

# Hartlepool Through the Ages

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century 1953 AD

Hartlepool changed greatly in the years between 1900 and 1953. Many buildings were extensively damaged during World War I by the German naval bombardment of 16th December 1914. Over 100 people were killed and 500 wounded. Bombing by aircraft in the Second World War also took its toll, both in lives and in further damage to local buildings. The effects of war were still visible in the early 1950s, from the ongoing stationing of troops at the Heugh Gun Battery, to the continuation of rationing in local shops.

The Council also changed the town, demolishing some 1,300 dwellings between 1938 and 1955 in a programme of improvements. While 2500 people were re-housed in the new estates of North Hartlepool, the majority who remained enjoyed new houses with modern facilities and walked in the public gardens where the Croft once stood. Luckily features of earlier times like the medieval town wall and the Elizabethan manor house survived this upheaval, the later enclosed within St Hilda's Hospital run by the new NHS.

There was much for the town to celebrate in the 1950s. The 850th anniversary of the granting of King John's charter was remembered in 1951, while 1953 saw celebrations for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Hartlepool also remained a popular destination for both traditional seaside holidays and day trips by the growing number of motorists. However a new form of mass entertainment was in the air: Council tenants were first allowed to erect television aerials in 1951.



*Not all of the older buildings in the town were demolished after World War Two. These houses on the Town Wall date back to the 1740s.*



*The Borough Buildings were built in 1866. They were styled on a Bavarian Town Hall, and originally contained public offices, a covered market and a police station.*



*The sea-water bathing pool, opened in 1923, was popular with both locals and tourists until it was damaged by a storm in late 1953.*



*The Heugh Gun Battery saw action during the Bombardment of 16th December 1914. In use until 1956, it is now a Scheduled Monument of national importance.*

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