



The Whitley Bay Discovery Walk

A nostalgic near circular walk through the sights and sounds of a much loved seaside resort



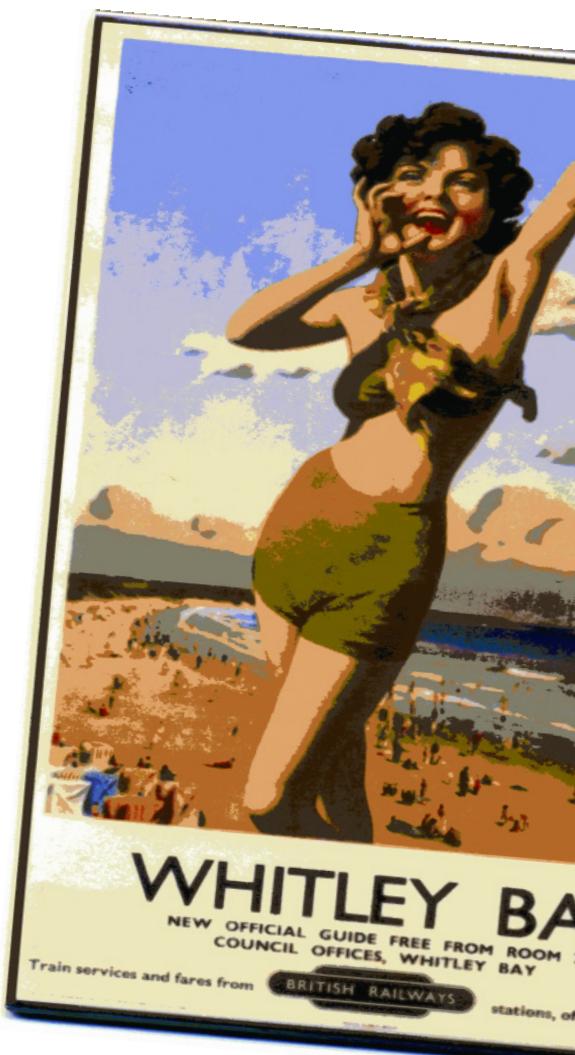
Whitley Bay
Chamber of Trade



North Tyneside Council

The Whitley

At the height of its popularity Whitley Bay was a busy seaside resort attracting visitors from far and wide. Here generations of families enjoyed everything that the traditional British seaside holiday had to offer. However, as air travel became more accessible in the 1960's holidaymakers began to seek out more exotic destinations where sunshine could be guaranteed. Holiday patterns had changed forever. As you step out on this walk you will discover for yourself some of the fragments of Whitley Bay's rich and varied past. Be prepared to be surprised.



Bay Discovery Walk



1. The walk starts where most visitors to the town first arrived at the beginning of their fortnight's holiday; the railway station. Opened in 1910, and replacing the original 1882 station, the renaissance style building was designed for the North Eastern Railway Company by W. Bell. Having as its central feature an impressive clock tower, the station's symmetrical façade looks directly towards the sea, the town's *raison d'être*. Inside the station, on the wall facing the former ticket office, is the mosaic triptych, 'Passing' by the artist Ian Patience. The central panel features a nocturnal seascape whilst the two outer panels show a young family enjoying a day on the beach. Outside, to your right at the head of Clarence Crescent, stands a very rare combination of a telephone box/post office kiosk. Introduced in 1928, less than 50 of this K4 type kiosk were installed throughout the country. Proving unpopular with customers the majority were withdrawn in 1935 but somehow this one escaped the axe. It was Grade II listed in October 1986.
2. Leaving the station behind, head eastwards along Station Road keeping to the right hand side. Within 100 metres, on the corner of Albany Gardens, stands 18 Station Road, the former studio of professional photographer Gladstone Adams. In 1908 the 1880-born photographer drove his motor car to Crystal Palace to watch his beloved Newcastle United Football Club play Wolverhampton Wanderers in the FA Cup Final. On his way home, having endured the 3-1 defeat of his team, snow kept obscuring the windscreen of his motor car and he regularly had to stop to manually clean it. This frustrating experience inspired him to invent the windscreen wiper, the design of which he eventually patented in 1911. In the early 1970's this building was home to Spectro Arts Workshop, a flourishing centre of artistic activity. Continue to the junction with Whitley Road, one of the town's main shopping streets. Once over the zebra crossing, turn left past the Station Hotel, the venue in October 1907 of Whitley Bay's first ever leek show, and then immediately right into the Esplanade. Take a moment to look above eye level to see some of the interesting features of the buildings that make up the four corners of this junction.

10. Soon you will pass, on your right, the 1864 consecrated St.Paul's Church, designed by London architect, A. Salvin. The first vicar of the church was the Rev. R.F. Wheeler who was a founder member of the Cullercoats Volunteer Life Brigade. In his 1957 book 'The Buildings of England', Nikolaus Pevsner thought that this was "not a church of much architectural merit". Judge for yourself. On your left stands the Fat Ox public house which derived its name from the famous, locally reared animal which, when killed in March 1789, weighed an astounding 216 stones 8lbs. (1375 kg.). A large copperplate engraving of the animal by Thomas Bewick was published the following month. Follow the road as it curves to your left and where it turns sharp left at the traffic lights cross straight ahead into Whitley Road.
11. You are now in the centre of the town and you have reached the end of the walk. Before you leave, take time to look around you. The 'Whitley Bay Clock' was commissioned from Cumbrian-based artist-blacksmith, Chris Brammall by the town's Rotary Club to celebrate their 75th anniversary. The work was inspired by the coastal location and reflects, in its materials and structure, the engineering traditions of the area. The clock was installed in October 1998 and was formally presented to the people of the town. Look upwards and see the light coloured façade of the New Coliseum which was opened in 1910 and provided live entertainment until the advent of the 'silent movies' in 1919, when the building was extensively altered. The ABC Company introduced the first 'talkies' to the cinema in 1929 and these continued to be shown until the very last film was screened on the 1st May 1971. Not far from this spot, at the top of South Parade, for a short while in the 1960's the Club A Go-Go reverberated to the music of the day and on the 9th November 1963 a fledgling band played at the club. They were the Rolling Stones and as they say.....the rest is history!



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