VOICE OF THE MOORS

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

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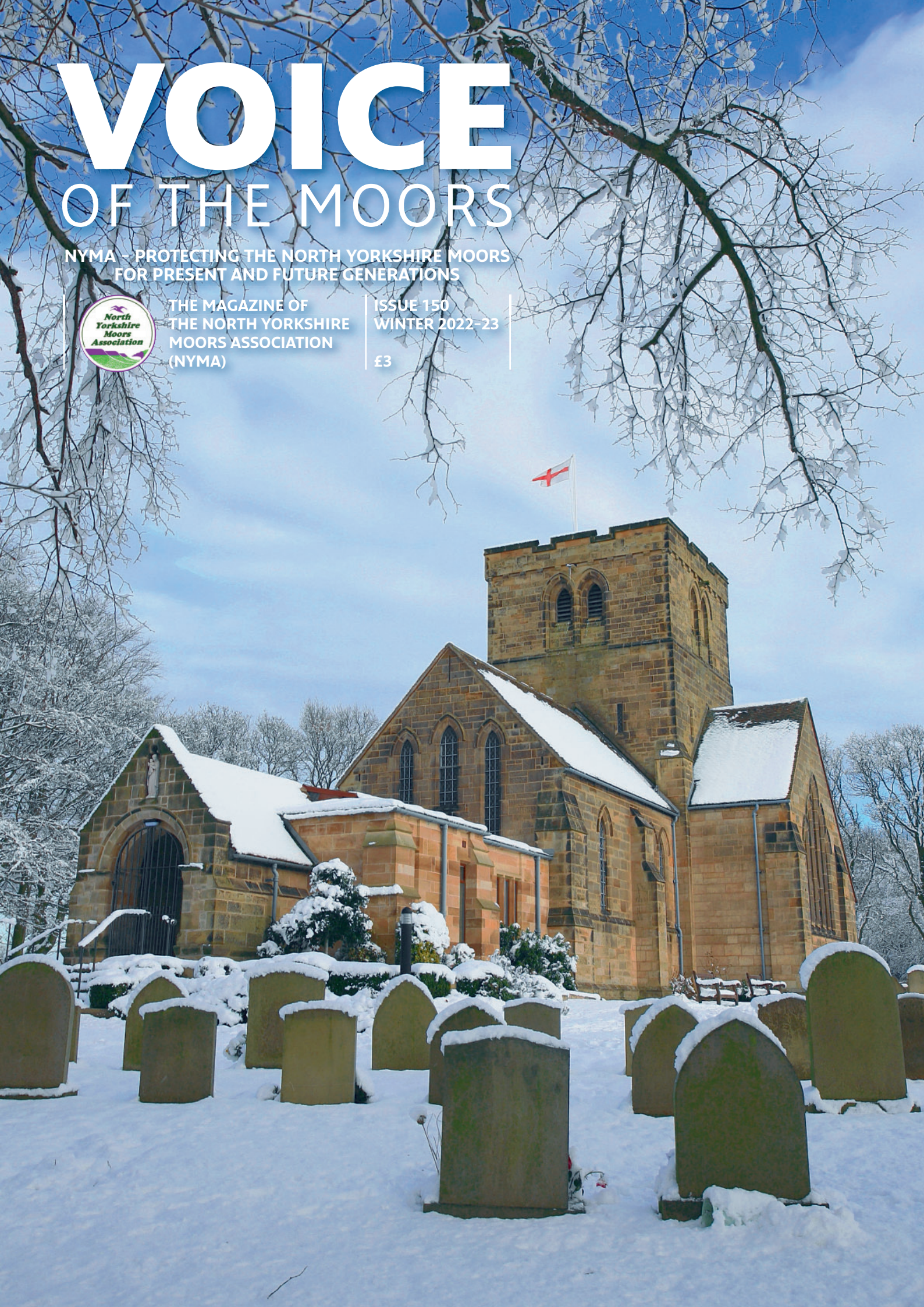

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NYMA MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership:
- Individual £22
- Joint £28

Annual digital membership:
- Individual £15
- Joint £20

10 Year membership:
- Individual £180
- Joint £220

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- £40

For membership queries or to join our e-newsletter mailing list, please email Membership@nyma.org.uk.

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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

FOLLOWING closely on the heels of the North York Moors National Park's 70th birthday, the North Yorkshire Moors Association has a milestone of its own: this is the 150th edition of 'Voice of the Moors'. We are currently building an archive of all 150 issues and hope to be able to place it so that the public can access it. At present you can look at issues 127 to 149 on the NYMA website (https://www.nyma.org.uk/voice-of-the-moors/).

We strive to achieve the highest standards in presenting the story of the North York Moors, as well as grappling with some of the pressing planning matters affecting the National Park and its users. 'Voice' would not exist without the commitment and skills of its editors. Dr Janet Cochrane is the current incumbent, and Albert Elliot, a former editor, is a valued member of the NYMA Council of Trustees. Just as important is the production side. NYMA is indebted to Pascal Thivillon and Nicola Chalton of Basement Press, Glaisdale, for their continued voluntary support in designing and setting the pages.

MEMBERSHIP FEES AND FUNDING

As you may already know from our December e-newsletter, we have reluctantly been forced to raise membership fees. The main reason is price inflation, which means we have to run faster to stand still, so to speak. Membership fees are our only regular, reliable source of income. Other intermittent sources, such as funded projects like 'The History Tree' or legacies like the Allan Patmore bequest which underwrote the Battle of Byland memorial, are highly valued by us but relatively rare. NYMA does not have the advantages of some other national park societies such as the Friends of the Lake District or the Dales which have much larger memberships and benefit from being more prominently in the public eye.

The obvious way forward is to increase our membership. In the past, word of mouth has been the most successful way. To this end, Ray Clarke has been spearheading the effort with talks in venues around North Yorkshire and further afield. You will also find Ray at the NYMA stall at fairs and festivals in the summertime.

'MEET THE MEMBERS'

We have introduced new 'Meet the Members' winter online socials, building on the growing confidence that people have with using Zoom software. So far Ian Carstairs, Jamie Walton and Kate Ashbrook have been our guests, each of them stars in their own right in their passion for the Moors and, in Kate's case

Meet the Members, December 2022

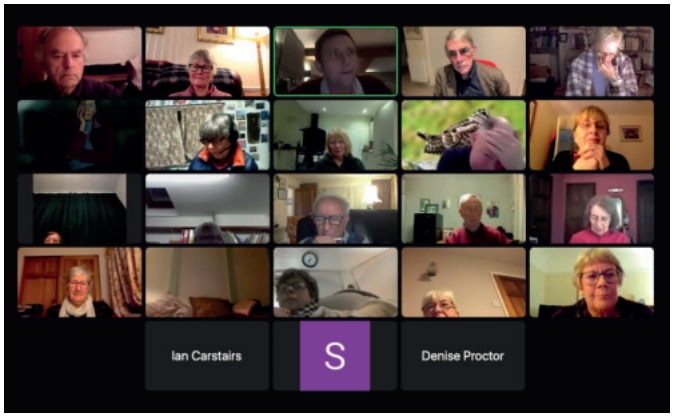


Photo © Mel Ullswater

Bridge across the beck at Brompton-by-Sawdon

especially, the entire national park movement. These events are informal. They are not talks as such but a Question & Answer forum open only to NYMA members. They are still experimental, but feedback so far has been very positive, such as: 'a thoroughly heartening and uplifting experience, I even managed to work the system'.

At our December 'Meet the Members' social I asked our guest Jamie Walton for tips on uplifting classical music that novices might not know about. Jamie said: 'For starters, try Fauré's Violin Sonata no 1, and, at Christmas, Benjamin Britten's Ceremony of Carols, which is best by candlelight'. Jamie also said that he thought Benjamin Britten was the finest interpreter of the English landscape, in Britten's case, East Anglia. Kate Ashbrook wrote in the chat room: 'Michael Tippett was on the Kinder Scout Mass Trespass'! Tippett was a contemporary of Britten's and another leading 20th century composer.

SPREADING OUR WINGS

As well as more activities for our own members, we are making greater efforts to contact other like-minded organisations in Yorkshire and explore new ways of working with them. Many of the topics that occupy us are also at the heart of other vibrant charities - access, wildlife, cultural heritage, funding for instance. It makes sense for NYMA to explore opportunities that collaboration might bring. We welcome suggestions from members. We will keep you in touch with developments.

Another area we are exploring is legacies. NYMA has benefitted from legacies in the past, but nowhere near the scale of national park societies with larger memberships. Income from legacies for named projects is always welcome. But so too are income streams for 'capacity building', that is, devoting some income to management and administration, especially activities that are time-consuming and challenging for volunteers such as fund-raising, a greater media presence, and support for the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) charity. A significant proportion of effort from NYMA Council's Planning and Policy Group goes into responding to requests from CNP for comments on Government policy papers, such as the 'Glover' Report on protected landscapes, and to planning strategies closer to home, such as the North York Moors National Park Authority's new management plan. These responses from NYMA may be found on the private NYMA members' page: https://membermojo.co.uk/nyma/membershome.

You may also be aware of changes to our membership administration and the switch to an online system: https://membermojo.co.uk/nyma. This is partly to take advantage of improved database and mailing features, but mainly to save valuable volunteer time. NYMA still has a proportion of members who do not use email, and we are still looking after those members by post. Gradually we will switch to a fully online system. The membermojo system - British software designed for ease of use - is particularly good for confidence that we are meeting current data protection requirements, for example https://membermojo.co.uk/nyma/help/gdpr.

COINCIDENCES

I was delighted to see John and Joan Roberts using Alec Clifton-Taylor's chapter on Whitby in his 'Six More English Towns' book as the inspiration for their guided walk in Whitby in November. The walkers were gawping at one of the houses mentioned in the book when the owner appeared at the door, seemingly honoured to be the centre of attention. 'Yes, I know we are in the book. You are the first in twenty years!'. John gives an account of the walk on pg. 17 of this issue.

Photo © J. Roberts

I have been reading NYMA President Ian Carstairs' excellent book: 'The Yorkshire River Derwent: Moments in Time'. The early chapters take you down the Derwent from its source in Fylingdales to the Humber. This is geographic writing at its best, written in the first person with a plentiful supply of anecdotes. I had just started Chapter Three when I let out a yelp: 'you cannot be serious!'. It turned out that Ian and I had the same geography teacher - Percy Silley. We were a year apart at Tiffin School in Kingston-upon-Thames. I know that the eccentric 'Perce' inspired my love of Yorkshire's geography, as he did with Ian.

ADRIAN LEAMAN

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO 'BIG MACK'?

Blakey Ridge in December 2022, bleak but passable

Photo © Mel Ullswater

IN THE DAYS when we had proper winters, people would whisper his name in hushed reverence: 'Look, there's Big Mack'. This meant there was a lot of snow to shift over the moortops. For Big Mack – I thought it was a pet name, but only later realised 'Mack' was the name of an American truck manufacturer – was a huge snowplough. Many of these US military six-wheel drive trucks with their massive engines - behemoths of the Second World War - were converted into snowploughs and used by Councils across the UK.

Up there on Blakey Ridge there would be 15-foot-high snow drifts. Road signs just peeped out of the endless white, which established its own new wind-sculpted contours across the high moorland.

Today, these winter scenes are the provinces of the fussy incisive snow-blowing vehicles scything their way through the white blanket. But when Big Mack ruled the roost, it was a matter of employing brute force as he headed into the wall of snow.

Encouraged to write this piece on a wintry theme, I cast my mind back to the days when I would drive over the top of the moors daily. It might have seemed dangerous in snowy weather, but if you did run off the road there was actually nothing really serious to hit. With the wisdom of years, however, I don't think I'd dare do it now.

Only once over the three winters that I regularly made that journey did I fail to stay on the highway. Having skirted the moors by going round by the Whitby-Pickering, then Whitby-Guisborough roads, I tiptoed into Danby from the Lockwood Beck direction. A sheet of frozen snow covered the hill down into the village and, with all the grace of an accomplished ice-dancer, I elegantly slid off the carriageway and onto the verge. It was disappointing that the crew of a passing gritter/snowplough, who stopped to discuss my plight, declined to give me a short tow-back just a few metres on to the road, in a 'more-than-my-job's-worth insurance issue' response. In the end I walked to the National Park centre, from which a colleague later came to the rescue.

So, back to Big Mack. What did happen to him, I wonder? A call to North Yorkshire County Council and an e-mail round departments failed to provide an answer. The only suggestion was that I make a freedom of information request - but a reply to that wouldn't come in time for this piece. I felt apologetic for asking such a seemingly frivolous question of the officer who answered my call. But my mind was put at ease when she admitted that she was intrigued to know about Big Mack too. I suggested she enter his name and the word Blakey into an internet search box. With luck she would then find the picture of 'Mack' forging a breakthrough just north of the Lion Inn in the late 1970s.

Photo © Ian Carstairs

My searches produced information about the vehicles and some excellent pictures of an example of one, now looked after beautifully in the Grampian Transport Museum. What a fine vehicle it is too. Resplendent in its bright yellow coat it would present a deeply reassuring face to any snowy scene and desperate motorist.

It would be nice to think that North Yorkshire's Big Mack also had such a caring retirement home or perhaps that he now resided in a vehicle enthusiast's collection. The fact that I couldn't find anything about such an impressive machine fills me with concern as to his fate. Someone out there must know. If no-one looks after him today, at best perhaps he was cannibalised for spares; at worst he might have been torn to bits, carved up into strips and exported to China as metal scrap, after joining a heap of big 'iron-filings' on Hull docks.

But for now, whatever happened, his memory lives on with his sibling in the Grampian Transport Museum. His image is also preserved for posterity in a photograph I have of him (which I cannot find) resting in the Lion Inn carpark, like an alpha-male elephant, pensively contemplating his snowy domain.

Perhaps, if you know what happened to Big Mack or better still have pictures of him, would you let me know, so we can add them to the history of our wonderful winter moorland landscape.

Mack, you were an icon; and you are not forgotten.

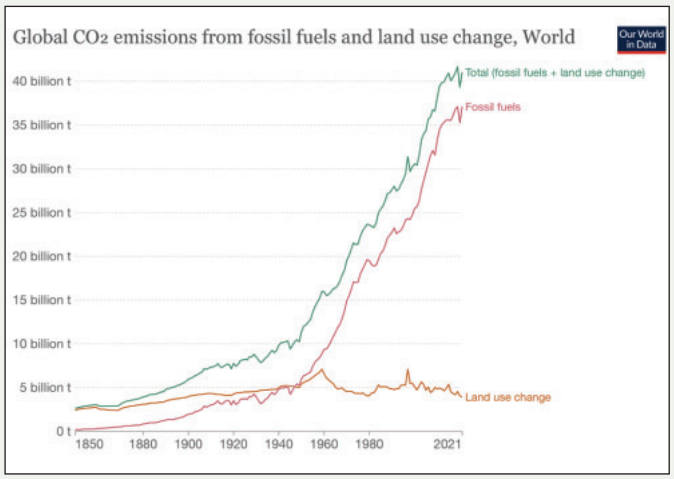
IAN CARSTAIRS

Mack in action

Photo © Grampian Transport Museum

To see a Big Mack in action, go to:
https://www.facebook.com/GrampianTransportMuseum/videos/mack-6x6-snowplough/576356332792609/

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE: WHAT'S NEXT FOR CARBON DIOXIDE?



Global Co_2 emissions, 1850-2021, metric tonnes. (https://ourworldindata.org/co2-data-update-2022)

"**IN THEORY,** theory and practice are the same, in practice they are not." This aphorism is a handy go-to whenever you are confronted with ideas that seem too good to be true. Step forward the hullaballoo about 'carbon' or, more correctly, carbon dioxide (CO_2). As we know, too much CO_2 in the atmosphere is a bad thing, and the amount being transferred there is still growing rapidly (see diagram). So how should we control it, or reduce it? Two candidates offer themselves: 'carbon offsetting' and 'carbon capture and storage'.

CARBON OFFSETTING?

'Carbon offsetting' means transferring carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to somewhere less damaging. Healthy trees, for instance, use CO_2 in their growth processes and 'fix' - store - it in their structure. Healthy sphagnum moss, a constituent of peat, is another relatively efficient way of doing the same thing. If you grow trees or invest in the restitution of peat, you transfer the CO_2 from the atmosphere and store it in new plant growth, thereby - in theory - equalling out or even reducing the CO_2, if you are generous with your planting. The term 'net zero' means that you have taken out exactly what you put in.

This begs many questions. How much planting? What species? Where? How long do they take to grow? Will the plants survive? Who looks after them? How do you measure their effect? Who does the measuring? Are the methods intelligible? Where can you find trusted sources of information?

If you pay for new planting on a large scale, then your virtue might be rewarded with 'carbon credit' tokens. One carbon credit, which you can trade with others in markets governed by 'cap and trade' systems, is for 1 tonne of CO_2. 'Cap' is the limit imposed by the regulating authority on any organisation's carbon credit allowance. 'Trade' means that any surplus credits from your allowance can be retained or sold on to others, thereby monetising the activity. A 'tonne' (or metric ton) of CO_2 weighs 1000 kilograms. This occupies a cube 8.23 metres long. About 35 billion metric tons of CO_2 are put into the atmosphere every year globally. Every year! You need a lot of trees and nature recovery to deal with that. How much? Nobody knows.

CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE?

Where else do you look for salvation? Almost everywhere, especially transportation, agriculture, housing, and the construction industry. You either stop carrying out processes which put CO_2 into the atmosphere or find ways of 'capturing' the CO_2 produced, then storing it out of harm's way. The clue here is 'fossil', as in 'fossil fuels' - gas, oil, coal and more – which are created over geological eras. Are we expected to believe that CO_2 (and other damaging gases like methane) can be extracted, converted into a stable derivative, then put back where they came from in geological strata, for instance under the sea bed, all done cost effectively? Without using even more energy, and without any of the CO_2 escaping back into the atmosphere, and in a ridiculously short time-scale compared with the geological time-spans in which they were created?

That may be several steps too far. But how about, for example, using waste cement to remove CO_2 from cement-making and then converting it to materials that can replace lime in new building construction and repair? That seems more realistic, especially if the energy costs of the process are within reason. The latest media claims from the cement and aggregate industry are pointing this way. But lab-based success at the experimental stage does not mean success in reality.

GREEN MINING?

The mining industry, a prodigious consumer of fossil fuels, is now talking about 'green mining' using 'green hydrogen' - made from sustainable energy sources like wind and solar power. But see also 'grey hydrogen' - made from natural gas, 'blue hydrogen' - made from natural gas with carbon capture and storage, and 'pink hydrogen' - made from nuclear energy. It seems that many think the answer is hydrogen, whatever the cost. But it's regressive: it perpetuates the problem you are trying to solve partly because of the large amounts of energy required to make hydrogen.

TAXATION

In fact, taxation is the fastest, most practical and equitable way to slow CO_2 emissions. It targets the worst offenders and the obdurate behaviours and habits that go with it. Use less and make things last longer. Addiction to economic growth and wealth creation powers the vicious circle that stops this happening. Is there any alternative? Instead of wealth creation and the inequity that produces, how about fulfilling human potential for everyone? That way, we might pay more regard to the best interests of humankind at large.

ADRIAN LEAMAN

For clear thinking, start with the transcript of a talk from 1990 by the late Carl Sagan. https://membermojo.co.uk/nyma/files/public/docs/SaganAboutClimateChangeEvidence.pdf

For data sources and presentation try https://ourworldindata.org

WINTER'S FEATHERS

Group of Waxwings

MANY BIRDS flee the Moors in winter. Warmer homes beckon – on the coast, in Africa – and in your back garden. There's more food there. So you can spend a long time walking on high land and not see many birds.

WINTER ARRIVALS

Some birds are arriving though, from the north and east. The quiet, crazy Woodcock is one. They really do carry their young to safety in their beaks and there was a good influx in the autumn, joining our resident birds. If you're out walking in wet grassland and forest edges you may flush one. Prolonged frost can push them farther west and downhill. The December freeze brought them to the centre of Thirsk, a tad warmer. They fly quietly when flushed, more owl-like than the fast and grunting Snipe.

You can also see them on spring and summer evenings. I'd recommend Nettledale, but I had my tyres half let down there. Yes, half deflated, both rear ones. Not as anti-social, perhaps, as shooting Woodcock, which is still legal, despite their decline.

There are a few winter specialities on the high ground – Rough-legged Buzzard is one. An individual was found near Westerdale in November. I couldn't find it, but I did meet some of the people I only knew previously from their helpful birding tweets.

Winter can also bring Great Grey Shrikes, particularly to the south-east of the National Park - a magnificent contrast of light grey, black, and white. The first one I saw was in the 1970s, long before modern bird-spotting scopes were available. Binoculars were not as good then as they are today. Hides were a rarity, and there were no social media to tell you where the birds were. Nowadays infra-red scanners can even reveal birds hidden in grassland and leaf litter that would previously have gone unrecorded. How the world has changed for the better in that respect! The downside is that there are fewer birds left to see ... I'm sure you may remember the truly vast flocks of Lapwings that used to brighten the skies they darkened.

Blackbirds also move in from the continent as winter unfolds, joining the Fieldfares and Redwings to eat berries and apples. The colder the weather, the more oblivious to humans they seem to be. There have been Waxwings too this year, eating berries in Scarborough and Coulby Newham near the Moors. They seem as happy in a Lidl carpark as on an isolated hedgerow tree.

SEAWATCHERS AND FIELD CRAFT

A totally different winter bird is the Little Auk: this one is tiny, Starling-sized, and lives far out to sea - until big winds upset their plans and they flurry past the Long Nab trying to escape the North Sea into the wide Atlantic. How do such small birds survive in the wild ocean? Seeing one might take many, many hours of chilly autumn and winter purgatory, staring largely at waves, but the strange camaraderie of seawatchers, the ultra-marathon runners of the birding world, will keep you company. Sightings from the Long Nab and other watch-points shoot up and down the east coast on social media and the Rare Bird Alert app, exciting the watchers in Filey, Flamborough and Hartlepool. They know how long it takes a Skua, for instance, to fly up the coast from a Norfolk sighting.

As young birdwatchers, my sister and I were taught 'field craft' - how to get close quietly without disturbing the bird – and to listen as much as to see. Looking back, or maybe re-inventing my childhood, there was something spiritual about moving slowly and near noiselessly through woodland seeking Wood Warblers. Which brings me back to the North York Moors, the English National Park with the most religious connections, I would argue.

Wood Warblers have all but gone from our National Park. They are one of several summer visitors in steep decline. Turtle Dove is another. Though we are gaining some extra bird species due to our warming climate (I am guessing that Woodlark will colonise the south of the Park over the next decade), the overall picture is of loss. My official standard of living is much higher now than when I was 10, but am I happier? Not if I can't hear the heart-stopping trill of a Wood Warbler. We've traded beauty and contentment for greater material wealth and human dominance over the planet we inhabit. An estimated 70% of the biomass of all birds on the planet is domesticated poultry. I guess we need to adjust more than the focus on our binoculars if nature is to flourish.

ANDY WILSON

Little Auk

20 YEARS OF APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE MOORS

Photo © Conservative Party

PM Rishi Sunak meets some apprentices

Photo © NYMNPA

The author at the Adder Wall, Pickering

IN NOVEMBER 2022 the North York Moors National Park Authority (NPA) celebrated 20 years of providing apprenticeships in environmental conservation. Back in 2002, Richard Gunton, then Director of Park Services, identified an opportunity to train people in traditional skills and encourage a young generation to stay local. A lot has happened since then.

Initially, an apprenticeship offered a Level 2 and Level 3 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in partnership with Scarborough Borough Council, with eight apprentices each on a 15-month programme. Soon, a second partnership was created with the Forestry Commission, giving apprentices an opportunity to practise their chainsaw skills for six weeks in the year.

Steve Young was Apprentices Supervisor from the beginning and retains this role 20 years on. He started working with the NPA in April 1987 and had already accumulated 15 years' valuable practical experience and a detailed knowledge of the Park. It was a bit of a gamble taking on this new role, as it was a new scheme with an uncertain future. I asked Steve if he had imagined it would endure for 20 years: "Well, I hoped it would keep going because I had packed up my job to do it! As field staff, the job was only secure for three years, so we had to make a good go of the scheme".

After three intakes of apprentices, the team regularly had to travel long distances to the sites where they were needed. Rangers in the North and Coast areas called for help over the years, and eventually two teams were formed, with Steve supervising a South team and Bill Ashton-Wickett a North team.

PROFESSIONALISM AND PARTNERSHIPS

In recent years the Government has aimed to improve the status of apprenticeships, and asked employers to develop new standards. The NPA was the trailblazer for the new apprentice standard for the Level 2 Countryside Worker, and worked closely with the National Trust on the Level 4 Countryside Ranger. The former was co-written by Steve and Ian Nicholls (Director of Corporate Services) from the NPA, with about 20 other organisations. The assessment for the Countryside Worker is now a demanding three-part End Point Assessment comprising a multiple-choice test, a practical, and a professional discussion.

Partnering with the North York Moors Railway offers an added advantage. For five months of the year apprentices do conservation work for Kerry Fieldhouse, Lineside Conservation Officer. Because she has such a contagious passion for wildlife as well as extensive knowledge and experience, Kerry teaches surveying for butterflies, plants, reptiles, water voles and bats. One of our projects with the Railway was repairing a historic stone wall known as the Adder Wall because of the prevalence of these reptiles seen on and near it.

I started the Level 2 with the North team in September 2020 and embarked on the most rewarding vocational training experience of my career, largely thanks to Bill and Steve – and having studied in the UK and abroad and worked in several industries, I have something to compare the experience with! Though I am at an age where I should have reached a peak in my working life, I began again at the bottom, and gladly.

Over the 20 years, the National Park has triumphantly trained more than 100 people ready for work. Most have stayed within the scope of the industry, while others have taken a different path. Apprentices were originally 16 to 18-year-old school leavers, and male. Now, we have a broader mix of ages, with a comparable number of women, and graduates wanting practical experience.

PERSONAL AND PUBLIC BENEFITS

Now as a Level 4, I am able to do anything from installing post-and-rail fences, identifying plants, morticing finger posts, undertaking surveys, and dry-stone walling to using machinery. We meet all kinds of people, from members of the public to the Prime Minister (who is also of course one of our local MPs), and work through all seasons and weather, including blizzards!

There are enormous benefits to the park and the individual under the scheme. No job is guaranteed at the end of the apprenticeship - but neither is it after three years at university. Experience in the field together with theory culminates in a bounty of transferable skills and knowledge. Those that have completed an apprenticeship are very employable, are more confident, and have secured good jobs.

Partnerships are vital to broaden the experience of apprentices in the field of environment and conservation where skillful, qualified professionals are needed to combat factors that currently threaten our environment, our wildlife and our world.

ANDREA BREW

YORKSHIRE BEAVER RELEASE TRIAL

Beaver swimming

Photo © Leigh Foster

WE WROTE about the enclosed beaver trial at Cropton Forest in 'Voice of the Moors' issue 143, Spring 2021, and as we are now well over halfway through the five-year project, we thought it was time for an update. The trial started in April 2019 and is licensed by Natural England.

A DYNAMIC AND DIVERSE ENVIRONMENT

What a difference has been made since the project started! The beavers have been very busy transforming the site and creating a dynamic environment with a diverse mosaic of habitats. They are still completely ignoring our artificially constructed wood dams in favour of building their own significant structures. Their dam has grown from strength to strength and now extends along the length of the pond - almost 70m - which makes it the largest beaver dam in England. The dam is made from logs and sticks and a large amount of silt which the beavers have dredged from the bottom of the pond and packed in amongst the sticks.

The author setting up a wildlife camera

Photo © Forestry England

The beavers divided a large clump of Flag Iris that was growing in the middle of the pond into smaller clumps, 'planting' them all along the length of the dam. The iris roots will grow into the dam and add strength, whilst also providing a valuable food source for the beavers and offering cover to them as it grows. The dam has become a living structure with other species such as Water Starwort, Tufted Forget-me-not and Water Plantain also growing amongst the sticks and silt.

In addition, the beavers have created several burrows and lodges along the bank of the river. These lodges have an underwater entrance to protect them from predators (an inbuilt instinct, despite the lack of predators for an adult beaver in this country). The burrows and lodges have several interconnecting chambers in the bank, above the water level. They have reinforced and insulated the top of their burrows with logs, sticks and earth.

For the first three years the beaver family concentrated their feeding and building activities around the pond area - the top third of the site. In the spring of 2022, however, they started to expand their engineering activities downstream. They now have several smaller dams in the watercourse, and have started extending one of them across the floodplain just downstream of their main dam. This area has dense conifers right up to the river's edge with very few understorey plants growing underneath them; this is the result of a former Forestry England practice which no longer takes place. Nowadays, riparian (riverside) buffer areas are left unplanted.

As the beavers raise the water levels in this area, we will see the conifers dying back. This will create a fantastic resource of dead wood for a whole host of insects, which in turn will have a positive impact on the whole food-chain. It will also allow more

light to reach the forest floor, meaning that more ground vegetation and understorey will begin to develop, thus increasing the forest diversity. It will be fascinating to watch this as it evolves, and its progress will be well studied as it is one of the botanical transect sites chosen in 2019 by the University of Teesside to track how the flora changes over time in response to the beaver activity.

IMPACT ON OTHER SPECIES

Other species have also benefited from the beavers' move to the area. For example, we are capturing an increase in the amount of otter activity, with two otter cubs having been spotted on camera for the first time this year. Amphibians have seen a dip in numbers since last year due to the amount of predation, but numbers are still higher than before the beavers' release. We are getting more regular sightings of Kingfisher – two were spotted on every visit over two months in the autumn of 2022, and Grey Wagtails appear to be doing very well. Damselflies and dragonflies are also thriving.

The studies on bats are also showing some interesting trends, with activity increasing significantly in the areas most impacted by the beavers and staying static in areas with no beaver activity. The 30-year-old bat boxes are being used more, with an increase in the number of the Natterer's bat (a scarce species), while Noctules (the UK's largest bat) were recorded in them for the first time. This is because the higher water levels have resulted in more insects – the bats' food source. Bats are an indicator species for an environment's health, so growing numbers are a positive sign.

SLOWING THE FLOW

The main aim of the trial was to investigate whether the beavers would have an impact on reducing the risk of flooding downstream. A team from the University of Exeter has been conducting hydrological monitoring on how flowing water moves through the site. Early results show that the impact of the one main dam was beneficial in helping to take the peak out of the waterflow. Instead of the water simply running down a single channel, the river is being re-connected to its flood plain. The way this happens is that water runs around and over the dam in several places, creating a multi-braided river, and then works its way back slowly to the main channel. We have not yet seen the analysis of the beavers' recent expansion downstream through their smaller, additional dams, but we hope that these too will help in slowing the water down and reducing the risk of flooding.

AN EXPANDING POPULATION

The population of beavers has steadily grown throughout the trial with kits born each year: two each in 2019, 2020 and 2022, and four in 2021. Although in the wild beavers often move on to find their own territories when they are two years old, the animals in this enclosure are living as an extended family group with just the dominant pair breeding. There are still plenty of resources to feed the whole family, and so the adults are accepting of the older kits staying on and helping to bring up any new offspring.

In the spring of 2022 we trapped the oldest kits (by then 3 years old) and relocated them to other projects. Each was partnered with a Scottish beaver of the opposite sex: the female went to an enclosure at the Hawk and Owl Trust's Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve in Norfolk, and the male went to an enclosure in Enfield, in North London, although – sadly – was found dead from natural causes a few months later.

Beavers remain active all year round rather than hibernating through the winter – footage on the cameras shows that a bit of snow doesn't slow them down! As we went through autumn the beaver family prepared for winter by collecting a cache of food. The smaller branches from any trees they felled were transported to an area near their lodge and stored under water to keep them fresh and close at hand: this is either done by weighing the branches down with heavier material or 'planting' them in the riverbed. The creation of a cache ensures that if the area around their lodge freezes over they will have a ready supply of food at hand until the weather eases.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

The beavers' progress has been amazing to watch over the last three and a half years and their engineering and ingenuity have far exceeded what we were expecting. What has also been amazing is the way that the other wildlife on site has responded to their activities.

We were excited by the news that the Eurasian Beaver (*Castor fiber*) became recognised as a wild species in England on October 1st 2022, meaning that beavers and their breeding and resting places are now protected by law. As we near the end of the Cropton five-year trial, we are starting to think to the future; we will keep 'Voice' readers up to date as our planning progresses.

CATH BASHFORTH
FORESTRY ENGLAND

Beaver enclosure with dams

TWO CHESTNUTS

Horse Chestnut Tree

Horse Chestnut Leaf

WE HAVE two trees called 'chestnut' in this country: the Sweet or Spanish Chestnut - *Castanea sativa* - and the Horse Chestnut, *Aesculus hippocastanum*. But they are quite different trees, not related at all; only their glossy, chestnut-brown fruits in spiky shells show a similarity. Also, neither is a true native. The Sweet Chestnut was introduced by the Romans when they invaded Britain as one of their food crops – although they may have been disappointed as it does not regularly set well here, while the Horse Chestnut was a later arrival, introduced in the 16th century from the Balkans as an 'amenity' tree for the avenues and parks of country houses, and later on village greens, as it is a beautiful shade tree. Both have now become significant in our landscape and heritage, though never becoming invasive like the more vigorous sycamore.

CHESTNUTS AND CONKERS

At this time of year we are reminded of both: it is less common to roast chestnuts on an open fire than in the past, although roasted nuts are still sold from street stalls and the fresh nuts appear briefly in shops. However, any used to stuff the Christmas turkey are more likely to be tinned or vacuum-packed, as they are not easy to skin!

The fruit of the Horse Chestnut – the conker - brings back memories of winter 'conker fights' with siblings or other children. The best conkers are hardened before being strung on a string and swung at each other, the remaining unbroken one being the winner. This is a long tradition that may have started using other nuts or more likely snail-shells (the name may derive from 'conch', for shell). It was not until the late 19th century that conkers were used, since before that most trees were on private land and not available to children - unless by stealth! The tradition is gradually dying out, either due to overbearing health and safety rules or because children spend less time outside in their natural environment.

THE SWEET CHESTNUT

The Sweet Chestnut belongs to the Fagaceae family. The name 'Castanea' probably derives from its origins near the ancient city of Kastanea, in northern Greece, while 'sativa' means cultivated and edible. It is a tall, spreading tree with rough grey/brown bark that becomes fissured and twisted in spirals with age and covered with large lumps or 'bosses'. There are some wonderful examples at the Yorkshire Arboretum near Castle Howard, but I know of some too amongst conifer plantations on the Moors. Often, they have been coppiced for their wood, making them shorter and stubbier but still with thick twisted trunks.

The leaves are lanceolate, fine-toothed and bright green with flowers on long yellow catkins, male at the top and some females lower down. They have an unusual strong, sickly scent that attracts numerous insects. The seeds form in very prickly seed-coats which split open when ripe to reveal two or three shiny brown nuts. These are too heavy to fall far from the parent tree, but their starchy food reserves attract birds and small mammals which carry them away, often burying them for storage – effectively 'planting' them in a good growing medium.

In their native Europe, especially Spain, Sweet Chestnuts are prized as a useful source of starch for polenta, soups, puddings, sweets and stuffings, as well as for stiffening white linen. We often forget that nuts were a staple source of carbohydrates before grain cultivation became widespread, and certainly at the time of the Roman Empire it would have been a significant food.

It was also used medicinally. The leaves contain tannins and are astringent, and were used in infusions for bronchitis, coughs, lumbago and rheumatism, while the capsules were a cure for diarrhoea. The wood is useful for building and although not long-lasting, survives well in the ground, so was used for stakes, fencing, pit-props, furniture, and milk pails. To cut the trees down was considered unlucky, which is perhaps why they were often coppiced. It was also used as an amenity tree, and scattered trees can be found on more acidic forest edges.

THE HORSE CHESTNUT

The Horse Chestnut belongs to the Hippocastanaceae family, with 'hippo' meaning horse. This could refer to it being considered inferior in its uses to the Sweet Chestnut, or because it was used as a medicine for coughing horses in its native land. Another interpretation is that the leaf scar left on the trunk after the leaves have fallen resembles in shape and appearance a horseshoe, while the conker peeping out of its shell has the look of a startled horse's eye: in America they are called 'Buckeyes'. So, take your pick!

In his herball, or 'Generall Historie of Plantes', of 1597, John Gerard describes the recent introduction of the Horse Chestnut as a great spreading tree with large branches, giving a good cool shade. It has a pyramidal shape with sticky brown buds over the winter which split open in spring to reveal large palmate leaves divided into six or seven sections, and which are quickly followed by upright 'candles' of striking white flowers tinged with red. These produce the spiky seed capsules of shiny brown nuts, lustrous when newly opened - the conkers.

The bark is smooth and grey, becoming flaky with age, and the quick growth means that the wood is soft and of little use. The largest and oldest tree in Britain is near High Wycombe, and is about 300 years old. The trees have a reputation for promoting life, health and energy so it is now sad to see so many devastated by the leaf miner, a moth larva that slowly kills the leaves, and more recently a bacterial infection which causes a weeping canker. We would so miss them if they disappeared from our parks and gardens. But they readily self-seed and spread in light woodland especially on less acidic soil, after the nuts are dispersed and 'planted' by birds and small mammals some distance from the mother tree.

In the past conkers were used as a narcotic for stunning fish, and just their presence in the house is said to deter spiders and moths. Although attempts have been made to leach out the poisons to use the nuts as an animal or human food, these have not proved successful. However, the natural saponins in the leaves can be utilised for soaps, shampoos and sun lotions, all very gentle and protective to the skin and to fabrics. Extracts can also be used externally to improve blood circulation for varicose veins, haemorrhoids, neuralgia, ulcers, bruises, sprains and rheumatism. So the tree is both beautiful and useful.

CHESTNUT BY NAME AND COLOUR

The two trees are both found in our area although they are rarely common, except where planted in parks, avenues, or as specimen trees. Both have chestnut-brown nuts in spiky cases - but which came first, the name of the colour or the name of the trees?

ANNE PRESS

Sweet Chestnut

Photo Creative Commons - Firooo2

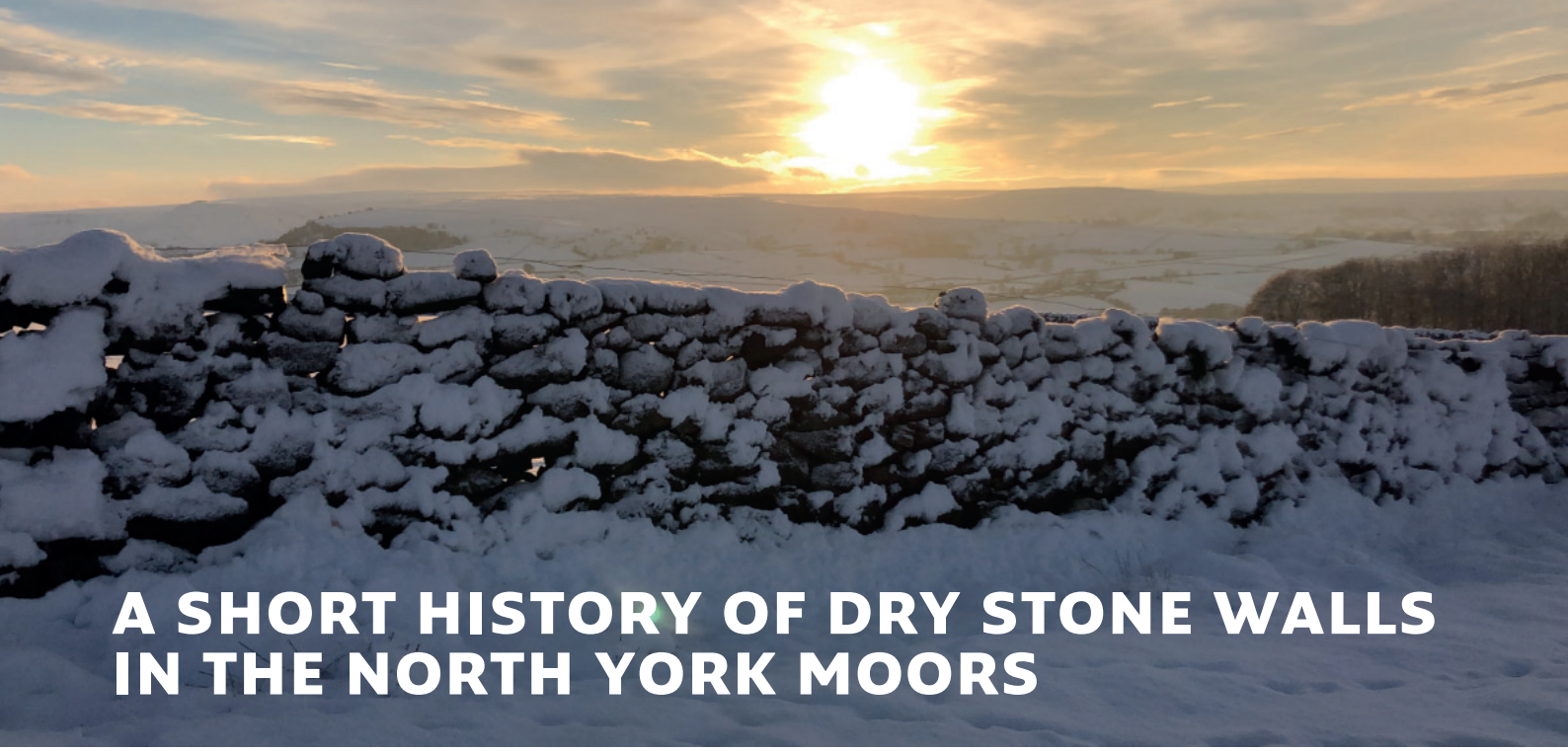
WINTER'S END (OR AWAKENING)

The earth sleeps snug
Beneath its quilt
Of patchwork fields,
Stitched with stone,
Embroidered with the year's last snow.
Bare trees stand stark,
Against old hills,
Like veins upon a witch's hands,
Stripped naked by cruel Winter's blasts,
They tremble at the wind's command.

On high a lone hawk,
Still as death,
Spots the sad-grey sombre sky,
Awaiting tiny creatures
Who chance his faultless eye.
With sudden swoop,
Of terrible grace,
He stoops to kill
Without a sound -
In hidden place.

But soon Old Nature's timeless clock
With arcane accuracy,
Will burst the bud,
Set free the flower,
Clad green the wood,
Sun-warm the bower
Awake the Earth,
With grace abounding,
Chime out rebirth.

AINSLEY



A SHORT HISTORY OF DRY STONE WALLS IN THE NORTH YORK MOORS

Dry stone wall in winter

Photo © Gerard McElwee

DRY STONE WALLS are an iconic feature of the North York Moors – in fact it is difficult to imagine the landscape without them. It is estimated that there are over 2000 kms. of them in the national park.

As a dry stone waller (Gerard McElwee) and an archaeologist (Miles Johnson), we are fascinated by a number of questions concerning the history of walls, some of which we shall attempt to answer here.

WHEN WERE THE WALLS BUILT?

We believe that the history of walls stretches back millennia, although it may have been only a thousand or so years ago that the walls we recognise today were constructed.

During the Bronze Age (3300-1200 BC) much woodland was cleared, or grazed out from the high moors, as early farmers started to settle and became less nomadic. Transhumance – moving livestock between higher and lower pastures according to the season - created more clear ground that could be enclosed. Evidence of this work and associated settlements can be seen throughout the high moors in the form of cairn fields. The boundary banks at that stage were relatively rudimentary, and some banks appear to be created from simple clearance of the pastures, whereas others are hedgebanks (a hedge planted along the top of a stone bank) or possibly walls.

Bronze Age field systems developed further into the Iron Age, but perhaps the greatest influence on the landscape of the Moors came during the 12th and 13th centuries when sheep farming evolved under the monasteries and priories. The Augustinian and Cistercian monks and nuns built dry stone walls around their monastic buildings and enclosed larger areas of land for livestock. They were successful sheep farmers, acquired more land, and established farms and pastures some distance away from their Abbeys. Many farms in the more isolated dales can be traced back to these times.

The next definable period of wall-building began in the 15th century, as society moved from feudalism and common farming towards enclosure of common land and individual holdings.

Sheep flock sizes increased and larger pastures were enclosed, with dry stone walls an ideal choice, given the ready availability of building materials. They were also used to stock-proof managed woodland, for shelter walls, and for stock handling. Once in place, the reduced maintenance requirements of walls would have been very important for livestock husbandry, especially if there were seasonal shortages of labour.

The next major transformation of the rural landscape of North Yorkshire came about through the implementation of the parliamentary Enclosure Acts, most of which were passed between 1750 and 1870. Over 5,000 Acts were passed that converted previous common land into private ownership. The process of enclosure was expedited by the appointment of special commissioners, who followed the provisions of the Acts and resolved disputes, but perhaps most significantly for the landscape, oversaw the building of the walls through establishing strict specifications for their construction. The Acts of course not only resulted in changes to the landscape but also in major social and economic shifts in how the land was used.

WHO BUILT THE WALLS?

Dry stone walling on monastic estates, such as the Cistercian houses, was likely to have been undertaken by lay brothers, while wealthier landowners may have used specialist builders, as the uniform construction of walls built appears to have been a product of estate management.

Gradually, however, labour became more expensive. From early accounts of walling in the 17th century and right up until the early 20th century, we know that wallers were usually paid by the 'piece' or perhaps in exchange for rent reduction, but as migration from rural to urban areas occurred during the Industrial Revolution, labour became scarcer and prices higher.

Moors winter landscape defined by dry stone walls

Photo © Frances Fletcher

What is unknown is how much itinerant labour was used and and entrepreneurial gangmasters who employed significant numbers of people, just as migrant labour is used for fruit and vegetable farming today. This is an area for further research.

What we believe is that throughout the long history of building the walls, the capital outlay would have offset the cost of erecting and repair of fences and dry hedges. The situation is much the same today, but with the added incentive of environmental benefits, in that walls use material which is easily available locally and extremely durable, while fencing uses materials which have to be imported, manufactured and perhaps treated with chemicals.

Photo © Frances Fletcher

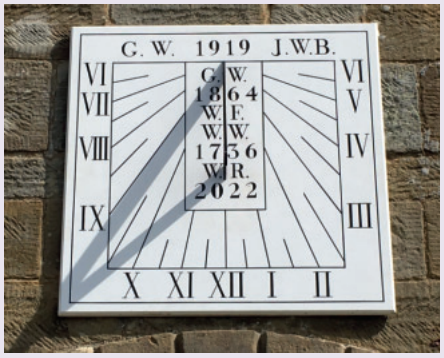
LOOKING AHEAD

Our study of walls so far raises many more questions than we can answer here. We know that some walls have stood in the same location for hundreds of years – perhaps longer - but can we identify the oldest ones in the Moors, were all the stones sourced locally, and are there different styles in different areas? How was any itinerant labour organised, how were the walls financed, and what subsidiary enterprises were associated with walling? What role do walls play in sustaining biodiversity? What do walls mean to local residents and visitors to the Moors in terms of the feelings and perceptions they evoke? What challenges and benefits do they present to modern-day farmers and landowners? And – perhaps most important – how can we ensure that this part of our heritage, apparently mundane yet embodying so much history and meaning, can be preserved into the centuries to come?

GERARD MCELWEE
Professor of Rural Entrepreneurship at the University of York St John
MILES JOHNSON
Head of Historic Environment at the North York Moors National Park Authority

Please send any comments and photographs you have of interesting walls to: g.mcelwee@yorksj.ac.uk

NEW SUNDIAL FOR OLD ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH



Photos © Alan Staniforth

2022 marked the 200th anniversary of the rebuilding of the old church of St Stephen at Fylingdales. To celebrate this historic event a large painted sundial, created by local craftsmen, was erected over the church porch. It was unveiled by Sir Frederick Strickland-Constable, Lord of the Manor of Fyling, at a ceremony in June.

Photographs of the church taken during the last century show that there was a gate into the church porch and a large wooden sundial fixed above the entrance. The sundial was nearly a metre square, painted white with black lettering. It disappeared in the 1980s around the time the church was taken into the care of the Redundant Churches Fund, now the Churches Conservation Trust.

The early sundial displayed the dates 1736 and 1864 together with various initials. Later, these were repositioned and the year 1919 and the initials G.W. and J.W.B added. What do these dates and initials represent? Extensive research has so far failed to provide answers, with the exception of the initials J.W.B. which are those of John Warren Barry, a prominent local landowner (profiled in issue 142 of Voice of the Moors). The year 2022 has been added to the new sundial, along with the earlier inscriptions, to commemorate the church's 200th anniversary.

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH STEPS

At the east entrance leading into the churchyard at old St Stephen's there is a gate and, just to the side of the gateway, a set of four stone steps set into the wall. These sandstone slabs project through the wall to provide steps on the inside. Where the steps pass over the wall, there is a vertical slab approximately 22 x 10 inches and 4 inches thick set into grooves to either side, allowing it to be removed for easier access. Just like the step into the church porch, these steps are deeply hollowed, demonstrating long and continued use. At the west gateway there is an identical set of steps. The mystery is, why have steps if you have a gateway?

Closer observation of the gateways reveal that the stone gateposts are cut and dressed to a better quality than the adjacent wall, suggesting that they were installed at a later date. We know that the church was largely rebuilt in the early 1820s and in the archives there are records of some of the work and costs involved, including, tantalisingly, *"To Thomas Greystone cutting four stoneposts £0 4s 0d"* and later, *"John Hudd (?) Cutting Stones £5 8s 0d"*. Could these be the present gateposts, supplied by Thomas and dressed by John?

The stone steps are obviously much older than the rebuilding of the church, and as they have been so well used, it is reasonable to assume that prior to the early 1820s there were no gateways into the churchyard and the only access was via the step stiles. Why? Could it be that, as the adjacent Raw Pasture was not enclosed until 1808, it was imperative to keep roaming stock out of the churchyard, which was still used for burials and where there were poisonous yew trees? Was this the reason that it was decided to have step stiles rather than gates, which might so easily be left open? The mystery remains!

ALAN STANIFORTH

Stone steps and gatepost

90 YEARS OF ADVENTURE IN CARLTON

HAUNTED by a 'Grey Lady', wooden doors engraved with 'Mousey Thompson' field-mice, plentiful food, activities, and stunning immersive scenery. Why wouldn't a group of eager schoolchildren enjoy a stay in the picturesque village of Carlton-In-Cleveland?

Although just 9 miles south of the centre of industrial Middlesbrough, this idyllic village could not be more different. It is in this tiny place on the edge of the North York Moors National Park and with the backdrop of the moors that 'Carlton Adventure' is nestled up a concealed lane behind the main village thoroughfare. To generations, the centre will be fondly known as 'Carlton Camp', a name most Hartlepudlians in particular still adhere to. Although over the years there have been changes to the accommodation and breadth of provision of outdoor activities, the ethos of fresh country air, exercise, camaraderie and team-building remain the same.

THE HISTORY OF CARLTON CAMP

The story of Carlton Camp, now known as Carlton Adventure, begins in 1931. A teacher from Hartlepool, Mr William Wilson Clark, purchased the field on which the current village school stands. He was keen for children to enjoy school trips, especially those who lived in urban or deprived areas. In an article published in the Hartlepool Mail in 1908, Wilson Clark wrote that he wanted to teach children 'how to spend a holiday happily and sensibly and to foster habits of good fellowship, self-reliance and unselfishness'. A look at Ward Jackson Boys' School log book from the 1920s, where Wilson Clark taught, reveals that he seems to have thought of the excursions and the 'Camp' as an extension of his school.

In 1932 the camp was officially opened and welcomed its first 50 children, who slept under canvas on the field. The Mayor of Hartlepool at the time, Mr Alderman George Turnbull, raised sufficient funds to construct and equip a permanent building on the site and the front of the main building was erected in 1935; this still remains today.

Laying the Foundation Stone, 1933

Almost 100 years later, this hidden gem is still owned by a group of trustees who ensure the site will be preserved and maintained for future generations. Hartlepool Borough Council currently lease the site and have given thousands of young people from across the North East the chance to explore nature, learn new skills and be educated in an outdoor setting. If you ask primary-aged schoolchildren in Hartlepool, many will explain that their family members have attended the 'Camp' and they aspire to do the same, although modern dormitories and excellent facilities have replaced the canvas tents.

The centre is open all year round and can accommodate any visiting group, offering bespoke programmes to suit any age, objective or length of stay. Visitors include self-catering groups, hospice groups, well-being organisations, and sports teams, some of them staying on a self-catering basis.

FUN AND ACTIVITIES

A typical week at the centre involves walks around the Cleveland Hills with the much-loved 'Pin Point' (Carlton Bank) a highlight, given its proximity to the centre and its dominance of the horizon. The local Faceby Plantation is used for shelter building and bushcraft activities, while Carlton Adventure itself provides excellent climbing facilities with a high ropes course, an outdoor 'vertical playpen', indoor climbing wall and low-level practice area. There are archery ranges, a large playing field, indoor classroom and canoes for water-based activities. Children learn to complete orienteering courses either on-site or at the nearby Cod Beck reservoir and enjoy a wide range of team-building activities, including a new 'Nightline' course which winds around the back of the beautiful 4-acre site.

Groups are led by passionate and fully-qualified instructors and are very well nourished by the resident chef, enjoying a hearty cooked breakfast each morning. The accommodation is warm, comforting and welcoming after a long day out in the countryside, with en-suite rooms for group leaders and comfortable lounges for collective relaxation.

Very few will speak of Carlton Camp without at some point mentioning the 'Grey Lady'. When children learn of an imminent visit, amidst the excitement will always be a babble of conversation about the alleged ghost, as the story has been passed down through generations and has been embellished in many ways for effect. This story appears to stem from a lady named Jane Turner who lived at Busby Hall in the early 1700s, a house still inhabited and standing proudly on the main road through the village.

A CHARITY BORN OUT OF ENTHUSIASM AND PASSION

For all who visit, from schools to sports teams and adults enjoying a wellbeing retreat, Carlton is a wonderful experience which provides a lifetime of memories. Sadly, as council subsidies were withdrawn from deprived schools over 10 years ago, the experience was increasingly being denied to the most disadvantaged children, who need it the most. This is why the Friends of Carlton Camp charity was formed in 2014, to ensure that no child misses out. The Friends are all volunteers - current and former teaching staff, including headteachers, and

Enjoying the high ropes course

Playing in the snow

representatives from the business and voluntary sectors, along with those who just love Carlton Adventure itself. Most visited Carlton as children. The Friends have recently raised enough funds to take around 90 underprivileged children to the centre for a residential stay, ensuring that those who wouldn't ordinarily get the chance to attend with their schools are able to spend a few days immersed in nature and enriching their wellbeing.

Members of the charity meet regularly and alongside raising funds, they ensure the centre is maintained. Recently, the group constructed a camp-fire area which was opened by the Mayor and Mayoress of Hartlepool in October 2022. A recent book entitled 'The Story of Carlton Camp', written by retired Hartlepool teacher Frances Wilson, explores the history of the centre and is available to purchase, with proceeds going to the charity.

The Friends of Carlton Camp, along with the Trustees of the site, endeavour to ensure that many more generations of schoolchildren from around the North East visit the site and make memories to last a lifetime.

The charity always welcomes donations and any special memories of the camp. Please visit the website www.friendsofcarltoncamp.co.uk or email friendsofcarlton@gmail.com.

ALI MULROONEY
The Friends of Carlton Camp

Acknowledgement: 'The Story of Carlton Camp' by Frances Wilson. For a copy of the book, please email friendsofcarlton@gmail.com.

'DIGGER & CUTS': HOW IT ALL STARTED

SUCCESSIVE cuts in government funding over the years have reduced the number of field rangers employed by the North York Moors National Park who are available to undertake restorative work to rights of way such as footpaths and bridleways. This has led to the formation of local groups of volunteers, usually people now retired and having time to spare.

About five years ago whilst out walking in the national park, it became apparent to a couple of us that where a path or bridleway had become overgrown it was often ignored and makeshift routes were established around it, something unacceptable and unnecessary: simple tools and free time were all that was needed to remedy each project. Enter 'Digger & Cuts'!

Digger & Cuts started out as two people who shared a passion for green spaces and the wildlife within them, and a profound dislike of routes neglected to the point they became inaccessible, who needed no fancy equipment to enable them to carry out restorative work, and didn't have to work to someone else's timetable. In the ensuing time the number of volunteers has grown to four, whilst work undertaken has included restoring a woodland pond and creating a permissive bridleway.

Pond Restoration: A friend purchased 4 acres of woodland in Troutsdale, part of which was a small pond that badly needed dredging and redefining. Access for any size of excavator was out of the question. The solution was buckets and spades and two days' free time! The pond today is a thriving habit for frogs and other amphibians and insects as well as a waterhole for birds and other animals.

Permissive Bridleway: This is at the eastern end of Helmsley and involved the clearing of scrub and trees and the creation of two ramps, thus enabling riders to safely negotiate the busy A170 road by passing under a bridge. For most of the time this was the work of two very

Photo © Digger & Cuts

Horse-friendly ramp under construction

determined volunteers over approximately 9 months – an excellent way of passing the time while doing something constructive during the pandemic!

RAY CLARKE

A WALK ROUND DUNCOMBE PARK, HELMSLEY

A snowy winter walk in Duncombe Park in a previous year

Looking across the parkland to Helmsley and the ruins of Helmsley Castle

THIS IS a perfect autumn/winter walk as it is relatively sheltered and low-lying on good paths, and includes parkland, woodland, and a section along the River Rye, as well as architectural interest.

The market town of Helmsley has a carpark with facilities near the Castle and the Walled Garden. The town also has a good selection of pubs, hotels, restaurants and cafes for refreshments.

Follow the footpath alongside the Castle and enter the Market Place via the bridge over Borough Beck. Duncombe Park is open to the public for walking by way of permissive access - you are asked to call at the Duncombe Park Shop on Bridge Street to purchase a £1 day ticket and pick up a map detailing today's walk.

UP TO DUNCOMBE PARK

From the shop, cross the road and follow the signs to Duncombe Park, where you pass through the Lodge Gates and follow the tarmac drive up through parkland which is home to many ancient trees. The Park is designated a National Nature Reserve, with rare Insects and fungi – look out for some unusual fungi on the trunk of a tree as you enter the Park. Follow the drive up through the park, with fine views across the parkland to Helmsley and the ruins of Helmsley Castle to your right. Go through the fine, black-painted wrought-iron gates and pass the Ionic Temple on your left. Continue on to the main house. Originally built in 1713 and substantially rebuilt in the 1890s after a devastating fire, the house is Grade 1 listed and is described as 'one of Yorkshire's finest houses'. It was built for the Duncombe family and remains their home today – although between 1914 and 1980 it was used as a girls' school.

As the drive reaches the front of the house your path turns right towards the Bird of Prey Centre (closed until 11th February 2023). Pass the Centre on the path then cross the grass to the gate in the fence and follow the sign for the Country Walk (blue dots on your map) across the meadow towards two copses of trees. From here, follow the sign slightly downhill and into Black Howl Wood ('howl' here probably means 'hollow'). Follow the path through the wood to a gate where you turn left onto a woodland track and follow it until it reaches a concrete road. Our choice was to turn left and walk towards the main house, but you could choose to cross the concrete road and continue through woodland (as shown by blue dots on the map).

DOWN TO THE RIVER RYE

On reaching the house, you turn right in a southerly direction to where both paths meet. Now the walk becomes the River Walk, rather than the Country Walk, and enters a beech wood to descend on a good track round a sharp bend towards the River Rye. Where the hard track turns right towards the Mill Bridge, go straight on, pausing at Simon's Seat if you wish. Go through a gate and follow the path through the meadow to the banks of the river. This section is known locally as the Cascades.

Skirting Terrace Bank Wood which cloaks the hill slope to your left, you follow the broad meanders of the river and go through a footpath gate until you reach the field boundary. Here there is a choice: either take the steps through the woods and go left over many tree roots to a metal boundary fence and a gate by the Ionic Temple to join the main drive, or continue through two wooden gates on a good track to join the drive. Then, retrace your steps back into Helmsley.

TIM & JANE DUNN

Atmospheric tree in Duncombe Park

NB: The house is not open to the public but for £5 per adult you can visit the gardens. Please check the Duncombe Park website for opening times - http://www.duncombepark.com/

NYMA WALK AROUND WHITBY

THE CATALYST for the November 2022 NYMA walk was Adrian Leaman's Foreword in issue 147 of Voice of the Moors. Adrian cited Alec Clifton-Taylor's 'Another Six English Towns', a BBC book and television series published and broadcast in 1984, in which he pays close attention to buildings he regards as having significant architectural interest. Whitby is one of the featured towns, prompting Adrian to suggest that future NYMA walks might include some that consider places from one person's specialist perspective.

Our walk took in locations such as large houses in St. Hilda's Terrace and Bagdale that were originally the property of maritime industrialists. Wellclose Square, off Skinner Street, was also on the route, as Clifton-Taylor was particularly appreciative of the smaller detail of some frontages here, such as the unusual tall window shown in the photo. We also looked at the role Whitby has had as a source of creative work in other fields, including:

- **Literature** – an extract from Bram Stoker's novel 'Dracula' (1897) was read to indicate the extent to which late 19th century perceptions of Whitby and its visitors still apply today.
- **Photography** – the legacy of Frank Meadow Sutcliffe's pioneering work resonates around the streets of Whitby and we viewed prints of his images in relevant locations.
- **Song** – folk songs with a transportation theme abound, and 'The Whitby Lad' as interpreted by The Watersons is a classic example. Its lyrics were recited as we looked over the outer harbour.
- **Painting** – our visit to the Pannett Art Gallery enabled us to view Whitby-inspired work by the Staithes and Fylingdales groups of artists.
- **Street furniture** – our route took in the Fishing Heritage trail of wire sculptures (see Voice of the Moors issue 146) and one of three brick benches that depict the River Esk environment (see Esk Valley News, Summer 2022).

The walk provided a mere snapshot of the wealth of features that make Whitby a town to celebrate as a fount of creative inspiration. Several trails have been developed to support self-guided walks around the town. Whitby Civic Society has produced a blue plaque trail and, following Lewis Carroll's visits, a White Rabbit trail. A Dracula trail can be accessed via www.discoveryorkshirecoast.com and www.invisibledust.com features the brick benches project.

JOHN ROBERTS

Photos © J Roberts

Brick bench depicting Esk Valley wildlife

Window in Wellclose Square

FISHER HOUSES AT RUNSWICK BAY

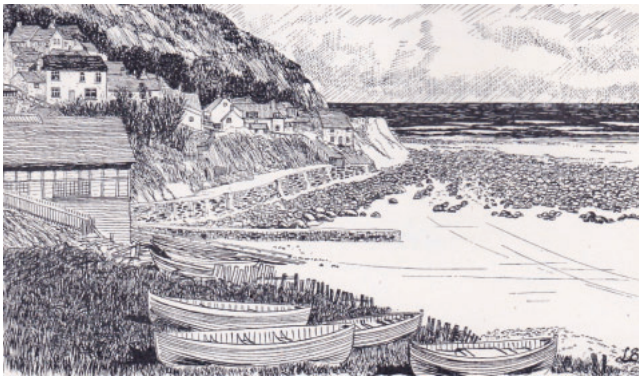
Two hundred years have scarce repaired the wrong
Done by the hungry waves that still devour,
And all who fled that dark disastrous hour
Are safe, beyond earth's crumbling. How the throng
Of red-roofed houses, that have climbed along
Their golden cliff, peep forth from apple bower
Brave as the fisher girls in calm, or cower
Silent as the fisher folk when storms are strong.
Like gay-cloaked gossips stand they knot by knot,
Shoulder to shoulder, and, from every hearth,
Rises as one the smoke that seamen hail;
Steep are the ledgy steps from cot to cot,
Love crowns each height, there is no place on earth
So dear to those who in the offing sail.

H. D. RAWNSLEY

The 'dark disastrous hour' was when a storm early in 1682 caused the cliff face at Runswick Bay to collapse into the sea, taking the whole village with it except for one cottage. Remarkably, no-one was killed. A disaster fund helped re-build the village in the form we know today.

H. D. Rawnsley - Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley - was a vicar, poet, and conservationist who in 1895 became one of the three founders of the National Trust. This poem was first published in 1881 in 'Sonnets at the English Lakes' and reproduced in 'Britain in Verse and Sketch', published in 1945 and illustrated by Lindley Searle.

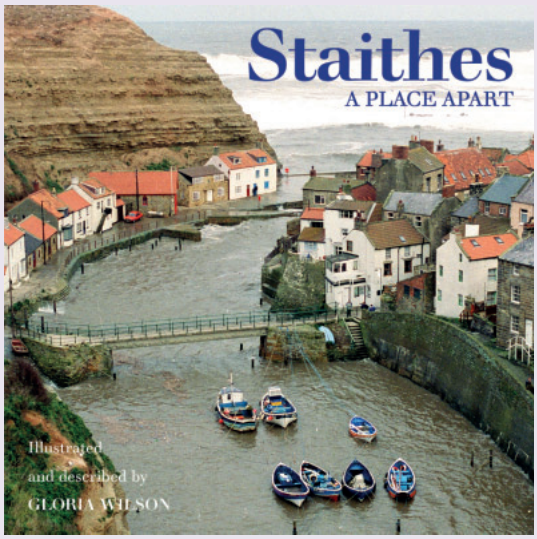
Runswick Bay



Drawing ©Lindley Searle

‘STAITHES – A PLACE APART’,

BY GLORIA WILSON, PUBLISHED BY LODESTAR BOOKS, £20



I LOVE Staithes. My family and I have been regular visitors to the little fishing village nestled on the North Yorkshire coast for decades. My kids are grown up now but my wife and I still head up to our ‘special place’ as often as we can.

By coincidence, I was asked if I would be interested in reviewing Gloria Wilson’s new book on Staithes just a few days before I was heading up for a long weekend in the village, so after a day pottering along the narrow streets and harbour walls with my dog, I sat down in front of a roaring stove in a little fisherman’s cottage to take in the book.

A bit about the author, Gloria Wilson, first. She was actually born in Surrey, but grew up in Staithes before studying Fine Art at Durham University. As an artist with a love of the coast and all things seafaring, she has illustrated many books on maritime subjects, particularly relating to fishing and boats. This book uses mainly photographs and illustrations of Gloria’s produced since the 1950s as well as paintings by her mother, the artist Lilian Colbourn, and it is fascinating to see how much has changed whilst remaining the same.

The key thing I notice about the book is that it is not your standard history book with detailed text and pictures throughout time. Whilst it does celebrate Staithes and particularly its relationship to the sea, its main aim appears to be defining its ‘sense of place’, or as Gloria puts it, the spirit that defines its ‘Staithesiness’.

FROM PREHISTORY TO THE MODERN DAY

So, whilst the author does discuss some of the history of Staithes, from its Jurassic-era geology, how its position between two headlands means that the cottages almost sit on top of each other as they perch on the cliffside and the many storms to have hit the village, to how its coastal location led to a once thriving fishing industry – the book covers much more.

Gloria’s fine art training means that elements such as the local brickwork, the gable ends of fishing cottages, narrow streets such as Gun Gutter, the disused fishing huts, old steps and outhouses, and the old crab and lobster pots stacked by the harbour are more important to the village’s character than the picture postcard views of the cobbles on Staithes Beck and Cowbar Nab, and the harbour from the clifftop, that are always shown when Staithes is mentioned in tourist material.

There are many images in the book of the fishing boats and the traditional Staithes cobbles, both in colour and black and white, and she includes not just the old existing craft but also celebrates skills being passed down generations with the building of new craft using traditional techniques and materials. Gloria’s love and understanding of boats dates back to childhood, and she has previously published books on fishing craft including 2019’s ‘Remembering the Boats’. This passion comes across in her book, and her tales about fishing and the use of unique words or phrases connected with the industry and the village are magical.

Another of the features which I enjoyed were some of the old pictures of people; the real people who lived and worked in the village, for instance the fishermen by their nets in their Guernsey sweaters in the specific Staithes pattern, or the ladies of the village proudly sporting their traditional Staithes bonnets. This does really take you back in time to when Staithes was a proper working village and not a holiday location where most of the cottages have become holiday lets.

The book is a fascinating look into the past and also highlights the small things many wouldn’t notice, where the sum of their parts makes up Staithes’ unique character. The ‘binks’ – upright stones built into the cottages as flood defences, the stonework crammed with micro-fossils, the eroded sandstone, the old signs, fishing floats and cork bunches and old boats bobbing in the beck.

I would say that Gloria Wilson has done an admirable job of defining Staithes’ sense of place, and as someone who loves the village myself, it certainly gave me a greater understanding of its ‘Staithesiness!’.

TIM BARBER
Real Yorkshire Tours

‘Staithes – A World Apart’ costs £20 and is widely available.

A double-ended beach boat

Drawing © Gloria Wilson

SKYLARKS

Unlike other animals, humans can usually get the food they need from the supermarket or other food shops. In the winter, it can be sometimes difficult for other animals to find enough food to survive. Have you ever seen a squirrel with a shopping trolley?

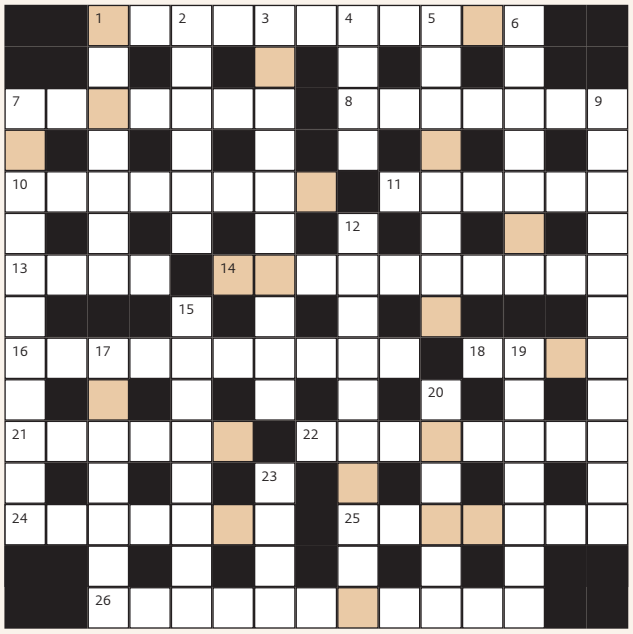
Squirrels, for example, bury nuts in autumn when food is plentiful, and dig them up in winter to eat. It is said that squirrels have a good memory and sense of smell to locate where they have buried their nuts.

Some garden birds depend on humans to provide seed and nuts in bird feeders. Other garden birds who are ground-eaters are able to find insects and worms in the ground. Fallen leaves (leaf litter) are particularly useful for them, which is why we shouldn't tidy our gardens too much with leaf-blowers and rakes.

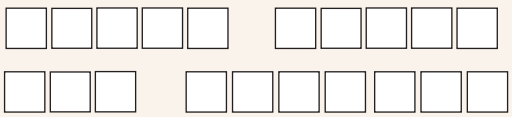
Many other animals use hibernation as a method of surviving over winter due to limited food being available. Which animals can you name that hibernate?

Photo www.publicdomainpictures.net

CROSSWORD 99 by AMANUENSIS



Take the letters from the coloured squares and rearrange in the boxes to solve the anagram:



ACROSS

1 Beautiful area where one finds smithy down in a depression (5, 6)
7 Cram ale into soft confection (7)
8 Often takes a sound beating with mallets (7)
10 Bug detectors (8)
11 Amanuensis has bed in south east (6)
13 The heart of the matter? (4)
14 Can be added by the spoonful (5, 5)
16 Adapt music for different instrument (10)
18 Crazy time to throw out (4)
21 Provocative scrap of cloth? (3, 3)
22 Little Alphonse on wall-painting outside (2, 6)
24 Coming before nobleman that is right (7)
25 Trips into the wild perhaps? (7)
26 Magic charm of rogue between two supporters (11)

DOWN

1 Author found right inside destroyed forest (7)
2 Always on the move? (6)
3 Wind instrument? (6, 4)
4 Came to a summit (4)
5 Person who writes notable words? (8)
6 Marching over rough terrain (7)
7 French shop for cold meat (11)
9 Moves away from normality (11)
12 Made steady at first attempt (10)
15 Rip lease up against the wall (8)
17 Bendy road ran into small landlocked state (7)
19 Was a ram butchered in area of Botswana? (7)
20 The building before is wonderful (6)
23 A little reptile? Anything but! (4)

A Whitby hostelry in Church Street where Lord Normanby once had lunch with the world-famous Victorian author, novelist, and social critic, Charles John Huffam Dickens 1812-1870). The quaint pub still serves lunches nowadays. Dickens was a guest at Mulgrave Castle. (See The History Tree book)

Answers on back cover

NYMA NEWS

Photo © John Ritchie

IT WAS hugely satisfying to be present at the Battle of Byland commemoration on a lovely autumn day in mid-October, with a good crowd of people (including several NYMA members) to witness the monument's unveiling by the Hon. Adam Bruce, a descendant of Robert the Bruce, who led the Scots to victory in 1322. Adam commented that he had been kept busy during the year attending commemorative events all over England and Scotland! We were especially pleased that Mrs. Barbara Patmore, widow of former NYMA Vice-President Prof. Allan Patmore whose bequest made the memorial possible, could attend, along with her family. The day was enlivened by displays of contemporary arms, armour and crafts carried out by re-enactment societies and the Royal Armouries.

We're delighted that a project funded through our Conservation Awards scheme has come to fruition – a raised kerb at the National Park's Moors Centre at Danby Lodge which will enable wheelchair-users to get on and off the Moorsbus more easily. Even though this appears a relatively simple installation, it involved a surprising amount of time and planning. Congratulations to the Moorsbus team for their perseverance!

Contributing to campaigning and policy papers by the Campaign for National Parks continues to keep us busy. Amongst others, we have contributed to their policy on tree-planting and peat regeneration, a possible introduction by the Welsh government to introduce visitor levies to support better local facilities (perhaps setting a precedent for other areas of the UK), and research on sustainable tourism in protected areas. Our Chair Adrian Leaman attended the National Park Societies conference in Snowdonia in October, and we have shared our experience on managing our own highly successful 2021 conference with the Friends of the Lake District, who will host the 2023 event.

At the start of January we enjoyed the third in our series of 'Meet the Members', with open spaces campaigner Kate Ashbrook as our guest speaker. The speakers at the events in November and December were NYMA President Ian Carstairs, OBE, and cellist Jamie Walton, founder and director of the annual North York Moors Chamber Music Festival. These informal events do a grand job in bringing out people's enthusiasm and motivation for the work they do in supporting the biodiversity and culture of our beautiful national park.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS (see page 19)

WHITE HORSE AND GRIFFIN

Anagram

20 prefab, 23 croc (croc-odile)
12 stabilised, 15 espalier, 17 Andorra, 19 Masarwa,
5 lyricist, 6 yomping, 7 charcuterie, 8 aberrations,
1 Forster (E M), 2 Romany, 3 eolian harp, 4 acme,

Down

26 abracadabra
21 red rag, 22 al fresco, 24 earlier, 25 safaris,
11 scribe, 13 core, 14 white sugar, 16 transcribe, 18 emit,
1 Forge Valley, 7 caramel, 8 marimba, 10 antennas,

Across

NYMA WALKS & EVENTS

Saturday 25 February
GUISBOROUGH WOODS

Meet 10.30 at the Fox & Hound Hotel, Slapewath (Grid Ref. NZ 640 158, postcode TS14 6PX, W3W fidelity.snap.script) for a 5 mile circular up through Spa Wood, along the Cleveland Way through Guisborough Woods, then down Belman Bank and return along the old railway (includes 260m of ascent but not all at once).
Please let Wendy Smith know if you are coming - wpsmith7a@gmail.com or 01642 711 980.

Saturday 18 March
CLAY BANK CIRCULAR – 7 MILES

Meet 10.30 at Clay Bank carpark (Grid Ref. NZ 572 035, postcode TS9 6RF, W3W engineers.theory.converter). This 7-8 mile route includes forest tracks, a steady climb up Ingleby Incline and a section of the Cleveland Way. (This is the same route as planned for last October, which unfortunately had to be cancelled.)
Please contact Kath Mair to book, email kathmair@icloud.com, mobile 07974 288056.

Numbers on the walks are limited, so please book your place with the walk leaders or contact Dave Moore, email walks@nyma.org.uk, tel. 01287 669648. Please come dressed and equipped for the weather.

'MEET THE MEMBERS'

Tuesday 7 February

'Walking & Riding the Moors' with 'Voice' Editor and NYMA Secretary Janet Cochrane. Janet will share her love of experiencing the Moors, the Yorkshire Wolds and other parts of Yorkshire on her own two legs or with the help of her horse's four – and will talk about typical access issues she encounters in her exploration.

Photo © Andrea Brew

North York Moors Railway temporary 'mascot'

Tuesday 8 March

'Poetry of the Moors' with NYMA Trustee and award-winning author and campaigner Colin Speakman, whose knowledge of the Yorkshire Dales as well as the Moors extends through geology, history, walking, public transport, literature and poetry.

The sessions are held over Zoom. Each starts at 7pm and lasts up to an hour and a half, with plenty of opportunity to put questions to the main speaker. To join in, all you need is a decent internet connection; email chair@nyma.org.uk to ensure you receive the Zoom link.

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: Vacant
Other Council Members: Tom Chadwick, Ray Clarke, Albert Elliot, Helen Gundry, Gerard McElwee, Tom Ratcliffe, John Ritchie, Colin Speakman, Andy Wilson, Elaine Wisdom
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The North Yorkshire Moors Association is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Registration no. 1169240

www.nyma.org.uk
Facebook: Wild about the Moors
Twitter: @NYMoorsAssoc