

## Chelmsford U3A Travel Group

### Durham, Beamish and North York Moors (11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016)

On 11<sup>th</sup> July six travel group members went on a Crusader coach tour to Durham and Beamish.

The pick-ups went well and the extra two hours' time on the journey was comparable to airport waiting time. Stephen our coach driver impressed us with his driving ability but his communication skills were not what we would have expected from a coach tour.

On route we stopped for one and a half hours at Newark-on-Trent, where a downpour prompted two members to go out and buy a cagoule and an umbrella. This guaranteed fine weather for the remainder of the trip!

A warm welcome awaited us at Redworth Hall Hotel. Set in magnificent parkland the building dated from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Fortunately the hotel rooms were a later addition and had all modern conveniences.

The second day was a tour of Beamish, an open air working museum. The colliery and pit village there have been recreated to how they were at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by using the original building materials. We were transported by trams and buses to the town, where the shops and bank brought back many memories. The museum set amidst beautiful countryside really impressed us and we all enjoyed the day.



Our trip to Durham the following morning was disappointing as we were limited to just a two and a half hour stop. The only guided tour offered was at the castle which if taken up would not have allowed us time to visit the cathedral as well. We all decided to visit the cathedral which is magnificent.

Stephen then took us on a coach tour of the moors, very picturesque but far too long! A short stop at Castle Barton gave us time to explore and have tea.

Our final day dawned. Stephen took on board our comments from the previous day. By cutting out a scheduled stop at Pickering and shortening our stop at Helmsley we had more time at Whitby. A beautiful sunny day enabled us to fully enjoy this traditional fishing /seaside town. The ruined abbey on the cliff top (the inspiration for Dracula) attracted some of us to climb the 199 steps to the top. It was well worth it for the spectacular views.

Evenings at the hotel were very enjoyable and the food excellent and we had two birthdays to celebrate! Our friendly party of U3A members impressed the young bar staff with our laughter and impromptu quizzes.