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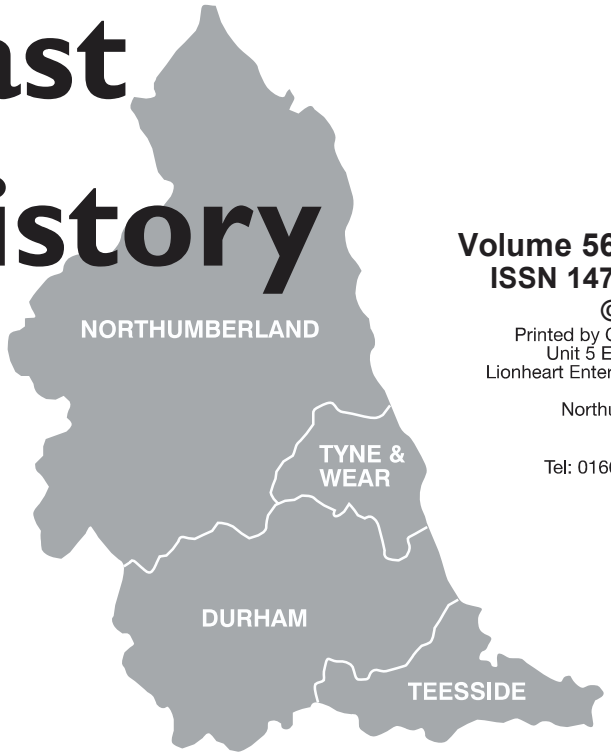

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The Land of Oak & Iron

Val Scully

Between Blaydon and Ryton, on the south bank of the Tyne, I live in the centre of a square mile that is so packed with rich and varied history, including unexpected international links, that it beggars belief. It was as a blow-in from Manchester forty years ago, stuffing envelopes with other volunteers in the Lit & Phil, [Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne] that I overheard the chance remark that alerted me to a hidden world. *A library for 18th century workers in Winlaton?* I can see Winlaton from my study window: it's on top of the escarpment on the other side of Blaydon Burn. The stream runs parallel to our street - Summerhill - on the final part of its route into the Tyne. Where apparently there had been a brickworks.

I was a full-time English teacher then: there was no time to do any real research, and by the time I retired, all I wanted to do was be outside, away from desks. I volunteered to help in the gardens at Gibside, four miles away as the crow flies, and the rest is history.

Novels and the move into local history

When I decided to write *My Name is Eleanor* (2015) it was with the aim of creating an accessible novelisation of the story of Mary Eleanor Bowes: the tale of one woman's 'scandalous' life, for which read abuse, resilience, survival and ultimate legal triumph. But the background research began to interest me far more than I expected. I knew nothing about industrial history, and I didn't want to romanticise the doting father, coal czar George Bowes, if he had been a particularly exploitative mine-owner. So it was

reassuring to read relevant sections in *The Making of an Industrial Society*[1] and anecdotal evidence from *A Fighting Trade*[2] which enabled me to give a superficial impression, stemming from the stewardship of his mother, of the Bowes family as employers whose treatment of their workers and tenants garnered respect. The miners, estate labourers, farmers and tenants play a vital role in *My Name is Eleanor*, and it was important to portray the lives of the people on whose efforts these great estates were built. An early encounter with graffiti on a newly excavated planting plate in the walled garden had been an epiphany for me. Naïve as I was: real people with no machinery did all this digging and building! By hand! I was struck by the loyalty that the workers and tenants displayed when Eleanor was at her most desperate: they sent secret food parcels to her London hiding place.[3] When her abusive husband abducted her from London and brought her to Streatlam Castle in Durham, over 300 miners lit fires around the building to try to prevent him escaping in the night with his captive before the London constables could get there.[4]

I was hooked now: social history was fascinating! And what's more, my next novel would take me into a period I was already interested in. My first proper job, aged 18, was in Manchester Central Library in St Peter's Square. When I learnt what had happened at Peterloo it changed my political thinking completely. While I was finishing the book, I was brewing on how to tell the story of Gibside from the death of Mary Eleanor in 1800 to the creation of the Bowes Museum in the 1870s. My mind was on the wider picture, and Peterloo had to play a major part. In debtors' prison, Stoney Bowes had sired five more children. When he died, they and their poor mother were released onto the streets of Victorian London, never to be heard of again. I would give one of them a fictional life and use her as a vehicle for the social history I wanted to portray: *Molly Bowes* was born.

By marvellous synchronicity, I'd been invited to get involved in the Land of Oak & Iron project. This was a Heritage Lottery Funded Landscape Partnership set up by the charity Groundwork North East & Cumbria 'to conserve, enhance and celebrate the unique heritage of the

Derwent Valley'. The project had been triggered by excavations of the Crowley Dam.[5] This was the first I'd heard about the vast ironworks that had once been centred on Winlaton. I joined Winlaton & District Local History Society and learnt about Crowley's from Susan Lynn, whose piece on the subject was published in this Journal.[6] The rich natural resources of the lower Derwent Valley and the fast-running river made it an ideal area for developing industries, and the advent of Ambrose Crowley and his ironworks in 1691, probably sponsored by Sir William Bowes[7], marked the beginning of the industrial revolution in the area. But it also revolutionised its social and political culture. Crowley was a Quaker; though sadly his beliefs didn't stop him being heavily involved in the slave trade.[8] By providing housing, medical care and pensions for his workmen and their families, as well as education for their children, Crowley helped gave birth to a radically different society which had profound social repercussions that echo down the centuries.

There was so much astonishingly diverse history in this small area that I set up a website, *The Land of Oak & Iron Local History Portal*, to record and share the resources I was finding. It soon became clear that what was going on in the valley in the 19th century was far too fascinating to be kept in the background of the novel. The lightbulb moment was when I heard that in the wake of Peterloo, there had been an enormous demonstration on the Town Moor.[9] The contingent from Winlaton was led by a young blacksmith called Joe Cowen.[10] Not only can I see Winlaton from my window, the site of Cowen's brickworks is a few yards from my front door and the grounds of Stella Hall are over the back fence. From that point on, Molly was destined to live in one of the pair of 1852 cottages that now formed our house.

My heroine's story arc suddenly became clear. In the chaos of Peterloo, her daughter would vanish. She would make her way to the North-East in search of help from the powerful family to whom she believed she was related. Because she was destined to be involved with John and Josephine Bowes' creation of a museum for the people of Durham, I would find a

way of making her story move between the cultured world of Newcastle's artistic and literary society and the lives of the miners, ironworkers and chartists of Blaydon and Winlaton. Oak and iron were perfect metaphors for the people of this area, and it seems remarkably prescient that in *My Name is Eleanor*, George Bowes wishes for his daughter 'a heart of oak and a will of iron.'

The research took me in all kinds of directions: it was like spinning plates. Along the way, I had other, darker epiphanies. One was the Stargate pit disaster, in which 37 miners died, many of them from Winlaton. What had caused it? Candles? Why were miners taking candles into a pit, especially when it had been closed for 72 hours? Surely they all had lamps by then - it was over ten years since they'd been invented!

And they'd had to buy the candles themselves.[11]

Crowley's Ironworks

I learnt an enormous amount from Men of Iron, which is not only the definitive book about the Crowley Ironworks, but also an important text in the social history of Western Europe. Last published in 1962 by the Edinburgh University Press, a copy was hard to find, even in local libraries. The Land of Oak & Iron project had awoken local interest in the unique industrial heritage of the Derwent Valley, so I decided to try to get the book back into print. I tracked down the late author's sons, who agreed to give us formal permission to publish a new edition of their father's book. Dr William Lancaster, who had delivered the inaugural Joseph Cowen lecture presented by Explore Lifelong Learning at Newcastle's Lit & Phil on 19th September 2018, agreed to be the speaker at the book's launch in April 2019.

It wasn't until we were subsequently visited by Czech film director Stan Neumann that I fully appreciated the international status of Crowley's: he was working on what became a four-part Franco German documentary called *A History of the European Working Class*.[12]

I learnt that Swedish iron-master Reinhold Angerstein (1718-1760)

had written an account of his 1754 visit to Crowley's - [13] it was a revelation to find in it a diagram of the Gibside column under construction. Thanks to the cash books in DCRO[14], we know that local carpenter Joseph Palliser built the scaffolding and shed at the top for the use of the sculptor, followed by the old lady who gilded Liberty. To make a more accessible version of the Crowley story and throw more light on the Derwent Valley in the 18th century, I asked permission to use Susan Lynn's essay along with excerpts from Angerstein to create an A4 illustrated book simply called *Crowley's*.

Place & Population

It was striking to this novice how much the geology had affected the industrial and social evolution of the area. Sixteen miles from the sea, the river Derwent enters the Tyne at Derwenthaugh. To the east, Whickham stands high above, looking over the steep-sided valley of the Derwent and across the Tyne. To the west, Winlaton perches on another steep escarpment 450 feet above Blaydon, down in the Tyne Valley, where the river is tidal as far as Ryton Willows. Tyneside coal seams were exposed up there on the hills. The name Blaydon (black hill) was probably originally used to mean the Winlaton escarpment, because down by the river, there was no Blaydon on the outside bend of a tidal river. There were only a few keelmen's cottages on the 1670 map.[15]

In the valley of the Derwent, Gibside grew rich on its perfect, accessible 'rounds' of coal and the Crowleys expanded their business until the Winlaton Mill works were the largest ironworks in Europe. It wasn't only the mineral wealth of the valley that determined its future but also its topography, which necessitated the development of wagonways to get the coal and iron to the Tyne and thence to London for the best prices.

This area was naturally rich, not only in coal, wood and water, but also in its mix of people from all over continental Europe: Romans, Vikings, Germanic Anglo-Saxons, Irish, Scots, Belgian ironworkers brought from Liege by the Crowleys, German swordmakers who mysteriously settled in Shotley Bridge at the same time; and French immigrants fleeing religious

persecution. From outlying rural areas and other parts of Britain people moved here for more reliable and better-paid work. Potential employment in the mines and factories drew people from Scotland, Ireland and the Midlands. The building of the railways brought an influx of Irish families fleeing the famine. Throughout the post-Reformation persecutions, Stella had drawn hundreds of Irish families to a Catholic enclave under the protection of the Tempests and Widdringtons. From the 1830s, more came because plenty of work was available as the Tyne was deepened and straightened and industry blossomed. Much of this was down to the Cowen family, evolved directly from the Crowley tradition.

What could have been a parochial, singularly blessed valley had developed unexpected links with the rest of the world: through the migration of workers and refugees, political activity, inventions, trade, visits of eminent European craftsmen, architects, artists and musicians to Gibside and Axwell Hall. This mix gave a stimulating freshness to the evolution of the area's folk culture. The environment of relative paternalism represented by wealthy local employers such as the Crowleys, the Bowes, the Claverings and the Cowens meant that the working classes were in a better position to move up the social ladder: local labourers learnt from European craftsmen and immigrants, notably the Belgians and Germans. Clever working-class boys were sent to Craiggy's school in Crawcrook, established by Sir Henry Liddell and John Simpson, two prominent local coal owners, to learn about geology, mathematics and civil engineering, which would directly lead to the foundation of the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers.[16]

Bill Lancaster's essay, 'The Lower Derwent Valley and the Making of the Modern World' had only been available on the Portal. In 2021, in the build-up to Glasgow hosting COP26, I read Peter Stark's essay 'North East England and the Climate Crisis: from cause to effect'.[17] So we put the two together and published an accessible illustrated book called *Releasing the Genie of Coal: The Lower Derwent Valley, the Great Northern Coalfield and the Climate Crisis.*

Legends

The next book we chose to create was *Tales of Derwentdale*, which had originally been set down in 1902 by Satley's James William Fawcett. Researching and writing a memoir of the extraordinary Fawcett, whose memory had been preserved in no small part by 'Red Ray' Thompson of Consett, proved fascinating and very surprising, taking another gifted local lad - a linguistic prodigy - to Egypt, Malta and Australia, even Khartoum in the close company of Lord Kitchener.

To give children easy access to their heritage, Roly Veitch, a local historian, composer and musician, had the idea of putting together a book and CD for schools, using one of the available community grants from the Land of Oak & Iron. Roly chose which songs he wanted to include, and together we wrote some text aimed at children aged 10-15 to explain and illustrate the history behind the lyric, which was printed on the opposite page. A CD of the songs would be included, along with a poster and some online resources such as links to audio-visual materials. In 2019, a copy of *A Legend Evermore* was offered free to every school in the Land of Oak & Iron: a class set was made available for loan.

Gibside Workers

Since I found that graffiti on a newly excavated planting plate in the walled garden on my first gardening shift at Gibside, I'd been aware of the generations of graft that built the place, literally as well as financially. The question of who those workers were had preoccupied me. The long-neglected estate had been taken over incrementally by the National Trust in the last decades of the twentieth century, following almost a hundred years of neglect after the death of John Bowes. Covid restrictions brought an opportunity. My thoughts about Gibside had long since cohered around the story of the workers – now was the time to research them properly. George 'Glory' Bowes erected his golden statue to British Liberty in 1757, at the height of his power and influence. He collected fine art, bred the finest racehorses and brought world-famous musicians,

architects and landscape designers to his estate. Local workers would have been employed to plaster the walls on which the pictures hung, build the stages for the outdoor operas, execute the designs for what became one of the finest landscape gardens of the Georgian era. The place was and is a lasting testament to hard graft: the miners who gouged the coal out of the ground, the workmen who moved huge weights of earth, the carpenters, stonemasons, gardeners, servants, the men and women, the skilled and the unskilled, the craftsmen and the labourers. And their families, generations of whom lived and worked on this singularly permeable estate, bounded only by rivers, roads and hahas. The history of Gibside is central to the history of the Derwent Valley and all the settlements around the edges of the estate. It was shaped, along with land use by the geology. Mining, the transport systems developed to get the coal to market, the coming of the Crowley ironworks, the influx of people from elsewhere, the arrival of the navvies who built the Derwent valley railway, lived in turf huts and poached rabbits from across the river.[18]

A People's History of Gibside (2021) began as a lockdown project. Records of the estate's history are fragmented, the evidence scattered to the four winds because of the nature of the human story that governed its fate. The paybills for 1752 give us details of the work done by 148 estate workers. It seems the wages paid at Gibside were above the going rate.[19] The few surviving accounts ledgers had been laboriously transcribed for Margaret Wills' seminal book[20], and from them we learn the names of workers: William Dodgson, the bricklayer who built the walled garden in 1734-6; Richard Stephenson, the talented young stonemason who carved the urns for the roof of the Orangery but died before he could be paid - his father had signed for his wages[21]. Joseph Palliser the joiner, who, like many craftsmen, was succeeded by his son; the plasterers who laboured for Swiss stucco artist Danieli.

Politics in the Derwent Valley

Things I'd referenced in the background of the two novels could now be

explored more fully: the French Revolution of 1789 had sent shockwaves through Europe: how had they been felt in the Derwent Valley? Devotion to the Hanoverian monarchy was intense among the ironworkers, who were thriving and clannish in their uniquely protected social order:[22] As long as those Royal Navy contracts kept rolling in, the establishment was supported and its stability robustly defended. The widespread ritual burning of an effigy of the 'traitor' Tom Paine was embraced with particular ferocity in the Derwent Valley.[23]

The keelmen, whose employment and way of life were increasingly being threatened, were traditionally of the opposite persuasion. While the Crowley workmen were 'noted for their strong high-Tory principles… the keelmen in Swalwell and the neighbourhood were adherents of the 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'.[24]

The Napoleonic Wars brought increased prosperity to the ironworkers: there was great demand for chains and anchors as well as nails and weapons. 1815 brought a dramatic slump in orders and massive social hardship rapidly ensued. 'And in the iron trade great distress prevailed among Crowley's workmen at Winlaton and Swalwell. Soup kitchens were established in the villages and hundreds of workmen were employed on the roads at a shilling a day.' Desperate men took desperate measures and it must have been a shocking day for a community who for so long had administered their own justice when in July 1816 a court for the trial of delinquents at Crowley's iron works was opened for the first time at Swalwell.[25] The civil unrest that had begun around the time of the French Revolution had been exacerbated by widespread unemployment after the Napoleonic Wars, crop failures, the Peterloo massacre and related draconian law-enforcement, the New Poor Law and the continuing refusal of the British establishment to reform parliament.

Gibside became obliquely associated with Chartism. In 1819, the year before the 10th Earl died, the Peterloo Massacre had caused a surge of

outrage, radicalisation and increased activism across the country. 'The men of Winlaton were ardent and active politicians. Under the old regime, the ironworkers were noted for their strong high-Tory principles - any meeting held in the village calling for reform in Church or State, would have been for the promoters a dangerous proceeding. But about the beginning of the present century a change seems to have taken place in the political sentiments of the ironworkers of Winlaton. For at the first public meeting held in the open air at Newcastle, on the Parade Ground in Percy Street, October 11th, 1819, Crowley's Crew were present in great numbers, and Mr. Thomas Hodgson of Winlaton was one of the speakers.

Crowley's Crew on that occasion seems to have spread terror; for in a letter from the Mayor of Newcastle to the then Home Secretary, he states that "seven hundred men who came from a village about three miles distant were prepared with arms to resist the civil power".

'It matters little whether the village referred to by the Mayor was Winlaton or Swalwell, for at both of these villages, arms were manufactured by the workmen, to protect themselves against what they considered to be the actions of a despotic government… The Winlaton Chartists, more active and daring than their brethren, were active in preparing for punitive measures, and occupied every leisure moment in the manufacture of thousands of "caltrops," (an iron-pronged instrument for the annoyance of cavalry). The caltrop was better known among the workmen as the "craa-foot." Pike-heads were made in great numbers and sold to the Chartists in other places for 1s. 6d. a piece'.[26]

Chartists had adopted as their symbol the red Cap of Liberty worn by French revolutionaries. It was known across the nation that the headquarters of North-Eastern Chartism were in Winlaton. Not only did Gibside's Statue to British Liberty hold the Cap of Liberty and Staff of Maintenance; oak staffs had become another symbol of the English Chartists. It seems Lang Jack and his colleagues helped themselves to Gibside saplings for their making. 'At a meeting in Newcastle on 15th May 1832, Charles Larkin expanded into a howl of defiance against the throne

and the aristocracy that echoed and re-echoed all over the kingdom. A forest of hands were uplifted in imitation of the speaker, and in solemn cadence the vast multitude enunciated that memorable vow, "In these principles I will live and die." Scarcely had the hands disappeared when a forest of oak saplings was uplifted, and remained there for some minutes, amidst profound yet most significant silence'.[27]

At Gibside it seems the estate workers and tenants were well cared for by their benevolent and beloved employer who had provided secure work throughout the Napoleonic wars: 'Few places for good keeping could equal Gibside during the lifetime of the late Earl. About 30 men were employed all the summer season on mowing the lawns in the pleasure grounds and the numerous green drives through the woods'.[28] There was plenty of work for builders and plasterers while the hall was being dramatically altered by the removal of the top floor and the addition of a battlemented parapet.

This paternalistic idyll abruptly came to an end with the death of John Bowes in 1885: Gibside entered a state of initially managed decline and the generations of loyal estate workers mostly moved out into the real world. (Except the Cheesemans, whose home and duties as curators of Paine's Palladian Chapel continued for another hundred years.)

In 1907, a row broke out between the occupants of the hall and their working-class neighbours that would have been previously unthinkable. Victor Grunhut, a social-climbing solicitor from North Shields, was renting the Hall and enjoying hobnobbing and hunting. He did not want 'the people' to be wandering around his estate and staring in at the windows, so he tried to stop access. The row that broke out in the local papers was an absolute hoot because of the wit of the unimpressed and defiant locals. Grunhut complained to his landlord, the Earl of Strathmore, and the case went to court, leading to a mass trespass which made the national press. The story of the Gibside Trespass Case is beautifully told by Helen Macfarlane, and you can read it in *A People's History of Gibside*.[29]

The Depression

After WW1, a curious craze for historical pageants began to get a grip on Great Britain. Some were planned with a political agenda in mind - especially true in the 1920s, a time of great political unrest. After the General Strike, precipitated by the miners' lockout of 1926, there was terrible hardship, especially in mining areas. In 1929, the then Prince of Wales visited the area, and was photographed 'trudging through the snow at Winlaton yesterday during his tour of mining towns and villages in the stricken Durham coalfield. His visit came as a surprise, but everywhere he received what a miner described as 'a reet welcome'. He talked with workless men and careworn women of their experiences in the struggle against hunger and he examined with keen interest and sympathy the domestic conditions in some of the worst quarters'.[30]

The national Conservative Party was deeply unpopular, but local Conservative organisations were more successful at retaining support, particularly by having low membership fees, putting on social events and selling cheap beer in their club premises! The Blaydon Conservative Party's Divisional Unionist Association, who mounted the Gibside Pageant of 1928, had apparently attracted a crowd of nearly five thousand to a rally two years previously, in the midst of the 1926 strike. One speaker later remarked that *'it was certainly a stimulating sight to see a great gathering such as that in the heart of what one might call, from a political point of view, a somewhat enemy country*'.[31]

On August Bank Holiday Monday 1928, 12,000 people entered Gibside to watch 600 performers enact uplifting scenes from the history of these islands. Some might have slipped away before the politicians took the stage at 4.30pm, but no doubt some will have eagerly returned to their seats to be inspired by fine words or simply to hear the results of the draws for the Lucky Prize Draw or the Pig! Either way, the Journal and North Star account tells us that the grounds of Gibside soon rang to a dire warning: *'Socialism Would Mean Slavery!'*

Brickworks

One of the sources for the Gibside book was unpublished work by Peter Davison of Sunniside. We corresponded by letter and as soon as I saw his handwriting, I realised he was the writer of *Brickworks of the North-East*, a handwritten marvel of which only 100 copies had been made in the 1980s by Gateshead library. Its 300 pages of A4 contained detailed accounts, descriptions and drawings all done with Wainwright levels of art and precision. When he realised that the closure of mines in the 1980s was resulting in the loss of the myriad attached small-scale brickworks, Peter had toured the north-east on his motorbike, learning about working conditions as well as industrial practices from the employees.

In 2022, I asked him whether he'd allow me to make a new edition to raise funds for Path Head Water Mill, at the top of our street, where the paths are lined with Cowen's bricks. Brick enthusiasts, of whom there are many, were thrilled and I was swamped with orders. One of them, Chris Tilney of Consett, offered to build a feature wall of heritage bricks at the mill, using local bricks, all with their beautiful stamps facing out. This is now a star attraction at the mill and regular Brick Swap events take place there, attended by enthusiasts from as far away as Torquay!

The mill was saved from dereliction in 1994, when Gateshead Council sold it to the Vale Mill Trust, which had been set up by Trevor Underwood, initially to renovate a mill in Jesmond Dene. I thought the story of how Trevor and his son and their army of volunteers had rebuilt a ruin into a working water mill ought to be preserved, so using his notes and newspaper cuttings, I pieced together the story and then interviewed his son Ben, publishing *Path Head Water Mill* in 2022.

Pit Villages

That same year, John Boothroyd, the Ryton historian who had written an introduction for the Brickworks book, asked for help in making a new edition of *Addison: The rise and fall of a pit village 1864-1963*. A Category D village between Blaydon and Ryton, Addison was demolished

in 1958. It was written by Nan Smith, who grew up there, and had last been published by Bernicia Books in 1991. The history of the village, still a cherished memory for many, is more than just statistics in the Coal Company's books. Side by side with the maps, tables and photographs of coal mining, Nan had recorded her own personal reminiscences of life in the village, along with testimony from others with similar wistful memories.

The success of the re-publication of this book led to an approach from Harry Watson, whose father's 1997 book, *Clara Vale: the story of a pit village* was similarly in need of a new edition. Both books, published under the aegis of the thriving Ryton Local History Society, now sell steadily.

The Wheel of Time

My interest in the area around our house had been ignited in the Lit & Phil way back in 1988, and ever since then I had been learning, collecting books and pamphlets, references, anecdotes, photographs and maps. By 2023, I felt it was time to write it all up. It was all connected: everything fell into place.

The legacy of Crowley's doctrine of workers' rights, education, solidarity and mutual support meant that in the troubled times that came after the Napoleonic Wars, when employment slumped and the residual company of Crowley and Millington broke apart, young Joseph Cowen became a founder member of the Winlaton Blacksmiths' Friendly Society. He had turned out to be the same Joseph Cowen who was knighted for his work on the Tyne River Commission, which had deepened and straightened this stretch of the tidal river so that it was transformed from the sandy shallows and islands that Bewick knew into a navigable channel. Could that have been a cause of the ferry disaster 1875? – Yes, that and the icebergs!

The turning point in his own fortunes and those of the whole area came when he married Mary Forster in 1822 and went into business with her brother John, making firebricks and then gas-retorts at Blaydon Burn. Rapid expansion led to a rise in status and power: he became an MP, was

knighted for his work with the Tyne River Commission, and bought Stella Hall. This had been a Roman Catholic stronghold throughout the years of persecution: English priests trained at Douai in France were smuggled to the landing stages near the mouth of Blaydon Burn and into the protection of the Tempests and later the Widdringtons, one of whom very nearly lost his head in 1716 for his part in the Jacobite Rebellion (for whom those German swordmakers may well have been making weapons). Cowen's son brought European rebel leaders to Stella, notably Garibaldi, whose statue once adorned the summit of Summerhill (or did it?) where Bronze Age burials were found in the 1930s: his own statue stands on Westgate Road. Steeped in the Crowley tradition of education, community, paternalism and self-help, the Cowens brought to Blaydon employment, worker education, a Mechanics' Institute, structural expansion, domestic gas, clean water and the first Co-op in the north-east. His son extended the family's political influence into Europe, bringing foreign radicals and freedom fighters to Blaydon and connecting local working people to the class struggle across the continent. The tradition of philanthropy continued with Joseph Junior's daughter, Jane, the last owner of Stella Hall.

As for the Burn itself. Such rich pickings for the archaeologist and the social historian alike: visitors to Path Head's working watermill talked of their ancestors who had run the eight mills that had once clacked along its course, ultimately existing alongside the railway that the Cowens laid to bring their bricks down to the lower yard, next to the Crowley warehouse. It all comes full circle.

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