

Quarries in Gateshead

Another very old industry was quarrying which left many workings scattered throughout Gateshead, especially the Fell, although there were several near the town itself, at Barns Close, Wylam Street, behind Pleasant Row (High Street) and on Bensham Bank opposite Bloomfield Terrace. These were used for the extensive house-building programmes of the nineteenth century but were themselves later filled in and built over.

In the eighteenth century the trade was largely concerned with grindstones, many of which were exported. The quarrymen themselves were a constant source of trouble to their landlord, the lord of the manor. Frequently they did not pay their rent and dumped rubbish and spoil at random and generally 'they followed their work without taking notice of anybody'. One lord of the manor was advised thus: 'If you do not make a publicke example of some of those fellowes they'll ride on your shoulders as long as you live'.

As time went on the grindstone trade decreased and the emphasis was placed on the quarrying of building stone, especially during the rebuilding of central Newcastle in the 1890s. The number of men employed in this trade was never large, only 75 in Gateshead and the Fell in 1839, one of the boom periods for this trade.



Quarrying blocks for pulpstones and grindstones, Windy Nook Quarry

From *A Short History of Gateshead* by I C Carlton