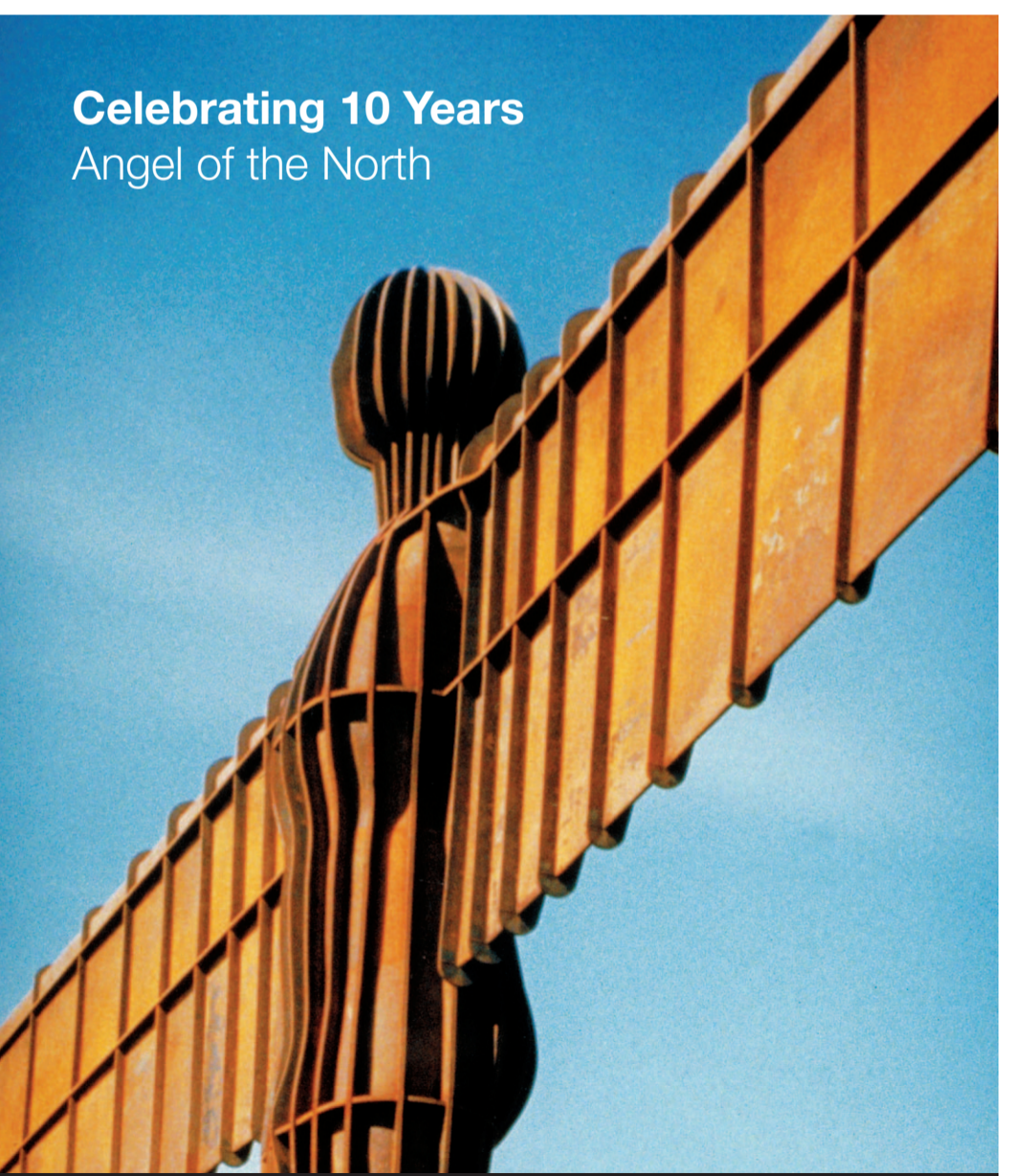




PROUD MOMENT: Artist Antony Gormley watched the Angel rise

# How critics fell silent...



Celebrating 10 Years  
Angel of the North

## 60ft angel 'will distract drivers'

By JON FLINN  
Highway chiefs attack plan  
PLANS for a 60ft sculpture have hit problems, with claims that it would distract motorists on the nearby A1.  
Council leaders in Durham are sceptical about the choice of site - a road area just north of the A1 junction with Durham Road at Eights Lodge.  
responsibility for the trunk road, was a "red herring". He said: "The sculpture is obviously meant to be an eye-catching piece. It will be a monument to week. The council is confident of raising the £300,000 costs from outside sources and it has already been stressed that the design should take account of



HEADLINES: The Angel attracted criticism during its early days. Ten years on it's still standing tall

## Angel of confusion



IT IS now officially an icon of England. For proof, visit the website [www.icons.org.uk](http://www.icons.org.uk) and there it is: "The Angel of the North... the country's most famous work of public modern art."

As the website says: "In a very short space of time, the Angel of the North has become a symbol of Gateshead, the North, public and contemporary art and of urban regeneration."

Whoever would have thought Gateshead would get such a symbol? Well, maybe Pat Conaty. On November 4, 1994, he was chairman of the relevant Gateshead Council committee when provisional planning permission was granted to Antony Gormley's "controversial 20-metre-tall steel sculpture" (as The Journal called it).

Liberal councillor Kathy King, voicing the opinions of many, declared: "It will be a statue to our stupidity." Pat Conaty disagreed. "I hope to have the sculpture up before I have passed on," said the long-serving Labour councillor, who had been in the British Army in Burma. "I want to see Gateshead on the map so people can be proud of it."

The Liberal opposition on the council waged a long campaign against the sculpture, and there was no shortage of sceptics to support them. The Highways Agency feared it would distract motorists. Others thought it would disrupt TV reception. Some worried it would compromise the safety of air travel. In fact, as the Chronicle commented last week, given the debate it created when first mooted, it is remarkable how the region has come to love the Angel.

It is testament to the work of Antony Gormley and the courage of Gateshead Council that the Angel has become one of Britain's most recognised, photographed and iconic images.

## FACTFILE

- The Angel is one of the most viewed pieces of art in the world and is seen by more than one person every second, 90,000 people every day or 33 million every year.
- Its 54m wingspan is bigger than a Boeing 757.
- It is 20m high, the height of four double-decker buses.
- The body weighs 100 tonnes and the wings are 50 tonnes each.
- It can withstand winds of more than 100 mph.
- Underground concrete piles, 20 metres deep, anchor it to solid rock.
- It is made of weather-resistant Corten steel, containing a small amount of copper, which forms a covering on the surface that mellows with age.
- The total cost of the Angel was £800,000.
- The wings themselves are not straight, but are angled 3.5 degrees forward, to create a sense of embrace.

Even those who say they do not like it cannot deny the phenomenally positive impact the simple structure has had for the region. It acted as a gateway for further change - the Baltic, The Sage Gateshead and the Gateshead Millennium bridge to name but three. Today it stands proudly on top of the hill overlooking the A1 and is now as firmly a symbol of coming home as the old lady herself - the Tyne Bridge.

That in itself is some achievement for what was at the time a controversial piece of art.

## RISING OF THE ANGEL

- July 1990:** Gateshead Council decide to turn former pit head baths, overlooking the A1, into a site for a landmark sculpture.
- January 1994:** Antony Gormley is chosen to create the Angel.
- February 1995:** Planning permission is approved.
- April 1996:** Funding of £800,000 is secured.
- May 1997:** Fabrication company Hartlepool Fabrications Ltd are chosen to build the sculpture.
- September 1997:** Thomas Armstrong (construction) Ltd begin work on the foundations for the Angel.
- January 1998:** Creation of the Angel complete.
- February 1998:** Angel is erected on site.
- May 1998:** A 29ft x 17ft Newcastle United shirt with 'Shearer' on the back is draped across the Angel ahead of Newcastle's FA Cup final tie with Arsenal.
- February 2008:** The Angel celebrates its 10th anniversary.

# A decade on our skyline



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: The Angel is bathed in white light for the first time in 10 years



JOY: Coun Mick Henry with twins Katie and Jessica Martin who were born on the day the Angel was unveiled

GATESHEAD Council has unveiled the first events of a year celebrating a decade of the region's most famous landmark - the Angel of the North.

Ten years on and Gateshead Council is celebrating the Angel of the North and the huge impact it has had.

The national reputation Gateshead Council gained for its groundbreaking work in public art and for delivering a project the size of the Angel gave us the credibility to secure funding to:

- Convert Baltic Flour Mills into BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art - the largest art space outside London (£46m funding);
- Build The Sage Gateshead - a world class music venue on Gateshead Quays (£70m funding);
- Construct the Gateshead Millennium Bridge - the world's first tilting bridge (£22m funding).

Leader of Gateshead Council Coun Mick Henry said: "When we first proposed the Angel of the North, some people failed to understand the vision behind the project. "They didn't understand the bold use of public art as a driving force for regeneration. "We remained confident that it was the right thing to do for Gateshead and that the Angel of the North would help bring about the transformation in the borough that we all wanted. "Ten years on and the Angel has led to the likes of Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art and The Sage Gateshead, bringing with them millions of pounds of investment and hundreds of jobs. "Now the Angel of the North is seen as the defining structural symbol of renaissance in the North East. It's only right that we celebrate not only what the Angel symbolises but the impact it has made in Gateshead and the North East. For the first time since its original installation, the Angel of the North was bathed in white light to star on TV. The sculpture was first lit up in 1998 to celebrate the installation and the start of a cultural renaissance across the region. Although it was briefly illuminated for a special edition of the popular BBC children's drama Byker Grove, Gateshead Council hadn't used lighting on the structure since the launch ten years ago. The lighting was a one-off event for a special Birthday broadcast and there are no plans to light up the Angel again."

Now the Angel of the North is seen as the defining structural symbol of renaissance in the North East

## Let's get ready to party

THERE are so many celebrations planned around the anniversary of the Angel of the North. A gala dinner has already been held in her honour, but one of the biggest events - to which you are all invited - is planned for later this year. The fun-filled street party on Sunday, June 22, is set to be the highlight of the summer, with families, friends and residents coming together for a once-in-a-lifetime celebration. Angel Day will take place at the

foot of the iconic sculpture. The day of festivities will include family friendly events such as live bands, films, a dance performance, artist's exhibitions, workshops and a street carnival with music and theatre and a few surprises along the way. As well as a feast for the senses, it will be a feast for the eyes, with party decorations galore - thanks to the Baltic's team of freelance artists and local schoolchildren whose angelic ideas will help create a fun party atmosphere. And there will even be a chance to do some shopping to

remember the day with Angel-related mementos up for grabs. So mark the date in your diary and join the Angel for the party of the year. Other events planned for the year include a range of celebratory events in schools, Angel cakes and other limited-edition products, and competitions across the borough. To find out how you can be involved, register for your own Angel Alerts at [www.itsmyangel.com](http://www.itsmyangel.com) ■ Part of NewcastleGateshead's world-class festivals and events programme.

