



# EC Rider

**Summer and Autumn 2023**



You just never know what you might discover when you get out using your bus pass. Enjoy exploring!



This is the 13 EC Rider and provides some ideas for days out using public transport and your Concessionary Travel Pass. A senior citizen railcard providing a 33% discount will enable travel further afield (costs £30 for a year). We are fortunate to live in a beautiful part of the country with a wide variety of places at a short distance from home.

This is our website address: <https://www.elderscouncil.org.uk/>

## Some important advice before you travel

Check times before you travel especially for any infrequent service. At the time of writing the information is up to date but operators can change times; operators aim to publish this on their websites.

- Check the opening times of any attractions you wish to visit and whether you may have to pre-book.
- Up to date travel information can be obtained by calling **TRAVELINE on 0871 2002233**, visiting their website, bus operators' websites or timetable leaflets on operators' vehicles.

### Journey Suggestions

I hope the list below caters for a range of interests and mobility:

- Beautiful locations such as Alnwick
- Interesting attractions such as Raby Castle and Grounds
- Interesting scenery such as between Hexham and Allenheads.
- And, for those with a good level of fitness, some walks such as Saltburn to Redcar.

This 2023 version has some new ideas for days out. Due to the constraints of space, in order to accommodate these, a number of last year's trips have been deleted. If you have kept this document, you will find that these trips are still possible. The cost of some of the more expensive visits are listed and, where known, the nearest toilet to the bus station or interchange point is shown in brackets. (M)=Market Place; (MH)=Market Hall; (MU) = Museum; (CG) = Cathedral Green; (RS) = Rail Station; (B) = Bus Station.

Most journeys from Newcastle are by Arriva or Go North East and start from Eldon Square Bus Station and times, where given, relate to Monday to Saturday, unless otherwise stated. If a journey commences at the Haymarket Bus Station, this is specifically noted.

Bill Harbottle

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We are very pleased that Transport North East was able to support the Elders Council by funding the printing of **EC Rider 2023**.

Their website address for any further information about them is <https://www.transportnortheast.gov.uk/>

# Transport North East

**1 DURHAM CITY** (CG) X12 and X21 leave regularly and take about 55 minutes. You can also take the slower 21. You should note that all buses depart and return from North Road as the bus station is closed for refurbishment.



In Durham it is a nice but long steep walk to the Market, Cathedral and Castle (phone 0191 334 2932 for times of tours).

There are lovely riverside walks. You may also like to visit the Botanical Gardens and Oriental Museum – catch Service 6. You could also catch the regular 56/57 to the first stop in Shincliffe alighting at the Rose Tree. Cross the road and it is a short walk to a lovely garden centre/café. It is also possible to walk along the river to Shincliffe from Durham, about 2 miles. There is a nice pocket guide to Durham on the web.

I would also recommend seeing the Lumiere show in Durham from 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> November – check the website ([Home - Lumiere Festival \(lumiere-festival.com\)](http://Home-LumiereFestival(lumiere-festival.com))) on acquiring tickets. You would also love Crook Hall Gardens which have re-opened.

**2 DARLINGTON** (M – Dolphin Centre) Go to Durham and then take Service 7 every 20 minutes – total journey time from Newcastle is about 2 hours. Darlington has good shops and market. Alight the number 7 at Morrison's on the journey into town to visit the interesting railway museum.

**3 HARTLEPOOL** (MU) Take the X10 at 10 minutes past the hour and change at Peterlee to frequent buses – total journey time 1 hour and 30 minutes. Returns Peterlee at 02 minutes past the hour. This journey takes 45 minutes by train.

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 (£10.00 for 1 visit). Nearby is the town museum – free. Take the Service 7 (other side of the road to the Marina) to the Headland (old Hartlepool) – nice coastal walks, old battery and St Hilda's, a Grade 1 listed building.

The Tall Ships are also visiting Hartlepool between 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> July – always a magnificent sight.



**4 PENSRAW MONUMENT** This folly, built on a hill above the village of the same name, looks like a mini-Acropolis. It commemorates John Lambton, who was Governor General of British North America (1792-1840) and was built between 1844-45. Located adjacent to one of the roads between Washington and Sunderland, it is visible for miles and, although steep, it is only a short walk from a nearby bus stop.

On the opposite side of the road is Herrington Country Park created on the site of a former colliery where there are some lovely walks on the flat, a lake, café and farm shop.

Catch the Go North East X1 which runs every 15 minutes from Eldon Square to Washington Galleries and transfer to the 2/2A which runs every 15 minutes. Total journey time between 45 minutes to an hour.

**5 STOCKTON** Get the X10 at 10 minutes past the hour. It takes an hour and 30 minutes and passes Dalton Park, a big shopping centre and returns most of the day at 22 minutes past the hour.

There are large street markets 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. Also in Preston Park is Butterfly World with a lovely collection of live butterflies. Just catch the frequent Service 7 going towards Yarm, which is also worth a visit and is only about 20 minutes from Stockton. It is a small, historic market town on the banks of the Tees.

**6 MIDDLESBROUGH, (B) REDCAR AND SALTBURN** The X10 leaves every hour and takes 105 minutes to Middlesbrough. Middlesbrough is the starting point for the X3/X4 buses which operate regularly to Redcar and Saltburn. At Redcar you can visit the Vertical Pier and the Zetland Lifeboat Museum. Saltburn is a lovely place with its Cliff Tramway, Pier, Beach and views of the cliffs and North York Moors. It is possible to walk back to Redcar along the beach – about 90 minutes.



**7 GREAT AYTON (M)** Take the 28A at 30 minutes past the hour from Middlesbrough bus station. Returns at 56 minutes. Takes about 45 minutes. This pretty little village lies on the banks of the River Leven on the edge of the North York Moors. It was the boyhood home of Captain James Cook and you can visit the school where he received his education, which is now a museum. There is a lovely village green, shops and café. A short walk out of the village and you will be able to see the distinctive hill of Roseberry Topping. A short distance on the 28A will take you to Stokesley, also worth a visit.

**8 WHITBY (Opposite RS) and SCARBOROUGH (RS)** There are two routes from Middlesbrough to Whitby. X93 across the moors takes just over an hour and leaves at 20 minutes past each hour while the X4 via Redcar, Saltburn and the scenic coastal route takes nearly two hours leaving at 5 and 35 minutes past the hour – try this one way – possibly stopping at Staithes – a lovely coastal village but a steep walk downhill.

Whitby is well worth a visit, both for the harbour area and the Abbey (English Heritage) on the East Cliff, reached by 199 steps. The X93 continues to Scarborough from Whitby taking about an hour and passing through Robin Hoods Bay which is well worth a visit but again a very steep walk downhill from the bus stop. It is possible to walk here from Whitby along the old railway line to Scarborough – 6 miles and wonderful scenery. Scarborough has numerous attractions but it is an hour from Whitby and the buses can be very busy in mid-summer. If you go, and it is a lovely trip, I would recommend spring or autumn.

**9 BISHOP AUCKLAND (B) SHILDON (MU) and STANHOPE (MU)** The X21 runs every half hour to Bishop Auckland and takes 90 minutes. The Mining Art Gallery, Castle and grounds are worth a visit. From Bishop take bus 1 or 5 (30 minutes) going to Darlington which stops outside Locomotion in Shildon, which is part of the National Railway Museum and well worth a visit. It is free to visit, although donations are welcomed. From Bishop you could also go to Stanhope (Weardale Motor Services – 45 minutes). A very attractive, small town in Upper Weardale – there are lovely river walks, church and the Dales Centre has a good selection of guides and information about the area. You can go further to explore Upper Weardale – get the 102 (from Stanhope) at 1.00 pm to

Rookhope, back at 1.30 pm or the longer 101 up to Cowshill at 1.45 pm, back at 2.45 pm. You only have time for the bus journey. On your return from Stanhope, you could alight the 101 at Crook from where there are regular buses to Durham.

#### **10 BARNARD CASTLE, STAINDROP and RABY CASTLE (MU)**



A really interesting place to visit with a castle high above the river and the wonderful Bowes Museum. It is a nice walk to the ruins of Egglestone Abbey. You can travel here from either Darlington (X75/X76) from outside the Town Hall at 13 and 43 minutes past the hour or Service 85 from Bishop

Auckland Bus Station. This runs less frequently at 11.55 am or 1.55 pm returning at 5.00 pm. This service stops at the gates of Raby Castle. Built in the thirteenth century, this well-preserved castle, set among 200 acres of deer park, is privately owned. Castle opening is Wednesday to Sunday (£8). A visit to the Castle and Park costs £12.00. From the Castle, it is a short walk to the lovely village of Staindrop – church, cafes and village green. Buses return to Bishop Auckland at 5.10 pm, a couple of minutes later from the Castle. The X76 also services Staindrop returning to Darlington at least hourly. Journey times to Barnard Castle vary but are approximately an hour.

#### **11 BEAMISH MUSEUM (M) and TANFIELD RAILWAY (M)**

Bus 28/29 leave every half hour for Beamish and take about an hour. On Sundays departs 20 minutes past and returns 19 minutes past each hour. Beamish is open every day in the summer but does close on certain days in the winter. It is described as the Living Museum of the North and has old trams, school, churches, housing, shops, pithead and old country manor. There are regular themed events during the year such as a Wartime Weekend. The admission price is £15.50 BUT this is an annual pass. For a short trip, on a Sunday, you may like another historical experience visiting Tanfield Railway. This runs on a former colliery railway and offers a run of three miles usually behind an industrial steam engine and runs between Sunniside and Tanfield. The main station is at St Andrews House where there is an engine shed, historical information and refreshments. You can alight at Causey Arch, built between 1725

and 1727, which is the oldest surviving railway bridge in the world and built to carry horse drawn coal wagons. The X30 leaves Newcastle going to Stanley at 08 minutes past the hour and takes about 30 minutes to St Andrews House and returns at 30 minutes past the hour.

**12 CONSETT (B) to LANCHESTER** I would recommend a ride on the X71 from Eldon Square to Consett. This service is usually operated by double deckers and climbs high up into County Durham offering lovely views even as far as the Cheviots. As an alternative the X45 travels along the lovely River Derwent through Rowlands Gill and Shotley Bridge. Once in Consett you would also enjoy the bus ride to Durham through Lanchester (X5/X15) which takes 45 minutes and runs every 30 minutes. Lanchester is a lovely village with a nice old church, village green and shops where you could break your journey.

For those of you able to try this walk, Consett to Lanchester is one of my favourite walks. I would recommend starting a mile from Consett by taking the X5/X15 Castleside bus to the Grove, alighting where the bus turns off the main road. Walk back over this road and you will see the start of the walk. It is an easy 5 miles. Soon after starting you will pass under an impressive railway arch and you are at Lydgetts Junction – completely different to a 100 years ago when busy lines diverged to Newcastle, Stanhope or Durham. There are lovely views of the North Durham countryside as you walk down the valley. There is a nice farm shop and café at Knitsley which is closed on Mondays, past Hurbeck Farm and at Lanchester you will see in situ the old platform and station buildings.

**13 HEXHAM (B)** There are a number of routes to Hexham from Eldon Square, all providing scenic journeys. The 684 and 685 go to the north of the Tyne and are the quickest taking less than an hour. The 684 goes through Wylam where George Stephenson was born. The 10 travels along the south bank through Prudhoe (ten-minute walk to the castle) and close to Cherryburn. Alight at Mickley for a short walk to Cherryburn where Bewick, the engraver, lived. The 74 runs less frequently at 11.35 am and 2.35 pm from Newcastle, returning at 4.05 pm and passes through Stamfordham and Matfen. In Hexham visit the Abbey with its excellent free museum and surrounding parkland or the Old Gaol and walks along the river

towards Warden (about 3 miles) where there is a lovely old church, part of which is Anglo Saxon.

**14 BELLINGHAM** (MU) Service 680 leaves Hexham at 11.30 am or 1.30 pm for a journey of less than an hour up the pleasant North Tyne Valley – return buses are at 2.20, 4.40 6.40 pm and 7.40 pm. Bellingham is a quiet country town with places for lunch and a really good Heritage Centre at the old Railway Station where the 680 terminates. There are also nice walks.

**15 ALLENDALE and ALLENHEADS** are 25 and 45 minutes south of Hexham. Bus 688 leaves Hexham for Allendale and Allenheads at 9.16 am, 11.16 am, 2.16 pm and 3.36 pm. This is a lovely run across the moors. There are shops and cafés in Allendale and a nice heritage centre/café at Allenheads.

Return from Allenheads at 12.03, 2.03, 4.23, 6.23 and 7.23 pm. 15 minutes later from Allendale.

**16 ALSTON** There are a number of alternative routes to Alston. Take the 10.45 am service 685 (Carlisle bus) to Haltwhistle arriving 12.16 pm then at 1.12 pm get the 681 up the South Tyne valley, reaching Alston at 2.00 pm. A super alternative is Wrights 889 from Hexham on Tuesday at 2.02 pm. This market day service arrives at 3.15 pm. The ride from Hexham to Alston goes up the lovely West Allen Valley then A689. Return at 5.18 pm on Go North East 681/X81 which gets to Hexham at 6.05 pm.

Wright Brothers will be running their service 888 from Newcastle coach station to Alston and Keswick on Fridays to Mondays during late July, August and September. Check times before travelling.

[Wright Bros Coaches - Our Routes \(wrightscoaches.co.uk\)](http://wrightscoaches.co.uk)



There is also a lovely narrow-gauge railway which runs to Slaggyford. Check the website for details. [South Tynedale Railway – The Friendly Heritage Attraction \(south-tynedale-railway.org.uk\)](http://south-tynedale-railway.org.uk)

**17 HADRIAN'S WALL** (MU) AD 122 now runs all year but only every 2 hours, departing Hexham at 8.30 am, 10.30 am, 12.30 pm, 2.30 pm and 4.30 pm returning from Haltwhistle at 9.59 am, 11.59 am, 1.59 pm, 3.59 pm and 5.59 pm. It calls at several Roman sites: Chesters, Housesteads, Vindolanda and Walltown for the



Roman Army Museum. Pick up a timetable and tourist information on the bus. A new visitor centre opened in 2017 at Once Brewed called The Sill which has some lovely exhibits about the landscape, history, culture and heritage of Northumberland. It is free and well worth a visit. There are cafés and retail outlets here as well.

## **18 CARLISLE**

Service 685 takes 2 hours 20 minutes departing from Newcastle at 45



minutes past each hour and returns at 15 minutes past the hour.

Carlisle, an attractive, small city, has a red sandstone Cathedral and an intact Castle (English Heritage). There is also Tullie House Museum (£15), which is highly recommended, a good shopping centre and some nice parks. There is also another favourite, the 93/93A circular trip from Carlisle at 12.40 pm, arriving back at 2.26 pm. (Do not alight mid route as buses are infrequent.) It runs across the Solway marshes to Bowness, then back via Cardurnock, Anthorn and Kirkbride. It is also possible to use your pass to visit Gretna from Carlisle.

**19 PENRITH** (B) Service 104 leaves Carlisle at 37 minutes past the hour taking almost an hour. The train takes 15 minutes. Buses return from Penrith at 25 minutes past the hour.

Penrith is a pleasant town with a ruined castle and a small, free museum. There is a lovely bus journey, the 508, which runs down the side of Ullswater past Pooley Bridge, Glenridding and Patterdale (about 50 minutes). This is best done on a summer Saturday when you can get an early start on the 685 from Newcastle. The 508 runs from Penrith at 11.32 am, 1.32 and 3.32 pm returning at 2.20 and 4.20 pm (hourly Saturdays, Sundays, Bank Holidays and School Holidays).

Some buses continue over Kirkstone Pass to Windemere. However, this takes two hours and you would spend most of the day travelling.

**20 KESWICK** (Booth's) Keswick is a beautiful town with plenty to keep you occupied – lakeside walks, boat trips on the lake, museums. When you arrive go inside Booths Supermarket where you will find plenty of tourist information and bus timetables. There

are a number of spectacular bus routes from Keswick. The 78 open top service up Borrowdale to Seatoller and back takes about an hour; the 77 and 77A circular routes to Buttermere climbing Honister and Whinlatter passes and the 555 down to Grasmere.

The service 685 to Carlisle operates hourly (2 hours and 20 minutes) than the 104 to Penrith hourly (60 minutes) followed by the X5 to Keswick every hour taking 50 minutes. There is a 554 to Carlisle at 5.30 pm arriving 6.46 pm. It is a long way albeit a very scenic travel by bus.

In the middle of the summer there is a direct 888 Newcastle to Keswick service via Alston run by Wright Brothers. This will be Fridays to Mondays from late July.

I like to go to Keswick for the day but always use the train to Carlisle/Penrith to increase the amount of travel to enjoy there on arrival and certainly outside the peak summer when Wright Bros do not operate.

**21 ALNWICK and NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND** (M) X15 from Haymarket at 38 minutes past each hour takes 1 hour 22 minutes. For a scenic ride take the X18 at 8 minutes past each hour via Amble, Warkworth (for an English Heritage castle and a nice walk along the River Coquet to the Hermitage) also Alnmouth for pleasant seaside walks. The X20 at 38 minutes past also goes to Alnwick via Ashington, Amble and Warkworth. It is a walk of about a mile to the beach at Warkworth but it is well worth it for lovely walks admiring the dunes and sea birds. It is also possible to walk to Alnmouth – about 2 hours.

Alnwick is an interesting town to walk around. Visit the Castle and the famous Gardens. (Prices vary and you may have to book in advance.)

Barter Books in the old station has a huge collection of 2<sup>nd</sup> hand books. From Alnwick take buses 418 or X18 at 10.05, 11.05 am 12.05, 1.10 and 2.05 pm to the coastal towns of Craster (harbour and kippers and a nice walk along the cliffs to Dunstanburgh Castle), Seahouses and Bamburgh (Castle and Grace Darling Museum). Check return times from wherever you travel to. For next spring, I would recommend you go to Warkworth to see the daffodils around the castle and the beautiful cherry blossom in Alnwick.

**22 ROTHBURY** (Bridge Street) The X14 takes 1 hour 13 minutes at 9.23, 11.23 am and 1.23 pm from Haymarket. Buses return from Rothbury to Newcastle at 1.00, 2.55 and 5.05 pm. Rothbury is a pleasant small town with a large green, church and several tea shops.

Some very good news, as from 2023 the X14 departures at 9.23 and 11.23 am, returning at 3.00 and 5.10 will also be stopping at Craggside, the former home of Lord Armstrong (National Trust £22).

**23 WOOLER** This is a nice small town. It is reached from Alnwick in an hour by the very scenic service 473 operating via Whittington, Powburn and Chillingham. Departures from Alnwick at 8.40 and 10.40 am and 12.40 pm. Journey taking an hour returning at 11.50 am, 1.50 and 5.05 pm.

Wednesdays only the 710 run by Glen Valley runs from St Thomas Street at 11.30 am returning at 3.40 pm, journey time 1.5 – 2 hours. Ad Gefrin, a new Anglo-Saxon Museum and Whisky Distillery has recently opened (not Open on Tuesdays) [English Whisky Distillery & Northumberland Visitor Attraction \(adgefirin.co.uk\)](http://adgefirin.co.uk)

**24 MORPETH** Direct buses on services X14, X15 and X18 leave



Haymarket taking 33 minutes. In Morpeth visit the free Bagpipe Museum, walk in the park and along the riverside. It is possible to walk to Mitford along the side of a quiet road where

there is a lovely church and ruined castle (about 3 miles).

**25 NORTH TYNESIDE RAILWAY AND STEPHENSON RAILWAY MUSEUM** are located in Middle Engine Lane in North Tyneside and area are reached in 26 minutes from Haymarket Bus Station on Go North East Service 310.

There is a wonderful collection of locomotives inside including Billy, an industrial steam locomotive believed to be the third oldest in the world which hauled coal wagons from Killingworth Colliery to the Tyne. Also in the collections is a very old electric locomotive built in Berlin in 1909 which worked coal trains at South Shields for 70 years. An electric motor luggage van (1904) from the first day of North Tyneside's electric railway is a forerunner of the current

Metro. The museum has a café and there are also heritage train rides over a short section of track to Percy Main. For opening times and train running dates go to the [www.stephensonsteamrailway.org.uk](http://www.stephensonsteamrailway.org.uk) . Open weekends and other selected dates.

**26 WASHINGTON OLD HALL** This picturesque stone manor house with its gardens and nuttery lies in a tranquil setting at the heart of the historic village. The building incorporates parts of the original medieval home of George Washington's direct ancestors and it is here that the family took their surname of Washington. There is a café and toilet at the hall (check opening times).

Catch the X1 from Eldon Square and alight at Washington Galleries Bus Station changing onto service 4 at Stand A alighting at Parkway for a short walk. Total journey time less than an hour.

Whilst in the area, you may also like to visit the Washington Wetland Centre – a haven for wildlife set on the banks of the River Wear. It is home to a range of rare wildfowl, exotic birds and otters and is open all the year round. Admittance is circa £8. From Washington Galleries, catch the Go North East service 8 (direction Sunderland). Journey time about 10 minutes.

**27 SEAHAM HARBOUR (M)** The most convenient way to travel to Seaham is from Sunderland Park Lane Interchange where there are regular buses (60/X6) taking 20-30 minutes. Use either Go North East 56 (takes an hour and 15 minutes from Market Street) or the Metro to Sunderland Park Lane.

Seaham has some nice seafront walks, look out for Tommy, a steel statue by a local artist commemorating WW1 and the impressive Londonderry Offices. Elsewhere towards Sunderland is St Mary the Virgin Church, part of which is Anglo Saxon. Check times.

**28 NEWBIGGIN** The Arriva X21 leaves from the Haymarket and operates every 20 minutes, the journey takes just over an hour. Newbiggin is a lovely seaside resort with some pleasant walks. Look out for the statues facing the sea. There is a nice information centre with a small museum and café and plenty of other places to eat.

**29 SEATON SLUICE** Regular 308/309 and X7 bus services from Haymarket Bus Station (journey time less than an hour). Seaton



Sluice has a nice harbour and a reputation for good fish and chips. There are some nice beach walks north of Seaton Sluice towards Blyth Beach. The X7 goes past Seaton Delaval Hall – a National Trust property with nice gardens but limited opening times (check before you travel). [Seaton Delaval Hall | Northumberland | National Trust](#)

**30 BERWICK** A few miles south of the Border this is a lovely town. It can be reached by bus from the Haymarket. The X15 leave Haymarket Bus Station at 10.38 am and 12.38 pm (journey times 2 hours and 22 minutes).

The X18 via the coast also has journeys at 10.08 am (journey time 3 hours and 52 minutes).

The train, on average, only takes 45 minutes and there is at least one an hour.

There are lovely walks along the river Tweed underneath the Royal Border Rail Bridge in one direction and in other the old C17 bridge (leading to Spittal where there are some lovely seaside walks) towards the pier. There are the Elizabethan town walls, barracks and old Town Hall.

In the previous edition I gave a list of bus trips you could make from Berwick: Kelso, Eyemouth, St Abbs, Holy Island, Bamburgh/Seahouses and Etal/Ford. All of these are still possible, but, before travelling, you should check times which are likely to have changed. For journeys into Scotland, your English Bus Pass can be used as far as Eyemouth and Kelso.

**31 BELSAY/WALLINGTON** On Saturdays, only until the 2<sup>nd</sup> September, the X75 will operate from the Haymarket (Stand N) to Wallington calling on the way at Belsay and Bolam Lake. Departures are at 9.30 and 11.30 am, 2.00 and 4.00 pm, returning at 10.30 am, 1.00, 3.00 and 5.00 pm. Highly recommended.

**32 CORBRIDGE** Situated on the north bank of the Tyne, Corbridge is served by all the buses going to Hexham, except the 74. There are plenty of cafes and shops, about a mile to the west is Corbridge Roman Town Museum. Admire the old bridge over the Tyne built in 1690 and the only one of the Tyne to survive disastrous floods in 1771, and St Andrews Church and Tower in the market place (part of which pre-date the Normans).

**Here is something different for those who enjoy an interesting bus service and a ride through the countryside.**

### **33 ROUTE X46 DURHAM TO CROOK**

The X46 runs every 20 minutes daytime and takes just over 30 minutes from Durham to Crook. On the way out of Durham you pass Nevilles Cross (now a major crossroads). Across the road on the right near the bus stop is a replica (but still old) monument to commemorate a battle between the Scots and English in 1346.

Further on you go through Brancepeth (worth alighting for a short while), a village with some lovely old stone buildings and hidden from the road, Brancepeth Castle (medieval) which is in private hands. Continuing, the bus goes through Willington, a former mining village which does have a nice church and green spaces.

The bus ( usually a double-decker) then climbs up High Job Hill with lovely views looking down on Crook ( a product of the industrial revolution). There are some nice cafés in the market place and plenty of information boards explaining the town's past.

#### **Some local walks**

**34 WYLAM TO NEWBURN** Catch the 684 service (destination Hexham) from Eldon Square Bus Station to Wylam. This departs hourly at 15 minutes past and returns at 31 minutes past the hour and takes 33 minutes. It is 3 miles to walk to Newburn mainly along the path of the old railway/wagonway on the north bank of the Tyne. Before setting off downstream, you may like to walk a short distance in the other direction towards Hexham along the track of the old railway that used to run on the North Bank of the Tyne to see and walk over the impressive cantilever bridge at Hags Bank (about half a mile). You will pass George Stephenson Cottage and the site of the Battle of Newburn where the Scots defeated the English in 1640. There are some excellent information boards. From Newburn the 22 runs every 10 minutes to Newcastle. Wylam was a significant place in the early development of the railways which is documented in small museum (check opening times).



### **35 HALTWHISTLE AND A WALK TO THE ROMAN WALL**

Haltwhistle is a small market town on the Tyne surrounded by beautiful countryside with some lovely stone buildings, a nice church, shops and places to eat. It is also at the heart of Britain. If you are moderately fit, there is a nice walk you can take up to the Roman Wall at Cawfields. Three miles each way and well signposted. Follow directions to the Haltwhistle Burn for a gentle walk next to the stream with wonderful rock formations and signs of post industry. After walking through an open field to reach the military road a short walk along the grass path to the right and after a short distance you join the road to the Roman Wall. The 685 to Carlisle takes one and a half hours and there are for most of the day two trains an hour taking one hour to Haltwhistle.

### **36 THE COAST**

The aim of this document is to provide ideas for days out with a Concessionary Bus Pass. We do have a lovely local coastline both north and south of the Tyne. With the introduction of the Metro, many of the fast, frequent bus services ceased to operate. However, although it takes longer, the following are some of the buses you could use to travel to the coast.



From Haymarket 306 to Tynemouth, journey time 40 minutes; to Whitley Bay 308/9, journey times 50 minutes; to North Shields 310, journey time 45 minutes. From Market Street 27 to South Shields, journey time 1 hour 20 minutes. From Pilgrim Street, X34 to Marsden, journey time 45 minutes.

There are lovely easy walks you can do from St Mary's Lighthouse to Whitley Bay – Cullercoats – North Shields and from South Shields to Marsden, from 30 minutes to a couple of hours. Combine North and South Tyneside by crossing the river on the ferry. Personally, my favourite is South Shields. It is not far to walk to the river, see the old market place and Customs House. I have seen some lovely sunsets, particularly in the winter with the ferry boat to Amsterdam in the background. In the other direction, there are some lovely parks either side of Ocean Road near the beautiful beach and a spectacular walk along the cliffs to Marsden.

**As previously, I have included a number of trips which involve travel by train before commencing a bus journey, this time from Darlington and onwards to Richmond.**

**37 RICHMOND** (MH) Buses X26/X27 leave Darlington rail station every 30 minutes. For a scenic ride take Service 29 at 1.10 pm, returns 4.30 pm from the Town Centre.

Richmond is a very attractive town with a castle (English Heritage), some narrow streets, a number of museums, a square worth exploring and riverside walks with a waterfall. Market Day is Saturday. Cross the river to the old railway station where there is a café, retail outlets, a small cinema and a small historical display. There is a nice walk along the old railway to the ruins of Easby Abbey and the old parish church with some wonderful 12<sup>th</sup> Century wall paintings which takes about 30 minutes.

Richmond is in Swaledale and is the 'bushead' for some lovely trips further into the Yorkshire Dales. I have done all of these wonderful journeys, but please check times before travelling as you will understand that, because of the remote nature of the area, services are not frequent.

Reeth, further up Swaledale, is served by the Little White Bus Company Service 30 – rolling hills, village green, riverside walks, small museum, nice café and pubs. Bus leaves Richmond at 12.25 pm and return at 2.00 pm (journey time about 30 minutes).

Leyburn, which sits above Wensleydale is again about 30 minutes from Richmond served by Dales and District 159. A lovely bus journey is climbing out of Swaledale into Wensleydale. A larger market town with plenty of places to eat – go for a walk for the views over Wensley from the Shawl. Departures at 11.25 am, 12.35, 1.50, 2.05 pm returning at 1.35, 2.30 or 4.27 pm.

You can also travel to Barnard Castle on Hodgsons Service 79, spending a couple of hours there before going back to Darlington direct – takes about an hour. Departures at 1.05 and 3.55 pm.

Happy travelling! Bill Harbottle!

*Photos by **Nick Lambert** and **Bill Harbottle** and Creative Commons*