

TEACHERS INFORMATION

Mowbray Park Sculptures



Introduction to the sculptures

Mowbray Park features many pieces of modern sculpture, commissioned by Sunderland City Council during the park restoration in 1999/2000. There are artworks in metal, stone and wood, featuring engraved poems and text. Poet in residence Linda France worked with professional sculptors and members of the public to create these works of art, inspired by the Victorian origins, memorable events, and folklore of Mowbray Park.

The park also includes Victorian artworks, such as the statues of important public figures, commemorated for their acts of bravery, heroism and service to their town and country. There are also memorial statues to remember lives lost in war and in a famous local tragedy.

Below is a numbered list of the sculptures you will find in Mowbray Park. The numbers correspond to the locations of the sculptures on the map. The sculpture trail will take approximately 1 hour to complete.

Additional resources for teachers and group leaders:

- Sunderland Sculpture Safari Tours are available for school groups (subject to availability). Please contact the museum learning team on 0191 553 2323 for enquiries and bookings.
- Sculpture colouring sheets are available to download from www.sunderland.gov.uk/museumlearning.



1. Wendy Ramshaw Gate 2001 Park entrance

Wendy Ramshaw OBE is a Sunderland born artist, who has gained international recognition for her contemporary works in jewellery, textiles and metal work. She is most famous as a jewellery designer, producing pieces with trademark geometric patterns.

The Mowbray Park entrance gate is based on a variety of geometric shapes and patterns, reflecting the artists feelings about Sunderland. Look for patterns and shapes in the gate and see if they resemble any local landscapes or shapes connected with local industry.



2. The Walrus 1999/2000 Lakeside

The life-size Walrus in bronze was made by artist Andrew Burton. The inspiration for the sculpture comes from the story Alice in Wonderland, written by Lewis Carroll. This story features a poem called 'The Walrus and the Carpenter'. There is a Sunderland legend that Lewis Carroll was inspired to write this poem after seeing the stuffed walrus in the Sunderland Museum. However the poem was published before the walrus was displayed so there can be no truth to the tale. The head of the Walrus survives to this day and is displayed in the Time Machine gallery in Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens.



3. War memorial 1925 Burdon Road

The war memorial was made by artist R.A. Ray, to commemorate the soldiers who died in the First World War. The figure on the top of the granite column represents winged 'Victory', standing on a globe with a laurel wreath in outstretched right hand, and a trumpet in the left. This sculpture is now used to remember all soldiers and service personnel lost in war. Each year at 11am on 11th November, a remembrance ceremony is held here, and people lay poppy wreaths on the memorial to remember the dead.



4. The Victoria Hall Disaster Memorial 1883, restored 2002 Community Garden

This memorial commemorates the Victoria Hall disaster which took place on 16th June 1883. Over 2000 excited children crowded into the Victoria Hall on that day to watch an entertainment show and receive a toy. As the show ended the children descended a back stairway to collect their toys. They were met by a half-bolted door, which created a crush on the stairs. 183 children lost their lives by crushing or suffocation on that day.



The memorial was created with money from the disaster fund and sited in Mowbray Park. It was removed to Bishopwearmouth cemetery after vandalism. In April 2002 the memorial was restored to Mowbray Park, after a public campaign in the Sunderland Echo, and re-dedicated by Canon Taylor of Sunderland Minster. The memorial is made of white marble, with a copper and glass casing.

5. John Candlish M.P. 1875 South Terrace

John Candlish was born in 1816 in Northumberland. He was most famous for his contribution to Sunderland industry, having owned many successful glass bottle making factories in the area. He became a member of parliament for Sunderland in 1866 and also founded a free lending library in the town. John Candlish died in 1873. His statue is made of bronze and granite, and was created by Charles Bacon. It was sited in Mowbray Park in 1875.



6. Stone lions 1999/2000 North and South Terraces

The sandstone lions have always been a firm favourite in Mowbray Park. There are six lions in total, guarding the ends of the balustrades on the North and South Terrace. These have replaced the original lions which were worn out from the generations of children sitting astride their backs to have their photographs taken.



7. Rose arbours 1999/2000 South Terrace

The two rose arbours on the South Terrace were created by local blacksmith Craig Knowles. They are made of steel as a reminder of Sunderland's industrial past. One arbour has sunflowers in the roof arch, the other has roses. Courting couples can sit on the wooden benches below and read the poems inscribed on the steel,

which read:

If love was a lion, it would purr like a lion, burn bright as Orion.

If love was a rose, we'd watch how it grows, learn all the secrets it knows.



8. In the silver mirror 1999/2000 White Walk

This sculpture was designed by poet Linda France and Alec Peever, a local stonemason. It is made of slate. The story behind the sculpture harks back to a 17th century legend. A man was quarrying for stone in the area which is now the park, when to his surprise he came across a large toad with a lump on its head. The lump was full of shining diamonds, suggesting that there are riches to be found in the most unpromising situations.

The carving reads:

In the silver mirror of the moon will you find a
toad throat shining with diamonds?





9. Jack Crawford 1889/90 South Park

Jack Crawford was a sailor aboard the HMS Venerable, the flagship (lead)vessel in the British Navy under Admiral Duncan. In 1797, the British fleet were engaged in battle with the Dutch at Camperdown. A Dutch ship fired at HMS Venerable and shot away the top of the mast, causing the 'colours' (the flag) to fall to the deck. Lowering the colours was the naval signal to retreat, and threatened the British attack. Jack Crawford bravely took up the flag and a marline spike, climbed the mast and nailed it back up. The British fought on with renewed force and won the battle. Jack Crawford was celebrated as a hero and received a medal of honour which is now displayed in Museum street.

The statue of Jack is made of bronze, granite and limestone, created by sculptor Percy Wood. A new stone sculpture was created in 1999 to enhance the original statue. **This reads:** 'on open sea or dry land, nail your colours to the mast'. This piece was created by stonemason Alec Peever.



10. Wooden sculptures 1999/2000 Children's play area

These sculptures were carved on site by artist Richard Caink. Many old or diseased trees were cut down during the park restoration in 1999/2000. The wood was carved into chess pieces, seats and a wooden flame. The chess pieces recreate the feel of Alice Through the Looking Glass, as you become tiny in a larger than life world. Riddles written by Lewis Carroll are carved into the sculptures and seats.

One reads: What does a candle flame look like after its been blown out?



11. Lion's Head Door 1999/2000 Quarry Garden

The Lion's head door and knocker was created by artists Craig Knowles and Carl Fisher. The wooden oak door is decorated with iron roses following the theme of flowers in other park sculptures. The door knocker invites you to summon the beast of the hill; who will come out when you knock? The stone arch around the door was originally from Bishopwearmouth Rectory, and has listed building status. There is a cave behind the doorway, where the park keeper used to store tools and supplies in years gone by. This cave has now been blocked up for safety reasons.



12. Major General Sir Henry Havelock 1861 Building Hill

The statue of General Havelock was created by sculptor William Behnes. Henry Havelock was born at Ford Hall in Sunderland in 1795. He became a famous soldier in the British army, who fought many successful battles during his military career and was promoted to the highest rank of Major General. His most famous victory was at the battle of Lucknow in India in 1857, when he saved the lives of many British women and children, held captive by Indian rebels. He died of dysentery soon after the battle. A second statue of Havelock by the same sculptor stands in Trafalgar Square in London.

Map of Sculptures in Mowbray Park



Start here →

