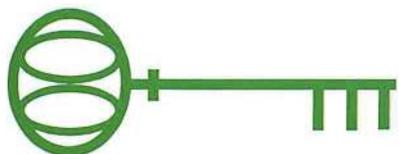


ISSUE NO 30

AUGUST 2001

THE KEY



A NEWSPAPER FOR NORTH SKELTON & LAYLAND



An aerial view of North Skelton & Layland - photo by Stuart MacMillan, 4th July 2001

Editorial

Don and I have received numerous e-mails from readers all over the British Isles and around the world. We appreciate each one sent and try to reply as quickly as possible. I am particularly grateful for all the lovely letters you send to me – thank you.

Don't forget if you would like to send a Christmas or Congratulations message to anyone please let me have it by the beginning of October. This facility remains free to North Skelton and Layland residents – there is a small charge of £2.00 to anyone else.

On 3rd May 2001, Eddie Britton presented me with a cheque for £25 on behalf of the R.O.A.B. St Thomas' Lodge, Green Inn, Skelton Green – thank you so much.

Your donations are still very much appreciated – please make cheques payable to 'The Key'.

Norma

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Photos from 'The Key' can be found on the Internet – the website address is:

<http://www.burluraux1.freemove.co.uk/keyindex.htm>

Sad Passing of NS's Oldest Residents



Edie Pinkney

birthday she would have been 100 years of age.

Laura resided in Richard Street only two doors away from her eldest daughter Irene and son-in-law Peter. Laura was 93 and had lived in North Skelton for 60 years.

Earlier this year, two of North Skelton's eldest residents sadly passed away. They were Edie Pinkney (nee Eccles) and Laura Bowers. Both ladies were of similar character, very quiet and genteel. Edie lived in William Street for many years with her sister Ivy. Had Edie lived until her next



Laura Bowers

'Fun Day' at the Bull's Head

Saturday 18th August
at the Bull's Head, North Skelton

10am: Car Boot Sale, Cake Competition,
'Feed the Goal', Tombola,
Tea, Coffee and more . . .

12.30pm: Bar B Q, Speed Pool, Greasy Pole
Knockout: Pool, Dominoes & Darts
Children's races: Egg & Spoon, 3-Legged,
plus much more . . .

7pm: Adults' Fancy Dress Disco
Cowboy/Girl & Indian

Tickets on Sale now - only £1.50

9pm: Raffle Draw and 'The Full Monty'

*Can you drink a 'yard of ale' ?
Come and show us how it's done then!*

Action North Skelton

On 26.06.2001 Action North Skelton held their Annual General Meeting. Both ANS and 'The Key' magazine accounts were presented, audited and found to be correct.

Officers elected were as follows:

Chair:	M Stephen
Vice-Chair:	M Matthews
Secretary:	A Husband
Treasurer:	J Tokarski
Members:	P Burluraux H & D McLuckie

The Key remains a sub-group of ANS

*Don't forget your 'Tote-Double' ticket every week
- after all, it's you that benefits*

My Life As A Miner at North Skelton Pit

By Bill Templeman

I was born in 1917 and on leaving school I applied for a job at Loftus Co-Op as a cobbler's assistant, but unfortunately for me, the manager's son got the job. As there was very little work available at the time, my next objective was to try to find work at the Mine.

The manager then was Mr Bill Morley. I was frightened to death of him, as was everyone else he came into contact with! He had a voice like thunder and in those days, men like that were masters of all they surveyed. There were Tom Ransom, Jack Forbes and R Dunstan who were all 'overmen' – you daren't put a foot wrong or else you got the sack.

I will never forget going into the office for my interview with Mr Morley – he bel-lowed at me, "There aren't any jobs left for yer! What did yer say they called yer?"

I replied with a trembling voice, "Bill Templeman, sir!"

"TEMPLEMAN!" he shouted, "the bloody pit's full of Templeman's!" After a short pause he said, "Yer can start on Monday and don't be late!"

I started at the pit as a 'shover-round', pushing tubs into different shunts which was really hard work for such a little lad like me – I was 14 years old, it was 1931 and for 5 shifts I received the princely sum of 5 shillings and 4 pence (27p).

I eventually progressed to 'driving horses'. We had 109 horses down the pit and I was in charge of 4 of them – they were really good mates. We had names for them all, mine were 'Nimbus', 'Sam', 'Dover' and 'Una'. They were beautiful animals and I honestly loved them all. I would take them apples and pies from home for a treat and they repaid me with all their hard work. Mind you, when they were straining to pull the tubs back onto the tracks they would often break wind so we'd run straight for cover!

My next job was at the pit bottom running full tubs into the cages. I'd like to point out that we only got a 15 minute break for our 'bait' (packed lunch) in those days. 'Buck' (Alf) Templeman was in charge at the pit bottom and he was a very conscientious worker.

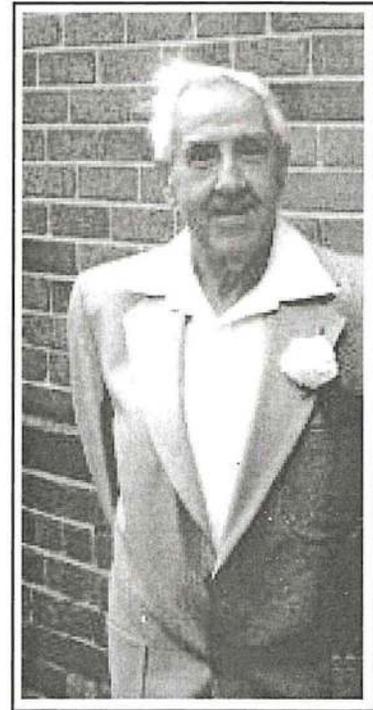
When World War II was declared, being with the 4th Battalion, Green Howards Territorials I was immediately called up. I was 22 years old and 'Ma' (Harriet) was expecting a baby at the time. The shock of finding out that two of her sons, me and George, had to go to war started her into labour! My sister, Cynthia, was born that very same day, 3rd September 1939.

Both George and I were sent to Moreton-in-Marsh and were then transferred to France at Christmas. I returned from Dunkirk to find out I shouldn't have been sent in the first place as my job was a 'reserved occupation'. George was in the same position as me but, unfortunately, he was taken prisoner and remained in Germany for the rest of the war.

When I returned to work at the Mine again Mr Wells, the manager at the time, said he was pleased to have me back. When some mechanical loaders came I was told I could learn to drive one. It was hard graft and you had to fill 100 tubs per day to earn a decent wage for your team of 4 men – 1 'hogger man' (air line controller), 2 drillers and myself, the loader driver. Andrew Turnbull was the under-manager at that time and one of his many sayings was, "Now come on Bill, give it some bloody hammer, it hasn't got a mother and father yer know!" When he got frustrated, which was on many occasions, he would throw whatever he had in his hands at the time up into the old workings and then he would have to go and retrieve them – it takes a bit of working out why he did it.

Then in 1954 I was severely crushed by a roof-fall. I suffered a smashed pelvis and internal injuries which kept me in hospital for 19 weeks. When I eventually returned to work I was given 'light duties'. I was sent into the lamp cabin repairing lamps until I recovered sufficiently to go back down the mine where I then learned to drive small haulage engines. I finished up driving the pit-bottom winding engine which had 4 big drums – 2 east and 2 west – which controlled the entire pit. I continued with this job until the very sad day in 1964 when North Skelton Mine finally closed down. I was given the princely sum of £100 for my services, hard work and suffering. They were the good old days – or so they say.

But the mine was a source for character building – I did meet many good friends and was proud to be part of it all. Our 'mine chatter' would spill over into our recreation time, much of which was spent at North Skelton Institute (the 'Tute). They were happy days of which I have very fond memories.



Bill Templeman

Bill Templeman, 50 Abingdon Rd, Easington

Before and After North Skelton AFC

By Norman Sturman

My association with the village of North Skelton began on 2nd January 1951. I started employment as Assistant Mines Surveyor for the sum of £1 17s 9d (£1.89) per week. The Area Office was an annexe attached to the Pit Offices, which were situated at the top of Bolckow Street.

At this time I was living at Hinderwell and playing football for their village team in the Eskvale League as an inside-forward, or in today's terms, an attacking mid-fielder. In the 1951-52 season I was (much against my will) converted to a left-winger, being naturally left-footed. At the time I hated playing in this position as you were totally reliant on other players passing you the ball.

The 1952-53 season began with me having transferred my services to North Skelton AFC – they required a left-winger. That season I played for the second XI in the Cleveland League, the first team competed in the Teesside League. Playing for the seconds was very enjoyable as most of the team were teenagers having a lot in common, as against a sixteen year-old playing in a predominantly man's team. During this season, Derek McLean, who played in the first team, signed professional terms for Middlesbrough.

Along came the 1953-54 season and with it my promotion into the first XI which was managed by George Berwick. This team was a seasoned and very good outfit.

Colin's description of the playing field had a small omission. Looking up the slope, the right hand side of the pitch was almost ridge and furrow free. On winning the toss we always played up the slope in the first half, the ball being played to Jimmy Hauxwell on the right wing as often as possible. He would then attack the opposition defence and, when nearing the byline, would whip in a cross for Len Douglass or any other forward to get on the end of and score – Len was quite good at the art of goalscoring. My only involvement in the first period of play would be if the ball overshot the penalty area. The second half would become the time I was brought into play to supply the crosses and occasionally score goals.

The ball in those days had a bladder inside a leather casing which had to be laced in. The lacing was checked before the start of the game as a badly laced ball could cause cuts to the forehead. At times in wet weather, the leather ball got so heavy, if you didn't head it properly you had stars in your eyes!

1953-54 was a 'silver season' – the best in the history of the club. Four trophies were won, the most prestigious being the North



North Skelton AFC 1953-54

*Back Row L to R: J Chamberlain, L Douglas, P Sellars, K Ovington
J Harrison, J May, E Cottle*

Front Row: J Ramage, T Simpson, N Sturman, D Wright, J Hauxwell

Riding Amateur Cup, followed by the Teesside League Bowl, or its more general name, the McMillan Bowl. The latter trophy was presented by the then Member of Parliament for Stockton, Harold McMillan, who later became Prime Minister. The third trophy the club won that season was the Cleveland Intermediate Cup, and finally the Junior Priory Cup.

Such was the feat of the club teams that no expense was spared as we were feted around the village with our trophies – no, not in an open-topped bus, but by the Mine's engineering shop lorry!

Prior to playing the Intermediate Cup Final, I signed amateur forms for Sheffield Wednesday FC. Before the season ended, John Chamberlain, our full back, also signed for Wednesday.

1954-55 was again a good season, but not as successful as the previous one. We again reached the finals of the North Riding Amateur Cup and the McMillan Bowl but, alas, were beaten in both, the NR Amateur Cup after a replay. The club also won through to the first round proper of the North Riding Senior Cup to join the seven 'seeded' teams – Whitby Town, South Bank, Middlesbrough Reserves, Scarborough, Stockton, York City Reserves and Billingham Synthonia. Late 1954-55 saw us being beaten at home in this competition before a large crowd. The game was won

4-0 by Scarborough, who, over the years, progressed to Football League status until 1998 when they dropped back into the Conference League. Our cup exploits made us a much feared team and we rubbed shoulders with some of the best players of that period.

Prior to Christmas 1954 I was called away six times to play for Sheffield Wednesday Intermediate team. Nothing further was heard for months and I was resigned to the fact that I had not made it. Then out of the blue, towards the end of the season, I received another telegram to report to play for the reserves in the Central League against Huddersfield. My playing partner on that day was Redfern Froggatt, an ex-England International player. They must have wanted another look at me – this was to be my last appearance for the Owls.

During that same season, our goalkeeper, Colin Rutter, signed forms for Middlesbrough. No fees were involved between amateur and professional clubs, but payment in kind was often made when the Junior Club player made the grade, and Derek McLean

had – our ‘payment’ was to be a home game against a Middlesbrough Select XI, all proceeds going to North Skelton. Colin Rutter was supposed to play for North Skelton that day but failed to turn up.

Middlesbrough scored early in the match and then proceeded to play exhibition football but they didn’t score again in that half. The start of the second half saw us going down that infamous slope where my speed was brought into play against a player named Bobby Corbett who was approaching the twilight of his career - Bobby had won two FA Cup Final medals with Newcastle United. What a contrast – from Wembley to our Brotton Road ground! I was very much on form in that second half and goals by Len Douglass and myself saw North go into a 3-1 lead. This didn’t go down too well with one particular senior Middlesbrough player, namely Jimmy Gordon. Prior to the match ending he decided to slow me down by putting me ‘over the ropes’! An altercation then took place with the crowd getting around that player. In the end, an amicable settlement was obtained and relations restored.

With regard to relationships, I would like to make mention of Mr Harry Ingleby and his wife Vera, who kindly took me in and gave me regular Saturday lunches. My job at the Mine meant I worked each Saturday morning and, as such, didn’t have time to go home to Hinderwell, have lunch then return in time to play, especially if we were away from home. Harry worked on the clerical side of the mine and later took over the village newsagency.

Still on about the mine, my Dad, Norman (senior) who was an ‘overman’, was being told every week that his lad was fortunate to make the team, being the last one selected. Dad tried to explain that the ‘outside-left’ wore the number 11 – but it wouldn’t sink in!

The 1955-56 season saw me move from North Skelton to play for Billingham Synthonia in the Northern League, Paddy Nash, the ex-Boro goalkeeper, being the manager. Whilst with Billingham, I had a weekend like I had never experienced before. We had been drawn away to ICI Ardeer (Ardrossan) on the west coast of Scotland in some ICI competition. We travelled by train from Stockton to Glasgow on the Friday, having dinner on the train, before staying overnight at the Ivanhoe Hotel in Glasgow. The next morning we had a quick look round the city before going by coach to Ardrossan. Both teams were led out onto the pitch by a Scottish piper. The rain lashed down the whole match but we won 4 or 5-0. Afterwards, we returned to the hotel in Ardrossan to get ready for the reception that had had been laid out – it was free food and drink all night! Most of us then went back to our rooms and played cards until the early hours. After a quick ‘kip’ we were back on the coach to Glasgow for the train journey home.

The weekend had been a marvellous experience as in those days the working class couldn’t afford to stay in hotels – package holidays hadn’t yet been invented. Furthermore, I had not had dinner on a train since, until my wife and I went on the Orient Express for our 60th birthday, a treat paid for by our son and daughter. Prior to that weekend I had not been enjoying my football with Synthonia, so the Scottish game turned out to be my last for them. I finished the season back with North Skelton.

One of the games on my return to North Skelton was against Whitby Town and after the match I was given a lift home on their team bus and dropped off at Hinderwell. They must have been impressed with my play as, in the close season, they came to sign me for the 1956-57 season.

That season saw me once again playing in the Northern League. I was the only local lad, the rest of the team came from Teesside. Perks were abundant playing for the Town, as long as you liked seafood! Fresh fish and crabs were freely offered. Once more I had an enjoyable season, the downside being that Billingham Synthonia finished as League Champions, whilst Whitby finished second bottom!

In April 1957 I reported to Number 1 Training Regiment Royal Engineers at Malvern, Worcester to undertake my National Service. Because of my sporting achievements I played for various Army teams. My final posting was to the school of Military Survey at Newbury, Berkshire. It was whilst playing for my unit that I received injuries which ended my career as a footballer. My left tibia and fibula were shattered in twelve places so it was all over for me at the age of just twenty three. My bones had to be screwed and plated to keep my leg together - the screws and plates are still in my leg some forty two years later. I’d had a great career in a short period and had done more than many other players had achieved over much longer periods.

On returning from National Service my job at the Mine came under threat and I left to start a new career in Civil Engineering with Tarmac Construction, but before departing we set out and started to prepare a football field behind the Mine’s shale-heap. I presume this is/was the pitch that Tees Components played on in recent times.

The injury I suffered did not affect my playing cricket. Prior to Army Service and subsequent de-mob, I had played for the two teams, Hinderwell and Mulgrave (Lythe) in the Whitby League.

In 1964 my work took me to Darlington and the 1965 season saw me playing for Haughton Cricket Club. So now, 36 seasons later, and at the age of 65, I have retired! My retirement has been well documented in the Northern Echo, so there is no way back! The year 2000 saw my book on Haughton CC, embracing my playing years, being printed as a limited edition and very quickly being sold out.

Staying with the theme of new football grounds, one of my last tasks was to take charge of the de-toxification of the then existing Tees Dock Storage area. Whilst carrying out this work we did have occasion twice to suspend work and call out the Army Bomb Disposal Unit to check out ammunition shells uncovered during the excavations. These turned out to be practice shells. Once the site was termed ‘CLEAN’, it was handed over for the building of Middlesbrough’s Cellnet Riverside Stadium.

Norman Sturman

“EVENING GAZETTE” KEY CARD

SOUTH BANK v NORTH SKELTON October 30, 1954



SOUTH BANK—Winners of F.A. Amateur Cup: 1913-15
 North Riding Senior Cup: 1917-18, 1921-22, 1923-24, 1925-26
 1928-29, 1931-32, 1935-36
 Champions of Northern League: 1910-11, 1919-20, 1923-24
 Winners of Northern League Challenge Cup: 1917-18



MEMBERS OF NORTHERN LEAGUE

SOUTH BANK F.C. OFFICIALS

President	Dr. J. W. Hildes	Hon. Auditors	Mr. F. Allaby & J. Gibbs
President	Mr. J. S. Mansor	Treasurer	Messrs G. Morris & P. Benson
Chairman	Mr. J. B. Cleator	Hon. Treasurer	Mr. C. C. Cunniff
Vice-chairman	Mr. T. Walker	Hon. Secretary	Mr. H. Lee (Junior)
Hon. Club Doctor	Dr. Blake		

Committee: Messrs. C. Baker, W. Burnett, H. Coates, H. Lee, T. Rhoads, J. Tomkinson, H. Wacker, H. Watson, J. Walsh, J. Tiers

Brothers Who Found Each Other After 55 Years

The internet is fast becoming a powerful tool for more and more people around the world to communicate with each other and seek and find information. The following is a perfect example of how useful the world wide web has become and how it brought together two half-brothers who, for many years, didn't even know the other existed.

This remarkable story begins on the 6th October, 1944 in Salisbury, Wiltshire, when Bob Burwell, who now lives in William Street, New Skelton, was born. Of course, during the war-time years, there were many soldiers stationed in England from abroad. One such man was Louis Walden Burwell, a Canadian from Winnipeg. Louis was stationed with the Royal Canadian Artillery in Aldershot and the Salisbury Plain area between 1940-45. Like many of his colleagues, Louis met a girl, Sheila, over here and enjoyed a wartime romance. Louis married Sheila on 21st February, 1942 but he hid from her the fact that he already had a wife and family back in Canada. Sadly, before Bob was born, the relationship ended and Louis eventually left our shores at the end of the war to return to Canada. Bob doesn't think Louis ever saw him, although he later found a poignant letter Louis had written to Sheila before he went, leaving her and the child fond wishes.



Louis Burwell

After the war, Bob's mum brought him up in the county of Hampshire (he still has the accent!) but she spoke little of his father, so as he grew older Bob was determined to discover more about him himself. When his mum died, Bob found a few photos and letters and it soon became obvious that some of the photos were of his father and his family in Canada. It turned out that Louis must have confessed to his wife back in Canada about his relationship in England as, remarkably, she and Sheila began to correspond and exchange photographs.

Having moved up to this area, Bob got himself a PC and became interested in the internet. There are lots of genealogy sites on the world wide web but Bob searched in vain for any information regarding his father. Then one day, after leaving some information on a website message board, Bob got his first breakthrough. He received an e-mail from a lady in Vancouver, Canada, who turned out to be a distant cousin – she informed him that his father was dead but that was about all she knew. Louis had in fact died on 3rd March, 1978.

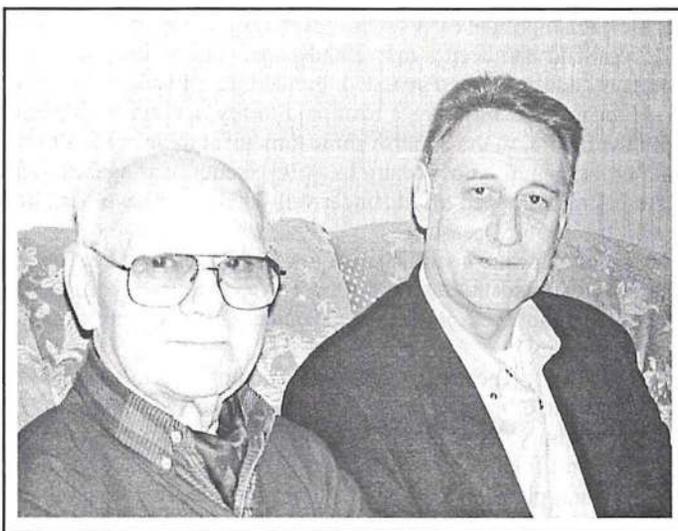
Bob's next success was through a website called 'Project Roots' (www.project-roots.com), a Dutch organisation who specialise in tracing Canadian fathers and their children from World War II, etc. After he had contacted them, they wrote back about a month later to tell Bob they had the phone number of Tom Burwell, one of Louis' sons living in Garson, Manitoba, Canada.

So on 11th February, 2000, and with great apprehension, Bob made the call that would change his life. Tom's wife, Jan, first answered the phone, but soon Bob was speaking to his new-found half-brother. Immediately, they 'hit it off' and soon became great friends, regularly corresponding by phone and written letters, exchanging many photographs. Of course, Tom could tell Bob all about his father and the family back in Canada. Louis Walden Burwell had been born in Winnipeg in 1908 so would have been about 36 when Bob was born. He had three sons over there – Tom, who is now 72, Bud (70) and Ken (67).

Eventually, Tom decided he wanted to come over to England to meet Bob. At 9am on 5th April this year, the two met each other for the first time at Teesside Airport. Tom had flown over with his wife Jan, and they stayed for a few weeks, Bob showing them around the area. Tom and Jan then returned to Canada to their 3 children and 7 grandchildren, saying 'goodbye' to Bob and his daughter, Belinda.

While Tom was over here, I was fortunate enough to arrange to meet him and Bob and hear their remarkable story at first hand while we enjoyed a pint at the Royal George. I'd like to thank them both for sharing it with us. Bob hopes to visit Tom and his family in Canada some time in the future – I wish them well and hope they all have a great time together. No doubt they still have many fascinating stories to share.

While Tom was over here, I was fortunate enough to arrange to meet him and Bob and hear their remarkable story at first hand while we enjoyed a pint at the Royal George. I'd like to thank them both for sharing it with us. Bob hopes to visit Tom and his family in Canada some time in the future – I wish them well and hope they all have a great time together. No doubt they still have many fascinating stories to share.



Tom and Bob Burwell

DB

A Farewell to 'Rodders'

In 1998, after almost 40 years as a player, Rodney Hill retired from Skelton Castle Cricket Club.



Pictured are Rodney and wife Sue, at a packed Presentation Evening in the Duke William, Skelton. My tribute on the night took the form of this poem . . .

A Farewell to Rodders . . .

Past the elms, and through the snicket
Strolling down to watch the cricket
Settle there on new-mown grass
Wond'ring what may come to pass.

See the bowler, feel the thrill
As leather thuds on Rodney Hill
The gasp at unexpected bounce
Read the imprint - 5½ ounce.

Down goes Rodney to his knees
Show not it hurts – pretend to sneeze!
See the bruises, black and blue
And on the fringes, yellow too.

Even though convulsed with mirth
The opposition know his worth
Know he will not freely give
His wicket away – more chance to live.

Rodney faces up again
Grimaces, ignores the pain
Driving forward, edge past leg-peg
Fizzes down to deep fine leg
The bowler's hands in supplication bend
Rod hastens to the other end.

Then Rod receives a savage blow
On comes an opposition bowler, slow
The ball of guile, thrown high with flight
Causes Rod some heart-felt fright
Relief! The ball bounces off the pad
Eludes the field – now Rodney's glad
No need, now, for two-strength Pampers
As down the pitch our hero scampers.

Finally, Rod skies a catch
Safely taken, no mismatch
Thirty seven runs (not zero)
Rodney leaves the field – a hero
No 'Raging Bull', no savage Nero
A quiet smile – then cakes baked with Be-Ro.

The weather dulls, here comes the rain
We shall not see his like again
Stroll from the ground, pass through the snicket
We've seen Rodney playing cricket . . .

Neil Harrison



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22								

Crossword - by Mark Thirkettle

ACROSS

2. *Fragile, frail*
8. *Scottish island*
9. *Tree*
10. *Confine*
11. *County town of Tyrone*
13. *Appropriate*
14. *Piece, slice*
17. *Amass*
18. *Breed of dog*
20. *Melody, tune*
21. *Dutch pottery town*
22. *Small seabirds*

(Answers on Page 25)

DOWN

1. *Wooden shoe*
2. *Shatter*
3. *Scope*
4. *Measurement*
5. *Extremely, moreover*
6. *East Indian seaman*
7. *Supplement*
12. *Black & white bird*
14. *Iron alloy*
15. *Sprawls*
16. *Mooring, dock*
17. *Team*
18. *Plant fluid*
19. *Craft*

Letterbox

Dear Norma

You might be interested in the attached photograph which my wife, Jay, took a few weeks ago. The picture is of myself and my eldest brother, Alan, taken on his veranda in Victoria on Vancouver Island. We had visited him to help celebrate the marriage of his daughter, Ann, and also Alan's eightieth birthday. Please note the recent copies of 'The Key' which are prominently displayed. I appreciate from previous editions that you have a considerable international circulation and think that



Colin (left) and Alan Lancaster with copies of 'The Key'

you might run a competition for the most unusual sighting of the magazine in some far-flung international backwater. Your magazine, together with a family tree which my sister Winn's daughter, Gill, has been researching, provided sources of much conversation.

I have been sending copies of 'The Key' to Alan for some years and he is always interested to see mention of his old friends and relatives and particularly looks for information about Ted Evans, Bob Cornforth, Bob Laker or Alan Hunter. Colin Berwick's articles about the village sometimes focus on the 'Tute' and inevitably our cousin Fred (Twaddie) and his pals come in for honourable mention. Alan is still capable of spotting wrong attributions of people in photographs. He saw himself in a photograph of the church choir where our mother was mentioned instead; presumably because her friend, Annie Austin was also included. Mother was never in the choir but we were all expected to be members at an appropriate stage of our development, irrespective of musical skill or inclination. Alan recalls visiting Skelton Castle each Christmas and singing in the main hall; after which the Colonel served them whisky, sherry or lemonade, depending on age and sex.

Alan has lived in Victoria for thirty years or more. When he moved to Canada with the Canadian Air Force in the early sixties it was to Vancouver Island. He then found himself posted to New Brunswick in Nova Scotia for a few years amidst the snow and ice. At the end of his contract he immediately put his family in the car and drove them straight back to the island and a much more temperate Pacific climate. I believe that he may have left the island on perhaps four occasions in thirty years, including the wedding which took place in Vancouver, but he is back as soon as possible to enjoy his garden and his grandchildren.

Wishing 'The Key' and yourself every success,

Colin Lancaster, 11 Gilstead Way, Ilkley, W Yorks

Found in an old Photo Album



FREE PASS

This pass is good on all Railroads provided that the bearer walks, carries his own luggage, swims all rivers, and stops for all Drinks and Smokes at the

"TRAVELLERS' REST," EAST LOFTUS

GEO. W. WREN
PROPRIETOR

NOTICE - A man is kept engaged in the Yard to do all the Cursing, Swearing and Bad Language that is required in the Establishment. A dog is kept to do all the Barking, our Potman (or chucker out) has won 77 prizes and is an excellent shot with a revolver. An Undertaker calls every morning for orders.

(Inside were GEO. WREN'S 'TEN COMMANDMENTS' which we will publish in a future edition of The Key)

A Good Wedding Cake

4 lb of love
1 lb butter of youth
½lb of good looks
1lb sweet temper
1lb of blindness of faults
1lb of self forgetfulness

1lb of pounded wit
1lb of good humour
2 tablespoons of sweet argument
1 pint of rippling laughter
1 wine glass of common sense
1oz of modesty

Put the love, good looks and sweet temper into a well furnished house. Beat the butter of youth to a cream, and mix well together with the blindness of faults. Stir the pounded wit and good humour into the sweet argument, then add the rippling laughter and common sense. Work the whole together until everything is well mixed, and bake gently for ever.

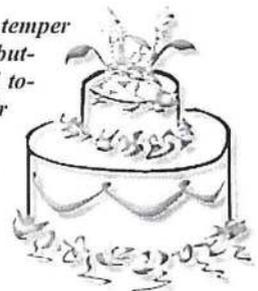


PHOTO GALLERY



Stanghow Lane School—The Merchant of Venice (c. 1945)

Back Row L. to R: Iris Yarker, Jean Sunley, Fred Yaxley, Marie Bolton, Norman Sherwood, Keith Walker

Middle Row: Cyril Wilcock, Les Ross, Doreen Danby, Dick Mossam, Betty Bolton, Audrey Harrison

Front Row: Lena Winter, Bill Leybourne, Irene Addison, John Harding, Nick Carter



On a bus trip somewhere by the look of things - anyone know where and when?

L to R: Graham Housam, -?- , Norman Housam, Pat Vasey



Stanghow Lane School Class - early 1940's

Back Row L to R: Keith Hanson, Audrey Palmer, -?- , Marion Ward, Marie Bolton, Betty Bolton, Terence Padgett, Leslie Thornton
Middle Row: Billie Robinson, Malcolm Robinson, Bobby Laverick, -?- , John Featherstone, Audrey Harrison, Audrey Pattinson, Audrey Nicholls, Shirley Skipper, Miriam Hoggarth, Pat Lupton
Front Row: John Robinson, Bill Leybourne, Dick Mossom, Norman Sherwood, Bobby Snaith



This photograph was taken at the bottom of Bolckow Street outside 'Boss' Bell's house - 1922

Back Row L to R: F Tremain, G Roper, F Thornton, R Dowson, J Barker, A Common, G Tremain
Front Row: H Thomas, T Templeman, G Kime, B Bryant



The Headmaster and some pupils of Stanghow Lane School (late 1950's)

L to R: Mr Edmonson (Headmaster), M Davie, Robert Bramley, Robert Whiteley, Stephanie Bonnard, Josy Brown, Rose Sanderson, Ruth Garland, Kathleen Berwick, Tom Hayes

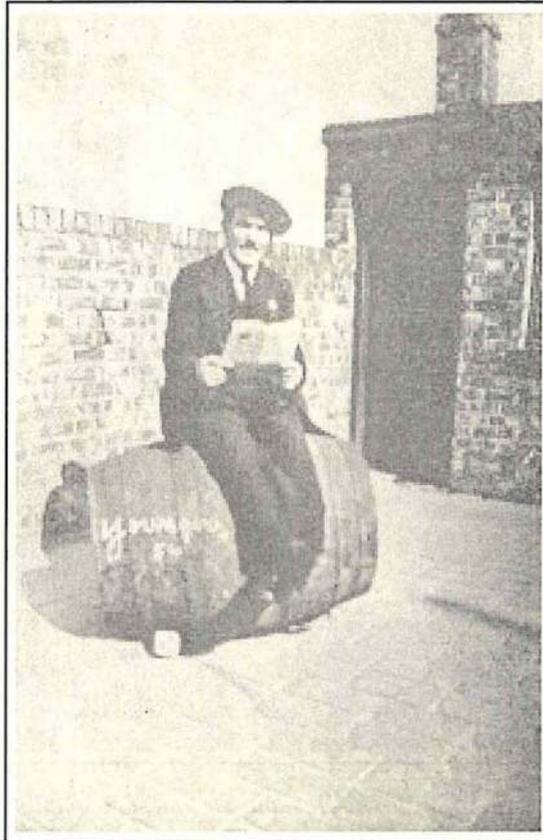


Stanghow Lane School's Headmaster, Mr Edmonson's leaving presentation, July 1959

L to R: Joe Reed, Mrs Edmonson, Mr Edmonson & son (seated), -?- , Marjorie Crossman, -?- , Robin Jackson, -?- , Brenda Dale, Rita Sturman, Sheila Garland



*On a trip to Blackpool -
Mrs Atkinson, Mrs Polly Pinkney
& Mrs Mary Brown*



*Cotson Wilson Snr, of Richard Street
- sitting on a beer barrel at the back
of North Skelton Workingmens Club
(c. 1920's)*



*Wilf Bonas, for many years Headmaster of Stanghow Lane School, receiving the OBE
for services to education, 16th February 1965
Seen here outside Buckingham Palace with his wife Irene on the right of the picture
and friend, Margaret Pybus, on the left*



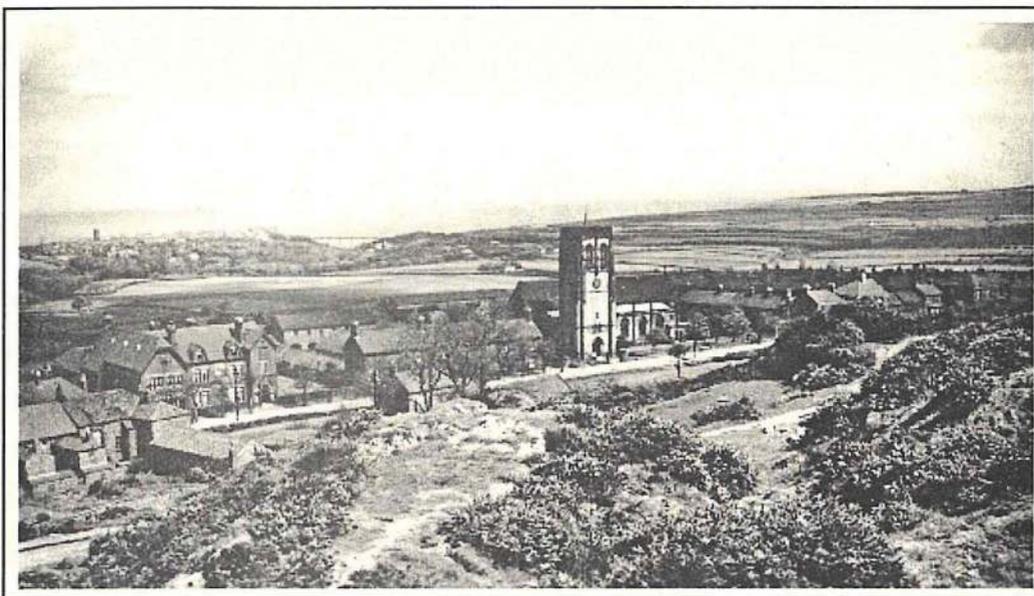
Playing up the 'crick' - c. 1960

L to R: Dennis Housam, Don Burluraux, Alan Easby, -?- , -?- , Keith Dobson



The Intermediate XI - Brotton County Modern School (1962-63)

*Back Row L to R: Mr Hilton (Deputy Head), William Watson , Geoffrey Harris , Peter Rennison ,
Ron Butler, Brian Hodgson, Ray Beckham, Martin Beckley, Derek Lewis
Front Row: Richard Lister , 'Camper' Wilkes?, Stuart Lawton, Peter Congerton,
Malcolm Blenkey, John Richardson , Ian Beattie*



*Skelton High Street from 'the Hills' (year unknown)
- note the Ha'penny Bridge at Saltburn in the far distance*



Presentation to Ernie Ward, retiring General Foreman of Skelton & Urban District Council - Summer 1952

*Back Row L to R: Harry Pearson, Tom Coulson, -?- , John Lane, Tom Havelock, Matt Hicks,
(standing on wagon is Matt Murphy)*

*Middle Row: Willie Walker, Fred Welburn, Tom Stevenson, Sam Gratton, Ken Forbes, -?-
Front Row: Ernie Ward receiving wallet of notes from Charlie Tindale, Ernie Bannister*

If you know anyone else please ring Dennis Preston (who provided the photograph) - 01287 651636

Memories from S.A.B.U. . . . Skelton & Brotton Urbanites . . .

By Neil Harrison

(I am indebted to Betty and Marie Bolton, formerly of Green Road, Skelton, for these reminiscences)

The day a dead whale washed up on Skinningrove beach immediately posed problems for Fred Stringer, Chief Engineer for Skelton & Brotton Urban District Council. It soon began to smell (the whale, that is, not the Council) and disposal was sure to prove a major undertaking.

Fred had noticed that the beast was a few yards from the 'dividing line' between his and nearby Loftus District Council's land. Aiming to shift the responsibility and the whale in one action, Fred decided that a discreet tow across the beach would solve the problem – so Mick 'no-signals' Buck was summoned. Unfortunately, as chain and tackle were being attached, their activities were observed by Bill Ransome, Chief Engineer to Loftus UDC and all hell (at a local level) broke loose. Fred had to dispose of the whale after all, and relationships among the two local authorities were a bit strained thereafter, neither Council being famed for its sense of humour.

How different things were in those heady days – sadly cut down in 1974 with the re-organisation of local boundaries and the creation of that monument to incompetence, Cleveland County Council. Since then we have enjoyed (!) Langbaugh Council – difficult to pronounce, let alone spell – and now the much-criticised Redcar & Cleveland Council . . . many changes, most of them expensive, few bringing benefits to residents.

So were things *really* better in those days? Certainly the streets were cleaner (each road sweeper took pride in his section of highway – Dicky Dowey, etc.) and even in the severest winter, Skelton Green Bank would be hand-cut free of snow, and the pavements eventually received attention. Now? Machines, overheads, labour costs, time-and-motion, etc. have all contributed to less service – a really tremendous reflection of local government in the 21st century.

Skelton & Brotton UDC was only as good as its staff and councillors. You could get things done by speaking to the person concerned in his/her office, or on the street – no need then for fancy planning applications. Richard Young was a new addition to staff, having transferred over from the big city (Middlesbrough), and he collapsed in hysterics when someone brought in plans for a garage extension, skillfully sketched on a rolled-out fag packet!

Time-keeping was a matter of honour to many – Geoff Posthill manfully struggled in from Runswick Bay, in all weathers, and was never less than 10 minutes early for work. His dedication was somewhat offset by Lily Ridsdale, who lived directly across the street from the Council Offices, yet rarely succeeded in crossing the 30 yards before 9.05am.

Joe Newton (car owner) travelled from Saltburn, and one day staff expressed amazement that he had arrived on time, despite the top end of Marske Lane being ice-bound. "Oh", explained Joe, "I just cut through past the Hall." Close examination confirmed that his route past 'the Hall' was, in fact, the ultra-private road leading through Skelton Castle grounds and out onto the Guisborough Road at Parson's Bank. Of course, Lily was late that day as well.

Betty Bolton worked in 'Payroll and Accounts' where the yearly audit had to balance to the penny, and days would be spent/wasted by staff looking for miniscule amounts. Fortunately, the quill pens had given way to more sophisticated biros. George Skipper was the Rating Officer, while his wife, Rhoda, ran 'Skippers' (the Wharton Arms) with a benign, yet disciplined eye.

Many of the local councillors were 'characters' – I am sure we all remember Harry Ingleby (Labour), Mr Morris (Conservative – I never learned his first name, even when he was Chairman of the local Cricket Club) and others. Reg Simon (Lingdale, Conservative surprisingly) smoked Woodbine fags but was never known to hand them round and could smoke one well down past the recognised 'butt' stage, then pinch it out and re-light it later in the day.

Sexism didn't exist in Skelton & Brotton UDC as long as women never asked for silly pay rises, or even parity with their male counterparts, although, fortunately, that policy did change in later years as the ladies assumed more responsibilities.

(Away from the Council, for a moment, Marie Bolton is probably our leading local expert on the location, condition, and subsequent demise of the 'gent's urinals' which were located at the 'Skelton Triangle' (which includes the 'haunted house') at the top of Coniston Road, and the unit across the road from the junction at Saltburn Lane).

Were they really 'the good old days' though? In the 1950's, a craftsman's weekly wage was £6.50, whilst a labourer aspired to a mere £5.10. No bonus payments and no overtime (unless there were snow-clearing duties required). Understandably, many of the 'troops' had other jobs – 'Rattler' Morgan was a part-time bus driver, while Lou Griffiths, Mr Lettin and Denis Pearson all rushed off to different jobs when their council work was done.

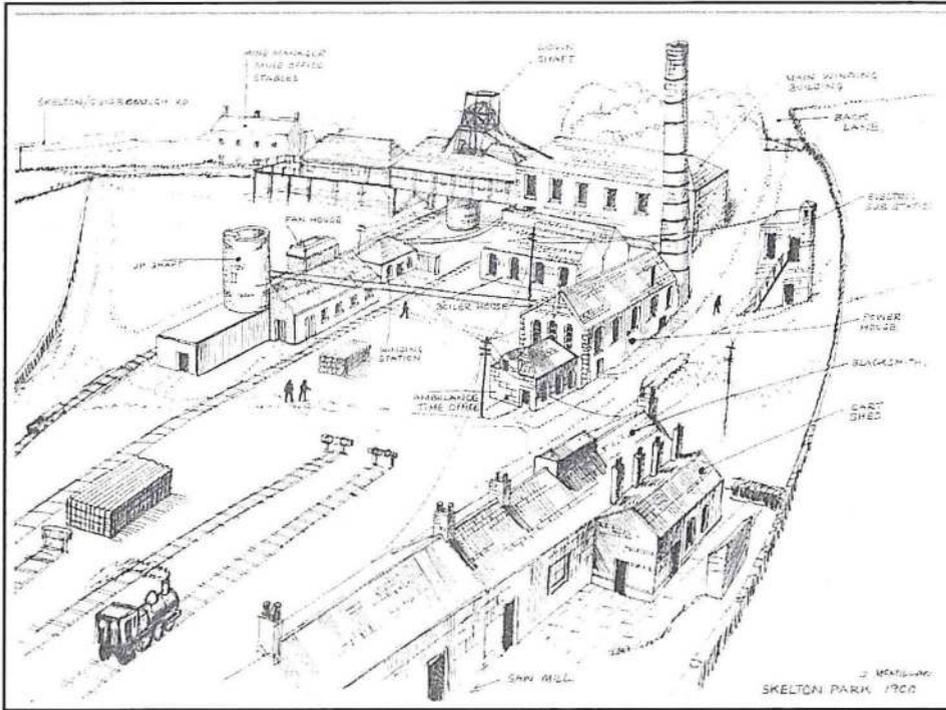
As a rough guide, the Management and Office Support employed about 17 people over three Departments (Engineers, Clerks, Public Health) while there were about 40 'workers' (with only one Foreman, Ken Forbes). Among the latter job descriptions were one 'Rat Catcher', one (only) Plumber, yet three Cemetery Sextons and six Grave Diggers/Gardeners. The conclusion may be that, if overrun and bitten by rats, and dying, there were plenty of staff available to give you a good send-off!

Most of the above were recalled by Betty Bolton, but twin-sister Marie chipped in with a classic tale, unassociated with the Council. She recalled the fearsome Miss Johnson (Skelton Infants School) supervising 'Maypole Dancing' on the Cross Green, while playing the harmonica (mouth-organ is not a phrase to be used in conjunction with Miss J). Having personally suffered vicariously at the hands (large, strong, chapped) of the aforesaid Miss Johnson, who'd have made Anne Widdcombe look effeminate, I have great difficulty grasping this image – it appears more 'X-Files' material than Skelton & Brotton . . .

Neil Harrison

The History of the Cleveland Mines - Park Pit

Park Pit is one of the best preserved examples of an East Cleveland mining site. Set in a rolling valley the pit buildings are still visible for miles, buildings that have stood the test of time. The head gear has long since gone, as has the sound of industry, miners and the pit hooter which signalled the change of shift, all lost to time, but in its heyday Park Pit was employing 300 miners.



Known locally as Skelton Park, the land was leased from the Wharton family in 1868 by the Bell Brothers, until closing in 1938. A spur line was added, cut from Slapewath, to supply the pit. Two shafts were sunk to a depth of 385 ft to a main seam which had a height of nearly 10ft and a smaller 2ft seam.

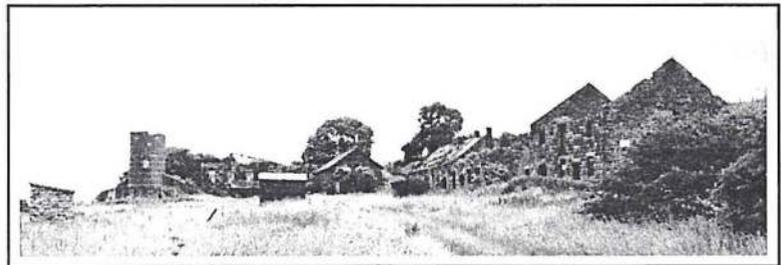
The pit today is quite recognisable - little has changed since its closure, the tracks from the spur line and shunting yard have gone, and most of the buildings have lost their roofs. At this time of year the grass and weeds are waist high.

To gain access to the pit you need permission from Skelton and Gilling Estate, as the site is on private land and all the buildings are dangerous to enter. Access was gained in its working days, and as today, from the A173 main Guisborough to

Skelton road or from the 'miners walk' (Back Lane). A long straight track leads now, as it did then, from the main road up to the mine manager's house, now a private residence (Park House). Just before the house the road forks to the right and past the up-shaft building, the brick shaft standing high.

This shaft and attached buildings forms part of a 'cul-de-sac' of structures, the secondary winding engine shed and boiler pump house, power house, ambulance room and time office. Some of the larger buildings were built in stone, others brick, and the one round the shaft was made of concrete, brick and stone, demonstrating the periods of its life and expansion as a mine, the concrete building on the up-shaft being the fan house.

In between the up-shaft and mine manager's house are the remains of the down-shaft, again identified by its round brickwork and which would have had a wooden building on legs, similar to Longacres Pit, for the removal of the full wagons of ore which were brought up to the surface. This shaft had the most visible head gear on site, and it was situated just in front of the largest building, a two-storey sandstone structure. The winding gear was on the ground floor, and the winding gear mounting block is still visible. There is no evidence of a shale tip.

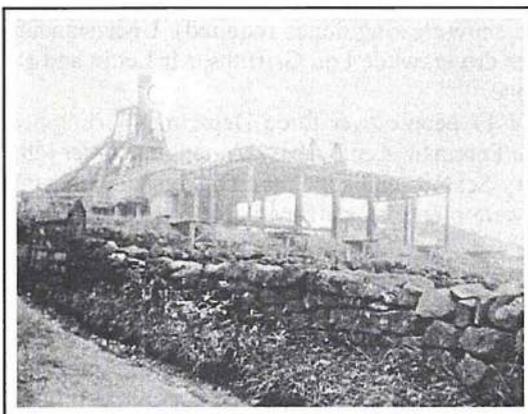


Present day ruins of Park Pit

Along the back of the site are two stone buildings, one longer than the other, again with brick extensions and a platform in front. The first is the blacksmith's and joiner's shop complete with saw mill, the second building being the saddler's shop. Following the old railway line to where it merged into one line, you will find the remains of the explosive store / magazine, one of two - the other was on the hill behind but has since fallen down. In between the two are the remains of the reservoir which provided water for the steam engines. A third magazine can be found behind the mine managers house which is now known as Park House - it was also the location of the mine offices and stables.

Following the old railway line to where it merged into one line, you will find the remains of the explosive store / magazine, one of two - the other was on the hill behind but has since fallen down. In between the two are the remains of the reservoir which provided water for the steam engines. A third magazine can be found behind the mine managers house which is now known as Park House - it was also the location of the mine offices and stables.

(Many thanks to Skelton and Gilling Estate for permission to visit the Park Pit site and take photographs.)



Up-shaft and fan house in its working days

Stuart McMillan

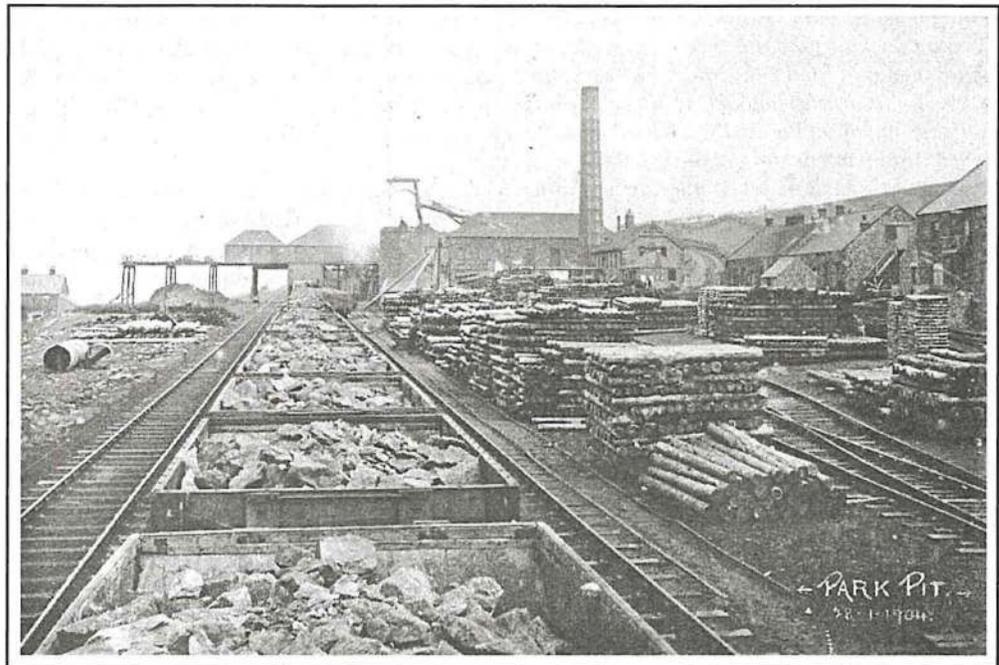
Childhood Memories of Park Pit & It's Miners

by Les Haywood

As a child I remember the miners who worked at Park Pit came from a wide area including such places as Guisborough from where they would walk to work and back each day. A few characters from Skelton who worked there were Jack Haywood, Johnnie Bulmer, Charlie Jackson, and many more who formed a tight-knit community. There was also Jack Snaith, the blacksmith, and Herbert Bulmer who was 'cartage man' delivering clogs of wood to houses in the area.

In its heyday, safety at Park Pit was non-existent – safety helmets hadn't been thought of and candles and carbide lamps were the main forms of lighting. The miners thought nothing about safety when they lit their clay pipes for a smoke, or failing that, they'd bite off a piece of tobacco and chew it. I remember each miner who smoked a clay pipe stuck it in the peak of his cap so he wouldn't break it in his pocket.

One of the favourite games us children would play at the pit was 'shoot the miner'. We would cut a hollow stem from the hedge-back and then gather a handful of hawthorn berries (cathaws). Then we'd wait for the cage coming up before shooting the berries at the miners as they emerged from the cage. Their language was anything but polite and we always had to make a run for it before they came charging down the steps, swearing and laughing at the same time. We'd sometimes think we were safe and would slow down to gather more 'ammunition'. Suddenly, a



Park Pit - 28/01/1904

huge hand would land on your shoulder and shake the living daylights out of you! Then he would give you a sandwich left from his 'bait box' and a handful of carbide for your cycle lamp.

The miners who lived at Skelton Green used to walk to the allotments and empty the spent carbide from their lamps onto the gardens – they used to think it was as good as lime.

When walking through the pit yard we always looked in the blacksmith's shop and would ask Mr Snaith if he would make us a hoop ('booler'). He never refused and would pretend to measure how tall you were so he knew how big to make it!

There was one phrase common to miners and it was 'off tack', which was a list of stoppages taken from their pay, a not too pleasant reading.

What did the miners find for pleasure you might ask? Well, they made their own. This was the time before TV and there were very few radios, so it was common to hear the 'chink, chink' sounds coming from the grass plot in front of Prospect Place where there were several quoit pitches. Games were in progress from just after tea until around nine o'clock when all became quiet as they all disappeared up to the New Inn for the 'last hour'.

There also seemed to be a lot of musicians in those days – out would come trumpets, accordions, banjos and other instruments as the miners enjoyed a musical evening outdoors. Some were members of the brass band which was always in big demand at local events.

Nearly everyone had a garden, often with a pig sty and a 'hen run'. The exchange of plants for the gardens was a regular feature and not a penny ever changed hands.

Accidents at the pit varied from minor to serious, but nearly all were treated at the miner's hospital on Boosbeck Road. Apart from those with serious injuries, most miners would be back at work still wearing their dressings – they were frightened to 'stay off' because if they did not work they got no pay.

Life in the pit was hard, but with great comradeship, the miners helped one another to get along. Was it a sad day to see the end of the pit? A few would say, "Yes," but the majority shouted, "Hooray!"

Les Haywood

Letterbox

Dear Norma

Many thanks for thinking about me and sending the marvellous magazine with a photograph of my school friends in it. I remember going to Stanghow Lane very well indeed. I used to run all the way to school every day from my home at 4 South Terrace, Skelton, just to see how long it would take me. When I did run I used to get earache quite badly and have done ever since if the wind's in the right direction! I particularly remember Barbara Stewart and Helen Myers, who always wanted to be a missionary. I adored Helen because she was totally unlike me, very sure of herself even at such a young age, and so determined to become a missionary. I often wondered over the years if she did. Helen used to live at the bottom of what was then the new estate at the rear of Whittaker's (now Devany's) paper shop in Skelton High Street. Her parents were very, very kind.

I remember many teachers at the school, to which my twin brother, Roderick, and I were transferred from Skelton Green County Primary. We both sat the 11-plus at Stanghow Lane. I also remember that we had a netball court marked out in the left-hand sloping playground (left-hand, that is, if you're facing North Skelton). I always assumed netball was played on a slope until I went to Cleveland Grammar School at Redcar! Mrs Broderick taught us how to play and I loved it. We also had a lovely teacher called Mr Ridley, who lived at Great Ayton, and I believe Mr Neasham was the headmaster there, though it may have been Mrs Lewis. We also had a lovely teacher from North Skelton who taught us needlework. She had quite a frightening manner but I remember her also being very kind to me. I wish I could remember her name. She was a noted seamstress. The nicest thing about growing up in the Skeltons was the smallness of the community, at a time when motor cars were still quite a novelty and the United bus to Loftus used to drop me off at my parent's door instead of leaving me at a bus stop to walk home. I never wanted to move to Guisborough, where we went in 1965 so that my father could be closer to his job at Guisborough County Modern School (now Laurence Jackson). I seemed to spend my childhood in Skelton roller-skating everywhere and playing 'among the hills' above the village.

It is now three years since my darling father, Len MacKenzie, died, and six since my beloved mother, Daphne, passed away. Both their ashes are interred at Skelton cemetery with my father's parents, overlooking the sea. I have not been home since my dad died except to clear out his house, but I will never forget Skelton and my early youth there. It is so sad nowadays that young children don't have what we had then - nature walks with classmates and annual day trips to Sandsend or Flamingo Park with Miss Johnson and Miss Jordan at Skelton Infants School. Perhaps they still do - I hope so.

After Cleveland Grammar School, I became a secretary and worked in Switzerland and then in newspapers before becoming a reporter. I hold a 2.1 MA honours degree from the University of Edinburgh and play the Celtic Harp and hammer dulcimer. I was also a Morris dancer at one time and belonged to a folk group for six years called Bryony, making three albums before moving to the Outer Hebrides where I worked for Grampian Television on Gaelic News.

I now work as a production journalist on the Southern Daily Echo in Southampton, basically involved in text, layout and design, though text is more my speciality. We have been in Southampton for three years but the south is nothing at all like the north and it is just the work that keeps us here really. We live in the New Forest which is very pretty but not a patch on Runswick Bay on a nice summer's day (sitting outside The Royal) or Whitby or Lealholm or anywhere on the North York Moors, like Rosedale or Westerdale. And the fish and chips down here are disgraceful! They batter the fish still in its skin and Derek always takes his back!

Anyway, Norma, thank you so much for sending me *The Key*. I hope a few fellow pupils of Stanghow Lane who read this will remember me - I send them all my very good wishes.

Ailsa MacKenzie, 36 Foxtail Drive, Dibden, Purlieu, Southampton SO45 4NZ

Dear Don

It's over thirty years now since I left North Skelton to join the RAF. I was demobbed after twelve years, then spent a further thirteen working in Saudi Arabia, eventually coming back for good to Lincolnshire, where I'd bought a home in a nice little old stone village just south of Lincoln.

I've never been able to resist a visit up home once in a while, even if just for a quick look around, and when expenses allow. Although I've made my life down here, the Cleveland area still calls me and I just like to see it once in a while, even if only for a day trip. I've been back up several times over the years, occasionally with my two sons when they were younger, but mostly to attend my brother Keith's girls' weddings. I've been known to get up at the crack of dawn, hop on the bike, and be in New Marske at my other brother Derek's home before breakfast. Then back down to Lincolnshire in time to pick the lads up from school - just a quick visit!

My most memorable 'quick trip' was on a cool, sunny September morning in 1990. The build up to the Gulf War had started and I was home on leave for a couple of weeks before going back out there. I bought the bike (Honda VFR) on the pretense of, 'If I'm going to die out there I'm going to die happy'. Truthfully, I'm a lifelong biker and was just looking for an excuse to ride again after several yearsoff them.

I came up to Cleveland my favourite way, through Hull and Beverley, doglegged at Wet Wang, then on to Malton and Pickering. Pickering always makes me dither about whether to go straight on at the roundabout towards Fylingdales and Whitby, or turn left and go over Blakey. Blakey usually wins - I prefer the scenery of that route. I think the last time I was with my father it was when I was returning him home from a visit that way and I recall him sitting in the car just looking around.

This particular morning I stopped at the top of the road coming from Castleton, near Freebrough Hill, and looked out over towards the coast. What a sight in the early morning sunlight! Just as I was quietly becoming absorbed in the scene, a familiar sound approached - of all things, an RAF Tornado came sweeping over from Blakey, directly overhead, making me want to duck. I watched as it turned, precisely and smoothly, out over the bay before disappearing south. Just watching that Tornado filled me with a certainty that by going back to the war zone I would be alright, and obviously I didn't die out there - very few did, thank God. I'm also still riding my bike, and still remembering that morning's wonderful view.

Regards

Ray Beckham (ex Wharton Street, North Skelton)



Recollecting My Fellow School Pals of Guisborough Grammar School

By Colin Berwick

The photograph on this page was e-mailed to 'The Key' by Reg Dunning, formerly of Broadbent Street, Brotton, and now living in Australia. It is part of a larger photograph, taken in October 1948, of the Staff and pupils of Guisborough Grammar School.

Reg is in the front row, third from the right. At the time, he was in the first form and would have started at the Grammar School in September of that year. According to his sister, Joyce, a former pupil of mine still living in Brotton, Reg went to Australia to work in computers, a relatively new industry in those days. One of his brothers, Joe, also emigrated to 'OZ' and is now retired and living in Queensland.

Norma was curious about the apparent lack of a standard school uniform. As I remember, the younger boys were required to wear a jacket or blazer displaying the School badge. They also had to wear a School cap which they



were expected to take off if they met a member of staff or the wife of a master outside school. This was not often observed because the younger boys hardly knew the masters, let alone their wives! In the upper school there was no uniform requirement.

The back two rows are a mixture of 2nd and 3rd year boys and in front of them are the 4th and 5th years. The 6th formers are seated behind the front row. I recognise some of my 6th form colleagues. At the far left is Ben Davies from Loftus, then Eddie Burnside of Loftus who taught for many years at Warsett School, Brotton. Next is Howard Vayro of Skelton Green, myself, Derek Richards from Loftus and Peter Trowsdale from Lingdale. Behind Howard Vayro is Colin Jefferson from Brotton. His mother worked for many years in Brotton Library. Behind Peter Trowsdale is Bernard (Ted) Weetman whose father had a shoe repair shop in Errington Street, Brotton. On Ted's left is Colin Lancaster, formerly of Wharton Street, North Skelton, and now living in Ilkley. From the expression on their faces it seems that Ted and Colin were sharing a joke! Ted later turned out for North Skelton at cricket and spent most of his teaching career in Redcar where he still lives.



Colin Berwick

I have a copy of the full picture which includes David Bell and Adrian Johnson formerly of Vaughan Street, North Skelton, who would be in the 5th form at that time. There were about 200 boys in all and about 10 staff, including Joe Morgan who went on to be Headmaster at Laurence Jackson School, Guisborough. The Headmaster was Mr R.J. Routh who retired initially to Egton and finally Shropshire.

The examination taken at the end of the 5th year was the Cambridge School Certificate which would normally require passes in five or more subjects from Mathematics, English, Physics, Chemistry, History, Geography, French, Latin and Art. The Higher School Certificate taken at the end of the 2nd year, 6th form, comprised a minimum of three subjects. These examinations were the forerunners of the GCE 'O' and 'A' levels.

A point of interest is that Mr R.W. Armstrong, who lived in Vaughan Street, North Skelton and owned a wholesale fruit and vegetable business, I believe, was a Governor of the School and Chairman of the Governors in the early 1950's.

The Lamps

Tabby, Mad Murphy, Marto, Fraggie and Ferret were all sat round a table in the Bull. They were all waiting for Davy to arrive. He had sent word that he wished to see them all and that it was important.

Marto's face had a worried look as he said, "Well, 'ah think that there's summat up with 'im an' 'e wants to tell us all first. 'Ah'll get 'im a pint in, it'll relax 'im a bit."

Marto got Davy his pint and the five of them sat very quietly, their faces sombre. It wasn't like Davy to be secretive – he was normally very open. The Bull door opened and Davy walked in and sat down.

Marto was first to speak. "Drink yer beer first Davy before yer tell us what's up."

Davy sipped off, took a deep breath and, looking straight at all his pals, he said, "It's Tilly, she wants a watter-feecha' in t' front garden an' that's not all. She wants a pond wi' fish in it!"

The lads looked at Davy, they couldn't believe their ears. They were livid!

"D'yer realise," Marto shouted, "we've sat 'ere thinkin' yer were bad or summat, when all yer wanted us for was a damned watter-feecha'!"

Davy felt awful. He hadn't thought for one moment that his pals had been worried he had a secret illness.

"Look lads, 'ah'm real sorry about this, but it's such a big thing. 'Ah'm gonna need all the 'elp 'ah can get." Mad Murphy's temper was showing in his red face. "Where the 'eck does she think she lives, on t' 'cream cracker' estate? Yer only rentin' t' Co-Op house!"

Davy could see that things were getting heated.

Benson came over. "Now lads, calm down. 'Ah don't want yer endin' up on 'pub watch'. What's up anyway?"

As the lads explained, Benson had to smile as he said, "By, your lass is flyin' a bit above 'er flag in't she Davy? D'yer realise 'ow much this feecha' is gonna cost? Yer talkin about six or seven 'undred quid at least!"

Davy was determined. "No it won't. 'Ah've gorra plan in mi' pocket."



He then spread a large piece of paper on the table. "Ah've thought it all out an' this is mi' plan. First we dig a big wide 'ole in t' garden. Then spread wheelie-bin bags inside and ovver t' edges. 'Ah've found an old zinc bucket which we can drill an 'ole in, turn upside down an' put in t' middle. Then we stick an 'osepipe up through t' 'ole, turn it on at t' cold tap an' 'Bob's yer Uncle'. Fraggie an' Ferret can tek me down Saltburn Sands an' we'll collect some big an' little

pebbles to cover t' bucket an' mek it look nice. We'll gerra couple of fish an' all and there's mi' watter-feecha' done!" Davy relaxed back in his chair, a confident smile on his face. From his pals there was complete silence and looks of disbelief.

Marto was first to reply. "Well Davy, 'ah've 'eard of some daft schemes in mi' time, but nivver one as daft as that! What 'appens when yer turn on t' tap an' watter spurts out through t' 'osepipe and fills up t' pond, then spills ovver an' floods t' rest of yer garden? An' don't forget, t' garden isn't even yours, it's Philip's, yer landlord."

Davy was in deep thought. "Aye, 'ah nivver thowt of that." Tabby piped up, "For a proper watter-feecha' yer've got to 'ave a pump Davy. Another thing, yer can't 'just 'ave a zinc bucket an' 'osepipe. Watter'll just fly up in t' air an' miss yer pebbles altogether. Forget it Davy, it'll nivver work."

"Ah can't Tabby," said Davy, "'ah've promised Tilly a watter-feecha' so 'ah can go on t' Club trip. Bairns are real excited about it."

The five lads sat in thoughtful mood. How could Davy achieve his aim with minimum cost?

"Look Davy, 'ave yer asked permission from Philip?" Marto asked.

"No, I 'aven't Marto. Anyway, 'ah'm puttin' money on 'is 'ouse, it'll improve it!"

"Davy, go phone Philip first while us lot 'ave a think about it."

Philip wasn't too keen when Davy outlined his plan. He made it plain that if it became an eyesore it would have to be removed and garden put back to how it was.

Davy went back to the Bull where the lads had been planning hard. Tabby had an idea where he might be able to lay his hands on a second-hand pump. Murphy and Marto were to go down Mario's to see about the water feature. Fraggie and Ferret were off to Saltburn to collect the pebbles. Meanwhile, Davy would be preparing the plot. The idea of a fish pond was out – it would be too dangerous where the bairns were.

Over the road, the 'Last of the Summer Wine' lads were sat on the seat at Sparrow Park, bored stiff. It was too warm to do any more gardening, so Jigger, Bob and Merv were havin half an hour's rest.

"Village is quiet today lads. Nowt's 'appening, everybody must be like us, sweatin' cobs," said Jigger.

"Ey-up, 'ah spoke too soon! Look, summat's 'appening in Davy's garden."

"Aye, well, let's get comfortable. Looks like an 'oven-topper' dinner again today!"

Mad Murphy and Marto were trying their best to do a deal with Mario who was adamant as he said, "I 'aven't got a cheap 'un, they're all eighty quid."

"Well, 'ave yer got one with a fault that we can 'ave a bit cheaper. Davy's Club trip's restin' on it!"

"Look, I'll tell yer what. 'Ah've got a lion watter-feecha' ovver there with a slight fault. Watter's supposed to spout out of its mouth an' it roars and glows in the dark! Floss tried it an' told me to send it back but if yer want it for Davy yer can 'ave it, as long as 'e'll do me two weeks tatie pickin' for nowt."

"Done!" said the lads.

They picked up the box and headed for Davy's front garden. Whatever was in the box was certainly heavy. When they got there they tore it open. Inside was a massive lion's head

that fitted onto the wall with a bowl underneath for the water to trickle into. They had seen some small, neat one's but nothing as big and grotesque as this!

Davy stared. "She'll go mad! She wanted an Egyptian urn." "Well Egypt 'asn't got any left, so she's gorra lion from Africa instead!"

Marto was mad – he and Murphy had done their best.

"An' don't forget Davy, it 'asn't cost yer a penny, just two week's tatie pickin' down Mario's field."

Davy hung his head in shame – he knew he should be grateful. Fraggie and Ferret duly arrived with the pebbles. They had managed to collect some beauties. The sounds of hammering and banging began, the noise deafening in the, until then, quiet afternoon. 'Er next door' in the shop kept looking out of the window wondering what was going on. Eventually, her curiosity got the better of her. She walked towards the gate. "Could I h'ask what you are doing?"

"Yer'll 'ave to wait like everybody else 'til it's finished misus!" replied Davy.

Mrs Snacky walked back to the shop, certain they were up to no good.

Jigger spoke. "Things is lookin' up lads, if yer look to yer left, Charlie Dimmock and Carol Smilie are on their way!"

The two ladies in question were, in fact, Linda and Julie. They were on their way to visit Tilly.

"Is she in, Davy?" asked Linda.

"No," Davy replied, "she's gone to Ed's School Summer Fayre. She'll be back about five o'clock."

"What's that then?" asked Julie, her eyes widening as she looked at the lion.

"It's Tilly's watter-feecha'."

"What! It's 'orrible, she'll go mad! Yer can't 'ave that stuck on yer garden wall!"

"Yer can both shurrup an' clear off!" shouted Davy.

Linda and Julie had no intention of 'clearing off'. In fact they walked across the road to Sparrow Park and joined Jigger, Bob and Merv on the seat.

The lads worked hard to get the job finished before Tilly arrived back home with the children. Meanwhile, 'Ord Norm' and Joyce were making their way home from the Club. Duffy had just thrown them out. They'd been in there all afternoon and were well inebriated! On reaching Sparrow Park, somehow still on their feet, they collapsed in a heap, giggling as they fell.

"Is that Julie and Linda (hic) sat there? 'Ah can't see (hic), must be t' sun in mi' eyes," slurred 'Ord Norm'.

"No, no," shouted Merv, "it's Charlie Dimmock and Carol Smilie!"

"Eh? 'Eck, is it?" slurred Joyce.

"Charlie Dimmock?" 'Ord Norm' shouted, "That'll be Peter Dimmock's lad then? D'yer remember 'im Joyce? 'E was on t' wireless when Joe Bugger'na' flattened Bruce Woodcock!"

"Eee, aye, 'e was. Well, what's 'is lad doin' 'ere then?"

"'Ah'd like to bet 'e's come for Duffy's 'appy 'our. Cheap-skate! 'Is fatha would be loaded."

With that, they were both so merry they went spark out across the seats.

Mrs Snacky once again flew out. "Have you got planning permission for that monstrosity?" she shouted

Davy was mad. "It's a watter-feecha' not a cow shed, so sling yer 'ook!"

The banging and clattering went on. There were pipes and

cables all over the garden. Sweat was pouring from the lads' faces. Another hour passed by then all was ready.

When Tilly and the bairns arrived home from the School Fayre the water feature was there to be seen in all its glory. The lion's head stood well off the wall, its mouth wide open showing enormous, sharp-edged molars, eyes shining and piercing. All was ready for the big 'switch-on'.

Murphy counted down, "3-2-1-Bingo!"

Everyone's eyes were on the lion. All at once its eyes flashed a luminous green, on-off-on-off . . . then an almighty roar thundered out of its mouth! Moggy flew over the garden wall. Spot slunk away whining. Everyone else jumped two feet in the air. Tilly didn't budge. The twins clapped their hands with glee!

'Ord Norm' opened one eye and slurred, "If yer gonna burp as loud as that, say 'pardon' Joyce!"

Little Ed said, "That's good Dad, look at the water!"

There coming out of its ears was a tiny trickle of water that tinkled into the bowl below. Next second – whoosh! It gushed out of each ear like a water cannon! They all jumped back in alarm. Water went everywhere but where it should!



Tabby whispered to Marto, "'Ah wondered what t' fault was, now we know!"

Linda's lips hardly moved as she whispered, "It's evil."

Julie, quietest she'd ever been in her life, whispered back, "It's what yer expect to see when yer 'ave a nightmare!"

Davy stood with his family. "D'yer like it then Tilly?"

Tilly was mesmerised. It's 'Goffic', 'ah love anythin' 'Goffic' Davy. It's a figure of h-outstandin' beauty!"

Once again the roar came and the water spurted out of its ears.

Bob turned to Jigger and Merv. "It's not Charlie Dimmock we need here, it's David Attenborough! 'E's been to every part of t' globe but 'ah bet 'e's niver seen out like Davy Lamp's watter-feecha'!"

Jean and Sally sat in their corner of the Bull. "They tell me we've got a Belisha beacon in North Skelton, Sally," said Jean.

"Oh, aye, where's that then Jean?"

"Well by all accounts it's in Tilly Lamp's garden. It's called a watter-feecha'."

Sally though before she answered. "We once 'ad a watter-feecha' down our garden. It was a beer barrel and when it rained it run across t' gutterin' an' down a lump of drain-pipe into t' barrel. When it was full, it spilt ovver onto t' muck an' gravel on t' garden."

"Did it Sally? 'Ah bet it looked lovely in a thunderstorm. D'yer fancy another Mackeson?"

"Aye, go on Jean, ah'll force it down . . ."

72

A Life on the Ocean Waves

By Captain Jim Elliott

Having seen the photos from 'The Key' on Don's website, I rang Norma to ask if there was any text available on the 'net. Not so, but she could send me several old copies and two days later they arrived.



Captain Jim Elliott

I originate from Saltburn, as did my father and grandfather, but that did not stop me at the age of 15 setting my romantic sights on a North Skelton girl, Anne Payne - that same Anne Payne has been Anne Elliott for some forty odd years now! Upon receipt of the copies of 'The Key', Anne spent about the whole day going through them, making strange noises like, "Oh yes! I remember him well, a tall handsome lad!", "Eeh! I've never thought of her for years!", and "Oh yes, I remember that family well." She was having a conversation with herself really, but what she was reading moved her to both laughter and tears. For myself, I was quite pleased, as for once it seemed I'd done the right thing asking for these copies. There was certainly a lot more laughter than tears - the tears were pure nostalgia.

The crunch now came, "I'm going to pay for these," says I, "maybe I will be able to order a regular copy." No opposition whatsoever on this remark, so away I went to Bolckow Street, North Skelton, to see Norma face to face. I would say it was about the third sentence from Norma that she made the request for an article, "You should be able to give me a lot for the magazine!"

As she had already remarked about my career, closely preceded by stating that she could picture every room in 'Gas House', which used to be the home of my wife, I wasn't sure if she was asking for interesting adventures at sea or stories from when Anne and I were both 15 and the walks up Bolckow Street, through the pit yard, and over Mr Ainsley's fields to Gas House.

So to be on the safe side I thought I would write a few words about happenings at sea. Fifty odd years ago when life went at a slower pace, my chosen career was to go away to sea. Health problems forced me back ashore after some 33 years, but during those 33 years one obtained an education not possible from books.

In 1949, life at sea had changed little for many years, apart from sail giving way to steam. Navigation was carried out in the same manner that Captain Cook used, indeed some of our charts were still marked 'surveyed by Captain Cook'. We had a sextant, a chronometer, navigational tables and a deep sea lead line. Most ships also had as a gesture to the modern age, a radio direction finding loop. Better than nothing but a long way from being able to give an accurate position. The most important instrument, perhaps, was the magnetic compass. This item had to be checked every watch for errors due to the direction of the ship's head and the ship's own magnetic effect along with the varying magnetic influence that the particular part of the earth's surface you were sailing over, had on it. So being able to see the sun and stars every day to carry out the calculations was very important. Many ships came to grief because of an incorrect course they had been steering and it was not unusual to sometimes go for many days without sight of sun or stars. Today, of course, it is push button navigation, but I am pleased to say that all my navigation was on par with James Cook.

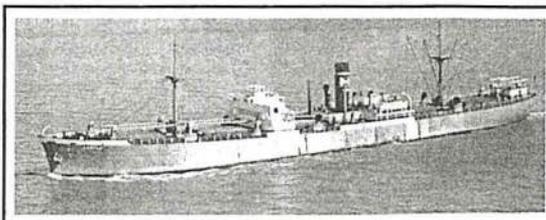
Accommodation on board the 10,000 ton tramp ships was somewhat sparse, in fact when I later visited the Cutty Sark, the accommodation appeared identical. Food ashore was still rationed and it was limited at sea also, although fresh water was even more scarce. So much then for the background and on to what readers of 'The Key' may consider of interest.

My first ship was the SS Norton, all riveted, 420 feet in length with a 58 foot beam and built in Scotland at Burntisland in 1941. Originally she was built as a coal burner and I joined her at Wallsend where she was being converted to oil burning. Speed in those days was nothing to get excited about insofar as tramp ships were concerned. If over say a three week or more ocean passage, we managed an average speed of 8 knots, it wasn't bad going! To average 9 knots required current and wind behind you all the way. Still they were strong and well built ships as I was to find out later on.

Our first passage as an oil burner was to go from the Tyne to Immingham to load coal for Spezia in Italy. Now this was just some 4 years after the war and wartime influence was still very strong with us as many older readers will remember. Imagine my surprise when upon arriving at Spezia, we are all lined up on deck under 'tommy-guns', whilst the Italian customs searched the ship. I was just 16 but found it hard to be stood in a line with a gun pointed at me by our erstwhile enemies. Cigarettes were what they were after, they were huge in the smuggling trade at that time and as I found in later years, law and order, as we knew it in this country, was a little different in other parts of the world. Entering the harbour at Spezia, various sunken ships were still partially visible and many of the buildings had ample evidence of war damage. There was a little smug satisfaction on seeing this at first hand, as I was still too used to seeing such damage remains back in England.

After discharge of coal, it was a short hop over to Bone in Algeria where we were to load iron ore for Tyne Dock. Education now started perhaps with the smell of Africa coming out to the ship well before we got there. Flies were something else, North African flies entered your mouth with your food if you were not careful. This I found in later years, all the same along the coast to the Suez Canal. The local rag-tag Arabs were also an item to keep in mind. It was not unusual for any lone seaman, either going ashore or returning to the ship, to find himself with a knife in his ribs and robbed. One night, we three apprentices were walking up the central promenade of the town (something like the high street but with many cafes serving onto the tables and chairs that filled the pavements). Anyway, we heard a sound behind us and turned to find a one-legged Arab boy with a crutch making a move at a 'snatch and grab' at us. He did not quite make it, being

caught in the act so to speak. We made to grab him but he was off like grease-lightning, one leg and one crutch, he dived down a dark alleyway and we prudently decided to stay in the well-lit promenade. If I remember correctly, our little old chief engineer, who was born in 1888, did take a walk ashore on his own. He was duly robbed but perhaps considered too frail looking to be killed for it.



Home then with iron ore and an unusually short voyage for a tramp ship, just six weeks. The next trip was to be for 9 months and quite eventful. We left the Tyne in what we called 'light ship' condition (no cargo), away across the Atlantic to a small island called Curacao off the north coast of South America. This was a regular spot to call at in order to take on board oil fuel bunkers and of course fresh water. It was then a northwesterly course inside the Caribbean Sea for the island of Hispaniola, half of which was still a strong voodoo country named Haiti, the other half being the Dominican Republic which was where we were bound. I must admit to a certain amount of cynicism when I now view the sales pitch on holidays here. In 1950 it was about the last place one would go for a holiday and I feel that passage of fifty years is still rather short to find the way of life having changed very much.

Our first stop was to a place called San Pedro de Macoris to load a part cargo of bagged sugar, mind we had of course given the holds a good clean out first on the passage across, after being full of iron ore. After loading our quota at this port it was a move around the coast and anchor off a place called Boca Chica where the rest of the sugar cargo would come out to us in barges.

Many seamen have a reputation for being very superstitious and it was here that things started to happen, the superstition part being that everything happens in threes. It could, of course, all have been due to various remarks that had been made about voodoo land by many of the crew. Anyway, first of all I get called away from my Sunday lunch by the Third Officer to go and rig up a hose pipe at number two hatch on the starboard side of the fore deck. One of the local workmen had started to bring up his lungs over the hatch coaming and sugar cargo, the deck and the bulwark, as one of his workmates dragged him to the ship's side. By the time I got round the corner onto the fore deck, he was just slipping down the bulkhead of the accommodation and breathing his last. My job was to wash away all the blood and bits of lung. So this 'happening' on board did not go down too well with some of the crew. Then upon completion of loading, the big heavy wooden hatch boards were fitted, three strong canvas tarpaulins stretched over them and secured along each side with steel bars and wedges.

The next job was to lower the five ton lifting capacity, derrick booms into their crutches ready for our voyage around the Cape of Good Hope and up to Ceylon, a job done on a regular basis, although care must be taken as this steel boom is lowered by hand. For reasons that we never found out, the heel of the boom at number three hold jumped from its swivel position on the samson post and it fell with an almighty crash over the hatch. The various wires caught one of the A.B.'s but there was no serious injury. With many sailors milling about in the area it was lucky indeed that its long length (about 40 feet) did not land on a sailor. I can tell you that all in the area were shaken up by the narrow escape. The first words said though were, "That's two", - the dead man had only been a couple of days before. However, everything was put in order and off we went in a southeasterly direction to head out into the Atlantic and for our passage around the cape of Good Hope.

It was flat calm seas and warm nights. Another apprentice had handed the wheel over to a seaman at 0200 hours, the Second Officer who did the midnight to 0400 watch had just gone into the chart room behind the wheelhouse to make his mid-watch cup of tea. The sailor on the wheel, looking straight ahead through the open wheelhouse window, suddenly saw a dim light being hoisted ahead and a voice shouting, "Hard astarboard!" He put the wheel over and the Second Officer came dashing out but too late.

I was on the 8 to 12 watch at that time and had come off watch at midnight and gone to bed. About ten past two in the morning the door to the apprentices' cabin opens and the Second Officer wakes up the Senior Apprentice (who did the 4 to 8 watch), "Come on Ginger, sound round, we are aground!" Now I had felt nothing and Ginger thought it was a leg pull but no, as we could see at daylight, we were balanced amidships on a rocky reef that surrounded a very small islet called Bird Island. We could see the bottom through the clear water.

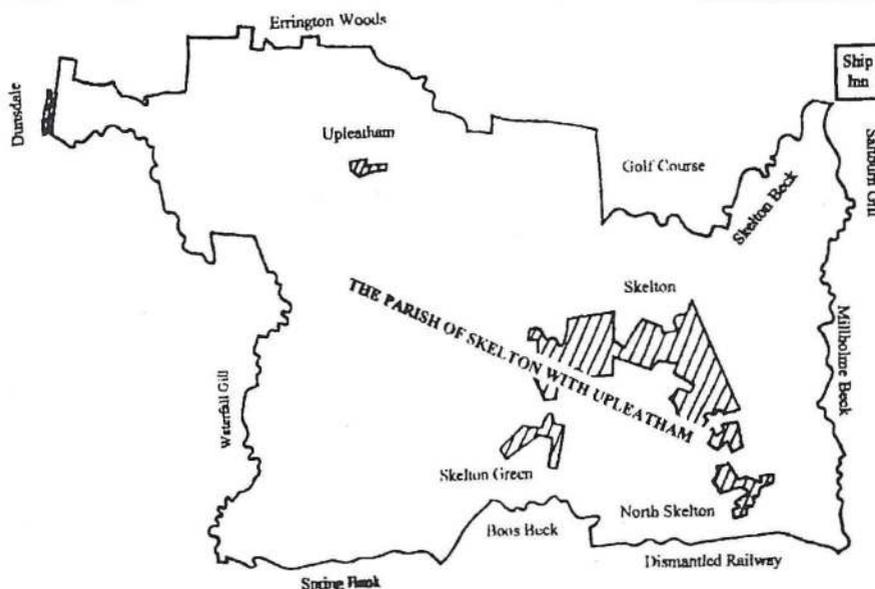
In those sort of ships there was about another 3' 6" below the bottom of the holds that were what we called 'double bottom tanks'. They carried fuel and ballast water. We had no carpenter on those ships so the Senior Apprentice did his job every morning, sounding the double bottom tanks and hold bilges, to make sure that they were not taking any water. Off went Ginger and came back to report that we were not taking sea water anywhere.

The third 'happening' had happened, but our next concern, if we got off, was for our passage around the Cape of Good Hope. Just like off Cape Horn, one can still meet some nasty weather off South Africa. Well the Captain, Chief Officer and Chief Engineer had their meeting - the plan was to pump out most of our oil bunkers and at the time designated as high water (not much rise and fall in that latitude) they would use the engines to try to go astern and get the ship off the reef. One must remember this was only a few years after the war when many ships had been sunk and much oil had been spread about the seas of the world, so no great concern was given, as it would have been today, to oil pollution. At the appointed time the engines were put astern and, standing amidships, we could actually see the topmast of the mainmast angle forward slightly as the ship bent. We slid off, a lot more sounding of course, and altered course to head towards Curacao again to fill up our bunkers. There was still plenty of concern about the pending South Atlantic passage, but all went well and it was on this passage that we heard on the radio that we had gone to war in Korea.

(To be continued...)

Ancient & Modern

The Christian Church in England has played a part in the lives of the people of Northern Britain since earliest times. When Pope Gregory sent St Augustine to convert the Britons in AD596 the Christians of the Celtic Church were already established under the guidance and leadership of people like Patrick and Columba. At the Synod of Whitby in AD664, under the guidance of Hilda, Abbess of Whitby, agreement was reached and the Church in England developed the roots of the organisation which would lead us to where we are today. The earliest mention of the Church in Skelton is of the building of a church on the site of All Saints old church in 1325, founded by Adam De Brus. The ancient parish of Skelton was much bigger than we know it today. In 1801 it comprised Skelton, Brotton, Skinningrove, Kilton, Moorsholm and Stanghow. With changes in population and the growing importance of these communities, the boundaries were altered to reflect growing need. The church has always been careful to try to organise itself to meet the needs of the people whom it serves and so the parishes of Brotton, Boosbeck Lingdale and Moorsholm, were formed. In recent years, further changes in population prompted the Church to align the parish of Skelton with the parish of Upleatham and so today the Parish of Skelton with Upleatham is defined by the boundaries shown on the map.



The Church of England endeavours to meet the needs of all those living within its boundaries who choose to call upon it, whilst recognising that some will choose to affiliate to other denominations or none. Over the years this has been illustrated in the way the church has developed its buildings. The present Parish of Skelton with Upleatham has, over the years, used five church buildings. Three of those are for the most part no longer used. The old St Andrew's Church at Upleatham is now a residential dwelling and the small Church in that village is looked after for posterity by Redcar and Cleveland Council. The old All Saints Church in Skelton is no longer used for regular worship and is maintained by The Churches Conservation Trust, it is used occasionally for services. In 1884 the new All Saints Church replaced the Old Church as the Parish Church. The new church was completed in 1884 at a cost of £13,476. The building is of special interest as it comprises an embattled tower which is separate from the body of the church and joined by a passage way. The tower containing a peel of eight bells was a gift from John Thomas Wharton of Skelton Castle. The second church in the parish still in regular use is the church at North Skelton dedicated to St Peter.

Although our church buildings are important, as a sign of the presence of God's Church in the community, these buildings can only be made effective by the people who make up the living presence of the Christian Family. The Church both ancient and modern has been at its best when it has made a meaningful contribution to the life of the community of which it has been a part. Over the years the Parish of Skelton has changed and the church has had to change in response to the needs of its community. The Christian Church has only survived for the last 2000 years because it has touched the lives of people and made God's presence real to them. Sometimes this has been in spiritual ways and at other times in more practical social ways. The Church in The Parish of Skelton with Upleatham still strives to keep up the valuable traditions of The Church of England in both these important ways. Its success in the past has been due to the tireless efforts of many faithful people. It is blessed at present by the support and goodwill of so many people in the communities which make up the parish. With the continued commitment of the Christian folk of the parish the Church can continue to thrive and truly serve the people in the name of Christ.



Graham J. Pacey Rector

Community Technician's Computer Tips

Greetings and welcome to the Community Technician's Technical Tips column.

The Community Technician's job is to offer help to community groups and raise IT awareness all around the East Cleveland area. I will also produce websites for Community Groups that want them to promote their activities onto the World Wide Web. All this is provided **Free of Charge** funded by

One North East through the Rural Development Programme. If you wish to contact me to discuss any ideas or help that you require I can be reached in the following ways:

Address: The Community Technician
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Or:
E-mail: neil.harland@talk21.com
Website: www.pctech.org.uk

I also give seminars on general IT issues. If you are interested then please give me a call. In future, I hope to produce a regular article for 'The Key', each issue concentrating on a particular area of interest for anyone with a computer. Next issue I hope to give a very brief buyer's guide in what to look for when buying a PC.

Neil Harland

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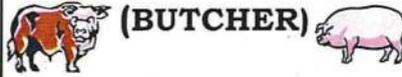
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