

Pottery in Gateshead

The pottery industry is a very old trade, older than coal mining (and was carried out on a world wide basis; people needed utensils and plates, no matter what period of history they lived in). The early pottery industry in Gateshead is still the subject of research, but as early as the fourteenth century clay was brought from Heworth in large quantities to be worked in kilns in the town. One such kiln was uncovered, although greatly damaged, on the site of the Ritz cinema during the construction of the Gateshead Highway.

There then appears to have been a decline in this industry and potteries were not worked again in Gateshead until the eighteenth century. There were small potteries at the South Shore and later at Bensham, Pipewellgate and Low Teams, but the main centres were at Carr Hill and Sheriff Hill.

John Warburton, probably a native of Staffordshire, opened a pottery at Newcastle and in 1740 moved the manufacturing side of the business to Carr Hill. He is said to have been the first to introduce white earthenware into the district. Warburton died in 1795 and the business was carried on by his son and then his widow, until 1817 when the white ware was discontinued.

From 1817 the pottery had a variety of owners, the last being Thomas Patterson of Sheriff Hill pottery, until it closed in 1893. The building was demolished in 1932. The Old Brown Jug public house serves as a reminder of the trade once practised nearby.

Paul Jackson established the Sheriff Hill pottery in 1771 at the corner of Pottersway and Old Durham Road. Members of the Jackson family were partners in the business until 1837 when Thomas Patterson took over. By 1839 there were 50 employees, many of whom lived in a row of cottages adjoining the Old Cannon Inn. This pottery closed in 1909 and the buildings were demolished in the 1920s to make way for council houses.

From A Short History of Gateshead by I C Carlton