



## COVE & CAPTAIN PALMER



George Palmer (1789-1866), Master of the Arctic whaling ship *Cove*, sailed annually from Newcastle to the Davis Straits whaling grounds from 1815 to 1833. He was born in Monkwearmouth, the son of a mariner, little is known of his early career but he took command of his first whaler in 1812 and became Master of the Whitby built ship '*Cove*' in 1815, completing 21 voyages in this ship. His brother in law Thomas Taylor was master at various times of the Tyne whaling ships '*Grenville Bay*', '*Lively*' and '*Lord Gambier*'

George Palmer was a successful master and left a series of log books which had been kept in his family. The whaling

ships were paid a Government bounty for each voyage, to protect the trade from American imports. Because of the bounty ship's masters had to keep logs which had to be examined by customs at the end of each voyage. These logs record the catch, the weather and where they sailed. They confirm that he usually sailed in the company of other ships and was ready to help other ships and crews if in danger. He records that on his outward voyages he usually stopped in Orkney to pick up extra crew and he also records the process of chopping up the blubber and stowing it in casks. These records have provided researchers with an invaluable insight to the trade at this time and as weather records were meticulously kept these are now proving invaluable in the study of climate change.

Apparently, it wasn't unknown to have a pre-sail party this from 11 March 1828

*"On Tuesday night, Captain Palmer entertained a large party of friends on board his ship, Cove in Shields harbour. Part of the deck was covered in for the purpose of dancing, which spritely amusement was entered into with the utmost spirit and vivacity. At 12 o'clock the whole party retired to the supper table, which was laid out between decks in a style of elegance quite unparalleled, consisting of every delicacy to please the eye and gratify the palate. After supper, a humorous song, written for the occasion, was sung with great applause. At two, the dance was resumed, and kept up with undiminished spirit until 5 o'clock, when the company returned on shore, highly gratified with the night's amusement, the hearty welcome of Captain Palmer, and the elegant attentions of his amiable wife".*

There were about a dozen whaling masters who sailed from the Tyne during this period and George Palmer was one of the most successful of his era. Between whaling voyages Palmer diversified into general commercial activities. After his two final and highly profitable voyages of 1832 and 1833, he retired from whaling aged forty-four to invest what may well have been substantial capital, specifically to develop the firm of Palmer, Beckwith and Co., export merchants, timber merchants and sawmill owners, based in Dunston near Gateshead. In the years following he also built two new ships.

The whaling ship 'Cove'

In 1813 he married Maria Taylor, also born in Monkwearmouth and from a seafaring family. George and Maria raised a family of eight: seven sons and a daughter. Two of the sons became master mariners, though neither appears to have followed the family tradition of whaling. George's prosperity gave his sons opportunities for education that enabled them to enter businesses or professions. Conspicuously successful was the fourth son, Charles Mark Palmer



(1822–1907), who started in his father's business at Dunston, but subsequently developed commercial interests in North Yorkshire iron mining, coking and shipbuilding. He eventually founded the integrated shipyards at Jarrow; represented the Jarrow constituency in Parliament; and in 1886 was awarded a baronetcy.

For many years following their marriage George and Maria lived in King Street, South Shields, after George retired from the sea they moved to Priors Terrace, Tynemouth. Following Maria's death in 1864, George remained a familiar figure in Tynemouth, where he liked to stroll along the front every morning with his telescope. His ship 'Cove' was sold to a new owner in Hull and was later thrust into the spotlight when it was commissioned by the Admiralty to relieve the ships trapped in the ice at the Davis Straits during the terrible winter of 1835/6.

*Susan Lynn*

Journal of the Hakluyt Society

The Whaling Trade in NE England 1750-1850- Dr. Tony Barrow

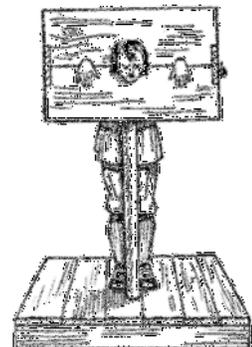
The British Whaling Trade - G. Jackson

Newcastle Courant



THE PILLORY - At the General Quarter Sessions, George Embleton was found guilty of obtaining money by false pretences from three Butchers in North Shields. He was ordered to be put in the pillory, in North Shields on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>. April at twelve o'clock in the forenoon there to continue for the space of one hour.

*Tyne Mercury 8 April 1806*



## SALT WATER BATHS and SEA BATHING

During the eighteenth century sea bathing was in vogue among the upper classes. Tynemouth & Cullercoats became fashionable bathing places and as early as 1751 visitors were writing "Tynemouth & Cullercoats are much in demand, there is not a room empty, my Lady Ravensworth & my Lady Delaval were a month at Cullercoats, bathing".



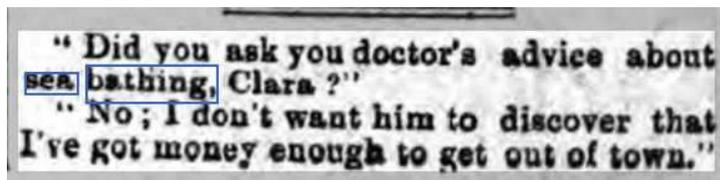
CULLERCOATS SALT WATER BATHS

In 1807 salt water baths at Cullercoats were opened, the proprietor Mr. Richard Armstrong announced that he had made considerable improvements to his sea water baths, no fresh water weakened the strength of the sea water and the baths were re-filled at every tide.

He took leave to inform ladies & gentlemen desirous of bathing that there were two bath rooms, later

increased to four, each with a commodious dressing room.

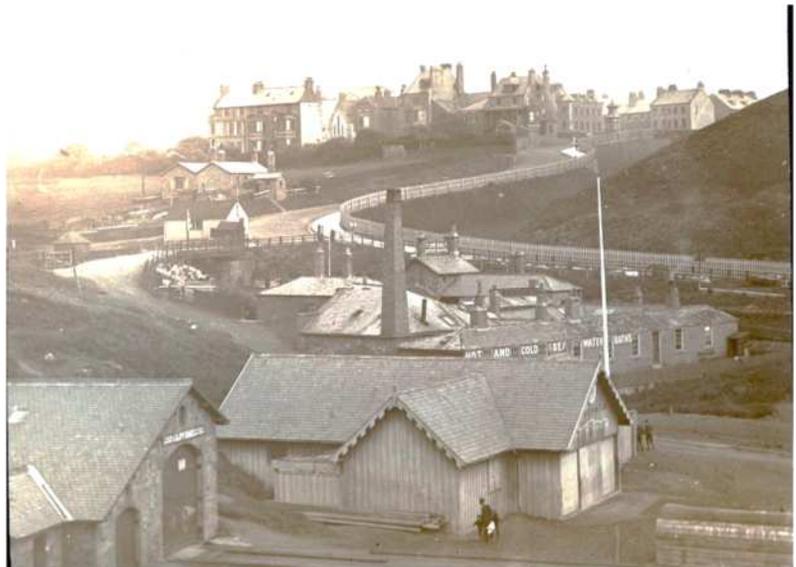
*Shields Daily Gazette 31 March 1900*



"Did you take your Doctor's advice about sea bathing Clara?"

"No, I don't want him to discover that I've got money enough to get out of town."

At Tynemouth salt water baths were also opened at Prior's Haven in 1807 to provide visitors with hot, cold and shower baths, without the necessity of entering the sea. Originally the water was drawn from the bay by means of a horse mill. The horses were later replaced with steam power. A cold plunge cost 4d and a cold bath 9d., a single warm or tepid bath cost 1s. 6d., the cost rising to 2s. for a warm bath with shower after it.



By the end of the nineteenth century these baths had lost their appeal.

The Tynemouth baths closed in 1894 and nothing else has been built on the ground where they stood.

At Cullercoats the Dove Marine Laboratory occupies the site of the baths.

Train travel made visiting the coast so much cheaper and easier and there were numerous advices given out to bathers and to those who intended to book rooms at a seaside resort. Visitors were advised to study the trains, pack carefully the day before and avoid hurry and excitement. Rooms should only be booked if they were clean and tidy and in a quiet street and on arrival visitors should do nothing the first day. Bathing machines were available for those wishing to bathe in the sea and this was best attempted three hours after breakfast. Bathers were advised, if you can swim plunge into the water, but come out of the water before you have ceased to enjoy yourself and it is best to bring one's own towel. Dress when quite dry and if faintness or sickness comes on, lie down for a few minutes. After dressing a brisk walk should be taken and now a hard biscuit will do you service. Remember that the glow after the bath is the great event to be looked for.

The use of bathing machines was part of the etiquette for sea-bathing to preserve modesty and more rigorously enforced upon women than men, but it was to be observed by both sexes among those who wished to behave respectably, bathing suits were not considered proper clothing in which to be seen in public. There were complaints in 1864 that the bathing machines at Cullercoats beach had been removed and that the ladies if they wished to bathe had nowhere to change except the beach which it was suggested was manifestly absurd and ridiculous as they would be exposed to the gaze of passers by.

No mention of the temperature of the North Sea, maybe bathers were tougher then !



An early picture of Tynemouth longsands showing bathing machines at the water's edge. Picture taken c1870 before St. George's Church, Beaconsfield or the Plaza had been built.

**FOOTNOTES...**

A unique method for obtaining the birthdate of a person, when his age and death date appear on the tombstone, is to use the 8870 formula. This formula was described in a recent issue of the "Genealogical Research Institute of America" newsletter.

An example of the formula is as follows: If Sarah's tombstone indicates she died April 5, 1891 and was three years, eight months, and seven days old, but no date of birth is listed, use the following calculation to arrive at her date of birth.

Write the date of death using numbers, with no spaces, in the order of year-month-day (18920405). Subtract Sarah's age by writing it in order by years-months-days (30807). The answer is 18879598.

Next subtract the constant 8870. The final answer is 18870728, expressed in year-month-day order. Thus 1887, July 28, is Sarah's birthdate.

**CALCULATING A DATE OF BIRTH**

This is a formula to calculate a date of birth, mainly for those with American connections, where the date of death is listed in years, months and days but the date of birth is not known, using the formula 8870.

Example: ' Sarah' dies on 5 April 1891 age 3 years, 8 months and 7 days old.

Write the date of death backwards using numbers, with no spaces in the order of year-month-day 18910405

Subtract 'Sarah's' age writing it year-month-days

30807

Answer: 18879598

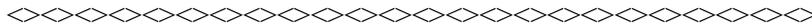
Next subtract 8870

Answer; 18870728

So 'Sarah's' date of birth is 28 July 1887

Ref: Genealogical Research Institute of America

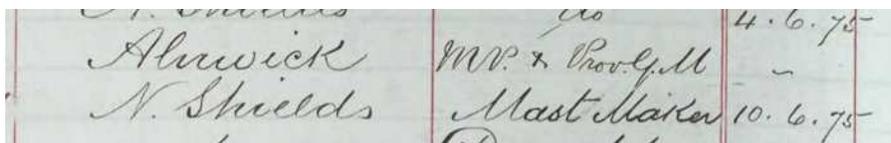
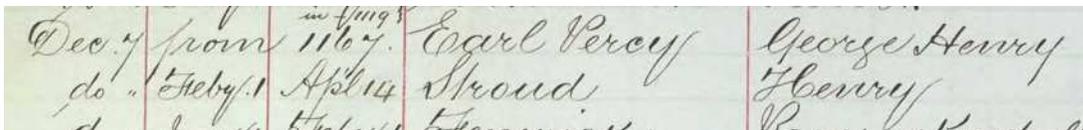
It really does work



**FREEMASONS**

Becoming a Freemason was an important part of business life and a good way of making contacts, 'networking' as we would say now. It was also important as a social welfare and charity organisation, taking care of members and their families in times of need. Several members of my family, all self- employed, were members including John Harcus 1839-1896 (3xgreat uncle) who joined the St. George's Lodge (Lodge No. 431), Norfolk Street, North Shields on 3 November 1873 and his brother-in-law. Henry Stroud 1833-1882 (2xgreat grandfather) who joined on 7 December 1874, the same day as the son of the Duke of Northumberland, Earl Percy who was MP for Northumberland North at the time.

Joined 7 Dec. 1874 , Passed 1 February 1875 and Raised 14 April 1875				
Earl Percy	George Henry	Alnwick	MP	age 28
Stroud	Henry	N. Shields	Mastmaker	age 41



Members and their wives also enjoyed quite a good social scene through the organisation, including this rather elaborate excursion to Alnwick Castle in 1878.

*NEWCASTLE COURANT – FRIDAY 11 OCTOBER 1878*

The newspaper recorded the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons at Alnwick on Tuesday 8 October. Members from the St. George's Lodge, North Shields were present at this gathering. The paper reported that they had met at the Corn Exchange, Alnwick and as there were over 700 attendees special trains ran from Newcastle. After the Assembly they went on to Alnwick Castle where they all sat down to a banquet. Earl Percy MP, who was a member, attended and they were greeted by the Duke (who wasn't a member) and Duchess. The meal was held in the Guest Hall which was enlarged by a marquee for the occasion. In view of the 700 sittings there were 3 tables in the hall and 4 in the marquee and they were entertained by a boys' choir from the Duke's School.

The catering for the meal was provided by the Duke's kitchens and included:

44	gallons mock turtle soup
100	soles
22	dishes of eels
66	:: venison
22	hams
44	dishes containing 132 roast fowls
22	:: 66 boiled fowls
22	:: tongue
22	:: galantine of chickens
21	game pies
22	pigeon pies
42	lobster salad
12	rounds of beef
12	dishes of roast beef
84	jellies
84	dishes pastry
44	dishes cream
44	plum puddings
44	ice puddings
250	dishes of desert etc. etc..



George Henry, Earl Percy 1846-1918  
7<sup>th</sup>. Duke of Northumberland from 1899

All rounded off by nine toasts  
.....and I imagine a jolly good time was had by all.

Susan Lynn

Resources:

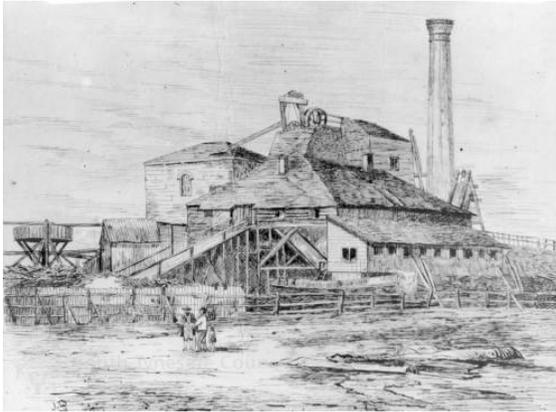
Ancestry.co.uk

Vanity Fair 27 August 1881

Newcastle Courant 11 October 1878

About-freemasonry.co.uk

## HARTON COLLIERY



The sinking of Harton Colliery began on 10 May 1841. It reached the Bensham coal seam on 10 July 1844 reaching a depth of 1290 feet, being the greatest depth reached in the Tyne district at that time. The colliery was located in what today is called West Harton, about a quarter of a mile west of where South Tyneside District hospital was later built. In 1854 Sir George Buddell Airey, the Astronomer Royal, conducted his famous pendulum experiments in the deep mine here

to calculate the mean density or mass and thereby the weight of the earth. At its peak level of employment in 1921 there were 2625 people working at the colliery (2051 below ground and 574 on the surface). In 1908 Harton Coal Company opened a ground breaking electric railway network, Harton Electric Railway, to transport coal from Westoe, Harton and other collieries. The colliery closed on 25 July 1969 with the loss of 1000 jobs.

Hodgson's History of South Shields    Whellan's Directory of Co. Durham 1894  
Durham Mining Museum                      Picture © South Tyneside Council



## LOCAL ODDITIES No. 7

### PET CEMETERY, NORTHUMBERLAND PARK, TYNEMOUTH

Tynemouth Borough Council records of 1948 show that they received a letter from the RSPCA requesting a pet cemetery. Opened in 1949 the RSPCA erected a tombstone for an Alsatian named 'Pop' who worked during the Second World War detecting land mines in Italy. He was demobbed with a leg wound and lived with his owner in Cullercoats, but sadly 1949, he was found dead at the foot of a Cullercoats cliff.

2012 records show 210 pets/animals are buried here, including another dog who was a Dunkirk veteran and mascot of a mine sweeper, later adopted by the dock police; also, Monty the tortoise and Bambi, an abandoned baby deer that the RSPCA tried, but were unable to save,

The cost of internment was 10s 6d. in 1948 increasing to 12s.6d. by 1962 (7/6 for a headstone). The cemetery closed in 1980.





