

## Wallsend

The earliest recorded evidence of human activity at Wallsend is the find of a flat bronze axe (HER 777). The most important archaeological remains surviving there are associated with Hadrian's Wall and the Roman Fort of Segedunum (HER 196-199). The fort was constructed in about the year 125 A.D. and was in use until the end of the Roman period in the late 4th century. It was excavated in the 1970s and '80s when the site was cleared of 19th century housing and is now on public display as the focal point of a museum and interpretation centre. The fort was probably associated with a civilian settlement, or vicus (HER 806), which it is thought extended westward along the Military Way. Over the years there have been many finds of coins, metalwork, altars, querns, animal bones, Roman pottery and a possible Roman pottery kiln (HER 807) in this area (HER 807-829). Defensive ditches and a possible earth bank formed the western boundary of the vicus some 65 metres from the fort and the Branch Wall from the fort to the Tyne formed the eastern boundary. Excavations at Swan Hunter's Shipyard in 2002 revealed parts of a defensive cordon that probably defined the south side of the vicus. The first documentary references to medieval Wallsend (HER 803) date from 1072 when it formed part of Bishop Walcher's gift to Durham Priory. There is little information about the size of the medieval settlement, though in 1539 there were 2 cottages and 7 leaseholders, the latter perhaps being early representatives of the township's 7 farms which survived at least as late as 1800. The site of the village is high up on the south side of the Wallsend Burn, the buildings being arranged around a very large green which even today retains its sub-circular shape. By the time of the Tithe Award of 1841 there were still 3 farms on the south side of the green, and 4 large houses on both north and south sides. The Holy Cross Church (HER 105), which now stands as a ruin, was in use from the mid 12th century until the end of the 18th century, and its graveyard continued in use until 1888. There are several references to mills at Wallsend in the 15th and 16th centuries - Wallsend Mill (HER 805) was a medieval windmill which became a water mill in the later 15th century and was in use until the mid 16th century. Cosyns or Carville Hall (HER 4941) was built in 1635 by John Cosyn and incorporated several Roman inscribed stones. It was later renamed Carville Hall by Robert Carville but was demolished in 1898.

The industrial development of Wallsend, as elsewhere on Tyneside, was based on coal mining and the coal trade. There were numerous pits in the vicinity from the late 18th century (e.g. HER 1125-7, 1129, 1136, 1139 and 2089 - Wallsend Colliery. Wagonways (e.g. HER 1128, 1135-6, 1139 and 2089) moved coal to staithes and drops (HER 2091-2, 2094 and 2100) on the river from these pits and numerous others further afield. The importance of the Tyne as a transport nexus led to the development of industry close to the riverside, while the medieval centre survived and developed as a quiet residential area. Shipbuilding became arguably the most important industry at Wallsend (HER 2202, 2210 and 5021), but brick and tile works (HER 2095), iron works (HER 2098), a cement works (HER 2206), lime works and roperies (e.g. HER 2086) were amongst other industries that flourished there. In the early 20th century, the opening of the Neptune Bank Power Station (HER 5106) and the Carville Power Station plants (HER 1912) continued the tradition of coal-powered industry at Wallsend. The 19th and early 20th centuries saw the development of housing for the huge number of industrial workers, and gradually an infrastructure of services also developed, including transport systems, churches and chapels, a library and schools (HER 5293 and 5474-7). A number of grand residences for industrialists, such as Mount Pleasant House (HER 1876) and the modernised Carville Hall (above) were also built in the vicinity. Modern sites of local cultural heritage importance include Second World War pillboxes (HER 1830, 5336 and 5340-2).