

Tales of Old

The struggle of Newcastle people in 18th century was very hard. We suffered, either physically, mentally or spiritually. Most of us lived around the River Tyne, working as coal miners, where we were worked tirelessly, throughout the day.



"When I am not working I go to meetings, despite the weather not being friendly. In the middle of weather that wasn't kind, cold wintry evening and small flakes of snow are being blown around the cobbled streets. My bones are aching from the long hours of hard work...I shiver with the cold and turn up the collar of my old coat. Frequently I almost fall, slipping on a patch of ice. Our life seems to be one long struggle.., against the grinding poverty, which drags on day in, day out, month in month out and against the powerful group of people who run commercial life and the politics of Tyneside. Mostly our opinion isn't considered by the government or authority. However, luckily there is a new preacher who puts the conscience of our words that helped me and all... his name is James Murray. He speaks the truth.., he talks of the Bible and uses it to rail against the injustices that I face during this time."

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It has become a custom in my family, after dinner we get together and talk about what happened or what has been done its activity during the day. However, I was more often to tell stories about the struggle of the hero in long time ago, how they were helping people. How could they sacrifice for the people and be so selfless? Without them, we cannot live like this today prosperous and independent. I mean the tell it to motivate them to create a sense of empathy, a social mutual help, mutual love sense, that is very useful for the future lives.

One night on a weekend after dinner, a time in the early summer vacation, we had free time to relax.. , my children don't have homework or other assignments from their school. An opportunity for me to talk to them about past experiences, how the ancient people fought, worked hard to fight for their rights, for their life, before reaching the welfare of its people with a safe and

fair governance as it today. I was impressed to read the stories of a fighter called James Murray, et al, .I just got from my tutor in Millin Community Centre on last Thursday.

My smallest child, his name is Tommy and he really like history lessons, but Bobby his brother, who is 15 years-old, he prefers art and is a bit political.

"Tommy.., Bobby...Mommy had and interesting story for you..is about the struggle people in Newcastle in North-East of England in the past before they achieve happiness, prosperity and advancement as it is to day, but.., wait a minute honey, Mommy going to trim the table and dishwasher first..", I exclaimed.

But Tommy cannot wait too long time, he wants to know immediately the story... " just let Mom, later sink!", Tommy shouted.

I immediately sat down with Tommy and Bobby in the living room, who was ready to listen, and then I start a story about The Struggle of James Murray.

In ancient times, about in the mid 18 century ago, the British people's too hard almost same as our country Indonesia . British people's struggle against injustice, unfairly, persecution, enslavement of the people, demanding a prosperous life and struggle for their rights, occurring in almost all areas in England, including North East areas, such as Newcastle Upon Tyne.

"And then?"... Tommy urged by the innocent faces, wrinkling his forehead.

People lives when it is suffering.., their life seems to be one struggle. In general they work as worked hard as a miner.. around Tyne and Wear. The difference lives ordinary people with the powerful families was like aristocrats, leader of officials in government who run the commercial life of the politics are so far. Nearly all of the money and all the political power was in the hands of a few families in the region. The government only really cared about rich people.

"Em mm.., so the powerful families in government are corrupt?..Is not it Mom emm ??", Bobby suddenly interrupted with a loud voice as he moved his chair close to me..not to be outdone by Tommy.

"Be patient honey.., Mommy will continue this story!" As I was thinking I tipped my head with a sad face.. With compassion I try to continue this story..

On a cold night, snow flakes scattered over the street. My body was piercing with shivering bones, old coats covering them crudely, from morning to evening

and even into the night amid sober light of the dark, when they had no electricity. They worked hard tirelessly, digging in the pits to feed their families lives from day to day. Frequently they don't meet and play with their son or daughter because his father left for work early in the morning still sleeping, while returning from work found his child was sleeping asleep. From day to day, month to month and from year to year they walked along the uneven cobbled street on a path of ice, even they often slipping in the icy gloom.



They were waiting for a glimmer of hope, wish the God's helper , a hero who are willing to make sacrifices to bring a bright her life. In North-East England, only a few number of men could vote, more over women were not involved.

"Can you imagine, how the societies live in the ancient times, filled with challenges, suffering, the struggle before the birth of democracy...."

Taking a deep breath, I continue the story later.., while Tommy and Bobby with teary eyes remained was silent listened.

"Amid these difficulties, fortunately came the heroes, the leaders to come to help and lead Tyneside and Wearside rebellions against the powerful and wealthy, who spoke out for human rights in the late 18 th century. The most famous of them are Rev. James Murray, Thomas Bewick and Thomas Spence. Rev James Murray is a preacher who use the Bible to speak the truth; Thomas Bewick used his great artistic skills, and Thomas Spence is an activist.

"However..., I am more interested in the story of the struggle Rev. James Murray, who was a preacher...."

"Why mom???, instead of Thomas Bewick? He is better, because he is an artist or the activist Thomas Spence", said Tommy and Bobby with surprise.

Then I said, the three heroes of this is great and exciting fighters, because they are fighting according to the field, means and ability.

As I mentioned before, the Rev. James Murray was a religious figure, who gave preaching and talks based on the Bible, to reassure the people, and he was very concerned to fight for the people who had been treated unfairly by the authority at the time.

Authorities finally arrested the activist Thomas Spence, but James Murray didn't get held.



Why?? ... As he was a preacher of religion, to speak the truth based on the Bible, give advice to many, he respected all the people except the authorities....Thus, he can continue his goal fighting, rebellion to assist the long-oppressed due to their indifference of the authorities, while Thomas Spence cannot be detained.

Until now, the services of James Murray and his two friends as a famous Hero from Newcastle Upon Tyne has to be remembered person. We should be grateful for his services to the independence and well-being of Newcastle people.

.... Is it finished mom??? Oooohh...indeed an interesting story, how the same heroes story in our country

Tommy and Bobby was very pleased to hear my story and tomorrow night they told again asking about the same story of an hero from Indonesian country, who worked for justice like James Murray..

The clock showed it was 12 midnight, so each of us went to our bedrooms.

Ummu

