

EXPERIENCE YORK



YORK WRITERS
Anthology

This selection first published in Great Britain 2003
Copyright 2003 by Individual Authors.

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted.
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the copyright owners.

Chocolate City
Earlier version published in Yorkshire Evening Press

The Painted People of Treasurer's House
First Published Yorkshire Evening Press

End of the Line
First Published Yorkshire Evening Press

Betty and the Bio-Scientists
First Published Yorkshire Evening Press

Let there be Lights
Earlier version published in Yorkshire Evening Press

ISBN 0 9528933-1-2
Imprint: York & District Writers Circle
Published by York Writers 2003
5 Thurlow Avenue
Pocklington
York YO42 2GT

Printed in 11pt Times Roman
TTA Press, Witcham, Ely, Cambridgeshire

Contents

A City of Ghosts	Ann Mitchell	07
Love me Love my dog	Bill Bradley	11
St Mary's Square Development	Dorothy E Penso	14
Love in the Poor House	Jim Foster	15
The Great Man	ClintonWastling	19
Planes	Sandra Simpson	23
Chocolate City	Janet Eldred	25
The Painted People of		
Treasurer's House	Joan Paley	27
At Sea in York	Gillian Ewing	30
The Lupin Man	Sandra Simpson	31
End of the Line	Rob Oldfield	33
The Bus from York	Dorothy E Penso	36
What's in a Name	Gillian Ewing	38
A Christmas Encounter	Sid Kirby	39
Making a Claim	Rubye Readhead	43
How Lucky You Are	Doug Allwright	45
The Reluctant Patient	Ann Mitchell	49
Ar's Arrered	Sandra Simpson	54

Contents

Tempest Anderson	Bill Bradley	55
York's Very Own Saint	Jim Foster	59
What's in a Name	Gillian Ewing	66
Betty and the Bio-Scientists	Simon Newton	67
Return	Roy Stevens	70
Single handed Guitar	Phil Shepherdson	71
Gray's Court York	Roy Stevens	74
History Lesson	Sandra Simpson	75
From the Train	Dorothy E Penso	78
Let There Be Lights	Janet Eldred	79
Bringing Grandma to York	Sandra Simpson	82
The East Anglia	Clinton Wastling	83
Bubbles	Doug Allwright	87
Alcuin of York	Bill Bradley	93
The Joyride	Sally Shaw	95
A Romantic Affair	Liz Halliday	99
Yule	Clinton Wastling	105
Grave Interests	Dorothy E Penso	109

Forward.

Historic York is brought to life in this collection from York Writers, a dynamic group of people who meet every Wednesday. They have worked hard to produce this collection of articles, stories and poems. Every type of writing is represented here throughout the past, present and future of York.

Read about the flower developed on a city allotment or the Victorian doctor who photographed volcanoes. Dialect, romance and the real world sit side by side. Hopefully there's something for everyone to enjoy in this their **4th Anthology**.

The group would like to acknowledge their thanks to **York Settlement Trust** who made the project viable.

The Editor.

A City of Ghosts

Ann Mitchell

‘Hot Mince Pies and Punch?’

The idea did not seem so attractive when we set off from the warm public house, the Black Swan, but as we tramp the bitterly cold streets of York, the prospect becomes more attractive by the minute. We are ‘willing’ participants in the ‘quaint new custom’ of going on a ghost walk.

Having heard about the history of the Black Swan, Peas-holme Green, our Guide, Harry Martindale goes on to tell us about a churchyard nearby. Grave-robbers opening a newly buried coffin had the surprise of their life, when the corpse sat up and objected to her jewellery being stolen.

Then we head towards Goodramgate, one of the roads leading out of the city and a small area known as Bedern. As we listen to our Guide tell us about a man walking his dog which would not go near Bedern, our blood starts to chill. On investigation a story emerged concerning children who were starved to death in a workhouse not far from where we are standing. The people running the workhouse were greedy and kept the money they were given for each child.

The crime was discovered and the bodies of children were found hidden all over and under the building. There is nothing left of the workhouse today, but it is claimed the children’s ghosts appear in the street to dance in a circle, and sing ‘Ring-a-ring-a-roses’. Most people know this area as a short cut from busy Goodramgate to St Andrewgate, Kings Square or Pavement, none of us knew of its chilling past.

Leaving Bedern we cross to College Street, which leads to York Minster This must be one of the most photographed streets in the world, because of its attractive buildings and close proximity to the great Cathedral. Stopping outside a small house on the very end of the street, just a stone’s throw

from the Minster we look at our Guide in surprise. What has such an ordinary looking house to do with ghosts?

We do not have long to wait before our Guide enlightens us. During the Black Death whenever a family caught the plague no one was allowed to enter the house, even with food. The plague had to be prevented from spreading at all costs, and a mark was put on the door to warn people it was a “plague-house”.

Inevitably, the family in this house caught the plague. The door was locked and would not be opened until everyone who had the plague was dead. However, not everyone was infected, and one young girl starved to death, because there was no food in the house and no one paid attention to her cries for help. Her ghost sits in the small window facing us, and her presence has forced at least two families to leave the house.

To see parties of tourists walking round the city is not unusual, for York is a popular destination with people from our own country as well as from overseas. However, when wandering the streets on a bitterly cold night there are not many people at large. A few brave souls have ventured out, but they soon scamper quickly into warm pubs, or welcoming restaurants, and our eyes follow them longingly.

Ghost Walks are run all year round, so summer visitors need not deny themselves this interesting experience. However, the dark, windy streets are so fitting a background our imaginations do not have to work too hard.

It's just after nine when we find ourselves at the Anglers Arms, in Goodramgate for the promised mince pies and punch. The rooms in the public house seem to be bulging, as everyone in our party crowds inside. The mince pies are so hot they burn our mouths and although the punch is not strong we all have red faces by the time we leave.

Our walk continues down Stonegate and by the Mansion House into Coney Street. Stopping outside the Woolworth's store in Spurriergate we wait for everyone to catch up and expect to move on, but Mr Martindale, our Guide, points to the glass-fronted store and tells us of another ghost.

When the new store was being built in 1962 a man working

on the roof fell to his death. Whilst the roof was under construction the ghost of this man was seen pushing his wheelbarrow across the planks forming the roof. He was seen every day for six weeks by his colleagues and the BBC tried to record the ghost on film. However, by this time the roof had been completed and the ghost was seen no more.

We shiver as we turn into Low Ousegate. Thinking we are on the homeward stretch, we start anticipating a roaring fire and warming drink, but Mr Martindale has other ideas and leads us back towards the Minster and for me, the highlight of the evening.

As an eighteen year old apprentice plumber, Harry Martindale was working in the cellars of the Treasurer's House fitting a new heating system. He was busy up his ladder when a strange noise attracted his attention. Looking round, he could see nothing, so continued working, but the noise, something like a trumpet, came again. Assuming that the sound was coming from a radio, inside or outside, he did not worry.

When he turned round, the figure of a Roman soldier emerged from the opposite wall. More soldiers followed, with one on horseback. Until they passed the centre of the room, where there was a hole for the boiler, they could only be seen down to their knees, but as they walked through the hole, the whole figure was visible.

The young man was so shocked he fell off his ladder, and although he was away from work for two weeks, he was deeply affected for a long time. Harry Martindale changed his job after this incident and became a policeman. He told us that over the years he has talked to many people and knows he is not the only person to see the soldiers. A lady living in the house had seen them and not only once. They are said to appear every seven years, but when television cameras were set up in expectation of one visit, nothing happened.

Our walk is just about to finish as we approach the Black Swan. The time is 10.20, and although we could have gone on listening to Mr Martindale's chilling tales of Roman and Medieval York, there are children on the tour and it is well past their bedtime.

The two hour walk cannot of course cover every story, and York is the most haunted city in Europe, but the Guides try to tell you as much as possible. We did not see any ghosts and I do not know what would have happened if we had seen one!

Having been on two ghost walks, one in summer and one in winter, I can thoroughly recommend them as a different form of entertainment. As a resident of York, they have certainly opened my eyes.

Love me, love my dog.

Bill Bradley

It was the way she looked at him, with those big brown eyes; the way they rushed to meet each other when he came home. They were besotted with each other, couldn't bear to be apart. They were in love.

I kept telling myself not to be stupid, that it was ridiculous to be jealous of a dog. But there's no logic in jealousy. It knots up your stomach and your brain goes into overdrive. You can't control it. It takes over, utterly and completely.

Simon had wanted a dog for ages. We'd kept putting him off, thinking that I, or his father, would be left to look after it, but we were wrong. Simon was up every morning, an hour before his usual time and before he went to school he would take her out. As soon as he came home he was out with her again.

We live in a terrace house that overlooks the Knavesmire so I could stand at the window and watch them, chasing about after a ball or a frisbee, the complete couple, boy and dog. I would watch him bend down and hug her and she would lick his face. Simon and that dog were closer than he and I had ever been.

Why is it that it's cool for a boy to show his love for his dog, but not for his mother? Perhaps it was my fault. I've never been a demonstrative sort of person, not one for hugging and kissing in a casual way as some people do. Perhaps I've seemed to be a little aloof to Simon. Maybe I should have hugged and kissed him more when he was little.

As I watched them I kept telling myself that I was being stupid, that I couldn't possibly be jealous of a dog, and a little voice inside my head said, 'But you are.'

She's a lovely animal, a dark, smooth haired collie with a white spot on her forehead and white paws. She's called Julie.

I don't know why he chose that name. We don't know anybody called Julie. Perhaps it's somebody at school he's got a crush on, a secret girl friend we know nothing about. I wonder if I'm going to be jealous when he brings a girl home. No doubt I will if they're always hugging and kissing and gazing into each other's eyes.

We don't do any of the things we used to do, like ten pin bowling at Clifton Moor or visiting the Railway Museum. Simon used to love going there, and it's free now. When I suggest going anywhere he says, 'No, it doesn't matter.' He has no idea how much it matters to me

It's a struggle getting him in for his tea. I've made an arrangement with him. When I want him to come in I prop a newspaper up in the window. That means it's time to come home. He can see it easily enough, but he pretends he's never noticed. But I've seen him giving a sly, sideways glance and then looking the other way.

A few days ago, he came home, flung his bag and coat on the floor as usual, hugged his beloved Julie and went flying out of the house. I don't know if he missed his footing, fell over the dog, or what. I heard a cry, looked out of the window, and he was laid on the garden path, clutching his leg. Julie was beside him, barking, looking back at the house as if she was asking for help. When I opened the door she looked at me, then looked back over her shoulder at Simon.

She led me to him, glancing back all the time to make sure I was following. I got him back in the house and made him comfortable with a cold compress and while I was doing it the dog came up to me and licked my hand, as if she was thanking me.

I took him to casualty, but it was only a sprain. He was told to rest it for a couple of days so it fell to me to take Julie on the Knavesmire whilst Simon watched out of the window.

I enjoyed it. Now I was the one hugging her and it was me she was licking. I was so pleased but at the same time I felt silly and self-conscious, taking such pleasure in a dog's display of affection.

I was quite disappointed when Simon's ankle was better

and he was ready to take her himself. They set off as usual and then I heard him calling out to Julie.

‘What’s the matter?’ I asked.

‘She doesn’t want to go,’ he said.

I went to the door. The dog was making the same sort of signs she’d made when she was asking me to go and help Simon.

‘She wants you to come with us,’ Simon said.

I didn’t believe him, but sure enough, as soon as I put my coat on and went out to join them, she was away. So now we’re a threesome. I’m not jealous any more and I’m getting some useful exercise.

St Mary's Square Development

Dorothy E Penso

We never take change kindly
Us folk what live in York,
So you'll know just 'ow we felt
When t'builders got to work
On that land behind Clifford's Tower.
We thought they'd never stop
And we 'ad a great big grumble
When t'barred winders appeared at t'top.

We said it looked like Alcatraz,
Far worse than Armley jail.
What was t'City Council thinking of?
But we knew they would prevail.

Yet now we never notice
Them winders with the grills
For we're far too busy reckoning
How long them folks in t'queue must stand
Before them little cars they enter
That take 'em round the Viking Centre.

Love in the Poorhouse.

Jim Foster

The Board of Governors of the York Union Institution was meeting. In line with other such workhouses across the country, it had been set up 1849 following the Poor Law Act of 1834 and had now been operating for ten years.

The Chairman, the Reverend John White, sat at the head of the table, a bearded, lugubrious figure in black clerical garb, glowering as he laid down the principles that the Board should follow.

‘We don’t want any of these new-fangled liberal ideas here. Separate accommodation for men and women it must be. This arrangement has worked well in the past, and I see no reason to alter anything in the future!’

Dr. Nathaniel Wood was the Board member who had the temerity to challenge the Chairman. On his frequent visits to attend the inmates, he had many times witnessed the anguish caused by the inhuman practice of separating husband and wife and children from each other.

‘My considered opinion, as the medical practitioner for this institution, is that it is not right to separate the sexes so rigidly. In fact, I would like to propose that, at least, married couples and their children should be allowed to live together.’

The Reverend White summarily dismissed such a suggestion out of hand, and nobody else dared to second the motion.

‘Good God, man, they are allowed to take their meals together! How much more do they want? If we allow them to sleep together as well heaven only knows how many more children they would produce for the hard-pressed ratepayers of York to look after!’

He gave a sneering laugh, looking across to the Workhouse Master Charles Squince, who nodded vigorously in approval of the vicar’s firm stance on the matter. Together with his

wife Emma, he was a determined upholder of such standards.

After the meeting, the Reverend John White returned to his vicarage. It was dark early at this time of year, and as he entered the sitting room, he saw his wife working at her needlework by the light of the newly-installed gas lamp. Gertrude was on the Board of Visitors for the workhouse, and fully endorsed his views on how the place should be run.

After a while, Gertrude coughed slightly to attract her husband's attention.

She sounded shocked as she spoke.

'I was making my rounds of the workhouse today, and would you believe it, I sensed that there is something going on between Simon Wilkinson and that Elizabeth Green!'

Her words made the vicar sit up with a start.

'Whatever are you talking about, woman?'

The very idea of any sort of liaison going on in his establishment was too preposterous to even think about. He knew hardly anything about the personal details of the paupers who lived in the building down the road. He was content to leave such messy matters to the Master to deal with.

His wife was persistent.

'I would suggest, dear, that you keep a close watch on those two unless you want trouble on your hands.'

He agreed reluctantly to personally investigate the matter, and would ask Charles Squince to point out the two miscreants to him.

'I will stop things before they go any further, I promise you!'

The next morning he and the Master entered the room where the male inmates were working. In John White's eyes, here were the dregs of humanity, as they huddled over the coils of rope to produce oakum, their vacuous faces showing no feeling as their hands automatically plucked at the never-ending strands in the dim light that filtered from the one small window.

Charles Squince pointed out Simon Wilkinson who was working alone at the far end of the group. The vicar peered disinterestedly through the half-light at the young man, but couldn't help noticing that he was very different to the others

in the room. There was no empty expression here, no hopeless acceptance of such soul-destroying drudgery. Rather there was a look of anger and disgust at the degradation of it all.

As John White lingered, drawn to studying the man's face, he could see that every so often the eyes, with a far-away look in them, would leave the monotony of the endless coils of rope to stare longingly at the small window through which the rays from a pale, wintry sun were struggling to enter.

Strangely affected, John White moved away. He told the Master that he would come back later when the inmates were having their midday meal.

On his return, Charles Squince pointed out Elizabeth Green to him. You couldn't really miss her, hobbling around on her crutches busily clearing up the plates, smiling as she fussed around others much less disabled than herself.

The vicar noticed that an especially tender smile lit up her emaciated but pretty face as she removed the empty crockery from the table in front of Simon Wilkinson, who seemed to awake, as she approached, from the dream-like impassiveness with which he had eaten his meal.

John White didn't like the feelings that were going on inside him, having always adopted the convenient view that anybody inside the poorhouse was genetically incapable of such emotions as love or tenderness. It was far simpler to operate on such a basis.

He was in a quiet and contemplative mood when he and Gertrude sat down together at the end of the day. But his wife's voice soon burst in on his thoughts.

'Well John, did you see them? Did you put a stop to their carryings-on?'

To her surprise, and frustration, her husband did not answer right away, and she thought he must be ignoring her question. Whatever was the matter with him? He was usually so decisive and vehement in his condemnation to news of any such transgression in the workhouse that came to his ears.

He eventually answered her.

'I will have to think about it. I might make up my mind to do something about it in the morning.'

Gertrude couldn't believe her ears. Was her husband sickening for something, or was he beginning to lose his grip on things? But she could see that she would be getting nothing more out of him that night as he had pointedly settled further down into his armchair and returned to the book he was reading.

But the matter would not leave John White's mind that night. It was very rarely that he gave the slightest thought to any of the paupers, especially at a time like this, when they were all asleep in their dormitories, and he could rid his mind of such unpleasant things and relax in the comfort and warmth of his own bed.

Sleep came eventually, but it was a troubled sleep. He had a vivid dream, in which two figures, hand in hand, their faces shining with a radiant happiness, escaped together through the small window of the poorhouse towards an expanse of clear blue sky. They left behind them in the bleak, white-washed room a pair of crutches, and a group of faceless creatures clutching helplessly at the eternally matted coils of rope, whilst the Master and his wife sat cold, and unfeeling, presiding over it all.

He awoke and lay there in the darkness, listening to the mournful whine of the wind as it rattled around the rafters of the old vicarage.

He thought of the two, young lonely people sleeping in their segregated quarters of the workhouse, dreaming longingly about each other and of their few snatched moments of happiness at meal times.

Unusually for him, he felt confused. In his position as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the York Union Institute he had been guided by a set of rigid rules that he was convinced were in the best interests of both the inmates and the ratepayers of York.

And in those rules, there was no room for love in the poorhouse, something that just shouldn't happen.

The Great Man

Clinton Wastling

The rain dripped in counter-point to the music. Water trickled into the buckets set around the stage. The Adagio became a solo. 'We can't go on! Not like this! Why did you choose such an obscure piece?' Helena put down her violin and bow.

David's pause before replying put the bad weather centre stage. 'Everyone else is doing the greats from the nineteenth century. I wanted to do someone who's alive. Yes. And I thought it would score with the listeners!' David put down the violin, paced across the sodden carpet and sat at the edge of the stage. He lit a cigarette.

'You're not supposed to smoke in here.' Helena towered over him, her circular lenses emphasising her dark eyes.

David didn't turn round. 'It's that wet in here I doubt a fire could ever take hold. Look there's only one more rehearsal ...

'That's the point!' Helena pushed her hair back with the bow.

'We're not in a relationship anymore Helena, we're in a quartet. The only things that connect us are the composer and harmony and there's precious little of that!'

Piles of plastic chairs were stacked round the room and someone had left a ladder ready to adjust the spotlights. The other two players whispered in the background. One began tuning his cello. 'I wrote to him.' David announced.

'To whom?' Helena felt the patch of carpet was dry before sitting next to David.

'The composer.'

'Now I know you've gone ... Helena got up and flounced back to her seat, her black midi skirt making her look like an alighting vulture.

'He replied.' For a moment the room was silent. 'He sent a postcard from Leningrad. It said simply: *Yes! Dimitry.*'

‘You’re making it all up. Someone of his standing will want a posh hotel, like that girl you met! And you’ll be footing the bill again.’

David ignored Helena and waved the postcard. It was eagerly passed round the other players. The rehearsal began again with the insistent echo of raindrops for accompaniment.

As David drove back to his flat, he couldn’t shake Helena’s warning. *He’ll want an expensive hotel, all the trimmings.* Even the sight of York’s walls by floodlight couldn’t erase the thought that he’d been naive in asking the great man to attend the concert. It couldn’t be undone. David consoled himself that he wouldn’t visit; there’d be an excuse offset by a letter of apology.

After all that rain David’s prized Hillman wouldn’t start. Damp and no amount of WD40 would remedy the fault. David packed his violin and briefcase and walked. He took the scenic route round the walls to Baile Hill before catching a bus.

‘You’re late!’ Helena snapped.

David ignored her and got out his violin. With chairs set out, the room felt like a concert hall. The first movement went well. The adagio with its lyrical rhapsody unravelled.

‘You could try taking more notice of the time signature.’ An old man in horn rimmed glasses tapped out the beat on the stage edge.

‘Who the ...

Helena put her hand over David’s mouth. ‘You always speak before you think. That’s your trouble.’ She whispered venomously. She tapped the postcard which protruded from his shirt pocket. ‘The Great Man, himself.’

David went across and shook his hand before introducing him to the players. They spent the afternoon under a new conductor. His fingers drew the melodies and counterpoint that made their own efforts seem amateur. He clapped his hands and the music fell silent. He breathed in deeply and drifted into a reverie. Helena looked at David and smiled. ‘Love.’ She put down her violin. ‘He’s in love with the music again. Hearing it live for the first time since 1939. It’s brought

back memories. How clever of you.’ She gave David a gentle kiss.

‘Now I think it is time for a meal.’ The Great Man put on his Mac and waited. ‘Well!’

The players all looked at each other. David emptied his pockets and found a ten-shilling note and some change. The composer laughed. ‘We have a saying in Russia. It’s always the old men who pay. But first,’ he said with a rye smile, ‘the *molto capriccioso*. Always mean what you play!’ He said to Helena and stared so intently her face reddened. They played furiously until the old man waved his finger. ‘Now we must eat.’

The five of them walked round York, gazing at the gothic facade of the Minster. Cars pipped as they stood in the road and took in the vista. Helena marshalled the group inside and made them wait for the six o’clock carillon from the knights. The Great Man’s eyes lit up. He insisted on waiting another fifteen minutes for the next chime. They walked carefully along the temporary walkway, which revealed the excavations. Below them a solitary light picked out Archbishop de Grey’s tomb. The Great Man paused. There is no marker for Katerina.’

Later, the cello and bass players made their excuses. Helena and David walked The Great Man down Stonegate and entered an inn.

‘I had to come.’ The composer confided. ‘No one has played my first quartet since before the war. How I was in love.’ He didn’t elaborate. ‘I hope you can feel that in the music.’

Helena smiled and looked at David. The meal was served. Vodka was bought and they drank to art, to harmony and The Motherland.’ The three of them wove through the streets of York slowly sobering in the cool evening air. David gave up his bed for The Great Man. He gave up the sofa for Helena and slept soundly in an old wing chair in the study.

Morning arrived to the plink fizz of hangover cures. ‘Now I will discover York alone, whilst you two rest before the concert.’ He put on his Mac and descended the steps to the

street. 'I'll see you afterwards. You must drive me to the station to catch the 9.47 to London.' Helena and David watched him go before they entered and locked the door behind them. Helena leant against the door. David leant against the wall. 'I'm sorry ...

Helena held her finger to his lips. 'It's my fault. That green-eyed monster, jealousy!'

There was a long silence, a couple of nervous giggles and a kiss.

Throughout the performance David felt something had changed. In rehearsal the music had just been notes but now it was rediscovered love. He daren't look at Helena but he could feel from the way her bow danced across the strings that she felt the same.

The adagio faded into the rhapsody, and finally the *molto capriccioso*. There was a moment of silence before the audience burst into applause. David couldn't stop grinning. He took a pace forward and held up his hand. 'We are very lucky tonight to have the composer with us.' He gave a grand gesture. The spotlight swung into the audience and picked out The Great Man. He nodded his head and waved.

He sat in the back of the Hillman Avenger and said nothing. David and Helena were also silent. The concert had drained them of all. David tried to speak but The Great Man placed his hand on the lad's shoulder. 'You've bought back my summer of love. 1939. Everyone should have a year like that. I'm sure this will be yours.

At the station they saw him onto the 9.37 and watched him take a seat. He didn't wave. He didn't look them in the eye. As the train pulled away he opened the window and leaned out. 'I'll send you a little composition for your wedding!'

Helena put her arm around David and they both waved until the train was out of sight.

Planes

Sandra Simpson

The summer had not been a good one last year for a gardener. The days when you could weed and reorganise the plots were rare. I was getting fidgety as the days went on waiting to change my tubs from the summer planting to the spring flowers.

We decided to do the usual Sunday ride of York's garden centres. Starting with Wyvale on the north west of the outer ring-road, and ending with afternoon tea at Deans on the east side.

It was one of those few hot sunny clear days, of seemingly endless days of rain. Even my garden had got flooded. Hence the container gardening instead.

I couldn't find the bulbs I was looking for at the first place. As I was looking for different varieties which I could enter in the next spring show. I'd seen a dwarf narcissus with a red trumpet called Jetfire at the Harrogate spring show. But they did not have it in stock. So we went back onto the outer ring-road which my husband thinks is a short cut to everywhere. But so do a thousand others all on the same pilgrimage as us! I hate it with its gut churning array of manic drivers getting nowhere fast.

We'd passed the A19 turn off for Selby and were on the next part leading up to the Hull road roundabout, when we were buzzed by the Red Arrows flying low across the motorway in V formation, rolling and bending over us. Across the fields into that amazing ballet where they split off into a fountain and trail coloured smoke from their tails.

Mick said, 'I had forgotten it was the last day of the Elvington air show.'

We were also treated to a fly-by, of an old Lancaster bomber, and a Spitfire. I'd wondered why there were so many

cars parked on each side of the road filling up the roadside parking bays. They were all getting a free show like us. We finally got to Dean's and the weather looked as though it was going to change again. The clouds started rolling into a huge thunderhead to the west of us. We decided to have our tea in the glass conservatory and bumped into an old acquaintance of Mick's who talked to us across the tables, as we were the only couples in there. I asked if they had seen the air show and told him we had been buzzed by the planes on the ring -road as we had driven up. He then said quite casually, 'Well there's a Tornado up there.' pointing to the sky behind us.

'Oh good,' I replied, 'I haven't seen that one.' Turning around. Not to see the plane which I was expecting. But a funnel shaped cloud hanging in the air over York. My next words were, 'My God' We all stood up together and went outside for a better look. I thought in those few minutes of all the things I had not done. I had seen on the television what damage these twisters could do.

'We'll just have to hope it doesn't touch down, or we won't stand a chance with all this glass around, there nowhere to shelter only the kitchen.

Mick started for the door, 'Where are you going,' I asked upset that he wanted to leave, 'we can't outrun that thing it goes too fast.'

'I'm going for my camera it's in the car.'

Well I thought it will probably be destroyed along with us. But if it will help to take his mind off the coming disaster I didn't mind. I didn't feel any fear, just a kind of awe and thought about the people who faced these horrors many times in their lives. But I never dreamt that I would have to face one in this country. By the time Mick got the camera the whirlwind had unscrewed itself and disappeared leaving only the heavy clouds. I don't know if I was disappointed or relieved. It all happened in a matter of minutes, and it didn't even rain.

The heavy clouds hung about for the rest of the afternoon. I didn't find my Jetfire, and had to wait until the Autumn Show at Harrogate to acquire it.

Chocolate City

Janet Eldred

In 1996, I arrived in York for the first time. After travelling 3,000 miles overnight by aeroplane from the US, followed by another 200 via train from London, I was eager to catch a glimpse of my new home. What would I see first in this famous and historic city—the medieval stone walls, the Minster towers, or the graceful curve of the Victorian rail station’s ceiling?

None of these, actually. Instead, my bleary eyes fell on a hoarding displaying a giant, 3-D chocolate bar and the greeting, ‘Welcome to York: Where the men are hunky and the chocolate’s chunky.’ It seemed there was an entire layer of excitement the tourist literature hadn’t mentioned; I resolved to investigate.

First things first. Not being a chocoholic, I began by exploring the human half of the sign’s message. Eureka! Then, once I’d found my own hunk, I was able to turn my attention to learning more about York’s chocolate history.

From chatting with people, it seemed that half the natives of York had worked or did work for either Rowntree’s or Terry’s, or had a spouse or close family member with chocolate ties. Stories of employment with these great candy manufacturers were as assorted and easily shared as a packet of Smarties or a box of Quality Street. I was a student among many willing teachers.

To really cover myself with knowledge, though, like the chocolate coating on a KitKat, I visited two exhibitions. A Nestlé UK exhibition at the Borthwick Institute was culled from the archives of Rowntree and Mackintosh. Decade by decade, it showed how the business history of the company and the social history of the city were entwined, and how both reflected the larger story of the nineteenth century in Britain.

Later, I celebrated one Yorkshire Day (that's 1st August) by visiting Chocolate! at the Castle Museum. This exhibition included the history of chocolate, as well as its place in York. Descriptions of the advertising and marketing of Rowntree's and Terry's products, and examples of packaging through the years, were especially intriguing because, as I came from abroad, they offered so much insight into popular British culture.

On a national level, the exhibition notes confirmed what I already suspected: that women are the largest single category of chocolate consumers in the UK, and that most advertising is directed at women or those who shop for them. Further, a national survey found that women in Yorkshire are the biggest chocoholics in the country. If coupled with another bit of information from the Chocolate! exhibition—that eating chocolate produces a similar kind of high to that of sexual climax—then perhaps Nestlé should consider a new ad campaign: 'If your partner's not hunky, have some chocolate that's chunky.' Apparently, because eating chocolate means, for so many people, 'luxury, comfort, sensuality, gratification, and love,' it may be the best date around.

After a while, this newcomer to York began to wonder if it was her civic duty to consume a certain amount of chocolate each day. As virtually all of the varieties on offer were new to me, either by name, ingredient mix, or both, I enjoyed identifying favourites while attempting to fill my quota. One of my biggest surprises and pleasures was discovering that here "Easter eggs" are hollow chocolate eggs with more sweets inside, not the hard-boiled-and-dyed chicken eggs I knew in the States. What a bonanza!

I've also been an interested spectator of the 'England-versus-the-rest-of-Europe-definition-of-chocolate' debate. As someone who grew up on the American variety, I'm unqualified (or so I'm told) to express an opinion. So, I just watch from the sidelines, munching my chocolate and awaiting the result.

Pass me a Yorkie bar, please.

The Painted People of Treasurer's House

Joan Paley

Frank Green lived in Treasurer's House for thirty-three years, filling it with beautiful furniture and portraits. In 1930, he gave it all to the National Trust and moved to Somerset. His generosity then enriched not only the city of York, but also the lives of those today who work in or visit this magnificent house.

Over the past ten years as a volunteer room steward, I have come to regard the people in the paintings around the house as friends, none more so than Mrs Halliwell, my favourite. As I move about the elegant dining room and talk to visitors, she watches me, her painted eyes following me. They have warmth and a slightly quizzical expression, as though she would like to answer my unspoken questions.

I wish I knew her Christian name. She is the daughter of L.Gardener, widow of James Halliwell, daughter-in-law of Simeon Halliwell, mother of James, Eliza, Maria, Ann and Frances. Her bonnet is ruched with richly gleaming loops of grey ribbon, and so delicately painted is it that I feel I could lift it off the ringlet-like curls on her brow. These, I suspect, are artificial. A faint smile lifts her rather sunken mouth — perhaps she has lost her natural teeth — for she is elderly.

Her lace fichu is caught up with a square black brooch, a mourning ornament, I feel sure for James, perhaps made of Whitby's famous jet? It glistens. Did it reflect her tears when he died? This calm and dignified old face was painted forty years after the nearby portrait of her stiff and solemn husband astride a horse of equally stiff proportions. There they linger, gazing out of their gilt frames, next to one another in the perpetuity of death.

I wish she could tell me more about her children. Their only

son, James, died unmarried, the proud family name dying with him. Eliza, their first-born, married a Mr. Roby, who, in time, having spent all his own money, spent most of Eliza's inheritance, so that little was left for the three Sons of that union. Did Mrs Halliwell weep for her unhappy daughter?

Maria wed a vicar, the Rev. Henry Latham and they went to live in a quiet rural area of Cheshire. Of their three children - two daughters and a son — the latter, Henry, died of what was described as a broken heart, after his wife left him. Was Mrs Halliwell then to offer comfort to her beloved grandson?

Sad Henry's sister Diana never married, whilst his other sister, like her mother before her, married a man of the cloth.

Ann married a Mr. Eckford, who was in the Indian Civil Service and they lived in India for over twenty years. All their children died in infancy, perhaps from childhood infections so easily treated today. Mrs. Halliwell must have felt such grief for those little grandchildren she almost certainly never saw.

Frances met and married a handsome army colonel, Thomas Evans; their story is the saddest of all. Two tiny sons died at a very early age and two daughters were buried at the Cape of Good Hope; nameless children who withered in the heat of Africa. Only one son lived, Henry; he, like his father, fought in India. Thomas, loving husband and father, was killed in battle. Henry the son was wounded and left for dead, and the fragile thread of survival spun him into insanity. Poor Frances, to lose all she loved. I like to think that Mrs Halliwell would be a great comfort to her grieving daughter.

And today, Thomas, forever young, also hangs in a gilt frame in the dining room of Treasurer's House, opposite his mother-in-law. Did Mrs. Halliwell like him? Did they get on for the short time they spent together? I hope so, for they can't ever escape from each other.

Visitors are always interested in the lives of these long dead ancestors of Frank Green. They linger, gazing curiously at the portraits and asking questions. I like to think that when they leave they will take with them some of the memories and mysteries of Mrs. Halliwell and her children and her

children's children and will remember the painted people of
Treasurer's House.

At sea in York

Gillian Ewing

I'm stranded on an island in the heat:
The sun beats down, a squawking gull swoops past;
I watch my fellow castaways retreat
From surging waves of sound, the deep down blast

Of doctored stereos, the crash of gears,
The swish of speeding tyres, the crunch of brakes,
Like pebbles clashing as a high tide nears,
And waiting for the turn is all it takes.

The red guard's at attention, so we must
Stand on the brink and breathe the oily air
That heaving hulks expel in gust on gust,
While in the murky distance sirens blare.

Lights change. We pour across from Fishergate
While there's a lull between the roaring squalls;
Adrift upon a confluence in spate
I seek the shelter of the city walls.

The Lupin Man

Sandra Simpson

George Russell *was* born in 1857 in the town of Stillington in Yorkshire.

His father was a keen gardener and he used to take George to the various shows. At the 1867 York Gala flower show he saw his first old style lupins in blues and whites. Most of these Lupins *Buplisia australis* a native from Western North America and *Lupinus uteus* a native of Mediterranean origin had small flowers and he did not think much of them

He worked as a jobbing gardener in and around York, for about forty years the last few for a Mrs Micklethwaite of the Mount.

Seeing the Lupins on Mrs Micklethwaite's dining room table prompted him to make an attempt at perfecting a better flower in colour, form and size.

When he retired he spent the next twenty years on his allotment on Bishopthorpe Road, shaping the future of Lupins. Working twenty hours a day sometimes keeping watch over the plants, burning the ones that did not look good. He would neither sell any nor give any away or allow his plants or seeds to become commercial. He was offered quite large sums of money for one plant but refused. To his visitors he said, 'If you want to see the Lupins then you can come down to my allotment and see them there.' But it was a treat at that time to walk down the lane and see them in the riot of colours he had made them. He wasn't a Botanist and knew nothing of the principals of heredity and wrote nothing down.

He had a young boy who helped him called Sonny Herd. He had contracted a form of paralysis when a small child and the doctors said he would not walk again. But George felt sorry for him and took him down to the allotments strapped to his back and with his perseverance and kindness got the child to

walk again.

Sonny used to help him on the allotment, and learnt all he could about the growing of Lupins. When asked what would happen to them when he died replied, 'Sonny knows all about them!'

In the end after much persuasion he sold the lot to a firm in the Midlands, Bakers Nurseries Ltd. of Codsall. When asked if he would continue to work with them declined as he said they were not his anymore. He only agreed to sell them if Sonny went as well to carry on the work there by ensuring that he had a lifetime's job carrying on George's work.

Apart from the knowledge that he had combined the English Lupin with the hardier German one, there is no information as to which others he used.

In the year of his death 1937 he received the Veitch memorial silver medal from the Royal Horticultural Society, and a recognition with an M. B. E. in the Birthday's Honours list. The Latin name *Lupus* - wolf was given to the flowers because it was thought that they destroyed the fertility of the soil. But Lupins like other leguminous plants,(of the pea family) have nitrogenous nodules on the roots so they were grown and ploughed back into the land as green fertiliser.

To remember the Lupin Man as George Russell was called and his helpers, the Russell Lupins have been named after them. So you can buy named varieties, George Russell, Mrs Mickthwaite, Sonny, Susan of York, and The City of York.

End of the Line?

Rob Oldfield

However well you think you know York there's always another bit of history to uncover.

Between Scarcroft Green, and what is known locally as Little Knavesmire there lies a swathe of land which was originally part of the ancient Micklegate Stray. At some time during World War II, encouraged by the Dig for Victory campaign, it was given over to garden allotments. By the 1970's a growing interest in self-sufficiency had breathed new life into the then neglected gardens. Today it forms an eclectic collection of plots: some well tended and productive, some the haunt of the weekend or casual gardener, others abandoned and overgrown, each one having some form of greenhouse, summerhouse or shed.

I often walk the narrow lanes and in one of the more remote areas, at the top of the hill, I recently noticed a shed that looked like part of an old railway wagon. It's not unusual for gardeners and farmers to re-use redundant rolling stock to make potting sheds, makeshift pigsties or cowsheds, but this one seemed different. I knew I had seen something like it before, so I pushed back the briars and overhanging buddleia and was thrilled to discover not an ordinary 'wagon,' but an eight-foot section of an old wooden passenger coach.

A few years ago, I was involved in an exhibition about the history of coach building at the Holgate Works and had access to archive photographs. I knew that somewhere among the images was one of a wagon with those distinctive vertical end panels. The National Railway Museum had provided a comprehensive selection of pictures, some showing the interiors of the huge buildings that still stand on the Holgate site today.

I searched through my files and at last found the photo I wanted. It was just as I remembered it and the caption read:

Image #1.2; 'Wooden bodies for non-corridor passenger coaches being constructed at York at the turn of the century. The bowler hat worn by the man standing at the end of the left-hand coach indicated he was the foreman.'

From his high vantage point the photographer has captured the scene in one of the busy workshops opened by the North Eastern Railway in 1884. It looks like the sort of organised chaos that might have been seen in any large workshop, piles of timber, workbenches, and overhead gables. Wooden coaches, similar to the fragment that is now a garden shed, are in various stages of assembly, in parallel rows they stretch away to the huge doors at the far end of the building.

Teams of workers gaze at the camera trying to strike informal poses but look self-conscious by today's standards, aware, perhaps that this may be the only photographic image of themselves to be passed down to future generations. They are wearing the working uniform of the day: collarless white shirt, waistcoat, and the inevitable flat cap and huge moustache. The foreman, in his suit, bowler hat and gold fob watch, stands in front of a coach still under construction. A craftsman joiner, distinguished by his long white apron, poses on a pair of stepladders, apparently putting the finishing touches to an open door.

I would really like to believe that the man in the bowler hat is standing in front of the very same coach that I discovered in the allotments.

After the joiners had finished, the coach would have been shunted next door to the paint and varnish shop. Here it would be 'polished like a baronial dining-table, embellished with proud coats of arms and mystic legends'. The company whose locomotives pulled it could boast that it was a state of the art vehicle, the last word in design and comfort. I am amazed that a small portion of it has survived the northern weather for more than a hundred years with no more protection than what looks like a couple of coats of creosote and a bit of roofing felt.

If indeed it is part of a York coach, it has a shared heritage with the Holgate Works where it was built. Parts of both have

survived into the 21st century, but their continued existence is precarious. Although re-opened in 1997, the Holgate Works is yet again under threat of closure due to lack of orders. There is hope of a rescue package, but its survival looks bleak. The coach too would seem to be under threat. Kids who roam the allotments looking for mischief seem to take delight in setting fire to the garden sheds. Half a dozen have been burnt down in the last year.

It would be ironic if, as their fathers were losing their jobs at Holgate, they casually destroyed a little piece of York's railway heritage that their great grandfathers helped to create.

The Bus from York

Dorothy E Penso

Ride on top -
you'll see more -
you would, if it wasn't for the
nets, voiles, festoons,
hedges, walls and fences.

Ride on top -
you'll see more -
the boy and his girl in the corn field
who think they're out of sight,
their passion hidden
by a million golden ears.

Ride on top -
you'll see more -
unconverted first floor,
an art deco cinema
stonework pediments
stained glass casements
above the second hand store

Ride on top -
you'll see more -
over the hedge to the
rose bay willow herb.
ragwort, poppies
colours clash and shout.

Ride on top -
you'll see more -
bed unmade at 3.00pm,
tights with deflated body imprint,
pillows imprinted by two heads
socks like two flat feet.

Ride on top -
you'll see more -
shabby English villa
once painted sugar pink
behind the straggling hawthorns

Ride on top -
you'll see more.

What's in a Name?

Gillian Ewing

Here Roman legions wintered long ago
In Eboracum's unfamiliar snow.

In Eoforwic men watched the acorns fall,
Forgot to reinforce a sturdy wall,

So Vikings conquered Jorvik, brought fresh skill
Which underneath the Foss lies buried still.

The martyred Jews have only left their groans
To echo round the castle's yellow stones.

Dark mediaeval rafters, bevelled beams,
Elizabethan casements, latticed seams,

Grand Georgian terrace, Jacobean hall,
Here in our city you can find them all.

Tread carefully along this crowded street
For history is nibbling at your feet.

A Christmas Encounter

Sid Kirby

I came slowly back to consciousness with the unhappy feeling that things were not normal. I should have been snug in bed at home. but this bed was different. It was hard and there was a strong smell of disinfectant in the air. Then I remembered. This was York District Hospital. I had been in to have my wisdom teeth extracted and because of a rare blood condition, they had decided to keep me in overnight.

There was more than that troubling me though. There was something moving under my pillow. Like a rodent scabbling around. Very creepy it was. No it was a hand. I could feel an arm brushing against my face. It would be the night nurse trying to wake me to take my blood pressure or to give me an anti-biotic tablet or something. Why wouldn't the silly bitch leave me in peace? I lay doggo. Make her work at it if she wanted me awake. If she had to struggle to wake me maybe it would give her some job satisfaction. Waite though, if that was the nurse , she wouldn't pussy foot around, she would have charged in and had the anti-biotic down my throat and bustled out of the ward before I got my eyes open. It must be another patient looking for my money. Well they would be lucky. I had only come in for one night and hadn't brought any with me.

I decided to pounce. I grabbed a plump wrist and there was a squawk of surprise from the owner.

'What the hell do you think you're doing?' I hissed. 'If you're looking for money you won't find any.' I could see her more clearly now. She had a beautiful golden head of hair and a diamond tiara was on her head. In her left hand she had a Wand which she held with the finesse of a javelin thrower There was a silver star on top which scintillated in the dim light.

The tips of two multi-coloured wings drooped over her shoulders sagging at the ends like two worn out party streamers.

‘Money? she tinkled,’ in her musical voice. ‘I don’t take money , I exchange money. I am the tooth fairy.’

‘Exchange it?’ I asked. ‘Yes for teeth you are stupid,’ She said crossly.

‘For defunct teeth. I told you I am the tooth Fairy.’

‘Why me, if it isn’t a stupid question? I asked. ‘I thought tooth fairies visited children?’ ‘Mistake,’ she said. ‘It is all your fault. It says in your profile that you act rather childishly sometimes. So I thought it meant you were a child. Anyway where are your teeth? Obviously I can’t exchange money for them if I can’t find them can I? I’ll get into trouble with my boss when I get back. I’m one short already. One stupid child on my list, swapped his tooth for a clockwork mouse. And it turned out to have a broken spring. Come on your teeth must be somewhere ?’

‘How would I know? In the waste bin I suppose. Or they may have gone for recycling A big tear rolled down the tooth fairy’s cheek. ‘I’ll get torn off a strip when I get back, if I can’t make my quota. Don’t you have any spare teeth lying around I can have?’ ‘Well there is only my partial dental plate,’ I said.

‘Good they will help,’ she said, brightening up ‘They aren’t here . I left them at home,’ I told her .

‘I’ll go and get them,’ she said, her face lighting up. She looked quite attractive when she smiled.’

‘You won’t!’ I said. ‘I still need them. I’m not going to go around with a big gap in my teeth just to please you.’

‘Oh well! that does it. I might as well pack up for tonight. I’m tired and my wings are aching. My boss will go spare when I report in without filling my quota. So who cares. She sat down and the bed shuddered under her weight.

‘It’s been a long night ,’ she said. ‘I have to cover all the York area by myself. We’re short staffed. There are too many cynical know alls amongst the kids these days. They never deny there’s a tooth fairy though or they wouldn’t get the dubs

would they? Then this old wand keeps going on the blink' She flicked the star on her wand with one finger . It pinged then faded out like a tired air raid siren.

'See ! Worn out,' she sighed . 'U.S. Obsolete'

'Won't your lot give you a new wand?' I asked.

'Oh dear me no. Not a hard working old fairy like me. The young ones get issued with all the new technology. Click on this. Instant that. No mod cons for me though. Oh dear me no. And we are expected to double up as Christmas fairies. I gotta do my stint on the tree in King's Square tomorrow. The young ones won't have it at any price. You won't find them sitting on top of a Christmas tree over the holidays. you wouldn't believe how sore a poor Christmas fairy gets after a few days stuck up aloft on a prickly branch. No joke I can tell you. ' She slipped under the covers and snuggled closer to me.

'Why bother about all that when we can do this though ?' She said, her hand caressing my body. I flinched and pushed her away.

'Come on love! she said. 'Even an old Tooth Fairy / Christmas fairy has her needs. 'She leaned up on her elbow. 'I think you are a teensy bit scared of girls aren't you Honey?'

'I am not.' I said. 'It's just — Not right. and my wife wouldn't like it,' I said

'I won't tell her if you don't,' she crooned. 'Come on, —Your tooth doesn't hurt now. Don't be mangy.'

'The night nurse'll be here any minute,' I said desperately. If she sees you in my bed she'll go through the roof. York District isn't't ready for this sort of thing. It's strictly a one person per bed sort of place.'

'You men are such worry pots,' the tooth Christmas fairy said. 'Worry worry about what's going to happen and it hardly ever does. Nearly morning anyway. I'm going . See Ya.'

She fluttered her wings and flew erratically towards the window. misjudged the height and said some choice un-fairy like words as she cracked her head on the sill, climbed out onto the window ledge and took off again fluttering away into the night.

I woke in the morning, surprised to see that I was not in Hospital. I was in my bed at home. I looked across the bed but my wife was not there. That was strange. She usually slept much later than I did. I got up and went into the living room where she was drinking tea and watching the news on the television

‘Morning dear,’ I ventured. ‘You’re up early?’

‘Course I am,’ she said. ‘Fine chance of getting any sleep with all the noise you were making. never heard of anybody making such a fuss about having a couple of teeth out. So it had all been a dream? I hadn’t been in York District at all, there was no Tooth/Christmas Fairy ? Oh well !

Yawning I went into the bathroom to wash and put my dental plate in before breakfast. My part dental plate was in the jar on the widow ledge, just where I had left it. There was a bigger gap in the plate than there should have been. Two teeth were missing. And on the shelf close by were two very new, shiny ten pence pieces.

Making a Claim

Rubye Readhead

It all started on a lovely Summer's day, when, struggling through the crowds of tourists in the centre of York I decided to take a short cut down one of the city's many snickleways. I ended up in a quiet side street and there it was in huge white lettering across the shop window.

“CLEARANCE OF STOCK, ALL SHOES ½ PRICE.”

Always appreciative of a bargain, I quickly became the owner of a pair of beautiful Italian shoes. The discovery I made when the rains came turned my delight to disappointment and shock, as my left foot became increasingly wetter from water seeping in between the sole and the upper of the shoe.

Returning to the shop, I politely made my complaint to the assistant, but to my utter amazement she informed me (in the most abrupt manner) that ‘there was nothing wrong with the shoes, and surely I knew that leather was porous I could not believe I was hearing such a ridiculous response to my genuine complaint. Not to be outdone, I wrote to the owner of the shop and four weeks and two more letters later I received a curt reply in the same terms as I had been told in the shop. This letter started me on the trail to the Small Claims Court, but I had yet to learn that patience, as well as determination, was to be the name of the game.

I sought and received excellent advice from the Citizens' Advice Bureau and was given a leaflet ‘How to put things right’, published by the Office of Fair Trading. This leaflet is compiled in a colourful, amusing picture step-by-step layout, plus a wide range of information and advice on legal rights.

My next visit was to the Small Claims Court, where particulars of my claim were taken and my case listed. I had to prove that I had tried to contact the owner of the shop on more

than one occasion (so it is very important to keep copies of all correspondence). I was given a booklet which proved to be most useful, 'Small Claims in the County Court, how to sue and defend actions without a Solicitor'. There was a court fee for the issue of a summons, but this was only a nominal charge, plus a small charge for the County Bailiff who serves the summons.

Several months later, the day eventually arrived for the hearing and I was very relieved to find the proceedings informal, held in a large comfortable room by a Registrar who was most helpful, explaining the course the procedure would take both parties, the Plaintiff (myself) and the Defendant (the shop owner) were given an equal opportunity to state our case and there was no sense of hurry or bias during the hearing, which took about twenty minutes.

Summing up, the Registrar agreed that the shoes were undoubtedly faulty and told the shop owner that he should have either verbally, or by displaying a notice, informed his customers that none of the shoes in the shop were guaranteed waterproof.

I won my case and was awarded costs, plus the value of the shoes, although I had to wait a further month before I collected the money, which the shop owner had to pay through the court.

My advice to anyone purchasing faulty goods is "don't give up". If you have a genuine complaint, the law is on your side. Be patient; my case took six months to complete, but proved to be a very interesting and satisfactory experience.

Shortly after this the shop closed down — due, perhaps, to a lot of unhappy customers with wet feet.

How Lucky you Are.

Doug Allwright

Not the best of times, George misquoted to himself as he went into the city under Monkgate Bar. He passed the model railway shop and headed down Goodrumgate. Late again he glanced at his watch and lengthened his stride. When he reached the archway leading to the college he tried to keep his gaze fixed but as he passed the pillar he couldn't resist a glance towards the bow window.

Normally he liked to 'ogleforth' as he called it. Down the street of that name round to the Treasurer's House and then across in front of the Minster. That way he was closer but had the safety of the old Roman road between him and the window.

George wondered how many other people had been affected by the walks since they started. He didn't class himself as a psychic but he supposed he must be. Amongst the thousands that had trudged the streets in the twilight hours someone else must have seen or heard something.

It had happened one night in his twenties when he had been invited on a night out by a couple of Americans who were working in the area. Harry Martindale it had been then, doing the one and only ghost walk. Not like these days when there were more walkers than ghosts. Or there would be if you discounted the legion that Harry had seen. He had sat with Dale and Sam Junior at a jazz night in the 'White Swan' and if only he hadn't gone into the 'Roman Bath' it might never have happened.

* * * *

'Hi there George.' Dale drawled. 'Nice to see you again.'

George shook hands, as was the custom, first with Dale and then with Sam Junior. He offered drinks which they refused at first but settled on 'top ups' with persuasion.

'We're not staying long,' Sam said as he gently poured to

keep the froth from spilling over. ‘There’s a crowd coming down from the Base to try out this ghost walk and we’re going to join them.’

‘How come you didn’t bus down with the others?’ George asked.

‘Sam and I were on a day off, so we came early. And as we are on the swing shift tomorrow we can go back late,’ Dale spoke with a grin as wide as the Rio Grande where it bordered his home state. ‘Why don’t you come with us? It’ll be good for a laugh.’

After the first couple of stops George found it a bit boring. Harry Martindale had been a police inspector and was relating the facts flatly at each point on the route, but tension was rising amongst the women in the party. The misty November evening didn’t help nor did their brief call into the White Swan which heightened their keenness to see spirits and Dale’s determination to liven up the proceedings.

When they stopped beside the Printer’s Imp in Stonegate a loud high pitched groan was heard coming from the nearby ginnel.

Sam Junior must have been in on it because as they approached the spot he had started a ‘Chinese whisper’ about the ghost of a chopped up child which had been seen in the next alley. It was so convincing that, George wondered why it had not been in the papers.

The groan had more than its desired effect! George swore afterwards that Joanne had levitated at least six inches in the air before she had clung like a limpet to Polly who had screamed like an Apache on full charge. The other women gathered round trying to calm them while the men stood back and introduced the bystanders to some choice American vocabulary. Perhaps it was the closeness of the Minster that gave their words a religious if blasphemous content. Sam apologised profusely insisting that it was nothing to do with him thus giving Dale the opportunity to edge unnoticed back into the throng.

During the full, if scrambled, enquiry Harry admitted to the nervous females that there had been deaths of children in the

area but it was some time before his reassurances persuaded the group to move on.

Afterwards Dale told George that he had eavesdropped on a previous tour to get the location exactly right.

‘After all George,’ he had explained, ‘A ghost walk would be rather dull without a ghost.’

The rest of the tour was uneventful for everyone apart from George. By the time they reached College Street and Harry’s story of the ‘grey lady,’ confidence had returned. Joanne stated Brooklyn fashion that any sudden noise would have made her jump and that she didn’t really believe in ghosts anyway. George expected Dale to say something but the ex-Police-Inspector murmured something to him that sounded like ‘shoot’ and ‘ghost’ and Dale seemed to lose some of his brashness.

The brisk walking and the chill November air caused George’s glasses to steam up and by the time they reached the window he was at the back of the crowd and had missed most of the story.

As the crowd moved away George looked at the child who had been watching them. Then he tapped on the window and shouted through the glass ‘I bet you love living in a haunted house.’ The least she could have done was smile but she just slapped her hand weakly against the pane. George tried smiling and winking but she just stared over his shoulder towards the Minster. Thinking there was someone behind him George turned but the street was empty. He turned back but the girl had gone.

‘Miserable cow,’ he murmured.

‘George! Are you with us or not?’ Dale had returned to the corner to see where he had got to.

‘Just coming,’ he replied. ‘I was just telling the kid in the window how lucky she was.’

The group settled in the ‘Black Swan’ for the post-mortem. They were in the upper room which was reputed to have its own spectre but by then most of the party were past caring. They had been saturated with knowledge and after a brief laugh about Joanne’s fright the conversation turned to every-

day events.

So the evening was about over when George casually mentioned the girl in the window.

‘You are a bit late with that one George,’ Dale said. ‘I think all the fright has gone out of them.’

‘It’s not a joke,’ George replied. ‘I am not talking about a ghost, there was a girl watching us as we went past.’

‘Pull the other one,’ Sam interrupted. ‘What did she look like?’

‘Young, fair-haired, she was dressed for bed in her nightie.’

‘I thought you said you hadn’t heard the story.’ Dale spoke loudly and the others started to gather round.

‘All I know is that I heard Harry say that the house was supposed to be haunted and then when I passed I saw this girl in the window.’

‘You mean you actually saw a ghost,’ Polly exclaimed.

‘The hairs on the back of George’s neck prickled. ‘It didn’t look like a ghost to me.’

And that is the last time he ever spoke of it.

The Reluctant Patient

Ann Mitchell

‘Not another damn prisoner!’ Helen moaned as she walked from the nurses accommodation block across Bridge Lane, and headed with her friend towards the entrance to the Intensive Care Unit.

For several distinctive police cars were parked in the area, and heavily armed officers were patrolling the parked cars and footpaths.

‘Why do you feel so strongly about prisoners?’ Sandie enquired.

‘It’s just that they hurt innocent people, and they are taking valuable NHS resources away from ordinary people, and that makes me mad. Some patients have to wait so long for their treatment, it’s just not fair.’

When they entered their ward they saw several more armed policemen, and knew the prisoner had to be one of their patients. At the briefing from Sister Murphy, they heard that the prisoner was in for an examination, after complaining of searing pains in his stomach.

Helen muttered under her breath, ‘Just our luck!’

‘How long is he expected to be in?’ Sandie enquired.

‘Well I would think at least a couple of days, but it really depends on what they find. If it’s serious then they might have to operate immediately.’ Sister Murphy grinned, ‘Enjoy your shift,’ as she left the ward.

Helen and Sandie started at the beginning of the ward and distributed the tablets or other medicine prescribed for each patient. This was painstaking work, because everything had to be done correctly, otherwise a patient could be given the wrong medication. So it was an hour later when they finally came to the private room occupied by the prisoner.

‘Hello,’ Helen smiled at the policemen, ‘we’re just going to

give Harry his tablets.’ One of the policemen checked the tablets and dosage were correct.

Harry meekly swallowed the tablets, he smiled and said, ‘Thank you.’ His voice was strangely melodious and strong.

When they went to the Mallard Restaurant for a coffee break, Helen could not help herself musing, ‘I wonder what he did, why he’s in prison?’

‘You could ask one of the policemen?’

‘Suppose so. There are so many officers, he must have done something serious.’

Sandie laughed, ‘You sound really sorry about that, and all you were saying earlier, about prisoners wasting valuable resources.’

Back on the ward, they were just in time to witness the change of the police shift. As Harry had been in hospital since early morning, the policemen had been at the hospital all day, and fresh officers meant sharper minds and bodies at work.

Sandie sat at the desk to write up some notes, whilst Helen toured the bays to check on all the patients, whether they needed anything before settling down for the night. As she entered Harry’s room, she noticed there was only one officer present, and he was seated on a chair in the corner, reading a magazine.

‘Hello Harry, how are you feeling?’

‘The pain doesn’t seem as bad. Thank you.’ He smiled, his soft brown eyes were warm and inviting. ‘I really appreciate all you’re doing for me. It can’t be easy for you, treating prisoners, with us having to be guarded all the time.’

Helen felt she had known him for years. ‘You become used to it, we have to learn to cope with everything, there can be electricians mending lights, information technology people updating computers, anything and everything.’

‘How long have you been nursing?’

‘About 12 years, I always wanted to be a nurse, my mother was in the profession for many years, and my sister is doing nurse training at the moment.’ A subdued cough from the officer in the corner, spoke realms, and Helen backed away

from the bed. 'Good night, try and sleep.'

When it was time for them to have a second break, they went to their staff room and made a cup of cocoa. Sinking down into the comfortable arm chairs, both of them sighed, and took off their shoes to give their feet chance to relax. Helen told her friend about the conversation with Harry.

Sandie broke a finger of Kit Kat in half, 'His voice reminds me of that TV presenter, you know that one on breakfast TV on the BBC. I can never remember his name.'

'Mmm, he reminds me of that actor who plays James Bond.'

Sandie's eyebrows rose dramatically, 'Oh huh.'

'What's that supposed to mean?'

'Just that he's the man most women would like to take on a desert island.'

'So I fancy him, as you've just said, thousands of women all round the world, think he's the best thing since sliced bread.' Helen stretched her toes, 'That feels lovely.'

'I'm off on Saturday, and I know you are, would you like to go into town and then see a film, or go to the theatre?'

'Sounds good to me. There's an Alan Bennett play on at the Theatre Royal, which I want to see.' Glancing at the clock, she pushed her feet back into her shoes.

'Yes, I'd like to see that as well.' Sandie drained her mug, 'I'll walk down before our shift tomorrow night and book two tickets for the stalls. I'd like to see round the Jorvik centre as well, I haven't been round since it was redesigned.'

The rest of the shift was fairly uneventful. Before they left the ward Helen put her head round Harry's door, and saw he was sleeping peacefully. She whispered a 'good morning' to the policeman.

When they came back on duty, they found three patients had been allowed to go home, and no new ones had been admitted, which would make life a little easier. The two friends started the medication round of the ward and arrived at Harry's door an hour later.

'Hello Harry, how are you feeling?' Helen looked at the information on his record at the end of his bed.

'Not too good, the pain is still there, but they think they

know what's wrong. They think it was when I had the last operation, when I was shot.' He watched their faces for a reaction and was not disappointed, as their eyes opened wide and they gasped.

'You were shot?'

'Harry', a warning from the officer in the corner, clearly indicated he had overstepped the rules.

'Sorry Bob. I didn't think it mattered, because they are staff.'

'Look Harry, you know we have to be careful who you come in contact with, about who knows you're here, and we have to watch you to keep you safe.'

'Keep him safe?' Helen repeated, 'We thought ...'

Bob laughed, 'You thought we were protecting you from a dangerous criminal?'

'Well yes,' Sandie admitted, 'because that's usually what happens. Patients and staff have to be protected from harm, and the prisoner stopped from escaping.'

'I suppose it is,' the policeman was clearly thinking about this situation.

Harry smiled, the warmth in his eyes made Helen feel a little giddy, 'These 'angels of mercy' are not going to cause us any problems, are they? I mean they are here to help people.'

'On reflection I tend to agree with you, that these young ladies will not know your colleagues, do you want to tell them?'

'Do you want to hear my story?'

'Yes.' Both nurses replied.

'Well, I was at College studying to become a teacher. When my brother started at the same college, we spent time together, but somehow managed to meet the wrong people. Both of us became drug addicts, and even started to do some dealing. Things went from bad to worse, and before we knew what was happening we had been kicked out of college, and owed a huge amount of money. Mr brother started working for a debt collector, a rather unsavoury character, who was not bothered about the methods his employees used.'

Harry paused for a couple of seconds, ‘My brother persuaded me to do a bank robbery with him and his new friends. Against my better judgement, I agreed. Everything was planned, and timed down to the last minute. We struck late on a Friday afternoon, when businesses had closed and taken their money to the bank. Everything was going perfectly until I fell as we left the bank...’ Harry’s voice shook with emotion.

‘What happened?’ Helen enquired softly.

‘My brother turned the shotgun on me and fired.’ Tears were in his eyes, ‘My own brother, wanted to kill me.’

‘But, surely it was an accident?’ Sandie suggested.

‘No, I saw his eyes and the cold, cruel glint of evil.’ Harry shuddered. ‘They knew they had to leave me, because the car couldn’t wait, and he didn’t want me to give evidence against them. As we all wore masks, I was the only one who knew who they were. They had a plane waiting at Luton airport to take them straight to Spain, they intended to spend some time there before going on to South America.’

‘So, you could testify against them?’ Helen found herself wanting to spend time with this attractive man. ‘Will you testify?’

‘Of course.’

‘So, that’s why we have to keep our man here in a very secure environment.’ Bob smiled, ‘Harry’s accomplices would give anything to find out where he is, and track him down. I’m sure I don’t need to tell you what could happen?’

Both nurses blanched at the prospect.

Helen smiled into Harry’s eyes, ‘thank you for telling us, it must be very hard for you?’

‘It is.’

‘At least we can help to keep you safe and make you well.’ The look in Harry’s eyes made Helen blush.

‘The only thing is, I now have a problem with my heart, nurse,’ causing Helen to blush even more.

Ah's Arrered

Sandra Simpson

Dost tha think thet yer couldst hide it fra me?
Even if tha couldst uve.
Mebbe tha wouldst uve purrit under't midden sett.
But tha didna wanner't leave it fra enni on us't finned.
Nowing tha were feir capped with tha keppin on't.
ifen tha had fund a cubby oil t'stash it
an frame thissen. Tha cudve gived t'tally man is dues.
Ahm reight dowdly, an me eids lik a set pot.
Wilt tha oppen t'dower oil as ahm nithered?
It's fair stowering dahn, an ah ain't mi coit wi mi.
Ay up lass oi telled tha ad bin fur a jar an am reight sorry I
took there gelt,
an ah's arrered.

Tempest Anderson.

Bill Bradley

Studying volcanic eruptions in the late 1800s when it took days or even weeks to reach the scene must have seen a strange hobby for a York ophthalmic surgeon, but Tempest Anderson was seeking a branch of science that could be studied by an enthusiastic amateur with limited leisure time.

He had another hobby, photography, and combined the two to eventually produce some 5,000 negatives and slides, now kept in the Yorkshire Museum, in the centre of York.

In the latter part of the 19th century photography was still in its infancy but when Anderson qualified in London as an MD in 1874 the use of wet plates that had to be dipped in silver nitrate before exposure was beginning to disappear. He would still have had to take a large supply of dry plates with him on his adventurous trips, as well as several wooden cameras, together with one of the two bags of clothing he always had ready packed, one for hot climates and one for cold.

He was born in York in 1846, the son of a well-known York doctor and lived at 17 Stonegate. He attended St Peter's School in York and after qualifying set up a surgery at 23 Stonegate, specialising in eye surgery. The original gold-lettered nameplate is still mounted on a black pillar at the entrance to the yard inscribed with 'T. Anderson, Surgeon'.

Despite being unable to get to the scene of an eruption quickly, he captured many dramatic pictures. His observations of the effects of the eruptions helped to create a new understanding of a volcano's destructive force and he became a respected authority on the subject.

Dr. Anderson was also a mountaineer and a member of the Alpine Club. He had seen the results of avalanches and began to compare these with the after-effects of a volcanic lava flow.

In an avalanche he had noticed that trees furthest from the origin, assumed to have been felled by the avalanche were only lightly covered in snow. He deduced that they had been knocked over by the preceding shock wave.

He reached a similar conclusion when he studied the after effects of the devastating eruption that caused the destruction of the town of Saint-Pierre on Martinique when Mont Pelee erupted in May 1902. Although every building, except part of the local bank, had been flattened to the ground there was little ash or larva in the town. The buildings had been destroyed by what he called ‘the ground surge’, a wind of hurricane force that preceded other results of the eruption.

By the time the Mont Pelee eruption took place, Dr. Anderson had already made a name for himself in volcanology. Together with Dr. J. E. Flett he was sent by the Royal Society to Martinique to investigate the eruption.

Saint-Pierre, referred to at the time as ‘the most beautiful city in the West Indies’ was totally destroyed with an estimated 40,000 lives lost. Only one of the ships in the harbour escaped and there was only one survivor in the town, a prisoner who was locked in his cell and not rescued until four days later, burnt by the blast, starving and dehydrated.

It was June by the time Anderson and Flett arrive at Martinique but the volcano was still active. In fact it was reported as still active the following February. They hired a small sailing boat and crew and went to explore the site.

They anchored off La Corbet near Saint-Pierre. There was a threatening black cloud at the top of the mountain and before long another eruption began. They tried to get away, the sailors manning the boat frantically using oars as well as sails.

They watched the sea boil as an incandescent avalanche of lava rolled into the water. They saw electrical discharges like lightning and dived for cover as stones as big as walnuts began to fall onto the deck. Fortunately, by the time they reached the ship, the stones had been cooled by the air they passed through.

Some American journalists, thinking that the two volcanol-

ogists must have perished in the eruption, came to look for them. Dr. Anderson told his story and described the scene to one of them. Later, he discovered that the man had reported the experiences as his own. He also said that a photographer for an American illustrated paper, when he discovered that all the bodies had been buried by the time he got there, paid some of the native people to pose as corpses so that he could photograph them.

Speaking about his experiences at lectures later, Dr. Anderson described how, following the second eruption, the ruins of the town were covered in ash, comparing the scene to events at Pompeii, 1,800 years previously, first ruined, then buried in ash.

On the 21st August 1902 Anderson made his report to the Royal Society. He told them that an eruption of the Soufriere on St. Vincent, another island in the West Indies, had produced ten times more material than Mont Pelee but had not created such a terrible disaster because there was no nearby town. In 1903 he lectured to the Royal Geographical Society in London.

In that same year he published a book, *Volcanic Studies in Many Lands*, describing the studies he had made during the previous 18 years including visits to Vesuvius and Etna, Iceland, The Eifel and the Auvergne, the Lipari Islands, the Canary Islands and the West Indies as well as various regions of Britain and North America. The book included more than a hundred of the photographs he had taken.

The following year he lectured at the International Association of Academics at London University on *Volcanic Phenomena in the West Indies*. He also addressed meetings of the Royal Dublin Society and the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club.

In August 1905 he was travelling again, this time to South Africa as a member of the British Association, calling at Vesuvius to see the results of a recent eruption there, a round trip of some 19,000 miles. In the 30 years between 1883 and 1913 he visited more than fifteen different countries, some of them several times, but Dr. Anderson did many other things, as well as travelling the world and studying volcanoes.

He was deeply involved with the Yorkshire Philosophical Society of which he was Secretary and then President as well as giving the Society much needed financial support to pay for repairs and improvements to The Yorkshire Museum they had founded.

In 1912 he presented the Museum with a new lecture theatre in memory of his sister. It is now known as The Tempest Anderson Hall. The existing lecture hall within the museum was considered inadequate and the space released by the new lecture hall was converted for use as a display gallery.

The Tempest Anderson Hall is thought to be one of the first buildings in the country to be constructed using concrete and shuttering. It is a remarkable match with the stonework of the main building to which it is attached. It is excellently designed, with a generous stage area and tiered seating for 400 people.

As well as doing professional work at York Hospital, Dr. Anderson was a magistrate and became Sheriff of York in 1894. He was also a Director of York Waterworks. In 1906 he was elected a Vice-President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. He served on the Councils of the Royal Geographical, and Linnean Societies, lectured at the Royal Institution and at one time was Vice-President of the British Association. He supported several scientific and archaeological societies and was a pioneer of town planning with a particular interest in traffic management.

In January 1913 he left England on his last trip, to visit the volcanoes of Java and the Philippines. On the voyage home he was taken ill whilst sailing through the Red Sea and died on 26th. August. He was buried at Suez.

About half of his £94,000 estate was bequeathed to the Yorkshire Philosophical Society and the Museum. There were complications with overseas investments because of the 1914-1918 War. The trustees were inefficient and dilatory. It was 1953, 40 years after his death, before the estate was finally wound up.

York's Very Own Saint

Jim Foster

It was the year 1154. King Stephen sat uneasily on the throne, his reign a time of festering civil war.

The Norman Minster in York dominated the city and the lives of its citizens. The archbishop held a particular place of affection in all their hearts. 16 years before, they had demonstrated this when most of the able-bodied men had rallied to the call of the aged Archbishop Thurston to march to meet the forces of King David of Scotland; the latter had taken advantage of the chaotic conditions in the country to try to extend his territory as far down as York.

With the fervour of a religious crusade, with priests in its ranks and with the consecrated host on the top of a ship's mast mounted on a cart, this army raised in York had completely routed the Scots at the Battle of the Standard near Northallerton.

By 1143, sadly the old archbishop had passed away, and King Stephen had appointed his successor. This was William FitzHerbert, and he was a popular choice. Since 1130, from the early age of 20, he had been serving as Treasurer of the Minster. Admittedly, a big factor in his appointment was that he was a nephew of King Stephen. Naturally, having been brought up in such circles, his lifestyle reflected this, it hardly being what one might call an austere one.

However, he was amiable and got on very well with everybody, and the citizens of York welcomed the news that he was to be their new archbishop.

But there were others who were not so happy about things. The Cistercians in particular were up in arms about it. Jealousy played its part, no doubt, as they would have preferred one of their own order in the position, but they also considered that somebody a bit less worldly than FitzHerbert would

be more fitting.

They thought back to eleven years previously, and what had happened then at St. Mary's Abbey in York. St. Mary's had been founded in 1085, not long after the Norman Conquest, by a group of French monks who followed the strict rule of St. Benedict.

In 1132 the abbot was Geoffrey, a nice and kindly old man, but one who didn't bother much about discipline in his community. By this time, St. Mary's was becoming quite wealthy from the endowments left by the local wealthy families, and this was to prove too much of a temptation for some of the monks.

Their standards, in dress, food, conversation and other aspects of their lives had slipped considerably as regards what Benedict had intended for them. In fact, it could be said that St. Mary's at this time was more like a luxurious club than a Benedictine house.

A group of the monks, led by a Brother Richard, felt strongly about this state of affairs, that they were living a lie. They approached Abbot Geoffrey with a proposal that they be allowed to set up a new monastery in another location where they could live in the stricter manner that they wished. But Geoffrey resented the criticism of his rule, and refused their request. They then went over his head to Archbishop Thurston himself.

Brother Richard complained of 'ill natured frivolities, vain and harmful gossip, luxurious feasting, frequent and splendid potations, and other countless frivolities.'

He continued that 'Chastity is with difficulty sustained in such surroundings. We lose our tempers, we quarrel, we seize the goods of others, we claim our rights by lawsuits, we protect fraud and lying, we follow the flesh and its desires.'

To try to calm things down, Archbishop Thurston decided to visit St. Mary's. We know what happened from a letter he wrote afterwards to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

'The whole Chapter House rang with such tumult and confusion that it seemed more like the seditious uproar of drunken revellers than the humility of monks, of which there

was no sign. Many of them rushed up with outstretched arms, as if to wrestle with us, and all cried out that they would be roused to fury if I entered.’

The archbishop tried to reason with the monks. When this had no effect, he tried threatening them

“Let your church be interdicted!”

Interdiction meant that no masses could be celebrated in the church, no sacraments administered, no Christian burials of monks could take place.

But this seemed to make matters worse. Simeon, one of the monks supporting the abbot, shouted out to the applause of his colleagues.

“Rather let our church be interdicted for a hundred years! Seize them! Seize them!”

Both sides then came to blows, the followers of Geoffrey trying to drag Brother Richard and his rebel monks away from Archbishop Thurston’s side. Richard and the others eventually made their escape, and they were lodged in the archbishop’s palace at Ripon, where they celebrated Christmas 1132.

It was this small band of monks who were to found Fountains Abbey, on the banks of the River Skell near Ripon. Here they could live according to the strict rules of Benedict in the manner they craved. But now they had become totally disillusioned with the Benedictine Order to which they belonged, and looked around for something more in keeping with their principles.

They found what they wanted in the Cistercians.

When William FitzHerbert was appointed Archbishop of York in 1143, the Cistercians of Yorkshire remembered all this. Resentment no doubt exaggerated things in their minds, but in their opinion, compared to their own self-sacrificing way of life, the new incumbent was guilty of many of those indulgences that had forced Richard and his small band to leave the security of St. Mary’s and brave the unknown dangers of a desolate spot to set up their new community. This was something that just couldn’t be tolerated.

They had some very important allies. Archdeacon Walter of

the Minster was on their side; and they were backed in their submissions to Rome by Bernard, the influential Cistercian Abbot of Clairvaux in France.

And finally, the Pope himself, Eugene III, was also a Cistercian. With all this against him, and the spurious charges that he had bought and sold ecclesiastical pardons and offices, FitzHerbert was dismissed from his post four years later in 1147. A Cistercian, Henry Murdac, who was then the Abbot of Fountains Abbey, was appointed in his place.

William FitzHerbert quietly retired to Winchester, where for the next seven years, he lived an exemplary monastic life, forgoing completely any worldly pleasures that he had previously enjoyed.

By the year 1154, his opponents, Henry Murdac, Eugene III and Bernard of Clairvaux were all dead. The new pope Anastasius IV decided to reappoint William FitzHerbert to the see of York.

And so it was that a public holiday had been declared in the city. Religious festivals and saints' days were red letter days in the lives of the people, a welcome break from their otherwise drab existence.

An almost tangible feeling of excitement was in the air. The streets were crowded from early morning by the citizens keen to welcome William FitzHerbert back.

At Micklegate Bar, the Mayor received the new archbishop as he arrived on horseback at the entrance to the city, accompanied by his retinue. As the procession moved along the length of Micklegate the cheers from the waiting crowd were deafening.

On Ousebridge, a large number of people had gathered, to get a good view of William FitzHerbert as he passed over the bridge.

Hearing the sound of the cheering as it came nearer and nearer, the people on the bridge all surged forward, everybody intent on securing as best a view as they could. But the wooden structure proved unable to withstand this sudden shifting of the excessive load upon it. First, there was an ominous crack of splitting timbers, and then, with a mighty

crash, accompanied by terrified screams, the whole thing collapsed into the muddy water beneath.

Luckily, there were many boats around on the river, their occupants also waiting to see the spectacle. Miraculously, everybody was saved from drowning.

The drenched but very relieved survivors scrambled to the bank to see in front of them an imposing robed figure. William FitzHerbert had dismounted and stood there, one hand holding his staff, the other raised in a blessing over the traumatised people, who, as though on a given signal, all fell down on their knees before him, many hands outstretched to touch him.

“It’s a miracle! He has saved us! Thank God for bringing him back to us!”

William FitzHerbert blessed them all again before continuing on his way to the door of the Minster, where he knelt to kiss the cross before entering.

Unfortunately, the joy of the citizens was to be short-lived. The new archbishop celebrated High Mass on Trinity Sunday, but was taken ill during the service and died within the week. It had been only one month since he had taken office, and everybody was naturally shattered by the terrible news.

Rumours flew around the city, the most persistent of these being that poison had been administered in the sacramental wine. And the finger of suspicion was directed, without there being any proof, towards the new Archdeacon of York, Osbert. The interment took place in York Minster.

Financial problems have always been a concern in administering a cathedral, and this was especially so in the early days with building and rebuilding going on all the time. Donations from wealthy men helped, but every archbishop needed extra funds to glorify the building and leave some mark of his tenure for posterity.

The canons looked with envy at the success of other northern cathedrals in raising money. Ripon, Durham and Beverley were all visited by thousands of pilgrims who reported miracles and answers to their prayers and left substantial offerings in grateful thanks.

But these other cathedrals had shrines, and relics, something tangible to attract the pilgrims. The conclusion was reached that York should have its very own saint.

Ever since the untimely death in 1154 of William FitzHerbert, there had been a feeling that he should be canonised. It was believed that he had performed miracles during his lifetime, and was therefore well qualified. And in 1227 something was done about it. Pope Honorius III asked the Cistercian Abbots of Fountains and Rievaulx to enquire into the life and miracles of Archbishop FitzHerbert. By now, time had healed any objections they might have had, and the result was that he became St. William of York. There was a feeling of posthumous amends being made for the wrongs done to him.

At first, FitzHerbert's remains had been interred in the nave. By the year 1283 the flow of pilgrims was coming along nicely, so a splendid new shrine befitting a saint was erected behind the high altar. But not all of his bones were transferred there. When the pilgrims entered the Minster, they were first directed to the original tomb, where a suitable financial contribution was extracted. Then the elaborate shrine behind the altar was pointed out to them, and a further donation was collected. The authorities thereby benefited twice.

During Oliver Cromwell's time, the shrine was removed, and back went his bones to join the rest of him in the nave. Then in 1960, due to work in the Minster, his remains were again transferred to a small chapel in the crypt, where they are reputed to be in a re-used Roman coffin. The mosaic floor depicts the swirling River Ouse on that fateful day in 1154.

Soon after he was canonised, a chapel was built at one end of Ouse Bridge to celebrate William FitzHerbert's miraculous saving of the people at this spot. This survived until 1807, when it was demolished to make way for a new bridge.

In 1421 the marvellous 78 feet high St. William Window in the choir was consecrated. In superb stained glass, it tells in ninety-five large coloured panels the ups and downs of his career, the miraculous saving from drowning of the York people from the River Ouse, and the subsequent miracles that

took place around his shrine.

In the Yorkshire Museum there is a set of marvellous Alabaster carvings, part of an altar piece, portraying scenes from the life of St. William, showing his birth, life and death. This had been deliberately buried at the time of the Reformation to prevent it being destroyed.

St. William of York's feast day is June 8th.

What's in a Name?

Gillian Ewing

Here Roman legions wintered long ago
In Eboracum's unfamiliar snow.

In Eoforwic men watched the acorns fall,
Forgot to reinforce a sturdy wall,

So Vikings conquered Jorvik, brought fresh skill
Which underneath the Foss lies buried still.

The martyred Jews have only left their groans
To echo round the castle's yellow stones.

Dark mediaeval rafters, bevelled beams,
Elizabethan casements, latticed seams,

Grand Georgian terrace, Jacobean hall,
Here in our city you can find them all.

Tread carefully along this crowded street
For history is nibbling at your feet.

Betty and the Bio-Scientists

Simon Newton

Once upon a time only the flakiest of saints had visions. They would go out to the wilderness, cut the protein intake and return with a blueprint for all our futures. It would often be bad news such as the end of the world or worse.

Today every business needs a 'missio' and a 'vision'. Even city councils have to see the future in a hundred words or less and share it with its citizens. Corporate identity snake oil salesmen praise the vision as true and wondrous and offer a logo in homage.

Visions are just a way forward to get from here to there. But they do have to be good news, both promise and fulfilment. A decade ago, with railways hitting the buffers and chocolate beginning to melt away, York needed to create a future that worked.

The consultants put away the snake oil and decided that the cloudy 'vision' and 'mission' needed to be razor sharp and based on the most rational and logical practice

—science and technology. Their crystal balls were polished well as 21st century York has more jobs in science and new technology than tourism. Young digital, creative companies cluster within the city walls. Craftsmen and women in nanotechnology nod across to the spirits of the Minster stonemasons and the bio-scientists have scones in Betty's. Worlds collide but there's no sound of an explosion, only people talking.

While the beautiful people of York are chattering at ground level over the ciabatta, families and couples watch the latest Hollywood and Bollywood movies upstairs at City Screen. Below the city streets in the basement bar, a scientist talks chaos.

As rowers pull down the Ouse in straight and ordered lines, the audience hears about 'chaos theory' and how a butterfly

fluttering its wings in the Amazon could cause a hurricane in Kyoto. 'What is its effect as it passes over York?' The scientist pushes the pendulum across a pin board of magnets and it jerks randomly in constant motion. 'It's like a drunk trying to get home. Three steps forward, one sideways, two back. Tell me what time he arrives home?'

It's impossible. But this regular York meeting to discuss science is a symptom that the city's vision is possible. Across town, a digital media company draws a full house in a shushi bar showcasing its work for the new visitor centre at Whitby Abbey, the place where the grandees of the early church decided the date of Easter and kick-started the chocolate industry. North of York, the Central Science Laboratory, with two thousand scientists, is sharing experiments with colleagues in Tokyo, Los Angeles and Bombay.

'Science City' is now the top layer of a city with rich deposits. Popular with visitors with missions since the Romans and Vikings, York has always been a gateway to new stages of city living but always passing through chaos and apparent endings.

Now sitting exhausted by the Minster next to a fallen column, Constantine once announced that he 'could control the whole of England from here.' Pushing the boundaries of empire, York was close to the northern frontier of a tired imperial world.

Straight roads, sanitation, drains and fountains offered a clear and ordered view of the world. Constantine's conversion to Christianity undercut this view. Once regarded as a minor religious sect worshipping a common criminal it grew to challenge the greatest empire of the known world.

The foot soldiers patrolling the city walls in a wet climate and dreaming of anchovy paste and olive oil must have puzzled over rumours of a collapsing capital city back home. Today, a message from an internet café could have confirmed the barbarian incursions were nightmares come true.

Pillage was popular with the Vikings but so was city building, creativity and family. Jorvik combs, jewellery and inscriptions suggest that horned helmets and landing craft

brought chaos but the invaders created and settled into an ordered world built to endure.

The 'weightless economy' has come to York. Locomotives and chocolate are either heavy or make you heavy. New ideas bring uncertainties but they can move around faster than light. If the city is to create a new legacy for global visitors it needs a new map for the journey and a 21st century city 'vision' is the nearest we can get to the treasure.

Return

Roy Stevens

John and Penny are returning home.
We wait , a little chilled, in the night wind
On the long platform. Strong station lights
Swing in the void above. People stand alone,
Or in huddled groups, apart,
Much space between us,
Not as in gregarious summer days.
The pools of darkness wait. Much can go wrong.
The lamps above, the stars, may help,
but are not ours.
We sense the separateness of life, until
All the isolates begin to move together, because
A long train snakes into number five,
Moving so confidently and so well.
Our hearts beat faster, and
Long train windows no longer passing by
Slow down, become candles, each to each, and
Through the crowds we run to clasp, hug,
Talk of little things. All smiles, delivered now,
Safe from highway perils,
Amidst the general warmth
All round us, the personal at its heart again.
Until the train, errand of mercy done,
Glides blue-gold into the northern chasm,
Cold stars, a new and colder winter wind,
Islands where others look south in loving hope
And trust of other candles coming home.

Single hand Guitar

Phil Shepherdson

I am, to my knowledge, the only one-handed guitarist in York.

Attempting to learn guitar can be firmly blamed upon two people: Bob Dylan and Mandy. In the sixties I became a fan of Bob Dylan through a fluke introduction by Mandy, a pharmacy technician who worked with me at York City Hospital. She knew that I had no interest at all in music and suggested that I should stop being 'so square' and listen to one another's records. What she gave me was 'Times They Are A Changing' by Bob Dylan. The fact that I had no idea who the man was did not deter her in the least. So I conceded to take the record home and listen to it.

Having tolerated Dylan's voice for a few howling moments, my hand lingered briefly while attempting to punch the record off the turntable. I paused. His words began to weave their magical poetry and abruptly I was hooked. It wasn't long before I too wanted to write lyrics that had meaning like his.

About this time John Mackenzie, my class mate and now neighbour, was having financial difficulties. Recently married, scratching for work and mouths to feed, he asked, 'did I know anyone who would buy his guitar?' Twenty quid was all he wanted.

'Teach me to play, and I will purchase it myself,' I said looking intently to see what his reaction might be.

I still remember how his eyes folded back in on themselves, came back into focus and then that final glazed expression which seemed to last for hours. Mentally, I knew that he was figuring out how he could teach a one-handed man, to play guitar. With a deep intake of breath, he said, 'yes'. I knew from past experience that John Mackenzie liked a challenge!

So, now a Grietch look-a-like electric guitar had one new owner.

All right I can hear you say there are now three people who changed my life.

Over a period of time I developed a style of my own (it sounded like a drum beat) and attempted to write a few simple songs. All too quickly this novel form of communication required an outlet and I now realised that I needed an audience. Enter Jed Morris.

Jed Morris hosted a club in York, which was called “Jed’s Kind-A-Folk”

OK. I know. Now I have introduced yet another person, making the total to four.

Everything musically went down there because he didn’t want to be stuck in the rut of playing just folk, blues or jazz. When I turned up at the door clutching my guitar he did not know what he was letting himself in for.

At last I was on stage surrounded by a curious audience hungry for music. I balked momentarily.

Jed hissed from the wings ‘Talk to ‘em. Give an introduction. I sat upon a stool and placed my guitar across my knee, in the style that I had developed. The heat had caused problems with the tuning and as I strummed it sounded dreadful. As if in mockery, outside in the street, a motorbike roared past. ‘Hang on’ I exclaimed, ‘That motorbike sounds in better key than I am I’ll tune it to that.’ Someone at the back laughed.

Now for the tricky bit I thought as I felt for the quick release on my artificial arm and in full view, removed my hand. A girl at the front looked as if she was going to be sick, as another made a bolt for the loo. The general mood of the audience I could tell was one of tensioned apprehension As I sat there “hand in hand” so to speak, all thoughts of bravado left me and I became throttled with stage fright. It was the quick thinking of Jed who came to my rescue. Striding across stage he grabbed my hand and waved it aloft.

‘He’s the only one here who can give himself a warm hand!’ The place erupted with laughter and I felt saved from

this ticklish situation.

From that moment on, I always started my act with that opener: by taking off my hand and declaring, ‘does anyone want a warm hand,’ or the variant, ‘welcome hand anyone?’

Over the years my faithful audience grew and nurtured me. It was pure adrenaline magic to hear their enthusiastic response after a performance that went particularly well.

Yes. Alright, another mathematical adjustment is now required now that the addition of the audience has to be added to the sum of four.

‘Jed’s Kind-A-Folk’ eventually attracted the media and soon we were asked to play on Radio Humberside. In front of my trembling knees now, was not an expectant audience, but a red light, a huge microphone, and a headphone clad DJ. This couldn’t be solved by a simple hand displacement. Thinking quickly for a different opening I plucked up my courage, pursed my lips and began to whistle the first few bars to my opening song ‘Two Of Us,’ by Paul McCartney. Later I was to discover that inside the control room, the recording needles ‘red-lined’ as the sound balance went on overload. The cause was my loud whistle because the radio technician had carefully sound balanced for my husky voice. He now had to frantically wrestle the controls in an attempt to compensate.

Our brief moment of fame was to me, the highlight of my musical stage career. Of course, by now you must be really non-plussed, for the grand total of people who have influenced me must now include the entire of audience of Radio Humberside.

To put it simply, the snowball that started with Mandy increased to an avalanche of listeners throughout the Eastern Counties.

Gray's Court, York

Roy Stevens

The roses will bloom again where the children sped
In years past, tiny and laughing. They have grown
Steadily up through childhood, tall and strong,
And other days lie dead in the lush rose-bed.

The thing in me I must check and would like to see
Are the small feet on the lawn, that earlier spring,
The lesser evil (it seemed) of times gone, more time left
And the man that was I in (part imagined) felicity.

But the ache for the past alone is so vain –
Even then was the way uncertain. On that day
Of burgeoning sunshine the future was strange with dread,
And then too hope and dismay both marked the way.

To be together is one thing, still to take hands
Where the lawn and the sun are different, the scenario changed;
But the roots still hold to the land, the roses bloom still.
In this, and in other lands, there are ties, there are bands.

And so the prodigal light on the yellowing lawn,
And the love which remains and the cycle of times
Which are better to take with thanksgiving as well as fear,
And the new roses, all say, 'Not yet forlorn. Do not mourn.'

History Lesson

Sandra Simpson

I was lucky being in a new school, the history teacher was a very imaginative person, and wanted us to have the same love of history as he did. Mr Wellburn arranged for us to have history lessons once a month in the Castle Museum. The teacher there was a Miss Wright, tall and thin with straight black hair pulled into a bun on the top of her head. She had a very plain face, with a sharp little nose; she looked the image of my grandmother Maryanne, my heart sank, 'Oh not another like her' I thought, but thank goodness the similarity stopped there.

She told us stories of the Kings and Queens of England, and various famous people who did a lot to change York. Bringing them to life for us, and letting us try on the clothes of the periods, using their tools to get the feel of how they lived. I was able to try on quite a few of the clothes because most of the ladies had been small and had narrow waists.

We also went to the Shambles a medieval street in York; the houses were dark, dismal and had little windows covered with horn, which did not let in much light. They looked top heavy as they leaned over towards each other the gap so narrow at the top you could almost shake hands.

'Margaret Clitherow lived here,' Miss Wright said, pointing out a narrow house set between the now new shops, 'It has been renovated but everything inside is from the 16th Century. I would like you all to sit in the chairs, and imagine how different their lives must have been from your cosy ones.' I was one of the last people to go in, as I wanted to try and get the feel for the place. I did not mind the low ceilings and the dark oak beams. I felt it had been built for me. But there was one part at the back near a reading table and kneeler which gave me a shiver when I touched it.

‘What’s the matter Carole, some one walk over your grave?’ my friend Jilly asked as she pulled me out into the open.

‘No. It felt a bit cold in there that’s all.’ I said trying to shake off the funny feeling. ‘There’s no sun down here, and they must have found it awfully hard to read their books with only candle light. Well, those people who had books of course. Come on Jilly, we have to get back home if we don’t hurry we will miss our bus.’ We ran all the way through town until we reached the bus stop at the Theatre Royal, and we were too out of breath to have any more discussions on what we had seen.

The next time we were at the Castle Museum, Miss Wright had us all acting out the life story of Margaret Clitherow. A child who was staying with her, when faced with the possibility of a whipping betrayed the poor woman. I was cast in the role of Margaret; I had to explain why I had hidden a priest in my house. That it was because of my faith, and that I thought it was terrible that people could not agree to worship the same God in whatever way they wanted.

We even acted out the execution. The actual one was gory. I was thinking of the pain that she would have felt, and her slow suffocation, as she was squashed on Ouse bridge. She had a stone placed under her back; a door laid on top of her, then large stones were placed on the door until she slowly died. All she said was, ‘No more, God release me.’ Her hand fell out from between the stones and they cut it off, and later on it was given to the nuns in the Bar Convent.

Even though the door was of cardboard, and the stones made of papier-mâché I still felt I couldn’t breathe. To me it felt real. My imagination took over. I could feel the stone in my back, the dampness of the river striking up through the floor on which I was laying. I echoed her pleas to the tortures, ‘No more. No more. God release me!’ then I passed out.

The next I remembered was someone patting me on the face and the smell of Lavender; as Miss Wright leaning over me, told me to wake up.

‘Would you like to go home? You look a bit green about the

gills.’ She said as she helped me to get up.

‘I would like a drink if I can have one, please. I feel a bit sick. I think I must have been too hot. But don’t send me home yet as mum will only fuss too much.’ I pleaded with her, and she allowed me to stay as we had nearly finished the lesson.

Jilly walked home with me and twittered on as usual, ‘What happened to you in there?’ she asked without waiting for my reply, ‘Was it the same as when you were in her house? The one in the Shambles?’ ‘Well I’m not quite sure,’ I was trying to work it out for myself, ‘I think it must have been connected. As our Barbara said I woke her up shouting from a nightmare, and I did feel funny in there. But it was much worse when we acted it out. I hope it doesn’t affect me like that every time I do any acting. As I would like to try for a part in the Pantomime and I can’t be falling down all over the place, can I?’ ‘Not unless you have a part as a clown.’ Jilly laughed at me, as we parted she said, ‘don’t go eating any cheese before bedtime, or you’ll be having bad dreams again. I’ll see you in school tomorrow.’

I did as she suggested but I still woke up my sister Barbara in the middle of the night shouting. What’s worse she told mum that I had been walking up and down the landing, my hands clasped together; and still asleep, but grandmother had heard me and put me back to bed.

From The Train

Dorothy E Penso

Woman with rollers
quilted nylon housecoat
windows festooned
in pink flocked net.

How do they live?
How do they live?

Garden choked with white goods
rusted at the edges
snarling prowling guard dogs
fixed to clanking chains.

How do they live?
How do they live?

White plastic barge boards
door with double glazing
garden starkly plain
conifered and paved

How do they live?
How do they live?

Boarded up windows
battered padlocked door
nettled, hay field garden
gateposts but no gate

How DID they live?
How DID they live?

Let There Be Lights

Janet Eldred

For me, as for many Americans, the Christmas season officially begins on Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday in November. On that morning, while women prepare groaning tables with feasts for twenty and men prepare to gorge themselves and fall asleep in front of televised (American) football, children watch the Macy's department store parade in New York City.

There, high school bands, giant cartoon-character balloons, and leggy Radio City Music Hall Rockettes march, float, and high-kick their way down Broadway to Herald Square. At the end of this annual spectacle, now in its eighth decade, Santa pulls up in his sleigh—let the festivities begin!

During my first two Christmas seasons in York, I searched for some alternative way to mark its exact beginning, sans turkey, pumpkin pie, and the odd Pilgrim hat or two. In the third year, I found it: the night the lights were switched on in the city centre.

What took you so long, York? My first year here, I expected a shimmering, glistening fairyland of lights. But, the blackness of the city left me feeling blue. It reminded me of the dark nights of the 1970s' oil embargo, when Americans cut back dramatically on light displays—at home, corporately, and in civic settings—in order to save fuel and money.

Most years, Christmas illuminations abound in the US. Homeowners set the spirit of the season with tableaux of Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus in the front garden and Santas with prancing reindeer on the rooftop. In the mix of secular and sacred that is a US Christmas, oxen and lambs share stables with red-nosed Rudolfs, and plastic snowpeople rub shoulders with wise men and shepherds.

Spot-lit wreaths on doors and decorated trees in windows

combine with flashing stars and blinking messages of ‘Merry Xmas,’ ‘Happy Holidays,’ and ‘Season’s Greetings’ for a presentation that would amaze Thomas Edison. Piped carols fill the air with ‘Joy to the World,’ ‘Away in a Manger,’ and ‘Santa Claus is Coming to Town.’

Families go out in the car and drive slowly through suburban neighbourhoods, admiring this house’s creativity and that one’s kitsch. Some streets are known for their illuminations, which can rival Blackpool’s, and traffic slows to a crawl as hundreds of visitors come to gawk.

Meanwhile, in towns and cities, every department store offers windows with animated elves making toys for Santa’s pack while Mrs. Claus bakes and nods wisely, or Victorian children hanging their stockings by a fireplace while a toy train circles around the base of a lavishly decorated tree. And, no building site is without its lighted tree poised on the highest floor of the incomplete structure.

In many communities, there’s the added attraction of legal battles over the separation of church and state—specifically, whether any form of Christmas display on the town green is acceptable. The battle between the American Civil Liberties Union and dyed-in-the-wool traditionalists is always good conversational fodder.

Of course, because it’s America, there is often the more-is-better approach to decorating. Here, every conceivable item available on the market is combined into one garish, spinning, shining, glowing, churning, singing, dancing, cluttered display. Yes, Americans often do things to excess, but whether it’s the quiet restfulness of a single candle in a window or the loudly joyous coloured lights that flash from every corner of a shop, at least we make a statement.

Finally, York had *almost* enough lights to satisfy my heart. Colliergate’s traditional swags and wreaths, Goodramgate’s winking all-white lights, and Swinegate’s moons and stars—I loved them. The lanterns, trees, and shooting stars on Foss-gate and Walmgate were a delight. And, proper trees appeared in Parliament Street, St. Helen’s Square, and Exhibition Square—hooray!

But, there were many city centre streets and squares that still needed to get into the act. I told myself to be patient—again.

Now, dare I even mention the latest Stateside trend: Easter displays in the front garden?

Bringing Grandma to York

Sandra Simpson

Would I be lost forever?
No documentation just ashes powdered grey.
Leaving my maternal grandmother in a land so far away.
Peach soft skin, in tiny creases, long silver hair in plaited
whirls.
Tiny features; always smiling her embraces my whole world.
Have I lost her?
To enter England it was the coldest winter recorded.
My mother wraps me in warm clothes to face the fogs and
snow.
Through the next few years without grandma's cuddles,
her warm caresses, a lifetime had passed me by.
I look forward to her letters counting the days to her arrival.
Will she be the same.
I picture her as we motor through the night.
Thick swirling fog; as soft as swansdown;
wrapping all sounds in a blanket of grey.
Would we be lost on some bleak moor land?
As through the night we drove to meet her,
following the pinpoint lights on a lony
to Liverpool's busy dockside.
Noisy calls and shouts, foreign words half forgotten.
Cases, bags and boxes lay in untidy heaps.
There's grandma, I could see her. Had she remembered me?

The East Anglia

Clinton Wastling

He did a double take. It couldn't have been. He looked in the rear view mirror. The distinctive modeling of the car was right. Just a glimpse brought back memories of their wedding day. That showery April Saturday, Vince and Angela stepped out of Saint Mary's and into a white Ford Anglia as man and wife. The car which passed must have been lovingly preserved. He looked in the mirror, the years hadn't been quite so kind to him.

When Vince got back home he told Angela about what he'd seen. He dug out the photos. Vince waxed lyrical about the car, Angela glanced over his shoulder and sighed, tracing her finger round the silk taffeta dress.

'Well Mr. East, nostalgia won't get the work done!'

He ignored this remark, got a magnifying glass and looked over the detail: MPY 246. White with a silver trim. Vince put the photos back in their box and thought about what he was doing. Here he was getting all starry eyed about a car a good forty years old, running on leaded fuel and drinking gallons of petrol at a time when they could barely afford litres. It was impractical. It was unfeasible and wholly desirable.

'You do realise that we'll have to tighten our belts if we're going to get a holiday abroad next year.' Vince recognised the first salvo, warning him off unnecessary expenditure. 'We're still keeping Kate at university and things aren't what they used to be in supply teaching. Bessie says her son's earning more in that burger place and he's only eighteen.'

'They probably pay him by the spot.' Vince said before stuffing a chip into his mouth and ignoring the vexed expression on Angela's face.

'And there's the garage to clear out and fix!' Angela stared at her husband. For a moment she couldn't believe the sixty-

year old in front of her was her husband. It was like being married to one of those mummies in the British Museum, only this one answered back and had smelly feet.

‘I thought you were happy using the garage as a store room?’

‘What ever gave you that impression? I want to use it for our car.’ Angela rattled the paper open and ignored everything to do with her husband.

In the week which followed Angela went out much more often than usual. Also there were the telephone calls that she would take upstairs. One Monday morning when Vince was just thinking about clearing out the garage she announced she was walking into town. Vince put on his anorak and followed her at a discreet distance. She walked past Woollies and the antique centre, crossed Museum Street and entered the park. She walked passed the Multi-angular Tower and in the winter sunshine sat on one of the wooden benches and waited. Vince took the long way round and watched from behind a bush. Presently a young man walked up from the river and waved at Angela. She waved back. Vince felt a little light-headed. The young man sat next to his wife and they started chatting. Presently papers were exchanged and Angela passed over a brown envelope. Vince's blood began to boil. His wife had been having an affair and now was being blackmailed. He felt the mobile phone in his pocket and was going to ring the police. It was only that when they parted, they shook hands and Angela walked away smiling. It didn't fit. Vince turned off the phone and decided to find out more.

With some effort he managed to get home first and started clearing out the garage: roller blades, buckets and spades, shells, Wellington's filled with cobwebs. Vince arranged the wrangum neatly in cardboard boxes.

‘What are you going to do with those?’ Angela asked as she passed over a mug of tea.

‘The tip.’ Vince said decisively.

‘I don't think we should be so hasty. There might be grand-kids.’

‘I hope you're not trying to tell me something...’ Vince worried when his wife started planning ahead. Mothers have

this instinct and Vince had learned the hard way to accept her intuition.

‘Well I’m away to work.’ Angela buttoned up her coat and fastened a scarf round her head. Vince watched her walk down the road. He felt sure he had a photo somewhere of his mother-in-law in precisely that outfit.

Vince was going to follow her again but looked around the garage and realised there was a lot of work still to do. He didn’t stop until the telephone rang. He wasn’t going to answer it but the tone continued.

‘Hello, York...’

The man’s voice clearly said, ‘wrong number.’ Vince put two and two together. It was the young man from the park.

Angela put the car away in the garage. She dropped the keys on the kitchen table. ‘Hello!’ She shouted. Vince didn’t answer. She found him sitting in darkness in the lounge, holding a cushion over his knees.

‘Tell me what’s going on.’ He said, his voice thin and strained. ‘First you talk about grandkids when we’re still in hock for our own children, then the telephone calls and...

‘...And you followed me this morning.’ Angela sat on the chair arm and played with the remaining tassel of his hair. ‘You wouldn’t make a good detective. I’m just a little hurt that you don’t trust me.’

‘Of course I do. I’ve just got to an age when there’s enough time to worry. So I’ve taken it up full time.’

‘You silly old fool.’ Angela gave him a kiss but no explanation. ‘Let’s turn the lights on, have a cup of tea and I’ll tell you all about it.’

After the drink, Angela led him to the garage door. ‘I drove it down to a friend’s the other day. You must have seen me. Fitting snugly inside the East’s garage was a white Ford Anglia: MPY 246. ‘I couldn’t let it go, after all it got us to the church and on our honeymoon...’ Angela gave her Mae West look.

Vince wiped away a tear. He stroked the car and kissed his wife. ‘I don’t suppose there’s a bottle of champagne in the fridge is there?’

‘No, but there's a cheap sparkling.’ Angela laughed. Just like the old days, they drove up to the abbey for a stroll round the ruins and afterwards...

‘How about celebrating in style like we did on our honeymoon?’ Angela snuggled against him. Their champagne glasses clinked and through the steamed up windscreen they could just make out the floodlights round the tower.

Bubbles

Doug Allwright

On the monitors in the control room Tom Sander's sharp eyes spotted the boy by the opticians. The lad had his hood pulled up and Tom could just make out the peak of a baseball cap underneath it. When he zoomed in with the camera the Security Officer could see that the boy was staring intently past the fountain towards the market.

'Now why would he be feeling the cold on such a nice day?' he murmured as he swung the camera along the line of the boy's gaze noting that nobody else was feeling chilled. It picked out a second boy similarly dressed. As Tom focussed he noted that the boy's hand was clasping something hidden in a carrier bag.

An old woman stepped away from the flower stall and the second boy moved in close behind her until he was almost touching. If Tom had not seen the other boy looking at him he would have assumed that he and the woman were together. For a split second the lad's face was in view and Tom pressed a key. The laser started its sweep and the captured photograph started to print. At the controls Tom smiled and focussed on the woman's bag waiting for the boy's hand to come forward.

The hand came forward but it didn't grab the woman's bag. On the monitor Tom saw him flick a bottle into the fountain then turn and run towards the crowd on Newgate. As the bubbles started to rise, Tom swung the camera just in time to catch the first boy as he ran and threw a second bottle.

He swivelled the camera but it was too late both the lads were in amongst the crowd. He swung back to the fountain just in time to see the first red bubble slide over the edge on to the pavement. 'The little sods,' he exclaimed, 'Not again.'

The new CCTV system had been installed to forestall some

of the street crime and putting bubbles into the fountain was not exactly Tom's idea of crime. Certainly not a crime to justify the cost of the system. However it was not up to him.

He studied the likeness and it brought back harsh memories of his divorce. The lad could be Sean. He looked about thirteen. But Sean was in Scotland with Marianne. He was better off in a comfortable house rather than a bed-sit. And Marianne wouldn't stand any nonsense. He looked down at the photograph. It wasn't Sean, this lad had fair curls showing under his hood. With a sigh he handed the photograph to Harry with his report and continued his surveillance.

The next day he was called into the manager's office.

'You're not really submitting this report about the fountain Sanders?'

'It's what I saw and it is vandalism.'

'I know and the Council takes a dim view of it especially when the fountain has to be drained and cleaned. However asking the police to trace the lads and then prosecuting them would cost a lot more.'

Tom placed both hands on the desk and leaned forward. 'Unless they are stopped it is going to happen every week. It started with bubbles now it is coloured bubbles. What next? A corrosive or a dye that can't be cleaned up as quickly.'

'I know but the committee has told us to keep the costs down. They say we should only involve the police if we are certain to get a conviction or if someone is hurt. And I don't think that either of those applies in this case.'

'It was a damn good picture. It's not often we can get one as clear as that.'

'However, Councillor Metcalf did say that if we could trace the lads and warn them off ... Well it wouldn't do us any harm when our contract came up for renewal.'

'That's a bit rich. And I suppose this has to be done in our own time has it?'

'Nothing like protecting our jobs Tom,' Harry said twisting his mouth into a forced smile.

On the following Monday, Tom took the printout around the schools and struck lucky on the third.

‘Declan Renshaw, if it’s not him then he has a twin.’

Tom looked at the Deputy Head, ‘You’re sure?’

She nodded.

‘Can I have his address then?’

‘Sorry, we can’t do that.’

‘Well can you arrange for me to speak with him?’

‘Can’t do that either. It would be more than my life’s worth. You wouldn’t like your son to be interviewed by a complete stranger. Even the police have to have someone else present.’

‘I’m not asking to interview him alone. His teacher could be there!’

His remark was met with an emphatic shake of brown curls. ‘I’m sorry we can’t help you further. Now if you would like to make arrangements to talk to the whole school.’

‘What and give them all an idea on how to liven up their Saturdays,’ Tom growled. ‘The Council would really have something to moan about then!’

He left the school very disgruntled about the waste of his day off. Over lunch he decided that he would not leave it there. If it meant him playing Private Detective then that’s what he would do. At half past three he was back at the school, stationed at the corner opposite the school gate. After five minutes and some strange looks from the lollypop lady he moved to the other end of the street but retained his vigil.

It wasn’t long before he spotted the two boys pushing and shoving their way through the crowd. Trying to be inconspicuous he followed them just hoping that they went straight home.

He was lucky, the other boy whom he found out later was Barry, sped off down a side street leaving Tom with the difficult job of staying behind a strolling Declan without arousing the lad’s suspicion.

He managed it however and at five to four saw Declan use a key to enter a semi-detached in the Rawcliffe area of the city.

Making a note of the street and number he glanced at his watch and headed for the nearby library. It only took a few

moments to confirm the name and address from the electoral roll and pleased with his work he walked quickly back to where he had parked his car around the corner from the school.

Later that evening feeling sure that the boy's parents would be home he drove back to the house. When he knocked the door was answered by an attractive brunette whom he judged to be in her mid thirties.

'Mrs Renshaw?' he asked.

'If you're selling then you're at the wrong house.' Her voice was soft but her eyes were steadfast and confident.

'I'm not selling,' Tom felt himself smiling and he knew that careful words would be needed for he was facing a woman who would broach no nonsense on her own ground. 'I've come about Declan.'

'Oh. And who might you be?' Although she was smiling in return her voice had hardened.

'Tom Sanders. I'm a Security Officer employed by the Council.'

The steadfast look softened into worry. 'I'm sorry you must have the wrong house. This isn't a council house. I own it, well at least the bank does.'

'It's not to do with the house.'

'Well if it's to do with him having a key that's my business and I trust him.'

'I'm not from Social Services, Mrs Renshaw. I've come about something totally different.'

She hesitated and then asked 'Have you some sort of identification?'

Tom showed his pass with its photograph and she added, 'Well you had better come in. It is too cold to stand on the step.'

The furniture in the sitting room was sparse but tasteful. The two prints on the wall had been chosen to match the pale green of the emulsioned anaglypa. When he sat down he felt the roughness of the springs in the settee and he leant forward when she moved behind him to straighten the cover that protected its back.

'Would you like a cup of coffee?' Mrs Renshaw asked.

‘If you’re having one.’

‘How do you take it?’

‘Milk and one.’

He sat back and wondered about the boy. ‘Is Declan not in then Mrs Renshaw?’ he called through to the kitchen.

‘Upstairs, on his playstation I expect. And it’s Kate.’

She re-entered carrying a tray holding two mugs. ‘It’s only instant. But now that Nestle are in York I suppose we can call it homemade.’ She smiled and he found himself smiling with her.

‘Is your husband about?’ Tom asked when they were both settled.

‘Divorced. Absolutely.’

‘I’m sorry.’

‘You didn’t know him otherwise you would understand. However I thought that you came about Declan. What’s he been up to?’

‘Nothing major,’ Tom answered with a smile that was nearly a grin. Flooding Parliament Street with red bubbles.’

‘Oh my God. But you said you weren’t from the police or the Social.’

‘No. I work for the council under contract. My boss thinks it is in the boy’s interests if we deal with the matter without it going to court. I was going to suggest that his father dealt with him but...’

‘Believe me Mr Sanders...’

‘Tom...’

‘Believe me Tom it is better left to me than his father. For a start I want to know where the detergent came from. If he stole it then he will suffer for a month.’

She rose and walked across the room with her hand outstretched. ‘Will you leave him to me?’

‘Of course.’ Tom hesitated for a moment and then added, ‘You won’t mind if I contact you again to check. Perhaps we could make it less formal. A meal or a drink?’

Kate studied his face as he tried to keep it impassive. ‘That would be lovely. I’m in the directory.’ Her eyes brightened as she spoke and Tom knew he hadn’t been mistaken. He

had lived in a cocoon too long. Now thanks to young Declan the bubble had burst.

Alcuin of York

Bill Bradley

A College at York University and a street in York are named after him but no doubt there are many people in York who would say ‘Alcuin Who?’ There is no point asking for his surname because, as with most people at the time he lived, more than 1,300 years ago, he did not have one. His full name was Flacius Albinus Alcuinus but they were not family names. Before the Norman Conquest in 1066 no-one in England had hereditary or family names.

Alcuin was a respected scholar and a churchman. He was born in 735 AD, the same year in which the Venerable Bede died. He spent the first fifty years of his life in York; at that time the greatest centre of learning in Europe. He was educated at the Cathedral School and by the time he was 32, in 767, he was its master and set up a large library there. St. Peter’s School at Clifton claims to have been founded by him. News of his ability spread to Europe and in 782 Charlemagne, the most powerful man in Europe, invited him to direct the Palace School at Aachen. Charlemagne, King of the Franks, came to govern Gaul, Italy and large parts of Spain and Germany. On Christmas Day 800, Pope Leo III appointed him Holy Roman Emperor.

The directorship given to Alcuin was a prestigious post that might now be described as the Director of Education for Europe. During this period he helped to transplant the traditions of learning associated with Bede and Northumbria.

He encouraged the study of liberal arts and revised the Vulgate, a Latin version of the Scriptures produced in the 4th Century. He was also responsible for the development of a clear and regular script known as the Carolingian miniscule.

In his lighter moments he produced a collection of what he described as ‘problems to sharpen the young’, one of which

was featured on television by Adam Hart-Davis in his programme 'Local Heroes'

The one Hart-Davis chose features a river, a wolf, a goat and a cabbage. You have a boat to take them from one side of the river to the other but can take only one at a time. If you leave the goat with the cabbage, it will eat it. If you leave the wolf and the goat together, the wolf will eat the goat.

In his programme Hart-Davis rowed valiantly backwards and forwards across the Ouse to demonstrate how it could be done. First he took the goat, left it, rowed back to the other side and returned with the cabbage. Then he took the goat back. Next, he left the goat and took the wolf, finally returning for the goat. This was one of Alcuin's simpler puzzles. Others were more complex.

In 796 Alcuin retired from the Court and became Abbot of the monastery of St. Martin at Tours. He died in 804. Also attributed to him is the famous saying, in the Latin that was the international language of scholars at that time, 'Vox Populi, Vox Dei.' – 'The voice of the people is the voice of God.'

The Joyride

Sally Shaw

Jackie picked up the bunch of keys from the hall table.

‘Are these what I think they are?’ she asked.

‘Car keys. So what?’ I said.

‘Why don’t we go for a drive?’

Don’t be stupid,’ I said, ‘I’d get murdered if I was found out.’

‘How are they going to know?’ Jackie asked, ‘You said they won’t be home till midnight. We don’t need to be away long. Come on, Mandy. You keep telling me what a good driver you are. Now’s your chance to show me.’

‘I know, but I’ve never driven on the road, only on the training school ground at Tockwith.’

‘Oh, come on, Mandy. Don’t be a wuss.’

‘I’m not. And I’m not taking the car out either. It would be stupid.’

She left it at that, except that she kept on playing with the keys and giving me meaningful looks. Despite what I’d said, the idea was starting to grow on me. We had nothing else planned. It looked like it was going to be a pretty boring evening, especially with Jackie in this mood. So in the end I gave in.

‘Come on,’ I said, ‘Give me the keys.’

I was trembling when I climbed into the driving seat, but trying hard not to let Jackie see how nervous I was. Luckily dad had reversed the car into the drive so backing out wasn’t a problem. I wasn’t even sure where reverse gear was.

The engine started straight away. I went through the drill dad had taught me, clutch, gear, touch of accelerator, release clutch slowly – then the engine stalled. The handbrake was still on.

‘Oh, good start,’ Jackie chortled.

I got it right next time and we were away along the street. The engine was racing. Time to change gear. I got that right first time and was really pleased with myself. I'd stopped trembling now. I was beginning to feel confident. After all, dad had said I was a natural.

It was early evening so there wasn't much traffic. Turning out onto Moor Lane might have been tricky at a busier time. The roundabout at the bottom was no problem, but the bigger one by Tesco is much busier so I turned left into Challoners Road. I even got into fourth gear going on there but I wasn't sure where to go next.

'Go left and into Acomb,' Jackie suggested, 'We can go back on the ring road.'

It seemed like a good idea, except that I'd forgotten about the road bumps on Gale Lane and the roundabouts in Acomb. What was it dad had said about roundabouts. 'Give way to traffic on your right.' That was it. I checked on which was my right. I always have to think about which is right and which is left.

Parked cars were a pest. They make the road narrow and you always feel like somebody coming towards you is going to crash into you. There was a whole string of them on my side of the road as we approached Acomb. I waited until nothing was coming towards me. Then I stalled the engine again. It all went quite smoothly after that and my confidence came back.

'We're not going back yet,' I said, 'I'm going on Beckfield Lane. We can turn left at the end, go to the roundabout and then go on to Harrogate if we want.'

Jackie said nothing. In fact she'd been very quiet, for her. Perhaps she wasn't too keen on my driving, although I thought I'd been doing quite well. Before we'd got very far on Beckfield Lane I was in fourth gear again and feeling very pleased with myself.

'Let's have the radio on,' I said and looked down for the switch. As usual dad had it tuned to Radio 2 so I looked for the button to change the channel.

'Look out!' there was a sudden scream from Jackie.

I looked up and froze for a second. I'd strayed onto the wrong side of the road and another car was coming straight at me. I wrenched at the steering wheel. There was a blare from his horn as he sped past and then the steering wheel spun in my hand. I realised afterwards that I must have pulled over too far and clipped the kerb with my front wheel.

The car swept across the pavement and before I could stop it we had slammed into somebody's garden gate.

I couldn't move. I just sat there. Jackie was crying. I didn't know what to do.

'You're for it now,' Jackie sobbed.

A man came out of the house. I'd expected him to be angry but he was quite calm. He stooped to examine the front of the car. Both Jackie and I were crying.

'I'm sorry,' I said, 'I'm so sorry.'

'Are you hurt?' he asked.

'No. We're alright, just shook up.' I said

'I heard some idiot blast his horn,' he said, 'Some of them seem to think this road's a race track. I know you weren't speeding. I saw you coming along the road – very steady.'

'Is the car badly damaged?' I asked.

'No. You were lucky. You brushed the hedge and then your bumper nudged the gate, which fortunately wasn't latched so it just flew back. A few small scratches on the car and my gate seems undamaged. Like I said, you've been lucky.'

I was still shaking and I felt cold. I couldn't stop the tears either. Jackie never said a word.

'It's really shaken you, hasn't it?' the man said, 'Are you alright to drive?'

'I ... I don't know.' I murmured.

'Look, tell you what. Let me drive you home. I'll get my wife to follow in our car and she can bring me back. That's providing you don't live too far away.'

I gave him my address and he went back to the house.

'I'm not riding with you again,' Jackie spoke at last, 'You frightened me to death.'

I was too upset to remind her that it was she who had goaded me into taking the car in the first place.

We set off home and it was a relief to have somebody else driving us.

‘Do you want me to come and explain to your parents?’ he asked as he turned into the drive.

‘They aren’t in.’ I said

‘You’re sure you’ll be alright?’ he asked.

I wondered if he’d guessed that I shouldn’t have been driving the car and if he was thinking I’d be in trouble when mum and dad came home.

When he’d gone I examined the car. It was like he said, just a few scratches. I found some polish and rubbed them over, hoping dad wouldn’t notice. I was beginning to feel more settled, almost pleased with myself, but something was worrying me and I didn’t know what it was.

Then it dawned on me. Dad had reversed the car into the drive. The man had driven it straight in, and there was no way I was going to try and turn it round.

A Romantic Affair

Liz Halliday

‘You’re SURE you’ll be all right, dear?’

Well, that’s the sort of thing a loving, concerned wife should say when leaving her husband on his own for a few days.

Angela was on tenterhooks waiting for the taxi to arrive. She just had to get out of the house and on her way. She kept looking nervously at her watch; the hands hardly seemed to be moving. There were still five minutes to go; she told herself she must keep calm, not let him notice how impatient she was to leave.

But he didn’t appear to be concerned.

‘Umm. Umm.’

Was that a yes or a no? Harry hardly took his eyes off his book. At any other time his attitude would have been very exasperating. But at the moment she had other much more important matters on her mind.

However, she made one further attempt at conversation, to pass away the waiting time if nothing else.

‘I’ve made sure there’s plenty of food in the freezer to keep you going for the week.’

‘Umm. Umm.’

Was she a person at all, or just another item of furniture? She had asked herself this question many times of late. Where had all the romance gone? It surely must have been there some time, or she wouldn’t have finished up being married to him. But it must have been a long time ago, for she had forgotten all about it.

Could he not realise that she still yearned for attention, for love, for a bit of tenderness at times? But she had now given up any hope of getting it from Harry. He didn’t seem to need a woman in his life.

Oh, yes, he needed his underpants and his socks washed regularly, his meals cooked and the house kept clean and tidy. But he could have a robot to do these things and he wouldn't notice the difference. Their marriage had become, how could she put it? – 'passionless.'

'Good, here's the taxi now!'

Amazingly, her husband stirred, even showing a flicker of interest. She thought he must have suddenly realised that his skivvy was leaving him to look after himself for a while.

'You'll be back on Saturday, then? I don't see how you can be bothered going away on your own like this!'

'Now, don't spoil things for me when I want to enjoy myself. You said it was all right my going away this week on my Creative Writing course. But the taxi's waiting. I must be going. Goodbye, dear.'

She presented what he used to call her adorable face and her inviting lips for the farewell kiss. He used to linger over such a kiss, savoring it, devouring it.

But there was just a little peck.

'Don't be so sloppy, love! Hurry up, or you'll miss your train!'

How free she felt as they drove along the road to the station. Her house in a York suburb had become of late more of a prison than a home, and she now felt as though she had leapt over the wall and escaped undetected. She must get there quickly. Norman would be there eagerly waiting for her, carrying a large bouquet of red roses.

She pictured herself rushing into his outstretched arms, to be held tightly, listening to his vows of eternal love. This will be the culmination of all those frustrating Thursday evenings down at the Institute, the fulfillment of every loving glance across the table at the Writers' Circle.

As they wrote, they would include little romantic episodes they both knew were meant just for each other, with the promise of what could be. It was their secret; the others would listen, uncomprehending.

But it always seemed doomed to be an unrequited love, kept at a distance; the opportunity to get closer never seemed to materialise. At the end of each meeting she had to hurry back

home to Acomb to prepare Harry's supper, while Norman disappeared in the opposite direction.

The week-long course at Blackpool came as a heaven-sent answer to their prayers. A coded message in one of his presentations was unmistakable; they both put down their names to take part. There were no second thoughts; well, life was too short, wasn't it? If you didn't grab these chances of happiness, they would be gone for ever.

She couldn't get him out of her mind. Suave, sophisticated, she bet he knew how to treat a woman! She knew HE wouldn't take his library book to bed with him and not notice her nice new nightie with the little flimsy straps and blue ribbons. She had worn it last week just to see what effect it would have on Harry, but she needn't have bothered.

As they drove down the road to York railway station, she was like a young girl on her first date, excited and nervous. Thoughts and emotions that she hadn't experienced for years were rushing through her mind.

They pulled into the station forecourt, and she dismounted. Downcast, she looked in vain for Norman. Time was getting on, perhaps he had gone on to the platform looking for her. Anxiously, she crossed the footbridge and found that the train was waiting. Soon it was ready to leave, and there was no sign of her companion. She strode panic-stricken up and down. Where was he? Her heart sank; had he changed his mind? Then, to her intense relief, as the guard was closing the doors prior to departure, he came running towards her. But there was no bouquet of red roses in his hands; no time to embrace before they were both bundled into the nearest carriage.

He panted his excuses.

'I'm sorry, dear, it took me a bit longer to get away than I thought it would.'

The train was packed, as was the carriage they found themselves in; the only available seats were on opposite sides to each other. Were they for ever destined to be apart? Oh, well, Angela consoled herself, they could make up for it when they arrived in Blackpool!

She looked longingly at the handsome figure facing her, in his smart dark blue blazer and compared it to the old cardigan

she had left behind back home.

Norman seemed to know Blackpool well, and they were soon at the reception desk of a small hotel on the front.

‘A double room, please.’

It all seemed so natural, as though they were just another married couple. She floated up the stairs to the bedroom.

The smiling brown eyes, the fit, athletic body, it was all too much. Her whole being called out — oh, take me, I’m all yours! She leaned back, waiting to be enclosed by those strong arms, her eyes lowered and half-closed.

It was then that she noticed it; just as his lips met hers, that moment she had been waiting for all day. There was no doubt about it, there was the strong smell of perfume.

Perhaps she was old-fashioned. She had watched with distaste the adverts on the television with virile men in the bathroom enhancing their sex-appeal with scent with masculine-sounding names. Mind you, they were disguised as ‘fragrances for men’, or innocent-sounding ‘body sprays,’ but they were still perfumes, whatever they were called.

In the advertisements, the fragrances instilled such passion into the women that the men didn’t have to do anything at all. All they seemed to do to her was to make her want to run a mile in the opposite direction.

Mind you, the persistent smell of tobacco that always hung over her husband Harry could be improved upon, she had to admit. But for a welcome change, she had hoped for the pleasing aroma of shaving cream or Imperial Leather soap; at the most, a faint whiff of unobtrusive male deodorant.

It had put her off completely. As his arms enfolded her, she held herself back.

He looked hurt and puzzled.

‘Why, whatever’s the matter, darling?’

She had been thinking quickly.

‘I’m sorry, I’m starving. I must have something to eat as soon as possible. I will faint if I don’t.’

He looked surprised and disappointed, but could see that a starving woman wouldn’t be much good to him.

‘It messes up my plans a bit, I must say. I had intended, later, to take you to a little Italian restaurant that I know, where we

could enjoy a romantic candle-lit dinner together. Then there would have been a stroll back along the promenade under the stars, and after that, our first wonderful night together.'

He sounded a bit grumpy.

'But if you must eat now, so be it!'

They made their way to the restaurant. It was still very early in the evening, but there were plenty of visitors in the town to see the illuminations, and Valentino's was quite well patronised. She had to admit that, even at this early hour, there was a certain romantic atmosphere about the place.

The candlelight cast a rosy glow on the faces of the diners, and in the background was faint, easy-to-listen-to music that wouldn't intrude on the intimate talk of two lovers with eyes only for each other. And that, she thought regretfully, was how she had hoped that things would turn out. But, sadly, it was not to be; she would just have to enjoy the meal.

Her conversation became a bit giggly; well, she got that way when she was nervous. She strung out the meal as long as she possibly could, and afterwards suggested that they adjourn to the bar next door.

Several more gins and tonics made her even more giggly, and the time still moved so very slowly.

They emerged into the breezy Blackpool night. The Tower loomed up above their heads into the sky in all its splendour, with thousands of little lights sparkling in the darkness.

'Oh, what a lovely night! I'd just love a walk along the pier!'

She sensed the expression on his face, even though she daren't look at him. And it WAS a lovely night with the myriads of stars shining down on the dark sea lapping the shore. She never imagined that she would be suggesting such a thing on this visit, but it would put things off for yet another hour or so.

They strolled along the pier; there was a stiff breeze blowing, and he put his arm around her to keep her warm. The twinkling display along the front gave a fairy-tale look to the resort, the illuminated trains seeming like magical toys moving up and down. Perhaps it was all this, or more likely the g & ts that had an effect on her, and the fresh air must have blown away all traces of the offending fragrance. She started

to weaken, to yearn again for those strong arms to entwine themselves around her.

He was getting more and more impatient.

‘Come on, darling, we must be going back. You will be getting cold out here. It’ll be nice and warm back at the hotel.’

She didn’t really care any more. She gave herself up to the inevitable.

But when they entered the bedroom, away from the breezes that blew along the shore, there it was again. The aroma of the fragrance for men seemed to fill the room. She came back to earth with a bump.

Whatever was she doing here with this man? The suave, sophisticated individual she had desired across the table at the Writers’ Circle had vanished. In his place, she saw an effeminate, perfumed popinjay. He would soon be going into the bathroom to give himself an extra squirt of the stuff before getting into bed with her.

He started to undress. She had to do something now or never.

‘Oh, damn! I’ve run out of cigarettes.’

She was searching feverishly through her handbag

‘I noticed a shop just down the road that will still be open. Would you mind, darling, just slipping down and buying me a packet?’

He was trying hard, not very successfully, to keep the anger and frustration out of his voice

‘I didn’t know you smoked!’

‘Yes, I do sometimes. A ciggy will just help me to settle before we retire for the night.’

She waited for him to leave the hotel on his errand. She then quickly grabbed her case with the nice little nightie with blue bows on it and tumbled down the stairs. Hailing the first taxi that came along, she directed the cabbie to the station.

It would be good to get back to York. What a relief it was to have escaped! Home was where she properly belonged, with her dear, dependable husband. There was something about a man smelling of tobacco smoke. She knew Harry really loved her, although he most likely felt too embarrassed to show it.

Yule

Clinton Wastling

Time was when it was cold and dark on the shortest day, now it is just dark. Mists weave over the marshes and the islands of the lagoon are strung like pearls in the moonlight. The mist hovers and engulfs, the water ripples, slowly eroding the last bastions of land.

When you are old, you can swear and say *I told you so* without embarrassment. People either pretend not to have heard or don't believe you. Well I knew it would happen. All the evidence pointed to a rise in sea level but I sat back. I didn't challenge anyone. I drove my car. I burnt coal and wood in the winter. I added my own decimetre cubed of carbon dioxide to the jigsaw of our current misery. So when people ask me, 'did you know this would happen?' I have to mutter some excuse like 'it wasn't made clear.'

I have denied the truth three times. Once to my wife, once to my daughter and now to you. I don't care whether you forgive me or not. I'm an old man and prone to be forgetful concerning the truth but the past I remember with alarming clarity. Yule is the season for lies. That much hasn't changed and it's refreshing to know that human nature remains undiminished despite catastrophe. Cards arrive through the letter-box announcing *Best Wishes* or *Season's Greetings*. I search in vain for one from Helen.

Some people say my daughter drowned a long time ago when the floodwater first invaded the land. She might well have done had I not swam to her aid. It was a split second decision. Who do you rescue wife or daughter? Helen was nearer. I just did it. I replay the events with different outcomes but there is only one truth. I saved Helen. Byrony drowned. I lied when I said I'd come back for her. No that's not right! She couldn't keep her head above the water long enough for

me to get back. There, I've said it. I've laid the blame.

I remember with certainty the day I set Helen on the airship. It moored on the tower of York Minster. I got one of the porters to take our picture. I was trying to smile; I didn't want Helen to see how much I would miss her. All she talked about was her new life.

Wiping the condensation from the window, I can see the postman pull up his boat on the muddy shore. He jumps out and walks toward the house. I walk to the hall and with some effort pull open the warped door.

'It'll be dark soon. Have you many more to deliver?'

'The number of addresses on my round gets less every day. The water claimed old Doreen's place yesterday and her just hanging up the tinsel. Your place'll be soon.' The postman added ominously.

'When my place goes, I'll go!' I said realising the macabre nature of the joke.

'What're you doing for Yule?' The postman says with concern.

'Waiting for Helen.'

He smiles. 'Well have a good one if you can. I hope to still be delivering here in the New Year!' He waves before he gets back into the boat. Its engine roars into life and the wake breaks across the step to the path.

'You need the exercise!' I shout, 'so I'll be here.' I looked at the cards he passed me; only one of them isn't rigid. I feel the texture of the envelope then smell the paper. Parma violets. I slide my finger under the flap. A letter. Two sides of small neat writing.

'*Father...*' My throat dries. No one has addressed me as that in many years. '*my work brings me home this Yule. Will you let me stay? Is my old room warm and dry still? And that silly little bear I sucked all the fur from, is he still waiting in the window, with his arm fixed in a wave?*'

I step down onto the path and walk a little way along. Even in the twilight I can see the odd brown shape in the window. I take a deep breath and walk towards the road. The water quickly engulfs the narrow tarmac scar, its path continued

insubstantially by the moonlight. I continue reading: *‘our mission failed. I suppose what was undone in one century will take more than a hundred years to put right. Reluctantly I’ve come to your way of thinking, that nature herself will put everything right. At fifty I’ve retired from the mission. I’ll be home for Christmas with my husband and our son.’*

‘Christmas, how quaint of Helen to use the old fashioned word. I suddenly felt my heart race. A grandson. I’m a grandfather! I wanted to tell somebody. Instead I shouted out and startled the birds.

...the airship docks at midnight on the 23rd. We’ll wait till one.’

It makes me smile. It’s the matter of fact way of reintroducing yourself after twenty years. How does she know I’m not dead? A woman’s intuition? Helen had devoted herself to science for two decades, floating round the world with her team of experts trying to cure the impossible. I walk once round the church and find the cold and damp penetrating. On the way to the front door I realise the date. I move quickly into the house. I double-check the calendar. There was no mistake. It was the 23rd today! It’s twelve miles across the lagoon to the station, so I change into warmer clothes, coat, scarf and hat. I feel twice as stiff with all the layers as I pull back the tarpaulin, a sharp pain which stops me. Age is cruel. I place candles in the lamps and pour my ration of petrol into the engine. The reverberation of an engine seems unnatural. It dulls the sound of the waves and weaves smoke into the mist. I travel between the ruins lining the old road until the distant light of the station rises above the western horizon. I steer straight for it. More boats appear some rowed, others possess the silent new engines. As I get closer, I hear the drone and finally see the outline of the airship. Its engines disturb the waters of the lagoon. I reach the tower and throw out a rope to the porter. He ties the boat to the magnesium limestone of the station. A hook pulls me to the makeshift ladder.

‘You’re a bit old for this aren’t you?’

‘I’ve made it this far. I hope to make it home again!’ You have to take each day at a time but it’s pointless saying this. I

pull a flask from my pocket and offer the porter a swig. He waits patiently for his tip. I pass over a coin. Two men lift me from the boat and I climb up onto the tower.

‘You’re old enough to remember all this as dry land,’ one chap jokes.

‘Yes,’ I reminisce, ‘I stood here with my daughter fifty years ago when this was a great church.’

‘I’d like to have seen York Minster before all this.’ The chap makes certain I’ve got my balance on the tower.

The sound of the engines dies. Ropes cascade onto the landing and are tied to great metal stakes. Finally a rope ladder is connected to the ground. Slowly people climb down. I feel my legs shake and steady myself against the medieval wall. A woman descends and looks around. At first I think she hasn’t recognised me. I find it hard to catch my breath. ‘Helen!’

There is a moment of silence before her face brightens and tears roll down her cheeks. We embrace. Her hair smells just as I remember. ‘Helen.’

‘Dad.’

It’s my turn to cry. I haven’t been called that for too long. A little boy joins us. I ruffle his hair and he looks up at me.

‘Is this grandpa?’

‘Yes William.’ Helen looks around. ‘Bring your dad over and I’ll introduce you. Then we can all get home.’

‘It’s a long journey,’ I caution. ‘But there’ll be a warm welcome when we’ve crossed the lagoon.’

Grave Interests

Dorothy E Penso

There are little known treasures within 10 minutes walk of the centre of York. The 24 acre site is one of the very few private cemeteries in England. In the 1960s it was rampantly overgrown and the once beautiful Grecian style chapel was derelict. Had the original shareholders of York Cemetery been aware of its shameful state they would have turned in their graves.

In the early nineteenth century York was densely populated especially in the low lying land adjacent to the Rivers Ouse and Foss. Poor sewerage, drainage, rotting refuse contributed to poor health and subsequent high death rates. In the 1840s there were 28.5 deaths per 1000 population. It was customary for burials to take place in the graveyards of parish churches. These small graveyards within the city boundary were already grossly overcrowded which caused additional risks to health and hygiene.

A number of people of various denominations met to discuss the possibility of solving this ever increasing problem by setting up a private cemetery within easy access of the centre of York. In 1834 a circular was distributed inviting subscriptions towards the establishment of such a cemetery within the city. After considering a number of sites, land between Hellington Road and Fulford Barracks was conveyed to the Cemetery Trustees on 19 July 1837, the first year of Queen Victoria's reign.

The first burial in unconsecrated land took place on 21 January 1837. Half the ground was consecrated by Archbishop Vernon Harcourt on 15 September 1837 and the first burial in this consecrated ground was on 5 October 1837.

In the ensuing years increasing numbers were committed to the earth. In 1900, 1512 burials took place. Shareholders

enjoyed handsome returns of their investments

By June 2000 there had been 122,429 burials in York Cemetery. Fifteen of these were in the catacombs and 78 beneath the portico of the chapel. There are 16,410 monuments and thousands of inscriptions providing a wealth of historical information. There are also 234 carefully maintained war graves.

In the twentieth century public health, sanitation and medicine advanced, fewer infants died and life expectancy increased. Throughout the years dividends had been paid to shareholders but in 1964 no dividends were paid. Difficult years followed and it was not until April 1979 that York Cemetery Company was liquidated.

In 1981 a group of people formed the Friends of York Cemetery and together with the York Cemetery Trust began the task of restoring not only the grounds but also the chapel.

Today the chapel in Grecian style not only provides a dignified and peaceful setting for funerals but is also the venue for art exhibitions, craft shows and the occasional musical entertainment.

The cemetery grounds provide space for remembrance and contemplation as well a multitude of natural resources. There is 150 metre butterfly walk where 20 species have been recorded since 1992 in addition to 45 species of moth. A 200 metre walk with plants chosen for their scents provides an area particularly interesting to people with visual impairments.

A herb garden nestles within beech hedging. In 1997 a fernery was planted of Yorkshire and other British species of ferns. The pond created in 1993 is the home not only to frogs but also to dragonflies, pondskaters and waterboatmen.

York Cemetery is visited throughout the year by large numbers of people who come to tend the graves of departed loved ones. People without direct connections with the cemetery come to walk in peaceful and verdant surroundings as well as to rediscover their family history. Groups with special interests come to study butterflies, pond life and plants. School children who are studying the Victorians or an aspect of wild life visit with their teachers.

York Cemetery is very different from that envisaged by the early Victorians. It is a place of peace and lively natural interest. It is a place to investigate ancestry, genealogy and social history; an opportunity to study and appreciate flora and fauna.

For further information about facilities, activities, talks and tours contact the Warden, York Cemetery, Gate House, Cemetery Road, York . Telephone:01904 610578

Murray, H. *This Garden of Death: the history of York Cemetery*, William Sessions Ltd., Ebor Press, York YO3 9HS, England. ISBN 0 9517737 0 4

York Writers

A group of writers who have a common interest in all aspects of writing.

Their aim is to share practical experience and knowledge about their craft without discrimination regarding sex politics religious or other opinions.

Meetings are held on Wednesdays at 8pm alternating between programmed events and workshops.

Further information from:

Guppy's Enterprise Club
17 Nunnery Lane
York
Tel. 01904 - 622879