VOICE OF THE MOORS

NYMA – PROTECTING THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS ASSOCIATION (NYMA)

ISSUE 139
SPRING 2020

£2.75

NYMA 35 YEARS OF PROTECTION 1985-2020

CONTENTS

3 Botany **PRIMROSES AND COWSLIPS**
5 Tribute **MEMORIES OF NAN SYKES**
5 **NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS PRESIDENT'S AWARD 2020**
6 President's Piece **MAGICAL MOORS MOMENTS NUMBER 1**
7 Arts and Crafts **FELL RUNNING AND THE EVER-CHANGING LANDSCAPE**
8 The Industrial Age **GASWORKS IN ROBIN HOOD'S BAY!**
10 Birds in your Garden **THE GREENFINCH**
11 Transport **GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS: BUSES SERVING THE MOORS**
12 Coast **STAITHES – YORKSHIRE'S PICTURESQUE NORTHERN OUTPOST**
14 Book Review **YORKSHIRE COAST PATH**
15 Skylarks
16 Crossword 88
20 NYMA News / NYMA Walks

Cover © Sue Slack, "Stepping Stile". At the top of the 'elbow' at Saltergate. Step over the stile to descend into the Hole of Horcum. See more about Sue's inspiration in the article on page 7 'Fell running and the ever changing landscape'.

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Design
Basement Press – 01947 897945
www.basementpress.com

Printed on paper made from sustainable and traceable raw material sources.

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

NAN SYKES

Think of wildflowers and you think of Nan Sykes and that in itself is a tribute to her long life and outstanding achievements in the field of botany. Sadly, Nan died on the 2nd February leaving this area of North Yorkshire a richer place because of her dedication to the conservation of wildflowers and the record she has left of her work. Nan was an early member of NYMA and a long serving member of the Council. Twenty five years ago she wrote in the Association's magazine, then called *Views and News*, an article headed, "A chance to save the vanishing plants of arable land". This led to the nationally acclaimed Cornfield Flowers Project which remains an outstanding legacy to Nan's work. We have had a long association with Nan and she will be missed by all who knew her.

WOODSMITH MINE

From the start in 2011 when Sirius Minerals acquired York Potash Ltd, there has been a roller-coaster ride for the company both in terms of the planning and development of the mine and particularly in terms of funding the project. By September 2019, Sirius was facing serious financial difficulties having been unable to raise the necessary funding to complete the construction of the mine. At this point Sirius needed to raise a further $3 billion on top of the $1.2 billion already raised by share issues. By December 2019 there was only approximately £60 million left in the pot which led the company to say that without securing major funding or a merger or acquisition Sirius would be placed into administration or liquidation.

The takeover

Sirius Minerals plc will be replaced by Anglo American plc in a takeover which was announced in January. A company has been formed called Anglo American Projects UK Ltd, also known as Bidco. More than 7 billion issued shares will be transferred by the end of March from Sirius to Bidco. An application will be made to the London Stock Exchange for Sirius shares to be de-listed and it is expected that trading in these shares will cease by the end of March or thereabouts. Anglo American valued the company at £409.9 million which gives shareholders 5.5 pence for each Sirius share. Sirius argued that if the acquisition was not taken up, the company would go into liquidation with no payout to shareholders who would effectively lose all their investment. The proposed acquisition was to be decided at a shareholders meeting held on 3rd March. The outcome was that a majority of shareholders accepted the offer by Anglo American, so the takeover was made. Many private investors, some of whom lost large sums of money, were understandably very unhappy with the result. Chris Fraser the chief executive officer and driving force behind the development of the mine is reported to have told shareholders that, "While the project was the greatest success of his career, the financing issues were the greatest failure".

What next?

The present slow-down in activity will continue for some time. Anglo American still has to find around $3 billion to finish construction of the mine. It says that it will "update the development timeline and optimise the mine design". During the first two years after the acquisition by Anglo American development work of approximately $300 million per annum is expected. There are many more changes likely and it is worth noting that any significant changes which are not already covered by the planning application which was approved in June 2015 or the additional non material changes approved in 2017 will probably require new planning permission. As always with this development, vigilance is necessary.

MOORLAND BURNING

For those of us who live within the National Park this year has seen some very intensive periods of heather burning with a pall of smoke stretching for many miles. The towering plumes of smoke all too often have reached an inversion layer which has forced the smoke down and filled up the dales, most noticeably in Danby Dale, Westerdale, Glaisdale, Rosedale and Farndale. The practice of burning heather is carried out between October 1st and April 15th. The weather obviously plays an important part as to when it is a suitable time to carry out burning and there have been, over the years, times when gamekeepers supervising burning have misjudged changes in wind speed and direction giving rise to fires which have got out of control.

Ending the practice of burning

There is a gathering momentum of opinion which regards the practice of moorland burning as no longer an acceptable way of moorland management. In the recently published report by the Committee on Climate Change, "Land use: Policies for a Net Zero UK" published in January 2020, there is a clear statement which says "Ban rotational burning in the UK in 2020 including burning for grouse shooting". On page 95 the report says "A voluntary cessation by landowners has not produced the desired outcome so the practice should be banned across the UK with immediate effect". The report seems to have gained support at government level with comments reportedly made by the Environment Minister Lord Goldsmith and from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Amanda Anderson, director of the Moorland Association responded to the report with counter claims on the Association's website. She says that "We estimate that on 30-40% of our members' deep peat land there is no sustainable alternative management technique to controlled burning. An outright ban on heather burning over peatland will lead to thousands of tonnes of new biomass building up in high risk fire zones".

There is perhaps an answer to this conflict of views in the use of horizontal chain flail cutting and creating a modern alternative version of the small patch technique made by burning. This is a method of creating strips called a narrow strip matrix (NSM), which apparently has some advantages over traditional burning, in the protection of grouse.

2020 NYMA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The NYMA Annual General Meeting due to have been held at Danby Moors Centre in June has been postponed until further notice.

FOOTNOTE

At the time of writing this foreword, there is a growing crisis with the COVID 19 virus which threatens to become a pandemic. The actions which will have to be taken over the next few months will affect all of our lives in one way or another. Amongst the measures which will have to be taken if the crisis deepens will be limitations on travel, the cancellation of significant gatherings of people and possibly the isolation of communities. These are measures which are already being taken in countries most severely affected by the virus at present. In the light of this, the government will be focussing a great deal of its time and effort in trying to control the spread of the virus and dealing with the challenging health issues which will arise.

TOM CHADWICK

Photo © Tom Chadwick

On hold: Lockwood Beck tunnel access March 2020

PRIMROSES AND COWSLIPS


Lysimachia nummularia


Primula veris


Primula vulgaris

Photos © Nan Sykes/NYMA

TWO HERALDS of spring: first the primrose, flowering from March to May, followed by the cowslip from April to May.

The primrose *Primula vulgaris* is a common, low perennial plant of grassy banks, verges and woodland edges. The leaves of its basal rosette are wrinkly and taper to a winged stalk and from its centre and from separate stems, are carried the pale yellow fragrant flowers with deeper yellow centres. These can either be 'pin-eyed' with a prominent green stigma, with five short stamens below, or 'thrum-eyed' with five tall stamens covering a short stigma. This avoids cross pollination.

The cowslip *Primula veris* is a taller perennial more frequently found on less acidic soils, grasslands, banks, pastures and roadside verges. The leaves of the basal rosette lie close to the ground, are smaller and rounder, narrowing abruptly to the stalk. The flower stems, rising from the centre of the rosette of the leaves carry drooping clusters of short stalked, long tubed, fragrant yellow flowers with orange centres.

We do have a third primrose on the Moors; *Primula farinosa*, or birds-eye primrose, which is much rarer, being local to damp, non-acidic pastures. It flowers from May to June with light mauve petals and narrow, light green, mealy backed leaves. Other members of this *Primulaceae* family often found here are chickweed wintergreen *Trientalis europaea* with its hidden white starry flowers, and three pimpernels; the yellow *Lysimachia nemorum*, the bog *Lysimachia nummularia* and the scarlet *Anagallis arvensis*.

The primrose, or first flower, has also been called the butter rose or Easter rose, often being used for Mother's Day bouquets and Easter decoration. On May Day it was brought into houses and farm buildings for protection and good luck as the years vitality returned. However it was considered bad luck to find it in flower before March or after June, and care had to be taken when it was brought into the house that more than 13 flowers were included or they risked the viability of any eggs being incubated there (13 being the number of eggs in a clutch, and both chicks and flowers were of the same colour).

In Humberside they were associated with St. John of Beverley and the 'Primrose League' which started in 1883 in memory of Benjamin Disraeli and urged its members to wear primroses on the anniversary of his death on 19th April.

The cowslip was referred to as Peter or Our Lady's Keys, or Key flower, probably taken from the Old Norse when it was dedicated to Freya the 'Key virgin'. Another Old Norse name was 'paigle', while Shakespeare called them cuckoobuds. The bunches of flowers were strung together by children to make 'Tisty-tosties', or paigle balls to play with.

Legend has it that if either primrose or cowslip are planted upside down the resulting flowers will be pink, something I remember being told in my youth. But not so, there are just some plants that produce pale pink flowers naturally.

The leaves and flowers of both primrose and cowslip can be eaten in salads, used to stuff meat or to flavour jams and cordials, while cowslip wine is widely available.

Both plants were used in many herbal remedies as they contain similar chemicals, and it seemed to be the commonest in an area being more often used, though the cowslip being stronger was more widely recommended. All parts of the plants, roots, leaves and flowers were employed, either singularly or together in teas, cordials and ointments.

The root, being antispasmodic and anti-inflammatory was recommended for any respiratory problem, coughs, mucous, bronchitis, and pneumonia as well as for rheumatism, arthritis, sciatica and neuralgia. Leaves were often used to heal wounds, cuts and burns, and for toothache, while the flowers were made into an ointment for skin problems, spots, freckles, sunburn, bruises, chapped hands, ring worm and chilblains. But more importantly, the whole plant was used as a gentle sedative, narcotic, relaxant to treat nervous tension, insomnia, giddiness, migraine, hallucination, epilepsy, paralysis, poor memory and restlessness. In concentrated doses it was an anaesthetic. What a pharmacy and so useful after the cold and chills of winter.

Heralds of spring, but could they lead you down the 'primrose path' in pursuit of pleasure and a carefree life as Shakespeare noted in Hamlet and Macbeth?

ANNE PRESS

MEMORIES OF NAN SYKES (1923-2020)

I **FEEL** very privileged to have had Nan as a friend for the past 20+ years. She was an inspiration and taught me most of what I know about the botany of North East Yorkshire. I'd always been interested in wild flowers but I learned so much more from Nan, not only how to identify them, but insights into how they fitted into the broader picture - what is now known as habitat and ecology.

When I think of Nan it is usually somewhere in a flowery meadow, either crouching or lying down to photograph a particular flower - and then relaxing to enjoy lunch surrounded by flowers and watching the birds - heaven!

Nan was always happy to pass on her knowledge, especially in the field where she was in her element. She taught me so much about the local flora, including identification 'tricks' and information that is not in the books - and of course the valuable lesson that Ryedale plants "don't read the books"; knowing what to look for is an invaluable tip.

As well as a walking encyclopedia of natural history (she was good on birds as well as plants) and an excellent photographer, Nan was good, entertaining company whether reminiscing about the stories she covered and the interesting and eccentric people she met as a journalist, or expressing her forthright views on the dire state of our hedges and verges - and indeed the state of the world!

If I had to sum Nan up in three words I would say 'wisdom, generosity and kindness', and I shall miss her greatly.

GILL SMITH
(BOTANY RECORDER FOR RYEDALE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY)

Nan photographing green winged orchid

Green winged orchid *Anacamptis morio*

Planting alder buckthorn

Photo © Gill Smith

NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS PRESIDENT'S AWARD 2020

£1,000 for Research in the National Park

A NYMA award of £1000 is available this year for research in the North York Moors National Park. The prize is donated under the President's Award scheme for research into topics including natural history, archaeology, social and economic history, or the built environment. The research can be at the planning stage or already under way.

Applicants may be members of local interest groups, students, academics, or amateur researchers, working as an individual or as a group: the key point is that the outcome of the research should make a contribution to the body of knowledge about the Moors.

Closing date for entries is **May 15th 2020**, with a decision made by early June. The winner will be contacted by NYMA and the winning entry announced in the summer edition of *Voice*. For application forms and enquiries please contact Janet Cochrane on secretary@nyma.org.uk or 07570 112010.

MAGICAL MOORS MOMENTS NUMBER 1

Photo © Ian Carstairs

I AM DETERMINED to be upbeat for the coming year, as an antidote to all the threats and uncertainty facing the Country, by sharing some of my Magical Moors Moments.

While I love the wild sweep and remoteness of the moors, I am almost embarrassed to say that my Number One Moment is the complete antithesis. It is an indelible experience from which I have never quite come back down to earth.

So, here we go for the roller-coaster ride of my life.

When I worked at the National Park Centre half-a-life-time-ago, I was struck by the excitement visitors showed as jets tore through the Dales at dizzying speed, way too close to the ground for comfort.

Low-flying in National Parks has always been a contentious issue, but inside the machines are real people, performing highly professional and exacting jobs and who, like the rest of us, enjoy the wonders of the countryside too.

It struck me it would be interesting to tell the story of what it is like to 'visit the moors' from the pilot's point of view and how they plan and execute their sorties so fleetingly observed from the ground as they pass overhead.

Having gained approval from the Ministry of Defence to fly with the RAF, Squadron Leader Ian Henley was assigned to look after me. I was very much in luck, for Ian, a keen walker, loved the Moors too.

Passing through the security gate at RAF Linton-on-Ouse, was to enter a world, to which civilians are wholly unaccustomed.

Firstly, we visited the building where pilots prepared their flight plans. Next, a short medical and all-important ejector seat training, something which certainly concentrates the mind. Finally, kitted out with flying suit, leather gloves and boots and helmet we crossed the apron to the aircraft.

Once in my seat, the ground crew strapped me in, linked up the communications mask and removed the safety pin from the ejector seat, before the canopy was closed and the engine started up.

Taxiing was smooth and strangely quiet. Even as we accelerated, little could be heard of the sound you experience from outside the aircraft as it hurtles down the runway, just a thin whine and a low distant rumble in the background.

We climbed away steadily to 3000 feet over Malton, before turning towards the Moors.

"Clear visor down, landing light on, descending to low level," Ian verbalised.

Then things went wrong. Lights flashed on the instrument panel. Calmly, Ian determined that the fuel pump had malfunctioned. Then, matter-of-factly he added, "And if I say EJECT, go and don't try to take anything with you."

Oddly, with no alternatives if things did come to the worst, I wasn't especially frightened.

An hour later, in another aircraft and back over Malton our run began again, low and fast over the ripe wheat fields of the Vale of Pickering with the slopes of the Tabular Hills rushing towards us.

Following the terrain closely we crossed Cropton, along Rosedale with the moorland above us to either side; our next way-point Roseberry Topping lay out of sight beyond the high moors at Ralph Cross.

How small the National Park seemed at this speed. In no time with a stomach churning, contour-hugging ride into Westerdale, the familiar shape if Rosebrry Topping now stood on the skyline.

Tight round the 'mountain', next a turn at Staithes and back over into the Esk Valley and into Danby Dale, up over Danby Rigg and on towards Grosmont before dipping down into Newtondale to follow the course of the meltwater at the end of the ice age.

With the railway in touching distance below the nose, tight right then tight left and lower still over Levisham Station, before bursting out like the waters so long ago into the Vale of Pickering.

Soon, on final approach to Linton, Ian produced a surprise.

"Are you ready for the crunchy way to land?" he cheerfully enquired, adding a little pertinent advice, "Hold tight".

Instead of a steady descent we arrived several hundred feet above the centre of the runway banking sharply into a steep 360 degree descending spiral to touch down perfectly. Now I understood what greying-out meant as the blood drained south into my legs and my vision faded.

It had been an incredible experience and an interesting story to share about the reality of the people behind the jets tearing through the sky.

IAN CARSTAIRS

FELL RUNNING AND THE EVER-CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Lockton-based artist Sue Slack was invited by Voice of the Moors to describe what inspires her paintings.

Horcum from Levisham Moor

The Valley of Horcum

I AM a self-employed, professional painter and my inspiration is the North Yorkshire landscape in which I live and work. My partner, artist blacksmith, David Stephenson and I have lived in Lockton, a beautiful moorland village for over 20 years. It's the longest time either of us have lived anywhere, so it must be good!

I am very lucky that I have an excellent studio which looks out towards Levisham Moor and the Hole of Horcum. The colours are constantly changing with the season and the weather, but none more vibrant than the purple moorland contrasting with the green valleys in late summertime.

It is important to me that the place I am painting is recognised and my work often appeals to walkers or cyclists who know the landscape well. It is the shape of the land that first attracts me to a view and a possible composition. Many of my recent paintings have been inspired by my love of fell running. I might catch a glimpse of a view from a different angle or a new view to me entirely and make a mental note to return with my sketchbook. I have a sense that the deep physical knowledge of the landscape that I am developing from running the land; feeling every bump, hill, rock and muddy place (plenty of those!) through the soles of my feet, is increasingly reflected in my work.

My work out in the field takes the form of sketches, usually in pencil, watercolour, ink or pastels. I then take the sketches back to the studio, along with any photos I have taken and work out the final composition from there. I never use photos alone and never paint anywhere that I don't know. The experience of identifying the chosen spot and settling down to sketch the view is important, no matter how rough the sketch, (which it can be in bad weather!). It is important to me that the view travels through my eyes, brain and arm to the paper or canvas; that it almost becomes part of me for a while.

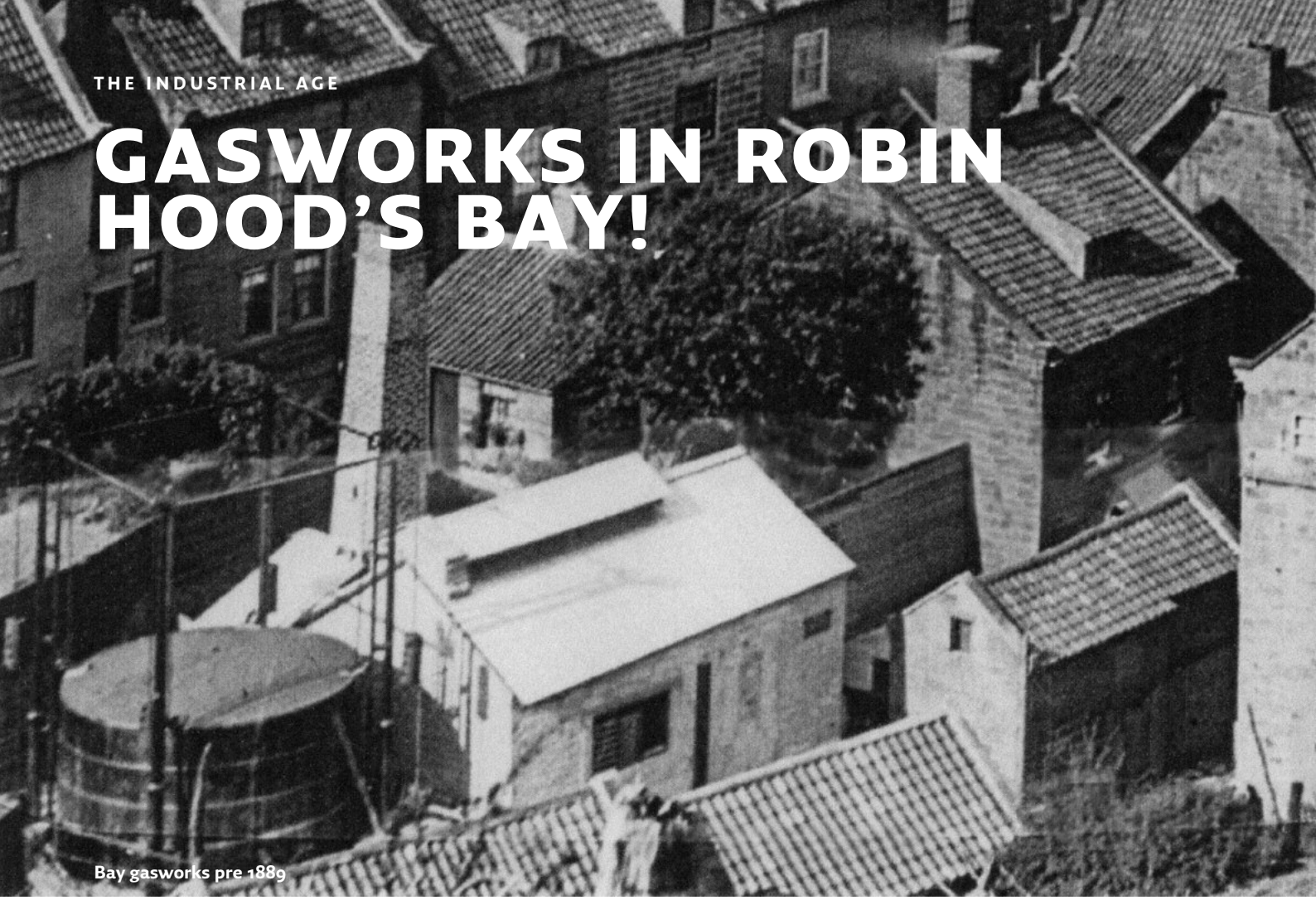
I love the sounds that I hear from sketching outdoors- one of my favourites is the curlew in early summer. I am lucky enough that my studio is usually filled with silence or the natural sounds from outside such as the nearby rookery. Occasionally I will pop on a CD but I am very particular which music I can paint to! My definite favourite is a David Hudson didgeredoo CD. Perhaps that's why red/orange fields often appear into my paintings!

People often ask me where I get my colours from. My response is that the colours are there in the landscape; I just accentuate them. I paint mainly in acrylic as this suits my technique of using layers to deepen the colour. My paintings have been likened to stained glass windows, an analogy I take as a compliment. I am influenced by artists such as Vincent van Gogh and Alexej von Jawlensky and their use of complementary colours. I tend to underpaint in red as the landscape is so green. If I then leave little hints of red showing through, it makes the paintings 'zing' and look more 3-dimensional. Another question that I am often asked is how long it takes me to do a painting. The truth is, I don't know! I've never actually timed how long it takes from sketch through to planning composition, starting and finishing a painting... and all the thinking that goes on in between. Probably a lot longer than I tell most people!

Exhibiting is a major part of my job. I love it when it all comes together-and you never know exactly how it is going to look until all the paintings are up. I exhibit regularly at Coast Gallery and in the Lockton Tearooms and Gallery. I have had a recent show at the Danby Moors Centre and am now busy planning and preparing work for Lockton Artists' Open Studios May 30th-7th June and North Yorkshire Open Studios 6/7th and 13th/14th June.

SUE SLACK

GASWORKS IN ROBIN HOOD'S BAY!



Bay gasworks pre 1889

For those of us who remember the huge gas holders in our towns and cities, it may come as a surprise to learn that Robin Hood's Bay produced its own gas for 100 years, from 1861 to 1961. Gas was made from coal, originally brought in by sea, later by rail and transported down Bay Bank by horse and cart. The works were situated at the end of Albion Road, at one time known as Gasworks Road.

THE GAS HOLDER

The earliest gas holder at Robin Hood's Bay was a small tank immediately adjacent to the retort house. When the works were extended, only the supporting pillars were left and that part was tiled over and used as the purifier. A larger gas holder was built on the other side of the road, the site of which is used today as a boat park.

THE RETORTS

The gas was produced by heating coal in horizontal D-shaped vessels called retorts; they had an ascension pipe at one end and were closed with an iron door at the other. The gas was driven off, leaving coke as a residue, which was then used as fuel for the furnace below. The original retorts were made of cast iron; when some of the earliest ones were replaced they were built into the sea wall below Beacholme Cottage and are still there today, nearly 150 years later. Later retorts were made of fireclay, and some of these can be seen in the garden of a house 'up Bay', once the home of James William Storm, who was the owner of the works from 1921 to 1948.

RECHARGING THE RETORTS

In his book *'Sound of the Sea'* Leo Walmsley gives a vivid description of charging the retorts in the gas works and how, as a boy, he used to play marbles there when the weather was poor. *'There was no marble playing while the retorts were being attended to. There were three retorts, made of thick iron, two side by side with the third one above, and below was the furnace. Each retort had a spare door and the first thing Mr. Birch had to do was to get the spare doors ready. He would spread a coating of lime mortar along the edge of each door, then he would roll up his shirt sleeves, take a piece of newspaper and twist it into a spill, light it at the gas jet and lay it on top of the door of the first retort. He would unscrew the clamp slowly and the door would come loose. There would be a loud pop, and flames would shoot out all round the door as the gas which was still in the retort caught fire from the paper. When the flames went out Mr. Birch would take off the hot door with a pair of tongs and drop it on the floor. The whole place would be lit up with a red glow and even if you were as far back as you could go you could feel the heat of it.*

With a long rake Mr. Birch would now begin to pull the red hot burning coke out on to the floor, which was covered with iron plates. Buckets of water were thrown on to the coke which would hiss and send up clouds of steam. The next thing was to fill the retort with fresh coal. Mr. Birch would fill his big shovel from the heap, hold it for a moment, then take three strides toward the open retort and at the third stride swing the shovel and shoot the coal so that it went to the far end of the retort. At

once the coal would catch fire and long flames and clouds of smoke would shoot out as he strode back for another shovelful, and this would go on until the retort was almost full. Then with the flames still coming out, he would lift the spare door on to the iron rods that held the clamp, push it forward and start to turn the handle of the clamp until at last the door touched the retort mouth. He would tighten the clamp until the mortar began to squeeze out, then he would mop the sweat from his face and get ready for the next retort.

When all three were filled, Mr. Birch would open the furnace door. The furnace was bigger and even hotter than the retorts, although it had no flames, for it only burnt coke. First Mr. Birch would rake it to get out the ash and clinkers, and then he would shovel into it the coke from the retorts. He once said, in a most frightening way, that the furnace was just like Hell on a small scale; it frightened me more than anything I had heard about Hell in chapel or Sunday school ....' No worries about health and safety in those days!

COAL DELIVERY

Tim Martin, who was born in 1933 while his father was working at the gasworks, recalls how the gas coal was taken from the railway station to the works by horse and cart.

'The coal was delivered by Ernest Thompson. With his cart full he set off to the bank top and stopped while he lifted the skids off the cart shafts and placed them on the road just in front of the cart wheels. He then moved the horse forward so the wheels were on the skids; these skids were anchored to the cart shafts by heavy chains. Off he went down the bank, the cart sliding down on the skids. When he arrived at the bottom, Ernest backed the cart up off the skids, then put them back on the cart shafts upside down'.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE GASWORKS

Ask any of the older residents of the village what they remember about the gasworks and they will mention the smell. They also comment about the chugging of the pumps and that it was a place to go to get warm.

'Coke and coal tar were by products of the works and in the 1940s, I remember walking across the fields to the gasworks with two galvanised metal buckets to collect hot tar for waterproofing our poultry house felted roofs. There were at least four stiles to clamber over and the journey back with the buckets filled to the brim for six pence a bucket was quite hazardous. I did not attempt the journey again!'

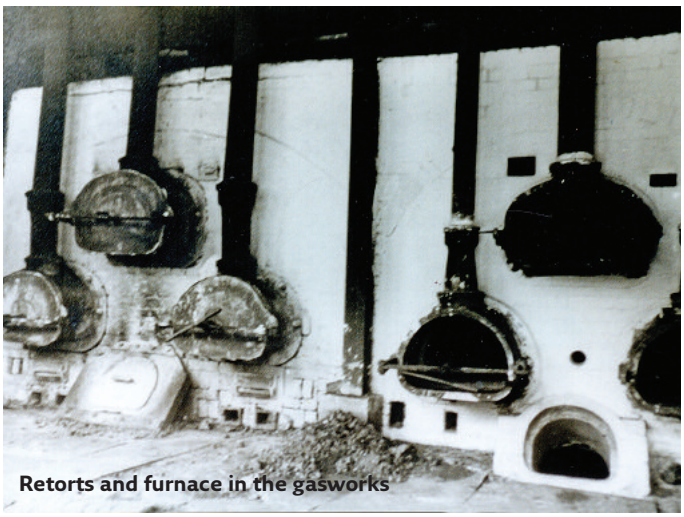
Coal boat unloading on the scars

'Every bit of coal, about a ton a day, had to be wheelbarrowed down a narrow passage into the works. I recall making occasional visits to do the calorific value test on the gas, carrying the heavy Boy's calorimeter and equipment. On completion of my tests, I had to dismantle the equipment and attempt to ascend the one in three hill in an 8HP Ford van. On more than one occasion this entailed reversing up the hill!

Little remains of the gasworks today, other than the base of the large gasholder and the old retorts built into the seawall and also into the garden of one of the past owners' of the works, 'up Bay'.

ALAN STANIFORTH

Retorts in sea wall



Retorts and furnace in the gasworks

Photos courtesy of Bay Museum

THE GREENFINCH

Photo © Sharon Artley

IS IT my imagination, or are there more greenfinches around this year?

Their numbers have nearly halved since about 2005 when trichomonosis struck, but my observations, and those of others I've talked to recently, suggest that they just might be coming back. The surveys I've seen don't show anything, but greenfinches do have the ability to rebuild their numbers quite quickly given favourable conditions.

Greenfinches were historically birds of woodland or forest edge, and were rarely seen around human habitation, which is still true in some parts of continental Europe. But in Britain, they started visiting gardens in the early 1900s, and have been familiar to us ever since. Changes in farming practice, including autumn sowing and hedge flailing, remove many of the seeds that they would otherwise eat, reinforcing this move.

After breeding, adults and juveniles disperse; the latter travelling the furthest. Residents of Scotland and northern England migrate to southern England and even into Europe for the winter, travelling as far as is necessary to find food. They are unusual in that the behaviour of individual birds varies from year to year depending upon food availability and population density. At about the same time, a few northern European birds arrive along the east coast of Britain.

Most garden observers report seeing greenfinches at some point in the year, often around now, late winter and early spring, when seed quantities elsewhere have dropped, but nowadays their numbers are small, with the flocks of yore quite rare. They are gregarious birds and nest in loose communities, usually of four to six nests, preferring evergreen shrubs, although they will happily use an ornamental conifer if needs be, building their rather bulky nests from twigs, moss and grass. Most pairs will have two broods per year, each of about four eggs, the first fledging in May. Birds nesting in gardens where food is provided throughout the year appear to begin breeding earlier, giving them a chance of fitting in a third brood. The female does all the incubation, whilst feeding the young is shared.

They have a more varied diet than most finches, still mainly seeds, but some insects are taken, particularly when feeding chicks. Their beaks enable them to deal with seeds held within a fleshy fruit, such as rosehips, though they may discard the flesh. They also eat yew, hawthorn and bramble seeds when available. So far as garden feeders are concerned, they seem to have switched their allegiance from peanuts to sunflower seeds: they will sit and expertly de-shell them, dropping any too small to be of interest. They will also sort through mixed seeds discarding in all directions the ones that don't take their fancy: they can be quite aggressive to other species.

I mentioned trichomonosis as the primary cause of the greenfinches' decline. This is a protozoan parasite affecting the throat and gullet, often preventing them from feeding. Infected birds tend to be lethargic and unkempt and may drool; sometimes they have cankers or swellings around their beaks. Trichomonosis is well known to pigeon fanciers who routinely treat their birds. It transferred from pigeons and doves in the wild, probably at feeding stations, highlighting the necessity of keeping all bird feeders, and the areas around them, clean at all times. It cannot survive very long away from its host, but can be transferred via saliva left by infected birds on feeders.

It can also be passed to their young when they regurgitated food to feed them, this being the reason why you do not see them carrying food to the nest. Courtship rituals are another potential transmission route, whereby a male bird offers a food parcel to his mate. It can also be spread by infected birds dropping food which is eaten by other birds. Infected birds drinking from bird baths could also infect the water which might be another transmission route, along with faecal transmission.

Whilst greenfinches were the most affected by trichomonosis, it did also have some effect on other finches, notably chaffinches.

Trichomonosis has also sounded alarm bells, as it is the first such parasite to "jump" avian species, and the severity of its effect over a short time-span has been dramatic. Should you find a poorly or even a dead bird with the signs of trichomonosis, or any other disease, you can report it via http://www.gardenwildlifehealth.org/.

If you find the lives of our garden birds to be of interest, and would like to join in and count the feathered occupants of your garden, please contact me or visit the BTO Garden BirdWatch website (www.bto.org/gbw).

MIKE GRAY
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GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS: BUSES SERVING THE MOORS

AN ACTORS' saying goes: "If you are playing a miser, emphasise their generosity". Cue: Laurence Olivier playing Shylock in Jonathan Miller's production of *The Merchant of Venice*. Or perhaps the ad for the new Jaguar E-pace which stresses a 'sculpted bonnet' and 'muscular haunches' on as boring a car as you have ever seen.

Bus services in the Moors can be seen as both miserly and generous. It depends whether your perspective is public service or private profit, and whether you live in a moors village with no car and a low income. Bus companies outside London have been forced to pursue profit through deregulation. Centres of population and tourist haunts are best for this, but this means that many areas are neglected with few or no services. It is impossible to run them profitably.

In the North Yorkshire Moors the best routes are Arriva's 93/93X Scarborough to Whitby via Robin Hood's Bay, and X4 northwards from Whitby; Transdev's Yorkshire Coastliner's Leeds/York then prime coastal resorts via, e.g., Malton and Pickering; East Yorkshire's 128 Scarborough to Helmsley via Pickering; and Arriva 95 into Eskdale as far as Grosmont from Whitby; and the 30X Reliance service from York to Helmsley. These routes win national awards: reliable, well-crewed, modern vehicles usually with hourly services winter and summer. Visitors are often surprised to hear locals saying 'thank you' to the drivers. Not only that, drivers reply.

These prime commercial routes have character. The 93X and X4 are the perfect way to walk sections of the Cleveland Way. The 93X is often full leaving from Scarborough, especially just after passes become valid. There is jeopardy in not knowing whether you will be able to get on at intermediate stops. In ice and snow the 93X may miss out Robin Hood's Bay. The Scarborough-bound 1 in 4 out of Fylingthorpe brings the bus down through the gears to walking pace even in good weather. When you get to the top the video screen helpfully kicks in with the tease that you might spot a golden plover. The Coastliner 840 route onto the moors from Pickering via the Hole of Horcum is not just spectacular but also has the latest buses.

Deeper rural routes are a different story. This is about access, or lack of it, not profitability. Try the North Yorkshire Council's Journey planner to find out about buses from, say, Danby https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/bus-timetables. It gives you two routes: DR10 the Whitby Shopper and DR18 Glaisdale to Guisborough. DR stands for demand responsive. DR10 runs every Thursday, DR18 every other Thursday. You ring 01947 602982 to book. You cannot just turn up on the day. Try Ravenscar. Thats's better: two a day on the 115 to Scarborough, not Sundays, plus a school service. Try Rosedale Abbey. Promising, two a day on the 173 plus a passes-only school bus. Oh no. Mondays only (except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day). And so on. Such services, usually community-funded, are threadbare, existing on a funding knife-edge, and have been hollowed out over the years.

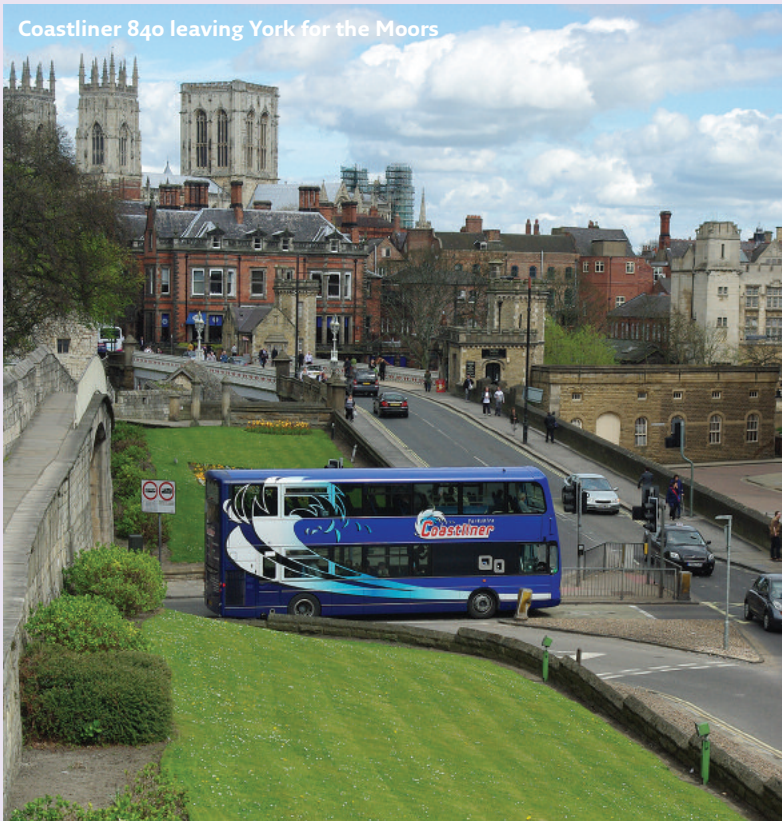
Then there is Moorsbus, a voluntary organisation running a summer bus network. Up to 2013 Moorsbus was mainly funded by the National Park Authority and the North Yorkshire County Council. At its peak Moorbus had 13 buses serving a substantial summer-only network bounded by Hull, Richmond and Bishop Auckland. Public-sector cuts put paid to that. The response was Friends of Moorsbus, with funding support from passengers, individuals and the North Yorkshire Moors Association, amongst others. From a standing start in 2014, Moorbus by 2020 has three buses, in association with Arriva, serving seven routes. https://www.moorsbus.org/timetablesfares.html

What next? Who knows? In recent months government appears to be turning its previous free market bus strategy outside London on its head. The Yorkshire Post reported in late February 2020 that the North Yorkshire County Council was in the process of preparing a formal bid of £757,000 to the government for bus network improvements from the Rural Mobility and Supported Bus Services funds (details : https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/funding-supported-bus-services-and-rural-mobility-fund-202021). This was downwind of the post-election bounty announcements for buses by Boris Johnson's government.

Judging from the lamentable performance of the Department of Transport in recent years in all aspects of strategic transport planning and management, it is a huge leap of faith to believe that any of this will lead to real advances and improvements. But if the planners want to find outstanding examples of how to make the best out of miserly resources, then look no further than North Yorkshire.

https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/bus-timetables

ADRIAN LEAMAN AND COLIN SPEAKMAN



Coastliner 840 leaving York for the Moors

Photo © Dorian Speakman

STAITHES – YORKSHIRE'S PICTURESQUE NORTHERN OUTPOST

THE LITTLE FISHING village of Staithes is the most northerly village not just in the North York Moors National Park but in the whole of Yorkshire. The name Staithes is an old Norse and Teutonic word still in use in Northern England for a landing stage, and to this day the old part of the village still crowds around its little harbour.

Staithes Beck now forms the county boundary between North Yorkshire and Redcar & Cleveland, though the National Park continues northwards beyond Boulby and its potash mine, to also include the immense 203-metre-high cliffs at Boulby the highest in England.

This is a paradise for anyone with even a passing interest in geology. Staithes lies at the tiny estuary of Staithes Beck, the stream that carves its way through the Lower Jurassic Staithes Sandstone cliffs, between 30-metre-high headlands that form Cowbar Nab to the north and Penny Nab to the south, the little breakwater and harbour in between. A rich variety of sandstones, mudstones and Cleveland ironstones give an amazing variety to the colour and texture of both cliffs and wave-polished pebbles along the shoreline – including an occasional fragment of jet. This is also an area rich in fossils, especially the variety of bivalves to be seen in the Oyster Bed rocks below Cowbar Nab.

The village didn't in fact really develop until the 15th century, then only primarily as a landing place – or Staithes – serving for the small village of Seaton recorded in the Domesday Book above on the cliff tops. This is now more or less the site of the modern part of Staithes along the main A174. The village we know as Staithes was originally known as Seaton Staithes. Eventually the first part of the name was dropped, and the name Staithes extended to include what are the newer part of the village above the cliffs. A farmhouse, known as Seaton Hall, probably situated on an ancient site at the far side of what is now the A174, still survives.

From Tudor times lucrative shell fishing including oysters provided the impetus for the growth of the harbour and a larger settlement around it. By the early 19th century, Staithes was reported to be one of busiest fishing ports along the whole of the East Coast, with at one time over 80 fishermen and their families employed. Staithes fishermen also had a reputation for their skill and courage, so much so, this unfortunately led to many of them being targeted by Royal Navy Press Gangs; many Staithes men were reported to have fought and died with Nelson at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

Alum mining was another local industry which added to the growth of the village. Alum was an important mineral used to fix dyes in textiles – and was also an important source of employment between the 16th and 19th centuries Alum was quarried or mined from the cliffs along the coast from where it could easily be exported by boat to the growing textile manufacturing centres of West Riding elsewhere. There were alum shale quarries at nearby Boulby.

Among young men attracted to the village as a centre of employment in the 18th century was 16 year-old James Cook who came to the village in 1745 as an apprentice to Staithes grocer and ship's chandler William Sanderson. Within two years Cook moved to Whitby and joined the Royal Navy.

Even until quite recent times you could see older ladies in the village wearing the distinctive Staithes Bonnets, but they are now worn only on special days. The design was, according to one old story, introduced by shipwrecked survivors from the Spanish Armada seeking sanctuary at what at that time would be a remote settlement on the Yorkshire coast. They are no mere fashion item, but are cleverly designed with padding to protect the heads of village women carrying heavy baskets of fish from the harbour side to waiting transport, also giving protection for the neck and shoulders from a dripping catch or North Sea storms. See the National Quilt Museum website for further details www.quiltmuseum.org.uk/collections/heritage/staithes-bonnet.

In the photograph taken by W.J. Harrison in 1897, one of the fisherwomen in the village wearing a traditional Staithes

Cowbar Nab

From the breakwater

View across Staithes Quayside to Cowbar Nab

W. J. Harrison, 1897. Image courtesy British Geological Survey Geoscene ©

Bonnet can just be seen on the quayside. The photograph, with the lack of activity and bored young men in the foreground, also suggest a level of poverty suffered by people in the village, as small boat fishing declined, overtaken by mechanised deep sea fishing and whaling in large ports such as Whitby, Hull and Grimsby.

The excellent little Staithes Heritage Centre on High Street has memorabilia and exhibits relating to village life, to the fishing, alum and iron industries, and the coming of the railway. But its showpiece relates to James Cook's stay in the village with a life-sized reconstruction of what the village might have looked like at that time.

But things began to revive for Staithes with the opening of the clifftop Whitby-Loftus branch of the North Eastern Railway in 1881, with a station at Staithes, sadly closed in 1958, situated close to where the present public car park is now.

The railway was the start of an economic revival of the village led by a colony of artists known as the Staithes Group, attracted and inspired by the beauty of the coast and the picturesque nature of the village, who developed their own versions of Impressionism. The most celebrated of these artists to work in Staithes was Dame Laura Knight (1877-1970) who lived in Staithes between 1894 and 1907. But she and her husband Fred were only two of up to 30 highly regarded artists who were based here at various times in the period from the 1890s up to the first World War. Artists and photographers are still drawn to the village and the dramatic coastline, and the Staithes Art Gallery in the High Street (open Wednesdays to Sundays) features Staithes artists past and present as well as running courses and exhibitions.

Like all beautiful villages in the National Park, most of the period cottages around the harbour are now bed and breakfast, second homes or holiday lets. With four village pubs, and a choice of shops, cafes and restaurants, tourism has long overtaken fishing as the mainstay of the village economy, but you will still see a few traditional wooden cobles and lobster pots around the harbour and along the banks of Staithes Beck that keep the ancient industry of fishing alive.

If you have the time and the energy, by far the best way of experiencing Staithes and its wonderful coastal setting is to walk along the superbly waymarked Cleveland Way National Trail. It's actually extremely easy to walk a short-day section to include Staithes, for example from Saltburn to Staithes (14km or 9 miles), or from Skinningrove to Staithes (10 km or 6 miles), whilst walking in the other direction Runswick Bay is around 6km or 4 miles away, Sandsend 16km or 10 miles and even Whitby 19 km or 12 miles.

What makes this so easy to do is that you can either get there all the way by frequent bus from Whitby, Middlesbrough or Saltburn, or park where you plan to finish your walk and take the same convenient X4 bus, to your chosen starting point. The X4 calls at Staithes (bus stop on main road near junction – half a mile walk to harbour or car park) and at Saltburn, Skinningrove (Lane End), Runswick Bay and Sandsend every half an hour Monday to Saturday and Sunday Bank Holiday afternoons until early evening and hourly Sunday morning; perfect for walkers. Just Google Arriva X4 Middlesbrough-Whitby to download the timetable.

COLIN SPEAKMAN

YORKSHIRE COAST PATH

Author: Andrew Vine
Publishers: Safe Haven Books London E14 8DJ
www.safehavenbooks.co.uk
Paperback, Price £14.99
ISBN: 978-0-9932911-8-0

Photo © Sandy Glossop

The author of a newly-published guidebook to the Yorkshire Coast Path, Andrew Vine, is a former Assistant Editor of 'The Yorkshire Post' who knows the area well, having walked the Yorkshire Coast for 35 years. He has used his professional skills and obvious love and knowledge of the area to produce a book which will be welcomed by newcomers and by those already acquainted with the charms of the Yorkshire coast. The book will be both useful when out walking along the coast path and also an interesting read at home, either reflecting on past walks or planning new ones.

The book is primarily a practical guide to walking the coast path from Redcar to Spurn Point, but it is much more than this. All walks, be it a day walk or a longer multi-day journey, need a degree of logistical planning in advance, and this book makes a valuable contribution to this. It is suitable for both the serious walker who may wish to complete the journey in 4 or 5 days and others who might like to break it into a series of day walks over a longer period. The full distance from Redcar to Spurn Point is 120 miles, but due to coastal erosion south of Bridlington, the author advises walking only certain safer sections beyond Bridlington itself. The 75-mile route from Redcar to Bridlington is broken into seven sections, and OS maps at 1:25,000 are included to support the clear narrative for the whole journey; OS maps are also included for those sections deemed safe south of Bridlington. Furthermore, the book contains a mileage chart which gives the distance between the main intermediate access points - 23 in all - which is particularly useful for those planning shorter or part-day walks.

Yorkshire Coast Path is printed in full colour as an A5-sized volume with around 120 photographs, and it fits nicely into a small rucksack pocket. There are sections on where to find information on transport, accommodation and tide-tables; this is particularly useful around Runswick, Filey and south of Bridlington, where some beach walking is necessary. It also has a list of Tourist Information Offices, other useful addresses, and suggestions for further reading.

The main towns encountered on the route - Whitby, Scarborough and Bridlington - are each the subject of a comprehensive summary of their origins and present-day attractions, whilst smaller centres such as Redcar, Saltburn, Staithes, Robin Hood's Bay and Filey are the subject of similar but shorter reviews.

On first acquaintance this book might seem to be just another guide to the coastal section of the Cleveland Way, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year; however, it has much more to offer than that. Interwoven into its 160 pages, the author finds time to draw the reader's attention away from the coastal footpath to the history of the area, the jet and alum mining industries, fishing, bird-life, natural history and geology. There is also coverage of the area's artistic connections, with information on the Staithes School of artists, who flourished in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Victorian Leeds-based painter Atkinson Grimshaw, and David Hockney; and in the literary field the Brontës, Winifred Holtby, and Philip Larkin. We even 'meet' Count Dracula, Captain James Cook and - most surprisingly - Lawrence of Arabia, who was stationed in Bridlington during the early 1930s.

Finally, as might be expected from a book supported by 'Welcome to Yorkshire', it works well as a tourist guide, encouraging people to sample the charms and beauty of the Yorkshire Coast and adjacent areas. The North York Moors Railway and the Tour de Yorkshire cycling events are featured in articles which should give our important tourism industry a well-deserved boost.

If I do have one suggestion for improvement, I think the author could have included information on the Cinder Track, the disused Scarborough to Whitby railway line which is never far from the coast path and is used these days by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders; when used together with the 'stage mileage' charts it is possible to create some enjoyable circular routes, returning the walker to a parked car or bus stop.

So whether you are a serious long distance walker, a more casual rambler or just an interested tourist wanting to find out more about this lovely corner of Yorkshire, this book will make a good addition to your bookshelf.

SANDY GLOSSOP

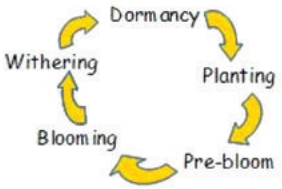
SKYLARKS

Hello Skylarks, do you have a good memory?
Last spring you completed an activity about how plants and animals need warmth and moisture to grow and thrive and you named the daffodil as a flower that blooms in spring.

If daffodils still have warmth and moisture, why don't they bloom all year round?

It's a bit like our bodies when we exercise. Do you think you could run forever and ever? What do you need to do when you run out of energy?
You probably said something like 'get your breath back' or 'rest'.

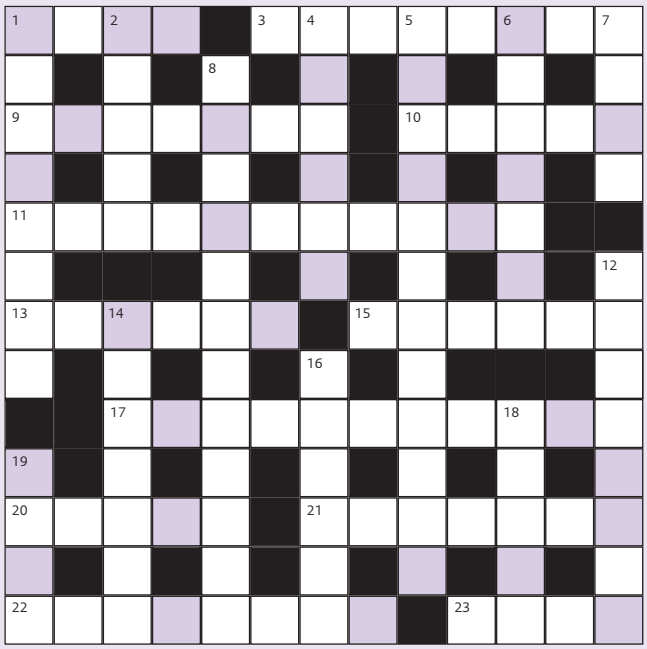
Daffodils and hundreds of other flowers and plants need to do exactly the same. In flowers this is known as dormancy or being asleep. The plant is still alive but is saving energy to flower again next year. **Planting** of new bulbs usually happens in autumn and then just after winter new shoots will appear when they **pre-bloom**. At this time of year daffodils may still be in blooming or they might have started **withering** like in the picture above.



Daffodil activity
Using the information above, make yourself a poster of the life cycle of a daffodil.
There are five stages, draw a picture for each one and write something about each stage.

We enjoy including your pictures, stories and news, please keep sending them to editor@nyma.org.uk

CROSSWORD 88 BY AMANUENSIS



Take the letters from the coloured squares in the grid and rearrange in the boxes to solve the anagram.
Clue: Whitby's stairway to heaven perhaps? (3,3,7,3,6-4,5)

ACROSS
1 Crazy pals go to high places (4)
3 Has a lot of bottle? (8)
9 Made contact with Russian suffering internal pain (7)
10 One hundred take break on ridge (5)
11 The Norsemen's craft (6,5)
13 Went quickly to detectives rank (6)
15 Glowing yearly meeting includes meadow (6)
17 Germanic people from our distant past (5-6)
20 Couple join a party at Spanish museum (5)
21 Doubled up Italian meal? (7)
22 Double-edged weapon across the border! (8)
23 This health food may be stored in barn (4)

DOWN
1 Animal that always comes first? (8)
2 Practical joke from quiet line of cabs (5)
4 Caught red handed perhaps? (2,4)
5 Uncle H began a mix up - the result can't be altered (12)
6 Supervise six deliveries to bishop's domain (7)
7 The second son of the first man (4)
8 Perhaps decorating place in which to swap clothes (8.4)
12 Missed out nothing on vocation (8)
14 Range enveloped by rain storm creates American flower (7)
16 Van on the rails in USA (6)
18 Smell of nothing sullen (5)
19 Heroic period found within deep ice age (4)

Answers on back cover

NYMA NEWS

WE'RE pleased to have made an award of £400 to a group of National Park volunteers in February, known as the 'Silver Seals' because they're retired folks who worked formerly at industrial sites on Seal Sands, Teesside. They're out and about in the western area of the park most weekends maintaining the rights-of-way by replacing waymarks, mending gates and stiles, and clearing vegetation. The award is to help them purchase the tools and equipment they need.

NYMA has followed through on the Whitby Naturalists' excellent work of planting alder buckthorn to attract brimstone butterflies by planting four dozen or so trees ourselves. The Whitby Naturalists were recipients of our 2019 Conservation Award for this scheme.

We welcome our latest Business Member – Dolphin Mobility, which installs stair-lifts all over Yorkshire, Cumbria and the Northeast. Director Gareth Watkinson comments that he and his engineers love driving across the North York Moors when they have work in that direction – and in his leisure time the Yorkshire Coast provides a beautiful venue for quality time with the family

A dozen of us enjoyed an insightful tour of Stokesley in January, led by NYMA member and local resident Beryl Turner.

Due to the Coronavirus, NYMA has suspended its guided walking programme and other events for at least the next 3 months. This situation will be kept under review. Please look at the website and future editions of *Voice* for updates.

NYMA WALKS

In view of the current Coronavirus situation, NYMA will not be organising any walks until further notice.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS (see page 17)

Anagram

THE ONE HUNDRED AND
NINETY-NINE STEPS

Down

1 aardvark, 2 prank, 4 in debt, 5 unchangeable,
6 oversee, 7 Seth, 8 changing room.
12 omission, 14 Niagara, 16 boxcar,
18 odour, 19 epic

Across

1 Alps, 3 bibulous, 9 reached, 10 crest,
11 Viking boats, 13 rancid, 15 agleam,
17 Anglo-Saxons, 20 Prado, 21 calzoni,
22 claymore, 23 bran

NYMA
4 Station Road, Castleton, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO21 2EG