



Edward Brown – Fitter's Row

From Riches to Rags

Edward Brown was a coal fitter, who built his mansion in 1727 in the East End of Sunderland. As a coal fitter he made a great deal of money. He built a mansion along with a row of cottages for his workers, known as Fitters, Fitters Row. This house and surroundings were renowned for its fine Georgian gardens and many would come from far and wide to visit his grand and splendid gardens. This cost Edward Brown a lot of money, around £5,000.

Unfortunately for Edward he lost his wealth very quickly and the houses he had built in a very short period of time would become slums, housing the poorest people of the community.

The area became known as The Hat Case and Fitters Row. It is interesting that this one site reflects some of the changes and developments of the east end. As it would later become the site of the first council flats to be built in Sunderland, known as Harrisons Buildings in 1903.

Unfortunately Edward finally died a pauper in Cork, Ireland.