



## **The Elders Council of Newcastle** **Transport Working Group**



### *Introduction*

*For the last eight years we have prepared a leaflet giving some ideas for days out using a concessionary bus pass and this has been so successful that we have decided to do it again this year.*

*However, we emphasise again that you must check prices and the details of your journeys before you travel. You can check and get timetable leaflets at the Nexus Travel Centres in Newcastle or by calling the bus operators direct - most journeys from Newcastle are by Arriva or Go North East, start from Eldon Square bus station and times relate to Monday to Saturday unless otherwise stated. In many cases a younger person could accompany you by using an “Explorer” or even a cheaper “day ticket”.*

*Once again, we are 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. Sadly, because of Mervin’s eyesight, this will be our last version of this leaflet and we would, again, say thank you for every enjoyment he has provided us in the past and wish him well for the future.*

### **Bill Ions**

Co-ordinator- Transport Working Group

### **Outings in 2017 with a Concessionary Bus Pass**

As Bill has said, this will be my last edition of this leaflet but I would like to place on record my thanks for the support and encouragement you have given me over the last eight years and your many kind comments. New entries this year are Silloth and Seaham and there are several new attractions and bus rides. The ideas I have given are only a guide, you can, of course, vary them to suit your own needs. Several attractions are closed on Mondays and most have more restricted visiting times after September. You can usually get details of times and charges from local tourist offices.

Where possible the nearest free toilet to the bus station or interchange point is shown in brackets after the place name sometimes using the codes (B) = Bus Station, (M) = Market Place, (MH) = Market Hall, (W) = Wetherspoons (also good for tea, coffee or a meal). Happy travelling and please phone me for more details or other ideas 0191 2855843.

**Mervin Dixon – April 2017**

**1 DURHAM CITY (W).** Express buses X21 and X12 leave at 09, 20, 39 and 50 minutes past the hour taking 53 minutes. The 21 is slower but also runs in the evening and on Sunday when the X's do not. In Durham it is quite a long steep walk to the Market, World Heritage Site Visitor Centre, Cathedral, Castle (£5.00 phone 0191 3342932 for times of tours) and Heritage Centre Museum (£2) so take minibus 40 every 20 minutes from Stand A across North Road opposite the bus station. The covered market is probably the best in the North East and walks along the riverside are very pleasant. Crook Hall with Durham's "Secret" Gardens is well worth the admission (£6.50) but not easy to find – start on Milburngate. For Botanical gardens (£3) – get bus number 6.

**2 DARLINGTON.** (M – Dolphin Centre) Go to Durham then service 7 every 15 minutes - total journey time from Newcastle is about 2 hours. I prefer taking the X10 on the hour to Stockton then X66/X67 from the Church every 15 minutes – taking 32 minutes. To return this way leave Darlington at 5 minutes past the hour. Darlington has good shops, an indoor market and on Mondays a small outdoor one. The interesting railway museum (£3.75) is just off the road to Durham three quarters of a mile out of town – several bus routes.

**3 RICHMOND.** (MH) Buses X26/X27 leave Darlington every 20 minutes taking 33 minutes. For a nice 40 minute country ride take Dales & District 29 at 1.15pm which returns at 4.25pm.

Richmond is a very attractive town with a castle (English Heritage), some narrow streets and a square worth exploring. Market Day is Saturday.

**4 NORTHALLERTON.** (Old Town Hall) Dales & District 72 leaves Darlington at 1.00 and returns at 4.22pm taking 50 minutes. For a very interesting alternative take Abbots X80 from Middlesbrough at 1.30pm, via Stokesley, arriving at 2.37pm.

The county town of North Yorkshire holds a good street market on Wednesday and Saturday. To get the most out of your visit telephone me for a copy of the "Town Trails" leaflet.

**5 SEAHAM,** Get the X24 Stagecoach express from Pilgrim Street (old Odeon) at 25 or 55 minutes past each hour to Sunderland, Fawcett Street, then the X6 or X7 at 26 minutes and 56 minutes past each hour from Winter Gardens ( or X6, X7, X21 from the interchange). If you return this way check X24 times as they are erratic in the afternoon. Alternative routes home are to get the X6, X7 or X21 to Peterlee then the hourly X9 to Newcastle, or better, cross the road for the 202 to Easington Lane, the 265 to Hetton le Hole or the 238 to Houghton le Spring then in all 3 cases get the frequent X1 to Newcastle via Washington. The X6, 202 and 265 call at Dalton Park Outlet Shopping Centre so you can break your journey there.

Seaham is a coastal town with good beaches to the North and a harbour on the south side. Opposite the bus stop is the shopping centre while behind the stop, a road leads down to the Marina with cafes and the East Durham Heritage and Lifeboat Centre

which is open 10am – 3pm Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday – admission free.

**6 HARTLEPOOL.** Take the X9 at half past the hour and change at Peterlee to frequent buses – total journey time 1 hour 20 minutes. On Saturday there is a direct Stagecoach X55 from Pilgrim Street at 9.00am and 2.30pm taking 57 minutes; back at 4.00pm.

“The National Museum of The Royal Navy”, near the Marina has a dramatic reconstruction of naval life in Nelson’s time, also “HMS Trincomalee”, England’s oldest floating warship (£7.00 for 1 visit or £8.50 for 5). Nearby is the town museum – free. Stagecoach service 1 every 30 minutes takes a nice route from Hartlepool to Middlesbrough via Seaton Carew and High Clarence, for the Transporter. (see Middlesbrough)

**7 STOCKTON.** (MH) Get the X10 on the hour; it takes 1 hour 7 minutes – a double decker service going on to Middlesbrough.

The famous Street Market is on Wednesday and Saturday. A visit to Preston Park is worthwhile for its outstanding museum with a parade of Victorian shops and nostalgic 20<sup>th</sup> Century theme (£1.50 valid for a year). Also in Preston Park is Butterfly World with a lovely collection of live butterflies (£3.50) – just get the frequent service 7 bus. The “steamer trip” to Yarm on the Teeside Princess is very good. Concessionary fares are £7.50 single or £9.50 return. It runs most Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.00pm. Phone 01642 608038 to check. If you take a single then explore Yarm – a small Market town, return to Stockton on the 7 or, get the 17 at 28 minutes past the hour to Middlesbrough then the X9 or X10 home.

**8 MIDDLESBROUGH.** (B) Buses leave Newcastle on the hour (X10 via Stockton) and the half hour (X9 via Peterlee and Billingham) – either takes 1 hour 20 minutes.

Middlesbrough has a good shopping centre, also the Dorman Museum and MIMA, a gallery of Modern Art, both free. The TRANSPORTER BRIDGE (60p) is unique in England and well worth a visit, but can be closed for high winds. Get a local bus TR1 or TR2 from stand 15 in Middlesbrough bus station to the South side of the Transporter Bridge where there is a small exhibition, don’t miss the winding house. From the North side it is a short walk to High Clarence for service 1 to Hartlepool or Middlesbrough every 30 minutes. Middlesbrough is the starting point for buses to Redcar; visit the “Vertical Pier” - there is a free lift (when working) to the viewing platform, (closed in high winds), Saltburn (don’t miss the Cliff Tramway- 50p), Staithes, Whitby, Scarborough, Great Ayton, Stokesley and Northallerton – all worth visiting.

**9 WHITBY.** There are 2 routes from Middlesbrough, X93 (Scarborough bus) across the moors takes 1 hour 8 minutes and leaves at 20 minutes past each hour while the X4 via Redcar, Saltburn and the scenic coastal route takes 1 hour 49 minutes, leaving at 5 and 35 minutes past the hour – try this one way – and possibly break your journey at Staithes

– a very picturesque coastal village.

Whitby is well worth a visit, both for the harbour area and the Abbey (English Heritage) on the East Cliff, reached by 199 steps. Bus 97 runs to the Abbey at 25 minutes past the hour returning at 31 minutes past. Just 21 minutes on the Scarborough bus brings you to Robin Hoods Bay – a very scenic coastal village.

**10 SCARBOROUGH.** (Station) The X93 takes 2 hours 18 minutes from Middlesbrough leaving at 20 minutes past the hour – it can be crowded both ways. Buses back are at 50 minutes past each hour until 3.50pm, then 4.55, and half hourly until 6.25pm – check connections at Middlesbrough.

Scarborough is a large seaside resort with a range of attractions and shops.

**11 BISHOP AUCKLAND and SHILDON.** (B) Bus X21 runs at 9 and 39 minutes past each hour to Bishop taking 1 hour 27 minutes. In the evenings and on Sundays use service 21/X21. From Bishop to Shildon take 1 or 5. (Not 5A)

Bishop Auckland Castle is closed this year for refurbishment but the surrounding parkland is ideal for walks and is free. I particularly recommend Shildon for “LOCOMOTION”, the excellent National Railway Museum – it’s free. From Bishop, buses run hourly to Weardale (see Stanhope) and less frequently to Barnard Castle – sometimes changing at Cockfield – phone me for times.

**12 STANHOPE.** (Dales Centre) A nice way to reach Stanhope (but not on Saturday or Sunday) is to take the X70 at 10.25am to Consett (W) – or an earlier bus and look around, you may be pleasantly surprised, continue on the 764 at 11.40am across the moors via Castleside and Tow Law to Wolsingham – cross the road and wait for the 101 at 12.30pm to Stanhope. To come home get the 101 at 1.51, 3.00, 3.51 or 5.00pm to Bishop Auckland then the X21 to Newcastle or get off the 101 at Crook and take the X46 to Durham. On Saturday there is an express bus Weardale X21 from Newcastle, Newgate Street (Wilkinsons) at 10am returning at 4pm.

Stanhope is an attractive small town. The Market Place is flanked by 3 interesting buildings; the Castle (really a mansion built in 1798), the Rectory rebuilt in 1821 and St Thomas Church of Norman origin but much altered. In front of the Church is a fossilised tree stump some 320 million years old! Do not miss the Durham Dales Centre a little to the West of the Church and set in the Castle gardens – it’s free. There are several places to lunch in Stanhope. To explore upper Weardale get the 102 at 1.00pm to Rookhope, back at 1.30pm or the longer 101 up to Cowshill at 1.45 or 2.45pm with an hour round trip – or stop at Ireshopeburn for the Weardale Museum (£3) – closed Monday and Tuesday except in July and August.

**13 HEXHAM.** Service X85 at 10 minutes past each hour takes 46 minutes: 685 runs at 45 minutes past taking 52 minutes, while X84 at 40 minutes past takes an attractive route via Wylam with a journey time of 1 hour. Double deck service 10 via Prudhoe, for its castle

(English Heritage), runs at 25 and 55 minutes past the hour and finally, my favourite, 74 takes a lovely country route leaving at 11.35am and 2.35pm; return at 1.05pm and 4.05pm. Both the 10 and 74 take 1 hour 25 minutes.

In Hexham don't miss the Abbey with its excellent free museum and surrounding parkland or visit the Old Gaol (£3.50 - closed Monday). A nice local bus trip is to Newbrough on service 683 at 40 minutes past each hour taking 22 minutes each way. Market day is Tuesday.

**14 BELLINGHAM** Service 680 leaves Hexham at 11.10am or 1.10pm for a 49 minute journey up the pleasant North Tyne Valley - return buses are at 2.02, 4.32 and 6.15pm. An interesting alternative on Tuesday or Friday is to take ADAPT service 694 at 1.45pm from Hexham. It is a small minibus going to Keilder which runs to Bellingham on the east side of the North Tyne Valley calling at the village of Birtley. Bellingham is a quiet country town with places for lunch and a really good Heritage Centre (£2.50) where the 880 terminates. There are also nice walks close by.

**15 ALLENDALE TOWN and ALLENHEADS** are 25 and 43 minutes South of Hexham respectively. Bus 688 leaves for Allendale Town at 10.45 and 11.55am, 1.45 and 3.45pm with all, except the first, continuing to Allenheads. Take a trip all the way with, perhaps, a refreshment break one way in Allendale Town – a nice large village.

**16 ALSTON.** Take the 10.45am service 685 (Carlisle bus) to Haltwhistle arriving 12.16pm then at 12.40pm get the 681 up the South Tyne valley, reaching Alston Townhead at 1.28pm. A super alternative is Wrights 889 from Hexham on Tuesday at 2.10pm from Wentworth Car Park near Waitrose – NOT the bus station. This market day service arrives at 3.30pm. The ride from Hexham to Alston goes up the lovely West Allan Valley then A689. Black Hill on the Northumberland/Cumbria boundary at 605 metres above sea level is the highest point in England for any all year bus service. In Alston, get off at the first stop (Townhead) and walk down with a stop for tea at the cafe. Return at 5.06pm from Hendersons Garage on Go North East 681/X81 which gets to Hexham at 6.05pm for service 10 at 6.22pm due Newcastle 7.36pm Alston is England's highest market town and has a station for the narrow gauge South Tynedale Railway. There are trains at 2.15pm and 3.45pm taking 1 hour 5 minutes for the round trip. The fare is rather high. (£9.00 for an all day ticket)

**17 HADRIAN'S WALL.** Until 1<sup>st</sup> October Bus AD 122 runs to Haltwhistle from Hexham at 9.10am and hourly, except 2.10pm, until 5.10pm. It calls at several Roman sites: Chesters (English Heritage), Housesteads (English Heritage and National Trust), Vindolanda (£6) - (1.10pm finishes here while even-hour, eg 10.10am, buses do not call) and Walltown for the Roman Army Museum (£5). From Haltwhistle or Greenhead you could continue to Carlisle on the 685.

**18 BIRDOSWALD** Roman Fort (English Heritage) – until 1<sup>st</sup> October. Take bus 685 at 9.45am to Haltwhistle 11.13am; then 185 at 11.30am getting to Birdoswald at 11.57am. Return at 3.45pm change at Greenhead Hotel, 4.00pm, for the AD122 at 4.16pm to Hexham via the scenic Roman Wall route arriving 5.05pm to get the X84 via Wylam at 5.10pm reaching Newcastle at 6.10pm. Birdoswald, my favourite Roman Fort, has a visitor centre and a cafe for your lunch break.

**19 CARLISLE.** (The Lanes) Bus service 685 takes 2 hours 20 minutes departing from Newcastle at 45 minutes past each hour - check return times.

Carlisle, an attractive small City, has a red sandstone Cathedral and an intact Castle (English Heritage). There are also two museums, a good shopping centre and some nice parks. Service 300 at 10 mins past the hour runs to Maryport, Workington and Whitehaven. Service 400 goes to Silloth and 600 to Cockermouth. One of my favourite rides is the 93/93A circular leaving Carlisle at 12.50pm, getting back at 2.36pm. It runs across the Solway marshes to Bowness then back via Cardurnock, Anthorn and Kirkbride.

**20 PENRITH (B)** Service 104 leaves Carlisle at 2 and 32 minutes past the hour taking 40 minutes – check return times.

Penrith is a pleasant town with a ruined castle and a small free museum.

**21 KESWICK.** (Booth's) Take the 9.45am service 685 to Carlisle then the 554 at 12.10pm getting to Keswick at 1.21pm. If you miss this, get the 104 to Penrith at 12.32pm then the X5 to Keswick arriving 2.02pm. Between 7<sup>th</sup> July and 29<sup>th</sup> September, Wright Bros Coach 888 leaves Newcastle Coach Station at 9.20am. This is too early for the Concessionary Pass, except on Saturday, but you can board at 9.31am at Lemington Road Ends (Stagecoach buses 10, 39, 40 and X82). The 888 takes a magnificent route which is one of the highest in England (at Hartside Cafe). There is a 20 minutes refreshment break in Alston, arrival in Keswick is 12.30pm. On Sunday the 888 leaves Newcastle at 10.05am reaching Keswick at 1.00pm. To return from Keswick, take the 554 to Carlisle at 5.35pm getting you home at 9.32pm or the 888 in July, August or September which leaves at 4.30pm alighting at the General Hospital about 7.25pm for local buses. Keswick is worth several visits with a variety of things to do there. A boat trip around Derwentwater takes 50 minutes with boats leaving every half hour (£9.50), a conducted tour of the very interesting Pencil Factory Museum (£3.50), visit the Keswick Museum (£4.25) or try "The Puzzling Place" for Holograms and optical illusion (£2.90). There are two spectacular bus routes from Keswick, the 78 open top service up Borrowdale to Seatoller and back takes about an hour (check times), then my favourite the 77 and 77A circular routes to Buttermere climbing Honister and Whinlatter passes. They leave at half past each hour until 4.30pm (also 4.00pm) taking 1 hour 47 minutes. The 4.30pm goes on at 6.20pm to

Carlisle as service 73A via Mungrisedale and Caldbeck. You would have 53 minutes in Carlisle and reach Newcastle at 10.32pm.

**22 SILLOTH.** Bus 400 from Carlisle at 12.40pm arrives at 1.43pm. Buses back run at 3.43 and 6.03pm which would get you to Newcastle at 7.40 and 9.32pm respectively. For a different route back take the 60E to Maryport then the 300 at 57 minutes past each hour to Carlisle. The 60E leaves Silloth at 2.03 and 5.00pm Monday to Friday but at 3.20pm Saturday. If you take the 2.03pm you could look around Maryport. Silloth is a pleasant, if rather sleepy, seaside resort with nice walks and places to eat.

**23 MORPETH.** (B) Direct buses on services X14, X15, X16, X18 leave Haymarket every 15 minutes taking 33 minutes. The 43 at 32 minutes past the hour via Cramlington takes 1 hour 6 minutes whilst the 44 at 39 minutes past the hour goes via Dinnington, Stannington and Stobhill, a very interesting route, taking 56 minutes – returning at 44 minutes past most hours.

In Morpeth visit the free Bagpipe Museum or walk in the park and up the riverside to Mitford Road.

**24 ASHINGTON (W) and NEWBIGGIN** Buses X21, X22 run frequently from Haymarket to Ashington – journey time about 1 hour while the X20 at 33 mins past each hour takes only 42 minutes. From Ashington to Newbiggin routes X21 and 35 run frequently and take about 15 minutes.

Ashington has a really good street market on Tuesdays while Newbiggin has an attractive sea front and the Maritime Centre (£2.50) at the North end of the promenade.

**25 ALNWICK.** (M) X15 from Haymarket at 33 minutes past each hour takes 1 hour 23 minutes, for a scenic ride take the X18 at 3 minutes past each hour or X20 at 33 minutes past, both taking about 55 minutes. via Amble; Warkworth, for an English Heritage castle and a nice walk along the River Coquet to the Hermitage; also Alnmouth (X18) for pleasant seaside walks.

Alnwick is an interesting town to walk around. Visits to the Castle, the home of the Duke of Northumberland, (£12.75) and the famous Gardens (£9.50). Visit Barter Books in the old station with a huge collection of 2<sup>nd</sup> hand books and if you return a book you get half price credit against another purchase. From Alnwick take buses 418 or X18 at 10.21am, 12.02 and 2.21pm to the coastal towns of Craster (harbour and kippers!), Seahouses (boats to the Farne Islands) and Bamburgh (Castle £10.75 and Grace Darling Museum –free). If you book at the Alnwick tourist office (01670 622152) you can get 10% discount on prices for Alnwick Gardens or the Castles of Alnwick, Bamburgh and Chillingham.

**26 ROTHBURY.** (Bridge Street) Service X14 at 10.18, 11.18, 1.18, and 3.18pm takes 1 hour 13 minutes, check your return times. Another way to Rothbury is to go to Alnwick then get PCL Buses service 15 at 2.15pm arriving 2.40pm.

Rothbury is a pleasant small town with a large green and several tea shops. All Saints Church dates from 13<sup>th</sup> Century but was largely rebuilt in 1850. PCL Buses run a marvellous circular trip via Alwinton on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 10.45am and 2.45pm taking 1 hour, the bus then continuing to Alnwick. Note: If you take the afternoon bus there is no X14 connection at Rothbury so either stay until 5.07pm or stay on the PCL bus to Alnwick.

**27 WOOLER** – is easily reached from Alnwick in 45 minutes, ideally by the 470 bus at 12.45pm via Chillingham (Castle £8) but also by the 473 at 11.55am and 1.55pm. The best way back to Newcastle, but only on Wednesday, is the Glen Valley coach 710 from Wooler at 3.40pm due in about 5.00pm. You can do the circuit in reverse order leaving ST. THOMAS STREET at 11.30am (Wednesday) arriving Wooler at 12.50pm. Buses from Wooler to Alnwick are Service 470 at 2.45pm and Service 473 at 5.05pm.

Wooler is a nice small town with plenty of places to eat, the library and tourist office are at the North end of town.

**28 BERWICK.** (W) The direct bus is X15 leaving Haymarket at 33 minutes past the even hour (8.33am, 10.33am etc) with a journey time of 2 hours 10 minutes – alight at “Golden Square”, the first stop across the Bridge. The 10.03am journey on X18 runs by the long very attractive coastal route via Amble, Alnwick and Seahouses arriving at 1.52pm.

Return on X15 at 3.07, 5.17 and 7.17pm. Southbound X18's leave Berwick at 2.07 and 6.17pm. Try the X18 in one direction with, perhaps, a break of journey in Alnwick.

Berwick, England's most northerly town, is an attractive Georgian Market Town, one of only three towns in England where you can walk right round the walls – free! There is a notable Town Hall of 1754 and Barracks dating from 1719 (English Heritage). The bridges over the Tweed are impressive - the Old Bridge built in 1610-34, the New Bridge of 1925-28 and Stephenson's Royal Border railway bridge of 1847. The tourist office in Marygate has a free leaflet for a walk around the town.

**29 SCOTLAND.** The Tyne & Wear Pass is not officially valid in Scotland but Perryman's will let us travel on service 67 at 11.10am or 1.09pm via Coldstream and Kelso all the way to Melrose and Gallashiels. (1 hour 43 minutes) and on service 60 which also runs to Melrose and Gallashiels but via Duns so come back on this. Check return times. Note your journey must start or finish in England so visits to Duns, Kelso, Melrose and Gallashiels would have to be on separate trips. You can also travel to attractive Eyemouth on Perrymans 235 or 253. (Museum £3 and Gunsgreen Smugglers House £5.50). Beyond Eyemouth we can go on at half fare to St. Abbs, Dunbar or even Edinburgh. Except for Eyemouth and Kelso, Scottish trips can only reasonably be made



by getting the 8.33am from Haymarket on Saturday. From Carlisle we can use the pass on service 79/179 every 30 minutes as far as Gretna where there is a very good outlet shopping centre. The buses continue to Annan and Dumfries (79) and we can get half fare with our pass.

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