

## Texts

### **1. Gateshead Birds**

#### ***River Derwent, Swalwell***

The section of the River Derwent directly above its confluence with the Tyne, has a developing mudflat and a reed covered island, surrounded by a formally managed park area. The best spot is close to the Metro Radio building at Swalwell, where parking is available, grid reference NZ204605.

This area is probably best visited during the winter, though spring and autumn are also worthwhile. There is a wintering flock of up to sixty Teal, which commute between here and and Shibdon Pond, other wildfowl species are also sometimes seen, both Scaup and Long-tailed Duck have been recorded. Little Grebe are usually present in the winter, with as many as ten birds, and Kingfisher are a regular sight along the river. Waders find the muddy silt bank attractive and Redshank are often present, as are Common Sandpiper in spring and autumn. Snipe are sometimes seen and more unusual species like: Little Ringed Plover, Green Sandpiper, Greenshank and Jack Snipe have all been recorded. The amenity planting blocks around the area hold many common 'garden' birds and on one memorable occasion they attracted a flock of almost 300 waxwing.

#### ***Saltwell Park***

A large formally managed park in the centre of Gateshead with a boating lake, holding some captive wildfowl, owned and managed by Gateshead MBC. There is also an aviary in a 'pets corner' which displays a variety of caged finches and other species. The lake often holds small numbers of wild duck, and there is an area of old oak woodland which is the best for wild birds. The park can be entered at a variety of access points, the lake is located at grid reference NZ254613.

The park is probably most interesting to the birdwatcher during winter or spring. A variety of captive wildfowl can be seen on the lake including: Lesser White-fronted, Canada, Emperor and Greylag Goose, Shelduck and Mute Swan. The aviaries hold a wide variety of finch, dove and pheasant species. Around the rest of the park can be seen large numbers of Collared Doves, some of which are so tame they will take bread from the hand. Scattered around the park are a variety of typical suburban park species, such as Greenfinch, Chaffinch and Wood Pigeon. In late spring large numbers of Spotted Flycatcher arrive and can be seen feeding around the bowling greens and open areas. Nuthatch has been recorded in the oak woodland below the castle. Occasionally unexpected species might be noted for instance Hawfinch and Tree Sparrow, whilst Red-necked Grebe was once seen on the lake in the 1930s.

#### ***Dunston, Riverside Mudflats***

An area of intertidal mudflat about a kilometre upstream of where the River Team joins the Tyne. The mud is best viewed from near the weighbridge building, and obviously low tide is the best time for viewing wading birds. The mudflats, known as

Timber Beach, are close to the minor road running parallel to the river, behind the Metrocentre, at grid reference NZ224628.

The mud attracts varying numbers of wading birds, with the largest flocks being seen in late autumn and winter. In spring small parties of Ringed Plover are often present, Redshank are seen throughout the year, whilst Curlew is mainly a winter visitor here. In spring the mud often attracts Common Sandpiper and sometimes rarer species such as Greenshank. There are usually a few Lapwing and Mallard present, with a winter flock of Teal which can reach over one hundred birds. Out on the river can be seen Cormorants, gulls, the occasional winter Goldeneye, and in summer, a few terns.

### ***Bill Quay Riverside***

A tidal stretch of the River Tyne, close to the International Paint Factory. The river can be overlooked from the track which runs westwards from below the Bill Quay Community Farm at grid reference NZ288627.

The river is probably at its most interesting in late summer at low tide when large numbers of fishing terns might be present as well as a few wading birds. A few pairs of Kittiwake have recently started to nest in the International Paint building and these can be seen from April through to August. During the winter small numbers of waders can be seen at low tide along the river banks, these include Lapwings, Snipe, Redshank and, quite often, Turnstone, at their furthest regular inland locality in the region. Cormorant are always to be seen along the river, and occasionally more unusual seabirds such as auks and divers have been noted.

*from* K. Bowey, S. Rutherford and S. Westerberg: Birds of Gateshead (Gateshead MBC, 1993)

## **2. Vermeer: The Little Street**

Time, halted for this instant and therefore in a sense for eternity, seems to be his essential subject. Its wear and tear is visible in the bricks and mortar, the fabric of fact that bluntly underpins our tenuous and temporary hold on existence with its many unanswerable questions, such as 'What are we doing here?'

*from* Anthony Bailey: A View of Delft (Henry Holt and Co., 1992)

[Instead of painting] individual bricks one by one, [he first laid in ]with a large brush a more or less uniform layer of thick reddish-brown paint on the part of the building's façade covered by bricks. Here and there [he introduced ]a hint of grey to avoid producing a mechanical effect. Once dry, [he carefully defined ]the mortar between the bricks with a thin line of light grey paint. Later, a few bricks [were ]heightened with orange to create some sense of relief while others are darkened to give a weathered appearance.

*from* [essentialvermeer.com/catalogue/littlestreet.html](http://essentialvermeer.com/catalogue/littlestreet.html)

broad daylight; and a modulation of this which, according to whether it contains more or less light, does not define the individual forms everywhere and at every place, but shows how light and objects encounter one another and how they become spatially visible.

*from* Ludwig Goldschneider: Vermeer (Phaidon, 1958)

Here, domestic virtues, the silence of daily life and the timeless routine of household work, are played out on a stage of humble stone, brick and mortar. In the *Little Street*, rather than the value of human existence, it is time itself, halted for eternity by the painter's brush, that seems the essential subject.

### **3. John Cage**

The nature of listening is the experience of hearing something and then realising that you're no longer hearing it and that you're hearing something else...as you listen to sounds, you have the impression that they're gone, and that others have taken their place. All you need to see is that you're brought into direct contact with ephemerality.

*from* John Cage: interview with Ev Grimes (ms, 1984), reproduced in *Every Day is a Good Day* (Hayward, 2010)

The attitude I take is that everyday life is more interesting than forms of celebration, when we become aware of it. That *when* is when our intentions go down to zero. Then suddenly you notice that the world is magical.

*from* Richard Kostelanetz (ed.): *Conversing with Cage* (Routledge, 2002)

Breathing and walking and managing to empty the head sufficiently to notice what there is to see and hear in the theatre we happen to be living in. There's not much more to say, or rather no space nor time to say it in.

*from* John Cage: *A Year from Monday* (Wesleyan, 1967). Used by kind permission of Wesleyan University Press.

Not an attempt to understand something that is being said, for, if something were being said, the sounds would be given the shape of words. Just an attention to the activity of sounds.

*from* John Cage: *Silence* (Marion Boyars, 1978). Used by kind permission of Marion Boyars Publishers.

#### **4. Fernando Pessoa/Alberto Caeiro**

##### ***from The Keeper of Sheep: II***

My gaze is clear like a sunflower.  
Looking right and left  
And sometimes looking behind me,  
And what I see at each moment  
Is what I never saw before,  
I'm capable of feeling the same wonder  
A newborn child would feel  
I feel at each moment that I've just been born  
Into a completely new world...

...

If I speak of nature it's not because I know what it is  
But because I love it...  
Because those who love never know what they love  
Or why they love, or what love is.  
To love is eternal innocence,  
And the only innocence is not to think...

##### ***from The Keeper of Sheep: IV***

I felt common and domestic,  
As if I'd lived my whole life  
Peacefully, like the garden wall,  
Having ideas and feelings the same way  
A flower has scent and color...

##### ***from The Keeper of Sheep: VI***

Let's be simple and calm,  
Like the trees and streams,  
And God will love us, making  
Us even as the trees are trees  
And the streams are streams,  
And will give us greenness in the spring, which is its season,  
And a river to go when we end.

##### ***from The Keeper of Sheep: XIII***

Lightly, lightly, very lightly  
A very light wind passes,  
And it goes away just as lightly,  
And I don't know what I'm thinking,  
Nor do I wish to know.

***from The Keeper of Sheep: XIV***

I think and I write the way flowers have color...  
I look and I am moved,  
I am moved the way water flows when the ground slopes,  
And my poetry is natural like the stirring of the wind.

***from The Keeper of Sheep: XXI***

What matters is to be natural and calm  
In happiness and in unhappiness,  
To feel as if feeling were seeing,  
To think as if thinking were walking  
...  
That's how it is and how I want it to be.

***from The Keeper of Sheep: XLI***

And there should be many things  
So that we will have a lot to see and hear  
For as long as our eyes and ears remain open...

***from The Keeper of Sheep: XLIX***

May this be my life, now and always:  
The day bright with sunshine, or gentle with rain,  
Or stormy as if the world were ending,  
...  
To feel life flowing through me like a river between its banks,  
And outside a great silence like a god who is sleeping.

*from* Fernando Pessoa: *A little larger than the entire universe* (Selected Poems), translated by Richard Zenith (Penguin, 2006). Used by agreement with Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc.

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