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## Dean Bank, Ferryhill - a brief history

by William McAdam

### Introduction

Before considering Dean Bank it is important to establish the geographical position of Ferryhill within Durham County. Ferryhill is built on a limestone escarpment which in the centre of the village reaches 538 feet above sea level. It is situated 6 miles due south of Durham city and some 12 miles north of the town of Darlington.

Ferryhill was mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon charter in 900 AD. There have been several names for the village and these varied from Ferie in 1125 to Ferye-on-the-hill in 1316. In 1646 it changed to Ferye On Ye Mount and sometime later to Ferryhill. The view from Ferryhill is unique in that both Durham Cathedral and Penshaw monument can on a good day be seen clearly. As you progress westward along the Merrington Road, Teesside, Middlesbrough and the area known as Cleveland can also be seen clearly when looking in a south easterly direction. This indicates the prominence on which Ferryhill is situated. The population recorded in 1841 was 854. This increased in 1901 to 1,123. In 1929 it was 10,674 and in the year 2000 it was recorded as just over 12,000. So although reference has been made to Ferryhill as a village it is now a small town. In the 19th century Ferryhill was situated on the main road from London to Scotland, this being the old Roman road called Watling Street. Due to the steep hill on which Ferryhill was built, it was difficult for transport to enter the village, particularly when travelling from the north and in 1918-1923 a by-pass to link the Durham and Darlington roads was constructed by cutting through the hill and widening the natural cut in the hillside. This was known locally as the cut.





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Early road maps numbered the road A1, however following the introduction of motorways this was renumbered A167. To get from Dean Bank to the village three bridges were built to cross the bypass, one to serve the colliery, one to serve the B6287 road from Ferryhill to Kirk Merrington and the third a footbridge which gives access to the school and various streets.

### **Dean Bank**

Dean Bank can be regarded as a suburb of Ferryhill since it only came into existence as a direct result of the sinking of the Dean & Chapter Colliery in 1902 which recognised the provision of housing for the miners who would be employed there. The land particularly that on which Dean Bank and the colliery were built was owned by the Church and it is accepted that this is the reason that the Colliery was named the Dean & Chapter Colliery in respect of the Dean & Chapter of Durham Cathedral. Likewise the name Dean became associated with the hill on which the houses were built and hence the name Dean Bank. At this point I would add that Bolckow, Vaughan & Company, who built the Colliery were credited with meticulous planning in that the layout was considered to be ideal for the working of the Colliery and this degree of planning is very much in evidence with regard to the streets and terraces as well as the colliery.

### **Dean & Chapter Colliery**

The Colliery was sunk in the lowest part of Ferryhill since the coal seams were nearer the surface at that point. The shafts were in a straight line and this assisted the layout of the surface workings in the screening and grading of the coal. The Colliery had its own coke ovens and a plant that processed Iron Pyrites to make Sulphuric





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Acid. It had a Laboratory and all the trade departments required for the maintenance of a big industrial complex, engineers, electricians, blacksmiths, joiners, central stores etc. It was intended to be a model colliery and it provided services to other collieries under the auspices of Bolckow, Vaughan and later the Dorman Long Company.

### **The Houses**

The houses were well built of good quality brick and designed to meet the needs of families of different sizes. The superior accommodation was reserved for senior management and for management at other levels such as deputies and foremen. The houses varied in size, one bed roomed, two bed roomed and three bed roomed, some having a sitting room or lounge and all having a separate enclosed yard area which contained an earth closet and coal house. All the houses had an iron range which consisted of a fireplace in the middle with an oven on one side and a small boiler on the other. In addition several houses had a large boiler which ensured that hot water was available for the miner to wash following his return home from the pit and for all the various household purposes.

The layout of Dean Bank was mainly in long straight streets with shorter streets at right angles to the long ones thus using the available space to the best advantage. The streets nearest to the Colliery provided accommodation for the miners, while the management were housed further away from the Colliery. On leaving the village proceeding westward to Kirk Merrington on the B6287 the houses on each side of the road are named after Bishops or Prince Bishops, again emphasising the connection with the Church. The remainder of the streets are named after people who have become famous as a result of inventions, discoveries or engineering feats.





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It is recorded that the building of Dean Bank was started in 1904, two years after the sinking of the Colliery and continued for four or five years in which time sufficient houses to accommodate the Colliery employees was built. The houses built by Bolckow, Vaughan & Company are listed in the table on page three.

<b>Terrace/Street</b>	<b>Number Of Houses</b>	<b>Description</b>
Barrington Terrace	38	Two bedrooms, sitting room, living room, scullery and pantry
Bessemer Street	66	One bedroom, living room, scullery and pantry
Brunel Street	43	Three bedrooms, living room, scullery and pantry
Davy Street	71	Approximately half were one bed roomed and the others were three bed roomed.
Faraday Street	88	Approximately half were one bed roomed and the others were three bed roomed.
Hackworth Street	22	Two bedrooms, sitting room, living room, scullery and pantry
Kelvin Street	18	Two bedrooms, sitting room, living room, scullery and pantry
Lightfoot Terrace	32	Three bedrooms, living room, scullery and pantry





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Newcomen Street	19	Two bedrooms, sitting room, living room, scullery and pantry
Newton Street	61	Three bedrooms, living room, scullery and pantry.
Paxton Street	16	Three bedrooms, living room, scullery and pantry
Rennie Street	74	One Bedroom, living room, scullery and pantry
Siemen Street	6	Three bedrooms, living room, scullery and pantry
Stephenson Street	88	Approximately half were one bed roomed and the others were three bed roomed.
St. Cuthberts Terrace	12	Two or three bedrooms, sitting room, living room, scullery and pantry. Small front garden.
Watt Street	44	Mostly one bedroom and about four houses had three bedrooms
Westcott Terrace	30	Two bedrooms, sitting room, scullery and pantry. Small front garden. For senior managers
The Villas	6	Three storey buildings with a front garden. For senior managers.
Denehurst	1	Large detached house for the Colliery





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		manager.
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Each terrace or street was named after a famous person and below is a brief biography of the people related to each street.

**Barrington Terrace:**

Shute Barrington (1734-1826). He was Bishop of Llandaff and Salisbury before being appointed Prince Bishop of Durham in 1791. He served until 1826 and was regarded as a most influential prelate during his time of office.

**Bessemer Street:**

Sir Henry Bessemer (1813-1898). He was an inventor and engineer. He developed the first process for mass producing inexpensive steel. Steel manufacturing process today is an extension of the processes developed by Bessemer.

**Brunel Street:**

Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1839). His great feats included designing a tunnelling shield which allowed a tunnel to move forward without collapsing. In 1830 he built the Clifton Bridge. He designed two ships, The Great Eastern and The Great Britain.

**Davy Street:**

Sir Humphrey Davy (1778-1829). After being educated in Truro, Davy was apprenticed to a surgeon in Penzance. In 1778 he took up chemistry and was taken on by Thomas Beddoes, as an assistant at his Medical Pneumatic Institution in Bristol. Davy was considered to be Britain's leading scientist and in 1812 he was





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knighted by George the third. His great contribution to coal mining was the development of the Miners' Safety Lamp.

### **Faraday Street:**

Michael Faraday(1791-1867). He was the discoverer of electro-magnetic induction, electro rotations, the magneto-optical effect, and the field theory. The Farad is a measurement used in electricity and electronics and is dedicated to his memory.

### **Hackworth Street:**

Timothy Hackworth(1786-1850). Originally he was a blacksmith, but was recruited by Christopher Blackett in 1808 to work at Wylam Colliery. He was known to have worked on an engine "the Puffing Billy" and George Stephenson appointed him as superintendent of locomotive engine production. He was renowned for the progress he made to the building of steam engines.

### **Kelvin Street:**

William Thompson(Lord Kelvin) 1824-1907). He was born in Belfast where his father was a professor of engineering. When he was ten years old he attended Glasgow University studying mathematics, astronomy, chemistry and physics. In 1841 he attended Cambridge University and following the study of thermodynamics he devised the absolute scale of temperature in 1848. The Kelvin absolute temperature scale derives its name from Baron Kelvin of Largs, which Thompson received from the British Government in 1892.

### **Lightfoot Terrace:**

Joseph Barber Lightfoot (1828-1889). He was Bishop of Durham from 1879 to 1889.





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A noted academic he held posts at Cambridge and was made Canon of St. Paul's, London in 1871. He was a member of the Company of Revisers of the New Testament.

### **Newcomen Street:**

Thomas Newcomen(1663-1729) He lived in Dartmouth in Devon and is credited with inventing the world's first successful atmospheric steam engine in 1712. It enabled mines to be drained to greater depths than were hitherto possible and so helped provide the coal, iron and other metals that were vital to the expansion of the industry.

### **Newton Street:**

Sir Isaac Newton(1642-1727). He was a mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher and was educated at Grantham School and Trinity College Cambridge. In 1666 it is said that the fall of an apple suggested the law of gravitation. However he did not conclude his calculations on this subject until 1684. He was knighted in 1705.

### **Paxton Street:**

Sir Joseph Paxton(1803-1865). His principal claim to fame is his design for the Crystal Palace in 1851. He began his career as head gardener to the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth where he exercises his ingenuity in designing glass houses. He was knighted in 1851.

### **Rennie Street:**

John Rennie(1761-1821). He was born in East Linton, Scotland. He studied at Edinburgh University and in 1791 moved to London where he started his own





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engineering company. He became a famous bridge builder, building bridges such as Leeds Bridge, Southwark Bridge and Waterloo Bridge. He was also involved in designing and building docks at Hull, Liverpool, Greenock and Leith. His last project was London Bridge but it was unfinished when he died in 1821.

**Siemens Street:**

Sir William Siemen(1823-1883) He was born in Hanover but settled in England in 1844. He was naturalised in 1859 and was knighted in 1883. Together with his brother Ernst Werner Von Siemens he developed furnaces to produce steel from iron ore. This revolutionized the method of steel production. He was also a pioneer in electric tramways.

**St Cuthberts Terrace:**

St. Cuthbert(635-687). Cuthbert was a hermit on the Farne and Holy Islands. In 685 he was made Bishop of Lindisfarne. His body was placed in a tomb in Durham Cathedral. The Cathedral was dedicated to him and became a place of pilgrimage.

**Stephenson Street:**

George Stephenson(1781-1848). He was born near Newcastle and in 1821 constructed the Stockton and Darlington Railway line and also in 1829 a railway line from Liverpool to Manchester. His steam engine The Rocket attained a speed of 35mph which was a remarkable speed in those days.

**Watt Street:**

James Watt(1736-1819) He was born in Greenock. In 1754 he went to Glasgow where he was appointed mathematical instrument maker to the university. Later he





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was employed on the Forth and Clyde Canal and the Caledonian Canal. In 1763 when repairing a Newcomen steam engine he discovered how he could make it more efficient. In 1781 he produced a rotary-motion engine which could then drive many forms of machinery. His up and down pumping action engine was ideal for draining water from mines. His crowning achievement was the invention of the governor for steam engines.

### **Westcott Terrace:**

Brooke Foss Westcott(1825-1901) He was born near Birmingham and educated at King Edward's School and Cambridge. He took holy orders in 1851 and became Canon of Peterborough and Professor of Divinity at Cambridge and later became Bishop of Durham in 1880. He assisted the revision of the New Testament. In 1883 he was ordained Canon of Westminster.

### **The Villas:**

This small terrace of six houses has no connection with any famous person.

### **Denehurst:**

The colliery manager's house was a large house standing in its own grounds. The name is spelt as in Denery and it may have been intended to represent Denehouse.

Before leaving the subject of housing it is important that I refer to the homes built for retired miners. Under the auspices of the Durham Aged Miners Homes Association and the Lodge of the Dean and Chapter Colliery, two crescents of some 24 homes in each crescent were built on the north side of Paxton street. These were one bed roomed bungalow with a small front garden. They were called the William





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Keers Crescent and the Joseph Patterson Crescent. Although the provision of these houses was a sign of progress the site chosen was not without problems. It was a long way from any shops and for the elderly it was too far to walk to Ferryhill Village. It was also very exposed to inclement weather and in winter time suffered from heavy snow. Joseph Patterson Crescent was named after Mr. Joseph Patterson, who was the Checkweighman, a very responsible position, in that he represented the workmen, and it was his duty to ensure that all the tubs of coal that came out of the mine were weighed and accredited to the coal hewer who produced them. William Keers Crescent was named after Mr. William Keers who was an official of the Miner's Union. Today these bungalows have been refurbished and modernised.

*Digitised By Dru Trenholm*

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