

29-1-1885 P2

## The Fortifications Wall.

For some time past the work of constructing a concrete retaining wall around the base of Fortification Hill has been completed. The job seems to be a thoroughly lasting and creditable one. Those of the public who used to find their way therabouts will recollect that the foot of the hill ("Captain Allan's Hill") was formerly riddled with broad drives, which had been put in to admit of examination being made of the old coal workings underneath the hill, with a view to ascertain whether their existence was likely to prove prejudicial in after days to the heavy fortification works and masonry overhead. All necessary precautions having been taken, by means of filling in or roofing the many underground passages and chambers, their entrances were finally blotted out of sight for ever by a deep thick wall of solid concrete and masonry. The discovery made at the time of a number of leg-irons, manacles, and other articles too strongly suggestive of the horrors and tyrannies enacted therabouts in days gone by, will be fresh in memory. The underground dungeons and abodes of wretchedness then exposed are now, happily, for ever closed from human sight. The Hill itself, however, stands rather too much like an oasis in a desert of mud. The slightest shower of rain renders access impossible, save through a slough of the stickiest of sticky grey marl, and is a thorough terror to butcher boys and the milkman. Pedestrians avoid it, and residents grumble not loud but deep. Somehow or another there would appear to be a tacit aversion on the part of the Borough Council towards recognising the claims of residents therabouts. They pay their rates regularly, and have done so for years; yet scarcely one pound—if indeed one farthing—of the general rates has been expended towards the improvement of the locality. If there be an objection that the place is beyond the limits of the borough, and consequently that no corporate money can be devoted, why, in common fairness, compel the people to pay taxes? The road is, or will soon be, one of the most largely patronised ones in the district as a drive and promenade, and only awaits the extension of Hunter-street eastwards to the ocean to make it so. Several petitions have found their way to the Council already, and it seems that now is the time for some one of our aldermen to step in and immortalise himself.

1885, January 1st *Newcastle Morning Herald & Miners Advocate*, p.2

Recollection of old coal workings at foot of the hill (Captain Allan's Hill) and discovery of leg-irons and manacles now all encased behind a wall of concrete.

### **The Fortifications Wall**

For some time past the work of constructing a concrete retaining wall around the base of Fortification Hill has been completed. The job seems to be a thoroughly lasting and creditable one. Those of the public who used to find their way thereabouts will recollect that the foot of the hill ("Captain Allan's Hill") was formerly riddled with broad drives, which had been put in to admit of examination being made of the old coal workings underneath the hill, with a view to ascertain whether existence was likely to prove prejudicial in [after?] days to the heavy fortification works and masonry overhead. All necessary precautions having been taken, by means of filling in or roofing the many underground passages and chambers, their entrances were finally blotted out of sight forever by a deep thick wall of solid concrete and masonry. The discovery made at the time of a number of leg-irons, manacles, and other articles too strongly suggestive of the horrors and tyrannies enacted thereabouts in days gone by, will be fresh in memory. The underground dungeons and abodes of wretchedness then exposed are now, happily, forever closed from human sight. The Hill itself, however, stands rather too much like an oasis in a desert of mud. The slightest shower of rain renders access impossible, save through a slough of the stickiest of sticky grey marl, and is a thorough terror to butcher boys and the milkman. Pedestrians avoid it, and residents grumble not loud but deep. Somehow or another there would appear to be a tacit aversion on the part of the Borough Council towards recognizing the claims of residents thereabouts. They pay their rates regularly, and have done so for years; yet scarcely one pound – if indeed one farthing – of the general rates has been expended towards the improvement of the locality. If there be an objection that the place is beyond the limits of the borough, and consequently that no corporate money can be devoted, why, in common fairness, compel the people to pay rates? The road i.e., or will soon be, one of the most largely patronized ones in the district as a drive and promenade, and only awaits the extension of Hunter street eastwards to the ocean to make it so. Several petitions have found their way to the council already, and it seems that now is the time for someone of our aldermen to step in and immortalize himself.