



Royal
Geographical
Society
with IBG

Building bridges

A free self-guided walk in Newcastle



www.walktheworld.org.uk

Find Explore Walk







Contents

Introduction	4
Route map	5
Practical information	6
Detailed maps	8
Commentary	10
Credits	38

© The Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers, London, 2013

Walk the World is part of Discovering Places, the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad campaign to inspire the UK to discover their local environment. Walk the World is delivered in partnership by the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) with Discovering Places (The Heritage Alliance) and is principally funded by the National Lottery through the Olympic Lottery Distributor. The digital and print maps used for Walk the World are licensed to RGS-IBG from Ordnance Survey.



The
Heritage
Alliance



Building bridges

Discover how industry and the arts made Newcastle a global city

Welcome to Walk the World! This walk in Newcastle is one 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 countries have shaped our towns and cities.

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.



Newcastle's medieval Tyne Bridge
© Newcastle City Library

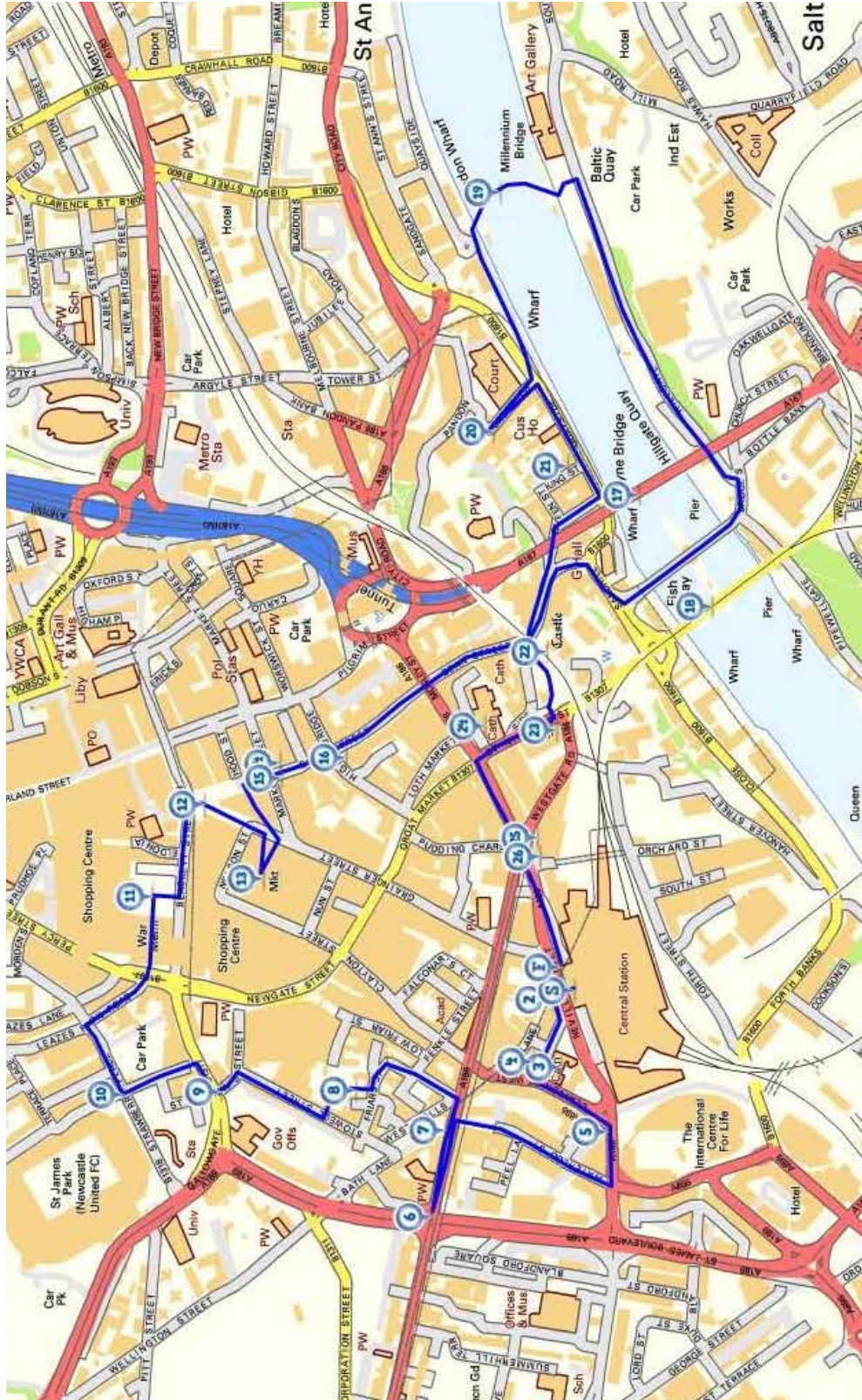


The River Tyne, Newcastle
Nick Stanworth © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

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 formed by the Romans. You can hear 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 its world-famous bridges.

Route overview



Practical information

Location	Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northeast England
Getting there	<p>Train - Very well served by the national rail network. Direct services include the East Coast Main Line (London Kings's Cross to 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	3 ½ miles
Level	Moderate - a busy city centre walk with a few slopes and one steep hill.
Suitable for	Families - plenty of sights to entertain children, take care at the river's edge and crossing busy roads.
Conditions	The route is along pavements and paved footpaths. Take care crossing busy roads. The section by the River Tyne can be breezy so wrap up warm. Steep steps at Castle Keep, alternate directions are given.

Refreshments

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

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 when opening is at 10.30am. Free entry. Tel: 0191 4781810

The Castle Keep is open 10am to 5pm Mondays to Saturdays and 12 midday to 5pm on Sundays. Entry £4 for adults, under 18s free. Tel: 0191 232 7938

Newcastle's Life Science Centre is open daily from 10am to 6pm Mondays to Saturdays, 11am to 6pm on Sundays.

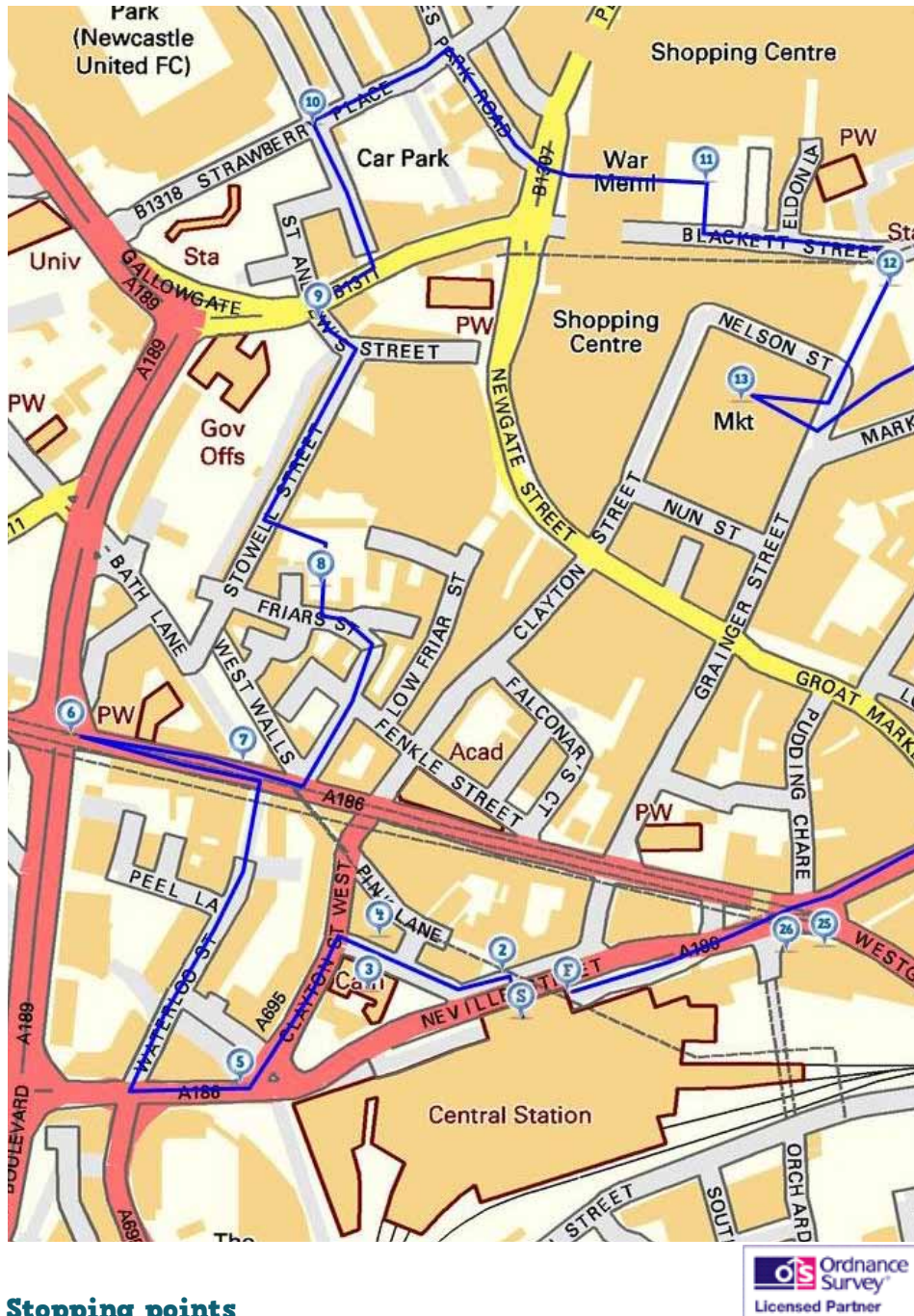
Tours are available of **St James' Park** stadium, £10 adults, £7 concs, £5 children. Booking essential. Tel: 0844 372 1892

The **Theatre Royal** is open daily all year; opening times vary according to performances. Tel: 0191 232 0997

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| 5. Newcastle Central Station | 8. Blackfriars |
| 2. Newcastle Central Station | 9. Chinatown and Tyneside Irish Centre |
| 3. St Mary's Cathedral | 10. St James' Park |
| 4. Newcastle Chinese Christian Church | 11. Eldon Square |
| 5. International Centre For Life | 12. Grey's Monument |
| 6. Robert Sinclair Tobacco buildings | 13. Grainger Market and Central Arcade |
| 7. Tyne Theatre | |

Detail of the second part of the route



Stopping points

- | | |
|---|--|
| 13. Grainger Market and Central Arcade | 21. Tyne-Tees Shipping Company boards |
| 14. Theatre Royal | 22. Castle Keep and the Black Gate |
| 15. Grey Street | 23. St Nicholas Buildings |
| 16. 53 Grey Street | 24. St Nicholas Cathedral |
| 17. Tyne Bridge | 25. The Literary and Philosophical Society |
| 18. High Level Bridge and Swing Bridge | 26. The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers |
| 19. Gateshead Millennium Bridge and BALTIC | F. Newcastle Central Station |
| 20. Trinity House | |

1. Welcome to Newcastle

Newcastle Central railway station

Welcome to Newcastle upon Tyne! This city, usually referred to as Newcastle, is one of the largest 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 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. The walk takes in almost 30 sights that reveal the links between Newcastle and over 50 countries around the world. We will also give you some ideas of how to look for international links near your home.

The route is 3 ½ miles long. We begin and end at Newcastle Central railway station. This is a busy city walk, especially at weekends. There are a number of busy roads to cross, so please take care of traffic and always use pedestrian crossings. There are also a few gentle slopes and one steep climb, so take your time, watch for traffic and look after your valuables. We hope you enjoy the walk!



Scenes from Newcastle
Nick Stanworth © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

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

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. 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 Italian tower. Even so, Newcastle Central is still a magnificent architectural achievement.

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 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. 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 (Creative Commons License)

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

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.

4. Chinese Christians

Newcastle Chinese Christian Church, Bewick Street

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.

The Newcastle Chinese Christian Church provides a place of worship for the city's growing Chinese Christian community. Besides residents, Newcastle's Chinese population includes students at the universities. In fact small groups of Chinese students 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 grown significantly in Chinese communities.

We have already seen how religious buildings can be great places to look for links to other countries. 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.

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 (Creative Commons License)

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. Pass a red building then turn left into Temple Street. Follow this street as it bends right then left. When you reach the main road turn right and stop at the corner of Westgate Road and St James' Boulevard. Look up for the buildings with Robert Sinclair Tobacco written on the walls.

6. Smoke on the Tyne

Robert Sinclair Tobacco buildings, Westgate Road

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

These buildings were made in 1913 and 1919, either side of a pub called The Carlisle. They included offices, a showroom for lighters and pipes plus a garage. In 1930 Robert Sinclair was acquired by Imperial Tobacco. After a series of further mergers it became part of Sinclair Collis, then moved out of Newcastle in 1988. The Carlisle pub was demolished and today the Sinclair buildings are flats.



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

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. 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

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.

7. Ever changing

Tyne Theatre, Westgate Road



French actress Sarah Bernhardt (1890s), a section of the Town Wall and the Ever Changing sculpture
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License) / Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

We are now at another Victorian building, the Tyne Theatre. It originally opened in 1867 and has a claim to be the oldest Victorian theatre still working today.

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. One of the most famous Victorian actresses, French actress Sarah Bernhardt, performed at the theatre three times from 1895.

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 partly to 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.

Finally, this 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.

8. Friars' retreat

Blackfriars, Friars Street

During the early years of the 13th century, orders of monks began to establish themselves in England. By the 14th 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.



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

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 the buildings. 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 here.

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 onto Stowell Street, lined with lanterns and Chinese shops. Continue to the end then turn left onto St Andrew's Street. Stop in front of the ornate Chinese arch.

9. The North East Far East

Chinese arch 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 Chinese arch in front of us.



The Chinese arch and Tyneside Irish Centre
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 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. To the right of 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 © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Country links - China, Ireland

Directions 9 - Pass through the arch and cross over the road. Stop here for a good view of the medieval town 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.

10. Goal!

St James' Park

The enormous stadium towering above us 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.



Inside St James Park -
where teams have played from around the world
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License)

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 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.

Country links - Albania, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Columbia, Czech Republic, DR Congo, France, Gabon, Georgia, Honduras, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Romania, Senegal, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, 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.

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 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 (Creative Commons License)

There are depictions of St George throughout the world. The earliest have been traced to 11th 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.

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

Directions 11 - Go out of Eldon Square and turn left onto Blakett Street. Continue up to the column with a statue on the top.

12. Tea, Prime Minister?

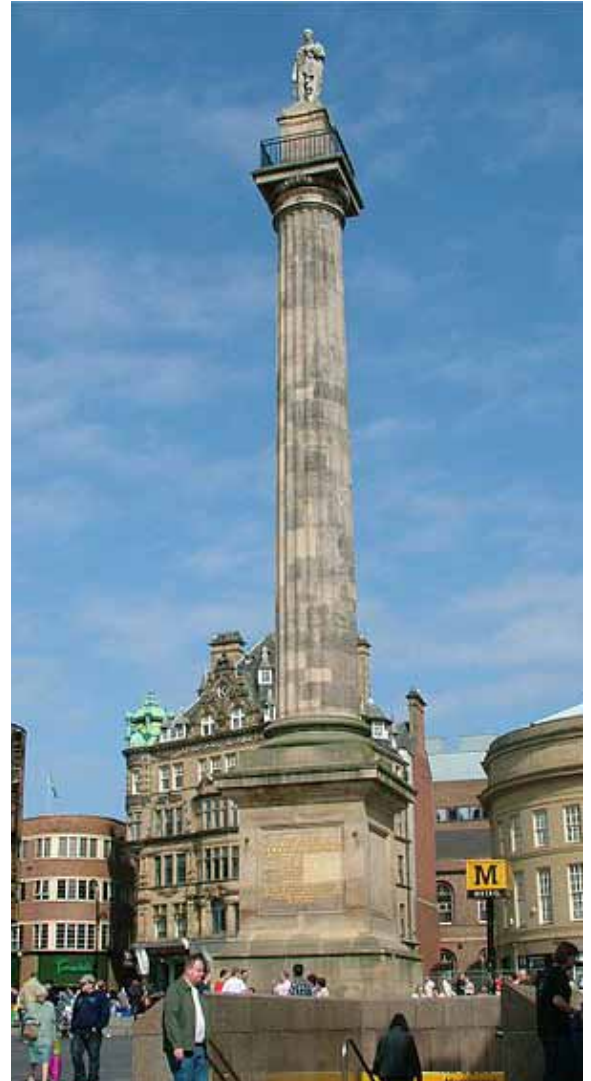
Grey's Monument

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. 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.



Grey's Monument
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License)

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, Stop when you have a view of some of the stalls.

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 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 changed considerably since, 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 stall is named Marks and Spencer's Original Penny Bazaar. The market also has a more multicultural feel these days; see if you can spot Chinese and Indian shops plus many international goods on sale.

When we leave the Market we will visit Central Arcade. This elegant walkway lined with multi-coloured tiles and upmarket shops is one of the most aesthetically pleasing streets in Newcastle. The Arcade was built in 1906 and is another of John Dobson's designs.

Country links - China, India

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. Turn slightly right and go through the entrance to Central Arcade on the other side of the street. When you reach the end of the Arcade, cross the road and turn right. Stop outside the Theatre Royal.

14. A Royal stage

Theatre Royal, Grey Street

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 it curves to the left.

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 the city. 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 in 1874
© Newcastle City Library

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. 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".

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 by the plaque.

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 (Creative Commons License)

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.

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.

17. Icon of Newcastle

Tyne Bridge

We have now arrived at the River Tyne. Ahead 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. 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.

Country links - Australia, United States of America

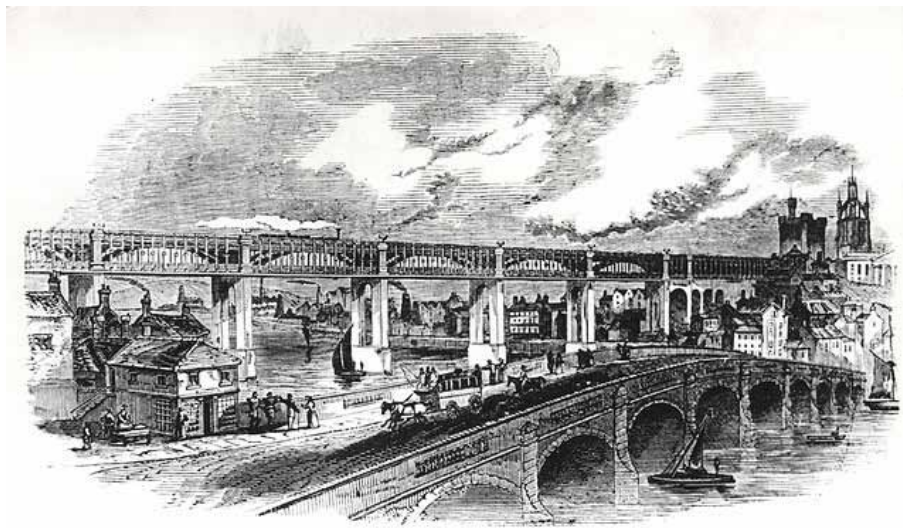
Directions 17 - Remain on the smaller bridge. Turn the other way to look at the high bridge on the other side.

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 called the Sage. 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.

19. Artistry from Industry

Gateshead Millennium Bridge and BALTIC

This striking structure is the Gateshead Millennium Bridge. Gateshead is a distinct borough from Newcastle on the opposite bank of the Tyne. 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 © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

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.

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

Directions 19 - 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.

20. Safe passage

Trinity House, Broad Chare

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 20 - Retrace your steps along Broad Chare and turn right. 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.

21. 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 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. 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.

Country links - Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands

Directions 21 - 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.

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

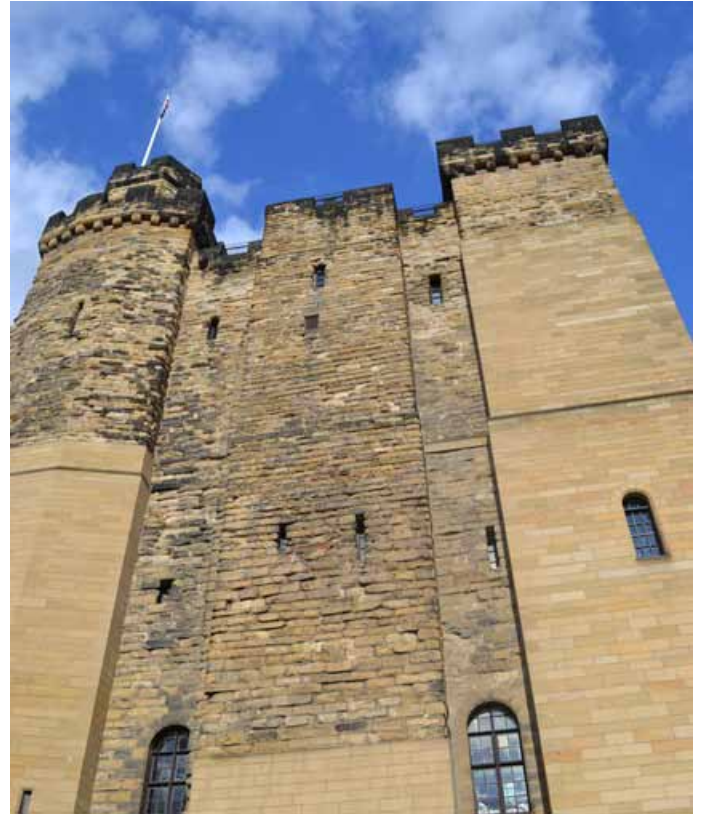
22. Oldcastle

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.

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.



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 22 - 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.

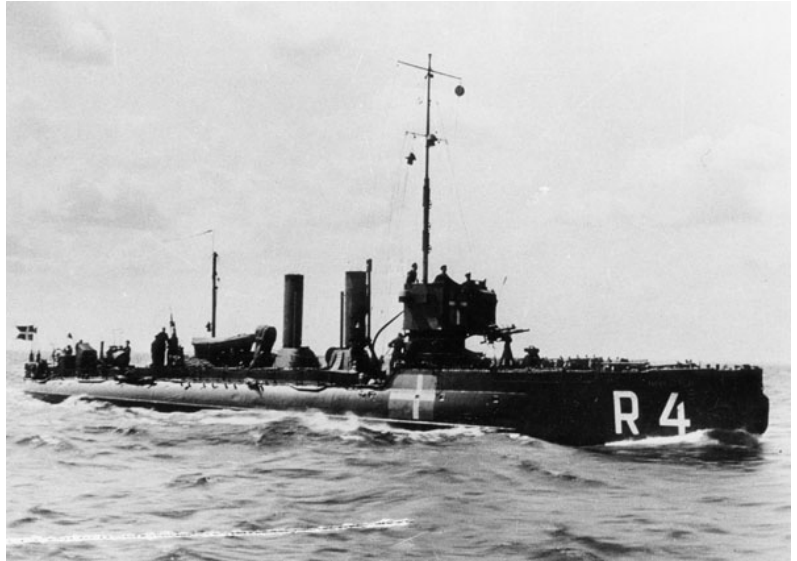
23. Brothers in arms

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 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. In April 1940 Denmark was invaded by Nazi Germany. All Danish ships in British ports and waters came under British protection.



Havkatten, a Danish minesweeper, in 1943
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License)

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 1982 the book returned to Newcastle as a memorial chapel was established at St Nicholas Cathedral. This plaque on the wall commemorates the Danish forces that made their temporary homes in Newcastle.

Country links - Denmark

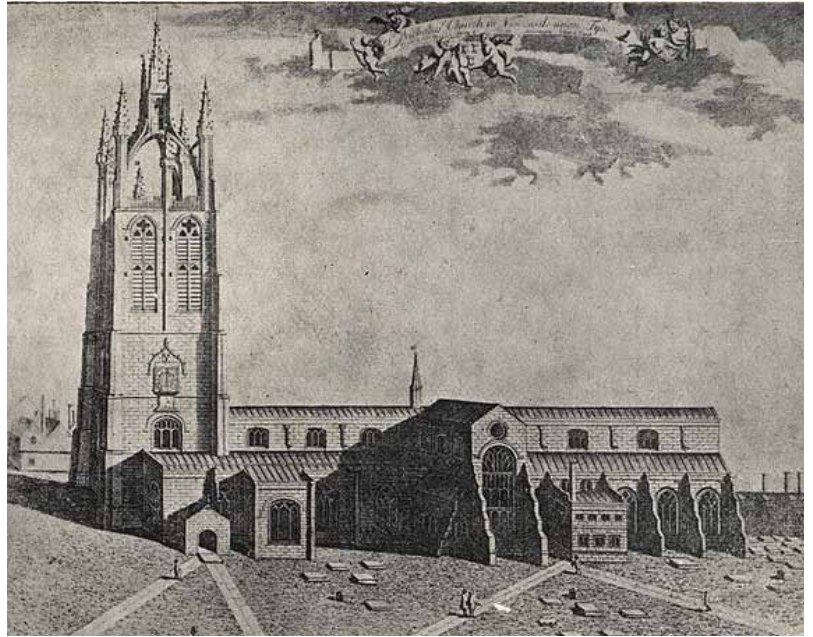
Directions 23 - Retrace your steps along Westgate Road. Cross the road at a safe place opposite the Black Gate. Turn left up St Nicholas' Street. When you reach the tall church at the top of the road, stop by the statue outside.

24. 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 (Creative Commons License)

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.



Lord Collingwood's tomb
© Peter Salmon via Geograph.org.uk (Creative Commons License)

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.

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

Directions 24 - 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.

25. 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 nations inside. This small building is the home of the Literary and Philosophical Society, founded in 1793 as a 'conversation club'.

Often known as the 'Lit and Phil', the Society was 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.



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

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 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. He 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 25 - Next door to the Literary and Philosophical Society is a building with metal railings outside. Stop in front of it.

26. 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 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 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.

Country links - Australia

Directions 26 - Continue along the road as it joins Neville Street. Pass the statue of Robert Stephenson on the opposite side then stop outside Newcastle Central Station.

27. Building bridges

Newcastle Central Station



The Tyne Bridge under construction, 1928
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License)



The four bridges over the Tyne, 2013
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

We have now arrived at the end of our walk, back at Newcastle Central Station. The station is 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 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. 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 we have found evidence of links to 60 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.

Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this Walk the World walk:

- **Nick Stanworth** for creating and researching the walk and taking photographs
- **Rory Walsh** for additional research, editing the walk materials and taking photographs
- **Caroline Millar** for providing the commentary and editing the audio files
- **Newcastle City Library** for permission to include archive images
- **William Dyson** and **Christine McKenna** for assistance compiling the walk resources
- **Ben Brooksbank, Andrew Curtis, George Gastin, Peter Salmon, Sebastian Stebinger** and **John-Paul Stephenson** for additional photographs

Walk the World is part of Discovering Places, the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad campaign to inspire the UK to discover their local environment. Walk the World is delivered in partnership by the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) with Discovering Places (The Heritage Alliance) and is principally funded by the National Lottery through the Olympic Lottery Distributor. The digital and print maps used for Walk the World are licensed to RGS-IBG from Ordnance Survey.



The
Heritage
Alliance







The UK is an island nation but we are by no means isolated - we are a hub of worldwide connections.

Walk the World is an exciting series of free geographically-themed walks that aim to show how the UK is linked with the 206 countries due to compete at London 2012.

Each walk explores how the Olympic and Paralympic Nations and their people have shaped our surroundings - often in surprising ways.

The self-guided walks are fun, informative and inspiring. Prepare to discover something new, to be surprised and to find the unexpected.

Visit www.walktheworld.org.uk

Submit your own links

Search for other walks

Find out how to create your own walk