

The Blaydon Races, England's first true poet, the People's Park, and Angel delight.

Starting point:

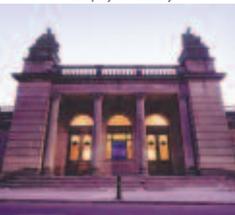
Gateshead Interchange

Length of walk: 1.5 - 2 hours

When it comes to boosting your international profile, there's not many areas can match the enormous strides made by Gateshead in recent years. There's The Angel of The North of course (more of which later), but you can also add BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art and The Sage Gateshead to the list of high profile ventures undertaken by this forward-looking town (see Castle and Quayside walk for more information on these two). Hop on a Metro to Gateshead and you'll find that it has even more to offer...

Adjoining the Metro station is the bus interchange (follow the signs from the station to get there). However, don't jump on a bus just yet. The road in which the buses arrive is divided by one of the largest public

Shipley Art Gallery



The Angel of the North

artworks to have been created in Britain:

1 & 2. Opening Line, which was created by Danny Lane. Composed of 19 elements in steel and glass, the sculpture runs for over 90 metres, rising to a height of over five metres above the ground, and incorporates elements of engineering and maritime culture to reflect the history of Gateshead.

After taking in this impressive piece of work, head for Stand K and you catch any number of buses (X1, 724, 728, 709 and 723) to the **3. Shipley Art Gallery** (ask the driver if you can have a ticket to the Gateshead war memorial. The journey

only takes 5 minutes). When you arrive, cross over at the lights, with the memorial on your right, and you'll see the Shipley Art Gallery. The gallery was named after Joseph Shipley (1822 - 1909), a local solicitor who achieved great wealth through practising law, who ploughed some of his cash into collecting paintings. When he died his immense collection was offered to the city of Newcastle but only if certain conditions were met. However, after much debate over a variety of issues, it was decided that Newcastle could not find a home for the collection. So, the Shipley Bequest came to its final resting place here in the purpose built art gallery in front of you. Just inside the main entrance, check out the goat on the wall to your right. It once graced one of the town's old pubs, The Goat Inn, but it is possible that the name of the town itself is rooted in the stories of goats once roaming freely on the high ground, or headland, to the south east. So, "goat's head", evolved into "Gateshead." Voila! The gallery has an imaginative arts programming policy and a collection of contemporary crafts that is one of the largest outside of London. One of the gallery's must-see pieces is the famous painting **Blaydon Races** (WC Irving 1866-1943) which is teeming with life and depicts the goings on of Tyneside's most famous anthem. On leaving the gallery look to your right to see the reclining figure of **James Renforth** who, in 1868, won the sculling Championship of the World (sculling being a form of rowing, which was very big on Tyneside during the 1850s/60s). Sadly in 1871 he collapsed during a race and fell back into the arms of his companion, Robert Chambers, never to regain consciousness. Head down the road (with the gallery on your left) to Central Library which houses a Tourist Information Centre, **4. Caedmon Hall** and The Gallery, a space for temporary exhibition by professional artists. Caedmon was a simple cowherd who lived in the 7th century and joined the monastic life at Whitby where his writing talent flourished. He is regarded as England's first true poet. Turn back towards the Shipley Art Gallery and turn right down Shipcote Lane and then left along Avenue Road until you reach **5. The Little Theatre**, home to the Progressive Players, an acting



BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

troupe that has existed for over 80 years (this, their permanent home, was built in 1939). Across the road you'll see an entrance to **6. Saltwell Park**, one of North East England's greatest parks. Dubbed "The People's Park", it was opened in 1876 to provide the industrialised town of Gateshead with some green space, and it has recently been restored to its past glories, and what glories! The central area is dominated by the magnificent

7. Saltwell Towers which is now a visitor centre and café. This building was the private mansion of William Wailes, a local stained glass manufacturer, and its design was influenced by his extensive European travels. There's a lot more to see in the park besides the Towers, however. The map by the gates will guide you to: sporting facilities (including bowling greens, tennis and basketball courts); the lake; play areas; the Rose Garden, The Dene (complete with lily pond); a maze, and much more besides. When you've enjoyed the park, leave by the entrance you came in, and walk uphill onto Durham Road and cross to catch a bus (21, 21a, 21b, 723 or 724), which, after a few minute's journey, will take you to Antony Gormley's incredible sculpture, **8. the Angel of the North**. This powerful symbol of regeneration is also a reminder of the engineering skills which made the region world famous. It has been named among the top twelve icons of English life by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Return to the Gateshead Interchange by catching either the 21, 21a, 21b, X1 or X41 bus. Contact Traveline on **0870 608 2 608** for bus times.