



# Coachman's Winter Tour of Yorkshire

*"Take a week off work, grab a luxury Coachman caravan and spend some time discovering Yorkshire's delights," they said. It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it!*



**L**ike most holidays, this one begins with an early start. I'm up at five and waiting outside Ben's apartment block at six, as he bumbles downstairs with five bags, a video camera, a duvet and two pillows.

Once the VW CC's loaded, we head north on the A1M, then east on the M62, reaching Coachman's Hull HQ before 8am.

Inside the compound, we spot the Pastiche 520/4 caravan that Val C's recommended for the trip (see a full review in the May issue). It takes a few minutes to hitch up, and, as we head out the gates, a perfectly-cloudless, midnight-blue sky grows brighter on the eastern horizon. The weather has been dismal recently, but today the gods are smiling on us.

The outfit looks pretty cool (though I say so myself). The low, curvy CC matches the Pastiche perfectly, with the caravan's cool alloy wheels, tinted windows, swooping graphics and contemporary door design hinting at some of the state-of-the-art technology to be found inside.

We immediately head north towards the town of Driffield and the rolling Yorkshire Wolds. The CC tows beautifully. With its 170bhp engine, and adjustable suspension set to the stiffer 'sport' mode, it bosses the Pastiche with ease at all speeds, even on the steep incline up onto the hilltops.

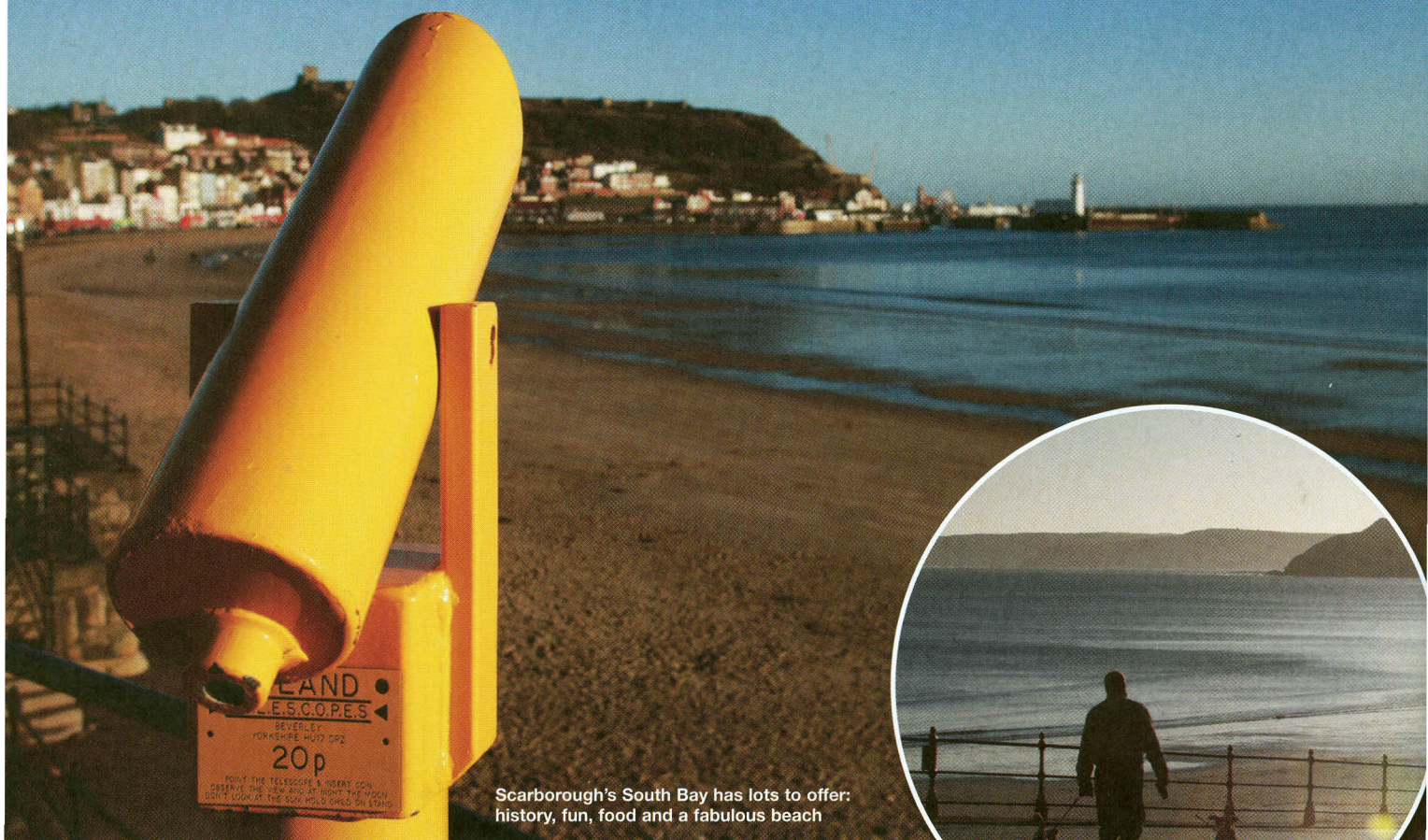
Our first stop is Scarborough, but on the way we pass the interestingly-named village of Wetwang, which Ben and I find most amusing. Juveniles.





You can do a lot of damage reversing a caravan! Whitby Abbey's magnificent ruin overlooks the town's dramatic harbour below. It's a photographer's paradise





Scarborough's South Bay has lots to offer: history, fun, food and a fabulous beach

The town of Scarborough occupies two bays on the east coast and radiates a spirit of past glories, when it became Britain's first seaside resort.

In 1626, Elizabeth Farrow, discovered a spring of acidic water flowing from the cliffs, this lead to Scarborough becoming a Spa town. Marketeers must have been better then, as Scarborough quickly grew to become a popular tourist destination.

As the spring waters bubbled to the surface, Victorian wealth flowed into the town. Signs of this wealth are everywhere – The Grand Hotel, with its 12 floors, was once the largest hotel in Europe and attracted the rich and famous from all over the Empire. Novelist Emily Bronte died there in 1849 – though we're assured it wasn't the scallops! She is buried in the town.

The promise of excellent vistas tempts us both to the delightful South Bay.

The impressive Valley Bridge spans the chasm between St Nicholas Cliff and the Spa. It was built in a year and opened in 1827. The bridge became such a popular promenade that toll booths were erected at one end and remained there until 1952.

As Ben and I find, the views from the bridge are spectacular, and it saved those stately Victorians from making the long haul down into the valley and up the other side!

Below the bridge is the beautiful Rotunda William Smith Museum of Geology, aptly constructed in golden limestone. It opens at 10am from Tuesday to Sunday – with under-18s getting free entry – and offers fascinating, interactive insight into the subject following a multi-million pound makeover. It's one of those sciences you don't realise is so fascinating until you delve into it.

We park for free on Foreshore Road, the wide van only causing slight problems for

passing buses, which creep carefully past while heads turn to admire our Pastiche.

It's still just 9.15am, and the beach is filled with dog walkers as we amble along the sands. It's a perfect English winter's day, but the intense sun takes the edge off a chilly morning.

The town is just coming to life as we stroll back to the bay's northern end to see the harbour and funfair. Traditional amusement arcades and chippies line the seafront, and the tide-washed beach looks clean and appealing; the icy North Sea, rather less so.

On holidays, my kids wear shorty wetsuits when swimming in this murky

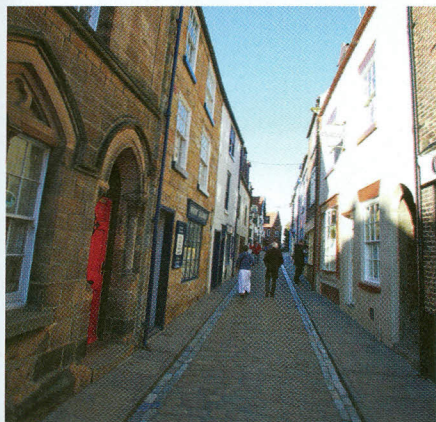


Scarborough's traditional South Bay seafront has something for everyone





Whitby's famous swingbridge spans the harbour.  
St Mary's church is perched above the town



Caption from top to bottom: Church Street is filled with quaint shops and boutiques.  
Hadley's fish & chip restaurant. Recommended

and bracing 'gazpacho' sea. It must work, they're always body-boarding for hours.

South Bay is separated from North Bay by a rocky promontory, with Scarborough Castle's 11th Century ruins perched on top.

A short drive along Foreshore Rd and around the promontory on Marine Drive brings you to Royal Albert Drive and the North Bay.

Here is another fine beach with rock pools that emerge at low-tide.

This bay is less commercialised and is popular with surfers and anglers. Bait like worms or mussels will land you cod, whiting or coalface, depending on the time of year.

Inland, Scarborough boasts a golf club in each bay, while a short walk from the North Bay beach is Peasholm Park ([peasholmpark.com](http://peasholmpark.com)), a free attraction that's open 24/7 all year round. The rowing lake has canoes, pedalos, rowing boats and dragon-head boats for hire, all overlooked by an impressive pagoda and oriental bridge. Peasholm also features a bandstand, a natural glen with flora and fauna, two cafés and is a venue for family and couples' music and sports events throughout the year (see page 111).

The North Bay miniature railway runs from Peasholm Park for about ¾-mile to Scalby Mills and the SEA LIFE Centre on a narrow-gauge (1ft 8in) track. Inaugurated in 1931, the original locomotives still run and provide an exciting journey for young children and gricers alike. The trains run every weekend in low-season and everyday in the holidays. It costs £2.70 return for kids and £3.30 for adults, all services are dog, wheelchair and pushchair friendly.

From Scarborough we head up the coast to the town of Whitby. At least we try to. Relying on the VW's sat-nav is probably not the best idea, but its poor choice of route results in an unexpected find.

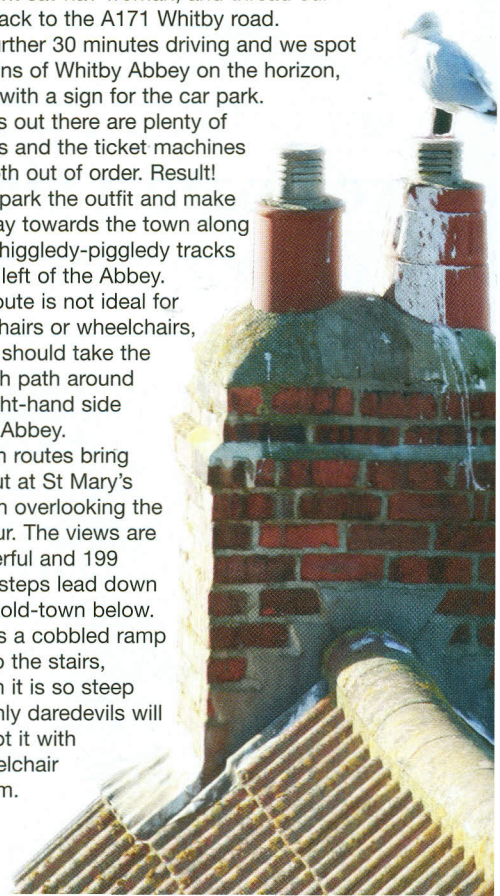
Minutes from Scarborough we find ourselves in a beautifully-tranquil wooded valley near the village of Hackness. The scenery is so serene it seems we've left civilisation far behind, and I can only imagine the views being even more stunning in spring, summer and autumn. Walkers, cyclists and especially birdwatchers will love this area.

After half-an-hour enjoying the country lanes, we get the map-book out, ignore the insistent sat-nav woman, and thread our way back to the A171 Whitby road.

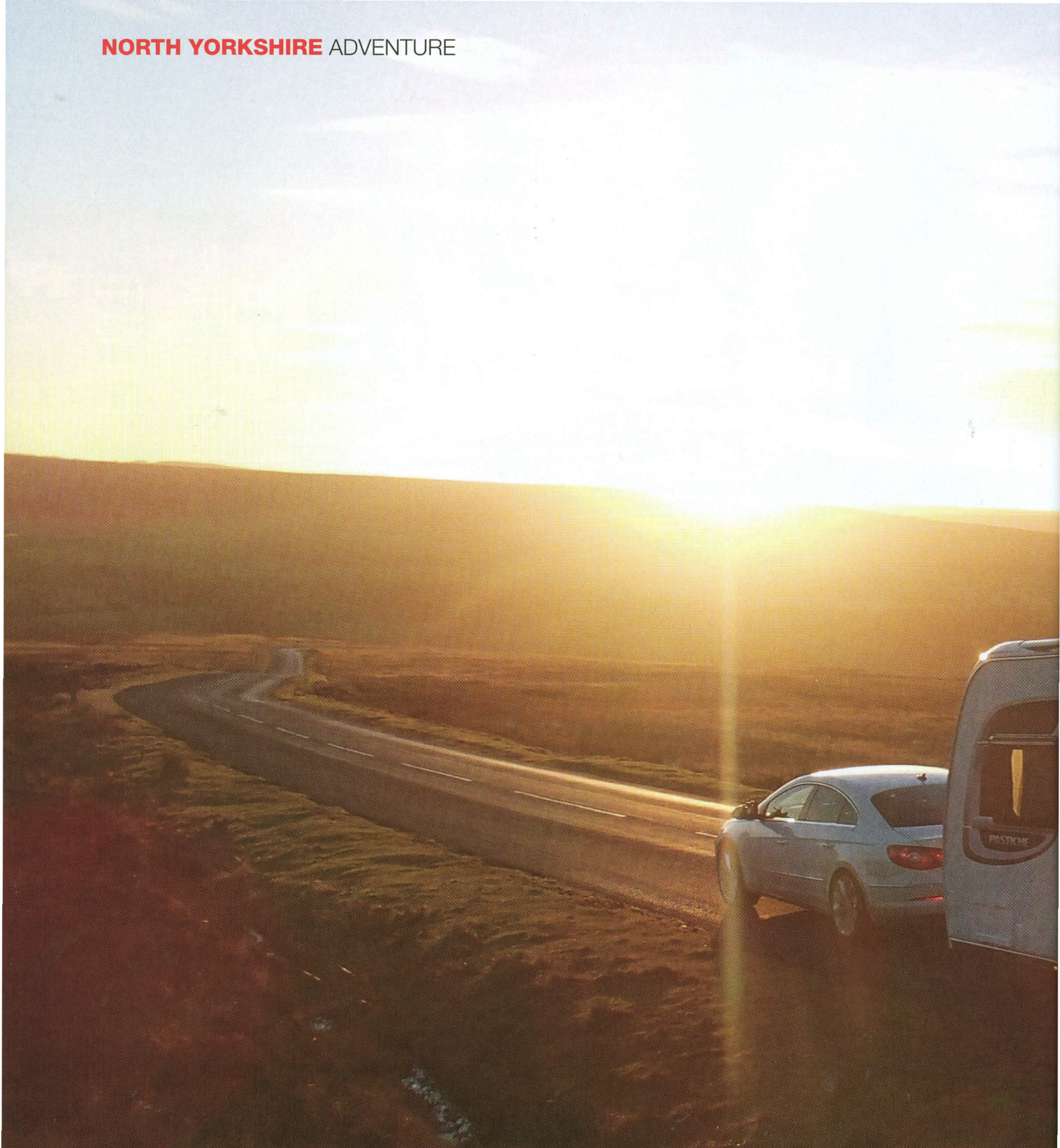
A further 30 minutes driving and we spot the ruins of Whitby Abbey on the horizon, along with a sign for the car park. It turns out there are plenty of spaces and the ticket machines are both out of order. Result!

We park the outfit and make our way towards the town along some higgledy-piggledy tracks to the left of the Abbey. This route is not ideal for pushchairs or wheelchairs, which should take the smooth path around the right-hand side of the Abbey.

Both routes bring you out at St Mary's Church overlooking the harbour. The views are wonderful and 199 stone steps lead down to the old-town below. There's a cobbled ramp next to the stairs, though it is so steep that only daredevils will attempt it with a wheelchair or pram.







After perusing the shops on the picturesque Church St, we're delayed by the harbour's swingbridge as it opens to let a fishing boat pass.

This reminds us we're both peckish, and when in Whitby, there is only one acceptable option – fish and chips.

I ask the swingbridge operator for a chippie recommendation. Apparently, the Magpie Café (turn right over the bridge) has a national reputation for quality, but it's undergoing a revamp. Next best is Trencher's (turn left after crossing the bridge), but there's a huge queue outside, so we cross back to the Abbey side and try out Hadley's Fish Restaurant.

It's a great choice, if a bit pricey (£10 for cod and chips, a cuppa and a slice of bread

and butter), but the fish is supremely fresh and the batter is light, tempura-style.

Replenished, we set off to explore Whitby and enjoy the hidden treasures and the surprise views down every tiny back-alley.

The award-winning Captain Cook Museum is close to the swingbridge in Grape Lane, in a 17th Century house where Cook lodged during his apprenticeship. Admission at £4.80 for adults and £3.30 for kids is worth every penny. Check out [cookmuseumwhitby.co.uk](http://cookmuseumwhitby.co.uk).

Next, in an effort to work off our lunchtime calories, we climb the 199 steps to explore St Mary's Church and the Abbey. For the keen photographer there's a stunning image to be grabbed at every turn and we even pose for a cover shot with the

Coachman in front of the Abbey that's so (wrongly) famous for being Count Dracula's final resting place!

Next, it's back to the car park and, with sunset just an hour away, we hit the road again and head on the A169 across the Moors to Pickering.

The North York Moors exude a bleak and lonely beauty. Without a caravan in tow the roads are a joy to drive, and the well-behaved Pastiche barely alters the excellent experience. We drop down into Goathland briefly to see the North York Moors Railway, which means we have to descend Cow Wath Bank, a 25% (1-in-4) slope. Reassuringly, the well-balanced outfit manages both the descent and ascent with ease and we're back on route.



The North York Moors is a brilliant place to drive, even with a caravan attached



After passing RAF Fylingdales radar station we pull over at the Hole of Horcum to watch the sunset. There's plenty of parking at this vast natural amphitheatre where, legend has it, a giant scooped up a handful of earth and threw it aside – creating Blakey Topping, a nearby hill!

The sunset is both spectacular and speedy. As the perfect sky grows dark once again, we continue on to the market town of Pickering, where we head west on the A170. After a few miles, we turn north again, back up towards the Moors to our first overnight stop, the wonderful Spiers House, Camping in the Forest site.

The friendly staff make us welcome on a premium hardstanding pitch with hook-up, tap and drain.

It takes us just 15 minutes to unhitch and level the van and then, as the outside temperature plummets towards zero, we fire up the Truma heating and stick our faithful Wacky-Practicals collapsible kettle on for a nice cuppa.

The perfect end to the perfect Yorkshire day, in our perfectly-built Yorkshire caravan!

➤ See page 111 for more information on musical and cultural events in Scarborough and Whitby.

➤ See page 120, to discover why the Pastiche 520/4 was ideal for the tour

➤ See a gallery of superb Coachman Tour pics: [www.caravan.ma/toygallery](http://www.caravan.ma/toygallery)

## YORKSHIRE CAMPSITES

### Scarborough

Arosa Caravan Park  
Ratten Row  
Seamer  
Scarborough  
YO12 4QB  
Price £20 per night  
T 01723 862166  
W [arosacamping.co.uk](http://arosacamping.co.uk)

### Whitby

York House Caravan Park  
Hawkser  
Whitby  
YO22 4LW  
Price £25 per night  
T 01947 880354  
W [yorkhousecaravanpark.co.uk](http://yorkhousecaravanpark.co.uk)

### North York Moors

Spiers House Campsite  
Cropton  
Nr Pickering  
YO18 8ES  
Open all year  
Price £27.10  
T 01751 417591  
W [campingintheforest.co.uk](http://campingintheforest.co.uk)  
(Full review next month)