

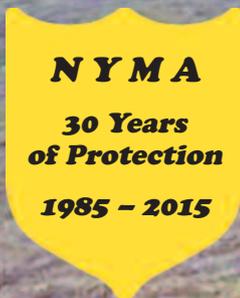
# VOICE OF THE MOORS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS ASSOCIATION (NYMA)

# ISSUE 120

SUMMER 2015

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# MORE RANUNCULACEAE

## BUTTERCUPS GALORE

As I write this piece the celandine (see Voice 119) and the wood anemone have had their day and are beginning to fade as the woodland and hedgerow leaves increasingly shade them. But the often-overlooked **goldilocks buttercup** of old woodland edges and the **marsh marigold** of the wetter open woodlands and marshes mentioned in the last article, are in full flower. Near where I live the goldilocks is flourishing – or am I just noticing it more now? For the next few months we will certainly notice the other buttercups, **creeping** (*Ranunculus repens*), **meadow** (*R. acris*) and **bulbous** (*R. bulbosus*) as they carpet our meadows and add a joyful spattering of vivid yellow to roadsides and hedgerows.

All three have bright golden yellow, usually five-petalled flowers and all start to flower at about the same time, although the bulbous buttercup has a shorter flowering season and its flower can be distinguished from the other two by its reflexed sepals, bending back to touch the stem. The bulbous and the creeping varieties have toothed, three-lobed leaves with the middle lobe being stalked, while those of the meadow buttercup are toothed but palmate in shape. As their names suggest, the bulbous buttercup has a bulbous base while the creeping buttercup, once established, sends out long stems or runners that root to produce new plants, like strawberries. The meadow buttercup is usually the tallest, the flowers being held on more erect, hairy, branched stems while the other two are slightly shorter, their stems being more stout, solid and furrowed. All avoid very acid soils, the bulbous preferring more lime rich, drier ones and is thus more commonly found to the southern part of the moors, while the meadow prefers undisturbed, damper ground but they can be found all growing together at times.

There is another difference between the species that has been investigated recently concerning the variation in petal number and shape in the creeping buttercup, it may have up to nine petals instead of the usual five and the petal edges may be wavy. As mentioned, this species sends out runners from the parent plant that, when they reach bare, damp ground, root to produce new plants. These are thus clones of the first plant, genetically exactly the same and these areas of cloned plants can cover several square meters. If then there has been a chance mutation for petal number in the parent plant, this will be passed on to all cloned offspring; an accumulation of mutations occurring over the years. Thus it was hoped to be able to 'date' old meadows, those having the larger proportion of plants with more than five petals being the oldest. However, it is more commonly the meadow buttercup that is predominant in these older meadows and they reproduce by seed so have less variation in petal number. But if you do find a spread of creeping buttercup in a meadow or hedgerow, do count the petals.

Both of these species can and do combine to cover fields and gardens at this time of the year to the consternation of farmers and

gardeners alike as they are pernicious, acrid and bitter, smothering other plants and no use to livestock who avoid them unless they are dried. But the vivid yellow fields are part of our folk law and heritage, loved and necessary to bees and other insects. Do children still walk through fields of buttercups and hold flowers under each other's chins to discover if the golden reflection shows that they like butter? Do children today even know what a buttercup is? Maybe not any more.

The only other member of this family that is fairly common in our area is the **lesser spearwort**, (*R. flammula*), which is a plant of shallow streams, marshes and wet grassland. Its flower is buttercup-like but a slightly lighter yellow and the leaves are pale green, lance shaped. Also in the same family is the **globe flower** (*Trollius europaeus*), which can be locally common in wet lime rich places, with its pale yellow round, nodding flower heads. I recently encountered this in abundance in the lime rich fens of Malham Tarn in the Yorkshire Dales, where, nearby in the limestone pavement, was the **baneberry** (*Actaea spicata*), also a *Ranunculaceae*. There are other occasionally found buttercups, the **hairy**, the **small flowered**, and the **celery leaved** and a number of the white flowered **water crowfoots** in a few wet places in our area and surprisingly also included in this family and sometimes encountered are the **columbine**, the **green** and **stinking hellebores**, **travellers joy**, **monk's hood**, **winter aconite** and the **meadow rue**.



## POISONOUS

But one attribute uniting the whole family is that they are all poisonous to a greater or lesser extent, and bitter and acrid. Monk's hood is the most toxic, although celery leaved buttercup (*R. sceleratus*) an unusual annual, is very virulent, blistering the skin badly and very poisonous to cattle, although they can sometimes seem to be addicted to it. Culpepper called the buttercups 'furious, biting herbs' that should not be taken internally and they have generally only been used in the past on the skin to raise blisters as a counter irritant for shingles, sciatica, gout and rheumatic conditions, but also mentioned as a help for cancer and the plague. The yellow petals were made into a hand and skin cream and because of their colour and its relationship to butter, were rubbed into the udders of cows. As mentioned before, once dead or dried, the bitter, poisonous, unstable constituents disappear, and both the bulb of the bulbous buttercup and the lush vegetation of the celery leaved have been cooked and eaten in the past. The very young leaves of the celandine that I mentioned the wood pigeons eating in winter in my last article, I tried and found quite sweet and pleasant!

I hope you have enjoyed meeting this old, beautiful but rather sinister flower family. ♦

Anne Press



**NYMA**

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Registered Charity No. 517639

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Malcolm Watt  
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Elaine Wisdom

#### Association Treasurer

Brian Pearce  
140 Newton Road  
Great Ayton  
Middlesbrough TS9 6DL  
brian.pearce11@btinternet.com

#### Hon. Secretary

Janet Cochrane  
The Forge, Fangdale Beck,  
North Yorkshire, TS9 7LE  
janetcochrane55@gmail.com

#### Membership Secretary

Gerald King  
5 Cleveland View, Faceby  
Middlesbrough, TS9 7DE  
Tel. 01642 701051

#### Walks Coordinator

Heather Mather  
Ainthorpe  
Tel. 01287 669104

#### 'Voice of the Moors' articles to:

Albert Elliot  
Piper House, 54 Church Street,  
Castleton, Whitby, YO21 2EL  
Tel. 01287 660137  
email: elliot142@btinternet.com

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## "QUOTABLE QUOTES"

"If a man walks in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer. But if he spends his days as a speculator shearing off those woods and making the earth bald before her time, he is deemed an industrious and enterprising citizen."

*Henry David Thoreau*

We learned that economic growth and environmental protection can and should go hand in hand."

*Christopher Dodd*

"The future will either be green or not at all."

*Bob Brown*

Front Cover: Kirby Bank Trod  
Back Cover: Cyclists pass through Castleton on the Tour de Yorkshire

[www.north-yorkshire-moors.org.uk](http://www.north-yorkshire-moors.org.uk)

# CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



*Ian Carstairs OBE*

## A NEW PRESIDENT FOR NYMA

We are delighted to announce that following our AGM Ian Carstairs, OBE, was elected president of NYMA. Ian has had a close connection with the North York Moors for many years and has a long history of association with landscape and conservation. He lived for 40 years in North Yorkshire and has had many public roles including his first direct association with the Moors, as assistant director of the Danby Moors Centre, in the 1970's. In 1989 Ian founded the Carstairs Countryside Trust (CCT) a conservation charity which today owns and manages 1000 acres of land of great natural, archaeological and paleo environmental importance at more than 20 sites across Yorkshire, most of which are farmed and of international significance. For the last 15 years he has been chairman of the Cornfield Flowers Project a nationally prestigious project in which NYMA has had an involvement as employer of the project officers over the last five years. In other roles he has been advisor to the Countryside Commission and has directed major campaigns and projects for wildlife and countryside organisations. He has been a member of the National Rivers Authority and the Forestry Commission's Regional Advisory Committees. Ian was a Secretary of State appointed member of the North York Moors National Park Committee for 9 years concluding his appointment as deputy chairman. He is author and photographer of a number of books including, *The Yorkshire River Derwent- A Moment in Time*, *A Portrait of York and of Hull*, *Moods of the Yorkshire Coast*, *Saving Cornfield Flowers in North East Yorkshire* and *A Harvest of Colour*. He was also the author of the second official guide to the North York Moors National Park.

Ian, like Derek, wants to be a hands-on president and has already expressed his concerns about the potash proposal and in this respect he said that "If the potash mine goes ahead we cannot assume any of our National Parks are safe. It pulls the carpet from under our belief that our greatly loved and valued National Parks are protected from harm". I am personally delighted that Ian was able to accept this role and his appointment was warmly endorsed at the AGM. I am sure that he will make a significant contribution to the Association as he has done over the years in so many areas of conservation work. Ian shares our views on the value of beautiful landscapes.

## NYMA AGM JUNE 13TH 2015 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

### Introduction

The Conservation Award is a biannual award which alternates with the NYMA Presidents Award. This is given for conservation work which makes a contribution to the landscape and heritage of the Park. The National Park make a contribution of £400 to this award and NYMA contribute £100. This year the Conservation Award goes to the Kirby, Great Broughton and Ingleby Greenhow Local History Group for their work on the restoration of the Kirby Bank Trod and for forward planned work including the publication of a Heritage Trail Leaflet (see article on page 9). The award was made to Grant Frew on behalf of the local history group and we wish the project success in the future for this valuable contribution to the rich heritage of the Park.

The President's Award worth £500 which was not taken up last year was retrospectively awarded to Derek Capes for his remarkable research into the Harvest Mouse population on the North York Moors based on his forensic examination of Owl pellets and for his projected work on siting Owl boxes. Derek has been involved with the study of small mammals for many years and it is appropriate that he should receive this award for his contribution to understanding wildlife in the National Park.

### NYMA Council

We welcome Malcolm Watt as a new Co-Opted Council Member. Malcolm was previously a planning officer in Gloucestershire with responsibility for the Cotswold AONB. He has an expertise in landscape management and related planning issues which is very welcome at this time of increased threats to the landscape of the National Park.

We now have 11 members of Council, the most we have had for a number of years and they bring together a significant range of expertise and experience which strengthens our position in making decisions on the future of NYMA and gives us a level of stability we have not had for several years. I value their help and input into Council meetings. Since last June we have held four Council meetings and one liaison meeting with the National Park.

Other meetings I have attended on behalf of NYMA have been three CNP Council meetings and two meetings of Chairs and Execs from National Park Societies. These meetings are essential in getting a National perspective and a way of engaging with the changes in legislation which affect all of us. We cannot function in isolation from the family of National Park Societies; we are here to help each other when the need arises. Last month I attended the first meeting of a new Northern Partnership consisting of, Friends of the Peak District, Yorkshire Dales Society and Friends of the Lake District and NYMA. At a time when National Parks are under threat from inappropriate development this co-operation strengthens our position.

### Membership

Our membership is just about holding a level at which members departing for whatever reason are matched by new members and that position varies through the year. However we have like all other associations a constant battle to increase membership.

One way of increasing members, which we need to look at, is to have a category of membership who are corporate members or

business members. This has met with considerable success in the Yorkshire Dales Society where it has significantly increased their members. At the moment our constitution does not provide for corporate membership but we need to go down this road whether through a new charitable structure or by making a request to the Charities Commission for an amendment to our present constitution. This is something we agreed at the 2013 AGM.

It is at this point that I have once again to thank our Membership Secretary Gerald King for his unstinting effort in maintaining membership records, communicating with new members and generally keeping the membership up to date. He deals with both hard copy applications and on-line applications for membership which is becoming, the preferred option for joining NYMA. I would like to pass on warm thanks from all of us to Gerald for his efficiency at this "behind the scenes" task which is so essential for the Association.

Our members would be appalled if the "Voice of the Moors" did not drop through the letterbox four times a year and this happens because Albert Elliot continues to put together a superb quarterly journal which is always full of interest across a wide range of subjects. It is practically a full time job. Barbara and Brian Spicer make sure it does drop through the letterbox and they are another behind the scenes team who deserve our warmest thanks for this essential point of communication with our members. We had an email earlier in the year which illustrates how much the Voice is appreciated and in unexpected places. Barbara Blumenthal from South Dakota USA visited the North York Moors many years ago and became a member of NYMA. Her membership continued until this year. She died in March of this year having moved to Florida some time ago "to be close to her grandkids", as her son Ed Abbot informed us. He said she always looked forward to our magazine and in appreciation of NYMA and the link she had through the magazine she left us a bequest of \$1000.

### Financial Report

NYMA is in a stronger financial position than we have been for some time as you will see from our treasurer's report. This has been the result of us having received a number of legacies, unexpectedly from some benefactors who have no direct connection with NYMA and from others who have been members over a long period. Our thanks are due to Brian for all his work in presenting to this AGM and throughout the year, clear statements of our accounts. In addition to dealing with day to day matters Brian has dealt with the complexities of our role as employers of the Cornfield Flowers Project Officers until the end of March this year.

### Two New Proposals

#### Appointment of an Administrator

Our strong financial position has enabled us to consider appointing a part time administrator who would take on some secretarial work such as dealing with our website and managing a facebook page and some membership recruitment. The details need to be sorted out but we need members support for a motion which will allow us to make such an appointment.

#### Change of Charity Structure

In 2012 new forms of charities were brought in through government legislation and rolled out to smaller charities in 2014 creating alternatives to the existing legal structures. Earlier this year our Council member Janet produced a discussion document for Council and this resulted in us deciding it would be to our

advantage to change our present legal structure from that of an Unincorporated Association. We decided that it would be appropriate to change to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and of the two types of CIO, an Association CIO was considered to be the best. The change to a CIO will of course mean that we retain our name and we retain our charitable purposes. We have already flagged up in Voice of the Moors that a decision taken at the Council meeting held earlier in the year was to bring the idea forward to this AGM for approval from members to make this change. Very briefly the benefits of doing this are limited liability for trustees, scope to employ outside of the trustees, scope to raise grant funding etc.

The need for us to change has in some ways been made more necessary because of the decision by the National Park to create its own charity. This has as yet to be finalized but we are told it will be in place by the end of this year. We do not know how this will affect our own charity but we will be keeping a close watch and working with the National Park.

As a result of these two proposed changes there were two motions to be agreed which allow Council to move forward with the employment of a part time secretary/administrator and to start the process for a change in our legal structure. (Note. Both motions were agreed by members at the AGM)

### Update on Projects

**The Cornfield Flowers Project** came to the end of the five year phase in March when the funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund expired. Carstairs Countryside Trust are supporting the project until next year and we will continue to have a presence on the management team for another twelve months.

**The History Tree project** is now part of a wider refurbishment at the Moors Centre for improvements to the riverside trail. This is supported by NYMA who made a provision of £1300 match funding for the upgrade. This should be completed later this year.

**The Biodiversity Project** which is centred on the plot above Park Wood Castleton is presently on hold until an opportunity to carry out some more tree planting is can be arranged.

**This Exploited Land.** Ann Glass is our representative on the National Park Project which is moving forward through a long process to secure Heritage Lottery funding

### Planning Matters

**See separate article on the polyhalite mine proposal**

#### Airfield Planning Application

The proposed Airfield which we objected to at South Moor Farm at Langdale End was refused for a second time by the National Park and was appealed for a second time by the applicant. We are presently waiting to hear the results of the appeal which was being conducted through an exchange of documents and a site visit by a planning inspector. The request for a local hearing was rejected by the inspectorate.

#### Ebberston Moor Gas Extraction Application

The Gas application at Ebberston Moor was withdrawn from the May Planning meeting because of some legal problems associated with the re-injection of waste water into a borehole. ◆

*Tom Chadwick*  
Chairman

# YORK POTASH LTD PLANNING APPLICATION

## THE NATIONAL PARK SPECIAL PLANNING MEETING

The National Park Committee met for a special planning meeting on June 30<sup>th</sup> to determine the application for a large polyhalite mine submitted by York Potash Ltd. The Committee, voted by a margin of one (8-7) to approve the planning application for the largest polyhalite mine in the world, to be built in the National Park. It is the largest planning application for major industrial development in any National Park in the UK.

The decision reached by the committee was contrary to the conclusions reached in the planning officer's report to the committee. Despite there being an open recommendation by the officer it was patently clear in his report that the steer was for refusal.

*"In terms of policy compliance, officers have concluded that the proposal, if approved would represent a very significant departure from the development plan, failing the policy requirements of a number of the Authority's adopted planning policies"*

Officers report to the planning committee 19.19

*"Officers have therefore reached a clear conclusion that the application has not fully addressed or met the policy requirements of the major development test and has not demonstrated that the proposal represents Exceptional Circumstances or is in the public interest. It is considered to be fundamentally in conflict with national planning policy on major development in National Parks as set out in the NPP".*

Officers report to the planning committee 19.23

*"Officers conclude that the policy conflict with the Development Plan and national policy is such that the proposal does not represent Exceptional Circumstances, which is the highest bar that planning policy requires. It is therefore considered that the economic benefits and extent of the mitigation/compensation offered through planning obligations do not outweigh the extent of the harm and clear conflict with the development plan. The greater public interest is considered to be that of the statutory National Park purposes which protect the North York Moors for the benefit of the nation. In reaching this view, officers acknowledge the unique role of the National Park Authority, which does not have a direct economic development purpose but which has at the core of its planning role, the statutory responsibility to conserve and enhance the North York Moors for the enjoyment of present and future generations".*

Officers report to the planning committee 19.45

## THE CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

The meeting was held at Sneaton Castle Whitby in a fairly restricted space (Bede Hall) which housed the committee and speakers and some members of the public. Because of the lack of space the meeting was relayed to an adjacent hall which served as an overspill for the public who were able to observe the proceedings on a large screen. The sound quality in the main hall was poor and there was loud clapping from an audience which mainly consisted of private investors, land owners and supporters of the project. Cheering and clapping could be heard from the adjacent hall including slow hand clapping. The atmosphere was not conducive to reasonable discussion and intimidating for members of the committee who expressed views which were critical of the project. Ruth Bradshaw from CNP who was a speaker received an abusive text message during the proceedings

from someone in the hall. This was one of a number of abusive messages she received prior to the meeting. The Chairman of the Committee made a request for some restraint by the audience but this was ineffective.

It was clear from the meeting that some committee members appeared with a predetermined position which was a quasi-political view of wider economic issues outside of the national park. It was also apparent that from much of the questioning, quite understandably, many aspects of the technical complexity of the application were beyond the grasp of some members.

A week before the special planning meeting each member of the committee was sent an open letter organised by CNP and signed by 29 national organisations which concluded with the following request;

*"We urge you to fulfil National Park purposes, refuse this application and demonstrate that the principle and integrity of National Parks remain something of over-riding national value".*

Organisations signing up to the letter included all 12 of the National Park Societies as well as the National Trust, RSPB, Open Spaces Society, The Wildlife Trust, The Woodland Trust, Scottish Campaign for National Parks, Caravan Club, Youth Hostels Association and others.

## THE OUTCOME OF THE MEETING

Eight members of the committee have turned their backs on the purposes of the national park and by supporting this application have rejected "that the principle and integrity of National Parks is something of over-riding national value".

The duty of members is summed up in the final part of the government's statement on membership of National Parks as;

*"A Member must work with the Chair, Chief Executive and other Members to discharge the functions of the Authority and to steer and champion the management of the Authority so that it delivers benefits to the nation and its local communities in accordance with National Park purposes".*

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

A decision notice which must be issued by the national park before final approval is granted is not expected until the end of September when all the conditional agreements and compensation payments for harm to the park have been agreed. This is called the 106 agreement.

On July 14<sup>th</sup> the Secretary of State's decision was announced rejecting the five call-in requests for a public inquiry which were submitted in April. These were from NYMA, The Campaign for National Parks (CNP), Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE coastal) The National Trust (NT) and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT).

The call-in criteria set out in a House of Commons briefing paper in June 2015 includes cases which;

- may conflict with national policies on important matters;
- could have significant effects beyond their immediate locality;
- give rise to substantial cross boundary or national controversy;

It is difficult to understand why the request for a call-in was rejected given the criteria which clearly fitted this application. However the bottom line is that the Secretary of State can just please himself. There is no legal obligation for him to in call in any

application. It seems that public inquiries for major development in National Parks are unlikely to happen.

The last opportunity to stop the development is through a legal challenge which can only be made after the issue of the decision notice. This is clearly a route which will require legal advice and is undoubtedly a very costly route. It will require a combined effort by a number of organisations to raise funding if a strong case can be

established. Finally, Sirius Minerals Plc has to raise at least £2 billion to finance this development and that is a tall order for a high risk venture by a company valued at £350 million. A definitive feasibility study has yet to emerge and so have details of financing and these are not expected until late 2015 or early 2016. ♦

*Tom Chadwick*

## THE BIRDS IN YOUR GARDEN

# THE GREENFINCH



*Photo by Jill Pakenham*

IS IT MY IMAGINATION, or has there been more Greenfinches around this year?

Their numbers have halved since about 2005 when *Trichomonosis* struck, but my observations, and those of many people I've talked to recently, suggest that they just might be coming back. It's too early for the various surveys to show anything, but Greenfinches do have the ability to recover in numbers quite quickly given favourable conditions.

Greenfinches were historically birds of woodland or forest edge, and were rarely seen around human habitation, which is still true in some parts of continental Europe. But in Britain, they started visiting gardens in the early 1900s, and have been familiar to us ever since. Changes in farming practice, such as autumn sowing and hedge flailing, which is increasingly used in preference to more expensive hedgerow management methods, remove many of the seeds that they would otherwise eat, reinforcing their move into our gardens.

For anyone who is unfamiliar with the Greenfinch, the male is dull olive and yellow-green with bright yellow wing flashes. The female and juveniles are duller with their yellow markings less obvious. Their large beaks make them fairly easy to distinguish from similar species, a particularly useful feature when seen with other juveniles. (See photo) If you still have doubts and have internet access, try <http://www.bto.org/about-birds/bird-id/bto-bird-id-green-finches-your-garden>

They make a number of calls, most commonly a rapid chichichichit or a mix of tremolos and a sort of chewlee note, plus a nasal dzwee in the breeding season. This last one can become a tad irritating after a while!

After breeding, adults and juveniles disperse; the latter travelling the furthest. Some birds resident in Scotland and northern England migrate to southern England and even into Europe for the winter, travelling as far as is necessary to find food. They are



Photo Mike Gray

unusual in that the behaviour of individual birds varies from year to year depending upon food availability and population density. At about the same time a few northern European birds, mainly from Norway, arrive along the east coast of Britain.

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

They have a more varied diet than most finches, consisting mainly of seeds though some insects are taken, and with their large beaks they can cope with quite a range of size and shape. Their beaks enable them to deal with seeds held within a fleshy fruit, such as rosehips, though they may discard the flesh. They also eat yew, hawthorn and bramble seeds as they become available. So far as garden feeders are concerned, they seem to have switched their allegiance from peanuts to sunflower seeds: they will sit and expertly de-shell the black sunflower seeds, dropping any too small to be of interest. They will also sort through mixed seeds

discarding the ones that don't take their fancy in all directions, and can be quite aggressive to other species.

To my surprise, captive Greenfinches are still kept and shown by a few people. Such birds have to be specially ringed to prove that they were bred in captivity, as it is illegal to capture and keep wild birds. They are even cross-bred with canaries to give a "Greenfinch" with a canary's song. Fortunately such crosses are sterile.

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

It can also be passed on from one bird to another by feeding regurgitated food. Greenfinches feed their offspring with regurgitated seeds, which is why you do not see them carrying food to the nest, whereas wood pigeons feed their offspring via pigeon milk. Courtship rituals are another potential transmission route, whereby a male bird offers a food parcel to his mate. It can also be spread by infected birds dropping small particles of food which are then eaten by other birds. Infected birds drinking from bird baths could also infect the water which might be another transmission route, along with faecal transmission on food or in bird baths.

Whilst Greenfinches were the most affected by *Trichomonosis*, and contrary to a information put out by Spring Watch, it did also have some effect on other finches, notably chaffinches.

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

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

Mike Gray

If you know of a local organisation that would like a talk/presentation on garden birds call: **Mike Gray 07596 366342** or [mikegbw@btinternet.com](mailto:mikegbw@btinternet.com).

## LETTER TO VOICE

### SARKLESS KITTY FOLK TALE

HAVING BEEN introduced to the story of Sarkless Kitty many years ago, I enjoyed the piece on this topic in the spring 2015 edition of Voice of the Moors (issue 119).

Various versions of this folk tale have been penned over the years. The twist in the tale I read and have always considered very apposite was that the young Quaker couple mentioned in the story had recently lost their daughter who was to be buried in the Quaker burial ground at Lowna. This prompted their action, which was to bury poor Kitty in the same grave.

The young Quaker couple recorded their worthy and compassionate action in a hand-written account at the back of the family Bible. The account ended with a reference to a passage from Matthew, chapter 27, verses 55 – 60. This tells the story of Joseph of Arimathea who buried Christ's body in his own unused tomb. ♦

David W Taylor

# KIRBY BANK TROD



*Drawing by Alec Wright*



*Volunteers clearing the Kirby Trod.*

TO MY MIND one of the most attractive footpaths leading on to the North York Moors is that which runs south from the village of Kirkby up on to Kirby Bank. It offers fine views of an expanse of the Cleveland Hills escarpment, over to Captain Cook's Monument standing on Easby Moor, to Roseberry Topping, and further afield, beyond Teesside, to the North Sea. For a large part, the path is a stone paved route.

Nowadays, If you are fortunate enough to avoid the noisy trail bike riders at the weekend and the occasional overhead roar of passing fighter jets from RAF Leeming, it is truly a wonderfully tranquil entry onto the Moors. It is much favoured by local dog owners, ramblers and walkers who drop down to the villages from the three long-distance footpaths (The Cleveland Way, Wainwright's Coast-to-Coast, and the Lyke Wake Walk) that cross its path. Very often the only sounds to be heard are those of sheep, pheasants, grouse and curlews.

This is **Kirby Bank Trod** – also known as **The Pannierman Way**, and its current tranquillity completely belies its intense commercial and busy industrial past. It never used to be like this!

It is, of course, just one of the network of paved routes that wind their way across the North York Moors. They have been well described and recorded in the past by Raymond Hayes and, more recently, by Christopher Evans (see reference at end of article). They fall into a number of broad types. These include long-distance routes (usually running north-south across the moors); routes running parallel to the River Esk or linking a series of farms along a dale; or shorter routes between settlements or individual buildings. However much they are a major landscape feature in our area, each one is individual as regards to its date of origin and its function.

But there is a big problem. Christopher Evans' research has led him to estimate that around 80% of our trods known in the C19th have been lost to us: robbed of their stone, covered by tarmac or just vanished and obliterated under invasive bracken, grass and overgrowth. Some ancient trods and pannier-ways are also suffering

severe damage by off-road vehicles. It means that surviving sections in good condition are becoming increasingly rare and are therefore it is increasingly important to protect and conserve them for present and future generations. Once gone they will never be seen again.

It was this realisation and insight that impelled members of the Kirby, Great Broughton and Ingleby Greenhow Local History Group in 2008 to seize our pens and our spades and, with the landowner's consent and support, 'adopt' Kirby Bank Trod. What follows below is just one group of enthusiasts' attempts to conserve just one of the many ancient trods that still exist on the Moors.

Initially we just muddled along. However, like those painting books from our childhoods, where a brush of water magically revealed colours, we found over the past seven years that six clear principles emerged from the wash. These are:

- 1) It is essential to have the landowner's consent and co-operation.
- 2) You need a workforce prepared to restore and maintain the route.
- 3) It is important to engage with the widest possible range of agencies.
- 4) Thorough research - researching is key – and the fun bit.
- 5) Seek whatever expert guidance and legal protection you can find, however frustrating it can be – and it is!
- 6) Publicise and communicate! Publicising and highlighting your own work will help raise the profile of others.

So, seven years ago we began talking to the NYMs National Park Archaeologists Graham Lee and Mags Waughman. They guided and advised us on the "do's" and "don'ts" of maintenance. By chance at that same time we had a tip-off that the Royal Dragoons were looking for an opportunity to become involved in some worthwhile community work, and in no time at all, a squad of willing soldiers arrived, wielding National Park equipment, under the watchful eye of Mags and Park Rangers. As the members of our group were mainly in our mid-sixties these young, energetic soldiers achieved much more in one day than we could have in several. They cut back turf, undertook essential drainage work and,

to our great delight, uncovered nearly 50 metres of hitherto hidden flagstones.

Since then groups of our members, ranging from five to fifteen in number, have voluntarily worked twice a year to maintain that same level of clearance. At that time, too, we produced a stone-by-stone survey of the full 410 metres of the Kirby Trod. Park Rangers, too, have supported us in repairing damaged waymarkers.

In 2010 we staged a Festival of British Archaeology event on the actual Trod. Our main guests were Christopher Evans and representatives of the Cleveland Bay Society. Christopher offered fresh insights and the Cleveland Bay members brought along fascinating pieces of equipment, including panniers. Sadly though, no packhorses! As they pointed out, the Cleveland Bays with which we are now familiar, are the larger modern-day descendants of the Chapmans, Chapman ponies were bred as a sturdy, weight-carrying, speedy, sure-footed animals – but were only 1.5 metres high! They were the packhorses which tramped along our causeways hundreds of years ago, the goods carriers of yesteryear.

In 2012 we successfully gained Scheduled Monument status from English Heritage for Kirby Bank Trod. Although the designation has placed the Trod on a par with some of the most celebrated monuments in the UK, in practice it has not given us as high a level of legal protection that we were seeking. The Trod is a Green Road and as a consequence has suffered, and is suffering, damage from use (or abuse?) by off-road vehicles. Much of our time over the past two years has been taken up lobbying the County Council to place a vehicle prohibition order on the Trod. Kirkby Parish Council has been prominent in the campaign, as have District and County Councillors. To say that the process has been tortuous would be an understatement! We are still awaiting a much-needed positive result.

We have agreed with English Heritage that, if there were to be a traffic regulation order, we will then enter into a formal management agreement with them to restore the damaged areas and to manage the causeway.

Finally, in terms of our own personal journey, in autumn last year, with the help of local residents, we planted fifty hawthorn seedlings alongside the Trod. All of these trees were germinated from indigenous berries taken from the few remaining hawthorns that are still in situ and will, in time, replace them. Across the Moors hawthorns were important waymarkers, particularly in snowy conditions. They, too, are disappearing.

So, now for some history!

Kirby Bank Trod is part of an ancient long-distance route from the Tees, through Kirkby, Chop Gate and into Bilsdale and, finally, on to Rievaulx Abbey. It rests for its main part on a man-made embankment, to even out the steep gradient on its bank. Christopher Evans characterises it as a “supra-parochial” project: far bigger than any individual parish could cope with or afford. It required ambition – and a deep pocket! In fact the Trod was created by the Cistercian monks in the late C12th / early C13th to link the important Rievaulx monastery with their Granges on the Tees, their fisheries and salt pans. The monks had it all neatly sewn up – they not only owned the fish and the salt production but they also zealously guarded the franchise placed on the packhorses. It’s interesting to note that the stretch of the A172 from Stokesley to Nunthorpe is called Pannierman Lane. With its Cistercian origins and raised embankment, its only parallel is the medieval causeway built to link the Cistercian monastic houses of Strata Florida and Abbey Cwmhir in mid Wales.

It is not difficult now to stand on the Trod and visualise the train of thirty to forty packhorses, heavily laden and led by only two men. You would hear the clack of the hooves on stone, the ringing bell collar of the lead horse and the shrill calls and commands of the panniermen.

One hundred and fifty years after the dissolution of the monasteries and the sacking of Rievaulx, an industry burst on to the scene around all the edges of the Moors. This was the alum industry. Alum was used as a mordant or fixative for dyeing cloth and was a highly prized and profitable commodity. Locally there were major works at Carlton and Guisborough – and small-scale alum workings on Kirby Bank. The Kirby workings were only in operation from 1706 to 1720, but during that time a familiar sight would have been the mounds of shale rock being burned for months at a time. We have conducted a geophysical survey, with York Archaeology Trust, of the site of the alum houses where the mother liquor containing the alum was boiled in water tanks for twenty-four hours. Stale urine was an essential ingredient of the process. A peaceful scene now, but once a cauldron of heat and pollution.

In the middle of the C18th the Manor of Kirby was sold, marking the end of the feudal estate village. There followed a spate of new building and the opening of fresh sandstone quarries on the Bank to meet the demand for a supply of building materials. Sledways were created to connect with the Trod to transport the building stone to the villages below.



In 1854 there was a ‘David and Goliath’ legal battle between James Emerson, who had purchased the title of Lord of the Manor of Kirby just two years previously, and the rich and influential Lord Feversham. It was a protracted – and expensive – boundary dispute between the two men, with the claim on the mining rights at the heart of it. You can imagine the sheer disbelief when the courts found in favour of James Emerson! One fascinating little detail lurks among the huge mass of court papers: advice that “You will never get a juryman to mount the hill at the March Assizes. There might have been a chance this month, but it will be impossible next Assizes unless you engage a Balloon”! There is no record of a balloon ever being hired for that use.

In the 1860s with the death of Queen Victoria’s husband, Prince Albert, and the Queen’s subsequent protracted period of mourning, a new industry emerged all around the edges of the Moors – jet mining; under the influence of Queen Victoria, jet became highly fashionable and a must-have funereal adornment, thus kick-starting the jet industry which flourished in the seaside town of Whitby, ensuring jobs for thousands of workers in the jet industry at its peak.

As with the alum workers, we have also tracked down the names and lives of the jet miners who worked in dark and dangerous conditions to win this sought-after substance. As the fashion for jet diminished at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the last resident jet miner of Kirkby, John Fenney, hung up his shovel for the final time in 1902. This was truly the end of an era.

Today as I stand on the stone flags of the Trod I can see the quarries, their track of sledway routes; the remains of the burnt alum-shale mounds; the jet waste tips and the line of ‘Emerson’s Wall’. If I close my eyes and listen I can easily imagine the ring of



hooves on stone from a passing packhorse train. For Kirby Bank Trod, as for all the other paved causeways on our Moors, that surely is a heritage worth protecting and conserving. ◆

*Grant Frew, Kirby, Great Broughton and Ingleby Greenhow Local History Group*

*References : The Trods of the North York Moors: a Gazetteer of Flagged Paths by Christopher P. Evans. Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society, 2008.*

## THE PENNINE WAY

# 2015 THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF REALISING A UNIQUE VISION



JUST OVER 50 YEARS AGO, on a cool, grey April day up on Malham Moor in the Yorkshire Dales, as a very youthful member of the West Riding Area of the Ramblers Association, I was among

around 2,000 other people, including the great and the good, at the official opening ceremony of the Pennine Way. I had little interest in listening to the platitudes of the gathered Government Ministers and officials, but there was one person I truly did want to hear – one of my heroes, Tom Stephenson.

The event had taken a long time in coming.

Whilst the original inspiration lay in a now famous article in the Daily Herald by journalist and countryside access campaigner Tom Stephenson, the roots of long distance walking purely for leisure lay much further in the past. Walking long distance for fun, as opposed to walking because you had no other form of transport or you were on a religious pilgrimage, began in Continental Europe, and in particular in Germany, in the Black Forest with the opening of the Hohenweg or High Level route in the Black Forest of Germany in 1900. The idea caught on in Sweden and America, but it was only when two young women who had walked sections of the Appalachian Way in the USA wrote to ask Stephenson why there was not a similar route in Britain, that Stephenson published his famous article and for the next 30 years became its resolute and determined champion.



A little matter of World War Two only strengthened Tom's resolve. As Press Officer for the Ministry of Town and Country Planning in the later war years and during the post-war Atlee Government, Tom even took a group of politicians on a celebrated ramble from Edale, which would eventually become the starting point of the Pennine Way. Tom became a member of the Hobhouse Committee that paved the way for the ground breaking 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside legislation and was able to ensure that the Act contained specific powers to create Long Distance Footpaths (the Americanism "National Trail" only came to be used much later).

Approval for the go-ahead for the 267 mile long Pennine Way, linking Edale in the Derbyshire Peak District with Kirk Yetholm in Scotland, was given in 1951, but it took another 14 long years to create the route. In particular the 70 miles or so of new footpath that had to be created along the moorland watersheds to supply the missing links took years of often fraught negotiations. Opposition didn't come so much from grouse moor owners, but from the various Water Boards along the route who claimed that Pennine

Way walkers would bring risks of typhoid and other dreaded diseases into the public water supply. Even some ramblers were not in favour, suggesting that a footpath over somewhere like Kinder or Bleaklow would be "desecration".

But Tom, and his allies in the Ramblers Association and Pennine Way Association, were to prevail, and the Way was finally completed, a huge tribute to the skill and determination of Tom, a true working-class intellectual, denied a University education for his religious and political beliefs (he was a Quaker and conscientious objector).

Within a few years, thousands of people were tackling the Pennine Way as a personal physical and mental challenge. Not everyone was ready for it, and many, having struggled over the peat hags of Kinder Scout and Bleaklow – arguably the toughest part of the whole route – gave up exhausted on reaching Crowden Youth Hostel on the A628. For years the Warden at this now closed hostel kept a supply of cardboard boxes in which exhausted walkers could send home their discarded clothing as they realised the essential need to lighten their packs if further progress was to be



made. Nor was way-marking always good; it was easy to get lost using small scale maps and the early guidebooks, which didn't give the meticulous details provided by Wainwright and later authors.

If the Pennine Way didn't serve the North York Moors, it was the inspiration for Britain's second Long Distance Path, the Cleveland Way opened in 1969. The Cleveland Way still provides a magnificent introduction to our National Park, traversing as it does the ridges of the Hambleton and Cleveland Hills before its spectacular coastal sections between Saltburn, Whitby, Scarborough and Filey. Interestingly the Cleveland Way was not one of the six routes recommended by Hobhouse, but probably was prioritised because of the magnificent coastal sections, a precursor of what will eventually be the English Coastal footpath.

It is hardly surprising that the Pennine Way, the great pioneering route, is no longer as popular as it used to be. This is not a decline in popularity of long distance walking, the very opposite. There are now 16 National Trails, but this does not include several extremely popular routes that are national in all but name, such as Wainwright's Coast-to-Coast Path, and the Dales Way. But there are also now literally several hundred, often

themed, long and medium distance walking routes, created by individuals, local authorities or voluntary groups such as the Ramblers, which can offer magnificent walking over far less forbidding terrain. And, of course, there is Bill Cowley's 42 mile Lyke Wake Walk traversing the North York Moors from west to east (or vice-versa) for those who like a 24hour challenging yomp over rough moorland. However, not everyone has three weeks and the stamina to tackle the considerable challenges of the Pennine Way, with gentler walks, such as the Wye Valley Way or even the nearby Yorkshire Wolds Way, being far more manageable in a more typical week's holiday break.

But the Pennine Way remains Britain's premier long-distance route, a magnificent challenge, a living tribute to the vision and determination of Tom, one of the great founding fathers of the outdoor movement.

And as we find ourselves facing bleak years of austerity, Government cuts and mean-minded penny pinching, we need people like Tom Stephenson to remind us what National Parks, nature and landscape protection, and long distance walking, are all about. ♦

*Colin Speakman*

## OUT & ABOUT

# EVENTS

### NYMA WALK - SATURDAY 29 AUGUST

Meet at Glaisdale Green (GR774056) at 10.30 am for c. 5 mile circular walk up Glaisdale Rigg and around Low Moor visiting the Busco Stone before returning to Glaisdale Village.

Walk will be led by Albert & Pauline Elliot Telephone 01287 660137

### NYMA WALK - SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER

Kath Mair will lead a circular walk of c. 6 miles starting at 10.30 from the car park (GR468994) at Sheepwash (the north end of Cod Beck reservoir). Note that there are two car parks but it is the first car park on the left on the road from Swainby to Osmotherley. The route goes along rough tracks and field paths to pick up the Cleveland way and on into Osmotherley. From Osmotherley the route continues along the Cleveland Way climbing up onto the moors before descending back to the car park at Sheepwash.

To confirm walk, Kath can be contacted on mobile 0797 4288056.

### NYMNP WALKS

These walks are organised by the NYM National Park Authority – all are welcome! Booking is essential to guarantee a place – call 01439 772738. Suggested donation for all walks - £2

### A MEDIEVAL PARISH

**Sunday 6 September, Station car park, Robin Hood's Bay 1pm – 4pm**

Explore one thousand years of hidden history – not to mention murders, myths and mysteries – on a 3 mile walk through the ancient Parish of Fylingthorpe, encompassing the villages of Robin Hood's Bay and Fylingthorpe.

### TWO TABULAR HILLS

**Sunday 20 September, Moorgate Information Point, Hawnby (SE539917),**

10am – 1pm: this energetic c. 6 mile walk takes you on a classic circuit around two distinctive hills close to the charismatic village of Hawnby.

### AUTUMN IN PARADISE

**Wednesday 7 October, Sneck Yate (SE509877), 1pm – 4pm**

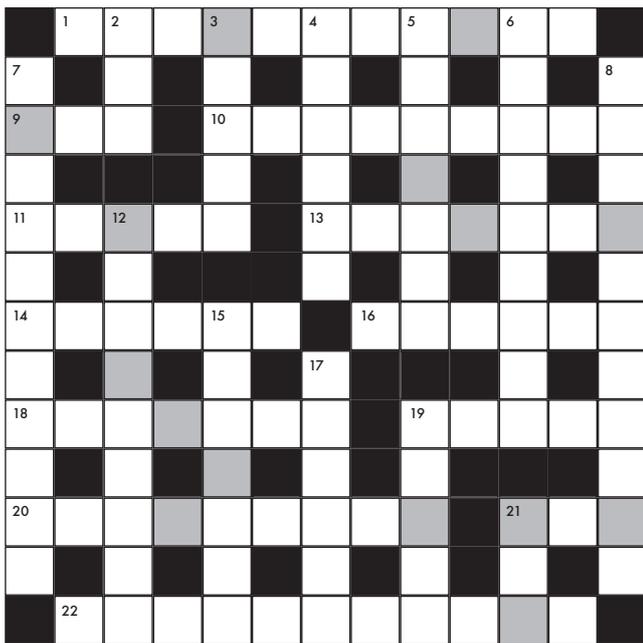
Starting from Sneck Yate, we visit not just one, but two Paradises on a c. 5 mile walk that explores a decommissioned reservoir – now a wildlife haven – and takes in the vibrant colours of Boltby Forest in autumn.

For further information and other walks and events see OUT & ABOUT IN THE NORTH YORK MOORS 2015, your FREE guide to the North York Moors National Park or visit [www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/events](http://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/events)

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

**Across:** 1 environment 9 cue 10 Bransdale 11 rogue (anagram of rouge) 3 one-step 18 obscure 19 sight 20 grant ball 21 are 22 tennis court  
**Down:** 2 nyx  
**Anagram Answer:** Pickering Castle

# CRYPTIC CROSSWORD No 69 BY AMANUENSIS



Take the letters from the greyed-out squares and solve the anagram in the boxes below.

Cryptic clue to anagram: Motte-and-bailey fortification on the south side of the NYMs National Park first built by the Normans under William the Conqueror in c.1070. (9,6)

**ACROSS:**

- 1 Troubled iron men vent external conditions (11)
- 9 Would you be snookered without one? (3)
- 10 Leads bran mixture from NYMs beauty spot (9)
- 11 Scoundrel messes about with the face powder (5)
- 13 A very simple dance by the sound of it (3-4)
- 14 Phoned in Old English for fruit (6)
- 16 Give help to the fool first (6)
- 18 Vague Old Boys remedy (7)
- 19 Building plot makes sound sense (5)
- 20 Conditionally discharge? (5,4)
- 21 Consumed a small number one hears (3)
- 22 You get your turn to serve on here (6,5)

**DOWN:**

- 2 Group of pheasants contained in thorny enclosure (3)
- 3 Fill with spirit? (5)
- 4 Pompous with words perhaps? (6)
- 5 Could be used in 19 down (7)
- 6 Not far away from a disaster perhaps? (4,5)
- 7 Resort to permanently mark town area (11)
- 8 Green energy from underground source? (3,8)
- 12 Lovely valley where agile lads go astray (9)
- 15 Greedy person has excessive amount and puts on weight (7)
- 17 Scared crazy of trees (6)
- 19 Outburst of colossal volley (5)
- 21 Distinctive quality of tune (3)

ANSWERS ON PAGE 13



HAWKMOTH

## NATURE NOTES

### ANNUAL DESTRUCTION OF WILDLIFE HABITAT

If there's one thing that really gets my back up and causes me deep concern, it's the unnecessary destruction of prime wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, I witness this outrage each and every year as contractors bring in their heavy machines and indiscriminately cut (or is it butcher?) our beautiful grass verges and hedgerows. I can understand that cutting back the verges is sometimes necessary and unavoidable on narrow lanes where vegetation is overhanging onto the road and at junctions where tall grass may obscure a drivers' vision and create a road safety hazard, but surely there is no need for the widespread draconian cutting of verges everywhere.

This year the contractors started cutting-back in early June, right slap-bang in the middle of the bird nesting season, and at a time

when thousands of butterflies were about to emerge from pupation along with a myriad of other moths, beetles and other diverse insects, all destroyed for the sake of 'tidiness'! Surely, for instance, the roadsides leading from the Whitby to Guisbrough road (A171) and heading towards the small hamlet of Stonegate, don't need cutting! The verges on this minor road grow on impoverished soil and the greenery struggles to achieve even a foot in height in places. Common spotted orchids thrive here, or would do if given the opportunity. You may well ask, 'Who pays for this wanton destruction?' Well, the answer is, we all do!

It is recommended that a 1 metre swathe is cut from along roadsides, but in places the contractors have cut up to 3 metres or as far as they could reach: on the verge, into the gutter and up the

bank-side behind. Why? Take a slow drive from Glaisdale to Lealholm and witness the carnage! Many of the roadside areas in Glaisdale are barren, colourless deserts with dead, brown grass strewn everywhere. It is not until you drop down towards Low Wood Lane that you see the contrast and find uncut verges that burst into colour, with beautiful grasses and flowers swaying in the breeze and cow parsley dripping with frothy white heads. Buttercups, red campion and birds' foot trefoil are also evident on the shorter turf. Ringlet and meadow brown butterflies can be seen fluttering amongst the untrimmed grasses and mingling with the striking red and black burnet moths. Alive with wildlife - what a contrast to the 'tidy' sheared verge areas, stripped of flora and fauna!

The crucial question is who controls the work of the contractors? When, where, and how often are they told to cut? Whoever it is making these decisions, they need to take a serious look as to how much of our money is being wasted and how much valuable natural habitat and wildlife are being destroyed un-necessarily!

I know that I am not a lone voice regarding this destructive and wasteful verge cutting process and many others feel the same way about this unsatisfactory situation. I urge anyone that feels as strongly as I do to put pen to paper and write to their local borough councillor and hopefully we will then get some positive action towards conserving our beautiful roadside verges and hedgerows and the great variety of wildlife that depend on these areas for their existence as well as, of course, benefiting from the additional bonus of helping the cash-strapped and struggling authorities save valuable funds! ♦

*Hawkmoth*



*Dead ...*



*... or alive!*

## TOUR DE FORCE

In May this year, the Tour de Yorkshire cycle race took place over three days. On Friday 1 May saw the first of the three stages. This stage started from Bridlington with the riders heading north up the east coast past Filey, Cayton, crossing the A170 at East Ayton then up into the North York Moors National Park via Hackness and Langdale End. The route continued through Dalby, Thornton le Dale, Wrelton, Cropton, Hartoft End, Rosedale Abbey, Ralph Cross, Castleton, Danby, Glaisdale, Egton, Grosmont, Sleights, Whitby, Robin Hood's Bay, Cloughton, Burniston, and finishing at the seaside resort of Scarborough, a distance of 174 km (total distance of race 515 km).

The riders were enthusiastically welcomed all along the route by villagers and members of the public who had turned out in droves to watch this iconic cycling race pass through the area. The overall winner of the event was Lars Petter Nordhaug riding for Team Sky. On the run-up to the event individual residents and local communities worked hard to decorate their stretch of the route with flags and bunting and with many bikes painted blue and yellow on display along the route. A true Yorkshire welcome to the hundreds of riders, their support teams, and visitors. The race was a great success and attracted thousands of tourists to our area gaining valuable publicity and exposure for the beautiful North York Moors countryside through which the riders passed. As one would expect, the North Yorkshire countryside along the route looked spectacular (and not a mine in sight!).



Racing cyclists passing through the moorland village of Castleton on their first leg of the Tour de Yorkshire, May 2015.



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