

Newburn

The earliest recorded evidence of human activity at Newburn is a bronze age socketed axe (HER 1254) found in 1899 in the River Tyne. A bronze bowl, thought to be Roman was also discovered in the Tyne in 1883 (HER 626). Roman building stones (HER 1287 and 1288) have also been found at Newburn and some are reused in the fabric of the medieval church, but there is no evidence of Roman structures in the immediate locality.

Newburn was a royal Saxon burgh before the Conquest (HER 1296), one of six in Northumberland, and it was in this period that the Church of St. Michael and All Angels was constructed, although the present church has a Norman tower, a 13th century chancel and later additions.

It is assumed that the post-Conquest village of Newburn (HER 1319) was a direct successor of the Anglo-Saxon burgh. The Manor of Newburn had been established by 1204 and is recorded as having 14 taxpayers in 1296, 19 in 1312. In 1332 the manor, of which the village was part, was granted to Henry Percy, second lord of Alnwick, and in 1367 consisted of a main house and dovecot, 18 cottages, 1 unoccupied cottage, 2 water mills, 1 brewery, 1 fishery, a coalmine and other lands and possessions. The village still retains some of its original plan - a 2-row plan with green on an east-west axis, immediately west of the burn - though few of its early buildings. The medieval pele tower (HER 1289), by then incorporated in a 16th century hall house (HER 1290), was demolished by 1960 and the manor house (HER 1291), built around 1600, was demolished in 1909. Newburn ford (HER 1295), an ancient crossing point on the Tyne, was the site of an important Anglo-Scottish battle in 1640 (1297; see also 624) – this is now a registered battlefield site. A possible Civil War burial ground is nearby (HER 1298). The industrial development of Newburn started in the medieval period; coal mining is mentioned in documents of the 14th to 17th centuries (HER 1309), and various mill sites are mentioned during the same period (HER 1312 and 1313). The transformation of Newburn from a rural village with low level industry to a thriving industrial centre came in the early 19th century with the opening of large collieries (e.g. HER 4229) and Spencer's Steel Works (HER 4231), which remained operational until the 1960s. Newburn was also important in the transportation of coals by boat and rail – a number of wagonways passed through the area (HER 1032/3, 4227, 4230 and 4274), and the Scotswood, Newburn and Wylam branch of the North Eastern Railway opened in 1875. The transport system was further improved with the opening of Newburn Bridge in 1893 (HER 4228). The increased industrialisation of the area, which also included a brickworks (HER 3937), chemicals works (HER 4951) and mills (HER 4939 and 4940), led to an increased demand for housing, some of which survives (HER 4944-5 and 4949-50). Later sites of cultural heritage significance include a war memorial of 1916 (HER 5199) and a WW2 pillbox (HER 5440).