

Ways to reflect on being a novice pedestrian: A Tale of Two Bridges (6th April 2018)

High Level Bridge (Newcastle – Gateshead – Newcastle – Gateshead – Newcastle); Tyne Bridge (Newcastle – Gateshead – Newcastle – Gateshead – Newcastle); Newcastle Quayside to Millennium Bridge (Newcastle – Gateshead – Newcastle – Gateshead – Newcastle).

“We were born on an invisible river which keeps gliding and singing and filling and flowing. We do not know where we go, but we know we are on the stream. We do not always perceive the movement, but we observe that the landscape has changed” (Stephen Graham, *The Gentle Art of Tramping*, 1926).

I walked across the Tyne Bridge and had a feeling of being simultaneously embodied in a single place and elsewhere; memories of other places overlapped and displaced others as a palimpsest that continuously erodes and builds conscious memory. This, according to Bergson, is duration itself; it “is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances. And as the past grows without ceasing, so also there is no limit to its preservation” (Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 1911).

The images from a shared novice walk - shared via the telepresence of WhatsApp - now prompt shards of memory of an afternoon in April 2018 when I walked across three bridges in Newcastle, crossing the River Tyne and back again. Now, in January 2019 I am reflecting on this walk and these places using shards of the histories of these places; geological, political, cultural, local, and contemporary. These shards do not come from books, articles, maps, websites, tourist information centres or local history guides; instead they come from (mostly) imagined histories that, like the palimpsest of memory, emerge distorted and misremembered.

54. Ways to reflect

What is the conscious experience of the wander, what is remembered?

How much of what is remembered is reduced to significant moments?

Interpret those significant moments through specific lenses such as:
Autobiography. Human Geography. Play Theory. Feminist Geography. Public Memory. Intercultural Geography. Cultural Memory. Biography. Psychogeography. Choreography. Ethnography. Phenomenology. Ecology. Human Rights. Environmental science. Aesthetics. Other.

Select a photograph/image from one of your 'wanders'. Research the place where you took the image through one, or a variety of the following:

*Geological history
Political history
Cultural heritage
Local history
Contemporary history*

Create a collage of written statements from your research findings onto/over/below the photograph.

Mark out on a page 12 squares using a pencil. Create a visual response in each square from 12 memories experienced on the 'wander'. The rules are as follows for each square:

*Starting anywhere inside the square
Draw only 3 lines to a square
Lines do not have to be straight
They can curve, meander, and circle
When you lift the pencil off paper that is the end of one line
You need to stop when the pencil touches the side of the square
Repeat for each of the 12 squares.*

On the banks of the Thames I welcomed in the 21st century. I remember only the journey home after midnight and a photographic image of Earth from space as the clock chimed twelve.



Much busier as I enter the Tyne bridge 13:47

“Overcome space, and all we have left is Here. Overcome time, and all we have left is Now” (Richard Bach, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, 1970).

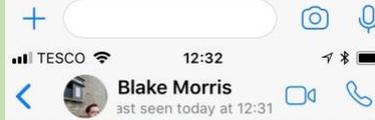


Birmingham. Chelmsford. London. Northampton. Manchester. Carlisle. Newcastle. Differences of geography.

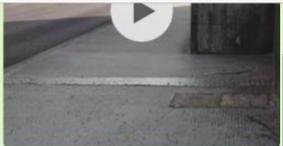
1989. 1999. 2000. 2003. 2009. 2016. 2019. Differences of time.

Watching a view of St Paul's is strange as real view is of the Tyne bridge 13:49

Repeated visits to the Tate Modern. A crack in the Turbine Hall. Grey felt. An inverted banister.



Crossing the Tyne Bridge in the Great North Run, beating the Red Arrows.



No crowds here. Free flow. 13:55

Padlocks on the bridge as symbols of everlasting love. I loiter for a while as have many others before me and consider whether these promises remain unbroken, untouched by loss; whether they have been weather worn.



Withs 13:56

Before the green bridge of iron across the Tyne, there was a Roman bridge heavily guarding Pons Aelius. Roman soldiers marched across the bridge. In my walk, I traced their footsteps, even though the bridge was never really there. Sicut ambulavit trans pontem miles.

