

And finally ... For centuries Newcastle has excited and inspired comment from visitors who have been struck by its lively character. In 1698 Celia Fiennes wrote "... it most resembles London of any place in England," and over 250 years later the French writer and couturier Ginette Spanier echoed that metropolitan theme with the comment "... a capital city without a doubt," adding enigmatically "... though the capital of what, I am not quite sure."

Newcastle is today a vibrant modern city that wears its historical heritage lightly. There is much of the hurried bustle of commerce, and little in the way of 'olde worlde' charm for the tourist such as might be found in York or Bath. Nevertheless, when viewed from across the river in Gateshead, Newcastle's skyline is still dominated by the lantern tower of its cathedral and the Norman castle from which it takes its name. Its streets and suburbs are full of antiquities, curios, and relics of its glorious past. It is to be hoped that this book has gone some way towards kindling an

interest or even a pride in that history where it may not have existed before. The list of features which have been covered is by no means exhaustive, and there remains much to be discovered by the sharp-eyed, or stumbled across by the inquisitive urban wayfarer. Finally, a word of warning to those who may be complacent or uninterested in getting to know their environment a little better. In August 1773, Dr Samuel Johnson and his companion Boswell passed through Newcastle *en route* for their celebrated tour of the Western Isles of Scotland. Johnson, perhaps understandably feeling a little travel-weary, wrote from Newcastle to a friend, remarking:

"On Tuesday night we came hither ... I have been taking a view of all that could be shown to me, and find that all very near to nothing ... one town, one country is very like another."

The great Doctor could not have been more wrong...

