

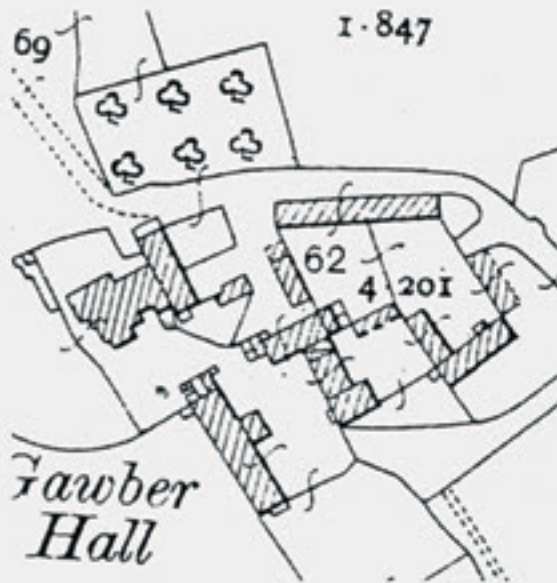
INTRODUCTION

THE WORLD OF art can sometimes seem to be divorced from people's everyday working life and concerns. When works of art are corralled into specialist buildings to which a special journey has to be made, it can seem so. But past Barnsley artists' histories show that artists themselves were far from separate. Many came from amidst Barnsley's past industries. Some grew up in the middle of a glassworks as at Gawber Hall; others found that painting what was all around them, namely the landscape, could be an effective way of earning a living to replace linen weaving when that industry was faltering; a coal miner spent what leisure hours he had painting what he saw underground and expressing his feelings about it; another embellished his workplace with large, almost humorous images of work reflecting back to the workforce the bare essentials of their craft. Artists came from all walks of life and their art has been displayed in places where it becomes part of everyday life, not just for the few who visit galleries or who can afford to buy original work for their homes.

There are three articles that explore these themes: glassmaking, linen weaving and coal mining. We show the history of how artists were connected with each industry providing an historical overview in each section to set the context. The details of each artist's history are not shown in this booklet but in the specific one on each artist.

GLASSMAKING AND THE HIDDEN ART OF BARNSELEY

GLASSMAKING HAS BEEN an important industry in the Borough of Barnsley for nearly five centuries. Before 20th-century mechanisation, glassmaking required design skill in fashioning the products, not just to fulfil their function but also to be aesthetically pleasing to its customers. Glassmakers needed to understand the way the material worked, the different effects of different ingredients in its chemical make-up and the effect of heat on their material. They required an agile ability with fingers and hands and good hand-eye co-ordination and they needed to have ideas about shape. It is perhaps not surprising that amongst some glassmaking families there was artistic skill and inspiration.



Below: Gawber Hall side B facing NW downhill some years before 1935 judging from the size of the tree perhaps c.1915. It seems divided into at least two dwelling units. Courtesy of Tasker Trust.

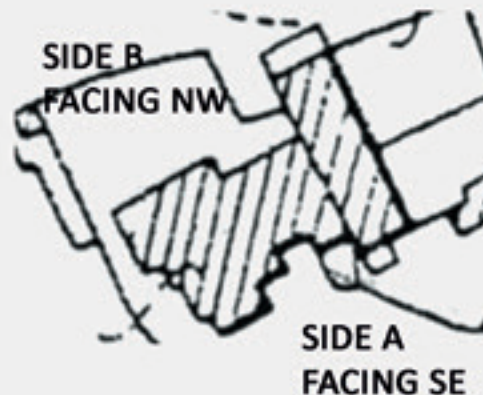
Map from Archives-1904



Above: Sketch plan for sale in 1821 seemingly not very accurate.

Detail of 1904 map enlarged to show plan of the Hall

Courtesy Denis Ashurst from an original in collection of J.F.Goodchild



GAWBER HALL



Gawber Hall was situated on a lane connecting Huddersfield Road and Gawber. When the hall was pulled down the interesting timber structure was revealed including a pigeon loft with its numerous nesting holes.



**Side A
Images courtesy
of Tasker Trust**

**Top picture of side A
Bottom picture is a close up of demolition pict**



**Gawber Hall side A
being demolished 1935
courtesy Barnsley MBC**

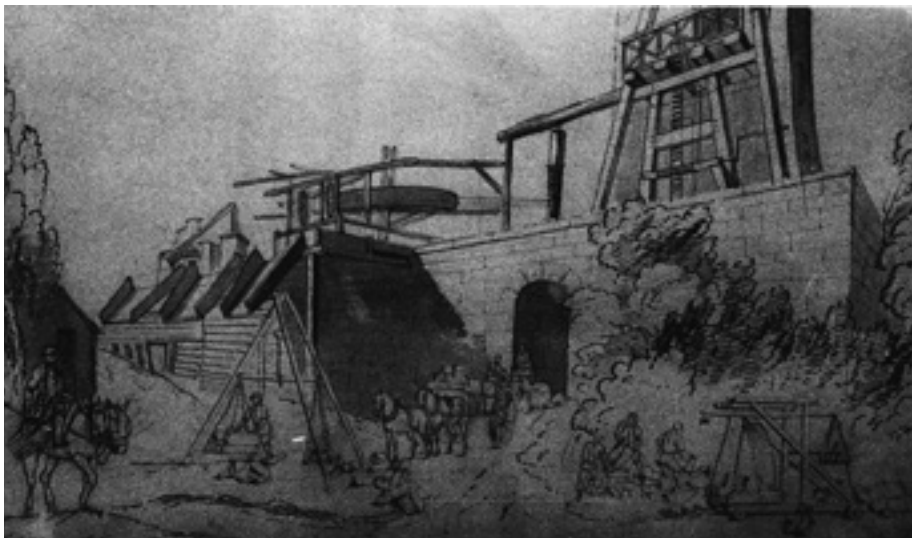
The first examples that we know about were the amateur artist and patron of the arts, Richard Tate (1736–1787) and his younger brother the professional painter William Tate (1747–1806). Their father, Paul Tate, was a glassmaker at Gawber Hall glassworks from the mid 1730s until he died in 1782. The two brothers were brought up at Gawber Hall; in adulthood they moved to Liverpool, Richard to work in a new glassworks and William to study, becoming a pupil of Joseph Wright of Derby. All Richard Tate's four children were exhibiting amateur artists there. William Tate painted portraits of the proprietors of Gawber Hall Glassworks, namely William Thorp (1695–1774) and his son Samuel Thorp (1747–1829), both recorded in the parish registers as glassmakers (see fourth image below).

William and James Williamson, assumed to be brothers, worked as glassmakers at Gawber Hall in the 1760s. James' son Joseph Williamson was baptised at Darton church in 1769. Joseph also moved to Liverpool and later married Elizabeth Tate, Richard Tate's daughter. She was an amateur artist and he an art collector. He is famous in Liverpool for building a series of huge tunnels in Edgehill and in the process providing employment to many unemployed people at a time of great anxiety about the potential for revolution after the return of troops from the Napoleonic war.

A third link is seen in the history of the Fox family. It was the children of James Fox (1828–1885) who in the 1930s provided finance to the Cooper Gallery for a new wing and donated their father's art collection to be shown in it. This is the present Fox wing. James Fox had been a successful businessman in pubs and hotels in Barnsley; in the Darton parish registers in 1814, his grandfather Thomas Fox is recorded as a glassmaker at Gawber some years before it closed in 1821. James Fox's father, another Thomas, as a teenager became a collier at Norcroft Pit, owned by the proprietor of Gawber Hall Glass Works and coal owner Samuel Thorp of Banks Hall. This Thomas Fox aged about 16 was the sole survivor of the terrible Norcroft pit disaster in 1821 when 10 men and boys were killed in a lift fall.



Joseph Williamson (1769–1840), 'the Mole of Edgehill' who built a complex system of tunnels at Edgehill, Liverpool and art collector. Artist unknown
Courtesy of National Museums, Liverpool (the Walker)



Drawing of Norcroft pit by Nattes 1807, showing a set-up for deep mining of coal with a hand-cranked windlass or a horse-gin with chutes and weighing scales. Nattes drew this when staying at Cannon Hall
Courtesy of Barry Jackson



Photograph of part of the exhibition at the Cooper Gallery, June to August 2014, showing on the left and right of the picture two painted panels by Kenneth Leslie Graham which had at one time hung in the entrance hall to Woods. The two portraits are of William Thorp of Gawber Hall, glassmaker (1695–1774) on the right, and his longest surviving son on the left, Samuel Thorp of Gawber Hall and then Banks Hall, Cawthorne (1749–1829), glassmaker and coal owner. In the middle is shown the digital recreation of Gawber Glasshouse made for the exhibition by students at Barnsley College
 Courtesy of private owner, BAYD and Barnsley Arts Museums and Archives Service

Finally Kenneth Leslie Graham (1900–1979) was an embodiment of the closeness between glassmaking and art. He became the chief designer at Wood Brothers Glass Works Ltd at Hoyle Mill from 1928; in 1938 he left to join Coty's Perfumery in London as Creative Manager. He is credited with designing the Coty logo. Subsequently he worked as an artist, illustrator and writer with his own London gallery. He has left a fine legacy of drawings and prints of Old Barnsley undertaken in the 1930s.

Further research may reveal other artists or art patrons who worked in or grew out of early glassmaking in the Borough of Barnsley. We know who many of the early glassmaking families were. Although there are no business records surviving for Gawber Hall glassworks, Darton parish registers do record the employment status of men who were either married or buried or who baptised children during this period of the glassworks (1733–1821). Thirty-eight glassmakers are recorded in 27 families. Based on length of service, the more significant families are Thorp, Tate, Shaw, Morton, Woodcock, Morgan, Fowweather, Smith and Jephson. There will have been other workers who were not recorded in the parish registers and some who worked there but not as actual glassmakers (e.g. labourers). Denis Ashurst suggests that glassmakers

moved about the country in order to better their pay, prospects or employment security. This led to interesting connections between different glass works – a topic for future work.

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF EARLY GLASSMAKING IN THE BOROUGH OF BARNESLEY

Coal-fired glassmaking furnaces date from the year 1615, when wood was forbidden in order to protect the forests. In the 17th century there were five coal-fired glass works within or in close proximity to what is the current Borough of Barnsley.

- At Wentworth, just two miles outside the Borough of Barnsley, window glass was made (1632–1642). It was on land held by Thomas Wentworth, chief minister to Charles I, who was created Earl of Strafford in 1640 but executed in 1641. The glassmaker here, Francis Bristow, had previously been at Haughton Green Glass Works, near Manchester. He was imprisoned in 1642 for not paying his dues. The works were short-lived
- At Silkstone, what is now Pot House Hamlet (1650 to early 1700s) was the site of a glassworks created by the Pilmay family on land owned by William Scott. Pilmay had also worked at Haughton Green. There were two furnaces: one for bottles and window glass, the other for fine quality tableware. Francis Morton was a glassmaker here; he had married Mary Scott, granddaughter of William Scott and Abigail Pilmay. He died in 1732. Mortons were to feature at the new Gawber glassworks in the mid-1730s. Roggins History Group and Heritage Silkstone have researched many aspects of this glassworks and have celebrated its history with information boards. Further work is needed to establish the connections between Silkstone and Gawber
- At Bolsterstone near Stocksbridge, just a few miles outside the current Barnsley Borough boundary, a glassworks was created by the Fox family of Fulwood Hall, Sheffield (1650s–1758). Household glass and fine tableware was made here. William Fenney was the glassmaker there before moving to Catchiffe in 1740
- At Gawber Hall, there is archaeological evidence that shows that there was a glass furnace whose last firing was in the early 1700s. There is no evidence of when this started. It was found when excavating the site of the later glassworks at Gawber Hall
- Ferrybridge at Houghton (renamed Glass Houghton in 1756), just beyond the northern boundary of the Borough of Barnsley, there was developed a glassworks owned by William Clifton, operational between 1691 and mid-1740s

Author's photograph from the glass display cabinet at the *Hidden Art of Barnsley* exhibition June to August 2014 at the Cooper Gallery, Barnsley. The bottles are of the right age and type to have been made at Gawber between 1735 and 1821
Courtesy of private owners and Cawthorne Jubilee Museum



Surviving glassmaking cone at Catcliffe, Rotherham built in 1740 as one of two cones
Author's photograph



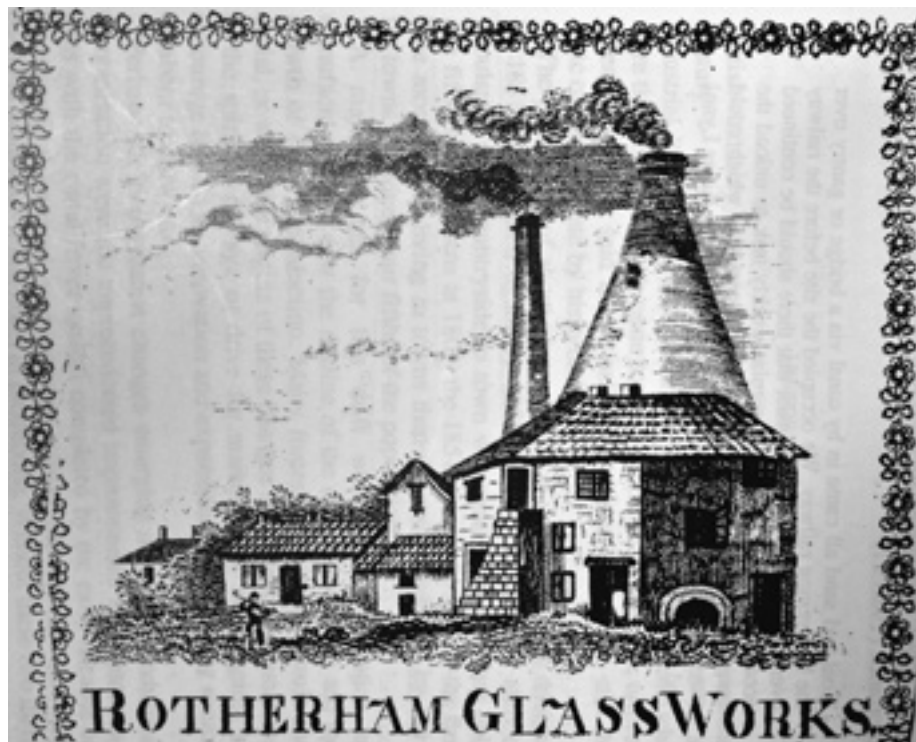


Image of 18th-century Masbrough Glassworks in Rotherham
Courtesy of Denis Ashurst

INTO THE 18TH CENTURY

Four of these 17th-century creations were in operation into the 18th century when a new Gawber glass works was built by William Thorp (1695–1774) from Houghton after taking a lease of Gawber Hall in 1733. Apart from Paul Tate, his nephew, the first glassmaker was William Morton who may be related to Francis Morton of Silkstone. This had a fine reputation for ‘black glass’ bottles towards the end of the 18th century and window glass was made there earlier on. From the excavations, it was a cone building, which is assumed to be similar to the 1740 cone at Catcliffe, near Rotherham.

At Catcliffe, Rotherham, (1740–1884), William Fenney from Bolsterstone glass works built two cones for bottles, flint and window glass.

A further 18th-century glass works with two cones was developed near to Barnsley at Masbrough in Rotherham in 1751; there had been a succession of cones on this site until it was demolished in 1945. The Beatson and Clark families were involved at different times and it formally became Beatson, Clark and Co in 1910.

However glass could not compete with, on the one hand, coal and, on the other, iron and steel. Two factors were crippling taxes from 1745 to 1845 and being landlocked so that large-scale exporting was too uneconomic.

Codd bottle pioneered by Rylands
Glassworks in the late 19th century



BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HISTORY OF 19TH- AND 20TH-CENTURY GLASSMAKING
IN THE BOROUGH OF BARNSELY

In the 19th century, a change in the tax regime of 1845 encouraged a dramatic expansion of glassmaking in the area. Canals and railways improved transport.

By the mid-1860s Yorkshire was a great seat of bottlemaking. There were 25 glass works in South Yorkshire by 1900. There were very many businesses created including in Barnsley:

- Wood Brothers (1834–1982) starting at Worsbrough Bridge by taking over the Borough Flint Glass Works there (1828–1834) and moving to Hoyle Mill in 1872
- Redfearns at Old Mill (1861–1946) and Monk Bretton (1946 onwards)
- Hope Glass Works, Stairfoot (1867–1927) – run by Rylands until 1927 when Beatson Clarks of Masbrough purchased it
- Oaks Glass Bottle Works (1872–1927)
- Wombwell – various works from 1872–1927
- Dobson and Nalls (1881–1920s)
- Manor Flint Glass Works at Stairfoot (1895–1938)
- Potters Bellatini (1960 onwards)

In the 20th century the story is of relative decline with only eight glass works in 1930 and five by 1990. Ashurst gives causes as:

- Over specialisation
- Overseas competition
- Saturation of markets

However mechanisation had led to an enormous increase in the amount of glass produced.

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Barnsley Archives and Local Studies

Sheffield Archives

Wakefield Archives

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