

# Queensbury Tunnel

Those Who Gave Their Lives

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## Newspaper sources

Halifax Courier, Halifax Guardian, Bradford Observer, Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, Yorkshire Post

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## Photographs

Four by Three (cover), Stephen Prior, Graeme Bickerdike/Four by Three, Forgotten Relics, *History of the Great Northern Railway 1845-1895* by Charles H Grinling, [www.picturethepast.org.uk/late](http://www.picturethepast.org.uk/late) Alan Watson collection, Rhondda Cynon Taff Digital Archive

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Queensbury Tunnel, at 2,501 yards (2,287metres) in length, was one of the most significant engineering feats ever undertaken by the Great Northern Railway. For most of its operational life, it was the 22nd longest railway tunnel<sup>1</sup> on the UK's rail network (11th longest at the time of opening), forming part of a strategically important north-south route that avoided the congested lines around Leeds and Bradford.

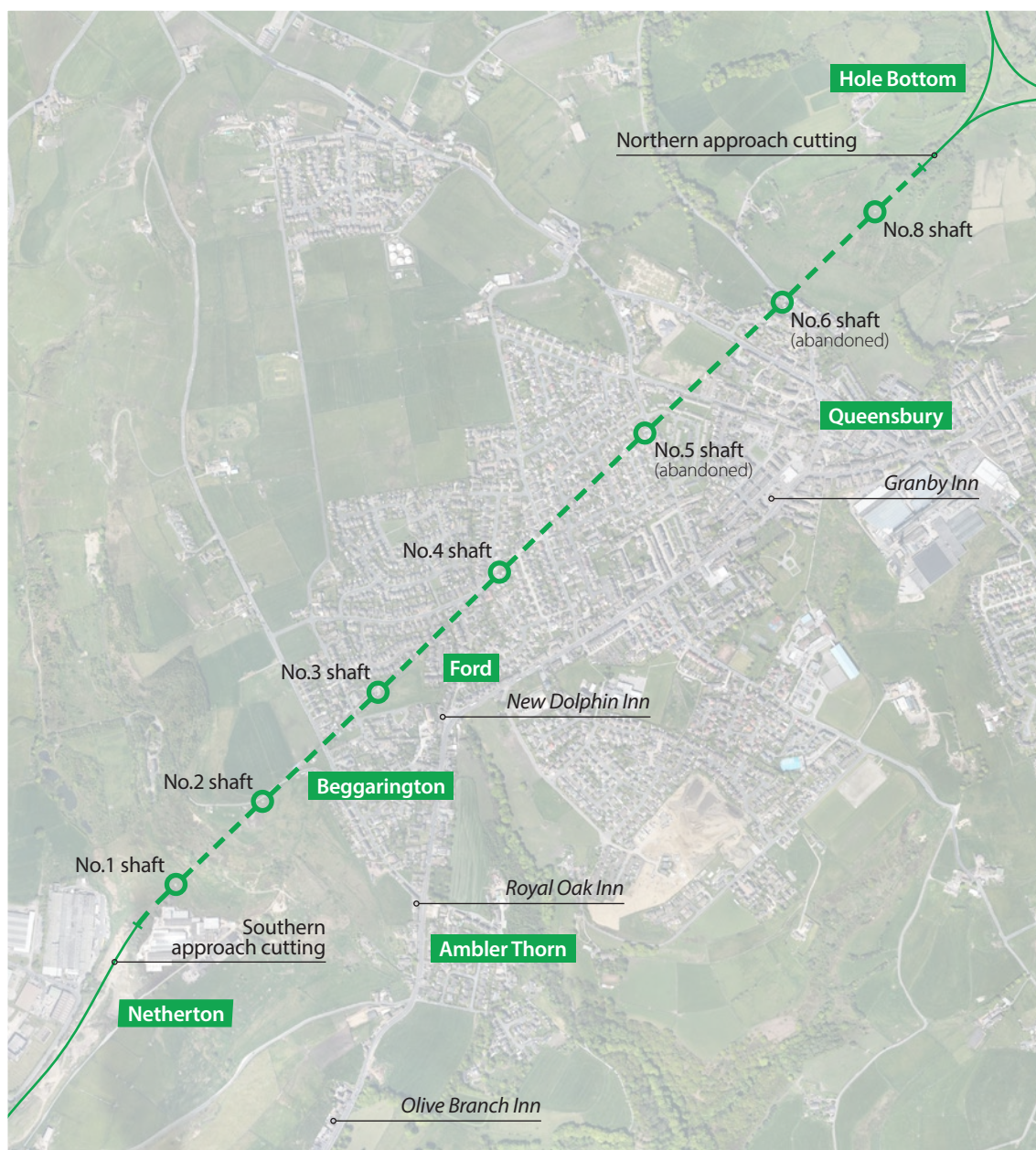
Ranking	Name	Company	Status	Length	Opened
1	Severn	Great Western	Open	4 miles 628 yards	1886
2	Totley	Dore & Chinley	Open	3 miles 950 yards	1893
3	Woodhead (New)	British Railways	Disused	3 miles 66 yards	1954
	Woodhead (Down)	Sheffield, Ashton-under-Lyne & Manchester	Disused	3 miles 22 yards	1845
	Woodhead (Up)	Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire	Disused	3 miles 22 yards	1852
4	Standedge (North)	London & North Western	Open	3 miles 64 yards	1894
	Standedge (Down South)	London & North Western	Disused	3 miles 62 yards	1849
	Standedge (Up South)	London & North Western	Disused	3 miles 62 yards	1871
5	Chipping Sodbury	Great Western	Open	2 miles 924 yards	1902
6	Disley	Midland	Open	2 miles 346 yards	1902
7	Ffestiniog	London & North Western	Open	2 miles 338 yards	1879
8	Bramhope	Leeds & Thirsk	Open	2 miles 241 yards	1849
9	Cowburn	Dore & Chinley	Open	2 miles 182 yards	1892
10	Sevenoaks	South Eastern	Open	1 mile 1,693 yards	1868
11	Rhondda	Rhondda & Swansea Bay	Disused	1 mile 1,683 yards	1890
12	Morley	London & North Western	Open	1 mile 1,609 yards	1848
13	Box	Great Western	Open	1 mile 1,452 yards	1841
14	Catesby	Great Central	Disused	1 mile 1,237 yards	1898
15	Dove Holes	Midland	Open	1 mile 1,224 yards	1863
16	Summit	Manchester & Leeds	Open	1 mile 1,125 yards	1841
17	Victoria	London & North Western	Disused	1 mile 946 yards	1849
18	Ponsbourne	Great Northern	Open	1 mile 924 yards	1918
19	Blea Moor	Midland	Open	1 mile 880 yards	1876
20	Bolsover	Lancashire, Derbyshire & East Coast	Disused	1 mile 864 yards	1897
21	Polhill	South Eastern	Open	1 mile 851 yards	1868
22	<b>Queensbury</b>	<b>Great Northern</b>	Disused	<b>1 mile 741 yards</b>	<b>1878</b>
23	Merthyr/Abernant	Vale of Neath	Disused	1 mile 737 yards	1853
24	Kilsby	London & Birmingham	Open	1 mile 666 yards	1838
25	Lydden	London, Chatham & Dover	Open	1 mile 609 yards	1861

<sup>1</sup> Both the Standedge and Woodhead trans-Pennine tunnels comprise three bores (two for a single track, one for a double track), but convention dictates that each counts as one "tunnel".



# 1 Background

Construction work on Queensbury Tunnel began in May 1874 under the auspices of contractor Benton & Woodiwiss whose agreement obligated them to complete it in two years. Initially, activity was concentrated at the two ends - where extensive approach cuttings were excavated - and seven construction shafts located across the hill. However, when additional working faces were opened below ground, even more opportunity arose for mishap.



Such was the severity of the challenges facing the engineers and navvies, it was not until July 1878 that the tunnel was eventually finished. Driving this substantial delay was a conspiracy of circumstance, most notably the huge amount of water penetrating the workings. This resulted in the abandonment of Nos. 5 & 6 shafts in 1875, whilst No.3 shaft was not worked southwards for a lengthy period.

Shortly before work finished, a reporter from the *Halifax Guardian* walked through the tunnel, describing the scene inside. He was inspired to remark that:

**“The pyramids of Egypt sink into insignificance compared with such a work.”**

Whilst this statement is clearly extravagant, it does reflect the extent to which great engineering endeavours were held in awe by the Victorians. Today, we can easily be distracted by the mechanical and technological advantages available to project teams, but this cannot diminish the remarkable nature of Queensbury Tunnel given the construction methodology used in the 1870s.

Although stationary engines and locomotives helped with the heavy lifting and transportation of materials, the tunnel was substantially a product of manual labour. Around 600 men - 200 of whom were miners - were involved in building it, whilst another hundred or so progressed the sections of line immediately adjacent. They were supported by 14 horses.



*The view from the southern entrance of Queensbury Tunnel into the approaching cutting during its excavation.*

Working conditions were unimaginable, with poor air, incessant water ingress and the purest conceivable darkness; light was provided only by candles. The nature of the activities exposed those involved to great danger; very few health and safety measures were available to mitigate the attendant risks. As a result, accidents occurred in significant numbers. Whilst many of these proved minor, some were life-changing: burns, loss of limbs, crush injuries etc. In the certain case of ten men, the outcome of their misadventure proved fatal and, although no direct evidence has been found, it remains possible that others also lost their lives, such was the extent of their injuries.

Ten deaths indicate a fatality rate for Queensbury Tunnel of at least one worker in every 70. Convention dictates that many more would also have suffered major injuries during the construction period. And around one in ten horses were literally worked to death as work progressed on a typical tunnel.

The names, dates and circumstances of the known/possible fatal accident victims are summarised below. Further details and biographical information are provided in Section 2, although it should be recognised that the transient nature of the railway construction workforce makes confident identification impossible in many cases, particularly for those with common surnames.

Date of Event	Name	Age	Nature of Event
10/10/1874	<b>Richard Sutcliffe</b>	30	Sutcliffe was killed instantly when a cage fell to the bottom of No.1 shaft where he was working. Dyson suffered serious injuries.
	Thomas Dyson		
31/3/1875	Jonathan Atkinson	68	Run over by wagons as he walked along the contractor's tramway at Ford.
1/7/1875	<b>John Swire</b>	44	Run over by wagons being moved by an engine in the southern approach cutting.
25/7/1875	<b>Henry Ingham</b>	36	Drowned after falling into five/six yards of water at the bottom of No.4 shaft.
1/9/1875	<b>Sutcliffe Hodgson</b>	29	Lost his balance and fell down No.1 shaft.
13/9/1875	Joseph Gibson		Sustained a blow to the head by a falling rock, causing his "brains to protude".
7/12/1875	<b>Henry Jones</b>	39	Killed when a charge exploded as they attempted to withdraw it.
	<b>John Gough</b>	40	
9/2/1876	Isaac Dealey/Jethro Daley		A dynamite cartridge exploded as he forced it home with a wooden rammer. Described as being in "a dangerous condition".
29/5/1876	<b>Richard Jones (William Brear)</b>	33	Crushed by a stone as he worked it with a pick.
24/8/1876	<b>Llewellyn Jones</b>	31	Severely injured by an exploding charge and succumbed to tetanus a few days later.
18/9/1876	James Hollins		Crushed between the buffers of a locomotive and an empty wagon. "Very slight hopes entertained for his recovery."
2/2/1877	<b>Frederick Goulding</b>	25	Crushed between a wagon and a supporting timber.
11/4/1877	Samuel Pengrove		Went into a local beerhouse complaining of feeling unwell and passed away in a chair three hours later.
17/6/1877	<b>Captain Pickles</b>	30	Struck on the back of the head by a timber weighing half-a-ton.
19/6/1877	John Cunningham		Run over by wagons, severing his legs above the ankle. Described as being in "a precarious condition".
28/11/1877	William Mitchell	26	Had a fit and died a few minutes later as he worked in the southern approach cutting.

Entries in grey indicate that death cannot be confirmed as the outcome of the accident; reports do however suggest that potentially fatal injuries were sustained.

Entries highlighted in blue indicate that the death involved a member of the public.

Entries highlighted in green indicate that the navy was not at work when he died.

Entries highlighted in purple indicate that the death was due to underlying health issues, not a work-related accident.



IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF  
THE LATE  
THOMAS COATES,

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE NOVEMBER 4TH,  
1874, AGED 27 YEARS.

ALSO WILLIAM ELLIOTT WHO DEPARTED THIS  
LIFE NOVEMBER 5TH, 1874, AGED 20 YEARS.

THEY WERE BOTH KILLED AT THE NO. 1 SHAFT  
OF THE CLAYTON TUNNEL, CAUSED BY THE  
NEGLECT OF THE MAN IN CHARGE OF THE ENGINE,  
TAKE WARNING AT OUR SUDDEN DEATH,

MAKE READY EVERY DAY  
TO FOLLOW US INTO THE EARTH,  
WE TELL YOU WATCH AND PRAY.

Trains heading from Halifax to Bradford exited Queensbury Tunnel, passed through the triangular station just beyond it and then entered the western end of Clayton Tunnel, 1,057 yards long and built with the help of four construction shafts. Both tunnels were progressed concurrently. On 4th November 1874, Thomas Coates and William Elliott fell to their deaths at Clayton's No.1 shaft due to the negligence of the man in charge of the engine. This commemorative stone, in the churchyard at St John's Clayton, remembers them. Such events were commonplace and similar circumstances also resulted in loss of life on the works of Queensbury Tunnel.

WILLIAM ELLIOTT  
OF  
MARY ANN ELLIOTT WIFE OF  
WILLIAM ELLIOTT  
DIED NOVEMBER 5TH 1874



### 2.1 Richard Sutcliffe

#### *Circumstances of death*

At around 7.15pm on the evening of Saturday 10th October 1874, George Sutcliffe was standing on the landing stage at the top of No.1 shaft, filling a skip with cement prior to it being lowered down to where three men were working. However William Saddle, who was employed to drive the portable engine located at the shaft, started it without warning, resulting in the skip being drawn up rapidly towards the pulley. Sutcliffe managed to jump clear, but the force was sufficient for the rope to break. The skip consequentially crashed through the landing stage and fell down the shaft.



© STEPHEN PRIOR

*A view of the cap and spoil heap at No.1 shaft.*

Working at the bottom were 30-year-old Richard (Dick) Sutcliffe (son of George), Thomas Dyson and John Price. Sutcliffe was struck on the head and died instantly; the other two were seriously hurt. It was reported that Dyson later succumbed to his injuries in Halifax Infirmary but no records have been found to support this.



Richard Sutcliffe's body was taken to the Royal Oak Inn at Ambler Thorn where an inquest was held on Tuesday 13th October. His father George was amongst those to give evidence. Saddle was unable to provide any explanation as to why he had started the engine but did admit that the accident was his own fault and that no one else was to blame. Another witness stated that the signal for starting the engine was very quiet and suggested that Saddle might have mistakenly thought it had been sounded. It was concluded that the accident resulted from a tragic lapse in concentration by a man who, the inquest heard, was a competent and careful employee. He was reported to have been sober at the time.

Surgeon John Fawthrop told the inquest that his examination of the body found a compound fracture of the skull which would have resulted in immediate death. The jury returned a verdict of "accidental death" and suggested that the signal for starting the engine should be made louder.

### **Biographical information**

Richard Sutcliffe was born in Bradford in 1844, the second of nine children (seven sons, two daughters) to father George and mother Elizabeth. The family was mostly employed in the wool trade and lived in a number of local villages including Guiseley, Ovenden and Northowram. It should come as no surprise then that, by the age of 16, Richard was labouring in a woollen mill.

The 1871 census records 'Dick' as a married man, residing with his wife Elizabeth and 10-month old daughter, Cordelia. They lived alongside his extended family at Mill Cottages in Northowram. By this time, both he and his father had become brick labourers. Richard subsequently fathered another daughter and a son.

Four days after his death, Richard Sutcliffe was buried at St Thomas' Church in Charlestown, Halifax.

## **2.2 John Swire**

### **Circumstances of death**

At around 7.00am on the morning of Thursday 1st July 1875, 44-year-old labourer John Swire was removing earth in the tunnel's southern approach cutting, at the foot of the incline that served the construction shafts. Swire was "very deaf" and had only returned to work at 6.00am that morning after being "lamed" in a previous accident.

An engine was being used to lower a number of tip wagons down the incline. When he saw Swire, the driver of the engine sounded the whistle to warn of their approach. However, probably as a result of his deafness, Swire failed to get out of the way and was run over. Both his legs were crushed and broken. One report suggested that the toes of his left foot and his right leg below the knee had been severed. He also sustained head injuries.

Swire was immediately loaded onto the engine and taken to Halifax Infirmary where he died at about half-past eleven.

An inquest was held at the Halifax Dispensary before William Barstow, the coroner. A verdict of "accidental death" was returned.

### **Biographical information**

The death of John Swire was recorded in Halifax on Saturday 3rd July 1875, the cause being stated on the certificate as "Shock from injuries to leg, foot and head. Run over by a railway engine near Nettleton [sic], Ovenden. Lived five hours." His occupation is documented as "railway labourer, formerly a butcher".



© GRAEME BICKERDIKE/FOUR BY THREE

*St Andrew's Church in Gargrave, John Swire's final resting place.*

Known to his friends as 'Punch', Swire was reported to have been a "native of Skipton" and, following the accident, unsuccessful attempts were made to telegraph friends in nearby Gargrave.

Swires had been living in Gargrave at least as far back as the 17th century. Born on 17th June 1831, John was one of eight children - three sons and five daughters - to Thomas, a 40-year-old carpenter, and Mary, 38. He was baptised on 19th January 1834 at Marton-in-Craven.



It seems that John went his own way at an early age. Four years after his mother passed away, the 1851 census finds him at Vicarage House in Skipton, acting as a farm servant to the Holgate family. By the age of 30, he is one of two lodgers living with John Wilkinson, a stone mason, and his wife Mary in Spring Gardens, Padiham. This street, with its small back-to-back terraces, still exists and forms part of the town's conservation area. He works - as suggested by his death certificate - as a butcher.

It's impossible to know quite why he ended up working in Queensbury Tunnel in 1875, particularly as reports indicate he was not a well man.

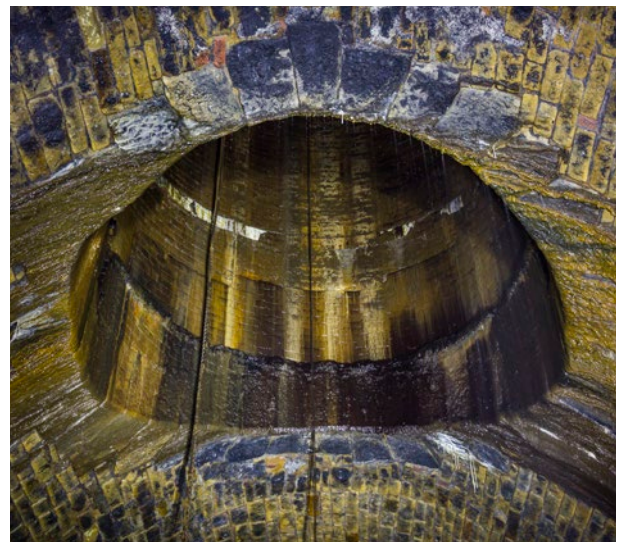
At 2.00pm on Sunday 4th July 1875, John was buried alongside three others in a consecrated grave at Stoney Royd cemetery, Southowram near Halifax. The burial records - like his death certificate - state his age as being 38 (rather than 44), but this would have relied upon the informant - seemingly his sister Elizabeth - remembering it correctly.

Records also exist of John Swire being reburied in a grave at St Andrew's Church, Gargrave, with eight other family members including his mother and father.

### 2.3 Henry Ingham

#### *Circumstances of death*

At around 9.30am on the morning of Sunday 25th July 1875, 36-year-old plumber Henry Ingham was working with Robert Ford in No.4 shaft, repairing some pipework which was out of order. At this point in time, the shaft had been sunk to a depth of about 270 feet and, to reach the pipe, the pair had to lean out from a tub suspended about 150 feet down. This meant that neither man was fastened in. With the work finished, Ingham overbalanced and fell out, drowning in about 15 feet of water which had accumulated at the bottom.



© FORGOTTEN RELICS

*The eye of No.4 shaft.*

An inquest was held at the New Dolphin Inn before William Barstow, the coroner. Ford described how he and the deceased had signalled to be drawn up, but they had been surprised by the pipe striking the side of the shaft in the darkness, resulting in Ingham's fall. Ford was hoisted out, however he returned shortly after with George White to retrieve his workmate's body.

A verdict of “accidental death” was returned, with a recommendation that belts, ropes and grappling irons should, in future, be provided to secure men into the tub when they were engaged in such dangerous activities. However the “overlooker of the works” stated that ropes were already available and it was the men’s own fault if they did not use them.

### **Biographical information**

Henry Ingham was born in Thornton, just north of Queensbury, in 1838 where he lived amongst his extended family throughout his life. He was the second son of John and Hannah who were both weavers. Living at Mill Cottages, the 1851 census records 12-year-old Henry as a part-time spinner; his 5-year-old sister is earning as an errand girl. Living next door is 71-year-old Hannah Ingham, presumably their grandmother.



© GRAEME BICKERDIKE/FOUR BY THREE

*Denholme St Paul's Church where Henry Ingham was buried.*

Henry married Margaret Dobson, also a weaver, on 2nd February 1862 at Bradford Parish Church. They were both 23. By this time, Henry had become a plumber and was working in a factory. According to the 1871 census, their home was at Hill Top in Thornton which they shared with their three sons, Fred, Walter and Herbert. At the age of just 8, Fred was already employed as a spinner.

Four days after his death, Ingham was buried in an unmarked grave at Denholme St Paul's Church which, sadly, is now boarded up and derelict.



## 2.4 Sutcliffe Hodgson

### *Circumstances of death*

Shortly before 9.00am on the morning of Wednesday 1st September 1875, 29-year-old banksman Sutcliffe Hodgson was standing on the landing stage at the top of No.1 shaft which had been drawn back to allow some scaffold boards to be drawn up. A trolley was brought forward to assist with their removal but, as Hodgson attempted to climb on it, he lost his footing and plunged more than 100 feet down the shaft. Near the bottom, his fall was broken by a scaffold plank.



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*Navvies prepare to descend a shaft during the construction of Cowburn Tunnel near Chinley in 1894.*

Rescuers found his body to be “fearfully mangled”, his head having being knocked flat and many bones broken. He was carried back to his home at Priestley Hill where his unexpected arrival caused considerable consternation amongst the locals.

An inquest was held at the Olive Branch Inn before William Barstow, the coroner. It was stated that the landing stage had not been secured with its catch, resuting in it slipping back by about 18 inches and causing Hodgson to lose his balance. A verdict of “accidental death” was returned.

### ***Biographical information***

Sutcliffe Hodgson was born in Northowram, near Halifax, in the spring of 1846 to parents John, 26, and Martha, 20. His father was a hawker of pots and earthenware. He is recorded twice in the 1851 census, firstly with his parents and then at the house of Jonathan and Martha Robertshaw in Ambler Thorn. These were his maternal grandparents who both worked as hand loom weavers, together with their son John.

In 1861, Sutcliffe was living at Ford, next to the New Dolphin Inn, working alongside three of his siblings in a worsted mill. With six children to support, father John is now a cart driver, however, by the time of the 1871 census, he had been widowed and was farming six acres. Living in a private house, he is the head of a family comprising Sutcliffe, a 25-year-old waggoner, Jonathan, 18, a joiner and cabinet maker, and four daughters, all of whom are working as alpacca spinners together with several of their neighbours.

Newspaper reports suggest that, shortly before his death, Sutcliffe had recently married and was living with his new wife at Priestley Hill, Queensbury. No records have been found to support this.

## **2.5 Henry Jones & John Gough**

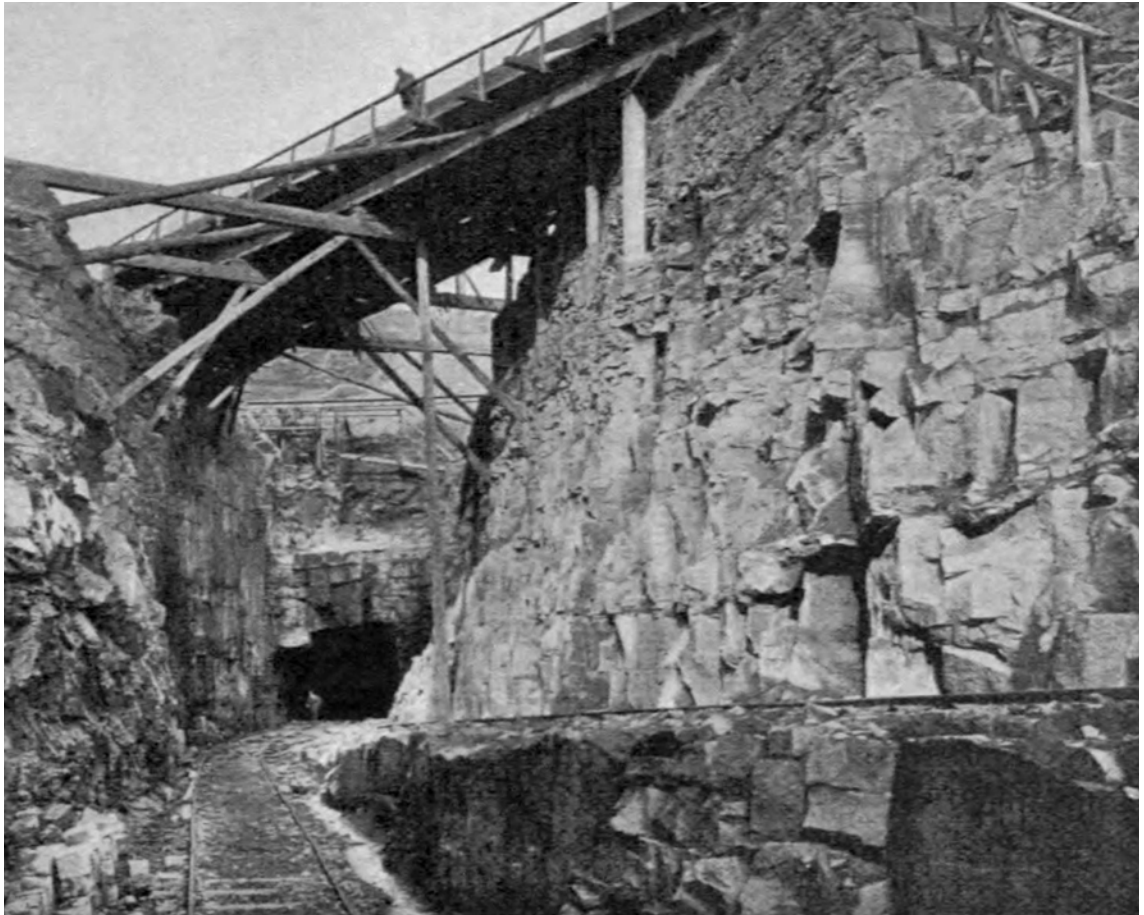
### ***Circumstances of death***

On the morning of Tuesday 7th December 1875, miners Henry Jones, 39, and John Gough, 40, were part of a 20-strong team rapidly pushing forward excavation work towards the south end of the tunnel. A three-shift system was in operation, allowing progress to be maintained around the clock.

At around 3.40am, a number of shots were fired, after which the men returned to the working face under the impression that they had all gone off successfully. However, on inspection, Jones and Gough discovered that one of the charges had failed so they set about withdrawing it. During this process it suddenly exploded, killing both men and injuring several of their workmates. Works inspector James Albrighton was quickly in attendance to render assistance. In the most serious condition was John Rowley who suffered a compound fracture of the arm and injuries to the head. He was removed to Halifax Infirmary.



Two days later, an inquest was held at the Olive Branch Inn before J E Hill, the deputy coroner. The first witness was Henry Jones' widow who stated that her husband had left home in Sunderland four weeks earlier to look for work. John Gough's remains were identified by Evan Edwards, a miner from Ovenden.



*The view towards the south portal of Queensbury Tunnel during its construction period.*

Llewellyn Jones, from Bank Top in Ovenden, stated that he had been working on the new line for four months and, on the night of the accident, was fulfilling the role of Foreman. Also a miner, his shift had begun at 6.00pm the previous evening. He described how, during the day, men would drill and charge holes, ready for those on the night shift to fire. On Monday night, it was understood there were only six to deal with; however, at about 11.00pm, a seventh was located but they could not be certain whether it was charged. They inserted the shaft of a hammer to gauge its depth and found it to be about 18 inches. Although this was sufficient to accept a charge, they could not detect one.

By convention, when a hole was charged, a fuse would be attached to the dynamite cartridge extending 12-18 inches out of the hole. This was the case at the six holes identified as being ready for firing; the other had no such fuse.

After his supper, Llewellyn Jones was working in another part of the tunnel when he heard an explosion and shouting. He attended immediately and found John Gough lying 'on the road' [tramway]. He succumbed to his injuries within ten minutes. Henry Jones' body was discovered shortly after, close to where the seventh hole had been located.

The jury returned a verdict of "accidental death", but recommended that all shots should be fired by the men who charged them.

### **Biographical information**

John Gough's death certificate confirms that he was "about 40 years old" and lived for ten minutes after the explosion in which he sustained head injuries.

The 1871 census lists 70 John Goughs with a birth year of 1835±2 years, the majority of whom also appear in later censuses. The others can be mostly ruled out on the basis of status or occupation, but amongst the remainder is a John Gough who was born on Anglesey to father Thomas, a fowl merchant, and mother Grace. He was baptised in Bodedern, on the western side of the island, in July 1836.



© FORGOTTEN RELICS

*Miners used hand-drilling techniques to bore holes in the rock for blasting purposes.*



Gough's life is difficult to track, but it is possible that he married a girl called Gwenllian, two years his elder, from the ancient parish of Mynyddyslwyn in Monmouthshire. The couple were lodging there in 1861, John working as an agricultural labourer. However, ten years later, he is alone and closer to home, living in Ffestiniog with John and Ann Harris, and employed as a quarry labourer along with most of the town's workforce.

It is clear that many of those who found work building the railway under Queensbury came from Wales and the leap from quarry labourer to tunnel miner is not a great one. It has though proved impossible to confirm whether this John Gough is the same man who lost his life at Queensbury.



*Six of the men who helped to drive Rhondda Tunnel in South Wales during the late 1880s. It was a gang of Welsh miners, employed by the Diamond Rock Boring Company, who operated a rock drilling machine which was used the drive part of the headings either side of No.4 shaft.*

Henry Jones' death is recorded as "instant" and a function of a head injury. At the inquest, his widow stated that the couple lived in Sunderland.

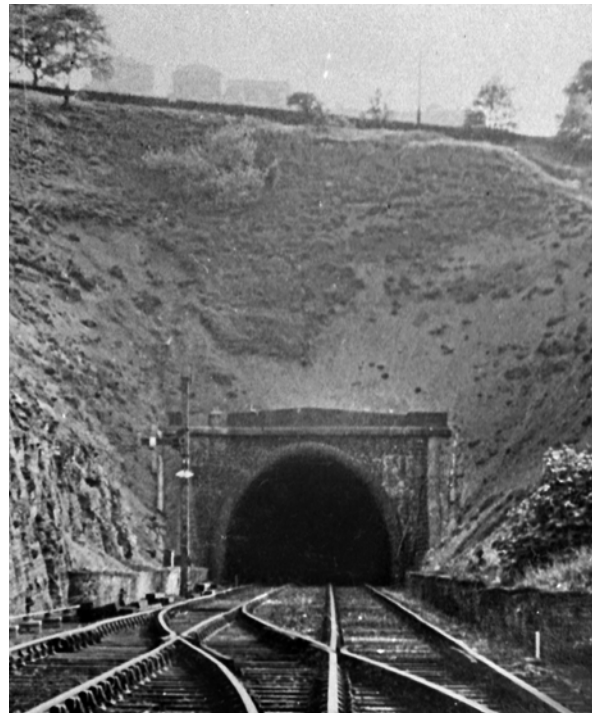
The 1871 census records three Henry Jones with a birth year of 1836±2 years living in the North-East. One is a factory worker, another is a coal miner whilst the third is a labourer in an iron works. The latter is the only one who does *not* appear in the 1881 census. From Wales, this Henry Jones was married to Irish-born Johannah and, in 1871, was living in Stranton, Hartlepool, with their two sons and three daughters.

## 2.6 Richard Jones

### *Circumstances of death*

On Monday 29th May 1876, three miners were working towards the north end of the tunnel at Hole Bottom. Amongst them was 33-year-old Richard Jones, although he went by a different name on the works, that of William Brear. This was a common custom amongst the navvies.

Having fired a number of shots, the men returned to clear away the resulting debris. Using a pick, Jones started to work a loose piece of stone which was in the way of the next set of holes to be drilled. After a short time, fearing that the stone might fall, his workmates told Jones to leave it. However their warning came too late. As he retreated, the stone - weighing about 4cwt - broke away and crushed him "terribly".



*The north portal of Queensbury Tunnel at Hole Bottom.*

Although he was quickly extricated, Jones passed away in the neighbourhood of Lister Hills as he was being taken to Bradford Infirmary. After being seen by Dr Lee, whose surgery was nearby, his remains were taken to the 'dead house' at the local workhouse.

Two days later, an inquest was held at Armstrong's Hotel, Bradford, before William Barstow, the coroner. A number of navvies gave evidence but no blame was attached to anyone but Jones himself. A verdict of "accidental death" was returned.

### *Biographical information*

It has not been possible to confirm any biographical information on Richard Jones. His death certificate confirms that his "right leg [was] broken and body bruised from a large stone falling on him in Queensbury Tunnel on Ovenden and Thornton Railway. Lived about three hours."

Richard was buried at St John's Church in Clayton on 1st June 1876.

The 1871 census records a Richard Jones with a birth year of 1843 boarding with Robert and Barbara Thistlethwaite at Ingleton, North Yorkshire. Born in Shropshire, he was unmarried and working as a quarrier.



## 2.7 Llewellyn Jones

### *Circumstances of death*

On the morning of Thursday 17th August 1876, miner Llewellyn Jones set to work drilling a hole in No.2 shaft which had been started by men on the night shift. He was not aware however that the hole had already been completed and charged. There was an immediate explosion, causing injuries to his face and right arm.

Jones was assisted home and medical help sought. For several days, he appeared to be progressing favourably; however, on Tuesday 22nd, "lockjaw" (tetanus) set in and, despite the efforts of medical practitioners, he passed away in great agony on the morning of Thursday 24th August.



© FORGOTTEN RELICS

*Huge volumes of water descend No.2 shaft due to an adit emerging into it about 65 feet up.*

### *Biographical information*

The death of a Llewellyn Jones was recorded in Bradford within the correct timeframe, suggesting his age was 31. A man of the same name was a witness at the inquest into the deaths of Henry Jones and John Gough, who were killed in similar circumstances. He was a Foreman and had been working on the new line since about August 1875.

Research indicates that 16 Llewellyn Jones' were born in 1845±2 years, of whom all but one were still alive in 1881. The remaining man came from Glyncorrwg in South Wales and was the eldest of at least eight children to father Thomas and mother Gwenllian. Collectively the family farmed about 100 acres of land at Llangynwyd near Maesteg, where Llewellyn lived for much of his life. By 1871, he was employed as a weigher at an ironworks, working alongside three of his brothers.

It has proved impossible to confirm whether this Llewellyn Jones is the same man who lost his life in Queensbury Tunnel.

### 2.8 Frederick Goulding

#### *Circumstances of death*

On Wednesday 31st January 1877, miner Frederick Goulding was standing near an empty wagon whilst workmates rolled a large piece of rock down from the top heading (upper part of the excavation). Unexpectedly, the rock struck the wagon, crushing Goulding between it and a timber supporting the roof. Assistance was immediately rendered and he was thereafter taken to his lodgings at Granby Field, opposite Holy Trinity Church in Queensbury. However Goulding died from his injuries two days later.

An inquest was held at the Granby Inn, Queensbury, before William Barstow, the coroner. A verdict of "accidental death" was returned.

#### *Biographical information*

The death of a Frederick Goulding was recorded in Halifax within the correct timeframe, suggesting his age was 25. This is supported by his death certificate which records that he passed away on 2nd February after succumbing to "peritonitis from injury to bowels and rectum. Crushed between a wagon and some timber in Queensbury Tunnel. Lived 34 hours."

On Sunday 4th February 1877, Frederick was buried at Holy Trinity in a common grave with four others, including an infant.

Research indicates that only four Frederick Gouldings were born in 1852±2 years, of whom three were still alive in 1881. The other, born in about 1852, came from Maidstone in Kent, the birthplace of his mother, Mary. She was married to Edward, a labourer, and in 1861 the family was living in Bermondsey. Ten years later, they had moved to the parish of St John's in Southwark. Frederick was employed as a leather dresser and had two younger siblings, Emma and William.

It has proved impossible to confirm whether this Frederick Goulding is the same man who lost his life in Queensbury Tunnel.



## 2.9 Captain Pickles

### *Circumstances of death*

At about 9.30am on Sunday 17th June 1877, a 30-year-old platelayer named Captain Pickles was assisting three other men - including Henry Johnson and Thomas Young - to push a trolley loaded with sleepers into the tunnel from the north end at Hole Bottom. They would thereafter lay a section of track. However a number of the sleepers were overhanging the side and, when they arrived at a location where excavation/lining work was still taking place, this resulted in them striking one of the vertical roof supports.

A collapse occurred, causing a half-ton timber to fall which struck Pickles on the back of the head. His right leg was also broken in two places and he sustained such other severe injuries that death was instantaneous. The other men fled - escaping injury - with the exception of one who was knocked down.

Pickles' body was removed to the Old Dolphin Inn where it was laid out by Mary Hartley, prior to an inquest held before William Barstow, the coroner. She recounted how it had a deep cut on the back of the head, severe crush injuries to the chest and neck, whilst his right thigh and shin were broken. Foreman carpenter William Rockelton asserted that the prop must have been struck with great force to drive it out.

A verdict of "accidental death" was returned.

### *Biographical information*

Captain Pickles lived at Cotton Hole in Shelf, Halifax, for much of his life. He was born there early in 1847, one of six children to father Abraham - a carter and farmer of three acres - and mother Amelia. He was baptised on 7th July 1850 together with his sisters Sarah and Susannah.

By the age of 14, Captain was working as a carter - probably alongside his father - helping to transport goods. However, by the time of the 1871 census, Pickles Snr had passed away. Instead Amelia is recorded as head of the household, farming five acres. Captain is labouring for her, whilst siblings Elizabeth, Mary Jane and Tom are earning a living as worsted weavers and spinners.

On 15th May 1877, Captain married Edna Oddy, six years his junior, at Bradford Parish Church. They moved in together with his new wife's family at Slack Bottom near Wibsey. It was possibly in an effort to give Edna a better life that he got a job on the new railway, platelayers being better paid than agricultural labourers. However, just one month after the wedding, Captain succumbed to his injuries in Queensbury Tunnel.

He was buried at St Paul's Church, Buttershaw, on 20th June.

### 3.1 Joseph Gibson

At about 9.00am on Monday 13th September 1875, labourer Joseph Gibson - working as a platelayer in the tunnel - was struck on the head by a rock which either fell from the roof or one of the wagons he was standing alongside in the dark. The blow was so severe that the rock penetrated Gibson's skull, causing his "brains to protude".

He was taken for treatment at Halifax Infirmary.



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*An extant track panel below No.4 shaft in Queensbury Tunnel.*

### 3.2 Isaac Dealey/Jethro Daley

At about dinner time on Wednesday 9th February 1876, miner Isaac Dealey (referred to as Jethro Daley in some reports) was using a wooden rammer (iron tools not being permitted) to press home a dynamite cartridge in the southern approach cutting, close to the tunnel entrance. Due to the excessively violent force he applied, the cartridge suddenly exploded, causing severe injuries to his face and head.

Dealey was conveyed to Halifax Infirmary where his condition was described as being "dangerous".

The *Halifax Courier* commented, "It is to be hoped the frequent accidents resulting from this highly explosive substance will teach the men to be more careful in dealing with it."



## 3.3 James Hollins

On Monday 18th September 1876, mason James Hollins was working just inside the south end of the tunnel, picking up wedges between a locomotive and some wagons. As he did so, the driver - having sounded a warning - started to move the engine, resulting in Hollins being severely crushed between the buffers.

Entirely helpless, he was conveyed over the hill via the contractor's tramway to his dwelling at Slave Row, Queensbury. Surgeon John Fawthorp was immediately summoned but "very slight hopes" were entertained for his recovery.

## 3.4 John Cunningham

On the afternoon of Tuesday 19th June 1877, brakesman John Cunningham was attempting to 'sprag' (immobilise) a number of wagons in the southern approach cutting. During this operation, he lost his footing and fell across the rails. A number of men working nearby rushed to his aid, only to find that the wagons had passed over Cunningham's legs, severing them both a little above the ankle.

He was immediately placed on an empty wagon and conveyed down the Ovenden line to Halifax Infirmary where his condition was described as "precarious".

#### 4.1 Jonathan Atkinson

On Wednesday 31st March 1875, 70-year-old Jonathan Atkinson, a member of the public, was walking along the contractor's tramway at Ford, half-a-mile south of Queensbury, when he was knocked down by a train of wagons and killed instantly. Surgeon John Fawthorp examined the body and found it to be "fearfully mangled", the thighs having sustained compound fractures, one of the knees being smashed, several ribs having been crushed and the bowels protruding.

An inquest was held before William Barstow, the coroner. A verdict of "accidental death" was returned.

##### *Biographical information*

Jonathan Atkinson was born in Thornton in 1805 to father Jonathan and mother Mary. In 1832, at the age of 27, he married Hannah Ambler at Bradford Parish Church, with whom he had a son, Joseph. Following Hannah's death, Jonathan lived with his son who farmed 20 acres at Northowram.

#### 4.2 William Mitchell

On the morning of Wednesday 28th November 1877, 26-year-old William Mitchell was engaged in tipping wagons close to the tunnel's southern approach cutting. According to the *Halifax Courier*, he was then "seized with a sudden giddiness and fell down insensible." Medical assistance was immediately sent for but Mitchell passed away within a few minutes.

The body was removed to the Malt Shovel Inn at Ambler Thorn and, after a medical examination had taken place, a certificate was issued stating that the cause of death was an "apoplectic fit". It was discovered that Mitchell had suffered a similar episode about a month earlier from which he recovered.

#### 4.3 Samuel Pengrove

At about 5.00pm on Wednesday 11th April 1877, navy Samuel Pengrove went into The George Inn at Queensbury and complained to the landlady that he was feeling ill. He asked her to warm him some beer and he remained there until 8.00pm when an acquaintance, William Locke, came in and offered to escort him to his lodgings. The pair left but, after walking a few yards, Pengrove exclaimed "Oh I'm dying" and he was helped back to the beerhouse where he died almost immediately after being placed in a chair.

The deceased, who lived at Sowerby Bridge, had never fully recovered from injuries sustained in an accident which happened in Scotland in 1861, since when he had only been able to work occasionally.



# 5 Construction timeline



Fatality
  Injury
  Engineering
  Criminality
  Incident
  Noteworthy






## Those Who Gave Their Lives (March 2017)

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