

Durham

All items were chosen by the committee members of VCH Durham

Wool

Circular sheep folds in Weardale date from the 13th century and wool is still Durham's principal rural product.

Leather and painting (photograph)

Cattle farming, both for beef and the tanning industry, was always prominent. The famous Durham or 'Ketton' Ox was bred by Charles and Robert Colling near Darlington around 1786.

Advertising playing card

Durham had a cottage carpet-making industry in the 18th century, and a factory was established alongside the River Wear around 1815. By 1850 this was the third-largest carpet manufacturing area in the UK. Durham Carpets survive today under the name Hugh Mackay.

Miner carved in coal

The Durham coal field is one of the most extensive in the country, and generated huge wealth for the coal owners. The Vavasour mine in Cockfield was recorded in 1375, the first inland coal mine in the country.

'Geordie' lamp

The great importance of coal mining in the north east led to the independent development of the safety lamp by George Stephenson, at the same time as Humphrey Davy was working in the south. In 1817 local coal-owners accepted Stephenson's claims on timing and independence, and awarded him £1,000 raised by subscription (equivalent to over £80,000 today).

The Durham Argus butterfly (photograph)

The Northern Brown Argus butterfly, *Aricia artaxerxes*, exists across the north of England, but the related Durham Argus is endemic only to County Durham. It is on the brink of extinction and a National Trust project is working to help it survive.

Durham Cathedral commemorative teaspoon

Begun in 1096, the cathedral is one of the greatest buildings of Christendom. It contains the shrines of St Cuthbert and the Venerable Bede. Along with the adjacent Castle, it forms The Durham World Heritage site, which was among the first UK sites to be listed by UNESCO in 1986.

Mustard seeds and paste

Together with carpets, mustard was considered the principal manufacture of Durham, where the processing methods were evolved. Aynsley's Durham Mustard Company was founded in 1692, and mustard made by Mrs Clements, also of Durham, is noted by Mrs Beeton as having been enjoyed by George I.

Railways commemorative mug and pamphlet

Evolved from the track-ways which had developed to carry coal from the pits to the ports, Durham was where the first modern railways were developed. The first passenger railway in the world was the Stockton to Darlington in 1825. Durham also has the Causey Arch, the first railway bridge in the world, built by George Bowes in 1725.

Lead ore - galena

Lead mining has existed at least since Roman times in the North Pennines, and during the 18th and 19th centuries the lead field of Teesdale, Weardale, South Tynedale and the Derwent Valley formed the most important lead producing area in Britain. Durham's last lead mine closed in 1919.