

Six views on the Angel,

Tons of newsprint have been occupied to discuss Antony Gormley's Angel of the North before, during and since its construction.

It has divided lay and critical opinion. It has brought joy to some, bitter resentment from others. But it's difficult to find anyone, anywhere, who doesn't have a view on the Angel.

We asked half a dozen people to look at the finished article. We got more than we bargained for. Here are their thoughts.

THE LOCAL HISTORIAN

THE word angel actually means "messenger", though quite what message Antony Gormley's Angel of the North is conveying to us, I can only guess (unless it's the letter 'r' in semaphore).

In the Bible, angels also performed various roles as guardians, avengers, celestial stage-hands, and a sort of heavenly equivalent of the civil service. Perhaps there is something Gateshead Council hasn't told us yet. But is it an angel at all? It bears little resemblance to the cherubim of Michelangelo. Indeed, much of the descriptive language I have heard applied to it so far veers more towards

that of the aerospace industry.

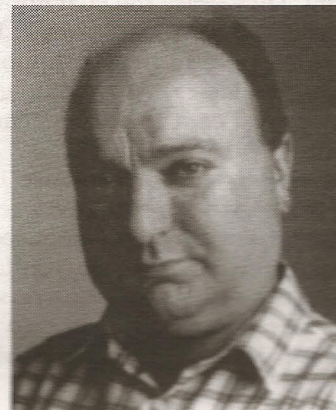
Gormley's harshest critics have even labelled the massive scale and bombastic style of his work as "Stalinist trophy-art". A bit over the top, I think - even if there are still streets called Lenin Terrace and Marx Terrace in Chopwell.

Even though it may not be beautiful in the conventional sense, I can imagine myself eventually becoming fond of that rusty giant. Familiarity often leads to big ugly things finding a special place in your heart.

I love the High Level Bridge - gloomy Gothic leviathan that it is - and the sight of the Tyne Bridge never fails to bring a tear of corny sentiment to my

eye if I've been away for longer than a weekend.

The Sphinx it isn't, but I suspect that the inscrutable winged sentinel of Eighton Banks will endear itself to us, given time.



Christopher Goulding