

A restored wooden bridge in Walker Park

Families will celebrate the transformation of Newcastle's Walker Park in style this weekend.

Walker Park Festival – complete with music, birds of prey, theatre and even a 'bubbleologist' – marks the completion of the restoration of the much-loved park, which was made possible by National Lottery players.

[quote=Ivor Crowther, HLF North East]"Today our parks continue to play vital role in our lives – for our wellbeing, a place to spend time together and as a connection to nature and our history."[/quote]

Walker Park was opened 125 years ago as much-needed open space for a growing community. In its heyday the park was a crucial resource for industrial workers to wind down as the area was heavily populated by shipbuilders and miners.

Today it is just as important.

Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East, said: "Today our parks continue to play vital role in our lives – for our wellbeing, a place to spend time together and as a connection to nature and our history."

Last year Newcastle City Council was awarded £1.8million by HLF and Big Lottery Fund to restore Walker Park to its former glory and put it back at the heart of the community.

Volunteers and local support played a huge part in the work which has seen vital repairs and improvements to paths, gates, amphitheater, play centre and sport facilities.

A local favourite has also returned as part of the renovation work with a replica statue of Scottish poet, Robert Burns – cast from the original Walker Park sculpture – taking centre stage again after a gap of 40 years. The original work is being housed in the onsite café for all to see.

Ivor Crowther added: “Thanks to the hard work of everyone involved in this project, the support of the local community and of course National Lottery players, we can celebrate the beginning of a bright future for this much-loved park.”

Walker Park Festival will take place on Saturday 3 September from 11am to 5pm. For more information and to share your memories of the park follow @NewcastleCC and @HLFNorthEast on Twitter.



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Scrub clearing by Walker Park entrance

Work starts on Walker Park redevelopment programme