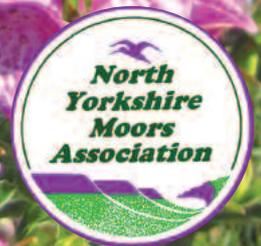


VOICE OF THE MOORS ISSUE 124

SUMMER 2016

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS ASSOCIATION (NYMA)

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PLANTAINS

PLANTAINS are not one of our most showy groups of native plants, but you are rarely far from them as you walk in the countryside, which is lucky as they can be very useful. They belong to the family *Plantaginaceae* and this, and the generic name *Plantago*, derive from the Latin '*planta*' meaning the sole of the foot. The Romans realised that the two most common species followed man on his travels, colonisations and farming from early times, the seeds sticking to the feet or shoes or being a contaminant of grain. The Saxons called it 'weybroed' or way-bread and in our more recent colonies it was called 'English man's foot' or 'white man's foot'

Plantains grow from a short, thick, usually perennial rootstock that supports a basal rosette of tough, ribbed leaves. From the centre of this sprout tall, leafless stems bearing dense spikes of small, rather insignificant flowers, often only noticed when the prominent stamens with coloured anthers are seen, maturing gradually up the stem; perfect for wind pollination.

FIVE SPECIES

In our moors area there are five plantain species, two very common and three local to more specific habitats. *Plantago major*, the greater, common or rats-tail plantain has broad, oval, light green, smooth leaves with long spikes of greenish flowers with purple anthers. It is widespread in waste places, track edges, open verges and in lawns. It can withstand being trodden on, cut and trampled and grows on disturbed or compacted soil in all but the most acid areas and is the one most commonly referred to as way-bread, being almost everywhere we tread.

Plantago lanceolata or ribwort plantain has longer, dark green, slightly hairy, lance shaped leaves with five prominent ribs. Its flowers are in a small dense, dark head at the top of a long, ribbed stem and have pale yellow anthers, the abundant pollen being a common cause of hay fever. It is widespread in pastures, meadows, verges, and on waste ground. Several of the country names for this species, soldiers, kemps, fighting cocks, fetchers etc. come from the old childhood game of using the heads and stems as in a 'conker' game or looping the stem round the flowering top and pulling to 'shoot' the flowering top off. These games seem to be very old, at least as far back as the Romans. Another game relies on the leaf 'ribs', two children pull at a leaf until it rips in half and the one with the most strings (veins) hanging wins!

Of the other three, less widespread species, *Plantago media* or hoary plantain prefers more calcareous soils, clay grasslands, or coastal cliffs, quarries and verges, sometimes becoming locally common. The leaves are similar to *P. major* though more pointed and slightly hairy and the dense flower spikes have very showy pink anthers on smooth stems. It is faintly fragrant. The other two species are found mainly on the coast. *P. coronopus* or buck's horn plantain has downy, dissected leaves resembling deer's antlers and prefers bare gravelly, sandy coastal cliffs and meadows, but also grows on winter salted verges, as it is tolerant to salt. *P. maritima* or sea plantain has linear, fleshy leaves and tends

to grow on damper coastal areas, salt marshes, tidal flats and wet meadows.

SHEEP FODDER

The leaves of the sea plantain are greatly sought out by sheep and have been pickled for winter use and the buck's horn plantain leaves are a salad crop in Italy. Ribwort plantain leaves were tried as animal fodder and will be readily eaten by sheep and pigs but not relished by cows and horses. None are poisonous and the very young leaves of all species can be eaten raw or cooked, ribwort ones are interesting dipped into tempura batter and deep-fried! The seeds are high in protein and minerals and can be ground and used in baking. The seeds are also loved by cage birds.



MEDICINAL USES

But *P. major* and *P. lanceolata* have been well known since early times as healing plants. They were magical plants in the pre Christian era, known to the Greeks and Romans, were one of the nine sacred herbs of the Anglo Saxons, a 'mother of all worts' and St. John included plantain as one of his healing herbs. Both Chaucer and Shakespeare mention them as healing and the Scottish and Irish 'Slanlon' means health herb.

They are antihistamine, anti-allergenic, anti-inflammatory, astringent, soothing and antibiotic, being particularly useful externally for healing wounds, drawing out splinters, pus, venom and dirt, for bites, stings, rashes, boils, ulcers, shingles, swellings, inflammations, nettle stings, eczema, ringworm

and verrucas, even to dog and snake bites; that is any new or chronic skin condition. A poultice can be made from the fresh leaves or they can be made into an infusion or cream. As they are so abundant by roadsides they can be a perfect emergency first aid kit for wounds, bites and stings, applied immediately to the latter will prevent any further swelling or pain. Laid on the forehead they will soothe a headache.

These same properties make them useful internally as well. They make a good eye wash for conjunctivitis, a gargle for teeth and gum infections and for inner ear troubles. They soothe a sore throat and loosen catarrh so helping coughs and bronchial problems. Similarly they soothe and heal urinary track infections and gastric inflammations. They are rich in minerals and trace elements making them a support and tonic for the immune, lymphatic and blood systems while, their anti-allergenic properties help with hay fever and other allergies. The seeds are mucilaginous and swell and with the bran constitute a very good cure for constipation. The leaves of *P. media* are said to cure blight on apple trees when the affected parts are treated with them.

Plantains, plants we readily tread on or dig up from our lawns as they mar its perfection, but luckily are always somewhere nearby when we need them, so do try the emergency first aid treatments for bites, stings and cuts when you are out walking, they really do work. ♦

Anne Press



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"QUOTABLE QUOTES" ABOUT SWIFTS

"Swifts can't feed in the rain and so will travel astonishing distances to avoid bad weather and find food. They are fantastic meteorologists, capable of detecting the finest fluctuations in air pressure and moisture. Despite only weighing the same as a bar of Dairy Milk, they will fly into a headwind to reach more clement climes on the fringes of weather patterns . . .

. . . Ornithological surveys have tracked swifts leaving gathering points above London to conduct foraging trips over the Norfolk and Lincolnshire coasts, way out across the North Sea, even as far as Germany, to plunder the abundant clouds of insects that swarm at the rear end of an occluded front.

To grounded minds, feeding excursions that might clock up 600 or miles in a day seem incomprehensible, inefficient even, but the more you learn from this bird, you realise that considering any part of its existence by our limits and measures is a mistake. Swifts are almost entirely beings of the air, as near to element as you'll find in a creature, evolved to spend their lives in a state of permanent airborne motion. From the point that they fledge and free-fall from nests on those sickle wings, the swift's life is one long aerial journey. Unless injured, they will never touch the ground. They feed, drink, preen, mate, even sleep in the air. Only fleetingly when nesting in the nooks and crannies of old buildings do they become creatures of the lower realms, of our earthly world."

This extract is taken from the book 'Common Ground' by Rob Cowen (2015). A fascinating, profound, and deeply personal account of his exploration of a stretch of common ground (edgeland) on the outskirts of the Yorkshire spa town of Harrogate. It was published in paperback by Windmill Books in 2016.

Front Cover: Foxgloves *Digitalis purpurea*
Back Cover: The early bird catches the worm – Song Thrush with Lunch

www.north-yorkshire-moors.org.uk



CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2016

NYMA COUNCIL AND ORGANISATION

The year since June 2015 has been one of progress towards change. Two of our Council members Shirley Learoyd and Ruth Chambers have stood down. I have to thank Shirley for the valuable contribution she has made and the support she has given in many ways. She has been a valued member of Council travelling from Beverley to our meetings sometimes in poor weather. Her presence on Council has been much appreciated. Ruth lives in London and has huge commitments which mean that it is impractical to travel to meetings. She will however be able to offer well informed advice when we need to call on it. We have one new co-opted member of Council, Adrian Leaman who has a wealth of advice and experience of website programming and website management.

We presently have 11 members of Council maintaining its strength and with a wide range of expertise from which we have already begun to benefit.

Once again I have to thank the hidden assets of our organisation. Gerald King, our membership secretary who records our subscribers and keeps track of membership numbers, those who for whatever reason leave and those who join us as new members. It is an essential part of the work of our Association. Thanks also to Brian and Barbara Spicer who despatch "Voice of the Moors" with clockwork regularity. In his absence I would also like to thank Albert once again for his constancy in maintaining such a high quality publication as "Voice of the Moors". I must also mention Pascal Thivillon of Basement Press who processes *Voice* for printing. Basement Press do this for us without charge, which amounts to a very generous contribution to NYMA. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the regular contributors to "Voice". Also to our walk organisers a well-deserved thanks for the hours given over to this activity which is such an important connection with our members.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

The Treasurer is pleased to report a surplus for the year of £17,759.

Income from all sources was £28,614 and expenditure £10,855. Our largest single source of income in the year was from donations, in particular we received the final tranche of the Tilley Bequest amounting to £21,986. This is unrestricted income and can be used for any purpose which meets the objectives of the Association. A donation of £2,000 was also received from the Carstairs Trust to support our conservation works.

Expenditure this year included a £4,000 contribution to the costs of running the Moors Bus and £1,300 to the Danby Moors Centre Project to enable improvements to be made to the riverside footpaths in return for groundworks carried out on our History Tree. The contribution to the Moors Bus was made from the Laughton Legacy received in February 2014. The terms of this legacy were that it was to be spent promoting and facilitating walking in the North York Moors. The balance of this legacy at 31 March 2016 was £12,398, of which a further £4,000 has been committed as a contribution to the Moors Bus in 2016/17.

As our income for the year exceeded £25,000, the accounts for this year require auditing before submission to the Charity Commission.

CHANGE OF CHARITY STRUCTURE

On January 27th we held a special general meeting in order to move forward with the change to a CIO Charitable Incorporated Organisation. We were able to secure support for this change and since then Council have been able to agree some slight changes to the objects of our constitution. We owe a big thanks to Janet and to Ann

for the work they have done in getting this submission together to the stage we are at. The application has to be submitted to the Charities Commission before the end of July.

CONSULTANT SECRETARY

Last year we agreed in principle at the AGM (Item 8 on last year's agenda) to make provision for the employment of a part-time administrator. We have decided to take action on this and appoint our present Hon Secretary Janet as a part-time paid consultant secretary. By appointing someone who is self-employed we avoid the complications of having an employee and dealing with insurance contributions etc. Janet will be our secretary dealing with secretarial matters but also contributing to a new website which will be developed as a help to recruiting new members. This post will become effective from the date of the AGM when Janet stands down from the Honorary Secretary position.

PLANNING MATTERS

York Potash Ltd/Sirius Minerals

As you know the proposal to build the largest mine in Europe in the National Park was approved on an 8-7 vote at the National Park Special Planning Meeting on June 30th last year. The secretary of state refused to call the application in for a public inquiry despite a joint request from NYMA the Campaign for National Parks and CPRE. I would like to thank CNP for their support in our long campaign and mention especially the contribution by Ruth Bradshaw.

So where are we now? Last year the company claimed that the capital cost of constructing this mine would be between \$1.7 Billion and \$2.0 Billion. The definitive feasibility study they produced in May after much delay has increased this to \$3.56 Billion. Sirius Minerals is trying to raise this funding in two phases. Phase 1 covering the mine head and tunnel construction will be through a combination of equity in the form of another billion share issue and the rest from so called structured debt. The second phase will be raised entirely through the debt market including high yield bonds.

How far this financing has progressed we simply do not know but there are already some worrying developments which confirm our prediction that once they had permission they would push the boundaries of that permission. Recent updates published by the company and a 63 page report by Shore Capital show that they are making changes to the mineral transport tunnel since the planning application was submitted. These include changes to the proposed access shafts and the introduction of pre-cast concrete tunnel lining. They are also now saying that they intend to ramp up production of polyhalite to 20 million tonnes per annum yet they only have permission to extract 13mtpa. They are also saying that they may convert the polyhalite to Sulphate of Potash by building a calcining plant at Wilton and that like Boulby Mine they may also produce Muriate of Potash. This would also involve the construction of massive surface plant. They have also added to this list the production of road salt.

In other words they will as predicted be pushing the boundaries of the planning permission they have obtained. What this means for the mine head site at Doves Nest Farm is not clear but it will certainly mean extending and expanding the surface structures at the mine head. It will certainly mean an increase in heavy goods traffic on the road system.

All this of course relies on the company being able to finance the project and that still remains in some doubt.

The airfield planning application at South Moor Farm which was once again refused permission has been reapplied for and again refused for the third time by the NP and once again appealed. The appeal was

to have been carried out by the exchange of written statements but we submitted a joint letter with CNP requesting that it should be determined through a local hearing and this was accepted by the planning inspector after reviewing the case. The hearing date has now been announced for the 19th July.

We are watching developments with test fracking on our doorstep at Kirby Misperton. This was given the go ahead a few weeks ago by NYCC.

With the relaxation of planning regulation the areas of landscape which have had a strong degree of protection for many years are under more threat from intrusive and inappropriate development than they have been for a long time. This calls for us to be vigilant in order to do what we can to conserve and protect the landscapes of the North Yorkshire Moors.

MOORSBUS

Colin Speakman gave us a brief update on the Moorsbus project which is continuing to expand with the introduction of other routes.

BARN OWL STUDY

Following on from the award he received last year, Derek Capes explained the progress he has made with his study of Barn Owls on the North Yorkshire Moors with new evidence showing the distribution of harvest mice in this area.

GUEST SPEAKER

NYMA's President Ian Carstairs was our guest speaker and gave a fascinating presentation of his involvement with numerous conservation projects over the years. With the title "There is Always a Chance" Ian covered thirty five years of taking on challenges for our



President Ian Carstairs and Vice-President Ron Foster meet at the History Tree.

natural and built environment and cultural heritage. This was expertly illustrated with photographs and video clips and very well received by the members present. ♦

Tom Chadwick, Chairman



PRESIDENT'S PIECE

OF SWIFTS: A CHANCE TO DO SOMETHING

'WHOSE SWIFT ARE YOU?', I wonder as a black shape scythes past me.

I am at Danby Beacon looking northwards over Scaling Reservoir towards the sea, checking out if this could be a great place to come next time there is a chance of seeing the Aurora Borealis from these lower latitudes.

Over the moor a small number of swifts sweep back and forth, jinking through the sky in pursuit of insects. But why are they here when there are no nesting sites nearby and where indeed might their nests be?

Of course the swifts don't belong to anybody, but nesting in buildings they may well have adopted someone's home - do they come from Danby, Castleton, Pickering or perhaps further afield?

Research carried out on swifts nesting on a house in Great Yarmouth, near where I live, revealed amazing facts about their feeding. I'm told, a tiny datalogger attached to a swift's back, showed the bird travelled right across Norfolk to feed over Thetford Forest, some 48 miles away. But with swifts capable of flying 500 miles in a day that's actually quite a short shopping-trip by their standards.

On this basis the swifts at Danby Beacon, might have travelled from as far as Hull, Harrogate or even Newcastle.

Would I actually want to know exactly where they have come from? In a way, maybe I don't. Knowing what birds do and where they go can be vital to their conservation ... but by knowing, somehow we lose a bit of the mystery, wonderment and fascination as to how a bird can fly all the time, only landing faithfully at the nest in exactly the same place each year, at the end of vast uncharted migration journeys.



Danby Beacon

Herein lies the root of a problem for swifts; nest sites have been disappearing as old buildings are demolished or have their roofs renovated, contributing to an alarming decline in their numbers over recent years.

However, there is hope on the horizon. And that's where we come in. Across the Country a rapidly rising tide of individuals and small groups are going-it-alone to make a difference for this magnificent bird. I really like this benevolent form of anarchy, with largely un-



Children printing swift flags



Seniors threading the children's mobile

coordinated or loosely-associated groups and individuals following a common theme, with no-one really in overall charge, simply because they are inspired to do something and believe it matters.

So, this is another positive challenge for those who care about the Moors and their wildlife, through one spectacular bird, whether you live within the Park or not.

In my home town, from which many people visit the Moors, we started SwiftAction/Harleston, with wide community involvement to celebrate and help swifts, not just as a symbol of threatened wildlife but also as a catalyst to social inclusion, education and understanding and wider conservation.

Our High School students designed and printed their own flags for display through the main streets; primary school pupils wrote messages of good luck on African-flag-coloured cut-out swifts, with seniors helping assemble them into a giant mobile; woodworking enthusiasts and builders produced and set up new nest boxes; and a friend Maggie Groom, who lives near Malton has written and recorded our own swift song - a lovely and touching evocation of the passing of summer and the swifts departure; each of these individual efforts adding to a widespread buzz of interest in a show of spontaneous enthusiasm and support across all ages.

What has this to do with the North York Moors? Well, we could encourage a push for SwiftAction/North York Moors for every village in the Park to start its own initiative, recording and safeguarding existing nest sites and creating new ones. And wherever we live we can persuade the local planning authorities and builders to ensure that swift-friendly features are included in any new-builds, roof renovations and extensions.



Photo: David Morceton

Equally importantly we can learn about swifts and their amazing lifestyle. A great start is to visit the website www.swift-conservation.org. Run from London by Edward Mayer, a highly committed and entertaining advocate for swifts and resolutions to their plight, the site contains well-presented and informative details about swifts and the extraordinary efforts in many communities across Europe to improve their fortunes.

And if there are already people active in your area, take a lead from their commitment and add your own contribution to a national groundswell of support for this enigmatic bird.

Faced with large-scale threats to the environment, an individual often feels impotent to influence the big picture. But swifts are the perfect subject over which to play a practical, worthwhile and highly satisfying role.

Perhaps, those birds, which swept past me on Danby Beacon came from, or were heading to where you live, or maybe passed by you on their way north on spring migration.

Keeping our moorland summer skies alive with swifts and their excited screaming parties and airmanship would be a wonderful achievement and a fantastic legacy to the future.

As for my Aurora-chasing; as I write this, factors affecting the earth's magnetic field suggest it could be visible in northern England tonight. But, it's a long way from here to Danby Beacon to find it's cloudy and there is nothing to see, even if an aurora should come that far south. It seems as mysterious as the lives of our swifts. And I kind of like it that way. ♦

Ian Carstairs

EGTON BRIDGE OLD GOOSEBERRY SHOW

OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS of gooseberry growing and yet Egton Bridge Old Gooseberry Society is still going from strength to strength. When other horticultural shows have fallen on hard times, what is it about growing large gooseberries that stirs people's imagination? Perhaps it is because there are only two gooseberry show areas in the country and the prestige of winning is very great. One is therefore a member of an exclusive band.

The rules of this Society have not changed significantly in the last two hundred years and, on show day, things carry on at a most leisurely pace. So, perhaps in this world of speed and high technology, the old fashioned ways of the Show have special appeal and we can be sure that, if the Society continues in this way, its success is assured.

HISTORY OF THE SHOW

Because of the Society's great age it is inevitable that much of its history is spoken, handed down from father to son, almost 'folk lore'. It is believed that the first show was held in 1800, or maybe even earlier. In reporting the 1900 show the Whitby Gazette described it as the 'Centenary Show' and their knowledge, at that time, was much more recent than ours is today.

The first mention in the press that the Society knows of was in the York Herald of 24th August 1833 which reported that the show as held on

"Monday 12th August at the Royal Oak, Egton Bridge. Champion James Harrison, Roaring Lion (red), 19 dwts, 0 grs."

The next year the Yorkshire Gazette carried a report entitled "Gooseberry Show at Egton Bridge" and made the following observation

"It may not be known to many of our readers, that the village of Egton (sic) – situated in a most beautiful part of the country, about six miles from Whitby, and the favourite resort of visitors, and of the inhabitants of the town, who are anxious to escape from the toils of business, and its attendant cares, – has always been famed for its gooseberries, and that the day of the show is looked forward to with great anxiety by the inhabitants, and the several competitors. Tea and cakes are provided on the occasion for the females, who are equally anxious with the male competitors; and the latter are regaled with ale and the social pipe."

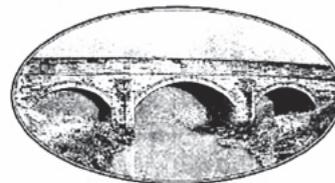
The Whitby Gazette did not appear until 1855 but, initially, it carried only lists of visitors to Whitby and the Hotels in which they stayed; it was not until 1858 that news of local social events was included. In that year the Gazette reported the results from the Whitby Gooseberry Club show at the White Horse and Griffin, but we know from the national Gooseberry Growers Register that the Egton Bridge show was also held that year and that many members showed at both events.

It is from the Gooseberry Growers Register that we have the earliest factual records of the Egton Bridge Society: In 1825, in a show held at the Royal Oak Hotel in Egton Bridge, (now a private house) near to the Horseshoe Hotel and the stepping stones, the champion berry was shown by James Harrison; a red berry of the Sir John variety weighing 17 pennyweights and 21 grains (15 drams, 19 grains in "today's" terms); about half the winning weight in a good year nowadays.

The following year the show was held at the Horse Shoe Inn and was, again, won by James Harrison with another red berry, this time a "Roaring Lion" weighing 15dwt. 14 gr. At that time the Shows were held alternately at the two adjacent public houses. For many years the show alternated between the Ship Inn and the Horse Shoe. Later they settled on the Royal Oak until, in 1869, they became the Esk Vale Gooseberry Show and moved to the Station Hotel, Egton Bridge (now the "Postgate").

It is not known why these changes were made, but it might well have been an attempt to broaden the membership in the surrounding

Egton Bridge Old Gooseberry Society



Established 1800



Show day at the Horse Shoe Hotel. Members from left to right- LW Bennison, H Harrison, E Raw, A Smith, A Spenceley, J Harrison, W Bennison & E Spenceley

villages with the opening of the Middlesbrough to Whitby railway in 1865. Whatever the reason they moved again in 1871 when the Show was held at the Tunnel Inn in Grosmont. Grosmont was, of course, a railway junction. This move to 'foreign parts' was, presumably, not a great success because the next year it moved back to the Royal Oak at Egton Bridge and the Society resumed its old name.

So far as is known the Show has remained in Egton Bridge ever since; at the Royal Oak until about 1905 and then back to the Horse Shoe where it remained until the 1960s, undisturbed by war or peace, through two world wars; except for one minor disturbance.

While at the Horse Shoe weighing and judging took place in the summerhouse on the lawn, the berries being displayed on St. Thomas's Island above the stepping-stones.

In 1940, however the summerhouse was commandeered for first-aid training to support the war effort. That year the show was held in the tenants' room at the Manor.

When the public attendance got too great for the summerhouse and the island the show moved to St Hedda's school just below Egton Bridge Station where it has been ever since, except for 2001. In the Society's 201st year Foot & Mouth disease did what neither World War had done and because of the severity of the outbreak in the Esk Valley, the Show was, with great regret, cancelled.

THE BERRIES AND THE PEOPLE WHO GROW THEM

The size of the berries has increased considerably over the years but the number of varieties has dropped dramatically; in 1831 there were listed 171 different berry names, mostly unknown today. Many had names that reflected the influence on society of the famous military and naval victories a few years earlier. Names such as Roaring Lion, Nelson's Waves, Hero of the Nile and Wellington's Glory!

There has been rather less change in the people than in their berries. Many of today's growers are the descendants of the early growers so that we see familiar names recurring through the years. Names like Harrison, Bennison, Welford, Harland and many more.

RULES, PRIZES AND OTHER MOTIVATION

In order to be able to compete, each member must have paid their modest subscription by the previous Easter Tuesday. Each berry shown must be intact (i.e. its skin must be unbroken). Beyond these basic rules weight is all that matters!

There are classes for red, white, yellow and green berries and the heaviest of the four is the Champion Berry. Classes for twins, heaviest 12, heaviest 6 and for 4 berries of different colours follow. There are also 'Maiden' classes for growers who have never won a major prize. Points are awarded in six classes and the exhibitor with most points is the Champion Grower. The berries are weighed on an oil-damped, twin-pan scale, which has been in use since 1937. Avoirdupois weights are used, 27.34 grains equal 1 dram; 16 drams to 1 ounce. Prior to 1937 'troy' weights were used (24 grains to 1 pennyweight, 20 pennyweights to an ounce and 12 ounces to a troy pound) this latter system is still used at the Cheshire clubs.

THE FUTURE

The current committee of Egton Bridge Old Gooseberry Society consider themselves to be merely the custodians of an enduring tradition. It is hoped and believed that the Society can push forwards



Six time champion, Graeme Watson

well into its third century. In 2011 an independent film maker, Jim Williams, made a prize winning film about the show entitled "The Forgotten Fruit" which beautifully captured the very essence of the show for future generations to enjoy. If you would like to enter the world of competitive gooseberry growing come along to this year's show on Tuesday 2nd August 2016 at St Hedda's School, Egton Bridge. For more details visit www.egtongooseberryshow.org.uk or contact the Secretary on 01947 895240, enquiries@egtongooseberryshow.org.uk. ♦

Ian Woodcock

FORESTRY

HARWOOD DALE FOREST

WITH ALMOST NO broadleaved trees at all, no recorded history of substantial woodland areas and planted almost exclusively with Scots pine and Sitka spruce Harwood Dale Forest was the archetypal twentieth century woodland. It was a product borne of strategic need and the remnants of the Victorian and Edwardian obsession that nature was something to be organised and controlled; a problem that still bedevils us today

Does this make it a less important place, boring, uninteresting and of value to neither man nor beast? Not really, underneath the superficial skin of recent conifers is a historically rich and ecologically diverse place which, given time and sympathetic management can become a jewel between the moors and the sea.

The area has rich history stretching back beyond Bronze Age times and into prehistory. It is a rather odd fact but the oldest recorded and preserved feature of the forest is not a barrow, standing stone but soil. Not just any old soil but fossil soil or palaeosol identified as "stagnohumic gley with prominent mottling in the Bg horizon" (Carroll & Bendelow 1981). These soils are typical of tropical regions with marked wet and dry seasons and must have developed under very different climatic conditions than we have today. This rare feature occurs in a forest ride north of the A171 and is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

More recently early people made extensive use of the area. An archaeological survey carried for the Forestry Commission and the National Park Authority in the early 1990's identified 191 individual features of historical interest predating 1945. Some of these are small quarries, pits and boundary stones from the last few centuries however many of them date from much earlier periods like the Bronze and Iron Ages. Some of these features such as Pye Rigg Howe, Three Howes and Penny Howe are Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) protected by law. There are fifteen SAM's in Harwood Dale Forest and all have management plans agreed with English Heritage.

Peat cutting for fuel was a common activity amongst communities on the North York Moors and Harwood Dale was no exception. Almost all the 'green-lane' access, controversially used by off-roaders and trailriders, in this area leads directly to the old peat cuttings in the wood north of the Falcon Inn. As far as I am aware all the peat-cutting (turbery) rights in this area have demised but I think a couple of households had permission in recent years to cut peat from the site.

As a 'typical' upland conifer forest, the wood has, been subjected to the standard conifer forest practice of thinning, clear-felling and re-stocking. Thinning a crop of trees makes the most of the nutrients in the soils allowing the maximum amount of timber to be produced. It normally begins when the trees are around twenty years old and continues at five-year intervals until the final crop is ready to be cut down. That's the theory, unfortunately when timber markets were low and the timber could not be sold for less than its potential value thinning was not done. The results of this can be seen at Harwood dale where tall trees are growing too close together and many of them become weak and whippy, never achieving their real potential. Clear-felling is the removal of the final crop usually done when the trees have reached their optimum growth-size ratio, between fifty and seventy years. Re-stocking is the replanting of the site. Both these operations are done to an agreed plan. Harwood Dale Forest Design Plan was last revised in 2015. This was actually ahead of its due date because local Forestry Commission staff realised that the existing plan was not delivering the type of forest needed for a sustainable future. The current plan recognises the challenging nature of the soils, water management and climate change as well as the archaeological and wider environmental values of Harwood Dale Forest. Some of the soils are so poor for the growing of a 'crop' of trees that they will be left to develop a semi-natural tree cover of birch and willow. Leaving areas to develop 'naturally' over a relatively long period of time is also a



good way of allowing the local environment to adapt to future climate change. Any Forest Design Plans can be viewed at the Forestry Commission's office in Pickering.

Despite its apparent monocultural appearance Harwood dale is a pretty good bird watching forest. It has its resident owls and birds of prey as well as passerine or perching birds such as coal tits and bullfinches. It is the largest substantial block of woodland near the coast for miles around and this makes it attractive to birds on migration. In spring wheatears are ever present and in autumn woodcock from Scandinavia 'fall' in good numbers. The forest also supports a large population of nightjars, which arrive here from Africa to breed in May.

Roe deer are common in the forest, but does anyone ever see red or fallow deer? A few years ago some were seen around Hayburn Wyke and in a field at Ravenscar

There are a number of ponds around the forest perhaps the best known of which is the 'goldfish pond' just off Helwath Road, with its water lilies and mock headstone. The lilies are a problem in this pond as decaying water lily leaves give off oils that pollute the water and reduce its value in the environment. This pond has cultural as well as environmental values though and there is no intention of removing the lilies. It just highlights the problems of introducing inappropriate life to inappropriate places. The ponds support many insects including a dragonfly not often seen in this part of the country, the broad-bellied chaser.

Road verges, rides and streamsides in the wood are very diverse from acid wetland to lime-rich grassland, mixing moorland plants such as cranberry and sundew with twayblades and spotted orchids and local rarities such as yellow-wort and royal fern. As well as the plants these places are the frequent haunts of adders, common lizards and slow worms.

I started out by saying that Harwood Dale Forest was an interesting place under a superficial skin of conifers. I hope this short article



inspires you to look much more closely at this area; it deserves a bit more care and attention.

As the plantation of Harwood Dale Forest continues to age and the boundaries between farm, forest and wood become softer it will sit more easily in the landscape. Three or four generations from now people might see the real forest as it emerges from its current chrysalis of change. ♦

Brian Walker

Brian Walker was born in Scarborough and left school at 17. After working in an office for about eight years he took a job as a ranger for the Forestry Commission at Hamsterley Forest on the North Pennines. This sparked his lifelong interest in trees, ecology and the natural world. He returned to Yorkshire with his family in 1994 to manage recreation activities in Forestry Commission woods in Yorkshire. In 2002 he says he was lucky to move over to a role as 'biodiversity officer' (later to include archaeology) for the FC's Yorkshire Forests and to help oversee the environmental development of these maturing woods.

Brian says *'In many ways I became an environmental 'fixer', getting FC staff to understand their role and the changes that were being made, trying to strip away external prejudices. My job involved working closely with specialists in many fields, all with the aim of producing forests that would sustain people and wildlife long after I'm 'pushing up daisies'. I owe a huge debt to many people from long gone members of Scarborough Field Naturalists' Society and current members, to former colleagues and friends such as Gordon Simpson a retired head forester from Cropton, now in his eighties, and one of the greatest naturalists in the North of England.'*

Brian now lives in Thornton-le Dale.

THE STARLING

SUCH IS THE STRENGTH OF ASSOCIATION between the Starling and humans that this species is unmistakable. While its size is close to that of a Blackbird, its overall appearance is more rakish, it's a bustling bird, often noisy and flighty. At a distance, the adults appear black, but on closer inspection you can see a multitude of spots and the iridescent nature of their plumage become evident. Young Starlings are dull brown in colour, often with a pale throat, and go through a series of changes as they gain their adult feathers. It is possible to tell the sex of two adults, mainly during the breeding season; the male always has the more glossy plumage but a breeding male will have a blue blush at the base of his bill whilst female has a pink one: both have a yellow bill.

Watch a group of Starlings probing a lawn during the summer months and you will soon discover that they spend much of their time feeding on soil-dwelling invertebrates, such as leatherjackets (the larvae of crane flies). From late summer the diet begins to change and they eat increasing quantities of plant material. This seasonal shift in the Starling's diet is matched by a number of morphological changes. Most notable of these is an increase in the length of the bird's intestine, the additional length allowing the Starling to deal with this extra plant material, which is more difficult to digest than animal matter.

Starlings do show a certain amount of adaptability when it comes to food and feeding though. In addition to probing the ground for invertebrates, they will also fly-catch or actively pursue insects across the ground. Larger food scraps, are taken when available and they have even been known to tackle small lizards, newts and frogs. This resourceful nature is one reason why the Starling has adapted so well to living alongside us within our urbanised landscapes.

It is not just local Starlings that visit our gardens during the winter though. Their numbers are supplemented by millions from further east in Europe where the winters get too hard for them to remain. These birds start to reach us in late September and keep coming through October and into November. Their return to the Continent starts at the beginning of March and continues through to mid-April, by which time our own birds may already be sitting on eggs.

British Starlings have not been doing too well over recent years. The abundance of breeding birds in the UK has fallen rapidly since the early 1980s, especially in woodland, with the south and west of Britain being particularly affected. The species' UK conservation listing has been revised from amber to red as this decline has become more apparent. This is despite breeding performance having been seen to improve: suggesting that decreasing survival rates, particularly of young birds, may be responsible for the observed decline.

Aside from their somewhat undeserved reputation for being argumentative and greedy, the Starling is one of our most interesting birds. This highly sociable species exhibits a suite of fascinating behaviours, many of which can be seen in those individuals visiting our parks and gardens.

A Starling's song consists of a wide variety of both melodic and mechanical-sounding noises. The male is the main songster and engages in bouts of song that can last for a minute or more. Each of these typically includes four varieties of song type, following each other in a regular order without pause. They begin with a series of whistles followed by the main part of the song which comprises a selection of variable sequences that often incorporate snatches of song mimicked from other species of bird, as well as various naturally occurring or man-made sounds such as telephone rings or alarms. Each sound clip is repeated several times before the bird moves on to the next. To finish off they produce a selection of repeated clicks and a final burst of high-frequency song. Each bird has its own repertoire.



Bathtime Starling – Photo: Jill Pakenham

Males sing constantly as the breeding period approaches but perform less often once pairs have bonded. In the presence of a female, a male sometimes flies to his nest and sings from the entrance, apparently attempting to entice the female in. Older birds tend to have a wider repertoire than younger ones. Those males that engage in longer bouts of singing and that have wider repertoires attract mates earlier and apparently have greater reproductive success than others. Females appear to prefer mates with more complex songs, perhaps because this indicates greater experience or longevity.

Singing also occurs outside the breeding season, taking place throughout the year apart from the moulting period. The songsters are more commonly male although females do sing on occasion. The function of such out-of-season song is poorly understood. Other types of call have been described including an alarm call that is a harsh scream, a flock call, a threat call, an attack call, and a copulation call. As well as all these calls they chatter while roosting and bathing, making a great deal of noise which, added to the incessant squabbling whilst foraging together, can make them unpopular neighbours! When a flock of common starlings is flying together, the synchronised movements of the birds' wings make a distinctive whooshing sound that can be heard hundreds of metres away.

Wintering Starlings roost communally and vast flocks may congregate at favoured sites, typically performing amazing aerobic displays (known as murmurations) before dropping into the roost, which may be a reedbed, a group of conifers or a human structure such as a pier. With many thousands of birds using a roost there is the potential for nuisance, their droppings fouling the ground beneath and around the chosen site. I can remember when I was a lad in Birmingham in the 60s that we used to have hundreds of thousands of Starlings coming into the city centre to roost every evening. It made the evening commute a hazardous event in the autumn!

These vast flocks have more humble beginnings, with small numbers of Starlings coming together as dusk approaches. Gradually, as more and more birds join the gathering a huge pulsating flock is formed. As the light begins to fade so part of the flock will plunge down towards the chosen roost, almost as if testing its nerve to see who will be the first bird to drop into the roost itself. The birds have good reason to be nervous; these large gatherings attract the attention of predators such as Peregrine and Sparrowhawk. The nearest guaranteed place I know of to see a murmuration is probably at Portrack Marsh reserve on Teesside during late winter.

With the first eggs laid as early as the end of March, our resident Starlings begin looking for nesting cavities very early in the year. The loss of suitable cavities is thought to be a contributory factor in the

decline in Starling populations witnessed over recent decades. Cavities under roof tiles or within barge boards and soffits are now less common than they once were, reducing opportunities for the urban members of our breeding Starling population.

Male Starlings, which establish breeding territories from January onwards, will attempt to defend a series of suitable nesting cavities in the hope that they will be able to attract several females. Competition for nest sites is high, which means that most male Starlings end up with a single cavity and just the one mate. It is not only the males who are opportunistic in their breeding behaviour though. Females will sometimes deposit one of their eggs in the nest of another female (a behaviour known as brood parasitism). The females that do this tend to be 'floaters', birds that have yet to secure a mate or nest site. Many of these birds will go on to have a nest of their own later in the season so you may wonder why they dump an egg on another bird rather than wait. The answer may have something to do with the fact that early breeding is better, being more productive and giving the resulting fledglings more of the summer to gain independence; it also gives breeding pairs a greater chance of making a second breeding attempt. ♦

Mike Gray *Starling migration routes.* © BTO



If you find the lives of our garden birds to be of interest, and would like to join in and count the feathered occupants of your garden, please contact me or visit the BTO Garden BirdWatch website (www.bto.org/gbw). If you know of a local organisation who would like a talk on garden birds call: **Mike Gray 07596 366342** or mikegbw@btinternet.com.

CHARTER FOR TREES, WOODS AND PEOPLE.

A BRIEF HISTORY.

In 1215 Magna Carta was signed-two months later a great deal of it was annulled.

In 1217, following on from Magna Carta, The Charter of the Forest was introduced- among other things this gave commoners the right to access royal forests-giving half back to common land. This charter continued to be invoked right up to the 1970s.

In 1717 at the start of the Industrial Revolution, woodlands fell out of management.

In the 1800s plantation forestry was introduced and in 1919 the Forestry Commission was founded.

In 2010 the government tried to sell off forestry estate-at which point people started to take notice of what was happening-leading to an independent forestry review- and the idea of a new Charter for Trees emerged.

THE CHARTER

In November 2017 it will be the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest. The Woodland Trust, along with over 40 other organisations will be launching the new charter. The Charter for Trees, Woods and People will be set up to help shape the future of our trees and woods.

Every person that steps forward to engage their community in the new Charter will be a Charter Champion- I signed up to this at a meeting in Sheffield in February and I'm looking for more to join up with our local Charter Branch (currently just myself!) to ensure that no local tree or wood is overlooked, and no person is unaware of the call for a charter and of the importance of trees and woods. I think a lot of us have experienced the shock of going to visit a favourite patch of woodland to be greeted by stumps and brash reminiscent of a Paul Nash war painting! Both the Forestry Commission and local councils have snuck these destructive measures through when no one was looking. (check out STAG(Sheffield Tree Action Group) online-set up when Sheffield Council decided to get rid of all street trees in the city-because they slowed down the replacement of pavements). Tree Protection Orders are easily over-ruled by "development needs."

In the run up to the launch Charter Champions will be campaigning to spread the word to communities across the country, setting up activities, exhibitions and projects to help us reconnect with trees and woodland.

WHAT NEXT?

The possibilities are endless. By the time you read this there will hopefully have been an Open Day in Potterside Wood, Commondale. The idea is to get local people interested in connecting with local trees-the hawthorn on the way to Lockwood Beck, the oak near the entrance to Thornhill Farm, the "plantation" of larches on the track to North Ings farm, the birches in Danby Park Wood-wherever you go there are trees-maybe sometimes we are not really aware of them until they've gone.

What can we do? We could start by mapping trees in our parish- as individual villages at first-to join up later. We can plant trees, adopt trees, dress trees (Tree-dressing Day in November), organise tree walks. We can draw them, paint them and photograph them. We can make up stories about them or rediscover tales from the past- the Woodland Trust is looking for tree stories from people of all ages, to show that people in the UK love the trees in their lives.

Most importantly we can teach our children to respect them and remind them that they are the lungs of the planet.

I'm hoping there are a few people out there who would like to join the local Charter branch. There is the possibility of funding for projects-ideas welcome!! ♦

Caroline Riley

For more information go to www.treecharter.com

There will be information about future local events on my website; www.tractorsshedcommondale.eu

Contact me at commondaletreecharter@gmail.com or call 01287660456

ON NOT LIVING IN THE NATIONAL PARK...



FIRST, I MUST CONFESS to being *furrin*.

I am, and have been for rather too many years for the good of my bones, a wandering Scot, once an army child, and then, when I married my North Yorkshire-born and -bred husband, a school-follower. I have, however, lived in North Yorkshire for over thirty years, longer than I have lived anywhere else, and as a working historian, teaching university extra-mural classes, have spent those years

studying my late husband's native land with great professional and enthusiastic interest.

I came to live in Whitby, where my husband and most of his antecedents were born, when he was appointed as head of his old school. The area is not dissimilar, I have long thought, to the Scottish borders where I and *my* antecedents were born. How pleasant, I thought, to live in a National Park.... I arrived in snow, along with a pantehnicon, driven by one of my husband's former pupils, who had never been so far north. Blue Bank on the A169 above Sleights was for him a new and terrifying experience. We survived the ordeal, and I managed to install the furniture in some of the rooms, and make curtains and even drive to Scarborough for more curtain material, through snow and ice. Of course, headmasters have magical powers, and the snow had all melted before 'himself' arrived at the end of term....

We settled in our new home and spent Christmas and New Year *en famille*, and inspected our surroundings, very familiar to my husband and much less so to me. I had decided to take time off from teaching and research in my new environment. Whitby was seaport of long standing; I understood seaports, having worked for years on the history of the ancient port of Harwich. I loved the surrounding moorland landscape. I had never lived in a national park before. THEN I made the shocking discovery that I did not live in a national park at all! Whitby was certainly part of North Yorkshire – in fact of the original North Riding of Yorkshire, but it was *not* in the National Park.

The reasons for Whitby's exclusion remain as closed to me today as they did then. And yet, as I have grown to love and respect this small independent-minded little town, I appreciate entirely the differences that separate it from the *park* and the dependence of the one on the other.

I have spent many years studying urban history, teaching it as an 'extra-mural' tutor for Cambridge, Leeds and Hull universities, in East Anglia and in North Yorkshire, and for the Open University in East Anglia. Teaching adults is a most rewarding occupation, because the students bring to their classes a great deal of life-experience and 'know-how' that younger pupils have yet to acquire. It can, of course, produce its own stress factors. To advertise a day-school on epidemics such as bubonic plague, and then 'call the register' to discover half a dozen highly qualified medical practitioners sitting expectantly in the front row, is a little daunting. And yet, in these days of antibiotics and

vaccinations and other medical advances, it is quite cheering to discover that they are enjoying themselves. And learning something new.....

But this article is not really meant to be about me. It is about Whitby, which is not in the National Park, but definitely in the county of North Yorkshire and well within the area of interest of NYMA. Before the National Park and the rearranged county, it was simply a small town in the North Riding of Yorkshire. Readers will have their own views about boundary changes.....

Whitby was not a 'borough', a town with a mayor and corporation to run it. At least, not for very long. It did achieve that eminence for a few brief years at the end of the twelfth century, until one Abbot realised that the independence of the town was depleting the Abbey's wealth and a petition was sent to King John for the town to lose its borough status. King John, badly in need of spiritual support from a powerful abbey, conceded, and Whitby became simply a dependent of the Abbey. And when Henry VIII dissolved the Abbey, the town became a dependent of the Cholmleys who eventually bought most of the Abbey's lands. The Abbey itself, one of the earliest of the Yorkshire abbeys, had already been dissolved in 1538.

Whitby was a market town, serving a wide area of the moor, well-placed either side of the River Esk, so that it attracted custom to its markets long after the Abbey had gone. It behaved like any other market town, though what we would now call its catchment area was larger than those of southern market towns because fewer people were dependent on the town as a market. The land was poorer, mainly heather moorland, the soil not very fertile, and the population meagre. It had had since mediaeval times coal mining, and from the beginning of the seventeenth century, mining for alum, a substance desperately needed for the cloth industry. Above all, it had built ships in its sheltered harbour, with great skill, so that they were often in demand by the government in the long eighteenth century wars with France. They were hired as store-ships, and troop carriers, and selected for voyages of exploration under James Cook, himself a product of Whitby's shipping industry.

For, as well as building sturdy ships Whitby produced MEN, men 'used to' the sea from childhood, and men attracted to this remote port from birthplaces as far afield as Orkney and London to be apprenticed to Whitby's skilled and successful masters. When the first listings of Whitby's shipping and crews began in 1752, over 1,200 men and boys were serving as 'servants', or apprentices on Whitby-owned shipping, among them a youngster called James Cook.

For many of the tourists who come to this small, neat town, Cook is the principal draw. How could it be otherwise in a town dominated by the statue on the west cliff, usually surmounted by another of Whitby's attractions, a herring-gull? Yet long, long before Cook came here as a teenage boy to learn his new trade as a seafarer, the abbey on the opposite cliff had been the *raison d'être* of the town at its feet, and a vital seamark for ships on the long haul between the coalfields of County Durham and the greedy maw of London.

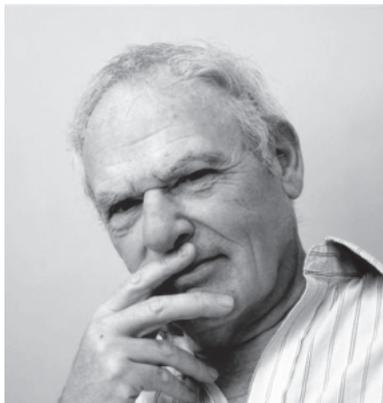
Perhaps that is the reason for Whitby's omission from the national park. Perhaps it is too ...° what? Unusual? Important? Old-fashioned ...? ♦

Rosalin Barker



PURPLE ACRES

A JOURNEY ACROSS THE NORTH YORK MOORS AND CLEVELAND HILLS
IN THE WORDS AND MUSIC OF GRAEME MILES.



GRAEME MILES 1935 - 2013: Graeme was a singer/songwriter who was brought by his parents as a baby to Teesside (from Greenwich, his birthplace) and was to live in the area, mainly in Middlesbrough, for the rest of his life. From a very early age he became passionately interested in his adopted area and began chronicling in song, music, poetry and words, the rich

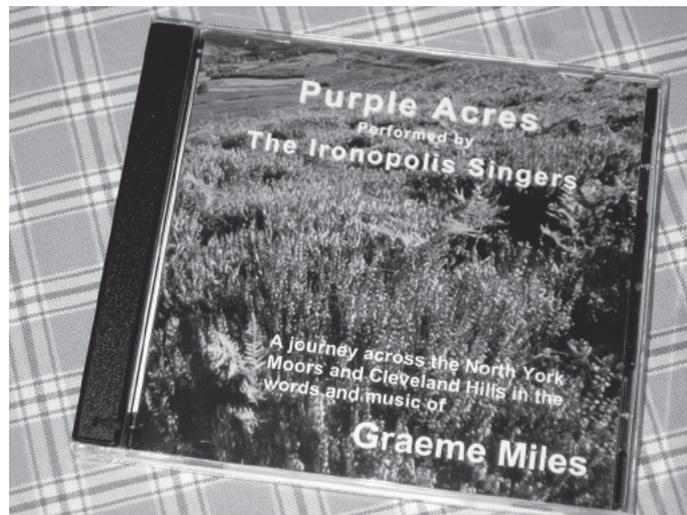
industrial heritage that the area had to offer, particularly that of the iron and steel industry. His songwriting style is firmly rooted in the genre of traditional folk song. He wrote songs such as Sea Coal [1949] remarkably, at the age of fourteen when still at school), The Salt People of Greatham Marshes, The Crying Crakes, The Match Factory, The Ring of Iron, The Moulder's Wedding, and The Procession. These are typical Miles songs, songs that have become embedded in the folk tradition of the area and are often performed at local folk clubs as well as across the country wherever people gather to sing and make music. It is said that on any given evening there is a Graeme Miles song being sung in a folk club somewhere in the country. Graeme was also an accomplished artist specialising in pen and ink drawings, many of which illustrate and adorn his published songbooks, 'Songscapes' (in conjunction with Robin Dale, photographer) and 'Forgotten Songs Remembered'. 'Songscapes' is now out of print and copies of this large-format book have become a much sought-after collectors item.

Lover of the Moors: However, as well as a lifelong interest in folk song and the urban industrial heritage of Teesside, his adopted home territory, Graeme also developed a deep and abiding love for the beautiful wide-open spaces of the Northeast Yorkshire moors and dales, which lay on his doorstep to the south of the sprawling Teesside conurbation. He loved the solitude of lonely places and often found solace and inspiration for his songs and poems while roaming in his beloved Cleveland Hills, whose escarpment to the south can be seen from Middlesbrough, as well as in the more remote outlying moorland areas. 'The Cleveland Hills', 'Along the Guisborough Road', 'Fair

Rosedale', and 'Westerdale' are four of his earlier 'rural' songs. This love of place shines through in the songs and words of Purple Acres, a double CD of 22 tracks. This is Graeme's personal and unique evocation through song, prose and music of the landscape, wildlife and people of this special place.

In November 2012 the English Folk Dance & Song Society honoured Graeme for his lifetime's work and presented him with their Gold Badge, their highest award, in recognition of outstanding achievement and contribution in the folk music field. Following his death in March 2013, the Graeme Miles Bursary for young musicians was established. The Bursary provides an annual monetary award given as support to an aspiring young musician or group to help them develop and hone their music and performance skills and further their careers in the folk world. The Bursary is administered by the EFDSS.

The singers and musicians performing on this CD are the Ironopolis Singers, a diverse group of friends and folk music enthusiasts who regularly perform songs from the extensive canon of Graeme Miles and whose aim is to promote and disseminate the work of the 'Teesside Bard' to a wider audience. This is their second recording of Miles' songs, their first being a double CD called 'Songs of Ironopolis - a journey through the industrial landscape of Cleveland.' The Purple Acres CD also includes unique recordings of Graeme Miles himself. The double CD costs £12. ♦



NYMA WALKS

Saturday 6 August – meet at 10.30 at Clay Bank car park. Circa 5 mile walk, mostly heather moorland with some steep climbs. Val Cunningham will lead walk.

Val can be contacted on 01642 778247

Saturday 3 September – meet at 10.00 at Tocketts Mill car park (please use the first car park just before the bridge) GR627181. Circa 6 mile walk through Upleatham, Errington Woods, Soap well. Wendy Smith will lead walk.

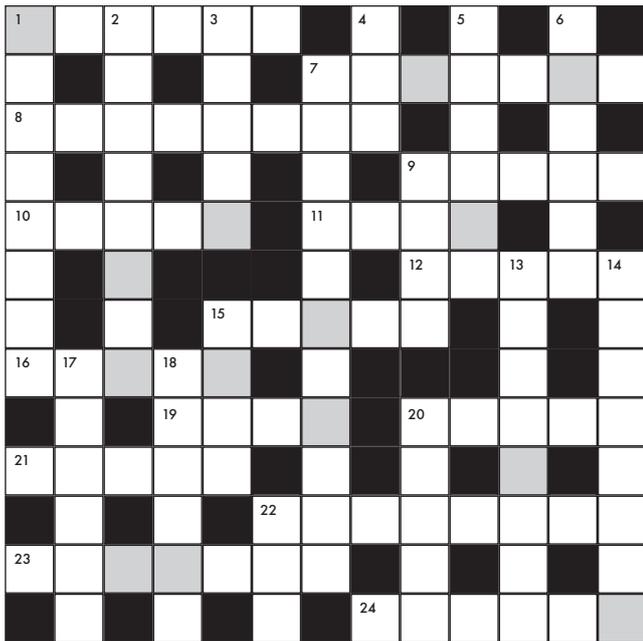
Wendy can be contacted on 01642 711980 or email wendy.smith@uku.co.uk

Saturday 8 October - meet at Sutton Bank car park at 10.30. Circa 7 mile fairly flat walk along the Cleveland Way. Beautiful views (weather permitting!).

Beryl Turner will lead walk. Beryl can be contacted on 01642 714479. No dogs allowed on this walk.

Please contact leaders of the walks if you intend coming along.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD No 73 BY AMANUENSIS



Rearrange the letters highlighted grey in the grid to solve the clue:
High points of the northern side of the moors. (9,5)

ACROSS:

- 1 Crazy bird (7)
- 7 Depression on the moors? (7)
- 8 In a class of their own (8)
- 9 A profit once more (5)
- 10 Stormy north can cause sharp pain (5)
- 11 A strong blow (4)
- 12 English course for a Caledonian (5)
- 15 Makes up the money (5)
- 16 Drape around the clergyman (5)
- 19 Discomfort found inside britches (4)
- 20 Italian on the fiddle a long time ago (5)
- 21 A dubious offer of money for piece of flawed cloth (5)
- 22 Show for the very first time (8)
- 23 Shoot helpers over Scottish border (7)
- 24 Assist changes but make no progress (6)

DOWN:

- 1 It's silly prattle to applaud gin (8)
- 2 China storage place? (8)
- 3 Hunter in the sky (5)
- 4 Go this way (3)
- 5 Strange as aged sayings (6)
- 6 Albion revolt caused by lack of pigment (6)
- 7 Royal anglers? (11)
- 9 Unusual asparagus contains rueful exclamation (4)
- 13 Spelunkers take lawyer inside to find dead bodies (8)
- 14 Footwear for PE instructors (8)
- 17 Able to do the right thing? (6)
- 18 Bridal mix-up is lewd (6)
- 20 Let in and let out? (5)
- 22 For every one (3)

SPOTLIGHT – GUEST PHOTOGRAPHER ALAN CLARK

Alan Clark grew up at Thornaby on Teesside where he attended Middlesbrough High School before moving on to St. John's College York to study art. Alan went on to work as a teacher and a musical instrument maker, specialising in lutes and early stringed instruments. He also makes longbows and practises archery. He lived and worked for many years in Lincolnshire and Staffordshire before returning to his native Yorkshire on retirement.

His lifelong interest in landscape painting and a deep love of the countryside lead to an absorbing interest in black and white photography, a passion he has retained throughout his life.

Alan maintains a preference for the earlier methods of film and darkroom techniques over modern digital images and this is reflected in his interest in large format cameras, some of which he has made himself. He has found these cameras to be very sensitive and effective for photographing the North Yorkshire landscape, particularly in black and white, a medium he excels in and finds very satisfying.

Alan makes regular forays into the moorland and dales areas of the North York Moors National Park in his quest to record and capture the essence of this beautiful area in all its moods and seasons. This is shown here in his dramatic and atmospheric monochrome photo of Mirk Mire Moor.



CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Clues Across: 1 cuckoo 7 Kildale 8 amphibia 9 again 10 thorn 11 gale 12 Ascot 15 coins 16 padre 19 rich 20 Amati 21 bribe 22 premiere 23 gillies 24 stasis
 Clues Down: 1 claptap 2 cupboard 3 Orion 4 via 5 adages 6 albino 7 kingfishers 9 alas 13 cadavers 14 trainers 17 adroit 18 ribald 20 admit 22 per Anagram Answer: Cleveland Hills



MILLIONS!

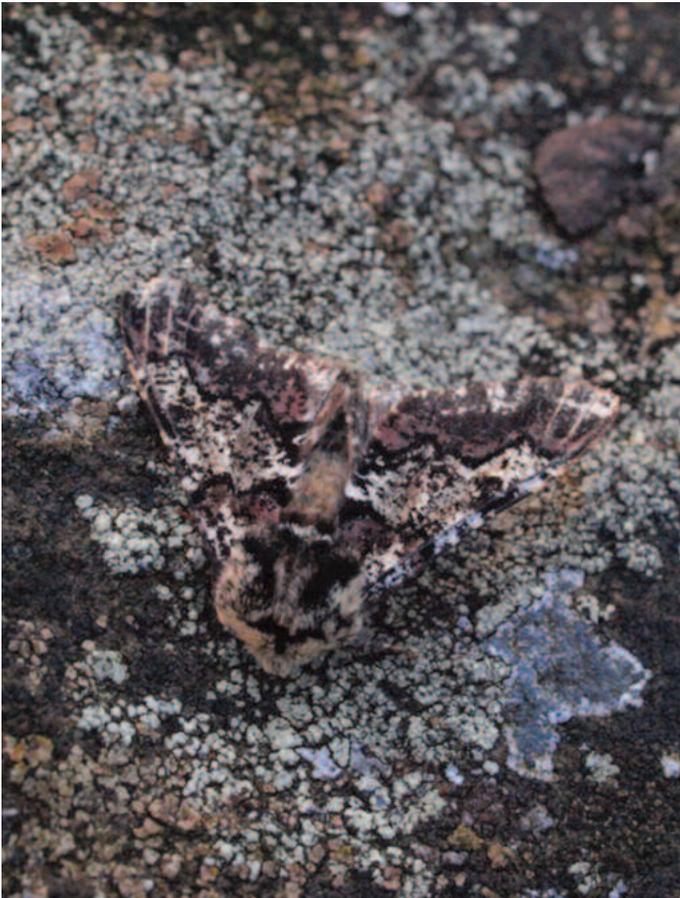
During late May we suffered relentless easterly winds, which produced some very miserable, cold, damp, foggy weather. Very little positive could be found from this spell of Easterlies, but as conditions improved it became very evident that we had had an influx of the little white moth, *Plutella xylostella*, or diamond-back moth, and they were to be found everywhere. These little micro-moths had been blown in from the continent, across the North Sea and onto the British mainland in their millions. Yes, millions! I ran a moth light in my garden on four consecutive evenings and my catches of diamond-backs were counted in at 257, 198, 56 and 116 (all released safely back into the wild), quite a catch for a single collection point.

DESTRUCTIVE PEST

However, this species of tiny moth is virtually a mini Cabbage white and on the continent is looked upon as a destructive pest that attacks brassica, just like our native Large, Small and Green veined white butterflies. The diamond-backs lay their eggs on the leaves of cabbages and other garden brassica. When the minute caterpillars emerge they voraciously nibble away on the luscious green leaves and make a terrible mess of the gardeners' carefully tended plants.

It was noticeable that the beautiful Painted lady butterfly, a much more welcome guest, also made a colourful appearance at the same time. Like the diamond-backs, these butterflies cannot withstand our cold winters and die out at the first sign of a frost.

The Oak beauty moth



ESCAPING PREDATION

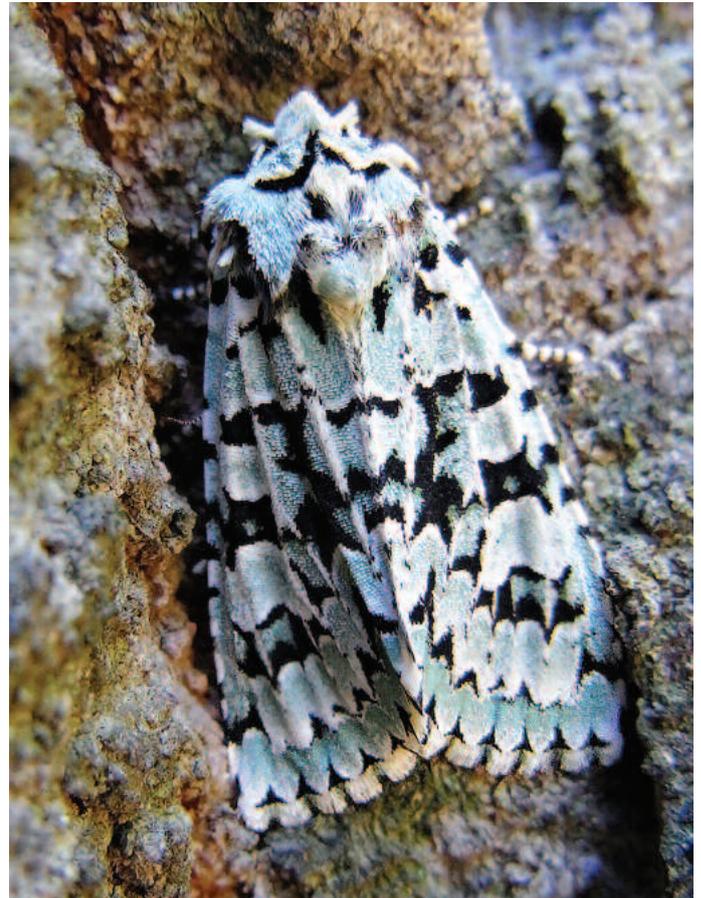
Moths have many predators, mainly birds and bats, so have evolved different methods and strategies to evade detection. The most popular defence against attack by predators is by the use of camouflage. What can't be seen, can't be found and therefore can't be eaten. In springtime before the trees are in leaf, many adult moths rest on tree trunks, using diffused colouration to effectively blend in with their background so that they become almost impossible to see. The Oak beauty moth (*Biston strataria*) is a perfect example. It is quite a common moth in spring and found mainly in well-established deciduous woodland areas. Later in the year as summer turns to autumn and nature's colours change, so the moths subtly change their colours also to a light brown or even yellow, to match and blend in with the hues of the season. This is a remarkable survival skill.

WONDERFUL SIGHT

However, the scarce and spectacular moth, the Merveille du jour (*Moma alpium*) continues throughout the year to use its mottled black and bluish-green camouflaged forewings to 'disappear' when alighting and resting on moss-covered tree trunk surfaces. Its French-derived name means literally 'wonder of the day' and a wonderful sight it is indeed to see. Watch out for this beauty. ◆

Hawkmoth

Merveille du jour



You can keep up to date with **Hawkmoth** sightings as he is now on Twitter as GPF MOTHMAN1. On a regular basis, he posts photos and information of the interesting moths that he has observed and caught as well as that of any other particularly interesting flora and fauna he encounters.

That's the wise thrush;
he sings each song twice over,
lest you should think he never could
recapture the first fine careless rapture.

Robert Browning



Photo: Patrick Roberts



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