

Felling (including Friar's Goose)

The earliest recorded evidence for human activity at Felling is a neolithic or bronze age perforated stone axe hammer (HER 698), found in 1937 on the Nest House Estate. Felling manor (HER 714) was created in the 13th century, carved out of Heworth waste by the prior and convent of Durham, and given to Walter de Selby. The manor lay between the Mereburn (the boundary with Gateshead on the west) and the Blakburn (the boundary with Heworth on the east) which in the 19th century ran through the modern village of Felling. By 1605 the manor was in the hands of Robert Brandling. Felling Hall, the presumed seat of the manor, was suffering from mining subsidence in 1820 and has since been demolished. The modern settlement of Felling appears to have been born out of the industrialisation of the area in the 18th and 19th centuries, when brickworks (HER 3803 and 3805), quarries (HER 3545), ironworks (HER 3804), chemical and lime-works (HER 3821) were all in production. Coal mining and transport, upon which all these industries depended, was the main catalyst for the industrial development of the area. The coal trade developed at an early date: The Felling Way I to Felling Drops (HER 3540) may date to the 1670s. Subsequently, from the early 17th century to later 18th centuries, the staithes at Felling were linked to several mines at High Felling, Low Felling and Carr Hill, for which purposes a number of wagonways were built (e.g. HER 5940 and 5941). One of the last was Felling Wagonway, laid on the line of part of the old Felling Way was opened in 1810 by the Blackett's to serve Felling Colliery (HER 3801). Tyne Main Staiths (HER 3534) at the end of the Friar's Goose Wagonway (HER 3533), shipped coal from the Tyne Main Collieries (HER 3532 and 3538), via the Tyne Main Wagonway. Another product of the coal trade was Friar's Goose Pumping Station (HER 1012), in operation between 1746-1763 in an attempt to drain the Tyne Coal Basin. One of the most important factories in Felling was the Friar's Goose Chemical Works (HER 3537), opened in 1827 by Anthony Clapham, a soap manufacturer. In 1833 the 263 feet high Clapham Chimney was built, at the time was the tallest chimney on Tyneside. After the chemical works went out of use in 1932 the 2 million ton spoil heap (HER 5591) was utilised for agricultural purposes, and the recovered land became East Gateshead Riverside Park in 1966. Felling was also deeply involved in the Tyneside shipbuilding industry. Mitchison's Ship Repair Yard (HER 5020) replaced Fair's boat yard in 1919, and closed in 1964. Industrialisation led to the development of workers' housing, transport systems, including a railway line (HER 2625 – now part of the T&W Metro system) and station (HER 1013), opened in 1842, and other public buildings and amenities, such as Felling church and a Park (HER 5253), opened in 1910.