

Seaham: harbour & town

Seaham was attacked during both the First and Second World Wars. On this walk you'll see where some of the defences were put in place to protect the port, town and colliery and learn a bit about the events that took place here during the wars. The East Durham Heritage and Lifeboat Centre is well worth a visit.

A 'Defended Land' Walk 3 1/3 miles/5km

- P** The walk starts at the War Memorial, off North Terrace on the cliff top. Parking is available around the green.
- Bus** No. 60 'Drifter' runs up to every 10 minutes during the daytime, connecting Parkside, Dawdon and Seaham to Sunderland. www.simplygo.com
- Coffee** There are lots of cafes along North Terrace as well as down at the marina.

Directions

- 1** From War memorial head towards coast and turn right and right again to follow path around the Green. At North Terrace, turn left. At roundabout turn left again to walk down to the harbour and East Durham Heritage and Lifeboat Centre.
- 2** Retrace your steps to roundabout and turn left, passing Byron Place shopping centre. Cross the road at the lights, take next right and very soon cross this road at the next lights. Turn right to keep heading west, away from coast then next left (Foundry Road) and next right (Ropery Walk) – you pass the school on your left. Keep on, passing under two railway bridges.
- 3** Just before the playground turn right and follow tarmac path which bears left to a road. Turn right and follow this road as it turns left (this is Park Street). At T-junction turn right (along Princess Road), cross where it is safe to do so. The entrance to the cemetery is on the left after about 100m.
- 4** Back out on Princess Road keep heading north. Just before roundabout cross road and bear right to cross footbridge over railway. Head down road through industrial area and keep straight ahead to cross next road by zebra crossing. Turn right, then left at brick terrace, 'Adolphus Street West'.
- 5** At the bottom of the street turn left (Sophia Street). Keep straight on to the end and turn left at the T-junction, opposite the garage. Cross the road when it is safe to do so.
- 6** Bear right on a narrow path which takes you into Rockhouse Dene. Turn right and down steps, over a bridge and then right to follow the burn through the dene. Eventually the path climbs out onto Dene House Road. Cross the coast road ahead when safe, turn left and walk along the promenade. At the roundabout turn right into viewpoint area behind sculpture. Retrace your steps from here along the coast road or promenade to the start.

The 'A Defended Land' project is part of the Heritage Lottery funded Limestone Landscapes Partnership. The purpose of the project is to conserve and interpret the history of the north-east's coastal defences. From Roman forts to defences against marauding pirates in the early modern period, there is a long history of coastal defence in the north-east. But the bulk of information left to us comes from the perceived threat of invasion by France in the latter half of the 19th century and the very real threat of German invasion during the two World Wars in the 20th century. This leaflet accompanies one of four walks along the coastline that explore the remains of defensive features from this period and the stories surrounding them.

- 1** Marsden to Trow Point
- 2** Roker cliffs and pier
- 3** Seaham
- 4** Hartlepool



This project has been coordinated by Groundwork NE & Cumbria. www.groundwork.org.uk/northeast
Look for us on Facebook and Twitter!
For more about the Limestone Landscapes project go to www.limestonelandscapes.info



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Seaham harbour & town

A walk of just over 3 miles around a town with plenty of wartime stories to tell



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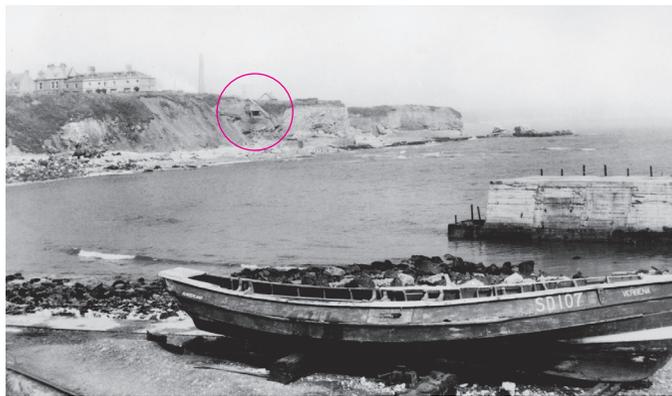
Making a positive difference to the unique environment of the Magnesian Limestone area

a The Seaham **war memorial** remembers the soldiers from Seaham who died in action in the two World Wars. The sculpture of the World War I soldier was created by local artist Ray Lonsdale. Entitled '1101' to reflect the first minute of peace at the end of the war, it was originally just on loan to the town, but proved so popular that local residents raised funds to purchase it and so 'Tommy' is here to stay!

b In 1943 a Victory Parade marched along **North Terrace** as Cubs and Scouts marked the success of the North Africa campaign where the allies had beaten the German army. This was a lighter moment for the town in the midst of the hardships of the war years.

c In the Second World War part of the town's defences was the **Seaham Harbour Battery**, situated on North Dock. The gun battery would have been located on the grassed area to the left as you start to follow the road down to the marina. When walking back up from the marina, if you look over to the cliffs on the right you can see the site of **Seaham Searchlight Battery**. The searchlights were used to light up the flight path of the bombers for the guns to aim at. 3.7" guns were deployed across the coast and operated by artillery soldiers and the home guard. They could reach aircraft flying overhead at up to 18,000ft. Soldiers operating the battery were stationed around the town.

Right, top: 1943 Victory Parade along North Terrace
Right: View from Seaham harbour looking towards the cliffs below North Terrace green. The Searchlight Battery is circled.



d Seaham suffered some of the worst bombing in the north east in World War II, with extensive damage and loss of life. In Princess Road Cemetery there is a memorial to the 58 civilians killed in six separate bombing raids. The cemetery is a Commonwealth War Graves site.

e As you look down the left side of Adolphus Street West, you can see where the original terrace ends to be replaced by a block of modern houses. This area was devastated by a German bomb on 16 May 1943. In total 113 houses and a Church were destroyed; 36 people lost their lives. Hundreds more homes were damaged. Looking back up the road from Sophia Street you can compare the view below.



The Presbyterian Church and houses on Adolphus Street West in 1908. The church was built in 1882.

f Just over the road from where you take the path into the dene is the former site of the Home Guard Drill Hall. This was once the home of the Londonderry Volunteers, formed in 1860 at the same time as the South Shields Artillery volunteers (now Durham 3rd Artillery Volunteers). It is likely that the hall was used during the First World War. The Hall became a clothing factory in 1958 before it was destroyed by fire in 1986.

The old Drill Hall is the building on the right of this photo looking down Tempest Road.



g Looking back from the viewpoint you can see the site of the old town battery which was manned by the Seaham Artillery Volunteers. Three cannon stood on hardstanding pointing out to sea. The guns didn't see active service but they and the volunteers were the forerunners to the harbour battery and artillery soldiers who defended the town during the two World Wars.



Old town battery in the late 1800s (top) and in 1910 (above), by which time the guns had been removed and shabby boats had taken their place! The images show the lighthouse on the headland. It was taken down in World War II (as it was in the way of guns aiming out to the sea) and was rebuilt at the end of the pier.