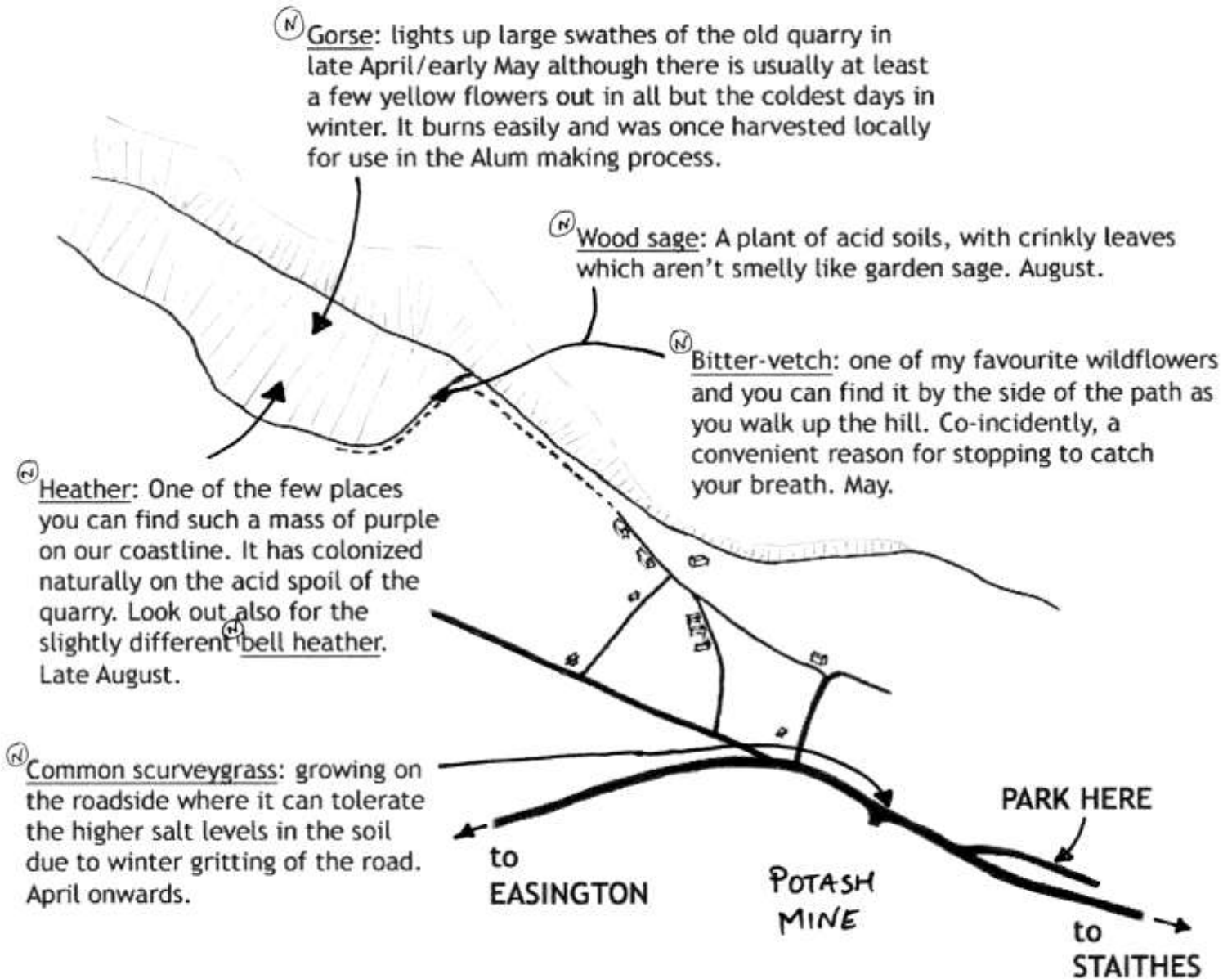


# Boulby

At 203m the cliffs here are the highest on the east coast of England. You can see all the way back to South Gare from the top on a clear day.



The quarry opened in about 1650 and was mined until 1871 when it became uneconomic. The process of releasing alum from the shale rock is long and has so many complicated steps that you wonder how someone thought of it. Alum was mainly used in the dyeing industry as a mordant to fix dyes to fabric, particularly wool.

This is the place from where Lewis Hunton set rules for the basis of modern stratigraphy (the study of sedimentary rocks in space and time) in 1836 - he produced a paper on the subject when only 21 and died 2 years later. His breakthrough was to notice that different species of ammonite appeared in particular narrow bands of rock at the quarry but not in others, so allowing rocks to be dated all across Europe from their fossils.