

## Hetton-le-Hole

Hetton-le-Hole and the surrounding area is steeped in history dating back to the later stone age. A number of prehistoric features have been located in the area including a rectilinear enclosure (HER 5300) and the burial mounds of Copt Hill (HER 100) and Fairies Cradle (HER 249). Such features may suggest that the area was occupied during the later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. No evidence of structures relating to a prehistoric settlement site have been located. However, a number of small finds, including Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age axe fragments (HER 251) do indicate that prehistoric people were located in the area. Early charters going back to 1187 mention the village of Heppedune, a combination of two Anglo-Saxon words spelt together. The 'le Hepdons', a local land-owning family, owned part of the local Manor from the 1180s. The ancient Manor was divided into two parts known as Hetton-on-the-Hill and Hetton-in-the-Hole, with the later being more sheltered and where the village ultimately arose. The early core of the village appears to have been bounded by Front Street, Park View and the burn in Hetton Dean (HER 262).

The village grew during the Industrial Revolution with a number of key raw materials located close by. Pits to extract gravel (HER 2995, 2997) and sand (HER 2992) were situated in the local area. The Hetton Coal Company was formed in 1819 with the first shaft being sunk in 1820 at the Hetton Colliery (HER 2989, 3207). It was decided to build a wagonway (HER 3624) from the colliery to the River Wear at Sunderland. George Stephenson was chosen as the engineer for the 8 mile stretch. The tomb of his friend and mentor Nicholas Wood who was also involved with the Hetton Coal Company can be found at St. Nicholas Church (HER 5186).

The village prospered with the increase in industrial activity and was required to grow to accommodate more workers, including the building of 200 houses for the coal miners and their families. There are no remnants of the mine which has been heavily landscaped since its closure in 1950.