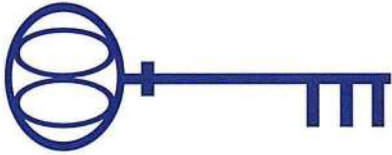


ISSUE NO 36

AUGUST 2003

# THE KEY



A NEWSPAPER FOR NORTH SKELTON & LAYLAND



## Editorial....

*Regretfully I have to tell you that the next issue of The Key this coming Christmas will be the final one.*

*Don and I are unable to carry on producing the magazine for a number of reasons. A lot of hard work goes into the production of each edition and we are both finding it difficult to maintain the high standard and the deadlines required. We will be thanking you all for your support in the Editorial of the last issue.*

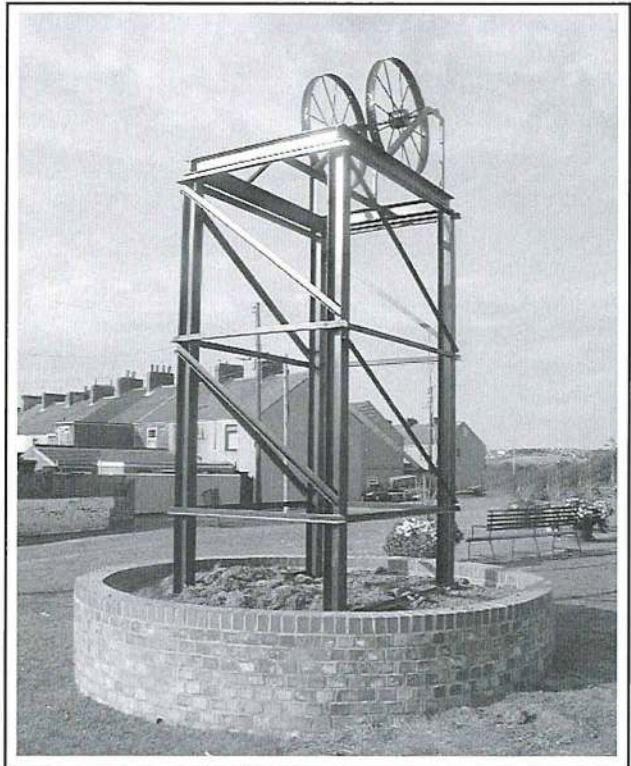
*Because the Christmas edition will be the final one, we are making it free to everyone. It will be available in the usual outlets - Devaney's Newsagents and The Church Charity Shop, Skelton and from Cooper's Fruit & Veg Shop at New Skelton. It will also be available from David Brown's Butchers, Curly Tops and the Post Office at North Skelton.*

*To all of you who have paid for more editions than this one, please let me know and I will return your money. This current edition must still be paid for. Anyone who has sent me photographs and haven't got them back please ring or write to me, though I'm certain I've returned them all.*

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## North Skelton Pit Headgear



At a meeting of Action North Skelton, ANS members were asked to put forward ideas to build something on the reclaimed waste land at the top of the streets, the former site of the old mine railway line. It was decided that a replica of the pit headgear would be the most appropriate.

George Pearson, a member of ANS and a former North Skelton Mine Manager, took that idea home and drew up some plans. Tees Components worked from those plans and built to scale an exact replica. As you can see above, it is now erected and stands proudly, taking pride of place at the top of Bolckow Street, a fine monument of our heritage. Our cover photograph shows a view from a different angle of the headgear, alongside one of the many tubs of beautiful summer flowers, yet another achievement by the hard-working members of ANS. Thanks go to all those concerned in turning the 'top of our streets' into a lovely grassed area where we can enjoy a peaceful stroll or sit on one of the many park benches and admire the show of flowers.

Over the years, ANS members have worked tirelessly to raise money in order to fund a variety of successful projects around the village including Sparrow Park, the War Memorial, the children's play area, a mini soccer pitch, a basketball court and not least the park area and headgear.

In our final edition of The Key this Christmas we will be publishing a special article with photographs of all that ANS has achieved for the villagers of North Skelton.

## Christmas Belles

### FUN DAY!

At the Bulls Head on  
Saturday 23rd August.  
BBQ, Raffle, Games etc.



Evening Entertainment -  
Supersound Disco, Late Bar

Please come along and enjoy yourselves. All proceeds towards extending and improving the North Skelton Christmas Lights.

*Our grateful thanks to businesses in North Skelton who support us, and of course you yourselves!*

# Y5 CHILDREN BECOME THE TEACHER...

Sharing knowledge and skills has always been an important part of life for the Year 5 children of Skelton Junior School. One day, these children decided that they would like to share their school and ICT suite with the younger children of the Infant School.

So the children in Year 5 decided to ask their teacher if they could spend their spare time in helping younger children. They were confident that they could pass on their skills and help other children on how to use a computer. Mrs Cox, a teacher in Year 5, arranged for the children to become 'buddies' to younger children in the Infant School. With the help of the 'dinner ladies' and Mrs Bonas, an infant class teacher, the children started by playing games during lunch times, becoming familiar faces to the younger children. This then developed, the children would next share their lunchtimes with the younger children, taking their packed lunches to the other school. To conclude the project, Year 5 children asked if they could use the ICT suite in the Junior School. They wanted to use the computers to create a small book.



Three days a week the children brought their 'buddies' across to the computer suite. They spent time explaining how to draw pictures on the computer. Each day they would show the younger children a new drawing skill until they were happy with their final picture. Helping the children to construct sentences they next inserted the text alongside their pictures. Each child had then made a single page for the book.

All the work undertaken during this project was totally organised by the children. Mrs Cox assisted with basic literacy skills and any technical problems the children had. It soon became clear that all involved, both young and old, thoroughly enjoyed spending time using the computers to draw and write up work.

As the weeks progressed, the quality of the younger children's keyboard and mouse skills improved greatly. Finally, the children jointly chose which pictures and text they wanted to put into the final book. These were printed and collated by Mrs Cox to make the final product which can be seen in the photograph to the right.

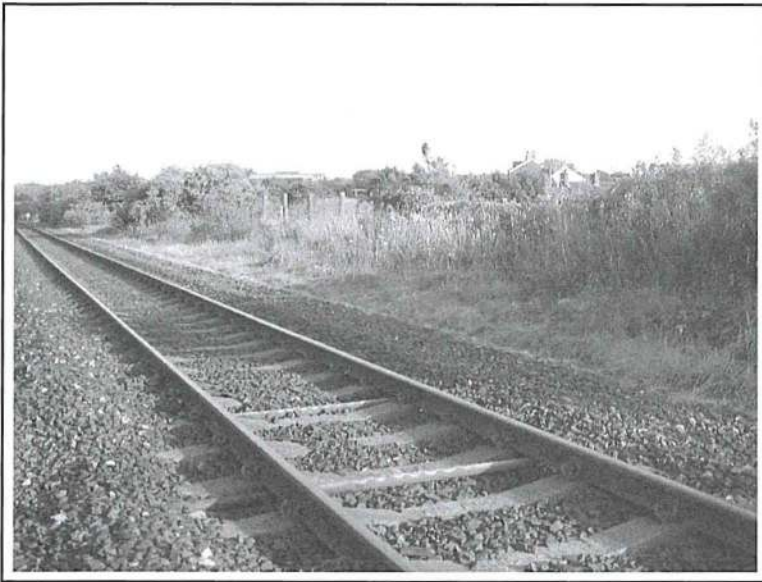
Mrs Cox said, "I was impressed to see children at 9 years of age showing younger children some technical aspects of the use of computing skills. I was amazed at the confidence and skills that the older children had. Their ability to transfer the knowledge to younger children is very apparent by the work they have produced."



# *A Legacy of the Past*

*by Colin Berwick*

Almost all towns and villages change over time and North Skelton is no exception. When I was a child I attended the village school. The building is still there but the school was closed over forty years ago. The Mine, which provided employment for so many over the years, no longer exists and the Methodist Chapel has also gone. There used to be a cricket field and teams to play on it. Local farms provided milk, there was a barber in Richard Street, a cobbler in William Street, three fish and chip shops and many other shops selling almost everything needed by a small community. Nowadays, these are things of the past and have been overtaken by the demands of a different kind of society which can find most of what it needs under one roof in a supermarket. Changes are inevitable, and North Skelton now has modern housing developments, a purpose-built play area and a Community Centre. Nevertheless, some things have remained almost the same for many years, such as St. Peter's Church, 'The Bull' and 'The Club'.



*The site of North Skelton Junction - present day*

There are also two other structures, older than the rest, which have withstood the passage of time and are instantly recognisable to people who live in the area. I am, of course, referring to the two railway bridges, which span the road leading to Brotton. They are a constant reminder of the history of the village and the reason why it exists. They are a symbol of the quality of workmanship of our forefathers and their determination to build a future. The North-East is rich in bridges and viaducts, many made necessary by the hilly and undulating nature of the land. In our area alone it was necessary for three viaducts to be constructed - at Slapewath, Kilton and Skelton. In fact, County Durham boasts the first-ever stone railway bridge, the Causey Arch, built in 1727 to carry a colliery line. It still stands as an ancient monument and a tribute

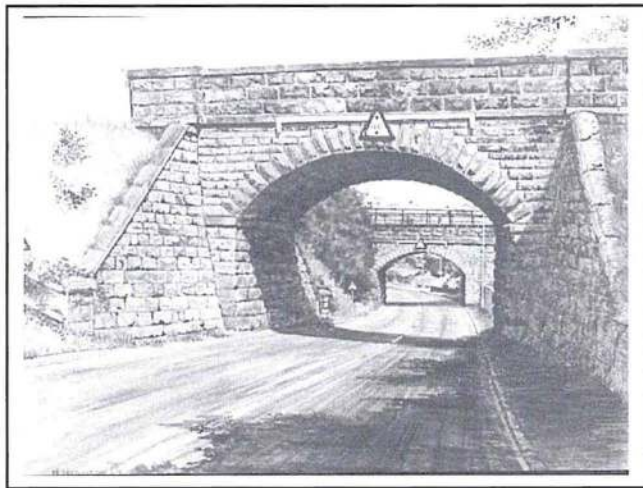
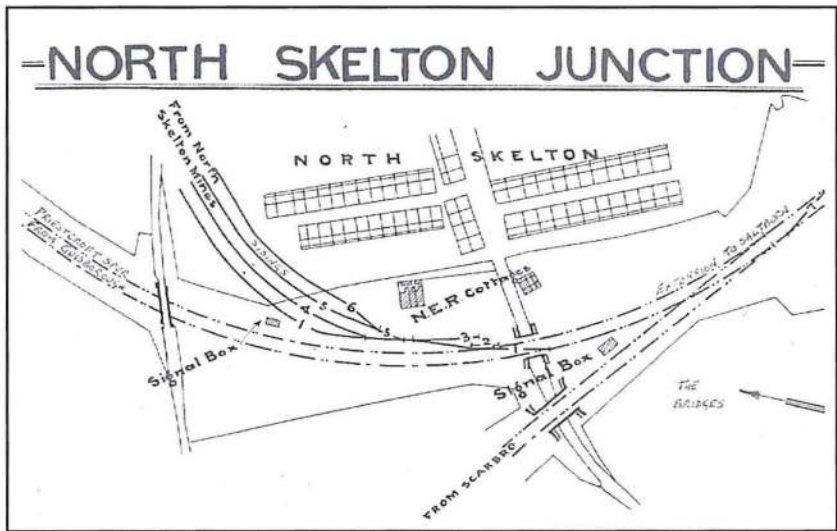
to the early railway engineers. Locally there are numerous railway bridges such as those at Brotton and Kilton but they are in separate locations. At North Skelton they are together - and that makes them different from the rest! Twin bridges are a rarity, and now that one of the two bridges at Claphow has been demolished, even more so.

The middle of the 19th century heralded great industrial changes in the Cleveland area. When iron ore was discovered, the sinking of mines was quickly followed by the development of railways to service the pits. The Cleveland Railway Company ran a line south and east of the River Tees to the ironstone districts of Cleveland, from whence the ore would be taken to the ironworks at Port Clarence which had been established by the Bell Brothers in 1853. By 1861 the line was open to Guisborough, then extended to Boosbeck in 1862 and on to Brotton in 1865. From this line a loop was constructed from Priestcroft Junction to North Skelton Mine. Both the main line and the loop crossed Stanghow Lane at Claphow, and two bridges were built to accommodate them. The northernmost bridge, the one nearer New Skelton, is a single-arch design and carried traffic to the mine. The southernmost bridge was double-arched (see also page 15) and carried the line south of East Pastures Farm to Lumpsey and Brotton. The double-arch construction was to strengthen the bridge against subsidence caused by mine workings. The third part of the triangular pattern of tracks around the village was North Skelton Railway's Saltburn to Brotton line completed in 1872 and known as the '*Saltburn Extension*'.

The North Eastern Railway had absorbed the Cleveland Railway in 1865, and had already begun construction in Cleveland when it completed the Kilton viaduct between Carlin How and Loftus in 1867. As the number of ironworks increased and pushed further south it became more economic for the ore from Boosbeck, Slapewath and Guisborough to be carried through North Skelton Junction by the Priestcroft Spur to the Saltburn Extension line and on to the Grangetown steelworks.

The North Skelton bridges were built by North Eastern Railway engineers soon after the opening of the mine

in 1872. They are constructed of sandstone, the roof of the arch on each bridge being built of brick, capped with a layer of clay forming a waterproof 'cupola'. Rubble filling was placed above the cupola and levelled to form a base for the track bed. Parapets of sandstone ran on either side of the track to meet the buttresses, which propped both sides of the arches. There was no motorised transport in those days (hence the name 'Coach Road' at Brotton), so it is remarkable that the heavy increase in traffic during the past century has not damaged the bridges to a significant extent. The height and weight of modern-day vehicles is always likely to lead to structural harm, such as when a truck collided with the arch and necessitated repairs which led to the closure of the road for a considerable time. We tend to take these structures for granted but it would be a sad day if they had to be replaced by something less aesthetically pleasing. These bridges not only do the job for which they were built but are fine examples of what can be achieved without massive cost. Talk of the bridges reminds me of playing football on the Brotton Road ground - we had to get changed at North Skelton Institute and walk under the bridges to get to the pitch. In the middle of winter it could be a miserable experience. There was no shelter from the icy wind, which seemed to blow directly from Siberia! It was so numbingly cold on one occasion that the referee called a halt to the game with the full agreement of the players, and as we ran back to the 'Tute' to get changed it was a relief to pause under the bridges where there was shelter from the wind - it was like putting on an overcoat! I remember also that during the last war the Home Guard set up a machine-gun post by the side of the bridge nearest Brotton. I had my first lesson in military tactics when Dad explained to me that not only did the position cover the road to Brotton, but it also provided a field of fire along the line towards North Skelton Railway Station.



*'Pip' Harrison's sketch of the 'double-bridges'*

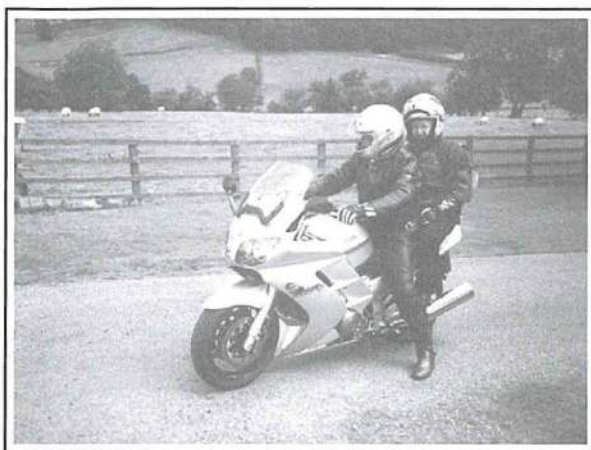
were built, and the fact that they have stood for one hundred and thirty years speaks volumes for the skill of the men who created them.

North Skelton was founded on mining and miners. These were people who were strong in mind and body; who were prepared to work hard for the benefit of their families. Their character and purpose was as hard and unyielding as the stone they dug out of the ground. The picture Harold painted seems to encapsulate all of this. Twelve years ago I asked Harold to paint an identical picture for me, which he did - I still enjoy looking at it!

In the writing of this article, information from the Darlington Railway Museum was used for which I am grateful. Peter Nightingale and Mario Tokarski also helped.

# FRANCE ON 2 WHEELS

Continued....



For any of you that have driven on the M25 you will probably have spent much of your time in a traffic jam or in traffic moving at a controllable speed - not so with the French '*periferique*'. You join this motorway and "go for it". I have been known to go to sleep while Kev has driven around Glasgow, and also missed chunks of Ireland, but no way did my eyelids cover my eyes on this particular part of our journey through France.

We had left the Hotel in Reims with the assurances of the receptionist that, "*It is an easy journey and not long. Follow signs for Orleans West once you reach Paris.*" Very simple instructions you may think - well, when you are sat in the bar with a glass of wine in your hand they are! When you are on the motorbike doing something like 70mph (because that's what the rest of the traffic around you is doing) it is a very different feeling. On reflection, I would compare this part of the journey to being in the mid-

dle of a herd of stampeding buffalo and you're wanting to turn right! I will never complain again about road signs in England - the signs on the *periferique* are the type which have you saying, "*We needed that one!*"

I was the one responsible for spotting the sign saying "*West Orleans*". In desperation I logged onto "*Orleans*" and shouted to Kev, "*Take a right, NOW!*" I think it was perhaps the manic tone to my voice which made his reactions so immediate. As he committed us to a right turn I spotted, "*Orleans - Bridge of*" - yes, we were now off the *periferique* and heading into Paris. After much discussion with the locals, to most of which I just nodded and hoped I looked intelligent, we got back onto the correct motorway and headed for Blois.

The word I would use to describe Blois would be elegant - it has a Cathedral, Chateau de Blois, and sits alongside the Loire. After we had checked into our hotel we wandered around the streets and sat at a pavement café watching the buskers and generally chilling out, drinking water of course!

After 2 days we travelled onto Vouvaray, only 15 miles on from Blois, but after the experience of the last journey we decided short was beautiful. We checked into Le Grand Vatel, which was an unimposing hotel but turned out to boast a restaurant second to none. Never have I tasted food or drunk wine like it.

The next day we set off for Rouen, calling at Le Mans for lunch. Again we were looking for a Kyriad Hotel and were lucky enough to spot a small sign pointing the way.

That evening we set off to walk into the square and as we turned a corner the sight that met our eyes was breathtaking. A cobbled market square, packed with pavement cafés and side shows, flowers hanging from every available place and ahead of us a golden-faced clock known as the Gros Horloge. Within this square there was also a modern church, dedicated to Joan of Arc. Inside this incredible church, the ceiling looked like an upside down boat and the walls were filled with stained glass windows. The sun was coming in through the windows and casting a glow over everyone in there.

Inevitably, the next day was our last full day and we headed off for Le Touquet, which would leave us only 20 miles to Calais on Saturday morning.

On our way we stopped off in Dieppe. This is where Kev and Len ate their best lunch of the holiday, a bucket (each) of mussels. These were, apparently, according to Kev & Len, the best mussels ever to be eaten by anyone in France. As it was a fish restaurant, the list was a little different from over here. Norma settled for a 'safe' salmon salad. Not me - I couldn't tell you what I ordered but I can tell you it was the ugliest looking thing I had ever seen in my life! Once Kev had got rid of it's head and tail (mainly to stop it looking at me) it was quite enjoyable!

We found accommodation, eventually, in Le Touquet, and set off yet again to find somewhere to eat. It started to rain so we made a dash for the nearest pavement restaurant, which turned out to be Italian. It wasn't our intention to eat there, just to have a drink until the rain stopped. Three hours later, and very well fed, we moved on! Has anyone else noticed that after 10pm on a Friday evening in Le Touquet, the buildings have a slight lean to them!

Other than catching the ferry home and riding home from Dover in pouring rain that's the end of our wonderful holiday on 'two wheels' in France.

PS - a couple of packing tips for those of you who decide to travel by motorbike. When you only have a pannier for a suitcase you need to be an ingenious packer. Cut up a pair of thick tights into tubes about 6 ins long. Now roll all the 'T' shirts together, trousers together etc and place into a tube. When you then need to take clothes out to wear you only need to take them out and re-roll.

Save empty film tubs and fill with sun-cream, moisturiser, shampoo, conditioner etc. AND DON'T FORGET TO LABEL!

Gina & Kev McMahon

# WALKING THE STREETS FOR MY LIVING!



*Sylvia - smiling as always!*

In 1973, Sylvia Balls left her cleaning job to follow in the footsteps of her sister Marion. Syl' started work as a 'postie' and for the next 30 years she 'walked the streets for her living'.

At that time, the sorting office was at the back of Kingston's chemists, where Elizabeth Gorman was the postmistress. There was a great camaraderie between the posties - Sylvia was happy working with such lovely colleagues as Fred Norlop, Dot Smith, Marg

Gomer, Eileen Robinson and Eric Barker - they all sorted their own mail. Part of Sylvia's round included the factories on Skelton Industrial Estate. Clegg's and Jowett's employed a great number of local folk who formed strong friendships that are still lasting today.

After the factories, Sylvia's next port of call was Hagg Farm. Over the next year or two this call would cause her many weather problems, but enjoying the changing seasons and outdoor life, she took it all in her stride.

Back at the Skelton Office rumours were rife - there was going to be a big change. The sorting office was going to be transferred to Saltburn. This news was received by all the postal workers with much trepidation. However, Sylvia's working days at Saltburn turned out to be the happiest of her working life. Rising at 4.30am, she would make her way to Saltburn Lane End, then at 5.30am The Royal Mail van would pick up her and her colleagues. There were no comfortable seats - whatever the weather they would all pile in.

Starting at The Spa, her round would take in such picturesque places as the old boating lake, the miniature railway and Cat Nab followed by the then lovely, clean, sandy beach. On her trusty bike she would cycle to Rigwood taking in all these pleasures. The weather then, as always, played a major part in a postie's life. Syl' remembers getting to the sorting office one winter's morning, and as the minutes passed by the snow became thicker and heavier. One of her workmates, 'Geordie', came in and said, "You buggers will never mek it home today!" The snow was by now becoming deeper and deeper. It was decided by them all that it would be best to walk home through Saltburn Woods - the trees would give them cover. And indeed they did, but as they emerged out of the woods at the bottom end of Skelton there was a complete 'white out' - it was very frightening. Syl' and her pals knew they might not make it, but walking in single file, their heads down and holding hands tightly, the posties finally managed to reach their homes. A hot bath, followed by a change of clothes and a good sleep, made sure these stalwarts were back again at work the next morning.

Christmas has always been a special time for Sylvia and Marion. The posties 'Christmas Do' at Tockett's Mill was famous for its party atmosphere, everyone making the effort to don 'fancy dress'. As each party came around, Syl' would take weeks to think up different ideas on how to 'dress up' - each year would be more outrageous and adventurous than the last. Back at the sorting office, after their round, Bill Halaman

would bring in the traditional mince pies, while Syl' and Marion popped the corks of their dad's lethal parsnip wine. After a 'Happy Christmas' all round they went merrily home.

It was then rumoured that a transfer to a new sorting office on the Industrial Estate was in the offing. The rumours proved correct - Syl' had now come full circle.

North Skelton became her new round - the bags of mail were delivered by van to Boocock's Garage ready for her to pick up. She recalls her round in our village as a very happy one.

The last years of her working life were spent walking and riding her bike around the streets of New Skelton and Hollybush, her happy and cheery personality making Syl' a popular figure with all her customers. Their appreciation was shown when she retired in May. Sylvia was presented with many gifts.

Her community spirit has always been strong. Would the carnival have been the same without the 'three posties'? Not likely! Every year saw them dressed up, their antics in the parade giving humour and pleasure to everyone. Their popularity was such that, because of work commitments one year, they were late. Ian Johnson made a decision - it was the one and only time the parade was held up, until they got there. Sylvia and her bike have always been the best of friends. Pedalling her rounds kept her fit and healthy. It also gave her a love of the countryside, which still continues today. Sylvia now spends a lot of her time with her husband Mike and her 4 children and 8 grandchildren. Her hobby is now the same scenario as her working life. Walking and enjoying our local countryside.

This poem has been written by Rene Burluraux, in her 90<sup>th</sup> year, as a tribute to Sylvia. It sums up what your customers think of you...

*Our Postgirl Sylvia is retiring,  
We will all miss her sunny smile.  
She trudged along day in day out  
For many a long, hard mile.*

*She came in all kinds of weather  
The rain, the wind and the snow,  
But Sylvia kept on going,  
We will be sad to see her go.*

*She walked along with that heavy sack  
But you never saw her frown.  
She must have had an aching back  
Yet it never got her down.*

*Sometimes she brought us good news,  
Other times a little sad,  
But we will never forget our Sylvia  
And the good Postgirl that we had.*

*So Sylvia, enjoy your retirement  
You surely have earned it and more,  
For each letter or bill or birthday card  
That you pushed through our door.*

There are endless good causes which Sylvia has supported and fought for. I am sure I speak for everyone when I say "Thank you Syl'! We are all so grateful and wish you a Very Happy Retirement."

# *Bogus Trading...*

## *Loan-Sharks...? Trading Standards Can Help!*

Lone-sharking is the unwholesome side of money lending. Money lending is legal, BUT only where the moneylender has a current and valid licence. We, in Trading Standards, assist the Office of Fair Trading to keep the licensing system correct and up to date. We also ensure that those holding licences are fit to remain in the credit industry.

Lone-sharks tend to prey on those who are turned down by the more legitimate credit industry. They know that their clients have limited options, so high interest rates can be charged. Charging high interest rates is NOT a criminal offence, but it can be judged unfair by a Court of Law.

Anyone trading in credit (i.e. money-lending) without a licence can be prosecuted. Furthermore, all their outstanding, unlicensed loans are considered 'unenforceable' (i.e. there's no legal right to call them in). So, if we can obtain adequate information about an illegal moneylender we can take him/her to Court, whilst their 'clients' are legally released from their debts.

We understand, of course, that the realities of being in debt to a loan-shark are much more complex than the above legal situation would suggest. There are obvious reasons for not disclosing the identity of such moneylenders to the authorities. It may be that debtors are content to pay large interest rates on the very few occasions that they need to use a lone-shark, so they wouldn't want their source of credit closing down. At the other extreme, it may be that the threat of physical violence is sufficient to ensure that debtors keep their mouths shut.

We cannot deny the difficulties involved in gaining the necessary evidence to close down a loan-shark. However, we are prepared to investigate any credible complaints, in partnership with the Police where necessary, and take Court action where possible. Anyone willing to pass on useful information, anonymously if necessary, is welcome to call (01642) 444284, (answerphone operates out of normal office hours).



## *Prize-Winner Or Prize Fool?*

Regular readers of this column may remember earlier warnings about bogus prize draws, but I can't apologise for returning to the subject once again. Of the many queries and complaints that arrive at our office, those about scam-mailing continue to be amongst the highest.

Various schemes are currently in circulation, either old ones re-hashed or variations on a theme. The DTI are running a campaign under the title 'Prize Winner or Prize Fool'.

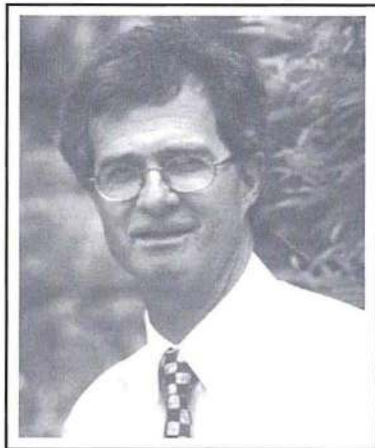
They warn the public to watch out for any of the following tactics:

- A sender who is based overseas.
- An unsolicited approach (ie where you've never contacted the sender before).
- An invitation to send a 'processing' or 'management' fee.
- An invitation to send money abroad or to a PO Box.
- 'Prizes' expressed in foreign currency.
- 'Rewards' wholly dependant on persuading others to join the scheme.
- A very short time in which to claim the 'prize'.
- An invitation to purchase goods to obtain a 'prize' or 'reward'.
- An invitation to claim by using premium rate phone lines (generally beginning with 090).

Scams can come through the post, by e-mail, text message or fax. The 'I Fancy You' scam on mobiles entices victims to find out who's sending the message. But no identity is disclosed and the fact that the return call is to a premium rate number is often disguised or absent.



# Doc Spot...



## *Hay fever, what a year . . .*

By the time you read this I hope that all you hay fever sufferers will be improving. Due to the early spring weather and the constant hot, dry weather, pollen levels have stayed persistently high, spelling misery for hundreds of people. Interestingly, not everyone is allergic to the same pollens, and some suffer earlier, while others suffer later in the season. The early pollens are from trees, then locally rape seed, followed by cereal pollens and grass pollens. The symptoms are also diverse; the eyes can be itchy, sore and water excessively; the nose can block, with or without catarrh, sneezing and nose bleeds can occur; chest reactions like asthma; mouth and throat symptoms include itching.

Since pollen contact is the problem, avoiding this is helpful, if not always practical; walking, wearing a space helmet, creates public disorder when riots of laughter break out! But shutting the windows at night and avoiding walks in the meadows are sensible. Treatments currently offered and those in the past are numerous; I shall mention some. As a nation we appear to be more allergic than ever, so hay fever is as popular as ever.

An ancient book I picked up stated that in order to treat hay fever properly it was important to correctly identify the offending pollen. This should be achieved by dropping a series of preparations of diluted pollens from different sources into the eye until you found the one which reacted - sounds like 'Russian Roulette' with battery acid eye drops! With this information, a series of injections of increasing strength pollen solution would be used, the idea being that the body tolerates the pollen better. Serious reactions, including deaths, have made this a treatment of the past. My book also talks about 'cautery' where the nose lining is attacked with heat to shrink it down. Also copper ionisation (whatever that might be).

Standard conventional treatment now includes antihistamine tablets, which rarely cause serious sedation, nose sprays and eye drops. These latter treatment contain either antihistamines, steroids or an allergic reaction stabiliser called sodium chromoglycate. Rarely, steroid tablets or injections are required.

Complementary and alternative treatments have something to offer. I prescribe homeopathic treatments for some patients. Choosing the best homeopathic medicine for the individual is sometimes difficult, and reading the leaflets in the pharmacy is not always selective. Briefly there are three ways you might choose a medicine. Firstly on the obvious symptoms e.g. sneezing; secondly of the cause e.g. rape seed and thirdly, everything about the individual which is the truly holistic approach. Considering the symptoms then, if the main feature was streaming eyes and nose with a lot of soreness, *Alium Ceba* (onion) could be useful. If the cause is rape seed, then taking homeopathically diluted specific pollen could be useful. If the individual has a wide range of strong features, symptoms and reactions, a 'constitution' medicine could overall reduce the allergic reaction. For those new to homeopathy I would recommend a 'triple' product, containing three medicines in one tablet - Nelsons sell this as '*Pollena*'.

There are numerous treatments used which I have not mentioned. Some are strange and weird; some are sensible but rarely used. Why not write to *The Key* with your memories of Hay Fever treatment before modern medicines were readily available.

*Dr Roger Neville-Smith*

## *Local Cricket Umpire Retires*

*Ian Proctor has announced his retirement as a Cleveland and Teesside Cricket League Umpire and any future umpiring he does will be on a part-time basis, so that he can concentrate on bringing up to date the League Records, the origins of which go back to 1885.*

*Then, the Cleveland and Teesside Cricket Association was formed on Wednesday April 22<sup>nd</sup> at a meeting held in the Royal Hotel, Brotton with the League launched in 1908. The two organisations merged in 1946 and the League is now known as the Cleveland Cricket League.*

*The competition is the second oldest in the country and a handbook was produced in 1985 named '100 Not Out'. Ian would like to bring it up to date. The Centenary Handbook was written by the then Chairman, Steve Oakley, and President Frank Jewitt. Research of this handbook was very difficult and they did a tremendous job as it wasn't easy going back 100 years, for some records were sketchy and the help of some of the older cricket fraternity was obtained.*

*Since being elected by the League Management Committee in January 1998 to become Honorary League Historian, Ian has spent a lot of his spare time visiting people who were and still are members of cricket teams that play or played in the Cleveland League, collecting information, borrowing photographs of teams or any other memorabilia.*

*If there is anyone with information or photos of Spa Wood, Liverton Mines, Moorsholm, North Skelton, North Skelton Mines, Lingdale, Brotton and Priescrofts. Ian can be contacted on 01642 289596 or ring Norma Templeman on 01287 653853.*



# SKELTON FIRE STATION

## - SERVING THE COMMUNITY



*Skelton Fire Station*

Skelton Fire Station has a long tradition of serving the people of Skelton and the surrounding areas. These duties include not just an emergency response but also a wide range of activities to inform and support the Community. In order to further support these initiatives a restructure has occurred which will provide direct contact for the people of the Skelton area and provide a driving force to address some of the problems facing the residents of the local area.

A dedicated Station Manager has now been appointed to Skelton Fire Station and he is Assistant Divisional Officer Andy Witham. His role is to assist in the running of the Station and also to drive initiatives to help the community and to be the initial contact for the people of Skelton.

Andy can be contacted on (01642) 456511

The philosophy of the Brigade is to transform the Fire Station from a fortress to a Community Fire Station where people can visit to get advice, receive training or help address some of the problems facing the community. As you are no doubt aware, Skelton Station is staffed by retained fire-fighters. These local residents provide professional fire cover 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. However, it means that the Station is not continuously manned. The Station training evening is on a Monday between the hours of 6pm and 9pm. During these hours Peter Holmes, Sub-Officer in charge and the fire-fighters of Skelton will be only too happy to deal with any problems or enquires.

In addition Andy would welcome the opportunity to visit Residents Association meetings or similar events in order to discuss any concerns residents may have.

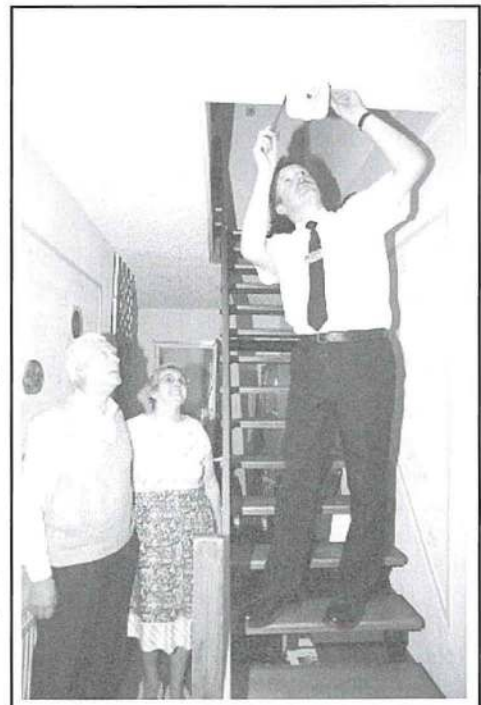
Cleveland Fire Brigade aims to prevent fires before they actually start. To assist us in doing this we carry out talks, visits and displays to various groups and associations. We also inspect premises to ensure that they are safe for people to visit or work in.

If you would like the Brigade to visit for any of these reasons please contact us.

If a fire does occur, early detection can mean the difference between life and death. A smoke alarm costing £5 can save your life. If you want advice on location and fitting please contact Andy or the Station.

In addition we are offering free smoke alarms, including fitting, to people who are over 60, single parents and those members of the community most at risk. To request an alarm contact Andy or Skelton Station on 01287 650273.

The Fire Brigade is there to help and all we ask is that people help us to reduce fires and the consequent deaths and injuries. If there are any issues in this article which you wish to discuss further please contact Andy or the Station.



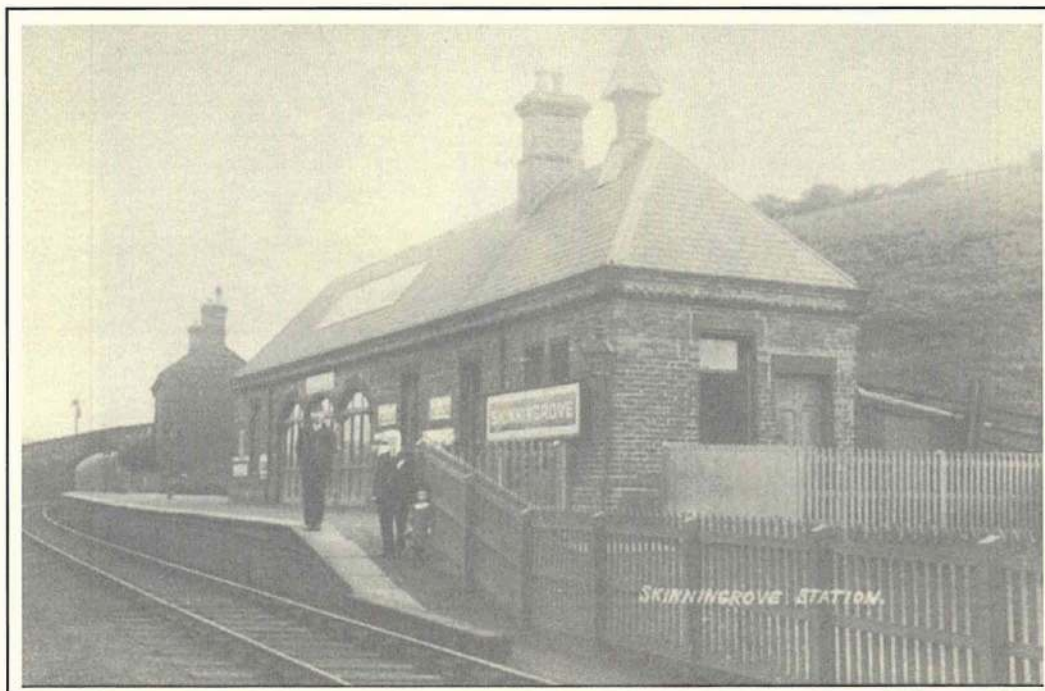
*Smoke alarms save lives  
- get one fitted!*

# PHOTO GALLERY



*At a Ball at the Redcar Bowl - mid 1950's*

*Sitting L. to R: -?- , Mrs Boocock, George Boocock, Mrs Boocock, Arthur Boocock,  
Ruby Hutchinson, Doreen Payne, Ken Hutchinson*



*Skinningrove Railway Station - 1921*



*Skelton Castle Junior Cricketers - presentation of a prize cricket bat  
(taken at Skelton Civic Hall)*

*Back Row L. to R: Les Allison, Martin Ball (winner of bat), Len Douglas, N Foulkes, Eric Gullen  
Middle Row: Karl Pigg, Rich Stainthorpe, Peter Briggs, Dave Coleman,  
Front Row: Stan Carter, D Allison, Johnny May*



*A Sunday School outing from New Skelton Methodist Chapel - early 1930's*

*Back Row L. to R: Mrs Fowler, Mrs Yates, Mrs Speck, -?- , -?- , Mrs Tippett  
Middle Row: Mrs Codling, -?- , -?- , -?- , -?- , -?-  
Front Row: -?- , -?- , -?- , -?- , Mrs Nellie Rooks*



*Stanghow Lane School Football Team - 1951-52*

*Back Row L. to R: Fred Antill, Jimmy Preston, Hugh Thomas, Gordon Bendelow,  
 'Pants' Robinson, Harry Steveson, Ronnie Garrett, Len McKenzie (teacher)  
 Front Row: George Hanson, Malcolm Mogridge, Wilf Green, Ian Carter,  
 Geoff England, Hilton Smith*



*Brotton C of E School - 1954-55*

*Back Row L. to R: P Johnson, N Sherrad, B Leybourne, N Riddiough, G Wisby, F Marsay, I Myles, J Tyreman  
 Middle Row: W Ward, J Stevenson, H Thornton, B Parks, C Atkinson, W Moore, A Leeks, W Wright,  
 B Trower, J Smith, J Taylor  
 Front Row: R Hodgson, J Preston, K Johnson, C Taylor, Mr Buckle, R Waite, S Bint, R Lettin,  
 T Fishlock, K Preville*



*A Flower Parade in Vaughan Street, North Skelton - early 1900's*



*Seated at Sparrow Park (1930's?)*

*L. to R: Fanny Thorpe, Kate Housam ('Granny'), Sally Pennock, Bella Evans*

*(Note the 'Chinese Toilets' behind them on the right of the photo)*



'Nightstop Teeside' has been successfully operating in the Redcar area for more than five years now. The project provides overnight emergency accommodation for young, homeless people between the ages of 16 and 25 years in the homes of trained volunteers. The young people are provided with a hot evening meal, a room for the night and breakfast the next morning before moving on.

Lots of young people leave home before they are really ready to for many reasons, but family arguments or breakdowns account for over 80% of the young people in need of emergency shelter or somewhere to live for a period of time. Unfortunately, many people think that if a young person is homeless it is because they are involved with drugs or alcohol, or are generally a 'bad lot'. At Nightstop we hear about their experiences first hand – generally they are just ordinary young people who, for whatever reason, find themselves in a situation they are unable to deal with on their own – this is just one person's story;

*'Dear Reader*

*I was in a situation where I lost my tenancy with the local council and consequently became homeless. I had family nearby but due to circumstances involving my terminally ill Nana, I was prevented firstly from telling my family the full extent of my problems and secondly moving back into the family home. I contacted Nightstop who said they could maybe find a host who would welcome me into their home for 1 to 3 nights. They would provide a bed for the night a meal and more importantly a warm, comfortable and relaxed environment, which would be a very much-needed break from the three weeks I had spent sleeping rough behind Asda at Thornaby. Nightstop arranged for me to be picked up and driven to the host's house. When I arrived I was made to feel at home almost immediately. I had a nice hot meal and had forgotten how good it was to have a hot bath and a comfortable bed to sleep in. I think this charity, its hosts and volunteers, are truly incredible for the help they kindly give. I am now close to moving into my own property and am employed again. My life is back on track and I feel that this is very much down to the help I have received from both Nightstop and my hosts. It can happen to anybody at the most unexpected times of life. Sometimes a break from their problems is all that is needed to boost their confidence enough to motivate them to strive to make a better and more stable life for themselves.*

*Andrew Bibby.'*

(Andrew was with Nightstop for a little over 5 weeks).

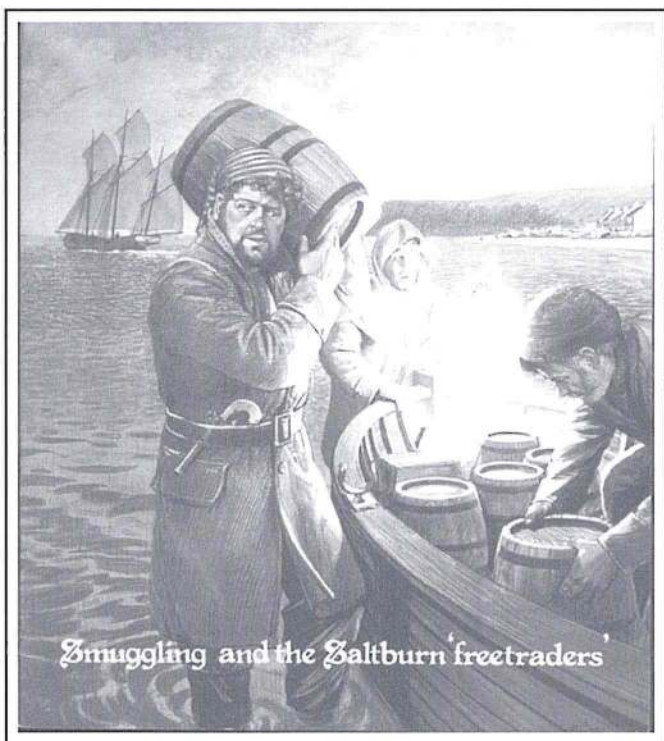
Experience has shown that what some of the young people really need is the chance to remain within a 'homely' environment long enough to learn and develop independent living skills from the householders. Then, when the time is right for them to move on they will be much better equipped to maintain their own place.

In order to meet this need, Nightstop Teeside has developed a new project called Supported Lodgings and we are now looking to recruit householders who are prepared to offer a young person place in their home. In return the householder will receive a set weekly amount of £100 to cover additional costs and will be expected to teach the young person a variety of living skills including good housekeeping, healthy eating, how to budget and manage money and to help them develop both personally and socially.

Nightstop Teeside staff check out all applicants – both householders and young people visit the householders on a regular basis to monitor the young person's progress and eventually help the young person find and move into their own accommodation.

If you are interested and would like more information about Supported Lodgings or other ways in which you may be able to help, please contact Joan Melling on 01642 493929.

# John Andrew - 'King of the Smugglers'



Smuggling and the Saltburn 'freetraders'

These days we all think of Saltburn as a grand Victorian seaside resort with its elegant buildings, the lovely Valley Gardens, and the cliff-lift leading down to the promenade, pier and sandy beach. And there aren't that many people who have visited Saltburn without calling for a drink at The Ship Inn.

But how many of you know that up until 1861, when the railway arrived and the 'new town' began to be developed, that 'Old Saltburn' was just a tiny hamlet consisting of The Ship Inn and a dozen or so white-washed cottages huddled below Hunt Cliff and Cat Nab. The only two roads leading in and out were the old Brotton Coach Road and the road leading down from Skelton we now know as Saltburn Lane. Three narrow and heavily wooded ravines - Saltburn Glen, Saltburn Gill and Little Dale - all led inland from the shore, making Saltburn a haven for smuggling.

In 1781, a Scotsman named John Andrew came to live in Saltburn and married a local girl, Anne Harrison, from Skelton (they married at the old All Saints Church, Skelton) and together they soon became landlord and landlady of The Ship Inn.

Although there was already smuggling taking place on a smaller scale in Saltburn, Andrew's organisational flair soon had the trade booming, and the small, closely-knit community began to thrive.

During the 18th Century, in order to help pay for the constant wars in Europe, goods such as Dutch gin, rum, brandy, tea, coffee, tobacco, chocolate, lace, linen, silk, even playing cards and dominoes - all were

taxed so extortionately that even the prospect of being hanged proved an insufficient deterrent to smugglers. At its peak, everyone in Saltburn was involved in smuggling to some degree, with each cottage having its own dark cupboard or 'gin-vault'.

It soon became known to locals that when they heard 'John Andrew's cow has calved' a lugger would be waiting offshore ready to be relieved of its cargo of smuggled goods - all waiting to be rowed ashore in fishing boats known around here as Yorkshire cobs. But first they needed to know from a lookout's signal from on Cat Nab that 'the coast is clear' (of the Revenue men, who were often waiting to catch the men red-handed). So determined were the smugglers, or 'freetraders' as they preferred to be known, not to lose their ill-gotten gains, that they would fight the 'Preventives' on the shore with short swords and pistols, and many a time blood was shed.

Before long, John Andrew prospered so much from his profits that he was able to afford, along with his future son-in-law Tom King, his very own cutter named the 'Morgan Butler' or 'Morgan Rattler' as it became known locally. It was the fastest ship in the district and it could easily out-sail any vessel in which the Revenue men might try to pursue it.



John Andrew - 'King of the Smugglers'



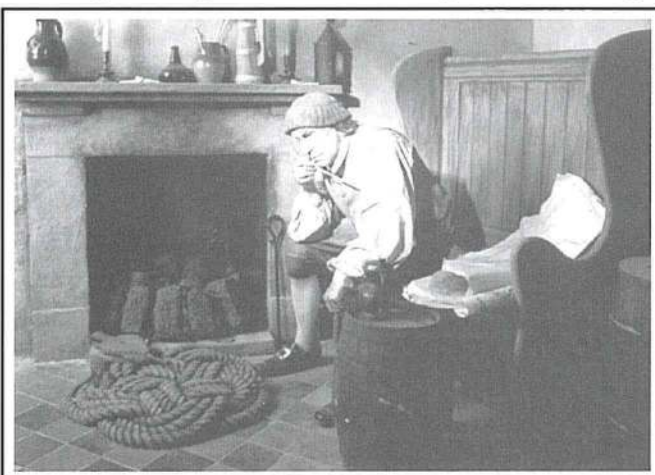


Andrew next purchased the 'White House' at the top of Saltburn Gill, just off the road from Skelton, and he and Anne finally left the Ship Inn to live there. However, he still continued to organise the smuggling trade from his new abode. Tales of secret tunnels between The Ship and the White House abound, although none have ever been found.

Some claim that Andrew had a trapdoor in the floor of one of his stables leading down to a spacious cellar in which was stashed much of his contraband, and 'guarding' it was a vicious mare which kicked and lashed out wildly at strangers who came near - not surprisingly, no Revenue Officer ever got close enough to check it out!

Many a string of pack-ponies wended its way up the wooded ravine from The Ship to the White House laden with goods which were soon to find a ready market at places such as Guisborough, Stokesley, Stockton and York, as well as with the local gentry round and about. Most local landowners were quite happy to 'invest' their cash in John Andrew's illicit ventures!

He may have been lawless as far as custom's duty goes, but Andrew remained loyal to King and country. In 1804 he joined the Cleveland Volunteer Infantry as an Ensign and by 1809 he had been promoted to Cap-

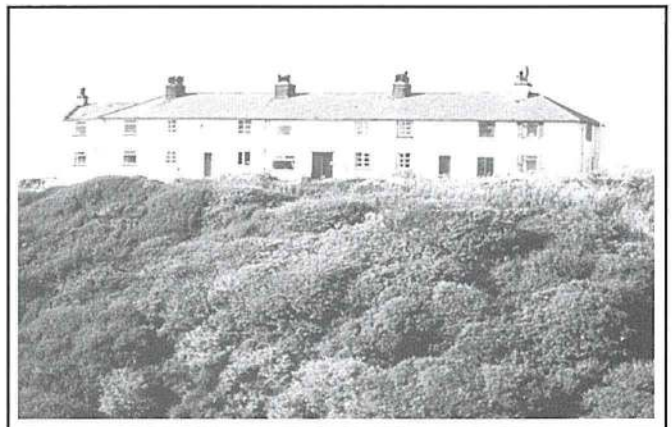


*Enter the bar of the Ship Inn - as it was over 200 years ago!*

tain of the 3rd Regiment of Local Militia of the North Riding. His commission each time was signed by the Duke of Leeds. Soon he was moving in the highest social circles and acquiring some excellent customers!

Unfortunately, most good things eventually come to an end, and John Andrew's idyllic state of affairs was not to last much longer. With the French wars over, the government turned its attention to problems nearer home. The Navy was wound down and, in 1822, 7,000 naval servicemen were redeployed to form the new Coastal Service. Saltburn was given its own detachment of coastguards - they lived in a row of white cottages which still stand today on Hunt Cliff overlooking the Ship Inn.

John Andrew was, therefore, forced to go further afield to conduct his smuggling operations, and this was to eventually lead to his capture while unloading a cargo at Hornsea (between Bridlington and Hull). Some say he was fined £100,000 (a fortune in those days) and unable to pay, he was imprisoned in York Castle. He was released two years later (with the help of friends in high places!) and returned to Saltburn. But things were never to be the same again.



*The Coastguards' Cottages, Saltburn*

John Andrew's health had deteriorated during his time in prison and he died on 14th November, 1835. He lies buried, along with other members of his family, in the graveyard of the old All Saints Church, Skelton.

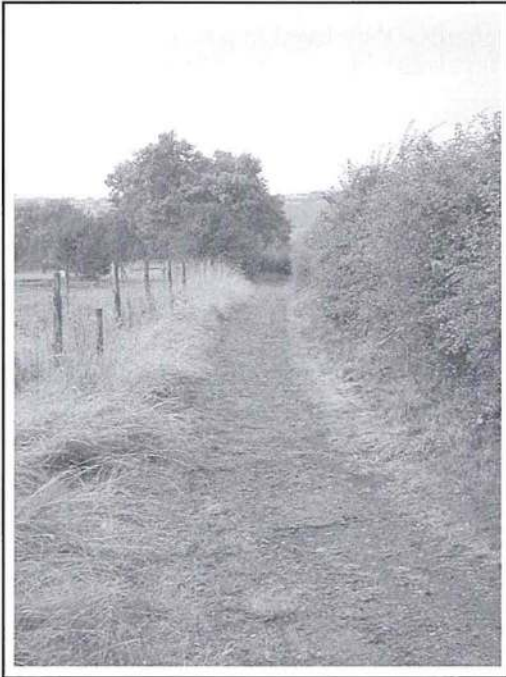
However, the fascinating story of John Andrew and his fellow smugglers still lives on! You can experience the sights, sounds and smells of over 200 years ago at the popular *Saltburn Smugglers Heritage Centre*, next door to the Ship Inn at Saltburn. Inside, the pub bar has been recreated as it would have been in those by-gone days, as well as John Andrew's parlour. Authentic models are seated in the rooms and you can listen to them talking about the days of smuggling, and of their master, John Andrew, 'King of the Smugglers'!

The museum is open every day from the beginning of April to the end of September. Prices are £1.90 for adults, £1.40 children and £5.50 for families (2+2). Special discounted rates are available for school parties. Phone 01287 625252 for further details.

# Some Fond Memories of 'Mucky Lane'

*When 'ah were a lass.....*

Machine Lane, better known to all locals as 'Mucky Lane', to me was always a magical place - an open door to so many of my childhood activities. My earliest memory is that of the railings that surrounded the top of *t'crick* ('the cricket field') where we all headed prior to and after school. Lining the beginning of the lane, and all the way around the field there were lines of wooden posts with a horizontal steel tube in between each pair,



*Mucky Lane*

approximately a yard long. Swinging at all angles, me and my friends could perform acrobatics that would have been the envy of many a gymnast of today! So many years ago, yet it seems like only yesterday - ah-h yes, I'll never forget going 'up t'crick', my first play area...

In springtime and summer, on our way home from t'crick, the meadow below would be a sight to behold. It was a mass of wild flowers, mainly daisies and buttercups. We spent hours picking the flowers and making daisy-chains, or taking them home where they were lovingly placed in a jam-jar of water, taking pride of place on the windowsill.

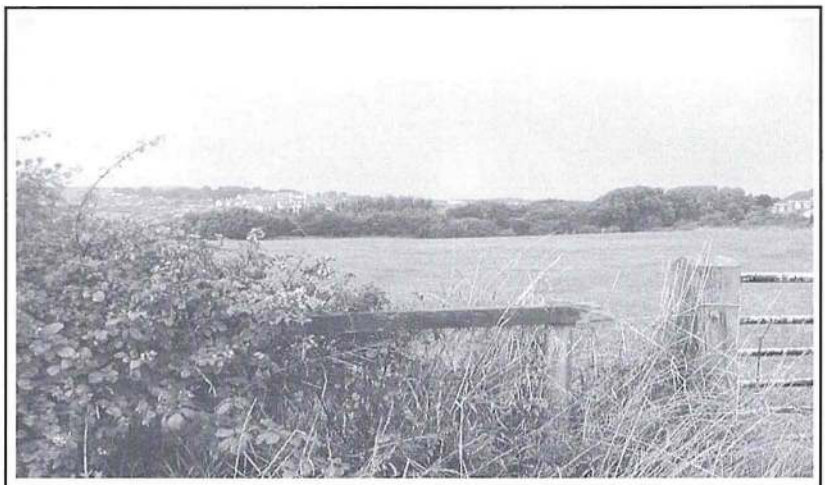
Carnival Day brings back wonderful memories - the 'parade' would stretch the full length of Vaughan Street, before we marched up and down all the other streets. Taking up the rear were two lorries - one carried the 'Carnival Queen' and the other a 'Gorilla'! The back of the second lorry was made to look like a cage and inside was Mr Brown, of Brotton, affectionately known to us all as 'Pig Iron'! Year after year he would wear his 'gorilla suit', and to a delighted audience of both children and adults, he performed all kinds of antics - he was marvellous!

After touring the streets, the parade would slowly make its way up 'Mucky Lane' and onto the field, we children hopping and skipping merrily behind. After days, even weeks of preparation,

all the 'fancy-dress' entrants would nervously wait to be judged. It was always a great day, full of community spirit.

The rosehip season changed 'Mucky Lane' into 'Money Lane'. Armed with a brown paper carrier bag, I was off like lightning! I would run to the top of the lane, picking the rosehips until my carrier bag was full to the brim and the string handles were digging into my hands! Next morning I would proudly walk to school for the 'weigh-in'. Miss Ramsay kept the first 3lbs and put the money from them into the school funds. We were given 3d a pound and if I went home with 1/6d I was delighted. Rosehips weighed very light. My fingers were sore as I filled bag after bag. The disappointment must have shown on my face as I watched my school friends reach the target of 50lbs entitling them to a free bottle of rosehip syrup. I can't recall the names of the lucky ones - maybe *you* can!.

Another of 'Mucky Lane's' important roles was to allow access from North Skelton to the lovely scenic cottages of Ground Hill, Claphow Row, Ainsley's Farm and my favourite, the 'Gas House'. George and Ethel Payne, who lived there with their family, always gave us a warm welcome - what a happy home that was! Brian Payne and I have continued to remain life-long friends and we are still in regular contact.



*The view towards New Skelton across part of t'crick*

The long, hot summer months brought forth the cricket season. The pitch was like velvet, kept so by dedicated lovers of the sound of leather on willow. George Sturman, now in his 90th year, must have spent many hours walking up and down 'Mucky Lane', on his way to and from the cricket pavilion shed where his petrol-driven mower was kept - he would then tend to his beloved 'cricket square', lovingly caring for every single blade of grass. You could bet that by the time Saturday afternoon arrived, the condition of that pitch would be as important to George as Lord's or Headingley was to a Test Match groundsman.

School Sports Day saw t'crick packed with Mams and Dads, all cheering the kids on in their respective races. Our coloured house-team bands, slipped on over our heads and shoulders, blew in the wind as we 'flew' down the track, hearts pounding, sweat pouring, running until we dropped....the cheering could be heard all around the village of North Skelton.

As far as 'Mucky Lane' is concerned, I have only described a handful of events. I could go on and on - the allotments, the New Year's Day football match, bird-nesting, brambling, walking to get fresh milk from Ainsley's Farm, the likes of which hasn't been tasted for many a year. The history of 'Mucky Lane' is endless....

We now come to the reason for this article - 'Mucky Lane' has been an important part of many North Skeltoners' lives, both past and present. It saddens me greatly to see it deteriorating so much. Once a wonderful and picturesque walk, now much in need of tender loving care.

I'm sorry to say, through local neglect, 'Mucky Lane' is beginning to literally live up to its name...

*Norma*

*In reply...*

*Dear Norma,*

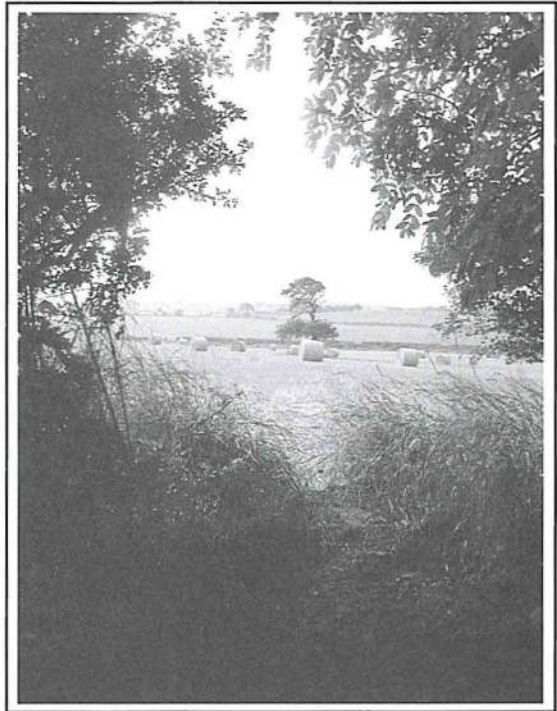
*Thank you for letting me know about the article you plan to print in this issue of 'The Key'. It will be a wonderful reminder to many people of what joys of nature 'Mucky Lane' has given us over the years and the pleasures all ages get from walking it. 'Mucky Lane' even forms part of the popular trail from Guisborough Priory to Loftus known as 'Cleveland Street'.*

*I am pleased to update you on the Skelton Villages Environmental Group's work on restoring our heritage of walkways. Discussions have been taking place since the 1st March 2002 when a walk took place with Emma Daniel, a Council Officer. The group made it quite clear that they, on behalf of the villages, want the link walk from Hollybush to North Skelton, then to Claphow Road via 'Mucky Lane', continuing up to Skelton Green via Trout Hall Lane, restored to its former standard.*

***A Tarmacadam Surface** - this will give back to residents and visitors a walk they had for many years, but which has long been neglected. It is a walk which can be used by all age groups, with access to prams, push-chairs, wheelchairs and cycles.*

***Heritage Restored** - to achieve this, a programme over many months may be required. However, ongoing meetings with Mr Brian Spinks and Emma Daniel, plus our elected members, are most positive. On this link walk you can enjoy nature at its very best!*

*Ian Johnson, Saltburn Lane, Skelton*



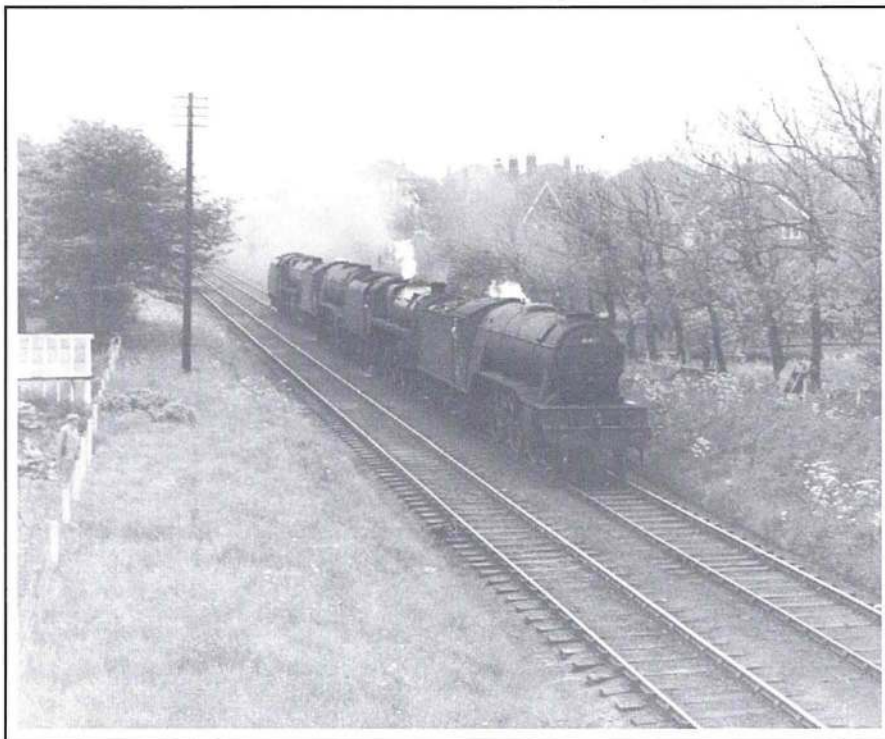
*Looking towards Claphow and beyond...*

# *A History of the Saltburn Railway*

*by Cath and Tony Lynn*

Looking around there are many reminders of the beginnings of our town of Saltburn - none more so than the railway station. In 1858 Royal assent for an act authorizing the extension of the railway from Redcar to Saltburn was obtained by the Stockton to Darlington Railway Company. Very quickly the railway navvies got to work and as a result the station was opened to the public on Saturday August 17th 1861. In the original design of the station buildings there was a first class and second class entrance, both going through the entrance hall and passing the circular telegraph and booking office - the ceiling in the Saltburn Health Food shop still gives an insight of the booking office shape. There were exit passageways for both classes of passenger. Separate gentlemen's and ladies' first class waiting rooms were provided together with a refreshment room. Second class passengers had a 'general' waiting room with a screened off portion for the ladies. The first stationmaster was Arthur Brown who came from Brighton and he was also the postmaster, but more importantly from our point of view he was a photographer who has left a record of the early days of Saltburn-by-the-Sea in his photographs. It is interesting to note that the Whitby Gazette in 1865 carried advertisements for a four-horse coach leaving the Angel Hotel, Whitby at 9.00am every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for Saltburn to meet the 1.40pm train to Redcar, Middlesbrough and all places northward, returning from Saltburn every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Fares to Saltburn were 4 shillings (today's equivalent of about £10) inside and 3s (today about £7.50) outside. A note in another advert indicates that the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company had given increased accommodation to the public by running 'penny per mile' trains over the whole of its section. Changes have taken place in the station area but there are still many of the original architectural features to be seen, and a splendid tiled wall-map of the North Eastern Railway system remains intact. For many years Walker and Wilson of Darlington had a newspaper shop in the station entrance, (the space now occupied by the Surf Shop). It was a facility much appreciated by the workers travelling on the trains. We are thankful that the railway, which opened in 1861, is still operational, although in a much reduced form, but it is still possible to travel speedily to many parts of the country from Saltburn via the rail network.

The railway played a very important role in the development of Saltburn-by-the-Sea as a sea-side resort. All building materials, consumable items and stock for shops and coal, were brought into the town by rail besides the many passengers it carried. It is recorded that 60,000 people watched the 'sand-racing' on one occasion and a large number of them would have been brought in by train. It is also believed that many of the racing cars also



*2 Class V.2 and 2 Stanier 2-6-0 locomotives returning to Saltburn after being turned on the Skelton Triangle*

arrived by rail.

Excursion trains were run from many parts of the North of England including Manchester, Leeds, York and Newcastle. To accommodate the carriages, sidings were provided to the west of the town. The steam locomotives were serviced at the engine shed and had to be turned around so that they were facing in the correct direction for their return journey. To achieve this, because the turn-table at the shed was too small, the Saltburn drivers and firemen took them around the 'Skelton Triangle', sometimes two or three at a time, and certainly on one occasion four locomotives coupled together. There would be a crew of two men on each footplate, so it represented a good opportunity for overtime pay on busy Bank Holiday weekends.

On the occasion when four locomotives were coupled together, Tony was painting the outside of the upstairs windows when the locomotives went past the end of the our street in Saltburn heading for the Skelton Triangle. He left the paint tin hanging from the ladders, grabbed his camera and went to Black Bridge in the hope that he could photograph the returning quartet. Meanwhile, Cath returned home to find the abandoned ladders with paint tin and a rapidly drying brush and no sign of Tony - it is the only case that we are aware of the Skelton Triangle causing the disappearance (only temporarily) of anyone, unlike the Bermuda Triangle!!! As you can see on the preceding page, Tony did manage to succeed in photographing the four locomotives.

The Skelton Triangle came about because of the link from the Redcar to Saltburn railway with the Guisborough to Whitby railway. The two bridges which were part of the triangle still cross the A173 road at North Skelton, and at one time there were two bridges spanning the Stanghow Road to Lingdale. However,

the Claphow Bridge was demolished and only one bridge now remains.

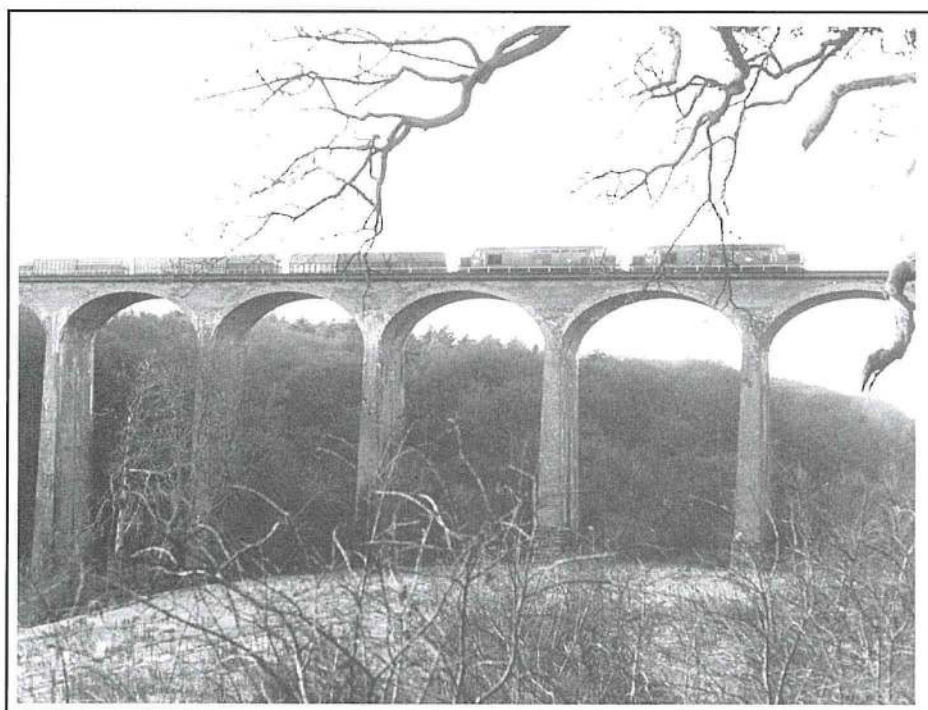
The most impressive piece of engineering work on the East Cleveland extension railway was the brick viaduct taking the railway across the Skelton Beck ravine at Riftswood. The viaduct has 11 elliptical arches, is 783ft long and 150ft high at its tallest point. It was opened to mineral traffic on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1872 and to passenger traffic on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1875, the first passenger train being driven by a Mr William Gladders. When first constructed,

the viaduct carried a double-track. Now it is only a single line working, but it is still carrying materials associated with the iron and steel industry in the form of blooms and finished products to and from Skinningrove, and potash and salt mined at Boulby Mine. It is a remarkable tribute to the lasting qualities of Victorian workmanship.

Saltburn Station is still used for excursion trains. A steam hauled train went over the Carlisle - Settle line originating from Saltburn, and in July this year a special excursion to Fort William in Scotland will depart the town, this trip has been organised by the Saltburn Line Users Group.



*The Claphow double-arched bridge on Stanghow Road - now demolished*



*A remarkable piece of Victorian engineering - the viaduct across Skelton Beck*

# Memories Of My Schooldays ....

What are your memories of school? Mine are many and varied as I attended a number of schools in North Yorkshire and Cleveland....

My first experience of school was at Moorsholm where I started in the Infants. We sat, as I remember, in strict rows of desks, with the teacher sitting at a very large Victorian desk, head and shoulders above us kids. I remember not liking my first taste of school and asking the teacher if I could go home. Surprisingly, she obliged and asked another child to get my coat from the cloak room. So off home I went, thinking this school life is pretty good as you can go when you like! I was quizzed by a dinner lady on her way to the school as to why I was out on my own. I remember she raised an eyebrow at my explanation - "The teacher said I could!" I arrived home much to the surprise of my mother who took me straight back and asked the teacher how I had got out of school? "He must have sneaked out," was the reply, "I certainly did not give him permission to leave!" "Yes you did!" said the lad who got me my coat. My mother left, much puzzled, but as soon as my mum was out of sight I was dragged to the front of the class along with the lad who backed my claims and we both got a slap on the back of the legs for 'telling tales'. That was my first day at school. The teacher was Miss Barker who, to me, looked old even then. She lived at Skelton in one of the cottages at the Castle entrance. She made it into the papers by finding a 'Knight's effigy' in her back garden, which was part of the old moat. I was led to believe that she walked to Moorsholm School every day from Skelton, rain or shine. Moving up at Moorsholm, our head teacher was Mr Rex. My memory of him was his loud voice and the odour of Woodbines which preceded him, again not a happy time at school.

From there I went to Park Lane Infants, Guisborough, a school I really liked, where, unfortunately, I was laid up with chicken pox. The building had big glass windows - the round 'porthole' windows in the head teachers office particularly fascinated me, and even today when I pass, they still bring back memories.

Next, I went to Castleton School, again a happy time and happy school with excellent teachers and children. I used to love the journey to school from Commondale where we lived - we travelled on Champion's mini bus.

Then it was on to Guisborough again, where I attended Providence School, across the road from Blackett Hutton Foundry, where the clang of metal echoed around the school all day long, and then if they left the door open you could watch them pour the molten metal into moulds during play time. Again happy days, although I did lose the finger prints of my right hand one day as I attempted to pick up a piece of slag that had fallen off a tractor and trailer as it passed the school - very hot! One of my main recollections is that Guisborough still had a railway station, with trains that passed the end of the street.

My next school was at Stanghow Lane, New Skelton. Like Providence School, Stanghow Lane was a big impressive brick building built on land leased from the Wharton family. I remember its separate 'Boys' and 'Girls' entrances and what seemed to me, a maze of classrooms. It was first built as a primary school for the growing mining community and their children, and was situated opposite the cemetery, at the junction of the main road from Skelton to Brotton and Stanghow Lane which leads to Lingdale. The school was opened at the height of the mining prosperity in East Cleveland, unlike Kiltonthorpe School which was built in anticipation of a new village that never materialised. Stanghow Lane School was put to good use, having thousands of children through its doors over its 100 years of service as a school. It was the first school I had been to where the playground sloped dramatically and the toilets were outside as well as in. As with Providence School, there were smelly brick air raid shelters, which I remember went very psychedelic with its paint scheme after the school closed down! When I started, there seemed to be a lot of kids, more than the school could cope with, so some of us were sent by bus to Margrove Park School. This building is now the Margrove Heritage Centre. Yet again it was a happy time for me - I think our teacher was Mrs Smith.

The head teacher at the time I attend Stanghow was Mr Harker, whose first words to me were, "Are you related to the Prime Minister?" Stanghow Lane School features on a set of commemorative plates of Skelton, along with the Castle. They certainly built those schools to last, with their red bricks and high, slate roofs. Except for one (Skelton Green, which was demolished) they are all still in use today, still servicing the community in different ways - i.e. Moorsholm - a retirement home, Lingdale - a community centre, and North Skelton a DIY outlet. Stanghow Lane School has been converted into flats. The building has been modified, with the middle section removed and its brick work clad, and as we go to press it is sporting a white paint job. The two school houses at each end are much as they were when the school was in operation for infant and primary children. The original Skelton Infants School is near the village green opposite the Duke William pub.

Many teachers have come and gone. Here are the names of some I remember - the head teacher of Brotton County Modern (later named Warsett School) was Mr Bonas, who was replaced at Stanghow Lane by Mr Edmonson, then later Mr Harker. Other familiar names which will bring back memories to those who attended are Mr Reid, Mrs Worsley, Miss Gray and Mrs Scott, who also went to Warsett but sadly passed away this year, Mr McKenzie, Mr Reed, Miss Hammond, and many more who have passed through the doors as teachers.

The school had an impressive record and many of its pupils went on to great things around the world, while many were content to stay nearer home. In the school was a memorial to the former pupils who gave their lives for their country in the War (if anyone knows where this memorial went I would be interested to know).

After Stanghow I went to the newly built school at Hollybush, my form teacher being Mr Fisher. Later I attended Brotton County Modern, getting the school bus (No. 3) from outside the Church in the High Street. If we were unlucky we ended up behind Miss Wilson, one of the two deputy heads at the school, making her way to work at a steady 15 miles per hour,

much to the annoyance of the bus drivers - on several occasions we would be 'told off' by her for being late, all because we were delayed behind her on the way there! The other deputy head was Mr Jack Hilden, who you did not want to get on the wrong side of - an almost Victorian type of teacher who loved cricket, and I believe he may have won a MM or MC in WWII, though that might be hearsay .

The school was impressive, with its stairs and long corridors leading to classroom after classroom. In hindsight, my education was not too good there - I don't think I learned much. Looking back I think the school was too big. Members of staff included Mr Stibbs, a very good teacher, the two Mr Myers, Mr Elliot, Mrs Scott, also a very good teacher, and Mr Brown who was another formidable character. Mr Lamb was the metalwork teacher, and on and on you could go. I was actually glad to leave, but others who attended may have happier memories.

It has been fascinating to research my articles for *The Key*, and I would like to express thanks to Norma and Don for letting me contribute on subjects varying from wartime history to castles and local pits to schools.

*Stuart McMillan*

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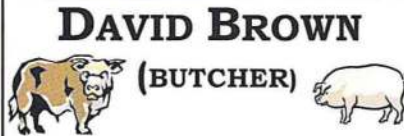
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