

SEAHAM OF 60 YEARS AGO IS RECALLED BY A MAN FROM UTAH

North Railway Street



An old view of North Railway Street, Seaham Harbour, described in the accompanying article. Below: The shop at Candlish Street corner now kept by Mrs Bird, also mentioned here. The shop originally had many connexions with the bottleworks.



SOME interesting photographs have been sent to me from Mr John L. Parker, of 1766-24th Ogden, Utah, U.S.A., who formerly lived at Seaham. He has received copies of the Sunderland Echo containing this series and wonders whether the whole will appear in book form, for as he says: "I don't think there is a place in the articles which I haven't nosed round as a boy; so you can see why I am so interested and will be anxiously awaiting a reply."

Thank you Mr Parker for your letter, to which the Editor has already sent a personal reply. Meanwhile we are most grateful

By
C. A. SMITH

for your photographs and comments reproduced below; they, too, will give pleasure to many.

The first is a view of North Railway Street, Seaham, "where" says Mr Parker, "I had a short session of being the printer's devil" in Young's Print Shop."

This picture was taken about the year 1905 or perhaps earlier. Mr W. J. Young was a printer, bookseller, stationer, book-binder and newsagent in those days, as his sign attests. The sign next door reads "Clough, the great wholesale clothier. Branch shops at Haswell, Wingate, Sunderland, and Hetton Downs."

Further old shops can be seen as far as the top sign which appears to read "Londonderry Vane—Craigh and Johnson," but the rest is undecipherable.

"Rugged" Regatta

Another picture (not reproduced) is described by Mr Parker as "part of H. B. Wright's gardens etc., of which I assisted in the care and cultivation under John Watson, the gardener."

Referring to the Seaham Regatta, which was mentioned in an earlier article, Mr Parker writes: "The Regatta wasn't such a fancy affair, but it created a deal of interest and accomplished the end in view and maybe more so than if it had been held in a nice warm indoor pool!"

"It was, in fact, 'rugged' to say the least."

Most of Mr Parker's photographs were taken with a box camera and on glass plates purchased from Messrs Fosters' tea and grocery store in Francis Street. An excellent picture of his brother Tom Parker was the first photograph ever to be taken there.

We are most grateful to Mr J. L. Parker for his contribution

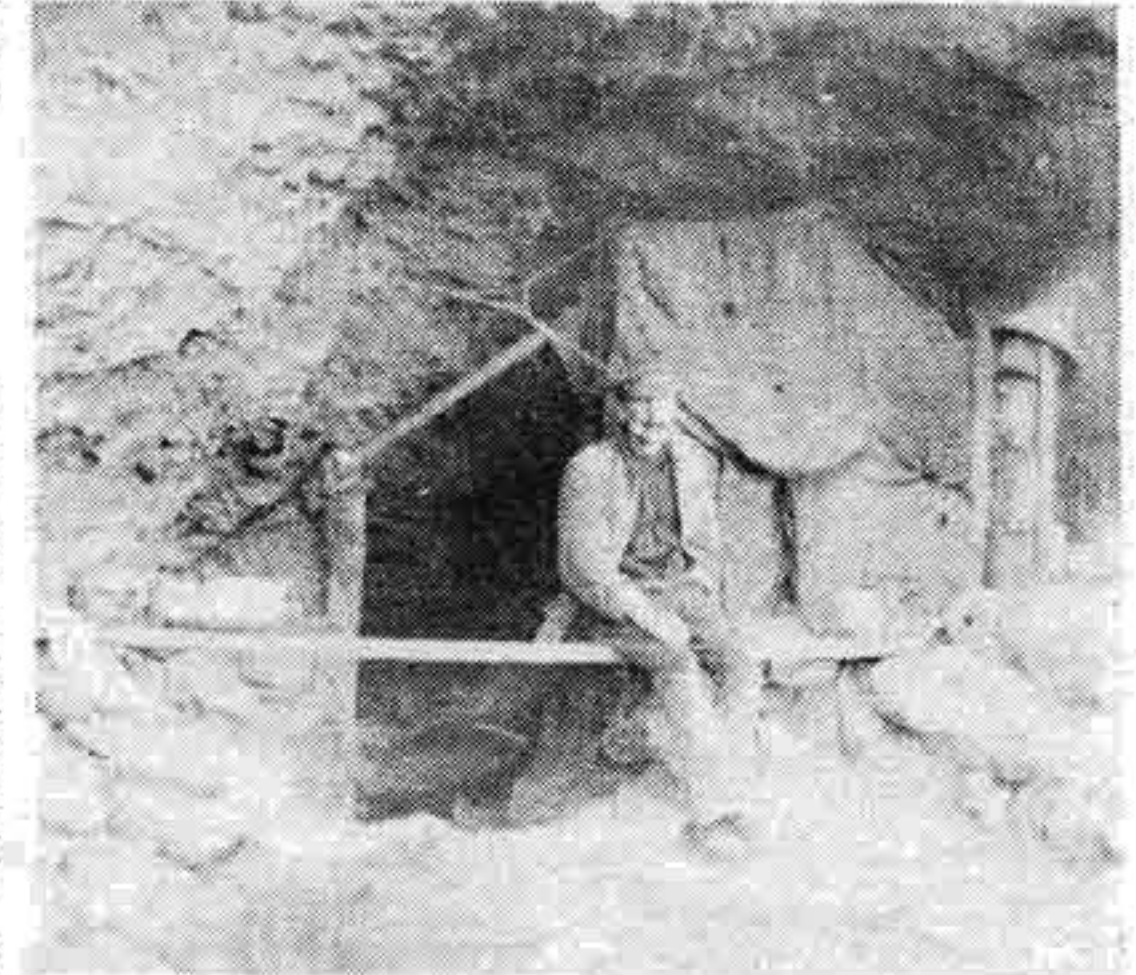
to this series and for several further pictures of the Old Docks which will appear in due course. A copy of the Echo containing this article is being forwarded to him in the U.S.A.

"The Hive"

I cannot resist including a snapshot taken by Mr Parker at what was then called "The Hive," just south of Dawdon Pit. The picture shows a tramp who had made his home in one of the caves along the beach there. Corned beef cans formed the chimney and barley bags closed

Street corner is kept by Mrs Bird, who is proud to own a copy of a local newspaper dated May 13, 1809, which advertises the sale of brigs and brigantines and lists the arrivals and sailings of ships to and from the North-East ports of Sunderland, Shields, Stockton, and Newcastle 154 years ago!

At the Bottleworks, where the employees seemed to have a language all of their own, one could always hear such nicknames as Jigger Jefferies, Sparrow Jefferies, Slop Jefferies, Teapot Hunter, Tints, McAn-



Mr Parker's picture of "The Hive," one of the caves south of Dawdon Pit that was made into a home for a tramp.

draw, Guis Reed, Piggy Hall. These were a useful way of identifying a particular Hall or Jefferies where so many of these existed, so the Bottleworks became well endowed with nicknames, including Dodger Curran and Laggy Turns.

Mr J. Humphrey tells me that the little corner shop shown in our picture had many connexions with the Bottleworks. It was owned by the Hall family and Mr Charles Farrow who were employed at the works and it meant as much to the women-folk as the "Parrot" meant to the men-folk—both being an important part of the life of this little community of bottleworkers and their families.

Mention of boat racing reminds us of the pilots who lived at Pilot Terrace. Apparently each possessed a telescope or a pair of powerful field glasses and they were constantly on the look-out for ships likely to be bound for Seaham Harbour.

When a quarry was sighted they would race each other, as far as Whitby if need be, to gain their objective to pilot the ship into Seaham Harbour. The little shop at Candlish

"Butter Baby"

A well-known topic at Seaham was the story of the "Butter Baby." It seems that a Danish ship laden with kegs of butter ran aground opposite Hendon Paper Mills, or was it Ryhope?

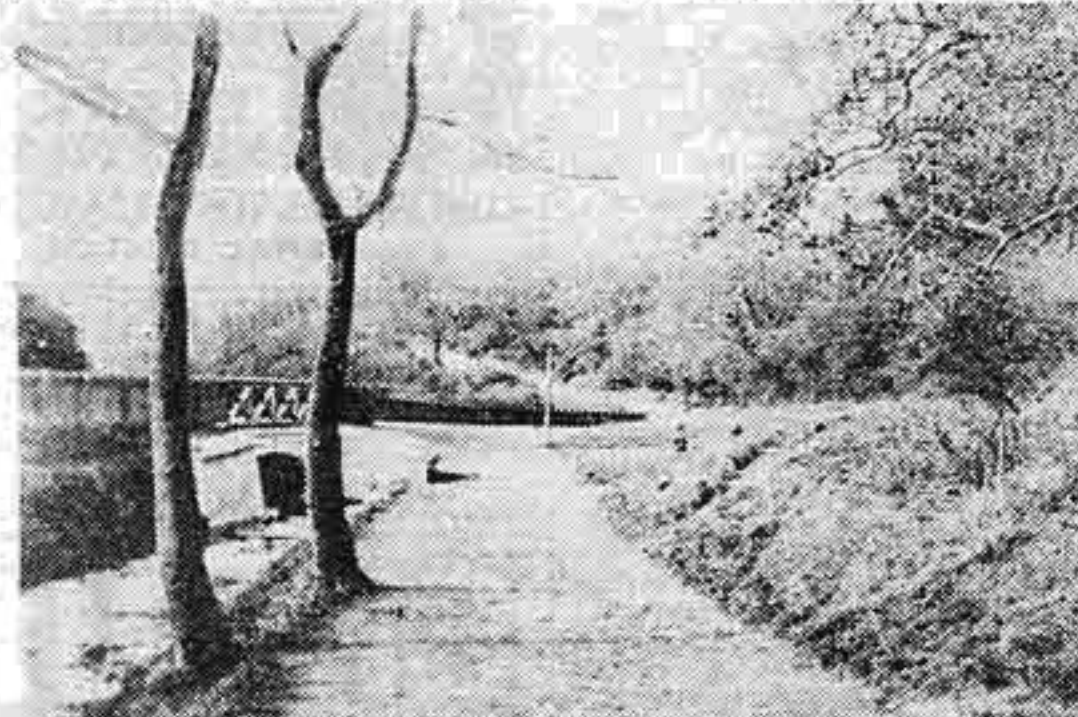
At any rate a large proportion of the cargo was washed up at Seaham and people hastened to the beach with all manner of conveyances to get a supply of "free butter or bacon."

Most of the cargo was eventually sold by auction in Messrs Elgey's timber yard in Foundry Road, but the police were kept busy examining prams which were seen leaving the beach, for in several instances the so-called "sleeping bobby" turned out to be a nice fat keg of butter carefully covered with sheet or shawl. I have myself seen a faded picture of the butter kegs strewn along the shore.

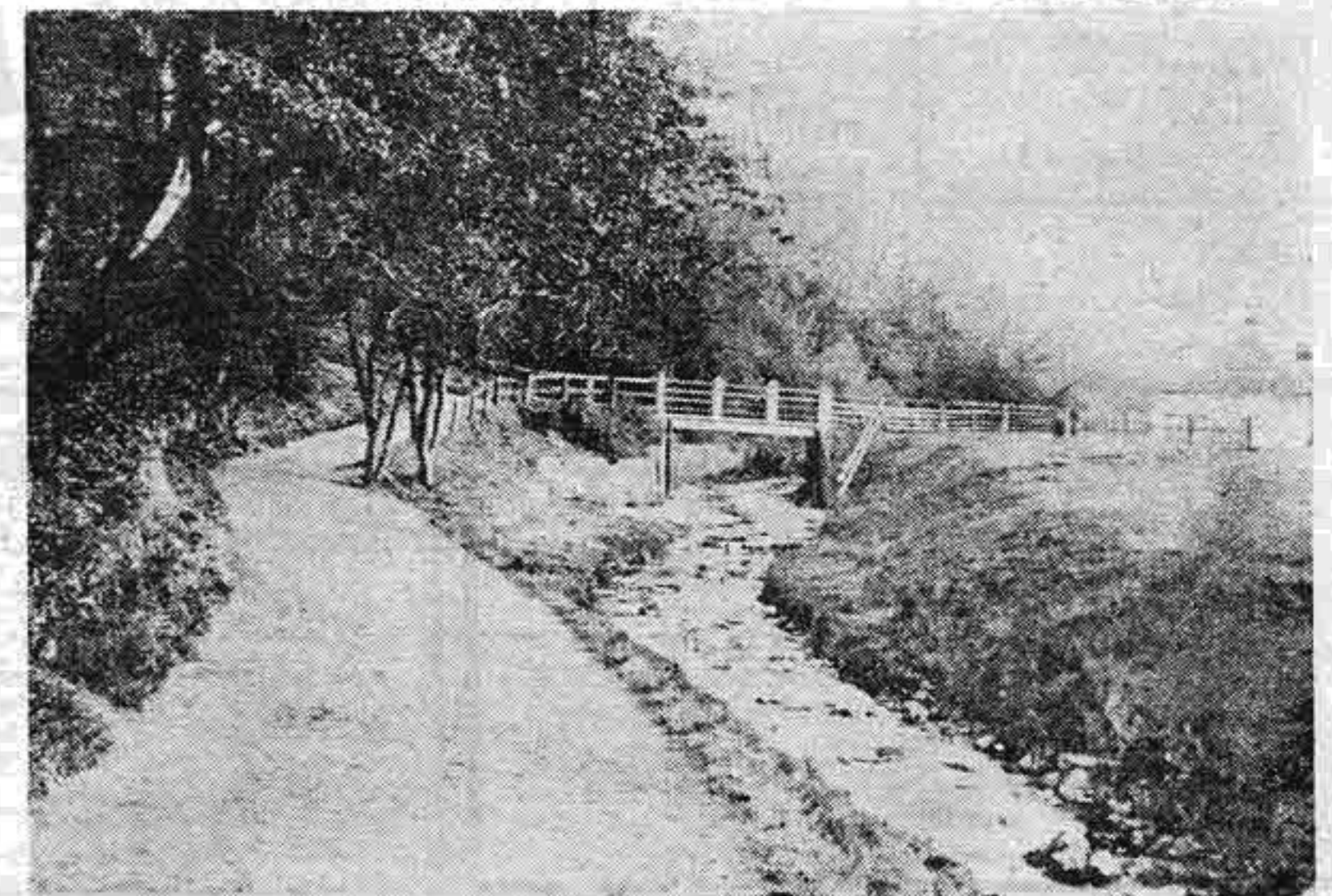
Our thanks are due again to Mr Humphrey and all who have provided pictures etc. A letter has just arrived from a lady now resident at East Herrington whose father, the late Mr William Miller, was coxswain on the Seaham lifeboats. The Skinner and Elliott Galer.

I am promised pictures of these and their crews as well as early views of the South Docks. I look forward to receiving these for early publication and news of the lady's grandfather, who was in fact one of the seven pilots when the Docks opened. This information will solve some of our problems relating to the identification of several of the early lifeboats.

(To be continued)



Two more pictures supplied by Mr Parker. Above: A view of Dawdon Dene, where the stud farm was on the left of the picture. Below: Another view of the dene, with the stud farm on the right.



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