



# Benwell and Scotswood in the time of the First World War HERITAGE TRAIL

This map shows what Benwell and Scotswood looked like between the two World Wars. The locations marked on the map are part of the story of this area during the First World War.

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1. Armstrong's Elswick Works
2. Armstrong's Scotswood Works
3. Atkinson Road School
4. Benwell & Fenham Council Offices
5. Benwell Dene House
6. Benwell Library
7. Benwell Presbyterian Church
8. Benwell Towers
9. Bond Church
10. Charlotte Pit
11. Clara Street
12. Cochran Street
13. Denton Road School
14. Hodgkin Park
15. Montagu Pit
16. Paradise
17. Pendower Estate
18. Pendower Hall
19. St James' Church
20. St James' Church Hall
21. St Joseph's School
22. St Margaret's Church
23. Scotswood Village
24. Violet Street





## Benwell and Scotswood at the time of the First World War

### HERITAGE TRAIL

The accompanying Heritage Trail map shows what Benwell and Scotswood looked like in the period between the two World Wars. To see how much has changed, compare it with what you see as you move around the area today.

The locations marked are part of the story of the area at the time of the First World War. Their significance is summarised below.

You can find out more about this story and see photographs of the places and people from our book “Benwell and Scotswood in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century” (due out late 2018) or by looking at our First World War schools resource pack (both can be viewed and downloaded from the Publications and Resources page of this website).

**1. Armstrong’s Elswick Works:** The First World War saw the peak of employment and production at Armstrong’s huge armaments and engineering works. There is now a business park on the site. You can walk along the riverside path through what was one of the foremost industrial areas in the world in this period.

**2. Armstrong’s Scotswood Works:** In 1899 Armstrong opened his second factory here. It was also a major producer of munitions during the First World War, employing about 30,000 people. Many women were recruited for this work, but they lost their jobs after the War.

**3. Atkinson Road School:** Atkinson Road School began in 1910 and is still open today in the same buildings. It was one of several new schools built here in this period in response to the growth of the local population and to government legislation providing for the education of all children.

**6. Benwell Library:** Benwell Library opened in 1908 as the first library in Newcastle to allow the public to look at book and borrow what they wanted. No longer a library, the building still stands.

**7. Benwell Presbyterian Church:** During the First World War recreation rooms for soldiers were opened in Benwell Presbyterian Church. The building was also used for teaching children when their schools were closed for War uses. It was demolished in the 1970s.

**8. Benwell Towers:** The grounds of Benwell Towers were used by the military during the War as a gathering point for reservists who could be called up to fight if needed. This house still stands.

**9. Bond Memorial Methodist Church:** This church opened in 1899 to serve the rapidly growing area then known as “New Benwell”. The central church building has been demolished, but the oldest part still stands to the west of the cleared site, and the former manse is still in use.

**10. Charlotte Pit:** Benwell’s last pit was on the site where the council depot is today. Condercum Road used to be Charlotte Pit Lane. To the south of the pit, opposite the church, was a big quarry.

**11. Clara Street:** Typical of Benwell's old terraced housing, Clara Street ran from Adelaide Terrace all the way down to Scotswood Road. The upper part of Clara Street still stands today but the lower part, built on a very steep slope and of poorer quality, has gone.

**12. Cochran Street:** This is one of the original terraces of "New Benwell", replaced by newer housing in the 1970s. The Armstrong family who lived here had five sons fighting in the War.

**13. Denton Road School:** This school opened in 1908 and has since been demolished. It stood on a site opposite St Margaret's Church in Scotswood.

**14. Hodgkin Park:** The upper part of Hodgkin Park opened in 1899 and the lower part was added in 1906. There used to be a bowling green, bandstand and tennis courts.

**15. Montagu Pit:** This was the last coalmine to close in the area. A terrible pit disaster here claimed the lives of 38 miners in 1925. Today the B&Q store stands on the former pit site.

**16. Paradise:** Paradise was a little village to the south of Benwell, made famous by the song "Blaydon Races". Two brothers, Charles and James, from the Bell family of Paradise went away to fight in the War but only one came home. Charles was killed in the Gallipoli campaign of 1915.

**17. Pendower Estate:** This estate was built in the 1920s as part of the drive to provide homes for people returning from the War. They were built to a high standard with gardens, and are still popular today.

**18. Pendower Hall:** Pendower Hall, which can be seen from the West Road, was used as a convalescent home for wounded soldiers during the First World War.

**19. St James' Church:** This has been the parish church for Benwell since 1843. The First World War Memorial for Benwell is inside the church, carved into oak panels around the baptistery.

**20. St James' Church Hall:** St James' church hall was occupied by the army during part of the First World War. It was also used by local schools whose buildings had been taken over by the military.

**21. St Joseph's School:** St Joseph's School was used to house German prisoners during the War.

**22. St Margaret's Church:** This church was actually built during the First World War. It is still the Anglican parish church for Scotswood. The Scotswood War Memorial is in the grounds of the church.

**23. Scotswood Village:** The area of terraced housing known today as Scotswood Village was under construction in the decades preceding the First World War. Some of these streets have since been demolished but others can still be seen.

**24. Violet Street:** This was one of the earliest streets of dense terraced housing built in Benwell in to house the workforce of the booming industries along the riverside. These homes were of poor quality and were demolished in the 1970s. The Preece family of Violet Street had two sons fighting in the First World War and a daughter who worked on the front line as a nurse.