

'Our project is also exploring the diversity of ways in which people today perceive, use, experience the landscapes around St Peter's and St Paul's.'

Our project is also exploring the diversity of ways in which people today perceive, use, experience the landscapes around St Peter's and St Paul's. Research undertaken by Sophie Laidler as part of a master's project at Durham University has involved the local community and schools as well as key local stakeholders and members of the Wearmouth-Jarrow Partnership for World Heritage Status. Through interviews and focus groups as well as 'elicitation' exercises, Sophie was able to build-up and analyse a wide composite of information relating to current modern perceptions of the monastic remains and their hinterlands.

The monastic remains and the lands around them were shown to hold special significance for many people. They were not only considered important sites of heritage, they were shown to have an important role in the ways in which people constructed and spoke about their local identity. They provided a point of reflection for people, often creating a stimulus for nostalgia and prompting recollections of individual memories connected to places and their hinterlands. These sites were 'bound into' the collective memories and constructed identities of local inhabitants alongside the industrial histories of the north east. They offered enduring structures in a changing landscape.

In summary the project has shown that the sites are more than spiritual symbols or active places of worship. The enduring value and legacy of Bede's monastery is reflected in the ways in which local people visualise and perceive the role of the sites now and in the future: as places of meeting, socialisation, education and international significance and value

Suter Point



Public Perceptions Project image from an exercise with primary schools



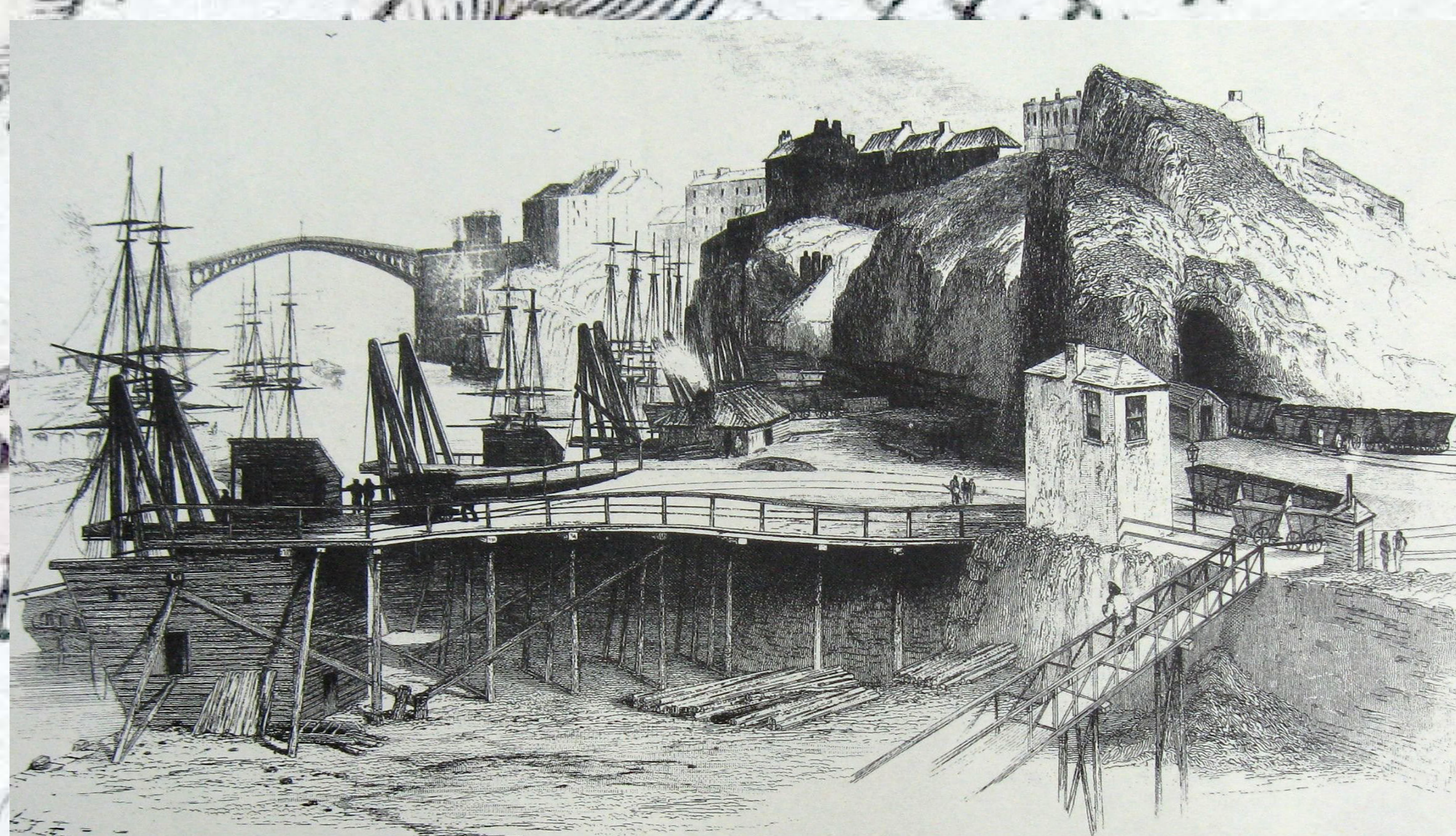
St Paul's Jarrow in the 19th century



St Peter's, Monkwearmouth in the 19th century



The Jarrow ferry



Sunderland staiths