

Here you will find novels and poems written by people in Great Ayton, or which mention Great Ayton and Roseberry Topping.

Roseberry Topping, a poem

Thomas Pierson

Originally published 1783, reprinted in 1847 with notes by John Walker Ord.

Ord, as held by Canon Atkinson, cannot be relied upon. His notes are mainly on the places which Pierson can see from the summit. Great Ayton is said to be "a large and well-built village". In his eleven lines on Great Ayton, Ord manages to make two serious errors. He states the church holding Commodore Wilson's monument is St, Cuthbert's, and that Captain Cook resided for some time in the house of Thomas Skelton.

Yorkshire Miscellany

George Markham Tweddell

Stokesley 1845

Also reproduced in *A Collection of the Poetry of the Cleveland Poet George Markham Tweddell (1823-1903)* Volume 1

Assembled by Trevor Teasdel and Paul M Tweddell

Trevor Teasdel and Paul M Tweddell, 2008

Tweddell's first poem on Roseberry Topping "Rosebury Topping" beginning "Not among smoke of busy, crowded town, where manufactures for the world are made ..."

Books of Poems by John Wright

The self-styled "Bard of Cleveland" started work as a shoe-maker and then a barber, writing poems in his spare time. He later became a full-time author, surprisingly making enough money from sales of his books, and a gift from Lord Palmerston, to build the house named "The Recess" on Newton Road. This house was designed around the mystical biblical numbers 3 and 7 and shaped like an open book.

Anacreontic Poems

John Wright, Middlesbrough, 1847

A Gem for Every One

John Wright, Middlesbrough, 1849

Comfort, Man was never made to mourn

John Wright, Middlesbrough, 1852

The Privilege of Man

The Fourth Work of Original Poems, designated the Privilege of Man

John Wright

Printed for the author by J. Windross, Middlesbrough, 1854

The Privilege of Man

The Fifth Work of Original Poems, and the Second designated the Privilege of Man

John Wright

Printed by W. F. Pratt, Stokesley, for the author, 1857

The Privilege of Man

The Sixth Work of Original Poems, and the Third designated the Privilege of Man

John Wright

Published by William Charlton, London, 1860

This book included some biographical details of the author and his family.

Revelations; comprising a concise compendium and exposition of the Old and New Testaments under the wonderful figures of Three and Seven, exemplified by singular occurrences in all ages of the world, and before the world began; collected from history both sacred and profane

Elizabeth Wright

Printed for the author by H. Heavisides, Stockton-on-Tees, 1862

John Wright's daughter wrote this bizarre work, with an equally bizarre title, at "The Bard's Recess, Ayton, near Roseberry Topping".

The Faithful Shepherdess: being a brief memoir of Mrs. Ibbetson, of Great Ayton Vicarage

The Christian Book Society, London, 1870

A eulogy to the life of Mrs. Ibbetson, wife of the Rev. Ibbetson. This book is summarised elsewhere in the website.

Rhymes & Sketches to illustrate the Cleveland Dialect

Mrs. G.M. Tweddell

Tweddell and Sons, Stokesley, 1875

Collection of dialect poems. Of interest is the list of subscribers, which can be taken as a measure of literary appreciation in the village at the time:

Miss Blacket, James Cole (four copies), Richard Craggs of Ayton Hall, Mrs. Crumney of the Manor House, T.S. Hardie Civil Engineer, Mrs. W. Hutton.

The Hills & Vale of Cleveland and other poems

James Milligan

The Gazette Steam Printing and Publishing Offices, Middlesbrough, Second Edition 1879

Third edition 1881

James Milligan lived in Great Ayton. Small volume of poems, opening with title poem, which features lines on the whinstone dyke, folks carving their names on Rosebury rocks, or sipping the clear waters from its well, Prince Oswy, Aireyholme and Captain Cook. In the third edition is twenty-pages of "Geology" with references to coal, whinstone, ironstone and jet

Cleveland Sonnets, Fifth series Tractates No. 38

George Markham Tweddell

Cleveland Publishing, Stokesley, 1890

Also reproduced in *A Collection of the Poetry of the Cleveland Poet George Markham Tweddell (1823-1903) Volume 1*, Assembled by Trevor Teasdel and Paul M Tweddell

Trevor Teasdel and Paul M Tweddell, 2008

Tweddell's second poem titled Rosebury Topping "Who has not head of famous Rosebury, the favourite hill of e'vry Cleveland bard?" Makes reference to the British village theory of Roseberry's pits.

T'Hunt o' Yatton Brigg

Richard Blakeborough Yorkshire Dialect Series No 9

The Yorkshire Publishing Press, Stockton-on-Tees, 1899

Extremely rare.

If the story indeed dates from 1760 or earlier, as claimed by Richard Blakeborough, the Yatton Brigg cannot be the stone structure shown in the illustration, because the first stone bridge was built in 1777. There was a previous wooden bridge on the site, in addition to the ford.

The Bi-Centenary of Captain James Cook. Under the Distinguished Patronage of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York. An Historical Play to celebrate a Great Yorkshireman and Benefactor of the Empire

J. Fairfax-Blakeborough

Horne and Son Ltd., Whitby, 1928

This is a play in six acts, mainly about Cook's boyhood. Acts 1 and 2 are at Marton. In Act 3 the action moves to Great Ayton, where Mr. Scottowe and the vicar are smoking and talking about the Postgate School. James Cook senior and his thirteen-year old son James enter. Young James wants to go to sea, but his father has arranged an apprenticeship with William Sanderson at Staithes, a grocer and draper. At the end of the Act, now alone, Scottowe reflects on the one or two guineas a year it has cost him to have young James educated.

Act 4 sees James at Staithes. The author deals with the issue of the shilling as follows: William Sanderson is paid with a shilling which he mislays, then early next morning James runs away to sea, and before he leaves Staithes he is given a shilling by a well-wisher. Sanderson then accuses the absent Cook of stealing the shilling.

Act 5 takes place at John and Henry Walker's house at Whitby. James Cook has been in their employ for them for the past thirteen years, but is now leaving to join the Royal Navy. The Walkers' maid, Betsy, is in love with Cook and he almost proposes to her, but then leaves with her in tears. Act 6 is about the final part of Cook's life at Hawaii.

The play was performed by the Marton and Great Ayton Players, at Ayton on Thursday 27 September 1928, and at Marton the following day. Some of the proceeds went to All Saints Church restoration fund and the deciphering of the damaged registers referring to the Cook family, and some also to the restoration of the Postgate Schoolroom. There is a copy of the play in the Teesside Archives, reference PR/MAC (3)/10/3 1928

Cleveland View

D. L. Leach

Macdonald & Co., London, 1945

A romantic novel set in Cleveland with a scene set on Roseberry Topping.

Funeral Tea: a shiver in one act

Pat Wilson

Hub Press, 1977

A short play about a lady who caters for small weddings and funeral teas, and finds that she may have used Uncle Jacob's ashes instead of tea leaves. Pat Wilson lived in Marwood Drive.

Coming Home (One Woman's Journey)

Ann Jarvis

Minerva 7, 2003

A small book of poems and photographs by Ann Jarvis who moved to Great Ayton in the late 1990s, where she found "inner peace and contentment". All the photographs, save one, were taken in and around the village.

Pillow Talk

Freya North

Harper Collins, London, 2008

“Pillow Talk” was the winner of the Romantic Novel of the Year Award. Arlo Savage is a music teacher at Roseberry Hall, a private boys boarding school in North Yorkshire. The school is apparently based on the Friends’ School in Great Ayton, although it is described as being some two miles from Stokesley on the old Thirsk Road. Unlike the Friends’ School, Roseberry Hall is an eighteenth century structure with turrets, but like the Friends’ School has a new science block. Petra Flint, Arlo’s sweetheart from his school-days, travels from London to Stokesley, which surprises her in its elegance. She cycles to Great Ayton, visits the Schoolroom Museum and eats her sandwiches by the Monument. The best thing about Ayton is Suggitts, whose ice cream is irresistible. Petra call in for an ice cream after a ride up Carlton Bank, at precisely the same moment that Arlo drops in to by an Easter egg for his parents in London, whom he is about to visit. He is so taken aback at meeting Petra that he leaves without paying for the Easter egg, but she settles the bill.

A few days later, Arlo returns to Ayton from London and Petra makes the journey in the opposite direction. However, she returns a few weeks later and asks in Suggitts where she might find Arlo. He has been fantasising about her, while engaging in torrid sex with Miranda Oates, the English teacher at Roseberry Hall. Eventually Petra finds Arlo at the school, and they have a date in the Thai Restaurant in Stokesley, The start of their affair, again with some graphic sexual scenes. He promises her dinner at the Tontine and lunch at the Star in Harome, but she finds out about Miranda and storms back to London. Arlo pursues her there and they make up. Later, Petra stays with a friend in Yarm to be nearer to Arlo; her house has Joe Cornish photographs on the walls, giving it the atmosphere of a boutique hotel. Then Arlo goes to London. And they meet each other’s parents. The story closes with two tickets for a six-day trek to Kilimanjaro.