

# VOICE OF THE MOORS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS ASSOCIATION (NYMA)

# ISSUE 125

AUTUMN 2016

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# RED FOR DANGER – A TRIO OF POISON

There are three bright-red attractive and luscious-looking berries that are widespread at this time of the year. But be warned – they are poisonous! One, the **Cuckoo Pint or Lords and Ladies**, I am often asked about as it seems to suddenly appear from nowhere like stalked, luminous, red candles in hedge bottoms and gardens, growing just at the height to attract toddlers! The other two are hedgerow climbers, **black bryony and honeysuckle**, both bringing a splash of colour to late summer and autumn hedgerows with their strings or clusters of glowing red berries.

## THE CUCKOO PINT

Cuckoo Pint, Lords and Ladies or *Arum maculatum* belongs to the *Araceae* family and is commonly found in hedge bases, in open woodlands on damp moist soils, but not on the high acidic moorlands. The large, stalked, arrow-shaped leaves are some of the earliest to appear in spring and are usually bright green but can be purple-spotted, growing from a white underground tuber. These are soon followed by a purple/green bract or spathe that envelopes the smelly, purple inflorescence spike or spadix that attracts insects that then drop to the base and pollinate the hidden flowers. When these have died away, the green then red berries develop on a short stalk.

The name *Arum* or *Aron* is from the Arabic 'ar' meaning fire, referring to the hot, acrid taste of the plant, while *maculatum* means spotted. Amazingly up to ninety local names have been recorded for this species, mostly of a sexual nature due to the evocative shape of the flowers and bract, some bawdier than others! Even in the name Cuckoo pint, the 'pint' rhymes with 'mint', and derives from the Old English 'pintle'(for penis). Other references to snakes, devils and poison give a direct warning of the plant's toxic nature. The plant is acrid and bitter but in the past the leaves have been used as a poultice for boils and ulcers though it sometimes caused blisters. The root however contains large amounts of white starch, which if heated or dried loses its poisonous properties and it was eaten as a 'salep'. But it was more extensively used as a laundry starch, especially in the Elizabethan age for the huge ruffs that were fashionable in those times, and was known as Portland arrowroot or sago, although it blistered the laundresses' hands. It was however used as a cosmetic white powder and in some herbal treatments. There are also reports of the tubers being eaten by some birds and mammals as an emergency spring food in bad weather.

## BLACK BRYONY

Black bryony, *Tamus communis* of the *Dioscoreaceae* or yam family is almost at its northern limit here but can be found climbing up hedges on more fertile or calcareous soils, but is not found on acid uplands. The long, weak stems twine round hedgerow plants and bear bright green, heart shaped leaves that turn purple and yellow in autumn. It is perennial and *dioecious* with separate male and female inflorescences of small white/green star shaped flowers. The female flowers ripen to green then red berries that look like exotic necklaces draped over the hedges. It has a long fleshy rootstock, dark outside, yellow within, unlike the strikingly pale one of the white bryony, *Bryonia dioica* that is in the unrelated *Cucurbitaceae* or cucumber family, and is rarer here. The name bryony derives from the Greek 'bruo' to burst or abound, referring to the fleshy root, *Tamus* is the genus name and *communis* means common. Other common names such as snake berry and adders poison are clear warning ones and the plant is sometimes referred to as Mandrake.

Although animals may eat the leaves, and there are records of young shoots, after soaking, being eaten like asparagus by people (not recommended), the berries are poisonous. They were also used, with care, as an emetic. The rhizomes contain a histamine-like alkaloid and are poisonous but have long been used externally as a rub for skin conditions, sores and chilblains but particularly for treating bruising as they dissolve congealed blood giving it the rather odd name of 'battered wives' plant' in France!

## THE HONEYSUCKLE

The third berry in this poisonous trio is the honeysuckle, *Lonicera periclymenum*, of the *Caprifoliaceae* family and it always comes as a surprise to discover that such a beautiful, enchanting and intoxicatingly scented

flower should produce such poisonous berries. Honeysuckle is common in hedgerows, open scrub and field margins being a twining, draping plant, a true 'liana'. The stems have opposite, oval leaves, joined at the base to form a cup, with compact inflorescences of tubular flowers, white, yellow or pink-flushed that mature into a head of lustrous, attractive red berries.

*Lonicera* is named after the German naturalist Adam Lonicer, while *periclymenum* means to twine. While honeysuckle is nowadays the more common English name, in the past it was more commonly known as woodbine, a much older name used by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* - "Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine." Other names for this plant are bindweed and ladies fingers.

Honeysuckle has always been a flower associated with lovers, but it was also used as a defence against witches, evil and sickness, especially on May Day when it was traditionally hung above house and dairy doors to protect the occupants and the butter and milk from harm. Although it is represented as gentle and draping, its stems are very woody

and tough and can twine round saplings so tightly that the growing wood becomes deformed and grooved making the timber less valuable; unless that is they result in a regular 'barley sugar' effect on young hazel in which case it is then in great demand as an attractive feature on walking sticks.

Although the berries are toxic and emetic, the flowers and to a lesser extent the leaves and bark, have been used medicinally. Children love sucking the flower tube ends for their honey and in infusions they were used for their cooling and soothing effects, on hot flushes, fevers, sunstroke and urinary track infections as well as for asthma, croup and bronchitis. It was also used as a heart tonic and to counter stiff joints, rheumatic complaints etc. The leaves and flaked bark were sometimes made into an infusion but for external use for cooling and healing wounds or as a gargle for sore mouths, throats and toothache.

Of these three very different plants - two are climbers, two produce useful tubers, one with wonderfully sweet-scented flowers - but all with a common warning message at this time of the year, especially when we are out picking other hedgerow berries:

**RED IS FOR DANGER –  
BEWARE POISONOUS!**

Anne Press



Honeysuckle berries

WOODBINE SHAKESPEARE

"Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine..."

Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



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Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)  
N° 1169240

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**Design & Production**

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



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**"QUOTABLE QUOTES"**

**BACK TO NATURE . . .**

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, to discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and to shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms."

*From Walden: Life In the Woods*

"It's not what you look at that matters, but what you see."

"If a man does not keep step with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drum. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away."

"Never look back unless you are planning to go that way."

*Henry David Thoreau (1817 – 1862)*

*Thoreau was an American writer and essayist, poet, philosopher, abolitionist, naturalist, mystic, radical and freethinker. Among his lasting contributions are his writings on natural history and philosophy, which anticipated the methods and findings of ecology and environmental history, two disciplines that are among the basic foundations of modern-day environmentalism.*

*Thoreau had a profound love of and respect for nature, was an early practitioner of outdoor living and an enthusiastic advocate of recreational hiking and canoeing. He was a founding promoter and campaigner for the conservation of natural resources and the protection and conservation of wilderness as public access land (mooted by Thoreau over 150 years before the Countryside & Rights Of Way Act [CROW Act 2000] came into being).*

Front Cover: NYMA members crossing the Esk at Lealholm stepping stones (photo: Jane Ellis)  
Back Cover: Golden-ringed dragonfly

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



# ALL CHANGE

## CHANGE OF CHARITABLE STATUS

The application we submitted to the charity Commission for a change of legal status has been successful. On September 16th we were notified that our application to change to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation has been accepted and we are now registered with the Charities Commission as a CIO. Special thanks is due to Janet Cochrane and Anne Glass for the work that was done to make sure our application had a smooth passage and has resulted in it being processed remarkably quickly. Just to remind members that one of the advantages we see in becoming a CIO, is that in the remote event of NYMA being wound up members have no liability. In other respects members will not see any change in our objects which remain virtually the same as they were under our previous constitution.

## WEBSITE CHANGES

Janet and Adrian have been working on the development of a new website and this has progressed over the last few months. Hopefully we will have a draft of this new website for Council members to view at the next Council meeting in October with a view to launching it before the end of the year.

## NEW STUDY COMMISSIONED

The Campaign for National Parks (CNP) Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and the National Trust (NT) have jointly commissioned a study to explore trends in major development planning applications within and on the boundaries of our National Parks. It follows a growing view that the protection which designated landscapes have had under previous planning policies has been eroded by recent changes to national planning policy. This has been highlighted by the proposed polyhalite mine in our own National Park which in terms of major development is the largest industrial development in any UK National Park. The study which will be carried out by Professor Lynn Crowe of Sheffield Hallam University will focus on this proposed development by Sirius Minerals. National Park Societies and National Park Authorities have been invited to contribute to this study and we have submitted a considerable amount of information.

## SHALE WEALTH FUND

There is presently a government consultation taking place on how Fracking can be made more acceptable by introducing a system of payments made to communities who are affected by hydraulic fracturing as a method of producing gas. The shale gas industry is about to start on the exploration stage which involves drilling wells and testing them by hydraulic fracturing. Benefits of £100,000 per well site will be made available to the local community. The government's consultation document says;

*"The government is also clear that those communities who host shale activity should directly benefit, beyond the expected boost to the local economy. We are also clear that households in those communities should gain directly from the benefits of shale development."*

How this wealth fund is to be distributed is the subject of the government consultation.

In a report commissioned by the environment agency in July 2015 the scale of shale gas development is examined and a view expressed

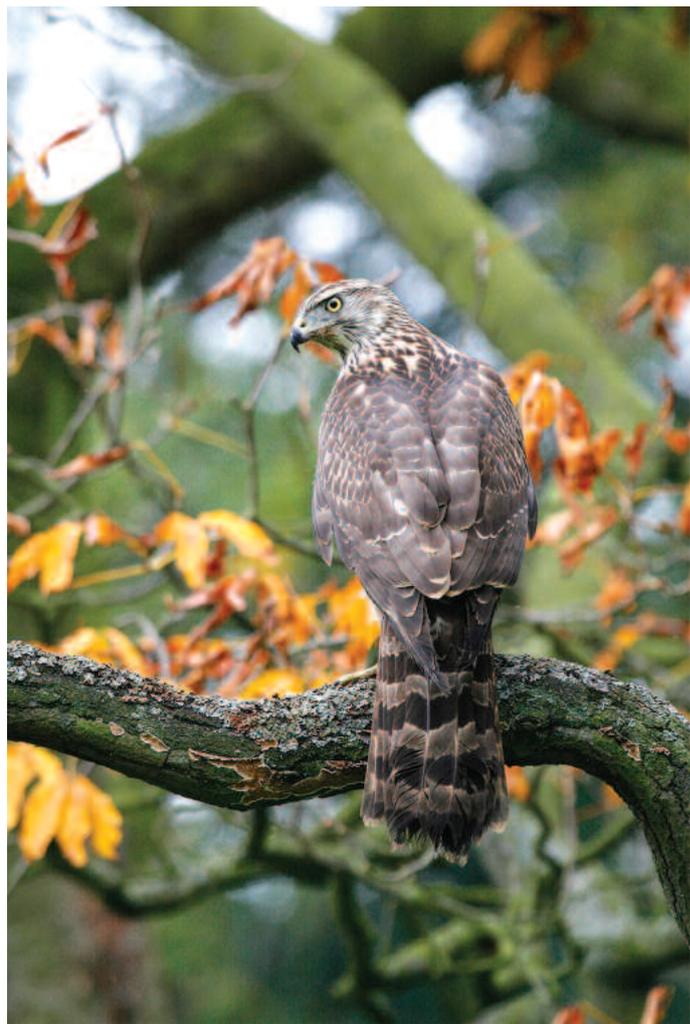


photo © Wildabout

Goshawk

that in order for the industry to produce approximately 89% of the UK current gas consumption the total number of wells drilled would be of the order of 12,500. The report also suggests that a two hectare site could support ten well pads. This gives some idea of the scale of hydraulic fracturing which of course will largely be carried out in rural areas. The government has said that there will be no surface structures allowed in National Parks but based on the experience in 2012 of Moorland Energy's application to build a gas processing facility within metres of the National Park boundary at Thornton-le-Dale, this does not bode well for future fracking proposals. Moorland Energy appealed against non-determination by the authorities and this prompted a public inquiry. Despite a refusal of permission by local planning authorities and very strong local opposition, the planning inspector at the subsequent public inquiry recommended approval and the government minister agreed with him.

Some local authorities will welcome the chance of increasing their coffers and the economic argument may help to wave planning applications through. On the other hand, if an application is refused at a local level and the applicant company goes to appeal, what will the government do?

The consultation assumes that hydraulic fracturing will take place, and that communities will accept the benefits. There is no place for simply saying "no we don't want this".

## CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Sirius Minerals York Potash project is still where we left it after my report to the AGM. They are trying to raise money for the first part of two-stage funding totalling US\$ 3.26 billion. The first stage is to raise US\$ 1.63 billion through a mix of equity in the form of a share issuance and structured capital, in layman's terms, borrowing. This will be funding for the minehead and the 37km long tunnel from Doves Nest Farm to Teesside. The second stage funding of US\$ 1.93 billion will be obtained through the debt market, "borrowed". This will be to fund the handling plant facilities at Wilton and the harbour at Bran sands Teesside. At the time of sending in this report there has been no announcement about how much progress has been made in raising the funding for the project.

## THANK HEAVENS FOR LITTLE BIRDS!

Members may recall that NYMA with the support of CNP made a request to the planning inspectorate that the determination of the South Moor Farm planning application for an airfield should be changed from a written exchange of documents to an appeal hearing. After reviewing the matter the inspectorate agreed to a local hearing. It is clear that a hearing provides the opportunity for wider disclosure of information and at the hearing, the presence of an ornithologist with specialised local knowledge, made a significant difference to the outcome.

The appeal hearing was held over the course of one day on the 19<sup>th</sup> July, at the National Park centre at Helmsley. It was very well attended by objectors on what turned out to be the hottest day of the year. The planning inspectorate gave notice on the 16<sup>th</sup> September that the

appeal was dismissed. The grounds for the dismissal were based on the disturbance likely to be caused to two species of birds which are present in a nearby breeding site. They are the Nightjar and Goshawk, the latter of which is a species protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. The Inspector concluded that,

"I take into account the conservation of wildlife is explicit in the statutory purposes of the National Park, and that having regard to the Sandford Principle, this harm must carry greater weight than the stated benefits. Therefore having regard to all other matters before me, the appeal is dismissed" ♦

*Tom Chadwick, Chairman*

*Nightjar with chick*



photo: NYMANPA



## PRESIDENT'S PIECE

# SAFEGUARDING OUR COUNTRYSIDE

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Caring about the future of our countryside can be something of a 'heavy cross to bear'. Tom Chadwick, NYMA Chairman, recently received a request from Sheffield Hallam University for complex information about planning policies, their impacts on National Parks with regard to major developments and the adequacy of decision-making processes. An important part of the research will focus on the Sirius Minerals proposal to build a polyhalite mine at Dove's Nest Farm near Sneaton, the biggest industrial development there has ever been within a National Park.

The work by the University is undoubtedly an important study on behalf of the Campaign for National Parks (CNP), The National Trust (NT) and Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). But however valid the study might be, it is nevertheless another mind-numbing exercise to test the spirit, following on from many other taxing efforts to try to convince policy-makers to listen and believe that there are very real issues and problems.

In my daily newspaper a large article explored the *State of Nature* report and while many new initiatives try to reverse decline, the basic message was: 'Loss'. The same could be said for the landscape too. After all the TV documentaries, sterling work by conservation organisations, myriad individual actions on farms and in gardens, yet the overall quality is still going down. As a Society we need urgently to face up to this firmly; no excuses.

If I hear the statement one more time: "education for the next generation is the answer", I think I might scream. The solution lies not with the young people of today, important as they are to the future, there is not the time. Anyway, the young I have worked with already 'get it', it's the decision-maker generation now who need to learn to find and commit to a collective resolve to say '**no, not here, make things better**' instead of compromising.

Then, there's the predictable statement 'there has to be a balance', another favourite excuse to try to justify a course of action. To this, I say yes, bring it on, but only a balance that requires constraint on proposals and inappropriate uses and reversals of over-intensification of management of the countryside. Not the ever-creeping 'death-by-a-thousand-cuts balance' where we diminish the environmental value to a lesser or greater extent to accommodate a scheme. The scales are already far too heavily weighted on the wrong side, which needs to be redressed with urgency.

Back at Danby Beacon, I visit it regularly, it all looks much the same as it did three months ago. However, now we have slipped into the post-referendum era with the loss of European protection and regulations which benefit the countryside seemingly on the cards.

What does the future hold, when history is littered with unforeseen outcomes as an old order is swept away? And sweeping away is exactly what is going on with no certainty as to where we are headed for environmental protection and farm support, or how we will hold the line for things we hold dear and fundamentally depend on.



*Little Fryup Dale – landscape with signpost! Little decisions count too. The sublime view up Little Fryup Dale from the junction with Danby Beacon Road. Did no-one stop to think for a moment that this was a very bad place to position a sign? At least it could have been dropped below the level of the wall.*

In the end, forget about all the science, the statistics, the surveys, the papers, the opinions, though we may need them - after all a massive decision to leave the EU was taken on a boxing-match of sound bites from both sides without much substance.

The way ahead comes down to whether there are 'ears to hear' under the umbrella of the three 'Ps':

**People** – are there open-minded people who understand the issues and believe that they matter?

**Persuasion** – are there people who will be convinced of the value of something simply because it is good to look after it? And...

**Politics** - are there sympathetic politicians skilled in the art of the possible to take everyone with them when the rulebook has been torn up?

So what of Tom's reply to the questionnaire and the other data which will be gathered and where will the study take us: will there be anyone to hear the findings or will the report just fall silently around deaf ears? Certainly the thrust of deregulation and the blind pursuit of economic benefit, above all else, very much seems to be the order of the day until someone proves to me otherwise.

Research has its place and sometimes more information is essential, but it often produces even more questions and a labyrinth of further considerations and digressions rather than answers. In the face of all this complexity, increasingly I have become rather enthusiastic about the value of making decisions by rule of thumb, or to put it another way, you don't have to be a baker to tell the bread's bad.

So if Society means it, when it says it wants to retain the quality of our countryside - a massive tourism, economic and social asset - then a simple rule of thumb would be a good starting point to help halt the loss: will a proposal be physically, visually and environmentally beneficial or neutral where it is to be carried out, if not, then it can't go ahead.

Restraint shouldn't have to be justified, if there is any validity in the intention to protect and improve in the first place. Another way would then need to be found if proposals were to proceed, for a principle is not a principle if sacrificed or compromised for the sake of convenience.

And therein lies the risk to our countryside. There are not enough people with the ears to hear who can stand by the principle, because the rules generally don't allow them readily to do that.

I am fully aware that this practical approach is just a forlorn 'pie in the sky' and my heart is being hopelessly naïve, for my head knows that realistically there is not a chance that such a straightforward and cost-effective logic for decision making could ever take place. But then everyone is entitled to dream a little that there might be a simpler way to safeguard and care about the future of our countryside; at least it's some food for thought. ♦

*Ian Carstairs*

**Footnote:** In Ian's last President's Piece (*Voice* 124) about swifts mention was made of a special song *Swifts: A Farewell*, which had been written and performed by Maggi Groom from Howsham, near York. You can now enjoy it at: <https://youtu.be/Vziv6yDDZA4> . Ed.

# BUSES AND THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS

NOW THAT THE WONDERFUL MoorsBus service has finished for 2016, it is time to reflect on the success of this transport system. With the new M14 linking Malton, Pickering, and Helmsley, with Rievaulx and Sutton Bank, and employing larger buses to reduce overloading, it looks as if passenger growth has been around 36% - a huge success story for the very small team of volunteers from the MoorsBus CIC and Friends of Moorsbus who plan and manage the service. However, without the generous grant from NYMA from our recent Laughton legacy designed to encourage walking on the North Yorkshire Moors, Moorsbus would not now exist.

As I experienced as a NYMA member, using the very well filled Moorsbus on August Bank Holiday this year. Not owning a car, I was able to catch MoorsBus to enjoy a spectacular 8½ mile walk I had not been able to do for many years – from the Lion Inn at Blakey along the panoramic Rosedale Railway to Bank Top, then over Hutton Ridge, with the heather at its glorious best, to Hutton-le-Hole, and time to enjoy the Ryedale Folk Museum and my return bus to Pickering, a perfect day out in the National Park. Thank you Moorsbus and thank you NYMA for making this possible.

Moorsbus only operates for a few weeks of the year, Sundays and Bank Holidays between July and the end of September.

Yet contrary to what many people think, even if you haven't a car much of the North York Moors National Park is in fact easily accessible by bus and train at other times of the year. There is the **Esk Valley Railway** between Middlesbrough and Whitby, one of the most scenically beautiful rural railways in England which has retained all its little stations, seventeen of them, all offering fantastic opportunities for walking, not least along the Esk Valley Way between such stations as

Comondale, Castleton Moor, Danby and Egton. Our most iconic summit Roseberry Topping, is easily accessed from Great Ayton station.

The **North York Moors Railway** between Pickering and Grosmont also provides very useful access to the National Park with stations at Levisham, Newtondale, and Grosmont, some services going through to Whitby. Services are, however, limited in the winter months to occasional weekends and school holiday periods.

But there are several great bus services available for walkers. **Arriva's X93** provides fast and frequent services seven days a week between Middlesbrough, Guisborough, Whitby and Scarborough, which gives great access, even on winter Sundays to the northern perimeter edge of the National Park and along the coastal sections of the Cleveland Way, including Robin Hood's Bay.

Along the southern edge of the National Park, **Scarborough & District 128** provides daily services every hour on weekdays between Scarborough, East Ayton (for the Forge Valley) Pickering and, (except for winter Sundays) along the A170 to Kirby Moorside and Helmsley. If you live in Hull or Beverley this is a good way reach the National Park by catching the train or **EYMS 121** to Scarborough to connect with 128. If you live in York, you can catch **Stephenson's 31X** every two hours Mondays to Saturday. This serves Coxwold and Byland Abbey and connects at Helmsley with the 128 for Pickering. If you are keen to get to Osmotherly and the western section of the Cleveland Way, on Mondays to Saturdays **Abbots of Leeming 80** runs every hour between Northallerton and Middlesbrough via Stokesly and Swainby and every two hours calls at Osmotherly.

There's also that other jewel in the crown, Coastliner. **Coastliner 840** provides a direct service all the way from Leeds, York to Whitby,



with handsome double-deckers offering magnificent topdeck views through the heart of the National Park via Lockton, Saltergate, the Hole of Horcum and across Goathland Moor to Goathland, Sleights and Whitby – again offering time for a full day’s hike most days of the year. The keen walker able to interpret timetables can plan a wide range of superb dalehead or moorland traverses between say the Esk Valley Line and Coastliner or the X93, and to the west the 80 and 128.

But there are serious gaps in the network most notably in the central areas of the National Park, areas such as Bilsdale, Farndale, Danby Dale, Rosedale and Dalby Forest which even the strongest walker will find a challenge to reach for a day. The beauty of Moorsbus is that it fills these crucial gaps. The **MoorsBus Rambler M4** in the east and the **M10/11 Endeavour** in the west open up the central areas of the National Park for walking and sightseeing at least on peak summer Sundays. Incredibly it is impossible on most days of the year to visit the National Park flagship Sutton Bank Visitor Centre with all its family friendly exhibits and activities without a car. Only the new **Moorsbus M14** operated by Ryedale Community Transport made this possible this year with a link from Malton Station, Pickering and Helmsley.

You may ask if the vast majority of North Yorkshire Moors Association members have access to the speed and convenience of a car to reach and travel around the National Park, why should NYMA be involved with public transport and supporting MoorsBus? The answer is that, as a charity, we don’t exist just to serve on our members, but the wider public. About 25% of households in the UK don’t have access to a car and this includes many older people, young people, and people on lower incomes, some of whom are NYMA members. Increasing numbers of overseas visitors who come to the UK expecting to enjoy access to our greatest heritage landscapes without having to hire a car. There is also the issue of cars creating significant environmental damage in terms of congestion, carbon emissions and visual blight.

There is also the huge advantage for the walker of being able to do a range of linear or point to walks without having to return to parked vehicle, as I was able to do using Moorsbus.

Whilst our ability to fund or even pump prime bus services is extremely limited, NYMA can and should campaign to improve and develop not just Sunday MoorsBus services but the weekly network which is so important for local communities living in the National Park. In fact many local people also use Moorsbus – it was great to see so many local people leaving the bus at Kirkby Moorside being able to enjoy a day out thanks to this amazing service.

In 2016 the National Park Authority was able to make a modest contribution through their diversity fund to the M14 service. It would be great if such a service could be available not just in high summer but on spring, autumn and winter Sundays, even if it were just two trips a day between Malton/Pickering and (say) Danby and Guisborough, perhaps alternating with a similar service to Helmsley and Sutton Bank to link with the 128. .

Urgent too is a single timetable booklet like the popular DalesBus booklet, in which all the useful services could be listed without having, at present, to consult perhaps half a dozen different timetable leaflets. Why not offer day or even weekly tickets to enable people to stay for several days in the National Park and get around by bus and train without spending a fortune on individual tickets?

NYMA has shown the way in terms of helping to rescue and support MoorsBus. Maybe we need to be thinking of the next steps. We need to pressurise not just the National Park agencies, but local and national Government agencies and sponsoring bodies to provide real support for MoorsBus and other bus services in the National Park. How about at least planning some of our own events, such as our guided walks, to fit in with available bus or train locations and times, (or even with lifts being arranged to remoter locations from bus stops or rail stations)? This would allow those of us who don’t own a car to be able to take part in some of the fascinating events that NYMA put on, hopefully for all its members. ♦

*Colin Speakman*

## FORESTRY

# WYKEHAM FOREST

**THIS IS THE SECOND ARTICLE** in my look at Forestry Commission (FC) woodlands in the North York Moors National Park. To some it seems odd that these ‘plantation’ woodlands are in the National Park, however it needs to be borne in mind that most of the woodland was planted decades before the National Park was created. As a retired senior manager in the Forestry Commission commented when a former National Park committee member asked why FC woods were included in the park, “We (the FC) were here first.” Many of the early criticisms of these new forests proved unfounded; contrary to popular belief they haven’t caused mass extinctions of wildlife across the National Park indeed it seems likely that more species have been saved as a result of afforestation than have been lost. Plantations certainly look ugly especially in the first fifty years or so but then I’ve never found large areas of moor burn particularly attractive either and a Sitka spruce plantation has a diversity of wildlife as good as if not better than a comparable area of ling heather. Of course ling has ‘the edge’ in that it is spectacular to look at for a few weeks in late summer whereas Sitka spruce is dark green and fairly boring to look at unless

it is over 100 feet tall. The problem of course is none of us like change and we tend to make judgements of what we see using our own values instead of thinking about the impact on the health of the environment for future generations. When working with woods and forests one learns to think in the long term. The FC and the National Park along with many other partners work closely together to ensure that the aims of both organisations are achieved.

The earliest note I have seen in relation to forestry planting at Wykeham is from around 1840. Plantation forestry was already established in the area when the FC acquired the freehold and leases in the area in the 1920’s. When the FC acquired the land much of the timber had been felled for use in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. Over the ensuing decades replanting of the felled areas and new planting on previously unplanted ground took place following the forestry practices of the day i.e. plantation areas ploughed and planted mostly in rectangular blocks. Little thought was given to wildlife conservation or archaeological heritage at the time. Obvious features such as the numerous *tumuli* or burial mounds were generally left undisturbed



but no thought was given to 'hidden' archaeology or more recent features such as rabbit warrens. The priority of the time was the Government's requirement for the FC to produce a strategic reserve of trees.

Like many forests of the time the trees used for planting at Wykeham were grown in a nursery within the forest. In the case of Wykeham Forest this role expanded in the latter half of last century.

Forest research also played a major role from quite early on at Wykeham with scientists and research foresters studying the soils, trees and the affect of various 'treatments' on the growing crop. One research scientist was Professor G Dimpleby from the Oxford Forest Research Unit. He carried out pioneering research into the historic soils under burial mounds in Wykeham, some of the earliest work of its kind and recognised throughout the archaeological world.

The resulting forest has become very diverse, both in the species of trees planted and in their ages. The nursery area has expanded to become one of the Commission's principal suppliers of trees with seedlings being sent to forests countrywide.

As with all its forests the Commission has to manage Wykeham following an approved and agreed management plan. The forests also have to be managed to meet the demanding standards of the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) and The Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC). The Forestry Commission was the first state forestry organisation in the world to have its entire estate endorsed as being run in an environmentally sustainable way. An area of its operation the Commission has been asked to review by UKWAS is the development of less intrusive methods of forest management. One area of research is looking at alternatives to clear felling (ATC) areas of forest and Wykeham Forest, because of its research history, diverse tree structure and location has been chosen for this work.

Over ten years ago a forest plan for managing Wykeham was adopted using ATC practices. Neighbours, local parish councils and local wildlife experts as well as the statutory authorities were consulted.

A number of changes to the way the forest was managed were made taking a range of factors into account.

### LIMITING CLEAR FELLING

Clear felling is very limited. A large percentage of the area on the plateau has been devoted to ATC experiments. On these sites various systems of tree management and removal are followed and their effects recorded. The main feature is the development of intimate mixture of tree species and ages (as opposed to 'fields' of trees where the trees are all of the same age and species). Although there will be continuous tree cover, timber will still be harvested as a crop and using such a system the hope is that this will be a self-replenishing, high quality, high value product.

### MAINTENANCE OF OPEN SPACE

Open space in forest areas is very important and particularly so in Wykeham Forest, for a number of reasons: - 1) Some of the grassland areas are relics of old meadows and contain a diversity of plants that would be lost under forest cover. 2) Some areas have a rich archaeological and cultural heritage and may be damaged by further tree planting. (Perversely it was probably the planting of trees that protected these sites from damage before their historical value was recognised). 3) Clearfell areas have become the most important sites on the North York Moors for the Nightjar. Traditionally a bird of heathland it will disappear from Wykeham if clear felling is discontinued altogether.

### RESTORATION OF PLANTATIONS ON ANCIENT WOODLAND SITES (PAWS)

Some of the slopes and valleys have been continuously wooded since at least 1600. The Commission is committed to the restoration of all these areas to native woodland. Where possible and environmentally acceptable a timber crop may still be achievable. Work on PAWS

restoration is another key area under UKWAS and FSC and has political ramifications in international care of the environment.

## NEW NATIVE WOODLAND

Many areas such as streamsides, around springs and on uncultivated ground must have had some native woodland cover although there is no map or documentary evidence readily accessible. In recognition of this and to produce a visually inviting landscape some areas currently under coniferous trees will gradually be converted to native woodland. Most noticeably this will be in the areas above Wrench Green and around Troutdale.

Wykeham Forest Plan is being reviewed again this year and no doubt there will be further changes some of which will reflect the increasing importance of a healthy environment entering a period of rapid climate change.

## SOME WYKEHAM FACTS

- First plantations to be planted c1840
- Total area managed by Forestry Commission 1113 ha (2750 acres)

- Wykeham Nursery produces about 9 million seedling trees a year for restocking the nation's forests.
- More than 25 species of tree grow in Wykeham forest
- The highest tree will be a Grand fir which can grow to around 50m (140 feet)
- The largest wild animal is the Roe deer which has been recorded in the area since the mid 1960's
- The smallest wild animal is the Pygmy shrew.
- Adders, our only poisonous snake still frequent the forest but are rarely seen.
- A railway once ran from above Wrench Green to Wykeham Station to carry timber. Locomotives were 'Little Giant' traction engines converted locally to run on rails. The rarest plant is probably the May Lily which although common on the continent is known from only a handful of places in the British Isles and the Wykeham site is believed to be not a human introduction.

Next time some notes about Broxa Forest... ♦

*Brian Walker*



## RABBIT WARRENS

Rabbits were introduced to Britain certainly by the Normans following 1066 and were possibly even known here in Roman times. Originally they were kept in artificial mounds as part of manorial estates, providing a secure food supply and a source of fur. All this changed in the 18th Century thanks to changing fashion. Colour-fast garments were becoming readily available due to the improved dye mordants produced from the alum shales. Coloured hats became a feature and these were made from felt which is simply hair beaten into a stiff unwoven cloth. The best felt was made from beaver fur, but this was in scarce supply so manufacturers turned to rabbits. The trade became so lucrative that large tracts of marginal land over much of England were converted to industrial scale rabbit warrens. Large areas of Breckland in East Anglia, the Yorkshire Wolds and the southern slopes of the North York Moors were given over to warrening on an unprecedented scale.

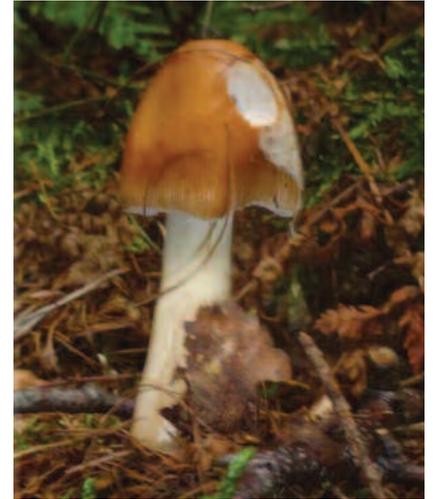
The warrens could cover several hundred acres surrounded by a boundary wall to keep rabbits in. Pitfall traps, known in North Yorkshire as 'types' were dug inside the warren, sometimes along the boundary wall or sometimes in a small enclosure alongside a track built for access. Rabbits were tempted into the trap by the provision of particularly attractive food such as root vegetables or holly and apple twigs. The traps would only be set when the rabbits' fur was in the best condition.

It was a boom and bust industry. Initially the value was in the hair and the meat and skin were by-products. As soon as fashions changed and other ways were found to make felt the industry began to collapse. Despite attempts to maintain the value of warrens by introducing rabbits with 'silver' fur to make the sale of fur more attractive the industry was virtually finished by the end of the 19th century. The last professional 'warrener' in the Dalby Warrens left in 1926.

Like many boom and bust industries it was not without its problems. The land was, in some areas so soured by rabbit faeces and urine that it needed regular harrowing to encourage new plant growth. Sheep were direct competitors for food and tenant farmers were 'discouraged' from grazing them in the warrens. Rabbits escaped from warrens, especially when the warrens began to decline, causing a great deal of damage to crops and in some cases forcing farmers to simply give up because they could not grow food to feed the horses on which the farm depended.

Extensive warren remains can be found in Wykeham, Langdale and Dalby Forests. Around 10% of the remains have legal protection as Scheduled Monuments. Previously unrecorded features still occasionally come to light. All features are protected within the public forest estate.

## FROM OUT OF NOWHERE...

*Bolbitious vitellinus**Amanita rubescens**Amanita fulva**Calvatia gigantea = Langermannia gigantea**Pleurotus ostreatus*

IT HAS LONG BEEN considered a mystery....where do fungi come from? Hundreds of years ago the somewhat generalised opinion was that fungi....though principally one suspects “mushrooms”....fell from the heavens. We do not separate fungi from mushrooms, they are of the same order; but nowadays fungi are found in fields and mushrooms in Tesco’s.

The fascination with finding and recording the wild varieties has captured those interested in all things natural and so from out of nowhere, in 1996, the North Eastern Fungus Study Group coalesced from that great cloud of wandering bryologists, lepidopterists, ornithologists, conservationists and pretty well every other variety of “ists” imaginable....and today has some fifty active members with no indication of numbers decreasing. The fascination is permanent.

The group was first and foremost a collection of like-minded individuals who cared about the environment. The first meeting was held in the hot and humid confines of a store room at Low Barns Nature Reserve, where twenty or so of us squeezed in to the black hole of Calcutta and quickly drew up a constitution which has remained largely unchanged. You can see more by visiting the NEFSG.co.uk web-site...but be warned, you may become fascinated.

Enough of the NEFSG. I want to talk about me, or rather me in Danby.

After 40 years in exile just south of Sedgefield, I have come home to Yorkshire. Great Ayton was where my own interest in fungi began. It was a solitary pursuit and did not attract any great following...though

it may have acted as an attractive peculiarity. That is for others to judge, though it was with some relief that I discovered there were many who shared my interest. A great many. Thousands. All over the country. A spate of TV programs featuring the redoubtable Sir David, the chummy communicator/author Michael Jordan and a surfeit of celebrity chefs extolling the culinary delights to be found for “free” ( a debatable term) brought mycology to the fore; though the subject is still under-represented. I shall be contacting the NY Moors Field Centre at Danby shortly to correct this situation in due course!

So here I find myself...my first season back in North Yorkshire with woodland, heathland, moorland, field and pasture to discover and investigate. I am wish- ing my life away in anticipation of the September seasonal “start”; but I have become wise in my old age. The “season” never begins or ends...it is just a shifting illusion. Beneath my feet in woodland, copse, grass and ground the mycelial march continues unabated. Oh, I know that what we are interested in comes with the “fruiting” of the fungi, but there are always some species to be found. This year, from a very wet Spring to a potentially splendid Summer, there has already been a goodly outcropping of Giant Puff Balls (*Calvatia gigantea = Langermannia gigantea*) in a car-park just outside Helmsley, yellow dung-capson (*Bolbitious vitellinus*) on the grass-verges where sheep and horses roam, a fine cluster of Oyster Fungus (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) somewhat past their smell-by date in The Warren near

Grinkle, great amanitas pushing through in Danby Park, both *Amanita excelsa* and *Amanita rubescens*, as well as the prized but suspect *Amanita fulva*, the Tawny Grisette. Today I walked a leisurely couple of hours on track and trail from off a “local” road in the Grinkle environs. This ultimately lead to me getting happily lost...whereupon I found myself in some forbidden woodland; a sign at my exit point proclaimed solemnly that the woodland “...shall never become a public right of way” or something to that effect. And that is a pity, because I found some fine examples of the Stinkhorn, as well as a very early outcropping of Honey Fungus...too young to pin down but worth recording; and that is the point. The fascination is in the finding and recording of the several thousand British species.

Although a large proportion of the 15,000 ( variable) or so species are to found in grassland, heath and meadow...where they are generally quite easy to spot...the vast majority are found in woodland,

hidden in under- growth and damp, dark places. It would seem perverse to prevent controlled access to such places, and in fairness, most landowners are very accommodating of our planned “forays”.

You may like to join us on a recording trip. We have planned forays this year in Crop- ton Forest, and Danby as well as more northerly venues in Northumberland and beyond. You can get details from me, on request, at my email address tectak@aol.com or by visiting the NEFSG website given earlier. Please note that we need to know if you will be joining us for insurance purposes...not that you might poison yourself but more that you may break a leg...remember, we FORAY not FORAGE. If you are still interested, then you can apply for membership via the web-site, new members are most welcome. ♦

Tom Kirby

(Hon. Treas., Memb. Sec. Newsletter Ed. NEFSG)

## NYMA WALK

# CRUNKLY GILL AND CARVED HEADS

ON 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY 2016 our group of twenty-one gathered at the tourist honeypot of Lealholm, in the Esk Valley, including friends from Loftus Accord walking group and Yorkshire Archaeological & Historical Society. A little research had been repaid with plenty of interesting facts about the area; firstly that the village’s name was derived from the Old English for “settlement by the willow trees”. Lealholm’s history can be traced back over many centuries thanks to its location as a crossing point of the River Esk, originally by fords but later by means of a wooden bridge of uncertain origin, though it is recorded that this was replaced by a stone bridge in 1594, and again by another in 1636. The present-day bridge dates back to 1755, though this was widened in 1888 – as the river level was low we were able to look beneath it safely to make out the width of the original, and the join where it was extended. An inscription on the upstream parapet is supposed to tell us “G. Roberts drowned 1861”, though I’ve never been able to locate it.

There was a Post Office here from 1898 – it is said that prior to this there was little need for one as most people were illiterate – and from here the postman walked seventeen miles a day, six days a week, for which in the 1920s he was paid £2 a week. Thankfully there is still an operational railway station, and from 1865 when the railway arrived, fish catches from Staithes and Runswick were brought across the moor to be transported from here, until the coming of the coastal line eight years later.

The theme recurring throughout our walk was carved stone heads and we had eleven to spot, the first being on the wall behind the shop. Most of these are attributed to John Castillo, a local stonemason also known as “The Bard of the Dales”, being celebrated for his poetry. The ornate wells still to be seen, complete with chained drinking vessels, are inscribed “FL”, having been provided by Sir Francis Ley, a lace manufacturer from Epperstone Hall in Nottinghamshire, owner of the Lealholm Estate and benefactor to the village – he it was who installed the water supply in 1904. Sir Francis and his wife Lady Alison also funded the planting of many of the fine trees which enhance the charm of the locality, as well as donating the land for the Anglican church and the adjoining Ley Hall. Lady Alison expected any little girl she met on her perambulations to curtsy to her, and firmly admonished any who failed to do so!

The corn mill survives, now a lovely private house bearing its flood reminder. One of the millers here, Tom Watson, put in the water supply to it by building a dam at Crunkly Gill on the Esk, which took a circuitous route keeping to the contour line for over half a mile. This major work took him 3 years in the early 1760s, and being an enterprising



character he didn’t rest on his laurels, but also rebuilt the mill during his time there. For over four centuries before this, the mill was dependent for powering its waterwheel on a stream which had regularly dried up. In 1763, now that there was a reliable source of water, a paper mill was built in what is now the garden of Poet’s Cottage; after milling ended there in 1850, a William Corner used it for his bacon-curing business, but it was demolished in 1938 with the stone being re-used for the building of Bramble Carr at Ainthorpe. When the paper mill was demolished, huge quantities of buttons were found, these having come from the old clothes that were the mill’s raw material. The original mill ceased operating in 1948 when it became the village hall, locally known as the Nelson Hall, which even had a dance floor installed in its upper level.

The 1839 Methodist chapel is notable not just for its reminders of the many floods which have devastated the valley, but for 4 more carved heads, one believed to be made in the image of the young Queen Victoria at her coronation. Fortunately the river was placid enough today to allow us to cross it by the stepping stones to the Hearse House. Lealholm has never been a parish in its own right, actually being in Glaisdale parish, and until 1904 there was no Anglican graveyard here, hence funerals had to travel to Glaisdale or Danby for burying the dead. However, the Glaisdale & Lealholm Association for the Prosecution of Felons formed a Hearse Committee, and if you contributed towards the purchase of the village

hearse, when your time came you had the use of it at a reduced rate. Its "house" was constructed in 1856 and was used until 1950, the hearse being sold in 1957.

Walking up the hill southwards out of Lealholm, we took a fairly recent permissive path overlooking the remarkable gorge of Crunkly Gill, where the River Esk drops 100ft in just a mile. The name is probably derived from the ancient Manor of Crubeclive (according to the Domesday Book) though several references also give this the unlikely name of "Crumbleclive"; this can be traced back to the Old English for "Ravine by the Crooked Cliff". The area in 1066 was in the possession of the Northumbrian nobleman Orm, whose name is perpetuated on the Saxon sundial's inscription at St. Gregory's Minster near Kirbymoorside (*Orm, Gamel's son, bought St Gregory's when it was all to-broken and to-fallen... etc*). Orm seems to have been here until 1086 when in that year Hugh, son of Baldrick, is recorded as being Lord and Tenant-in-Chief. The gorge was formed when the waters of the Esk were diverted from the pre-glacial channel by a thick moraine of boulder clay that formed a dam across the valley, creating Lake Eskdale, until at the end of the last ice age the water dramatically cut its way through here. The Lealholm Estate owners the Leys turned it into a tourist attraction, with tea gardens and rockeries, and Lady Ley charged visitors 4d (or four for a shilling) in aid of the church. It was known as "A Wonder of the North" and people came in their thousands to admire the scenery and the rare plants that grew here. The serious floods of 1930 destroyed the gardens, and to quote the writer Harry Mead: "*On July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1930 the huge flood swept away the Leys' ambitious handiwork, since when the Gill has remained wild, secluded and secret.*"

Our path from the slopes of the gorge led us to Wild Slack Farm, where our hunt for the carved heads continued, with four more to be found adorning the barn. After the Norman Conquest, Crubeclive Manor was sited about where Wild Slack is today; this was given to Robert de Brus along with land in Upper Eskdale, and the house here fell out of use when he built his own castle at Castleton, which itself was superseded by Danby Castle. Ancient mullions are embedded in the walls of the farm, and fragments of the old manor house have been found in the fields hereabouts.

A path from here took us to our lunch stop where there was some shelter from the strong wind in the long, narrow gouge in the earth which was a whinstone quarry, a smaller version of that at the top of Blue Bank above Sleights. Whinstone is a dense, black basaltic rock which outcrops in places as a ridge across North Yorkshire from near Eaglescliff almost to Robin Hood's Bay. It was quarried mainly for roadstone, the quarry



Lady Ley



Flood levels

workers boarding at Wild Slack.

Our next stone head was spotted on the barn wall of Lawns Gate Farm, the location of the delightful 1970s TV film "Children of Eskdale". A short climb brought us to Shaw End where we enjoyed wide ranging views, as far as Roseberry Topping. The quarry here was worked until 1959, stone from it was used to build Lord Dugdale's Crathorne Hall near Yarm and also, more mundanely, Lealholm's cricket field roller – this was ceremoniously lowered down to the village by local men, women and children hanging on to ropes attached to it, so it didn't run away! Health and safety considerations didn't come into it in those days.

At Shaw End Farm nearby, an unmarried couple, a Mr Watson and Jane Agar, were killed in their bed when the house was struck by lightning in 1869. Jane's son Joseph Agar was found safe and well in an outhouse. At the inquest the coroner asked the jury to contribute a shilling each to buy the boy some clothes, as everything the family owned had gone up in the fire caused by the lightning strike. All the jurors did indeed pay a shilling and other members of the public made contributions, with the coroner himself adding a generous sum of money. Various accounts say the lad was either six months or seven years old, and a local man was said to have taken him in to raise him as his own son.

Descending by the quarry sledway we passed our eleventh stone head of the day at Finkel House in Great Fryupdale, from where we proceeded along the road to visit something unusual for this valley, a trial drift into an

ironstone seam. Around 1863 there were plans to turn the Eskdale area into an industrial klondike equalling Rosedale; thankfully the mineral here was not considered worth mining so Fryup was left to its rural peace.

Just along the road we came upon a well hidden inscribed stone, carved by Danby stonemason Frank Wetherill. The wording states "*1936. Six gates in next mile a nuisance proved. Helped by kind donors, tenants and owners had them removed. Use well time saved*". This commemorates the replacement with cattle grids of the gates, which used to make progress tedious along this dale road. It was nice to find, behind the stone, a box containing a notebook, pen, sticking plasters and other survival equipment, evidently a geocache. We left it for other passers-by to discover.

Back in Lealholm was our final curiosity of the day, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Quaker Burial Ground where the only gravestone to be seen was inscribed "TW", a clue to the identity of the person who had donated the land – perhaps that very busy miller Tom Watson? A flight of ancient stone steps now took us up the hill to The Ley Hall, as today the local ladies were serving afternoon teas, a fitting and very civilised way to end a walk!

Jane Ellis

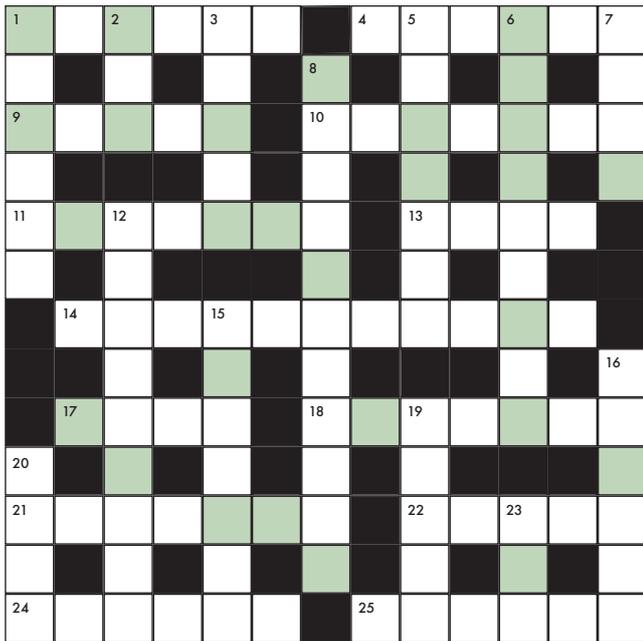
## NYMA NOVEMBER WALK – SATURDAY 26 NOVEMBER

Meet at Danby Lodge Moors Centre at 10.00 for short circular walk (c. 4.5 miles) via Ainthorpe, over Ainthorpe Rigg to \*Stonebeck Gate Farm, down Little Fryup Dale passing Foresters Lodge to Crag wood, under rail bridge to Park House returning to Moors Centre (the Centre café and shop will be open). Walk will be led by Pauline & Albert Elliot. Please wear/bring suitable winter attire.

NB \*If enough interest shown, coffee break for members of the walking group can be arranged in advance at Stonebeck Farm House including visit to their small museum of rural artefacts.

Please confirm your interest by ringing 01287 660137. Thank you.

# CRYPTIC CROSSWORD No 74 BY AMANUENSIS



Take the letters from the greyed-out squares and solve the following clue:

Famous local sailor and navigator who searched the seas for leviathans of the deep (7, 7, 8, 6).


**ACROSS:**

- 1 Bird flies out of thorium reed. (6)
- 4 He'd imbibe beer and be better for it (6)
- 9&10 On track between Pickering and Grosmont (5,7 )
- 11 Always spotted but rarely seen (7)
- 13 Fuse diode employed internally (4)
- 14 Vigorous physical energy requires joint lubricant (5,6)
- 17 Fever in The Hague (4)
- 18 Aims to influence things in the house (6)
- 21 Place where you may lose your shirt on spin (7)
- 22 Letter from Greece
- 24 Attempts pieces of writing (6)
- 25 Main work song (6 )

**DOWN:**

- 1 Le sluts go wild in fight (6)
- 2 Have regrets about the plant (3)
- 3 Land in the ocean (5)
- 5 Gourmet tale of heroic deeds on Yorkshire river (7)
- 6 Crazy Sally slew without regard to the rules (9)
- 7 Periods of time in a confused state we hear (4)
- 8 Biblical waster (9,3)
- 12 Eggheads? (9)
- 15 Weighty health problem? (7)
- 16 Idyllic country place of old (6)
- 19 Master musician takes time to form a group (5)
- 20 Came unstuck at highest point (4)
- 23 One changes over long period of time in America (3)

**North Yorkshire Moors Association**

## CELEBRATION LUNCHEON

SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER 2016

The Bay Horse, Broughton

Meet at 12.30 for meal at 13.00

Please phone 01287 660137 to reserve your place  
(NB. Restricted places – first come, first served will apply)

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Down: 1 russia 2 rue 3 Samoa 5 epicure 6 lawlessly 7 days 8 prodigal son 12 oologists 15 obesity 16 Arcady 19 batch 20 acme 23 con  
 Across: 1 thrush 4 healed 9&10 steam railway 11 leopard 13 used 14 elbow grease 17 ague 18 lobbyist 21 casino 22 thera 24 essays 25 shanty  
 ANAGRAM ANSWER: Captain William Scoresby Senior



## SCARCE MOTHS

Late summer is an exciting time of the year for a lepidopterist living near moorland. Quite a few scarce moths emerge at this time of year as they take advantage of the flowering heather, which this year has been particularly good. I usually find a few of these late summer moths are tempted into my moth trap in my Glaisdale garden. However, to discover which species can be found on the moor I make a couple of planned visits to a private site up on the moorland edge where I set up my gear. This entails running a bright light over a white ground sheet. Hopefully this simple device lures in any nearby moths and then they can be closely inspected, identified and recorded. In previous years some of the moths which I have recorded on the moors have been seen nowhere else in Yorkshire, whether this is due to under recording or to the fact that they are localised to this area can only be discovered by more attempts to find them and more detailed surveys.

## ELUSIVE CREATURES

This year a friend from Scarborough decided to give me a hand with my search for these elusive creatures of the moors. We got off to a good start by making a trip to Fen bog on 21 August. Here we recorded eight *Anomalous* amongst a haul of fifteen more generalised species. Following a second visit two nights later, three more moorland species were identified and recorded: *Neglected rustic*, *Heath rustic* and *White-line dart*. Two visits to my usual site near Glaisdale moor also produced more treasures in a single *Grey chi* and a rare *Haworth's minor*.

*Heath rustic*



*Emerald damselfly*



## RARE SIGHTING

Encouraged by our success, my friend chose a balmy September evening to run a light (with permission) near Ravenscar. He was overwhelmed with moths and took good numbers of some of the same moorland species which I had been seeing and recording, however one moth in particular stood out: the very scarce *Northern rustic*. This moth has rarely been seen in VC62 and is more usually associated with the rocky coastline of Western Britain. The caterpillars of this moth feed on the leaves of the plant species, harebells and stoncrop which are abundant there, so it was a real bonus to discover this rare visitor here on the East coast!

## DRAGON HUNT

I had promised to take a friend of mine dragonfly spotting, and with the forecast for August bank holiday set fair, we arranged to go on a Dragon Hunt. The first site we surveyed was a pond in Cropton Forest. As we approached we were greeted with the sight of the *Common hawkler* hunting along the forest rides. The pond itself also had good numbers of *Black darter* and *Emerald damselfly* along the margins and a single *Brown hawkler*. We also spotted a beautiful uncommon moth, the *Bordered beauty*.

Our second foray in search of dragonflies was to Goathland tarn. The weather was perfect with plenty of warm sunshine and a slight breeze. Again good numbers of smaller species were seen but the larger *Common hawkler* was in abundance and seemed to be everywhere. Due to heavy rain the previous day, many shallow pools had formed in the boggy areas and the females were busy laying their eggs in them, often accompanied by the males holding them in their claspers by the neck. I was overwhelmed with their numbers and my friend was suitably impressed with my 'dragon hunting' skills.

*Hawkmoth*

*Hawker dragonfly*



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.

## THE DRAGONFLY

Today I saw the dragonfly  
Come from the wells where he did lie.  
An inner impulse rent the veil  
Of his old husk: from head to tail  
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.  
He dried his wings: like gauze they grew;  
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew  
A living flash of light he flew.

*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*



Golden-ringed dragonfly  
*Cordulegaster boltonii*

Photos: Tammy Andrews - NYMNP



NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS ASSOCIATION –  
SPONSORS OF THE MOORS RAMBLER BUS

