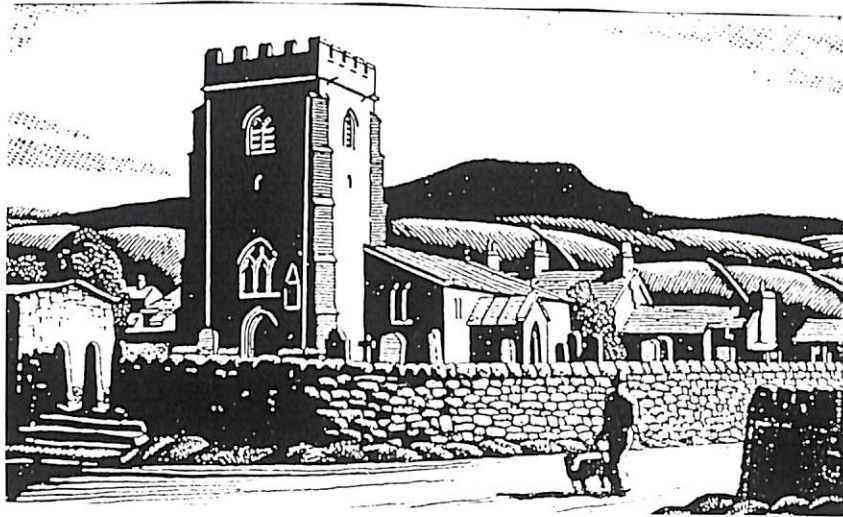


Trevor

W. R. MITCHELL, MBE  
18, YEALAND AVENUE  
GIGGLESWICK  
SETTLE, NORTH YORKS.  
BD24 0AY  
Tel. (01729) 822371

## PENYGHENT:

Hear all, say all, see nowt!



The adventurers: David, Cyril, Trevor, Terry, Bill (and Popsie)

Weather: Damp and murky.

24 Nov., 2004.

David, the chauffeur, managed to pack five of us (not forgetting Popsie) into his vehicle for the (thankfully) short journey to Helwith Bridge. He parked the car on a grass verge near the bridge. The bonnet of the car was lined up with the inn. There was talk of the last Dales outing that took place in similar weather conditions and featured an unfordable watercourse and an ultra-warm bar.

We had decided to begin our walk on the normally green lane leading to the nose-end of Penyghent. The lane was not green. A tractor had wiped its feet on it. So in places we plodged [traversed wet ground]. Popsie was soon into its "I've-got-a-stick-and-you're-not-going-to-get-it" routine, a game which ended when Bill, outwitting the aforementioned Popsie, grabbed the stick and threw it a little too hard.

It dropped beyond a wall, which was topped by wire netting. Popsie was put over the wall to recover it – but didn't, despite David's urgent commands. The dog returned to the lane. The stick remained where it had landed.

The first of several gates, initially just a silhouette in the murk, was negotiated. On the gate was painted the words "please" and "and". A detached metal notice, which had been wrenched off the gate, urged us to "Please close gate". We came face to face (fortunately, over a wire fence) with three bay horses that had blonde manes and tails. A finger post had the faint name of Dub Cote. David said that it once directed walkers to a bunk barn which was closed down because the owner had not got planning permission.

## Page Two

Drizzle turned to light rain. Popsie was dissuaded from trying to carry the major part of a fencing post. When we reached the heathery area not far from Penyghent, we were careful to stay on the hard track. Grim tales were told of the bog which short-cutters encounter. A grouse called.

We are overtaken by three dogs of the lolloping variety (and later discover the odd dog out should have been a collie but there was a genetical mix-up; it is now called Amos and answers to Mutley). There is a flypast of grouse. Trevor says there were three grice. Which prompts a long discussion about aspects of English and its basic decline from the mouths of raucous young television presenters.

Terry suggests we have the Victor Melrose syndrome and we are grumpy old men. He invites us to spell three words, which we get wrong (to use a sloppy modern phrase). Innoculate has only one "n", supercede has an "s" not a "c" and should be supersede. The correct spelling of miniscule is minuscule.

We cross a stile (which is in the rubbish zone, judging by the litter) and begin our ascent of the nose-end of Penyghent. Normally, we can stop now and again to admire the view. Today, we just plod on, up, up, up, over greasy wet limestone and slabs of gritstone. The ascent is completed and, blinkered by mist, we head towards the trig point. We find the "shelter" installed in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Yorkshire Dales National Park (which was also celebrated by fireworks at Bolton Abbey (ugh) after a celebrity walk featuring tv folk (double ugh).

The lads cross a stile composed of thick flags with a sprung gate and (all but Bill, who stands so as not to mucky his trows) they sit on the seat provided. The wall behind them is adorned with representations of limestone fossils. Bill, finding a concentric circle, recalls visiting Long Meg and her Daughters, above the Eden Valley, with a party of schoolchildren. He pointed to a concentric circle (c4,000 years) and asked if anyone could explain what it was. A small boy said: "Made in Japan."

Cyril, catering officer, dispenses slabs of fruit cake. Terry revives an old tradition and dispenses wedges of Victoria sponge cake made by Jean. Bill carries out the usual census of edibles. Terry: Egg and mayonnaise. Trevor: sardine and cucumber. David: crisps and sardines in tomato sauce. Cyril: ham roll and mustard. Bill – prawn and mayonnaise, courtesy of Booths.

On the descent, a grouse rises and Popsie chases it (with no hope of catching it). David finds a curious insect (black, slug-like, six legs). Terry, perusing it as it reposes on the end of his walking stick, says, unbiologically: "It's not a nice one." We plod



### Page Three

on an uneven track through a succession of solitudes. At the main lane leading down to Horton, David and Trevor decide to put on a spurt and, at Horton, follow the riverside down to Helwith Bridge and the car, while the remainder of the party make a slow descent to the Crown at Horton. Popsie is supposed to stay with the slow-coaches but opts to run with the fleet and healthy.

The trio in the slow-lane duly arrive at the pub and have a round of drinks in a clean, tidy bar heated by a coal fire. David and Trevor and a sodden Popsie who, having left us at 1-40<sup>and</sup> had completed their mission by 2-55, eventually join them. Talk ranges from politics to politics, with a dash of politics. Eventually, we emulate sardines as we settle in David's vehicle. Who cares if a hand goes cold and cramp besets the left leg? We've had a great day!

