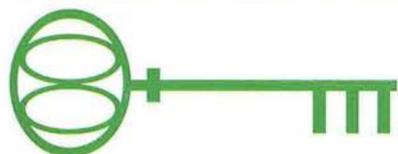


ISSUE NO 35

APRIL 2003

THE KEY



A NEWSPAPER FOR NORTH SKELTON & LAYLAND



Daffodils at Rushpool Hall - photograph by Don Burluraux

Editorial

Thank you for all your kind words and letters about the exit of 'The Lamps'. I was particularly moved by the many phone calls I received. I am also sorry to see them go.

Once again Don and I appreciated all your Christmas cards, e-mails and donations.

The Key mailing list has now risen to over 100. The majority of you pay well over the £3 per year, which includes postage and packing. However there are still one or two who owe me last year's subscription. Please send me the money or cheque made out to 'THE KEY'. I am sorry but if you don't you will not receive the next edition.

The notice board on Page 19 is to publicise fund raising events. Each event is for the improvement of North Skelton. The same genuine people turn up every time. It's time 'YOU' came along and gave your support. After all, it's 'YOU' that benefits.

Norma

Editor: Norma Templeman, 7 Bolckow Street,
North Skelton, Saltburn, Yorkshire TS12 2AN
Tel: 01287 653853
E-mail: norma@templeman146.fsnet.co.uk

Assistant Editor: Don Burluraux, 8 North Terrace,
Skelton, Saltburn, Yorkshire TS12 2ES
Tel: 01287 652312
E-mail: don.burluraux@ntlworld.com

Golden Couple!



John and Eileene Pinkney were married at the Wesleyan Chapel, Brompton in November 1952. The newlyweds came back to North Skelton and lived with John's mam, Mary Ann Pinkney (Polly to us North Skeltoners) at 16, Vaughan Street. The couple celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary last November. John and Eileene have a son, Malcolm, and three grandchildren. Congratulations to you both!

Bolckow Street Floods

What is the point of having a garden when your children or grandchildren can't play in it or it can't be planted?

This is exactly what residents of the semi-detached houses in Bolckow Street are saying. Why? because at the first sign of a downpour they are all on flood watch.



Prolonged rain immediately floods their back gardens destroying everything in its path.

Hundreds of pounds have been spent over the years, not only on plants but on pipes as well, as residents try to help solve the problem that Councillors ignore.



The buck has been passed from one department to another. No-one will take responsibility yet they all realise the problem has something to do with the beck that runs adjacent to the gardens which we understand is part of the old mine drainage system.

Understandably the residents are becoming very angry, all their hard work has been for nothing.

If it can be believed, the Councillors now tell them something will be done in the near future - where have we heard that before.....?

N

FRANCE ON 2 WHEELS

For someone who has a phobia about flying I have no such fear about setting off on the back of the motorbike to spend a holiday in France. In fact it has been known for me to take the occasional nap – yes whilst travelling!

Our re-introduction to the biking scene happened when our first grandchild, Emily, was born. We decided to celebrate this great event by treating ourselves to a purely selfish ‘toy’ - you can’t get three on a bike!

It normally takes Kev two years to buy a pair of trainers but only a few seconds to buy a bike. This was proved when two years ago he went off on a biking holiday with an old friend (Len Thompson, ex Warsett Crescent) and rang me up one night to say he was in love with his dream bike, a Silver Yamaha FJR1300.

He did invite me to join him “...to see if it has a comfortable backseat.” It would have taken more guts than I have to part a man from his dream love...!

The holiday in France was organised for 25th July 2002 and our friends Len & Norma would join us. We booked no accommodation, just went along with Len’s assurances that, “France is full of places to stay we so won’t have a problem,” - and we didn’t.

We rode down to Dover on the Friday on one of the hottest days of the summer. There had been a major accident on the M25 near Heathrow which meant that every vehicle heading south was on the same road as us and we were in miles of traffic. Here is where a major plus comes in when biking, you don’t have to sit and wait. It did involve a bit of riding on the hard shoulder now and then but we got through. Another advantage is that at the ferry, bikes are often waved through ahead of the rest of the travelling public – hence no queuing.

Once the bikes were on board a girl really finds out how important she is to her man. The care and consideration Kev & Len gave to getting those bikes settled in for the journey to France had to be seen to be believed. It’s the first time I have seen Kev converse in French to a guy who obviously had a deep interest in the two machines and body language was understood from start to finish.

At the other end, after waves of goodbye and lots of “Merci, merci...”, we were away. The first thing I noticed was the quietness of the roads and the politeness with which other road users treated us. None of the second-class citizens that bikers in this country often come up against, but a completely different culture.

We opted to use the pay roads to get us to our first stop-over in Reims. The charges are minimal and over the whole holiday I don’t think we spent more than £10 on tolls, and all our journeys were based on the quickest and fastest roads. It hadn’t been our intention to do this but the weather was so hot that every time we stopped for a rest we were roasted in all our protective clothing so we headed from A to B as fast as possible, parked up and wandered around the bars, sights, bars, restaurants, bars, and the occasional bar...!

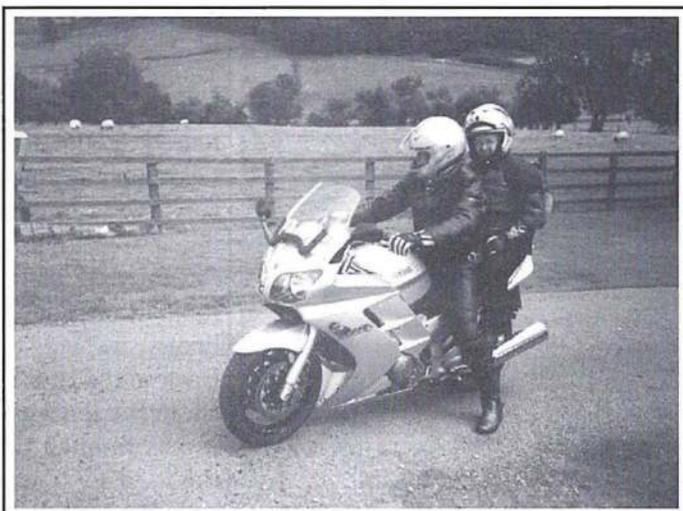
The hotel we stayed at in Reims was part of the ‘Kyriad’ group and throughout our holiday, when possible, we checked in to one of their hotels - I would highly recommend them. They also have special accommodation for motorbikes!! After spending the rest of Saturday looking around the town and the beautiful Cathedrale Notre-Dame we went to bed tired but happy.

The next day we decided to spend the day discovering the Champagne History of Reims and Epernay. We visited the Moet et Chandon establishment and took advantage of the guided tour and tasting. I am not a lover of champagne, or so I thought. I have obviously been drinking the wrong stuff because this was exquisite and after four glasses I am pleased to tell you that we had taken a taxi over to Epernay and we were getting the train back!

That night we ate at a Chinese pavement restaurant in the centre of Reims and watched the world go by.

The next day we were heading for Blois, which is south of Paris and involved us in a nightmare journey around the Paris Peripherique (think the spelling is nearly right). But that’s another story.....

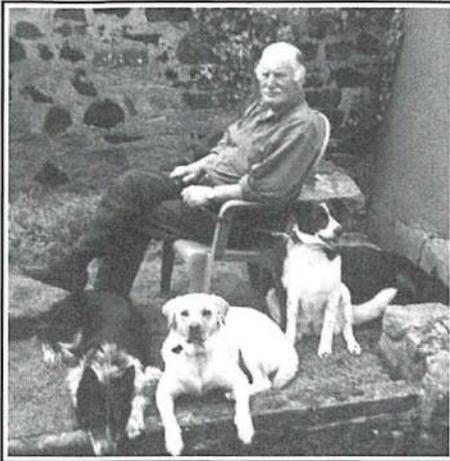
Gina & Kev McMahon



Kev & Gina McMahon

More Memories of North Skelton

By Brian Addison (Young Nimble Nat)



Brian Addison
(Young Nimble Nat)

In my ill-spent youth I frequented the 'Tute' playing snooker with Jeff Templeman, Keith Beckham and Dennis Readman. I still get a Christmas card from Dennis who now lives down in Suffolk. Dennis and I toured Scotland on our pushbikes. We set off from North Skelton to the Lake District, then onto Glasgow, over the Trossachs to Callender, then back over to Edinburgh. The most wonderful sight waking up one morning at Aberfoyle was the mist around the mountain tops. Not a bad fete for a couple of North Skelton lads. Every Sunday afternoon we played football on Tom Robinson's field - if the nets were left up it was sheer luxury, we were Stanley Mathews and Wilf Mannion rolled into one. Back to the Bull's Head - father and Jack ('Salts') Hodgson were arguing about the quickest route walking from Lingdale to the Bull. Father said it was through the pit yard, Jack said no it was down past the cricket field. They decided to have a race. When father came to the level-crossing in the pit yard he ran like hell down Wharton Street and had a pint in his hand to give Jack as he came in the Bull door! Jack couldn't believe his eyes - father said that if he hadn't ran from the pit yard down

Wharton Street he wouldn't have beaten Jack in a month of blue Sundays!

Carnival Day was another event of the year for the village. I remember the old 'block cart' and horses with a man dressed up in a gorilla skin. He looked so real it frightened us kids to death. Bob Todd also did his impression of Charlie Chaplin so well he could have been a good stand-in for Charlie. Another event I remember was the Women versus the Men at football. The women were allowed to run but the men had to walk!

When the Poles came to work down the Mines they were billeted in the 'Tute'. One of them came into the Bull and asked father for some cigarettes.

"What kind do you want?" asked father.

He replied, "A packet of Capistan."

"Sorry we only have Golden Flake," said father.

He laughed and said, "You're a funny man Bob!"

Occasionally I had to go down the mine to make and hang airway doors. They had to be made in the mine because they were too big to go down in the cage. After completing my task I went to the pit bottom to ring the surface to send down a small door, which slid into the big one after cutting a hole in it to allow the air to come through enabling us to open pressure. Anyway, halfway back up the drift, one of the miners said, "That door's no good Brian for yon hole."

"Why not?" I asked.

He laughed and said, "Because the set's just gone through the bloody lot!"

I attended Sunday School in the village and I remember (little horror that I was) waiting behind the doors with a kneeling mat and whopping the kids on the head as they came through, just missing Mrs Austin our Sunday School teacher who didn't find it too amusing.

Skateboards - we made our own, a piece of wood put across an old roller-skate and away we went like 'billy-o' down Bolckow Street.

My night out as a lad was either a trip to *Brotton Grand* picture-house or upmarket to the *Regal* at Loftus. Almost every Sunday there was a queue a mile long outside the Grand.

Jack Sayers was the village cobbler. Once you had your pit boots soled and heeled by Jack, the thickness of the leather and studs meant you only had to pick your feet up - they put themselves down! A darned good repair job.

Sid Goodall's ice-lollies are remembered with relish - any flavour for a penny.

Back at The Bull... My job as a kid (pocket money) was to clean the spittoons and swill the men's urinals, not a pleasant job at the best of times but somebody had to do it - Brian.

In the winter we had paraffin lamps in the cellar to stop the beer freezing. In summer we hose-piped it down with cold water to keep it cool. No central heating or refrigeration in those days.

There was an art in keeping beer and father was one of the best at pulling a good pint. Nowadays it's like filling your car up with petrol. Mam and Dad retired from The Bull in 1958 after 26 happy years.

Brian Briggs - Local Parish Council Chairman

In 1969 Margaret and I moved from Normanby to Skelton - our first home was at 26, Saltburn Lane. I suppose the main reason we moved was our friendship with Alex & Jean Birkbeck.

Alex and I first met when we were doing our National Service at Catterick, both as drivers in the R.A.S.C. Alex was originally a Paratrooper, but after he suffered a bad accident to his ankle he was transferred to our unit. That was in 1960.

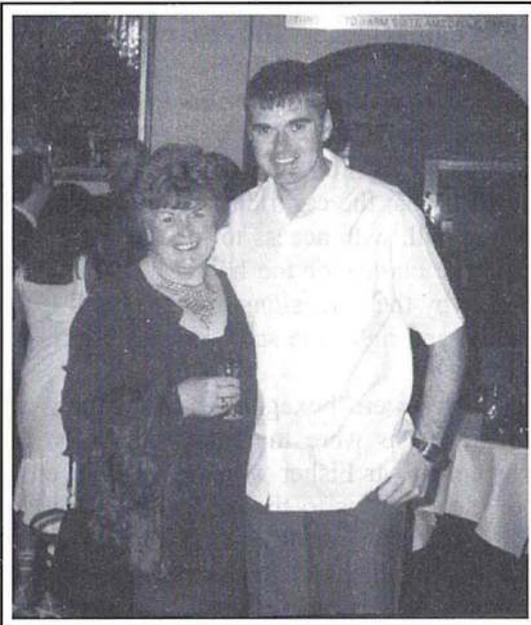
As a Bricklayer I was able to help Alex & Jean develop and maintain their properties in Skelton.

After completing my National Service I went back on the tools, and for three years worked for Parkway Estates (Charles Amer) on private building work. Then in 1965 I started work as a Maintenance Bricklayer for the then South Durham Iron & Steel Company, Cargo Fleet Works and in 1970 for British Steel at the South Bank Coke Ovens, and then into the 'Torpedo Shop' - that was until 1982.

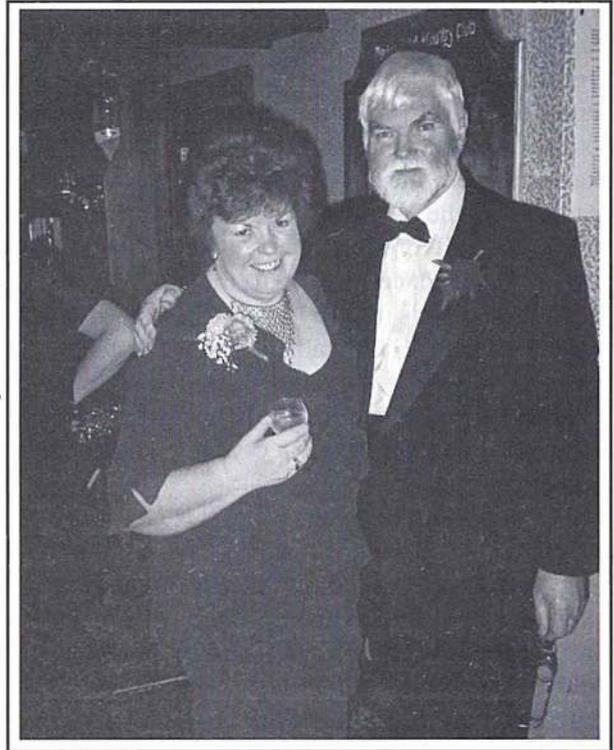
For 10 years I was shop steward and also the U.C.A.A.T convenor responsible for Bricklayers, Joiners and at one time Painters - I'm still a U.C.A.A.T trade union member.

I always felt that period gave me a good foundation for dealing with people and associated problems.

In 1982 I decided to work outside again, spent a number of years with Rush and Tompkins a civil engineering company, and that's where our youngest son Peter served his time as a Bricklayer. Now Peter is a Building Inspector for Coast & Country Housing and I'm pleased to say that he is a shop steward and hopes to run for the Parish & Borough Council in May.



Margaret and son Peter



Margaret and Brian Briggs

After a short period of time serving as a Parish Councillor I was pleased when I was elected Chair, and Margaret became my escort last May. We have performed many duties during that period of time representing Skelton & Brotton Parish Council.

I have just had confirmation that I will be contesting the Skelton Ward with Helen & Dave McLuckie. They have both been of great help to me during my term of office as a Parish Councillor. I would also like to thank Councillor Mike Steven for all the work he has done for the Parish and Borough Council.

Mike will not be standing as a Councillor in May and I thank him for his endorsement in contesting his seat.

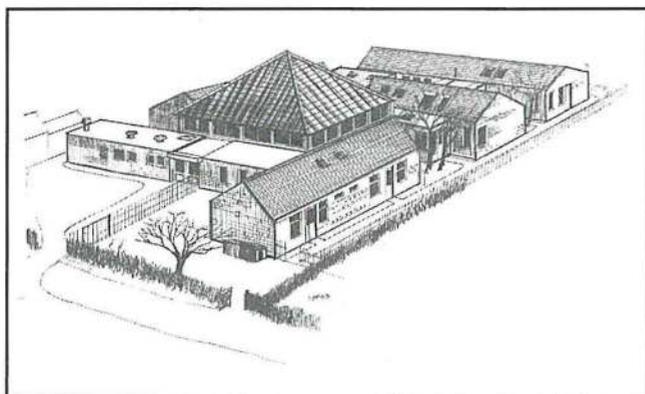
*Brian Briggs
Chairman, Skelton & Brotton Parish Council*

School for the Future - Skelton Primary School

If you have lived in the villages of North Skelton, New Skelton, Skelton and Skelton Green you can't help but have noticed the great changes in the area over the last few years. The large house building programmes at North Skelton, Saltburn Lane, and Fish Ponds; the reclaimed land that was once Park Street, Skelton Green; the new houses that are about to appear behind the Wharton Arms car park in the High Street - all will, or already have, added to the population of these once tight-knit mining communities. And then there's the bypass! The speed calming measures, the CCTV cameras and the Community Wardens have all appeared in the last few years. Whether or not they were really needed or have been effective? I bet that you have your own thoughts on the subject.

One of the other great changes in this area has been in education. As mentioned in the last edition of *The Key*, the closure of North Skelton School and the opening of Stanghow Lane School, then a County Primary in September 1962, was a great change for the children of North Skelton, New Skelton and Skelton. The new school was based on the old Victorian style school with its high roofs and red brick and the *Boys* and *Girls* entrances carved above the doors. That school was to be the next in the local School's History articles.

However, as this article goes to press, other changes are taking place in the education of our children and I would like to take this opportunity to by pass the Stanghow Lane School until next time and write about the present Skelton Infants and Junior Schools which this year commemorate their 25th anniversary in 1993.



Skelton Infants School

As from 1st April 2003 the Infant and Junior Schools will become one - SKELTON PRIMARY SCHOOL. It will be under the leadership of one head teacher who will be the present head teacher of the Junior School, Mrs Barbara Bell. After a formal interview

process Mrs Bell was offered the job of head teacher of the new Skelton Primary School and she accepted it. Mrs Bell is leaving her present post she has held since 1993 leading the Junior School to Beacon Status, and in her new post she will be responsible for a staff of around 70 and 530 pupils. The new Primary School will also maintain the Beacon Status.

Skelton Junior and Infants School pupils moved from the overcrowded Stanghow Lane and Skelton Green Schools to the new schools on Station Lane near the Hollybush Estate, and the then new Rivers Estate in 1968, Stanghow Lane and Skelton Green Schools closing after nearly 100 years of service. Stanghow Lane was so overcrowded that some of the pupils were transferred to Margrove Park School. I was one of those pupils and was transported by bus for nearly a year until the new Schools opened.

In September of that year, I remember it well, I attended the new Junior School after watching it being built as we kids played on the playing field 'swings' which are still there if some what improved.

I left next summer to attend Brotton County Modern School, which later was to become Warsett School. Believe me, that was an education in itself - if you went there you'll know what I mean! The Warsett School head teacher then was Mr Bowman who had been a teacher at Stanghow Lane School in the 1950's. More on that in a later school's history.

The new Junior head teacher was to be Mr Dennis Neasham who was deputy head teacher at Stanghow Lane, under head teacher Mr Harker, and the new deputy head was to be Mrs Hoskins until the appointment of Mr Keith Williams. In January 1969 the Infant School was to be headed by the head teacher of the then closed Skelton Green School, Miss Pybus, later succeeded by Mrs Alman.

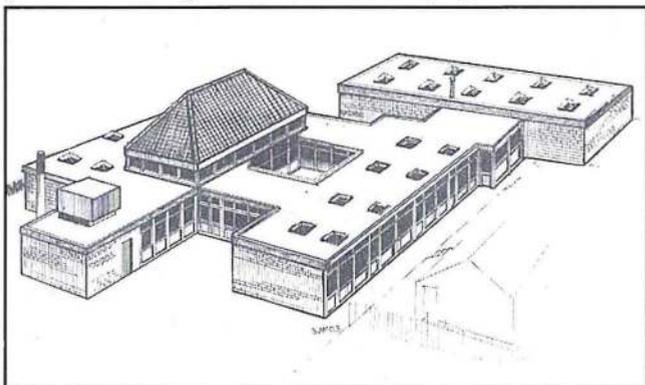
During my time at Skelton Juniors, the school was a lot smaller, with just the eight classrooms situated to the side of the hall, with access to the one large play ground from the classes or the hall. Much of this is now built over by the extensions to the school. If my memory serves me right, the staff room is still in the same place.

Our dinner tables were hexagonal and the hall curtains were orange as were the Infant School's. My teacher was called Mr Fisher who was I think at his first school. School trips to the Yorkshire Show and Flamingo Park Zoo were the highlights of my time there, as well as football - we had a very decent football team which was always at the top of the inter-school league, though I never made the team.

These new schools were a great improvement on the old Victorian Stanghow Lane that was later turned

into private residences.

As you will be aware, the Infants School has had a bad time lately and had a bad Ofsted report. Despite the great efforts of the head teacher Miss Joy Adams and staff and governors, the school had failed to make the required government standards and Joy left the school and was sadly missed by parents and staff. As a consequence the merger was to be the only option.



Skelton Junior School

But to the future of the new school, all looks good with the head teacher, staff and governors all working for a great launch on April 1st, though you will not notice any great change. There will be no new buildings except a new Neighbourhood Nursery Centre that is to serve the community.

Other changes to education in our area will be the building of a new large school to replace Rosecroft, Warsett and De Brus Secondary Schools, now collectively known as Freebrough, and the debate to the location of the new Community College - again more on this later.

Stuart McMillan

A Cry for Help!

Reg Dunning, who presently resides in New South Wales, Australia, contacted us recently:

"I will be in England on holiday in June / July of this year and one of my old school mates from Guisborough Grammar is trying to organise a class reunion. We have tracked down about two thirds of the mob but the remainder are either spread to the far corners of the UK or are ex-directory.

Three of the guys came from our immediate area:

Norman Greenhough - Brotton

Jimmy Ellerby - Brotton

Brian Lacey - Carlin How

Does anyone know of their whereabouts...?"

If you can help, please ring Don - 01287 652312 or Norma - 01287 653853.

Jean & Sally

"Shut t' door, its blowing a gale in 'ere," shouted Sally. "These young 'uns 'ave no thought for us ord 'uns. Froth on our stout'll be at t' other side of t' bar afore long. By, some on 'em are brazent fond." Jean and Sally had just walked into the Bull. The pair always sat in their usual seat facing the door. That way they could watch the comings and goings of the rest of the patrons. Taking a long drink of their stout, they licked their lips as they made themselves comfy.



"It's just t' same as the carry on a lot of 'em are 'avin' wi' these 'ere drugs. It's t' ruination of this country," said Jean. "We used to get injected with cocaine years since, but only to get our teeth out. Ten minutes wi' Toft in his dentist's chair would 'ave cured all these addicts!"

"E-E-H, Jean!!!" replied Sally, "He sat you in that chair, pulled a lever, an' as yer flew back he shouted, 'OPEN WIDER!' You were shakin' like a dothery dock as he came towards you with a needle full of cocaine. E-e-h! God it was like 'avin' a pitchfork shoved into yer gums. Did he wait 'til it froze? Did he 'ell. He got them pliers wrapped round yer tooth and nearly rov' yer 'ead off."

Sally shivered as she remembered.

"Ah know Sally," said Jean. "An' he didn't take any notice if you screamed. He just kept on pullin'. Well yer know what his catchphrase was - 'Spit in there! NEXT!' Many's the time ah've seen kids goin' 'ell-for-leather down Loftus High Street. They'd rather 'ave toothache than Toft! Did yer ever know 'im 'ave gas Sally?"

"Only ta' cook 'is meat, Jean!"

Jean got up, the two empty glasses in her hands.

"Di' yer fancy another 'alf then, Sal?"

"Don't forget we 'ave to tek our tablets at 3," Sally was quick to reply.

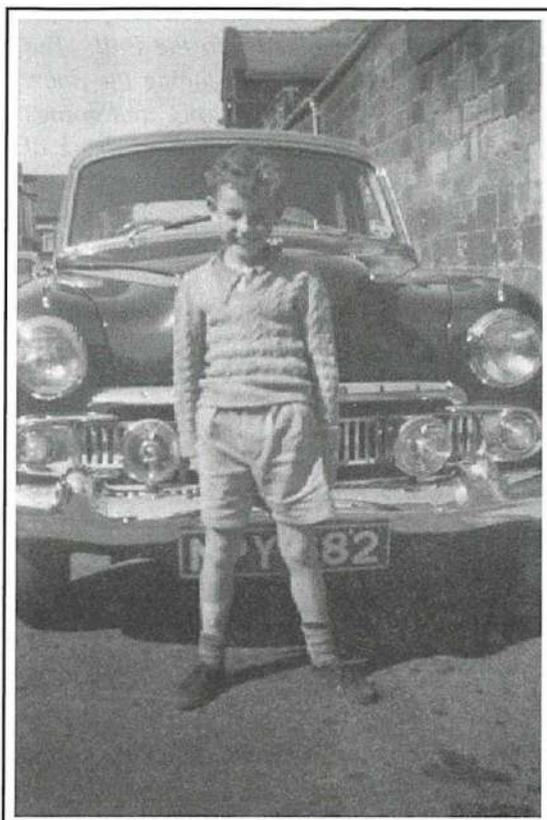
"Awe! Ah'll ger 'em in. We'll tek 'em at 4!"

"Cheers!"

n

Nostalgia From Abroad

By Pete 'Tongey' Turnbull



'Tongey' Turnbull standing proudly in front of his Dad's car - c. late 1950's

On several occasions Don has asked me the reasons why I had not contributed an article for 'The Key' and really it was down to finding the motivation, so it is to that end I finally put pen to paper and also commend Norma and Don for having that motivation and conviction which most of us find lacking in firstly the concept and secondly in keeping it rolling off the press every 4 months.

Every time I read 'The Key' I always recall some distant memory, either the numerous pit-yard 'camps', especially the infamous elderberry bush on the shale-heap. It was from there where we would spy on the kids led by Miss Pybus on their way for school dinner from the Infants School to the dinner hall that was located on what is now the site of the Country Store. No - we weren't playing truant, just recovering from an epidemic of chicken-pox, and in any event the 'kid-catcher', a certain Mr Codling, and indeed Miss Pybus herself ensured that this particular word was never in our vocabulary.

The pit-yard was one big adventure playground to us, and most certainly the kids of North Skelton had the freedom of it and to this day I'm in awe of that fact. It was a great place to roam and forage, ranging from the 'cinder track', the newt-filled reservoir and the Manager's vegetable garden, so ably maintained by Sam Ovington and full of prize-winning produce. We weren't in the garden uninvited but rather to be offered cherry-ripe tomatoes and some sweet tasting 'goosegogs' (gooseberries).

As with the garden, each building or area would have an individual custodian associated with it. The lamp cabin was Mr Foster and Mr Lamb, the joiner's shop and explosives store Mr

Swan, and countless others.

Characters abounded and perhaps one of my favourites was Sid Tremain. I remember well the time he acquired a musical toilet roll holder which at that time was high-tec gone crazy! It was a time when outside toilets were common and usually at the bottom of the back-yard. Sid used to enjoy a pint or two and so would use it in the early hours of the morning. The immediate neighbours all thought it was an ice-cream van and were about to complain to Trillo's about the fact! Sid, however, was found to be the true culprit when on one occasion he decided to sing in harmony with it but it didn't stop the musical rendition coming from 11 Bolckow Street whenever nature called...!

When I see the world today I look back at my time at North Skelton with great fondness and remember a genuine kindness from its residents - doors were never locked, such was the trust that abounded. I spent my formative years there, before at 20 years old making a big move to 49a High Street, Skelton with my big mate Robin Hall - it was an independence thing associated with the 1960's. That lasted a year and then my travels via employment began, firstly in Botswana and from then on travelling became my norm - Libya, Sudan, South Africa, Singapore, China, Russia and many other places without becoming too boring. Now in my fifties, I wonder how this came about for a guy only 'armed' with an apprenticeship and a few bits of certificates, and I firmly believe it was the influence and integrity inherited from my past masters at the 'University of Life' at North Skelton.

About a year ago I was working in the Phillipines. I wasn't happy with my lot and in the best contractor tradition - 'wrapped' (resigned). I had been there about 3 months and well away from the activities of the main site of Malampaya, so did not have day to day contact with my Project Manager, a one Mr Ken Dixon. The leaving day came around so I went to see him to say my last 'goodbyes' and the niceties began. The conversation got round to, "Did I have a brother called Ian?" I explained that he was my cousin and it turned out that through

Ian's first marriage they had been brothers-in-law! This promptly led into, "Did I know of North Skelton?" - I was amazed!

It thus transpired that he came originally from Dormanstown and had worked at North Skelton Pit as a trainee surveyor in his youth. He told me that in his early years he was a nervous sort of a lad, and how well he remembered the support and encouragement from his colleagues. Harry Ingleby, George Berwick and George Pearson all got a mention and he recalled how at Christmas time the above-mentioned plus himself and others would, and what's more would be expected to, do a carol rendition for the Mine Agent (Mr Roberts) in the main office. I cannot remember his first name, but I do remember he drove a Jaguar car and lived in Brotton just down from the garage. That I did not know of the fact, and even stranger to find out in the Phillipines, just goes to show how more global we have all become, but how endearing certain times will always be remembered in distant places by different players.

I could certainly list many other names and associated stories with them but perhaps that might be the time for the book, so apologies to all those not mentioned in this article.

I would at this point like to mention Jim Ramage for his single-handed doggedness in clearing all of the stones and shale from the then incomplete village football pitch, which means a facility is in place today which might have gone the same way as the village pit.

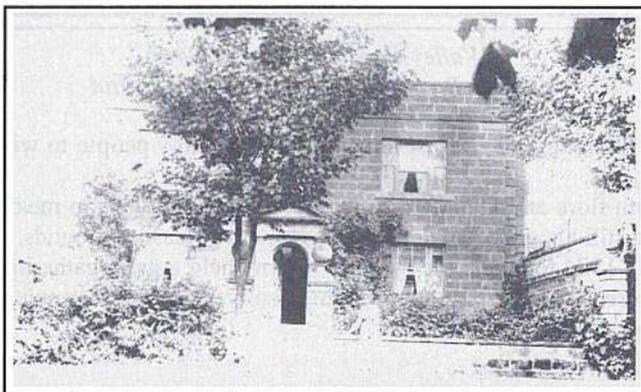
I pen this article from a jungle location in Gabon, and because the vehicle I drive is a Landrover, and the guy who works alongside me mentioned that they were a good work-horse and also because he's a bit of a car enthusiast, he turned the topic of conversation to earlier models. I remember Boocock's had an Austin Gypsy (Baby Landrover) that was their general-purpose vehicle. He confessed that he had never heard of it and so confirmation was sought in the bar that night - again there were distracters. It was finally confirmed the following night via an internet enquiry. I never had any doubt because I remember that vehicle with a passion - it was originally a muddy brown soft top. The soft top was eventually done away with and was replaced with a solid cab, then it was re-sprayed a blue/grey colour. It was necessary to mention this because its first job after its transformation was the principal transport of the North Skelton Carnival Parade with none other than Jim's wife, Anne, being the Carnival Queen firmly perched on the back.

Finally, in a previous edition of The Key I read an article by Ray Beckham and the mists of time were swirled once again to the occasion when we had a bike race down Bolckow Street. Ray was on a newly acquired two-wheeler and me on my three-wheeler. It was my first taste of brinkmanship and I lost because I was heading straight for my father's Vauxhall, so at the last possible moment I conceded the race and pulled on the brake, which being a tricycle only had a front one. The next thing I knew was that I had landed on the bonnet of the car with blood pouring from my head. I had caught the arrowed sign on my 'flight path' and I remember being more concerned about the car than my injuries because my father had just purchased it and it was his pride and joy! I remember its registration plate to this day and wonder if it was because of the accident or whether I just thought it was a super car. Incidentally, the registration was NPY 682. The photograph shows me standing in front of it.

Bon Voyage

Pete 'Tongey' Turnbull (Mark II)

Brotton House...

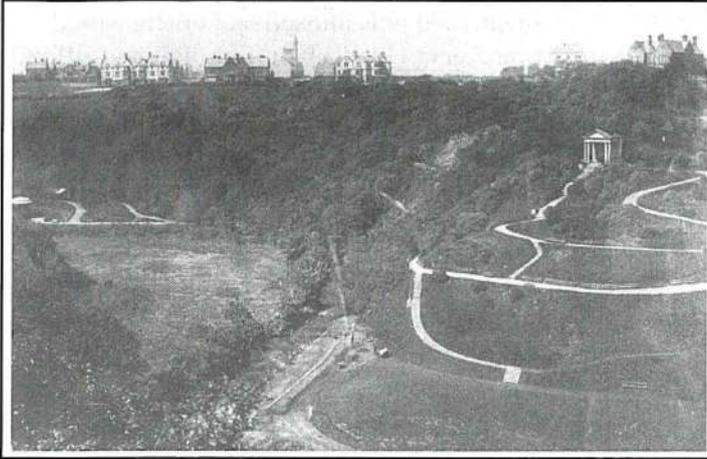


Brotton House - c. 1900

My family and I moved into Brotton House on the High Street in Brotton about 5 years ago. We have just about stripped it bare and renovated it to its former glory. I have since found out that it is a quite significant building with a varied history over the past 250 years. I have one photograph dating back about 100 years (left) but would like to know where to start to look for more information, photos and plans of the property. It is important to us to do this and we would greatly appreciate some help and direction on this. We did look in the council vaults in Northallerton but only found what we already knew. Maybe some of your readers might be able to help...?

Chris Tanner, Brotton House, High Street, Brotton

Saltburn Valley Gardens



Saltburn Valley Gardens - c. 1885

The provision of pleasure grounds was an essential part of the development of the new town of Saltburn-by-the-Sea. In fact, before the railway was extended to Saltburn, Henry Pease and Thomas MacNay visited Scarborough to inspect the town and gardens to look for ideas as to how to develop the steeply sloping wooded valley known as the Glen. The minute books of the Saltburn Improvement Company show that a lot of time was devoted to discussing the plans for the 'pleasure grounds' as they were referred to and although landscape gardeners' names are mentioned, the driving force behind the development appears to have been Henry Pease. Plans were made and amended mostly due to the high costs being incurred. It was decided to totally enclose the grounds and to make a charge for entry, the charge per person in 1865 being 6d (equivalent today to about £1.75) and for an individual season ticket 12s (about £31). However,

two inmates from the convalescent home were allowed in daily free of charge provided they entered before 8.00 a.m.

A newspaper reports that, *"Along the slopes of Skelton Glen the Railway Company and SIC have laid out public gardens similar to Scarborough but minus the assembly rooms and terrace. The Earl of Zetland has thrown open the whole of the romantic woods - it is impossible to conceive anything more exquisitely beautiful or tranquil and romantic than the two mile walk through the glen, with beck purling in its deep trough, and its steep sides clothed with terraces in full summer foliage and a luxuriant undergrowth of ferns and wild flowers - here gorges of ravine like closeness where the trees almost meet; whilst occasional openings present bits that vividly remind us of Killecrankie and Glen Tilt. The one special advantage of the glen was that it gave visitors a delightful shade in the summer and a quiet retreat in boisterous weather. The reporter visited it on a rough day when he found the stillness serene and the leaves scarcely moving."*

The reporter also described the Spa water. *"The Spa water was compared to Tewith Well and St John's Well (Royal Chalybeate Spa) of Harrogate. There was about the same amount of iron. It had a metallic taste deposited iron ochre on the stones and had a pungent smell."*

Within the enclosed pleasure grounds there was provided a bandstand, where many nationally famed bands played during the summer season, a croquet lawn, a bowling green, grass tennis courts and of course a formal garden now known as the Italian Gardens.

The gardens were initially lit by electric lighting and then changed to gas lighting. This lighting was supplemented for special occasions by the use of candles in small glass globes, the children of the town being paid a small sum of money to assist in the lighting process. Many of the special events culminated in a grand fireworks display with the Bridge across the Glen being used to create a magnificent spectacle resembling Niagara Falls by the cascading light from fireworks.

In 1990 there was a proposal to develop the valley into a Theme Park with the name 'Brunel's Kingdom' which was to include cafes, restaurants, children's rides, chair lifts and buildings housing gaming machines. This was strongly resisted by the townspeople and the proposal was dropped.

The Valley Gardens still provide a lot of pleasure for many people from the town and from a wider area. Many events are still held within the grounds but a recent addition of a formal fountain did not last long enough for many people to witness the fountain in action before it was twice destroyed by vandals.

The variety of wildlife that can be seen within the grounds, both flora and fauna, make it a very attractive place to meander and it is a tribute to the early work of the Victorians that we still have the privilege of enjoying the pleasure grounds.

A report in the *Skelton Illustrated Monthly Magazine* dated July 1884 tells that the Salvation Army held a great gathering in the woods near Marske Mill. The usual warlike exercises were indulged in, the proceedings enlivened by solo singing.

The band, we hope, has not frightened all the feathered minstrels of the wood away...!



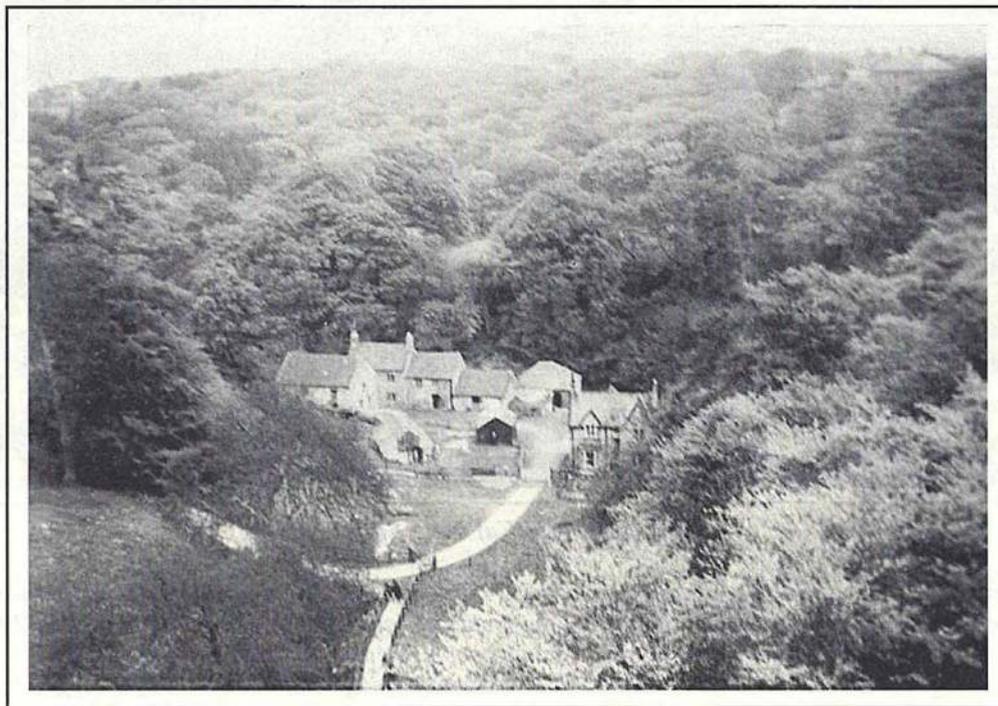
*Valley Gardens Croquet Lawn
- note Rushpool Hall in the background*

Cath and Tony Lynn, Saltburn

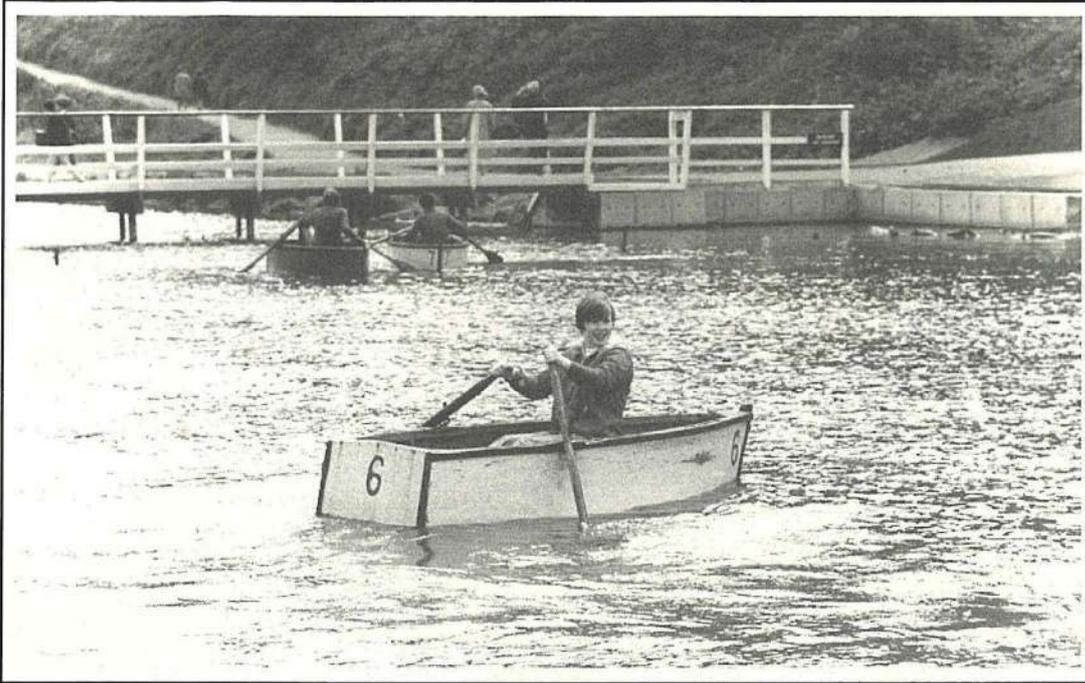
PHOTO GALLERY



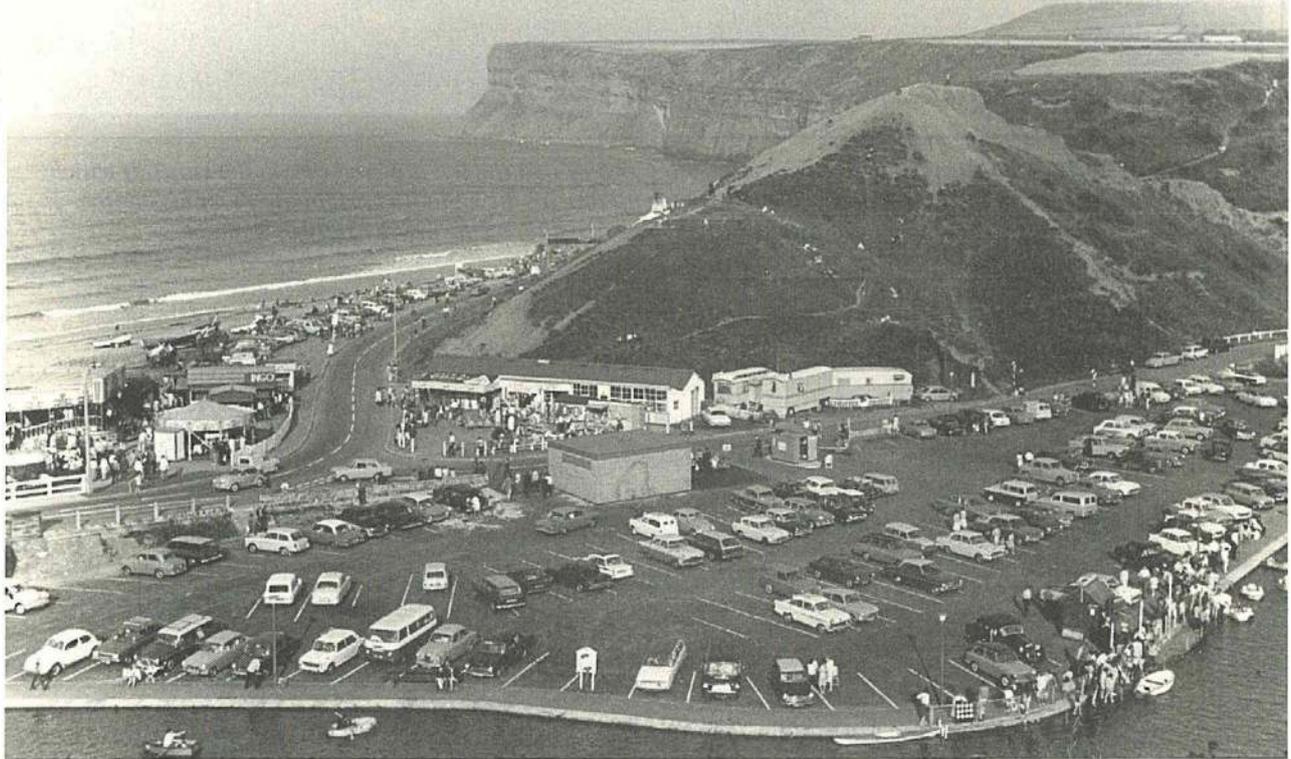
A tranquil, rural scene, probably from the late 19th Century - on the left is Marske Mill, the ruins of which can still be seen in Skelton Woods. We think the building on the right was originally the house of the Manager responsible for overseeing the construction of the nearby railway viaduct.



A photograph of the same buildings taken from on the viaduct itself.



Continuing the Saltburn Valley Gardens theme, here's a photograph of someone enjoying themselves on the once very popular Boating Lake at Saltburn



Hunt Cliff and Cat Nab, Saltburn

This photo should bring back many memories of those of us who used to enjoy summer evenings and weekends down Saltburn - judging from the makes of cars we're guessing it's in the late 1960's.

Note in the bottom right of the photo, people queuing for the rowing boats.

Left centre are the famous 'waltzers', roundabouts, bingo stand, and air-rifle range.

The ice-cream shop, gift shop and café (centre) were always popular and the grassy hillside of Cat Nab was a favourite place to sit and sunbathe and watch the world go by....



Stanghow Lane Netball Team - 1959/60

*Back Row L. to R: Miss Hicks, Maureen Pigg, Enid Booker
Front Row: Wendy Bennison, Wendy Jackson, Mary Bennison, Jackie Lever, Pam Sanderson*



Stanghow Lane School Class - late 1950's

*Back Row L. to R: Kenneth Crossman, Jimmy Butcher, Colin Brown, Tom Stevenson, Stanley Green
2nd Row: Trevor Taylor, Eric Baker, Stuart Wallace, David Beadle, Jeff Brady, Frank Hambley, David Easton
3rd Row: Jeff Warren, Pat Garvey, Enid Booker, Jillian McCormack, Mary Bennison, Pat Crooks,
Joyce Calvert, Susan McIlroy, Pam Robinson, Ann Dale, ? Naylor
Front Row: Wendy Bulmer, Kathleen Taberner, Carol Tyreman, Diane Hutchinson, Barbara Kirk,
Mr Brown, Jackie Lever, Beryl Whittaker, Pam Sanderson, Joyce Brown, Molly Evans*

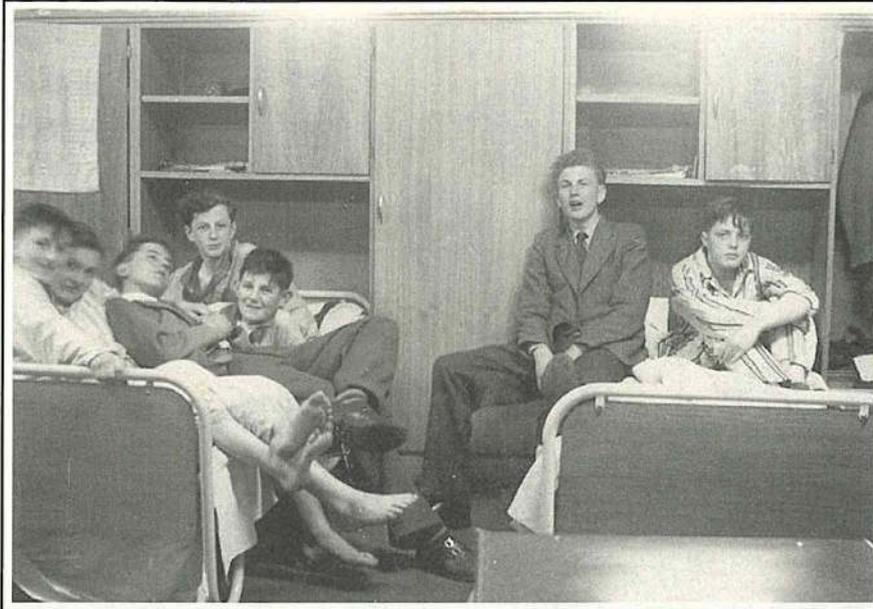
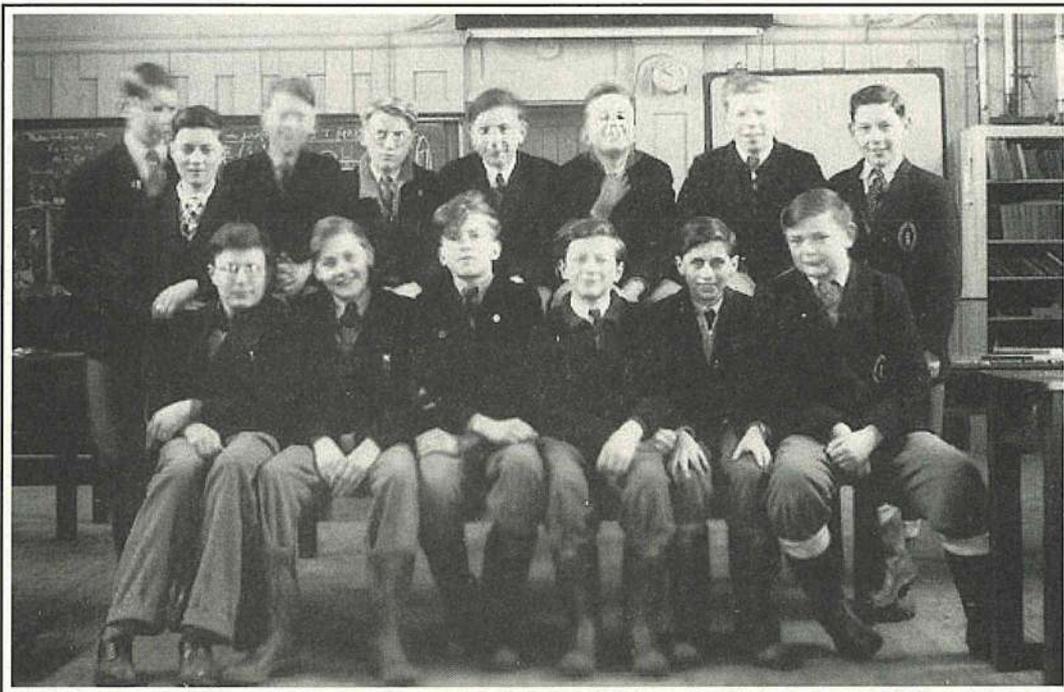


Photo taken on one of the (in)famous Guisborough Grammar School trips, this one being to Paris in April 1957 supervised (well, that's what we had to tell our parents) by Masters Philip Cooper and Geoff Farrington. We stayed in dormitories at the Centre d'Apprentissage Gazier (Gas Apprentices Training Centre) in Versailles.

L. to R. Alan Snaith (Brotton), Keith Booth, Keith Butcher (both Skelton Green), Robert Carter (New Skelton), Esmond Crossman (Brotton), Mike Midgeley (Guisborough), Bob Crispin (Lingdale)



Guisborough Grammar 1955ish! We are in the Physics lab, in winter (hence the abundance of wellies!) This photo was taken with a Box Brownie, without flash and using the primitive timed (i.e. count up to ten) exposure mechanism by Eddie Moreland (Master)

Back Row L to R: Clive Little (Nunthorpe), Keith Watson (New Skelton), Roger Barker (Guisborough), John Nellist (Loftus), David Lloyd (Nunthorpe), Alan Smith, Leonard Hodgson (both Brotton), Jim Hoggart (Great Ayton)

Front Row: Andrew Sutcliffe (Guisborough), Keith Booth (Skelton Green), Owen Rooks, Robert Carter (both New Skelton), Terry Carter (Loftus), Rowland Robson (Great Ayton)

Above photos kindly submitted by Owen Rooks, formerly New Skelton



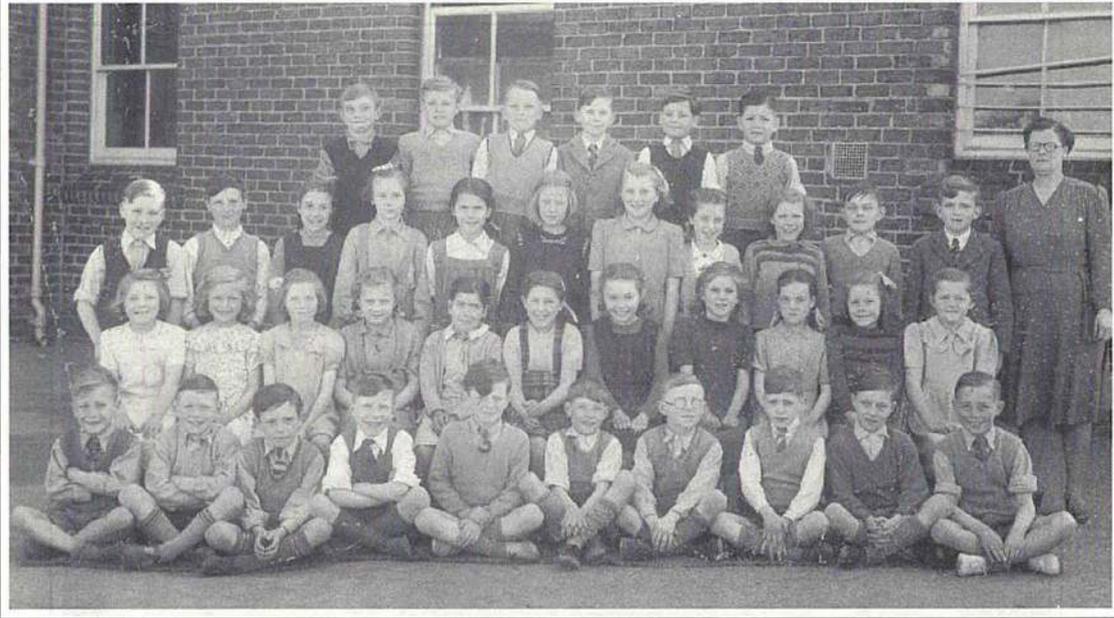
Skelton Brownies 'taking eggs' to Guisborough Hospital - Easter 1969

*Back Row L. to R: Barbara Parker, Diane Wynne, Mollie Scuffham (Brown Owl)
Front Row: Delia Gill, -?- , -?- , Janice Collinson, -?- , Elizabeth Peel,
Lesley Addison, -?-*



Skelton Brownies - c. 1938

*Back Row L. to R: Sheila Dickenson, Doreen Laing-Taylor, Jean Smith or Olive Palmer?
Middle Row: Rosemary Dickenson, Audrey Ward, Miss Johnson (Brown Owl), Audrey Robinson,
-?- , Eileen Hayward, Betty Palmer
Front Row: Marion Ward, Audrey Palmer, Audrey Howard, Lena Winter,
Maureen Gratton, Edith Bennison*



North Skelton Junior School - Year 6, 1953

*Back Row L. to R: Neil Morley, Rodney Tomlinson, John Sleeman, Michael Endean,
Alan Burluraux, Geoff Hudson*

*2nd Row: John Whiteley, Arthur Payne, Sheila Agar, Marjorie Wilson, Janet Pratt, Pamela Richardson,
Irene Codling, Evelyn Johnson, Hilary Cole, Derek Dauncey, Owen Rooks, Mrs Readman*

*3rd Row: Sheila Harrison, Janet Wynn, Eileene Webster, Dorothy Hodgson, Christine Whitehead,
Joan Robson, Marjorie Butler, Ann Ruddy, Eunice Smurthwaite, Brenda Yates, Frances Batterbee*

*Front Row: Ian Parks, Gerald Kitchener, Michael Boothby, Les Smith, Robert Carter, Alan Bonus,
Kenny Keeler, Arthur Fowler, Keith Watson, Owen Laffey*



Skelton Infants School - 1933

*Back Row L. to R: Edna Wilford, Margaret Dale, Dorothy Bannister, Jean Bulmer, Tony Ainsley,
Eric Davidson, ? Craven, Doris Wright, Freda Corner*

*Middle Row: Agnes Wilford, Jean Smith, Fred Brack, , -?- , Keith Baker, Frank Bennison,
Ena Ferguson, Letty Hanson, Norma Leybourne, Molly Hayward*

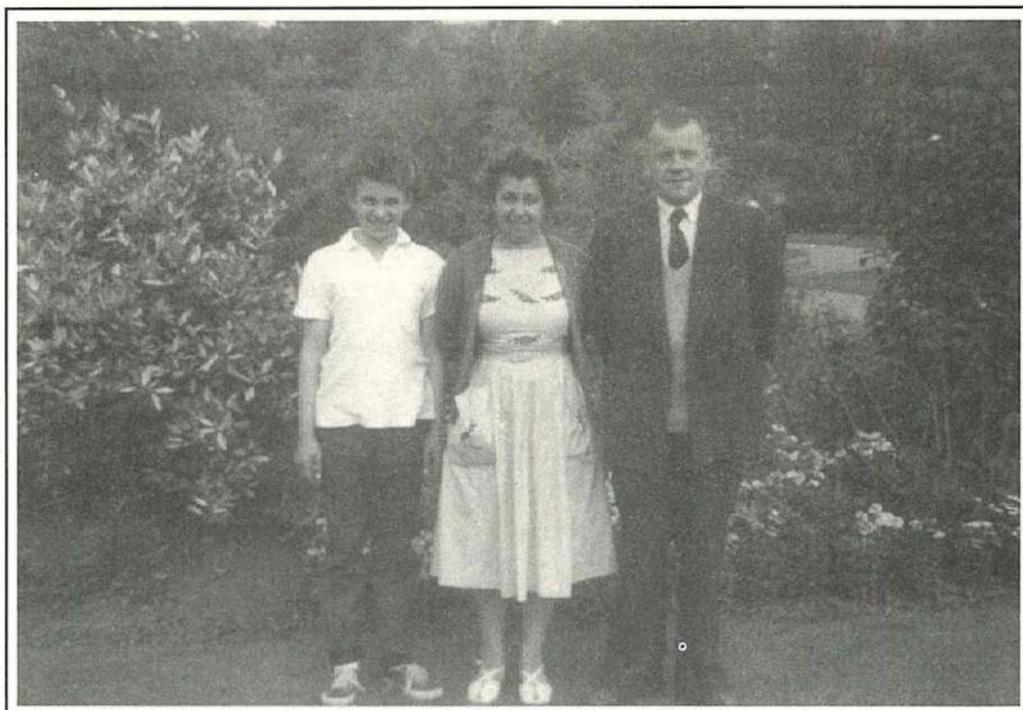
*Front Row: Hubert (Cliff) Videon, Harry Pigg, Clary Christon, Keith Ball,
Colin Todd, Keith Corner*



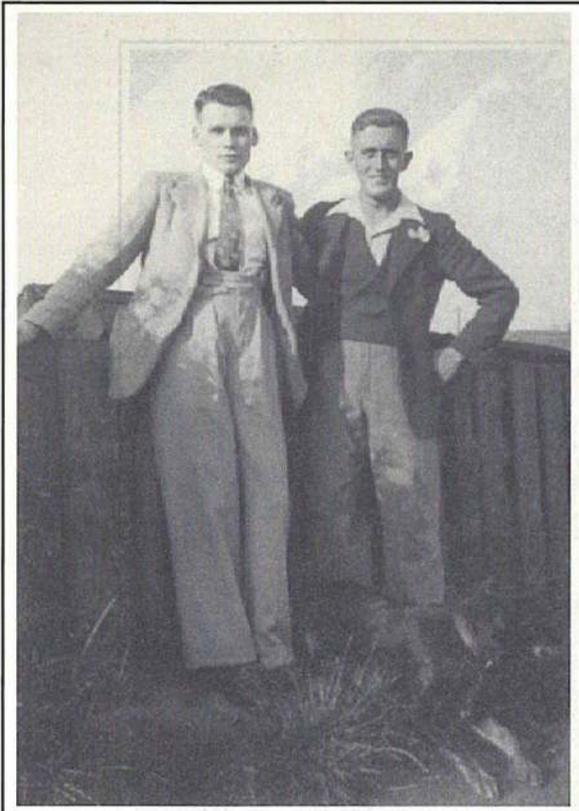
*Joe ('Punch') and Hilda Beadle,
Jean Spychala's Mam & Dad*



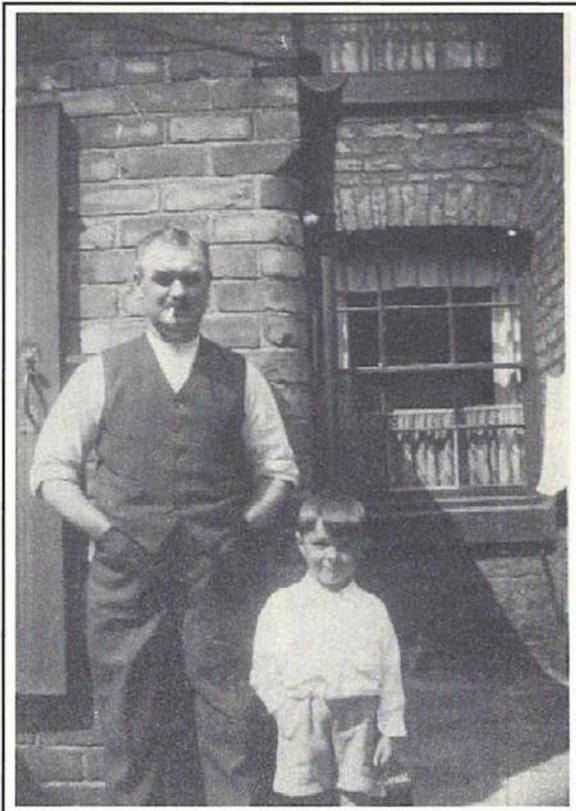
*Tamer Kirk
Jean's seamstress teacher*



Jean's son David, Jean and Tony Spychala



John Whiteley and Bill Crossman



'Buster' Bowers, former shopkeeper of what is now the Post Office, and grandson Jim



*Jefferson's Shop on Vaughan Street (opposite the Bull)
- then a General Dealer and Post Office, now 'Shanghai Night' takeaway*

Notice Board

Christmas Belles...

Because of the popularity of the Xmas lights, the *Christmas Belles* committee has decided to continue with their fund-raising. Their aim this year is to light up Sparrow Park by stringing lights in each tree. The cost of this project will be £500. Once again they are asking for your generosity in raising this amount by attending the following fund-raising events:



Every alternate Thursday

Prize Bingo in North Skelton Village Hall at 7.30pm. Tea & Coffee available.

Easter Saturday, 19th April

Fun Night with brilliant vocalist '**Matt Black**' in the Bull's Head - tickets on sale in the Bull's Head.

Easter Monday, 21st April

Prize Bingo in the Village Hall - 'eyes down' at 2pm. Refreshments available.

Working tirelessly, the *Christmas Belles* deserve your support!

Thank you.

Action North Skelton...



David Beadle and his friend Dillon braved the icy waters of the North Sea to raise money for ANS - the two friends took part in the 'Boxing Day Dip' at

Redcar beach, raising the magnificent sum of £186.

Well done both of you - and many thanks...!

Good Friday - Coffee Morning

The Village Hall doors open at 10am on Good Friday, 18th April. There will be home-made cake stalls, a Tombola and a Raffle. Coffee, tea and biscuits will also be served.

Your contributions of home-made cakes or prizes for the raffle and tombola will be gratefully received.



The Village Hall



Don't forget - North Skelton Village Hall is there for you to use. It can be booked through Tony Chapman at North Skelton Post Office.

Thank You Sheila...!



Sheila & Bill Dowey

Please could we, as mothers of children attending the Skelton Nursery and Infants School (now Skelton Primary), say a big thank you to Sheila Dowey who works tirelessly for the good of the children and the school. As well as serving tea and setting out her own delicious home-baked food, she even organises regular bingo sessions!

Sheila, your voluntary work hasn't gone unnoticed, and we are sure that we speak for all Mums and Dads when we say, "Well done! We appreciate your never ending efforts!"

T Hickman

A Watts

J Kennedy

E Puckik

L Benson

B Sharp

K Templeman

A Weed

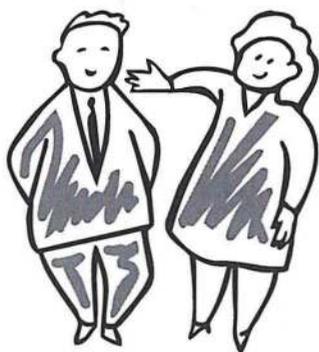
T Mowbray

L Addison

Sheila, you have raised hundreds of pounds over the years. We would also like to add our thanks and appreciation...

Grandmas and Grandads

Me and the Wife...!



My wife and I have the secret to making a marriage last.....

Twice a week, we go to a nice restaurant, have a little wine, some good food, and companionship. She goes Tuesdays, I go Fridays. We also sleep in separate beds. Hers is in

North Skelton and mine's in Brotton.

I take my wife everywhere, but she keeps finding her way back.

I asked my wife where she wanted to go for our anniversary. "Somewhere I haven't been in a long time!" she said. So I suggested the kitchen.

We always hold hands. If I let go, she shops.

She has an electric blender, electric toaster, and electric bread maker. Then she said, "There are too many gadgets, and nowhere to sit down!" So I bought her an electric chair.

My wife told me the car wasn't running well because there was water in the carburettor. I asked where the car was, she told me, "It's in the lake!"

My wife is on a new diet - coconuts and bananas. She hasn't lost weight, but BOY, can she climb a tree now. She got a mudpack and looked great for two days. Then the mud fell off.

She ran after the dustbin wagon shouting, "Am I too late for the rubbish?" The driver said, "No, jump in!" Remember....marriage is the number one cause of divorce.

Statistically, 100% of all divorces started with marriage.

I married Miss Right. I just didn't know her first name was Always.

I haven't spoken to my wife for 18 months. I don't like to interrupt her.

Our last argument was my fault. My wife asked, "What's on the telly?"I said "Dust!"

In the beginning, God created earth and rested. Then God created man and rested. Then God created woman. Since then, neither God nor man has rested. Why do men die before their wives? Cause they want to....!

Anon

Sorry girls! Here's one for you....

Men fall into three categories:

The rich, the handsome and the majority!

Letterbox...



Dear Norma

When my December 2002 issue of 'The Key' arrived I was delighted to find a photo on page 12 of Boosbeck High Street, possibly taken in the 1900's, showing a lovely photo of S Tuck's Dividend Stores - Simon Tuck (or Sim as he was known) was my father's uncle. The Tuck's had grocery/general stores in Boosbeck for many years, starting with Edwin Tuck, my great-grandfather who ran the grocer's shop in the High Street. The family are shown as being there in the 1881 census. On the photo, one of the men outside the shop may well be Sim.

I'm not sure of the date of your photo but I know that Sim Tuck owned a shop in the area from 1899 when he took over his father's shop in Boosbeck - possibly 37-41 High Street. In 1904 he applied to put a shop front on No. 49 High Street.

My dad, Alexander Tuck, whose parents Albert and Emma ran the Post Office/General Store at 27 Vaughan Street, North Skelton, often visited his grandmother, Grace Tuck, who lived at 44 High Street, Boosbeck, with her daughter Susan Oliver and granddaughters Minnie and Gladys Oliver. Alex said that when he and his cousin, Percy Thompson, called in at Sim's shop, they were often given a couple of grapes (!) out of the barrel of straw that they were kept in just inside the door. In 1924 Sim opened his shop at 39 High Street, Boosbeck.

Might any of your readers have known Sim Tuck or any of the members of the Tuck family in Boosbeck, or have any stories related to them? I should love to hear from them if they do.

Pamela Last, 41 Fowey Ave, Shiphay, Torquay, Devon, TQ2 7RE

E-mail: paljude@hotmail.com

Dear Norma

You had an article about buses in 'The Key' by Neil Harrison a while ago. He said he wondered if anyone had any more memories of local buses to let him know. Well, one unforgettable memory of mine is of a bus driver singing at the top of his voice, 'The Laughing Policeman' and 'The Old Rugged Cross' on the way to Middlesbrough!

Miss I V Dickenson, Skelton

Recipes...

Scones

Ingredients

- 2 ozs sugar
- 2 ozs margarine
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 large tub natural yoghurt
- 1 lb self-raising flour



Method

Sift flour and baking powder together. Rub in the margarine, then add the sugar and mix to a soft consistency with the yoghurt. Roll and cut out, then place on a greased baking sheet. Bake in a hot oven for 10-15 minutes or until cooked as ovens vary.

Norma Marsay

St Martin's Pie

Ingredients

- 250 g dates (cut in small pieces)
 - 200 ml warm water
 - 125 g self-raising flour
 - 200 g walnuts or roasted hazelnuts (crushed)
 - 100 g dried figs (cut in small pieces)
 - 1 large egg (beaten)
 - ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
 - ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - Juice and grated rind of 1 orange
 - 1 spoonful crushed almonds.
- Cake tin: 23 cm diameter.



Method

- 1 Soak dates in warm water for 1 hour. Grease cake tin with a little melted margarine.
- 2 Add the flour, walnuts (or hazelnuts), figs, the beaten egg, ground cloves, cinnamon, orange juice and grated rind to the dates and warm water. Mix well till all ingredients blend together to a soft consistency.
- 3 Place mixture in cake tin and sprinkle the spoonful of crushed almonds on top of the mixture.
- 4 Bake in the centre of the oven for 30-35 minutes or till top is golden brown. (Gas Mark 4, 180° C, 350° F).
- 5 Remove from oven and leave to cool before serving.

Broccoli and Potato Pie

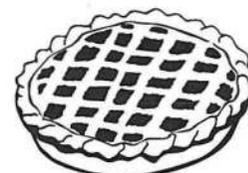
Ingredients

- 400g plain yoghurt pastry
- 500g potatoes (weigh after peeling)
- 400g broccoli florets (boiled)
- 2-3 cloves garlic (optional)
- ½ teaspoon dried sweet basil
- 100ml skimmed milk
- 1 spoonful grated parmesan cheese
- 23cm diameter oven-proof dish

Method

- 1 Cut potatoes into cubes and boil.
- 2 Mix all ingredients in a bowl and leave to cool.
- 3 Do not grease oven dish, instead cover bottom with a light dusting of semolina.
- 4 Using a little more than half of the pastry, line oven-dish.
- 5 Place mixture on pastry and cover top with remainder of pastry. Seal the edges well and trim.
- 6 With a fork, prick top of pie in several places.
- 7 Bake in pre-heated oven (temperature 180° C, 350 F° Gas Mark 4) for 30-35 minutes.

Yoghurt Pastry



When using this pastry for sweet recipes you can use a fruit yoghurt or a flavoured one like vanilla, instead of the plain yoghurt.

Ingredients

- 400g self-raising flour
- 300 ml plain yoghurt

Method

- 1 Sieve flour into mixing bowl forming a hold in the middle for the yoghurt.
- 2 Mix flour and yoghurt together with a fork or wooden spoon.
- 3 Knead lightly to make dough.
- 4 Place pastry in plastic bag in refrigerator for 30 minutes before using.

Oven temperature 180° C, 350° F. Gas Mark 4.

When using this pastry do not cook for more than 35 minutes otherwise it will become very hard, as it has no fats. It's ideal for people with cholesterol problems or simply watching their weight.

*Last 3 recipes from
Marian Abdilla
Malta*

MODS & ROCKERS...!



Neil aboard the Velocette 'ankle cracker'

Stripped, I'm small but beautifully marked, with but two blemishes. One is an entry/exit bullet wound suffered getting out of Prague in '64; the other is a swollen and misshapen right inner ankle bone, accrued during combat with a particularly vicious kick-back on a 350cc Velocette Viper.

This was a real jackass of a motor-bike. No coil ignition, the air mixture and throttle slides had to be just right, otherwise *thunnnnggg*, the kick-start pedal cracked back up faster than I could remove the leg. Agony! I tell you, dudes, it soon went, to be replaced by a smooth electric-key, coil ignition Triumph Speed Twin (bathtub style).... among others.

I blame Pop Foster for it all. Back in the late 50's he owned a stunning Douglas Dragonfly, with opposed cylinders (a la BMW) with matching rear quadrant panniers, in a beautiful stone livery with green edging. It really was a pretty thing, up on its stand at the bottom of Dixon Street...three yards or so from the wall, pre-Grampian Road and the Council Estate. Brian was not a bulky lad, but wiry, and all bikes needed the knack to

haul them onto their stands without incurring later hernia troubles. There was no thought of merely using the prop stand, such was the crumbling state of the street surfaces – so nothing much changes, does it?

Anyway, this beauty – the motorbike, dears, not Pop Forster – inspired me to indulge and following a solo reconnaissance to Cowies in Stockton Rd, Norton, where I bought a 250cc BSA C12 (or some such government department number). Pop was kind enough to agree to a Saturday morning adventure, which involved getting the 56 United bus to Middlesbrough, then a blue double-decker to Stockton and, after what seemed like half a day, we finally arrived at Norton. I would like to think we were served by Tom (later, Sir Tom) Cowie himself – but I don't suppose we were! (Note: when Sir TC was Chairman at Sunderland FC, and he dismissed the Manager, they always received a farewell present of a motor-cycle. What brand? Oh, a Cowiesaki, of course!)

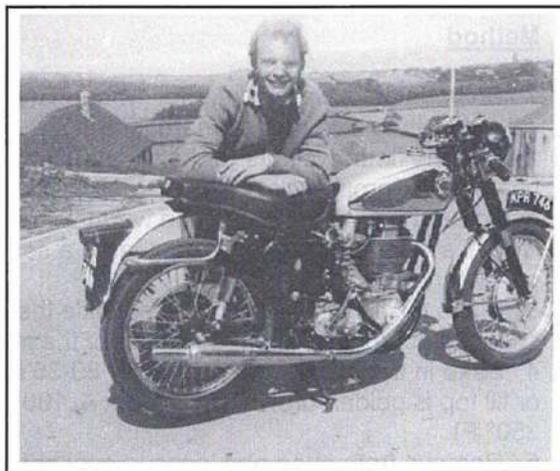
That was me hooked. Pop drove us home and so enthralled was I that I cancelled a 'date' for that evening. She understood, quickly assessing that with me now mobile, there would be extended opportunities to tour the area, especially the countryside, and bring freedom from the dreaded buses. And so it proved, though not without alarms and adventures – more of these later in the piece.

Some two years earlier, I had been enthralled to see the *'Wild Bunch'* tearing round the just-being-developed Industrial Estate at Hollybush, on a selection of machines from God-knows-where, and unlikely to have been roadworthy. Of this crowd, Eric and Keith Bennison, Maurice and Terry Hutchinson, various Wards, none caught my eye more than Tex Hutchinson. Later to be a brave goalkeeper for Skelton FC, at that time he rode (?) some baffle-less, sprung single-seat monster, with a short gearshift mounted along the fuel tank.

This paled into insignificance alongside the 'dream machines' ridden by Darrel Wilson (the Saltburn Lane speedster) and Maurice Ferrer – farmer's son from Guisborough Rd, I think. Darrel had a succession of clip (drop) handlebar rockets – with my short reach I soon got backache on them, and anyway, they frightened me to death! As did Darrel, who acknowledged no speed limit or road safety measures. I think it was Cliff Drinkhall who recalled waving to Darrel at Barker's Garage, but it was near the Co-Op before he screeched to a stop. Fortunately, no animals were endangered that day.

Meanwhile, Maurice Ferrer was a quitter sort of chap, favouring a Norton Dominator - that is not some overpowering female living near Stockton, dear readers. It was (rightly) marketed with its 'Featherbed' suspension, and it was a true lady in that respect, hugging close to the right areas, reliable, and a generally smooth ride. Unfortunately, if it is not a contradiction, it lacked a 'poke' and Darrel curled his lip at it as only he could. Chasing Maurice one dark night, up near Kiltonthorpe, he flicked round a tight right-hander, which I could not make, and shot straight up towards the shale tip – fortunately, the road was not gated that night!

Later, I was to seriously threaten my inner marriage prospects when riding solo up towards Roxby from Staithes, and encountering some



Maurice Hutchinson

freshly laid cow-pat (well, it was more like a sheet of s**t than a mere 'pat') on one of the many blind corners. No long term damage suffered. More bizzarely, the following year I essayed my longest single trip, with fiancée Betty on the pillion, to visit her relatives in Leeds. Nearing our destination, some way up the road, I noticed a bus leaning up against a telegraph pole, while its driver ran towards me shouting and gesticulating in a most strange manner.

Realising that something was amiss (there's not much gets past me y'know) I went into full 'emergency stop' mode. As the brake locked and the Breezer canted over, I realised the reason for his distress and my current predicament – the road adjoined an open-cast site and it was rimed with two or three inches of slurry-slime. It all seemed to happen in slow motion – and this was long, long before Sam Peckinpah.

Down went the bike, but the small crash-bars avoided direct contact between my leg and the road, and as it slewed through ninety degrees, with me still aboard, out of the corner of my eye I saw a strange, white and black object sliding smoothly past me, on its back with legs high in the air. This latter view jogged my memory, and I recognised Betty, who was gliding along on the mud without damage, thanks to a heavy, white PVC jacket bought just the week before, and especially with this journey in mind. She arrived at the bus driver's feet some twelve yards before bike and I...!

Apart from one bent handlebar brake lever and some cold slurry in some very unusual parts, we were unharmed. While the bus driver was livid at his skid and crash, the two men who eventually sauntered over from the opencast site were phlegmatic in the extreme. "Eeh, lass, thee were real lucky there tha' knows. Mek sure thee allus wears thy St Christopher!" At that point I realised, apropos nothing at all, that Geoff Boycott would struggle to become England captain!

Riding pillion is a major contribution to motorcycling safety. The good passenger integrates with the driver's leanings, helping balance to complement the road camber, but I had some passengers who panicked a bit and leaned the opposite way hindering control, and on occasion causing a phenomenal speed wobble.

Kenny Preville was 6' 1" or so and about 16 stone. For reasons known only to himself his first set of wheels was a tiny BSA Bantam, pulling about 10 bhp. With Kenny on board it was never fast, nor even medium, but Kenny was stopped by the police for 'speeding' up the rise near New Skelton.

"Speeding?" spluttered Ken, "This bugger won't exceed 30 mph with me on board going downhill and with a tail-wind." He got off with the offence...

Weather? Cold? Wet? Well, yes, but invest in some good gear, especially gloves, and you embrace the 'Leather for Weather' culture. Returning from Staithes one bitter February night - gawd, it was cold over Boulby top - I was transmogrified to encounter a fog of warmth as I passed through Loftus - hundreds of coal fires I suppose.

My driest wet-weather motoring on two wheels arrived with the ownership of a Triumph 500 Speed Twin. No great road-scorcher, it was the epitome of conventional dependability. It had a covered rear (the 'bathtub' genre) and when I added a full-frontal fairing I was about 95% protected from the elements, while still enjoying the fresh air and all-round visibility which are the attractions of motorcycling.

For various reasons, the bike eventually gave way to a car, although I returned to it briefly aged 30, and I again dabbled with a little Honda Superdream (400cc) when I was in my early 40's. It was a splendid drone, easy to start (electric), ran like a sewing machine, and was a good gadabout for early-morning romps through what we now refer to as 'Heartbeat Country'. But my nerve had gone and I soon realised that car drivers were often unaware of motor-cycle traffic, so I gave it up after two summers. Others are made of stronger stuff - Maurice Hutchinson retains his biking culture and has an impressive, solid (if old) BMW....a bit like Maurice himself really!

What's that? No mention of Mods yet? Of course not! Scooters were namby-pamby motorised skateboards, driven by a mixture of poofers and wimps, although their pillion passengers were often quite stunning! Actually, the desperately dull Lambrettas and Vespas have evolved into some ultra-smart, modern machines, with amazing economy and a lot of 'street cred'. But....there's no brio about them, nothing red (my favourite colour) and throbbing between your legs, no punch - I'm pathetic really, aren't I..?

So there you have it. We've run a few chain-links of motor-cycling life through the oil bath of remembrance, but now, away with the oily rag of nostalgia and into the Gunk-tub of today.

Happy motoring, on however many wheels...!

Neil Harrison

(PS - I was kidding about Prague...!)



Brian Howe, Roy Hooper, Colin Wunibald, Keith Bennison
'Skelton lads'

My Experiences of National Service

by Norman Sturman

The first National Service Acts were passed during the Second World War. However, following the war, conscription was extended as peacetime National Service. The 'call-up' finally came to a halt on 31 December 1960 and the very last National servicemen left the Army in 1963.

Working in certain types of industry after the War meant you would be exempt for this service - coal mining was in this category but not ironstone mining. Should you be serving an Apprenticeship, your enlistment could be deferred until you became 'time-served', usually at 21 years of age.

Three to four days prior to your date of enlistment you were required to attend for a medical, whereupon you were 'graded' for service. Should you be passed fit, your Enlistment Notice would follow, giving you and your employer two week's notice of what would be a dramatic change to your lifestyle. Included with the notice was a Rail Travel Warrant and a Postal Order for 4 shillings (20p) which was one day's advance pay.

The Notice also informed you that on completion of the 2 years National Service, you would be placed on the Emergency Reserve for a further 3½ years. Once this engagement was complete, you would then be placed on General Reserve until 30th June 1964 or until attaining 45 years of age, whichever was the earlier.

My annual salary at the time of my 'call-up' was £600 per annum - my Army pay was 28 shillings a week (£73 per annum) which was quite a significant drop.

On arrival at the designated railway station we were met and loaded into Army lorries and transported to Camp, my camp being No. 1 Training Regiment, Royal Engineers, Merebrook Camp, Malvern. New recruits arrived at intervals of two weeks. Discipline began as soon as you stepped off the train - 'spit and polish' quickly followed. Our first night's sleep was rudely shattered by soldiers banging pick-axe handles on dustbin lids just before 6am, threatening us with dire punishment if we didn't jump to it. We jumped to it alright in awe of these soldiers!

Basic training was a 6-week period, two weeks at No. 1 T.R.R.E. being 'kitted out', inoculated and parade drilled. A 36-hour pass was your reward after the initial 2 weeks training.

When this 2 weeks training period was over we found that 'guard duty' was also on our agenda, one duty being the awakening of 'sproggs' (new recruits) in the early hours of the morning. So much for the 'awe' we had held 2 weeks earlier for the 'trained' soldiers! Then it was off to your designated unit for a further 4 weeks to complete 'basic training'.

Our camp had its own Bagpipes and Drum Band - on our first guard duty they played music until the early hours despite our pleas, so we did not get much rest. When they finally retired, one of our guards sat on the big drum for quite a while which stretched the skin! There was quite a commotion later that day 'tuning' the drum for that day's Passing Out Parade - they never did get to the 'bottom' of it...!

We guarded the camp carrying pick-axe handles - only the Guard Commander carried a weapon when 'doing the rounds'. Even then the loaded magazine was carried in his pocket!

Later, at the School of Military Survey, guards carried unloaded rifles, but the ammunition was kept in the Guardroom. God help you if you were attacked whilst on patrol!

Some scholastic units did not have facilities to complete basic training, as was the case of my posting, so I stayed at No.1 T.R.R.E. to complete my training. Once this intensive 6-week training period was over, I was posted to the School of Military Survey, Hermitage, Newbury. Times were easier here for us academic types - civilian clothes could be worn when leaving camp. In a lot of other units, six months had to be served.

My training to be a Trigonometrical Surveyor took place - it was a 3-months course after which I duly passed my Trade Test. Next on the agenda was a Junior Cadre, which on completion gave me a Lance Corporal's stripe. In the Forces, passing exams is rewarded with an increase in weekly pay - every little helped. There being no vacancies at the time, I was assigned to the best duty on camp, the Regimental Police, who worked in shifts between 06.00hrs to 18.00hrs on weekdays and until 12 noon on Saturdays - no night or weekend duties. We had a Sergeant and three NCO's on our camp, and we worked the shifts to suit ourselves, reporting direct to the Regimental Sergeant Major. On one occasion, whilst the night guard was on duty, three prisoners broke out of the Guard Room and escaped. They were captured three to four days later looking very bedraggled. At the subsequent Court Marshal they were given a custodial sentence. I was part of the escort which took the handcuffed prisoners by rail from Newbury, across London changing stations, then on to Colchester Military Prison. We were glad to get out of there, for all we were the escorts, the only difference in treatment was that we were released that day!

Soldiers who smoked were lined up twice a day behind sand-filled fire buckets. Each was issued with a cigarette which had to be smoked there and then - you couldn't finish it later as a butt had to be in the bucket at the end of

the parade.

Sportsmen are always well cared for in the Forces. Within an hour of arriving at Malvern, I was being interviewed/interrogated regarding my football prowess. Life became easier when you proved your capabilities on the field.

The last 6 months of service saw your pay being put on a par with the regular soldiers. When going on leave, Rail Travel Warrants were issued. Warrants were not issued for 36 or 48 hour passes - I used to 'thumb' lifts to get home, but my dad always paid for my return to Camp.

De-mob day arrives, and it is 'goodbye' to your mates, some you have been with for the full two years. Civilian life beckons again, and it is time to return to your workplace. Your employer had to give you your job back for a minimum of six months from your return from National Service.

In my opinion, most people were better for the experience as it stood you well in later life.



Homeguard Competition



It has come to the attention of Trading Standards that there have been instances across the Borough of bogus callers and distraction burglaries. In at least one instance this included *abogus water board official*. Enquiries with Northumbrian Water confirm that a worker would only call if specifically requested by the tenant and where there is work carried out in a neighbourhood area a representative would ask a sample of tenants to check the water supply themselves and say if the water was running clear.

Distraction burglary is when an intruder enters the premises under false pretences. In today's society this person may be a very smart lady, gentleman or someone with a young child using various ploys such as claiming to have broken down or be looking for a relative. Please don't let anyone enter that you do not know and certainly not into a room where there is a wallet or a purse unattended.

As Spring is approaching our thoughts may turn to a more relaxed approach regarding security and as thoughts turn to Summer some of you may also be thinking of holidays which in turn means savings. With the many banks and building societies that exist not to mention post office and postal accounts it is unnecessary to keep large amounts of money at home these days.

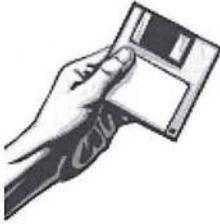
Although it is important to stress that most people who call at the door are genuine, by taking a few simple precautions you are making yourself less vulnerable to this type of crime.

For the chance to win one of 5 x £10 household vouchers just answer these simple questions:

Should You:	YES	NO
Leave your door unlocked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use a door chain when answering?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep large amounts of money at home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ask for identification?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a password with utility company?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your Contact Details:		
.....		

Entries should be sent to:
Michelle O'Rourke, Trading Standards Dept., Neighbourhood Services, Redcar and Cleveland House, PO Box 86,
Kirkleatham Street, Redcar, TS10 1XX

(Closing date: 1st June 2003)



COMPUTER HELP PAGE

Community Technician's Technical Tips

By Neil Harland



Tools for cruising the Net

This month I'm not going to talk about any hardware or training. Instead I thought I'd have a little thought about how to make our surfing of the web a better experience. Now there's nothing worse than finding out that you've got a virus, especially if you've been very careful and not opened dubious attachments to e-mails from inappropriate addresses, but these days, some viruses are being downloaded in web pages, so do yourself a favour and make sure that you've got anti virus software and it's regularly updated. If you can't afford to buy one then download one for free off the net. One program that has been getting good reviews for some time now is AVG anti virus.

You can find and download this from www.grisoft.com. You don't get the full product and you get no product support but it's stopping a lot of viruses doing their nasty work.

Now if you've downloaded this program and set it up on your machine one thing that you will have noticed is that it took an age to download. That's because it's a big file and the fact is that the telephone line can only give you so much information a second - unless you've got broadband and this is not likely to be an issue. This is a constant problem on the web, big files just take an age to get to their destination because of the slow working modems and the limitations of ordinary telephone exchanges. So two types of file compression have emerged to make the files smaller before they are transmitted and then they can be uncompressed once they have arrived at your machine. The first type of compression is called 'zipping' a file and there are several products out there that do this compression, the most common being 'Winzip'. This is available for free at www.winzip.com and you can download an evaluation version. This is not the full product but it is free and it will enable you to uncompress 'zipped' files that you have downloaded from the web.

Another method of compression was patented for documents by the software company Adobe. This program is called Adobe Acrobat and turns documents into Acrobat or .pdf files. The documents are compressed and then you download them from the web. You then need an Acrobat Reader in order to read the documents. This is available to download from www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html.

Every computer that is hooked up to the web should have these programs in them. Do yourself a favour download them and make your web life easier.

Divine Invention



Just as a matter of interest, did you know you can hire a motor cycle hearse for your funeral? It is minister Paul Sinclair's idea and is unique in that it is the only one in the world that is fully enclosed, necessary in this country because of the weather. Another reason being that in an emergency stop the coffin doesn't shoot out. It's very popular!

Looking immaculate at all times, Paul and his hearse travel the country to attend 'Biker' funerals. You can even book it early and go for a ride round the deceased's favourite places!

For motorcycle enthusiasts and fanatics, what better than knowing you were going to take your last ride before meeting your maker on a Triumph-powered motor cycle hearse. Talk about going out in style, but not everyone's cup of tea! It would certainly turn a few heads....

More info can be found in the February 2003 edition of Motor Cycle sport and leisure magazine.

Just A Few Thoughts...

Do a little kindness
Any sort will do
As sure as life's worth living
It always comes back to you
It warms your heart and makes you
Happy as can be
If you don't believe me
Try it, you just see.

If you have a naughty boy
Turn him not away
For many a cloudy morning
Turns out a sunny day.

It's nice to be able to make ends meet
But it's nicer to tie a bow.

The hardest thing in life to learn
Is which bridge to cross
And which to burn.

Don't worry about growing old
It's something I don't do
Every time I am one year older
Everyone else is too!

Don't worry if your luck is out
Just try and laugh instead
It's better to be alive and poor
Than a millionaire and dead.

Success is getting what you want
Happiness is wanting what you get.

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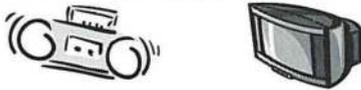
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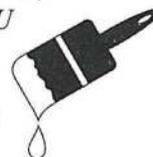
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