The Yorkshire Journal

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**Charles Dickens – A Christmas Carol**
Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat
Please put a penny in the old man’s hat
If you haven’t got a penny, a h’penny will do
If you haven’t got a ha’penny, then God bless you!

(See pages 16-17 for the story of - The first Christmas card)

Old Christmas Cards often showed idealistic scenes of horses pulling stagecoaches along snowy village streets like the ones illustrated on this page.

In reality travelling on stagecoaches two centuries ago was somewhat different.

Charles Dickens gives an account of his journey to Bowes, situated on the northern edge of North Yorkshire, which illustrates the travelling conditions of the times. (See pages 22-27 for the story of – Charles Dickens)

It was at the end of January 1838 in severe winter conations when he and his friend and illustrator, Hablot Knight Browne, nickname Phiz, caught the Glasgow Mail coach out of London. They had a difficult, two-day journey, travailing 255 miles in 27 hours up the Great North Road, which was covered in snow. They turned left into a blizzard at Scotch Corner and then along the wilds of the trans-Pennine turnpike road.

The coach stopped at about 11pm on the second day at the George and New Inn at Greta Bridge on the A66. Dickens was “in a perfect agony of apprehension” due to the gloominess of the moor and the coldness of the snow. But inside they found roaring fires, excellent bedrooms and “a smoking supper and a bottle of mulled port”.

They travelled at approximately 10 miles per hour and the roads would have been full of potholes. Dickens travelled to Bowes to research the conditions of boarding schools in Yorkshire. The outcome of which was his novel Nicholas Nickleby.

Travellers suffered great discomfort in coaches, they were often crowded together and in winter they wrapped up in many topcoats, shawls, mufflers and rugs. They could not wait for their journey to come to an end and meet their family and friends again.
On behalf of all the staff at The Yorkshire Journal, past and present, we wish all our readers a very Happy and Merry Christmas and all the best for a Prosperous New Year 2013.

**Editorial**

Christmas is once again upon us and the New Year is just around the corner. This winter issue of The Yorkshire Journal marks our third year. We have achieved a completely fresh approach to magazine publishing in the region. Over these three years we have strived to bring together a wide range of creative talent with a high standard of production. Some names of contributors will be familiar to you by now, and their excellent work will continue to appear in the future. We are also keen to encourage our readers to submit their own work.

In this issue Alison Hartley delves into the background of the Ripon Horn Blowing Ceremony. Still on the historical theme Sarah Harrison tells us about the famous Pontefract cakes. Then John Moor recalls some nostalgia over the Selby Toll Bridge on the way to a seaside holiday. Gillian Morris tells the fascinating story of the first Christmas card. Jean Griffiths recollects the macabre and tragic store of Walter Calverley in the early 17th century. A Christmas Carol is one of Charles Dickens’ best known novels, which has become a traditional Christmas story. Jeremy Clark reveals how Charles Dickens exposes the social ills in the early Victorian age in two of his novels Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby. He takes us on a harrowing journey to a Yorkshire boarding school to find out about ill-treatment of pupils.

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  Ripon has an historical past with a Horn Blowing Ceremony every night. Alison visits Ripon and finds out about its past.

- **Pontefract Cakes and Their History**  
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- **The Selby Toll Bridge - On the way to a seaside holiday by John Moor pages 14-15**  
  John recalls a nostalgic trip to the seaside which took him over the Selby Toll Bridge.

- **The First Christmas Card by Gillian Morris page 16-17**  
  In 1840 Henry Cole had the idea of a Christmas Card. Gillian tells the story of why and how it all started.

- **Calverley Old Hall and a Tragedy in West Yorkshire by Jean Griffiths pages 18-21**  
  In 1605 Sir Walter Calverley brutally murdered his two young sons. Jean recollects this macabre and tragic story and explains why it happened.

- **Charles Dickens - A Christmas Carol by Jeremy Clark pages 22-27**  
  But there is much more to these articles, please read and enjoy them. We welcome your comments.

Andrew Simpson
Historical Ripon in North Yorkshire

By Alison Hartley

This summer we had a long weekend in Ripon which is a small but fascinating cathedral city that was formerly in West Yorkshire, but is now located in the county of North Yorkshire. It is located on the River Skell which joins the River Ure on the eastern outskirts of the city. Ripon was founded over 1300 years ago, and is noted for its main feature the Ripon Cathedral. In fact Ripon is one of only two cities in North Yorkshire, the other being York. It is also famous for an ancient ceremony which is performed every night called the Horn Blowing Ceremony. We went to see this and found out that it is one of the oldest ceremonies in England. Mr George Pickles is the current horn blower and we were fortunate to be given one of George’s wooden pennies which, he calls his ‘lucky wooden penny’.

Above Right: British Railways (BR) poster, produced to promote rail travel to Ripon for the Yorkshire Dales. It shows the Ripon Horn blower, blowing his curved horn standing outside the so called Wakeman’s house at the corner of Market Place. He is wearing the Horn blower’s traditional costume of frockcoat, white gloves and tricorn hat. The poster is dated 1960

Ripon of Today

The old city of Ripon is filled with a modern range of shops, packed with contemporary cafés, great restaurants, and real British pubs, whilst still keeping its original beauty that makes Ripon such a popular place. It also has historical buildings and three museums which are the Yorkshire Law and Order Museums. This includes the Courthouse, the Prison and Police Museum and the Workhouse Museum. The Georgian Courthouse was built in 1830 and remains virtually unchanged. Here you can find out about the people who were transported to Australia for stealing as little as a pair of shoes. In the Prison you are invited to sit in a prison cell, hear the door slam shut and imagine the harsh conditions of Victorian prison regimes. The Workhouse Museum is set in the cell block which had originally housed male vagrants in 1854. The museum has recreated the grim atmosphere in which workers were locked in cells at night, and released at daybreak to work for food.

Ripon Market

Ripon has grown up around the large rectangular Market Place which has provided a focus for the life of the town and city. Its right to hold a weekly market and fair was granted by charter in 1108 and a market is still held in the Market Place every Thursday next to the 300 year old Obelisk where the Horn blower sounds his horn at 9 o’clock pm every night, a tradition that has been carried out for years.

Today’s popular market offers fresh fruit and vegetables, flowers, fresh fish, clothes, jewellery, and much more. Other markets are also held here several times a year, including farmers markets, craft fairs and also a French market, where traders come over from France to sell their local cheeses, wines and jams.
St Wilfrid’s Day and the Ripon Fair

Ripon market square also plays host to a fair twice a year. The first is Spring Bank Holiday, where the kids can enjoy a weekend of waltzers, dodgems, arcade games, hook a duck and lots more.

The second fair is for St Wilfrid’s Day. In 1108 King Henry I granted to the Archbishop of York the privilege of holding a fair at Ripon at the Feast of St Wilfrid, and the fair has been held ever since. About 200 years ago it was the custom to dress up an effigy to represent St. Wilfrid and to take it out of the City the night before the procession, so that it could be brought back in triumph on the day. This lasted into the 19th century and in 1844 a woodcut in the Illustrated London News shows the dummy St. Wilfrid on a led horse, accompanied by 2 musicians with another man carrying St Wilfrid’s hat around.

In the second half of the 19th century proper vestments were provided for ‘St Wilfrid’ who was represented by a Ripon citizen. The procession started from the Town Hall and followed a meandering route through the City to finish at the Cathedral. This lasted for 100 years. However, rumour had it that this route was arranged to pass every pub in the City and somehow a superstition arose that it was unlucky for St Wilfrid to pass a pub without calling in for a quick drink!

Today St Wilfrid’s fair is held on the Saturday before the first Monday in August. A parade of themed floats, Morris Dancers, a brass band, attended by Mayor and Mayoress of Ripon, and of course, St Wilfrid, travel around Ripon, waving to the hundreds of onlookers that flock into Ripon to see this marvellous day.

Above: St Wilfrid’s Day parade including Morris Dancers, themed floats, a brass band and ‘St Wilfrid’ riding a horse
Ripon’s Wakeman and Horn Blower

It is claimed that a Royal Charter was given to Ripon in 886, but instead of a written document a horn was presented as a symbol of the charter. The city people decided that the “Wakemen” should put the charter horn to good use. In the Middle-Ages the Wakeman was the original keeper of Law and Order in Ripon and it was his job to stay awake and patrol the areas from dusk till dawn.

The Wakeman kept a watchful eye for any approaching enemy while the rest of the people slept safely in their beds. The first Wakeman in those days needed to be paid for his work, so a tax was imposed on the citizens. The tax was levied according to the position of the house door. If a door of a residence faced onto the market square, or a main thoroughfare of the city it would be considered that the occupiers were well off and were charged four pence per door, per year. If the door was down the side or round the back then the property was considered to be less well-off and they were only charged one penny per door each year. An agreement was reached whereby the Wakemen should sound a horn at the four corners of the market cross each evening at 9 o’clock pm to let the people know that the watch was set and he was now on patrol. If the Wakeman encountered trouble on his rounds he would sound his horn to alert the citizens.

In the late 1500s it was ordered that anyone in Ripon who at any time mistreats, or hinders the wakeman or his brethren with any scornful or opprobrious or slanderous words, shall be punished in the stocks for one day and one night, and if he offend again, to be further punished.

This system prevailed until 1604, when a charter, this time a written one, was granted to the city by James I, who was the first king to reign over a united Britain. It was decided that the time had come to make things more democratic in Ripon. The Wakeman of the day had become a very powerful man and was elected or re-elected annually by 15 of his peers, these being the most influential men in the city.

In the same year a mayor was elected democratically for the first time, voted for by all the people. The first mayor of 1604 was Mr Hugh Ripley who happened to be the last Wakeman of 1603. It is alleged, incorrectly, that he lived in the house which still stands at the south west corner of the market square. Wishing to keep the setting of the watch ceremony alive, the mayor appointed a horn blower to carry out the duty of sounding the horn at the four corners of the market cross each evening on his behalf. This occurs at 9 pm to show he is on duty.

It is said that if the Horn is not sounded to his satisfaction, the ghostly face of Hugh Ripley will appear in the attic window of the Wakemans House and a pestilence and other great tragedies will descend upon the City!

After setting the watch at the market cross, he must then find the mayor of the day, wherever he may be in the city and sound the horn three times in front of him, raise his hat, bow his head and say the words “Mr Mayor, the watch is set”. This is to prove his duty has been done. This ceremony is still carried out every night come snow, rain or shine, at the Obelisk and is one of the oldest still performed in England. After the ceremony visitors who see him at the marketplace are given a lucky wooden penny.

When Mr George Pickles was appointed to the position of Ripon Horn blower in 2004 he thought it would be nice to use the modest fee he receive for the job to finance some small token of appreciation to give to those who take the time and trouble to come and see the Horn blower perform the ancient ceremony of ‘setting the Watch’. George came up with the idea of a wooden penny. The design of the ‘Horn blowers Lucky Wooden Penny’, is of the City Coat of Arms on the front face and some historic text on the reverse. People have travelled long distances to Ripon just to get the Horn blower’s Lucky Wooden Penny and George has given out over 23,000 to date!
Throughout the years Ripon has had many horn blowers, but there are only 5 horns. The original Charter Horn still exists. It is not blown any more and is in safe keeping in the Town Hall where it can be seen. The horn is now covered in black velvet and capped with solid silver and hangs on a wide leather baldric which bears the badges and crests of previous Mayors and Wakemen.

The Charter Horn was replaced by the 1690 horn which is the only Horn the city ever paid for. They were charged six shillings and eight pence which at that time was considered a large sum of money. This second Horn can still be used today if needed. It is a magnificent specimen of craftsmanship from that era, and like the original Charter Horn is also on display on a baldric in the Town Hall.

A third horn was given in 1886, which is a very large African Ox Horn to celebrate 1,000 years of the granting of the first Charter. This is always in the possession of the first Deputy Horn blower who has to be fully equipped and prepared at all times to stand in at short notice should the Horn blower of the day himself be unable to carry out the duty of ‘Setting the Watch’.

Horn number four, is the one used every night by George Pickles the present Horn blower. This horn was given to the City in 1986 to celebrate 1100 years of the granting of the first Charter. It is said to come from the Chillingham herd of wild cattle in Northumberland. The Horn is decorated with copper fittings created by a local craftsman and financed and donated to the City by a local company. It is exquisitely inscribed on the copper fitting around the horn and says ‘This Horn was Presented by Sigma Antiques & Fine Art to the City of Ripon on the occasion of the 1100th Anniversary of the Granting of the Charter’. This is considered by many as the most beautiful of all the Horns.
There is a mysterious horn that has never been blown. This sits atop of the 93 feet (30 metre) Obelisk in market square as a symbol of the City. It is a weather vane and also a sealed time capsule. It was sealed the time before last in 1889 for one hundred years, and it was always said it contained 7 gold sovereigns. It was taken down in 1986, three years before the hundred years was up because urgent repair work was needed to the upper part of the Obelisk. When it was opened up the sovereigns were gone and there was just the bill for the last time repairs were carried out. After this disappointment the Horn was re-sealed in 1986 for a further 100 years and this time there is money inside the sealed Horn. Maundy money given to the City by the Queen is now in the Horn together with a bill for the repairs this time. The bill for repairs in 1889 was 42 pounds and the bill for almost identical repairs in 1986 was 13 thousand pounds. That gives some indication how things have changed over the years.

Each year the ceremony is witnessed by thousands of people from all over the world. At the height of summer there could be up to a hundred people there each evening, and even in the depth of winter there are always some people looking on. Over the centuries the office of Horn blower has been held by countless dedicated men. At present a plaque on the Obelisk lists the names of the Ripon Horn blowers going back over 200 years. The length of service in the role varies widely; some have served for over twenty years, others just a few months.

### The Wakeman’s House

Traditionally, but incorrectly, the Wakeman’s House, which stands at the south west corner of market square, No 33, was the home of Hugh Ripley, last Wakeman and first mayor of Ripon who, it is said haunts it. The house is an oak timber framed building with wattle and daub infill and it is believed to have been a wing of a much larger building originally facing at right angles to its present position. Around 1600, the frontage was changed to face the Market Place by the addition of the oriel windows and a door. The original hall to which it was attached has long since been demolished.

The actually site of Hugh Ripley’s house is in fact a few doors along, where the Ripon Civic Society has placed a green plaque on the Halifax building, which reads “No 37 Market Place, On this site once stood the home of Hugh Ripley, the last Wakeman (1604) and the first Mayor of Ripon (1605). In the 1730s the celebrated architect Sir William Chambers spent his boyhood here. It was the main Post Office from 1860 to 1906 and later for about 30 years it became the popular Lawrence Restaurant and Ballroom”.

Today the Wakeman’s House is a delightful café which serves excellent cakes and home baked scones.
Recent Local History of the Wakeman’s House

At the beginning of the last century the building was so dilapidated that the council said it should be pulled down. It was saved in the 1920s by the then Mayor, William Hemsworth, who had the council pay out £1,200 to purchase and restore the building. Then for nearly half a century it served as Ripon’s local history museum. In the 1960s and 70s it was a tea room and then the Tourist Information Centre. Ripon Improvement Trust took it over in 1990, and it attracted a Heritage Lottery Fund grant for another restoration.

The Wakeman’s House received a grant of £205,000 and the Harrogate Borough Council added a further funding of £69,000 to ensure that this important late medieval timber building was restored to its former glory.

One of the conditions of the grant from the HLF was that the building retained an element of ‘community use’.

So the Wakeman’s House opened once more as a café on 11 November and who better to be the ‘first customer’ than the First Citizen of the City, Mayor Councillor Sidney Hawke. The new tenant Mrs. Tiggy Ferris, along with her business partner, Jane Eccles, now provide home baked and cooked traditional Yorkshire fayre. They also honour their tenancy commitment to provide community facilities as well, so it is also used by artists, schools, voluntary and social groups.

Since the Wakeman’s House opened its doors as a café many more people now enjoy this historic and important building and it is once again a central point in the city.

Ripon’s Obelisk

The Obelisk stands in Ripon’s Market Place; it is visible from most parts of the city and is an easily recognisable landmark. It was built in 1703 to replace an earlier Market Cross, and half of the cost to erect it was borne personally by the then Mayor of Ripon, John Aislabie. The 93 feet (30 meters) high stone Obelisk was designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor. It had wrought iron railings surrounding it which were replaced with four smaller obelisks at the corners when it was repaired in 1781 by William Aislabie, John’s son, who served as an MP for Ripon for 60 years. These four smaller obelisks have also since been removed. At the top of the obelisk are a star and a replica of the Wakeman’s Horn. The plaque on the obelisk implies that it was William who was responsible for the construction! The Ripon obelisk is said to be the earliest surviving free-standing monumental obelisk in Great Britain.
Pontefract Cakes and Their History

By Sarah Harrison

Pontefract is a historic market town in West Yorkshire known for its medieval castle, where King Richard II was supposedly murdered in 1400.

*Right: A true picture of Pontefract Castle, its strength and grandeur before it was sieged in 1648 can now only be seen in this fine painting made in the early 17th century, which is on display at Pontefract Museum. Later the bailey area was used for growing liquorice.*

Pontefract is also famous for Pontefract cakes which have been synonymous with the town for centuries. They are made from liquorice which is an herbaceous perennial plant which comes from the genus glycyrrhiza. This originates from the Middle East and Mediterranean, more specifically Turkey, Iraq, Spain, Greece and is also found in northern China. The meaning of the Greek word glycyrrhiza is ‘sweet root’ and it is the root sap of the plant that gives liquorice its distinctive sweet taste, being some fifty times sweeter than sugar. The liquorice plant can grow to a height of 4.5 feet, 140 cm, and has a blue or violet flower.

*Left: Map of Pontefract showing Monkhill, the site of St. John’s Priory and the Castle*

It is not known who brought liquorice plants to Pontefract, but it was either crusaders returning from their campaigns or more likely Cluniac Monks who founded a Priory near the Castle at Monkhill in 1090, which was dedicated to St John the Evangelist. The Priory had an infirmary for aged and sick monks, which was excavated in 1962-63.
The monks grew the liquorice plants and were very skilled medical practitioners; they would have extracted the sap from the roots of the plant and used it medicinally along with other herbs for easing coughs and stomach complaints. After the priory was dissolved by King Henry VIII in 1538 the buildings were demolished and the site reverted to liquorice fields.

The liquorice plant needs deep soil to grow because the roots can extend to some four or five feet in depth and the soft loam of Pontefract proved to be perfect and is in fact one of the few British places in which liquorice can be successfully grown. The plants did not flower in the colder English climate, but this did not matter because it was the root of the plant that was needed.

It is recorded in 1614 that a round liquorice lozenge was being produced to ease stomach disorders and Sir George Saville applied a small stamp to each round ‘cake’. This was an early form of what would become the famous Pontefract Cakes, although they were still used as a medicine. Large areas of the town and surrounding areas were growing liquorice. Even the castle yard was turned over to its cultivation after the Civil War.

It was not until 1760 that a Pontefract apothecary, George Dunhill, came up with the idea of adding sugar to the recipe. He produced circular liquorice and thus began the production of ‘Pontefract Cakes’ commercially as a ‘sweet’. Within a few years Dunhill’s became one of the most well known English manufacturers of liquorice, and Pontefract would become inextricably linked with the product. The 1800s saw a boom in the confectionery business in Pontefract producing ‘Pontefract Cakes’.
In the 19th century more liquorice factories started up in business, resulting in a shortage of the raw material which was grown locally, but soon the production was in decline. By the end of the 19th century most of the liquorice fields had gone, although it was still grown at Stump Cross in Pontefract until the mid 20th century. Today the liquorice fields have been abandoned. The last liquorice harvest in Pontefract took place in 1966 and the final commercial grower, James Shay, died in 1984.

*Left: Harvesting Liquorice root at Stump Cross, Pontefract in the 1950s*

*Right: Young workers at the Wilkinson’s ‘factory’ Pontefract making Pontefract Cakes in 1905*

The factory was founded in 1884.

At one time there were 13 liquorice factories in the town. Now Pontefract’s remaining two liquorice factories are owned by Haribo, formerly known as Dunhills. The second company Tangerine, formerly Wilkinson’s on Monkhill was the most famous and was sold out to Trebor Bassett. The lack of home grown liquorice meant that it had to be imported, firstly from Spain, which is the origin of the local nickname for liquorice, ‘Spanish’, and later from Italy and Turkey.

**How Pontefract Cakes were made**

The real Pontefract Cakes were made to a special recipe but the basic process included cleaning the liquorice roots, then grinding and boiling them which took four and a half hours. Sugar was added, along with a thickening agent, usually starch, although Gum Arabic was used as well.

*Above left: Rolling a lump of liquorice until it was soft and pliable.*  
*Above right: Pinching off and flattening liquorice on a tray*

*Right: Hand stamping Pontefract Cakes*

This raw mass was allowed to dry and cool for about a week. After that, workers nicknamed ‘Spanish thumpers’ would pull a lump of liquorice, roll it until it was soft and pliable. Then a piece roughly the size of the finished confection was pinched off, and flattened by hand onto a tray. Each tray held about 240 cakes which were stamped with the trademark image of Pontefract Castle that identified it. The pressure applied on the liquorice by the thumper also formed the familiar little ridge around the edge of each piece. It is estimated that a good thumper could stamp between 20 and 25 thousand Pontefract Cakes a day.

When the process of manufacture became automated the ‘thumpers’ went into decline. This was because it was much quicker to produce the sweets by a machine which presses and flattens them in a mould and applies the traditional Pontefract Cake stamp and all at a much faster speed.
Charlie Chaplin’s Old Boot

In the film *The Gold Rush*, 1925 Charlie Chaplin then aged 35, is seen eating one of his boots and laces, which was specially made from liquorice produced in Pontefract, but it is not known for sure which factory actually made it. The scene is where The Lone Prospector and Big Jim have a boot for supper which took three days and 63 takes. Because the boot was made of liquorice Chaplin was later rushed to hospital suffering insulin shock and had to have his stomach pumped.

*Above: Still scenes from the film The Gold Rush, 1925 in which Charlie Chaplin boils one of his boots and shares it with Big Jim for supper*

*Right: Each liquorice cake bears the embossed stamp of a stylised image of Pontefract Castle on one side, which indicates its historic importance of the confection. The castle also connects the liquorice to its former medicinal role*
In the 1950s when I was a young school boy, every year my family went on holiday to the seaside for one or two weeks. One seaside resort that we went to more than any other was Hornsea on the east coast. In those days my father had an old car so we were luckier than others who had to go by train. But I would have loved to have gone by train and always felt left out of being part of the holiday crowd. To me it would have been part of an adventure mingling together with all the other holiday makers. This wasn’t to be, we always went by car and in those days there weren’t so many cars on the road. I cannot remember there being any traffic jams at all.

The journey by road was rather boring with nothing much to see or do, I just wanted to get there. Although I do remember that we had to go across the Selby Toll Bridge because there was no alternative route over the river. This did not cause lengthy tailbacks in those days, but later in the 1960s it often snarled up the entire town. My father did not like paying the toll just to cross the river. I can still recall the toll collector in his brown smock shaking his dark brown leather money bag. He was as keen as mustard not to let anyone through without paying. This is the impression I still have of him, seeing him at work you would think he was the owner being so keen, or was there an ulterior motive!
Another memory I have of the Selby Toll Bridge is the sound of the rickety wooden boards which rattled dreadfully as cars went driving across the wooden bridge.

Left: An engraving of Selby Toll Bridge by N. Whitlock circa 1840. The wooden bridge has been swung to allow a ship with its high mast go through. In the background can be seen Selby Abbey

History of the Selby Bridge

In 1791 an Act of Parliament allowed for a company to be formed and construct the bridge. A company was set up under the name of ‘Company of Proprietors of Selby Toll Bridge.’ Then a wooden Toll Bridge was erected over the river Ouse which opened in the same year. The tolls recorded at this time were, 3 shillings for a horse driven coach to cross, a penny for each cow and a half penny for each person on foot (local people could cross free of charge once each day). There were occasions over the years when the bridge was closed and ferries were used instead. Two of these occasions were when shipping struck the bridge and caused damage. The old wooden toll bridge was in operation day and night, but wear and tear over the years made the wooden bridge unsafe and it was entirely replaced with a new bridge in 1969/70 that still stands there today.

In 1986 the company wanted to raise the toll charges higher and bring them up to date, there were no longer horse driven coaches going across the bridge! After a public enquiry new chargers were set at 7p per vehicle, cars with trailers 14p and 6p per tonne for lorries. There were still concessions for residents who were given a sticker in their car showing they lived locally.

In September 1991 the bridge became ‘toll free’, due to Selby District Council and North Yorkshire County Council buying it with contributions from local business. The total cost was around £748,000. However even though the bridge is free, it is still known locally as the Toll Bridge.

The Selby Toll Bridge has had a colourful history, in the 1980s it was reported that toll collectors were embezzling, with up to £50,000 being stolen. It also seems that it was not uncommon for people to use the bridge without paying tolls and that this issue had to be addressed more than once.

The Selby Toll Bridge was the only crossing of the River Ouse in the Selby area until the Selby bypass opened in 2004, and provided an alternative route over the river.

After we paid the toll and crossed the Toll Bridge we were off once again to Hornsea for a bucket and spade holiday on the sands. The only other attractions for kids in those days, were the children’s boating lake, roller skating and amusement arcade. It was not long before our holiday was over and we were heading back home, once again across the Selby Toll Bridge till next year!

Left: A view of the Hornsea boating lake in the 1950s. In the distance is Carlos’s Italian Café where we used to drink Horlicks and next door was the amusement arcade, all now gone!

The Yorkshire Journal
THE FIRST CHRISTMAS CARD

By Gillian Morris

The festive season is fast approaching and it will soon be time once again when we sit down to draw up our all-important Christmas card list. But to some it is all Humbug! In fact, on average, most people send 46 Christmas Cards each year which makes a total annual sale of about £1bn putting us at the top of the Christmas card market in the world!

So why do we send Christmas cards each year? Well it was all started in 1840 by Henry Cole (later to become Sir Henry Cole) who was a very busy man, working in the Public Records Office in London. He was so busy that he did not have the time to write at length to his relatives and friends over the Christmas season. In Victorian times it was customary to send letters or notes of seasonal greetings to family and friends at Christmas.

In 1840 Henry Cole had an idea to have a card designed with a message on it that could be sent to everyone. He commissioned John Calcott Horsley rector at the Royal Academy to design a special card about the size of an ordinary postcard with a greeting to send to his family and friends at Christmas.

Left: Henry Cole
Right: John Calcott Horsley

Horsley’s design of the first Christmas card was bordered by a trellis, made of rough branches, hung with ivy, grapes and vine leaves divided into three panels. This consisted of a larger centre one and two small side panels. In the two small side panels were figures representing two acts of charity, feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. In the larger centre panel is a picture of Cole with his family enjoying a meal. They all toast the festive season by sipping wine and having a merry Christmas party. Below is the greeting, "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You." These cards were printed in black and white and then coloured by hand.

The Christmas card idea was well received by Henry Cole’s relatives and friends, so in 1843 some 1,000 of these Christmas cards were produced for commercial sale in London for one shilling each making it the first recorded mass produced Christmas card. The printing work was done by Jobbins of Warwick Court, Holborn, London, and hand coloured by a professional colourer named Mason using dark sepia.

The cards were published under Henry Cole's nom de guerre, "Felix Summerly" by his friend Joseph Cundall, of New Bond Street and sold at Felix Summerly’s Home Treasury Office, 12 Old Bond Street, London.
Not everyone approved of the card. Some objected to the picture showing people raising a glass to Christmas, putting alcohol and holy Christmas in one picture. A child drinking a glass of wine was also criticised by many. But to most people it was a good idea and soon caught on. Its popularity may have been boosted because in the same year Charles Dickens wrote and published his ‘The Christmas Carol’.

In 1851 Henry Cole helped to organise the Great Exhibition and was a founder member of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. He was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1875.

This was the beginning of Christmas cards and the following year there were other picture-makers, and the Christmas card was launched on a tide of popularity. It was soon taken up by Charles Goodall of Goodall & Sons, playing-card manufacturers, who also later published visiting cards and was one of the first to mass produce Christmas cards and visiting cards. In 1866 Goodall & Sons published four designs of Christmas cards, showing holly, mistletoe, and robins these may be taken as the forerunners of today’s Christmas card.

Nowadays Christmas card designs can range from scenes relating to the Nativity to pictures of seasonal weather or amusing pictures of Santa Claus. Lots of cards are sold in aid of charities, raising money for needy people or other good causes. People often include a letter in the card updating their friends with news of what they have been doing. Those working and living abroad are often sent cards with the words ‘across the miles’ printed on them.

**Buy one of the First Christmas cards**

An original copy of Horsley’s Christmas card is considered very rare and is now among the most sought after by collectors. In fact it is thought that only 12 original cards still exist today and you can see one of them in the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. An original Christmas card was sold at auction on Saturday 24 November 2001 for £22,500. It was sent by Henry Cole to his Granny and Auntie Char. It attracted a higher than expected bid because it was signed by Henry Cole.

**The meaning of Christmas**

Every year in December we celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ. That is why we call this time of year ‘Christmas’; we celebrate the ‘Mass’, or church service, for Christ. The word Christmas (or Christ's Mass) comes from the Old English name Cristes Maesse - Christ's Mass - and is the celebration of the birth of Jesus. The first recorded observance occurred in Rome in AD360, but it was not until AD440 that the Christian Church introduced a celebration date of December 25.
Calverley Old Hall and a Tragedy in West Yorkshire

It was the scene of one of the most notorious murders in the early 17th century

By Jean Griffiths

Today Calverley is a quiet sleepy village, surrounded by fields in West Yorkshire, but in the early 17th century it became notorious for two murders. The small rural village of Calverley is situated midway between Leeds and Bradford on the A657 road. It is on high ground to the south side of the river Aire. The village has a medieval manor house and a parish church dedicated to St Wilfrid, which has some Norman features, but largely dates from the 13th and 14th centuries. Its tower was added and increased in the 13th to 15th centuries.

Apart from the church, the oldest building in the village is the medieval manor house. Calverley Hall, which is a Grade I listed building, was the home to the Calverley family from the 12th to the 18th century. Two sections of the present building, the great hall and the chapel were probably built between 1485 and 1495. The chapel has a balcony room reached directly from the family apartment in which the members of the Calverley family gathered for services. The rest of the household were expected to stand in the lower area, which maintained the social difference between the Calverleys and their servants. Later additions include a 16th century wing.

The Calverley Family

In the 12th century the Calverley family settled in Calverley and remained there for many years. They were a prosperous Yorkshire family. The best known is the most tragic, Walter Calverley (nearly all the sons in the Calverley family are called either Walter or William). He inherited his family estates at the age of twenty-one and was considered a very eligible bachelor.
In the summer of 1599 Walter married Phillipa Brook. She was closely involved with London’s high society and her family were very much a part of the aristocratic and royal circles. The marriage surprised many, as the couple were from such different social backgrounds. They had their first child in early 1601 and named him William. A second son, Walter, was born at Calverley Hall in October 1602 and a third son, Henry was born almost exactly a year afterwards.

Later on in the mid-17th century Walter Calverley (born 1629) married Frances Thompson, heiress of the Thompson estate at Esholt. In 1709 their son Walter built a new mansion house Esholt Hall, and the family left Calverley. The village of Esholt is in fact situated only a few miles north-east of Calverley between Shipley and Guiseley. After his death in 1749 the family sold the Esholt estate, and in 1754 they sold the Calverley properties to the Thornhills.

In more recent times the hall has enjoyed humbler tenants. The chapel was let out as a wheelwright’s shop and in 1981, Landmark Trust bought and restored the hall, which they let out as holiday accommodation.

**The Calverley Tragedy**

In April 1605 the hall was the scene of dreadful violence which formed the basis of “The Yorkshire Tragedy”, an early Jacobean stage play wrongly ascribed to William Shakespeare. It was first printed in 1608, and is now generally thought to have been written by Thomas Middleton. To discover what really happened in Calverley Hall that April is quite difficult. The contemporary press differ in many aspects of the story and recount scandal and sensationalism. Many of the legal documents from the trial have vanished. Also the account of the murders differs significantly from the version found in the play A Yorkshire Tragedy.

Focusing on the harsh reality of what actually happened at Calverley Hall on April 23, 1605 and not the high drama of A Yorkshire Tragedy, it would seem that Sir Walter Calverley suffered some form of mental breakdown. He rushed through the house in a fit of rage and brutally murdered his two young sons William and Walter, the former four years old and the latter 18 months. He tried to stab his wife but the attempt failed as his knife glanced off the metal stays of the corset which she was wearing. Nevertheless the lady fainted with shock and Calverley, who thought that he had killed her, rode off to find his youngest son who was out with his wet nurse. After a frantic ride the horse stumbled and fell over, trapping Sir Walter beneath it, this was fortunate for his third infant son, Henry and gave time for Sir Walter’s pursuers to catch up with him.

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It is possible that he intended to include his own death in his plan, if so, he was only partially successful. It was
to be in August 1605 that he would die. His pursuers tied the unfortunate Calverley up to prevent him from
causing any further harm. He was then taken to Wakefield prison and brought to trial at York where he was tried for murder.

At his trial he refused to plead. Many people think that Walter Calverley had recovered his sanity to some
degree by this point in the trial. He would have known that, if he had been found guilty of murder his property
would have been confiscated by the Crown. By refusing to plead he ensured that the property passed down to
his remaining child Henry.

He was therefore found guilty, not of murder, but for contempt of court, and suffered an extremely barbaric
punishment. In August he was sentenced to “death by pressing” in York Castle. Calverley was placed on a
heavy oak table. A wooden door was placed on top of him and then the executioners piled stones on top of the
door until the life was crushed out of him.

It is also said that an old family servant was present at the execution. Moved by Calverley’s pleas to get the
torture over with, he began to quickly heap up more stones on the door. For this act of mercy in giving his
former master a swift end, the servant was hanged for interfering with the course of justice.

Left: This drawing serves to illustrate “death by pressing”. It depicts Giles Corey being pressed with heavy stones after also refusing to enter a plea. He was accused of witchcraft in 1692.

Walter Calverley suffered the same punishment for refusing to plead.

The most famous case in Yorkshire was that of Roman Catholic martyr St Margaret Clitherow, who (in order to avoid a trial in which her own children would be obliged to give evidence) was pressed to death on March 25, 1586, after refusing to plead to the charge of having harboured Catholic (then outlawed) priests in her house. She died within fifteen minutes under a weight of at least 700 pounds (320 kg). Her story has been published in the journal (TYJ 2 Summer 2012).

Right: A pen and ink illustration of Calverley Hall

Sir Walter Calverley’s estates escaped forfeiture and descended to his surviving son Henry who later became a royalist. He was the last of the family to reside regularly at Calverley Hall. Henry married, first, Elizabeth, daughter of John Moore of Grantham; secondly, Joyce, daughter of Sir Walter Pye. He died on 1 January 1661, and was succeeded by a son Walter, who was knighted by Charles II in consideration of his father’s loyalty.

Sir Walter Calverley’s Ghost

The story of Walter Calverley is still remembered in the village today. Legend has it that his ghost can still be seen riding through the village and walking into the Hall. There seem to be no recent sightings though.
Calverley Hall

Calverley Hall is a stone and timber-framed house of many periods from circa 1400 to post 1651. The earliest phase to survive is a timber-framed solar wing of four bays of circa 1400. It was extended and rebuilt in stone circa 1485. Contemporary with the hall is a chapel that was built circa 1485-96. Later additions include a dining room and kitchen which probably postdate 1651.

Below: Four reconstructed drawings of possible phases of Calverley Hall from c. 1400 to post 1651.

Above: Plan of Calverley Hall showing all possible building phases from c. 1400 to post 1651.
Charles Dickens – “A Christmas Carol”

By Jeremy Clark

A Christmas Carol is one of Charles Dickens’ best known novels, which has become a traditional Christmas story. Dickens wrote A Christmas Carol in 1843 finishing it by the end of November in time to be published for Christmas on the 19th December. Disagreeing with his publishers, Dickens financed the publishing of the book himself. He ordered lavish binding, gilt edging, and hand-coloured illustrations, by John Leech. Then he set the price at 5 shillings so that everyone could afford it. This combination resulted in disappointingly low profits despite high sales. In the first few days of its release the book sold six thousand copies and its popularity continued to grow, whilst receiving immediate critical acclaim.

The plot of A Christmas Carol is about Ebenezer Scrooge who is a penny-pinching miser. He cares nothing for the people around him or mankind, his only interest is making money and not spending it. He particularly dislikes Christmas which he describes as “humbug” a word for nonsense, but it is also a word used to describe a hard striped peppermint sweet. Scrooge is visited, on Christmas Eve, by the ghost of his former miserly partner Jacob Marley who died seven Christmas Eves ago.

Marley suffering the consequences of his deeds in the afterlife hopes to help Scrooge avoid his fate. He tells Scrooge that he will be haunted by three spirits. These three spirits, the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future, succeed in showing Scrooge the error of his ways. He is transformed on Christmas morning and sends a Christmas turkey to his long-suffering clerk, Bob Cratchit, and has a splendid Christmas day with his nephew, Fred, whom he had earlier scorned.

Scrooge’s new-found kindness continued. He raised Cratchit’s salary and promises to assist his family, which included Bob’s crippled son, Tiny Tim. In the end Dickens reports that Scrooge became ‘as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew’.

In A Christmas Carol Charles Dickens reveals the plight of the poor, particularly the children and in his writings he exposes many of the social ills and abuses in the early Victorian age. He uncovers in his novel Oliver Twist, workhouse injustices and in Nicholas Nickleby ill-treatment of pupils in a Yorkshire boarding school.

Dothelboys Hall and Nicholas Nickleby

In February 1838 Charles Dickens went with his friend and principle illustrator, Hablot Knight Brown, nickname Phiz, to visit schools in Yorkshire. He wanted to research stories about the sometimes harrowing conditions pupils experienced in boarding schools.

Fifteen years earlier a story appeared in a newspaper with the headline ‘Cruelty of a Schoolmaster’. This was in October 1823 when William Shaw, the headmaster was being sued by the parents of boys at his Academy in Bowes (then in North Yorkshire) for gross neglect leading to injuries to the eyes of the boys. Two civil cases were heard before juries at the Guildhall in London. In the first case, which was heard at some length, Mr. Owen Jones of London was suing over the state of his son Richard’s eyes and the total blindness of his youngest son William. In the second case, which was concluded swiftly, Mr. Ockaby was suing in connection with injuries to the eyes of three of his sons.
William Jones, 11, told the court about life at Bowes Academy. The pupils washed in a long trough, like horses drink out of, they had to share two towels a day, which was for the whole school. They ate meagre unappetising rations and slept five to a bed in a 30-bed dormitory. Their first job every morning was to de-flea their beds with quills and if they did not catch all the fleas they were beaten by the ushers. On Sunday, they had pot-skimmings that the school called broth for their supper, in which there was vermin. The ushers offered a penny for every maggot discovered but on finding them, the ushers would not pay them.

About nine months after William Jones had been at the school, his sight was affected; he could not see to write his copy. Mr. Shaw threatened to beat him if he did not write his copy. The next morning Jones was sent to the wash-house where he remained for a month, by which time he was completely blind. He was removed to a private room, where there were nine other boys who were totally blind. A doctor was sent for; his name was Mr. Benning from Barnard Castle. Jones stayed in this room two months before the doctor discharged him, saying, that he had lost one eye, and should preserve the other. Jones had lost one eye, but he could not see with the other. He was then taken back to the washhouse, and never saw the doctor again. According to Jones Mr Benning used to look over the boys eyes, and turn them away again. He never did any thing else, no medicine or medical treatment was administered. He just came to look at them. In March Jones was taken home.

William’s elder brother Richard, by then about 14, told a similar story and introduced a further woe of itching. His eyes became infected during Christmas 1820, they were blood-shot but he could see a little; and never quite lost the sight in either of them. William’s eyes were very bad till he came home in March.

After Jones had testified against the masters and been cross-examined, three other boys gave corroborating evidence. Three surgeons gave evidence in which it was generally agreed that the boys had received inadequate medical treatment and that conditions at the school were sufficient to have originated or aggravated the inflammation of the eyes. An eye specialist opined that the complaint yielded readily to early treatment in young subjects and that, if properly applied, there was much advantage to be derived from timely topical applications in the early stages of the disorder.

The case came to a close with a considerable number of healthy boys and their parents testifying as to the general good management of the school, in respect of morals, feeding, clothes and education.

After closing speeches from counsel, the judge summed up the case and the jury withdrew. After only half an hour the jury returned finding Mr Shaw guilty of gross neglect, he was ordered to pay damages of £300. The next day, Ockaby’s case against Shaw in respect of alleged injury to his three sons was heard before the same judge. Within minutes of the case opening, Shaw realised that this case was likely to go against him as well, so consented to such a verdict and agreed the same level of damages. Altogether Mr. Shaw paid out £600 in damages; this was a huge amount of money in those days which is equivalent to a quarter of a million pounds in today’s money. The judge commented that there was nothing to impeach the general conduct of Shaw in the management of the school. So after the court cases Mr Shaw returned to Bowes to continue running his Academy. Life evidently returned to normal and the bad publicity did not deter parents. Then in 1838 Charles Dickens took a hand.

It was to investigate such outrageous stories that on Wednesday, January 31, 1838 in a very severe winter that Dickens and Phiz caught the Glasgow Mail coach out of London. They had a difficult two day journey through a bleak midwinter landscape covering 255 miles in 27 hours up the Great North Road, turning left into a blizzard at Scotch Corner and then along the wilds of the trans Pennine turnpike road.

The coach stopped at about 11pm on the second day at the George and New Inn at Greta Bridge on the A66. Dickens was ‘in a perfect agony of apprehension’ due to the gloominess of the moor and the coldness of the snow. But inside they found roaring fires, excellent bedrooms and ‘a smoking supper and a bottle of mulled port’.

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The next morning, a small, open, horse-drawn carriage took them into Barnard Castle, where they took rooms at the King’s Head, a grand coaching inn in the Market Place which is now a residential care home. He introduced himself to a local solicitor, Richard Barnes, posing to be acting for a widow who wished to place her son in a Yorkshire school. Mr Barnes outlined the local options and then Dickens went for a walk.

Charles Dickens’s friend Charles Smithson a Malton solicitor had supplied him with a letter of introduction in a fictitious name. It also referred to a little boy who had been left with a widowed mother who did not know what to do with him but thought of sending him to a Yorkshire school. In this way Dickens obtained local information and was able to complete his book at the age of 26.

He visited a school run in a top room by a Mr. McKay. This man had been recently sacked as an usher at William Shaw’s Academy in Bowes by Mr. Shaw and fuelled by revenge, had tales to tell of his former employer. After Dickens had listen very carefully to these stories about Mr. Shaw and his court cases in London some 15 year earlier Dickens was determined to meet Mr. Shaw and see his academy.

Before returning to dine at the King’s Head Dickens inspected just one more school in Startforth over the County Bridge. That evening to Dickens’ surprise Mr. Barnes came to the King’s Head and in a broad accent pleaded with him to stop the widow sending her son to a Yorkshire schoolmaster. Dickens wrote down his exact words ‘I’m dom’d if ar can gang to bed and not telee, for the weedur’s sak, to keep the little boy from our schoolmasters’ and wrote him into Nicholas Nickleby as John Browdie, a straight-talking Yorkshire hero.

The next morning, Dickens headed for Bowes. His carriage dropped him at the Unicorn, where he wined and dined before walking along the main street to Mr Shaw’s Academy. He knocked on the door and Mr. Shaw himself answered. It seems however that Shaw had been warned that a young London writer was asking awkward questions and dredging up old court cases that were best forgotten. He did not let him in but Dickens had seen him and spoken to him.

William Shaw’s Academy became Dotheboys Hall, and the real William Shaw became the fictional Wackford Squeers who so dreadfully abused the boy Smike whom Nicholas Nickleby had befriended. As Dickens stood in the doorway of the Academy he noticed that Mr. Shaw ‘had a slight scale covering the pupil of one of his eyes’. He worked this into his character of Squeers who ‘had but one eye’.

The visit was sufficient to help Dickens create a novel, so he returned to the King’s Head, dined and left next morning for Darlington and thence via stagecoach to York and London.

Within two months the first instalment of Nicholas Nickleby was published, it was the third novel by Charles Dickens and like his first two novels was serialised between March 1838 and September 1839, with his public waiting eagerly for the next month’s instalment. Nicholas Nickleby was published in book form in October 1839.
The outcome of Nicholas Nickleby

There is no doubt that Dickens intended the headmaster Wackford Squeers to be a portrayal of William Shaw; equally, Dotheboys Hall was Bowes Academy. Whether these portrayals were entirely fair is another matter altogether. Dickens had a passionate or spiteful dislike of these northern schools, as he admitted in the preface of the 1848 edition of Nicholas Nickleby; ‘These Yorkshire schoolmasters were the lowest and most rotten in the whole ladder. Traders in the avarice, indifference, or imbecility of parents, and the helplessness of children; ignorant, sordid, brutal men, to whom few considerate persons would have entrusted the board and lodging of a horse or a dog; they formed the worthy corner-stone of a structure, which, for absurdity and a magnificent high-handed laissez-aller neglect, has rarely been exceeded in the world’.

Shaw stood no chance of salvaging his reputation. In the prefaces to both the 1839 and 1848 editions Dickens referred - without mentioning Shaw explicitly - to the earlier court records, thereby heading off any possibility of his being sued by Shaw for libel. This time the bad publicity clearly did take its toll. Shaw’s last advertisement for his Bowes Academy appeared in The Times in July 1840.

Dickens’ reading public of Nicholas Nickleby was horrified and outraged when they read of the alleged conditions that schoolboys endured in Yorkshire schools in the fiction novel and at the supposed callousness of parents who dispatched their children to such institutions. The outcry was so great that the Bowes Academy and a number of other boarding schools were forced to close. However, it must be remembered that Nicholas Nickleby is a work of fiction. William Shaw’s family, and in particular his great-great-grandson Ted Shaw, has always defended his character’s integrity

Left: Nicholas astonishes Mr. Squeers and his family

William Shaw threatened to take legal action against Dickens. However, he decided against this move and to end his career as a schoolmaster. By the time of the 1841 census (June 1841) Shaw, still in his late fifties, was in fact no longer a schoolmaster but living with three of his children as a gentleman of independent means. A few years later a school commissioner wrote that, ‘I have wholly failed to discover an example of the typical Yorkshire school with which Dickens has made us familiar.’

William Shaw died in Bowes on 10th January 1850 at the age of 67. He was buried in the nearby churchyard of St Giles where his headstone can be seen to the left of the church door and as close to the church as any other fine, upstanding, community figure. He shares the family burial-plot with his own son who died in 1837, aged only 24.

Right: William Shaw’s headstone in the churchyard of St Giles

An interesting fact of the court case is that there was no mention of unjustified flogging, apart from one reported threat by Shaw. It would seem that Shaw’s principal misfortune was that his school, fell prey to what was clearly a highly contagious eye disease. This was probably Egyptian ophthalmia (so named because it was first noted in British soldiers in Egypt some twenty years earlier and now known as trachoma). Better hygiene would have mitigated the extent of the outbreak but quite possibly the way the disease was transmitted was not yet widely understood and quarantining the worst affected boys was seen as the natural response. If, as it seems to have been the case, Shaw himself subsequently contracted the disease, then none was free of risk.
Dickens’ childhood was not a happy one like many of those portrayed in his novels, owing to his father, John Dickens who lived beyond his means and his inability to stay out of debt. This eventually led to his imprisonment in Marshalsea debtor’s prison in Southwark London in 1824. To pay for his board and to help his family, Dickens was forced to leave school and work ten-hour days at Warren’s Blacking Warehouse, on Hungerford Stairs, near the present Charing Cross railway station. Here he earned six shillings a week pasting labels on pots of boot blacking. The strenuous and often cruel working conditions deeply affected Dickens for the rest of his life which led to his indignation at the cruelty that children suffer at the hands of society.

*Right: Illustration by Fred Bernard of Dickens at work in a shoe-blacking factory after his father had been sent to the Marshalsea, published in the 1892 edition of Forster’s Life of Dickens*

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**The Bowes Academy Today**

The elegant two storey building has now been renamed Dotheboys Hall and converted into seven private flats. It is a long L shaped building, set at right angles to the road, at the far west end of the village and was formerly a late 18th century coach-house before it became Bowes Academy. Now it is a listed building and not open to the public but the house and lawns can been seen from the road.

*Left: Dotheboys Hall as it looks today*
Left: A postcard of the early 1900s when Dotheboys Hall was used as a café

Below: Two similar views of Dotheboys Hall, on the left, how it looks today and on the right a photo taken in about 1947 when it was still being used as a café

Left: Map showing location of the village of Bowes, now in County Durham, but in 1838 when Charles Dickens visited Bowes it was on the northern edge of North Yorkshire. The Pennine Way goes through Bowes which takes in many of the historical sites in the area.

Right: Dotheboys Hall, in deep winter, covered in snow
Richmond covered in Snow

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