

**South Shields Volunteer Life
Brigade**

**Annual Reports for
1870's**

Transcripts of the Annual Meetings as
reported in the local press

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CONTENTS

Annual Meeting 1870.....	2
Annual Meeting 1871	6
Annual Meeting 1872	9
Annual Meeting 1873.....	15
Annual Meeting 1874.....	18
Annual Meeting 1875.....	22
Annual Meeting 1876	28
Annual Meeting 1877	29
Annual Supper 1877	33
Annual Meeting 1878	39
Annual Meeting 1879.....	43
Additional Report	49

ANNUAL MEETING 1870

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

Yesterday evening, the annual meeting of the members of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade, was held in the Brigade House, on the South Pier, Ald. Glover presiding. Amongst those present were. Messrs M. Cay, J. W. Lamb, M. Cay, jun., S. Malcolm (hon. sec.), W. Blakie, W. Cay, J. Crease, the Rev. Mr Moore (chaplain on board the Joseph Straker, Mission ship), &c.

The Chairman, in opening the proceedings, said that he was very proud once more to preside over the annual meeting of the Brigade. There was nothing worthy of special mention, unless it was that they had been as watchful as ever during the year, and ready to give their services on behalf of poor shipwrecked seamen. Only once had there been an occasion where life was imperilled, and in that case the men were saved by the lifeboat, which was quite as gratifying as though they had been saved by the brigade. The institution was popular not only in South Shields but in the district, and the brigade house was quite a feature to the visitors that came to the pier, the more so as Capt. Wilson was so attentive to them (applause). Though he (the Chairman) has not the pleasure this time of congratulating them upon their bravery, yet he could congratulate them upon the willingness they at all times displayed of giving assistance to the vessels that chanced to be in distress. (Applause.)

Mr Malcolm (hon. sec.) then read the following report:—

"The committee have again the pleasure of meeting the members and presenting the fourth annual report. Although during the past year it has not been our fortune to save life, yet on several occasions we have been summoned to vessels in distress. Oct. 16, 1869, a terrific gale from the NNE visited this coast, doing immense amount of damage to shipping property. The first casualty we were connected with was a *pilot coble*, which had gone out early in the evening, and was obliged to put back. After struggling for some time, the crew ran the boat on the beach. Some of our members were promptly on the spot, and soon had both men and boat in safety.

The brig *Sea Horse, of Aberdeen*, in for the harbour, about 9 p.m., and after having rounded the North Pier, was struck by a heavy sea and had her rudder and steering gear carried away. She was now at the mercy of the waves, and it was quite certain would drive ashore. 59 men obeyed the summons of the signal guns, and got all the apparatus in readiness if required. The vessel eventually stranded, and the lifeboat Tyne had the honour of saving the crew of 7 hands. At midnight the guns were again fired, and brought out 47 members. The gale had increased considerably, and in taking the bar the brig *Friends, of Aberdeen*, was struck by a sea, and, becoming unmanageable, gradually drifted on to the South Pier. On this occasion, also, the lifeboat Tyne saved the crew of 6 hands. There is one circumstance in connection with this last wreck that your committee would like to mention, in the hope that by bringing it before the public it may not again be a cause of complaint. A great number of men going to their homes late the Saturday night rushed to the pier on hearing the guns. Their conduct was most uproarious. The apparatus had all been arranged ready for use, but the mob soon had it kicked and trodden about, and the delay in re-arranging the ropes might have been very serious. An arrangement has since been come to, between the Borough and River Police, by which, in cases of shipwreck, detachments will be sent down to keep on the public and prevent the members from being interfered with in the discharge of their duties.

On December 1st, the signal guns summoned us to the schooner *Squirrel*, on the Herd Sand, and also about 7 o'clock on the morning of March 23rd, this year, to the schooner *Alert*, of Wick, in a similar position.

There have been 13 ordinary drills, with an average attendance of 38; also 4 wrecks, average attendance, 47. The number of men on the roll books is 108, after striking off those who have not attended one drill.

The Sunday evening services are still held in the Watch House, under the superintendence of the Rev. P. H. Moore, and are very popular and well attended.

We are also glad to report that the improvements made in the travelling block by Mr Robert Bell, one of our members, after several trials, have been considered by the Board of Trade as eminently satisfactory, and the award of £20 to Mr Bell is not only an acknowledgment of the value of the improvement, but also, we hope, will be an encouragement to other members to make the rocket apparatus still more perfect.

It is our melancholy duty to record the death of the late honorary surgeon. From the commencement of the brigade, Dr Stokoe took a great interest in its affairs, not only

in his official capacity, but also as a private member. Dr Crease has since kindly offered his services to the institution, which were accepted by the committee, subject to the approval of the members at this meeting.

A vacancy has also occurred among the captains. The committee, while regretting that Mr William Wright has thought it his duty to leave England and reside at Sulina, are glad to give expression to their sense of the ability and energy with which he performed his duties as an officer and member of this brigade, contributing very much, by his zeal and attention, to promote its efficiency. Before leaving, the members subscribed and presented him with a gold chain as a small memento of his connection with us. We are sure all will wish him success in his new sphere.

After a long correspondence the Board of Trade have awarded us £40 for services at shipwrecks. This sum has been spent in providing the members with Guernsey frocks, which not only improve their appearance at drill, but will also increase their comfort during the cold stormy nights of winter. We recommend that no member be allowed to drill who does not wear his Guernsey and belt.

The Brigade was inspected April 25th by Captain Robertson, R.N., Surveyor-General to the Board of Trade, who, as on former occasions, complimented the members on their efficiency. Since the inspection new sets of gear have been granted, and also a new cart ordered to be supplied for conveying the apparatus along the coast if necessary. The Watch House has been repainted and varnished, and is becoming very attractive to strangers, who, with the towns people in general, are allowed by the committee to inspect its arrangements. During the year efforts have been made to form a library, and, thanks to our many kind friends, about 100 volumes have been collected, besides a weekly supply of illustrated papers. Looking at the past year whole, your committee believe that great improvement has been made in the efficiency and attention of the members, that the Brigade is becoming more than ever a permanent institution of the town, and they hope when this generation of members shall have passed away, that brave hearts and willing hands will be "always ready" not only to man the lifeboats of the sister institution, but also work the rocket apparatus of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade."

Mr Malcolm also read the treasurer's report, from which it appeared that the expenses during the year had amounted to £100 1s, and there was now a balance due of £10 7s 3d. The balance in hand from last year was £10 8s 7d, but there had been £50 expended upon Guernsey frocks.

Mr Bell moved, White, jun., seconded, and it was carried unanimously, that the reports received and adopted.

Mr Blakie said that he thought the amount subscribed towards the Library was very small. He did not know what steps had been taken make public the fact that a library had been established, but thought it should subject for consideration whether they should publish it as widely as possible. He had doubt that if that was done that there would be soon an increase of the contributions and subscriptions.

Mr R. Thompson, Newcastle, said that, as the first fruits of Mr Blakie's suggestion, he would have great pleasure presenting the institution with 50 volumes (Great applause.)

A vote of thanks was immediately accorded to Mr Thompson for his offer. Similar compliments were paid to the hon. secretary, and the hon. surgeon.

The following was the result of the voting for officers for the ensuing year:—Capts., Messrs N. Riddle, W. Cay, M. Cay, and S. Cotten; treasurer, Mr Archibald Stevenson (unanimously); secretary, Mr S. Malcolm (unanimously); committee—Messrs T. Howlsby; T. A. Wilson, T. G. Mabane, J. Wood, J. Smith, R. Bell, B. Birch, J. Crisp, M. McQueen, J. R. Crease, and J. F. White.

This concluded the business of the meeting, which then broke up, but resumed again for the usual annual supper, at which number of complimentary toasts were drunk.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette July 1870

ANNUAL MEETING 1871

South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade

The annual meeting of this brigade was held, last night, in the Watch House on the pier, Ald. Glover presiding. There was a pretty good muster of members, and there were also present the Rev. P. H. Moore; Dr Crease, Messrs J. Robinson, M. Cay, sen., R, Thompson, J. L. Hall, Blakie, W, Glover, Crisp, Price, J. W. Lamb, Malcolm, T. G. Mabane, Quick (Commander of the Coast Guard), &c.

The CHAIRMAN having expressed the pleasure felt in once more coming amongst the members of this brigade, called upon

Mr MALCOLM (hon. sec.) who read the following report —Another year has gone, and your committee have again the pleasure of meeting the members and presenting the fifth annual report. Although last year we attended several vessels in distress, yet had not the opportunity of landing any the crews with the apparatus. This year we have been summoned to four shipwrecks. The first occurred on Dec. 9. During the night a heavy gale from the SE sprang up, accompanied by blinding showers of hail and rain. About daybreak a steamer, when crossing the bar, was struck by a heavy sea, which damaged the steering gear and put out the fires. Becoming unmanageable, she gradually drifted on to the herd. With great promptitude, the members on duty fired a rocket, but another had to be sent before communication was effected. Through some misunderstanding, the crew did not use the lines, and were eventually taken out (17 all told), by the Tyne and Northumberland Lifeboats. She proved to be the screw-steamer Eagle, of London. The storm continued with increased violence during the day, and about half-past four in the afternoon there was one of those tragical events which sometimes happen on our dangerous coast. A small vessel was descried in a very critical position near the South Pier. The apparatus was run along and got ready with all possible speed, but, to the intense horror of the numerous spectators, a terrible sea capsized her, and another huge roller following immediately after, sent her to the bottom with all on board. In a short time the wreckage began to drift ashore, among which a nameboard and portions of the log-book, from which learnt she was the schooner Samuel Barnard, of Boston, with supposed crew of five hands. December 20th was the date of the next wreck. In the afternoon, a gale from the SE came on, and increased very rapidly. About 7 p.m., a vessel was observed approaching the harbour. When near the bar, a succession of heavy seas struck her, and she became unmanageable. Despite the efforts of her crew, she was dashed on to the stones at the extreme end of the South Pier. Those who have seen this portion of the pier during ordinary easterly gale will have some idea of the danger to the members conveying along and working the rocket apparatus. Nothing daunted, but true to their motto of being "always ready" to risk their lives at duty's call, a rocket was fired. Communication with the vessel obtained, and the whole crew 10 hands brought safely ashore. The committee would here remark, and they are sure all present will endorse the opinion that, if the members had not saved a crew before, or were never to save another, still they would, feel amply rewarded for all their efforts in establishing the brigade, by being instrumental in saving this the crew of barque Union of Colchester. While other crews we have landed might, in some instance

have been saved by the lifeboats, or left their ships when the tide receded, yet from this vessel's dangerous position no boat could have ventured near. Just after landing the man she fell over with her decks to the sea among the boiling waves, and was very soon a shapeless mass of broken timber. At four o'clock in the morning of January 23rd the signal guns aroused the brigade to attend the brig Maize, of London, stranded at the south side of the pier. By means of the heaving line, the gear was got on board, and six of the crew landed, the remaining man getting into the lifeboat. Such is brief account of our attendance at wrecks, saving 16 lives; this number, added to 68 reported in previous years, making a total of 84. Besides the above, several casualties have occurred by the upsetting of fishing and other boats, at which some of the members have been instrumental in saving lives. The watch-house, with all its appliances, has been found most useful in such cases. 95 men are now on the roll-book, but with deaths and resignations, the number is reduced to 89, so that there are 11 vacancies to bring the Brigade to its maximum strength of 100. The average attendance at drill has been 35.4. We have not had an official inspection but your committee hope, when the Inspector-General to the Board of Trade comes round (which may be shortly) the members will muster in force and acquit themselves with credit to the Brigade.

The Treasurer's report, which was also read by Mr Malcolm, in the absence Mr A. Stevenson, stating that the year's receipts amounted to £84 16s, including a contribution of £25 received from the Board of Trade, £10 from the Lifeboat Trustees, £6 15s 5d from the box in the Watchhouse, and £34 7s 4d as the proceeds from the South Shields Glee Club concert, held in the Theatre Royal some months since. The balance in the hands of the treasurer, after paying all expenses, amounted to £21 17s 1d.

Mr WILSON moved the adoption the report.

Mr MABANE, in seconding the motion, congratulated the treasurer on the satisfactory position in which the Brigade was placed, and remarked that great credit was due to Mr Black for allowing his Glee Club to give the concert in the Theatre, by which they had got about £30 added to their fund. The concert was not only a success financially, but afforded a great treat to the large audience which assembled in the Theatre on the occasion.

TREASURER remarked that the sixteen lives had been saved a cost only £3 10s each.

Mr MALCOLM proposed the re-election of Dr Crease as honorary surgeon, which was carried amid applause.

Dr. CREASE, in returning thanks, said the post of honorary surgeon was one which he valued very highly, and would be extremely glad at any time to give his services. His services during the past year had been nil, but he thought that this fact spoke highly as to the efficacy the Brigade.

Mr WILSON But you are always Doctor. (Laughter)

Dr CREASE: Oh, yes. (Applause)

Some discussion took place on a motion submitted by Mr Wilson to the effect that members who attended the Brigade House from 11 o'clock at night until three o'clock in the morning during stormy weather, should have one drill for each attendance placed to their credit as some compensation for the self-denial which they displayed. It was agreed that the Secretary should write to the Board of Trade on the subject.

Mr W. PURVIS and Mr WILSON urged the importance of purchasing a small life-boat for the rescue of bathers who were placed danger; but Mr W. Cay and other members objected to the funds of the Brigade being devoted to any object but that for which the Institution was established, viz., the saving of seamen from drowning by ship wreck. It was agreed that the subject should stand over for consideration.

The CHAIRMAN, in addressing the meeting, said the reports were extremely satisfactory, and must be a source of gratification, not only to the Brigade but to the public. The members were lavish of their bravery in time of danger, and, as a Shields man, he was very proud them. (Applause)

Mr K. THOMPSON having briefly addressed meeting.

Mr J. ROBINSON said that the pier work progressed the danger to vessels would be greater and increased watchfulness on the part of the Brigade would be required. He urged the members to render themselves efficient it was possible for them to be and also remarked that it was highly necessary that seamen should be taught the use of the apparatus, and with a view to this end he recommended that practices should be carried on near the river.

The following were elected the Captains of the Brigade —Messrs Riddell, W. Cay, M. Cay, and Mabane; Mr A. Stevenson was re-elected treasurer; and Mr Malcolm secretary.

The proceedings of the meeting terminated with the election of the Deputy Captains, and the members afterwards sat down to supper, at which Ald. Glover presided.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 14th of July 1871

ANNUAL MEETING 1872

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

Last night, the annual meeting of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held in the Watch House at the South Pier—Ald. Glover occupying the chair. There was a numerous attendance of members; and among those present were the Rev. P. H. Moore, Dr Crease (hon. surgeon), Mr Weatherburn, Mr Dixon (Collector of Customs at Shields), and Messrs M. Cay, sen., W. Cay, S. M. Malcolm (sec.), R. Thompson, M. Cay, jun., T. G. Mabane, W. Quick, and G. Hannay.

The CHAIRMAN expressed his pleasure at seeing them gathered together, and called upon the Secretary to read the report.

Mr MALCOLM then read the following report: — "Your committee have again the pleasure of meeting the members and presenting the sixth report. During the past year our coast has not been visited by severe storms as are sometimes experienced. Nevertheless, gales have occurred, causing, we regret to say, the loss of useful lives and the destruction of valuable property. The principal disasters we have been connected with were the wrecks of the Anne, the Frisia, and the Amphitrite, The Anne came ashore on the inside of the Pier on the night the 2nd of October, 1871, during a severe gale from the ESE, and the Amphitrite stranded at the south of the Pier during the afternoon of 21st of April, 1871, while a heavy storm was from the NNE. In each case the sea was very high, but from the positions of vessels the crews were not in much danger. Although the brigade had not the honour of saving the men, we would at the same time hear testimony to the noble conduct of our gallant brethren the lifeboatmen, who at times were in rather perilous positions. On both occasions the lifeboat Tyne succeeded in rescuing the crews. We trust that a generous rivalry will always exist between these kindred institutions, and that each will rejoice the success of the other. Established as they have been, for such a noble object—an object worthy of the most heroic efforts of the human powers are capable of exercising—we hope that the same generous spirit will be handed down from generation to generation, so that the establishment of the Tyne lifeboats and the Tyne Life Brigades may prove as great a benefit in the future as they have been in the past. The loss of the Frisia and its fatal consequences will long be remembered by those who were eye-witnesses. Heavy squalls of wind, principally from the NNW, accompanied with hail and snow, visited this part of the coast, the sea outside presenting a very stormy appearance, and the heavy rollers dashing with considerable violence against the Piers. About ten o'clock in the forenoon of the 3rd of December, 1871, the Frisia proceeded down the river, in tow, intending to go to sea. When a little below the Black Middens the force of the waves was such that no progress could be made. A sudden squall at the same time broke the tow line and sent her over to the south side of the channel. Efforts were made by another steamboat to get a line on board, but these failing, the vessel gradually drifted till she came in contact with the staging at the end of the Pier. In the meantime, the rocket apparatus had been conveyed along the Pier close to where the ill-fated vessel lay. After clearing the staging, she struck on the Pier stones, and, to the horror of everyone, she broke in two, and immediately began to fall to pieces. The crew, six in number, were crowding together at the fore end. Heaving lines were thrown to them, and by their means the captain and one man were, with great difficulty brought ashore. Another of the crew saved himself by climbing up the staging, but we regret to say that the other three fellows, after being sadly knocked about among the wreckage by the heavy waves, ultimately succumbed, and sank amongst the seething foam. In less than half an hour the unfortunate schooner was scattered in fragments along the Pier. The bodies of the three men were soon recovered and brought to the Watch House, where every effort was made to restore animation, but without effect. We would here make testimony to the unwearied exertions of our honorary surgeon Dr Crease, on this and several other occasions during the year when accidents have occurred at the Pier. Financially the Brigade is in a very prosperous condition, and, as will be seen from the treasurer's report, besides meeting our ordinary expenses, we have presented each effective member with a pair of pilot clothe trousers to be worn at drill and in stormy weather.

When funds will allow, your committee will be glad to extend the principle of supplying the members with other articles of clothing should it generally be thought necessary. There is also an improvement in the attendances of members, the average at ordinary drills being 38.5 and at wrecks 52.3 with a total membership of 100. During the year, the Brigade has been twice inspected by Captain Robertson, R. N., Surveyor-General of the Board of trade, namely, on the 15th of September, 1871, and on the 23rd of May, 1872. On both occasions he congratulated the members on their continued efficiency, and said it would give him great gratification to report most favourably to the Board of Trade. We are also glad to observe the continued interest in the Sunday evening services at the Watch House, as manifested by the large and attentive congregation who assemble from time to time. These meetings are most efficiently conducted by the Rev. F. H. Moore who is ably assisted by Mr W. H. Price. In conclusion your committee would congratulate the members on the continued prosperity of the Brigade, and the increasing interest manifested in its welfare.

Mr JAMES WOOD moved and Mr ROBT. FRASER seconded the adoption of the report.

The CHAIRMAN said the report was of a most satisfactory character, and it was most pleasing to him to see the kindly rivalry that exists between those noble men who manned the lifeboats and the Volunteer Life Brigade, and he was still more pleased to hear the noble sentiment expressed in the report. He had no doubt that the same kindly feeling would exist so long as there was a pilot breathing in South Shields. (Applause)

The report was adopted unanimously.

Mr MALCOLM then read the financial statement showing an expenditure of £63 0s 8 1/2d-leaving the institution 1s 4 1/2d in debt. Mr Malcolm explained that they were not really in debt, as there was a subscription of £15 due from the lifeboat trustees.

On the motion of Mr MABANE, seconded by Mr BELL, the statement was adopted.

Mr W. CAY moved the re-election of Dr Crease as honorary surgeon, and expressed his high appreciation of the kindness, the courtesy and the attention of that gentleman; indeed the kindness of Dr Crease was beyond any praise which could be given him.

Capt. WILSON seconded the motion, and bore testimony to the value of the services of Dr Crease.

The CHAIRMAN also expressed his high sense of the courtesy and attention of Dr Crease and trusted the motion would be carried with that acclamation it deserved.

The motion was carried amidst applause.

Dr CREASE returned thanks and said he certainly esteemed the position of hon. surgeon very highly. He might take this opportunity of impressing upon the members the necessity of becoming familiar with the regulations for dealing with persons apparently drowned, for he thought a great deal of valuable time might be saved, there would be a greater chance of saving human life.

Votes of thanks were then passed to Mr Chas. Anderson for supplying the Brigade House with coals gratis, to Mr Malcolm, secretary, for his services and to the committee.

Mr WILSON raised a discussion of those members who put in the most attendance, receiving some mark of merit for attendances. He suggested that those who attended most should be put in the first division.

Mr MABANE argued that Mr Wilson's suggestion could not be very well adopted.

Mr E. THOMPSON, Newcastle, solved the difficulty by promising to present, at next annual meeting, six silver medals to those who had most attendances. (Loud applause)

Mr M. CAY, sen., addressed the members and expressed the hope that they would be long spared to perform those services they had hitherto so ably and successfully rendered. He proposed a vote of thanks to the captains of the divisions.

Mr CRAY seconded the motion and said he was quite sure if the institution continued under its present management it would be a success.

Mr M. CAY, jun., briefly responded in appropriate terms.

The SECRETARY announced that the following gentlemen had been appointed to the committee: Messrs T. A. Wilson, J. T. White, T. Houlsby, Jas. Ross, J. Hopper, Jas. Wood, Jos. Smith, W. A. Bavage, R. Bell, Benjamin Birch, M. M'Queen and T. Potter. Captains: Messrs Wm. Cay, M. Cay, jun., T. G. Mabane and Stephen Cottew; deputy captains: J. T. White, Benjamin Birch, Jas. Wood and T. Houlsby.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 12th of July 1872

ANNUAL MEETING 1873

South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade

The seventh annual meeting of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held last night, in the Watch House the South Pier. Mayor (Ald. T. Glover) was unanimously voted to the chair, and there were also present the Rev. P. H. Moore (chaplain), Archibald Stevenson (treasurer), Mr S. Malcolm (secretary), Mr R. Thompson, Newcastle; Captain Quick, R.N., Capt. Dawson, Capt. Cottew, Lieut. Dawson. Messrs W, Dixon, Collector of Customs; J. Robinson, J. L. Hall, - Wawn, Jos. Crisp, Wm Cay, M, Cay, jun.; T. G. Mabane, R. Potts, G. J. T. White, and a large number of the members of the Brigade. Letters were read from the Rev. T. H. Chester, Henry Nelson, Esq , and Dr Crease, regretting their inability to be present on account of other engagements, The minutes of the last meeting having been read and confirmed.

Mr S. MALCOLM (honorary secretary) read the annual report, which stated that the institution had entered upon the eighth year of its existence and was still in a most flourishing condition. During the past year 71 members had made themselves efficient, 11 were non-efficient by not attending the required number of drills, and 18 had fail to attend at all. The latter would be struck off the roll and their places filled by new members. The funds were in a most healthy condition, for which the Brigade was indebted, principally to the late Miss Rawe, who left it a legacy of £15. The first wreck to which the Brigade was summoned was that of the brig Duff, of Portsmouth. On entering the harbour about 8 p.m., on the 17th of Dec., 1872, during an ESE gale and strong ebb, apparently struck on the north side and afterwards hove on to the Herd Sand. The crew was saved by the lifeboat Northumberland. The next day the gale increased, with a tremendous sea, and several vessels had narrow escapes from being driven ashore. One brig, however, the Gleaner, of Blyth, became unmanageable and drove on the Herd. The guns fired and several members joined those who had previously been on the lookout, and who had already got the van with the apparatus taken down the Pier to be in readiness for any casualty that might occur. The lifeboat Northumberland in proceeding to the wreck had several men washed out of her. The brigade men, seeing them struggling in the water, ran along the beach with buoys and life-lines, but could render no assistance to two of the men, who were unfortunately drowned. They, however, assisted to haul the boat up which had drifted near to the Fish Pier, and also attended to the wants of the men who had been overboard. The crew of the Gleaner was taken out by the new lifeboat Tom Perry, but the mate died soon after being landed from injuries received, and another of the crew was killed on board his own vessel. It was during this gale that the barque Consul, of South Shields, was wrecked at the end of the North Pier, and while working the rocket apparatus at this vessel one the members of the Tynemouth Life Brigade was washed off the Pier, and unfortunately drowned. About midnight on the 3rd of February 1873, during a strong gale, a small vessel in tow was observed entering the harbour. The tow-line broke and she came ashore on the north side the South Pier. Heaving lines were thrown on board, and the crew of two men were brought safely ashore. She proved to be a hopper barge bound from Grangemouth to Tyne Dock, and was the property of the North-Eastern Railway Company. Mr Merriman, of New York, was sent down by the Board Trade to exhibit a new waterproof and life preserver, of which he is the patentee. The dress is made of India rubber, and consists of two parts which unite together at the waist the only part of the body exposed being the face. The whole is divided into seven air-tight compartments, which can be inflated separately. It can be worn over the ordinary dress, and only takes about three minutes to adjust. The patentee went into the water and floated about on the tops the waves like a cork. The members present were unanimous in their praise of its merits, and since then the Board of Trade had forwarded two dresses for the use of the Brigade. The committee were glad to report the unabated interest taken in the Sunday evening services held in the Watch House under the superintendence of the Rev. P. H. Moore, and trusted that good results would follow from them.

The Watch House had just been cleaned and painted, the clothing for shipwrecked men renewed, and nothing had been spared that would tend to increase the efficiency the Brigade. In conclusion, the committee hoped the Brigade would continue to prosper for all time to come, and that, long as shipwrecks occurred, willing hearts and hands would be "Always Ready" to render assistance to their more unfortunate fellow creatures.

On the motion Mr R. POTTS, seconded by Mr M. MACQUEEN, the report was adopted.

The treasurer's report was also read by Mr Malcolm. The total receipts amounted to £101 5s 51/2d and included two years' subscription of £20 from the Lifeboat Fund, a legacy of £45 from the late Miss Rawe and a grant of £22 10s from the Board of Trade. The expenditure amounted to £64 8s 71/2d, which left a balance of £36 16s 10d in the hands of the treasurer.

Mr BELL moved, and Mr WILSON seconded, the adoption the report, which was carried.

Mr WM. CAY proposed the re appointment of Dr Crease as honorary surgeon to the Brigade for the coming year, and spoke in eulogistic terms on the attention paid by that gentleman to the institution, and on the lecture which he delivered some time ago on the method of restoring the apparently drowned.

Capt. COTTEW seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mr T. WILSON moved that a hearty vote of thanks be forwarded to C. W. Anderson, Esq , for supplying the Brigade with coals.

Mr JAMES ROSS seconded the motion, and it was unanimously agreed to.

On the motion of Mr BELL, seconded by the Rev. Mr MOORE, a vote of thanks was accorded to Mr J. B. Thompson for supplying the Brigade with the Daily and Weekly Chronicle.

The following were elected officers for the ensuing year:—Captains Matthew Cay, William Cay, S. Cottew, T. G. Mabane. Deputy-captains: Thos. Houlsby, J. T. White, James Wood, Robert Bell Treasurer: Archibald Stevenson, Secretary: Samuel Malcolm, Committee: T. A. Wilson, J. T. White, T. Houlsby, James Wood, Thomas Potter, Robert Bell, Joseph Hopper, James Ross, M. McQueen, W. A. Bavidge, Robert Hobson, and D. Frazer,

The business of the meeting being over, the members and several friends were entertained to supper in the Watch House, after which the usual loyal patriotic toasts were given and responded to, several songs were sung, and very pleasant evening was spent.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 10th of July 1873

ANNUAL MEETING 1874

South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade

Last night, the eighth annual meeting of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held in the Watch House, on the South Pier. The Mayor (Ald. Glover) presided, and there were also present, Mr Archibald Stevenson, hon, treasurer; Mr S. Malcolm, secretary; Capt. Balfour, Board of Trade; Mr Thompson, Newcastle; Messrs Crisp, J. L. Hall, R. Glover, W. Glover: T. G. Mabane, G. Hannay, G. R. Potts, Capt. Whitelaw, and others

Letters of apology were read from several gentlemen.

Mr MALCOLM then read the annual report, as follows —"Your committee feel it somewhat difficult to present anything like the usual lengthy and interesting report, from the fact that during the past year nothing of eventful character has transpired. We are happy to state that not a single wreck has occurred at the mouth of the Tyne, and have in consequence not been called upon to witness a repetition of the many harrowing scenes of former years. Our transactions have been of an exceptionally quiet nature. Only on two three occasions was it considered necessary be on duty during the night. Of the 100 members on the roll books at the beginning of the year, 74 are effective and 14 non-effective 12 not having attended a single drill, their names have been struck off. These vacancies will be filled up by the committee at the earliest opportunity. Thirteen rocket practices have been held, with an average attendance of 43. Your committee have, by way of adding to the comfort of the members, and contributing to their uniform appearance, adopted a new storm cap. It is made of waterproof cloth, light colour, so that we can distinguish each other more easily at a wreck on a dark night. Each man's cap has the letters V.L.B. on the front, and also the number of his division. This, we hope, will tend to facilitate the operations of the brigade when called upon to act during the exciting surroundings of a shipwreck. This item of clothing, as you will see by the treasurer's report, has cost 25/. In addition to this, we have in former years expended for belts 18/, guernseys 50/, trousers 55/, making total of 148/. Hitherto members have been mildly requested to make it a point of wearing this uniform at drills, but we are sorry to say some still fail to do so. Now we decidedly think that it is unfair to those members who are at the trouble to change their ordinary dress, that their attendance should not be recognised differently than it is, and we are of opinion that the time has arrived when this matter should be insisted upon by the officers, and we propose that those members who come to drill without the brigade uniform should not be allowed to fall in. Taking into account the large sum that has been expended over clothing, we hope the members will consider it a pleasure as well as a duty to do all they can to increase the personal appearance and efficiency of the brigade. We regret to state that the exercise mast, which was erected about four years ago, has become rotten and unsafe for drill purposes; at the same time, we are glad to report that, on the recent visit of Mr Gray, Assistant Secretary Board of Trade, some of the officers had an interview with him, and an inspection of the mast also, when he kindly promised that we should have new one. Tenders have been sent in, and we hope ere long to see it in its place. On the 30th August last Captain Digby Murray, Surveyor-General of the Board of Trade, inspected the brigade, and expressed himself to be highly satisfied at the way the members acquitted themselves. The Sunday evening services continue to be held in the watchhouse, and the public interest in which, judging by the attendance, appears to be undiminished. There are other matters worthy of indication in this report, and which, if attended to, would make the brigade more efficient.

The first that occurs to us is a knowledge of the best known methods of restoring the apparently drowned. In our experience as a brigade we have seen the urgent necessity of this, and our honorary surgeon has kindly offered to give us the necessary instruction, hope the members will avail themselves of the opportunity. It would be well if, during the winter evenings, the members would occupy some of their spare time in making themselves thoroughly acquainted with the details of working the rocket apparatus, a knowledge which all cannot satisfactorily acquire in the short time occupied at the monthly drills. We have no doubt our obliging Inspecting Commander, Captain Prouse, R.N., would give us every facility with regard letting the Coastguard instruct us. It would also be of service, and give a smarter appearance to the brigade, if the members had a few lessons in position drill, so as to fall in readily, and march with more regularity than at present. This would be easily acquired, and is well worth a trial. We throw out these few hints in the hope that they will meet with the approval of the members, whom we are sure have one and all the welfare of the brigade at heart."

Mr RIDDLE moved, and Mr BELL seconded, the adoption of the report.

Mr J. L. HALL said he considered the report a very satisfactory one. They had not been called on to witness such scenes as they had experienced in former years, and their services had not been required, but he was sure that if they had every man would have been found at his post. (Hear, hear.) It would be well if the hints thrown out by the committee were attended to, and especially in regard to their appearance in uniform at drill, and the restoration of apparently drowned persons.

The MAYOR said it was most gratifying to think that so unprecedented an event as not a single shipwreck at the mouth of the Tyne for twelve months had occurred. He did not think such a thing had occurred for a hundred years past.

Mr STEVENSON said a lifeboat had been out to assist of the River Tyne Commissioners' hoppers at the mouth of the harbour. He then read the balance sheet, from which it appeared that the total receipts for the year had amounted to £64 9s 9d, and the expenditure to £54 18s 3d, leaving a balance in hand of £9 11s 6d. He believed the brigade would go ahead, and always keep a balance. (Applause.)

MR THOMPSON moved the adoption of the financial statement. He thought it very satisfactory, and he must express that they were under great obligations to the treasurer for the way in which carried out his duties. He was prepared at all times, if they were in the background, to help them.

Mr POTTS seconded the motion, which was earned unanimously.

Mr BELL moved a vote of thanks to Mr Thompson for supplying the Brigade with the Daily and Weekly Chronicle.

Mr WOOD seconded the motion, which was carried with acclamation.

Capt. COTTEW proposed a vote of thanks to the secretary and treasurer for their services during the past year. They had exerted themselves and given themselves a vast of trouble. (Applause.)

Mr .J. T. WHITE seconded the motion.

The MAYOR, after some eulogistic remarks, put the motion, which was carried with applause.

Mr STEVENSON and Mr MALCOLM having briefly replied,

Mr MABAME moved a vote of thanks to Mr C. W. Anderson and the St. Hilda Coal Company for their annual donation of coals to the brigade.

Mr MITCHESON seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

On the motion of Mr CAY, jun., seconded by Mr McQUEEN, Dr Crease was re-appointed hon. surgeon to the brigade, and a vote of thanks was accorded to him for his past services.

The whole of the officers for last year were re-elected.

The members were afterwards entertained to supper and the evening was spent in a social manner.

Source Shields Daily Gazette July the 10th 1874

ANNUAL MEETING 1875

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

Last night, the ninth annual meeting of the members of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held in the Watch House, on the South Pier. Ald. Glover presided, and there was a numerous attendance of members. Amongst those present were the Rev. T. H. Chester, Rev. P. H. Moore, Rev. M. Herdman, Rev. J. E. Cracknell, Mr Archibald Stevenson, hon. treasurer; Crease, hon. surgeon; Mr R. Thompson, Newcastle; Ald. J. F. Spence, North Shields; Capt. S. Cottew, Capt. Prowse, Commander of Coastguard ; Mr J. Dixon, Collector of Customs ; Mr W. Glover, Mr Joseph Heslop, Mr J. Barber. Mr M. Cay, jun., T. G. Mabane, Capt. Whitelaw, Mr J. T. White, Mr J. Latter, Officer Coastguard, and others.

Mr S. Malcolm, the hon. secretary, read the annual report, as follows:

The past winter has been one of great severity both on land and sea. The mouth of the Tyne was the scene of several shipwrecks, and we regret to record the loss of several lives. On Saturday night, November 28th, 1874, gale of unusual violence sprung up from the SSE, causing the seas to break with great force over the Piers. About half-past ten o'clock the signal guns announced that some unfortunate vessel was in distress. She was observed driving into the harbour, and eventually struck on the Herd Sand, near the Fish Pier. The members of the brigade proceeded along the sands to her assistance, but the crew, nine in number, were taken off by the Tom Perry lifeboat. The ship's name was the Lavinia, of Guernsey. About quarter past eleven the same night steamer was seen off the harbour mouth, burning signals, as in distress. The van with the apparatus was immediately taken along the pier. On reaching the end the vessel was seen in the offing apparently all right, which afterwards proved to be the case. A portion of the brigade resolved to remain on duty all night, the gale was increasing, and several vessels were making for the harbour. About five o'clock in the morning vessel was observed through the darkness of the storm evidently in distress among the broken water to the south of the pier. Her position was very perilous, for the south-east wind lashed the waves with great fury over her. The members of the brigade who had remained on duty fired the signal rocket, and immediately rushed down the pier with their gear to the assistance of the crew. The first rocket went over the vessel, and was washed away; the second went over her topgallant yard and was secured. One of the crew in attempting to reach the line fell from the rigging, but fortunately was caught by the captain and prevented from falling overboard. The whole of the crew, six in number, were, within three quarters of an hour of the vessel striking, safely landed by the rocket apparatus, and taken to the brigade house, where every attention was paid to their comfort. The vessel was the schooner Scylla, Whitstable. We now have to record the most fatal wreck that has occurred here since the formation of the brigade.

During evening December 8th, tremendous gale arose from by N, causing the sea to run fearfully high across the bar. About 1 a.m., December 9th, the signal guns boomed forth the painful intelligence that ship was in danger. The members were on in considerable force, and, having already described a large vessel among the broken water to the north of the pier, soon had the apparatus as near the scene as possible. In a very few seconds a rocket was fired, but it either fell short or was carried away by the force the wind. The second rocket fell across the jibboom, and great disappointment was felt that no efforts were made by the crew to haul in the line. Directions were shouted through the speaking trumpet, but without any response. A third rocket and a fourth were fired, and, by the light the latter, we were horrified to see the barque falling to pieces. Not a living soul was ever seen or a voice heard, and the melancholy conviction was forced upon us that the whole of the crew had perished. This disaster was keenly felt by all present, which was afterwards intensified when it was found that the vessel was the barque Henry Cooke, of South Shields, and that 18 poor fellows were drowned. We are fully convinced that the crew must have been washed off the deck before she struck, and after doing all we possibly could under the circumstances we cannot help stating that it was somewhat humiliating to the brigade that their conduct on this occasion had be defended at a Board of Trade enquiry into the loss of the vessel. While the brigade was busy with the above another vessel, the schooner J. P. Frecker, ran ashore on the sands between the pier and the first rocks. A portion the members were told off to go to her assistance, and while on their way two of them nearly lost their lives. One rocket was fired which landed the line right across the jibboom. The crew refused leave their vessel, and afterwards walked ashore at low water. Another SE gale visited our coast on 11th Dec, and at eleven o'clock the members on duty observed a vessel dangerously close to the South Pier. The apparatus was got out and taken on to the timber staging at the end of the pier. No time was lost in firing a rocket which, however, fell short, the vessel being a good distance off. Owing to the heavy gale and the continual motion of the vessel, several rockets had to be fired before communication was effected. The lines now got fouled by the wreckage floating about. The crew took to the rigging, and although ultimately five lines were sent on board the crew could not be prevailed upon to leave their position. The mainmast fell over and with it two poor fellows lost their lives. Other rockets were fired, principally keep up the courage of the rest of the crew, who were lashed to the fore rigging, momentarily expecting the foremast to share the fate of the mainmast. About seven in the morning the ship had drifted well inshore, and the members of the brigade, many of whom had been on the pier for eight hours, went into the sea to their waists and encouraged the men to jump into the water, which they did, one by one, and were safely landed, and carried to the Watch House, where warm clothing and refreshments awaited them. This was without exception, the most trying night the brigade has endured, finishing up it did, after the long exposure at the end of the pier, with a plunge into the cold sea. We had, however, the satisfaction, which repaid us for all our toil, of getting the four poor fellows safely ashore, and all went home to our breakfasts thankful that Providence had once more crowned our efforts.

This vessel was the Arcadia, of Truro, with a crew of six hands. Your committee also report with pleasure that arrangements have been made considerably enlarge the Watch House before next winter, which, it is earnestly hoped, will still further increase the efficiency of the "South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade." We expect also, in a short while, that South Shields will be raised to a chief station with the coastguardsmen living in new houses to be built close to the South Pier. Such is brief account of our own efforts in conjunction with the coastguard during the past year to assist the unfortunate crews who have been cast on this coast, and we trust men will ever be found in South Shields "always ready" to brigade themselves together for such noble purpose.

Mr Archibald Stevenson, hon. treasurer, then read the financial statement, from which it appeared that the total receipts had amounted £86 9s 7d. and the expenditure to £42 17s 7d, leaving in hand a balance of £43 12s.

Mr J. Wood moved that the report and balance sheet be received and adopted, printed, and circulated.

Mr Bell seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The Chairman, in the course of some remarks, expressed the pleasure he felt in their having the presence of Ald. J. F. Spence, who took great interest the cause of humanity. He was himself glad to be present, notwithstanding that when invited he had given up the pleasure. It would have been source of great regret to himself, because he had always presided at their annual meetings, and he had always had great pleasure doing so. (Hear, hear.) Alluding to the report of the secretary, he said one grand thing about the institution was the readiness with which everyone connected with it came forward to do his duty. They seemed to have imprinted in their hearts the old saying of Nelson, "England expects that every man this day will do his duty." The members of the brigade had always done their very utmost to save the lives of their fellow creatures exposed to danger and storm upon the coast. He thought he might fairly say they had done their duty nobly and well, and the only reward they looked for was to rescue their fellow creatures, and if they did that they seemed to be amply repaid for their exertions. (Hear, hear.) He expressed hope that the improvements would be carried out in satisfactory manner, so that every member connected with the brigade should more easily be enabled to discharge the arduous duties to which they were called. (Hear, hear, and applause)

Ald. J. F. Spence, who was greeted with loud applause, expressed the pleasure he felt meeting the members of the Volunteer Life Brigade in annual meeting assembled. He referred to the wreck of the Arcadia, and said he had the pleasure of visiting the scene of their operations on that long night. He must say that he was struck with the zeal and determination there seemed on their part to save the lives of the crew of that ship if possible, and no one present that night could doubt for one moment that everything was not done that possibly could be with that object and although two lives were lost he believed was beyond human power to save them. He was glad to see Capt. Prowse, Commander of Coastguard present. That gentleman was about to leave this district, and his absence would be felt, as he had always taken lively interest in the affairs of the brigade. (Hear, hear.)

Capt. Prowse remarked that he had been proud to be associated with the members that brigade and also the one at Tynemouth, and he did not believe he should meet such men again.

Mr Archibald Stevenson referred to the fact that Mr Spence had got the Board of Trade to have enamelled plates attached every ship with instructions what to do when the rocket line went on board, and remarked that if Mr Spence had done nothing else this year, he had done very great deal indeed. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Mr R. Thompson congratulated the members of the brigade whose efforts had not only won the admiration of those on the banks of the Tyne, but of persons in every part the country.

Mr Mabane proposed that Dr Crease re appointed hon. surgeon of the brigade.

Capt. Cottew seconded the motion, which was carried with acclamation.

Dr Crease returned thanks, and remarked that he could only say what had said on former occasions, namely, that they had elected him to a post honour which he would always esteem (Applause.)

Capt. Cottew moved a vote of thanks to the treasurer and secretary, both of whom, he said, had done their duty well. Although Mr Stevenson did not get down very often they knew they had his sympathy and good wishes, and he was always ready to help them with funds. He did not think they could have a better secretary if they went the whole length of the country, because Mr Malcolm was continually endeavouring to promote the welfare of the brigade.

Mr J. T. White seconded the motion, which was carried with acclamation.

Mr Stevenson and Mr Malcolm having responded

Mr Bell proposed a vote of thanks to the Rev. J. E. Cracknel, who kindly entertained the members the brigade on Tuesday last.

J. Wood seconded the motion, and it was unanimously agreed to.

Mr Cracknell having acknowledged the compliment,

Mr Malcolm read the result of the election of officers for the ensuing year, as follows Captains: Messrs W. Cay, T. G. Mabane, M. Cay, and S. Cottew. Deputy Captains: Messrs T. Houlsby, J. T. White, J. Wood, and R. Bell: A. Stevenson. Secretary: Mr S. Malcolm. Committee: Messrs. T. A Wilson, J. Wood, T. Houlsby, R. Bell, J. T. White, J. Hotter, J. Ross, T. Potter, W. A. Bavidge, R. Hotson, D. Frazer, and G. R. Potts

Mr Mabane then moved votes of thanks to St. Hilda colliery for gratuitously supplying the Watch House with coals, and J. H. Thompson and G. Davison for supplying daily a copy of the journals which they represent.

Mr J. T. White seconded the motion, which was carried with applause.

The Rev. T. H. Chester proposed vote thanks to the Chairman.

The Rev. P. H. Moore seconded the motion which was carried with a round of hearty cheers

Ald. Glover having responded, this part of the proceedings terminated, and the members adjourned.

At a subsequent period the members sat down to substantial supper, provided by Mr Archibald Stevenson, and the remainder the evening was spent in a social manner.

Before separating a hearty vote of thanks was, on the motion of Mr Malcolm, seconded by the Rev. M. Herdman, accorded to Mr Stevenson for having supplied the provisions for the occasion.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 17th of July 1875

ANNUAL MEETING 1876

South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade

Last night, the tenth annual meeting of the members of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held at the Watch House on the Pier. Mr Ald. Glover presided, among those present were, the Rev. R. M. Herdman, Rev. R. Glover, Bristol; Mr S, Malcolm, hon sec, Messrs & Cottew. M. Cay, J. Crisp, J. Gillie, T. G. Mabane, J. Stephens, Superintendent of River Police; T. A. Wilson, G. R. Potts, J. Robinson, Wellington Terrace; Theo Storey, Newcastle: A. Whitelaw, W. H. Bell, J. L. Hall, W. Dickson, Collector of Customs; and others.

The CHAIRMAN, at the commencement of the proceedings, called upon Mr Malcolm, the secretary, to read the minutes of the last meeting, also the report and statement for the past year.

The report was as follows: - The committee have again much pleasure in meeting the members, and presenting the tenth annual report. The principal event of the past year has been the enlargement of the Watch House, the completion of which was celebrated Dec. 28, 1875. We are indebted to the liberality of the Board Trade and other gentlemen for this necessary addition, details of which have already been set before you in a special report. We wish, however, to thank the Tyne River Glass Company for a present of plate glass for the windows, value £30, and also Mr Thompson of the Marine Hotel, for furnishing the house with an extra table, which should have been mentioned in the report referred to. As you will see by the treasurer's report, we have a considerable balance in hand, and your committee think that the opportunity should be taken of enclosing this valuable block of buildings with an iron railing, and if necessary again appeal to our friends (which is not probable) we are sure they will be delighted to come to the rescue. The gales during the past winter have not been so strong as in many previous years. We have had, however, occasion to attend three vessels, which were stranded on the Herd Sand, namely the Barba Zvana, Nov. 19th, the screw steamer Alice, Nov. 30th, and a Norwegian schooner, January 7th. At none of those was the apparatus used. and are glad to add that no lives have been lost from shipwreck at the mouth of the Tyne during the year. The brigade was inspected May 19th, by Captain Prowse, R.N., and Mr Monkhouse, of the Board of Trade. Both gentleman spoke highly of the smart appearance of the members, and the excellence of the rocket drill. On June 30th a special exercise was called at the request of Board of Trade in order to give Commander Pompeu of the Brazilian Imperial Navy, an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the details of working the rocket apparatus. The Brazilian Government have a set of gear, which we hope will be the pioneer of a complete life saving system along their extensive coast. We also trust their good example will be followed other nations who have not yet adopted it.

The balance sheet showed that the receipts had amounted during the past year to £111 8s 41/2d, and the expenditure to £41 4s 4d, leaving a balance in the bank of £70 4s 01/2d. The receipts included £43 12s balance in hand from last year; £30 grant from Board of Trade; and £23 4s from building fund.

Mr WOOD moved the adoption of the reports and also that they be printed and circulated.

Mr WHITELAW seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

On the motion of Mr WILSON, seconded by Mr POTTS, it was unanimously resolved that Dr Crease be re-elected honorary surgeon of the Brigade. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN said it appeared that the greater part of the business of the meeting was already over, but the SECRETARY was anxious that the time should be filled up till the gentlemen looking over the ballot papers returned with the votes for the different officers of the institution. He found that the only thing that Mr Malcolm had to find fault with was that there had been fewer shipwrecks or accidents during the past year. He then referred to a visit which he had that day paid to the Agricultural Show at Warkworth, and said that, grand as the sight was, nothing was so grand as a volunteer life brigade ready to risk life at any signal given for saving the lives of others. He was happy to be their chairman for the tenth year, and he hoped he might be chairman for the next ten years. (Applause.) It would be a pleasure to him at all times to be placed in the position he occupied that night.

Mr HALL and Mr DICKSON having spoken a few words of congratulation to the members of the brigade,

Mr MABANE returned thanks on their behalf, and said they would still be willing to go forward and do their duty as hitherto.

Rev. R. GLOVER then rose to propose votes of thanks to the secretary (Mr Malcolm) and the treasurer (Mr Archd. Stephenson) for their services during the past year, also that they be requested to continue their services for the year to come. (Applause.) He believed they owed to the secretary, not only the keeping of the records of the brigade, but also the execution of the plans for the enlargement of the building, and also the superintending of the work connected with it. (Applause.) He knew how much his heart was in the work, and the sincerity of his labours added to their value. (Applause.)

Mr WILSON seconded the proposition and it was unanimously carried.

Mr MALCOLM, in responding, said it gave him very great pleasure. He had the interest of the brigade at heart, and anything he could do to forward its interest he cheerfully did. He was sorry the treasurer was not present that evening to return thanks for himself, but they all hoped that he might be restored to perfect health, and be able to come back to South Shields to live. He hoped the means he was taking would have the desired effect, and they would have him here once more. (Applause.) He was obliged to the members for the hearty way they had received the motion.

On the motion of Mr BELL, seconded by Mr ROBINSON, votes of thanks were given to the captains and officers for their services during the past year.

Mr MABANE, Mr COTTEW, and Mr CAY responded.

Mr MALCOLM then proposed a vote of thanks to the coastguard for the efficient way they had kept the gear in order, and the assiduity and attention they showed whenever their services were required.

Mr LATTER, chief officer of coastguard, stationed at Tynemouth, returned thanks.

The following were the results of the election of offices: Captains: W. Cay, T. G. Mabane, M. Cay, S. Cottew, A. Whitelaw. Deputy Captains: James Wood, J. T. White, R. Bell, B. Birch. Committee: G. R. Potts, T. A. Wilson, R. Hobson, J. Wood, J. T. White, J. Hopper, J. A. Ross, R. Bell, W. A. Bavidge, D. Frazer, T. Potter and H. Richardson.

At the conclusion of the business the members were entertained to a substantial supper which was provided at the sole expense of Mr Archibald Stevenson, and this was followed by the usual conviviality.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman brought the proceedings to a close, a similar compliment having previously been accorded to Mr Archibald Stevenson for his continued kindness in providing the supper.

Source Shields Daily Gazette 28 July 1876

ANNUAL MEETING 1877

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

On Thursday night, the eleventh annual meeting of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held in the Watch House on the South Pier. The chair was occupied by Ald. Glover, J. P., and there was a numerous attendance, amongst the company being the Mayor of South Shields (Mr Ald. Stainton), the Rev. R. M. Herdman, Mr J. L Hall, .J .P., Capt. Johnson, R. N., Inspector of Coastguards, Mr J. Dickson, Collector of Customs; Dr Crease, hon. surgeon; Mr S. Malcolm, hon. sec.; Mr M. Cay, Mr S. Cottew, Mr T. G. Mabane, Mr W. Cay, Mr Jos. Crisp, Mr A. Whitelaw, Mr J. T. Hedley, Mr Supt. John Stephens, Mr John Edgar, Mr G. R. Potts, Mr T. Coulson, Mr T. A. Wilson, Mr W. J. Haggerston, &c.

The Chairman opened the meeting calling upon the honorary secretary, Mr Malcolm, to read the minutes of last meeting, which were adopted. The Secretary then read the annual report as follows:—The year just closed has been one that will long be remembered by the members of this brigade and the inhabitants of the district generally, for the severity of the storms that visited this coast, and for the fearful amount of destruction to life and property. Speaking as a brigade we have never seen the like before, and trust we may never see it again. It, nevertheless, becomes our duty, on the present occasion, to recall those painful scenes, and to place on record a brief account of the shipwrecks of the past winter. On Tuesday, December 19th a gale visited this neighbourhood, increasing so rapidly, that on Wednesday, the wind and sea had risen to a very alarming extent. The brigade, as is usual on such occasions, mustered in force at the Watch House to be ready for any emergency that might arise. On Thursday morning about two o'clock, the screw-steamer Claremont, of Newcastle, was observed making for the harbour. On nearing the bar, a succession of heavy seas struck her and she became unmanageable, eventually stranding about 200 yards to the south side of the pier. Meanwhile the apparatus had been taken along, and in a few minutes a rocket line was thrown right amidships, but falling on the stays, out of reach of the crew, a second was fired abaft the mainmast by means of which the other gear was got on board, and all the crew, with a woman and child, numbering 21, safely landed. As the morning advanced the wind and sea increased, with heavy rain. Shortly after six o'clock the lights of another steamer were descried in the darkness, and in a very short time she was driven against the end of the pier. The apparatus was all, in readiness, and a rocket line was thrown on board. By this time the crew had taken to the rigging. The scene was now most heartrending, as rocket after rocket went over the doomed ship, and the men were unable to leave their positions get them. After the vessel got ashore very little was to be seen but the bridge and the masts. The former was soon washed away, and the latter followed in rapid succession, carrying with them the poor fellows who had gone there as a last refuge. She proved to be the screw-steamer Tyne, of North Shields, many of the crew belonging to South Shields, one of whom, David Cleet, being a member of this brigade. Just as the last rocket was fired over the Tyne, another steamer struck the pier. After backing off she was ran full speed ahead to the beach, just clearing the submerged hull of the Tyne, which, had she struck, might have been attended with similar consequences. Two rockets were

fired, both of which took the lines over the ship. The crew, twenty in number, remained board till low water, when they landed, and were supplied with necessary food and clothing at the Watch House. This steamer was the Fenella, of London. After the breaking up of the Tyne, a detachment was told off to along the beach in search of any bodies that might wash ashore. Those of the captain and chief engineer were found soon after. It was while in the performance of this duty that one the members, Stephen Barnett, was knocked down by a wave and had his leg broken. Other members also had narrow escapes. The storm continued to rage and about three o'clock in the afternoon the screw-steamer Blenheim, of Hartlepool, struck the pier, and almost immediately parted amidships, the after part remaining fast, and the forepart washing round the north end of the pier. The men on this part of the vessel jumped on to the pier staging in passing, and were saved, except one who fell short and was drowned. A rocket was fired over the stern, and the remainder of the crew, 6 in number, safely landed by the apparatus. The total on board was twenty, nineteen of whom were saved and brought to the Watch House. The gear was all collected together, and kept at the end the pier to be ready for any other emergency. Shortly after the wreck of the Blenheim, a small schooner named the New Cornwall, of Barnstaple, got among the broken water, was capsized, and all her crew, five in number, drowned. They could render no assistance, the melancholy sight being over in three or four minutes. On Saturday, the 23rd, the sea continued very high, with blinding showers of sleet. The members were on duty, and about midnight another screw-steamer was observed making very bad weather near the end of the pier. She was struck by heavy seas, and eventually stranded near the other steamers. The apparatus was taken down the pier, and the first rocket fired right amidships. No action being taken by the crew, a second was fired, and the whipline hauled on board. From some cause this got foul, and other three rockets were fired, by which a second whip line was hauled off, and also a hawser, but these became entangled amongst large quantities of wreckage floating about. After working on with the lines about two hours it was determined to try the Willie Wouldhave lifeboat. This proved successful, and all the crew were safely landed. One of the lifeboatmen, named Jacob Harrison, unfortunately got his leg broken, while assisting to launch the boat. This vessel was the screw-steamer Herman Sauber, of Hamburg, with a crew of 19. By this time most of the members were nearly worn out with the exertions of the last two or three days, but as the weather was still very stormy, some remained on duty all through Christmas Eve. On Christmas morning, about half-past three o'clock, the brig Mary, of Whitby, was observed to go ashore on the Herd Sand. The signal was instantly given to the life boats. The Brigadesmen ran along the beach with heaving lines and lifebuoys, but the crew were taken out by the lifeboat. During the storm they landed 27, people with the apparatus, besides assisting the others to the best their ability. They also received 80 shipwrecked persons into the Watch-house, providing them with every necessary comfort. Three other vessels claimed their attentions, viz., the Mystery, on August 19th the Eliza Mary, March 8th, and the Amphitrite, April 21st all of which the crews refused to leave, and were eventually towed off by steam tugs.

It was also their painful duty record the loss the Brigade has sustained through the death of the treasurer, Mr Archibald Stevenson. From the formation of the Brigade Mr Stevenson had taken a deep interest in its welfare, and, although latterly circumstances prevented his being often amongst them, yet from time to time, especially on occasions like the present, he gave proof that he was not unmindful of their welfare. The committee have made arrangements for his portrait to be hung up in the Watch-house. A railing along the pier had long been considered necessary for the protection of the members in stormy weather, and through the exertions of the committee, and the influence of the South Shields Town Council, the Tyne Commissioners had consented to this, and as they were aware the railings were fixed and would prove of much benefit during future storms. Another change had also taken place, which, they hoped, would improve the working the Brigade, Until now South Shields had been considered a sub-station of the Coastguard, but from its position and the numerous wrecks that take place, representations were made at head-quarters that it would tend to the efficiency of the Rocket Service if South Shields were raised to a chief station, having its own Chief Officer of Coastguard, with houses built at the South Pier for himself and men. They were, glad to report that the Admiralty and Board of Trade had agreed that South Shields should be a chief station; from July, 1st 1877, and that arrangements had been made for the immediate erection of the Coastguards' houses. The committee had also had under consideration the necessity of an additional room for drying the clothing &c, of shipwrecked crews. A plan for this, as well as for railings to enclose the watch House, was now before the Commissioners to obtain their sanction to the ground. The committee, in conclusion; trust that the members will continue to do all they can to promote the efficiency of the South Shields Volunteer Life, Brigade.

The Mayor moved the adoption of the report, which was seconded by Mr, John Hall, supported by the Rev. R. M. Herdman and the Chairman and carried unanimously.

Mr Malcolm then read the annual financial statement, which showed that, inclusive of balance in hand from last year of £70 4s 11½ d, and grant from the Board of Trade, the income for the year amounted to £114 1s 8½ d; and the expenditure was £52 10s 2d, leaving a balance in hand of £61 11s 6½ d. Mr Malcolm stated out of this balance there would be £20 to pay for Guernseys expected next week. There would, moreover, be the cost of the proposed extension and the railing, so that the balance would be more than swallowed up.

On the motion of Mr M. Cay, seconded by Mr J. Dickson, the financial was statement was unanimously adopted.

Mr Mabane moved a vote of thanks to Dr Crease for his services to the brigade, and that he be re-elected honorary surgeon for the ensuing year.

The resolution was seconded by Cottew, and carried with applause.

Dr Crease briefly acknowledged the compliment,

Upon the motion Mr T. A. Wilson, seconded by Mr Mabane, a cordial vote of thanks was passed to the Harton and Hilda Coal Company for gratuitously supplying the brigade with coals.

Mr Edgar moved a vote of thanks to the officers of the Brigade for their services during past year.

Captain Johnson seconded the resolution, and it was carried amid applause.

Mr Cottew moved a vote of thanks to the River Tyne Commissioners for placing the railing upon the pier, and expressed a hope that they would continue the work, by carrying it down to where the wall is perpendicular, and also by placing eyebolts to which tackle could be fixed.

Mr Mabane seconded the resolution, and spoke of the desirability of placing gates upon the pier to prevent the public going and hampering the members of the Brigade during stormy weather.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Officers elected for the ensuing year were as follows:—Captains—Messrs W. Cay, S. Cottew, M. Cay, T. G. Mabane. Deputy -Captains Messrs A. Whitelaw, R. Bell, B. Birch, and James Wood. Treasurer and Secretary, S. Malcolm.

The business part of the meeting having been concluded, the members sat down to a substantial supper, which was given by the officers of the Brigade. After supper a number of toasts and songs were given.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 28th of July 1877

ANNUAL SUPPER 1877

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

SUPPER AT THE WATCH HOUSE

Last night, the members of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade were entertained at a supper provided by Mr R. R. Glover, of London, son of Ald. Glover, in the Watch House on the South Pier. The Brigade House had undergone the usual transformation for such an occasion, and presented a very bright and cheerful appearance. The walls were decorated with mottoes and devices appropriate to the time and place, and garlands were suspended from the rafters. Supper, a cold but very elegant spread, was laid for 100. The chair was occupied Mr R. R. Glover, who was supported by the Mayoress (Mrs Stainton) and Mrs R. R. Glover. There were also present the Rev. T. H. Chester, vicar of St. Hilda's Parish; the Mayor (Mr M. Stainton), Mr Ald. Glover and Mrs Glover, Dr Crease and Mrs Crease, Mr Ald. J. F. Spence, of the Tynemouth Brigade; Mr S. Malcolm, secretary of the brigade, and Mrs Malcolm, Mr W. Cay and Mrs Cay, Mr S. Cottew and Mrs Cottew, Mr W. Glover and Mrs Glover, Mr Dickson, Collector of Customs; Mr J. Crisp, Mr T. G. Mabane, Mr J. Stephens, Superintendent of River Police; Mr W. H. Bell, Mr A. Steele, Mr J. Graham, Coroner for Chester Ward; Captain Johnson, Inspecting Officer of Coastguard for the Northern District; Mr G. R. Potts, Mr J. W. Lambton, Mr J. E. Smith, Mr R. Hobson, Mr W. W. Ridley, Mr J. T. White, Mr J. Latter, Chief Officer of Coastguard, Tynemouth, and others.

On the clearing of the tables, the usual loyal and patriotic toasts were proposed from the chair and duly honoured. In proposing "The Queen," the Chairman referred to the pension lately granted by Her Majesty to Thomas Edward, the humble Scottish naturalist, and stated that he would be glad to forward, for the brigade library, Smiles' "Life of Edward." (Loud applause)

The Chairman next gave "The Army, Navy, and Volunteers," and said he was afraid from the present look of political matters those services might soon be brought into requisition. However, they hoped to the contrary, but if they were called upon they should find the army to be as perfect as any as there existed in Europe. (Hear, hear.) It would not be so numerous, but he had doubt it would answer every expectation that there was about it. He need say very little about the navy. It was to be expected that accidents should be as severely criticised as they had been; but still, accidents would take place in our navy, as well as in the merchant service. (Hear, hear.) He believed the navy to be the most invincible thing that ever was created—not only equal to the other countries of Europe, but a match for every combination of the European nations together. (Hear, hear.) He did not say that boastfully, but thought it would be a great disgrace to them if it were otherwise. As for the volunteers, he hoped they might never be called out, but, if they were, he was quite sure they would do their duty. He concluded by coupling the toast with the name of Captain Johnson. (Applause)

Captain Johnson said he felt it high honour to return thanks for the service to which he belonged—the Royal Navy. He had to reply on behalf of the army and the reserve forces. Allusion had been made the criticisms lately passed on the navy, and they no doubt did them (the navy) a great deal of good. The leading newspaper of this country never lost opportunity of criticising the navy, and that paper did nothing but create a feeling of annoyance among the officers and men of the navy. Referring to the life brigade, he said they did their duty thoroughly well, and the services which they so gallantly rendered were well recognized. (Applause)

The Rev. T. H. Chester proposed the "Mayor and Corporation of South Shields," and spoke in flattering terms of the amiable qualities of his worship. He had been acquainted with him for many years, and had always regarded him a sterling, straightforward Englishman and the inhabitants the borough of South Shields ought to be proud to see man bred and born amongst them placed at their head. (Hear, hear, and applause.) With regard to the Corporation, they were very much obliged to them for the work they did, and he hoped before long they would place some lights from the Workhouse to the Pier. He hoped also the River Tyne Commissioners would before long put the railing along the Pier. (Hear, hear.) It would be of service to the public, and it would be especially serviceable to the members of the South Shields Life Brigade. (Hear, hear.) He could not stand up in that room without expressing his thanks to Mr Glover for giving him an opportunity to be present at that gathering. It must be a source of great satisfaction and pleasure to him to come to his native town, and see so many of his fellow-townsmen, without any remuneration for their labours, working in the way the members of the Life Brigade did for the deliverance of their fellow-men from the perils of the deep—(hear, hear)—and he could well understand his being ready and wishful to entertain them in the magnificent way he had that night, and in some measure to acknowledge their noble services. And with regard to the members of the Volunteer Life Brigade, of course it was impossible for him to express one's gratitude to them for their self-denying and noble labours. (Hear, hear.) It was quite impossible to find words to express one's feelings about them, especially at this time, after the great dangers they had gone through for the safety of their brethren. They might be said to be following the example of Him who went about doing good, and following in the steps of the Saviour of the World. After some further remarks, he concluded by stating that their bravery for the safety of others was the admiration every man and woman in England.

The toast was honoured with cheers for Mayor and Mayoress and children.

The Mayor, in responding, said he was proud he was Mayor of that town, and he thought the man who was not proud of being Mayor was unworthy of the office that he held. (Hear, hear.) He was proud of being Mayor of the borough that owned the lifeboat as its birthplace, and that had its life brigade. With regard to the Corporation, he could only say that probably sometimes it got a little excited—(laughter)—and it might be that its language was little more forcible than eloquent, but he defied any Corporation in the locality to act with more fairness, industry, energy, and perseverance so far as it regarded the money of the ratepayers, and the trust that it had. They were not an ancient Corporation, they had not golden coach or a sheriff like Newcastle, but they were young and vigorous, and willing to work. If they looked at Tynemouth, it had a Mayor who was ways Green—(laughter)—and he hoped the trees they were planting would always be green. (Renewed laughter) He was perfectly satisfied if they were planting trees in South Shields they would not be long green, if, in fact, they ever reached that verdant state. (Laughter) The lamps would soon be placed between the Workhouse and the Pier, and with regard to the handrail—that was almost talked stale amongst them—the engineer to the Commissioners would meet the members of the Life Brigade in that house early next week, so that the matter might be finally arranged as to its proper position. On behalf of himself, the Mayoress, and his children he begged to thank them for the manner in which the toast had been received. (Applause)

The Chairman rose to propose the toast of the evening. He said that when he had been visiting his native town, on two or three occasions, he had been there at the time of the annual meeting and supper of the Life Brigade, and he had been invited to share their hospitality. He had often wished to have an opportunity of having them at his own table—and he was obliged to have it in that particular way—but now the wish on his part had been gratified. He proceeded to express his admiration of the services of the members of the institution as such. The first thing that occurred to him was the object they had in view—the

safety of human life. Was there any grander object that could be proposed? Another thing in their society he liked was that it was an organized effort. They were under discipline and control, and the consequence was that they met there to some purpose. He found that in the course of the ten years they had been in existence they had saved between 100 and 200 lives. That was altogether independent of the service they had rendered to the lifeboat, but directly they had saved in those ten years 115 or 120 souls. That was a noble and grand thing to have done, and they could not have done it if they had not banded themselves together as an organized force. There was another thing he liked, and that was that they were volunteers. In being volunteers they were thoroughly English. They left their beds, their ease, their comfort, and their safety, and they came down their at the bidding of that which Englishmen believed to be the highest principle they could obey, and that was duty, and he thought that an association of men who did that work from that motive were imitators of Christ. He liked the brigade also because of the direct good that it did. The Chairman here alluded to the comfort administered, not only to Englishman, but also to foreigners, by the services of the life brigade, and spoke of the joy they unconsciously afforded to many in far off places, when wreck had taken place, and great doubt uncertainty hung over the safety of those who are cast ashore on dangerous coasts. He hoped they would go on, and prosper, and that they might get more and more control over the stormy elements with which they had to deal. He hoped they would go on increasing in their intelligence, in their education, and in their discipline, and every year find them more capable of battling with the surf and waves, and in saving the lives of their fellow-creatures. He expressed regret that the size of the room did not permit of his asking their wives and sweethearts, but believed the building, although it had only recently been enlarged, was only a germ of a larger building that would yet be. He hoped, therefore, that he would, on some future occasion, have the extreme pleasure of asking them and their wives and sweethearts to meet him. (Applause) He concluded proposing, "The continued prosperity and increasing efficiency of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade." (Loud applause)

Mr Malcolm, secretary of the brigade, being called upon to respond, said he was sure he expressed the feelings of all the members present when he said they were extremely obliged for the very sensible remarks the Chairman had made with regard to that brigade. It was rather a delicate matter for him to get up to reply to that toast, but they believed in actions more than words. Their energies during the past fortnight had been very severely tried, but they were very thankful that they had been of some service to their fellow-creatures. It was the object of the brigade to save the lives of their fellow-creatures cast upon that inhospitable coast, and one of the principles that animated their actions was that they were wishful on all occasions to do their duty to the best their ability, and they endeavoured to do it as far as they possibly could. They were very much obliged to the Chairman for his kindness, and they hoped they should long continue to merit it. (Applause)

Mr W. Cay proposed the health of "The Ladies," to which Mr W. H. Bell responded.

Mr Ald. Glover rose to propose "The Tynemouth Life Brigade," and said nothing gave him greater pleasure than to find their friend, Mr J. F. Spence, present. (Applause) Both the Tyne Brigades had gained fame throughout the whole of this land, and they had been admirably conducted by Mr Spence and Mr Malcolm. He was proud of his neighbour, Mr Spence, for he was man whose heart was bound to everything that was good, and he was always ready to help, whether the life brigade or anything else. (Applause)

Mr Spence, who was heartily applauded remarked that he must say he was entirely overcome by the handsome manner in which Mr Glover had been pleased speak of him. In the first place, he should like to return his thanks to their Chairman, through whose hospitality, he supposed, he received an invitation to be there that night. He had not been at a pleasanter gathering or felt more proud at being present. They had heard a good deal about the good likely to result from the efforts of the coastguard and life brigades, and he was glad that to the Tyne be longed the honour of inaugurating the life brigades of this country. It was an honour of which the men of the Tyne might feel proud. (Hear, hear.) The coastguard had worked manfully year after year, before there were life brigades, but was impossible for three or four men to undertake a duty which required from 50 to 100 men to work the ropes on such a coast as ours. After alluding to the letters which were recently received from the Board of Trade thanking the Tynemouth and Shields brigades for the manner in which they had assisted to carry out that duty, he said he thought it was the duty of every man to do what could in the saving of life. It was a very different thing to have a body of trained men, instead of having nothing better than rabbel, and he believed that was one cause of the great loss of life that occurred on the occasion of the wreck of the Stanley. On behalf of the Tynemouth Life Brigade, he thanked them most heartily, and he only hoped that life brigades might continue to increase round their coasts, for he was sure the admiration of the work in which they were employed was daily increasing in this land. (Loud applause)

Mr Malcolm gave the health of the "Coastguards," coupled with the name of Captain Johnson, and the "Lifeboatmen," with whom he associated the names of Andrew Harrison and Thomas Houlsby. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

These gentlemen having responded, other toasts were given, several of the members sang songs, and altogether a pleasant evening was spent.

ANNUAL MEETING 1878

South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade

The twelfth meeting of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held last night, in the Watch House, on the South Pier, which had been taste decorated for the occasion with flags, garlands &c. Mr Ald. Glover was unanimously voted to the chair, and amongst present were Dr Crease, honorary surgeon; Mr T. G. Mabane, Mr S. Cottew, Mr W. Glover, J. H. Morton, Mr T. Coulson, Mr M. Cay, Mr John Robinson, Mr W. Wright, Mr J. Stephens, Superintendent of River Tyne Police; Mr S. Malcolm, hon. secretary; W. J. Haggerston, Mr J. L. Hall, Captain Whitelaw, Mr J. Latter, chief officer of Coastguard, Tynemouth, and others., There was a good attendance of members.

Mr Malcolm read letters of apology for absences from Mr T. Gray, assistant secretary, Board of Trade; Mr Gover, London; Mr J. F. Spencer, Tynemouth Brigade; Mr Dickson, Collector of Customs; Captain Johnson, inspector of Coastguard for the North-East Coast; Mr H. Nelson, and Mr W. Black. The latter gentleman enclosed in his letter a cheque for £5 towards the funds of the brigade.

Mr Stevenson M.P., had desired Mr Malcolm to state that he was sorry an engagement in London prevented him from being present this evening.

Mr Malcolm next read the annual report of the committee, which was as follows:— the contrast between the past and the previous year could not have been more marked. While then we had to deal with devastation and death, now all has been peace and quietude, and nothing has occurred in our brigade work to call for special notice in this report, except that a small vessel, the Mabel, early on the morning Feb. 11, stranded behind the South Pier, and the crew stepped ashore. We have, however, to record the deaths three of our members, viz, Mr J. T. White, a deputy-captain; Mr D. Frazer, a member of the committee; and Mr J. E. Hunter, ordinary member. Eight new members have been elected, at the present time there are ten vacancies, caused by resignations and disqualifications from non-attendance. These will be filled up when suitable candidates present themselves. The new coastguard's houses so long talked about are at last complete and occupied. This much desired arrangement will, by having the men constantly on the spot, tend to the greater efficiency of the life saving apparatus. We notice very great satisfaction that from the report of an official trial ordered by the Board of Trade between Mr Roger's apparatus and the rocket system, complete vindication of the superiority of the latter over the former was obtained, and we hope that all attempts to supplant it by the clumsy mortar system are now shelved. It is not our intention to go into the merits of the two plans, but having tested the efficiency of the rocket system on many a stormy night, and also seen Mr Rogers's ideas carried out during the calm and quiet of an ordinary drill, we fully concur with the conclusions of the committee at the official trial "That the rocket apparatus, as exhibited to the committee and experimented upon in their presence, seems so perfect in its construction, details, and manipulation that it appeared to them as hardly possible of improvement." While stating this we think that anyone who comes forward to benefit his fellow creatures by trying to improve the means of saving life deserves the fullest consideration of institutions such as ours, and Mr Rogers, who spent a large amount of time and money with this object, must feel some consolation under his defeat that he has failed in a good cause. We can assure him of this, that had his system been considered the most efficient, no body men would have taken it up more eagerly than the members of this brigade. The committee hoped before now to have had the new Drying Room and railings round the Watch House finished, but arrangements are being made for the alterations to begin at once so as to be ready before next winter. Although very little has occurred during the past year to interest the members generally, and has in fact been totally devoid of the excitement of a stormy winter, yet in conclusion your committee would express the hope that each will make himself thoroughly acquainted with all the details of the apparatus so as to "Always Ready" for any emergency that may arise.

On the motion of Mr J. Wood, seconded by Mr T. Coulson the report was unanimously adopted and ordered to be printed and circulated.

Mr Malcolm also read the financial statement which stated that the income (including a balance in hand of £61 11s 6¹/₂p) amounted to £111 15s 11d. This amount included the Board of Trade Grant of £40 for the year ended June 30th, 1878. The expenditure for the year was £71 12s 2d, leaving a balance of £40 3s 9d in the bank.

Mr J. Laws moved, and Mr G. Gray seconded the adoption of the balance sheet which was carried

The Chairman said it must be a satisfactory thing to that meeting and a very laudable thing to the secretary that when had nothing to report he had made a very elaborate and very good report. (Laughter). It must be satisfactory to the Brigade that the past year had been so thoroughly free from accident, shipwreck, and disaster at the mouth of the harbour Only one small vessel got ashore and he was glad say that the crew were able to step ashore, and so saved all trouble to the life brigade or the lifeboat. They must attribute the absence of shipwreck to the fact that the storms had not been very severe, and partly owing to the River Tyne Commissioners making the Tyne more and more a harbour of refuge He felt he must say he felt great pleasure In presiding over the twelfth annual meeting of the brigade, and it must be satisfactory to every member to know they were still as enthusiastic and ready as men could possibly be to save life, although there had been no occasion for their services. He was quite sure should any occasion arise during next autumn or winter they would be ready do their duty. (Applause.)

Mr J. L. Ball said it must be a gratification to the members and cause of happiness and consolation to others, that their services had not been required to succour the shipwrecked mariner. It was well-known that South Shields stood forth pre-eminently as the place where the lifeboat was established and he need not tell them how great a boon the lifeboat had been to many homes in all parts of the world. Although the life brigade had not originated in South Shields, it was satisfactory to know it was started in Tynemouth. (Applause.)

Mr W. Wright said the life brigade was one the noblest institutions in the country, and South Shields had every reason to be proud of it. No port on the north-east coast was so dangerous in times of yore as the Tyne, but with the noble piers at the entrance he hoped that futures wrecks would be things the past. The life brigade, he might say, was more useful than the lifeboat, as the dangers that vessels had to contend with were now more localized, and the brigade could sometimes be of service where the lifeboat could not reach the wreck.

Mr M. Cay proposed that Dr Crease be re-elected honorary surgeon for brigade for the ensuing year.

Mr T. Potter seconded the proposition, which was carried with acclamation.

Dr Create returned thanks for being reappointed to a post of honour which he esteemed and said that as in the past he would be ready what he could to better the interests of the brigade. (Applause.)

Mr Mabane moved vote of thanks to the gentlemen who had supplied the daily newspapers to the brigade, free of expense, during the year.

Mr Whitelaw seconded the motion, which was carried with applause

Mr S. Cottew proposed a vote thanks to the Harton Coal Company for supplying coals to the brigade house during the year.

Mr Watkins seconded the motion, which was carried with applause.

Mr J. Robinson made some remarks, in which he referred to the benefits conferred upon widows and orphans by the Tyne Shipwrecked Mariners Widows and Orphans fund of which he is the honorary secretary. . There had been some heavy calls upon the fund recently. In the case of the missing steamer Henry Coxon he had already received an account of eight widows, and seventeen children, and he believed there would be still further calls. During last year over £100 was paid in South Shields to widows and fatherless children, and this year, up to the present time nearly £300 had been paid. The loss of the Henry Coxon would entail an expenditure of over £200, and the year was likely to be a very heavy one for the fund.

Mr M. Cay next made some remarks, urging the members to proficiency and discipline in their drills. He remarked that although they were not the brigade established in the country they were the first to save life, for which they had reason to be grateful (Applause.)

Mr J. H. Morton having made a few remarks

Mr S. Cottew moved a vote of thanks to Mr T. G. Mabane for his present of ornamented name boards which were placed around the Watch House.

Mr T. Potter seconded motion, which was carried with acclamation.

Mr Mabane acknowledged the compliment, the business of the meeting concluded.

The result of the election of officers was as follows: - William Cay, S. Cottew, T. G. Mabane and Matthew Cay. Secretary and Treasurer- S. Malcolm. Deputy Captains- A. Whitelaw, James Wood,, T. Watkins, B. Birch, Committee— Messrs J. Wood, , T. Coulson, T.A. Wilson, G.R. Potts, T. Watkins, R. Hobson, J. Hopper, A. Whitelaw, T. Potter, J. Ross, H. Richardson, and B. Bell.

The members were subsequently entertained to supper, and the rest of the evening was spent in a social manner, several of the members singing songs, and a number of toasts being given.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 28th of July 1878

ANNUAL MEETING 1879

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE

Last night, the thirteenth annual meeting of the members of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held in the Watch House, on the South Pier. The interior of the building was profusely decorated with flags, banners, &c. and there was a modest display of bunting the outside. Mr Ald. Glover occupied the chair, and amongst those present were the Mayor (Ald. Readhead), Rev. R. M. Herdman, Association Secretary Missions Seamen; Dr Crease, hon. surgeon to the Brigade; S. Malcolm, hon. secretary and treasurer; Captain Johnson, R.N., inspector of Coastguard; Mr R. Thompson, Newcastle; J. L. Hall, Esq. J.P., Mr R. Watson, Mr J. Robinson (Wellington Terrace), Mr W. Cay, Mr M. Cay, Mr J. Crisp, Mr J. Stephens, Superintendent of the River Tyne Police; Mr T. G. Mabane, Captain Whitelaw, Mr T. Coulson, G. R. Potts, J. Dickson, Collector of Customs Mr T. Brown, Mr T. A. Wilson, Captain Cottew, J. E. Smith, Mr T. F. Hedley, Mr W. J. Haggerston, R. Hobson, J. Carmichael, and other's.

The Chairman, who had been elected to that position amid applause, said they had met to hold their annual meeting, for the purpose looking over the accounts, and the secretary would read the report and tell them what the committee had done during the past year.

Mr Malcolm read letters from the Rev. T. H. Chester. Vicar of South Shields; Ald. J. F. Spence North Shields; H Nelson, Esq., J.P., and W. Black, Esq., J.P., South Shields, regretting their inability attend the meeting.

Mr Malcolm then read the annual report of the committee as follows:—

"In presenting the 13th annual report, your committee would again take the opportunity of welcoming the members at the close of another year. The past winter will long be remembered for its severity and the prolonged continuance of its frosts and snows. Although such has been the case, there has not been what we may call life brigade weather, compared with former years. Our work at the pier, with two exceptions, has been principally to keep a sharp look out in stormy weather, and we are pleased to report that no lives have been lost at the mouth of the Tyne. Early in the morning of August 24th, during a strong gale, signals of distress were reported in the neighbourhood of Marsden. A detachment was despatched in that direction, but after a tedious walk along the coast, no signs of a vessel could be seen, and it must, therefore, have been a false alarm. During heavy gale, the brigadesmen on duty observed, about half-past five on the morning of November 28th, vessel's lights; and her movements were watched with great anxiety, as it was seen from her position there would be great difficulty in weathering the South Pier. In a short time she struck the staging at the end of the pier, carrying away her foremast and bowsprit, and, about 6 15 a.m., stranded on the south side of the pier, at a distance of 50 yards therefrom. In anticipation of this, the brigadesmen, who had been on duty all night, had taken the rocket apparatus along the pier, and had everything in readiness. The first rocket carried the line over the bows, but the sea was washing right over the vessel, and the crew in consequence appeared unable to get to it. A second line was thrown over the main top gallant yard, this the crew failed to reach. A third line was thrown on board, which landed across the rigging in a similar position. An attempt was then made to fire a line on to the deck within reach of the crew, who had taken refuge aft, but owing to the nature of the pier and the difficulty of adjusting the rocket at a proper elevation, it fell short. After this, one the crew managed to go aloft and get hold of one of the previous lines, by which they soon hauled our apparatus on board, making the gear fast to the mizenmast. During all this time heavy seas were breaking over the ship, and we had grave fears lest the other masts might fall. However, without any mishap and about twenty minutes from the seaman getting the rocket line, the whole the crew, seven in number, together with the English pilot, were safely landed. They were then taken to the Watch House and supplied with warm clothing and refreshments. The men were very grateful for our efforts in their behalf, and the Imperial Government of Germany also tendered their thanks to the brigade. The vessel was the Jacob Rothenburgh, of Rostock. The day previous to this, Captain Prowse, R.N., Inspector- General of Life Saving Apparatus, paid us an official visit, but as the weather was threatening it was wisely decided not to disturb the apparatus in case it might be wanted. This turned out to be the case and Captain Prowse had the satisfaction of being present at the wreck and witnessed the saving of the whole of the crew. We have lost during the year, by death, three very active members, viz., Messrs Thos. Houlby, Benj. Birch, and Wm. Ridley. The two former were deputy-captains for many years, and were amongst the oldest members. By the efforts of a few of his comrades, the sum of £110 was raised for the widow and children of Thomas Houlby, with which an annuity of £12 for 10 years was purchased. An interesting addition has been made to the adornments of the Watch House. Mr Robert Watson, artist, has kindly presented to us his original sketch of the Stanley (s), made the morning after that now historic wreck, an event which will

always be associated with the rise and progress of Volunteer Life Brigades. The thanks of the members are due to him for his appropriate and valuable gift. Our thanks are also due to Captain Johnson, R.N. Inspecting Commander of Coastguard, and the admirable staff of men under him at this station for the great interest they take and the attention they give to the important duties devolving upon them. It will be seen from the financial statement that the expenditure has been very heavy owing to the addition of a drying room, and also enclosing the whole of the buildings with a wall and iron railings. These additions were very necessary, and the members have the satisfaction of knowing that they possess one of the most complete Life Brigade buildings the world.

Having now done all that seems to meet the requirements of the case in this direction, and having a most complete rocket apparatus supplied by the Board of Trade, it is hoped by your committee that the present members, and those who may succeed them in the years to come, will use every effort to promote the welfare of this institution, and ever maintain it not only as a credit to the birthplace of the lifeboat, but also as an honour to the country at large.

Mr Malcolm also read the financial statement, which showed that the receipts had amounted to £186 9s 1 1/2d, including a balance in the bank of £40 3s 9d, a grant of £75 from the Board of Trade (£25 of which was to pay the Board's proportion of the new railing round the Rocket House, and £50 (four year's donation) from the Tyne Lifeboat Fund. The expenditure had reached the sum of £263 9s 11d, which included £141 4s 7d for the new drying room, and £86 5s 6d for the new railings, leaving a balance due to the treasurer of £76 19s 11 1/2d. Mr Malcolm said this was one of the most unsatisfactory balance sheets they had had, but they hoped, by the kindness of their friends, that an improvement would be made in their funds in the course of the ensuing year.

Mr J. Wood moved that the report and financial statement be adopted, printed, and circulated amongst the members.

Mr R. Bell seconded, and the motion was unanimously carried.

The Chairman said he thought the report was one of the most satisfactory he had ever heard read for the last thirteen years; and he thought it was satisfactory, because they had so improved the premises, and considering they had spent so much money it was a wonder they were not more in debt. (Hear, hear.) But he had no doubt their friends would come forward and assist in reducing the balance against them, and by way of a beginning he would give them guinea. (Hear, hear.) He was glad to learn from the report, that the brigade had saved, eight lives during the past year, and that they had received the acknowledgment of the German Government. He wished the brigade continued success (Applause).

Mr M. Cay said there was a gentleman amongst them who not only attended the Brigade on the occasion of practices and shipwrecks, but also gave his professional services gratis, and he had great pleasure proposing that Dr Crease be again appointed honorary surgeon to the Brigade. (Hear, hear.)

Mr T. A. Wilson seconded, and the motion was carried by acclamation.

Dr Crease said he could only return this year, as he had done in past years, his thanks for the high honour they had conferred upon him. It was an honour he esteemed very deeply, and he should continue to discharge any duty imposed upon him with the same zeal as hereto. (Applause.)

Mr W. Cay moved a vote of thanks to the Harton Coal Company for gratuitously supplying the Brigade with fuel from the commencement of the institution to the present time.

Mr S. Cottew seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Mr T. G. Mabane moved vote of thanks to the donors of the daily papers to the institution

Mr J. Wood seconded the motion, which was agreed to unanimously.

Mr R. Thompson (Newcastle) moved a vote of thanks to Mr Robert Watson, artist, for his present of a sketch of the wreck of the Stanley towards the adornment of the Brigade House.

Mr J. Laws seconded the motion, and it was carried by acclamation.

Mr Watson acknowledged the compliment.

Mr Malcolm moved a vote of thanks to the members of the Coastguard and Captain Johnson, R.N., the district inspector. It must be remembered that life brigades were formed to assist the Coastguard. They had a steady and able-bodied set men stationed at South Shields at the present time, and all the members would bear him out in this—that they had at their head an officer of Her Majesty's Navy (Captain Johnson) who was most assiduous and attentive to his duties. (Applause.)

Mr Mabane seconded the motion, and said the kindness and courtesy shown by Captain Johnson and his men could never be forgotten by the members of that brigade. They had always worked together with the greatest harmony; it had been otherwise their differences might have resulted in some lives being lost.

The motion was carried hearty acclamation.

Captain Johnson, R.N., returned thanks, and said it was with mingled feelings of pleasure and pain that he met them to-night. Pleasure, because it was always a pleasure to be amongst them and pain, because he was sorry to say the three years for which he was honoured with the appointment take charge this district was drawing to close, and would expire in November. Wherever he might be called to, he would ever retain lively recollection of the kindness he had experienced amongst them. There were in the country five Volunteer Life Brigades, and four of them were under his charge. It was an honour to him to have so many of these valuable institutions under his charge. A few months ago Captain Prowse, Inspector General of Life Saving Apparatus, made a tour of inspection of the division, and assured him that there was no station in a better or more perfect condition than that at South Shields. (Applause.) Captain Johnson, in conclusion, read his report to the Board of Trade respecting the South Shields Life Brigade, as follows :— "South Shields. I need hardly say anything in praise of the South Shields Brigade, as they have so often given valuable proof of their efficiency and zeal." (Applause.) He remarked that the zeal they had shewn, often under very trying circumstances, had rarely been equalled and could not possibly have been surpassed. (Applause.)

The following was the result of the election of officers:—Captains: Messrs W. Cay, M. Cay, S. Cottew, and T. G. Mabane. Deputy- Captains: Messrs A. Whitelaw, Thomas Watkins, James Wood, and Thomas Coulson. Secretary and Treasurer: Mr S. Malcolm. Committee : Messrs T. Coulson, R. Hobson, James Wood, T. A. Wilson, T. Watkins, A. Whitelaw, J. Hopper, T. Potter, James Ross, R. Bell G. R. Potts, and H. Richardson.

This part of the business being over, there was an adjournment for a few minutes, after which the members and their friends sat down to a substantial supper.

The Chairman gave the first toast, the Queen, which was duly honoured.

The Mayor proposed the toast of the evening "Success to the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade." After expressing his pleasure at being present on that occasion, he referred to the efficient manner in which the members of the brigade rendered their services. Whenever there was any danger they were always ready and willing to render assistance. He associated with the toast the health of the captains of the brigade. (Applause.)

W. Cay responded on behalf of the officers and men. He said there were many institutions, not only in South Shields but in other towns, which were formed for the relief of distress, but he did not know any institution that had harder services to go through and more privations to endure, and bore them more manfully, than did the life brigadesmen of that town. It was a positive pleasure to be connected with them, and the men of that brigade, on every occasion when their services were required, had done their duty as only Englishmen could do it. (Hear, hear.) They had raised that Watch House subscription, and he was happy to say that the whole thing, from the beginning to the present, had been great success. (Applause.)

The Chairman proposed the health of Mr R. Thompson, of Newcastle, and testified to the interest that gentleman had always shewn towards the institution. (Applause.)

Mr Thompson, in responding, said that, although a resident of Newcastle, he had for fully fifty years come to South Shields to bathe, and as long as he lived he should ever cherish a warm affection for South Shields. Towards reducing the debt on the institution, he should gladly subscribe £5. (Cheers.)

Mr Malcolm proposed the health of the Lifeboatmen; and alluded to the great services rendered by them, in which they even exposed themselves to more danger than the Brigadesmen. He coupled with the toast the name of Mr Andrew Harrison. (Applause.)

Mr R. Wells, in lieu of Mr Harrison, who had left the room, returned thanks, and said the South Shields lifeboat had been the means of saving 1,001 lives. (Cheers.) On the occasion of the wreck of the Stanley, he was in the lifeboat for five hours. (Hear, hear.)

The Chairman gave the health of Captain Johnson, R.N., who responded.

Other toasts were given, several members sang songs, and a pleasant evening was spent.

The proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette of 11th of July 1879

ADDITIONAL REPORT

In last week's notes I drew attention to the annual meeting of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade, but there were one or two matters that I omitted to mention. The principal omission was in reference to the finances of the institution, which, by the way, is entirely supported by voluntary contributions. The balance sheet showed that there was a balance due the treasurer of £76 19s 11 1/2d. At the previous annual meeting there was a balance in the bank of £40 3s 9d, but during the period intervening a new drying room has been added, and the whole of the buildings have been enclosed with a wall and iron railings. According to the last report of the committee, "these additions were very necessary, and the members have the satisfaction of knowing that they possess one of the most complete Life Brigade buildings in the world." The total cost of the drying room was £141 4s 7d, and of the wall and railings £86 5s 6d, so that the balance at the wrong side is easily accounted for, the expenditure being exceptionally heavy. A hope was expressed at the meeting last week that the friends of the brigade would contribute towards the deficiency, and already two promises of five guineas each have been received. This is very encouraging, and, as several smaller donations have been promised, it is hoped the debt may soon be wiped out. The other items of expenditure amounted to only £35 19s, while the receipts, including the balance of £40 3s 9d above mentioned, reached the sum of £186 9s 11/2d. It will be seen therefore that economy has been practised, and, as such heavy outlay will not be necessary for a considerable time to come, the institution may soon be placed in a flourishing financial condition.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 19 July 1879