

# *The* **SWALWELL** *Story*



**William Bourne's History of Swalwell**  
**Written in 1893**

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Swalwell  
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# THE SWALWELL STORY

This village which lies in a valley, probably derives its name from **Swale**- a valley, and **well**. The population in 1811 was 1,393; 1821, 1,320; 1831, 1,372; 1841, 1,611; 1851, 1,429; 1881,1,961; 1891, 2,148.

According to the **Boldon Buke** (1170), "The land of Swalwells pay sixteen shillings; William, son of Arnald, for an assart of six acres, pays one mark". **Hatfield's Survey** includes the following description amongst the free tenures "The tenants jointly hold the Mill of Swalwell, the Fishery there, and the Toll of Ale (bigg or barley), and used to pay £38".

In the year 1403-4, William de Swalwells burgess of Newcastle, released by charter all his lands and tenements to William Redmershall of Newcastle. In 1411, William, son and heir of William de Swalwells, quit-claimed all his father's lands in Swalwell and Whickham, to John Fenwyke, chaplain, a trustee for Roger Thornton. The grand-daughter of Thornton, a wealthy merchant, carried her immense wealth into the family of Lumley. It afterwards passed to Matthew Ogle, gentleman, and again to a branch of Lumleys; and in the year 1629, William Smith of Durham alienated the lands of Axwell and Swalwell to John Clavering, alderman of Newcastle, and James his son, to whose family Swalwell has belonged since that time.

In the time of Bishop Skirlaw, the Claxtons held lands in Swalwell; and a branch of this wealthy family probably lived here. Formerly, a house stood at the west side of the Wesleyan, chapel, which was called Claxton's Hall. The ruins were removed about seventy years ago.

With the exception of a few stragglng houses, probably there was not what may be called a village until the advent of

## Sir Ambrose Crowley

to Winlaton and Swalwell. Very little is known of this worthy and enterprising man. The only known circumstance connected with his early life is the tradition that the sign of "The Doublet", at his establishment in Thames-street, London, was a picture of a leathern jerkin in which he worked when a common smith. He was knighted at St. James' on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1706; was sheriff of London in 1707; and died in 1713 being then one of the aldermen for that city, and M.P. for Andover. In the **Spectator**, No 229, Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>, 1712, Sir Ambrose is ridiculed under the soubriquet of Sir John Anvil. He is described as "a person of no extraction, who began the world with a small parcel of rusty iron". Hutchinson, in his **History of Durham**, says; "About the year 1690, that great patron of manufactory and trade (Sir Ambrose Crowley), fixed upon this situation (Winlaton) to establish those works in Winlaton Mill; and afterwards to Swalwell. Fixed in the gable of one of his warehouses at Swalwell is an old sun-dial bearing the following inscription :-

*Qua est enim vita vestria  
Vapor enim est adexi  
Quum tempus apparens.*

A translation of which is : "For what is your life? For it is a vapour, appearing for a little time". On a stone below the sundial is inscribed "1715".

In all probability the works at Swalwell would be commenced before 1715, but how long is

uncertain. The iron works covered about four acres of land. And consisted of rolling mills, foundry forges, and smiths' shops.

In the following advertisement which appeared in the **Post Boy**, No. 510 (published about the year 1697 or 1699), we have a detailed account of the articles Sir Ambrose manufactured at the commencement of his bold enterprise at Winlaton, and afterwards at Swalwell. "Mr. Crowley, at the Doublet, in Thames-street. London, ironmonger, doth hereby give notice, that at his works at Winlaton, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, any good workmen that can make the following goods, shall have constant employment, and their wages every week punctually paid viz. : Augers, Bed screws, Box and Sad Irons, Chains, Edge-tools, Files, Hammers, Hinges, Hows for the Plantations, Locks (especially Ho-Locks), Nails Pattern-rings and almost all sorts of smiths' work". As there were at that time few skilled workmen in the North of England, hundreds of men were brought from the south, and many even from Spain and Germany. One of the peculiarities of the factory was the registration of the workmen. Every man employed by the firm had not only his name entered upon the register, but also his age, religion, height, complexion, place of birth, and last place of residence.

After establishing his useful and extensive factory, Sir Ambrose, with good sense and benevolence, instituted a code of laws for the government of his colony, and which was afterwards altered and improved as cases and exigencies required. "Crowley's Court" was the chief tribunal of the factory. It was held every ten weeks, and bore the character of both a criminal and civil authority, and dealt with the delinquencies, disputes, and debts of the workmen.

Infractions of the factory laws, and breaches of social order were here punished; quarrels were adjusted and civil claims heard and adjudicated upon. If a tradesman wished to recover a debt due from any of the men, he brought the matter before "the Court", and if he established his claim, an order was made for a fixed sum to be deducted periodically from the man's wages towards the liquidation of the debt. In like manner bastardy claims were settled. No publican could sue in "the Court" for debts for drink. The Court House is still standing at Swalwell, and, although a modern building, is known as "Claxton's Hall".

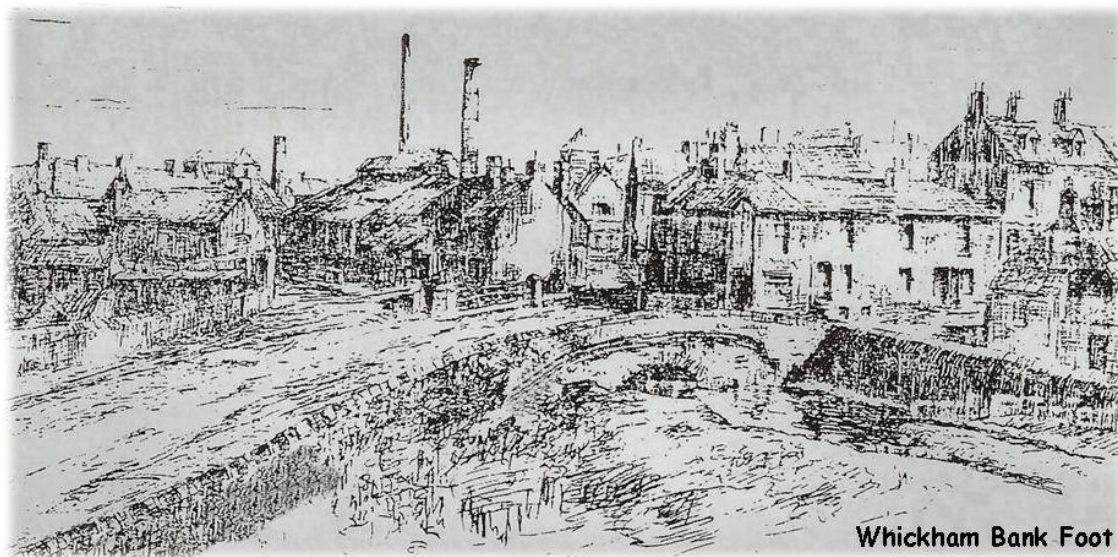
From the year 1691, until the conclusion of the war with France (1815 -16), a large portion of the anchors, chain cables, and other descriptions of ironware used by the Government in the Naval Dockyards, was manufactured at Swalwell. Two vessels of three hundred tons, one named "The Crowley", the other "The Theodosia", were constantly employed in carrying the goods to London, where they were deposited in large warehouses: one at Greenwich, and the other in Lower Thames-street. The warehouse at the former place was said to have been occupied by Queen Elizabeth as a palace; that in Thames-street was the sign of "the Doublet".

In the year 1705, a chapel capable of seating three hundred people was built at Winlaton, "on the foundations of St. Anne's chapel, destroyed in the rebellion of the Earls in 1569". The workmen chose a minister of their own, and contributed for his support from their wages, one half-farthing in the shilling. To the sum so raised the proprietors added an annual gift of ten pounds. Afterwards a fixed stipend of fifty pounds per year was settled on the minister, and the workmen's tribute, amounting to more than that, the surplus was appropriated to the maintenance of public school. The Rev. Edmund Lodge was the first chaplain. He died October 15th, 1742. Dr. Tomlinson erected a tombstone to his memory in Whickham churchyard.

In addition to the above chapel, Sir Ambrose secured for the accommodation of the workmen at Winlaton (in the year 1703) a large gallery in Ryton Church. Schools were also commenced at Winlaton Mill and Swalwell. At the latter village, the building once used as a school is still standing, but is now converted into a dwelling house. The desk used by the master in the school; and an armchair that belonged to once of the vessels, "The Crowley",

are still in the possession of one of the old families at Swalwell.

A surgeon was appointed to attend to the whole body of workmen. When any workman was ill, he had money advanced; when superannuated or disabled, he had a weekly maintenance; and at his death his family was provided for.



Ample provision was made for the sustentation of those who were sick or otherwise incapacitated for work. A rate of nine pence in the £ earned by each employee, was levied, and the product of this tax served to feed, house and clothe the aged or permanently disabled, and to provide an allowance for such as were thrown out of work by illness. The Whickham Parish authorities refused to pay anything towards the support of Crowley's aged workmen when unable through old age to work.

The following entry is made in the churchwardens' book for the time, which is preserved in the vestry at Whickham : "At a vestry meeting held this 27th day of Sept., 1749, Mr. Nathaniel Somerland, and Job Hall, agents in Mr. Crowley's factory at Swalwell, being present, and asked what persons and families employed in the said factory they deemed to be properly entitled to maintenance from the said factory upon becoming poor, answered, that all such persons as were hired to work in the said factory by the year, or were bound by indenture to any person employed under them, they deemed them and their families entitled to a maintenance from the factory upon being objects of charity, not chargeable in anywise upon the Parish of Whickham". The pensioners were known as "Crowley's Poor", and they wore a badge on the left arm, on which the words "Crowley's Poor" were moulded.

About the close of the last century, however, during a time of intense depression in trade, the workmen were reduced to an impoverished condition, and being unable in many cases to provide for their own individual wants, they were compelled to abandon the system under which "Crowley's Poor" were maintained.

The workhouse at Swalwell, built about the year 1780, then became the only resort of the infirm; and in this institution the inmates were treated with much consideration. They were allowed to go where they liked during the day, and at night were generously treated. In the churchwardens' book for 1789, there is the following entry : "March 19, Paid for Tobacco for the Workhouse, 2s, 3d. ". The workhouse remained as an institution in Swalwell until the formation of the Gateshead Union, When it fell into disuse. Although the part of the factory

on the north side of the dam is in Whickham Parish, it has never been rated for the poor of the parish.

The hardware made at Winlton comprised chains, hinges, rings for women's patterns, nails and spikes. The heavier work was made at Swalwell and Winlton Mill. This work consisted of anchors, chain cables, and haws were heavy and unwieldy implements used by the slaves in our West Indian possessions. Blistered German and cast steel were also manufactured; and file-cutting was one of the principal industries. Hutchinson supplies us with the following description of the factory in his day : -

Incessant day and night, each crater roars  
Like the volcano on Sicilian shores;  
Their fiery wombs each molten mass combine.  
Thence lava-like, the boiling torrents shine;  
Down the trenched sand the liquid metal holds.  
Shoots showers of stars, and fills the hollow moulds.

The hours of the workmen were exceptionally long. Those who made the smaller hardware commenced at five o'clock in the morning and worked till six at night. The anchor-smiths originally began their work at twelve o'clock (midnight), and finished when their "allotted work" was done.

There were at that time, as there are now. Government Inspectors; and probably Mr. Girling, who was sent from London by the government to supervise the making of the big chain at Swalwell, was the first inspector appointed in England. To suit the convenience of this gentleman, the anchor-smiths commenced at three in the morning instead of twelve at midnight. On the Saturday, which was considered a short day, the bell rang at three in the morning for starting, and at one o'clock in the afternoon for the workmen to finish. The anchor-smiths had their special beer carrier. For every seventy cwt. Of anchor made, the master gave seventy quarts of ale as allowance, which was received as the work proceeded.

The factory at Swalwell was in such high repute for skilled workmen, and for the excellence of the work produced, that orders for hardware were received from all parts of the country. It is a question whether any other firm in Europe at that time possessed the commercial skill and importance which had been attained by the ironworks of Sir A. Crowley in their best days. The making of chain by the "Dolly" was commenced at Crowley's nearly eighty years ago by one of the workmen named Robert Lumley, who may be said to have been the inventor of this useful piece of machinery. "Dolly" was the Christian name of Lumley's wife, with which he christened the system of chain making now so extensively used in this industry.

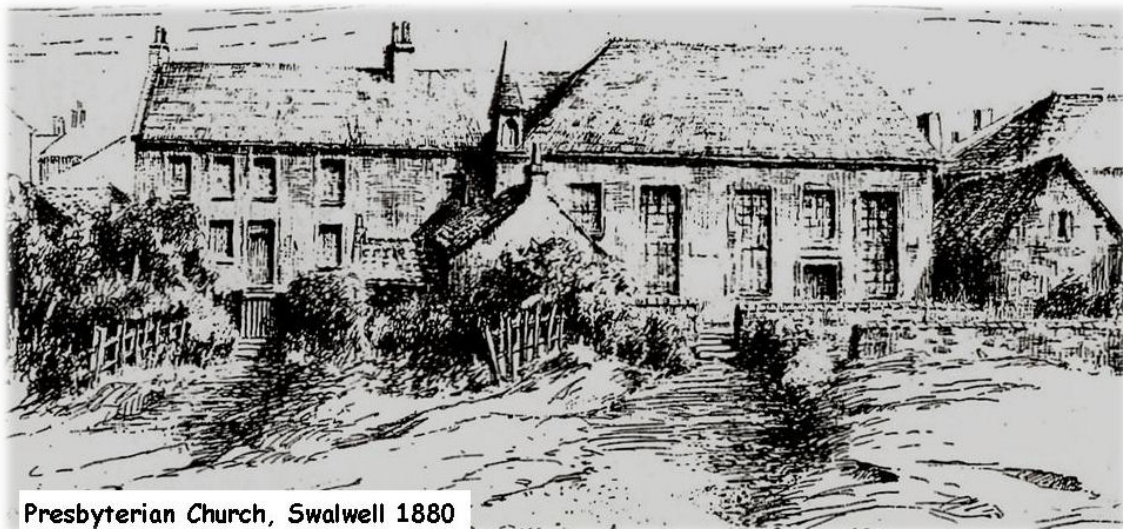
The wages of the workmen who made the heavier class of hardware were good, but those who made the smaller work were only poorly paid. The labourers, who were mostly old men, received 1s. 6d. a day. The orders for work from the Naval Dockyards were received every ten weeks, and it frequently happened that the hardware required was only sufficient to keep the workmen employed a few weeks out of that time. Then hundreds of men were employed to break stones on the highways in Whickham and Winlton. Some people are inclined to think that the workmen of Sir Ambrose lived in a kind of golden age, but when the small wages of most of the men, the times of depression, and the high price of many kinds of provisions are considered, their minds will be disabused of that idea.

The price of bread flour at the end of the eighteenth century was 7s, a stone (35p today), salt 1s. per lb (5p today), candles 1s. 2d. per lb (6p today), while an ordinary newspaper cost 6d (2.5p today). On Monday mornings several butchers came from Newcastle and Gateshead, and exposed their meat for sale on the "Town Gate", so that the public

thoroughfare had the appearance of a veritable Butcher's Market.

Mr. Arthur Young, who visited the factory at Swalwell about the year 1770, thus describes it at that time; "About five miles from Newcastle are the ironworks, late Crowley's supposed to be the greatest manufactory of the kind in Europe. Several hundred hands are employed in it, insomuch that £20,000 a year is paid in wages. They earn from 1s. to 2s. 6d. a day (5p to 12.5p today), and some of the foremen so high as £200 a year (£4 per week). The quantity of iron they work is very great, employing three ships to the Baltic, that each make ten voyages yearly, and bring seventy tons at a time, which amounts to 2,100 tons, besides 500 tons more freighted in others. They use a good deal of American iron which is as good as any Swedish, and for some purposes much better. They would use more of it, if larger quantities were to be had; but they cannot get it, a circumstance the person did not sufficiently explain, but which in the mere outline is worthy of remark. They use annually 7,000 bolls of coals, at 16 bushels each. They manufacture anchors as high as 70 cwt., carriages of cannon, hoes, spades, axes, hooks, chains etc. etc. In general their greatest work is for exportation, and are employed very considerably by the East India Company. They have of late had a prodigious artillery demand from the Company. During the war their business was extremely great : it was worse upon the peace; but for anchors and mooring chains the demand these last seven or eight years has been very regular and spirited. Their business in general, for some time past, has not been equal to what it was in the war. As to the machines for accelerating several operations in the manufacture, the copper rollers for squeezing bars into hoops, and the scissors for cutting bars of iron, the turning cranes for moving anchors into and out of the fire, the beating hammer lifted by the cogs of a wheel; these are machines of manifest utility, simple in their construction, and all moved by water. But I cannot conceive the necessity of their executing so much of the remaining work by manual labour.

**I OBSERVED** eight stout fellows hammering an anchor in spots which might evidently be struck by a hammer or hammers moved by water, upon a vast anvil, the anchor to be moved with the utmost ease and quickness, to vary the seat of the strokes. It is idle to



object the difficulty of raising such a machine; there are no impossibilities in mechanics: an anchor of twenty tons may undoubtedly be managed with as much ease as a pin. In other Works besides the anchor-making I thought I observed a waste of strength".

One of the old cannon made at Crowley's is still preserved at Swalwell. It is made of steel,

was fired by flint and steel, and, without the wooden block in which it is fixed, weighs about half a hundred weight.

In the year 1753, Ambrose and John Crowley, Esquires, occupied Winlton Hall. The name of Crowley became extinct in 1782. The ironworks passed by sale to Mr. Millington, whose son, Crowley Millington, became the head of the firm known for many years afterwards as Crowley Millington and Co. In the year 1819 the factory was removed from Winlton the goods afterwards being made at Swalwell.

About this time several other iron manufactories commenced in the North of England, not the least important among them being that of Hawks, in Gateshead. As a consequence a great number of Swalwell workmen removed to other centres of industry. There seems to have been a keen rivalry sustained between the workmen of Crowley and those at Gateshead; and the encounters that took place between them were generally severe and bloody, as the old song, "Swalwell Hopping" will show : -

"That day a' Hawks' blacks may rue  
They got mony a varry sair clanker,  
O!

Can they de owse wi' Crowley's crew,  
Frev a needle tiv an anchor, O ?"

The workmen of Crowley Millington were then known as "Crowley's Crew". They possessed a singularly unfortunate reputation for boxing, cock-fighting gambling, poaching, and general mischief-making. They were "a terror" to the press-gang and the bailiffs, for "they hammered their ribs like an anchor shank", and sent them away sadder and wiser men.

Under the old Crowley regime the workmen were noted for their strong high Tony principles, while the keelmen in Swalwell and the neighbourhood were adherents of Whig party. Lawless displays in favour of "our glorious constitution in Church and State" were not uncommon: and lively scenes were frequently enacted by the rival political parties in adjusting their differences.

The following report of an extraordinary demonstration which took place at Swalwell appeared in a local paper on 5th January 1793 : "On Saturday last, Tom Paine was hung in effigy at Swalwell (as he had been before at Winlton Mill), and after hanging the usual time, was burnt to ashes, with the emblem of his trade in one hand, and his most detestable pamphlet in the other, surrounded by the judge in his robes, and all the principal officers that attended the procession and trial. At the time of burning the hangman's nephew - the devil - had nearly shared the same fate. The concourse of people was very great, and everything was carried on with the utmost decorum, almost every person attending with black cockades and labels at their hats, with various devices printed on them, as 'God save the King', King and Constitution', etc. etc. The whole concluded with a grand chorus of 'God save the King', and sundry volleys of small arms and cannon".

On this occasion the supporters of the Government seem to have had their own way, but in the following year "Crowley's Crew" suffered a serious reverse of fortune. In the **Newcastle Advertiser** for August 9th, 1794, appeared a report of a murderous attack on Crowley's workmen by the keelmen. It says : "The people of Swalwell, particularly those vulgarly known by the name of Crowley's crew, take this method of returning their sincere and hearty Thanks to the Mayor and Magistrates of Newcastle, the Magistrates of the county Durham. General Grant, the Right Hon. The Earl of Fauconberg, the Right Hon. The Earl of Darlington and the rest of the officers and privates for their kind exertions in coming to their assistance at a moment when the inhabitants were in imminent danger, and many of them



had narrowly escaped **being murdered** by a tumultuous assembly of keelmen and their wives, etc. who threw such quantities of stones that it was esteemed little less than a miracle that more of them did not lose their lives. However, the people known by the name of Crowley's crew are determined, should ever an attempt be made to disturb the peace of the Factory, to unite as one Body in support of the present Government, and to defend the property of Messrs, Crowley Millington and Co., as well as their own lives and families, and are determined to stand by each other till they spend the last drop of their blood, rather than any set of men assembled in a riotous and tumultuous manner shall ever Lord over them; and they will ever be emulous in retain the name of Crowley's crew".

When other firms commenced to make the work for the Government, and the glory of the factory at Swalwell had departed, the political enthusiasm of the workmen on behalf of the Government considerably abated, and at the beginning of the Chartist movement they were among the first in the North of England to espouse the Chartist cause. They used to go into the fields at night time and drill like soldiers, making at their leisure the pike-heads which they intended to use if the occasion required.

Public meetings were held in Swalwell, addressed by such well known agitators as George J. Harney, Robert Kydd and T. Emerson of Blaydon. Private meetings took place in the public houses. Where contributions were received from members to carry on "the cause". The writings of William Cobbett were eagerly read, which added fuel to the flame produced by the agitators. "Crowley's Crew" sometimes acted as a kind of body-guard to Mr. Charles Attwood of Whickham, who did yeoman service in the cause of Reform in the years 1830—31. In the month of October 1831, a county demonstration was held at Durham, at which Mr. Charles John Clavering of Axwell Park presided. On this occasion it became known that there was a plan to bring a force of men, in the employment of the Marquis of Londonderry, to disturb the meeting of noisy interruption. To counteract this force, Mr. Attwood had taken 300 men of undoubted courage, from Swalwell, Blaydon and Winlaton, armed with oak-saplings. The disturbance commenced, but each man was felled to the ground so instantaneously that those even nearest to him could scarcely detect the blow by which he was felled. The consternation produced by this attack was so great, that "Crowley's" men carried all before them, and the meeting went on without further interruption.

As ironworks increased at other places, the work was taken from Swalwell and manufactured elsewhere, until at last these famous works were closed. The workmen still clung to their native place with as much pertinacity as the Highlanders clung to their mountains and heather. Even in the longest periods of distress, they preferred submitting to great privations rather than risk their fortunes elsewhere. Afterwards the ironworks were re-opened by Mr. Laycock of Winlaton. At the present time they are carried on by Messrs, Ridley and Co. Extensive alterations have been made by this firm.

The works comprise steel foundries, forges for steel and iron, tilting hammers for tool-shed, smiths' shops, and machine shops. About 200 workmen are employed in the various departments, the products of which consist in crucible steel castings, tool-steel, steel and iron forgings, and general smith work.



The quality of the work produced by the firm may be inferred from the fact that at the Newcastle Exhibition they obtained a silver medal for the excellence of their steel castings; also the Diploma at the Royal Naval Exhibition, 1891, for tool-steel and other productions. Separating pans for desilverising lead is a special industry.

The firm, as in the days of Crowley, still execute orders of steel for the Admiralty. Considering that steel is to a great extent superseding iron in the construction of locomotive and marine engines, a considerable extension of the Swalwell Steel Works may be expected.

About the year 1800, Mr. George Robson commenced the works for the manufacturing of chain at Swalwell. They were subsequently carried on by Messrs. Edward and George Robson. This establishment may be said to have been a branch from "Crowley's" as the founder of them had in his youth been a chain maker at the more famous ironworks. About fifty men were employed by the firm. Unfortunately, the works in 1851 were closed, and have not been re-opened.

### **William Shield Musician and Composer**

This remarkable man was the son of William and Mary Shield of Swalwell, and was born 5th March, 1748. He had a brother John, born December 15th, 1752; and a sister named Ann, born 5th May 1750. His father was a music teacher in the village.

The boy Shield would probably receive the rudiments of education at the school established by Sir Ambrose Crowley. At the age of six years he began to play on the violin, and shortly after on the harpsichord. When nine years old, he sustained a heavy loss in the death of his father.

After his father's death he remained a few years in Swalwell, when three trades were placed before him— a barber, a sailor and a boat builder. He chose the last, which necessitated his removal to North Shields. He took with him from his native village the music which belonged to his father, and his own violin.

Fortunately, at Shields he fell into the hands of an excellent man, Mr. Davidson, with whom he served his apprenticeship. This gentleman not only allowed Shield to follow his favourite pursuit, but obtained for him invitations to play at concerts, for which the young musician was sometimes highly remunerated.

After serving his apprenticeship he obtained a valuable friend in Avison, the well-known author of the "Essay on Musical Expression", who instructed him in thorough bass. He was at this time a distinguished musician; but a greater honour awaited him. At Sunderland a church was consecrated, for which service an anthem was composed by Shield.



This anthem was sung by the choir of Durham Cathedral, to the delight of an immense congregation. This performance at once stamped Shield a composer of no mean degree.

In the year 1778, he made his first appearance as a dramatic author, producing "The Flich of Bacon", which secured for him the appointment of "Musician in Ordinary to His Majesty George IV". In 1791, he made the acquaintance of Haydon, from whom he declared he obtained more knowledge than he had by study in any four years of his life.

In 1792, he visited Italy. At Rome he met Sir William Hamilton; and obtained the friendship of Prince Augustus. Here also he became a disciple of More, the landscape painter, from whom he received lessons everyday for two months, after which he returned to London, and was engaged as composer at Convent Garden Theatre. He afterwards published his "Introduction to Harmony", which was accepted as a standard text book; and in 1817, his "Rudiments of Thorough Bass".

In the same year Sir William Parsons died, when Shield was appointed by His Majesty George IV, "Master of his Musicians in Ordinary", which position he filled with the highest credit to himself and the musical profession. William Shield died on the 25th January, 1829, and his remains were entered in Westminster Abbey.

Among his productions are the songs : "The Thorn", "The Wolf", "The Heaving of the Lead", "Old Towler", "The Ploughboy", and "Post Captain" ; and among his dramatic compositions are "The Flich of Bacon", "The Poor Soldier", "Rosina", "Robin Hood", "Friar Bacon", "The Farmer", "The Woodman", and "The Noble Peasant". In his opera "Rosina", the objects and scenery of Gibside and Winlaton Mill are presented to us, which give to the opera a local interest which the others do not possess.

The following extract from the 'Quarterly Musical Review' contains a handsome tribute to the merits of the compositions of Shield, more especially as it was written about the time of his death. "Late as he (Shield) appeared he struck out for himself a style of writing, pure, chaste, and original. His great prominent characteristic, however, is simplicity. No composer has ever woven so few notes into such sweet and impressive melodies, while the construction of the bass and harmony, is alike natural, easy and unaffected. We cannot open one of his operas without being instantly captivated with the quality of his music. In such delightful little entertainments as "Marian" and "Rosina" his airs breathe all the freshness and purity and beauty of rural life, through the more ornamental and difficult parts are carried beyond the common style of bravura. Shield seems to have been singularly fortunate in the great compass and agility of the female singers for whom he wrote his airs of execution. In "Marian" there is a hautboy song of amazing extent and much complication. In most of his works, where he introduces bravures, we find passages combining the difficulty of execution in a manner which, if not absolutely new, lay considerably claims to novelty, and full of the same ingenious cast of expression that is discernible through all the parts of his style. Perhaps no writer is so remarkable for songs containing so much that is strictly national. After Purcell, we consider Shield to be the finest and most perfect example of really English writers. Ballads in all the different modes of sentiment and description abound in his operas—sea and hunting songs, the rural ditty, the convivial song and glee, the sweet sentimental ballad, are so frequent, that indeed, with the occasional interposition of songs of execution, they may be said to make up the customary and continual alterations from air to air. It will strike the observer as singular that the later composers for the stage should have made so little use of the minor key. Shield has applied it in a most beautiful manner. In the course of our study and analysis of his compositions, we have been led from time to time to regret the incessant appetite for novelty in the public, which calls for such continual changes of food, and that can lure us 'from this fair mountain' but too often 'to fatten on a minor'. Yet, nevertheless, the taste of our own age bears us out in our belief, that so much of Mr. Shield's music will descend to posterity, carrying with it the intrinsic marks of English genius, as any other writer since the days of Arne".

Little is known about the private life of Shield. We know that he visited his mother at Swalwell in the year 1791 ; but little notice seems to have been taken of the great musician by the inhabitants of the village. Even the house in which his mother lived is not known. According to his will, dated 29th June, 1826, his wife—whose maiden name was Ann Strokes—is described as belonging to Marylebone. Of his companion, Shield speaks in the highest terms of commendation, calling her his “beloved partner”.

The parents of Shield “sleep” in Whickham churchyard. Their daughter Ann, who was married to John Arkless, of Whickham, is also buried here. Of their son, John, nothing is known. Evidently he is not buried at Whickham, as there is no entry in the parish register. Mainly through the assistance of Mr. Jos. Cowen, of Stella Hall, a marble tablet, with an appropriate inscription, was erected over the resting place of William Shield in Westminster Abbey on January 25th, 1892.

### **Charlton Nesbitt**

This able artist was born at Swalwell in 1775. His father was a keelman, who perceiving the bent of his son’s genius, apprenticed him to the celebrated Thomas Bewick. His first large work on his own account was engraving Johnson’s view of St. Nicholas’ Church on twelve distinct blocks of wood, which were joined and clamped together. For this beautiful engraving he received the gold pallet from the Society of Arts. In London his productions tended considerably to revive the taste for wood engraving, but wearied of the dissipations of the metropolis he returned to Swalwell, where he lived in close retirement during twenty years, occupying himself with gardening. On the death of his mother, to whom he was much attached, he again repaired to London for the purpose of resuming his profession. He died at Brompton, near the city on the 11th November. 1838.

### **Swalwell Hoppings**

Lads, myek a ring,  
An hear hus sing  
The sport he had at Swalwell, O!  
Wor marry will play  
O’ the Hoppin’ Day.  
Ho’way, marrows, and aw’ll tell ye,  
O!  
The sun shines warm on Whickham Bank,  
Let’s a’ lie doon at Dolly’s. O!  
An’ hear boot monny a funny prank  
Played by the lads at Crowley’s. O!

According to Brand, the word “Hopping” is derived from a Saxon word signifying to leap or dance. Dances in the North were formerly called hops.

On May 22nd, 1758, the following curious notice appeared on the walls of some of the houses in Swalwell : “On this day the annual diversions at Swalwell will take place, which will consist of dancing for ribands, grinning for tobacco, women running for smocks, ass races, foot courses by men, with an odd whim of a man eating a cock alive, feathers entrail and all”. We have in this announcement, not only a passing intimation of the Hopping, but the sports and pastimes in which the people engaged 140 years ago. It need scarcely be said that today public opinion is against these diversions, which did so much to brutalise and degrade our fore-fathers. Bull-baiting and cock-fighting as well, at least in this neighbourhood, have ceased to have any attractions for our working population.

At that time only the Presbyterian Chapel existed as a place for worship. Wesley had preached in the village, but as yet no chapel had been erected by his followers. If traditions

can be depended upon, the oral darkness which prevailed was almost impenetrable.

The sports were carried out on an extensive scale, being more like a carnival than a village hoping. There were horse races on the "Sands". Which lasted three days. At the races the horses generally ran for purses of gold. Mr. George Norvell was for many years either starter or judge. Tents were erected near the course, in which refreshments were sold, and in which many a severe pugilistic encounter took place.

Steamboats conveyed thousand of passengers from Newcastle and Shields to Derwenthaugh, in order to witness the sport. On the "Town Gate" were the caravans and shows. Billy Purvis frequently visited the hopping, and amused the people by his quaint appearance and humorous sayings; Punch and Judy enlivened the sports with their drolleries; while for those who had a taste for natural history, monkeys and other animals were exhibited in cages, displaying their agility and fantastic tricks.

Among the spice-wives who attended seventy or eighty years ago, were Peggy Clasper, Bella Turner, Jane Rate, and Mary Cotteral. The generation has passed away, others have taken their places. Formerly feasting, drinking, and fighting characterised the hoppings. Ham and veal were always provided in abundance. Sometimes friends travelled a great distance to dine at Swalwell on the Hopping Sunday."

In the year 1828, Swalwell possessed thirteen public-houses for a population of 1,320; so that there was ample accommodation for those who wished to frequent them. The whole week was spent in festivities. Probably the next week would be one of remorse and reflection.

There was at that time a "dancing" held every public house on the "hopping night", at which the young people of both sexes attended. In fact to such an alarming extent was dancing indulged in, that Rector Grey of Whickham rebuked the people of Swalwell from the pulpit of Whickham Church. But the worthy rector had not been sufficiently acquainted with the disposition of his rebellious parishioners for the next night a great number of them marched to Whickham, and stormed his house, breaking all the windows with stones, after which they returned to Swalwell.

Fighting was considered to be an almost indispensable factor in producing merriment at hopping times. Between the workmen of Winlaton and those at Swalwell feuds always existed. At this time old wounds were re-opened and old scores paid off with a broken limb, a cracked head, or dislocated joint. The hopping now is quite a different affair from what it once was.

Horse races and ass races, grinning for tobacco, females running for ribbons and dresses, are things of the past. Dancing in public houses are never heard of. There is still the "ham and veal". There are still the stalls as in the olden times; the village is made attractive by the gilded machinery, roundabouts, and switchback; but the demoralising sports are gone - let us hope for ever.

### **The Freemasons (Lodge of Industry)**

When this Lodge was founded is uncertain; but there is reason to think that it existed as an operative Lodge as early as the year 1717. The Lodge was originally held at Swalwell, and there is a tradition that it was founded by the operative Masons brought from the south by Sir Ambrose Crowley about the year 1690.

From the copy of the bye-laws the following extract is taken : - "The oldest Minutes of the

Lodge was written in sheets, bound up with a copy of the Constitutions of Freemasonry, published in 1723, edited by the celebrated Dr. J. T. Desaguliers, D.G.M., and dedicated to His Grace the Duke of Montague, Grand Master". This Minute Book, with the Warrant and other valuable documents and property of the Lodge, were lost before the year 1770; but the Minute Book was fortunately recovered by Bro. John Etridge Wilkinson, who found it exhibited for sale at a bookstall, purchased it, and presented it to the Lodge in 1845. The various minutes of Lodge meetings, annual appointments of Worshipful Master and Officers, and Indenture of Apprentices were duly recorded in the old book, furnishing to the Brethren of the Lodge of Industry an interesting record of Masonic history.

The first entry is dated 29th September, 1725, on which day it is noted : - "Then Matthew Armstrong and Arthur Douglass had their names registered as Entered Apprentices". The original Warrant of the Lodge was dated 24th June, 1735, the number of the lodge at that time being 132. After this Warrant was lost a Charter of Confirmation was granted to the Lodge in October, 1771, by the Duke of Beaufort, Grand Master, which is now in possession of the Brethren of the Lodge, and constitutes their authority for all Masonic purposes.

In the year 1735, the number of members was 132, and in the year 1832, the number had fallen to 56. At a meeting held in February, 1845, it was resolved to remove the Lodge from Swalwell to the neighbouring borough to Gateshead, a step which gave increased vitality to the old Lodge, as several of the most active and the Lodge has since that period continued in a successful and prosperous career.

The Lodge at Swalwell was held at the Queens' Head. Annually the members, decorated with their Regalia, and preceded by a band of music, paraded to Whickham Church, when a sermon for the occasion was preached by the Rector of the parish. There is still in existence at Swalwell, a sword - artistically finished - which was presented by the Earl of Strathmore to Mr. Brown, the hose of the Queen's Head.

The late Mr. James Davidson was an active supporter of the Lodge. He was for fifty years a subscribing member; and upon his death in 1851, the Brethren of the Lodge erected a tombstone to his memory in Whickham churchyard, bearing the following inscription:

*Sacred  
To the Memory of  
James Davison of Swalwell,  
Who died April 23rd, 1851,  
Aged 77 years  
He was for fifty-six years a much respected member of the fraternity of Freemasons*

## **Presbyterian Chapel**

This historical chapel is situated at the east end of the village, and is the oldest Dissenting place of worship in the parish. Its length is 46 feet, and breadth 24 feet. At the east end is a gallery. The chapel contains sittings for 300 people. This is one of the very few churches on Tyneside in which John Wesley preached.

The appearance of the place has been slightly altered since the founder of Methodism occupied its pulpit. At that time the pulpit was fixed against the south wall, now it is at the west end, alongside of which stands the organ. Lately it has been greatly improved and beautified at the expense of the congregation.

In the year 1732, a number of people belonging to different churches in Newcastle, but unable to attend them regularly owing to the distance, united and met in a dwelling house at Woodside, near Ryton. They were soon formed into a congregations, and placed under the

care of the Rev. J. Crossland. In 1750, this Christian society removed to Swalwell, where the present chapel has been built for its accommodation. Mr. Crossland continued to labour amongst them until the year 1752, when after a ministry of twenty years he entered into his rest. His remains lie in Whickham church yard, where a stone erected to his memory, bears the inscription

*The Rev. Mr. James Crossland  
late Dissenting Minister of Swalwell  
Departed this life August 11th 1752  
Aged 65 year*

The next minister was the Rev. Edmund Arthur, who had been pastor of a church at Simonburn, in Northumberland. He entered upon his duties at Swalwell in January, 1753, and soon after formed the congregation according to the Presbyterian model of church government. He continued his labours at Swalwell until the year 1760, when he resigned his charge, and removed to some other place.

After an interval of twelve months, during which the pulpit was supplied by neighbouring ministers, he was succeeded in January, 1761, by the Rev. John Summerbell, who laboured at Swalwell till the year 1765, when he removed to Sunderland.

Four months after, the church called as their pastor the Rev. James Somerville, then a minister Weardale. He raised a large congregation, and for nine years ministered to them, when an unhappy dispute arose between him and the elders, which resulted in his resignation.

The fifth minister was Mr. John Rutherford of Shillmore, in Northumberland, who was ordained at Swalwell in 1774, but again, in consequence of some dispute with the elders, he likewise resigned in the year 1778, after a ministry of four years.

Mr. Robert Heslop of Wooler, Northumberland, was ordained at Swalwell in 1779. For sixteen years Mr. Heslop continued pastor of the church, when a separation took place between him and the congregation. He did not, however, remove from Swalwell, but continued to reside there, and preach in the surrounding villages till near the period of his death which took place in 1818.

In the year 1796, the Rev. Archibald Nelson was chosen to be the seventh pastor of the church. In consequence of his superior talents, a general revival took place in the congregation, so much so, that the chapel was on all occasions crowded to excess. But after four years, he resigned his charge 1800, and removed to Aberdeen.

The Rev. David Gallotly was next appointed, but his stay at Swalwell was short, for after two years, he resigned and removed Newcastle.

In the year 1805, the Rev. Richard Turnbull, belonging to the Lady Huntingon Connexion, became the tenth pastor. Under him the church, which had hitherto maintained the government and discipline of pure Presbyterianism, experienced a considerable change in its principle, and became Congregational or Independent. Mr. Turnbull continued pastor for seventeen years, when he resigned in 1822.

Mr. W. W. Williams, a student from the Independent Academy at Hackney, London, succeeded him. The call to Mr. Williams was signed by 53 persons. For a considerable time the church continued to flourish under his ministry, as is evident from the repeated notices of large accessions to its membership. According to all accounts he must have been a popular and attractive preacher. He frequently went to Derwenthaugh, and preached to the



keelmen from the deck of one of their vessels, when, it is said, these hardy toilers were kept spell-bound as he unfolded to them “the unsearchable riches of Christ”.

But alas for human popularity and applause, Mr. Williams in an evil hour yielded to the power of drink, and after committing frequent and glaring irregularities, he resigned his charge in April, 1825. On account of the misconduct of Mr. Williams the congregation had become small, a great number of them having joined other societies.

The chapel at Swalwell was for a short time supplied with preachers from the Independent Association, but finding that their men did not meet their expenses, a meeting was held on the 16th January, 1826, when it was unanimously agreed that they should apply for assistance to the United Secession Presbytery. The application was successful, and a deputation of the Presbytery, consisting of the Rev. James Pringle, Mr. Cowan, and Mr. Todd, was appointed to visit the Winlaton and Swalwell members, and, if possible, to effect a reconciliation between them. In this they were happily successful, and thus the church once more united passed into the hands of the United Secession Presbytery of Newcastle, in whose hands it remained until the union of the two branches of the United and English Presbyterians in 1876.

The church was formally constituted and received into connection with the Secession body on the 1st of April, 1827, or about seventy-seven years after its first opening. Still things did not prosper with the congregation, for another dispute arose between the Swalwell and Winlaton members. It would seem that the preacher sent by the Presbytery had divided his services between Swalwell and Winlaton, and confining then exclusively to Swalwell.

This decision caused great dissatisfaction among the Winlaton members, who formed nearly one half of the congregation, its membership being Swalwell, 3; Whickham, 5; Blaydon, 2; Winlaton, 14; and 6 from other places, making in all 30. They accordingly applied to the Presbytery to be separated from the Swalwell congregation, and to have a distinct supply of sermons for themselves. The Presbytery granted their request, and the consequence was the withdrawal of many of their members, and the formation of an Independent congregation at Winlaton.



**The** congregation at Swalwell continued to be supplied with sermons till the year 1830, and about three years after they had joined the Secession body, when they called the Rev. W. Rattray, who was the first Secession minister at Swalwell. He was a man universally beloved, his homely and familiar manner, and the warm interest he took in the temporal and spiritual welfare of his people endeared him to their affection. His memory is still fragrant in Swalwell and its neighbourhood. Mr. Rattray continued his labours with more or less success until the year 1850, when he was removed by death, after having been twenty years minister of the congregation. A tombstone in Whickham churchyard marks his resting-place, and bears the following simple inscription :-

*In loving Remembrance of the Rev. William Rattray  
For 20 years Minister of the Secession Church, Swalwell  
Who died January 6th, 1851  
Aged 63 years*

After Mr. Rattray's death the church continued vacant for nearly eight years, during which several ministers were called, but unfortunately without success. In the year 1857, the church presented a unanimous call to Mr. W. R. Berrie. He was ordained at Swalwell in the year 1858, and continued his ministrations till July, 1861, when he resigned.

In the year 1862, the Rev. George Samuel became pastor. Mr. Samuel was a ripe scholar, and a theologian of no mean degree. Besides discharging his duties as minister of the church, he gathered around him a number of young men, to whom he taught languages and mathematics. He was elected a member of the Whickham School Board on its formation in 1873, and remained a member until his death.

It is needless to say the church flourished under his ministrations, and although he was not a brilliant preacher, the hearers knew they were listening to a man impressed with the responsibility of his work. After labouring for eighteen years he was taken from his congregation by death, and sleeps alongside of the Rev. W. Rattray in Whickham churchyard. A granite tombstone, erected by his friends and admirers, bears the following inscription :-

*In Memoriam  
The Rev. George Samuel  
For 18 years Presbyterian Minister at Swalwell  
Died August 11th, 1880, Aged 55 years  
He laboured unweariedly in the cause of education,  
and was esteemed by all for his genial disposition.*

The Rev. W. Fairweather was the next minister who received a call from the congregation, he remained with them six years, and resigned his charge in 1886.

In 1886, the Rev. A. Laird was appointed pastor, but resigned in March 1887. For nearly twelve months the congregation was without a minister, the pulpit being occupied for the time by probationers.

In the year 1888, the Rev. R. Thompson was located at Swalwell, but remained only a short time, afterwards removing to Shrewsbury.

From 1889 to 1890, the Rev. f. Stubbs laboured among the congregation, afterwards removing the Dudley.

On the 2nd August, 1890, a unanimous call was given to the Rev. W. Dryburgh of Sunderland who is the pastor at the present time, and twentieth since the foundation of the church in 1750.

Two Pewter Plates, bearing the inscription, "Word Side Meeting" are still in possession of the chapel at Swalwell. The Chapel Bell, cast in 1840, formerly belonged to Messrs. Crowley Millington and Co., and was bought by the Rev. G. Samuel. At the making of the bell, many of the workmen at the factory threw silver coins into the crucible.

The village until recent years possessed a number of wells of pure water. In fact no other village for miles around had so many within such easy access to the people. At the east end, down the lane which the visitor approaches before reaching the Board Schools. Was "Roger's" well. Sixty years ago, at this part of the village there was a mill for grinding corn, the wheel being driven by water conveyed in a spout across the road from a spring in the adjoining field; Mr. John Embleton being the occupier and miller.

At the West end was "Hodgson's" well, which supplied the inhabitants at that end of the village. About the middle was the "Spout", with a daily supply of thousands of gallons. But a few years since the water mysteriously disappeared, and has not returned; the loss at the time being intensely felt by the people. The village is now supplied with water from Whittle Dene.

Behind the Board School is a colliery, which belongs to G. H. Ramsay, Esq. The seam of coal being worked is what known as the "Five Quarter", at a depth of 23 fathoms, and which gives employment to 120 men and boys.

The premises of the Swalwell Co-operative Store are large and commodious, especially those opened in 1890. This is the most handsome building in the village. The number of members for the quarter ending June 20th, 1892, being 366



The "Town Gate" is the only open space the people possess; and where public meetings are frequently held 'Gate' signifies a way or march.

*"Nothing regarding they kept on their gait". - Spenser*

As early as the year 1706 - before the Hexham turnpike was made - "An Ancient Highway" was used for "Sacke and Seame" between "Broades Gate" at Swalwell, and "Tame Bridge Causey". The present "Town Gate" in former times would be the starting point of the old Highway.

The "Keelmen's" bridge connects Swalwell with the "Island". This land is the property of Sir H. Clavinger, and is divided into allotments or gardens, which are highly cultivated by the working men of the village.

On the "Waterside" is the establishment of Messrs. R. and W. Shield, spade and shovel manufacturers. This industry was established in Swalwell nearly seventy years ago by Mr. Thomas Shield, and at the present time is one of the largest in the district. The works consist of forge and finishing departments. Large consignments of shovels are supplied to collieries in Durham and Northumberland. The firm have also and increasing export trade, a quantity having recently been sent to Siberia.

At the bottom of the Waterside, and following the course of the Derwent, are still to be seen the remains of some of the staithes which once stood here. A little northwards are the fire brick works of Messrs. G. H. Ramsay and Co. The founder of this firm, Mr. G. Heppell, first established his brickworks at Derwenthaugh. On account of these works not being large enough to meet the demands made upon the firm, the present works, which are the largest in the north of England were commenced in 1830. The flats for drying the bricks are capable of holding the completing 7,000,000 bricks per annum. The clay used in the making of the bricks is transported from the colliery - which is distant about three hundred yards - to the Works in wagons drawn by a locomotive. The firm also manufacture tiles and fire-clay gas retorts.

For the high class character of their fire-clay food, the firm have been awarded a bronze medal, Paris, 1855; the exceptional honour of the gold medal at Paris, 1878; a gold medal at Antwerp, 1885; and a bronze medal at Newcastle, 1887. The brick works have a frontage of two hundred yards, and the goods are conveyed to their destination by both rail and water. The management of both the colliery and brick works is now in the hands of Mr. G. R. Ramsay.

Midway between Swalwell and Derwenthaugh are the fire-brick works of Mr. G. H. Snowball, for a quarter of a century this industry was carried on at Gateshead by the late Mr. James Snowball, and removed to Swalwell seventeen years ago. The works are situated on the Derwent, and have a splendid frontage of nearly one hundred yards. Possessing all the machinery and appliances for the manufacture of bricks on a large scale, the firm are enabled to turn out fifty thousand per week. Not only have they a large home trade but an extensive export trade as well, notable markets being Russia, France and Belgium.

**At** Derwenthaugh are the iron works of Messrs. Raine and Co., of Winlaton Mill, comprising furnaces, etc. These works are an extension of those of Winlaton Mill.

At the west end of Swalwell is the colliery of Messrs. Hannington and Co. opened in 1889. At a dept of ten fathoms the "Five Quarter" seam is reached, and at twenty-three fathoms the "Brockwell", giving employment to one hundred and thirty men and boys. Near the colliery is the Swalwell railway station, on the Consett branch of the North Eastern Railway. The distance from Swalwell to Newcastle is four miles and a half.

### **Swalwell Brewery**

This well known brewery is situated on the south side of the village, and occupies over an acre of ground. It was built by the great-grandfather of the present proprietor, Mr. H. E. Taylor, in 1765, and is probably the oldest establishment of this kind in the county of Durham.

As showing the great advance in wages since that time, it may be stated that the masons who built this brewery had only ten pence a day. The scientific knowledge and mechanical improvements of the present day having made the art of brewing vastly different from what our ancestors were content with, it was thought desirable to entirely reconstruct the internal arrangements, and to introduce new and improved plant. This was most effectively carried out in 1889 by the well-known brewer's engineer, Mr. Wilson of Stockton-on-Tees.

A tower nearly fifty feet high was erected on the site of the old malt kiln, in which most of the operations are carried out on the gravitation system now so generally adopted. Cast iron was largely introduced in the place of wood for hop bucks, coolers and mash tun. Plate glass is used in the grist and malt hoppers. All the grinding, pumping, and other work which was done in the early days by horse power, and at a later date by steam, is now done by two powerful Otto gas engines supplied by Crossley Bros.

A good supply of water is obtained at a depth of two hundred feet, and forced to the top of the tower, where it is received in a cistern holding 8,000 gallons. The refrigerator, a large and powerful machine, is Mr. Wilson's latest invention; it is exceedingly simple in construction.

The firm possesses a good reputation. Up to 1852, only the mild sweet beers, and porter, were made; but about that time, owing to the increasing taste for the pale hopped ales, that particular branch was taken up, and continued with success.

The ponderous book of the firm, quaintly written and dating back to 1777, furnishes us with many names of the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood in bygone days, such as Andrew Robinson, Stoney Bowes, Lady Ann Jessop, Bird-hill; Lady Windsor, Lord Mountstuart, Major Jones, Pontop; Anthony Leighton, Middleton Grange, Sunnyside; Rev. James Breville, rector of Whickham; Jasper Dixon, Rev. Charles Thorpe, Earl of Strathmore, Sir Thomas Clavering, Edward Surtees, Croniwell; Sir Charles Loraine, Bart. In the Earl of Strathmore's beer account occurs the following interesting entry : "Aug. 19th, 1803. To 5 Bar. Ale for Volunteers". This is the year in which Buonaparte was expected to invade England, and the volunteers consisted of amounted troop of Gibside cavalry. Inns : Station Hotel, Queen's Head, Elephant, Crowley Hotel, Highlander, Seven Stars, Three Tuns, Sun and Wherry Inn.

## **Keelmen**

The keelmen for a long time formed the largest class of our working population. They are described as a rough and hardy race of men, exceedingly clannish, and very jealous in support of their supposed privileges. In the year 1704, there were about four hundred keels employed on the Tyne, and about sixteen hundred keelmen.

On account of the Tyne being frozen for several weeks in the year, the Keelmen's calling was a very precarious one. But they had other troubles besides winds and frozen river, as the "Press-gang" often made their appearance in our village.

The practice of impressing seamen to man the Royal Navy was adopted in every emergency; and the Keelmen were well-known for their strength and endurance, and offered a fair field for the inroads of the King's officers, who sometimes carried off the Keelmen who happened to be unprotected at the time.

A terrible affray took place in the village on 30th March, 1759. between the "Press-gang" and "Crowley's Crew". A number of the Kings' officers went to impress men, a short time preceding when the gang received a sever thrashing at the hands of Crowley's workmen. On the date mentioned, they returned, strongly reinforced, and several were stabbed with

swords; and one of the inhabitants, named Bell, was wounded in five places, in consequence of which he died, and others were dangerously wounded.



The Keelmen were often engaged in strikes; but one more serious than the others took place in the year 1822, when the men objected to the erection of spouts to run the coals into the ships.

A large number of men in the parish were involved in the conflict; and, as a consequence, scenes of riot and disorder were continually taking place.

A small man-of-war vessel was brought up the river, and moored near Newcastle. Soldiers were billeted at the public-houses in Swalwell, and were drilled in Axwell Park, thus filling the neighbourhood with alarm.

Frequent conflicts took place between the soldiers and the Keelmen, and many of the latter suffered imprisonment; but the strike terminated after ten weeks duration - the spouts being erected, and they proved to be a boon to the Keelmen.

During leisure hours many of them engaged in sports and pastimes that were anything but elevating in their character. The Keelmen's Bridge reminds us of the past; and the well-known and inspiring airs of "The Keel Row" and "The Black Cock o' Whickham" are associated with that industry.

### **Horticulture**

For many years, Swalwell and district has had a great reputation not only for its manufacture in iron, wood, etc., but for its productions from the gardens of the villagers.

Who has not heard of the Swalwell big "grozers", leeks, and other vegetables, grown on little plots made mostly from cinder heaps, old wagon-ways, etc.?

The present generation will scarcely realise the amount of downright hard work put in by their forefathers, in their efforts to make these gardens from "waste places". It was, however, well-spent energy; and success in the cultivation of flowers, fruit and vegetables, crowned their labours. It was quite the rule for these amateur gardeners to take the

principal prizes at the horticultural shows held far and near.

Generally speaking, today we are not so enthusiastic over gardening matters. We prefer to watch games being played - such as football and cricket - a recreation right in itself, but not so profitable or beneficial as the interesting hobby of gardening.



Several pages of this little book could be filled about the wonderful exhibits; and many names of our worthy growers could be enumerated, - but it will suffice to give the following records : -

A Red Cabbage, 4 ft. 2 in. high; 7 yds. 5 in. in circumference: which weighed 8 st. 11lbs. (Fancy 123 lbs. !)

Three Leeks, weighing 17 lbs. 12 ozs.

A Big Leek, 14 in. In circumference; 8 in. in white; 10 ft. 4 in. in length, from end to end; weight, 61/2 lbs.

A Stalk of Rhubarb, weighing 15 lbs.

A Stalk of Rhubarb, 12 3/4 in. in circumference; 21 1/2 in. in length 4ft. 10 in. being the width of the leaf.

A Red Goosberry, weighing 33 dwts. 3 grs.

Twin Red Gooseberries, weighing 56 dwts.

The Swalwell gardeners not only excelled in the growing of grand fruit and vegetables; for as is well known, the roses, dahlias, gladiolis, asters, etc., as well as the delightful specimens of stove and greenhouse plants produced by them, have won at the Newcastle and other big shows, defeating gentlemen gardeners and nurserymen from the South as well as local "big pots".

— The End —