



The Elders Council of Newcastle
Transport Working Group



For the last nine years we have prepared a leaflet giving some ideas for days out using a concessionary bus pass and we are grateful to Mervin for his support over these many years. However, Mervin has had to relinquish this responsibility and we are delighted to welcome Bill Harbottle who has kindly agreed to help us this year.

Yet again, we emphasise 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, by calling the bus operators direct, by calling TRAVELINE on 0871 2002233 or visiting the bus operators websites. Most journeys from Newcastle are by Arriva or Go North East and 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”.

We are grateful to Bill 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

Outings in 2018 with a Concessionary Bus Pass

As Bill has said, this leaflet is based on previous editions produced by Mervin. There are some new ideas such as Great Ayton, Beamish Museum, Staindrop and Raby Castle and for the more active some short walks you may like to do using the local bus network. Can I stress again the importance of checking times before you travel? Times, where given, are also not for Sundays although many places such as Durham still have a good bus service on this day but many places in rural areas such as Wooler will not be accessible. Also, if you are visiting some of the attractions check times of opening, particularly after the summer and check prices. Where known I have included the cost of some of the more expensive visits. Also, where possible the nearest 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), (MU) = Museum, (CG) = Cathedral Green.

I hope you enjoy your trips out.

Bill Harbottle

1 DURHAM CITY (W) (CG). Express buses X21 and X12 leave Eldon Square every 15 minutes and take about 55 minutes. The 21 is slower but also runs in the evening and on Sunday when the X12 does not.

In Durham it is a nice, but long, steep walk to the Market, World Heritage Site Visitor Centre, Cathedral, Castle (phone 0191 3342932 for times of tours) and Heritage Centre Museum but you can take minibus 40 every 20 minutes from the bus station. There are lovely riverside walks and Crookhall with Durham's "Secret Gardens" is well worth a visit. You may also like the Botanical Gardens and Oriental Museum (service 6) Pick up a pocket guide to Durham at the Bus Station for other attractions and directions.

2 DARLINGTON. (M – Dolphin Centre) Go to Durham then service 7 every 15 minutes - total journey time from Newcastle is about 2 hours.

Darlington has good shops, an indoor market and on Mondays a small outdoor one. The interesting railway museum 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, 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 C13 paintings which takes about 30 minutes.

4 HARTLEPOOL. (MU) Take the X9 at half past the hour and change at Peterlee to frequent buses – total journey time 1 hour 20 minutes.

"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 (£8.00 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 Hildas, a grade 1 listed building which is open Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 2pm to 4pm.

5 STOCKTON. (MH) Get the X10 on the hour; it takes just over an hour.

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 20th Century theme. The "steamer trip" to Yarm on the Teeside Princess is very good - Phone 01642 608038 to check. If you take a single on the boat then explore Yarm – a small Market town, return to Stockton on the service 7.

6 MIDDLESBROUGH REDCAR AND SALT BURN. (B) The X9 and X10 leave Newcastle every half hour and take less than 90 minutes. Middlesbrough is the starting point for buses to Redcar; visit the “Vertical Pier”. 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. Take the 28A at 35 minutes past the hour from Middlesbrough Bus Station. Returns at 54 minutes. Takes about 45 minutes. You can also catch the X80 (11.00am and 1.30pm from Middlesbrough and 3.43pm return). 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. It is possible to make a short detour via Guisborough on your return where there is a ruined priory, lovely main street with historical buildings, cafes and shops. Bus 81 departs Great Ayton at 59 minutes and passes close to Roseberry Topping - takes 30 minutes. There are buses from Guisborough back to Middlesbrough every 30 minutes. Journey takes 30 minutes.

8 WHITBY AND SCARBOROUGH. There are 2 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 every half hour in the summer from Whitby taking about an hour and passing through Robin Hoods Bay which is well worth a visit but a very steep walk downhill from the bus stop. It is possible to walk here from Whitby along the old railway line to Robin Hoods Bay - 6 miles and wonderful scenery. SCARBOROUGH has numerous attractions but it is an hour from Whitby and the buses can be very busy in midsummer. If you go, and it is a lovely trip, I would recommend spring or autumn.

9 BISHOP AUCKLAND, SHILDON AND STANHOPE. (B) The X21 runs every half hour to Bishop Auckland and takes 90 minutes. The castle grounds are worth a visit and the castle itself. 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. From Bishop you could also go to Stanhope, 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 to the area. On Saturdays you can catch a direct bus to Stanhope from Newcastle at 10.00am from Newgate Street (outside Wilkinsons)

returning at 4.00pm. You could go further and explore upper Weardale - get the 102 at 1.00pm to Rookhope, back at 1.30pm or the longer 101 up to Cowhill at 1.45pm, back at 2.45pm..

10 BARNARD CASTLE, STAINDROP and RABY CASTLE. 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 11.02am or 13.02pm returning at 4.56pm. This service stops at the gates of Raby Castle. (£11) Built in the thirteenth century, this well preserved castle, set among 200 acres of deer park, is privately owned but open to the public in the summer on Wednesdays to Sundays - also Tuesdays in July and August . 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 5.10pm, a couple of minutes later from the castle. The X75 also serves Staindrop returning to Darlington at least hourly. Journey times to Barnard Castle vary but are approximately an hour

11 BEAMISH MUSEUM and TANFIELD RAILWAY. Buses 28 and 28a leave 13 and 50 minutes past each hour from Eldon Square and take less than an 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, houses, shops, pithead and old country manor. There are regular themed events during the year such as a Wartime Weekend. The admission price is £14 BUT this is an annual pass. For a short trip on a **Sunday** you may like another historical experience visiting the Tanfield Railway. (£8) This runs on a former colliery railway and offers a run of three miles usually behind an industrial steam engine and runs between Sunnyside and Tanfield. The main station is at 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 45 minutes past the hour and takes about 30 minutes to Andrews House and returns at 5 minutes past the hour.

12 CONSETT TO BLANCHLAND AND HEXHAM. For a short trip out through nice scenery I could recommend Consett to Blanchland on a THURSDAY leaving Consett on the 773 at 1.40pm arriving 2.10pm and returning at 4.50pm back into Consett at 5.19pm. Blanchland is a lovely small village with cafes on the border between Durham and Northumberland. There are plenty of buses from Eldon Square to Consett with the journey taking an hour (45/46/X70/X71)

13 HEXHAM. There are a number of routes to Hexham from Eldon Square all providing scenic journeys. The X85 and 685 go to the north of the Tyne and are the quickest taking less than an hour. The X84 goes through Wylam (short walk along the river to the cottage where George Stephenson was born). The 10 travels along the south bank through Prudhoe (castle) and close to Cherryburn, (get off at Mickley) where Bewick, the engraver, lived. The 74 runs less frequently at 11.35am and 2.35pm from Newcastle returning at 4.05pm and passes through Stamfordham and Matfen. All services except the 74 run through Corbridge which is also worth a visit for its church and Roman museum. In Hexham visit the Abbey with its excellent free museum and surrounding parkland or the Old Gaol and walks along the river.

14 BELLINGHAM. Service 680 leaves Hexham at 11.10am or 1.10pm for a journey of less than an hour up the pleasant North Tyne Valley - return buses are at 2.00, 4.35, 6.10 and 7.05pm. An interesting alternative on Tuesday or Friday is to take ADAPT service 694 at 1.45pm from Hexham. Please check that this still runs before you travel. It is a small minibus going to Kielder 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 at the old Railway Station where the 680 terminates. There are also nice walks close by.

15 ALLENDALE TOWN and ALLENHEADS are 25 and 45 minutes South of Hexham respectively. Bus 688 leaves Hexham for Allendale Town at 10.45am and 12.00, 1.50 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. There are a number of alternative routes to Alston. Take the 10.45am service 685 (Carlisle bus) to Haltwhistle arriving 12.16pm then at 12.40pm get the 681 (from Railway Station) up the South Tyne valley, reaching Alston Townhead at 1.28pm. A super alternative is Wrights 889 from Hexham on Tuesday at 2.12pm from Hexham Bus Station. This market day service arrives at 3.30pm. The ride from Hexham to Alston goes up the lovely West Allen 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 5.15pm from Townhead on Go North East 681/X81 which gets to Hexham at 6.05pm for service 10 at 6.22pm due Newcastle 7.36pm. From 6th July to 30th September you could also travel on the 888 service from Newcastle (see Keswick section) which arrives at Alston at 10.45am and returns at 6.05pm. Alston is England's highest market town and has a station for the narrow gauge South Tynedale Railway. On Tues, Thurs, Sat, and Sundays and every day during school holidays there are trains at 1.15pm and 3.15pm taking 90 minutes - the rover concession fare is £9.

17 HADRIAN'S WALL. Until 30th September 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 - £5.90), Housesteads (English Heritage and National Trust - £6.80), Vindolanda (£6.75) and Walltown for the Roman Army Museum (£5.75). 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 on the landscape, history, culture and heritage of Northumberland. It is free and well worth a visit. There are cafes and retail outlets here as well.

18 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 two museums, a good shopping centre and some nice parks. There is also another favourite, the 93/93A circular trip from Carlisle at 12.50pm, arriving back at 2.36pm. (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 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.

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 hourly from Penrith at 32 minutes past the hour on Saturdays and all days between 23rd July and 31st August. (on other days 1.32 or 3.32pm only).

20 KESWICK. (Booth's) Take the 9.45am service 685 to Carlisle then the 554 at 12.10pm getting to Keswick at 1.25pm. If you miss this, get the 104 to Penrith at 12.32pm then the X5 to Keswick arriving 2.02pm. From 6th July to 30th September, Wright's Coach 888 from Newcastle Coach Station at 9.20am is too early for our Pass, (except on Saturday) but we can board at 9.31am at Lemington Road Ends (Stagecoach buses 10, 39, 40 and X82). The 888 takes a magnificent route, one of the highest in England (at Hartside Pass). 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 9.34pm or the 888 in July, August or September which leaves at 4.30pm.

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 where you will find plenty of tourist information. There are a number of spectacular bus routes from

Keswick, again you should find a bus timetable at Booths, 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.

21 MORPETH. (B) Direct buses on services X14, X15, X16, X18 leave Haymarket every 15 minutes taking 33 minutes.

In Morpeth visit the free Bagpipe Museum or walk in the park and up the riverside to Mitford Road. You could walk to Mitford - there is a path along the side of the road - it is about 2.5 miles-lovely church and castle ruins.

22 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 1 hour 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. Visit the Castle and the famous Gardens. (Prices vary and there are discounts online. As an example, a combined on the gate annual pass for the Castle and Gardens is £20). Barter Books in the old station has a huge collection of 2nd hand books. From Alnwick take buses 418 or X18 at 10.10am, 12.02 and 2.00pm 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). For next spring I would recommend you go to Warkworth to see the daffodils around the castle and the beautiful cherry blossom in Alnwick Gardens.

23 BERWICK. (W) The direct bus is X15 leaving Haymarket at 33 minutes past the even hour (8.33am, 10.33am etc) taking 2 hours 10 minutes – alight at “Golden Square”, the first stop across the Bridge. The X18 at 10.03am runs by the long very attractive coastal route via Amble, Alnwick and Seahouses arriving at 1.52pm. Return on X15 at 3.01, 5.11 and 7.11pm (change Morpeth) or X18 at 2.01 and 6.11pm. Try the X18 in one direction with, perhaps, a break in Alnwick.

Berwick, England's most northerly town, is an attractive Georgian Market Town, you can walk the walls and along the river to see the magnificent bridges. It is quite a sight to see a train go over the Royal Border Bridge.

Onward from Berwick your pass is valid for short journeys into Scotland and return BUT you cannot break your journey in Scotland. Eyemouth is a valid destination to which buses run at least hourly but you cannot travel further on this route up to St Abbs/Edinburgh. There is lovely harbour - you may see a seal, fishing boats and Gunsgreen House.

24 ROTHBURY. (Bridge Street) The X14 takes 1 hour 13 minutes at 10.18, 11.18am and 1.18pm Monday to Friday but 10.18am and 12.18pm Saturday when you could also get PCL Buses service M1 from Morpeth at 10.00am to reach Rothbury 10.40am. Rothbury is a pleasant small town with a large green, a church and several tea shops. Craggside is close by, the former home of Lord Armstrong but is a long uphill walk - DO NOT WALK ON THE DANGEROUS ROAD. 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. If you take the afternoon bus there is no X14 connection at Rothbury but there is an M1 at 3.50pm to Morpeth.

25 WOOLER – is reached from Alnwick in 45 minutes, ideally by the 470 bus at 12.30pm via Chillingham (Castle £8.50) (also 10.00am Saturdays) but also by the 473 at 1.00pm. (also 10.30am on Saturdays) Buses from Wooler (Bus Station) to Alnwick are Service 470 at 1.20pm or 4.35pm and Service 473 at 1.52 or 5.12pm. Wooler is a nice small town with plenty of places to eat, the library and tourist office are at the North end of town.

26 SWALWELL TO ROWLANDS GILL. From Eldon Square take the 45 or 46 bus (destination Consett) which runs four times an hour Monday to Saturday daytimes and alight at Swalwell Rugby Club. Walk a short distance back and you will see on the right the start of the Derwent Valley walk which follows the route of the old disused railway line that used to run to Consett. It is an easy 3 mile walk to Rowlands Gill - tree lined but with views, from time to time, of the Derwent Valley and Gibside. Keep your eyes open and you may see Red Kites. Once at Rowlands Gill cross the road and you can take the 45, 46 or 47 back to Newcastle which run every 10 minutes.

You could also visit Gibside which is managed by the National Trust.

Gibside is about 15 minutes further on from where your walk ends at the main road.

27 WHITLEY BAY TO BLYTH. From the Haymarket Bus station, the 308 and 309 run regularly to Whitley Bay Crematorium - cross the road to St Marys Island - you can walk across the causeway at low tide to see the lighthouse. It is a nice walk of about an hour along the cliffs to Seaton Sluice (picturesque harbour) from where it is about another hour along the beach or dunes to Blyth. On this part of the walk the road is adjacent so if you are tired you can get the 308, 309 or X7 back to Newcastle. The X7 runs half hourly at 06 and 36 minutes past the hour from Blyth or 14 minutes later at Seaton Sluice passing Seaton Delaval Hall (nice gardens) a visit to which you could combine with the walk.

Bill Harbottle

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