

# Hendon - Heart of Shipbuilding!

The largest shipbuilding town in the world



Tall Ships on the River 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 how Hendon laid the foundation for Sunderland to become the world's largest shipbuilding town.

## 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.

### Hendon was First on the River Wear

The first record of shipbuilding in Sunderland was in 1346 when Thomas Menville built a vessel at Hendon.

It is likely that ships were being built on the River Wear before that time.

Hendon was subsequently famous for the shipyards of S P Austin & Sons, Sunderland Shipbuilding Co. Ltd., Osbourne Graham and Bartram & Sons Ltd.

### The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Expansion

In 1814, there were 23 shipyards in Sunderland with 31 ships under construction. By 1815, it was the leading port for wooden trading vessels with 600 ships built. In 1840, there were 76 yards. By 1850, 5 times more ships were being produced than in 1820. During 1846-54, Wearside produced one-third of the ships built in the UK.

Ships were now being produced in iron, as well as wood, and steam was replacing sail. The last wooden ship was built in 1880. In the 1880's, steel replaced iron and cargo ships and tankers were the main type of vessel built in Sunderland. Around 22% of the ships built between 1888-1913 were for export.

### The 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Decline

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw many changes in shipbuilding on the River Wear. During the two World Wars, the main work was the production of cargo ships. With changes to steel, the number of yards reduced to 16 between 1914-18 and 8 by 1939.

With the decline of UK shipbuilding, the Sunderland workforce reduced from 7,535 in 1978 to 4,337 in 1984. The remaining yards on the River Wear finally closed on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1988.

### Sunderland Male Voice Choir

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Tall Ships at Hendon Quay in 2018

### The Key Shipyards on the River Wear

**Sir James Laing & Sons** – Founded by Philip Laing in 1818 at Deptford and renamed in 1898. Merged with Thompson's and Sunderland Forge in 1954.

**S P Austin & Sons** Founded in 1826 and famous for its pontoon. Merged with Pickersgill's in 1954, but yard closed in 1964.

**William Doxford & Sons** – Founded at Cox Green in 1840 and moved to Pallion in 1857. Joined Thompson's, Laings and Greenwell's in 1961 to form Doxford and Sunderland Shipbuilding and Engineering Group. Merged with Austin and Pickersgill's in 1986, and then closed in 1988.

**William Pile**, one of the greatest designers of his age, created his business in 1846.

### World Famous Ships from Sunderland

The '**City of Adelaide**' launched in 1864 by William Pile, Hay & Co. – Ocean Clipper.

The '**Torrens**' launched in 1875 by Laings – Last fully rigged, composite, passenger clipper.

The '**turret**' ship launched in 1892 by Doxfords – Popular design for cargo vessels.

The '**Liberty**' ships designed by Thompsons and operated as emergency cargo vessels in World War II.

## Remembering our past heritage through words and music!

### What the Papers Said

In 1850, the Sunderland Herald proclaimed the town of Sunderland to be 'the greatest shipbuilding port in the world'.

### The 'Makems'

'The word, 'Makem' is often associated with residents of and people from Sunderland, and fans of Sunderland A.F.C.

There is much debate over the origins but it is argued that it may stem from the phrase, 'Mak'em and Tak'em'.

It is argued that it dates to the height of Sunderland's shipbuilding.

Some argue that the shipwrights would 'make' the ships and the pilots and tugboat captains would 'take them' down the River Wear to sea. Others argue that Sunderland 'made them' and Tyneside 'took them' to outfit.

### The Male Voice Choir Song

It is hoped that the new song created by Sunderland Male Voice Choir will provide a musical legacy about the important role that Sunderland played in worldwide shipbuilding and how Hendon was at the heart of its development.



The Port of Sunderland in 2023

### 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.