

Exhibition at Rothbury
11th August 1894
Opening by Lord Armstrong

On Wednesday an industrial and loan exhibition was opened in the Jubilee Hall by Lord Armstrong C.B. of Cragside, in the presence of a large company, including Mr and Mrs W.A. Watson-Armstrong, Sir John and Lady Adye, Mrs Medd, Mr Forster (Burradon), Mrs Maine, Mrs Rayne and the Misses Rayne, Mr Jon Howey (Thropton Maine), Mr W. Hawthorn (Wreighburn), Mr G. Crawford (Cartington), The Rev E. Williams and the Rev G. Jones (Rothbury), the Rev Father Ord (Thropton), Mrs and the Misses Hawthorn, Mrs and the Misses Armstrong (South Cartington), Mr P. Dodds (Biddleston), Mr W. Glover (Newcastle), Mr H Wallace (Trench Hall), Mr D.D. Dixon, Mr Robt. Donkin, Dr Barrow, and others.

Lord Armstrong, in opening the proceedings, said in the course of his life he had been more or less connected with all the great national exhibitions - not that he was implying that this one was of a national character, but he dared to say it was about as good in its way as many of the great exhibitions he had seen. (Applause) As regarded national exhibitions, the first one, namely, that of 1851, was a very great success. But none of those which had followed had achieved anything like the same amount of success as that one. They had grown bigger and bigger, and more and more costly. But at the same time they had diminished in profit and in general beneficial effects. The last of all the great exhibitions which had just been held at Chicago, had been a disastrous failure. Under those circumstances it was time to consider whether numerous and small ones would not have a better effect. (Applause) He was glad to find that Rothbury had decided to make a venture in that direction. (Applause) The pecuniary stake involved in that exhibition was small, and therefore there could be no serious loss connected with it. (Applause) It would certainly do much good by encouraging amateurs in arts and crafts, and by so doing show that leisure hours could be pleasantly and profitably spent without resorting to coarse and demoralising pleasures. (Applause) He was glad to observe, in speaking of the arts, that in that exhibition, drawing, penmanship, and needlework were strongly represented; and that as regarded the crafts, joinery and carpentry held their respective places. They would all agree with him that they were greatly indebted to those persons who had devoted their time and their labour to get up that exhibition. After most heartily congratulating them upon the success of their endeavours, his Lordship declared the exhibition open. (Applause)

The company then turned to the exhibits, which are numerous, and in many instances highly interesting from an antiquarian as well as from an artistic point of view. The catalogue comprised two sections, one for competitive and the other for loan articles. In the former, prizes were given for oil-paintings, water-colour drawings, pen and ink sketches, penmanship, ornamental writing, knitting and needlework, fretwork, wood carving etc., the whole collection numbering nearly 2 hundred. In the loan section the exhibits total close upon 3 hundred. Trophies

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from the Crimea, a lock of Sebastopol Arsenal, a small earthenware lamp found at the temple of Diana at Ephesus, a piece of belt perforated with grape shot, found at the Alma, lent by General Sir John Adye, G.C.B., are among the most noteworthy, as are also Indian curiosities and other things belonging to Sir J.W.B. Riddell, Bart. Mr Robert Donkin's collections of pictures and of sea birds' eggs from the Farne Islands, together with a head of Chillingham wild ox, were generally admired. Mr D.D. Dixon has on view a very numerous variety of knick-knacks which call for special note. A pair of steel spurs for cock-fighting, with a cock-pit circular for 1833, sent by Mr G. Rennison, attracted a great deal of attention. The Rev A.O. Medd contributes a fine lot of pictures, as does General Sir John Adve. Mr Watson-Armstrong exhibited a variety of brass work, &c., with a number of paintings, and Mr Garvie of Morpeth has a collection of portraits in oil. Stuffed birds belonging to Lord Armstrong, and an extensive assortment of curious from the South Sea Islands, and other places, the property of Mr H. Codling, constitutes a pleasing feature of the display. The judging of the competitive exhibits was not concluded yesterday. The secretaries, Messrs J.P. Ridley and J.T. Dixon deserve credit for the way in which the arrangements were carried out, and praise is due to the executive, who have worked indefatigably for some time in preparing for the event. The Rothbury String Band, under Dr Barrow, played selections of music during the afternoon and evening. The exhibition remains open up to Saturday.