

## New streets of Bishopwearmouth

Through the middle decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the port and Bishopwearmouth began to grow together. Little but farmland stood between the western boundary of Sunderland borough, later called Sans Street, and Crowtree Lane, the eastern edge of Bishopwearmouth village, in 1737. Within half a century, High Street was built up along almost its entire length. The one short undeveloped section would shortly form the Wearmouth bridge approach.

The only buildings between the villages in 1737 were the Halfway houses, on a track from High Street towards the Panns; and Sunnyside, south of High Street, the extensive property of the Maude family. The first new estate was on land between Halfway houses and the rector's glebe, owned by Ralph Robinson, whose family had done so much building in the east end. Five streets were laid parallel with Pan Lane: east to west Green, Factory (soon re-named Cumberland), Queen, Chapel (afterwards Dunning), and somewhat later, Castle, connected by smaller lanes.

Like the Robinson streets in the borough, this neighbourhood was mixed. Houses nearest High Street were smaller and interspersed with shops and a sail cloth factory. Further from the bustle of the main road, above the river gorge, more imposing properties stood in private grounds. One was the house of John Mounsey (1766-1833), hatmaker and furrier, in Green Street. The chemist Bernard Ogden had a smart new residence in Dunning Street. But the attractions of this part of town, a stone's throw from the riverside, would soon be blighted by bottle works and coal staiths. These images show something of the contrast between the now demolished properties.

A second major development was on the Lambton estate and followed closely upon the building of the Wearmouth bridge. East of Sunnyside, Villiers, Nile and Norfolk Streets were set out, presumably around the date of the Battle of the Nile (1798). They are certainly earlier than John Fawcett's West Sunnyside. This district was a magnet for nonconformist chapels, with the Bethel (1817) and St George's Presbyterian (1825) chapels in Villiers Street, and the Quaker meeting relocated to Nile Street in 1822. Villiers Street was notable for genteel residences populated by the élite of early-19<sup>th</sup> century local society. Houses fronted directly to the street, yards and gardens behind, some with warehouses and counting houses. Remains of these back yards can be seen adjacent to the ring road. A handful of the grand frontages survives.

### NOTES:

B&T 1737; Rain's Eye Plan; Wood 1826; 'Visit to Sunderland', *Chambers's Edinburgh Jnl*, 30 Mar. 1850, 194; Surtees, 25; Brayley and Britton, 146; Milligan, 312; Ironbridge Gorge Museum Lib. and Archives, Lab/Abi/3/6; *Tyne Mercury*, 21 Mar. 1809; 25 Dec. 1810; Lambton estate office, plan of letting the earl of Durham's property in Sunderland, 1839; letterbook, 1841-77; plan of ground in Sunderland belonging to the earl of Durham, 1850; DULASC, DDR/EA/NCN/2/32/8; DDR/EA/NCN/2/32/10; RTP, 117