

# VOICE OF THE MOORS

NYMA - PROTECTING THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS  
FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS



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Cover: Pond on Egton Moor in summer (© Mel Ullswater)

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# CHAIR'S FOREWORD

## NYMA AND THE NORTH YORK MOORS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNPA) published its new Management Plan in late May. NYMA was one of many organisations which commented on the draft plan earlier in the year. It is easy to be cynical about the public commenting process. You expect that all the effort that goes into writing the comments is wasted as they disappear into a bureaucratic mire, never to surface again. Not in this case, though! We were delighted to see in the final plan that various parts had been beefed up, and they were often about the things that concerned us most.

The Management Plan is available on the NYMNPA website. It's an important document because the coming few years will be, as they say in the introduction, 'daunting'. There are six 'Outcomes' and a total of twenty-four 'Objectives'. 'Outcomes' are aspirations, to which we can allow some poetic licence. For example, 'A nature-rich, more biodiverse landscape' and 'A place that lifts the nation's wellbeing'. 'Objectives' are much more difficult. Not only must they be realistic as targets, but they must not play against each other. For instance, too much emphasis on biodiversity and nature restitution in the name of, say, controlling carbon dioxide emissions, may be misplaced when the real problem might turn out to be population decline and economic decay. Better to make the objectives modest, realistic and measurable than too ambitious, as they do in the most part.

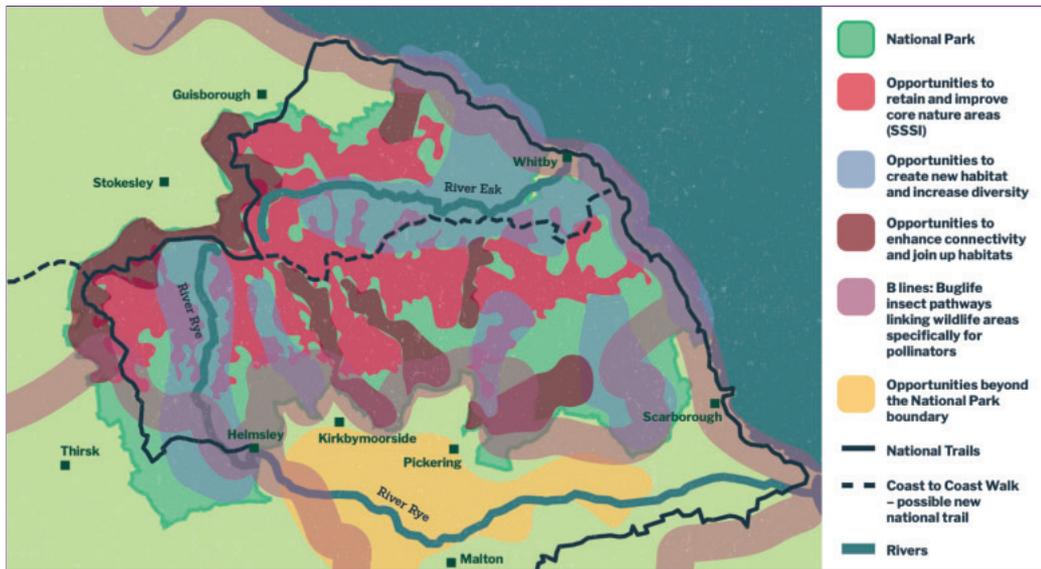
## WHERE DOES THE BOUNDARY LIE - AND WHY?

In making our comments on the plan, NYMA carried out some modest checking of the demographic information available. Is it really the case that communities within the National Park are losing population? The answer is 'yes', but before we reached this conclusion, we went down the road of trying to identify which wards and parishes are actually within the National Park. A grapple with a large-scale Ordnance Survey map quickly revealed that the main rule for choosing the boundary was something like 'steer clear of any major settlements and A-roads'. For example, if I ask you 'Which are the main settlements?' and your answer is 'Helmsley and Thornton-le-Dale' then you are half-right and nearly right, but not totally right because the boundary cuts through them both. Kirkbymoorside is completely outside the park, as are Stokesley and Pickering.

Where is the logic? Most of the Moors 'gateway' towns and villages are just that, 'gateways'. How is it possible to develop a coherent plan when most of the significant service towns are not part of the total? From a management perspective, the bounded National Park does not make proper sense as a social and economic entity, which is why it is so difficult to plan for its future as a totality.

## ACCESS FOR HUMANS - AND WILDLIFE

Another of NYMA's watchwords is 'access'. We want more access for all, especially those without their own vehicle. Speaking of which, what about animals and plants? Increasingly, wildlife management plans include wildlife 'corridors' to allow creatures to overcome barriers created usually by humans. Image-friendly ducks, toads, hedgehogs and red squirrels notwithstanding, this is an important initiative for all wildlife. The Management Plan has a fascinating 'Nature Opportunities'



map, showing areas for improvement. These include 'B lines', 'buglife insect pathways linking wildlife areas specifically for pollinators' and 'opportunities to join up habitats'. The map takes some liberties, such as missing off the River Derwent, one of the most unheralded parts of the UK in its nature conservation story (see the piece by NYMA President Ian Carstairs on page 4), but it's a big step forward because it gives much more prominence to how the natural world really works.

### HARRY MEAD

My recent reading has included 'Inside the North York Moors' (1978, 1994), prompted by NYMA's first Lifetime Achievement Award made to the author, Harry Mead. His books - including 'A Prospect of the North York Moors' (2000) - are classics of their kind, best reserved for dark winter evenings to relive happy days in much-loved places. My personal favourite is his chapter on

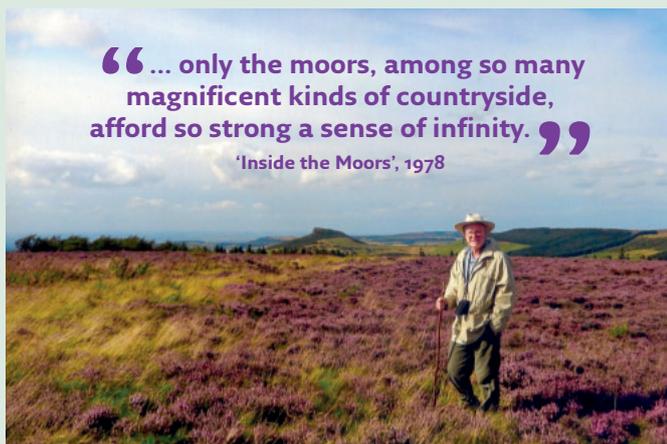
churches, including his account of St Gregory's Minster in Kirkdale, 'a place of absorbing interest', 'a tiny parish church that might escape the notice even of those who follow the signposts to it'. Harry Mead is master of detail and anecdote. He writes of John Betjeman attending evensong at St Gregory's in October 1970, reading some of his poems from the pulpit. I imagine Betjeman appealing for funds, in his poem "Verses Turned ...":

And must that plaintive bell in vain  
Plead loud along the dripping lane?  
And must the building fall?

Harry will take you on happenchance journeys like that: evocative, personable, passionate echoes of the past.

ADRIAN LEAMAN

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD - HARRY MEAD



NYMA is delighted to make a special award to journalist and author Harry Mead for his wonderful contribution over many decades to public appreciation of the North York Moors.

Harry Mead was born over 80 years ago, son of a local brickyard manager in a village in the Eston Hills on the edge of what is now the North York Moors National Park.

For well over 50 years until his retirement in 2019, Harry was a leading journalist with the Northern Echo, rising to become its Chief Feature Writer, exploring aspects of life, history, landscape

and culture of Cleveland and of the North York Moors in particular, in articles of perception and insight.

Harry's passion for everything to do with the Moors is developed in greater detail in two influential books, 'Inside the North York Moors' (1978) and a 'Prospect of the North York Moors' (2000). These two books alone put Harry with the likes of Canon Atkinson, Fairfax Blakeborough, Frank Elgee, and Tom Scott Burns as a leading authority on the cultural heritage of the North York Moors. His formidable knowledge of its history and people, presented in his books and many articles in an entertaining and highly readable way, has brought a deeper understanding of the unique cultural landscapes of the North York Moors to past and present generations.

Although now sadly very ill, Harry is thrilled and honoured by the award. His family tell us that "Dad has a life-long love affair with the North York Moors and, prior to his stroke, he was never happier than out with his rucksack, either by himself, or with his late wife Shirley - his walking companion for 60 years - strolling between Danby and Castleton, through Farndale or Bransdale, or on the Cleveland Hills behind his home in Great Broughton."

His writing no doubt will remain an equally important influence on future generations in decades to come.

# NO TIME FOR SHAKING THE FOUNDATIONS



Lower Derwent meadow with Ragged Robin and Meadow Rue



Farming near Hackness, in the Derwent Catchment

**IT IS TO STATE** the obvious: society is under pressure; some might say in chaos.

At a time when affording essentials is a challenge for many, the growing crisis is compounded by all manner of changes to established systems, however well-intentioned those changes might be.

This is the difference between the private and public sector. If a business is struggling, the first instinct is to stabilise its operations. Whereas in the public sector it seems to lead to wholesale reorganisation in the hope that this will fix the problems.

For example, the Government's Green Paper on Nature Recovery suggests that the long-established designation system of landscape and wildlife sites should be changed. Why? Then, faced with a national imperative over food security, the financial support which has underpinned farming is being reduced. This is to be replaced by laudable and indeed essential - but not perhaps in the short-term realistic - environmental goals when it comes to embedding them into the primary purposes of food production in the face of international supply challenges.

Surely it would be better firstly to stabilise food production instead of risking putting farmers out of business and the rural social consequences which could follow, when the world is changing for the worse around them. In the absence of any clarity over the road ahead, how about a few suggestions?

- Suspend phasing out the farm Basic Payment support scheme at the levels which farmers are used to, at least for the time being.
- Going forward, reward farmers for existing natural assets they have on their holdings, adding to them where possible and practical, otherwise those who have done the right things all along lose out.
- Experiment with incentivising farm business to diversify and let sub-divisions of their land in zones around towns to provide varied food production for local consumption with low food-miles.
- Drop any thought of re-designating landscapes and wildlife sites. Land managers, planners, developers all know the rules - change will only lead to confusion.
- Maintain the present Habitats Regulations requirements and associated planning process to unequivocally protect our core wildlife sites - without a secure future for them our ability to build back nature across the wider countryside is compromised.
- Reinforce commitment to 'the precautionary principle' where it protects the landscape and wildlife. It cannot be used 'more

flexibly' as the Green Paper suggests - that is a contradiction in terms.

Unless we stabilise the pivotal issue of food security, the wide ambitions of rewilding may well be a pipe-dream, at high risk of being abandoned if we should hit a future food crisis, whether for environmental reasons or through international tensions.

But can we make any difference to influence the future? Well, take heart.

What is not well known are the national impacts for conservation over the last forty years which have stemmed from our region, all focused around the catchment of the River Derwent, which rises on Fylingdales Moor.

A campaign in the 1980s against Ministry of Agriculture grant support for conversion of moorland to grassland, centred on Troutsdale Moor, saw national grant-funding ended. Challenges over grant support for pump-drainage schemes impacting wetland wildlife sites in the Lower Derwent Valley yielded similar positive results. A House of Lords test-case over the river itself helped to protect many rivers throughout the country. Also, the very process setting out how the Habitats Regulations should be applied was established alongside groundbreaking agreements over the Selby Coalfield and its potential impact on the Lower Derwent Valley.

Who managed to bring about these successes?

Well, it wasn't the large conservation bodies or councils and organisations. In each instance, 'ordinary local people' proved time and again the wise words of the American anthropologist Margaret Meade: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

Naturally, as a conservationist I would love to see improvements to biodiversity that are so desperately needed. But I fear that it will not be helped by the wholesale changes to the present arrangements, such that nobody really understands where we are or where we are going.

To paraphrase the words of the philosopher Edmund Burke, the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century MP for Malton (itself on the River Derwent): "It is only necessary for those concerned about the conservation of the countryside and its wildlife to do nothing for those whose schemes will harm it to prevail".

We must continue to speak up!

**IAN CARSTAIRS**

# OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MINES?

**A** RECENT Yorkshire Post article carried the headline 'Third Energy seek UK's first geothermal energy pilot in North Yorkshire'. My first response was the sinking feeling that we might be faced with yet another battle to follow those concerning large-scale mining, fracking and on-shore wind farms in protecting the national park and AONB landscapes which are supposed to be protected in the first place. Solar farms are another on the horizon. Then, more calmly, I asked myself: 'Where, exactly?' and 'What's appropriate?'

“ Given the clarion call for renewable energy supplies, ground-source installations are an attractive option because once installed they are all-but invisible at ground level. ”

## HOW DOES GEOTHERMAL WORK?

Geothermal plants extract energy in the form of heat from below the surface of the earth. There are already at least 40,000 installations in the UK of ground-source heat extraction, which use a loop of pipes just below the ground surface, or - much deeper - a borehole, so that latent heat below the ground may be captured by a heat pump, similar in operation to a fridge but in reverse. There are some larger-scale systems that tap into aquifers, such as the hot springs at Bath, and a project in Southampton, started in 1980, which supplies hot water for 3,000 homes. Some swimming pools also use geothermal heat. But these are scratching the surface in comparison with geothermal energy installations that can penetrate up to five miles down to tap into much higher temperatures. In the UK there is one such project, at United Downs, near Redruth in Cornwall. There are two wells - 5,200 and 2,500 metres deep - that exploit hot rocks in the granite substrate for heat to generate electricity or for heating.

## WHERE, AND WHAT'S APPROPRIATE?

Let's not get carried away. 'Where, exactly?' and 'What's appropriate?' As might be expected, Third Energy is not specific on specifics. Candidates are their own energy plant at Knapton Carr (near West Heslerton, and close to the Scarborough-Malton power line), the ex-fracking site at Kirby Misperton, and the existing installation originally for gas extraction near Ebberston. Only the last is in the National Park. But there are other locations within the Park that have deep shafts, such as the Boulby mine, which presumably has heat to spare the farther down they go, and the Woodsmith mine too, eventually. So what's appropriate? Domestic-scale geothermal projects

such as ground-source and borehole heat extraction are proven and successful in their niches, but are not a cure-all. A lot of digging and some disruption is involved on installation, the systems need maintaining, the pumps are electric and the upfront cost will be out of the reach of many. However, given the clarion call for renewable energy supplies, ground-source installations are an attractive option, especially in national parks, because once installed they are all but invisible at ground level, an important factor in protected landscapes.

Bigger, hotter, more expensive geothermal systems need to be closer to centres of demand for heat or power to justify their installation costs. They may be better suited, for instance, to horticultural use for heating greenhouses than to domestic heating, because they do not need to be close to towns and cities. Large-scale horticulture may be looking for new ways to keep heating and power costs down. Geothermal might come under consideration. However, hot-rocks geothermal can only be located where the geology plays ball (as it does in Iceland, where the majority of homes are heated geothermally). At this stage we don't know whether the geology of the North York Moors is suitable. But this area has remarkable geodiversity, which, of course, contributes to the landscape quality. So nothing should be ruled out. Especially earth tremors. The self-same problem that put paid to fracking in the UK may also rule out geothermal. Although Britain is constantly affected by earth tremors, they become more of a problem when they are generated by drilling or by explosions linked to exploration.

“ Could gravity power be another form of renewable energy? ”

## THE POWER OF GRAVITY

Such obstacles may lead us down a new 'old' route: gravity. 'Old' because clocks have for centuries been powered by weights. 'New' because, according to engineering company Graviticity, "multi-weight systems raising and lowering weights totalling up to 12,000 tonnes in shafts up to 750 metres deep offer ... almost 25 MWh of flexible storage". Such systems might be used for 'load balancing' surplus wind energy created at night, acting as storage in the same way that proven pump storage installations such as at Dinorwig in Wales work at present, generating hydro-electricity during the day. Cue: re-use of abandoned mineshafts, perhaps? All underground, and out of sight as soon as the contractors have gone. A welcome return to proven, stable technologies that work, or more technological myopia?

The Yorkshire Post has just carried this headline: "Gravity Energy Facility Plan for North Yorkshire". Where? Knapton Energy Park, Ryedale. Appropriate? We'll see.

ADRIAN LEAMAN

# THE ST. JOHN'S WORTS OR HYPERICUMS

Photos © Nan Sykes



*Hypericum hirsutum*



*Hypericum perforatum*

**T**HERE IS NO group of plants so closely connected to summertime than the Hypericums or St. John's Worts. Not only do they reflect the sun with their bright yellow flowers, but they all flower more or less at the same time, in late June to August. Thus in folklore, right across Europe, they had a strong association with the Feast of St. John the Baptist on June 24<sup>th</sup>, which is how they got their name.

The Hypericums of the Hypericaceae family are mostly hairless, upright perennials and undershrubs, with terminal branched flower panicles on leafy stems; two smaller ones are trailing plants. The leaves are opposite, untoothed and most have translucent veins and oil glands, while some also have black dots. The star-shaped flowers have five sepals and five bright yellow petals which may also be dotted with black. These surround prominent bunches of long yellow stamens round the central styles.

## A VARIETY OF HABITATS

Although they are all fairly similar and all flower about the same time, each tends to be restricted to a distinct habitat - acidic or alkaline, wet or dry, valley or high moors. Quite a number of them can be found in our area, though many are far from common. The four most likely to be encountered are:

- The Slender or Beautiful St. John's Wort (*H. pulchrum*) on drier acid heaths, often woodland edges and tracks. This is the most delicate of the family, small and upright with red-tinged flowers, noticeable when in bud.
- The Common or Perforate St. John's Wort (*H. perforatum*) on the lower moor slopes, in drier less acidic regions to the south, in hedges, grass verges and woodland edges. It is more robust with two ridges to the stem, and the leaves can be red-tinged with translucent glands.
- In similar areas can be found the Hairy St. John's Wort (*H. hirsutum*), with downy leaves that have translucent glands and a rounded stem.

- The Square-stemmed St. John's Wort (*H. tetrapterum*) prefers wet acidic soil, damp grassland and ditches; it is a robust plant with a square, four-winged stem and slightly paler leaves with translucent glands.

In old woods, the Shrubby St. John's Wort or Tutsan (*H. androsaemum*) may be found; a larger-leaved plant, the leaves are pleasantly scented, though near habitation this may be a garden 'escape'.

Others that may be found are the Marsh (*H. elodes*), the Trailing (*H. humifusum*) and the Pale (*H. montanum*) St. John's Worts. The Imperfect (*H. maculatum*), with no translucent glands to its leaves, is rarely found in our area.

## A HISTORY OF PROTECTION

Although the Hypericums came to have a deep connection to the Feast of St. John, they were known, used and appreciated long before this association was made. 'Hyper' is Greek for 'above', and their name is thought to originate from the plant being used above icons and statues of gods, placed to ward off evil spirits and influences, for protection; even their scent was thought to protect and calm nervousness. They were also reputed to be dedicated to Baldr - a Norse god of light - with the sun-coloured flowers and long yellow stamens representing the rays of the sun.

The plant thus has a long association with protection in folklore and witchcraft, which was later 'Christianised' - absorbed into Christianity - to make it a herb of St. John. Thus, it became one of the seven Irish herbs that offered complete protection against all evil influences. They were picked before sunrise on St. John's Eve and held in the smoke of the fires lit for the festival on June 24<sup>th</sup> before being hung round the houses and farm buildings to protect its inhabitants.

*Hypericum tetrapterum*



This practice was common Europe-wide. The French saying “employer toutes les herbes de la Saint-Jean” (using all the herbs of St. John) means using all the tools at one’s disposal to succeed in an enterprise, while in Scotland the plant was revered by St. Columba, who recommended it was worn near the heart, under the left arm. Similarly, knights on the crusades always carried some.

### A HEALING HERB

As well as the belief that it could protect, it was also recognised as a useful healing herb from the time of at least the Greek physician and botanist Dioscorides (40-90 AD). The name Tutsan, for the Shrubby St. John’s Wort, derives from the French ‘toute-saine’ or ‘heal all’.

The glands on the plant contain a red oil which has antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties, a healant for burns, bruises,

bites, stings, scolds, neuralgia and any skin irritations. Care had to be taken, however, as some foods and medicines consumed with it could increase the photosensitivity of the skin, causing further pain and inflammation.

It was also recorded from the earliest times that extracts from the plant helped melancholia, nervous depression, anxiety, and fatigue, and that it was a mild sedative. This has been proved by modern science and it is nowadays used as an antidepressant with few side-effects.

All in all, the St. John’s Worts are a group of plants with a long history of medicinal use, slipping into magic and witchcraft in the Middle Ages, but which have been vindicated in modern times and widely used again for healing.

And with their bright yellow flowers reflecting the sun in the midsummer, they are enough to lift any mood - find and enjoy!

ANNE PRESS

## THE EMPEROR OF THE MOORS



Emperor caterpillar

**THE EMPEROR MOTH** is the only species of silkworm moth found in Great Britain. It is widespread throughout the country and is found across a wide range of habitats including heaths and moors: the North York Moors is a great place to seek them out. The male and female are similar in pattern but their colours vary substantially, as shown in the photos. The females are the larger of the two and can have a wingspan of up to 9 centimetres.

The male Emperors fly rapidly by day in sunshine and could be mistaken for a Small Tortoiseshell or similar butterfly. The females fly at night and sometimes come to a light; they may be observed resting during the day. Female Emperor moths have a pheromone gland at the end of the abdomen which emits a scent to attract the male moths. The male

Emperors are equipped with feathery antennae, and they use these to detect the pheromones of the female.

Artificial pheromone lures are available which can be used to entice the males of the species to you as they are quite difficult to see otherwise. I have done this on several occasions in the North York Moors and have had several males flying about my head very quickly after the lure is opened. If you are really lucky a male may come to rest. It’s thought the males are able to detect the pheromones from several kilometres away, and even after the lure is put away the scent remains and you often find yourself being followed by a male Emperor moth.

The female Emperor moth lays her eggs within a few hours after mating, and the eggs take about 10 days to hatch. The Emperor moth caterpillars are black and hairy when newly hatched. As they grow, they change to green with yellow, pink or

orange spots: each spot is covered with short black hairs. You are most likely to see these wonderfully ornate caterpillars walking across moorland footpaths during the months of late May to August. The caterpillars feed on a variety of foodplants including Heathers, Meadowsweet, Alder Buckthorn, Bramble and Hawthorn.

The caterpillars spend the winter in their brown, pear-shaped silk cocoon, and emerge as adult moths in April or May.

MARTIN PARTRIDGE

Male Emperor Moth



Female Emperor Moth



# SKYLARKS



Photo © Jill Pakenham

**T**HE SKYLARK is a truly agricultural bird – before the widespread introduction of farming it was probably quite scarce, and its fortunes ever since have followed farming practice. It has long been an integral part of the British landscape, and its song has inspired poets ranging from Chaucer to Blake.

Skylarks are characteristic of semi-natural grassland systems from sand dunes through heathland to marginal upland, but are most common in arable farmland, making use of the nesting cover and bare ground for feeding that the crops provide throughout the year. Males are highly territorial, using long song flights at altitude to broadcast to rivals and potential mates. The stamina required to sustain these song flights is likely used by females as an indication of male quality. This has also allowed male Skylarks to advertise themselves without bright plumage, so they have kept the cryptic, streaked brown colouration that affords them protection from predators on the ground.

## DECLINE IN SKYLARK NUMBERS

The British Trust for Ornithology's Breeding Birds Survey shows a continuous decline in Skylark numbers since the late 1970s, and indeed it has been on the UK Red List as a bird of conservation concern for some years (the Red List provides data on the world's biodiversity). Research suggests that a reduction in over-winter seed availability from the loss of crop stubbles, plus autumn sowing of cereals and rape, were the prime causes. The use of more efficient herbicides meant that fewer weed seeds were available, too.

The other problem with autumn-sown crops is that by the time the breeding season comes round, it is generally too tall and too dense to allow Skylarks to nest or to feed, which means that they are unable to raise enough chicks to maintain stable populations. Their choice of nesting site is influenced by the height and density of surrounding vegetation, the ideal height being 20-50 cm.

In their other favoured environment, modified grassland, frequent cutting of grass for silage has disrupted nesting and ever higher levels of stocking of grazing animals have increased the chances of nests being trampled.

Skylarks generally make two or three nesting attempts in the same area of farmland during their long breeding season and these need to be successful to maintain a healthy population.

## FARMING FOR CONSERVATION

Conservation concern over the Skylark's decline led to the introduction of subsidised farming programmes designed to help their recovery. Agri-environment schemes such as leaving stubble

unsprayed over winter to enhance weed seed availability, providing weedy, fallow land in spring for nesting, and creating bare patches in crops to allow access for breeding birds have all been funded – but without much success. Where Skylarks do use autumn-sown crops, their nesting attempts are often on or close to 'tramlines' (the tractor tracks used to apply sprays to the crop), which makes them vulnerable to ground predators

So why has the decline continued? The picture is complex. Firstly, many farmers do not like agri-environment management schemes that interfere with crop production, so most tend to be along field edges – places that Skylarks avoid as they are more visible to predators. The Skylark's heritage as a steppe species is apparent in its avoidance of vertical structures, which restricts their use of farmland with a lot of hedgerows. Secondly, some options have not had the intended effects, for example through concentrating birds and making them more obvious to predators. With ELMS (the new Environment Land Management Schemes) in the offing, no-one knows what sort of specific conservation initiatives will follow or how much bureaucracy will accompany them, but a wider culture-shift about what constitutes "good farming" is needed, something current pressure on farm incomes makes less than easy.

Skylark numbers in areas of heathland, moorland, and marshland have bucked the downwards trend slightly with decreases less than average. Perhaps the only positive effect of intensive land management in support of the excessive releases of gamebirds (covered in Winter 2021 issue of *Voice*) is the suppression of predators, which has helped ground-nesting birds such as Skylarks and Curlews.

## MORE RESEARCH NEEDED

What does the future hold for the Skylark? Knowledge of Skylark ecology is much better in the breeding season than in winter, chiefly because they are seldom ringed and still more rarely recovered or recaptured, whereas nests are quite easy to find. More research into the reasons why the decline continues is vital, perhaps using some form of tagging. Without this, fewer and fewer people will see and hear this icon of the British countryside in the future.

**MIKE GRAY**

Please visit the BTO website - <https://www.bto.org> - for more details of the birds in the Moors, your garden, and surrounding areas.

To hear the glorious song of the Skylark in flight, go to <https://xeno-canto.org/722548>

# SUBTERRANEAN MYSTERIES: THE 'ROTOR' RADAR SYSTEM

Photos © Alan Staniforth



ROC Post on the outskirts of Castleton

**T**AKE THE ROAD to Goldsborough from the East Barnby crossroads and you will shortly pass on your right a burnt out and derelict bungalow. Quite modern in design, this building is not what it might at first appear. The site of the present ruin had been used by the Army in the early 1940s as a radar base for detecting enemy shipping, and the base was later transferred to the RAF.

As the Second World War approached its end, the radar system that had played such an important part in the conflict was gradually run down. However, in 1949 - following the first Soviet nuclear test and the outbreak of the Korean War the following year - the British Government decided that the national system should be updated as a matter of urgency. Codenamed the ROTOR project, work began at Goldsborough in 1951 with the excavation of a huge hole in the ground. Hundreds of tons of concrete were used to build a bunker on two levels with walls ten feet thick. The structure was then buried and a guardhouse 'bungalow' giving controlled access to the bunker was built at ground level. Due to post-war austerity measures the project was not completed until 1953, and within only a few years advances in technology had rendered the ROTOR system all but obsolete. A severe fire closed the Goldsborough station in 1958, while a few principal stations elsewhere were upgraded but most were closed. Money down the drain! The Goldsborough site is on private land but is within yards of the road. Another fire in 2004 severely damaged the roof and the building is now boarded up.

## ROC POSTS

Scattered throughout the North York Moors, and indeed the whole of the country, are a number of subterranean structures with only a low mound, a small concrete box and a few pipes on the surface to show that there is anything there at all. Easily mistaken for a small enclosed water reservoir, these are the sites of old Royal Observer Corps posts.

From the late 1950s to the late 1970s the Cold War was at its height. Threat of nuclear war was prevalent and after the launch of Sputnik 1 in 1957 the race was on for dominance in space.

The Government of the day (under Harold Macmillan) wasted no time in setting up defence and monitoring systems. By 1964 RAF Fylingdales was in operation and over 1,500 ROC monitoring posts had been built across the country, nearly twenty of them in or around the North York Moors.

These posts, built largely underground, were constructed in order to monitor nuclear blast and fallout in the event of a nuclear attack. Usually manned by three ROC volunteers, the posts were largely self-sufficient. Information collected would be forwarded to a regional group HQ and from there fed into the national monitoring system. Like many of the ROC posts, most of the group HQs have either been demolished or put to other uses. However, a group HQ near the centre of York has been retained in virtually its original state: it is now in the care of English Heritage and is well worth a visit. Of the ROC posts within our area at least one has been completely demolished, several are derelict, and a couple have been renovated by local enthusiasts and are occasionally open for the public to visit.

Ironically, an unusual structure within the grounds of Whitby Abbey recorded on a map in *'Defence of Britain. North Yorkshire & Cleveland, Volume 2'* as an ROC post appears in fact to be an old water reservoir! The nearby underground Monitoring Post is recorded as being built in 1959 and closing in 1968. The site has since been landscaped.

## BACK TO THE FUTURE

Back at the crossroads, take the road towards East Barnby and on your left you will pass the North Yorkshire County Council Training Centre, now used as an outdoor activity centre. In times past this was the base for RAF personnel operating the radar system on the Goldsborough road, and in the 1960s it was again a base for staff clearing Fylingdales Moor of old wartime ordnance prior to the building of RAF Fylingdales, affectionately known as 'the golf balls', which were themselves replaced by 'the cheese grater' in 1992.

ALAN STANIFORTH

ROTOR bungalow on the Goldsborough road



# “CLASH OF CROWNS

## THE BATTLE OF BYLAND 1322: YORKSHIRE’S FORGOTTEN CONFLICT”

BY HARRY PEARSON (CERRIDWEN PUBLISHERS, £16.99)

**E**IGHT YEARS after his celebrated victory over Edward II and his English army at Bannockburn in 1314, King Robert I of Scotland met the English monarch on the field of battle again - but this time it was deep into Edward’s territory, close to Byland in North Yorkshire. This was the Bruce’s last battle against the English and it has too often been overlooked and omitted from the accounts of his life and reign.

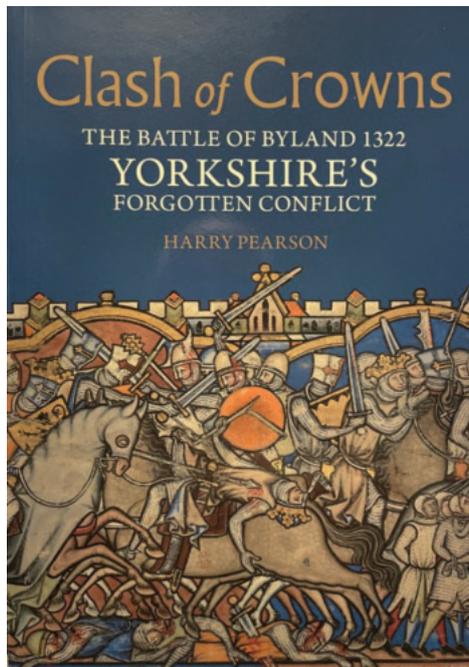
Following an unsuccessful invasion of Scotland in August 1322, Edward had retreated southwards with the remnants of his army. Sensing the weakness of the English, Robert launched a bold counter-raid into English territory at the end of September through the West Marches (later known as Cumberland and Westmorland) towards Carlisle.

When he was made aware of reports from his scouts that Edward was in Yorkshire, Robert immediately saw an opportunity to force a negotiated settlement with the English by capturing important prisoners or even Edward himself.

Travelling at great speed, a characteristic of Scottish raiding forces of the period, the Scots reached Northallerton on 12<sup>th</sup> October, with Edward now only some 15 miles away in the vicinity of Rievaulx. On 14<sup>th</sup> October 1322 the two armies engaged, with the English positioned on the heights of the steep escarpment of Sutton Bank. Bruce had lost none of his sharp tactical awareness and, by a combination of a frontal assault up the path to the top of Sutton Bank and a flanking assault which required a part of his force to scale the steep wooded slopes to the south, the English were put to flight. Edward, who had remained behind the lines away from the fighting, only narrowly managed to make his escape.

To mark the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Byland, Harry Pearson has produced an excellent account of the engagement set in its context. His clear and unfussy narrative provides a tour of the earlier stages of the Anglo-Scottish conflict begun in the reign of Edward I through to the detail of the battle itself and the aftermath, concluding with the Treaty of Edinburgh / Northampton in 1328. This ended the first phase of the Wars of Scottish Independence and gave the Scots all that they had been fighting for.

This book is readily accessible to the non-specialist reader while underpinned with notes and a bibliography for those who may wish to delve into the detail of the primary and secondary sources. The precise location of the battle has been the subject of some debate over the years, and Harry Pearson has put forward his views based on detailed research and an intimate knowledge of the landscape. By way of appendices there is a



helpful section on the arms and armour of the period and a brief summary of the limited archaeological investigations that have taken place to date. There is clearly scope for more work in this area. The book concludes with some suggested battlefield walks for those who wish to visit the site.

Harry Pearson has illustrated his text throughout with photographs and maps that bring the landscape and the story to life, although the inclusion of a small-scale map of Yorkshire showing Byland would have been useful for those not familiar with the area. There are a number of helpful photographs of modern re-enactors, provided by 3 Swords Historical Services, showing how the soldiers of the period would have been equipped, while an artist’s impression by Chris Rock, Chairman of the Yorkshire Region of the Battlefields Trust, brings to life the realities of 14<sup>th</sup> century hand-to-hand warfare.

Overall, this is a highly readable and clear account of a battle that deserves to be better known and remembered.

**GEOFFREY CARTER  
THE BATTLEFIELDS TRUST**

‘Clash of Crowns’ is available from the National Park Visitor Centres at Sutton Bank and Danby Lodge, Claridges in Helmsley, Abbey Books in Knaresborough and the White Rose Bookshop in Thirsk, with postal copies from [www.thebattleofbyland1322.co.uk](http://www.thebattleofbyland1322.co.uk).



Harry Pearson at the Memorial stone with award

**HAVING** supported Harry Pearson throughout his hard work to bring the Battle of Byland project to fruition by part-funding it and providing the memorial stone itself, we at NYMA are delighted that his efforts have been recognised with the President’s Award from the Battlefields Trust. The award is given each year for outstanding contribution to battlefield preservation / interpretation.

# A STORM IN BRANSDALE



Looking south along Bransdale from above Cockayne

Photo © Mick Garratt

**WE ALL KNOW** the havoc that summer storms can wreak. In 1845 the Preston Chronicle reported a ‘Remarkable Occurrence In The Dales’, about a dramatic event that occurred on 17<sup>th</sup> July.

*On Tuesday, the 17th ult., the inhabitants of Bransdale and Farndale were much surprised, and even alarmed, by the appearance of a very dark cloud, from which depended something like an arm, or long spout. The inhabitants of those dales first observed the cloud at the lower end of the dales, gradually advancing nearer, and apparently travelling up the moor, called Rutland Ridge. The arm that depended was most remarkable, folding itself in circles, and then drawing itself into the cloud, and then again shooting itself down, and discharging from its extremity something resembling steam, as from a steam-pipe, accompanied with a most fearful hissing noise, like the roaring of the sea.*

*The dark cloud, with its arm being continually drawn up, and then let down again, like the folds of a snake, arriving at the top of Bransdale, shortly after passed over the upper part of Farndale, which the inhabitants saw with dread, not knowing what would happen; and it was remarked, that when the cloud*

*passed it was accompanied with a mighty wind, tore clothes off the hedges, levelled potato rows, and might, if it had come in contact, unroofed houses. From Farndale this fearful cloud took a westerly direction, and burst in a thunder storm somewhere towards the top of Bilsdale, where a person, who took shelter in a shed from the torrents of rain, was instantaneously killed by the electric fluid.*

The report reveals some intriguing detail, for instance suggesting that potatoes were then a significant crop, with people growing sufficient to feed their families. In addition, whereas now Bransdale is almost entirely pasture, many fields would have once been ploughed with enough oats and barley grown to supply the mill.

Another thing worthy of note is that hedges were used to dry clothes on after washing. Clothes-pegs gradually came into common use throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and rope for less important utilitarian purposes would have been in short supply, so hedges were used to keep laundry off the ground - with hawthorn and blackthorn hedges providing handy ‘grippers’ in the form of thorns.

**FHITHICH, WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES BY JANET COCHRANE**

## BATTLE OF BYLAND COMMEMORATION



Historic flags of Scotland and England

### OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup> 2022

To mark 700 years since the Battle of Byland and unveil the new Memorial Stone, October 15th 2022 will see a day-long programme of events at the National Park Visitors’ Centre at Sutton Bank.

The events begin at 10am and there’s a schedule of music, guided walks, and demonstrations of medieval arms and armour.

The Memorial Stone itself will be unveiled during the day by a very special guest – the Honourable Adam Bruce, a direct descendant of King Robert.

## NYMA AGM



**THE ANNUAL** General Meeting of NYMA has been re-scheduled to Saturday, October 1st, after its cancellation in June.

It will be held at the Moors Centre, Danby, starting at 2pm, preceded by a walk in the morning and buffet lunch (free to members).

A presentation on the innovative approach to nature recovery in the Esk Valley will be given by Chris Watt, Project Officer, at the end of the afternoon. The event will finish by 4.30.

Please let us know you’re coming (for catering purposes) on [secretary@nyma.org.uk](mailto:secretary@nyma.org.uk) or 07570 112010.

Photo © Harry Pearson

# INNOVATION IN NATURE RECOVERY: A PILOT IN THE NORTH YORK MOORS

Photo © Mark Bullmer

**M**UCH CONSERVATION work has traditionally been financed in a series of finite 'projects' funded by the public sector or large charities, sometimes with contributions from the private sector. With the continuing squeeze on government finances which has resulted in a reduction of funding in many aspects of life, yet increased awareness of the need to mitigate the impact on the environment caused by human activities, there is renewed interest in seeking other ways of paying for ecosystem enhancement. An experimental approach to doing this is taking place in the North York Moors. While some people are uncomfortable with 'monetising nature', this initiative is a potential model for an effective way to ensure sustainable land management and nature recovery.

## THE ESK CATCHMENT

The Esk water catchment – the area where the Esk River arises – is situated in the northern corner of the North York Moors National Park and is characterised by a mosaic of habitat types including moorland, farmland, grassland and woodland. The wider catchment contains the dales of Baysdale, Westerdale, Fryup and Glaisdale, which have a distinctive patchwork of farmsteads, drystone walls, hedges and woodland. Farming is a key component of the catchment, with dairy, beef, sheep and smallholdings accounting for primary land use.

The River Esk is the main watercourse in the valley and flows for 28 miles from the upper reaches of Westerdale to Whitby, where it enters the North Sea. The Esk is home to an array of important wildlife including Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), Sea trout (*Salmo trutta*), and the critically endangered Freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*). These charismatic species need high, if not exceptional, water-quality. Unfortunately, issues largely attributed to changes in agricultural practices over the last 70 years have contributed to increased levels of sediments in the river, while invasive non-native species such as Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed have also contributed to increased sediment loads through eliminating riverside vegetation and destabilising

banksides. This has led to the alteration of water chemistry and the smothering of spawning habitats for Salmon and Freshwater pearl mussel, which require fast-flowing, clean, well-oxygenated water.

Conservation efforts over the last 20 years have sought to remediate these issues by targeting pollution pathways from farms, control of invasive non-native species, and eliminating stock access to watercourses. Examples of measures include riverside fencing, riparian woodland creation, hedge-planting, bankside restoration, farm infrastructure improvements, and provision of new livestock watering points such troughs. These measures have been funded through various sources such as the Environment Agency and the waste management company Biffa, which gives grants to projects near landfill sites to offset their environmental impact. The most recent initiative in this area was the Esk Restoration Project, which delivered capital works across 30 farms in the catchment and ended in March. It was made possible through the Water Environment Grant, which was EU-funded and administered through the Environment Agency.

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT INVESTMENT READINESS FUND IN THE ESK VALLEY

Following completion of the Esk Restoration Project, the current initiative is a nature restoration project delivered through the Defra-funded Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF). Launching In October 2021, the North York Moors National Park Authority was one of 29 organisations in England to secure funding from the NEIRF to develop a nature restoration project which aims to develop a model for restoring and creating habitats such as species-rich grasslands, riparian woodland and riverside meadows at a catchment scale. Enhancing 'ecosystem services' – in other words the public benefits provided by natural ecosystems such as carbon sequestration and water quality – will also be a prominent part of the scheme.

The NEIRF is led by Palladium, an international group which brokers finance models to fund nature management by bringing

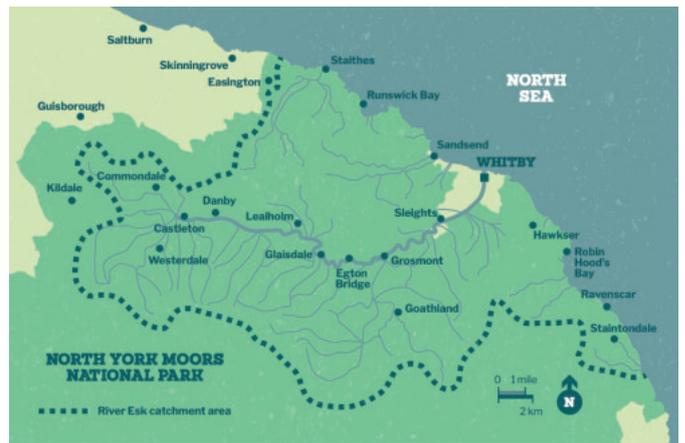
together the owners and managers of environmental assets with appropriate buyers. Each NEIRF project has its own characteristics depending on site-specific circumstances. In this case devising a commercial model involves the NYMNP, the Esk Valley Farmers Group (formed in 2018 through the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund), the Environment Agency, and Natural Capital Research, which is mapping possible woodland and grassland restoration opportunities across the Esk Valley.

The project will explore the feasibility of paying for nature recovery by channelling funding from private companies to deliver works on the ground. The Esk Valley initiative runs under the auspices of an umbrella scheme known as Revere, a UK-wide collaboration between national parks and Palladium that aims to catalyse private finance into nature restoration across the national park network (see <https://revere.eco/>). The Esk Valley scheme is unique in the UK in that no other projects are currently working with farmers on this scale to better understand the private financing opportunities for managing land for improved environmental outcomes.

The aim is to test the concept that nature restoration can deliver long-term economic returns for land managers by generating revenue through the sale of ecosystem services. To clarify, ecosystem services could include improvements to water quality, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity enhancements. It's important to emphasise that this will not be an opportunity for 'greenwashing' or empty 'virtue signalling': the team is working hard to identify 'responsible' buyers keen to carry out genuine work under corporate social responsibility initiatives, and who are in the business of buying and selling credits in ecosystem services. The funding will go direct to land managers for maintenance of natural assets, for example hay-meadow and riparian woodland.

The team is fully aware of potential pitfalls, such as what happens if a company funding an environmental service fails or

#### Farmland habitats in the Esk Valley



Map of area covered by the project

changes its policy, and a financial model is being devised to avoid future issues in this scenario. It's worth perhaps pointing out at this stage that funding by the public sector or non-governmental organisations is by no means itself problem-free: continuity of funding can be undermined in these circumstances too by policy changes or funding cuts.

#### A PROGRAMME OF THREE PHASES

The project is being undertaken in three phases and will operate until autumn 2022.

**Phase 1** focuses on creating a baseline of natural capital assets and identifying opportunities for habitat restoration. This involves mapping existing natural capital assets in the Esk catchment to get a clear understanding of the current state of the environment. In addition, opportunities to enhance natural capital through restoration activities such as hay meadow creation and woodland planting will be mapped through discussion with landowners. The ecosystem services generated through restoration will then be clarified and options for selling them to provide a viable long-term income explored.

Running parallel to this, visualisation materials will be prepared to give a representation of how the landscape will change over a 30-year period due to the work undertaken, for instance filling in gaps in hedgerows, increasing areas of unimproved grassland and riverside planting. This is to provide a discussion point with land managers and enable a coordinated and agreed vision to proceed. These materials will showcase restoration measures within the riparian zone and the wider landscape to capture all the special qualities of the Esk Valley. What is certain is that the landscape we have come to love and which is so typical of the area will evolve rather than change dramatically from one state to another. The Esk Valley will still be a farming landscape but this will be balanced by higher ecosystem benefits and improvements in biodiversity.

**Phase 2** involves assessing the potential for private investment. Once the restoration opportunities have been mapped, the project will focus on exploring whether they have the potential to attract private finance to fund nature restoration delivery and maintenance, as well as providing a guaranteed annual income for land managers. One aspect of this is to develop a business model that compares the cost of delivering and maintaining the restoration activities, the revenue that could be gained from selling the resulting ecosystem services, and the investment requirements of the scheme. The project team will also work to identify reputable buyers of ecosystem services and design a long-term income model for land managers.



Riparian tree-planting

**Phase 3** involves designing an approach to delivering the proposed nature restoration. If the restoration case and business model demonstrate the potential to deliver an attractive income to landowners and tenant farmers, and the parties concerned wish to proceed towards implementation, a framework for coordinating the delivery of restoration across a portfolio of sites will be developed. This is a step-change from typical nature restoration projects where one site or parcel of land is restored in isolation rather than considering a larger landscape transition. The delivery approach will likely set out how land managers can present sites that they would like to 'opt in' to the Esk Valley project, which could allow them to dictate how and when they would like to join the initiative, and could allow for more land managers outside of the immediate engagement group to get involved. Not all land managers in the Esk Valley are currently part of the Farmers Group, but it is hoped that others will decide to participate in the scheme once they are aware of the benefits.

Draft agreements will also be designed outlining the roles and responsibilities of each delivery partner in restoring nature, and specifying how revenue generated through the project will be disbursed over the lifetime of the project.

Over the next year findings will be reported to Defra and the land management community. By this autumn, it is hoped the project will deliver:

- **A feasible restoration and land use transition concept for the Esk Valley.** This will include nature restoration activities such as hay meadow and woodland creation, and modelling of the ecosystem service gains it has the potential to deliver.
- **A commercial model.** This will consider the costs of delivery and estimated long-term revenues for land managers that can be generated from the sale of ecosystem services resulting from the work.
- **An inclusive delivery approach.** This will enable habitat restoration at scale by aggregating (for example) multiple hay meadow and woodland creation sites into one initiative. Draft agreements will set out the roles, responsibilities and income guarantees that delivery partners would sign up to if capital finance were to be raised to deliver the scheme.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The NEIRF concept is a new and innovative approach to nature recovery, and presents an immediate challenge in that the



New hedge planted to reduce agricultural run-off

project so far is of an experimental nature rather than a tangible, proven one. Other challenges include:

- Interpretation of how the scheme should look, in that there are different viewpoints on the future vision of changes to the Esk Valley, in particular with some stakeholders keen to embrace change while others prefer the status quo.
- Economic uncertainty in an era of rising costs and changes to future farming policy.
- The distribution of income from the scheme between landowner and tenant farmers.
- Identifying 'buyers' of biodiversity outcomes outside of the Biodiversity Net Gain planning framework: this is a where under the terms of the Environment Act 2021, any major infrastructure project has to demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain in some form or another.

The identification and exploration of these challenges is a useful exercise for knowledge-sharing with project partners, and will shape the next steps of the project.

Overall, the NEIRF Esk Valley Project presents the opportunity to demonstrate effective partnership between farming groups, private sector and statutory bodies that can lead to positive outcomes for climate and nature. If successful, the project has the potential to facilitate long-term restoration and management of habitats within the Esk Valley while generating sustainable incomes for land managers.

Furthermore, the exploration of this concept presents the opportunity for synergy with exchanges of experiences and knowledge which can benefit similar projects and assist with future nature recovery in the UK. Phase 2 commenced in June 2022 with the identification of ecosystem services and the exploration of the commercial model, following farmer engagement in restoration opportunities. Landowner engagement starts in July, when restoration opportunities combining both private and public finance will be presented along with the visualization materials prepared to communicate change in the catchment. This will be the next chapter in leading to nature recovery in the Esk Valley.

**CHRIS WATT**  
RIVER ESK PROJECT OFFICER - NEIRF

# EGTON BRIDGE WALK



Gateway between the oak and the ash tree



The garden at Blue Beck Cottage



River Esk at Egton Bridge

Photos © Tim Dunn

**T**HIS IS a 5-mile circular walk to the east and south of Egton Bridge which has plenty of historical and natural interest along the way.

The walk starts opposite St. Hedda’s Church, in Egton Bridge, near to which is ample free parking in an old coal yard. St. Hedda’s was built in 1867 and is a Catholic church, part of the long history of Catholicism in North Yorkshire. Cross the road and follow the Coast-to-Coast Trail sign to Grosmont. This bridleway passes Egton Manor on the right, which is surrounded by parkland containing a variety of mature trees and lovely rhododendrons. The route follows the old Toll Road to Grosmont - there is a sign showing the range of tolls for different categories of transport on the side of a cottage. Tolls were payable until at least the late 1940s to the Egton Estate, which owned the land.

On arrival in Grosmont take time to explore the lovely station, complete with ticket office, café, shop and Ladies and Gents waiting-rooms. If you’re lucky, you might see the steam trains which run to and from Pickering on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

From here you take the Rail Trail which runs south alongside the railway track for a while towards Goathland, famed as the location of Aidensfield in ‘Heartbeat’, the popular television series; but that visit is for another day. For the first part of this section of the route you walk alongside the Murk Esk, a tributary of the River Esk.

After about three-quarters of a mile, just after the Esk Valley hamlet, look out for a plaque on a stone block which tells the history of this line and the link to George Stephenson. After a further half-mile or so the track reaches an information board, produced as part of the Land of Iron Project, explaining the history of ironstone mining and quarrying in the area of the Murkside Mine. The mines opened during the great Victorian ‘iron rush’ in the late 1850s, while whinstone was quarried and transported by train until the 1950s. Here we leave the Rail Trail and take a right turn

**Toll charges on sign-board**



through a gate and up the hill, keeping the fence on your right. The path continues over some rough grazing until you reach Dowson Garth at the top of this first hill. Sadly there are no footpath signs to guide you, nor is there a name on the farm, but take the track through the larger gate opposite and along the back of the farm buildings. Follow the track around the field edge as it continues to rise. At the top of the hill pass into the next field, and pause at a gateway between an oak and an ash. Here there are footpath and bridleway signs. The path goes right through a large gateway and along a broad green bridleway to reach the minor road from Egton Bridge to Goathland. Turn right and descend towards High Burrows Farm. Ignore the first footpath on your left, but take the second one, signed Low Burrows Farm.

The path passes a modern house with a lovely garden before passing through three fields to reach the minor road from Esk Valley. We opted to turn left (you could take the footpath on the opposite side of the road which drops downhill to join the old Toll Road) and walked along the quiet road until we reached Blue Beck Cottage on the right at the junction with the road to Egton Bridge. Just past the cottage is a signposted footpath which descends through lovely woodland to Egton Bridge. Turn right at the junction, cross over the river, and follow the road back to your car.

Refreshment can be taken at the Horseshoe Inn or at the Postgate Hotel in the village.

**TIM & JANE DUNN**

**The path down to Egton Bridge**



# THE UNDERGROUND MOORS - PART THREE

Photos © Gary Douthwaite



The author carrying a box of cave mapping equipment in a passage at the furthest end of the 2020 Jenga Pot extensions, 1km from the entrance.

**I**N THE Summer 2021 issue of 'Voice', we introduced you to the fascinating world of the caves which lie beneath the southern slopes of the North York Moors. The Winter edition continued the story with our 2007 discovery of Excalibur Pot, the largest cave yet found in the area. One of the passages in this cave carries Hutton Beck on its subterranean journey from where it sinks just south of Hutton-le-Hole towards Bogg Hall Rising, near Keldholme, where the water emerges to daylight again.

This discovery sparked national interest and surprise amongst the UK's caving community, many unaware that the thin, gritty Jurassic limestone of the North York Moors could harbour caves comparable to many in the carboniferous Yorkshire Dales.

Most of the obvious passages, nearly 2km in total, were explored and mapped by 2009. Little were we to know that this was just the start of a story of discovery and exploration that would continue to the present day, which is where we hope to bring you to in this instalment.

## EXPLORATION CONTINUES ON TWO FRONTS

One passage in Excalibur Pot took a very different direction to the others. This passage is barely 40cm high and 80cm wide, involving flat-out contorting through sharp rock and liquid mud. After 50m a fallen rock blocked the passage, but in 2009, using crowbars, we were able to manoeuvre it out of the way. Beyond, we explored another 200m passage including two small streams, which sadly became too small to navigate.

We also commenced another dig in Hutton Beck, at a surface sinkhole 300m downstream of Excalibur Pot. This came to be known as Jenga Pot, and from 2008-2013, we mined down various mud and rock-filled vertical passages, following a strong outward draught, a tell-tale sign of cave passages beneath waiting to be discovered. This was a slow game of hide and seek, human versus rock, played weekly, and we were determined to win.

In 2013, after five hard years at Jenga Pot, encountering many dead ends, our efforts were finally rewarded when we uncovered an open, unobstructed passage leading into the distance at a depth of about 18m. That evening we explored nearly 700m of cave.

Much like Excalibur Pot, this was a cave that had been forming for hundreds of thousands of years, but until our work nobody knew it even existed. In these days when we assume every corner of the planet has been mapped, we once again found ourselves entering the absolute unknown. Cavers do not need to launch into space or navigate through remote jungles to discover somewhere nobody has ever been: this was just 100m from our parked cars, near a popular road!

## CONNECTING THE CAVE SYSTEMS

Jenga Pot turned out to be less grand than Excalibur Pot, mostly crawling height and without beautifully decorated streamways. However, once we had mapped this new system it became clear that one of the passages was on an intercept course with the passage we had found in 2009 coming from Excalibur Pot, and the two were only 200m apart. Could the two caves be connected?

Each week for the next two years, a team headed down both caves to inspect every nook and cranny. We were searching for a passage that we predicted must exist connecting the two caves, but which may have been blocked by mud or obscured by rocks. Our work paid off, and in 2015 we discovered a connection which brought Excalibur Pot and Jenga Pot together into a single 2.8km system.

## ONE FINAL PROJECT IN JENGA POT

We took a break from the system from 2015-2018 to pursue projects elsewhere in the area. However, in 2019 we returned to Jenga Pot, with one final objective. At the southern end of the cave, an inviting wide passage reaches a pool of water and continues underwater. In caving terms this is known as a sump, and by no means is this the end of the cave.

One way forward would be diving, but cave diving is a very specialist technique which most of us were not proficient in, nor were we enthusiastic to learn!

We decided to have a go at pumping the water out. An industrial water pump was placed into the flooded passage, powered by 200m of cable run from a generator on the surface. By some miracle this setup worked, nobody got electrocuted, and water gushed forth from the pump along a 60m length of pipe which we routed down into a lower level of the cave.

Several weeks and tanks of petrol later, the water level had been lowered. After a 12m wallow along the muddy remains of the sump we emerged up a ramp into a spacious chamber, where we were faced with a second sinister pool of water filling the next section of passage.

With another pump, more cable, pipe, and a more powerful generator, we started pumping this second sump. As the water level lowered a passage emerged, and we impatiently thrashed along this for several metres. As we rose out of the water into another chamber, we saw a passage disappearing off into the distance and became giddy with excitement.

A chamber discovered in 2015, connecting Excalibur Pot to Jenga Pot





New passage discovered and explored in 2020, beyond Sump Three of Jenga Pot



Surface dig site at Jenga Pot

### A MAJOR DISCOVERY

Restarting work in 2020 was delayed due to Covid, but in June we wasted no time in pumping out the first two sumps again (which had refilled from the winter floods) and getting another pump into the third sump. Despite the increasingly elaborate and precarious nature of our setup, it functioned well, and the third sump was quickly drained and passed, once again rising into a chamber beyond.

This time our efforts were properly rewarded; a walking-height passage with stalactites and stalagmites vanished off into the distance!

We followed this passage with all the excitement of a child on Christmas day. After 250m, passing through large chambers and low crawls, it became apparent that this was another major discovery. The passage just kept going and going, leaving us feeling a very long way from home. In total, we explored around 1km of

passages that week, bringing the total system to 3.8km in length!

We found two streams in the new passages, both of which reach sumps at their upstream and downstream ends, with spacious passages continuing underwater. Pumping is not an option here, so instead we await a visit by cave divers. As I write this article, we have just commenced the operation to carry air cylinders and other equipment through the cave in preparation for a diving effort later this year. Therefore, more discoveries may soon be made, and although this is the final instalment for this series of articles, it might not be the last you hear from us.

**MATT EWLES**  
YORK CAVING CLUB

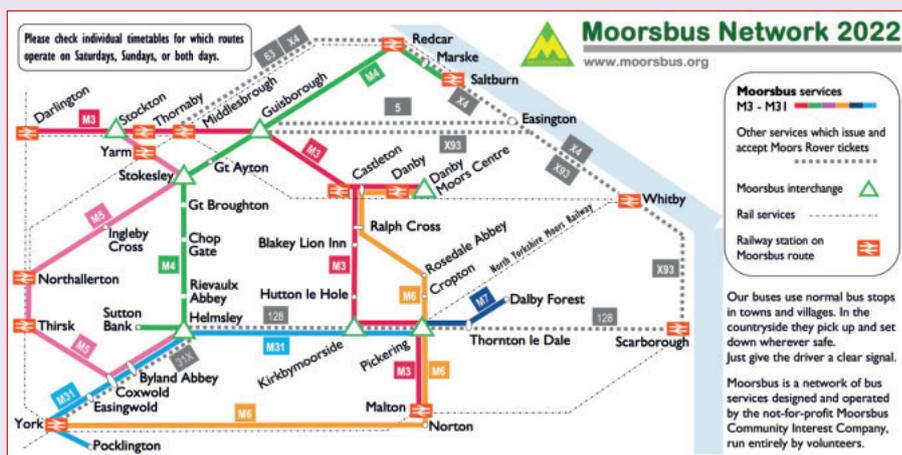
If you are interested in learning more, search on YouTube for 'Caving in the North York Moors' for a presentation, or 'Excalibur Pot Walkthrough' for a video-tour of part of the cave system. If you have any questions you can get in touch via the York Caving Club website.

## MOORBUS 2022

**M**OOBUS runs a scheduled public bus service for residents and visitors across the North York Moors every weekend in July, August and September.

This is the only public transport to reach the National Park centres at Sutton Bank and Danby, and the Dalby Forest Centre. Our links across the fabulous Moors roads mean that visitors from the North East can reach Pickering and Thornton-le-Dale, while visitors from Hull and York can get to the Esk Valley, Guisborough Forest and Stokesley. In the countryside, the buses will stop to pick up or drop off passengers wherever it is safe to do so – excellent for starting and finishing walks or runs.

As well as helping to reduce car congestion, air pollution and the carbon footprint of travel, Moorsbus makes use of the National Park more equitable by giving access to those who don't drive. There is a huge market for more accessible tourism, and during 2021/2022 Moorsbus CIC joined two Access for All conferences organised by Visit Britain/Visit England. With funding



from NYMA and others, Moorsbus have arranged for wheelchair accessible bus stops to be installed at the Moors Centre, Danby, and we will develop the accessibility information on our website over the coming months.

Our team works closely with NYMA, whose regular financial contribution helps attract other funding streams for Moorsbus and makes it an important, expanding, and much

appreciated part of the National Park 'family'. We are already seeking funding for 2023, and would welcome approaches from partners who feel this would also meet their own objectives.

The map shows the current routes. There's more information at [www.moorsbus.org](http://www.moorsbus.org), including 'days out' suggestions and details of boarding points and times.

**HELEN GUNDRY**

# THE NORTH YORK MOORS RAILWAY - FUTURE THINKING

Photos © NYMR



Ox-eye daisies on a lineside meadow at Grosmont



Butterfly survey



The Outstation at Stape

**WE ARE ALL** well aware of the many pressures facing us globally and locally, as individuals and organisations. I read with interest the articles in 'Voice of the Moors' and the deep concerns about the future of our countryside. Trying to foresee the future and where we all fit into it can seem elusive and uncertain and with the world changing at a rapid pace, it can feel daunting.

Organisations are often challenged with the need to respond positively to changes in their external environment, including societal changes and different perceptions of how we manage the natural and cultural environment, and to do so inclusively and with ingenuity. The NYMR is keenly aware of the pressures facing us and our role and impact within that narrative. The image of the steam train puffing through the North York Moors National Park is an iconic one, but how do we stay true to our heritage and who we are and still be future-fit, relevant and responsible?

As a voluntary run organisation (there are 1200 volunteers on the books) that also employs a spectrum of staff in all aspects of our work, our connection to people and their passion for the railway is clear. In fact, I have been blown away in my time here (two years nine months and counting – a mere babe!) by just how dedicated and passionate the NYMR family is. We are also most evidently connected to our landscape and communities.

## A CHANGING FOCUS

Reflecting on our connections and the future, we have recently changed our Articles of Association. These are essentially our charitable purposes - who we are as a charity and how we position ourselves as an organisation. Our new charitable purposes centre around Education, Heritage, Community and Conservation. We are bound to those and are expected to uphold them. We have always been a charity with a purpose to educate the public in the history and development of railways, but we have been naturally evolving and the new purposes (see box) make our intentions and responsibilities clear.

These are bold ambitions, some of which we have already started to fulfil. For example, on a local level we have recently launched 'The Outstation' at Stape. Having refurbished the old school building, this is now a modern, accessible and exciting Volunteer Development Hub and residential outreach centre for

## NYMR CHARITABLE PURPOSES

**EDUCATION** The education of all people of all backgrounds through the operation of a living museum demonstrating the impact of the coal-powered steam railway as a catalyst for the rapid expansion of the Industrial Revolution and a foundation of modern societies and economies.

**HERITAGE** The advancement of heritage by the preservation and operation for the public benefit of the historical railway line across the North York Moors between Grosmont and Pickering.

**COMMUNITY** The advancement of citizenship, community development and individual wellbeing for all ages, backgrounds and ethnicities through the promotion of volunteering, learning and training including training and development in at-risk heritage skills.

**CONSERVATION** The advancement of conservation of the flora, fauna and species within the Charity's lineside estate, adjacent to and within the North York Moors National Park, including designated areas of special scientific interest forming part of that estate.

all the community to access. Already in use by the NYMNP Young Ranger programme, the facility enables us to give opportunities to diverse groups of people who might not normally have access to the NYMR or the inspirational landscape of the North York Moors.

On a wider level we are launching our own internal Environment & Sustainability Board Group and we are active in the new national Heritage Railway Association's Environment Group, which shares 'best practice' and expertise across the UK.

It is that positive potential that drives us forward. Our desire is to be a local multi-purpose charity, a heritage railway that doesn't just survive into the future but one that develops and flourishes with our communities and landscape at its heart.

**KERRY FIELDHOUSE**  
NYMR LINESIDE CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER

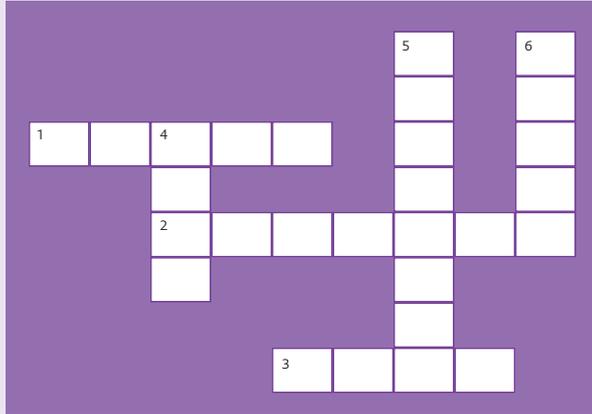
# SKYLARKS

Back in Summer 2017 (5 years ago) we published our first Skylarks page in this magazine. We thought about how high a skylark could fly, and how they could see what was going on below on the North Yorkshire Moors.

Have you thought about what skylarks do on the ground? You probably know that skylarks are ground-nesting birds. This can mean that they and their chicks are more likely to be predated than tree-nesting birds.



Like many ground-nesting birds, when a skylark lands, it will land a few feet away from its nest to lure any predators away from its chicks.

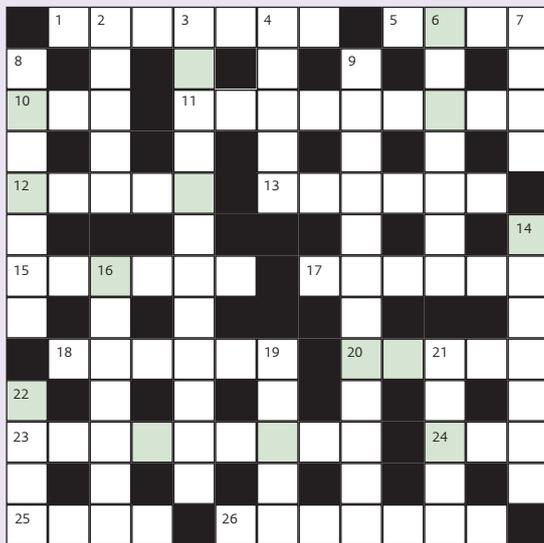


### Test Your Knowledge

1. What a bird does after it has flown.
2. The bird this feature is about.
3. What a bird does to distract predators.
4. Where a bird lays its eggs.
5. An animal that might attack a bird and its chicks.
6. It hatches from a bird's egg.

Answers: 1. Lands, 2. Skylark, 3. Lure, 4. Nest, 5. Predator, 6. Chick.

## CROSSWORD 97 by AMANUENSIS



□ □ □ □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Take the letters from the coloured squares and rearrange in the boxes to solve the anagram:

### ACROSS

- 1 They are skilled at pulling strings (7)  
 5 & 2 down Often exchanged during matches (4,5)  
 10 Stop prominent rock outcrop falling back (3)  
 11 Where children always remain young (9)  
 12 Tempting holy man into river (5)  
 13 A vandal initially in wild mood causes devastation (6)  
 15 Take no notice of destroyed region (6)  
 17 All in agreement (6)  
 18 Ensnare in small measure of net (6)  
 20 Shy (5)  
 23 Comes from Greenland but is British (9)  
 24 Often comes in cupfuls (3)  
 25 Benevolent type (4)  
 26 About poetry back up (7)

### DOWN

- 2 See 5 across  
 3 A local saviour at sea (5,7)  
 4 Flower (5)  
 6 Ordnance Survey has scope inside for fruit (7)  
 7 Fastidious dresser but does not go off at first (4)  
 8 Take no part in a second class blemish (7)  
 9 Power behind military unit perhaps? (7,6)  
 14 Clue 15 across gives an example (7)  
 16 Has many sides to it (7)  
 19 & 22 Runner going through lovely Sleightholmedale (5,4)  
 21 They amount to very little (5)  
 22 See 19 down

CLUE: A skirmish took place seven hundred years ago in the year 1322 between English and Scottish armies and is to be commemorated in October at the Sutton Bank National Park Centre with the unveiling of a natural stone monument, bronze plaque and information board (NYMA funded). Name of conflict please?

Answers on back cover

## NYMA NEWS

We were disappointed to have to cancel our AGM on June 18<sup>th</sup> at short notice, but unfortunately a dose of Covid intervened to make it essential. The new date for the AGM will be Saturday October 1<sup>st</sup>, with the schedule as before: a morning walk followed by a buffet lunch, the business of the day starting at 2pm, then a talk from Chris Watts, Project Officer for the innovative nature recovery scheme in the Esk Valley (see page 12 in this issue). Chris will be able to give us an update on how the scheme has progressed.

The AGM will be held at the Moors Centre, Danby. Please let us know if you're planning to attend – this is important for catering purposes and to let the Moors Centre know numbers, and also so that if anything goes awry at the last minute, we can let you know.

We're delighted to have made another grant of £1000 under our Conservation Award scheme, this time towards the installation of wheelchair-accessible bus-stops at the Moors Centre, so that more people can use the services of MoorsBus. This is a rolling award, so if you know of any good causes in or near the Moors that could benefit from small amounts of funding, do get in touch.

Fancy being a Church Bat Detective? The Church of England and the Bat Conservation Trust have joined forces (with support from the Heritage Fund) to survey churches across the country to find out how bats are using them. So far, 13 species of bat have been recorded. The information gathered will help feed into conservation management for the bats and the historic buildings they inhabit. The survey continues to the end of August. To take part, go to <https://batsinchurches.bats.org.uk/>.

As we go to press, two of our regular walk leaders – Cal Moore and Wendy Smith – are preparing to accompany a group of 'Wanderlust Women' for a walk near Runswick Bay as part of their summer tour of national parks. The Wanderlust Women is a hiking and adventure group formed by Amira Patel to encourage Muslim women to explore beautiful places in our countryside that many people take for granted, yet which seem out of reach (culturally as well as geographically) to others.

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS (see page 19)

D N D BATTLE OF BYLAND

Anagram

down

16 nonagon, 19 & 22 Hodge Beck, 21 lotas, 22 See 19  
7 dude, 8 abstain, 9 driving force, 14 anagram,  
2 See 5 across, 3 Henry Freeman, 4 river, 6 oranges,

Down

26 reversed

18 emesh, 20 fling, 23 Englander, 24 tea, 25 kind,  
(Peter Pan), 12 tasty, 13 ravage, 15 ignore, 17 unison,  
1 archers, 5 & 2 down gold rings, 10 ban, 11 Neverland

Across

## NYMA WALKS & EVENTS

**Saturday 16 July**

### SWAINBY CIRCULAR

Meet 10.30 at Holy Cross Church, Swainby (Grid ref NZ 477020, postcode DL6 3DG, W3W: backpacks.thrusters.human)  
Mainly easy/moderate terrain, 6.5-mile walk, with one short, steep climb up onto Live Moor. Around half the route is on the Cleveland Way. Please let Kath Mair know you're coming on [kathmair@icloud.com](mailto:kathmair@icloud.com).

**Saturday 6 August**

### SUTTON BANK TO HELMSLEY

Meet 11.30 at Sutton Bank Visitor Centre having arrived by Moorsbus (sponsored by NYMA) from Redcar, Guisborough, Ayton, Stokesley or Helmsley. Walk 7 miles mostly along the Cleveland Way and downhill to Helmsley. Return bus from Helmsley to Guisborough etc 16.42. See Moorsbus website for full timetables.  
Please contact walk leader Wendy Smith on [wpsmith7a@gmail.com](mailto:wpsmith7a@gmail.com) or 01642 711980 if wanting to come.

**Wednesday 14 September**

### GLAISDALE MOOR IRONSTONE TRAMWAY CIRCULAR

Meet 10.20 at Glaisdale War Memorial (Grid ref. NZ 775054, postcode YO21 2PL, W3W: hobbit.overcomes.stadium)  
Joint walk with the Railway Ramblers' Club, timed to coincide with the arrival of the no. 95 Lealholm bus service from Whitby bus station (departs Stand 4 at 09.31). On-street parking for cars nearby.  
3 miles of moorland walking on good paths following an easy inclined railway track to the moor top, with optional 3-mile circular extension to trace the line of "Paddy Waddell's Railway". Bring a packed lunch, and please let Jane Ellis know you're coming on [janerway@gmail.com](mailto:janerway@gmail.com).

All the walks are Grade 3, with reasonable fitness required (see [www.nyma.org.uk/walks-events/](http://www.nyma.org.uk/walks-events/) for information on the grading system).



Photo © Dave Moore



### OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

**President:** Ian Carstairs OBE

**Chair:** Adrian Leaman

**Vice-Chair:** George Winn-Darley

**Executive Secretary:** Janet Cochrane – [secretary@nyma.org.uk](mailto:secretary@nyma.org.uk), 07570 112010

**Hon. Treasurer:** Brian Pearce

**Membership Secretary:** Vacant

**Other Council Members:** Tom Chadwick, Ray Clarke, Albert Elliot, Helen Gundry, Dave Moore, Tom Ratcliffe, Colin Speakman, Andy Wilson, Elaine Wisdom

**Walks Coordinator:** Dave Moore, [walks@nyma.org.uk](mailto:walks@nyma.org.uk)

**NYMA:** Glen Cottage, Carr Lane, Scalby, Scarborough YO13 0SB

The North Yorkshire Moors Association is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Registration no. 1169240

**www.nyma.org.uk**

**Facebook: Wild about the Moors**

**Twitter: @NYMoorsAssoc**