

Early Community of Sunderland!

Hendon – The original heartland in the East End



Hendon at the Mouth of the Wear

Sunderland Male Voice Choir evolved from the former Shiney Row Male Voice Choir in July 2022.

The Choir has recorded and performed some great material over the years. Recently, it has embarked on a programme of creating new musical material. Some of this material incorporates new arrangements of traditional numbers.

An exciting new initiative is the creation of brand-new songs based upon the region's rich local heritage and its people.

The Choir has been working with Sunderland City Council and members of the community to expand their outreach in Hendon, Sunderland.

One of the oldest parts of the City of Sunderland is steeped in a rich heritage which is being captured by the Choir in song.

This information sheet looks at the original community heartland in the East End of Sunderland - Hendon.

The Hendon Music Project

Sunderland Male Voice Choir is creating a series about the rich heritage of the Hendon Ward of the City of Sunderland and its people.

The Origins of Hendon

It is believed that 'Hendon' comes from the word 'Hynden', which is an evolution of an Old English name 'Higna-denu'. This translates as 'The Valley of the Monks'.

The Early History of Hendon

One of the earliest records in Hendon's history was in 1346 when Thommas Menville built one of the first known ships on the River Wear.

As Sunderland started to expand on the South Bank of the River, Hendon emerged as a leisure resort in the late 18th century. It became famous for its beach and spas. The 'Hendon Bath Hotel' was known nationwide for its hot baths. The leisure resort was eventually replaced by the construction of Sunderland Docks.

Hendon was also an agricultural area. On Hendon Road or 'Lonnin', there were two windmills. The Hendon Burn also passed through the area on the way to the sea. There were farms in the area, including 'Hendon Red House' and 'Hendon Blue House', which became 'Blue House Field' and the first home of Sunderland AFC.

The Industrial Growth of Hendon

From the 18th century onwards, the town of Sunderland started to grow separately from the parish of Bishopwearmouth. In the mid-19th century, there was rapid industrial growth with the creation of the port.

Hendon was absorbed into this growth and the beach resort declined. The area was replaced with terraced housing to support the industrial expansion and accommodate the rising inflow of migrants.

From 1872, Hendon was the home of a large paper mill works, which was later acquired by the Thompson Group in 1981 but closed in 2014.

Sunderland Male Voice Choir

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Seventeen Nineteen (Holy Trinity Church)

The Key Landmarks in Hendon

Some key existing and past landmarks of Hendon are as follows:

Seventeen Nineteen (Holy Trinity Church)

– The Holy Trinity Church is the oldest remaining building in Hendon and is a Grade 1 Listed Building. It has been restored as a Cultural Centre.

Queen Street Masonic Temple – The second oldest remaining building in Hendon. The purpose built temple, which has been restored, was opened in 1785 and is a Grade 1 Listed Building.

The Port of Sunderland – The port, which is now operated by the City of Sunderland, was originally developed in the mid-19th century around Hendon. Shipbuilding was first recorded in 1346.

The Sunderland Barracks – The original fortifications of Sunderland (gun placements) at the mouth of the River Wear date back to the 1740's. The former 'Sunderland Barracks', which were located on the existing Barrack Street and part of the Port of Sunderland, was opened in 1794.

Victoria Hall – The Victoria Hall, for public meetings and entertainment, was opened in 1872 but destroyed by a Second World War bomb. It is famous for one of the worst disasters in history when 183 children died of asphyxia on the 16th June 1883.

Remembering our past heritage through people and music!

Key Characters in Hendon

Some legendary characters:

Peggy Potts – She was born in 1789 and would sell fish and cheese in the East End to cover up for her smuggling. It is claimed she was related to General Havelock.

The French Onion Seller – Monsieur Paul Grall would come to the East End of Sunderland every year for over 30 years from Brittany in France.

Eliza Lang – She was famous as she would sit by her door in Flag Lane in the East End selling pears to the passers-by.

Hatter Matter – She lived in Hendon. Shirley was the daughter of the George Street Rat Catcher. Many people thought she had a speech impediment as when people were unhappy, she would say 'atta matta' ('what's the matter').

The Male Voice Choir Song

It is hoped that the new song created by Sunderland Male Voice Choir will provide a lasting musical memorial of Hendon – one of the original communities and the heartland of Sunderland.



Queen Street Masonic Temple

Sunderland Male Voice Choir Information Sheets

Sunderland Male Voice Choir is producing a range of information sheets on its new music creation and project work. These sheets will be published within the 'Project' page of the Choir website.