

## The Art & Houses of Newcastle & Northumbria

23 – 28 April 2012

### Coach

The coach was clean and on time. Nigel was unfailingly helpful, drove well and got us to each of our destinations on time. He and the Blue Badge Guide worked very well together.

### Harewood House

There have been changes over the past year and we did not feel the room stewards 'knew their stuff'.

### Marriott Royal County Hotel

This was an excellent hotel although impossible for the coach to access the front door. The beds large and comfortable (commented on by many in the party). The rooms clean and service good.

The staff in the restaurant were charming, but the service was extremely slow. One night there appeared to be only 2 looking after our party of 38. Other staff seemed to be around but not assisting. After speaking to the management, this improved the following evening. I am not sure where the problem lay.

The restaurant staff were very helpful when we required 2 dinner sittings to enable some of the group to go to a recital in the Cathedral. They went out of their way to provide the menus and take the orders the evening before.

The hotel did not appear to have made a note of the 'No dairy' requirement of one of our party. No enquiries were made as to whom this applied.

### Blue Badge Guide

Jan was the best guide ever! She was very attentive and made sure we had a really enjoyable time. Jan made a few diversions to show us extra places and liaised well with the driver.

### Itinerary

Overall we got the mix right.

Jan managed to give us time to look round the Sage, which was really appreciated. We did not enjoy the Baltic Centre, although the guides were enthusiastic and good! There did not appear to be enough to see.

On our way to Seaton Delaval, Jan took us past the remains of Jarrow Abbey and also to Tynemouth – the Priory and Castle were well worth visiting – fascinating 'extras'.

Seaton Delaval is a new NT property, very well worth seeing, but does not take the time we had allowed. The café is very small and it would have been better to leave earlier and lunch in Newcastle and spend longer at the Laing Art Gallery.

### Tailored Travel

The arrangements had been carefully managed by Kate and it all went extremely well. Thank you.

**KP, Hayling Island** April 2012