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Building bridges

A free self-guided walk in Newcastle



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Contents

Introduction	4
Route map	5
Practical information	6
Detailed maps	8
Commentary	10
Further information	34
Credits	35

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The
Heritage
Alliance



Building bridges

Discover how industry and the arts made Newcastle a global city

Newcastle-upon-Tyne is one of the major cities of north east England. Newcastle came into its own in the nineteenth century. Fuelled by coal and oiled by the River Tyne, the city attracted trades, goods and people from around the world.

In later years however Newcastle's industries experienced severe decline. The city had to reinvent itself and it has since become a vibrant centre for the arts. This walk explores how Newcastle has constantly adapted since it was founded by the Romans.



Newcastle's medieval Tyne Bridge
© Newcastle City Library



The Tyne Bridge, Newcastle
© Rory Walsh

We will find out about some of the international industries and communities that have shaped Newcastle and visit some of the key sites in the city's history - including a castle, a friary, a Premier League football stadium, "Britain's finest street" and the city's world-famous riverside.

This walk in Newcastle was originally created for a series called Walk the World. These 20 walks explored Britain's links with the 206 participating nations in the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Along the routes we discovered many countries have been part of the UK's history for many centuries and shaped our towns and cities

Route overview



Practical information

Location	Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northeast England
Getting there	<p>Train - Newcastle is very well served by the national rail network. Direct services include the East Coast Main Line (London Kings's Cross - Edinburgh), CrossCountry services to Yorkshire, the Midlands and South West, TransPennine services to Manchester and Liverpool.</p> <p>Bus - Served by a variety of local bus routes and long distance coaches. There are two bus stations, Haymarket and Eldon Square. The latter is closest to the walk route.</p> <p>Car - Major roads include A1 to Edinburgh and London and the A19 to Sunderland and Middlebrough. Some city centre parking though charges apply.</p>
Start & finish point	Newcastle Central railway station, NE1 5DL
Distance	2 ½ miles
Level	Moderate - a busy city centre walk with a few slopes and one steep flight of steps.
Suitable for	<p>Families - plenty of sights to entertain children</p> <p>Dogs - must be kept on a lead</p>
Terrain	The route is along urban pavements and paved footpaths. There are steep steps leading to the Castle Keep, so alternate step-free directions are provided.

Conditions

Take care when crossing busy roads and at the riverside edge. The section by the River Tyne can be breezy.

Refreshments

There are numerous cafés, pubs and restaurants along the route. Eldon Square (Stop 11) is ideal to stop for a packed lunch.

Toilets

Public toilets are available in the city centre and inside the museums.

Other info

Newcastle city centre can be very busy at weekends. The area around St James' Park (Stop 10) can be very busy on match days.

Family-friendly activities

The BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art is open daily from 10am to 6pm, except Tuesdays open at 10.30am. Free entry. Email: info@balticmill.com Tel: 0191 478 1810

The Castle Keep is open 10am to 5pm Mondays to Saturdays, from 12 midday on Sundays. Small entrance charge. Tel: 0191 232 7938

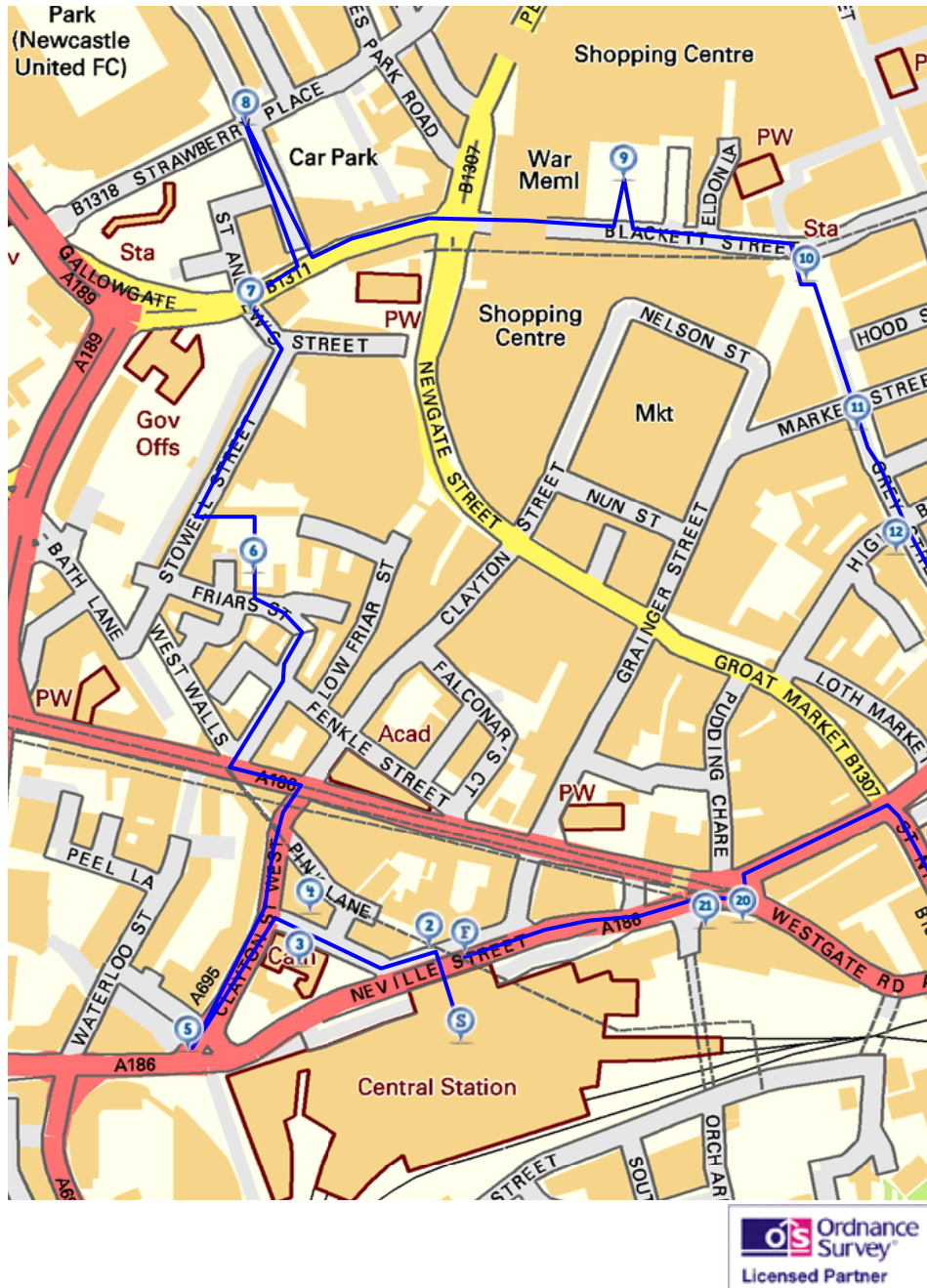
The Life Science Centre is open from 10am Mondays to Saturdays, 11am on Sundays. Closing times vary. Charges apply. Tel: 0191 243 8210 Email: info@life.org.uk

Tours are available of **St James' Park**. Charges apply. Booking essential. Email: stadium.tours@nufc.co.uk. Tel: 0844 3721892

Tourist information

Newcastle-upon-Tyne Visitor Information Centre is located at 8-9 Central Arcade, which is just off Market Street (near Stops 13-15) Tel: 0191 2778000

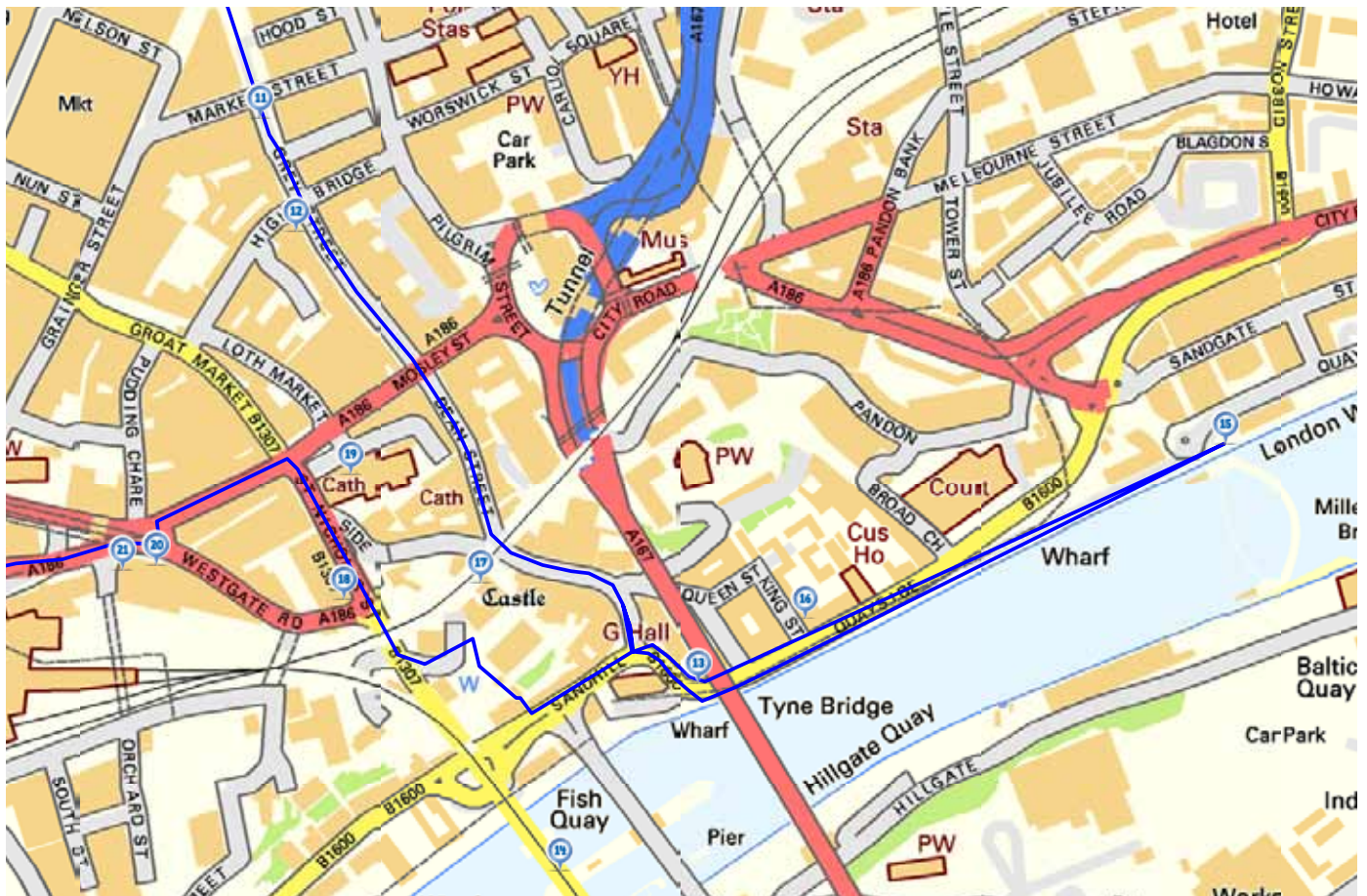
Detail of the first part of the route



Stopping points

- | | |
|--|--|
| S & F. Newcastle Central Station | 6. Blackfriars |
| 2. Newcastle Central Station | 7. Chinese Arch and Tyneside Irish Centre |
| 3. St Mary's Cathedral | 8. St James' Park |
| 4. Newcastle Chinese Christian Church | 9. Eldon Square |
| 5. International Centre For Life | 10. Grey's Monument |

Detail of the second part of the route



Stopping points

- 11.** Grey Street
- 12.** 53 Grey Street
- 13.** View of the Tyne Bridge
- 14.** High Level Bridge and Swing Bridge
- 15.** Gateshead Millennium Bridge and BALTIC Centre For Contemporary Art
- 16.** Tyne-Tees Shipping Company boards
- 17.** Castle Keep and the Black Gate
- 18.** St Nicholas Buildings
- 19.** St Nicholas Cathedral
- 20.** The Literary and Philosophical Society
- 21.** The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers

1. Welcome to Newcastle

Newcastle Central Station, Neville Street

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, usually 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 was awarded city status during the Industrial Revolution.

Fuelled by coal and oiled by the Tyne, Newcastle attracted people, goods and trades from around the world. The bridges that were built across the Tyne became city landmarks and symbols of Newcastle's success.

Newcastle's industries however, including coal mining and shipping, went through severe decline and closure from the 1960s. 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 and hear about some of the international communities that have shaped Newcastle's development.

We will discover how Newcastle is connected to the rest of Britain by the bridges over the Tyne - but also by social, cultural and historical bridges.



Top: Newcastle seen from New Chatham. Gateshead in an engraving by William Miller (1832)
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)

Above: Neville Street (1927) courtesy of www.oldukphotos.com

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.

2. A station fit for a queen

Newcastle Central Station, Neville Street

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. The term 'neo-classical' refers to later buildings inspired by that style.

The columns, arches and elaborate stonework we can see here are all typical Classical features. Along the walk keep an eye out for more buildings with neo-classical design features – such as columns, porticos and stepped bases.

Dobson's design won an award at the Paris Exhibition of 1858. His original plan for the station was for a double row of columns and an Italian style tower at the end. Unfortunately, Dobson was forced to alter his original plan to something less grand without the tower. Even so, Newcastle Central is still a magnificent architectural achievement.

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 tall spire. Stop beside the statue outside of Cardinal Basil Hume.

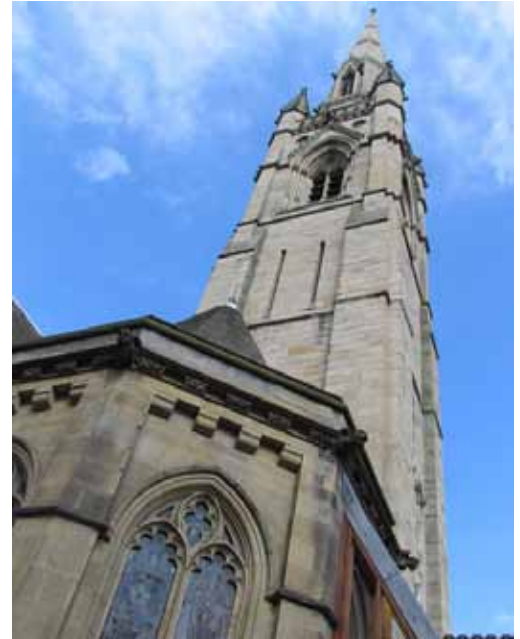
3. The Irish Brigade

St Mary's Cathedral, Neville Street

This imposing building is St Mary's Cathedral. It was built between 1842 and 1844. It looks much older though because of its Gothic Revival design. 'Gothic' describes a dramatic and ornate building style that began in southern Europe from the twelfth century.

Gothic Revival was very popular from the early nineteenth 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.

St Mary's has several Irish connections, partly due to the large Irish Catholic community in Newcastle. Inside St Mary's are memorials 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.



St Mary's Cathedral spire
© Rory Walsh

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.



Cardinal Hume statue
© Rory Walsh

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

Directions 3

From the statue bear right through the Cathedral courtyard. Stop opposite the Chinese Christian Church across the road.

4. Chinese Christians

Newcastle Chinese Christian Church, Bewick Street



Newcastle Chinese Christian Church (left) and Chinese lanterns in Stowell Street (right)
© Rory Walsh

We are now by another church. It looks rather different from St Mary's Cathedral doesn't it? The building reflects a recent religious community in the city.

The Newcastle Chinese Christian Church provides a place of worship for the Newcastle's significant and growing Chinese population. Besides residents, they include many Chinese students at the universities. In fact small groups of Chinese students helped to establish the Newcastle Chinese Christian Fellowship, or NCCF, in the 1970s.

At the heart of Newcastle's Chinese community is the area known as Chinatown, which we will see later on. According to the 2001 census, the majority of religious Chinese people in Newcastle are Christian. In China the predominant religion is Buddhism. Under communist rule, religious diversity was suppressed but in recent decades with more relaxed governance, Christianity has grown in Chinese communities.

Directions 4

Facing the Chinese church, turn left. With the cathedral on your left continue up to the traffic lights. Turn left into Clayton Street. At the end of the road use the first set of traffic lights and stop in the central reservation opposite the Centre For Life building.

5. Life sciences

International Centre For Life



The Centre For Life complex
© Rory Walsh

This eye-catching structure is the International Centre for Life. The building is a science village, 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.

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. Overall nearly 600 people from 35 countries work here.

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.

Directions 5

With the Centre For Life behind you cross back over the road. Turn left and retrace your steps past St Mary's Cathedral. Continue to the end of the road then use the traffic light crossings to turn left into Westgate Road. Take the first right into Cross Street. At the end bear left into the narrow cobbled Friars Street. Follow the street round to the left and you will reach an old stone building. Go through the entrance arch and into the courtyard.

6. Friars' retreat

Blackfriars, Friars Street

During the early years of the thirteenth century, orders of monks began to establish themselves in England. By the fourteenth century Newcastle had five different friaries including Whitefriars of the Carmelite order, Austinfriars of the Augustinian order, Greyfriars of the Franciscan order and the Trinitarian friars.

The courtyard we are in now is the remains of Blackfriars, the Dominican order established in 1239. The Dominican order was founded by St Dominic, from Osma in Spain, shortly after 1200. This friary covered seven acres with two gardens and four small closes.



Engraving of Blackfriars (1784)
© Newcastle City Library



Blackfriars gardens
© Rory Walsh

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.

During the fourteenth century, the friary hosted royal visitors. For example, in 1334 Edward III of England and Edward Balliol, the claimant to the Scottish throne, met here. Newcastle's friaries were dissolved after the Reformation of 1536 and the land was sold to wealthy merchants.

Today Blackfriars is home to a restaurant, museum and craft workshops. We will see many other examples of preservation and regeneration later in the walk.

Directions 6

When you are ready, leave the friary courtyard through a gate opposite the arch you came in. Turn left and follow the path onto Stowell Street, lined with lanterns and Chinese shops. Turn right then continue to the end. Then turn left onto St Andrew's Street. Stop in front of the ornate Chinese arch.

7. The North East Far East

Chinese arch and Tyneside Irish Centre

We are entering 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 this Chinese arch.



The Chinese arch and Tyneside Irish Centre
© Rory Walsh

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. On the main panel in the centre of the arch are symbols of 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. Beside the arch is the Tyneside Irish Centre. 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 Tyne coal mines and many of the present Irish community in Newcastle are descendants of these original migrants.



Symbols of Newcastle on the Chinese arch
© Rory Walsh

Directions 7

Pass through the arch and cross over the road. Stop here and look back for for a good view of Newcastle's medieval town walls. Then continue into Strawberry Lane. At the end of this road, stop at a safe place in front of the sports stadium.

8. Goal!

St James' Park

The enormous stadium towering above is 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 plus Peter Beardsley, Chris Waddle and Paul Gascoigne.



St James' Park (1927)

Courtesy of www.britainfromabove.org.uk © English Heritage

Football has long been an international sport and players from many 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 also briefly the home of Mirandinha, the first Brazilian to play for an English club. In recent years Newcastle United's players have come from many countries including France, the Czech Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Columbia, Georgia, DR Congo, Peru, Nigeria, Senegal and Argentina.

This stadium has also held many international matches. England have played here against Azerbaijan, the Ukraine, Albania and Norway. During the 1996 European Championships, the stadium held group games for France, Bulgaria and Romania. It also hosted matches during the London 2012 Olympic Games. Teams from Mexico, South Korea, Gabon, Switerland, Japan, Morocco, Spain, Honduras, Brazil and New Zealand all played here. The stadium is also going to be used as a venue for the 2015 Rugby World Cup.

Directions 8

Retrace your steps down Strawberry Lane and turn left into Gallowgate. At the end of Gallowgate, cross over the busy junction at a safe place and continue under the shopping centre arch. A square lined with benches will appear on your left. Stop in the square with a good view of the statue in the middle.

9. 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 international connections 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.

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.



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

There are depictions of St George throughout the world. The earliest have been traced to eleventh century Georgia, Turkey and Armenia. St George became a figurehead of England when the Crusaders brought back stories about him from the Middle East.

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 are dedicated to different legions. 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.

Directions 9

When you are ready leave Eldon Square and turn left onto Blakett Street. Continue until you reach a column with a statue on the top. Stop facing the statue.

10. 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.



Earl Grey tea
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)



Earl Grey statue
© Rory Walsh

The column of Grey's Monument was designed by local architects John and Benjamin Green. Incredibly, 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.

Directions 10

With your back to Grey's Monument continue down the right hand side of Grey Street (the pedestrianised road the statue is looking along). Cross over Market Street and immediately stop with the Theatre Royal across the road on your left. Look down the length of Grey Street as it curves downhill.

11. Britain's finest street

Grey Street



Grey Street in 1874 and 2014
© Newcastle City Library / Rory Walsh

We are now in a district of Newcastle called Grainger Town. Grainger Town is Newcastle's historic heart. It got its name as it was planned and built between 1824 and 1841 under the direction of architect Richard Grainger. 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.

This street and others surrounding it was shaped by neo-classical designs. Neo-classical features to look for are the Corinthian columns that decorate the front of some of the buildings, such as the Tyne Theatre. 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.

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".

Directions 11

Continue along the right hand side of Grey Street, taking your time to look at the spectacular buildings. Stop when you find number 53 with a round plaque on the wall.

12. 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.

His consular duties in Newcastle included dispatching detailed reports to the Portuguese foreign office about unrest in the Northumberland and Durham coalfields. 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 the British cold weather, he spent 15 years here; 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.



José Maria de Eça de Queiroz (1882)
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)

Directions 12

Continue all the way to the bottom of Grey Street and into Dean Street. Continue under the high bridge and turn left at the mini roundabout onto the pedestrianised road called the Side. Follow it downhill and take the right fork. The arched Tyne Bridge will appear on your left. Cross over the road at the traffic lights underneath the bridge.

13. Icon of Newcastle

Tyne Bridge

We have now arrived at the River Tyne. Above 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 seven bridges over the River Tyne that link Newcastle with the town of 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

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. It 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.

Directions 13

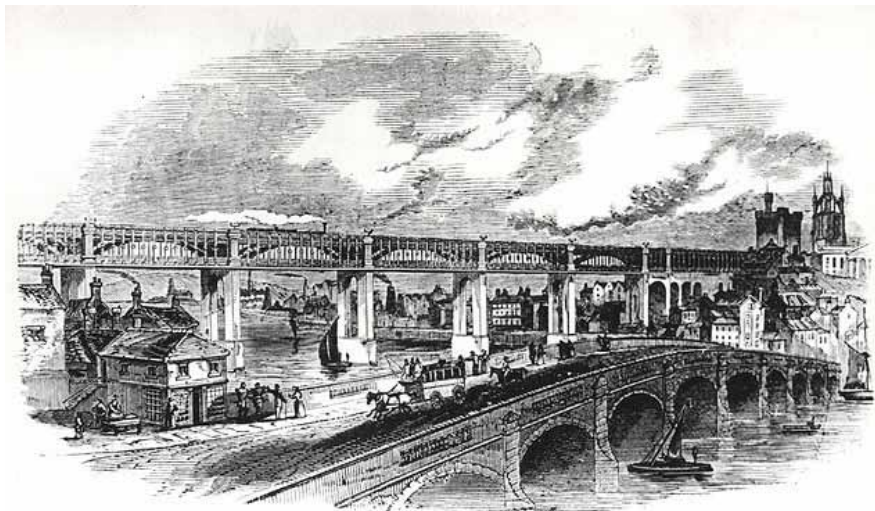
Remain by the Tyne Bridge. Turn to the right to look at the two bridges downstream.

14. Roman and rail crossings

High Level Bridge and Swing Bridge

Look along the river and we can see two more Tyne crossings. The taller one is 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.

The colourful lower structure 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 eighteenth century. It was replaced but increased shipping activity along the Tyne meant the Swing Bridge was built in its place in 1866. It's incredible to think that the Swing Bridge spans the point that the Romans would have crossed the Tyne almost 2,000 years ago.

Directions 14

Turn left and pass underneath the Tyne Bridge. Keep the river on your right and follow the riverside path. Take your time and enjoy the views. Pass the curved silver building (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.

15. Artistry from Industry

Gateshead Millennium Bridge and BALTIC

This striking structure is the Gateshead Millennium Bridge. Gateshead is a town on the opposite bank of the Tyne from Newcastle. Gateshead Millennium Bridge and the Sage concert venue we just passed are landmarks of the recent regeneration of Tyneside.



Gateshead Millennium Bridge and BALTIC Centre
© Rory Walsh

The Gateshead Millennium Bridge was officially opened in 2001. The award-winning design recalls the Tyne Bridge and it was built by Dutch constructors Volker Stevin. It is sometimes referred to as the 'Blinking Eye Bridge' or the 'Winking Eye Bridge' because of the way it allows 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 a red and yellow building with 'Baltic' written on it. It used to be a flour mill, one of several that lined the river. Flour was produced by grinding wheat. Most of the wheat in Newcastle was shipped from Canada, France and Australia. Britain's largest wheat suppliers were the Baltic countries, which is how this mill and the centre of British wheat trading, the Baltic Exchange in London, got their name.

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.

Directions 15

From the Millennium Bridge retrace your steps and follow the path with the river on your left. When you reach the Sage cross over the road at the traffic lights. Turn left and continue towards the Tyne Bridge. At the corner of King Street, stop and look behind you for a sign on the wall for the Tyne-Tees Steam Shipping Company.

16. Sign of the past

Tyne-Tees Shipping Company boards, King Street

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. Further along the Tyne shipyards were established to build and repair vessels.

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



The Quayside - a hive of industrial activity (c.1928)
© Newcastle City Library

By the nineteenth 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.



Newcastle industries on the Tyne - Spillers and Bakers Mill (1924) and the Walker shipyard (1927)
Courtesy of www.britainfromabove.org.uk © English Heritage

Sadly for Newcastle and the north east, the region's industries declined in the twentieth century. 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 to 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.



Tyne-Tees Shipping Company board
© Nick Stanworth

Directions 16

Continue underneath the Tyne Bridge. Follow the pavement as it turns right then left past some timber fronted buildings. Before you reach the High Level Bridge look for a set of steps on the right called the Castle Stairs. Follow the stairs up to the Castle Keep - do take your time. When you reach the top stop outside the castle.

For a step-free route: Turn right into King Street then turn left into Queen Street. Pass under the Tyne Bridge and bear right onto the Side. Continue uphill to the top of the Side - again take your time - and turn left at the mini roundabout under the High Level Bridge. When you reach the top of the road you will arrive to the right of the Black Gate. The Castle is past the Black Gate on the left hand side.

17. Oldcastle

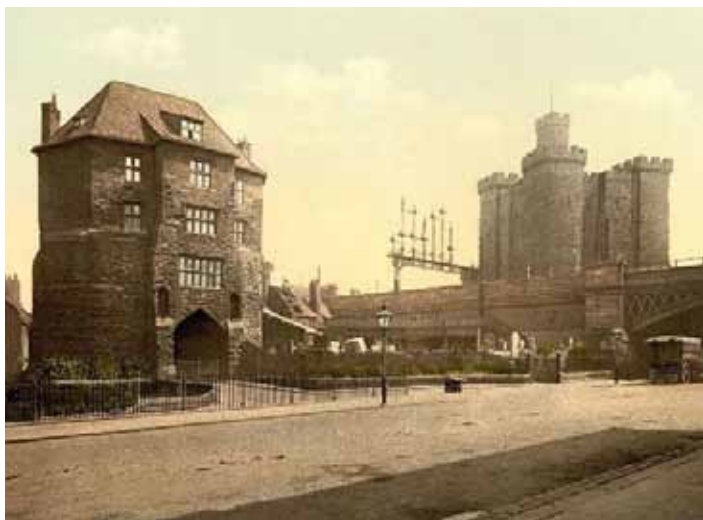
Castle Keep and the Black Gate

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, they 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.



Novum castellum - The Castle Keep
© Nick Stanworth



Postcard of the Black Gate and Castle Keep (c.1905)
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)

A little further up the road is The Black Gate, which 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.

Directions 17

With the Castle Keep on your right, cross under the bridge. Continue up to the Black Gate. Stop with your back to the Black Gate and look at the building across the road.

18. Brothers in arms

St Nicholas buildings, Westgate Road

As a port city, Newcastle has many international links through trade. Its north east location means Newcastle has had particular bonds with Scandinavia.

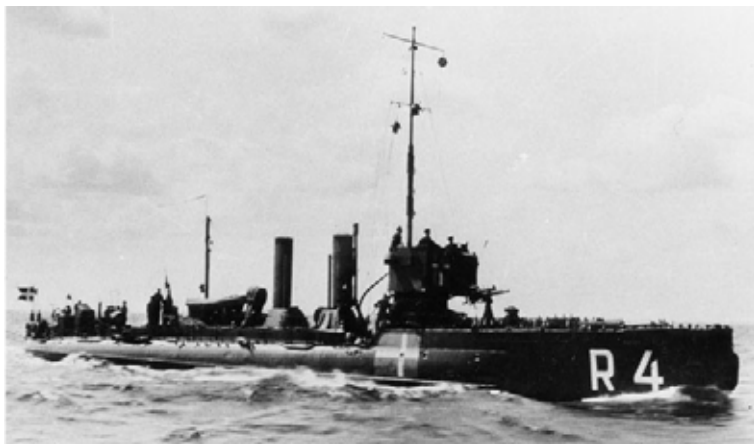
In the late nineteenth century growing numbers of Danes began to settle in Newcastle. Newcastle traded extensively with Denmark, exchanging cargoes of butter, eggs and fresh meat. A Danish church was established in Newcastle in 1875.

Newcastle's relationship with Denmark strengthened in the Second World War. In April 1940 Denmark was invaded by Nazi Germany. 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.



St Nicholas buildings Danish plaque
© Rory Walsh



Havkatten, a Danish minesweeper (1943)
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)

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 1982 the book returned to Newcastle as a memorial chapel was established at St Nicholas Cathedral.

Today a plaque on the wall of the St Nicholas buildings commemorates the Danish forces that made their temporary homes in Newcastle.

Directions 18

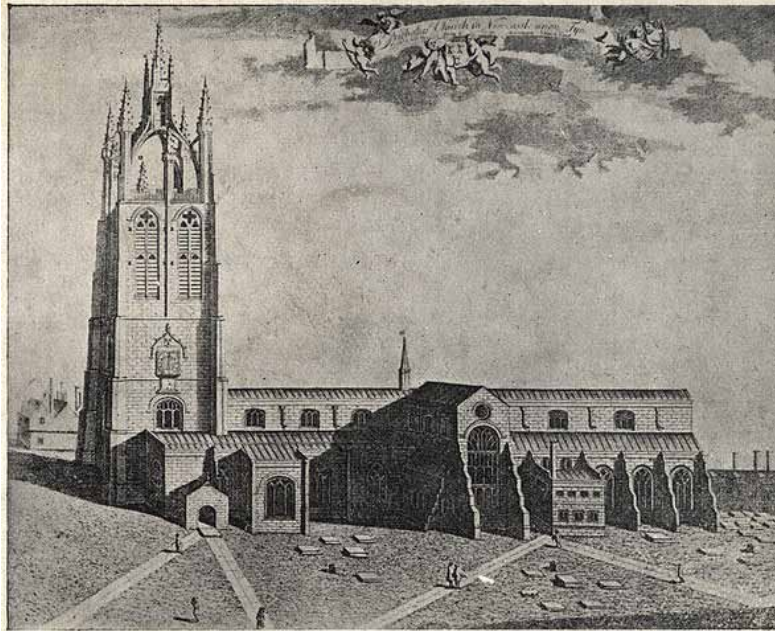
Continue along the right hand side of Westgate Road. Head towards the church with a spire. When you reach it, turn right at the junction and stop by the statue outside.

19. Soldiers, sailors and Santa

St Nicholas Cathedral, St Nicholas' Street

St Nicholas Cathedral is one of the oldest buildings in Newcastle. Look up and we can see the Cathedral's unusual lantern tower and spire. For hundreds of years, it was a navigation point for ships using the River Tyne.

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 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



Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee portrait (1893)
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)

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 five centuries before it became a cathedral. This happened when Queen Victoria created the diocese of Newcastle in 1882.

Outside the cathedral a 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.

Inside the cathedral meanwhile are a number of memorials, including the Danish Chapel we heard about at the previous stop. The memorial window features the coats of arms of Copenhagen, Marstal and Århus.

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 in Jamaica, as well as a failed expedition to cross Central America by navigating ships through Nicaragua. Worldwide there are several towns named after him including Collingwood in New Zealand plus towns in Ontario in Canada and in Melbourne, Australia.

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.



The Thornton Brass
© Nick Stanworth

Directions 19

When you are ready, leave the Cathedral. Use the traffic islands at the end of St Nicholas' Street to turn left into the left hand side of Collingwood Street. At the junction use the traffic island to the left to cross over to The Literary and Philosophical Society building at the end of Westgate Road.

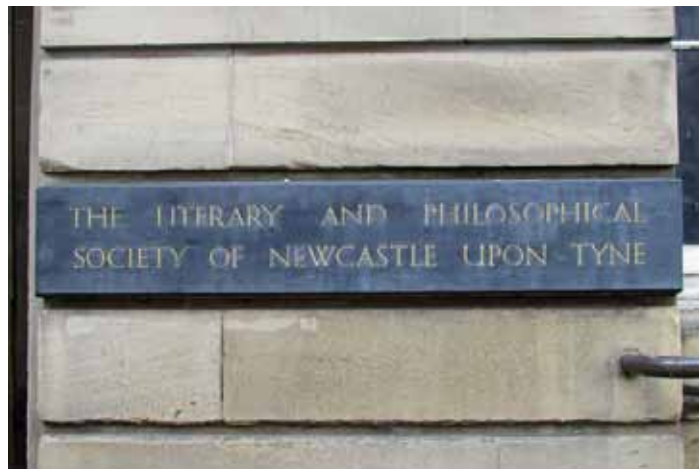
20. An enlightening society

The Literary and Philosophical Society

From a grand religious building we arrive at a rather smaller site. This is the home of the Literary and Philosophical Society. Often known as the 'Lit and Phil', it was founded in 1793 as a 'conversation club'. Contacts were international and members debated a wide range of issues - however religion and politics were prohibited!

The Society is famous for its extensive library. It is Britain's largest independent library outside London, housing some 160,000 books. From the outset the extensive collection contained works in French, Spanish, German and Latin.

The current premises date from 1825. Various ground-breaking demonstrations of new technology 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.



The Lit and Phil entrance sign
© Rory Walsh



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

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. He was Governor of New South Wales in Australia and an honorary member of the Society.

Directions 20

Next door to the Literary and Philosophical Society is a building with metal railings outside. Stop in front of it.

21. 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 'coals to Newcastle' was first recorded at this time. It defines a futile activity - as Newcastle was so brimming with coal importing any into the town was needless.



Westoe Colliery, South Shields (c.1965)
© Newcastle City Library

In the nineteenth 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 twentieth 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 phrase '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 is the largest coal exporter in the modern world, exporting over 90 million tonnes each year.

Directions 21

Continue along the road as it joins Neville Street. Pass the statue of Robert Stephenson on the island on the right then stop outside Newcastle Central Station where we began.

22. Building bridges

Newcastle Central Station



The Tyne Bridge under construction (1928)
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)



The bridges over the Tyne (2012)
© Rory Walsh

We have now arrived at the end of our walk, back at Newcastle Central Station. The station is an appropriate place to finish 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, including the Swing Bridge that succeeded a Roman bridge or a friary and shipping company office that are now restaurants. 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 sport venues.

Throughout the story, many countries 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. As the city's economy has evolved, so has its population. Newcastle has always been an international city - exploring Newcastle today we have found evidence of links to 60 different nations.

Further information

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

www.balticmill.com

Bridges on the Tyne

www.bridgesonthetyne.co.uk

Castle Keep

www.castlekeep-newcastle.org.uk

Centre for Life

www.life.org.uk

The Danish Church in Newcastle

www.danskekirke-newcastle.co.uk

The Literary and Philosophical Society

www.litandphil.org.uk

Newcastle Chinese Christian Fellowship

www.nccf.org.uk

Newcastle Quayside

www.newcastlequayside.co.uk

Newcastle United FC

www.nufc.co.uk

North of England Institute and Mechanical Engineers

www.mininginstitute.org.uk

St Mary's Cathedral

www.stmaryscathedral.org.uk

St Nicholas Cathedral

www.stnicholascathedral.co.uk

Credits

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