



Building bridges

How industry and arts made Newcastle a global city

1. Welcome to Newcastle

Welcome to Walk the World! This walk in Newcastle is one of a series of 20 in different parts of the UK. Each of these walks explores how the 206 participating nations in the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games have been part of the UK's history for many centuries. Along the routes, you will discover evidence of how many Olympic and Paralympic countries have shaped our towns and cities.

Newcastle upon Tyne, often referred to as Newcastle, is one of the largest cities in north east England. Formed by the Romans on the north bank of the River Tyne, Newcastle became a city during the Industrial Revolution. Fuelled by coal and oiled by the Tyne, Newcastle attracted people, goods and trades from around the world. The landmark bridges across the Tyne were symbols of the city's success. But Newcastle's industries then experienced severe decline and closure. The city had to reinvent itself. Today Newcastle is a business and cultural centre of vibrant arts venues and nightlife.

This walk explores how Newcastle has changed from an industrial to cultural city. We will visit some of the key sites in Newcastle's history - including a Norman castle, a medieval friary, a Premier League football stadium, "Britain's finest street" and the world-famous River Tyne. We will also hear about some of the international communities that have shaped Newcastle's development. The walk takes in almost 30 sights that reveal the links between Newcastle and over 50 of the 206 Olympic and Paralympic Nations. The walk will also give you some ideas of how to look for international links near your home.

The route is 3½ miles long. We begin and end at Newcastle Central railway station. This is a busy city walk, especially at weekends. Watch for traffic and look after your valuables. There are a number of busy roads to cross, so please take care and always use pedestrian crossings. I hope you enjoy the walk.

Directions 1 - Make your way to Newcastle Central railway station. Stop outside the station entrance on Neville Street. The best view is probably on the opposite side of the road. When you are ready listen to Track 2.

2. A station fit for a queen

Newcastle Central Station

Welcome to Newcastle! We start at the city's mainline railway station. Newcastle Central opened in 1850 with the ceremony attended by Queen Victoria herself. At the time, Newcastle was an industrial powerhouse. The River Tyne brought ships and their cargoes from around the world. A thriving shipbuilding centre developed and the city was a major site of the British wool trade. And then there was coal. Vast quantities of coal were mined in pits in the surrounding counties of Durham and Northumberland. Most of it passed through Newcastle. The Central Station was built not just for people but to help transport coal across the UK.



Newcastle Central Station, 1863
© Newcastle City Library

We will hear more about these industries later – for now we are going to take a closer look at the station building. It was designed by John Dobson, an architect who worked in the neo-classical style. 'Classical' architecture was the building style of ancient Greece and Rome. Neo-classical means a later version of that style. The columns, arches and elaborate stonework we can see here are all typical classical features. Classical buildings were designed using strict rules to make sure they were pleasing to the eye. For example, columns were decorative as well as structural features.

John Dobson's original plan for the station was for a double row of columns and an Italian style tower at the end. Behind was to be an enormous train shed, with three arched glass roofs built in a curve. If you travelled to Newcastle by train today, you may have noticed them. This roof design was the first of its kind and set a precedent for many of the north east's railway stations. Dobson's design won an award at the Paris Exhibition of 1858. His plan had the potential to create one of the grandest neo-classical buildings in the world. Unfortunately, Dobson was forced to alter his original plan to something less grand without the Italian tower. But even so, Newcastle Central today is still a magnificent architectural achievement. Along the walk keep an eye out for more buildings with neo-classical design features – such as columns, porticos and stepped bases.

Country links - France, Greece, Italy

Directions 2 - Continue along the right hand side of Neville Street. Head toward the junction of Bewick Street then stop outside the church with a statue of Cardinal Basil Hume outside. Stop here and listen to Track 3.

3. The Irish Brigade

St Mary's Cathedral

This imposing building is St Mary's Cathedral. At first sight it looks a bit medieval with its dark walls and arched windows. In fact the Cathedral is Victorian – it was built between 1842 and 1844. It looks much older as it was designed in Gothic Revival style. 'Gothic' describes a dramatic and ornate building style that began in southern Europe from the 12th century. Gothic Revival was very popular from the early 19th century. St Mary's was designed by Augustus Welby Pugin, best known in Britain for designing the Houses of Parliament. He also designed numerous buildings in Australia and Ireland.



Tyneside Irish Brigade men at the Battle of the Somme, 1916
Wikimedia Commons

St Mary's has several Irish connections, partly due to the large Irish Catholic community in Newcastle. St Marys is the seat of the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle and the current bishop is an Irishman - Seamus Cunningham, who was born in Mayo.

Like most religious buildings, St Marys features several memorials inside. Some are to the Tyneside Irish Brigade of the Northumberland Fusiliers. They were founded in 1914 after a nationwide recruitment campaign to find men to fight in the First World War. The Brigade was made up of Irish volunteers who worked in coal mines across Durham and Northumberland. Some 3,000 of these men fought at the Battle of the Somme in France and in further campaigns in Arles and Flanders, now part of Belgium. We will hear a little more about the origins of Newcastle's Irish community later. For now, we have already seen how religious buildings such as St Marys can be very interesting places to find links to the 206 Olympic and Paralympic nations.

Before moving on, look at the statue outside of Cardinal Basil Hume. Cardinal Hume was born and grew up in Newcastle before studying theology in Fribourg in Switzerland and becoming a monk at Ampleforth Abbey. He later became Archbishop of Westminster, the highest ranking bishop of the British Catholic Church, and was appointed Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church.

Country links - Australia, Belgium, France, Ireland, Switzerland

Directions 3 - Continue along Bewick Street until you reach the Chinese Christian Church on the right. Stop outside the Church and listen to Track 4.

4. Chinese Christians

Newcastle Chinese Christian Church

This building is another church. It looks rather different from St Mary's Cathedral doesn't it? The building is fairly new and reflects a recent religious community in the city. This Chinese Christian Church provides a place of worship for Newcastle's growing Chinese Christian community - and the students from China studying at the universities. In fact it was small groups of Chinese students who came to study in Newcastle that helped to establish the Newcastle Chinese Christian Fellowship, or NCCF, in the 1970s.



Newcastle Chinese Christian Church
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Newcastle has a significant Chinese community. At its heart is Chinatown which we will see later on. According to the 2001 census, the majority of religious Chinese people in Newcastle are Christian which is why there is demand for churches such as these. In China the predominant religion is Buddhism. Under communist rule, religious diversity was suppressed. But in recent decades with more relaxed governance, Christianity has been growing significantly in China. This growth includes immigrant Chinese communities.

As at the last stop we have seen how religious buildings can be great places to look for links to the Olympic and Paralympic nations. So why not see what you can find out about religious buildings near you.

Country links - China

Directions 4 - Continue along Bewick Street and turn left down Clayton Street. At the end of the road turn right on to Westmorland road. Stop across the road from the large Centre for Life building and listen to Track 5.

5. Life sciences

International Centre For Life

This eye-catching structure is the International Centre for Life. The building is a science village, also home to a museum and an educational charity that aims to promote greater interest and engagement in science. The Centre presents science shows and workshops plus supports world-class scientific research, much of which is carried out on site. Overall nearly 600 people from 35 countries work here.

Since it opened in 2000 the Centre has earned headlines for ground-breaking research on stem cell technology. The scientists working here were only the second in the world to get a license for stem cell research on human embryos.



Signage at the Centre for Life
Wikimedia Commons

The landmark building was designed by Sir Terry Farrell. Though he grew up in Newcastle he has designed buildings throughout the world, particularly in south-east Asia. These include an airport in Seoul, South Korea; a train station in Beijing, China (the second biggest in Asia), as well as a number of projects in Hong Kong.

Country links - China, Hong Kong, South Korea, United States of America

Directions 5 - Turn right into Waterloo Street. Continue through Thornton Square then turn left at the end. Stop at the corner of Westgate Road and St James' Boulevard by the buildings with Robert Sinclair Tobacco written on the walls. Listen here to Track 6.

6. Smoke on the Tyne

Robert Sinclair Tobacco buildings

These buildings were home to the Robert Sinclair Tobacco Company, once one of the biggest tobacco companies in the north of England. Look up at the tops of the buildings for the company name painted on the walls. The company started in 1856 when Robert Sinclair and his brother John opened a small tobacconist shop in Newcastle.

The tobacco industry originated after the first European conquests in the Americas. Native Americans introduced tobacco to the Europeans, who brought it back home. The habit of smoking tobacco spread widely and it became in high demand throughout the world.



One of the Robert Sinclair Tobacco offices
Nick Stanworth © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

In the United States tobacco became the most important export crop. Huge plantations were established to grow it, particularly in southern states such as Virginia.

Around the time Robert Sinclair's company began, cigarette rolling machines were developed. These allowed tobacco companies to sell cigarettes wholesale which created a booming industry. Although major production began in the Americas, tobacco is now produced throughout the world in many warm countries. In fact there are very few that don't grow any tobacco, Britain being one of them.

These buildings were made in 1913 and 1919, either side of a pub called The Carlisle. They included offices, a showroom of lighters and pipes and a garage at the back. In 1930 Robert Sinclair was acquired by Imperial Tobacco. After a series of further mergers it became part of Sinclair Collis, a company that produces vending machines. Sinclair Collis moved out of Newcastle in 1988 and The Carlisle pub was demolished. Today the buildings are flats – the only evidence of Robert Sinclair Tobacco are the signs.

Country links - United States of America

Directions 6 - Retrace your steps along Westgate Road. Continue until you see the Tyne Theatre on the right. Stop by the silver sculpture across the road from the Theatre and listen to Track 7.

7. Ever changing

Tyne Theatre

We are now at another Victorian building, the Tyne Theatre. It originally opened in 1867 as the Tyne Theatre and Opera House. A Grade I listed building, it has a claim to be the oldest Victorian theatre still working today. The theatre was designed by William B Parnell for politician and journalist Joseph Cowen. The Journal Tyne has been owned by numerous different investors and has seen many improvements to keep visitors attending its shows.

Over the years the theatre has welcomed many internationally famous acts. An interesting example was Irish writer Oscar Wilde, who spoke here in 1885 on the subject of Fashion. French actress Sarah Bernhardt, arguably one of the most famous Victorian actresses, performed at the theatre three times from 1895.



French actress Sarah Bernhardt, 1890s
Wikimedia Commons

Now look across from the Tyne Theatre to a section of stone wall. This is a part of Newcastle's medieval town wall. It was built to protect the town and keep intruders out, particularly Scottish invaders who tried repeatedly to capture Newcastle. There are still bits of the wall dotted around the city so keep your eyes open for more sections of it as we walk around today. Also have a think about theatres where you live. Maybe famous people from some of the Olympic and Paralympic nations have appeared near you!

Finally, the strange steel sculpture we have stopped next to was designed by Northern Irish artist/sculptor Eilis O'Connell. Its name is 'Ever Changing', which is very fitting if we look around us at the medieval wall, Victorian theatre and modern buildings that all reflect the city's continually changing environment.

Country links - France, Ireland

Directions 7 - Continue along the left side of Westgate Road then turn into Cross Street. Continue into the small cobbled road which is Friars Street. Go through the Friary entrance arch and into the courtyard. Listen here to Track 8.

8. Friars' retreat

Blackfriars

During the early years of the 13th century, orders of monks began to establish themselves in England. Newcastle came to have five different friaries. The courtyard we are in now is the remains of Blackfriars, the Dominican order established in 1239.

The other friaries in Newcastle included Whitefriars of the Carmelite order, Austinfriars of the Augustinian order, Greyfriars of the Franciscan order and the Trinitarian friars. All of them were established in the late 13th to early 14th century.



Blackfriars in 1784. A Dominican friary, it has its origins in Spain
© Newcastle City Library

The Dominican order was founded by St Dominic from Osma in Spain shortly after 1200. Dominicans were forbidden from owning buildings and land, but property could be held in trust for them. This was the case with Blackfriars, which was founded by a wealthy Newcastle merchant, Sir Peter Scott. The friary covered seven acres, but also had two gardens and four small closes that provided a small income.

Look around the courtyard and we can see some of the ruins of these buildings that would have once been part of the friary. During the 14th century, the friary hosted royal visitors. For example, in 1334 Edward III of England and Edward Balliol, the claimant to the Scottish throne, met there.

Newcastle's friaries were dissolved after the Reformation of 1536 and the land was sold to wealthy merchants. By the 19th century the site was in disrepair. But today Blackfriars is home to a restaurant, museum and craft workshops. We will see many other examples of preservation and regeneration later in our walk.

Country links - Spain

Directions 8 - When you are ready, leave the friary courtyard through an arch opposite the way you came in. Turn right and continue along the street lined with lanterns and Chinese shops. At the end, turn left then stop in front of the Chinese arch. Listen to Track 9.

9. The North East Far East

Chinatown and Tyneside Irish Centre

We are now in Newcastle's Chinatown. Like the Chinatown districts in many other British cities, these streets are full of vibrant colours and mouth-watering food aromas. Look out for the colourful lanterns and ornate Chinese themed designs on the restaurants and shops.

Newcastle's Chinatown was founded in 1972 - some three decades after the first Chinese immigrants settled in the north east. The district has flourished economically and socially since, becoming the sixth-largest Chinese community in Britain. The centrepiece is the traditional Chinese arch in front of us.



Chinese arch detail - look out for symbols of Newcastle
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The arch was unveiled in 2005 but had been discussed for over 30 years. It was built in five months by the Changsu Classical Garden Construction Company in China. Funding and support came from the North East Chinese Association and the local Chinese community. Like the rest of Chinatown it's full of vibrant colours and elaborate designs. On the main panel in the top of the arch are designs that symbolise Newcastle. Have a look and see if you can work out how they relate to the city.

The Chinese are not the only immigrant community that meet in this area of Newcastle. To the right of the arch is the Tyneside Irish Centre. This centre was set up to represent and connect the Irish community in the north east. People come to socialise, enjoy live music and take part in cultural events. The Tyne area has an historic Irish community, largely due to the great migrations out of Ireland during the famines of the 1840s. Many Irish men and boys worked in the coal mines and many of the present Irish community in Newcastle are descendants of these original migrants.

Country links - China, Ireland

Directions 9 - Pass through the arch and cross over the road. Stop here for a good view of the medieval walls on your left. Continue into Strawberry Lane. At the end of this road, stop at a safe place in front of the sports stadium and listen to Track 10.

10. Goal!

Sports Direct Arena (St James' Park)

The enormous stadium towering above us is the Sports Direct Arena or St James' Park, home to Newcastle United Football Club. Newcastle United, known locally as 'the Magpies' and 'the Toon', have played here since 1892. This is the oldest and largest football stadium in the north east. In fact it is the sixth biggest in the UK with a spectator capacity of 52,339. Some true football greats have graced the pitch here, including local lads such as ex-coal miner turned centre forward Jackie Milburn, record goal scorer Alan Shearer as well as Peter Beardsley, Chris Waddle and Paul Gascoigne.



Inside St James Park - where teams have played from around the world
Wikimedia Commons

Football has long been an international sport and players from many of the Olympic and Paralympic nations have turned out for the Magpies. One of the first was a Chilean, Jorge 'George' Robledo, who was another former coal miner. Newcastle was briefly the home of Mirandinha, the first Brazilian to play for an English club. In recent years international players have included; Pavel Srníček (Czech Republic), Chaka Hislop (Trinidad and Tobago), David Ginola (France), Faustino Asprilla (Columbia), Temuri Ketsbaia (Georgia), Lomana LuaLua (DR Congo), Nolberto Solano (Peru), Obefemi Martins (Nigeria), Demba Ba (Senegal) and Argentines Fabricio Coloccini and Jonas Gutierrez.

Besides Newcastle United, the stadium has held 10 international football matches. England played here against Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Albania and Norway. During the 1996 European Championships, it held group games for France, Bulgaria and Romania. Links with the Olympic and Paralympic nations are set to continue as the stadium will host some matches in the 2012 Games. The stadium is also going to be used as a venue for the 2015 Rugby World Cup. Why not see if a sports club or stadium near you has links to the Olympic and Paralympic nations.

Country links - Albania, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Columbia, Czech Republic, DR Congo, France, Georgia, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Romania, Senegal, Trinidad & Tobago, Ukraine

Directions 10 - Retrace your steps down Strawberry Lane and turn left. At the end of Gallowgate, cross over the busy junction at a safe place and continue under the shopping centre arch. Turn left into Eldon Square. Stop here to listen to Track 11.

11. Battles fought on foreign fields

Eldon Square

This city square lined with benches is an ideal spot for a rest. Yet there are still plenty of connections to Olympic and Paralympic nations to look out for. The square is dominated by a statue of St George killing the dragon. St George is the patron saint of England and the story is often considered an English legend. Yet there are international origins behind the tale.

St George became a figurehead of England when the Crusaders brought back stories about him from the Middle East. There are depictions of him throughout the world.



St George and the Dragon by Paolo Uccello (c.1470)
Wikimedia Commons

The earliest have been traced to 11th century Georgia, Turkey and Armenia. According to tradition George was a Roman soldier. The story of him slaying a dragon may be an adaptation of an ancient Greek legend, of Perseus the dragon slayer.

Whatever the origins of St George, the statue we can see was built as a memorial to people from Newcastle who died during the First and Second World Wars. The benches in Eldon Square feature plaques dedicated to different legions that lost soldiers during the wars. One example is the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, who saw action in France, North Africa, Singapore, Italy, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, India and Greece.

Some unfamiliar battalions and units are also commemorated such as the Russian Convoy Club North East, the Tyneside Irish Brigade, George Cross Island Association of Malta and the Association of Jewish ex-servicemen and women. With this diverse collection of countries commemorated here, St George's international origins are very appropriate.

Country links - Armenia, Egypt, France, Georgia, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Palestine, Russia, Singapore, Syria, Turkey

Directions 11 - Walk out of Eldon Square and turn left onto Blackett Street. Continue up to the column with a statue on it and listen to Track 12.

12. Tea, Prime Minister?

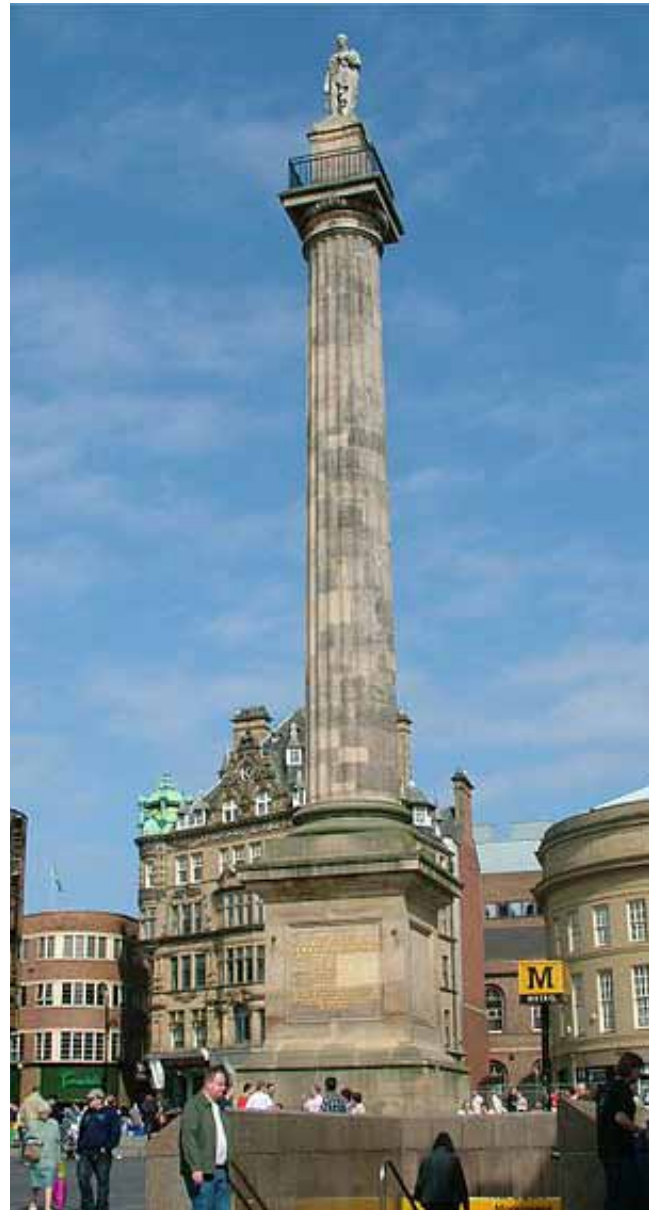
Grey's Monument

This formidable monument at the top of Grey Street was erected in 1838. As its location suggests, it was built to acclaim a man named Grey.

Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey, was Prime Minister between 1830 and 1834. This 41 metre (135 feet) high column was built to mark his role in passing the Great Reform Act of 1832. This Act saw the reform of the House of Commons and allowed more people to vote in elections. These reforms indirectly led to the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire in 1833.

Besides his political achievements, Earl Grey also lent his name to the famous and unique blend of tea. Earl Grey tea is specially flavoured using oil from bergamot oranges – a fruit typically grown in Italy, although also in France and the Ivory Coast.

The column of Grey's Monument was designed by local architects John and Benjamin Green. Unbelievably, it is actually possible to get to the top of it by climbing a narrow staircase. The statue of Earl Grey was created by the sculptor Edward Hodges Baily, who later made Admiral Nelson's statue for Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square.



Grey's Monument
Wikimedia Commons

Country links - France, Italy, Ivory Coast

Directions 12 - From Grey's Monument take the pedestrianised road on the right. Continue up to the Grainger Market entrance on the right hand side. Go a little way into the market and listen to Track 13.

13. Market forces

Grainger Market and Central Arcade

We are now inside Newcastle's famous covered market. Grainger Market was constructed in 1835 and like the Central Station where we began our walk, the Grainger Market building was designed by John Dobson.

It was originally divided into two parts. The eastern section was a meat market laid out in a series of aisles. The western section was a vegetable market in a large open-plan hall. These original uses have since changed considerably, although there are still some butcher and vegetable stalls here.



The Moody & Evans shop in the Grainger Market , 1908
© Newcastle City Library

The market is also home to the world's smallest branch of Marks and Spencer! The market stall is named Marks and Spencer's Original Penny Bazaar. The market also has a more multicultural feel these days, with a few Chinese and Indian shops dotted about. See if you can spot the international goods on sale.

When we leave the Market we will visit Central Arcade. An elegant walkway lined with tiles and upmarket shops, the Arcade is one of the most aesthetically pleasing streets in Newcastle. Light pours in from the glass roof above and makes the multi-coloured tiles literally shine. The Arcade was built in 1906 and is another of John Dobson's designs.

Country links - Italy, United States of America

Directions 13 - If you want to find Marks and Spencer, make your way towards the back of the market. When you are ready, retrace your steps and exit into Grainger Street. Go through the entrance to Central Arcade on the other side. When you reach the end of the Arcade, cross the road and turn right. Stop by the Theatre Royal and listen to Track 14.

14. A Royal stage

Theatre Royal

This spectacular theatre is the third home of the Royal Shakespeare Company. It opened in 1837 with a performance of *The Merchant of Venice*. Another Shakespeare play was nearly the theatre's final curtain.

Following a performance of *Macbeth* in 1899, a huge fire destroyed the building. As a result the interior was redesigned by world-famous theatre architect Frank Matcham.

The front of the Theatre Royal is often considered the finest theatre façade in Britain. Look out for more neo-classical features.



The finest in theatre façade in Britain?
© John-Paul Stephenson via Wikimedia Commons

Many international performers have appeared here, including a few from Hollywood. Orson Welles, Charlton Heston and Jack Lemmon have all appeared on its stage. The theatre has continued to present Shakespeare plays as part of a varied programme including drama, comedy, dance, the annual Opera North season and musicals.

Reputedly the Theatre Royal is haunted! A ghost nicknamed 'The Grey Lady' has been seen inside. According to legend, she was a 19th century actress who fell from the upper circle while reaching out to an actor she was in love with who was rehearsing on the stage.

Country links - Italy, United States of America

Directions 14 - Cross back over Grey Street. Look downhill to the end of the street as you listen to Track 15.

15. Britain's finest street

Grey Street

We are now in a district of Newcastle called Grainger Town. Look down Grey Street and we can see the buildings are very different to other areas of Newcastle. Grainger Town is the city's historic heart. It got its name as it was planned and built under the direction of architect Richard Grainger who between 1824 and 1841 oversaw the redevelopment of the area.

Grainger Town was shaped by neo-classical designs. Existing buildings that didn't fit neo-classical ideals were even demolished and rebuilt.



Grey Street in 1874
© Newcastle City Library

Obvious neo-classical features to look for in Grainger Town are the Corinthian columns that decorate the front of some of the buildings. Also note their symmetrical shapes, stepped bases and the domes on some of the roofs. These are characteristics of neo-classical architecture based upon original ancient Greek and Roman designs.

Richard Grainger was said to 'have found Newcastle of bricks and timber and left it in stone'. The result was some of Newcastle's finest buildings and streets. Grey Street is probably the most obvious. But Grainger Town wasn't always in the fine condition we can see today. By the early 1990s many of the 244 listed buildings were empty and nearly half of them were so neglected they were structurally dangerous. Grainger Town was a symbol of Newcastle's post-industrial decline.

The city council and English Heritage raised funds to restore the area however and today Grainger Town is a proud centre of the city. In fact a Radio 4 survey in 2005 voted Grey Street "Britain's finest street".

Country links - Greece, Italy

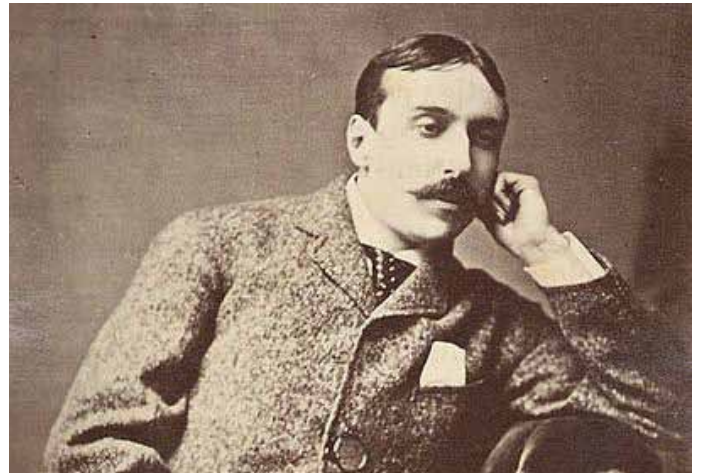
Directions 15 - Continue along the right hand side of Grey Street, taking your time to look at the spectacular buildings. Look for number 53 with a round plaque on the wall. Stop outside and listen to Track 16.

16. Lisbon letters

53 Grey Street

Here at number 53 Grey Street we can find evidence of an international visitor to the city. This building was once home to José Maria de Eça de Queiroz, a Portuguese writer and consular. Eça is often considered the greatest Portuguese writer of the 19th century. Known for writing realist novels he has been compared favourably to Charles Dickens, Leo Tolstoy and Gustave Flaubert.

He was born in Portugal in 1845 and worked for the Portuguese consulate, a job that took him around the world. He arrived in Newcastle after spells in Egypt and Cuba.



José Maria de Eça de Queiroz in 1882
Wikimedia Commons

His consular duties in Newcastle included dispatching detailed reports to the Portuguese foreign office about unrest in the Northumberland and Durham coalfields. As he pointed out, the striking miners earned twice as much as those in South Wales, along with free housing and a weekly supply of coal.

Eça's Newcastle years were some of his most productive as a writer. He redrafted his first novel *O Crime do Padre Amaro* (The Sin of Father Amaro), published another novel called *O Primo Basílio* (Cousin Bazilio) and wrote articles about Britain for Lisbon newspapers. In 1880 he left Newcastle to work in Paris. Despite disliking our cold weather, he spent 15 years in Britain. Besides Newcastle, he worked and wrote in Bristol where he is commemorated by a statue. His work in Newcastle preludes how the city would develop from an industrial heartland to a home for the arts.

Country links - Cuba, Egypt, France, Portugal

Directions 16 - Walk all the way to the bottom of Grey Street and continue onto Dean Street. Continue downhill then turn left onto Sandhill. Cross over the busy riverside road and walk onto the smallest bridge. Stop halfway across it and look towards the arched bridge to the left. Listen to Track 17.

17. Icon of Newcastle

Tyne Bridge

We have now arrived at the River Tyne. Ahead of us is one of the icons of Newcastle and the north east. The Tyne Bridge has become a defining symbol of Tyneside and its industrial prowess. It is one of several bridges over the River Tyne that links Newcastle with Gateshead.

The first bridge over the Tyne was built by the Romans in about AD120. It was called Pons Aelius or 'Bridge of Aelius'. Aelius was the family name of Emperor Hadrian, who was responsible for the construction of Hadrian's Wall, which divided Roman Britain and what is now Scotland.



Icon of Newcastle - the Tyne Bridge
Nick Stanworth © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The Tyne Bridge is an amazing piece of architectural engineering. When it was officially opened on October 10th 1928 by King George V, it was the largest single span bridge in the world. The design is called a 'through arch' as the road cuts through the arch at either end. The steel arch weighs 3,500 tonnes, is 531 feet (162 metres) long and the road deck is 84 feet (26 metres) above the river. The bridge cost £1.2 million to build. The Tyne Bridge was designed by the engineering firm Mott, Hay and Anderson, who based the design on the Hell Gate Bridge in New York.

Looking at the shape of the Tyne Bridge it is very similar to the Sydney Harbour Bridge in Australia, which was completed in 1932. Because the Tyne Bridge was finished before the one down under, stories have suggested that the Sydney Harbour Bridge was based on the Tyne Bridge. This is untrue as the Sydney contract was signed first. The similarity is more likely to be that both bridges were built by the same contractors, Dorman Long and Co. of Middlesbrough.

Country links - Australia, United States of America

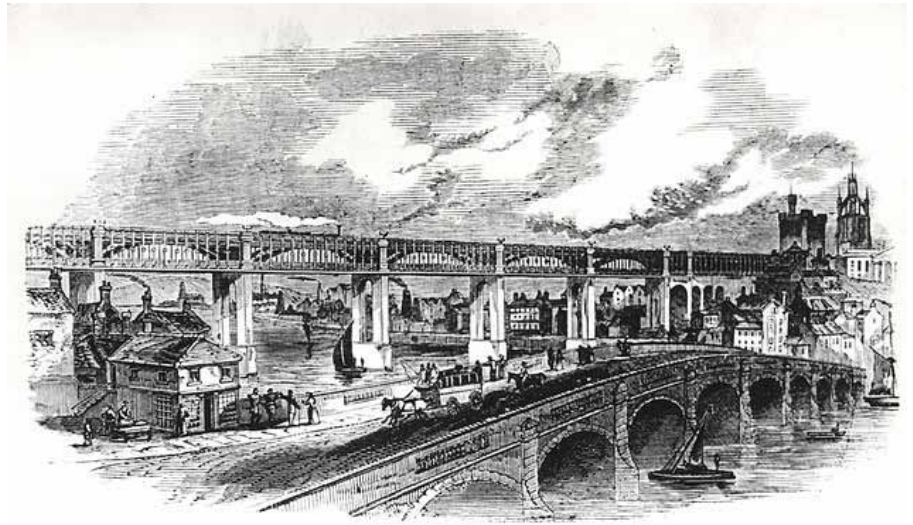
Directions 17 - Remain on the smaller bridge. Turn the other way to look at the high bridge on the other side. Listen to Track 18.

18. Roman and rail crossings

High Level Bridge and Swing Bridge

Look up and we can see another Tyne crossing, the High Level Bridge. Opened in 1850, it was the world's first combined road and railway bridge. It was built for distributing and trading coal. Coal exports were vital to Newcastle's economy.

Up to 1906 the High Level Bridge was part of a London to Edinburgh railway now known as the East Coast Main Line. Today it provides a route for trains going towards Sunderland and Middlesbrough.



The High Level Bridge in the 1870s - towering over the old Tyne Bridge
© Newcastle City Library

The High Level Bridge was designed by the famed locomotive builder and railway engineer Robert Stephenson. Stephenson built a number of railway bridges throughout Britain. His expertise was also used as both designer and advisor for railway bridges in France, Spain, Switzerland, Egypt and Canada. He also built train networks in Italy and Russia.

And what about the bridge we are standing on? This is the Swing Bridge. It gets its name as it rotates 90 degrees to allow ships to pass along the river. We heard previously that the Romans built the first bridge over the Tyne. This fell into disrepair and a stone bridge was built in 1270. This in turn was destroyed by great floods in the 18th century. It was replaced but increased shipping activity along the Tyne meant it was replaced in 1866 by the Swing Bridge. It's incredible to think that where we are standing on probably spans the point that the Romans would have crossed the river almost 2000 years ago.

Country links - Canada, Egypt, France, Italy, Russia, Spain, Switzerland

Directions 18 - Continue over the Swing Bridge. Take your time to enjoy the views. Once you are across, turn left and follow the riverside path. Pass under the Tyne Bridge and continue up to the curved silver building. Stop here and listen to Track 19.

19. Cymbals and symbols

The Sage, Gateshead

Now that we have crossed the river, we have left Newcastle and arrived in Gateshead. Gateshead is on the opposite bank of the Tyne and is a distinct borough from Newcastle. On both sides of the River Tyne, the banks are known as Quayside. Quayside was once a highly industrialised area. We will hear more about the industries that used to thrive along Gateshead and Newcastle a little later. For now, take a look at the unusual silver structure in front of us.



The Sage Gateshead
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

This strange curved building is the Sage Gateshead. It is a music educational centre, concert venue and conference building. The Sage is the home of the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra and Folk Works, an organisation that promotes international traditional music. The glass, steel and aluminium structure contains three concert halls that host a variety of music events. International acts that have performed here include Irish singer Bob Geldof, Mitsuko Uchida from Japan and the late US soul legend James Brown.

The Sage gets its name from a north east IT company who funded its construction. The building opened in 2004 as part of the regeneration of the Quayside. Today Quayside is largely a leisure and entertainment district lined with thriving bars, restaurants, music venues and art galleries. The Sage is a symbol of Tyneside's transformation.

Country links - Ireland, Japan, United States of America

Directions 19 - Pass the Sage and follow the riverside path up to the white hooped bridge. Stop when you have a good view of it or are halfway across it. Listen to Track 20.

20. Artistry from Industry

Gateshead Millennium Bridge / BALTIC Centre

This striking structure is the Gateshead Millennium Bridge, the latest Tyne crossing that connects Gateshead and Newcastle. Although it is called the Millennium Bridge it wasn't officially opened until late 2001. The curved shape echoes that of the Tyne Bridge and it is another recent landmark that represents the regeneration of Tyneside. The award-winning design was conceived by architects Wilkinson Eyre and structural engineers Gifford. The bridge was built by Dutch constructors Volker Stevin. Based in Rotterdam, Volker Stevin is one of the largest construction companies in Europe.



Gateshead Millennium Bridge and BALTIC Centre
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The Gateshead Millennium Bridge is sometimes referred to as the 'Blinking Eye Bridge' or the 'Winking Eye Bridge'. This is due to the way it allows small ships to pass underneath. The bridge rotates backwards through 40 degrees, thanks to six hydraulic rams on large bearings. Quite a different method from the Swing Bridge that we crossed earlier! And quite a different function too; - from bridges built to mobilise soldiers and transport coal we are now on a bridge made for leisure and recreation.

By the bridge, look for the tall red and yellow building with 'Baltic' written on it. It used to be a flour mill, one of several that lined the river. The mill produced flour from wheat. Much of Britain's wheat came from the Baltic countries and Britain's centre of wheat trading, the Baltic Exchange in London, was named after them. So was this mill - but most of the wheat that arrived in Newcastle came from Canada, France and Australia.

The mill closed in 1981 but in 2002 it reopened as a modern art gallery. The BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art presents a constantly changing programme of art exhibitions and events. In 2011 it hosted the Turner Prize modern art exhibition and award. It was only the second time in 25 years that the prize had been outside London and exemplified how international arts have flourished on Tyneside.

Country links - Australia, Canada, Estonia, France, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands

Directions 20 - Cross over the Millennium Bridge; again take your time to enjoy the views. Once you are across, turn left and re-join the road along the river. Pass the Law Courts then turn right into Broad Chare. Continue up to the pedestrianised section then turn left into Trinity House. Stop in the courtyard and listen to Track 21.

21. Safe passage

Trinity House

From a modern Tyneside landmark we arrive at one of the river's oldest organisations. In 1505 a group of seafarers formed a charitable guild to support the growing maritime community. Called the Guild of the Blessed Trinity of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, they looked after sailors and their families by providing financial help and accommodation.

A charitable organisation, their work today includes examining, licencing and registering deep-sea pilots. They also run maritime education and training programmes.



One of the seafaring plaques at Trinity House
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

In their early years, Trinity House played a major role improving the River Tyne for ships. In the 1500s the Tyne was described as “a tortuous, shallow stream, full of sand”. Smaller ships were often beached. In 1536 King Henry VIII awarded Trinity House a royal charter. The charter permitted the guild to impose tax on ships trading in the river - at the rate of two old pence per English ship and four pence per foreign ship! The tax helped to raise funds to improve the Tyne.

The courtyard we are in now is the centre of a complex of buildings that date from the 15th century to 1800. Take your time to look for the restored plaques and coats of arms. Also look out for a huge ship's anchor. It came from the Spanish Armada, the fleet of Spanish ships defeated by Francis Drake in the English Channel in 1588. This anchor is just one item from the large maritime collection at Trinity House. Guided tours of the buildings are available if you would like to find out more about this unique historic charity.

Country links - Spain

Directions 21 - Retrace your steps along Broad Chare and turn left. Stay on the right hand pavement and continue towards the Tyne Bridge. At the corner of King Street, stop by a sign on the wall for the Tyne-Tees Steam Shipping Company. Listen here to Track 22.

22. Sign of the past

Tyne-Tees Shipping Company boards

On the Gateshead side of the river we saw some of the latest developments along the Quayside. But what about the riverside's past? The Tyne used to be lined with ships. The river was a vital way to transport goods to London, Scotland and northern Europe. Vast quantities of coal were loaded onto ships at the riverside – if we look carefully, some of the dock equipment still survives. Further along the Tyne shipyards were established to build and repair vessels.

Newcastle's port really began to develop from the 16th century, although coal had been transported along the Tyne for at least 300 years before then.



The Quayside circa 1928 - a hive of industrial activity
© Newcastle City Library

By the 19th century, Newcastle was a major city in the Industrial Revolution. Besides shipbuilding and the coal industry, Newcastle was also a major site for printmaking, glass making and flour production. Several industrial inventions were based in Newcastle, such as railway locomotives, electric light bulbs and steam turbines that revolutionised the way ships were powered.

Sadly for Newcastle and the north east, the region's industries declined in the 20th century. We will hear more about the reasons a little later on. But on the wall of this building we can find a reminder of Newcastle's great industrial past. This preserved panel records the Tyne-Tees Steam Shipping Company which used to operate steam ferries from Newcastle. Look at the destinations; major port cities across Holland, Germany, Belgium and France. The Company transported goods as well as passengers as Newcastle's industrial wares were traded throughout Europe. Today these buildings are international restaurants and bars.

Country links - Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands

Directions 22 - Continue along the Quayside and turn into Queen Street. Go underneath the railway bridge - take care as this road is quite steep. Take a flight of steps immediately on the left. At the top stop outside the castle. Listen here to Track 23.

For a step free route: continue uphill to the top of Side and turn left. The Castle is the other side of the railway bridge

23. Oldcastle

Castle Keep and the Black Gate

We are now at the famous castle that gives this city its name. As we learned earlier, the Romans established a small settlement where Newcastle is now. To protect it, the Romans built a fort overlooking the river. After the Norman invasion in 1066, William the Conqueror's eldest son - Robert Curthose, the Duke of Normandy - built a wooden castle on the site.

This structure was called Novum Castellum or 'new castle'. Not a trace of the Norman castle remains. The stone Castle Keep we can see was built between 1172 and 1177 by Henry II.

A little further up the road is The Black Gate. The Black Gate was added to the castle between 1247 and 1250. It consisted of two towers with a passage running between them. In 1618 James I leased the gatehouse to a noble, Alexander Stephenson. Stephenson substantially altered it and let it out to various tenants. One was a merchant named Patrick Black, who supposedly gave the Black Gate its name.



Novum castellum - The Castle Keep
Nick Stanworth © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Before we move on, take a look at the building beside the castle with the columned front entrance. This is the Moot Hall, a Georgian building dating back to 1812. Described on completion as the most perfect specimen of Doric architecture in the north of England, the design is based on the Parthenon in Athens.

Country links - France, Greece

Directions 23 - Cross over at the traffic lights and turn left onto the end of Westgate Road. Continue a little way until you find a green plaque on the wall of one of the buildings. Stop here and listen to Track 24.

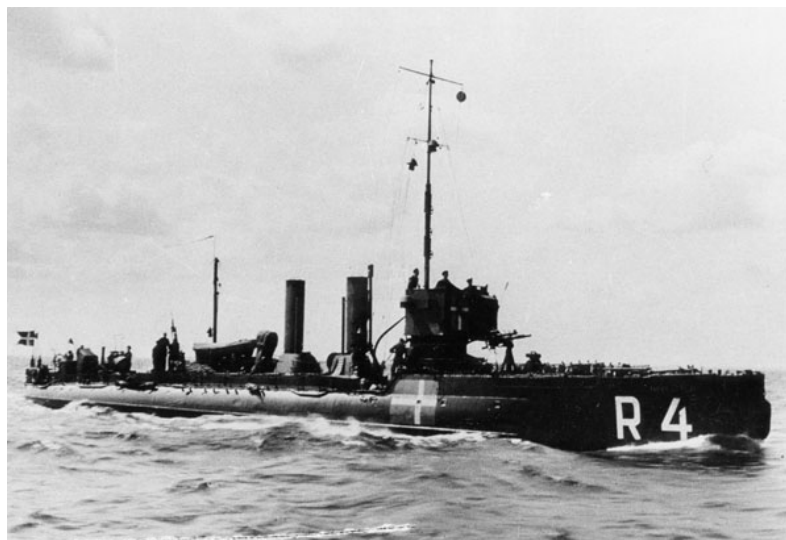
24. Brothers in arms

St Nicholas Buildings

As a port city, Newcastle has many links with Olympic and Paralympic nations through trade. Through its north east location, Newcastle has had particular bonds with Scandinavia.

In the late 19th century growing numbers of Danes began to settle in Newcastle. Newcastle traded extensively with Denmark, exchanging cargoes of butter, eggs and fresh meat. A Danish church was established in Newcastle in 1875.

Newcastle's relationship with Denmark strengthened in the Second World War.



Havkatten, a Danish minesweeper, in 1943
[Wikimedia Commons](#)

On the 9th of April 1940, Denmark was invaded by Nazi Germany. After the invasion all Danish ships in British ports and waters came under British protection. As a result, many Danish sailors fought alongside British forces. Newcastle became the home port of the Danish Merchant Navy. From 1940 to 1945 Newcastle was the official home town to some 3,000 to 4,000 Danish sailors. The St. Nicholas buildings here became the Danish Merchant Navy Reserve Pool. The sailors stayed here and set up unions and clubs.

After the war a Danish seaman's church was consecrated and a memorial book was established. The church closed in 1968 and the book and other memorials moved to London. Then in the 1980s the book returned to Newcastle, which many Danes considered the rightful place for a British memorial to their navy. In 1982 a memorial chapel was established at St Nicholas Cathedral, which we will visit on our next stop. At the St Nicholas buildings meanwhile, this plaque on the wall commemorates the Danish forces that made their temporary homes in Newcastle.

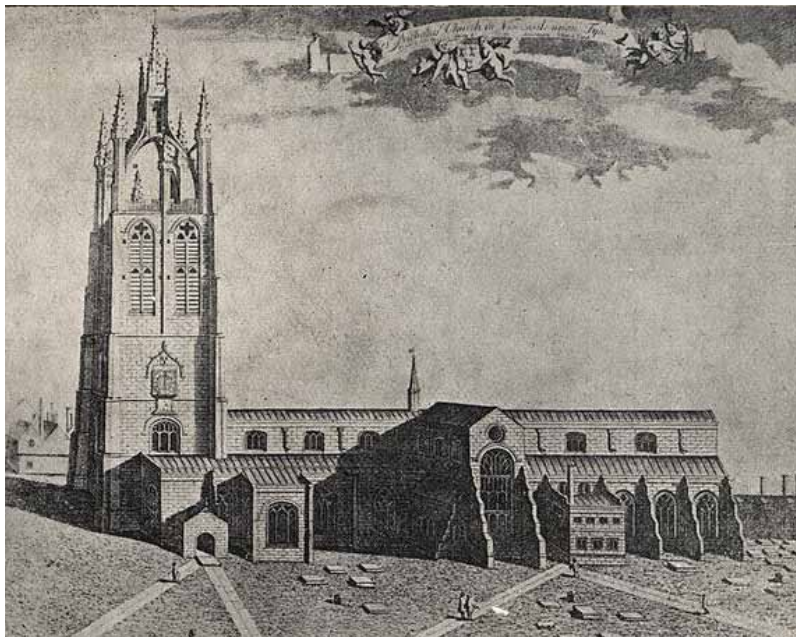
Country links - Denmark

Directions 24 - Retrace your steps and cross back over the road to the Castle. Now turn right up St Nicholas Street and pass the Black Gate. When you reach the tall church at the top of the road, stop by the statue outside and listen to Track 25.

25. Soldiers, sailors and Santa

St Nicholas Cathedral

St Nicholas Cathedral is one of the oldest buildings in Newcastle. Like many religious buildings in maritime settlements, it is named after St Nicholas the patron saint of seafarers. Nicholas was born between AD 260 and 280 in the village of Patara. At the time, Patara was Greek but it is now on the southern coast of Turkey. After the untimely death of his parents, Nicholas used his whole inheritance to help the needy. This generosity became his trademark and the stuff of legend – St Nicholas is the origin of Father Christmas!



St Nicholas Cathedral, 1715
© Newcastle City Library

St Nicholas Cathedral was originally built as a parish church in 1091 but this was destroyed by fire.

Once rebuilt (in 1359) it took another 500 years before it became a cathedral. This happened in 1882 when the diocese of Newcastle was created by Queen Victoria. Outside the cathedral this bronze statue shows Queen Victoria in full regalia – and not just as Queen but Empress of India. Queen Victoria had taken the title Empress of India in 1876, as Britain was consolidating its political and economic interests on the Indian subcontinent. At the time, India comprised present-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

Look up and we can see a notable feature of the Cathedral, the unusual lantern tower and spire. For hundreds of years, it was a navigation point for ships using the River Tyne. Inside meanwhile are a number of memorials, including the Danish Chapel we heard about at the previous stop. The Danish chapel includes a memorial book and memorial window, which features the coats of arms of Copenhagen, Marstal and Århus.

Also look out for the “Thornton Brass”, a memorial to Roger Thornton. He was a merchant and three times Mayor of Newcastle. His memorial dates from 1441 and is a particularly fine example of a Flemish Brass from Belgium.

Another memorial to look for is that of Admiral Lord Collingwood. He was a hero of the Battle of Trafalgar, a sea battle fought in 1815 where Lord Nelson's British forces defeated those of France and Spain. Lord Collingwood was a great friend of Nelson's and served under him off the coast of Portugal and the West Indies, namely Jamaica, as well as a failed expedition to cross Central America by navigating ships through Nicaragua. Worldwide there are several towns named Collingwood after him including Collingwood in New Zealand plus towns in Ontario in Canada and in Melbourne, Australia.



Lord Collingwood's tomb
© Peter Salmon via Geograph.org.uk

Country links - Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Greece, India, Jamaica, Myanmar, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Portugal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey

Directions 25 - When you are ready, leave the Cathedral and cross over the end of St Nicholas' Street. Continue along the left hand side and stop by The Literary and Philosophical Society building. Listen to Track 26.

26. An enlightening society

The Literary and Philosophical Society

From a grand religious building we arrive at a rather smaller site. However, there are fascinating links to many of the Olympic and Paralympic nations inside. This small building is the home of the Literary and Philosophical Society, often known as the Lit and Phil. The Society was founded in 1793 as a 'conversation club' by the Reverend William Turner and other notable locals. Membership was by annual subscription, which was originally one guinea (or £1 and five pence today).



Duck-billed platypus, from Gould's Mammals of Australia (1863)
Wikimedia Commons

The Lit and Phil is famous for its extensive library. It is Britain's largest independent library outside London, housing some 160,000 books. The music library contains 8,000 CDs and 10,000 LPs. From the outset the extensive collection contained works in French, Spanish, German and Latin. Contacts were international and members debated a wide range of issues - however religion and politics were prohibited!

The current Lit and Phil premises date from 1825. Various ground-breaking demonstrations of new technology also took place here. During a lecture by Sir Joseph Swan in October 1880, the lecture theatre was the first public room to be lit by electric light. Another guest speaker was Oscar Wilde - maybe fresh from the Tyne Theatre!

The Lit and Phil also received Britain's first specimens of the wombat and the duck-billed platypus. These Australian animals arrived here in 1800 as a gift from John Hunter. Hunter was Governor of New South Wales in Australia, and an honorary member of the Lit and Phil.

Country links - Australia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain

Directions 26 - Stop outside the building next to the Lit and Phil Society and listen to Track 27.

27. Coals to Newcastle

The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers

Next to the Lit and Phil this building also had a major role in Newcastle's history. We are now outside the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers. Coal mining was at the heart of Newcastle's development from a small town to a major industrial city.

Coal was first exported from Newcastle in the mid-13th century. Then in 1530 a Royal Act created a monopoly in coal exports which made Newcastle very wealthy. The famous phrase 'carry coals to Newcastle' was first recorded at this time. It defines a pointless activity or a waste of time - Newcastle was already so brimming with coal that importing any into the town was needless.



Westoe Colliery, South Shields circa 1965
© Newcastle City Library

In the 19th century demand for coal was vast; it was used to power trains, ships, domestic fires and early electrical systems. Coal made Newcastle rich but conditions for the miners were poor. As mines were built deeper underground to meet demand, safety levels declined as well. From 1800 there were 30 major colliery disasters in Durham and Northumberland. Over 1,500 men and boys died in north east mines. So the Institute were established in 1851 to promote safety in mining.

A registered charity, today the Institute is home to the world's largest mining library. Its archives and offices are reminders of a once huge industry. Newcastle's coal trade declined rapidly in the 20th century. Reserves ran low and demand fell due to Middle East then North Sea oil. The last coal mine with a border to Newcastle closed in 1956.

By then the famous phrase 'carry coals to Newcastle' took on a surprising new meaning. In New South Wales in Australia is a harbour town also called Newcastle. It was named after Newcastle upon Tyne because huge coal supplies were discovered there in the 1790s. Today this Newcastle in Australia exports over 90 million tonnes of coal each year. It is the largest coal exporter in the modern world.

Country links - Australia

Directions 27 - Continue a little further along the road, past the statue of Robert Stephenson then stop outside Newcastle Central Station. Listen to Track 28.

28. Building Bridges

Newcastle Central Station



The Tyne Bridge under construction, 1928
Wikimedia Commons



The Tyne Bridge and Gateshead Millennium Bridge
Nick Stanworth © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

We have now arrived at the end of our walk, back at Newcastle Central Station. The station provides an appropriate place to end as its presence reflects the changes that much of the city has experienced. The railway was a symbol of Newcastle's industrial importance. Trains provided a modern and efficient way of exporting Newcastle's goods and also brought people to the city from around the world. And John Dobson's neo-classical building is a typical example of the way Newcastle was redeveloped during the construction of Grainger Town.

Redevelopment has been central to Newcastle's history. We have seen many examples during our walk today; the Swing Bridge that succeeded a Roman bridge, a friary and shipping company office that are now restaurants, the flour mill that is now an art gallery. We have seen bridges built to transport coal sit alongside ones made for leisure. We have also seen how Newcastle's industries - such as coal mining, ship building and wool production - have been superseded by entertainment, arts and leisure venues.

And throughout the story, Olympic and Paralympic nations have played a role; the French nobles who built the castle that gave the city its name, the Danish sailors who fought from the Tyne, the Chinese community that have added to the city's vibrancy. Though the economy may have evolved, the population has too. Newcastle has always been an international city.

Newcastle is connected to the rest of Britain by the bridges over the Tyne - but also by social, cultural and historical bridges. Exploring this evolving northern city is a great way to celebrate London 2012. On the walk we have found evidence of links to 55 of the Olympic and Paralympic participating nations. Maybe you spotted more. If you did, please let us know. And if you enjoyed this walk, look on the Walk the World website and you will find more in different parts of Britain that you can try. Why not think about creating your own walk?

Credits

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Visit www.walktheworld.org.uk

- Submit your own links
- Search for other walks
- Find out how to create your own walk

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