



TOP 10 NEWCASTLE

Once an industrial powerhouse, the great city of the North East is now a cultural hub with a spectacular riverscape and stately city centre

WORDS JENNY ROWE

To many British people yet to visit, Newcastle upon Tyne is famous for many things – rowdy football fans, Newcastle Brown Ale and raucous Geordie nights out – other than its heritage. They are therefore surprised when alighting from a train in the North East's capital to find a grand Georgian core and a Norman castle at its centre. When William the Conqueror's eldest son built it to replace the pre-existing Roman fortification, the new castle gave the settlement, previously known as Pons Aelius, its modern name.

With the Angel of the North's blessing, no other North Eastern city has better fared the ill-fated crossing between the industrial and information age. It was once responsible for a huge 25 percent of Britain's coal supply; "taking coals to Newcastle" became a



common phrase when referring to the act of bringing something to a place that has more than enough of it already.

The city's seven soaring bridges built in close proximity are a physical reminder of its commercial past. Be sure to cross the High Level Bridge on foot for the best view of this impressively varied riverscape.

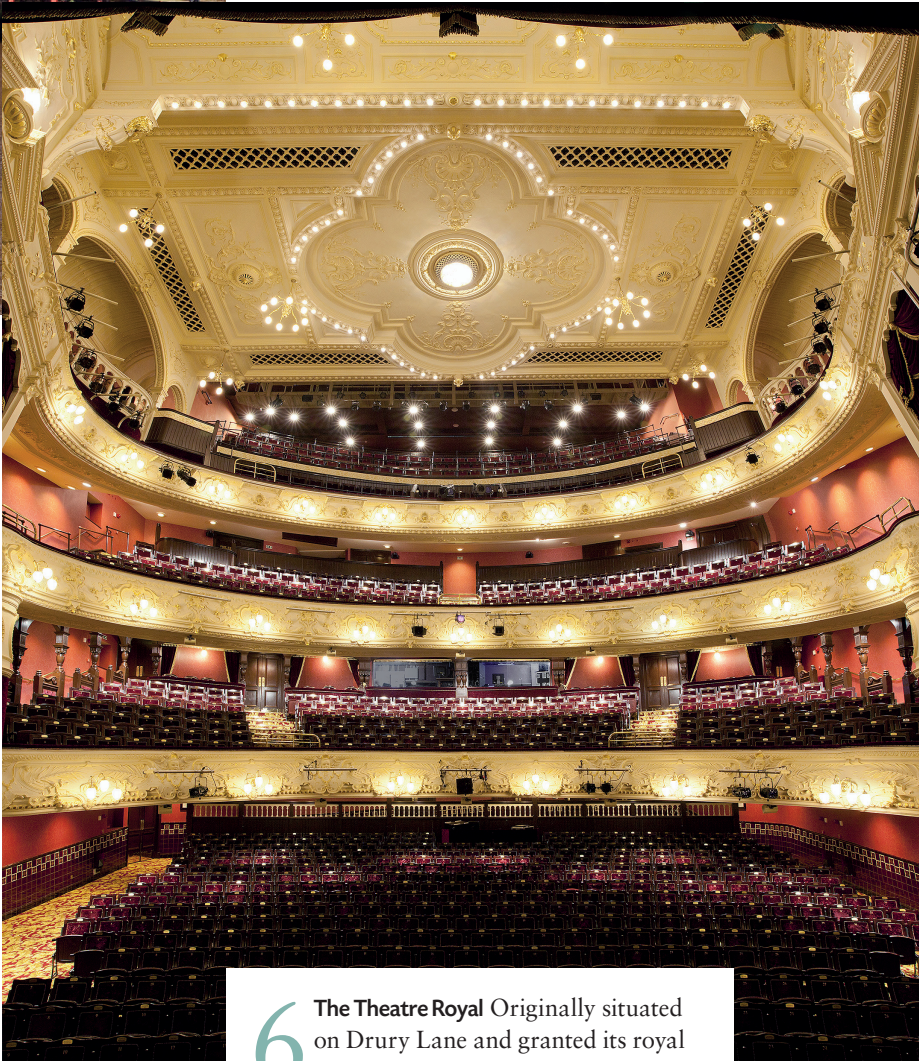
Quayside is its social heart, beating on both sides of the Tyne and joining the city with its twin town, Gateshead, to the south. Recent additions such as the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art have followed Antony Gormley's lead and reimagined the city as a cultural landmark. Newcastle may be more rough and ready than some southern cities, but it is as history has demanded: consistently and ingeniously defying the odds while remaining true to its northern roots.



1 Tyne Bridge Arguably the most iconic of all Newcastle's bridges, Tyne Bridge was built by Dorman Long and Co. of Middlesbrough in 1928, who later went on to build Sydney Harbour Bridge, which opened four years later. Its design is said to be inspired by Hell Gate Bridge in New York. www.newcastlegateshead.com



4 Sage Gateshead An international arts centre, Sage Gateshead puts on more than 400 concerts each year. Its voluminous silver form protrudes from the south bank of the Tyne, welcoming more than two million visitors annually into its state-of-the-art music halls. www.sagegateshead.com



6 The Theatre Royal Originally situated on Drury Lane and granted its royal licence by George III, in 1837 the Theatre Royal moved to Grey Street, into a flagship building in Richard Grainger's city plan (p88). It features what is generally regarded as one of the finest theatre facades in the UK, combined with an auditorium designed by Frank Matcham in 1901. www.theatreroyal.co.uk

5 Jesmond Dene The most beautiful and tranquil of Newcastle's green spaces, Jesmond Dene is enclosed within the Ouseburn river's steep-sided wooded valley. Yet once it was a hub for farm industry, home to water mills that ground corn for local farmers. Its history trails will lead you to the best spots, including a ruined mill and Italian-style Banqueting Hall. www.jesmonddene.org.uk



7 Newcastle Castle It was the son of William the Conqueror, Robert Curthose, who built the first castle, replaced a century later on the orders of Henry II. The Keep dates from this period, while the Black Gate was the last major part of the Castle to be completed in 1250. Exhibits guide visitors through each of its incarnations (and many secret passageways). www.newcastlecastle.co.uk



2 Grey's Monument Take a tour of Grey's Monument, named after the 2nd Earl Grey, Charles Grey, who hailed from the North East and was British Prime Minister from 1830 to 1834. Well known for leading multiple reform movements including the Representation of the People Act of 1832, his other lasting legacy was a penchant for a certain bergamot oil-infused hot beverage. www.newcastlegateshead.com



3 Great North Museum: Hancock So-called because the Newcastle-born ornithologist and taxidermist John Hancock was instrumental in securing funds for the museum in 1884, the Great North Museum now houses several galleries including those dedicated to the Egyptians, fossils and Hadrian's Wall. www.greatnorthmuseum.org.uk



8 Angel of the North The guardian of the North East, Antony Gormley's 20-metre-high Angel of the North was completed in 1998, conceived to be "a tumulus marking the end of the era of coal mining in Britain". Its 54-metre wingspan is a symbol of hope, built on a mound that was created from the remains of the pithead baths at Lower Tyne colliery.
www.antonygormley.com

9 Grainger Market Grainger Town is the aesthetic and historic epitome of Newcastle, with uniform grand streets designed by internationally renowned builder and developer Richard Grainger in the 1830s. Grainger Market, home to the original Marks and Spencer's Penny Bazaar, remains a thriving covered market and a must-visit.
www.newcastle Gateshead.com



10 Cathedral Church of St Nicholas The first parish church on the site of Newcastle Cathedral was built out of wood shortly after the castle in 1080. It grew in strength and size until in 1553 an attempt was made to create a City of Newcastle, which would divide the Diocese of Durham. This was scuppered by the ascension of Queen Mary, who reversed the legislation, and St Nicholas Church had to wait for 329 years to pass before it became a Cathedral Church for good in 1882.
stnicholascathedral.co.uk

THE PLANNER



GETTING THERE

Trains run at least every 30 minutes from London King's Cross and take about 3 hours. There are just two stops, one of which is York, which if combined could make for a great northern English tour. www.lner.co.uk



WHERE TO STAY

A magnificently refurbished Edwardian building on the banks of the Tyne, Hotel du Vin Newcastle was originally home to the Tyne Tees Steam Ship Company. They reference their maritime history throughout, with ship ropes in the courtyard and porthole windows in some of the rooms. www.hotelduvin.com



WHERE TO EAT AND DRINK

For an unbeatable setting and an authentic taste of the North East at its best, eat at Blackfriars. Originally a 13th-century medieval friary, it claims to hold the oldest dining room in the UK, which is still in use today thanks to its 80-seat restaurant occupying the same spot as the friary's former refectory. Their award-winning menus offer gutsy British classics made from seasonal and locally sourced produce. For a drink, head to the Cumberland Arms, which overlooks the cultural quarter of Ouseburn, to try local beers in their leafy outdoor space or cosy, stained-glass interiors. There are also four en-suite B&B rooms.
www.blackfriarsrestaurant.co.uk;
www.thecumberlandarms.co.uk