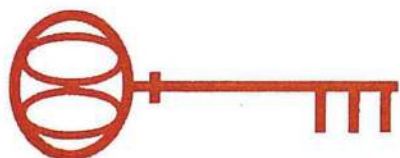


# ***THE KEY***



A NEWSPAPER FOR NORTH SKELTON & LAYLAND





## Editorial



*This is our 6th Christmas and we have now been going for 6 years and it's all thanks to you. I can't stress enough how much your donations help - THANK YOU!*

*Thank you to Flo Calvert for the lovely box of groceries you made up for our 'Xmas Draw'.*

*I do need articles to keep 'The Key' full so please, if any of you have stories to tell, let me have them. You do not need to live in North Skelton to get a story published.*

*Norma Templeman, 7 Bolckow St, North Skelton. Tel: 01287 653853*

**MERRY XMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!**

## Some Special Thank You's

*Thank you to Marjorie & Jean for North Skelton's 'Tote Trips'. Another successful year - well done!*

*Thank you to Pat, their stand-in.*

*Thank you to Jean Spsychala for donating the money she earned making 'peg bags' and to Curly Tops for selling them - this all went towards the 'Tote Trips' - from Marjorie & Jean*

*A Very Merry Xmas and prosperous New Year to all the above.*

**PLEASE BUY THE 'TOTE DOUBLES' ON SALE IN LOCAL SHOPS - YOUR TRIPS RELY ON THEM. LET'S MAKE 1998 A BUMPER YEAR.  
DON'T FORGET - THE MORE MONEY YOU PUT IN THE MORE YOU GET OUT!**



## Letterbox

Dear Norma



*I have been in contact with Ian Keeler from Boosbeck who told me about your newspaper, 'The Key'.*

*On the front cover of Edition No. 17 for April 1997, I was very excited to see a sketch of Vaughan Street showing what I believe was the grocery store owned by my great-grandmother and father, Grace and Edwin Tuck (in the sketch it was called Smart's Grocery Store).*

*My great-grandfather ran the Grocer's shop in the High Street, Boosbeck.*

*My father, Alexander Tuck, was born in Vaughan Street in December 1897, when his father and mother, Albert & Emma Tuck were running the Post Office and General Stores. Previously, this had been known as 'Tuck and Thompson' when my grandfather was in partnership with his cousin and I wonder whether this might have been the same shop. If it is, then the date of the sketch must have been after 1905/6 as my grandparents and father moved from the area around this time.*

*I am trying to trace the whereabouts of the school log books for the old Stanghow Lane School in the late 1890's. My grandmother, Emma Armstrong, used to teach there before her marriage to my grandfather. I have tried both Middlesbrough and Northallerton Record Offices without any luck. I wonder if someone local might have some information - I would be very grateful.*

*Finally, is it possible to subscribe to 'The Key' as I would like to receive copies if possible for a while. It is really interesting to read local news about the area. Although I have visited Skelton only once, some years ago staying at the Wharton Arms, I did enjoy my visit, especially seeing the places that my father often told me about.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Mrs Pamela Last, 41 Fowey Avenue, Shiphay, Torquay, Devon, TQ2 7RE*





## Pubs & Clubs

### The Green Tree



Over the centuries our local pubs have been an essential part of village life and this can certainly be said of the Green Tree at Brotton. My records show that the pub was in full swing in 1823, but the present landlord believes that there is evidence to show that it was built a few years earlier in 1818.

In the early days of the Green Tree the licence was held by a Richard Webster and it continued in the Webster family until the turn of the century. One Robert Head then took over and ran the pub until the early 1920's. It was then that the Miller family, headed by Albert, took over. The roof was thatched and beer was 4d (2p) a pint in those days. Members of the family remained in charge until Walter Miller retired some ten years ago - he had lived there since he was 4 years old. Having had only three families in charge over one hundred and sixty years there have been five other licensees in the last ten years. Ian Fawcett, a young man hailing from Redcar is the latest and has only been in residence for the last six months. Will he be the one to start a new dynasty at the Green Tree?

During the war the upstairs lounge was used as a headquarters for the Home Guard and a window overlooking the North Sea was used as a 'watch point'. The same room was used by the Buffs for their 'lodge meetings'. A hatch in the doorway still enables those inside to view anyone coming up the stairs.

Just after the war the pub boasted an organ played by "Mad Harry". Nobody can say that the title was conferred through his organ playing, but more likely from the fact that he had been a member of the Bomb Disposal Squad during the war.

For many years since the 1930's Cameron's Brewery had been the owners of the Green Tree, but mergers over the years have made it the responsibility of the Pubmaster Group, with Bass, Whitbread, Camerons and Carlsberg/Tetley all taking an interest.

The pub cellars have recently been rebuilt for good reason. Where the new housing estate on Ings Lane has been built stood the old pig farm. In the old days of heavy rain the slurry was carried down by the flood water into the pub cellars. I am told that, in flood times, the stink was unbelievable! Not everything was wonderful in the 'Good Old Days'!

Gordon Fowler

## Blooming Marvellous!

When the editor asked me to write a short article for the Christmas edition of 'The Key' I did not have to think long for a suitable subject.

Perhaps by the time you read this the past summer will be just a distant memory - warm days, rainy days, we had the lot! But what I remember most about last summer and North Skelton were the magnificent floral displays in the village. It was a real treat to visit or just drive through North Skelton.

The Memorial Garden and Sparrow Park looked really nice and the Church especially so - obviously a lot of hard work had been put into creating the floral displays in the baskets and the churchyard. Local businesses had certainly done their bit to brighten up the village - an excellent effort all round.

Best of all I think was the effort and hard work that local people had put into the displays of baskets, tubs and window boxes.

During August I was discussing, with officers of the Leisure and Libraries Department of Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council, Saltburn's entry in the "Britain In Bloom" competition. Local people put a great deal of hard work into making the town look very good and we felt that they would be bringing back the winner's trophy. It was not to be, however, but they did obtain a creditable second place. At that time I did remark that North Skelton should have entered.



After discussion with the Chief Officer I have managed to gain the support of the Parks and Countryside Department for an entry into the 1998 competition. Although the Council does not have a big budget for this type of thing they do have a lot of expertise and would put a good deal of effort into helping North Skelton to enter.

First of all we need to know if there is local support for such an initiative. If there is I would be willing to organise meetings with Council Officers and people from other similar villages that have had experience of "Britain In Bloom". I am quite sure that the Parish Council would be more than willing to assist and I know that members of Action North Skelton are very keen to improve the image of the village.

However, it needs your support to make it work. If you are keen to see "North Skelton In Bloom" next year then get in touch with myself or any of your local Councillors - we are here to help.

Cllr. Mike Stephen



# 'The Pioneers'



*Mrs Clements now  
in her lovely lounge*

The Bungalow is a beautiful, spacious, tastefully furnished dwelling situated between Layland Estate and the old railway line. It sits at the top of a hill opposite the allotments to the north of the village. Mrs Clements, now widowed, lives there and is very proud of her house - she has a right to be as it was built through blood, sweat and tears.

Mr & Mrs Clements came north in 1958, Mrs Clements running away with her son Paul from a very unhappy marriage. Their journey brought them to a caravan site at Brotton where they settled down. Mr Clements found employment at Skinningrove Works but it wasn't enough for either of them. Their dream was to own a small piece of land on which to build a house and have a smallholding and allotment.

One day while at work, Mr Clements was informed by Frank Marsay that 2 acres of good land were being sold by the Kirk family. Clem' immediately went to see them and bought the two acres that were eventually to be the site of their home. They pulled the caravan from Brotton onto the plot and so began the life of the family who Brotton's Dr Cawley affectionately called 'The Pioneers'.

Will Bean had owned that piece of land at one time and had run a very successful allotment. He had pumped all his water from a deep well into a tank which fed his greenhouses. This tank was to play a major part in the early days, it being the only source of water. Mrs Clements used it for all her general purposes; washing her clothes, cleaning and bathing. Drinking water was carried from a spring in the wood that all North Skeltoners know as "The Plantation". In winter these tasks became particularly difficult as the ice on both the tank and the spring had to be broken.

There was no electricity supply so oil lamps were lit which Mrs Clements recalls made the caravan "so cosy". By now Susan and Robert had arrived, both born at Overdene Maternity Home at Saltburn.



*In the 'early days' - Mr Clements with  
sons Paul, Michael and Simon and daughter Susan*

As time went on, Mr Clements was slowly but surely building rooms, made of wood, around the caravan. Another major improvement was the purchase of a generator - electricity at last. They now had entertainment in the form of an old 'Dansette' record player. The kids loved it and played it day and night. One of their favourite records was Lonnie Donnegan's "Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavour on the Bedpost Overnight?" Max By-

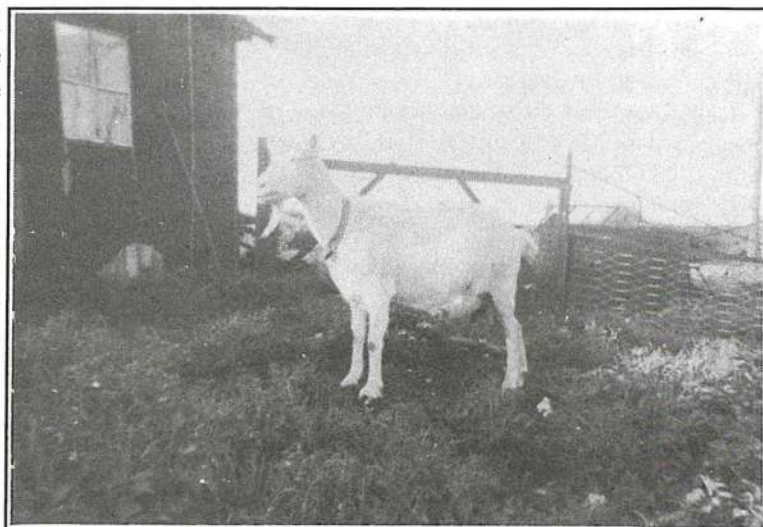


graves and Doris Day were also popular.

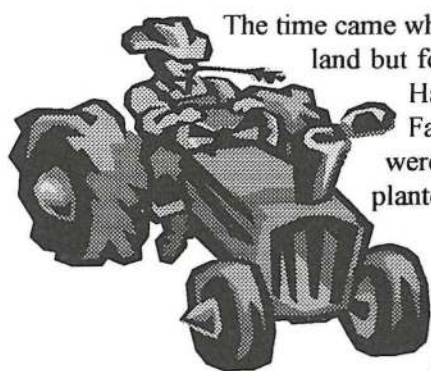
One big problem was that many a time the generator would run out of diesel causing everything to go off. This created a hazardous task, especially in winter, for Mr Clements and one of the boys to go start it up again, often in the pitch black. One would hold the torch while the other filled it up. When it was running the noise was deafening but as Mrs Clements said, "We just got on with it."

The wildlife was wonderful with foxes and rabbits calling in to see them, the dawn chorus with all the birds and a cock pheasant which regularly called its mate on the bankside. They always had dogs as pets and kept goats which supplied them with fresh milk. Mrs Clements recalls some of their names from over the years; 'Honey', 'Rosie', 'Bluebell', 'Big Horn' and 'Nancy'.

All the cooking was done on a calor gas stove until Clem' built a kitchen and acquired a 'Raeburn'. Mrs Clements spent hours baking and making jams. Times were very hard but she says she would "go back to them tomorrow." It was a lovely time for her as she took the pram every week into North Skelton and shopped at the Co-Op. She would fill the pram with any food she could not make herself and, like most people then, would pay for it all the following week!



*One of the goats which supplied them with fresh milk*



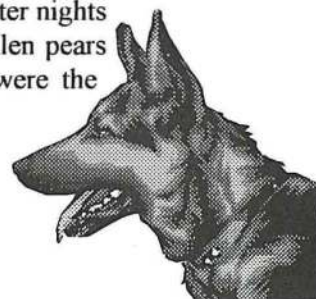
The time came when Mr Clements decided he needed a tractor, not only to plough the land but for other uses as well. Once again friends came to the rescue. Derek Harding was, at the time, working for Tom Robinson on East Pastures Farm and managed to get him an old, grey 'Fergy' tractor - now they were getting somewhere. A vegetable garden could be planned and planted, adding to their dream of being as self-sufficient as possible

Bob Laker was another who befriended the Clements' family, understanding their hardships. In the summer months, Bob would take the children into the 'Plantin' wood to play and splodge in the clear spring water. They would sit and watch the passenger trains trundling on to different sea-side towns along the coast and the freight trains back and forth to North Skelton Ironstone Mine

You could see for miles - no Layland Estate then or much of Hollybush Industrial Estate. Just Bell's Farm and a row or two of council houses. Unlike today, the Clements' children roamed the fields safely Mrs Clements sits back in her comfy chair thinking back "Those cold winter nights when we all sat around drinking home-made pear cider, brewed from fallen pears off our own tree, and listening to the records on the old 'Dansette' were the happiest days of my life and I would go back to them tomorrow"

Then fate dealt them a devastating blow in the form of a fire

(to be continued . . .)





# The Lamps

"Now then, Davy, can a' come in?"

"Aye, away in Greeny."

Davy beckoned him in wondering why he wanted him at this time of day

"Now then Greeny, what's up?"

Greeny cleared his throat and began, "Well a' want a dead sheep for Mick Bennett to stuff"

Davy's eyes popped as Greeny continued, "Yer know Mick stuffs animals for an 'obby. Taxidummy or summat they call it?"

"Aye, a' know 'e does, but whats 'e wanna stuff a sheep for?"

Greeny laughed "A'm comin' to that Davy Now Jim an' Ann Ramage are't talk o't place They've 'ad patio doors put in. Our Julie thinks they've won a bob or two on't lottery but it seems they're sayin' nowt. Anyway, to get back to mi' tale, Jim's invited Ann's sister, Kathleen, over fer Christmas an' she lives up Danby Dale, so to make 'er feel 'ome from 'ome 'e's goin' to put a stuffed sheep in't yard an' their Angela's found some brown marbles to put under it so it'll look like t' fields around 'er 'ouse!"

"What, wi' one stuffed sheep?"

No! No! No! Davy. 'e's got some green plastic grass an all to cover t' yard wi' an' stand t' sheep on By now Davy was dumbfounded "Anyway what's patio doors?"

Greeny was by now in full swing with his tale "They re two big windows that reach to t' floor an' on a mornin' yer push 'em open an' 'ave yer breakfast on yer patio sat on two plastic white chairs an' a white plastic table Davy's mouth was still open "Greeny, this get's dafter "Aye, it does but a 'avn't finished yet! 'E also wanted two 'peace doves' but Mick couldn't get any doves so 'e's stuffed 'im two pigeons instead that 'e got from Brian, t' pigeon king."

"Eeh! 'ell!" laughed Davy "Yer'll be tellin' me next 'e's given 'em names!"

"Aye, 'e 'as!" laughed Greeny

"Go on then, spit it out What's t' stuffed sheep called?" Greeny was by now in stitches. "Rudolph! And t' stuffed pigeons are 'Olly n' Ivy!"

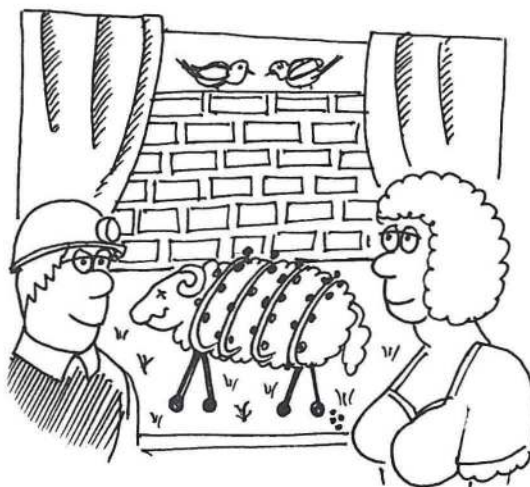
Tears were running down Davy's face Ah'll tell yer what, Greeny, ah'll get 'im that sheep if it kills me!"

Davy was in a thoughtful mood Where on earth could he get a dead sheep from? It looked like he'd have to give Jigger a visit at NSDSS on Sparrow Park. After all, he could get anything. He's even getting an extension to his office - they're putting another seat on Sparrow Park next year

Three days later Davy had his dead sheep. He took it to Mick Bennett. Mick looked at it "Davy, it's a beauty. Where's it come from?"

"Now, Mick, ask no questions. Just get on wit' job."

Christmas week was hectic Jim and Ann were as busy as bees Jim's Santa suit had arrived, the freezer was bulging with food. All the family were coming on Christmas Eve to see Jim's surprise. Ann was so proud of her patio doors she'd invited half of North Skelton. Even old Norm was going - she'd have something in 'The Key' about this!



10 o'clock Christmas Eve saw everyone merry - they'd all had a few drinks and their tummies were full to bursting. The front door flew open and in came Santa shouting. "Merry Christmas everyone!! Merry Christmas!! Goodwill to all men!! Jim looked a treat in his Santa suit as he made his way towards the now famous patio doors. Everyone held their breath as Jim pulled back the curtains. He pressed the switch and a gasp came from the living room. The green, plastic grass shone,

the coloured lights twinkled in the frosty, night air Holly and Ivy sat on the backyard wall but taking pride of place in the middle of the patio stood Rudolph, the stuffed sheep! He looked magnificent, covered from head to toe in bonny lights

Kathleen was entranced "Jim, it's like fairyland and Rudolph makes it just like home from home!"

Jim's face lit up. What a lovely Christmas Eve they d had

Someone shouted, "Look everybody, it's starting to snow and the stars are like diamonds, sparkling in the sky," as the first flakes of snow began to fall "Oh, isn't Christmas lovely!"

Davy looked up into the sky and gave a start. Was that a reflection of David Brown counting his sheep? "I 'ope not!" Davy said to himself

*May everyone's Christmas Dreams come true.*





# *In Memoriam*



Two miles from the town of Bapaume in the Picardy region of Northern France is the British War Cemetery of Warlencourt. It is a peaceful, beautifully kept place, colourful with shrubs and plants and surrounded by trees. At the rear of the cemetery stands the Cross of Sacrifice, a monument of gleaming white stone erected in each of the front line cemeteries of the Somme battlefields. Close to the Cross is a headstone with the inscription, "Corporal H. Leeks, Yorkshire Regiment." That same inscription appears on the War Memorial at North Skelton.

Harry Leeks lived with his family at 12 Vaughan Street. He enjoyed his life and his work at Skinningrove but that was to change at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. As soon as he was 18 years old, Harry, along with many of his mates, signed up to do his bit and, together with thousands of other young men across the country, was sent to join one of the volunteer battalions of what was to become known as Kitchener's Army. In Harry's case it was the 4th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment (The Green Howards).

He was a good soldier and was soon promoted. Like most of his companions he could not wait to go to France to fight. After all, everybody expected the war to be over quickly and nobody wanted to miss out on the adventure. However, it didn't turn out like that. Harry took part in the Somme offensive of July, 1916 and survived that bloody campaign. As the German armies withdrew to the Hindenburg Line in the winter it seemed that the worst was over. It was not to be. Harry was killed in action on 11th January, 1917. He was just 21 years old.

Harry's death had a profound effect on his 16 year old sister, Alice. She was devastated. Years later she named her son after her beloved brother. When the War Memorial was erected at North Skelton she was one of the first to place flowers there in his memory. She has done so ever since, never once missing her annual visit on Remembrance Sunday. Alice is 97 years old now but has never seen the headstone which marks Harry's final resting place. She could not cope with the travelling involved so her grandson, Andrew, went to France to take the photographs which are now her treasured possessions and provide comfort for her



*Harry's gravestone at  
Warlencourt War Cemetery*



As we walked through Warlencourt Cemetery last August, Andrew suggested that I write something in the Visitor's Book. At first I couldn't think of anything to say, and then I wrote simply, "Love from Alice."

*Colin Berwick*



# Remember Green Shield Stamps?

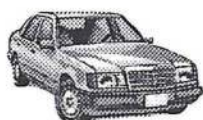


by Eddie Hartley



Green Shield Stamps were introduced in 1958 and were an instant success. Gifts could be collected from Green Shield Stamp shops in major towns and the company thrived in the 60's. One of the main outlets for them were garages where you could collect a certain number of stamps depending, of course, on how much you spent - similar offers continue today mainly in the form of vouchers.

With the oncoming of fuel shortages in the 70's the Green Shield Stamp boom slowly declined and finally fizzled out. I hope the photos on this page bring back memories.



Tesco certainly 'swung' in the 60's and the supermarket became an important customer for Green Shield.



Cars left to right: Ford Consul, Ford Cortina, Ford Zephyr & Morris Oxford



On the left is a Vauxhall Victor and on the right a Ford Corsair

Do you miss the glamorous petrol pump attendants who adorned the forecourts at the time attracting clientele into their particular garage? This gaily dressed, 6-girl team filled tanks at the Bluebell Garage at Acklam, Middlesbrough which only a few weeks ago closed down and moved to new premises.

Esso prices down and double Green Shield Stamps! Paradise for this couple in their Austin Healy Sprite. Note the bonnet badge has been tastefully 'dolled up' and look at those spot lamps! Shame there was only a 948cc engine under the bonnet.



Merry Xmas



# PHOTO GALLERY



*Class of 8 year olds - 1954  
North Skelton School*

*Back:  
Mrs Readman (Teacher)*

*Centre Row L. to R.  
G Coates, D Berwick, - ? -,  
J Swan, P Hall, T Wrigley,  
B Agar, A Sanderson*

*Front Row L. to R.  
- ? -, B Readman, A Easby,  
J Whiteley, C Mains*

*Start of the  
'Tour de North Skelton'*

*Includes:*

*G Ring, Geoff Coates,  
Peter Hall & Tom Hall*



*North Skelton School  
1954*

*L. to R.*

*Ian Clayton, Alan Easby  
& Peter Hall*





*Skelton Football Club - c 1960*

*Back Row L. to R. : F Thompson, G Hodgson, F Ellingham, A Craig, E Drinkhall,  
B Ward, A Cummings, -?-, Mr Drinkhall*

*Front Row L. to R. : B Wilson, A Burluraux, G Hudson, N Harrison, A Sherwood,  
E Jackson, -?-*



*Stanghow Lane Junior Football Team - 1959-60*

*Back Row L. to R. : M Crame, D Hambley, J Bailes, D Walker,  
W Dowey, T Bennison, Mr Proctor*

*Front Row L. to R. : B Fletcher, D Carter, L Jackson, P Neasham,  
D Armstrong, I Westbrook, K Drinkhall*





*Stanghow Lane School Football Team -1930 - 31 ( Look at the medals! )*  
*Back Row L. to R. : H Richardson, T Williams, G Reece, L Snaith, C Gibson,*  
*J Hayes, Jack Salts*  
*Front Row L. to R. : J Crame, A Richardson, R Todd, K Breeze, C Bennison*



*North Skelton Miners Outing 1948/49 at Hexham Co-Op Tea Rooms*

*Party includes from L. to R. : Ted Evans, Adam Derring, Fred & Jack Burluraux,*  
*Sam Ovington, Will Bean, Mr Harrison, John Pinkney, Wilf Wheatley,*  
*'Jonks' Porte, Wilf Bennison, Tommy & Ron Hugill, Les Boosefield*





*North Skelton Carnival up the 'crick' - late 1950's*

*L. to R. : -?- , Brenda Readman, Marjorie Crossman, Jean Whiteley, Dorothy Berwick, -?-*



*Stanghow Lane School - Form III (1957/58)*

*Back Row L. to R. : V Nicholas, M Morrison, J Mogridge, H Smurthwaite, B Hill,  
T Ainsley, R Laffey, R Carter, B Whitehead, J Parkes*

*Middle Row L. to R. : I Hutchinson, N Housam, P Peattie, J Richards, P Carter,  
J May, H Hopkins, J Woodsworth, S Garland, K Ridley, D Anderton, G Hodgson*

*Front Row L. to R. : D Lowe, J Boddy, L Graves, C Robinson, Mrs M Legg,  
S Harrison, G Hogarth, M Harrison, K Bell*

*Sitting L. to R. : G Young, K Scuffham, D Thompson*



# Letterbox



Dear Norma

Thank you for 'The Key'. We always print a copy for my cousins (all in their 80's) in Cheshire.

I loved the story about Skelton pubs. The Miners Arms was my Uncle Gordon's 'watering hole'. He used to walk up from Charltons every night with his huge lurcher called Floss. On the nights when he'd had a few too many, Floss would make sure he made it safely home across the fields to Charltons.

I went to school with the Bradley boys and we mixed our first shandy on the roof of the Sunday School next door.

I never went in the pub though, until I took my husband when we were visiting our daughter at Ayton Friend's School. Tommy had put the colour TV to black & white so that customers wouldn't bother to watch it and waste valuable drinking time! His step daughter and her husband were there at the time and it was good just to see them again.

Funnily enough, I'd never been in a pub whilst I lived at Skelton though I'd danced in all the dance halls and been to all the cinemas around.

Sheila Forbes, Yvonne Buck and June Stainton were my friends. They lived near the Green Inn. Yvonne told me that Sheila had sadly died but I often wonder what happened to June?

After I left college I never went back to Skelton Green so until I heard from Yvonne (via 'The Key') I'd heard no news about anybody for years - my own fault for moving around so often.

Thank you again for sending 'The Key'. I read them over and over again. I bet all the ex Skeltonians living away from home are the same.

Best Wishes

Sheila Bocking, 20 Ford End, Woodford Green, Essex, IG8 0EG.



Dear Norma

Thank you for 'The Key'. I enjoyed reading the article on Ground Hill by Betty Swainston. My father used to deliver meat there when he worked at the Co-Op on a Tuesday and Friday. That would be before 1936 as we left North Skelton in August, 1936 after my brother died. We lived at 4 Railway Cottages. My niece, Christine, is married to Harry Antill, so you see why I like to read about the 'old place'. Harry has just come out of hospital after a triple heart bypass but is doing well.

I remember Bowes' fish shop. Mabel and I know each other well. My mother did some shopping when they opened the shop on Vaughan Street. She was friendly with Jennie Wells' mother and they went to the sisterhood together.

While I write this I wonder how many people I knew are still alive; Mary & Edith Marshall, Mary Thomas, Sarah Cole, Rhoda Watts, Minnie & Ella Johnson, Moody's girls, Ann Dushley, Jean & Ann Beadle - I could name many more. Then there were the boys Butler, Slater, Sukers, Templeman - I could go on for ever. It was a place where you knew everybody.

Well, keep up the good work and please accept my donation

Yours

Effie May Brough, 20 Maltby Court, Quisborough.

We were very pleased to receive the following letter from novelist, Peter Walker (alias Nicholas Rea of 'Heartbeat' fame) . . . . .

Dear Norma

Thank you very much for yet another excellent issue of THE KEY. As always, it is knowledgeably written and I congratulate you on the well balanced mixture of local news, nostalgia and human interest stories. A lot of other local magazines could do well to emulate your publication.

Best Wishes

Peter Walker





# *A Taste of Persia*

*by Brian Payne*

We flew from Beirut to Teheran full of great excitement. We were all huddled together, 13 of us, in 1st Class on a Persian aeroplane - how private could one get? The journey was short but the amount of energy and anticipation was great. Unfortunately, upon arrival, our mood changed as we sensed we were under military control. The imitation guns, props which we



*Me in the 'Pernod' advert -  
Monte Carlo*

used in our James Bond routine, were found in our luggage and were confiscated.

So it was in the early hours that we arrived at the Club Chattanooga's living quarters minus the guns - they finally turned up days later. The owner wasn't pleased - it took us a further hour to convince him that we were the group booked.

Never do we get sufficient time to rehearse so we had to quickly size up entrances, exits and adjust whilst performing. What made the atmosphere so tense at this time was the fact that we had arrived at the beginning of 'Ramadan', a religious festival that lasted for 5 days, which meant no work - no pay! Seeing hoards of families picnicking on whatever piece of ground they could find brought a warm glow to our hearts. They were such friendly people and so generous at offering us treats.

The club was situated away from the built-up, city centre. A prestigious air was given to it but that didn't mean to say things couldn't go wrong. We were given a regular spot at the club going on last which meant getting out of the club at about 2.30 - 3.00am. We were told that the Hilton Hotel was a good place to go - this was true for we used to meet up with other acts who enlightened us to the Persian downfalls. The Hilton became our nightly rendezvous; it had to be as we had no money. In fact 'pay day' didn't arrive until we flew out early one morning at 4.30am, with only 2 hours notice, some weeks later.

Before that happened we moved into the city to a 'dive' of a club that had a boss with 'Hitler-type' qualities! He arranged for us to have our fingerprints taken - a real hoot to a group of dancers like us! The smiles were soon wiped off our faces when, arm-locked, they forced each finger onto the block. I and a few others felt sure a night in the cells would follow!

At this time, the owner of the Hotel Diamond turned out to be a 'diamond' in himself. He allowed us to use his 'slate' - eat now, pay later. If he hadn't we would have been reduced to begging. One delight, although none of us appreciated it at the time, was the amount of caviar



*Meeting some of the locals near  
Mount Fuji, Japan*



we were offered. It was 'the real stuff' and we toasted bread piece 'soldiers' and piled it on them - it certainly made up for our lack of wages!



*I get my hands on the FA Cup with friend Jane Molloy after Wimbledon beat Liverpool 1-0 (1988)*

There's always a ray of sunshine and, in fact, for us two appeared. A member of the Shah's family, apparently a 'bad apple' and a regular visitor to the club, took us under his wing and introduced me to one of his pilots. Between them they showed us a lot of their country. The most treasured memory for me was visiting a poor family who had very little but what they had they loved to share. The father worked for a British firm near to the Caspian Sea. He loved to have a chat over a meal made up of pasta and salad (picked

from the grass verges) but, to me, far better than caviar. Sadly, I've never heard from them since leaving - I dare not try to contact them in case of reproach from the powers that be.

A final surprise for me was being invited to dance in front of the Shah and his family at his summer palace. There were five of us and we spent an unbelievable evening, not only performing but joining in dancing with guests and the huge Royal Family. We left at 3.30am, me with a very large pineapple but to this day I don't know why!

In the city there were stalls everywhere, many selling fresh carrot juice which is very popular. Violent dust storms were a regular occurrence. I found it very humbling to hear the voices of religious chanting coming from distant Mosques and seeing ordinary building workers kneeling down to give prayer.

After we paid all our outstanding bills we hadn't much left and, although sadness creeps in when leaving all places, getting on that plane was a blessing to us all. Some time later, in the middle of an earthquake in Japan, a thought came to me that Teheran wouldn't be a bad place to be at that moment!

It's been wonderful relating my stories to you through 'The Key'. My life and adventures would never have seemed possible up at the 'Gas House', and yet secretly, on visits to Panto's with Mam and Dad, I would inwardly dream.

*May I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!*

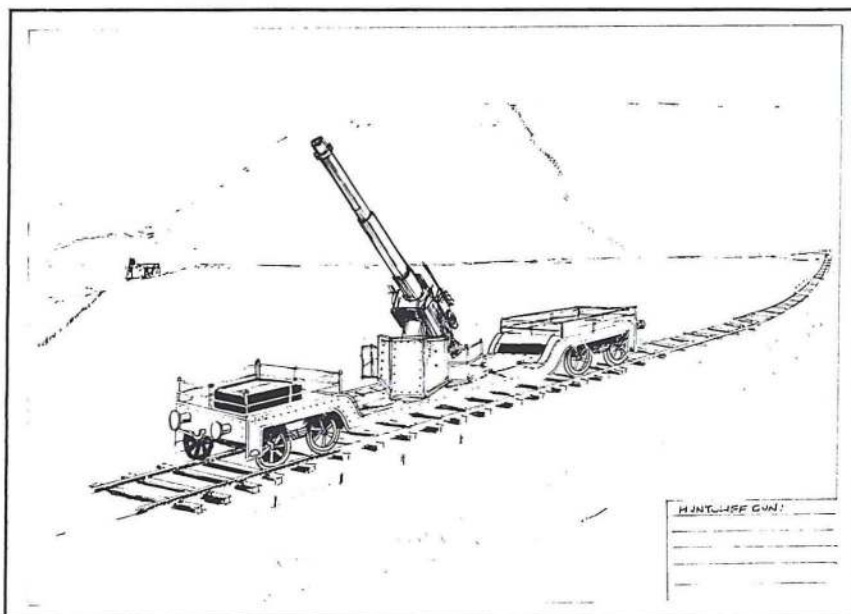
*Brian*





# *We Were Ready For Them!*

If you were around North Skelton in 1916 on a dark, moonless night, you may have heard a droning sound from the direction of the coast. Search lights would be scanning the skies. There would be a flash and then a loud bang would be heard as the 'Huntcliff Gun' was fired. The target would have been a German Zeppelin, either looking for Skinningrove Alum Works and TNT plant or just making a run up the coast looking for a target. This was something North Skelton would itself suffer only a few years later.



*The 'Huntcliff Gun' - World War I*

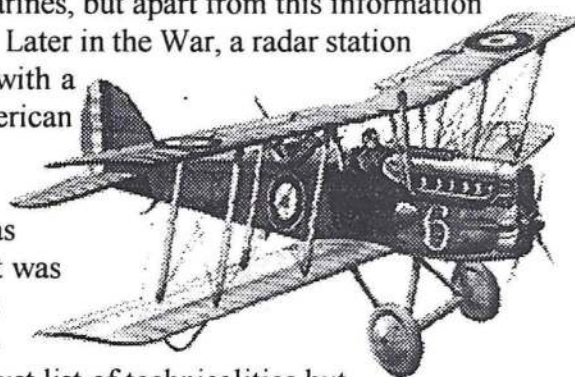
The 'Huntcliff Gun' was a six inch anti-aircraft gun, mounted on a specially constructed railway carriage, which ran on a spur line constructed specifically for the gun from the now demolished Westcliff Cottages to the Roman Signal Station on the cliff edge under the north side of Warsett Hill.

The gun was one of two made in Darlington, the other being stationed north of the River Tees. The 'Huntcliff Gun' was manned by either the local regiment or possibly the Navy and

was kept at Lumpsey Pit. It was drawn to the cliff edge by horses. When the Zeppelin raids ended, the guns were shipped to France. The track remained intact until the 1950's when it was dismantled. It is rumoured that a certain gun crew once fired at the moon thinking it was a Zeppelin!

On the same site during World War II, a radar station was built as part of the chain home low network. The foundations of the Nissan huts still remain. Also in that area was a portable, six inch gun supplied by the Navy and manned by Marines, but apart from this information there is little else we know. Perhaps you can help! Later in the War, a radar station was built on the crest of Warsett Hill complete with a camp. At one point it was controlled by American personnel.

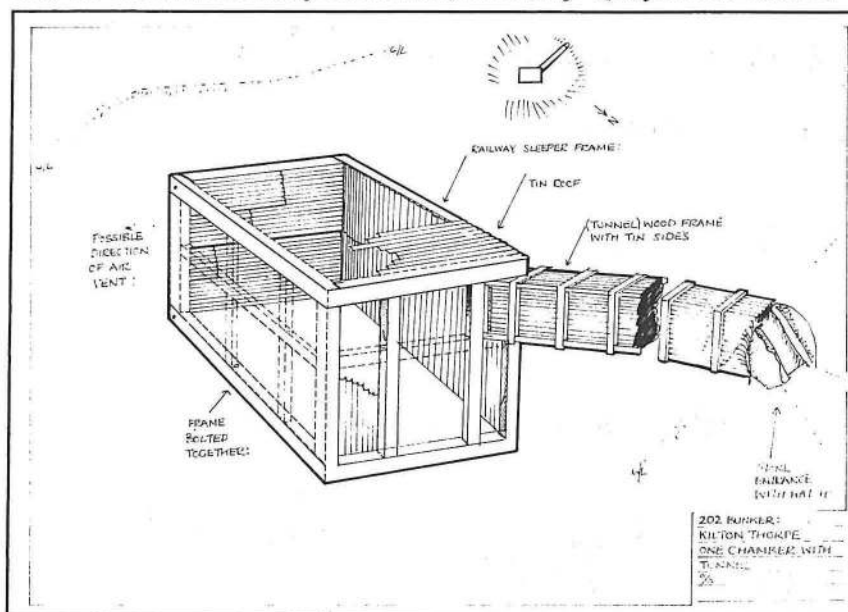
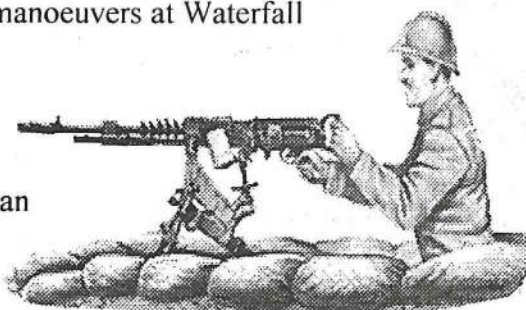
The Defence of Britain Project was lent what has become known as the 'Wright Paper'. J H Wright was a Home Guard captain from Redcar who was charged with the placement of minefield road-blocks, explosive traps, etc. Most of the paper is just list of technicalities but





there are some photographs of the Home Guard on manoeuvres at Waterfall Farm and Comondale.

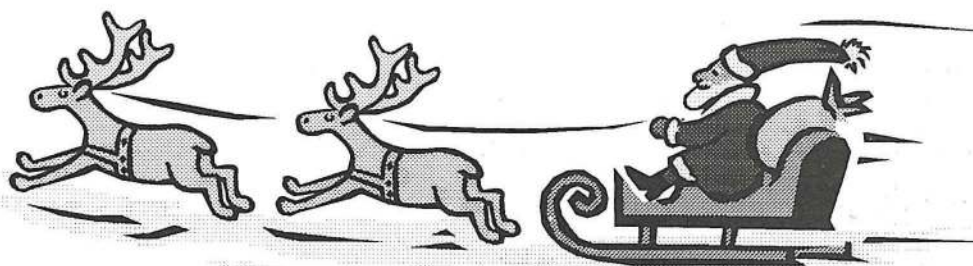
Recently, we have found a 202 Bunker at Lumpsey Pit. As mentioned in our previous article, 202 was to be the British Resistance in the event of a German invasion. So far, ten bunkers have been found in the Cleveland area, the one at Lumpsey Pit being the nearest to our village. The site had been chosen by the Army because of its close location to the mines of Lumpsey and Kiltonthorpe. Responsible for this choice of site were the grandson of Canon Atkinson and the the man who was to become a Hollywood star, Anthony Quayle. He starred in films such as *The Guns of Navarone* and *Ice Cold in Alex*, and also played Shakespearian roles in the theatre. He was stationed at Danby Lodge in a barn which still stands today. From here, he scouted the area for places to site the bunkers. When the threatened invasion did not materialise, he was posted to SOE (Special Operations Executive) and spent the best part of the War in Yugoslavia, behind enemy lines.



**202 Bunker - designed for the 'British Resistance'**

The other bunkers found so far have been at Danby, Es-ton, Guisborough and Dunsdale. 'Radio-communication rooms' have been discovered at Skelton, Castleton and Glaisdale. Most sites consist of one or two bunkers but we think there are many more yet to be found.

*Stuart McMillan*



**Merry Xmas & A Happy New Year to all our readers**



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Dec 27th - 'Roadhouse  
Dec 29th - Xmas Draw**

**Happy New Year**

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