

Watson, Kipling & Co

In 1865, Frances Lawrence Kipling of the **Barningham Kipling** (see [The Kipling Darlington Linen and Carpet Business](#)) set up a chemical-manufacturing business at Seaham harbour in County Durham with John Watson FRAS, whose history is told below.

PRESENTATION AT WASHINGTON.

A very pleasing ceremony took place at Washington on Saturday, the occasion being the presenting of a testimonial to Mr. John Watson, for many years the principal foreman at the Washington Chemical Works, but who is now leaving that establishment to commence business on his own account at Seaham Harbour. Mr. Watson may justly be included in the list of the self-made men of the north. He first joined the works in question, then under the management of the late Hugh Lee Pattinson, Esq., on the 19th of February, 1844, when only some sixteen or seventeen years of age, commencing with the humble salary of 1s. per day. He no sooner got himself established there than he at once gave his mind and his leisure time to study, not contenting himself with the mere elementary rules, but going even into mathematics, in which he ultimately attained great proficiency. He next turned his attention to astronomy, and amongst other things in connection with that science he not only invented but—being of a mechanical turn of mind—manufactured some improved telescopes for astronomical purposes, some of them being of immense size. For these and other valuable contributions to the science of astronomy, he was, about nine or ten years since, honoured by being elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. Meanwhile he did not neglect the class of study connected with the profession which he had adopted, a fact which was not lost sight of by his then employer, Mr. H. L. Pattinson, sen., who not only promoted him in the works when occasion offered, but also assisted him in many ways in his other studies. In this manner Mr. Watson went on, and was soon made foreman of a department in the works, from which, about eighteen years since, he was further promoted to the position of general foreman, which situation he has held until the present time, he having on Saturday evening completed a servitude of exactly twenty-one years. The new firm, Messrs. Watson, Kipling, and

Co.—of which he is to be the managing partner—has taken land at Seaham Harbour, on which they are at present erecting new chemical works. For some time past Mr. Watson has identified himself with every movement in the North of England having for its object the general improvement, morally and socially, in the district. He has also appeared many times before the public as a lecturer, once at the Literary and Philosophical Society, Newcastle, several times at the Gatehead Mechanics' Institute, and also in the neighbouring towns of Shields, Sunderland, Darlington, and elsewhere. He has taken an interest in every branch of practical science, and is now a great scientific authority in the North of England. Having thus distinguished himself, his fellow-workmen were determined that he should not leave them without bearing with him some mark of their appreciation of his character and attainments. The testimonial consisted of a handsome silver tea service, from the establishment of Messrs. Reid and Sons, Newcastle, there being upon the teapot the following inscription:—"Presented to Mr. John Watson, by the workmen of the Washington Chemical Works, as a token of respect, on his leaving, after a service of 21 years. Feb. 18, 1865." The presentation took place on Saturday evening, at the house of Mrs. Durcan, Woodside Hotel, Washington Staiths. Mr. G. McWhan presided, the duties of the vice-chair being discharged by Mr. Georgeson. There was a large attendance, the spacious room being crowded to the door. The usual loyal and patriotic toasts having been given and responded to, the Chairman next came to the business of the evening. In proposing the health of Mr. Watson, the chairman alluded in eloquent terms to that gentleman's studious habits from his youth upwards, and to the fact more particularly that

he had gained what knowledge he had during those hours of the night apportioned to rest. In conclusion he said (addressing Mr. Watson): We were unwilling, sir, that you should quit the scene of your boyhood and your early manhood, the neighbourhood and the institution with which your name has been identified for a number of years, without some token of our regard. We have put that token into this form, and we ask you to accept it as a mark of our esteem; and we wish that a long, prosperous, and happy life may yet be reserved to you and your partner. I have great pleasure in proposing the health of Mr. John Watson, and prosperity to the firm of which he is now a partner.—The toast having been received most enthusiastically, Mr. Watson returned thanks in feeling terms, and in the course of his remarks alluded to the kindness which he had ever experienced at the hands of the late Mr. H. L. Pattinson, and also of his successor Mr. I. L. Bell. He would ever cherish the kindly feeling which had existed amongst them during the time he had been at those works; and he hoped that if ever they should meet again they would not forget their last merry meeting. (Cheers.)—Several other toasts were then drunk, including the "Workmen of the Washington Chemical Works," and the "Agricultural interest," the latter being responded to by Mr. Potts. Some excellent songs were given by gentlemen present, and altogether a most agreeable and pleasant evening was spent.

Newcastle Daily Chronicle - Monday 20 February 1865

Frances Lawrence Kipling had been a bleacher in Manchester, so knew something about chemicals.

NEW CHEMICAL WORKS AT SEAHAM HARBOUR.—On Thursday afternoon, the ceremony of cutting the first sod of the new chemical works at Seaham Harbour took place, in the presence of a considerable number of spectators. Amongst the gentlemen present were Mr. Watson and Mr. Kipling (two of the partners in the new firm), the Messrs. Mann, Mr. R. Candlish, Mr. Wight, Mr. Stewart, Mr. James, &c. The site of the new works lies between the bottle works of Ald. Candlish, and Earl Vane's blast furnaces, and contiguous to the railway and harbour. Mr. Kipling cut the first sod, after which Mr. Watson invited the company to join with them in drinking success to the new undertaking. Mr. Watson afterwards gave the requisite instructions to a number of workmen, who forthwith commenced their operations, and the visitors gradually dispersed.

Newcastle Chronicle - Saturday 11 March 1865

CO-OPERATION.—The workmen employed at the Bottle Works of John Candlish, Esq., M.P., and those employed at Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co.'s Chemical Works, are about to start a co-operative store. An efficient committee has been appointed, and eligible premises secured in Church Street. Several attempts have previously been made at co-operation, but, from some cause or other, they have failed. The present effort is looked on very favourably, and the promoters are very sanguine of success.

Durham County Advertiser - Friday 28 February 1868

In 1869, the firm went into steel-making.

SEAHAM HARBOUR AND THE DEPRESSION OF TRADE.—The tradespeople of Seaham Harbour have suffered severely through the depressed condition of the coal trade. On Saturday it was reported that there was not a single vessel in the docks. On the same day, the bindings took place at the collieries, and the men were engaged at a reduction of about 10 per cent. from former prices. One hundred of the men were paid off, and the working of the pits has been reduced from three shifts to two. Two soup kitchens have been opened for the relief of distressed families. An extension of manufacturing operations is, however, expected; Messrs Watson, Kipling, & Co., the chemical manufacturers, having taken the blast furnaces, which have not been worked for many years.

Shields Daily Gazette - Monday 08 March 1869

WORKMEN'S EXCURSIONS.—The workmen in the employment of Messrs. Angus and Wilson, drapers, Grey Street, Newcastle, had their annual trip to Whitley on Monday. A splendid dinner was provided by Mr. Watkin of the New Fat Ox Inn. The party afterwards repaired to St. Mary's Island, where a pleasant day was spent.—Messrs. Watson, Kipling, & Co., of the Seaham Chemical Works, on Saturday last treated their workpeople to their usual yearly trip by steamboat to Whitley.—On Monday the employees of Mr William Pearson, tailor and draper, Grey Street, Newcastle, had their annual excursion to Whitley. Before returning home, the party passed a hearty vote of thanks to their respected employer, Mr Pearson, for his kindness and liberality on the occasion.

Newcastle Daily Chronicle - Wednesday 04 August 1869

Shipping.

**IMPORTS.
SUNDERLAND.
FRIDAY.**

Rio de Janeiro, 247 tons, Pettersson, Gothenburg,
72 standard pit props and sleepers, and 2 cases
matches, Johnson & Co; 60½ standard staves,
Watson & Kipling; 2,736 bars iron, and 29
pieces do., Hunter.

Shields Daily Gazette - Monday 24 January 1870

SEAHAM COLLIERY EXPLOSION.

At a meeting held at New Seaham Vicarage on Monday, Nov. 6th, it was resolved that a Subscription List be opened for the relief of the families of these who perished in the late calamitous explosion.

The number left destitute and dependent, so far as can be at present ascertained, is—Widows 23, of whom several are aged and in feeble health, and about 40 children.

A local committee has been formed, with the Rev W. A. Scott as chairman, and E. A. Phillips, Esq., of Messrs Woods and Co.'s Bank, Seaham Harbour, as treasurer, with power to add to their number.

The names of the committee will shortly be published.

Amount previously advertised	£351	0	0
Geo. Elliot, Esq., M.P.	100	0	0
The Lord Bishop of Durham.....	10	0	0
Watson, Kipling and Co.....	25	0	0
Captain D. Mann	10	0	0
Messrs P. R. Los and Co.	5	5	0

Newcastle Journal - Tuesday 14 November 1871

SEAHAM HARBOUR NOTES.

STATE OF TRADE.

still the same number of idle cones. The blast furnaces which have been re-built by Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., are expected to be blown early in the coming year. Already contracts have been made for the supply of ironstone; some cargoes indeed have arrived. Large quantities of coke is also being burnt in anticipation of the commencement. Nothing but the best hematite iron will be manufactured, and for this purpose a portion of the ore used will be brought from Cornwall and Spain by sailing vessels to this port, thus opening out a source of employment for vessels on their return from voyages down channel. About 80 extra men will be employed at these works. The chemical works belonging to the same firm are busily employed getting out orders. The firm now manufactures 300 tons of chemicals per week, whilst extensions for increased facilities are being made from time to time. At these works a visitor would find that the mental man as well as the

physical man is cared for, in the shape of a capacious news-room, where English, Irish, and Scotch daily and weekly newspapers of all shades of politics may be found on the tables. There is also a library of so varied a nature, that we believe no book of repute from Tom Thumb to sacred history will be found wanting. The managing committee are elected from amongst the workmen, and are ably assisted by Mr Joseph Moffatt, cashier to the works. The Londonderry Engine Works and

Shields Daily Gazette - Monday 18 December 1871

EXPLOSION IN A BLAST FURNACE AT SEAHAM HARBOUR.

The blast furnace at Seaham Harbour has been considerably damaged by an explosion. Erected in the time of the late Marchioness of Londonderry, it has been out of blast for a long period, but was at length taken in hand by Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., of the adjoining Chemical Works. These gentlemen had got it filled ready for a start yesterday, but on the blast being applied an explosion ensued, blowing the top off, considerably damaging the furnace. Fortunately no one was injured. The accident, it is expected, will delay the blowing in of the furnace for a few weeks. The cause of the accident is ascribed to some defect in the ventilating apparatus.

Shields Daily Gazette - Friday 02 February 1872

BLAST FURNACES, SEAHAM HARBOUR.

The furnaces, the property of Messrs Watson, Kipling, & Co., were successfully blown on Thursday, and tapped for the first time on Friday. The results of each running since then has been better than anticipated. The iron made will be of a superior class.

Shields Daily Gazette - Tuesday 05 March 1872

THE BLAST FURNACES AT NOSE'S POINT.

These furnaces have turned out most successful since they were blown in by Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co. The iron manufactured is of excellent quality, and some capital runs have been obtained since the opening. A large additional sum per week is now being paid as wages at Seaham Harbour.

Shields Daily Gazette - Monday 15 April 1872

SERIOUS ACCIDENT AT SEAHAM HARBOUR.

Yesterday, a man, named George Burn, engine-man at Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co.'s chemical works, Seaham Harbour, while cleaning the machinery in motion, fell and became entangled in it. Before he could be extricated, the poor fellow was so seriously injured that his life is despaired of. He was removed to his residence in Church Street, Seaham Harbour.

Shields Daily Gazette - Saturday 25 May 1872

In the early 1870s, a terrace of thirteen houses was built to accommodate some of the plant's workers. It became known as Watson Town.



Watson Town (photo [Archive 1858 - \(seahamfamilyhistorygroup.org.uk\)](http://Archive 1858 - (seahamfamilyhistorygroup.org.uk)))

"WATSONTOWN," SEAHAM HARBOUR.

"Watson town!" This is the name of a new row of cottages about to be built in the vicinity of Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co's. Chemical Works, for the occupation of the men employed by them. On Wednesday night last the foundation stone of the first house was laid by Mrs Watson, the wife of one of the partners. The ground to be occupied by the new buildings is about eight acres in extent. There was a select company present to witness the auspicious ceremony. The foundation stone was laid with a beautiful silver trowel and a handsomely polished mallet. Mrs Watson in a few remarks hoped that the cottages of which they were laying the foundation stone would in a short while be ready for occupation. She called the place "Watson town" as she recollected being one of the company at a similar event which took place at Washington about twenty years ago, when the foundation stone of "Pattison town" was laid. Mr John Watson then made an allusion to the absence of his partner, Mr Kipling. He was at Rochdale taking part in some birthday festivities of a friend. In compliment to that same friend they had chosen that day for their ceremony. Several plots of land had been set apart for building purposes but they had been prevented from building, as property so near to extending works like their's was apt to interfere in the extensions that were daily going on. They had now, however, got a few more acres of land granted for building purposes a short distance off. Soon they would see the new town progressing in several directions. They did not intend to let any of the sites for beer houses, as they were convinced there were plenty of them in the town already. Mr Watson spoke in conclusion of the gentlemanly demeanour of Earl Vane's new agent Mr Eminson. Under him Seaham Harbour would progress better than ever it had done hitherto. It was the intention of the company to prove that iron could be made profitably at Seaham Harbour. For this purpose ores of the greatest purity had been secured by them. In time other branches of the business would, follow, namely, the making of rails, bar iron, and ship's plates.

Seaham Observer June 4th 1870

CLEVELAND IRON TRADE.

The following is a statement of the number of furnaces in blast and available in the Cleveland district :

WORKS.	PROPRIETORS.	Furnaces blowing	Furnaces out.	Furnaces built.
Seaham	Watson, Kipling, & Co....	1	0	1
Totals		131	9	140

Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough - Friday 07 June 1872

AMERICA.

New York, Sept. 18.

terms. Watson, Kipling and Co.'s celebrated magnesia in pound bottles and pound tins, is offered at 60c, ditto in 12 lb tins 57c, carbonate 19c, all gold, and ditto in small squares 50c currency—the superior quality of this article commends it to the notice of the trade—Reed and Co., Cedar-street, are the sole importers.

Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser - Wednesday 02 October 1872

A NEW LINE OF STEAMERS.

A new line of steamers is being started by Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., to run from Sunderland South Dock with goods for London and the Continent, bringing back iron ores, chalk, &c., for use at their large chemical and iron works at Seaham.

Shields Daily Gazette - Wednesday 29 January 1873

SEAHAM HARBOUR.

The firm of Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., chemical manufacturers, have so overgrown the limits of their business that they have just established a new line of steamers to trade between Sunderland and London and the Continent, carrying the produce of their works, and bringing new material for return cargoes. The first of the new steamers sailed from Sunderland on Thursday last, for London, and had a very successful passage. She is named the Lily, and the firm are in treaty for two more of the same kind. In celebration of the event, one of the firm (Mr John Watson) and a few gentlemen met at the Lord Seaham Hotel, Seaham Harbour, on Thursday night last. Several toasts were drunk, amongst them being "Success to the new enterprise," and the "Town and Trade of Seaham Harbour." Mr Watson, in responding, said he wished to correct a slight error which had crept into a daily paper with the reference to the shallowness of the docks at Seaham Harbour. He might state this was not the cause of the steamers trading from Sunderland, as they were built especially to meet the requirement of the place, being no more than nine feet draught of water. The Lily had sailed that day with a full cargo and drawing eight and a half feet of water forward and nine feet aft. Now he had been for the past eight years trying to improve the position of the town and port, the interest of which he had thoroughly at heart, but having had so many obstacles put in his way he had been reluctantly compelled to

take advantage of the facilities put in his way. He would mention notably one instance which occurred some five years ago. He wanted to ship some goods at Seaham Harbour for the Continent, and sent them from the works on his trucks. Not long after the trucks were returned un-emptied, with a request that the material before it could be shipped would have to be taken from his trucks and placed upon some ballast waggons which had been sent to the works, the reason assigned being that the rails would not admit of his trucks travelling around some curves. Now, he contended this was not the way a firm like his ought to be treated, when he was so anxious and wishful to do the place good. Due representations were made at the time as to the necessity for more alterations, but they were unheeded, being a considerable loss to Seaham Harbour since that period. The mode of conducting business at the time of the commencement of the town had now become revolutionised, and he argued that the place ought to be made to accord with the growing exigencies of the times. Surely something could be done as an encouragement in the future, seeing what he had done in the past. Until a change took place and similar facilities offered his firm as were offered elsewhere it was not to be expected they could risk their capital—time and money—to make use of a port which offered them such a paucity of inducements to do so. He knew general outcry of lament had gone up from the inhabitants of the town, caused by the fact of his steamers being sent to trade from Sunderland. However, he might tell them that so soon as sufficient accommodation was made he would be only too glad to have the steamers coming to the port.

Shields Daily Gazette - Saturday 01 February 1873

CHEMICAL WORKS ANNUAL PIC-NIC AND SPORTS.—The workmen employed at Messrs Watson, Kipling, & Co's. Chemical Works, with their wives and friends, held their annual pic-nic and sports in Dawdon Dene on Saturday last. There was a large gathering, and, as the day was fine, though sometimes rather threatening, all seemed to enjoy themselves. On the same day, and in the same place, was a large gathering of Sunday scholars, teachers, and friends from Usworth Colliery. This party, who had come in open waggons, were rather unfortunate in their journey home at night. Just as they were preparing to leave Seaham, about eight o'clock in the evening, a heavy rain commenced, accompanied by vivid lightning and thunder, the rain continuing for two or three hours. Many and various were the contrivances and covering resorted to for the protection of summer bonnets, &c. It is to be hoped that a wet skin would be the worst effects produced.

Durham County Advertiser - Friday 18 July 1873

IMPORTS. SUNDERLAND. YESTERDAY.

Black Sea, 705 tons, Porman, 1,300 tons iron ore,
Watson, Kipling, and Co.

Shields Daily Gazette - Friday 15 August 1873

Odin (s), 341 tons, Kuhule, Oierhaven, 700 tons
sulphur ore, Watson, Kipling, & Co.

Shields Daily Gazette - Friday 15 May 1874

Yesterday 500 men employed at Watson, Kipling, and Co.'s Blast Furnace Works, Seaham, came out on strike against a reduction of ten per cent.

Freeman's Journal - Friday 22 May 1874

END OF THE STRIKE AT SEAHAM HARBOUR.
—The strike at Messrs. Watson, Kipling, and Co.'s Chemical and Iron Works, at Seaham Harbour, has ended by the masters allowing the men to resume work on the old terms, and granting weekly pays. In some instances some of the workmen have had their wages increased.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Saturday 30 May 1874

In April 1875, Francis Kipling left the partnership, as will be seen almost certainly due to his ill health. John Petrie, jun. was Francis's brother-in-law.

PARTNERSHIP DISSOLVED.
John Petrie, jun., Francis Lawrence Kipling, and John Watson, chemical manufacturers and iron manufacturers, Seaham Harbour, trading as Watson, Kipling, & Co.

Shields Daily Gazette - Saturday 03 April 1875

The firm however continued to operate under the same name.

SEAHAM HARBOUR.
STRIKE AT MESSRS WATSON, KIPLING AND CO.'S CHEMICAL WORKS.—At present a portion of Messrs Watson, Kipling and Co.'s men, numbering about 150, are on strike. It appears that a month ago the men gave notice for an advance of ten per cent., which at the expiration of the said notice—a week—was conceded to them. Now, however, they allege that the advance should have been equal to fifteen per cent., to put them on an equality with works on the Tyne. This their employers will not agree to, and the men, having given a week's notice, came out on strike on Saturday last.

Durham County Advertiser - Friday 18 June 1875

Francis Lawrence Kipling died in November 1875,

We have to announce the death of Mr. F. L. Kipling, late of the firm of Watson, Kipling, and Co., Seaham Chemical Works, which occurred on Monday evening, at his residence in St. George's-terrace. Mr. Kipling has been for the past two years an invalid. Of modest and quiet habits, he seldom was seen in public affairs; but, nevertheless, he was a keen interested observer of the current of public events. A staunch Liberal in politics, he was tolerant of the opinions of those who differed from him. One of his last public acts was to leave his sick room to vote for the Liberal candidates at the last Parliamentary election.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Wednesday 03 November 1875

LOCK-OUT AT SEAHAM HARBOUR.

The Chemical works of Messrs. Watson, Kipling, and Co., at Seaham Harbour, have been laid idle owing to a general lock-out. The men were at work on Sunday night, and presented themselves at the works on Monday morning also, prepared to go to work at the terms settled upon, but, owing to the decision arrived at on Saturday, they were not allowed to do so. Upwards of 200 men are employed at the above works. The blast furnaces belonging to the same firm are likewise idle.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Tuesday 15 February 1876

OFFICIAL REPORTS.

STRANDING OF THE LILY (s).

Report of a Court of Inquiry held by order of the Board of Trade at the Borough of South Shields, in the county of Durham, on the 9th, 10th, and 11th days of May, 1877, before Joseph Augustus Yorke, Esq., Stipendiary Magistrate for the said borough, assisted by Rear-Admiral Powell, R.N., and Captain Nicolas, as Nautical Assessors, into the stranding of the steamship Lily, of the Port of Sunderland, within the entrance of Sunderland Harbour, on the 16th day of April, 1877.

The Lily is an iron screw steamer of 178.96 registered tons, built at Aberdeen in 1872, is owned by Messrs. Watson, Kipling and Co., of Sunderland, and at the time of stranding was commanded by Mr. Charles M'Intosh. She left London on April 14 last, bound for Seaham, in water ballast, the crew consisting of 10 hands all told. Her draught of water was 8 feet aft and 3 feet 9 or 10 inches forward. They arrived off Seaham on the 16th, but the weather being too rough to allow them to enter they made for Sunderland. They had only the mainsail set, and the wind was blowing strong from the E.S.E. When they first left Seaham Roads the Master, who was in command on the bridge, intended coming on to Shields, but in passing Sunderland he saw that the tide flag was up, and he decided to go in there. He took in the mainsail and placed his vessel to run in between the piers. Just as the fore part of his vessel was entering between the piers a heavy sea struck her under the port quarter, snapped the wheel chain, and rendered the helm useless. The vessel was going full speed ahead. By this time they were nearly between the piers, and the vessel was still running on the same wave towards the centre; a second sea caught her under the port quarter, and caused her to collide with the inside of the north pier.

The vessel was going full speed, and so soon as she was clear the Master stopped her, and put her full speed astern, to avoid collision with a jetty within the harbour. There was, however, a heavy range up the harbour, and the wind blowing from the S.E. very strong, the vessel's head canted round and she touched the ground. The Master then got the assistance of four steamtugs, and she was towed off and moored in the river after being on the ground about an hour.

A charge has been preferred in this case by the Board of Trade against the Owners of the steamship Lily for contributing to the stranding of that vessel through their default in neglecting to have the wheel chains tested or examined since they were fitted to her in May, 1875. This charge has been, however, formulated, not so much for the purpose of obtaining the judgment of the Court upon it, as for the purpose of enabling the representative of the Board of Trade to lay before us the evidence of some scientific witnesses which would, under the operation of the Rules of Procedure embodied in the Act of 1876, have been entirely excluded if no charge were made. It will be sufficient, therefore, for us to say that, in our opinion, the charge is not proved, and that no blame attaches to the Owners for the accident which occurred; and, in justice to those gentlemen, we may add that they appear to have done all that lay in their power to render their vessel seaworthy, and to cause her to be well equipped and fitted for the purpose for which she was required. The accident, no doubt, was primarily caused by the breaking of the wheel chain, and it appeared to us that it might be useful that we should inquire what means could be adopted for the prevention in future of similar accidents, accidents which might prove most serious in their consequences, and lead in some cases to a total loss of any vessel to which they might occur. We have had laid before us some very valuable

evidence on this point, and especially the very able evidence of Mr. Denton, Naval Architect and Surveyor of Sunderland, as well as that of Mr. Hamerton, the Board of Trade Surveyor, of the same place, and these gentlemen entirely concur in recommending a more frequent inspection and testing of the wheel chains and steering gear, and in suggesting the application of some machinery for lessening the strain on that portion of the steering gear close to the wheel itself, which may prevent the effect of a sudden jerk caused by a heavy sea striking the rudder, or by the application of relieving tackle, which should be ready for use on such an emergency as that proved in this case. On the present occasion it appears to be only necessary that we should recommend that some such expedients as those referred to should be adopted, and thus render the occurrence of such an accident as the present less likely. It appears to us especially desirable that a more frequent inspection and an effective test of the condition of the wheel chains and steering gear should be put in practice than that which now appears to prevail. In this case it appears that, although the chains had been inspected within a fortnight of the accident, no test of the strength of the steering chains had been applied since the present steering gear was fitted to the vessel in May, 1875. It appears to us further advisable that in the case of vessels like the subject of this Inquiry, which are constantly compelled to enter harbours such as Sunderland and other harbours on the East Coast, with a narrow entrance, and a bar across it, that they should have attached to the tiller some means, such as relieving tackles or some other expedient, ready for use in the event of an accident occurring such as happened in this case.

I do report that, having carefully inquired into the circumstances of the above-mentioned Shipping casualty, I have found that the said stranding was occasioned by the perils of the sea. I am also of opinion that the costs of this investigation should be borne by each party paying their own.

Dated this 11th day of May, 1877.

J. A. YORKE, Judge.

We concur in the above report,—

R. ASHMORE POWELL, } Assessors.
B. G. W. NICOLAS, }

Shipping and Mercantile Gazette - Friday 22 June 1877

The *Investors' Guardian* furnishes the particulars relative to the following companies, which were registered during the week:—

Watson Kipling and Co. (Iron and Chemical Manufacturers), capital £150,000, in £100 shares.

Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser - Monday 09 July 1877

NEW LOCAL COMPANY.—A company has been formed to take over and continue the business of Watson, Kipling, and Co., manufacturers and vendors of chemicals and iron, at Seaham. The capital is £150,000, in £100 shares. The subscribers are Messrs John Petrie, James Petrie, and George Petrie of Rochdale, Joseph Petrie of Scarborough, John Watson and James Bury Petrie of Seaham, and John Petrie also of Seaham.

Newcastle Courant - Friday 13 July 1877

Upwards of 100 workmen employed at Messrs. Watson, Kipling, and Co.'s Temple Factory, Seaham Harbour, have left work on strike against the reduction of 10 per cent. of their wages. The dispute is likely to be a protracted one, and masters and men keep aloof from each other. The men are guided in their action by the association in Newcastle. It is said that there are no funds to support them. The factory, which is one of the oldest in the North of England, has hitherto worked without dispute.

Shipping and Mercantile Gazette - Friday 15 March 1878

The whole of the men employed at the chemical works of Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., Seaham Harbour, have received notice of a reduction of wages. The men have accepted the reduction.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Saturday 09 November 1878

The extensive chemical works of Messrs Watson, Kipling and Co., are also in full work; but, unfortunately, we understand that the wages of the labourers employed therein have been reduced to a very low rate. still half a loaf is emphatically "better than no bread" just now. The shops present rather

Durham County Advertiser - Friday 27 December 1878

DISTRESSING AFFAIR AT SEAHAM HARBOUR.

An accident, attended with fatal results, occurred at the chemical works of Messrs Watson, Kipling, & Co., Seaham Harbour, yesterday. One of the condensers had lately shown signs of giving way, and the firm invited contracts for taking it down. The contract was undertaken by a mason called John Osmond, and he, assisted by his brother George, and a man called Gilbey, commenced the work yesterday morning. About a quarter to twelve o'clock, while they were at work at the foot of the fabric, the whole of the superincumbent masonry came down. John Osmond was buried in the ruins, and was not extricated until two hours afterwards, when life was found to be extinct. A portion of the falling brickwork went through one of the condensing chambers and liberated a large quantity of sulphuric acid. The acid fell upon the other two men, who were severely burned. John Osmond was a prominent member of the 2nd Durham Artillery Volunteers, and one of the prize winners at Shosbaryness last year.

Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail - Wednesday 26 November 1879

MONTROSE.

SALE OF A STEAMER.—The steamer Laurel, of this port, has been sold by private bargain to Messrs Watson, Kipling, & Co. (Limited), Seaham.

Dundee Advertiser - Tuesday 03 February 1880

TRADE IN THE NORTH.—From nearly all parts of the north of England favourable reports come to hand of the rapidly increasing demand for finished iron, and there are signs that trade, which during the past four years has suffered from depression of the most serious and calamitous kind, has commenced a new era of prosperity. At Seaham Harbour, Messrs Watson, Kipling, & Co.'s blast furnaces are under repairs, and will be re-lighted as soon as practicable.

Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail - Wednesday 04 February 1880

One of the blast furnaces rented by Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., Seaham Harbour, has been blown in this week, after having been out of blast for nearly four years.

Durham County Advertiser - Friday 02 April 1880

Trade in and around Seaham Harbour has undergone a most favourable change during the past three weeks. The Seaham Harbour blast furnaces, owned by Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., are now in full work, giving employment to an additional 150 men. The chemical works, owned by the same company, are fully employed, and additional labour has caused an influx of workmen. The bottle works, owned by the trustees of the late Mr John Candlish, M.P., under the able management of Mr Robert Candlish, and Mr Richard, the son of the latter, have during the past fortnight secured many foreign and home orders. The ironworks, owned by Messrs Cockburn and Sample, have also booked a large number of new orders, and all the workmen have full employment.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Monday 12 April 1880

CLOSING OF THE SEAHAM HARBOUR BLAST FURNACES.

Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., the owners of the Seaham Harbour blast furnaces, owing to depression in trade contemplate damping them down on Wednesday. The furnaces in question have not been worked for several years prior to about three months ago.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Monday 24 May 1880

DEPRESSION IN TRADE AT SEAHAM.

The *Northern Echo* says:—The iron and chemical manufacturing firm of Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., at Seaham Harbour, is about to be laid in. The cause assigned is depression in the chemical trade. A meeting of the shareholders was held at York on Monday last, when a resolution was submitted to the meeting to voluntarily wind up the concern. A subsequent meeting will be held in a fortnight to confirm the above. The resolution will, however, be opposed. There are now only 50 hands at work in place of the usual complement of 400. To Seaham Harbour the stoppage means a wages loss of close upon £800 per fortnight. The company is constituted under the Limited Liability Act.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Thursday 16 June 1881

WINDING-UP PETITIONS.

Watson, Kipling, and Company Limited; to be heard before
Mr. Justice Cave, on the 7th September.

Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser - Wednesday 31 August 1881

Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co. (Limited), Seaham Harbour.—In Liquidation, under the Companies' Acts.—Sale of Chemical Works and Blast Furnaces.

MR ARTHUR T. CROW has been commissioned to OFFER FOR SALE BY AUCTION, at the Queen's Hotel, Sunderland, in the County of Durham, on WEDNESDAY, 12th October, 1881, at Two for Three o'Clock in the Afternoon, the Extensive CHEMICAL WORKS situate at the Port of Seaham Harbour, in the Parish of Dalton-le-Dale, near Sunderland aforesaid, with 8 First-class WORKMEN'S COTTAGES, comprising an area of 16a. 2r. 18p., or thereabouts, held by Lease from the Marquess of Londonderry to Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., for 99 years from the 1st day of May, 1864, at the Yearly Rental of £200. Also the IRONWORKS, BLAST FURNACES, CORE OVENS, and LAND connected therewith, adjoining the Chemical Works, and comprising an area of about 10a. 1r. 40p., held by Lease from the Marquess of Londonderry to Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., for 91 years from the 1st day of January, 1869, at the Yearly Rental of £200.

The Chemical Works comprise Offices, Storehouse, Burner Shed, containing 64 burners; Two sets Sulphuric Acid Chambers, 2 Glover's Denitrating Columns, 3 Absorbing Columns, Decomposing House, with 2 Decomposing Furnaces and 1 Jones's Mechanical Furnace, 5 Condensers, Furnace House, with 4 Hand Ball Furnaces with Settlers, Ball Tanks and Receivers, and 2 Mechanical Ball Furnaces, 5 Hand Carbonating Furnaces, and 1 McTear's Carbonating Furnace, Alkali Sheds, with 4 Pans, Drainers, and Settlers, Dissolving House, with 18 Pans and Settlers, Crystallising House, with 275 Cans, 2 Chimneys 160 feet high, and 1 Chimney 59 feet high, and Flues, 9 Boilers and 2 Hot Water Boilers, 22 Engines, estimated equal to 160 nominal horse-power, 8 Weighing Machines, Tramways, Turntables, Workshops and Sheds, Cold Water Well, 108 by 8. The Magnesia

Process consists of Magnesia and Calcining Houses, with 5 Kilns, Mill, Tank, Cisterns, and Drying Stoves; and the Works are said to be capable of manufacturing 260 Tons of Soda Crystals and 1 Ton of Magnesia per week.

Water and Coal are obtainable from the Lessor, and Magnesian Limestone from His Lordship's Quarry, adjoining the Blast Furnaces, the payments for same being fixed by provision of the Lease.

Both Leases contain clauses peculiarly advantageous to the Lessees so far as regards Railway Rates, which are remarkably low, the Main Line of Railway running into both works; and as to Importing and Exporting Goods and Merchandise to and from the Port of Seaham Harbour, and also as to the disposal of the refuse left from both Chemical Works and Blast Furnaces.

Until the past few days the Chemical Works have been in active operation, and are now in such a condition as to enable a purchaser forthwith to commence the trade recently carried on.

The Blast Furnaces are in excellent order, and may, at comparatively small expense, be placed in good working condition.

There is a large quantity of Loose Material and Plant, which may be taken at a valuation at purchaser's option.

Intending purchasers, or their solicitors, may inspect copies of the Leases and Conditions of Sale at any of the addresses given below at any time within ten days of the day of Sale.

Further particulars, with orders to view, may be had from GEORGE O. PECKETT, Esq., 2, Park-place East, Sunderland, the Liquidator duly appointed to wind up the Estate; JOSEPH HEAP, Esq., Solicitor, Rochdale; Messrs JOHNSON AND WEATHERALLS, Solicitors, 7, King's Bench Walk, Temple, London; Messrs NORTHIS, ALLENS, AND CARTER, Solicitors, 20, Bedford-row, London; from the AUCTIONEER, Manor House, Sunderland; and from

Messrs HASWELL AND MARSHALL,
Solicitors, 61, John-street, Sunderland,
Sunderland, Sept., 1881.

Northern Echo - Monday 10 October 1881

SEAHAM CHEMICAL WORKS
OFFERED FOR SALE.

Yesterday, Mr A. T. Crow, auctioneer, offered for sale by public auction the leasehold chemical works, iron works, blast furnaces, coke ovens, land and premises, situate at Seaham Harbour. The company, under the name of Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., Limited, are at present in liquidation. There was a large attendance, among those present being Ald. Pecket, Messrs D. E. Watson, R. Richards, J. B. Sutherland, R. Vint, W. F. Vint, John Hartley; J. Herring, Newcastle; Goddard, Newcastle; John Watson, Seaham; John Petrie, jun.; James Petrie; Wm. Dicketts, London; T. Brown. Mr Crow said the original cost of the chemical works was £51,802, and in 1878 they were valued by the well-known Mr Hoyle at £46,000. The blast furnaces were erected by the Marquis of Londonderry at a cost of £30,000, the capital represented in the works being £81,000. Mr Crow spoke of the capital situation of the works, the accommodation for import and export. If the purchaser felt disposed to lay before the Marquis a request for improved road facilities, his lordship would meet the proposition in a liberal spirit. Bidding then commenced, Mr Tilley offering £10,000, and the other offers were as follows:—Mr Richards, £11,000; Mr D. E. Watson, £11,500; Mr Tilley, £12,000; Mr Richards, £13,000; Mr Tilley, £13,500; Mr Richards, £14,000; Mr Watson, £14,500; Mr Tilley, £15,000; Mr Richards, £15,500; Mr Tilley, £16,000. No further bids were made, and Mr Haswell, of the firm of Haswell and Marshall, solicitors, the legal agents in the matter, put in the reserve bid of £25,000. The property therefore was not sold. Mr Crow announced that Mr Haswell would be ready to treat privately. Ald. Pecket is the official liquidator.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Thursday 13 October 1881

THE CHEMICAL WORKS.—There seems good reason for hoping that these works may shortly be started again, after having been idle for several months. We understand they were sold on Saturday last by the liquidator of the late company to Mr Watson, the chief partner in the firm of Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co. In point of fact the works may be said to have been created by Mr Watson in the first instance. Several gentlemen of local influence are said to be associated with Mr Watson in the revived enterprise.

Durham County Advertiser - Friday 09 December 1881

IMPORTANT RATING CASE.

At the Seaham Harbour Petty Sessions yesterday, Mr. G. C. Pecket, of Sunderland, the liquidator of Watson, Kipling, and Co., Limited, was summoned for non-payment of the sums of £25 16s 6d and £38 18s, alleged to be due to the Dawdon Local Board. Mr. H. B. Wright supported the summons, and Mr. E. H. Haswell defended. It appeared that last year the defendant succeeded in an occupation of the chemical works and blast furnaces at Seaham Harbour, and that two rates were made, one on the 25th October last and the other on the 25th April, neither of which had been paid. Notice of demand was admitted. For the defence Mr. Haswell contended that the Bench had not jurisdiction to order payment of the rates of the local authority, and that the same had no prior claim over the other creditors. The 163rd section of the Companies Acts provided that where a company was being wound up under supervision of the Court, any attachment, distress, or execution put in force against the estate and effects of a company should be void. It was also clearly laid down by the Judges that the liquidators were [not occupants of the property so as to make them responsible for rates, but were merely occupying as the company, and were officials of the Court of Chancery. It was easy to begin proceedings in Judges' Chambers which would bring all the parties face to face, and so enable the judge where the case was under supervision to settle the dispute. Mr. Wright said the Local Board would consider the propriety of amending the assessment, and would afterwards, if advised, take further steps. Ultimately the Bench declined to make an order.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Saturday 26 August 1882

CHANCERY DIVISION.—SATURDAY.

(Before Mr. Justice KAY.)

IN RE WATSON, KIPLING, AND COMPANY (LIMITED).

A question was raised upon an adjourned summons in the winding up of a company called Watson, Kipling, and Co., whether the liquidator, who had kept on the premises for the purpose of the sale of the business, was bound to pay the parish rates in full, which had been levied after the commencement of the winding up. The summons asked that the liquidator might be ordered to pay the poor rate amounting to £31 17s. 2d., and the district rate of £74 15s. 11d., which had been assessed by the overseers of the parish of Dawson, Durham, and by the Local Board of Health. The company was established for the manufacture of chemicals, and was wound up in October, 1881. After that time the liquidator carried on the business in order to sell the property as a going concern, and for that purpose he had used the machinery and plant on the premises, and had kept some of the furnaces alight. There was evidence that no profit had been made from thus carrying on the business, and that there had consequently been no beneficial ownership of the premises.

Mr. Justice Kay observed that there was a clear distinction between the rent paid to a landlord of premises held on by the liquidator after the winding up and the parish and other rates. No doubt it had been decided that the landlord was entitled to payment of his rent in full, but that was because the landlord was kept out of property for the benefit of the shareholders, in order that they might receive a better dividend upon the sale of their property, but in the case of rates levied upon the premises the only plausible object was that if the business was not carried on it would be necessary to hire some warehouse for the storing of the goods of the company until the sale should take place. His lordship was of opinion that unless it could be proved there had been a beneficial enjoyment of the premises the rates could not be claimed in full. Here it had been shown that there had been a positive loss, owing to the necessity of keeping the furnaces alight, and the engines in working order. Under all the circumstances his decision must be that the application should be refused.

Morning Post - Monday 16 April 1883

The case was still being quoted as a legal precedent in the 21st century (e.g. [Kahn and Another v Commissioners of Inland Revenue; In re Toshoku Finance plc: HL 20 Feb 2002 - swarb.co.uk](#)).

Sales by Auction.

WATSON, KIPLING, AND CO, LIMITED,
SEAHAM HARBOUR.

In Liquidation under the Companies' Acts.
Particulars of

LEASEHOLD CHEMICAL WORKS,
IRON WORKS, BLAST FURNACES,
WORKMEN'S COTTAGES, COKE OVENS, AND LANDS,

Situate at Seaham Harbour, in the County of Durham,
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION

(By order of the Mortgagees),

At the Queen's Hotel, Sunderland.

ON WEDNESDAY, THE 10TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1883,
At Two for Three o'clock in the Afternoon.

MR ARTHUR TREVOR CROW,
AUCTIONEER.

The Property will first be offered in one lot, and if not sold, will be offered in two lots, as under, subject to certain conditions of sale.

Lot 1.—CHEMICAL WORKS.—The extensive Chemical Works, situate at the Port of Seaham Harbour, near Sunderland, in the County of Durham, having an area of 16a. 2r 13p. or thereabouts, held by lease granted by the Marquis of Londonderry to Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Petrie, for 99 years, from the 1st day of May, 1864, at the yearly rental of £200.

The lot comprises Offices, Store Houses, Laboratory, Burner Shed containing 64 burners, Two sets of Sulphuric Acid Chambers, Two Glover's Denitrating Columns, Two Absorbing Columns, Decomposing House, with Three Decomposing Pans, Four Decomposing Furnaces, and One Jones's Mechanical Furnace, with Four Condensers.

Furnace House, with Four Hand Ball Furnaces with Settlers, Bell Tanks and Receivers, and Two Mechanical Revolving Ball Furnaces, Five-Hand Carbonating Furnaces, One McTea's Carbonating Furnace, and Eight Evaporating Pans.

Alkali Shed, with Four Pans, Drainers, and Settlers, and One Alkali Furnace.

Two Dissolving Houses, with Eighteen Pans and Settlers. Crystallizing House, with 276 Cones.

Two Chimneys, 159 feet high, and One Chimney 59 feet high, and Flues.

Nine Boilers and Two Hot-water Boilers. Twenty-two Engines, estimated equal to 150 nominal horse-power.

Six Weighing Machines, Tramways, Turotables, Workshops and Sheds. Cold Water Well, 108 by 8, &c., capable of manufacturing 260 tons of Soda Crystals per week.

The manufacture of Magnesia forms an important and valuable branch of the Chemical Works, and consists of Magnesia House, with Two Calcining Retorts, Five Kilns, Mill Tank, Cisterns and Drying Stoves, capable of producing Four Tons of Magnesia per week.

Water for the manufacture of Magnesia is obtainable from the Lessor, and Magnesian Limestone from his Quarry on the adjoining land, the payment for the same being fixed by the Lease.

Lot 2.—BLAST FURNACES.—These Works adjoin Lot 1. They have an area of 10a. 1r. 30p. and are held under a lease from Lord Londonderry to Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Petrie, for 91 years, from 1st January, 1869, under the Yearly Rental of £200.

The Lot comprises One entirely new, nearly completed, modern Furnace, and one in good working order, almost new. Powerful Engine, recently converted into a Condensing Engine, with an abundant supply of condensing water.

Arrangements for using the waste gases for heating the boilers. Six Steam Boilers, Coke Ovens, 14 Workmen's Cottages, &c., and land connected therewith.

These Works are, from their situation and close connection by Lines of Railway to Seaham Harbour, admirably adapted for the importation of Foreign Ore, and the manufacture of suitable Pig Iron for the making of Steel.

Both leases contain clauses peculiarly advantageous to the Lessees so far as regards Railway Rates (which are remarkably low, the main line of railway running into both works), and the importing and exporting goods and merchandise to and from the Port of Seaham Harbour, and also as to the disposal of the refuse left from both Chemical Works and Blast Furnaces.

Full information, inspection of the Leases, and orders to view may be had on application to GEORGE C. PERRET, Esq., the Liquidator, Sunderland; the AUCTIONEER, Manor House, Sunderland; JOHN G. MARSHALL, Esq., Solicitor, Fawcett-street, Sunderland; and

Messrs HEAP AND MOLESWORTH,

Solicitors, 48, Lord-street, Rochdale.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Friday 28 September 1883

SEAHAM HARBOUR CHEMICAL WORKS.—Yesterday afternoon, Mr Arthur T. Crow offered for sale by auction at the Queen's Hotel, Sunderland, the leasehold chemical works and blast furnaces situated at Seaham Harbour, lately occupied by Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co. The property was put up in one lot, but there being no bids, the chemical works and blast furnaces were offered separately, but still no offer was forthcoming.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Thursday 18 October 1883

I congratulate the people of Seaham Harbour on the revival in their midst of an important industry. Since July, 1881, the chemical works and blast furnaces of Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co., Limited, situate in that town, have been closed, the company being in liquidation. The works have twice been unsuccessfully offered for sale by auction, but, as we announced on Saturday, Mr James B. Petrie, of Sunderland, has now purchased them, and we understand it is intended to commence active operations without delay. This fact, taken in conjunction with the advanced preparations for shipbuilding, holds out a pleasing promise of prosperity to the little enterprising town.

ASMODEUS.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Monday 19 November 1883

DEATH OF MR J. WATSON, OF SEAHAM HARBOUR.

Yesterday afternoon, Mr John Watson died at his residence, Vane House, Seaham Harbour, aged 58 years. Mr Watson for several years worked at the Washington Chemical Works, where he steadily raised himself to a good position. In 1863 he went to Seaham Harbour, and commenced business as a chemical manufacturer, as the principal in the concern afterwards known as Watson, Kipling, and Co., his partners being Mr F. L. Kipling, of Sunderland, and Mr John Petrie, jun., of Rochdale. The firm subsequently acquired the Vane Ironworks, which were contiguous to the chemical works, and after carrying them on for some time, a limited liability company was formed, composed mostly of the family and friends of the three original partners, but soon afterwards Mr Watson withdrew from the undertaking. He was an ardent student of astronomy, and the Royal Society conferred upon him the distinction of F.R.A.S. He was much attached to the Free Methodist body. Mr Watson was a member of the Seaham Harbour Local Board, and general sorrow is expressed in the town at his death.



STABLER & FRIES, ARTISTS & PHOTOGRAPHERS, 63 & 64 JOHN STREET, SUNDERLAND.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Wednesday 04 November 1885 (photo [Archive 1858 - \(seahamfamilyhistorygroup.org.uk\)](https://archive.1858-seahamfamilyhistorygroup.org.uk))

RESTARTING OF SEAHAM HARBOUR CHEMICAL WORKS.

After many conflicting rumours in reference to the restarting of the Seaham Harbour Chemical Works there can now be no further doubt as to the truth of the statement, as the manufactory founded by Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Co. when the chemical trade was in the zenith of its prosperity has been bought by a Tyneside firm, and will be carried on under the style of "Lomas, Spence, and Co." The production of soda and magnesia will, as formerly, be carried out, but in addition special attention will be given to the manufacture of bleaching powder. The works were last in operation under the ownership of Mr J. B. Pelne about three years since, and have been idle since then. Before commencing operations extensive repairs and alterations will be made, and but for some delay in the carrying out of legal formalities the necessary workmen for these purposes would have been now at their labours. It will now be with the incoming of the New Year that a start will be made. The promised recommencement of the Chemical Works is hailed with much delight by the tradesmen and inhabitants of Seaham Harbour. There will be a large accession of workmen, boys, and girls, and this will bring a consequent addition of business to the town. At present there are no empty tenements in the town. Thus new buildings will have to be erected at once. To meet the anticipated demand a plot of ground has been laid out by Mr W. Forster, architect to Lord Londonderry, on which cottages of three and four rooms can be built.

Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough - Thursday 22 December 1887

NEW LOCAL COMPANY.

Amongst the new local companies registered at Somerset House this week is the Seaham Chemical Works, with a capital of £20,000. The objects are to acquire the property formerly used by Watson, Kipling, and Company as chemical works at Seaham Harbour, for the purpose of carrying on the said works and business of chemical manufacturers. The first subscribers are:—John Spencer, Whorlton Hall, Newcastle, steel manufacturer; Michael Spencer, Walbottle Hall, steel manufacturer; Thomas Spencer, The Grove, Ryton; John Spencer, Newcastle, merchant; Thomas Lomas, Seaham Harbour, chemical manufacturer; Henry W. E. Spencer, Seaham Harbour, book-keeper; J. Frederick Spencer, Newcastle, merchant's clerk. In the first instance, Messrs John Spencer, Michael Spencer, Thomas Spencer, John Spencer, and Thomas Lomas are the directors. Mr Thomas Lomas is first managing director.

Shields Daily Gazette - Thursday 15 March 1888

The new enterprise did not thrive for long, for the buildings and blast furnaces were later left to deteriorate and were demolished in 1900 to make way for the sinking of Dawdon pit. Watson Town however survived a little longer as it was occupied by the German pit sinkers.



Chemical Works before demolition (photo [Archive 1858 - \(seahamfamilyhistorygroup.org.uk\)](http://Archive 1858 - (seahamfamilyhistorygroup.org.uk)))

Seaham Harbour.

The death of Mr Thomas Moffatt, brother of Mr Joseph Moffatt, agent for the Sunderland and South Shields Water Company at Seaham Harbour, took place at Whitley at the residence of his son, and his remains were interred yesterday. Deceased formerly resided at Seaham Harbour, where, about 40 years ago, he was one of the managers of Messrs Watson, Kipling, and Company's Chemical Works.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Thursday 23 July 1903

In another issue of the same almanac for 1877, there are only 43 ships "belonging to the port of Seaham Harbour," as against 56 ten years earlier. Of these 43, 35 were sailing vessels and eight steamers. The Marquess of Londonderry, Watson Kipling and Co., and G. Luckey appear as owners of steamers, and among the owners of sailing ships were J. Witten, J. W. Ellemore, R. Thorman, T. R. Gibson, R. Candlish, J. Adamson, Phillips Gage and Co., T. Chilton, T. Elliot, G. Y. Watson and G. Judson.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Thursday 07 November 1929