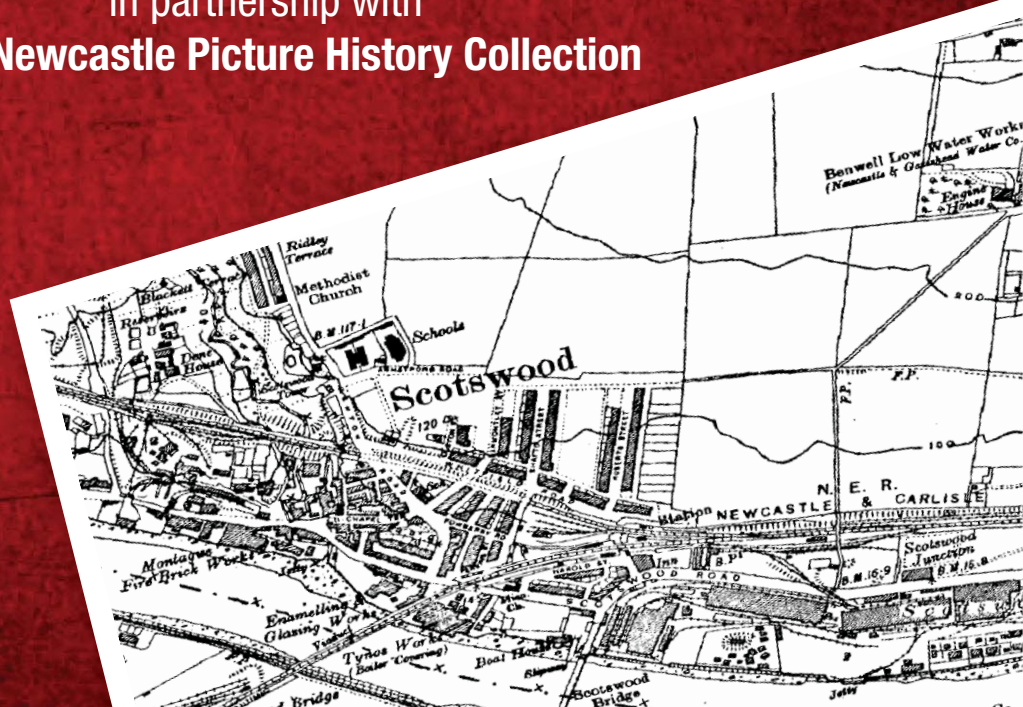




# Scotswood through the years

## *In Maps and Pictures*

St James' Heritage & Environment Group  
in partnership with  
West Newcastle Picture History Collection



This is a joint publication by St James' Heritage & Environment Group and West Newcastle Picture History Collection, two volunteer-run organisations based in the west end of Newcastle upon Tyne. This is the third of a series of publications that use maps and photographs to trace the development of particular neighbourhoods within the area.

### **Acknowledgements**

The book would not have been possible without the work of all the volunteers, past and present, who have collected photographs, carried out research on the history of the area, planned and curated exhibitions, and encouraged so many others to explore and enjoy the history of West Newcastle. We are also indebted to the many Scotswood residents who provided photographs and information about the area, its buildings and its people.

All the photographs come from West Newcastle Picture History Collection's unique archive of about 20,000 images of West Newcastle from the 1850s to the present day.

Thanks are due to Historic Scotland for permission to reproduce the aerial photograph of Scotswood in 1950, to the copyright holders of the Ordnance Survey maps for permission to use extracts of the maps, and to the Northumberland Name Books Project for permission to quote from the transcriptions of the Ordnance Survey Name Books for Newcastle St John held by the National Archives. The Northumberland Name Books are expected to appear later in 2020 at [namebooks.org.uk](http://namebooks.org.uk).

Thanks are also due to those individuals and organisations who contributed to the cost of producing the book. We do not charge for our publications, because we consider that we are giving people's history back to them, but we welcome donations to help us to continue our work of exploring and sharing the history of this fascinating area.

### **Other books in this series**

*Benwell through the Years in Maps and Pictures*, St James' Heritage & Environment Group and West Newcastle Picture History Collection, 2015

*Elswick through the Years in Maps and Pictures*, St James' Heritage & Environment Group and West Newcastle Picture History Collection, 2017

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*West Newcastle  
Picture History  
Collection*



## A Brief History of Scotswood

Two hundred years ago Scotswood was a hamlet in Northumberland, situated on the north bank of the River Tyne where the stream known as Denton Burn flowed into the river. The wider area that we would now call Scotswood was dominated by farmland. At that time the Denton Burn was the boundary between the Townships of Benwell to the east and Newburn to the west. The Benwell part was owned by the Ord family of Fenham, and the land to the west was in the ownership of several people, principal among them being Lord Rokeby.

In 1825, Eneas Mackenzie, author of *A History of Northumberland*, wrote that Scotswood was

“a long, straggling, pleasant and populous village which stretches along the banks of the river towards Bell’s Close. At the east end of the village, and close to the river, stands a large paper manufactory belonging to Messrs Grace and Co..... Nathaniel Grace, Esq. occupies a snug, pleasant house, on an eminence above the mill and which is adorned by a fine garden sloping to the south. On the level green below stand twelve or thirteen neat cottages, which are occupied by the work-people belonging to the mill.”

To the west of the village was the Montagu Pit which had opened in 1750. It was one of several coal mines along the banks of the Tyne west of Newcastle, where the coal seams were nearer the surface and the river provided a convenient transport route. Other settlements were growing along the river banks, comprising clusters of dwellings often adjacent to pits and small-scale manufacturing activities. To the west of Scotswood were Bell’s Close and Lemington and to the east were Delaval and Paradise.

There was a ferry at Scotswood to transport people across the river. Otherwise communications with the outside world were by dirt track. The nearest all-weather road was the Military Road to the north, which is

the present-day West Road. The opening of the first Scotswood Bridge to traffic in 1831 transformed the situation, changing Scotswood from a backwater to a crossroads. Within a decade this was followed by an east-west railway line running along the north bank of the Tyne, passing through Scotswood.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a railway bridge had been added, linking Scotswood to the south. The village had grown with the addition of several rows of terraced housing. New industries had located there. The most significant of these were the armaments and engineering works of Armstrong Whitworth (later Vickers) and the sanitaryware factory of Adams and Co. (later Adamsez) which had taken over the site of the former paper mill. Open fields still lay to the east and north of the village. Scotswood Road ran through fields as it travelled west from Benwell as far as the Scotswood Bridge.

Scotswood was soon to become part of Newcastle. In 1904 Benwell Township was absorbed into the city, and over the following decades most of the agricultural land was swallowed up by new housing, both public and private. By the start of the Second World War, Scotswood had become a suburb of Newcastle.

By the end of the 1980s, however, the seeds of decline had been sown. Most of the industry had gone. The Montagu Pit closed in 1934, and Adamsez in 1975. Vickers Scotswood works still existed, but only employed a fraction of the workforce of previous years. The railway line no longer ran through the area, and Scotswood Station had closed in 1964. Although the 1989 Ordnance Survey map shows the area almost completely filled with housing, before very long bulldozers would start to claim many of the council houses that had been built between the wars to provide homes for thousands of people, many of them re-housed from Newcastle’s slums.

## 1864 Map of Scotswood

This map shows Scotswood as a mainly rural area, with the small village and adjacent industry clustered in the south above the river banks, and the railway and road bridges already built. Fields are the main feature of this map. Each field had a name, such as Bull Meadow, Green Delaval and Low Hope. The location of six of the seven images in this section can be traced on this map. Only the school had yet to be built.



## 1. Scotswood Bridge



Before the original Scotswood Bridge was opened in 1831, there was no bridge across the Tyne between Newcastle and Corbridge. The need for a new bridge at Scotswood was agreed in principle by the “gentlemen” of the area at a meeting at the Stella Staithes Inn on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1827. In those days central government did not usually fund the construction of bridges so this was a local initiative requiring an Act of Parliament. Chief among the protagonists

was Nathaniel Grace, owner of the paper mill located on land to the north west of the new bridge. A joint stock company, the Scotswood Bridge Company, was formed, and the necessary Act of Parliament obtained. The design was a suspension bridge using wrought iron chains hung from two stone towers. The nickname “Chain Bridge” soon followed.

## 2. The White Cottages



Probably of 18<sup>th</sup> century origin, this small row of cottages stood west of the Denton Burn on a high point close to the present-day Bell's Close Industrial Estate. The cottages remained in residential use until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

They can still be seen in a 1950s aerial photograph of Scotswood. The above photograph was probably taken between the wars, looking upriver from high ground to the east of the cottages.

### 3. Scotswood House



Can you help us solve the mystery of the two Scotswood Houses? According to the 1864 and 1899 Ordnance Survey maps, the property lies to the east of modern-day Denton Road. However, this photograph from the 1920s shows a different Scotswood House to the west of Denton Road, just below the Sporting Arms public house and at the eastern end of Chapel Terrace. The most likely explanation is that the Scotswood House shown on these maps was

demolished in the early 1900s at the same time as the terraced streets around Fowberry Road were built, and the name passed to the other house. It was not uncommon in this period for names to be transferred from one property to another as new buildings were developed.

#### 4. Scotswood Tower



This unusual stone property, situated on Denton Road, was originally called Tower House. The exact date of construction is not known but it was certainly before 1857. It was a residential property. The notes to the first Ordnance Survey map record it as a “neat building with outhouses and gardens.” Despite

its appearance, the tower structure at the rear is not medieval in origin and was probably built at the same time as the rest of the house. The building was demolished in 1984. This image dates from the 1880s.

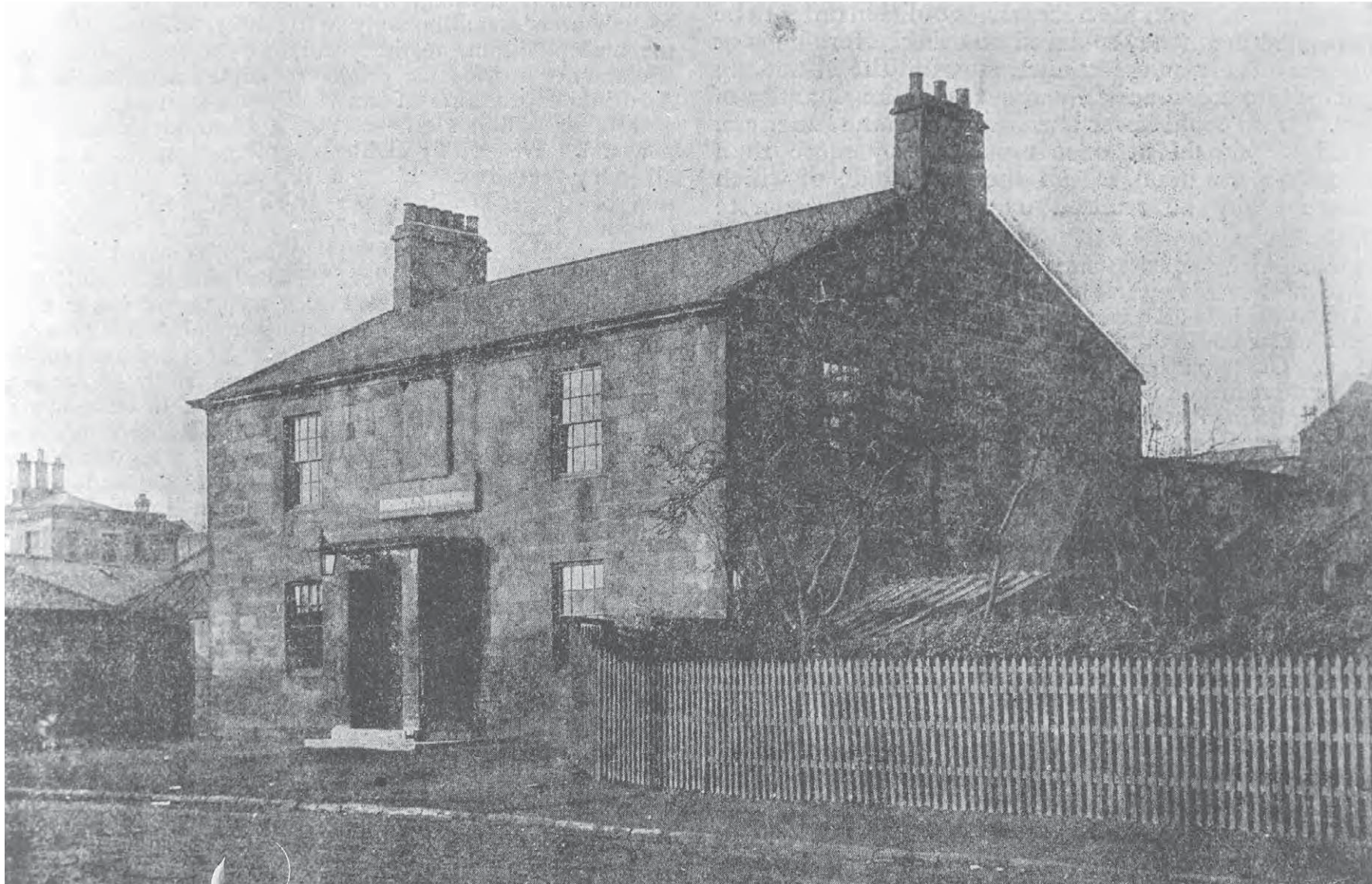
## 5. Scotswood Church of England School



This school opened in 1870. Pupils were transferred here from the church school in Benwell Village which had become inadequate for the growing population of the area. In 1884 it was reorganised into Infants and Mixed Departments. By the time Scotswood and Benwell were incorporated into the city of Newcastle in

1904, the church school building itself was overcrowded and it was decided to replace it with a new much larger school. This image dates from 1983, shortly before the original building was demolished.

## 6. The Ord Arms



The original Ord Arms public house, depicted here, was built in 1831. It was situated to the east of Scotswood Village on a site lying between the Newcastle-Carlisle railway and the river. The notes to the first Ordnance Survey map record

it as “a very good public house with outhouses, yards and gardens.” This image dates from 1899 and shows a south-facing stone building. The building behind, with the chimneys, is thought to be Scotswood railway station.

## 7. Papermill Houses



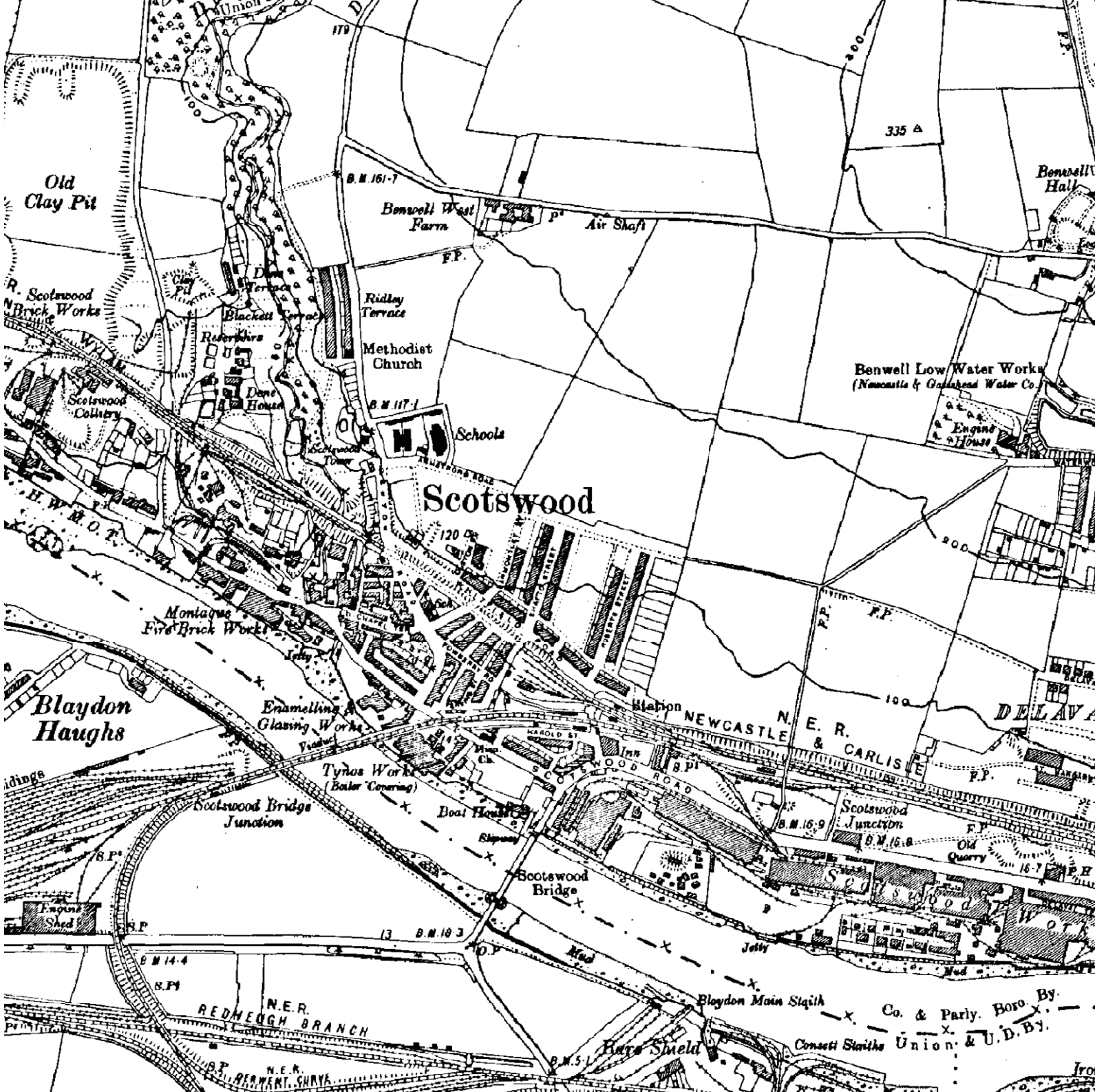
These images are thought to date from the 1890s. They show two of the families who lived in the row of cottages just south of Scotswood House. These were



originally built for the workers employed at the nearby papermill.

# 1921 Map of Scotswood

This map shows how much the residential development of Scotswood had progressed by 1921. However there were still fields to the north and east of the village, occupied by tenanted farms on the Blackett-Ord Estate. More industry is visible along the riverside, including Armstrong Whitworth's works and Adamsez factory.



## 8. Scotswood Bridge Toll House



The Scotswood Toll Gate was situated on the approach to the Scotswood Bridge from the Newcastle side. Since their construction in 1831, both the bridge and the approach on Scotswood Road had been subject to tolls. Scotswood Road also had toll gates at Paradise in Benwell and next to the Hydraulic Crane public house. The road tolls on the approach to the Scotswood Bridge ceased in 1907 following the incorporation of Scotswood into Newcastle, but the

bridge tolls evidently continued until the late 1940s. In this photograph, which probably dates from the early 1900s, can be seen Mr Wilson Park who became toll keeper in 1897. After tolls ended he continued to live in the toll house as caretaker until his death in 1940. In the background is the newly built Ord Arms which had replaced the original pub and was itself demolished in 1966.

## 9. Chapel Terrace



Chapel Terrace ran downhill from Denton Road to Scotswood Paper Mill. It was sometimes known as Weightman's Bank. This image dates from around 1900 and looks eastward up Chapel Terrace. On the left are the United Methodist Chapel and the Rose and Crown pub, and on the right is the Alma pub.

The building with chimneys in the middle distance is Scotswood House. Along with many of the older terraced houses, most of Chapel Terrace was identified as substandard and demolished in the 1930s.

## 10. Ridley Terrace



This short street of terraced houses was situated on the west side of Denton Road, further up from Scotswood Tower. It stood roughly opposite where Thorndale Road is today. These homes may have been built for workers at the

nearby Montagu Colliery. There was a small Methodist chapel at the southern end of the street. Both Ridley Terrace and Blakett Terrace, which ran parallel to it, were still standing in 1950. This image dates from around 1900.

## 11. The first St Margaret's Church



This church was built in 1895 on Bridge Crescent, just west of the entrance to Scotswood Bridge. It was an "iron" church, built from a kit of prefabricated parts either purchased new or obtained from another church. This was a common solution to the problem of catering cheaply and quickly to the spiritual needs of a rapidly growing population in urban areas. WNPFC has in its collection an example of a catalogue showing a range of iron church buildings available. The iron church

would later be replaced by a permanent stone building when funds allowed. The original St Margaret's Church was replaced in 1917 by the large stone building on the corner of Armstrong Road and Denton Road which is still a functioning Anglican church today. Afterwards the old church building became a cinema and later the Robin Adair public house. The chimney in the distance belongs to Armstrong Whitworth's works.

## 12. Denton Road School



The rapid increase in housing and population by the early 1900s resulted in the need for a much larger school. A site was chosen on the corner of Armstrong Road and Denton Road in Old Reading Field. Denton Road School was opened

in September 1908. It was closed in the 1990s and demolished in 2001. Only the boundary wall remains today. This early image of the school was taken about 1910, soon after it was opened.

### 13. Workers at Adamsez



Adamsez was a manufacturer of sanitaryware. Its premises occupied a sizeable part of Scotswood on two sites known as High Yard and Low Yard. The company had its own drift mine below the premises to produce some of the fireclay needed

to make its products. During the First World War, with so many men serving in the armed forces, women were employed to fill their roles. This image shows women workers at Adamsez in 1916.

## 14. Scotswood War Memorial



Unveiled by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1921, this War Memorial stood outside the Blaydon Co-operative Stores shop at the corner of Fowberry Road and Denton Road. It was in the style of a Celtic Cross, and commemorated 79 local men who died in the Great War of 1914-18. The memorial was taken

down in 1965 when Denton Road was realigned to facilitate access to the new Scotswood Bridge. Following a public meeting, it was relocated within the grounds of St Margaret's Church, where it still stands today. This image of the memorial in its original site dates from the 1920s.

## 15. Low Montagu Pit



The Montagu Pit, also known as the View Pit, was sunk in 1750 and closed in 1934. It was situated to the west of the Denton Burn, at the southern end of Copperas Lane, where the B&Q store stands today. In 1925 there was a major mining disaster at this pit, resulting in the death of 38 men and boys. This occurred when miners working underground accidentally broke through into the flooded

tunnels of the abandoned Paradise Pit in Benwell, causing a massive inrush of water. Most of the victims came from the Scotswood area. The disaster was avoidable, since the plans of the old pit were available, and it led to a change in mine safety legislation. This image is thought to date from 1920.

## 16. Guthrie's Greengrocers



This corner shop was situated in Perkins Street. As the notices on the door-frame show, it was typical of its day, selling everything that the local community could want. The owner, Mr J Guthrie, can be seen in this image which dates

from the 1920s. Perkins Street lay east of Denton Road, between Fowberry Road and the railway line. It can be seen on the 1921 Ordnance Survey map.

# 1938 Map of Scotswood

By 1938 Scotswood was no longer a small village set among green fields. It had become an integrated suburb of Newcastle. This map shows the extent of housing development during the interwar years. Most of the Blackett-Ord Estate had been sold off for housing developments. Large council housing estates had been built to the north and east of Scotswood village. Further north - beyond the boundary of this map - private housing was being developed on former farm land. Meanwhile the original village had been transformed by the demolition of much of the oldest terraced housing nearer to the river. To the south, Vickers Armstrong's Scotswood works dominated the riverside. The railway line continued to offer both passenger and freight services.



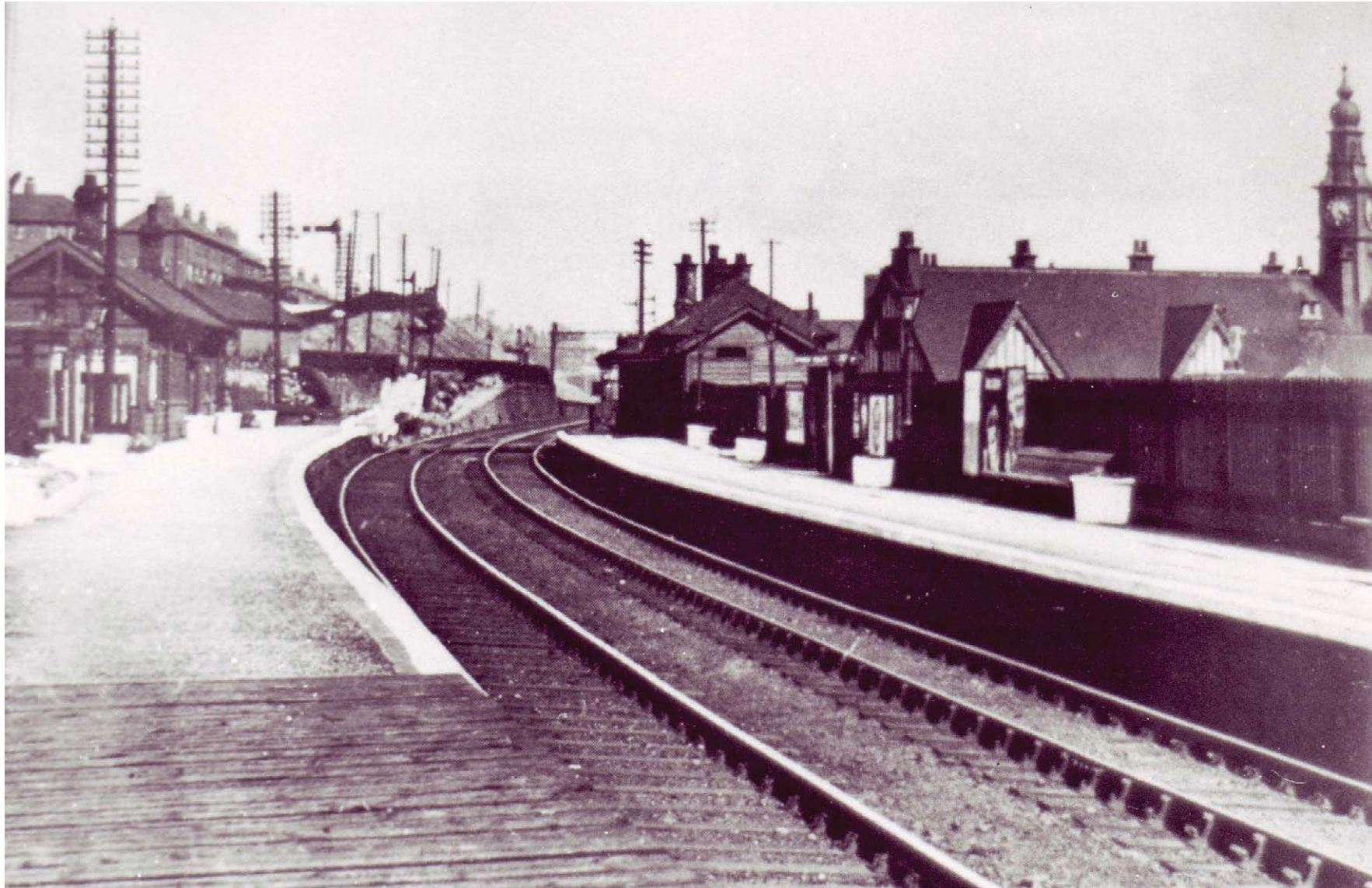
## 17. Scotswood from the air



This aerial photograph, looking upriver, was taken in 1950. The railway bridge can be seen clearly, while the Chain Bridge is just off camera to the bottom right. The premises of Adamsez Ltd can be seen both to the north and the south of the approach to the railway bridge. The new council housing estates of Lower Scotswood and Ferguson's Lane can be seen, with the existing Denton Road and Armstrong Road evident within what is now a built-up area.

At the top of the photograph, the line of the Denton Burn running through Denton Dene is visible to the west of the new housing. Further west, it is possible to pick out the large chimney of the Montagu Pit, just below the railway line, in the top left of the photograph.

## 18. Scotswood Railway Station



Construction of the Newcastle to Carlisle railway line began in 1834. It was completed in stages, reaching Scotswood in 1838. This railway was the first east-west line in the country. It is also famous for originating the system of cardboard tickets. In 1844 a station was built on the east side of Scotswood

village. Below the station a house was built for the stationmaster. In the 1960s, rail traffic was transferred to a route south of the river, and the station closed in May 1967. This image is dated 1950 when it was still in operation. It looks east, towards the centre of Newcastle.

## 19. Bridge Crescent



The main feature of this 1960s photograph is the Ord Arms with its distinctive clock tower. This is the second Ord Arms which in 1900 had replaced an older public house on the same site. When the pub in the photograph was demolished in 1966, the clock tower was rebuilt at the Tyne Brewery in Bath Lane. The brewery buildings were, in turn, demolished in the early 2000s and the iconic clock was

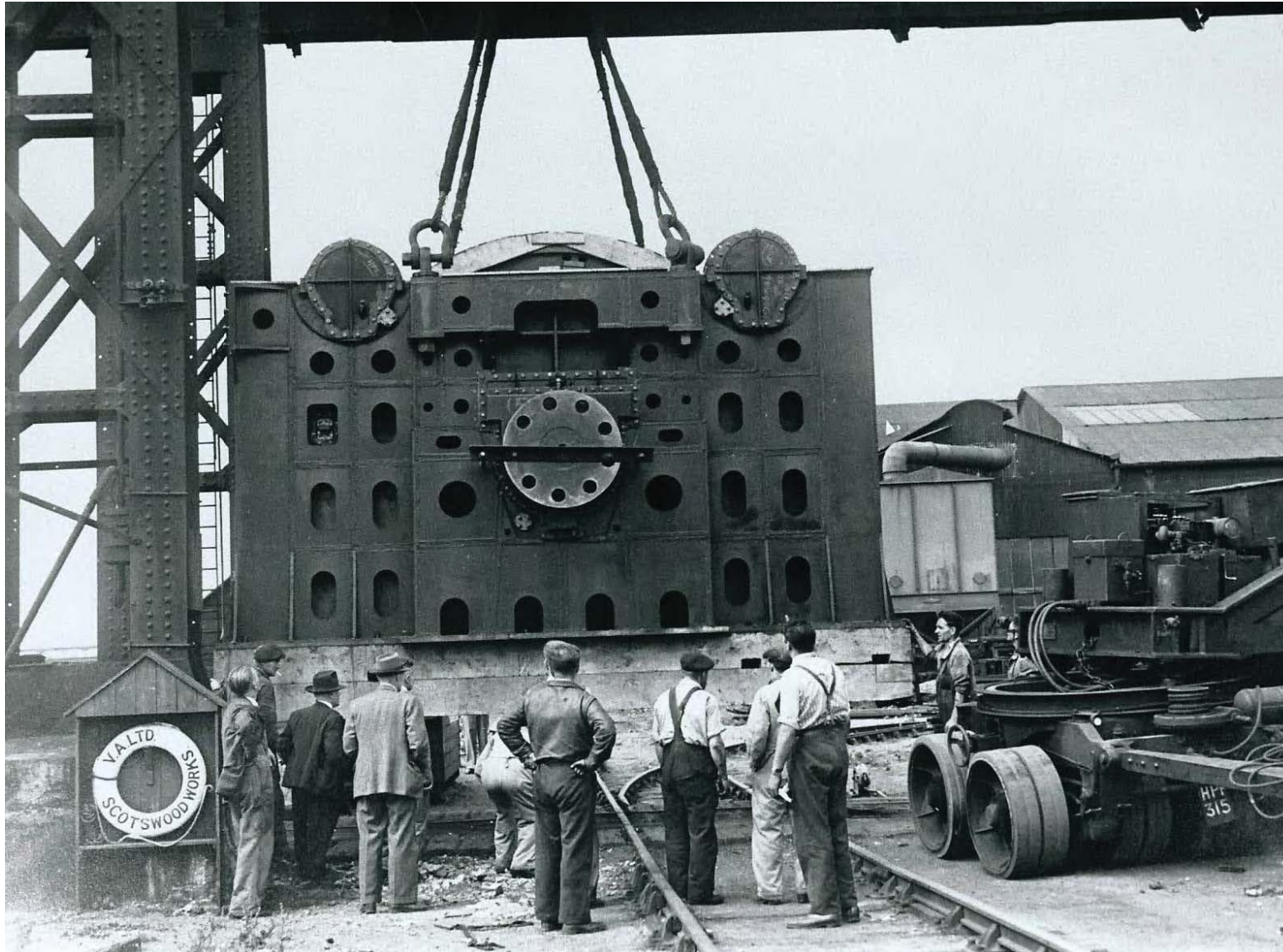
lost. The whole area shown here was demolished in the 1960s to make way for the new Scotswood Bridge and its approach roads. At the time the photograph was taken, the Toll House for the old bridge still stood at a point just off camera to the right of the picture.

## 1989 Map of Scotswood

This map shows that by 1989 the Chain Bridge had been replaced by the new Scotswood Bridge, but the even newer bridge that was soon to carry the A1 over the Tyne does not yet appear. Railway traffic to Carlisle had been moved to a route south of the river. Vickers Scotswood works still dominated the riverside, but employment and production had been greatly reduced, with the workforce now about a tenth of its pre-war total. Adamsez had closed in the 1970s, along with several of the other factories along the West Newcastle riverside. The area to the north of Scotswood Road still appears on the map as a dense residential area, but many of these homes were to disappear within the following decade.



## 20. Workers at Vickers Scotswood works



This photograph shows workers at Vickers watching a “clearing press” being lifted by crane onto transportation, probably during the 1950s. Vickers Scotswood works was best known as an armaments manufacturer, but it also

made other engineering products, notably locomotives. This clearing press was used in the automotive industry.

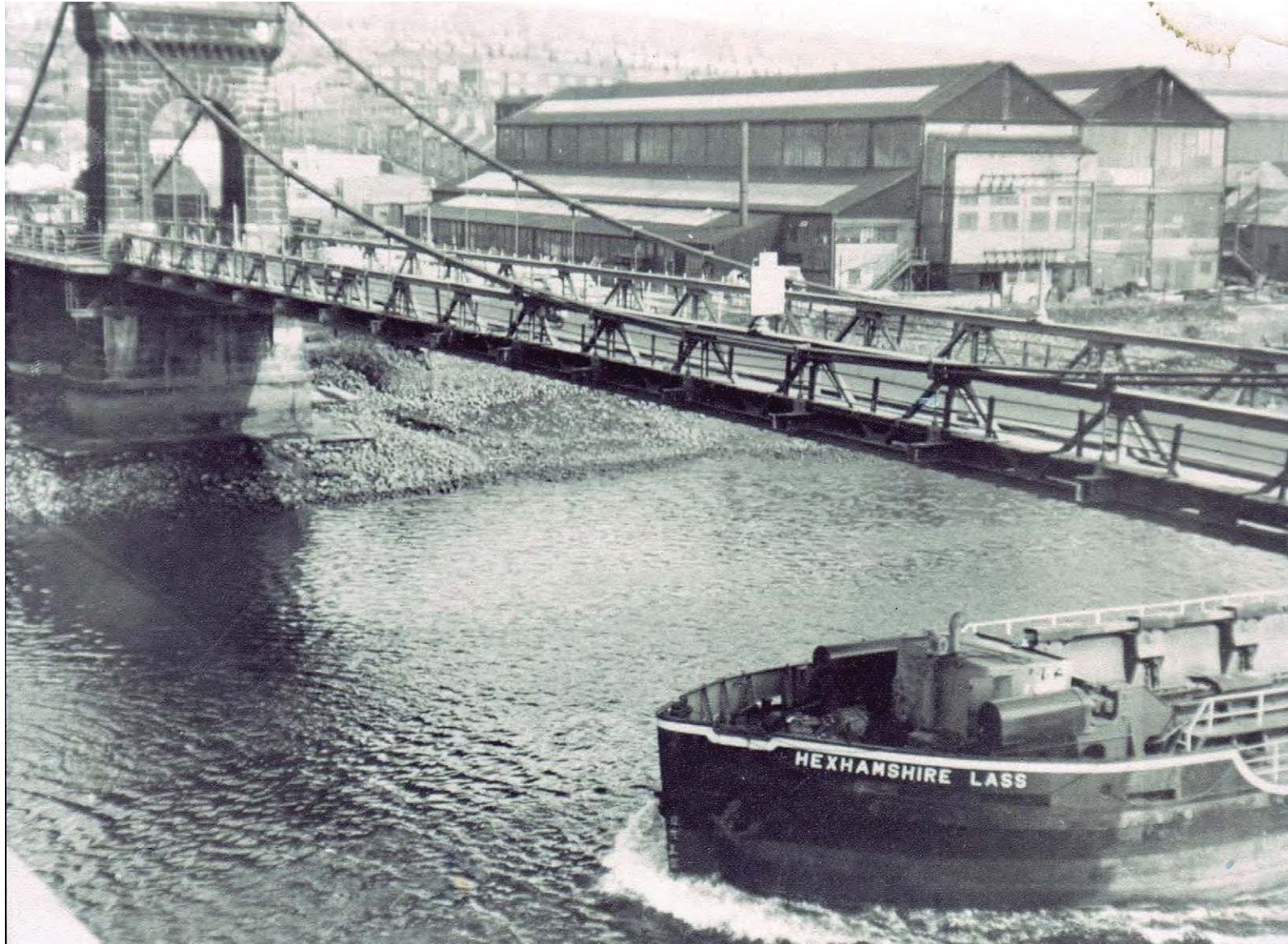
## 21. Scotswood Road



This image dates from 1959. It looks westwards with the Ord Arms visible in the distance. On the left is the Vickers Scotswood works, while on the right are the stationmaster's house (alongside the parked van) and an electricity sub-station which generated power for Vickers. When Scotswood Road was being constructed during the 1830s to enable access to the new road bridge, the

local newspaper, the *Newcastle Courant*, referred to it initially as "Scotswood Bridge Road", then "the New Road to Scotswood Bridge", and finally in 1833 as "Scotswood Road". It was just over 30 years old when it featured in the song about the Blaydon Races which has immortalised it in popular memory.

## 22. Old Scotswood Bridge and Vickers Scotswood works



The big armaments and engineering factory at Scotswood had originally been established in 1899 under the name of Armstrong Whitworth, the company who already owned a huge works further east along the river at Elswick. It became Vickers Armstrong in 1927 following a merger, and simply Vickers in the 1980s.

The Scotswood works eventually extended to cover a 35 acre riverside site. This image is thought to date from the early 1960s. It shows the *Hexhamshire Lass* sailing upriver under the Chain Bridge, with the works in the background.

## 23. Scotswood Bridge old and new



This image speaks for itself. The year is 1966 and the Chain Bridge is still standing next to the new bridge built to carry four lanes of traffic. Attempts to preserve it failed, and the Chain Bridge was demolished in 1967 after 136 years of service.

The new bridge is of box girder construction, supported by two piers in the river. Opened in 1967, it is still in operation, although it has required considerable repair work over the years to remedy design defects.



### Key

These numbers mark the locations of particular buildings and sites shown in the photographs

1. Scotswood Bridge
2. The White Cottages
3. Scotswood House
4. Scotswood Tower
5. Scotswood Church of England School
6. The Ord Arms
7. Papermill Houses
8. Bridge Toll House
9. Chapel Terrace
10. Ridley Terrace
11. St Margaret's Iron Church
12. Denton Road School
13. Adamsez Ltd
14. War Memorial
15. Low Montagu Pit
16. Guthrie's Greengrocers
18. Scotswood Railway Station
19. Bridge Crescent
20. Vickers Scotswood Works
21. Scotswood Road

# Scotswood through the years

## *In Maps and Pictures*

This book uses maps and photographs to trace the development of Scotswood from 1864 to 1989. During this time Scotswood was transformed from an isolated hamlet to become a suburb of Newcastle upon Tyne, albeit with a distinct identity. It was, for a period, at the forefront of national economic development as the site of two world-famous businesses. A major railway line and a new road bridge connected it to the outside world. Still surrounded by farmland until the First World War, within a couple of decades the original village had become part of a populous residential area of mainly council housing intended to help tackle Newcastle's serious housing shortage. Little more than 40 years later, however, the situation had changed. The local industries were in decline or had gone altogether, precipitating the area into a period of social and economic difficulties. Today Scotswood stands at the threshold of great change once more.

***Scotswood through the years*** uses images from the photographic archive of West Newcastle Picture History Collection to bring back to life places from the history of Scotswood over those 125 years. The book is a joint project between West Newcastle Picture History Collection and St James' Heritage & Environment Group, two community organisations dedicated to exploring the history of the west end of Newcastle and preserving images and stories from its past. It is one of a series of local history publications by the Heritage & Environment Group.

### St James' Heritage & Environment Group

St James' Heritage & Environment Group is an independent voluntary organisation that provides activities and resources for people of all ages to explore and celebrate the history of the west end of Newcastle. The Group also maintains the historic graveyard of St James', Benwell.

**Visit:** Tuesdays between 1-4pm at St James' graveyard, Benwell Lane, NE15 6RR

**Write:** St James' Heritage & Environment Group, c/o Sunnybank Centre, 12/14 Sunnybank Avenue, NE15 6SD.

**Email:** stjamesbenwell@gmail.com

**Website:** <https://stjamesheritage.com>

### West Newcastle Picture History Collection

West Newcastle Picture History Collection is an independent voluntary organisation that cares for an archive of about 20,000 images of West Newcastle. The earliest image is thought to date from the 1850s. The group also documents change in the area as it is happening, adding new photographs to the collection. Nearly 1,000 images can be viewed on the website, and an online facility is under development that will allow users to search for images by subject.

**Visit:** Mondays between 10am and 4pm at the West End Library and Customer Service Centre, Condercum Road, NE4 9RH

**Write:** West Newcastle Picture History Collection c/o West End Library and Customer Service Centre, Condercum Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 9RH

**Email:** wnphc@yahoo.co.uk

**Website:** [www.newcastlephotoarchive.org.uk](http://www.newcastlephotoarchive.org.uk)

