

Title: Faverdale

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Faverdale Industrial Estate, 8 am on a Sunday, after a two hour drive, with the promised rain just about to add to the general aura of despondency. It's two or three generations since Doctor Beeching cured the place of full employment by bulldozing the railway wagon building factory and its' employees futures. Many of the "factories" built with the first flush of grant money are shut and decaying, and, unless you include Argos and Aldis' massive robot run distribution centres, the only green shoots of recovery that you are likely to see round here are the weeds struggling to reclaim the place. And in the centre of this, guarded by lights, cameras and a security fence, squats the Arriva Depot.

And then, like a desperate escapee, a turquoise and cream bus came sidling out of the fortress, and, obviously overcome with the prospect of a whole day away from this place, flicked on its' destination board which boasted that it was an M2, and was heading for The North York Moors and Guisborough.

The Rambler didn't even make it as far as the bus stop before it stopped and the beaming driver jumped out to take some photos of that evocative destination board.

A couple more stops down the road Mary, a Moorsbus regular, jumped on, but her delight was as nothing compared to that of the lad who was dancing about in the road with his arm out and wearing a grin from ear to ear when we got to Bus Stand L at Tubwell Row in Darlington town centre. And so it went on for most of the journey, as people smiled with relief as the Rambler rumbled towards them, climbed aboard, and carried on conversations with those who they probably thought that they wouldn't ever meet again after last October.

There were hiccups, of course.

“Why does your leaflet have us going to the Station, but the timetable doesn’t?”

Errrrrrrrrrrrr.....

“And why have you two ladies got on here today?”

“ Because your bus went to the wrong stand at Middlesbrough Bus Station and we were at the one that your timetable told us to wait at as it drove past, so a friend gave us a lift here....”

Oh.....



But there was triumph as well, like the chorus of “I never thought that I’d see this again” as we bounced over Blakey, and the relief of the two passengers who had come all the way from Slough, when they realised that the Moorsbus really had come back to life. And the spontaneous round of very enthusiastic applause when Bill Breakell, the father of the

Moorsbus (although he probably hates being called that), got on board.

So Danby and Castleton, the Moors Centre, Hutton le Hole, Kirkbymoorside and Pickering all whizzed by, just like old times, and at each of them people got on and got off with the same slightly relieved and slightly disbelieving smile.

Eden Blyth, Sunday 13th of July