

VOICE OF THE MOORS

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



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Cover: Statue of Dora Walker, by Emma Stothard (© J Roberts). Dora Walker (1890-1980) was the first female skipper of a fishing-boat in the north-east. Originally from a wealthy manufacturing family in West Yorkshire, she moved to Whitby for health reasons and became fascinated with the fishing industry. She had her own boat built, developed good seafaring skills, and fished all through the Second World War. She started a company selling local fish and later wrote her memoirs and tales of Whitby.

NYMA MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership:

- Individual £18
- Joint £25 (living at same address)

Annual digital membership:

- Individual £10
- Joint £14 (living at same address)

10 Year membership:

- Individual £120
- Joint £150 (living at same address)

Life membership:

- Individual £300
- Joint £400 (living at same address)

Business membership:

- Small businesses (up to 10 employees): £30
- Large businesses (more than 10 employees): £100

For membership queries or if you wish to join our e-newsletter list, please contact Membership Secretary: Carolyn Moore on 01287 669648 or e-mail: membership@nyma.org.uk

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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

STEPPING DOWN

After sixteen years as Chairman of NYMA I have decided it is time to step down. It is time to bring fresh ideas forward to enable the Association to respond to the environmental issues to be faced in the coming months and years. Some of these were highlighted at our conference in October and also at COP 26. We live in a rapidly changing world with the climate emergency encroaching on many aspects of life, not least in rural areas where changing habitats and loss of biodiversity and wildlife are already evident.

TWO CONFERENCES

NYMA's Conference 'The Future Role of National Parks' in October was a resounding success thanks to our Executive Secretary Janet Cochrane who must be given full credit for bringing her organisational experience so effectively to the event. A big 'thank you' is also due to the NYMA team who contributed in so many ways, including greeting people, providing IT support, transporting delegates, and on the field trips. All but two of the English and Welsh National Parks Societies sent delegates and we also had a full complement from the Campaign for National Parks. The many comments from delegates were a measure of the event's success in terms of its organisation and the quality and diversity of the speakers. Given its initial cancellation in 2020 and the following uncertainties associated with Covid-19, we can regard the conference as an outstanding achievement. (A full report appears on pages 6-7.)

In November COP 26, 'The Conference of Parties', brought together the nations who signed up to the 1992 UN Framework on Climate Change. Representatives from 197 countries attended the Glasgow conference to try and reach a consensus on how they might keep to the 2015 Paris Agreement goal to limit global warming to 1.5°C by the year 2050.

To measure progress, independent scientific analysis has been carried out by Climate Action Tracker, whose report 'State of Climate Action 2021' identifies what is required to achieve the reductions in emissions agreed at the Paris COP and what remains to be done by 2030. Of the 40 indicators, none are on track to reach the 2030 targets. Amongst these, we need to phase out coal-powered electricity generation five times faster than presently planned, and tree cover needs to happen three times faster. In other words, to achieve the 2050 target of 1.5°C there has to be a transformation in many areas, including how we power our homes and businesses, transport people and goods, grow food, construct buildings, protect our forests and much more. The online conference NYMA is organising jointly with Friends of the Dales in January on retrofitting traditional buildings to make them more energy efficient fits squarely within this agenda.

WHAT DID COP 26 ACHIEVE?

Summing up in his closing address, Alok Sharma, President of COP 26, said:

"Today we can say with credibility that we have kept 1.5 degrees within reach. But its pulse is weak and it will only survive if we keep our promises, if we translate commitments into rapid action, if we deliver on the expectations set out in this Glasgow Climate Pact to increase ambition to 2030 and beyond and if we close the vast gap that remains, as we must."

Perhaps the most important outcome of the Glasgow Pact is that instead of waiting till 2025 for COP 27 there was agreement to bring this forward to 2022, highlighting the urgency required to deal with the climate emergency.

THE ENVIRONMENT ACT 2021

On 9th November, after many delays, the Environment Bill passed into law, the first UK bill for thirty years aimed at protecting the environment. The Act makes provision for a large number of matters including establishing the Office for Environmental Protection. There is hope that its provisions for improving and safeguarding our environment will translate into actions and that organisations such as the water companies will be held to account for their polluting activities.

LOOKING BACK

I took on the role of Chairman of NYMA when Peter Barrow stepped down at the 2005 AGM. That was held in Fryup Village Hall – and was notable also for the excellent food served up by the village hall caterers! In my first contribution to ‘Voice’ as chairman (Issue 81) I mentioned the CAP reforms and the introduction of Environmental Stewardship schemes as well as The Countryside and Rights of Way Act which came into effect in October 2005. Since then, my Foreword has appeared 64 times. In making the decision to step down I have looked back at what NYMA has been up to in the last sixteen years, and I have picked out a few outstanding examples.

JUNIPER TREE PLANTING

The first planting of Juniper trees was carried out in 2002 by four local schools at the head of Fryupdale. This marked the beginning of a programme of planting of Juniper trees across the National Park to regenerate populations of this important local tree, using seedlings propagated from berries collected by school-children. The project ran for around 10 years and involved NYMA and the National Park Authority.

CORNFIELD FLOWERS PROJECT

In 2010 NYMA joined the management group for this project and became its lifeline, employing two project officers - Chris



Wilson and Tom Normandale. Starting with a plant survey by Nan Sykes which identified the loss of arable plants, the work achieved national acclaim, culminating in an exhibition at the Millennium Seed Bank (part of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew) which holds seeds of plants propagated during the project.

THE HISTORY TREE

This project was conceived by Albert Elliot to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of NYMA by commemorating a 200-year-old Copper Beech tree which stood outside the Moors Centre, Danby. An engraved plate with the names of events and people who lived during the life of the tree was placed in front of the Moors Centre in 2010, and the book ‘The History Tree: Moments in the Lifetime of a Memorable Tree’ followed in 2018. Edited by Janet Cochrane, the book had contributions from over 30 people, and the NYMA team also prepared educational materials presented to primary schools across the North York Moors.

MOORSBUS

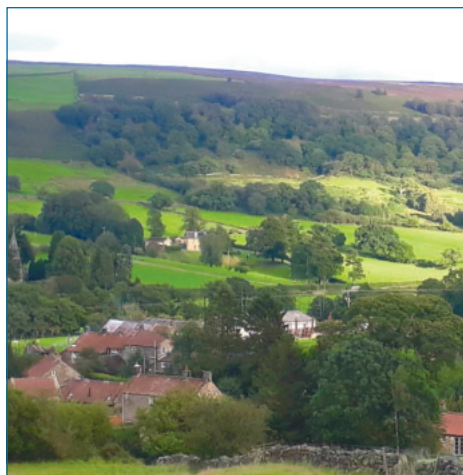
Funding support for Moorsbus was initially provided through a bequest to NYMA from the estate of Charles Laughton, which helped this admirable project to provide a public transport network for visitors to the National Park. NYMA continues to support Moorsbus.

VOICE OF THE MOORS

It is not possible to look back without noticing the important role of ‘Voice’ as the main link with NYMA members. A succession of editors has maintained the high quality of content, with the excellent standard of design due to the generosity of Pascal Thivillon of Basement Press, Glaisdale. Finally, thank you to the many people who over the years have made my task as Chairman both satisfying and a pleasure. I will remain on the Council as a Trustee.

To all NYMA members - a peaceful and happy Christmas.

TOM CHADWICK



‘THE RESPONSIBLE RETROFIT OF TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES’

TUESDAY 25 JANUARY, 7PM (ONLINE)

Joint Event with the Friends of the Dales

This talk covers a topic central to the built heritage of National Parks and other conservation areas: how vernacular buildings can be modernised in terms of energy efficiency. The talk will be given by Nigel Griffiths, a sustainability and energy efficiency expert with over 25 years’ experience as a practitioner, project manager, author and consultant, and there will be a chance to ask him questions.

This free event is enabled by the generous sponsorship of sustainability specialists Native Architects of York.

Book your place by emailing secretary@nyma.org.uk

TOM CHADWICK: FAREWELL NOT GOODBYE - AN APPRECIATION

Photo © Dave Moore



At the 2017 NYMA AGM



Planting trees at Corbett's Copse on a winter's day

RECENTLY, after the highly successful National Park Societies' Conference hosted by NYMA, chatting to Tom, I pondered with him the personal question for our respective roles in conservation: "When is the job done?" It was of course a rhetorical question, for we both knew full well that the job is never - and is highly unlikely ever - to be done, such that we can relax and enjoy the fruits of our labours.

Tom told me that the time had come for the baton to be handed on, a critical consideration for those leading any organisation, and somehow in the voluntary world, quite a hard step to take when so much knowledge and experience is bound up in the role. But the years move on and without sound succession, however good our contributions, there are real dangers for any organisation. Tom has delivered a sustained and stoic performance for 16 years, especially in relation to fundamental threats to the national park principles such as major mining proposals. Maintaining the momentum against seemingly relentless obstacles and pressures - you can't do a half job - is a steep uphill and daunting task to sustain with inevitable personal sacrifice, which Tom has pursued in full measure.

But for me it would be a shame only to remember his role for 'the fight'. For many years we shared joint responsibility for

managing the Cornfield Flowers Project to save the wild plants of arable fields - a truly lovely experiment which brought together farmers, local authorities and volunteers in a delightful non-bureaucratic experience. Without Tom and NYMA the project would most likely have failed when the National Park Authority declined to continue employing the Project staff on behalf of the management group. Pivotal, it was then that NYMA seamlessly stepped in; and most importantly, with Tom acting as the catalyst to smooth the way forward. This is just the kind of quiet, hidden contribution which lies behind many great projects, where unsung heroes are focussed on the outcome, not on personal position or aggrandisement.

Another example of Tom's quiet contribution to his lifelong concern for environmental protection is his work in taking water quality samples from a weather station at Camphill, near Danby, for over three decades, keeping meticulous records and feeding into analysis of climate change as it affects the Upper Esk Valley. From his home in Castleton - where he and his wife Sue will celebrate 50 years in the village next year - he has built on his time as an art teacher at Caedmon School in Whitby to develop a wide-ranging knowledge of the area. In fact, his familiarity with the paths and tracks around his home is quite possibly unsurpassed, as he is still an enthusiastic fell-runner and goes out on moorland jaunts most days.

When Tom handed over the National Parks Societies' wooden walking staff to the Snowdonia Society at the end of the October Conference - a gesture similar to handing on the Olympic flame to the next host! - I sensed that an era might be drawing to a close. I thought to myself, this has been a great conference, 'Go out at the top'... and indeed that is exactly what Tom did, leaving him with the memory of a job for NYMA very well done.

I am a great believer that there really are times, when giving thanks, that 'Less said can be more powerful than saying more'. So, Tom, simply: 'Thank you' and 'Farewell' as Chairman for an outstanding performance. But it is not 'Goodbye': your friends and colleagues look forward to continuing our work together for the future of national parks through your role as a Council Member and Trustee of the Association.

Once again, thank you.

IAN CARSTAIRS

THE QUIZZERS' COMPENDIUM

Containing over a thousand general knowledge questions covering an eclectic range of topics, the new Quizzers' Compendium makes a perfect gift to test the wit, wisdom and brain-power of family and friends. With 50 individual quizzes for solo or team participation, the questions - and answers - are packed with interesting facts and information.

Compiled by NYMA stalwart Albert Elliot -

aka 'Ainsley' - all profits go to NYMA. Books can be purchased for £8 from: Guisborough Book Shop; Book Corner, Milton Street, Saltburn; Chapter One Bookshop, Loftus; the Moors Centre, Danby. Alternatively, write to Albert at Piper House, 54 Church Street, Castleton, Whitby, N Yorkshire YO21 2EL enclosing a cheque for £10 (to include p&p), or order your copy by email on elliott142@btinternet.com.

QUIZZERS' COMPENDIUM

A GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CHALLENGE

- FOLK? POLITICS? PLANTS? ART? CUSTOMS?
- CATS? HISTORY? ACIDS? FOOD? RIVERS?
- SPORT? BOTANY? LITERATURE? CRIME?
- ANIMALS? PEOPLE? TELEVISION?
- SHOOKER? QUOTES? THEATRE? MUSIC?
- VOLCANOES? BONES? RELIGION? DRINK?
- MEDICINE? ENTERTAINMENT? NATURE?
- MATHEMATICS? GEOGRAPHY? BALLET?
- ASTRONOMY? SCIENCE? WRITERS?
- EXPLORERS? WORDS? BIRDS? SEAS?
- INSECTS? GAMES? PHYSICIST? PLANETS?
- COOKERY? BOOKS? SCULPTURE?
- HONEY? FILM? JAZZ? COMPUTING?
- FOOTBALL? ORES? ROYALTY? MOUNTAINS?
- ET CETERA

QUESTIONS SET BY AINSLEY

TRIBUTE TO SHARON ARTLEY



Lacewing

Photos © Sharon Artley

IT WAS with great sadness that in late November we learned of the death of Sharon Artley, Editor of 'Voice of the Moors' between 2018 and 2020.

After retiring as a teacher, Sharon developed her hobby of wildlife photography and went out often into the Moors to capture on camera the birds, insects and other wildlife that she loved. She kindly shared many of her stunning photographs with NYMA members through 'Voice of the Moors' even after standing down as Editor. She was equally generous with advice to aspiring photographers, and summed up her success as: "in a nutshell, the right camera lens, lots of patience, good light, lots more patience, getting it wrong (a lot!), being super critical and keeping practising!"

We're reproducing here a small selection of the marvellous images that Sharon created. She often chose to photograph animals which wouldn't be everyone's first choice, but it was typical of her to see beauty in creatures which others might overlook. Of the Greenbottle, she said "I love the contrast between the green iridescence and the pink flower", while she caught the extraordinary colours of the Lacewing one evening at her desk with only the reading light for illumination. Of the Dunnock, she said "they may be only grey and brown, but I think they are beautiful". Another of Sharon's long-term interests was helping women in need in the Masaai Mara, Kenya, and she sold many of her magnificent photographs of British and East African wildlife to benefit them.

As a former colleague said: "Whatever Sharon did, she always did it very well indeed". She will be very much missed.

JANET COCHRANE

Dunnock in snow



Greenbottle



NATIONAL PARK SOCIETIES COME TO THE MOORS

Photos © NYMA



EACH OF the 13 national parks of England and Wales has its own support and campaigning group, with the exception of Northumberland. For well over 30 years, an annual conference of representatives of all 12 societies, plus our “parent” organisation, the Campaign for National Parks (CNP), has taken place. The idea behind these annual events, which move each year to a different park, is a simple one: to share news, ideas, information, best practice, and of course to get to know something of each other’s national park.

Organising such a conference often gives a real boost to the host society, bringing together members for a common purpose. It is a lot of work but often can do much to reinvigorate an organisation as we showcase our own national park and what our society has achieved.

It was more than 20 years ago when NYMA last hosted a conference, so in 2019 Council decided it was time we stepped up to the challenge to host in 2020. Sadly this was not to be, owing to the pandemic, but despite all the difficulties and uncertainties your Council was determined to go ahead in 2021. In October we enjoyed what by general agreement was a highly successful three-day event, superbly organised by NYMA Executive Secretary Janet Cochrane and her team of volunteers. Cober Hill Hotel, Cloughton, near Scarborough, was chosen as the venue. A former home of Arnold Rowntree from the great York family of chocolatiers and philanthropists, Cober Hill is set in spectacular grounds just inside the North York Moors National Park. It proved a perfect location.

ACTION TO CHANGE THE WORLD

The theme of the conference – ‘The Future Role of National Parks’ – was simple in concept but a challenge in terms of outcomes to be achieved. All our speakers reflected what by common consent are the three greatest challenges to our way of life – Covid-19 and its aftermath; the economic impact of our exit from the EU, particularly on farming; and greatest of all the Climate Crisis.

With over 50 delegates attending, the conference got off to a flying start on the first evening after NYMA Chair Tom Chadwick introduced Roger Osborne, celebrated local author, geologist and raconteur who, with a few telling maps and slides, offered an explanation of the characteristic Jurassic rocks that underlie our moors, dales and spectacular coastline. He introduced

delegates to some of the variety of fossils which in his view makes the Yorkshire coast every bit as important as Dorset and East Devon’s Jurassic Coast, as well as outlining a great industrial heritage linked to iron, jet and alum.

On the second day the morning session was chaired by NYMA President Ian Carstairs. In his introduction Ian quoted the great anthropologist Margaret Mead: “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world”. He stressed that we need to ensure that our national parks receive effective protection whilst also ensuring income streams for land managers in national parks, with strong regulations for habitat protection and such issues as light pollution and its heavy impact on insect life.

The first of our guest speakers was Tom Hinds, CEO of the North York Moors National Park Authority. His agenda included dealing with the immediate threat to many hill farmers caused by Covid-19 and post-Brexit CAP financial changes, including the need for diversification. What impacts will ‘Net-Zero’ adaptations to address climate change have on national park landscapes? How can we ensure nature recovery and protection of special landscape features at a time when pressure from recreation and demographic changes are increasing? National parks will have a crucial role in implementing and developing the new Environmental Land Management Schemes which could have crucial benefits for the environment as well as protecting farm incomes.

Debbie Treblico, of the North Yorkshire Rural Commission, spoke of the challenges faced by rural North Yorkshire. 47% of this, the largest county in England, is protected landscape. Yet rural communities are struggling – an ageing population as young people migrate to the cities, between a quarter and a third of farmers struggling to survive, restricted opportunities for young people including poorly paid jobs, inadequate public transport, and lack of rented accommodation. But there are also huge new opportunities when agencies, landholders and communities work together – the Hovingham Estate being a fine example. There are also massive opportunities for new and better-paid jobs in emerging green technologies.

Kate Ashbrook, General Secretary of the Open Spaces Society, reminded delegates of the need to put people at the heart of national parks, created as they were by the great 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. She quoted former

National Parks Minister Rory Stewart as suggesting that national parks are the 'soul of Britain', and the need to foster the close relationship between people and nature to create greater understanding of the natural world. New environmental farming measures need to be combined with better access provision, especially for people from low income or BAME backgrounds, not just the better-off middle classes. Climate change mitigation measures must be combined with greater knowledge of and access to the natural world, while Nelson Mandela's call for 'vision with action' to change the world should be a motto for all national park campaigners.

The morning ended with David Rooke, Chair of the Yorkshire Derwent Catchment Partnership. He outlined the importance of the River Derwent which produces around 20% of Yorkshire's drinking water, yet is internationally important for conservation and biodiversity, including the Lower Derwent National Nature Reserve and Ramsar sites. Investment in flood management schemes in the Derwent's tributary valleys in the North York Moors produce £6 of benefit for every £1 invested. Partnership with stakeholders was vital to make progress.

LINKING ENVIRONMENT AND PEOPLE

The afternoon session was chaired by Colin Speakman, Trustee of NYMA, who reminded delegates how 40 years ago the radical Exmoor activist Malcolm MacEwan spoke of national parks being 'Greenprints' for the future in terms of developing new techniques of environmental management for wildlife and nature conservation.

This was a theme developed by former NYMNP Chief Executive Andy Wilson, who spoke of the need to empower national parks. Much progress was achieved year by year until around 2009, when austerity policies froze that progress, replacing action with empty words and promises. As popular support for nature conservation and national parks was growing, financial support was reducing, and planning controls were being weakened. Government agencies such as Natural England and DEFRA became ineffective, resulting in lost opportunities and damage. The Glover Report promised greater support for NPs and AONBs but little is yet delivered, including a failure to develop policies for wilderness management. Andy offered 14 key strategies for National Park Authorities to adopt to reverse this decline.

David Steele, CEO of the Dawnay Estates, demonstrated how a major landowner can deliver many national park core objectives in terms of managing not only grouse moors in a sensitive way, but also in woodland planting, visitor management, tourism provision, providing low-cost rented accommodation for local families, and management of archaeological sites and historic

buildings (including the Moors Centre at Danby) in a profitable way. This includes facilitating fast broadband networks to support and encourage rural businesses.

Susan Briggs is a tourism consultant who manages both the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors Tourism Networks, with over 600 small businesses in the Moors network alone, focusing on effective marketing, developing a sense of place, and supporting her members by trend spotting and networking. Sustainable tourism in a national park or even 'Regenerative' tourism (which aims to improve an environment) is about minimising environmental impact whilst maximising revenue by extending stays, including through new forms of nature and activity tourism. She gave several examples of how this can be achieved.

The afternoon concluded with a stunning presentation by Scarborough naturalist and wildlife photographer Steve Race, who through his magnificent wildlife photographs emphasised the need to protect the species being photographed, for example by keeping distant from subjects or blending into the background whilst capturing them on camera.

Themes raised by delegates in both morning and afternoon session included questions of how we can engage 30-40 year-olds to join national park societies and the kind of vision we should have for national parks 70 years from now.

Lastly, CNP's CEO Rose O'Neill, Policy & Research Manager Ruth Bradshaw, and Campaigns & Communication Officer Laura Williams brought delegates up to date with CNP's current campaigns and strategies.

FIELD TRIPS FOR EDUCATION AND RELAXATION

The final day of the Conference was spent in the North York Moors with three well-organised field trips led by local experts, illustrating themes of the conference: to Spaunton Moor looking at key issues of moorland, wildlife habitat and peatland management; to Robin Hood's Bay and Ravenscar to look at visitor management issues in both the present and the past; and to Grosmont, once a busy, productive but polluted industrial village, now a major visitor honeypot and heritage centre on a nationally celebrated Heritage Railway.

COLIN SPEAKMAN

If you weren't able to attend the conference or you'd like a reminder of what the speakers said, the presentations are on NYMA's YouTube channel. On YouTube, search 'North Yorkshire Moors Association' and you'll find it.



OUR WILD ROSES

Photo © Janet Cochrane



Robin's pincushion

ROSSES conjure up summer days rather than winter ones, and our wild roses on woodland edges and in hedgerows were spectacular this year - although with our now changeable weather their blooms seemed very short-lived and to melt away in the rain. But now we have the outcome: rose hips, ripe, red and full of seeds. These should last all winter, brightening up our countryside, if not prematurely cut away by the too-early management of our hedgerows, depriving wildlife of its winter food stores.

Roses are England's national flower and have been a long-recorded part of our history. However, these are generally not our wild roses but the garden or 'tamed' roses originally from the Middle East, probably Persia, which were showier and more scented so were preferred for perfumery and garden ornamentation. Our native ones were called 'dog roses', a term often indicating an inferior plant, although the name may originate from their use in the past to cure the bite of a mad dog, or it could even refer to 'dag' - or dagger - from their sharp thorns.

BRITAIN'S NATIVE ROSES

Most native roses are scrambling deciduous shrubs with thorny stems, flowers with five pink/white petals with sepals, and stipuled, pinnate leaves with serrated leaflets. The fruit is actually a 'false fruit' and consists of hips, usually red and full of bristly seeds.

The native species are somewhat difficult to identify and classify, their actual number being open to dispute. They vary greatly and hybridise, and identification often rests on small differences in morphological features.

The most common are the dog rose group, *Rosa carnina*, including our northern dog rose *R. caesia*. These are long-stemmed scrambling shrubs of woodland edge, cliffs, hedges and thickets, with large hooked prickles, shiny green leaves and pink flowers in June and July. Their hips tend to be flask shaped. Next in frequency is the downy rose group *R. tomentosa*, which includes our northern downy rose *R. mollis* and Sherard's downy rose *R. sherardii*. Their foliage is grey-green and downy, stems a little less scrambling with straight prickles, darker pink flowers and round prickly hips that retain their sepals for longer. They tend to be more of a hedgerow plant.

The white-flowered, prominently styled, field rose *R. arvensis* can occasionally be found in hedges on more alkaline soils, as

can the rarer scented-leaved sweet briar *R. rubiginosa*. On sea cliffs the prickly white-flowered, black-hipped burnet rose *R. spinosissima* may be found in one or two locations.

FOOD AND MEDICINE FROM ROSES

Although the introduced garden roses were kept for their perfume, our native ones were used as food and medicine. One of the earliest recorded uses was of the 'robin's pincushion', the distorted round prickly 'bud' produced by the gall wasp. Also known as 'bedeguars', they were dried, crushed and used to treat bladder and kidney stones, and as a diuretic.

Petals were used to make rose water as a cooling astringent skin cleanser and tonic, or to flavour drinks. They were also crystallised and made into jam, jellies and syrups. The hips, divested of their seed, were cooked into purees, pulps or jams for tarts and desserts.

The hips have been most prized however for their medicinal properties, never more so than during the Second World War, when no oranges rich in vitamin C reached our shores. Instead, rose-hip syrup was made in huge quantities from the hips collected by volunteers, often school-children, and was made available to all families and children in order to supply this essential vitamin - which the hips actually contain more of than any other fruit. They also contain antioxidants, organic acids and tannins, acting as a whole-body tonic. They boost the immune system, helping to fight infection as well as having a cooling effect to bring down fevers and inflammations. They aid waste elimination but check diarrhoea and dysentery. A tea of the dried hips makes a superb 'pick me up' to fight off colds and flu's, sore throats and chest complaints. Petals have similar but weaker properties but are more soothing and calming, so are also helpful for depression and menopausal symptoms.

Even the seeds were once used to break down kidney stones, and the seed oil as an anti-wrinkle cream, while their prickly attachments were thought to eliminate worms. Who remembers as a child putting these as 'itching powder' down a companion's neck?

Wild roses are such vibrant treasures, often overlooked and almost lost from our hedgerows, but surely so useful in winter, to us as well as to our wildlife.

ANNE PRESS



Rosa arvensis

Photo © Nan Sykes

RELEASE OF PHEASANTS AND PARTRIDGE



Pheasant in snow



Red-legged Partridge

Photo © Jill Pakenham

A SA REGULAR walker on and around the Moors I seem forever to be putting up pheasants and partridge as well as coming across pens and feeding stations for released gamebirds. I have also noticed a significant increase in rooks, crows and buzzards, and wondered whether there was any connection.

The practice of breeding, releasing and feeding some species of gamebird, primarily Ring-necked Pheasant and Red-legged Partridge, is vast and widespread and has both supporters and detractors, with the latter increasingly vocal of late. Leaving aside the moral, social and economic issues, what effect does this massive release of non-native species and associated land management practices have on indigenous wildlife?

There are two sides to most stories, and this is no exception. The control of some predatory species and some of the land management schemes may have positive effects, but many smaller birds are outcompeted or preyed by the larger interlopers, and their habitats can be destroyed or at least diminished.

THE SCALE OF THE ISSUE

In recent years, effort has gone into trying to determine exactly what effect the releases have, but accurate information concerning numbers and areas of release is hard to come by. Many of the organisations involved are understandably reticent, and it has proven challenging for researchers to find a true baseline to use in any comparisons: this is essential, as most scientific work needs a control scenario and repeatable and reliable data to compare with it. Nevertheless, several studies have been published recently, including from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and Natural England, summarising what is known and proposing further work to learn more.

A few numbers from the BTO report (2019) give a feel for the size of the issue:

“Every year, 40–50 million non-native gamebirds (Ring-necked Pheasant and Red-legged Partridge) are released in the UK, a combined weight of around 46,000 tonnes. Fewer than half these birds are shot, with the remaining individuals preyed, scavenged or surviving to breed, or to be preyed in subsequent years. This means there is potentially a large food resource available to predators and scavengers, a resource that has steadily increased as the numbers released have grown.”

To put this figure in perspective, this is more than twice the combined weight of all our native breeding birds put together. Such a quantity of non-native birds being released each year, together with the supplementary food put out for them, will clearly have a major effect on local ecosystems: but much still remains to be learned about the plusses and minuses.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS

We know that game management in general can have positive effects; for instance, measures to enhance agricultural habitat for gamebirds are likely to be advantageous for other species, and predator control could have implications for species vulnerable to predation, including declining breeding waders like the curlew. However, curlew declines were found to be greatest in areas of high crow abundance, which is where releases are at their highest. Again, the evidence goes both ways and these indirect effects have yet to be fully investigated.

But what about the impact of the gamebirds themselves? They can alter hedgerow and understory structure, both of which are important for nesting birds, and reduce the numbers of invertebrates available for other birds to eat, outcompeting them by sheer volume. They may also increase disease and parasite transmission, particularly around feeding stations, a well-documented problem when feeding garden birds. Gamebird releases typically occur in late autumn, when other food may be scarce, so are predator populations being sustained above levels they would otherwise reach? If so, could this have implications for species that are vulnerable to increased predation pressure?

BTO results showed that buzzards, jays and crows were more numerous in areas of higher gamebird abundance, although there was a negative association between the abundance of magpies and that of gamebirds. Possible explanations include predator control reducing magpie numbers, habitat management not favouring them, and greater competition and nest predation by crows.

FURTHER RESEARCH AND COOPERATION NEEDED

This is a discussion that will run on, with passions high on both sides. It is obvious that such a major interference with the environment will have consequences, many of them unintended. To allow the research needed to find out what is really happening, and then to better balance the local environment, all concerned need to contribute openly. There is already pressure to reduce the quantity of birds released, and once the subject is better understood, it may be possible to reduce the negative effects and enhance the positive ones.

MIKE GRAY

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). If you know of an organisation no more than 30 miles from York which would like a talk on garden birds contact: Mike Gray on gbwmike@gmail.com.

Photo © John Harding

EXPERIENCES OF MOORLAND MANAGEMENT

Looking from Danby Moor into Fryupdale

DRIVING UP through Cropton, Rosedale and over the watershed to Danby High Moor was one of the great joys of managing the Danby Moors Estate, which includes a 10,500 acre grouse moor, Danby Castle and 14 upland farms. Doing so meant participating in and leading an interdependence of people, farming, grouse, vegetation, peatland, water and history. The views over the classic heather plateaux with the North Sea in the distance meant that this was probably the very best 'office' you could occupy!

The Danby Estate has been owned by the Dawnay family since 1656 when it was purchased by Sir John Dawnay, whose family title later became the Viscount Downe, of which the current owner is the 12th Viscount. Interestingly, the Danby Court Leet was formed at about the same time to prevent any further enclosure of what is now the moor and of a common which extends into five village greens.

Over the last 365 years there has been a symbiotic relationship between men and women, farming and grouse moorland management. Much of this interdependence relies on balancing the priorities of managing a moor for the benefit of grouse and sheep with the need to maintain and improve biodiversity, soils including peat, vegetation and mosses, and water quality, all on designated landscapes within a National Park and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). An increasing number of management practices are proving controversial such as controlled burning, vermin or pest control and retention of the relatively small areas of blanket bog. Inevitably, controversy creates extreme views – on both 'sides' – which makes the task of explanation so much more difficult. This is not helped by a whole variety of inaccurate information designed to influence a largely uninformed audience, in other words the 90% of Britain's population who live in urban areas, but enjoy the countryside such as the North York Moors.

GROUSE MOOR MANAGEMENT - OVERVIEW

So, where to start? Perhaps with a brief summary of grouse moor management at Danby. The grouse shooting records go back to the mid 19th century. Numbers shot vary, with peaks in the late 19th century, the 1950s, and in very recent years, with records being achieved in 2012 and 2019. Consistency is more important than numbers, but peaks and troughs have existed over many years, all in amongst the different demands for shooting grouse. The early days saw very much the landowners and their guests with fewer days but many more grouse shot on

a day, to recent years with more days and averages of grouse shot in the region of 120 brace per day. It is also worth noting that the numbers shot have been fairly static over the last 20 years. Red grouse are of course a wild bird and extremely territorial, and management is all about providing the right environment for the birds to flourish and produce a shootable surplus. This management supports other ground-nesting species such as Curlew, Lapwing, Golden plover, Merlin and other raptors.

One management practice, bracken control, is often overlooked, probably because it has overall support. The North York Moors became rife with bracken – some 2,000 acres at Danby – up until the 1980s when control with Asulox became possible. The majority of control is ground-based, and a huge amount of bracken has been eradicated. It is, however, very invasive and is known to be carcinogenic, so continuing control remains very important. The use of Asulox is under threat and may be withdrawn, which is confusing as the very organisation which might ban its use also provides grants for this method of control. Removing bracken creates a much more diverse habitat.

HEATHER BURNING AND RE-WETTING

Let's move on to a much more uncomfortable topic – burning. First of all, the facts: two important ones, the first being that it is no longer possible to burn over blanket bog (over 0.4m depth of peat) without a licence for restoration purposes, and the second point is that burning is a 'cool' burn only carried out in the right conditions. This method does not burn the peat soils, but only the top heather vegetation, which on the North York Moors grows back rapidly. There is also no evidence to show that cool burning destroys the mosses. Keepers have no desire to burn into the peat as it would destroy the very habitat which is suited for grouse and many other ground-nesting birds.

There is much more research required, but existing science seems to indicate that grouse moors store around 11% to 35% of England's total peatland carbon, while emitting only around 1% to 5% of total peatland carbon emissions. Managed heather-burning releases a small amount of carbon, but carbon is then taken up by the rapid regrowth of the heather – a neutral balance. Cutting has the opposite effect due to the rotting vegetation which releases methane, one of the worst greenhouse gases.

When I took over responsibility of the Danby Moors in 1993, the burning was fairly minimal despite a major wildfire having taken

place in 1976 on approximately 1500 acres of rank heather on Glaisdale moor. The cause of the fire was believed to be a cigarette, but because of the lack of controlled burning by gamekeepers the fire took off through the old heather vegetation and proved disastrous to the peat soils (mainly blanket bog), with some of the area affected still requiring restoration to this day. In the last twenty years the burning over the entire moor has been conducted over a large area but with less impact to produce a mosaic of small burns, which provides a much more sustainable ecosystem and reduces the threat of wildfires over what is probably the driest area of heather moorland in the country. I would suggest that there is far greater biodiversity on the Danby Moors following this change, which continues to this day. Numbers of Curlew, Golden plover and Merlin seen by the keepers have remained steady or have improved, as is the case on so many managed moors.

The other management system which was commenced over 15 years ago is re-wetting. This became necessary after the 1976 wildfire where the exposed peat was eroding without any vegetation cover. Natural and very deep gullies were being formed, so re-wetting commenced by retarding the flow or run-off using heather bales and other means of damming. I understand that another phase is about to commence this winter and spring.

Just a quick mention of vermin or pest control. Legal control of vermin such as stoats, weasels, fox, magpie and corvids ensure that the population of protected ground-nesting birds, including grouse, are kept safe; the very reason why managed moorlands support a greater number and diversity of these bird species. Curlew are three times as likely to fledge chicks successfully on moorland where these predators are controlled. Recent work by the Spaunton Estate has also indicated an increase in sightings of Buzzard, now very common, and Red kites as well as Kestrels, Barn owls and Sparrowhawks. The keepers at Danby also regularly comment on the variety of birds they see during their normal day-to-day activities.

CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMY AND LANDSCAPE

And finally, the contribution that managed grouse moors make to the community and local economy. It is perhaps not sufficiently recognised that this private sector driven land use (the major land use on the North York Moors) makes a significant financial contribution to the landscape, habitat and people's wellbeing. Local businesses which benefit include hotels, pubs, restaurants, petrol stations, game dealers and retailing, as well as employment of keepers, beaters and



Red grouse

Photo © David Mason/Moorland Association

caterers. At Danby the number of keepers has doubled over the last twenty years and on a typical day of driven grouse-shooting over 35 people are employed. This would be lost if driven grouse-shooting ceased; walked-up shooting would never be an adequate economic replacement.

Danby is just one of many moorland Estates on the North York Moors, but is an example of the wide range of interests which exist in tying together all the threads which lead to a thriving community of people and habitat. I refer back to my opening paragraph about driving up from Rosedale and over the moors and you see all around you a stunning wild landscape – even if it is managed; what would be the loss if the management ceased? The SSSI designation is there to protect the landscapes and biodiversity and long may it continue. The work in maintaining this landscape is a matter of great pride to keepers and moorland managers, and it is often forgotten that many of them are the unsung heroes of the countryside with their interest and great knowledge in ornithology, habitat, vegetation and the peat soils. There is much common ground; it just needs better communication ... and a greater respect of the facts and science behind them.

I have not mentioned climate change, which is the new challenge for which much research and work is still required as to how moorland management can contribute and benefit. Complacency should not be the order of the day, but to meet the challenge there is a need to pull all the existing resources together and understand the processes through an objective understanding of the facts.



Heather burning

Photo © Dawnay Estates

ROBERT A H SWORD, FRICS FAAV

Estates Director (until 31 May 2020) of the Dawnay Estates

'FARMER MOVING SOUTH'

ANYONE as keen as I am on British Transport Films (BTF) will be aware of a delightful 17-minute film released in 1952: 'Farmer Moving South'. This documents a possibly unique event, the relocation by train of Robert Ropner and his family from North Yorkshire to Sussex, with all their furniture and possessions including the entire stock of their farm. Vehicles, implements and livestock - including a herd of Hereford cattle - had to be moved from White House Farm, Skutterskelfe (between Stokesley and Hutton Rudby) to Hartfield, Sussex. The move and the filming took place in December 1950 on the coldest day of the year.

FROM STOKESLEY, NORTH YORKSHIRE ...

BTF was set up in 1949 by the British Transport Commission and over 35 years produced around 400 documentaries to celebrate

and promote all forms of the UK's transport network. These ranged from travelogues to staff training films, many using orchestral soundtracks and featuring notable individuals of the day. The narrator on 'Farmer Moving South' is the Wiltshire writer and broadcaster on rural topics, A.G. Street, with additional input from Inspector Barr of the British Railways District Commercial Superintendent's office in Middlesbrough, who was responsible for the logistics of the move.

At the beginning of the film, the narrator asks Mr Barr if there is actually a station at Stokesley. The emphatic reply is "Oh, they've got a station at Stokesley all right" - no doubt never imagining that within five years it would be closed to passengers. The line itself, North Yorkshire & Cleveland Railway's Picton-Battersby line of 1857, survived until the Beeching axe fell.

The tale of this remarkable operation is beautifully told, with nice little details such as how the iron wheels of one of the hen-huts were well and truly stuck in frozen mud. Extracting it using an improvised heating method of burning straw around the wheels prompted some squawking from the chickens, and a remark from Inspector Barr that: "it was a toss-up as to whether we'd thaw the wheels or get roast chicken".

The operation was planned with precision, though the recent arrival of two litters of piglets meant that a couple of extra horseboxes had to be found quickly so they could be bedded down in straw for their journey rather than being loaded into draughty open cattle wagons.

There are lovely shots of the tractor cavalcade on Stokesley's main street and of the proceedings at the station as goods and livestock were transferred onto the train, with Mr Barr commenting that it was all achieved with "some very pretty shunting". With around 50 wagons to be loaded it must have been chaos, particularly as the temperature dropped and snow began to fall, but the film portrays it as running like clockwork.

The attire of the day is worthy of mention. The stationmaster proudly wears his full pre-nationalisation LNER uniform, whilst one of the farm-workers keeps his trousers up with a twine belt, tractors are driven in collar and tie, gloves are mainly absent despite the freezing conditions, and the bailiff's footwear is a fine pair of hobnailed boots.

On this short December day the train was still being loaded after darkness had fallen, and in several scenes we catch a glimpse of the filming lights, which must have been brought in and powered by a generator since the only lighting at the station was provided by the standard oil lamps visible on the platform. The farm-workers come prepared with their own hand-carried Tilley lamps.

I always wondered if the little boy filmed incredulously watching all this, standing shivering and stamping his feet in the snow, was a child actor, but we now know that he was a local lad, Ralph Barker. He just happened to be on the platform wearing his school cap and gabardine coat, and was given a brief cameo role in the film.

... TO HARTFIELD, SUSSEX

The train would have to have gone out northwards, so it is interesting to speculate on the route taken. Would it go via Battersby? This seems unlikely as the engine would have difficulty holding such a heavy train from running away when



Snow falls as the bull heads for the train



Steaming south through the snow



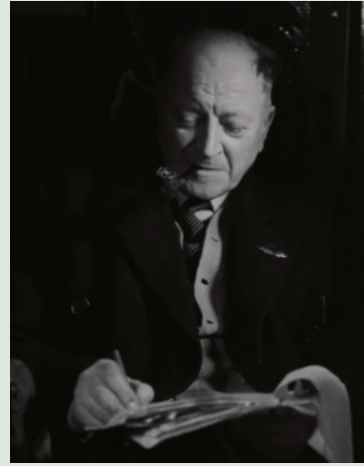
Arrival at Hartfield Station

descending Nunthorpe Bank, so towards Eaglescliffe may have been the more likely path, perhaps reversing at Picton.

The coach in which the human passengers are travelling looks comfortable, with separate compartments and deep-sprung upholstery, but the family, farm-workers, bailiff, railway inspector and film crew would have required heating on that bitterly cold night. In the departure scene the coach is on the back of the train, but for the long journey it must have been coupled next to the engine in order for the steam heating to work. They must all have been cold and hungry after such a busy day, but there is no catering – they have to make do with sandwiches and drinks from a thermos flask for sustenance.

Since this ‘Noah’s Ark on rails’ departed from Stokesley in the dark, there is no footage of the first part of its journey. We are told that whilst it was running behind time it was given high priority – presumably because of the livestock on board – and it kept moving throughout the night, arriving at its destination in daylight. Again, Hartfield’s station disappeared long ago, with the nearest now being at East Grinstead.

BTF made sure to emphasise the efficiency and reliability of British Railways, stating that “nothing had budged an inch” during the long run. On arrival, the weather was still so bad that local farmers were called in to help move the livestock quickly to their new home at Perryhill Farm, a mile north of Hartfield. Bailiff Henry Hill was the only employee from the Yorkshire farm to relocate with the Ropners to Sussex and he settled there with his family, the other farm-workers and Inspector Barr all returning home.



Inspector Barr checks his paperwork

A heroic, well-coordinated effort indeed; and with a jaunty soundtrack composed by Thomas Henderson, I consider “Farmer Moving South” to be a wonderful example of period documentary film-making, rarely bettered.

JANE ELLIS

The film is well worth watching for its insights into how farming has changed in the last 70 years, as well as for its fascinating story. It’s available on YouTube and at <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-farmer-moving-south-1952-online>

THE SILVER SEALS



Fixing a stile in winter

THE ‘SILVER SEALS’ began as an informal rambling club among employees from a chemical works at Seal Sands on Teesside. Now mostly retired and aged from late 50s to nearly 80, the members remain active by walking in the Moors whilst having a convivial chat.

Group leader Mike is a Volunteer Ranger in the western area of the National Park. The Silver Seals accompany Mike on patrol, checking the rights of way network. We clear obstructions ranging from encroaching bracken and brambles

to proliferating gorse bushes, and even the odd fallen tree.

We find many gates and stiles needing maintenance. The stiles often have slippery surfaces and over the past 3 years we have been fitting anti-slip strips to improve safety. The familiar roundels that waymark bridleways and footpaths tend to fade or go missing over time so Mike carries a stock of spares and we refresh them as we go. Likewise, finger-posts need attention, including renewal from time to time – and we sometimes spot them pointing the

wrong way! Any structural repair needs are reported to the National Park Authority by Mike for remedial action.

The ‘anti-slip’ treatment costs around £15 per stile, and we have improved over 100 stiles so far. Whilst much of our work is self-funded, we are very grateful to NYMA for their contributions towards the cost of our tools and the anti-slip strips.

THE SILVER SEALS MEMORIAL BENCH

A few years ago, noticing numerous memorial benches around the National Park, we agreed to erect our own bench. Rather than waiting until we had actually passed away, we decided to place ours at a spot that can be reached by car even after we become unable to manage long walks. With permission from the landowner and the NPA, we sited our bench near the drovers’ road above Osmotherley in a lovely spot overlooking Oak Dale. Referred to tongue-in-cheek as the ‘death bench’, it carries individual plaques for each member – although we are hoping that it will be a few more years before we start having to fill in the ‘closing dates’!

ROBIN CHAPMAN

The Silver Seals were supported under NYMA’s Conservation Award scheme. If you know of a project which would benefit from funding, please get in touch with us!

IN RECOGNITION OF WORKING LIVES



Willow Polar Bear, by Emma Stothard



Miner's listening post, by Katie Ventress

RECENT YEARS have seen debate and action concerning statues of some people regarded – or once regarded – as key historical figures. Statues tend to be placed on pedestals, implicitly conferring an uncritical stance towards the subject, and toppling the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol in 2020 led to questioning the validity of awarding heroic status to figures such as Captain James Cook. A key benefit from articulating perspectives on this matter is the confirmation that history as received and perceived is often shaped by the value judgements of those who construct and dominate the narratives.

Around the same time as media attention to statues was in full flow, sculptors were at work along the Cleveland and Yorkshire coast. The results of their creative skills can now be seen: these artefacts represent a significant contrast to those mentioned above.

WALK WITH HERITAGE

Emma Stothard (www.emmastothard.com) and her team have produced 'Walk with Heritage', a sculpture trail in Whitby which highlights the fishing industry that was once so vital to the town's economy. Nine wire sculptures and accompanying information panels stand on the pavements, to be appreciated at eye level (so no need to 'look up to' them). The role of women in the fishing industry is recognised in several sculptures, including the one shown on the cover of this issue of 'Voice' of Dora Walker (1890-1980), the first female fishing-boat skipper on the north-east coast.

Perhaps the most striking sculpture is 'Herring Girls', near the bandstand at the bottom of Khyber Pass. This two-part structure recalls the days of huge fleets making their way down the east coast from Scotland, bringing work to ports such as Whitby. The location of 'Herring Girls' relates closely to the historical origins of the subject, as does the sculpture of Frank Meadow Sutcliffe (1853-1941) in Skinner Street, where the photographer had a studio. We can happily succumb to the nostalgic glow of Sutcliffe's sepia prints but his true legacy lies in his recording of the daily lives of working people. Those in the fishing industry and associated occupations such as working on the lifeboats were his core subjects; another primary industry, agriculture, was also a rich source of inspiration. The area around Lealholm attracted him and he would probably take

the train there then somehow transport his heavy equipment to the hillside farms above.

Emma Stothard adds: "The toppling of the sculptures across the UK was certainly in my mind as I was working on the trail. I hope my chosen figures are a true reflection of the people who lived and worked in Whitby and how they shaped – then and now – our beautiful town by the sea."

LINKING PAST AND PRESENT

Katie Ventress (www.kvblacksmith.com) was featured in 'Voice of the Moors' issue 135, Spring 2019. Since then, Katie has produced a metal sculpture that now stands alongside the Cleveland Way National Trail (at grid ref. NZ 764 188), across the road from Boulby Mine. Commissioned by ICL UK, it celebrates the mine's 50th anniversary. It's an arresting piece of work, depicting a miner sitting at a bench alongside a safety panel with communications equipment used in the early years of the mine. Boulby Mine extracted potash until a few years ago and now mines polyhalite for use as a fertiliser.

A century ago, an ironstone mine was worked in this locality, one of about 80 that operated between the mid 19th and 20th centuries in northeast Yorkshire. You'll find background information to read on the bench as you stand or sit here; meanwhile, hundreds of feet below you, people are at work in this vast mine. There's a vivid account of the scale of the operation at Boulby Mine in Robert Macfarlane's 'Underland' (Hamish Hamilton, 2019).

Katie comments: "It was an absolute honour to be asked to create this sculpture. Those who work at the mine can now share with family and friends a glimpse of the world they experience every working day. The sculpture is educational and interactive, giving walkers the opportunity to sit and absorb information while appreciating the beautiful scenery around them."

Works by Emma Stothard and Katie Ventress were on display at the Staithes Festival of Arts & Heritage (www.staithesfestival.com) in 2018. Katie's metal sculpture of a stingray could be seen in the harbour while Emma's willow figure of a polar bear stood on a harbour wall, alerting us to climate change.

Chainsaw sculptor Steve Iredale, who is based in Staithes, has also produced works that refer to the lives of working people;

these include structures he's designed for the annual Skinningrove Bonfire (www.skinningrovebonfire.org.uk). The 2016 bonfire highlighted the role of the alum industry in the history of the Cleveland and Yorkshire coast and the 2017 event featured the popularity of pigeon fancying in local communities. "It's a shame it has to be set on fire!" is often heard on these occasions. Steve adds "It's been my pleasure to help with the bonfire for about thirty years - it's always the result of a magnificent effort by members of the community throughout the year".

One of Steve's more recent works is a sculpture at the site of the former Esk Valley Mine (NZ 822 044) which was partly revealed

during the Land of Iron project. Another tribute to working lives, it features a mineshaft wheel supported by tree trunks, sculpted to represent the furnaces that operated at nearby Grosmont Ironworks and elsewhere around the National Park.

We are fortunate to benefit from such creative people whose artefacts have been integrated into the landscape while illuminating the crucial role of working people who devoted their lives to sustaining the industries that shaped our area.

JOHN ROBERTS

CAPTURING THE MOORS IN SNOW

There are often wonderful 'back stories' behind the photos we use, and in some cases dramatic ones. Here are two from contributors Mel Ullswater and Cara Organ. Mel is an experienced photographer who uses sophisticated equipment, and whose images have graced the covers of 'Voice'; while at the other end of the spectrum, Cara Organ took an award-winning shot of the trig point and boundary marker on the round cairn atop Carlton Bank using her phone.

Photo © Mel Ullswater



STORM AT FREEBOROUGH HILL

It all looks peaceful here in this shot but quickly changed to a gale-force southwesterly wind and hailstones the size of marbles. I can laugh about it now but it soon became pretty serious. I'd never been round this side of the hill before and I couldn't see a hand in front of me nor could I see my footprints, so I couldn't retrace my path.

I knew I was not far from the Whitby road but couldn't hear traffic because of the wind, hail, etc., then all of a sudden - boom! - as I crashed through the ice of a frozen pond and was more than waist deep! At first I couldn't get out, eventually I did somehow, but I was freezing, exhausted and still lost.

Luckily after that the worst of the storm passed and I was starting to see a few yards. I managed to climb over a fence and back to my van, then I couldn't feel my keys in my pocket and then couldn't get the key in the door as it was frozen solid.

Anyway, apart from that it was a lovely day out on my own with the camera. On the technical side, the photo was taken handheld at 125 sec, f11, ISO 125 half a stop overexposed with CPL.

MEL ULLSWATER



Trig point and boundary marker at Carlton Bank

Freeborough Hill

THE CLEVELAND HILLS

In January 2021 I found myself back at home in lockdown, so, like the rest of the country, I used the opportunity to explore the local area, which luckily for me was the Cleveland Hills on the northern edge of the North York Moors. It really is a fantastic area regardless of the season and - providing you have enough layers and appropriate equipment - the occasional snowy days are the best. However, the snow seemed to last for a whole month this year.

One particular day, having navigated our way through knee-deep snow-drifts, we arrived at the top of Carlton Bank just as the sun was setting, which looked so fantastic I had to take a photo. So later this year, when I saw that the Campaign for National Parks was running a phone photography competition focusing on climate change, I immediately thought of the super snowy day on top of the Cleveland Hills and had to share my image. I'm so proud that my photo came in third place, particularly as I'm not a photographer and just happened to be in the right place at the right time.

CARA ORGAN

THE UNDERGROUND MOORS - PART TWO

In our Summer issue, Matt Ewles talked us through the history of cave exploration in the North York Moors, from the Windypits to the water-formed but now dry caves that once played a big role in our region's hydrology. We also learned that it was not until 1981 that two cavers dived a rising on the east bank of the River Dove at Bogg Hall, Keldholme. This turned out to be a flooded cave passage, known as a sump, which surfaced to air after 20 metres into a subterranean river passage. Bogg Hall Cave was the first discovery of an active, water-carrying cave in the North York Moors. This article explains the next phase of the extraordinary exploration of the ground beneath the Moors.

BOGG HALL CAVE

The cave is 150m long, involving some nerve-racking wet and narrow passages just beyond the entrance sump. Further upstream however it soon develops into a splendid 3m wide river passage which abruptly ends at a large chamber, The Font, shown in the headline photo of our last article. The centre of this chamber is dominated by an ominous 18m deep flooded shaft, from the bottom of which all the water wells up. Many divers have tried to push beyond the 18m depth, however the passage at this point becomes too narrow.

Most of this water originates from sinks a kilometre upstream of Bogg Hall. This means that the River Dove takes a subterranean diversion to part of its overland route. A few points of entry into this system (including an old well) have been explored by divers, and around 80-100m of submerged cave has been mapped beneath the floor of the River Dove valley, limited by the challenges of diving against the strong flow of the water in the submerged passage. The limited altitude difference between the sinks and the rising means that finding dry cave here is extremely unlikely.

More interestingly, some of the water resurging at Bogg Hall comes from Hutton Beck, in the next valley to the east. The sinks in Hutton Beck are 40m higher than Bogg Hall, providing ample range for non-flooded cave passages to exist. The concept of a substantial cave system spanning the valleys of Hutton Beck and the River Dove had persisted for decades, but finding a way into it was never going to be easy, as the only points of entry would be tiny fissures hidden under the riverbed.

SEARCHING FOR A NEW SYSTEM

In 2007, a few other members of York Caving Club and I were looking for mischief. Many of our friends had gone on a caving expedition to Montenegro, but as we lacked enough time off work, we decided to search for something closer to home. We picked up a copy of 'Moorland Caver', the first and only guidebook to caves in the North York Moors. One by one, we visited these caves to see if any offered the potential for further discovery, until we arrived at Bogg Hall Cave. While here, we had a chance encounter with members of Scarborough Caving Club. They told us about their failed efforts in the 1990s to locate the elusive underground system of Hutton Beck and suggested that if we were serious about finding new caves in the area, this was the place to look.



The splendid main river passage of Excalibur Pot

With landowner permission arranged, we turned up at Hutton Beck in summer 2007 on a receding flood. We watched in awe as a significant amount of the Beck gurgled down tiny holes and fissures in the streambed. One such fissure was particularly enticing, and so once the river had fully receded, we set to work here with spades, hammers, crowbars, winches and other tools.

The weather was kind, and Hutton Beck remained low for the rest of summer, the entire stream disappearing underground at a sink 250m upstream of where we were working. Only 2m beneath the streambed, we encountered a substantial draught blowing outwards; an encouraging sign for any cave-hunter that cavities must lie beneath. At 4m down we broke into a tiny chamber carved into jumbled limestone blocks by the sinking water; it was barely large enough to turn around in. A route onwards into two equally small, parallel chambers was engineered over the following weeks, and in the second of these chambers, now 6m underground, we noted a loose muddy floor. A short session with a crowbar and we heard mud and rocks falling beneath, as we uncovered a void dropping into the darkness.

We had not been ambitious enough to bring the necessary equipment to tackle the descent of such a void, so an over-excited late-night drive back to York ensued. We grabbed some ropes and ladders, inhaled a pizza, and got back to Hutton-le-Hole just in time for last orders at The Crown, where our tents were pitched around the back. The following morning promised so much.

FIRST DESCENT

The morning came and with ropes rigged, I made the first descent. Only 7m down, I landed on a ledge and through a window was a towering aven (a vertical upwards shaft), 8-9m high, with a further drop of 5m into a lower chamber. More ropes were rigged and we descended further, finding ourselves in a spacious chamber with several routes leading off into the darkness. The excitement of descending into the unknown is one thing, but to be venturing along passages knowing you are the first person ever to see them (or even know they exist) is indescribable. One might imagine hiking for weeks into the

The author standing in a sinkhole of Hutton Beck in 2007, watching the river vanish into the cave we suspected lay beneath.



Calcite formations in the Excalibur Pot passage



remotest jungle, diving the deepest ocean, or blasting off into space to achieve such a feeling; yet here we were, in the North York Moors, 15 minutes and 200m from our parked cars!

The cave system did not disappoint. The initial four weeks of exploration revealed a network of passages we called The Honey River Series, fed by a small percolation stream. The total length of the new cave quickly exceeded 500m, making this the largest in the North York Moors. However, we didn't immediately locate the big prize we had come for - a river passage carrying Hutton Beck on a kilometre-long journey down the valley towards Bogg Hall Rising.

In week five, however, one of our team went head-first into a very narrow squeeze and emerged into another chamber. From here, the distant roar of water could be heard. Only 150m further, we found ourselves on a balcony looking 4m down into an underground river carrying Hutton Beck.

A ladder was needed to climb down into the river, so we retreated to the surface, fuelled up on instant noodles and tea, and headed straight back down for one of the most memorable

days of my life. We were treated to a glorious walk downstream in a tall and dramatic river passage. Sadly, this did not deliver quite the full kilometre we had hoped; after 300m the passage rapidly lost height and became too small for us, but not for the water, which continues to Bogg Hall Rising.

Upstream, we were treated to a cascading river passage with some beautiful calcite decorations. After 250m, however, the route fractured into several impenetrable inlets as we neared the surface sinks, and opportunity for more passageways diminished.

MAPPING THE UNDERGROUND MOORS

This was one of the largest new cave discoveries in the UK for several years, and the largest in Jurassic limestone for even longer. The North York Moors suddenly came to the attention of the caving community as being an area where large, active caves can, and do, exist; but as we have shown, finding them involves considerable research and physical effort.

The next job was to survey the cave to produce a map, a task which took myself and Gary Douthwaite over 100 hours underground over about 20 sessions through 2008-2010. The full map (with spoilers of our third instalment!) is available for free on the York Caving Club website. And next time you drive between the A170 and Hutton-le-Hole, you might like to think about how you're driving over the new river passage!

The story doesn't end there though. No sooner had we explored most of the cave and named it 'Excalibur Pot', than some of us were already starting work at another sink of Hutton Beck 300m further downstream. Simultaneously, we found a new passage in Excalibur Pot, heading southeast down the valley for 150m in the opposite direction to the main river. This passage is only just high enough to slither along and is desperately muddy and wet. Nonetheless, little did we know that these two forefronts of exploration were to provide the next, equally exciting chapters in our story, which are still unfolding as this article goes to print. We'll return with the final instalment in a future issue of 'Voice of the Moors'.

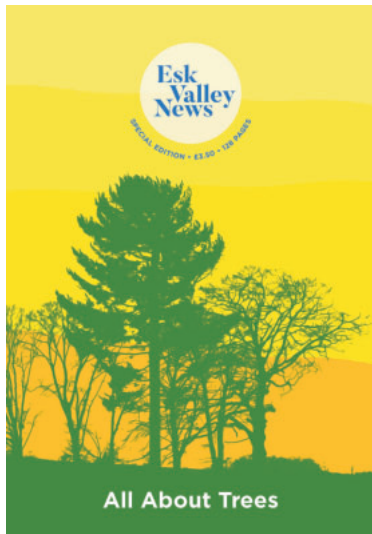
MATT EWLES
York Caving Club

The author ascending out of the main river passage on the day of the breakthrough



ALL ABOUT TREES

PUBLISHED BY ESK VALLEY NEWS, GLAISDALE



UNDERSTANDING and appreciation of the crucial importance of trees to the well-being and ultimately the very survival of life here on Earth is at last gaining widespread credibility with people across the UK and globally. Science has shown the essential part that trees and forestation contribute towards maintaining a healthy and balanced

environment in which we and future generations can thrive. This is particularly so in helping to combat the climate crisis facing us: we need trees more than trees need us. It is heartening to see tree-planting, woodland protection and husbandry projects gaining greater momentum over the past few years. The message is clear: we need more tree cover.

Spreading this message has been boosted recently by an excellent publication from Basement Press of Glaisdale, in the Esk Valley. Proprietors Nicola Chalton and Pascal Thivillon, themselves avid lovers of trees and the natural world, decided to devote the combined summer editions (July & August) of their monthly community magazine, Esk Valley News, to all things to do with trees. They were delighted by the enthusiastic reaction from contributors, a resounding collective response in support of trees. The result is a superb 128-page book, 'All About Trees', which contains over 100 fact-filled articles and features covering many aspects of trees and the valuable and

sustainable wood resource that they yield.

Bursting with learned and enthusiastic contributions from botanists, foresters, conservationists, environmentalists, walkers and land-owners, as well as evocative personal thoughts and reflections from creative artists, writers and poets on these wonderful 'forces of nature', 'All About Trees' offers a stimulating and informative read for anyone concerned about the future of our natural environment. A must-read for all tree and nature lovers.

'All About Trees' is also exceptionally good value, costing just £3.50 per copy. Buy one for yourself and for a friend and help spread the message! Copies can be obtained from The Moors National Park Centre, Danby, as well as from village stores and bookshops in the Esk Valley and East Cleveland areas. Postal and digital copies are available from www.eskvalleynews.co.uk/

AINSLEY

RAPTOR SUCCESS IN THE NORTH YORK MOORS



Merlin chick being ringed

IT'S GOOD to report a success story for raptors on the Moors this year. It is thought that at least 62 Merlin chicks hatched, of which 56 successfully fledged. The Merlin Ringing Group (licensed by the British Trust for Ornithology, BTO) ringed 12 of the fledglings, meaning their progress can more easily be recorded into the future. The Merlin is the UK's smallest bird of prey, at 25-30cm long and with a

wingspan of 50-62cm (by comparison, the more familiar Kestrel measures 32-35cm long and has a wingspan of 71-80cm). According to the RSPB, there are just 900-1500 breeding pairs in the UK, although in winter the population is boosted by Icelandic birds migrating to the relative warmth of the British Isles. The Merlin is the key species for which the Moors are an SPA (Special Protection Area), an international designation, and BTO data shows that breeding success is much higher on managed moorland.

Earlier, a significant number of other birds of prey were recorded for the year ending March 2021 on Spaunton Moor, which covers around 6% of heather moorland in the National Park. These included 10 sightings of the Red List species Hen Harrier and 3 of White-tailed Sea-eagles on their travels out from the Isle of Wight to

explore England. Also commonly seen were Buzzard, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Peregrine, Goshawk and Red Kite, while Marsh Harrier and Hobby were less frequent. Several species of owl were also spotted, especially Barn Owls, which have made a huge recovery in range and numbers, thanks partly to nesting boxes put up by the moorland estates; and also Tawny owl, Short-eared owl, and Long-eared owl.

It's interesting to note that Ravens were also present. Not a bird of prey but a predator, this charismatic bird wasn't seen in the Moors even 5 years ago.

JANET COCHRANE

Note: The 'Red List' denotes UK birds of most conservation concern, while 'Amber List' birds are of medium concern and those on the 'Green List' are of least concern. The list is maintained and updated by the BTO.



SKYLARKS

It is almost 25th December - what does this date mean to you? Like many people, you may consider that it is the birth date of Jesus Christ.

But why do people think this?



Nobody really knows the date of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Christians believe that Jesus is the light of the world. It could be that December 25th was chosen as it is close to when the days are becoming longer.

21st December marks the **Winter Solstice**, the shortest day in the **Northern Hemisphere**.

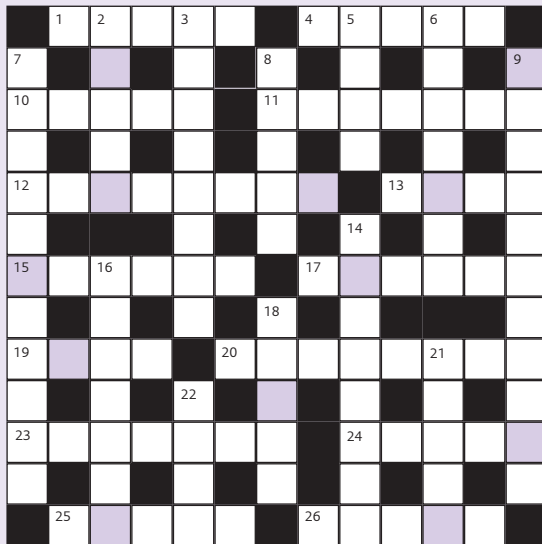
In ancient times, before Christianity, many people, including people called **Druids**, worshipped the sun and many other gods associated with nature. The sun was - and is today - very important in giving us longer daylight hours to work and help things to grow and thrive. The **Winter Solstice** was - and is - celebrated as it marks the start of good things to come.



Many Christmas traditions have developed from ancient forms of worship. In Roman times, during December the god of agriculture, **Saturn**, was celebrated with a festival called Saturnalia. This happened at the time of the **Winter Solstice** and the festivities included music, eating, gift-giving and being kind to the poor, like how Christmas is celebrated.

It is said that the Christmas wreath was borrowed from the **Druids**, who used a circular **wreath** of evergreen plants to represent the circle of life. Similarly, Christians use a wreath to symbolise everlasting life.

CROSSWORD 95 by AMANUENSIS



Take the letters from the coloured squares and rearrange in the boxes to solve the anagram:
 CLUE: The day before the big one! (9,3)

ACROSS

- 1 Group pushing change to house entrance (5)
- 4 Rodent appears when a thousand take to the river (5)
- 10 What a state to be in? (5)
- 11 Simply put an end to (7)
- 12 Pulled together at Christmastime (8)
- 13 It's a very long time in passing (4)
- 15 Country bird (6)
- 17 Satin seller offers shiny tree decoration (6)
- 19 Language found in verses (4)
- 28 Capital fellow from Eire? (8)
- 23 Comes with strings attached (7)
- 24 Long for a hundred going to wild party (5)
- 25 Wasp enters nee from the middle (5)
- 26 Greetings from America's 50th (5)

DOWN

- 2 Old man initially expresses surprise in America (5)
- 3 Quite a small runner (8)
- 5 Award nothing in part of the woodwind section (4)
- 6 25 across does this (7)
- 7 Club for movers and shakers? (11)
- 8 Child from the north country (5)
- 9 Source of lights? (11)
- 14 Contained in good book (8)
- 16 Secures diange and saves (7)
- 18 A couple surround five with warm covering (5)
- 21 Poetically below? (5)
- 22 Yield to the embryonic plant, one hears (4)

Answers on back cover

NYMA NEWS

THE CONFERENCE in October served to raise NYMA's profile and create new links for us within Yorkshire and further afield. There have been several interesting outcomes already, including new initiatives such as the joint online event in January with Friends of the Dales (on Retrofitting Traditional Buildings), and two new social media channels - Twitter and YouTube. If you use either of those, do please follow the Twitter feed @NYMoorsAssoc (managed by NYMA member John Ritchie) and subscribe to the YouTube channel.

There are changes to your NYMA officers and Council too: as well as Tom Chadwick standing down as Chair and Adrian Leaman being elected as Acting Chair, George Winn-Darley now holds the post of Vice-Chair (replacing Adrian), while Andy Wilson, former CEO of the NYMNP, has joined the Council and become a Trustee, and Helen Gundry has joined the Council. We are delighted to welcome these new members with their energy and expertise, and that Tom is staying on as a Council member. Ann Glass has resigned as a Trustee - we thank her for everything she has done for NYMA. We also thank Heather Mather, who has decided it's time to stand down as Walks Coordinator, while Dave Moore has kindly offered to take on that role.

Now that - in general - we are less restricted in our social lives, Council member Ray Clarke has been giving lively and well-received talks to local groups on NYMA's work, with more lined up for the early months of next year. Ray covers the eastern side of the national park and the surrounding area, including Middlesbrough, while Janet Cochrane is happy to visit groups around York and the western side of the national park; in September, she was honoured to be the first speaker to a group in Faceby Village Hall since before the pandemic.

The Battle of Byland commemoration which NYMA is supporting through a bequest from former Vice-President Allan Patmore is going according to plan. Led by National Park Volunteer Harry Pearson, the latest step is to create the plaque which will in due course be affixed to the ganister boulder collected from Spaunton Moor earlier in the year.

We're always very grateful when people share their skills and enthusiasm for the benefit of the Association and to further our aims of supporting conservation, culture and the natural beauty of the North York Moors. These skills come in many forms, including writing articles for 'Voice of the Moors' and photography. Here we have a charming photograph by Pete Nelson of knitted poppies produced by the residents of Lealholm to adorn their village for Remembrance Day in November.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS (see page 19)

CHRISTMAS EVE

Anagram

21 neath, 22 cede

8 balm, 9 chandleries, 14 biblical, 16 rescues, 18 duvet,

2 Omaha, 3 brooklet, 5 oboe, 6 shivers, 7 discotheque,

Down

20 Dubliner, 23 ukulele, 24 crave, 25 aspen, 26 aloha

13 aeon, 14 Turkey/turkey, 17 tinsel, 19 Erse,

1 lobby, 4 mouse, 10 Idaho, 11 abolish, 12 crackers,

Across

NYMA WALKS & EVENTS

Saturday 22 January EXPLORING KIRKBYSOORSIDE

Meet 10.30 at the junction of Tinley Garth and High Market Place, opposite the Memorial Hall (Pay & Display carpark next to the King's Head, or park on the street).

4-mile walk (no steep sections) in and around Kirkbyside looking at the 18th century water races and evidence of longhouses and burgrave plots, and up to Ravenswick and Yoadwath to see old routes into the town, returning with views of the windmill, the Moors, and the more distant Wolds.

Please contact lyndawix@yahoo.co.uk to let her know you're coming.

Saturday 19 February A CIRCULAR FROM STAITHES

Meet at Staithes Bank Top carpark (postcode TS13 5BB) for 10.30am start. This walk of up to 5 miles features local industry past and present, with a look at how it's inspired some public artwork. We'll finish with a brief exploration around the historic village of Staithes. Steep slopes; may be muddy in places; busy road to cross. Please bring refreshments for a lunch stop.

For more information, and to confirm attendance, please phone John & Joan Roberts on 01287 642322 or email joanyeoman24@btinternet.com

Saturday 19 March OLD OAK AND NEW SHEEPFOLD

Meet 10.30 at entrance to High Farm, Ingleby Greenhow (Grid Ref. NZ 588 042, What3Words anchorman.toys.frogs), on small road south of Greenhow Ave towards Greenhow Bottom - please check directions carefully before you set off. Park on the verges on this quiet lane.

5-mile walk on field paths and forestry tracks, mostly flat. Please let Wendy Smith know you're coming on wpsmith7a@gmail.com or 01642 711980.



OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

President: Ian Carstairs OBE

Chair: Adrian Leaman

Vice-Chair: George Winn-Darley

Executive Secretary: Janet Cochrane - secretary@nyma.org.uk, 07570 112010

Hon. Treasurer: Brian Pearce

Membership Secretary: Cal Moore - membership@nyma.org.uk

Other Council Members: Tom Chadwick, Ray Clarke, Albert Elliot, Helen Gundry, Dave Moore, Colin Speakman, Andy Wilson, Elaine Wisdom

Walks Coordinator: Dave Moore, flightbrand@gmail.com

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

The North Yorkshire Moors Association is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Registration no. 1169240

www.nyma.org.uk

Facebook: Wild about the Moors

Twitter: @NYMoorsAssoc