



EC Rider

Using your concessionary travel passes to travel further afield 10th Anniversary Edition



A suggested donation of £2 towards costs – thank you

This 10th Anniversary edition gives you much wider scope to spread your wings and try some travel outside of the city.

There are many places to visit - you just need your bus pass, and maybe your senior rail card; suitable clothing and pack a lunch if you like, then away you go using this great little guide.

Travelling further afield gives more opportunities – get a bus and stay a couple of days to explore; catch a train, see an exhibition, visit a special garden or just a seat to admire the view.



This booklet was produced by Bill Harbottle and Bill Ions on behalf of the Elders Council Transport Working Group

The Elders Council of Newcastle

Transport Working Group

For ten years we have prepared a leaflet giving some ideas for days out using a concessionary bus pass and we are grateful to Bill Harbottle who has kindly agreed to help us again 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. 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 2019 with a Concessionary Bus Pass

As Bill has said, this leaflet is based on previous editions produced by Mervin Dixon There are some new ideas such as Washington Old Hall and Washington Wetland Centre and for the more active some more short walks such as Wylam to Newburn. I have also included two trips outside the area where you will need to catch a train before commencing a bus journey: Holy Island and the North York Moors. 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, (RS) Rail Station. Most locations should have a disabled toilet facility and there will be facilities in cafés in any town you visit. I hope you enjoy your trips out and please do let us know how you get on.

Bill Harbottle

1 DURHAM CITY. (W) (CG) X21 and X12 leave every 15 minutes and take about 55 minutes. The 21 is slower but also runs in the evening and on Sunday. In Durham it is a nice, but long, steep walk to the Market, World Heritage Site Visitor Centre, Cathedral, Castle (phone 0191 334 2932 for times of tours) and Heritage Centre Museum but you can take minibus 40 (Stand A) 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 from Durham bus station). Pick up a pocket guide to Durham on the web or 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 two 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 – 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 12th-century 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 Wednesday mid-day and Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

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. Also in Preston Park is Butterfly World with a lovely collection of live butterflies – just get the frequent service 7 bus going towards Yarm. The steamer trip to Yarm on the Teesside Princess is very good. Phone 0164 260 8038 to check times. If you go one way, then explore Yarm – a small market town; return to Stockton on the 7.

6 MIDDLESBROUGH REDCAR AND SALTBURN. (B) The X9 and X10 leave every half hour and take 85 minutes to Middlesbrough. A short walk or the TR1/2 bus will take you to the Tees Transporter Bridge. Built in 1911, it is the longest

working transporter bridge in the world. Middlesbrough is also the starting point for the X3/X4 buses, which operate every 15 minutes 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 mins.

7 GREAT AYTON. (M) Take the 28A at 30 minutes past the hour from Middlesbrough bus station. Returns at 58 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. 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, cafés and shops. Bus 81 departs Great Ayton at 00 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. (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 (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 Scarborough – six 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. (B) **SHILDON** (MU) **AND STANHOPE.** (MU) 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; it 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 about 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 (from Stanhope) 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, cafés and village green. The bus returns to Bishop Auckland at 5.10pm, a couple of minutes later from the castle. The X76 also serves 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). Buses 28 and 28a leave 13 and 50 minutes past each hour and takes 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 £14.50 BUT this is an annual pass. For a short trip on a Sunday you may like another historical experience visiting the Tanfield Railway (£8.50)/ 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 waggons. The X30 leaves Newcastle going to Stanley at 45 minutes past the hour and takes about 30 minutes to Andrews House and returns at 10 minutes past the hour.

12 CONSETT (B) TO BLANCHLAND AND HEXHAM (B). 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 5.21pm. BLANCHLAND is a lovely small village with cafés on the border between Durham and Northumberland. There are plenty of buses to Consett with the journey taking an hour (45/46/X70/X71). Once out of Gateshead, these are scenic journeys which you should enjoy; the 45/46 goes along the Derwent Valley through Shotley Bridge. The X70/X71 are run by double deckers and

climb up through Sunnyside and Burnopfield offering lovely views as far as the Cheviots on a clear day.

13 HEXHAM. (B) 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, 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. There is a nice river walk of about three miles to the hamlet of Warden, which has a lovely ancient church. You go west past the side of the golf course, continuing by the side of the river with the railway on your left; look out for the pillars in the Tyne of the old Border Counties Railway. Turn right over the bridge past the Boathouse Inn into the hamlet. You can return by bus: the Service X85 from Newbrough to Hexham/Newcastle leaves the Boatside Inn at 27 minutes past the hour.

14 BELLINGHAM.(MU) 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.

15 ALLENDALE TOWN and ALLENHEADS are 25 and 45 minutes south of Hexham respectively. Bus 688 leaves for Allendale Town at 10.45am, 12noon, 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 85 (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 2.12pm. 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 café. 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. From 5th July to 29th 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 to Slaggyford. This operates from the 30th March to the 31st October; normal operating dates are Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays (Wednesdays from June to September) and every day during school holidays. There are trains at 1.00pm and 3.00pm taking 95 minutes; the fare is £10.

17 HADRIAN'S WALL. (MU) Until 29th 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: £6.30), Housesteads (English Heritage and National Trust: £7), Vindolanda (£7.50) and Walltown for the Roman Army Museum (£6.50). 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 85/685 takes 2 hours 20 minutes departing from Newcastle at 45 minutes past each hour – return at 15 minutes past each hour. 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 15 and 45 minutes past the hour taking 40 minutes. Buses return from Penrith also at 15 and 45 minutes. 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 11.32am, 1.32pm and 3.32pm returning at 2.25pm and 4.25pm from Glenridding.

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, catch the 104 to Penrith and then the X5 to Keswick, which runs hourly at 15 minutes past the hour. From 5th July to 29th 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 Café). There is a 20-minute 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 9.18pm 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 Supermarket, where you will find plenty of tourist information. 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.

21 ALNWICK. (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 or X20 at 38 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 £24.55). Barter Books in the old station has a huge collection of 2nd-hand books. From Alnwick take buses 418 or X18 at 10.05, 11.00am, 12.05, 1.08 and 2.05pm 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). Buses return hourly – check times. 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.

22 BERWICK. (W and RS) The direct bus is X15 leaving Haymarket at 38 minutes past the even hour (8.38am, 10.38am etc) taking 2 hours 20 minutes – alight at “Golden Square”, the first stop across the Bridge. The X18 at 10.08am runs by the long very attractive coastal route via Amble, Alnwick and Seahouses arriving at 1.57pm. Return on X15 at 3.12, 5.12 (change to 7.22pm Morpeth) or X18 at 2.12 and 6.22pm. 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 a lovely harbour - you may see a seal, fishing boats and Gunsgreen House.

23 ROTHBURY. (Bridge Street) The X14 takes 1 hour 13 minutes at 10.23, 11.23am, 12.23 and 1.23pm. Buses return from Rothbury to Newcastle at 2.00, 3.00 and 5.00 pm. There is a later departure at 6.10pm changing at Morpeth. Rothbury is a pleasant small town with a large green, church and several tea shops. Cragside is close by, the former home of Lord Armstrong, but is a long uphill walk through woods. 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.

24 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 to Alnwick are Service 470 at 1.15pm or 4.30pm and Service 473 at 1.45 or 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.

25 ASHINGTON AND NEWBIGGIN. Buses X21 and X22 run every 10 minutes to Ashington from the Haymarket bus station with a journey time of circa one hour whilst the X20 hourly at 33 minutes past the hour takes only 42 minutes. The X21 every 20 minutes continues to Newbiggin.

Ashington has a really good street market on a Tuesday. Newbiggin has an attractive seafront and Maritime Centre and the Land Couple sculpture looking out to sea.

26 BOWES RAILWAY MUSEM. The Go-Ahead bus service 56 (Newcastle to Sunderland) stops outside the museum. It operates every 12 minutes (20 minutes on a Sunday) and you can pick it up on either New Bridge Street or Market Street. Journey time is about 30 minutes.

Bowes Railway was originally a colliery railway built to carry coal from pits in North West Durham to the Tyne at Jarrow. The earliest section was designed by George Stephenson and opened on 17 January 1826, making it one of the world's first modern railways. At its peak, the railway handled over 1 million tons of coal per year and remained virtually intact until 1968 (I can remember seeing rope hauled trucks near Springwell). Most of the line closed between 1968 and 1974 – the last 3 miles between Monkton and Jarrow being operated by the National Coal Board. However, the original 1826 section between Black Fell Bank Head and Springwell Bank Head was acquired for preservation in 1976 by Tyne and Wear County Council. Two other parts of the railway have been preserved: the Marley Hill Shed forms part of the Tanfield Railway, which you could visit – see 11. The Springwell Bankfoot locomotive shed is the home of the North East Bus Preservation Society. The museum, where there are toilets and a café, is open daily for most of the year. There is currently no charge but donations are welcome.

27. 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. The hall where there are toilets and a café is open most of the year from 10am to 4pm. Entry price is £7.40. Catch the X1 from Eldon Square (Red Arrows) going to Easington Lane and alight at Washington Galleries bus station changing onto the 84 bus, destination Heworth. The X1 runs every 12 minutes and takes 32 minutes. The 84 departs the Galleries at 00 and 30 minutes and takes 10 minutes to arrive at Washington Village returning at 09 and 39 direction Rickleton. 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 37, operated by Gateshead Central Taxis, at 57 minutes past the hour (direction Usworth) or Go North East service 8 at 59 and 29 minutes past the hour (direction Sunderland) and alight at Waterview Park; journey time about 10 minutes. The 37 bus returns at 25 minutes past the hour (direction Doxford Park) or the 8 at 26 and 56 minutes past the hour (direction Stanley).

28. SEAHAM HARBOUR. (M) Catch the Go North East service X9 direction Middlesbrough at 30 minutes past the hour and alight at Peterlee bus station; journey time 42 minutes and change to the X6 (direction Sunderland) at 21 minutes past the hour to Seaham Harbour Interchange - journey time about 20 minutes . Buses return at 50 minutes past the hour; X6 (direction Hartlepool, where you alight) at 08 minutes past the hour for the X9 to Newcastle at 25 minutes past the hour. Alternatively you could catch the Metro to Sunderland Park Lane, where there are regular buses to Seaham (60/X6/X7/X21) taking between 20 and 30 minutes. Seaham has some nice seafront walks. Look out for Tommy, a steel statue by a local artist commemorating WW1 and the impressive Londonderry Offices. A walk down to the harbour brings you to the East Durham Heritage and Lifeboat Centre, where there are photographs and other artefacts from Old Seaham and the restored George Elmy Lifeboat, which capsized with the loss of many lives in 1962. Elsewhere towards Sunderland is St Mary the Virgin Church, part of which is Anglo Saxon and is open from 2pm to 4pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays between the 1st June and 8th September.

Three local trips with short walks.

29 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 10 and 40 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.

30. WYLAM TO NEWBURN. Catch the X84 service (destination Hexham) from Eldon Square bus station to Wylam. This departs hourly at 40 minutes past 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. 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 a small museum that is open Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and Saturday morning.

31 SOUTER LIGHTHOUSE/WHITBURN to SOUTH SHIELDS Catch the X10 on the hour to Heworth Interchange and change to the 558 at 37 minutes past the hour and alight at the coast road in Whitburn. From here the E1, which operates every 20 minutes (direction South Shields), will take you the short distance to SOUTER LIGHTHOUSE. Opened in 1871, Souter remains an iconic beacon hooped in red and white and standing proud on the coastline midway between the Tyne and the Wear. Souter is a special place all year round and was the first lighthouse in the world designed and built to be powered by electricity. To the north, the Leas is a two and a half mile stretch of limestone cliffs, wave-cut foreshore and coastal grassland. The cliffs and rock stacks of Marsden Bay are home to nesting kittiwakes, fulmar, cormorants, shags and guillemots. South of the lighthouse is Whitburn Coastal Park and Nature Reserve – reclaimed colliery land, now a haven for wildlife. The 558 returns from Whitburn at 31 minutes past the hour. You may wish to walk from Whitburn to South Shields past Souter and this wonderful scenery with views to the north of Tynemouth and beyond. It is about 5 miles and a fantastic stroll on a fine day. From South Shields you can return to Newcastle on bus 26/27, the Metro or return to Whitburn on the E1/E2 or E6. If you want a more relaxing day out, I would also recommend a trip on the E1 between South Shields and Sunderland for views of the coast – it takes about 45 minutes.

32 HOLY ISLAND (LINDISFARNE). For this year, I have included two trips which involve travel by train before commencing your journey. Pre book your rail ticket with a Senior Railcard (£30 per annum) and make considerable savings. Border Buses operate one of the most unusual bus services in the country. The island is accessible only at low tide and the 477 from Berwick Railway Station has a timetable which varies with the tides. The service, which takes 35 minutes, runs all the year round but on limited days, primarily Saturdays, in winter. For actual times and days of operation, go on to the Border Buses or Traveline website. You will be able to spend between 3-5 hours on the island. About 4 square miles, so you can do plenty of walking. You will see the priory ruins that date from the eleventh century and hear the history of St Cuthbert in the adjacent museum. The sixteenth century castle was extensively refurbished by Lutyens in the nineteenth century, below which is a beautiful wildflower garden. Other highlights are the small harbour and ruined lime kilns and of course there are cafés, souvenir shops and toilets.

33 YORK (RS) TO WHITBY. (opposite RS) Catch one of the regular trains to York and from outside the station jump on the Yorkshire Coastliner service 840 to Whitby. There are journeys all day in summer but I would catch the 10.23am departure. Operated by double deckers, the section from Malton to Whitby was recently voted, in an online poll, the most scenic bus route in Britain. It operates all the year round and takes 2 hours 30 minutes (about an hour to Malton for a short stop in the bus station, where there are also toilets). As well as Malton, a picturesque market town, you pass Eden Camp, a Second World War themed museum and then Flamingoland. Next comes Pickering, a lovely town with a castle. From here, steam trains operate in the summer months to Whitby – another option; check North York Moors Railway website for times. After picture postcard Thornton le Dale, the bus climbs up over the Moors through Goathland and you will have some wonderful views in the next hour before arriving at the coast. The X93 to Middlesbrough followed by the X9/10 will take you back to Newcastle.

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