

Seaham Harbour Marina



Visitor Information



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Front cover picture courtesy of Paul Levitt

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Seaham Harbour Marina Amenities

Seaham Harbour Marina offers a fantastic range of amenities for both berth holders and visitors. Enjoy a wonderful selection of dog-friendly shops, cafes, and restaurants right on the waterfront, plus recreational and community facilities such as a nursery, gym, and water sports centre, as well as toilets and a stunning sandy beach. Perfect for family days out.

The Waterside

Discover The Waterside, a lively hub of 12 units offering something for everyone. Businesses include:



Unit 1: Bulan Burger Joint

With a terrific selection of delicious burgers and chicken dishes combined with a great choice of wines and beers, you'll be spoilt for choice at Bulan Burger Joint.



Unit 6: Seaview Sweets N' Gifts

Sea View Sweets 'n' Gifts is a family run business. They pride themselves in stocking all old traditional childhood sweets as well as the more modern ones. While in the shop why don't you grab a bean to cup coffee, ice cream, Mr Whippy or scooped ice cream



Unit 2: Nicey Icey Icecream Parlour and Milshake Bar

No trip to the beach is complete without an ice cream! From mint and salted caramel to bubblegum and rhubarb crumble, you're sure to find your favourite flavour.



Unit 7: Hello Sunshine

Booking a holiday couldn't be easier with this dedicated Jet2 booking centre. Experienced and friendly staff will ensure you get the best deals around



Unit 3: The Pancake Kitchen

Offering a selection of tasty savoury and sweet pancakes or waffles, Pancake Kitchen is an excellent cafe in Seaham.



Unit 8: Mindful Me Wellbeing Hub

Mindful Me Wellbeing Hub, founded by Reiki Master Teacher and Holistic Therapist Claire Bell, is a hub for holistic living: mindful existence, nurturing body, mind, and soul, and living in gratitude.



Unit 4: Playology Beach School and Creative Studio

Playology was founded in 2019 to provide children, educators, and families with meaningful, developmentally appropriate play experiences—indoors and outdoors—that spark learning, ignite imagination, promote wellbeing, and connect children with nature.



Unit 9: Taylor Hall Financial Services

For over 40 years, Taylor Hall Financial Services has provided financial solutions throughout the North East, including Seaham, Durham, Sunderland, Washington, Gateshead, Newcastle, and surrounding areas.



Unit 5: Seaside Chic

Discover an expansive range of exclusive home decor, choice of gifts, and luxury goods in this modern chic boutique.



Unit 11 & 12 The Lookout Cafe

As if great coffee and food isn't enough, The Lookout boasts incredible views of the marina, so sit back, relax, and have you cake and eat it too.



The Castleside

Visit The Castleside, featuring a fully equipped gym, a nursery, and a water sports and outdoor activity centre. You can also enjoy stunning coastal views from the Red Acre Point lookout, making it perfect for fitness, family activities, and seaside adventure.



Unit 1A: Adventure Access Seaham

Our coastal site is at the stunning Seaham Harbour Marina - join us here for stand up paddle boarding and kayaking on the sea, and enjoy a trip to see the lighthouse by water

Our centre in Durham City is on the river - here we offer activities such as Durham City by SUP, open canoeing and our most exciting group activity of all - dragon boat racing! Paddle through the city with excellent views of Durham Cathedral from the river



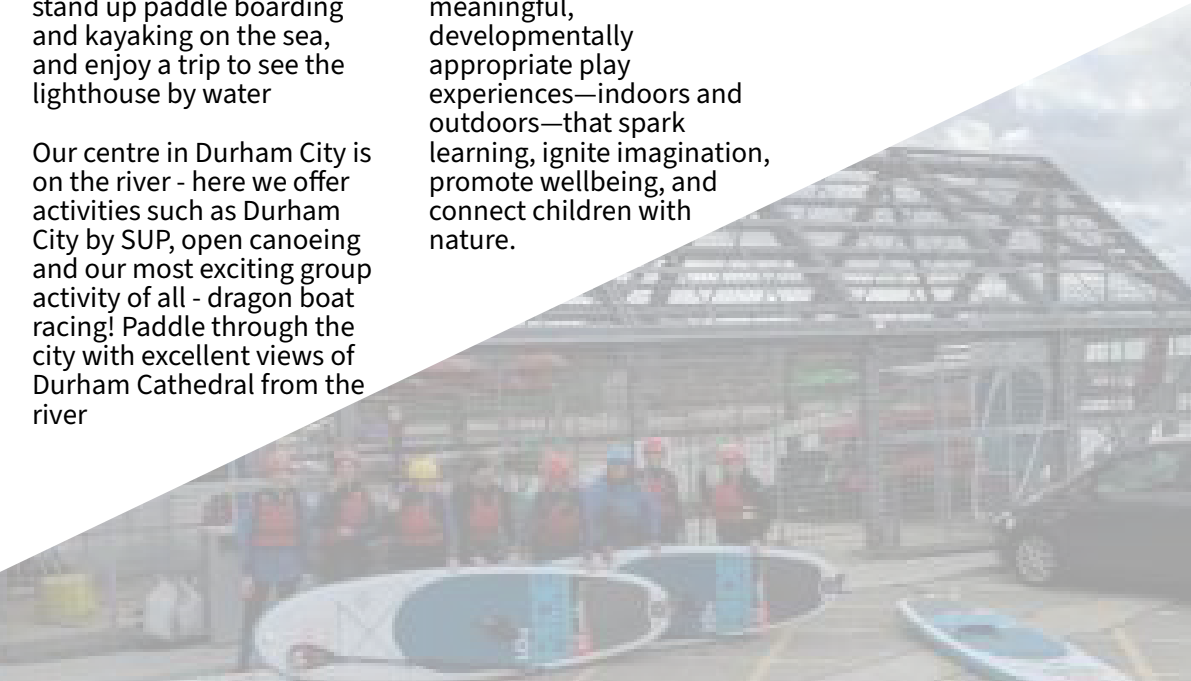
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Unit 2: East Coast Fitness

East Coast Fitness - helping local people regain body confidence with personal training and group fitness.



The Castleside

RED ACRE POINT was the site of the port's first lighthouse and coastline.

later became a defensive gun emplacement during the Second World War. This landmark has a fascinating history behind it and now serves as a viewing platform where visitors can enjoy the

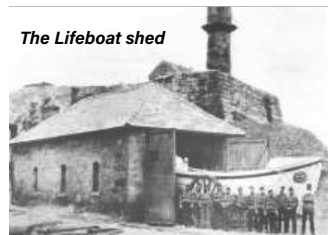
The steps leading up to the viewing platform have been replaced thanks to SeaScapes, Seaham Marina Community Interest

Lottery Heritage Fund programme.

Company and National Lottery players through the National

Heritage Centre and Lifeboat

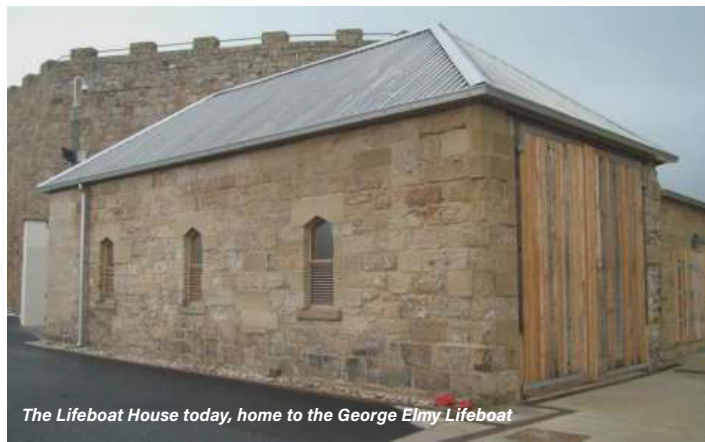
In partnership with East Durham Heritage Group, we have developed the former lifeboat house into a tourist attraction which has become home to the restored George Elmy lifeboat



The Lifeboat shed



Before restoration



The Lifeboat House today, home to the George Elmy Lifeboat



Steps to the viewing platform completed in 2023



The George Elmy Lifeboat



The George Elmy found on the beach, 17 November 1962

The lifeboat capsized during a rescue off Seaham in November 1962 in which 5 volunteer crew members tragically lost their lives as well as 4 of 5 fishermen who had just been rescued.



Arriving at the docks before restoration

The lifeboat was thought to have disappeared entirely after it had been removed from Seaham by the RNLI after the tragedy. However one of the members of the East Durham Heritage Group spotted the lifeboat for sale on eBay in 2009 and the money was raised to buy it and return it to Seaham.



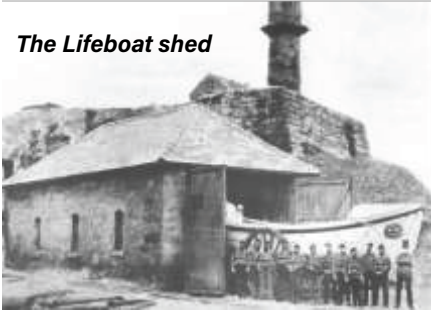
Being lifted from the water ready to be housed in the Heritage Building, June 2013

A flotilla of RNLI lifeboats from Sunderland, Tynemouth and Hartlepool provided a guard of honour when it sailed back into the Seaham Harbour Marina.

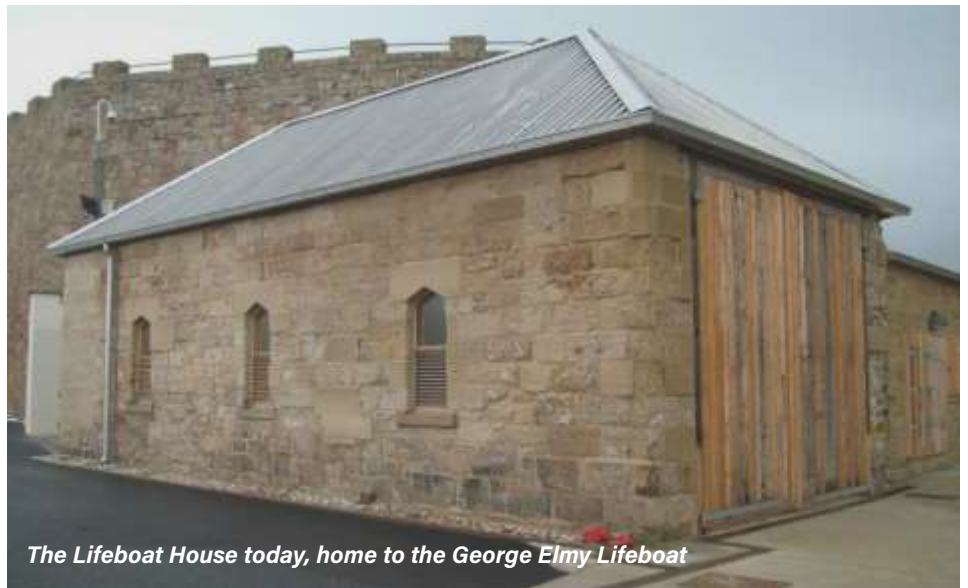
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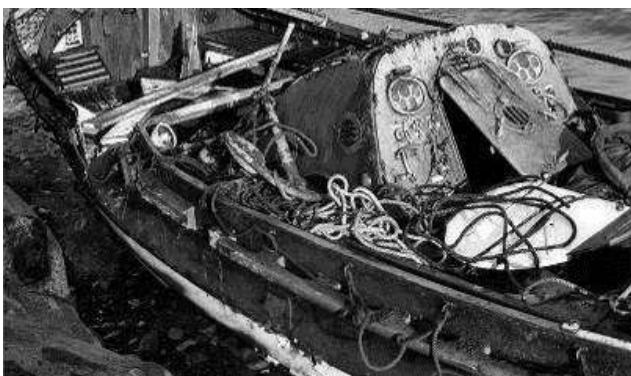


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Being lifted from the water ready to be housed in the Heritage Building, June 2013

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Background

After the demise of the pits in the early 1990s the North Dock fell into a semi derelict state. The redevelopment of the Dock was one of the key objectives of the Seaham Regeneration Strategy undertaken in 1994. The aim being to boost local enterprise, jobs and income, increase visitor numbers to the town and wider area, and transform the North Dock (now known as Seaham Harbour Marina) into a new modern marina with facilities and amenities to rival any across the North East.

In 2006 the restoration of the limekilns, viewing areas and secondary sea defense work were completed.

By 2012, the flagship building 'The Waterside' (comprising 12 commercial units) had been created and now offer first class businesses such as cafes, ice cream parlour, gift shop and a travel agent. The construction of a marina using floating pontoons to accommodate up to 96 leisure craft was also completed, along with the reinstatement of the dock gates (located to the original position of the abandoned dock gates) and improvements to the public access, boat storage facility, slipway and launch facilities.

In partnership with East Durham Heritage Group, we have developed the former lifeboat house into a visitor attraction which is now home to the restored George Elmy lifeboat.

2017 saw the completion of 'The Castleside' building, home to a café, fitness studio, beach school and outdoor activity centre.

Red Acre Point was the site of the port's first lighthouse and later became a defensive gun emplacement during the Second World War. In 2022/23 the steps leading up to the viewing platform were replaced through the National Lottery Heritage fund programme, enabling access to a viewing platform where visitors can enjoy the breath views of the coastline.

Management of the Marina

Seaham Harbour Marina is managed by a Community Interest Company (CIC) which is a not-for-profit organisation. Its principal objective is for a sustainable development that will serve the community. The CIC also aims to provide, and continually improve, facilities for maritime activities.

Introduction

The construction of the harbour at Seaham began in 1828 and was completed in 1831. It was created and owned by the Marquess of Londonderry to facilitate the shipment of coal from his East Durham coalmines. The harbour was further developed in 1898 with extensions which included the addition of the North and South outer breakwaters.

The North Dock was designed as a high tide harbour in which the coal ships entered at high tide, the dock gates were then closed to retain the depths required, then the laden ships departed at high tide.

Due to the constant damage to the dock gates they were removed in 1952 and the North Dock became a small fishing harbour which dried out on low tides. Coal exports were then concentrated to the larger and deeper South Dock.

After the demise of the pits and the decline of the fishing industry through the 1990's the North Dock fell into a semi derelict state. By 2005 there were only 4 fishing boats left operating from the North Dock.

The redevelopment of the Dock was one of the key objectives of the Seaham Regeneration Strategy undertaken in 1994. It was agreed the most appropriate way to bring about the restoration of North Dock was for it to be developed as a marina for leisure craft and as a visitor attraction.

In recent years Durham County Council has worked with Seaham Harbour Dock Company, Friends of North Dock Seaham and the local community to bring about the regeneration of Seaham North Dock.



The North Dock, 1930



*The
North
Dock,
1987*



The North Dock today

Then and Now

The North Dock has seen many changes over the years. Below are a few of the improvements.

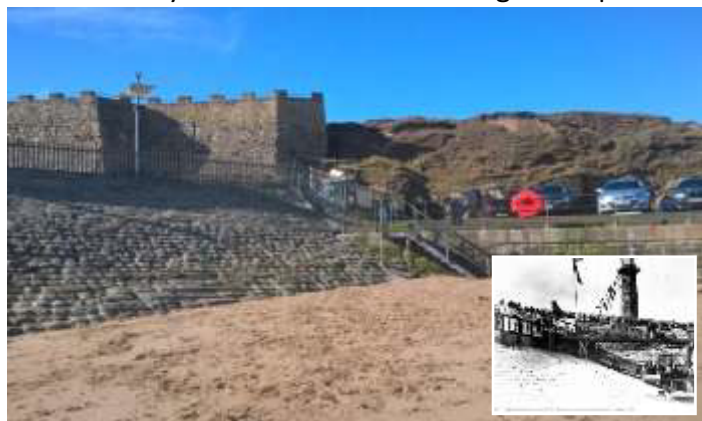


THE MARINA ACCESS ROAD is a relatively new road first established for private vehicle access in the early 1980s. Prior to the road being constructed the only means of access was for pedestrians via the steps at the south west corner of the dock basin. The small photo on the left shows the improvised access road in the late 1970s in which you can see the coast guard station on top of Red Acre Point and the picture far left showing the road in 2004 following much needed resurfacing works.

THE EAST QUAY was an integral part of the north dock for many years. It held some fairly substantial infrastructure for the dock gate operations, engine room and pumping station, and later for the old steam crane to lift out and store fishing boats. You can see from the small inset picture, taken in the 1950s, of what it was used for. Nowadays the east quay does not represent a storage area but can be seen as an area that creates an excellent viewing platform for the marina, surrounding historic dock walls and seascape. The East Quay has now created public interest with the installation of the Helmsman by the East Durham Heritage Group.



THE SLOPE BEACH used to be the main area of Red Acre until it was enclosed due to the building of the North Pier in 1905. The area is of great importance because of the laying of the foundation stones. The first in 1830 and the 2nd in 1898 which still can be seen near the access steps to the beach. The area also holds a lot of history due to the creation of the Swimming Club in the 1800s which survived until the 1970s. Many local children learned to swim in this area during nearly a century of the swimming clubs existence.



Between the 1950s and the 1990s it wasn't unusual for fishermen to build cabins in the most unlikely of places as proven in the picture above which was taken in 2004, before the start of the redevelopment of the marina. The area is now used as a viewing area.



In 2006 the Council completed phase one of the redevelopment. This phase involved the undertaking of public accommodation works, restoration of the limekilns, viewing areas and secondary sea defense work.



The second phase of the redevelopment completed in 2012, aimed to bring economic life back to the North Dock, by creating conditions to support a working marina.

This includes the creation of the flagship building 'The Waterside' (comprised of 12 commercial units), construction of a marina using floating pontoons to accommodate up to 96 leisure craft, reinstatement of the dock gates, improved slipway and improved public access to areas of the North Dock.

