



Wellbeing for Life

Travels with a wheelchair



Disclaimer: Please be aware all these outings were undertaken using a car, a light weight wheelchair and very able-bodied support.

Some of the more adventurous ones were quite hard work. Bus information has been included but was not tested as part of these outings. This document is intended to provide some ideas and some information about accessibility and facilities. Please do your own research and make appropriate preparations before setting off to any of these destinations to ensure safe and enjoyable travels.

Within 30 minutes drive of Jesmond Library

1. Exhibition Park/Lake/Wild Flowers, NE2 4AA

- Disabled Access - Car entrance via Claremont Road, park at Urban Green Cafe with Blue Badge (speed limit 9 mph, use hazard lights)
- Cafe with outside area/disabled toilets
- Good paths, mostly level (beware of sideways slope towards lake in front of Wylam Brewery)
- Lake with various birds (swans, mallards, coots, moorhens, herring gulls, herons + occasional others), newly planted wild flower beds and blossom trees.

2. Wallsend Parks:- Prince Road Arboretum, Richardson Dees Park, Wallsend Hall Grounds, NE28 7QT

- Three separate but linked parks (old mine workings) - mature trees, lake/river, country views, formal flower beds
- Park on street either Kings Road South or Prince Road

- Cafe with outside area and toilets in Richardson Dees Park
- Good paths throughout, possible to stay mostly on one level but full exploration involves some significant inclines
- Buses 306 or 308 from Haymarket, Sandyford Road or Cradlewell. Get off at Mulcaster Gardens stop and cross over Coast Road. Walk back to roundabout to cross and then turn left. Park entrance on the right. For return journey, the bus stop is at the entrance.

3. Tynemouth Shore NE30 4DB/North Shields Low Lights NE30 1JQ

- Two Car Parks down hill beyond Tynemouth Priory, at lower level (free), or up on Spanish Battery
- With a Blue Badge parking costs £3.70 a day and ticket is valid for all car parks along the shore so you can move
- Public toilet block at the top of the hill in front of the Priory and the former Gibraltar Rock Pub
- Views from Spanish Battery of Priory, North and South Tyne piers, mouth of the River Tyne, Lord Collingwood's Column
- N Tyne Pier is an easy walk once you are on it though a hill up/down to get on. It is only open in clement weather.
- Bus 306 from Haymarket, Sandyford Road or Cradlewell to Tynemouth Priory
- Alternatively park for free at Low Lights Car Park in North Shields and walk along the river bank which is mostly level, though then fairly steep climb up to the Spanish Battery
- Public toilets in the car park at North Shields
- Adjacent to North Shields Fish Quay - fresh fish and fish and chips shops
- Metro to North Shields. Walk down to Fish Quay. It is a steep walk up to Tynemouth. Bus 19 operated by Gateshead Central Taxis and Go North East bus 317 go between North Shields Transport Hub and stop on Clive Street.

4. Whitley Bay Promenade NE26 1TP

- Park at the Rendezvous Café, Dukes Walk (free with a Blue Badge) and there is immediate access

to the sea shore within a few yards - all at almost the same level.

- The Promenade has been completely renovated in both directions and is wide, level and smooth
- Great when the tide is high
- 2 separate Cafes - Rendezvous Cafe (has an outdoor serving hatch) facing the sea and Links Gallery Cafe (outdoor seating) facing the car park
- New toilet block including Disabled Toilet (need Radar Key)
- Beach wheelchairs are available at certain times of the year by prior arrangement through Beach Access North East. You must be a member to use this service. You can join via www.beachaccessnortheast.org. You can then book a beach wheelchair by calling 0300 999 4444 or emailing info@beachaccessnortheast.org
- Buses 308 and 309 run along the shore.

5. St Mary's Lighthouse NE26 4RS

- Large Car Park at far end of access road just before the causeway (free with Blue Badge)
- Old and not very convenient toilet block on the mainland - no Disabled Toilet. Block is occasionally closed in which case nearest facilities are adjacent to Rendezvous Cafe
- Great views from Car Park
- No cafe on the mainland, usually at least one van selling hot drinks, ice creams, snacks etc.
- Getting onto the island entails a fairly steep hill and some difficult terrain on the causeway and around the island
- There is a shop on the island which is not always open but may sell refreshments and hot drinks and has toilets
- There is a very good level Promenade with many benches along the shore towards the south (short hill leading to it)
- Towards the north there is a gravel path with some inclines leading to a level path with seats and views to the island and the north

- Much of the year there are seals on the rocks at the far side of the island at low tide - as many as 170 sometimes including pups
- In winter there are many shoreline/wading birds to be seen at low tide, take binoculars
- There is a second car park just before the end of the road next to a small nature reserve, seen through peep holes
- Check tides beforehand [Whitley Bay tide times and weather | Tyne and Wear 5 day forecast | UK Beach Guide \(thebeachguide.co.uk\)](#)
- Buses 308 and 309 run along the shore.

6. Rising Sun Countryside Centre NE12 9SS

- A series of lakes with various water birds, paths through woodland, and grassland, tracks between high hedges, mainly level some short slopes
- Cafe at main centre near car park
- Farm with bakery and cafe down a lane at opposite side (i.e. South) of lake to main entrance
- Bus 51 from Haymarket. Get off at Benton Asda, follow path into the Park from gate at east end of car park.

7. Killingworth Lakeshore NE12 6TW

- Free Car Park at western end of the lake
- Coffee hut with outdoor seating and Disabled Access Toilet adjacent to Lakeshore Car Park (not always open)
- Level good path almost all-around lake, have to leave the shore for a small part of the walk to go through the houses
- Many birds in winter, lots of varieties and biggest flock of swans in the vicinity
- NB swans are very big and can be a bit aggressive in search of food!
- Near to Gosforth Park Garden Centre so you can call there for a café as an alternative

- Bus 52 from Haymarket, Sandyford Road or Cradlewell. Get off at Southgate, Norgas House.

8. Big Waters Nature Reserve NE13 7BD

- Northumberland Wildlife Trust Reserve, collapsed mine workings
- Free Car Park at the end of long single-track drive is very close to the lake
- No other facilities
- Members only bird watching hides at far western end of lake, public paths around eastern side of lake, some seating at various points
- Most of the usual birds but some different ones e.g. terns, cormorants, crested grebe, willow warblers
- Easy access to nearside of lake, more difficult terrain to the far side
- Peaceful, lovely views (also near flight path into airport)
- Can feel a bit isolated, not a place to visit alone
- Bus 45 get off at Brunswick Village, Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, cross the road and follow the narrow track, signposted Big Waters.

9. Washington Wetland Centre

- Car park is free, one or two blue badge bays down the hill adjacent to the entrance to the Visitor Centre
- Entry costs about £10.00 (concession)
- Good paths and lots of birds to see at quite close quarters but whole site is on a hill so quite a bit of down and uphill to manage
- An otter enclosure which can be very entertaining
- Cafe, toilets at the entrance
- *Caution Satnav may direct you wrongly when you are very near to the entrance.*

10. Heaton Park

- On-street parking on Jesmond Dene Road, cross Armstrong bridge and turn right, can stay at a high level all the way through to the Pavilion (cafe and terrace)
- "King John's House" 13th century ruins.

11. Northumberlandia, Cramlington

- Enter off Blagdon Lane - large free car park
- Cafe near entrance to the park with Disabled Toilet and outside seating
- Can stay on lower level and walk around the land sculpture, there are three lakes on the south side (not many birds when we went)
- Not recommended to attempt climbing the sculpture with a wheelchair it is very steep
- In late Spring/early Summer there are a lot of wild flowers and many marsh orchids at ground level
- Also, a walk through the woods, but not very easy with wheelchair and not very rewarding.

12. Saltwell Park NE8 4SF

- Free car park with Disabled spots - access off East Park Road (adjacent to Cemetery)
- Large castle-style building with cafe on ground floor with outdoor seating and toilets (open daily 9.00 am – 3.00 pm) Also the new Prism Coffee in the Almond Pavilion (open Tues – Sunday 8.00 am – 4.00 pm)
- Large Park with lots of interest - trees, open areas, formal planted floral beds, herbaceous borders, Japanese Garden, little dene with bridges, formal rose garden, large lake with water birds, 2 very big children's playgrounds
- Good paths throughout but lots of inclines so hard work with a wheelchair and some areas e.g. the little dene not accessible for wheelchairs as there are steps
- Bus service 53 and 54 from Market Street or Gateshead interchange.

30 to 90 minutes drive from Jesmond Library

13. Newbiggin by the Sea NE64 6DB

- Big free car park at Church Point adjacent to the Maritime Centre (drive all the way along the main street and turn right at the roundabout at the end)
- Maritime Centre has museum, cafe with Disabled Toilet and outdoor seating with lovely views over the bay/beach
- Can borrow beach wheelchair from Maritime Centre - book in advance on 01670 811 951. These can be taken into the water (NB quite hard work to push on dry soft sand, ok on wet sand at low tide)
- Big beach always seems quiet even in the summer (NB on weekdays), shallow water at low tide
- Promenade along beach reasonably level but wall overlooking sea is possibly just slightly too high for wheelchair user to get a good view
- Church Point headland has great views all the way south down the coast and there are occasionally dolphins
- There are other cafes and toilet facilities in the town behind the sea front
- Bus Arriva X21 from Haymarket.

14. Bolam Lake

- Three car parks at different points around the lake, free for first hour or entirely free with Blue Badge
- Cafe/Visitor Centre/Toilets at the car park on the northern shore
- Reasonable paths circumnavigate the lake - one small but sharp hill up/down near north car park, rough in places
- Good variety of views - lake, woodland, open grassland
- Swans on lake, some woodland birds, marsh orchids in early summer
- On Saturdays between May and September Go-North East X75 goes from Haymarket to Bolam Lake, Belsay and Wallington

15. Belsay Hall

- English Heritage site
- Entry fee about £11.80. It's cheaper if you book online in advance. Free to English Heritage members.
- New Hall, old Castle, gardens mostly accessible by wheelchair
- Cafe, toilets near entrance
- On Saturdays between May and September Go-North East operate X75 bus from Haymarket to Belsay Hall.

16. Wallington Hall

- National Trust site
- Entry fee £19 (summer season includes entry to Hall). Free to National Trust members
- Historic Hall, woodlands, walled garden, estate
- Cafe and toilets in courtyard near entrance
- Free to borrow mobility scooters (call ahead to book)
- On Saturdays between May and September Go-North East operate service X75 from Haymarket.

17. Northumberland Wildlife Trust Low Hauxley Nature Reserve

- Car park fee of £2 but free entry to the NWT Nature Reserve at Northumberland Wildlife Trust Hauxley, just behind the coast at the northern end of Druridge Bay
- Visitor Centre/Cafe with viewing area/Disabled Toilet at entrance
- Path leads around the edge of the reserve from which for the most part the lake cannot be seen behind thick undergrowth, in order to view one has to go into one of the several hides that are on the edge of the lake
- No bus service.

18. National Trust Cragside, Rothbury

- National Trust site
- Entry fee £23. Free to National Trust members

- Historic House, garden, grounds, carriage drive round estate (May/June good for rhododendrons), picnic places
- Tea room and toilets
- Gardens and grounds not especially wheelchair friendly
- Can get most of the way around the House in a wheelchair using the historic lift by special request
- Bus X14 from Haymarket to Rothbury and Thropton will stop at Cragside three times a day Monday to Saturday and twice on Sundays
- <https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/find-a-service/x14-newcastle-to-thropton> .

19. Howick Hall NE66 3LB

- Historic seat of Earl Grey
 - Large free car park, entrance fee £9.90 (concession)
 - Disabled Toilet adjacent to Entrance Cabin
 - Extensive, varied and well-stocked gardens and arboretum
 - Mostly level, much is accessible by wheelchair though terrain is occasionally difficult
 - Cafe at the Hall, outdoor seating and indoor Disabled Toilet
 - 2 Bus services daily from Alnwick 418
- <https://www.travelsure.co.uk/services>

20. Beadnell

- Public (paying) car park and toilets at Beadnell Bay (facing south)
- Very attractive little harbour though not accessible directly by wheelchair from the car park as no firm path along the beach, have to take route via Harbour Road (towards the Sailing Club)
- Other interesting bays and rock formations on the shore facing east
- Small interesting and beautiful Church of St Ebba towards north of village on The Haven - spectacular stained-glass windows
- Various cafes
- Travelsure Service 418 from Alnwick approx. hourly Monday to Friday goes up coast to Belford via Craster, Embleton,

Beadnell, Seahouses and Bamburgh. Timetable at <https://www.travelsure.co.uk/services>

21. Amble Harbour

- Parking not especially easy - on-street or limited spaces in small paying car parks
- Amble Harbour Village - area of small kiosks
- Various seafood restaurants, cafes and Fish and Chip shops
- Level access to wooden pier from harbour with good views.

22. Warkworth

- Various attractions - river walk, medieval bridge, old church, village (cafes/pubs), Warkworth Castle (ancient seat of Harry Hotspur Percy)
- Free Parking and Toilet Block at the Castle at the southern/high end of the village
- Car park adjacent to river on The Stanners, behind St Lawrence's Church at the NW/lower end of the village
- Public Toilets on Brewery Lane in the village
- Not the best place for a tour by wheelchair, the main street through the village is very steep and though you can enter the Castle grounds there is no Disabled Access to the Castle itself
- Very interesting Castle dates from about 1200 and has some areas still remarkable intact, seasonal opening hours, entrance fee £9.50 (concession).

23. Vindolanda, Bardon Mill

- Roman fort excavations and Museum - entrance £12.50
- Nearby Roman Army Museum entrance £8.00
- Entrance to both £16.00
- Excavations are partly accessible with effort by wheelchair from main car park to the west of the site
- Disabled parking only down by Museum which is reasonably accessible (quite a steep slope at the entrance)
- Interesting museum, also Cafe with indoor and outdoor seating, attractive garden area with stream

- Disabled Toilets in the museum
- If not a Blue Badge holder have to walk down hill to the Museum and cafe then back up.

Acknowledgements



All the outings described here were undertaken in a wheelchair by Joan Hall, between the ages of 95 and 100, with the support of her daughter and fellow adventurer Rosalind who has compiled this document for the

Jesmond Library Wellbeing for Life Group. Joan loved an adventure, never said no to an outing and was incredibly intrepid. Her last outing was to her favourite of St Mary's Lighthouse a week before she died aged 100 and a half on 1st June 2023. Pictured here in one of the beach buggies paddling at Newbiggin by the Sea aged 98.

We'd love to hear from you

If you have enjoyed any of the trips mentioned in this booklet or in EC Rider 2024 ([Publications | EldersCouncil](#)), please write in and tell us your story. We also welcome your suggestions for other trips which members might enjoy. Please send them to info@elderscouncil.org.uk.