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Fireworks and Bonfire Night
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A wooden sculpture on the Chevin, Otley

This wooden sculpture was carved by Shane Green, a local sculptor, and is titled 'Cradle' which was intended to represent a protector of the environment. Notice the colossal hands wrapped around the vulnerable leaf.

A timber sculpture trail representing different periods in the Chevin's history is outlined by Susan Horton on pages 10-17.
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Above: Stathes on the east coast in North Yorkshire

Cover: Fire Works Poster

Editorial

As the autumn nights draw in we have tried to provide some welcome warmth and cheery reading. We start off our journal with a stimulating story looking at the disappearing customs associated with the celebrations of the 5th of November. One of these bygone traditions is children begging ‘a penny for the Guy’ on streets from passers-by along with street bonfires. The demise of Yorkshire’s manufacturers of fireworks is also explained in this fascinating story. Then, we go along the Otley Chevin Heritage Time Trail. On this circular route are nine striking timber sculptures that have been created. Each timber sculpture represents a different period in the Chevin’s history, go back in time as the trail is walked. A nostalgic story is of Alan Bennett’s first television play for the BBC, ‘A Day Out’. The story is set in 1911 just before World War I and follows an Edwardian Yorkshire cycling club on a day trip from Halifax to the ruins of Fountains Abbey. The play was filmed at various locations in Calderdale in 1972. Some of these locations have dramatically undergone changes which are outlined in the story. Willie Howe, or Willy Howe, is a large Neolithic round barrow in East Yorkshire. Over the years it has been associated with stories and legends. The most famous one is about a fairy banquet and a gold cup. This story attempts to make some sense of the stolen fairy gold cup legend in relation to gold cups that have been found in barrows in southern Britain. Also included are the two girls, Frances Griffiths and her cousin Elsie Wright who in 1917 claimed to have taken photographs of real life fairies.

In the Autumn issue:

- Fireworks and Bonfire Night by Sarah Harrison pages 4-9
  Sarah looks at the disappearing customs associated with the celebrations of the 5th of November.

- The Otley Chevin Heritage Time Trail by Susan Horton pages 10-17
  The Otley Chevin Heritage Time Trail consists of nine timber sculptures that go back in time. Susan explains the history behind them walking the trail.

- A Nostalgic Look at Alan Bennett’s ‘A Day Out’ by David Reynolds pages 18-25
  Times have changed along with some of the locations since ‘A Day Out’ was made in 1972. David looks at these changes and the cast who played the cycling club members who have sadly pasted away.

- The stolen fairy gold cup at Willie Howe in East Yorkshire by Jeremy Clark pages 26-31
  Jeremy attempts to make some sense of the stolen fairy gold cup legend and explain the history and excavations of Willie Howe.

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

Andrew Simpson
By Sarah Harrison

A generation ago it was customary; in the weeks leading up to the 5th of November, for children to make life-sized effigies of Guy Fawkes, using old clothes stuffed with newspapers, a mask for a face, and often an old cap or hat. The children would then take their homemade effigies of Guy Fawkes out onto the streets. They were wheeled out in old prams or carried and leaned against walls. The children would beg ‘a penny for the Guy’ from passers-by, but were obviously expecting much more than just a penny; the money would be spent on fireworks or sweets. This custom has all but disappeared along with street bonfires which mark another change in the factors which have affected how we celebrate the 5th of November. In fact burning effigies of Guy Fawkes on bonfires is a relatively new custom. Dummies have been burned on bonfires as long ago as the 13th century, initially to drive away evil spirits. Following the gunpowder plot of 1605, the focus of the sacrifices switched to Guy Fawkes’ treason. The tradition started early in the 17th century but it was effigies of the Pope which were burned at first to mark the gunpowder plot. It was not until 1806 that people started burning effigies of Guy Fawkes instead.

There was also a time when families celebrated Bonfire Night with or without a small bonfire in their own back gardens, where fireworks were set off. Father would light the blue touch paper at one end of the garden, setting off rockets carefully placed in empty milk bottles, roman candles, Catherine wheels pinned to a wooden stake or fence. At the same time the children waved sparklers in their gloved hands watching in awe the colourful fireworks.

Left: A Standard Fireworks poster of the 1930s, showing a family in their garden with father setting off the fireworks for his children.

Courtesy of Bob Hryndyj, Graphic Design, Black Cat Fireworks, Huddersfield

In fact fireworks have been inseparable from the celebration of the 5th of November since 1605. But the first fireworks were probably made about 2,000 years ago by the Chinese. These were fire crackers which played an essential part to Chinese festivities which included weddings, births, religious festivals, and to scare away evil spirits. Gunpowder was probable developed in China because of the ready availability of potassium nitrate (saltpetre) one of the essential ingredients, and used domestically in the curing of meat.
Before long, the knowledge of fireworks began to spread to the west. It is believed that Marco Polo, on one of his many trips to China transported this invention to the Middle East where European Crusaders brought it to England during the 14th century. Fireworks then rapidly became a form of entertainment.

In England a Franciscan monk and Scholar, Roger Bacon (1214-1294) is believed to be one of the first Europeans to study gunpowder. He recorded his experiments which involved the uses of a mixture that was very inadequate by today’s standards but was recognisable as gunpowder. His formula was very low in saltpetre because there was no natural source available, however it did contain the other two essential ingredients of gunpowder, charcoal and sulphur.

The first recorded use of fireworks in England was at the wedding of Henry VII in 1486. They became very popular during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and they were so much enjoyed by the Queen herself that she created a ‘Fire Master of England’. James II was also pleased with his coronation display that he knighted his fire master. Shakespeare mentions them in his plays and pyrotechnic effects were used in the productions. In fact, the miss-use of pyrotechnics was the cause of the fire which destroyed the original Globe Theatre.

Information on how to make fireworks has long been available and a number of books on the subject have been published from 1635 to 1833. In the nineteenth century many Fireworks in England were home-made by amateurs, especially for the 5th November. This meant that during the run-up to Bonfire Night people whose main employment lay elsewhere got involved in the production of fireworks as a sideline. As a result many fatal ascendants and explosions occurred during the manufacturer of these early fireworks. This encouraged the Government to take steps in tightening up the safety of the fireworks industry and to regulate both the manufacture and sale of fireworks. This in turn led to purpose-built premises for the manufacture of fireworks.

The firms of Brock and Pain in southern England were to enjoy a long existence as firework manufactures, as did Standard Fireworks in Yorkshire. There were also a host of lesser manufacturers, such as Lion, Wessex, Wilder’s, Rainbow, Wizard Astra, Excelsior and for a short while Guy Fireworks. Their products rapidly assumed the characteristics of modern factory production, with a wide range of choice, attractive packaging and advertising.

However, Standard Fireworks built up a reputation for quality and reliability and must be considered the most recognisable and most popular of all British firework makers. In their time Standard give firework-lovers some of the most memorable firework names and labels. In the 1950s and early 1960s they sold selection boxes for half a crown 2/6 twelve and a half pence in today’s money, upwards. In fact only the selection boxes and sparklers were packaged, everything else was sold loose. These loose small fireworks were tame in comparison with today, but there was a wide variety which included rockets for one old penny up to fifteen shillings each, bangers and electric sparkers (7, 10 and 16 inches long).
Later on the output from their Huddersfield factory was truly vast, covering every single type of consumer and professional display used for public displays. In their prime Standard produced fireworks and designs that are still recognizable and identifiable even if the textual element of the design is removed, such was the effectiveness of their artwork. Traffic Lights are instantly identifiable purely by the stark black and white design and the three central spots of colour. Harlequin also, its swirling geometric pattern of blue and red immediately recalled.

**Left: A selection of Standard fireworks that were sold loose**

Right: A 1950’s poster of selection boxes

In 1975 the law changed the age from 12 to 16 for the purchase of fireworks because of firework related injuries which were unacceptably high. Erratic flight fireworks including jumping crackers were also phased out, bangers were dropped and ‘new bangers’ only sold packaged. Small and medium sized fireworks were not to be sold loose.

**Left: A banned jumping cracker**

**The Rise and Fall of Standard Fireworks**

Standard fireworks were founded by James Greenhalgh, a Huddersfield wholesale draper in 1891. Like others engaged in fireworks business in the 19th century, James had seen that there was money to be made selling fireworks through his drapery business in the weeks before 5th November. James’ manufacturing business had begun in a very small way, worked alongside his continuing wholesale drapery business. The fireworks that he sold were in the main made by outworkers, usually local coal miners supplementing their income. The fireworks business proved to be a successful venture with James’ four children Edward, Richard, Kate and Ruth so that they eventually became involved.

**Right: James Greenhalgh the founder of Standard Fireworks**

It was soon realized that a suitable and safe manufacturing site was needed. So in 1910 an old stone quarry at Crosland Hill on the outskirts of Huddersfield was purchased. The site was ideal as it provided all the space required and had purpose built gunpowder stores used previously in the quarrying business. A factory was started and the business expanded and became Standard’s headquarters.
During the First and Second World Wars production switched to munitions work and the factory became an essential part of the war effort. The post-war years brought further expansion and the company showed a steady improvement in both turnover and profit and continued to provide considerable local employment.

Below: Publicity from a previous era in the history of Standard Fireworks

In 1988 Standard bought Brocks Fireworks Ltd. This led to all firework activity being transferred to the Huddersfield site making Standard one of the largest employers in the Yorkshire region with over 500 workers. By the end of 1990 the company was the only major fireworks manufacturer in the United Kingdom.

Fireworks Safety

Standard Fireworks had excellent relations with public bodies in educating the public in firework safety. The company was particularly proud to have taken part in a unique production of a Bonfire Night safety video to promote safety and enjoyment of Guy Fawkes celebrations.

The End of Standard Fireworks

However, this prosperity was not to last and by 1997 firework making was over forever at the Standard’s Crosland site, their home of over 70 years. In 2001 Standard was bought out by Chinese-based Black Cat Fireworks and all firework manufacture switched to China spelling an end to production in the UK.
Towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century many Yorkshire fireworks companies both small and large, started up in business. Most of these companies were run by enthusiastic firework lovers who happened to make a living, often only just, from their passionate interest. Some however, did not last very long like Tasker’s of Bradford, other companies survived and became successful in the manufacture of fireworks for many years. All have now vanished leaving only their brand names in advertising material in evidence of their existence which has become memorabilia.

The Excelsior firm actually started life sometime prior to 1909 as Oswald Bradley and Co. Ltd, in Ripon, Yorkshire, before relocating firstly in 1911 to Freshfield on the Lancashire coast south of Southport, before moving for the final time to the outskirts of the Victorian seaside resort of Southport in 1913 and becoming known thereafter as Excelsior Fireworks. It was a name for which they would become rightly famous. From its Russell Road factory the business produced a wide and very respected range of retail fireworks right up to its closure in 1971 when its then owner, Fredrick Bradley, Oswald’s son, retired, with no-one else seemingly willing to guide the dwindling company through the quagmire of anti-fireworks feeling which grew around that time.

Guy’s started out under the title Comet Fireworks in 1946 as the result of the efforts of a school chemistry teacher named Hugh Allen. After a couple of years the name was changed to Guy’s and they carried on trading from their Leeds based factory until their termination in 1957. There was an ill-fated attempt during the 1980s to bring this brand name back from the dead, but it failed.

Jessop’s fireworks were started up by Mr. Allen Jessop in 1875 at Lepton, Huddersfield; he brought in his sons, Ben, Humphrey, Eli and Elliot to help run the factory. After Allen’s death in 1880, sibling rivalries caused a split during the 1890s resulting in two new companies being formed in the same area. Elliot continued to run the original firm of Allen Jessop & Sons, Humphrey and Eli worked together to run their own company of Jessop Brothers. The fourth son, Ben, joined forces with a budding firework maker named Harry Kilner to start Jessop & Kilner Fireworks. They remained in business until the early 1900s when Harry Kilner left to start his own Yorkshire Firework Company which later became Lion Fireworks. Eventually Jessop Brothers were purchased by another long established Yorkshire based firework concern, H. Shaw & Son, who had been making fireworks since 1876. In 1914 Ben Jessop sold what was left of his half of the company to the locally based and rapidly growing Standard Fireworks. By 1917 not one of them was left trading.

The Lion brand of fireworks, complete with its eye-catching logo of a Lion leaping through the O of the name was owned through its entire seventy-five year history by the Kilner family. It started out early in the 20th century under the leadership of Harry Kilner following his separation from partnership with Ben Jessop. Trading initially as The Yorkshire Firework Company, the name changed to Lion in 1936 which became one of Yorkshire’s most famous and well loved firework brands.

Left: A Lion’s fireworks poster dating to 1938 with its famous Lion leaping through the O of the name

Courtesy of Bob Hryndyj, Graphic Design, Black Cat Fireworks, Huddersfield
The business grew to produce a wide range of very good quality fireworks from sparklers to rockets. After the war the company thrived and continued to sell a variety of fireworks and selection boxes. However, with the extra changes of new safety legislation in the late 1960s plus the economic downturn in the early 70s, the company began to struggle and finally ceased trading in 1973.

*Right: A selection of Lion fireworks that were sold loose*

Riley’s Fireworks was established by Michael Riley, an Ossett man in 1844. Over the years Riley’s extended with the result that by the early 1920s they were regarded as one of the largest firework making firms in Britain supplying successive generations of schoolboys with delightful fireworks. Their works covered an area of several acres off Wakefield Road. However, in August 1927 there was a huge explosion at the Flushdyke factory, Ossett which killed Arthur Riley, the proprietor and two employees which resulted in completely destroying the factory. This tragedy ruined the Ossett business and caused it to close overnight.

Tasker’s is yet another of the many Yorkshire firework makers, this one being based in Bradford during the 1930s, the only decade they appear to have existed.

**The Reason for Bonfire Night**

It all came about because of the persecution of Catholics under the rule of King James I, a Protestant. He failed to grant more toleration to Catholics, so a group of Catholic gentlemen led by Robert Catesby conspired to blow up the House of Lords during the State Opening of Parliament on 5 November 1605. The plan was called Gunpowder Plot but it failed to assassinate the King. One of the plotters most associated was Guy Fawkes who was born in Yorkshire in 1570. He had military experience fighting in the Netherlands with the Spanish army. It was his job to keep watch over the barrels of gunpowder that had been placed in the cellar beneath the Houses of Parliament and to light the fuse.

It was probably Francis Tresham one of the plotters who betrayed the conspiracy. He had a brother-in-law, Lord Monteagle, to whom he sent an anonymous letter ten days before the opening of Parliament, warning him not to attend Parliament.

During a search of the House of Lords at about midnight on 4 November 1605, Guy Fawkes was discovered guarding 36 barrels of gunpowder, enough to reduce the House of Lords to rubble, and arrested. He was tortured and questioned about the other plotters. To start with he didn't tell the soldiers anything about the plot. But, eventually he started to tell the truth. His fellow conspirators fled but many were killed or arrested. At their trial on 27 January 1606, eight of the surviving plotters, including Guy Fawkes, were convicted and sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered.

Gunpowder Plot was commemorated for many years afterwards by special sermons and other public events such as the ringing of church bells, which have evolved into the Bonfire Night of today. However, it is not a public holiday.
The Chevin is the name given to the ridge on the south side of Wharfedale situated about 16 kilometres north-west of Leeds, overlooking the historic market town of Otley.

It is largely covered in attractive woodland, heathland and grassland with massive rock outcrops towering above the surrounding land. The highest point of the Chevin is ‘Surprise View’ which gives magnificent extensive panoramic views across the Wharfe Valley and has an adjacent car park.

The Chevin is divided in two by the East Chevin road and links the Dales Way and Ebor Way. It also has a number of footpaths and bridlepaths, and is popular with walkers, runners, riders and climbers.

Friends of the Chevin Forest working in partnership with Leeds City Council’s Parks and Countryside Committee with support from National Lottery’s Heritage Lottery Fund have produced a visitors’ Heritage Time Trail guide on how the Chevin has changed through time. Along about a 3 kilometres trail are nine striking timber sculptures that have been created, each timber sculpture represents a different period in the Chevin’s history, which go back in time as the trail is walked. The timber sculptures have been created by local sculptor Shane Green who is head of art at Prince Henry’s Grammar School in Otley. The sculptures have all been carved from mature wood which came from fallen trees around Leeds in the Great Storm of 1987. The timber is from sycamore, beech, oak and ash trees and some are about 350 years old. They were taken over to the Chevin and carved on site. Shane made the sculptures large with an average height of 1.83 meters for impact and so that they did not deteriorate quickly with time. The point of a carving blade and a chainsaw were used to produce the decoration. Shane has also made sketch drawings of the sculptures which are illustrated in the Heritage Time Trail guide.
THE HERITAGE TIME TRAIL

The car parks closest to the start of the time trail are the Shawfield car parks on East Chevin Road. The circular route is about 3 kilometres long and will take about an hour and a half for most people to complete finishing back at the start. The conditions of the paths is pretty good but there are two steep, but short sloping sections and some paths can be muddy in wet conditions, so good foot wear is recommended. The trail is a bridleway which means horses, cyclists and walkers can all use it. There is a free leaflet with a map to accompany this trail available from Otley library and also from the White House café which has its opening hours displayed on the notice boards near the car parks. Parking is at the upper or lower Shawfield car park, opposite the Cheerful Chilli café, on East Chevin Road. If parking at the upper Shawfield car park, enter the woodland turning left at a notice board and follow the path for about 50 meters until you come to the start of a tree lined track known locally as Chippendale Ride. You will see two notice boards side-by-side which is the starting point of the time trail. One has information about the Dales Way Link and the other has “Welcome to Chevin Forest Park” written on a map board. Proceed along the main track of Chippendale Ride for about 200 meters until you come to a timber sculpture of a bike on your left hand side, this is the first of nine sculptures.

Sculpture No. 1 is entitled Bike and Climber

The bike on this sculpture represents the modern day use of The Chevin for recreation. Every year The Chevin attracts half a million visitors, they come to enjoy the different forms of recreation. Cycling, horse-riding and walking are enjoyed by many, but running and wildlife-watching are also very popular.

Rock climbing and bouldering, which is just climbing on rocks without the use of a rope, have also become very popular activities on The Chevin. Caley Crags is the most used area and is located below Keepers Wood alongside the Leeds Road.

This part of the Chevin was known as the Danefield Estate and was owned by the Fawkes family since the 1783. It was managed for deer and timber production and also for producing millstone for local corn mills.
In August 1944 Major Legender G.G.W. Horton-Fawkes of Farnley Hall decided to give the Danefield Estate to the people of Otley, as a memorial to those from the Wharfe Valley who lost their lives in World War II. This act of generosity saw the Danefield Estate become open to the public for the first time. Then a Chevin Forest Park was created. All of The Chevin was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 1989.

The next sculpture can be found after crossing the Holbeck Bridge about 50 meters on the right.

**Sculpture No. 2 is Walking Boot and Wildlife**

This sculpture once again represents recreation activity on The Chevin, mainly walking but also the many different kinds of wildlife that The Chevin supports such as animals and plants. Within the woodland are roe deer, nuthatches and the great spotted woodpeckers which can be seen. The bird symbol on the car park signs and notice boards is a ground-nesting bird called a Woodcock. The bird symbolises the delicate balance between people and wild life. It needs undisturbed areas of woodland floor to breed and lay its vulnerable eggs. But being a bird that nests on the ground amongst bracken it is at risk from dogs running through the woods off leads and cyclists or walkers leaving the main paths and trampling on its eggs. The Woodcock still breeds on remote parts of The Chevin where there are fewer visitors. There is currently a good balance between people and wildlife on The Chevin and this balance should be maintained.

The famous painter Turner often painted in the Otley area, one of his watercolour paintings is ‘Woodcock Shooting on Otley Chevin’, 1813. It was painted near Caley Crags. It shows a hunter shooting at a Woodcock which flies above a path across a steep slope. Trees crowd in on both sides. Turner’s painting suggests that woodcocks were still present in this particular part of the Chevin, but not so today. His painting is, in effect, used to monitor wildlife, adding a different angle and relevance to his artwork.

If you walk on the lower slopes of Danefield in the spring you will see a wonderful English woodland display of bluebells, wood sorrel and yellow archangel.

There are also lots of paths for walkers to explore and a couple of long distance walking routes pass through the site such as the Ebor Way which links the North York Moor at Helmsley with Ilkley along the a 112 kilometre route, and the Dales Way Link which connects Leeds with the start of the Dales Way in Ilkley over a 30 kilometre route before continuing for 135 kilometres through the Yorkshire Dales to Bowness in the Lake District. Also there are two Otley walkers welcome routes that connect Otley Town to The Chevin.
The next sculpture is about 300 meters along the Chippendale Ride, on the left.

**Sculpture No. 3 is entitled Hanna the Bull Elephant**

It is of an Elephant with an artist’s palette and an easel on the back. In 1810 whilst staying at Farnley Hall as a guest of his friend and patron Walter Fawkes the world famous artist Turner witnessed a thunderstorm passing over The Chevin. The impressions of this and his sketches in the area lead to his painting ‘Hannibal Crossing the Alps’ first exhibited in 1812. Turner’s imagination made The Chevin stand in as a substitute for the Alps. He visualised an army of armoured elephants and war-torn soldiers striving to cross the rocky snow slopes of The Chevin.

The painting shows Hannibal in the distance on an Elephant making his way up the valley whilst the snow rolls in a great vortex all around him.

*Below: Turner’s famous painting, Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps. Tate Gallery*

From here you can look down towards Otley between the trees and see a grand looking house which is Farnley Hall, it is located to the east of Otley town on the north side of the River Wharfe. Turner frequently stayed at Farnley Hall between 1808 and 1820 where he undertook a number of drawings and paintings from The Chevin or looking at it from the Hall.

Continuing along Chippendale Ride for about 100 metres, look out for a chair on the right, Keepers Woods is on the left and Memorial Plantation is on the right. A memorial stone commemoration to the people of Otley who fought in the Second World War is half way along.

**Sculpture No. 4 represents a Chippendale Chair**

Thomas Chippendale was born in nearby Otley in 1718 and became a famous furniture maker of distinction in London. There is no known connection between him and The Chevin, but in 1968 a line of trees was planed along what is now called Chippendale Ride and consists of the types of trees that he would have used for furniture-making such as Hornbeam, Cherry, Lime, Sweet Chestnut and Norway Maple.

There is a tradition that as a young apprentice he made the dolls house at Nostell Priory and also worked at Farnley Hall. The story of Thomas Chippendale has been published in journal (TYJ Summer 2010).
The result of Chippendale’s book “The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker’s Director” first published in 1754, his business became immediately known to a wide circle of potential clients. A life size statue of Thomas Chippendale stands in the market town of Otley, next to the old Prince Henry’s Grammar School that he once attended.

About 100 meters further along Chippendale Ride, on the right is a deer sculpture.

**Sculpture No. 5 is Caley Hall and Deer Park**

Caley Hall was an impressive house built sometime in the early 1500s on land near the River Wharfe below the Danefield Estate. By the time of the 1780s land enclosures, the Fawkes family owned Caley Hall and adjoining land. In the early 1800s there would have been game including Red Deer, goat’s, wild boar, wild pigs and exotic animals such as zebras on this part of the land, which became known as Caley Deer Park. Caley Hall was probably used as a hunting lodge at this time by the Fawkes family. When the Leeds Road was built in 1840 it separated Calay Hall from the rest of the Deer Park. This in turn led to Calay Hall being demolished in 1964. The deer today on The Chevin are native wild Roe Deer and are not part of any deer park.

From here there is a short walk down a track that leads to the site of the gamekeeper’s cottage. It was most likely built in 1819 and first occupied in 1820. The only illustration of the cottage that is known to exist is a painting done by the late Reginald Rawling a copy of which can be seen by the remains on the interpretation panel. In early 1914 the last tenant of the cottage was asked to leave and the cottage boarded up and it was demolished in the 1925.

Continuing along the path for 100 meters looking for a Roman Chariot this is on the left.

**Sculpture No. 6 is entitled Roman Chariot**

This sculpture is on the eastern end of Chippendale Ride, it is of a Roman chariot. However, no Roman finds have been made on The Chevin. A military Roman road ran along the top of The Chevin that connected the garrison settlement of Ilkley (Olicana) to Tadcaster (Calcaria) and would have had significant strategic importance. It may also have been used as an ancient track prior to this. The route of this road is to the south of Yorkgate Road but it is difficult to see today unless close inspection of aerial photos is made and then only a faint line across farm land can be seen with a standing stone known as the Bull Stone on its route.
The name Chevin may come from the Celtic word ‘cefn’ meaning a ‘ridge’, or ‘ridge of high land’. In the late Saxon times the name was changed to Chevin.

After the Romans left England and until the land enclosure acts of the 1780s it is likely that The Chevin was used as common land by local people for its valuable resources such as bracken and wood. Open grass land would have been used for livestock grazing. Stone was quarried extensively through the medieval period from the numerous quarries which was used for local buildings, roof slates and millstones.

Just after the Roman Chariot turn right, walk up hill along the path for about 300 meters to the next sculpture nestled back from the path at the edge of the woods on the left.

**Sculpture No. 7 is Bronze and Iron Age**

The developments of stone and metal hand tools led to the ability of nomadic people to clear areas of trees and cultivate the land for food. They are able to settle down and live in more permanent dwellings. This marks the start of agriculture that began in the late Stone Age and continued through the Bronze Age and Iron Age.

On The Chevin, sites of hut circles and enclosures have been discovered on the Danefeld Estate. They were possibly occupied at various times before and shortly after the 2nd century AD which was well into the Iron Age. Although the sites have not been excavated a shard of pottery has been found of this date. It is likely that livestock such as sheep were kept in the stone and earth enclosures.

There are also a number of rocks across The Chevin that have cup-and-ring markings on them such as the isolated Knotties Stone located near Surprise View. Although very eroded the carving consists of a double cup mark surrounded by four large concentric rings plus two lines radiating from the inner ring, which form a pattern similar to the rare ‘ladder’ design found on Rombalds Moor. These date from the Late Neolithic to Bronze Age periods 2,800BC to 500BC. However, little is known about what the prehistoric rock-art means.

The story of Rock Art has been published in the journal (TYJ Autumn 2010).
Turn right to follow the path directly opposite the sculpture

**Sculpture No. 8 is Stone Age Steve**

This 2.13 metres high sculpture depicts one of the earliest inhabitants of The Chevin. About 8,000BC the area was explored by Palaeolithic hunter-gathers who followed the herds of migrating animals mainly elks and red deer. They would have hunted them with arrowheads that were made from flints.

The nearby tree plantation has been called Flint Wood because a number of flint tools were found when the soil was ploughed up before the trees were planted. Flint Wood is on the opposite side of the park to Stone Age Steve, who is holding stone-tipped spears. The flint tools found include knives, scrapers and arrowheads which may indicate that the high areas of The Chevin were used on a regular basis. At the base of the sculpture can be seen carved shapes of some flint tools.

**Continuing westwards along the path looking out for the last sculpture on the right**

**Sculpture No. 9 Goniatite**

The rocks visible across The Chevin are grit stones formed 315 million years ago and composed of sands and muds that were laid down by rivers on the edge of a large continent that was near the equator. The sculpture is of a Goniatite which would have only grown to 50mm and swam in the sea during the Carboniferous period. The Goniatite had a shell the size of a large coin and the eyes were on the sides of its head to give it an almost a 360 degree view of the aquatic world all around it.

The Goniatite fossil reminds us that the Chevin was once covered by water.

There is also a geology trail suitable for anyone interested in learning how the landscape was formed over millions of years. A guide for the trail, which has a map of the routes, is available free from Otley library and The White House café.
The Heritage Time Trail can be taken on most days of the year and there is also a Chevin Forest Park Heritage Audio Trail to accompany the leaflet which can be downloaded at: chevinforest.co.uk/downloads/.

If you have an mp3 player, you can listen to this whilst following the trail on the Chevin for a fascinating insight into the history of the Danefield Estate.
A Nostalgic Look at Alan Bennett’s ‘A Day Out’

By David Reynolds

Alan Bennett’s first television play for the BBC, *A Day Out*, was directed by Stephen Frears and produced by Innes Lloyd in 1972. It was one of the last black and white films to be made before colour came in and has a duration of 49 minutes. The idea came from an old photo of a cycling club just before World War I that Alan saw, which inspired him to write the play. The story is set in 1911 just before World War I and follows an Edwardian Yorkshire cycling club on a day trip from Halifax to the ruins of Fountains Abbey. The play was filmed at various locations in Calderdale. On the way they discuss their lives and concerns, blissfully unaware of what will happen to them and the country over the next few years.

The film begins on Sunday May 17th 1911 and by the Halifax Town Hall clock it is 7.55am. When the play was filmed the Town Hall was black caused by many decades of soot deposits from the industrial mills which were dependent on coal. In 1972-3 the stonework of the Town Hall was cleaned.

In fact Alan Bennett’s *A Day Out* was not the first time the Halifax Town Hall was used. In 1958, the film *Room at the Top* was filmed in the Town Hall.

The first member of the cycling club to get ready is Gregory Wilkins, played by Philip Locke, he gingerly tiptoes down the hall, picks up his bike and inadvertently alerts his mother. He panics and rides off. At Ackroyd’s home, Arthur played by John Normington, feeds his rabbit while his wife Mrs Ackroyd played by Helen Fraser, breaks off from her child’s teething to prepare sandwiches for her husband. Giving his wife a kiss he rides off to the sound of the Town Hall clock chiming eight. Meanwhile, Mrs Shorter, played by Maggie Jones, is berating her husband Mr Shorter, played by James Cossins, over the time he spends with the cycling club, saying it’s not fit for grown men and especially not on a Sunday. After visiting the toilet his wife helps him on with the jacket of his new suit, and then he rides off on his bicycle content to be away from his wife.
Mr Shuttleworth, played by David Waller, is the founder of their cycling club and is also the owner of a Jeweller’s shop. Outside his shop he is helped on his bicycle with the aid of a chair and by his shop assistant. This part of the story was filmed in Woolshops, Halifax. Mr Shuttleworth’s shop is part of a row of shops separated by an archway entrance into Riley’s Yard, renamed the Woolpack Yard. These are listed buildings and were saved from being demolished in the 1970s redevelopment of the area. The archway entrance now leads to the bus station.

Also to survive the redevelopment was the ‘Tudor’ building at the top of Woolshops; it is the last remaining half-timbered framed building in Halifax town centre. It also serves as a landmark to the many visitors to the town. Although it has a date stone of 1670 the building probably dates to the early part of the 17th century. Many will remember it as Paul’s Gentlemen’s outfitters with black woodwork. Today it is a coffee shop with red lead coloured woodwork, which according to English Heritage is the correct colour.

Right: Woolshops, Halifax, This row of renovated shops on both sides of the Woolpack Yard are listed buildings and survived the 1970s redevelopment of the area

Left: Mr Shuttleworth standing under the arched entrance to the then Riley’s Yard with his bicycle. In 1972 when the film ‘A Day Out’, was made the shop on the right was Riley Brothers Tailors and Outfitters. The premises on the left were vacant and were specially made into a Jeweller’s shop for the film

Right: The same buildings renovated in the 1970s redevelopment, photo taken in 2013
Arthur cycles past Mr Shuttleworth’s shop and the plump Percy Baldring played by Paul Shane calls for Henry Boothroyd a socialist, played by Brian Glover who is pumping up his tyre set off together. All but one of the cyclists meets up at the small Akroydon Square Park, Boothtown, just north of Halifax. At the centre of the park stands the spire-shaped Victoria Cross Monument. Mr Shuttleworth the founder of their cycling club and Mr Shorter sit together on a park bench studying a map and discuss the route which is considered to be an ambitious one. They plan to cycle to Fountains Abbey, which is a distance of some 35 miles from Halifax. In 1911 the cyclist would not have to contend with the motor car, the roads, such as they were, apart from the odd horse and cart were free from traffic. The other cyclists include balding Eric Gibson, played by Dave Hill and Mr Tetley, played by Don McKillop and his slow-witted son Ernest Tetley, played by Bernard Wrigley, ride together on a tandem. The members discuss the absence of Edgar Appleton, played by Paul Greenwood and decide to let him catch them up. Edgar has in fact overslept; he is woken by his landlady, played by Anna Wing and rushes out with his bike.

Right: Akroydon Square Park, with the spire-shaped Victoria Cross Monument at the centre
At last the club set off cycling through Halifax, as they push their bicycles up hill Gregory’s mother spots him and the other cyclists tease him. They ride over a bridge and once again push their bicycles up another hill and pause outside a large gated mansion house where young Gerald Cross played by Paul Rosebury, joins them. Gerald has a bad foot, but this does not handicap him. Outside Gerald house is where Edgar catches up with them. They then ride into the countryside, where they stop for a break. Mr Shuttleworth denies that he’s tired, and they all take in the view of the valley, discuss changes to the countryside, concluding that for all the rise of industry and urban development it will be a long time before they build up England.

The journey recommences and Percy, who usually brings up the rear, is gradually overtaken by all the cyclists, then the tandem has a brief accident. This looks real because Ernest and his dad really did fall off the tandem, after a visit to the hospital the scene was improved. The club stops at ‘The Sportsmen’ for a drink. Henry the socialist explains his theory that the reason England has never had a revolution is that drink and Methodism have combined to distract the population through intoxication and visions of Heaven.

After their refreshments they cycle on through a woody glade and then back onto the road. At this point Mr Shuttleworth notices a short cut and checks it on the map, but any time saved is lost after he has a puncture outside a church where the congregation can be heard singing. Arthur goes to get a bowl of water from a nearby house and Gerald quietly sits down on the grass to begin reading a book in which Henry takes an interest. Edgar decides to walk by the house to say hello to the woman, played by Jane Wood that gave a bowl of water, only to quickly walk away when his sees the appearance of her burly husband, played by Paul Luty. Shorter repairs the puncture and lectures to the others on the technique.

The puncture repaired, the club cycles on passing a pony and trap ridden by two women. Edgar makes eyes at the younger one, but her mother’s disapproval is all too clear. They walk their bikes through a cow field, which Mr Shorter complains is in a disgusting state and then puts his foot in some cow pat.

As Henry sings they finally reach their journey’s end, the ruins of Fountains Abbey. Mr Shuttleworth appreciates the idyllic view but all that Percy can say is that his bum is numb. In the abbey grounds by the River Skell that runs through the ruins, they have lunch. However, Eric does not have much to eat so he suggest that they should all share, this is rebuked by Mr Shorter. Meanwhile, Gregory worries about being missed in church, and is mocked for his concern. On the Abbey wall Eric carves his name and is reprimanded by Mr Shuttleworth. Arthur has a guide book of the abbey and discusses the lives of the monks who once lived there with Henry the socialist who disagrees with the way they lived.

The dissolution of Fountains Abbey came in 1539, the monks were pensioned off and the abbey buildings and lands were sold. Between 1598 and 1611 Fountains Hall was built with the stone from the abbey ruins. Before the cyclists visited Fountains Abbey, in 1911 some excavations and repairs had been undertaken to parts of the abbey, which was privately owned and not open to the public. Essential repairs to the ruins continued and parts of the silted bed of the River Skell within the abbey were cleared. In 1966 the abbey was placed in the guardianship of what is now English Heritage. Today Fountains Abbey is owned and managed by the National Trust, but the preservation of the abbey buildings is still the responsibility of English Heritage.

Left: The Lay Brothers Infirmary at Fountains Abbey where the club members played cricket. The church tower can be seen in the background

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The cyclists see two young ladies, Connie played by Sharon Campbell and Louisa, played by Rosalind Elliot, who appear on the other side of the bank. As they cross the river on steppingstones Edgar tosses a stone in the water, splashing them. They laugh. He tosses another one, splashing both Mr Shuttleworth and Mr Shorter. They find this less amusing. Continuing walking around the abbey grounds Henry gives his opinion to Arthur that there will never be another war. Then on the lawn Arthur feeds a squirrel, watched by Henry, Eric mischievously captures it with his coat to the annoyance of Arthur. In another part of the abbey Edgar goes off with Connie and Louisa, watched by Mr Shorter which inspires him to give vent to misogynist views. Back at the River Skell Ernest sings as he paddles his feet in the water amusing Henry.

After the game keeper, played by Fred Feast, shoots a bird, Gerald goes for a wander coming across a lavish country garden where a family are taking afternoon tea on the lawn. At the edge of the garden through the trees appears a girl, Florence, played by Virginia Bell, she is of the same age as Gerald and has stung her hand on a nettle.

Meanwhile in a secluded spot Edgar seduces Connie as Louisa complains that she’s bored, and threatens to go, calling for Edgar in the process. He is bored, and threatens to go, he declines, and continues regardless. Back at the abbey ruins the remaining club members decide to play cricket, but Mr Shorter is not too sure pointing out that it is consecrated ground. Arthur corrects him by explaining that it is where the monks had their dinners. The members let Mr Shorter bat first as Gregory complains that they will get into trouble for playing in the abbey ruins. When Mr Shorter is bowled out he disputes the decision and storms off. This brings the game to an end; Eric in his frustration throws the ball at Ernest. In fact throughout the film Eric is horrible to slow-witted Ernest.

The club gather together with their bicycles ready for setting off back, calling for Edgar in the process. He is late again and quickly ends his liaison with Connie, saying that he must go, we are a club but Connie is unimpressed. The members slowly cycle off so that Edgar can catch them up. As they cycle through the grounds of the abbey to the road, Florence rides her horse through the abbey ruins to the road where she hopes to see them leave but is disappointed to have missed them, in particular Gerald. Further along the road pushing their bicycles up a hill, Mr Shuttleworth pauses, and has to sit down, he is clearly unwell. It is obvious that he has done too much but recovers, the others look concerned. They take it slowly cycling through fields and on roads which is mainly downhill homeward into the sunset.

The ending scene of the film had to be changed; it should have been a series of idyllic sunset shots of the cyclists going home from the Abbey along the roads that they came along. However, due to the inclement weather this was imposable. So the scene at the War Memorial was a substitute.

In the substitute scene it is November 11th 1919, anniversary of Armistice Day, the surviving club members meet again in the Akroydon Square Park around the Victoria Cross Monument from where they began in 1911. For the purpose of the film the monument at the centre of the park is now a War Memorial where a congregation stands around singing a hymn. This includes Mr Shorter, Gregory and his mother, Gerald and Mr Shuttleworth, all looking much older. After the hymn the congregation disperse leaving only the four men. Mr Shuttleworth points out the cycling club’s badge in their wreath to Mr Shorter on the steps of the memorial as Gregory and Gerald look on. Then they also leave taking away their own thoughts and memories with them.
The Cast of the Cycling Club in ‘A Day Out’

Sadly most of the cast that played the cycling club members in ‘A Day Out’ have pasted away they are as follows.

James Cossins who played Mr. Shorter died in 1997 aged 63. He became widely recognised as the abrupt, bewildered Mr. Walt in the Fawlty Towers episode “The Hotel Inspectors”.

John Normington played Arthur Ackroyd, he died in 2007 aged 70. John joined the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1963 and played many Shakespearean roles.

Philip Locke played Gregory Wilkins; he had a slightly odd eye, died in 2004 aged 76. Philip is possibly best known for his role as Vargas in the 1965 James Bond film Thunderball.

David Waller played Mr Shuttleworth, he died in 1997 aged 76. David is best known for his role as Inspector Jowett in the television series Cribb. He also appeared as Stanley Baldwin in ITV’s Edward and Mrs. Simpson.

Paul Shane played Percy Baldring, and was born in Rotherham, South Yorkshire. Paul was a comedian and actor, best known for his television work, in particular playing the part of Ted Bovis in Hi-de-Hi! BBC’s sitcom in the mid 1980s. At the time of making ‘A Day Out’ Paul was a club comic, he died in 2013 at the age of 72.

Brian Glover who played Henry Boothroyd was born in Sheffield, Yorkshire but grew up in Barnsley. Brian’s first acting job and probably his most memorable one is playing Mr Sugden, the comically overbearing sports teacher in the film Kes. He was still a professional wrestler at the time of making ‘A Day Out’. Brian died in 1997 at the age of 63.

Don McKillop played Mr Tetley; he died in 2005 aged 66. One of his notable roles includes Bert the Landlord in the Doctor Who fifth and final serial of the eighth series.

Paul Rosebury played Gerald Cross; he has appeared in a number of TV series, and died in the late 1980s.
Akroydon Square Park

Akroydon Square Park, Boothtown, Halifax was originally developed in the 1860s by mill owner and philanthropist Colonel Edward Akroyd to provide improved living for his mill workers ‘wherein they might enjoy to some extent the beauties of nature close to their own homes’. The park is about half acres in area and was opened on April 29 1876 by Mrs Akroyed in the absence of her husband who was travelling in the South of Europe.

Akroydon Square Park Garden forms the centre of Akroyd’s model village. In the centre of the park stands the spire-shaped Victoria Cross Monument, in memory of Edward Akroyd. It was designed by Swinden Barber and is based on the Queen Eleanor Cross. The inscription on the cross is in gilt mosaic work but time has since somewhat dimmed the original lettering which reads ‘Erected as a monument of Christian reverence for the emblem of the Cross; and of loyalty to our sovereign lady Queen Victoria by Edward Akroyd, the founder of Akroydon, 1875. Fear God, Honour the King’. On one side of the cross there is the figure of Queen Victoria and a shield of Akroyd arms.

The garden was originally fenced and locked, but each house holder of Akroyd’s model village had a key to one of the gates of the park in return for an annual subscription of five shillings towards the upkeep. After the death of Colonel Edward Akroyd in 1887, the Akroydon Park along with the Akroyd’s estate was bought by the Halifax Town Council and is now opened to the public.

The ornamental fountain that was incorporated in the cross has been filled in. The Akroyd model village, including Square Park was designated a conservation area in 1976.

Above: The inscription on the cross in gilt mosaic

Left: The figure of the Queen Victoria on the cross
The layout and design of Akroydon Square Park with the Victoria Cross Monument as its centre piece included paths that lead to and around the cross, flower beds and trees bordered the park. A number of seats were positioned at strategic areas so that people sitting on them could appreciate the splendour of the park. The Square Park, although it is not really a square in shape but a rectangle had a boundary wall and four gates positioned at each side of the square.

Right: Part of the 1880 OS map illustrating the original layout and path system of The Akroydon Square Park

Left: The cyclists meet up at the Akroydon Square Park

Left: At the Park Mr Shuttleworth the founder of their cycling club and Mr Shorter sit on a park bench studying a map and discuss the route
The stolen fairy Gold Cup at Willie Howe in East Yorkshire

Having a drink with the fairies

By Jeremy Clark

Above: Willie Howe in winter when the mound can be seen through the trees.
At the centre is a deep crater giving the appearance of an extinct volcano

Willie Howe, or Willy Howe, is a large Neolithic (3500-2000 BC) round mound or barrow situated 1.7 km south-east of Wold Newton and about 2 km west of Burton Fleming in East Yorkshire. It is close to the border with North Yorkshire (NGR TA06167234) and is approximately 16 km north-west of Bridlington and 10 km south-west of Filey. The intermittent Gypsey Race, which is a stream, threads its way eastwards through the valley before reaching the North Sea at Bridlington. Over the years Willie Howe has been associated with stories and legends. The most famous one is about a fairy banquet and a gold cup and there are a number of versions of the story. This legend is thought to have originated by William Newburgh an historian, as a real event. William Newburgh was born in Bridlington in about 1136 and died in about 1198. He became an Augustinian Canon at Newburgh priory and took an interest in popular legends of the area.

According to William Newburgh the full account of the legend goes -

“One day a countryman went to visit one of his friends at Burton Fleming and spent the evening drinking beer. It was close to midnight when he bade farewell to his host and mounted his horse and rode for his home at Wold Newton. His path took him close by a large prehistoric burial mound known as Willie Howe, and as he approached he thought he heard the sound of music. He brought his horse to a walking pace and finally to a halt. There was no doubt about it, from somewhere nearby came strains of the sweetest music he had ever heard.

The countryman walked on tiptoe across the grass and was astonished to find a door which he had never seen before. The door was open, and from within came a strange light. He approached cautiously through the doorway and discovered a brightly illuminated hall. In this magnificent hall was a company of fairies enjoying a banquet. The man stood for a while spellbound, and then a fairy carrying a shining cup of wine came towards him.

The cup was of curious design and he longed to taste its contents. But the countryman had heard from childhood that it is dangerous to eat or drink with fairy folk. After a moment’s hesitation he snatched it, poured out the wine and ran off with the cup as fast as he could. He jumped on his horse and set spur while countless angry fairies, with whirring wings and wild cries pursued him, never leaving him till he reached his own gate at Wold Newton. The cup was found to be more remarkable by day, being fashioned of some unknown metal. This rare cup was not for an ordinary man to keep, so the fairy cup was made a present to King Henry I, (1100-35) for it was in his reign that this event occurred. Henry subsequently presented it to the Queen’s brother, David, King of Scotland and it was deposited for many years among the treasures of his kingdom. Many years afterwards, Henry II (1154–89), visiting the Scottish court, was shown this wonderful cup. He begged it of William the Lion (1165-1214), who then occupied the Scottish throne. But no one knows what happened to this rare fairy cup after King Henry II had had it”. From Essays on archaeological subjects by Thomas Wright, (1861) and from The everyday book’ by William Hone, 1827

From then till now the fairies of Willie Howe have never been seen or heard.
Description and Excavation of Willie Howe

Willie Howe is the largest round mound or barrow on the Yorkshire Wolds and the scale of it cannot be appreciated without walking around it and climbing up the steep sides of the mound. It is recorded as being 15 metres in height with a diameter of 50 metres. In the past Willie Howe has been dug into many times, but the first antiquarian to take an interest in the mound was Lord Londesborough (1834-1900). On the 5th October 1857 he dug a large trench from one side of the barrow to the centre, but after 5 days of digging failed to discover any remains or artefacts. It was considered that it would take another week or more to fully excavate the barrow but because of the disappointing results, it was decided to abandon the excavation.

However, the barrow was re-excavated more methodically by Canon William Greenwell (1820-1918) in 1887 just 30 years after Lonesborough’s attempt. It is interesting to note that amongst Greenwell’s discoveries was a slab of stone bearing an inscription commemorating the previous excavation. At the centre, beneath the mound, Greenwell found what he described as an oval grave, which may have been a rock cut pit or cist (a rectangular or square stone grave). It was some 1.3 metres long, about 1 metre wide and 3.7 metres deep. This was filled with alternate layers of chalk and earth. The only finds of 4 fragments of animal bone, five flint chippings and a flint flake were found in this pit or shaft. The lack of human remains and the absence of any indication of previous disturbance puzzled Greenwell who had encountered empty barrows before. He remarked “Throughout the whole course of my barrow explorations I have never met with anything that I can compare with this mound. It was of more than ordinary size and constructed at the expense of much labour ... Until I opened Willie Howe I had always disbelieved in the erection of such memorials as cenotaphs at the time when these barrows were constructed. That supposition appears, however, to be countenanced by the experience of this mound, and I am forced to admit the possibility that this very large mass of chalk stones was thrown up merely to commemorate, and not to contain the body of, some great personage” From Recent Research in Barrows in Yorkshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire etc., Archaeolgia 52 by W. Greenwell (1890).

The pit discovered and described by Greenwell of Willie Howe, its method of construction and size would suggest a parallel with Duggleby Howe which is situated about 7 km to the southwest and about 300 metres from the source of the Gypsey Race. Duggleby Howe is one of the largest round barrows in Britain but it is unusual in that unlike most round barrows that date from the Bronze Age, this mound was constructed in the Neolithic period (4500-2300 BC).

Duggleby Howe was excavated by J. R. Mortimer (1825-1911) in the summer of 1890. It would appear that before the barrow was construction a pit of about 2.7 metres deep was dug into the ground in which contained the burial of a man with a Neolithic bowl. Other adults and a child’s burial were found above this central burial. A short distance to the east was a second shallower grave which contained an adult burial and a further burial was discovered laid between the two graves.

Left: Mortimer’s section drawing of Duggleby Howe from ‘Forty years researches in British and Saxon burial mounds of East Yorkshire’ (1905)
These burials were then covered in a low mound of earth in which were discovered further burials of an adult, an adolescent and three children, as well as several cremation remains. The mound was then extended by covering it with a layer of chalk rubble into which more cremations was placed. In total 53 cremation deposits were found although as the entire site was not excavated it is estimated that the total number may have been double this.

The mound was then capped with a layer of clay effectively sealing the burials and cremations and a further thick layer of chalk rubble piled over it to create the final barrow form. Mortimer draw a section of his excavation which gives us an idea what these two grave pits with the burials looked like. The bigger pit of the two, many will have been similar to the one Greenwell excavated at Willie Howe, but without burials.

The various incursions into Willie Howe over the years have left permanent scars on the barrow particularly in the centre and on the western side. There is a large part of the centre of the mound missing with a crater over 8 metres deep leaving it looking like an extinct volcano. Much material is also missing to the west although some of it went into making an access ramp to facilitate Greenwell’s excavations which can still be seen to the northwest of the mound. Trees also grow over the mound, which when covered in leaves during the summer months, obscured views of the mound.

In the area around Willie Howe, on the Yorkshire Wolds, is a profusion of round barrows scattered in small groups or individually. Over the years a large number of these have been excavated and many have produced pottery vessels which include Bakers, Collared Urns, and Food Vessel. This would indicate that the Yorkshire Wolds were occupied over a long period in prehistoric times.

**Gold Cups of the Early Bronze Age**

There may be some truth in the Willie How gold cup legend because two gold cups have been found in southern Britain at Rillaton on Bodmin Moor, Cornwall and Ringlemere in East Kent. The Rillaton gold cup was found by workmen in 1837 during plundering a burial cairn (a mound of stones or small rocks) for stone to be used in construction work. In one side of the mound they discovered a stone-lined cist, a rectangular or square stone grave that contained a human skeleton accompanied by a gold cup, a bronze dagger and other objects that have not survived. Being Duchy of Cornwall Treasure Trove, the objects were sent to King William IV, and thereafter remained in the royal household until the death of King George V in 1936, who is alleged to have used the gold cup as a receptacle for his collar studs. Then the importance of the Rillaton gold cup was realised and is now on display in the British Museum.

Many years after the discovery of this gold cup a story was written in 1899 that “a Druid who would sit on the Cheesewring tor handing out drinks to passing travellers. He had an inexhaustible supply of refreshments which he served in a golden goblet. One day, a greedy hunter wrenched the gold cup from the Druid and galloped away with it but his horse fell and he broke his neck, the goblet still clutched in his hand. He was buried with it, in Rillaton Barrow”; from a book of the West, by Sabine Baring-Gould, 1899. There is no evidence of earlier folklore, for this Rillaton gold cup, so this may be an invented story.
The main body of the cup was beaten out of a single lump of gold of high purity. The corrugated profile would have required great skill to achieve. In addition to being aesthetically pleasing, it added strength to the thin sheet metal. The handle is decorated with two sets of grooves and is neatly riveted to the body through lozenge-shaped washers.

The badly crushed Ringlemere gold cup was discovered in November 2001 by metal-detecting conducted by Mr Cliff Bradshaw, whilst scanning a recently harvested potato field in which the cup was found. Subsequently an excavation was carried out around the find spot which confirmed that there was a low, but quite distinctive mound surrounded by a substantial circular ditch. The cup itself may have been dislodged from a grave by modern ploughing but this remains unproved. The gold cup was recorded and declared to be treasure in 2002. It was bought by the British Museum in May 2003 for the amount of £270,000, with the money paid split between Mr. Bradshaw and the Smith family who own Ringlemere Farm.

The body of the Ringlemere cup carries multiple horizontal corrugations a feature most closely paralleled on the Rillaton gold cup. The Ringlemere cup is probably a little larger than the Rillaton cup at about 11.2 cm high; the gold is certainly thicker. There are also striking similarities in the broad strap handle attached by rivets with lozenge-shaped washers. A neat row of dots was punched just under the rim from the outside of the vessel. The cup was probably made out of a single lump of gold, apart from the handle.
Another Explanation and Possibility

It is possible that a gold cup could have been found at Willie Howe sometime in the 11th or 12th century and there are various possibilities as to how a cup may have been discovered and why. One possible hypothesis is that animals that live in holes in the ground such as rabbits, badgers, weasels, rats and water voles could have been responsible for disturbing a burial that has still to be discovered. Not all of Willie Howe has been excavated and Greenwell’s excavating methods were according to the prevailing standards of the nineteenth century, by driving a trench from one side of the barrow to the centre and often ignoring the rest of the mound. In the Early Bronze Age (2300BC-1400BC) the practice developed of cremating the dead and placing the cremated bones in a specially constructed funeral urn, which would be inverted and inserted into a pit and a mound of soil and stones would then be constructed over the burial placing it at the centre. It was also common to find several further burials inserted into a barrow at later dates, each one contained in its own urn. Therefore if a secondary burial had been placed somewhere in the mound accompanied by a gold cup, an animal burrowing in that part of the mound could have dislodged it and because the cup would block up the hole being dug by an animal, it would eventual be kicked to the surface and out of the way of the animal’s burrow.

In the middle ages people were superstitious and believed in fairies, but they were deliberately left unidentified and their non-human status is indicated by allusion and not by direct statement. It is perfectly possible that a countryman did visit a friend for a drink of beer and riding his horse home came close to Willie Howe. It may have been a bright moon lit night sky that shined on something and somewhere on the mound. On seeing this dazzling light coming from the mound the countryman would have dismounted his horse to climb up the mound to investigate what the shining light was. When he reached the glittering light, he would have been amazed to find a golden cup, the likes of which he would never have seen before. This golden cup could have resembled the one found at Rillaton. Running down the mound he would have jumped on his horse and set off home in great delight with the golden cup. On examining the cup by day light he would realise that the cup was very special and consequently it was passed on to King Henry I.

The account about the music, combined with the fairies would have been woven together. This would have given the story the right touches of fantasy needed to inspire King Henry I when the cup was presented to him.

Alternatively, the Willie Howe stolen fairy gold cup legend could be just that, a legend.

Fairy Mythology

Left: The Fairies’ Banquet by John Anster Fitzgerald (1859)

Many of the collections of fairy mythology published earlier in the 19th century include reported sightings of fairies banqueting. Fitzgerald probably gleaned inspiration for his artwork from 17th century poetry and from books on fairy lore and myth.

In Celtic myth fairies are immortals living in barrows, but their food and drink is not good for humans to eat or drink resulting in sleep or death.
Do You Believe in Fairies?

In 1917 Frances Griffiths aged 9 and her cousin Elsie Wright aged 16 claimed to have taken photographs of real life fairies behind their house at Cottingley Beck near Bingley in West Yorkshire.

The two girls photographed themselves with ‘fairies’ and fooled many people including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It started, not as a practical joke but just to fool the girls’ parents. It should have been a private family matter but later, it was taken out of their hands by fairy believers, who were responsible for all the stories, not the girls, they were only used by them to further their own cause. The story of The Cottingley Fairy Tale, West Yorkshire - Why it became Yorkshires biggest Hoax, has been published in the journal (TYJ 4 Winter 2010).

In the end they both decided to confess, France in 1983 when she was 75, then Elsie, aged 81 for the sake of her family.

In fact it was Elsie who had copied all the fairy figures from a children’s book on stiff-paper. Then she cut them out using sharp tailor’s scissors, borrowed from Frances’s mother, who worked as a tailor in Bradford. All they had to do then was secure them in place by long hatpins, fastened with zinc oxide bandage tape to a bank of earth or bushes.

*Right: This is the first and most famous photo entitled ‘Frances and the Dancing Fairies’. It shows Frances standing in front of a waterfall and rocks. She is looking innocently into the camera and not at the fairies, with one hand held against her neck as four fairies dance on the branches in the foreground directly in front of her but her face is not obscured. Three of the fairies have wings, and one plays a set of pipes.*

France could see the hatpins holding up the figures in the photo from where she was. She has always marvelled how anybody could believe they were real fairies and take it seriously. In July 1986, Frances passed away aged 78.

*Left: This photo is entitled ‘Frances and the Leaping Fairy’, in which Frances’s profile is slightly blurred because she moved slightly during exposure. The winged ‘leaping’ fairy appears very crisp suspended in flight just in front of her nose. This image was particularly criticised for the contemporary hairstyle. It was also pointed out that the fairy’s farthest leg does not logically connect to the body; a problem easily explained when Elsie admitted she had drawn it wrong.*

Elsie’s last words on fairies are “No I don’t believe in fairies. Never have and never will”. She died in April 1988 aged 84.

Elsie’s father, Arthur Wright developed all the plates and made prints. He knew they were fakes, and could not understand how such intelligent men could be fooled by his Elsie!
Along the Rochdale Canal, near Hebden Bridge in Autumn

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