

VOICE OF THE MOORS ISSUE 114

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS ASSOCIATION (NYMA)

WINTER 2013



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A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR

HAZEL – *Corylus avellana*

THE NAME HAZEL comes from the Old English word for a baton or rod of authority, 'haesel', still hazel in German and sometimes hassel or hezzel here. It has few alternative local names, sometimes called cobnut but this usually refers to the more cultivated varieties. *Corylus* is from the Latin name for hazel, *Korilus*, probably derived from the Greek *Korys* meaning hood or helmet and referring to the calyx covering the nut, while *avellana* relates to the town of Avella where the nut grows in profusion. The name for the closely related Filbert (*C. maxima*) is reputed to have come into being when the pagan hazel was re-christened as 'noix de St. Philbert' in mediaeval Normandy, thus becoming the property of a saint instead of the elves! Universally, the male catkins are called lambs tails from their physical and spring-time appearance. In Gaelic hazel is Coll or Caltuinn and can be seen in the name MacColl (son of hazel), an early Irish king, and in Caledonian (Cal dun = hill of hazel) in Scotland where it is the emblem of the Colquhoun clan.

CULPEPPER

Culpepper in his Herbal says of the hazel nut, 'so well known to every boy that they require no description'. Unfortunately not true today! Although the hazel is not a very distinctive tree it is easy to recognise from its flowers and fruit. It is a bush or small tree with smooth light brown bark marked with yellow pores or lenticels becoming scaly with age. The twigs are reddish and carry alternate, hairy, saw toothed leaves that are a pointed, asymmetrical oval, slightly heart-shaped, lime green in spring, mid green later and butter yellow in autumn. The male and female flowers are separate and very different. The well-known male catkins or lambs tails begin to show, green and solid, in late autumn and gradually extend to become the long, hanging, yellow-brown tassels by spring. They shed their pollen in February to March, wind pollinating the female flowers which are rarely noticed; tiny stalk-less buds with bright red thread like styles sticking out and resembling little brushes or sea anemones. The resultant nuts, in clusters of two or more, are green at first ripening to brown by late summer and are enveloped in ragged, cup like leafy bracts.



COPPICING

The hazel is a native of Europe and Asia and is a shrub or small tree of hedgerows, woodland edges and an under-storey of oak and ash forests. It is often found coppiced (from the French 'couper' to cut) or cut down to a stool on a five or seven year cycle to produce a useful and manageable wood. It will grow under a high canopy but not in deep shade. It tolerates most soils except very acidic ones. It is widespread on the North York Moors in hedges, copses and woods, though not on the acidic exposed tops. Coppicing is being reintroduced in some woods. Pollen studies of sub fossil peats indicate that it was once far more widespread being one of the first trees to re-colonise after the last ice age. As more trees arrived it was pushed to forest edges and hill slopes or as an under-storey, but became more widespread again as the 'wild-wood' was opened up by man's use of trees.

MAGICAL TREE

From these very early associations and uses of hazel by man, it is of no surprise that it was considered a magical tree, surrounded by myths and mystery. It was thought to be supernaturally protected by elves, like the Rowan, but it could also protect against evil spirits, snakes and fairies and should never be felled. The hazel was cherished as a holy tree and the receptacle of all knowledge and wisdom, particularly by the Irish and Scots. In England it is more a symbol of fertility, abundance and good luck. Irish legend tells of nine hazels growing over a sacred well and the nuts dropping into the water to be eaten by a salmon so conferring on it all wisdom and all knowledge. In old tales the hazel was always closely associated with water and the god Mercury who speeds through air and water against all odds, as the salmon does to spawn.

DOWSING

From this it was believed that the wood and nuts had the power of divination, both physically in dowsing for water, minerals or treasure, or mentally as a way of seeing into the future and gaining power. My father was certainly able to locate water on the farm by dowsing with a hazel rod but it was necessary to ask elves or 'piskies' to help with the minerals and treasure! Now we use metal detectors. Both tree and nuts are reputed to help creativity and inspiration by encouraging intuition instead of more rational thought, a poets' tree. Twigs were often carried for luck and protection and the double 'St John's nuts' were particularly effective, while catkins were placed by the kitchen fireside for the good of the lambs in spring. Hazel hurdles were thought to be very protective while rods were used to control animals and pilgrims' staffs were usually of hazel and to stir jam with a hazel twig stopped the fairies stealing it!

PRACTICAL USES

But the hazel has long been used for more practical purposes too, especially when coppiced to produce long straight, strong but pliable rods that split lengthwise easily but can also twist and bend. It can be woven into hurdles, fences, the framework of wattle and daub walls, screens, windbreaks, baskets and for pea and bean sticks, walking sticks, small furniture items, fishing rods, to secure thatch and lay hedges, while hooped poles made coracles and 'benders' or temporary shelters. The wood was made into charcoal that was particularly good for making gunpowder. If the wood was coppiced every seven or so years, nuts could also be harvested, two crops for one tree.

NUTRITIOUS

The nuts are very nutritious, rich in protein, fats and carbohydrates and can be eaten raw or cooked, ground into flour or pressed for oil. This latter is very good on salads. The oil can be used as a hair tonic or wood polish. And of course the nuts are a great seasonal food for small mammals and birds. It is this that makes it difficult to harvest them as they need to be picked when the kernels are fully formed but before the wildlife finds and devours them! They keep well for a year at least so were a very important source of protein in the past, a staple food of prehistoric peoples, and even up to a century ago, late summer 'nutting' was an important social occasion and economically viable. Now most hedge hazels are cut too short and regularly to produce nuts and forest trees are coppiced for wood leaving only the odd few ones left as trees to produce nuts regularly. The leaves were a useful crop for cattle to eat before grassland became common.

MEDICINAL

For a tree with such a long association with man, it has very few recorded medical uses. The tannins in the leaves and bark help with varicose veins and bruises and more recently it has been found to contain the anti cancer agent, taxol. The ground kernels mixed with mead or honeyed water were used to make a cough remedy, or with pepper for colds.

The future of hazels is, as in the past, very much tied up with ours. Cobnuts are grown commercially in Kent and there is an increasing interest in coppicing the native hazel again in our woodlands for its useful wood products. Careful coppicing increases the possible life of the tree as it is constantly rejuvenated. But natural regeneration from the nut is problematic now due to the number of squirrels eating the nuts and the young seedlings being so palatable to grazing animals.

We need to be aware of these dangers while celebrating this humble little tree that crosses the autumn - spring divide with its rich harvest of nuts followed so soon afterwards by catkins giving the promise of new life. ♦

Anne Press



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QUOTABLE QUOTES

"Keep close to Nature's heart . . . and break clear away, once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean."

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and give strength to body and soul."

John Muir

John Muir (1838 – 1914) was a Scottish-born American naturalist, environmentalist, author, adventurer, and passionate early advocate of the preservation and protection of wilderness areas in the United States. His ceaseless campaigning led the way to the eventual establishment of Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks, based on Yellowstone, the first National Park in the world. Today Muir is referred to as the 'Father of the National Parks'.

Front Cover: Father Postgate as depicted in the new stained glass window, St Hedda's Church, Egton Bridge.
Back Cover: Robin Redbreast.

www.north-yorkshire-moors.org.uk

NATIONAL PARKS SOCIETIES CONFERENCE 2013



THE NATIONAL PARKS SOCIETIES ANNUAL CONFERENCE was hosted this year by Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and held in Tenby from 17th- 19th of November. The venue was the Giltar Hotel a splendidly located seafront hotel with extremely comfortable accommodation and good conference facilities. Credit must be given for the excellent catering and the friendly efficiency of all the hotel staff.

The conference was outstandingly well organised and both invited speakers and Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park deserve congratulations for the success of this event. The pre-conference meeting of National Parks Societies CEO's and Chairs was held on Friday evening and there was an opportunity to bring other NP Societies up to date with the polyhalite mining proposal and the present position with regards to the locating of the mine head at Doves Nest Farm which is just south of Whitby and well within the National Park. The conference started on Saturday with a recorded video welcome from the Minister, John Griffiths AM who has responsibility for National Parks in Wales. A number of outstanding speakers addressed the conference on the theme of "National Park Challenges – Past, Present & Future". Although the focus of the conference was on the changes taking place in Wales described as a "Tsunami of consultations and planned new legislation", much of this raises serious concerns for the Welsh National Parks and other designated landscape. The English National Parks may well feel the influence of what is taking place in Wales because the thrust of developing policies seems to be growth at any cost. Text from the main speakers will appear on the FPCNP website in the near future.

LANDSCAPES UNDER THREAT

The conference in Wales was followed by the Campaign for National Parks AGM and Council Meeting held in London on 21st November. The Council Meeting focussed on the subject of "Landscapes under Threat" and was addressed by a number of speakers including Andy Wilson CEO North York Moors National Park. He presented the new National Parks UK Landscape Declaration which was previously announced at the recent ANPA conference in September. Other speakers included Cat Griffith-Williams, Assembly Adviser, Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales; Edward Holdaway, Vice Chair, Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park speaking on behalf of the Alliance of National Park Societies in Wales; Howard Davies, CEO, National

Association for AONB's. Following this was a discussion chaired by Val Kirby, Fellow of the Landscape Institute, with contributions from an expert panel consisting of, Professor Adrian Philips, Campaign for National Parks Vice President; Simon Evans, Director of operations, National Forest; and Andrew Wood, Executive Director, Science, Evidence and Advice, Natural England. The resulting exchanges emphasised the need for action to deal with the strong consensus that "Landscape" has dropped off the political and public agenda. It was agreed to set up a working group to address the threats to protected landscapes as well as other landscapes and to bring this to the attention of the public as soon as possible. Amongst those willing to join this group were Professor Adrian Philips and Val Kirby.

Hopefully the outcome of the present debate and subsequent actions will be to help to reverse a slide into the commodification of our landscapes where they become merely an exchangeable unit of economic wealth instead of places valued for their intrinsic beauty and diversity.

MINE HEAD PLANNING

There can be no greater focus for this debate on landscape than the major industrial intrusion we face from the mining proposal within our own National Park. The planning shambles reported in the last issue of "Voice" is not going away. York Potash Ltd has now decided to extend the boundary of the planning application known as the "Red Line", to include parts of the mineral options area which lie outside the National Park. This means that a further complication arises because the area outside the National Park comes under the authority of the County Council Planning Department. This "Straddling" application will have to be submitted to both the NYCC and the North York Moors National Park. York Potash is expected to withdraw the last planning application and because of significant changes, submit a new application which effectively takes us back to February 2013. The company have offered no clear explanation why they should now include an area that was excluded in the last application and which is a long way removed from the proposed mine head development at Doves Nest Farm. This could be seen as a strategic move to include the County Council as a determining authority because the NYCC have a pre-determined position of qualified support for the proposed development. This puts the North Yorkshire County

Planning Department into a difficult position and raises the spectre of the sort of costs faced by the National Park of around £800,000.

There is clearly a long way to go before planning submissions for all the parts of this project are placed before the consenting authorities, there are many unresolved issues. Sirius Minerals have no other active projects anywhere in the world and are putting all their eggs in one basket, namely the York Potash Ltd polyhalite mining proposal. In order to continue with this project after the debacle of last July Sirius Minerals have had to raise funding to see them through another approvals process. This has been done through a Standby Equity Distribution Agreement arranged with an anonymous source. Over the last year the price of their shares has fallen by 70% and there is continuing uncertainty in the global potash market reflected in reduced production and the recently announced loss of one in five jobs at PotashCorp a major Canadian producer.

BIODIVERSITY OFFSETTING

Following the footnote in the last issue of "Voice" on the subject of biodiversity offsetting it is encouraging to find that the

LETTER TO VOICE

YORK POTASH

DEAR SIR

I am writing in response to two articles in the last edition of Voice (issue 113). First though, I will declare my interest. I am a member of NYMA and for many years I was a voluntary ranger and so I must declare that my primary interest is in the protection of the National Park. I am also however keen to see sustainable economic development and much needed long-term job creation in the National Park and in the Whitby area in particular, and of course to encourage anything which will make a positive contribution to our balance of payments.

The reason why I think it important to declare one's interest before expressing opinions is exemplified by two articles in Voice 113. The leading article by NYMA's chairman clearly expressed his opposition to the proposal. I have no reason to suspect his motives, I believe he is committed to his position of total opposition to the project because of strong support for the National Park's objectives. My only reservation is that I think a, perhaps more nuanced, article expressing the views of the whole committee would be useful.

However there was another article in the same issue of Voice. This article proposed a scheme to improve wildlife connectivity within the National Park. I have no knowledge or views as to the benefits of this scheme. I mention it because the scheme would involve costs, but not large costs. Sirius has commented that "*in combination with its planning gain contributions*" its impact on tourism in the Park will be positive. This Voice article proposing a potential "*planning gain*", was written by a director of Sirius and the owner of over four million shares in the company. I believe NYMA members are entitled to know who is writing articles in Voice and why.

Therefore as NYMA/Voice will for the next year or two inevitably be embroiled in these political issues, can we please have

Environmental Audit Committee reporting on the Government's Green Paper had this to say;

"The Government's Green Paper does not provide an evidence based analysis of how offsetting would deliver "biodiversity gain", according to the MPs. The twenty minute assessment, that has been proposed by Ministers, for calculating biodiversity losses at a site, is also overly simplistic. It should include particular species, local habitat significance, ecosystem services provided – such as pollination and flood prevention - and 'ecosystem network' connectivity to reflect the full complexity of habitats, according to the Environmental Audit Committee. For sites of special scientific interest, the weightings in the metric must fully reflect their value as national, as well as local, assets. Ancient woodlands should be even more rigorously protected".

Perhaps there is hope that unlike some politicians, wiser people who have a deep respect for wildlife and the countryside will be able to influence for the better some of these destructive ideas presently being put forward in the name of economic growth. NYMA's response to the green paper consultation was well justified.◆

declarations of interest where appropriate.

I would like to make a second point. The discussion I have seen to date centres on whether the scheme should be approved on the basis of the economic benefits, or turned down because of the impact on the National Park. I am concerned about a third scenario. The worst possible outcome would be that the project was started, any damage to the National Park happened, and then the company went bust or the project failed for any other reason. It then might leave a post-industrial site without the compensation of historical interest.

There are a number of reasons why I would like to be reassured on this scenario. First, the owner of York Potash, Sirius Minerals, claims to be an international mining company. As far as I can see it has only two projects, one in South Dakota and this one in Yorkshire. However, to quote the company's website, "*due to the focus on York Potash no further work is planned in the near future in South Dakota*". So in reality the company is totally dependent on York Potash, it is an all or nothing bet on this mine.

It seems there is only a small number of existing producers of the product of the York Potash mine. If these competitors have the market power they might attempt to prevent the entry of a new competitor with large reserves by keeping the price low in the short term to undermine the business case for the York Potash mine.

This proposed York Potash project requires huge capital investments long before the mine starts to produce an income stream. The company is listed on AIM*, the market for small and new companies. This means it is subject to a light regulatory regime. What guarantees are there that the necessary financing will be available? Investors do not seem to be optimistic about the prospects for the company (and therefore for the mine). The share price has dropped by over 76% since the beginning of this year (I am writing this on the 13th of November).◆

*AIM was founded in 1995 and formerly the Alternative Investment Market. It is a sub-market of the London Stock Exchange allowing smaller companies to float shares with a more flexible regulatory system than that applicable to the main market.

DOWN BY THE RIVER



Glaisdale Beck – a barrier to migratory fish



Barrier removed and replaced by bridge.

THE ESK

The River Esk, Yorkshire's premier salmon and sea trout watercourse, is one of few major rivers flowing predominantly within the North York Moors National Park (NB. Although the Esk runs through Sleights and Whitby Town, they lie outside the Park boundary). The Esk flows from west to east and empties into the North Sea at Whitby. The river has its source 45 km (28 miles) to the west of Whitby in a high moorland area above Westerdale, known as Esklets. The river and its environs are not only a valuable habitat for a wide range of wildlife and plant life, but it is also a superb resource and recreation facility for all those interested in angling and other riparian pursuits and activities. It is a very picturesque river running through scenic Eskdale, the beautiful valley that takes its name from the river.

To get the best out of any natural resource it has to be cared for and managed in a sustainable and ecologically sympathetic way for the benefit of all. The aim of the Yorkshire Esk Rivers Trust is to do just that, both for the River Esk and its subsidiary waterways. The following information is taken from YER Trust's recent newsletter.

YORKSHIRE ESK RIVERS TRUST (YERT)

On the 19th June, 2013, at an evening meeting at the Robinson Institute in Glaisdale, the Yorkshire Esk Rivers Trust held a successful public launch. There was a good attendance with a broad range of interested organisations and individuals represented on the night. This is testament to the wide interest and passion that many diverse people have for the River Esk.

CHARITABLE TRUST (Charity number 1152750)

In July this year the Trust also gained charitable status as a 'Charitable Incorporated Organisation'. The Trust sees this as a significant step forward as it enables the Trustees to apply for public funding grants and to take full advantage of any tax concessions available on donations made to the Trust under Gift Aid.

BARRIER REMOVED

At the launch meeting in June a number of barriers that impede migratory fish were identified. One of the barriers on Glaisdale

Beck has now been successfully removed (see photos). Simon Hirst, of the NYMNP, headed up this project that was funded by the Environmental Agency and the National Park Authority. The work to remove barriers such as this from the main river and other feeder becks, streams, and water courses will greatly assist migratory fish, primarily sea trout and brook lamprey, reach their spawning grounds quicker, safer, and more easily.

CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP FUND

In August the YER Trust applied for funding under a scheme called the Catchment Partnership Fund. The application was completed working in conjunction with the North Yorks Moors National Park Authority (NYMNP) who along with the Trust are joint hosts. The fund, which is supported through DEFRA, has two aims:

- 1 To deliver positive and sustained outcomes for the water environment by promoting a better understanding of the environment at a local level.
- 2 To encourage local collaboration and more transparent decision making when both planning and delivering activities to improve the water environment.

The application was successful and the Trust have secured £11.8k, the maximum level. This will enable the Trust, working in conjunction with NYMNP, to undertake specific improvement projects.

Typically this includes not only meeting costs for website development, but will also cover areas such as project-based work on juvenile/adult salmonids monitoring programmes, intelligence gathering on the ecological status of coastal streams, as well as enabling the Trust's attendance at local shows and events in the Esk Valley.

FISH MONITORING PROGRAMME AT RUSWARP

The Environmental Agency is shortly due to commence the first of a three-year fish monitoring programme following the

commissioning of the Ruswarp hydro scheme. The intention was to start earlier this summer, but the programme is delayed due to both lack of water and to allow time for Esk Energy to undertake riverbank reinforcement work below the hydro installation. This work was completed in September. The Trust, NYMNPA, and Esk Energy, the hydro scheme operators, all believe that a fish detector/counter in the fish pass would greatly assist in determining any affect the hydro scheme may have on upward migration of salmon and sea trout. Discussions are to be ongoing on this with the EA.

The Trust has also had further meetings with the EA in order to gain a fuller understanding of the level of monitoring done on juvenile salmonids throughout the River Esk catchment that has been carried out in previous years up to 2013. This base information is crucial in determining the long-term influence and impact of the hydro scheme.

The trust also aims to organise a meeting with angling clubs, riparian owners, and all those who have an interest in the River Esk and the broader water environment. Whilst rod catch data is eventually submitted to the EA, up to 12 months can elapse before this information is publicised. Equally, there is no system currently in place to capture at the end of the season details of catches for angling clubs and private stretches of water. If it should be considered that catches are declining, then the ability to promptly highlight this is important, whatever the reasons may turn out be. It would also be valuable, if possible, to gather and record information and details on rod catches and sightings etc., at variable heights of water during the season.



SALMON RE-STOCKING PLAN 2013 – 2014

Re-stocking of the River Esk, using Esk brood stock and working in conjunction with Kielder Hatchery, takes place annually. This has resulted in c. 80,000 salmon fry being released each year into the feeder streams and upper sections of the River Esk. A fish survey using electro-fishing is scheduled to take place at the back end of the year, but much will depend on water conditions. The Trust is also helping with other rivers. For example 25 pair of sea trout have been taken as broodstock to provide fry for the restocking of Skelton Beck following on from a pollution incident. The fish and c. 25,000 fry will be returned to the Esk.◆

For those interested in the River Esk, fishing, and other watery things, further information can be found on the Trust's website. www.yorkshireskrivertrust.org

RENEWABLE ENERGY

WHITBY ESK ENERGY AUTUMN UPDATE 2013

WE HAVE BEEN PRODUCING renewable hydro-electricity for nearly a year now on the River Esk at Ruswarp weir. Every engineering project has teething problems and we have seen more than our fair share of them. This has then been topped by the driest summer in the Esk Valley for 20 years. Therefore, it is unsurprising that generation in the first ten months has been lower than we expected – just over 70,000 kWh. Now that the weather seems to be returning to more normal patterns we can hope for steady generation over the winter months.

We held a successful open afternoon on Saturday 7th September as part of Community Energy Fortnight. Over 50 people attended the event which included a presentation about the construction of the turbine and a tour of the site. Fortunately, after a long dry spell, it rained the day before so we were generating. During the tour people could look under the covers to watch the Archimedes screw turning and visit the control kiosk to see the display showing the electricity as it was being generated.

The event was sponsored by The Co-operative who also gave a short presentation explaining that they are promoting community energy. It not only helps the UK to meet its energy and climate change goals but also benefits the local community and raises awareness of energy and environmental issues.

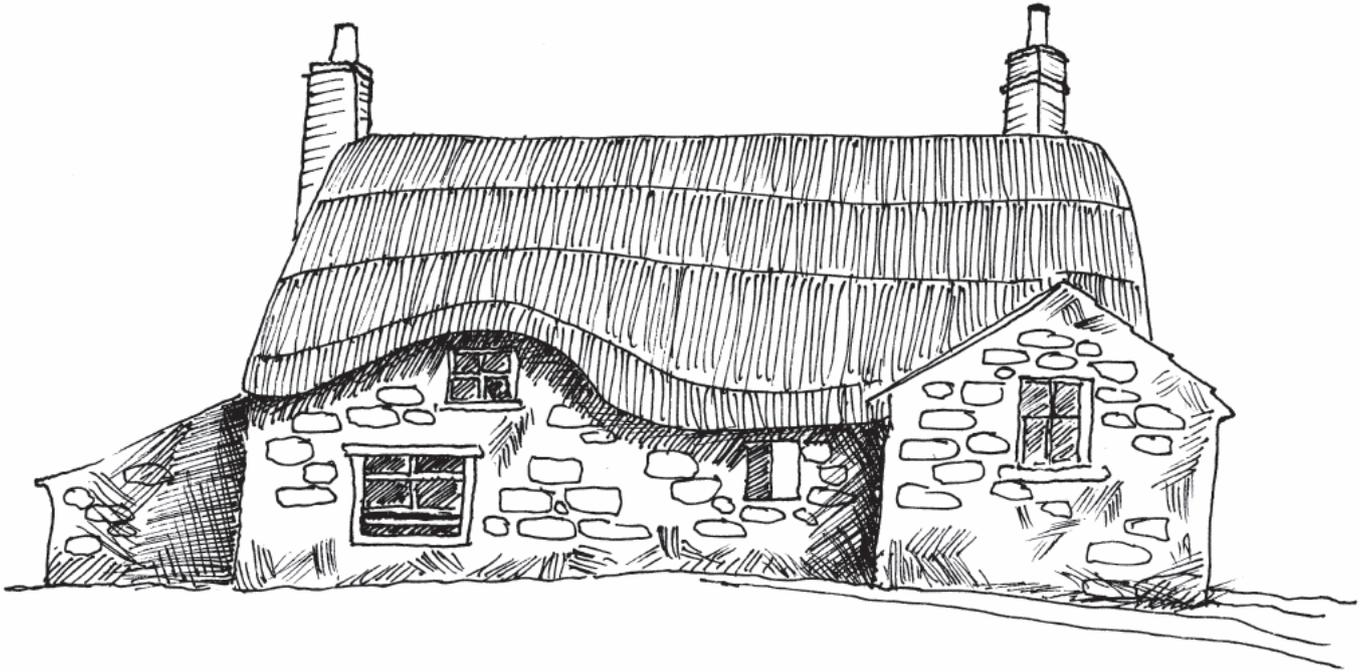
We have now moved from the construction phase into the

operational phase which involves managing the running of the hydroelectric turbine and the surrounding site. If you are interested in joining our team of volunteers who undertake a range of practical tasks on site then please get in touch – admin@whitbyeskenenergy.org.uk or tel. 0741 0549 833◆



BLESSED NICHOLAS POSTGATE

PRIEST AND MARTYR OF THE MOORS



The Old Mass House, Egton.

WHILE WALKING with friends from NYMA, we visited St Hedda's church at Egton Bridge, which holds relics of the life and ministry of Father Nicholas Postgate, known as the Priest of the Moors. The relics are a strangely moving collection of objects, older than the present church itself. A new magnificent stained glass window, by artist Thomas Denny, depicting Father Postgate striding over the moors lights up the church with soft, luminous colour, like the moors themselves on a clear bright day.

Nicholas Postgate lived and ministered on the moors in the 17th century, before his martyrdom at York in March 1679. His friend and contemporary Thomas Ward, wrote of him:

*"Sweet his behaviour, grave his speech,
He did by good example teach;
His love right bent, his will resigned
Serene his look and calm his mind:
His sanctity to that degree,
As angels lived, so lived he.*

*Nor spared they Fr. Posket's blood,
A reverend priest, devout and good,
Whose spotless life in length was spun
To eighty years, and three times one."*

Thomas Ward 1642

Nicholas Postgate was born in the closing years of the Elizabethan era, between 1596 and 1599, to William Postgate and his wife Jane, a recusant couple living at Kirkdale House, Egton, in the Esk Valley, now within the National Park. The family name was

variously given as Poskitt or Poskett, but Nicholas wrote it as Postgayt, as evidenced by his signature on the flyleaf of his book, a relic also kept in St. Hedda's church.

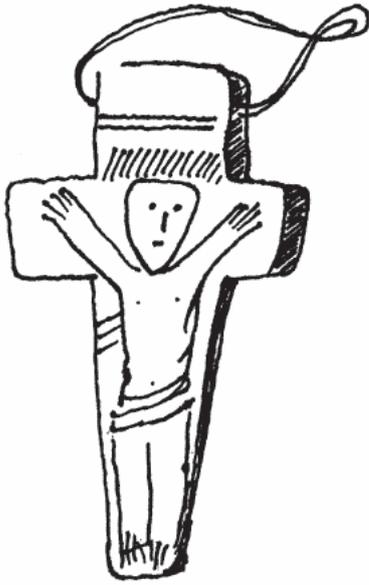
Nicholas Postgate was born an Elizabethan, but died during the Restoration; he lived through the reigns of Elizabeth I, James I (VI of Scotland), Charles I and Charles II. Not only a great span of years, but also a time of cataclysmic change in ways of life, religion, thinking and ideas.

The life, and particularly the death of Nicholas Postgate has its roots in the preceding Tudor century, that time of Reformation which upended life, faith and religious belief in ways that we now find difficult to comprehend.

To try and set what happened to Nicholas Postgate in its historical context, we must revisit Elizabeth I's reign, plagued as it was by disaffection amongst Roman Catholics who considered Mary, Queen of Scots, to be the rightful sovereign.

In 1569, what became known as the Rising of the North tried to free Mary, Queen of Scots in order to place her on the throne. This was followed in 1570 by Elizabeth's excommunication by pope Pious V, a serious matter in those days. English Roman Catholics were now inevitably suspected of disloyalty to the Queen, and penal laws were harshly imposed.

An influx of Roman Catholic priests in 1574, mainly trained at Douai in France, but swiftly followed by newly ordained priests from other continental seminaries, all committed to the "English Mission" (as it was known at least up to the middle years of the 20th Century). Their arrival on these shores again inevitably heightened suspicion towards of Roman Catholics. A statute followed in 1585 "... *against Jesuits, seminary priests and other such like disobedient persons* . . ." stating that priests educated and ordained in Europe who did not take the Oath of Supremacy



Father Postgate's bone Crucifix which he wore at his martyrdom (at Ampleforth Abbey).



The Postgate Cross. It is thought that Father Postgate may have held meetings here.

acknowledging the reigning monarch as Supreme Head of the Church in England would be guilty of treason, punishable by death. The statute effectively forbade Roman Catholic priests on English soil, and it is under this statute that Nicholas Postgate would later be charged.

The next crisis in the Elizabethan era was the invading Armada, sent by Philip II of Spain in 1588 and seen by the English establishment as further proof that the Pope and Phillip were aiding English Roman Catholics, and chief among them the priests, to foment treason against Elizabeth. Anti-catholic feeling was again cranked up.

Early in the reign of James I (VI of Scotland) came the Gunpowder Plot, and although James I was not ill-disposed towards Roman Catholics (unsurprisingly as his mother was Mary, Queen of Scots) it fanned the flames and fear of anti-catholicism.

James's son Charles continued the Stuart family dalliance with Roman Catholicism, marrying the French Roman Catholic princess, Henrietta Maria in 1625. It was hoped by many that greater tolerance for Roman Catholics would now be allowed, and in fact the penal laws went into abeyance at Charles' request, on his accession to the throne, also in 1625.

But Charles I's reign saw renewed crisis and upheaval as the king and parliament waged civil war (1642 – 49) in their disagreement over ultimate authority to rule, and their struggles to gain control. Roman Catholics were largely loyalist, whilst Parliamentarians were in the main of the Reformed Churches and anti-catholic. So this struggle too, like the Reformation a century earlier, took on religious overtones.

And now we reach the nub of Nicholas Postgate's death. Shortly after the restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660, the King married, in 1662, Catherine of Braganza, yet another Catholic princess. His brother James, Duke of York and next in line to the throne, converted to Roman Catholicism around 1669, and married Mary of Modena, also a Roman Catholic princess, in 1673. As James was the Heir Apparent to the throne, the prospect of a Roman Catholic monarchy suddenly became a strong

possibility; anathema to many.

It was at this time that Titus Oates, a "dissolute renegade" claimed that Roman Catholics were hatching a plot to assassinate Charles and replace him with his brother, James. There was an immediate reinstatement of the penal laws, and a vicious backlash against Roman Catholics ensued; it is in this backlash that Nicholas Postgate is caught up and condemned.

Nicholas Postgate's life has a trinitarian completeness in that it falls into three parts; his childhood at Egton about which we know little, but which obviously contributed to his formation and character. He left England when 25 years old to train as a priest at the English College at Douai, a seminary near Dunkirk in Flanders that specialised in training priests for the "English Mission." Nicholas was ordained priest there in 1628, but he remained in Douai until 1630, when he was appointed to the English Mission in June 1630, on the Feast of St Peter and Paul.

On returning to this country, the second part of Nicholas' life begins, as chaplain to various recusant gentry families in Yorkshire, among them the Hungate family near Tadcaster, and Lady Dunbar at Constable Burton in the East Riding. He later moved to the North Riding to serve the Saltmarsh family at Kilvington Castle near Thirsk and then the Meynells of Kilvington Hall. It is not known whether Nicholas requested to be sent to the north of England for his ministry, or whether it was thought to be a good idea knowing he was himself from the north.

The third part of his life, the time he spent as a priest on the North York Moors, became the most significant. Around 1660, he returned to his birthplace on the moors, where he eventually made his home at a dwelling near Ugthorpe, later called The Hermitage. The contrast between his new life on the moors and his old among the landed gentry must have been considerable, moving to a life of great simplicity and hardship from one of relative sophistication and comfort. Perhaps it was the simplicity that in part attracted him.

Words placed alongside the Postgate Window in St. Hedda's Church remind us "that the life of Nicholas Postgate was intimately associated with the people and landscape of North East Yorkshire." ►

He is known variously as the Priest of the Moors, the Hermit of the Moors, or as the Martyr of the Moors. His new moorland parish was extensive, roughly covering an area of moorland to the northeast known as Cleveland Moor and Blackamoor. It extended from the Whitby coastal area northwest to Ugthorpe and on towards Guisborough, then south to Egton, Eskdale, Grosmont and even further south to Pickering, where he is remembered as the last priest to say Mass before the enforcement of the Penal Laws caused a temporary suppression of Roman Catholicism. His slate altar stone is still in use at the church to this day.

On his travels he always wore a brown tunic, covered by a cape of white canvas to protect him from the wild moorland weather. He is depicted wearing this cape in the stained glass window in St, Hedda's Church at Egton Bridge. Nicholas also wore a beard, apparently to protect himself from a recurring weakness of the throat. He was totally committed and dedicated to serving his moorland folk. He walked the moors in all weather and at all hours in response to his parishioners' needs. When we drive over the moors today, we do not always recognise or appreciate the amount of travelling, mostly by foot, undertaken by many in those times as a matter of course, including Father Postgate. He would be very familiar with the network of trods (paved pathways and pannierways) and stone crosses set up as way-markers across the moors from ancient times. The burial mounds from even further back in time would also have been a familiar feature of his daily landscape.

His house at Ugthorpe was open house to all who came for help or advice, in trouble or need. Whenever he was going to say Mass, he would hang out sheets on the bushes, as if to air them, to let the people know his intention. This practice of draping sheets over bushes continued on until recent times and is within living memory of some. As such, this covert signal aroused no suspicion in the authorities of the time.

The Roman Catholic population of the moors area were renowned for their stubborn loyalty to "The Faith" and it was said in 1690 that the district around Egton had the greatest number of recusants in the North Riding.

Father Postgate apparently loved flowers and had a small garden full of them. He is credited by many with bringing the arum lily and the daffodil to the moors, perhaps the origin of the glorious display of daffodils we continue to enjoy each year in Farndale to this day.

A building closely associated with Nicholas Postgate and his time on the moors is the old "Mass House" at Egton. The place was apparently so secret that in later years it was entirely forgotten, and only rediscovered by accident in 1830. The oratory, a tiny room directly under the thatched roof, still had a small altar prepared for Mass, with crucifix, candlesticks, and vestments laid out ready for use.

Father Postgate's last free journey over the moors took place in December 1679 when he went to baptise the baby son of Matthew Lythe at Redbarns, on the Ugglebarnby to Littlebeck road. He was apprehended here by John Reeves, an excise man from Whitby. This was during the anti-catholic panic generated by the Titus Oates Popish Plot allegations. Nicholas Postgate did not immediately admit to being a Roman Catholic priest, saying somewhat defiantly "Let them prove it!" However, he was taken to Brompton, near Pickering, where he was accused of being a "Popish priest". From Brompton he was taken to York and

imprisoned in the castle, and there he was detained for over four months. During this time he was allowed visitors whom he received "With open arms and charity." It is probably also during this time of incarceration that he composed what has become known as the 'Postgate Hymn', still sung to this day.

*"My weary wings, sweet Jesus, mark,
And when then thinkest best,
Stretch forth Thy hand out of the ark,
And take me to Thy rest.*

His trial took place at the Lent Assizes of 1679 in the Guildhall at York, the same place where Margaret Clitheroe was also tried and condemned in 1586, nearly a century earlier. He was not, however, charged with involvement in the Popish Plot, but under the Elizabethan statute of 1585, by which it was unlawful to be a Roman Catholic priest on English soil.

Witnesses against Father Postgate testified to having heard him say Mass, and personally receiving the Sacrament from his hand, all the more painful for him to hear, having helped many of them in times past. In fact, one woman who testified against him later returned in deep sorrow and remorse to beg his forgiveness for having betrayed him. It is recorded that Father Postgate "... blessed her, calmed her, and gave her some money ... for her journey home."

On the 7th August 1679, Nicholas Postgate was dragged on a hurdle to the Knavesmire gallows in York. His last words on the scaffold were brief;

"I die in the Catholic religion . . . Mr Sheriff, you know that I die not for the Plot, but for my religion . . . I forgive all who have wronged me and brought me to this death, and I declare forgiveness of all people."

After speaking these words, the holy man was hanged, drawn and quartered. He was over 80 years old.

In 1977, Hedda Watson, a lifelong devotee of Blessed Nicholas Postgate, composed the following prayer in his memory. It vividly sums up Blessed Nicholas Postgate's ministry, the love and respect in which he was held, and in which he continues to be held today.

"You knew our forefathers, and you knew the things we cared about – our way of life. Our fields and paths you trod, and knew too well dark, misty, stormy Blackamoor. You died that we might keep the faith you taught. Do not desert us, for once again our world is all awry and we are perplexed. Priest of the moorland, pray for us." ♦

Text and drawings by Elaine Wisdom

References/sources:

- "The Priest of the Moors, Reflections on Nicholas Postgate." By Elizabeth Hamilton
- "Venerable Nicholas Postgate – priest and Martyr." By Revd. David Quinlan
- Various leaflets and information sheets.

THE ROBIN REDBREAST (*Erithacus rubecula*)

BOTH MALE AND FEMALE robins have similar colouration with their distinctive orange-red breast, throat and face. Its face is outlined with grey and it has piercing black eyes. The bird has brown under-parts and a whitish belly. Despite its tiny size, the robin, or robin redbreast, is one of our pluckiest birds showing little fear of other birds and animals. The robin is also relatively unafraid of people and will cheekily come close to anyone found digging over soil, the bird's bravado coming from its constant need to search for earthworms and insects on which to feed itself or its family. Robins will even feed boldly from the hand especially if offered their favourite tit-bits, particularly in wintertime when their food is scarce.

GARDENERS' FRIEND

Because of this liking for insects, the robin is regarded as the gardeners' friend. From folklore attached to the bird, one is advised never to harm a robin otherwise this will bring bad luck, disaster, or even death. However, on the continent it is a sad fact that robins, along with many other species of small wild birds, are netted or shot in large numbers, all in the name of sport.

FIGHT TO THE DEATH

It is a territorial bird and fierce in defending its chosen patch against other robins that attempt to encroach within its habitat. They are known to fight viciously in defence of their territory. Sadly this 'battle of the birds' often results in one or both of the combatants being injured, in some cases fatally. It is estimated that ten percent of older robins die each year as a result of territorial battles while attempting to repel younger and stronger rivals. The survival of the fittest/strongest is certainly clearly demonstrated by the robin species. Nature has some cruel but perhaps necessary ways.

SONGBIRD & WEATHER FORECASTER

The robin is a songbird having a melodious, fluting and warbling call particularly in the breeding season. During the mating season they often sing in the evening and well on into the night, especially if there is lighting nearby. This has led some to mistake them for the much-admired songbird, the nightingale. However, the robin's alarm call is an unmistakable loud and harsh ticking sound, not pleasant to hear.

The robin's behaviour is also said to be an accurate forecaster of the weather. If a robin is heard singing from dense cover then bad weather is on its way. Conversely, if the robin is seen singing freely from an open branch or perch, then the weather will be good or remain good.

NATIONAL & CHRISTMAS BIRD

In Britain the robin is one of the most beloved of our wild birds. In the 1960s, following a countrywide vote publicised by The Times newspaper, the robin redbreast topped the poll and was adopted as the unofficial national bird of the UK. This plucky little aviator has become synonymous with Christmas. Images of the robin redbreast are one of the most popular and widely used symbols to appear on Christmas cards, wrapping paper, Christmas postage stamps, and other seasonal merchandise. It seems that everyone loves a robin at Christmastime. Although this was not



Robin

always so; in the past some people believed that if a robin should enter your home at Yule Time then this was a harbinger of bad luck or even death. In latter years in Victorian times, when robins began appearing on Christmas cards, this was also considered very unlucky by the superstitious and such cards were not welcomed by them into their homes. Some people were even said to greet the postman to check their mail and tear up on their doorstep any card that depicted a robin. Robins keep out!

MORE MYTHS & LEGENDS

It is not surprising that robins feature prominently in British folklore with many myths and legends surrounding it, and in particular strange tales of how it got its redbreast. One story with a religious theme that is appropriate to this time of year involves Mary and the baby Jesus. It tells of a robin (then said to be an all-brown bird) that flew into the stable where Mary's Baby had not long been born. Both Mother and Child were sleeping. The robin saw that the fire had almost gone out and felt that it was becoming cold in the manger. So the little bird went near to the dying embers and began vigorously flapping its wings, thus fanning the fire back to life. But in doing so, the small bird had gone too near to the flames and consequently the feathers on its breast were singed completely by the revived heat of the fire. Mary awoke and saw the little robin and the warming fire and realised what the brave bird had done. She blessed the robin for his kindness and courage and when the robin's breast feathers grew back again, they were a distinctive orangey-red fire colour and have remained so since that day in memory of that kind act.

Another legend of how the robin got its red colouring again involves Jesus, on this occasion at the time of His Crucifixion. A robin is said to have flown up to Jesus as he was hanging from the ►

cross and perched on His shoulder. The robin sang sweetly to Jesus trying to comfort Him in His agony. The bird also attempted to pull out some of the spikes from His crown of thorns that were causing Jesus so much pain. While doing so drops of blood from Jesus' wounds fell on to the robin's breast and stained it red, and red it has remained so ever since as a mark of the bird's compassion and bravery. An alternative but similar legend has it that the compassionate robin was scorched fetching water to thirsty souls trapped in purgatory or next to the fires of hell.

It is also believed in some parts of the country that if a robin should find a dead body it will cover over the face of the corpse with leaves and moss as a mark of its love and respect for the human race. This myth probably has its origins in the story of The Babes in the Wood. The Ballad of Babes in the Wood is a traditional children's fairytale (and a rather gruesome one at that) first published by Thomas Millington in Norwich in 1595. In this pitiless yarn there is only one tender, redeeming detail and this involves a sympathetic and caring robin that scatters strawberry leaves as a coverlet or shroud over the tiny corpses of the perished children. The excerpt below taken from the poem tells this part of the morbid story:

*Thus wandered these poor innocents;
In one another's arms they died,
As wanting due relief;
No burial this pretty pair
Of any man receives,
Till Robin Redbreast piously
Did cover them with leaves.*

Despite the robin's bravery and ferocious fighting abilities, it was another of our small common birds that brought about a particular Cock Robin's demise – if we are to believe these confessional lines from yet another gory children's nursery rhyme:

*Who killed Cock Robin?
'I' said the Sparrow, 'with my bow and arrow,
I killed Cock Robin.'*

Other older colloquial English names for the robin are ruddock and robinet, while the collective noun or noun of assemblage for the little bird is 'a worm of robins,' a very appropriate description indeed.

Watch out for cheeky robin redbreasts at Christmas – but don't let the little bird into your home or . . . ? ♦

NE YORKSHIRE GEOLOGY TRUST

MILESTONE – 10 YEARS YOUNG

THE GEOLOGY TRUST'S FIRST DECADE OF CONSERVING LOCAL GEODIVERSITY.

THIS YEAR ON NOVEMBER 9TH in our Village Hall at Robin Hood's Bay, NE Yorkshire Geology Trust celebrated 10 years in our community. 10 years of fossil walks with school children, our MP and our local Councilor, an oil millionaire, a trilobite fanatic, a few creationists, tourists and countless enchanted individuals. 10 years of fund raising for geoconservation, always a difficult task as rocks are not cuddly even when sold with little eyes by Michael Styles in his Rock and Fossil Museum and Bookshop in Robin Hood's Bay. Michael, a staunch supporter of the Geology Trust will for our 10 anniversary, sponsor in our name some more bio-gas generators in Nepal, a lovely present which makes a massive difference to so many people's lives.

Changing lives and people's perspectives is also what your Geology Trust has been trying to do over the years with:

- institutions, getting them to give geology parity with archaeology and biodiversity,
- individuals, instilling in them an interest in our local landscape and earth heritage,
- school children and students, generating interest and furthering their knowledge of a fascinating subject - the study of our planet,
- the general public, giving people a sense of place and a better understanding of our landscape, its origins, unique value and fragility.

In addition we have our fingers firmly crossed that our recent funding application to the Lottery to support our Lewis Hunton project will be successful and that we will be able to carry our work

further and to many more people through our Geonaut Clubs for young pupils and our internships for older students. We know this works as our last intern is now at University thanks to the support of the Geology Trust. We want to pass on these benefits to others, helping them to better understand the world around them.

Looking to the future it appears that there is greater need for people to be equipped with an understanding of Earth processes than ever before. Globally issues such as climate change and more locally mining and fracking, are becoming more insistent.

Who would ever have thought that oil companies would be interested in our area?

People will always need resources and the only place they can get most of them is from the Earth. It is imperative that we help present and more especially, future generations, to be able to understand how the Earth works and so be able to make informed decisions about these issues. They are going to become more and more pressing as time goes on.

With our position as consultee to all the local planning authorities we will be continuing our conservation work, protecting important Earth Heritage sites like Wykeham Quarry for future generations and sharing our local Geodiversity with as many people as possible.

Finally I would like to offer seasons greetings to everyone, especially to our hard working members and to all our friends and supporters over the last ten years, there are too many to list but you know who you are.

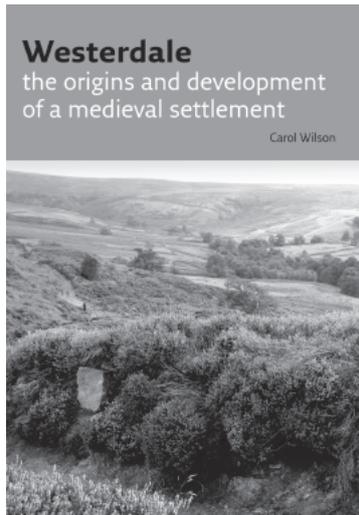
Many thanks and a Merry Xmas.

WESTERDALE – NEW LOCAL HISTORY BOOK

THE NEW BOOK *Westerdale: the Origins and Development of a Medieval Settlement* offers an intriguing look at the landscape and settlement of one of North Yorkshire's more remote moorland villages. The author, Westerdale resident Carol Wilson, undertook her research into the village for her dissertation in the MA in Medieval Studies at the University of York, and the interdisciplinary training of that degree shines through in her approach, which happily results in far more than a standard local history. The author has provided us with a thorough historical and archaeological study of a medieval village, giving the reader a sense of the real physicality of the landscape, people, and material culture of Westerdale, as well as its documented past. She provides a model for interdisciplinary settlement studies that aspiring local historians would do well to follow.

The place-name 'Westerdale', as Carol Wilson points out in her introduction, has always referred to more than just a settlement, and this in itself offers a clue that how the settlement and its surrounding landscape came to be is far from a straightforward story. Along with the nucleated village, the name 'Westerdale' encompassed a two-pronged dale in the valley of the River Esk in the North York Moors, a royal forest granted to the de Balliol family in the late-eleventh century, a manor passed down through the same line and eventually granted to the Knights Templar and Hospitallers, and an ecclesiastical parish focused on a parish church and graveyard which were in existence from at least the twelfth century, if not earlier. Though the valley bears some traces of prehistoric activity, we know little until the grant of the forest c. 1090. Westerdale isn't mentioned in Domesday Book, so the village's origins and the physical development of the settlement and its landscape over time are murky, even if the various lords of the manor are known. By examining charters, land conveyances, inventories and inquests alongside detailed analyses of historic maps, antiquarian illustrations, surviving architecture, artefacts, and some old-fashioned mud-on-your-boots fieldwalking, the author artfully picks apart and begins to reconstruct the complex relationships between village, parish, and field, and how they changed through the Middle Ages.

Although the book covers the entire medieval life of the village from the twelfth century to the Reformation, Carol Wilson has laid out the book thematically rather than chronologically, which is an effective approach, especially given the disjointed timeline of the surviving documents and material culture for Westerdale. It's also much more exciting than the standard trawl through documents from earliest to most recent which often characterizes village histories, instead giving the reader a vibrant sense of how the settlement is laid out and how it once worked. The author



starts us out with the early grange Rievaulx Abbey established in one corner of the dale, then leads us around the parish boundaries and the church and churchyard, into the village and its houses, manor, and mill, and then finally out into the open fields and the wider dale. She examines the agriculture, pasture, and rural industry that have supported the people of Westerdale throughout the Middle Ages, as well as the unusual scattered character of settlement in the area that encompassed far more than just the nucleated village. The dale's numerous isolated farmsteads, tiny hamlets, and 'ends' — mysterious place-names that seem to indicate foci of particular activities or settlement — and more importantly, the roads and tracks which provided communication

lines between them, prove that while perhaps generally remote from the wider world, the dale as a whole was a bustling hive of activity within the confines of its valley.

Another strength of the book is that it is richly illustrated from cover to cover, with photos of buildings and landscapes, artefacts, drawings and maps. The author makes especially fine use of a range of historic maps and new ones that she created herself, so the reader never gets lost in the complicated landscape of the village and dale. Overall, the book is a thorough and fascinating exploration of a medieval landscape whose complexities and mysteries were well worth the time and effort spent on disentangling them. It will be useful publication for scholars looking for a well-researched interdisciplinary study of a medieval village, but the book should also be commended for accomplishing a rare feat for an academic study — it will also be a highly engaging and enjoyable read for anyone interested in North Yorkshire's landscape and history.

*Dr Aleksandra McClain,
Department of Archaeology, University of York.*

The book is available from Castleton Post Office; Champion's Garage, Castleton; Danby Health Shop; Danby Moors Centre; Sutton Bank Centre; Guisborough Book Shop; Kirkleatham Museum Shop; Pannett Park Museum; North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton; Waterstones, Northallerton. Published by NYMA — price £12.

NEW YEAR WALK DANBY, SATURDAY 25 JANUARY 2014

Make a New Year resolution to come along and join the first NYMA walk of the year. Meet at 11am at Danby Lodge Moors Centre for a winter wander of no more than 4 miles according to weather conditions on the day. SORRY, NO DOGS ALLOWED.

Walkers can take refreshments following walk, or if weather conditions prove too bad, enjoy a social meeting in the Woolly Sheep Café at the Centre. For confirmation and further information please ring walk leader, Beryl Turner — 01642

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Across: 1 rainbow 5 coomb 8 stern 9 suicide 10 clearing bank 12 & 14 silver lining 17 affectionate 21 seasons 22 rabbit 23 named 24 endorse
Down: 1 ruse 2 ideal 3 bandage 4 wasp 5 cling 6 origami 7 breakage 11 assassin 13 left arm 15 ignored 16 tissue 18 cloud 19 labor 20 Nile



A GIFT OF THE MOORS

Have you friends who are lovers of the moors and dales of Northeast Yorkshire? Are you pondering what you could give them as a suitable gift for Christmas, birthdays, or other special occasions?

Give them membership of the **North Yorkshire Moors Association**. Membership of **NYMA** would make an ideal gift for anyone who loves the moors and dales of Northeast Yorkshire.

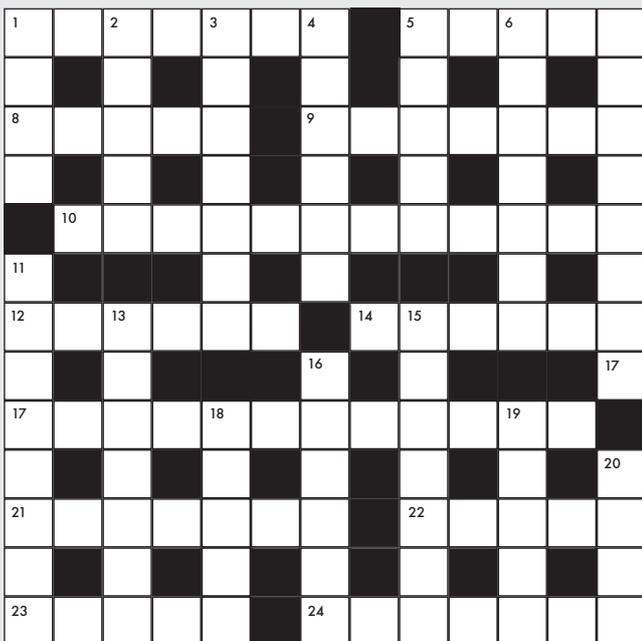
By giving gift membership you are also helping to protect this special area by supporting the ongoing work of NYMA whose aim is to ensure the moors remain a place of beauty, peace and tranquillity for all to enjoy – a very precious gift indeed!

Visit NYMA website for membership application and payment details:

www.north-yorkshire-moors.org.uk

CROSSWORD

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD No 63 BY AMANUENSIS



ACROSS:

- 1 Bluebirds fly above it, according to the song (7)
- 5 Search for love inside deep hollow (5)
- 8 Authoritarian at the rear of the ship (5)
- 9 Some people chose to take this way out (7)
- 10 Getting over hill to sorting house (8,4)
- 12 & 14 18 down could have one, so 'tis said (6,6)
- 17 Loving result of particle consumed (12)
- 21 Adds zest to the year's quarters (7)
- 22 Coney has no time for religious leader (5)
- 23 Given a handle? (5)
- 24 Give sanction to send ore out (7)

DOWN:

- 1 The stratagem is sure to change (4)
- 2 I dish out cards so perfect (5)
- 3 Group takes long time dressing (7)
- 4 Stinger that is tight about the waist (6)
- 5 Hang on to one hundred found on moor plant (5)
- 6 Skill of folders? (7)
- 7 Smashing period results in damage (8)
- 11 A pair of fools take in killer (8)
- 13 It's never on the right hand side! (4,3)
- 15 Go in red though took no notice (7)
- 16 Christmas wrapper? (6)
- 18 Seen in sky – could change (5)
- 19 Abort around small drum (5)
- 20 Long distance runner (4)

ANSWERS ON PAGE 13

THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD 2014

The Association invites applications for an award from this fund from University or Sixth-Form students, from local interest groups, or from individual amateur researchers who are currently pursuing or are intending to pursue research into the Natural History, Archaeology, Social and Economic History, or Natural or Built Environment of the North York Moors. The results of the research should make a contribution to the body of knowledge about the Moors. The 2014 Award is for £250 and the closing date for entries is April 30th 2014. Applicants must include an outline of the current or proposed research project and a statement of the applicant's previous experience and/or academic support, and an indication of how any award would be spent.

Applications to be sent to: The Secretary NYMA, 4 Station Road, Castleton, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO21 2EG. Or by e-mail to tomandsuechadwick@btinternet.com



2013 - SOME HIGHS & LOWS

Looking back at 2013 from a naturalist's aspect, what were the highs and lows of the year? Spring was a complete disaster, with weeks of continuous biting north-easterly winds. Many sea birds were washed up dead along our coastline. Apparently they had starved to death, unable to find adequate feed they had succumbed to the relentless cold and wet conditions. The usually hardy conifer trees turned brown where the vicious blast of the icy winds had 'burnt' their needles. Even more noticeable was the thousands of acres of moorland that also turned brown as the exposed tips of the heather died off; a very miserable start to the year.

SUMMER EVENTUALLY

Fortunately the long and seemingly relentless grip of winter was finally released and the next six months saw some wonderful spells of warm, sunny weather with plenty of opportunities to get out and about in the surrounding countryside. I was over the moon to be able to photograph some pristine spikes of the burnt tip orchid (*Orchis ustulata*) at a secret location within the NYM National Park, but even this was surpassed by the sighting of another rare plant that I stumbled upon by chance. I was busy counting butterflies in Dalby forest on an exceptionally warm day, when I was momentarily distracted by some developing spikes of the fragrant orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*) and the pyramidal orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) growing in amongst the short calciferous sward. It was then I noticed a strange looking yellowish plant nearby. As it had no leaves and a lack of strong colour, it seemed obvious to me to be a saprophytic plant, rather like the common toothwort (*Lathraea squamaria*). These plants can sometimes be found in the spring at the base of hazel bushes. I took a couple of photos and on arriving home I immediately emailed them to a very good botanist friend for identification. Soon after sending the email, my phone rang. A very excited lady was on the line wanting to know where the yellow bird's nest (*Monotropahypopitys*) had been discovered. Apparently, it was only known to grow at one other noted site within the National Park.

BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies flourished in the long warm summer, but what about the rare spring species? Well they had rather sensibly delayed their emergence until the weather changed. On the 6th June I decided to see if I could find the famous Duke of Burgundy (*Hamearis lucina*). The temperature was well into the seventies as I climbed the famous hill that they are known to

inhabit. After an initial search of the area I failed to find any Dukes at home. Perhaps I was too late? However, I continued my search and my perseverance was rewarded when I finally found a few individual Dukes at a small sheltered pocket on the hill. What splendid little characters they were, much smaller than I had anticipated but very lively, zooming about very purposefully. Spotting these lovely butterflies was well worth the effort of the steamy climb up the hillside.

MOTHS

Moths also did very well in the fine summer weather. As I mentioned in my previous article (Voice 113), I was delighted to take a rare bedstraw hawkmoth (*Hyles galli*) in my garden, but I did have one rather unfortunate episode. One morning I found a strange grey moth had been attracted to my garden light trap. I was unable to identify the moth. So I took a couple of photos of the individual in question and emailed them to my Vice County moth recorder and our Yorkshire macro moth recorder to try and obtain a positive identification of the species before releasing the moth back into the garden unharmed. As soon as I released the moth, it flew out of the garden and disappeared. Not long after, both of the moth experts got back to me saying it was probably a very rare migrant moth, but they would need to examine it more closely in order to pin it down to an exact species level. Could they please have the moth sent to them immediately? Oooooops!

OTTER & OSPREY

Another highlight for me during 2013 happened while I was quietly fishing a fly on the Esk (Not far from Danby Lodge Moors Centre) when a whiskery muzzle appeared out of the water near the far-side riverbank. It is always a great pleasure to see a wild otter in the river Esk – even though it had spoiled the fishing. Also near Danby I was thrilled to witness an osprey fishing on the Esk, not a common sight by all means.

SPECIAL DAY

But the one very special treat that really stands out for me as I look back on 2013, was the day I simply sat in the warm summer sun at Dalby forest with hundreds of beautiful small heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*) butterflies cavorting and flitting about me, and at the same time being surrounded by the humming sound of thousands of bees and hoverflies going about their normal business and nectaring on the orchids – absolute heaven! ♦



Small heath butterfly



Burnt tip orchid



Yellow bird's nest

Apology An apology goes to Hawkmoth for an inaccuracy that slithered into the Moors Wildlife feature in the autumn issue of Voice 113. The line that was added saying 'our only native poisonous snake' should have read 'our only native venomous snake'. The adder is a venomous snake, it is not a poisonous snake as stated.

The editor.

A photograph of a robin perched on a snow-covered branch. The robin has a bright orange-red breast and a greyish-brown back. The background is a soft-focus winter scene with snow on branches and trees.

Good-bye, good-bye to summer!
For Summer's nearly done;
The garden smiling faintly,
Cool breezes in the sun;
Our Thrushes now are silent,
Our Swallows flown away,
But Robin's here, in coat of brown,
With ruddy breast-knot gay.
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
Robin singing sweetly
In the fall of year.

Bright yellow, red, and orange,
The leaves come down in hosts;
The trees are Indian princes,
But soon they'll turn to ghosts;
The scanty pears and apples
Hang russet on the bough,
It's Autumn, Autumn, Autumn late,
'Twill soon be Winter now.
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
And welaway! my Robin
For pinching times are near.

The fireside for the Cricket,
The wheatstack for the Mouse,
When trembling night-winds whistle
And moan about the house;
The frosty ways like iron,
The branches plumed with snow,
Alas! In Winter, dead and dark,
Where can poor robin go?
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
And a crumb of bread for Robin,
His little heart to cheer.

Robin Redbreast
by William Allingham 1824 - 1889