



## Fringe activities in support of the Community Rail Awards 2025

### Important travel information

**Please note the following:** Between 0300 on Saturday 15th March and 0445 on Monday 17th March there will be no trains servicing Darlington Station, there will also be line blocks in place on the East Coast Mainline between Darlington and Newcastle, during those times a rail replacement will be in operation. Please consider this when planning your extended stay in the Northeast. It may be better to stay longer or choose a different route! If returning to the south you can use Northern from Newcastle to Sunderland, then use Grand Central Sunderland to London. Newcastle to Carlisle services to the West Coast Mainline will not be affected.

### Headline Partners Welcome Reception

Our headline partners Lumo will be hosting a 'Pre-Awards Welcome Reception' on Wednesday 12 March, for any Awards guests arriving early in Newcastle! [Click here for more information and to book your place](#)

**Community rail and other wonders of the North-East** - You may want to book a few days in the region! While you're in the North-East, take some time to discover what makes this region and the people who live here so well loved. Newcastle makes an ideal base for exploring the region, so why not take some extra time during your visit to discover what the area has to offer.

**The local community rail partnerships (CRP) including Bishop Line, Esk Valley Railway, Tyne Valley (and the anticipated new CRP for the Northumberland Line) will be on hand at the Awards to showcase the best of community rail in the North-East, and they also invite you to attend a 'community rail' album launch!**  
[See full details below:](#)

### Launch of a new album of songs and poems 'Passengers & Pioneers' from the Bishop Line CRP

**On Friday 14th March you are invited to attend the launch of 'Passengers & Pioneers', from the Bishop Line CRP's Storylines project.** 'Passengers & Pioneers' created by Sam Slatcher of Citizen Songwriters, along with award winning Northeast poets, celebrates the birth of the Stockton & Darlington Railway and what it means to us today as it approaches its 200th anniversary.

**This event is free of charge and will run twice, first at 12:00-13:00 and again at 19:30-20:30, in The Common Room Lecture Hall, a 2 min walk from Newcastle Central Station. The Common Room, Neville Hall, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1SE <https://thecommonroom.org.uk/>.** The Common Room holds one of the largest, most comprehensive, public collections on mining engineering in the world and will be open for general admission on Thursday 13th March 2025 10am to 4pm, a perfect opportunity to chat with their friendly room guides to learn about the history of the venue and the archives & collections on display.

The album incorporates stories of passengers travelling today and archive history from the first journey in 1825. Find out more about the Storylines project on the Bishop Line website. [Storylines - Stories of a world changing line - Bishop Line](#)

**Book your place at the launch event via the Eventbrite link below, but be quick as places are limited!**  
<https://passengers-and-pioneers.eventbrite.co.uk>

## Other attractions/activities and community rail lines

Take a trip around the city and onwards to the coast on board the **Metro**, looking out for iconic art along the route.

Travel west from Newcastle along the **Tyne Valley Railway** to Haltwhistle, the central most town in Britain, and see the work of the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership (CRP). Visit the Old Booking Hall, now used by the CRP as an education space, and see reproductions of the classic railway tickets invented on this line in 1830's, known as Edmondson tickets. Nearby you'll see more impact of the CRP's work as you enjoy a bite to eat at the [Water Tower](#) cafe, recently converted by the CRP and explore the fascinating exhibitions in the waiting rooms and the new offices and studios transformed from redundant station buildings. Haltwhistle is a gateway to the area's Roman history which is easy to reach with the AD122 bus from the station to [Hadrian's Wall](#), [Vindolanda](#) and [The Sill National Landscape Discovery Centre](#). Alternatively, leave the train at Wylam to visit Stephenson's birthplace and for a memorable evening, join the [curry train to Corbridge](#). You could even take a ride north on the new **Northumberland Line**

In 2025 we celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the railway and you'll be in the best place to explore where it all began. En route to Newcastle take a trip along the **Bishop Line**, from Darlington and discover the area's rich history. Less than half an hour from Darlington and you'll be at the end of the line at Bishop Auckland. Here you're invited to step back in time as you experience 2,000 years of history with [The Auckland Project](#) home to Auckland Castle, The Spanish Galley and Auckland Tower. Leave the train at Shildon to see how the railways have progressed throughout the ages with a visit to [Locomotion](#), home to the largest undercover collection of historic railway vehicles in Europe. Back on the train and one stop later you can visit the newest attraction in the North East, [Hopetown](#). This site boasts over 7 acres where each building has a unique and interesting story to tell, including North Road Station Museum, The Carriage Works, The Stores, Darlington Locomotive Works and Skerne Bridge, known to be the oldest operating railway bridge in the world.

### **\*Exclusive event on the Weardale Railway – Friday 14th March\***

Bishop Auckland marks the start of the Weardale Railway – a heritage line running through the dales up to Stanhope. You are invited to a free of charge return journey on a heritage DMU from Bishop Auckland to Stanhope. The Weardale train departs from Bishop Auckland West 11:30. You'll enjoy a leisurely journey along the line to Stanhope Station capturing many of the beauty spots along the way. The train will return to Bishop Auckland West in time for the 15:27 train to Darlington. To get to Bishop Auckland in time you can catch a train from Newcastle at 10:03, change at Darlington and catch the 10:56 to Bishop Auckland arriving at 11:21.

**To ensure your space please book in advance [HERE](#)**

Staying for longer? Make sure you take a trip east from Darlington via Middlesbrough, on the **Esk Valley Railway**. You'll soon see why it's known as 'The Pretty Line' as you journey through North Yorkshire Moors National Park, passing Roseberry Topping and taking you to the historic seaside town of Whitby to enjoy some of the area's famous fish and chips. Along the way, be sure to look out for the amazing station display by the Nunthorpe and Marton Knitters.

### **\*Special accommodation offer in Bishop Auckland\***

You could use Bishop Auckland as your base to explore more of County Durham and the Tees Valley region. Park Head Hotel is offering 10% discount off advance purchase B&B rates. The discount can be redeemed when booking directly through the Park Head Hotel website **using the code TRAIN 25**– it will bring up the dates either side of (and including) the awards and give the discounted rate.