

Healthworks

the community health charity



THE HODGKIN PARK HISTORICAL TRAIL

In partnership with Healthworks

Who are Healthworks?

We are a charity based in Newcastle working with local communities across the North East to improve their health, wellbeing and life outcomes.

Healthworks believes that everyone, regardless of the challenges they face- low income, unemployment or poor housing, should have the same opportunity to live in good health.

Our aim is to support people facing these issues, across the northeast to maintain and improve their health, wellbeing and life outcomes.

For more information about Healthworks, visit our webpage:
<https://www.healthworksnewcastle.org.uk/>

Walking is a fantastic way to improve both your physical and mental health, and our historical trails can teach you lots about your local area! We hope you enjoy the Hodgkin Park Historical Trail, and keep a look out for more trails in the future.

Participants are responsible for assessing their own risk and safety of themselves and family members. Healthworks takes no responsibility for any accidents or liability while following this trail.

Healthworks are adhering to all Covid 19 guidelines and are staying Covid secure. All participants should also comply to current guidelines surrounding Covid 19

This trail will take around 45 minutes to complete at a leisurely pace.

The starting point for this historical trail is the Chester Pike carpark (NE15 6BS), at the bottom of the small stairs.

Chester Pike road used to be known as Woodland Crescent when the previous housing estate was there. The postcode of the previous houses was terminated in 2009 after the houses had remained derelict for a number of years.



To begin the trail, walk downhill towards Whitehouse Road (NE15 6BG) (the road at the bottom)

At the bottom of the hill, take a left and walk a short distance until you reach the entrance to Hodgkin Park.

When the Hodgkin family left Benwell in 1893, they gifted the grounds, almost six acres and Hodgkin Park was formally opened by Mrs Hodgkin on 8th August 1899. A newspaper reported “the little park slopes to the south, and the grass is as green and the air as sweet, as though the smoke and the chimneys of the city were hundreds of miles away. The view is exceedingly pretty.”



Upon entering Hodgkin Park, bare left and walk a short distance up the hill.



On your left hand side, you will see the first of two ponds.

Opposite the pond, on your right hand side, you will see the iconic water pump.

Unfortunately, due to the complexity of its design, the pump is not longer in use but still makes a great sculpture.



To continue the trail, walk further up the hill and remain following the main path until you reach the second pond on your left hand side, which is highlighted by the metal bridge.



The pond shows a great variety of natural wildlife, including wildfowl, frogs, fish, and flowers.

From standing on the main path, take a right turn and walk in the direction of the football cage.



To continue the walk, take the stairs on your left to lead you to site of the old band stand.



Did you know? During World War II, part of this land was used for allotments in the 'Dig for Victory' campaign. This campaign was created by the British ministry of Agriculture to encourage the community to grow their own produce in times of harsh rationing. It ran from 1939 to 1945.

When you reach the bench, take a right then walk around the edge of the grass square.

You will come across this blue plaque.

The plaque shows the location of a time capsule buried by West Riverside Sure Start. As stated on the plaque, the capsule is scheduled to be opened by Akinsion Road Nursery School in 2038.



Continue to walk around the grass square, until you reach another set of stone stairs.



At the top of the stairs, take a left and follow the path towards the top of the Dene.

Keep following the path towards the Dene until you come across the 'Benwell Dene' sign.



Take a few minutes to read the information on the board. It will inform you about the wildlife found throughout the Park and the Dene and some other general facts about the parks.



Opposite the board there are some stone stairs, take these with care to continue the trail.

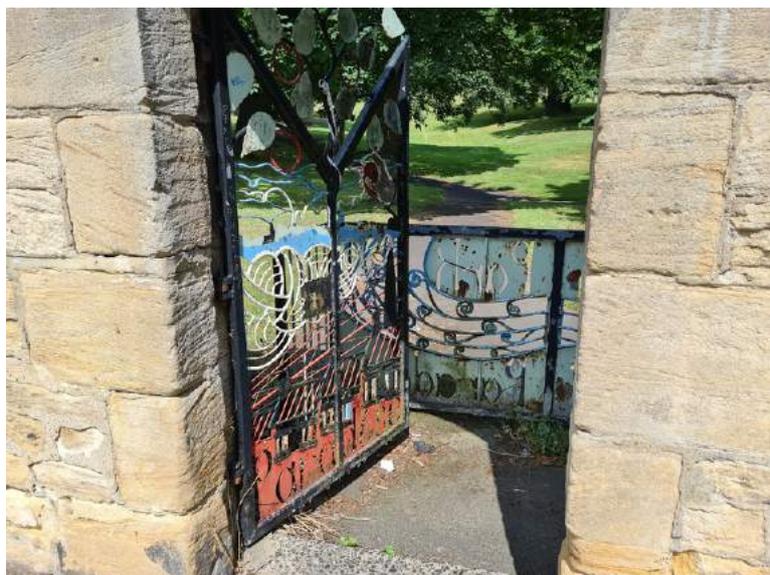
At the top of the stairs is Armstong road. Please cross the road with caution and enter the arch leading into the top of Hodgkin Park.

The top half of Hodgkin Park was donated generously to Benwell and Fenham Urban District Council by Thomas Hodgkin who was a local historian and successful banker. He did this specifically "for the benefit and recreation of local people".



Once you have crossed the road, you will see one of the many sculpted gates into Hodgkin Park.

These gates are handmade by the local artist William Pym. They represent both different areas of the parks and significant areas and landmarks around Newcastle.



After you have walked through the gate, follow the path along to the right. You will walk past the old circular stairs which used to lead to the old bowling green.

On your right you will see another entrance sculpture once again by William Pym.



Continue following the path leading up the hill. On your left you will see the site of the old bowling green.

In 1904, the new bowling green and gymnasium were created, along with new footpaths, entrances and planting. This is because, Benwell became part of the City of Newcastle and the park was extended to include the land south of Armstrong Road.



Keep walking up the hill and then follow the path around to the left. Notice the small patch of flat land, here was the old site of the tennis courts.



In the distance, past the tennis court site you will notice a small vertical sculpture in amongst the trees. This is another sculpture by William Pym. Go and have a closer look if you fancy!

Continuing on with the walk follow the path to your right and continue walking up the hill through the top park.



If you keep walking up the hill you will eventual see a small fenced building which used to be the old park wardens hut.

The hut is now used by Urban Green and other charities for various events in the top of Hodgkin park.



Keep walking up the hill and you will see on your right The Lodge Hodgkin Park.

According to local residents at the time, a park keeper was employed around the turn of the century. He was housed in the park in The Lodge Hodgkin Park at the top of the second half of the park. His primary job was to maintain the greenspace and make it safe and pleasant for regular users.

To finish this walk head through the exit gates of Hodgkin Park at the top of the hill.

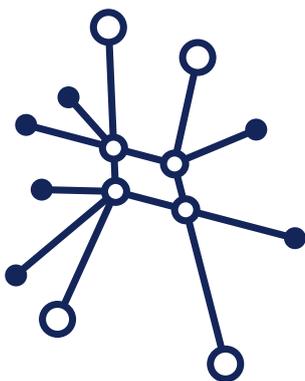
These gates are know as the Lovers Lane gates and are sculpted by William Pym.



We hope that the Hodgkin Park Historical Trail allowed you to learn something new about your local area and that you enjoyed taking some time to walk and improve your wellbeing.

Remember to keep an eye out for more trails in the future, and for more information visit our website:

<https://www.healthworksnewcastle.org.uk/>
for more information and services.



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