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Hebburn Shipyard Amble

First records of a settlement at Hebburn mention fishermen's huts, which were burnt by the Vikings in the 8th century. Since that time the area has seen huge change due to industry. The first large-scale non-agricultural industry was coalmining, which arrived in the 1700s, and by the second half of the 19th century, shipbuilding and other industries had swelled the population with incoming immigrant workforces, initially from Scotland and Ireland.

The walk starts and finishes at Hebburn Metro Station.

From the start, we walked along Station Road towards Hebburn Shopping Centre. On the left is Fountain Square Park which was opened in 1989 on the site of the old Newtown Junior and Infants Schools.

Crossing over Victoria Road at the lights onto Hall Road we carry straight on until the junction with Canning Street. Ahead is St. John's Church which was converted from part of Ellison Hall and is said to include the remains of a 14th century Pele Tower. The church was consecrated in 1887 by the Lord Bishop of Durham and is one of several churches built in Hebburn in the 19th century.



Turning left along Canning Street, we crossed over the road and through the entrance into the park.

Carr-Ellison Park was created in 1920 when Colonel Ralph Henry Carr-Ellison presented 25 acres of land surrounding Ellison Hall to be used as a public park. Following the path through the park with the Hall to the right, passing on the left a memorial erected to the memory of Hebburn men killed in the Boer War.



The Ellison family purchased the Hebburn estate in 1658. Ellison Hall as it is today was rebuilt in 1790 as a spacious mansion with over 80 rooms. The Ellison family left the Hall in the mid-19th century and it was leased as residence until 1897, when the east wing was converted into Ellison Hall Accident Infirmary. The infirmary closed in 1976 and the Hall was leased to the Freemasons as a private social club. Since then, the Hall has been converted into apartments.

Continuing through the park, we pass the back of the Hall. At the second war memorial we take the path to the right towards the park gates and on to St. John's Avenue, crossing the road and entering Hebburn cemetery through a small gate.



Hebburn cemetery was reputedly once known as 'Thompson's Garden' probably after a Mr Thompson who was Superintendent for the park and cemetery. The HMS Kelly memorial is here, perpetuating the memory of the crew of Lord Mountbatten's gallant World War 2 warship.



There are many optional paths through the cemetery. Head towards the cemetery church then down the main drive on to Victoria Road West. Turn left at the gates, crossing over Victoria Road at the traffic island and taking the next right turn down South Drive. This part of Hebburn was once dominated by Reyrolles. In 1901 Frenchman Alphonse Reyrolle set up his first factory in Hebburn, employing 58 staff in the making of electrical switchgear. The company was to grow and prosper and in the 1960s Reyrolles covered an area of 160 acres and at its peak in the mid-20th century employed more than 12,000 staff. Since 1965 Reyrolle has been through several mergers, and is now owned by Siemens. Reyrolle now operates in less than 10% of the original site, although they do have a modern office block on the nearby Monkton Business Park.

Continuing down this road we reach the metro line and cross the metro line using the stiles at either side.

Caution: Take great care crossing the Metro line. Check both directions for oncoming trains.

Carrying on down the hill, past the allotments on the right, towards the River Tyne. At the carved mushroom marker at the bottom of the hill, we turn right along the path through the Riverside Park towards Hebburn Marina.



The Riverside Park and Marina area was reclaimed from 75 acres of derelict land once dominated by industry. Development began in the 1970s to transform the riverside into an attractive leisure area with a surprising variety of wildlife. From here you can walk or cycle along the banks of the Tyne to Bill Quay and beyond. Continuing along Prince Consort Road past the marina, following the road uphill.

This route takes us back down to the river past a new housing area on the site of the old Ballast Hill, once a popular viewing point to watch ships being launched on the Tyne.

The old Hebburn ferry, 'Fairy Queen', operated from the bottom of Ellison Street providing transportation across the river to Wallsend and Walker. It was originally built by a Scottish shipbuilder for use on the Forth & Clyde Canal and purchased some years later by Hawthorn Leslie. The ferryboat was also used as a pleasure boat taking trips up the Tyne. The Mid Tyne Ferries were jointly owned by shipbuilders Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson, Hawthorn Leslie and Vickers-Armstrong, plus electrical engineers A Reyrolle.



The Fairy Queen



A more typical mid-Tyne ferry



From "Get Carter" – three cross Tyne ferries

Turning right up Ellison Street until we reach St Andrew's Church. This area was once dominated by the shipbuilding industry, which began in Hebburn in 1853 with the arrival of Andrew Leslie from Aberdeen. Leslie built houses for the many workers who followed him and the area became known as 'Little Aberdeen'. Leslie also largely financed the building of St Andrew's Church in 1873. Hawthorn-Leslie's shipyard had up to 7 slipways and dry docks at its height in the 1940s.



One of the ships built at the Hawthorn Leslie yard was the destroyer HMS Kelly which was launched in 1938. The Kelly needed major repair work at the yard after being torpedoed off the coast of Norway in May 1940 during the Second World War. She rejoined the war, only to be sunk in May 1941 during the invasion of Crete. Over half the ship's company were lost and are fondly remembered by the people of Hebburn.

At the top of Ellison Street, we cross over and turn right along Lyon Street, towards Hebburn town centre, until reaching Prince Consort Road. Turning left here, we pass St Aloysius RC Church which was built in 1888. We then continue up the hill back to Hebburn metro station, the end of our walk, and looking forward to refreshments at Café L.

