

## Walker

The earliest possible evidence of human activity at Walker are records of the Stott's House Mounds (HER 1392), now destroyed, but tentatively identified as prehistoric burial mounds, or tumuli. George Jobey excavated one of the mounds prior to its destruction in 1964 and, although he recorded no evidence for its function, found probable prehistoric plough marks on the old ground surface beneath the mound. The Roman wall passes through Walkergate on its way from Byker towards its eastern terminus at Wallsend, and several finds have been made of Roman material such as bone, coins and an inscription (HER 1392 and 1397). The medieval village of Walker (HER 1411) was included in the barony of Morpeth in the 12th century, and it is recorded that it had five taxpayers in 1296, seven in 1312, but only two in 1336. The actual settlement seems always to have been small, and according to historic maps had been reduced even further, to a single farm and some cottages by the mid-19th century. The medieval and post-medieval settlement, subsequently known as 'Old Walker', abutted the south side of the line of the Roman Wall and the east side of Scrogg Road. A 1745 map shows the triangular "Town Green". Newcastle Corporation bought the manor of Walker in the 18th century, partly to endow the Holy Jesus Hospital, but perhaps more importantly to acquire more of the river shore upon which to dump ballast, thereby assisting the coal trade. As a result of the coal trade, the area became heavily industrialised in the 19th century, and the site of the old village covered with housing. Coal mining on an industrial scale started in Walker at the beginning of the 18th century (certainly by 1713), and during the early part of the following century there were 10 pits in operation (e.g. HER 4181, 4187, 4200 and 4206-7). Staiths (HER 4285) on the riverside were supplied by wagonway (HER 4185, 4203, 4209-13 and 4205-6) with coal from the pits of Walker and beyond. The availability of fuel and clay (a by-product of mining) stimulated the development of brick-working (e.g. HER 4196, 4198, 4205-6 and 4276-7). Other industries included an oil works (HER 2093), ironworks (HER 4199), various chemical works (e.g. HER 4197 and 4202). Shipbuilding became increasingly important in the later 19th century (e.g. HER 4208, 4217-18 and 5023) and survived into the second half of the 20th century, outliving most of the other Walker industries. The industrial development of Walker was accompanied by its urbanisation, including an extensive transport infrastructure (e.g. HER 4183), housing developments and associated public buildings, such a colliery school (HER 4264). The modern history of Walker is marked by war memorials (HER 5205-6), a pillbox (HER 1787) and other military sites (e.g. HER 5503).