

The Yorkshire Journal

Volume 2 2019

John Wood's Cropping Shop

**The Saddleworth Rushcart
Festival**

**The Tragic Story of Lily
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**Nevison - Yorkshires Notorious
Highwayman**

**The First Brontë Museum at
Haworth**

**Railway Seaside Holiday Posters
along the Scenic Coast**



The Yorkshire Journal

Volume 2, 2019

RAVENSCAR'S HEADLAND

Editorial

Welcome to the 2019 edition of the Yorkshire Journal Volume 2. Our aim is to continue to produce a high-quality, advertisement-free journal dedicated to Yorkshire. The articles in the journal are serious but enjoyable and informative providing a wide range of subjects to satisfy a variety of reading tastes, which focus on all aspects of Yorkshire's heritage, past and present, including features on its stunning landscape, picturesque villages, historic towns and cities, customs, traditions, curiosities, folklore and the history of its people.

In addition to the annual journal there is the Yorkshire Review which is available to download from our website published in Spring, Summer and Autumn. It includes readers' photographs, comments and one or two articles to supplement the annual journal.

We are lucky to have such a variety of well researched articles by our contributors some of which have a comprehensive list of references, notes or a bibliography and we always try to explain technical terms. Conformity of style is often difficult to achieve as authors come from different disciplines and as always we welcome your comments.

We do not have a 'letters to the editor' page but a writer will send in an article, which picks up on a previous one and adds to knowledge. These are a very welcome addition, and are interesting and helpful.

The full archive of the e-journal and the Yorkshire Review is available on-line. Please feel free to download copies of which we hope you will enjoy reading the articles. To receive an e-mail notification from us each time a new issue of The Yorkshire Journal and the Review are issued please "Follow" us by entering your e-mail address on our home webpage.

Helen Young

Editor

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HORNSEA MERE LOOKING TOWARDS THE TOWN WITH THE
CHURCH TOWER IN THE FAR DISTANCE



JOHN WOOD'S CROPPING SHOP AT LONGROYD BRIDGE, NEAR HUDDERSFIELD

By Jeremy Clark

A print titled 'The Old Cropping Shop' supposedly that of John Wood's at Longroyd Bridge, Huddersfield is one of the most familiar illustrations of a cropping shop of the early 19th century. The drawing is mainly black and white with traces of colour ¹ measuring 17 inches by 14 inches. It shows the interior of 'The Old Cropping Shop', better known as the cropping shop or cloth dressing shop. It depicts a comprehensive scene of various finishing operations carried out in the dressing shop as part of the woollen textile industry in West Yorkshire. There is no date on the print but it was published in Huddersfield by Benjamin Brown who first appears in local directories for 1850, the lithograph was by George Falkner who set up in business in Manchester in 1843 and died in 1882. These dates indicate that the print probably dates to about 1860. Benjamin Brown was one of Huddersfield's leading booksellers in the second half of the 19th century who also sold the print at his shop.



Above: 'The Old Cropping Shop', a lithograph by G. Falkner, c.1860, it was formerly titled 'John Wood's Old Cloth Cropping Shop'.

The print of 'The Old Cropping Shop' was based on an actual painting by an artist called J. Thornton, who may have been a John Thornton of Paddock, Huddersfield and originally painted sometime in 1810 or shortly after this date ². This historical drawing has been reproduced in many books and articles at all academic levels and displayed in museums alongside exhibits of the 19th century woollen textile industry. It is regarded as an authentic view of the interior of a West Yorkshire dressing shop just before the practice of dressing and finishing woollen cloth by hand began to be replaced by mechanical shearing frames that could do the work of four skilled men each using a heavy pair of shears to crop the nap from the length of cloth. The building is also noted as one of the famous places in Huddersfield's history because of its connection with the Luddite movement.

The print of 'The Old Cropping Shop', had a limited edition so it is not known how many original prints remain in circulation. In the past the print and the building itself has never been examined in detail, and there are various aspects that have not previously been considered.

The realistic detail shows the interior which consists of the main area with part of an adjoining room seen through an opening on the right. It is a single storey building which illustrates the underside of the roof at mid-height supported on wooden beams and rafters. Examining the central wooden beam in the print reveals two inscriptions, that look as though they have been written in white chalk, the one on the right side reads 'Hood 1799' and the left side 'Johne Green's web June 2d 1810'³. These inscriptions were clearly intended to suggest a date before the Luddites' involvement of 1812. The floor is paved with squared flagged stones and the walls are plastered with traces of a fawn colour. Hanging on the right wall next to the opening is a pair of cropping shears. The interior is lit by a large window divided into four panels by three stone mullions, the middle two of which are sash windows, and a single window on the left matches in size to one of the panels that have small square panes of glass. There is also a window in the second room on the right which also has small square panes of glass. A closer inspection of the large window reveals clouds at the top of the two middle panels and through the small square panes of glass on the right can be seen the outline of buildings on the far side of the River Colne.

The main interest is focussed on the small group of people who occupy the centre of the composition. They are carrying out various work of the dressing shop, apart from the young man in the foreground who is seated on piles of rolled up cloth, taking a break from his work eating from a parcel of food spread across his knees. The smiling young woman standing among the group of men wearing a yellow dress and a white apron is carrying a jug containing refreshment which she is about to offer to the workers. Only the young man at the wooden frame termed a 'nelly' has his back turned, and the boy or youth in the second room are looking towards her. There is an atmosphere of quiet normality that prevails over the whole scene which is a typical example of an early 19th century dressing shop.

The print of 'The Old Cropping Shop' was clearly to record the methods and practices used in the dressing shop after the cloth had been fulled. In fact in the early 19th century the dressing shop was the only non-cottage process in the production of woollen cloth. The picture shows in detail the main processes in the dressing and finishing of woollen cloth by hand. The accuracy of the drawing is supported not only by illustrated documents, but by comparison with surviving examples of objects shown in the print, such as the shears. The process began with wetting the cloth with water from a can, the man on the left in the picture can be seen undertaking this work. The dressing involved drawing out any loose fibres from the cloth with teazles which have stiff but flexible curved hooks, and which also raised the nap. A number of teazle-heads were set close together in a small hand-held wooden frame called a 'handle' of a convenient shape and size to be worked by hand. The cloth was stretched between two rollers on a wooden sloping frame, the 'nelly' seen propped up against the rear wall. Connected to the top roller on the right side is a handle used to wind on the cloth after each section had been dressed. Although the young man working the cloth on the 'nelly', appears to be actually using a card which has wire teeth, it is of a different shape and size to a wooden teazle 'handle' and an alternative to teazles. The wooden rack in the foreground next to the young man taking a break has a number of 'handles' ready for re-use, the teazle-heads in them have been cleaned of flocks using a spiked tool called a 'preem'⁴ then dried. This may have been the young man's job, part of which was also to fetch beer and sweep up.



Left: 'The Preemer Boy' from George Walker's Costume of Yorkshire of 1814, shows the 'Preemer Boy' sitting on a stone cleaning teazle-heads of flocks using a spiked tool called a 'preem'. To the left are two men using wooden teazle 'handles' to dress cloth which is draped over a sloping wooden frame with a number of cleaned 'handles' piled up on the floor near the man's foot on the left.

Setting the ‘handles’ with teazles was carried out on the small table in the light of the window to the left, beside which are a pile of teazles in the form of ‘stavs’, that have been stacked up lengthways on the floor as supplied by the growers.⁵ A large number of ‘handles’ in which the teazle-heads have been cleaned can also be seen drying in a long rack above the open window along the rear wall. Teazle-heads do not last forever and with the hooks bent and broken eventually come to the end of their working life. The print of ‘The Old Cropping Shop’ may illustrate this, in front and on top of the box in the foreground is a pile of what could represent discarded teazle-heads.

The arrangement of the ‘shearboards’, which are long narrow tables with a curved surface, stand in pairs on trestles, each with a footboard for the cropper to stand on off the wet floor, can be seen clearly. In the picture the cropper is wearing a red waistcoat using huge cropping shears with square ends that measure over 3 feet long. They were curved to match the ‘shearboards’ and lead heart-shaped weights were needed to give extra purchase on the unfinished cloth. Four of these weights are illustrated in the print on the blade of the shears behind the man brushing away the flock.

The shears were difficult to hold and manage. The nap was cut as close as possible to the surface of the cloth so that it was smooth with an even surface. To prevent the cloth moving, it was pulled taut using hooks which can be seen on the ‘shearboard’ in the foreground. The job was slow and laborious, the cloth needing to be continually moved over the ‘shearboards’ after each cut falling in ‘cuttle’ on the floor. The shears themselves weighed in excess of 40 pounds and would have needed great strength and skill to operate them.

When the shearing was completed, the cloth was well brushed in order to remove the loose particles of wool termed ‘flocks’. The man to the right of the cropper is using a long hand brush made for the purpose of brushing away the flocks which can be seen heaped up on the end of the trestles and on the floor. In the room to the right, a boy or youth is pressing the cloth to produce a smooth level surface probably with a screw press. The cloth is folded to form a thick package with sheets of glazed paper placed between the folds of the cloth, in order to prevent the contact of two surfaces.

The perspective of the picture is not quite skilfully drawn, parts of the detail are out of proportion which perhaps betrays the hand of the local artist. All the work in the print takes place in the central area of the dressing shop and the room on the right, these account for about three-quarters of the actual building.

The activity in John Wood’s dressing shop can perhaps be compared with George Walker’s coloured illustration of ‘The Cloth-Dresser’ first published in 1814⁶. The drawing shows the interior which is similar to John Wood’s main area with a wooden beam ceiling, plastered white washed walls with a window on the right which has small square panes of glass. Hanging on the left wall are four pairs of cropping shears and a number of ‘handles’ in which the teazle heads have been cleaned can be seen drying piled on the floor below the croppers shears. It illustrates a master cropper standing on a footboard using shears to crop the cloth with three young apprentices looking on. Although in Walker’s illustration the ‘shearboard’ is flat they were in fact curved to match the cropping shears.



Right: ‘The Cloth-Dresser’ from George Walker’s Costume of Yorkshire of 1814, shows a master cropper at work.

THE EXTERIOR OF THE STONE BUILDING

John Wood's dressing shop was situated about half a mile south-west of Huddersfield along the south bank of the River Colne, north of St. Thomas's Road and immediately east of Longroyed Bridge. Before the building was demolished in about the middle of 1891, a few photographs were taken of the exterior showing that it was a rectangular single storey building. The Ordnance Survey map of 1887, confirms that in plan it was rectangular measuring some 50 feet by 20 feet and was probably constructed in one building phase. The walls were constructed in stone and stone slabs used for roofing. The building had a tall stone chimney stack with a single chimney pot built on top at the far western end of the gable roof. Abutting the western end of the building and lying at right-angles to it was a small low stone building with a flat sloping roof that was probably used as an outside toilet for the workers. There was only one entrance with a door that led directly into the dressing shop, this was situated on the south front at the western end of the building. The dressing shop was lit on the south front by a large window at the eastern end and a smaller window set at a higher level near the roof midway between the entrance and the larger window. The photograph of the south front taken from the open space or yard shows the entrance and the small window blocked up and the larger window is boarded up.

Right: A front view of John Wood's dressing shop taken from the open space or yard.

The entrance to the building has been blocked up which is behind the girl in the white dress. The white crosses painted on the building are probably markings for demolition. The empty building was used to store timber in the late 19th century, long after the cropping shop had closed down. This photograph is believed to have been taken prior to demolition in 1891 and is attributed to Alderman F Lawton who could be the dandy man leaning against the side wall wearing a pocket watch chain across his front looking satisfied with himself in the photograph.



Left: The single storey rectangular building of John Wood's dressing shop alongside the south bank of the River Colne long after the dressing shop had closed.

It has five mullioned windows and a tall stone chimney stack. Notice the small building on the right side built against the end wall. It was probably used as a toilet and is marked on the 1887 Ordnance Survey 25": 1 mile map. This confirms that the building was standing at this time and it was probably demolished sometime in 1891.



This photograph is believed to have been taken in 1891 just before the building was demolished and is attributed to Alderman F Lawton.

Right: John Wood's dressing shop alongside the south bank of the River Colne looking west towards the bridge at Longroyd Bridge which it runs under.

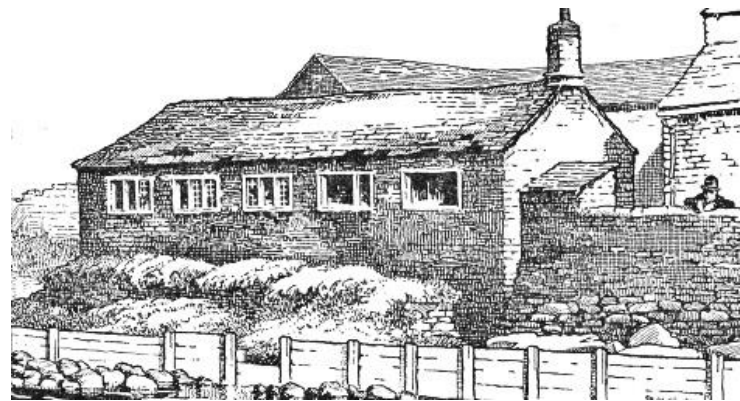
This photograph was probably taken prior to demolition in 1891.



According to the two photographs taken along the south side of the building that overlooked the River Colne, the rear stone wall incorporated five mullioned windows. However, by the time the photographs were taken in about 1891 some of these windows were blocked up, two appear to have been completely taken out and some of the small square panes of glass have been smashed.

Three of the windows in the photographs along the outer wall at the eastern end of the building are divided into three equal panels by stone mullions, the two windows at the western end are divided into two panels by a stone mullion with the larger panel being equivalent in space to two panels. It seems likely that these two windows were originally divided into three equal panels and that all five windows had the same design to light the dressing shop on the south side of the building. The series of five windows were the same in size, equally divided and built horizontally at the same elevation along the outside wall. What cannot be deduced from the photographs are the number of rooms the building contained.

Right: Drawing taken from an 1891 photograph of John Wood's dressing shop showing windows in proportion along the outside wall. The illustration is by Harold Blackburn and is reproduced from Colne Valley Cloth by Phyllis Bentley.



THE INTERIOR OF THE BUILDING

Comparing the print of 'The Old Cropping Shop' illustrating the interior with the photographs taken of the exterior of the building is difficult, but they seem to agree that it was a rectangular single storey building with a gable roof. The print illustrates the underside of the roof at mid-height with a thick timber central beam and common timber rafters spaced out at intervals which supported the stone slabs used for roofing. This is likely to correspond with the design of the roof in the photographs. However, the three windows on the rear wall in the print of 'The Old Cropping Shop' do not resemble those in the photographs. The print suggests that the building was divided into two rooms. The main large room had an entrance with a fireplace at the western end not illustrated in the print but shown in the photographs. On the right is part of an adjoining room seen through an opening, and although the dimensions of this room are difficult to interpret from the print, it could extend much further east.

A copy of 'The Old Cropping Shop' was published in 1888 by Frank Peel a local Yorkshire historian in his second edition of *Risings of the Luddites*,⁷ when the drawing was generally known as John Wood's cropping shop, titled 'Interior of John Wood's Old Cloth Cropping Shop' this original title has virtually disappeared from use. The justification for this has never been explained, but might possibly be a distant memory of the Luddites involvement and to be viewed in its original historical connotations. In the preface to Peel's second edition he records that the picture was supplied to him by his friend Mr J J Stead, a Heckmondwike antiquarian, presumably this was after the publication of Peel's first edition of 1880 in which it does not appear. He probably learned of its association with the Luddites and it can only be assumed that this was something that was known at the time.

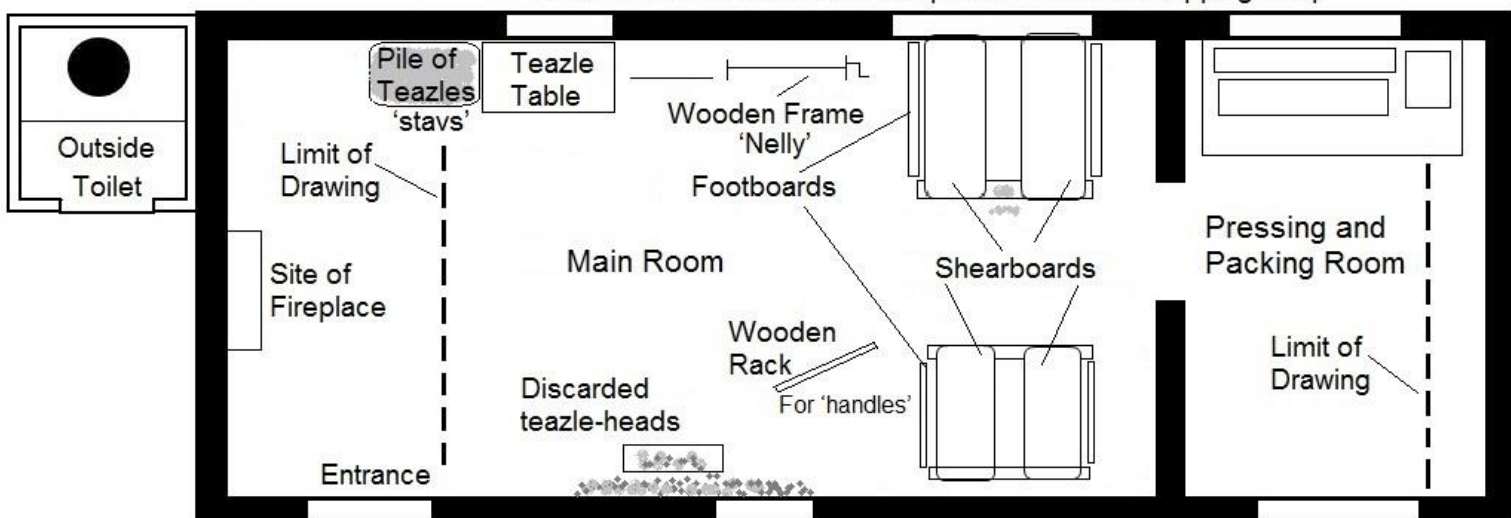
Peel also records the location of John Wood's cropping shop at Longroyd Bridge, he writes 'The building still stands on the water side, not far from the highway, and is now used as a place for depositing lumber' from this account the building itself was standing until the early 1890s⁸. The illustration of 'The Old Cropping Shop' was accepted as John Wood's cropping shop based on direct evidence and the involvement with the Luddites.

There can be little doubt that this single story rectangular building was John Wood's dressing shop situated alongside the south bank of the River Colne. Allowing for artistic licence and although the windows in the drawing do not correspond to these in the photographs, probably because of the perspective, the evidence that links the print of 'The Old Cropping Shop' comes from its former title in Frank Peel's second edition of the *Risings of the Luddites*, which is 'John Wood's Old Cloth Cropping Shop'. Old museum labels on the photographs dated 1891 described the building as 'The Old Cropping Shop, Longroyd Bridge' which further confirms the identity of 'The Old Cropping Shop' and John Wood's dressing shop.



Above: The location of John Wood's dressing shop can be identified on the 1887 Ordnance Survey 25": 1 mile map. It is situated between the River Colne and St. Thomas's Road. The entrance was in the south front from an open space or yard. Built against the west end wall is a small building that was probably used as an outside toilet.

Three windows illustrated in the print of 'The Old Cropping Shop'



Windows and entrance on one of the photographs

Above: Reconstruction plan of John Wood's dressing shop showing the position of the equipment used based on the illustration of 'The Old Cropping Shop', photographs and the 1887 Ordnance Survey 25": 1 mile map. In the print only three windows are illustrated on the rear wall whereas in the photographs there are five, this is probably because the artist had difficulty with the perspective and all the activity in the main area of dressing shop.

There is no date stone for John Wood's dressing shop in the photographs so an actual date for the building is unknown. However, the simple design of the single storey building with a gable roof is typical of domestic architecture in the 18th century. Further dating evidence is provided by the date of 1799 chalked on the central wooden beam, this suggests a construction date for the building in the second half the 18th century. After the building went out of use as a dressing shop it was used for storing timber until about 1890. In the middle of 1891 the building was demolished, and the Huddersfield Corporation Tramway Depot and Power Station was built on the site which opened in 1901⁹. Today the Fired Up Corporation Company occupies the site.

The significance of the central wooden roof beam with the chalked inscriptions dating 1799 and June 1810 appears to be that the scene, although set in John Wood's dressing shop, belongs to the years directly before the Luddite fury of 1812. The 'old' cropping shop of the title is therefore not only the 'old' cropping shop of the pre-industrial age, but of the time before the Luddites' involvement.

THE LUDDITES

It was the direct cause of the Luddites disturbances that brought John Wood's dressing shop into disrepute and acquired its role in the uproar and the extremism into which the Luddite movement degenerated. Although there were many cloth finishers and others in the cloth industry who did not participate in the Luddite movement, and there were many who sympathized and supported them without being part of it in the hope for its success. George Mellor a rather fiery young man of 22 with fair curly hair, was a cropper working for his step father Mr Wood at John Wood's dressing shop became the unelected leader of the Luddites in the Huddersfield area. It is believed that several attacks were planned at the dressing shop as well as the assassination of William Horsfall a mill owner of Ottiwells in Marsden. Although John Wood himself would later deny having had any knowledge of what was happening in his own dressing shop. On 28th April 1812 George Mellor aided by two workmates and a man from another dressing shop shot William Horsfall as he was returning home on horseback from Huddersfield. Sympathy for the motives of those who supported the Luddites movement was now full of moral condemnation of what had been done. It was one thing to break machines to pieces but quite another to commit murder. It must also be remembered that unemployment in those days meant nothing less than starvation.

*Right: A contemporary artist's impression of the shooting of Mr William Horsefall on 28th April 1812*¹⁰



George Mellor and his two accomplices William Thorpe and Thomas Smith were hanged on the scaffold for the murder of William Horsfall on January 8th 1813 at York. The judge in their case was Justice Le Blanc. A lasting impression was also left by the impunity with which George Mellor had converted John Wood's dressing shop into a centre for conspiracy, where there was continual talk of violence and lawlessness, and by his considerable success in organising the cover-up afterwards.

The peaceful scene in 'The Old Cropping Shop' is a warning of things to come. This is significant only if seen in terms of an interval between the early 19th century and the time when 'The Old Cropping Shop' was published. Luddites represented the brief but epic struggle of the hand workers to resist the forces of the factory system and machines that could do the work of several men, and which in the course of a few decades had altered the structure of the textile industry in West Yorkshire.

By the mid-19th century the methods shown in the print and in other small dressing shops like John Wood's were largely a thing of the past. 'The Old Cropping Shop' represents and idealises and the virtues of a lost past as seen from a period that had experienced the brutalities of the industrial revolution. The drawing of 'The Old Cropping Shop' has remained popular to the present day, its meaning was almost lost in time, whilst the creative interest of the Luddites has since been left to the writers of literary and dramatic fiction. One of these includes Charlotte Brontë's novel *Shirley*, published in 1849, and based on events in the Spen Valley. Although her novel is overly romantic it is probably one of the earliest signs of the growing interest in the subject of the Luddites and since then there have been numerous publications.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Anne Lord, Colne Valley Museum, Huddersfield, for readily making the print of 'The Old Cropping Shop' available for study and for facilities to research material in the collection. Also to John Taylor, Colne Valley Museum, Huddersfield for his valuable assistance in interpreting different features in the print of 'The Old Cropping Shop. To Frances Stonehouse Tolson Memorial Museum, Huddersfield for providing a digital image of 'The Old Cropping Shop' used in this article and for archive information of the photographs. Also to Emma Burgham, Heritage Quay, University of Huddersfield for checking the original photographs of John Wood's Cropping Shop. To Robert McMillan I owe a special debt of thanks for his assistance and advice given to me during the preparation of this article and to Margaret Harley for her valuable suggestions.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

¹ The print of 'The Old Cropping Shop' in the collection of the Colne Valley Museum, Huddersfield. It has recently been cleaned and restored revealing some traces of colour in the print.

² This information was on a label attached to the back of the print in the collection of Bankfield Museum, Halifax in 1979, it was written in 1911 by Ling Roth, former Curator of Bankfield Museum, R. A. McMillan, *The Old Cropping Shop, Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 51 (1979). Since then the print has been mounted and sealed with glue which now conceals this label and there are no records establishing the source of this information. Written by hand at the bottom of the white cardboard frame is 'Cropping Shop Huddersfield 1799' suggesting the date when the print was painted. Considering the second inscription on the central wooden beam has a date of 1810 the original painting must therefore have been painted shortly after this date. I would like to thank Calderdale Museums, for examining the print and providing me with a digital image.

³ W. B. Crump and Gertrude Ghorbal., *History of the Huddersfield Woollen Industry* (1935) Tolson Memorial Museum, Huddersfield, handbook No. 9.

⁴ G. Walker, *Costume of Yorkshire* (first published in 1814 and republished in 1885 by Richard Jackson, Leeds) Plate XXI page 59.

⁵ Robert A. McMillan., *Teazles and Teazle Men - The teazle trade in the West Riding of Yorkshire since the eighteenth century*. Published by Robert A. McMillan (2012).

⁶ Walker, (1885) Plate VI pages 19-20.

⁷ F. Peel, *The Risings of the Luddites* (2nd edition, Heckmondwike 1888), frontispiece. It also appeared in the third edition of (1895).

⁸ Peel, 2nd edition (1888) page 11.

⁹ Gordon and Enid Minter., *Discovering Old Huddersfield Part 2* (1995) page 65.

¹⁰ Leman Thomas Rede., *York Castle in the Nineteenth Century: Being an Account of All the Principal Offences Committed in Yorkshire from the Year 1800 to the Present Period, with the Lives of the Capital Offenders ..* (1831) pages 443-463.

John Nevison - Yorkshires Notorious Highwayman, dubbed ‘Swift Nick’

An investigation into the life and death of John Nevison and an attempt to separate fact from fiction.

By Sarah Harrison and Jeremy Clark

John Nevison is not as well-known as other legendary highwaymen such as Dick Turpin. Some accounts about his life are conflicting and it is difficult to sort out fact from fiction and myths and legends about him are often disputed. This is not surprising considering his lifestyle. Most current authors writing about him, have formed the basis of their research work on the nonfictions that appear in *The Newgate Calendar* - entry on William (John) Nevison and from a few other sources such as 17th century pamphleteers and from various books that mention him, written in the 18th and 19th centuries. However, *The Newgate Calendar*, which was originally a monthly bulletin of executions, produced by the Keeper of Newgate Prison in London on notorious criminals published from the 18th century, does not mention the feat for which he is best known, the fabled ride from Kent to York that was later attributed to Dick Turpin (see *Dick Turpin - his Yorkshire Legend* in the *Yorkshire Journal*, Issue No. 4 Winter 2014).

John Nevison’s Early Life (1639-1685)

Nevison used John, William and James at different times for his first name as well as Johnson for a surname, but he was commonly known as ‘Nick’ Nevison. Several places in Yorkshire claim to have been his birthplace, although most probably, he was born at Wortley near Sheffield or Pontefract in West Yorkshire in 1639.

He is reputed to have come from a good family, his father was comfortably well off reported to have been a wool merchant or a steward at Wortley Hall. His parents provided him with a good education and was making good progress at school until he was 13 or 14 year old when he became unruly and the ringleader of his young companions in disturbances. This led to thieving and he stole a silver spoon from his own father, who delegated a thrashing to the schoolmaster. This made him determined to get revenge on his schoolmaster. That same night he collected food and clothing, and cautiously taking his father’s keys to the cashbox helped himself to £10. Nevison took great delight in stealing the schoolmaster’s horse, saddling it from his father’s stable he rode to London. Apparently the journey took him four days but within a mile or so he killed the horse for fear he should be discovered riding a stolen horse when arriving at an inn.

Right: The current appearance of Wortley Hall. It dates mostly from the 18th and 19th centuries although the site is likely to have been a medieval manor house. During the English Civil War the owners were Royalists who fought for the King. In later life Nevison was also a Royalist which may account for having some connection with Wortley Hall.



Once in London he changed his clothes and name, he soon found a job working in a brewery, where he lived for two or three years. But he was always looking for opportunities to rob his master. One night he got his chance by getting his master’s cashier and clerk drunk in the counting-house. After the clerk fell into a drunken sleep Nevison ransacked the office looking for money and on finding about two hundred pounds fled to the Netherlands. He continued his robbing career in the Netherlands but was caught, arrested and put in jail, with some difficulty escaped making his way to Flanders, where he enlisted in the English volunteers of the Duke of York army. Nevison participated in the Battle of Dunkirk in 1658 also known as the battle of the Dunes.

Nevison the Highwayman

He distinguished himself as a soldier, saving a little money before returning to England in 1659. The prospects for an ex-soldier were limited and instead of living in want and poverty Nevison decided like many other Royalist soldiers, now homeless and destitute, to take to the road for his livelihood. He bought a horse and a pistol and



with his dashing costumes set himself up as a highwayman preying on travellers using the Great North Road which for centuries was the main route between London in the south and beyond York in the north, operating from a base around Newark and at first was a lone highwayman. John Nevison is described as a tall charming man with the appearance of a gentleman, it is also claimed that he was polite and never used violence against his victims during hold-ups and was gallant to the ladies, only robbed the rich. It is also said of him that he distributed some of his loot to the poor and being a true Royalist supporter, he never robbed from them, but targeted with vengeance Parliamentarians, rent-collectors

and money-lenders. In addition to his highway robberies John Nevison operated a protection racket extorting regular payments from northern drovers as 'insurance' and guaranteeing their safety from other highway robbers.

When Nevison was using the name of Johnson in his early career he met two countrymen travelling on the road who warned him of three highwaymen who had just robbed them of £40. Nevison promised them that he would find the robbers and return their money. This he did with their help and after much altercation in which Nevison was forced to shoot one of the robbers in the shoulder, and only then did one of the robbers reluctantly hand over £40. Nevison demanded they handed over all their money for his compensation this amounted to £115 with some silver coins. On giving back £40 to the countrymen he told them that in future they should look after it better. In about 1661 after robbing a rich cattle farmer of £450 he considered this amount was sufficient to take temporary retirement to settle down. Nevison returned to his father, who was living in the same town, he had not seen his son for seven or eight years and had long given up all hopes of seeing his boy again. He was overjoyed to find him alive and well, a young man of about twenty-one with a respectable sum of money which he told his father was the savings of a frugal and industrious life in London. He lived a quiet life caring for his elderly father until he passed away. After which he left the quiet existence and once more took to the life of a highwayman.

At one time in the 1670s Nevison associated with other robbers of the road such as Edward Bracey of Nottingham and Thomas Tankard of Lincolnshire and was part of a gang of six outlaws who robbed travellers along the Great North Road using safe houses at Wentbridge and Tuxford, and the Talbot Inn at Newark was their meeting place.

Nevison was caught and arrested several times the first was in 1674, when he was captured and jailed in Wakefield, but he was able to escape before charges could be brought against him.

John 'Swift Nick' Nevison - Ride to York

At times Nevison would ride southwards by himself, and it was one of these occasions that resulted in the spectacular feat that made him famous at the time. There is, however some confusion of his most famous high-speed ride from Kent or London to York accomplished in record-breaking time. This story goes that at 4 am one summer morning in 1676, a traveller at Gads Hill, near Rochester in Kent was robbed by Nevison. The victim identified Nevison, so he fled on a bay mare, crossed the River Thames by ferry from Gravesend to Tilbury and galloped towards Chelmsford, Essex. After resting his horse for half an hour, he rode on to Cambridge and Huntingdon, resting regularly for short periods during the journey. Eventually, he found his way to the Great North Road where he turned north for York.

Nevison arrived in York at sunset after a journey of some 220 miles, in thirteen to fifteen hours, a stunning achievement for both man and horse. He stabled his weary horse at a York inn, washed and changed his travel-stained clothes, then strolled to a bowling green where the Lord Mayor of York was attending a bowls match at the time. He approached the Lord Mayor and wagered a bet with him on the outcome of the game at around 8 pm. Nevison made a point of asking the Lord Mayor the time to make sure that he remembered the time the bet was laid.

A few weeks later, the highwayman was positively identified by the Gad Hill gentleman and arrested for the crime. In his defence, Nevison called his impressive witness the Lord Mayor of York, who could prove that he was in York at 8 pm on the day of the robbery, the jury acquitted him on a the supposition, that it was impossible the man could be at two places so remote on one and the same day.

Right: Drawing of Nevison riding away with a purse he has just robbed from a country gentleman who recognised him.



A different version of the story is written by Captain Alexander Smith in his 'A Complete History of the Lives and Robberies of the Most Notorious Highwaymen, Footpads, Shoplifts, & Cheats of Both Sexes' (fifth edition, 1719). The robbery occurs at Barnet, London. Apparently a gentleman had just come from the Bosom's Inn, and was robbed by a highwayman of 560 guineas at about 5 am, who rode straight to York he arrived at around 6 pm in the evening. This highwayman is referred to as 'Nicks', not Nevison by Smith who also writes a chapter on William Nevison which seems to have been copied from The Newgate Calendar and once again Smith does not connect the well-known ride with Nevison. Although Smith's editor, Arthur L. Hayward, suggested in a footnote that Nicks could have been John or William Nevison.



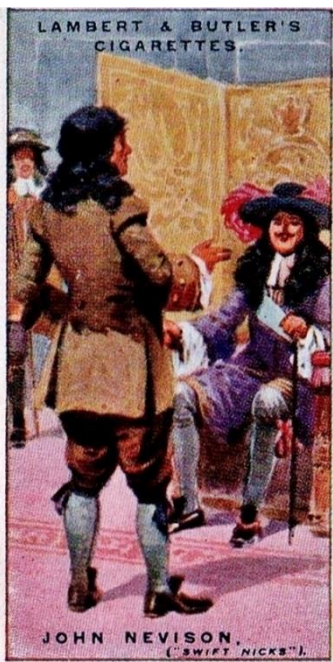
Left: Map outlining the Great North Road and places associated with John Nevison. Gads Hill in Kent was on the old main road from Dover to London (now the modern M2 Motorway and A2 trunk road) and was one of the starting points of the epic ride to York.

Daniel Defoe in his *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, 1724-1727, recounts the story again but identifies the highwayman as 'Nicks' and records of executions in York Castle suggest that Nicks and Nevison were one and the same man.

After the trial of the robbery, Nevison could not keep his clever exploit to himself, he told the story of his ride in confidence to the delights of his companions. Instead of being arrested on what was practically a confession, he became a hero.

The tale reached the ears of King Charles II, who had him presented before him, and was asked to explain how he managed to accomplish such a journey on one horse in less than a day. The highwayman's reply was that he had ridden so ferociously that the Devil himself, 'Old Nick', could not have caught him. The King was impressed by the clever rogue and on pardoning he nickname him 'Swift Nicks' and he emerged as a folk hero.

Right: An illustration of the highwayman (John Nevison) explaining his ride from Gads Hill to York to King Charles II who nickname him 'Swift Nicks'.



Left: Lambert and Butler also include the highwayman (John Nevison) in their cigarette cards. It is No. 16 in their 1926 set of Pirates and Highwaymen.

After the tales of Nicks and Nevison they both have a different ending. Nicks allegedly became a captain in the Lord Moncastle's regiment in Ireland, where he married into money and lived an honest and law abiding life. As for Nevison there are a few more accurate records of his career as a highwayman robbing travellers along the Great North Road.

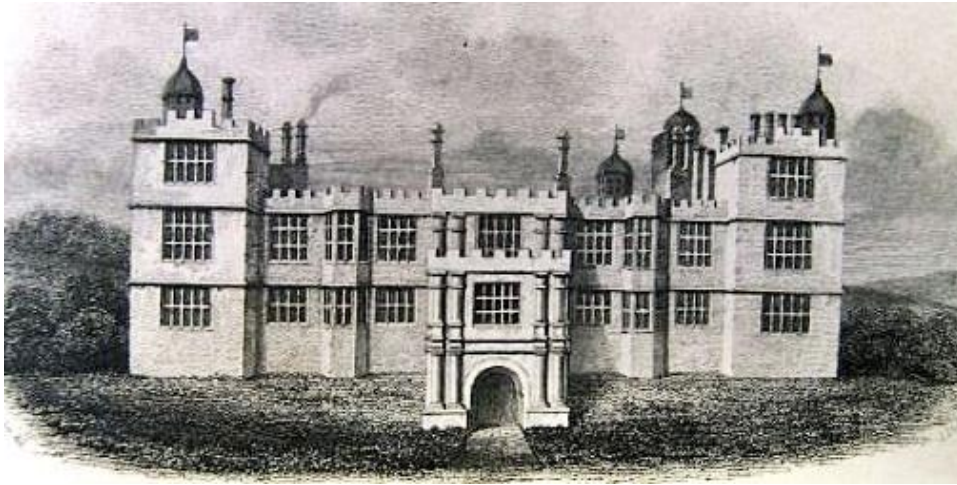
Nevison's Downfall

In 1676 Nevison was charged with robbery and horse-stealing. This time he was sentenced to hard labour and to transportation to Tangiers (which was an English colony at the time). However, he managed to escape ship before being transported and was soon back on the highway.

Apprehended yet again in 1681 committing robberies in Leicestershire he was put in jail firmly shackled in irons, and strictly guarded. This time he escaped with an ingenious plan of 'playing dead', with the help of three accomplices, one a physician who came to visit him, presumably he had been stricken by the plague. The jailer was warned that the prisoner must be isolated from the other inmates to prevent the disease from spreading. The jailer agreed and Nevison was speedily removed to a larger room. The physician visited Nevison two or three times a day in his new cell, explaining that there was little hope of recovery. Afterwards the jailer's wife hearing this news refused her husband or any others working in the jail to go nearer than the door to his call. One day another of Nevison's accomplices, a painter, came and artfully daubed spots on Nevison's hands, face and body to imitate the sores on plague victims. The physician administered a powerful sleeping draught and then pronounced him dead. As customary the jailer ordered an inquest to formally examine the cause of death, this was hurriedly held. The jury kept a considerable distance away, with vinegar-saturated handkerchiefs covering their noses. They agreed the verdict of "Death of the plague". Nevison's friends claimed the body which was immediately put in a coffin, removed and correctly interred, but without Nevison who stepped out at the first opportunity.

Back on the road again Nevison resumed his career, but rumours spread that he had died of the plague, and a legend grew that Nevison's ghost was haunting the road. Soon it was realized by the authorities that Nevison had made his escape from Leicester jail and a reward of £20 was put on his head.

Nevison thought it would be safe for him to mingle with groups of travellers. So he joined a band of beggars and idle vagrants and proposed to join them, their leader welcomed him and he was accepted by them. But he soon became discontented with their way of life and one night after a rowdy drinking session he took one of their horses and fled off to London. He soon discovered on visiting a number of inns that his notorious exploits were a popular topic of conversation and with a price of £20 on his head he decided to return to the countryside.



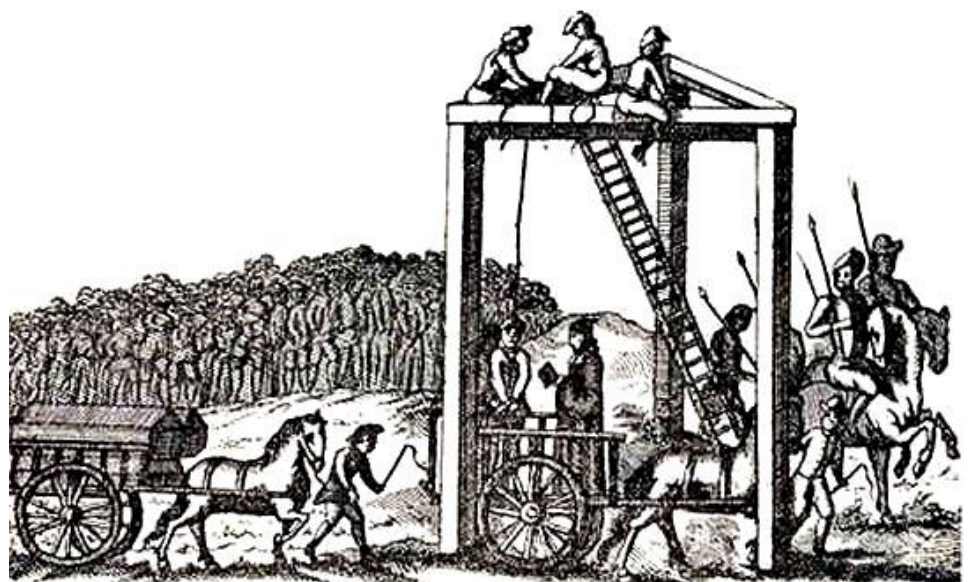
The reward for his capture made him very vulnerable and he trusted nobody being pursued by constables and bounty hunters, especially two brothers named Fletcher. Nevison's luck, however, was soon to run out. One of the Fletchers, Darcy Fletcher was a Constable, who, when he was trying to arrest him near Howley Hall, by Soothill, in Batley, Nevison shot and killed him. This was probably Nevison's first and only murder.

Above: Howley Hall at Batley, completed in 1590. Sometime between 1717 and 1730 the house was blown apart with gunpowder, on the orders of the then Earl of Cardigan leaving only a few corner remains. Over a number of years the stones of the ruined hall were gradually removed to Batley, Birstall and Morley and used to construct many local buildings, including the present Howley Hall Golf Club and adjacent farm buildings.

In the spring of 1684 while sleeping after drinking at the Magpie (or Plough) Inn in Sandal Magna, near Wakefield Nevison was betrayed by the landlady, probably because several inn keepers in the district had been fined for providing him with food and drink, he was arrested by Captain Hardcastle and taken to York in irons. He was put on trial for the murder of Constable Fletcher and was found guilty. On the 4th May 1685 Nevison was driven from the prison with a coffin and hanged at Knavesmire, York aged 45 his body was buried in an unmarked grave in St Mary's Church in Castlegate, York.

Knavesmire was also known as the York Tyburn, after the Tyburn gallows in Middlesex, it was situated in the area to the south of the York Racecourse. The last public hanging at Knavesmire was in 1801, as it was dismantled in 1812, the gallows did not give visitors to York a good first impression of the city. Executions moved to a site at York Castle and still attracted large crowds until the last public hanging in 1868.

Right: An illustration of about 1680, of the permanent gallows at Tyburn, which stood where Marble Arch now stands. In design it is similar to that used in York and known as the 'Three-Legged Mare'



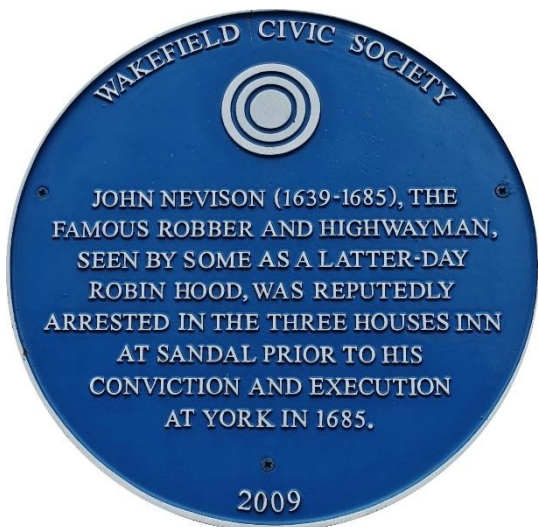
There is another variation of Nevison's story given by the local Leeds historian Norrison Scatcherd in his *The History of Morley*, first published in 1830. He writes that the Fletcher brothers lived near Howley Hall and had discovered that Nevison sometimes went to see a married woman at Dunningley, about 5 kilometres north-east of Howley Hall. The Fletchers were determined to capture him so they followed Nevison on one of his visits and caught him. They locked up his horse in the stable, and fastened Nevison in one of the upper rooms belonging to the farmyard building, which may have belonged to Howley Hall. But Nevison forced his way out of a window landing on a pile of manure which was under it and headed towards Morley.

Dercy Fletcher chased after Nevison on foot, he caught him and in a struggle Nevison was overcome by force and on the ground he drew his small pistol and shot Fletcher through the heart. After obtaining the stable key from Fletcher's pocket freed his horse and rode to York in record time. He established an 'alibi' at the Bowling Green but this time for the murder he had committed early on the same day. According to Scatcherd, Nevison was later apprehended not by Captain Hardcastle but instead by 'a valiant tailor' who discovered Nevison asleep on a bench at the Magpie Inn, on Barnsley Road, Sandal "one of the then three inns called 'Sandal Three Houses'". The tailor pinned his arms and called for assistance.



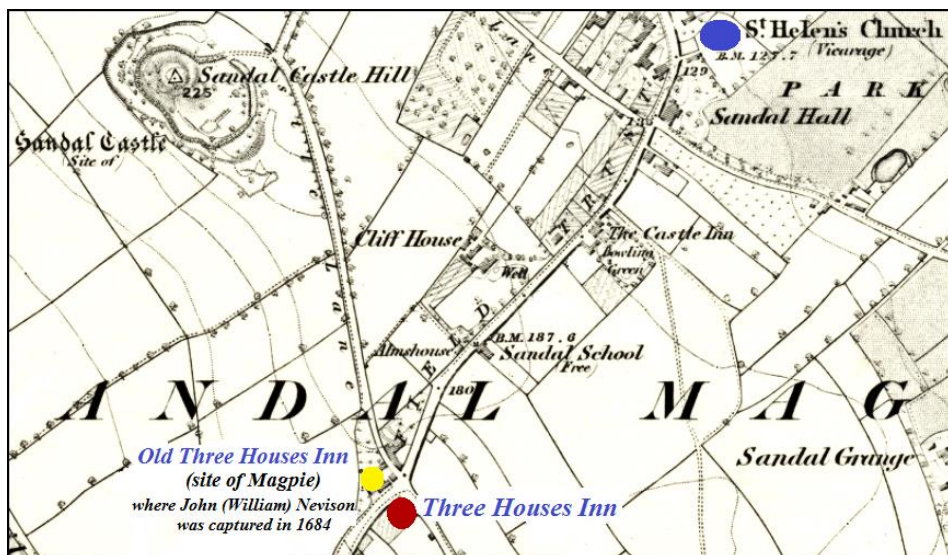
Left: This old photograph is of The old Three Houses Inn at Sandal Magna, taken after it had stopped being an inn. This is where Nevison the Highwayman was apprehended and which has since been demolished.

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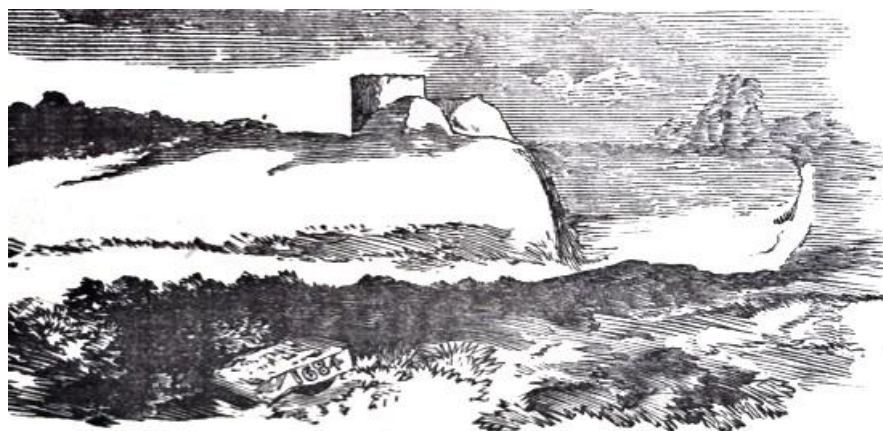


In September 2009 the Wakefield Civic Society unveiled a blue plaque commemorating the arrest and execution of John Nevison the highwayman in 1685 on the wall of the present Three Houses Inn on Barnsley Road, Sandal. The pub's name comes from the union of three Sandal Magna Inns, the Raven, the Magpie and the Plough. After magistrates ordered the closure of the Raven and the Plough, all three of these inns were amalgamated to form the Three Houses Inn on the site of the Magpie. Later the Three Houses Inn was relocated across the Barnsley turnpike road to where it is still located today. The original building has been demolished.

Right: Location map of the present-day Three Houses Inn and the site of the former Three Houses Inn on Barnsley Road Sandal Magna. The earliest part of the building of the 'new' Three Houses Inn dates from the late 17th or early 18th century. Nevison was arrested in 1684. The chair in which Nevison was sleeping when arrested is kept at St Helen's Church. Taken from the 1854 6" inch Ordnance Survey Map.



Scatcherd also records that near the footpath between Morley and Howley Hall, about 100 yards west of where the farmhouse stood at Howley Hall, was a small cylindrical or square stone, sunk in the ground which was inscribed, “Here Nevison killed Flecher. 1684.” He notes, “This stone has certainly been here above seventy years (since before 1760), but how much longer is unknown.” It was carved by John Jackson who at one time was a schoolmaster of Lee-Fair, and nicknamed “Old Trash” by his pupils. In about 1879 the inscribed stone was removed or buried.



STONE WHERE NEVISON KILLED FLETCHER.

Left: Drawing of the inscribed stone along the footpath to Howley Hall where Nevison killed Fletcher, from the ‘History of Howley Hall’ by Sir John Savile, Published by J. Fearnside & Son, Batley in about 1880, page 27. The account of Nevison’s Stone in the book is extracted from Norrison Scatcherd’s ‘The History of Morley’, 1830.

Right: The ruined walls of Howley Hall, it was once a popular pleasure spot for Victorians. Today the area is covered in scrub and small bushes with only a few fragments of standing walls and arches.

Photography by Craig Battye



Nevison’s Chair

In 1684, the Parish Constable of Sandal Magna, William Hardcastle Justice of the Peace and John Ramsden of Milnthorpe were commanded to help arrest the notorious highwayman John Nevison. When they arrived at the Magpie Inn (later to become the original Three Houses) apparently they found him asleep in a chair. It seems that Nevison dozed off after drinking a pint or two of ale.

Right: The chair where Nevison was found asleep when he was arrested. It can be seen in St. Helen’s Church Sandal Magna.

An entry in the Wakefield Sessions for the 9th October 1684 records an “Order for Constable of Sandal to pay John Ramsden 10s 6d for the Constable of Sandal & William Hardcastle gentleman, three days conveying one Nevison, a highwayman, to the Castle of York, and 2s 6d for obtaining the order.”



The Hardcastle family gave the chair to St. Helen's Church, Sandal Magna before the Inn closed down and became a private house. It is not sure if Nevison spent a lot of time in the Magpie or in the Sandal area, much about Nevison's life remains a mystery.

The chair is Jacobean in style made of oak, it has four turned spiral legs with a plain frame. The arms rest on turned spirals and the rectangular seat is covered with a red drop-in-upholstered seat cushion. The backrest is highly carved with foliage and semicircles with a panel and diverges from the arms to carved semicircle scroll work along the top.

Nevison's Leap

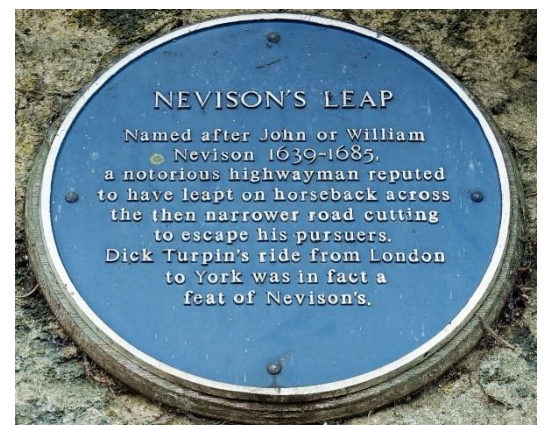
Another feat associated with Nevison is his so called 'Leap'. According to legend, John or William Nevison was being pursued by constables, he spurred his horse on to make a jump across what was a narrower road cutting to make his spectacular escape. The spot has been named after him, although his name does not appear on any map.

Right: The cutting on Ferrybridge Road where Nevison is alleged to have galloped his horse over, the blue commemorative plaque can be seen on the cliff wall at Fern Hill.



The site of Nevison's Leap is on the Ferrybridge Road on the outskirts of Pontefract north-east of Monkhill and Old Hall Farm. The road is now very wide and one side of the cutting has been levelled and built with houses but in Nevison's times it was a narrow gorge with steep cliffs on either side. To commemorate the location a blue plaque has been placed on the cliff wall of the cutting situated below The Prince of Wales' Working Men's Club and diagonally opposite is Nevison Avenue named after the highwayman.

Nevison was sufficiently popular to have become the hero of a rural ballad, although there does not appear to be many versions of the 17th century ballad of Nevison. The following version of the ballad was sung by Joseph Taylor and recorded on a wax cylinder for Percy Grainger in 1908, it is taken from *The Ballads and Songs of Yorkshire*, by C. J. Davison Ingledeu. Bell & Daldy, London 1860.



“BOLD NEVISON”

Did you ever hear tell of that hero,
Bold Nevison that was his name?
He rode about like a bold hero.
And with that he gained great fame.

He maintained himself like a gentleman,
Besides he was good to the poor;
He rode about like a bold hero.
And he gain'd himself favour therefore.

Oh the Twenty-first day of last month.
Proved an unfortunate day;
Captain Milton was riding to London,
And by mischance he rode out of his way.

He call'd at a house by the road-side,
It was the sign of the Magpie,
Where Nevison he sat a drinking,
And the captain soon did he espy.

Then a constable very soon was sent for,
And a constable very soon came;
With three or four more in attendance,
With pistols charged in the king's name.

They demanded the name of this hero,
"My name it is Johnson," said he.
When the captain laid hold of his shoulder.
Saying, "Nevison thou goeth with me."

Oh! then in this very same speech.
They hastened him fast away;
To a place call'd Swinnington bridge,
A place where he used to stay.

They call'd for a quart of good liquor.
It was the sign of the Black Horse,
Where there was all sorts of attendance,
But for Nevison it was the worst.

He call'd for a pen, ink, and paper,
And these were the words that he said,
"I will write for some boots, shoes, and stockings,
For of them I have very gi'eat need."

'Tis now before my lord judge.
Oh! guilty or not do you plead;
He smiled into the judge and jury.
And these were the words that he said,

"I've now robb'd a gentleman of two pence,
I've neither done murder nor kill'd,
But guilty I've been all my life time,
So gentlemen do as you will.

"Its when that I rode on the highway
I've always had money in great store;
And whatever I took from the rich
I freely gave it to the poor.

"But my peace I have made with my Maker,
And with you I'm quite ready to go;
So here's adieu! to this world and its vanities,
For I'm ready to suffer the law."

THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

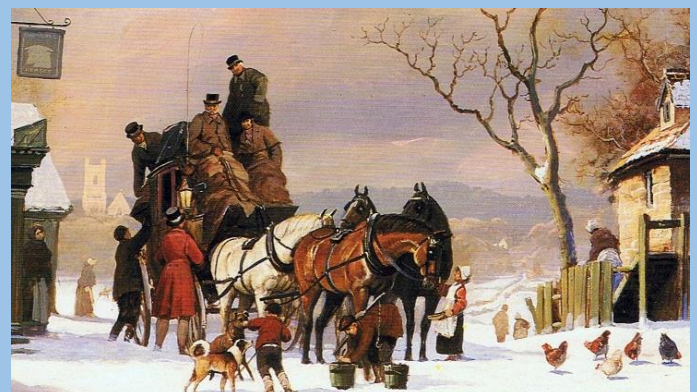
The Great North Road evolved in the early 17th century. At first the road was uneven, narrow, muddy, full of puddles, and wheels ruts. Inclement weather made communication difficult and often dangerous. It twisted, turned, shrank, expanded, and it changed its course, sometimes by design and occasionally by accident. Passing along its length were pilgrims, soldiers, peasants, vagabonds, rebellious armies, cattle drovers, coaches, and highwaymen. In the late 18th century improvements in coach design and better road construction, led to greater speed and comfort for passengers and became the mode of transport for travellers.

The first recorded stage coach operating from London to York was in 1658 taking four days. Faster mail coaches began using the route in 1786, providing a quicker service than the other passenger coaches. In the “Golden Age of Coaching”, between 1815 and 1835, coaches could travel from London to York in 20 hours, and from London to Edinburgh in 45½ hours. But in the mid-19th century coach services could not compete with the new railways. The last coach from London to Newcastle left in 1842 and the last from Newcastle to Edinburgh in July 1847. At the end of January 1838 Charles Dickens with his friend and illustrator, Hablot Knight Browne, nickname Phiz caught the Glasgow Mail coach out of London to Bowes situated on the northern edge of North Yorkshire. According to Dickens they had a difficult, two-day journey, travelling 255 miles in 27 hours up the Great North Road, which was covered in snow. The coach stopped at about 11 pm on the second day at the George and New Inn at Greta Bridge. Dickens was



“in a perfect agony of apprehension” due to the gloominess of the moor and the coldness of the snow. Dickens travelled to Bowes to research the conditions of boarding schools in Yorkshire. The full story of Dotheboys Hall and Nicholas Nickleby has been published in the Yorkshire Journal, Winter 2012.

The coaching inn was a vital part of the Great North Road until the development of the railway. They provided a resting point for people and horses. The inn served the needs of travellers, for food, drink, and rest. The attached stables, cared for the horses, including changing a tired team for a fresh one. Although many coaching inns survive, and some still offer overnight accommodation, in general they have lost their original function and now operate as ordinary pubs.



THE SADDLEWORTH RUSHCART FESTIVAL

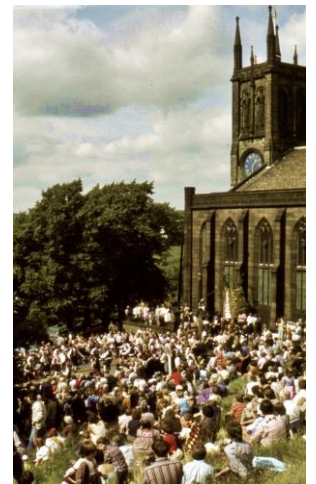
By Daniel Theyer

In the early 1980s, while we were living in Holmfirth, I was intrigued by an article in Pennine Magazine, entitled “It’s a rush job” (Vol. 2 No. 6, August/September 1981), featuring the Saddleworth Rushcart Festival.



Above: Ready for the off – Uppermill 1981

Having 3 small children at the time it seemed like a good idea for an afternoon out, especially as the weather was fine and it was a pleasant 30 minutes trip across the Pennines to Uppermill church, where the rushcart was headed. For once my timing was spot on, and we arrived just before the Morris Men started hauling the rushcart from the village centre up the hill to the church. The bright colours of the costumes and the decorated cart made a fine impression against the imposing church nestling in a green valley, and we all enjoyed the spectacle of the Morris dancers in front of the church. A grassy bank made an impromptu grandstand for the hundreds of other spectators. The two public houses ensured no-one got thirsty and contributed to the air of well-being among the good-natured crowd. We all enjoyed it so much that it would probably have become an annual event, had we not moved to West Germany. When we returned to Yorkshire later it was no longer a short trip away, and there were other distractions, so it was not until 2017 that we revisited Uppermill at rushcart time.



Right: Watching the Morris Dancing at Uppermill church 1981

Origins of the Rushcart Festival

But I am getting ahead of myself, first we need to look into the origins of the rushcart festival. There are several theories of how it came into being, any of which may or may not be correct, as there is little relevant surviving documentation. What is certain is that rushes used to be an important commodity before the industrial revolution. The majority of dwellings had beaten earth floors, which would become damp and cold in winter. Rushes provided an accessible and economic way of improving comfort levels when liberally strewn over the floors.

As they became soiled and compacted further rushes would be laid over those already in place. This would continue until spring, when they could be removed and disposed of, an early and energetic form of spring-cleaning. There are several species of rushes, the choicest being sweet rush, which has a pleasant aroma, but, in practice whatever grew locally would be utilized. Rushes grow in poorer, damp soils, and were much more abundant than they are today, agricultural practices having drained and improved the majority of the land they formerly thrived on.

They had several other uses too:

- A cheap and easily-obtained wick for a rush-light.
- Woven rush mats,
- Chair seats
- Ropes
- Baskets
- Thatch
- Paper manufacture
- Sails
- Medical uses, particularly against thrush, and charms
- Animal bedding
- Hassocks or kneelers (the Old English word *hassuc* meant "clump of coarse grass,")



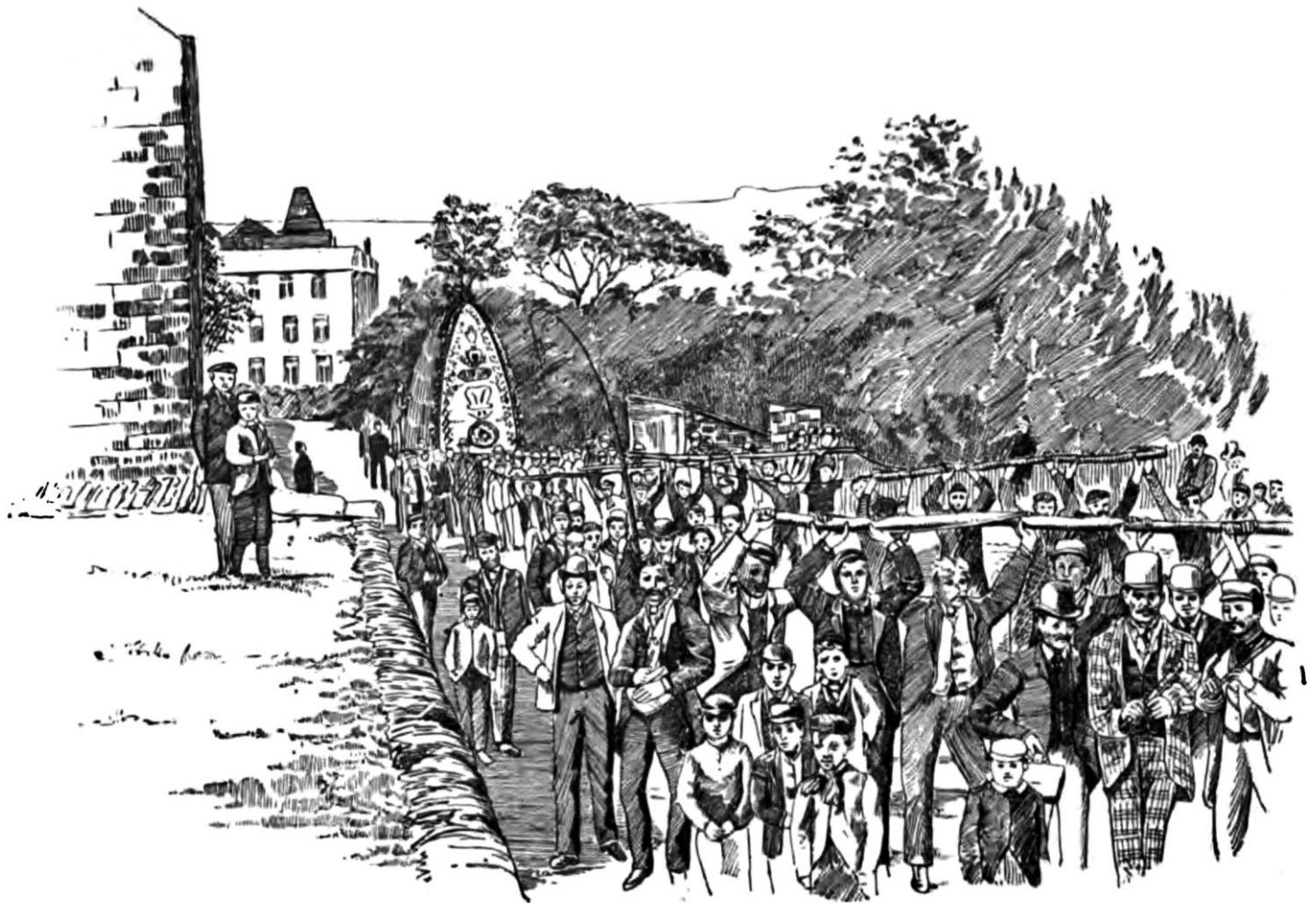
“ CHAIRS TO MEND ! ”

Many rural churches had earthen floors, with wooden pews reserved for the better off. Naturally rushes were used here too, and it would have been a duty of the parishioners to provide a supply of them. Cutting the rushes, bundling them and carrying them to the church was usually a task for young women, so it is easy to see how this could become a communal activity. Rushes grow quickly in the summer and there is an optimum time to harvest them in late June /early July.

With a larger volume of rushes in more remote areas it was practical to use sledges or wheeled carts to transport them, usually pulled by men. This practice was widespread throughout England, wherever rushes were abundant. In some places, with its wide range of uses, the rush harvest had sufficient importance for the occasion of a village celebration at its conclusion, as did other events like harvest festivals and bringing in the May. Initially it is unlikely that there would be any decoration to the cart bearing the rushes, though it is quite possible that the old custom of using mirrors to ward off evil applied here too.

Annual church festivals included a celebration of the founding of the church, and these usually took place between July and mid-September. They were known as wakes - from which the Wakes weeks later developed. The wakes were a holiday of several days duration, for which the local inhabitants saved money either all year round or during a short period of concentrated work just prior to the start of the holiday. New clothes were purchased, houses cleaned, and beer brewed, ready to receive visitors.

Entertainment, mostly locally produced, included various sports and competitions, animal baitings, shows and stalls. The bringing of rushes to the church became incorporated into these celebrations. Where rushcarts were used they began to interrupt their progress to the church by calling at the houses of the local gentry, where they were provided with food and drink. The custom of decorating the rushcart now came into play, aided by the loan of silver articles from the gentry. Music began to make itself heard, partly to provide a rhythm for pulling the cart and partly as entertainment. Dance too played a role in some areas.



UPPERMILL RUSH-CART, 1890.

Influences of the industrial revolution

As the industrial revolution spread it had an impact on rushcart processions. Populations doubled and trebled, villages and towns increased in area, the road network improved. It is generally recognized that the industrial revolution led to the elimination of many old traditions, however the rushcart flourished as never before. The heyday of the Lancashire rush-cart was the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Until about 1830 a large number of villages in south-east Lancashire, the Yorkshire border, and north Cheshire, held their rush-cart processions on some day of July, August, or September; and in such market towns as Rochdale, surrounded by populous villages, eight or nine rush-carts might be assembled on one day at wakes time. This centralization of the village pageants was probably one cause of their downfall. The streets and lanes were narrow, the rush-carts bulky, and collisions frequent; local rivalries, old grudges, drinking excesses, and the fighting spirit, led to disorder and even bloodshed, and the prestige of the custom declined. After 1830 the rush-carts began to diminish in number.

For practical reasons the maximum size of the rushcart was fixed to stop the load becoming unstable, as was the basic pyramidal structure of the vehicle. The bundles of sheaves were carefully cut and arranged to produce a smooth neat finish, with a large sheet covering the rear. The decorating of the cart, the gold and silver articles on the sheet, demonstrate the pride of craftsmanship involved in the building of the structure. The shiny decorations were an extension of the old custom of wearing mirrors to reflect away evil. While the gentry were still visited it was now more usual for money to be given instead of food and drink, particularly from the nouveau-riche factory and mill owners – who did not have the same close bond to the local inhabitants as the traditional gentry did. It was easier and ensured that the rushcarts' attendants did not linger. The money collected would be used to purchase ale at the next public house.

In a fairly small area of south-east Lancashire the local Morris dancers accompanied the rushcart, adding to the spectacle and entertainment and encouraging spectators to give contributions in return for a display of dancing. The origins of Morris dancing may have their roots in rites celebrating fertility and the coming of spring, dancers blackening their faces with soot so they would not be recognised by the local priest, and resembling "Moors". Over time "Moorish" become "Morris". More likely the dancing came from Spain and was brought back by John of Gaunt when his army returned from the Spanish wars.



In either case this style of dancing was very popular from the sixteenth century onwards. During the nineteenth century rushbearing remained widespread, in some cases without a rushcart, but this association of rushcarts and morris dancers occurred almost exclusively in south-east Lancashire. (Apologies to readers who are upset by mention of the L word. Although this article is about rushcarts in general its specific focus is Saddleworth, which every true Yorkshireman knows is in the West Riding, whatever the legislative nonsense in 1973 may have decided.) The presence of Morris dancers in the procession added greatly to the spectacle.

Demise of the Rushcart Festival

Paradoxically, as the rushcarts were approaching their prime in the early 1800s the practice of taking rushes into the church was rapidly declining. This was because churches were undergoing restoration, stone or tile floors became the norm and pews more extensive. In some cases churches were completely rebuilt or replaced. In Uppermill the bishop paid a rare visit to the church and was appalled by the rushes in the church, he likened it to a stable and banned their use in future. Usually the rushcart still processed to the churches, but the contents of the rushcart would be sold to the highest bidder. By the end of the 19th century the rushcart festivals had almost completely ceased. There is no single reason for this, but the following must have played a part.

There were other, newer, competing attractions. The railways came to Saddleworth in 1849 and for the first time people could enjoy a day trip beyond Saddleworth's borders – in 1850 nearly 400 people availed themselves of a cheap trip to Liverpool. Blackpool became a focus for many of these trips. Local papers recorded the tickets sold at each station and resorts included Llandudno, Southport and London, with perhaps the most exotic the Isle of Man.

Matrix of Wakes Week Destinations Reported From Saddleworth Stations

Destination	1850	1854	1855	1860	1870	1871	1879	1883	1891	1893
Blackpool					431		560	20	381	1207
Buxton						350				
Douglas									45	63
Liverpool	400	520	600		416			600	139	187
London									10	1
Manchester										187
North Wales				100						1
Oldham										1403
Scarborough										103
York	1200									

However the rushcart festival remained popular in Saddleworth for much of the second half of the century, with some years being more successful than others.

1858 and 1860 Newspaper extracts:

THE WAKES.—The time-honoured wakes, with their rush-bearing, rush-carts, and Morris-dancing, seems to have lost none of their charms of attraction in this locality. There are no doubt many to be found in these modern times who find fault with this custom; and they would be blind indeed who could say that it has no fault; but, after all that may be said against it, there is much to be said in its favour. For weeks previously to the wakes, every cottager, however humble in circumstances, may be seen lime-washing and painting the interior of his house, in order to make his relatives and friends, whom the vicissitudes of life have taken to other districts, as comfortable as possible when they pay a visit to the place of their birth—a common practice at this annual period of festivity and rejoicing. Besides this, it is a general thing for parents to provide new clothing for their children at the wakes, which makes it to be a season of cheerful gaiety for the young folks. Were it not for the wakes many a young boy and girl would probably have to be absent from Sunday-school, church, and chapel, in consequence of not having what they consider suitable clothing to appear in at these places. This thorough cleaning, clothing, and social entertaining of friends and relatives, are the commendable parts of wakes keeping in rural districts, and which we hope may be continued in their pristine integrity. On Saturday last Saddleworth wakes commenced with a rush-cart being drawn from Running-hill to the church, accompanied with the usual number of antic morris-dancers, to the music of fife and drum. At the Mountain Ash Inn, there was the attraction of a first-class quadrille band in the spacious pavilion, which was well patronised by the young people, who apparently enjoyed themselves in the merry dance. Sunday morning trains brought many visitors, and large quantities of roast beef and “home brewed” were consumed. On Monday the wakes were kept up with great spirit at Dobcross, with pigeon shooting at the Granby Arms, Uppermill, hound dog trail, and other sports at Shawhall; and a large party enjoyed themselves with field sports of various kinds at the Mountain Ash. On Tuesday the wakes-keeping reached Uppermill. In the evening a very neat rush-cart made its appearance from Frenches, drawn through the village by six donkeys, richly caparisoned. On Wednesday the wakes ended at the much frequented and celebrated Bill’s o’ Jacks, where the company were numerous and highly respectable. It is matter of congratulation that the wakes have been conducted in a most orderly and becoming manner. All seemed to enjoy themselves with great gusto in open air exercises, which they were able to engage in to their hearts’ content, from the favourable state of the weather, which was exceedingly fine.

Right: Huddersfield Chronicle 01 September 1860



Left: Huddersfield Chronicle 28 August 1858

SADDLEWORTH WAKES.—These wakes commenced on Saturday last, and about seven o’clock in the evening groups of rough, half-drunken, disorderly young men, from what is familiarly called “the lower end” of Greenfield, yoked themselves to “rush carts,” by long ropes and poles, or “stangs,” by which they drew them through their different districts, and to Uppermill, to the evident delight of themselves—judging from their uproarious laughter and merry-andrew capers, as they went along drawing the carts. Four carts were thus drawn through Uppermill; and as is usual on such occasions, the parties drawing the different carts came into contact with each other, and fully sustained the true character of their affair by kicking and striking one another. If the guardians of the peace had not happened to be there, no one can tell what might have been the result of the encounter; as it was, kicks and cuffs were dealt about in a profuse manner for a few minutes, before the police could get the parties separated. The wakes, however, are not to be disparaged on account of the disorderly conduct of those who get up “rush carts” for the sole purpose of getting money to spend in drink. These displays of rival rush carts will cease to exist, if parties who get them up are not supplied with money and drink. The wakes, or annual pastime, are a great benefit generally to the working classes, as they give them a short relaxation from toil, and enable them to invite and entertain their friends at the social board with good old English fare. This is not the only benefit. Children mostly get their new winter’s clothing, and domiciles get thoroughly cleaned and renovated against the wakes. Besides, in these railway days of cheap trips, the humblest individual can, at the wakes time, avail himself of the boon, to extend his knowledge or recruit his shattered health, by spending a few days at the seaside. On Sunday evening the wakes were held at Saddleworth Church, and were very thinly attended. On Monday, at Dobcross; but in consequence of a great number of people from that neighbourhood having gone to Liverpool, by the Oddfellows’ cheap trip from Diggle and Saddleworth, the village was nearly deserted. On Tuesday the wakes reached Uppermill, where the landlord of the Marquis of Granby entertained his friends with a pigeon shooting for a free sovereign. And on Wednesday the wakes ended, according to custom, at “Bill’s o’ Jacks.” This favourite resort is mostly well attended; but this year there was a great falling off in numbers in comparison with former years. Probably this was owing to the unfavourable state of the weather in the forenoon, which, however, cleared up and was fine during the afternoon and evening. Upon the whole, there was great provision made for the wakes in the shape of “roast beef and home brewed;” and on Saturday and Sunday there were many visitors in the district.

Left: Uppermill - Sedlock Cart 1879

The following account of the Saddleworth Rushcart of 1890 is an extract from "*Rush-Bearing*" by Alfred Burton, published in 1896. This is a classic book, written as the era of rushcarts was ending. It has recently been re-published, and is also widely available on the internet.



There are many quiet little valleys running into the hills on the east and south-east border of Lancashire, where the inhabitants retained many of their old manners and customs till a recent date, but the spread of manufacturing industry into these out-of-the-way places, and the introduction of railways, have led to a rapid increase in the population, and consequent change in its character. The parish of Saddleworth is a typical specimen, and bears the curious anomaly of being included in the County of York for civil, and in the diocese of Chester for ecclesiastical, purposes, a state of affairs which has given rise to a saying that while York holds its body fast, Chester ministers to its soul. Comprising several hamlets, the rush-bearing (which takes place on the second Saturday after the 12th August), led to many rush-carts being drawn to the parish church at Saddleworth.

Left: Uppermill Rushcart 1890 – Front

Right: Uppermill Rushcart 1890 – Back



Mr. George Shaw, J.P., who gave a lecture on the subject of rush-bearing in the Mechanics' Hall, Uppermill, on the 31st December, 1870 states that at that time there were seldom more than two or three, though, in his early days, five or six, and on great occasions, such as election times, double that number appeared; and that he once saw twelve at the church at one time. There are people yet living who remember as many as eight being drawn to the church on the Wakes Saturday. The last time rushes were spread in the church was in 1821; they were often spread to a depth of twelve to fifteen inches. After the rushes ceased to be used on the church floor, they were used as bedding for cattle. Some few years ago the landlord of the "Church Inn" used to give a sovereign a load for them, but of late years no cart has been taken up to the church.

On ordinary occasions the rush-carts came from Cross, Boarshurst, Friezland, Running Hill, Harrop Dale, Burnedge, Uppermill, and Greenfield. The Cross rush-cart always claimed precedence, and was allowed the privilege of backing up to the old porch of the church; the Boarshurst between the gate piers opposite, front to front; the Running Hill was generally stationed under the great yew tree; and the Friezland always went up to the 'Cross Keys Inn.' There seemed to be some tacit understanding that this should be the arrangement. How or why, I cannot tell, but I very well know that fifty years ago any other positions would have been deemed wrong, and entirely out of order.

During the last fifteen years, there have been seven rush-carts built in Saddleworth. Uppermill now takes the lead in the celebration of the wakes, known as "Longwood Thump." Last year (1889), the rush-cart was so badly made that the top fell to pieces, bringing down the riders. A row ensued, and in the melee the cart itself was broken. So disgraceful were some of the scenes witnessed in the evening, that many people thought no rush-cart would be made this year; but the landlord of the "Commercial Inn," being a new one, and wishing to ingratiate himself with his customers, called to his aid a number of men who were anxious to wipe out the failure of the previous year, and it was determined to have a rush-cart in the old style. A committee of twelve was appointed to superintend the affair. Subscriptions were canvassed for, a shilling constituting a member, and the rush-cart builder, now a sailor by profession, and who is considered the best builder of a rush-cart in the neighbourhood, set to work.

Early on Sunday, the 17th August, a number of men went up the hill to the moss reserves to cut the long rushes needed for making the bolts, which must be of a superior kind to the short hard ones used for the body of the cart; and these rushes require to be selected as long as possible, and cut with a knife. They brought down fifteen large bundles of fine, pliant rushes, none less than four feet six inches, and many over six feet in length.

Right: Uppermill Rushcart 1890 – Side view



On the Monday, the builder of the rush-cart proceeded to tie them up into bolts four inches in diameter, rejecting all the broken ones. An assistant, in the meantime, mowed the shorter rushes required for the body of the cart, and brought them in to be tied up in larger bundles ready for the building. The cart was one of the small two-wheeled ones used for carting stone in the neighbourhood, and was sunk in the ground up to the axle, being further secured by slotches, and trestles under the shafts, so as to render it immovable. At noon, on Thursday, the actual building of the cart began. An iron rod, bent to the angle required, was fixed at each corner, and tied at the top, to strengthen the structure and guide the builder in placing the rushes. The body of the cart, having been filled with loose rushes, well-trodden down, the bundles-the ends cut straight with a scythe blade-were laid, keeping the face as nearly as possible to the curves it would finally assume, the longer and finer bolts being placed with the ends to the front and back of the cart only, and not transversely as well, as in the carts made in some places. The usual height to which the rushes are piled in these small carts is from nine to ten feet above the side, but, as the maker was determined to make a finer and better one than that of last year, he decided to build twelve feet. This required great care in consolidating the rushes and keeping to the curves, any deviation from which would have entailed a similar disaster to last year. This great height, for so small a base (six feet by four feet), as will be noticed on looking at the illustrations, gives the rush-cart a very tall appearance, much different to the huge, substantial ones which used to be built in wagons, and which, to the same height, were half as much longer and wider. This peculiarity is to be observed in all the rush-carts built in the hill districts, in former times

as well as the present. Having arrived at a height of ten feet, the builder began to use the bolts made of long rushes, in order to bind the top together as much as possible, and, finally, as these left a small face unfilled along the top, made two good bundles of rushes, which were placed across the others, or lengthways, to fill up this space, and afford a more comfortable seat for the two men who had to ride upon it. The sides swelled out (at the cart wheel) to a distance of eighteen inches, and then gradually sloped upwards and inwards to the top, the greatest projection being at a height of two feet six inches above the side of the cart. The front and back did not curve outwards, but sloped gradually inwards from bottom to top.



Left: Uppermill Rushcart 1881



The builder and his assistants had proceeded so far by Friday night, but a strong, south-westerly gale springing up in the night-time, accompanied by torrents of rain, daylight on Saturday revealed a most unpleasant state of affairs, for, as the cart was being built in a yard sheltered on two sides by high buildings, it had not been thought necessary to secure the top with ropes, and the settling down of the rushes, caused by the rain which soaked in, and the strain of the wind on so high and narrow a structure, had bent over the cart to one side, the mischief being aided by the sinking of one of the wheels. Though somewhat disheartened, the builders commenced to put the best face upon the matter that could be done, for to have had no rush-cart after the trouble that had been taken, and the boasting which had taken place, would never do. To take down the rushes in order to straighten it would be to nearly dismantle the cart, and time was pressing, so it was decided to get boards and ropes, and endeavour to pull the top over into something like its original shape, and then trust to the man who pares the faces of the cart to put as presentable an appearance as possible upon it. This was done, and though several inches were pared off one side, yet it left the cart with a most unpleasant-looking hoist. The substantial

character of the building was, however, shown by the treatment it received, and survived. This led to a delay of a couple of hours, and as it had been stated that the rush-cart would be drawn out about three o'clock, and as much remained to be done, every hand that could be found room for was set to work. Trestles were placed, and whilst one man pared the face of the rushes smooth and into shape with a scythe blade, others were making fresh blades as sharp as a razor, for the toughness and density of the rushes took the edge off the blades very quickly. This paring is rather a dangerous business, for, the blade slipping, the man nearly cut off his thumb, and, two years ago, a man almost cut his left hand off: Others procured two large branches of ash, and tying them securely to strong pointed stakes, drove them down into the rushes at the top of the cart, leaving the centre clear for the riders. Another was trimming the edges, or "feathering," with a pair of shears, whilst the front of the cart was being embellished with the sheet. This was a piece of bleached calico, cut to the shape of the front of the cart, and was ornamented with a border of red and blue braid crossed diagonally, and in the diamonds thus formed were fastened artificial flowers. At the bottom of the sheet was a large rosette of silver and gold tinsel and blue ribbon, above which was a large crown in silver. This was surmounted by the figures "1890," in white, on a black ground. Then came a large heart in silver, on which was displayed some coloured scraps, artificial flowers of various kinds and colours, filled all the blank spaces, and the whole affair, when the sun shone upon it, had a most gorgeous appearance. No plate has been displayed on the Saddleworth rush-carts for some years past. Natural flowers were stuck in the ends of the bolts, both at the front and back of the cart. These were to have been dahlias of various colours, a number of which had been promised, but, failing to arrive, resource was had to the neighbouring gardens, and shift made with such flowers as they afforded.





As the moment for drawing-out arrived the excitement became intense; the inn-yard was crammed with men and boys all wanting to have a hand in hauling in the ropes. Trestles and props were knocked away, the ground in front of the wheels dug out, the ropes run out to their full length, and the stretchers manned by as many as could lay hold (I counted over seventy drawers), who roughly sized themselves, the boys next the cart, increasing in height to the tallest in front. Two men mounted the cart, sitting back to back, and steadied themselves by the large branches before mentioned. This post is one much coveted, although rather dangerous. I have been informed of three men who have fallen off and broken their backs, and have myself witnessed several ugly falls, but these chiefly occur through the rider getting too much beer. In the present instance one of the riders had provided himself with a tin can tied to the end of a long string, so as not to miss his share through inability to reach it. The whip was now brought out, it was twelve feet long, having a lash two feet long at the end, and was an inch and a quarter thick at the handle. It had been well oiled several times in order to make it pliable, and was a most formidable implement. The "band" now collected, consisting of two fifers and a drummer, and,

everything being ready, the men laid hold of the shafts, the boys began "girding," or straining at the ropes, the word "neaw lads" was given, and for a moment quietness reigned, but the music struck up, the men shouted, the cart gave a slight heave, and then rose up to the level ground as the strain told. Till now there had been but little noise, but as soon as the cart began to move freely a most extraordinary sight presented itself, for the music changing to the old rushcart tune, a cheer was given, and instantly the whole of the drawers commenced to dance, if such it may be termed, or rather capered most vigorously, at the same time swaying from side to side of the road, and carrying the stretchers high above their heads. The cart was now run into the square, where it was greeted with a cheer from the crowd assembled to witness the spectacle. Here a rest was taken, beer served round, and the cart and its ornaments criticised by the onlookers.

The scene which presented itself was an extremely picturesque one. On one side of the square runs the high road, lined on one side with stalls and booths of various descriptions, containing nuts, gingerbread, hotpeas, toys, and pots, The square itself was filled with other stalls of a similar character, swing-boats, and a merry-go-round, whilst the whole was backed by the clean-looking grey stone houses, above which towered a couple of factory chimneys, the blue hills in the distance just giving it a rural look, and leading the mind to the quieter scenes beyond.

Having refreshed themselves, and decided on the route to be taken, the carter cracked his whip, the band struck up "The girl I left behind me," the drawers began capering, and, with a shout, the rush-cart started on its way to Greenfield, calling at all the public-houses on the way, where the drawers were liberally regaled with ale and contributions given to the expenses of the show.

The illustrations of the cart here given to show it when the building was completed, and before the sides had been pared to their proper shape and smooth surface. They also show the damage done by the storm, and, notwithstanding the care spent upon its building, the cart, which was to excel any previous one, was finally judged by its makers as "the worst we ever made." It cost just £9 in building, of which the builder had £1 for his services, and weighed about fifty cwt. On the Tuesday, the rushes were given to the owner of the cart, as some recompense for the damage done to it last year.

Revival of the Rushcart Tradition

The Rushcart tradition was revived in 1975 by the newly formed Saddleworth Morris Men; rumour has it that the revival was sparked by the local government boundary changes!



Left: 1975 – the first Saddleworth Rushcart since Victorian times

A suitable cart was found at a local farm and stangs (long wooden poles attached to a rope to enable the rushbearers to pull the rushcart) were bought from a timber firm. With the help of old plans, books and reports, the Rushcart was built in the traditional location of the Commercial Inn, Uppermill. The first Rushcart for over 50 years was ready and on the Saturday morning emerged from behind the Commercial to renew the old tradition. The small 1975 audience is in stark contrast to the hundreds who now gather in Uppermill.





The Rushcart is built onto a two-wheeled cart into a conical shape. It is 13 feet high and weighs 2 tons. It is trimmed and decorated with heather and then on the Saturday morning the front is dressed with a banner made by the Jockey. Tradition dictates that the Morris man with the longest continuous service without already riding the cart, takes his turn as Jockey. He sits astride the Rushcart with only two Rowan branches to support him. He is supplied with ale for the day in a copper kettle. On Saturday the cart is then pulled around the Saddleworth villages by Morris Men from all over the UK, pausing, often at a public house, for displays. There are usually 150 men in the stangs fixed to the cart by a strong rope. On Sunday the Rushcart is taken to St Chad's Church above Uppermill where the top is dismantled and in keeping with tradition the rushes are mixed with fragrant herbs and flowers and then symbolically spread in the aisles.

Encouraged by old friends who now live in Uppermill we decided to pay a return visit in 2017. The M62 is as quiet as it ever is early on Sunday morning so we made good progress, arriving around 9:30 in good time for the planned departure of the rushcart from the Commercial Inn at 10 o'clock. Parking in the village car park was surprisingly easy and we soon made our way to the Commercial Inn, which was doing a roaring trade with the assorted Morris Men. They made a fine sight, in an array of colourful costumes. Particularly prominent were the Saddleworth Morris Men, with their fantastic heather and flower headgear, and the Britannia Coconut Dancers of Bacup, unmistakable with their blacked faces and frilly red and white aprons. They were in no great hurry, but eventually a small group of them set off to retrieve the rushcart from its overnight rest place behind the inn. After taking part in the first Rushcart in 1975 at the age of 5, it was finally the turn of Saddleworth Morris Man Simon Williams as Jockey, riding on top of the 13 feet-high cart. A few minutes later the rushcart was pulled into the main street to the cheers of the other Morris Men and the spectators, who were now lining both sides of the street. Getting the teams of Morris Men organized in their appointed positions to pull the train took quite a bit longer, reluctant as they were to drink up and leave the comfort of the inn. It was well after 10 o'clock before the rushcart was in motion, slowly at first but soon picking up speed to a smart pace. Once out of the village centre the road began to rise on its way to St Chad's, which lay almost a mile away, and the pace dropped, so the assorted crowd of followers had no trouble keeping up with them, even the pushchair brigade. Before long the parade was in open country and St Chad's could be seen in the valley ahead. The road down to the church is quite steep and now it was the turn of the men on the stangs behind the rushcart to use their muscles to brake the heavy cart.





The rushcart was pulled right up to the church, a few sheaves of rushes removed and strewn in the aisle before the well-attended church service – even some of the Morris Men were seen in the gallery. All round the church the banners of the previous rushcarts since 1975 were displayed. A sombre note was struck by the vicar at the end saying that the building was now on the buildings at risk register, and that £300,000 was needed for repairs to the roof, tower and stained glass – the message being dig deep if you want to come back next year!

After the service the Morris dancing started in two locations, in front of the church and also outside the nearby Cross Keys Inn. The grassy bank overlooking the dance floor had become quite overgrown with shrubs and small trees, so it no

longer made such a good grandstand. There were probably two to three hundred people there – and about the same at the Cross Keys – with limited seating, most folk forming a circle around the dancing area. Each group of Morris Men performed for ten to fifteen minutes. It soon became apparent that there were two main types of dance groups; the southern and Cotswolds’ groups having lighter footwear, with more fluid dancing, featuring high leaps. The Saddleworth Rushcart is one of the most important events in the Morris Ring (National Morris Society) calendar and attracts groups from all over the country, so there were plenty of connoisseurs in the crowd, who were only too pleased to explain the different styles.

Although the pubs and food stalls were attracting long queues it was refreshing to find that neither were the prices inflated nor the quality and quantity of the offerings were diminished. Although the dancing was the main event there were other competitions taking place - Gurning, Wrestling, Worst Singer and Clog Stepping etc.



Having taken place annually since 1975 the tradition is now firmly re-established in Saddleworth, and its immediate future is secured. Other areas have also revived their traditional rushcart festivals, Sowerby Bridge being the other venue in Yorkshire, with Littleborough and Whitworth also holding rushcart events. There are plenty of videos on the internet which capture the atmosphere of the event – just google “Saddleworth Rushcart”. See you there next time?



The latest recruit to Morris Dancing saw his opportunity to perform a solo between dances, to the dismay of the following group, who pronounced “That is just not FAIR, how do we follow that?”

THE BRONTË MUSEUMS AND COLLECTIONS AT HAWORTH, WEST YORKSHIRE

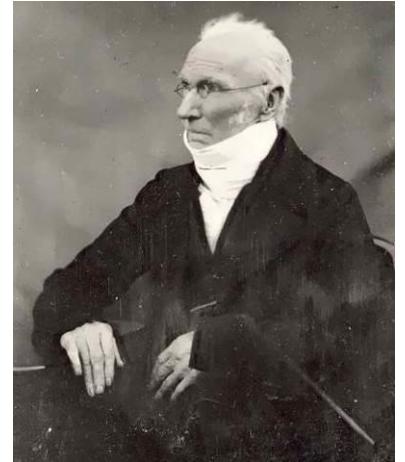
By Claire Mason

The Brontë story is well known but what is not so well known is Haworth's first museum of Brontë relics which opened in 1889 before the Brontë Society was founded. This was a time when collecting Brontë personal items was becoming popular and not that long after the death of Charlotte Brontë in 1855 and her father, Patrick Brontë's death in 1861. After Charlotte died her husband Arthur Bell Nicholls stayed with his ill father-in-law the Reverend Patrick Brontë and cared for him for the remaining six years of his life. Martha Brown, the faithful servant who had nursed Charlotte stayed on to help him with her sisters Eliza and Tabitha. Patrick Brontë had reluctantly relinquished most of his clerical duties to his curate and son-in-law Nicholls.



Left: Portrait Charlotte Brontë by George Richmond dated 1st January 1850, she died on 31st March 1855 aged 38.

Right: Photograph of the Reverend Patrick Brontë taken in about 1860. He died on 7th June 1861 aged 84.



In October 1860 Elizabeth Gaskell, with her daughter Meta were the last visitors to see Patrick Brontë, she had written an authorised account of his daughter's life. Nicholls was unenthusiastic and dreaded having his private life made public but complied with Patrick's wishes. *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* was published in March 1857.

Nicholls expected to succeed Patrick Brontë as Perpetual Curate, and be allowed to remain at the Parsonage, but the Church Trustees voted against him and he resigned. Dismayed and disillusioned by their rejection Nicholls had no wish to remain in Haworth. He packed up his belongings and many of Charlotte's manuscripts and personal effects. Nicholls had also given several items to friends and family servants as keepsakes. On 1st October 1861, the furniture and household contents of Haworth Parsonage were sold at auction. Nicholls then returned to his native Ireland where he lived at The Hill House, Banagher, becoming a farmer and eventually marrying his cousin Mary Bell. He strongly refused to co-operate with would-be biographers who wanted to exploit his connection to the Brontës. He became a bitter and resentful man who never recovered from Charlotte's death, he died on 2nd December 1906 aged 88.



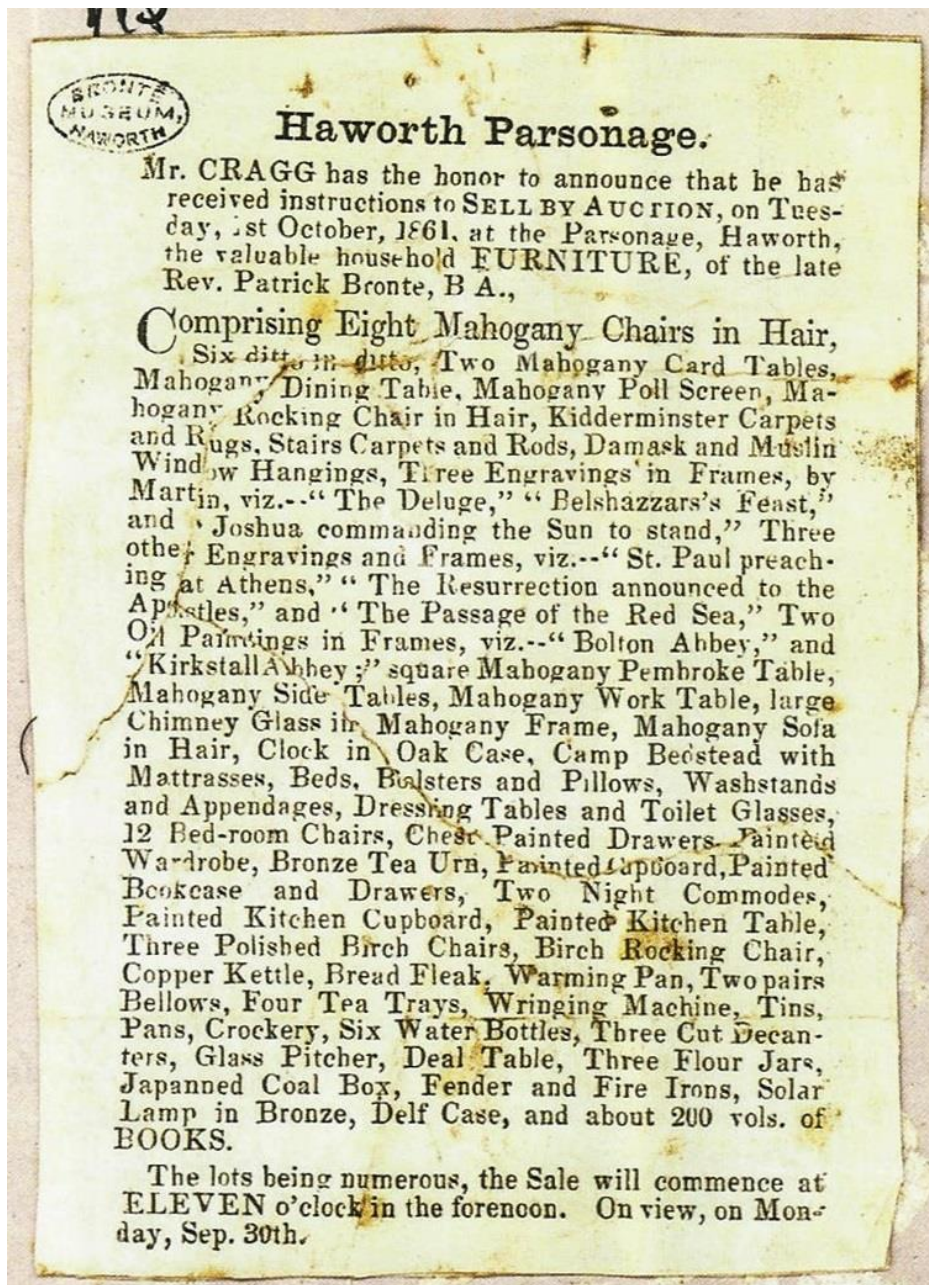
Right: Arthur Bell Nicholls, Charlotte Brontë's, husband and Patrick Brontë's son-in-law. He died on 2nd December 1861 aged 88.

The sale of Brontë collectables in the 1880s

Martha Brown had one of the largest collections of the Brontë sisters' personal belongings which consisted of drawings and paintings and inscribed copies of the novels. The collection had remained virtually intact, although she did sell selected items, presumably on occasions of financial necessity, until her death in 1880 and then her collection was divided between her five surviving sisters all struggling to raise families on limited incomes. When they were sought out by collectors they would often sell items inherited from Martha.

Right: Martha Brown servant and friend of the Brontë family, she died on 19th January 1880 aged 51.





Left: The Bill of sale for the furniture and household contents of the Haworth Parsonage on the 1st October 1861.

Many of these household contents and furniture sold at this auction in 1861 have been returned to the Haworth Parsonage Museum and restored.

Courtesy of the Brontë Parsonage Museum.

In 1886 Martha's recently widowed sister Ann Binns was forced to sell her large collection of Brontë items that she had inherited, and the subsequent auction at Saltaire was one of the first sales of Brontë collectables which included forty-four lots of Brontë personal items. Amongst the principal purchasers at the sale were Francis and Robinson

Brown, cousins of the Brown sisters who were booksellers in Haworth and Keighley, who acquired many of the lots. However, lots they could not obtain were purchased by Alfred Gledhill of Keighley, he had been a collector of Brontë personal belongings over many years and had acquired several paintings, many drawings, and needlework, mostly by Charlotte. He probably bought them from people that were at one time associated with the Brontë family. When his large collection came up for sale in May 1889 it was purchased by the Brown brothers.

The collection included a water colour of Charlotte's favourite dog Floss and an oil portrait of her, apparently the only one painted during her lifetime. There were several letters by Charlotte, one dated Haworth June 13th, 1848 addressed to "My dear Susey," an old friend of the Brontë family, who had left Haworth for a stay at York. Also in the collection was a spotted print dress said to have been worn by Charlotte and her shawl, her brooch, and a lock of her hair, taken after her death, and given to Martha Brown by Nicholls, an autographed copy of 'Jane Eyre,' given to Martha Brown by Charlotte, and her silk patchwork counterpane.

During this period Martha's sister, Tabitha Ratcliffe was happy to show her collection to interested visitors and even sell them if the price was acceptable. The inheritance bequeathed to the other sisters gradually dispersed.

The Browns' Private Museum in Haworth

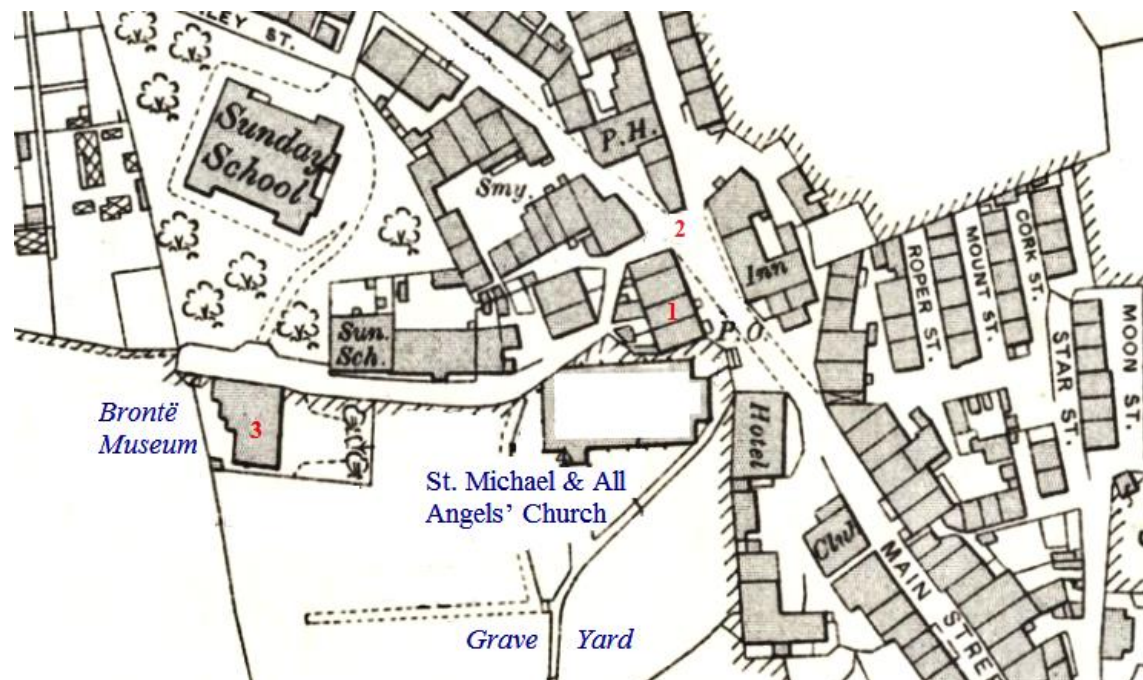
The enterprising Brown brothers now owned a substantial collection of Brontë personal effects and in 1889 opened the first museum of Brontë relics in a room above their Temperance Hotel and Refreshment Rooms at 123 Main Street, Haworth.



Above: This photograph is of the upper part of Main Street Haworth and is dated to about 1893. According to the census returns for 1861, the Temperance Hotel was situated between William Hartley's Ironmonger's and Edwin Feather's Post Office. The tallest of the four buildings to the right of the Church steps is No. 123 Main Street which has a signboard above the window which reads 'Refreshment Rooms'. It is situated between the buildings with signboards reading 'Benzoline' and 'Feather'. The premises have now been taken over by the Haworth Wholefoods. Courtesy of Steven Wood.

Below: Map of Haworth showing the upper part of Main Street, taken from the 1908 25" Ordnance Survey map, sheet CC 10.

1. No.123 Temperance Hotel and Refreshment Rooms, where the Browns Museum was located.
2. Previously the Haworth Tourist Information Centre, where the Brontë Society established their Museum.
3. Brontë Parsonage Museum, the Brontë Society moved into the Parsonage in 1928.



The Browns' private museum of Brontë relics was above their large refreshment rooms that catered for clubs, schools and picnic parties. The museum was not very attractive, the collection was not well displayed and although the Browns sold picture postcards and photographs of Haworth views and the Brontë family the museum did not attract sufficient visitors to stay in business for very long. The Brown brothers did produce a museum catalogue that described the Brontë objects on display. The front cover was illustrated with a drawing of the Reverend Patrick Brontë and contained 12 pages. In total it lists 97 artefacts in some detail but no photographs of the interior of the museum showing any of these objects on display are known to exist.

MUSEUM OF BRONTE RELICS.



P. BRONTE.

DESRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF BRONTE RELICS

NOW IN THE POSSESSION OF

R. & F. BROWN,

123, MAIN STREET, HAWORTH.

Left: The front cover of Browns' catalogue of their Brontë Museum with a drawing of the Reverend Patrick Brontë.

Right: The back page of the Browns' catalogue advertising postcards.

On the back of the catalogue is a list of views and photographs of Haworth and of the Brontë family. Cabinet photographs were 1/1 (5½ pence) and cartes-de-visite were seven pence (3 pence) post free. It encourages visitors to see the 'Collection of Brontë's Relics', which it claims is the 'largest that has ever been got together'.

The catalogue also advertises a booklet by the Reverend Patrick Brontë entitled 'Two Sermons and a Phenomenon' priced at sixpence (2½ pence) post free. The phenomenon was the Crow Hill Flood which occurred on the moors of Haworth in 1824.

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The following is a List of

Views & Photographs of Haworth

AND THE

BRONTE FAMILY

Cabinets, 1/1; Cartes-de-Visite, 7d.; post free.

GENERAL VIEW OF HAWORTH	THE OLD PEW
CHARLOTTE BRONTE	THE OLD PULPIT
THE OLD CHURCH	THE TABLET
THE NEW CHURCH	OLD PARSONAGE
REV. P. BRONTE	THE BRONTE WATERFALLS
REV. W. GRIMSHAW	THE FAITHFUL SERVANT, MARTHA BROWN
MR. NICHOLLS	CHARLOTTE'S FAITHFUL DOG, "FLOSS"
THE INTERIOR OF THE OLD CHURCH	
THE BRONTE GROUP	

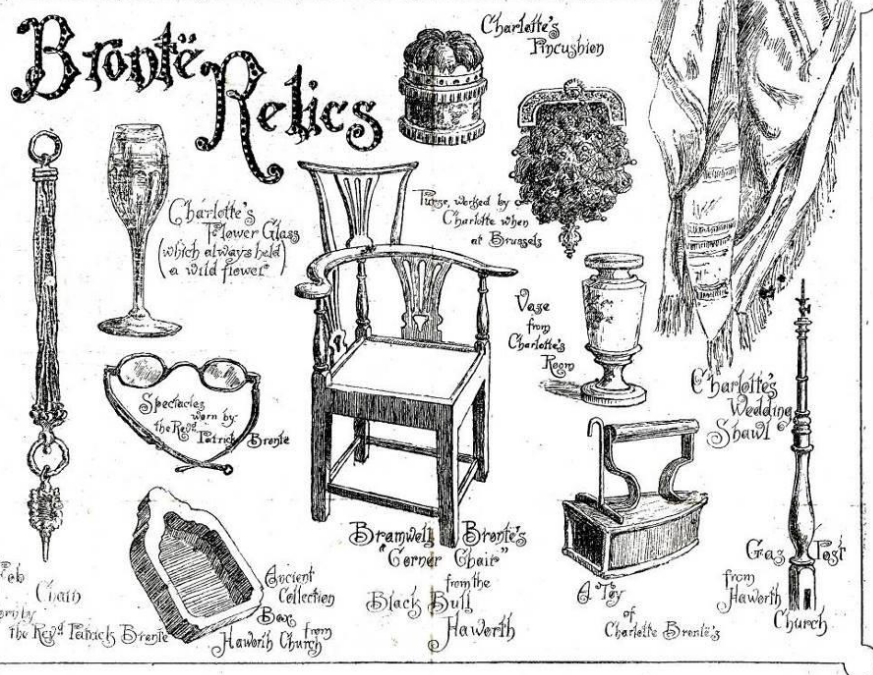
VISITORS TO HAWORTH

Should not fail to see the Collection of Brontë Relics, which is the largest that has ever been got together.

Also a Pamphlet by the Rev. P. BRONTE, entitled,

"TWO SERMONS and a PHENOMENON,"

Or an account in verse of the Extraordinary Disruption of a Bog (better known as the Crow Hill Flood), which took place on the Moors of Haworth on the 2nd day of September, 1824. Price 6d.; Post free, 7 Stamps.



In October 1890 the Browns exhibited their Brontë collection at the Mechanics' annual soirée at Thornton, near Bradford. The committee encouraged owners of Brontë objects to display them alongside the Brown's Museum collection. The Pall Mall Budget published a drawing illustrating 11 of the Brontë objects in the Browns' collection, one of which was Branwell's corner chair from the Black Bull Inn, it is now in the Brontë Parsonage Museum.

Left: Drawing published in the Pall Mall Budget of 30th October 1890 illustrating 11 Brontë objects in the Browns' collection, including Branwell Brontë's corner chair.

Brown's Refreshment Rooms

AND
MUSEUM OF BRONTË RELICS,

123, MAIN STREET, HAWORTH.

Large Refreshment Rooms for Clubs, Schools and Picnic Parties.

The following is a list of Views and Photographs of Haworth and the Brontë family, Cabinets, 1/1; Cartes-de-visites, 7d., post free

Rev. P. Brontë.
Rev. W. Grimshaw.
Mr. Nichols.
The Interior of the Old Church.



[P. BRONTË].

The Brontë Group.
The Old Rev.
The Old Parsonage.
The Old Rectory.
The Old Church.
The Old Parsonage.

General View of Haworth.
Charlotte Brontë.
The Old Church.
The New Church.

The Brontë Waterfalls.
The Brontë Mill.
The Brontë Rectory.
The Brontë Parsonage.
The Brontë Old Rectory.

Visitors to Haworth should not fail to see the Collection of BRONTË RELICS, which is the largest that has ever been got together.

Also a Pamphlet, by the Rev. P. Brontë, entitled: **Two Sermons and a Phenomenon**, or an account in verse of the Extraordinary Disruption of a Bog (better known as the Crow-hill Flood), which took place on the moors of Haworth on the 2nd day of September, 1824.—Price 6d., post free 7 stamps.

x

To further advance their enterprises the Browns produced a promotional leaflet advertising the 'Refreshment Rooms and Museum of Brontë Relics' once again with a drawing of the Reverend Patrick Brontë on the front. This however, did not have the desired effect to encourage sufficient visitors to keep the business viable.

Eventually the Browns moved their enterprise to Blackpool, taking their Brontë collection with them. Then in March 1893 they went over to America, to the Chicago World Exhibition setting up their museum not far from Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. The Browns attempted to sell their Brontë artefacts to rich Americans at the exhibition but failed.

The First Brontë Society Museum

Meanwhile back in Haworth Brontë tourism was becoming very popular, many of the visitors having read Gaskell's biography of Charlotte Brontë, and this created a market for personal belongings of the family. This was a period of active collecting of Brontë artefacts, and people who had purchased items at the Haworth Parsonage sale in 1861 were increasingly sought out by collectors and persuaded to part with their pieces. A few Brontë enthusiasts established the Brontë Society which was founded on 16th December 1893 to promote the

study of the works of the Brontës, to collect and organise a permanent home for the surviving possessions of the Brontës, and to keep them together as a collection before the opportunity was lost for ever. The society rented a small room on the upper floor of the Yorkshire Penny Bank, the building at the top of Haworth Main Street as a public museum to display the collection. This was after the building was taken over by the Yorkshire Penny Bank in 1894, and when they added a short tower and a pyramidal roof in which was carved the name YORKSHIRE PENNY BANK in a rectangular block of stone. Previously the Haworth Mechanics' Institute, founded in 1849, met in the building. On 18th May 1895 the Brontë Museum was officially opened by Sir John Brigg who was a founding member of the Brontë Society and its first President, the day was an important occasion in Haworth and many people travelled from all over the country to be present at the opening.



Above: The building at the top of Haworth Main Street before it was taken over by the Yorkshire Penny Bank in 1894.



Right: This photograph was taken after a short tower and a pyramidal roof was added by the Yorkshire Penny Bank, the name YORKSHIRE PENNY BANK is carved in a rectangular block of stone.



Left: Inside the Brontë Museum which at this time was neatly laid out. Notice the statue of William Makepeace Thackeray, who was one of Charlotte Brontë's literary heroes, on the window sill that overlooks Haworth Main Street, it faced visitors as they enter the main room, and is the same statue that can be seen in the window from the street in the photograph on page 38.



Right: This view of the Brontë Museum shows cases displaying objects belonging to the Brontës and paintings and drawings can be seen hanging on the walls. The entrance door to the museum room can be seen on the right hand side.

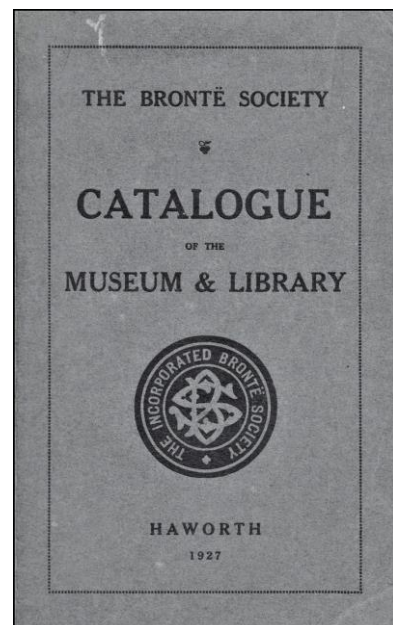
In 1896 the museum had over three hundred exhibits, many of them were donated or loaned and by this time the Brontë Society itself had grown to 260 members. The number of visitors to the museum was also steadily increasing with a recorded number of 10,000 visitors during the summer months of 1897.



Left: Members of the Brontë Society outside the Haworth Parsonage in 1899, at this time it was occupied by the Reverend Thomas William Story who was Rector of Haworth, 1898-1919. He can be seen standing at the back of the group between the window on the left and the main door.

From 1895, the society issued its own publications, encouraging research into the Brontës' works and lives. The Brontë Society Transactions, now known as Brontë Studies is the only journal solely dedicated to Brontë family research. They also publish catalogues of their museum collections and library.

Right: The front cover of the 1927 Catalogue of the Museum & Library published by the Brontë Society.



The Auction of the Browns' Museum of Brontë Relics in 1898

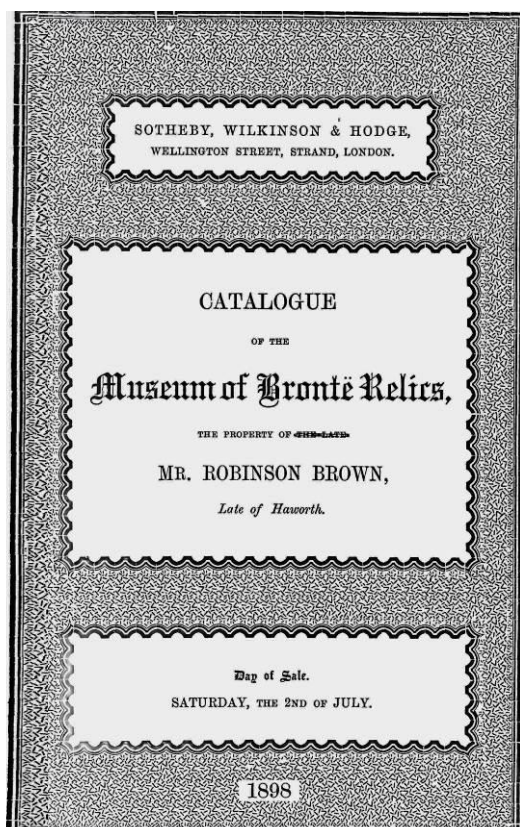
Failing to sell their Brontë collection in Chicago the Browns returned to England to auction it off. The auction was in London at Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge's premises in Wellington Street, Strand on the 2nd July 1898. An itemised sale catalogue was produced of the 'Museum of Brontë Relics' to be auctioned.

A foreword to the 1898 sale catalogue reads 'A large proportion of these relics was given by members of the Brontë family at various times to William Brown (father of Mr Robinson Brown), Sexton at Haworth Church during 20 years of the Rev. P. Brontë's incumbency, and to his niece Martha Brown, who for many years lived with the Brontë family. Those relics which were not inherited from these relatives by Mr Robinson Brown, he acquired from Mr. A. Gledhill, Keighley; Miss Nussey; Mr. W. Scruton, Bradford and others; a few were purchased by him in the locality.'

A further note reads that the collection of 107 lots was to be offered for sale in one lot with a reserve price of £500. It adds: 'If this sum be not realised, it will then be sold in detail as catalogued'. The latter course was taken but the sale failed to attract many serious bidders. The newly formed Brontë Society hoped to buy the collection, but the asking price of £500 was far beyond its means.

Many of the 107 lots failed to find a bidder including J. H. Thompson's signed oil portrait of Charlotte Brontë, lot 28 which is illustrated in the catalogue and her doll's cradle lot 65. Representatives of the Brontë Society were among those present and spent just under £20 on the day, purchasing several Brontë personal belongings. They include an unfinished patchwork counterpane worked by all three sisters' lot 47 which sold for £1. 2s (£1.10), Charlotte's watercolour of Anne's favourite dog Flossy, lot 18 and illustrated in the catalogue for the sum of £12, a lock of Charlotte Brontë's hair taken after her death by Nicholls and given to Martha Brown lot 80 £1. 14s (£1.70), another lock of Charlotte Brontë's hair given by Miss. Nussey to Mr. W. Scruton lot 100 fetched over £3.00. The Brontë Society purchased the remaining items many years later from Francis Brown's daughter.

Left: Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge catalogue of the 'Museum of Brontë Relics' auctioned in 1898.



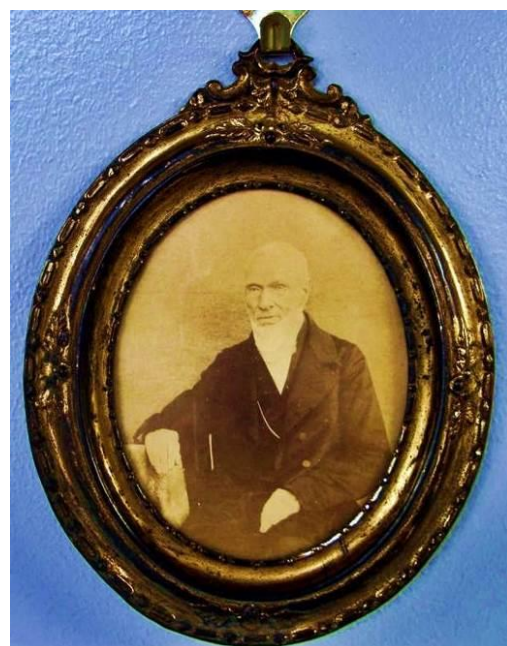
A recent discovery of a Brontë personal possession

One item that came up for sale in the auction was a faded sepia photograph of the elderly Reverend Patrick Brontë mounted in an oval gilt frame. In 1889 it was proudly displayed alongside other Brontë mementos at the Browns' Museum.

This oval framed photograph of the Reverend Patrick Brontë was lot 105 in the catalogue and is believed to have been sold for one shilling (5 pence) which was the lowest amount that could be bid, and was lost to the literary and art world since it was auctioned in 1898.

In 2009 this photograph was rediscovered among papers in an old Ilford film box at a provincial antiques fair still mounted in its original oval gilt frame. With it was a copy of the 1898 auction catalogue.

Right: The oval framed photograph of the Reverend Patrick Brontë auctioned in 2009



An inscription on the back of the portrait, presumably copied from the museum's description, reads, 'Rev. P. Brontë; Various relics including an oval photograph framed and glazed, a small china blue and white plate often used by him and a sword stick. The photograph was owned by Martha Brown and was bought from the Ratcliffes from whom came also the plate. The swordstick is accompanied by a framed certificate from C. Stansfield who sold it to Mr Dixon. It was given by Mr Brontë to John Hudson the elder of Haworth who repaired Mr Brontë's boots for many years and was bought by Stansfield from John Hudson the Younger his son'. Francis and Robinson Brown were cousins of the Brown sisters and presumably obtained the oval framed photograph of the Reverend Patrick Brontë, along with other items from Tabitha Ratcliffe.

The photograph of the Reverend Patrick Brontë was sold in Woking by Surrey fine art auctioneer Ewbank Clarke Gammon Wellers on 24th June 2009 and fetched a hammer price of £1,250, the total cost after auction fees was £1,476. It was bought by a woman from the south of England bidding by telephone. The photograph sold for nearly three times more than expected. Ironically the Brontë Society was once again unable to purchase the photograph due to financial difficulties. However, fortunately for the Brontë Society the oval framed photograph of the Reverend Patrick Brontë was presented to the Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth by the unidentified buyer.

Disposal and Recovery of Brontë Collections

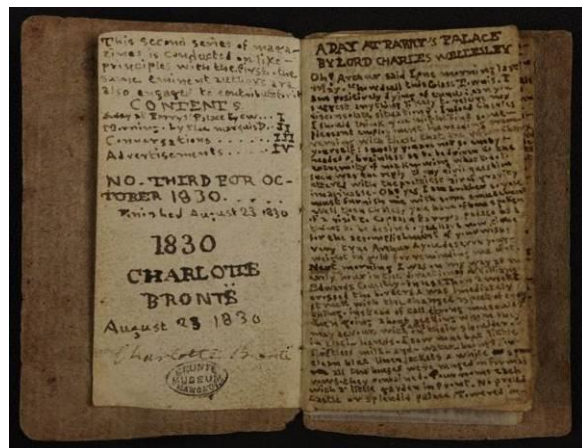
Ellen Nussey, lifelong friend of Charlotte Brontë, had hundreds of letters from Charlotte and after her death Arthur Bell Nicholls became concerned that Charlotte's letters to Ellen might damage her reputation and asked for them to be destroyed, but Ellen refused. Later when Ellen attempted to have the letters published she learned that Nicholls held the copyright. Before her death in 1897 Ellen had been approached by Clement Shorter a journalist on the Illustrated London News, to sell her letters to one of his associates Thomas J Wise, later exposed as the greatest literary forger of the age but at this time still esteemed as a collector, and book dealer, to safeguard them for posterity assuring her that they would eventually be deposited in a national collection. They managed to convince her and this seemed a perfect solution. However, to Ellen's horror, it became obvious that Wise was selling her letters at auction and when Ellen complained that she had been betrayed, Wise threatened her with legal action.

Nicholls, living in Ireland, had most of Charlotte's manuscripts and private effects. He had always been unwilling to part with them so it is debatable how Shorter persuaded Nicholls to part with Charlotte's archives. Shorter was researching a new biography of Charlotte that was to come out the following year under the title *Charlotte Brontë and her Circle* (1896) and had deliberately timed his visit to coincide with the fortieth anniversary of Charlotte's death on the 31st July 1895. Shorter was aware that Nicholls had always been fiercely resistant to books about the Brontës, and was surprised to find him genial and accommodating. A more plausible explanation for Nicholls to receive Shorter must be that he was in desperate financial straits. But Shorter was not working alone in the purchase of Nicholls' collection, his associate Wise also wanted to buy any Brontë manuscripts that were available to provide much of the money to acquire them. Shorter interviewed Nicholls at some length and managed to persuade him to part with the greater part of his manuscripts and letters, including the tiny manuscript books of Charlotte and Branwell's childhood. In 1895 Nicholls was seventy-six years old and it would seem that he was prepared to relinquish his collection for financial gain.

Right: One of the tiny manuscript books by Charlotte Brontë dated 23rd August 1830 but completed in October 1830, when she was 14 years old.

Courtesy of the Brontë Parsonage Museum.

Shorter bought the manuscripts on Wise's behalf, retaining the copyright for himself. During the next two years Wise acquired other letters from Nicholls, and like Ellen Nussey he too was under the impression that the material would eventually be given to the nation. Within a year of obtaining Nicholls's collection Wise began re-selling a large part of it through auction houses, scattering it far and wide with those by Branwell often passed off as the work of his sister Charlotte. Shorter exploited his exclusive control of the rights in a series of biographies of the Brontës. Wise and Shorter's transactions with Nicholls have had severe repercussions for Brontë scholarship.



However, Shorter and Wise did not manage to acquire everything of Charlotte's personal effects that Nicholls had been unwilling to part with during his lifetime. After his death in 1906 at the age of 88, his second wife Mary Ann sold at Sotheby's in 1907 many of her husband's remaining possessions of his former wife Charlotte Brontë. Although unable to compete with wealthy collectors, the Brontë Society managed to acquire several items in this sale and a subsequent one in 1914. Another sale was held in 1916 after the death of Mary Ann who died in 1915 aged 85. These lots contained the remaining Brontë manuscripts, personal possessions, furniture and artwork by the Brontës which Nicholls brought from Haworth in 1861.

Perhaps most significant are two paintings that show likenesses of the Brontës thought to have been lost. They came up in the 1914 sale and were purchased by the National Portrait Gallery. The two portrait paintings are by Branwell Brontë, one is of his three sisters and named the 'Pillar Portrait' and the second one is named the 'Profile' portrait. They were found on top of a cupboard in 1906 but the famous group portrait was badly damaged by creases after being kept folded and still bears the marks.

Right: Painting by Branwell Brontë in 1834 entitled 'the Pillar Portrait'. He hoped to become a professional artist, his three sisters are from left to right: Anne, Emily and Charlotte. A self-portrait of the artist, their brother Branwell Brontë was originally included between Emily and Charlotte but later painted over by a pillar. The painting is now in a delicate and fragile state of preservation and is badly damaged by creases being kept folded for many years.



Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery.



Left: This is apparently all that remains of a group portrait of the Brontës by Branwell Brontë painted in 1833 of which it formed the right-hand part. The identity of the sister in this fragment is disputed, but it may depict Emily or Anne.

Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery.

In an interview in 1895, Nicholls told Shorter that he had cut out a portrait of Emily, from a group picture, which he then destroyed, and gave the fragment to Martha Brown, Brontë's old servant, during one of her visits to Ireland. If the fragment can be identified as that given to Martha, then its identity as Emily is beyond dispute. Nicholls' description of Martha's portrait is 'that really fine and expressive painting' which fits the fragment, but so far no-one has been able to prove whether or not Martha's picture was ever returned to Nicholls. In a letter to Reginald Smith, Charlotte's publishers, written soon after the discovery of the group 'Pillar Portrait' and 'Profile' fragment portrait, Mrs Mary Ann Nicholls remarked that she had not realized that the Brontë portraits had remained in her husband's possession, but she did imply that she had already seen the fragment, 'the one of Emily I had seen, & remember Mr Nicholls telling me he had cut it out of a painting done by Branwell as he thought it good but the others were bad, & he told Martha to destroy the others'. It would seem that Mrs Nicholls links the fragment with her husband's statement to Shorter about cutting out the portrait of Emily and giving it to Martha, and therefore connects the two as one and the same picture, though how or when Martha's picture was returned to Nicholls remains a mystery. However, the identity of the sister in this fragment is still in dispute by some.

Wise died in disgrace in 1937, three years after he had been unmasked as a manufacturer of counterfeit first editions. His personal collection of books and literary artefacts was sold to the British Library and it was shockingly found that few Brontë manuscripts remained, considering the huge amount of material which had once passed through his hands.

Since then most of Nicholls' collection that Shorter and Wise purchased by deception from him and for their ill-gotten gains, betraying his trust has been returned to the Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth.

The New Brontë Museum in Haworth

After the sudden death of the wealthy Philadelphia publisher Henry Houston Bonnell in 1926 his extensive collection of Brontë manuscripts, poems, French devoirs, letters, first editions and personal effects along with the desk on which Emily wrote *Wuthering Heights* was bequeathed to the Brontë Society. Bonnell was a life member of the Brontë Society and collected Brontë material from the 1890s. During his lifetime his collection was considered one of the most valuable and representative in existence. With his bequest the Brontë Society's collection had now outgrown the small one-room museum.

Right: This photograph shows how crowded the museum had become. A plaster medallion portrait of Branwell Brontë can be seen on the far wall, with drawings and paintings by his sisters on the left.



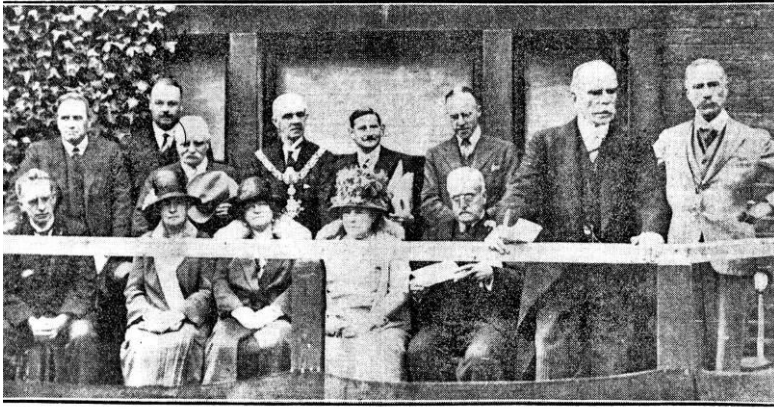
At the Brontë Society's annual meeting in 1927, when their cash assets were just under £50, they approached the Haworth Church Lands Trustees to enquire if they would be prepared to sell the Parsonage. The church authorities indicated that they would be willing to consider selling the Parsonage for the sum of £3,000 which would enable them to build a new home for the rector on West Lane. This was reported in the *Yorkshire Observer* and was read by Sir James Roberts's wife who suggested that he should buy the parsonage for the Brontë Society to provide them with a permanent home for their museum and library. Sir James Roberts, a local man who had made a fortune in the textile industry thought this an excellent idea and paid the asking price of £3,000. He not only presented the building to the Brontë Society but he also contributed a further £1,500 towards the cost of refurbishment and fire-proofing the dining room for the Bonnell collection. The Brontë collection was transferred to the



Brontë Parsonage Museum which was officially opened on 4th August 1928, thousands arrived at Haworth to witness its official opening.

Right: The 4th August 1928 was a glorious day that brought out thousands for the opening of the Brontë Parsonage Museum. The crowd watched Sir James Roberts standing on a platform giving his address.

AT THE BRONTË MUSEUM OPENING.

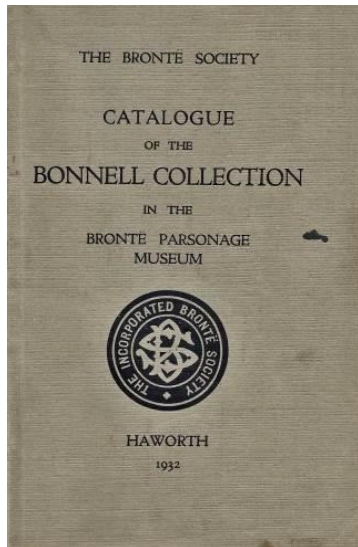


View of the platform during Sir James Roberts' address at the opening of the Brontë Parsonage Museum and Library last Saturday at Haworth. Among those included in the picture are Sir Edward Brotherton (seated next to Sir James), Lady Roberts, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Bradford, the Mayor and Mayoress of Keighley, Mr. Coulson Kernahan (on Sir James' left), and Mr. J. A. Symington (in the centre at the back).

Source: G. Crowther, Keighley.

Left: The opening of the Brontë Museum and Library reported in the Keighley News, Saturday 11th August 1928. The photograph is of the platform erected in the garden for special guests. After Sir James Roberts' address he handed over the deeds to Sir Edward Brotherton the Brontë Society President (seated next to Sir James). Among those included in the photograph are Lady Roberts, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Bradford, the Mayor and Mayoress of Keighley, Mr. Coulson Kernahan (on Sir James left), and Mr. J. A. Symington (in the centre at the back). The photograph is by George Crowther who ended his career as editor of the Keighley News from 1950 to 1956. He also served on the Council of the Brontë Society.

Right: Photograph of the dining room at the Brontë Parsonage Museum in 1930. It then housed Bonnell's large collection displayed in glass cases. A framed photograph of Henry Bonnell can be seen hanging on the wall.



Left: Catalogue of the Bonnell Collection published in 1932 by the Brontë Society.

The Brontë collection continued to grow, and today the museum is considered to contain the world's largest Brontë collection. Also the many subsequent bequests allow the Society to bid successfully for Brontë items that come up for sale at auctions. The rooms in the parsonage have been restored by the Brontë Society as closely as possible to their appearance when the Brontës lived there. Much of the original furniture is used and many of their personal belongings are on display.

Right: The sitting room where the family spent time. The portrait over the fireplace is of Charlotte Brontë. Courtesy of the Brontë Parsonage Museum.



The Haworth Parsonage

The Haworth Parsonage has been home to several families but until 1778 there was no official Parsonage at Haworth. This was when the Church Land Trustees acquired the land on which the Parsonage now stands, near the church. It was built of millstone grit, quarried from the moors behind the house and completed in 1779. The house is situated above the village and separated from it by the church and a square garden. At the rear was a backyard with a toilet and a range of outbuildings. A barn that stood across the lane from the Parsonage was also owned by the Parsonage. The Reverend John Richardson (1763-1791) was the first to occupy the parsonage house. He was followed by the Reverend James Charnock (1791-1819). After his death in 1819 he was succeeded by the Reverend Patrick Brontë (1820-1861) and in April 1820 he moved into the Parsonage with his family.

Right: This photograph of Haworth Parsonage was taken from the church tower around 1860. It shows how the building looked after it was completed in 1779.



Left: Haworth old church and Parsonage in about 1860 before the Reverend John Wade carried out extensive alterations to both of them in the 1870s. Note the total lack of trees in the churchyard.

Following the Reverend Patrick Brontë's death in 1861 the Haworth Parsonage was occupied by the Reverend John Wade (1861-1898). By now

the Parsonage house was generally in a poor state of repair, Wade carried out the necessary alterations and repair work that was needed. He also found the Parsonage too small for his extended family and servants, plans were drawn up to extend the Parsonage house and in the late 1870s a two-storey gable wing was added to the north of the Parsonage. Consequently there was a shocked reaction to Wade's alterations to the Parsonage by Brontë devotees.

Right: The Haworth Parsonage in about 1900 after the Reverend John Wade added a gable wing. The barn on the right which was a stonemason's workshop in Brontë's times is just out of shot in the above photograph, it was demolished in 1903. The top of Church Street is visible and part of the Sunday School can be seen at the bottom right hand corner.



The old church of St. Michael and All Angels was also in a poor state of repair. In 1870 he installed a new clock in the old church tower by increasing the tower by a few feet and in 1872 carried out major internal alterations. He also wanted to improve the conditions of the church, which were dark, damp and malodorous, so when Michael Merrall, one of the local mill owners offered £5,000 towards the cost of a new church he gratefully accepted. With the exception of the tower, the old church was demolished in 1879 and rebuilt on the same site. The new church was consecrated in 1881 and is that which exists today. The outcry over the demolition of the old church came largely from outside Haworth and was made by those who were motivated by the Brontë sisters' writings, Wade however, saw the church as a place of worship, not literary pilgrimage. Nicholls was also in favour of the new church, saying that 'it was a house of prayer and not a shrine to his wife or her sisters'.

From the beginning of his appointment in 1861 Wade gained a reputation for antipathy towards Brontë literary followers and regularly refused visitors admission to the Parsonage.

Right: This photograph shows the old church of St. Michael and All Angels shortly after a new clock was installed. The new clean stonework on the upper part of the tower can clearly be seen.



Left: The new church of St. Michael and All Angels after it was rebuilt in the 1880s. The design does not resemble the old church, only the tower with its clock remains from the old church building.

Following on from Wade the Parsonage was the home to three further incumbents, the Reverend Thomas Story (1898-1919), the Reverend George Elson (1919-1925) and the Reverend John Crosland Hirst (1925-1928) was the last incumbent to occupy Haworth Parsonage before it became the Brontë Parsonage Museum in 1928. Very few Brontë devotees were allowed to enter the Parsonage apart from the friends of the families of the successive rectors who have lived there. Hirst the last incumbent was used to visitors but was put off by some of them. In Hirst's time photographs of the interior of the Parsonage was made available as postcards in an attempt to satisfy the curiosity of tourists to Haworth.

Right: Two 1920s postcards of the interior of the Parsonage made available in an attempt to satisfy the curiosity of tourists to Haworth.

The Hirst family was extremely reluctant to leave the Parsonage, they had to stay with Michael Merrall at Law House for some weeks until the building of a new rectory was complete because a gale had delayed the building work. They eventually settled into the new rectory and forgave the Brontë Society, their son William joined the Society and his father became a member of its council.



All of these later occupants witnessed the development of tourism in Haworth, and experienced the trials and tribulations of living in the literary home of the Brontës.

After the Haworth Parsonage was taken over by the Brontë Society it became the home to four museum custodians and their families. Fred Smith who had acted as caretaker of the museum above the Yorkshire Penny Bank handed in his resignation just before the Brontë Society took over the Haworth Parsonage. The Brontë Society appointed 32 year old Harold Gilliam Mitchell an ex-serviceman as custodian. In September 1928, Mitchell and his wife, along with their small son Raymond moved into the few rooms in the Wade wing of the



Parsonage. Mary, Harold's wife became his assistant and they both sorted out the collection of artefacts transferred from the Yorkshire Penny Bank building. They cleaned the building, cared for the contents and arranged the Museum displays. When the museum was open Harold issued tickets to visitors from a little kiosk and sold postcards and souvenirs in the Brontës' old kitchen. On 1st May 1961 Harold Mitchell retired, he had lived and worked at the Parsonage for thirty-three years.

Left: Harold Mitchell standing on the stone steps at the front door of the Haworth Parsonage in 1947. Photograph Courtesy of Ann Dinsdale

After Harold Mitchell's retirement, the post was upgraded and Geoffrey Beard, Assistant Keeper of Leeds City Art Gallery, was appointed as Curator of the Brontë Parsonage Museum, moving into the new flat at the back of the Parsonage with his wife Margaret and their young daughter Helen. However, it is not surprising that Beard, a museum professional in fine arts resigned after finding out that he was expected to do the duty of the doorman, sweep floors and sell tickets on the front door. He must have felt humiliated by the

Brontë Society that they should require a professional person to undertake such duties. This illustrates how inexperienced and unprofessional council members of the Brontë Society were at this time. Needless to say he resigned after a few months to take up a new post at Cannon Hall in Cawthorne, near Barnsley. Following on from Geoffrey Beard the last two custodians to live on the Parsonage premises were Joanna Hutton and Norman Raistrick who was already working at the Parsonage as a doorman so there was none of the misunderstanding which had affronted Geoffrey Beard. He retired on 21st March 1981 moving out of the Parsonage flat in the previous December.



Increasing numbers of visitors led to more staff and the custodian's flat was converted into much-needed office space and a meeting room for the Brontë Society Council.

Left: The Brontë Parsonage Museum owned by the Brontë Society. The Brontës lived here from 1820 until Patrick's death in 1861.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Brontë Society for permission to reproduce some of the photographs in this article that are from the collection at the Brontë Parsonage Museum. The information on the various occupants of the Parsonage is drawn from Ann Dinsdale's book 'At Home with the Brontës' 2013. I am indebted to Haworth Historian Steven Wood for information relating to the Browns' Museum and for providing digital images of the Browns' museum catalogue, advertising leaflet and the drawing of Brontë objects from the Pall Mall Budget, 30th October 1890 taken from William Scruton's scrap book, housed in Keighley Local Studies Library. Also for providing archive newspaper reports and his valuable suggestions.

THE TRAGIC STORY OF LILY COVE – A YOUNG LADY AERONAUT AT THE HAWORTH GALA

One of Britain's Youngest Female Daredevil Balloonists and Parachutists in the early 1900s

By Margaret Mills

Most people think of Haworth in the context of the famous Brontë sisters, but there are other fascinating histories associated with this old Yorkshire village. One connection is that of Lily Cove a balloonist in the early 1900s when ballooning was all the craze and swept across the country. The thrill of witnessing a woman ascend, then parachute to the ground, drew thousands of paying spectators.

Elizabeth Mary Cove better known as Lily Cove was born on the 7th November 1885 in Haggerston, which is considered part of London's East End, but her birth was registered in Poplar in the East End of London.¹ At her baptism in April 1886, her father was named as Thomas and her mother Annie. Lily was an only child, her parents never married, and her mother died a few years after she was born. At the age of four Lily was enrolled in school by her great uncle George Cove and by the time she was seven, she and her father were living with a woman called Margaret. Lily was brought up by her father a shoemaker, who had several partners, and because he was often in and out of prison, she was looked after by various relatives.

Lily's father Thomas served a string of prison sentences for sex offences against young girls and women, his first one was in 1899 and by 1912 he had been in and out of prison at least four times serving sentences ranging from three months to twelve months in various prisons in London.² At the turn of the 20th century most children left school before they were 13 and the opportunities for a working class girl were very limited, either going into domestic service or factories working long hours for very low pay with little time off. Lily changed her surname to her father's mother's name and became Elizabeth Nelly when she left her poverty stricken home at around 15 to live and work for a well-to-do family as a nursemaid and servant at 112 Downs Park Road, Hackney.³ She eventually became known as Lily Cove when she became a daring young aeronaut.

In the early 1900s Lily could have taken her young charges to see balloon performances at a gala or a fair on Hackney Downs or in Victoria Park, from where balloonists ascended, and parachuted down. It was probably watching these displays that inspired her to change her life. Lily could have seen or met Captain Frederick Bidmead at one of these galas, who besides being an experienced aeronaut ran a balloon and parachute manufacturing business, and around 1904 she went to work for him sewing balloons in his workshop.⁴

Right: A postcard of Lily Cove, suggests the description as a handsome young lady with a fine figure and long golden hair was not entirely showmanship jargon. Lily chose to become a balloonist, and travel the country, being the centre of attention was very appealing to her.



Throughout the country from the 1780s to the early 1900s balloonists were giving displays which added to the drama of an event.⁵ Captain Bidmead was looking for a young woman to join his show and soon singled out Lily to train as a balloonist, he must have seen some potential in her, other than her being a handsome young lady with a fine figure and long golden hair⁶ which might have also had something to do with it. Lily was charismatic, fearless and a fast learner, perfectly suited to becoming a liberated lady balloonist.

For a number of years Captain Bidmead had been going up in balloons and parachuting to earth, during this time he had made 400 balloon ascents and 83 parachute descents,⁷ but it would be a better crowd puller to see a woman parachuting rather than a man. At first Captain Bidmead did a duo display with Lily, using a double harness, leaping from the balloon where they had simply held on with a ring or perched precariously on a trapeze bar, then floating, as the parachute opened towards the upturned faces of admiring crowds.

Lily was always outgoing and fearless and after two years Captain Bidmead considered her an able aeronaut who had never had an accident. Soon Lily was jumping solo and by 1906 aged 20, she had made 20 successful ascents alone, the last one was at Cambridge on Monday 4th June a week before the Haworth Gala. Her parachute had been specially made for her. She was now earning herself a country-wide reputation as a daring aeronaut, travelling the country with her manager, Captain Bidmead, performing her daring, death-defying stunts before amazed crowds of people at galas and country shows. She would ascend beneath a gas filled balloon, and then jump from the balloon, parachuting to the ground. In today's world, where the wonders of transport and air flight are everyday things, we can only imagine the amazement of the watching crowds in the early 1900s.

The Haworth Gala

In June 1906 it was decided that the eighth annual Haworth Gala promoted by the Haworth and Oxenhope United Friendly Societies and Tradesmen's Association would be held in aid of the Victorian Nurses Association. The turnout of previous galas had been poor, and interest in them seemed to be on the decline. Some blamed the steep ascent of Main Street, for parades, saying it was just too much for the heavy wagons. This year the committee were delighted to be able to secure Miss Lily Cove, the young aeronaut as the guest appearance and the main attraction under the direction of Captain Bidmead her manager. They were hoping she would draw the crowds by making a gas-filled balloon ascent from the Gala site on West Lane football ground and descend by parachute further up the Worth Valley near Ponden.



In fact Captain Bidmead was no stranger to the area. He had appeared at Keighley's annual gala held on behalf of the hospitals on the evening of Saturday 18th June 1898 which was held in Victoria Park and it was during a flight from here that he had his worst accident in his career.⁸

Left: A photograph of Captain Frederick Bidmead aged about 30 in c.1897. He is wearing one of his medals lost in an accident. Photograph by Geobethoff, of Pentonville Road, London

He was standing in for his employer August Gaudron, who was appearing at the Alexandra Palace that day. At 8.30 pm he ascended into a very dull sky with dense clouds and there was a strong south-westerly breeze. When trying to parachute down, the parachute ropes entangled with the balloon rope which had been strengthened by the rain to such a degree that it refused to snap when he jumped. Captain Bidmead found himself dangling under his balloon in mid-air, unable to separate himself. He was able with great difficulty to double himself up to catch one of the grappling irons, belonging to the balloon. In this way he was carried, clinging desperately, all the way to Pontefract some 27 miles away 'as the crow flies'. Somewhere in the clouds, he lost his cap, which was later retrieved from a local sewerage plant, and also one of his medals along the way. Finally his balloon descended and dragged him across two fields, through a canal and finally halted painfully, in a thick hedge in the grounds of Stapleton Hall, Darrington north-west of Pontefract, in a very battered condition.

The flight had taken the balloon just over 50 minutes, he was soon rescued and carried exhausted, covered in blood and mud to Stapleton Hall where he received much needed assistance. A telegram was sent to Keighley to say that Captain Bidmead was alive. He stayed there the night, and next morning, scratched but sufficiently recovered to return to Keighley by train where he was given a hero's welcome with a brass band and he made a speech from the railway platform. At the time Captain Bidmead said that the jump would have been his 84th ascent had he been successful.

Captain Bidmead and Lily arrived in Haworth from Cambridge on Friday 8th June 1906, the day before her performance. It was to be Lily's twenty-first ascent by balloon and sixth parachute jump. They had reserved separate rooms at the Old White Lion Hotel, at the top of Main Street, Haworth. Lily had room number 7, and soon made friends with the young daughters of the proprietor, who saw her as glamorous, adventurous, exciting, one of the new modern young 'liberated' women. Lily loved life, she was an outgoing girl, and in the evening would sit in the bar chatting and laughing with locals and the other guests of the hotel where they were staying.

Left: The Old White Lion Hotel, situated at the top of Main Street, Haworth where Lily, and Captain Bidmead stayed

Although some of the older generation were not so sure, they disapproved of a young woman travelling around the country with a man that was not her husband. Of course there was no suggestion at all that the relationship between Lily and Captain Bidmead was anything other than a platonic employee employer relationship, but he must have got to know her quite well. More disapproved of by some was just before going up with the balloon she would pull off her skirt with a flourish revealing her beribboned and frilly bloomers beneath, a risqué thing to do in the early 1900s. This was all part of her act and possibly devised to shock, but it was also a safety requirement so that her clothes would not get caught up with the parachute or any of the devices.



Lily's stay in Haworth is likely to have included a visit to the first Brontë Museum, housed on the upper floor of the former Yorkshire Penny Bank virtually next door to the Old White Lion Hotel. It was the Tourist Information Centre until January 2019, it is now a community centre, the museum moved into the Parsonage in 1928. The Brontë sisters Charlotte, Emily and Anne had made Haworth a place of literary pilgrimage, with such novels as *Jane Eyre* published in October 1847, *Wuthering Heights* published in December 1847 and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* published in June 1848. But in 1906 Haworth locals were less thrilled by the memory of the Brontë sisters, Brontëmania had not quite taken off, they were more excited by the charming, cheerful aeronaut Lily, who was more to their liking.

Handbills were printed, given out and displayed in windows advertising the gala and Lily Cove's special parachute descent, with the Haworth brass band to play for dances. No charge was made and all contributions were given to the Nurses' Association. These nurses made around 232 visits in one month to the homes of the sick and relied on fundraising events.

Right: An original handbill of the Haworth Gala 1906. Although somewhat damaged and creased it is a rare survival. It advertises Lily Cove as the special attraction and was handed out at the time in the districts around Haworth Courtesy of Steven Wood

Those who planned to attend the gala and watch Lily's balloon ascent must have been filled with excitement and anticipation. They were used to working as many as 60 hours a week in the local mills. On Saturday, 9th June 1906, gala day, the weather was hot and airless the streets were brightly coloured with strings of flags and other decorations giving a festive appearance and three special trains ran from Keighley. Spectators arrived in droves for a well-earned day out.



The procession was headed by dignitaries followed by comic couples in fancy dress, and four Sunday school wagons with children decorated as fairy-tale characters and young ladies dressed in costumes of various nationalities. Then came the comic cyclists along with squads of ambulance men and Merrall's fire engine also joined the procession. They were also horses, light, draught and heavy, with their harnesses gleaming in the sunshine. All these, along with the Haworth Brass Band and members of the Haworth local Council in a waggon made their way up Haworth's steep Main Street, and breathless finally arrived at the West Lane Football Field which was used for the gala that day, it is now home to the Haworth Cricket Club. It was reported in the newspapers that the procession was not as lengthy as usual with a noticeable reduction in the number of tradesmen.⁹ The Friendly Societies had not turned out in any number and there was a lack of the usual cyclists in fancy dress.

The Haworth gala was dominated by the wealthy Merrall family whose textile mills were major employers in Haworth. They enjoyed social influence and power and many of the cups and trophies were named for the family, the nurses association was a particular charitable project among the Merrall ladies.¹⁰ The Merralls built and lived in a Gothic Mansion, Longlands Hall, on Lees Lane, near Haworth, which is now the Haworth Youth Hostel. It was rumoured that their rich and eligible 29 year old son, Charlie E. Merrall was attracted to Lily.



Above: Longlands Hall the former home of the Merrall family, it is now the Haworth Youth Hostel

The sunshine drew a crowd of about 6,000, including representation of the Keighley Board of Guardians, which gathered in the gala field. There were attractions to suit all tastes. The Methodist Sunday School had provided four tableaux, various competitions had to be judged, prizes presented and speeches made before the main attractions could take place.



Left: The site of the gala field on West Lane where Lily went up in a balloon, then it was a football ground, now home to the Haworth Cricket Club

Mrs R. E. Weatherhead of Bingley whose mother was Mrs George Merrall, was one of the main speakers, she spoke on behalf of the Victorian Nurses praising their good works, then presented the cups and medals. Eventually, after all the speeches and tributes ended, the gala got off to a good start and Haworth and Kildwick Brass Bands played to the crowd. Other attractions included the Keighley Wiffan Wuffan Wuffan and

the Haworth Bingem Bangem Comic Bands, there were the Baily Brothers Punch and Judy, conjuring and ventriloquy display by a Monsieur Ducarel, and exhibitions by the local Cross Roads Athletic and Ladies' Physical Culture Clubs. However, the organizers could not relax about Lily reigniting enthusiasm for the gala until they had seen her performance finish safely and successfully.

Right: The Haworth Brass Band, it was a prominent feature of many village events. This photograph shows them leading a procession on May 31st 1913, 7 years after playing at the gala when Lily went up in a balloon





Left: The Haworth Bingem Bangem Comic Band in 1905. They took part in the Haworth Gala procession on Saturday, 9th June 1906. They blacked their faces and wore ornate fancy dress to enhance the comic effect
 Courtesy of Steven Wood

The First Balloon Attempt

The highlight of the day's entertainment was Lily Cove's balloon ascent and parachute descent arranged for 7 that evening. When the moment eventually came a large crowd gathered round the balloon. Her parachute was fastened to the balloon's netting by a cord calculated to snap when she jumped. It was expected that Lily would float up the Worth Valley and jump at a pre-determined spot between Stanbury and Ponden. A pipe from the local gas supply had been laid to the gala field to fill the balloon with gas, the crowd became silent as the inflated balloon was released, but it refused to take off. For an hour and a half vain attempts were made to get the balloon into the air. Some blamed the humid weather conditions, others the local gas supply being cut off too early, but the disappointment was overwhelming.

At 8.30 pm after six attempts had been made Lily was forced to abandon the ascent, after discovering a tear in the fabric of her balloon. She was disappointed, as it would have been her 21st balloon ascent and Captain Bidmead declared that it was the first time in his experience that this had happened. Lily looked rather pale as she accompanied Captain Bidmead and Mr. Charlie E. Merrall, the local mill owner's son and vice-president of the Gala Committee onto the stage, and reluctantly announced that another attempt would be made in two days' time on the evening of Monday 11th June.¹¹ The gala finished at about 10 pm with a display of fireworks.

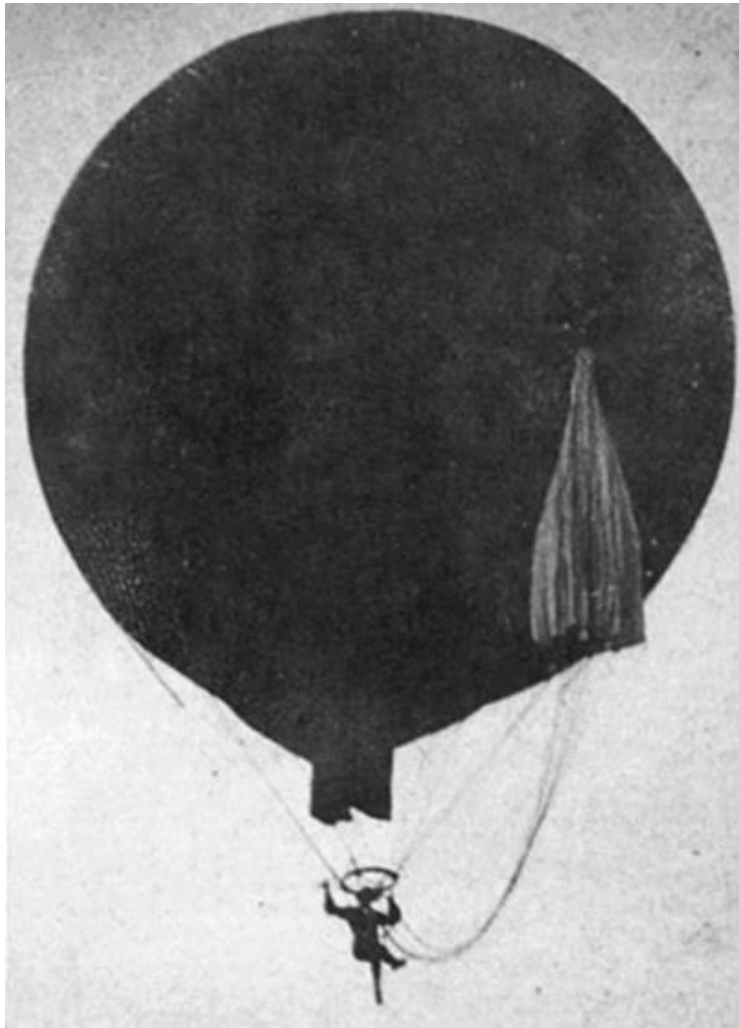
Lily and Captain Bidmead went back to the Old White Lion Hotel to relax after their ordeal and the following morning they repaired the tear that had appeared in the balloon during their attempt of the previous evening. Afterwards they went to take tea in Haworth at the home of Albert Best, Secretary of the Gala Committee. The unsuccessful balloon attempt had unnerved Albert and he tried to persuade Lily to call off the ascent planned for the following day, but she would have none of it. Lily was quite determined and was an impetuous young woman.¹²

The Second and Successful Balloon Attempt

Good fortune seemed to favour her next attempt, on Monday 11th June, the weather was pleasantly warm and sunny, a real summer's day with only a slight breeze. The crowds gathered once again, at the gala field and at various vantage points on the moor, to watch Lily's balloon ascent. Lily Cove and Captain Bidmead drove in style from the Old White Lion Hotel in a motor-car belonging to Mr. Charlie E. Merrall, vice-president of the Gala Committee and Lily received a rousing reception. The big brown balloon, covered with netting was filled with gas and inflated without any problems, it was checked and everything seemed set fair for a successful event in front of an estimated 7,000 spectators.

Lily was in a cheerful mood, dressed in a white frilly blouse, treating the appreciative crowd by whipping off her skirt to reveal bloomer-clad legs before taking her seat on the trapeze bar under the balloon, holding on by the ropes. Captain Bidmead checked the technicalities for a safe ascent and parachute jump.

The parachute was fastened to the netting on the sides of the balloon by a piece of cord tested to break at 56 lbs. pressure. Sergeant David Pearson, of the West Riding Police at Haworth, witnessed all the preparations, and particularly noted the hooks firmly fastened at the shoulders. She had been approached by Keighley Friendly Society Gala officials with a view to a performance the following Saturday, and was anxious that her Haworth jump should be a success. At the last moment Lily asked for a handkerchief, and Captain Bidmead gave her his.



Left: This photograph was taken by Mr G. W. Holmes of Haworth, 50 seconds after leaving the ground. It shows Lily Cove waving to the crowds as she ascends from the football field on West Lane. She is sitting on a trapeze bar attached to the parachute by a harness, and the parachute is attached to the side of the balloon. This is the fatal balloon ascent in 1906 and about 9 minutes after this photograph was taken Lily jumped from the balloon and was killed

At 7.40 pm on that warm summer's evening, the balloon rose steadily and easily up into the air. A great cheer and whistles went up from those gathered on the ground. Lily, swinging her legs from her trapeze seat, looked down at the spectators and waved her white handkerchief at the turned up faces of the amazed crowds waving their caps as she passed over their heads. Captain Bidmead climbed into a pony and trap and trotted after her followed by Charlie Merrall in his motorcar, the first in Haworth.

He seemed determined to impress Lily by driving below her. The balloon floated up and drifted away on the breeze across Stanbury towards Ponden until the hills hid it from the watching crowds in Haworth. As she went up the Worth Valley her balloon silhouetted against the evening sky, Lily could see a peaceful

scene of patchwork fields divided by stone walls, farms with hills beyond. At Stanbury people came out of their houses to watch and wave as she floated overhead then the wind began to blow her on towards the shining expanse of Ponden Reservoir. Mr. Cowling Heaton who ran the Scar Top Refreshment Rooms saw the balloon approach the back of his house.

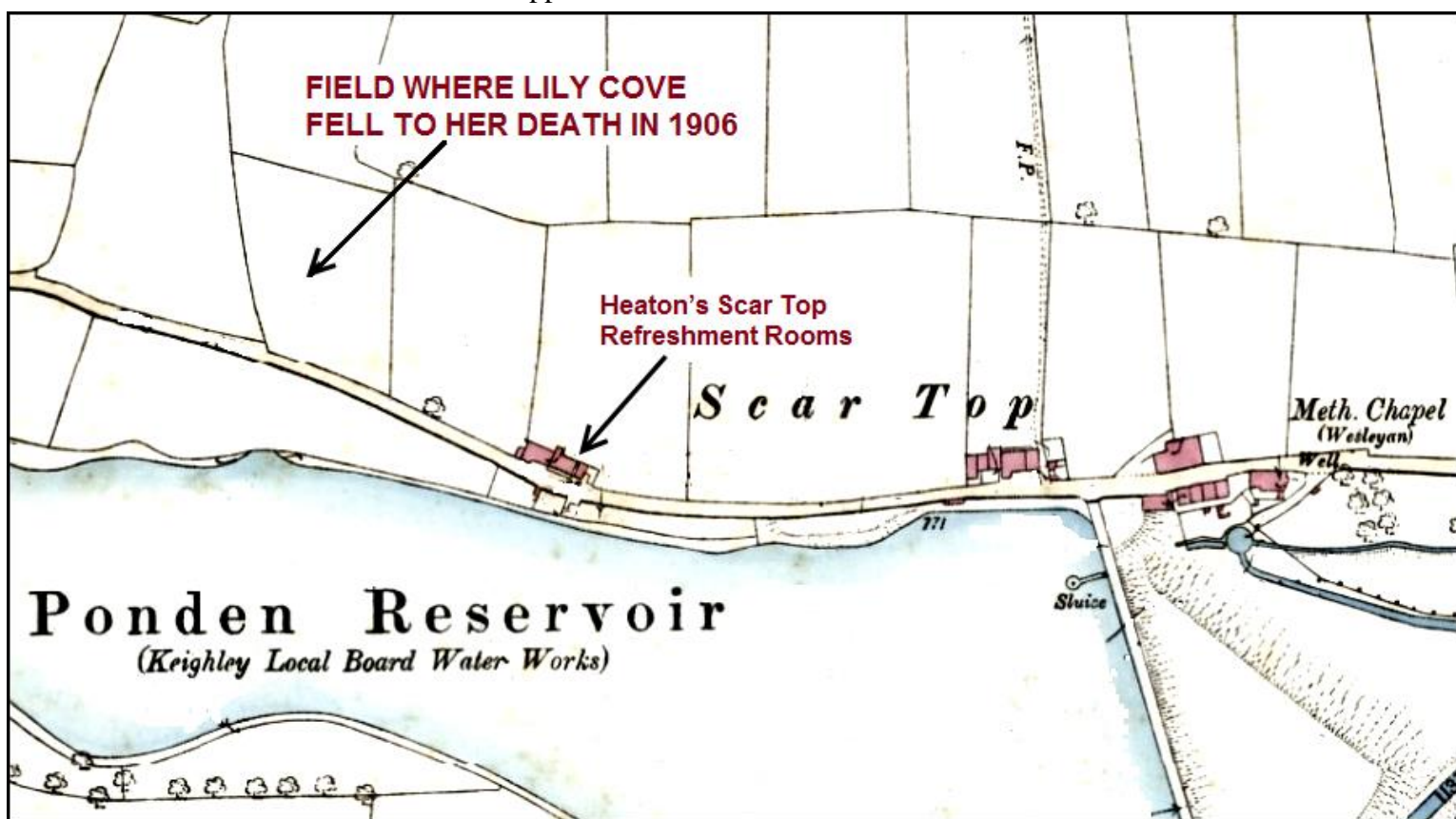
Right: Captain Frederick Bidmead managed Lily Cove for three years before her tragic death on Monday 11th June 1905. He is seen in this photograph wearing his cap he lost somewhere in the clouds as he was carried in mid-air to Pontefract (see page 49)



According to plan, Lily would wait until the balloon reached the correct altitude before detaching herself from it and jump off, releasing her parachute and floating dramatically and safely to earth in the performance she had perfected. As Captain Bidmead followed her in his trap along the country road, he calculated the height of the balloon to be 600 to 700 feet and the conditions for a safe descent were favourable. Suddenly, something went catastrophically wrong, she began dropping towards Ponden reservoir. This was when Captain Bidmead lost sight of the balloon for a few seconds behind houses in the foreground, he next saw it drifting up without Lily who had jumped and was out of his sight. The balloon now light without Lily floated on towards Laneshaw Moor a few miles north-west. At Haworth, Sergeant David Pearson, straining his eyes, saw the parachute open, then lost sight of it between the hills.

The Accident

What really happened to Lily, and why, no-one will ever know. At about 8.00 pm, Lily jumped to her death in a field near the Ponden Reservoir, and the Scar Top Refreshment Rooms, but exactly how it happened remains a mystery. Jonas Bradley, the Stanbury schoolmaster, standing on Haworth Moor, at an altitude of 900 feet, watched the parachute slowly open and disappear behind the skyline into the dark shadow. He noted that nine minutes had elapsed since the balloon had left Haworth. From the nearby village of Stanbury, Robert Rushworth was monitoring the balloon's progress through a pair of field-glasses and observed Lily leap from the balloon, but her parachute was only partly opened, when it was detached while she was about forty feet from the ground and could only watch in horror as she fell nearly head first. Lily was wearing her harness and could only have unhooked herself from the parachute with great difficulty. When the harness was examined later it was not found to be faulty or have been tampered with as was suggested at the time. Captain Bidmead had checked the harness before the ascent, and it was the one Lily had used many times before. Mr Rushworth said he saw her 'shrugging her shoulders', out of the safety harness just as she neared Ponden Reservoir before losing her grip or letting go of the safety straps, but he did not see her raise her arms to the hooks. Mr Cowling Heaton, the 'refreshment housekeeper' at Scar Top assumed that the opening of the parachute had 'exploded' almost right above him. Then to his utter disbelief he saw Lily and the parachute part company and Lily fall 'head over heels like a cartwheel. She went over once or twice and then appeared to fall head first' to her death.



Above: The field where Lily Cove died and Heaton's Scar Top Refreshment Rooms is just one field away with the Ponden Reservoir on the other side of the road. Taken from the 1894 25" OS map

Lily fell into the long grass in a field close by Ponden Reservoir, near to the Scar Top Refreshment Rooms. Mr. Heaton was the first to reach her, and although she was unconscious, bleeding from the nose and mouth she was still breathing. Lily was wearing her leather belt and strappings, but the parachute was about 20 yards away, it was then partly closed but from its position it was concluded that it must have been opened. Mr Heaton knelt by her side and raised her head on his knee and said 'my good woman, if you can speak, do so,' but she did not utter a single word. A boy came up and was sent for water, Lily's manager Captain Bidmead, who had followed the course of the balloon in a pony and trap stopped in the road by the field, and was quickly on the scene closely followed by Charlie Merrall in his motor car, and James Wood, a Haworth joiner, hurried up. They could only sink to their knees as moments later Lily took her last breath. Lily lived for only a few minutes after the fall.

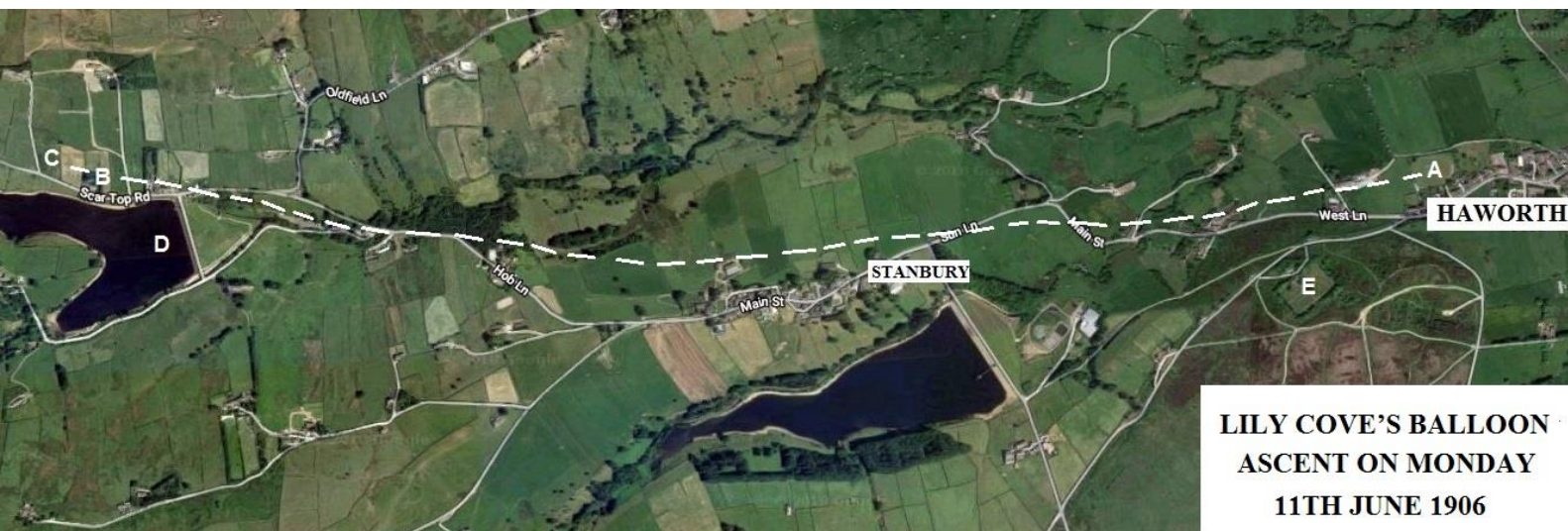
By the time Doctor Thomson arrived to examine her she was dead from multiple injuries. Lily died where she fell, never speaking a word amidst the trampled grass and the shocked. They lifted her battered body onto a stretcher and carried her to a flat covered cart in Hob Lane for the mournful ride back through the village of Stanbury to Haworth where they laid her in the bedroom in the Old White Lion Hotel.



Left: Ponden reservoir which Lily tried to avoid, probably because of her fear of water and drowning, she was a non-swimmer. The patchwork of fields divided by stone walls with hills beyond can be seen in the photograph. Lily landed about 50 yards from the reservoir in a field with the parachute a few feet away

Chaelie Merrall drove back to Haworth, where a cheer went up when his car appeared the gala field, spectators assumed he had chauffeured Lily back to the gala. He stepped out of the car and announced the tragic news of Lily's accident and death to the stunned crowds waiting in the football field, they had set out that evening with great expectations of seeing this attractive young woman perform an amazing feat of skill and return safely and triumphantly. Instead the flat-cart conveying her body passed the vicinity of the football field from which the ill-fated ascent had been made and her death plunged the village into mourning. In the evening a telegram was sent to her father Thomas Charles Cove who was living in London informing him of the tragic death of his only child Lily.

Doctor Robert Thomson examine her body at 9 pm and found that she died from multiple injuries and shock. She had a fracture of the tibia in the left leg, a fracture to the right leg, a fracture to the right thigh and severe bleeding caused by a skull fracture. Lily was the fourth woman to die in this manner since the first lady balloonist took to the air in Paris on 20th May 1784.¹³



**LILY COVE'S BALLOON ASCENT ON MONDAY
11TH JUNE 1906**

LILY COVE'S BALLOON ASCENT

- - - Conjectural Route Taken

A The Gala site on West Lane **B** Heaton's Scar Top Refreshment Rooms **C** Field where Lily Cove fell to her death in 1906 **D** Ponden Reservoir **E** Haworth Cemetery where Lily Cove is buried.

As soon as Lily Cove's death became common knowledge, a large number of morbid sightseers flocked to Haworth to seek out the exact spot where she had met her end. Locals could only stand by on the streets, watching the sudden onslaught of rushing journalists determined to report the fatal accident and the following proceedings in their local newspapers. Some covered the story fairly accurately and in some detail while others are rather sketchy and taking the moral high ground. The quotations in this article have been reproduced from the archives of these newspapers: Bradford Daily Telegraph, Shipley Times and Express, which includes a photograph of Captain Bidmead and a drawing of Lily's balloon with her waving (see photographs on page 53) The Keighley Herald, The Keighley News which included a drawing of Lily Cove (see photograph on page 48), The Yorkshire Post and The Leeds Mercury.

The Inquest

An inquest was held at the District Council Offices, Haworth to try and discover the cause of the accident, the Coroner was Mr. E. Wood. Mr. Jonas Bradley, Stanbury's schoolmaster, who had watched Lily's flight from Haworth Moor, was appointed foreman of the Jury. Lily Cove's address is given as 170 Bow Road, London and Captain Bidmead's address is reported as 94 Balaam Street, Plaistow, London. There was much debate about why she became detached from her parachute and rumours were rife about possible foul play, with gossip linking Lily's death to an imagined love rivalry between her manager Captain Bidmead and Charlie Merrall. Some suggested that she had taken her own life, but there was no clear evidence for these assumptions and the police report stated that 'no blame or suspicion appeared to attach to anybody'.

Her manager, Captain Bidmead put forward a possible explanation that Lily had allowed herself to float too far before she jumped from the balloon. When they arrived in Haworth they had walked across the moors to see the course the balloon would take and had selected the field that Lily was to land in. When asked if Lily had made the descent at the proper time, Captain Bidmead replied, 'She went further than she should. My instructions were that she should drop just over by the mill. If she had done so I should have been with her in a couple of minutes.' He believed that Lily panicked and somehow deliberately managed to separate herself from her parachute as she was drifting towards Ponden Reservoir. This according to Captain Bidmead she could have done by pulling herself slightly up the ropes and unfastening the hooks at her shoulders. She could not swim and feared the balloon might descend into the water and to avoid entanglement and the possibility of drowning she decided to jump. It was further reported that Lily Cove had no previous mishaps.

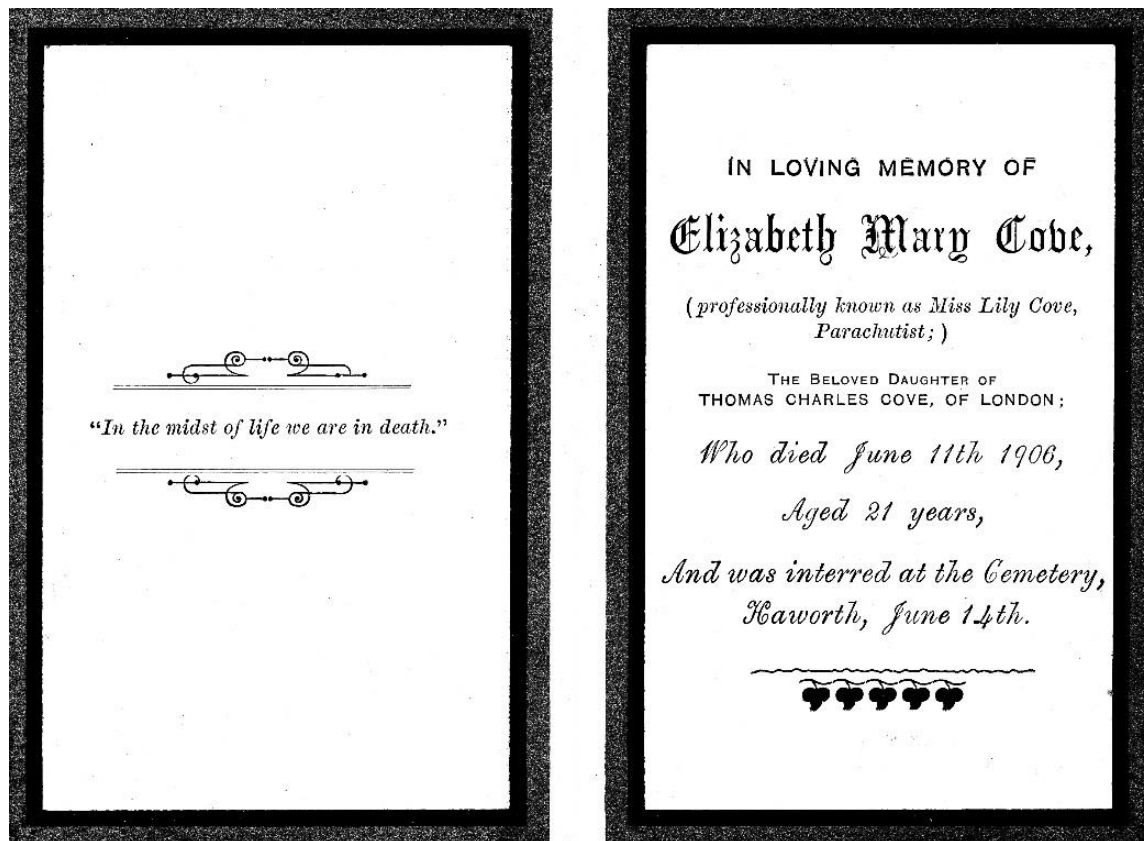
Would Lily have lived if she had remained in her parachute? Did she misjudge her distance from the ground? These questions would remain unanswered, and the inquest jury returned a verdict of 'Death by Misadventure' with a recommendation that such dangerous performances should be forbidden by law be forward to the Home Secretary. It was also noted that their 'attraction to the public lies in the danger, not the achievement, and should be stopped in the interests of public morality'.

Captain Bidmead told the inquest that the two of them were meant to appear at Keighley Gala on the following Saturday, 'I intended her to have a quiet week's holiday in Keighley before Saturday. She was a jolly girl, she had a joke and a jest for everyone.' After Lily's accident and death the Keighley Gala Committee announced that they would not consider a parachute descent. Captain Bidmead declared that it would be some time before he would go up in a balloon again. The 'hero of 400 ascents and 83 descents' confessed himself 'utterly unnerved', but it would seem not for long. Some two years after the tragedy, in June 1909 he was still having problems, this time in Northampton where he had another miraculous escape when he lost his parachute, and was carried away half clinging to a wooden ring attached to the cording of the balloon. After one hour and a half the balloon gradually descended and Captain Bidmead reached the ground safely but exhausted.¹⁴

As a consequence of the inquest in the House of Commons on June 14th, Mr. Fell, MP for Great Yarmouth, asked the Secretary for the Home Department, the Right Hon, Herbert J. Gladstone, 'whether his attention has been called to the death of Miss Cove when descending from a balloon in a parachute on June 11th, and whether he proposes to take any steps to prohibit such exhibitions in the future.' Mr. Gladstone replied that he hoped to introduce 'a Bill extending the Dangerous Performances Acts to all women whatever their age may be.' Previously the Acts had only covered females up to the age of 18.¹⁵

Lily Cove's Funeral

Minnie Hey, the village shroud maker, took care of the body, which lay in the parlour at the Old White Lion. Minnie's shrouds were considered to be 'works of art'¹⁶ with covered buttons and tassels. Lily's coffin was made of pitch pine comfortably padded and lined with wood shavings. At the time of Lily's death, her father Thomas Cove, a poor man was living in a men's hostel in Bow Road, London. He was brought up to Haworth by Captain Bidmead, who felt it was his duty regardless of Thomas's history and bought him a new black suit for the funeral, which took place on 14th June 1906, the same day her name was brought up in Parliament. Many of the village women were allowed to look at Lily's dead face before the coffin lid was nailed down, as was the custom at that time.



Above: Lily Cove's Funeral Card, it was discovered a few years ago during a local house clearance. It gives her full name of Elizabeth Mary Cove and her age is given as 21, in fact she was only 20 years old
Courtesy of Steven Wood

After a short service in the Old White Lion conducted by the Rector of Haworth the Reverend T. W. Story for relatives and close friends, the funeral cortege set off on her final journey to the cemetery on the moor. Her coffin with heavy brass mountings inscribed simply 'Mary Elizabeth Cove, aged 21 years, who died June 11th, 1906', was carried in relays on the shoulders of the Haworth Gala Committee along the moor road to the cemetery. Albert Best was among those who headed the procession and behind the coffin came a carriage with Lily's father, Captain Bidmead and several friends. The Merrall family had a private carriage and walking alongside and behind were members of the Haworth and Oxenhope Nursing Association. Mourners lined both sides of the road right up to Haworth's new cemetery with hundreds of villagers and sympathisers, where she was interred. All over Haworth shutters were closed and curtains drawn as the shocked residents paid tribute to Lily.

Men working at the Dimples stone quarries overlooking the cemetery stopped working, took off their caps and bowed their heads as the coffin passed by and stood in silence during the short committal. The crowd had by now increased in number and only a few were able to witness the actual burial take place. There had been nothing like it in Haworth since the day of Patrick Brontë's funeral in 1861, he outlived all his children. The Reverend T. W. Story met the procession at the gates and led the way between the mourners to the open grave. With the reading of 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust' the coffin was lowered gently down in silence. It is recorded that a lark was heard singing sending a message of love and sympathy to those left behind.

Among the many wreaths was one of pink roses from Mr. Charlie Merrall, the card attached bore the words, 'In deepest sympathy for a brave girl who lost her life in the cause of charity.' Another one, of wild flowers, was left by a little boy who never disclosed his identity. A subscription list which was opened for donations to cover the funeral expenses was generously patronised, and money for the headstone was raised by public subscription.

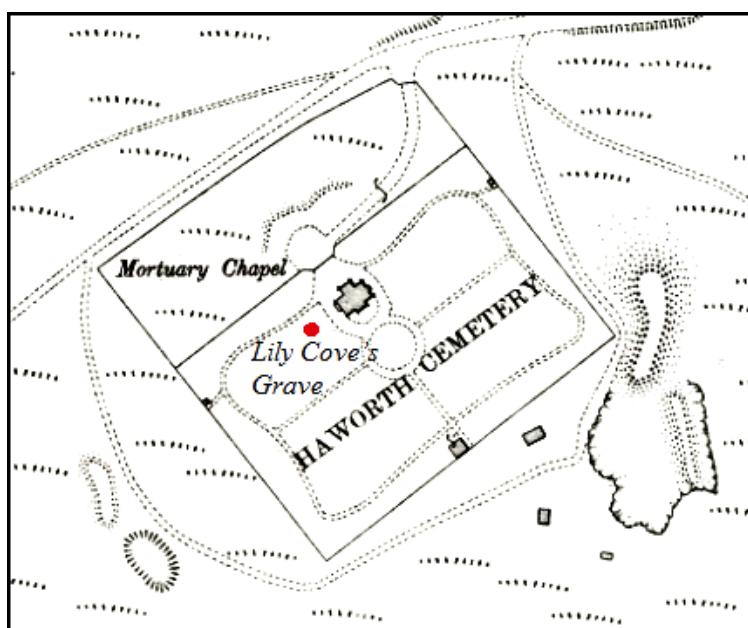
As Mr Charles Merrall reputedly said 'She gave her life for charity'. How much charity? The Gala raised the grand total of £17 6s (£17.30) this is worth approximately £2000 in today's money. Ironically, the amount was disappointing and the Haworth Gala Committee decided to abandon the Haworth Gala for the following year. Six months later Charlie Merrall married a young actress who was appearing in pantomime at the Alhambra Theatre, Bradford¹⁷ and by 1911 when Charles was 34 they had two children aged 3 and 2.

So she lies, the girl from the East End of London, in the cemetery on the edge of Haworth moor, overlooking the valley towards Stanbury, the scene of her last balloon flight. Today Lily Cove is not entirely forgotten and her grave is occasionally visited and flowers are left for her. The stone quarries nearby are now forever silent, but the larks still sing above the grave of this 'liberated' lady and tragic heroine.

Right: Lily Cove's grave can be seen in the Haworth cemetery in close proximity to other graves. Lily's gravestone is the tall grey one on the left in the photograph



Below: Map of Haworth cemetery illustrating Lily Cove's Grave. The Chapel building marked on the map has since been demolished by the Bradford Council



Above: This photograph of Lily Cove's grave in Haworth Cemetery was taken shortly after her funeral which took place on 14th June 1906. It stands alone with a posy of flowers on her grave. The cemetery was opened in 1893 and it soon started to fill up as can be seen in the above photograph. Courtesy of Steven Wood

The headstone of Lily's grave can be seen, complete with a carving of her balloon and the parachute she used surrounded by a border of leaves. The granite headstone was raised by public subscription and unfortunately contains one error, Lily was 20 when she died not 21, her age was clarified at the inquest, it reads:-

IN
LOVING MEMORY
OF
ELIZABETH MARY
(MISS LILY COVE,
PARACHUTIST)
DAUGHTER OF
THOMAS CHARLES COVE
OF LONDON
WHO DIED JUNE 11TH 1906,
AGED 21 YEARS



Carved at the base of the stone was the doleful reminder '*In the midst of life we are in death*'

These days it is not unusual to see flowers placed on Lily's grave, and although situated on the edge of Haworth moor she is not forgotten.

Miss Ethel Denby, of Haworth wrote a broadsheet of narrative verses called
'A Tragic End'

A Tragic End

All was ready then up she went,
'Mid cheers from the crows below,
And when she reached a certain height
She drifted a mile or so,
"She's made a leap," cried the people
And they watched for her return,
But little knew the sad tidings
That they were so soon to learn,
Yes! She had leaped, twas certain,
But oh! What a tragic end;
For some strange reason none could tell,
When she began to descend.
Unbuckled the straps that bound her,
And then took the fatal leap
Into the icy arms of death
Which were open at her feet,
Strong men were stunned and women wept,
And the town was wrapt in gloom,
When news was brought to the people,
Of the dear young lady's doom.

By Miss Ethel Denby

Lily was a brave woman who left the drudgery of domestic service to become a professional parachutist, and lost her life performing an aeronautic display

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Haworth Historian Steven Wood for information relating to the location where Lily Cove fell to her death and Heaton's Scar Top Refreshment Rooms, for generously giving permission to reproduce the Haworth Gala handbill and Lily Cove Funeral Card. Also for providing all the archive newspaper reports. To the staff at the Bradford and Keighley Local Studies Libraries for assistance regarding archive enquiries.

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² S. Wright, *Balloonomania Belles: Daredevil Divas Who First Took to the Sky*, 2018, Pen & Sword History

³ Glynis Haynes, *Who Do You Think You Are?* Issue 17 January 2017.

⁴ Captain Frederick Bidmead's address is given in the police report (Shipley Times and Express, Friday, June 15, 1906 page 3, The Keighley News, Saturday, June, 16, 1906 page 5) as 94 Balaam Street, Plaistow, London. In the 1906 Kelly's Directory this is listed as a newsagent's. It is possible that Captain Bidmead lived in a flat above the shop. He claimed to own a balloon and parachute workshop, and although there were harness manufacturers in Balaam Street none are in his name, and nothing is known of his military connections.

⁵ S. Wright, 2018

⁶ Shipley Times and Express, *Gala of Gloom*, Friday June 15, 1906, page 3

⁷ Captain Frederick Bidmead received his balloon training from Auguste Eugene Gaudron (1868-1913), and during his career as a balloonist had a few spectacular mishaps, his first one was in 1895 when visiting Dundee he fell almost 80 feet before crashing onto a slanting roof and then falling headlong into the street. The crash left him with an injured spine and was in hospital a long time. Bradford Daily Telegraph, *Captain Bidmead Adventures*, Tuesday June 12, 1906, page 3.

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Railway Seaside Holiday Posters along the Scenic Coast from Scarborough to Whitby

Including a brief history of the Railway Line and its Stations

By Stephen Riley

The Scarborough and Whitby Railway line followed a difficult but scenic route along the North Yorkshire coast. It eventually opened on 16th July 1885 long after the first proposal to open a line between Scarborough and Whitby in 1848. One of the problems in building a line was the hilly topography and many of the early schemes failed because of the difficulty finding an economic route and raising sufficient capital to construct the line. Before this time the coast between Scarborough and Whitby was rarely visited by holidaymakers and Robin Hood's Bay was a relatively unknown fishing village.

A bill was put before Parliament and received Royal Assent on 5th July 1865 authorising the incorporation of the Scarborough & Whitby Railway. Their planned line was not started due to insufficient finance. In 1870 a new route was proposed and this time funds became available, construction work starting on 3rd June 1872. Progress was exceedingly slow and by 1877 work on the line came to a halt when insufficient capital could not be raised to complete it and the original engineer and contractor pulled out. The work resumed in June 1881 with the appointment of new contractors John Waddell & Son under new engineers, Sir Charles Fox & Sons who completed the line, included the building of a 13-arch red brick viaduct over the River Esk near Whitby.

The official opening of the Scarborough & Whitby Railway (S&WR) took place a day before public services commenced, on 15 July 1885, with a special train for the directors of the company and dignitaries from Scarborough and Whitby. This special train left Scarborough with no ceremony, but was cheered on the route by workmen and well-wishers. Making brief stops at the eight intermediate stations, the train took an hour and ten minutes to complete its journey, arriving at West Cliff Station at 12.45 pm. Lunch was provided at Whitby's Crown Hotel before returning at 1.45 pm. The non-stop return trip took just under an hour, a journey time that would remain typical throughout the working lifetime of the line. The directors and around two hundred guests completed their day out by banqueting at the Royal Hotel Scarborough. The completed line was managed by the North Eastern Railway Company (NER), they provided the trains, rolling stock and the staff and equally shared the gross profit with the Scarborough & Whitby Railway (S&WR). This however did not prove satisfactory, both companies had a number of different grievances.

The Scarborough & Whitby Railway line had cost £27,000 a mile to build and was not a profitable line from the beginning, this was partly due to the antagonism that existed between the two companies but principally because of the vast amount of capital that had been expended. After operating at a loss for some years the NER bought the S&WR line outright on 1st July 1898.

Right: Map outlining the Scarborough & Whitby Railway line



The 21 miles of line had taken thirteen years to complete running along the picturesque coast between Scarborough and Whitby. There were eight intermediate stations Scalby, Cloughton, Hayburn Wyke, Stainton Dale, Ravenscar, Fyling Hall, Robin Hood's Bay, and Hawsker, all with their own distinctive character, although Hawsker was the only station built of brick though the design was very similar to that of the stone built stations, and they served the different needs of visitors and local people.

In 1923 the North Eastern Railway (NER) became part of the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) at the grouping of the railway companies known as ‘The Big Four’. Early in the 1930s the number of passengers had improved considerably with the introduction of cheap fares aimed at holidaymakers. Camping coaches were also introduced at five stations on the line, four at Scalby, three at Cloughton, two at Stainton Dale, two at Ravenscar and five at Robin Hood’s Bay, these quickly proved to be very profitable. When parts of the Scalby and Hayburn Wyke railway stations became unstaffed the buildings were converted into holiday cottages. The increase of passengers in the 1930s was short lived and was only seasonal.

After the railways were nationalised in 1948 the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) became part of British Railways (BR) and with the rapid popularity of road transport the railway began to decline and the line quickly became unprofitable. The camping coaches were still operating at a profit but this was insufficient to save the line which closed as one of the Beeching cuts to goods traffic on 4th August 1964 and to passengers on 8th March 1965, the last passenger train ran on 6th March, bringing to an end what could arguably be said to be one of the most scenic railway journeys in the country. The Scarborough & Whitby Railway line initially opened up a countryside that had been virtually inaccessible to most people and for 80 years it gave many thousands the opportunity to see and stay in the most picturesque part of the Yorkshire coast. In 1975 Scarborough Borough Council bought the track-bed and is now used as a bridleway by cyclists, walkers and horse riders, known as the ‘Scarborough to Whitby Rail Trail’ or ‘Cinder Track’.

THE RAILWAY STATIONS AND THE LINE

Originally trains left from Scarborough Station but the platforms could not cope with the influx of passengers to the town during the holiday season. North Eastern Railway obtained permission to build an excursion station on the site of an old engine shed half a mile before the Scarborough terminus. The station was named Washbeck which opened on 8th June 1908, it was upgraded on 1st June 1933 and was renamed Scarborough Londesborough Road. It directly served the Scarborough and Whitby line via the Falsgrave tunnel which passed underneath part of western Scarborough before resurfacing into the location of today’s Sainsbury’s supermarket. This station closed on 24th August 1963 then all trains ran into Scarborough Central.



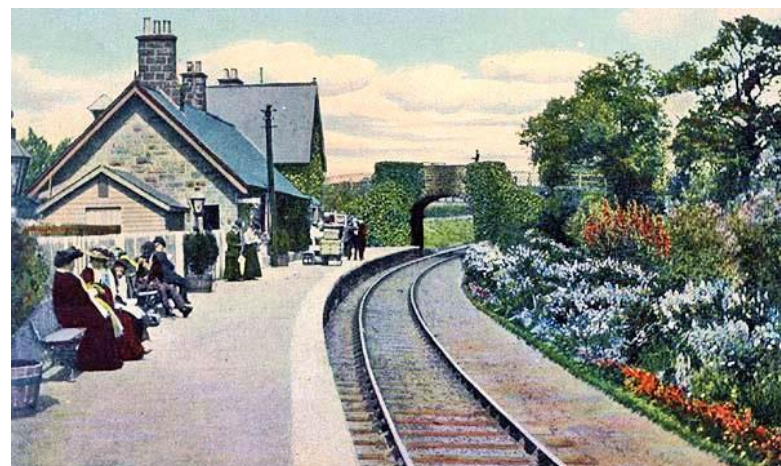
Left: This photograph was taken from the end of platform 1A at Scarborough Central Station showing the platform line on the right and the line through the Falsgrave Tunnel on the left. The tunnel carried only one track and was in use until 1965. The railway line has been lifted and tunnel entrance bricked up

SCALBY RAILWAY STATION

Shortly the train approached Scalby station over a small four arch viaduct that still stands. Scalby was the first of the eight stations on the line and had a single platform on the down side of the line with a goods bay to the rear

of the platform and a further siding. The station was built of local stone with a slate roof and was converted to holiday accommodation after the station became unstaffed.

Left: This old coloured postcard dated 1914 shows the station at its most picturesque with a group of people waiting from the train and the well-kept station garden on the other side of the single line. The ivy covered hump backed bridge that carried Station Road over the line can be seen in the middle of the postcard. It was demolished along with all the station buildings, and a small housing estate built on the site.



Right: The Scalby Viaduct, it is brick built with four arches running over the Scalby Beck, photograph taken in the 1950s



Left: A recent photograph of the Scalby viaduct now much overgrown with trees and bushes

After closure some trains continued to stop until 1964 serving the occupants of the two camping coaches which were located in the goods bay platform. The station and the nearby hump bridge were

sadly demolished in 1974 to make way for a housing development which incorporates some of the stones from the old station.

Right: Looking north at Scalby station in July 1963, three camping coaches can be seen in the goods yard. After closure of the station to passengers in 1953 some trains called at Scalby by requested for people who had hired camping coaches until final closure of the line on 8 March 1965. A permanent way trolley was stored in the corrugated white shed on the right



Left: Two years after closure on 31st October 1967 a special train was run on the line. It brought contractors up the railway who were going to tender for the redundant assets of the closed line. Scalby station was the first stop and this was the very last train to run on the railway



CLOUGHTON RAILWAY STATION

Leaving Scalby travelling north the next station on the line is Cloughton. When Cloughton station was originally built it only had one platform with a parallel siding, and it was not until 1891 that the siding was extended to form a passing loop and a second platform was added. The goods yard included a cattle dock and small goods shed with a wooden canopies. This station had the only manned public level crossing on the line, the gates were worked by a wheel in a small hut to the side of the gates. The camping coaches at Cloughton station had their own siding.



Above: Cloughton station in 1904 showing the two storey station master's house and to the right a single storey waiting room and offices

The Cloughton station had a two storey station master's house next to a single storey waiting room and offices at the south end. When the line closed in 1965 the station building and stationmaster's house were restored and converted into a guest house and a tea room with access to the platform and extensive landscaped garden. The old goods warehouse has also been renovated into holiday accommodation. At the south end of the platform sits a new camping coach.

Right: This 1930s photograph shows Cloughton station looking along the platform line south towards Scalby. In the far distance can be seen the camping coaches in their own siding.



Left: The station restored and converted into a guest house and tea room with access to the platform and extensive landscaped garden. It makes a pleasant place for cream tea on a summer afternoon

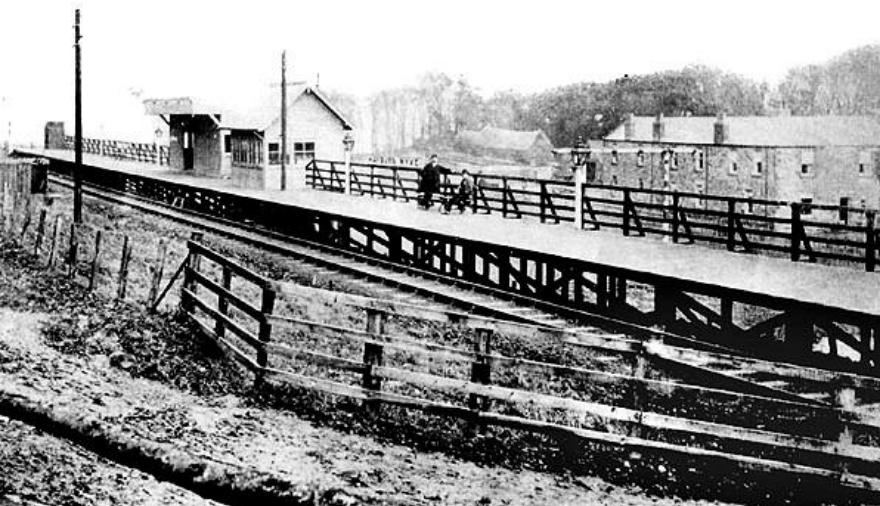


Right: A short length of track has been re-laid at the south end of the platform for a refurbished Mk 1 railway carriage built at Derby in 1962 to provide self-catering accommodation similar to the 'camping coach' that used to stand at Cloughton Station.



HAYBURN WYKE RAILWAY STATION

It is only 1 mile from Cloughton Station to Hayburn Wyke which is the next station on the line. Originally the platform at this station was built entirely of wood on the 'up' side of the line but in 1887 the North Eastern Railway (NER) complained to the Scarborough & Whitby Railway Company that it was inadequate. They were required to build a new station on the 'down' side of the line which became a single track station. At one end of the platform the stationmaster's house was built separately in 1892. Hayburn Wyke station was the smallest on the line and the only one without a siding or goods yard. The station became an unstaffed halt on 23rd March 1955 when the buildings were converted into holiday accommodation.



The original wooden platform at Hayburn Wyke on the 'up' or the seaward side of the line in 1886. This was replaced with a new station on the 'down' or landward side of the line in 1893



Right: Hayburn Wyke station looking south in about 1910. Beyond the name board and the platform lamp is the gentleman's convenience and further along the platform is the canopied waiting shelter



Left: This 1950s photograph shows the separate brick built stationmaster's house at Hayburn Wyke looking north-west. A steam train has just passed the stationmaster's house and is about to arrive at the station on the single line.

After closure in 1965 all the buildings were demolished except for the stationmaster's house. Hayburn Wyke was popular with day trippers and picnickers but for most of the year there were only about four trains day in each direction increasing to eight in the summer months. Today

only the overgrown platform and the stationmaster's house survive

Right: The overgrown platform and the public footpath known as the 'Cinder Track' which runs along the old track bed. The fence that can be seen on the left is the same one in the top photograph. In the far distance to the north between the trees is the stationmaster's house which stands alongside the track, it is now a private residence



STANTON DALE RAILWAY STATION

From Hayburn Wyke the railway line snakes round to Stainton Dale station. This station was known as Staintondale until 1937 when it was renamed Stainton Dale. It had a small goods yard and in later years two camping coaches were stationed in the goods bay. Stainton Dale railway station closed on 8th March 1965 but unlike Hayburn Wyke which also closed in March the station was not demolished, both platforms survive and the station buildings are privately owned.



Left: Stainton Dale station looking north in about 1905. Access to the second platform was by using an unmanned level crossing which can be seen situated at the south end of the station.

Right: Stainton Dale Station looking south in the 1950s. Two camping coaches can be seen in the siding behind the signal on the right



Left: This recent view of the picturesque station shows the original double track bed with cyclists. It is now part of what is known as the 'Cinder Track' because the track ballast was made from cinders rather than crushed stone. It forms part of a long distance footpath used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders that follows almost the entire Scarborough to Whitby railway. On the fence along the station platform there is a gradient sign of '1 in 54/1 in 172'

RAVENSCAR RAILWAY STATION

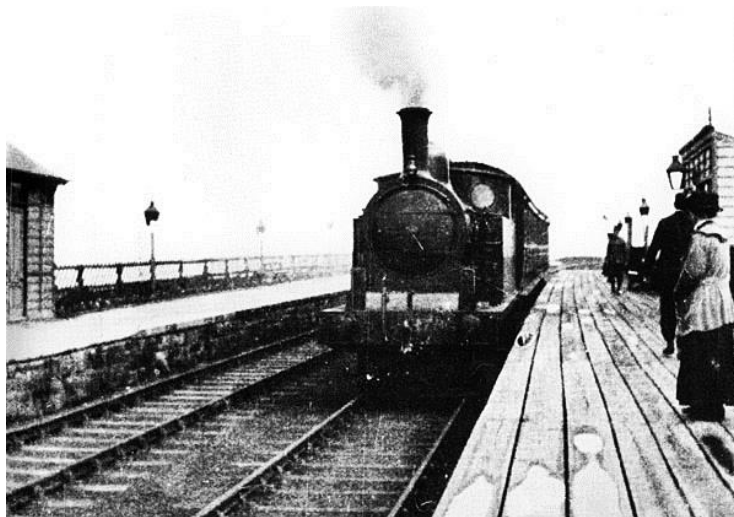
Ravenscar was the highest point on the Scarborough & Whitby railway line built at the 850 feet contour line (259 metres) level and the station was called 'Peak' when it first opened on 16th July 1885, but was renamed Ravenscar on 1st October 1897. Originally there was only a single track with the platform on the up side and a goods siding on the down side. The station was made of wood but there was no stationmaster's house. In 1886 the North Eastern Railway requested the Scarborough & Whitby Railway company to provide one, they failed to do so and the NER in retaliation closed Peak station on 6th of March 1895. Eventually the S&WR board agreed and built one and the station was reopened on 1st April 1896. In 1908 a second platform built of wood was added with a shelter room.



Left: Ravenscar wooden station looking north-west before 1908 when a second platform was added. Outside the station is the Ravenscar Guest Houses and tea rooms

Right: Ravenscar Station looking south-east in about 1915 after the new wooden platform and shelter was built.

Ravenscar station also had two camping coaches until the autumn of 1963. After the station closed on 8th March 1965 all the buildings and the wooden platform and shelter were demolished. Today only the solid southbound platform remains.



Left: The remains of the southbound platform looking north-west towards Robin Hood's Bay. The Ravenscar Guest Houses and tea rooms can be seen on the right. Photograph by Nigel Thompson

Ravenscar station was at the top of a steep 1-in-39 gradient from both north and south directions. Immediately north of the station was a 279 yard long (255 metres) tunnel that curved sharply away to the west with the steep ascent to Fyling Hall. The tunnel proved troublesome for many trains that often came to a halt in the darkness, having failed to overcome the steep gradient. In fact the tunnel was not necessary, it would have been easier to make a cutting but W. H. Hammond, did not want to see the railway crossing his land. In the 1930s plans to blast the tunnel roof off, because many trains failed to overcome the steep gradient up to Ravenscar becoming stranded in the darkness was never implemented. The entrance to the tunnel has been bricked up as it is become dangerous.

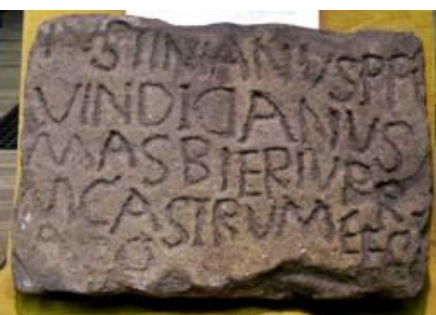


Left: A train is about to enter the north portal of Ravenscar Tunnel on the way to Fyling Hall the next station on the line going north

Right: Inside the disused tunnel showing the bend curving sharply away in the distance

Today the village of Ravenscar consists of the Raven Hall Hotel, the Ravenscar guest houses and tea rooms in the square, a few houses, a church and the National Trust visitor centre which displays the history of the area. To the north of the village is the old Peak alum works, now a National Trust site, but once an important part of the dyeing industry.

Ravenscar was known as Peak until 1897 and has a most intriguing history. In 1774 Raven Hall, formerly known as Peak Hall was built on the site of a Roman signal station that formed part of a chain of coastal defences that extended along the Yorkshire East coast. A late 4th century dedication stone block was found with a Latin inscription recording the construction of a ‘tower and fort’, it is on display in the Whitby Museum.

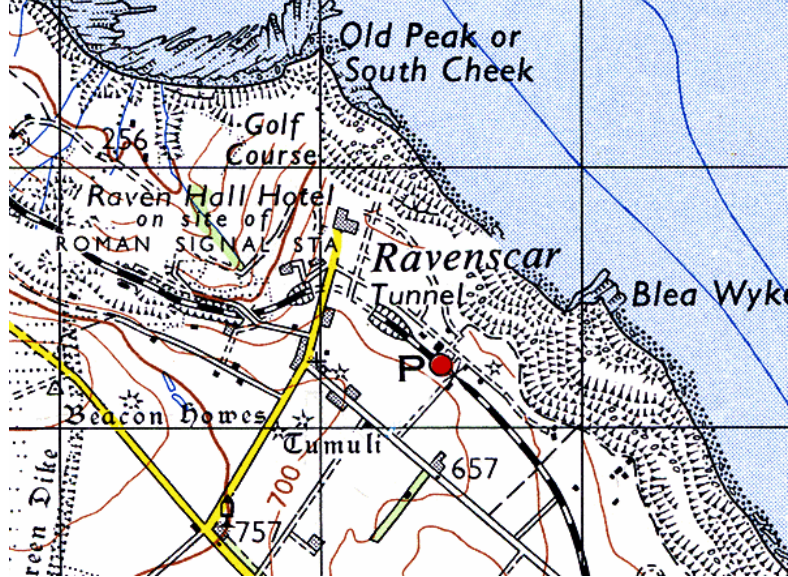


Left: Stone slab found in 1774 during the building of Raven Hall, Ravenscar with a Latin inscription on display in the Whitby Museum

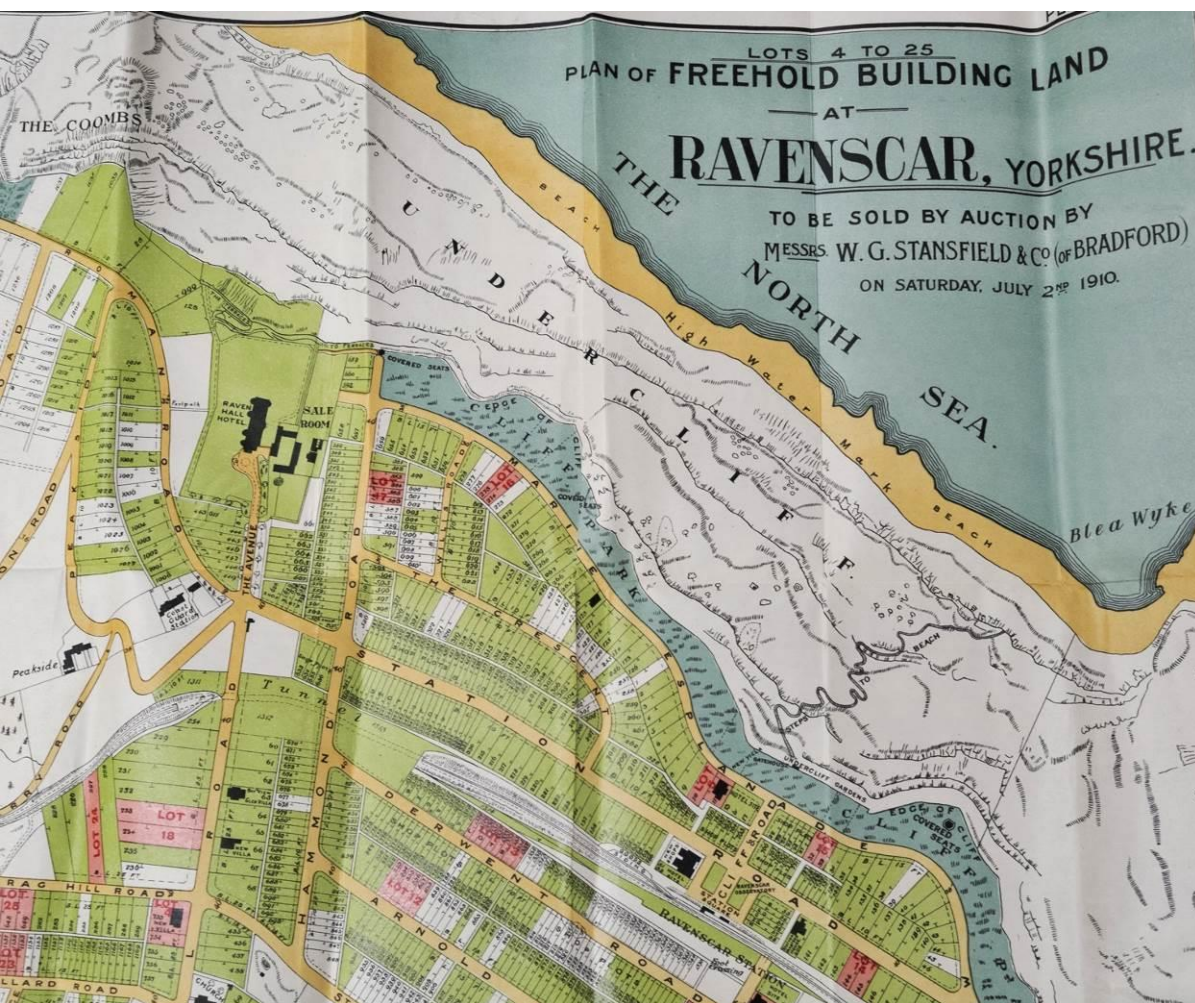
The Raven Hall Hotel was once owned by Dr Francis Willis, doctor to King George III who had bouts of madness. In 1841 after the Rev. Dr. Richard Child Willis had gambled away his money the property was taken over by his main creditor, William Henry Hammond who was a public benefactor. He became a director of the Scarborough to Whitby railway line, and he insisted that it passed through his property with a station and that it should disappear under a tunnel.

This was built at an extra cost of £500 but sadly, Mr Hammond died in 1885 three months before the line was completed.

Right: Map showing Ravenscar railway station with the line running through the tunnel, Ravenscar Hall Hotel and Golf Course and the site of the Roman Signal Station.



On the death of his widow in 1890 their four daughters who inherited the estate sold it to the Peak Estate Company who envisaged the small village as a large holiday resort, bringing jobs and prosperity to the area. The Hall was turned into a hotel, and renamed Raven Hall in 1895, its golf course was opened in 1898 by the Earl of Cranbrooke and the village was renamed Ravenscar. The Raven guest houses and tea rooms in the square was also built at this time. By 1897 plans for a 'new town' to include shops, tearooms, guesthouses, gardens and attractions were drawn up to rival the popularity of Scarborough approximately 10 miles (16 kilometres) to the south. Some building foundations were erected, roads, drains and a mains water supply were laid down and the land was divided into 1500 plots for building which were offered for sale. The plans were eventually abandoned when the company responsible for its development became bankrupt, investors did not buy the plots of land and the town was not built. Ravenscar failed due to its location high on the cliff tops, exposed to the elements with only a rocky shoreline hundreds of feet below with no proper sandy beach and accessible by a railway line with a steep gradient of 1-in-39 climb which trains often struggled to overcome. Today parts of the unfinished layout of the town remain with overgrown roads.



Left: A plan of Ravenscar Estate map divided into plots and lots of land to be sold by auction on Saturday 2nd July 1910. The black areas are buildings that had been constructed prior to the scheme to turn the small village into large holiday resort. The railway station is located at the bottom centre of the plan and Raven Hall is on the left side

One of the reasons why the planned large holiday resort for Ravenscar failed was after would-be investors viewed the site, they found it difficult to access the rocky beach which is a drop of almost 600 feet (185 metres) from the cliff top clearly shown on the map.

FYLING HALL RAILWAY STATION

The approach to Fyling Hall station from Ravenscar was over a short wrought iron bridge with stone abutments, beneath is the Fyling Hall Road which leads to the sea. Fyling Hall was one of 4 stations on the line without a passing loop, one was proposed in 1934 but was rejected due to the short seasonal duration of the traffic.



Right: Looking north across the wrought iron bridge with stone abutments with the station beyond. To the left between the trees can be seen the weigh house and goods yard

The station platform had a goods warehouse, a waiting shelter with a stove, ticket office and at the far end a brick built signal box. At the rear was a goods yard with a weigh house. In its heyday Fyling Hall was a very attractive station with well-kept gardens, tidy platforms and bright paintwork.



This photograph taken on Saturday 27th July 1957 is a view from the north end of Fyling Hall Station and shows the access to the goods yard through the gate on the right. Arriving at the station is the 14:37 Scarborough to Whitby service



Right: Fyling Hall Station in the late 1940s. The signalman at Fyling Hall was a keen gardener and the station was a regular winner of the 'Best Kept Station' competition

In 1958 Fyling Hall station became an unstaffed halt and all the wooden buildings were removed. It was completely closed in March 1965 and today the platform has practically disappeared in a mass of trees and bushes that have grown up since the line closed. The station house survives as a private residence.



Left: This photograph shows what remains of the platform overgrown with trees with a group of horse riders. The line is now used as long distance footpath called the 'Cinder Track' used as a bridleway by cyclists, walkers and horse riders

The short wrought iron bridge with stone abutments seen in the above photograph has been replaced by steps leading down to Fyling Hall Road.

ROBIN HOOD'S BAY RAILWAY STATION

The Scarborough to Whitby coastline curves its way northwards towards the coast at Robin Hood's Bay. This was the busiest station on the line and the goods yard which was the largest included a weighbridge, coal yard, cattle dock, crane, and goods shed with five sidings. The main station buildings which stood on the up platform consisted of a two-storey station master's house, single storey waiting room and a booking office. The signal box was behind the up platform and there was a waiting shed on the down platform. The station also had a water tank to replenish the tanks of the steam locomotives. Four camping coaches were situated at the south end of the station on a specially built siding.

Right: Robin Hood's Bay station looking south in the 1960s, with left to right, the booking office, single storey waiting room, two-storey station master's house and signal box. At the very end of the platform is a water tank



Left: The waiting shelter on the down platform at Robin Hood's Bay, it was a typical design of the North East Railway, although most of them were fully enclosed to give complete protection from the weather. In the far distance on the left can be seen camping coaches standing in their own siding. At the bottom of the photograph is an unmanned level crossing which gives access to the second platform. Notices have been placed at the end of each platform which reads 'Stop! Look! Listen!'

Most of the station buildings have survived, and are now used as holiday accommodation although the platform has gone. The goods warehouse was renovated and incorporated into the new village hall that occupies the site across the railway track. The weigh house was demolished and the area cleared to make way for a large car park used by most visitors to Robin Hood's Bay.

Right: The station buildings converted into holiday accommodation minus the platform



HAWSKER RAILWAY STATION

Once again the line moves inland away from the coast towards Hawsker which was the penultimate station on the Scarborough to Whitby line before terminating at Whitby West Cliff. It opened on 16th July 1885, and was a small intermediate stop, its ticket sales reflected this according to LNER in 1922 it sold only 8,982 tickets. The design of Hawsker station was similar to Scalby except that it was built of red bricks being close to the Whitby Brickworks, Scalby had access to nearby stone quarries. Like Scalby and Fyling Hall stations Hawsker station did not have a passing loop or a second platform. It had a small goods yard which mainly dealt with milk from the local farms.

Right: Hawsker Station looking north-west in the 1950s. A steam train has just arrived at the station on the single line, it is waiting opposite the single-storey waiting room next to the two storey stationmaster's house



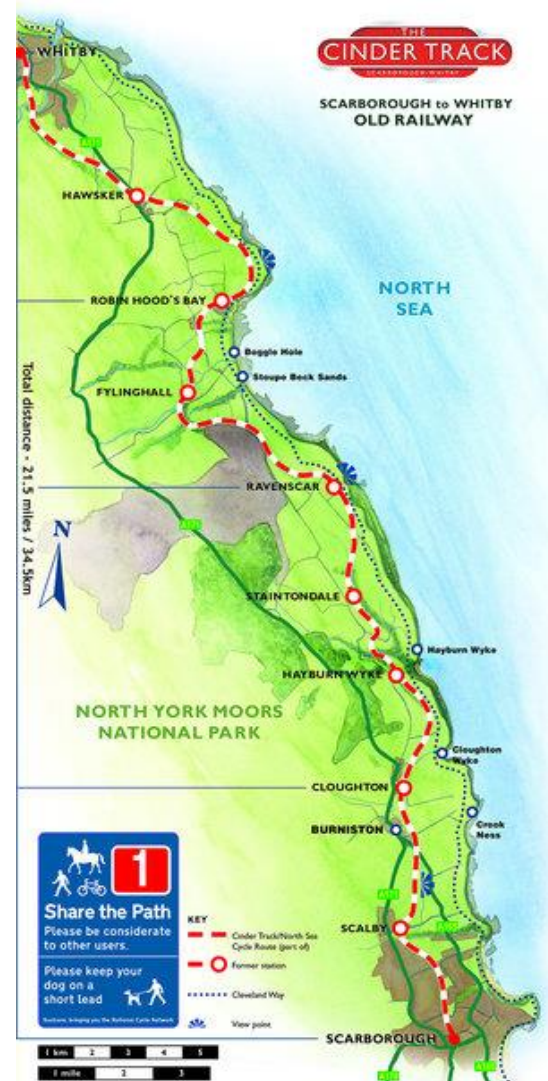
Freight services were withdrawn from Hawsker Station on 4th May 1964 three months before all freight service along the line ended on 10th August 1964 and the station closed to passengers on 6 March 1965. The rail track between Hawsker and Whitby was left *in situ* until 1973 pending potash traffic which never materialised.

The main station building is a private residence and guest house and includes a cycle hire business called Trailways. It also has a number of old railway carriages sitting on track that has been re-laid in the platform and goods bay and which are used as accommodation.



Above: Hawsker Station looking south east along the old passenger platform. The old railway coaches are used in conjunction with the bicycle hire business that is run from the station.

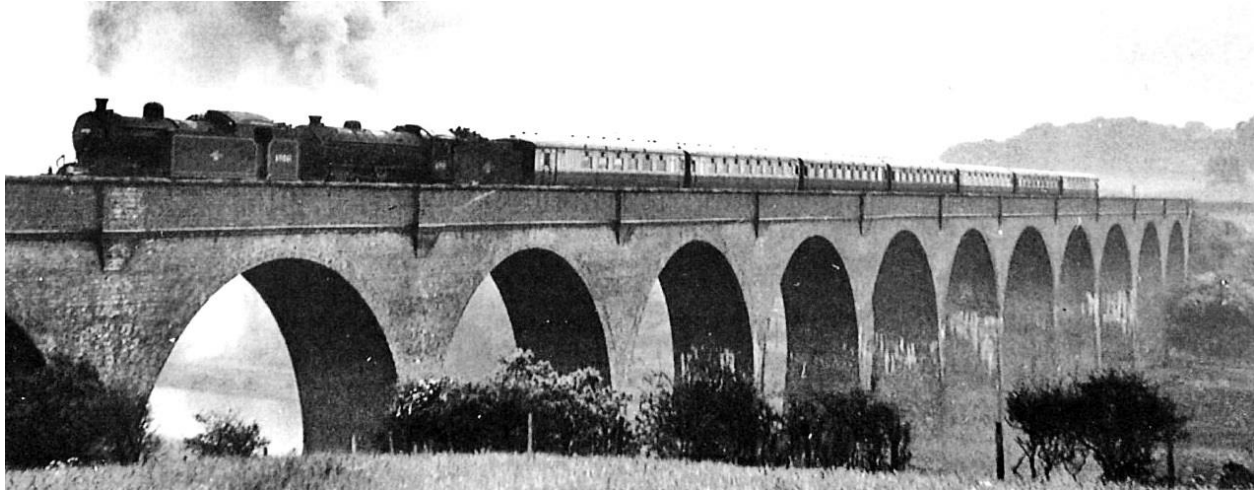
Right: Map of the Scarborough to Whitby Old Railway line known as the 'Cinder Track'. It is used by cyclists, walkers and horse riders as indicated on the map with gives key features and information for dog walkers



WHITBY WEST CLIFF RAILWAY STATION

The line from Hawsker curves through the countryside and crosses the Larpool Viaduct, also known as the Esk Valley Viaduct to Prospect Hill. The Grade II listed Larpool Viaduct is the largest above ground structure on the Scarborough and Whitby railway. It is estimated to have been constructed with five million red bricks, is 915 feet long, and stands 125 feet from the river bed at its highest point. The viaduct is supported on 12 piers by 13 arches with an average span of 60 feet. It was constructed for the Scarborough and Whitby Railway to carry a single track line across the River Esk and valley near Whitby, and was also used by and two other railways, the Whitby, Redcar and Middlesbrough Union Railway (WR&MUR) and the Esk Valley Line. The viaduct was completed on 24th October 1884 and was officially opened on 16th July 1885, it now forms part of the 'Cinder Track'.

Right: A passenger train for Scarborough steaming over the Larpool Viaduct in 1958. Photograph by Ken Hoole



Left: A recent view of the Larpool viaduct over the River Esk showing the red brick arches

The line ascended steeply at a gradient of 1 in 50 from Prospect Hill to Whitby West Cliff Station where there was a short branch line to Whitby Town Station.

Right: Prospect Hill from the north. The Scarborough and Whitby railway line is in the foreground by the junction with the line from Whitby Town station. On the right is the unusual signal box and to the left above is the Larpool Viaduct





Left: The signal box at Prospect Hill Junction was a bridge type. This view is looking north towards West Cliff station. It commanded an excellent view of both the Whitby, Redcar and Middlesbrough Union Railway (WR&MUR) line below, and the Scarborough and Whitby line (S&WR) which ran above the retaining wall on the right. The pair of staircases allowed the signalman to reach platforms for the collecting and handing over of single line tokens. The signal box was destroyed by fire after the lines closed

The Whitby West Cliff Station was built without goods facilities but these were developed later and included coal cells, goods warehouse and a one ton crane. The main station buildings which were substantial, stood on the 'up' platform built with red bricks and incorporated the two-storey station master's house, long single storey waiting rooms and a booking office. Towards the end of the platform was a wooden signal box. On the 'down' platform there was also a red brick waiting area. The station had water tanks situated at the end of each platform and a covered footbridge at the south end.

Right: This 1908 photograph shows Whitby West Cliff station looking north. The two-storey red brick station master's house can be seen on the 'up' platform next to the long single storey waiting room and booking office. Towards the end of the platform is the wooden signal box. On the opposite 'down' platform is the red brick waiting area and at the very end of the platform is a water tank. Further in the distance to the north end is a stone bridge over the railway line



Left: On the 'up' platform at Whitby West Cliff Station is a shuttle train about to depart for Whitby Town Station in 1960. The covered footbridge can be seen at the south end of the station

When Whitby West Cliff Station closed on 12th June 1961 trains from Scarborough had to reverse at Prospect Hill junction to go to Whitby Town station.

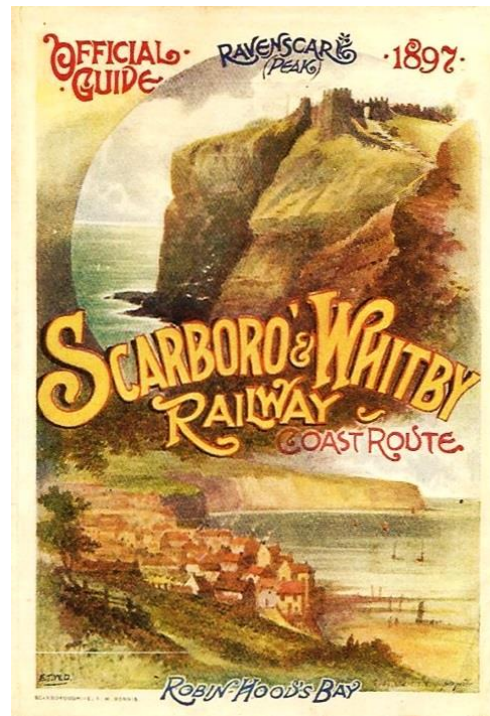
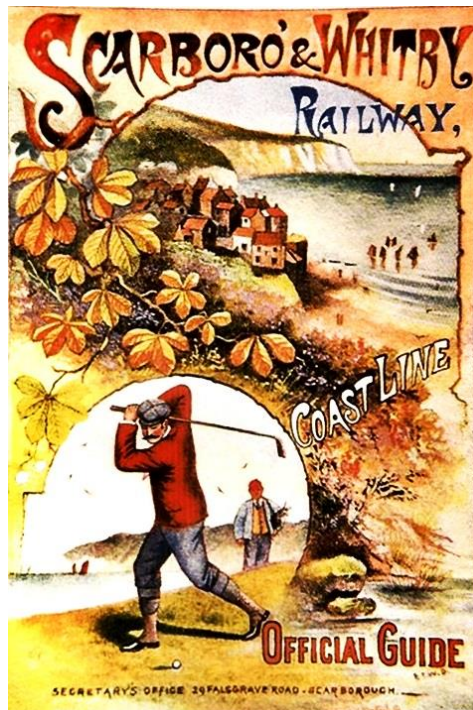
All the station buildings on both platforms have been converted to private residential units. The covered waiting area on the 'down' platform has been retained as a car port. The rest of the site has been developed as private housing.

Right: The former Whitby West Cliff station looking west, the station masters house can be seen in the foreground



An official Scarborough & Whitby Railway Company guide, published in 1897, wrote ‘The line runs through pleasant, undulating pasture lands at either end, winds in and out amongst the gorse and heather-clad hills, dips into wooded dales, skirts the edge of a wild moor, climbs the highest cliff on the Yorkshire coast, runs round one of the bonniest bays in the Kingdom, and over a portion of its course is perched on the brow of a cliff against which the waves ceaselessly break’. The guide was a very comprehensive and interesting publication, which included illustrations of the scenery on the route, a map, as well as time tables and fares. There was a chapter on the area surrounding each station, giving its history and features together with suggestions for walks and a list of the lodgings available in the villages on the route.

Right: The front covers of the official guides published by the Scarborough and Whitby railway company in the late 1890s. They illustrate Robin Hood’s Bay, a popular destination and Ravenscar with its golf course



THE FIST RAILWAY POSTERS PROMOTING HOLIDAY DESTINATIONS ALONG THE SCARBOROUGH AND WHITBY RAILWAY LINE

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY.

HALF-DAY EXCURSION
To Robin Hood's Bay and Whitby.

On Tuesday, July 4th,
An Excursion train will run as under, to

ROBIN HOOD'S BAY
AND
WHITBY,

Returning from Whitby (West Cliff) at 8-45 p.m.,
and Robin Hood's Bay at 9-5 p.m. same day.

		Fares there and back, Third Class.	
		To Robin Hood's Bay.	To Whitby.
p.m.			
Scarb' dep.	1 25	1/3	1/6
Scalby "	1 35		
Cloughton "	1 42		

Children not exceeding 5, free; above 5 and under 12 years of age, half fare.
A limited number of carriages will be provided for this Excursion, and in order as far as possible to ensure the comfort of the passengers and to avoid delay, the issue of tickets will be limited to the carriage accommodation provided, and passengers who intend to travel by the train should therefore apply early for such tickets, which can now be obtained at the above-named stations.
The tickets issued at the above fares are only available for the Excursion train from and to the stations at and for which they are issued, and are not transferable, and no passenger will be allowed to leave the train at any intermediate station. Passengers travelling by this train without having first obtained a ticket for it, will be required to pay the ordinary single fare.

NO LUGGAGE ALLOWED.

Yark. June, 1898. **GEORGE S. GIBB, General Manager.**
Ben Johnson & Co., Printers, York.—No. 238—27-C-98.

After the Scarborough and Whitby Railway line opened in 1885 the North Eastern Railway were eager to encourage passengers to use their trains on the line. Cheap excursions were the best way, they offer passengers economical travel while filling their trains and generating income for the company. These excursions were popular at this time and were a big part of people’s leisure activities. Marketing them to attract customs was initially by simply producing handbills and posters printed by letterpress in black bold lettering without colour. These were the earliest railways posters produced by the NER advertising the Scarborough and Whitby Railway line.

Left: Letterpress type poster dated June 1893 which represents the early posters produced by NER to promote the Scarborough and Whitby Railway line. It advertises a half-day excursion in the afternoon of Tuesday 4th July 1898 to Robin Hood’s Bay and Whitby from Scarborough. It returns quite late in the evening 8.45 pm from Whitby and 9.05 pm from Robin Hood’s Bay.

Right: Another example of a letterpress type poster produced by North Eastern Railway dated June 1893. It advertises a day excursion on July 3rd from Hull and stops at practically every station south of Scarborough and stations on the Hull Scarborough line, known as the Yorkshire Coast line (see Scarborough Railway Seaside Holiday Posters in the Yorkshire Journal Vol, 1 2018), and most stations on the Scarborough Whitby railway line to the Whitby West Cliff station. Third class return tickets are itemised from 2/- and 3/6 depending on which of the stations passengers depart from. According to the time table the train took two hours to reach Filey from Hull and would probably not reach its final destination for at least another hour and a half. The return train left Whitby West Cliff at 7.45 pm.

The developments in colour lithography replace the dull, informative letter press type posters and enabled pictorial posters to become a cheap and effective form of advertising.

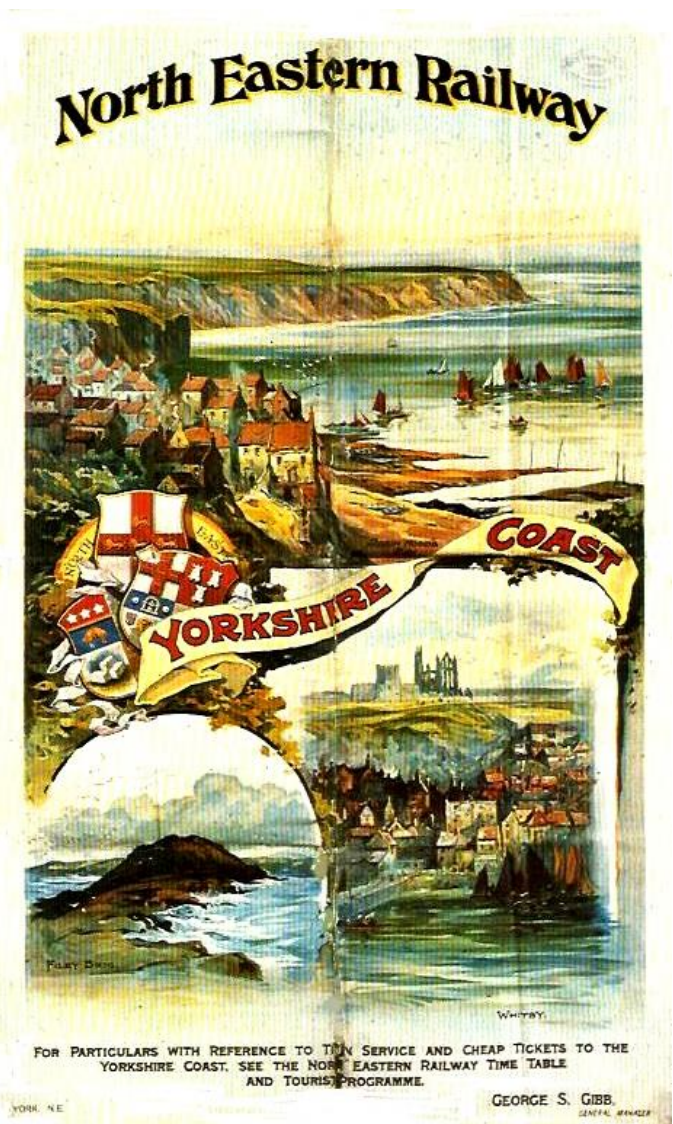
NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

DAY EXCURSION
TO
SCALBY, CLOUGHTON, HAYBURN WYKE
Robin Hood's Bay and Whitby (West Cliff.)

ON MONDAY, JULY 3rd,
A DAY Excursion will be run from Hull, Beverley, Driffield, Bridlington, &c., to
SCALBY, CLOUGHTON,
Hayburn Wyke, Robin Hood's Bay
AND
WHITBY (West Cliff)
AS UNDER:

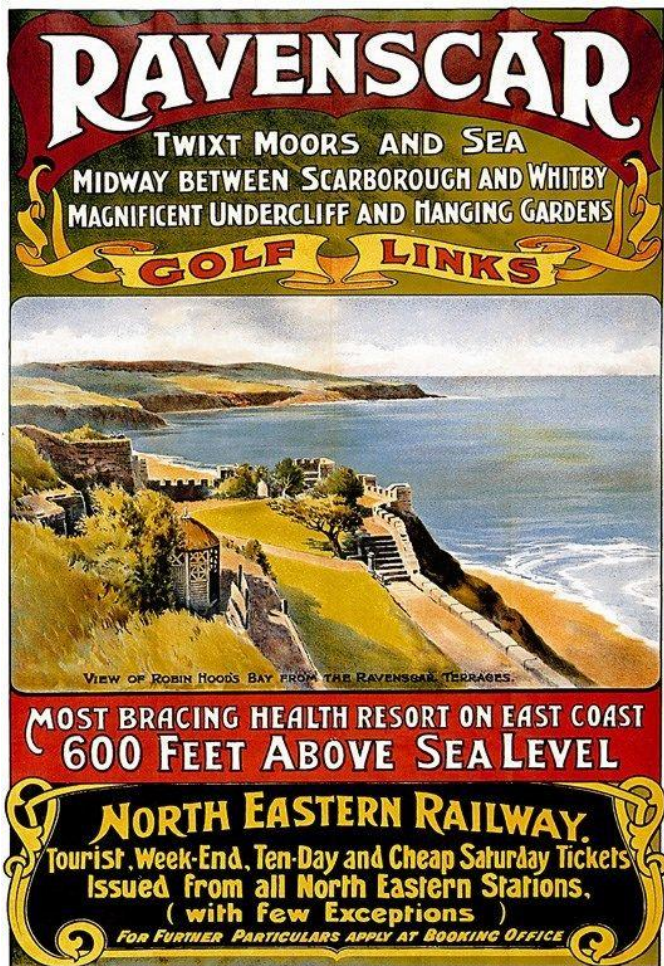
		A.M.		P.M.		Fares there and back—Third class.	
HULL	6 55	} 3s. 6d.
COTTINGHAM	7 4	
BEVERLEY	7 14	} 3s. 0d.
ARRAM	7 22	
LOCKINGTON	7 32	
HUTTON CRANSWICK	7 32	
DRIFFIELD	7 40	} 2s. 6d.
HAFPERTON	7 46	
LOWTHORPE	7 52	
BURTON AGNES	7 57	
CARNABY	8 4	
BRIDLINGTON	8 12	
FLAMBRO'	8 18	
EMPTON	8 23	
SPERTON	8 32	
HUNMANBY	8 41	
FILEY	8 45	

The RETURN TRAIN will leave WHITBY (West Cliff) at 7-45, ROBIN HOOD'S BAY at 8-5, HAYBURN WYKE at 8-45, CLOUGHTON at 8-45, and SCALBY at 8-54 p.m.
Children not exceeding 3 free; above 3 and under 12 years of age half-fare.
A limited number of carriages will be provided for this Excursion, and in order as far as possible to secure the comfort of the passengers, and to avoid delay, the issue of tickets will be limited to the carriage accommodation provided, and passengers, who intend to travel by the train, should therefore apply early for such tickets, which can now be obtained at the above-mentioned stations.
The Tickets issued at the above fares are only available for the Excursion Train, from and to the stations at and for which they are issued, and are not transferable, and no passenger will be allowed to leave the train at any intermediate station. Passengers travelling by this train, without having first obtained a ticket for it, will be required to pay the ordinary fare.
The issue of tickets from Hull, for an hour before the train's departure, will only be made at the Excursion booking office at the west-end of the Paragon Station, York.
NO LUGGAGE ALLOWED.
York, June, 1893. **GEORGE S. GIBB**, General Manager.
Goddard and Son, Printers, Silver Street Hull.



The poster on the left is one of the first coloured lithographical railway posters produced by North Eastern Railway (NER) to promote destinations on the Scarborough & Whitby Railway line. It is dated to about 1900, and although the artist is not known it could be by Frederick W. Booty (1840-1924) who produced other posters for the NER around this time. He lived for sixty years in Scarborough and produced many paintings featuring towns and villages along the Yorkshire Coast.

The poster is a typical example of early railway posters with various artwork. The top view is of Robin Hood's Bay with its red roof houses descending down to the beach. Out at sea are a number of fishing boats known as Yorkshire cobs. In the distance are the jagged cliffs of Ness Point also known as North Cheek. The bottom scene is of Whitby illustrating sailboats in the harbour and part of the town's buildings set on the hillside. St Mary's Church and the ruins of Whitby Abbey are situated on the hilltop; they look down on the town and harbour. The small illustration inserted in the poster on the left is of Filey Brig. Separating the views is a yellow banner with the words Yorkshire Coast written in red and to the left the York coat of arms.



The poster on the left is another early coloured lithographical railway poster produced by North Eastern Railway (NER) to promote destinations on Scarborough & Whitby Railway line. It is dated 1909 by the artist William S. Tomkin and promotes the Ravenscar Resort. The centre panel shows a picture of the magnificent views from the cliff tops overlooking the North Sea with the rocky coast line that sweeps in a wide curve toward Robin Hood's Bay in the north. Just below the cliffs are the hanging terraced gardens with battlements which surround Ravenscar Hall. The caption at the bottom of the poster is justified 'Most Bracing Health resort on the East Coast' just too bracing perhaps for some people. It is a drop of almost 600 feet (185 metres) to the sea from the stone battlements walls along the terraces illustrated in the poster. The cliffs are sandstone from the lower Jurassic period dating from around 170-180 million years old and are favourite places with fossil hunters. The view looking up from the small rocky beach is rather daunting to those who have to walk up.

Right: This recent photograph shows a view of the steep cliff with zigzagged steps going up from the rocky beach



Right: A similar view of the hanging terraced gardens and the cliff battlements of Ravenscar Hall to the one in the poster. They were laid out by Rev. Dr. Richard Child Willis son of Ann and Dr. Francis Willis, before squandering the family fortune. He failed to grow trees, instead he put up cast-iron replicas complete with metal leaves that tinkled in the wind

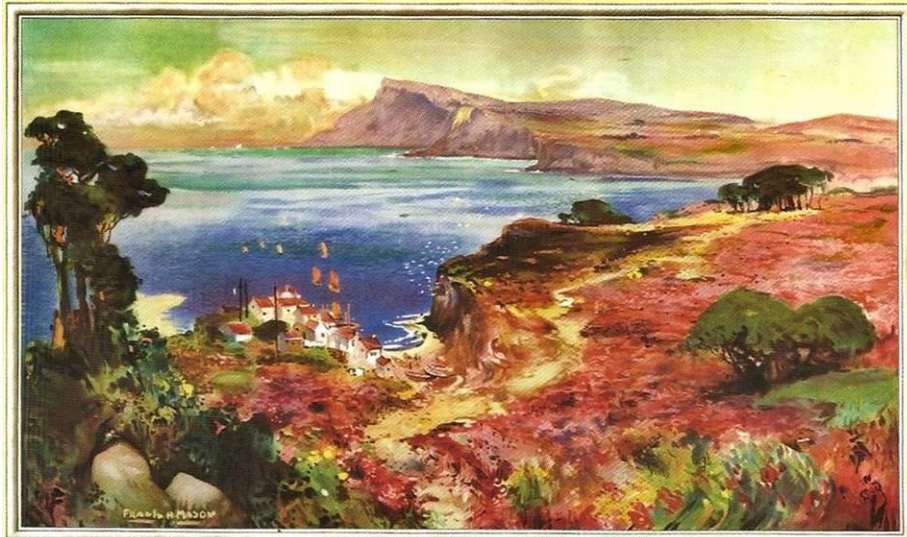


Left: A view of the golf course from the battlements of Ravenscar Hall looking north along the coast toward Robin Hood's Bay



THE YORKSHIRE COAST

TWIXT MOORS & SEA



HOLIDAY RESORTS TO SUIT ALL TASTES

FOR ILLUSTRATED BOOKLETS APPLY PASSENGER MANAGER, NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY, YORK.

N.E. No. 50.

two cobsles are being unloaded by three fishermen, and just behind them, beached on the sands are another three cobsles. Robin Hood's Bay was a thriving fishing village with 130 fishermen and forty-five boats, but by the end of 1914 there were only two families fishing fulltime. The decline was due to the introduction of off-shore trawlers working from the harbour in Whitby, these could not be used at Robin Hoods Bay due to the lack of harbour facilities this made fishing from local cobsles unprofitable. The poster illustrates the wild North Yorkshire moors stretching away beyond and the path running along the cliff tops now forms part of the Cleveland Way National Trail that rolls up and down along the cliff edge and gives wonderful coastal scenic views. It leads towards Stoup Brow and the nearby site of the Alum Works which closed in 1864 and the rugged South Cheek, otherwise known as Old Peak a 600 feet (180 metres) high headland pictured in the far distance.

RAILWAY POSTERS ISSUED BY THE LONDON AND NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY (LNER)

In 1923 the Scarborough and Whitby railway became part of the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) at the creation of four new railway companies, it served largely the eastern side of England. The London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) employed some of the finest poster artists of the day to tempt passengers on their trains. They were quick to realize that a successful poster relied on good design and a strong images for its appeal. The posters in this series show how effective they were.

The poster on the right was issued in the early days of LNER, and carries one of its early logos. It is dated 1925 and is the first poster that LNER produced to promote rail travel on the Scarborough and Whitby railway line. It is looking north towards Ness Point also known as North Cheek with its sweeping curve of the bay and cliffs in the background. This is one of the most treacherous headlands along the coastline with its jagged rocks.

The diversity of the landscape between Robin Hood's Bay and South Cheek, also known as Old Peak has been captured by artist Frank Henry Mason (1874-1965) in his colourful poster on the left which is simply titled 'The Yorkshire Coast, Twixt moors & Sea' and is dated to about 1910. The poster is painted from the wind swept cliff tops looking south across the North Sea along the rocky cliffs. Below can be seen Robin Hood's Bay with its red roof cottages descending sharply down to the beach. Out at sea are a number of fishing boats known as Yorkshire cobsles. They belong to local fishermen, four of them appear to be returning from fishing in the North Sea. On the small sandy beach the catch from

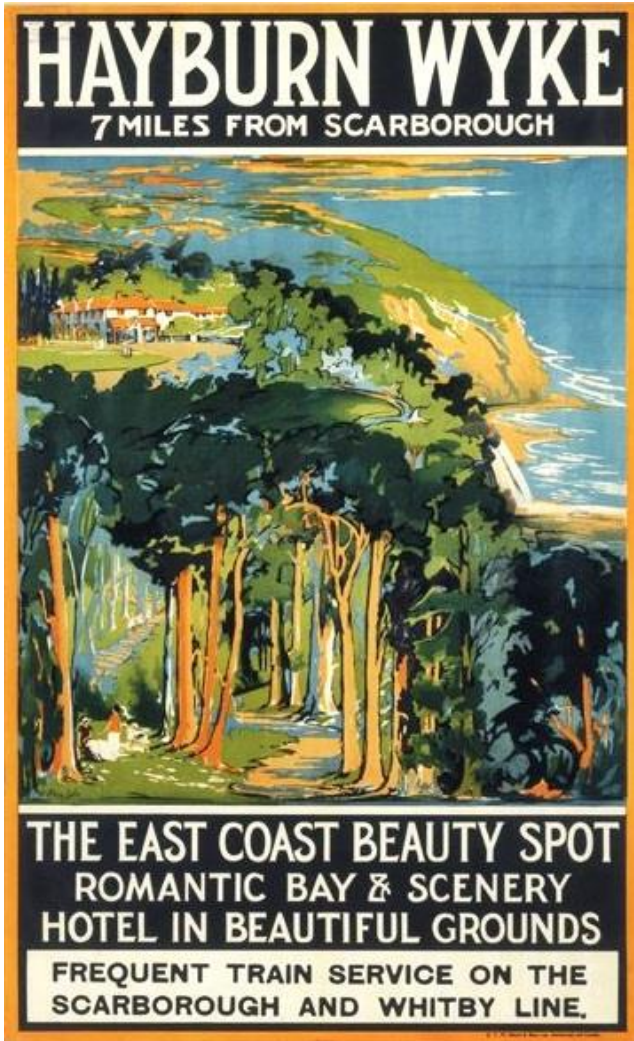


Illustrated booklets free from Passenger Manager Liverpool Street Station E.C.2; York; Waverley Station Edinburgh; Traffic Superintendent L.N.E.R. Aberdeen or any L.N.E.R. Enquiry Office

LNER

Jet was mined here in the 19th century to make necklaces and brooches and small pieces of jet can be found on the beach. Between the cliffs in the foreground from where this poster was painted from, huddled together are the red roofs of former fishing cottages that drop steeply away down to the beach and the edge of the sea. This is the picturesque Robin Hood's Bay, a scene that has hardly changed today. Although the connection with the legendary Robin Hood is obscure, one story is that he made his way here in order to hire a boat in which to escape from England. The artwork is by F Gregory Brown (1887-1941) who undertook work for all four of the main railway companies.

Right: A recent photograph showing a similar view of Brown's 1925 poster of the treacherous headland of Ness Point or North Cheek and red roofs of Robin Hood's Bay



The poster on the left was produced to promote rail travel to the bay of Hayburn Wyke, the artwork is by Alice Cole and dates to the 1920s. The name Hayburn comes from Anglo-Saxon word meaning 'a hunting enclosure by a stream' and Wyke comes from the Norse word 'vik' meaning a sea inlet or creek. This poster illustrates the attractive wooded nature reserve valley leading down, through a beautiful glen, to a tumbling waterfall and giant boulders on the beach. Hayburn Wyke became a particularly popular picnic spot in Victorian times with the coming of the Scarborough to Whitby railway line, but nowadays, apart from when visited by walkers and cyclists it is relatively quiet.

During the 1940s oak, ash and beech trees were felled for the war effort and the Forestry Commission later replanted the area with conifers. In 1981, when the woods were purchased by the National Trust, work started to restore the woodland to its earlier state by thinning out the conifers and encouraging native species. On the right hand side of the poster is a waterfall that cascades over large gritstone blocks and descends onto the beach below. During heavy rain twin falls can be seen gushing out down the cliffs.

Right: Hayburn Wyke waterfall cascading into a pool on the beach. Photography by Lance Garrard

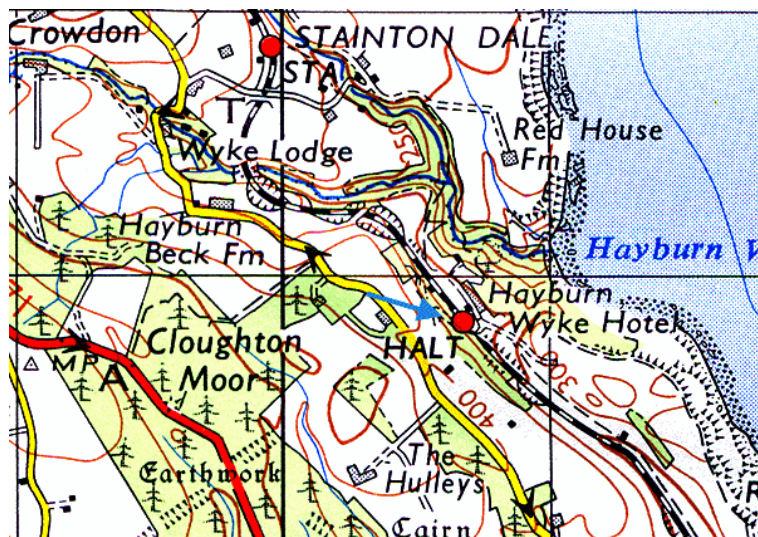


The Hayburn Wyke Hotel can be seen situated at the top left hand side of the poster with gardens laid out in front. This poster is thought to have been produced privately to advertise the Hotel and grounds, it was printed by local printers E. T. W. Dennis & Sons Ltd, Scarborough. The Hayburn Wyke Inn was originally an 18th century coaching inn set in woodland next to the coast. Nowadays the area is a lot quieter, and the inn caters more for walkers hiking across the Cleveland Way.



Left: This old postcard shows the Hayburn Wyke Hotel as it looked in 1922. The building has hardly changed, but the area in front of it which was laid out in gardens is now a car park. Set out under the canopy are two tables with white cloths, a waiter is standing behind serving afternoon tea to guests

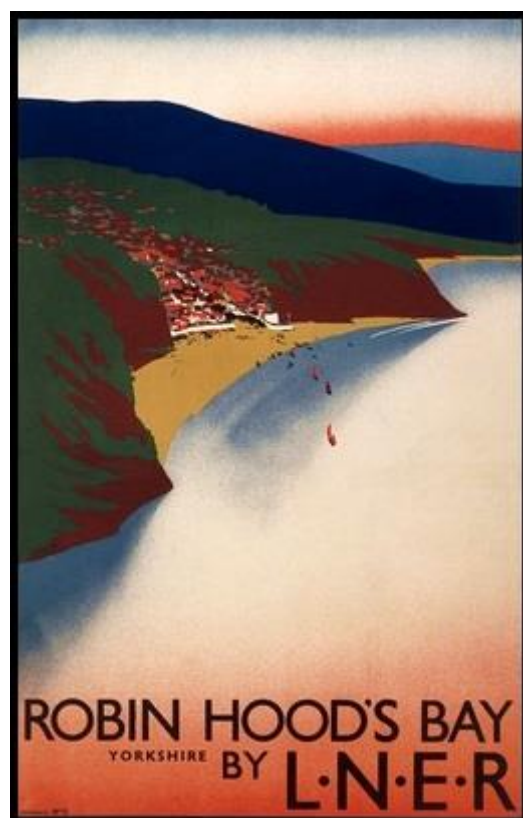
Below: A view north across Hayburn Wyke bay looking towards Stainton Dale



Above: Map showing the Scarborough and Whitby railway line winding its way to Hayburn Wyke railway station pointed out by a blue arrow, and the Hayburn Wyke Hotel. The line curves its way inland to Stainton Dale railway station after crossing over the Hayburn Beck.

The LNER poster on the right is by Tom Purvis who developed a bold, two-dimensional style using large solid blocks of vivid flat colour and eliminating detail. It was originally produced in 1930 as part of a set of 6 posters using the same bold style to form a panoramic night view of the LNER holiday coastline. This poster is number 5, the others are Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, Lowestoft, Suffolk, Skegness, Lincolnshire, Scarborough, Yorkshire and Bamburgh, Northumberland.

What is remarkable about this poster is that LNER got the topography wrong, the view is not Robin Hood's Bay but Runswick Bay some 14 miles (22 Kilometres) further north along the coastline.



RAILWAY POSTERS ISSUED BY BRITISH RAILWAYS (BR)

In 1948 the railways were nationalised, London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) became part of British Railways (BR). They continued to produce railway posters promoting rail travel to holiday destinations along the Scarborough and Whitby railway line.



Robin Hood's Bay

FRANK
SHERWIN

THE YORKSHIRE COAST

BRITISH RAILWAYS

SEE BRITAIN BY TRAIN

BRITISH RAILWAYS

The above poster is a panorama view of the picturesque village of Robin Hood's Bay. This is one of the most beautiful railway posters ever produced, it is by the artist Frank Sherwin and is dated 1954. It is an idyllic landscape and a classic of its type to persuade holidaymakers to visit the area by train.

The view is looking south with the rocky rugged coast line sweeping in an arc around to the headland of South Cheek also known as Old Peak, although the wide sandy beach below the cliffs is somewhat exaggerated. The white patches seen on the sloping hills are Alum quarries which closed in 1817, the Peak Alum Works continued production until 1864. These are ruins today and a tourist attraction in the care of the National Trust. In the far distance the hills go on climbing to the North Yorkshire Moors. On the beach are a few holidaymakers, they are sitting or strolling along the sands and some are paddling or swimming in the sea. Two children are happily playing with a beach ball and on the sea near the bay are two sailing boats.

The foreground is looking down over clusters of red-tiled roofed houses and cottages that give this place an obvious charm. They are built at a different level with two nearest the cliff edge being three stories high. In front of two cottages, walking along the path enjoying the sunshine are two young ladies, one is waving to a young man walking down the steep cobbled side-street down to the beach.

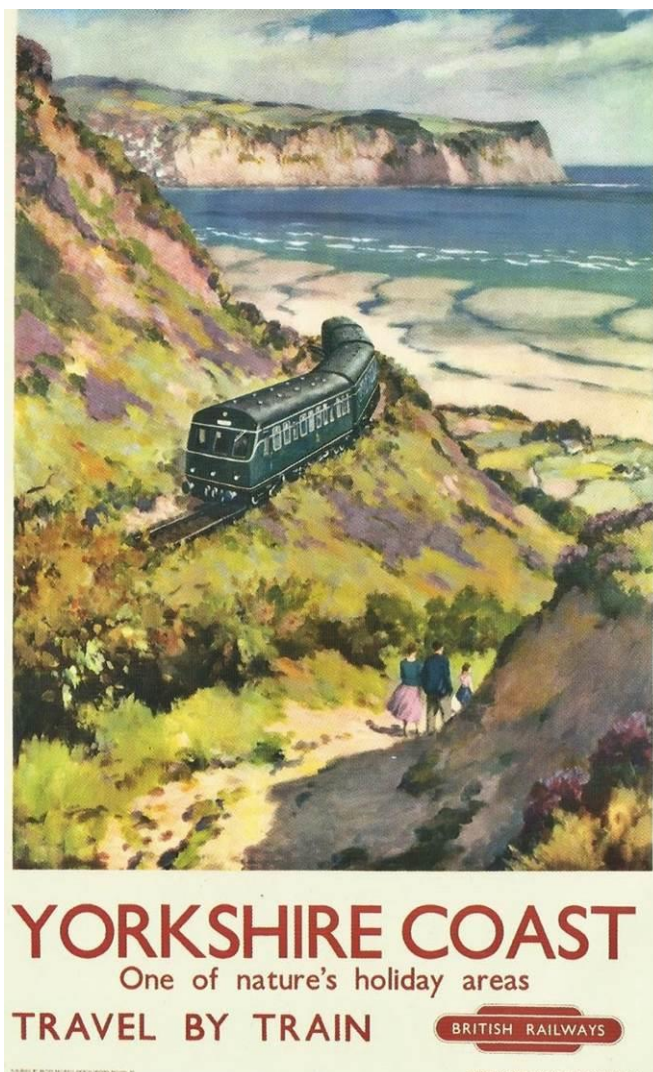
Over the years up to 200 cottages have disappeared due to cliff erosion, a common feature of the Yorkshire coast. The last house to fall was Regent Cottage in 1973. In 1975 to stem the erosion, a 40 foot (12 metre) high by 500 (150 metre) long sea wall and cliff promenade was built. During the smuggling era many of the cottages had cellars which were connected by passages and ran through the centre of the village, some of the buildings also had openings disguised as cupboards into adjacent houses. Most of the passages have now been blocked off and many of the cellars filled with concrete. The main legitimate activity had always been fishing, but this started to decline in the late 19th century. These days most income comes from tourism.

Right: This black and white old photograph is of the same view to that of Frank Sherwin's poster which is dated 1954. The only difference appears to be that the shed in the centre is a now a cars garage with two car, a lorry and a cart parked outside. In the poster it is shown as a repair shop for boats with a man working on a sail boat. The cottage on the far right is a Lyons Tea café which has a number of people sitting outside, this is also the same in the poster although Sherwin omits the sign. The actual small size of sandy beach along the cliffs can be clearly seen in the photograph. Since the poster was painted and the photograph was taken the last building on the cliff edge has vanished.



Above: The sea wall and cliff promenade built in 1975 to stem the erosion.

The British Railways (BR) poster on the right is rather an unusual view as very few holiday posters showed the actual train. It is one of the new Diesel Multiple Unite which were introduced on the Scarborough and Whitby railway line in 1958. These new trains gave much improved viewing of the endless variety of wild and picturesque scenery along the line. The train in the poster is running along the line at Stoupe Brow which is between Ravenscar in the south and Fyling Hall in the north. In this area the line runs close to the coast and gives views of Robin Hood's Bay with its clusters of red-tiled roofed houses and cottages which can be seen on the left side of the poster between the rugged steep hills in the foreground and the cliffs of Ness Point or North Cheek in the background. A family can be seen walking between the hills going down to the beach. The poster is by artist Gyrth Russell and is dated 1959.



CAMPING COACHES ALONG THE SCARBOROUGH AND WHITBY RAILWAY LINE

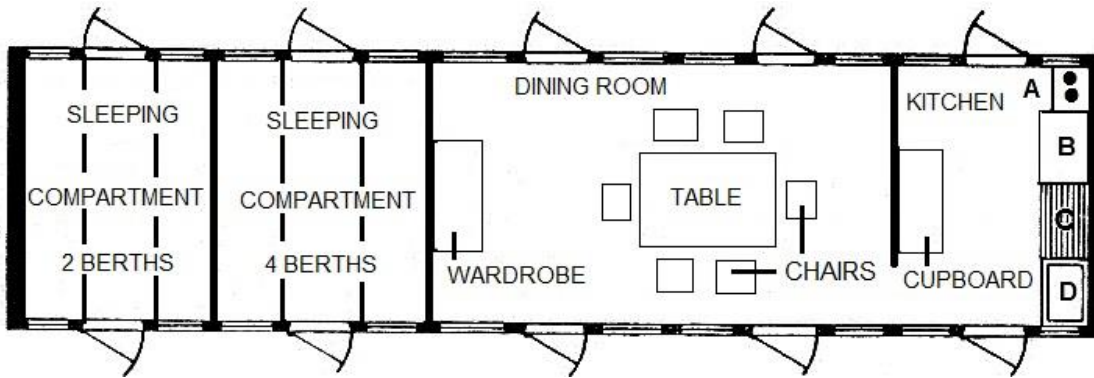
Camping coaches were first introduced by the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) in 1933 they were obsolete six-wheeler carriages converted into camping holiday homes using five small compartments. These coaches stood in some remote, rural siding and came under the care of the local station-master.

Right: A LNER postcard to promote camping coaches situated at a wayside halt or siding. It is carefully posed showing a happy couple



L.N.E.R. CAMPING COACH.

The most popular type accommodated six persons which had one two-berth sleeping compartment and another with four berths. The dining-room contained a wardrobe, a table and six chairs. The kitchen contained cupboards, a stove with an oven, a sink and table. All the coaches were provided with cutlery, crockery, bed linen, towels, cooking utensils and table linen. Oil lamps and deck chairs were also included in the inventory. The local station-master could arrange food for campers and gave advice and information. Campers were also able to use the amenities available at the nearby station.



Left: Plan of a camping coach. These coaches are usually designed to accommodate six people. A stove with an oven B table and cupboard C draining board D sink



Left: This picture shows how the interior was arranged with a wardrobe in the background. Six ladies are seated around the dining room table taking afternoon tea

Right: Another carefully posed LNER postcard to promote camping coaches. It shows steps attached to the sides of the coach to enable entering and leaving the converted holiday home which uses five small compartment



L.N.E.R. CAMPING COACH.

Camping coaches were introduced at five stations on the Scarborough to Whitby line, four at Scalby, three at Cloughton, two at Stainton Dale, two at Ravenscar and five at Robin Hood's Bay, these quickly proved to be very profitable.

Left: This 1934 postcard is of a LNER camping coach in a siding at Sandsend near Whitby. It shows three lots of steps attached to the sides of the coach to enable entering and leaving the converted holiday coach



CAMPING COACHES ON CIGARETTE CARDS

To illustrate how popular camping coaches were in the 1930s Senior Service cigarettes and Ogden's cigarettes included camping coaches in one of their sets of cards.

The Senior Service cigarette card was of a glossy black-and-white horizontal photograph of a camping coach on the right issued in 1938. It shows a camping coach parked near a railway station in the countryside on a warm summer's day with a couple taking afternoon tea on the grassy side of a lonely platform. The card is titled 'Camping Coach' in



BRITISH RAILWAYS
A SERIES OF 48 — No. 19

CAMPING COACH

The railway camping coach provides a novel form of holiday. More than 400 of these coaches are sent out in April to beautiful coastal and inland localities. They are under the care of the local station master and are rented in advance. Camping coaches are fully equipped, whilst bed and table linen are supplied through the railway laundries. The rental for a party of six to ten varies from £3 - £5 per week.

Photo, courtesy G.W. Railway.

**SENIOR SERVICE
CIGARETTES**

a rectangular white box centered at the bottom of the photograph. The back of the card on the left, is printed in black ink in two rectangular boxes with the name of set 'British Railways', in this series there are 48 cards this one is No. 19 in the set. The description outlines the amenities of camping coaches and the rental for a party of six to ten which varied from £3 to £5 per week. The photograph is courtesy of Great Western Railway (GWR). The lower box displayed the name 'Senior Service cigarettes'.

The Ogden's cigarette card is a coloured illusion showing the inside of what is called a camp coach on the right. It belongs to a set of 50 cards in the series 'Modern Railways' issued in 1936, this one is No. 11 in the set, titled 'Camp Coach' printed at the bottom of the card. It depicts the dining room with a table and chair in the foreground. The lady in the background is making the tea and the man standing next to the wardrobe is putting a record on the portable record player. The man seated at the table is reading a newspaper and the lady is preparing sandwiches. Hanging down from the roof is an oil lamp. Printed in black ink on the back of the card on the far right, is a description of the amenities of a 'camp coach' which includes some of the contents.



MODERN RAILWAYS
A SERIES OF 50

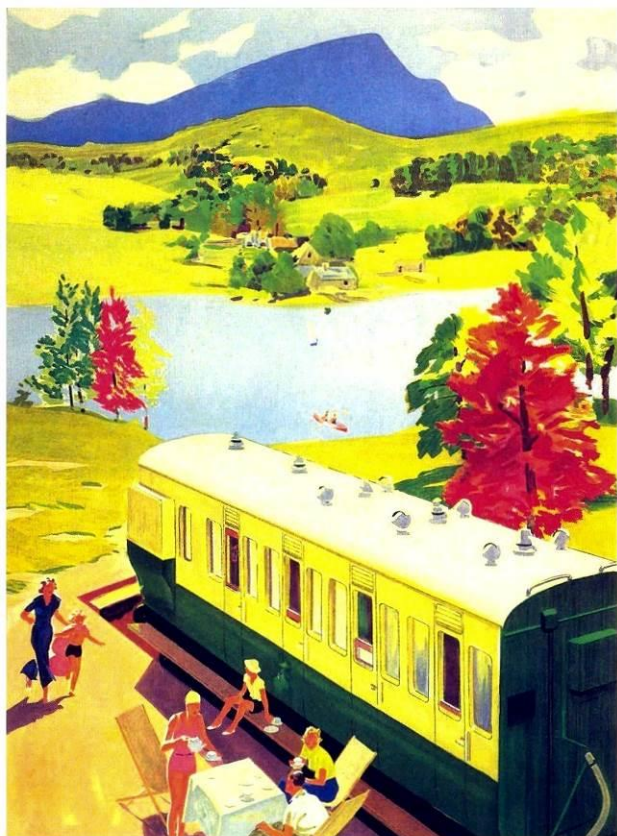
11

CAMP COACH
Great Western Railway

The railway camp coach is designed to provide all the fun and freedom of a camping holiday without the drawbacks of a canvas shelter. Specially-equipped coaches are placed near station premises at points carefully selected for the quiet and beauty of their surroundings, whether seaside, mountain or moorland. Accommodation for six to ten persons is provided, including sleeping compartments, a dining section, and a kitchen. Bedding, crockery, kitchen utensils, lamps and a stove form part of the coach equipment and, except for the purchase of provisions, the only expenditure is a low rental and the cost of the railway journey to and from the selected site.

ISSUED BY
OGDEN'S
BRANCH OF THE IMPERIAL TOBACCO CO.
(OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND), LTD.

RAILWAY CAMPING COACH POSTERS ISSUED BY THE LONDON AND NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY (LNER)



L·N·E·R CAMPING COACHES in England and Scotland

Accommodation for six persons from £2.10.0 per week
Ask for details at any L·N·E·R Station or Office

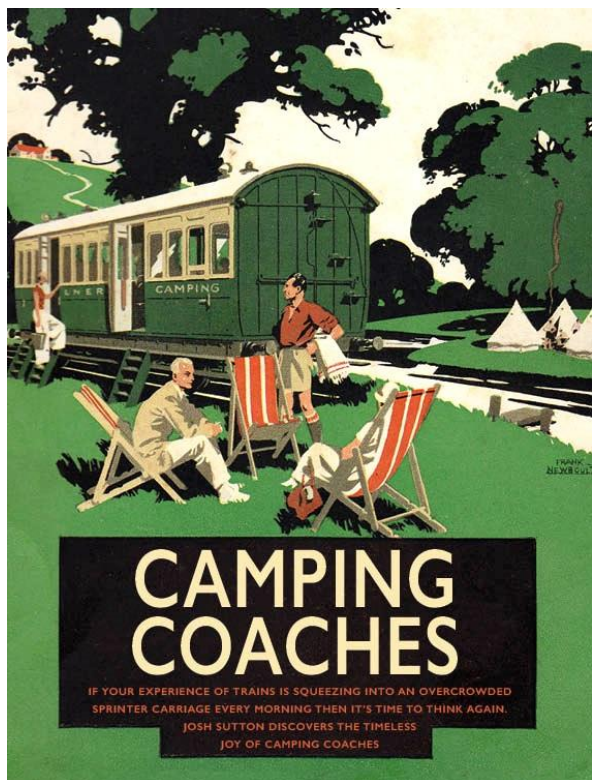
The poster on the right was also used by LNER on the cover of their 'Camping Holidays' booklet No 17 dated 1937 in which it lists camping sites on the eastern side of England and Scotland accompanied with a map. The cost of a camping coach for six people on this atmospheric poster has increased from £2.10.0 to £3.3.0 per week. The scene is set among trees in a beauty spot on a warm summer evening with the moon above the mountain in the background. Behind the camping coach is a lake where the holiday makers can have a swim. The group of six holiday makers are sitting and standing around a campfire singing songs, one has a guitar which he is playing to accompany the singers. The art work is by Tom Purvis (1888-1959) who was one of the major designers for LNER.

The London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) produced a few posters to promote affordable camping coach holidays at a number of attractive seaside and country sites that were ideal for a family holiday.

The poster on the left promotes LNER Camping Coaches in England and Scotland at a cost of £2.10.0 per week for six people. It illustrates a camping coach that has been repainted from its previous teak livery to the familiar colours of green and cream yellow. Sitting outside in the shade of the coach, are three holiday makers having a cup of tea. The lady standing next to the table is pouring out a tea from the teapot. A young boy and his mother are running back from the lake where the boy has been swimming. Paddling across the lake in a canoe are two young people wearing bathing costumes. On the other side of the lake surrounded by trees is a farmhouse and in the background rising above the green hill is a mountain. This is truly an idyllic setting for a relaxing family summer holiday far away from city life.



CAMPING COACHES
IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND
ACCOMMODATION FOR SIX PERSONS - £3.3.0 PER WEEK
ASK FOR DETAILS AT ANY L·N·E·R STATION OR OFFICE



The LNER poster on the left advertises affordable holiday camping accommodation for six people, at a cost of £3.3.0 per week. This was in the late 1930s, which is equivalent to about £143 in today's money, during this period the average weekly wage was around £1.20.0. It illustrates a group of holidaymakers beside their camping coach in the countryside. Two are seated in deckchairs engrossed in conversation with a man standing with towel under his arm looking towards a lady walking up the steps attached to the sides of the coach carrying a bucket of water. He is probably telling her that he is going for a swim in the river next to the coach which has a small wooden jetty. In the field across the river is a Boy Scout camp, they are cooking on a campfire. The coach has been repainted from its previous teak livery to the familiar colours of green and cream yellow. The artwork is by Frank Newbould (1887-1951), who studied at Bradford College of Art. He designed posters for LNER, the Great Western Railway (GWR), Orient Line and the Belgian Railways.

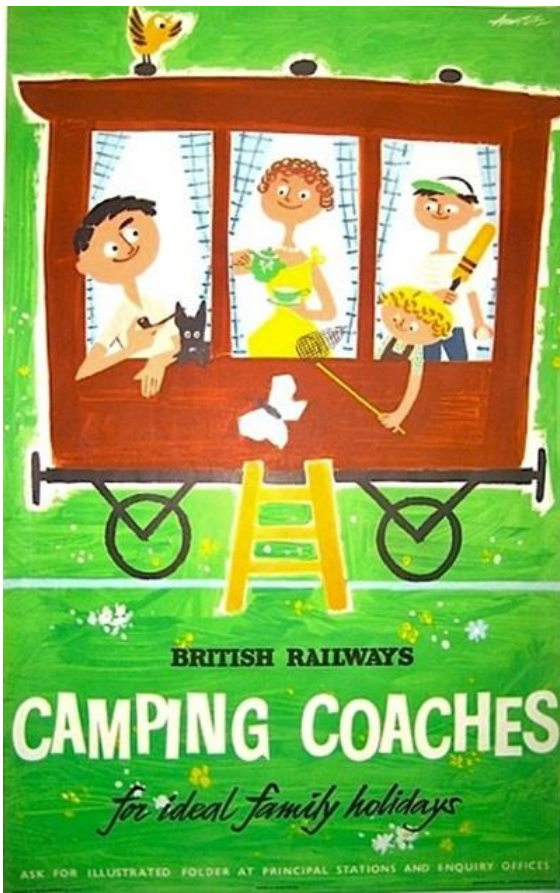
The posters and photographs produced by LNER depict carefully posed camping holiday coaches in idyllic settings to attract holidaymakers. The ones on the Scarborough to Whitby railway line were situated in sidings close to railway stations and not actually in particular tranquil locations. However, such peaceful scenes were only a short walk away from the camping holiday coaches.

RAILWAY CAMPING COACH POSTERS ISSUED BY BRITISH RAILWAYS (BR)

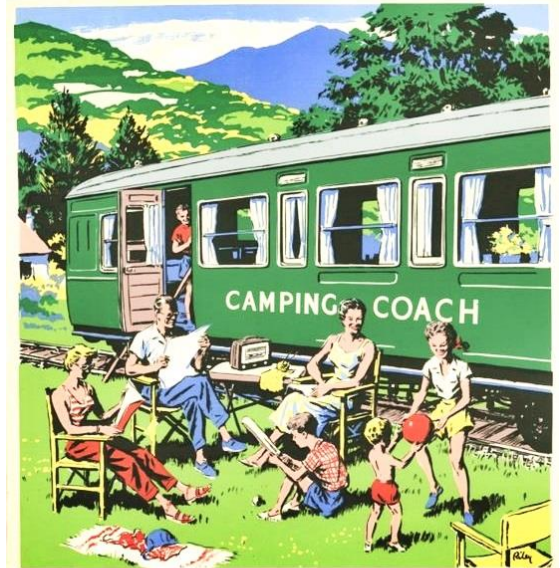
In 1939 the camping coaches were withdrawn with the outbreak of World War II. They were reintroduced by British Rail in 1952, using larger coaches which provided sleeping accommodation for four, six or eight persons. They included a fully equipped kitchen, a commodious living room and three bedrooms. All the coaches were fully equipped with crockery cutlery, cooking utensils, towels, table and bed linen. Some coaches used paraffin or Calor Gas for lighting, heating and cooking, but the ones at Robin Hood's Bay and Scalby had electricity. Tenants had to pay extra for this essential power. Drinking water and toilet facilities were available on nearby railway stations. These camping coaches were available from the end of March to the end of October and could be hired for one or two weeks. Rentals varied according to season, in 1958 for example 4 or 6 berth coaches with electricity at Robin Hood's Bay and Scalby were between £5.15.0 and £9.0.0 per week. At Cloughton and Ravenscar which had Calor Gas it was between £6.10.0 and £11.0.0. per week and at Stainton Dale which had oil it was between £6.0.0 and £10.10.0 per week. British Railways published brochures which included photographs, a map listing coach sites for all regions, and an application form.

Right: One of British Railways early posters produced to promote cheap and ideal holidays for the family in self-catering camping coaches. It is illustrated with two black and white drawings, the top one shows the living room and the bottom one the exterior of the coach. This poster was published 1954





The British Railways poster on the left is by Amstutz and is dated January 1955. The caption reads ‘Camping Coaches for Ideal Family Holidays’ and shows a cartoon family inside a camping coach. Leaning out of the window on the left is father, pipe in his hand with the family pet dog next to him. Mother is standing in the central window pouring out a cup of tea from a teapot. Their two sons can be seen in the window on the right, the younger one is trying to catch a large butterfly with his small net and their other son is standing behind him holding a cricket bat watching him.



CAMPING COACHES
 FULLY EQUIPPED FOR 8 PERSONS
 SITUATED AT NUMEROUS ATTRACTIVE SEASIDE AND COUNTRY SITES. IDEAL FOR FAMILY HOLIDAYS
 AVAILABLE 30th MARCH TO 19th OCTOBER, 1957
 REDUCED CHARGES - EARLY AND LATE SEASON
 ASK FOR ILLUSTRATED FOLDER AT STATIONS AND ENQUIRY OFFICES OR APPLY TO CHIEF COMMERCIAL MANAGER, WESTERN REGION, PADDINGTON STATION, LONDON, W2
 WESTERN BRITISH RAILWAYS REGION
 PUBLISHED BY BRITISH RAILWAYS - WESTERN REGION - PA 104 PRINTED BY STUDIO 100/200 LTD.

Although the British Railways poster on the right was produced for the Western Region it advertises camping coaches at numerous attractive seaside and country sites that are ideal for family holidays. It illustrated a happy family of parents and grandparents on a warm sunny day outside a camping coach in the countryside. Two children are playing with a ball and a young boy is sitting on the grass polishing his cricket bat. Grandfather and mother are sitting on camping chairs reading newspapers. Grandmother is also sitting on a camping chair, she is smiling happily watching her grandchildren playing. On the table between the grandparents is a pile of yellow knitting and a portable transistor radio. Father is standing in the doorway of the camping coach wearing blue shorts looking at the children playing. This Camping Coaches poster was produced for British Railways in 1957.

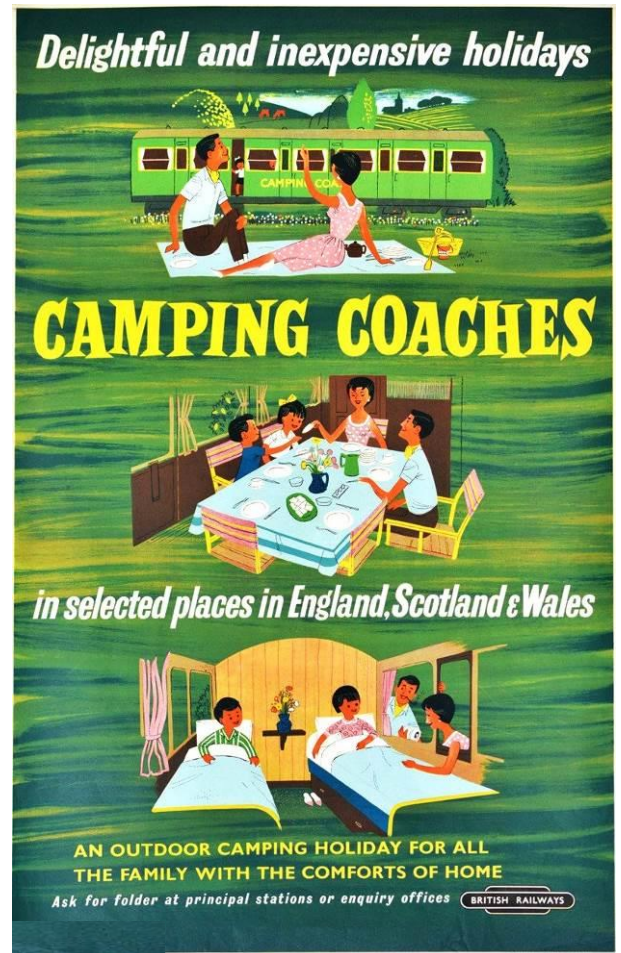


Left: This 1951 photograph is of a very similar setting to the one in the above poster. It is showing a family relaxing in camping chairs listening to their portable record player, outside their camping coach after lunch. The two eldest boys are reading comics and the two younger children playing with toys on the grass. Mother is sitting back in her chair taking in the sun and listening to the music, father is enjoying the music whilst smoking a cigarette.

The title of this British Railways poster is ‘Camping Coaches – Delightful and inexpensive holidays – In selected places in England, Scotland & Wales’. The situation is somewhere in the countryside illustrating three different parts of the camping coach. The top shows mother and father sitting on a white cloth which has been laid out with a teapot, plates and cutlery. Mother is waving to their two children who are inside the camping coach to join them for tea. On the right side of the white cloth is a yellow basket which probably contains food with a bucket and spade indicating that they are not far from a beach. Growing in front of the camping coach is a row of colourful flowers.

The middle illustrates the living come dining room with the family sitting round the table about to have a meal. The bottom illustrates a bedroom for two which is situated at one end of the camping coach. Mother and father are looking in through the windows making sure that the children are safely in bed.

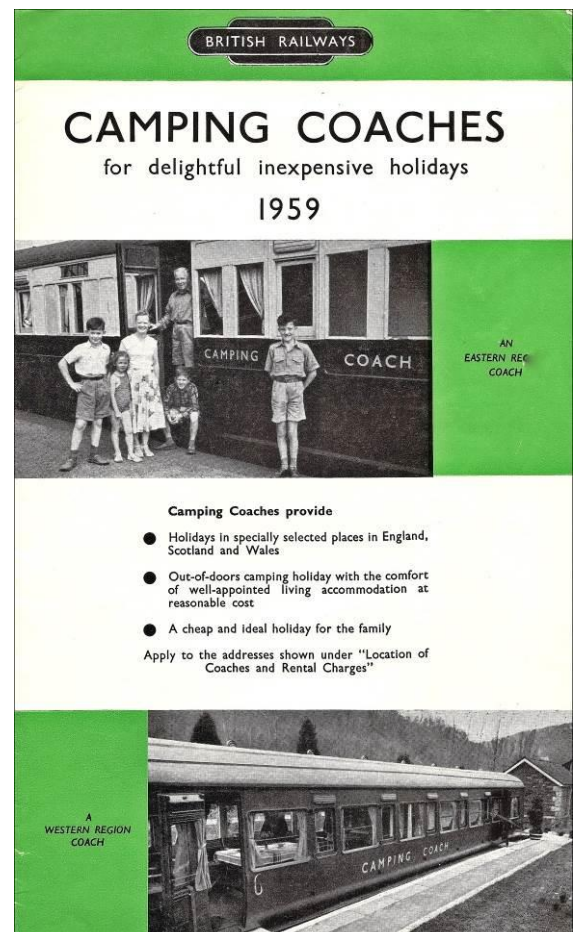
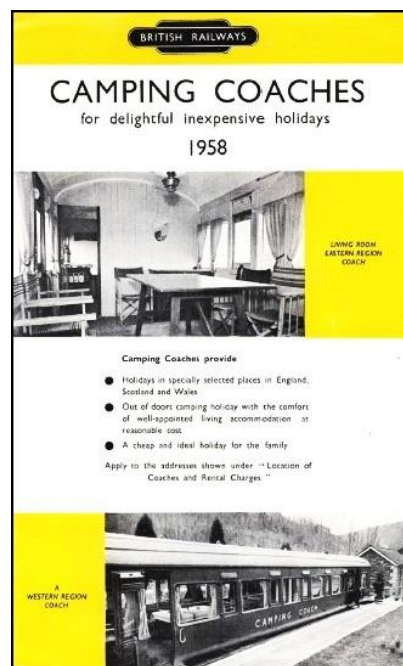
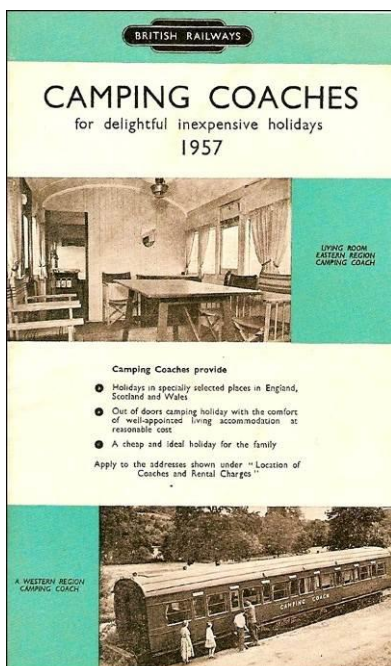
This British Railways poster was designed by Studio Seven and is dated to about 1960.



Left: The living room of a camping coach showing a table and camping chairs



Right and Below: Three British Railways brochures dating from 1957 to 1959 which includes photographs, a map listing coach sites for all British Railways regions, and an application form



The rapid expansion of road traffic which was in competition with the railway led to the drop in passenger numbers on the line. It was inevitable that in 1963 the Beeching Report proposed the closure of the Scarborough & Whitby railway. A financial survey was carried out in the summer of 1964 to determine the railway's viability, it revealed that the Scarborough & Whitby railway was running at a considerable loss, the wages paid out to staff fell well short of the income from passenger ticket sales. This is not to say that the whole line was unprofitable the camping coaches were still operating at a profit but this was insufficient to save the line which closed to all passengers on 8th March 1965.

CAMPING COACHES

This was not the end of all camping coaches on the Scarborough & Whitby railway line. At Cloughton Station an 'OSCAR' MK1 railway carriage built at Derby in 1962 has been refurbished to provide self-catering accommodation for up to 6 people similar to the 'camping coach' that used to stand at Cloughton Station. It is situated on short length of track at the south end of the platform a short distance from the stationmaster's house which has been restored and converted into a guest house and a tea room with access to the platform.

The first three of the original compartments have been converted into a lounge area, the next compartment is a kitchen and there are three bedrooms.



*Left: The 'OSCAR' MK1 railway coach looking north along the Cloughton Station platform
Photo by Nick Catford*



Right: The 'OSCAR' MK1 railway coach on the original track-bed alongside the old platform at Cloughton Station



Left: Inside the camping coach looking along the full length of corridor



Right: The lounge/dining area with a table, chairs, and television



At Hawsker Station an old railway coach has been converted into self-catering holiday accommodation which is situated alongside the old Hawsker railway station on a track that has been re-laid by the platform. The accommodation including 3 bedrooms, fitted kitchen, sitting room with traditional, first class railway carriage seats, shower room with WC can accommodate up to six people. The old railway carriage is managed by Trailways, a bicycle hire business run from the main station building which is a private residence and guest house.

Trailways also have a number of other old railway coaches which are used in conjunction with the bicycle hire business they are situated along the former passenger platform and the opposite former goods loading bay.



Left: The converted self-catering railway coach at Hawsker Station with wooden steps alongside the railway coach



Right: The sitting room with traditional first class railway carriage seats, table and television



Left: Hawsker Station looking south east. The former passenger platform is on the right with the former goods loading bay to the left. The old coaches are used in conjunction with the bicycle hire business that operated from the station. Photo by Nick Catford

Below: The old railway coaches at Hawsker Station converted into self-catering holiday accommodation situated alongside the railway station that can be seen in the background. Wooden steps have been built alongside the railway coach for easy access

THE CINDER TRACK

Almost the entire length of the old railway line of 22 miles from Scarborough to Whitby known as the 'Cinder Track' is travelled and well used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.



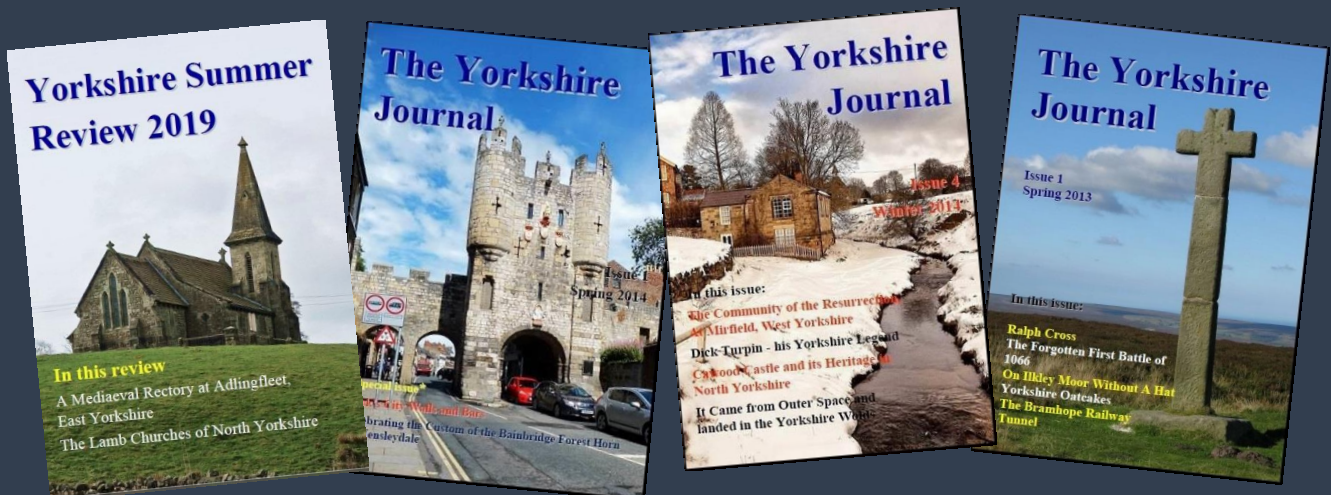


The front cover is the remains of tower or keep of Helmsley Castle. It was built in about 1200 and heightened in the 14th century. The tower would have been visible for miles around, a symbol of the power of the lords of Helmsley. During the Civil War in 1644 Helmsley Castle was held by the Royalists, following the surrender through lack of food. Sir Thomas Fairfax, commander of the Parliamentary army, brought down with gunpowder more than half of the tower and destroyed the curtain walls to prevent reuse. The tall towers of All Saints' parish church, Helmsley can be seen on the right of the tower.

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