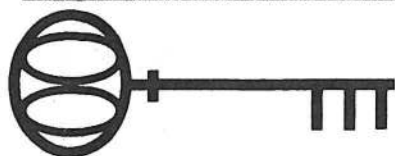


# **THE KEY**



**A NEWSPAPER FOR NORTH SKELTON & LAYLAND**



VAUGHAN ST. NORTH SKELTON.

H. HARRISON.

*This sketch of Vaughan Street was drawn by Harold 'Pip' Harrison from a photograph lent to him by Tony Watts. We think it dates around the turn of the century - do you know a more precise date? Some clues that may help include - Railway Terrace hasn't yet been built, R Cross owns the butcher's shop, Smart's Grocery Store, the old gas street lamps and why is the Union Jack flying?*

Hello everybody

Once again thank you for all your donations.  
We have acquired three grants for which we are most grateful:

£750 - JACK BRUNTON CHARITABLE TRUST  
£200 - ICI WILTON  
£100 - REDCAR & CLEVELAND COUNCIL

Because of the shortage of articles from residents of North Skelton, Layland & Greenhill View I am now going to local villages for news. I would like to stress I CAN ONLY PUT IN WHAT I AM GIVEN!

The same applies to photographs. I have repeated again and again to complaints that the same people are on a lot of the photos - of course they are but there's always someone on them who hasn't been in 'The Key'.

If you have a photo or an article please let me have it.

Finally - DON'T BIN IT, GIVE ME IT BACK!

Norma Templeman  
7 Bolckow Street  
North Skelton

Tel: 01287 653853

### ***The Funniest Language!***

***The plural of box is boxes, not boxen  
But the plural of ox is not oxes, but oxen!***

***One bird is a goose but a pair are called  
geese  
But a number of mice is not mouses or  
meece!***

***The plural of man is invariably men  
Why shouldn't a number of pans be called  
pen?***

***If I speak of a foot and you show me two  
feet  
You'll be ready to put on your boots not  
your beet!***

***Then the masculine pronouns are he, his  
and him  
But imagine the feminine she, shish and  
shim!***

***So English I reckon you all will agree  
is the funniest language you ever did see!***

## **Make Your Shed Secure** **by P C Paul Bland**

You may or may not be aware that over the last 6 months there have been a large number of sheds broken into in the Skelton area.

Many people keep valuable equipment stored in their sheds: e.g. tools, lawn mowers, strimmers, mountain bikes, fishing tackle, etc. The list is endless. The value of this equipment can run into thousands of pounds and yet the vast majority of people take absolutely no precautions in securing their sheds other than a cheap lock and hasp held on with some ½ inch screws. It takes a thief about ten seconds to force open the typical shed lock and then your belongings are there for the taking.

So what can be done to deter the would be thief? Here are just a few suggestions that won't cost the earth but don't come dirt cheap either:

1. Place the shed in a position where it can be easily seen from the house instead of round the side or hidden away in a corner.
2. Instead of one cheap lock in the middle of the door try putting three reasonable ones at the top, middle and bottom. Ensure when it is shut that the hasp covers the securing screw heads and fit decent sized screws.
3. Fit a security lamp to the rear of the house that also illuminates the shed if activated. Thieves don't like light.
4. Fit an alarm to the shed. There are several quite cheap ones available that can be fitted inside the shed which make an unholy racket if activated. Most DIY stores supply these alarms.
5. Cover shed windows with net curtain so that the thief cannot clearly see the contents or alternatively fit some bars on the inside.

These precautions will not stop your shed from being burgled but will make it more difficult and cause the thief to make more noise than he would wish. If your shed is going to provide them with problems then they will go elsewhere.

As I said earlier these precautions will cost money but they could save you a fortune.

It is also worth checking whether the shed contents are covered against theft by your home insurance. Insurance companies are loathe to pay out for hundreds of pounds worth of goods if they are only protected by a cheap padlock.

Another good tip is to HAVE YOUR PROPERTY POSTCODED so that if the worst happens it can be identified if found.

Finally, if anyone would like advice on house security I can be contacted on 01642 302018.

# Me and My Dog



Me and my dog would walk  
for miles  
We would walk through the  
fields and over stiles.  
He was black and tan, a fine  
young thing  
The lead round his neck was  
just made of string.

He was a hunting dog, a ter-  
rier at heart  
But little did we know some  
day we would part  
The rabbits he chased gave  
him many a good run

But he always knew I would be ready with the gun.

Sometimes we went with ferrets and nets  
There were always plenty of rabbits and sets  
He would sniff at the hole and his tail it would wag  
That's when I knew there were going to be rabbits in  
the bag.

Sadly the day came when we had to part  
It was a feeling that remains forever in my heart  
He got stuck down a hole, a terrible fate  
I tried to get him out but it was too late.

The sun went down that dark October day  
And took the little dog I loved away  
He was gone but not forgotten that little dog of mine  
And in my eyes he will always shine.

It is the end of a life, the end of a line  
For that little dog who will always be mine  
I will never forget the times we had  
If I could turn back the clock things wouldn't be so  
bad.

His name it was Flint, a bright little spark  
And I will never forget that last little bark  
As I walked away from that salty grave  
I said to myself "Chin up lad, you've got to be brave"

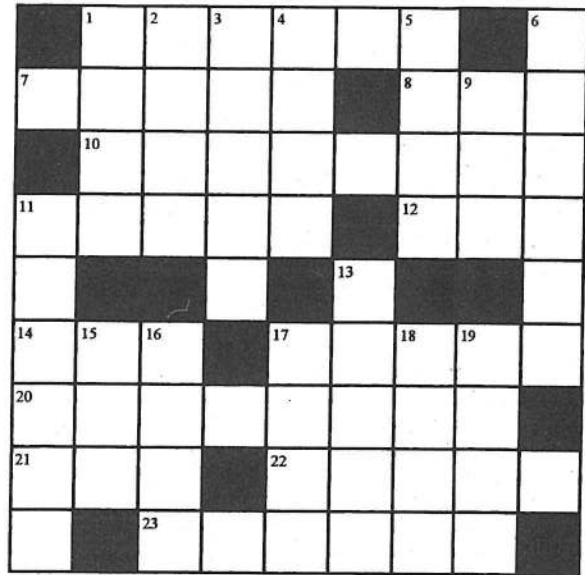
Nobody knows the love that I had  
"Goodnight little friend, goodnight little lad"

Flint died 5.10.86

'Marto' P Smith

# CROSSWORD

By Mark Thirkettle



### ACROSS:

1. Seabird with brightly coloured bill (6)
7. Arabian sprite (5)      8. Swiss river (3)
10. Capital of South Australia (8)
11. Amusing (5)      12. Item for auction (3)
14. Small riding horse (3)      17. Cheerful (5)
20. Fruit eating mammal (8)      21. Epoch (3)
22. Single gun shot (5)      23. Sailing barge(6)

### DOWN:

1. Fruit (4)      2. Untie (4)      3. Meadow (5)
4. Cut down a tree (4)      5. Metal spike (4)
6. Attractive (6)      9. Fuss, bustle (3)
11. Ass (6)      13. Army rank (5)
15. Atmosphere (3)
16. Wear away with teeth (4)
17. Greyhound bait (4)      18. Of rainfall (4)
19. Small and weak (4)

(Answers on Page 13)

## Action North Skelton

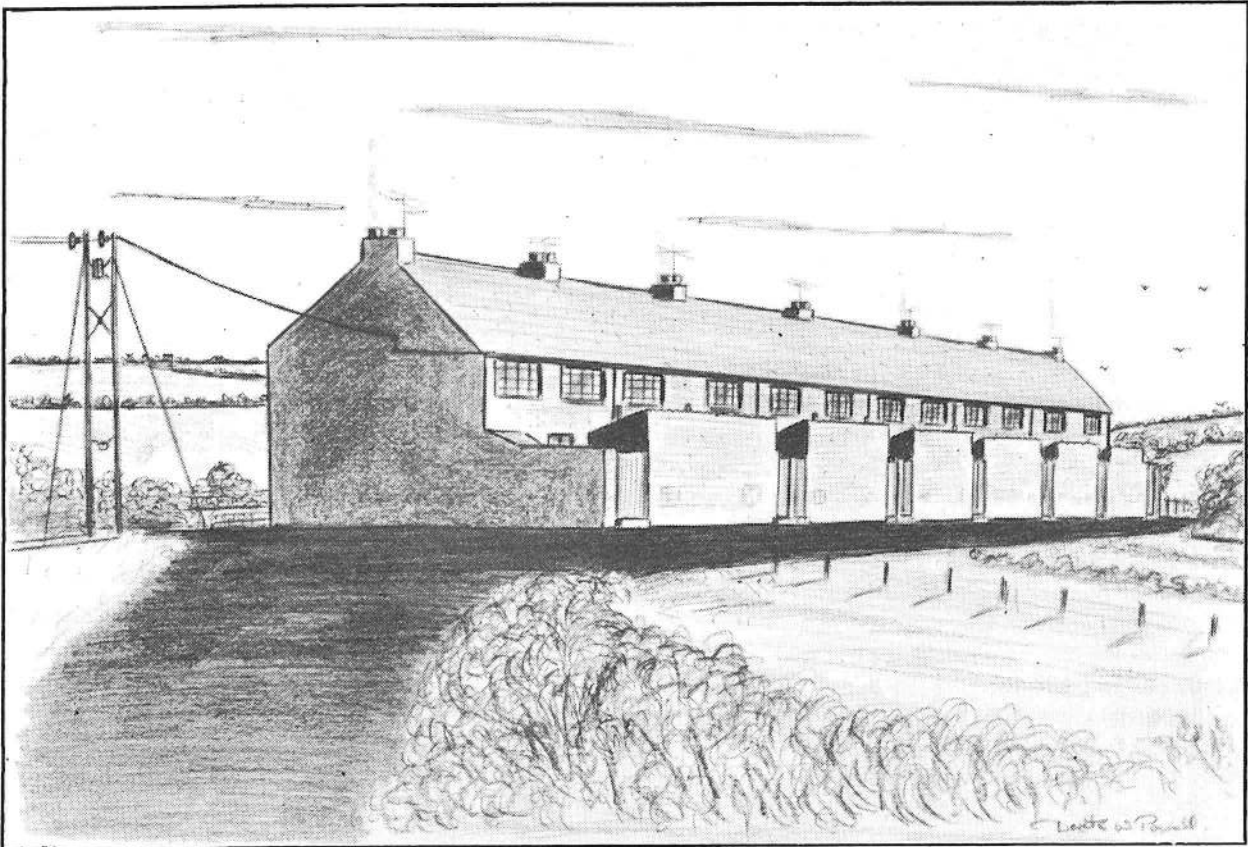
ANS would like, this year, to add two more seats to the village; one in Sparrow Park and one near the telephone kiosk. Funding is the problem so if anyone would like to donate a seat, the villagers of North Skelton would be most grateful. Anyone interested please get in touch with Tony Chapman, Chairperson of ANS, at North Skelton Post Office.

# Memories of Ground Hill

by Betty Swainston

Although I have not lived in Cleveland for 25 years I still feel it is my home and my roots are still there. So I look forward to receiving 'The Key' which my brother, Ralph, sends me. Thanks, Norma, we all enjoy it.

Last year I came back for one of my numerous visits and took a walk along 'Mucky Lane' - the memories flooded back. I was a child again amongst my old friends and neighbours. You would not think that so many happy and, yes, sad memories could be brought to life from a row of twelve, small, two-up, two-down cottages in the middle of nowhere, that no longer exists - Ground Hill.



**Ground Hill Cottages**  
(demolished approx 1962-64)  
Illustration by Derek Powell

No. 1 - here lived Madge Tomlinson, with her daughter Denise and son Rodney. Her husband was in the army so I don't remember him. (Many years later she married my brother-in-law).

No. 2 - Mr and Mrs Antill and their four children, Harry, Margaret, Doreen and Mary. Mary used to play with our Maureen. I remember they used to like to dress up and sing. Mary's favourite was "Me And My Teddy Bear". If only I had a pound for each time I heard it I would be a millionaire! I think it was all she knew!

No. 3 - Mr and Mrs Jack Hodgson. Dear Aunt Jane, one of the kindest ladies I have ever met. They had five children at home - Albert, Bessie, Claude, Derrick and Marian, my best friend.

No. 4 - Mr and Mrs Pratt with their seven children - Cyril, Kenneth, Maria, Winston, Janet, Jean and Michael.

No. 5 - Mrs Chapman and her three grown up sons, Jack, Ronnie and Tommy.

No. 6 - this is where we lived. Mr and Mrs Bunney and family. I was born here, moved away and then returned when I was five years old. The house was always full of men. My Aunt Gly and Uncle Ed had an ever open door for any nephews and nieces that wanted to move in, besides their own children Billy, Cliff and Emma. There was me and our Maureen plus others at different times.



*Betty (2nd right) with brothers Ralph and Lenny and sister Dot*

No. 7 - was the home Billy Bunney later moved into with his wife Amy.

No. 8 - Mrs Arnold and her son Percy. He kept pigeons and had a gambling shed at the bottom of the garden. I bet many a man lost his wages there!

No. 9 - Mr and Mrs Whitehead with Billy, Aileen, Christine and Peter.

No. 10 - Mr and Mrs Peirson, Joyce, Mary and Jennifer. I spent all my school days with Mary at North Skelton Junior and Stanghow Lane Senior Schools.

No. 11 - Mr and Mrs Gooderum. If anyone was ill or having babies this is where you'd call. She was at most of the births at Ground Hill - no one seemed to go into hospital to give birth in those days. She had lots of grandchildren living with her - Joan, Ken, Dorothy, Harry and Raymond.

No. 12 - Mrs Skidmore with her son Ted. He had been a prisoner of war. I remember there was great excitement when he came home. We put streamers out and wrote "WELCOME HOME TED!" on the gable end of the street. Emma Bunney came home with her new husband, Ted, shortly after. He thought that the "Welcome Home Ted" was meant for him!

When anyone needed shopping it had to be carted from North Skelton. We were all members of the Co-Op and on Saturday mornings we queued for cakes. Our Emma was pregnant so she would be allowed to go to the front and get served first. Fish and chip suppers meant a creepy, dark walk along 'Mucky Lane' to one of three fish and chip shops in the village at that time.

I can also remember how everyone used to get together and play games in the field at the top of our lane. Men, women and kids would all go sledging down Boosbeck fields. A burst water main flooded the whole place once - we all had a great time splodging in the water!

We had the biggest bonfire in the area on Bonfire Night so long as we could keep the lads from North Skelton and Lingdale from burning it down the night before.

I recall the night we were bombed during the War. Uncle Ed was at work and as he came out of North Skelton Pit he was told that Ground Hill had gone. But no! Bombs were dropped all around us and we had the craters to prove it, but Ground Hill still stood proud. We all spent the night in the air raid shelter singing. If I close my eyes, even today, I can still hear Aunt Jane singing "Sally, Sally, pride of our alley". She had a lovely voice.

All the kids used to love the winter - when snow blocked the lane it usually meant a day or two off school with a bit of luck! The week I got married the lane was blocked solid with snow, three feet deep. Everyone turned out with their shovels on the Friday but not for my cars - the coal man was due! So all turned out well for me in the end, even though George and I had to lend a hand with the clearing. But that was typical Ground Hill for you, everyone helped each other.

Looking around now, how things have changed. Racing stables have moved in - you can watch the horses training in the fields where we used to play. What hasn't and won't change are the memories and affection people hold for their old home of Ground Hill. We had our ups and downs but we are all proud to say we once lived there.

Written by Betty Swainston (nee Young), now living in the New Forest, Hampshire.

## Noel's The Head Lad!

There are no nicer people you can meet than the Irish. This is especially so in the world of horse racing. So it was our pleasure to be able to talk to Noel O'Connor, the head lad at Mary Reveley's racing stables at Groundhill Farm, Lingdale. We found Noel's broad Irish brogue a little difficult to understand at times but I'm sure what follows is what he said! Noel was born 27 years ago at Thurles in Ireland and was destined to be involved with horseracing from day one. His grandfather, Paddy O'Connor, was a racehorse trainer and at an early age he was soon riding at his uncle's farm nearby. On leaving school he joined the local stable of Pat Cairey as a stable lad and he soon showed enough talent to earn his



*Noel O'Connor with stable star Mellottie*

place as a jockey on some of their runners. He rode a few winners in point-to-point meetings before deciding that greater opportunities lay across the Irish Sea in England.

In 1989 he joined the stable staff of Jenny Pitman in Lambourn. Noel says he enjoyed his 2 years working for Jenny. One of the first horses he looked after at the stable was Garrison Savannah which later went on to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup and was 2nd in The Grand National.

As seems common in the racing world he was soon to move on - this time further north to Sue Brammall's stable near Thirsk. Having ridden a few winners for Sue he again got itchy feet and after talking to George Reveley at the races he learned of a vacancy at the Reveley stable. Knowing the high reputation

of the stable and the potential of furthering his career he accepted the post without hesitation. That was about 5 years ago and since then he hasn't looked back and has progressed to head lad.

We asked Noel what was a typical day in his job; "I get up at about 6am and at 6.30am put half a dozen horses on the 'walker'. ( This is a piece of equipment partitioned off into 6 enclosed parts and revolves at a horse's walking pace. A horse is placed and tethered in each partition and the machine started. The horses can then be left safely for an hour or so while they gently exercise). While the first lot of about 35 horses go out on the gallops at about 7am, Mary, Bob Hodge and myself go round the stable with the horses' first feed. This consists of what we call 'nuts' which is a balanced meal for the horses. It's a bit too rich in protein for the fillies, though, so we give them mainly oats. As we go round we check the general condition of the horses as well as feed them and this takes about an hour. Any horses which don't 'eat up' are checked over and we record the information in a book. Sometimes a simple change in diet is all the horse needs. I then take the horses off the 'walker' and at 8.30am it's breakfast time!"

Noel told us that the staff all cook their own breakfast - he makes do with a cup of coffee and a few slices of toast. His accommodation at the farm is in a modern, centrally heated flat with wonderful views from his lounge window towards Skelton and Saltburn and the North Sea. He is very happy to be where he is at the moment! Other members of the stable staff live in adjoining rooms.

After breakfast Noel sometimes spends the rest of the morning 'breaking in' new horses. This involves getting the horse accustomed to having a bit in its mouth then 'lunging' them around a small enclosure. If he hasn't a horse to break in then he sometimes joins the other riders on the gallops with the 2nd and 3rd lots. Every Tuesday the vet, Graham Russ, arrives at 9am and Noel spends all morning going around the stable with him attending any sick or as Noel calls them 'dodgy' horses.

"At about 12.15pm we give the horses their dinner time feed and then from 1pm to 3pm we have our own break. After a bite to eat I try to relax and read the papers, especially studying form in the Racing Post! Then I go round most of the horses in the stable to check they are 'sound'. This involves generally feeling their legs for injuries but you can soon tell if a horse is not right. I also inspect them for any runny noses or swollen glands - a sure sign of a virus. I also check that the stable lads and lasses are doing their jobs properly. It's hard work! Between 5.30 - 6pm we give the horses their tea time feed. This time we add vitamins to their normal meal. After that I'm finished for the day!"

Noel spends a lot of his spare time with girlfriend Susan who is a photographer. They are engaged but Susan lives at Trimdon in Co Durham so one or the other has to commute. "When Susan is here we often go to the 'Waterwheel' for a drink. When she isn't I love to go fly fishing for trout at Egton Bridge or Scaling Dam." Surprisingly, Noel is an avid Newcastle United fan, "I haven't missed a home game this season. In fact, Douglas Hall, son of Newcastle chairman Sir John, has several horses in the stable."

Noel O'Connor is a pleasure to talk to and is yet another vital cog in the successful Mary Reveley stable. We wish him and fiancée Susan all the best for the future.



## What Did You Do In The War Dad?

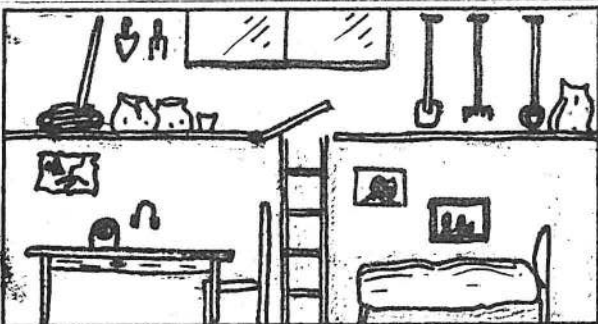
What can you tell us about the War in your area? The Defence of Britain Project is asking the questions. During the First and Second World Wars our landscape was changed with military constructions. Within 2 years pill-boxes, anti-tank obstacles, coastal defences, bombing decoys, radar stations as well as airfields were built in our area. You just have to look around to find some relic of the Wars but after 50 years of coastal erosion, agricultural redevelopment and neglect these remains are being destroyed at an alarming rate.

That is why a project was set up to record, number and photograph the whole area from the Tees to Scarborough and sixty miles inland under the watchful eye of the Imperial War Museum who are compiling a kind of Domesday Book on computer.

In researching the area we have found some interesting facts like the 202. In the dark days of 1939 with war on its way, and with Churchill's blessing, an organisation was set up - local people were recruited by MI(R) - Military Intelligence (Research) - and were to become the British Resistance.

Secret bunkers were constructed in remote areas of the countryside and specially selected citizens with local knowledge and physical fitness were called up. They had their own radio stations and were independent of Home Guard or Army control.

One of these radio stations was located in the cellar of the Wharton Arms in Skelton High Street. The discovery of its location and importance is thanks to the article about the Wharton Arms in the Xmas edition of 'The Key'. One station in the dales is under a lady's garden shed. A trap-door entrance leads into a bunker the size of a large room. The radio aerial was found in a tree in the garden - still there after 50 years!



Skelton radio station was run by Mrs Kingston, the local postmistress, who's husband was Captain of the local Home Guard and the local chemist.

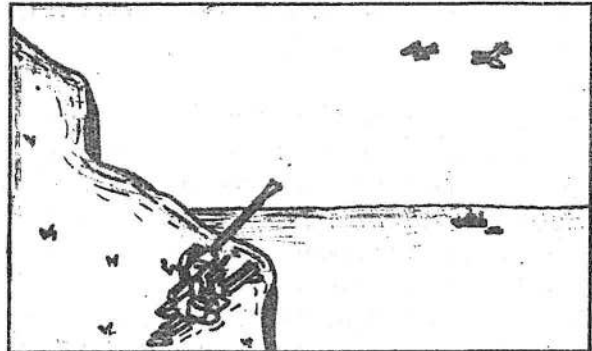
From these radio stations 'runners' would have supplied details of enemy activities to Zero Station who would then pass the information on to local defence forces.

The secret forces were trained in the art of guerrilla warfare. At night they were transported to remote locations and had to find their way home, destroying a 'mock target' on the way. Although not officially part of the Home Guard the patrols were formed into three special Home Guard battalions as a cover.

201 Battalion was formed in Scotland, 202 in Northern

England and 203 was in the South of England, a total of 5,000 guerrillas. We have discovered quite a few of the secret bunkers but more are to be found. Were you or your dad in 202? Let us know. Have you any old photos of the defences of Britain or anything that might aid us in our quest for the War history of the area?

We are asking local farmers if they have anything in their fields. On one occasion we made enquiries at a farm above Skinningrove and were told there was nothing at all except a searchlight in the fields and a gun pit on the edge of the cliff known locally as the 'target hole'!



An inspection revealed it to be a possible World War I pit which fitted in with an old photo of a World War I target range. The hole may have been constructed to send signals to the aircraft shooting at a canvas aeroplane painted on a large canvas sheet.

On asking about the searchlight we were told that the farmer's wife had collected the names of the searchlight crew. On borrowing the book it was found to contain over 300 names ranging from lowly privates to lieutenant colonels, with people from all over the UK and America and all sorts of regiments such as the Royal House Guards, The 9th Hussars, R.A.M.C., 12th South Stafford Regiment, Royal Artillery, Royal Marines, Argyll Sutherland Highlanders and many more service personnel. The R.A.F. and R.C.A.F. were also mentioned but most interesting of all was the number of Americans who were up there from 1942 onwards, one of them being from the U.S.M.C. They came from places like Detroit, Springfield, New Haven, Brooklyn, Los Angeles and so on, their names and service numbers all being in this book.

On the cliff near Boulby Potash Mine are the remains of a convoy tracking station which was controlled by R.A.F. personnel. It sent signals to coastal defences to warn of friend and foe. Also up there was the 1930's experiment which involved using a large sound mirror to listen for ships and aircraft out at sea. It was decommissioned before the war started. The dish and control building are all that remains.

Did you know that there was a secret R.A.F. station on the sight of Hunley Hall golf course used to decoy the German airforce? Its sister station was at New Marske. The fields were laced with copper wire and the farmer still has problems ploughing the land with miles of wire just under the ground!

*Stuart McMillan*

## John Bell - Founder of Rushpool Hall

*Following our story about the 1904 Fire at Rushpool Hall from Richard Murphy's 'A Brief History of Rushpool Hall' comes another fascinating tale - this time about John Bell for whom the Hall was built.*

Rushpool Hall was built for John Bell, one of the founding Fathers of nineteenth century Teesside. John was the brother of Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell. Whereas Lowthian Bell is well known, even famous, and merits a mention in the Dictionary of National Biography, along with grand-daughter Gertrude, John Bell gets no such recognition. However, there are many people who see John Bell's role in the development of Teesside as at least as significant as that of Lowthian Bell, including John's daughter Sybil.

When Lowthian Bell died in 1904, the newspapers were filled with reports, tributes and histories of his life and work. The photographic coverage in the press would suggest a royal funeral! Sybil Bell felt very strongly about the press coverage, particularly as when her father died in 1888 there was no such coverage. She even wrote a letter to The Times pointing out that her father was at least as important as his brother in the development of Teesside. Even when you take into account a daughter's feelings for her father her argument still has some force.

John Bell was aware of the extent of the Cleveland Ironstone field. He was a capable mineralogist and was well respected by the miners of East Cleveland for his knowledge of mining the stone. There is little doubt that it was the location of ironstone in East Cleveland that allowed Middlesbrough to achieve the fastest growth of any town during the Industrial Revolution. John Bell's knowledge of the location, extent and quality of the stone was pivotal to the development of industrial Teesside. The Bell Brothers were also central to the industrial development of East Cleveland.

Joseph Whittwell Pease developed ironstone mining in East Cleveland. One of the first mines developed by Pease was at Codhill, on the outskirts of what is now Hutton Village. Although Pease was quite happy to bring the railway as far as his mine at Codhill, it took some considerable pressure from Admiral Chaloner to have the line extended into Guisborough. Landowners in the rest of East Cleveland were keen to have the ironstone royalties under their land exploited. To this end they asked Pease and the Stockton & Darlington Railway Company to extend the railway into East Cleveland. However, Pease was keen to maintain his monopoly on ironstone extraction and refused to develop the railway any further.

Ward Jackson, of 'British West Hartlepool' fame, was a great rival of the Pease empire. He was also keen to have the ironstone exploited under his Normanby estate. He intimated to the Bell Brothers that he would give them permission to extract the ore if they would build their blast furnaces on the Hartlepool side of the Tees, at Port Clarence. The reason for this was that coal could be brought via Ward Jackson's West Hartlepool Harbour and Railway Company system. This they agreed. The three Bell furnaces were built at Clarence in which they were owned by Bolckow & Vaughan. There were also two furnaces owned by Messrs Gilkes, Wilson, Leatham & Co. From this you can see that the Bell Brothers were major players during this period of early development on the Tees.

The East Cleveland ore was taken by private railway to the side of the Tees at Cargo Fleet. At that point a jetty was to be built and the ore transferred into barges to cross the Tees from there onto Ward Jackson's railway system. Pease, a Quaker, was not, to say the least, pleased with this plan!

What happened next is known as the 'Battle of the Tees'. Pease had four barges moored in the middle of the river in line with the two jetties. There was a two day running battle to defend the jetty. Finally, police had to be stationed on the jetty to prevent Pease's men from smashing it! Ward Jackson's men for their part sank the Pease barges during the night.

The Bells, and perhaps John more so, were instrumental in extending the railway system into East Cleveland, initially to Brotton, then to Loftus and the rest of the East Cleveland ironstone field.

It is said that John Bell offered to pay for the construction of a breakwater and for the dredging of Skelton Beck to allow access for his steam yacht to anchor at the bankside below Rushpool Hall. The offer was not taken up. It has been suggested that the offer was not taken because it would have radically changed the Valley Gardens and also the future costs and liabilities. However, S.I.C. was controlled by the Pease family with their strong links of both family and business. It must also be considered that the Bells had supported Ward Jackson in his struggle with the Pease empire. This being the case, Pease's opposition to the Bell proposal would not be surprising. There is no mention of Bell's request in any of the minute books of S.I.C. This may be interpreted either way.

*Richard Murphy*



# PHOTO GALLERY



*This photo was lent to us by Ralph Brown  
It's taken in front of the old 'billboards' - now Sparrow Park  
Do you recognise anyone - please let us know*



*North Skelton Silver Prize Band  
in the 1920's*



*North Skelton 'Institute Dance' - about 1950*

*Back Row: -?-, Betty Young, -?-, Aileene Whitehead  
Front Row: -?-, Madge Webster, -?-, -?-*



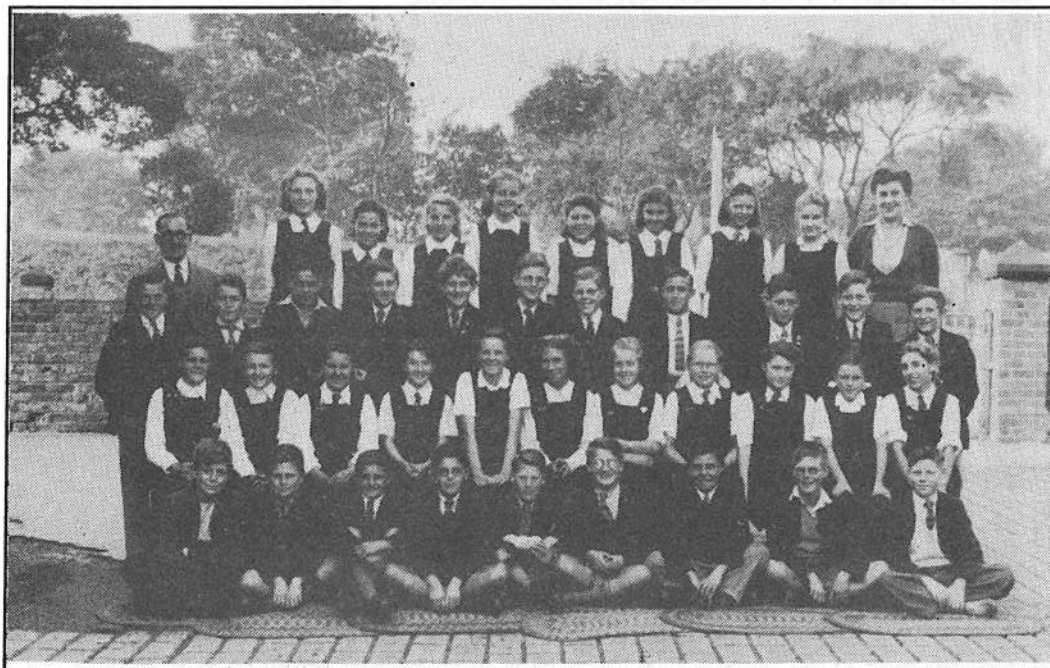
*Stanghow Lane School 'Puppet Show'! - early 1950's*

*L. to R: Michael Want, Keith Bennison, John Simpson, John Parker,  
Ian Keeler, Barry Bloomfield, Jim Woodsworth*



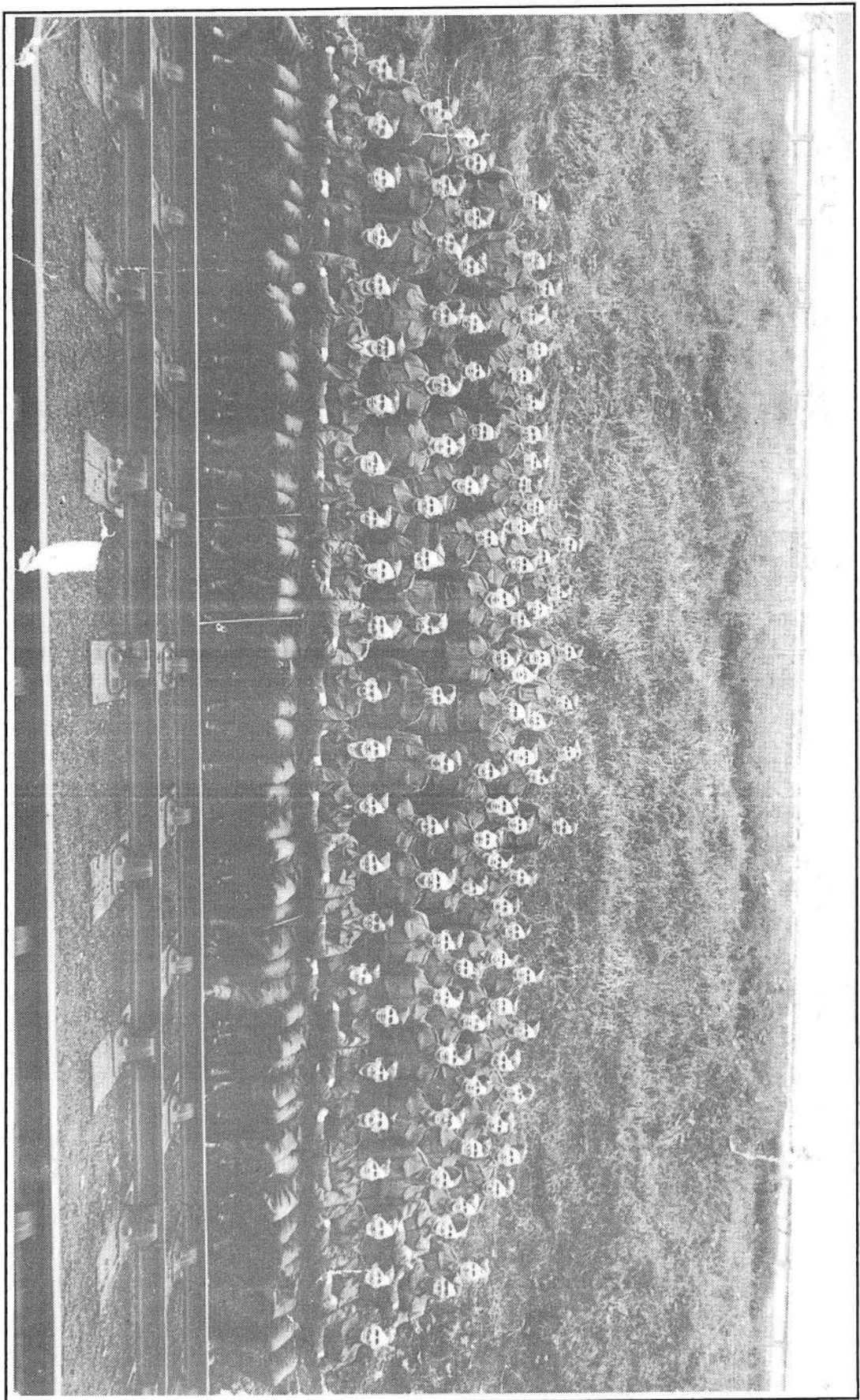
**Skelton Green Infants School - 1951/2**

**Top Row L to R: E Chapman, C Scott, L Bowden, -?- , A Hart, -?- , C Scuffham, -?- , -?- , -?-  
 Middle Row L to R: H Holmes, B Hill, -?- , E Waller, D Readman, F Jackson, -?- , K Norman, J Allinson  
 P Thompson, S Smithers, J Brown  
 Front Row L to R: -?- , J Bewison, D Breeze, J Bainbridge, D Lowe, -?- , J Curnow, C Warburton, -?- ,  
 L Greaves, C Robinson**



**Stanghow Lane School - 1950's**

**Back Row L to R: Mr Bonas, S Sleaman, M Walker, J Brown, -?- , -?- , J Graves, G Shepherd,  
 A Jones, Miss Procter  
 3rd Row L to R: K Beckham, -?- , -?- , B Ness, B Bloomfield, L Allinson, M Want, J Dadd,  
 N Johnson, I Keeler  
 2nd Row L to R: J Bonnard, E Pashley, M Porte, A Berwick, D Payne, -?- , K Robinson,  
 J Bendilow, S Evans, A Pulford, E Dowson  
 Front Row L to R: W Whitehead, R Brown, -?- , -?- , B Addison, A Pearson, G Templeman,  
 D Preston, A Tilly**



*Skelton & North Skelton Home Guard - World War II*

*Names too numerous to mention !*

## The Lamps

North Skelton Club was packed. Everybody had been waiting for weeks. It was going to be a night of nights. Posters were up. Brass mad Tabby was 'running a book' on the final outcome.

Davy Lamp was so excited he couldn't eat his dinner as he said to his wife Tilly, "This is the most important night of my life! Ah've bin picked out of 'undreds to referee the North Skelton Club Pool Final. Is all mi' gear ready?"

"It's all pressed ready, Davy," replied Tilly, "Ah' want yer well turned out tonight 'cos ah'm proud of yer!"

Bev and Mick had moved the pool table into the Concert Room and had put chairs all around it. David Brown was 'putting on' pies and peas and had offered to dish them out for "nowt" - a rare occasion indeed! Ann Hutchinson was in charge of the raffle and bingo which was to take place at half-time - all proceeds to go to Norm's paper.

At precisely 8 pm the door opened and in walked Davy Lamp. You could fair feel everyone's intake of breath. Davy looked a 'bobby-dazzler' in his black suit, white shirt and gloves and black dicky-bow - he wouldn't have had that if Jean Spychala hadn't found a piece of black taffeta and run him it up.

In a loud voice he shouted, "Ladies and gentlemen! I, the referee of this final, would like yer all to put yer 'ands together for the two finalists. Please welcome Keith Beckham of 'olmbeck Road and Andrew Batchelor of Green'ill View!"

The room erupted as they both walked in, smartly clad in shirts and waistcoats. The applause was deafening and Bill Smith had to shout above it all as he leaned over and said to 'Big Rodge', "It's more than just a pool final is this, Rodge. Years ago it was called 'top enders' against 'bottom enders'. Today it's 'olmbeck Road against Green'ill View 'cos they pinched our cricket field!"

Big Rodge was baffled. "Well, who the 'ell's this Andrew Batchelor?"

"'e's t' milkman an' 'e's bin shoutin' 'is mouth off about 'ow good 'e is, so I 'ope to god Beckam's on top form!"

Davy got his beer in, gave the signal and in a clear voice shouted, "Quiet please! Game on!"

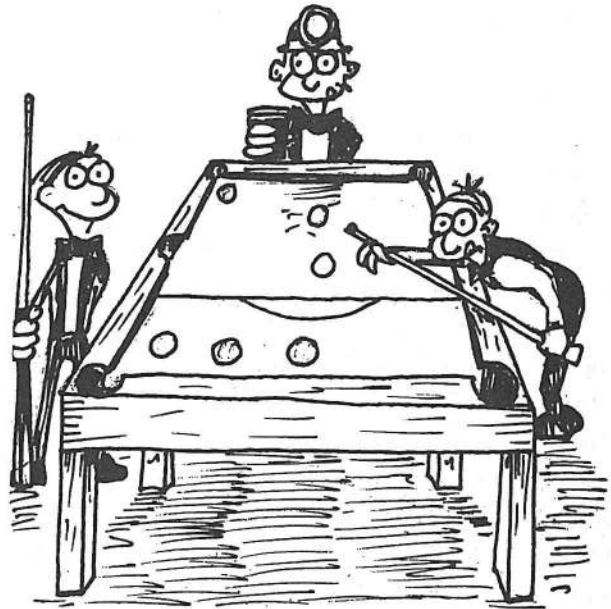
You could have heard a pin drop.

One hour later it was 'level pegging'. Everyone was on the edge of their seats. This was top class pool and Davy was doing a superb job as referee. Mick was slipping him a regular pint. By the time the

interval came Batchelor was leading 3 games to 2. Tabby was in a sweat. If Batchelor won he stood to lose a packet. That would really brass him off.

'Brownie's' pies and peas were tip-top and bingo fanatic Ann was in her element. It had been a grand night so far with the best yet to come.

Davy had consumed many pints of Mick's beer - he'd have to pull himself together for the second half. Both lads were playing a blinder. Davy stood up. "Quiet please! Game on!"




One and a half hours later it was 4 - 3 to Beckham. The shouts got louder and Davy got drunker. By now he was rocking and all the balls looked the same colour! He hadn't a clue what the score was and his legs were fair plaited. He was desperate for the 'gents'. All at once a roar went up. The noise was deafening.

"'ells bells", thought Davy, "'t match is over, ah'm t' ref an' ah don't even know who's won!"

He ran to the toilet. What was he going to do? By now he was sober with shock. He went back in. Tabby was paying out, the players were surrounded and the trophy was waiting to be presented to the winner. But who to? He'd have to ask and show himself up. Davy felt terrible - the most important night of his life ruined. He hung his head in shame. A pat on the back turned Davy round. It was Dave Hutchinson wearing a big grin on his face.

"Davy, ah might live at t' top end but 'ah'm glad a bottom ender's won it," he said.

Davy breathed a huge sigh of relief.

Once again he took charge. Keith Beckham had won and that's all he wanted. It had been a brilliant night. Greenhill View might have won the battle of the cricket field but much more important, they lost the battle for North Skelton Club Pool Champion! 

## *From North Skelton to the Bright Lights of London*

*by Brian Payne*

*In a house situated between John Hall's farm and Claphow, known affectionately as "The Gas House", lived the Payne family; Mr & Mrs Payne, Margaret, Ann, Doreen, Brian and Arthur. No-one knew of the dreams in Brian's head or of his strength of mind and effort to make those dreams come true. This is Brian's story of the road from North Skelton to the bright lights of London's West End.*

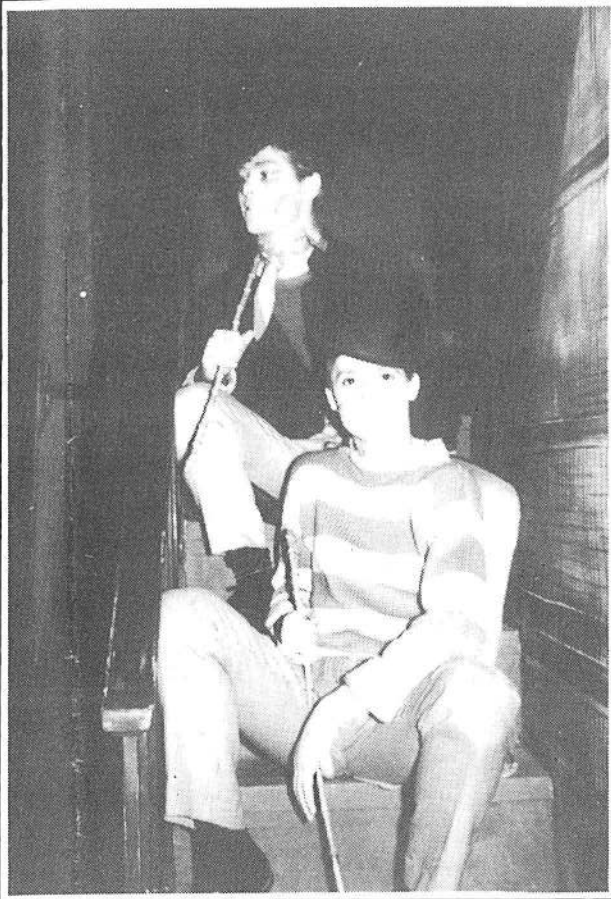
It is now 40 years since I decided to elope with adventure. Yes! I'm sure that was it, for within me was this burning desire which exploded when Captain Taylor, head of the North Riding Physical Education, invited me to attend Scalby College, Scarborough for weekend 'movement courses'. That was just the opening I needed to get me going and so I went home to plan my way to London. My dear Mum was dumb with fright when I broke the news that I had an audition in London but I was determined to go; nothing would stop me.

I do have a stubborn streak and recall the time I had a "Tony Curtis perm!" Jeff Templeman had one at the same time and many of my friends in North Skelton will remember seeing me for the first time with tight curls! It took 3 hours to do at Redcar and I remember not daring to go home. Next morning my Mam cried but Dad said I was an idiot and looked like a "bloody drenched rat!" I arrived in London in the 1950's, but not until later did I realise how fortunate I was to attend the Siguro Leeder School near King's Cross. It will always be special to me - it was the forerunner of modern dance. I remember writing to Sadlers Wells Ballet School hoping for an interview. The reply was "Don't waste money on a train ticket", as I had not done any ballet classes.



*'Snip & Snap' - Dutch Revue (1960-61) - I'm on the right*

For 3 years I studied and took regular classes all around London. The offer of a year's work in a Dutch Revue won me over even though an offer to join the Chilean State Ballet came my way.



*'My Fair Lady', Drury Lane - 1962*

and then went to the 'Casino' at night to relax. I regularly awaited Tommy Smith and his Liverpool team-mates for they were very free with their verbals but so humorous! Everton's Howard Kendall, Ernie Hunt and Alan Ball along with many visiting teams used to fill the ground floor. Rather sadly, around that time, Ernie Hunt departed company with his Everton colleagues in not such a friendly terms and from then on his football career went downhill. Ernie was such a good-natured guy. Alternative weeks saw me watching Everton and Liverpool with the odd invitation to Southport.

The top floor of the 'Casino' was a disco where 'chart-toppers' played - 'Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich' were my favourites - they were a great act. However, quite a few didn't come up to credibility. The boss of the club was a 'Mafia type' and every so often he would take a dislike to performers and get rid of them from the Club. To my great shock he paid off the great American singer, Brenda Lee, after only 2 nights! Having to depart after 7 months wasn't easy.

The second half of my dancing years is much more exciting, covering my time in Greece and Japan.

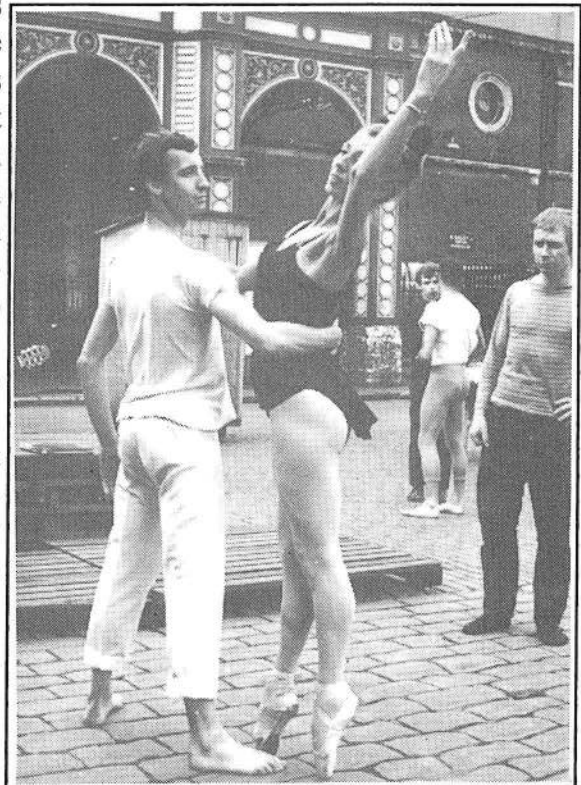
(To be continued . . . . .)

Thank goodness I made that decision because a year later the dreadful uprising in that country happened so fate played a hand.

In 1961 I was dancing in 'The Boyfriend at Scarborough, such a happy show, and to be so near to home was special to me. At that time Mr & Mrs Bonas ( Headmaster at Stanghow Lane School ) lived in Scalby and welcomed me with open arms. I kept in touch with Miss Lewis because it was so very special to her that I had chosen dancing as my career. I want to take this opportunity to say "sorry" to Joe Reed for not advancing in athletic - it's been burning in me for all these years that I should have performed for my country. Miss Ramsay and I kept a long friendship going right up until the day she died aged 90 years. Maybe the fact that we were St Swithin's 'twins' had something to do with it.

1962-3 found me in 'My Fair Lady' at Drury Lane Theatre. It was an unbelievable time for my Mam and Dad to come to London to see what my life was all about in such a wonderful show.

In 1968 I was in cabaret at the famous 'Casino', at Southport. This must have been the fittest time of my life as the beach was very near and inviting. All the footballers came to train on the sand dunes



*Covent Garden - practice makes perfect!*

## Rhubarb Pie and Sports Day!

Whenever I smell the wonderful aroma of shortcrust pastry and rhubarb baked in a pie (a very simple but under-rated dish) it always evokes a warm and comforting memory of a day in my life many years ago - more years ago than I care to remember - 1951 to be precise!

I was a pupil of Stanghow Lane County Modern School and it was Sport's Day. It was held on a hot summer's day in a field full of uneven bumps and dips and many 'cow-pats' dotted around the field like dinner plates! Some were dry, crumbly ones a few days old but others were fresh, hot and steamy!

It was a bit of a walk from the school to the sports field which was located somewhere between Old Skelton and North Skelton - I suppose it's full of houses now?



*Stanghow Lane School Hockey Team - 1950*

*Back Row: Marie Wilson, Sheila Laughton, Anne Peacock, Frances Miller, Miss Lewis  
Front Row: Isabel Cross, Edna Hewling, Doreen Payne, Pat Gill, Freda Bint, June Bonnard, Eileen Drury*

Anyhow, on this particular day the field was 'marked out' ready for the sporting events. The "Tenants of Skelton Industrial Estate" had provided commemorative trophies and one of them was for "Best Athletic Performance". Doesn't it all sound so wonderfully English with a 'heart of the community' feeling.

I remember it was a windy day and those of us involved in the events had to wear school football shirts and shorts - I and other girls were not very taken by them you might say! The shirts had been dyed a quite sickly shade of orange - some were rather mottled looking. Guess what I was given. That's right, a speckled, orange number and when the wind blew we felt and looked like inflated balloons!

What has all this got to do with rhubarb pie you might ask? Well, it doesn't, except the last lesson we had before we had to troop off to the sports field was Domestic Science (called Home Economics these days). We'd all baked rhubarb pies and had to take them home with us. They were full of juice and had to be kept flat at all times. There was no choice but to cart them about with us to Sports Day - I didn't mind too much because I thought mine was quite fine, of course, and it smelt delicious.



I was relieved, though, to see my Mum and Dad in the spectator area with two friends. I ran over to show them my pie which by now was beginning to look rather sad, soggy and sorry for itself! I asked them to look after it and was puzzled as to why they were laughing as I walked away.

I took part in the 100 yards sprint, the hurdles, throwing the cricket ball, the long jump and the high jump. I remember being very surprised and delighted to win the high jump - a girl I knew then, Doreen, seemed a 'dead cert' to win it. She was thin, with long legs, and as light as thistle-down - in P.E. lessons she always sailed over the bar. All I can think is that it was a combination of a group of people shouting for all they were worth, "C'mon the rhubarb pie!", and a sudden gust of wind getting up and under my orange shirt and taking me like a balloon over the high jump bar. The next thing I knew I was being presented with the cup for "Best Athletic Performance - 1951".

To round it all off my Dad ate my rhubarb pie for his tea. I don't know which I was most proud of!

Anne J. Dawson (nee Peacock), 30 Croft road, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-on-Tees, TS16 0DX

## Letterbox



Dear Ed

Congratulations on a smashing newspaper for North Skelton and Layland. I received the December issue out here in Qatar just a couple of days ago, after dear Mam had told me that she had posted something about Mrs Reveley to me about three weeks ago. I had looked forward to reading about our 'local lass' who has done so very well in the racing world and I wasn't disappointed. In fact, I thoroughly enjoyed the whole paper.

I always loved the racing scene back home and do so miss Redcar and Sedgfield Races. However, I constantly keep in touch with what's happening through the English 'dailies' (cost £1.75 out here) and any racing papers I'm fortunate enough to receive. So you can imagine what great pleasure I had when I began to see in the winners columns a certain Mrs M Reveley, Saltburn By Sea. What's more, I could actually say to my fellow racing fans out here, "Trains just down the road from us!" Mrs Reveley has been very successful and, yes, I think it's great for our local area. We should all be very proud of how she's gone in there with the 'big boys' and made her mark, especially in such a chancy business.

Now then, I can picture some readers thinking, "Just down t' road? He's barmy; 'bin out in t' sun too long!" after seeing I was writing from Qatar. Well, it wasn't always the case, and that leads me onto why I so enjoyed the whole paper. Like so many other readers, once I started it didn't take me long to recall those good old days gone by.

There was Ground Hill - you know, the row of houses; the 'double-bridges'; the Pit and yard were still open, so full of life; the railway to Boosbeck and the shunting line; the hound trails; wild violets; tickling trout; walking everywhere; Ainsley's Farm; but most of all there was a home for the first years of my life - the 'Gas House'.

We were one big, happy family living there; Grandad George and Grandma Ethel Payne, our Arthur, Doreen and Anne, Mam and Dad with visits from the 'mystery man', our Brian, all the way from London (some far off planet in those days). And all just over the road from 'our Mary' as I sometimes refer to Mrs Reveley with no disrespect intended!

So it really was a pleasure to read your paper and then recall my own past times in the area as well as have an update on one of my favourite 'locals'.

Oh yes, and before I sign off, I must just add "I'll lay 'odds-on' that the secretary mentioned in Mrs Reveley's article was the same Jean Ackerley I went to Brotton County Modern School with?"

All the very best regards to you all

'The Desert Fox'

(Paul A Fox, Doha, Qatar)



### Crossword Answers:

Across: 1. Puffin 2. Genie 8. Aar 10. Adelaide  
11. Droll 12. Lot 14. Nag 17. Happy  
20. Kinkajou 21. Era 22. Round 23. Wherry

Down: 1. Fruit 2. Undo 3. Field 4. Fell 5. Nail  
6. Pretty 9. Ad o 11. Donkey 13. Major 15. Air  
16. Gnaw 17. Hare 18. Pour 19. Puny

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or old photographs  
that might go in  
'The Key'?**



**If so ring Norma on  
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