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Welcome to the Autumn issue of the Yorkshire Journal. This issue includes the fascinating story of Anne Brontë’s connection with Scarborough by Claire Mason. Anne was introduced to Scarborough by the Robinson family when she was governess to their children. Between 1840 and 1844, Anne spent around five weeks each summer at the coastal town and fell in love with the place. A number of locations in Scarborough were the setting for Agnes Grey’s final scenes and for Linden-Car village in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall. In Claire’s article she takes us back in time when Anne visited Scarborough and visits all the places that would have been familiar to her. Sadly in 1848 Anne caught consumption (tuberculosis), she returned to Scarborough for a change of air, but died on Monday 28th May 1849 and was buried in St. Mary’s Church yard.

Next Julia Oldham takes us on a visit to North Landing at Flamborough Head. She describes this beautiful coast line and what it has to offer visitors. Julia also recounts days when cobs were used at North Landing by fishermen to catch crabs and fish. Nowadays these colourful boats have diesel engines and usually half a dozen can be seen moored up on the beach. They are also used by fishermen to take visitors around the North Landing headlands to view the many caves used by smugglers. This is another aspect of North Landing that Julia points out in her article. Some of the favourite goods were tea, brandy, silk and cotton, smuggled by using a coffin at night from their ships, moored not far from the cove.

Diana Parsons recounts the friendship of Phyllis Bentley, a highly successful novelist, with the well-known writers Marie Hartley and Ella Pontefract in her revealing article ‘Dear Miss Bentley’. Their long lasting friendship was not without problems as Diana explains. After the death of Ella, Marie formed a literary partnership with Joan Ingilby. Over the years Joan had the unenviable role of mediator between Marie and Phyllis, who both had feisty temperaments and firm opinions, although their friendship only came to an end with the death of Phyllis in June 1977.

Our next feature is a poem by Julia Oldham - YORKSHIRE - It is what it is and I love it! Julia is passionate about Yorkshire reading through her delightful poem.

Jean Griffiths then visits Spofforth Castle near Harrogate, which she discovered was not crowded with visitors being a lesser known castle. In fact Spofforth Castle is a fortified manor house. Jean highlights its history and the Percy family who were gave Spofforth by William the Conqueror, then Percy built a manor house for his family. During the English Civil War (1642-1651), Spofforth Castle was vandalised by Parliamentarian troops which finally reduced it to ruins. Jean then takes us on a tour of the ruined castle and points out that the most distinguishing feature of the castle is an octagonal tower, which Turner sketched in 1797.

For our last feature Jeremy Clark takes us on a journey along the Gypsey Race, which is a meandering stream, steeped in legend and tradition. It carves its way through the Yorkshire Wolds, before it reaches the North Sea at Bridlington. Jeremy explains the most important prehistoric sites that are associated with the stream as he follows its course. The Gypsey Race also runs past many other interesting places and sites including the Rudston Roman Villa, deserted medieval villages and last of all, a meteorite, all of which are detailed by Jeremy in his fascinating article.

But there is much more to these articles, please read and enjoy them. We welcome your comments.
Anne Brontë's Connection with Scarborough

An account of the life of Anne Brontë, with a particular focus on her connections with the seaside resort of Scarborough; a place she loved

By Claire Mason

Anne Brontë was born on 17th January 1820 at 74 Market Street in Thornton near Bradford where her father was curate. She was the youngest of the six Brontë children. In April 1820, the Brontës moved into the five-roomed Haworth Parsonage, where Anne’s father, Patrick Brontë was appointed perpetual curate and it became their home for the rest of their lives. When Anne was only about a year old her mother Maria Branwell died. Her father, Patrick was unsuccessful in trying to remarry to provide a mother for his children. Maria Branwell’s sister, Elizabeth Branwell, who had moved to the parsonage to nurse her dying sister, stayed on and spent the rest of her life there raising the children. The bleak moors surrounding Haworth became the children’s playground and their aunt Elizabeth Branwell tried to teach the girls how to run a household, but their minds were more inclined to literature. At the age of eleven Anne created an imaginary world with her sister Emily called Gondal. The characters in the land they created had newspapers, magazines and chronicles which were written in extremely tiny books, with writing so small it was difficult to read without a magnifying glass. These creations and writings were a training for Anne’s later literary talents.

At the age of 15 Anne went to Roe Head School, Mirfield, it was her first time away from home and she was determined to stay and get the education she needed to support herself.

In 1839, a year after leaving the school aged 19, Anne started work as a governess for the Ingham family at Blake Hall, near Mirfield. However, the children in her charge were spoilt and disobedient. Anne had great difficulty controlling them and ultimately the Inghams, dissatisfied with Anne dismissed her. She returned home at Christmas 1839, joining Charlotte, Emily and Branwell. The episode at Blake Hall was so traumatic that she reproduced it in almost perfect detail in her novel, Agnes Grey.

Anne obtained a second post as governess to the four children of the Reverend Edmund Robinson and his wife Lydia, at Thorp Green Hall, a country house near York. Initially, she encountered similar problems to those she had experienced at Blake Hall. However, Anne was determined to make a success of her position and eventually was well-liked by the Robinson family to become a lifelong friend. Anne was employed at Thorp Green Hall from 1840 to 1845 and the house appeared as Horton Lodge in her novel Agnes Grey.

Left: A portrait of Anne Brontë c.1835, it is a restored version of a painting by her brother Patrick Branwell Brontë produced when Anne was aged about fifteen.

Along with the other aspects of restoration performed on this image, by Michael Armitage, he has returned Anne’s eyes to their natural blue colour. This pigment seems to have faded in the original painting. Many years after Anne’s death, the Brontë sisters’ lifelong friend, Ellen Nussey, described Anne as having ‘lovely violet blue eyes’.

It was in fact, the Robinsons who introduced Anne to Scarborough. For the next five years, Anne spent no more than five or six weeks a year with her family, during holidays at Christmas and in June. The rest of her time was spent with the Robinsons at Thorp Green and she accompanied them on annual holidays to Scarborough. Between 1840 and 1844, Anne spent around five weeks each summer at the coastal town and loved the place. A number of locations in Scarborough were the setting for Agnes Grey’s final scenes and for Linden-Car village in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall.
On the death of her aunt, early in November 1842, Anne came home, her sisters were away studying in Brussels. Elizabeth Branwell left a £350 legacy (about £30,000 in today’s money) for each of her nieces.

Anne returned to Thorp Green in January 1843 where she secured a position for Branwell. He was to take over as tutor to the Robinsons’ son, Edmund, who was growing too old to be in Anne’s care. Anne and Branwell taught at Thorp Green for the next three years. Branwell entered into a secret relationship with his employer’s wife, Lydia Robinson. When Anne and her brother returned home for the holidays in June 1846, she resigned her position. While Anne gave no reason for leaving Thorp Green, it is thought she wanted to leave on becoming aware of the relationship between her brother and Mrs. Robinson. Branwell was dismissed when his employer found out about the relationship. Anne retained close ties to Elizabeth and Mary Robinson, exchanging letters even after Branwell’s disgrace.

Over Christmas of 1848, Anne caught influenza. Her symptoms intensified, and her father sent for a Leeds physician in early January. The doctor diagnosed her condition as consumption (tuberculosis) and intimated that it was quite advanced, leaving little hope of recovery. Her health fluctuated as the months passed, and she grew weaker.

In February 1849, Anne seemed a little better and felt that a change of air might relieve her symptoms, so she decided to make a visit to Scarborough. Charlotte requested that their friend Ellen Nussey accompany them on the journey which began on 24th May 1849. They booked rooms at Wood’s Lodgings. On Sunday, 27th May, Anne asked Charlotte if it would be easier to return home to die instead of being in Scarborough. A doctor was consulted the next day and indicated that Anne’s death was imminent. She died around two o’clock in the afternoon of Monday 28th May 1849.

Left: This old photo dated around 1860 shows a view of Wood’s Lodgings across the Spa Bridge. It was taken about 10 years after Anne died there. The light coloured cottages abutting the left-hand side of the main building were also part of Wood’s Lodgings, and some believe that it was in one of these where Anne spent her last few days; however, it is equally possible that it was at the right-hand end of the larger, main building. We know for certain that she had a sea view from both her bedroom, and her sitting room (which was one floor below), hence they were ‘back rooms’ with respect to this photograph. Wood’s Lodgings were demolished in 1862 to make way for the Grand Hotel which was finally opened in 1867.

On the seaward side, the main Wood’s Lodgings building extended below street level, down the cliff by another 3 floors, in a similar manner that of the current Grand Hotel. These extensions can be seen on the extreme right and on the photo below. The vast difference in size between the two buildings is also very evident (compare against the building on the extreme left, which is the same one in both photographs).

Right: The Grand Hotel which extends below street level, down the cliff with the Spa Bridge on the left.
Left: This old sketch shows St. Nicholas Cliff around 1840. On the left are Wood’s Lodgings, in the distance and behind is Scarborough’s South Bay. It was in these buildings where Anne stayed during her first few years at Scarborough with the Robinson family.

Right: This drawing is titled ‘New Buildings, Cliff, Scarborough’, and dated 1843. It shows Wood’s Lodgings viewed from the sea, with its new ‘central block’ and ‘down-the-cliff’ extension, in the year of Anne's third visit to the resort. On the left is the Spa Bridge, and a number of bathing huts (or machines) are in evidence along the beach. Scarborough was the first seaside to pioneer bathing machines in 1735. The full story of Scarborough’s bathing machines has been published in the journal (TYJ Spring 2012).

Left: The Grand Hotel in about 1895 standing on the site of Wood’s Lodgings. When it was first opened in 1867 the hotel was hailed as “the largest and handsomest in Europe”

Right: Front view of the Grand Hotel today
Anne is the only member of the Brontë family not to be buried at Haworth. Charlotte had chosen to bury Anne at St. Mary's Church, but at the time of her death, major restoration work was being carried out at the church. So for this reason the funeral was held on Wednesday 30th May at Christ Church, which was situated near the top of Vernon Place, now Vernon Road, only a few minutes’ walk from Wood’s Lodgings, the place where Anne had died. This seems inadvertently appropriate, as it was in this church where Anne had worshipped with the Robinson family on their annual visits to Scarborough some five to nine years earlier. This however, did not allow time for Patrick Brontë to make the 70 mile (110 km) journey, had he wished to do so. The former schoolmistress at Roe Head, Miss Wooler, was in Scarborough and she was the only other mourner at Anne’s funeral. Anne’s body was taken by horse carriage to be buried in St Mary’s churchyard, beneath Scarborough castle, overlooking the bay. Charlotte commissioned a stone to be placed over her grave, with a simple inscription.

The construction of Christ Church dates between 26th October 1826, and 23rd August 1828. This was where Anne worshipped with the Robinson family throughout the times they were at Scarborough.

Above right: The Interior of Christ Church in the mid-1900s. Several times during the final days of her life, Anne expressed a wish to attend this church but Charlotte dissuaded her feeling Anne was too weak to do so. Ironically, Anne’s wish was finally granted, as her funeral service was conducted here. Christ Church never had its own church-yard.

Christ Church was demolished in October 1979, the site is now occupied by a supermarket and a fish-and-chip restaurant.

Left: This photograph was taken around 1970, it shows the top end of Vernon Road with the tall Christ Church tower, above what is now the Scarborough Public Library, formerly Oddfellows Hall built in 1840. In the foreground can be seen a car park, the site of which is now occupied by part of the Brunswick Shopping Centre complex.

The full story of St. Mary’s Church has been published in the journal (TYJ Spring 2011)
Charlotte only revisited the grave once on 4th June 1852 a few days after the third anniversary of Anne’s death. She did not stay in Scarborough, the memories being too painful, but spent the following three to four weeks in a cottage at the southern end of Filey. On her arrival at Scarborough she discovered five errors in the inscription on Anne’s headstone, and had to arrange for it to be refaced. However, Anne’s age at death was still written as 28 when, in fact, she was 29 when she died. In April 2011, the correction was finally made when a new inscribed plinth was laid by the Brontë Society in front of the eroded headstone. Throughout the summer months there is an almost continuous stream of visitors to Anne’s grave. It is not uncommon to see bouquets of flowers placed on her grave.

Right: Anne Brontë’s weathered and eroded headstone, beneath is the new plaque installed in 2011

Above: Anne Brontë’s grave and headstone before being badly weathered and eroded

Anne Brontë’s footsteps in Scarborough

The illustration on the right was the main Seamer/York road as it entered Scarborough (from the south-west), the road Anne used when travelling to and from Scarborough on her five annual visits with the Robinson family. The road is shown here in 1840 the year she made her first visit to the resort.

Right: A watercolour by Paul Braddon 1840

In the centre of the picture, on the hill, can be seen the castle, and behind the buildings on the right is the tower of Christ Church. This was where Anne worshipped with the Robinsons and ultimately where her funeral was conducted.

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About six hundred yards beyond and to the right of the church, not visible in the illustration is Wood’s Lodgings, where Anne stayed on all her visits to Scarborough. Immediately beyond this, below the cliff, is the South Sands where she loved to walk beside the sea. A few hundred yards behind and to the right of the cliff is the site where, five years later, the York/Scarborough railway station was erected. Anne travelled to Scarborough by train on her final visit with her sister Charlotte and friend Ellen Nussey in May 1849, she did not make the return journey, but died three days after her arrival.

In Anne’s day, this section of road was called Falsgrave Walk, today it is named Westborough, and the area behind the railings on the left is Alma Square.

To the right is the same view sketched several years later. A surprising number of changes have taken place, including the appearance of street lamps, and ‘The Bar’ (the archway seen a few hundred yards down the road) which was built in 1843.

There is much misconception about which members of the Brontë family visited Scarborough, here is the situation. Anne visited at least four, though more likely five times with the Robinson family, followed, some five years later, by her final, dying visit with Charlotte and their friend Ellen Nussey. The latter occasion was Charlotte’s first visit to the resort, and she only returned once, three years later, to visit Anne’s grave. Branwell was at Scarborough on two occasions, when he accompanied Anne and the Robinson family. Emily had planned to accompany Anne on a short visit in the summer of 1845 but the venue was changed to York; there is no indication that Emily, or Patrick, the father, ever visited Scarborough.

This old sketch to the left, shows the view across Cliff Bridge from Wood’s Lodgings around 1849, the year Anne spent her last few days there. On the left, beyond and below the bridge, can be seen Henry Wyatt’s ‘Gothic Saloon’, beside which are the Spa Wells. At the bridge entrance is the Toll Booth where tickets could be purchased allowing unlimited access to the bridge and Spa Wells for a one, two, or four week period, or indeed the entire season. Anne took many walks across this bridge; indeed, the day before she died, she chaperoned Charlotte, and their friend Ellen Nussey, along it. Today, the bridge is known as the Spa Bridge and it leads to several footpaths, one of which gradually descends to the Spa buildings, which stand on the site of the old Gothic Saloon. Just below and to the right of the bridge, not visible in this illustration, is the Rotunda Museum.
The picture on the right shows Henry Wyatt’s ‘Gothic Saloon’ which opened with dancing and fireworks on 16th August 1839, the year before Anne’s first visit to Scarborough. On the extreme right of the picture is the Cliff Bridge (now Spa Bridge), above and to the left of it can be seen the tower of Christ Church, indicated in the picture, at the top of Vernon Place (now Vernon Road). This was the church in which Anne and the Robinsons worshipped, and ultimately where Anne’s funeral was conducted.

The left is an illustration dated around 1845, from a bridge-like structure which led from the cliff pathway to the roof of the Gothic Saloon. On the skyline, extreme left, can be seen Wood’s Lodgings with St. Mary’s church and the castle on the right. In the foreground is the entrance to the underground room which contained the Spa Wells. In 1626, a natural spring was discovered here by Elizabeth Farrow, and the water was believed to have great healing properties. From this time until around the mid-1800s, many summer pilgrimages were made to the ‘Spa’, and people would take the waters in the hope of a cure for a multitude of ailments. The full story of Scarborough Spa has been published in the journal (TYJ Spring 2010).

Although it is not recorded, it is quite possible that Anne may have tried them in 1849, hoping they might assist in her hoped-for recovery from consumption. Indeed, she may well have sampled them when visiting Scarborough with the Robinsons some years earlier, the Spa-water was certainly reputed to cure asthma, from which we know she suffered.

On the sea-wall, just beyond and to the left of the ‘Spa Wells entrance’, can be seen two stone pillars, these mark the opening to a set of steps which, running parallel to the sea-wall, lead down to the beach. These steps remain today. Half way down is a level platform, and here, the overflow of the Spa-water comes out of a small pipe in the wall. Anyone wishing to sample the water can do so, though it does not look very appetizing and actually tastes rather bitter!
Left is a view across Scarborough’s South Bay from just beyond the Gothic Saloon. This sketch was drawn in 1839, just after the saloon had been opened. Between the Saloon’s turrets can be faintly seen St. Mary’s Church (where Anne is now buried) and the castle is on the right.

To the right is the view from the South Bay seafront in the opposite direction. The sketch is by Francis Nicholson and dates around 1832. Clearly visible at the top right is Wood’s Lodgings and in the centre is the Spa Bridge that spans the valley from St Nicholas Cliff to the Spa. On the extreme left is the Gothic Saloon. Even the pathway that leads from the Spa Bridge down to the Saloon and the Spa Well, can easily be identified. This pathway remains today. The South Sands is where Anne loved to walk beside the sea. In this sketch are number of bathing huts on the sands with horse riders, and carriages.

The Rotunda Museum cannot be seen in the sketch, but it would be to the left around the cliff. The museum was described by Anne’s brother, Branwell, in an unfinished novel. It is inconceivable to think that Anne would not have paid a visit here with the Robinsons, if not alone, she may have taken the Robinson children there as an educational exercise. The building was erected, specifically as a museum, in 1829, and the rectangular side wings were added in the 1860s. The building still serves as a museum today and was renovated in 2006. This old sketch on the left is not dated, but was drawn sometime between 1845 and 1850. The ‘Mill Beck’ ran down this chasm making its way to the sea, today this is completely concealed below ground as the area passing beneath the Spa Bridge on the right. On the cliff-top, just to the right of the museum is the ‘pre-1842’ Wood’s Lodgings. This is where Anne stayed during her first few visits to Scarborough. This site is now occupied by the Grand Hotel, dominating the scene in the modern photograph, as it does in many other Scarborough views. Behind the Spa Bridge, on the skyline, can be seen the castle, and just to the right of the bridge are the South Sands, The full story of Rotunda Museum, Scarborough has been published in the journal (TYJ Winter 2011).

To the right is a crayon sketch by W. Tindall, produced around 1840, the year Anne made her first visit to Scarborough. Once again, to the right of the museum, on the cliff, is the early Wood’s Lodgings ‘house’. This was also, probably, the block in which she died (No: 2, Cliff) in 1849. On the right can be seen the pool created by the ‘Mill Beck’, the water gradually making its way beneath the ‘Cliff Bridge’ (now called Spa Bridge), and across the South Sands to the sea.
Left: The Rotunda Museum with the two rectangular side wings which were added in the 1860s. It is overlooked by the Grand Hotel.

Below: In 2006 the Rotunda Museum was renovated and now forms its original role as a centre of geology for the region.

Careful analysis of the photo shows the Spa Buildings in a partly demolished or rebuilt stage. In 1876 the spa buildings were destroyed by fire with the rebuilding being completed in 1879 and officially opening in 1880. The bridge is shown in its original width, it was widened in 1880 from 13.5ft to 23ft to allow extra pedestrian traffic. Initially, people that wanted to use the bridge had to pay a toll. It would remain in place until 1951 when the council purchased the bridge from the Spa Company for £22,500. An 1845 advert for the bridge gave the specifications as 13·5' wide, 414' long, and 75' high.

Left: This photograph is probably the oldest of the Spa Bridge and dates between the years 1876 to 1879.

Situated on Tanner Street (now St. Thomas Street) was the theatre on the right, which was only about a three minute walk from Wood’s Lodgings. During the mid-1800s this theatre was owned and run by the Roxby family, and on 20th October 1845, the Robinson’s eldest daughter, Lydia, absconded with and married the play actor Henry Roxby who performed here. This clearly indicates that the Robinsons, and almost certainly Anne, attended concerts and performances by many famous actors, at this establishment. In 1825 a seat in the boxes cost three shillings, in the pit two shillings and in the gallery one shilling. The theatre had a long run, being built in 1767 and not closing until 1924 when it staged a final week of Vaudeville. It was demolished a few years later and the site is now a nightclub.

Left is a view across the Cliff Bridge (Spa Bridge) to Wood’s Lodgings, indicated in the illustration and St. Nicholas Cliff in the late 1840s, around the time Anne spent her last days there. Bathing machines are in clear evidence along the South Sands.
The sketch below shows Harland’s Baths at the corner of Falconer’s Road (The ‘New Road’ to the right) and Vernon Place (now Vernon Road on the left). Winifred Gerin, one of Anne’s biographers, suggests that these were the baths Anne attended alone (at her own insistence) a few days before she died. However, a study of the contemporary, local baths indicates that this may not be the case. It is certainly a possibility that Anne attended these baths when she visited Scarborough with the Robinsons during the early 1840s. The tower, which can be seen above the buildings in the old sketch is Christ Church, where Anne and the Robinsons worshipped, and ultimately where Anne’s funeral was conducted.

This illustration was sketched around 1841, and appeared in various editions of Theakston’s ‘Guide to Scarborough’ throughout the 1840s. Along with the sketch is the following description:

**HARLAND’S BATHS**

*This commodious and elegant establishment is situated in the New Road, near to Vernon Place. The interior of the Baths is fitted up with considerable taste, and the edifice has been much enlarged, and the accommodation for visitors augmented. The Baths are constantly supplied with pure sea-water, and no expense has been spared by the proprietor to render them worthy of an enlarged share of public support.*

This illustration on the right shows Travis’ Baths, situated at the top end of St. Nicholas Cliff, little over 100 yards from Wood’s Lodgings, which can actually be seen in the background, to the right of the baths. It is very likely that Anne bathed here with the Robinsons; and these are probably the baths she attended alone, at her own insistence, a few days before she died. The building does not exist today. This sketch shows the view down into St. Nicholas Cliff, on the right, with the sea and cliffs in the distance beyond Wood’s Lodgings. The illustration was sketched around 1841, and appeared once again in various editions of Theakston’s ‘Guide to Scarborough’ throughout the 1840s. Theakston also presented this description with the illustration:

**TRAVIS’S BATHS**

*This respectable establishment, situate at the entrance to St. Nicholas’ Cliff, was originally opened in 1798. It has since been re-built, and the interior fitted up with every attention to comfort and elegance. The Baths are of wood and marble, and are adapted either for plunging, sitting, or the recumbent position. Every tide, these baths are supplied with pure sea water, and admit of every variety of temperature. Rooms are also fitted up for Steam, the Douche, and Shower Baths.*

The sea-water for these baths would have been transported beneath the Cliff Bridge (now Spa Bridge), and up Falconer’s Road (now Vernon Road).

Once again, this drawing on the right shows the South Bay, but this time from the castle entrance. The date given with the picture is ‘c.1850’; however, Anne’s grave does not appear to be present in the graveyard, so it could have been produced prior to the summer of 1849; unless, of course, the artist has not been too keen on precision.
Whatever, this is certainly Scarborough the way Anne knew it. All the main landmarks are visible, St. Mary’s church on the right; a little way to the left of this, in the distance, is the tower of Christ Church (dark coloured), where Anne worshipped with the Robinsons and where her funeral was conducted. Just left of picture centre is the Cliff Bridge, now Spa Bridge with Wood’s Lodgings immediately to the right of it. On the extreme left is Henry Wyatt’s Gothic Saloon (on the site of the current Spa-Complex buildings); and, of course, Oliver’s Mount stands bold behind the new buildings on South Cliff.

The painting on the left is undated but was produced around the mid to late 1840s the period Anne was visiting the resort. In the picture, a group of people appear to be having a picnic on one of the more level sections of the South Cliff. On the right, a young lady with a parasol takes a stroll along one of the cliff pathways. Just left of picture centre, on the beach, is Henry Wyatt’s Gothic Saloon, now ‘The Spa’, beyond it is the Cliff Bridge, now Spa Bridge; and a little to the right of this, in white, and looking in pristine condition, the re-structured Wood’s Lodgings with its new down-the-cliff extension is clearly visible, or rather the side of it is.

Anne loved the seaside resort of Scarborough and she portrayed the place in both of her novels, Agnes Grey and The Tenant of Wildfell Hall. It was the place where she ultimately died and was buried.

Anne’s signature, taken from one of the educational books she used while employed as a governess at Thorp Green. (Dated 19th. September 1843). Anne was twenty-three years old at this time.

Right: This aerial view of the St. Nicholas Cliff, Scarborough c. 1935 was most familiar to Anne, though, shown here some 86 years after she died. The Grand Hotel, which replaced Wood’s Lodgings; and Christ Church, where Anne’s funeral was conducted, are indicated. The Grand Hotel’s three storey ‘down-the-cliff extension’ is clearly visible. An almost identical extension was added to Wood’s Lodgings in 1842, the year of Anne’s third visit to the resort. The Spa Bridge, where Anne took many walks, is on the left, with the Rotunda museum just beyond it (extreme left). In the foreground are the South Sands, where Anne loved to walk beside the sea, and that inspired some of the concluding scenes of her novel, Agnes Grey.

Left: The plaque which is mounted on the wall of the Grand Hotel indicating that Anne ‘died in a house on this site on May 28th. 1849’.

The author would like to acknowledge Michael Armitage for permission to use his copyright material from his website on Anne Brontë at www.mick-armitage.staff.shef.ac.uk
According to Ellen Nussey’s diary the day following Anne’s burial, she and Charlotte Brontë visited Scarborough Castle, and would have passed Anne’s grave along the way. Also, on that day, in the same edition of the Scarborough Gazette which reported in its ‘Visitors List’ the arrival of “Miss Brontë” at No. 2 The Cliff, was Anne’s obituary, the wording was as follows: ‘On the 28th inst, at this place, of consumption, Miss Anne Brontë of Brookroyd, Birstall near Leeds.’ The incorrect address was obviously on account of Ellen arranging the entry, this was her address. Even more ironic, was that on the front page of this same edition was an advertisement for the Scarborough Circulating Library, which put Jane Eyre at the top of its list of new popular novels.

Above: The walk way leading towards Scarborough Castle in about 1889. It illustrates Anne Brontë’s grave, which is now over the small car park walling. Charlotte and Ellen would have taken this roadway the day following Anne’s burial passing her grave. In the distance can be seen the barbican gate, Charlotte and Ellen would have entered the castle through this gateway.

Above Right: A view of St. Mary’s Church walking down from the entrance to Scarborough Castle. On the left of this black and white photo, dated to about 1887, in the detached part of the burial ground Anne’s grave stone can be seen. Depicted in both illustrations can be seen a fence and a gate across the road with a small gateway on the left permitting accesses to the road leading to the castle. In the middle of the roadway is a Drinking Fountain with a conical shaped roof. It was erected in 1860 to commemorate Scarborough’s first historian, Thomas Hinderwell. His history of the town first appeared in print in 1798. The fountain was badly positioned when horse-drawn vehicles gave way to automobiles. It kept getting nudged by traffic, finally a reversing lorry demolished it.

Left: Scarborough South Bay, to the left is St. Mary’s Church and right Scarborough Castle
North Landing. The name itself conjures up images of pirates, caves, and treacherous seas with swarthy fishermen pulling their wooden boats up the shingle. It is all these things surrounded by breath taking scenery from clifftops sheltering this small cove.

North Landing, situated on the Flamborough Head Heritage Coast, is approached on the B1255 road from Sewerby, north of Bridlington, passing through Flamborough.

The village of Flamborough, colonised by Scandinavians over one thousand years ago, is the nearest village to North Landing. The Domesday Book refers to it as Fleneburg and the Flaneburg Hotel is located on this road to the cove. The village now relies upon tourism rather than the active, albeit small, fishing industry. There are many delightful holiday cottages, apartments and holiday parks in and around Flamborough offering all-year-round rentals.

You can reach North Landing by local bus from Bridlington or by car and using the pay and display carpark. There is a licensed bar or you may like to use the adjacent café providing refreshments which you can enjoy at the picnic tables whilst breathing the ozone of the wild North Sea.

On the clifftop walk, leading left from the carpark, there are benches to enjoy the views and amongst are various works of woodcraft in the grass; continue walking on the coastal path (often close to the edge) and you will arrive at Thornwick Bay. Alternatively, take the paths behind the bar to walk to Saltwick Bay, eventually reaching Flamborough Head and the lighthouse, enjoying the spectacular sights, flora, fauna, and numerous seabirds in the nooks and crannies of the cliffs.
There are two ways to get down to the beach at North Landing, both quite steep and challenging on the way back. There are some earth steps from the clifftop which join with a concrete zig-zag road, passing an old tin refreshment hut (note the advertisements on it), then onward to the old lifeboat station. Here you use the steps or slope, once used when launching the lifeboat, and you are then on the beach. The new lifeboat station is at South Landing where there is a nature trail leading to Flamborough lighthouse.
You can usually find half a dozen boats moored up on the beach belonging to the local fishermen. These colourful wooden boats are inshore fishing vessels commonly known as cobles (or cobbles depending where you live on the east coast from Berwick-upon-Tweed to Hull). Legend has it they are descended from Viking longboats, as they are long and sleek in the north, whilst Yorkshire craft are deep and squat. Generations of fishing families trusted their lives to the coble because of its seaworthiness and it was the essential tool of fishing communities.

In the 1920s, when diesel engines were introduced, cobles took on a new appearance. The sides were heightened as oars were no longer needed and, as horsepower increased, so did the width and length providing more room for up to four fishermen, extra nets and pots for crabs. The locally caught crab and fish are used in the hotels and restaurants in the villages and to ensure you can enjoy them, you have to reserve a crab the day before due to the demand from gastronomes!

Cobles are also found on dry land in the form of brightly painted flower containers on east coast homes. There is the occasional old coble found on a road roundabout or in a garden, and so the legacy lives on.
The Bridlington Sailing Coble Preservation Society, funded by donations, takes care of the “Three Brothers” historic sailing coble, built in 1912. There is currently a display of photographs regarding cobles in a shop window in Bridlington. Further information can be obtained online or from an office on the harbour side.

When the sea is calm, fishermen use the cobles to take visitors around the North Landing headlands to view the many caves used by smugglers. They would bring in the likes of tea, brandy, silk and cotton from their ships, moored not far from the cove, under the guise of a dead body in a coffin at night, right under the eagle-eyed customs officers!

Left: A cbole taking visitors around North Landing
Photo by Steve Hope

When the tide is at its lowest, it is possible to walk out to the caves. However, as soon as the tide turns, the sea covers the rocks and caves rapidly, so the utmost care has to be taken to get back on the beach before you are stranded. The water in the cove is crystal clear but rather cold for swimming unless you have a wet suit.

Right: This cave is known as Robin Lythe’s Cave, at North Landing Flamborough. When the tide is out it can be reached by walking through a small entrance in the cliff. As you enter it is dark, hard to see and the large sea water pools on the ground that you have to negotiate are difficult, if you do not want wet feet. As the eyes get accustomed to the dark and you turn a corner the seaward mouth of the cave comes into view. The cave is massive and was believed to be used for smuggling in times gone by.

North Landing is a peaceful place to sit and reflect upon life for an hour or two. It is a place to explore anytime of the year and experience the gift of the nature of the sea.
The sea at North Landing, Flamborough can be very cruel and stormy with big waves reaching the top of the cliffs.
The railway poster on the left was produced by the North Eastern Region of British Railways to promote rail travel to the Yorkshire seaside coast.

It portrays North Landing at Flamborough between Filey and Bridlington and illustrates spectacular chalk cliffs covered with grassland at the top, to the rocky shore and sandy beaches.

The poster is titled ‘Yorkshire’ and dates c1948-1965, by the artist Edward Wesson (1910-83) who was primarily a watercolour demonstrator and teacher.

Flamborough was never part of the rail network and was only accessible from stations on the Scarborough to Hull line. Bridlington is the nearest railway station to Flamborough, opened on 6th October 1846, by the York and North Midland Railway as the terminus of their line running from Hull railway station. An extension northwards to Filey railway station, leading to a junction with the York to Scarborough line, was opened just over a year later.

This additional railway section is by Stephen Riley who wrote the fascinating story of *Classic Vintage Yorkshire Railway Posters*, published in the journal (*TYJ Summer 2011*).
So began a letter in 1939 from the Yorkshire topographers Marie Hartley and Ella Pontefract to the novelist Phyllis Bentley after she had written a favourable review of their book “Yorkshire Tour.” Expressing the wish that she should visit them at their cottage in Askrigg when next in Wensleydale, it proved to be the start of what Phyllis was later to describe as a lasting friendship, although one which was not without problems.

Marie and Ella, the daughters of wealthy Yorkshire wool textile manufacturers, first met in the 1920s when their respective families moved to Wetherby from the West Riding. Although Marie was Ella’s junior by nine years, the gap was never significant because both had similar interests, especially cycling and walking in the countryside. They also shared cherished ambitions, Marie as an artist, Ella as a writer, and when Marie gained a place at the Slade School of Art in London, Ella joined her to study journalism. On their return to Yorkshire they began to combine their talents, cycling to local churches where Marie sketched the building from the churchyard while Ella explored the interior making notes. Over a period of three years these combined efforts appeared regularly in the then ‘Yorkshire Weekly Post’ and were later published in book form as ‘The Charm of Yorkshire Churches.’

Soon they began to venture further afield by bus or on foot, visiting the dales regularly and staying overnight in farms, cottages or on one occasion, at the Post Office in Keld. While Marie painted, Ella, the more gregarious of the two, chatted to local people gathering memories which often stretched back through parents and grandparents to the mid-eighteenth century. These accounts were written up in the evenings and were published in their first Dales book, ‘Swaledale,’ in 1934. Two years later, after acquiring a caravan, it was followed by ‘Wensleydale’ and then, in 1938 by ‘Wharfedale.’

Above: The first books punished by Ella Pontefract and Marie Hartley, from left to right Swaledale (1934) Wensleydale (1936) and Wharfedale (1938)
In the late 1930s the pair bought a run-down cottage called ‘Coleshouse’ in the village of Askrigg, painstakingly restoring it over many war-interrupted years. Sadly, Ella died in 1945 at the early age of forty eight from the complications of high blood pressure, then untreatable, and some months passed before Marie felt able to return alone and begin to write ‘Yorkshire Heritage’ as a memorial to her. In this she was helped by a mutual friend, Joan Ingilby, thus forming a literary partnership which soon became permanent. For the next fifty years the two women shared the cottage in which they produced a stream of carefully researched, well-written and invaluable books on every facet of the history and topography of Yorkshire of a quality which has never been surpassed.

Meanwhile Phyllis Bentley, also the daughter of a West Riding wool textile manufacturer, was a distinguished, well-established and highly successful novelist whose greatest achievement was the internationally acclaimed “Inheritance” published in 1932. Born in Halifax in 1894, and therefore older than either Marie or Joan, Phyllis was highly intelligent, volatile, impetuous and extremely sensitive. She was also an accomplished lecturer, having undertaken four lengthy and successful tours of the United States, and had many literary friends including Winifred Holtby, the Yorkshire novelist and author of ‘South Riding,’ and with the writer J. B. Priestley, born in Bradford, in whose Hampstead home she enjoyed many literary parties. Later, as the author of many books, plays and short stories, she also became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and was awarded a D. Litt degree by the University of Leeds.

In 1949 Phyllis took a walking holiday staying at the ‘Rose and Crown’ in Bainbridge. Since 1926 she had relished such breaks, or ‘thinking holidays,’ where she gained an inner peace and the space in which to create her work unfettered by domestic problems and the tyranny of a possessive and demanding mother with whom, as the only daughter of the family, she was compelled to remain. Now on a whim she decided to realise a long cherished ambition by calling on Marie and Joan. Given a warm welcome and an invitation to tea she found Marie ‘still in great grief’ over the loss of Ella, although ‘kind...a true artist’. Two days later, when she called to return a book they had asked her to sign, she found a notice pinned to the door announcing that the occupants were ‘very busy’ and not to be disturbed. As she hastily turned away the door suddenly opened to the sound of laughter and yet another welcome.
Over the next thirty years Phyllis made regular visits to ‘Coleshouse’ especially at Christmas and also at Easter when days were spent walking and picnicking at favourite places such as Sunbiggin Tarn or at Ellerkin Scar high on the hill behind the cottage.

Right: Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby outside Coleshouse

During evenings by the fireside they discussed their work, their triumphs and disappointments and the difficulties of single women trying to forge independent careers while caring for dependant relatives. In particular Phyllis described as ‘almost intolerable the awful frustration of her life at home’ where, despite being active in the Halifax Thespians, the Halifax Writer’s Circle, and the Brontë Society at Haworth, she felt ‘intellectually isolated.’ It was in sharp contrast to her life in London where she was a member of PEN, a group of distinguished writers, and enjoyed dinners at Claridge’s with her publisher Victor Gollancz. There were also hints of a relationship and a proposal of marriage which she had turned down, perhaps from Harold Latham, Vice-President of the American branch of Macmillan Publishing with whom she had a close and lasting relationship.

For Marie and Joan such accounts were a world away from their relatively simple, quiet lives in Wensleydale, and both were very conscious of the fact that Phyllis led a much ‘more interesting and fuller life.’ Often too they felt ‘overwhelmed’ by her. ‘I don’t think [that we] will ever get used to the fact that it is the famous novelist who is our friend - we gain spiritual refreshment from being with a person cleverer than ourselves’.

Left: Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby at work in the studio at Coleshouse in 1948, before their workroom was built

They did however recognise that ‘a threesome is difficult to manage,’ and Phyllis agreed. ‘The trouble with our relationship is that there are two of you and one of me’ she once declared. Despite this she regarded her visits to Askrigg as a ‘much cherished lifeline.’

After the death of Mrs. Bentley, Marie and Joan visited Phyllis at her home, a Victorian stone villa in Halifax. This proved to be a far from casual affair involving planning on a military scale. ‘10.30 arrival – coffee with Rich Teas if available...inspection of dining room, trellises, small chairs, tea cosies, new evening dress and anything else in the house of interest. 12.30 sherry. 1 pm lunch at ‘White Swan’. 2 pm return to Heath Villas. Talk. 5 pm high tea.’ All went to plan and the day, according to Phyllis, was one of ‘complete happiness and accord.’ Sadly this was not always so, for weekly letters between the three reveal that the path of their friendship was often far from smooth, especially between Marie and Phyllis, both of whom were endowed with feisty temperaments and firm opinions. Consequently over the years many an impulsive remark made by one or the other was misunderstood and small incidents assumed large proportions. Meanwhile Joan had the unenviable role of mediator.

Right: Joan, Phyllis and Marie at Heath Villas, Halifax
In 1952 Phyllis, who found the atmosphere at ‘Coleshouse’ claustrophobic and the constant companionship exhausting, chose to stay at the ‘Rose and Crown’ which provided the solitude and freedom she craved. Needless to say Marie and Joan were upset, Marie asking ‘do you mean not to stay with us again’ and adding ‘if you don’t I shall have as long as I live a raw place...in my heart’...and adding ‘if you wanted a day by yourself we really shouldn’t mind’.

Although Phyllis relented to some extent and did stay at ‘Coleshouse’ on many future occasions, she also often stayed at the Rose and Crown where she would entertain them to dinner. Marie felt that they should all meet every two months; Phyllis thought every three would be enough but she was careful not to tell Marie.

In 1953 matters boiled over when they decided to take a joint holiday in Italy. In Florence, Phyllis developed urticaria as a result of eating shrimps and was covered in spots, Marie and Joan were unenthusiastic about the idea of morning coffee which Phyllis relished, Siena was ‘blazing hot’ and as they all wore tweed suits, they found the hills doubly difficult. Meanwhile Marie felt that Phyllis was being extravagant with money and said so, and Phyllis did not disguise her annoyance at the accusation - for which she later apologised. In Milan a man queue jumped them while waiting for a taxi and an outraged Marie leapt forward, put her head through the window and shouted ‘filthy beast,’ which Phyllis found ‘extraordinary.’ Somewhat surprisingly however she later summed up the whole Italian experience as a ‘friendship cemented,’ and her travelling companions ‘kind, unselfish, reliable and intelligent,’ although she was not encouraged to repeat the experience. When a similar trip abroad was proposed in 1956, she announced that although ‘fond of them both’ she did not think ‘the fondness could survive a further fortnight together.’

Despite this the three did manage to enjoy short joint holidays nearer home, one of which was to Phyllis’s much loved Isle of Man, the scene of many happy childhood holidays. The success of this occasion was perhaps due to the fact that the three of them split up occasionally. A further holiday in Orkney was equally enjoyable; also memorable were trips nearer home when Marie and Joan introduced Phyllis to ‘all the lovely Dales places’ although some of these - like a climb up High Seat between Wensleydale and Swaledale - were not without challenges to their friendship. All three were wearing tweed skirts, but while Phyllis and Joan were wearing shoes, Marie, who was leading the walk, was equipped with more sensible boots. Setting off at a great pace she proceeded relentlessly through peat bogs and across crevasses into which an irate Phyllis, shouting ‘I’ll kill you for this,’ promptly fell. In fact on another occasion the pair very nearly did kill her when, unaware of her heart condition, they took her up Ingleborough which necessitated frequent stops in order for her to regain her breath.

Left: The Rose and Crown at Bainbridge where Phyllis stayed

Left: Joan, Phyllis and Marie outside Phyllis’s later home at Warley, near Halifax
A further source of dissension was Phyllis’s criticism, perceived or real, of their work. Before achieving literary success she had worked as a reviewer for several newspapers and journals, and had no time for the ‘yes men’ of literary criticism. Of Marie and Joan's first collaborations, ‘Yorkshire Heritage’ published in 1950, and ‘Yorkshire Village’ in 1953, she found the former ‘well-constructed’ with ‘fine phrases’ and that ‘upright, vigorous, humorous wide-seeing quality which is you’ and the latter ‘while not wholly to my taste, a bit above the heads of the ordinary housewife and unlikely to sell as well as their previous books’ but ‘an absolutely first class bit of work...a real classic.’ The assessment of its saleability proved to be accurate.

In 1961 the two sent for her approval, a draft of their latest book ‘Yorkshire Portraits’ which consisted of short biographical accounts of famous Yorkshire people. Phyllis, who had never seen the point of such a book and said so often believing them capable of better work, was upset by the number of inaccuracies contained in the draft devoted to her, although after modification it eventually gained her approval.

Left: The front cover of Yorkshire Portraits by Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby published in 1961

But when the book appeared she was horrified to find it contained what she perceived to be an unflattering portrait of herself done by Marie from a photograph. Declaring that the illustration made her look ‘like a malevolent gnome, harsh, coarse, slovenly and masculine’ she angrily accused Marie of not having shown it to her because she knew she would disapprove. ‘What would your own feelings have been...if I had published a picture of you without consent’ she demanded. Marie needlessly to say was deeply upset, explaining that if she had shown their pictures to everyone featured in the book it would never have been published at all. As usual it was left to Joan to put up a staunch defence of her friend, accusing Phyllis of ‘being unkind to a degree,’ that ‘such an accusation was not only completely unwarranted but was completely ‘foreign to [Marie’s] nature’ and adding that if she herself had seen anything derogatory in the picture, she would not have allowed it to go through. Eventually matters were smoothed over, and although the scars went deep somehow the friendship survived both this and many other similar disagreements.

Right: Illustration of Miss. Bentley by Marie Hartley as published in ‘Yorkshire Portraits’

For her part Phyllis was usually bemused by all the accusations laid against her, declaring both Marie and Joan ‘the touchiest, prickliest, misunderstandingest, umbrage where nothing is intended takingest people in the whole of Yorkshire.’ However in view of her own incautious, passionate, impetuous and highly strung temperament and her admission that she ‘often dashed off all that is in my head without thinking,’’ such a criticism could equally have been applied to her. There is no doubt that she found Marie and Joan very naive and their outlook narrow. Nor is there any doubt that they were sometimes overawed by their older and worldly-wise friend, fearing that they would be thought ‘lumpish’ in comparison. In fact there is no doubt that all three needed each other, and whatever their mutual differences and problems the friendship continued to survive.

In the nineteen sixties when Phyllis became increasingly infirm and had moved into the home of a relative, the three still managed to meet up occasionally, sometimes at Grassington. One Christmas, Phyllis booked a room at a hotel in Ripon where the three of them opened their presents. On another occasion following a stay in hospital she was taken to ‘Coleshouse’ where Marie and Joan nursed her back to health, and when she eventually moved back to Halifax they continued to visit her.

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Phyllis died on the 27 June 1977 in ‘Ing Royde,’ a Halifax care home, cherishing to the end the friendship she still regarded as ‘one of the greatest enrichments of my life.’ When Marie gave the oration at her memorial service she ended with the words ‘she felt strongly about almost every subject,’ a remark which was equally true of the speaker.

Right: Marie painting with Joan

Joan Ingilby died aged 89 on 27th October 2000 and Marie Hartley died aged 100 on May 10 2006.

They both held honorary degrees of the Universities of Leeds and York and from the Open University together with the Silver Medal of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society.

Together they spent more than 50 years gathering material which related to all aspects of rural life in Yorkshire and through their work, they live on.

*The quotations in the text are by courtesy of West Yorkshire Archive Service Calderdale*
YORKSHIRE - It is what it is and I love it!

By Julia Oldham

If I could write poetry, it would be a miracle;
    But then, they rarely happen.
So here we go with a bit of prose -
    and it rhymes in places, thou'st knows.
Millstone grit, drystone walls and icy waterfalls,
flowing into dark, racing rivers that wash the fleeces
    of the sweet faced sheep.
Clog feeted workers in their caps wefting and warping
    the soft cloth in many hues and patterns
to coat those city gents.
If you like to take tea,
then Harrogate is the place to be.
In Betty's, the tourists sit eating neat finger sandwiches
    and scrumptious cakes whilst tea brews.
But, if you like fish and chips,
then Harry Ramsdens is the place to go,
where battering cod is far from slow!
What about those prize-winning crisp, water crust pork pies
    which make men raise their eyes up to the skies
as the brown sauce gurgles on to the plate.
Yorkshire puddings with real onion gravy is the meal
    that will never fail to please.
Watch the batter splatter as it hits the blue hazy fat.
Wait by the oven door to see them rise
    like inflatable bouncy castles.
Who could not ask for more?
The Wakefield Triangle is a mystery.
Why force rhubarb to grow in the dark?
It bursts into life like a pink new-born babe.
Served in a crumble with custard,
it puts folk into a child-like slumber.
Longley Farm yogurts, Wensleydale cheese,
Pontefract cakes to blacken your teeth,
and why call a teacake a teacake when it is not?
Plenty of fish from the North Sea,
made into fingers in Grimsby.
Kippers in Whitby, rock in Scarborough,
and Mother Shipton's Caves in Knar'borough.
Yorkshire, a county so huge that I could write for days
of the beauty and history, of the love and the mystery,
of people and places, historical and modern.
As a comer-in of forty years standing,
Would you deny me a piece of God's landing?
On the few hot sunny days during the summer, we visited some of Yorkshire’s picturesque ruined castles and abbeys, as well as one or two stately homes. It seemed that everyone had the same idea because everywhere was crowded with visitors picnicking on the grass in the sunshine as children climbed and played around the medieval walls. Even the beautiful, atmospheric ruins of Jervaulx Abbey (published in *TYJ Spring 2012*) had its fair share of visitors.

However, we were fortunate to find ourselves the sole visitors at Spofforth Castle, which is, in fact, a fortified manor house situated in the village of Spofforth, North Yorkshire, off the A661 and about eight kilometres south-east of Harrogate, on the River Crimple. As it is off the beaten track, Spofforth Castle is very much off the tourist trail being a lesser known castle. The Follifoot and Spofforth Castle Walk provides magnificent views of the ruins. The impressive medieval ruins stand on a small plateau of slightly higher ground sloping gently towards Castle Street on the east side, whilst on the west it ends abruptly in a rocky outcrop against which part of the castle was built.

The castle is now owned by English Heritage and managed by Spofforth-with-Stockeld Parish Council. Admission is free but there is no information centre to buy postcards, guide books or souvenirs. There are, instead, information panels in the grounds giving a brief history of the castle.

Daily opening hours are April to September 10a.m. - 6p.m and October to March 10a.m. - 4p.m. Car parking is by the side of the road.
History of Spofforth Castle

From the Norman Conquest until the 17th century, Spofforth was in the possession of the Percy family, one of the most important and influential families in the north of England.

In 1067, William de Percy, a Frenchman from Normandy, arrived in England and began the English line of Percys. He was a young man of powerful physique and strength of mind, and in favour with the king, William the Conqueror, who gave him eighty-six lordships in Yorkshire. One of these included Spofforth, where he built a manor house for residence and the family led the life of a feudal baron. Spofforth Castle remained the principal family seat until the late 14th century, during which time it was fortified. It is reputed that Spofforth Castle is where the rebel barons drew up Magna Carta in 1215. Richard de Percy was one of the leading signatories.

Henry Percy, who became the first Lord Percy (1273-1314) was a leading commander in Edward I’s army and his successes in the king’s Scottish wars brought him many estates and influence in the north. Henry extended the family house at Spofforth, after receiving permission in 1308, from Edward II, to fortify it. A year later, he purchased Alnwick Castle from Anthony Bek, Bishop of Durham, and Spofforth fell into decline as a family residence and Alnwick went on to become the seat of power of the Percy family.

The Percy family were engaged in a rebellion against Henry IV in 1403. Harry Percy (1364-1403), believed to have been born at Spofforth Castle was only fourteen years old when he was on active service at the siege of Berwick. He was nicknamed “Hotspur” by his opponents because of his enthusiasm in warfare. “Hotspur” Percy was killed in the battle of Shrewsbury and buried in Whitchurch. Two days later, his body was disinterred, later to be exhibited in Shrewsbury and his head chopped off to be fixed on a gate in York. His father Henry, the Earl of Northumberland was killed in the battle of Bramham Moor. “Hotspur” is included in the play King Henry IV Part One by William Shakespeare, as is another family member, Lady Percy, in Henry IV Part Two.

This rebellion cost the family their estates and Spofforth was given to the commander of the royal forces, Sir Thomas Rokeby, Sheriff of Yorkshire.

Right: Henry Percy (1421-1461) 3rd Earl of Northumberland, who had been one of the leaders of the Lancastrian forces. He was killed at the Battle of Towton in 1461

During the War of the Roses, the Percy family decided to support the House of Lancaster and many family members, along with thousands of Lancastrians, lost their lives at the Battle of Towton in 1461. The Yorkists, in their victory, destroyed Spofforth Castle, which lay in ruins until 1559 when another Henry Percy restored it. The family later abandoned the fortified manor house to live in Alnwick Castle, giving the house to their steward, Sampson Ingleby. After his death in 1604, Spofforth Castle lay in decay.

During the English Civil War (1642-1651), Spofforth Castle, like many other estates, was vandalised by Parliamentarian troops which finally reduced it to ruins. In 1924 Charles Henry, Baron Leconfield, transferred ownership of the site to the State by deed of gift.

Left: An illustrating map of Spofforth Castle and village by Robert Norton, circa 1616
The Castle

All that remains of Spofforth Castle is the west range, which is rectangular in plan built partly on a small rocky outcrop and overlooks the village. It is a two storey building, but because of the difference in levels it appears from the east to be one storey. The medieval castle was arranged around a courtyard which consisted of a number of buildings, but only earthworks and some low walls remain of the north, south and east ranges. The west range contained the principal apartments of the castle, the hall at the south end and the private chambers of the lord and his family at the north.

A flight of steps leads down from the site of the courtyard to the ground floor of the west range below the hall. The south end is the earliest part of the building, dating from the 13th century. The west range was built against the rocky outcrop which forms the fourth wall.

Right: Steps leading down to the undercroft from the site of the courtyard

Above: Plan of the west range of Spofforth Castle © English Heritage
Most of the undercroft is a cellar, which has four windows in the west wall. In the fourteenth century, a stone arched ceiling known as a vault was built in the undercroft, which has since disappeared. Only three bases of its supporting columns have survived and a number of wall corbels, two of which are built into masonry blocking the original windows. At about the same time, the hall above was rebuilt with a large private chamber added at the north end, which blocked a window at the north wall of the undercroft.

At the far end, on the north side are two rooms, a lobby and a private chamber. The private chamber block was added in the 14th century, with a spiral stair turret leading from the main chamber up to the first floor and a parapet walk. At the south end there is a partition wall by a passage cut directly through the rock that once led up to the great hall but was later blocked, probably in the 15th century.

Left: Reconstructed drawing of Spofforth Castle in the 15th century when the hall was widened so that the first floor extended over the top of the rough outcrop rock. The great hall had large windows on both sides and a new fireplace set in the north wall.

Right: A view of the undercroft looking north which was used as a cellar. In the middle can be seen the remains of three bases that supported columns and on the right the rough outcrop rock. In the far distance the archway door leads into the lobby and beyond that is the private chamber. A partly blocked window can also be seen in the north wall and above this are the remains of a fireplace at centre of the north wall which belongs to the great hall.

Left: The doorway at the south end cut through the rock with a flight of stairs, now blocked, which once led up to the great hall. The entrance doorway to the hall can been seen above and to the right is a 16th century doorway.
At the far end on the north side are two rooms, a lobby and a private chamber. The private chamber has the remains of a stone vault, a fireplace in the centre of the north wall and a window. There was another window in the west wall which was altered to make a doorway leading into the chamber from outside. Next to this in the corner is another door to the octagonal tower which once contained a spiral staircase that lead to the main chamber above on the first floor and to a parapet walk. At the north east corner of the chamber is a doorway to a smaller room and a second doorway at the south-west corner that leads into the adjoining lobby on the south. This lobby is also vaulted and has a doorway in the west wall which was later blocked up and a window which was altered.

Right: Private chamber showing the fireplace in the centre of the north wall and window. The window in the west wall was made into a doorway which led into the chamber from outside. Next to this can be seen another door in the corner of the octagonal tower which once contained a spiral staircase that led to the main chamber above on the first floor. The entrance door into this chamber can been seen above and at the top of the octagonal tower the door onto the parapet walk.

Above left: The private chamber showing the remains of stone half columns in the north wall that supported the vault arches, a fireplace in the centre and a window.

Above right: Another view of the private chamber showing a doorway to a smaller room in the north east corner. Above can be seen another doorway in the larger private chamber on the first floor which led into a smaller room containing a garderobe (medieval toilet).

Right: The lobby, this room was also vaulted, the doorway on the right leads into the private chamber.
The first floor above, now ruined, was mainly taken up by the great hall, although there are again two rooms on the north side. One of these is believed to have been a chapel and the other a large chamber with three windows and a doorway in the north east corner which led into a smaller room containing a garderobe at the north end. There is no evidence of a fireplace but this may have been in the vanished south wall of the main chamber.

*Left: The two ruined rooms on the first floor on the north side. The dividing wall has been destroyed*

The room between this large chamber and the hall was probably a chapel with a richly moulded window in its west wall, but there is evidence that it was converted later into a small room with a garderobe in the thickness of the east wall. Also a passage on the east side lead from these two rooms to the great hall.

*Right: The moulded window in its west wall of the former chapel*

The hall, built mainly of the 15th century has large windows in the east and west walls. At the north end of the west wall is a garderobe reached by means of a wall passage from the most northerly of the four windows. There are the remains of a fireplace at centre of the north wall.

*Left: The large windows on the west side of the great hall. The garderobe and passage can be seen on the right. Below is the undercroft with windows and corbels built into the wall that supported the vault arches*

The entrance to the great hall is at the south end of the east wall adjacent to a 16th century doorway which probably led to the buttery and kitchens.

*Below: The south end of the great hall showing the large windows and entrance which is next to the last doorway on the left of the east wall*
The most distinguishing feature of the castle is an octagonal tower on the north-east side that once contained a spiral staircase between the two floors and a parapet walk at the top.

In the late 18th century, the renowned watercolour artist Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) visited the ruins of Spofforth Castle whilst touring the Yorkshire Dales and northern England. He made eight sketches of the castle from varied compass points but, unfortunately, did not paint one of his famous watercolours. The sketches of the ruins can be found in his North of England Sketch Book 1797, on the Tate Gallery website where many of his watercolour scenes of the Yorkshire Dales can also be viewed.

Left: One of Turner’s sketches of the ruins of Spofforth Castle. In this one he focused on the octagonal tower and the more modest farm buildings to the left. His sketches of Spofforth Castle can be found in his North of England Sketch Book of 1797.
Following the Gypsey Race on the Yorkshire Wolds

By Jeremy Clark

The Gypsey Race is a well-defined meandering stream, steeped in legend and tradition which carves its way through the Great Wold Valley, of East Yorkshire’s farmland and villages until it reaches the North Sea at the seaside town of Bridlington.

The source of this mysterious stream is a quiet but mystical spring surrounded by a thicket of bushes and nettles. It is located at the side of a field along Salents Lane on the outskirts of the tranquil Wolds village of Wharram-le-Street. This surface stream is the only one on the Yorkshire Wolds. It flows intermittently from west to east for some 20 miles (32 kilometres) in length, rising to a height of 180 feet (55 metres) south-east of Foxholes. It widens out in the grounds of Thorpe Hall, near Rudston, into what is obviously two ornamental ponds or lakes before it flows into Bridlington Harbour.

During the summer months the course of the Gypsey Race, which stretches from its source at Wharram-le-Street to Burton Fleming and which is more than half of its total length, can dry up. This is due to the Gypsey Race being on porous chalk. Also along this course the stream disappears underground in quite a few places. Two of its longer underground stretches lie between the villages of West Lutton and Weaverthorpe, then at Butterwick and it appears once more to the south-east of Foxholes. From Burton Fleming the Gypsey Race turns south to Rudston from where the stream flows permanently eastwards to the sea.

However, in the winter months, swollen by the rains and snows, the Gypsey Race has a powerful flow, rushing through the countryside and has on occasions flooded hundreds of acres and some villages. Though the water supply is very intermittent and can dry up for several years before once again springing forth.

The origin of its name may come from the Greek word, ‘Gupos’, meaning chalk springs, or that it originated from the gipsy travellers in the fact that it wanders and like them it comes and goes without any warning or expectation. The most likely explanation is that the name derives from the Norse term ‘Gypisia’, which means gushing stream or geyser. The Gypsey Race was known as early as the reign of King Stephen (1135-1154) when the phenomenon was the same as it is today, and referred to by the same name. According to William of Newburgh, an English historian, who was born in Bridlington in about 1136 and became an Augustinian Canon at Newburgh Priory near the village of Coxwold. In recording the events of Stephen’s reign, he makes mention of the ‘Gipsies’. He describes the stream as rising at intervals over some years, and forming, when it did rise, into considerable torrents. He also observed that there was widespread belief that when the Gypsey waters ran, there was likely to be a famine the year after. This belief was later recorded by Drayton and Defoe in the eighteenth century, who further noted that the Race also prophesied plague. In local folklore the Gypsey Race was in full flow before the Great Plague struck England in 1665.

Above: The source of the Gypsey Race in the copse of a field alongside Salents Lane, between the villages of Wharram-le-Street and Duggleby. Photo by Roger Marris

Left: The Gypsey Race at Salents Lane entering the village of Duggleby. Photo by Roger Marris
Only a short distance away from the true source of the Gypsey Race, to the west is the small village of Wharram-le-Street which in turn lies next to Wharram Percy a deserted Medieval Village. Before following the Gypsey Race from its source to the sea this deserted Medieval Village is well worth a visit. Only the ruined church is visible above ground, but the overgrown foundations of the village can be seen in the surrounding fields which are now all that can be seen of the once thriving medieval community.

Right: The ruined church of Wharram Percy

Wharram Percy flourished as a village between the 12th and 14th centuries, before final abandonment in about 1500. The site is privately owned, but it is managed by English Heritage, it is open to the public all year round and the entrance is free. There is a small English Heritage car park about one and a half miles south of Wharram-le-Street. Then it is only about half a mile walk along an uneven footpath, which is steep in places, that leads to the deserted Medieval Village. The story of Wharram Percy has been published in the journal (TYJ Autumn 2011).

Above: Map showing the course of the Gypsey Race

From its source the small Gypsey Race stream flows north-east towards the village of Duggleby and past the prehistoric burial mound of Duggleby Howe. This is the first of a number of important prehistoric monuments found along the valley of the Gypsey Race. It was during this prehistoric period, that the stream became the focus of an extensive ritual landscape. This is due to the magic of the Gypsey Race, because running water is such a rarity on the Wolds.

Duggleby Howe

Duggleby Howe is one of the largest round barrows in Britain. It stands just east of the B1253 road to the south of the village of Duggleby and about 300 metres from the source of the Gypsey Race stream. It was constructed in the Neolithic or New Stone Age (4,000 to 2,000 BC) of earth, clay and chalk in several phases.

The centre of the mound was extensively excavated by J. R. Mortimer (1825-1911). (He was responsible for the excavation of many of the notable barrows in the Yorkshire Wolds) in 1890, which contained a complex sequence of cremations and inhumation burials. At the time, the mound measured 38 metres in diameter and 6.5 metres in height. A deep rectangular pit cut into the chalk was found at the centre of the mound, which contained a number of inhumation burials. Above these burials were found the remains of 53 cremations and several inhumation burials. Some of these burials were associated with artefacts including bone pins, a polished flint knife, a flint axe, flint arrowheads, boar’s tusks, an antler mace head and a Neolithic Grimston-ware bowl.
Aerial photography in 1971 discovered that Duggleby Howe stands in the centre of a large circular enclosure 370 metres in diameter. It consists of a wide inner ditch, a narrower outer ditch and a series of causeways. The ditch is not complete but somewhat penannular and open to the south.

A section of the encircling ditch was excavated in 2009 which reveals that it varied between 7.75m and 5.25m wide and was 2.75m in depth.

From Duggleby, the Gypsey Race stream flows along both sides of the deserted medieval village of Mowthorpe. The earthworks of this small medieval settlement are visible in the field, which is used for grazing to protect the archaeology from damage by ploughing.

Above: The Gypsey Race can be seen in the foreground running through the deserted medieval village of Mowthorpe

Photo by Roger Marris
The stream then flows through the picturesque village of Kirby Grindalythe. It was here that many years ago a spring literally forced its way through the ground floor of a cottage and had to be drained by artificial means.

Right: Cropmarks of an elaborate funnel-like system of ditches near Weaverthorpe, © Crown copyright. NMR Riley Collection

From here the Race moves on across country running intermittently past West and East Lutton to Helperthorpe. Then it flows gently on to Weaverthorpe alongside the main street and almost running past the doorsteps of many of the small cottages. Near Weaverthorpe many prehistoric features including a cursus (two parallel linear ditches with internal banks, closed off at the ends) have been discovered from cropmarks on aerial photographs.

The stream then takes a subterranean way to the picturesque village of Wold Newton, surfacing again at some point to the south-east of Foxholes before it runs on the edge of Wold Newton, which lies in a shallow valley. In former times it would bubble to the surface again via a number of small springs to reform the Race which is the main supply of a large mere in the centre of the village.

The Wold Cottage Meteorite

It was here immediately north of the Gypsey Race that in the winter of 1795 an extraordinary phenomenon of nature occurred. A meteorite dashed through the sky and fell to earth on land owned by Major Edward Topham (1751-1820), who lived in the nearby Wold Cottage. The meteorite actually fell within two fields of his home and was so named the Wold Cottage Meteorite.

In 1799 Major Topham erected an obelisk on the exact site where the meteorite fell to earth. It is situated in the middle of a field on the outskirts of Wold Newton, built of red bricks with an engraved tablet on one face recording the meteorite’s events. As for the meteorite, it can be seen in the Natural History Museum, South Kensington in London. The full story of the Wold Cottage Meteorite has been published in the Journal (TYJ Winter 2014).

Below: The course of the Gypsey Race from Foxholes to Burton Fleming © Crown copyright, Ordnance Survey
The stream then carries on eastwards for about 2 kilometres until it comes to another prehistoric burial mound on the edge of Wold Newton.

**Willy Howe**

This is Willy Howe, a large Neolithic (4000-2000 BC) round mound or barrow. Recent aerial photographs show that it is surrounded by a ‘henge type’ (a circular bank with an internal ditch surrounding a central flat area) which merges with the present course of the Gypsey Race at its northern edge. Willy Howe is about 36.5 metres in diameter and about 7.5 metres high. It is thought by some archaeologists to be of the same general date as Duggleby Howe, which is similar in size. 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. It is said that long ago, close to midnight, a lone horseman riding home, after an evening drinking beer with his friend, rode past Willy Howe. As he drew near, he heard music coming from the mound, so he pulled up his horse and approached it on tiptoe. He found that the music was coming from an open door in the side of the mound. When he looked inside, he was amazed to see a brightly lit room filled with fairies enjoying a banquet.

*Right: The fairy banquet and gold cup legend ‘Sounds of merriment came from the Willy Howe and a door was open in its side’*

Suddenly, he was spotted by one of the fairies, who offered him a cup of wine. The traveller knew it was dangerous to drink or eat with fairy folk, so he snatched the cup dashing its contents to the ground and leapt on his horse. He then rode off as fast as he could, with the fairy cup. The fairies gave chase, but the horse galloped like the wind and easily outstripped them. This fascinating tale was collected by the same William of Newburgh, who mentions the ‘Gipsies’ in recording the events of Stephen’s reign. It is further recorded that the traveller presented the fairy cup to King Henry I, (1100-35) who then passed it on to King David of Scotland. It was later given to King Henry II (1154–89) after he expressed an interest in it, but then disappears from the annals of history.

In the past, stories and legends like this one have inspired many curiosities to dig into the mound to look for buried treasure. But if they discovered any it was not recorded.

It was not until 1887 that a thorough excavation was undertaken by Canon William Greenwell (a late 19th century antiquarian). At the centre of the mound he found an oval grave filled with layers of chalk and earth but failed to find any burials or datable objects. The intriguing story of Willy Howe has been fully published in the Journal (TYJ Autumn 2013).

*Left: Williy Howe in winter when the mound can be seen through the trees. At the centre is a deep crater which is the result of antiquarian excavations*

After passing Willy Howe, the Gypsey Race flows through the village of Burton Fleming. In the distant past, it was the custom of the young people of the village to go down to the banks of the stream to “meet the Gypsy” whenever it rose in flood.

One of the worst floods to occur for many years at Burton Fleming was in December 2012 when the Gypsey Race flooded the centre of the village and surrounding fields. Recorded high ground water levels were the main cause of the flooding, due to many weeks of rainfall throughout the summer and winter.
From Burton Fleming, the stream changes course and heads south towards Rudston. At this point the Gypsey Race increases in volume and occupies a channel roughly 12 feet (3.6 metres) wide and about 3 feet (0.9 metres) deep. On its way it runs straight past the Maidensgrave Henge, also known as Little Argham Henge, which is another important Neolithic monument.

This henge was first discovered in the early 1960s as cropmarks on aerial photographs, but plough damage means there is now nothing to be seen at ground level. It has a symmetrical oval bank with two opposing entrances. A trial excavation in 1964 revealed that there was no berm between the banks and internal ditch. A line of four post-holes across the centre was discovered, two of them containing Beaker pottery sherds. This henge would have been an important part of the Gypsey Race ritual landscape.

Satellite image of the area of Little Argham Henge. The henge appears as a faint circular, indicated by the arrow on the picture and is enlarged on the lower right where the northwest entrance can be seen as a gap through the bank. The southeast entrance is not as clear. The image is from 2002 Google Maps

Following the Gypsey Race from Burton Fleming to Rudston there are level fields in this broad flat valley in which every year the ripening crops reveal a range of ancient settlements, burials, and ritual monuments. These have all been flattened, but cropmarks appear distinctively on aerial photos. The importance of the area is to some extent due to the magic of the Gypsey Race: running water is such a rarity on the Wolds. This could help to explain the large number of prehistoric and Iron Age burials in this area. Archaeologists have excavated over 250 Iron Age burials in cemeteries between Burton Fleming and Rudston that are situated on both sides of the Gypsey Race. These burials were in the form of square barrows and in rows of grave pits.

Below: Cropmarks of square barrows near Rudston. Photo by A. L. Pacitto

Right: Square barrows showing the ditches and central graves at the Iron Age cemetery near Burton Fleming, diagonally opposite and across the Gypsey Race from the Little Argham Henge. Photo by A. L. Pacitto
The Gypsey Race journeys onwards and runs through the small village of Rudston. In this area there are a number of Neolithic sites associated with the stream. However, apart from the famous Rudston monolith, there is very little to see on the ground. In the surrounding area are an unparalleled group of four cursuses, which are considered to be the largest concentration in the country. They were probably used as some kind of processional walkways, designed to lead people through the ritual landscape. Cursus B (Breeze Farm Cursus) and Cursus D (Argham Cursus) are both almost, but not quite, aligned on the monolith in the village while both Cursus C (Glebe Farm Cursus) and Cursus A (Beacon Cursus) both pass close by the huge stone. It is interesting to note that Cursus D follows the present day course of the Race for about half of its 4 kilometre length, although, owing to changes in the course of the stream, whether this was the case in prehistoric times is not known. Both Cursus A and C cross over the stream at some point in its course. Cursus B may also cross the Gypsey Race but its eastern end is thought to lie beneath the modern village and so cannot be located. All four cursuses have been identified in crop marks on aerial photographs.

Above: Google Earth image showing the soil and cropmarks of the western end of cursus B (shown highlighted in inset image)

Just before the Gypsey Race flows through the village of Rudston and bends sharply to head eastwards, it closely passes the Rudston Monolith which stand on the east side.

**The Rudston Monolith**

The Monolith stands in the north-east of the churchyard of All Saints Church built in the 12th century. The stone can be seen from the main road. The Rudston Monolith is the tallest prehistoric standing stone in Britain, standing just under 8 metres tall, slender, with two large flat faces 2 metres wide and 0.75 metres deep. In 1861 the churchyard near the massive stone was raised 1.5 metres, indicating that it was even higher above ground in the past. The top of the stone has been weathered and eroded into a fluted peak and was first covered in 1773 with a metal cap to try to protect it from the elements.

*Right: The Rudston Monolith in the churchyard of All Saints Church*
This giant block of gritstone is believed, by some archaeologists to have been quarried about 16 kilometres away at Cayton Bay, on the north-east Yorkshire coast and was pulled here by Neolithic people. Others think it may have been pushed into the area by the same glacier that carved out Forge Valley. In the late 18th century Sir William Strickland of nearby Boynton Hall carried out an excavation of the stone and found as much of the stone below ground as there is above! It is also said that he found many skulls during his dig.

The most famous legend involving the Rudston stone was that the Devil was so angered by the construction of a Christian church that he picked up and hurled the huge stone, hoping to destroy it. But as usual his aim was not too good and he just missed and it became embedded in the ground.

It would seem that the entire course of the Gypsey Race landscape to Rudston was obviously important in prehistoric times. It has a rich selection of ritual sites, most of which have been destroyed or badly damaged by ploughing, including many Neolithic sites, four cursuses, at least one henge, a large number of Bronze Age round barrows and Iron Age cemeteries. This clearly shows the symbolic role played by the stream in the minds of prehistoric communities.

Before leaving Rudston we must pay our respects to Winifred Holtby (1898-1935). Sadly she died before her most acclaimed novel, South Riding, was published, which is about life in the 1920s and 1930s in a small Yorkshire town. She also became a director of the weekly Time and Tide. Winifred Holtby was only 37 when her valiant life ended in the London nursing home on the 29th September 1935. She was brought back to Rudston and is buried in All Saints churchyard. A white marble headstone on her grave is an open book with the inscription:

God give me work till my life shall end,
and life till my work is done

The story of Winifred Holtby has been published in the journal (TYJ Autumn 2011)

Left: Winifred Holtby’s grave in All Saints churchyard with a white marble open book for her headstone

To the south-west of Rudston village and less than a kilometre from the Gypsey Race is the Rudston Roman Villa. It has been dated to the end of the 3rd or early 4th centuries, fairly late in the Roman occupation. It contained some of the best examples of Roman mosaics and painted wall plaster from the North of England.

The site was first occupied no later than the middle of the 1st century AD., by a native Iron Age settlement with circular huts and enclosed by a ditch. In the early 3rd century this Iron Age settlement had been abandoned, the ditches were filled in and the site completely levelled off. So what had once been an Iron Age site, had been replaced by overlying it during the years of the Roman occupation by a large prosperous villa.

Right: The reconstruction of Late Iron Age roundhouses at Butser near Petersfield, which is an archaeological open air museum, would have been similar to the ones at Rudston before the Romans built a villa on the same site

Both the Iron Age people and the Romans would have considered the Gypsey Race to be important and chose to live close to it. The stream provided a source of fresh water and irrigated crops. The Bronze Age/Iron Age people carried out their ritual practices in natural surroundings such as groves or beside sacred springs and streams where it was the custom to dispose of personal items, such as metalwork and artefacts into water to honour their ancestors and make offerings to gods.
The Romans also considered water important and treated rivers with respect. They animated and personified these rivers with spirits, and these spirits evolved into gods, and were given temples, shrines and sacrifices.

However, no Bronze Age/Iron Age or Roman finds have so far been recovered from this section of the Gypsy Race. A large number of Bronze Age broken objects, including many bronze swords and personal items, have been recovered at Flag Fen, near Peterborough. They were given as offerings to the watery fen. At Ross Carr north-west of Withernsea in East Yorkshire, a collection of well-preserved wooden objects was found in a ditch. These included naked male warriors with shields and paddles thought to have been deliberately placed in water to honour their ancestors and make offerings to gods. The full story of the Intriguing Ross Carr model wooden boat figures has been published in the journal (TYJ Spring 2011).

**Above: Stone relief of Coventina the water goddess reclining on a water leaf**

Throughout Roman Britain many temples and shrines associated with river gods have been discovered. One Romano-British goddess of the river and spring is Coventina. Her sacred spring was at the Roman fort Brocolitia, Carrawburgh in Northumberland, on the Hadrian’s Wall. Votive offerings were thrown into the spring including coins, pins and costly offerings such as pearls. Over 13,000 Roman coins were found in the well. A stone relief found at the site depicts the water goddess, she is shown reclining on a water leaf, and is dated to the 2nd or 3rd century AD.

The Rudston Roman villa was first discovered in 1838 when walls, roofing tiles, wall plaster and the remains of a mosaic floor were found by farm workers. Unfortunately, most of the pavement was destroyed by the workers, who dug it up in the hope of finding treasure.

Then in 1933, the owner and farmer of the land Mr. H. Robson hit the Venus Mosaic while ploughing and over the next few months he found and exposed the Geometric Mosaic and Aquatic Mosaic that paved other rooms in the Roman villa. Mr. Robson built a shed over the mosaics and opened it to the public.

However, due to frost damage the mosaics could no longer stay in the ground and were lifted and removed to Hull and East Riding Museum in the early 1960s.

In 1971 a trial excavation was carried out and another building was discovered that contained a mosaic named ‘Charioteer Mosaic’ along with two other mosaics, one of which had been badly damaged by 19th century pipe-laying.

The Rudston Roman villa had several rooms in the main wing built around a courtyard. At least three of these rooms had mosaic floors decorated in very intricate patterns and some of them had painted wall plaster. At the end of the main wing which had an L shape corridor was the bathhouse heated by a hypocaust.
Among the outside buildings were workshops and there was a large room containing several ovens for drying corn. The villa had been altered and extended over a period of time, but it had clearly been the centre of intensive farming. The villa was probably abandoned in about AD 330 or soon after.

The number of fine mosaics and wall-plaster discovered at the villa, which are on display at the Hull and East Riding Museum, makes the Rudston Roman villa one of the best known villas in the North of England.

Above: The Venus Mosaic on display at the Hull and East Riding Museum

The Venus Mosaic paved the largest room at the north end of the house. It consists of a square with oblong panels at both ends, with a central circle surrounded by semicircles and quadrants.

The central circle depicts Venus, the goddess of love. She is nude and holding the golden apple on a stem in her right hand that she won in a beauty contest, and placed beneath her left hand is a grey circular mirror with a red handle. Her long hair is flowing wildly on either side of her head and she wears bracelets on her outstretched arms. She looks to the right where, below her outstretched arm, is a small figure facing her, interpreted as a merman or triton, with an olive-green human torso and a red fish tail. His right arm is held across his body bearing a flaming torch.

Above: The central circle depicts Venus the goddess of love with half human figure with the tail of a fish

Right: Drawing of the Venus Mosaic by D. S. Neal
The four semicircles each contain an animal and the human figures in between represent the hunters. The lion has been pierced through the belly by a spear and has the inscription that possibly means ‘the spear-bearing lion’. The head is lost except for an ear and part of the mane. In the museum the head is shown but it was restored in the 1930s. Clockwise, the next semi-circular feature is a stag running through stylized trees. This is followed by a rather stylized leopard with black spots. Its head is turned backwards to look at a large chequered disc. In the remaining semicircle is a red bull, over which is a shaft with a crescent, the end towards the creature’s horns. Beneath is another inscription TAVRVS OMICIDA, ‘the man-killing bull’. The three naked hunters are running in the same direction as the animals. One holds a net or rope as if about to throw it at the injured lion, the next hunter is missing. So after him, in the sequence stands the hunter with one hand on his hip and holds a spear in the other. He is looking towards the approaching stag. The figure behind the bull is unarmed and has a mop of red and yellow hair. In each corner quadrant is a bird, perhaps a dove, pecking at what may be a pomegranate on a twig. In the rectangle at the top end, Mercury, the messenger of the gods, carries his caduceus, a serpent-entwined staff. On either side of him is a leafless vine with bunches of grapes growing from a cantharus (a large drinking cup with two handles). The corresponding panel seems, from the fragmentary remains to have been similar. Despite the crude and poor workmanship it is colourful, made from 12 colours and the subject matter is classically Roman.

The Geometric Mosaic lay in a room behind the corridor in the central room of the same house as the Venus and Aquatic Mosaics and dates to the early 4th century AD.

This mosaic is square and almost complete. It consists of a square central panel, bordered by a row of red inward pointing stepped-triangles and consists of four tangents termed ‘swastika-peltae’, each made up of four peltae arranged in the form of a swastika around a central endless knot. These four tangents are grouped so as to occupy a white square. The width of the red stepped-triangles on two adjacent sides differs from that on the other two. This suggests that the fringe was composed by two craftsmen starting together and working round; this may explain why the two halves do not match.

Surrounding the panel is a border of swastika meander with double returns, using blue and white tesserae. Although the design of swastika meander is accurately set out, mistakes do occur where the out lines have been extended across intended breaks. The workmanship of this mosaic is very coarse and the tesserae are larger than average.

Left: Drawing of the Geometric Mosaic by D. S. Neal
Less than a quarter of this Aquatic Mosaic that belonged to the apodyterium, the undressing-room of the bathhouse has survived. It extended into an opening between Rooms 5A and 5B and may have been constructed around a doorstep associated with an entrance through the east wall. The remains show a design surrounded by borders of lotus flowers, with a rectangle at each end. The main panel is a lively and colourful aquatic scene with a variety of sea-creatures including fish, a striped dolphin and an open bivalve on a white ground. These appear to be swimming round a central feature which was possibly a bust of Neptune, now lost.

On two sides of this imaginary aquarium are the remains of fragmentary rectangular borders of lotus. The additional outer border depicts a tree growing from the end towards the centre with a bird at the top facing what appears to be the handle of a central cantharus, the rest is lost. There would have been a corresponding border depicting the same scene.

The Aquatic Mosaic is amateurish and dates to the early 4th century. Mosaics composed of aquatic creatures are relatively rare in Britain and this mosaic is unique in the North. Such mosaics were obviously intended to convey the illusion of a pool and were a popular choice for the pavements of bathhouses.
The Charioteer Mosaic and the Geometric Mosaic were excavated from House 8, which had an L shaped plan. The Charioteer Mosaic was found in Room 2 at the northern end. Under an archway was a Leopard mosaic which connected the mosaic at the southern end, but very few fragments of this mosaic remained. The Geometric Mosaic found in Room 1 had been badly damaged in the 19th century by laying a drainage pipe.

Right: The Charioteer Mosaic in the Hull and East Riding Museum

Below: Plan of House 8 where the Charioteer and Geometric Mosaics were excavated. The 19th century drainage trench can be seen running through the house damaging part of the Leopard panel and the Geometric Mosaic

Right: The Charioteer Mosaic, and the Leopard Mosaic that connected the southern end. The reconstructed drawing is what the fragmentary mosaic may have looked like, a circle around a large octagon.

Drawing by D. S. Neal

At the centre of this square framed mosaic is a large circle that portrays a finely drawn victorious charioteer standing in his four-horse drawn chariot facing the spectator. He is proudly holding up a wreath and a palm-frond, symbols of his victory, and wears a rounded grey cap.

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He is dressed in a red tunic with a laced corselet around his waist and bindings around his arms. Between the ears of each horse is a plume, and their manes are bound with ribbons. The wheels and the hind legs of the outer horses have been omitted. This centre piece is bordered first by a linear circle and then by a circle of three-strand guilloche.

*Left: Detail of the Charioteer in the Mosaic*

Around the central circle in the corners are four more circles, depicting the busts of the seasons, which are skilfully drawn. Spring is looking across to her right shoulder where a swallow is perched. The head of Summer is colourful, wearing three red poppies in her yellow hair. The figure at the bottom left is severely damaged but shows a yellow rake above her shoulder. This figure is not hooded so it probably depicts Autumn and the order suggests this. The remaining Season is lost, although a right angle of solid brown may be part of a hood normally associated with Winter.

On each side of these circles are oblongs panels, containing a pheasant-like bird accompanied by fruits, one is round and the other pear-shaped. The birds are portrayed with small heads and thick tails curving upwards towards the corners.

This design was enclosed by a wide border of four-strand guilloche and around the whole mosaic runs a border of coarse interlocking red T-shaped bands. Workmanship on the Charioteer and the Seasons is good, but elsewhere it is untidy and unskilful which could represent craftsmen of diverse abilities. There is some evidence of burning near the Charioteer suggesting that the villa may have been destroyed or badly damaged by fire.

Looking from the reverse direction to that of the charioteer is a rectangular panel, framed in three-strand guilloche. At the center is a cantharus with leopards on both sides springing towards it. The leopards have grey spots and white undersides. This mosaic connected to the southern mosaic, under an archway, of which only fragments remain. A reconstructed drawing of what it may have looked like has been attempted from the surviving fragments. Its design may have been of a circle around a large octagon.

The west room in House 8 contained a square mosaic, which had been badly damaged by a 19th century drain pipe running through this section of the building. The mosaic covered the entire room with a design consisting of a central panel of small intersecting circles and spindle-shapes, framed first by a simple guilloche and then by red and white chequers. Between this pattern and the walls was a plain surround of large white tesserae. The only colours in this mosaic were white, red, brown and blue.

This mosaic is not on display, it is in store at the Hull and East Riding Museum

*Right: Drawing of the Geometric Aquatic Mosaic by D. S. Neal*
Leaving Rudston the Gypsey Race glides its way east past another large round barrow known as Southside Mount. It is situated on a hillside that overlooks much of the Gypsey Race landscape to the north and west and lies east of the ‘Beacon Cursus’. Although plough damaged like much of this ritual landscape, it still survives to a height of nearly 3 metres with a diameter of around 30 metres. The barrow is surrounded by a circular ditch, with a further square ditch beyond that, which are not visible on the ground.

Left: Southside Mount round barrow overlooks the Gypsey Race landscape

It seems that the barrow was built for the body of a young child about one year old, although several bones from a young woman were also found. It has been speculated that these bones belong to the child’s mother who died first, perhaps in childbirth, and was buried elsewhere, later to be dug up and reinterred with the child at its death.

The Southside Mount round barrow was probably used by a group of local people, perhaps a powerful family group as there is evidence of many other later burials being added to the mound. The date of this barrow is unclear, but there is evidence of Neolithic domestic waste within the mound material which date it to the late Neolithic.

Returning to the Gypsey Race, its course continues east running through a well-wooded stretch to the grounds of Thorpe Hall where in the early 19th century human interference created a system of canals, weirs and two ponds or lakes at different levels.

Right: One of the artificial ponds or lakes at Thorpe Hall

The Upper Pond, was said to have been dug in 1815, to give ‘employment to some men during the trade depression following Waterloo’, and the Lower Pond a few years later. The digging of these ponds is described as ‘a brilliant feat of engineering’ and was enlarged in 1830.

Left: Thorpe Hall, built in the 1700s

Today the Lower and Upper Ponds, in part, retain their early 19th century shape, with a broad walk leading down to the Upper Pond. Thorpe Hall dates from the 1700s and probably stands on the site of the medieval manor house.
From Thorpe Hall the Gypsy Race curves its way along a wooded stretch to the small village of Boynton which is surrounded by farmland and trees. It runs through the Boynton Hall estate with the hall on the south. Once again here we find that the stream was interfered with by human intervention.

**Right: Map of Boynton village showing the course of the Gypsy Race making its way through the Boynton Hall estate**

It appears that in late 17th or early 18th century the hall gardens were divided into rectangular compartments and a new bridge was built over the Gypsy Race. Further to the east the Gypsy Race was formed into a long rectangular canal, a typical garden feature of the period. In 1768 the gardens around the hall were redesigned in a more picturesque style, and the canal stretch of the Gypsy Race was widened and returned to its more natural curving route.

**Left: The Gypsy Race in winter running through the Boynton Hall estate. The high water level can be seen just under the arches of the bridge and Boynton Hall can been seen through the trees on the right**

Today the entrance to Boynton Hall is from the village street passing the church on the left, and then the driveway that leads to the hall crosses a bridge over the Gypsy Race.

Boynton Hall was built by the Stricklands at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century. It is believed that William Strickland in 1526 brought back the first turkeys to England from North America and in 1550 he became rich by importing turkeys. The Boynton church, at the entrance drive to the hall is liberally decorated with the family’s turkey crest, most notably in the form of a probably unique lectern, which is a 20th century creation. This is carved in the form of a turkey rather than the conventional eagle, the bible supported by its outspread tail feathers. The full story of *‘The Yorkshire Tradition of the Christmas Turkey’* has been published in the journal (*TYJ Winter 2011*)

The Gypsy Race now continues east to the seaside town of Bridlington, its journey now being uneventful. The end of this magical stream is not entirely spectacular either, it is the main stream that flows underground through Bridlington and into the Harbour taking sewage with it before entering the North Sea. It is an unseemly end for a stream which was once held in awe.

**Right: The Gypsy Race from the A165 approaching the seaside town of Bridlington.**

Photo by J. Thomas
In prehistoric times this inlet from the sea was probably wider than it is today and maybe there was more water in the stream which could have been used as a way into the Wolds by prehistoric people.

Rudston with its Monolith, cursuses, Neolithic sites and Bronze Age round barrows strung out along the level summit of Rudston Wold seems to be the last major prehistoric complex associated with the Gypsey Race and Great Wolds Valley ritual landscape.

Today, the Gypsey Race has lost much of its ancient power and mystique. It now runs mostly through artificial channels alongside field boundaries and roads instead of choosing its own course along the floor of the Great Wolds Valley. Human interference has led to a lowering of the water table and the valley itself is given over to intensive modern agriculture, with the roar of the tractor constantly blasting the ear of the modern seeker after mystery. It is still possible to catch a faint echo of the ancient magic if you walk between the hedgerows along the valley floor and gaze up at the enigmatic prehistoric mounds. The feelings of awe still rise up in the hearts of those who stand on the high ground above Rudston and look down on the church and monolith. Yes the Gypsey Race that once inspired still lingers on.
The Gypsy Race flowing near Boynton Hall

Photos by J Thomas

The Bridge over the Gypsy Race at Boynton Hall
Spofforth Castle

The octagonal tower is the most distinguishing feature of the castle which once contained a spiral staircase to a parapet walk at the top.