

Parton - Industry & Education

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Parton, once on the edge of the Roman Empire, later developed as an industrial port offering a range of trades and manufacturing services.

Industrial coastline

Parton Bay has shaped Parton's history. The bay was used by the Romans when they occupied Moresby Fort which sits above the village on Hadrian's Wall. The port continued to be used through the Middle Ages, and Elizabethan times but it wasn't until in 17th century that the port underwent significant development to cater for the local coal trade.

During the early seventeenth century the port flourished and Parton prospered and new industries developed. For a time Parton was a busier port than Whitehaven, however in 1795 a storm destroyed the harbour breakwaters, and the port never recovered, reverting back to a small fishing haven. The village industries, which included a brewery, had enough local custom to survive and some new industries developed including an engineering company, a tannery and glassworks which shipped glass bottles to London. With the loss of the port, coal now had to be transported to Whitehaven and a horse-drawn tramway was built along the foot of the cliffs which is known as the Wagon Way

Locomotives made at Lowca Engineering works, had to be transported from Parton by seagoing barge as it was not until late in the nineteenth century the railway extension to Whitehaven via Parton was built. The railway brought new opportunities for Parton's industries. The colliery, the engineering works and the brewery all thrived, an iron-foundry opened next to the new railway station, and in the 1870s an ironworks was established on the shore near the Lowca works.

Unfortunately, Parton's relatively small businesses began to struggle and by the 1920s, almost all were gone.

Education in Parton

Parton had two schools throughout much of the nineteenth century with boys and girls educated separately. However the idea to merge the schools was proposed in 1903, but was resisted by trustees of the boy's school, although they welcomed the introduction of flushing toilets to replace the school yard privies in 1905.

The boy's school, which is now the village hall, had to pay a rent (5/- a year) for the right to have windows on the north side, a result of the 1886 extension of the school onto land owned by the London & North Western Railway Co.

The boy's school consisted of a single room, 21m by 7m although this could be divided into two to allow the teaching of Standard 1 pupils and Standards 2 to 7, with three teachers working simultaneously. The building was heated by a single fire grate which by all accounts only kept the one teacher warm who was able to teach stood in front of it!

Whilst pupils were taught according to the syllabus, few in Parton passed the 11+. With no buses to transport people outside of the village, and because for a time the job opportunities in Parton guaranteed everyone a job, most pupils left school and walked straight into employment at one of the local industries. The coal board providing an 'education' for most through work at the pits.

Fishing

Parton has always been a fishing port, and was especially noted for the quality of the herring. This catch was aided by porpoises which chased the herrings into shore ensuring good catch.

[Click here to listen to the locally recorded audio files and learn about parton's rich history](#) [5]

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