

St Mary's Well, Jesmond

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Scheduled Monument**

List Entry Number: **1018641**

Date first listed: **11-Jan-1929**

Date of most recent amendment: **02-Dec-1998**

Location

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: **Newcastle upon Tyne (Metropolitan Authority)**

Parish: **Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference: **NZ 25854 66503**

Reasons for Designation

Holy wells are water sources with specifically Christian associations. The custom of venerating springs and wells as sacred sites is also known to have characterised pre-Christian religions in Britain and, although Christian wells have been identified from as early as the 6th century AD, it is clear that some holy wells originated as earlier sacred sites. The cult of holy wells continued throughout the medieval period. Its condemnation at the time of the Reformation (c.1540) ended new foundations but local reverence and folklore customs at existing holy wells often continued, in some cases to the present day. The holy wells sometimes functioned as sites for baptism but they were also revered for less tangible reasons, some of which may have had origins in pre-Christian customs, such as folklore beliefs in the healing powers of the water and its capacity to effect a desired outcome for future events. Associated rituals often evolved, usually requiring the donation of an object or coin to retain the 'sympathy' of the well for the person seeking its benefits. At their simplest, holy wells may be unelaborated

natural springs with associated religious traditions. Structural additions may include lined well shafts or conduit heads on springs, often with a tank to gather the water at the surface. The roofing of walled enclosures to protect the water source and define the sacred area created well houses which may be simple, unadorned small structures closely encompassing the water source, or larger buildings, decorated in the prevailing architectural style and facilitating access with features such as steps to the water source and open areas with stone benching where visitors might shelter. At their most elaborate, chapels, and sometimes churches, may have been built over the well or adjacent well house. The number of holy wells is not known but estimates suggest at least 600 nationally. They provide important information on the nature of religious beliefs and practices and on the relationship between religion and the landscape during the medieval period.

St Mary's Well is a well preserved example of this class of monument and is believed to date from the 17th century, although it may have origins in the medieval period. It is associated as a place of pilgrimage with St Mary's Chapel, the subject of a separate scheduling.

Details

The monument includes St Mary's Well, situated in a fenced enclosure, 100m west of St Mary's Chapel, Jesmond. The visible remains, which are Listed Grade II, include a well, a flagstone paved area enclosed by walls, and steps leading down to the well from the south. The well is circular in plan. The lowest three courses of the well lining are of dressed sandstone blocks with curved inner faces and packed with pink-brown clay. These courses are lain on top of a millstone base. Above these are three uneven courses of roughly dressed stone. The well lining is surmounted by a capstone, which has 'gratia' carved on it. The presence of two iron hinges to the right of the well opening and the stub of a retaining bar on the left indicate that the well opening was at one time enclosed by a door. The area of flagstones starts at the foot of the steps, in front of the well opening, and extends to the north. The area of flagstones is approximately 6m in length from the steps to the north wall, and in width it tapers from 1.5m next to the well opening to 1.1m at the northern end. The flagstones in front of the well opening are larger than the area to the north and have been shaped to abut neatly with each other. The area to the north has been lain with smaller flagstones and cobbles in an irregular pattern. The area of flagstones is enclosed by walls on three sides: west, north and east. The west wall stands to a height of 1.5m at its southern end and decreases in height to 0.5m where it joins the north wall. The north and east wall are to 0.5m high. Part of the east wall is one course lower and provides a seat. The steps lead down in a zigzag pattern, into the hollow from the south-west corner of the enclosure. The first edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map shows that the steps led straight down into the hollow from the south. This map also shows an access path coming in from the north. The well has been the subject of a partial excavation prior to restoration in 1982, which identified four phases of construction. Phase one relates to the lower three courses of the well lining and the area of large flags immediately in front of the well opening and has been dated to the 17th century by brick fragments. The second phase saw the addition of a bath

structure to the north west of the well by William Coulson in the early 18th century. This is not visible but will be preserved beneath the surface. The third phase, dated to the early 19th century, includes the enclosing of the well with the addition of the upper courses of the well-lining, capstone and door. Associated with this phase is the demolition of the bath, and the foundation courses of the west wall. The fourth phase is the erection of the east and west walls and the extension of the cobbled area to its present form. Though the first historical reference to the well is in the 18th century and the present structure is believed to date from the 17th century, it is thought that there may have been a well of greater antiquity associated with St Mary's Chapel, which was a place of pilgrimage in the medieval period.

MAP EXTRACT The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract.

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: **32046**

Legacy System: **RSM**

Sources

Books and journals

Brewis, P, 'Archaeologia Aeliana' in St. Mary's Chapel, and the Site of St.Mary's Well, Jesmond, , Vol. 4, V, (1928), 102-111

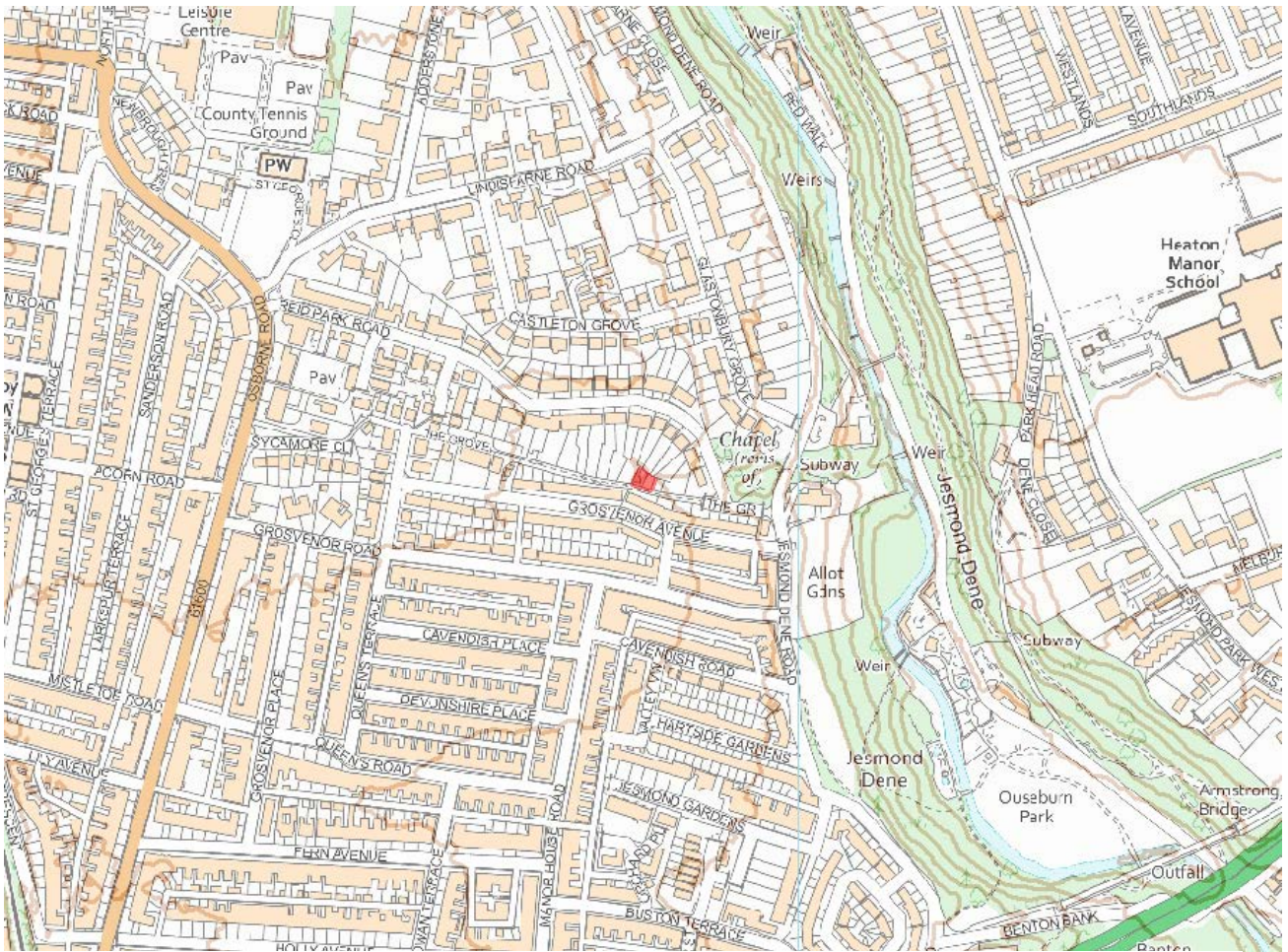
Fraser, R, 'Archaeologia Aeliana' in St. Mary's Well, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, , Vol. 5, XI, (1983), 289-300

Other

SMR record no.146, Harbottle, B, Jesmond, St.Mary's Well, (1995)

Legal

This monument is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended as it appears to the Secretary of State to be of national importance. This entry is a copy, the original is held by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.



Map

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End of official list entry



ST MARY'S WELL

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1355270**

Date first listed: **17-Dec-1971**

Date of most recent amendment: **30-Mar-1987**

List Entry Name: **ST MARY'S WELL**

Statutory Address 1: **ST MARY'S WELL, THE GROVE**

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

[Understanding list entries](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/) (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/>)

[Corrections and minor amendments](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/) (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/>)

Location

Statutory Address: **ST MARY'S WELL, THE GROVE**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: **Newcastle upon Tyne (Metropolitan Authority)**

Parish: **Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference: **NZ2585066505**

Details

NZ 26 NE 9/302 17/12/71

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE THE GROVE (north side) Jesmond St. Mary's Well (formerly listed in Jesmond Dene Road).

G.V. II

Well and bathing place. Possibly late C17 well; C18 bathing place; C19 restoration. Sandstone, some coursed and squared, some blocks ashlar-dressed. Steps down to nearly-rectangular bathing place with walls from 2 to 7 courses high. Elliptical-headed opening on north side has stone lintel with GRATIA carved in irregular letters; round ashlar well behind arch. Iron hinge-pin in wall to right. Source: R. Fraser 'St. Mary's Well, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne' *Archaeologia Aeliana* 5 XI(1983) 289-300.

Listing NGR: NZ2585066505

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: **304620**

Legacy System: **LBS**

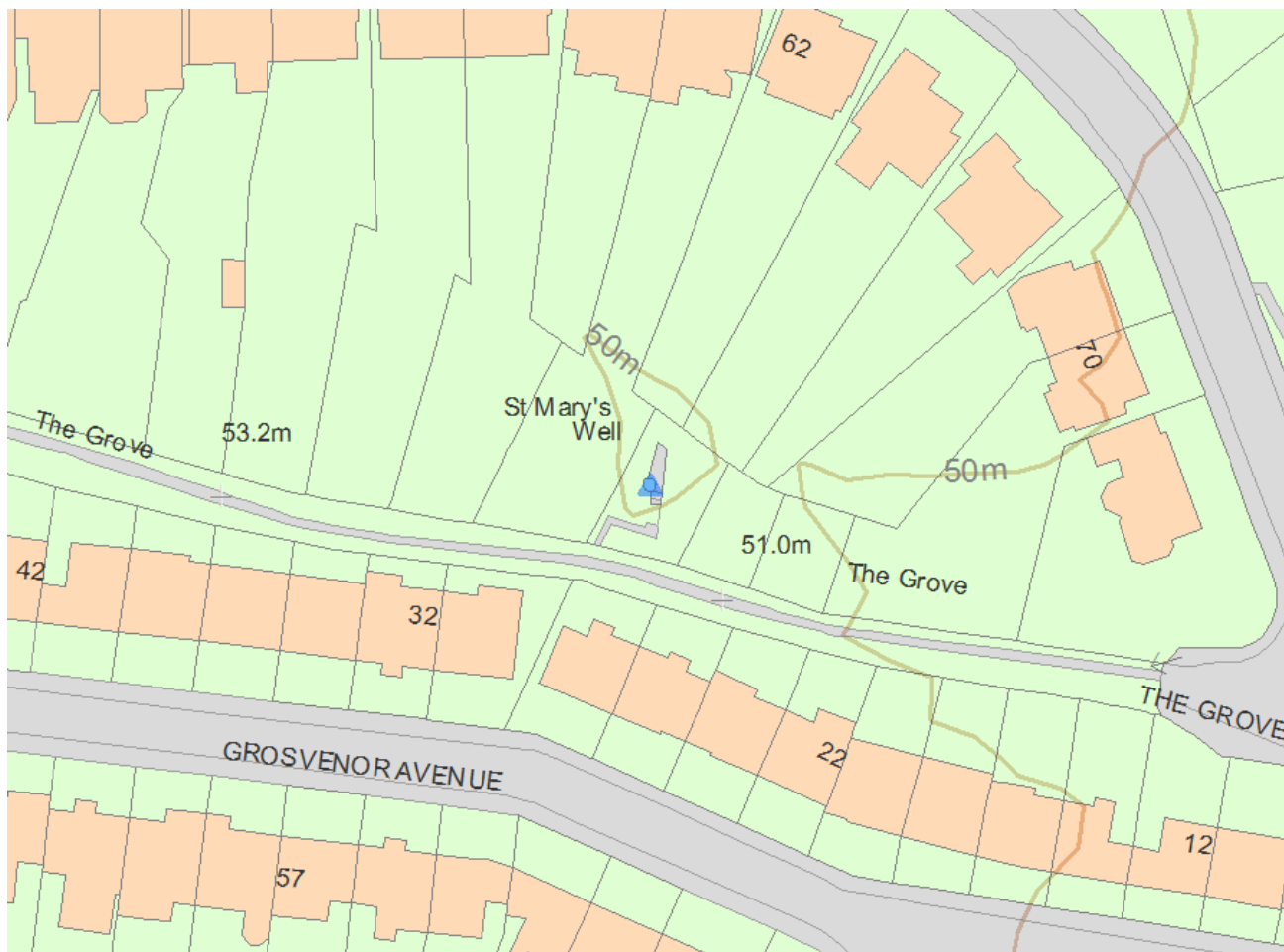
Sources

Books and journals

'Archaeologia Aeliana' in Archaeologia Aeliana - Fifth Series, , Vol. 11, (1983), 289-300

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



Map

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End of official list entry



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St Mary's Chapel, Jesmond

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Scheduled Monument**

List Entry Number: **1018640**

Date first listed: **26-Nov-1932**

Date of most recent amendment: **02-Dec-1998**

Location

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: **Newcastle upon Tyne (Metropolitan Authority)**

Parish: **Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference: **NZ 25937 66526**

Reasons for Designation

A medieval chapel is a building, usually rectangular, containing a range of furnishings and fittings appropriate for Christian worship in the pre- Reformation period. Chapels were designed for congregational worship and were generally divided into two main parts: the nave, which provided accommodation for the laity, and the chancel, which was the main domain of the priest and contained the principal altar. Around 4000 parochial chapels were built between the 12th and 17th centuries as subsidiary places of worship built for the convenience of parishioners who lived at a distance from the main parish church. Other chapels were built as private places of worship by manorial lords and lie near or within manor houses, castles or other high-status residences. Chantry chapels were built and maintained by endowment and were established for the singing of masses for the soul of the founder. Some chapels possessed burial grounds. Unlike parish churches, the majority of which remain in ecclesiastical use, chapels were often abandoned as their communities and supporting finances declined or

disappeared. Many chantry chapels disappeared after the dissolution of their supporting communities in the 1540s. Chapels, like parish churches, have always been major features of the landscape. A significant number of surviving examples are identified as being nationally important. The sites of abandoned chapels, where positively identified, are particularly worthy of statutory protection as they were often left largely undisturbed and thus retain important information about the nature and date of their use up to their abandonment.

St.Mary's Chapel is a well documented medieval chapel and legal documents involve both the Papacy and the Crown. The chapel was an important place of pilgrimage in the medieval period and may be associated with St.Mary's Well 100m to the west, which is the subject of a separate scheduling. The chapel was also part of a larger complex which included a hospital, positioned by the first edition 10' Ordnance Survey map as 50m north west of the chapel.

Details

The monument includes the remains of St Mary's Chapel, located above a tributary dene to Jesmond Dene in the Jesmond Grove area of Jesmond. It was a medieval place of pilgrimage. The chapel is sited on a level area bounded to the south by a steep slope, with traces of a stone boundary wall along its top. The remains, which are Listed Grade II*, include the chancel, chantry chapel and nave, constructed of coarse grained sandstone blocks. The chancel and chantry chapel survive to a height of about 6m. A 2m length of the north wall and a 3m length of the south wall of the nave survive at the chancel end. The original length of the nave, approximately 20m, is depicted on the 1859 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map. The foundations of the nave survive up to the intersection with a residential road about 10m from the chancel arch. Three phases of construction are detectable. In the 12th century the chancel arch was built. The chancel was enlarged twice during 14th century and a chantry chapel was added in the 15th century. The earliest visible remains of the chapel are the chancel arch and semi-circular responds. The arch has some voussoirs with roll and chevron mouldings. The north respond has a cushion capital with a chamfered abacus and the south respond a scroll work. The 14th century enlargements to the chancel consist of an enlargement to the chancel arch and an eastward extension of the chancel. The arch is raised on three courses of stone blocks. The extension of the chancel is indicated by the presence of two piscinae in its southern wall. References to the discovery of human remains indicate that the chapel had a graveyard. The first reference to the chapel is in 1272. Numerous legal documents in the 14th and 15th centuries mention the chapel due to disputes over the right to present to the living. These documents involve both the Papacy and the Crown. The site was an important place of pilgrimage. Gray, in 1649, states that the Pilgrim Inn in Pilgrim Street was so named because the pilgrims lodged there on their visits to St Mary's Chapel. It was dissolved in 1548. The chapel was part of a larger complex which included a hospital. The site of the hospital is marked on the 2nd edition 1:1000 Ordnance Survey map of 1896 as approximately 50m west of the chapel and is now beneath a housing development. No known remains of the hospital are known to survive and it is not included in the scheduling.

MAP EXTRACT The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract.

Legacy

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Legacy System number: **32045**

Legacy System: **RSM**

Sources

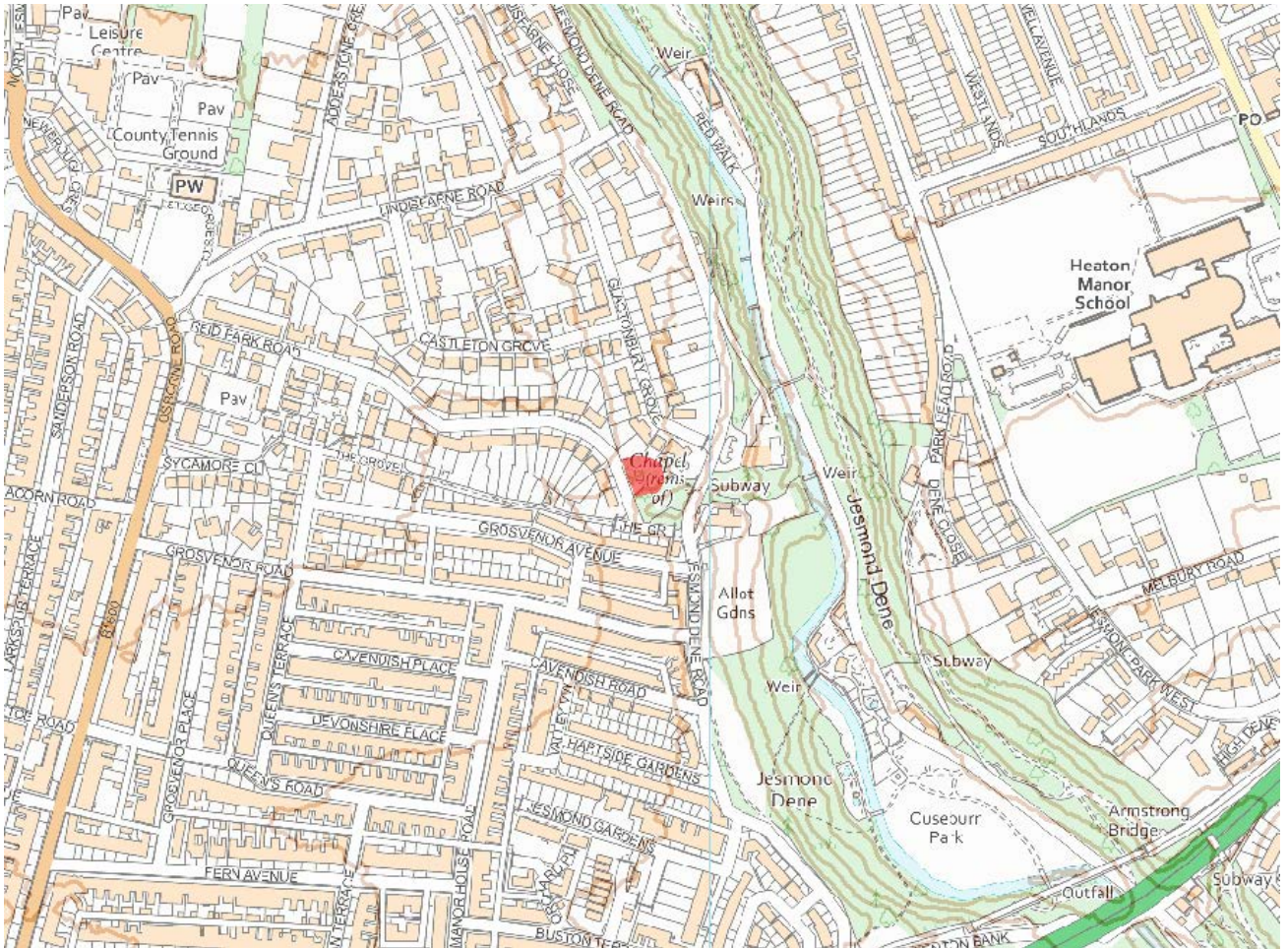
Books and journals

Brewis, P, 'Archaeologia Aeliana' in St. Mary's Chapel, and the Site of St.Mary's Well, Jesmond, , Vol. 4, V, (1928), 102-111

Knowles, W H, Dendy, F W, 'Archaeologia Aeliana' in An Account of Jesmond, , Vol. 3, I, (1904), 130-143

Legal

This monument is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended as it appears to the Secretary of State to be of national importance. This entry is a copy, the original is held by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.



Map

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End of official list entry



telons.

4. Pilgrim-Street-Gate; so called because of Pilgrims lodging in that street; and went out of that gate to the shrine of the Virgin Mary in Gesmond; to which place, with great confluence and devotion, people came from all parts of this land, in that time of superstition.

5. Bandon Gate, so called from the ancient town

(24)

Pilgrim Street.

EAST again is Pilgrim Street, the longest and fairest street in the towne. In it is a market for wheat and rye every Tuesday and Saturday.

Likewise an house called the Pilgrims Inn, where pilgrims lodged that came to visit the shrine in Gesmond or Jesu de Munde, which occasioned to call this street Pilgrim Street.

In the upper part of this street is a princely house, built out of the ruins of the Black Friars

Above: extract from: Grey, W, Chorographia: Or, A Survey of Newcastle Upon Tyne, in 1649, p10 & 24
https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=r_c6PgAACAAJ&source=gbs_navlinks_s

lxiii *Virgin Mary's, St. Lawrence—Benwell, &c. Chapels.*

taken down, and scarcely any traces of the original structure now remain.

The Virgin Mary's Chapel and Hospital, at Jesmond, existed in 1351; for, in that year, Sir William de Heighinton possessed the chaplainship, which he shortly afterwards resigned, declaring that he had no title to it. The corporation obtained a grant of the establishment from Edward VI., and in the same year sold it to Sir John Brandling. The hospital is now a dwelling-house; and the picturesque ruins of the chapel are carefully preserved by the owner, James Losh, Esq. The shrine at this place was anciently resorted to by pilgrims, who came from all parts of the kingdom to worship at it.

St. Lawrence's Chapel stand on the banks of the Tyne a little

Above: extract from: History, Directory & Gazetteer of Durham & Northumberland, 1827, p70
<https://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/139980/rec/1>

miles north west of Newcastle.

JESMOND township is situated about one mile and a half north east of Newcastle. It contains 654 acres, and its population in 1801, was 275 ; in 1811, 317 ; in 1821, 467 ; in 1831, 1,393 ; in 1841, 1,725 ; and in 1851 it had increased to 2,089 souls. Jesmond is included within the parliamentary and municipal boundaries of Newcastle. Of late years a considerable number of good houses have been erected here, and the scenery and walks in the vicinity are exceedingly picturesque and agreeable. At the southern extremity of the township the Sandyford Dean is crossed by a stone bridge where the rivulet falls precipitately over a rocky descent into a narrow ravine of great depth, called Lambert's leap, in consequence of the providential escape of Mr. Cuthbert Lambert, whose mare taking fright as he was riding along Sandyford Lane, instead of pursuing the road, leaped over the battlement of this bridge into the rocky dean below. Mr. Lambert having kept his seat soon recovered from the shock but the mare died almost immediately, having dislocated nearly every joint in her back. Mr. Nicholson, a surgeon's apprentice, repeated this awful leap in 1827, but this time the unfortunate rider was killed, while the horse was scarcely injured. At Jesmond Grove on the north bank of the Ouse Burn, are the ruins of St. Mary's Chapel and Hospital, which were formerly much resorted to by pilgrims. The following seats are in this township, viz. ;—Jesmond House, Jesmond Cottage, Jesmond Dean House, Goldspink Hall, Villa Real, and Sandyford House.

BRANBLING is a village in this township, pleasantly situated on the east

Above: extract from: History, Topography & Directory of Northumberland, 1855, p467

<https://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/178671/rec/4>

The Banqueting Hall to St Mary's Chapel

Cross Jesmond Dene Road opposite the Banqueting Hall and enter a small copse by the wooden gate provided. The copse, a small Dene formed by the course of a stream called the Moor Crook Letch, contains the remains of the Chapel of Our Lady of Jesmond or St. Mary's Chapel. The oldest church or chapel in Newcastle, this was probably built by the Grenville family, one-time Lords of Jesmond, early in the 12th Century, from which date are the remains of the pillars of the chancel arch.

The chapel is first mentioned in 1272 in an Assize Roll which records how five clerics helped a criminal escape from Newcastle Gaol – first to Jesmond Chapel and then to sanctuary at Tynemouth. Although the chapel was at one time in the possession of the Priors of Tynemouth, division of the manor between three sisters in 1333 led to confusion as to rights over the chapel and, at one time, three separate Chantries were maintained by their descendents; this confusion resulted in much scandal and damage, including stolen jewellery and chalices and in 1364, Edward III took claim. In 1549 the Mayor and Burgesses of Newcastle paid £144.13.4d to Edward VI to purchase the chapel and adjoining Hospice and in turn sold them to Sir Robert Brandling.

The Chapel has been a place of pilgrimage for centuries because of the diversmiracles, reputed to have taken place among the sick who attended the Chapel and the neighbouring Holy Well. Even today there is an organised pilgrimage to the Chapel every year when a service is held in the ruins. Pilgrim street, in the centre of Newcastle, probably derives its name from being the route the pilgrims took on their journey to the Chapel. Following the Reformation and dissolution of the monasteries, the building thought to have been a hospital was rebuilt as a house, and the Chapel became a barn and stable; it passed through several hands until bought by Lord Armstrong who gifted it to the City.

Above: Text taken from: <https://www.jesmonddene.org.uk/history/>

St Mary's Chapel to Armstrong Bridge

Leaving the Chapel, we make our way to the Holy Well, which is situated some 200 yards west. On the stonehead is inscribed the word Gratia; the full inscription is, however, said to have read: Ave Maria Gratia Plena (Hail Mary full of grace). The well at one time was reputed to have been a warm spring and in cold weather a cloud of vapour issued from it – be that as it may, the waters of the present well are clear and ice-cool. The reputation gained over the centuries for miraculous cures of various ailments still remains today and people even now fill small bottles with the well's water for its medicinal values. The well was acquired by the Corporation in 1932 and it having deteriorated considerably since then, it was decided in 1982 to renovate the site and to take the opportunity to have a full archaeological investigation. From this it appears that the doubt that existed early in the century as to the exact site of St. Mary's Well was justified as the present structure does not date back beyond the 17th Century. There are known to have been at least two other springs in the vicinity of the Chapel and it may be that one of these at least marked the site of the original miraculous cures.

Above: Text taken from: <https://www.jesmondene.org.uk/history/>