



Welcome to the fourth of this series of Newsletters.

You might have already received your new style membership card with a short explanatory note. Something to emphasise and remember as well is that it is, in fact, your subscription renewal reminder as well, which we hope you will take up.

Please note that until you renew you are no longer a member. There is one exception. If you should join after September 30th. your membership carries through to the end of the following year.

The 2015 AGM of Friends of Nature UK

Our **AGM** this year will take place on **Saturday, April 18th. at 2 p.m.** at the **Acomb Quaker Meeting House, York** from 5pm to 7pm.

See: <http://tinyurl.com/pt3oz8r>

With our membership scattered far and wide York was finally chosen as being a reasonably central location for the majority of members.

The venue is easy to get to by bus from the railway station (a 30 min walk otherwise) and parking is easy nearby - an advantage over the central York venues where parking would be much more difficult/expensive. There is a map on the web page (see above) and there is easy access as it is just off the ring road.

If anyone who might be thinking of attending and would like further information please contact me or Simon Neal at info@thefriendsofnature.org.uk.

LIFE`S RICH TAPESTRY?

... or, who'd be a Volunteer Warden?

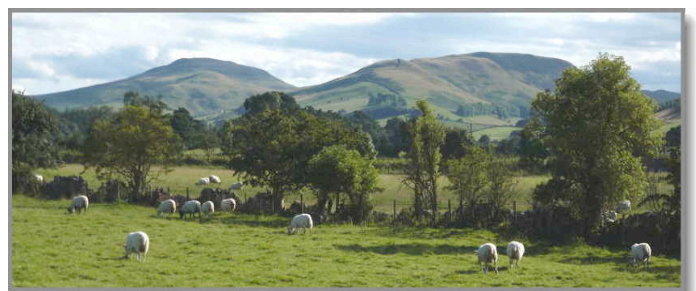
Life at the Friends of Nature House resembles a tapestry in many different ways, as the threads are woven into many different patterns: people arriving and departing, on foot, by bicycle, motor bike, or car, and each one with a different tale to tell. Travellers' Tales, in the footsteps of Chaucer`s Canterbury Pilgrims, but with many different journeys,

beginnings, endings, destinations, continuations or completions.

There was even one evening when a young couple arrived, quite late, having completed the Pennine Way, and two young lads also landed, ready to set out on their Pennine Way, only "backwards", from Kirk Yetholm to Edale! They were following in the footsteps of Simon Armitage, the poet, who documented his journey in the book, *Walking Home*. It`s a travelogue of a penniless poet along the Pennine Way, heading for his home in Marsden, West Yorkshire. He chose to `sing for his supper` along the way, giving poetry readings in church halls and pubs to earn his bed and breakfast. A good read! Nightly conversations in the Common Room added colour and texture to the Tapestry of adventures and experiences, as tips and hints were exchanged, recipes, rations and even tea bags were shared, and on more than one occasion, the world was put to rights!

On another occasion, totally unbeknown to us, there had also been an X Factor Celebrity Winner in the House. We were told that Joe McElderry, in addition to being famous for his 24 carat voice and diamond personality, as Pop Star to Opera Star, is also the Ambassador for the North East for the Teenage Cancer Trust, and was cycling from Glasgow to Tyneside with the South Shields Group on a sponsored bike ride to support this very worthwhile cause.

The Saturday morning of their departure from Kirk Yetholm for Newcastle, there was one moment when horses and riders were also milling around, as an International equestrian event was also taking place that weekend. I could just picture the cyclists and the equestrians on the wrong mounts, exchanging four legs for two wheels, wearing the wrong trousers. But that surreal moment quickly passed.



So, scenes from a two-week 'snapshot' for us, and a taste of life in a thrumming little community; tasty literally with freshly picked runner beans available at the Church coffee morning!

Our third visit to Kirk Yetholm, to the Friends of Nature House, which was truly International, with visitors from: Poland, Germany, Norway, France, Italy, Australia, England and Wales, thanks to Simon's brilliant marketing on the World Wide Web.

Plans are in place to return next year, to pick up the threads of the tapestry once more!

*Sheila and Bill Goodman
Volunteer Wardens*



Hibiscus

An AGM with a difference!

West Malaysia is not an obvious tourist destination. The distance and unremitting tropical heat are off-putting for many, nor is it, apart from scattered enclaves such as Old Melaka and the islands of Penang, Langkawi and Tioman, a particularly tourist-friendly place. Nevertheless, as it is my wife's native country, I have made a number of visits there over the past 30 years, and have had the good fortune to see some of its remaining areas of wild forest, of which there are basically three kinds – highland, lowland and coastal mangrove. All are disappearing – the former two categories at a combined rate of around 1.5% per annum – though the drivers of this process are different in each case. Highland forests are logged for hardwood to supply furniture, and though in theory the process is selective, i.e. only selected trees agreed with and marked by the forestry authorities are felled, the reality tends to be rather different, and outside the few areas designated as National Parks there is no immunity from illegal logging. Lowland forest, on less steep ground, is

being steadily replaced by plantations of the West African Oil Palm, as “development” throughout the world demands more palm oil for its cheap cosmetics, cheap biscuits and cheap butter substitutes deemed appropriately high in polyunsaturates. On top of this, we have the recent fashion for “biodiesel” increasing palm oil demand still further: the current European Union target of 10% biodiesel in all diesel sold in the EU by the year 2020 can only make matters worse. Mangrove swamps are less often threatened, providing a reasonably productive coastal fishery for the local villages, but some lose out to investors who would rather have shrimp farms for the export market.

The Malay Nature Society, founded by British expatriates in 1941, just months before Japanese troops overran the then British colony of Malaya, has survived well into post-war independence, and does what little it can to ameliorate the plight of the forests. Its emblem is the Tapir, the large, shy black-and-white ungulate of the tropical rainforest with the elongated, slightly elephant-like nose. MNS (the acronym is acceptable, there being no Marks & Spencer in Malaysia to cause confusion) still holds its annual general meetings in English, which remains a well-understood language among all the three racial groups, or at least their educated members, despite the efforts of the dominant Malay minority to favour their own tongue. So 13th September found me, a long-standing overseas member of MNS, attending my first AGM in an air-conditioned lecture theatre on a brand new university campus on the outskirts of the historic city of Melaka. (Yes, it's the same place as Malacca: all newly independent countries like to play down their colonial past by changing the spelling). Here we heard talks on subjects as diverse as conservation of marine and freshwater turtles, how to run a tropical hospital in an eco-friendly manner, and Alfred Russell Wallace, the Victorian biologist who toured the “Malay Archipelago” at around the same time that Charles Darwin was exploring the Galapagos, and who came to much the same conclusions regarding Evolution as his more famous colleague.

These were followed by presentations from the various local groups of MNS up and down the country. Mostly, there is one group per state, and among them are the two states of East Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak, which though politically part of Malaysia are geographically part of the island of Borneo. The presentations contained many uplifting stories: planting new mangrove trees in Kelantan, reintroducing the tapir to a forest reserve in Sarawak, successful opposition to a new cement plant in Pahang, a new Forest Interpretation Centre for Langkawi, and many others. But they could not disguise what became the major topic of discussion at the ensuing AGM proper: the aging and declining membership of the organisation. A majority of the

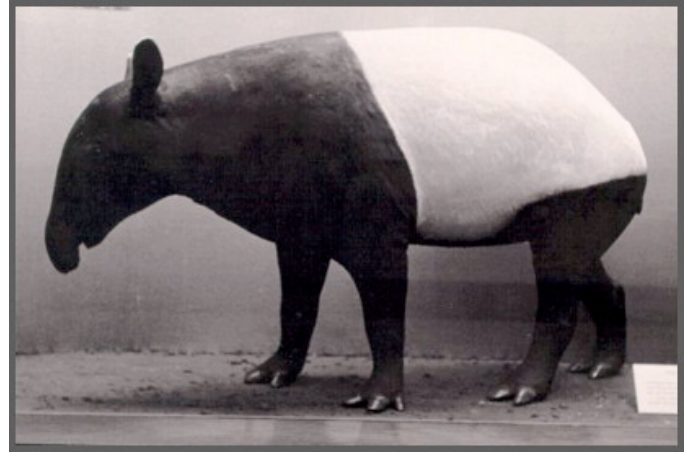
groups now have a membership of less than 100. Does that sound familiar to FoN members? I suspect it is a problem as global as deforestation itself, and there may be no answer, but at any rate a new President and partly new Council were duly elected, with a promise of bringing all the means of modern electronic communications to bear upon it.

At the AGM I was fortunate to meet up with one of the Council members who proved to be staying at the same hotel as me, and who provided my transport for the remainder of the weekend. (I had not hired a car myself, and Malaysian public transport is for the most part in a state of dire neglect, so the value of this cannot be overestimated). His name was Ivan Ho – I'm sure he also has Chinese familiar names, but it does prove that Chinese families in Malaysia have a sense of culture in choosing Western names for their offspring.

Thanks to Ivan, I was able to meet up with other MNS members for a barbecued fish dinner in a local village, and to take part in the excursions arranged for the following two days. The first of these was to an "Eco-home", built 10 years earlier by one of the MNS council members, Stephanie Bacon, who originally comes from Essex. It was built exactly as you would in England – walls, floor and roof highly insulated, double glazing with no opening windows, PV solar panels on the roof....but with some modifications, as in the tropics you are trying to keep the heat OUT, not IN. Thus, the windows are installed "backwards" – with the heat-reflective surfaces facing outwards, the solar panels face upwards, not southwards, and produce more than enough electricity to power the air conditioning which operates throughout the house.

Next morning was a guided tour – not of a nature reserve, as I might have expected, but of an enormous factory on the edge of Melaka. This joint venture (between the Taiwanese firm AUO and the US firm SunPowerCorp) imports wafers of monocrystalline silicon about 10 centimetres square and 180 nanometres thick as its raw material. As our little group walked the vast air-conditioned corridors, peering in at room after room of conveyor belts attended to by staff gowned, gloved and masked exactly as in an operating theatre, site engineers explained the processes by which copper-etched circuitry is added to the lower surface, and layers of semiconducting Boron and photosensitive Phosphorus to the upper surface, to produce 95-watt cells ready to be made up into photovoltaic solar panels. Finally, we visited a 5-Megawatt grid-connected solar farm that had just come on stream nearby. It was by now baking hot noonday, but we stayed out long enough to admire the pristine arrays of panels (not, in fact, made by the factory we had just visited), and the lightning conductors sited at intervals round the edge of the site – very necessary in a country with frequent tropical storms. Small by

the standards of some countries, the 7-hectare site has an estimated payback time of 10 years. But in a country whose oil and gas reserves will probably run out in another 30 years, it's a start.



Tapir

But what about the wildlife, I hear you ask? Didn't you see any of that in Malaysia. Well, yes, but you'll have to wait until the next Bulletin.

Rohan Lewis

The Proud History of Lancashire's Youth Hostels

Sometimes we don't always appreciate it, but Pennine Lancashire is one of the most fascinating areas of north England. With its rich in heritage, it is full of surprises, being at the heart of Great Britain's industrial and social history. Its heritage comes in a multitude of ways; the legacy of the former cotton industry, the windswept moors, the iconic Pendle Hill, its market towns and the Leeds Liverpool canal are those dominant features giving the area such a proud historical legacy.

One other example of Pennine Lancashire's heritage is that the area has two of the earliest youth hostels established by the Youth Hostel Association. The hostels at Earby and Slaidburn are now the only hostels across the whole of Lancashire and exist for a very good reason, the popularity of the area as a place to visit and explore. To this day they continue to provide comfortable self-catering, budget accommodation for walkers, cyclists, families, nature lovers and those wanting to find out about the history of Pennine Lancashire.

The hostel buildings themselves are steeped in history each having quite different backgrounds. Slaidburn was previously a coaching inn and the Earby hostel was owned by someone who was perhaps Earby's most famous local resident. Both exhibit character with many of the original features which make them cosy places to stay.

Prior to becoming Earby hostel the previous owner of Glen Cottage was Katherine Bruce Glasier who became one of the most remarkable activists in the

international Labour movement in the early 20th Century. Katherine Bruce Glasier was one of the founder members of the Independent Labour Party and close friend of early pioneers of the Labour movement - George Bernard Shaw, Keir Hardy, William Morris and Edward Carpenter. Keir Hardy considered her the 'mother of the ILP'.

Katherine married the prominent political campaigner and poet John Bruce Glasier and from then on they worked together "in the service of mankind" as stated on her memorial plaque displayed at the hostel. Apart from her "socialist evangelism", many of the causes she promoted were not directly politically orientated but had a common theme of help for the weak and oppressed. She played an important part in the beginnings of the Nursery School Movement, becoming vice president of the Nursery School Association and was active in Save the Children, promoting and protecting the rights of children. She led the campaign to help working class housewives by persuading the mine owners to install pit head baths so that grime and coal dust were left at the colliery and not brought to the home.

Following her death in 1950, discussions began as to how Katherine's life could be commemorated. In May of 1952 a memorial fund was inaugurated and ideas were discussed as to how her memory could be perpetuated. One suggestion was to buy her home Glen Cottage and the two adjacent cottages and adjoining land, to be used for some social purpose. Eventually it was decided that, because of her involvement in young peoples' issues, that the cottages would be converted for use as a youth hostel which was handed over to the YHA as a perpetual memorial to Katharine and what she stood for. The hostel was officially opened in 1958.

The village and community of Earby are justifiably proud of Glen Cottage and together with Pendle Council play a vital role in supporting the YHA in continuing its development as affordable holiday accommodation.

At the other side of this part of Lancashire is Slaidburn hostel situated in the centre of this picturesque village. It is one of the oldest hostels in the YHA network having originally opened its doors to visitors in 1933 soon after the YHA was formed.

This Grade II listed building was previously an inn known as the Black Bull and references to it go back to the 18th century though parts of the building are probably older than that. When the old inn was adapted for use as a youth hostel the name was changed to Kings House, commemorating a local family whose history in the area extends back to the 16th century. The Youth Hostel Association is carrying on the centuries' old tradition of the building by offering accommodation for people visiting or passing through Slaidburn.

Slaidburn has an excellent network of relatively quiet roads and cycle paths while walking routes will take

you across the Bowland moors or alongside the river Hodder and Stocks reservoir. For peace and solitude, head to the relatively undiscovered Bowland fells and valleys.

The YHA website gives a lot of information about the Youth Hostel organisation, its hostels across the country and also how to book a bed at Earby and Slaidburn. The YHA was originally established in this country in the 1930s with a clear mission to inspire all, especially young people, to broaden their horizons, gaining knowledge and independence through experiencing adventure and discovery in the countryside. The Earby and Slaidburn hostels with their long historical connections are certainly doing their bit today to achieve the original aims of the YHA by continuing to attract visitors to the area and helping give them experiences of the countryside of this area.

Nick Moule

Friends of Earby and Slaidburn Youth Hostels

Clarion House . . .

. . . a haven for walkers and cyclists

The "Hidden Valley" where we are located is truly wonderful and our regulars never tire of the many and varied paths that bring them to the Clarion.

We offer a warm welcome to both seasoned walkers and families out for a Sunday stroll.

The Clarion House can be reached by easy or moderate walks from the surrounding towns of Nelson, Colne, Burnley & Clitheroe. There is Car Parking at nearby Barley. In Summer a "Hopper Bus" operates from Nelson, Burnley, Padiham, Sabden, Pendleton, Clitheroe and Downham.

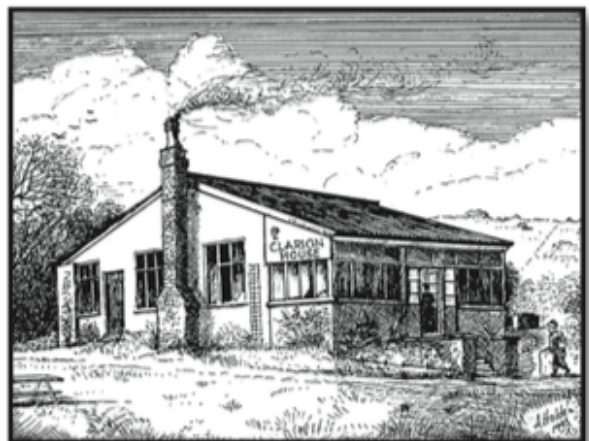
The East Lancs Railway Line, lies close by to the east. Navigators of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal will discover the Clarion House to be "nobbut a cockstride away". It can be found at:

Jinny Lane, Newchurch-in-Pendle

National Grid Reference: SD 832 396

Post Code and SatNav: BB12 9LL

<http://www.clarionhouse.org.uk/>



Drawing by A Holden 1993

How Nature reclaims its own

In the early 60s, the German novelist and Nobel Prize winner Heinrich Böll, spent a holiday in the West of Ireland with his young family. Out of this trip come the following thoughts...

One day while out walking, the writer stumbles upon an abandoned village. Like so many others, it has been consigned to oblivion by the local folk who do not think its existence even worth mentioning to visitors.

The old village first appears in stark outline against the horizon like the background in a cheap ghost film but as Böll approaches, he sees the rough-hewn blocks of stone standing as if still awaiting the joiner's hand – grey walls, dark holes for windows, no scrap of timber or cloth, no trace of colour. The decaying houses remind him of a body without hair, eyes, flesh or blood. The little settlement is reduced to a skeleton eroded by rain, sun, wind – and time, twenty-four large drops of time every twenty-four hours, eating away as acid does, so patiently at the ruins.

The village is laid out as for an anatomy lesson. Look! – there is the high street for a spine and here are the arms and legs of the side-streets. But one street is shorter than the other and so this skeleton must limp, just as that lonely shepherd in a distant field.

Abandoned in the 1880s, the settlement suffers from no vandalism, no robbing of its stone. It is slowly dying, the grasses growing in the streets and the mosses creeping ever higher on the mouldering walls, now washed clean of their binding mortar. The children discover an old lump of iron, perhaps once a kettle, on a stone shelf; it crumbles to dust as they touch it except for one small piece no thicker than a nail. Böll puts the piece in a pocket but on the way home, it too disintegrates. Böll is left with reddish dust in his hand, the same colour as the surrounding mosses. He scatters it to the winds as one does with a loved one's ashes after cremation.

From: "Irishes Tagebuch" by Heinrich Böll, translated as "Irish Diary".

Ian McArdle



A New Executive Director for IFN

Andrea Lichtenecker takes over the role of an Executive Director for IFN from 2015, the first woman to lead the umbrella organisation of the Friends of Nature movement which

counts more than 500,000 members worldwide. We wish Andrea well in her new post.

"Travelling Respectfully - tips for fair travel", an interesting brochure published by IFN, is now in its 6th Edition, and is available to download from: <http://tinyurl.com/n5uy7wo>.

It aims to encourage reflections on the impact of tourism and make the most important aspects of "sustainable" tourism comprehensible in a humorous way and with many useful tips. Some examples:

❖ *Re-discover the term "to have plenty of time". Punctuality is a different concept in different cultures. Patience is a virtue – almost everywhere.*

❖ *All in all, there are more than 7,100 languages around the world. 2,146 (30.2%) of these are spoken in Africa, 1,060 (14.9%) in America, 2,304 (32.4%) in Asia and 1,311 (18.5%) in the Pacific region.*

With 284 languages, Europe only makes up 4% of the living languages.

Forthcoming Norwich Group Events

Feb. 8th - Knapton Walk - Meet at Knapton Village Hall Car Park for a 10:30am start. Lunch at 1:30pm. Mundesley Royal Hotel. 30 Paston Rd, NR11 8BN

March 8th - Blofield Walk - Park on the road near 'The Kings Head', Blofield for a 10:30am start. Lunch at 1:30pm at the 'The Huntsman', Strumpshaw, 41 Norwich Rd NR13 4AG

March 21st - Norwich Group AGM/Wine & Cheese Social Night to be held at the Owen Barnes Room, Costessey. 7:00pm for 7:30pm.

After the AGM there will be live entertainment, Wine and Cheese. Some soft drink will be provided, but please feel free to bring beverages that you prefer, i.e. beer, spirits etc. Please bring own glasses. Names to Mick Mickleburgh.

Events by other Groups, Lancashire, Northern and Borders etc. Visitors are always welcome to join in but, as they are organised on more of an ad hoc basis, it is obviously best to make contact initially with a Group representative before making any plans. Contact details will be found at the end of this Newsletter.

We can but apologise to some members for the use of Internet addresses in some sections of this Newsletter. The only alternative would be the creation of a separate "internet-free" version which, sadly, is not really viable . . .

. . . and, finally, a thank you to our contributors. As always, if anyone has any contributions that they think might be of interest to other members we would love to hear from you. Even more importantly, if anyone feels they could contribute to the running of Friends of Nature UK we'd be even more pleased!

Alan Gentle/FoN UK - January 2015

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Subscriptions:

Single member.....£10.00 Couple.....£15.00 Family (children under 18).....£17.50
Annual membership runs from January 1st and prompt renewal is appreciated.

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For the 800+ houses in Europe and the rest of the world see:

www.friendsofnaturehouses.net

For details of International Friends of Nature (IFN) see: www.nf-int.org

