

**Brian Everingham  
Diary  
2025**

**May  
Volume 1  
Newcastle**



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## Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2025

We duly arrive in Newcastle on time, found our way to our apartment with not too much difficulty and managed to get in despite the numbers on the keypad being so very obscure.

The apartment is big and, indeed, is a two bedroom place. However, we had not received the password for the WIFI and had no way of letting the owner know we had arrived safely. In the end, we asked a girl who ran a shop next door if she would text him for us. She duly did that and he received the message but he was not coming out to see us tonight! So much for saying he would be there in 30 minutes if needed!

I discovered this because I walked back down to the station and used their public WIFI to get my mail. He, Alan, had sent a message to it and had hoped I would go to a pub or something and see it. Well, we did get it and we are now connected and Faye has been to a supermarket. We have eaten and we have also found a few quirks in the place so it will be good to see him at about 10 tomorrow.



We look out at the old Newcastle wall!!!!

## **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

After breakfast, Faye and I went exploring the immediate streets around us, ending at the railway station where we bought two return tickets to Hexham for 7<sup>th</sup>. That's the day when we are heading up to see Melanie and Jon.





The Newcastle United ground was used this weekend for a series of Rugby League games. It's the Super League Magic Round! And the supporters are very male, though of mixed ages!

St James' Park first held the event in 2015 and ever since it has been a favourite on the calendar for fans and players alike.

Newcastle hosted the Magic Weekend another six times until 2023 - missing out only in 2019 when Liverpool's Anfield played host and 2020 when the event was cancelled because of the Covid pandemic.

Saturday, 3 May

Leigh Leopards v Catalans Dragons (15:00 BST)

Hull KR v Salford Red Devils (17:15)

St Helens v Leeds Rhinos (19:30)

Sunday, 4 May

Huddersfield Giants v Hull FC (13:00)

Wigan Warriors v Warrington Wolves (15:15)

Castleford Tigers v Wakefield Trinity (17:30)

The crowds have been flowing down from the ground all day today. Obviously, we also saw most of the crowds yesterday too!

But let us walk on!



This was once a proud, prosperous city and the industrial heartland of what once made Britain great!





Grey's Monument is a Grade I-listed monument in the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne, England. It was built in 1838 in recognition of Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1830 to 1834. In particular, it celebrates the passing of the Great Reform Act 1832, one of Grey's most important legislative achievements.<sup>1</sup>

And you can pay for a tour of it, including climbing up to the top to say hello to the great man! A helical staircase with 164 steps leads to a viewing platform at the top of the monument. England can certainly live off its past!

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey%27s\\_Monument](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey%27s_Monument)

The man honoured by today's Monument wasn't always popular in Newcastle. That was because of the Great Reform Act. In this Act, the Old Guild system in Britain was swept away. In Newcastle the Guilds were heavily entrenched with most people in the area being members. They had the right to vote through their Guild and when the Guilds were abolished, it left a lot of people feeling disenfranchised and suspicious of Earl Grey. There was a great deal of debate about whether to honour the Earl with a statue because, as the new laws allowed only men over 25 years old with more than £10 worth of property to have a vote, there were fewer people with the vote in Newcastle than there had been before.





At that point, we returned home and awaited Alan's visit. He arrived promptly and Faye went through all her talking points and questions, She is now familiar with dishwasher (it will still be me) and the clothes washing machine along with a series of other questions about cleaning products!

And we then headed off once more!





Newcastle Cathedral<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://newcastlecathedral.org.uk/learn/history-and-heritage/history-of-the-cathedral/>

For over 900 years, Newcastle Cathedral – originally the Parish Church of St Nicholas – has been at the pulsing heart of Newcastle, as a place of worship and community. From its creation, rebuilding in the Medieval era and the drama of the English Civil War to the extensive remodeling across centuries, the Cathedral echoes stories and history from every corner.

My picture just shows the tower!



The most prominent remaining structures on the site are the Castle Keep (the castle's main fortified stone tower, pictured above), and the Black Gate, its fortified gatehouse (next page)

Robert Curthose, eldest son of William the Conqueror, in 1080 built a wooden motte and bailey style castle on the site of the Roman fort. Curthose built this 'New Castle upon Tyne' after he returned south from a campaign against Malcolm III of Scotland. Henry II built the stone Castle Keep between 1172 and 1177 on the site of Curthose's castle. Henry III added the Black Gate between 1247 and 1250. Nothing remains above ground of the Roman fort or the original motte and bailey castle.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Castle,\\_Newcastle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Castle,_Newcastle)



### The Black Gate

Our next stop was to check out the bridges – especially the Tyne – but we were right at the crossing of the various races known as the Newcastle-Gateshead Marathon, Half Marathon, 10K & Juniors races.

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<sup>4</sup> Apparently, there is a new flag on it. The notes say that:

In collaboration with the Baltic's Ax-is-Mun-di exhibition, a new flag is now flying from the Castle Keep rooftop. Created by multidisciplinary artist Mani Kambo, the flag's design, alongside the rest of the pieces in her ongoing exhibition, externalizes Kambo's exploration of the inner spirit, drawing on personal totemic symbols and influences rooted in superstition and religious ceremony. Her practice encompasses textiles, fabric dying and printmaking, focusing on the layering and editing of totemic symbols in order to 'collage narratives and weave dreamscapes'.

We saw her exhibition at the Baltic Museum of Contemporary Art later





The courses took in the famous landmarks of Gateshead including Gateshead Millennium Bridge, Sage Gateshead, BALTIC, Tyne Bridge, Swing Bridge and finishes in the iconic Gateshead International Stadium. Trust us to be visiting those same sites today!



The Tyne Bridge is a through arch bridge over the River Tyne in North East England, linking Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead. The bridge was designed by the engineering firm Mott, Hay and Anderson, who later designed the Forth Road Bridge,

and was built by Dorman Long and Co. of Middlesbrough. The bridge was officially opened on 10 October 1928 by King George V.<sup>5</sup>



The 1781 stone bridge, with the High Level Bridge in the background, from an 1861 illustration

Having crossed, with the runners, to Gateshead we then headed straight to the Baltic! This is the Centre for Contemporary Art and is housed in an old flour mill.

The idea to open a centre for contemporary arts in Gateshead was developed in the 1990s, which was a time of regeneration for the local area—the Sage and Gateshead Millennium Bridge was also being conceived of in this period.<sup>6</sup>

We had lunch there but we also visited the three contemporary art exhibitions.

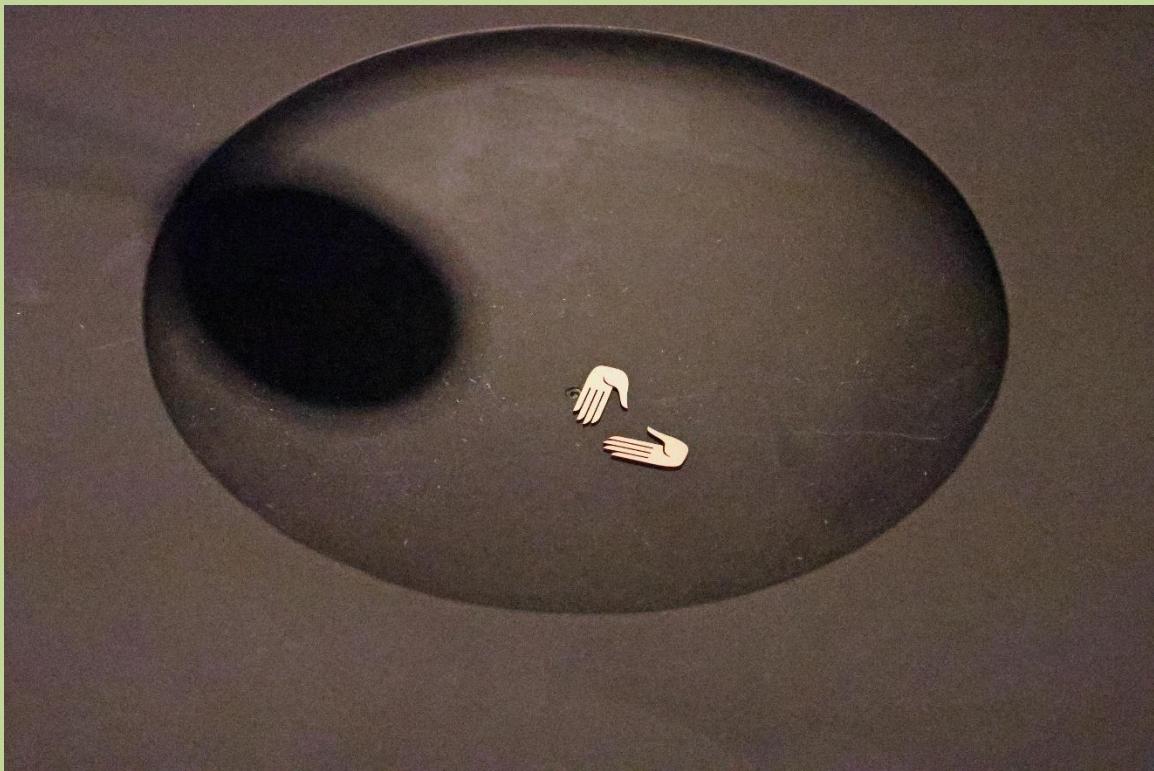
On Level 2 there was Mani Kambo's work, Ax·is Mun·di! Mani Kambo is a multidisciplinary Newcastle-based artist who explores the inner spirit by drawing on her own personal totemic symbols.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyne\\_Bridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyne_Bridge)

<sup>6</sup> Baltic opened in July 2002 in a converted flour mill, which had operated in various capacities from 1950 to 1984. The architectural design of Baltic was devised by Dominic Williams of Ellis Williams Architects, who won a competition to design the new contemporary arts centre in 1994





7

Ali Cherri's exhibition, *How I Am Monument*, was on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, and we sat through one of the videos! It reminded us both of *Powaqqatsi*! It was a video of men making mud bricks on the Nile.<sup>8</sup> Man, mud and God overlap in reference to the Epic of Gilgamesh.

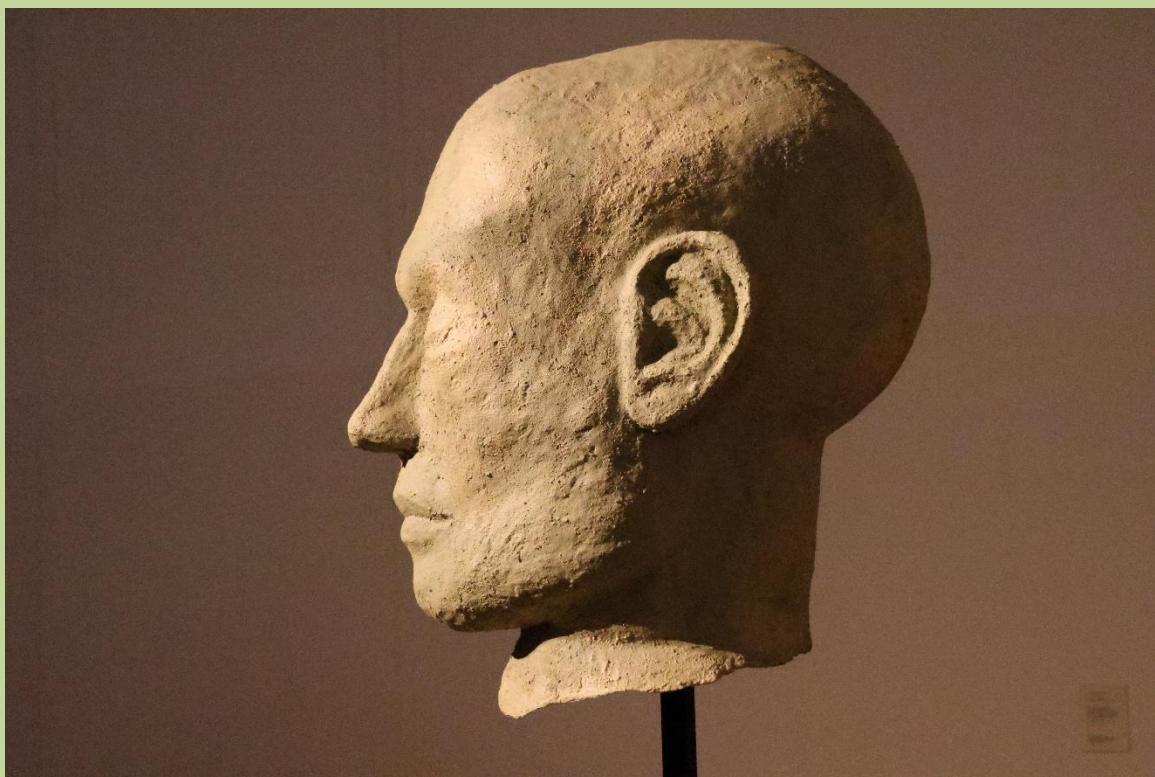
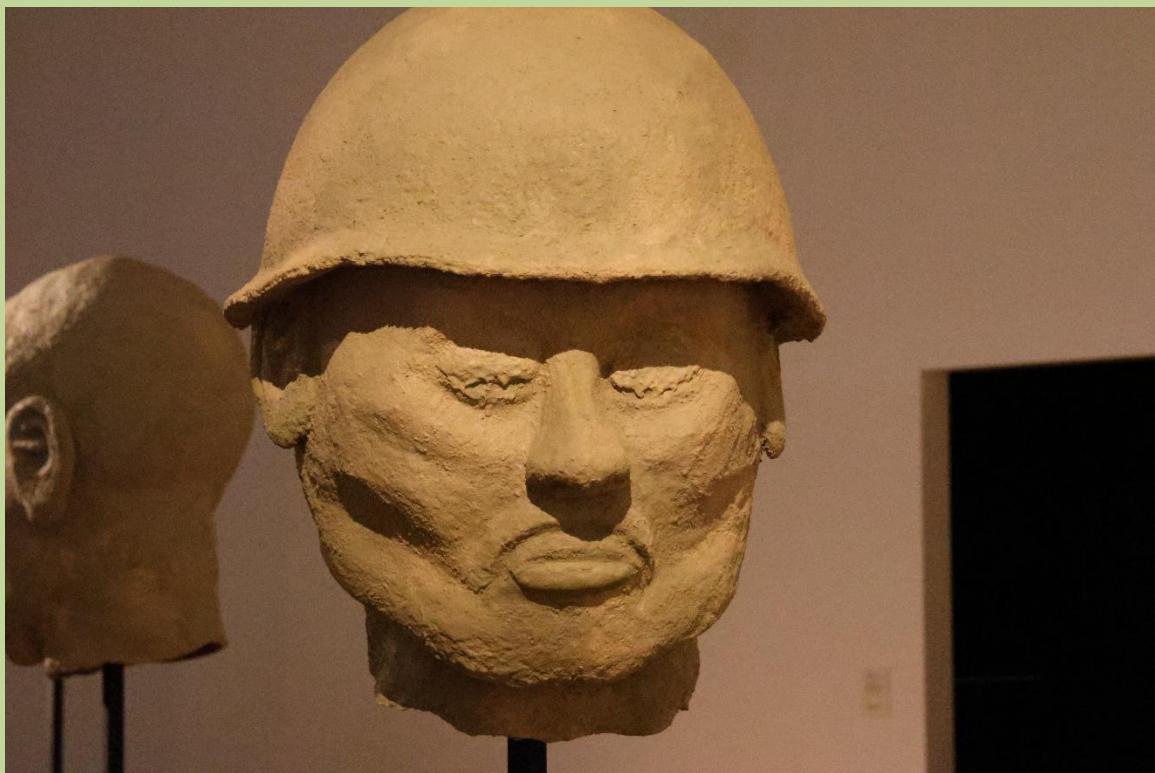
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<sup>7</sup> Kambo embarked on a seven-month residency at Baltic, exploring new mediums and creating an entirely new body of work comprising textiles, wood engraving and symbolism. The artist residency was conceived as part of Baltic's Artist Development Programme and has provided Kambo with a studio, curatorial and technical support and access to Baltic's facilities. Baltic's Artist Development Programme was established in 2022 and offers learning and developmental support for artists and curators working across the North East of England.

<sup>8</sup> Ali Cherri's multidisciplinary practice encompasses film, sculpture, installation, drawing and performance.

Born in Beirut, a year into the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), Cherri examines violence against bodies, objects and nature in regions of conflict, and reflects on the processes through which historical and cultural narratives are shaped.

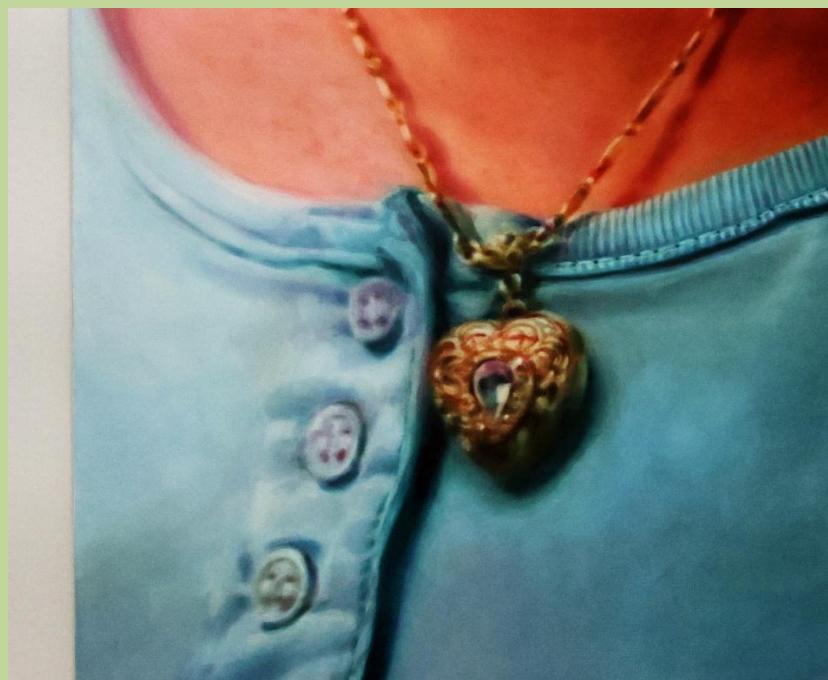
The exhibition *How I Am Monument* looks at history through a material lens. Cherri's recent mud-based sculptures take inspiration from archaeological artefacts and the natural world. Relics, sourced from auctions and antique markets, are grafted onto mud bodies to create hybrid beings. Cherri uses mud as both a material and a metaphor for creation. His video installation *Of Men and Gods and Mud* (2022) further explores mud's creative power.



The final exhibition we went to was the work of two sisters. Laura Lancaster & Rachel Lancaster in a show called Remember, Somewhere.



Rachel Lancaster uses painting as a means to slow down the act of looking, focusing the gaze on often overlooked scenes. She depicts detailed fragments of imagery disconnected from greater narratives, rendering these fragments both descriptive and abstract, suspenseful, and open-ended; within this, her strategic use of ambiguity creates resonant pauses, allowing emotional undercurrents to come forth and find resolve. She reveals the uncanny beauty and quiet spectacle that lies beyond the action

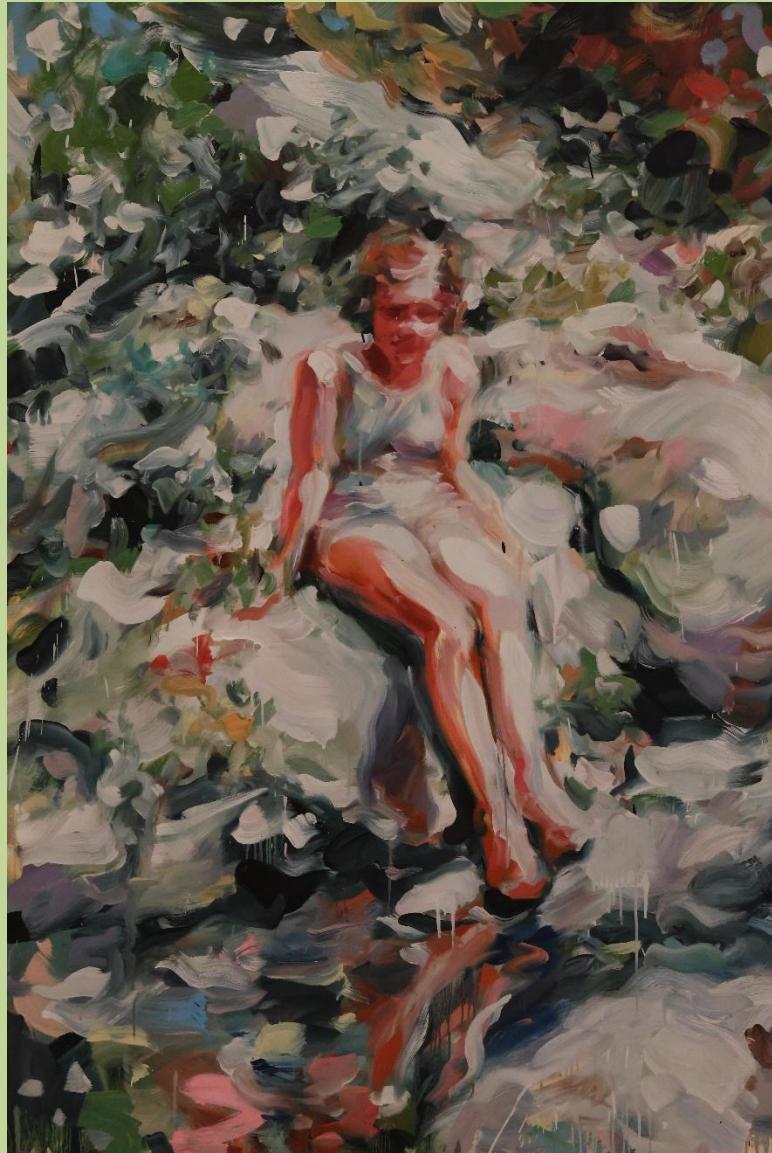




Laura Lancaster's work centres around the figure, often abstracting its presence, which is intensified by the manipulation of paint, creating ambiguous and surreal imagery. The inspiration for Laura Lancaster's paintings, drawings and installations is found photographs, cine films and slides of strangers. Lancaster's process-orientated practice forms an ongoing dialogue between the languages of painting and photography, focusing on the manipulation of the tension between the visceral qualities of the paint and the image it depicts.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <https://baltic.art/whats-on/zo-laura-lancaster-rachel-lancasterremember-somewhere/>



We had lunch served in a crowded café - many of the runners were there too! – but a special word of praise for our German/Spanish waiter. Vi was all energy and positivity! We were both in awe of her.

We then headed to the Glasshouse. It houses an auditorium that fits 1500 and a smaller venue for 500 and it is the home of the Royal Northern Sinfonia but much else was also happening there. When we arrived, the audience was heading in for a musical exploration of Star Wars! Complete with characters!





But it was time to head back via the Gateshead Millennium Bridge



It was the first tilting bridge ever to be constructed<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup><sup>10</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gateshead\\_Millennium\\_Bridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gateshead_Millennium_Bridge)





And then home, via Tesco, for dinner!

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

After breakfast Faye and I walked up behind the flat through some of the edge of town and around the university campus!









It might be because I was rude about finding Hillsong here but not long after that my Panasonic Lumix camera switched to video without me knowing how and how I can switch it back!



I then ducked down the street and bought a local phone and SIM card, a very basic model that will let me phone and/or text people within England. It cost me £40 but it is usable across all countries beyond England just by buying a local SIM! £10 of that price is for calls.

Faye and I then caught the 21 bus out of Eldon Central Bus Station out to her target scenery: the Angel of the North! Antony Gormley's renowned steel sculpture in Gateshead, the parent of the small one at the NGA! The bus drive was about 20 plus minutes and the drive was itself quite fascinating, both there and back! I really liked seeing some of the housing out along that road!

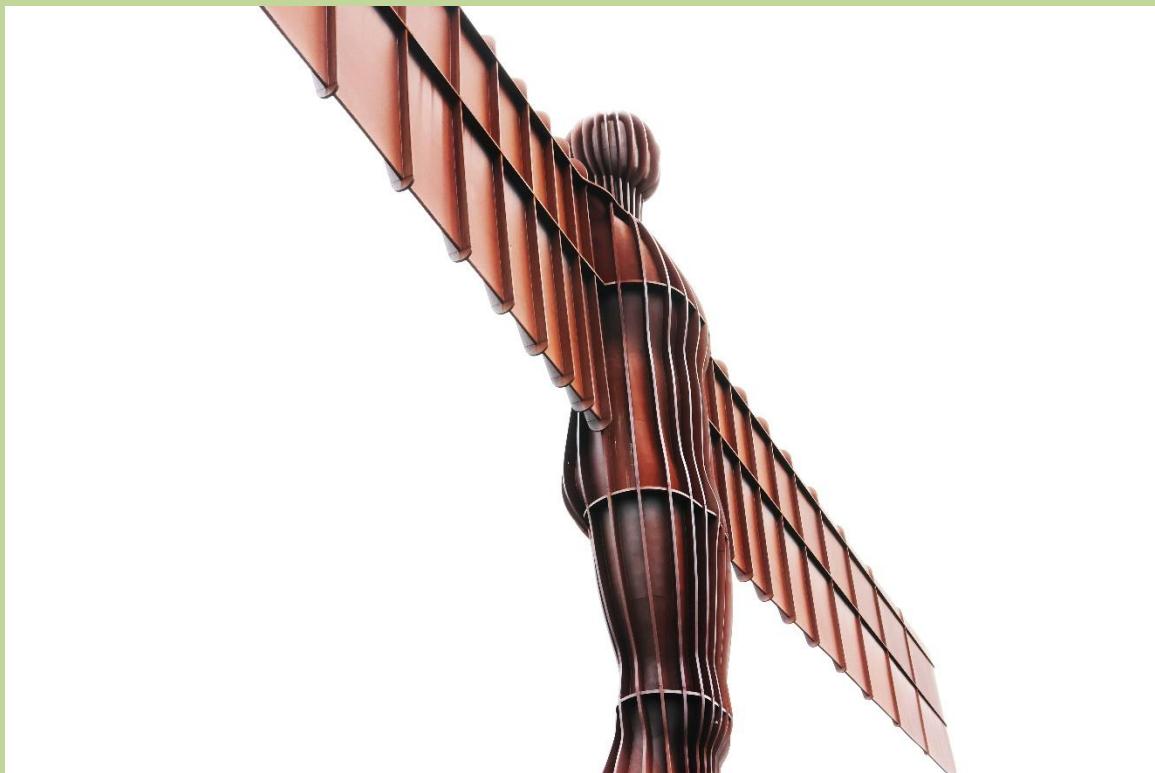


Standing tall on a hill in Gateshead, the Angel of the North is an iconic sculpture that has become a symbol of Northern England's spirit and heritage. Created by renowned artist Antony Gormley, this massive steel angel—spanning 54 meters (177 feet) wide with a height of 20 meters (65.5 feet)—welcomes drivers on the A1 motorway and local residents alike. Its distinctive silhouette against the North East skyline has made it one of the most photographed landmarks in the country.

Commissioned in 1994 and completed in 1998, the Angel of the North reflects the region's strong industrial past while looking forward to a modern cultural renaissance. Its wings are angled slightly forward, creating a sense of embrace, and the sculpture's rust-red color blends into the landscape, echoing the iron-rich heritage of the local area. With its striking design and peaceful setting, this public artwork has inspired debate, pride, and a deeper appreciation for contemporary sculpture.<sup>11</sup>

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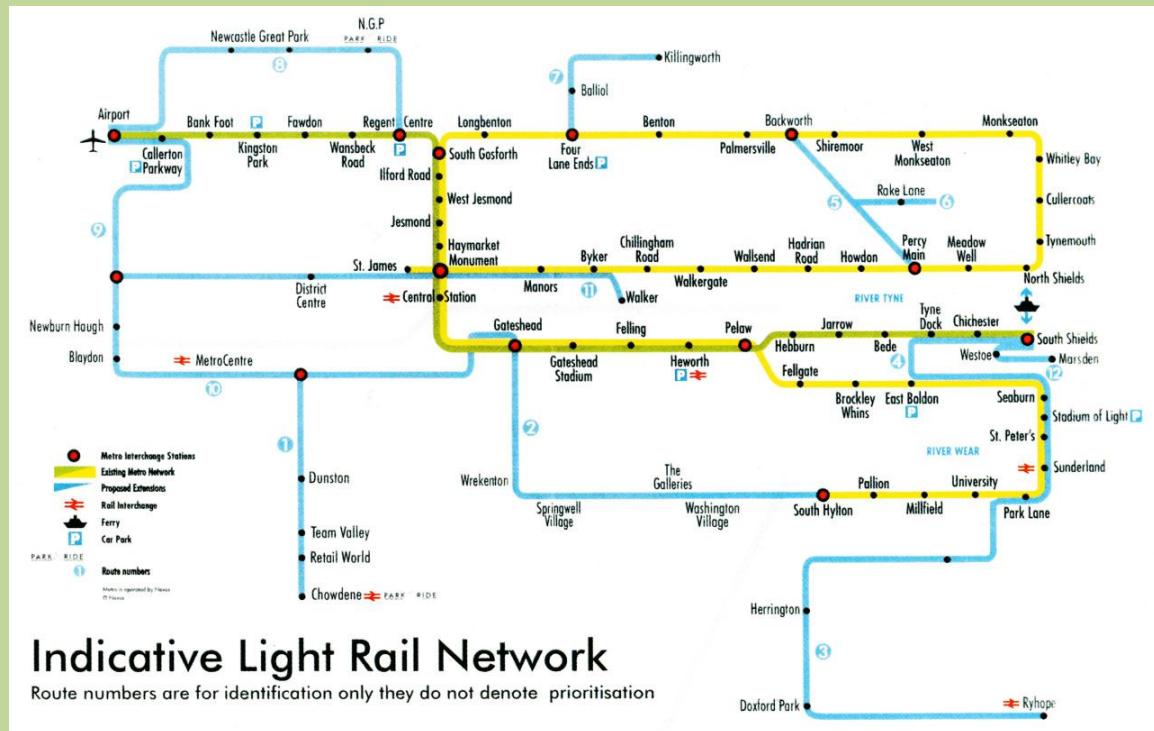
<sup>11</sup> <https://www.explorebritain.uk/attractions/angel-of-the-north/>



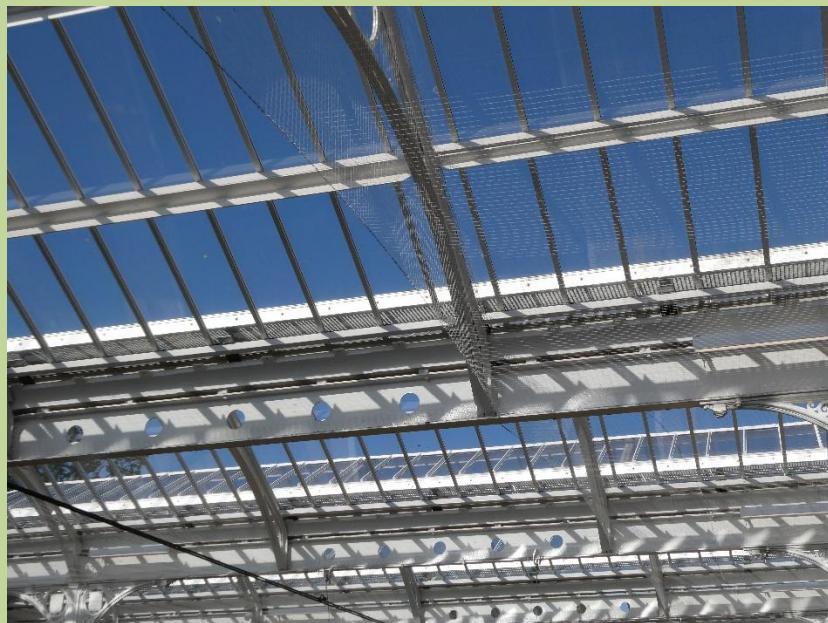
By 4.20 Melanie and Jon Winter had arrived from Hexham and we then spent a delightful evening with them, dining on Spanish food and then ending the evening drinking an English beer at the pub next to the station before they headed back home!



Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025



We bought day passes for the Metro today and travelled from Central Station to Whitley Bay where we disembarked. We then walked the coast through Cullercoats, Long Sands Veach and Tynemouth to the River Tyne and up river to the North Shields Ferry. I suspect that we walked about 10km today and saw some delightful scenery.



The relatively new replacement roof at Whitley Bay railway station after storm damage

This part of the greater Newcastle area had its major makeover in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

From the late 19th century and into the 20th century, the adverse effects of the decline of local coal mining and dependent industries in the area were ameliorated by the emergence of Whitley as a seaside holiday resort. The opening of the North Tyne Loop railway line in 1882, connecting the coastal villages to Newcastle, benefited the tourism industry.<sup>12</sup>

The seaside housing reflects that period!



<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitley\\_Bay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitley_Bay)



St Mary's Lighthouse<sup>13</sup>

We had a high tide for our day out!



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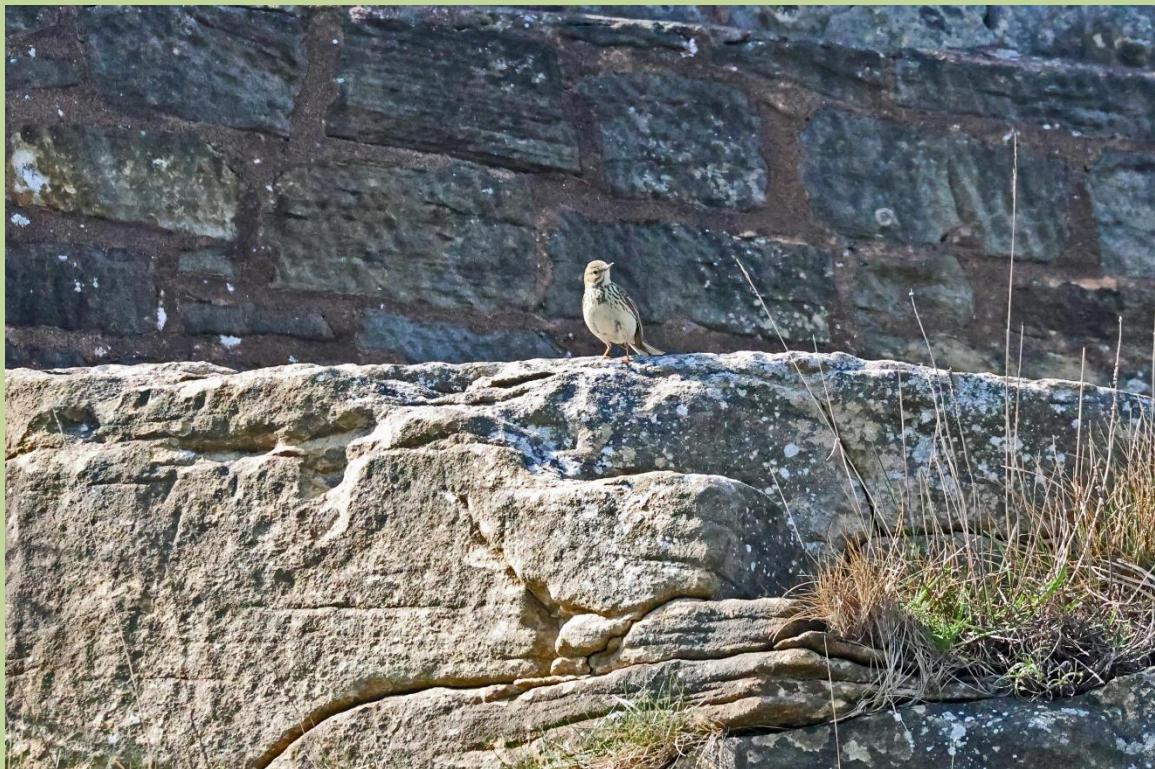
<sup>13</sup> [St Mary's Lighthouse - Wikipedia](#)



Fulmars on the cliff ledges



We also saw Rock Pipits in this area and, out to sea, a lone Great Cormorant!



Rock Pipit



Table Rocks Bathing Pool (a natural formation)



Browns Bay



A brazen Common Starling



The lifeboat station at Cullercoats<sup>14</sup>

Here we saw many House Martins flying around!

Later, near the end of the walk, we found a statue devoted to the fish lady. I learn that

In 1848 a coble, taking a pilot to a ship further out at sea, capsized with the loss of all on board. In response to this disaster the local landowner, the Duke of Northumberland funded the setting up of Cullercoats Lifeboat Station. The following year a second disaster, this time costing 20 lifeboat crew their lives, prompted the Duke to sponsor a competition to design a self-righting lifeboat. The resulting boat, the *Percy* was built at the Duke's expense and delivered to Cullercoats in 1852. The Brigade House and watchtower were designed by Newcastle upon Tyne-based architect Frank West Rich in 1877–79, but the lifeboat station remained in use, with a few minor alterations, until 2003 when a new RNLI station was opened. In 2022 Cullercoats had its first all-female lifeboat crew.

The Bay Hotel, an important local landmark, was demolished in 2004. It was notable for a period in the 1880s when it was home to the American watercolour artist Winslow Homer who stayed in room 17 of the Hudleston Arms (1870) (later called the Bay Hotel),

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<sup>14</sup> Cullercoats village was founded in 1539. Historically the village depended on fishing; there was also local coal mining in so-called bell pits. The coal was used to fire salt pans (now long gone) on the field now known as the boat field. As a port, Cullercoats was used to export both salt and coal from the 1670s

and maintained a studio across the road at No.12 Bank Top (demolished 1930). Homer was a resident in Cullercoats from April 1881 to November 1882.

Homer was the most famous of the professional artists who were part of the "Cullercoats Colony" in the period 1870–1920. Others included Henry H. Emmerson, Robert Jobling, Arthur H. Marsh, Isa Thompson, John Falconer Slater and John Charlton and visitors like Ralph Hedley.

#### Cullercoats Fish Lass



Detail of a Cullercoats Fishlass, from Inside the Bar, by Winslow Homer 1883. William Finden noted that the fishwives (wives and daughters of the fishermen) searched for the bait, digging sand-worms, gathering mussels or seeking limpets and dog-crabs. They also assisted in baiting the hooks. In addition to this, they carried the fish to the market to sell them. "When fish are scarce, they not unfrequently carried a load on their shoulders, weighing between three or four stone, to Newcastle, which is about ten miles distant from Cullercoats, in the hope of meeting with a better market."

The Cullercoats Fish Lass became a popular subject for many of the Cullercoats Artist Colony, most notably Winslow Homer. While he resided from the spring of 1881 to November 1882, Homer became sensitive to the strenuous and courageous lives of its inhabitants, particularly the women, whom he depicted many times, hauling and cleaning fish, mending nets, and, most poignantly, standing at the water's edge, awaiting the return of their men.

Jean F. Terry wrote, in 1913, "The Cullercoats fishwife, with her cheerful weather-bronzed face, her short jacket and ample skirts of blue flannel, and her heavily laden "creel" of fish is not only appreciated by the brotherhood of brush and pencil, but is one of the notable sights of the district".

William S Garson, in his 1935 book, *The Romance of Old Tynemouth and Cullercoats*, wrote: "The Cullercoats fishwife plays a man's part in helping to launch the lifeboat, frequently wading waist-high into furious and ice-cold waters, and she never hesitates to allow her man to take a place on the boat, though he may go to face death and disaster."<sup>15</sup>



St Georges Church<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cullercoats>

<sup>16</sup> As a Grade 1 listed building its heritage rests mainly on the splendour of the work of renowned architect, John Loughborough Pearson (1817 to 1897).



Linnet (male)



Long Sands Beach



The Priory at Tynemouth<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/tynemouth-priory-and-castle/history/>

It has had a troubled history. Several religious buildings and fortifications have existed on the site through until the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII but the tidbit I'd like to add is as follows:

It became common for the abbots of St Albans to punish wayward monks by sending them for a period to Tynemouth, which seemed cold and comfortless in comparison to their southern English abbey. A letter survives from the mid 14th century describing Tynemouth, possibly from one of these exiles:

*Our house is confined to the top of a high cliff ... day and night the waves break and roar and undermine the cliff. Thick sea frets roll in, wrapping everything in gloom. Dim eyes, hoarse voices, sore throats are the consequence.*

It would appear that there had also been much conflict with Newcastle, Competition over access to the trade on the Tyne River was the issue!



The entire site, including the castle, was once well-protected!

The ever-present possibility of war in Scotland, the vulnerability of Northumberland to border raids, and the usefulness of the Tyne as a base for English military campaigns, resulted in 1296 in a grant by Edward I (r.1272–1307) allowing Tynemouth to be properly fortified. A high perimeter wall with towers enabled soldiers to defend the priory in times of war and lawlessness. After the Scots' victory over the English at the

Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, Robert the Bruce attacked the priory, which was defended successfully by an 80-strong garrison.





By this point, we had arrived on the Tyne!





Statue to the fishermen unveiled on 25 September 2017  
Fiddlers Green<sup>18</sup>

It has a sister: the Herring Girls. Done by the same artist!

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<sup>18</sup> Renowned sculptor Ray Lonsdale, the man behind the famous ‘Tommy’ sculpture in Seaham, was tasked with creating the memorial, which was inspired by an image of a fisherman taken in 1959 by local photographer Harry Hann.

Ray said: “Fiddler’s Green is one of the larger pieces I’ve done, and it’s been interesting for me tackling a different area like the fishing industry, I’ve really enjoyed doing it.

“Memorial unveilings are always a bit of a nerve-wracking time for me because of the sense of anticipation and you just don’t know what reaction you’ll get when the covers come off, but I was delighted that the feedback at its unveiling was so positive.”

The North Shields Fishermen’s Heritage Project (NSFHP) was founded in early 2015 to provide a fitting and lasting memorial to fishermen who lost their lives at sea while doing their job after leaving the port of North Shields.

<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/news/17429/memorial-lost-fishermen-unveiled>

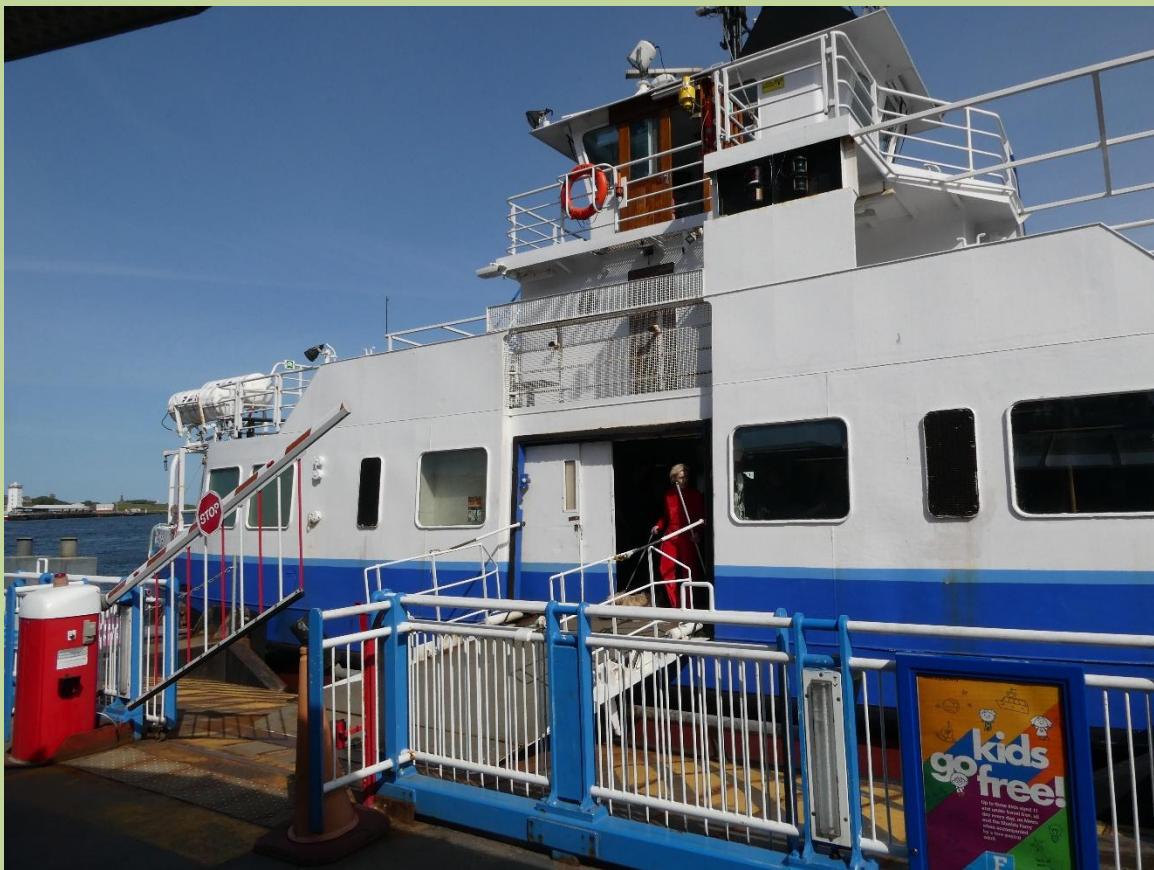


This old industrial site along the Tyne is being rejuvenated but it's a pity some of the foreshore has been taken away from the public to enable wealthy unit developments right to the river edge!



We then caught the ferry over to South Shields and walked up the hill, along through the market and then the mall to turn right, into the Metro and home!







## Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025

We duly caught the train from Newcastle to Hexham this morning and enjoyed a train ride in comfort of about 35 minutes. It left platform 9 on time and arrived at the othr end, also right on time, where we were met by Jon and Melanie!



The up train was a quick service. After Hexham it was going on to Carlisle.

Melanie and Jon took us from the station up into town and then on a walking tour of that place! We began in the Queen's Hall Arts Centre, a magnificent Victorian building that also houses the library and is currently holding a Book Fair (we call it a Writers Festival).



That's the roof!







The Old Gaol



Free grammar school and attached master's house constructed in 1684, and slightly later caretaker's house, with C18, C19 and C20 alterations. Tudor-gothic style. The building was used as a school from 1684 to 1902, and is now a private residence.





Hexham House



This pub/restaurant was located right near the stream where much of the tanning took place for a now defunct glove-making industry. Given the smelly nature of the trade, no doubt the residents were pleased for it to be gone!

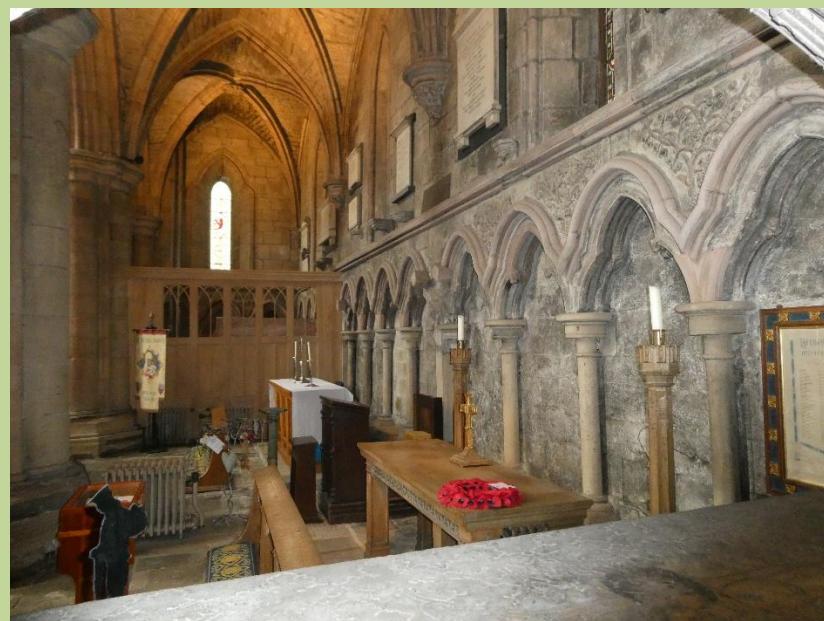


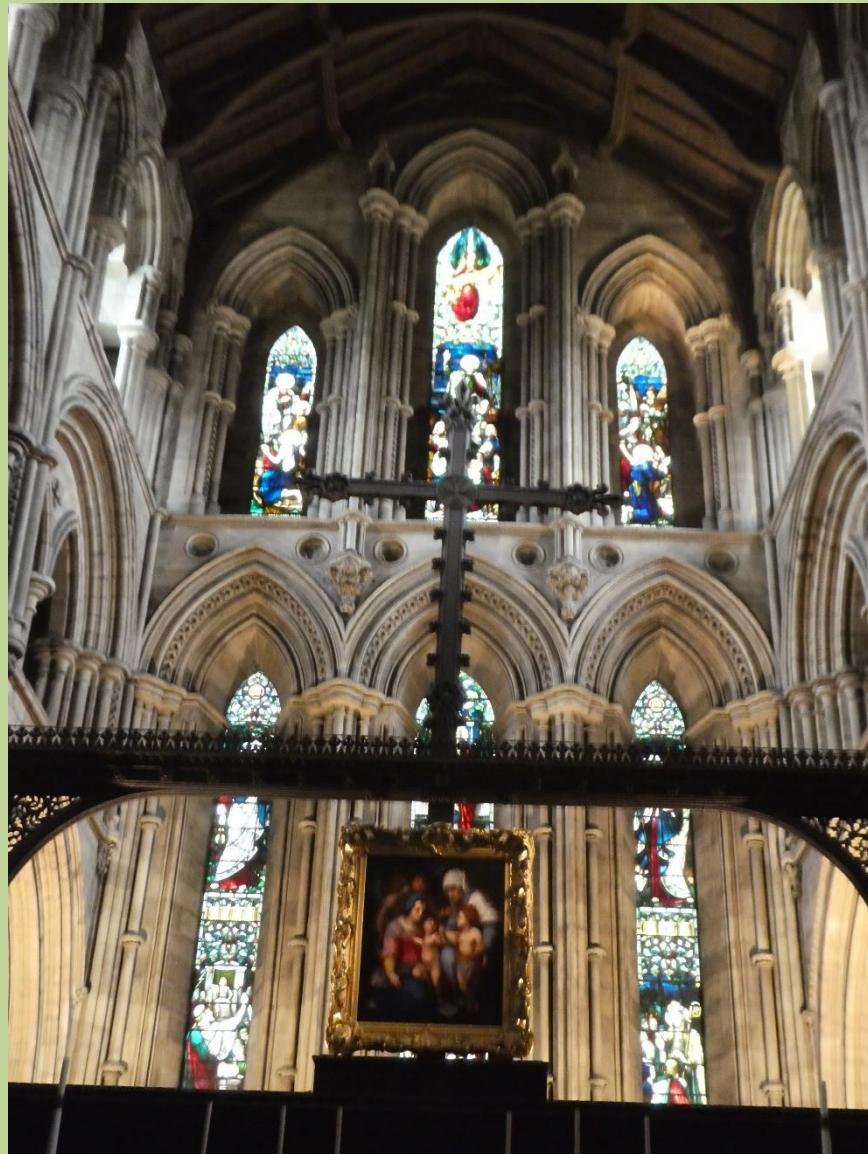


We then explored the priory/church. Hexham Priory was founded in 1114 by Thurstan, Archbishop of York, for Augustinian or Austin Canons, and continued until the 26th

February, 1536/37, when it surrendered after the dissolution of monasteries. During these 422 years twenty-six persons held the office of Prior. The place was regularly sacked by the Scots but somehow survived. It also survived the dissolution too. Hexham, the Chancel and Transepts survive because they were needed by the Parish Church.







And then to lunch at the Country Hotel! I had jacket potato and Chilli beef!

We then drove up to check out the home of Melanie and Jon; a home they have now had for 25 years (though they now own a second home over closer to the Lake District) and this one is a delightful place with a lovely garden and many regular bird visitors! Even while we were there, we saw 7 species of birds in the garden.

We then drove down to the Tyne river, the southern bit! The River Tyne is a river in North East England. Its length (excluding tributaries) is 73 miles (118 km). It is formed by the North Tyne and the South Tyne, which converge at Warden near Hexham in Northumberland at a place dubbed 'The Meeting of the Waters'. We walked to that meeting point! And certainly, my highlight was seeing up to four Dippers at once!



I have always loved Dippers!

But I think Faye was more excited to see Robson Green, the actor, and his house, right next to the stretch of water along which we walked!







### The Meeting of the Waters!

And with a Willow Warbler, a pair of Buzzards overhead and a pair of Mandarin Ducks in the water, a Song Thrush performing and the first of the Sand Martins and Swallows flying, it was indeed a nice walk!





And then back to Hexham railway station and home! The Newcastle and Carlisle Railway was formed in 1829, and was opened in stages. The station opened in March 1835, following the commencement of passenger trains between Blaydon and Hexham/

Dating from around 1835, Hexham is one of the oldest purpose-built railway stations in the world, and is Grade II listed. The over-line, elevated signal box, located to the east of the station, is also Grade II listed. Constructed in 1896, and once a popular design for the line, it is now almost unique, with the only other surviving signal box of this design located at Wylam.

And with that, our time in Newcastle comes to an end. Tomorrow, we shall collect our car and move into Northumberland.