

Thirsk		1340	£18.85
Sunderland	1449	1530	
Hexham	1639		

J has started a Welsh course every Friday morning. Hannah want a new Barbour, so somehow I get persuaded to go with her to the Barbour shop at Jarrow - paying for petrol en route. I paid for the Barbour too - favourite little girl! I could have returned from there, or use the offer of a free lift south to head back north again!

She dropped me at Thirsk and I sat and enjoyed the passing trains until the Grand Central arrived. I had purchased a ticket from the machine and treated myself to first class - a good decision as the train was full. I got added value by getting my free tea and snacks, and had a very good bacon ciabatta too (ordered from the app and delivered to my seat). The GC service turns right off the ECML at Northallerton and runs up to Eaglescliffe, then does the third side of the triangle (Stockton Cut to Hartburn Junctions), then through Hartlepool to Sunderland. It was a slow journey when I did this with Michael (trip 88), and not much quicker on this unit!

Sunderland station is an even worse black hole than Birmingham New Street. We were supposed to have arrived at 1449, but it was gone 1500 when we arrived. They kept the unit in the platform before it went south again at 1530 - lots of diesel fumes. Various metro units went round it, then the train to Hexham - also running late. By the time we got to Newcastle it was even later, having followed a metro out. Not many people made the through trip - I was using the return half of the Saltburn ticket I purchased last time.

No taxis bookable, so I walked back up from the station - I can still manage it in less than 20 minutes.

