



The Elders Council of Newcastle

Transport Working Group



Introduction.

Last year we prepared a document giving some ideas for days out using a concessionary bus pass. This was very popular and over 200 copies were requested by Elders Council members.

This year we have updated and modified the document and given a few extra ideas.

Please remember that you must check the details of your journeys before you travel.

You can check at the Nexus Travel Centres in Newcastle or by calling the bus operators direct.

In conclusion, we are again grateful to Mervin for all his hard work and we hope that you find this leaflet useful and that you have many happy days out.

Bill Ions

Co-ordinator – Transport Working Group

Summer Outings in 2010 with a Concessionary Bus Pass

Hello.

This is largely a revision of last year's paper brought up to date in March 2010 so you must check in case summer timetabling changes are made. Timetable leaflets for most Arriva services are available from their office in Haymarket Bus Station whilst leaflets for Go North East services can be found in Eldon Square Bus Station and Haymarket Metro Station.

Where I have given times, these generally relate to Monday-Saturday services and I have not always given return times, so please check these fully. In many cases I have suggested alternative routes so you can come back a different way. Personally, I like to explore the countryside as well as visiting interesting places. Hope you enjoy your trips.

Let's start with a new entry for 2010 – a WEARDALE CIRCULAR. This attractive country ride takes you from Newcastle to CONSETT then across the moors to WOLSINGHAM and up the Wear Valley to STANHOPE – a very pleasant large village. After a lunch break you could return home directly via Bishop Auckland or ride right up Weardale to COWSHILL and back home via Bishop.

Start from Eldon Square to Consett at any time from 9.30am to 10.30am on services X70, X71, 45 or 46; with the earlier buses you will have a little time in Consett.

The key journey is route 764 at 11.40am from Consett via Castleside and Tow Law to Wolsingham arriving 12.15pm. Cross the road for the 101 to Stanhope at 12.30pm arriving 12.45pm for a lunch break.

There is a bus at 2.00pm to Bishop Auckland arriving there at 2.43pm, but I would recommend the 1.45pm right up Weardale to the tiny village of Cowshill. Then come straight back to Stanhope or break your journey for one hour at either Wearhead, for the Weardale Museum or at the pleasant village of St. John's Chapel. Finally, via Stanhope and Bishop Auckland for the service 21 to Newcastle.

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To the west, CARLISLE is a "must" – a small city with a cathedral, a castle (English Heritage), a museum and shops. The 685 leaves Eldon Square Bus Station at 45 minutes past each hour and usually takes 2 hours 11 minutes. Note that the last 685 back is 5.54pm, with a late bus at 8.07pm Friday and Saturday. On Sunday you have to change buses at Hexham both ways, where services 85 and 685 connect, giving a total journey time of 2 hours 55 minutes.

A most attractive way to return is to take the Alba Travel AD122, which follows Hadrian's Wall (started in AD122) finishing in Hexham near the Tourist Office – a five-minute walk to the bus station for the 685 or 602 back to Newcastle. This bus leaves Carlisle Citadel (not the bus station) at 1.45pm and 4.25pm arriving in Hexham 2 hours 8 minutes later. In the other direction the AD122 leaves Hexham Tourist Office at 11.30am and 2pm.

From Carlisle there is an hourly 104 to PENRITH at 5 minutes past each hour with a 40-minute journey time. Penrith is yet another pleasant market town where, on Saturday, there is a free bus to a large out-of-town flea market. There is a ruined castle and a nice free museum. From July to September you might be able to take the very scenic journey back on Wright's 888 via Alston, leaving Penrith at 5.40pm and arriving in Newcastle at 7.30pm.

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A super outing is by coach on Wright's 888 to KESWICK running daily between 2nd July and 26th September. It leaves Newcastle Coach Station (if you can find it) at 9.20am so passes can't be used Monday to Friday but you could board at Throckley at 9.35am. Arrival in Keswick is 12.30pm having had a 35-minute stop in Alston, where you could get a coffee or explore England's highest market town. On Sunday the coach leaves Newcastle at 10.05am, arriving in Keswick at 1pm with a 20-minute stop in Alston.

The route is really spectacular with the steep hairpin descent from Hartside to Melmerby and an equally impressive one at Staward between Langley and Whitfield. It is one of the most attractive bus rides in England. The coach also passes through Penrith, well worth a visit, though possibly more easily reached via Carlisle.

Keswick is of course well known but have you visited the interesting Pencil Museum, or taken a boat trip around Derwentwater?

There are also some fantastic local bus rides, especially the 77/77A Honister Rambler, which I rate as England's best. It is a circular mini-bus tour taking about one and a half hours including Honister and Whinlatter passes and viewing Buttermere and Crummock Water, two of the highest lakes.

If you fancy something more gentle, take the 78 open top bus up Borrowdale and back along the east shore of Derwentwater. (The 77/77A goes on the west side of this lake). The coach back to Newcastle leaves Keswick daily at 4.30pm, getting to Newcastle at 7.30pm with a 20-minute break in Alston.

HEXHAM is an attractive town with markets on Tuesday and Saturday and a most impressive Abbey. The direct 685 bus (to Carlisle) leaves Eldon Square bus station at 45 minutes past each hour and takes 51 minutes. The main alternative is the 602, also from Eldon Square, which takes 1 hour 20 minutes travelling south of the Tyne through Blaydon, Ryton, Prudhoe and Stocksfield; it also goes into the attractive centre of Corbridge, unlike the 685. It leaves Newcastle at 5 minutes and 35 minutes past each hour.

CORBRIDGE is worth a short visit and there are 3 or more buses an hour to or from Hexham (Services 602, 685, 687). If you have a little longer, just outside Corbridge there are the remains of a Roman Town. (English Heritage)

If you are feeling a little more adventurous, a really pleasant way back is to take the lovely cross-country 870 route from Hexham to Consett. It takes 55 minutes departing 10.15am, 12.15pm, 2.15pm and 5.15pm; or from Consett to Hexham at 11.15am, 1.15pm and 4.15pm. There is a frequent service of buses between Consett and Eldon Square taking about an hour (45, 46, 70, X70, X71).

Another interesting way back from Hexham, until the end of October, is on the Classic AD122 following the eastern part of Hadrian's Wall. It leaves Hexham Tourist Office (not the bus station) daily at 5.33pm getting into Newcastle at 6.27pm. The outward journey starts from Central Station at 9am so passes can be used only on Saturdays and Sundays – the bus goes on to Haltwhistle and the Roman Army Museum but not through to Carlisle.

Note that the Alba Travel service AD122 is different from the Classic AD122. Both cover the main part of Hadrian's Wall between Hexham and Haltwhistle but Alba does return journeys from Carlisle to Hexham while Classic has 1 return journey from Newcastle to Haltwhistle and 1 between Haltwhistle and Hexham. The Newcastle Tourist Office has timetables.

My favourite trip in Northumberland is by coach to WOOLER: service 710 operated by Glen Valley Tours from St. Thomas Street opposite Haymarket Bus station. It leaves at 11.30am but only on Wednesdays – showing a destination Kelso. This is a really comfortable ride arriving in Wooler 12.50pm in time for lunch. Wooler is a small town but has, at the North end, a good tourist office with a display about the surrounding area. The coach returns at 3.40pm getting into Newcastle about 5pm. If you fancy a different, perhaps less comfortable, route home, there are buses on routes 470 and 473 to Alnwick at 2.45pm and you would reach home at 5.20pm or later if you take a break in Alnwick.

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For a longer journey BERWICK is well worthwhile, with an Anglo-Scottish atmosphere and plenty of character. Like only Chester and York, you can walk around the ancient walls. Buses from Haymarket are 505 direct at half past the even hour and 501 at half past the odd hour by the lovely coastal route with superb views, especially if it is a double decker. This takes 3 hours 10 minutes compared with 2 hours 45 minutes on the 505; if this seems a long time on the bus, you could stop off for an hour or so in Alnwick. I recommend travel by 501 at least in one direction – and get a seat on the seaward side! You can also use the 501 for a visit to BAMBURGH with its Castle and the Grace Darling Museum or SEAHOUSES with boat trips to the Farne Islands.

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ALNWICK is a nice place to visit with both the Castle and the famous Garden being open to the public but with quite high charges. If you like “browsing”, try Barter Books, in the old station at the south end of the town (5 minutes walk or 3 bus stops), with a huge selection of second-hand books. There are 3 services from Haymarket: the 501 and 505 (Berwick buses) run direct at half past each hour with a journey time of about 1 hour 20 minutes while a longer, but very attractive route is the 518 via Warkworth and Alnmouth, both worth a visit. This takes 1 hour 49 minutes and departs at 45 minutes past the hour.

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STOCKTON is just 1 hour 7 minutes by the Go North East X10 (on the hour) or 1 hour 40 minutes on the Arriva X2/X1 (9.32am then 5 and 35 minutes past each hour) via Durham, both from Eldon Square. Stockton is famous for its street market (Wednesday and Saturday) but I really recommend the steamer trip up the Tees to Yarm, a pleasant little town, where you can either stay on the boat for the return trip, which gives a view of the Tees Barrage, or come back to Stockton on the frequent bus. The boat also stops both ways at Preston Park, which has an open-air museum with vintage shops but is better connected to Stockton or Yarm by frequent bus (Service 7, 7A). The boat is the Teesside Princess and “concessionary” fares are £4.25 single to Yarm or £6.50 round trip. It leaves Stockton at 10.15am and 2pm but not every day – telephone 01642 608038 to find out more!

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The X10, on the hour, goes on to MIDDLESBROUGH as does the X9 at half past each hour, this one running via Peterlee, which is possibly worth a break for an hour or two; both take 1 hour 20 minutes. Middlesbrough is good for shopping. It is also the place to change buses for Redcar, Saltburn (don't miss the Cliff Lift), Whitby or Scarborough.

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Buses to WHITBY leave Middlesbrough at 20 past most hours on the 93 (Scarborough bus) across the moors taking 1 hour 6 minutes or on the hour by service 5 by the scenic coastal route – journey time 1 hour 37 minutes. The X9 makes connections with either. Whitby is a picturesque harbour town with a famous ruined Abbey on the East Cliff. There is a town mini-bus service to it, the 97, at 25 minutes past the hour. Then, if you feel really fit, walk back down the 199 steps to the town; otherwise, bus back at half past each hour. The 97 does not run on Sundays.

SCARBOROUGH can be reached daily by taking the X9 or X10 to Middlesbrough then the 93 – but it takes 4 hours so leaves little time in Scarborough.

In the summer school holidays (18th July to 5th September), the X60 will probably run daily direct from Eldon Square Bus Station at 9.15am

taking 3 hours; passes can't be used Monday to Friday but they can from Heworth Metro at 9.36am. The return from Scarborough is at 4.50pm. This bus can be very busy both ways. It may run on Sundays and Bank Holidays from 30th May. It is not worked by a coach but an ordinary double decker – good for the views.

The X60 also serves Whitby.

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HARTLEPOOL is hosting the Tall Ships event this year (7-11 August) – a really magnificent sight. Whilst there may be special arrangements made, at the moment there are no through buses from Newcastle; but catch the X9 to Peterlee then X35, a total journey time of 1 hour 22 minutes. There is a very interesting free museum at the Historic Quays or you can spend most of the day at the main exhibition with many realistic displays and “shows” of Nelson’s time – admission charge.

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Most of us have been to DURHAM to visit the magnificent Cathedral; the Castle opposite is used by the University but is often open to the public – with an admission charge. Direct buses run frequently from Eldon Square either Go North East 21 or Arriva X2 taking about an hour. An alternative, though rather longer (1hour 40 minutes) route is Go North East’s Diamond service 43 or 44 (every 15 minutes), a quite attractive route via Stanley, where you may care to take a break, especially on Friday for the market.

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Another easy journey from Eldon Square is by service 21 (The Angel) at 26 minutes and 56 minutes past each hour taking one hour 39 minutes to BISHOP AUCKLAND, another pleasant market town (Thursday), the home of the Bishop of Durham’s Palace, which is open on Sunday and Monday afternoons. The extensive grounds are always open – ideal for walks or a picnic. The 21 goes through Durham so you can break your journey there.

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A really special country ride is to take the 1.15pm Monday to Friday service 88 from Bishop Auckland to BARNARD CASTLE via WITTON LE WEAR arriving at Barnard Castle 2.13pm. Alternatively there is a direct service 8 at 12.30pm (Mon-Sat) arriving 1.17pm. Buses back on service 8 leave Barnard Castle at 3.55, 5.38 and 6.48pm. Don't miss the famous Bowes Museum at "Barney" or the Castle (English Heritage). Market Day is Wednesday.

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There are many other interesting places, near and far that can be visited in a day; I have even managed Leeds. Some ideas include Newbiggin by the Sea with a break in Ashington; Cramlington Market on Wednesdays – possibly combined with Blyth; Darlington's Monday Market and Railway Museum travelling via Stockton or Durham; or even "Locomotion", the large railway museum at Shildon reached via Bishop Auckland. There are lots more (for example, Maryport) – just phone me for ideas or to let me know how you get on – 0191 285 5843.

Happy Travelling

Mervin Dixon – March 2010

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