

Journey back home

We are booked to leave Rowsley at 17:20 so please make your way onto the bus as soon as you can, particularly if you are arriving back on the 16:50 departure from Matlock. It will take us just over half an hour to get to Buxton where we will have a break. The bus will park under the viaduct which carries the Hindlow branch (formerly a through route to Ashbourne and Uttoxeter) south out of Buxton. Food and drink outlets to satisfy a variety of palettes are available. Real ale is available at four nearby pubs: The White Lion, Miltons Head, The Railway and Wetherspoon's Wye Bridge House. Several food emporia are open for business. Jill and John at Bill's Fish and Chips on Fairfield Road (five minutes walk from the coach park on the A6 towards Chinley) will do their best to prepare enough food for our needs if we let them know in advance. We leave Buxton and head north on the A6 to Stockport, onto the M60 and the M62, with one quick final stop at Birchwood Services.

Timetable

Please make sure that you return to the bus in good time for a prompt departure from each stop. There is a quaint tradition that the organiser does a headcount at each departure point to make sure that everyone is present, but it cannot be guaranteed that this tradition will continue. In case of problems, you can contact me on **07712 834035**.

Liverpool Tithebarn Street	d	08:20	<i>Peak Rail timetable: see below</i>		
Liverpool Oxford Street	d	08:25			
Birch Services M62	a	09:15	Rowsley South Station	d	17:20
	d	09:30	Buxton Coach Park	a	18:00
Overton National Mining Museum	a	10:20		d	18:40
	d	11:40	Burtonwood Services M62	a	19:50
Rotherham South Yorkshire Transport Museum	a	12:40		d	20:00
	d	13:45	Liverpool Oxford Street	a	20:25
Rowsley South Station	a	14:50	Liverpool Dale Street	d	20:30
	d				

Note that the toilets at Buxton Coach Park are free until about 18:00, but that there is a 20p charge thereafter.

Peak Rail timetable

Rowsley South	d	15:15	16:20	Matlock Riverside	d	15:45	16:50
Darley Dale	a	15:20	16:25	Darley Dale	a	15:55	17:00
	d	15:25	16:30		d	16:00	17:05
Matlock Riverside	a	15:35	16:40	Rowsley South	a	16:05	17:10

Future dates for your diary (see www.lupts.org.uk for full details)

Sunday 2 May 2010: Lunch at The Toad, Colwyn Bay.

Saturday 4 September 2010: LUPTS reunion at Crich Tramway Village to mark the 50th anniversary of the LUPTS tour on Glasgow tram 1055 (ex-Liverpool 869) which led to the preservation of the car.

Friday 29 April-Sunday 1 May 2011: LUPTS weekend.

Coal, Steel and W

an 8F to
the rescue

Saturday 1 May 2010

Dear Passenger,

Welcome to the 2010 LUPTS annual bus tour, the 34th in the series since they began back in 1977. The job of bus tour organiser can be a bit of a thankless task at times, but in the end generally rewarding, particularly when you get to deal with so many people who are keen to welcome a party of enthusiasts, such as ourselves.

This year there has been the Midland Railway – Butterley, as they now like to be known. In all the bus tours I've planned – and from memory this is my fifth – I've never had the misfortune to deal with such a disorganised, duplicitous, arrogant bunch of people, who gave us misleading and contradictory information and then retreated into a bunker of anonymity when they were rumbled.

Don't get me wrong, I'm sure there are some earnest, dedicated people at the Midland Railway. I just never met or spoke to any.

I plan to retire from public life in general, and bus tour organising in particular, and dedicate my life to convincing people that even if they inherit a vast amount of money, they don't even consider for a minute putting any of it the way of the Midland Railway. There are plenty of more deserving causes for it.

OK, rant over, let's get on with the bus tour.



To give you some idea what we're missing today, here's a couple of pictures of the sumptuous station buffet at Butterley.



Sister vehicle E736HFW in service with Yorkshire Traction at Barnsley in 1997.

Our vehicle today has us returning to Hilton's Travel of Newton-le-Willows. The planned vehicle is East Lancs-bodied Volvo Citybus E737HFW, which has an interesting history. It was new to Lincoln City Transport in 1988 (with registration KIB6708), one of a batch of four with coach seats and additional luggage space for operating services to Skegness. When the company was sold, the four vehicles passed to Yorkshire Traction where they were used predominantly used on the X32: Leeds-Barnsley-Sheffield service. Yorkshire Traction passed to Stagecoach in 2006 and our vehicle passed to Hilton's the following year.

Journey from Liverpool

Today's tour takes us to Yorkshire and Derbyshire with three contrasting visits for your enjoyment. You will note the emergency renaming of the tour, the result of not now participating in the Victorian Gala at my favourite preservation site. We leave Liverpool via what's left of Edge Lane and get onto the M62. Following on from the precedent set last year by Jonathan, there will be a short stop at Birch Services for whatever purposes you require (subject to taking no longer than 15 minutes to do it). From Birch, we get back onto the M62 as far as junction 23 and pass Huddersfield, with the bus station on our left. Beyond there we take the A642 through Lepton, the former home of bus companies County Motors and Ward Brothers, before reaching Overton for our first visit.

Coal: The National Coal Mining Museum for England

Coal is the theme of our first visit. Yorkshire is famous for its mining tradition. Mining was carried out at Caphouse Colliery on the western edge of the Yorkshire coalfield near the village of Overton at least as long ago as 1789. Passing through several changes of ownership, it became part of the National Coal Board in 1947. Coal production continued until 1985, at which point the conversion of the site into a museum began. It is now the National Coal Mining Museum for England and consists of nearly 20 restored buildings across a 7 hectare site.

We have an hour and 20 minutes on site here. The majority of the attractions are near to where the bus will park. These include the original pithead, the 1876 steam winder, stables for the pit ponies (Eric and Ernie), the pithead baths (for anyone requiring a mid-tour shower) and a number of permanent exhibitions. The main building has an excellent café.

The museum has a large collection of coal industry-related railway rolling stock. Only a small proportion of this is on 'official' display but much of the reserve collection is visible through the railings of a compound which is about 10 minutes walk from the main buildings. The site has a narrow gauge railway which may be able to operate to coincide with our visit.

Steel: Rotherham

We leave Overton and take the A642 and A637 through the village of Flockton and past the entrance to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, home of the UK's largest collection of Henry Moore sculptures. A short stretch on the M1 takes us down to junction 35 from where we take the A629 into Rotherham. As we arrive in the town, we take the opportunity to view some of its leading attractions. Visible on our left is Masborough station closed in 1988 but with its platforms and main buildings remaining intact. On our right is Millmoor, home of Rotherham United FC, currently flying high in League Two. Beyond the ground is the yard of C F Booth, scrap dealers, whose advert is predominantly displayed over the football ground's main stand.



The economy of Rotherham has historically been heavily dependent on the steel industry. Its last remaining vestige is Corus Engineering Steels' plant in the Aldwarke district of the town which we pass on the right hand side as we approach the location of our next visit. Please do not be perturbed by the

The main exhibition hall at the South Yorkshire Transport Museum



Hope Pit winding engine house at the National Coal Mining Museum

11ft-3in (3.4m) bridge height sign – we turn off Aldwarke Lane (formerly part of the works estate) before we reach the offending bridge.

The South Yorkshire Transport Museum has been open since 2007 but it has its origins in other preservation schemes, including the Sheffield Bus Museum in the former Tinsley Tram Depot, which was visited by LUPTS on the 1994 bus tour. Buses and coaches form the main part of the collection, with most of the major municipal and company fleets of the area being represented. They range in age from a 1941 ex-Sheffield AEC Regent cut down to a grit lorry, to a 1985 ex-South Yorkshire PTE Dennis Domino, one of only 34 of this type of vehicle ever built. Other exhibits include several Scammell lorries formerly operated by the local firm of S Harrison and Sons, which continued operating these older designs of vehicle well into the 1990s. A small café will be open for our use and we will have just over an hour on site.

We take a different route out of Rotherham and reach the M1, turning south onto it and heading for Butterley. Silly me, ... of course we don't. With an appropriate hand signal in the general direction of the Midland Railway, we stay on the A6102, head for the outskirts of Sheffield. We share part of our route with the Sheffield Supertram lines to Halfway and Herdings Park and then we take the A621 and A619 to Baslow and Bakewell and finally the A6 down to Rowsley, main operating centre of Peak Rail.

An 8F to the rescue: Peak Rail

The scenic railway line between Buxton and Matlock, part of the Midland Railway's route from Manchester Central to London St Pancras, was closed in 1967. The Peak Railway Preservation Society was formed in 1975 with ambitious plans to reopen the Buxton-Matlock stretch but initially struggled, resulting in the decision to abandon the Buxton site, even after the costly reinstatement of a bridge. Operations began at the southern end of the line in 1991 and Peak Rail now runs on the 4 mile (6km) section between Rowsley South and Matlock Riverside.

This weekend, the railway is holding a special event – '48624 Steam Special'. The loco in use will be the recently restored 8F – in non-authentic maroon livery as LMS 8624 to upset the purists. The loco was built during WW2 at the Southern Railway's Ashford Works, withdrawn by BR in 1965 and despatched to Woodham's scrapyards at Barry Island. Rescued from there in 1981, restoration took 28 years, but it was worth it. This weekend is the loco's last on the line for the time being.



Some things change: 8624 has been fully restored since the picture on the left was taken at Buxton in 1988, and an engine shed has been rebuilt on the site shown in the picture on the right in 1991. Dave Parker is largely unchanged though.

Rostered for duty as fireman today is LUPTS' very own Dave Parker. We are due to arrive at the railway in time for the 15:15 departure for Rowsley. Passengers then have several options. One is to disembark in Matlock and remain there for just over an hour (15:35-16:50), although be aware that the Peak Rail station is 10-15 minutes walk from the town centre. Another is to return almost immediately on the 15:45 departure. This will give time back at Rowsley, where there is a café, shop and narrow gauge railway which will be operating. The railway will also be playing (I think that's probably the right word) with their turntable which will have been officially opened by music impresario and railway preservationist Pete Waterman earlier in the day.