

Newcastle-upon-Tyne Human Rights Heritage Walk

"Our last *official* Culture Club outing, succeeding trips to the Laing Art Gallery, the Legal Graffiti Wall in Newcastle, a visit to view the soon-to-be-late Dunston Rocket and frequent visits to the Baltic Art Gallery (including the viewing of Turner Art Prize), was a tour of Newcastle by a member of Amnesty International.

At first mention, a tour of Newcastle seemed no more than "This is the 'hippy-green', steer clear...moving on!"; but to our delight there were much more delicate, yet important treasures that have been somewhat hidden by time. For example, our much adored meet-up-point –Grey's Monument–is in fact a tribute to the extremely important Charles Grey and his Great Reform Act of 1832, allowing more people to vote; something that many of us would normally pass by without even thinking about.

We also learned of Joseph Cowen, a prominent politician of the late 1800's, who stood up for the rights of the mining classes, and whose statue is located on Westgate Road; the meetings of the Suffragettes in Fenwick's, where they successfully schemed to extend the vote to women; the meetings in the Methodist Church to end slavery; the lectures and demonstration of the first working light bulb at the Lit & Phil; and possibly the most staggering to me, the huge demonstrations on the land of the Hay Market, in which more than double the population of Newcastle travelled to fight for their rights.

A tour which, even on a cold day of April, was most worth taking, not least because it started at the Amnesty International Book shop, a place which is now my favourite place in the entire city of Newcastle."

Dan.