





## JAMES HUNTLEY (1850-1919) and THE DISPENSARY



This is James Huntley, he was Dispenser of Medicine to the Poor from premises in Church Street, North Shields and a junior colleague to Dr. Stephens.

Born at Haggerston in Northumberland he came to live in South Shields when he was a child. In 1871 the family were living at Simonside Lane, Westoe, South Shields. His father John and younger brother John jnr. both worked as labourers at an Alkali works but James was a bright young lad and when he left school he was able to secure himself an apprenticeship as a Doctor's assistant.

He then moved to North Shields when he got the job as a Dispenser of Medicine at the Church Street Dispensary

The first dispensaries were set up from about 1770 to provide outpatient medical care to the sick poor who couldn't afford to pay for medical treatment and they lasted right until the formation of the NHS in 1948. They were initially set up by wealthy patrons who became subscribers and saw this as an act of philanthropy. They would be given books of tickets which they could then hand out to the sick so that they could be treated at the dispensary. Doctors often gave their services free, whilst continuing to run their own private medical practices. The North Shields dispensary opened on 31 December 1801 at the Half Moon Inn, Low Lights moving not long afterwards



to Church Street next to the Imperial Arms near the corner with Charlotte Street. The first secretary said that its job of providing free medical aid to the sick and lame poor was made possible by generous donations from Robinson Wakefield and the Duke of Northumberland among others. Potential donors were encouraged to reflect on the advantage to themselves of a healthy workforce. Later it was usual for the dispensary to employ an apothecary to run the dispensary and visit the sick at home, this was the job of James Huntley.



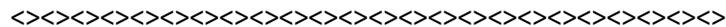
SUM SOLUS  
THE FIRE EATER

Mr. POWELL the famous FIRE EATER, from London, will perform on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup>. January inst. And every Evening during his short stay, in a large and commodious Room at the King's Arms in North Shields, several curious EXHIBITIONS by Dexterity of hand and new levitations by Cards or Money – After which, he will exhibit his most surprising Performances of FIRE EATING which will be fully expressed in the hand Bills delivered at Shields.

The Doors to be opened at Six O'Clock and he begins precisely at Seven – Admittance, Fore seats 2s., Back seats 1s. – Working People and Boys etc. 6d. There will be good Fires to keep the Room warm.

Mr. Powell, by Order of Captain Bover, is to be indulged with Liberty to the Sailors from being impressed from Six to Ten o'Clock, during the Exhibition every Evening.

*Newcastle Courant 9 January 1779*



HAIL at BILLY MILL

Newcastle, 4 May 1760

Sunday, there were several showers of Hail, one in particular, The Hail-Stones were as big as Filberds, attended with thunder and lightning; and from Billy Mill near Shields we are told that the Miller standing at his house door, a little distance from the Mill, observed, about a Minute after one of the Flashes of Lightning had passed, several of the wands of the Mill-Sails fall, and on going to it saw nearly the whole of the wands broke away, and some of them at a great Distance. The Mill rent from Top to Bottom and some very large stones and two Beams in the building shiver'd to pieces. Two hens were in it and both killed.



Billy Mill in North Shields was documented in 1320 in a grant by Henry Faukes to Tynemouth Priory in which it was called Billings Mill. The mill was rebuilt in 1597-99 with timber from the Tyne valley and millstones from Barnard Castle. The mill was rebuilt in stone in 1760 but was in ruins by the early 20<sup>th</sup>. Century. These ruins were demolished in 1967 when Billy Mill roundabout on the Coast Road was doubled in size from 60'

to 110' diameter. The roundabout itself was replaced with traffic lights in 2016.

## SOUTH SHIELDS MARKET

South Shields market has long been a favourite with those from both North and South Shields and is still popular after 250 years of trading.

The Dean and Chapter of Durham having obtained a Grant of a Weekly market and two annual Fairs, to be holden at South Shields in the County of Durham: Notice is hereby given that the first Market will be Holden at South Shields on Wednesday the 17<sup>th</sup>. October instant, and will continue to be holden there weekly, on every Wednesday afterwards; and the first Fair will be holden there on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of June next, and the second on the 1<sup>st</sup>. day of September next; and that Fairs will from thenceforth continue to be holden there on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of June and the 1<sup>st</sup>. day of September in every year, unless either of the said days of the month respectively shall happen to fall on a Sunday in which case the fair will be holden on the next day. NB: There will be a Court Leet holden at the townhouse of South Shields on Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup>. Day of October instant, for the whole Manor of Westoe.

P. Bowley Reg.

*Newcastle Courant 13 October 1770*

Located in South Shields Market Square this Grade I listed building was erected in or around 1768 for The Dean and Chapter. The upper room was designed for use as offices for their officials and a place to hold manorial courts etc, whilst the open space underneath provided shelter for a corn and provisions market. The building has been put to a range of uses during its life including a charity school, Courts Leet, reading room and a shipping office. Today the Old Town Hall still houses a small office at ground level and the first floor is used for occasional exhibitions.

*South Tyneside Libraries*



November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1793

### SOUTH SHIELDS MARKET – NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

That the SHAMBLES will be ready for the Butchers on Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup>. of November instant; at and after which times, all MEAT to be sold in South Shields will be exposed for sale in the public Market-place. And all Farmers and others are desired to take notice that they must bring their butter, eggs, poultry, vegetables, roots etc. to the public market, at and after that time.

Such persons as wish to take Shambles are desired to apply immediately to Mr. Hallgarth, the Clerk of the market, those who apply first will have preference in choice of stalls.

Newcastle Courant 9 November 1793

South Shields Market place on a Saturday night is a scene that few South Shields men would like to see altered. It is not surpassed as a grand muster of life, character and brisk commerce in any market town in England and has a reputation that attracts to it trades and purveyors who afford the lucky inhabitants a choice of articles and a tariff of prices immensely to their advantage. Many men like noise but even a Philosopher with a young family might relish the loud but hearty and healthy humour of South Shields Market and the clear ring of the current coin that breaks through it all.

*Shields Daily News 2 June 1870*



*Engraving of South Shields market place c1850 by Rock & Co.  
looking north with Harding's Windmill to the right. © South Tyneside libraries*

The 5<sup>th</sup>. Annual Dinner of the South Shields Market butchers took place last evening at the House of Mr. A.N. Dodds, 'Ye Old Lambton Arms', South Shields. The function being a great success. About 100 gentlemen sat down to a substantial repast catered by Mr. Curry of the Metropole Restaurant. The proceedings throughout were of a most enthusiastic character, great credit being due to the organisers.

*Shields Daily Gazette 9 March 1899*

At a Parliamentary Hustings at the market place in 1869, Charles Mark Palmer was speaking when an opponent threw a rotten egg that smashed upon Palmer's cheek. He never flinched and calmly went on with his speech. The reporter recalled Palmer deserved to win, but he didn't.

James Clare recalled meeting Joseph Conrad in the market place about 1894, standing side by side listening to a speaker they fell into conversation and went to have a drink in a nearby pub. Conrad was engaged in the coasting trade on a tramp steamer and he showed Clare a book, a small volume of Virgil which he had bought the day before at the market. He said that it was "his humour to follow the sea, it was the only place where he found himself at peace with the world".

*Shields Daily News*

### USA & CANADA NEWSPAPERS

Those of you with a Pro Subscription to Find my Past may have noticed that the USA & Canadian newspapers have ceased to be available. The reason is that these newspapers had been hosted by an external source and that agreement had now come to an end. FMP have confirmed that they are investing in most-requested records including newspapers with the British Library and the 1921 Census.

### FREE BRITISH NEWSPAPERS ONLINE

The British Newspaper Archive & Find My Past have 158 titles which are now free to explore dating between 1720-1880. You can check this out via their websites.

### ADVERTISEMENT

#### Newcastle City Guides Heritage walks in October

**ALL TICKETS MUST BE PRE-BOOKED ONLINE IN ADVANCE. £5pp/ £3 pp (over 60) go to**

[Newcastle City Guides Heritage Walks | NewcastleGateshead](#)

**one of local interest is :**

Sunday 10 October 2.30pm - North Shields Nostalgia

Full description of walks and meeting points on City Guides website

### IN THE NEWS – OCTOBER 1849



**SEIZURE** – On the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. French of the Custom House made a very large seizure on board the 'Oliver', Captain Schwartz, from Bremen, in ballast. He found secreted in the cabin, and acknowledged to be the property of the captain, upwards of 36lbs. of tobacco and cigars, and about 2 gallons of Geneva. Schwartz is now in jail awaiting the decision of the board.

**SHIP ON THE BAR** – Yesterday morning the 'Memnon', Charlton, in attempting to cross the bar inwards at low water, stuck fast and remained there for upwards of two hours. Through the assistance of two steam tugs she got off about 11 o'clock without any serious damage. Had the wind been strong at the time she would inevitably have been driven on the Black Middens.

**FAT SHEEP** – On Saturday, Mr. J. Wilkinson, butcher, South Shields exhibited the carcass of a three year old sheep on his stall in the Market Place, of large weight 15 stones 2 pounds.

**ROBBERY IN THE STEAM FERRY** – On Saturday evening Mr. William Coward, surgeon, South Shields was crossing by the quarter past eight o'clock Ferry from that town to North Shields on professional duties, when some rogues picked his pocket of a box of surgical instruments. Some thieves from Newcastle who have been seen lurking about Shields for a week or so back are suspected of the robbery.

*North & South Shields Gazette 5 October 1849*

