

WHAT THE BADGERS

SAW 12

The 20th Century 1

Right! Listen up, you lot. We're getting closer to our own time now. Let's see what happened during the last century.



On January 22nd 1901, Queen Victoria died and Edward VII came to the throne. By this time, 91,302 people lived in Middlesbrough. In 1831, only 25 people had lived there, on a farm! The population of Newcastle had been over 215,328, and Sunderland's population was around 146,077.



Over 100,000 coal miners worked in the Durham coalfield and 37,000 in the Northumberland field. So we can see that coal was still the major industry of the North East. (

Not much use to badgers, though some of our relatives actually have their setts dug into the pit heaps that came from the colliery waste.)





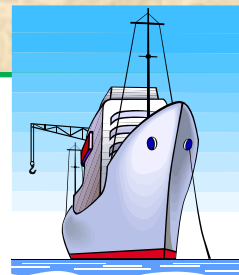
In 1903, a terrible smallpox epidemic hit Newcastle and many people died. Luckily for us, smallpox is extinct in the wild, and only lives in a few research laboratories around the world. We should be grateful for all of the medical improvements that have happened right through our history!

On a happier note, in 1905, the Cleveland Bridge Company in Darlington built the huge bridge that now spans the **Victoria Falls in Africa**. (Clever, weren't we!) By 1906, the Doxford shipyard in Sunderland was said to be the world's busiest - it was building a new ship every two weeks!

On May 6th 1910, George V became the new king of England.



The 17th January 1911 saw the opening of the **Transporter Bridge** over the River Tees at Middlesbrough. It took 5 years to build and cost £68,026. (You couldn't buy a house for that now!) It was also designed and built by Cleveland Bridge of Darlington. It was a good idea, as it doesn't stop ships passing easily up the river.



On August 4th, 1914 war broke out in Europe. Thousands of miners and other workers from the North East joined up to fight the Germans in the Great War. (World War I) Many joined famous regiments such as the Durham Light Infantry and the Northumberland Fusiliers. On Teesside, man joined the Green Howards. (Look for their museums.)

On December 16th, 1914, battleships bombarded Hartlepool. The Teesside area suffered badly, as it had lots of important industries. The Dorman Long plant in Middlesbrough made millions of shells.

Scarborough and Whitby were also bombed.



On November 2th, 1916, a Zeppelin was shot down a mile off the coast of Hartlepool by a pilot based at Seaton Carew aerodrome.

On November 11th, 1918 the Armistice was declared Around Europe. It was the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. We remember it every year with poppies and ceremonies around the country. We should *never forget* what our armed forces did for us during that terrible war, and the one that followed it.



In 1920, the Tees Conservancy Agency began the huge reclamation of the Seal Sands at the mouth of the Tees

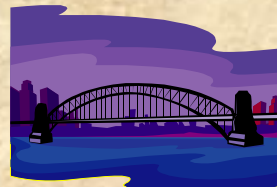
About time too!

(Why not visit the Seal Sands Nature Reserve?)

Between 1920 and 1939, coalmining reached a peak. However, many other industries around the region were having a hard time. In Middlesbrough, over 45% of men had no job. It was worse in Jarrow, where 80% of people had no work to do. On 5th October, 1936, two hundred men marched 275 miles to London to protest about their lives. It was called **The Hunger March**.

In 1928, the Tyne Bridge was erected by Dorman Long of Middlesbrough. It was opened by King George V.

In 1932, the Sydney Harbour Bridge was built and shipped to Australia by Dorman Long.



The Second World War also led to a huge loss of life amongst the men of the North East. It also put huge pressure on industries at home. Lots of people lost their lives when the main towns and cities were bombed. In June 1940, a bomb hit the Transporter Bridge.

On August 15th 1940, the Germans began a huge raid on the North East. The bombers were intercepted of The Farne Islands by 12 Spitfires and Hurricanes from RAF Acklington. The Germans managed to drop some bombs on Newcastle and Sunderland, but the RAF soon chased them back home!



In 1941, Goosepool RAF Station was built at Middleton-St-Giles. You now know it as Durham Tees Valley Airport.

On May 8th 1945, the war ended in VE Day. Dancing breaks out on the streets and many people have parties. Flags fly everywhere! In Darlington, a football game was held in Tubwell Row. A warship in Sunderland Harbour accidentally fired shells into the town, but no one was hurt!

During the war, there were 298 air raids on our region. Hundreds of people were killed.

I suppose it was easier for wildlife like us, as we lived in the countryside. Lots of children from the towns were moved to live with families in the country, to keep them safe from the bombs. They were called 'Evacuees'. Think how they might have felt, leaving their families in the cities to live with strangers in the countryside.