



DURHAM  
*In Time*

## Belmont - a short history

by Jane Hatcher

### General Background History

The place-name consists of two elements, both of them Old French words, "bel" meaning beautiful, and "mont" or hill, so the name means 'beautiful hill' (1). The present area known as Belmont takes its name from Belmont Hall, built in 1820 by Thomas Pemberton to replace an older building known as Ramside. When the Pemberton family sold the estate in the 1960s, the mansion became a hotel and some of the grounds a golf course, and the old name of Ramside Hall was resurrected (2).

This area was formerly in the ancient parish of St. Giles, Durham, but became a separate ecclesiastical parish, under the then new name of Belmont, in 1852 (3). This was a time of great change in the area, due to the growth of local collieries, including one called Belmont Grange, from which the colliery village took its name Belmont, and the parish church was just one of the new facilities which had to be provided in the mid-19th century. The new church, dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, was built 1855-7, to the designs of the famous Victorian architect William Butterfield. Later it would be altered and improved by another specialist church architect, Charles Hodgson Fowler of Durham (4), at the expense of the lay rector and impropiator of tithes, the Marquess of Londonderry (5). The Vicarage was added to the church to designs by Walter & Robson in 1862 (6).





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A reading room and library were also established in the 1850s, and a school had been established, and was flourishing but was already crowded (7). A new School and School House were designed by Austin and Johnson in 1870 (8). Important local landowners included not only the Marchioness of Londonderry but another absentee, R.L. Pemberton Esq., who lived at Hawthorne Tower, Barnes but owned Belmont Hall (9). Belmont Hall was described as a tasteful estate laid out with trees (10) and a picturesque building, and was occupied by Mr. John Jarratt, the viewer at Broomside Colliery (11). In 1879 the Marquess of Londonderry had a farm bailiff living at Woodwell House (12). Belmont became a civil parish under the 1894 Local Government Act (13).

In 1856 (14) the directory entries for Belmont are given under Durham City, but by 1879 (15) Belmont with Broomside, Carr Ville and Gilesgate Moor had its own list of 68 entries, of which 13 were private residents, and 18 were licensed premises [including the appropriately named George & Dragon at Dragon Ville!]. By 1910 (16) Belmont had its own section with 7 private residents and 25 commercial directory entries, none of which related to coal mining, although one was the Grange Iron Works, and 5 were pubs!

The surrounding colliery villages, which grew up at about the same time, soon had their own nonconformist chapels. In 1856 (17), 'Carville' had a fine Primitive Methodist Chapel which had been built in 1839. Grange Chapel, a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel at Broomside, was a small plain stone building built first in 1835, and rebuilt in 1840 to seat 250. Broomside was inhabited mainly by pitmen employed by the Broomside Coal Company and the workpeople of the Grange Iron Company. Here there was also a National School, with another, the Marquess of





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Londonderry's School, at Dragon Ville (18). By 1910 (19), Broomside was still home to workers at the Grange Iron Company. At Carr Ville there was a small red-brick Wesleyan Chapel built in 1881, also a Primitive Methodist Chapel built in 1869 which could seat 250.

Belmont does not appear on the early maps held in the Durham County Record Office. The 1923 edition shows Belmont Hall just east of the Newcastle, Leamside & Ferryhill stretch of the North Eastern Railway. Nearby the Durham Goods Line branches off to the west, and immediately north of this the Bishop Auckland Branch joins also. To the east is the Durham, Elvet & Murton Branch.

The 1923 map also shows a Belmont House at the Durham end of the settlement marked as Carr Ville, along the Durham-Sunderland road near St Mary Magdalene's Church. Here is also a Methodist Church, another Chapel and Sundays School. Along the fork called Broomside Lane, which further along becomes Pittington Lane, is the small settlement of Broomside, with a School and Infant School.

By 1938 (20) Belmont had 8 private residents, and 26 commercial directory entries, with 6 pubs.

### **Mining History**

The involvement of the Londonderry family in coal-mining in the Belmont area means that there are relevant documents in the extensive Londonderry archives in Durham County Record Office. Some relate to specific local issues, such as the flooding of Belmont Colliery, allegedly from Rainton, in 1871 (21), and others concern the family's participation in national events. For example, George Elliott,





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their agent at Belmont Colliery, gave evidence to the Parliamentary enquiry into the employment of children in mines which led to the 1842 Act of Parliament, and George Hunter, agent at Penshaw, Belmont and Wynyard collieries, was involved in using Irish labourers as strike-breakers and putting down the 1844 miners' strike (22)

The Londonderry family were also involved with Broomside Colliery, which was quite an early one, opening in 1835 (23). The disused Broomside Colliery (Lady Adelaide Pit) is marked on the 1923 6 inch Ordnance Survey Map a short distance to the south-east of Belmont Hall. Further east is Littleton Colliery, which was sunk by the Earl of Durham in 1834 (24). Further east again is marked Pittington Colliery (Disused), which was worked 1835-1891 by Lord Londonderry (25), and there is also Lambton Main Engine. To the north-east of Belmont Hall is shown Lady Seaham Pit (Disused), which was another Londonderry pit, then Belmont Engine (Disused) to the north-east. An 'Old Coal Pit' is shown in a wood at Wood Side. West of Belmont is shown Frankland Pit (Disused), and to the south-west Keping Grange Colliery, Old Shaft Keping Colliery (Disused). Further West are shown as still working in 1923 two larger collieries - Framwellgate Colliery, and Durham Main Colliery further south, which was sunk 1893 (26). Also marked to the north-west of Carr Ville is Grange Iron Works, served by the Durham Goods Line of the North Eastern Railway.

(1) Ian Stuart Robinson, *The Place-Names of County Durham*, (1998), p. 17.

(2) Durham County Council, Archaeology Section, *Sites and Monuments Record*, 'Belmont; Overview'.





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(3) William Whellan & Co., *History, Topography and Directory of the County Palatine of Durham*, (1856), p. 221.

(4) Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: County Durham*, (1983), p. 93.

(5) *Kelly's Post Office Directory* (1879), p. 27.

(6) Pevsner, p. 93.

(7) Whellan (1856), p. 222.

(8) Pevsner, p. 93.

(9) Whellan (1856), p. 222.

(10) Whellan (1856), p. 222.

(11) Kelly (1879), p. 27.

(12) Kelly (1879), p. 28.

(13) *Kelly's Directory of Durham and Northumberland*, (1910), p. 44.

(14) Whellan (1856).

(15) Kelly (1879), p. 28.

(16) *Kelly's Directory of Durham and Northumberland* (1910), p. 45.

(17) Whellan (1856), p.222.





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(18) Kelly (1879), p. 27.

(19) Kelly (1910), p. 44).

(20) Kelly's *Directory of Durham and Northumberland* (1938), p. 36.

(21) DCRO D/Lo/B261.

(22) DCRO D/Lo/C149.

(23) DCRO, *Durham Collieries*, (2001), p. 19.

(24) DCRO, *Durham Collieries*, (2001), p. 48.

(25) DCRO, *Durham Collieries*, (2001), p. 61.

(26) DCRO, *Durham Collieries*, (2001), p. 29.

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