe shock and slight injuries, and everything possible was done for them until the cages were got into working order again.

‘After about an hour the men were brought to bank, where Dr Shepherd, the assistant colliery doctor, was in attendance. Restoratives were applied by the manager (Mr. T A Lishman) and in cases where injuries had been sustained the men received medical treatment.

‘The whole of the men were found to be suffering more or less severely from shock and a few of the older men complained of internal injuries. An examination showed that fortunately no bones were broken and it is believed that after a few days’ rest the men will be all right again. Thomas Hall, who is nearly 70 years old, and complained of injuries to the back, legs and ankle, had to be helped home by

³⁴ To the surface.

his two sons. No damage was done to the shaft or cage but owing to the accident the pit was laid idle for the day.'

It is perhaps worth commenting here on the differences between life in 1909 and in the early 21st century following 'an accident at work'. In the Edwardian mind, 'a few days' rest' would be quite sufficient for even a 70-year-old man to recover from such a major trauma and the pit was out of commission for just one day. It is a ruthlessness, and mental and physical toughness, almost incomprehensible now in our 'Health and Safety' conscious (and compensation-obsessed) society.

WEST STANLEY COLLIERY 1909

Inscription(s) and details

West Stanley / Disaster / 168 lives lost / Feby 16 1909 [reverse] fern

Small tankard, 80mm high and 56mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Tankards, 80mm high and identical to the tankard above, are in Sunderland Museum and in Broadfield House Glass Museum. Meanwhile, two almost identical tumblers with inscriptions similar to the item above are held by an Oxford collector. A Winchester collector has another variation on a tankard. It is 120mm high and 65mm diameter. The inscription uses the word 'Explosion' rather than 'Disaster' and the date is 'Feb' not 'Feby'. There are three vertical ferns on the reverse.

West Stanley / Disaster / 168 lives lost / feby 16 1909 [reverse] three-leaved fern

Slightly ovoid, thinly-blown tumbler, 196mm high and 60mm diameter at the lip. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

A tumbler, almost certainly identical to this glass above, is in the Science Museum in London.

West Stanley / Disaster / 168 lives lost / 1909 [reverse] union flag

Small left-handed tankard, 50mm high. Private collection: East London.

West Stanley / Disaster / 168 lives lost / Feby 16 1909

Jug, 98mm high and standing on a rudimentary foot. Private collection: Durham City.

In Loving Memory / of / William Nicholson / Who Lost his Life / in the West Stanley / Colliery Disaster / Feb. 16 th. 1909 / Aged. 33. Years [reverse] palm tree surrounded by ferns

Thinly-blown tumbler, with a capacity of more than half pint (say 380mls), 125mm high and 78mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

WEST STANLEY / EXPLOSION / 168 LIVES LOST / FEB 16 1909 [reverse] three vertical ferns

Pub rummer (unusual for use of capital letters). Private collection: Nottingham.

West Stanley Colliery Disaster / 168 lives lost Feby 16 1909

Sugar bowl with scalloped edge, 285mm high and 143mm diameter, on moulded base and decorated with horizontal ferns. Private collection: Nottingham.

168 DIED MEN AND BOYS / AT WEST STANLEY PIT DURHAM / FEBRUARY 16TH 1908 (sic)

A jug, 210mm high. Notable in that the date (i.e. the year) is wrong. At the first break in the inscription (i.e. below the first line of text) there is very crudely diamond-point engraved picture of a pit head. This is the only known example of

diamond (as opposed to wheel) engraving on a disaster glass. Private collection: Nottingham.

The Nottingham collector also has four West Stanley tumblers. Three are half-pint straight-sided glasses and one is smaller and barrel-shaped. The inscriptions and spacing are similar or identical to the first item above but one has the word 'explosion' instead of 'disaster'. All have ferns on the reverse.

Meanwhile, Beamish Museum has a total of twelve pieces commemorating the West Stanley explosion. All are engraved with either one or other of the citations on the first two glasses listed above or else give just '1909' for the date. There are five thin tumblers, each about 110mm high; a heavy tumbler with a recessed base; three small wine glasses on stems; a small jug; a one pint tankard and a miniature tankard, 50mm high.

Finally there are two jugs commemorating *multiple* disasters, both including West Stanley: (1) a large jug in Beamish, commemorating not only the Stanley disaster of 1909 but also the explosions at Seaham Colliery (1880) and Washington (1908) and (2) a jug in a private collection in Nottingham, commemorating West Stanley 1909; Seaham 1880; Usworth 1885 and Horden 1910. Both are catalogued at the end of Part One.

Historical context

The West Stanley 1909 disaster occurred at the Burns Pit (owned by a Mr. F A Burns) in Stanley, County Durham. An explosion at 3.45pm on 16 February was followed, 50 seconds later, by a second, more powerful explosion that was heard in the town. By 27 February, 166 bodies had been recovered and the search for the last two missing people was called off. There were 30 survivors.

Three huge communal graves were dug in the town cemetery for Church of England and Non-Conformist victims and another in the churchyard of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church. The local press of the time reported that 'about 200,000' [could this be a misprint?] people attended the mass funerals, more than 11,000 arriving by train. The graveside services lasted some five hours.

The inquest in March 1909, under Coroner Graham of Bournemouth, lasted ten days with 195 witnesses being called but the jury, after deliberating for three hours, was unable to reach a conclusion as to the cause of the explosion. Deaths occurred throughout the pit, distributed as follows: Townley Seam 64; Tilley Seam 18; Busty Seam 36; Brockwell Seam 48 – making a total of 166. Deaths were mostly certified as being due to carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning and/or trauma, especially burns. William Nicholson (see the tumbler catalogued above) died of carbon monoxide poisoning in Townley Seam.

Mr. J B Atkinson, HM Inspector of Mines for Newcastle district, had attended the pit following the explosion but was not part of the official team. Together with his two brothers, both also Inspectors of Mines, he had published a book, Explosions in Coal Mines, in which they postulated that coal dust was a major cause of some explosions. Some coal owners, for obvious reasons, tried to have the book suppressed. Atkinson remained dissatisfied with the failure to establish a cause

of the disaster. The official report by R A S Redmayne, the Chief Inspector of Mines, and D Bain, the District Inspector, added some details to the inquest findings but came to no conclusion over the cause.

In March 1933 – 24 years after the incident - the bodies of the two missing men, William Chaytor and John Rogers, were found in Busty Seam. At the second inquest, Atkinson, despite initial objections by Coroner Carr, was allowed to read a deposition. He stated his opinion that a roof fall in Brockwell had liberated firedamp (gas) and that this had carried over large-sized safety lamps and ignited. The resulting explosion blew open doors on the surface allowing clouds of dust into the mine, leading to the second explosion of coal dust and air. The type of suspect lamp in Brockwell Seam had not been mentioned at the 1909 inquest or in the official report.

As a result of this disaster, mining legislation was changed. To allow an accurate record of how many men were down a mine, they now had to carry numbered tokens, one to be handed in when they went down the pit, and the other as they came out. The Burns pit was finally closed on 19 March 1936.³⁵

Further information

One of the survivors, who went back down the pit to help in the rescue attempt, was Frank Keegan, grandfather of the footballer Kevin Keegan. The dignified memorial that now stands on the site of the pit was dedicated by Kevin Keegan at a ceremony in February 1995. A memorial service was held on the centenary of the disaster in 2009.

A booklet Around Stanley (Tempus Publishing, 1997, ISBN 0 7524 0794 5) contains numerous contemporary photographs and a memorial poem The Tragedy of the Mine.

³⁵ This information is mainly from a small, interesting book devoted to the disaster: Eric Forster: The Death Pit (Frank Graham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1969. ISBN 900409-26-6 Durham County Library, Class No: 622.8).

HARTFORD COLLIERY 1909

Inscription(s) and details

Cage Disaster / Hartford Colliery / 4 men killed / July 20 1909 [reverse] vertical ferns flanking ***Wm Dickson 31 / F Robinson 37 / A Clarke 44 / John Sturdy 21***
Half pint, moulded tankard, 118mm high and 67mm diameter. Private collection: Nottingham.

Cage Disaster / Hartford Colliery / 4 men killed / July 20 1909 [reverse] vertical fern
Thinly blown, half pint tumbler, 113mm high and 68mm diameter. Private collection: Nottingham.

HARTFORD COL / DISASTER / 4 LIVES LOST / JULY 26 (sic) **1909** small decoration above and below inscription [reverse] three vertical ferns
Small jug, 104mm high and standing on a 56mm diameter foot. The rim diameter is also 56mm. Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead (TWCMS: N3551).

HARTFORD COL / DISASTER / 4 LIVES LOST / JULY 26 1909 [reverse] ***FRED ROBINSON age 44 / JOHN STURDY age 19 / WILLIAM DIXON*** (sic) ***age 29 / ANTHONY CLARK*** (sic) ***age 57*** [both inscriptions, on face and reverse, flanked by vertical ferns]

Sweetmeat bowl on stem, with rudimentary shoulder knop, 125mm high and a rim diameter of 123mm. Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead (WCMS N: 275).³⁶

Historical context

Hartford Colliery was the most northerly pit owned by the Cramlington Coal Company. It was situated some 16km north of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where East Hartford is now, just north of Cramlington. The pit closed in 1961.

At about 8.55am on 20 July 1909, four men, William Dickson, a fitter's labourer (age 31); Frederick Robinson, a fitter (age 37); Anthony Clarke, a fitter's labourer (age 44) and John Sturdy, an electrician (age 21) were in a cage on their way down the Daisy Pit shaft to continue work on installing electrical appliances. After about 14 or 15 fathoms (84-90 feet) of uneventful descent, the cage overturned and all four men fell about 200 feet to their deaths at the bottom of the shaft.

At the inquest, held the next day, evidence was heard from several witnesses who were questioned by Mr. J B Atkinson, HM Inspector of Mines. The coroner, in his summing up, observed that this was one of those unfortunate occurrences where no person was able to state what actually happened. Clearly the cage had

³⁶ A hand different from the others has clearly engraved the two Shipley Art Gallery items listed above. The engraver, who has chosen capital letters, displays a considerable lack of care over details. Not only has he got the date wrong - if we accept the Durham Mining Museum data as correct - he has misspelled both 'Dickson' and 'Clarke' and not one of the four victims has been given the correct age.

overturned with fatal consequences but the shaft man had stated that he had examined the shaft and found everything in order and that others had given evidence 'in a very clear and straightforward manner'. It was for the jury to decide upon a verdict. After 'lengthy deliberation' the jury found that the men had been accidentally killed and recommended that gates be provided on the cages for the better protection of the workmen and also that holding-on bars be provided on the cages.

Further information

The accident was reported in The Morpeth Herald and Reporter of 24 July 1909 and in the next edition - 31 July. The proceedings of the inquest cover two columns and include some technical details. See also the records of the Durham Mining Museum.

Inscription(s) and details

Whitehaven Pit / Disaster / 136 lives lost / May 11 1910 [reverse] fern
Miniature tankard, 54mm high and 42mm diameter at the rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Whitehaven Pit / Disaster / 136 lives entombed / 1910 [reverse] fern
Small ovoid bowl wine glass, 119mm high and 53mm diameter at the rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Whitehaven Pit / Disaster / 136 lives Entombed / May 11 1910 [reverse] two vertical ferns
Small, slightly barrel-sided tankard, 65mm high and 55mm diameter at the rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Whitehaven Pit / Disaster / 136 lives Entombed / 1910 [reverse] two vertical ferns
Small, slightly barrel-sided tankard, 65mm high and 55mm diameter at the rim. Woodhorn Mining Museum (ASHMM 2001.21.1).

Historical context

On Wednesday 11 May 1910, the town of Whitehaven in what was then Cumberland on the west coast of England was rocked by a disaster.

On the cliff tops overlooking the town stood the entrance to the Wellington Pit. Below, and many miles out to sea, was the mine.

Owned by Lord Lonsdale and leased by Messrs. Bain and Company, Wellington Pit was first worked in 1843. At the time of the accident the total number of people employed underground was 723.

143 men had entered the pit on the evening of 11 May before an explosion blocked the main road in the mine. Of those 143, only six managed to escape immediately afterwards. 137 people died, trapped under the sea. Initial reports about how many people had died were confused and inaccurate – hence the inscriptions on the glasses above recording ‘136’.

³⁷ Glasses commemorating the Whitehaven Colliery disaster are notable for the fact that they are very unusual - in being linked to a mine outside the northeast of England. It is possible, indeed probable, that they were made in the northeast, to sell in the northeast, to raise charitable funds for fellow miners outside the region. See also ‘Bolton Colliery 1910’. But we really don’t know what changed in or around 1910 that caused disaster glasses to be produced that go against the pattern of recording northeastern events. Possibly it was simply that the better communications of the early 20th century meant that people were much more aware than they would have been years before of what was happening outside their immediate community?

The 'revised official list' of those who died was published in the 19 May edition of The Whitehaven News and it detailed 85 coal hewers; 48 shift hands and four drifters - a total of 137. Two hewers and four shift hands escaped. The disaster glasses above must therefore have been engraved in the first few days following the explosion.

J B Atkinson, now HM Chief Inspector of Mines, (see West Stanley 1909) arrived in Whitehaven the following day and went down the pit. Fire had taken hold and it was concluded that it was impossible that anybody remained alive. Stoppings³⁸ were built in the intake³⁹ as the only way to put the fire out but it was months before the mine's management were sure that the fires had been extinguished completely and the badly decomposed bodies were recovered.

Lasting eleven days, the inquiry into the incident took place at the Town Hall in Whitehaven. It was decided that the inquiry would run concurrently with the Coroner's Inquest. 44 witnesses were summoned including Robert Steele the Colliery Manager, Richard Walker Moore, Mineral Agent for Lord Lonsdale, and J B Atkinson. The official report indicates that the ignition of firedamp was the cause of the explosion. However, what ignited the gases is not clear.

Such were the extreme conditions of the rescue that the King, George V, awarded 66 bravery medals to those involved. The Edward Medal, known as the miners' VC, was awarded to recognise the efforts of those in the rescue parties. Living recipients were invited to exchange their medals for the George Cross in 1971.

On the centenary of the accident in 2010, a large black memorial was unveiled in Whitehaven. A week of events, parades and exhibitions around the town also took place.

Further information

This information above has been taken partly from a very full and illustrated account of the disaster, at the Haig Colliery Mining Museum website: www.haig1.freemove.co.uk. See Haig Colliery Mining Museum/The Museum/Disasters/Wellington Pit Disaster. We must also give credit to the very excellent Heritage and History site: www.heritageandhistory.com.

There is more information at the Durham Mining Museum website, including details about the disaster fund. It was reported in the London Times that King George and Queen Mary had subscribed. The then recently widowed Queen Alexandra also personally sent £100.

The disaster was extensively covered by The Whitehaven News in its editions of 19 May and 26 May 1910 and facsimile reproductions of the reports are to be found in a booklet published by Whitehaven Museum in 1990.

³⁸ Mining industry term for a barrier erected to prevent the flow of air or gas.

³⁹ A ventilation shaft in a mine.

Inscription(s) and details

Bolton / Explosion / 354 lives lost / Dec 1910 [reverse] fern

Miniature tankard, 55mm high and 40mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

The Hulton colliery in Bolton, Lancashire, known locally as 'Pretoria Pit', employed 2,500 men and boys.

On 21 December 1910, about 900 of them had clocked on for the morning shift while the rest of the community was preparing for Christmas.

A large roof fall had occurred the previous day and there was mention of sparks from a switch. What happened next was the worst coal mining accident ever to occur in Lancashire and the third worst mining disaster in British history.⁴¹ The explosion was reported to have been heard two miles away.

Only four men survived the initial blast: Fountain Byers; John Sharples; Joseph Staveley and William Davenport. But Fountain would survive less than 24 hours. Like many others in what was a completely devastated community, he was buried on Christmas Day.

Of the three remaining survivors, another would soon be lost. John Sharples, although he had survived the initial explosion, and by all accounts had initially been recovering well, ultimately succumbed to pneumonia, secondary to afterdamp exposure, and died a week later.

The Coroner concluded that the roof collapse had caused a build-up of gas and that a faulty lamp had ignited it.

There is a memorial in the graveyard of St Bartholomew's Church in Bolton and a memorial service is still held there each year.

⁴⁰ This glass commemorating the Bolton Colliery disaster is notable for the fact that it is very unusual - in being linked to a mine outside the northeast of England. It is possible, indeed probable, that Bolton Colliery glasses made in the northeast, to sell in the northeast, to raise charitable funds for fellow miners outside the region. See also 'Whitehaven Colliery 1910'. But we really don't know what changed in or around 1910 that caused disaster glasses to be produced that go against the pattern of recording northeastern events. Possibly it was simply that better communications in the early 20th century meant that people were much more aware than they would have been years before of what was happening outside their immediate community?

⁴¹ The worst mining disaster in British history (and the 4th worst in the world) was in Senghenydd in Wales in 1913; 439 men and boys died. The second worst disaster was in Barnsley in Yorkshire in 1866; 361 lives were lost. (www.epicdisasters.com)

Further information

This information above is taken from www.pretoriapit.html. The website gives a few more details and lists the names of 338 casualties but gives no official total number of dead to compare with the '354' recorded on the glass.

The Haig Colliery Mining Museum states in passing that those killed at Bolton numbered '344' and that the disaster was due to an explosion of coal dust. Perhaps, like the Whitehaven glasses (see 'Whitehaven 1910') this is an example of precipitate engraving based on preliminary, unofficial evidence.

There is also a very excellent account on a website dedicated to the history of the Staveley family: http://www.staveley-genealogy.com/pretoria_pit.htm. 16 year-old Joseph Staveley, one of only two long-term survivors, was on his very first day of employment in the mine on 21 December 1910. He went on to survive service in the Royal Engineers in the First World War, came home to Lancashire, got married, had three children and did not die until 1954. We are indebted to his family for their work in recording his life – although their website says '343' men and boys died that day, giving us a fourth option.

There is yet another number. The London Times of 23 December 1910 reported: 'The Lancashire Pit Accident - Three Hundred and Twenty Lives Lost'.

Given these various and inconsistent sources of information, we will possibly never know the real number of fatalities at Bolton. Ironically, the disaster glass is quite possibly the least trustworthy - as noted above.

There is one final irony. The West Stanley colliery disaster of February 1909 (almost two years before Bolton) had helped influence a change in mining legislation. To allow an accurate record of how many men were down a mine at any one time, miners were to carry numbered tokens - one to be handed in when they went down the pit and the other to be handed in as they came out. Why was this sensible practice not in place at Bolton by December 1910? There are two possibilities that immediately occur but that would require further research to verify absolutely: either the legislation was still not finalised or the Pretoria management were remiss in not following it. What we do know is that the use of checking systems in British mines was not made *mandatory* until 1913, by means of an amendment to the Cole Mines Act of 1911.

Whitehaven and Bolton are the only mining disasters outside Northumberland and Durham that we have found commemorated on glass. But the style of the engraving leaves us in no doubt that they are of northeastern provenance.

By 1910, events of national importance such as the Transvaal War were being commemorated and the sheer scale of the Whitehaven and Bolton disasters put them into this category. As mentioned in the footnote on the previous page, we believe that these glasses would find a sympathetic market in the mining communities of the northeast.

WOODHORN COLLIERY 1916

Inscription(s) and details

WOODHORN DISASTER / AUG 13 1916 13 LIVES LOST [reverse] fern
Press-moulded, straight-sided tumbler with six panels, 85mm high and 74mm diameter at the rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

WOODHORN COL / DIS / AUG 13 1916 / 13 LIVES LOST
Small, heavy-based tumbler without any panels, 10cm high. Woodhorn Mining Museum (E344).

Identical engraving appears on a jug of about two pints capacity, 19cm high. Woodhorn Mining Museum (ASHMM: 1991.49).

WOODHORN / DISASTER / AUG 13 1916 / 13 LIVES LOST engraving incorporates four stars and two four line designs.
Tumbler. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO 07947/1).

WOODHORN COL / DISASTER / AUG 13 1916 / 13 LIVES LOST
Tumbler, 130mm high, with branching ferns on the reverse. Private collection: Ashington.

WOODHORN COL / DISASTER / AUG 13 1916 / 13 LIVES LOST [reverse] fern
Straight-sided small tumbler on heavy base, 87mm high and 49mm diameter. Private collection: Nottingham.

Historical context

The first sod of Woodhorn Colliery, one of five pits owned by the Ashington Coal Company, was cut in May 1894 and the last shift was in February 1981.

The explosion of 1916 occurred when a naked flame was taken into Number Two pit where there was a build up of gas in Low Main Seam. Since it was Sunday, there was only a small working party of 30 men erecting steel girders underground. Eleven men died below the surface; two more were brought out alive but died soon after. Full accounts of the disaster were printed in the Newcastle Daily Journal of 14 August 1916 (reproduced in the display at Woodhorn Mining Museum) and in the Morpeth Herald of 18 August 1916 (reproduced in a booklet, Blood on the Coal, a history of Woodhorn Colliery by Mike Kirkup, Woodhorn Press 1997, ISBN 09523422-78.)

A memorial, erected in Hirst Park in Ashington, unveiled on 18 August 1923, records the names of the three stonemasons, two putters and eight deputies who died. At the request of the son of one of the victims, the memorial was dismantled and re-erected in Woodhorn Mining Museum in 1991.

(1) WEST STANLEY 1909 + SEAHAM 1880 + WASHINGTON 1908

Inscription(s) and details

*West Stanley Col / Disaster / 168 lives lost / Feby 16 1909
Lead Kindly Light the Men Murmured / Lead Me Beyond this Dark Gloom / Lead
from Pain and from Suffering / Lead Kindly Light Lead Me Home [reverse]
Seaham Colliery / Explosion / 164 lives lost / Sept 8 1880 / Washington Col /
Explosion / 14 lives lost / Feby 20 1908*
Large jug, decorated with ferns. Beamish Museum (no accession number).

Historical context

See this catalogue for details about the West Stanley disaster of 1909; the Seaham disaster of 1880 and the Washington disaster of 1908.

We thought that this item, commemorating three separate incidents, was unique until the West Stanley / Seaham / Usworth / Horden jug surfaced in July 2008 – see below.

The distribution of the citations on this jug does not obviously suggest that they were engraved at different times, but it appears to be primarily a memorial to West Stanley.

(2) WEST STANLEY 1909 + SEAHAM 1880 + USWORTH 1885 + HORDEN 1910

Inscription and details

*West Stanley / Disaster / 168 lives lost / Feby 16 1909 / Seaham Colliery /
Explosion / 164 lives lost / Sept 8 1880 [reverse] Usworth Colliery Explosion /
42 lives lost / 2nd March 1885 / Horden Colliery Riot / January 26 1910*
[opposite handle] vertical ferns
Straight-sided jug, about 118mm high with a base about 100mm diameter and tapering slightly to about 85mm in diameter at the rim. Sold to a private collector in Nottingham in July 2008 for £186.50.

This jug is comparable to the one in Beamish Museum (catalogued above) that commemorates the West Stanley, Seaham and Washington colliery disasters and we suspect it is the work of the same engraver.

See this catalogue for details about the West Stanley disaster of 1909; the Seaham disaster of 1880 and the Usworth disaster of 1885. See below for the details about the Horden riot of 1910.

The 'Horden Colliery Riot' was one of several violent episodes associated with the miners' strike affecting some 15% of Durham pits - itself in protest against the proposed introduction of a four shift system. By 20 January 1910, many miners

and their families, entering the fourth week of the strike, were suffering considerable hardship. Soup kitchens were in operation and miners, short of fuel, were digging in old wagon ways for coal.

At **Murton** colliery on 17 January, a crowd of 700 started removing coal from the colliery itself in pails, baskets and baths, despite the efforts of the police, and three days later a further raid took place. Extra police who had been drafted in faced a crowd of 3,000. Injuries were sustained on both sides of the conflict from thrown stones or baton blows. The mob moved to the colliery offices, the Officials' Club and the homes of the manager and assistant manager, breaking windows and pulling up railings. Telephone poles were pulled down for use as fuel.

The same day at **Houghton-le-Spring** men, women and children raided trucks of coal standing at Houghton Pit. The local gas works were then entered and 25 tons of coal removed. At the colliery, before the management had made it clear that people could have what coals were about the pit except those for firing the boilers and keeping the pumps going, the gates had been smashed. 'A stream of people carried coal in every conceivable receptacle ... whilst the police watched ... There was never any sign of roughness, the crowd being entirely good-humoured. The permission given by the management no doubt saved a considerable amount of damage ... to the premises.'

Meanwhile, not wanting a public house in the village, the colliery company at **Horden** had built the social club at a cost of £10,000 – a very considerable sum at the beginning of the 20th century. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Horden club was said to be 'equal to any gentlemen's club in the North' but on Wednesday 26 January it was wrecked by a mob of striking miners, reported that evening to be on their way to Hardwick Hall, the home of Mr. J J Prest. Mr. Prest JP was chief agent to Horden Collieries Ltd. that incorporated Shotton Colliery and both pits were idle at the time over the four shift dispute.

In the early hours of Thursday 27 January all was quiet at Horden village and at the colliery, where there was a strong police presence, but a crowd of about 300 collected and set off on the direction of Hardwick Hall, from where Mr. Prest telephoned for assistance. When the mob attempted to storm the house, Mr. Prest discharged his shotgun from the roof. Although this was allegedly into the air 'with the evident intention of showing that he was armed' several persons were said to have been struck by pellets.

However, the only confirmed injury was to a lad, Joseph Raine, subsequently admitted to Hartlepool Hospital with a number of pellets in his leg. The crowd was able to smash all the windows of Hardwick Hall, the greenhouses were 'riddled with stones', garden ornaments were damaged and Mr. Prest's brougham (or small carriage) was removed from the coach house and thrown into a dene.⁴² The grounds were cleared and order restored following a baton charge by police, reinforced from Horden.

⁴² Regional word meaning 'valley' or 'dale', 'hollow' – most likely here referring to a stream bed. ME from the OE 'denu'.

But this then allowed the mob to return to Horden and to set fire to the Social Club, which had been damaged the day before. With no fire extinguishers or fire hydrants on hand the fire could only be allowed to burn itself out, destroying the premises. The windows of Walter Wilson's shop were broken but no other shops were damaged.

The Social Club, described as a 'palatial building', comprised three bars; a concert hall; a billiard saloon; a gymnasium and caretaker's apartments. 'We built them a club for gentlemen,' said Mr. Prest in a statement afterwards, 'and they have burnt it.' Unsurprisingly, the company would take no part in the provision of a new club.

Further information

Hardwick Hall, near Sedgefield, is now a hotel. The rioting at Murton is well covered by the Durham Chronicle and also the Durham Advertiser, both of 28 January 1910. For the raid at Houghton-le-Spring, see the Durham Advertiser of 28 January and for an account of the riot at Hardwick Hall see the Durham Advertiser of 4 February 1910. There was also a short mention in The Times reproduced in the Durham Mining Museum website, www.dmm.org.uk (Mines / Horden Colliery / Related links / Newspaper articles / 28 January 1910).

PART TWO

OTHER MINING-RELATED COMMEMORATIVES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS' STRIKE	1887
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THE MINERS' SHIFT SYSTEM	[1904-14]
THE BLACK LIST	[Date uncertain]

DEATH OF WILLIAM JOBLING 1832

Inscription(s) and details

William Jobling / Gibbeted at Jarrow Slake / August 3rd 1832 [reverse] fern⁴³

Pub rummer, with rounded bowl and about 100mm high. Private collection: Durham City.

Another example of this glass is illustrated in Charles R Hajdamach: British Glass: 1800-1914 (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2003, black & white plate 152). Private collection of the author.

A further example is one of several glasses listed under 'Local events commemorated on engraved glasses' at the end of an article by E L Thornborrow: Some Late Victorian Wine Glasses from South Shields District (South Shields Archaeological and Historical Society Papers, 1959; Vol. 1, No.7: 25-29). The engraving is the same as above and is on a wine glass bought in Norwich by a collector from Lincoln.

Historical context

Jarrow's Alfred Pit opened in 1832 and quickly gained a reputation for both the quality of the coal and for the number of men who were killed there. The life of a pitman was extremely harsh, yielding pitiful rewards in exchange for long hours of dangerous labour. Pitmen were obliged to sign a 'bond' by which they were forced to remain at a particular colliery and they were paid, not in cash but, in 'Tommy Checks'. These were vouchers that were valid only in company stores at unfavourable terms. Such conditions led to the miners' strike of 1831 and to the famous 'long strike', lasting from March to August, 1832, when pitmen refused to sign the bond.

In 1832 industrial relations between pitmen and coal owners were at very low ebb. In May the owners declared that pitmen must renounce membership of the pitmen's union before they could be employed. Lead miners were moved in to work in the coal pits and at Hetton Colliery, where miners and their families were evicted, a 'blackleg' was shot dead. When special constables were sent to evict miners of the Tyne Main Colliery at Friars Goose they were each issued with two cartridges containing swan shot⁴⁴ and in the subsequent 'Battle of Friars Goose' several constables were wounded by stolen firearms.

Unemployed miners were now reduced to a state of desperation. In the early afternoon of 11 June 1832 a group of striking miners, including William Jobling and Ralph Armstrong, were drinking in Turners public house on the road between South Shields and Jarrow. Jobling and Armstrong, who had succeeded in begging

⁴³ This incident in 1832 occurred many years before commemorative glasses of this type became common and it is therefore likely it was engraved later by members of the northeast mining community - perhaps in 1882, the fiftieth anniversary of Jobling's death?

⁴⁴ A large size of shot used in fowling.

a shilling from a passer-by, had been drinking heavily. At 5pm, a colliery owner and South Shields magistrate, Nicholas Fairles, was riding his horse to Jarrow Colliery when he was approached by Jobling who attempted to beg from him. Fairles refused to give him any money and Armstrong dragged the elderly magistrate from his horse. In the ensuing fracas Fairles sustained a severe wound from which he died ten days later. Armstrong escaped but Jobling was arrested and tried at Durham on a charge of murder. The illiterate Jobling stated that it was not he who had struck the blow and that when Fairles had fallen from his horse he had left the scene. Looking back, he had seen Armstrong standing over Fairles brandishing a stick. Judge Parke ruled that even if Jobling did not strike the fatal blow he was equally guilty by being present at the time. After 16 minutes of deliberation, the jury found Jobling guilty of willful murder. Judge Parke observed that the murder 'was the melancholy consequence of that combination amongst workmen which has prevailed in this country for so long a time ... combinations that are ... injurious to the public interest.'

Jobling was sentenced to hang in public but since gibbeting had been abolished in 1825 an Act of Parliament was rushed through decreeing that murderers should be hanged and their bodies hung at the scene of their crime. At Jobling's execution in Durham City on 3 August, 100 soldiers guarded the scaffold in case miners attempted a rescue. Jobling's body was then stripped, immersed in tar, re-clothed and placed in an iron harness. On 7 August it was taken in a cart escorted by a troop of Hussars and a company of infantry out of Durham to Chester-le-Street and thence to the turnpike road to South Shields. At Jarrow Slake, the scene of the crime, the body was suspended from a 20-foot pole erected 100 yards beyond the high tide mark. Isabella, Jobling's wife, had a cottage near the slake and would have been able to see her husband clearly for the three weeks he was displayed. On the night of 31 August the body disappeared. It was never recovered and it was thought that friends of Jobling had come by boat when the tide was in, cut the body down and buried it at sea. Armstrong was never arrested and may have escaped to America. In 1891 Isabella Jobling went into South Shields Work House and died there, too senile to recall her husband.⁴⁵

The gibbeting of Jobling was intended to act as a deterrent and it seems to have been so. By September the strike had petered out and the union was almost non-existent.

William Jobling was one of the last two men gibbeted in England – the other being a James Cook, also gibbeted in August 1832 but in Leicester. His case, in fact, was instrumental in having this practice abolished, once and for all. According to *The Newgate Calendar*: 'Thousands of persons were attracted ... to view this novel but most barbarous exhibition and considerable annoyance was felt by persons resident in the neighbourhood of the dreadful scene. Representations were in consequence made to the authorities, and on the following Tuesday morning instructions were received from the Home Office directing the removal of the

⁴⁵ Taken partially from David Temple: *Durham Miners' Millennium Book* TUPS Books, ISBN 1 901237 18 4, pp.40-42 and Vince Rea: *Jarrow Slake, a photographic record* (Morpeth Library, 942.875 LOC COLL). See also www.dnar.org.uk/local-history/36-south-shields/114-william-jobling-martyr-or-murderer.html

gibbet.'

In 1834, gibbeting was finally outlawed under English law.

DURHAM MINERS' STRIKE 1844

Inscription(s) and details

The Strike / of Durham Miners / april 5th / 1844 [reverse] diagonal fern
Straight-sided pub rummer, 111mm high and 60mm diameter. Private collection:
Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

An Oxford collector has a rounded-bowl pub rummer with engraving identical to that above except that 'april' has an upper case 'A' and there is a 'leaf spray' on the reverse (probably a fern).

Historical context

In Durham, miners were tied to the mine owner by a legally enforceable agreement known as the bond. Miners signed or, in many cases because they could not read or write, 'put their marks' to the bond once a year on the binding day. The terms of the bond were harsh and included penalties for infringement that often meant that miners, after working a full shift, could be in debt to the owners.

In March 1844, 20,000 pitmen from Northumberland and Durham met and agreed that they would not bind themselves to the terms of the owner's bond but only to a bond acceptable to them and drawn up by William P Roberts, the legal representative of the Miners' Association of Great Britain. Thus started the first truly universal strike of Northumberland and Durham miners; all collieries were out and agreed not to return until all owners had settled. Some violence did break out in the first weeks of the strike; at South Hetton 20 hewers and deputies had bound themselves before the strike began and on 5 April their houses were attacked and windows smashed. By May Lord Londonderry's coal stocks were all but depleted. Meeting pitmen at Penshaw he told them to 'return to work or make way for those who will' and he then began evictions at Pitlington and Rainton, introducing labour from his Irish estates. During June more blacklegs from Wales, Staffordshire, Cornwall and Ireland were brought in and more local families were evicted. As a result, small, tented villages appeared along hedgerows and on the moors constructed from furniture, sheets and canvas.

Although the strike remained relatively solid until the end of July, hardship and blacklegs sapped the will to continue and after 240 families from Flintshire were settled in the Hetton and Lambton pits in August, over 100 union men, mainly in Durham returned to work. By the end of August, it was all over.

Further information

From David Temple: [Durham Miners' Millennium Book](#) (TUPS Books, 2000 ISBN 1-901237-18-4) and [The Collieries of Durham Vol I](#) (TUPS Books 1994 ISBN 1-871518-11-3).

DEATH OF JOHN GRAHAM 1885

Inscription(s) and details

John Graham / Who Died March 29th 1885 / Through an Accident at / Usworth Colliery / Nov 28th / 1884

Glass seen by John Brooks. Details unrecorded.

Historical context

Whoever commissioned the glass above (presumably the family) clearly believed that John Graham's death related directly to the accident he sustained in the pit four months earlier. If this was the case the relatives might have received some compensation, following an enquiry. Such deaths were not at the time - as they are now - reported to the coroner. We do not know the nature of the accident since it is not recorded in the North of England Colliery Accident Index nor is it on the database of the Durham Mining Museum. And neither the accident nor the death is reported in either the [Durham Chronicle](#) or the [Durham County Advertiser](#).

However, Dr James Gardner MRCP who certified the death (Death certificate: District Chester-le-Street, Sub-district Harraton, No: 159) was of the opinion that the death was due to natural causes i.e. unrelated to any accident. John Graham died, he certified, of acute rheumatism of seven days, and pneumonia (double) of 24 hours duration. There is no mention of any accident. The deceased was a 'Stoneman at Colliery' and was aged 41.

DEATH OF RALPH YOUNGER 1885

Inscription(s) and details

In Loving Memory of / My Dear Father / Ralph Younger / Died 26 Nov 1885 / Age 42 Years [reverse] flanked by fern leaves *Gone / But not / Forgotten*
Straight-sided pub rummer seen by John Brooks.

Historical context

This death on 26 November 1885 finds no mention in the Shields Daily News of 27, 28 or 30 November (the 29th was a Sunday), nor in the Morpeth Herald of 30 November or 3 December. Neither was it mentioned in the Blyth Weekly News of 28 November or 5 December nor the Newcastle Daily Journal.

Our only information about Ralph Younger comes from his death certificate (Tynemouth District, Earsdon Sub-district, No: 228).

This states that the deceased was a miner who died of chronic cystitis and acute nephritis of two days' duration and of a fractured spine of eight years' duration. We may speculate as to whether the fractured spine was sustained in a mining accident and how this could be a contributory cause of death. Was there a spinal injury that predisposed to urinary infection?

The certificate gives the age of the deceased as 41 years and states that a son, John Younger, was present at the death.

NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS' STRIKE 1886

Inscription(s) and details

Northumberland / Strike / 1886 [reverse] clover leaf

Pub glass with straight sides. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO 09138/3).

Historical context

There were no miners' strikes in 1886. This citation therefore probably refers to the 1887 strike that started in the January of that year – see next entry. It is possible, however, that some debate occurred about starting the strike *before* Christmas – and some engraver thought he would get ahead of the game?

NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS' STRIKE 1887

Inscription(s) and details

Northumberland / Strike / 1887 [reverse] clover

Bucket bowl pub rummer, 115mm high, 60mm diameter at rim. A smear-like discolouration in the glass lies partially across the inscription. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Northumberland / Strike / 1884 (? 7) [reverse] clover⁴⁶

Pub rummer. Beamish Museum (accession number 2001.63.1).

Historical context

The economic recession that hit the Northumberland mining community in the mid-1870s persisted into the 1880s. Wages remained low and labour unrest was common throughout the nation. Distraught over low pay and short working weeks, and faced with owners who seemed callous to their needs, men of the Northumberland Miners' Association (NMA) responded angrily in 1887 by waging a 17-week strike that was against the advice of their leaders.

The lock-out of 1877-78 led to the adoption of a sliding scale to determine basic wages. Put into effect in late 1879, the scale linked wages to the selling price of coal and wages were adjusted every three months. Officials of the NMA and, in particular, its secretary, Thomas Burt, were in favour of the sliding scale and considered that its use benefited the miners but not all miners or indeed labour leaders were so enthusiastic.

The Northumberland miners' strike of 1887 was caused primarily by the coal trade's collapse that exacerbated long-festering labour problems. Miners and owners alike acknowledged that 1886 was one of the worst for the coal industry for many decades. Large numbers of miners were laid off or put on short time and some pits closed. In October 1886 owners announced that they would terminate the sliding scale, wishing to replace it with one reflecting a lower base rate; in November they stated that they would no longer provide housing allowances to miners in non-company accommodation and in December they demanded a 15% reduction in wages. Under pressure from the Union, the owners dropped the reduction to 12.5% and agreed not to cut off the housing allowance but the Union was willing to go no further than a reduction of 10%. The miners agreed by an overwhelming majority (9844 to 2161) to strike and did so on 27 January 1887. On 24 May, after several votes and an authorisation to the wages committee to gain the best possible terms available, the strike ended. The Union accepted a reduction of 12.5% with a promise by several owners to contribute payments for

⁴⁶ At first glance the date on this Beamish Museum glass appears to be 1884 but in the peculiar idiosyncratic script that characterises these glasses, 7s often look like 4s. A search of the records at Woodhorn Mining Museum finds no mention of any strike by Northumberland miners in 1884 and Rosemary Allen, senior keeper at Beamish, concedes that the date could well be 1887.

house rental.

The strike failed for several reasons. The NMA had few financial resources. Economic hardship among the mining families was evident, and officials feared that if the strike was prolonged, miners would begin drifting back to work. Moreover, because trade was depressed anyway, owners were not particularly harmed by the strike, since there were relatively few contracts to fill. They also knew that the Union was financially strapped even before the strike began.

Further information

See L J Satre: Thomas Burt, Miners' MP, 1837-1922 The Great Conciliator (Leicester University Press, London, 1999, ISBN 0-7185-0184-5, Robinson Library, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 331.880.92 SAT). Chapter 7 is devoted to the 1887 Northumberland miners' strike.

DEATH OF SARAH CONLIFF (or CORLIFF) 1890

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / Sarah Conliff / died 2 april 1890 / age 69 years [reverse] *North Seaton* three ferns

Pub rummer, vertical sides with twelve thumbprint facets around base of bowl and six facets to the short stem, 122mm high and 66mm diameter at the rim.

Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

No mention of this death can be found in The Morpeth Herald, The Blyth Weekly News or The Newcastle Daily Journal and the General Records Office can find no death certificate. Nor can a grave for a Conliff or a Corliff be found in North Seaton churchyard.

The reason has turned out to be very simple: this appears to be a significant mis-spelling of a name. The interest for historians lies in why the glass was allowed to survive by the person or persons who commissioned it. But even before records are investigated, there are some obvious uncertainties about the engraving of the surname on this glass.

The first letter is unquestionably C and the second a lower case o. The third letter is probably r but possibly n and the fourth initially looks like l but could be b. The options are now Corb / Corl / Comb / Conl. The last three letters are undoubtedly iff and thus possible versions are Corbiff / Corliff / Conbiff / Conliff. However, nobody of these unusual surnames died in the northeast or, indeed, anywhere in England and Wales in the first half of 1890 (St Catherine's House Index).

However, reference to the 1881 census⁴⁷ discovers a Sarah **Corbitt** living in North Seaton. She was 58 and would, therefore, be 67 in 1890. Her death certificate (No: 263, Registration District: Morpeth: Sub-district: Bedlington) confirms she died on 2 April 1890 at North Seaton. It seems virtually certain, therefore, that this is the lady commemorated on the glass.

Sarah Corbitt was born in Blyth. She was married to a miner, William, five years her junior and they lived at North Seaton Colliery with their son, also called William. The certified cause of death was 'Severe cold' with 'Age' and 'Exhaustion' as secondary causes. 'Severe cold' may mean an upper respiratory viral infection or hypothermia. In either event, it speaks of a life of poverty, depravation and hard work.

Further information

Inaccuracies relating to ages and to dates of death are found, not infrequently, on these glasses and the mis-spelling of names is also not unknown. Other examples of this are the Nobley brothers (April 1890); Peter Waddell (June 1895);

⁴⁷ District: Morpeth: Sub-District: North Seaton, pp 5-6, microfilm, Blyth Library.

Robertson Ewen (St Mary's Island publican) and George Davison (one of the four men drowned off Blyth in July 1895).

However, mistakes with names are less easily explained and particularly in private family situations like Sarah Corbitt's. Glasses commemorating notable or public figures like Charles Fenwick or Andrew Colvin might command a moderate local market but those created in memory of, say, a miner or his wife were surely intended for family and friends only. And in these circumstances one would think that spelling mistakes would not be acceptable.

The Corbitt glass – as we now believe it to be – with its basal flutes and faceted stem is (literally) a cut above the usual pub rummer and was surely produced as a one-off or in small numbers. Yet the spelling error is the most flagrant we have seen: there can be no mistake about the final ffs that bear no resemblance to the t in 'Seaton' on the reverse of the glass.

Why were these glasses not rejected and destroyed? Are they rare survivors? Or rejects sold off by the engraver to anybody who wanted a glass at a bargain price? Or were they simply accepted by those who commissioned them, warts and all – either because the mistake was too costly to correct or (less likely but possible) the commissioner could not read? Maybe, if not illiterate, the members of the Corbitt family were poorly educated and simply lacked the confidence to complain about the mistake.

DEATH OF MARY COOK 1890

Inscription(s) and details

In. Memory. of / Mary. Cook / Who. Died 18 Dec 1890 / Aged. 75. Years

Jug with straight tapering sides. The inscription is within ferns. Private collection: Durham City.

In Memory of / Mary Cook / Who Died 17 Dec 1890 / Aged 75 Years [reverse]
ferns

Pub rummer, 125mm high, the stem cut with vertical facets. Private collection: Durham City.

Historical context

Mary Cook was the wife of Samuel Cook, a miner, She lived and died at 3 West Row, Pelton Fell, County Durham.⁴⁸ She died of bronchitis of two months' duration on 18 December 1890 (death certificate: District and Sub-district Chester-le-Street, No:309).

The idiosyncratic use of full stops used by the engraver of the jug recorded above is replicated in another item - a large jug in Beamish Museum commemorating the death of William Bell at Usworth Colliery on 11 April 1891. Pelton and Usworth Collieries lay on either side of the A1, about five and a half miles apart as the crow flies. Thus these jugs commemorate deaths separated in time by 16 weeks and in distance by only a few miles and it seems likely, if not almost certain, that they were engraved by the same person.

But when Samuel Cook and/or another member of the Cook family (as it probably was) commissioned the engraving of a glass (pub rummer) to record Mary's death, perhaps they went to another engraver who abstained from full stops but who recorded an incorrect date of death.

⁴⁸ 'Pelton Fell is a populous colliery village, partly in this and partly in Chester-le-Street parish. ... There are chapels of ease to both parishes in this village, and the railway station is on the north. Pelton Village Colliery School for boys, girls and infants, built by the owners of ... the colliery, in 1862, are a good set of stone buildings, capable of accommodating 1,000 children, with an average attendance of 900. Literary Institute, Pelton Fell, erected by the colliery proprietors, in 1889, contains reading and billiard rooms, also lecture hall and is supported by subscription of one penny per fortnight.' From: Whellan's 1894 Directory of County Durham.

DEATH OF ROBERT LANCELOT BOOTH 1891

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory Of / Robert Lancelot Booth / Died 25 Nov 1891 / Ashington Colliery

[reverse] *gone but not forgotten* [diagonal fern]

Slightly ovoid bowl pub rummer, 105mm high and 62mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Woodhorn Mining Museum holds a similar glass (ASHMM. 1992.38).

Historical context

The death of Robert Booth ‘under painfully sudden circumstances’ was reported at some length in the 28 November 1891 edition of The Morpeth Herald.

‘On 24 November Mr Booth, the manager of Ashington Colliery, left his office at about 6pm. On arriving home he ordered his supper, intending to go out to a meeting. However, before eating anything he suddenly left the table for the bathroom. Hearing a noise, his wife hurried upstairs and caught him in the act of falling. A doctor arrived and found that Mr Booth had ‘taken an apoplexy fit’. Two other doctors and the under manager next arrived and bleeding was carried out. Yet another doctor appeared and ‘the four medical gentlemen exerted themselves to the utmost but all was to no avail’ and Mr Booth died in the early hours of the next day, in his forty-seventh year.’

Robert Booth was the eldest son of one of the owners of Norwood Collieries, near Bishop Auckland. He was manager of Ashington Colliery for some 14 years and ‘it was not merely a matter for him that he should endeavour to produce as much coal for the owner’s profit that he possibly could but he generously looked after the workmen ... and was ever ready to advocate their claims for any social or intellectual improvement. ... His death is a great loss to the workmen of Ashington who have been deprived of a kind master and a staunch friend. ... No tongue can tell, no pen can describe the sudden regret which is felt in this district. ... A light has been extinguished that helped to brighten many a humble home and cheer many a saddened heart.’

Robert Booth’s grave is at the Holy Sepulchre Church in Ashington.

DURHAM MINERS' STRIKE 1892

Inscription(s) and details

Durham Miners / Strike / 1892 [reverse] fern

Bucket bowl pub rummer, 99mm high and 58mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Durham Miners / Strike / 1892

Rounded bowl pub rummer. Beamish Museum (2006-125.2).

Durham Miners / Strike / 1892 [reverse] clover

Pub rummer. Private collection: Winchester.

Durham Miners / Strike / 1892 [reverse] fern

Port glass. Private collection: Nottingham.

Durham Miners / Strike / 1892 [reverse] three leaf clover

Small straight sided rummer, 95mm high. Two identical examples. Private collection: East London.

Historical context

Durham miners' wages rose in 1889 but the maximum realised price of coal was reached in 1890 and then declined. The mine owners met all groups of colliery workers, now united as the Durham County Mining Federation, and demanded a 10% wage reduction or arbitration. A miners' ballot rejected these proposals outright and although there was a further offer of an immediate 7½ % reduction or a 5% reduction with another 5% reduction in May, this was again rejected following a ballot the results of which were:

For acceptance of a 7.5% reduction: 926

For acceptance of two reductions of 5% each: 1,153

To strike: 40,468

Federation Board to have full power to settle: 12,956

The overwhelming vote in favour of a strike showed a lack of confidence in the Federation leadership who had advised the men to let them negotiate. In March 1892 a county strike began, the greatest centre of support being in the eastern pits. Soup kitchens appeared and suffering amongst miners and their families increased leading, by June, to Bishop Westcott bringing the two sides together. The miners were forced to submit to a wage reduction of 10%. The strike had lasted twelve weeks.

Further information

The information above is taken mainly from Norman Emery: The Coal Miners of Durham (Allan Sutton Publishing Ltd., Stroud, 1992, pp.118-119).

DEATH OF EDWARD POTTER 1893

Inscription(s) and details

Edward / Auberne (sic) Potter / Died 29 Dec 1893 / Marine House / Tynemouth
[reverse] random scroll

Parallel-sided bucket bowl pub rummer, seen by John Brooks.

Edward Aubone Potter / Died 29 December 1893 / Marine House / Tynemouth
Port glass⁴⁹ with green bowl and clear glass pencil stem and foot, 118mm high.
Private collection: Cambridge.

Historical context

In the local studies' section of North Tyneside Central Library there is a file on an Edward Potter who lived at Marine House and also at Cramlington where he owned the colliery. He lived from 1806 to 1869, had two sons, W A Potter and D M Potter, and was a local figure of some note. His death was reported in the Shields Daily News of 9 September 1869.

The Edward Potter commemorated on these glasses was the only son of Jane and the late W A Potter and the grandson of the Edward Potter who owned Cramlington Colliery. His death finds no mention in the Blyth Examiner, the Morpeth Herald, the Shields Daily News or the Newcastle Daily Journal but it is recorded in the Deaths column of the Blyth Weekly News of 6 January 1893.

The death certificate (No: 20, Registration district, Tynemouth, Sub-district, Tynemouth) states that he was a colliery manager (of his grandfather's mine?) and aged 36. Death was due to scarlatina.

⁴⁹ Coloured glasses or bowls within the disaster glass genre are unusual. We know of two other green bowl glasses – one a 'Transvaal War Commenced 11 oct 1899' glass and the other commemorating the death of Andrew Colvin in 1895. The only other example of a coloured disaster glass that we have seen is a dark green tumbler in Sunderland Museum, commemorating the 1880 Seaham Colliery disaster. All are recorded in this catalogue.

BETTER LUCK TO THE DURHAM MINERS 1893 and 1894

Inscription(s) and details

Better Luck / to the Durham Miners / 1893

Sold on EBay, 7 October 2012.

Better Luck / To the Durham Miners / 1894 [reverse] flower with three petals (?) on stem with two small leaves

Vaguely ogee bowl pub rummer, 97mm high and 58mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Better Luck / To the Durham Miners / 1894

Rounded-bowl pub rummer. Beamish Museum, (22006-125.3).

Historical context

In 1893 the coal trade was in recession. The minutes of the Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Association for 28 January 1893 record that the miners met the coal owners at the Coal Trade Office to consider a reduction of wages. Small coal was almost impossible to sell and prices were still falling. Depression in the shipping industry had also reduced the demand for steam coal. The owners felt that 'the condition of trade' compelled them to ask for a 7.5% wage reduction. Wages in Fife had been reduced by 25% and in South Wales by 35%.

The Association Committee, whose members included Charles Fenwick MP, with deep regret, advised the miners to accept a reduction of 5% but the workers voted against this. Throughout the country men at collieries connected with the Miners' Federation, including those in Durham (but not Northumberland) came out on strike demanding an increase in pay but all these actions failed. Northumberland miners reaped a temporary reward in the form of a small rise in pay in September, reflecting an improvement in the price of coal.

The one example above dated 1893 – which fits with the year of the actual strike – was seen on eBay some years after we discovered the 1894 versions.

Deborah Moffat, curator at Woodhorn Mining Museum, thinks that the prospects for coalmining had been so bad in 1893 that the 'Better Luck' glasses dated 1894 were probably engraved in late 1893/early 1894 as tokens of hope for the New Year.

SUCCESS TO BURRADON COLLIERY 1894

Inscription(s) and details

Success to Burradon Colliery

Glass seen by John Brooks. Details unrecorded.

Success / to / Burradon Colliery / 1894 [reverse] clover

Bucket bowl pub rummer, 100mm high. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO-7033/1).

A drinking glass engraved ***Success to Burradon Colliery 1894*** was sold at Bonhams (UK) in 2005 as part of Lot 672. (The hammer price unrecorded.) Lot 672 also included two other drinking glasses: ***Now wee*** (sic) ***shan't be long 1898*** and ***Better luck to the Northumberland Miners 1894***.

Historical details

Without a date, we can only guess at what prompted the citation on the first glass. Lord Ravensworth sunk Burradon pit in 1820 but this is earlier than the time span of the 'disaster' glass' genre. In 1849, the colliery was sold to Carr & Co. but in 1856 they were declared bankrupt and the pit was bought by Joseph Straker. In 1860, the year of the explosion⁵⁰, Joseph Bower of Leeds bought Burradon and it became part of the Coxlodge & Burradon Coal Co. It was sold to Nathaniel Green, Lambert & Partners in 1879. These changes of ownership in 1849, 1856, 1860 and 1879 seemed the most likely events prompting the engraving of the glass, although Deborah Moffat, curator at Woodhorn Mining Museum, says the reason could have been less significant such as the sinking of a new shaft or installation of a new boiler. The final ownership change, to the Hazelrigg & Burradon Coal Co. in 1929, is rather too late an event to be considered.

The information above was obtained early on in our research. Then, in 2007, Woodhorn Mining Museum acquired the second glass listed above. Without being able to handle both items it is difficult to be certain - but it now appears likely that both were engraved in 1894. They are probably, in other words, merely two versions of the same glass (compare *Tak A Wee Drappie v Tak A Wee drappie 1894* and *Peace and Plenty v Peace and Plenty 1896*).

Research has so far failed to uncover anything particular in the history of Burradon Colliery that might have prompted it being wished success in 1894. It may just have been a non-specific goodwill greeting for the New Year? Alternatively, there may be a link to a local sporting event or team?

Further information

Reference: J T Tuck: The Collieries of Northumberland, Book I (TUPS Books, 1993).

⁵⁰ See 'Burradon 1860' in Part One.

BETTER LUCK TO THE NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS 1894

Inscription(s) and details

Better Luck to the Northumberland Miners 1894

Pub rummer, seen by John Brooks.

A drinking glass engraved ***Better luck to the Northumberland Miners 1894*** was sold at Bonhams (UK) in 2005 as part of Lot 672. (The hammer price unrecorded.) Lot 672 also included two other drinking glasses: ***Success to Burradon Colliery 1894*** and ***Now wee (sic) shan't be long 1898***.

Historical context

This would seem to be a companion to the pub rummers engraved 'Better Luck to the Durham Miners 1893' and 'Better Luck to the Durham Miners 1894' that are recorded earlier in this catalogue.

It is also interesting to cross-reference the pub rummer 'Better Luck to the / New Biggin Folks / Catch Plenty Fish 1894' – see Part Three. It uses the same phrase and is dated the same year.

It is not beyond the realms of possibility that an itinerant engraver was making his way around the northeast in 1894, suggesting use of a general exhortation for communities who, even if there wasn't a tangible disaster like an accident or ship wreck to cope with, had a hard life and were most certainly in need of better fortune.

NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS ADVANCE [PAY] 1894

Inscription(s) and details

Northumberland Miners / Advance of 7 1/2 Per Cent / January 13.1894

[reverse] clover

Vaguely ogee bowl pub rummer, 98mm high and 67mm in diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Northumberland / Miners First Pay / of / 2 1/2 per cent / Feb 2 1894

Bucket bowl pub rummer. Private collection: Nottingham.

Historical context

At a meeting on Saturday 13 January at the Coal Trade Office in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the Northumberland miners applied for an advance of wages, through their agents - who included two MPs, Messrs. Burt and Fenwick.

The owners had previously granted a provisional advance of 5% to extend over six fortnightly pay days. Following a long discussion, the owners agreed to an advance of 7.5% in place of the provisional 5%, coming into effect on the first pay day.

Further information

The Morpeth Herald and Reporter, 20 January 1894.

DEATH OF THOMAS STRATTON 1894

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / Thomas Henry M Stratton / Who Died 29 May 1894 / Cramlington House / Age 42 years [reverse] *In the Sweet / by and by* stylised clover leaf
Ovoid bowl pub rummer, 112mm high and 64mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Thomas Henry M Stratton / Died 29 May 1894 / Cramlington House [reverse]
clover
Bucket bowl pub rummer, 111mm high. Private collection: Durham City.

Thomas Henry M Stratton / Died 29 May 1894 / Cramlington House / Remember Me Glass shown to William Cowan at the launch of *An Alarming Accident*⁵¹ in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 25 September 2008.

In memory of / Thomas Henry M Stratton / Who Died 29 May 1894 / at Cramlington House / Age 42 years [reverse] *Gone but not forgotten*
Rummer, 100mm high. Private collection: Nottingham.

Historical context

The death of Mr T H M Stratton was reported in the 2 June 1894 edition of The Morpeth Herald and Reporter. He had served his time with a Mr Heckels, 'the well-known Durham viewer' [colliery manager] and was 'afterwards employed by Messrs. Pease and Company'.

He then moved to the Londonderry Collieries and was official-in-chief at Seaham on 8 September 1880 when the explosion occurred.⁵² 'On that occasion he distinguished himself by his great bravery ... and remained for thirty consecutive hours in the mine without once coming to bank [the surface]. The noble heroism which he displayed in the work of rescue ... stamped him as a man of more than ordinary quality ... and the daring deeds which he performed will long remain prominent in the mining annals of the North of England.'

After working in Monmouthshire, Stratton was appointed manager of the Cramlington Coal Company's pits in 1877. He was chairman of the Cramlington School Board, vice-chairman of the Cramlington Local Board and a member of the Joint Committee of the Northumberland Coalowners' Association. The Morpeth newspaper report continues:

'He was well known in mining circles, not only in the Northern counties, but throughout the country. By his employers he was held in great esteem, and the inhabitants of Cramlington and the neighbourhood also held him in high regard on account of his geniality and kindness.'

⁵¹ John Brooks and William Cowan: An Alarming Accident - or every glass tells a story (Tyne Bridge Publishing 2008 ISBN 978-185795-124-0).

⁵² See Seaham 1880 in Part One.

‘At the beginning of last week the deceased gentleman caught a chill, which brought on pneumonia, and on Friday last he was compelled to take to his bed [at his residence, Cramlington House]. He became much worse, and early on Tuesday Dr Drummond of Newcastle was sent for, but despite all that could be done on his behalf, Mr Stratton died the same night.’

Further information

With reference to the first of the glasses listed above: ‘In the sweet by and by’ is a quotation from the American gospel singer and composer, Ira David Sankey (1840-1908):

‘In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.’

Sankey, who was known as ‘the sweet singer of Methodism’, cooperated with the American evangelist, Dwight L Moody to produce both the Sankey and Moody Hymn Book (1873) and Gospel Hymns (1875).

DEATH OF ANDREW SCOTT 1894

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory Of / Andrew Scott / Of Broom Hill Colliery / Who Died 11 Aug 1894 / Age 59 Years [reverse] stylised clover leaf

Bucket bowl pub rummer, 96mm high and 58mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

In Memory Of / Andrew Scott / Of Broom Hill Colliery / Who Died 11 Aug 1894 / Age 59 Years [reverse] stylised clover leaf

Bucket bowl pub rummer, 96mm high and 58mm diameter. Beamish Museum (1996-96.3).

Historical context

There is a Broom Hill (two words) in County Durham, about one mile south of Ebchester - but there is no record of there ever being a pit there. Andrew Scott (and despite what is recorded on these glasses) died at Broomhill (one word) in Northumberland, southwest of Amble. Broomhill Collieries were sunk c1850 and closed on 3 February 1961.

Andrew Scott's death was announced in the Deaths column of The Newcastle Daily Journal of 13 August 1894 and was also reported in The Morpeth Herald and Reporter of 18 August 1894:

'Quite a gloom was cast over the district on Saturday last, owing to the sudden death of Mr Scott, the esteemed manager of Broomhill Colliery ... [He had] not been in the best of health for some time, and on the Friday previous to his death took suddenly ill. Drs McNicoll, Smyth and Scobie were hastily summoned ... and found him in an apoplectic fit. Other medical assistance was summoned from Newcastle, but he gradually sank and died the next day ... [The] deceased came to Broomhill twenty-three years ago ... [and] from a humble beginning worked his way up to the elevated position of manager of one of the leading collieries in the North of England ... He was chairman of the Chevington School Board and the Felton Highway Board ... It was unanimously agreed that the colliery be idle on Monday, in order that the workmen might ... pay the last tribute to their late master by attending his funeral ... which took place at Chevington [Church] ... The funeral was largely attended and ... the handsome wreath which was placed upon his grave by the workmen were proof, if proof were necessary, of the great esteem in which he was held ...'

ASHINGTON MEMORIAL HALL 1894

Inscription(s) and details

The Memorial Stone / Of a New Miner's (sic) Hall / Was laid at / Ashington Colliery / 6 Sept. 1894 [reverse] diagonal fern

Ogee bowl pub rummer, 115mm high and 57mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The memorial stone / of a new Miner's (sic) Hall was laid at / Ashington Colliery / 6 Sept 1894 [reverse] fern

Pub glass with rounded bowl, Woodhorn Mining Museum, (NRO 08603/1).

Historical context

No reference to this event can be found in either The Newcastle Journal or The Blyth Weekly News.

However, a paragraph in The Morpeth Herald and Reporter of 18 August 1894 records that the Northumberland Miners' Association had declined to advance any money for the proposed hall until the miners had raised, or could give security that they would raise, one third of the total cost.

The minute book of The Miners' Mutual Benefit Society of Northumberland records that, on 8 October 1894, it agreed to loan £3,000 for the building of the Miners Hall at 3.5% with 5% of capital to be paid annually. Subsequent minutes show that the loan ran into trouble because the committee felt that the 14 inch thick walls were not strong enough for the proposed height of the building and the loan was suspended. There was then a problem of getting the architect to agree to meet the Society's experts since he felt that his professional judgment was being called into question.

The matter was eventually resolved to everyone's satisfaction and the money was finally paid on 16 March 1895, six months after the foundation stone had been laid.

Further information

The information above was provided by John Brooks, co-author of *An Alarming Accident*.⁵³

⁵³ John Brooks and William Cowan: An Alarming Accident - or every glass tells a story (Tyne Bridge Publishing 2008 ISBN 978-185795-124-0).

NEW DELAVAL EXPLOSION 1895

Inscription(s) and details

Alarming Powder / Explosion / New Delaval / 26 January 1895 [reverse] fern
Rounded bowl pub rummer. Private collection: Nottingham.

Historical context

This accident was reported in the Morpeth Herald and Reporter of 2 February 1895, as follows:

SHOCKING GUNPOWDER ACCIDENT AT NEW DELAVAL

On Saturday night an accidental explosion of gunpowder occurred at New Delaval, in the house of a miner named Thos. Nelson. It appears that whilst a girl called Elizabeth Nelson, who was left in charge of the house at the time, was engaged in carrying a shovelful of red hot coals upstairs, she managed by some means or other to ignite a quantity of gunpowder which was near. The force of the explosion which ensued had the effect of partially wrecking the house, and inflicting on the girl injuries of a terrible character. The burning clothes of the unfortunate girl were extinguished as soon as possible by a miner named Harrison. A child aged 18 months was also hurt. Miss Nelson was conveyed to the infirmary at Newcastle.

Despite her 'injuries of a terrible character' Elizabeth Nelson seems to have survived the accident – at least in the short term, as her death is not recorded in the St Catherine's House Index for January, February or March of 1895.

Fires in bedrooms were commonly lit or established by burning coals carried upstairs from the kitchen or main living room of the house. The potential for accidents is obvious – even if gunpowder was not being stored nearby.

DEATH OF ANTHONY TOOLE 1895

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / Anthony Toole / Who Died 27 March 1895 / at New Hartley

[reverse] *Remember / Me* clover leaf

Ovoid bowl pub rummer, 94mm high with a bowl 63mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

In Memory of / Anthony Toole / Who Died at / New Hartley / 27 Mar 1895 / Age 32 Years [reverse] *Remember / Me* clover.

Pub rummer, 92mm high. Private collection: Durham City.

In memory of Mr. A. Toole who Died at New Hartley 27 March 1895 aged 33 years [reverse] *Shall we meet beyond the river* vertical fern

Small rummer, 107mm high and 59mm diameter. Private collection: Nottingham. John Brooks has recorded what is believed to have been an identical glass. Note the correct age of the deceased is recorded here - 33 years.

A glass at Woodhorn Mining Museum (ASHMM: 2000.47) commemorating Anthony Toole is inscribed *Come for all things are now ready*.

Historical context

New Hartley is in Northumberland, between Seaton Sluice and Cramlington. Anthony Toole's funeral and subsequent burial in the Roman Catholic Cemetery in Cowpen was reported in the 6 April 1895 edition of The Morpeth Herald and Reporter.

'The deceased gentleman was very well known and widely respected in the district, and held various offices. He was an ardent member of the committee of the Hartley Institute, and was on the Technical and School Treats Committees. He [was the] President of the local Mechanics' Union and ... of the Hartley Touring Club. At a full meeting of the Hartley Institute a vote of condolence was sent to Mrs Toole ... and at the monthly meeting of the Cowpen Branch of the Irish National League ... the following motion ... was attached to the minutes: 'That we record our sincere sorrow at the death of Mr Anthony Toole of Hartley, who was ever held in the highest regard for his excellent qualities by all sections of people. And we tender to his widowed mother our deep sympathy and condolence.'

The funeral was also reported in the Blyth Weekly News of 2 April 1895.

Anthony Toole's death certificate (No: 174, District, Tynemouth, Sub-district Earsdon) shows him to have been a colliery mason, age 33 and to have died of 'Phthisis Pulmonalis' i.e. pulmonary tuberculosis.

DEATH OF NICHOLAS HOY 1895

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / Nicholas Hoy / Who Died 3 April 1895 / Age 35 Years / Seaham Colliery [reverse] *Gone But Not Forgotten* clover

Pub rummer, 95mm high. Private collection: Durham City.

In Memory of / Nicholas Hoy / Who Died 3 April 1895 / Age 35 years / Seaham Colliery [reverse] *Thy Will be / done*

Small blown drinking glass, 92mm high. Broadfield House Glass Museum, Kingswinford.

Historical context

This death at Seaham Colliery was announced in the Deaths column of the Durham Chronicle of 12 April 1895: 'HOY At New Seaham Colliery Miners' Buildings, 3rd inst. age 35 Mr Nicholas Hoy.'

There is no other mention either in the Durham Chronicle or in the Durham County Advertiser.

The death certificate (District and Sub-district, Easington, No:166) states that the deceased was a colliery checkweighman and that he died of pulmonary phthisis (tuberculosis) of two years' duration and of exhaustion.

Tragedy appears to have struck the Hoy family again within weeks. On 23 June 1895 another Nicholas Hoy, the infant son of James Hoy, also a colliery checkweighman living at the Miners' Buildings, died of 'imperfect development', aged just three days (Death certificate No:355). It seems very likely that Nicholas Hoy Snr. and James Hoy were brothers.

DEATH OF JOHN DICKINSON 1895

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / John Dickinson / Died 16 aug 1895 / age 44 years [reverse]

Rock of ages ferns

Large pub rummer, Beamish Museum, (accession no. 1973-420).

Historical details

John Dickinson's death was not reported in the Newcastle Daily Journal, (16-20 August), the Morpeth Herald, (17 or 24 August) or the Blyth Weekly News, (16, 20 or 23 August). But his death certificate (District Tynemouth, Sub-district Earsdon, No. 317) states that he was a 41 year-old miner living at Seaton Sluice who died of a cerebral haemorrhage. This was presumably a spontaneous haemorrhage i.e. this was a death due to natural causes, rather than a traumatic haemorrhage following an accident in the pit, since the certificate would probably have been phrased differently. Further, there is no mention in the North of England Mining Accident Register.

ASHINGTON COLLIERY FIRE 1895

Inscription(s) and details

A Serious Fire Ashington Colliery on Saturday 19 Oct 1895 Accidents will happen

[reverse] fern

Pub rummer seen by John Brooks. Further details unrecorded.

Historical context

The Morpeth Herald and Reporter of Saturday 26 October 1895 states that a little after 8pm a fire broke out in the 'Fifth Row' (miners' houses) at Ashington Colliery, apparently originating in the house of a Mr Walter Elliott whose wife had been ill in bed for a considerable time.

Mr Elliott, who had been in almost constant attendance on his wife, left the house for a short time and returned to find his house in flames and his wife crawling naked towards the door. He ran inside, wrapped her in a blanket and carried her to a neighbour's house while flames spread to the adjoining cottages. A large crowd of horrified people assembled and messengers were sent to the colliery officials but, as it was Saturday and pay day, many were not at home.

With what hands could be mustered, the manual fire engine was set to work, by which time several houses were 'well alight'. The pump became choked and 'attention was at once turned to other means'. Gaps were cut through the roofs of houses on either side of the fire and the hose was coupled to water pipes in the locomotive shed. It was then found that the pipe was about 100 yards too short but this was made up with lengths of two inch piping 'which brought a copious supply of water under good pressure to bear upon the flames'.

At one point it was thought that the entire length of the row would be consumed and householders began to remove their furniture but by midnight the fire was under control and those families who had lost their homes found shelter with friends, leaving furniture in gardens. Seven houses were totally destroyed. No lives were lost but there were a number of minor injuries and in one or two instances families lost nearly all their furniture.

'In a few cases it is alleged that downright plundering was engaged in by a section of vicious miscreants who, in the general disaster, found scope for their vicious propensities'. Shortly before 10pm a mounted messenger had arrived at Morpeth and as quickly as possible the fire brigade was called together. The fire engine set off at 11.15pm but was stopped at Whitefield (about half-way) and informed that their services were no longer required since the fire 'had been got under'.

'The locality on Sunday presented an extraordinary spectacle, furniture, clothing and household goods being scattered everywhere ... On Sunday evening a public meeting was held in the Recreation Hall to devise means for the succor of those families who had suffered by the fire. Mr Charles Coburn, the popular comedian, who is at present engaged at the Portland Theatre, Ashington, kindly offered the services of himself and company for a benefit performance ... It was also resolved to open a subscription list immediately.'

The value of the buildings was covered by insurance but not furniture and household property. John Brooks records that the damage was estimated at £300, that nine families lost their household possessions and that they asked the colliery for a donation to the relief fund. The application was noted in the records of the Miners' Mutual Benefit Society but there was no further mention of the outcome.

It is interesting to note here the differences between the 19th and 20th century responses to domestic fires. In 1895, if your house catches alight on a Saturday evening it could, apparently, be four hours before the fire brigade arrives!

Further information

The Morpeth Herald and Reporter.

DEATH OF WILLIAM LEE 1895

Inscription(s) and details

William Lee / Who died at Felling Colliery / 8 May 1895 / Rest in Peace

[reverse] clover

Wine glass, rounded bowl, rudimentary shoulder knop and 110mm high.

Sold on eBay, April 2009 for £94.

Historical context

The Durham Mining Museum reports that William Lee was the Colliery Manager who died suddenly in his office of a heart attack. This was not, therefore, a colliery accident nor strictly speaking (as the eBay vendor stated) a 'mining disaster glass' – although it is part of the genre.

SUCCESS TO HARTFORD 1895

Inscription(s) and details

Succefs to Hartford / For 1895 / Drink Plenty Good Beer / And Your Shure (sic) to Thrive [reverse] single large cloverleaf surrounded by squiggles. Note also that the word 'Success' is engraved as 'Succefs'.

Pub rummer with rounded funnel bowl, 95mm high and with a bowl 63mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

Research has so far failed to uncover anything particular in the history of Hartford Colliery that might have prompted it being wished success in 1895. One can only think that it was a non-specific goodwill greeting for the New Year. Alternatively, there may be a link to a parliamentary or local election? Or to a local sporting event or team?

Compare (see Part Three) seven other glasses, all dated 1895: Prospect Terrace; Cement Houses; Stobswood Church (one example); Charles Fenwick; Thomas Burt; Samuel Storey and Lord Warkworth. All use the 18th century spelling of the word 'success' ... 'succefs'.

NOW WEE SHANT BE LONG 1898

Inscription(s) and details

Now wee (sic) shant be long 1898

Glass recorded by John Brooks.

A drinking glass engraved ***Now wee (sic) shan't be long 1898*** was sold at Bonhams (UK) in 2005 as part of Lot 672. (The hammer price unrecorded.) Lot 672 also included two other drinking glasses: ***Success to Burradon Colliery 1894*** and ***Better luck to the Northumberland Miners 1894***.

Historical context

The significance of this inscription is difficult to interpret, but Deborah Moffat, curator at Woodhorn Mining Museum, points out that if the engraving has anything to do with mines or mining then it might refer to the strike of Welsh miners.

The Monthly Circular of the Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Association (April 1898) records that there had not been a major dispute in the Welsh mines for 22 years but that now there were 100,000 men on strike:

'It is not easy to ascertain the exact facts of the controversy. Elaborate manifestoes have been issued by both sides to show on whom the responsibility for the stoppage rests.'

It would seem that the issue was one of wages and, in particular, a sliding scale of pay that the miners wanted abolished.

The strike lasted from the end of March until the early days of September 1898, a period of nearly six months, during which the Welsh miners were generously supported by other workmen, with Northumberland miners contributing more liberally in proportion to its membership than any other district. It is possible, therefore, that this glass is of Northumbrian provenance and engraved in, say, August.

The miners returned to work 'utterly defeated as regards the essential points for which they had contended'. The sliding scale continued but there was an increase of wages of 5%.

Whatever the significance of the inscription, it seems possible that this glass was engraved by the same hand that was responsible for 'Hee's a Jolly good fellow' on the reverse of the 1895 Charles Fenwick glass.

COAL STRIKE SETTLED 1909

Inscription(s) and details

Coal strike settled / July 30, 1909

Miniature tankard. Science Museum, London.

There are two further identical tankards to the one catalogued above in the collection at Woodhorn Mining Museum, Northumberland.

Historical context

We believe the strike referred to here was about the admission of putters to the miners' union.

Putters were young men and boys who supplied the tubs (coal containers) to the hewers (miners at the coal face). Until the beginning of the 19th century, haulage was by sledge but in 1812 George Stephenson introduced rails underground at Killingworth, thereby making the job slightly less arduous. It was, nevertheless, still both arduous and dangerous. The putters, either by hand or by pony, delivered the empty tubs from the end of the line to the hewers, and then removed the full ones. Putting was a job for young men, usually ex-drivers, before going on to hewing. Putters might serve two or three hewers throughout the shift and were liable to be bullied by them, as the hewers were anxious to have plenty of empties ('chumins') available. The putters sat on the wagons ('limbers') with one hand on the tub handle and their heads down. Failure to lower their heads frequently caused injury.

In 1909, probably due to their age, putters were not members of any union but demanded better conditions of work and more money. The putters at Ashington Colliery in Northumberland managed to bring about a regional strike. Their job was such an important part of coal mining that the union was forced to accommodate them and fight for their rights when it was realised that they were more than capable of bringing the whole industry to a standstill *without* the involvement of the union. At Ashington, then the largest colliery in the country (and possibly the world), some thousands of workers were idle for several weeks.

The strike was supposed to end on 30 July 1909 – although internal fighting amongst the group of striking putters delayed their full return to work until 6 August.

Further information

The information above is from Deborah Moffat of Woodhorn Mining Museum. See also the minutes of the Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Association dated 29 October 1909 for a 'Report on Putters' Grievances' and contemporaneous press reports of the Ashington dispute in the Morpeth Herald and Reporter.

Note that there were actually a number of other disputes in the UK mining industry during the summer of 1909. For example, as well as the putters' dispute

in the Northumberland coalfield, described above, there was a dispute over wages going on simultaneously in the Fife coalfield. In Scotland, however, the men decided, on 30 July, *not* to strike. So, even though the date is exactly the same as the date inscribed on these glasses, we believe the items are from the northeast of England and linked to Ashington - for two reasons. Firstly, although a vote had been taken that confirmed the willingness of the Scottish miners to strike, they never actually did so – and so ‘coal strike settled’ seems a slightly odd phrase to use. Secondly, the *style* of these engravings seems to link the glasses fairly conclusively to the northeastern ‘disaster glass genre’. Put another way: if this inscription is linked to the *Scottish* mining industry, it would represent a unique departure from a genre that is, we have found, firmly rooted in northeastern England.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the very few glasses we believe may be of Scottish provenance, see under ‘Death of Robert Burns 1796’ and ‘Guid auld Thornhill’ – both catalogued in Part Three.

END OF THE GREAT COAL STRIKE 1912

Inscription(s) and details

THE GREAT COAL / STRIKE / ENDED APRIL 6 / 1912 [reverse] fern

Small tankard, moulded glass with radial flutes on base. 62mm high and 62mm diameter at the rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

COAL STRIKE / ENDED APRIL 6 / 1912 [reverse] fern

Tankard with a heavy base and an everted rim, 112mm high. Beamish Museum, (1994-40.4).

THE GREATEST COAL WAR / THE WORLDS EVER / KNOWN / ENDED / APRIL 6 1912 [reverse] fern

Tall pub rummer, 158mm high. Beamish Museum, (1973.432).

COAL STRIKE / ENDED APRIL 6 / 1912

A small moulded glass jug, 74mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

THE GREAT COAL / STRIKE / ENDED APRIL 6 / 1912

A straight-sided pub rummer. Private collection: Oxford.

THE GREAT COAL / STRIKE / ENDED APRIL 6 / 1912

A tall glass, with a stem with a central knop. Seen in a Newcastle-upon-Tyne antique shop, 2 October 2006.

Historical context

A 'continuous build-up of grievances, coalowners' attacks, disputes and conflicts' was a feature of the years immediately preceding the great 1912 minimum wage strike. The Coal Mines Act of 1911 was step forward in establishing safety standards in mines but was, in places, inadequately implemented. Only a year later, in 1913, the worst disaster in British mining history occurred at Senghenydd pit in Glamorgan; 439 men perished where the danger of gas explosion had been recognised since 1910.

At the annual conference of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain (MFGB) in 1911, Durham, Lancashire, Cheshire, Somerset and Yorkshire put resolutions on the necessity for a minimum wage and this was resolved. But in Durham especially, the owners insisted that the principle of a minimum wage was unacceptable and that no useful purpose would be served by negotiation. Following a national ballot on strike action and a last-ditch meeting with employers on 7 February 1912 that ended in total deadlock, Prime Minister Asquith offered to mediate, calling all 170 members of the MFGB Conference to London on 27 February. Verbally conceding the principle of a minimum wage, but offering compulsory state arbitration that was rejected by both sides, he was unable to persuade the miners to call off the strike.

On 1 March, 800,000 miners came out, the biggest strike in British history. Soon one million men were out, factories went on short time and train services were cut. The Government called the two sides together on 12, 13 and 14 March but

deadlock persisted. Roy Jenkins, in his biography of Asquith, observes that: 'Like other ministers, both before and after him, Asquith found that he could not break through the stubbornness of the coalowners.' He urged them to pay the minimum of five shillings a shift (and three shillings for boys) that was demanded by the MFGB but this was refused. On 19 March, an emergency Bill was introduced to Parliament that conceded the principle of a minimum wage but no figures were included, leaving the amount to be decided by district agreements. There were hints to the miners that their figure for a minimum wage might be included in an amendment but, despite the hostility of the owners, the dissatisfaction of the miners and the opposition of the Conservatives, the bill was pushed through both houses within a week and became law on 29 March. No figure for a minimum wage was included. A ballot on continuing the strike failed to obtain a two-thirds majority and by the end of April all the miners were back at work.

Further information

See David Temple: Durham Miners' Millennium Book (TUPS Books, pp 78-86).

THE MINERS' SHIFT SYSTEM (DATE 1909-14)

Inscription(s) and details

GET BACK THE 2 SHIFT SYSTEM

Glass seen by John Brooks. Details unrecorded.

Historical context

As a result of the 1908 Mines Act, also known as the Eight Hours Act or the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Act, miners began working in three shifts. In the long discussions that preceded the passing of the Act, and indeed after it became law on 1 January 1910, Northumberland miners in particular were opposed to it. In December 1909 the lodges of the Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Association voted in favour of accepting the terms of the Act but only by a modest majority (308 for acceptance, 276 for rejection); many Northumberland miners came out on strike and discontent rumbled on.

In 1914 a committee of Newbrough Colliery workmen introduced the Coal Miners (Northumberland) Bill in the House of Lords with the object of abolishing the three shift system in Northumberland but their efforts were unsuccessful.

This glass, therefore, is almost certainly of Northumberland provenance and presumably dates from between 1909 and 1914. However, the capital letter style of the engraving is reminiscent of the Woodhorn Colliery glasses of August 1916 and, for that reason, 1914 is considered as the most likely date.

Further information

The minutes of the Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Association.

THE BLACK LIST (DATE UNCERTAIN)

Inscription(s) and details

Keep off / The Black / List [reverse] clover

Miniature tankard. Woodhorn Mining Museum, (ASHMM:2002.3.1). The curious engraving of the capital *K* of *Keep*, with some resemblance to a capital *H*, is identical to that found on glasses commemorating the death of King Edward VII and the coronation of King George V, suggesting that this tankard was engraved in the 20th century.

Historical context

For many years, in both the 19th and 20th centuries, coal owners maintained an unofficial list of men they considered to be key figures in promoting industrial disputes and strikes - the so-called Black List. It was updated and circulated between owners and to be on the Black List was to risk victimisation from the employers.

The treatment of a Christopher Haswell was notorious. He was a member of the executive of the National Miners' Association before and during the strike of 1844 and he lived with his father, also called Christopher, and three brothers at Seghill Colliery. Following the strike, when the four brothers applied for work, the master agreed to find work for them all with the exception of young Christopher. After he had travelled to several collieries in both Durham and Northumberland where he was refused work, he did obtain employment at Seghill in the powder store, handing out the powder and candles. As a single man, he still lived with his father but the old man and his sons were then given a month's notice to quit the colliery.

Young Christopher went to Scotland, thinking that this would spare his father and brothers but the notice was still enforced and the whole family was thrown out of work. They applied for work at many pits in the two northeastern counties but, although there were vacancies, they were repeatedly turned away after giving their names.

A friend of the old man advised him to change his name, as he knew of many men working under false identities, but as a strict Methodist he refused: "I was named Christopher Haswell when I came into the world and will be Christopher Haswell until I go out of it." He ultimately succeeded in getting employment for himself and his family at Charlaw Colliery and was later allowed to return to Seghill by the head viewer, who was impressed by his honesty. His son Christopher, who had married while in Scotland, also returned to Seghill.

Further information

See Richard Fynes: The Miners of Northumberland and Durham (Newcastle: Davis Books, 1986 reprint, first published 1873, Robinson Library, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne: 331.88094288 FYN).

PART THREE

NON-MINING DISASTERS & COMMEMORATIVES

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THOMAS BURT MP	1895
SAMUEL STOREY MP	1895
LORD WARKWORTH (HENRY PERCY)	1895
ROBERTSON EWEN OF ST MARY'S ISLAND	[1895]
JOHN ATKINSON	1896
JARROW BOAT DISASTER	1896
QUEEN VICTORIA'S DIAMOND JUBILEE	1897
WEST CORNFORTH	1898
DEATH OF ISABELLA VASEY	1899
HEBBURN PARK HOSPITAL	1899
THE WAR (ENGLAND ALWAYS READY)	[1899]
TRANSVAAL WAR - BEGINNING	1899
TRANSVAAL WAR - GENERAL BULLER	1899
TRANSVAAL WAR - GENERAL WHITE	1899
TRANSVAAL WAR - 'BOBS AND MAC'	1900
TRANSVAAL WAR - BRITISH FLAG HOISTED AT PRETORIA	1900
DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA	1901
TRANSVAAL WAR - END	1902
(1) CORONATION AND (2) DEATH OF EDWARD V11	1902 + 1910
NEWBIGGIN SEA DISASTER	1904
CRESSWELL SEA (BOATING) DISASTER	1905

DETAILS	DATE
BLYTH SEA DISASTER	1905
DEATH OF LADY GREY	1906
CORONATION OF GEORGE V	1911
SINKING OF THE TITANIC	1912
R.M.S. EMPRESS OF IRELAND	1914
1914-18 WAR	1914
DEATH OF LORD ROBERTS	1914
SINKING OF THE LUSITANIA	1915
DEATH OF LORD KITCHENER	1916
GUID AULD THORNHILL	[Date uncertain]

DEATH OF ROBERT BURNS 1796

Inscription(s) and details

Death of Robert Burns / 1796

Pub rummer seen by John Brookes. Further details unrecorded.

In 2005, a dealer in Norwich sold a similar, if not identical, rummer. He was confident that the glass was manufactured c1895 and it seems almost certain that these glasses were made to commemorate the centenary of the Scottish poet's death.

Historical context

Robert (or 'Rabbie') Burns was born in 1759 in Alloway in Scotland, two and a half miles south of Ayr. His upbringing was humble, his father being a small farmer, but an old woman who lived with the family introduced him to Scottish folklore at an early age.

The death of his father in 1784 forced Robert to farm for himself but the venture failed. However, success and fame for the man who became known as the 'Ploughman Poet' followed publication of his poems and song lyrics. They were written in a style that is variously passionate, romantic, tender, humourous or satirical – and in his native lowland Scots dialect.

Robert died in 1796 of endocarditis (inflammation of the lining of the heart) and is buried in Dumfries but his appeal has endured. He is accepted not only as Scotland's national poet (the 'Bard of Ayrshire') but also as a writer of international stature.

Further information

Readers seeking to know more about the life and works of Robert Burns could do no better than visit the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway. Opened in 2011 by The National Trust for Scotland, the museum contains the best collection of Burns artifacts and original work in the world, supplemented by films and audio presentations.

Notes on possible 'Scottish' glasses

In addition to ***Death of Robert Burns / 1796*** there are three other inscriptions that we have come across so far that might prompt one to consider if the glasses are 'disaster glasses' as we define them here (i.e. as being from the north/northeast of England) or if they are, in fact, of Scottish provenance.

These three additional 'Scottish' inscriptions are:

- ***Auld Lange Syne*** (two variations - see Part Four)
- ***Tak a Wee Drappie*** (two variations - see Part Four) and
- ***Guid auld Thornhill*** (see later in Part Three)

We will almost certainly never know if these glasses are from Scotland. It is possible but the balance of probability is that the majority, at least, are from north/northeast England and that they do, therefore, fit within the 'disaster glass' genre.

Auld Lang Syne can be dismissed quite easily, we feel, as *not* being Scottish. Not only is this a phrase that is quoted widely outside Scotland, we find it as a secondary engraving on the reverse of two Northumbrian glasses – namely Stobswood Church and Prospect Terrace, Amble (both listed in Part Three).

Tak a Wee Drappie is rather more problematic. Certainly 'tak' (like 'bairn' meaning 'young child'; 'gan' or 'gang' meaning 'go' and 'bonny' meaning 'good-looking' and/or 'healthy') is a word common to the vernacular of both northeast England and Scotland. Yet, although this phrase looks like an attempt to reproduce a Scottish accent and does sound distinctly Scottish, there are other considerations that would point to it being from the northeast of England.

Firstly, careful comparison of the capital 'T' on the **Tak a Wee drappie** glass in the East London collection (see Part Four) to the capital 'T' on the 'Success to Charles Fenwick MP 1895' glass (see Part Three) would suggest they are by the same hand – as both 'Ts' are unusually elaborate and idiosyncratic. Since the Fenwick glass is, without doubt, from the Newcastle-upon-Tyne area, the evidence of the engraving points to *both* glasses being of northeastern provenance.

Secondly, we know that the seaside resort of Whitley Bay, just north of Tynemouth, was for many years in the late 19th and early 20th centuries a favourite holiday resort for Scots, especially Glaswegians. Whitley Bay residents (and we have spoken recently to a man whose parents ran a B&B there in the 50s and 60s) still tell of the town being virtually taken over by Scots who filled the hotels and boarding houses in what was known locally as 'Glasgow Week', coinciding with the annual July shut-down of the Clyde shipyards. Local memories do not stretch back to 1894 (which is when one of the **Tak a Wee Drappie** glasses is dated) but it is likely that the Scottish predilection for the area started soon after the railway reached Whitley Bay in 1882. There is no question that for many years the annual influx of the welcome visitors from north of the border would provide a fruitful market place for souvenirs aimed at a Scottish market. This argument is equally valid in respect of the Robert Burns glasses and so it is not, we feel, unreasonable to postulate that both the **Tak a Wee Drappie** glasses and the Burns glasses were engraved in the northeast, perhaps in Whitley Bay itself, for sale to Scottish holidaymakers.

Finally, the background to **Guild auld Thornhill** is set out in some detail under its entry later in Part Three. Although the 'Thornhill' is so far unidentified, as a place or a person, it must be accepted that this glass was, most likely, engraved in Scotland. Is it, perhaps, the work of an itinerant northeastern engraver visiting one of the Scottish towns called Thornhill in the course of an experimental business foray north of the border? We shall never know.

PRIZE FIGHT ON BLYTH LINKS 1849

Inscription(s) and details

Prize fight on Blyth Links / Between Stoke (sic) of Seghill / and Mills of Gateshead / Stopped by Police 1849

Glass seen by John Brooks. Further details unrecorded.

Historical context

The inscription on this glass suggests a posse of policemen forcibly separating two pugilists, dispersing a crowd and, perhaps, making arrests but the truth is much more prosaic. This was, in effect, a non-event, finding no mention in The Newcastle Daily Journal. Neither The Morpeth Herald nor The Blyth Weekly News was published in 1849 but the Newcastle Guardian of Saturday 10 November 1849 reported as follows:

FIGHT PREVENTED.

A fight for £10 a-side was appointed to come off on Blyth links, on Monday last [5 November] between Stoker of Seghill and Mills of Gateshead, both pitmen. A great number of men were brought together from the neighbouring collieries and railway works to witness it, but we are glad to say that the whole were disappointed. As Blyth had obtained an unenviable notoriety some time ago, by being the scene of a brutal fight between Gleghorn and Riley, which ended in the death of the latter, the authorities determined that such an exhibition should not again take place with their knowledge. Accordingly the constables of Cowpen, Blyth and Newsham were early astir on the above morning, and having procured the assistance of the coast-guard officers and four police officers from North Shields, a sharp look-out was kept in different directions during the day, and the designs of the parties were completely frustrated.

JOHN CLAY – FIRST MAYOR OF SOUTH SHIELDS - 1850

Inscription(s) and details

John Clay first Mayor of South Shields 1850

Glass of unknown type recorded by E.L.Thornborrow (see 'Further information' below.)

Historical context

John Clay was born in South Shields in 1802. He married the daughter of a shipbuilder and they had eleven children.

In 1840, following a resolution proposed by Clay, a committee was formed to establish South Shields as an independent borough, strengthening its position in relation to Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the struggle for dominance over the river Tyne.

The incorporation issue was won when, on 5 September 1850, a charter was granted and, at the first Council meeting in the Police Buildings on 9 November, Clay was appointed an Alderman and immediately and unanimously voted Mayor. The Mayoral chain is inscribed: *This chain presented to John Clay Esq. the first mayor of South Shields and his successors, by the Ladies of the Borough, 10th November 1851.*

John Clay was manager of the Northumberland and District Bank with an office on King Street and represented South Shields Corporation on the River Tyne Commission from 1852 to 1855. A man of some substance, he owned a brewery in Holborn, a farm in Marsden and a shipyard near Stone Quay. A street in South Shields was named after him. He moved to London in the mid 1850s and died in Crawley in Sussex in February 1887.

A full-length portrait of John Clay hangs in South Shields Museum.

Further information

This glass is one of several listed under 'Local events commemorated on engraved glasses' at the end of an article: [E L Thornborrow: Some Late Victorian Wine Glasses from South Shields District](#) (South Shields Archaeological and Historical Society Papers, 1959; Vol. 1, No.7: 25-29). The author does not specify the type of glass and the inscription is unlikely to be exactly recorded.

TYNE DOCK OPENING 1859

Inscription(s) and details

The Opening of Tyne Dock 1859

Glass of unknown type recorded by E.L.Thornborrow (see 'Further information' below.)

Historical context

Tyne Dock lies on the south bank of the river Tyne, close to its mouth and adjacent to Jarrow Slake. It occupied some 50 acres and its purpose was to allow the loading of ships with coal from collieries lying south of the river. Five railway viaducts facilitated the rapid transport of the coal to four jetties where 36 ships could be loaded at the same time, exporting between 12,000 and 15,000 tons of coal a day. Construction had begun in 1855, financed by the North Eastern Railway Company.

At 2.15 pm on Thursday 3 March 1859, a special train left Newcastle Central Station conveying those gentlemen who were to take part in the opening ceremony. The passengers included Lord Ravensworth; the Earl of Carlisle; Sir William Armstrong; the Mayors of Newcastle and Gateshead and the Chairman and directors of the NE Railway Company. The Newcastle Journal reports the occasion at considerable length and observes that: 'The vessels at anchor in the river presented an unusually gay appearance, dressed overall as they were with bunting.'

On arrival at High Station in South Shields the company walked to the jetty behind the band of the Rifle Brigade (who were at that time locally stationed) playing *The Keel Row*. The main dignitaries then embarked on the steamer *Vanguard* that toured round the dock followed by the *Gosforth* carrying the band and several other steamers packed with VIPs.

After a salute of 16 guns the party disembarked to inspect the engine house, pumps and the Armstrong-designed hydraulic cranes before being greeted by the Mayor of South Shields. According to the Newcastle Journal: 'The inhabitants of South Shields observed the afternoon as a holiday. The weather proved extremely auspicious for the occasion and everything passed off in a satisfactory manner.'

That evening the directors of the NE Railway company and 'a numerous and influential party of shareholders and gentry of the neighbourhood to the number of about two hundred celebrated the opening by a sumptuous banquet at the Central Station Hotel, Newcastle'. The Newcastle Journal gives a long list of the guests (that includes not a single female) and lists also the toasts that were drunk in the following order:

The Army and Navy!
Success to the Tyne Docks!
The North Eastern ports!
Mining and manufacturing interests!
The North Eastern Railway Company! ...

... and by the Chairman of the NERC in responding:

All other railway companies!

Meanwhile, the event was celebrated in South Shields by the Mayor presiding over a public dinner at the Golden Lion Hotel in King Street.

Further information

This glass is one of several listed under 'Local events commemorated on engraved glasses' at the end of an article: E L Thornborrow: Some Late Victorian Wine Glasses from South Shields District (South Shields Archaeological and Historical Society Papers, 1959; Vol. 1, No.7: 25-29). The author does not specify the type of glass and the inscription is unlikely to be exactly recorded.

The Newcastle Journal of 5 March 1895 gives more information about the Tyne Dock opening.

DEATH OF NORTHUMBERLAND POET ROBERT STORY 1860

Inscription(s) and details

Robert Story / The Northumberland Poet / Died 1860 [reverse] fern⁵⁵

Rounded funnel pub rummer, 100mm high on short stem. One of two glasses brought to Woodhorn Mining Museum by a lady, September 2003.

Historical context

Robert Story, the youngest of nine children, was born into relative poverty on 17 October 1795.⁵⁶ His father, Robin, was a Northumbrian peasant; his mother, Mary Hooliston, was a Scottish servant girl from Lauder. She was almost 50 years old when Robert was born. The family lived at Wark Common and Robert attended Wark School at the age of five or six. He was a shy, sensitive child who learned to read at an early age and who progressed rapidly at school. This was a time of famine in northern England and the family was impoverished and malnourished. His father obtained a job as a servant to a Mr Grey near Twizel Bridge, between Coldstream and Norham, and it is said that the poet much admired the ruins of Twizel Castle nearby.

Robert next attended school at Crookham (on the A697 near Etal) but he was not happy and played truant. He befriended a lame fiddler, Doddy, who excited him with tales of his travels and who took him on one of his journeys when he visited many places and met interesting characters that inspired at least one of Robert's poems. After a year, the family moved to Howtel (on the B6352, southwest of Flodden) where Robert again went to school and learned arithmetic.

At the age of eleven he went to live with his sister near Kelso in the Scottish borders where he worked as a nurseryman. He then returned to his father, now at Reedsford, a short distance south of Howtel. He worked keeping sheep and cattle but was also writing poetry.

When his father died in May 1809 Robert had to provide for himself and since he was 'educated' his mother arranged for him to become a schoolmaster (age 14!) at Humbleton, just north of Wooler, where she rented a dwelling. He made friends with a young local poet, John Smith, and was influenced by a Melrose poet, Andrew Scott. He taught at a school in Akeld, just north of Humbleton, before moving to Roddam, south of Wooler, where he had up to 50 pupils. He next moved Warley Academy near Halifax but was dismissed after three weeks 'for want of Latin' and was briefly at Castleton Lodge near Leeds where his rough

⁵⁵ This glass may have been engraved in 1860 – or perhaps it dates from 1885, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Story's death?

⁵⁶ Northumbrian poet Robert Story, 1795-1860, should not be confused with an almost direct contemporary with the same name. Robert Story, 1790–1859, was a Scottish writer and a graduate of Edinburgh University who was born just north of Northumberland, in the Scottish borders, at Yetholm, Roxburghshire. To add to confusion, both men worked as schoolmasters and private tutors to wealthy families.

Northumbrian character was thought unsuitable. He left amicably to return home in June 1815.

After haymaking and turnip hoeing, and failing to obtain employment in Wooler Fair (where he stood with a sprig of thorn in his hat – the traditional sign that an individual was looking for work), he went back to teaching and in 1817 he was at West Allerdean, south of Berwick, before becoming a private tutor to a rich farmer. His poem, “Harvest” was published and sold about 300 copies. Dismissed from his tutoring post, he returned to Roddam where he fell out with General Orde at Roddam Hall and allegedly got one of his maids pregnant. After writing a satire on Orde he fled to Newcastle before going to Skipton and then to Gargrave, a short distance north, in April 1820. Here he stayed for 23 years, working as a schoolmaster, marrying Ellen Ellison (in May 1823), having a large number of children by her and writing some of his best poetry. His income initially was five shillings (25p) a week, less two shillings rent, and he was also obliged to pay money for an illegitimate child. But, in time, his circumstances improved. By now he could cope with Latin and French and he was also teaching navigation. His poems were being published in the Newcastle Magazine and he was also working as Gargrave Parish Clerk.

But about 1830 his prosperity was interrupted. The Reform Bill of that year aroused controversy and Story expressed his views so forcibly that he became unpopular in Gargrave, being hailed as the ‘Poet of Conservatism’. His teaching career was damaged by his political opinions and so he and his family moved to London where he worked in the Audit Office. In 1844 he spent a holiday in Northumberland among scenes of his youth and this was repeated several times. He visited Paris in 1854. In 1859, en route by steamer from London to Aberdeen, he became ill and his health thereafter declined. He died of ‘disease of the heart’ at Battersea in London on 7 July 1860, and was buried in Brompton cemetery. A short biography was prefixed to a selection of his ‘Poems’ edited by John James in 1861.

Further information

Biographical details can be obtained from John James: The Lyrical and other Minor Poems of Robert Story with a Sketch of his Life and Writings (Longman, London, 1861 - Northern Counties Library, Morpeth, 821 L).

Morpeth Library also hold in their reference section The Poetical Works of Robert Story (Longman, London, 1857 - L821 REF) - a volume of 416 pages with poems dating from 1816 to 1857.

Another copy of the Poetical Works is in the Robinson Library, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Victorian Special Collection, V821.89.STO).

MILBURN PLACE TIME GUN 1863

Inscription(s) and details

Time Gun Milburn Place / Ballast Hill / North Shields / First Fired / 1863

[reverse] fern

Glass seen by John Brooks. No further details recorded.

Time Gun North Shields / Stopped Firing / 13th August 1905

Pint tumbler, Broadfield House Glass Museum, Kingswinford.⁵⁷

Historical context

In the Local History Department of North Tyneside Central Library, North Shields, there is a file, One o'clock Gun, containing press and other cuttings together with a map and an illustration. However, despite all this information, some precise details relating to the gun remain obscure.

Originally, it seems there was a six-pounder gun that was replaced by a nine-pounder, both fired by hand. But in 1863, coinciding with a meeting of the British Association in Newcastle, a 32-pounder gun was installed on Ballast Hill and was fired daily at 1pm by an electrical current originating in the Edinburgh Observatory under the direction of Professor Piazzi Smyth. The first firing was on 18 August 1863 and the North & South Shields Gazette of 27 August reported that Professor Smyth, having demonstrated that an electrical spark could fire guns in both North Shields and Newcastle, observed that these guns, if permitted to fire on Sundays, “would give an audible hint to the congregation that no tedious preacher would be able to resist.”

The gun was fired daily for the duration of the British Association meeting but soon not only North Shields and Newcastle but also Sunderland had time guns fired from Edinburgh Observatory and applications from other sites suggested that shortly there would be no fewer than seven guns fired from the same source (North & South Shields Gazette, 3 September 1863).

Smith's Dock Journal of January 1931 states that the North Shields gun was first fired either on 18 August or 9 December but the North & South Shields Gazette of 15 December reports that the gun was now fired by ‘direct current’ from Greenwich Observatory, suggesting that Greenwich took over from Edinburgh on 9 December 1863.

On 20 May 1864, during a severe thunderstorm, the gun was accidentally fired by lightning and in 1865 it did not fire on 5 and 6 November “for want of electrical

⁵⁷ In September 2006, the Director of Broadfield House Glass Museum wrote to John Brooks to say that he had found this glass in the museum basement. The question arises as to whether the two glasses were inscribed at the same time (i.e. in 1905) but, unfortunately, we no longer have the precise details of the first item and so we are unable to make any comparison.

current” (Shields Daily News, 6 November 1865). In 1869 it was silent “for one or two months” due to lack of funds but resumed firing when the funding issue was settled (Shields Daily News, 16 March 1889).

The last firing was on 31 August 1905 and the gun was removed on 9 September 1905.⁵⁸

‘Ballast Hill’ was precisely that - a substantial pile, perhaps 150 feet high, made up of ballast brought back mainly in ships that had exported coal from Tyneside. A photograph in the North Tyneside Central Library file shows the gun at ground level and, in the background, men demolishing the hill.

⁵⁸ Note the different versions of the date of the last firing – the second glass listed on the previous page versus the local records in North Tyneside Central Library. The most likely explanation – although purely speculative - is that the engraver simply transposed the ‘1’ and the ‘3’ in error.

SHERBURN HOSPITAL CHURCH DESTROYED BY FIRE 1865

Inscription(s) and details

Sherburn / Hosp Church / Destroyed By Fire / 4 Dec 1865 [reverse] leaf frond
Rounded bowl pub rummer, 99mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

Historical context

Sherburn Hospital, two miles south-east of Durham City, was established in or about 1181 by Bishop Pudsey for the reception of lepers and accommodated 65 sufferers, both male and female. Pudsey gave to the hospital a considerable amount of land (including Garmondsway Moor, some 1,100 acres) most of which is still owned by the charity, a watermill on the Sherburn House Beck and the tithes of three or four churches. The establishment included three priests and four clerics and divine offices were celebrated for leprous brethren and sisters. In 1434 a bill from the Pope authorised a new constitution, one of the reasons being that very few persons afflicted with leprosy could be found. There were now four priests, four clerks and two boy assistants, two lepers if they could be found and 13 poor men who were also sustained in the hospital. Following abuses of the administration of the funds of the hospital, an Act of Parliament was passed in 1585 for its regulation - and those regulations were, from time to time, revised by the bishops of Durham. According to the 1585 Act, the establishment was to be known as 'The Master and Brethren of Christ's Hospital in Sherborne near Durham'. 30 named brethren were incorporated. Great damage during Civil War may account for the disappearance of earlier records.

In 1857, the Charity Commissioners put a new administration scheme forward. The number of brethren was to be 30 – 15 living in and 15 out. A hospital in the modern sense was to be constructed; this was completed in 1863 but did not open until 1872. Patients were to be styled 'inmates' (not exceeding 35 in number) with approximately equal numbers of male and female. In 1858, a dispensary providing free medical treatment for the poor was created and a year later a medical officer was appointed. Patient numbers grew; in 1880 a new building was erected and at the turn of the century about 18,000 consultations per annum were being held. Shortly after the end of the First World War Stanley Ritson, a surgeon, was appointed as Medical Officer. In 1925 the hospital was recognised for teaching, and tonsil and adenoid cases were treated 'by contract' for Durham County Council. Dr Ritson continued working until the surgical unit (and the dispensary) closed in 1946 with the introduction of the NHS.

In 1867 estimates were accepted for the construction of a private gas works and the introduction of main water supply; the gas works continued until 1920 when mains electricity was brought in. Sherburn House had its own railway station, a quarter of a mile from the hospital on the Durham and Sunderland Railway and in 1887 six trains passed each way on weekdays only. The station closed in 1953.

Today, Sherburn Charity operates a 62-bed residential care home for the elderly in the large 19th century building that was originally the medical and surgical unit. A building erected in 1832 as a residence for the Master is now divided to provide accommodation for him together with four flats for retired clergy. A few yards from

the care home is the chapel, built in the 12th century. There is a chaplain on site who conducts religious services. All the buildings are set in 15 acres of garden and woodland.

The chapel [church] and the fire

C W Gibby⁵⁹ states that the chapel was badly damaged by fire in 1866; the inscription on this glass quotes 1865 but, in fact, the fire started in the early hours of Sunday, 4 December 1864. About 3am the Master, disturbed by a crackling noise and looking from his window, saw flames bursting through the chapel roof. A mounted messenger was dispatched to Durham for the fire brigade and this was on site 'within an hour' by which time the whole roof had fallen in and, fanned by a brisk breeze, the building was soon almost totally destroyed. A fire had been lit the evening before by the chaplain to warm the church for divine service the next day but the flue from the 'heating apparatus' that ran under the north aisle became so overheated that its brickwork became red-hot, setting fire to paneling on the wall immediately above. From here the fire spread to the pews.

This was not the first time that fire had damaged the chapel. There were incidents five and 14 years previously - but neither was on the scale of the catastrophe of 1864. It was not until 1867 that an estimate of £1,590 for restoration was agreed and the work was completed in 1868. Only the south wall of the nave and the lower part of the tower survive as original.

Further information

To commemorate the 800th anniversary of the charity in 1981, the Governors commissioned Dr C W Gibby to write a short history of Sherburn House. It is now out of print but the full text is available on the web - www.sherburnhouse.org/history.htm - and the history above is taken from this source.

Very similar accounts of the fire are to be found in the Friday, 9 December 1864 editions of both the Durham Chronicle and the Durham County Advertiser.

⁵⁹ Dr C W Gibby – author of a short history of Sherburn House.

Inscription(s) and details

Jesse Dawson Ewen / St Mary's Island / 1879

Inscription enclosed within ferns [reverse] a swan and some leaves
Straight-sided tumbler, 104mm high. Private collection: Durham City.

Historical context

We cannot be absolutely sure of the identity, or even gender, of the individual commemorated here, or why the year 1879 was significant in his or her life, but we have found two intriguing possibilities.

The first possibility that springs to mind is that 'Jesse' was a member of the (in)famous Ewen family of St Mary's Island.⁶⁰ However, although the presence of the Ewens on the island from 1852 until they were evicted in 1895 is well documented, the name 'Jess(i)e' does not appear in any of the records. No Jess(i)e Ewen was resident on the island, for example, at the time of the 1891 census. Yet the same census lists a male descendent of John Ewen as having 'Dawson' as a first name suggesting that, quite apart from the St Mary's Island connection, the individual commemorated on this glass was related to this family.

No Jesse or Jessie Ewen was born, married or died in England or Wales in 1879 (source: St. Catherine's House Index). However, the 1881 census lists a family of Ewens living in the west end of Newcastle-upon-Tyne at 53, Bell Street. They may perhaps have been two brothers with their wives and children, and all are listed as having been born in Scotland. They were James (27), George (23), Sarah (23), Mary (23), Francis (1 month) and Jessie (3). This means Jessie had been born in 1878.

We know George Robertson Ewen⁶¹ had been born in Scotland and that in 1879 he was landlord of the pub on St Mary's Island, helped by his son, John. Perhaps the Newcastle Ewens were cousins or Scottish relatives of some sort who, like many others, visited the island (especially on Sundays) and a commemorative glass bearing the year of Jessie's first birthday, or perhaps her Christening, was engraved for her?

This hypothesis may be challenged on two counts: we must assume that the spelling 'Jesse' is a mistake in the engraving but, more important, the middle name 'Dawson' does not appear as part of the name of the child listed in the 1881 census.

The second possibility is that 'Jesse' was a nickname, as opposed to a given name. We know that the names 'Jessie' or 'Jesse' were used widely in 19th

⁶⁰ For more details about the Ewen family, see under 'Robertson Ewen of St Mary's Island 1895' – catalogued later in Part Three.

⁶¹ See under 'Robertson Ewen of St Mary's Island 1895 – catalogued later in Part Three.

century Scotland as abbreviations, or pet names, for both 'Janet' and 'Jane' (source: www.behindthename.com). This tradition is well established – to the extent that the site www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk advises amateur genealogists to 'beware of forename variants' when researching their Scottish antecedents: 'Jane', it advises, 'can be recorded as Jean, Janet or Jessie' even in formal records and/or on gravestones.

Armed with this new information, we researched northeastern births again – using www.ancestry.co.uk and find a record of a 'Jane Dawson Ewen' born in June 1878 in Tynemouth, Northumberland. This seems to be a more likely candidate for the first owner of the glass – particularly when we find that there is also a link to St Mary's Island. Jane had, we believe, two siblings: a younger sister, Dorothy Dawson Ewen, born in 1880, and an older brother called, significantly, *Robertson* Ewen, born in 1876.

It is plausible, then, that the Tynemouth-based Ewens were *also* relatives of the island Ewens; that their baby daughter Jane was known to the family as 'Jesse' and that somebody, possibly her island cousins, presented her with a souvenir of St Mary's for some reason we will never know. It may have been a first birthday present, or a Christening gift? Or maybe both Jane and her three year-old brother were given similar glasses and that somewhere out there, there is a 'Robertson Ewen / St Mary's Island / 1879' glass waiting to be discovered?

JOHN PATTERSON CONNELL DROWNED 1880

Inscription(s) and details

John Patterson Connell / Who was Drowned / 22 July 1880 Cambois / Age 17 years [reverse] *Gone / But Not / Forgotten* (sic) above a probable clover-leaf with scrolling.

Private collection: Oxford.

In memory of John Patterson Connell / 22 July 1880 / Quality Row, Cambois

A glass (probably a pub rummer) with the above inscription was shown to Barry Mead, the Director of Woodhorn Mining Museum, by a lady at a WI meeting in 2003.

Historical context

Cambois (pronounced "Kummus") is on the Northumbrian coast between Blyth and Ashington - and the site of this tragedy was the local beach lying between the mouths of the rivers Blyth and Wansbeck.

The incident was reported in The Morpeth Herald as follows:

BATHING ACCIDENT ON CAMBOIS SANDS

On Thursday afternoon, much excitement was created in the Cambois and Blyth district owing to a fatal bathing accident occurring on the beach at Cambois. The unfortunate young man is named John Connell, and was a joiner at the Colliery workshops; and it appears that at about three o'clock in the afternoon - the weather being very warm - he went to the beach to bathe. He had been perspiring when he went into the water, and the shock to the system is supposed to have caused cramp, as he was soon observed to be in difficulties. An effort was then made by a man named John Crawford, an expert swimmer, who at once went to the youth's assistance, but it was seen that the strong undercurrent of water, which runs off that place was gradually drawing the drowning lad underneath the surface. Crawford however, at great risk to his own life, dived down and caught the youth by the hair of the head, and brought him to the surface. Further help had by this time arrived, and John Hudson and John Anderson, who had witnessed the scene, dashed into the water, and Connell was then got to the shore. Medical assistance was immediately in attendance and every effort was used to restore animation, but it proved useless. The body was then conveyed to the house of the parents in Quality Row, Cambois. Deceased was a young man of great promise, and was a son of Mr. Robert Connell, overman at Cambois Colliery.

Further information

From The Morpeth Herald and Reporter, 24 July 1880.

DEATH OF VIOLET SMITH 1882

Inscription(s) and details

Violet Smith / Died Jan 7th 1882 / At Seaham Colliery / Aged 38 years

A vase, 245mm high, on a short, knopped stem. The inscription is surrounded by ferns. Beamish Museum (no accession number).

Historical context

This death is reported in the Deaths column of The Durham Chronicle of 13 June 1882 – curiously more than five months after it happened. Violet Smith was the wife of a Police Sergeant Smith. No other details are known.

VICTORIA HALL DISASTER 1883

Inscription(s) and details

Victoria Hall / Disaster June 16 . 1883 / 200 children lost there [sic] lives / Sunderland [reverse] flower with three petals on stem with two small leaves
Vaguely ogee bowl pub rummer, 97mm high and 63mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Victoria Hall / Disaster June 16 . 1883 / 200 children lost their lives / Sunderland

Barrel-shaped tumbler in Sunderland Museum (J17 326). This inscription is replicated on a pub rummer with a vertical fern on the reverse held in a private collection in Nottingham and on a rounded funnel pub rummer with a clover on the reverse in a private collection in Durham City.

Victoria / Hall Disaster / 16 June 1883 / 180 Children / Suffocate [reverse]
vertical fern

Tall pub rummer, 122mm high and 57mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Victoria Hall / Disaster 16 June 1883 / 182 Children Lost

Tumbler recorded by John Brooks. This inscription is replicated on a rounded bowl pub rummer held in a private collection in Oxford and on a pub rummer in Beamish Museum (1/30/1).

Victoria Hall / Disaster June 16 1883 / 200 children lost theee (sic) lives / Sunderland / 1883 [reverse] three-leafed clover

Small rounded bowl rummer, 95mm high. Private collection: East London.

Historical context

This was a major disaster reported not only in the local newspapers but also in the national press (e.g. The Times of London) and prompting a message of condolence from Queen Victoria. The Newcastle Daily Journal of 18 June devoted the whole of page three and one column of page four to the event and there was further reportage in the 19 and 20 June editions.

Victoria Hall was the main public hall in Sunderland. It held about 3,000 people, with more than 1,000 on the ground floor or body of the hall, about 600 in the dress circle and about 1,000 in the gallery. There was also substantial standing room at all levels.

On the afternoon of 16 June 1883, more than 2,000 children were in the hall together with a few adults to see an entertainment given by a company from the Tynemouth Aquarium called The Fays. This offered: 'The greatest treat for children ever given. Conjuring, Talking Waxworks, Living Marionettes, The Great Ghost Illusion &c. Every child will stand a chance of receiving a handsome present.'

At the end of the show, dolls and other toys were thrown from the stage amongst those in the body of the hall. When they saw this, the children in the gallery, not

unsurprisingly, left their seats and rushed towards the staircase to get down to the ground floor. Some children later stated that someone on the platform actually called out to the gallery occupants to come downstairs for their presents.

The crowd of excited children hurried down the top flight of stairs, along a long passage and down the second flight of stairs where their progress was suddenly stopped at a swing door - fixed by a bolt into the floor leaving only a gap of about 20 inches. The stairs and passageway quickly filled up with about 400 children, the ones at the back not realising that the ones at the front were trapped and could go no further.

Soon the children's cries for help raised the alarm. The hall-keeper opened the door between the long passage and the dress circle lobby, relieving the pressure - but only then was the extent of the catastrophe realised. So tightly were the children wedged in that 'it was with great difficulty that the mass of trapped individuals was extricated and carried into the lobby'. After lifting up about 200 children, all alive but some injured, the lower mass of mainly dead children was reached, but it was an hour before all were removed and the bolted door reached.

It is not stated in the official account why it was not possible to approach the victims from the far side of the bolted door but, presumably, the pressure of bodies against a door that opened inwards would have precluded this. The underlying cause of the tragedy was set out in The Sunderland Post, quoted by The Newcastle Daily Journal: 'It seems that one purpose of the door is to restrict the rush of people ascending to the pay-wicket. It is the custom to fix the door whenever [there is] a public gathering ... we believe it is also the custom to raise the bolt to allow the door to swing open before audiences are dismissed ... It is the parties that hire the hall who control ... the entry and exit of the people. The hall-keeper has nothing to do with these arrangements ... If it is assumed that ... the bolt had been left in the floor after the occasion for its use had ceased, and had forgotten to be raised before the children began to crowd down from the gallery, the circumstances of the disaster become as clear as day.'

Most of the children who died were aged between seven and ten years old and none was more than 14. Several sibling pairs died and one family lost four children:

Age of child	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
Number who died	1	1	6	13	26	23	37	36	19	14	5	2

Sunderland Museum holds a number of artifacts including an illustrated poster listing the names of the victims; memorial cards; an original ticket for the performance; a picture of the hall and stairway; a handbill of 'Lines on the Dreadful Calamity' and a reproduction of The Sunderland Herald & Daily Post account, printed on silk.

As a direct result of this tragedy, legislation was passed in Parliament requiring all places of public entertainment to have adequate access and that all doors should open outwards. Meanwhile, donations to a relief fund came from all over the country; the Queen herself sent £50.

Following the disaster a white marble statue of a mother cradling her dead child was sculpted and erected in Mowbray Park in Sunderland, paid for by donations from a shocked public. The statue fell out of favour in the 1930s when, vandalised, weather-beaten and considered too sombre for its surroundings, it was moved two miles away to a cemetery. There it suffered more vandalism. But in April 2002, 183 children (one for each life lost) took part in a rededication ceremony. The statue had been restored at a cost of £63,000 and replaced on its original site, a short distance from where the Victorian children died.

Further information

The glasses recorded shown some discrepancies in the number of children who died and this confusion is evident in other memorabilia.

Some of the glasses catalogued above, presumably engraved very shortly following the event and before the facts were properly established, record 200 fatalities while the aforementioned 'Lines on the Dreadful Calamity' handbill says 'about 200'.

Meanwhile, 181 names, ages and addresses are listed on the poster in Sunderland Museum but a memorial card is 'In loving remembrance of 182 children'. This total of 182 is found on other glasses, but so is the number 180 (see the example catalogued above).

The final official death toll appears to be 183 - made up of 69 girls and 114 boys - perhaps after the delayed death of one or more children?

JOHN CLAVERING 1883

Inscription(s) and details

John Clavering / Cramlington / 1883 flanked by ferns [reverse] ferns

Heavy tumbler with straight, sloping sides and twelve cut flutes at the base. The capacity is less than half pint, say 250 ml. 118mm high and 74mm diameter at rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

Reference to the 1881 census establishes that a John Clavering, age 34 and a joiner by occupation, was living in Seghill (a mile or two from Cramlington) at the time. He had two daughters - Annie, age three, born in Cramlington and Elizabeth, age 11 months, born in Seghill. It seems very likely that this is the man commemorated on the glass.

However, John Clavering did not die in 1883 (General Records Office) and we have not found his grave in Seghill churchyard. Nor was any John Clavering born in 1883, (excluding the possibility that this glass refers to a son of the joiner) and no John Clavering married in 1883 (St. Catherine's House Index).

We can only speculate. What event in 1883 prompted this glass? Did John Clavering move house to Cramlington? Or set up business? Or perhaps it was simply a birthday or Christmas gift?

OPENING OF THE ALBERT EDWARD DOCK 1884

Inscription(s) and details

Albert / Edward Dock opened 21 aug / 1884 [reverse] fern
Glass seen by John Brooks. Type not recorded.

Historical context

The Royal visit to Tyneside of the Prince and Princess (Alexandra) of Wales together with their two sons, Prince Albert Victor and Prince George (later King George V), was extensively covered by the Newcastle Daily Journal in their editions of 20, 21 and 22 August 1884.

The accounts even go into details of the numerous street decorations and list not only the guests at the various functions but also the menus for the dinners and luncheons.

The Royal party stayed at Cragside as the guests of Lord Armstrong, travelling each day into Newcastle from Rothbury by special train. (The Princesses Louise, Victoria and Maude were also with their parents but do not appear to have attended the functions in Newcastle.)

After dinner (we include the menu at the end of this section – over the page) and a night at Cragside, the Royal party arrived in Newcastle at noon on 20 August where they opened Jesmond Dene, a gift of Lord Armstrong, as a park. They then lunched (*Poissons: x2, Entrees et Viands Variees: x 14, Entremets: x7, Dessert*) at St George's Hall, the drill hall of the Newcastle Volunteers, before opening the Natural History (Hancock) Museum and finally the Reference Department of the public library in New Bridge St. They then returned to Cragside for dinner.

On 21 August, back in Newcastle, they embarked on the steamer *Para-e-Amazonas*, a luxurious vessel chartered for the purpose and appropriately furnished and decorated, and sailed down the Tyne to Coble Dene. Here they found that the new dock was 'gaily decorated with flags and [that it] presented a gay appearance'.

At 2.20pm the ship arrived at the main opening and, slowly steaming into the dock, cut a ribbon stretched across the tidal entrance. The Prince then named the dock "The Albert Edward Dock" and declared it open.

A banner was unfolded bearing the words: 'The dock is declared open by HRH the Prince of Wales' and a royal salute was fired by a detachment of the Tynemouth Artillery Volunteers as the Royal steamer moved to her mooring place near to the luncheon pavilion. (Again, the menu for the lunch is recorded and we include it, over the page.)

The Royal party left the northeast for Edinburgh on 22 August.

Menu at Cragside - 19 August 1884 (24 covers)

HORS D'OEUVRES – Huitres au naturel
POISSONS – Turbot farci a la Normande, Rouget a l'Italienne
POTAGES – Tortue Claire, Crème de Volaille a la Princesse
ENTREES – Coquille de Foie Gras a la Strasberg, Cotolettes d'Agneau a la Piccolominie
RELEVES – Poulardes a la Montmorencie, Jambon au vin de Madere, Hauche de Venaison roti, Rot Grouse, Tomates a l'Espagnol
ENTREMETS – Gelees de Maraquin aux Poches, Poudings a la Venitienne, Souffle Glace au Chocolat, Talmouse a la Sefton
GLACES – Brown Bread, Cream, Raspberry and Currant Water

Menu at the Albert Edward Dock (printed on lavender and white satin with hand-painted coats of arms) - 21 August 1884

Potage Tortue Claire et Gras Vert
-
Tranche de Saumon Ecosais, Sauce Montpelier, Filets de Soles a la Venitienne, Salad Francaise
-
Hure de Sanglier, Filet de Boeuf a la Jardiniere, Galantine de Volaille a la Moderne, Pate de Gibier au Fume, Quartiers d'Agneau, Cotes et Ronds de Boeuf a la Garde de Roi, Paons des Indes decors, Piece de Boeuf a la Chasseur, Pate de Pigeonneaux Bordelaises, Chapon du Mans aux Cressons, Grouse et Poulets Rotis, Legumes Varies
-
Aspic aux Huitres, Langoust a la F and F, Mayonnaise de Homards a la Wolferunnen,
Terrine de Foie Gras
-
Bavarois aux Chocolat, Charlotte aux Fraises, Compot aux Fruits, Souffle aux Apricots, Tourte a la Allemande, Crème a la l'Imperatrice, Gelee Doree, Patisserie Parisienne
-
Dessert et Café Gloria

VINS: Johnnesberger Schloswein 1875, Champagne, Heidsdeck Dry Monopole 1872, Ch. Leoville 1864, Cognac Vieux 1857

Further information

The Newcastle Daily Journal for 20, 21 and 22 August 1884.

WRECK OF THE SS REGIAN 1884

Inscription(s) and details

S.S.Regiau (sic) / *Wrecked upon / The Bondicar Rock / Between Broomhill / and Amble / 1884* [reverse] vertical ferns

Bucket bowl, large pub rummer. This glass is illustrated in Charles R Hajdamach: British Glass: 1800-1914 (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2003, black & white plate 152). Private collection of the author.

Historical context

It is odd that this incident apparently found no mention in The Blyth Weekly News although the paper did report several named vessels in distress at this time following severe gales along the northeast coast. But the Newcastle Daily Journal covered the episode both in its general pages and in its 'Shipping Intelligence'. The *SS Regian*, under the command of Captain Stodart, was a barquentine-rigged steamer, registered in Liverpool, on its way from Calcutta to Dundee with a cargo of jute. Dundee was, at the time, a major centre for the manufacture of sacking, canvas and linoleum, all using jute as raw material.

At six o'clock on the evening of 5 November 1884 she ran aground on rocks about two miles south of Coquet Island. The newspaper states the site of the wreck to be Hadston Skeers (sic) rather than Bondicar Rock. Modern maps show Bondi Carrs rocks to be slightly north of the separate Hadston Carrs rocks, the latter being almost due east of Broomhill.

Five feet of water flooded 'the second compartment' and part of the cargo was jettisoned. The crew, numbering 33 hands, was taken off 'by rocket apparatus' according to one report. At any rate, the Hauxley lifeboat landed some members of the crew and the rest were put on board the tug *Pactolus* by the ship's boat. They were brought to the Harbour Inn in Amble. There were some hopes that a part of the cargo could be saved, albeit damaged, but the vessel was a total wreck. It is not mentioned in the surviving wrecks recorded by Ron Young (see under 'Further information', below) and therefore must either have broken up completely in the weather or been salvaged in some form.

Further information

See the Newcastle Daily Journal of Thursday 6 November 1884; P Collings: The Illustrated Dictionary of Northeast Shipwrecks (undated, ISBN 0.9511681.1.8, Blyth Library, 910.450 Loc. Col. Ref.) and Ron Young: Shipwrecks of the Northeast Coast Vol. I – 1770-1917 (Tempus, 2000).

BISLEY HOTEL (c1885)

Inscription(s) and details

Bisley Hotel / Blaydon

Rounded bowl pub rummer with oval flutes on side of bowl. 107mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

Historical context

Bisley Shooting Ground occupies some 3,000 acres of Surrey Heath, 30 miles from London, and is 'Europe's Premier Shooting Ground'. The original 'colonial' style clubhouse was built in 1865 on Wimbledon Common but as Wimbledon grew larger the situation became dangerous. A gravedigger was shot in the shoulder and when the local MP received a bullet through his top hat the decision was made to move to Bisley in 1895. The clubhouse was dismantled and re-erected at Bisley - but back to front by mistake. In 1890, the United Kingdom National Rifle Association Championship was inaugurated and in 1908, Bisley hosted the shooting competitions of the London Olympic Games.

Meanwhile, in Blaydon-on-Tyne in the northeast of England, a coaching inn called the Bee Hive on Bridge Street was demolished in 1894. It was probably then more than 200 years old and coaches running from Hexham to Newcastle had stopped there twice daily. The last landlord was an Edward Adams, *a keen marksman who had competed successfully at Bisley on several occasions*. So, when the Bee Hive licence was transferred to a new building on Shibdon Road, in around 1885, Mr Adams named it the Bisley Hotel.

Blaydon was the site of the North Durham Bottle Works and among its products were bottles labelled *Bisley Hotel*.

The 'hotel' – which was originally, when it opened, residential - still existed in 2009. The ground floor of the three storey building was a pub at that time, but the original windows and wooden ceilings survived as did several marble fireplaces with one hearth decorated with six tiles: B / I / S / L / E / Y.

MARY ANN STEEL 1887

Inscription(s) and details

Mary Ann Steel / 1887 flanked by ferns

Heavy moulded glass cup with vertical sides and a handle on the opposite side of the inscription that is engraved in a script slightly more elegant than the standard 'disaster' glass. The base of the glass has the peacock's head trademark of Sowerby's Ellison Glass Works, Gateshead, in the centre of moulded radial fluting. The glass is 59mm high and 63mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

The precise identity of the individual commemorated on this glass is impossible to establish.

According to the St Catherine's House Index, four Mary Ann Steels were born in England and Wales (in Ashton, Barnsley, Bootle and Peterborough) in 1887. In the same year, four more Mary Ann Steels were married (in Carlisle, Hull, Oldham and Toxteth Park, Liverpool) and one Mary Ann Steel died (in Camberwell in London).

In addition to these nine candidates, other Mary Ann Steels could have been born, married or died in Scotland and still more might have commissioned a glass to celebrate an event such as a birthday, betrothal or wedding anniversary.

But the shape of the glass suggests a christening memento and we know that glasses were engraved to celebrate births because some of the citations say so.

These glasses travel all over the country but if this specimen, purchased in Barnard Castle in County Durham, does indeed celebrate a baptism, then the Mary Ann Steel born in Barnsley in the second quarter of 1887 seems the most likely contender.

DEATH OF THOMAS WALLACE WILLEY 1889

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / Thomas Wallace / The Beloved Son of / J and MA Willey / Of White house Holmside / Who Died Oct 2nd 1889 / aged 25 years [reverse]

Goblet on a short stem, 143mm high. Private collection: Durham City.

Historical context

White House Farm lies on the B6532, a short distance south of Craggside, itself a little south east of Stanley, and is marked on the 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey map (Grid reference 215505). Holmside is another village about 1 ½ kilometres south of the farm.

The farmhouse is a prominent white-painted building on rising ground; it remains a functioning farm with fairly extensive old farm buildings.

Surprisingly, neither the death of Thomas Willey nor the subsequent inquest were reported in either the Durham Chronicle or the Durham County Advertiser, but the death certificate (District and Sub-district Lanchester, No: 493) states that the deceased was 'a farmer's Son, assisting at the Farm'. Death was due to him being 'Accidentally shot by discharge of a gun carried by himself' and the certificate was issued by the Coroner for Chester Ward following an inquest on 4 October.

Very near to the farm, between it and Craggside, is St Thomas' Church, now a private dwelling but with a churchyard and modern graves. However, there is no trace of 19th century graves and the church is thought to have been built in the first few years of the 1900s. It is likely, therefore, that Thomas was buried at St John's Church in Burnhope. No trace of a grave remains, as the churchyard has now been largely cleared of its old headstones.

DEATH OF JOHN FINDLATER 1890

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of John R.C.Findlater / Died Feb 22nd 1890 / Aged 13 ½ Years
[reverse] palm trees and ferns

Large, straight-sided jug, about two litres capacity. The engraving of the citation is a little less crude than that found on the typical pub rummer 'disaster' glass and is enclosed in a cartouche. Above is an engraved broken column – a very common Victorian symbol of a 'young life cut short'. Broadfield House Glass Museum, Kingswinford, West Midlands.

Historical context

John Brooks found this glass jug at Broadfield House Glass Museum and obtained a copy of the death certificate (District, Newcastle upon Tyne, Sub-district, Westgate No.318 1890). This established that the boy, John Robert Crawford Findlater, who lived at 216 Philip Street, Westgate, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, was the son of John Findlater, a railway guard. The death was certified as due to tubercular phthisis (tuberculosis) or, as the Victorians would probably have said, 'consumption'.

DEATH OF DAVID WISHART 1890

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / David Wishart / Who Died 4 Aug 1890 / Aged 29 Years [reverse]
fern

Small goblet with facettled stem. Beamish Museum (no accession number).

Historical context

David Wishart's death is recorded in the Deaths column of The Durham Chronicle of 8 August 1890. He lived at Grange Villa, West Pelton and was the son of Mr William Wishart. We have no other details about David Wishart or why a glass was created to commemorate his death.

Further information

David Wishart's death certificate is on record.

DEATH OF M MADDISON 1891

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / M Maddison / Who died 22nd August / 1891 [reverse] fern
Wine glass with a rather thin bowl, on stem, 111mm high. Private collection:
Durham City.

Historical context

This death was not recorded in either the Durham Chronicle or the Durham County Advertiser. The death certificate (District and Sub-district South Shields, No: 323) records that Margaret Ann Maddison was 21 years old, the daughter of George Maddison, a coal miner, and living at 49, High Lane Row, Hebburn.

Death was due to peritonitis complicating 'Confinement (premature)' - perhaps a ruptured ectopic pregnancy, but one wonders about a perforated uterus following an attempted abortion?

Margaret Ann Maddison does not appear to have been married (unless she married a Mr Maddison) but if this had been a death following illegal abortion of an illegitimate pregnancy, would it have prompted the engraving of a glass? And would the death have been reported to the coroner? (It would today.) Her father, who was present at her death, signed his name with a cross - 'X, the mark of George Maddison'.

There is a discrepancy between the engraving and the certificate; the date of death is certified as 21 August 1891.

GEORDIE TAK THE BAIRN 1891

Inscription(s) and details

Geordie / Tak the Bairn / 1891 [reverse] oblique fern

Wine glass, 109mm high. Rounded bowl, 38mm diameter. Sold on e-Bay, July 2009.

Historical context

The inscription on this glass undoubtedly derives from *Geordie Haud [Hold] the Bairn*, the title of a popular Tyneside music hall song written by Joe Wilson (1841-1875).

An extract from the lyrics is as follows:

<i>Cum, Geordie, haud the bairn</i>	Come, Geordie, hold the baby
<i>Aw's sure aw'll not stop lang</i>	I'm sure I'll not stop long
<i>Aw'd tyek the jew'l me-sel</i>	I'd take the jewel myself
<i>But really aw's not strang</i>	But really I'm not strong
<i>Tho's flooer and coals to get</i>	There's flour and coal to get
<i>The hoose- turns thor not deun;</i>	The chores aren't done
<i>So haud the bairn for fairs</i>	So hold the baby to be fair
<i>Ye've often deun'd for fun!</i>	You've often done it for fun!

The full song may be seen at: <http://www.buswell.co.uk/music/cumgeo.htm>

Joe Wilson wrote many music hall songs, including *Keep your feet still Geordie hinny* and also *Varry Canny*, raising the possibility that this might have been the inspiration for the *It's Very Canny* glasses (see Part Four).

Further information

See: Michael Kilgarff: *Sing Us One of the Old Songs* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

WHEN WEE (sic) WERE BOYS 1891

Inscription(s) and details

When wee (sic) / were boys / 1891 [reverse] fern

Wine or sherry glass, with a rounded bowl and a flat foot. 110mm high, with a 38mm diameter bowl. Sold on e-Bay by a seller in Morpeth, July 2009.

Historical context

Apart from the inscription, this glass is identical to the glass inscribed '**Geordie Tak the Bairn 1891**' – also catalogued. The vendor's explanation of what the inscription means was as follows:

'When we were boys is the title of a novel by William O'Brien that was published in 1890 and this glass was probably engraved to celebrate the success of the book. The novel is an Irish romance set in 1860 and has a land reform theme. O'Brien (1852-1928) was a writer, journalist, Irish nationalist, social revolutionary and an MP in the British House of Commons. He was particularly associated with campaigns for land reform in Ireland, as well as with a conciliatory approach to the question of Home Rule for Ireland. O'Brien's political ideas were shaped by the Fenian movement and the plight of the Irish tenant farmer. O'Brien was imprisoned for his association with the Irish Parliamentary Party and during his time in prison he drafted the famous 'Land War No Rent manifesto – a rent-withholding scheme.'

But it was hard to see, at first, how a glass connected to a novel about Ireland would find a ready market in the pubs and villages of northeast England - so we checked out an alternative theory that it may have been the title of a popular song or musical of the time. (However, it wasn't - as far as we can ascertain.)

After some further research, we believe that the reference is to O'Brien's book; that it is the *land and social reform* issues that are relevant here and that a direct political connection can be made between the impoverished tenant farmers in Ireland and the working class miners of northeast England through the Durham Miners' Gala.

In his history of the Durham Miners Gala⁶², David Temple describes how the 'Big Meeting', from its inception in 1871, swiftly became a political platform for the whole country (which then included southern Ireland) and, in fact, the wider Empire and even the wider globe.

To quote from an anonymous review of Temple's book that was published on the miners' news website www.minersadvice.co.uk:

⁶² David Temple: The Big Meeting: A History of The Durham Miners Gala (TUPS books, Washington, Tyne and Wear, hardback ISBN: 1 901237389).

‘James Connolly⁶³ said ‘the cause of labour was the cause of Ireland, and the cause of Ireland was the cause of labour’. To a great extent this is also true of the politics of coal, and the position of the Durham miners within that. Coal and, by extension, the miners and their union poised over the jugular of the Empire and the expanding capitalist ‘Workshop of the World.’ What miners thought and did mattered ... and the Durham coalfield was the epicenter of that whole strategic ensemble.

‘Since 1871 and the first ‘Big Meeting’, through to the days when a quarter of million miners and their families marched to claim “wa reets”, through to the 21st century’s 100,000 plus gatherings, the Gala has always been, and remains, Europe’s largest labour movement event. Other areas, of course, had galas, demonstrations, picnics or Eisteddfods but none ever compared in size or importance with Durham - and it was at Durham that union and political leaders aspired to appear.

‘The first Big Meetings and the platform predate independent working class representation. [Among others] exponents of Irish Home Rule, a united Poland and Garibaldi’s red shirt campaign joined the voices of moderate Methodism and industrial coexistence. The first meetings saw hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands making their way to Durham, many marching 15 miles each way, others hiring special trains, even [travelling on] traction engines pulling wagons. This was a real [political] meeting, with real resolutions, speeches and votes for and against. The crowds were so great, two platforms were organised simultaneously.

‘Speakers each year were selected by a ballot of the miners’ union lodges. Charles Bradlaugh, who spoke on eleven occasions between 1871 and 1880, for example, was the most popular speaker of the period and the darling of the Gala crowds. Militant republican, atheist, champion of women’s rights, abortion and an independent Ireland, he was [also] a passionate campaigner for land reform.’

Back to our glass - it would have been neat if William O’Brien MP had been one of the platform speakers at the 1891 Durham Miners’ Gala. He wasn’t. But it is very plausible – indeed, a matter of historical fact – that many speakers in the last decades of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th would have addressed the subjects of both Irish Home Rule and land reform. Hence there may well have been a ready market in Durham and amongst miners’ communities for a glass supporting the socialist cause and a fairer deal for the working class.

⁶³ James Connolly (1868-1916) was an Irish Republican and Socialist leader. Born in Edinburgh to Irish immigrant parents, he left school at the age of 11 but became one of the leading Marxist theorists of his day. He also took a role in Scottish and US politics. He was executed by a British firing squad because of his leadership role in the Easter Rising of 1916.

PRESENT TO LAURA MADDEN 1893

Inscription(s) and details

A Present to / Laura Madden / Born 9th July 1888 / From her / Grandma / 1893

engraving flanked by ferns on side opposite to the handle.

Moulded tankard on a slightly raised base with star moulding. 120mm high, 70mm diameter at the rim and ½ pint capacity. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

Laura Madden was born at Toppings Row, Boldon Colliery, Co. Durham, the daughter of James Ambrose Madden, a miner, and his wife Eliza, nee Dawe (birth certificate No:104, Registration District, South Shields, Sub-district Westoe).

We do not know whether the grandmother who gave Laura this glass (perhaps a fifth birthday present?) was paternal [Madden] or maternal [Dawe]. But Laura's birth certificate states that a grandmother named 'J. Westwater' was present at the birth. The lady had presumably remarried.

MAN WHO BROKE THE BANK AT BLYTH 1894

Inscription(s) and details

The / Man That Broke / The Bank at Blyth / 1894 [reverse] clover
Rounded bowl pub rummer. Private collection: Oxford.

The Man Who Broke the Bank at Blyth 1894

Glass seen by John Brooks in June 2000. Probably a pub rummer but the inscription (it might possibly have been "That" not "Who") was perhaps inaccurately transcribed and the spacing was not recorded.

Historical context

These glasses can only refer to a John Robinson Jr. By his own account, John Robinson started work at the age of 13 at a chemist's shop in Bottle Bank, Gateshead but left after a few months to be apprenticed to a draper in South Shields. He had also, at some point, served on one or two sailing ship voyages, stowing sails. After four years in South Shields, he returned to Blyth and, aged 18, he joined the temperance movement that under his leadership recruited 700 members in Blyth. A year later, he became a Wesleyan. He later joined the Congregational Church of Blyth, raising funds for their chapel and occasionally taking services and preaching. He was also familiar at Salvation Army meetings.

Over the years, John Robinson established himself as a leading figure in Blyth, 'identifying himself with all kinds of commercial ventures, religious and temperance and social movements, whilst he also at one time held most of the public appointments in the town.' He was clerk of the Cowpen Local Board; secretary of the Northumbrian Building Society; clerk of the South Blyth Local Board (and had been for ten years); clerk of the Cowpen Burial Board; secretary to the Blyth and Cowpen Gas Company; secretary to the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Society and was associated with the printing works of Robinson Bros. who published the newspaper the Blyth Examiner as well as Robinson's Almanac. He also ran a stationer's shop, was a sub-postmaster and owned the Central Hall in Blyth that he had purchased for £3,100. Finally, he was secretary and manager of the Blyth Deposit and Advance Bank. He lived in Monkseaton.

Towards the end of the second week in February 1894, rumours spread that Mr Robinson was bankrupt. Cheques drawn to pay tradesmen and workers employed by the South Blyth Board and the Blyth and Cowpen Gas Company were unaccounted for and the accounts of the Burial Board showed a deficiency. At this point, Mr Robinson was not available but his son, who travelled hastily to the Board, intimated that his father was ill in London and asked for a deferment of action. The Board, however, unconvinced, took out a warrant for their clerk's apprehension.

But it was the position of the Blyth Deposit and Advance Bank that was generating the most anxiety. Formed some six years previously, very little was known about the bank or its assets or securities. John Robinson was the proprietor, secretary, treasurer, auditor and, indeed, the only official. The bank was advertised almost as a national institution and there were investors living outwith Northumberland.

Interest was purported to be 4 ½ -10% per annum according to the conditions of withdrawal.

John Robinson had last been seen in Blyth on 13 February. By 24 February, depositors, 'entertaining the gravest fears that they will lose their hard earned savings' and some weeping in the street, found the doors of the bank closed and nobody available to answer questions. All bank books, letters and other documents had disappeared from the office of the bank. 'It is one of the most gigantic and ramified commercial collapses which has ever figured in the commercial life of Blyth.' Mr Robinson, at this time 'a little over sixty years', was reported (in the Newcastle Daily Journal of 24 February) to be in Paris but this information was 'totally discredited' in Blyth, according to the Blyth Weekly News of 3 March. However, the 24 March edition of the same paper reported that: 'It is now understood definitely that Mr John Robinson, of Blyth, is in France, desirous of presenting himself at Newcastle for examination ...'

On 21 April, with John Robinson still missing, the leading article of the Blyth Weekly News described the affair as 'one of the most colossal financial collapses which has ever blackened the records of local and commercial life ... All Mr Robinson's trumpeting ... about it being a sound financial concern ... have come to naught, and were loudest when the bank was rottenest.' The official statement of the bankruptcy showed a deficiency of £10,240 - 7s - 9d. (The 2010 equivalent, based on average earnings, is nearly £4m.) A final meeting of the creditors was held on 24 April.

Deaths of 'John Robinsons' were reported from around the world but John Robinson of Blyth was never seen again. He left a wife and two young children.

Further information

See: Blyth Weekly News, 24 February, 3 March, 24 March, 21 April and 28 April; the Morpeth Herald, 2 April and 28 April and the Newcastle Daily Journal, 21 February, 23 February and 24 February 1894.

A final note: in the casino at Monte Carlo, a Joseph H Jagger won over 2 million francs in eight days. An expert on spindles, he correctly suspected the spindle of one of the roulette wheels and staked on numbers that were turning up with more than mathematical probability. This was in 1886. He was the subject of the music hall ballad The Man Who Broke The Bank At Monte Carlo, sung by Charles Coborn and written and composed in 1891 but doubtless still popular in 1894.

Inscription(s) and details

Better Luck to the / New Biggin Folks / Catch Plenty Fish 1894 [reverse] clover
Pub rummer. Beamish Museum (accession number 2001.63.2).

Historical context

1893 had not been a happy year for the fishermen of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea in Northumberland,

On 14 February a southerly gale threatened the safety of 17 fishing cobs⁶⁴ and the lifeboat was launched.

There was another life-threatening occurrence on 1 March when between 20 and 30 fishing boats turned back on account of the weather that deteriorated so much that any landing would have been extremely dangerous. The lifeboat rowed towards them and on reaching the first one the Coxswain recommended that the only chance for them to save their boats was to run for the 'North Hole', entered by a narrow channel about half a mile north of Newbiggin. There they landed having had a narrow escape ... 'and there is little doubt the lifeboat was the means of saving both boats and crews, such is the universal opinion amongst the seafaring population here'.

On 18 November gale-force winds and heavy rain brought destruction to Newbiggin with several roofs stripped and chimneys blown down. At about 9am that morning cries brought hundreds of people to the beach. The Norwegian brig *Posiden* had first struck the Beacon Rocks, then was dashed along the coast until she reached Newbiggin Church Point. Seven men were seen clinging to the rigging. A rocket secured a line to the vessel but this was lost when the ship was washed onto The Needles Eye Rocks and turned bottom up. One man was saved but six lost their lives including the captain. The Newbiggin lifeboat had been launched but was unable to come alongside the wreck, which was too close to the rocks. In the rescue attempt the Coxswain of the lifeboat was injured.

Further information

From R J Martin: Newbiggin by the Sea Lifeboat Station: The first 150 years.

⁶⁴ A coble is a type of open fishing boat developed on the northeast coast of England. The southern-most examples occur around Hull and the type extends to just across the Scottish border. The distinctive shape of the boat - flat-bottomed and high-bowed - evolved to cope with the particular conditions prevalent in this area. Flat bottoms allowed launching from and landing on shallow sandy beaches; high bows helped the fishermen to sail in the dangerous North Sea and, in particular, to launch into the surf. Newbiggin-by-the-Sea has a pub called 'The Coble', named in tribute to these boats.

DEATH OF WILLIAM ARMSTRONG SCOTT 1894

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / William Armstrong Scott / who died 4th Feb 1894 / at Seaham Colliery / Aged 73 years [reverse] clover *Gone but not forgotten*

Pub rummer. Private collection: Durham City.

In Memory of / William Armstrong Scott / Who Died 4 Feb 1894 / At Seaham Colliery / Age 73 years [reverse] clover *Thy Will / be done*

Pub rummer. Private collection: Durham City.

Historical context

The Rev. Canon William Armstrong Scott, vicar of New Seaham and honorary canon of Durham Cathedral, was born in 1820, the son of a rector. He was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin (BA 1844, MA 1856) where he won several prizes and he also graduated MA Oxford in 1854. He had six children. Both of his sons were clergymen in the Church of England; one daughter married the Bishop of British Honduras and another daughter married Thomas H Stratton, the manager of the Cramlington Coal Company pits. Thomas Stratton was to die only a few weeks later, on 29 May 1894, and his death, like that of his father-in-law, is commemorated on a pub rummer – see Part Two. The other two daughters were living at home.

William Scott had been vicar at Seaham for 37 (31?) years at the time of his death. He was a popular evangelical preacher and an examiner of schools. Following the ‘lamentable explosions’ at Seaham Colliery on 25 October 1871 and 8 September 1880 ‘he was untiring in his ministration to the affected and, in the measures of relief that followed, did much to assuage the pain and affliction which fell so heavily on a large number of families. He died respected and loved not only in his own parish but throughout the entire district of East Durham’.

He had suffered from ‘impaired health’ for some two years and shortly before his death was ‘seized by a partial paralysis’. Two weeks before his death he suffered a second attack from which he ‘never rallied’. He became ‘gradually weaker ... and passed peacefully away’ in the presence of his wife, his son, the Rev. Charles Scott, and his daughters. At morning service on Sunday 4 February at Christ Church, New Seaham, the curate, the Rev. James ‘imparted the information of the death of the vicar to the congregation, many of whom were overcome with emotion. The organist ... played the Dead March ...’.

Further information

The Durham County Advertiser of 9 February 1894 – from where the quotes above are taken.

SEATON SLUICE BRIDGE 1894

Inscription(s) and details

Seaton Sluice / Bridge Opened 2 May / 1894 [reverse] clover

Wine glass on short stem, 100mm high, bowl 50mm diameter. Seen and photographed by John Brooks. Private collection: Leicestershire.

Historical context

The formal ceremony of demolishing the Briar Dene toll-gate at Whitley, so opening a direct free road from Tynemouth to Blyth, and the opening of the Seaton Sluice Bridge was reported in the 5 May 1894 edition of the Morpeth Herald and Reporter. The Blyth Weekly News of the same date printed a shortened version of the same report and they offer a flavour of how these things were conducted at that time.

The ceremony was performed by the Rt. Hon. Sir Matthew White Ridley, Bart, MF, chairman of Northumberland Council and he and other dignitaries, such as the Mayor of Tynemouth, were initially entertained to lunch at the Whitley Club. 'The usual loyal and patriotic toasts having been honoured', Sir Matthew's health was toasted and he replied with a lengthy speech, interrupted several times by applause and hear-hears.

The party then left the Whitley Club in carriages and, in torrential rain, drove to Briar Dene Toll-bar. Despite the weather, a large number of people were there to see Sir Matthew introduced to a Mr Bramwell, a solicitor who received a cheque from Sir Matthew in compensation for the freeing of the road. Mr Bramwell made a short speech and was followed by Sir Matthew declaring the road free forever to traffic (cheers). It was of great importance to the public that the toll-bar should be removed and the number of people who were in attendance was sufficient indication of this (applause). He 'then knocked down the obnoxious barrier' (we are not told how exactly) 'amid the plaudits of those assembled'. Returning to their carriages, the party then drove to Seaton Sluice.

'The rain continued to come down during the whole ceremony in a most merciless fashion' but a large crowd awaited Sir Matthew as he proceeded towards the bridge accompanied by the Bridge Committee and members of various local boards while the Seaton Delaval Brass Band played 'See the Conquering Hero Comes'. Arriving at the bridge Sir Matthew was given a knife, cut a cord that had been fastened across and declared the bridge open. County Councillor Walker made a speech of welcome accompanied by hear-hears and applause to which Sir Matthew replied, accompanied by cheers and applause. The party then walked to the other end of the bridge, where they cut another cord before 'ascending a waggon' (sic) where they were joined by several more gentlemen.

County Councillor Ornsby then proposed a vote of thanks to Sir Matthew for 'the able manner in which he has formally opened the Bridge and abolished the Briar Dene toll-bar'. The Mayor of Tynemouth seconded the motion and was followed by a contribution from County Councillor Walker. Sir Matthew was then handed an illuminated album 'beautifully bound in rich brown rough-grained morocco. It

contains delightful watercolour sketches of Briar Dene toll-gate and the new and old bridges at Seaton Sluice. Mounted on the cover is a sterling silver water-gilt shield with the Rt. Hon. Sir Matthew White Ridley's arms beautifully engraved and heraldically emblazoned in enamel'.

The lengthy address was read by Mr Whitehorn and Sir Matthew 'returned thanks' with another speech. The bridge would increase trade in the area (hear-hear). It behoved the inhabitants to set their shoulders to the wheel and do what they could for the interests of the community (applause). He thanked the local authorities for the magnificent address that was undeserved ('No'). The southeast of the county would always have his warmest support (applause). Mr Moorhead then proposed a resolution that he promised would be short (laughter), thanking Lord Hastings for his generous assistance without which they would be crossing a bridge of sighs (laughter). He hoped his Lordship would soon be restored to health (applause). Mr Dixon seconded and the resolution was passed (cheers). After Mr Peel, agent to Lord Hastings, had responded (cheers), Mr Ornsby proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs Whitehorn for performing the ceremony at the toll-gate and Mr Whitehorn responded on behalf of his wife (cheers).

A practice of the local Fire Brigade then took place after which the company removed to the Reading Room and another address - this one, from the Cramlington and Seghill Local Boards, was presented to Sir Matthew. Mr Hornsby called on Mr Lamb to read it. The address, 'charmingly bound in pure white vellum with the Ridley Arms richly emblazoned', ran to twelve pages and included 'exquisite watercolour views of Blagdon Hall ... Plessey Weir ... Blyth Harbour, the new bridge, Seaton Sluice etc.' The book was enclosed in a walnut casket lined with padded watered silk and fitted with an ormolu spring lock. After reading the address, Mr Lamb made a short speech to which Sir Matthew replied (his fifth speech that day) at considerable length. 'I am very thankful to think that anything that I have been able to do for the people of Cramlington has deserved your indulgent treatment' (applause).

The report ends by stating that 'in the evening, a dinner was held in the village school to celebrate the event. There was a good attendance.' We are not told of any guests, toasts or additional speeches. Presumably Sir Matthew was safely back at Blagdon Hall with his feet up.

OPENING OF HOLYWELL BRIDGE 1894

Inscription(s) and details

Holywell / Bridge / Opened 20 June 1894 [reverse] fern

Rounded bowl pub rummer, 96mm high, bowl diameter of 63mm. Private collection: Leicestershire.

Historical context

There has been a village of Holywell, on the southern approach to Seaton Delaval in Northumberland, since 1161. The Newcastle Daily Chronicle in 1873 opined that 'Holywell village is not by any means a clean place; there seems a want of drainage and a deficiency of sanitary arrangements' - but it is more attractive now. The well itself was one of several chemical or healing springs within the dene⁶⁵ of Seaton Burn and housed a bubbling well dedicated to St. Mary, situated on private land known as The Park near to the Holywell Bridge. This vitriolin spring apparently had an atramentous (inky) and iron-like taste and it was said that the water rose in 'predictable bubbles'. Today only a few stones of the original well remain.

Holywell Bridge carries the A192 road across Seaton Burn immediately south of the village. It lies about 2½ kilometres west and upstream of the larger bridge at Seaton Sluice and opened a few weeks before. Holywell Bridge is best viewed today from the old, stone bridge, now carrying a bridleway and crossing the burn a few yards upstream. The new version was never a handsome structure; a single span of iron girder lies across stone abutments and these are now kept vertical by massive wooden, graffiti-covered buttressing. After crossing south over the old bridge, a path leads under the new bridge and along the attractive burn to the well and beyond.

Further information

The title page of the Morpeth Herald specifically mentions that the paper covers the district of Holywell but scrutiny of both it and the Blyth Weekly News fails to uncover any mention of the opening of the bridge. And yet the newspaper sees fit to report such mundane events as a temperance meeting at Blyth, the New Hartley Day School Children's Annual Treat and a Pic-Nic (sic) and Sport at Whalton. There can be little doubt that this is the bridge in question and not, for instance, the Holywell Bridge of the Embsay and Bolton Abbey Steam Railway. If it was opened with so little ceremony that it was thought not worth reporting in the local press, this reinforces what we believe to be the case – that there was a very local and limited demand, as with commemoratives of individual deaths, for these glasses.

⁶⁵ A [wooded] valley.

Inscription(s) and details

John Henry Todd / Who was Drowned / 4 July 1894 Blyth / Gone But Not Forgotten [reverse] clover

Bucket bowl pub rummer, 102mm high. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

John Henry Todd / Who was Drowned / 4 July 1894 Blyth / Age 22 Years / Remember Me [reverse] clover leaf and scrolling

Bucket-bowl pub rummer, 112mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

In Memory of John Henry Todd / Who was Drowned / on the 4th July 1894 / at Blyth age 23 years

Pub rummer of rounded funnel shape. Woodhorn Mining Museum – donated by a local farmer who found it in a cupboard and reported it to a local newspaper ('Farmer finds mystery glass').⁶⁶

Additionally, in 2005, Robson's Antiques in Barnard Castle had two Todd glasses. One was a pub rummer giving the date as '**4 of July**' with '**Remember Me**' and a clover on the reverse and the other was a port glass with the same inscription as the Woodhorn Mining Museum glass listed above.

Historical context

Unusually, the inquest into the death of John Henry Todd, described as 'well-known in football circles' was held at the Ridley Arms Inn on the same day as the tragedy happened – 4 July - and is reported in The Morpeth Herald and Reporter of 7 July 1894.

Evidence of identification was given by the father of the deceased who said that his son, age 23 years, had been a miner but had latterly been employed in the shipyard at Blyth. "He could only swim very little."

Roger Patton deposed that, at about 7.15am that day, he had gone down with the deceased to bathe on the Cambois Sands. They went into the water together and three of their mates, who had arrived earlier, were already in the sea. About 30-40 yards from the shore the water was up to the level of Patton's mouth and he noticed that the deceased was being carried out to sea, trying to swim. The witness told him to return to the shore but the deceased continued in the opposite direction, shouting for help. Patton turned and went to his assistance. He managed to get hold of the wrist of the deceased who then tried to clutch him with the other arm and the witness was compelled to let go in order to save his own life. Shortly afterwards, the deceased sank.

There were three people on the sands to whom the witness shouted and one of them stripped off and entered the water but the deceased had sunk before he had got halfway to him. Coroner: "Was the current setting out at the time?" –

⁶⁶ The farmer was asking, through the newspaper, for information on John Todd. William Cowan sent him a copy of the Morpeth Herald report.

“Yes, there was a heavy current setting out to sea.” Coroner: “You think he just got out of his depth?” - “Yes.” A Juryman: “Was he sweating?” - “Yes.” “Did he rush into the water straight away?” - “Yes.”

Continuing, the witness said that the deceased was “only what might be called a learner at swimming” and he would be out of his depth when he shouted for assistance. It was the first time that the witness had bathed at that spot – the north side of Roker Rocks – but the deceased had bathed there the previous day. William Morton, one of the three men on the sands, said that none of them could swim. Patton, so far as he could see, did all he could to save his companion.

Jacob Robinson then deposed that, hearing that a young man had drowned, he found the body of the deceased between 8.30am and 9am in about two feet of water 30-50 yards north of the rocks. He was acquainted with the sands and considered that on the ebb tide it was a bad place for bathing.

The Coroner, after returning a verdict of ‘Accidentally drowned whilst bathing’, remarked that it was a very rare occurrence for anybody to be drowned at Blyth (referring to the south side) because it was very safe bathing there.

Further information

The circumstances of Henry Todd’s death are not unlike those of the drowning of John P Connell on Cambois Sands on 22 July 1880, also recorded on a glass.

WILLIAM HOLDER GARRETT 1894

Inscription(s) and details

William Holder Garrett / Who Died 29 aug 1894 / Cowpen Quay Blyth / Age 69 Years [reverse] ***Remember Me*** [stylised clover leaf]

Ovoid bowl pub rummer, 102mm high and 60mm diameter at rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

William Garrett, the manager of the Central Cooperative Store in Cowpen Quay, was at his desk at 4.55pm on 29 August 1894 when he ‘suddenly gave a short, stifled moan’ and fell back unconscious. When Dr Boyle arrived he was able only to pronounce life to be extinct.

At an inquest the next day, the deceased’s brother said that he had never heard Mr Garrett ‘complain of an affection of his heart lately although some years ago he was troubled in this respect’.

The coroner concluded that ‘it was perfectly clear how the deceased had died ... death had been brought about by heart disease of some form or other’. A verdict in accordance with this was returned.

Further information

The Morpeth Herald and Reporter, 1 September 1894.

ELIZA WILLCOCK 1894

Inscription(s) and details

In Loving Memory / of Eliza Willcock / Who Died 9th Dec 1894 / Cambois / Gone but not Forgotten

Small tankard. Private collection: Nottingham.

Historical context

Cambois (pronounced *Kammus*) is a village on the Northumberland coast just north of Blyth and south of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea.

The death certificate (No: 300, Registration District, Morpeth: Sub-district, Bedlington) states that Eliza Willcock died on 10 December, age 18. The cause of death was 'acute general peritonitis' of twelve hours' duration and it seems probable that it followed rupture of an acutely inflamed appendix. Her uncle, Samuel Bratt, who registered the death, signed his name with a cross.

Inscription(s) and details

William . Elliott . / Broom . Hill . Colliery / 1894 [reverse] three large vertical ferns
Straight sided tumbler, tapering to base, exceptionally thinly blown glass, 117mm tall. Private collection: East London. Recent provenance: USA.

Historical context

Broomhill (one word) is a village in Northumberland, south-west of Amble.⁶⁷ The mine opened with the sinking of the first shaft in 1849 and closed in 1961. The Durham Mining Museum records ‘no disasters’ – that is, by the museum’s definition, no accident where five or more people were killed. There is a list of individuals who lost their lives at the pit – but there is no Elliott included. Neither is ‘Elliott’ recorded as a manager’s name at any time in the mine’s history.

We may, therefore, never know who William or (perhaps, we hope) ‘Billy’ Elliott was or why he had a glass engraved with his name on it – but, given no clue but the date, this is probably nothing to do with the mining industry as such and is more likely to be a birth, Christening or notable birthday gift. (It is possible it could be a memento of a retirement from the colliery or long service award of some kind but, in this case, we would have expected to see that happy event referenced in the engraving in some way and, perhaps, a better quality item.)

It is worth recording that this glass was bought by the current owner through eBay from an American seller in 2007. The seller was from North Dakota and, when asked about the provenance of the item, wrote:

‘I purchased the glass in Kentucky along with several other coal mining items from England. The auctioneer said that the family had emigrated to the US in the late 1890s and worked in the Kentucky coal mines.’

This story is unverified, of course, but it is entirely plausible that a Northumberland miner’s family went to America for a better life in c1899 – taking their young child, William, with them. Kentucky’s mining industry started at the end of the 18th century and continues to this day.

Extraordinary to think that this fragile item – and it is, even of its type, exceptionally thin glass – has made the journey across the Atlantic in perfect condition not once, but twice. It has a story to tell, if only it could speak.

⁶⁷ It is not clear why the engraver has split the name of the village into two words, taking the additional step of placing a large dot between them.

ELIZABETH CROWE 1894

Inscription(s) and details

Elizabeth Crowe / 1894 [reverse] fern

Exceptionally crude and heavy glass tumbler, 136mm tall and 80mm diameter at the rim. Private collection: East London.

Historical context

A typical example of a simple 'name and date' glass, very probably done by an itinerant engraver at the kitchen door and possibly for no other reason than the individual him/herself wanted a personal memento – or a member of their family chose to give them a gift. 'Crowe' is a common northeastern name.

Inscription(s) and details

Succefs To / Prospect Terrace / Amble / 1895 [reverse] ***auld Lang Syne*** three small ferns

Ovoid bowl pub rummer, 86mm high and 60mm diameter at the rim. There is a chip on upper surface of the foot. The second 's' in the word 'Success' is, in the 18th century style, in the form of an elongated 'f' i.e. '*Succefs*'. This is identical to the way the word is engraved on seven other glasses, all dated 1895: Hartford (see Part Two) and (see Part Three) Cement Houses; Stobswood Church (one example); Charles Fenwick; Thomas Burt; Samuel Storey and Lord Warkworth.

Historical context

Amble is located on the Northumberland coast at the mouth of the river Coquet. Members of the Amble Local History Society say that Prospect Terrace no longer exists in the town but there is a Prospect Place and reference to an old map suggests that there was a terrace of houses adjacent.

In 1895, the Amble Local Board became Amble Urban District Council and one suggestion that we have for this engraving is that the UDC offices may have been located in Prospect Terrace.

Alternatively, it may be nothing more complicated or significant than a resident of Prospect Terrace being persuaded by an itinerant engraver to have something engraved – in this case with a general expression of hope for future luck and fortune for self and neighbours. See ***Succefs to the Cement Houses Northumberland 1895*** (see later in Part Three) for which we could put forward exactly the same theory.

CEMENT HOUSES, NORTHUMBERLAND 1895

Inscription(s) and details

Succefs to the / Cement Houses / Northumberland 1895 with a fern leaf on either side of the engraving [reverse] a different fern leaf
Small rummer, 92mm high and 62mm diameter. Bought at an antique fair at Newark c2012. Private collection: Leicestershire.

Historical context

We may never know what this glass commemorates or where exactly in Northumberland it was engraved. It was a relatively late discovery for us (2013) and, so far, we have established just two facts:

1. Cement or concrete had begun to be used in the late 19th century in the north of England as a cheaper alternative to brick for working class housing;
2. 'Cement Houses' is a known postal address in the northeast.

Deborah Moffat of the Woodhorn Mining Museum confirms the first piece of information. And given that this would have been a new, and unusual, material for house-building, one may suppose that 'Cement Houses' would have been a logical way for the local community, and the Post Office, to identify any new dwellings made of it.

For example, we know there was a 'Cement Houses' in County Durham.

- A family genealogy website mentions a John Hunt as living at 106 Cement Houses, Hamsterley Colliery, in 1911;
- A 1912 photograph of Hamsterley Colliery School on a local history website shows 'Mr Allison (headmaster) from Shotley Bridge and Miss Whitfield (assistant) from Cement House[s], Hamsterley Colliery'.
- The London Gazette of 9 February 1934 advertises the estate of Thomas Borwn, deceased, late of 22 Cement Houses, Hamsterley Colliery.

Meanwhile, we have established a tentative link to a Northumberland 'Cement Houses' or, cottages – interestingly in Amble (see the *Succefs to Prospect Terrace Amble 1895* glass, listed earlier in Part Three).

- A leaflet called 'Amble – Town Trail' (published, we assume, by the local tourist office) makes reference to some 'cement cottages' that once stood 'near the Little Shore' not far from the original lifeboat and coastguard houses. This was confirmed by a search in the Woodhorn Mining Museum archives, where we found some architects' plans dating from 1895 that make oblique reference to 'cement cottages' near the site of a proposed new, brick dwelling house.

- An on-line chat room for local history enthusiasts makes reference to 'Cement Houses, Amble' being given as an address on 'a census' – we don't know which one.

At the time of writing we have not been able to research this further but our hunch at this stage would be that there was a group of dwellings called 'Cement Houses' or 'Cement Cottages' in Amble in 1895.

If so, it is possible that someone who lived there was persuaded by an itinerant engraver (probably the same man who visited the town's Prospect Terrace in the same year, 1895) to have something engraved – in this case with a general expression of hope for the future for him or herself and the neighbours.

THE NOBLEY BROTHERS 1895

Inscription(s) and details

*In Memory of / John & Thomas William Nobley / Who were Drowned at /
Barrington Colliery / Jan 9 1895 / Age 11& 8 Years* [reverse] *O / Think of The /
home over there* [horizontal fern]

Ovoid bowl pub rummer, 95mm high and a bowl 57mm diameter. Private collections, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. There is an identical specimen in a private collection in Nottingham.

*In Memory of / John & Thomas William Nobley / Who were Drowned at /
Barrington Colliery Jan 9 1895 / Age 8 & 11 Years* [reverse] *They (sic) Will be
Done* [clover leaf]

Ovoid bowl pub rummer, 92mm high and a bowl 57mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

*In Memory of / John & Thomas Noble (sic) / who was (sic) drowned at /
Barrington Colliery Jan 9 / Age 11 & 9 years 1895* [reverse] fern

Pub glass with rounded bowl. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO 07990/1/1). John Brooks has seen and photographed another very similar example - a pub rummer also recording the boys' surname as *Noble ... who was drowned*.

There are three more pub rummers commemorating this tragedy in Woodhorn Mining Museum (accession nos: ASHMM: 2002.3.1 & 2002.22.1 and E279). Two are identical to the first example listed above. The third is engraved '*Rock of Ages*' on the reverse.

A pub rummer in the Science Museum in London is engraved '*Safe in the arms of Jesus*' on the reverse and we have information (August 2006) of a rummer engraved '*Suffer little children to come unto me*'.

Historical context

Perusal of The Newcastle Daily Journal covering early January 1895 suggests that severe winter weather covered much of the country that month. The 9 January edition reports the drowning of a boy skating in Aldershot and the next day describes 'an alarming accident near Richmond' [Yorkshire]: 'Five young ladies struggling in the water' having fallen through ice were saved following a 'gallant rescue by the Marchioness of Zetland'.

The 11 January edition reports both the drowning of a skater in Cork and the 'Lamentable Ice Accident Near Choppington' that resulted in the deaths of two young Nobley brothers:

'Sons of Mr. John Noble (sic), miner, skating on a reservoir belonging to the colliery ... precipitated into water which is some fourteen feet deep. Alarm was raised and the father of the lads was among those who first arrived. Mr. Noble rushed into the water followed by Mr. Blandford, another employee at the colliery. After some searching the father brought the lifeless body of one of the boys to the

surface, the other body being recovered an hour after. Mr. Noble was himself very much exhausted, and it was with difficulty that he was rescued.'

The Newcastle Daily Journal, incorrectly reporting the family name as Noble, states that the boys were 'aged seven and eleven'. It did not mention that a third boy, named Dixon, who was also sliding on the thin ice, managed to extricate himself. (See Stephen B Martin: Barrington Colliery Village (Bedlingtonshire Villages History Series, a local history in typescript, page 21.) Presumably it was Dixon who raised the alarm.

The style of engraving is the same on most of the glasses listed above, which raises some questions.

- Were these glasses engraved by the same illiterate man who misspelled 'Thy' on one; engraved 'was' instead of 'were' on others and perhaps initially engraved one glass 'Noble' and thereafter corrected it to 'Nobley'? Reference to the St Catherine's House Index confirms that the deaths were registered under the name of 'Nobley'.
- Or were there two engravers whose standard forms of script are indistinguishable and who independently engraved memorials to the same event, one misspelling the surname or possibly copying it from the local paper, the Newcastle Daily Journal?
- Or was it that these glasses were engraved with such speed and relative lack of attention to detail that minor mistakes routinely occurred?

Whether or not there was more than one engraver, it seems probable that some of these glasses were engraved as a speculative venture for sale rather than as a commission from the family who would, presumably, have rejected items with the wrong name.

DEATH OF ANDREW COLVIN 1895

Inscription(s) and details

Andrew Colvin / Who Died at Blyth / 26 April 1895 Age 84 Years [reverse] Rock of Ages cleft for Me [clover leaf]

Ovoid bowl wine glass with 15 thumbprint facets around the base of the bowl - 121mm high and 66mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

In Memory of / Andrew Colvin / Who Died at Waterloo / Blyth April 26. 1895 / Age 84 Years [reverse] Class Meeting Conducted / at NewBiggin / 1835 / o Think of the / home over thire (sic) vertical ferns

Bucket bowl pub rummer, 145mm high on a short stem with rudimentary shoulder and basal knops. The bowl is 67mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

In memory of Andrew Colvin died at Waterloo Blyth 26 April 1895 age 84 years / Hold the fort for I am coming / Class Meeting conducted at Newbiggin by him 1835

Glass with moulded bowl on a stem, decorated with fern leaves, 15cms tall. Private collection: Northumberland.

Andrew Colvin who died at Blyth 26 April 1895 age 84 years / Hold the fort

Wine glass with green bowl, 11.5cms tall, decorated with a clover leaf. Private collection: Northumberland.

In memory of Andrew Colvin who died at Waterloo Blyth April 26 1895 age 84 years / Rock of Ages cleft for me

Glass jug, 11cm tall, decorated with fern leaves. Private collection: Northumberland.

In memory of Andrew Colvin who died at Waterloo Blyth April 26 1895 age 84 years / Rock of Ages cleft for me

Pub rummer, 14.5cms tall, decorated with ferns. Private collection: Northumberland.

Andrew Colvin who died at Waterloo Blyth April 26 1895 / Jesus is the name I (sic) love to hear

Plain wine or sherry glass, 10cms tall, decorated with a clover leaf. Private collection: Northumberland.

In Memory of Andrew Colvin who died at Waterloo Blyth 26 April 1895 Age 84 years / My Grace is sufficient

Rounded bowl glass, 9cms tall, decorated with a clover leaf. Private collection: Northumberland.

Historical context

Andrew Colvin was a well-known character in 19th century Blyth. He was born on 11 September 1811 in a cottage near Blyth, lent to Methodists. At the age of nine he went down the pit at Cowpen Colliery, working 15 hours a day as a trapper for

10d (say 4p) a day. (A trapper was a very young new-starter's job, opening and closing wooden ventilation doors to allow traffic to pass. With the splitting of air currents, introduced by Mr Buddle of Wallsend in the early 19th century, the trapper's job gradually became redundant, as there were many fewer doors across the coal routes). At this point Colvin had received little education, being taught by a miner, then at a dame school where he loved reading. He later became a putter and finally, for 50 years, a hewer, during which time he twice sustained serious accidents. Although offered an easier job, he refused since the shifts underground allowed him more freedom to work for the Methodists.

In 1834 he conducted the first Wesleyan service in Newbiggin and in 1835 the Newbiggin Society was formed. Mary Dawson, who attended the Methodist chapel in Blyth, offered the use of her house in Newbiggin and here Wesleyan Methodist morning classes were held with services in the afternoon and evening (much to the annoyance, it is said, of the local parish vicar). In 1841 Andrew Colvin was preaching in Blyth. He was a great favourite at Sunday School anniversaries and was a leading member of the Band of Hope movement in Blyth district. In 1838 he married Isabella Kilgour, a devout Christian and temperance worker, who bore him four sons and three daughters. At the age of 32, he passed a trial sermon and theological examination and was received as a fully accredited Wesleyan preacher at Monkseaton. In 1874, when he was 63 years old, he was appointed Town Missionary for all the churches in Blyth and later solely associated with the Blyth Wesleyan Circuit. He was presented by admirers with a large travelling pulpit that could be wheeled about the streets and every Saturday evening he preached in the Market Place in Blyth, an event, it is reported, that was eagerly awaited. His reputation extended throughout Northumberland, Durham and especially Hexham and in Blyth he became known as "St Andrew". Waterloo, where he died, is a district of Blyth. He was buried at Cowpen Cemetery.

The Blyth Weekly News & Wansbeck Telegraph of 30 April 1895 devotes a full column to the life of Andrew Colvin and The Morpeth Herald and Reporter of 4 May 1895 compared him with the Rev. Canon Whitley, vicar of St. Cuthberts, Bedlington, who died in the same week. Whereas the Rev Whitley was a cleric of the Established Church, Andrew Colvin "has been, is and will be most intimately associated with the Wesleyan Methodist Church. The one possessed a wonderful amount of culture and learning; the other commenced life at the age of nine in the pit, and was self-instructed. Both, however, will be long remembered in the district."

Further information

There is a file on Andrew Colvin in the local history section of Blyth Library that includes a small book, Saint Andrew of Blyth or Memorials of the Life of Andrew Colvin of that Town by Rev. RWG Hunter, London, 1897 (Borough of Blyth Reference Library, 6505 B92 COL).

"Hold the fort for I am coming" (see the third glass listed above) is a quotation from a poem by Philip Bliss (1838-1876) called 'The Charm Ho, my comrades, see the signal!' (Oxford Dictionary of Quotations). This, in turn, was probably inspired by 'Hold the fort!' - an exhortation immortalised by General Sherman during the American Civil War (1861-1865) when, in 1864, he signaled this message to

General Corse from the top of Mount Kennesaw (Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable).

We have been fortunate to interview Andrew Colvin's great, great grandson, an authority on his ancestor, who thinks that 'Hold the fort for I am coming' was one of Colvin's favoured quotations. A eulogy, printed on a card in December 1888 and sold at a church bazaar for Chapel funds, is made up of 15 rhyming triplets, each one ending A. COLVIN.

Verse seven reads:

*Who shows the sailors, when on Port
The way to find Divine support
And then by grace to 'Hold the fort' A COLVIN.*

We have also seen this quotation on a mining commemorative glass (see 'Death of Michael Lennahan – Dinnington Colliery - 1895' in Part One). Dinnington is not all that far from Blyth. Had the person who commissioned *this* glass, a parent perhaps, heard Andrew Colvin preach?

DEATH OF PETER WADDLE 1895

Inscription(s) and details

Peter Young Waddle (sic) / *Who Died at Choppington / Guide Post / 7 June 1895*
/ *Age 67 years* [reverse] *Rock of Ages* clover

Round bowl port glass on long stem. Private collection: Nottingham.

Historical context

This death was not reported in either the Morpeth Herald or the Blyth Weekly News.

The death certificate (No. 191, District Morpeth, Sub-district Bedlington) confirms the surname as Waddell and states that the deceased, age 67, was a 'Grocer (Master)'.

The primary cause of death was sarcoma (i.e. a malignant tumour) of the humerus. Secondary causes were amputation of the arm 47 days before and congestion of the lungs of two days' duration. Post-operative mortality at this time for limb amputation without Lister's antiseptic precautions was 43% - compared to just 15% when antiseptics was used.

This is another example of a glass engraved with a misspelled name.

Inscription(s) and details

In memory Of / The four Blyth Men / George W Nicholson 22 / George Brown 30 / Thomas Brown 21 / George Davison 29 / who were drowned / 13 July 1895

[reverse] crudely wheel-engraved single-masted gunter-rigged yacht without jib between vertical ferns

Pub rummer, ogee bowl, 106mm high with a 55mm diameter bowl. The yacht on the reverse is virtually the same as that engraved on the reverse of the Alnmouth riot glass (see later in Part Three, also 1895) - in particular, the stays forward of the mast and the pennant from the masthead are identical. The glasses were almost certainly engraved by the same hand. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Other glasses commemorating this event are:

- A bucket bowl pub rummer, 106mm high, engraved identically - but for 'George Davidson' - with a yacht on the reverse. Private collection: Nottingham.
- A pub rummer also engraved 'George Davidson' with a yacht on the reverse. Woodhorn Mining Museum, Northumberland (ASHMM.2002.22.2).
- A rummer engraved 'George Dawson' (possible misreading?) with a yacht on the reverse. Private collection: London.

A bucket bowl rummer, complete with the men's names and the yacht on the reverse but rather larger than the above glasses (say 130mm high) was displayed in the Crystal Clear: Glassmaking in the North East exhibition at Sunderland Museum, June - September 2006. Private collection: Northumberland.

Historical context

Very similar accounts of this tragedy are given in The Morpeth Herald and Reporter of 20 July 1895 and The Blyth Bi-weekly News and Wansbeck Telegraph of 16 July 1895.

The four men named on the glasses left Blyth on the Northumberland coast at about 2pm on Saturday 13 July in the small sailing boat Marie 'with the intention of cruising about the bay'. George Nicholson, the son of the Blyth Harbourmaster, was an engineer on the dredger Blyth and was 'well known in local football circles'. George Brown was a dredger workman and owner of the Marie. Thomas Brown, a brother of George, was a joiner and George Davison (sic)⁶⁸, who also worked on a dredger, had a local reputation as a vocalist. Although George Brown,

⁶⁸ Both the Morpeth and Blyth newspapers state that the fourth man was a George Davison and this would appear to be his correct name. His death was registered in Tynemouth and his age was recorded as '30' (St Catherine's House Index).

a seaman for some 15 years, was regarded as an expert handler of small craft, none was believed to be a swimmer.

The weather on that Saturday was 'rather squally' and on Sunday it was 'pretty rough'. The Marie did not return to port. This is from The Morpeth Herald:

'Telegraphic communication was opened out with several ports along the coast, on Sunday a couple of tugs scoured the sea close to the shore and a yacht set off in search of the missing men, but no information was gained of them. Hopes are entertained that the occupants of the Marie, having got too great a distance from the shore, have been picked up by a passing vessel. A telegram was received at Blyth – where the most profound sensation prevails in regard to the affair – on Monday stating that a steamer which had arrived at the Tyne had passed a boat bottom-up, off Blyth, which answered the description of the missing boat.'

A further report in The Morpeth Herald of 27 July states that the steam tug Defiance had found the Marie about 15-18 miles east south east of Tynemouth floating bottom upwards. She was split from stem to stern and attempts to right her resulted in her falling in two, but the nameboard was recovered and sent to Blyth.

STOBBSWOOD CHURCH 1895

Inscription(s) and details

Succefs to Stobbs Wood (sic) / New Church / The Good Shepherd / 1895

[reverse] ***auld lang syne*** clover and tendrils

Rounded bowl pub rummer, 90mm high with a bowl of 60mm diameter. Note the 18th century spelling of the word 'success'. Private collection: Leicestershire.

Success to Stobbs Wood / Its very canny / New Church / The Good Shepherd / 1895 [reverse] clover with spirals

Rounded bowl pub rummer. Private collection: Oxford.

Historical context

This is another example of a place name being split into its syllables by a (one assumes, semi-literate) engraver - compare *Broom Hill, NewBiggin and CressWell* for Broomhill, Newbiggin and Cresswell.

The small village of Stobbswood is in Northumberland, about eight kilometres north of Ashington and adjacent to Widdrington Station. Stobbswood Colliery opened in the 1880s and in 1896 was relatively small, employing 80 men and boys, 63 below ground and 17 above.

Northumberland County Archives hold a manuscript book that lists the services held at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd at Stobbswood Colliery, giving the name of the preacher and other details. This records services from 3 June 1885 until 28 August of the same year. There is then a gap and the next entry is for 1 September 1895, suggesting that at this time the chapel may have re-opened and prompted the engraving of a glass.

Unfortunately, careful searches of both the Morpeth Herald and the Blyth Weekly News for several editions around this date fail to find any report of Stobbswood Chapel. A large-scale Ordinance Survey map of Stobbswood, dated 1897, (Northumberland Archives) shows the pit situated north of, and immediately adjacent to, the railway line with the small colliery village, made up of two rows of houses at right angles to, and south of, the railway. At the south end of the houses is the school and at the end of the village a building marked 'Chapel'. None of these buildings exists today but what is puzzling is that there are records of a Mission Church in Stobbswood, made of 'wood and [presumably corrugated] iron', founded in 1895 and by 1939 derelict and demolished to make way for St. Mary's Church Hall.

Further, another book records the sermons with title and text together with the collections at an unnamed church in Stobbswood with no gaps from 1894 to 1896. The preacher was the same man who officiated at the Good Shepherd but on any one Sunday he typically preached twice at this unknown church and once (usually about 3.00pm) at the Good Shepherd.

So, in short, we appear to have had three churches in this vicinity: the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, unequivocally identified by the book of sermons; a Mission

Church founded ten years after we have records of the Chapel and a third church with a separate list of services, although sharing the same vicar as the Good Shepherd Chapel.

Why then, does the 1897 map show only one church, almost certainly the subject of this glass? Possible explanations include the fact that, at this time, some religious services were conducted in homes before funds were raised to build a church or perhaps the Mission Church and the unknown church, although filed under Stobswood, were geographically in the adjacent Widdrington Station, sometimes included under the title of Stobswood.

Further information

See Northumberland County Archives: Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Stobswood:

- Register of Services EP 19/56
- Preachers' Book - record of sermons EP19/57
- Papers concerning the disposal of Stobswood Mission Church 1939 EP 19/39.

THE ALNMOUTH RIOT 1895

Inscription(s) and details

The Alnmouth Riot / 22 Sept 1895 / Better Luck to the Police / & / The Rev Mr Brailford's (sic) / ***recovery*** [reverse] yacht between vertical ferns

Pub rummer with a rounded bowl, 104mm high and 62mm diameter at the rim. The yacht on the reverse is virtually the same as that engraved on the reverse of the Blyth yacht accident glass (see earlier in Part Three, also 1895) - in particular, the stays forward of the mast and the pennant from the masthead are identical. The glasses were almost certainly engraved by the same hand. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

This incident is reported in the Newcastle Daily Journal, the Newcastle Daily Chronicle, the Morpeth Herald and the Alnwick and County Gazette. It would appear that on the occasion of the 'annual feast' at Alnmouth on 22 September a number of pitmen arrived by boat (possibly stolen) from Amble and became noisy and quarrelsome. The local policeman, PC Richardson, was called to the Schooner Hotel at about 8pm but when he attempted to eject the men, he was assaulted by two of them one of whom (Linen) hit him in the eye, knocking him down and taking his truncheon. However, the constable followed Linen and was able to arrest him. He was then taken in custody to Amble by a sergeant and constable who had been summoned from Alnwick by telephone.

Meanwhile the gang attempted to escape by sailing back to Amble but were frustrated by lack of wind and returned to Alnmouth 'infused with a spirit of revenge as well as frenzied by drink'. PC Richardson's house was besieged and his windows smashed as the 'rough men' went around the village, assaulting people and breaking windows.

The Rev. Edmund J. Brailsford, Wesleyan Chairman of the District, was on holiday at Alnmouth, staying at the house of a friend. Having preached that evening at the Chapel, he had returned to the house and was sitting in an upstairs room when a stone came through the window. He and his son went downstairs to investigate, confronted some men and asked whether they had thrown the stone. 'The answer was a most dastardly attack.' One man, who told the reverend gentleman that he 'would do for him' hit him on the face with a stone with such force that he fractured his maxilla (upper jaw) and continued hitting him while he lay on the ground. The Rev. Brailsford's son was also attacked. A Dr Ridley, who happened to be staying in Alnmouth, attended and pronounced the Rev. Brailsford's injuries as serious, but not dangerous.

The whole village was now aroused. Inhabitants and visitors, some armed with sticks, surrounded a number of the rioters - although four of them forded the river and escaped towards Amble. More police had now arrived - a sergeant and two PCs from Alnwick and two sergeants and two PCs from Amble - and nine men were arrested. Remanded in custody, they appeared at Alnwick Magistrates Court and 'a stalwart young fellow', William Linen of Amble, charged with assaulting PC Richardson, was sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour. The

remaining eight men, having been remanded, were later charged with ‘unlawfully, riotously and tumultuously assembling together to the disturbance of the public and feloniously and with force doing injury and damage to certain houses in the village of Alnmouth’. After the Rev. Brailsford had given evidence the men were committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions.

A slightly different version of the riot is given by Ella Dodds in her Memories of Alnmouth. She states that the Percy Volunteers, with headquarters at Alnwick and detachments in various villages, competed in an artillery-firing contest, firing out to sea at Alnmouth on the day in question. The competition was won by Alnmouth much to the chagrin of their great rivals, Amble, and it was this that sparked the riot. However, although the annual feast would seem an appropriate time to hold this event, none of the newspaper accounts mention any artillery competition and Isabel Wright, in her history (see below), states that the gun used by the Percy Artillery Corps at Alnmouth was dismantled in 1893. Moreover, Ella Dodds’ assertion that there was no resident policeman in Alnmouth at the time is clearly incorrect. Ms. Wright gives a short account of the riot and concludes: ‘It is interesting to know that some commemorative glasses were made and at least one still exists.’ She cites a virtually identical engraving to the one recorded above.

The Schooner Hotel is still in business in Alnmouth and on the opposite side of the street are two prominent first floor bay windows. It is tempting to suppose that the Rev. Brailsford was sitting at one of them.

Further information

The Newcastle Daily Journal, 24 & 30 September, 7 & 8 October; the Newcastle Daily Chronicle, 24 September; the Morpeth Herald and Reporter, 28 September; the Alnwick and County Gazette, 28 September 1895.

Isabel Wright: Alnmouth. Ancient and Modern (Alnwick Library, 942.82.LC)

Memories of Alnmouth (www.alnmouth.org.uk)

DEATH OF JAMES NEWTON 1895

Inscription(s) and details

In Memory of / James Newton / Died / at Seaton Sluice / 2 Oct 1895 / age 98 Years [reverse] *Gone / But not / Forgotten* flanked by vertical ferns with

horizontal leaves below

Small moulded tankard, 85mm high and 62mm diameter. The base has moulded radial fluting and the 'peacock head' trademark of Sowerby's Ellison Glass Works, Gateshead, in the centre. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

James Newton's death certificate (No. 385, Registration District Tynemouth, Sub-district Earsdon) states that he died on **1** October 1895, a date checked by the registrar, and that his age was **96** years. His occupation is given as 'Gardener Domestic Servant' and we can also see that his son, Walter Newton of Cowpen Colliery, witnessed the death, making a cross in lieu of a signature. The certified cause of death was 'senile decay'.

This glass is a good example (others are the Blyth Yacht Accident and the Nobley brothers glasses) of an item engraved in commemoration of a death where the inscription is inaccurate. This might suggest that the family of the deceased were not the commissioners of the glass – as they would be unlikely to accept such errors. It suggests, rather, that the glass was engraved speculatively, for sale. But perhaps the illiterate son Walter – who had to mark his name with a cross - did not realise that both the date and age were incorrect!

Inscription(s) and details

Succesfs To Charles / Fenwick MP / 1895 / Re-Election [reverse] *Hee's* (sic) *a Jolly / good fellow* clover

Oval bowl pub rummer, 90mm high and 61mm diameter at the rim. The second 's' of the word 'success' is in the form of an 'f' in the 18th century style i.e. 'Sucesfs'. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

Charles Fenwick was born in Cramlington in 1850 and after attending a colliery school started work at Bebside pithead at the age of nine. A year later he went underground. Although active in the Northumberland Miners' Association and a delegate to the Trade Union Congress in 1884, he continued to work in the pit until 1885. In this year he was elected the Liberal member of Parliament for the newly created Wansbeck division with a majority of 3,155. He successfully contested the seat in 1886, 1892, 1895, 1900, 1906 (majority 7176) and 1910. He served on several Royal Commissions and continued to be an active member of the Northumberland Miners' Association. In the 1910 Coronation Honours List he was made a Privy Councillor and in December 1917 he was given a complimentary luncheon by the Northumberland Miners Association to celebrate his 32 consecutive years in Parliament.

A member of the Primitive Methodist Church, he also 'accomplished much good work as a preacher'. The Newcastle Daily Journal records: 'He had been ill for a few weeks and about ten days before his death complications set in which terminated fatally. Quite recently Mr. Fenwick, owing to the state of his health, intimated to his constituents ... his intention to resign his seat.'

Charles Fenwick died on 20 April 1918. Following a service at his house at 14 Tankerville Terrace, Jesmond, he was buried in St Andrew's Cemetery. Among the many mourners were representatives of the Miners' Federation; the Northumberland Miners' Association; the Durham Miners' Association; the Northumberland Coalowners' Association; The Northern Counties Permanent Building Society; the Lord Mayor and the deputy Lord Mayor.

Further information

The information above is mainly from The Newcastle Daily Journal, 22 and 24 April 1918. It is tempting to believe that this glass and the 1895 Thomas Burt glass (see later in Part Three) were engraved by the same hand responsible for the glass engraved 'Now wee shant be long 1898' (see Part Two).

THOMAS BURT MP 1895

Inscription(s) and details

Succefs To Thomas / Burt MP / 1895 / Re-election [reverse] *Hee's* (sic) *a Jolly / good fellow* clover

Oval bowl pub rummer. Private collection: Leicestershire.

Historical context

Apart from the name, this glass is identical to the 1895 Charles Fenwick glass (see earlier in Part Three), including the spelling of '*Succefs*'.

The two glasses were obviously engraved by the same hand and it is tempting to surmise that they were sold in tandem, perhaps at the Durham Miners' Gala in 1895 when Charles Fenwick was present.

Thomas Burt was a guest speaker at the Gala of 1891 but appears not to have attended thereafter. He remained an MP until 1918.

Further information

For a biography of Thomas Burt see L J Satre: Thomas Burt, Miners' MP, 1837-1922 The Great Conciliator (Leicester University Press, London, 1999, ISBN 0-7185-0184-5, Robinson Library, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 331.880.92 SAT).

SAMUEL STOREY MP 1895

Inscription(s) and details

Succefs (sic) *to Samuel / Storey MP For / re-election / 1895* [reverse] *Don't Forget This / ye miners* three leafed clover and spiral either side of reverse inscription

Rounded bowl pub rummer. Private collection: Buckinghamshire.

Historical context

Samuel Storey (1840-1925) was elected Liberal MP for Sunderland in a by-election in 1881, re-elected in 1885, 1886 and 1892 but lost his seat in 1895. He was defeated in 1900 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne but was re-elected to Sunderland in January 1910. He retired before the December 1910 election.

Since Samuel Storey was unsuccessful in 1895, this glass was clearly engraved before the event as part of the election campaigning - and it may well be that the Fenwick and Burt glasses (see earlier in Part Three) were similar inducements to vote, rather than celebratory souvenirs.

The private collector who owns this glass has a 'substantial collection' of pottery items used for the same purpose and states that they are 'heavily northeast biased'.

LORD WARKWORTH (HENRY PERCY) 1895

Inscription(s) and details

In Honour Of / Lord Walkworth (sic) / Wishing him Succefs / In the future / 1895

Rounded bowl pub rummer, 88mm high with a bowl 90mm diameter. Private collection: Leicestershire.

This glass and the glass commemorating Charles Fenwick in connection with the same General Election (see earlier in Part Three) must, surely, have been engraved by the same hand? Both spell “success” as ‘Succefs’ and both contain spelling mistakes (‘Hees’ and ‘Walkworth’) indicative of some degree of illiteracy.

It is easy to see why Fenwick - ex-miner, trade unionist, champion of the coal miners and a Liberal - should be commemorated on a glass directed at a working class market but it is interesting that an aristocrat and a Conservative, Lord Warkworth, should also be accorded the same treatment. Unless these items were distributed as ‘promotional gifts’ – in a pre-election attempt to win votes – and that is very probably the explanation.

Historical context

The 7th Duke and Duchess of Northumberland had 13 children, of whom six died prematurely. One of these was their eldest son, Henry Algernon George Percy. He was known as Lord Warkworth until 1899, when he was styled Lord Percy.

Warkworth Castle came into the hands of the Percys in 1332. It was previously part of the estate of Sir John Clavering before reverting to the Crown. For centuries the castle was the favourite residence of the Percys when in Northumberland but the 1st Duke decided to develop Alnwick as his northern seat and Warkworth fell into ruin. In 1749 the 7th Duke of Somerset was created Earl of Northumberland and Baron Warkworth.

Henry Percy was a man of outstanding intellect who seemed certain to attain high political office. He was at Eton from 1884 to 1889 before attending Christ Church College, Oxford where he took a First in classics in 1893. In 1895 he was elected Conservative MP for South Kensington and retained his seat until his death.

The ten years following his election were a period when the Conservatives were in power, initially under Robert Cecil, Marquis of Salisbury and then under Arthur James Balfour. Percy was one of the administration’s most promising young men and from 1902 he held the junior office of Under Secretary of State for India and the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In December 1905, however, following several by-election defeats, Balfour resigned as Prime Minister in favour of the leader of the Liberal Party, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. In the General Election, held a few weeks later in January 1906, the Liberals won a landslide victory.

Percy retained his seat but he never again held office because he died of pneumonia (some records say ‘pleurisy’) in the Gare du Nord Hotel in Paris at the end of 1909, at the relatively young age of 38. There were rumours at the time

that he had been mortally wounded in a duel – or even murdered. The murder was supposed to have taken place on the orders of Winston Churchill, whose young wife, Clementine, had allegedly, at some time in the past, had an affair with Warkworth. Some people went further and said that Churchill's younger brother, Jack, was the murderer.

Further information

Richard Lomas: A Power in the Land: The Percys (Tuckwell Press, East Linton, Scotland, 1999).

Inscription(s) and details

Robterson (sic) *Ewen / St Marys Island*

Heavy tankard, about half-pint capacity, 95mm high with an elegantly curved handle. The engraving is of somewhat better quality than that of the common 'disaster' glass and the inscription is surrounded by ferns. Private collection: Durham City.

Historical context

St Mary's Island is a small rocky islet off the coast of Northumberland, just north of Whitley Bay, approachable on foot at low tide and well known for its lighthouse, built in 1896-8.

In 1852, George Robertson Ewen⁶⁹ obtained a twelve-year lease from Lord Hastings for fishing salmon from the island that included the proviso that any buildings he erected would become the property of Lord Hastings. The rent was £20 a year. Fishing was at that time by bag and snake nets. Ewen then applied to Lord Hastings for permission to erect a hut in which to store and dry his nets.

The Salmon Fisheries Act of October 1861 abolished the method of netting used by Ewen and fishing of salmon passed into the hands of the Tyne Conservancy Board. Ewen was by then living on the island with his wife and family, including his son, John Robertson Ewen⁷⁰, and had converted the hut into a building with stone walls and a roof thatched with 'bents' (grass) gathered from the headland. He applied to Lord Hastings for permission to obtain a licence to sell beer and this was given on the grounds that his former living had been taken away. His rent was reduced to £5 a year.

The pub, the *Freemason's Arms*, known locally as *The Square and Compass* since its sign bore the Masonic set square and compass emblem, soon became popular with the increasing numbers of visitors to Whitley Bay. But the island was a part of Hartley East Farm and soon the tenant farmer, Joseph Patterson, was complaining that visitors to the pub were unlawfully crossing his land and that, especially on Sundays, were, together with their dogs, worrying his sheep.

Right of way was then interrupted when Patterson let a field opposite the island to the army as a rifle range and with bullets passing over the pub it was said at times to be in a state of siege. Complaints were made against the farmer (who was obtaining £100 a year rent for the range) who in turn appealed to Lord Hastings, alleging trespass and nuisance.

⁶⁹ **George Robertson Ewen**, born 15 October 1830, Donbridge, Aberdeenshire; died 18 January 1906, Hexham, Northumberland.

⁷⁰ **John Robertson Ewen**, born 2 June 1859, Ross, Northumberland; died 23 July 1938, Waterloo Hotel, Berwick.

A final straw may have been the police stating that they were unable to maintain order on the island and the Ewens were given notice to quit by 1 May 1892. This notice was ignored, the family refusing to go without compensation for the improvements that they had made to the island, not only buildings but sea defences. Further negotiations ensued and it was agreed that the Ewens could stay if the licence was discontinued. However the magistrates 'did not see their way to discontinue the licence as requested by the police' and therefore a second notice to quit was issued, this time for 13 May 1894. This in turn was extended to November 1895 but still the Ewens preferred his Lordship to eject them forcibly. 'Lord Hastings had done everything in his power to give the Ewens a chance but they were claiming the island and he was bound to assert his right of possession.'

On 13 November 1895 the Sheriff plus officials and six policemen began the eviction of George Ewen, his family and his possessions. A large number of people witnessed the eviction - now involving a dozen policemen - that continued into the next day. The bailiffs took all the family's possessions over the rocks to the headland and left them there, the last item being a pig that had evaded capture for some six hours but which was eventually transported in a wagon. The family (John Ewen, his now elderly father George, his wife, his two sons and his three daughters) spent several nights under tarpaulins before lodgings were found for them in Whitley Bay, where there was considerable sympathy for them. They later opened a butcher's shop. The origin of the tankard listed above is unknown. It may have been produced during the period the family ran the pub on the island - an early advertising gimmick - or it may have been produced after the eviction, to help raise money to get them back on their feet.

On 16 November 1895, Lord Hastings issued a statement explaining the eviction, his reason being that the Ewens were disputing the ownership of the house on the island. On 10 December, John Harris Crisp became the tenant of the cottage with a licence to run it as a temperance hotel and eight days later a Trinity House surveyor took up lodgings to survey the island. Construction of the famous St Mary's lighthouse began in the autumn of the next year.

Further information

The eviction and the events leading up to it were described in some detail in the Shields Daily News of 12 November 1895 et seq. These reports are the basis of an account, covering several pages, filed, together with other information in the Ewen archive, in the Local History section of the North Tyneside Central Library. See also 137 Steps: The Story of St Mary's Lighthouse Whitley Bay, the handbook published by North Tyneside Council (1998) that includes a photograph of the eviction.

See also the glass 'Jesse Dawson Ewen / St Mary's Island / 1879' recorded earlier in this section.

Inscription(s) and details

John Atkinson / Seaton Delaval / June 18 1896 [reverse] large fern
Pub glass with straight sides. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO 091138/4).

Historical context

The Atkinson family were miners who lived at Seaton Delaval, Northumberland but, without further investigation, it is not known who John Atkinson was or what this glass commemorates.

Further information

This glass was acquired by Woodhorn Mining Museum in March 2011, along with four others – namely two mining disasters (Burradon 1860 and Hartley 1862); an unusual ‘Northumberland Strike 1886’ glass⁷¹ and an ‘Auld Lang Syne glass – direct from the Atkinson family, still of Seaton Delaval.

⁷¹ There were no miners’ strikes in Northumberland in 1886.

JARROW BOAT DISASTER 1896

Inscription(s) and details

The Jarrow Boat / Disaster 26 Sept 1896 / 7 lives lost above the inscription there is an engraved empty rowing boat on water viewed obliquely from the stern [reverse] fern

Ovoid bowl port glass on long stem, 120mm high and 50mm diameter. Private collection. Nottingham.

In memory of the Jarrow boat disaster 26 Sept. 1896 7 lives lost

Small red glass tumbler, also engraved with ferns and a rowing boat. See: E L Thornborrow: Some late Victorian engraved wine glasses from South Shields district (1959). The transcription of upper and lower cases here is unlikely to be exact.

Historical context

This incident was reported at some length in the Newcastle Daily Journal of 28 September 1896:

DREADFUL ACCIDENT ON THE TYNE / SINKING OF A BOAT / FIVE MEN AND TWO WOMEN DROWNED

‘A painful sensation was created at Howden, Willington Quay, Jarrow ... when it became known that a terrible accident, involving seven lives, had occurred the previous night. The unfortunate victims belonged to the working class population ... [and] ... as soon as the people of the neighbourhood heard of the disaster, vast crowds made their way to the riverside ... The direct passenger traffic between Jarrow on the south side of the river [Tyne] and Willington Quay and Howden on the north side is carried on by two large ferries and a smaller steamer ... These vessels do not run at night and a custom seems to have been established that one of the crew of the Tyne General Ferry Company to take any belated passengers who have lost the last ferry across the river in a sculler boat ... As the last passenger had crossed at 11.30pm several people made their way to the Jarrow landing stage and the sculler boat was used to take them to the north shore. There were eight passengers and the boatman Robert Young.’

The newspaper report goes on to say that the sea was calm and that there appeared to be nothing untoward about the boat ‘but as the boat made its way across the river some serious defect became apparent and produced the terrible tragedy’. The two survivors said that about half-way across one of the women said that there was water around her feet and that this was confirmed by another passenger. The boatman made some jocular remark about the possibility that they would have to swim before it rapidly became clear that the boat was filling with water and sinking. One passenger, John Osborne, who was ‘well skilled in the art of natation’ [i.e. a good swimmer] jumped overboard and set off for the shore but despite the reduction of weight in the boat it went down by the stern and the remaining occupants were left struggling in the water. Shouts and screams were heard on the shore and a boat was launched. The second survivor, Thomas Campbell, was found clinging to the half-submerged boat and taken ashore. The bodies of the two women, Mrs Bannister and Mrs Bell, were (like Ophelia) found

floating, buoyed up by their clothes. Attempts were made over the next two hours to resuscitate them but in vain.

The 30 September edition of the paper, reporting the funeral of one of the women, states that at that time none of the bodies of the five missing men had been recovered.

The final record was:

Survived

1. John Osborne
2. Thomas Campbell

Drowned

1. James Bannister
2. Althea Bannister, wife of the above
3. Joseph Bell
4. Sarah Bell, wife of the above
5. Arthur Smee
6. Mr Waile
7. Robert Young

Tragically, the Bannisters left eight children and the Bells five.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S DIAMOND JUBILEE 1897

Inscription(s) and details

Richard Scott Batey / Jubilee Year / 1897 [reverse] fern leaf spray
Small tumbler, 96mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

Jubilee Year / band of ferns enclosing J. Chapman / 1897
Small tumbler, 100mm high, with fluted sides and ground base. Private collection. Oxford.

Jubilee Year Sarah Chapman above a band of fern leaves
Small tumbler, 100mm high, with fluted sides and ground base, pair of the above

Thomas M Routledge / Diamond Jubilee / 1897 [reverse] wheel - cut swan between palm trees
Large tumbler, 149mm high, with Sowerby peacock head.⁷² Private collection: Oxford.

Historical context

In 1987, Queen Victoria celebrated 60 years on the throne and the nation – indeed, the whole British Empire - celebrated by producing a huge number of Diamond Jubilee souvenir items including a great deal of cheap china and glassware.

At the time of writing (October 2011), however, we have not encountered any 'pure' Diamond Jubilee glasses i.e. items engraved with inscriptions commemorating only the date and the celebration. The above, all owned by the same Oxford collector, are examples of personalised glasses engraved to mark the Jubilee year. Batey and Chapman in particular are, it is worth noting, common northeastern names.

⁷² Sowerby was a famous glass-manufacturing firm, in Gateshead. They used a peacock head as their trademark.

WEST CORNFORTH 1898

Inscription(s) and details

Play Up / West Cornforth / 1898 [reverse] leaf frond

Rounded bowl pub rummer, 105mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

Historical context

The village of Cornforth is in county Durham, about six miles south of Durham City and due east of Spennymoor. Adjacent is West Cornforth that, despite its name, lies south and a little east of Cornforth itself and which developed in the 19th century to house a growing population of workers in the local collieries, brickworks, quarries and iron works, notably at Spennymoor. There were no less than ten blast furnaces in the district.

[The Cornforth website](#), clearly owing much to a local historian called Robin Walton, offers a fairly comprehensive history of the locality giving details of the streets, shops, schools, pubs and churches but no information on any sporting activities that might be relevant to *Play Up West Cornforth*.

But there are some clues in Mr Walton's booklet.

- In 1897, the West Cornforth & District Fanciers Society held an open show for poultry, pigeons and rabbits - just the sort of gathering that might have attracted an itinerant engraver and, if it was repeated in 1898, West Cornforth might have been competing in some category against other local fanciers.
- A similar and more likely event was the Thrislington & Cornforth Flower Show and Annual Sports that included a 120 yard race, a quoits handicap and football matches.
- In 1900, there was a Cornforth United Football Club and we can speculate that it may have incorporated a West Cornforth club that existed in 1898.

But was the engraver of this glass familiar with the poem by Sir Henry Newbolt (1862-1938) that was published in 1887?

*There's breathless hush in the Close to-night -
Ten to make and the match to win -
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote -
"Play up! Play up! and play the game!"*

In our search for possible motives behind the engraving of this glass, the aspirations of the West Cornforth Cricket Club (certainly active in 1896 when it hosted a concert) seem the best bet.

Further information

See the Cornforth website: www.cornforth.org.uk/westcornforth.htm

See also: Robin Walton: A History of Thrislington, Cornforth and West Cornforth (Coxhoe, County Durham, Coronation Press, 1991, Durham County Library: Accession No: 5029528 Class No: 942 815/4).

DEATH OF ISABELLA VASEY 1899

Inscription(s) and details

Isabella Vasey / Died at Thames St. / June 4th 1899 / Age 101 years

Glass of unrecorded type. The inscription has ornate capital letters. Private collection: London.

Historical context

Survival to this age must have been comparatively rare in 1899 but the death was not recorded in the Newcastle Daily Journal or in the Durham newspapers.

The death certificate for Isabella Vasey (South Shields District and Sub-district, No: 443) states that she was the widow of Thomas Vasey, a retired merchant seaman, and that she died at number 73, Thames Street of 'senile degeneration' with her brother in attendance. One can surmise that he also must have been of a good age.

There is no Thames Street in South Shields anymore.

HEBBURN PARK HOSPITAL 1899

Inscription(s) and details

Hebburn / Park Hospital / opened aug 7th 1899 [reverse] fern
Rounded bowl pub rummer. Private collection: Oxford.

Historical context

A local public holiday was declared on 7 August 1899 to celebrate the opening of Hebburn's public park and fever hospital. A procession assembled in Parliament Square and passed through the principal streets on its way to the park. It was made up (in order) by the Council and officials; the General Arrangements Committee; the Colliery Prize Silver Band; sixteen friendly and other societies; the Colliery Temperance Band; cyclists; Horton Boys' Band and about 5,000 children from Hebburn schools. From a platform at the Park entrance, Councillor J Smailes, Chairman of the Urban District Council, was presented with a silver key and, after his speech, a vote of thanks for it and *another* speech seconding the vote of thanks, the members of the public were admitted. There were sports and games for the children with 'valuable prizes'; meanwhile, 'the older visitors, who numbered many thousands, found entertainment and comfort in the music and refreshments which were plentifully provided'.

The park, about 20 acres in size, had formed the grounds of Hebburn Hall and was acquired from the owner, Mr Carr Ellison, a year or two before being 'tastefully and skillfully laid out.' When completed 'which [it] will be shortly, it will bid fair to rival any park in the neighbourhood, both for its natural and artificial beauties. Its position is about half a mile south of Hebburn Station, and will provide a welcome change from the hot and not over pleasant streets of the town.'

At 5pm, Mrs Smailes opened the infectious diseases hospital, which stood in an enclosure a little to the west of the park and, like her husband, was presented with an inscribed silver key. The hospital, that had cost about £4,000, was made up of 'typhoid and scarlet fever wards, discharging and disinfecting rooms ... fitted with the latest appliances.' It was 'in every way well up to date'. Then 'the festivities were brought to a close at dusk by a brilliant display of fireworks.'

Hebburn Hall, a substantial building of more than 80 rooms, was rebuilt in the classical style in 1790. It was first converted to an infirmary in 1897; the fine staircase was retained and led to the wards on the upper floor. In 1976 the infirmary closed and part of the hall was leased to the Freemasons as a private social club. The park was still in existence in 2009. Hebburn Hall has now been converted to private housing.

Further information

See: [Shields Daily Gazette & Shipping Telegraph](#), 8 August 1899.

THE WAR ENGLAND ALWAYS READY (date uncertain but c1899)

Inscription(s) and details

The War England Always Ready

Glass seen by John Brooks. Further details unrecorded.

Historical context

Although it is conceivable that this citation is unique, referring to the Ashanti War (1874), the Kaffir War or Second Afghan War (1878), the Zulu War (1879) or the First Boer War (1881), it is much more likely that it was engraved either in 1899 or in 1914, commemorating the start of either the Second Boer ('Transvaal') War or that of World War I.

We know that a large number of glasses were engraved in 1899 to commemorate the start of the Second Boer War, General Buller at the front and the siege of Ladysmith - but we know of only a few glasses commemorating the start of World War I (see later in Part Three).

Not only are World War I glasses less common, they also tend to include a mixture of upper and lower case lettering, which was common at the time.

Taking these facts into account, 1899 seems the most likely date for the above glass – but we will never know for sure.

TRANSVAAL WAR – BEGINNING - 1899

Inscription(s) and details

Transvaal War / Commenced 11 oct / 1899 [reverse] fern

Bucket bowl pub rummer with rudimentary shoulder and basal knobs, 113mm high, and 63mm diameter at the rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Transvaal War / Commenced 11 oct / 1899 [reverse] two vertical ferns

Wine glass, dark green bowl on plain stem and foot, 128mm high. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Transvaal War / Commence (sic) / **1899** [reverse] leaf spray

Rounded bowl pub rummer. Private collection: Oxford.

Transvaal War / Commenced 11 Oct / 1899 [reverse] fern

Straight-sided rummer, 107mm high. Private collection. Oxford.

VR / Transvaal War / Commenced 11 oct / 1899

Miniature tankard. Beamish Museum (1968.166).

Transvaal War / commence (sic) **1899** [reverse] three-leafed clover

Rounded bowl pub rummer, 106mm high. Private collection: East London.

Historical context

Until 1886, when gold was discovered in the Witwatersrand and Johannesburg became the richest mining town in the world, an uneasy balance existed between the Dutch-descended Afrikaners or Boers and the British settlers in South Africa. The British were mostly in Cape Province and Natal whereas the Boers dominated the Transvaal or South African Republic and the Orange River colony, carrying on a rugged agriculture and living in close-knit, isolated communities. The majority native tribes were little regarded on either side of the divide.

It was the opening up of the 'Rand'⁷³ that upset the balance. The lure of gold brought an influx of British and other nationalities into the Transvaal. The Boers, who controlled the political process of the province, treated them as 'Uitlanders' (literally 'outlanders') and refused them voting and other rights - and tension gradually built up.

After years of this hostility, the British decided to increase their 12,000 strong army contingent in South Africa to a force that eventually numbered 500,000. This finally prompted an ultimatum, probably drafted by Smuts but issued by President Kruger of the Transvaal, demanding withdrawal of British troops from the Transvaal border, removal of all troops that had arrived since 1 June and return of all troops then on the high seas bound for South Africa. Unless 'an

⁷³ (Witwaters)rand - a rocky region in the southern Transvaal in northeastern South Africa that contains/contained rich gold deposits, coal and manganese.

immediate and affirmative' answer to these demands was received by 5pm on Wednesday 11 October 1899, the Transvaal would consider the British to have declared war.

The British public received the ultimatum's expiry initially with little emotion but soon there was great enthusiasm for the war. On 14 October a huge, cheerful and patriotic crowd gathered at Southampton to bid General Sir Redvers Buller, Commander-in-Chief, Godspeed on his passage to South Africa. It seems likely that the glasses listed above were engraved about this time and before Mournful Monday, 30 October, when General White was driven back into Ladysmith.

The green wine glass listed above is unusual, although such items commemorate Edward Aubone Potter (1893) and Andrew Colvin (1895). Meanwhile, differences in the way the capital 'W's are engraved on these glasses indicate that they were done by at least two different hands.

Inscription(s) and details

Transvaal War / General Buller / at The Front 1899

Small wine glass. Beamish Museum (accession number 1973.185).

General Buller / at The Front / 1899 [reverse] leaf frond

Rounded bowl pub rummer. Private collection: Oxford.

Cheers for / General Buller 1900

Pub rummer. Beamish Museum (accession number 1984-134.3).

Historical context

Sir Redvers⁷⁴ Henry Buller was born in 1839. After Eton, he was commissioned into the 60th Rifles in 1858 and saw active service in the war with China, the Red River expedition, the Ashanti War, the Kaffir War and the Zulu War where his rescue of fellow soldiers won him the VC. He was chief of staff in the 1st Boer War (1881) and was made commander-in chief at the start of the 2nd Boer War in 1899. But after a succession of defeats, which became known as 'Black Week' he was replaced by Lord Roberts in December 1899, remaining in command of the Natal Army.

On 28 February 1900 (Ladysmith Day) he successfully relieved Ladysmith at the fourth attempt but at the end of October 1900 he was relieved of his command and returned to his pre-war job of training the Army Corps at Aldershot. A year later he was sacked following an allegation that he had ordered General White to surrender at Ladysmith.

Historians have compared the feuding between Lord Roberts and Buller with that between Lords Lucan and Cardigan. Certainly Roberts, who threatened to resign if the Cabinet did not allow him to have Buller sacked for indiscipline, was behind the *coup* (Roberts' phrase) against Buller. Thomas Pakenham takes the view that historians have been over-harsh in their assessment of Buller. The index of Philip Magnus's biography of Kitchener, for instance, lists: '*Buller, bloated incompetence of.*' But it was Buller, Pakenham observes, who successfully hammered out the new tactics needed when a 19th century army had to fight a 20th century war. Moreover, he had enjoyed some 18 months of unbroken success in an independent command at the head of a third of the British fighting force. One of his colonels wrote: 'By a short unintelligible address he could send his defeated and diminished army merry and confident back to camp.'

On his return to England in 1900, Buller was given a hero's welcome by the public if not by the Government. And even after his retirement, under the shadow of his failure, he remained a popular national figure until his death in 1908, "hot-tempered, bibulous and jolly to the last" (James Morris).

⁷⁴ Pronounced 'Reevers'; or - satirically, later in his career - 'Reverse'. (James Morris: Farewell the Trumpets.)

It seems likely that the first two glasses above were engraved either on or around 14 October 1899 when Buller set sail for South Africa (but before Mournful Monday, 30 October, when General White was driven back into Ladysmith) and that the third glass commemorates either the relief of Ladysmith in February 1900 or Buller's return home.

Further information

For background, see Thomas Pakenham: The Boer War (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1979 ISBN 0-297-77395-X). See also James Morris: Farewell the Trumpets: An Imperial Retreat (Pax Britannica) (Faber & Faber, London 2003 ISBN 9780571194681, originally published 1978).

Inscription(s) and details

Transvaal War / Three Cheers / for General White / at Ladysmith / 1899

[reverse] fern

Pub rummer with vertical sides but a rounded base, 113mm high and 64mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

British forces, under the command of Lt. General Sir George White VC, were besieged in Ladysmith from 2 November 1899 until relieved on 28 February 1900 (Ladysmith Day), but in truth 'Three Cheers' is hardly an appropriate sentiment.

George White, aged 64 in 1899, had won his VC in the second Afghan War and was commander-in-chief in India from 1893 to 1898. However, he proved to be an inept commander in the field when, following the disastrous failure of his intended 'knock-down blow' (1,272 casualties in a day), for which he accepted full responsibility, he was forced back into Ladysmith after a battle on 30 October 1899 ('Mournful Monday').

Sir George had to be rescued before he could be sacked and after General Buller's successful relief of the town at the fourth attempt, he was invalided home. He was Governor of Gibraltar from 1900-04 and died a Field Marshal in 1912.

Further information

For an authoritative account and a small picture of White, see Thomas Pakenham: [The Boer War](#) (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1979 ISBN 0-297-77395-X, Robinson Library, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 968.204.PAK).

TRANSVAAL WAR – BOBS AND MAC – 1900

Inscription(s) and details

Cheers For / Little Bob's / 1900 [reverse] Union flag within vertical ferns
Pub rummer, 110mm high. Beamish Museum.

Cheers For / Fighting Mac / 1900 [reverse] Union flag within vertical ferns
Pub rummer, 109mm high. Beamish Museum.

Historical context

At just 5 feet 2 inches tall, Field Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar, Pretoria and Waterford was short of stature - hence 'Little Bobs' (note that the apostrophe on the glass above is the engraver's own). Lord Roberts served in the Indian Mutiny and, during the second Afghan War, became famous for leading the relief of Kandahar. He was said to be 'the most popular commander in the British Army'. In 1900, he succeeded Buller as Commander in Chief, British Forces, South Africa. He died in 1914 while visiting British Empire troops in France – see memorial glass also catalogued later in Part Three.

Major General Hector MacDonald ('Fighting Mac') commanded the Highland Brigade in the Transvaal War. Later, following allegations, which were never proven, of a homosexual relationship with a Ceylonese youth, he saved the reputation of his wife and the British Army by shooting himself in a Paris hotel.

TRANSVAAL WAR – BRITISH FLAG HOISTED AT PRETORIA – 1900

Inscription(s) and details

Transvaal War / British Flag / Hoisted at Pretoria / June 5th 1900 Inscription flanked by vertical stems, possibly ferns [reverse] Union flag at nearly full mast. Thinly blown straight-sided tumbler, 115mm high and 70mm diameter at the rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The style of engraving on this glass differs from that on other Transvaal War commemoratives, being rather more stylised. And the Union flag is slightly more sophisticated than those on the 1914 War and Lusitania glasses, with the blue element in the flag roughly engraved with squiggles.

Historical context

By 30 May 1900, victory in the Boer War seemed close at hand. Ladysmith and Mafeking had been relieved. The 'Grand Army' of Lord Roberts was only ten miles from Johannesburg and beyond lay Kruger's Pretoria.

The Boers had stated that Johannesburg would be surrendered the next morning on condition that they were given 24 hours to withdraw their army from the town.

Roberts agreed and it was probably the most serious strategic mistake of his career - although in keeping with his 'velvet glove' strategy of trying to bring the war to both a speedy and humane conclusion. Roberts believed the war was nearly over – so why waste British lives? The next day his troops marched into Johannesburg.

Meanwhile, Kruger, giving way to despair, had been smuggled out of Pretoria together with most of the Transvaal government - but the spasm of hopelessness quickly passed, for the 'Johannesburg armistice' had allowed Botha to extricate his best men and heavy guns, all the reserve ammunition and all the gold and coins from the Mint. Talk of surrender was forgotten; instead they would make a fighting retreat. In order to buy time, the Boers put out peace feelers to Roberts and offered to negotiate the disposal of Pretoria.

Again, Roberts took the bait. The triumphal entry into the Pretoria was on 2 June. Down came the Transvaal flag and on 5 June a silk Union Jack, stitched by Lady Roberts, was run up on the Government Building.

But Roberts' talk of civilised warfare had allowed the Boers to fight again and it was not until 10 June that he realised that he had been duped. Thanks to the two breathing spaces, Botha had managed to gather 5,000 Transvaalers and had restored the volk's hopes.

The conflict dragged on with guerrilla warfare, the burning of farms, deportations and concentration camps and it was not until 31 May 1902 – two years later - that peace terms were finally signed.

Further information

Thomas Pakenham: The Boer War (Widenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1979).

The abridged and illustrated edition of this book (London, 1993) has a photograph (page 224) of troops outside the Government Building on 5 June, waiting for the Union flag to be run up.

DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA 1901

Inscription(s) and details

Death / of Queen Victoria / January 22nd / 1901 / age 82 Years

Small horizontal scroll above inscription [reverse] fern branching into three.
Thinly blown, straight-sided tumbler, 105mm high. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Death / of Queen Victoria / January 22 1901

Small pressed glass jug with radial fluting on the base. Private collection: Nottingham.

Death / of Queen Victoria / The Record Reign Ended / The Close of a Noble Life / January 22nd 1901 / aged 82 Years This engraving is between fern leaves and, below, there is a diamond-engraved star followed by **VR** between crossed Union flags

Pressed moulded jug. Private collection: Oxford.

Historical context

The interesting point to note here – in relation to the first and third items listed above, which give the Queen's age as 82 - is that Victoria was born on 19 May 1819, which meant that she died at the age of 81, some four months short of her 82nd birthday.

TRANSVAAL WAR – END - 1902

Inscription(s) and details

Transvaal War / Ended 31 May / 1902 [reverse] large clover leaf
Rounded-bowl pub rummer, 102mm high. Private collection: Oxford.
John Brooks has seen another pub rummer with an identical engraving but with a fern on the reverse.

Transvaal War / Ended 31 May / 1902 diamond cut ***ER*** above [reverse] three ferns
Tankard, 140mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

Transvaal War / Cost 230 Millions [reverse] fern
Straight-sided pub rummer, 103mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

Transvaal War / Cost / over 200 million [reverse] fern
Rounded bowl pub rummer, 105mm high. Offered for sale on eBay, July 2009.

Historical context

The signing of the Peace of Vereeniging ended the Boer War, in which British losses numbered 5,774 killed and 16,000 deaths from disease against 4,000 Boers killed in action.

The Boers accepted British sovereignty but were promised self-government in the Orange River Colony and Transvaal, and £3m from Britain for re-stocking farms.

It is likely that the engraver(s) of the last two glasses obtained the figures from a newspaper but the estimates are not far off that given by Professor Bill Nasson. He writes that the Salisbury government initially estimated that the conflict would involve 75,000 troops, sustain negligible casualties, last three to four months and cost £10-11m. By April 1901 it had cost £153m and the final cost was £217m. The South African military historian Lt Col Ian van de Waag quoted a cost of £223 million at a conference in 1999.

Further information

Thomas Pakenham: *The Boer War* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1979).

Bill Nasson: *The South African War 1899-1902* (Arnold, London, 1999).

[Ian van de Waag](#) – web page.

Inscription(s) and details

King Edward VII / Crowned 26 June / 1902 The rim above the inscription is decorated with a frieze of half circles [reverse] stylised floral device. Miniature tankard, 57mm high and 48mm in diameter at the rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

King Edward VII / Crowned 26 June / 1902 [reverse] clover⁷⁵
Small tankard. Private collection: Nottingham.

King Edward VII / Crowned 26 June / 1902 [reverse] fern
Small tankard, Private collection: Oxford.

King Edward VII / Crowned 26 June / 1902 [reverse]
Small bowl with a fern decoration. Beamish Museum (1989-237.1146)

King Edward VII / died May 6 / 1910 [reverse] fern
Miniature tankard, 53mm high and 40mm in diameter at the rim. There is some chipping of the base. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Death / of King Edward VII / May 6 1910 [reverse] Union flag
Small tumbler. Beamish Museum (1997-61.2).

Historical context

Edward's coronation was scheduled for 26 June 1902 and many foreign royalties, Indian princes and colonial dignitaries were already in London when rumours started to circulate that the King was unwell. His waist measurement - 48 inches - now equaled that of his chest and, after spending a wretched night on 14 June, he noted in his diary: 'The King rather ill with severe chill. Unable to dine'. Sir Francis Laking diagnosed appendicitis and asked Edward to rest in bed on a milk diet. Meanwhile, the press was told that the King was suffering from severe lumbago.

At Windsor, between 16 and 23 June, Edward went to bed before dinner and kept to a diet but was a difficult patient, telling Laking that he intended to be at his coronation on 26 June even if he were to drop dead during the service. He returned to Buckingham Palace for lunch on 23 June where he was examined by Laking and Sir Thomas Barlow. They told him that he would certainly die unless an operation was performed without delay and added that arrangements had been

⁷⁵ On this item (and on the three following) the engraving of the capital Ks is very idiosyncratic, with some resemblance to capital Hs and, on all, it appears that the VIIs have been engraved with a different wheel. Since the second line on this tankard lies centrally below the first only when the VII is ignored, it seems that for some reason the VII was added later. This is also true of a glass jug at Beamish Museum celebrating 'The New Reign of George V' where the V has clearly been cut by a different tool.

made secretly for Sir Frederick Treves to operate in a specially prepared room in the Palace the next day. The coronation would have to be postponed indefinitely.

Though feeling desperately ill Edward retorted that he would not, and could not, disappoint his subjects and told Laking to leave the room immediately. Laking told the King that obedience in the existing circumstances was not possible and eventually extracted Edward's consent to surgery. The next day after further consultation with Lord Lister and Sir Thomas Smith, Treves performed a completely successful operation lasting 40 minutes. Edward's rapid recovery was regarded as almost miraculous and he conferred baronetcies upon Laking and Treves. When he embarked on a convalescent cruise on the royal yacht on 15 July he was six inches thinner at the waist and was better in mind and body than for years. Most foreign guests had returned home when the coronation was finally held on 9 August. The ancient ritual was made shorter to avoid fatiguing the King.

These coronation commemoratives bearing the incorrect date can be compared to the souvenir items produced to celebrate the coronation of Edward VIII that *never* took place due to his abdication.

Further information

Philip Magnus: King Edward the Seventh (John Murray, London, 1964).

A manuscript account by Sir Frederick Treves of the operation is in the library of the Royal College of Surgeons.

Chapter I of Barbara Tuckman's The Guns of August (Constable, 1962) is a classic account of the funeral of Edward VII.

NEWBIGGIN SEA DISASTER 1904

Inscription(s) and details

NewBiggin / Disaster / Dec 9 th 1904 [reverse] vertical fern

Straight-sided tumbler, 117mm high, 77mm diameter at the rim and ½ pint capacity. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

NewBiggin / Disaster Dec 9th 1904

Tumbler with thumbprints over the whole surface except below the rim, of about one pint capacity. Woodhorn Mining Museum (E337)

NewBiggin / Disaster Dec 9th 1904

Tankard with vertical flutes of about one pint capacity. Woodhorn Mining Museum (also E337).

New Biggin / Disaster Dec 9th 1904 / Seven Fisherman (sic) ***Lost***

Small wine glass on a slender stem. Recorded by John Brooks.

The NewBiggin / Disaster / Dec 9th 1904 / 7 lives lost [reverse] vertical fern

Tankard, about 135mm high. Sold on eBay in March 2009 for £206.

A pub rummer commemorating the event turned up in a Newcastle antique shop in August 2006. No record of the exact engraving.

Historical context

This 'Sad Calamity at Newbiggin' was reported in the Newcastle Daily Journal of 10, 12 and 13 December 1904 and also in The Morpeth Herald and Reporter of 17 December 1904, which covered the incident in unusual detail, illustrated by a photograph of the grounded Anglia (992 tons) and a drawing of the victims' funeral at Newbiggin Church:

'Newbiggin fisherfolk have sustained a disaster the like of which they have not known for half a century. ... The calamitous event has evoked a thrill of sympathy throughout the kingdom, and the immense number of people who attended the funeral ... was ... evidence of the sympathy and interest taken in this most melancholy incident. At about 5 o'clock on the morning of Dec. 9th, the steamship Anglia, of Grimstad, Norway, bound for Sunderland, light, ran on the rocks near Needle's Eye Rocks. The alarm gun was fired and the lifeboat ... was speedily launched. Meanwhile, however, a number of cobs⁷⁶ had also put off from the shore with the object of rendering assistance to the stranded vessel and crew. One, ... amongst the first to reach the scene ... had on board ... George Armstrong, owner, (60), John Armstrong (36), Edward Armstrong (29), John Brown Armstrong (37), John ("Sailor") Dent (60), James Armstrong, sen., (60) ... James Armstrong, jnr. (32), and John Armstrong (39), a son of George, and brother of Edward Armstrong. [With the exception of John Dent, all the men were related.] Suddenly the coble was struck by a heavy sea and capsized. The lifeboat ... made for the spot ... but all the occupants had then disappeared with the exception of John

⁷⁶ Fishing boat, peculiar to the northeast coast of Britain.

Armstrong (39), who was rescued in an unconscious condition [and recovered to give his account of the accident]. The news rapidly spread to the shore, and many painful scenes were witnessed amongst the relatives and acquaintances of the drowned men. ... The master of the Anglia, in an interview, stated that the coble ... came alongside his vessel ... The swell ... was very great, and the coble was several times carried away from the ship's side. Some little conversation concerning the salvage of the ship had passed with the occupants of the coble, when suddenly the heavy sea overturned the boat. Those on board the Anglia brought lifebelts and ropes ... started flares and sent up rockets. The ship's lifeboat was also lowered ... but the men, in the darkness ... were soon lost from sight.'

The sole survivor of the eight men said that heavy sea struck the coble head on, turning it over completely. The sea was bitterly cold and the victims were repeatedly washed off the capsized boat by the heavy swell. He did not think that any of his companions could swim. He himself clung to a buoy that was attached to fishing nets and after about an hour in the water was carried to the shore by the current. The 17 members of the Anglia crew were rescued later in the day. Thousands of mourners attended the funeral on 12 December of the six men whose bodies had by then been recovered. A public disaster fund was opened in Newcastle on 13 December.

The Morpeth Herald and Reporter quotes 'a well-known Newbiggin resident' who observes that 'it is the custom, when there is a wreck, for the fishermen to hurry out, in the hope of being able to earn something by rendering assistance; and to this end the fishermen are always eager to be in advance of the lifeboat. If a crew reaches a stranded vessel and makes an arrangement with the master for a certain sum, each member of the crew receives an equal share of the sum received. ... Thus everyone who is on the beach ... jumps into the first boat he can find, and hurries to the vessel.'

CRESSWELL SEA [BOATING] DISASTER 1905

Inscription(s) and details

Boating Disaster / at Cresswell / 29 th July / 1905 [reverse] vertical fern
Straight-sided tumbler, 117mm high, 77mm diameter at the rim and ½ pint capacity. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Apart from the inscription, this glass is identical in all respects to the Newbiggin-by-the-Sea tumbler of 1904 – see earlier in Part Three. Almost certainly they were engraved by the same hand and, possibly, at the same time (i.e. 1905). They came up for auction as a pair (Jim Railton Northumbrian Sale, Newcastle Racecourse, 7 July 2001) and it is therefore possible that they have always been together as a pair of disaster glasses, commemorating accidents that were close together in time, as well as distance.

Historical context

Cresswell is a small village in Northumberland at the south end of Druridge Bay, just north of Newbiggin.

John Anderson, age 24, James William Armstrong, age 26, and James Beech, age 'about 32' were all miners from Newbiggin. After codling⁷⁷ fishing on the evening of 28 July they came ashore for supper at their lodgings. They left again between 11pm and midnight 'in capital spirits', telling their landlady that they would return with some fish for her. They 'were all perfectly sober'.

At about 2.30am they were anchored near Cresswell Rocks in a calm sea. Anderson and Beech were preparing the lines when Armstrong, who was in the centre of the 16 foot rowing boat, stood up to reach for some bait that was near the stern. He overbalanced, fell on the gunwale, the boat capsized and all three fell into the water. Armstrong started to swim for the shore, while Anderson and Beech tried to right the boat. They succeeded, and Beech, 'an expert swimmer ... awarded honours for life saving' got Anderson on board 'all but his feet, when it again capsized'. Beech then lost hold of Anderson who drowned. Beech, holding on to the boat, started shouting for help and was soon rescued by three men fishing nearby. They found the body of Anderson in the sea 'quite dead'.

Armstrong's body was also found 'at the rock end of the beach. He was in the sea, quite dead. ... The disastrous occurrence cast a gloom over the neighbourhood, the two deceased men and the survivor all being well known in the district. Of late there has been a growing practice amongst miners employed at the pits on the Northumberland sea board to devote a portion of their time to fishing ... and in a number of cases ... the financial results have justified the undertaking, although many take to occasional fishing for pleasure and pastime.' (From The Morpeth Herald and Reporter of 5 August 1905.)

This accident was also reported in the Newcastle Daily Journal of 31 July 1905, where the survivor was named as James Veetch (sic). It was noted that the

⁷⁷ A young cod.

incident occurred in a place known as The Gut, about 150 yards from the shore, where a strong current runs. Armstrong's grandfather and his two uncles were all drowned in the same spot years before and Armstrong himself was a distant relative of the Armstrongs who drowned off Newbiggin in December 1904.

BLYTH SEA DISASTER 1905

Inscription(s) and details

Disaster in Blyth Bay / Fishing Boat Capsized / 3 Men Drowned / Aug 24th 1905

[reverse] fern

Tankard. Private collection. Nottingham.

Charles Bassberg aged 25 / Thomas Redford aged 36 / Robert English aged 23 / Who Lost Their Lives / on August 24th 1905 [reverse] In the Midst of Life We are All in Death

Straight-sided tumbler about 111mm high. Sold on eBay, 2 June 2008, for £83.01p.

Historical context

This incident was reported in The Morpeth Herald and Reporter and also in the Shields Daily News, both of 26 August 1905.

In the early morning of Thursday 24 August 1905, three men, Charles Bassberg, Thomas Redford and Robert English, together with English's dog, set out salmon fishing in a coble⁷⁸ - *James* - owned by Mr J Taylor of Blyth. At about 8am, the coble was seen floating bottom up off Hartley Point and was ultimately taken ashore but found to be empty. A heavy sea was running.

George Howes, an eye witness, was sitting close to the shore 'about 100 yards the Blyth side of the Link House' at about 7am when he saw the coble only about 200 yards away, 'opposite Link House Farm'. One of the men was aft, one forward and the third amidships at the oars. One of the men appeared to miss his hold of the nets and, at the same moment, the boat, which was amongst the breakers, lurched shorewards and then capsized.

Howes, followed by another man, John Bushall, waded into the water but they were unable to reach or even see the men. The breakers were very heavy but they managed to get hold of the nets that were twisted around the boat and pull it close to the beach. But, on righting the coble, they found no bodies underneath.

Mark Anderson and William Martin, who were in a coble some distance away, corroborated the statements of Howes. As soon as they saw the boat capsize they rowed to the place, but could find no men in the sea. James Taylor, the owner of the boat said that the coble was one of the safest on the coast but that it was 'injudicious' of the men to go out in such a sea, and much more so to attempt to draw nets without the boat heading the seas (sic). English's oilskin jacket was washed ashore about 100 yards away and the sails floated as far as Hartley.

The newspaper reports end by stating that the dog swam ashore. Someone had tied a paper around its neck on which had been written '*Robbie's drowned*' and this was the way English's young wife was informed of her husband's death. The affair 'has cast a gloom over Blyth', the Morpeth Herald concludes.

⁷⁸ Fishing boat, peculiar to the northeast coast of Britain.

We are not told whether or not any of the men could swim but it seems possible that - like so many of their contemporaries and most of the Newbiggin fishermen on 9 December 1904 - they could not. They might have been wearing sea boots (which would have weighed them down) but, tragically, they were only a short distance from the shore, short enough for the dog to swim to safety.

DEATH OF LADY GREY 1906

Inscription(s) and details

In Loving Memory / of The Late Lady Grey / Wife of Sir Edward Grey / Who died as The result of a Trap accident / Near Alnwick on february (sic) 1906 / In The Midst of Life / We are in / Death engraving is within a cartouche of leaves on stems

Jug, 190mm high, base 110mm diameter, tapering to a rim of 80mm diameter.
Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The above jug is similar to one in Beamish Museum (1976-86.2) except that, on the Beamish example, the inscription is surrounded by ferns, the spacing is different and the date is given as ***February 4th 1906***.

Death / of The Late Lady Grey / on February 4th 1906 / Near Alnwick [reverse]
three vertical ferns

Small, pressed glass, tankard, 76mm high and 58mm diameter. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

A tankard identical to the above is in a private collection in Durham City.

In loving memory / of Lady Grey / Who died as a result / of a trap accident / near Alnwick / 1906 [reverse] vertical ferns

Tankard, 80mm high. Private collection: Nottingham.

Death / of Lady Grey / Feby 4th 1906 / Near Alnwick [reverse] vertical ferns

Tankard, 59mm high. Private collection: Nottingham.

Death / of Lady Grey / on February 4th / 1906 / Near Alnwick [reverse] vertical ferns

Tankard, 79mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

In Loving memory of / the late Lady Grey / Who died as a result / of a trap accident / Near Alnwick / February 4th 1906 engraving is within a cartouche
A straight-sided tumbler. Private collection: Northumberland. Exhibited at the Crystal Clear Exhibition, Sunderland Museum, 2006.

A very similar tumbler (no cartouche) was sold on eBay to a private collector in April 2009.

Historical context

On the afternoon of Thursday 1 February 1906 Lady Grey, age 41 and the wife of Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Minister, was flung from her trap and sustained head injuries from which she died on 4 February. Lady Grey was the daughter of Major Shallcross Fitzherbert Widdrington and married Edward Grey in 1885, before her husband entered Parliament. She left no children.

At the inquest Thomas Henderson, under gardener at Fallodon, the Grey's estate, said that under Lady Grey's instructions he put the horse into the dogcart and was ready at 1.40pm. Lady Grey drove and he sat behind.

The Coroner: "Was the horse a quiet one?" – "Well, it had been prancing several times". About 50 or 60 yards south of Ellingham schoolhouse the horse suddenly shied to the left, the left wheel struck a stump in the hedge, the cart overturned and they were both thrown to the ground. The witness got up and found Lady Grey on the road unconscious. He went at once for Dr Waterson who came immediately. The Coroner: "Have you any idea at what the horse shied?" – "I could not say with certainty but close to the road, inside the plantation, there was a heap of scaffolding poles lying."

Dr Waterson, giving evidence, said that he arrived at Ellingham schoolhouse about three-quarters of an hour after the accident and found Lady Grey lying on a sofa quite insensible and bleeding from the right ear, both nostrils and the mouth: "I at once diagnosed fracture of the base of the skull." He called Dr Rutherford Morison of Newcastle and "other medical gentlemen" in consultation. Lady Grey was kept in the schoolhouse, being unfit to be moved, and died there on Sunday 4 February without regaining consciousness.

The Coroner "in the course of a deeply sympathetic summing up" said: "Lady Grey has, during the last twenty years and more, by the beauty of her life and the excellence of her virtues, not only endeared herself to the public but also, I venture to say, has rendered, directly and indirectly, no small service to the common weal ..." The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

Lady Grey's body, conveyed by special train, was cremated at Darlington. After a service in the cemetery chapel and a committal service in the crematorium chapel, the relatives departed. The process of cremation took an hour and a half, after which the ashes were taken back to Ellingham by the undertaker. There were memorial services at Embleton parish church and at St Margaret's, Westminster. The account in The Morpeth Herald and Reporter concludes with 'Northumbria's Lament' in six verses, the first of which reads:

Northumbria weeps with scalding tears
Our hearts are swelled with grief to-day (sic)
Our words are choked with sobs and sighs
Alas! Alas! For Lady Grey

Further information

Under the influence of Sir Henry Thompson, Surgeon to Queen Victoria, the Cremation Society was founded in 1874. The first working crematorium in England was at Woking in 1879 and in 1902 Parliament passed the Cremation Act, formally legislating the practice. Darlington crematorium, the fifth in the country, opened in 1901 but Newcastle-upon-Tyne crematorium did not open until 1934, hence Lady Grey went to Darlington.

For more details about Lady Grey's accident, see The Morpeth Herald and Reporter of Saturday 10 February 1906.

There are biographical details in G.M.Trevelyan's Grey of Fallodon (Longmans, 1937) with a photograph of Lady Grey in 1897 (Robinson Library, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne: 941.082.3 GRE[Tre]).

See also Keith Robbins: Sir Edward Grey (Cassell, 1971, Robinson Library, 941.082.3 GRE [ROB]).

CORONATION OF KING GEORGE V 1911

Inscription(s) and details

Coronation / of King George V/ June 22 / 1911 [reverse] three ferns⁷⁹

Coronation / of / Queen Mary / June 22 1911 [reverse] three ferns

A pair of almost identical goblets with rounded funnel bowls and stems with rudimentary shoulder and basal knops. The King George glass (height 136mm, lip 80mm diameter) is marginally larger than the Queen Mary glass (height 134mm, lip 78mm diameter). Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

R / Coronation / of Queen Mary / June 22 1911 [reverse] Union flag⁸⁰

Miniature tankard, 54mm high. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

V / Coronation / of King George / June 22 1911 [reverse] Union flag

Miniature tankard, 51mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

The New Reign / of King George V / June 1911 [reverse] three ferns

A small jug, about 112mm high, standing on a rudimentary pedestal. Beamish Museum (accession number 1989-237.114a).

V / Coronation of King George / June 22 1911 / Coronation / of Queen Mary / June 22 1911 [reverse] crossed ensigns

Jug, 200mm high and 120mm diameter. Beamish Museum (accession No: K185).

(Star) Coronation / King George V / June 22 1911 / W Burn / Engraver to the King [reverse] six-leaved spray, G, crossed ensigns, R and a further six-leaved spray.

A blown rummer with a moulded foot, 135mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

Historical context

George V succeeded his father, Edward VII, on 6 May 1910. The coronation of the new King and his wife, Queen Mary ('May of Teck'), took place at Westminster Abbey on 22 June 1911.

⁷⁹ Like the Edward VII glasses and the other George V glasses the capital 'K' of 'King' is in the peculiar style and, moreover, once again it looks as though the 'V' on this glass has been added later.

⁸⁰ This and the previous Queen Mary item listed have undoubtedly been engraved by the same hand. The engravings are of different size but the style is the same; in particular the capital Ms of 'Mary' show the central part of the letter descending below the line.

SINKING OF THE TITANIC 1912

Inscription(s) and details

WHITE STAR LINE / TITANIC SINKING The 'E' of 'WHITE' lacks the central horizontal stroke and above it there is an engraved star. Below is an engraved ship half-submerged in a rough sea with smoke coming from all four funnels [reverse] what could be a palm tree flanked by ferns. Slightly ovoid goblet with minimal shoulder and basal knopping, 131mm high and 78mm diameter at the rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

A virtually identical specimen of the glass catalogued above exists in the Broadfield House Glass Museum. This does have the central horizontal stroke to the 'E' but it is very thin and faint.

TITANIC SUNK / APRIL 15 1912 / 1615 LIVES LOST [reverse] fern
Tumbler, thinly-blown, 109mm high. Broadfield House Glass Museum.

TITANIC SUNK / APRIL 15 1912 / 1615 LIVES LOST [reverse] fern
Tumbler, thinly-blown, 109mm high. Beamish Museum (2007.97)

THE / TITANIC / DISASTER / 1635 LIVES LOST / APRIL 15 1912 / NEARER MY GOD TO THEE small swags above and below the engraving [reverse] fern
Straight-sided, rounded bottomed pub rummer, 109mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

TITANIC engraved beneath a star and above a steaming four-funneled ship
Straight-sided pub rummer, 160mm high, with a round knob on the stem.
There is no indication of a disaster – so was this last glass engraved before the maiden voyage?

Historical context

As John Brooks observed, this was the ultimate disaster.

The engraving on the first two glasses listed above is highly fanciful since, in fact, the ship sank in a dead calm sea and the after funnel was a dummy – so would not have been smoking. This is, however, an unusual example of its genre for having no date on it.

The date was, in fact, 15 April 1912 when the Titanic, carrying 2,224 passengers and crew, sank on her maiden voyage after hitting an iceberg south of Newfoundland. There were only 711 survivors. These 'disaster' glasses were not known to the Southampton Museum where there is a Titanic display, although they do have other commemorative artifacts.

The official loss of life in this disaster was 1,513 - which means that, like many Sunderland Victoria Hall 1883 glasses (see earlier in Part Three), the glasses above that record inaccurate figures were probably engraved very soon after the event and before all the survivors were registered.

Further information

The Titanic bibliography is immense but the classic account of the disaster is Walter Lord's A Night to Remember, originally published in New York (Henry Holt, 1955). The UK edition was published in 1956 (London, Longman's Green) and there was an illustrated edition in 1976 (London, Allen Lane).

R.M.S. EMPRESS OF IRELAND 1914

Inscription(s) and details

Empress of Ireland Disaster May 29 1914

Glass seen by John Brooks. Type not recorded.

Historical context

This was a major disaster that must have been reported in newspapers throughout the world, both national and provincial. The Newcastle Daily Journal devoted four columns to a report of the 'Terrible Disaster'.

The *R.M.S. Empress of Ireland* was built in Glasgow and launched in 1906. She was the sister ship of the *R.M.S. Empress of Britain* and they were the two largest ships in the Canadian Pacific fleet. At the time of the disaster she was carrying 1,057 passengers (1st Class: 87; 2nd Class: 253 and 3rd Class: 717) and a crew of 420, under the command of Captain H G Kendall.

Bound from Quebec to Liverpool, at 2am on Friday 29 May 1914 she was off Father Point at the mouth of the St Lawrence River. The precise sequence of events leading to the tragedy is unclear since the masters of the two vessels involved differ slightly in their accounts. However, in dense fog, the *Empress of Ireland* was rammed amidships by the Tyne-built Norwegian collier *Storstad*, bound for Quebec. Although the crews of the two ships appear to have been aware of each other's presence, there seems to have been some misinterpretation of the signals given by their sirens.

Captain Kendall (who was rescued from the water and, later, cleared of all charges in the disaster) maintained that if the *Storstad* had kept her engines at full ahead following the collision, as he had tried to convey to the master, the gap would have been partially sealed and then his ship, the *Empress of Ireland*, might have remained afloat for longer. Unhappily the *Storstad* went full astern following the ramming creating a huge hole in the side of the larger ship into which 'a deluge of water instantly poured' and she sank in less than 20 minutes.

There were only 465 survivors amongst the 1,477 people on board the *Empress of Ireland*. Some individuals were saved by the mail tender *Lady Evelyn* and some by the pilot boat *Eureka* but the speed with which the vessel sank, together with the time of the collision, inevitably led to great loss of life, totaling 1,012. Many of the dead drowned in their bunks; many of the survivors suffered injuries.

The Newcastle Daily Journal account is relieved by two interesting biographical details.

- It was Captain Kendall who, when in command of the S.S. *Montrose* in 1910, identified Dr H.H.Crippen, one of his passengers, by his false teeth when he laughed. He then contacted Scotland Yard by radio-telegraphy (the first use of radio for police purposes) and this led to Crippen's arrest.

- The most prominent of those who perished was Sir Henry Seton-Karr, financial magnate, big-game hunter, traveler and formerly MP for St Helens. He had raised the Sharpshooters in the Boer War and was knighted in 1902. 'One of his discoveries is said to be the Garden of Eden, in which he found himself while in pursuit of a lion.' Well, that is what the Newcastle Daily Journal says, anyway. A family tomb in Melrose Abbey commemorates the deaths of several Seton-Karrs, starting with Alicia Catherine (died 1824), including Sir Henry and ending with his son, Major MH Seton-Karr (died 1953).

Further information

See both The Newcastle Daily Journal of 30 May 1914 and The Illustrated London News, Vol. 144 for contemporary press reports. Meanwhile, the statistics here have been taken from the Wikipedia entry for *R.M.S. Empress of Ireland*.

1914-18 WAR

Inscription(s) and details

THE WAR WITH / England & Germany / aug 4 1914 [reverse] crossed Union flags. The ampersand is represented by what looks like a lower-case 'p' or a twist. Bucket bowl pub rummer with shoulder and basal knopping, 114mm high and 70mm diameter at the rim. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.⁸¹

THE WAR WITH / England & Germany / Aug 4 1914 [reverse] crossed Union flags.

Drinking glass, 153mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

Other examples of this glass have been recorded by John Brooks. The inscriptions are interesting as rare examples, in our experience, of a mixture of upper and lower case being used on the same glass. The other example is the 'Death of Lord Roberts 1914' glass, also recorded here.

Historical context

World War I or the **First World War** (called, at the time, the **Great War**) was a major war centred on Europe that began in the summer of 1914. The fighting ended in November 1918. This conflict involved all of the world's great powers assembled in two opposing alliances: the Allies (centred around the Triple Entente of the UK, France and the Russian Empire) and the Central Powers (Germany, Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria). More than 70 million military personnel, including 60 million Europeans, were mobilised and, in total, more than nine million combatants were killed, due largely to great technological advances in firepower without corresponding advances in mobility.

Further information

Very readable accounts of the events leading up to the outbreak of World War I are Barbara Tuckman's *The Guns of August* (Constable, 1962) and the closing chapters of Robert Massie's *Dreadnought* (Jonathan Cape, 1992).

⁸¹ This glass is very similar in size and shape to that commemorating the sinking of the *Lusitania* on 7 May 1915 – recorded here. Both have crossed Union flags on the reverse as well as two small horizontal embellishments (stylised leaves?) below the inscriptions. It is difficult to believe that the two were not engraved by the same hand. And the crossed Union flags motif and capital letters are also features of the Lord Kitchener glass (1916) – also recorded here.

DEATH OF LORD ROBERTS 1914

Inscription(s) and details

Lord Roberts / Died Nov 14 1914 / aged 82 years [reverse] Union flag on a flag pole with the cord loose around the pole
Wine glass. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO 07812/1).

Historical context

Field Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar, Pretoria and Waterford (aka 'Little Bobs') was appointed Colonel-in-Chief of the British Empire troops in France during the First World War. While visiting Indian troops in 1914, he caught pneumonia and died.

SINKING OF THE LUSITANIA 1915

Inscription(s) and details

THE LUSITANIA / SUNK / MAY 7 1915 [reverse] crossed union flags
Tall pub rummer with shoulder and basal knopping, virtually identical to the WW I (1914) glass – recorded here – and about 140mm high. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

An identical glass is in a private collection in Ashington, in Northumberland.

The crossed Union flags on the reverse of the Lusitania glass(es) are identical to those on the glasses commemorating the start of World War I (1914) – recorded here - and the death of Lord Kitchener (1916) – also recorded here. All three glasses are engraved in capital letters.

Historical context

The RMS Lusitania (32000 tons) was the largest, fastest and one of the most luxurious passenger liners on the trans-Atlantic run. She was the flagship of the Cunard fleet. Docked in New York after her maiden voyage in 1907, she was dubbed 'a skyscraper adrift'.

When she left New York on what was to be her final voyage in 1915, during the First World War, most of her passengers were content to ignore German warnings of unrestricted submarine warfare. American citizens had been warned against taking passage on British vessels in a notice that had appeared in American morning newspapers on the day that the ship sailed, 1 May, but her master, Captain Turner, did not enforce lifebelt and lifeboat drills for fear of passenger alarm and resistance.

RMS Lusitania was torpedoed without warning by the German submarine, U20 at 2.10pm on 7 May off the southern coast of Ireland. She quickly developed a steep list to starboard with a result that most of the port lifeboats could not be launched and many of the starboard boats swung out too far to be boarded. She sank within 18 minutes. Of the 702 members of the crew, 413 died and of the 1,257 passengers, 785 (including 128 Americans) perished, a total loss of life of 1,198 with 761 survivors.

The German assertion that the ship was carrying arms for the Allies was denied by Great Britain and the USA but, in fact, she was carrying a small amount of ammunition that in theory made her a legitimate target. The Germans claimed that the ammunition had exploded, contributing to the disaster, but recent marine archeology suggests that it was coal dust in the near-empty bunkers that ignited, triggered by the single torpedo that blew a cavernous hole in her side.

Popular feeling against the Germans rose to a high pitch in the USA following the disaster with strong sentiments for declaring war on Germany. President Woodrow Wilson chose a diplomatic course, however, and sent the German foreign ministry three successive notes demanding that Germany disavow the sinking and make reparations.

Germany refused to accept responsibility for the tragedy but did agree to make reparations and to sink no more passenger liners without warning.

On 24 March 1916, a German U-boat sank the passenger ship Sussex without warning and the victims included US citizens. Then, on 3 February 1917, the US liner Housatonic was sunk by a German submarine off the coast of Sicily. The USA broke off diplomatic relations with Germany and refused to reopen negotiations until it abandoned unrestricted naval warfare. The discovery of German plots for attacks on the USA by Mexico and Japan led to America's decision to declare war on Germany on 6 April 1917.

However, 'Remember the Lusitania' was a popular slogan and it is accepted that the sinking was a significant factor in the ending of US neutrality in the First World War. Further, it has been suggested that the outrage that the Lusitania sinking provoked weakened the German resolve to pursue unrestricted submarine warfare and that if she had, in fact, continued this strategy the war might have followed a different course. Hence it could be argued that the innocent lives lost on the Lusitania were not lost entirely in vain.

Further information

Diana Preston: Wilful Murder: The Sinking of the Lusitania (Doubleday, London, 2002, ISBN 0385601735).

DEATH OF LORD KITCHENER 1916

Inscription(s) and details

DEATH OF / LORD KITCHENER / JUNE 5 1916 [reverse] crossed Union flags.
Straight-sided miniature tumbler, slightly tapering to a solid base, 54mm high and 35mm diameter at the rim, which has a miniscule chip. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.⁸²

DEATH OF / LORD KITCHENER / JUNE 5 1916 engraving is under a star [reverse]
three-leaved fern
Straight-sided tumbler, 100mm tall and 68mm diameter at the rim, tapering slightly to the base. Sold on eBay by a dealer in Morpeth in January 2009 for £76.

Historical context

Horatio Herbert Kitchener was born near Ballylongford, County Kerry, Ireland in 1850. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1871 and served in the Sudan campaign (1883-85). He was Sirdar (commander-in-chief) of the Egyptian army from 1890 and, by the final rout of the dervishes at Omdurman on 2 September 1898, won back the Sudan for Egypt and was made a peer, 1st Earl Kitchener of Khartoum. Successively Chief of Staff and Commander-in Chief in South Africa (1900-02), he finished the 2nd Boer War. In 1902, he was made a Viscount and Commander-in-Chief, India (1902-09); in 1911, Consul-General in Egypt and on 7 August 1914, Secretary for War.

Seated on the right of Asquith in the Cabinet, he virtually assumed the role of wartime Prime Minister. He was soon in conflict with the General Staff and, insisting that this was not a war that could be won by sea power alone, he proposed to raise an army of a million men. Appealing initially for 100,000 volunteers, ('Your Country Needs YOU'), he recruited 2½ million in 18 months. However, by 1916 Kitchener was aware that he had lost the confidence of his Cabinet colleagues. He was blamed for lack of munitions, his part in the Dardanelles campaign, the failure of the Salonika expedition and for his support of the disastrous Loos offensive.

The view that Britain should send a top-level mission to Russia to discuss munitions, strategy and common war aims had long been in politicians' minds. Asquith toyed with the idea of sending a team headed by Lloyd George but, at Cabinet meeting on 28 April, Kitchener suddenly announced that he would like to head the mission and on 27 May 1916 he was invited by the Czar to do so.

⁸² The capital lettering of the inscriptions on these glasses is typical of the period (compare the Titanic and Woodhorn glasses) and the crossed Union flags on this first example are identical to those on glasses commemorating the start of World War I and the sinking of the Lusitania. However, the style of this first glass is most unusual and unique in John Brooks' experience of the genre. Without the inscription he would, he wrote, have regarded it as a continental schnapps glass. Perhaps it is a miniature tumbler in the same class as the miniature tankards.

The party, 13 in number, embarked at Scapa Flow on the cruiser HMS Hampshire on 5 June. A northeast gale was blowing and Admiral Jellicoe ordered Hampshire to sail in the lee side of the Orkneys and Shetlands to avoid the worst of it, unhappily choosing an unswept channel. It has been suggested that German intelligence, who were in close association with Russian revolutionary committees, were aware of the course of the vessel and acted accordingly but, in fact, the mine that sank Hampshire had been laid by U475 on 28 May.

At 7.40 pm an explosion almost cut the cruiser in two and she sank in ten minutes, a mile and a half off the high cliffs of the west coast of Mainland Orkney. Kitchener was seen to leave the Captain's cabin and to walk up to the quarter deck. The sea was so rough that no boats could be lowered. Three rafts were launched with about 50 to 70 men on each but the majority died from exposure, some after landing. There were just 14 survivors (one account states 12) from a company of 655.

The news of Kitchener's death stunned the nation. The fact that his body was not recovered gave rise to the belief that he might be a prisoner of the Germans and his sister refused to accept that he was dead. Innumerable pictures and mementos of him were made and sold. The people of Orkney raised a memorial to Kitchener on Marwick Head on the west coast of Mainland Orkney, commanding impressive views of the mainland cliffs. In December 1925, a marble statue was placed in St Paul's cathedral. He had never married and so his title passed to his elder brother.

Further information

Philip Warner: Kitchener, The man behind the legend (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1985, Newcastle University Library, 941.081-KIT [War]).

Trevor Royle: The Kitchener Enigma (Michael Joseph, London, 1985, Newcastle University Library, 941.081-KIT [Roy]).

Inscription(s) and details

Guid auld Thornhill [reverse] vertical decoration - perhaps a lily of the valley
Wine glass on a short stem with a thin bladed knop below the rounded funnel bowl.
116mm high, with a 40mm diameter bowl. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Historical context

Who or what is being celebrated or commemorated by this somewhat cryptic engraving is unclear and we cannot be certain about either the location or the date.

There was a Thornhill Hall (demolished in the 1930s) in or near the city of Sunderland and, for some part of its history, a family called Thornhill lived there⁸³. 'Thornhill' is still the name of an area, or suburb, of present day Sunderland.

There is also a possible northeast England Masonic connection. Thornhill Lodge, Sunderland (No. 3216) was consecrated on 24 July 1907 by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham and the consecration was officiated by the Provincial Grand Master Rt. W. Lord Barnard, the grandfather of the present Lord Barnard.⁸⁴ The Lodge now claims to be 'the oldest purpose built Freemasons' Masonic Hall' and a centenary celebration was held there in 2007. These are the only northeastern connections for 'Thornhill' we know of and neither fits completely with the glass.

Looking outside the northeast, there are places called Thornhill in Hampshire, Derbyshire and Glamorgan and there was a Thornhill Colliery in Yorkshire (the site of a disaster in 1893) but the spelling of 'Guid auld' seems to place this Thornhill in Scotland.

Despite some suggestion that there was a Thornhill Colliery in Ayrshire, the Scottish Mining Museum have no record of any coal mine of this name and so, unless the glass refers to an individual named Thornhill (in which case one might

⁸³ Further investigation into the Thornhill family of Thornhill Hall reveals that a John Thornhill paid for the building of the church of St. John the Evangelist, in Chapel Street, Sunderland, in 1769. Demolished only in 1972, it was the second oldest church in Sunderland after Holy Trinity and, according to the architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner, looked 'decidedly Dutch from certain angles'. It was built of brick, a typical building material for churches in the 1700s. The early date combined with the use of what seems to be Scottish dialect ('guid auld') mean that this glass is almost certainly unconnected with the building of the church ... but there may be a connection with later generations of Thornhills, as yet undiscovered?

⁸⁴ Although 1907 is relatively late for the northeastern 'disaster glass' genre, it is not impossible. What militates against a Masonic connection here is (1) the lack of any Masonic symbols on the glass (and such items do exist) and (2) the unexplained use of what appears to be Scottish, as opposed to northeastern, dialect.

have expected a prefix of 'Mr', 'Mrs' and/or a first name), we are left with Thornhill in Nithdale, Dumfries and Galloway and Thornhill on the A873, northwest of Stirling.

If the glass commemorates an event, such as the success of a Thornhill team in some sort of sport, one would have expected a date; however, the style of the engraving suggests a date somewhere between say 1880 and 1910. Both the Scottish Thornhills enjoyed some tourist trade in this period and perhaps the glass was merely a souvenir of a visit or holiday.

Perusal of two volumes devoted to Thornhill local history does not offer any very good suggestions, but the following are somewhat poor possibilities:

Thornhill, Dumfries & Galloway (Tom Wilson – see 'Further information', below)

- 1850 - Thornhill Railway Station, on the Carlisle to Glasgow line, opened.
- 1871 and 1873 - visits of Edward, Prince of Wales to Drumlanrig.
- 1872 - Thornhill Museum completed and opened to the public.
- 1892 - Thornhill Mart erected by the Nithdale Auction Co.
- 1907 - nearly £50,000 worth of livestock sold at the Mart.
- 1909 - modern school and police station built.

Thornhill, Stirling (Stuart McCulloch – see 'Further information', below)

- 1884 - on 22 August, John Ferguson, of Thornhill, won the ½ mile race at a competition held at the West Lancashire Athletic Ground.
- 1880s - the Thornhill Draughts Team distinguished themselves in several competitions.
- 1893 - Thornhill Masonic Lodge moves into reputedly the smallest purpose built lodge in Scotland. It is an imposing, now listed, red sandstone building with a tower affording commanding views and topped by a weather vane. Built in the Arts and Crafts Movement style, it was widely admired and remains a landmark.
- Tourism thrived in Victorian Thornhill; it was especially popular with Glaswegians. Both hotels were often full and there were several boarding houses.

This glass is of interest since, apart from the *Death of Robert Burns* (see earlier in Part Three) and two examples listed in Part Four (*Auld Lang Syne* and *Tak a Wee Drappie*) it is the only recorded example of (query) Scottish provenance. See notes under the 'Death of Robert Burns 1796' about possible Scottish glasses. The lily of the valley on the reverse (if that is what it is) is also unusual.

Further information

Tom Wilson: Thornhill and District: A Chronology (Dumfries & Galloway Libraries, 1994, Da 5 [9]).

Stuart J McCulloch: Thornhill and its Environs: A Social History (The Munroe Trust, 1995, Stirling Library and also Durham County Library (CO 1 64 40446 E9 [941.31]).

PART FOUR

OTHER RECORDED EVENTS AND/OR INSCRIPTIONS

A / Happy New Year / 1910

Straight-sided bowl with rounded bottom on stem consisting only of rounded knob, 160mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

A Merry / Christmas [reverse] fern

Wine glass on stem, 110mm high. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

auld / lang syne [reverse] fern

Wine glass, 98mm high. Offered for sale on eBay, July 2009.

Auld Lang Syne 1896 [reverse] clover leaf

Pub glass with rounded bottom. Woodhorn Mining Museum (NRO 09138/5)

Be Canny with the Sugar 1900

Sugar dish with a pan-shaped bowl on a stem with central and shoulder knobs. Height and bowl diameter both 110mm. Inscription engraved beneath rim with ferns below around whole circumference. Private collection: Winchester.

1894 / For Grandma

Small wine glass on stem. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Get your hair cut

Glass unseen – but a lady in the audience at William Cowan's talk to the Newcastle Association of City Guides on 22 May 2006 was confident that there was a pub rummer in her family's possession (long since thrown out) bearing this inscription.

Good Luck

Rounded bowl pub rummer. Seen in an antique shop in Barnard Castle, County Durham - June 2011.

Happy / New Year / 1895 [reverse] clover

Rounded-bowl pub rummer, 95mm high. Private collection: Oxford.

Health And / Happiness

Wine glass on stem, identical to the Peace and Plenty glass (listed below) but the inscription is in a slightly different style. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

***Home / Sweet Home*⁸⁵ / 1894** [reverse] slightly untidy clover
Rounded bowl pub rummer, 110mm high. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

***Its / Very Canny* / 1893**

Pub rummer, rounded bowl. Beamish Museum (2006-25.2).

Its / Very Canny [reverse] fern

A slightly taller rounded bowl pub rummer than the example listed above; this glass has larger and bolder script, with embellishments on the capitals V and C. Comparison suggests different engravers. Private collection: Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Its / Very Canny [reverse] fern

Wine glass, with rounded bowl, 95mm high. Offered for sale on eBay, July 2009.

***Merry / Christmas* / 1893**

Pub rummer. Beamish Museum.

Never Too Late To Mend

Glass seen by John Brooks. No details.

***Peace and / Plenty*⁸⁶ / 1896** [reverse] two vertical fern leaves

Bucket bowl pub rummer, 148mm high and 70mm diameter at the rim. Private collection: East London.

Identical inscription seen also on a rounded bowl pub rummer in an antique shop in Barnard Castle, County Durham - June 2011.

Peace and Plenty

A wine glass on stem, 110mm high, with slightly ornate script. Private collection: Durham City.

***Tak / A Wee Drappie* 1894** [reverse] clover

Pub rummer. Beamish Museum, accession number: GS04/01(2005.10).

Tak / a Wee drappie [reverse] vertical fern

Small, rounded bowl rummer, 105mm high. Private collection: East London.

⁸⁵ Home sweet Home was a popular English song that first appeared in the opera Maid of Malta in 1823. Music by Sir Henry Bishop (1786-1852).

⁸⁶ 19th century political slogan associated with British Liberal statesman and Prime Minister William Gladstone.

EPILOGUE

This catalogue has attempted to collect together a group of glasses defined, we believe, within the limits of date, style and geography, as ‘disaster glasses’. But we end with a glass that is certainly *not* an example of this ‘genre’.

Belonging to a private collector in East London who sourced it from eBay, this 115mm high, straight-sided tumbler is cheap and thinly blown. The crude lettering, in capitals, says **MUSSO’S / LAST DROP / JULY 25 1943** and there is an engraving of a hanged man between the word ‘MUSSO’S’ at the rim and ‘LAST DROP’ near the base of the glass.

Engraved a generation later than the last of what we believe to be traditional northeastern disaster glasses, this item nevertheless has something in common with them in that it is of indifferent quality, crudely engraved and commemorates an event of national interest. It even follows the tradition of blatant inaccuracy. The Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) was not executed by hanging, but was captured and summarily shot by Italian partisans. (It is true, however, that his corpse was later publicly displayed, hanging upside down, with that of his mistress and other fascists.)

As with many of the disaster glasses, we will never know the true story behind the ‘Musso’ glass – but we include it here as an epilogue, and as a rare and amusing item.

APPENDIX

DECORATIONS AND ADDITIONAL PHRASES

The reverse sides of disaster glasses are frequently decorated with ferns, either vertical or diagonal, and somewhat less frequently with clover leaves or with vaguely stylised flowers.

Other decorations seen have included crude Union flags; doves; a swan; a yacht; a rowing boat; palm trees and a pit head.

In addition, the following additional phrases have been recorded, usually but not always, on the *reverse* side of the glass.

- Accidents will happen
- All Gone But Not Forgotten
- Auld lang syne
- Come for all things are now ready
- Don't forget this ye miners
- Gone but not forgotten
- Hee's (sic) a jolly good fellow
- Hold the fort
- Hold the fort for I am coming
- In the midst of life we are in death
- In the midst of life we are all in death
- In the sweet by and by
- It's very canny
- Jesus the name i (sic) love to hear
- My Grace is sufficient
- Nearer my God to thee
- Not a day to call our own
- Not forgotten
- O think of the home over there
- Prepare to meet they (sic) God
- Remember me
- Rest in Peace
- Rock of ages

- Rock of ages cleft for me
- Safe in the arms of Jesus
- Shall we meet beyond the river
- Still in memory
- Suffer the children to come to Me
- Think of the home over there
- They (sic) will be done
- Thy will be done