

An Introduction

Gateshead and its surrounding area has a long and rich history. There is much to learn about how the settlement started and how its population grew due to an increase in various industries, in particular coal mining and iron working. In this study, children will gain an understanding of how Gateshead became the place we know and love today.

What you need to know

With the arrival of the Romans in AD43, the map of Britain underwent great change. One area where this happened was in neighbouring Newcastle. A fort was built which sat next to Hadrian's wall. This fort was connected to the Gateshead area via a bridge known as Pons Aelius. This was the first bridge to be built over the River Tyne and was the first step in Gateshead becoming a settlement.

Evidence shows that a settlement existed in Gateshead during this time, as roman coins, stone carvings, and other materials were found. The settlement of Gateshead was also connected via a Roman road, some of which, still exists on today's map beneath Durham Road from Chester-Le-Street.

Following the Roman withdrawal from Britain, it is suspected that many Romans chose to stay and settle in the area. During the Anglo-Saxon era, the link to the existence of a settlement comes from the area known as Bottle Bank. The reason for this suggested link is that the word bottle comes from the Old English 'botl' meaning building or house.

The Norman invasion of Britain brought about further change and the north suffered deeply during this time. Several harryings took place in the north, with Gateshead being a target due to the murder of a Norman bishop in the area where St Mary's Church now sits.

Under Norman rule, manors were established in the area. The Bishop of Durham granted land to wealthy Norman families, and they built lavish homes in the surrounding areas. People living in these manors would have worked for the local land owners. There were many impressive homes such as Redheugh Hall, Hollinside Manor, Felling Hall and Ravensworth Castle.

A survey of the Bishop of Durham's lands was carried out in 1183 and published in the Boldon Book. It allows us to get an idea of some of the trades at the time. It describes Gateshead as having watermills, windmills, bakeries, fisheries, pottery kilns and farms.

One of the main industries that played an important role in Gateshead's history was coal mining. Coal mining was found across the borough with many manor owners running mines on their land. The first evidence of coal mining in Gateshead is from 1344. By the mid 1500s, it was the most productive coal field in the country. During the mid 1600s, the coal mining industry began to decline as it became too



expensive to reach the deeper seams of coal. However, demand for coal grew during the Industrial Revolution and technological advances meant that it was possible to dig deeper mines to reach the seams that were previously out of reach. Gateshead, once again, began to prosper from the coal industry.

Other industries that shaped the town included ship building, rope making and iron working. With expanding industries and better transport links, the town of Gateshead grew rapidly.

During the two world wars, life was tough for people living in Gateshead. Many men went to fight for their country, which in turn led to many deaths, which affected the families back home. To honour the fallen, a large cenotaph was built in Gateshead – this still stands proudly today.

In World War 1, to aid in the war effort, Belgian refugees came to Gateshead to assist in the production of ammunition. A unique settlement known as Elisabethville was built, and it contained homes, shops and schools. It was unique as it was built solely for the Belgian refugees and even followed Belgian rules, rather than being considered an English village.

In World War 2, many children from Gateshead were evacuated from the area for safety. This was one of the largest evacuation programmes outside of London and over 10,000 children left their homes and families. Later in the war, the people of Gateshead came together for a 'Holidays at Home' event which took place in Saltwell Park to boost spirits.

Following the war, a great deal of redevelopment took place in Gateshead. Old industrial sites found new uses, and several large development projects took place. One of the key changes was the construction of the Angel of the North – a large art statue which stands proudly over the town and reminds the people of their proud industrial heritage and strength.

Resources

Our key enquiry questions, sources, PowerPoints, activities, and other resources will help to build children's understanding of their local area of Gateshead and answer the question 'How has Gateshead changed over time?'

Get in touch

Is there an area of local history you'd love to see on our Local History Hub?
Get in touch to learn how we can work together! Email

LocalHistory@tpet.co.uk
to find out more.



Teacher's Pet



Historic England



Local History

Historic England and Teacher's Pet have come together to bring you a collection of free resources that you can use in your local history teaching.



Historic England



Teacher's Pet

Who are Teacher's Pet?

Teacher's Pet have been providing downloadable and playable educational content to early years and primary school teachers for over 14 years. We cover all areas of the curriculum and use a team of in-house teachers and designers to create engaging and memorable concepts, that the children will love.

Why local history?

At [Teacher's Pet](#) we want to empower primary school teachers by giving them the tools they need to deliver inspiring and thoughtful lessons about the local area and its history. We believe local history teaching has such an important part to play in a child's wellbeing – helping to give children a sense of pride in where they live.

Our Local History project is designed to provide teachers across the UK with everything they need to successfully carry out a full scheme of teaching about their local area, through key enquiry questions and source led activities.

Working with [Historic England](#) gives us access to archived maps and photos for resources and information from knowledgeable local historians, as well helping us to provide the content to you free of charge.

For more information about our Local History project or to find out more about Teacher's Pet Classroom Resources, please visit our website.