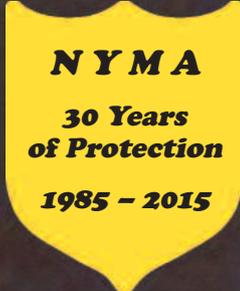


VOICE OF THE MOORS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS ASSOCIATION (NYMA)

ISSUE 121

AUTUMN 2015



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THE STINGING NETTLE

THE STINGING NETTLE, *Urtica dioica*, a member of the *Urticaceae* family, is one of our easily recognised and probably most disliked plants. Most of us were stung as children, not only reacting to the hurt of the sting, but to the fact that a plant could so painfully fight back! This is just as the plant wants it because far from being a troublesome weed, a designation that is really only a matter of individual judgement, the nettle is potentially our most useful wild plant, a valuable natural resource, which without its stinging defences would be grazed or picked to oblivion.

Nettle derives from the Anglo Saxon 'netele' meaning a needle, Uro means burning, while dioica indicates that it is dioecious having male and female flowers on different plants. It is a hardy perennial with a far reaching mat of branching yellow roots that sprout new shoots every year which can grow up to two metres tall. The pairs of opposite leaves are toothed, sharply heart shaped and, like the stems, covered with curved stinging hairs. These hairs are hollow and filled with a number of chemicals including formic acid (the same chemical as that used by ants in their sting), histamine, acetylcholine and serotonin. The hairs can penetrate the skin where they break off releasing the chemicals into the body to give the familiar uncomfortable burning sensation. By July small catkins of male and female flowers appear in clusters in the leaf axils, usually on separate plants. It is wind-pollinated and strings of small seeds are produced.

The stinging nettle grows where it can in most temperate regions, but prefers moist nutrient rich ground, verges, river banks, farmyards and gardens, usually clinging to wherever man is or has been enriching and cultivating the soil. Here in such favourable conditions it can form huge vigorous patches and it can be found many years later round old habitations and abandoned dwellings on moors and mountains, even when these have long disappeared. It loves damp riverbanks, often now growing with Indian Balsam, both benefiting from the run-off from adjacent fields of nitrogen from fertiliser, without which they would be less successful and allow a return of more appropriate stabilising native flora.

When grown in the garden, and it usually needs no invitation to do so, it can be an important host plant for wildlife supporting many of our most colourful butterflies, as well as moths and insects including ladybird larvae. It provides cover for small mammals and winter seeds for birds though large patches are really necessary to be of any great use. But it is worth keeping nettles in the garden for other reasons. It makes a wonderful, nutrient rich compost or mulch and can be made into a rich liquid feed. It also acts as a good companion plant by helping nearby plants resist disease, especially good for soft fruits, growing very well with raspberries I find, but it is as well to harvest the nettles to eat or use as a fertiliser before attempting to pick the raspberries! Bunches of fresh nettle leaves will deter flies in the house while dried leaves placed round stored apples protect them from insect damage and nettle tea makes an effective insecticide spray.

Dried, withered nettle leaves and stems have long been used as a nutritious fodder for horses and cattle while the seeds were fed to poultry. The older stems contain a strong fibre that can be used to make cloth, ranging from the finest material for lingerie to coarse

sackcloth and sailcloth, also rope and paper. The common use of it as a cloth dates back to at least the Bronze Age and it was used until superseded by flax and cotton. The leaves produce a green dye and the roots a yellow one and these have been used with the cloth to make a camouflage material.

But more importantly, the plant is edible, the sting disappearing with heat and the young tender leaves are very high in vitamins, contain a huge number of essential minerals and are protein rich, giving a wonderfully healthy spring tonic. They can be used in soups, pies, quiches, pastas, omelettes, cakes, puddings, bread, pizzas, pancakes, and casseroles, to add colour, taste and extra goodness. The leaves can act as a rennet substitute in cheese making, can be added to cheese to colour it or as a wrap to aid safe ripening. Nettle teas, beers and wines can be made while in the South West competitions are held to find who can eat the most raw nettles, the secret being to wrap the leaves into the tightest ball possible, chew and swallow. I prefer mine cooked!

The nettle has cosmetic uses too, as a deep cleanser for oily skin, acting as a tonic and stimulant while as a hair rinse it will prevent dandruff, deter lice and give the hair a shine. Liquidised, the bright green chlorophyll of the leaves makes an antiseptic mouthwash, sweetening the breath, and it is also used as a natural food colouring.

But for centuries it has been more than anything prized for its medicinal qualities, in teas, compresses, ointments, juices and powders, used both internally and externally for man and animals. Its high levels of vitamins and minerals make it a valuable tonic, especially for anaemia, while its astringency and anti inflammatory properties help to heal cuts and bruises and soothe neuralgia, toothache, sciatica, rheumatism, arthritis and chest and lung problems. Its antihistamines counteract bites and stings and are useful in allergies and

asthma. It acts as a stimulant to many of the bodies systems, on the kidneys as a diuretic it helps remove toxins and so purifies the blood thus improving many skin problems, as well as lowering blood pressure. It stimulates the flow of milk, the circulatory system and the working of the immune system and it may even help the lowering of blood sugar levels. In the past the stimulating of the blood flow was achieved by using the fresh nettles on the skin, by whipping or poultices, though tales of country dowagers rolling naked in nettle beds to relieve their arthritis and rheumatism may only be an old wife's tale! Warm nettle tea is a useful aid for colds, flu, sore throats and digestive upsets being antiviral and soothing. The roots have been used in the treatment of prostate problems and are antifungal and antibacterial.

So, what a superb plant! We can eat it, feed our plants and animals with it, use it to enhance our beauty, to keep us healthy and fight diseases, to make cloth and paper and dyes, and to sustain our native wild life. All this for no cost and no work - no wonder it needs its stings to protect itself!

PS. We have all used dock leaves to counter nettle stings; they do cool, but ironically the best cure has been shown to be the fresh juice of the nettle itself – you just need to work out how to do this without getting stung again! ♦

Anne Press





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Registered Charity No. 517639

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Design & Production

Basement Press
The Old Parsonage, Glaisdale,
Whitby, North Yorks YO21 2PL
Tel. 01947 897945
www.basementpress.com

Printed by

Camphill Press
www.camphillpress.co.uk

Articles appearing in Voice of the Moors convey the authors' personal views, beliefs and opinions and are not necessarily those of the North Yorkshire Moors Association.

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North Yorkshire Moors Association

**CELEBRATORY CHRISTMAS
LUNCHEON**

Meet at 12 noon Saturday 5 December 2015.
Bay Horse, Broughton near Stokesley

Members & friends are invited to a
seasonal meal to celebrate our milestone of

**30 Years of Protection
for the North York Moors Area.
1985 - 2015**

Please register your interest by ringing **01287 660137**
(number of places may need to be restricted)
NB There will be no organised walk before the meal.

Front Cover: William Smith, the great pioneering geologist
Back Cover: Barn Owl - *Tyto Alba*

www.north-yorkshire-moors.org.uk

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

MINE DEVELOPMENT

The planning process for the York Potash development will reach another stage when the National Park issues a decision notice; this is expected to be in the second week of October. The signing off the 106 Agreement and the issue of this notice completes the planning process for the mine head and mineral transport system (the tunnel to Teesside). The Harbour Facilities and the overhead conveyor which links it to the Teesside Handling Facility is currently being examined by the Planning Inspectorate as a separate application because this is regarded as an infrastructure project and after close examination will go directly to the government for a decision. This is not expected to happen until summer 2016. In the meantime we hold the view that no construction work should start before all the pieces of the planning jigsaw are in place. York Potash has said that they will start construction work at the mine head before summer 2016.

When the decision notice is issued it opens a window of just six weeks during which time a legal challenge can be made about the decision by the National Park Planning Committee by just one vote to approve the development. The process for instigating a Judicial Review could start around the second week of October.

Sirius Minerals have yet to produce a definitive feasibility study (DFS) to show in detail how the project will be set up and financed. The figure of £1.7 billion which has been made public in numerous statements seems on the face of it to be well below that which comparable mining and tunnelling projects have cost. If this is like the company's estimated volume of spoil which grew to more than double the amounts we were given to expect, the figure could be nearer to £3 billion. We are told that this money will largely be raised through the debt market. We shall see what the DFS reveals when it is published, as we have been told, before the end of 2015.



Small-flowered catchfly

CORNFIELD FLOWERS PROJECT

The prestigious Cornfield Flowers Project has had another successful year and after the changes made earlier this year it has now become centred at Ryedale Folk Museum. Tom Normandale, the Project officer, in his report to the volunteers and species custodians comments on the rare Small-flowered catchfly. This plant was rediscovered in 2014 after an absence in the area of 74 years and after careful growing-on by some of the volunteers, he says there is now sufficient seed to start trial sowings. The contact email address for enquiries about the project is (cornfield@ryedalefolkmuseum.co.uk) and the telephone number is 07543540008.

NYMA CHANGE OF LEGAL STATUS

After the support given by NYMA members at the AGM for the proposed change of status from that of an Unincorporated Association to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) progress has been made to complete the change. The next Council meeting should see the final pieces put in place for the application to the Charities Commission to be made.

COMMENT

At the meeting of National Park Societies Chairs and Chief Executives held on the 8th October in Birmingham a number of topics were raised which together show the extent to which National Parks are under threat. The North York Moors National Park is clearly at the top of the list with the imminent threat of the largest mining operation in Europe having been sanctioned by the planning committee in June. National Parks should have the highest level of protection from inappropriate and damaging development but the question as to whether this is any longer the case needs to be high on a list of concerns.

National Parks are presently looking at their Local Plans and the need for bringing them up to date because of the recent significant changes imposed by the government and the likelihood of further changes. In flagging up to the National Park Committee the start of the this local planning policy revision the North York Moors National Park Planning Officers say that "Overall, officers consider that many of the changes made to the planning system over recent years have weakened protection for National Parks and in the absence of a holistic approach, have done so in an incremental and ad hoc way". The erosion of the protection for National Parks by national planning policies which have been cobbled together over the last few years is short sighted and misguided and as we have seen runs contrary to National Park Statutory Purposes. We certainly support the officers of NYMNPA who have said that "A new Local Plan will create the opportunity to address these inconsistencies and seek to introduce a planning framework which is appropriate to deliver sustainable development in a protected landscape" The plan also needs to deliver the two statutory National Park Purposes which as a reminder to us all are : To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Parks by the public. ♦

Tom Chadwick

THE FATHER OF ENGLISH GEOLOGY

This is the first instalment of a two-part article by Alan Staniforth on the life and work of the great pioneering surveyor and map-maker, engineer and geologist

TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO this year a map of Britain was published in London that was to 'change the world'. Created solely by one man travelling on foot, horseback or coach, the creation of this map was not only a huge scientific and cartographic achievement but it was also a considerable work of art.

William Smith, son of John and Ann, was born on 23rd March 1769 at the village of Churchill in Oxfordshire. His parents were of humble origin, working the rich land in the neighbourhood. Like many of his day, William had little opportunity of any formal education, but early in life showed the acute observation and retentive memory that were to stand him in such good stead in later life.

Smith's mother remarried when his father died in 1777 and at 18 William became an assistant to Edward Webb, a surveyor of Stow-on-the-Wold. It was working under Webb, firstly on land enclosure maps and later on the survey of canal lines, that gave Smith his first real opportunity to enlarge and apply his embryonic geological ideas, knowledge and natural talents. With the passing of the Canal Bill in 1794, Smith, still in his early 20s, found an increasing market for his specialist and largely self-taught skills. On a 900 mile circuitous journey to the north of England to survey canal lines and mining operations in Yorkshire, he was able to extend his observations and was, even at that young age, already in a position to relate the rocks in the north with those he had already studied in the south. The following extract from his own diaries gives a clear picture of this keen young specialist and also highlights his acute powers of observation and deduction:

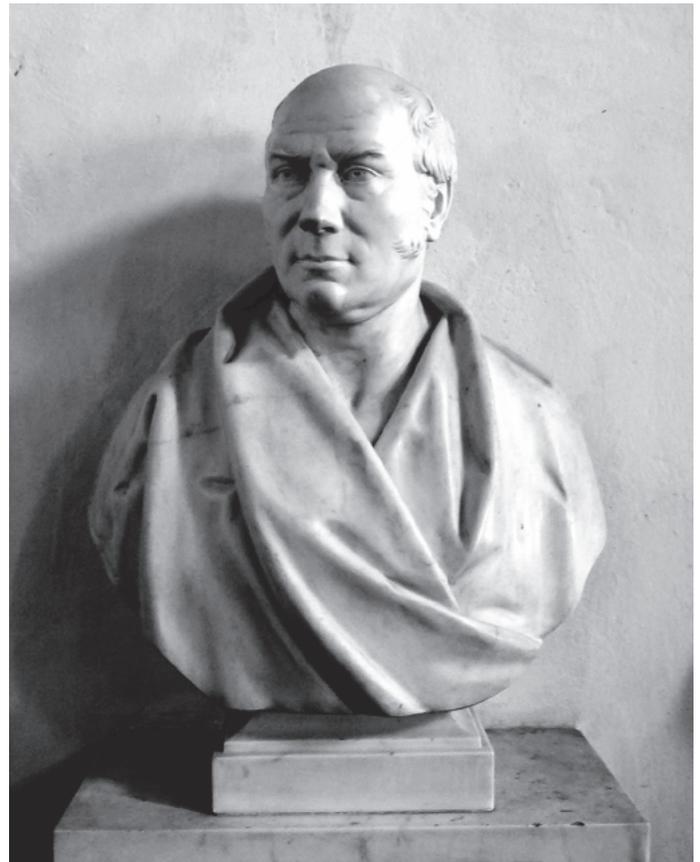
"From the top York Minster I could see that the Wolds contained chalk by their contour. We here had time enough to indulge ourselves with a good dinner and pineapple at the Black Swan, and resolved upon a run up to Newcastle, to see the celebrated collieries there; and after the first stage from York, I recognised in the Hambleton Hills the features of the Cotswold Hills viewed from the Vale of Gloucester; saw near Thirsk the red marl in the road, and found that along Leaming Lane we were travelling upon red sandstone. The yellow limestone appeared again at Pierce Bridge, and at Ferry Hill they were working coal under it"

Following this extensive tour, Smith was engaged for six years in superintending the works on the Somerset Coal Canal. During this time, due to his increasing geological experience and knowledge, he was able to advise the contractors on the best method of work to be employed. It was also at this time that he collected

"extraneous fossils" and realised "that each stratum contained organised fossils peculiar to itself, and might, in cases otherwise doubtful, be recognised and discriminated from others like it, but in a different part of the series, by examination of them".

This is the first reference to one of Smith's great contributions to the science of geology; that characteristic fossils can be used to correlate strata across the country.

Having moved to Bath, he began to commit his thoughts to paper, although the intended book never appeared. Smith's



exceptional ability to state accurately the nature of the rocks likely to be met with in drilling a well or locating a mine became almost legendary. Yet we continually realise in following his work that patient and meticulous observation allied with intelligent deduction based on fact, were his only tools.

In 1799, there was exceptionally heavy rain at Bath. This resulted in great landslides, both in and around the spa town. The obvious man to deal with this problem was Smith, the engineer. By drilling shafts into hillsides and tapping and diverting the spring-heads into pipes, he was able to avert the worst of the damage.

It was in the same year that he produced what is regarded as the first real geological map in the country, a circular map of the area around Bath, coupled with the publication of his table of strata and organic remains. He was to become known to some by the epithet of William 'Strata' Smith

Smith had not only produced the first geological map that the country had known but was suggesting that rocks throughout the kingdom could be dated and classified by their fossil content. This was the dawn of stratigraphical geology (*see footnote) and geological cartography. In spite of this and numerous other important works, we find no mention or acknowledgement of Smith during the formation of the Geological Society of London in 1807, a gross oversight the Society willingly rectified in later years.

Perhaps one of the best-known associations between Smith and the City of Bath resulted from the failure in 1810 of the celebrated hot springs within the town. Smith was called in and in spite of much opposition, succeeded in opening the base of the wells where he discovered that the water had cut several new channels and was escaping in other directions. By sealing these, he not only restored

the water to the spa baths, but also ensured that they filled more rapidly than before. Coupled with this was the plugging-off of the nearby Batheston Pit into which water, presumably from the hot springs, had been collecting for some time.

In 1813, during a twelve-day visit to northeast Yorkshire, Smith was principally concerned in examining some of the coal pits scattered throughout the North York Moors. On December 18th, while staying at Larpool Hall, Whitby, Smith wrote:

“Walked to Nape How (Gnipe Howe) Farm and searched for a place in the cliffs between Whitby and Robin Hoods Bay where coal is worked. Examined the various strata, found an imperfect limestone but could not get by the water’s edge to the place where coals are dug - returned to Larpool House . . . The coal at Nape How which has been partially worked for some years for the purpose of burning lime is but very thin, nor does it appear from my view of the situation or from the information of the person who works it, very likely to be productive of any considerable rental. Under the present circumstances, of the most awkward approach to the mouth of the level, at the foot of a most dangerous cliff, and passable only at ebb tide, I should think the expenses must be nearly equal to the profits. This little colliery is, however, capable of improvement if the coal should prove thicker on driving the level further into the hill.. The level was begun a few years since by a neighbouring farmer who has annually procured his coal here for burning lime”.

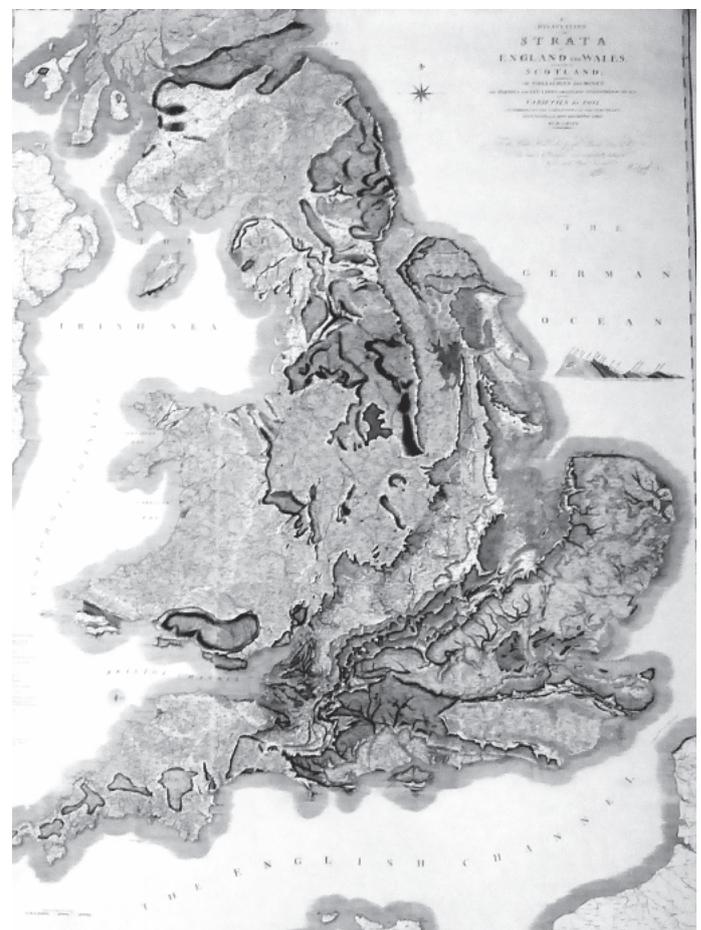
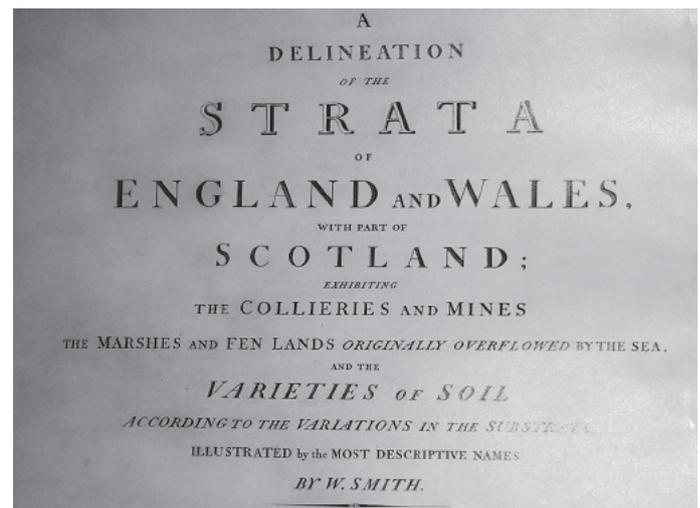
“The works are carried on in the summer only on account of the dangerous path by which the coals are brought up the cliff upon asses and also from the roughness of the tides in the winter which cover part of the track and which sometimes flow to the mouth of the level. As the outburst of the coal is not many feet above the water, the level was begun as low as possible to meet the vein of coal, as it dips into the hill.”

The report continues:

“The coal worked at Nape How is part of a thin stratum which extends over a large portion of the moors in the North Riding of Yorkshire. As it is nowhere found more than eighteen inches in thickness and seldom more than fourteen or sixteen and at several places where it has been worked not more than ten inches, it cannot be expected to be very profitable. There are, however, many situations where, connected with local circumstances, this vein of coal may pay for working. The general scarcity of wood throughout the vast district which is the site of this coal increases its value. The great distance from any other coal pits and the difficulty of obtaining coal from the seaside, owing to the scarcity of good harbours along this coast and the steepness and badness of the roads thence into the interior contributes also very largely to enhance the value of this thin seam of coal. It is of great use in burning lime which being much in request for manure, in this part of the country, renders the coal of still greater value. It happens also very fortunately that the coal lies under the greater part of the immense districts of waste land, and the cultivation of such land depending much upon the facility of obtaining lime, the working of the coal may greatly facilitate these improvements. As it is not merely for the purpose of first bringing such waste land into cultivation, but also for the

support of its future crops that lime will be continually wanting, the demand for coal will continue to increase according to the progress of improvements and the increase of population. From these considerations it must appear that those who have the largest estates and particularly such as have large wastes attached to them are most likely to be benefited by the working of these coals”.

Smith then goes on to suggest that it would be desirable that the tenants of the “great landowners” should work the coal and pay a rent or “a portion of the produce of the pits”.



The map that changed the world.

Although he was not specifically asked to study the nearby Danby Moors pits, Smith does refer to them when calculating the value of the coal deposits at Borrowby:

“Each acre of the high land (if the coal proves as thick as at Danby) will produce about 2000 tons of coal which sells at the pit at 8 shillings per ton. I expect every acre of the moors and high land adjoining contains the same coal as at Danby”.

From his many long and arduous exploratory journeys over the country, William Smith was now able to produce in 1815 the very first geological map of England and Wales and indeed the first large scale geological map of any country in the world. Printed on fifteen sheets to a scale of five-miles-to-the-inch and measuring six feet by eight and a half feet an original copy of the map hangs in Burlington House, the home of the Geological Society in London. A colourful work of art in its own right and which remarkably on comparison with a modern map shows only minor differences and serves to illustrate the accuracy of Smith’s meticulous observations and recording.

Sadly, the publication of his great map was overshadowed by other serious personal matters, mainly financial. Hoping to generate the necessary resources required for publishing his great work, he had invested in a stone-cutting enterprise based on his property at Bath; the project failed. It was partly because of this failure and impending financial ruin that Smith now faced, he was obliged to offer his extensive geological collection to the British Museum. This must have been a great blow to Smith. According to his nephew, John Phillips (**see footnote), who at the age of 14 came to stay with his uncle in London in order to help prepare the

precious collection for sale, there were 2,257 specimens covering 693 species. In June 1816, after much prevarication on the part of the Treasury and the Trustees of the British Museum, Smith finally obtained a sum of £500 for his unique collection. As Smith’s debts continued to mount up, he applied for further funds for additional work in preparing his collection for the museum and was eventually paid a further £200. However, this additional sum was still insufficient to clear his debts and prevent bankruptcy resulting in him spending ten weeks in Kings Bench Prison for debtors in London. On his release in the autumn of 1819 he gave up his house in London (the bailiffs requisitioned the property) and he moved from the capital to the north of England, eventually settling in the seaside town of Scarborough. This turned out to be a very fortuitous for the area. ♦

Alan Staniforth

End of part I

To be continued: The second and concluding part of Alan Staniforth’s fascinating article on William ‘Strata’ Smith will appear in December in the winter edition of Voice, Issue 122.

* Stratigraphy: an as yet unnamed and nascent science at that time, was to be further refined in the early 19th century by Lewis Hunton (1818 – 1835), a young scientist from Loftus in East Cleveland, where his father and grandfather before him were masters of the local alum works.

** John Phillips travelled extensively with his uncle and benefited greatly from his mentor. At the age of 25 he became the first keeper of the Yorkshire Museum. He went on to become Professor Phillips, a distinguished Scientist and a member of many illustrious societies.

“QUOTABLE QUOTES”

HENRY BESTON ON NATURE AND ANIMALS

“Touch the earth, love the earth, her plains, her valleys, her hills, and her seas; rest your spirit in her solitary places. For the gifts of life are the earth’s and they are given to all, and they are the songs of birds at daybreak, Orion and the Bear, and the dawn seen over the ocean from the beach. “

“We need another and a wiser and perhaps a more mystical concept of animals. Remote from universal nature and living by complicated artifice, man in civilization surveys through the glass of his knowledge and sees thereby a feather magnified and the whole image in distortion. We patronise them for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate of having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein we err, and greatly err. For the animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and

complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth.”

*Henry Beston 1888 – 1968 was an American writer and naturalist, best known as author of the book, **The Outermost House**, which he wrote in 1928 following what Beston called “a year of life on the Great Beach of Cape Cod.” In 1959 Beston became the third recipient of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS) Emerson-Thoreau Award, previously awarded only to the poets Robert Frost and T S Elliot. He is considered one of the founding fathers of the modern environmental movement. Beston was a huge influence on the thinking and writings of Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring*, a landmark environmental book.*

NULLIUS IN VERBA – MOTTO OF THE GEONAUTS®



PURPLE GLOVES, BANK NOTES & HAND LENSES

As the 'Lewis Hunton Project', funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, enters its final stage, NE Yorkshire Geology Trust Director, Mike Windle, reflects on the outstanding success of the Geonaut Clubs:

"I have to say, the Geonaut Clubs have proven to be one of my better ideas. I have derived enormous satisfaction in seeing the Geonauts learn and develop over the course of the Clubs. I was very proud when the Geonauts presented their achievements to their classmates, teachers and parents at the end of the school year".

With the enthusiastic and tireless support of Andrea Brewster, a Teaching Assistant at St Benedict's, Ampleforth and Intern with the Geology Trust, and Laura Carver, a Teacher at Hummersea Primary School, East Cleveland, Mike has introduced the young Geonauts to the science of geology, and has given them an insight into the earth they live on, a secret window on their world. The Geonauts have explored the planet, acquired life skills (observation, communication, recording, drawing, note making, analysis...). All the children enjoyed being submitted to the £10 note test – a test specifically designed by Mike to judge their correct use of hand-lenses, an essential skill for Geonauts.

They have learnt about dinosaurs, created their own collections of rocks and fossils, visited mines and museums, and had the opportunity to handle special items and artefacts with purple gloves to their great delight. They discovered the life of Lewis Hunton, a young geologist from Loftus, who made a significant



contribution to the science of geology and stratigraphy before dying at the young age of 24.

"Science has become the Cinderella of education in primary schools and Geonaut Clubs are a very effective way to deliver science and scientific methodology in a engaging and holistic manner, not favouring any particular science subject, challenging Geonauts to keep an open mind, ask questions and pursue evidence, rather than accept information at face value. Hence their motto (the same as the Royal Society's) is 'Nullius in Verba' – 'Take no one's word for it'.

The Geonauts have learned a lot and enjoyed even more over their year in the Clubs and this has been reflected in their enthusiasm to share their acquired knowledge and skills with others and the amazing presentations and displays they each contributed to on the days of the Geonaut Celebrations.

The Mayor of Loftus, Michael Hodgson, and the NEYGT Trust's Chairman Stuart Swann also presented them with certificates attesting to their achievements. Each Geonaut also received a gift from Mike Windle of a T-shirt, hand-lens and a wonderful fossil collection.

The Geonaut Clubs at Hummersea and Ampleforth were a pilot scheme, part of the Geology Trust Lewis Hunton Project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Geology Trust has now moved from Robin Hood's Bay to the other side of the North York Moors National Park and the Northallerton area. However, it is very much business as usual despite the lack of a postal address and landline for now. Please contact the Geology Trust by emailing contact@neyorksgeologytrust.com if you want to know more about our projects and activities.

NE Yorkshire Geology Trust is a not-for-profit organisation, which aims to protect and share our rich local Earth heritage with as wide a public as possible. ♦

Bénédicte Windle

HELPING THE NORTH YORK MOORS BECOME MORE SUSTAINABLE



MANY OF YOU will be familiar with the work of the Esk Valley Community Energy Group (EVCEG). Since 2006, the Esk Valley Community Energy Group worked to reduce the community's contribution to climate change by promoting energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. The group held regular public meetings to give updates on current projects and to help people find out about new technologies. It also maintained a website offering a wealth of up-to-date advice and useful links.

After nearly nine years of activity, the group decided to cease to operate in February of this year but, due to strong links and overlapping aims, decided that its assets should be transferred to Moor Sustainable CIC (a community interest company). This means that the work of the EVCEG will now be continued over the wider area of north east Yorkshire, covered by Moor Sustainable. We would like to thank in particular Colin Mather for all his work in chairing the Esk Valley Community Energy Group.

The aim of Moor Sustainable CIC is to improve the sustainability of the communities and environment of north east Yorkshire, with the objectives of improving the natural and built environment; reducing the use of carbon; and helping to develop stronger communities. As a community interest company we need to have an asset lock so that if the company is wound up any profits remaining are used for the benefit of the community. The North Yorkshire Moors Association is our asset lock as we believe our work complements that of NYMA.

As a CIC we also have to produce a social audit report which outlines how our activity has benefitted the community we are set up to serve and also how we have consulted with the community to ensure our work meets the needs of the community. The full

report can be found on our website but to give you a flavour for example during the year April 2014 – March 2015: we provided the opportunity for householders to find out more about energy reduction and generation measures through running a Green Open Homes event in the Esk Valley and Moors area where 10 homes opened their homes for a weekend and provided information for case studies about the work they have undertaken; and we undertook a feasibility study for a community energy scheme which showed that due to power grid constraints there was only the possibility of a 200 kW ground mounted PV system in the area we were considering.

Moor Sustainable CIC has a wide range of stakeholders which will vary depending on the projects we undertake in any given year. In 2014-15 the majority of our projects were energy related and we visited parish council meetings, met with a local school, landowners, local groups, held an online survey with a paper version available in local outlets, met with planners and the district network operator.

We attended a Totally Socially event in Scarborough, which gave us an opportunity to meet and talk to members of the public, other social enterprises and local independent businesses. We took this opportunity to carry out another consultation exercise to find out what local people and organisations would like to see happen in the north east Yorkshire area. The results were fairly evenly spread across our themes, with strongest interest in activities to bring communities together and increase the self-sufficiency of the area. ♦

Caryn Loftus

To find out more about the work of Moor Sustainable visit our website – www.moorsustainable.org.uk or contact our secretary Caryn Loftus T: 01642 723137 E: carynloftus@moorsustainable.org.uk

FARMLAND BIRDS

DECLINING NUMBERS

The Skylark is an icon of the British countryside and has been the subject of more research and direct attention than most other bird species: but it is still declining in numbers. It seems that some of the environmental schemes intended to help Skylarks may even be having a negative effect on them, but why is this happening?

The story of the declining numbers of farmland bird is of course, not new. The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) surveys revealed some while ago several farmland bird population reductions beginning back in the mid 1970s. Over the following decade, further research confirmed these losses statistically, and suggested that changes in agricultural practice were the most likely cause. Farmland birds such as Skylarks and Yellowhammers have declined by almost two thirds and Lapwings by almost a third since the 1970s. Significantly, these declines have continued despite all our conservation efforts, at first slowing down but then accelerating again over the past 10 years.

CONSERVATION SCHEMES

Once Government recognised the problems, various conservation initiatives were introduced beginning in the early 2000s. These consisted of a selection of environmental schemes in which farmers signed up to receive payments for potentially beneficial actions that involved changes to some of their normal farming practices. The uptake of these schemes was high, almost three-quarters of English farmland was covered by one or other of them at its peak, but whilst the population of some species has stabilised in recent years, there have yet to be clear recoveries in other target species such as Skylarks, Yellowhammers, Lapwings and Grey Partridges.

It is clear that to date the various schemes are not working as expected. Measures taken include options such as creating grass strips around fields to protect hedges and streams, managing hedges in a way that helps wildlife, retaining weedy, seed-rich stubbles over the winter, and providing seed for wintering birds to bridge the “hungry gap” during late winter and early spring. The options available have varied according to local conditions and the type of wildlife in the area.

Recently, it has been found that whilst some of these schemes have had positive effects on several of the target species, such as Yellowhammers and Bullfinches, they have not so far resulted in a sustained recovery in numbers in others. Worse still, the results suggest that some options have even had unintended negative effects on species such as Skylarks.

WHAT'S GOING WRONG?

So what is going wrong? Is it farmers? Is it predators? Predictably, responses to these issues from some quarters include ‘it’s all the farmers’ fault’, while others point the finger at increasing predator populations, particularly species like Carrion Crow, Sparrowhawk and Red Fox.

There is no doubt that many farmers do little to actively support wildlife and indeed perceive a conflict between wildlife and profit, but this in turn can be based on their being businessmen in a competitive market. We need solutions that acknowledge these issues; it is clear that the best management is delivered when farmers are fully engaged and that demonising the farming community is not going to help.



The Yellowhammer is a reliable barometer for the health of farmland, being a resident which needs boundary vegetation on which to feed and good habitats in crops in which to nest. The signs are good that the various schemes have slowed the rate of decline of this bird but, as yet, it seems still more is needed to deliver real recovery.

Photo by Jill Packenham

The numbers of several key predators did indeed increase during the main period of farmland bird decline, though research continually failed to find clear evidence for any direct links between the two. More recently still, Sparrowhawk and corvid populations have stabilised while songbird numbers continue to decline.

Nevertheless, the way in which predators respond to any new management systems could be critical. Should the numbers of prey species be increased, predators are bound to be attracted, possibly creating ‘ecological traps’. To prevent this happening we need to find out how to produce habitats that allow predators to coexist with prey, as they do in natural systems.

With many farmland birds still in decline, we need to work out which solutions are working, and which are not: more of what we already have will not do. We need to understand the problems and then fix them – for example, why are the various schemes not benefiting Skylarks?

MORE FOR LESS

As is the case with current funding of all kinds, cuts will mean that future measures will need to do more for less. There are also new challenges to wildlife in the form of pressure on land for development, solar energy production and bio-fuels. We need to work out how to protect environmental priorities, like birds, whilst delivering wider benefits for society.

The BTO has initiated further research into these continuing problems, as in order to solve them, first we have to understand what exactly is going wrong. Hopefully, with the help of our supporters, we can make a significant contribution to helping the recovery of our farmland bird population.

If you’d like to know more about farmland birds and for details of the Farmland Bird Appeal go to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) website: www.bto.org/support-us/appeals/farmland-bird-appeal

Mike Gray

SONGS FROM THE MOOR



Ralph Vaughan Williams



Cecil Sharp

JUST AS ANTIQUE COLLECTORS long to discover that hidden gem in the attic, so it was with collectors of traditional music in the late 19th early 20th centuries. Their ‘attics’ were isolated rural areas untainted by urbanisation or lost to the dirty, greedy industrial revolution as people left the land and its traditions behind.

A group of collectors, including names that might be familiar to some; Cecil Sharp, Sabine Baring-Gould, Lucy Broadwood, Percy Grainger et.al. scoured the country, concentrating largely on the southern counties. The North did have its own collectors, the most influential being Frank Kidson (1855-1926) who collected songs whilst travelling around for his brother’s antique business. Even so the NE and the isolated North York Moors in particular was largely passed by. The longer this neglect persisted the more alluring the area must have become until finally it happened, Kidson scratched the surface, a famous composer passed through on his bike, a famous collector gave us nudge, a Wharfedale farmer’s daughter and her chaperone cast their net over Yorkshire and a latecomer from Leeds University finished the job off.

Westerdale might seem an unexpected place to associate with Ralph Vaughan Williams, regarded by many as England’s finest composer. Vaughan Williams (1872- 1958) had started collecting folk songs in 1903 and amassed over 800 traditional songs and carols over a ten year period. So it was that Mr Vaughan Williams with his bicycle and note book fetched up at the Duncombe Arms, Westerdale on Wednesday, 13th July 1904. Here, from the singing of a Mr. Greenwood, he notated a song called *The Yacker of Land*. If you are unfamiliar with the Duncombe Arms that is because it is now Duncombe Farm Cottage and Duncombe Cottage opposite the village church and a little way down the road. If you are

unfamiliar with *The Yacker of Land*, it is a riddle song not unlike Scarborough Fair which has the narrator reaping his acre of land with an old tup’s horn and flailing his corn with a butterfly’s wing. This song has many variants of both tune and lyric and it was recorded in a short volume of Vaughan Williams’ collected songs.

Next on the scene was Cecil Sharp (1859-1924) who was those most famous, influential and controversial folksong and dance collectors of all time collecting in England and also in North America. In 1920 Sharp, along with local historian Major Fairfax-Blakeborough of Westerdale, encouraged Mr. F. W. Dowson, a retired schoolteacher from New Wath, to resurrect the *Goathland Dance* and in doing so also helped resurrect the *Goathland Ploughstots Long Sword Dance Team* in 1922. The dance dates back to the early 19th century being part of a mummers’ play, so the Ploughstots are credited with being the oldest team, dancing their own traditional dance, in England. The name of the team is derived from the bullock or stot that was used to draw the plough. So Sharp didn’t discover a local tradition but he surely helped save one – job done.

So we come to the Farmer’s daughter and a heart warming love story to boot. Mary Robinson was a primary school teacher in Bradford and as a girl she would holiday in the Eskdale area with her Yorkshire Dales farming family. Her interest in folk songs led her to become an amateur collector of Yorkshire songs. This interest became a little more serious and through the English Folk Dance Society she obtained a male helper to escort her, feeling she needed some protection in her work which took her into public houses. As it turned out she did need protection but not from the drinkers indeed her ‘protector’ ran off with all her recordings. So



Mary and Nigel Hudlestone

she advertised for a new and hopefully more honest chaperone. Her advert was responded to by Nigel Hudlestone from Rillington near Malton and in Nigel's own words;

"Number one man went off with the tapes I went off with Mary, tapes and all."

Mary was 41 and Nigel was 44 – romantic serendipity. Between 1958 and 1978 the couple gathered together the largest known collection of Yorkshire traditional songs. According to their friend Steve Gardham.

"The entire archive includes twenty-two large boxes of tapes, photos, slides, letters, and a hundred cine films of Yorkshire customs and mummings' plays"

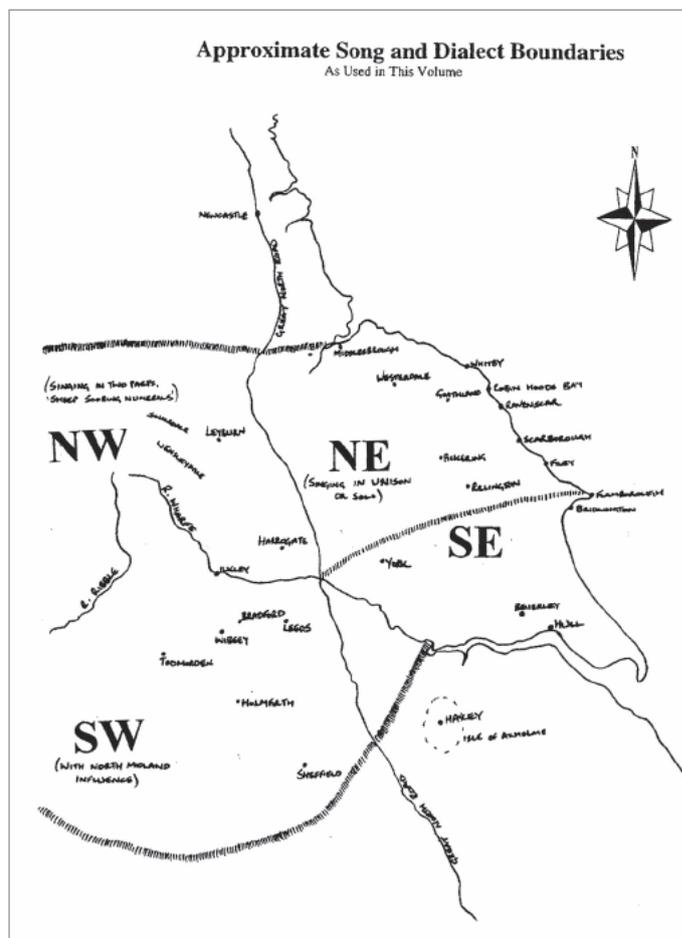
At the mid-point of the process they approached Leeds University with 150 songs but, despite the fact that the university had a Dialect and Folklore department, no interest was shown which surprised and hurt the couple. Undaunted they carried on and, at considerable effort and expense, Nigel published 'Songs of the Ridings' in 2001.

Sadly this belated publication turned out to be a memorial for Mary who died in 1986.

As the collection's title suggests the material covers much of Yorkshire but out of the 226 songs in print, around half were collected in the NE of the county and at least 100 of these were from Whitby and the Moors.

These songs were collected from twenty two 'locals' but three contributors were prolific with Bill Pennock of Goathland singing eleven songs, Mr and Mrs Linton of Whitby fourteen and Arthur Wood of Middlesbrough weighing in with an astounding thirty six. Ah!! I hear you cry – "He's not from round here." – True but his parents moved from Littlebeck to take a public house in the Boro, so he's ours!! Other contributors came from Sleights, Lythe, Lealholm, Rosedale, Farndale, West Barnby, Bilsdale, Burnistone, Eskdale?, Kirkbymoorside and Runswick Bay a pretty representative group.

Before leaving the happy couple I will leave the last words to Steve Gardham.



"Nigel and Mary leave behind a legacy from a bygone age to be enjoyed by performers and students alike. We can only thank them for their endeavours and be grateful that they were there in time to capture such priceless gems"

But had they captured all the gems? Colin S Wharton didn't think so and neither did his tutors at Leeds University. In 1961/2 Wharton was encouraged to undertake an MA in English Literature by searching for folk songs in NE Yorkshire at around the time the Hudlestons were being turned away from the same university having started to do the exact same thing ... mmmm! Leaving any hint of controversy aside the final thesis is interesting. What he does for us is to put flesh on some very old bones with addresses, ages and some anecdotes which help us identify with the singers even to the point of knowing living relatives. Most of his informants were between sixty and eighty with seven over eighty. If any of these songs were learned at their mothers' knees then we can be sure many of these songs were being sung in pubs and homes on the Moors in the late 19 century.

He also brings a smile when he points out that a number of older informants were more inclined to "*present their life story*" than sing him a song. On occasion in pubs he would buy many a drink but receive no song - I think someone saw him coming. He recorded songs from twenty six local people in only six visits and noted down seventy five songs having rejected quite a few others. The fact that he managed to collect all these songs in the short time available, with all that gerrymandering is creditable.

A rough breakdown of subjects reveals ten farming songs, ten hunting songs, eighteen songs of courtship, eighteen comic or bawdy songs, surprisingly only six songs from the sea and the rest.

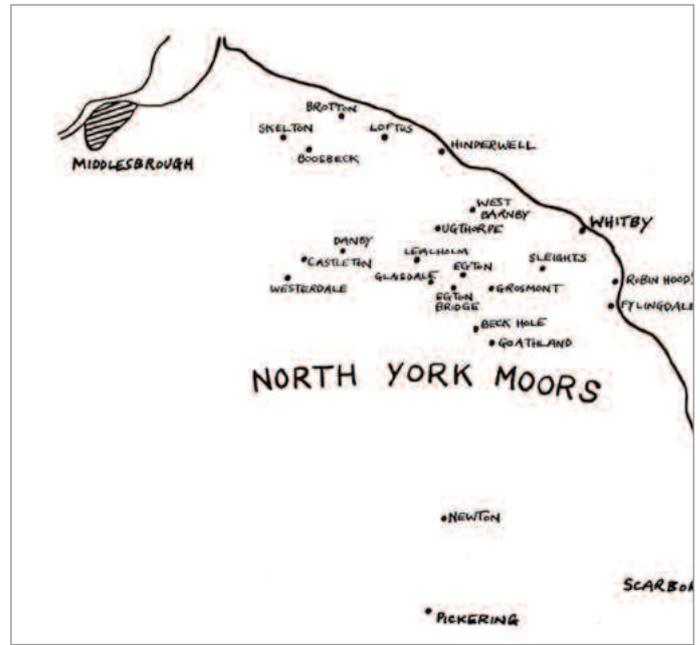
Many of the songs are familiar ditties but a few of songs are specific to the moors especially the hunting songs.

Wharton was under no illusions that the time for folk song collecting was coming to an end saying "there are no really remote places in England since the motor came" he added hopefully "But it would be equally foolish to say that no more folk songs could be found." His study proved he was correct, but I suspect he was one of the last.

So much for the process of collecting in a second article I will look at the songs and highlight one in particular. Who knows I might get you to sing the chorus. ♦

Dave Chapman

Places from where songs have been collected.



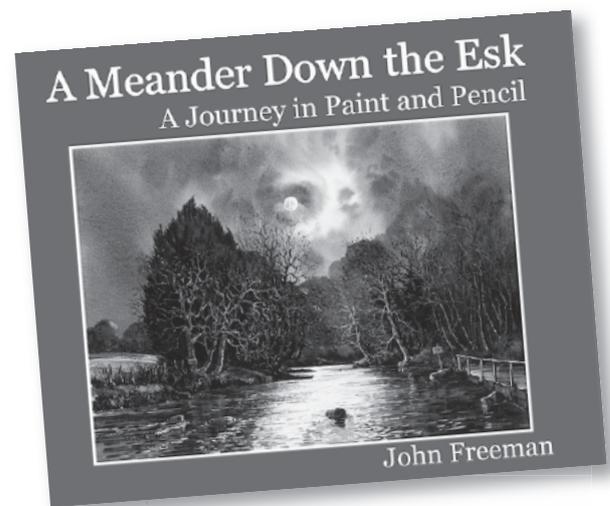
BOOK REVIEW

A MEANDER DOWN THE ESK

A JOURNEY IN PAINT AND PENCIL BY JOHN FREEMAN

JOHN FREEMAN, the Whitby-based artist, has created a most beautiful new book, which once I peeped inside its pages made me gasp with pleasure and I had to have a copy. Each double page has a sumptuous watercolour picture painted by the artist at each of the sixty or so carefully chosen scenic spots on his journey down the River Esk, from its source at Esklets on the wild heather moorland high above Westerdale to the picturesque seaside town of Whitby. The detailed watercolours and fine pencil drawings of local features provide a delightful pictorial record of the River Esk as it meanders eastwards down the valley from its source to the North Sea (a map giving the exact location of each painting is included). The illustrations are accompanied by 18,000 words of well-researched and interesting text. The book was launched in September at the 'Inspired By ...' gallery, Danby Moors Centre and was accompanied by an exhibition of the actual paintings and drawings reproduced in the book, the majority of which were for sale. The exhibition ran for three weeks duration. I feel sure that anyone who loves the moors and the Esk Valley area will want a copy. It would make a wonderful Christmas present, or an irresistible purchase for oneself. The book costs £19.99 and is available from the Danby Moors Centre or from John Freeman's studio shop, 9 Market Place, Whitby (telephone: 01947 602799).

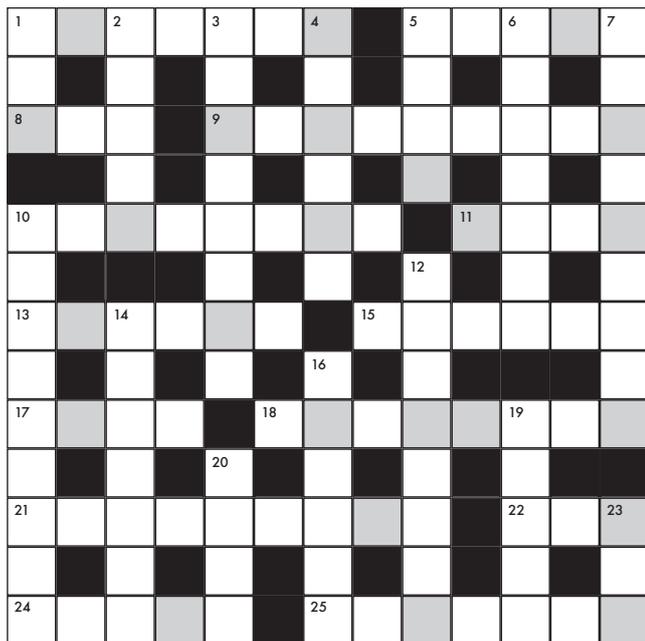
Beryl Turner



CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Across: 1 lobster claws 8 pub 9 cavesdrop 10 dressage 11 idol 13 fedora 15 purdah 17 onyx 18 diagnose 21 idiota 22 asp 24 steed 25 sawmill **Down:** 1 lap 2 Bible 3 treasure 4 ravage 5 cyst 6 abraded 7 sepulchre 10 daffodils 12 bungalow 14 daytime 16 circus 19 okapi 20 stud 23 pal **Anagram Answers:** Green Plover, Peverit Lapwing

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD No 70 BY AMANUENSIS



Take the letters from the greyed-out squares and rearrange into the three common names of the moorland creature *V. vanellus*

First name (5, 6)

Second name (6)

--	--	--	--	--	--

Third name (7)

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

ACROSS:

- 1 & 5 Nippers by the seaside? (7, 5)
 8 Place to drink in the republic (3)
 9 Secretly overhear the roofline fall (9)
 10 Horsemanship makes female apparel grow old (9)
 11 Adored figure in mixed lido (4)
 13 Hat for the iron lady (6)
 15 Muslim women hide behind it (6)
 17 Mineral on unknown quantities (4)
 18 Determine what is complaint? (8)
 21 Makes absolutely no sense (9)
 22 Grasped snake in the middle (3)
 24 Used for 10 across (5)
 25 Woodcutters' place of work? (7)

DOWN:

- 1 Go round once mate returns (3)
 2 It has both old and new parts (5)
 3 Wealth of variegated aster with Yorkshire flower (8)
 4 Destroy a grave (6)
 5 Pouch in the middle of fancy stockings (4)
 6 Worn away by breaking bread in our time (7)
 7 Stiff vault? (9)
 10 Blooming trumpeters? (9)
 12 You can't take flight in here (8)
 14 Appropriate period for light work? (7)
 16 Where people sit around and watch (6)
 19 African mammal is alright to start with (5)
 20 Perhaps where 24 across comes from (4)
 23 Friend found in Spalding (3)

ANSWERS ON PAGE 13

NYMA WALKS ARE FUN AND GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH !

THE MONTHLY NYMA WALKS of up to 7 miles are well established on Saturdays throughout the year and are led by anyone who wishes to share their favourite special places with other members of NYMA. So far this year we have met at Ayton, Kildale, Castleton, Lowna, Duncombe Park, Swainby, Loftus, Goathland, Glaisdale, and Sheepwash at Osmotherley. The co-ordinator for NYMA walks is Heather Mather who can be contacted on 01287 669104.

The NYMA walkers who also meandered down the Esk following the 35 mile route of *The Esk Valley Walk* in 2014 will find John Freeman's book brings back many happy memories.

This year keen members have finished another long distance walk *The Link through the Tabular Hills*, 48 miles from

Helmley to Scarborough in a series of monthly walks of up to 7 miles. The Link joins both ends of the Cleveland Way and passes through lovely farmland, moorland villages, and forests. There are plans afoot for next year to undertake *The Hambleton Hillside Mosaic Walk*, a 36 mile circular walk. Booklets for both these walks are published by the North York Moors National Park. Margaret Kirby, a qualified HF walk leader, has done a grand job with all the logistics of cars at the start and end of linear walks and has offered to lead in 2016. She can be contacted on 01642 722555

Beryl Turner



WHERE HAVE ALL THE BUTTERFLIES GONE?

This is the question every one has been asking me! The summer of 2015 will be remembered by lepidopterists and other nature lovers as one of the worst for butterflies on record. Despite the great attraction of buddleia bushes smothered in flowers, the blossoms were oddly almost devoid of butterflies. The common Peacock, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Comma, and the migrant Painted Lady, have all been very noticeable by their absence. I personally think that that the reason for their non-appearance is due to the very cold late spring and cold early summer and this is probably the main cause of the dearth. Although we had a relatively mild winter and good numbers of butterflies hibernated and were breeding in early spring, their caterpillars must have struggled to survive the cool temperatures. On top of this, a very late frost on 15th June was probably the last straw and death knell of many of them. Even the Cabbage Whites, which can be a real pest when attacking and feeding voraciously on our brassica, were few and far between, and yet these summer garden marauders are regarded as some of our most hardy butterfly species.

NATURE'S WAY

So what are the prospects for our beautiful local butterflies and moths? Well, there's no need to panic, next year might hopefully see warmer, sunnier conditions with hoards of butterflies swarming everywhere and not an un-nibbled cabbage left in sight! It is usual for butterfly populations to fluctuate from year to year depending on various influences and conditions. Inclement weather is the most obvious negative influence, but parasitic wasps can take a heavy toll. It has been noted that as Small Tortoiseshell numbers peak, so do parasitic wasp numbers. These wasps lay their eggs on, or in, the caterpillars of butterflies, and their offspring feed on their helpless hosts. I have often gathered caterpillars or pupa of butterflies and moths (with permission, of course!) from

the wild, only to find little black wasps emerging instead of butterflies. This infestation of parasitic wasps builds up to such a level that only small numbers of butterflies survive into adulthood and go on to successfully breed, therefore their overall numbers crash. The following year, with the subsequent very small numbers of caterpillars available to feed on, the parasite numbers crash too, and then the butterfly numbers start to recover and increase once again. This rather strange and macabre relationship between parasite and host seems to take place in roughly a 5-year cycle. Quite fascinating!

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER!

This summer I was hoping to get out regularly looking for moths, at least one evening a week, but with such cool nights I only managed to get out and about a handful of times. It is hardly worth the effort of staying out until 1am if the temperature is not well up into double figures. Alas, this year such evenings were few and far between. Although on 2nd of July I did record a minimum temperature of 17.6 c, but this was the exception rather than the rule. Probably my best night's 'mothing' was at a friend's farm, where I was hoping to prove how a very bright MV (mercury vapour) bulb hung on a tripod over a white sheet could successfully attract moths. Two hours later and with 280 moths (amongst which there were 65 different species) lured to my light to be seen and counted, I think my friend was suitably convinced that my set-up worked well!

NEXT YEAR, PERHAPS?

So, the summer of 2015 was unforgettable for all the wrong reasons, but naturalists are ever optimistic so maybe next year will be that bumper year for butterflies, moths, and other interesting insects - lets hope so! We'll just have to wait and see. ♦

Hawkmoth



Cabbage White butterfly

SO CLOSE

A summer evening settles down
with hills a smudged grey
and branches black against a pewter sky.
Behind us the lamp glows
and in the window-bay the screen
flickers its ice-blue light.

Across the lawn a flash of white
wings, luminous, and from a bough
a heart-shaped face stares straight
in, dark eyes looking at us,
and then away to the field
beyond the garden fence

to swerve, tilt, hover, turn
and glide, face-down,
until, fixed, he drops
out of sight. Then rises
and wings beating strongly
he drives a course low

across the lawn back to the house
and us and just before the glass
ascends, his talons clutching
his prey beneath his bright,
white, silent explosion of feathers,
up to the roof-ridge and into the night.

Jenny Burgoyne

