



The sixth sense, the Danish connection, the birthplace of Newcastle's industrial revolution and a hidden bridge.

Starting point:

Baltic Square on Gateshead Quays

Length of walk: 1.5 - 2 hours

There are numerous links between Newcastle and Gateshead, with the most obvious, and justifiably famous, being the river Tyne which joins the two. What a lot of people don't know, however, is that the Tyne has a little cousin, The Ouseburn, which has a tale to tell all of its own... Begin this tour in **1. Baltic Square**, next to the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art. And if you haven't yet paid a visit to this fantastic gallery now is an ideal time to do so. The building itself has quite a history as back in the 1950s it was used to store grain, with the River Tyne being used as a key route for trading with Scandinavian and Baltic states. The company which built it had a habit of naming its warehouses after famous oceans of the world, hence its name. After you've taken in whatever BALTIC currently has on show, prepare yourself for more artistic delights, this time of the architectural variety as you head over the stunning **2. Gateshead Millennium Bridge**. Once over the bridge turn to your immediate right and past the glass



Gateshead Millennium Bridge

fronted Pitcher and Piano bar, where you will discover some of the sculptures which make up the 'Art on the Riverside' scheme. The golden globe you can see sits atop the **3. Swirl Pavilion** and walking inside the sculpture reveals the names of the destinations of ships which departed from the Tyne during its industrial heyday. Further along you'll come to the **4. Blacksmith's Needle**. It is divided into six sections and amongst the many objects which make up this sculpture, you should notice an ear, an eye and a nose amongst other things. The theme is the senses, with the last segments indicating the sixth sense! Continue along this way (with the Tyne on

your right) and past the smart looking offices and residential properties. Soon you will arrive at the Ouseburn, flowing into the Tyne, which is usually resplendent with colourful little boats bobbing at the mouth of the river. On the opposite bank you will be able to see the modern building of the

5. Ouseburn Water Sports

Centre. Now you need to double back a little bit (and behind the residential properties) until you come to a cobbled steep incline which is Horatio Street. On the left hand side, at the top of this road, you'll see the **6. Sailors' Bethel**. The word "Beth-el" is Hebrew for "House of God", and in the 130 years of its existence this building has served as a non-conformist chapel, a community centre, a Danish seamen's church and now, finally, offices. In the late 19th century regular trade between Newcastle and Danish ports resulted in cargoes of butter, eggs and fresh meat arriving at the mouth of the Ouseburn, and the Sailors' Bethel was the ideal place for the Danish seamen to stay overnight whilst their cargo was unloaded.

Just about opposite the Sailors' Bethel you'll notice a memorial to **7. William L. Blenkinsopp Coulson**, a man noted for his huge efforts on behalf of not only the weaker members of society, but animals, too. The drinking trough has two fountains: the larger one for humans, and around the back, a smaller one for animals! Take a left at the top of Horatio Street, cross the City Road and head up the hill until you come to **8. Cut Bank**. On a grassy corner at the top of this road you'll notice yet another piece of sculpture. This slim work has the words "sisal", "hemp", "coir" and "jute" carved into it, recalling the days when this area supported a number of industries including rope-making.

Continue down Cut Bank and past the Dallas Carpet warehouse, and once over the road bridge at the bottom of the slope, head down the steps on the right-hand side. Now walk under the bridge you've just crossed and along the river footpath towards the heart of the Ouseburn Valley.

This is the valley which gave birth to Newcastle's own industrial revolution. As early as the 17th century, glass factories were established near the mouth of the Ouseburn and local supplies of coal were



The Ouseburn

used to fuel the glassmaking processes. Water power drove machinery in the flint and flax mills which developed in the late 18th/early 19th centuries; lime kilns, a coppers works, tanneries and a white lead factory also arrived on the scene. Now, the whole of the Ouseburn area has been earmarked for careful regeneration aimed at keeping its unique character intact. If you head along the footpath, and then over the wooden bridge, you won't fail to notice the various bridges spanning the valley. The Byker Road Bridge (brick arches) dates back to 1878; the Ouseburn Rail Viaduct (wrought iron) opened in 1839, while the modern, concrete, Byker Viaduct was opened relatively recently and carries the Metro line high above the valley. There's more, however. Walk under the red brick arches of the first bridge and you'll be standing on one of the oldest of the ravine's bridges.

9. Crawford's Bridge.

Retrace your steps along past the Ship pub and spend a bit of time exploring the area. **10. The Cluny** is a great bar and is housed in an old whisky warehouse, originally built as a flax mill in the 1840s, and was designed by John Dobson. It has a great selection of real ales. Just up from here is the recently opened **11. Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books**, which is a superb place to go to see an inspirational collection of original artworks, manuscripts and all manner of other paraphernalia and activities relating to children's books (note: there is a fee to get in, but it's free to use the bookshop and cafe). Heading further along Lime Street (pausing to check out the **12. Ouseburn Resource Centre** for more information on this fascinating area), will bring you back to Cut Bank and onto Newcastle's Quayside again.