

Jarrow

The earliest recorded evidence of human activity at Jarrow is the recorded find of two flint flakes (HER 490) in 1860, during the construction of Tyne Dock. In 1887 a worked flint was found at Jarrow, by the son of the secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle, and in a fine flint axe was found "in the town of Jarrow" in 1886. (HER 830-1). Finds and structures from later periods include an oil lamp, coins and various other Roman artefacts (HER 983-992), which led early antiquaries to postulate the existence of a Roman fort at Jarrow (HER 993). The most important archaeological remains surviving at Jarrow are associated with the early medieval, or Anglo-Saxon period. The monastery of St. Paul (HER 994) was founded as a twin monastery for St Peters, Monkwearmouth on the banks of the river Don by a Northumbrian noble called Benedict Biscop in 681 A.D. The dedication stone for the church is the oldest in the country, dating the building to the 23rd April of the year 681 A.D. although there are two older churches in the North East of England, including that at Monkwearmouth. Biscop's Saxon monastery at Jarrow was a great centre of English learning and is internationally known as the home of the Venerable Bede, (673-735 A.D), author of the 'Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum' ('The History of the English Church and People'), the main source for the history of Anglo-Saxon England. Having repelled earlier raids, the monastery was abandoned after raids by the Vikings in 874-5, but revived in the late 11th century when it became a cell of Durham. This priory (HER 1230) survived until the dissolution in 1536. Many Anglo-Saxon stone fragments have been found at Jarrow, mainly associated with the monastery (HER 994-1000, 1201-1226), as well as a cemetery (HER 1227). The first documentary references to Jarrow (Gyrvum) medieval village date from the late 11th century in a document by Bishop Walcher. It was, however, quite a small settlement at this time - in 1345/6 there were 8 named tenants, one being the Master of the cell of Jarrow, paying rent for 9 tofts and 1 cottage. When Hutchinson visited it in 1782 he noted only "two or three mean cottages". The actual site of the village to which the documentary references apply is unknown, but it may have been north of Jarrow Hall (HER 1233) or along the road west of the hall, or alternatively, on the site of the 18th-19th century village (HER 1235) east of the priory. 19th century plans show houses arranged around the south, east and north sides of the rough grassed area between the church and the Don (to the east), with another row along the edge of the road north from the bridge, but no signs of an early village were found there when it was excavated. The 18th and 19th centuries saw Jarrow develop into a major industrial centre, with saltpans in operation between Jarrow Slake and South Shields throughout the 19th century, glass and chemical works (HER 2267, 2277 and 2279), and coal mining, notably at Jarrow Colliery (HER 2258) between 1803-1851. Wagonways and railways associated particularly with the coal trade were built in abundance, eventually converging on Tyne Dock (HER 2556), built for the North Eastern Railway and opened in 1859. The Tyne dock lock gates and quay walls survive, but a range of other features, including various stone- and brick-built structures, cranes and coal drops have been lost. Shipbuilding yards at Jarrow included Palmers shipbuilding and iron works (HER 2534), operational between 1860 and 1933. The late 19th century also saw the development of housing for the huge number of industrial workers, and of an associated transport infrastructure - both the rail and tram networks became well-established. Public buildings associated with urban development included churches and chapels of various denominations, as well as a service infrastructure.