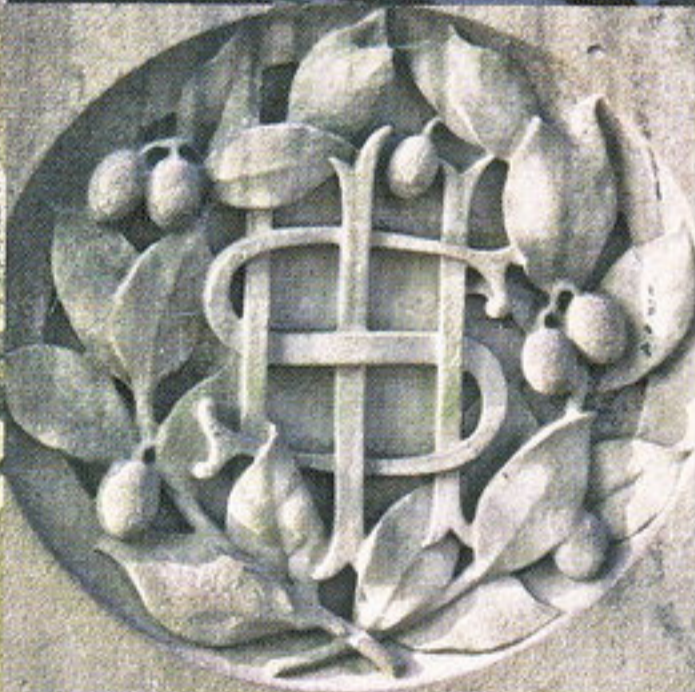


A Guide to St James' Graveyard



St James' Heritage & Environment Group

This is one of a series of local history publications produced by St James' Heritage and Environment Group.

The Group began life in 2009 as an informal group of volunteers who came together to tidy the historic graveyard at St James' and map the graves there. They became the Graveyard Group and continued to meet weekly to maintain and improve the graveyard, and also started to run activities and events for people to learn about and celebrate the local history and wildlife of the graveyard and the area. In 2010 they set up an independent voluntary organisation, St James' Heritage and Environment Group, to develop this work.



The Group runs a variety of events, activities and projects including a weekly drop-in at St James' where people can visit the graveyard and church. A database of the graves and burials at St James' is available as a resource for people interested in researching family or local history, and there is a programme of exhibitions, guided tours, and archive photographic and film shows. The Group is wholly volunteer-run and welcomes new volunteers and other support.

Credits

Thanks to all the members of the Graveyard Group, past and present, without whom most of these graves would still be hidden under ivy and brambles.

Images courtesy of the following:

Cover images: Michael Young

Graveyard Group: Tyne and Wear Community Foundation

Hedgehog: Steve Barrass

Storytelling event/ slugs: Judith Green

Sculpture trail: Andy McDermott, Michael Young

Richard and Rachel Grainger: Laing Art Gallery (Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums)

John and Anne Sowerby: Pat Riley (Sowerby family collection)

Paradise: Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums

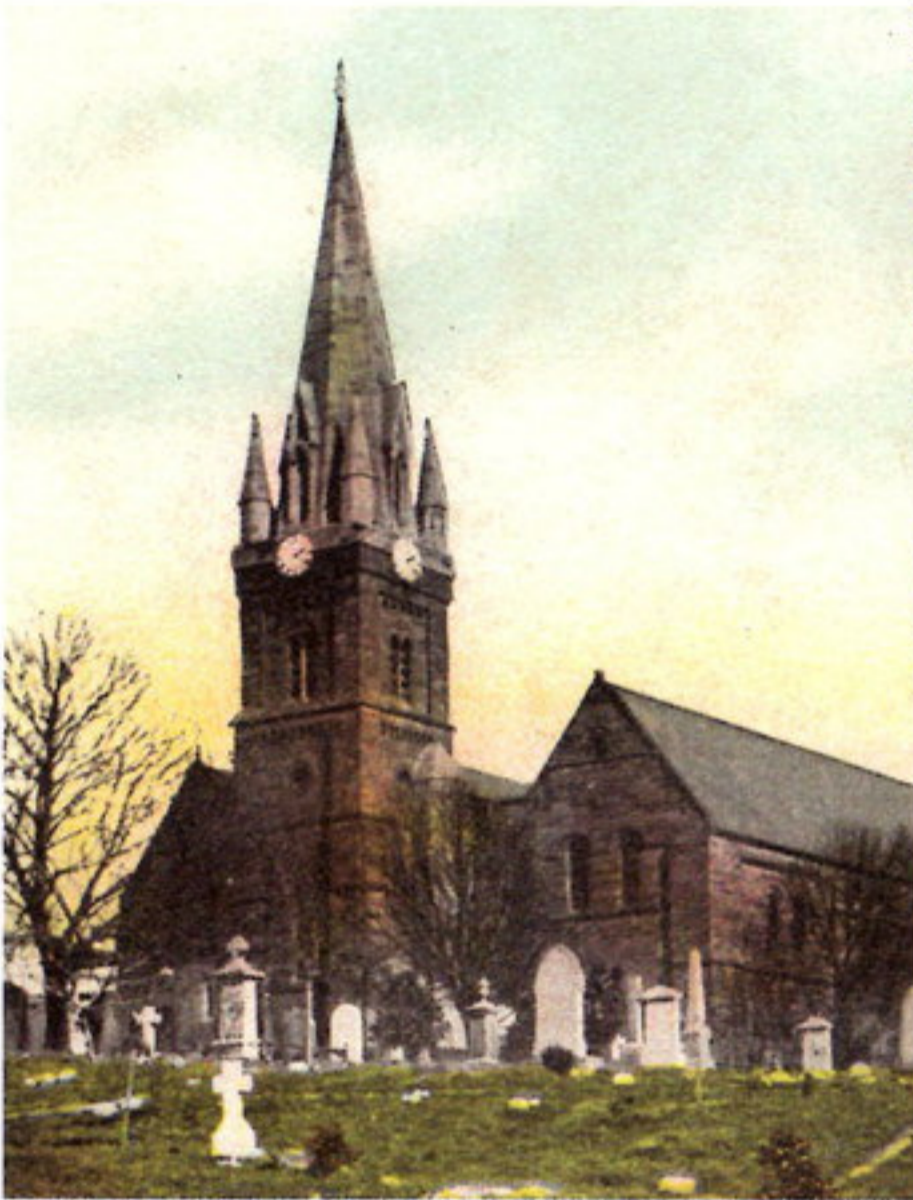
HG and WG Grace: Joyce Craggs

Christopherson children: Ann Crichton-Harris

Joseph, Edwin and Annie Luck: Josephine Briggs

All other images: West Newcastle Picture History Collection

St James' Graveyard

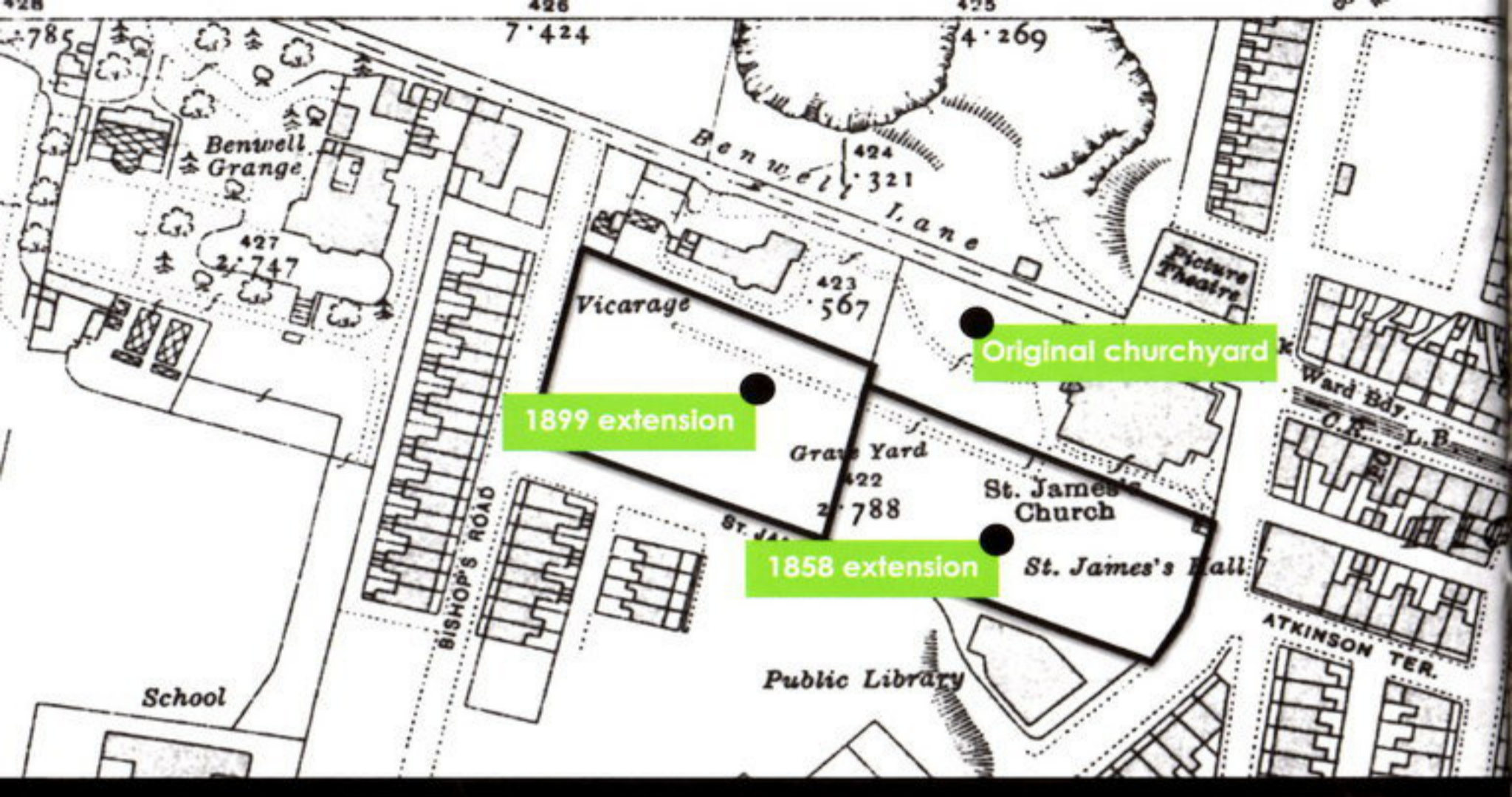


This postcard depicts the graveyard in the early 20th century.

(Above) The same view today.

St James' graveyard was opened in 1832 at the same time as the church. The land on which they were built was a gift from the famous colliery engineer and mine owner John Buddle. At this time Benwell itself was a largely rural area with a resident population of just over 1,000. However the parish served by the church was much larger, extending from the city centre out west beyond Scotswood and from the town moor to the river Tyne.

At first the graveyard occupied only the small area of land between the church and the vicarage. However only 26 years later it had to be extended to accommodate the unexpectedly large number of burials, many of which were from the workhouse. During the later part of the 19th century the rapid industrialisation of the area led to a dramatic increase in the local population. As the number of burials rose, more space was needed again in the graveyard, and further land was added in 1899. Coffins were brought into the graveyard through a gate in the west wall along Bishops Road. Although the gate no longer exists, the course of the carriageway that ran east from here across the graveyard is still visible.



Although St James' is an Anglican church, many burials there were conducted by Roman Catholic priests or those from Dissenting churches such as Methodists and Presbyterians. In the first 80 years, almost 500 such burials (more than 5% of the total) took place.

By the time the graveyard was closed for burials in the 1960s more than 12,300 people had been buried there. There are over 625 marked graves in the churchyard but most of those buried at St James' have no visible memorial.

The Victorians imposed new legal requirements for recording deaths, marriages and births, but the task of maintaining burial records still fell to individual churches. The burial records for St James' (copies of which are kept at the church) are a fascinating but not always consistent source of information about those who lived and died in this area. The first recorded burial in St James' graveyard was that of Elizabeth Clark of Benwell Colliery who died at the age of five. The last was Elizabeth Gubbins who died aged 79.

Benwell was once home to many of the richest and most powerful families on Tyneside, and a number of famous names are to be found on graves in St James' graveyard. Also buried there are thousands of local residents who were not so wealthy or famous, including pitmen, boatmen, soldiers, and inhabitants of the local workhouse. This guide is an introduction to some of the people buried at Benwell.

The graveyard is also a haven for wildlife in this urban area, and various species of birds, bats, butterflies, small mammals and mini-beasts can be found here.

This 1904 photograph shows Barbara and Anne Steadman of Perkins Street tending the grave of their brother Robert.



BURIALS in the Parish of *Benswell* in the County of *Northumberland* in the Year One thousand *nine* hundred and *two*

Name.	Abode.	When Buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was Performed.
<i>George Robinson Ramsay</i> No. 369	<i>Benswell Lodge</i>	<i>Jan 5</i>	<i>52 7/8</i>	<i>R.R. Manly</i>
<i>Thomas Watson</i> No. 370	<i>23 Violet St</i>	<i>Jan. 6</i>	<i>47 years</i>	<i>W. J. Williams</i>

Extract from St James' burial records



The hedgehog and slugs pictured here are among the graveyard's living residents





In the middle of the 19th century Benwell was a mainly rural area of farms, mansions and private estates. A contemporary historian wrote of St James' graveyard in 1901

"Altogether it is a beautiful little churchyard, lying as it does on a gentle slope facing south, and commanding a most extensive view of the Tyne and Derwent Valley."

There are six small sculptures hidden away in different locations in the graveyard. These were designed by pupils from Bridgewater School, inspired by their explorations of the graveyard. Local sculptor Andy McDermott created the sculptures out of recycled materials, based on the children's drawings, models and ideas. The sculptures were designed to rust so that they blend into the setting.



A ship to carry us on our final journey



Hiding under the holly bush, a shell case and a poppy are a reminder of those killed in wars



The graveyard is home to many birds and animals

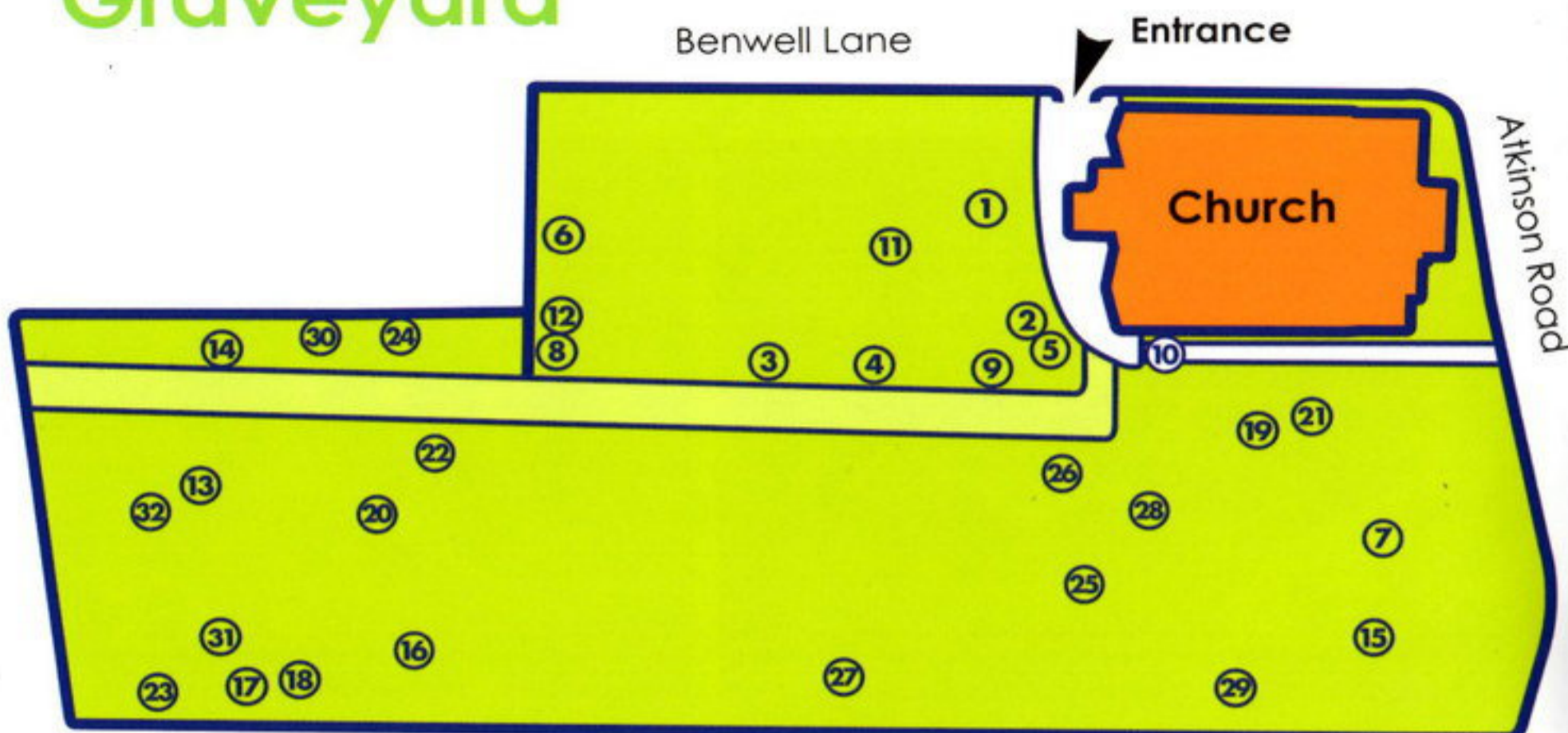


At night the bats come out and fly around the graveyard

The storytelling trail celebrates the wildlife of the graveyard. Available on CD and in a paper version are ten stories inspired by the trees, animals and birds that live here, told by Newcastle storyteller Chris Bostock (pictured here at a storytelling event at St James').



Who's Who in St James' Graveyard



Key

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Richard Grainger | 17. William Sanderson |
| 2. John Buddle | 18. Charles Harris |
| 3. John Sowerby | 19. William Simpson |
| 4. Walter Scott | 20. William Richardson |
| 5. Grace family | 21. William Taylor |
| 6. William Cochran Carr | 22. John and Jane Ferguson |
| 7. John Wood and Joseph Crass | 23. Thomas Alderson |
| 8. William Isaac Cookson | 24. James Waugh |
| 9. Bishop Lloyd | 25. Edward Shield |
| 10. Rev Maughan | 26. Henry White |
| 11. Rev Bromley | 27. Jane Blair |
| 12. Christopherson children | 28. James Ord |
| 13. Jack Palmer | 29. Robert Coulter |
| 14. John Pendlington | 30. Matthew Cross |
| 15. Joseph Ryan | 31. Thomas Peacock |
| 16. Alfred Stobbs | 32. Joseph, Edwin and Annie Luck |

This plan shows the location of the graves described in the following pages. These represent only a small fraction of all burials that took place during the 130 years that the graveyard was open. For those who are interested in finding out more, we also hold a comprehensive plan of all the visible memorials as well as a copy of the complete records of those buried there.

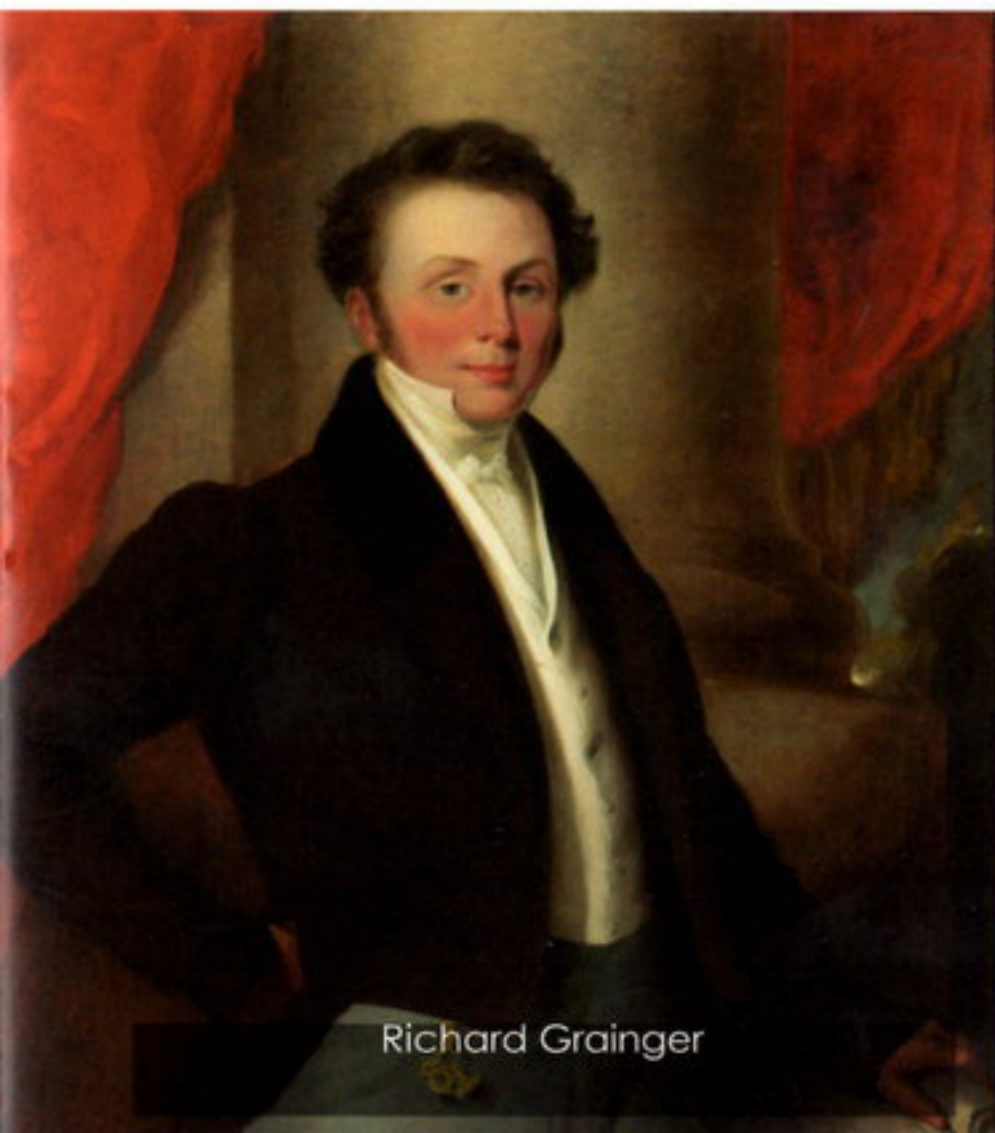
Richard Grainger

1797-1861

Richard Grainger, born in 1797 in High Friar's Lane, is best known for transforming the medieval townscape of Newcastle into one of Britain's finest town centres. A prolific builder, developer and entrepreneur, he worked with the town clerk John Clayton and the architect John Dobson during the 1820s and 1830s to create many of Newcastle's most important streets and buildings including Grey Street, Grainger Street, the Theatre Royal and the Grainger Market.

Grainger's connections with the west end of the city are less well known. In 1839 he acquired a large area of land in Elswick and moved his home to Elswick Hall, reportedly declaring that this "will one day be the centre of Newcastle". His master-plan for this semi-rural area aimed at turning it into a "New Jerusalem" by building new housing, factories, roads, railways, churches, and even a zoo. However the Elswick project was to be Grainger's downfall. Hardly any of his grand plans were implemented and Grainger himself only narrowly avoided bankruptcy.

When Grainger died in 1861 he was buried in St James' graveyard in a substantial family vault. His wife Rachel died in childbirth in Scotland in 1842 at the age of 42, followed by her infant son two days later. Their bodies were later brought to Benwell for re-burial. Four more of the Graingers' 13 children are also buried here including their oldest son Thomas who died in 1884.



Richard Grainger



Rachel Grainger

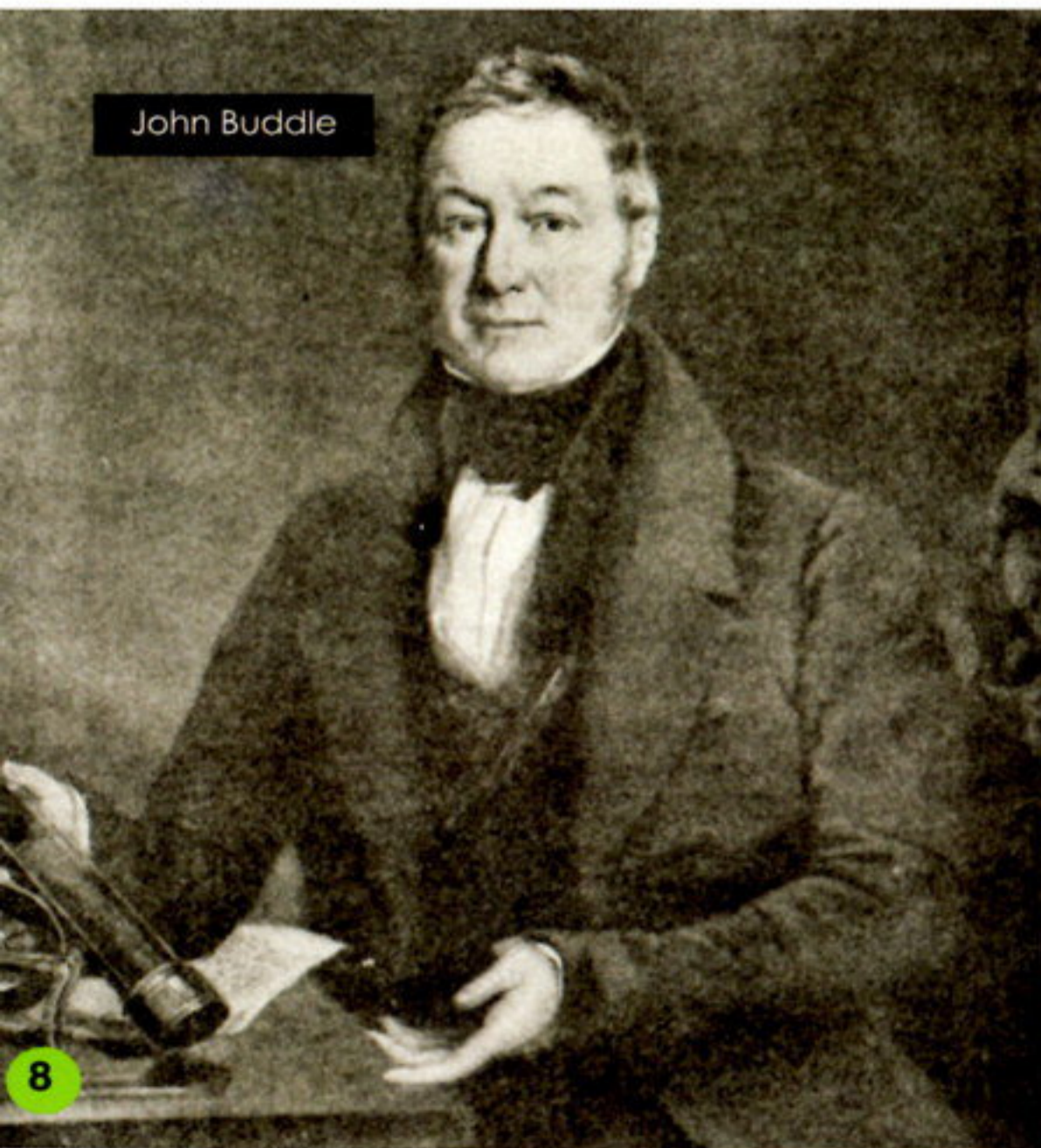
John Buddle

1773-1843

John Buddle, known locally as "King of the Coal Trade", was a mine owner and entrepreneur who had a huge influence on the development of the northern coalfield in the first half of the 19th century. He was also the leading mining engineer of his day who made a major contribution to mining safety by measures such as insisting on the importance of good ventilation and helping to introduce the Davy safety lamp.

Buddle took over Benwell Colliery in 1801, sinking two new shafts (the Edward Pit to the north and the Beaumont Pit to the south) as well as continuing to work the Charlotte Pit on Condercum Road. His land-holdings included the area on which St James' Church and graveyard now stand. The High Main coal seam actually outcrops here, and the waggonway from Charlotte Pit down to the river once ran through the graveyard.

When Buddle died in 1843 he was, by his own choice, buried at St James' in a vault designed by John Dobson who was also the architect of the church. The funeral procession was over a mile long and took more than three hours to travel from Buddle's home in Wallsend.



John Buddle

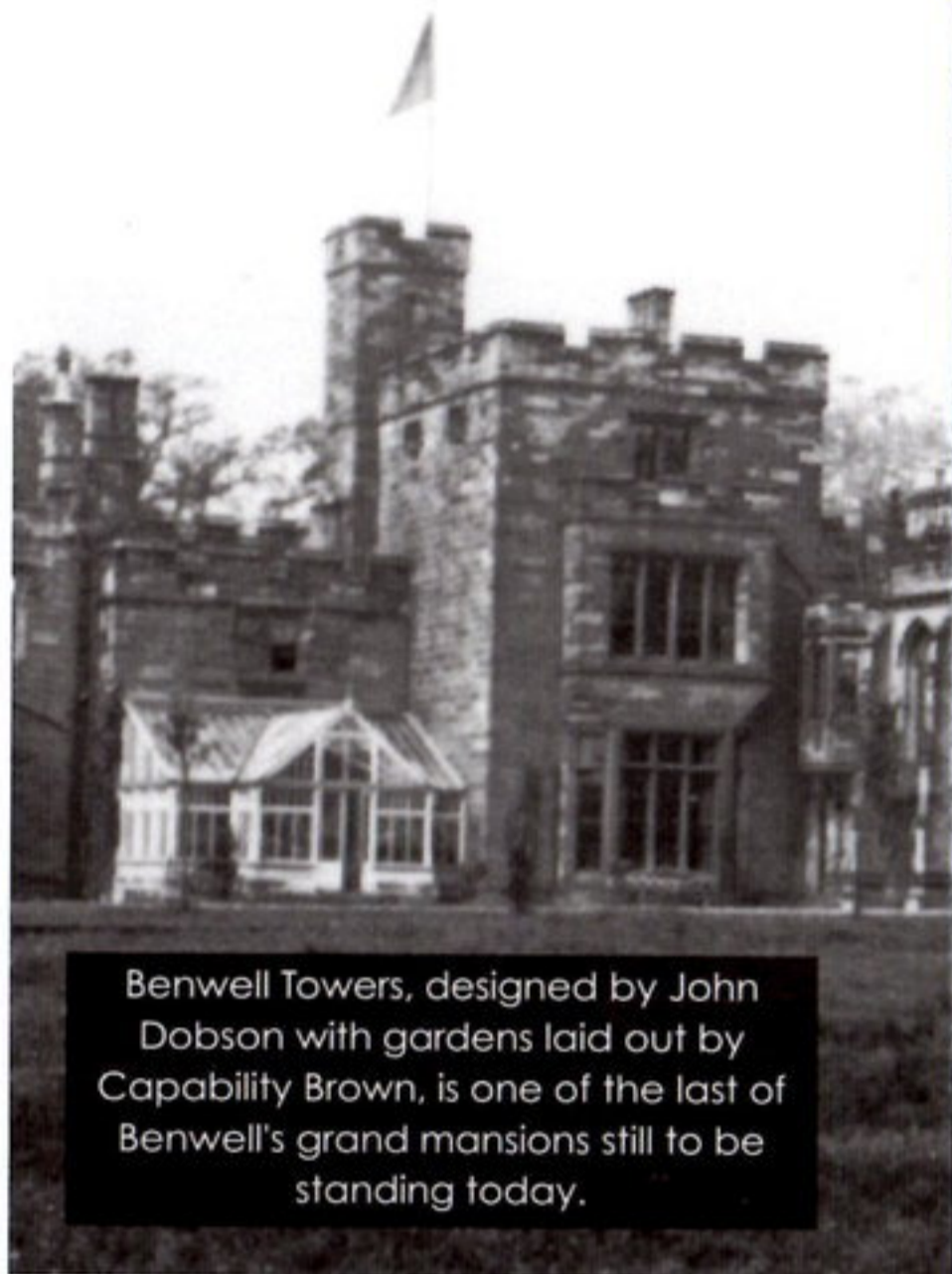
Also buried in this vault are Buddle's sister Ann who was his lifelong companion, and his nephew Robert Thomas Atkinson, son of Buddle's sister Eleanor and heir to Buddle's estate after his death. Next to it is a separate grave where lie his niece Ann Elizabeth Atkinson and her son Thomas Burnet.

John Sowerby

1808-1879

John Sowerby was a member of the wealthy and influential Sowerby family who had made their money out of glass manufacture. His major contribution was to develop large-scale production of glassware for a mass market. In 1852 he opened the huge Ellison Glassworks in Gateshead.

John Sowerby and his wife Annie are both buried at St James' in a grave originally topped with a white marble cross. They lived nearby at Benwell Towers from 1867 until John's death in 1879.



Benwell Towers, designed by John Dobson with gardens laid out by Capability Brown, is one of the last of Benwell's grand mansions still to be standing today.



John Sowerby



Anne Robson Sowerby

Walter Scott

1826-1910

Sir Walter Scott is not to be confused with the novelist Walter Scott, although he did own a large publishing works in Felling and is credited with being the first to publish Ibsen in English. Starting from humble beginnings, having arrived in Newcastle in 1848 to work as a mason on the building of the new Central Station, Scott became one of only a handful of genuinely self-made millionaires in Britain in the period before the Second World War. His business interests were extensive, including coalmining, steel, chemicals and railways. As a major civil engineer and building contractor, among his achievements were the building of the first underground electric railway in London and the Royal Station Hotel, the Catholic Cathedral and the Redheugh Bridge in Newcastle. Scott was also heavily involved in the provision of housing in the west end, both as a builder and as a landlord.

Scott lived at Bentinck House in Elswick. He was an active supporter and benefactor of St James' Church and other local organisations, serving as president of Benwell Cricket Club for example. There are several memorials to him at St James', including a family monument and memorial in separate parts of the graveyard and stained glass windows and plaques inside the church. A memorial service was held at St James' after his death in 1910 although he actually died in France and was buried there.

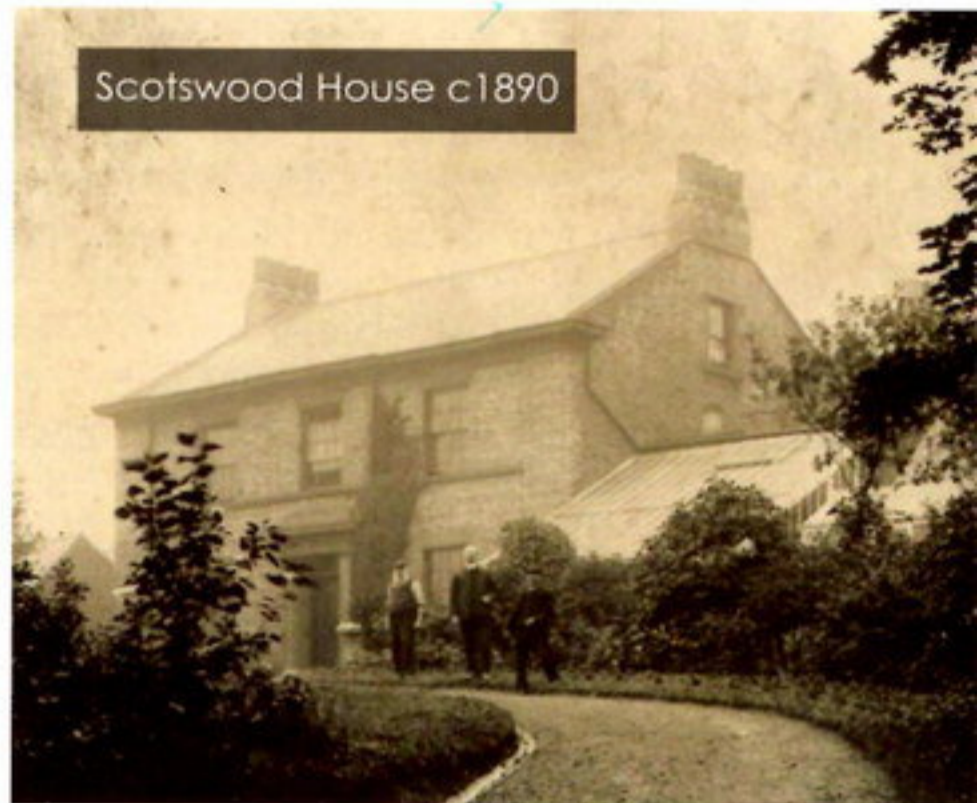


Caricature of
Sir Walter Scott
from
Newcastle
Weekly
Chronicle,
1899

The Grace Family

Two adjacent memorials at St James' are the burial places of seven members of the influential Grace family of Scotswood.

Nathaniel Grace (1780-1865) was the owner of the Northumberland Paper Mill of Nathaniel Grace and Co. on Scotswood Road. He lived at Scotswood House and was active in local affairs. He was a prime mover in the development of the Scotswood Bridge which was built just below his paper mill. Nathaniel Grace is buried in the graveyard together with his two wives Catherine (died 1842) and Maria (died 1877) and his great-nephew Herbert Wylam Grace (1860-1925).



Nathaniel's nephew William Grace (1818-1886) is buried at St James' in a second grave together with his two wives Jane (died 1876) and Mary (died 1918). William became a co-partner in the Scotswood Paper Mill, taking it over completely after Nathaniel's death. William lived in Scotswood Villa. His two sons, William Percy Grace and Herbert Wylam Grace, took over the business after his death. They retained the name of William Grace and Co but moved the business to Swalwell. The site of the paper mill in Scotswood was taken over by Adamsez.



The Graces were keen cricketers, and were probably distantly related to the famous W.G.Grace. Pictured here are Herbert Wylam Grace (centre with hat) and his son William Grace Grace (immediately behind him)

William Cochran Carr

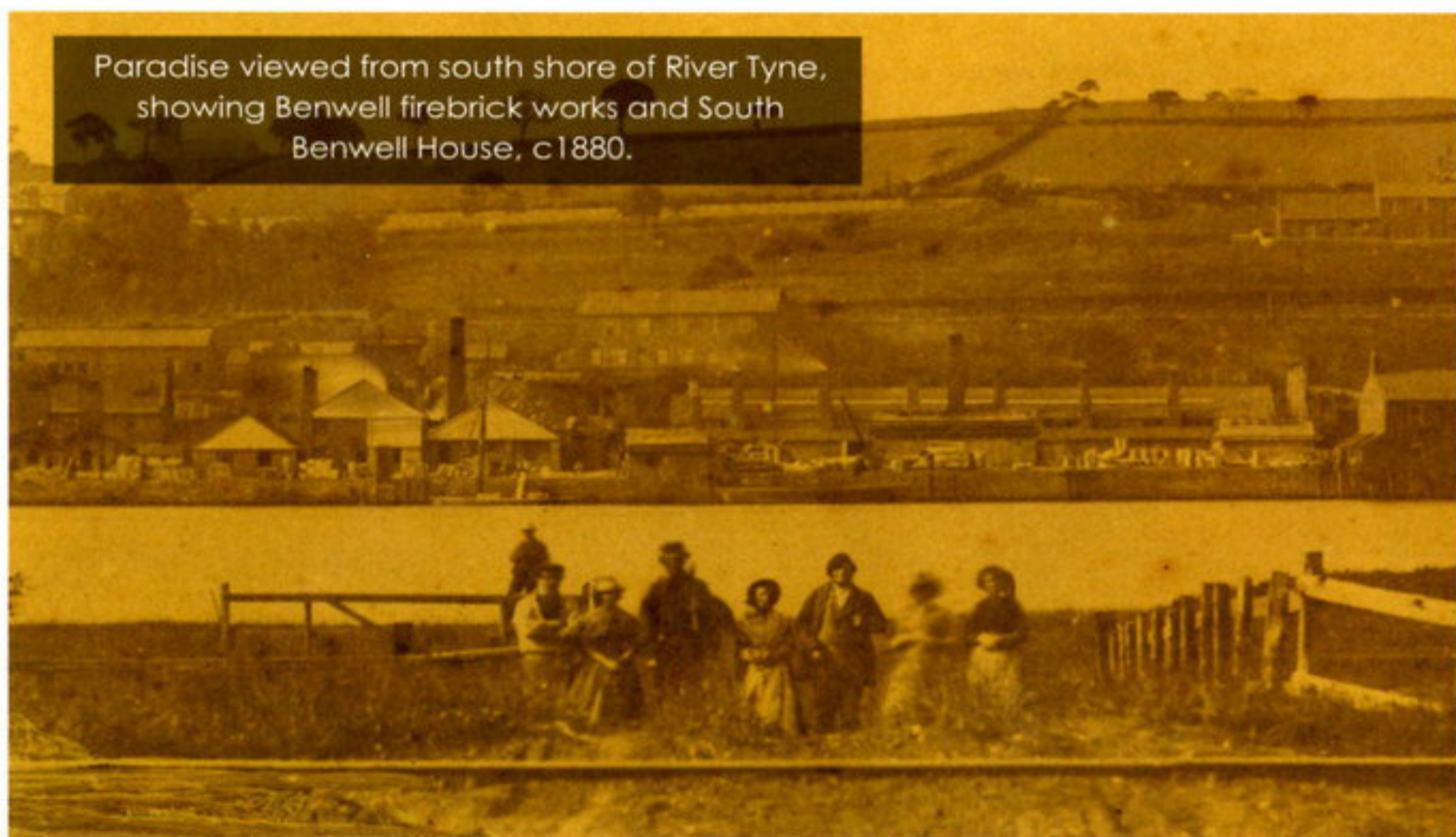
1815-1889

Cochran Carr was a man of humble origins who married the daughter of a market gardener. After starting as a brick manufacturer in Scotswood, he moved into other business activities. Benwell Low Colliery in Paradise had closed, but Cochran Carr began to mine fireclay there in the 1850s. By this time he also owned the Montagu Colliery in Scotswood and a large firebrick works in South Benwell near to the fireclay mine.

At the foot of the grave of William Cochran Carr at St James' is a memorial stone paid for by his employees and inscribed "in loving memory of their late and much respected employer".

For over 25 years from 1861 until the late 1880s, Cochran Carr lived in South Benwell House, a large house in wooded grounds situated at Paradise just north of Scotswood Road.

Paradise viewed from south shore of River Tyne, showing Benwell firebrick works and South Benwell House, c1880.



John Wood and Joseph Crass

Also buried at St James' are two victims of an accident in 1868 on board a wherry owned by Cochran Carr. Wood an engineer and Crass a fireman had just finished discharging a cargo of bricks at the Friars Goose chemical works when the wherry's boiler exploded. They are buried in the same grave but there is no monument to mark it.

William Isaac Cookson

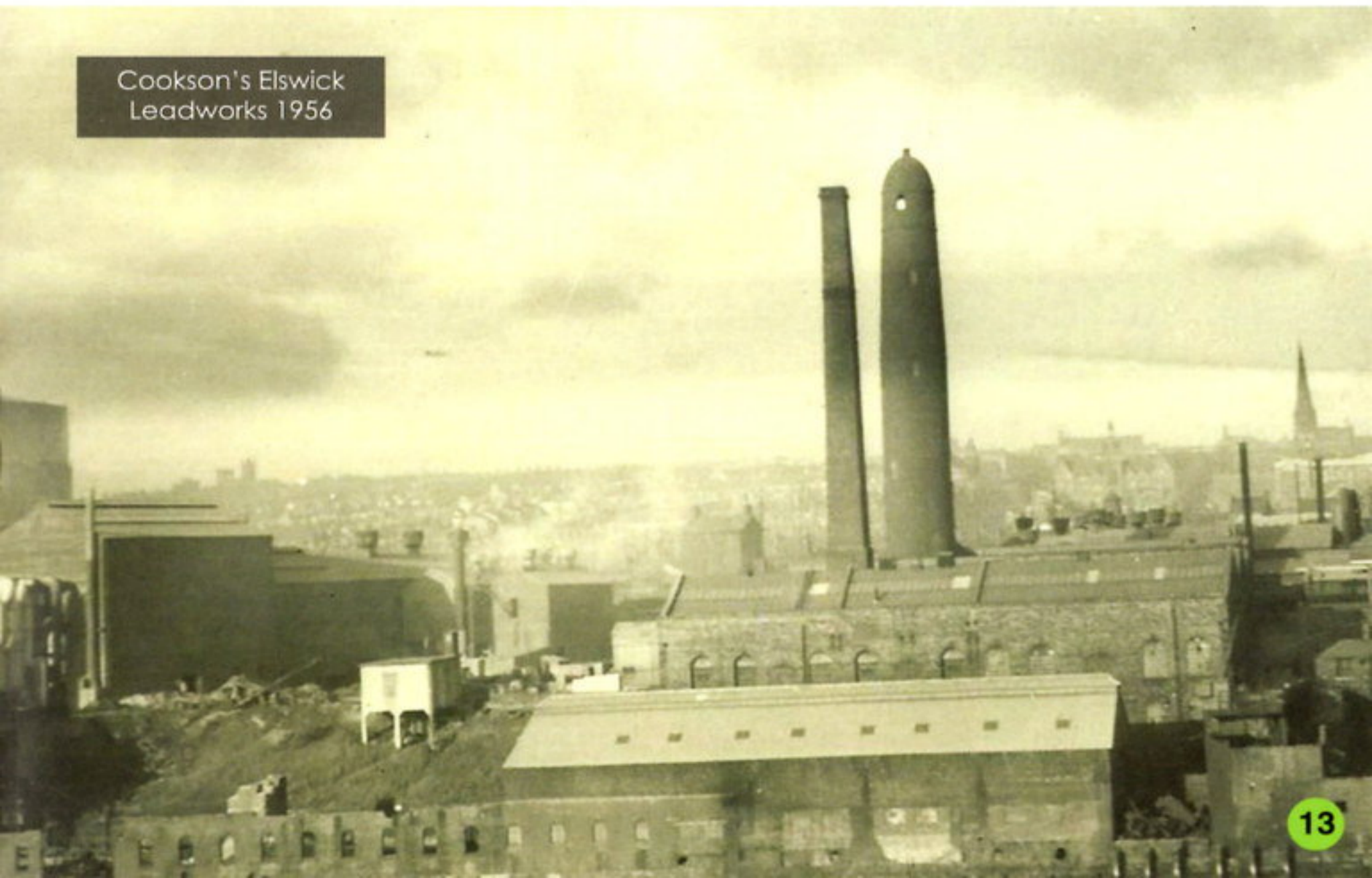
1812-1888

William Isaac Cookson was a member of one of Tyneside's most important families with extensive business interests ranging from banking and coal mining to glass and lead manufacture. Cookson also followed the family tradition of involvement in the politics of Newcastle, serving as Sheriff.

Cookson was a scientist as well as a businessman, having trained in the laboratory of Michael Faraday, one of the most influential scientists of his day who was responsible for a number of major discoveries in the fields of electromagnetism and electrochemistry. Although not in the same league, Cookson is also credited with several scientific inventions.

Cookson was a resident of Benwell, living at different times in Benwell Towers and another large mansion, Benwell Hall. His first wife Jane was the daughter of William Cuthbert who was a business partner of Cookson's father. Cookson is buried in a family vault topped by a massive stone slab in the graveyard at St James', along with Jane, his second wife Mary, and his eldest son William Bryan Cookson who died in 1859 at the age of 19.

Cookson's Elswick
Leadworks 1956



Bishop Lloyd

1844-1907

Arthur Thomas Lloyd was the third Bishop of Newcastle, serving from 1903 to 1907. The official bishops' residence was Benwell Towers, a large mansion on the other side of Benwell Lane near to St James'. This had previously been home to some of Tyneside's foremost families such as the Sowerbys and the Crawhalls. Bishop Lloyd had a close relationship with the parish church and chose to be buried there. There is also an elaborate memorial to Lloyd in St Nicholas Cathedral.

Benwell Towers was home to a further four bishops before being sold to the Mines Fire and Rescue Service in 1943. It later became a pub, a night club, and latterly the recording studio for the television programme *Byker Grove* which made Ant and Dec famous.



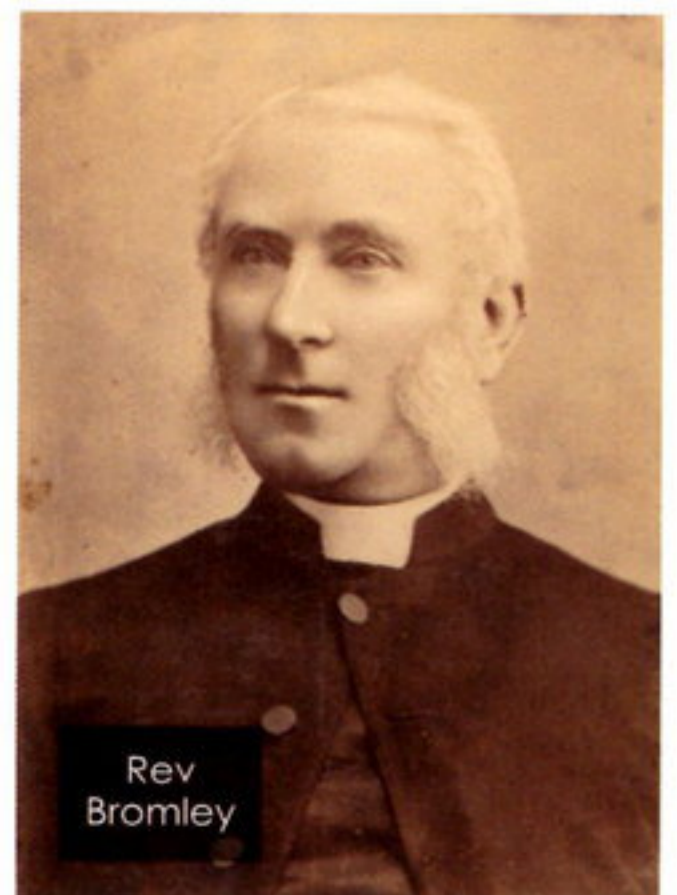
Bishop Lloyd

William Maughan and Francis Bromley



Rev Maughan

Maughan was the first vicar of St James', holding the post from 1843-1877. He was well connected, having married Mary Atkinson, the widow of Robert Atkinson who was the nephew and heir of John Buddle. The second vicar of Benwell, Francis Bromley, who served from 1878 to 1894, is also buried at St James'.



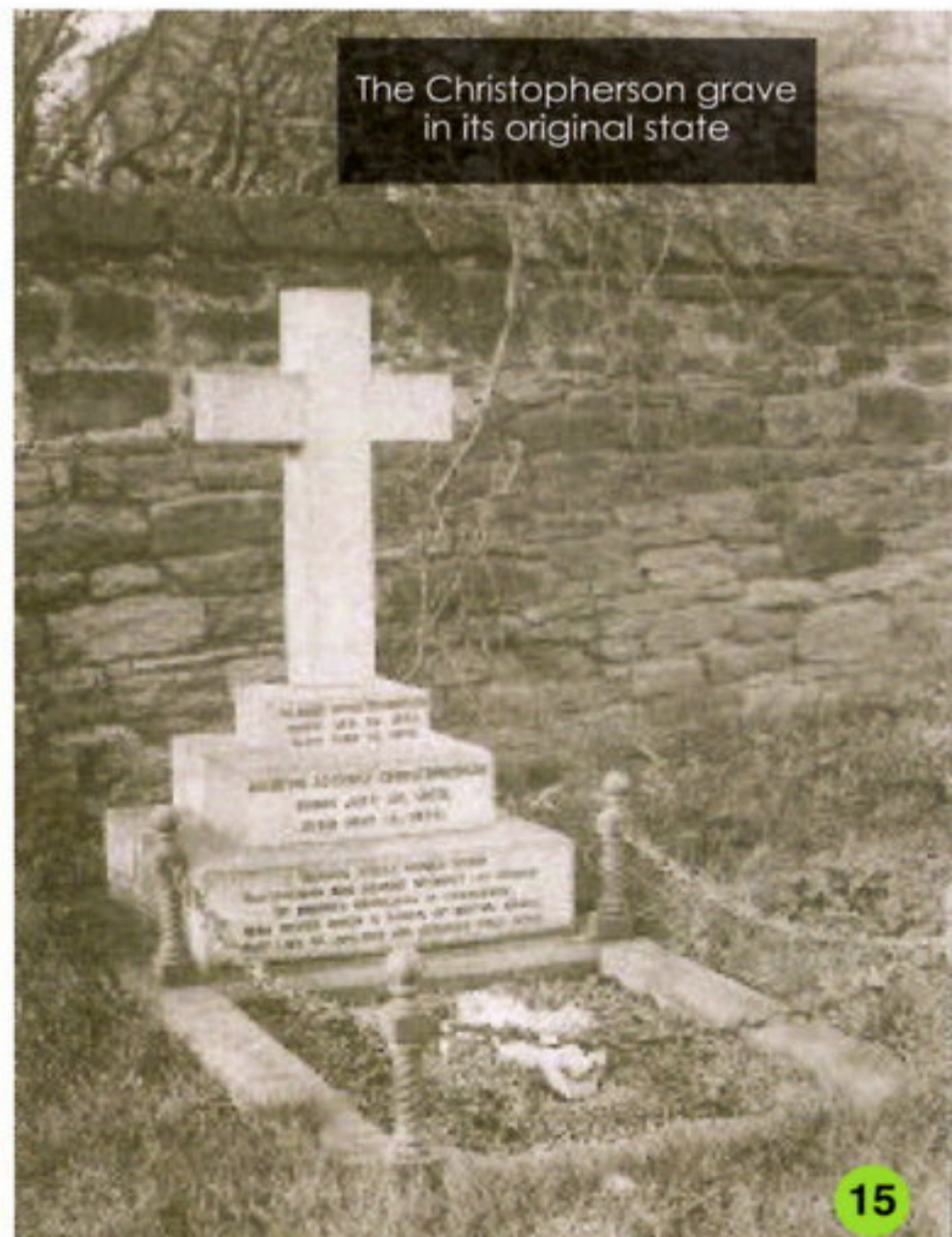
Rev Bromley

The Christopherson children

A high proportion of those buried at St James' during the 19th century and early 20th century were children. Between 1870-1879, 41% of all deaths were of infants of five years old or under and, between 1900-1909, it was an even higher proportion of 51%. In this latter period a shocking 48% of all burials were of infants under three years of age.

Epidemics of infectious diseases were a major cause of infant mortality. In 1832, the year that the graveyard was consecrated, cholera killed more than 300 people in Newcastle. Twenty years later, a worse cholera epidemic killed over 1,500 residents. Other killer diseases included measles, diphtheria, scarlet fever and tuberculosis.

The two oldest boys in this picture below, Denton Dockray Christopherson and Claude Christopherson, sons of the headmaster of the Royal Grammar School, died in 1879 from scarlet fever at the ages of five and four soon after this photograph was taken. They are buried at St James'.



Jack Palmer

1879-1928

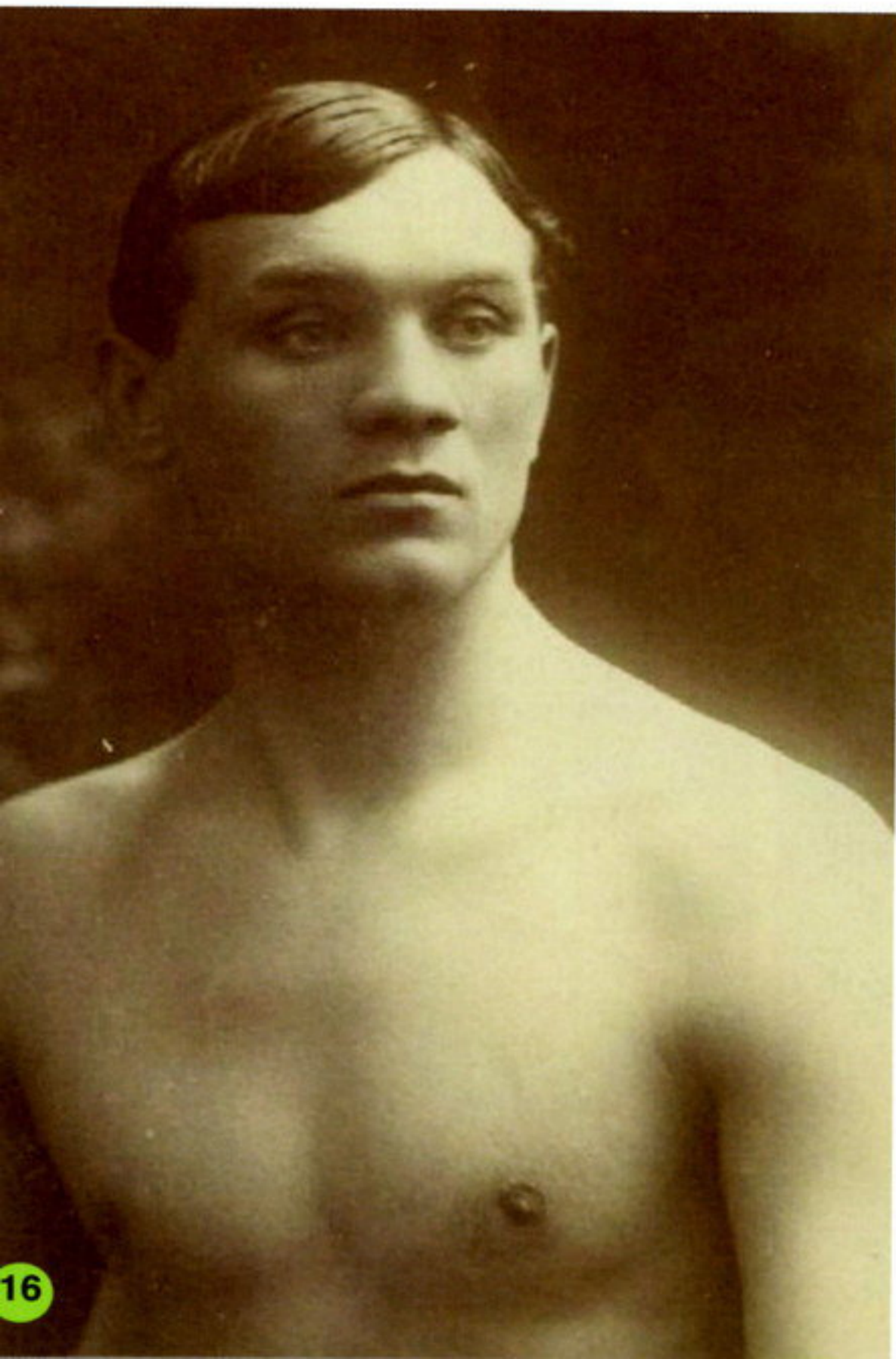
The sport of boxing was immensely popular in Britain a hundred years ago. There were thousands of professional fighters as this offered a chance to earn big money and an alternative to life down the pit or in a factory. There were 38 boxing rings in Newcastle in 1933, the most famous of which was St James' Hall opposite the football ground. Nearly all the world class boxers were American, however, which is what made Jack Palmer special.

Jack Palmer was born John Liddle in Benwell in 1879. A former miner, he turned professional at the age of 18. With powerful arms and big fists, he was described

as a "a tall good-looking well-groomed man with the face of an angel and the disposition of an axe murderer". By his early twenties Palmer was the middleweight champion of England. One of his most famous fights was with Charlie McKeever, the American middle-weight champion. Palmer fouled repeatedly until the crowd broke up the match and the referee declared it a "no contest".

Later he moved up to heavy-weight, becoming British champion from 1903 to 1906. He fought Tommy Burns for the world heavy-weight championship in 1908 but was knocked out.

After his death in 1928 Palmer was buried at St James', with a memorial stone inscribed with the words "erected by his many sporting friends as a token of esteem".



John Atkinson Pendlington

1861-1914

Pendlington was an engineer and businessman with a passion for cricket. He was the inventor of the Linear Method of cricket scoring which records the number of balls each batsman receives from each bowler and how many runs he makes from each. It was first demonstrated in 1893 at a game played in Scarborough between a local team and one from Australia. Less prone to error than traditional methods, it was initially adopted by the Australians and later used in all first-class cricket right up to the computer age.

Pendlington was a member of Benwell Cricket Club, the oldest cricket club in the west end. Founded in 1868, its first ground was on the site where Canning Street School stands today. During the 1880s it moved up the hill to the West Turnpike ground - on the site of the present-day Westgate Centre for Sport - where it remained until 1921 before moving to Fenham. At this period Benwell Cricket Club numbered among its presidents and vice-presidents several of the area's most wealthy and powerful local residents including the millionaire industrialist Sir Walter Scott, the bankers Thomas Hodgkin and John Pease, coal owner and entrepreneur Sir W H Stephenson, and Colonel W M Angus of the leather and rubber manufacturing dynasty.

During his career Pendlington held several senior managerial positions in companies in the north east and in London, going on to found the Tyneside Supply Company which later became the British Electrical and Manufacturing Company of Newcastle and London. At the time of his death in 1914 he lived in Fairholm Road in Benwell, and is buried at St James' in the Pendlington family grave



Down the mines

There were several coal mines in operation across the area during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Mining was a dangerous occupation. Injury and death caused by roof falls, pockets of gas, foul air, small explosions, flooding, falls, fires and broken equipment were common occurrences. Among those buried at St James' are several miners killed in pit accidents.

Most notorious was the major disaster at the Montagu Pit in Scotswood which killed 38 men and boys in 1925. However this was only a fraction of the numbers who died mining coal there over the years. Records show that this pit alone claimed the lives of at least 116 miners in total. There are four gravestones at St James' which illustrate the variety of hazards facing coal miners at the Montagu Pit.

Joseph Ryan was killed in 1891 when he took a naked light into an area where, unknown to him, there had been a recent gas escape. He was seriously injured in an explosion and died the following day leaving a wife and four young children.

Alfred Dickinson Stobbs, a coal cutter, was electrocuted in 1932.

William Sanderson, who worked as a rollywayman repairing the underground roads, was "crushed by tubs" in December 1933.

Charles William Harris, a filler loading coal into tubs, was killed by a fall of stone in 1935.

Also buried at St James' are William Simpson, a hewer cutting coal at South Benwell colliery, who was killed by a fall of "saggar clay" in 1878, and William Richardson, a deputy overman, who was killed in 1906 in a roof fall at the Charlotte Pit in Benwell, the last pit to close in this area.



Charlotte Pit, Benwell

BENWELL HOUSEHOLD COAL
EXCELLENT QUALITY PROMPT DELIVERY BEST GUARANTEED

Vickers Armstrong

Armstrong's Elswick shipyard 1885



William Taylor had worked at Armstrong's Elswick works for 27 years when he died in 1875. He lived in South Benwell, one of many thousands of men who poured down the steep terraced streets to the factory every morning.

The second half of the 19th century had seen a major transformation of the West Newcastle riverside into one of the world's most important industrial areas. The establishment of W.G. Armstrong and Co's works at Elswick in 1847, together with the existing firms of R. Stephenson and R. & W. Hawthorn, made this a major centre for heavy engineering, shipbuilding and armaments manufacture. By the 1880s these three companies employed almost 20,000 men, prompting the rapid urbanisation of an area that had previously been characterised by green fields.

Armstrong opened a second factory at Scotswood in 1899. By the time of the First World War the firm had taken over almost the whole three mile strip of land along the riverside from Elswick to Scotswood. The company merged with Vickers in 1927 to become Vickers-Armstrong. At their peak the two factories employed more than 20,000 people.

Farmers

During most of the 19th century Benwell was semi-rural, with several working farms in the area. Next to it was open countryside until well into the 20th century. It is not surprising therefore to find that there are several people from farming families buried in the graveyard. The records show burials from at least ten different local farms: Benwell Hill Farm, Thorn Tree Farm in Denton Burn, Condercum Farm, Benwell Park Farm, Silver Hill Farm, High Gowland Farm, Nine Acres Farm in Fenham, Benwell Farm, Fenham Farm, and Benwell West Farm.

These were not established local farming families who had tilled the land for generations, however, as the case of the Ferguson family who lived at Benwell West Farm from the 1890s illustrates. John Ferguson was born in the Rothbury area in c1841, the son of a farmer. By the age of 30 the census records him living in Kenton and working as an agricultural labourer, and ten years later he is working as a coal miner. A decade later he is recorded as a farmer at Benton Bridge Farm which was near Benton Bank in Heaton, and by 1901 he is at Benwell West Farm working as a dairy farmer with several employees. Here he stayed until his death in 1916. He is buried at St James' along with his first wife Jane.

This is the origin of the name of the present day Ferguson's Lane which led from Benwell Village to Ferguson's farm and dairy. Pictured below left is the farm, with Mrs Ferguson and her children, and on the right one of Ferguson's milk floats in Benwell Village.



Shopkeepers

By the end of the 19th century the rapid growth of housing across Benwell meant that Adelaide Terrace was already a busy shopping street with more than 40 different shops and a wide variety of goods on offer. It received a further boost in 1901 when the tram route along Elswick Road from the town was extended as far as St James' Church.



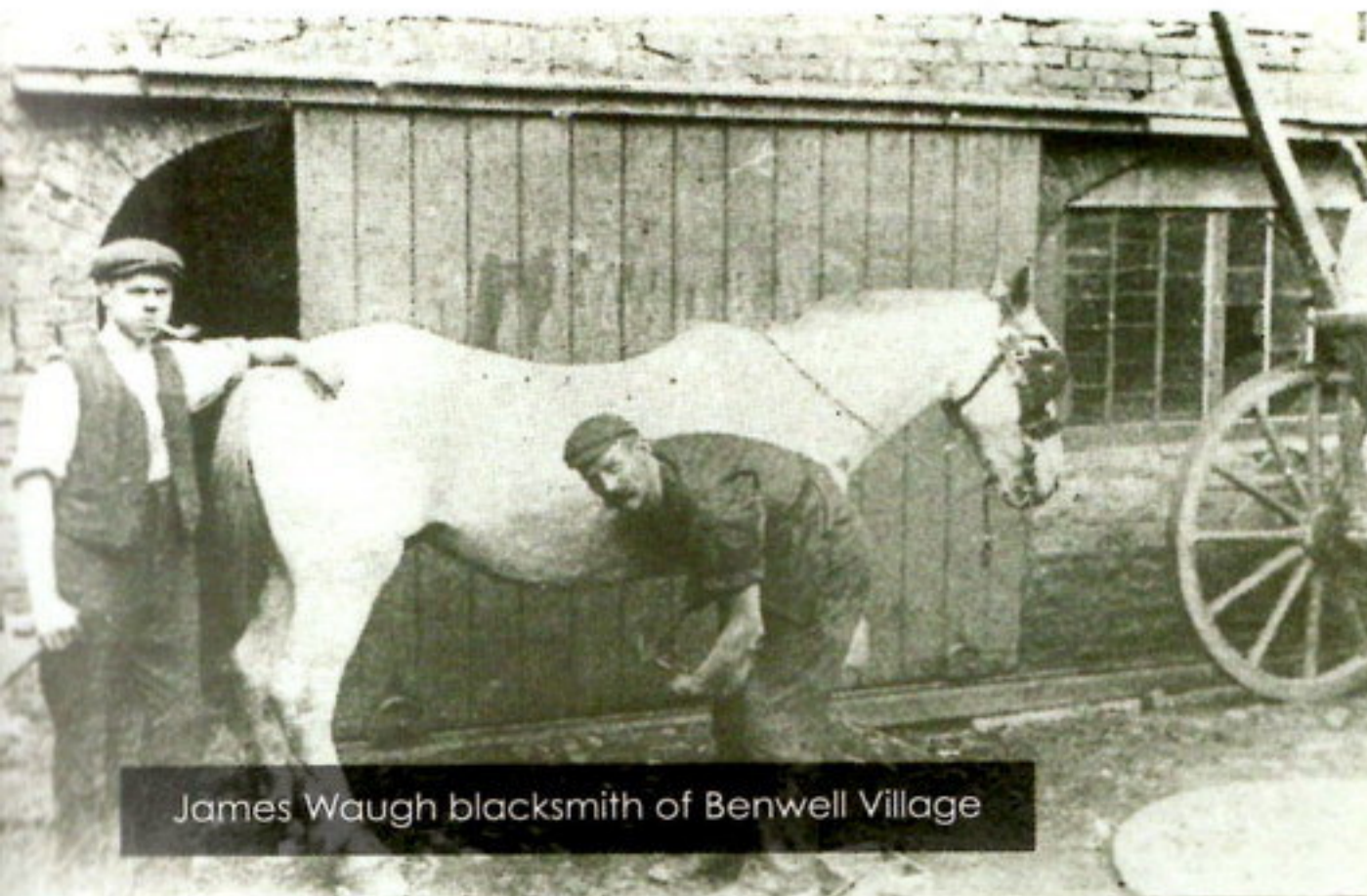
Adelaide Terrace tram terminus, c1902

Among those buried at St James' is Thomas Alderson, a draper with a shop at No 22 Adelaide Terrace. Alderson lived with his family in Milvain Avenue, Benwell, and died in 1931 at the age of 70. His memorial states that he is lovingly remembered by his four daughters Gertie, Flossie, Doris and Vera.

Blacksmith

James Waugh was the blacksmith in Old Benwell Village. The smithy was on the site later occupied by H&Q Motors. James, his wife Margaret, and two daughters Frances and Elizabeth, lived nearby in Thirlwell's Cottages. James was born in Benwell in c1880. His father John worked in various jobs including

a lead refiner and cartman, and the family lived in Oak Street. James started as a blacksmith at Benwell Colliery. He died in 1930 at the age of 50 and is buried at St James' together with his parents and his older brother John, but there is no memorial to mark the burial place.



James Waugh blacksmith of Benwell Village

The workhouse

In Victorian times institutions known as workhouses were created for those unable to support themselves because of illness, old age or other reasons. Here they were given food and lodgings in return for work. Newcastle's workhouse was opened in 1839 on a site later occupied by the General Hospital. This was in the north east corner of what was then Benwell parish.

The original graveyard attached to St James' Church was quite small, as this was seen as sufficient for an area with fewer than a thousand residents. The church worthies were quite put out when they realised that they were expected to accommodate burials from the workhouse as well, writing to the Board of Guardians to complain that "when provided it was never contemplated that the dead from a Work house for the whole poor of the Newcastle Union would be sent to it for inter-ment". Their claim that there were four times as many funerals of people from the workhouse as from the whole of the rest of the parish was over-stated, although in several years during the 1840s and 1850s deaths from the workhouse did account for over half of all burials at St James'. In 1857 St Nicholas Cemetery was opened behind the workhouse and, after this date, there were only occasional burials at St James' from the workhouse.

Among the large number of people buried from the workhouse were Edward Shield and Henry White, both of whom died in 1904. There are few visible memorials in the graveyard as the inhabitants of the workhouse were among the very poorest of local residents.

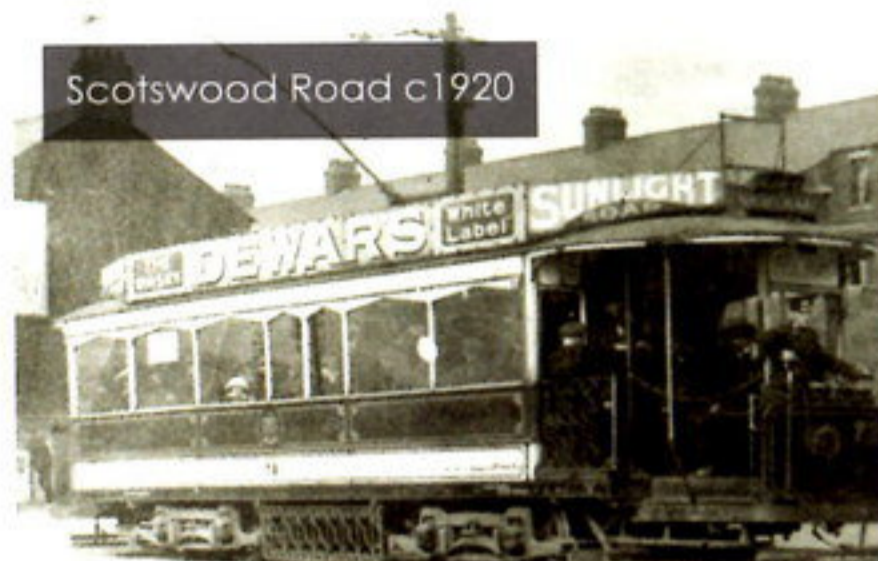


The workhouse building still stands on the site of the former Newcastle General Hospital today.

Dangerous journeys

Killed by a motor car

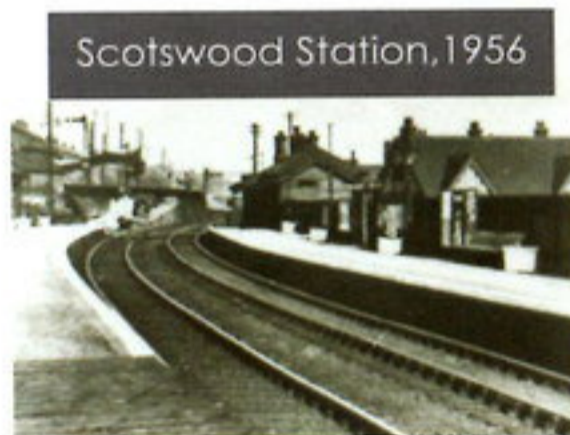
One of the more unusual gravestones at St James' records the death of Jane Blair "killed by a motor-car" in 1922. Jane, who had originally come from Shetland, lived in Maughan Street with her husband Samuel Blair, a steelworker, and her two sons. At the time of her death, Jane was aged 71.



The accident happened on Scotswood Road near to the Hydraulic Crane pub. The car driver (a confectioner from Leadgate) told the inquest that he had been travelling at about five or six miles an hour at the time. A verdict of accidental death was recorded.

Run over by a train

James Ord, a resident of Scotswood, died in an accident at Scotswood Station in 1885. He was a traveller for Messrs T Carver and Son, brick manufacturers in Scotswood. Ord was run over by a train while crossing the line to catch the 6.42 train to Newcastle



Thrown from a horse-drawn dray

Robert Coulter lived in Stanton Street and worked as a drayman for Newcastle Breweries. In October 1903 he was killed in an accident on Walker Road while driving to Wallsend in a horse-drawn dray with a load of beer. The horses suddenly bolted and Coulter was thrown off, later dying from his injuries. He is buried at St James' together with his infant son Ralph who died aged two days and his parents-in-law Elizabeth and George Barker.

Fallen from a tugboat

Matthew Cross was drowned in 1912 after falling from the steam tugboat Tom Perry owned by his father.

War deaths

Scattered across the graveyard, there are 40 memorials to people who died on, or as a result of, active service during war-time. These include 19 War Graves made from white stone and administered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the remainder being military deaths recorded on family headstones. Most of those commemorated in the graveyard did not die in the UK and therefore also have memorials in war cemeteries overseas.

There is no external war memorial for Benwell but inside St James' Church is to be found the war memorial for some of those who died during the First World War. This is carved in oak panelling in the baptistery.

Thomas Peacock

Thomas Peacock was awarded the Military Medal for gallantry in action during the First World War. He worked as a clerk at Armstrong Whitworth until September

1914 when he enlisted in the Northumberland Fusiliers. He served at home until July 1916 when he was transferred to the British Expeditionary Force in France where he was wounded in action. After being discharged from the Northumberland Fusiliers in October 1917, Thomas was granted a temporary commission in the Royal Flying Corps and, after undergoing training in the UK, he returned to France in August 1918 and was assigned to a squadron flying two-man Bristol fighters. Thomas was killed in action on 3rd October 1918 whilst flying with the RAF's 11 Squadron and is buried in France in Bagnoux British Cemetery. He is commemorated on the Peacock family memorial in St. James' graveyard.

In Memory of
Second Lieutenant
Thomas Peacock

MM

11th Sqdn., Royal Air Force who died on 03 October 1918 Age 20

Son of Elizabeth May Pears (formerly Peacock), of 77, Maria St., Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the late Henry Peacock.

Remembered with Honour
Bagnoux British Cemetery, Gezaincourt



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Joseph Edward Luck

Able Seaman Joseph Luck was lost at sea in June 1940 at the age of 33. He served on the aircraft carrier HMS Glorious during the Norwegian campaign. The United Kingdom and its allies had come to the support of Norway following the German invasion, but were finally forced to withdraw leaving the country under German occupation. HMS Glorious was part of a task force that included the flagship Ark Royal, charged with evacuating troops and equipment. Glorious was sunk by the German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau with the loss of more than 1,200 lives. The circumstances surrounding this tragedy are still a matter of dispute today.

Joseph Luck is pictured below in the back garden of the family home on Whickham View, Benwell. He is commemorated on the Naval Memorial in Plymouth, and his name is also inscribed on the family grave in Benwell together with those of his father and mother, Edwin Flowers Luck and Annie Luck, also pictured here.



Meet our ancestors

This is a guide to the graveyard at St James' Church, Benwell, one of the oldest churches in Newcastle. It introduces some of the people buried there. Benwell was once home to many of the richest and most powerful families on Tyneside, and a number of famous names can be seen around the graveyard. This was also an important coal mining area and the location of some of the region's major industries. Inside are the stories of just a few of the 12,300 local residents buried at St James' including pitmen, boatmen, soldiers, farmers, shopkeepers & inhabitants of the local workhouse.



Contact Details

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Published by St James' Heritage and Environment Group 2014

Supported by Make Your Mark

Series Editor: Judith Green

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Heritage &
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Local History Series

