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In winter

In the garden of the York Priory Guesthouse are the attractive Twin Gothic Arches which are an original 'Victorian Folly'
On behalf of all the staff at The Yorkshire Journal, past and present, we hope all our readers had a very Happy and Merry Christmas and we wish you all the best for a Happy New Year 2012

Left: Roseberry Topping in North Yorkshire covered in winter snow

Cover: The Shambles, York

Editorial

Christmas is now over for another year, but in our winter issue we have two stories that related to Yorkshire Christmas’s, past and present. First the connection between Scrooge’s Counting House and the offices in Malton. The second Christmas story is about Yorkshire’s Christmas association with the turkey, which is believed to have been first brought into Britain by a Yorkshireman. A look at stocks which are an iconic feature, they have survived over the years in villages and towns in Yorkshire. A cold winter visit to Malton discovers why it is such an interesting little market town. The restoration of the Rotunda Museum, Scarborough to its original role as a centre of geology was visited by HRH Prince Charles before the work was completed. The discovery at York of what could be a Roman gladiator cemetery ends this edition.

In the Winter issue:

- **Stocks and Their Use in Yorkshire**
  Elizabeth Lambert finds out why stocks were a traditional method of punishment in the middle ages and continued to be used until the 19th century.

- **Scrooge’s Counting House in Chancery Lane, Malton**
  Philip Hartley looks into the connection between Scrooge’s Counting House in Charles Dickens novel ‘A Christmas Carol’ with the offices in Chancery Lane, Malton that inspired Dickens.

- **Malton in North Yorkshire**
  Sarah Harrison visits Malton in the middle of winter and discovers why it is such an interesting, busy, little market town.

- **The Yorkshire Tradition of the Christmas Turkey**
  Jean Griffiths looks into the history of the first turkey brought into Britain by William Strickland a Yorkshireman in 1526.

- **The Rotunda Museum and its Restoration at Scarborough, North Yorkshire**
  John Stuart visits the newly restored Rotunda, which is now a Museum of Geology

- **Roman Gladiator Cemetery Discovered at York**
  Jeremy Clark investigates what could be the world’s only Roman gladiator cemetery at York

But there is much more to these articles, please read and enjoy them. We welcome your comments.

Andrew Simpson
Stocks and Their Use in Yorkshire

By Elizabeth Lambert

Although the concept of public punishment by “the stocks” may now seem strange, even barbaric, it was the accepted norm until the 19th century. The number of stocks that have survived in villages and towns in many parts of Yorkshire are a testimony to this fact and today they are an iconic feature. They were used to punish minor offences such as drunkenness, gambling and blaspheming on the Sabbath. Passers-by would throw refuse and verbal abuse at the culprit. Interestingly, of all the punishments, stocks remained in use for the longest time.

Why Stocks were used

Stocks had become a traditional method of punishment in England by the mid-14th century. The second Statute of Labourers was introduced in 1350 requiring every town and village to provide and maintain a set of stocks. It further ordered that the punishment of the stocks be used for unruly artisans.

Also the Statute attempted to discourage agricultural labourers demanding increased pay. It decreed that anyone demanding, or offering higher wages should be set in the stocks for up to 3 days.

Stocks were later used to control the unemployed. A Statute passed in 1495 required that vagabonds should be set in the stocks for 3 days on bread and water and then sent away. If a vagabond returned to the same parish, he or she would receive another 6 days in the stocks. These punishments were however seen as excessive and the lengths of time in the stocks were later reduced to 1 and 3 days respectively.

A Statute of 1605 required that anyone convicted of drunkenness should receive six hours in the stocks, and those convicted of being a drunkard should suffer 4 hours in the stocks or pay a substantial fine of 3 shillings and 6 pence. A slightly later Statute made it legal to sentence those caught swearing. They could be put in the stocks for 1 hour, if they could or would not pay a 12 pence fine. In practice the authorities preferred offenders to pay fines as the monies were used to fund poor relief.

In 1855, anyone who was unable to pay a 5 shilling fine was ordered to sit in the stocks for 2 hours.

The stocks were never formally abolished and continued to be used, but less regularly until the 1870s. The last recorded case of the stocks being used in Yorkshire was reported in the Leeds Mercury 14 April 1860 when a Pudsey man named John Gambles sat in the stocks for six hours for gambling on a Sunday.

How stocks were used

A pair of stocks is hinged together at one end and at the other end a hasp and staple is used as well a padlock. The lower stock is fixed to the ground. The stocks confined the culprit’s ankles through two round holes with a wooden upper stock board. Then the culprit was obliged to sit in this position, either on the ground or on a wooden bench. Some stocks have posts at each end, with runners in which the upper stock board can slide up and down.

Public humiliation was a major part of punishment in stocks. These would always be sited in the most public place available, for example the market square or village green. In small communities, those being punished would be well known to everyone else, thereby increasing their shame. The culprit might have his or her footwear removed; exposing their bare feet, exhibiting an offender’s bare feet was considered a form of humiliation.
Audience participation was a critical aspect of such punishment. The helpless culprit would usually be subjected to a variety of abuses and mockery by passers-by, ranging from having rotten fruit and vegetables thrown at them, kicking, spitting, tickling and insulting.

Public punishment in the stocks generally lasted for several hours and since stocks served as an outdoor punishment, its culprits were subjected to the day and night weather which includes the rain; heat during the summer and the freezing weather in winter. As a consequence it was not uncommon for people kept in stocks over several days to die from heat exhaustion or hypothermia. The person would generally receive only bread and water, plus anything brought by their friends.

Stocks were used to punish a wide range of minor offences, drunkenness, gambling and blaspheming on the Sabbath, not attending church; the list is endless. A Yorkshire example of offences being punished by the stocks was in Sheffield, on 12 February 1790, for drinking in a public-house during the time of the church service, for this nine men were locked in the stocks.

**Stocks in Yorkshire**

In West Yorkshire, particularly in Calderdale there are several good surviving examples of stocks that can be seen near and around the town of Halifax and all within a radius of 15 kilometres.

The Parish Church of St. John the Baptist Halifax stands at the bottom end of the town. The stocks were moved in early 1960s, several yards to the southwest of their original position and can now be seen by the north-west gate of the church. Their main purpose was to punish Sunday gamblers by locking their legs in the stocks for perhaps two hours at a time and exposing them to public ridicule. They are well worn by culprits and there is a stone bench for them to sit on. Halifax must have had its fair share of offenders!

*Above: The Parish Church Stocks, Halifax*

About 5 kilometres north-west of Halifax along Keighley Road above the Talbot Inn at Wrigley Hill is the former Illingworth gaol or jail and village stocks.

*Right: The Illingworth jail and stocks*
The stocks stand outside, next to the old jail and are dated 1697 with the initials G.K, which is inscribed on one of the stones. The initials are those of George Kitchenman, constable of Ovenden in that year. On the other are written 'A. H.' and 'G. R.' above a crown with the motto "Know thy Self" below. Both these inscriptions are now very corroded.

Left: The Illingworth stocks next to the jail

The jail has a carved inscription above the door ‘Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth Erected A.D. 1823’. This quotation appears to be from Saint Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians IV 28.

The date of 1823 indicates when the jail was built. It had four cells with heavily barred windows. Originally, the building had just a single storey. When a wrongdoer was caught at night, the Ovenden Constable brought a small bedstead from his home, and the prisoner spent the night in the gaol until he was taken to appear before the Halifax magistrates on the following morning.

The jail was discontinued in 1860. The building was then leased to the Illingworth Industrial Provident Society who used it as a store room. It opened as a Co-operative store on 23rd November 1863. It was listed as 121 Keighley Road in 1936.

Right: Carved inscription above the door
In the 1960s, the Co-operative Society, offered the building to Halifax Council, but it was refused, and a private trust was set up to ensure that the building survived and was kept in good repair.

Plans to convert it into a police museum, or even a museum for children came to nothing. Then in 1978, Calderdale Council adopted the building and leased it for use as a private garage.

In recent years the building has deteriorated and the windows have been boarded up to prevent vandalism.

Right: A Sketch of the stocks and jail from Old Halifax Published in 1912

Southowram is a village that stands on the hill top about 3 kilometres south-east of Halifax. The village stocks were originally situated just below the Pack Horse Inn in Cain Lane. They were moved to Towngate in the 1970s when parts of the village centre were demolished and rebuilt.

Left: The stocks at Towngate, Southowram. It is not known why an extravagant arch was build over the stocks but presumably to protect them and make them more interesting for visitors to see.

Below: The Coley stocks

Coley is situated about 6 kilometres north-east of Halifax and the stocks stand at the junction of Coley Road and Brighouse & Denholme Gate Road. They have been restored; the two upright thin stone slabs keep the wooden boards in place.

Left: The Coley stocks in winter snow, photo by Sue Johnson
The village of Norland is about 5 kilometres south-west of Halifax. The stocks stand in the village pinfold by the war memorial. A pinfold was an enclosure for stray and wandering animals and cattle until they were claimed by their owners, who then had to pay a fee to the official who was in charge of the pinfold.

Midgley is situated about 9 kilometres north-west of Halifax. The stocks can be seen at Town Syke Well on the north side of Town Gate. They were used as a punishment from the 14th century until 1825 when cells were built underneath the school either at Midgley or Luddenden.

Barkisland is situated about 9 kilometres south-west of Halifax and today only the 2 stones remain. The left stone is dated LJ 1611 and the right stone is dated HG 1688.

South-west of Barkisland 12 kilometres south-west of Huddersfield and about 23 kilometres south-west of Halifax is the large village of Marsden. The stocks were vandalised but repaired in 1999 and still look in pretty good conduction.
The small market town of Elland is located 5 kilometres south-east of Halifax and 4 miles north-west of Huddersfield. The re-erected stocks can be seen in the garden of the Elland Council Offices in Elizabeth Street and date to the 17th or early 18th century. They were moved from Huddersfield Road when Elland prison was demolished and originally stood at the Cross near Elland Parish Church. By the late 1880s the stocks were falling into disrepair until a local press campaign resulted in them being refurbished.

One of the last victims of the stocks was John Ogden who was arrested in October 1863.

The village of Heptonstall is situated on the top of a steep hill near Hebden Bridge about 15 kilometres north-west of Halifax. All that remains of the village stocks is one stone which is in Northgate and has an attached plaque. The stocks were originally sited near The Cross Inn. The Church records of 1823 note that a new “mobile” pair of stocks had been bought to replace the stone ones and church wardens had power to put people in the stocks for punishment. The Heptonstall stocks were dismantled in 1875. The surviving stone stock now serves as a signpost inscribed “To Haworth” with a hand and pointing finger. In the village is replica set of wooden stocks under a railed off arch.

Further afield at Haworth village, standing in the little cobbled square at the top of the steep, main street are the stocks. About 14 kilometres north-west of Halifax

They can be seen by the church steps next to the famous Black Bull Pub. The Haworth stocks are unusual because they were made to accommodate three offenders. Most stocks were prepared to accommodate two offenders.
Much further away in the Yorkshire Dales, is the small village of Arncliffe, situated about 23 kilometres north of Skipton. These are an interesting set of restored stocks. Although these are nowhere near the other stocks in this article they are worth including. They can be seen just outside the churchyard of St Oswald’s Church. When an offender is locked into the stocks, he or she has a nice view of the church. It is reputed that one of the purposes of these village stocks was to punish those who did not attend church on a Sunday. This is probably why the stocks face St Oswald’s Church which stands beside the river at the north end of the village.

Right: Arncliffe restored stocks outside St Oswald’s Church

**Stocks used at fairs and festivals**

The entertainment value of stocks is still very much in evidence today. For example, if you visit a country fair or festival, you will see stocks that have been, in some way included in their event.

To the far east of Arncliffe is the village of Ripley situated about 7 kilometres north of Harrogate. The stocks can be seen in the cobbled centre of Ripley located in front of the stone cross and The Boar’s Head.

Lift: This amusing photo on the left is of a papier-mâché pig sitting in the stocks during the Ripley boar festival.

The stocks at the beautiful village of Kettlewell are used as part of their Annual Scarecrow Festival, which is situated in the idyllic Yorkshire Dales about 22 kilometres north of Skipton.

Scarecrows are displayed around the village to produce a scarecrow trail, visitors tour the nooks and crannies of the village to find and identify as many scarecrows as possible.
Scenes illustrating offenders in stocks, through the ages
By Philip Hartley

“To begin with, Marley was dead; there is no doubt whatever about that he was as dead as a door-nail. Scrooge and he were partners for many years. Scrooge never painted out old Marley’s name. There it stood for many years afterwards, above the office door of the counting house, Scrooge and Marley”.

This is the first passage in Charles Dicken’s novel ‘A Christmas Carol’ where he introduces Scrooge’s counting house. Dickens began writing this novel in October, 1843 and finished it by the end of November in time to be published for Christmas with illustrations by John Leech.

Charles Dickens often visited the town of Malton because of his long friendship with Charles Smithson, a solicitor in the town. He would stay with Smithson at Easthorpe Hall and then at the Abbey House in Old Malton and was inspired by the town, its people and by the surrounding area. The Smithson family had their offices on Chancery Lane in Malton and although not written down the Smithson family were told by Dickens that their office in Chancery Lane was the inspiration for Scrooge’s counting house and that the church bells which feature so prominently in the novel were those of St Leonard’s on Church Hill.

Dickens may have been inspired with Smithson’s building as the model for Scrooge’s counting house, because it is not a big office and would have been a typical solicitor’s office of the day. Unfortunately in 1844 Charles Smithson died at an early age. He was only 39 and Dickens attended the funeral at Old Malton. He left York by fast carriage at 7.00 am on 5th April and arrived in Malton just in time for the funeral at 9.30 am.

The Charles Dickens (Malton) Society had plans in create an historical link with Charles Dickens. This included developing and restoring the building in Chancery Lane into a museum, as it had been used as the model for Scrooge’s counting house in A Christmas Carol. But unfortunately these ambitious plans have been abandoned because of apathy and a lack of money.
Malton
North Yorkshire

By Sarah Harrison

Malton is a market town in North Yorkshire situated half-way between Scarborough and York. It has been at the historic centre of Ryedale since Roman times and there are three Maltons, Roman Malton, Old Malton and New Malton.

The Roman Fort was first established on the northern bank of the River Derwent, at a place that is now Orchard Fields, off the Old Malton Road. Although there is not a great deal to be seen today, the site has revealed several important archaeological discoveries. Old Malton dates from the twelfth century and grew up around St Mary’s Priory, which today is the sole remaining example of a Gilbertine Monastery Church in England.

When a Norman castle was built near the River Derwent, a second town called New Malton was created. The castle was demolished on the orders of King John, and is now the site of St Leonard’s Church.

During the middle ages, Malton, like many other towns, was enclosed within a wall. The wall no longer exists, but four streets - Wheelgate, Castlegate, Yorkergate and Old Maltongate - are named after the four gated entrances to the town.

Around Town

The present town of Malton is a busy market town with a traditional street market held at Market Place every Saturday. At other times, Market Place acts as a "pay-and-display" car park. Farmer’s markets are also held regularly and a very popular event is the annual Malton Food Lovers Festival.

An array of architectural shops, inns and tearooms, surround the market place, in the middle of which stands St. Michael’s church. Parts of the church date from Norman times, but most of it has since been added to and subsequently restored.
New Malton’s second church, St Leonard’s, is thought to originate from the late 12th century, with the spire and clock being added in the 19th century. Somewhat unusually, this former Anglican church was handed back to the Roman Catholic Church in the 1970s, making it one of only a few medieval catholic churches in England.

Today, many of Malton’s buildings belong to The Fitzwilliam Estate, and it is partly because of the estate’s influence that the town remains relatively free of chain shops. Malton has a real old-fashioned feel to it, and it’s a pleasant change to find such a broad variety of independent businesses, many of which have been in the town for generations.

*Below: Market Place acts as a “pay-and-display” car park when there is no market or other event taking place*
Situated on the edge of the lively and interesting market town of Malton is St. Mary’s, the only surviving Gilbertine Priory Church in England, still in use for regular worship. It is open daily from dawn to dusk for visitors to look around.

St Mary’s was built in about 1131 by the Gilbertine Priory and completed in about 1200. The church would have been much bigger, but in the late 15th century a fire caused the collapse of the North West tower and severely damaged the north aisle. Restoration work was started in 1877 and by the end of the 19th century; the church had achieved its present stature.
The Yorkshire Tradition of the Christmas Turkey

By Jean Griffiths

It is thought that the turkey was first brought into Britain by a Yorkshireman named William Strickland in 1526. He was a cadet under Sebastian Cabot in those voyages of discovery which resulted in revealing the existence of North America. Strickland acquired six birds from American Indians on his travels and when he got back into the port of Bristol sold them for ‘tuppence’ (2d = two-old-pence) each in Bristol market.

However, if William Strickland was not the first, he was undoubtedly the most important trader and importer of turkeys to Britain’s shores. He made further recorded voyages, and in 1550 he became rich by importing Turkeys. Strickland’s association with the turkey seems to have been accepted by his contemporaries since he was granted arms in 1550; he was allowed to take as his crest "a turkey-cock in his pride proper". The official record of his crest is in the archives of the College of Arms and is said to be the oldest surviving European drawing of a turkey.

Right: Strickland’s coat of arms is in the family chapel St. Andrews Church. The turkey is perched on the top

Strickland purchased the estates at Wintringham, North Yorkshire and at Boynton in East Yorkshire. He seems to have lived the remainder of his life at Place Newton, his house at Wintringham where he is buried. He had the Norman manor house at Boynton rebuilt as Boynton Hall, and this became the seat of his descendants. The church at Boynton is liberally decorated with the family’s turkey crest, most notably in the form of a probably unique lectern which is a 20th century creation. This is carved in the form of a turkey rather than the conventional eagle, the bible supported by its outspread tail feathers.

Boynton

The small picturesque village of Boynton is delightfully situated amidst lavish woods and rolling fields, approximately 3 miles (4.8 km) west of Bridlington on the B1253 road. A few houses are built along the road with St Andrew’s Church and Boynton Hall.
The parish church is dedicated to St Andrew and is a Grade I listed building, built in brick and stone. The 15th century embattled western tower, which contains two bells, belongs to the previous church. The interior is in an un-ecclesiastical style, a mixture of Greek and Gothic which has a chancel and a nave rebuilt in 1768. The west gallery is reached by a curving spiral stair and the nave is fitted with painted pews.

The 15th century embattled wester tower, which contains two bells, belongs to the previous church. The interior is in an un-ecclesiastical style, a mixture of Greek and Gothic which has a chancel and a nave rebuilt in 1768. The west gallery is reached by a curving spiral stair and the nave is fitted with painted pews.

The east end of the church is set aside as the mausoleum of the Strickland family of Boynton Hall. The mausoleum is inaccessible, but the Strickland tombs can be viewed through the wrought iron barrier behind the altar and on the walls are several monuments of the family. Boynton Hall is a large mansion beautifully situated in a wooded park. It is built of red brick in the Queen Anne style by the Strickland family and was extensively remodelled in the eighteenth century.

The Turkey takes off

Christmas just would not be Christmas without a roast turkey and everyone buys more turkey than they can eat on Christmas Day. The leftovers are usually made into sandwiches and served well after Christmas. But before turkeys were introduced, popular past Christmas delicacies included geese, bustard and cockerel while the wealthier dined out on swan, pheasant, peacock and roasted boar’s head. Henry VIII was the first English Monarch to try turkey as an alternative to the usual Royal fare. The turkey was an instant success, with the upper classes, having far more meat on them than the small Tudor chickens, and being far tastier than birds of a comparable and equally impressive size. So many more turkeys were imported to fulfil the demand. This was the time that the turkey started to become more common in Britain because turkey was cheap, domesticated and fast to fatten up. By the early 1600s the turkey had begun to replace the tougher meats, from the earlier celebratory and feast day birds, of peacock and swan, at major Tudor banquets held by the rich and powerful.

Thanks to William Strickland, around 11 million birds are plucked and stuffed for the roasting pan each year. He was a Yorkshireman and the most important trader and importer of turkeys to Britain.

Left: An illustration of a medieval banquet where the main dish is a peacock
The Rotunda Museum and its Restoration at Scarborough, North Yorkshire

By John Stuart

The Rotunda at Scarborough is one of the oldest surviving purpose built museums in Britain, still fulfilling its original role. This small handsome building was constructed in 1829 and is a Grade II listed building. It overlooks Scarborough’s South Bay and the iron Cliff Bridge that crosses the valley, which was erected in 1827. It is also overlooked by the Grand Hotel which was completed in 1867. This was one of the first purpose built hotels in Europe and one of the largest hotels in the world.

The Rotunda Museum was built to the specifications of William Smith, geologist who lived and worked in Scarborough in the early 1800s. The dramatic Jurassic coastline of Yorkshire offered him an area of geological richness. Smith came to be regarded as the ‘Father of English Geology’ for collating the geological history of England and Wales into a single record. He established that geological strata could be identified and correlated using the fossils they contain. In 1817 he drew a remarkable geological section from Snowdon to London. Unfortunately, his maps were soon plagiarised and sold for prices lower than he was asking. He went into debt and finally became bankrupt. On 31 August 1819 Smith was released from King’s Bench Prison in London, a debtor’s prison. Sir John Johnstone became Smith’s patron and employed him as his Land Steward in 1928 at Hackness.

It was Johnstone, who was President of the Scarborough Philosophical Society which raised the money to build the Rotunda; a geological museum devoted to the Yorkshire coast. He consulted Smith as to the Museum’s design. Still in his twenties, Sir John was an intellectual leader in Scarborough in the 1820s and a staunch supporter of Smith and his ideas. He donated the Hackness stone of which the Rotunda Museum is built. Smith had seen a rotunda in London and instructed the architect, Richard Sharp of York, to follow that design. The Rotunda Museum was built to Smith’s design suggestion and the original display of fossils illustrated his ideas. The fossils and rocks were arranged in the order, in which they occurred, with the youngest in the cases at the top and the oldest at the bottom. The order around the walls reflected the order of rocks on the Yorkshire coast. A section of the rocks on the coast was drawn around the inside of the dome of the building by Smith’s nephew, another geologist, John Phillips. The two wings were added to the building in 1860.

Right: This illustration of the Rotunda Museum and Cliff Bridge which are features of Regency Scarborough is dated about 1850

Photo courtesy NYCC Unnetie Digital Archive
The Collection

The museum has over 5500 fossils and 3000 minerals, which include numerous types of specimens, which were the first of their kind ever to be described and contains one of the finest Middle Jurassic fossil plants in the country. The collection also includes a large selection of Cretaceous fossils from the Speeton Clay and the Chalk, a wide variety of Upper and Lower Jurassic specimens, specimens from the Ice Age such as mammoth teeth and fossils from the Kirkdale Cave and a pristine Carboniferous plant collection. The complete collection was catalogued and conserved in 2007 and the more spectacular specimens are now on display in the refurbished Rotunda Museum. These give some idea of the quality and range of the fossils and minerals that have been found along Yorkshire’s Dinosaur Coast which stretches from Redcar in the north to Flamborough in the south.

Redevelopment of the Rotunda Museum

In May 2006, the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded just under £2m towards the redevelopment of the Rotunda Museum to its original role as a centre of geology for the region. William Anelay Limited was contracted to carry out some essential external stonemasonry repairs and to cover the existing dome roof with a new lead covering. The contract included the demolition of some internal walls and a new build extension to the front of the property in keeping with the original structure. This now provides a new entrance area, offices and toilet facilities and allows access from the path to the building at basement level. The existing spiral staircase was removed and stored, and a new one installed allowing for a lift shaft in the centre. The museum was closed during the restoration and refurbishment period. It was reopened on Friday 9 May 2008 by Lord Oxburgh following a two-year refurbishment, costing £4.4 million. The museum was renamed The Rotunda – The William Smith Museum of Geology.

Above left: The renovated and renamed, The Rotunda – The William Smith Museum of Geology, Scarborough. Above right: Looking down onto the Upper Gallery with the central see through lift shaft

Right: Inside, the dome of The Rotunda Museum
In September 2007 before the extensive restoration work was completed, HRH Prince Charles came to Scarborough and visited the Rotunda Museum and viewed the progress of the refurbishment. Prince Charles is well known for his interest in conservation and the preservation of the nation’s architectural heritage and so he was a very welcome visitor to the project.

Right: This photo shows Prince Charles finding out what it is like to use a masonry tool with Lord Derwent of the Scarborough Museum’s Trust and two of William Anelay’s employees looking on

Left: Prince Charles looking round the inside of the Rotunda Museum during his visit in 2007

The Rotunda Upper Gallery contains a set of unique glass display cabinets that have undergone restoration and have been put back in the museum. The cabinets date back to 1850 and were designed to showcase the work of Smith. They highlight the story of the birth of geology, celebrate the life of William Smith and explain why the museum was built by the Scarborough Philosophical Society. Other cabinets now display items such as a model of George Cayley’s original flying machine and an early steam car model by Sir Edward Harland. Lower levels house artefacts such as fossils, rock samples and minerals. The museum also includes all the interactive technologies demanded of a modern museum. The remarkable space in the central Rotunda Gallery explains the Scarborough that existed in Smith’s day, as well as some of the characters that populated the town at the time. On the first floor is a brand new ‘Geology Now’ gallery, sponsored by Shell. This new gallery focuses on research and 21st century developments and uses the latest multimedia techniques to present geological and environmental research. It is focuses on the scientific processes behind both geology and archaeology with dinosaurs and the Gristhorpe Man. The Dinosaur Coast Gallery concentrates on the nature and geology of the coast from Redcar to Flamborough and includes hands-on experience with fossils.

Left: The Gristhorpe Man, died between 2200 BC and 2020 BC

Rotunda, the William Smith Museum of Geology is open Tues – Sun, 10am – 5pm including Bank Holidays. Closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day.

There is now a yearly admissions fee
The Rotunda museum before major renovations and extensions began

The Rotunda museum after major renovations and extensions
Roman Gladiator Cemetery Discovered at York

By Jeremy Clark

York archaeologists believe that they may have discovered a Roman gladiator cemetery at York. About 80 remains have been found since the investigation began in 2004, ahead of modern building works at Driffield Terrace, Holgate. More than half of them had been decapitated. Experts believe they may form part of the world’s only well-preserved Roman gladiator cemetery. The skulls were found in another part of the grave, not on top of the shoulders. Quite a few skulls had been chopped with some kind of heavy bladed weapon, a sword or in one or two cases an axe, but they were still buried with some care. No mass pits were found, most of them were buried individually.

Right: Archaeologists excavating two of the skeletons at the site in York

Detailed forensic analysis of the skeletons found in the cemetery showed characteristics that they may possibly have once been Roman gladiators. Some of the skeletons bear bite and cut marks that might reflect a violent death. Also one of the most significant items of evidence is a large carnivore bite mark, probably inflicted by a lion, tiger or bear. This is an injury which must have been sustained in an arena context.

Right: Researcher shows how a tiger tooth fits the bite mark in one of the bones

There are not many situations where someone is going to be killed by something like that, and also to have other wounds and be decapitated. So they may have been a gladiator involved in beast fights.

Other important pieces of evidence include a high incidence of substantial arm unevenness, a feature mentioned in ancient Roman literature in connection with a gladiator and some healed and unhealed weapon injuries; possible hammer blows to the head.

The arm irregularity would also be consistent with weapons training that would have already started in teenage years. This is known from Roman accounts that some gladiators entered their profession at a very young age.

Most losing gladiators who were put to death were stabbed in the throat. However, decapitation may have been adopted as a custom in York in response to a prevailing local preference.

Right: Decapitation of a gladiator by the sword, like one depicted by Russell Crow in the film Gladiator
It is believed that many of these skeletons are those of Roman gladiators. So far there are a number of pieces of evidence which point towards that interpretation or are consistent with it. But researchers have made it clear that the gladiator explanation is just their ‘lead theory’ and that more study is required.

The size and importance of York suggested it might have had an amphitheatre, but so far none has been found. Gladiators have been discovered in several other major Roman cities in Britain such as London and Chester. York, then named Eboracum, was established by the Romans in 71AD and boasts a Roman bath and walls. This story has been published in the journal (TYJ 1 Spring 2011).

Nearly all the skeletons, which date from the late first century AD to the 4th century AD, had features consistent with gladiators, in that they were mostly male, strong and above average height. Fourteen of them were buried with ‘grave goods’ to accompany them into the next world.

The most impressive grave to be found was that of a tall man aged between 18 and 23, buried in a large oval grave some time in the 3rd century. Buried with him were what appear to have been the remains of substantial joints of meat from at least four horses, possibly consumed at the funeral, cow and pig remains. He had been decapitated by several sword blows to the neck.

The York cemetery is an internationally important discovery because there are no other potential gladiator cemeteries at this level of preservation anywhere else in the world.
Roman Amphitheatre at Chester

Chester is situated south-west of York and in Roman times York, was called Eboracum, after the Celtic name ‘the place where yew trees grow’ and Chester, was known as Deva, after the Celtic name for the river Dee on which it was located. They were both Roman legionary fortresses and became two principal military bases and towns in Roman Britain. The Roman towns grew up outside the fortresses which were built around the same time in the 1st century. The two fortresses were linked by an east-west Roman road, the route of which went via Manchester. By about 410 both armies in Chester and York had abandoned their fortresses when the Romans retreated from Britain. The civilian settlements continued to be used for a short time but were soon to become completely deserted.

The Chester amphitheatre, which lay outside the south-east corner of the fortress, was built in the 1st century and is the largest known in Britain. It would have been used primarily for military training and drill by the 20th Legion, based at the fortress. It was also used for entertainment such as cock fighting, bull baiting and combat sports, including, classical boxing, wrestling and gladiatorial combat.

Left: Model of Roman Chester, in the Grosvenor Museum. The amphitheatre can be seen outside the south-east corner of the fortress

Right: Roman amphitheatre, Cheshire. Aerial view reconstruction drawing by Peter Dunn (English Heritage) showing what the amphitheatre would have looked like in c.100 AD
It was excavated by English Heritage and Chester City Council in 2004-5 which revealed two successive stone-built amphitheatres with wooden seating. The first included access to the upper tiers of seats via stairs on the rear wall and had a small shrine to Nemesis, goddess of retribution built next to its north entrance. The second provided seat access via vaulted stairways. The two buildings differed from each other and from all other British amphitheatres, underlining the importance of Roman Chester.

The amphitheatre could easily seat 8,000 spectators, gathered to watch a variety of bloody spectacles in the arena, and around it, a sprawling complex of dungeons, stables and food stands were built to support the contests.

Today, Chester’s Roman amphitheatre is a shadow of its former glory which encompasses almost half of the structure, including entrances on the eastern and northern side. Trapped within the modern urban landscape, it is difficult to picture the ancient ruin as the major city landmark that it was more than 1,600 years ago. The amphitheatre is a Scheduled Ancient Monument in the care of English Heritage and managed by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Right: The north entrance. The small building to the right of the entrance was found to contain an altar that served as a shrine of Nemesis, goddess of fate and divine vengeance.

Left: Steps leading down into the arena. At the bottom can be seen a column fragment which originally formed part of an official box above.

Further evidence existence of gladiators in Britain comes from a Roman vase found in Colchester illustrating gladiators in combat.

Right: This Roman Vase dates from around AD 175 and was found in 1848 in a grave at Colchester. On one side it shows hunting scenes and two men baiting a bear. On the other side it depicts four gladiators. In one scene a gladiator is holding up his finger asking his opponent, who is a Secutor, for mercy because he has lost his net and trident. Above is scratched the names of the men, Memnon and Valentinus. The Colchester Vase is one of the finest pieces of ceramic art to have survived from Roman Britain.
Castle Howard, pedestal with frozen gladiator

In the park at Castle Howard, west of the Temple of the Four Winds, is the frozen gladiator with snow piled up on him.

Above: In the summer he is free from the winter snow.