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A classic painted wall sign "Pure rock made here." on the sea front at Foreshore Road, Scarborough. This ghost sign is still in use by the John Bull Rock Makers shop below, established 1911

McGills saucy seaside postcard ‘A Stick of Rock Cock’

This story has been published in the journal (TYJ 2 Summer 2010)
Editorial

Summer is the warmest of the four seasons so most people take advantage of the good weather by spending more time outdoors. With this in mind readers of The Yorkshire Journal may be tempted to get out and about and visit some of the interesting places highlighted in the summer issue. We start off with a fascinating visit to The Shambles in York, and then ride on steam trains at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. A nostalgic look at Filey Butlin’s Holiday Camp, next we look back at the movie KES followed by a visit to the Three Nuns Public House at Mirfield which has an intriguing history. Our last feature is about a Yorkshireman who came up with the idea of putting the name of a seaside resort running through the centre of a stick of rock. Also in this summer issue we have Readers Photo Gallery.

In the Summer issue:

- The Shambles in York & St. Margaret Clitherow by Sarah Harrison pages 4-9
  The Shambles is today a popular tourist attraction which has a fascinating history. Sarah explores the narrow street that was once full of butcher’s shops. The Shambles was also the home to the saint and martyr Margaret Clitherow.

- The North Yorkshire Moors Railway 175th Anniversary Steam Gala by Stephen Riley pages 10-15
  A lively visit to the NYMR steam gala where Stephen rides on the trains and tells the interesting story of this heritage railway line. Today steam trains takes tourists on an 18 mile (29 km) journey running across the North York Moors.

- Filey Butlin’s Remembered - 1946-1983 by Jonathan Guy pages 16-21
  Filey Butlin’s Holiday Camp was Billy Butlin’s pride and joy. Jonathan explains why, as he takes a nostalgic look at the Camp which closed in 1983.

- Readers Photo Gallery pages 22-23

- KES by David Reynolds pages 24-31
  KES was filmed around Barnsley in 1968. David visits the places and takes us through the movie. He goes behind the scenes and locations and talks to the unknown cast, now in their prime of life.

- The Three Nuns at Mirfield, West Yorkshire by Jeremy Clark pages 24-29
  The story of the Three Nuns Public House at Mirfield has an intriguing history. It is believed that three nuns from Kirklees Priory sought refuge at a guest house and subsequently ran it as a tavern. Jeremy investigates the history behind the three nuns.

- The Yorkshireman who made the first seaside rock - with the name running through it by Sheila Goodall pages 30-31
  Today sticks of seaside rock remain a popular icon of the seaside holiday. Sheila uncovers the Yorkshireman who first made seaside rock with the name of the town running through the centre.

But there is much more to these articles, please read and enjoy them. We welcome your comments.

Andrew Simpson
The Shambles in York & St. Margaret Clitherow

By Sarah Harrison

The front cover of The Yorkshire Journal Issue 4 Winter 2011 was of a picture of The Shambles in York. It was taken in the middle of winter during snowfall when I, along with other visitors had to take shelter. The photo on the left is exactly the same shot of The Shambles, but taken after a light shower early on a Sunday morning in summer before the crowds of shoppers and tourists had awoken to descend upon the area.

The Shambles is a narrow street conveniently situated in the city centre only a few minutes walk from York Minster. It has a long historical and interesting past.

Today it is a tourist attraction with a mixture of shops, cafés and restaurants and whatever time of year, there is always something different to see.

In fact The Shambles won the first ever Google Street View Award in 2010 for the most picturesque street in Britain.

History

Some of buildings in The Shambles are timber-framed and date to the 14th century with a number leaning into the middle with the roofs almost touching.

The word Shambles probably originates from the Anglo-Saxon Fleshammels ‘flesh-shelves’ the word for the shelves that butchers used to display their meat on open shop-fronts, this is because The Shambles was historically a street of butchers shops and houses. The Shambles is also mentioned in the Domesday Book which dates over 900 years and is believed to be Europe’s oldest and best preserved Medieval Street.

In 1872 the number of butchers was recorded as 26. This figure dwindled over the years until the last butcher standing was Dewhurst, at number 27 The Shambles, but now there are none. Although the butchers have vanished, it is still possible to see some of the original butcher’s meat-hooks, attached to a number of the shops on the street hanging outside and attached to the shop fronts.

The Shambles was a street of butchers’ shops and houses in medieval times where livestock was slaughtered at the back of the premises ensuring a ready supply of fresh meat. The meat was hung up outside the shops and laid out for sale on what are now the shop window-bottoms these were originally the Shamels. It is also interesting to notice the way the pavements on either side of the street are raised up, this was done to create a channel so the butchers could wash away their waste.
In the medieval period butchers' shops were unhealthy places because it was difficult to get clean water and not all the animals butchered were healthy. Unwanted waste was a problem too and was not correctly disposed of. It was also very easy to get disease by handling unsafe implements. By accidentally cutting themselves while butchering a carcass a cut could lead to sepsis. They did not have a good idea of the importance of hygiene and of course there was no refrigeration to keep butchered animals.

Left: This illustration shows how The Shambles may have looked in the 14th century, with meat hanging up outside the butchers' shops and laid out for sale on the shop window-bottums. One man can be seen carrying a carcase on his back and on the left a group of women are buying meat.

There are a number of old photos taken around 1900 of The Shambles which record butchers' shops with their names. The following four photos serve to illustrate how the Shambles looked.

Right: This photo was probably taken in the 1890s, it shows a horse and cart making a delivery and a woman coming out of a shop on the left. At least four butchers' are clearly visible with meat hanging up outside two of them and laid out for sale on the window-bottums. The sign of W. Wilson's Eagle and Child Inn can be seen attached to the upper part of the building on the right of the picture.

Left: This photo of the Shambles was taken in about 1900. On the right it shows Mr J. Render the butcher sitting outside his shop at no. 44 with meat hanging up ready for sale. His name sign can be seen above his shop. He occupied these premises from 1881 until his death on 2nd October 1900 when it is believed he was aged 48.
This 1890s glass plate illustrates the difficulties that photographers have always had in recording the narrow, overhanging Shambles. Looking right down the dark Shambles can be seen butches’ shops with meat hanging up outside. Although the names of the butchers cannot be made out the one in the foreground is that of Mr. Thomas Carter who had a butcher’s shop at no. 33. Carter became Lord Mayor in 1910 and was a notable citizen involved in many civic duties. He died in 1916 but his business continued under the same name until the 1950s.

Above the boy on the left in the foreground is the sign for The Shoulder of Mutton Inn. The landlord, Mr. Miles Close Thompson, was also a butcher in the adjoining shop. The Inn was opened in 1885 until his death in December 1889.

Right: This old photo is a good view of the Shambles. Running down on the left-hand side can be seen several butches’ shops which appear to be closed with window-bottoms where meat would be laid out for sale. Also on the left is the shop sign for J.W. Collier, butcher. A few women can be seen walking along the Shambles. This old photo dates to about 1910.

A long term butcher in the Shambles was John Huffington who had his shop for about 20 years. He died in May 1909 then his business was taken over by Mr. J.T. Swales.

Before World War I (1914–1918) the Shambles was regarded as just an ordinary narrow old street in York. It was noted by locals, especially for its butcher’s shops, but historically, very little if any interest was paid to the buildings. Women came to the Shambles to buy meat, but there were also tea rooms and pubs where refreshments and drinks were supplied to shoppers, local visitors and for the workers of the area.
The railway came to York in 1839, and the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) was the railway that served Yorkshire from 1923 until the nationalisation of the railways after the Second World War. In fact LNER became one of the most important railway poster producers and because York was a major railway centre began to produce railway posters that dealt with the historical side of York to attract visitors. One such poster was produced illustrating The Shambles; it was still underdeveloped as a tourist attraction. After the Second World War (1939–1945), British Railways (BR) continued to produce railway posters promoting rail travel to York. The railway travel posters helped to promote tourism in York and very quickly became a popular tourist destination with the development of many historical sites in and around York.

Right: This railway poster was produced for London & North Eastern Railway (LNER) to promote rail travel to York. It depicts the narrow cobbled street of The Shambles with overhanging buildings leaning in the middle. On the left are a row of butcher’s shops with window-bottoms where meat is laid out for sale. In the foreground can be seen a butcher wearing a blue and white striped traditional apron, in conversation with two lady customers. It is titled ‘The Shambles, York’ and dated to the 1930s the artwork is by H. Tittensor.

The details of the buildings in this poster are remarkably similar to the photo on page 6 dated to about 1910.

Left: British Railways (BR) poster, produced to promote rail travel to the city of York. It shows shoppers strolling through The Shambles a picturesque medieval street. In the foreground is a butcher standing outside his shop, on the corner of Little Shambles. He is wearing a blue and white striped traditional butcher’s apron and is waiting for customers.

The poster is dated 1962 and the artwork is by A Carr Linford.

The full story of Classic Vintage Yorkshire Railway Posters has been published in the journal (TYJ 2 Summer 2011).
In the mid 16th century The Shambles was home to the saint and martyr Margaret Clitherow, who was the wife of a butcher. She is sometimes called “the Pearl of York” and a Shrine to her can be seen half way along The Shambles and is open to the public. Her actual house is 10 and 11, The Shambles, further down the street.

Margaret Clitherow (1556 - 25 March 1586) was the daughter of Thomas Middleton, Sheriff of York (1564-5) and a wax-chandler. She was born after Henry VIII had split the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church. She married John Clitherow, a wealthy butcher and a Chamberlain of the city, in St. Martin’s church, Coney Street on 8th July, 1571 at the age of 15 and bore him three children. She converted to Roman Catholicism at the age of 18, in 1574. Her husband John was supportive, having a brother who was Roman Catholic clergy, though he remained Protestant himself. She then became a friend of the persecuted Roman Catholic population allowing her house to be used as a refuge for Catholic priests seeking shelter during a time when Catholicism was being driven underground. She kept this up for twelve years, during which time she was arrested on several occasions and spent a total of three years in prison.

She regularly held Masses in her home in The Shambles where a cavity had been cut between the attics of her house and the adjoining house, to enable a priest to escape in the event of a raid. Her son Henry went to Reims in France, to train as a Roman Catholic priest. In 1586 she was arrested and called before the York assizes for the crime of harbouring Roman Catholic priests. She refused to plead to the case so as to prevent a trial that would entail her children and servants being made to testify and therefore they would be tortured. She was therefore executed by being crushed to death; this was the standard punishment for refusal to plead and meant being pressed naked beneath a heavy stone and left for three days without proper food or drink. She walked barefooted to the Tollbooth on the Ouse Bridge, York where she was crushed to death, having sent her shoes to her daughter Anne, in token that she should follow in her steps. She was killed on Good Friday 25th of March 1586. The two sergeants who should have killed her hired four desperate beggars to kill her. She was stripped naked and had a handkerchief tied across her face, and then laid on the ground, a sharp rock the size of a man’s fist, beneath her back, her hands stretched out in the form of a cross and bound to two posts. A strong wooden door was then put on top of her, which was slowly weighted with an immense weight of rocks and stones. The small sharp rock would break her back when the heavy rocks were laid on top of the door. Her death occurred within fifteen minutes and during this time her last words, were “Jesu! Jesu! Jesu! have mercy on me!” she was left for 6 hours before the weight was removed from her body.
After her death her right hand was removed, and preserved in the chapel of St. Mary’s Convent, York, but the resting-place of her sacred body is not known. Her sons Henry and William became priests, and her daughter Anne became a nun at St. Ursula’s, Louvain in the Low Countries. Her life and the account of her death was written by her confessor John Mush and was published in 1619.

Right: This illustration shows the death of Margaret Clitherow by being crushed to death under a weight of stones

After Clitherow’s execution, Queen Elizabeth I (from 17th November 1558 until her death on 24th March 1603) wrote to the citizens of York to say how horrified she was at the treatment of a fellow woman: due to her gender, Clitherow should not have been executed. She was beatified in 1929 by Pope Pius XI and canonised in 1970 by Pope Paul VI.

In 2008, a commemorative plaque was installed at the Micklegate end of Ouse Bridge to mark the site of her martyrdom; the Bishop of Middlesbrough unveiled this in a ceremony on Friday 29 August 2008.

Left: The Commemorative plaque on the River Ouse Bridge

Below Left and Right: The Shrine of St. Margaret Clitherow
The North Yorkshire Moors Railway 175th Anniversary Steam Gala

A heritage railway in North Yorkshire

By Stephen Riley

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway (NYMR) held their 175th anniversary last year from 29th April to 8th May 2011. I was fortunate to be one of the thousands of visitors to attend this May Bank Holiday spring celebration. The event ran over a 10 day period and featured locomotives and activities portraying both the history of the line and of railways in general. Between 8 and 9 steam-driven engines were in operation each day, using a mixture of local and guest engines all of which I had the privilege to ride on, up and down the scenic line.

The resident iconic engine Sir Nigel Gresley was popular, as was the guest engine the Duke of Gloucester. Alongside the recently-named Cock o’ the North these huge, powerful engines made easy work of hauling seven and even eight carriages carrying enthusiastic passengers across the North Yorkshire Moors. Guest engines included a replica of George Stephenson’s Rocket and the Planet which were quite a novelty. The little North Eastern tank engine Joem pleased the spectators as it shuttled a smaller number of vintage carriages. Many visitors enjoyed the unique experience of riding behind these engines for short distances between Pickering and Levisham.

Left: Sir Nigel Gresley 60007, at Grosmont station looking smart with the Flying Scotsman headboard

Right: The Duke of Gloucester 71000 on platform 3 at Grosmont station

Left: The replica of George Stephenson’s Rocket leaving Pickering station

Right: Joem 69023, passing Thomason Foss makes her way to Goathland with the shuttle from Grosmont
The Tornado Steams In

The Tornado 60163, which is the newest steam locomotive, hauled the anniversary Pullman to Pickering and back from Grosmont, the first leg of the journey from Whitby to Grosmont was hauled by another steam engine.

The Tornado ran as a guest along the railway line until 5 June and it was the first opportunity for steam fans to ride behind it in its new BR Brunswick Green livery.

It was first unveiled to the public in 2009 and is the first new steam engine to have been built in over 50 years, at a cost of £3 million. The engine is known as a Peppercorn A1 pacific class and was built in Darlington. Building an A1, based on the LNER Peppercorn Class A1 filled the 'missing link' in the otherwise preserved examples of East Coast main line tractions.

All of the original locomotives were scrapped in the late 1960s, meaning that Tornado had to be built from scratch, following the original plans at the National Railway Museum.

The A1s were the final development of the London North Eastern Railway (LNER) Pacific design, started by Nigel Gresley. He was the Chief Mechanical Engineer at the LNER and later became Sir Nigel Gresley.

Philip Benham, the NYMR marketing manager was dressed in a 1830s costume to add to the spectacle of the occasion. He said that “the 175th Anniversary Festival had been a success with ticket sales significantly higher than previous years and what particularly stands out is that Sir Nigel Gresley continues to be a huge crowd puller.” The weather undoubtedly helped, as did the sight of Pickering Station’s new roof, itself a new feature.

Left: The Tornado 60163 leaving Goathland Station

Right: The Tornado 60163 passes Moorgates bound for Pickering
The North Yorkshire Moors Railway was planned in September 1832 by George Stephenson as a means of opening up trade routes inland from the then important seaport of Whitby to Pickering. The line opened four years later in 1836 after completing the 24-mile line at a cost of £130,000. The construction was carried out by navvies and coordinated by top engineers. The three main achievements were cutting a 130 yard tunnel through rock at Grosmont, constructing a rope-worked incline system at Beck Hole and traversing the marshy and deep Fen Bog using a bed of timber and sheep fleeces. The tunnel and the track are believed to be one of the oldest pieces of railway engineering in the world.

In the early days the railway was used by horse-drawn carriages. One stretch between Beck Hole and Goathland was too steep for this, and the carriages were winched by a stationary engine. In its first year of operation, the railway carried 10,000 tons of stone from Grosmont to Whitby, as well as 6,000 passengers, who paid a fare of 1shilling to sit on the roof of a coach, or 1shilling and 3 pence to sit inside. It took two and a half hours to travel from Whitby to Pickering.

In 1845, the railway was acquired by George Hudson the railway tycoon for £80,000, who was the director of the North Midland, later becoming chairman of the York and North Midland Railway. Steam locomotives were introduced after re-engineering the line, which involved wide scale improvements in new bridges and a tunnel. Permanent stations and other structures were also contracted along the line which still remains today.

Steam trains still had to negotiate the Beck Hole incline a 1 in 15 slope which was re-equipped with a steam powered stationary engine and iron rope. It remained in use until a fatal accident in 1864 when the rope snapped prompting the re-routing of the line to avoid the Beck Hole Incline. In 1865 a four-and-a-half mile diversion route to the new Goathland station was opened, which cost £50,000.
In 1923 the North Eastern Railway (NER), was absorbed into the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) as a result of the Railways Act 1921. In 1948 nationalisation meant that British Railways took control and during this time, little changed on the line. However, in his controversial report, Dr Beeching declared that the Whitby-Pickering line was uneconomic and listed it for closure, which took place in 1965 after 130 years of service.

In 1967, the North Yorkshire Moors Railway Preservation Society was formed, and negotiations began for the purchase of the line. During the early seventies the Society transformed itself into a Charitable Trust and became the North York Moors Historical Railway Trust Ltd. Purchase of the line was completed and the railway was able to reopen in 1973, just eight years after the line had been closed, and named the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. The Duchess of Kent officially opened the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on May 1, 1973.

A Visit to the Historical Steam Railway

Today the North Yorkshire Moors Railway (NYMR) is a significant tourist attraction with more than 320,000 tourists from around the world visiting the railway each year. The steam trains take tourists on an 18 mile (29 km) journey running across the North York Moors from the market town of Pickering stopping at Levisham, Newton Dale, Goathland and terminating at the village of Grosmont. The service also operates to Whitby during the summer which is a further 6 miles on to the seaside resort. Now it is possible to travel from Pickering right through to Whitby (stopping at all stations in between) for the day by steam train, on most days throughout the summer. The scenic ride winds its way through the North York Moors National Park, passing through a diverse scenery, from forest covered valleys to heather clad moorland and along the way there are picturesque villages in the countryside.

The train operates daily from the beginning of April to the end of October and on weekends and selected holidays during the winter (with no service from 24-27 December). At the height of the season, trains depart hourly from each station. The extension of steam operated services to the seaside town of Whitby has proved extremely popular.

The sight and sound of these magnificent steam engines and the beautiful rural stations, makes a visit to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway like taking a step back in time.
Pickering is the perfect start for a steam train adventure; the station has been restored to its 1937 condition and is home to a traditional tea room.

Left: Arriving at Pickering Station under the newly overall roof, the S15 825 from Grosmont

From Pickering it is only about 20 minutes to Levisham, where the 1912 style station is accessible by one solitary hill road surrounded by the magnificent Yorkshire Moors. At the station refreshments are served at the Weighbridge tea hut. This is the perfect base for a Moorland walking holiday. Newton Dale Halt is a walker’s request stop with excellent walks and beautiful scenery.

Right: Levisham Station is very quiet, it is generally only used by hikers

The next railway station on the line is Goathland which takes approximately 50 minutes from Pickering. The Goathland station is one of the few stations on the line with two tracks. This provision allows trains coming in either direction to pass each other. Also Goathland station is one of the most attractive stations with original signs, lamps and features, except for the footbridge which was installed in the last ten years.

Left: A view looking down on Goathland Station

There is a tea room with authentic furniture and artefacts where a cup of tea can be enjoy in the style of the 1920s. Goathland also has its own signal box and a refurbished Warehouse.

Grosmont station is about 15 minutes from Goathland and is the terminus for NYMR. The station has been restored to the British Railways’ style of 1952 which includes a traditional tea room. Goathland also houses the NYMR engine sheds where locomotives are serviced and restored, the work is mostly undertaken by paid staffed and volunteers. It’s also the junction with the main rail network. The journey between Pickering and Whitby is over one hour and a half. Whitby is the terminus of the Esk Valley Line, connecting with the NYMR at Grosmont, and provides mainline running for NYMR trains during the summer months.

Whitby was developed into a holiday resort by George Hudson, the infamous ‘railway king’ when he purchased the Whitby & Pickering Railway in 1845. At the height of the railway era Whitby had no less than four railway lines which brought thousands of visitors.

Right: Grosmont Station, the road crossing has all the original gates and signals.
During the 1920s and 1930s the London and North Eastern Railways (LNER), the second largest company promoted rail travel to Whitby by producing railway posters with the slogan ‘It’s Quicker by Rail’, and this was something the trains could live up to. In 1948 nationalisation meant that British Railways took control and continued producing railway posters until 1966 when services were branded Inter-City. This brought about the end of the classic popular railway poster of the Yorkshire seaside holiday resorts. The full story of Classic Vintage Yorkshire Railway Posters has been published in the journal (TYJ 2 Summer 2011).

Maybe with the extension to Whitby the NYMR will produce new railway posters, of destinations along its line, draw from the rich heritage of railway posters of yesteryear and hopefully combine these with a new innovative approach.

The most popular part of the line is undoubtedly Goathland Station, also known as Aidensfield in the Yorkshire TV’s series Heartbeat. Several sections of the railway line feature in many episodes of Heartbeat which was filmed in and around the North York Moors and in Whitby. The charming village of Goathland, just a few minutes walk from the station is also known as Aidensfield in YTV Heartbeat.
Billy Butlin, (29 September 1899 - 12 June 1980) was an entrepreneur whose name is synonymous with the British holiday camp. He began by starting his own travelling fair and opened some permanent attractions in 1925. In 1927 he set up an amusement park in the seaside town of Skegness with hoopla stalls, a tower slide, a haunted house, and a scenic railway. In 1928, Butlin secured an exclusive licence to sell Dodgem cars in Europe. The first Dodgems in Britain were available in his park at Skegness; other showmen bought Dodgems from Butlin. His activities in Skegness continued to expand, and by 1930 included a zoo, featuring lions, zebras and an African village. He continued to expand his funfair and amusement park business into the post war period opening parks around the coast at seaside towns.

For some time Butlin had toyed with the idea of a holiday camp. He had seen the way landladies in seaside resorts would, sometimes literally, push families out of the lodgings between meals, regardless of the weather. He experienced this himself during his career as a travelling showman “I felt sorry for myself, but I felt even sorrier for the families with young children as they trudged along wet and bedraggled, or forlornly filled in time in amusement arcades until they could return to the boarding houses”. In those days it was normal practice for guests staying in bed and breakfast places at the seaside to be locked out all day by landladies.

Butlin came up with the idea of providing holiday accommodation that encouraged holiday makers to stay on the site and even provided entertainment for them between meals. Butlin did not invent the holiday camp idea but simply took it to a much higher level. In fact the basic concept and idea had been pretty well developed by the time Billy Butlin became involved.

He opened his first Butlin’s holiday camp at Skegness, on 11 April 1936. It was officially opened by Amy Johnson, the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia. Her story has been published in the journal (TYJ 4 Winter 2010). He placed an advertisement in the Daily Express, announcing the opening of the camp and inviting the public to book for a week’s holiday. The advertisement offered a week’s holiday with three meals a day and free entertainment, with a week’s full board costing £2.5.0. This is the equivalent of just over £100.00 at today’s prices. This eventually led the way to package holidays. His Skegness camp offered more than anything ever attempted before and the immense scope of entertainment and attractions, along with the high class interior features of many of the public buildings, was way larger and more impressive than anything ever seen in Britain.

His holiday camp was so popular with the public that he built and opened other camps around the coast. Filey was his third holiday camp which opened in 1946 after WWII. If fact shortly after building work commenced on the site, WWII broke out and it was taken over by the RAF and became known as RAF Hunmanby Moor.

In 1938 Billy Butlin began his search for a third site to build a holiday camp in the North. The picturesque Filey Bay seemed to be the ideal spot. First Butlin went to Primrose Valley thinking he could buy a plot of land for a camp. He walked round with the manager of Primrose valley who said he had no spare land because it was all taken up with caravans. Butlin soon saw some land nearby that looked just right, it belonged to Mr Milner a Hunmanby Gap farmer who agreed to sell him the land.
Billy Butlin bought 120 acres of land at £100 per acre, paying a total of £12,000 which was a considerable sum of money in 1938. Butlin applied for permission to build a new camp on the land. His plans were approved by the Filey Town council in April and building work commenced. However, shortly after the work began, war broke out and all three Butlin’s holiday camps were requisitioned by the government. The Filey camp was completed in 1940 and became known as RAF Hunmanby Moor and over 6000 military personnel moved in. Butlin did a shrewd deal with the Government allowing him to buy the Camp back after the war.

At the end of the war in May 1945, half the camp was handed over to Butlin’s. With the assistance from 400 RAF workers the camp was able to partially reopen on 2nd June 1945. Initial capacity was 1500 but this was soon raised to over 5000 after the rest of the camp had been handed back. Filey camp was the biggest, extending to 400 acres and eventually accommodating nearly 11,000 campers. It was also Butlin’s pride and joy.

The camp was close to the main railway line to Scarborough, so a short branch line was built and a new station opened in 1947. The station was on the opposite side of the main road so a short subway tunnel was dug to connect it with the camp. A road-train would meet the campers and carry them through the tunnel to the reception building. In the early days around half of the camp visitors used to arrive in this way but dwindling figures finally closed the station at the end of the 1977 season.

Above: The Opening Of The Filey Holiday Camp Station By The Rt. Hon. Lord Middleton, M.C. at 10.30am on Saturday 10th May 1947

Left: Two posters produced for British Railways (BR) in conjunction with Butlin’s holiday camps to promote holidays on the east coast of England. The poster on the far left shows a young woman in a swimming costume standing in the outdoor pool at Filey, holding a red beach ball. The second poster illustrates a family sitting on the south fountain at Filey. Both posters show the tall Filey clock-tower, behind the people, which was demolished several years later.

Right: Filey Holiday Camp station in June 1974 with a few arriving passengers. The lampposts had public address speakers to welcome them. The road train can be seen at the bottom right of the picture. This took passengers through the subway to the camp.

When the station opened in 1947 most holiday makers travelled to the camp by train but as the years went by more and more people came by car until it was uneconomic to keep the station open. The last train ran on Saturday 17th July 1977. Photo by Bernard Mills
The Holiday Camp Opens

When the Filey holiday camp opened in 1946 everything was new and fresh, people were just starting to get back into the swing of things, they had not had a holiday for many years. The holiday camp provided what they were looking for and the camp brought in holidaymakers from all over. Walking through the main gates campers would have had a tremendous experience seeing lights across the roads, banners fluttering in the breeze and music being played.

The swimming pool had flags all around it and was a stunning colour of blue. There were rows and rows of wooden chalets all with different coloured doors and windows.

The camp had elegant ballrooms, a large amusement park, tennis courts, sports fields and immaculate gardens. There was plenty to do, even when it was raining. In the early years customers were called ‘campers’ but gradually developed until they were called ‘guests’. Also in the mid-60s Butlin’s was re-organised by using modern design to boost its image and stopped being a Holiday Camp and became a ‘Holiday Centre’ The famous ‘Hi-De-Hi, Ho-De-Ho’ routine was introduced from the very early days of Butlin’s and radio Butlin’s would wake campers up in the morning ready to go the dining hall. Breakfast was always porridge or bacon and eggs. They were served in massive dining halls in two sittings. Mealtimes were busy for the staff. The waitresses brought several plates in a rack so that they could serve people quickly. The accommodation was plain, but clean and adequate. The chalets generally only had cold running water.

In 1953 a miniature railway was added to the camp and ran on a circular route around and across the boating lake at the front of the camp. The chairlifts appeared in 1961 and ran for some half-mile from the centre of the camp towards the headland at the beach. One of the camp pubs boasted ‘the longest bar in the world’ and another, the Parliament Bar, was an exact replica of the bar at Westminster. Paul McCartney once stayed at Filey as part of a family holiday, in August 1957 and reportedly made his first ever stage appearance here, whilst participating in a talent contest with his brother.

In this era people booked up holidays early. They could not wait to see what the weather might be like but had to take a chance. At Butlin’s Filey the weather would not ruin the holiday.

Above: Boating Lake and the miniature railway

Above: chairlifts going across the road and gardens

Left: Dancing in the Viennese Ballroom
Butlin’s ran a variety of family fun activities and entertainment which were organised by the redcoats who also acted as hosts. They wore red jackets, white trousers, white shirts, white shoes and bow ties and it was their job to know where everything was. People came to be entertained and to have a good time and redcoats had to make sure that, that happened.

The competitions they organised included whist drives, snooker, football and darts. There were also knobbly knees, glamorous granny, holiday princess competitions, as well as all the children’s competitions. The Red Coats also took part in all the shows and danced with the campers in the Old Time and Modern Ballrooms. Some would sit up till gone midnight doing the late night bingo and then still be up for first sitting breakfast at 7:30 am smiling away. At night the Redcoats patrolled the chalets to listen for children waking up, so parents could go out in the evening and not worry about the kids. It might rain all week, but campers could still have a good time.

The Filey camp used to do the ‘Au Revoir’ on Friday night when people were leaving and people had tears in their eyes because they were going home the next day. All the Redcoats used to march in and link up arms in front of the campers and do a slow kicking dance singing ‘Goodnight Campers’ which was popular in its day. But this routine came to an end with modern audiences but all wanting to shake your hand and promising to see you next year.

The Downfall of Filey Holiday Camp

In October 1983 it was announced that the camps at Filey and Clacton would be closed. Butlin’s said that bookings at Filey had been declining for several years and that the centre was no longer viable. The closure came as a shock to everyone. Right up until the last minute chalets were being redecorated ready for the 1984 season.

In the 1950s there were no cheap package holidays, people were not going abroad and this was Butlin’s heyday and was at the top of the holiday league. But this was not to last. In 1968 Billy Butlin’s son Bobby took over the management of Butlin’s and in 1972 the business was sold to the Rank Organisation for £43 million. With the introduction of cheap package holidays in the 1960s to Mediterranean resorts, British seaside holidays declined and in fact it was cheaper to go to Spain than Butlin’s.

Once people had been abroad once or twice some of them returned to Butlin’s, but they were now more sophisticated, they had seen a different type of holiday and they were more demanding. Also television had come in and people were seeing great shows on TV. Butlin’s became very old fashioned. With the rising operational costs and rapid demand for change, this forced many of the camps to close.

Shortly after closure the Filey holiday camp was put up for sale and was sold in October 1985 to Trevor Guy, a demolition contractor from Harrogate. He sold a 40 acre strip of land to the adjacent Primrose Valley caravan park and announced grand plans for the future.

Left: Amtree Park advertisement on the side of an East Yorkshire double-decker-bus. It needed all the surface area to accommodate over 45 attractions. How could it fail? But it did!

After a complete repaint, Trevor Guy reopened the site as a holiday centre on 24th May 1986. The opening ceremony was performed by Ernie Wise and the camp was given the new name of ‘Amtree Park’. With its new name, new colour and new owner the camp was expected to be a huge success. Unfortunately the venture failed after only six weeks and the camp closed its gates once more, this time for good, on 8th July 1986.
The site was auctioned in April 1988 and sold again the following month, this time to Birmingham Estates who had hoped to turn it into a residential site complete with golf course, nature reserve and leisure facilities. Demolition of the camp commenced in 1989 and was completed in 1991 with the new development to commence almost immediately. However in August 1991 Scarborough Borough Council refused planning permission and insisted that the site be cleared and grassed. Birmingham Estates eventually found itself part of the recession and went into liquidation in 1994. Although most of the buildings had been demolished, it was still possible to pick out some of the old camp features and it became a favourite haunt for Butlin’s historians.

The site has now been redevelopment as The Bay, Filey which consists of holiday homes, leisure and sports facilities.

The Filey Butlin’s holiday camp site may have disappeared but the memories will live on as a valuable part of our history, culture and heritage. In 2005, former holidaymakers, staff, day-trippers, historians and volunteers had the opportunity to remember and celebrate the Butlin’s Filey Holiday Camp. This project covered the camp’s history from its opening in 1939 to its final closure in 1983. During the project a book of memories was completed which included illustrations, photographs and postcards. All the information is now stored as a permanent archive, which is available to the public, at Bridlington Central Library, Kings Street, Bridlington, YO15 2DF.

*Left: The Outdoor Swimming Pool*

*Below: The South Fountain*

*Above: The Fun Fair*

*Right: The Indoor Pool*

*Left: Compare these two postcards. Virtually the same angle but taken several years later after the tall clock-tower had been demolished*
Filey Butlin’s Remembered

Right: Aerial photo of Filey Holiday Camp in 1967, the blue arrow marks the station

Left: Plan of the Filey Holiday Camp in the 1962 Entertainment Guide

Right: Fred Percival’s Dance Band on the stage of the Regency Theatre in 1962. Photo by John Goodhead

Left: Billy Butlin at the Filey Holiday Camp

Goodnight Campers and a sad goodbye to Filey Butlin’s Campers 1946-1983
Barden Tower

Barden Tower is located on the edge of the road between Bolton Abbey and Burnsall in the Yorkshire Dales. The tower was originally built in the late 15th century by Henry Clifford. The building fell into disrepair and was restored in 1658 by Lady Anne Clifford. After her death it was taken over by the Earls of Cork, and fell into decline in the late 18th century.

Photo by Elaine Wilde
Readers

Photo Gallery

If you would like to submit a photo for possible inclusion in The Yorkshire Journal, which shows just how beautiful Yorkshire really is, please email your photos to theyorkshirejournal@hotmail.co.uk. Your photo will be shared with everyone around the world that reads the journal and can be of a landscape, people, events, wildlife etc. Please do not forget to tell us your name, where you are from and where the photo was taken. We can only accept digital images via email, preferably no larger than 5MB.

This photo is of Swaledale in Northern Yorkshire which is one of the northernmost dales in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It is situated by the River Swale on the east side of the Pennines. This photo was taken during the summer.

By John Booth from Harrogate

Newby Hall is an historic mansion house situated on the banks of the River Ure at Skelton-on-Ure, near Boroughbridge in North Yorkshire. The photo was taken in the summer time

By Sue Povey from Yorkshire

A Monk captured on camera in the village of Esholt, which is between Shipley and Guiseley, near the City of Bradford in West Yorkshire. In fact this old gentleman is a West Yorkshire character. He seems to have been around for years, particularly in the Bradford area. Local lads know him as ‘that Jesus bloke’ He still walks the streets of West Yorkshire and he never seems to get any older! There are many tales about him, including one about him living in a cave at some time on Ilkley Moor. Remember the old Yorkshire saying ‘There’s nowt so queer as folk. The photo was taken at the height of summer.

By Ian Cognito from Leeds

Thank you to everyone who has sent us their images please keep them coming.
KES

By David Reynolds

In the late 1960s a Barnsley, Yorkshire lad of 14 gave a remarkably sincere, convincingly natural and moving film performance, when he played in KES. The film is based on A Kestrel for a Knave, a novel by the Barnsley born author Barry Hines. (His story has been published in the former journal, Setting the Scene in South Yorkshire, by Melvyn Jones, Winter 2000). The film was directed by Ken Loach and produced by Tony Garnett. Hines recounts in his book the medieval practice of attributing categories of birds to human social classes. So, emperors should own eagles, peregrine falcons are for princes and kestrels are for knaves, the working classes.

The lad is Dai (David) Bradley who played Billy Casper, which was filmed in the summer of 1968 on location in and around Barnsley, South Yorkshire. The film was released in 1969 and has become an all time classic of British cinema. Apart from one or two established faces, KES featured a cast of unknowns drawn from around Barnsley. The plot line was simple enough. A boy with no future finds meaning in his life when he captures and trains a kestrel. However there was a much more powerful message at play here, a bird that flew free, while the boy remains tied down to his working class life from which there seems little escape. The actor Dai (David) Bradley was himself much different from his character of Billy Casper but will in people’s mind forever be fateful Billy. Dai remembers making the movie KES over 40 years ago and shares some of his memories.

The film focuses on 15-year-old Billy Casper, who has little hope in life and is bullied, both at home by his physically and verbally abusive half-brother, Jud, and at school by some of his classmates. He is mischievous outside, cadging money, stealing eggs and milk from milk floats. He has difficulty paying attention in school, day-dreaming, and is often provoked into tussles with classmates. Billy comes over as an emotionally neglected boy with little self-respect with no positive interests. Billy’s mother refers to him in the film as a ‘hopeless case’. His father left the family some time ago. His greatest fear is ending up working down the pit as a coal miner (at that time, British miners were amongst the lowest paid workers in the developed world). The film shows scenes of Billy’s school; shots of coal-miners walking to work, of local pub entertainment, blackened factories spewing smoke, of lush green woodland, and of red brick streets. These emphasise the film’s central theme of a working class young boy with no apparent prospects. This is until one day playing out in the woods he sees kestrels flying and follows them to their nest.

Billy watches young kestrels flying

Billy’s life is transformed after watching young kestrels soar majestically above him from their nest high up in a dangerous wall. He is enthralled by their beauty and freedom. Walking towards the nest Billy is approached by the farmer and his daughter. At first the farmer tells Billy to “Bugger off” but when he realises that Billy is looking for kestrels, he soon takes an interest and they take a closer look. Now Billy is more attracted to the kestrels and wants to find out how to train one. The farmer tells him that the public library in the City has some books on falconry.

Right: Eric Bolderson played the farmer, looking up at the kestrel’s nest standing next to Billy.
So Billy goes to borrow a book from the library, however he is not a member and is too young to sign up for a library card. The librarian advises Billy to go to a local, second hand book shop down the street were he can buy one, but in his usual inimitable way he steals a book instead.

Above: Zoe Sutherland played the Librarian at the Barnsley public library

The Civic Hall in Barnsley used to be the home of the Library on the ground floor. This is now part of the offices of the town council. The bookshop used in the film was shot at James Miles Bookshop in Leeds, which was on Woodhouse Lane. It has long since gone though.

Billy takes a young kestrel

Billy’s half-brother Jud, who works in the mines and aggressively dominates the home, comes home drunk from a night out at the pub, arriving noisily, in the early hours, and wakes up Billy. He tries to get into the small single bed that they share. Billy helps Jud who then falls asleep and takes advantage of this opportunity to get his own back on Jud by calling him names close up to his face and slaps him across the cheek. At this Jud stirs and calls out to Billy who takes his clothes and runs out of the house. He returns to the site of the young kestrel’s nest, and after climbing the dangerous wall he gently removes one of the young kestrels and takes it home for it to become the biggest focus in his life, providing him with meaning, freedom and happiness.

The pub night out scene with sing songs, was filmed at The Cudworth Hotel, now the Dards on Pontefract Road, Cudworth.

Tankersley Old Hall is the ruined house where Billy climbs the wall to the kestrel’s nest. It was built in the late 16th century but by the 1720s and 1730s, its stone and timber were re-used in a number of other buildings. These included the present farmhouse which, stands to the west of the single block of the Old Hall which, was allowed to survive, and the ruins can be seen today. Billy ascends to the nest, which was at about forty feet of sheer stone with only a few handholds and only straw to break his fall if he slipped. Dai’s actual P. E. teacher hammered in two or three mountaineer’s spikes where the wall was totally inaccessible. In the main, his feet and hands relied on cracks between stone and crumbling mortar.

Billy trains the young kestrel

Billy names the kestrel ‘Kes’ and as the relationship between Billy and Kes improves during the training, so does Billy’s outlook and horizons. He keeps the kestrel in a shed in the garden which was specially built for the film but is now long gone.

Right: How Old Hall looks today
The Football Match

One of the most memorable scenes in the film is of the games teacher Mr Sugden, (played by Brian Glover, who was an English teacher at the time). Billy has no PE kit, because his mother refuses to pay for it. Mr Sugden thinks Billy uses his poverty and lack of kit as a means to escape the cold and mud on the football field. So he forces Billy to wear a pair of ludicrous looking spare shorts that are far too big for him. He goes onto the football pitch, and is told to play in goal. Mr Sugden lives vicariously through his football matches with students, strutting around the football pitch fantasising about himself as Bobby Charlton in his replica Manchester United kit and commentating on the match. He is surrounded by bored and miserable boys. This no doubt will strike a chord with many young lads forced to play football on a miserable school day. After a long game, which involves Billy performing acrobatics on the goalpost, the class goes back inside for a shower. Billy tries to get out of taking a shower but because he let in the winning goal he is bullied by Mr Sugden who makes him take a shower. Then he turns the hot water taps to ice-cold. Billy’s only way out is by climbing over the shower wall, this because Mr Sugden has posted bigger boys to stop him from getting out. However even they realise that Mr Sugden’s punishment is much too harsh, after all it’s only a game!

The caning scene

One scene in particular involves shock and surprise for the lads because they did not know what was about to happen. This was the canning scene for a group of three boys who were caught smoking, McDowell, wrongly selected by Mr Hesketh (his form teacher) for coughing in assembly and Billy for having fallen asleep in assembly due to his early morning chores. An innocent younger boy had inadvertently joined them also. He had been told to take a message to the Headmaster. Before caning them, Mr Gryce the headmaster, played by Bob Bowes, gives the guilty schoolboys a speech on the “state of the youth today”. His speech merely succeeded however in making himself appear neurotic, out of touch, irrelevant and ridiculous. In the end, he tells them all that they are worthless and that it is pointless for him to even try talking to them since they never listen. It is comical, yet very sad due to the very realistic style of the movie and the picture it paints of the working class in the 1960s. Then Billy is caned along with several other supposed wrongdoers including the hapless innocent boy there solely to deliver a message.
The boys were assured that they would not be caned for the film. However when it came to the point when they held out their hands they were not aware that they were going to being hit, and suddenly they were all in extreme pain. They decided that they would not continue with the film and went on strike. Ken Loach the director explained “that you cannot imitate that impression where the cane strikes the hand, so we just caned them really.” He explained to all of them why it was necessary and they understood, so they did not bear a grudge. In fact the boys were given an extra ten shillings, (now 50p) for each stroke of the cane, which in total is the equivalent to £11 in today’s money, and within a few minutes they were all happy. What is more, in the scene where Mr Gryce is searching the schoolboys, the small first year pupil, who was made to take and hide in his pocket everybody else’s cigarettes had the impression that he was to give the headmaster a note and leave the office. Subsequently, when he is searched and found to be “a right little cigarette factory”, he is caned alongside the other boys; hence, his look of shock and tears of pain are real. This was an important scene in the film it was both moving and disturbing. Martin Harley was the young 12 year old messenger boy unjustly caned.

**Billy’s talks about the training of his kestrel**

Returning to the classroom, where Mr. Farthing, Billy’s English teacher played by Colin Welland, is discussing ‘Fact and Fiction’. Mr. Farthing, a relatively kind teacher, encourages and coaxes Billy to talk in front of the class about his relationship and the training of his kestrel. He is so enthusiastic that his talk captivates the wholly class. They listen quite attentively and even ask questions about his training methods. Billy finishes by saying “I trained her sir and that were all I could do”.

*Left: Billy giving a talk in front of the class*

For the first time in the film Billy receives praise, from his English teacher after delivering his impromptu talk. Mr Farthing seems sincerely interested, and asks to come and see the bird at some point later in the day.

In the very next scene after Billy’s classroom talk, a group of boys led by the bully Macdowall, played by Robert Naylor, who is a much larger boy, tease Billy about his bad home life in the schoolyard, which leads to a fight between the two. It becomes clear that Billy is as unpopular with some of his classmates as he is at home. But Billy actually had something he was good at, enjoyed and made him happy. MacDowell with his mates are resentful of this and finally Billy loses his temper and they end up fighting on a pile of coal. The fight is eventually broken up by Mr. Farthing who sympathises with Billy and can see he is getting bullied.

**Jud kills Billy’s kestrel**

After this it is lunchtime, Billy goes straight home and shoots a sparrow with an air rifle, he wants to uses it to teach Kes how to hunt, but first he takes it back to the shed to cut up. There he finds a note and money left by Jud to place a bet on the horses. Then he takes his kestrel out and flies her, Mr Farthing, true to his word arrives to watch, and he is very impressed by the bird, and the degree of skill Billy shows in handling it. He joins Billy in the bird’s shed and they both admire the kestrel sitting on a perch.

*Left: Mr. Farthing and Billy in the shed admiring the kestrel*
After this Billy runs to the betting shop to place Jud’s bet, but before he does so, asks a customer, played by Ted Carroll if he thinks Jud’s horses are a good bet. If both of the horses Jud wants to place a bet on lose, then Jud will not bother to visit the betting shop, leaving Billy free to keep the money, and Jud none the wiser. The customer tells Billy that for the bet to be successful, both horses must win, but one of the horses Jud has picked is unlikely to win. So instead of placing Jud’s bet he spends the money on a portion of fish and chips. Billy goes back to school for afternoon lessons.

Jud is furious with Billy for not putting on the bet because both his horses won. He goes to the school to find him but Billy, from the window, whilst in a maths lesson sees Jud walking towards the school. Terror hits Billy as he realises what has happened. The horses have won, and Jud has visited the betting shop to collect his winnings, only to be told that Billy never put the bet on for him in the first place. Jud has worked out that Billy spent the money on himself and hoped to get away with it; and now he is coming for revenge! After the lesson finishes Billy escapes hurriedly from the classroom and manages to avoid Jud. He hides for some time in the school’s boiler room where in the warmth and darkness, he swiftly goes to sleep. When Billy awakes and leaves the boiler room, Jud is nowhere to be seen. Billy tries to rejoin his class, but Mr Gryce catches him. He is furious with Billy for missing an important interview to discuss his future career prospects with the Youth Employment officer, played by Bernard Atha. Billy is sent along straight away to the careers adviser, who finds it very difficult to recommend anything but a job down the mines, something Billy will not consider. When the adviser asks Billy about hobbies, he does not seem to consider bird keeping a hobby.

After his interview with the employment Officer Billy runs home worried about what Jud might do as revenge for not putting the bet on. When Billy returns home, he finds the shed open and the kestrel disappeared. He goes to the betting shop looking for Jud, the bookmaker tells him that Jud’s horses won and that if he had made the bet Jud would have won a ten pounds. Frantically Billy searches for his kestrel, in the fields and through the darkening woods, desperately calling for Kes. This is a nightmarish scene with Billy looking desperately for his kestrel; his companion, who he secretly fears is dead. He finally gives up looking for Kes and returns home.

When he gets home Billy asks Jud where his kestrel is and what he has done with it? Jud is very angry with Billy for not putting on his bet and spending his betting money. He tells Billy that the horses won and the winnings from the bet would have been equivalent to almost a week’s wages. Jud then admits he has killed the kestrel and at this Billy sobs on the settee and calls Jud a “big bastard”. His mother criticises Billy’s language and asks Jud what he has done with the bird, “its in bin that’s were it belongs” at this Billy stops sobbing on the settee and runs out to retrieve the kestrel from the bin. He runs into the house and swings the dead bird at Jud before running into the garden to bury the kestrel in a field just behind the shed. He digs the grave with an axe. Both Jud and his mother did not understand what Kes really meant to Billy.

This it how the last scene of the movie ends, it is an incredibly tragic and extremely moving image. Ken Loach, the director, tries to make the film ending not so pessimistic. However, at the end of the book, Billy runs grief stricken to the town centre, where he wanders absentmindedly. Soon he comes across an old shut down cinema, all boarded up. He breaks into the cinema, exploring the darkness with lighted matches, eventually sitting alone in the dark and decrepit auditorium. In perhaps the most moving and powerful passage of the book, Billy recalls his father. In something of a trance, he remembers visiting the cinema as a child, happy and carefree. In a dreamlike sequence, Billy imagines himself on the screen, starring in a film with Kes, triumphing over Jud, but he realises this will never happen. The suggestion is that things just will not get any better. Billy returns home, and the novel finishes abruptly with him burying Kes and going to bed. The unexpected and unsatisfying ending maintains the harsh, lonely and bitter note of the whole novel.
In our schools there are hundreds of Billy Caspers. They are full of frustration and restricted energy, and in the old mining areas there is precious little to look forward to for lads like this. In the movie young Billy is sliding into a world of manual labour and a dead end job. Now, his young equivalents will be signing on when they leave school. The KES story is timeless and comes uncomfortably close to home.

One can only hope that Billy remains motivated to break free of his predetermined career in the mines. It perhaps would be interesting for a filmed sequel to KES to be made about Billy’s life after Kes! For all his faults, there is a lot of caring in Billy and who knows he could turn out to be a success. In the past, many in Billy Casper’s deprived situation have! They have escaped and become successful in their own life.

Behind the Movie

The movie KES was sponsored by United Artists in Hollywood but it had to be overdubbed in America to help audiences understand the film, the thick broad Yorkshire accents being beyond their comprehension. It was shown at the New York Film Festival but was not an immediate success. Now the move is widely regarded as a film classic and it has been voted No.7 in the top ten British films of all time.

The story is set in the late 1960s and is only a couple of days in Billy’s life. At the time the movie provided a portrait of life in the mining area of Barnsley including broad local Yorkshire accents. The school used as the main set was St. Helens Secondary Modern School, but has since been renamed Edward Sheerien School.

Dai (David) Bradley was chosen from hundreds to play the leading role in the movie KES. He was selected from Form 3S at St. Helen’s Secondary Modern School. Dai recalls that he got selected for the part of Billy Casper for being just natural. “Tony Garnett and Ken Loach did not want to use professional actors. They wanted to use primarily, real kids, in fact youngsters from schools where children had failed their 11 plus. They did not want to use Grammar school kids. In some respects they wanted to impart a double message. One was the message of the film, and the second that someone from a very normal background, a typical working class background, and an ordinary kid, could actually contribute something. And that being myself, Dai (David) Bradley. You did not have to use a professional actor to bring Billy to life”. He adds, “My prospects were pretty mediocre, so to have the opportunity of being involved in making a feature film in Barnsley was unbelievable.”

Dai explains the similarities of growing up between Billy and himself. “On a kind of base level Billy and I came from the same background in that we both lived on a working class estate, came from coal mining families and had failed the eleven-plus. But Billy and I were different characters to a great extent. I came from a family that was reasonably secure; my Mum and Dad did have hard times, and there were arguments as you usually have, but the family stayed together. I enjoyed school, I didn’t mind going, I had good relationships with most of my teachers and I enjoyed football. Billy did not get on well at school, but he knew about the training of birds, whereas I knew nothing.”

Dai had another job whilst making the movie “I was doing a paper round in the morning. I remember they weren’t particularly pleased that I was up at quarter to seven running around the local estate. They said, ‘We’ll pay your wages not to do your paper round.’ Towards the end of the shoot, the football season started and I said I couldn’t work past midday Saturday as I sold the football programmes at Barnsley. Again they asked how much I earned and agreed to pay my wages.”

Like Billy Casper, his screen character, Dai had little idea of what he wanted to do after he left school. He knew that he did not want to follow in his father’s footsteps. “I spent an hour in a mine as a boy and I knew I couldn’t handle that kind of life. It was a gruelling existence. When I look back at my dad, I realise that each day he spent eight hours working and eight hours sleeping. That means he spent two thirds of his life in darkness.”

The Yorkshire Journal
The success of KES changed Dai’s ambitions, he found himself alongside Ken Loach being asked questions by critics at film festivals. Ken Loach’s naturalistic style was widely praised, as were his actors’ real performances. In 1969 Dai won Bafta’s most promising newcomer award. Dai (David) left school at 17 and began training as an actor in the Royal National Theatre. He went on to star in the stage play Equus, and went on a 2 and a half year tour of the United States, in Hollywood and Boston.

Despite some disappointments, Dai is happy to contemplate his post-Kes life. “I feel a tremendous sense of journey about my life. It all started through Ken Loach and KES was the catalyst.” In no way is Dai concerned about being solely remembered for his part in KES “It doesn’t worry me. One must accept certain things. One of the things I happily accept is that if people only remember me for Billy Casper then that’s fine. It was a wonderful experience and obviously it had a great effect on so many people.”

**Supporting Roles**

Nearly all the pupils that played in KES enjoyed the fantastic experience of being in a feature film. Their marvellous performances in supporting roles made the movie so powerful. However, like so many other children who had a one off part, did not progress further in the acting profession. These include Robert Naylor who played MacDowell, David Glover who played Tibbutt, Julie Shakespeare, Jean Palmer, Desmond Guthrie, George Speed, and Martin Harley who played the young 12 year old messenger boy unjustly caned, Frank Norton and Stephen Crossland who were both part of the smokers union in the caning scene.

The pupils can all recollect that they had an enormous and wonderful experience and that they would do it all again given the chance. Over 40 years on they can now stand back and see how they were then and what they have become. Robert Naylor who played McDowell the bully had never done any acting before or since. He did not realise the potential in an acting career. He is now a shift manager at the Manor Bakeries. David Glover, who played the mouthy fourteen year old Tibbutt, gave a wonderfully natural performance. He could have gone to drama school but instead, became a miner at Dodworth Colliery. In 1986 David left the pit and is now the licensee of The Cudworth pub renamed Dards, where the scene of Billy’s mom and brother Jud enjoying a night out was filmed.

There were not many female roles in KES; however Julie Shakespeare narrated a story in the classroom and Jean Palmer read the bible in assembly. Julie was fourteen years old at the time and thought the whole thing was amazing. Shortly after its release Julie moved to Buckinghamshire where she worked in a country pub. Then for 20 years Julie lived in Greece, but has now returned to live in Barnsley with her family. Jean Palmer was 14 years old when she took centre stage at her real school St. Helen’s and read the bible passage Matthew 18: 10-14. In fact she was in the same class as Dai (David) Bradley. Jean was chosen from three girls for the part, after reading a passage from the bible. She vividly remembers standing on the stage in assembly with a big camera right in front of her while she read her lines, it was a bit nerve racking for Jean.
Desmond Guthrie, Billy’s friend did not stay on at school, he went down the pit and became a Barnsley miner. This was because there was no other work or work that paid. George Speed, played Billy’s friend, but it could have been the other way round, because the part of Billy Casper was between Dai (David) Bradley and George. They both auditioned for the main part, but David got it. George believes that the role was given to David because he had a broader Yorkshire accent. George of course was disappointed in not being offered the part.

Martin Harley was the young innocent 12 year old messenger boy unjustly caned. In fact he did not expect to be punished in this way. Afterwards he felt angry, but at the time he was shocked and amazed, he could not believe they had done it. He explains that he received the cane six times on each hand. The first one was filmed showing the cane sticking each hand, and filmed from the back for the other five, where all the boys were wearing sheepskin mittens. All the swipes were painful, even with the mittens on, because they were repeatedly hit. His tears were very real and for Martin this was a sad period in his life that he wants to forget. There is a mental scar although not a serious one and it is tragic that Martin cannot look back on this part of his life with any affection. However, after leaving school Martin took an engineering apprenticeship in Leeds and has never looked back. He is now an engineering supervisor at a bakery in Swinton, near Rotherham which is the largest bagel factory in the world.

Frank Norton and Stephen Crossland were both part of the smokers union in the caning scene. Also it was the comical character, Frank Norton who coughed in assembly; but Mr Hesketh wrongly selected McDowell.

The official KES web site

Dai (David) Bradley has his own, official, web site where KES fans can find personally signed photos. On another page you can read Dai’s blog and CV and at the same time listen to the KES soundtrack. There is also a page of locations featured in KES, using polaroid photos to illustrate them. Of course many places have changed over the years. These include Billy Casper’s house, the school, (formerly St. Helen’s Secondary Modern), Old Farm, the pub night out, (formerly The Cudworth Hotel, now Dards) and many more. Dai has a Guestbook where you can post your comments about the film or the web site, and read what others think.
Dai’s web site intends to make a contribution to various charities for every item sold, on behalf of fans. For every Rebel T-shirt sold (after costs), 15 per cent directly benefits The Food Chain. This British charity provides meals to men, women, and children, chronically sick as a result of HIV related illnesses, prepared and delivered by volunteers, funded via public donations.

KES now has a whole new generation of fans and some have gone to remarkable lengths to show their admiration. Recently, Dai gave a talk to the Yorkshire Falconry Club and met Jordan Stringfellow who wanted something different, that he would not get bored with. So his father tattooed the face of Billy on his teenage son’s leg as a birthday gift.
The Kestrel

About two weeks before filming began, Richard Hines, the brother of Barry Hines, author of A Kestrel for a Knave, found a baby kestrel in a nest at Old Hall Farm, called Monastery Farm in the movie. The crew named the baby kestrel Freeman. When they filmed the scene where Billy Casper climbs up the crumbling wall face to get to the nest, it was the real nest that contained the baby kestrel and it was Dai (David) who actually liberated the bird, on film. Ken Loach wanted realism and needed that look of excitement on Dai’s face. This was the first time Dai had seen the nest or the kestrel that he was going to work with.

*Right: Dai (David) Bradley with one of the kestrels*

Two other hawks were supplied by a gamekeeper, in case of loss, illness, or poor performance. To keep these hawks (which the crew humorously named Hardy and Willis), Richard and his brother Barry had to apply to the Home Office for a licence, to comply with the Protection of Birds Act 1954. The training of the kestrels was in fact undertaken by Richard Hines, who was a falconer as a boy, and was also a technical advisor on KES. After the film was completed all three birds were released back into the wild.

*Above: Right Barry and Richard Hines, left Dai (David) Bradley*

In the last scene where Jud kills Billy’s kestrel, the dead bird that was used, was not one of the three trained kestrels, but one that had died from natural causes, found by the British Falconers’ Society. Once again Ken Loach wanted realism and tried to convince Dai (David) into believing that the dead kestrel was one of the three trained birds that he had been working with. Dai did not believe they would do such a cruel thing and could tell the dead bird lying in the dustbin was not one of the three trained kestrels he knew. However, Richard Hines was unsure of Dai’s true feelings and was of the opinion that he was not all that bothered about the kestrels. He also felt that Dai was not into or moved by the natural world. Whether he was or not, Dai gave a very convincing performance and Ken Loach got the result that he wanted.

*Above: Barry Hines and Dai (David) Bradley with two of the kestrels*

*Left: Ken Loach and Dai (David) Bradley during filming of the classroom scene*
By Jeremy Clark

The present day Three Nuns Public House is an impressive building. It is situated between Mirfield and Cooper Bridge off the A644 Leeds Road (NGR SE181212) on the boundary of Kirklees. The site of Kirklees Priory is located just over 1 kilometre north-west of the pub with the Nun Brook, which meanders its way past the Priory, running along side it. The road which leads from the Priory to what is now the A644; and which is adjacent to the pub would have been little more than a rough track in the mediaeval period.

Edward Armytage, the son of John Armytage improved the surface of this road and extended it to approach his newly built Kirklees Hall in 1610. At about the same time he erected what is now the Old Lodge and added wrought iron gates at the entrance to his park. With the construction of the Turnpike Road in 1815, that formed part of the A644 Wakefield Road, Armytage’s old road, which eventually entered the village of Clifton to the north-west, was discontinued and closed as a public road. The land then became the property of the Armytage’s who owned the adjoining grounds.

A Local Story

The story goes that when Kirklees Priory was dissolved by King Henry VIII on 24th November 1539 there were only a few nuns in residence. Three of them sought refuge at a guest house located on the edge of the Priory at Nunbrook, and subsequently ran it as a tavern. This guest house was probably built to accommodate visitors to Kirklees Priory and may have dated to the late 14th century or early 15th century. Many years later this building or part of it was incorporated into a much larger pub and was named after them as ‘The Three Nuns’.

It is claimed that the three nuns were Cecelia Topcliffe, former prioress, Joan Leverthorpe, and Katherine Grice. Three nuns may well have run a tavern at Nunbrook after the dissolution of Kirklees Priory, but Cecelia Topcliffe the former prioress, could not have been one of them because she died some time between May 1538 and the dissolution on 24th November 1539.
What Really Did Happen

Kirklees Priory was dissolved by King Henry VIII on 24th November 1539, it was surrendered by the Prioress who at the time was Joan Kyppes aged 50. In fact Joan Kyppes was only the Prioress for little more than a year before surrendering the Priory. It was Cecily Topcliff the former Prioress, who when Kirklees Priory was listed in the dissolution Act of 1536, obtained a licence exempting the Prioress from suppression. This was on 13th May 1538, when Cecily Topcliff was 60 years old. The Priory continued as before, for worship and hospitality and consisted of nuns that had been there on 4th February 1536, before the passing of the Act. Cecily Topcliff died some time after May 1538 then Joan Kyppes became Prioress. Eighteen months later in 1539, after the Second Act of Dissolution, Joan Kyppes surrendered the priory. At this time only 7 nuns are recorded remaining at the priory including the Prioress, they were all given pensions and the whole property was worth £29 18s. 9d. Pension credited to the nuns were for Joan Kyppes the Prioress and Joan Leventhorpe a senior nun 40s each, Isabella Hopton, Agnes Brook, Isabella Rhodes, Katherine Grice and Isabella Saltynstall 33s 4d each.

The Nuns are banished

After the dissolution of the Priory it is said that Joan Kyppes (1487-1561/2) the last Prioress retired together with four of her sisters to a house subsequently called Paper Hall in Mirfield, which was on Flash Lane and is now demolished. She would have been 75-76 years old when she was buried in Mirfield Church on the 5th February 1561/2. But which of her four sisters went to live with her at Paper Hall is open to speculation.

*Right: Paper Hall, Mirfield in 1910*

Agnes Broke (1496-1564) had died by 1564 and is presumed to be buried in the Parish Church of Huddersfield. Katherine Grice (1514-1552), since her name is not recorded on the Edwardian or Marian pensions list of 1553, she probably died before 1553. Isabella Hopton (1486-1564) had died by 1564. Jane Leventhorpe (1479-1543?) very probably died soon after the dissolution of Kirklees Priory. She was 60 years old in 1536 and since her name is not recorded on the Edwardian or Marian pensions list, she probably died well before 1553. Isabella Rhodes (1496-1564), although she had a child, she received a pension and appears to have died by 1564. Isabella Saltynstall (1512-1584) seems to have gone to live in Halifax soon after the dissolution of Kirklees Priory; she was still drawing her pension in 1582.

Tradition claims that the four sisters that went to live at Paper Hall in Mirfield with Joan Kyppes, were Agnes Brook, Isabella Hopton, Isabella Rhodes and Isabella Saltynstall. Joan Leventhorpe and Katherine Grice may have sought refuge at the guest house near Nunbrook.

There is no evidence that these events took place. It is however, reasonable to surmise that Joan Kyppes retired at Paper Hall in Mirfield because she was buried in St. Mary’s Church Mirfield on the 5th February 1561/2. She may have taken four sisters with her but this does not mean that they lived the rest of their lives in Mirfield. Joan Leventhorpe and Katherine Grice probably turned the guest house into a tavern and ran it together at Nunbrook for only a few years before one of them died. This was probably Joan Leventhorpe, because she was the older of the two. Then it is likely that two of the other sisters came to join Katherine Grice and ran the tavern as three sisters, which they may have done for over 15 years. This is the length of time it would require for locals and travellers frequenting the tavern for it to become accepted and recognised for its hospitality.

There are many theories and ideas about the nuns after the dissolution, particularly the three nuns who ran the tavern. Some of these theories are unacceptable and some plausible but the real truth about the three nuns will probably never be known. In fact, for the legendary Robin Hood connection with Kirklees Priory, which over shadows and clouds the history of the Priory, the reality is that Kirklees Priory would receive little attention.
The Three Buildings

After the dissolution of Kirklees Priory on the 24th November 1539, the property passed to King Henry VIII. Then between 1540 and 1548 the property was leased or sold until 1564 when John Armytage bought the land from Robert Pilkington, and it became the home of the Armytage family. In fact by 1564 all the sisters had died except for Isabella Saltynstall who seems to have lived until about 1585. During this time permission must have been granted for the guest house to be run as a tavern and presumably rent paid.

The discovery of what was thought to be the original guest house was made in 1939 when demolishing the old stone inn on the same site. Workmen discovered a timber framed building that had been incorporated into the old inn. It appears to have been located behind the dressed stone frontage to the old inn; the central construction consisted of a roughly square timber framed building. This timber framed building was found to be in good condition and was thought at the time by historians and archaeologists, that came to examine it, that the building dated to the 14th century. Although great interest was shown in this 14th century timber framed building no photos or drawings were made. Furthermore it was not recorded and it would seem that the timbers were not preserved.

This timber framed building discovered in 1939 was most probably the guest house conveniently situated off the main medieval highway and by the path that leads to the priory. It can be conjectured that the building had two floors with three or four bedrooms, living and domestic quarters and a kitchen.

Kirklees Priory had a brewhouse which was situated next to the bake house and producing wine and ale were part of the nun’s main duties. In fact in medieval times everyone, young and old, drank ale with every meal. This was an extremely important part of the diet, as water was often dirty and the brewing process killed a lot of the germs. Very few tools were required to brew ale which includes wooden containers (today called vats and barrels), with ingredients being water, yeast and cereal crop such as barley or oats, plus a source of heat. It would not be surprising, if in fact the nun’s did turn the guest house into a tavern, because they were familiar with brewing ale and this would make a living for them and keep a roof over their heads.

Taverns in the medieval period were ordinary dwellings where the householder served home-brewed ale and beer. A sign was put up to advertise their presence to potential customers, and branches and leaves would be hung over the door to give notice that wine could be purchased. Pastimes like gambling and singing were part of the tavern scene.

The nun’s tavern was situated on the highway between villages and would have attracted travelling customers besides the local folk. They could have also offered lodgings and food to travellers and in fact the favourite adult recreation of villagers was drinking. Both men and women would gather in a tavern to pass the evening.

When John Armytage took over the Kirkles Estate in 1564 he probably allowed the guest house on the edge of the estate at Nunbrook to continue as a tavern, by now it was probably a profitable going concern. Although the nuns who started the enterprise, about 15 years earlier had died, it would have been taken over by new people. In 1610 John Armytage’s son Edward built the present Kirkles Hall, using stone from Kirklees Priory. It would have been about this time that a much larger purpose built public house was required. So a public house was built on the same site as the original timber framed guest house, which was incorporated into the larger building. No dating stone appears to have been laid in the building, but it was named ‘The Three Nuns’ after or in memory of the sisters that first had the idea of turning the guest house into a tavern to make a living.

The inn remained in the Armytage family until 1935 when it was purchased by Thomas Ramaden & Son Ltd. By this time the building had fallen into a state of neglect and despite its venerable history was demolished in 1939. Fortunately, long before being demolished a number of photographs were taken, mostly around 1900, which now serve as a record of the building.
Left: The front of The Three Nuns in the 1920’s. It looks as though the front of the building has just been painted white. On the wall above two windows on the right is the pub’s signboard which shows three nuns praying. Standing outside are two draying wagons, they are delivering barrels of beer. Between them is a carriage with patrons. The pub building looks in reasonable condition.

Above: The Three Nuns in 1910 with a group of people standing outside with delivery horses and carts. In this photo a flagpole is attached to the building on the right hand side next to the pubs signboard. The cart on the far left looks as though it is carrying bundles of cotton.

Above right: The Three Nuns had two entrances; this is the porch entrance, 1910

Right: This old photo of The Three Nuns shows a classic motorcar parked outside between the two entrances.

In these three old photos the inn looks decidedly run down.
It is alleged that Oliver Cromwell rested here on 2nd July 1644 on route to fight at the Battle of Marston Moor, west of York.

On the night of 11th April 1812, a field nearby the Dumb Steeple and close to The Three Nuns was used as the meeting place of 150 Luddites who were gathering to march to Cartwright Mill at Rawfolds near Cleckheaton. The purpose of the Luddites was to stop the progress of mechanisation in the textile mills which they believed were a threat to local employment.

The Shears Inn at Hightown is the recognised meeting place of the Luddites, but rumour has it that the Three Nuns also played a part. Consequently fourteen men were hanged at York for their involvement in this affair. A collection of their weapons which included knives and swords was discovered hidden in the ceiling in the 1920s.

The stone old inn stood alongside the road occupying the present Three Nuns car park; the new building is set further back. It is supposed that the foundations of the old inn with its extensive cellars still remain intact and connected to the new building, but sealed off under the current car park.

The present day Three Nuns is in a mock Tudor style, the exterior remaining largely unchanged since its construction. In fact the building was designed to bear a resemblance to the old stone inn especially the stone porch. The frontage of the new inn has two entrances, one with a porch and two wings connected by a wall installed with windows. This would also describe the frontage of the old building.

The interior has suffered over the last two refits the pub has undergone. Originally the interior was split into a number of oak panelled rooms in character with the mock Tudor theme. The layout was changed to a more open plan form during the late 1980’s but sections of the oak panelling still remain and the windows contain small stained glass panes. Above the fireplace in the snug is a large painted panel featuring a picture of three nuns; this picture is a copy by Cuthbert Crossley (1883-1960) a Halifax artist, of the original pub signboard, which was originally located on the wall between the roof and two windows and next to a flagpole on one of the wings of the old building. It is believed that the original pub sign was painted over 100 years ago by another local artist Jim Sayner. Also carved in stone above the porch entrance are the same figures of the three nuns.

There are obvious differences between the two signboards; the one in the three nuns looks much slimmer and has been finely painted in some detail. There are two gothic stained glass windows above the nuns, which have been painted in detail with a column behind them. On the altar is a candlestick with a long lit candle. In the original pub sign which, appears to be much plainer there are no stained glass windows, column or candlestick on the altar. The signboard looks broader with the words THREE NUNS running along the bottom of the sign.
Another Myth

In 1983 The Three Nuns was closed for renovation and a refit to modify the inn into a big family pub. Sometime after the renovation a wooden panel with a carving of a Rams Head on one side made an appearance in the inn. The story told in the pub and later in the press that during the recent renovations, in the cellars a board was discovered hidden away with the satanic image of a rams head on it. This panel was made of solid oak and varnished. It was about 30 inches long by 12 inches wide, the carving was quite poor and rather than a satanic ram it featured a rather pleasant looking fat sheep’s head. The area manager was shown the board and decided to take it to another pub in the area called the Ram to be hung on the wall as a decoration.

This was about the time when it was said that “strange” events began to happen. On several nights the draft beer taps on the bar mysteriously became turned on emptying gallons of beer onto the bar floor and large stacks of bottled beer or spirits would mysteriously fall over to be smashed on the cellar floor. So the panel was returned to appease something in the spirit world that was supposedly upset by its removal. The panel was then fastened to the wall over the pool table. Shortly after, another attempt was made to turn the pubs image back to being a family type. The panel remained above the pool table until a subsequent refit, when the pool room was replaced by new toilets. Today the panel cannot be seen in the pub and its whereabouts are supposed to be a mystery.

The truth of the matter is that after renovation, the pub suffered problems with a large number of break-ins and loss of stock, with the manager coming under increasing pressure. So enter a solution to the problem, it was a mysterious ghost who was causing the taps to be turned on and smashing all the bottles. This became a joke amongst the bar staff and the locals, but in reality they were simply trying to offset the stock problems that were supposedly lost. During the time of these occurrences the carved rams head panel made its appearance; prior to this it had never been mentioned. It is likely that this panel was not found in the pub at all, during the renovation, but was brought into the pub and used as a deviation. All went according to plan, but after the panel became an embarrassment. It was placed on the wall over the pool table. Following another refit the panel was quietly take away in the hope that this saga would be quickly forgotten. This is one piece of history that The Three Nuns would like to forget!
The Yorkshireman who made the first seaside rock - with the name running through and it’s still as popular as ever

By Sheila Goodall

Today sticks of seaside rock are still as popular with visitors to the seaside as they were in the last century. Gone are the days of naughty saucy seaside postcards but pink sticks of rock, donkey rides on the sands, striped deckchairs, candyfloss and fish and chips are still all part of our traditional seaside holiday or a day trip. Even today, “bring us back a stick of rock” is still a familiar phrase.

How It All Began

The first sticks of rock were made in Dewsbury in West Yorkshire by Ben Bullock a one-time miner, who became a sugar boiler with his own factory in Dewsbury. After returning home from his summer holiday in Blackpool on the west coast, nearly 70 miles away in 1887 he made the first batch of Blackpool Rock. Whether the idea occurred to him or was suggested to him that he should put the words ‘Blackpool Rock’ through the centre of the rock is not known, but he obviously thought it worth a try and became the first confectioner to put the name of the resort through rock.

In fact rock as a “pulled sugar sweet” with patterns and letters running through and cut into small colourful squares seems to have been first sold at fairgrounds throughout the country in the early 19th century and was known as “Fair Rock.”

Blackpool Rock was not made in the town itself until around 1902. This was when sticks of rock became popular with seaside holiday makers and day trippers, so manufacturers set up business in the town. A day at the seaside was the closest that most late 19th and early 20th century factory workers would get to a holiday, and a stick of rock was a cheap and colourful gift to bring home as a souvenir or a present for those who could not go.

In fact seaside rock was not just limited to Blackpool on the west coast, the idea of running the name of a seaside town through the centre of a stick of rock soon caught on at most seaside resorts around the coast of England.

The “authentic” stick of seaside rock has a pink outer layer, mint in flavour, and the words of the seaside town running through the centre.

The Heyday of Rock and its Popularity today

The early 1950s and late 60s were the boom time for seaside rock. This was a period when holiday camps were at their highest and the favourite seaside resorts were on the west and east coasts of Northern England. This was before foreign package holidays had taken off. A stick of rock was an ideal and inexpensive present, Fridays and Sundays were the busiest days to buy a stick of rock just before people went back home.

Seaside Rock is still popular today although it has been formed into different shapes. Replicas of full English breakfast and babies’ dummies are very popular. Rock is also made into many more novelties some even naughty but there is nothing new about that, the seaside has long been a traditional place for the British “nudge-nudge wink-wink”.
Making Rock with Letters

The original method of rock making is still practiced today but with the aid of one or two labour saving devices. To begin with sugar and glucose are mixed and boiled in a large copper pan to approx 300 degrees Fahrenheit. The syrup mixture is then poured out onto a cooling table and colours and flavours are added. Pink is the most popular colour and in most cases mint flavour. When it is cool enough, it is placed on a pulling machine which churns it around until it has a glossy sheen.

The lettering is put on by forming each letter by layering strips of coloured and white toffee, in this way the letters are built. By varying the colour of the strips of the toffee the colour of rock lettering can be varied. This is a fiddly process and difficult to describe accurately but it takes a great deal of skill and experience to ensure the letters appear clearly.

Now the rock is at a stage where it is a big and floppy cylinder in shape. It is then further rolled into shape, cased in more pink sugar and pulled again by special “batch rollers” where it is kept round and which gradually make it thinner. The final rolling is still done by hand, before it is finally cut into lengths and wrapped in cellophane with a photographic view of the seaside town. The sticks of rocks with the words, in red lettering running through them are now ready for sale.

Buying Sticks of Rock Today

There are many shops on the seafront and in the towns of seaside resorts where all kinds of rock can be bought. Over the years the seaside rock companies have weathered post-war sugar rationing and later shortages, healthy eating regimes and food legislation, but still the traditional British stick of rock has changed little in over a century and remains a popular icon of the seaside holiday.

So next time you have a holiday or a day trip to the seaside, don’t forget to “bring us back a stick of rock”!
Helmsley Walled Garden

Set against the backdrop of Helmsley Castle, the towering walls surround 5 acres of beautiful gardens with unusual varieties of flowers.

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