



The three animals that feature throughout the park are also used in the artwork for the play area. Rather than looking at the water vole, the little ringed plover and the dingy skipper butterfly as three individual species, poet Bill Herbert and sculptor David Paton have created a fantasy creature, inspired by the work of Lewis Carroll. The Westpark Jabberwock can be found on plaques around the play area.

Jabberwocky, considered to be one of the greatest nonsense poems written in the English language, appears in Carroll's sequel to *Alice in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking Glass*, where Alice reads about the Jabberwock, a monster built from parts of different animals with dragon wings, large claws and a long tail:

*Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch.
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
the frumious Bandersnatch!*

Jabberwocky, Lewis Carroll

Both Carroll and his *Jabberwocky* have strong links to the local area. The Jabberwock is said to have been based on the Sockburn Worm, the subject of a fourteenth century North East legend. This legend is still commemorated in Carroll's childhood town of Croft, near Darlington, where his family lived in the 1840s: every time a new Bishop is consecrated, they are presented with the sword which slew the monster. Fittingly, it was here that Carroll wrote the first part of his poem.

Where Carroll's Jabberwock, visualised by John Tenniel's iconic illustration, was an enormous, terrifying monster, the Westpark version is a lot less scary. With its butterfly wings, furry features, and bird's feet, it's an odd but friendly mascot for the Westpark play area:

*'The Jabberwock,' the Plover cried,
'sounds glim and unendeating!'
'The Blabbersquawk?' the Vole enquired,
for he was hard of hearing.*

The Westpark Jabberwock, W.N. Herbert

