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## Scarborough Borough Council

No 10 1/1

### Legend of the Penny Hedge

The Legend of the Penny Hedge was originally taken from an ancient copy printed on vellum and briefly is as follows:-

‘In the fifth year of the reign of King Henry II three noblemen were hunting a wild boar on Eskdaleside, near Whitby. The boar, being wounded and hotly pursued by the hounds, took refuge in the Chapel and Hermitage at Eskdaleside, which was then occupied by a monk from Whitby Abbey. The monk closed the door to keep out the hounds, and when the hunters came along they, in their anger, set upon him with their boar-staves. The monk, being on the point of death, sent for the Abbot of Whitby who would have had them put to death. The monk, however, forgave them and said their lives would be spared *‘if they be content to be enjoined to this Penance, for the safeguard of their souls’*. The Penance is as follows:-

“You and yours shall hold your lands of the Abbot of Whitby, and his Successors in this Manner: That upon Ascension-Eve, you, or some of you, shall come to the Wood of the Strayhead, which is in Eskdaleside, the same Day at Sunrising, and there shall the Officer of the Abbot blow his horn, to the intent that you may know how to find him, and he shall deliver unto you, William de Bruce, ten Stakes, ten Stout-Stowers and ten Yedders, to be cut by you, or those that come for you, with a knife of a Penny Price; and you, Ralph de Piercie, shall take one and twenty of each sort, to be cut in the same manner; and you, Allatson, shall take nine of each sort, to be cut as aforesaid; and to be taken on your backs, and carried to the town of Whitby; and so to be there before nine of the Clock (if it be full Sea, to cease Service), as long as it is low water, at nine of the Clock, the same hour each of you shall set your Stakes at the Brim of the Water, each stake a yard from another, and so Yedder them, as with Yedders, and Stake on each side with your Stout-Stowers that they stand three Tides without removing by the Force of the Water. Each of you shall make them in several places at the Hour above-named (except it be full Sea at that hour, which, when it shall happen to pass, that Service shall cease), and you shall do this Service in remembrance that you did most cruelly slay me. And that you may the better call to God for Repentance, and find Mercy, and do good Works, the Officer of Eskdaleside shall blow his Horn, Out on you, Out on you, for the heinous Crime of you. And if you and your Successors do refuse this Service, so long as it not be full sea at that Hour aforesaid, you and yours shall forfeit all your land to the Abbot, or his successors. Thus I do entreat the Abbot that you may have your lives and Goods for this Service and you to promise by your Parts in Heaven, that it shall be done by you and your successors, as it is aforesaid.”

Nowadays the ceremony is carried out by the owner of some land which formerly belonged to the Abbot: the ancient horn being blown by the bailiff to the Lady of the Manor followed by the cry *‘Out on ye, Out on ye’*.