The Yorkshire Journal

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Scarborough Castle is one of the finest tourist attractions in Yorkshire with its stunning location and panoramic views over the dramatic Yorkshire coastline.

Scarborough Castle and grounds are managed by English Heritage which has made the site a tourist attraction with exhibitions of artefacts from the site and viewing platforms.

There is also an audio tour guide available and the 18th century Master Gunner’s House is now a tea room and a museum with exhibitions of the castle’s history and finds made during archaeological excavations.

Photos by Jeremy Clark
Editorial

Summer is here again and to start us off Susan Horton takes us on a stimulating short walk around the charming village of Heptonstall which is situated on a steep hillside above Hebden Bridge, not far from Halifax. This walk is called the Heptonstall Trail which is only about one mile (1.5 kilometres) in length and the whole walk can be completed in about 1½ hours. It also forms part of the Calderdale Way, which was created in 1973 as a circular walk around Calderdale. Susan explores the rich history of Heptonstall with its many interesting features, as she takes us along the walk. These include the Cloth Hall, the Old Grammar School, (now a museum), St. Thomas à Becket Church and the famous Octagon Methodist Chapel.

Then Jean Griffiths visits the restored Julian’s Bower maze which is not in Yorkshire but just across the Humber Estuary in North Lincolnshire, situated in the small village of Alkborough. The Julian’s Bower maze is a fine example of a turf-cut maze which has been recently restored. Jean explains the fascinating history of the maze which is made up of twisting and turning paths that form interlocking rings. The maze is now open to the public, and offers spectacular panoramic views across the rivers Trent, Ouse and Humber.

Next Jeremy Clark looks into another Yorkshire mystery, three enigmatic solid chalk cylinders known as the Folkton Drums. They were found buried in a Bronze Age round barrow in the 19th century, along with a child who may have been a girl of about 5 years old. The carved decoration lines on two of the drums could be interpreted as human faces with what look like eyebrows, noses and a pair of eyes. The Folkton Drums are on display in the British Museum, London. But replicas can be seen in the Hull and East Riding Museum, Hull.

Summer of course is associated with holidays and the seaside. This is reflected in Gillian Morris’s article as she recalls the ballad of ‘Scarborough Fair’ and its traditions. Scarborough was the first and is the most famous seaside resort in Yorkshire. In 1253 Scarborough was granted a charter to hold an annual fair and over the years Scarborough Fair developed into one of the biggest and one of the most famous international fairs in England. Gillian looks into the history of Scarborough Fair and how the song has developed over the years.

For our last story Marcus Grant visits the church of All Saints in North Street, York which houses a remarkable collection of ten medieval stained glass windows which are internationally famous. One of these is ‘The Pricke of Conscience’ window of 1410, situated in the north choir aisle, and is based on an anonymous poem. Part of the poem concerns the ‘doom’ or the final fifteen days of the world. Marcus guides us through each of the fifteen panels showing the last days at the End of the World and clarifies their meaning.

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

Andrew Simpson
The Calderdale Way

At Heptonstall

By Susan Horton

The Calderdale Way in West Yorkshire was pioneered in 1973 by local civic trusts and groups who came together under the umbrella of the Calderdale Way Association, to create a walk showing off the numerous attractions within the district of Calderdale. The route chosen provides a tour through scenery of great variety and much interest. The Calderdale Way links public rights of way and paths in a 50 mile (80 kilometres) circular route around Calderdale encircling Halifax, Brighouse, Sowerby Bridge, Hebden Bridge, Heptonstall and Todmorden. It follows the old packhorse ways, across the open high moors with sections of traditional stone causeways, passing through hillside villages, old mill towns and onto the banks of the River Calder. In fact Calderdale’s unique blend of town and country are inextricably linked.

The walk is clearly signed and the route marked so the Way can be joined at any point and can be walked in any order, although the official start is at Clay House in West Vale. The main and link routes which connect the Calderdale Way to the valley floor are designed so that they can be completed in short stages. The Calderdale Way is suitable for people of most ages, as it provides both a challenge to the adventurous as well as an invitation to those with less experience or time, who can make a series of day or half day walks. The Way and its link paths provide a network within which a variety of linear or circular walks can be devised. Bus and train services also add another dimension to its flexibility.

One short walk is the Heptonstall Trail which is only about one mile (1.5 kilometres) in length and the whole walk can be completed in about 1½ hours. The charming village of Heptonstall is situated on a steep hillside above Hebden Bridge. It is full of character with many interesting features and is rich in history, more so than most other Pennine settlements.

From Hebden Bridge there is a bus service to Heptonstall. On foot there are many paths that lead to Heptonstall, the most straightforward route starts from the old Pack Horse Bridge in the centre of Hebden Bridge. Cross over the bridge and opposite you will see a wide steep cobbled path going up, known as The Buttress. This used to be the main road between Hebden Bridge and Heptonstall, when Hebden Bridge was little more than a hamlet, which grew around the ancient packhorse bridge, with only a few houses an inn and corn mill.

*Right: Cobbled wide path known as The Buttress over the old Pack Horse Bridge*
At the top you come to Lee Wood Road. Turn right and walk along the road until you see the next footpath going up on your left. Walk up this path and turn right along the Heptonstall Road which is the last stretch until you arrive at the village of Heptonstall.

The trail starts at the bottom of the village which, is entered from Heptonstall Road. There is a colourful guide map to Heptonstall on the wall next to the Towngate Tearoom at the junction of Heptonstall Road and Towngate. It shows the layout of the village with comments about the Lord of the Manor. Heptonstall once thrived on the woollen trade and the cottages and terraced houses were characterised by their large first floor windows to maximise the light for weaving.

The success of Heptonstall’s woollen trade came to an end in the last years of the 18th century, when water, and then steam, powered mills were built in the tributary valleys of the Calder. As a result, the hamlet of Hebden Bridge developed into a town, which was helped by the Rochdale canal which provided transport for coal to power the steam mills. Heptonstall was also the site of a battle in 1643 during the early part of the English Civil War.

Today Heptonstall is a conservation area and remains a good example of an authentic pre-industrial hill village with a living community, so please respect the privacy of the local residents when walking around.
The first impression of the village is that the gritstone houses huddle closely together, as though sheltering from the prevailing wind, which give a captivating effect.

Opposite the guide map is a large two-story detached house called Longfield House. It was built between 1730 and 1740. The double-front windows are arranged symmetrically on classical lines.

Walk a little way up and around to your right to the front of the Towngate Tearoom block where the guide map is fixed to the wall. This large building was built in 1866 by the newly formed Heptonstall Co-operative Society which flourished during the 19th century. The Society went into liquidation in 1967 and the property was sold, since then it has seen many changes.

Right: Old Co-operative Society

Walk down into the paved courtyard. This is Stage Fold. The building opposite is Stag Cottage which is probably the oldest surviving house in Heptonstall. It was built around 1580 and has typical 16th century windows. Stag Cottage was named from its former nearby public house, ‘The Sign Inn’. The cottage was then known as the Elizabethan Cottage.

Step out of the Fold, back onto Towngate, the main street and walk up until you reach the former Cloth Hall on your left opposite the White Lion car park.

Before the industrial Revolution Heptonstall was a centre of the woollen trade. The Heptonstall Cloth Hall was the first in the Pennines which was originally built in 1545.
At that time all the cloth was produced by handloom weavers in their homes and the pieces, or lengths, of cloth were taken to the Cloth Hall to sell to merchants from Colne, Halifax and further afield. The Cloth Hall was single storey in construction and named Blackwell Hall after the great Cloth Market in London.

It is not known for how long the Cloth Hall flourished, but in about 1613 it had been converted into cottages. The second storey of the present building was added in the mid-18th century. The change in size of the cleaned stonework can clearly be seen in the wall on the churchyard side.

The Heptonstall trade declined gradually and moved to Halifax which was more convenient for buyers and sellers over a wider area. The market in Halifax continued to increase in importance and in 1779 the huge 315 room Piece Hall was opened in the town.

_Cloth makers on their way to the market (1814)_

The Heptonstall weavers had to use horses or donkeys to carry the cloth to Halifax where they sold it. The ancient Packhorse Trails were steep and would have been difficult to negotiate with horses fully laden with cloth. There is a good illustration by George Walker, of cloth makers on their way to the market with their horses fully laden with cloth in his book ‘The Costume of Yorkshire’, 1814 which indicates how difficult the journey must have been. Walker reports that ‘these cloth-makers reside almost entirely in the villages and bring their cloth on market days for sale in the great halls erected for that purpose. Their horses are always overloaded and have a manner of going peculiarly on their own’.

Turn down the pathway below the Cloth Hall, you will see the sign ‘Museum’, go through the archway known as the Great North Gate. The second building on the left is the Old Grammar School, which has been converted into a museum.

The school was established in 1642 by the Rev Charles Greenwood, Rector of Thornhill and Lord of the Manor of Heptonstall.

In 1771 the school was rebuilt and continued as a school until 1889. Then in 1898 it became the Yorkshire Penny Bank whose staff were careful to preserve some of the original features of the school, including a black oak desk at which pupils took their lessons, the headmaster’s desk and books in the bookcase.
The bank closed in 1954 and the building was handed to the Hepton Rural District Council who opened it as a public museum in 1972.

The Heptonstall Museum contains varied exhibitions including the changing importance of Heptonstall and the surrounding area, from prehistoric times to the present day. Displays also include the infamous Cragg Vale Coiners, who produced counterfeit currency and the exploits of Heptonstall’s Parliamentarian garrison during the English Civil War. Intriguing stories of the everyday lives of the people of Heptonstall and the Upper Valley are also included. The museum is open from Easter to October, on Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays 11am to 4pm. Admission is free.

Pass through the wrought iron gates into the Churchyard. Turn right around the gravestones into the ruins of the original church.

Heptonstall early church was dedicated to St. Thomas à Becket, and is now a roofless shell. Originally a chapel it has a long and complex history. The oldest parts were built in the mid-1200s, it had a nave, chancel and a short tower. The tower was heightened by a belfry stage in about 1440 with embattlements and has a stair turret in the south-east corner. Outside, on the east gable of the south nave, you can see the original Sanctus Bell Cote where a bell was rung during Mass. The south porch was originally built in the early 15th century.

It would appear that major extensions took place in the late 16th or early 17th century, when the north aisle and chapel were rebuilt to their present dimensions and the outer north aisle added. Both nave arcades and pillars were rebuilt at this time. One interesting feature is that windows were added on the nave and north aisle walls to give additional lighting to the galleries in the 17th century.

During this time there was seating for 815 people on the ground floor and a further 300 in the new upper galleries. The church bells and clock summoned people to services. Traces of the painted clock face on the tower can still be seen. The clock which was made in 1810 is now in the new church tower. Heptonstall church is a prime example of a Pennine chapel of uncertain origins which developed into a building larger than many parish churches.

*Right: Drawing of North-East view of St. Thomas à Becket church in about 1840*
Following the great storm in 1847 the west face of the tower fell away and plans were drawn up to rebuild the whole tower. However, a lesser measure of repairing the damage was approved and the church was used up to 1854 when the new church on the south side of the churchyard was built. Instead of being demolished the earlier medieval church was left to become a ruin until the mid-20th century when it became a protected ancient monument.

Overlooked features in the church include two simple cross grave slabs, one is in the floor of the south aisle of the nave and the other is in the floor beneath the western arch of the chancel south arcade. They probably date to the later 15th or early 16th century.

Apart from the decorated columns that have carved shields and hearts, there is one corbel between the north chancel and outer aisle that has an intriguing stone carved grotesque. It appears to be in the form of a head belonging to a creature. Local folklore believes it to be the head of a cat called Old Mad Sal. Boys behaving badly in church where made to sit under the head has a punishment. The carving appears to have ears at the top of the head and not at the side, with distinct carved eyes and its tongue is hanging down from its open mouth. The sides of the head are carved with zigzag lines which could represent the hair of an animal. It probably dates to the 14th or 15th century but its significance and what it represents is not known.

The graveyard around the two churches was closed in 1915 when land for a new burial ground was donated and which is situated on the opposite side of St Thomas the Apostle church. The old graveyard contain many gravestones which are being recorded by the Hebden Bridge Local History Society. Probably the most visited grave is that of David Hartley, known as ‘King David’, of the infamous Cragg Vale Coiners, sometimes referred to as the ‘Yorkshire Coiners’, who was executed at York in 1770. His body was brought back to be buried in Heptonstall churchyard because in those days Cragg Vale was part of the Parish of Heptonstall. In the burial register the Vicar at that time entered the cause of death as ‘hanged by the neck near York for illicitly cutting and stamping coins of the realm’. His grave can be found 12 stones slabs from the porch of the old church and 2 stones down. At the top of the gravestone is the inscription ‘David Hartley 1770’ and below this are the initials and names of his family members. The museum has a very interesting exhibition on the Cragg Vale Coiners, and explains about counterfeiting and why they murdered to conceal their illegal trade. On display are the original dies used to make their gold counterfeit coins and other equipment. The full, fascinating story of ‘The Notorious Cragg Vale Coiners Who Became Murderers’ has been published in the journal (TYJ Autumn 2010).
At the bottom of the churchyard between the two churches is Chantry House which has had a very chequered history. At one time it was a charnel house where human bones were stored and was once weavers’ cottages. In 1960 it was transformed into a delightful private residence. During its conversion a large number of bones were found under the floors. The blocked up doorway leading into the churchyard was the one through which the countless dead where carried when it was an ecclesiastical building.

Now make your way along the path to the entrance of the Victorian Church of St Thomas the Apostle. It was built following extensive storm damage to St. Thomas à Becket Church in 1847 and was completed in 1854. St Thomas the Apostle is a good example of Victorian Gothic architecture. In the 1960s, following a generous legacy by Mr A Gibson, who died in 1956 a non-traditional interior of the church was created. At the tower end of the church is a beautiful copy of Leonardo da Vinci’s famous fresco ‘The Last Supper’. This copy, by Gringaschi, was painted for the Italian Government in 1905. It was hung by the side of the original in Milan until it was bought by Mr J Sutcliffe of Hebden Bridge in 1906, but only after the Italian Government had given special permission for the sale. It was bequeathed to the church by one of the Mr Sutcliffe’s relations. Among the items brought from the church of St. Thomas à Becket included the font and six bells. The font has 11 plain shield shaped sides, apart from one that seems to contain the letters HIS. It is lined with lead and could date to the late 14th century. The first set of bells were made for St. Thomas a Becket Church in 1440 but the six bells that were transferred to St Thomas the Apostle in 1845 are dated 1742 and 1748. They were re-cast in 1911 when two new bells were added making a full peal of eight bells.

Leave the church the same way you entered and turn right following the cobbled path round the opposite side of the church to the South Gate. The stone gateway leads to the New Graveyard which contains the grave of the American poet Sylvia Plath (1932-63).

Go back through the South Gate of the churchyard, turn left and follow the path round the Church to the Pinnacle. On 5th April 1875 the south-west pinnacle of the church was struck by lightning causing considerable damage to the roof and nearby tombstones. The damage was repaired at a cost of £200 and the stone was later reassembled at this spot.

Leave the churchyard by the West Gate, up the slope and turn right on the cobbled path. The large house immediately on the right was the vicarage until 1995. On the site of the Old Vicarage, built between 1824 and 1827, was once the cock pit, which was owned by the landlords of a former nearby Inn called ‘The Fighting Cocks’. Fighting two birds together to the death was regarded as a blood sport centuries ago, but today it is banned by law.
Keep walking straight along the street, past an entrance to Weavers’ Square and on the wall to your right is a stone plaque concerning the Mechanics’ Institution with the legend ‘Man know theyself’. Mechanics Institutes were a part of life in Victorian industrial towns. They were similar to adult education centres, although they were always for men only. Mechanics’ Institutes exemplified the Victorian belief in education and self-help. The Heptonstall Institution had a reading room and arranged lectures, but towards the end of the Victorian era had become mainly a social club.

Retrace your steps a little and turn left into Weavers’ Square. The Square was designed and completed in 1967. Several weavers’ cottages and the old band room previously stood on this site.

Leave the square by its main exit and turning to the left, note the sign on the wall of the cottage above Church Street which reads ‘Top o’th’ Town.

Left: Top of the Town in about 1910. The building on the right was demolished when Weavers’ Square was created.

The name Top of the Town dates from medieval times when this was the topmost extent of the village, which extends a little further today. The main street, Towngate changed its name to Smithwell Lane at this point.

Walk up Smithwell Lane, pausing at the first opening on your left, Silver Street which is a row of former handloom weavers’ cottages dating to about 1750. One was for many years the home of John Sutcliffe, the last handloom weaver of Heptonstall. He died in 1902.

Often home weavers worked up to twelve hours a day making the most of the daylight hours. To supplement the family income the whole household were usually involved in a variety of different tasks, as can be seen in the model of a weavers’ cottage below.

Left: The family hand carding and spinning wool on the great wheel in about 1760. Above: Father at the handloom weaving. He is working on a narrow loom, before the invention of the fly-shuttle of about 1733.
Continue up the main street until you reach the village pump on the left. Before the days of piped water, pumps were used in every village. One of Heptonstall’s four public pumps remains in its arched alcove and is dated 1891.

Right: The village pump today

Walk back down Main Street to the building on the left called Star Chamber. Mystery surrounds the name of this building and its early history. The long line of windows and “taking-in door” in the side wall were put in for use by the textile manufacturers in the 18th century. Continue walking down the road to The White Lion, a few houses further down is The Cross Inn. These are now the only two remaining inns out of five, in addition to beer shops, in the village, all of which were situated on Towngate in the early 19th century. Five public houses may seem a lot for a small village, but Heptonstall was once an important focal point for traders and merchants.

The age of the White Lion is uncertain, but the back of the building is considerably older than the front. Just below the White Lion is Swan Fold. The three cottages in the Fold were once The Swan Inn. The Cross Inn was originally known as the Stocks Inn and although the present frontage is Victorian, the rest of the structure is much older. Until 1958 when the inn changed hands, a fossilized cat was displayed in a glass case. It was discovered in the rafters of the old church after the 1847 storm. Opposite, below the Great North Gate, the three storey building was once the Bull Inn.

Directly below The Cross Inn are a group of three cottages known as ‘Litherstone’, built about 1700. Prior to the opening of Heptonstall’s Wesleyan Chapel in 1764 local Methodists used the central part of the building for meetings and it became known as The Preaching House.

Turn left below The Cross Inn, along Northgate to New House which is on the left. There is a decorative carved stone above the entrance door to the building. It is inscribed 1736, with the initials of the builders H.E.F. – Henry and Elizabeth Foster. It is thought to have been a Quaker house.
Walk a little down Northgate for a short distance until a lane forks left, spanned by a stone lintel. The lintel bears the initials J.B. which stand for John Bentley and is dated 1578. The fine house beyond the arch to the left is Whitehall, a farmhouse, once the ancient home of the Bentley family. During the 18th and early 19th centuries the building was known as ‘the Great House on the Northgate’, and it was not until later that it was renamed Whitehall.

Continue along Northgate until a lane branches off right at Stocks Villa. A little way down this lane, on the left is one stone, this is all that remains of the village stocks. Attached to this solo surviving stone is a plaque. The stocks were originally sited near The Cross Inn and troublemakers were put in them for public punishment. Often the culprits were ridiculed and sometimes old fruit and vegetables were thrown at them.

Church records of 1823 note that a new “mobile” pair of stocks had been bought to replace the stone ones and church wardens had power to put people in the stocks for punishment. The Heptonstall stocks were dismantled in 1875. The surviving stone stock now serves as a signpost inscribed “To Haworth” with a hand and pointing finger.

This way is part of the old Packhorse track to Haworth, and can still be followed on foot today. The Calderdale Way also uses this track as far as Pecket Well.

Retrace your steps back along Northgate almost to Whitehall Arch and take the pathway down to the Methodist Churchyard and Chapel. The chapel is normally open during the daytime and a visit inside is worthwhile.

People have made pilgrimages to this building from all over the world. The chapel was completed in 1764 and John Wesley laid the foundation stone. The octagon shape was chosen to be different from the established Church.

On leaving the Chapel the trail goes left, past the Sunday school. The small stone doorway in front leads to a small stony lane. This is Tinker Bank Lane, an ancient Packhorse Trail to Hebden Bridge. Go down the lane to the foot of the Methodist Sunday School, then turn right below the school. Walk a little further on to a small walled enclosure near the car park. This is the Pinfold.
This path is rough and may be slippery in wet conditions. A safer way is to go back up the steps along Northgate, to the start of the trail at the Towngate Tearoom, turn left into the car park and walk straight ahead to the stone walled Pinfold. The Pinfold is where cattle, sheep and other farm animals were held, that had strayed away from their owners’ land. They were impounded until the owner paid a fine for their return. The pinfold has now been converted into a picnic area.

Walk back and on the right, near the entrance to the car park and next to the WC is a tall square stone wall that used to be the wall of the brewhouse for the Stag Inn. In the bottom right corner of the wall is a door which guards a damp windowless cellar known as the “lock-up”, or dungeon. This is in fact directly below Stag Cottage. In earlier days, when travel and communication were difficult, the local constable would make use of the dungeon for remanding drunks and petty criminals.

Continue out of the car park past the garages. A railed off well can be seen on the far side, under an arch in the wall. This well was probably not used to supply drinking water as it was often contaminated. The wellhead now contains a replica set of wooden stocks.

This is the end of the walk. The Guide Map is just around the corner, as are the café, village shop cum Post Office and the pubs. A ‘Heptonstall Trail guide’ is on sale at the Hebden Bridge Tourist Information Centre and a booklet is available inside the Octagon Chapel outlining its history.
The lower half of Heptonstall tower has been dated to the 13th century and has the nave roof lines.
The Restored Julian’s Bower maze at Alkborough in North Lincolnshire

By Jean Griffiths

This maze is not in Yorkshire, it is just across the Humber Estuary in North Lincolnshire, situated in the small village of Alkborough. The maze which stands on a hillside overlooking the confluence of the River Ouse and River Trent can be visited by crossing the Humber Bridge.

The Julian’s Bower maze is a fine example of a turf-cut maze which has been a popular tourist attraction for centuries. However, years of visitors walking over it left it damaged. So for three months in 2007 it was closed to the public by the local Maze Community, English Heritage and North Lincolnshire Council while conservationists restored it by re-turfing the site with hard-wearing grass mix, the same used for football pitches. It is now once again open to the public, but visitors can help preserve the maze by leaving their heavy boots at home.

The Julian’s Bower maze is made up of twisting and turning paths that form interlocking rings measuring 13.4 metres across. No one knows who originally cut the Julian’s Bower maze or when and why it is described as a maze, because technically it is a Labyrinth as it has a single entrance and path. It was first recorded in 1697 by the Lincolnshire antiquarian Abraham de la Pryme and one theory is that the maze was carved by a small cell of monks who lived in the area until the 13th century. The early Christian church did indeed use the idea of mazes as symbolic of the path to heaven, and also as a penitential device. Whatever the origins of the maze, it has played an important part in the lives of the local people, and games are known to have been played here on May Eve until well into the 19th century.

The nearby Alkborough village church of St John the Baptist, which dates from the 11th century, has a copy of the maze inlaid into the stone floor of the oak porch, and this is used as a template for the periodic re-cutting of the turf. The maze is also reproduced in the chancel window above the altar, and a short distance away in the Alkborough cemetery a stone cross marks the gravestone of James Goulton Constable which also bears a copy of the maze.

The location offers spectacular panoramic views across the confluence of the rivers Trent, Ouse and Humber and reputedly on a clear day you can see the towers of York Minster and the Kilburn White Horse which is almost 45 miles away - binoculars do help! The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is open daily, free admission.
The Mysterious and Unique Folkton Drums, North Yorkshire
Still an unsolved mystery today

By Jeremy Clark

Yorkshire has a number of unsolved mysteries. Famous examples include the Crop Circles Phenomenon, this story has been published in the journal (TYJ 3 Summer 2010), Carved Rocks on Ilkley Moor (this story has also been published in the journal (TYJ 3 Autumn 2010). But some of Yorkshire’s mysteries have been solved such as the Cottingley Fairies (this story has also been published in the journal (TYJ 3 Winter 2010). During a recent visit to the British Museum I came across another Yorkshire mystery. On display in a glass case are three enigmatic solid chalk cylinders. They are carved with abstract patterns which because of their distinctive shape have come to be known as the Folkton Drums, being found at Folkton in the late 19th century.

It was Canon William Greenwell of Durham who dug into a Bronze Age round barrow, south of Folkton, on Folkton Wold in 1889 were he found the spectacular set of chalk drums. This was during one of his annual barrow digging campaigns started in 1864 in which he dug into over 400 barrows throughout England. His substantial collections of finds are housed in the British Museum, London.

The small village of Folkton in North Yorkshire lies on an area of land known as Folkton Carr, meaning low lands, just over 5 miles (8.5 kilometres) west of Filey and 14 miles (22.5 kilometres) south of Scarborough. It is situated at the foot of the south Yorkshire Wolds, across the Carrs to the north-west is the Vale of Pickering, and further north are the North Yorkshire Moors.

The Discovery of the Folkton Drums

The three small drums were found in an oval grave between and close to the outer of two ring ditches. They had been buried with a child who may have been a girl of about 5 years, in a crouched position; the hands covering the face. The child lay on the right-hand side facing west, carefully placed behind the head and hips were the drums. A bone pin was also found which would have been used to hold a piece of clothing such as a cloak that the child may have been wrapped in. The round barrow was originally built for an adult male and female, buried with a Beaker (drinking cup) of the Early Bronze Age dated to about 2500-2200 BC and for some unknown reason their skulls had been removed.
Although it has been suggested that they had been reburied in prehistoric times, after the skulls had been removed. Also buried within the barrow but at a different area were four adults and a child. Objects buried with a body are called grave goods by archaeologists but no other datable grave goods were found with the crouched child in the oval grave. The Folkton Drums grave goods are exceptional and must indicate something about the status of the child they were buried with.

Their Size and Decoration

The height of the largest drum is only 11.8cm, with a diameter of 14.6cm, the height of the middle one is 10.5cm, with a diameter of 12.7cm and the smallest one is 8.6cm high with a diameter of 10.2cm. Although the tops of the drums appear to form lids, they are in fact solid and not hollow.

The carved decoration of incised lines on each of the drums is in a unique design, covering the curved sides of the cylinders and also the slightly domed tops. The bases of the drums were carefully shaped and smoothed but appear to have been undecorated. The designs were probably made by chipping and abrasion of the chalk and they remain generally quite sharp. The abstract chevron patterns are organised in panels with filled triangles, and with stylised shapes that could be interpreted as human faces with what look like eyebrows, noses and a pair of eyes looking out from two of the drums. The tops have concentric circle decoration.
The significance of their designs is unknown but similar decorations are well documented in Passage Grave art. The geometric patterns are also very similar to those found on pottery of the Later Neolithic Grooved Ware style with suggestions of Beaker style decoration which also occurs on sheet gold work from the Early Bronze Age 2500-2200 BC.

Made of Magnesian Limestone or Chalk?

The Folkton Drums where thought to be made from Magnesian limestone which is found much further afield. But recent examination by a team of experts has finally resolved the argument. Light and electron microscopic examination has revealed microfossils typical of the late Cretaceous period, confirming chalk. Therefore the drums were clearly made from chalk and were probably made locally in Folkton Wold.
Dating and Function

They have now been dated to the third millennium BC the time of Stonehenge and are unique in the archaeological records. No other objects like them have so far been found in the British Isles from the prehistoric period. It is possible that very similar objects were made of wood and have not survived. Their function and meaning is still not known. The apparent markings of eyes, eyebrows and noses have given some to think that they may be idol figures of some kind. So the problem of their precise cultural significance remains unresolved.

A Visit to the Folkton Barrow

There is nothing left to be seen of the Folkton barrow today and it was less than a metre high when Canon Greenwell dug into it in 1889 but the site is worth a visit. By following the public right of way from the roadside of the A1039 eastwards; the landscape opens out as a huge natural crossroads between the hills. The barrow would have overlooked what could have been an important junction of two trading routes in the area. The field where the barrow is situated is under cultivation and in summer usually full of crops. In winter too it is ploughed out. However, the scenery is beautiful and the tranquil atmosphere is absorbing.

See the Folkton Drums

The Folkton Drums are on display in the British Museum, London in Room 51. But replicas can be seen in the Hull and East Riding Museum, Hull in the Neolithic gallery. Admission is free and it is open Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm, Sunday 1.30pm to 4.30pm.
Scarborough Fair: a Traditional Yorkshire Ballad

By Gillian Morris

Scarborough on the north-east Yorkshire coast was the first and is the most famous seaside resort in Yorkshire, rich in history. In the 13th century Scarborough was a busy market town port dominated by Scarborough Castle. During the reign of Henry III, 1216-72, the town was granted a charter in 1253 to hold an annual fair. The charter, which gave Scarborough many privileges, stated: ‘The Burgesses and their heirs forever may have a yearly fayre in the Borough, to continue from the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary until the Feast of St Michael next following.’ So the fair started on 15th August and lasted in total for 45 days. This was an unusually long period almost more than any other northern town and had the effect of converting the borough into an open market attracting large crowds. In Mediaeval times fairs were like markets but they were held only once a year and appealed to traders and entertainers from all over the country.

The ceremony of heralding in the fair was very impressive, with town’s officers riding on decorated horses, headed by musicians through the narrow streets, reading the proclamation of the fair, and welcoming strangers to the town, who were urged to sell goods ‘of true worth’. Everyone was invited to ‘sport and play’ and to ‘do all things’, with the proviso that ‘nowt amiss’ (nothing remiss) should happen! Soon Scarborough fair became internationally famous with merchants coming from all areas of England and Europe mainly from Flanders, Norway and Denmark. Each stallholder had to pay 2d to the Burgesses and on the opening day of Scarborough Fayre (15 August), the town’s householders had to pay their annual Gablage Tax. This tax dates from 1181 and was the ‘first rates’ levied at Scarborough. In the 13th and 14th centuries each house with its gable facing the street had to pay four pence and every house with its front facing the street paid six pence.
However, Scarborough Fair was by no means a big friendly affair. In 1256 the burgesses of Scarborough complained that the markets of Filey, Sherburn and Brompton were a ‘nuisance of their borough’. The Burgesses pleaded to the King’s Court for them to be abolished on the grounds that they were taking trade away from Scarborough. On this occasion the Burgesses were successful and the markets were discontinued.

This was to be the forerunner of a more serious dispute, against Seamer, where even today the fair is still observed on each St Swithin’s Day. Seamer’s charter was granted by Richard II to Henry de Percy, Earl of Northumberland, in 1383, but Scarborough began a law suit the following year in the Court of Queen’s Bench for the suppression of the fair, because of the injury done by it to the Scarborough Market. During this time, Scarborough’s prosperity began to decline. The number of bakers was reduced, some drapers closed their shops, and a number of butchers, weavers and tailors closed down. Even the public houses suffered with only about half remaining in business!

It cost Scarborough dearly, some £2,000 to achieve victory in 1602, but their triumph was short-lived, when James I decided to grant another charter to Seamer. Again the Seamer market was suppressed, but when it was revived again in the 18th century, it was Seamer who came out victors, and the Scarborough Fair ended in 1788. Although the traditional Scarborough Fair no longer exists a number of celebrations take place every September to mark the original event.

This is the background to Scarborough Fair and the tradition in which the ballad was performed.

The song ‘Scarborough Fair’ was first sung by medieval bards and was originally a medieval ballad that caught on with the local people. A Bard is defined as a professional poet and singer whose occupation was to compose and sing verses in honour of the heroic achievements of Princes and brave men. The Medieval Bard was replaced by minstrels and musicians who flourished during the middle ages. Medieval minstrels often created their own ballads about chivalry and courtly love but they were also famous for memorising long poems based on myths and legends just as the Medieval Bards had done before them. These epic poems were called ‘chansons de geste’. As the minstrels sang they played the tune on their fiddles wandering from villages to towns singing ‘Scarborough Fair’. In turn it was sung by the local people who heard it and they also took it with them wherever they went. This is how the song spread and soon it was adapted and modified with more lyrics added. This is why today there are many versions of Scarborough Fair.

In later centuries ‘Scarborough Fair’ was relatively an unknown folk song until traditional songs were collected, written down and published in the 19th century. Frank Kitson published in his ‘Collection Of Traditional Tunes’ in 1891 and reported the song ‘Scarborough Fair’ as being “sung in Whitby streets twenty or thirty years ago”, this would be in about the 1860s. Since then many song artists have revived ‘Scarborough Fair’ in their own way and the most familiar version of ‘Scarborough Fair’ is by Simon & Garfunkel composed in 1966.

The lyrics of the song are about a man trying to attain his true love. The singer is asking a friend who is attending the Scarborough Fair to seek out a former love who he was once romantically involved with to let her know he still has feelings for her. However, for her to be his true love again she must carry out a number of impossible tasks.

One such impossible task is for her make him a cambric shirt with no seams or needlework and then wash it in a dry well, adding that if she completes these tasks he will take her back. Cambric is a lightweight fabric that was used specifically for making lace and needlework. The fabric is tightly woven and when completed, it has a slight glossy finish. In fact Cambric was not actually available until 1520-30, when it was discovered by the French, so the word Cambric, or the verse was probably not in the original ballad but added to the song after about 1550.
The other tasks that his former love has to complete in the song are quite impossible for obvious reasons. In the second line in every verse of the song four herbs are mentioned, parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme. In the middle ages these herbs had some meaning. This was a time when flowers and herbs were significant in the lives of medieval people and they believed that they contained mystical properties that could influence emotions and feelings.

**Parsley** is the first herb and to most people it is eaten with a meal and often a sprig of green parsley is put at the side of a plate in a restaurant. Historically, parsley was thought to aid digestion and this custom of eating a few leaves with a meal was thought to promote well-being. The song however alludes to a different meaning. Parsley was thought to remove bitterness and although medieval herbalists recommended it for a sour stomach, it was also thought to remove bad or bitter emotions. The singer wants to cleanse the bitter air between himself and his lost love.

**Sage** is the second herb and was a symbol of strength and wisdom according to Celtic tradition and was even associated with immortality. Today, sage is used for stuffing the Christmas turkey, but it was used medicinally long before it became a modern seasoning. Sage has drying properties and was used to treat chest congestion and its antiseptic compounds were used to bind wounds and treat snakebite. In the context of the song, it seems that the singer wants to offer strength and wisdom to his lover.

**Rosemary** is a modern cooking herb with ancient meanings beyond its seasoning properties. It is associated with love and fidelity. The strong scent lingers, so it was given as a token of remembrance between lovers. Rosemary also helps his lover to remember what love and affection they had so that she does not become discouraged by the impossible tasks and possibly pleading with her that he will remain faithful this time around.

**Thyme** has a number of healing or medicinal properties and has been used for thousands of years to bind wounds and as an antiseptic. It was also a sign of love and courage. Our singer wants his lover to have courage to what it will take in order to complete the tasks so that he will be eventually return to her and they once again be lovers.

This traditional Yorkshire ballad refers to ‘Scarborough Fair’ and it has been suggested that the name Scarborough Fair, along with the chorus ‘parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme’ dates to a 19th century version. Also the chorus may have been borrowed from other ballads which have similar plots. There are a number of older versions that refer to locations other than Scarborough Fair, and many versions do not mention a place-name, and are often given a general title such as ‘The Lovers’ Tasks’ and ‘My Father Gave Me an Acre of Land’.

It has also been suggested that the lyrics of ‘Scarborough Fair’ appear to have something in common with an obscure Scottish ballad, ‘The Elfin Knight’, which has been traced as far back as 1670 and may well be earlier. In this ballad, an elf threatens to abduct a young woman to be his lover unless she can perform an impossible task.

However, ‘Scarborough Fair’ is a medieval Yorkshire ballad which pre-dates all the written down versions. ‘Scarborough Fair’ was passed on by being sung at fairs, markets and in villages and towns throughout Yorkshire and England by strolling minstrels. Also it is likely to have been adapted and modified with more lyrics added as time went by. This does not mean to say that it incorporates other ballads, on the contrary other ballads may have been inspired by ‘Scarborough Fair’ to the point that similar ballads were composed on the same lines.
There has been some research and much debate about the meaning of the song, which is actually just about a former lover trying hard to convince his lost lover that if she will gather the strength and courage to see him again, and to remember their happier times, he will eventually return to her. We should just enjoy the song for what it is and remember Scarborough when it hosted one of the most famous international fairs in England.

The following is a typical modern version of ‘Scarborough Fair’ that most people will recognise.

Are you going to Scarborough Fair?

Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme;
Remember me to one who lives there,
She was once a true love of mine.
Tell her to make me a cambric shirt,
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme;
Without a seam or needlework,
She will be a true love of mine.
Tell her to wash it in yonder dry well,
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme;
Where never spring water or rain ever fell,
She will be a true love of mine.
Tell her to dry it on yonder grey thorn,
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme;
Which never bore blossom since Adam was born,
She will be a true love of mine.

This illustration shows the view from Scarborough castle over the town in around 1300.
The End of the World

Illustrated in a medieval glass window in the Church of All Saints, York

By Marcus Grant

The church of All Saints in North Street is situated close to the River Ouse in the centre of the City of York. The first church on the site may have been built before the Norman Conquest. This early church was expanded and reconstructed in the following centuries. The present building, with its fine spire, dates to the 14th and 15th centuries.

The church houses a remarkable collection of ten medieval stained glass windows which are internationally famous. The earliest glass is from the first half of the 14th century, but the majority is from the early 15th century, when the original lancet windows were replaced with larger windows, and glazed. Three of the windows consists of a series of panels that were intended to instruct the viewer. The imagery and text within the Corporal Acts of Mercy, the Order of Angels and the Pricke of conscience windows reinforce ideas of medieval social conscience, hierarchy and repentance. All the medieval stained glass has been restored at some point in its history between 1844 to the 1960s.

Last year the Lady Chapel was refurbished with floor tiles and a life-size statue of Our Lady. The floor tiles have been made in the authentic medieval manner and feature designs known to have been used in All Saints. The statue is based on surviving fragments of the head and shoulders of a 14th century statue which stood in this position and formed a devotional unity with the famous Pricke of Conscience window to the left.

Left: The refurbished Lady Chapel

The Pricke of Conscience window is the last stained glass window in the north choir aisle. The iconography of this window is unique in European art and it is based on an anonymous poem in rhyming verses, written in the Northumbrian dialect of Middle English in 10,000 lines. It seeks to ‘prick our consciences’ with a complete explanation of the Christian faith and its call to repentance. The poem was extremely popular in the 14th and 15th centuries as a devotional book. It was expressly written in order to make the truths of the faith available in ordinary English. Lines about halfway through the poem concern the ‘doom’ or final fifteen days of the world. This stained glass window of 1410 illustrates these lines and gives parts of the words underneath each of the fifteen panels showing the fifteen last days at the End of the World. However, the words in the window are different from the words in the text of the poem. This is probably because before the invention of printing, the poem circulated in various versions, not all of which have survived. Neither have all the words in the window survived.
The window reads from the bottom left to top right with each of the final days given a separate panel with a Middle English couplet that paraphrases the poem. The only text not in English, but in Latin, is the Victorians’ inscription along the bottom which relates to the window being re-leaded in 1861. The first nine panels are concerned with the physical destruction of the earth. The last six panels illustrate the end of all things.

It is thought likely on stylistic grounds that the glass painter was John Thornton of Coventry, who made the huge east window of York Minster in 1405-8.

The 15 panels of glass start at the bottom left hand panel, above the kneeling figures who are particularly expressive and seem to look on in horror at the events going on in the panels above.

Recent research (by Jessica Knowles, York University) has identified the donor of the Prick of Conscience window as William Hesill (Hessle), he appears as a priest in the centre bottom panel of the window. The other people in the same centre panel are his mother and father. In the western panel are his paternal grandparents (with his grandfather’s other wife) and his maternal grandparents (with his grandmother’s other husband) are in the eastern panel.

Left: The bottom centre panel of the window, which on the right dressed in red priest’s robes is William Hesill who paid for the Prick of Conscience window. Behind him is his mother and father

A simple modern verse translation is given for all the relevant lines of the poem. The first of the fifteen last days, starts at the bottom left hand panel with the sea flooding, as high as a mountain (below left). This is something that we are concerned with today. Then in the centre the sea recedes exposing the sea-bed and then on the right hand side the sea returns to its normal level.

On the fourth day fishes will come together leaping out of the sea roaring (below left) and make such a hideous din to hear. But what they mean by all their cries no one but God will ever surmise. In the next centre panel which represents the fifth day the sea catches fire and burns from the sun’s rise until the sun sets. Beneath the flames fish can be seen still swimming in the sea. On the next day fruit drops from the trees, which are depicted by the glaziers like mushroom trees.

These first six panels deal with the sea rising and falling and giving up life in the sea.
In the next line above, the seventh day, are towers and great castles falling to the ground during earthquakes, destroying buildings. In the panel can be seen the newly constructed spire of All Saints North Street dating to 1394 and not long before this window was placed here. In the centre panels of the window, the eighth day the sky turns red, rocks and stones are consumed by fire and shatter into pieces. On the ninth day (above right) people are scared and take refuge in holes in the ground and in caves that almost look like medieval air raid shelters. The biggest earthquake since the world began will take place on this ninth day.

Now everything has been wiped out, (above left) the earth will be made flat and plain, no buildings no trees, no hills, no mountains just earth and sky as far as the eye can see.

*The four panels above illustrate the destruction of buildings by earthquake and the burning of all physical matter.*

On the eleventh day (above centre) people come out of their holes in the ground, and caves, to say their prayers, as well they might. In the panel can be seen one man still hiding not ready to come out. In the next panel (above right) the graves come open and dead people’s bones will be put back together and then rise all alone each above their own grave. In the panel can be seen three or four skulls in each grave, this was because in the middle ages one grave was dug through another as there was a shortage of space in the graveyards.

On the thirteen day (above left) the stars and all the planets in the high heavens fall. Then on the fourteenth day (above centre) death comes with its spear to collect anyone who is left, ready for the final judgment. For all will rise again who were dead. The fifteenth day (above right) is the last day and it can only be described as a nuclear holocaust - the whole cosmos goes up in flames, the earth, the sky and the sea. This is the final end.
The window is intended to be moralistic and a calls for repentance. There is a reminder of this in the tracery lights at the top of the window. There are two quatrefoils - one shows redeemed souls being let into heaven by St. Peter, who is holding a golden key, while the others portray the damned being taken into hell by demons. This has nothing to do with the text Pricke of conscience, but completes the iconography of the window, and the adjacent statue.

A more than a life size medieval Statue of Our Lady stood at the right of this window. The window’s apocalyptic events are intended to lead viewers to seek the help of Our Lady in turning back to God in Christ.

The church of All Saints is open daily from 10.00a.m., till dusk and welcomes all visitors.
The Octagon Tower, Studley Royal, North Yorkshire

The Yorkshire Journal is a quarterly publication, published in Spring Summer, Autumn and Winter and is a free online e-journal available at www.theyorkshirejournal.wordpress.com.

Photograph by Brian Wade

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