

THE PEACE

The Great War produced some of Britain's greatest poetry, and some of the best from Weardale.

Universal Peace

Hail, Universal Peace ! thy glorious reign bring in;
Let war's dread scourge forever cease, let heaven on earth begin.
Let nations of the earth, in art and commerce vie;
But not the art of killing men, through earth and sea and sky.

Why should the cannon roar? the sword and bayonet slay?
The U-boats lurk beneath the waves, intent upon their prey?
Why should we strain each nerve, to raise our armies great?
Why should we sorely tax the poor, big navies to create?

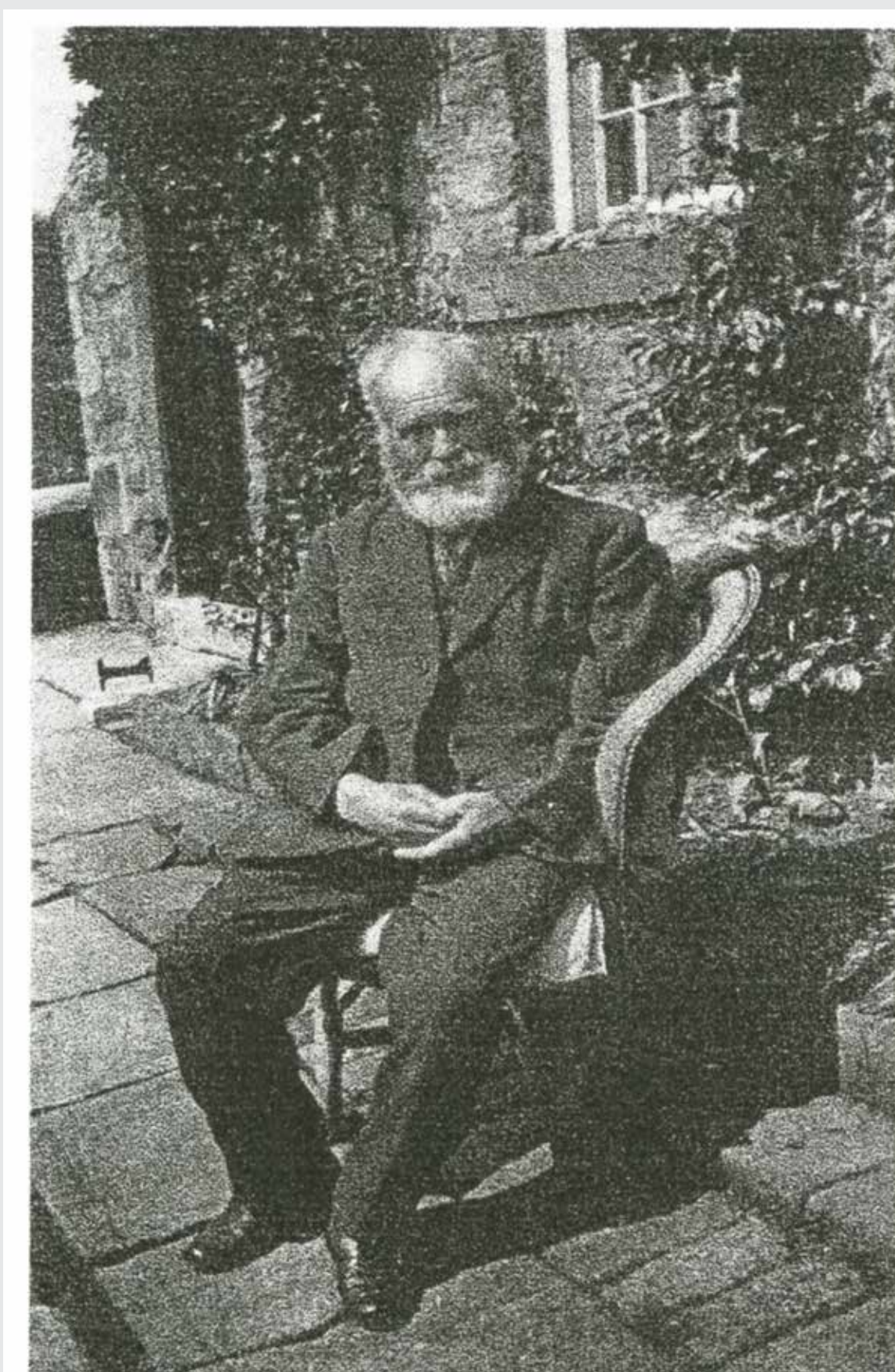
God made us of one blood, that we should dwell in peace;
That man might cultivate the soil and earth yield her increase.
The Prince of Peace forsook His throne above the skies,
That He might bring God's peace to earth, that man to heaven might rise.

Yet men who bear His name, who claim to own His sway,
Through jealousy each other hate, each other tear and slay.
They devastate the earth, God made and pronounced good;
Bring want and ruin in their train, in place of wealth and food.



William Parker (1851 - 1924)

Willie Parker from Ashy Bank, Eastgate,
worked in what is colloquially known as the
“Poet's Corner” at Newlandside quarry.



The widow cause to mourn; make children fatherless;
For joy and happiness bring woe; yet ask the Lord to bless.
God speed the men who seek, peace o'er the earth to spread
Let all who love the name of Peace speak blessings on their head.

Let reason take the place of force in each dispute.
To arbitration all things yield, let the “war dogs” be mute.
Let nations great and small, in solemn league agree
That henceforth might shall yield to right, that wars no more shall be.

The people then their swords, may into ploughshares beat.
To pruning hooks may bend their spears; with peace each other greet.
The lion then and lamb, may down together lay.
The weaned child around the den of cockatrice may play.

Then shall the heavens be glad and earth lift up her voice;
The desert blossom as the rose; the wilderness rejoice.
Then may the angels song, on earth be sung again;
Glory to God, on earth is peace, goodwill among all men.

William Parker,
January 19th 1919



For the Fallen

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

by Robert Laurence Binyon (1869-1943),

published in The Times newspaper on 21st September 1914.