

Photo Essay – March 2022



Art Instead of Coal - How the North of England Rose from the Ashes

This photo essay documents a region whose economy has completely hit rock bottom. That was precisely the case in the late 1980s in Northeast England, around the River Tyne in Newcastle and Gateshead. Over **150,000 people** once worked in the **182 mines** of the **Tyne and Wear** region. But following the harsh deindustrialization under Margaret Thatcher, which brought an end not only to coal but also to proud shipbuilding, **unemployment** soared to a dramatic **55 percent**.

Today I am showing you how this region pulled off one of Europe's most impressive rebirths - not through new industry, but through art and culture!



Symbol of rebirth: Angel Of The North, Gateshead

The Angel of Renewal

The symbol of this incredible transformation stands right by the A1 motorway near Gateshead: the **"Angel of the North"**. This 20-meter-high, giant sculpture by artist Anthony Gormley was erected in 1998 for over one million pounds right on the site of a former coal mine. It watches over the structural change of the region like a guardian angel.

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And those in charge bravely pushed forward: In the year 2000, the "**Millennium Bridge**" opened for 22 million pounds. It connects **Gateshead** and **Newcastle** and is an absolute engineering marvel - it rotates around its own longitudinal axis to allow ships to pass through!



Millennium Bridge and The Sage Gateshead



Sculpture Millennium Bridge



Sculpture near Millennium Bridge

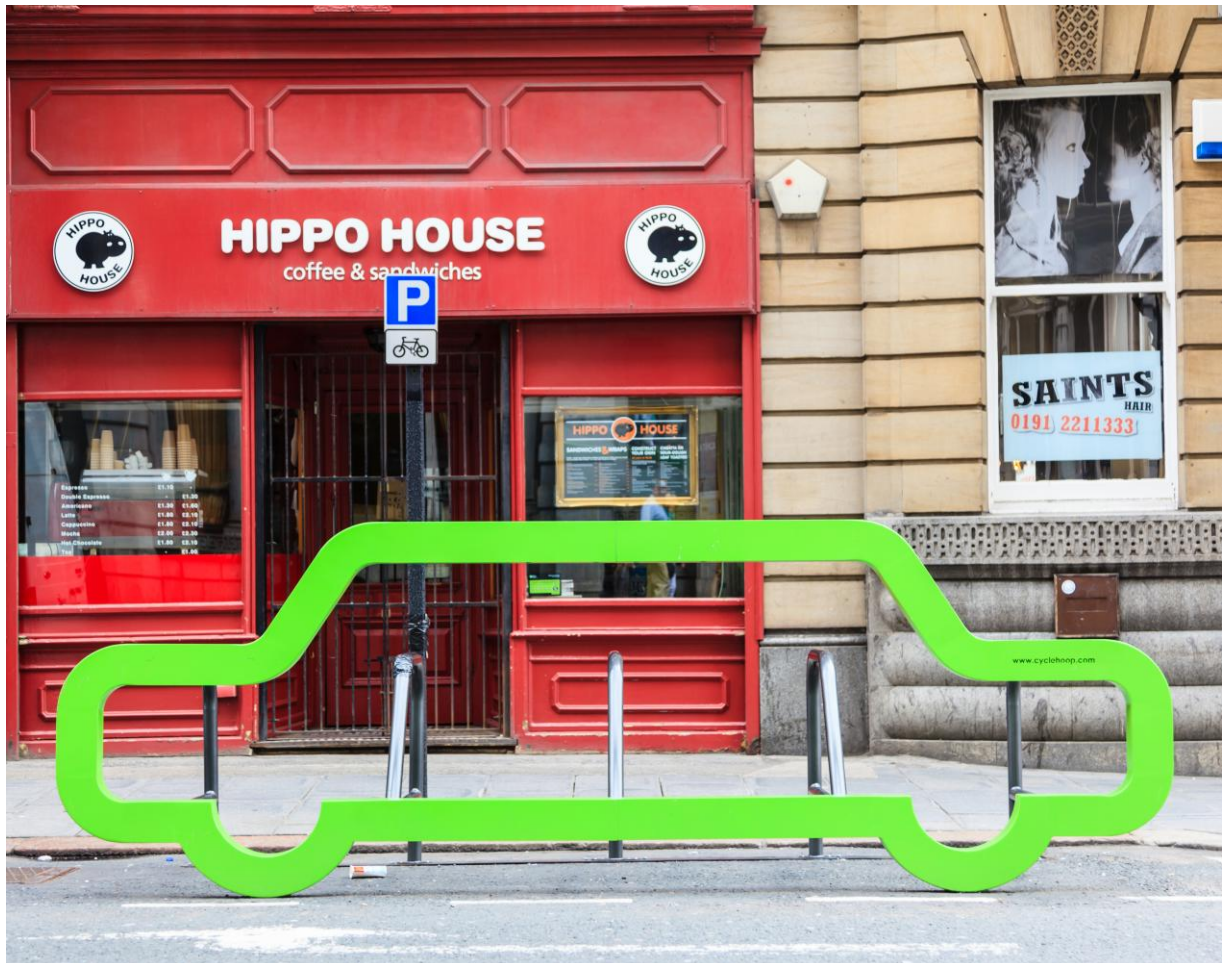
Silos Become Museums, Lottery Money Becomes Music

Today, cultural life pulses right along the banks of the River Tyne. In 2004, "**The Sage Gateshead**" opened - a futuristic glass and steel concert hall built for 70 million pounds (mostly

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lottery funding). Just a stone's throw away you will find the "**Baltic**" - once a massive grain mill and silo, today the region's largest centre for contemporary art, whose conversion cost 50 million pounds.



Art at Bigg Market

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Tyne Bridge

As Gateshead councillor Mick Henry aptly put it:

„Culture first changed the physical face of our city. Now our economy is blossoming through it.“

Art has made people here flexible again and paved the way for many small start-ups and creatives.

History Up Close: Durham and Hadrian's Wall

If you are in the area, you mustn't miss the surroundings! A few miles away lies Durham, founded in 995. Alongside the historic university, the magnificent 11th-century cathedral towers over the city - which travel writer Bill Bryson once described as the **"best on earth"**. If you want to immerse yourself in the era before deindustrialization, I recommend the Beamish Open Air Museum.

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Beamish Museum, County Durham

And for all history fans: **Hadrian's Wall**, built by the Romans around 122 AD, stretches right across the landscape here with its once 80 gates. Or how about a detour to the Lake District in Cumbria to take a deep breath by one of the 16 lakes?



Hadrian's Wall, Housesteads

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Northern England impressively proves to us: When old doors slam shut, you simply have to courageously open new (creative) ones. Who among you now fancies a little journey through time to Great Britain?

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