

Never felt so good



BENWELL AND SCOTSWOOD IN FELT

Thanks to the following people and organisations: Action for Children, Bond Guild, Bridgewater School, Cornerstone Crafts Group, Excelsior Academy, Ferguson Lodge Care Home, Hadrian School, Patchwork, Pendower Good Neighbour Project, Riverside Roma Girls Group, Riverside Toddler Group, Riverside Women's Group, St James' Church, St Joseph's RC School, St Margaret's Toddler Group, Scotswood Natural Community Garden, West End Library, West Newcastle Picture History Collection, Whickham View Guild of Co-operators.

Adeb Ahmed	Pat Davidson	Sylvia Jenks	Mirjana Petrovic	Amira Uddin
Adl Ahmed	Donna Davison	Joyce Jobling	Phyllis Pullar	Sanjana Uddin
Esha Ahmed	Karen Dobson	Mcarahlee Johnston	Sonia Ramzan	Tariqa Uddin
Maryam Ali	Mary Doherty	Nathan Johnston	Doris Redpath	Liz Vasey
Alisa Amin-Taylor	Judy Duffy	Catherine Jones	Bill Rennoldson	Gill Wake
Lucille Antoniou	Abi Dunn	Manpreet Kaur	Joel Riches	Terine Walker
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Demi Bailey	Revd Allison Fenton	Robbie Landreth	Caitlin Riley	Sylvia Wood
Jack Bailey	Dot Findlay	Claire Lewis	Julia Robertson	Pat Young
Kathryn Bailey	Marjorie Florance	Nan Lindsay	Spencer Rosabal	Plus 30 children from Year 6 at St Joseph's RC Primary School
Michaela Banda	Lynn Fox	Xumin Liu	Betty Ruddick	41 children of different ages from Bridgewater Primary School
Olma Begum	Betty George	Danielle Luke	Margaret Sands	20 children from Years 5 and 6 at Hadrian School
Rahima Begum	David Gibb	Cameron Luke	Irene Scaife	12 children and adults from Riverside Toddler Group
Ravia Begum	Karl Gilbert	Maggie Lumsden	June Scott	8 women from Riverside Women's Group
Sonia Begum	Betty Gill	Gladys Macfarlane	Isabella Sheeron	8 girls from Riverside Roma Girls Group
Aaron Bell	Anne Gilroy	Flo Mair	Harchardeep Singh	12 people at the drop-in session at West End Library including members of the library staff
Michael Bell	Keith Gordon	Lindsay Marchout	Manjit Singh	Emily, Chloe, Blake, Elsie, Alfie, Faye and Finlay from St Margaret's Toddler Group, and Ouse and Mary from Action For Children.
Jacqueline Best	Margaret Gray	Sapphire Marchant	Rajinder Singh	
Helen Blakelock	Judith Green	Scott Marshall	Samitra Singh	
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The project was coordinated by Judith Green and Ruth Taylor.

The felting tutors who worked with the groups were: Omi Pharnocote, Sally Southern, Kate Eccles.

The felting pictures will be on permanent display in The Carnegie Building, Atkinson Road, Benwell, from Summer 2015.

Black and white photographs courtesy of West Newcastle Picture History Collection.

Colour photographs courtesy of Michael Young, Judith Green, Sylvia Wood.

Images of tank and Roman inscription courtesy of Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums.

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This book was created and published by St James' Heritage and Environment Group.

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The **BENWELL AND SCOTSWOOD IN FELT** project aimed to build on local residents' knowledge, experiences and hopes in order to depict the story of the changing area. The pictures in this book are the work of almost 300 people of different age groups, neighbourhoods and backgrounds, from 19 different local groups and organisations. They used the craft of felting which involves making a picture out of pieces of wool and applying water, soap and hard work to transform these into a robust fabric. This work took place during 2013-14 in different venues across the community - schools, community

centres, churches and libraries - anywhere people meet and talk about their area and their lives. Each group chose an image and decided how to depict it. They then worked with a specialist felting tutor to design and make their pictures.

Never Felt So Good brings these felting pictures together with photographs of scenes from the area's history in a celebration of the past, present and future of Benwell and Scotswood and the creativity of its local community.



The Benwell and Scotswood area has a long and interesting history, evidence of which can be found across the landscape. As well as Roman remains and Victorian mansions, there are the legacies of the area's coalmining and industrial past. For the local community the dominant experience of recent decades has been of change

- almost complete deindustrialisation, large-scale housing clearance and renewal, and, alongside this, many changes in the community itself. At this point in time, the area stands at the cusp of further change as a result of a major regeneration programme.



The banks of the Tyne below Benwell and Scotswood used to be home to some of the world's leading industries.



In the 19th and early 20th centuries thousands of terraced homes sprang up along the slopes above the river.



Ambitious regeneration plans swept away large areas of housing in the early 21st century.



Today many former housing sites remain empty.



"The Rise" - the start of a major new housing development, pictured in 2015.



Looking west across Benwell and Scotswood from Adelaide House.



Remembering the Past

The felting pictures here incorporate images of places and people from the area's past. These memories reflect a sense of loss but also of pride in a shared history. More importantly perhaps they show how the past continues to shape community life in the present in many different ways. For most participants, the activity of remembering the past was not just a nostalgic trip down memory lane: it was a reminder of how past experiences and values influence how we live now and also how we imagine the future.

Memories of the west end

Ferguson Lodge Care Home



This picture was made by residents of Ferguson Lodge, a care home on Ferguson's Lane, Old Benwell Village. Most have lived in the west end of Newcastle all their lives and remember different places where they had lived, played, worked or gone to school. Although most of these places have gone or changed beyond recognition, the memories remain. Their felting picture shows a few of these places that meant so much to people - Elswick Road School, the Adelaide pub, the Big Lamp, and a street of terraced houses where they played as children.



Adelaide Hotel, Elm Street, 1967. This was demolished in the 1970s to make way for a new shopping centre which incorporated a new Adelaide pub. The shopping centre was never a success and remained largely empty until it was itself demolished in the 1990s and replaced by the present Adelaide shopping centre.

Benwell's grand mansions

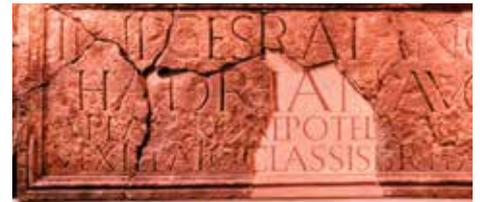
West Newcastle Picture History Collection



This picture of Benwell Towers was created by members of West Newcastle Picture History Collection, a volunteer group who manage a collection of more than 19,000 photographs of the west end through the years. The group based their picture on an early 20th century photograph from their collection, chosen because it depicts the oldest of Benwell's buildings still standing today.



Benwell Towers, c1900. There has been a big house on this site just north of Benwell Lane for at least a thousand years. During this time it has been home to many famous people including the Delaval and Shafto families and the Bishops of Newcastle. In the 20th century it housed the Mines Fire and Rescue Service before becoming a night club then a pub, and finally the studio for the Byker Grove television series.



Benwell Roman fort inscription: Although there are no actual buildings remaining, the physical evidence of Benwell residents from an even earlier period can still be seen in Benwell in the form of the remains of a Roman temple and a vallum crossing to the fort of Condercum. This fort was on Hadrian's Wall which is now under the West Road. This inscription reports that the Roman fleet helped to build the fort.

St Joseph's RC Church

St Joseph's School

This picture depicts St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church on Armstrong Road, Benwell which closed suddenly in 2013.

St Joseph's RC Primary School is on the opposite side of the road from the church, and had close links with it. The children chose this image because the church is part of the school's history and identity.



St Joseph's RC Church, Armstrong Road, 1966.

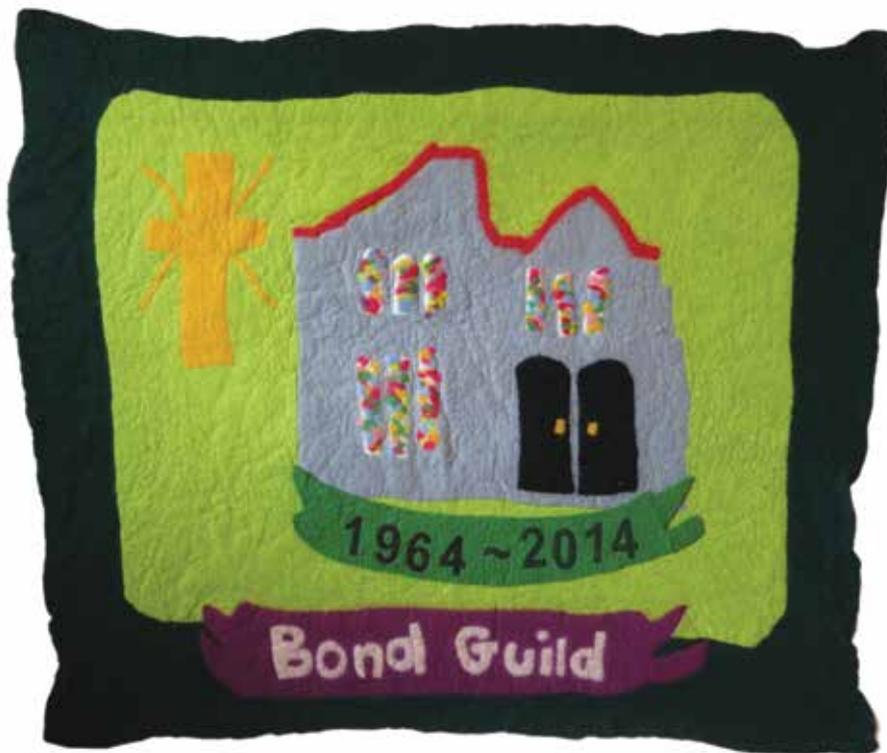
This church was built in 1931, replacing an older corrugated tin church of 1903 which stood on the site where the primary school is today.





The Bond Methodist Church

The Bond Guild



This picture celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Bond Guild in 2014. The Guild began as the Bond Young Wives at the Bond Memorial Methodist Church on Adelaide Terrace. The church had been the focal point of the area for the group and they chose it as the subject for their felting picture because it held so many memories for them. Although the church has now closed, the group continue to meet at the Carnegie Building in Atkinson Road.



Bond Memorial Methodist Church, 1910. When it was opened in 1899 this was one of the finest churches in the Newcastle area, seating 800 people.

Scotswood's tank

Bridgewater School



This picture was created by children from Bridgewater Primary School in Delaval Road, on the boundary between the neighbourhoods of Benwell and Scotswood. This area has experienced huge changes in recent years, and the pictures reflect the children's views about what has been lost and gained and what they would like to see in the future.

This image is of a tank which for many decades stood outside the former Vickers Scotswood factory on Scotswood Road near to the Scotswood Bridge.



The tank arriving at its new home outside the Discovery Museum in Newcastle, 2014.

The Pink Palace

Bridgewater School



This picture shows the Pink Palace – the name given locally to the former Co-op building on Armstrong Road which was converted into a youth and community facility in 1995 but was demolished in 2011 to make way for the major Scotswood regeneration project.



Pink Palace under demolition, 2011.



Delaval, which lies between Benwell and Scotswood, used to be a distinct village with a coalmine, a church, a school and farms. Bridgewater School, which was previously called Delaval Road School, celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2014. This photograph shows Delaval Colliery in 1904.



the

Benwell's trams

St Joseph's School



This picture by children from St Joseph's RC Primary School depicts a tram. Inspired by a history project about Benwell in Victorian times, the children chose the tram as one of the features of the area's past that contrasts with the present.

A hundred years ago trams ran from the town centre along Adelaide Terrace to the terminus next to St James' Church.

Benwell's Carnegie Library

West End Library



This picture of the former Benwell Library building on Atkinson Road was created during a special drop-in session at the new West End Library.

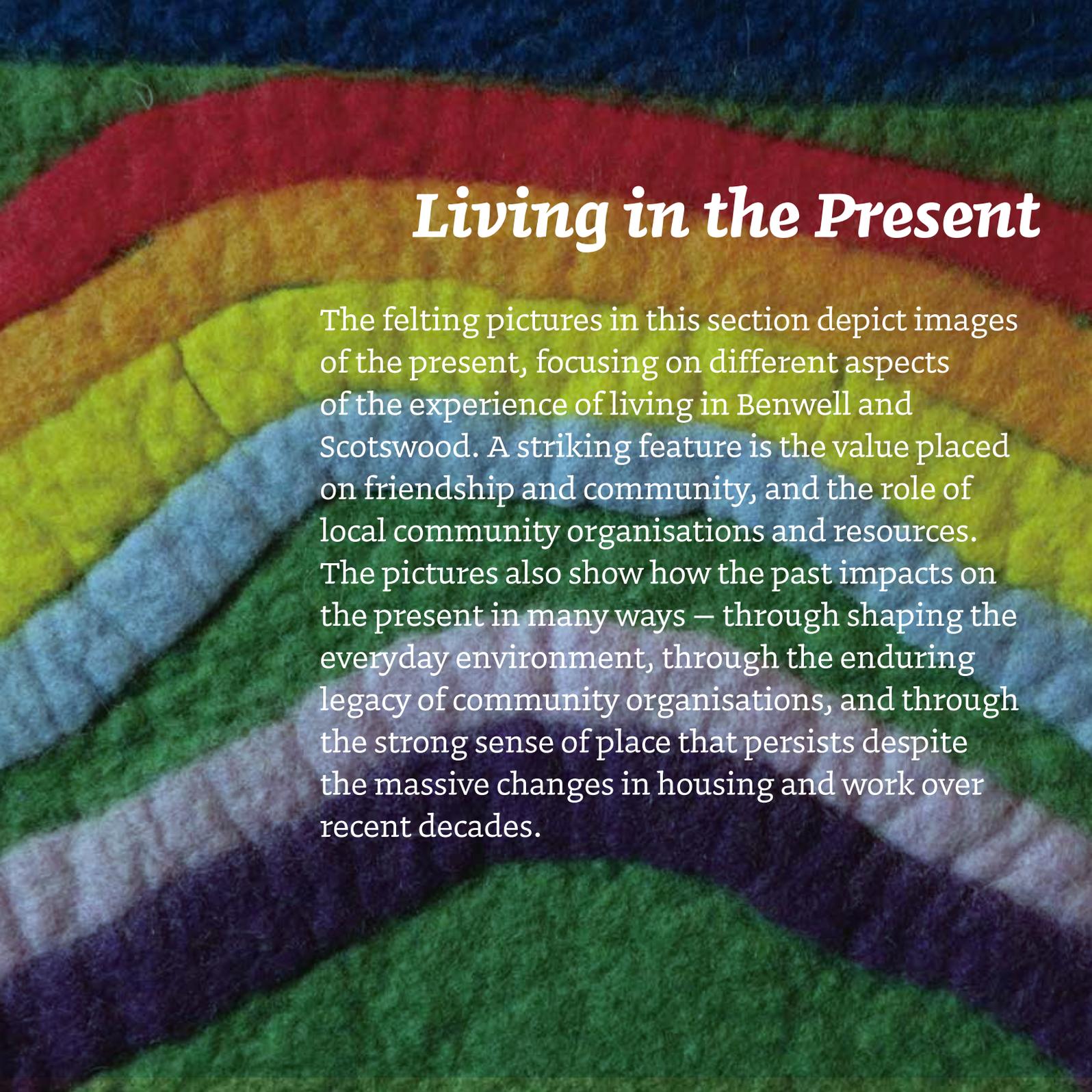


Benwell Library, pictured here c1920. Opened in 1909, this was a Carnegie Library, funded by the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. Its design reflects this with a light above the entrance representing the light of knowledge. The library was closed in 2010 but the building was taken over by the Riverside Community Health Project so that it could continue to serve the local community. It is now known as the Carnegie Building.



Majestic Cinema, 1930s. The new West End Library stands on the site of the former Majestic Cinema on Condercum Road.





Living in the Present

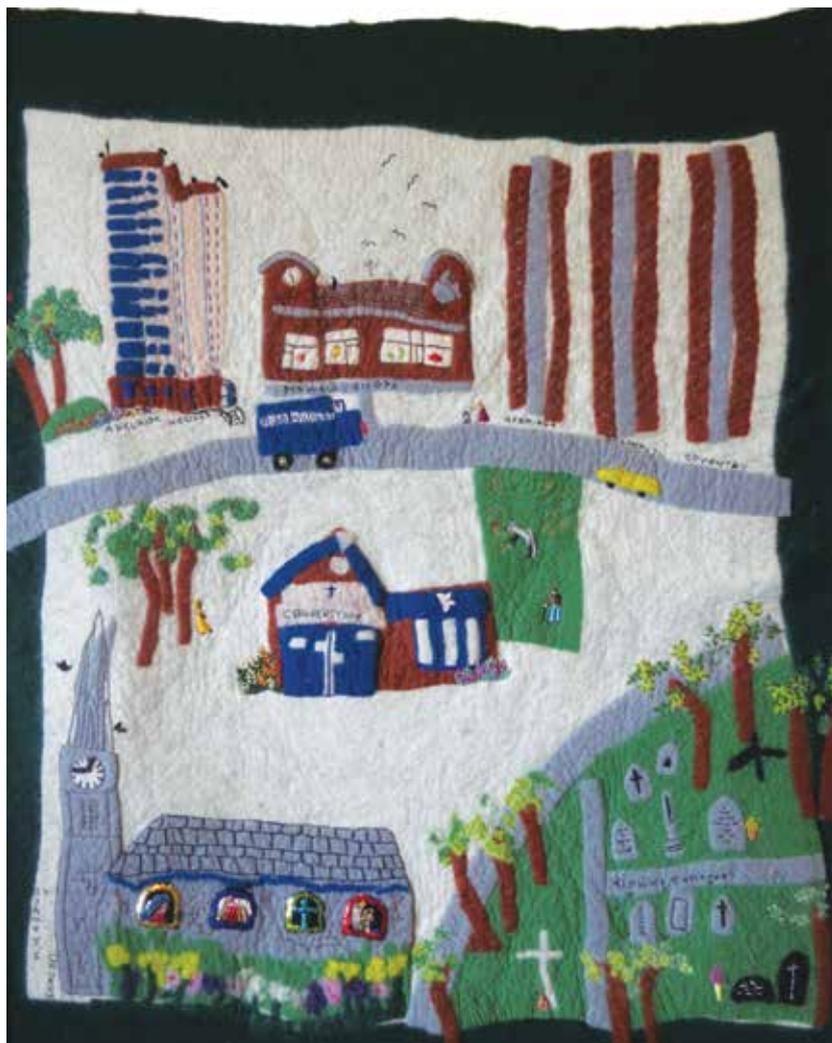
The felting pictures in this section depict images of the present, focusing on different aspects of the experience of living in Benwell and Scotswood. A striking feature is the value placed on friendship and community, and the role of local community organisations and resources. The pictures also show how the past impacts on the present in many ways – through shaping the everyday environment, through the enduring legacy of community organisations, and through the strong sense of place that persists despite the massive changes in housing and work over recent decades.

The heart of Benwell

Cornerstone crafts group

This picture depicts different places around the central area of Benwell from St John's Cemetery in the east to St James' Church in the west, taking in the multi-storey flats of Adelaide House, the Adelaide shopping centre, and the "ABC" streets to the north-west. In the centre is Cornerstone - the community project on Armstrong Road where the group meets twice weekly to do crafts and knitting. Adjacent to Cornerstone is the grassed area where the terraced streets of Maria and Caroline Street once stood.

The group chose these features because together they would identify this as a picture of Benwell, and because they represented old and new in the area.



The local community

Action for Children



This picture was created by local families working with Action for Children's family support service based on Adelaide Terrace.

They wanted to show the diversity of the local community.



Hodgkin Park: old and new

Riverside Toddler Group

This depicts the new entrance gates to Hodgkin Park - a large Victorian park donated in 1899 by the banker Thomas Hodgkin when he left his home at Benwell Dene to live at Bamburgh Castle. It is one of a set of images of Benwell by parents, grandparents and toddlers at the Riverside toddler group.



Hodgkin Park, 1930.



Kings and Queens

Riverside Women's Group



This picture shows the drinking fountain at the top of Atkinson Road, set in the boundary wall of St James' Church. It commemorates the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902, marking the end of the Victorian era. Largely unnoticed by most people, this fountain catches the attention of young children walking past with their parents.



Co-operation and community

Whickham View Branch of National Guild of Co-operators



This picture was created by members of the local branch of the National Guild of Co-operators. Founded in 1936, the branch has continued to meet regularly in the area, although the Whickham View Co-op no longer exists. For the members, the group represents friendship, community and their continued commitment to the principles of co-operation in every area of life.



Fifty years ago there were several Co-op shops across the area, but today only one remains - Denton Burn Co-op on the West Road. This 1920s photograph is of Denton Road Co-op with, next to it, the Scotswood War Memorial.

Scotswood's wildlife

Scotswood Natural Community Garden



This picture was created by volunteers at Scotswood Natural Community Garden who help to make the garden a place to be enjoyed by the local community and by wildlife. Three ponds are home to frogs, toads and three species of newt. The picture uses images from a pebble mosaic made by volunteers at the Garden.

The Garden is located in the heart of Scotswood on the site of a former drift mine which produced fire clay for Adamsez, the sanitary ware manufacturer whose toilets once adorned bathrooms across the world. Adamsez was a major employer in Scotswood from 1903 until it closed in 1975. Known originally as the Drift Garden Centre, it was set up by local volunteers following the mine's closure.



A miner working in Adamsez fire clay mine in the 1960s.



Friendship

Riverside Roma Girls Group



This picture was created by local teenagers in the Riverside Project's Roma Girls Group. The girls identified friendship as the most important thing in their lives. Their vision for the future is of beautiful places where they can meet their friends and be happy together.



Our Benwell

Riverside Women's Group

This picture depicts some of the features of the central area of Benwell including local shops and the trees and gravestones of St James' churchyard.

Our area: our home

Riverside Toddler Group



This overview of the area includes the Scotswood Bridge, the Angel of the North and the home of one of the families who designed it. This is one of a set of images of the area by parents, grandparents and toddlers at the Riverside toddler group.

The picture of Atkinson Road Nursery is also by the Riverside toddler group. Generations of young children from this area have attended this nursery since it was opened in 1970.



Atkinson Road School.

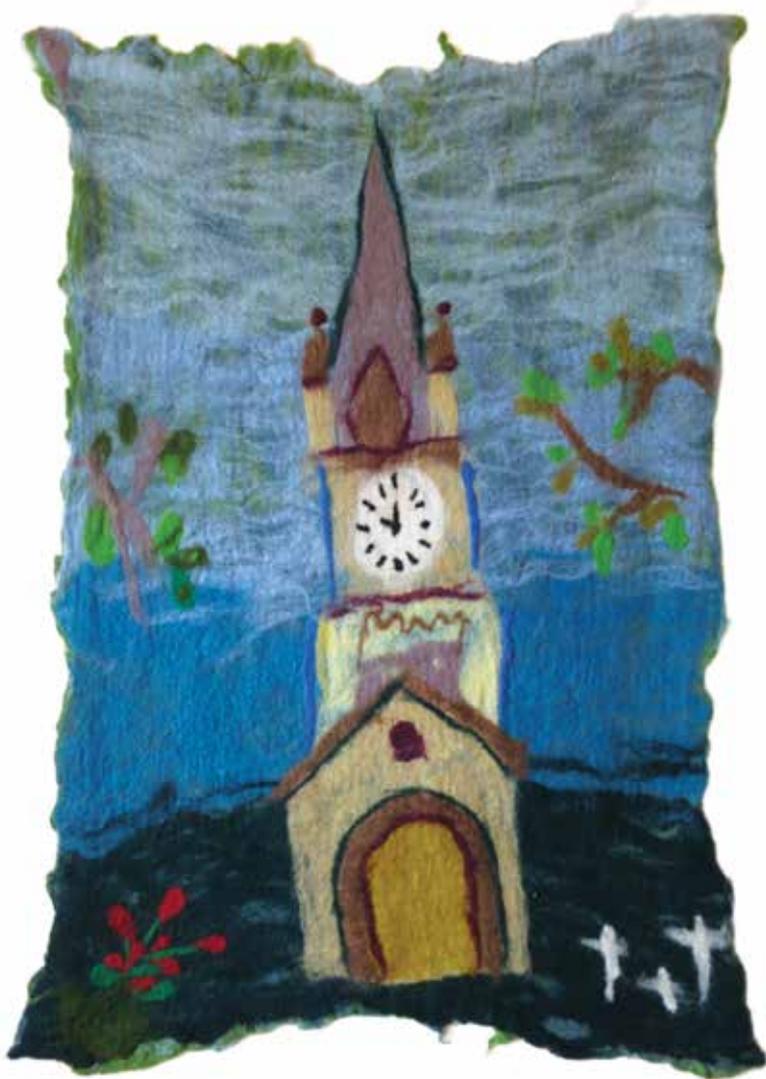
The nursery building was previously part of the large Atkinson Road Schools complex - built in 1910 when Armstrong Road was just a muddy track. This is an early class photo from Atkinson Road School.





Benwell Parish Church

St James' Church

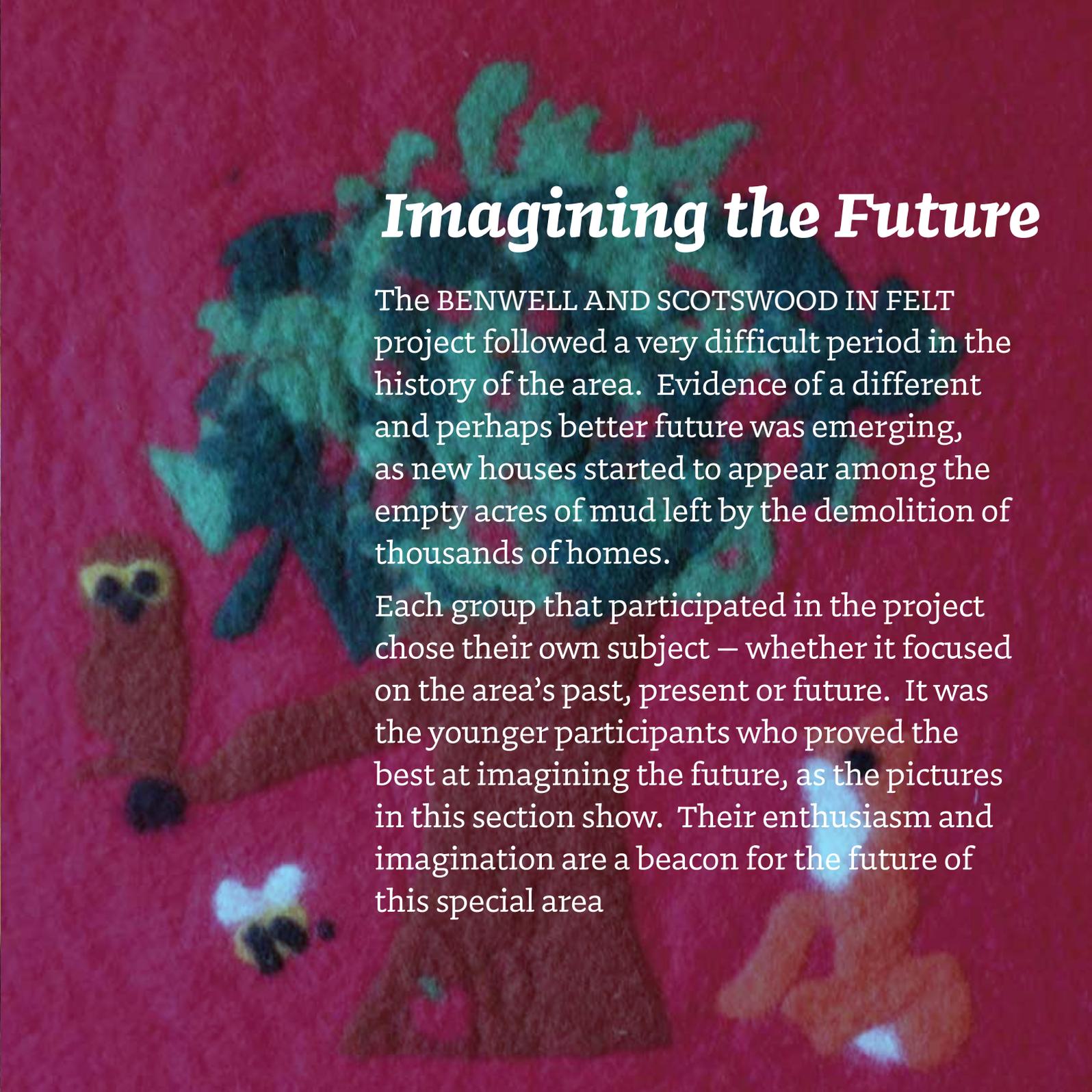


This picture shows St James' Church on Benwell Lane. This was originally built in 1833 as a small chapel at a time when Benwell was a mainly rural area of green fields and mansions. Over the following years it was expanded several times to accommodate the rapidly growing population. By the start of this century the church had fallen into disrepair, but it is now being improved and developed to create a local centre for heritage and culture as well as continuing to serve as a parish church. This church is widely seen as a significant local landmark and its distinctive spire can be seen from miles away.



In this early photograph St James' Church is pictured behind High Cross cottages.

1902



Imagining the Future

The BENWELL AND SCOTSWOOD IN FELT project followed a very difficult period in the history of the area. Evidence of a different and perhaps better future was emerging, as new houses started to appear among the empty acres of mud left by the demolition of thousands of homes.

Each group that participated in the project chose their own subject – whether it focused on the area's past, present or future. It was the younger participants who proved the best at imagining the future, as the pictures in this section show. Their enthusiasm and imagination are a beacon for the future of this special area

Pendower Community Orchard

Pendower Good Neighbour Project



Pendower Way pictured in 1926.

Pendower was one of Newcastle's earliest council estates, built to provide "homes fit for heroes to live in" following the sacrifices of the First World War. Newcastle at this period had one of the worst housing problems in the country, with thousands of families living in overcrowded and unhygienic slums and tenements. Pendower was designed as a "garden" suburb with generous outdoor spaces intended to reproduce the qualities of a traditional English village..

This felting depicts the Pendower Community Orchard. It shows how the future is being built in small ways by the local community as well as through official regeneration schemes. The Orchard is a new project to create a 'secret garden' on Pendower Estate behind the houses on Pendower Way. Pendower Good Neighbour Project worked with a group of young residents aged between eight and 14 years of age to create

the picture. For the children, one of things that makes Pendower a special place to live is its green open spaces. They used the process of designing and making the felting to imagine what the new orchard could be like in the future - a place where the community could work together to create a place for wildlife, to grow food and where children could play.

The children are our future

St Margaret's Toddler Group

Parents and children from the toddler group at St Margaret's Church on Armstrong Road, Scotswood, worked together on this picture. The group chose this image because they wanted the children to be at the heart of their project. Scotswood is undergoing a major regeneration programme which has meant large-scale demolition and upheaval for many families and uncertainty about the future. The group believes that children are the future of the area.



St Margaret's Church itself is a symbol of new life arising out of destruction and loss, as it was built during the First World War. Pictured here soon after opening in 1917, it replaced an older temporary church building in Scotswood village.

Our river

Excelsior Academy



This picture was created by young people at Excelsior Academy in Scotswood. It represents some of their ideas about what is needed to make the area a better place to live. This is one of a set of two pictures and it shows what might happen on the River Tyne.



Salmon fishing near Scotswood Bridge, 1900,





A beautiful garden

Excelsior Academy

This picture by a group at Excelsior Academy depicts the kind of outdoor facilities the young people would like to see in their area. It shows a beautiful garden with trees and a tree house.

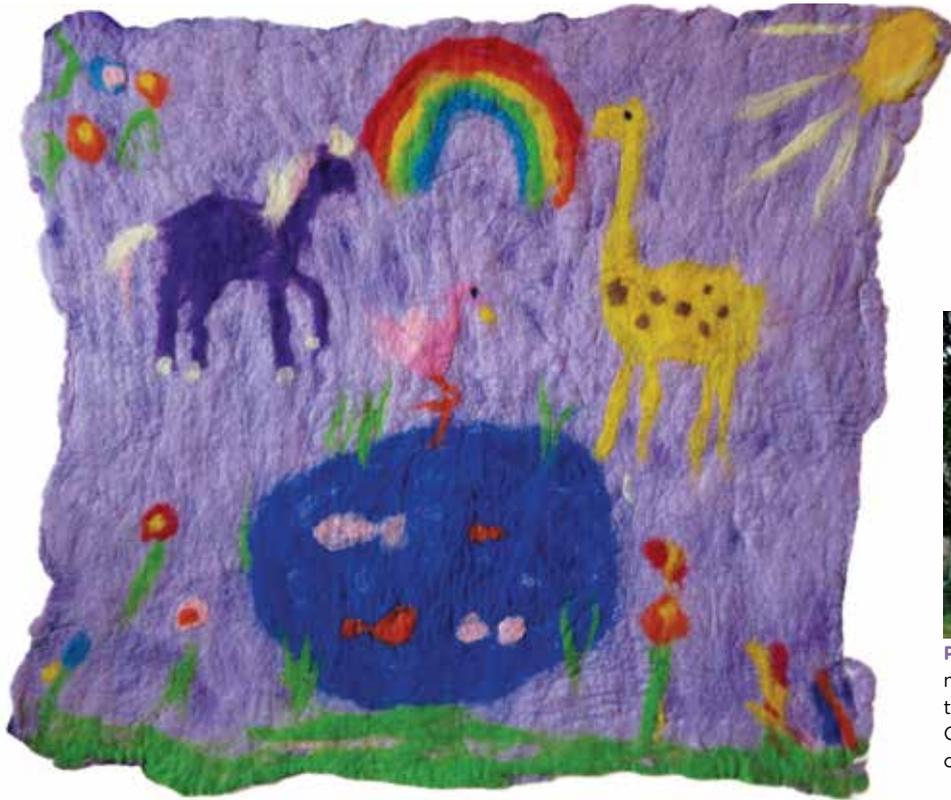


Benwell Dene, 1905. This later became part of Hodgkin Park.



A rainbow future

Hadrian School



Pendower Hall. Hadrian School used to be housed in nearby Pendower Hall which now stands empty on the West Road. It was known then as Pendower Hall Open Air School. The Hall, pictured here in 2009, was originally the home of the wealthy Pease family.

This is one of two felting pictures created by children from Hadrian School. The school is located at the top of the Pendower Estate and caters for children up to the age of 11 with

additional physical and learning needs. This picture illustrates one of their ideas for the future of the area – a zoo with animals and a pond.

The wheels on the bus

Hadrian School



This picture by children at Hadrian School shows a playbus going down to the river - one of the things they would like to see happen in the area in the future.





ADVENTURE



Never Felt So Good is a record of a project using the craft of felting to explore one community's views of their changing area. It is a vivid and moving celebration of the past, present and future of Benwell and Scotswood and the creativity of the people who live there.

