

Wednesday 28 July continued

RAILWAY 9

Airport	1450	
Pelaw	1524	1531
Airport	1605	£5.40

We went to Dobbies and I left Julie there to meet Anne. I walked to the Airport and down to the Metro - the airport was pretty empty, and the metro not much fuller.



The first section runs along the old Ponteland branch - this picture of Ponteland station around 1905 was supplied by the Local History Society. The original line from South Gosforth to Ponteland was opened in 1905, extended to Darras Hall in 1913. There was a freight line extending to the mines at Wallridge, but that didn't last long. Passenger traffic ended in 1929, but freight continued. The last section which saw regular freight was up to Cadbury's at Fawdon and the ICI Explosive works at Callerton (I love the idea of explosives and chocolate on the same train) - this freight lasted until 1989.

In 1981 the Metro opened as far as Bank Foot, Kingston Park was opened in 1985, and the extension to the Airport in 1991. There had been suggestions of an extension to Ponteland, but that is in Northumberland (which complicates matters), and I remember being told in no uncertain terms that it would encourage crime, reduce house prices and let the riff-raff in. This is the view coming in, and leaving, Callerton.





We went past the depot which is being rebuilt for a new fleet. Sometimes the curve along the back of it is available in passenger service. The control centre is at South Gosforth where we joined the main circle - so at least the branch is done. (The first time I did it was when Hannah was in Durham and we were in Bury. I got a later train south from Newcastle, but had not allowed myself enough time to do the branch. I watched my return train depart Newcastle station, and had a very expensive journey home. A year or so later I got the job in Ponteland!). I watched the link to the circle - a link which I have never seen with a passenger service.

On through the centre of town - this 7 mile section, most of which is in tunnel, was opened in 1981 - and the Metro Bridge over the Tyne gives a good view.



I went on to Pelaw, along the original section of the Brandling Junction Railway (opened in 1839). There is a building which still exists near Pelaw - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1299895>. I would have liked to have gone through to South Hylton or change for South Shields, but there wasn't time. Even more annoying, my ticket was valid for all of it! O well, I'll come back.