

Up!

APRIL 2022

TRAVEL



Making the world
a better place -
one page at a time

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Photo - see bottom of page

Up Front!

Hello and a warm welcome to our latest 'travel' themed edition.

Ironically, we haven't travelled very much in the last month, having both been struck down with Covid. But one cancelled holiday later, here we are fit again and raring to go! Cancelled holiday or not, we realise we are among the lucky ones and wish you all the very best of health should you be unfortunate enough to succumb to the virus.

While you're waiting for your summer holidays, why not pack your virtual bags and check in to Up!'s first class departure lounge? You'll find all the usual features and interviews with brilliant people doing brilliant things.

All aboard for 'another fine mess'!

Bridget & Harry x



Theresa Rose wrote "I have been collecting suitcases all my life. My father was in the Air Force and stationed in France. My brother and I were born in Europe and the burgundy trunks on the bottom were the steamer trunks that brought us back from Europe to Canada in 1958." - [Good Living Guide](#)

Stepping Up!

DEREK ALLAN

Up! talks to a musician, writer and fundraiser about his mission to walk the world better

We first met you through the music scene and only found out about your fundraising later. We'd love to hear about your first ever charity walk.

My first ever charity walk was when I was a 9-year-old boy. I was inspired by stories of my hero at the time who did lots of charity work, Ian Botham. It was a 10 mile walk through Thrunton Woods. In later years I organised many more charity events, things such as 24-hour darts marathons, 24-hour buskathons and 24-hour walks. When my daughter Ellie was 7 years old, we were on a spur of the moment walk with two backpacks. She said she wanted to save the world with me. That day we walked 17 miles and made our plans.

Our walks along the coast continued after this. The first big charity walk together was in the summer. Ellie was aged 8 and we walked 65 miles along the Northumberland coast in aid of Headway. We called ourselves "footprints for others". Each year the challenges continue and get further each time, each mission for a different cause. Now Ellie is 15 we are



walking from Edinburgh to Cresswell. (Originally, we had planned to end in Sunderland but financially due to Covid and fuel costs we have had to cut it short).

Are you always on the lookout for new routes for walking, or do you have favourites you return to?

When we train, we look for 10 – 20 mile walks and do a minimum of two days a week all year round. Our favourite walk is in Northumberland, from our home to Warkworth then on to Amble, through the harbour to the beach, to Hauxley and Druridge Bay, then around the lake and back home. It is 14 miles in total.

We love trying out new walks. Kielder was great, 25 miles around the lake. We also did the Great Glen Way in Scotland. Our favourite is the North East coastal walk. It is exciting adding more miles each year and seeing new areas each time.

We don't just do long distance walks; we do endurance ones too - 24 hours around smaller areas where people can join us for a lap or two.

There's an oft-quoted phrase, 'it's not the destination, it's the journey', but for you it must be a bit of both ...

For me life is a never-ending journey, it is about people, we all came here to help each other, and I'll never understand any other way.

Stepping Up!

DEREK ALLAN

We know your daughter often joins you on your walks. How does walking with family affect the experience?

It is so nice to share these experiences with my daughter. I know that these memories will last her lifetime. She has inspired me to do even more. I know now what it is like, to witness an inspiring person. It is an unbelievable feeling knowing that we have both inspired others to raise money. It isn't just about our own fundraising, it is all the good things that happen because of us. Other people running coffee mornings and doing things like sponsored walks themselves.

Ellie is a born leader, and her walking training helps towards her sporting activities. She is a great cricketer, captain of Alnmouth and Lesbury Ladies' team and Gateshead Fell Under 15's. She also plays for Northumberland County. I'm very proud of her and her massive achievements in life at such a young age. She really cares.

Our charity adventures are always a family effort. Each person plays an important role. My wife Melanie and youngest daughter Rebecca act as our support team and we couldn't do it all without their help.



When my daughters are a little older and are living their own adult lives, I plan to walk the entire country around the coastline. This plan has to wait as it will take at least a year in total. It has been a dream of mine since my teenage days. I would be raising money for charity along the way and busking my way around.



What's next on the horizon?

My normal musical life of performing 200 gigs a year was stopped during Covid times. Instead, I went back to my roots and started writing again. I am currently writing my second diary of a cricket season. I'm also still doing gigs for people but on zoom to help fund my endeavours. For these, 50% of money raised goes to a charity of their choice and 50% towards our next charity walk. As well as the Edinburgh to Cresswell walk, I am doing a 24-hour fishing challenge in the summer with my friend Ben Oliver. On the shortest day of the year (the Winter Solstice) I am doing a 24 hour walk around Druridge Bay lake where people are able to join me for laps. I'm writing a lot more poetry and short stories too.

Like you, I came here to inspire everyone. Life is not about me, I am about life.



To buy a copy of Derek's book, or to find out more about his ongoing adventures, contact him via facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/derek.allan.37>

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF TRAVEL

Cruise Control

Tightly wound running my entire life
like a watch on the verge of stopping constantly
checking rechecking seeing overseeing
with no opportunity to slow down stop
sit back and admire the view
micromanaging the hour the day the week
until we board the ship and suddenly

breathe

everything
is someone else's job.
Nothing
is my responsibility.
I have
no control over anything
except
the decision of what to wear
and even that
is subject to the vagaries of the weather
and
what I remembered to pack.

Nikki Fine

Urban Pedestrian

The urban pedestrian knows all the tricks.
Every ginnel, every back street, every right of way,
knows how to shave a minute
and exchange monoxide main road
for a park or a lazy canal.

The urban pedestrian knows what it takes.
He'll be there in exactly thirty-two minutes.
No traffic jams can spoil his plans,
no two star Uber drivers,
no buses lost to suburban Bermuda triangles.

The urban pedestrian strides on his way,
alert to his only enemies:
the dawdling fool
and the little red man
who always says WAIT.

Joe Williams

Grice's Cheapskate, Do-It-Yourself Safari

Stop the truck in a lay-by,
stop for lunch at a thorn tree here,
on the edge of a name. At home in England,
we'd do the same – look for a picnic spot,
bit of shade and a bench.
This time turning, we've lost track of home,
all we see is a road up to this brink.
We know there's a way, but stand looking
deep in the desert, trying to see how to live
in these round houses, think in this place
of infinite border, infinite heart.
I won't insult with a camera shot
here at our limit of vision, limit of song.
Makgadikgadi, white sound
on the tip of my tongue.

Dave Medd

Playing Up!

DR DANNY LAWRENCE

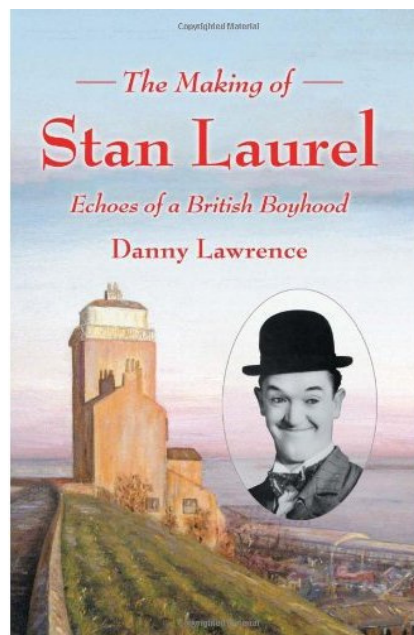
Stan Laurel's biographer tells us about Stan's journey, from local Northern lad to ending up as half of a legendary comedy duo

Hi Danny. Thanks for agreeing to talk to us about Stan. Not everyone will know about his connection to the North East. What can you tell us about Stan's formative years?

Stan's parents were touring actors and he was brought up by his maternal grandparents in Ulverston until he was five. Only when his father, Arthur Jefferson, leased the Theatre Royal in North Shields in 1895 did the family live together for the first time. In the days before the advent of cinema, radio and television Arthur was a local celebrity as well as a councillor for Tynemouth and Cullercoats. The Jeffersons' home from 1895 to 1902 was in Dockwray Square (where there is now a statue of Stan). From 1902 until 1905, they lived in the now demolished Ayton House, on Brightman Road. At that point, for a variety of reasons, Arthur found himself in financial trouble. He moved with his family to Glasgow where he still held the lease of the Metropole Theatre.



Those formative years in North Shields, from the age of 5 to 15, were crucial to Stan, though he was a much better student of the theatre than his schoolwork. He learned much from his



experienced comic actor father, who also wrote and staged melodramas and sketches. Arthur's small theatrical empire meant Stan had access to all sorts of theatrical performances, actors and entertainers.

From an early age he developed a passion for performing, put

on shows for his friends in the back yard of his Dockwray Square home, and in the little theatre his father had built for him in the attic of their Ayton House home. Instead of ignoring the significance of his boyhood years, as other writers have done, I chose to research and describe them in detail in *The Making of Stan Laurel: Echoes of a British Boyhood* (McFarland 2011). They matter because Stan played a crucial role in creating the ideas and gags for Laurel and Hardy films, and the settings and situations in many of them are undoubtedly echoes of his boyhood.

Stan never forgot his Tyneside years. He felt 'he belonged' to North Shields and referred to it affectionately as 'the old town'. He reminisced about the area in his correspondence, and his inventive mind conjured up amusing images of how it was changing. When he left North Shields, the Wooden Dolly was a carving of a stooped, elderly fish wife. When Stan heard it was going to be replaced, he conjured up an image of Marilyn Monroe as the model for the new Dolly!

Another example is his remark that the then-new pedestrian tunnel under the Tyne sounded so posh you would have to wear your Sunday best to walk through it!

Playing Up!

DR DANNY LAWRENCE

We know Stan was part of a touring troupe that worked its way around the country. How on earth did he go from that to emigration to America and getting paired up with a certain rotund gentleman from the Deep South?

Your question is the very question that I pose in my book *The Making of Laurel and Hardy* (Ayton House 2020). Stan travelled to the USA twice with a Fred Karno troupe of comic actors. After the second visit, he decided to stay on and try his hand at vaudeville. He toured for many years and also made several films but never on a regular basis.

Eventually, almost reconciled to giving up comic acting altogether, he joined the Hal Roach film studios as a writer. Then, in 1926, at the age of 36, he wrote a screenplay based on a sketch which his father had written for the theatre twenty years earlier. He envisaged the leading roles would be played by himself and another English actor, Sid Crossley. For reasons we don't know, Oliver, who was working independently for Roach at the time, was cast as Stan's domineering partner. Their pairing in the film,



Photo - credit

released as *Duck Soup*, worked so well that they were soon internationally famous as Laurel and Hardy. But, given how long Stan and Oliver had worked independently of one another with only limited success, one wonders whether without Stan's father's sketch the world would have ever heard of Laurel and Hardy!

The pair returned to the UK at least twice didn't they?

They made four visits. The first, in 1932, was a non-stop publicity tour during which they spent two nights at the Grand Hotel, Tynemouth. After a huge welcome from the public in North Shields and a civic reception, they took part in an open-air event at the rear of the Plaza. Fortunately, the Grand's proprietor had an amateur film made of the occasion which can be seen via this link: [Laurel and Hardy in Tynemouth - YouTube](#).

Their second visit was in 1947 to tour variety theatres, during the worst winter weather since 1814. They arrived in North Shields for a civic reception on the same day that overnight blizzards had driven the 4,800-ton Greek ship *Zephyros* onto the rocks at Cullercoats.

During their 1952 tour they again stayed for two weeks at the Grand Hotel, whilst appearing for a week each at the Newcastle and Sunderland Empires. During their stay, they made an unscheduled appearance at a Sunday night charity concert at the Gaumont cinema in North Shields. Their contracts did not allow them to perform but they created a stir by making their way noisily down the central aisle onto the stage. Stan talked to the audience about his boyhood in the town, amongst other things mentioning the occasion he fell into a barrel of fish guts on the Fish Quay and had to be hosed down; and the time when, dressed in his best Eton suit, he was hit by a soot bomb. Their fourth and final UK 1953/4 tour is the subject of the film *Stan & Ollie*.

Playing Up!

DR DANNY LAWRENCE

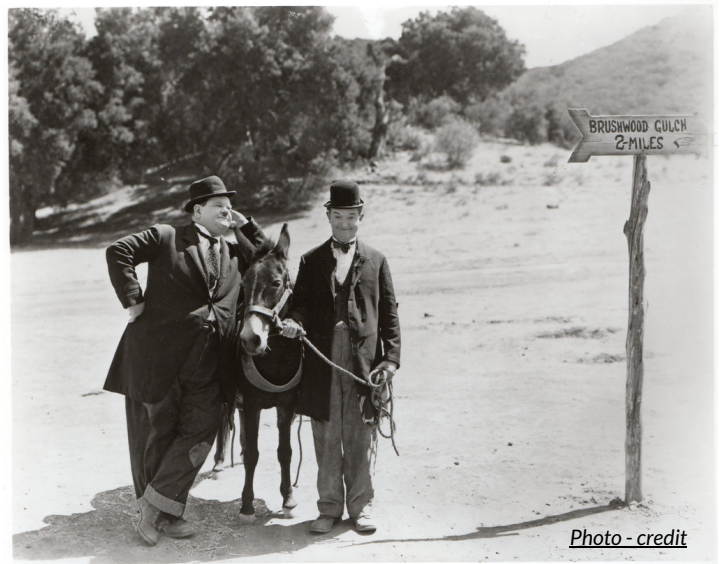
Many readers will have seen *Stan & Ollie*, featuring Steve Coogan as Stan. How accurate was the film to real life, do you think?

It's a work of fiction, with factual material included to encourage people to believe the marketing hype that it was a 'true' and previously 'untold' story. Although well-made and enjoyable, it's full of distortions introduced for dramatic effect. But what matters more to me about the film is how their characters and relationships are depicted. They never fell out. However happy the ending, I believe that Stan and Ollie would have been distressed at how they were portrayed just to provide cinema audiences with an entertaining film.

Tell us a bit about Stan's later years...

Stan's health was mixed, he was unable to attend Oliver's funeral. Fortunately, despite diabetes, a significant stroke, and a dangerous operation, he recovered sufficiently to enjoy his final years with his wife in an apartment overlooking the Pacific Ocean. He declined offers of work but still devised comic gags even though he could never use them. He was a great letter writer and received numerous visitors, including Alec Guinness, Peter Sellers, Dick van Dyke and Jerry Lewis, all of whom admired him greatly.

He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The praise from fellow comic actors is truly remarkable. Dick van Dyke called Stan 'the greatest of all film comedians' and, at Stan's funeral, Buster Keaton said, 'Chaplin wasn't the funniest; I wasn't the funniest: this man was the funniest.' It's nice to think that what Stan experienced as a boy in and around North Shields made a contribution to the emergence of that comic genius.



Give us your 3 Laurel & Hardy desert island films.

The first two remind me of my North Shields boyhood. In *The Music Box* the boys struggle to carry a boxed pianola up a steep flight of steps in Los Angeles, very similar to the steps up from the Fish Quay to Stan's Dockwray Square home. The second is *Towed in a Hole* in which Laurel and Hardy have a small business selling fresh fish but decide to cut out the middle-man by buying a fishing boat and catching their own fish. Repairing the only second-hand boat they can afford leads to predictable Laurel and Hardy capers. The third film is *Way Out West* (the American Wild West) where, despite the incongruous setting, Stan manages to work in a mention of 'fish and chips' towards the end for the benefit of UK audiences.



Dr Danny Lawrence

Shiels to Shields. The Life Story of a North Tyneside Town (Carnegie, 2016)

The Making of Stan Laurel. Echoes of a British Boyhood (McFarland 2011)

Arthur Jefferson. Man of the Theatre and Father of Stan Laurel (Brewin 2017)

The Making of Laurel and Hardy (Ayton House 2020)

<https://www.facebook.com/ShielstoShields>

<https://www.facebook.com/MakingOfStanLaurel>

www.themakingofstanlaurel.com

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF TRAVEL

HUARAZ

I.

Sometimes the clouds part
revealing the White Mountain
Range, its heavily
snowed peaks rising, lost in those
clouds again gathered.

II.

Thunder crumples, sharp
breeze rustles eucalyptus
leaves e'er chill rain falls.

III.

This dawn the icy-
sharp peaks of Cordillera
Blanca scrape the clear
blue sky, the mountains shadowed
by their own deep folds.

Lorraine Caputo

Next month's theme is -
HEALTH and WELLNESS

Feel free to interpret the theme as you
see fit and send up to 3 poems (no
more than 20 lines each please) to:
TalkToUp@gmail.com

Holy Island, 23rd June 1996 - For Kate

This peace is interrupted.
The sound of voices
And the hum of distant traffic.
I watch you -
A figure as small as my thumbnail,
Red t-shirt set against
The brown of the mudflats.
Stop. Scan the sky for birds.
Their wings catch the silver light,
Glint in the sun.
You kneel down to examine your terrain.
Think. This reminds you of him.
Brings him clearly into view.
I feel an outsider - lost in the spell.
He has made this change in you.
Unaware that I observe,
You move further away,
Become lost in the landscape,
An ever more indistinct figure.
Alone I watch you scanning the horizon,
Drawing his image close to your embrace.

Jenny Thompson



Turning Up!

STEVE LOWE

A first-class return from Africa - and no carbon footprint!



It won't be long before my favourite long-distance travellers return to my house to reclaim their love nest and bring up their own little squabs. Very welcome, now that my own have flown the coop.

The arrival of common swifts in May heralds the beginning of my summer. They arrive here having migrated all the way from Africa – that's around about 14,000 miles! I spend my evenings hoping to hear their screaming as they undergo their fantastic ballet at breakneck speed. A more aptly named bird is impossible to find, in my view!

Throughout their migratory flight, these remarkable birds feed, preen, mate, sleep and drink whilst “on the wing”. And once they arrive back in Blighty, they continue to live most of their life without ever touching the ground - unless visiting their nests.

Swifts are very faithful to their nest sites and will return year on year to exactly the same spot. They are so precise that should the entrance be moved just a couple of inches away from its original position, the swift abandon the nest site. That's why I know that the birds I see (and hear) are the very

same birds, and I am overjoyed to know they are back. They tuck themselves under the eaves, usually ignoring the boxes I risked life and limb putting up (honestly, me and ladders!).

Given the short space of time swifts spend with us, they are very unlikely to find a new nesting site in time to rear any young until the next year if their traditional nest has gone. This short window means that young swifts will look for nesting sites for next year before they leave our shores on their return flight.

If you want to attract swifts to your own house, then it's best to ensure that artificial nesting boxes are in place for July, when the young are on the hunt for next year's “des res”.

Sadly, like many of our once common birds, swift numbers are declining at an alarming rate as a result of – guess what - human activity. They tend to nest in cracks in walls, on wall plates and below tiles, using small collections of saliva-glued wind-blown debris. As buildings are renovated, insulated and converted, these nest sites are lost.



But things can be (and are being) done! For instance, I have done my own bit by putting up three nest boxes (although last year the starlings got there first, and tree bumblebees took over one right outside the window - I loved that).

If you know that a swift is nesting in a building, simply ensure that the entrance to their nest site remains unblocked and obstacle-free.

Turning Up!

STEVE LOWE

Where nest sites can be provided, special swift nest boxes can be installed, just like I did. There are loads of design details online and they can be made from scrap wood for free. There's no guarantee they will move in of course, but they make brilliant lodgers, and that high-speed air display is worth it every time as they swoop and dive, sometimes treading air when a particular morsel presents itself. Absolutely mint!

Whilst we are on the subject, I will also mention Colin the Cuckoo. If you don't know him then look him up - he is pretty famous, and you need to take a long hard look at your use of social media!

Colin is one of the British Trust for Ornithology's satellite tracked cuckoo, and people tune into the BTO webpages to see where he and his other cuckoos are at any time, especially during migration. Every bird that has been "tagged" with a small transmitter beams back a stream of information, and you can watch their flightpaths throughout their journey. No-one knew much about

the habits of these birds until now, but they all seem to take slightly different routes to get to the same destination, once again in Africa.

The sound of the cuckoo is such a quintessential part of spring/summer that it's been immortalised in song, music and poetry, but how many of us hear that sound as often as we used to? Well, here is another example of science helping to address this. Have a look at the BTO webpages for more information and to help with the work.



I'm supporting PJ who is currently in the Sierra del Perdon mountain range, approximately 10 Km south of Pamplona, Spain. Lucky thing!



An experienced wildlife professional, Steve currently works freelance with Northumberland Rivers Trust as well as undertaking work with volunteers on local heritage and archaeology projects.

His hope is to leave the world a better place.

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF TRAVEL

Meeting Place

Their invisible chase from Chobe shiver
on Africa's skin, our wandering lifeline footnote.
Twin destinies cross by these three trees,
this whitening, ruined log. Pilgrims for lions,

we waited, ochre and khaki mopane
moments in a dry world's mouth. Three ladies
took their cue from forest sand.
Dust became flesh stars on cats' paws.

They might have gored us open, voice box
to bowel had they chosen, ripping our song to dribblets.
Last of all came lion, all that we longed for,
paid for, grace and saviour.

Neutron power, killing field terror.
Dumb-struck in our skeleton truck, we feared
he might grant us his gaze, his wandering, pondering
white-hot, silent, lion stare.

And though he's gone forever now,
somewhere I'll always be
sifting with my stick, waiting for lion,
scoring an antique script in sand.

Dave Medd

I Could Have Been an Astronaut

I passed all the exams, the only
problem was the moon, that's all,
the dairy-coated moon, and what
a waste they were, those take-off drills,
those tests in zero gravity,
you could have asked me at the start,
I could have told you then that I've
an allergy to cheese, so I'm
allergic to the moon, and I'm
intolerant to lactose and
we could have saved a lot of time,
and while I'm here, I don't agree
with all this corporate sponsorship,
commercial interests. Domino's?
The European space programme
was never meant to be about
pizza.

Joe Williams



Up River!

JUDI SUTHERLAND

Up! talks to a much travelled poet about her latest work tracking the trails of the River Tees through some unexpected twists and turns ...

Ok, Judi, thanks for taking the time out to chat about your new epic poem Following Teisa. Before we get into the poem itself, how's life in Ireland? Is there much of a literary scene where you are?

We have landed in a really lovely place, beside the sea in North County Dublin. Covid has prevented me from really exploring the literary scene, but things are opening up now, and I'm part of a tiny poetry group of three local poets. So, not bad, I would say.

Excellent, I'll have to come over and visit. Now then ... Teisa ... I have memories of standing with you under the Tees Transporter Bridge, little knowing you were planning an epic poem! It might sound like a trite question but what was it about the river that inspired you to start writing the poem?

When we moved from Oxfordshire to Barnard Castle in 2014, I realised I knew very little about the local geography. I could see the River Tees flowing through the town, and because I went to some poetry nights in Middlesbrough, I saw the river much further downstream. I started to wonder about where it went between those places.



Then I stumbled on a poem called "Teisa" written by an unknown poet called Anne Wilson in 1778, which tells the story of the Tees from source to mouth, so I thought I might repeat her journey and see what had changed and what hadn't.

Yes, I must admit I hadn't come across Anne's poem either. I know during the height of its working life, the Tees' course changed somewhere around Thornaby/Stockton. So, industrialisation and post-industrialisation aside, what else has changed, do you think?

In Teesdale, reservoirs were built on the Tees (Cow Green) and on its tributaries, the Lune and the Balder. These were intended to provide a steady flow of water for the chemical industry on Teesside. As a by-product of that, the dangerous wave known as the "Tees Roll" was consigned to history, because the flow of water can now be controlled by dams.

In Wilson's day, Yarm was a sizeable port, although it took several days for boats to get there on the incoming tides. Stockton put a stop to that, by building a bridge that tall-masted ships couldn't get under. Now, of course, the Tees barrage has changed the flow of the river. There were actually two places which were straightened, as you mention, to ease the flow of shipping at Stockton.

When Wilson was writing, Middlesbrough did not exist other than as a tiny hamlet. So the town and its bridges are a major change. I wonder what she would think of the great Victorian town we can see now ...

Up River!

JUDI SUTHERLAND

I have to say I love the way that the feel of the poem changes as the river winds and weaves its way. The writing style for example in Kirkcarrion feels perfectly rural compared to, say, The Black Path. Was this intentional or did you just pick up your pen and try to reflect what you saw and its effect on you?

I didn't want this book to be all "nature writing", full of lovely birds and flowers – although there is of course some of that. I want to look equally on everything I saw, so in Middleton I mention the lead miners, I visit the pumping station at Broken Scar, and I mention the fly tipping I saw at Hurworth. The story of the river isn't just about beautiful things, it's also about the human relationship with the river for good or ill.

So the use we have put it to for fishing, abstracting water, shipping, all of that went into the poem. That much was intentional. I was less interested in praising or criticising, more interested in just recording what the places are like.

Yes, that angle of human interaction with the river is an interesting one to me. I recognise the 'biscuit-sweet / exhaust of Frutarom's spray-dried flavours' at Teesmouth! Given the length of the Tees and all the locations/human uses, it must have taken a good while for you to research and write the poem...?

About four years! Of course (excuse the pun) I was only skimming the surface. A poem is not a map and you can't represent every metre of the river. If it wasn't for lockdown and then having to move away from the area, the book might have been a lot thicker! I am aware that there are lots of people, including quite a number of poets, who know the Tees better than I do, and who have written about

it in more detail. I just came into the area as an "offcomer" and wrote about as much as I could in the time I had. I walked as much of the Teesdale Way as possible, and backed that up with some online research. It still feels very incomplete.

Oh, I think you're being a bit hard on yourself there. I think those of us who grew up around the Tees can sometimes fall into the trap of either overdoing the 'dirty old river' thing (guilty as charged) or we can talk about it wistfully as if it's some kind of mythical giant. You have brought an unsentimental outsider's eye to it, and the book is all the better for it. (And you know how rubbish we Smoggies are at giving praise!)

The next question has to be the one everyone will expect... what was the bit of the river that you look back on most fondly, your favourite part?

There are so many lovely places! Eggleston Bridge where I use to drive across to Mickleton for choir practice every Tuesday, the wonky planks of Whorlton Bridge, the tiny spa fountain at Gainford, the seals at the barrage, the Transporter Bridge... but if I really had to choose, I'd pick the waterfalls at Low Force, where the limestone slabs are a great place to eat a picnic, and you can cross the wobbly Wynch Bridge to see the fantastic range of wildflowers on the western bank. People living near the Tees are extremely lucky.



www.geograph.org.uk/photo/2481401

Up River!

JUDI SUTHERLAND

Ok, final question... what's next on your writing agenda? Working on anything in particular?

Well... the part of County Dublin we rocked up in is known as Fingal - "the land of the fair strangers" - and it seems that all sorts of people have arrived on this piece of coast over the centuries from the Stone Age to the present day, including Romans, Vikings, and the perfidious English. At one stage it had its own language "Fingallian" which was something like Chaucerian English.

So there are poems about that and also about some of the differences I have found between Britain and Ireland, from turf fires to a type of soft drink called 'Rock Shandy'. And I married into an Irish family many years ago, so there are poems about that too.

I've also written about my attempts to learn Irish. I will be continuing my interest in places and their history, and their effect on people, I suppose.



*This interview first appeared in
North East Bylines*

*Judi's book is available from her publisher,
The Book Mill*



A journey is best measured in friends, rather than miles.

Tim Cahill

You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough.

Mae West

We travel not to escape life, but for life not to escape us.

Anonymous

Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing at all.

Helen Keller

Read Up!

JENNA WARREN

Book your adventure here ...

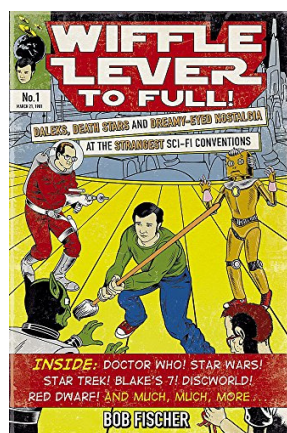
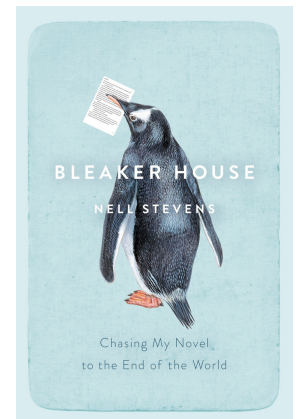


In keeping with the theme of this issue, I thought I would focus on travel writing. I very much enjoy unusual travel books that present familiar places in new and interesting ways, or explore a particular aspect of history, architecture, or landscape.



One of my favourite recent travel books is the fascinating *Lev's Violin: An Italian Adventure* by Helena Attlee. The author attends a local concert featuring a violinist. She is instantly captivated by the instrument he plays: a violin of uncertain origin. Intrigued to find out where the violin originated and learn its story, Attlee travels to Cremona, where Italian violins originated. What follows is a fascinating journey from Italy to Russia as she attempts to unravel the fascinating history of Lev's violin, and violins more generally. This is a wonderful and unusual book for anyone with an interest in music or travel, and especially Italy.

Bleaker House by Nell Stevens is another travel memoir with an unusual hook. Stevens is in the middle of her Creative Writing PhD, and as part of her studies she decides to travel to the Falklands. Her destination, Bleaker Island, has an official population of two. She believes that if she can isolate herself, with limited distractions, she will succeed in her ambition to write a novel, preferably a Falklands-based novel. But things do not go quite according to plan. Stevens finds the isolation affects her in unexpected ways, and the writing she produces is very different from her hoped for novel. This is a very interesting exploration of how creativity relates to place, and it's funny, too.

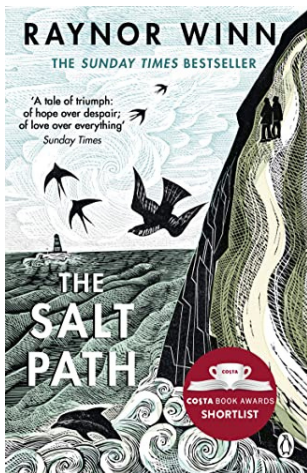
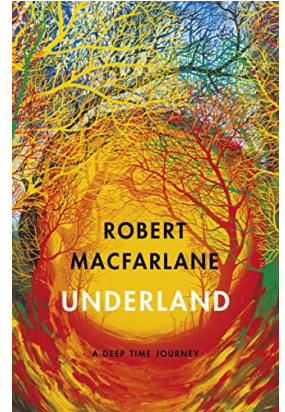


Speaking of funny travel books, I warmly recommend *Wiffle Lever to Full!* by Bob Fischer. This is a book about fandom, specifically Sci-Fi and Fantasy conventions. Bob Fischer travels around Britain visiting a variety of weird and wonderful events, from a Doctor Who convention at the Swallow Hotel in Stockton-on-Tees, to a convention devoted to the cult 60s TV series *The Prisoner* at Portmeirion in Wales. My personal favourite is the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy versus Blake's 7 water-pistol fight, which takes place in a quarry in Dorset. The book is very good-humoured and celebrates popular sci-fi culture and the fans who love it.

Read Up!

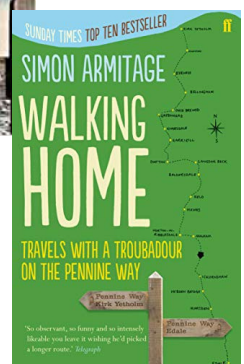
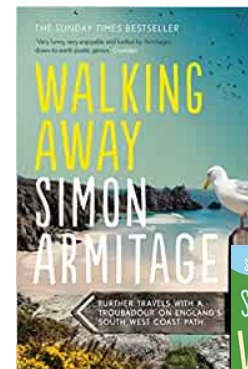
JENNA WARREN

For a very different but no less unusual journey, there's *Underland* by Robert Macfarlane. This extraordinary piece of travel writing explores the underground spaces of Europe, both natural and manmade. It immerses the reader in the Paris catacombs and takes us to Scandinavia in search of ancient cave paintings. I found the chapter on Boulby Potash Mine particularly fascinating, where Macfarlane goes on a journey beneath the sea to visit a laboratory devoted to the study of dark matter. The book is beautifully written and epic in scope, taking in travel, nature writing, history, science, architecture, geography and folklore. There's also a strong focus on environmental concerns, especially in the chapter relating to fishing and drilling for oil off the Norwegian coast.



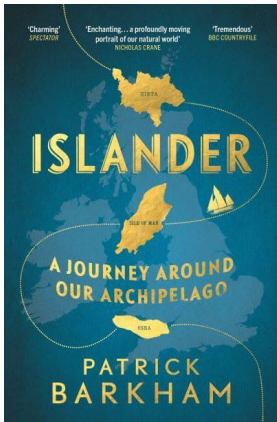
The Salt Path by Raynor Winn is a beautiful book which follows both a journey on foot, and a personal journey. When Winn's husband, Moth, is diagnosed with a terminal illness and the couple find themselves homeless, they decide to walk the South West Coast Path. They have no real aim in mind, only a desire to walk and find something positive in their very difficult circumstances. Their journey is filled with lovely observations of nature and the landscape, but what really sticks in my mind is the people they meet along the way, and the reactions they receive from those they meet. Some people display prejudice when they learn that the couple are homeless, but others are friendly and give them places to stay. There's also humour. I particularly enjoyed the running joke in which Moth is repeatedly mistaken for poet Simon Armitage, who is apparently doing the walk at around the same time.

I would like to mention both of Simon Armitage's walking books here, as they're wonderfully entertaining reads. *Walking Away* follows his journey along the South West Coast Path, but his previous book, *Walking Home*, is my favourite of the two. One summer, Armitage walks the Pennine Way, but he decides to do it in the opposite direction from most hikers, starting at Kirk Yetholm in the Scottish Borders, and ending in the Yorkshire village of his birth. He also decides to travel as a 'troubadour', performing his poetry in a variety of venues in exchange for food and board. The book is good-hearted and full of humour, while also exploring certain poetical pitfalls. I loved his recollection of a past poetry gig in an art gallery, where he was distracted by a man dressed as a doughnut peering through the large windows.



Read Up!

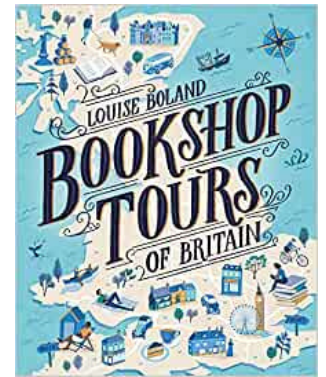
JENNA WARREN



My current travel-based read is *Islander* by Patrick Barkham. The nature writer decides to visit several islands that make up the 'British archipelago', starting with the larger and quite populated Isle of Man, and moving on to ever smaller islands. Up to a point, he follows in the footsteps of Compton Mackenzie, author of *Whisky Galore*, a writer rather obsessed with islands, and who bought several. I'm finding the history of the various islands particularly fascinating, and I love the way Barkham gives the reader an insight into their unique identities.

I can't finish this travel-themed column without mentioning *Bookshop Tours of Britain* by Louise Boland. I'm obviously biased about this one, as I love bookshops and it even features my own bookshop, Book Corner in Saltburn.

This colourful book includes lovely illustrated maps and photographs of the bookshops, and the suggested routes are great for anyone who would like to explore the UK in a uniquely 'bookish' way.



Jenna Warren is a bookseller and writer from Teesside. She studied Theatre and later Creative Writing at university. She runs Book Corner, an independent bookshop in Saltburn-by-the-Sea. Her debut novel will be published by Fairlight Books in autumn 2022.



*There's a sunrise and a sunset every single day, and they're absolutely free.
Don't miss so many of them.*

Jo Walton

*Travel makes one modest.
You see what a tiny place you occupy in the world.*

Gustave Flaubert

Where Is HoneyB?



Welcome to HoneyB - Up! magazine's newest team member.

HoneyB loves to travel and each month will be buzzing around a mystery location.

Your challenge, should you accept it (in true Mission Impossible style!) is to work out where on earth she's been.

In her first trip she landed up somewhat precariously at the foot of a man with a very large sword! But, where on earth is she? If you think you know, or would like to hazard a guess, simply post your suggestion on the Up! facebook group page and tag it #HoneyB.



Coming Up!

So here we are at journey's end - but only for now. As Stan and Ollie dance off into the distance we bid them a very fond farewell. We hope you enjoyed learning more about Stan in particular and what made him the enormous star he became. It was certainly an education for us.

We also hope our feature on the mighty walking Allan family inspires everyone to stride out into the sunshine, even if it is for just a walk around the block. We cannot over-emphasise just how important it is to our health to get out and about in the fresh air for a bit of gentle exercise.

Speaking of which, next month's issue will be all about Health and Wellness. There'll be more brilliant features, plus the return of all our regulars and another HoneyB challenge.

Until then stay healthy, stay happy!



Much love
Bridget & Harry xx

PS - Thank you so much to everyone who's shared the magazine with their friends. Our lovely group is currently nudging the 1,000 mark. Just a few more shares and invites and we'll be there!



As always, if you have any suggestions for future articles or features, we'd love to hear from you. Just email us at TalkToUp@gmail.com