



It was over one hundred years ago, in 1894, that Turbinia, was designed and built by one of Tyneside's most famous engineers Sir Charles Parsons. Turbinia was the first steam turbine powered vessel and by 1897, was easily the fastest vessel in the world. She now takes pride of place in Discovery Museum.

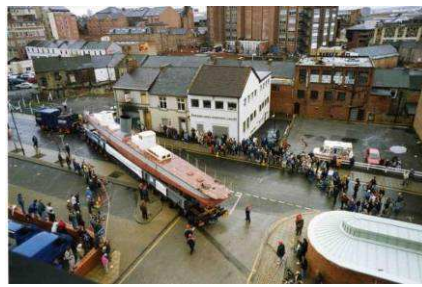
On 26 June, 1897, Turbinia, the tiny prototype vessel built on the Tyne, sped into view at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Naval Review at Spithead, setting a record speed afloat and astonishing the crowds. They witnessed one of history's most spectacular events which changed marine engineering. Her debut at the Review saw the tiny craft travelling at an unbelievable 34 knots [almost 40mph], which in those days was an amazing achievement. With her bows clear of the water and flames leaping from her funnel, Turbinia raced along in the water weaving in and out of over 150 vessels appearing at the Review including some of the Royal Navy's proudest battleships.



Turbinia enjoyed a successful twelve year experimental career, with Charles Parsons returning to the River Tyne to continue tests, closely followed by the Royal Navy's engineers, eager to take part in the trials of this amazing example of engineering.



Sadly however, after such an impressive career in the water, the pioneering vessel Turbinia was laid up shore in 1908 and used as a marketing tool for the Turbine Works. In 1927 the section containing the turbine engines that propelled Turbinia through the water was given to the Science Museum in London, for display. Later, in 1944, other parts of the vessel were given to the Municipal Museum of Science and Industry in Turbinia's birthplace of Newcastle upon Tyne. It was not until the 1960's that the stern, the back end of the vessel, was returned to the North East and reunited with the remaining parts of the ship in Newcastle. Turbinia was put on display in the newly built annex of the Municipal Museum of Science and Industry in Exhibition Park.



In 1994 she was painstakingly moved by lorry through the streets of Newcastle to be the focal point of the Discovery Museum in Blandford Square, where she has been on display ever since.

