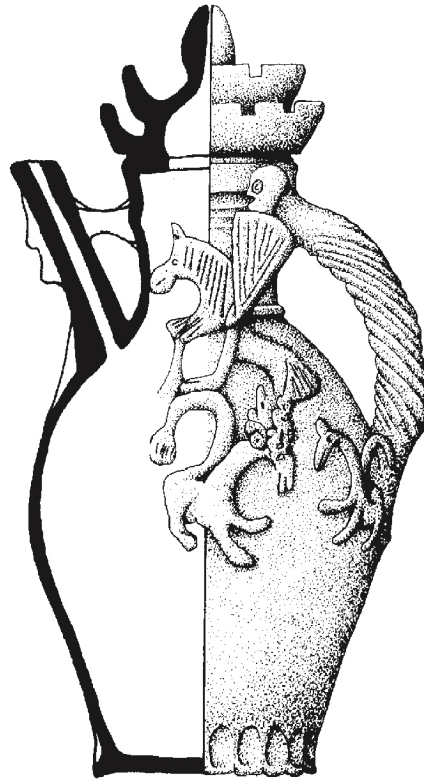

TRANSACTIONS



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SCARBOROUGH
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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NUMBER 45: 2019

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Editorial

Apologies for the long gap between the previous volume of *Transactions* and this one. Although more and more people show an interest in local history, as seen, for example, in the numbers attending the lectures that the society puts on and from the various Scarborough history pages on Facebook, there seem to be fairly few who having researched a topic are willing to write for a journal like this one. I should appreciate suggestions as to how to persuade more people to write articles.

If any one does want to put forward a suggestion for an article then please contact me at keithjohnston@btinternet.com, on 07778 445385 or at 28 Weaponness Valley Road, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO11 2JF. I promise to give aspiring authors as much support and guidance as they need or desire. At the moment I am revising the guidance notes issued to would-be contributors to *Transactions* to make them more user-friendly and will shortly be in a position to email them to anyone who would like to receive them. Printed copies will also be available.

In the meantime I hope you will enjoy reading the articles in this edition. They cover a range of topics and time periods and I am most grateful to the very patient contributors. Thanks go to them and to others who have helped in the preparation of this volume, especially Trevor Pearson.

Finally, some recommended reading and this time two rather different volumes. I'd like to start by recommending a book which I know another member of the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society's committee enjoyed reading. By Tom Isitt and entitled *Riding in the Zone Rouge: The Tour of the Battlefields 1919: Cycling's Toughest-Ever Stage Race*, it combines an aspect of the history of cycle racing with details of the state of the battlefields of the Western Front at the end of the First World War. Some years ago I gave a talk to the society on battlefield tourism after the First World War – I really wish this volume had been available then.

Also rather different from the usual run of History books is Ned Palmer's *A Cheese Monger's History of the British Isles* which tells the history of these islands in association with the history of its cheeses. It deals with the period from 4000 BCE to the present day in ten periods, each linked to one or more cheeses, and is a fascinating and thought-provoking read. The author substantiates his claim that 'You can, in a very real sense, explore the history of the British Isles through the cheeses its people have made, from the arrival of farming in Neolithic times right through to the present'. Many will no doubt be pleased to learn that there is a chapter on Wensleydale.

In the editorial in the previous volume of *Transactions* attention was drawn to the society's involvement in the project 'The Redress of the Past: Historical Pageants in Britain, 1905-2016'. Very recently a volume of essays has been published as one of the main outcomes of the project, a book in which the work of the society in relation to the project is acknowledged. Entitled *Restaging the Past: Historical Pageants, Culture and Society in Modern Britain*, it is not only available in both hardback and paperback formats but can also

be downloaded free as an open access pdf from <https://www.uclpress.co.uk/collections/history/products/123496> Readers of this journal might be interested to know that the book includes much about the 1912 Scarborough Historical Pageant and Play.

Gristhorpe Man – An Elite Bronze Age Burial c 2500BC: The Skeleton

By Vaughan J. Wastling

Introduction

We are very fortunate that the best preserved Bronze Age skeleton in the whole of Britain was excavated in the local area and consequently resides in the Rotunda Museum in Scarborough.

In July of 1834 William Beswick a landowner at Gristhorpe, near Filey, gathered with a group of friends to open a large barrow.¹ The barrow was the most prominent of a group of three on the cliff top at Gristhorpe and was found to contain an intact oak log-coffin containing a flexed skeleton laid on its right side, with head to the south facing east. Organic and inorganic grave goods were recovered together with the complete skeleton of what subsequently became known as Gristhorpe Man. The skeleton was stained black in the manner of a bog body and described as ‘very rotten’ having lain in a liquid for millennia. To conserve the intact but clearly effected bones it was decided to gently boil the remains in a solution of gelatine, a method recently successfully undertaken to consolidate some friable African ivory.² Following this process, which clearly worked, the skeleton was articulated and wired for display by local doctors William Harland and Thomas Weddell.³ The skeleton and other finds were then donated to the Scarborough Museum and except for a brief period of storage during the Second World War have remained on display there ever since.⁴ The first keeper of the Museum was a John Williamson and he was actually one of the party that attended the opening of the burial mound. His son William was the one subsequently given the unenviable task of watching the bones for several hours as they simmered in the glue solution in a large washing copper!⁵ That year William wrote a monograph detailing the origins of the coffin, skeleton and grave goods and the actions and research carried out by members of the Scarborough Philosophical Society.⁶ Subsequently updated and republished in 1872, both were invaluable documents for the recent re-evaluations.

The skeleton and other artefacts from the burial became available for study during the 2006-2008 extensive refurbishment of the Rotunda Museum, and the University of Bradford took possession of the material in 2005 and commenced an extensive research program into all aspects of the Gristhorpe remains.⁷ I was privileged to be asked to perform a modern skeletal assessment of the remains as part of a Masters degree in osteology and paleopathology I was undertaking at that time. As a professional field archaeologist with a keen interest in all things prehistoric, I took the opportunity to also assess the grave goods found with him in the burial mound at Gristhorpe and consider the burial practices to which he had been subjected.⁸ This article contains the central results of the skeletal examination, with some additional information from colleagues involved in the project, specifically the research on the cranial tumour and some additional details regarding the dentition.⁹

The skeletal report

The completeness of the skeleton is one of the most striking features. This anatomically wired individual is missing only three finger tips, one of the small bones of the wrist, eight

toe bones and the hyoid (a very small bone in the neck), which is easily overlooked and frequently missed during excavations even today. The proximal fibulae (outer slender lower leg bones) have sustained post mortem damage, but all other bones are intact. The examination was primarily undertaken to establish the sex, age-at-death, stature, relative date and health status of the Gristhorpe remains, all of which would assist in establishing the social status of this individual.

Age-at-Death

In his original report of 1834, Williamson assessed the skeleton as “advanced in years” based on the teeth being “much worn and flattened by mastication” and due to the extent of ossification present on the sternum.¹⁰ Those features do indeed suggest an older age-at-death, an assessment supported by the application of modern methods. Because the skeleton was wired together obscuring areas of the pelvis normally examined for age assessment only three current standard techniques could initially be applied:¹¹ ectocranial suture closure,¹² sternal rib end,¹³ and tooth wear.¹⁴ The cranial suture closure estimates provided a mean age in years of 45.2 years and 56.2 years respectively for the vault sites and anterior-lateral methods. The sternal rib end estimate is phase 7, 59-71 years. While the tooth wear so heavily relied upon by Williamson and his colleagues in the 19th century, provide a range of 25-35 years of age-at-death for the lower mandibular molars, with the more extreme wear of the maxillary first molars suggesting a much older age-at-death, the left first molar of 45+ years of age, the opposite first molar 33-45 years of age. Taken together, the three techniques placed this individual in the “Old Middle Adult” age category of 36-45 years of age-at-death, and likely to be actually over 50 years of age-at-death. To obtain images of the important but obscured pelvic surfaces Ct images were later created, and these permitted some assessment of the age related patterning, especially of the auricular surface. Although these images are not as clear as the actual surfaces, they do permit observations of an irregular rim around that surface that is very faint posteriorly and much more definite anteriorly, considerable retro-auricular activity, and marked apical activity. The surface has an uneven, rugose appearance that may be attributed to areas of densification. These features would suggest an older age-at-death perhaps phase 7 or 8 of the Lovejoy *et al.* age-at-death classification system,¹⁵ which would equate to an age-at-death of over 50 or perhaps as much as 60 years of age. This estimate is in keeping with the other element that could be observed on the Ct images, the pubic symphysis. Although the relative surface appearance could not be judged, the presence of a depressed symphyseal face and an oval, but with discontinuous crenulated and eroded symphyseal rim with evidence of ossific nodules, suggests a phase 6 of the Suchy-Brooks method¹⁶ which compares best with this appearance. This provides a range of 34-86 years age-at-death with a mean of 61.2. The advanced degree of periodontal disease in the mouth, especially indicated by porosity and recession of the alveolar margin of the distal most molars, together with degenerative changes in the vertebral column and the presence of extra vertebral enthesophytes, are also suggestive of advanced age.¹⁷

Assessment of sex

Thirty-four non-metric sex indicators of the skull (Plate 1) and the pelvis, the most sexually dimorphic elements of the human skeleton, and seven metric indicators, leave no doubt that Gristhorpe Man was male.¹⁸



Plate 1 Gristhorpe Man's Skull

Stature and body proportions

In 1834 Williamson considered that Gristhorpe Man was “not less than six feet and three or four inches”.¹⁹ This estimate does not appear to have any calculation applied to arrive at that conclusion and seems based purely on a visual impression. Having been involved in the excavation of hundreds of skeletons, all visitors and inexperienced staff peering into a grave universally express a belief that the individual is taller than experience tells you they will turn out to be when measured, clearly for some reason a common misconception. By 1872 in his revised paper a formula based on the femur being 27.5 to 100 ratio of the height of an individual is applied, and with a femur length of 19.5 inches the result arrived at was 5' 11". Using more recent regression equations,²⁰ the combined left femur and tibia provide an estimate of 181.2 ± 2.99 cm, which accords well with Williamson's observation of “about six feet in height”. A method not normally available because it requires every element that forms the height of an individual to be present was also applied.²¹ This method is considered to be the most accurate for calculating height.²² The result of that calculation rendered a height of 178.27 cm (5' 10"). Overall then Gristhorpe Man stood about 180 cm (6') tall, or just a little under.

Based on a comparison with the statures of other Early Bronze Age barrow burials, whose occupants possess a mean height of 174.8 ± 5.15 cm, Gristhorpe Man is at the top end of the

stature range (maximum 185.3 cm) and about a standard deviation (5.15) from the mean for the group (Table 2). He is also substantially taller, by over two standard deviations, when compared to a group of ten individuals from Bronze Age Wetwang Slack, East Yorkshire, who possess a mean of 170.25 ± 5.1 cm (Table 1). Gristhorpe Man's surpassing height further substantiates the greater stature of males (largely interred singly) in the Early Bronze Age burial mounds.²³

Stature is a good measure of population and individual health and well-being from birth, with notable differences in attaining adult stature in modern and historic populations due to differences in the quality of the social, economic and political environment in which they were born and developed.²⁴ Shorter stature is indicative of a poorer growth environment and lower socio-economic status, while those individuals of a higher status are taller due to their environment being conducive to attaining full genetic potential for stature. This would indicate the Gristhorpe Man enjoyed a beneficial developmental environment. In fact his stature is comparable to that of modern UK business executives, who average 177.0 cm.²⁵

Table 1

Reconstructed Bronze Age male stature from Wetwang Slack, East Yorkshire, using femoral length from the left side (after Dawes n.d.)²⁶, and right side, if not (after equations in Trotter 1970, 71-83)²⁷ (Wastling 2006 table 3, 47)²⁸

	Wetwang Slack Bronze Age	Femur		Tibia		Stature	
		right	left	right	left	cm	Imperial
1	VI. Gr V, Till, Sec M (WS4)		467			172.6	5' 8"
2	VII. Gr VI, Sec M+R (WS4)	503		395		181.1	5' 11"
3	E.J. 201 (695/550) (WS6)	450			361	168.5	5' 7"
4	WW DH WW88 (WS9)	451	454	359		169.5	5' 7"
5	DH WA77 277.5/133 (WS10)		453			169.2	5' 7"
6	AJ/AR WG5 (WS 12)	425	416	342	343	162.6	5' 4"
7	AS WG6 (WS12)		448	381	376	168.0	5' 6"

8	AS WG7 (WS12)	472	474			174.2	5' 9"
9	AE WC2 (WS14)		469			173.0	5' 9"
10	AB WY 8 (WS 14)		434459		375	165.9	5' 6"

Mean 170.46
Standard Deviation 5.10

Table 2

Reconstructed stature estimates from Bronze Age adult males buried singly in barrows or cists. Stature was reconstructed from femoral measurements (after equations in Trotter 1970, 71-83, unless otherwise stated)²⁹ Crania Britannica tables I & II³⁰ (Knüsel *et al.* 2013 table 8.1, 99)³¹

Crania Britannica/ other reference s	Location	Femur Inches *	mm	Stature cm	Imperial	Ref	Notes
V (table) (I)	Kinaldie, Aberdeenshire, Cist	18.5		173.25	5' 8"	1	
XII (I)	Arras, E. Yorks. Barrow	19		176.27	5' 10"	1	
XIV (I)	Wetton Hill, Staffs. Barrow	18		170.22	5' 7"	1	
XVII (I)	Ballidon Moor, Derbyshire. Barrow	18.6		173.84	5' 8"	1	
XVIII (I)	Parsley Hill, Derbyshire. Barrow	18.3		172.03	5' 8"	1	
XIX (I)	Hitter Hill, Derbyshire. Barrow	19		176.27	5' 10"	1	
XX (I)	Hay Top, Derbyshire. Barrow	18.7		174.56	5' 9"	1	
XXI (I)	Green Lowe, Derbyshire.	19.2		177.48	5' 10"	1	
XXII (I)	End Lowe, Derbyshire. Barrow	18.8		175.05	5' 9"	1	

XXIII (I)	Kennet Hill, N.Wilts. Barrow	20.5		185.3 4	6' 1"	1	
XXX (I)	Morgan's Hill Wilts. Barrow	19.5		179.2 9	5' 11"	1	
XXXI (I)	Roundway Hill Wilts. Barrow	20.5		185.3 4	6' 1"	1	
XVI (II)	Gratton Hill, Staffs. Barrow	19.2		177.4 8	5' 10"	2	
XIX (II)	Castern, Staffs, Barrow	19.2		177.4 8	5' 10"	2	
XXI (II)	Ramscroft, Staffs. Barrow	19.7		180.5 0	5' 11"	2	
XXVI (II)	Galley Lowe, Derbyshire, Barrow	19.5		179.2 9	5' 11"	2	
XXXIII (II)	Rolley Lowe, Derbyshire. Barrow	19.7		180.5 0	5' 11"	2	
XXXIV (II)	New Inns, Derbyshire. Barrow	18		170.2 2	5' 7"	2	
XXXV (II)	Gotham, Derbyshire. Barrow	18.5		173.2 5	5' 8"	2	
XXXVI (II)	Bostern, Derbyshire. Barrow	17		164.1 8	5' 5"	2	
XXXVII(II))	Shuttlestone, Derbyshire. Barrow	18.7		174.4 6	5' 9"	2	
XLII (II)	Mosal Dale, Derbyshire. Barrow	18		170.2 2	5' 7"	2	
XLIII (II)	Mosal Dale, Derbyshire. Barrow	18.6		173.8 4	5' 8"	2	
XLIV (II)	Mosal Dale, Derbyshire. Barrow	17.7		168.4 1	5' 7"	2	
XLVI (II)	Wagon Lowe, Derbyshire. Barrow	18		170.2 2	5' 7"	2	
XLVIII (II)	Haddon Field, Derbyshire. Barrow	18.5		173.8 4	5' 8"	2	
Bush Barrow	Normanton, Wiltshire	20		182.3 0	6'	7	

Burial 1291 (Archer)	Amesbury, Wiltshire		46 4	174.0 0	5' 9"	3	Femur & fibula
Burial 1238 Companion	Amesbury, Wiltshire		48 5	178.0 0	5' 10"	3	Femur only
Grave 2500 (Bowman)	Boscombe, Wiltshire		47 9	176.0 0	5' 10"	3	Femur & tibia
Stonehenge Ditch	Stonehenge, Wiltshire		47 2	175.6 1	5' 10"	4	Calculated from raw data
Chilbolton burial	Chilbolton, Hampshire		nil	170.0 0	5' 7"	5	
Amesbury G.71(Burial 85)	Amesbury, Wiltshire		41 5	161.5 7	5' 4"	6	
Amesbury G.71(Burial 158)	Amesbury, Wiltshire		46 8	173.5 3	5' 8"	6	

Mean	174.80
Standard Deviation	5.15
Maximum	185.34
Minimum	161.57
Median	174.46

* obtained using an 'imperial' tape measure in inches and tenths of inches, converted to cm by multiplying each measure by 2.54. Davis and Thurnam 1865, Table I, 240-241³² Davis and Thurnam 1865, Table II, 242-245³³ McKinley pers. Comm.³⁴ Evans *et al.* 1984.³⁵ Russel 1988.³⁶ Power and Brothwell in Christie 1967.³⁷ Ashbee 1960, 76.³⁸

Body Mass

Body mass was estimated through the application of three formulae; Ruff *et al.*,³⁹ McHenry⁴⁰ and Grine *et al.*⁴¹ These calculations rely on the maximum breadth of the femoral head because this load bearing element is often preserved in archaeological contexts. Its dimensions are also not influenced by activity levels and muscular loading after physiological maturity has been obtained.⁴² These estimates then, indicate body mass at skeletal maturity (*c.*18 years). All three formulae produce similar results, despite the fact that the regression equation of Ruff *et al.* has been found to work best in the middle of a population's weight distribution, that of McHenry at the lighter end, while that of Grine *et al.* is better at the heavier end.⁴³ The estimates therefore include a middling estimate, a lighter estimate and a heavier estimate: 71.468 kg, 69.811 kg, and 74.632 respectively, which contributes to a mean figure of 71.6 kg (about 11 stone or 168 lbs). Application of the method based on stature and bi-iliac breadth (31.3 cm), which is considered to be more accurate, produced a reconstructed body mass estimate of between 78.64 and 79.57 kg (about 173 to 175 lbs).

This figure is higher than those produced by from femoral measurements making Gristhorpe Man heavier, with a body mass index of 24.9.

Note: the average of all the femoral head measurements were used in conjunction with the 178.27 stature measurement to calculate body mass, producing a figure of 24.9 (78.9/3.1684). The stature measurement of 181.2 provides a BMI of 25 (79.48/3.1684) (based on Auerbach and Ruff's recommendations).⁴⁴

Testing for bilateral asymmetry

Due to the human proclivity for using a preferred hand in a range of tasks, and the morphological alterations this preference makes to the bodies of those who strenuously engage in activities relying on the greater power and control of the dominant limb, that limb lateralisation permits behavioural inferences.⁴⁵ Five measurements of the humerus and four of the clavicle were used to assess bilateral asymmetry (Tables 3 and 4) based on the following equation;

$$100 \times \left(\frac{\text{right} - \text{left}}{\text{right} + \text{left} \div 2} \right)$$

The results show right handed asymmetry (Table 3). Robusticity indices⁴⁶ calculated from computer-tomographic images used to obtain humeral length produced a figure of 19.35 for the right element and 18.18 for the left. Gristhorpe Man's right and left humeral robusticity indices exceed or are similar to the average noted for the late medieval Towton mass burial sample previously analysed by Knüsel⁴⁷ both for right (mean = 17.8, range from 19.9-14.6) and left (mean = 19.8 – 17.1) indices, although the values do not surpass the highest achieved in this robustly built group. Based on the greater length and robusticity of the right humerus Gristhorpe Man appears to have been right handed. Based on a large sample of roughly 700 skeletonised individuals from the past Storm⁴⁸ reports that for measurement of elements of the humerus and pectoral girdle between 1 and 3% can be considered normal directional asymmetry. For the epicondylar breadth of the humerus the mean value is 1% (standard deviation 1.9%, 95% range from -2.8% to 4.7%) and for its length, 1% (standard deviation 1.1%, range from – 1.2% to 3.3%). Gristhorpe Man with values of 6.2% and 1.8% for these measurements is strongly lateralised. Moreover, the population standard deviations for these measurements are, for humeral length, 1.1% and for epicondylar breadth, 1.9%, which would indicate that Gristhorpe Man is not only strongly lateralised compared to this comparative population, but especially so for epicondylar breadth, being more than three standard deviations from the mean.

As can be observed in Table 4, the right clavicle is 4mm shorter than the left, but with a somewhat more robust diaphysis. The right side demonstrates the restricted length known to occur on the dominant side as a result of the forces acting on the shoulder girdle of that side.⁴⁹ Based on measurements from over 600 individuals, Storm⁵⁰ notes that the mean asymmetry for clavicular length is 1.2% with standard deviation of 2.3%. Gristhorpe Man is,

again, strongly lateralised, which indicates he engaged in strenuous use of his upper limbs and preferentially the right side.

Table 3

The measurements and values used to assess bilateral asymmetry

Humeral measurement	Right (mm)	Left (mm)	% asymmetry
Maximum transverse head diameter	49	48	2.62%
Maximum breadth of greater tubercle	34	34	0%
Maximum circumference of the humeral shaft	65	60	8%
Epicondylar breadth	67	63	6.2%
Articular breadth	49	47	4.1%
Maximum length	336	330	1.8%

Table 4

The measurements and values obtained to assess clavicular asymmetry

Clavicle	Right (mm)	Left (mm)	% asymmetry
Maximum length	155	159	-2.55%
Sagittal diameter at midshaft	14	13	7.41%
Vertical diameter at midshaft	10	9.5	6.67%

Craniometric analysis

Previous research indicates that the cranial shape changed from a “longheaded” dolichocranic shape in the Neolithic to a “broad-headed” shape in the Bronze Age.⁵¹ In the light of the importance of this long held, but incompletely understood phenomenon, cranial shape was assessed through the use of the cranial index, using the following formula from Bass.⁵²

$$\frac{\text{maximum cranial breadth} \times 100}{\text{maximum cranial length}} = \frac{15.3 \times 100}{18.5} = 82.70$$

The result demonstrates that Gristhorpe Man is brachyranic, short or broad-headed, which covers a range of 80.00-84.99 (Plate 1). This result supports Brodie’s⁵³ contention that Craniometric analysis separates Neolithic from Bronze Age cranial morphology, an interpretation in keeping with Brothwell’s and Krzanowski’s⁵⁴ earlier analysis of cranial morphological change in British populations through time. Gristhorpe Man’s cranial morphology is thus in keeping with his Bronze Age date.

Using a series of measurements of the cranial vault, viscerocranium, and mandible, the FORDISC 3.0 computer package,⁵⁵ which is used to determine the geographic affinity of an individual, identifies Gristhorpe Man to have been of European origin (posterior probability of 0.9966), although he is not typical for any modern group (typicality scores are low, 0.000-0.005). Given the 4000 years that separates this Bronze Age individual from the European derived populations of more modern times, this comes as no great surprise. It indicates that this particular constellation of morphological cranio-facial features are not found in the relatively more recent populations that make up the comparative database.

Paleopathological Analysis

Degenerative changes

Degenerative changes are visible throughout the whole of the skeleton, the most prominent of which involve the vertebral column. Marginal osteophytic lipping (spondylosis) was present anterior-laterally on the inferior and superior edges of all vertebral bodies, from the fifth lumbar vertebra to the first thoracic, becoming less pronounced towards the top of the column. A prominent syndesmophyte, 2 cm by 3 cm wide is present on the right lateral side of the first sacral vertebra (Plate 2). Degeneration of the vertebral column with ageing is commonly seen in skeletal material⁵⁶ and this can be exacerbated with activity-related trauma. These vertebral degenerative processes have produced a slight scoliosis of the column to the left, most pronounced in the thoracic region. In addition to the marginal osteophytic lipping of the vertebral column, enthesophytes are present on the *ossa coxae*, notably on the lateral rim of the obturator foramen, an alteration of the tendon for *M. obturator internus*, a lateral rotator and abductor the thigh in extension and flexion of the hip, respectively. This unilateral expression stands in contrast to larger bilateral enthesophytes located on the vicinity of the *linea aspera* of both femora. Enthesophytes are present at the insertion of the Achilles tendons on the calcanei, and there is slight enthesophytic formation of the spinous processes of vertebrae, the attachment of the supra-spinous ligaments. The formation of these ossified structures can be viewed as accommodating movement, the body's attempt to stabilize a joint following stress or injury, with bone formers potentially having a better outcome than non-bone formers.⁵⁷ They are an age related phenomenon in that these bony changes occur in older individuals and more often in males than females.⁵⁸ Villotte⁵⁹ notes that they occur four times more frequently in older adults than in younger adults in an archaeological population sample and in a known-age group sample in those over 50 years of age.



Plate 2 Vertebral column

Spina bifida occulta

The neural arches of the sacrum are unfused; sacral vertebra 1 is cleft, sacral vertebra 2 is partially fused, while sacral vertebra 3, 4, and 5 are bifurcated (Plate 3). In sharp contrast to the condition *spina bifida cystica*, in which the spinal cord may protrude and sustain damage resulting in lower limb paralysis, *spina bifida occulta* results from a neural arch defect. It would have had no obvious physical manifestations because the sacral cleft defects would have been covered by a strong fibrous tissue in life.⁶⁰ Gristhorpe Man would have been totally unaware of the condition. Today a genetic predisposition linked to the development of such defects is triggered by an inadequate maternal diet, lack of folic acid, selenium and in particular zinc.⁶¹



Plate 3 *Spina bifida occulta* of the sacrum

The cranium

The cranium had a small perforation on the left side (Plate 1) which the author initially thought may be taphonomic (i.e. damage occurring in the burial environment). A full body ct-scan image clearly showed an area of depleted bone and subsequent radiographs identified a radiolucent patch 20-30 mm in extent in the anterior third of the left parieto-temporal area. These three were aligned and inspection using an endoscope revealed a space-occupying expansile lesion created by bone resorption that had exposed the underlying diploic bone (the lattice type bone between inner and outer skull layers). Three dimensional ct-imaging shows this to be a space occupying lesion with geographic (irregular) margins. A starch based three dimensional anatomically accurate reconstruction made from these images allowed a detailed description of the lesion to be made that assisted with making a differential diagnosis of the observed condition. It was clear that the lesion was restricted to an area of the temporal bone and largely affects the inner table and diploë layer. It is thus a focal largely non-perforating space-occupying osteolytic lesion displaying geographic (i.e. irregular), rounded margins. It disrupts the middle meningeal grooves for the middle meningeal arteries, which appear to run into the lesion. At its centre the lesion is characterised by fused rounded finger-like projections of bone. Taken together, these features suggest the presence of an irregularly shaped intra-cranial soft tissue mass.

The differential diagnosis of this lesion includes neoplastic conditions such as hemangioma (developed from epithelial cells that line the blood vessel of the brain), meningioma (developing from the membranous covering of the brain), glioma (developing from brain nerve cells), neuroma (developing from the nerves entering the brain), or a secondary metastatic tumour (from a tumour located elsewhere in the body). In light of the lesion's close relationship to the meningeal grooves that carry the arterial supply of the brain's membranous covering (i.e. the *dura mater*), an infectious origin, either specific, as in tuberculosis, or from a non-specific source bacteria such as staphylococcus, or a variety of others that cannot be distinguished from one another in the absence of soft tissue biopsy, must be considered.

Sub-dural intra-cranial abscesses, like those associated with tuberculous infection, can also spread via the bloodstream (i.e. hematogenously) from infection of the paranasal sinuses, mastoid processes, or the middle ear, as well as from skin, lungs, or dentition; some 60% of sufferers possess a pre-disposing infectious condition, diabetes, or an immuno-compromised state. The most common location of intra-cranial abscesses are the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain,⁶² a location consistent with the location in Gristhorpe man. Today, such life-threatening conditions are treated with antibiotics and drainage and, to avoid recurrent infection, surgical incision. Prior to the use of ct-scanning and the better visualisation such technology permits, mortality from such infections was as high as 40%, with 55% of individuals over 40 years of age succumbing.⁶³ These features are also consistent with the age-at-death of Gristhorpe Man. Both Whitfield⁶⁴ and Fedges *et al.*⁶⁵ depict examples of such infections in the maxillary atrium, similar in location to the cyst noted in Gristhorpe Man (see 'dentition'), but the possibility that the cranial lesion resulted from a subdural abscess from a disseminated dental infection is unlikely because such lesions usually produce a rounded,

non-perforating osteolytic lesion, rather than the more irregular lesion present. Moreover, because such lesions are sub-dural, they do not arise within the bones of the cranial vault as seems to be the case noted in Gristhorpe Man. In addition, such abscesses most often derive from a chronic ear infection,⁶⁶ evidence for which is lacking in Gristhorpe Man. It seems then that an infectious origin is unlikely in this case.

Distinguishing amongst the different types of malignant tumours from their skeletal effects is difficult and secure diagnoses, even in the living, are based on biopsies performed after surgical excision of the tumour mass in most cases, but whether or not the lesion resulted from a malignant neoplasm can be addressed with more certainty due to the pattern of its effects. Radiographs and ct-scanning are important aids to this endeavour, especially when the endocranium is not easily accessed (due to the completeness of the cranial vault and wiring of the atlas to the base of the cranium), as is the current case. Malignant neoplasms are characterised by their ability to metastasise and, as a result, they are more often found in the intracranial skeleton.⁶⁷ In the absence of evidence for other tumour-like lesions in the rest of the skeleton, the localised expression of this lesion makes this unlikely to be a malignant neoplasm since malignant tumours are noted for their aggressive, bone-destroying and rapid development and spread.⁶⁸ Although this lesion has produced pores in the cranial vault, their size and lack of diffuse distribution (as assessed from radiographs) mitigates against a diagnosis of multiple myeloma,⁶⁹ which develops from bone marrow. The lack of clusters of small pores and stellate, spiculated ('sunburst lesions')⁷⁰ would tend to rule out metastatic carcinomas, as well as primary osteosarcomas. Due to the localised nature of the lesion in Gristhorpe Man, restricted as it is to the parieto-temporal region, this would seem to be a slow growing, indolent tumour. The resorption of the diploë and inner table of the cranial vault, and only minimal perforation of the outer table would suggest this tumour was not an invasive brain tumour but one with its origin in the diploë layer, an intra-osseous tumour. Today such tumours are considered benign, because they do not penetrate the brain, and they can be excised surgically. However, their rapid growth, even if restricted, can cause destruction of surrounding normal tissues because of the pressure they exert on the dura mater and underlying arachnoid and pia mater (brain coverings) and, ultimately, the brain itself, as well as by their often highly vascularised nature.⁷¹ Although benign tumours like meningiomas may erode the inner table of the cranial vault, this type of cancer is most often characterised by hyperostosis (i.e. excessive new bone development),⁷² the opposite of what is observed in Gristhorpe Man. Therefore, the most common form of tumour, the meningioma, seems unlikely in this case.

Another type of benign tumour, the hemangioma, requires consideration because they can be intra-cranial, even if they are more often encountered on the skin. They consist of bundles of proliferating blood vessels. As noted above these tumours develop from the epithelial cells lining blood vessels, and the proximity of the lesion to the meningeal grooves would be consistent with this origin. They typically involve the thin arteries of the leptomeninges, the pia mater and arachnoid, the two innermost coverings of the brain, although they may occur anywhere in the central nervous system, including the cerebral hemispheres, spinal cord, optic nerve and peripheral nerves, the most common primary tumour location in adults being the cerebellum.⁷³ They are rare tumours, accounting for just 0.2% of cranial tumours.⁷⁴ Although they normally develop as an expansion of the outer table of the cranial vault, they

can occur as isolated tumours intracranially, that is, between the inner and outer tables of the cranial vault, and they are thus termed intraosseous cavernous hemangioma.⁷⁵ The lesions produced are osteolytic and have a 'honeycomb' internal structure,⁷⁶ formed by lysis of the diploic trabeculae that transverse the lesion.⁷⁷ This morphology gives the lesion a 'sunray' appearance in tangential radiograph, without a sclerotic margin, and a honeycomb appearance in axial views these descriptions accord with the features observed in Gristhorpe Man. They are slow-growing tumours that are more common in females than males by a three to one ratio.⁷⁸ They have a peak of incidence in the fourth or fifth decade of life but may occur at any age. Although they may appear anywhere in the cranium, most commonly they are found in the frontal, temporal, and parietal regions of the cranial vault, in that order.⁷⁹ Both with regard to age, location, and appearance of the lesion, these traits seem to fit those observed in Gristhorpe Man. Although the cause of these lesions is poorly understood, they appear congenital in nature or related to trauma.⁸⁰ The occurrences of other traumatic lesions of the infra-cranial skeleton and dentition may provide some basis of support for a traumatic origin in this, although this is only circumstantial at best.

Due to increased cranial pressure resulting from either infection or benign tumours, behavioural consequences for those suffering from such conditions are similar and may include headaches, drowsiness, impaired consciousness, nausea and vomiting, as well as neurological deficits such as dysphasia (speech impairment), hemiplegia or hemiparesis (full or partial paralysis, respectively, of unilateral upper or lower limbs) and behavioural abnormalities, as well as seizures.⁸¹ These symptoms occur in benign intra-cranial tumours not because of direct effects on the brain, as would be found in glioma (i.e. nerve cell) tumours, but due to their compression of the brain and the increased cranial pressure their expanding presence exerts. They can, however, have no behavioural effects whatsoever, and their presence in such cases would go unnoticed. The parietal and anterior temporal location of the lesion would suggest that functions of the left hemisphere and, most immediately, the temporal lobe of the brain would have been affected by the growth of the tissue mass. The left hemisphere of the brain is responsible for verbal ability, linguistic description, mathematical, sequential (as in sequential movements of the body and in speech syntax) and analytical skills.⁸² Given the wide range of capacities, it is no wonder that this hemisphere is strongly linked to what one identifies as consciousness. In addition to its primary auditory role, the temporal lobe of the brain is connected with somatosensory (control of the contralateral side of the body, i.e. producing hemiparesis in those affected) and visual cortical associated pathways.⁸³ The cortex of the upper part of the temporal lobe serves to process sound, and the parietal and temporal areas are important associated areas; they integrate information gathered by the senses. The affected area lies close to Broca's area, the left posterior inferior part of the frontal lobe, which is important in the production of language. Deficits in this area contribute to aphasia, the inability to express oneself; speech is difficult to initiate, becomes disjointed, and intonation is lost. In addition, the lateral surface of the anterior temporal lobe also contains the visual cortex associated with recalling the names of objects. The lobe also encompasses Wernick's area, located on the left posterior superior temporal gyrus (the name for a ridge on the cortical surface of the brain), which is linked to language comprehension.⁸⁴ Although both hemispheres of the brain are required in the production and understanding of language, the left lobe is dominant and that is responsible for speech output and the flow of language information goes predominantly through this side

of the brain, while the right is linked more specifically to language comprehension.⁸⁵ It seems that Gristhorpe Man may have had difficulties in producing and comprehending speech, had deficits in visual perception, and a lack of control of the right side of his body prior to death. The presence of this lesion, then, could have profoundly affected his behaviour towards the end of his life and if, as argued here, he occupied an elite leadership role, his lapsing ability to communicate may have severely affected his social interactions upon which his position depended.

Trauma

There are two well-healed rib fractures of the left side of the rib cage. The first is a transverse fracture located on rib 6, 20 mm from the sternal end (Plate 4). The second is an oblique fracture of rib 9, 60 mm from the vertebral end (Plate 5). Both are well healed with no malalignment and appositional displacement and likely took place many years before death. Ribs cannot be splinted effectively, and no treatment is possible beyond binding the rib cage to restrict movement; most rib fractures heal without complication⁸⁶ and can be treated conservatively as ‘a bad bruise’.⁸⁷ The presence of both these fractures on one side of the body makes the possibility that a single event caused both conceivable, yet their differing positions on the ribs makes this assessment less obviously clear. The oblique fracture of rib 9, near the vertebral end (i.e. towards the vertebral column), would suggest a compressive force of the rib cage coming from a force directed from the posterior⁸⁸ while the more sternal position of the transverse fracture of rib 6 would suggest a direct force to the chest. If the two occurred together, which may be a possibility in that both are well healed in death, then a lateral force (i.e. producing lateral compaction) to the left side of the rib cage may be indicated. Both could well have been produced at the same time.⁸⁹



Plates 4 and 5 Healed fractures of sternal end of left 6th rib and left 9th rib at vertebral end

Ankylosis of cervical vertebrae

Cervical vertebra 2 and 3 are ankylosed (i.e. fused) through the left articular facets (Plate 6). Williamson thought the condition could have been an indicator of advance age at death, but he knew it could also be the result of disease.⁹⁰ Joint ankylosis is not a feature associated with osteoarthritis,⁹¹ and thus is unlikely to be due to an age related process. Furthermore, because

the other cervical vertebrae show little degenerative change, in either their bodies or apophyseal joints, it seems highly improbable that this condition results from age related degeneration. Ankylosis due to injury is known to occur,⁹² and this seems far more likely to have been the cause in this particular case. Given that the ankylosing is restricted to only two vertebrae, the resulting lack of flexibility would be insignificant, and probably pain free.



Plate 6 Ankylosis of cervical vertebra 2 & 3

The dentition and dental conditions

The oblique molar cusp wear observed in Gristhorpe Man is similar to that found in other agricultural groups and differs from the uniformly flat wear observed in hunter-gatherers produced by the extensive lateral movements demanded by their coarse diet.⁹³ The type of helicoidal (or ribbon-like) wear noted is caused by moderate side-to-side grinding movements, which is normal in humans and leads to the wear and eventual loss of the lingual cusps of the maxillary molars and the buccal cusps of the opposing mandibular molars,⁹⁴ a pattern most clearly observed in the maxillary first molars of Gristhorpe Man. There is also chipping of the occlusal edges of the anterior maxillary incisors that may relate to the use of these teeth as tools in the manufacture of objects (Plate 7).⁹⁵ This could indicate that the teeth were used to prepare a range of materials. Wallace⁹⁶ notes that in ethnographically recorded groups, the teeth are used to retouch stone tools, in stripping vegetable material for making ropes, and for thinning sinews. This type of activity produces the rounded type of wear seen in the anterior dentition of hunter-gatherers. The last of these could indicate use to produce bowstrings,⁹⁷ although there is no extant study to demonstrate the differential dental effect of these processes to date. Bows though were certainly an apparently prominent component of the material culture of the Bronze Age British groups, as indeed were stone tools, which are among the grave inclusions. Rope and other fibres are also well attested to in later Danish Bronze Age oak coffin burials similar to that of Gristhorpe Man.⁹⁸ Although there is no circumstantial evidence for a bow (or for that matter sinews or rope) amongst the grave inclusions of Gristhorpe Man, the wear on the anterior incisors and labial chipping may indicate that he engaged in such activities. In addition to projectile points, there is ample evidence for bows in the Bronze Age in the form of arm bracers, although when these are found, usually as grave goods, they often show no sign of wear attributable to their putative function.⁹⁹ Bow use is evident as well, if anecdotally, in embedded projectile points, such as

those identified in the remains of a young male found in the ditch at Stonehenge, dating to the Early Bronze Age (2170 ± 110 cal BC).¹⁰⁰



Plate 7 Chipping on central incisors

Calculus or mineralized plaque was present on all teeth, and this had resulted in periodontal disease commencing around the maxillary molars, especially prominent on the right side dentition. A deep caries lesion is visible on the occlusal surface of the left mandibular second molar; a similar lesion may have been responsible for the loss of the left third molar sometime before death (Plate 8). Dental caries attests to the presence of cariogenic foodstuffs in the diet that could include carbohydrates from grain and fructose-bearing foods. There is also agenesis (absence usually due to developmental failure) of the mandibular third molar on the right side, as confirmed from radiographic and ct-image analyses.



Plate 8 Mandible

Abnormal destructive areas occur in the jaws indicative of dental pathologies, including a large opening in the posterior maxilla on the left side, in the vicinity of the molars on that side, and another in the anterior part of the mandible. All four mandibular incisors were dead but held in place by a plug of material (probably wax) that had been inserted into the opening mid-line of the mandible when the skeleton was prepared, presumably for display purposes (Plate 8). Radiography and ct-imaging of this gap reveal a rounded sclerotic margin around the opening indicative of bony reaction from an *in vivo* (active within) pathological process. This probably resulting from trauma to the anterior incisors that damaged the nerve and blood supply of the roots of these teeth, leaving them held in the alveolar process by soft tissue (e.g. a granuloma) only. This would seem to indicate that these teeth were likely found loose. The posterior maxillary opening shows a well-demarcate, rounded margin that separates this area from the surrounding palatal bone on the radiograph. The rounded margin indicates that this was an *in vivo* process, distinct from the uneven, sharp, and undulating margins of a more recent (i.e. post-mortem) break. A ct three dimensional transverse section of the maxillary antra demonstrates that the left one is enlarged compared to the right. This appearance is consistent with a large peri-apical cyst, the pressure from which caused bone resorption around the first and second molars. These two teeth appear to have been the origin of this lesion and were no longer vital through death of their pulp.

Non-metric traits

Gristhorpe Man was examined for non-metric traits. Due to the lack of a suitably large comparative sample from the Bronze Age to compare with the trait expressions in Gristhorpe Man only those that might relate to behaviour are discussed here. In addition to the agenesis of the third right molar, third trochanters are present on the posterior aspect of the proximal ends of the femora, together with hypotrochanteric fossae and a medio-lateral broadening of the proximal femoral shafts (Plate 9). This development suggests hypertrophy of the *M. gluteus maximus*, which takes its attachment from the gluteal tuberosity, and when strongly developed is called a third trochanter.¹⁰¹ *M. gluteus maximus* originates on the posterior of the sacrum, and has two parts that perform different functions. The superior part of the muscle abducts and laterally rotates the thigh, while the inferior part extends and laterally rotates the thigh, extends the trunk and assists in the adduction of the thigh. It is noteworthy that this muscle is not used in normal walking, but is active in forceful extension, such as rising from a seated position, running or climbing up an incline. The presence of increased rugosity in this area indicates strenuous use of and/or age related damage to these muscles. The enthesophytes present along the *linea aspera*, where the adductor muscles insert, indicate similar aetiologies. The largest muscle *M. adductor magnus* adducts and extends the thigh, with *M. adductor brevis* adducting the thigh and assisting with flexion; all assist with medial rotation. These alterations have previously been associated with hip extension and stabilization of the hip in the maintenance of an upright posture in unstable conditions.¹⁰² These enthesopathies tend to occur most frequently during physical exertion associated with sport,¹⁰³ although their link to specific behaviours and strenuous use remains unclear.¹⁰⁴ These muscles are not involved in normal walking; Rogers *et al.*¹⁰⁵ established that there are four groups of sites strongly associated with each other in the formation of osteophytes and enthesophytes. In one group are the two calcaneal sites and in another the two femoral trochanters and the tibial tubercle, indicating that biomechanical factors may lie behind such

groupings. This supports the suggestion that their presence in the Gristhorpe remains may be due to activity-related change that may also have been age-related, and given the sites of the changes in Gristhorpe Man, notably the hips and lower limbs, some powerful movement in that area can be envisioned.¹⁰⁶



Plate 9 Posterior of left femur

Summary

Gristhorpe Man was clearly an elite individual amongst his community, as demonstrated by his burial in an oak log-coffin within a large burial mound. An examination of the skeletal remains also demonstrates that his elite status was not something gained in later life, but one to which he had been born. His attainment of a height of around six feet, his full growth potential, and at the top end of his contemporaries indicates the superior developmental environment in which he was reared. In life he was clearly very active as a young man, indicated by the markers found on the attachment points of various muscles and related bone deformations, for example his right handedness and robust thighs. Over time his active life style inevitably took its toll, wear and tear on the spinal column and elsewhere, a couple of fractured but well healed ribs and some activity related damage to his teeth. But despite those markers, which can easily be seen as the normal consequences of a full life, he lived to be a good age, probably around 60 years, for most of which he would have been a normally functioning individual with his community. The presence of the cranial lesion puts into question whether in the latter part of his time he continued to be the man he once was, or whether an increasing array of disability slowly crept over him. Alternatively the lesion may have had little or no consequences, we will never know.

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Of Myths, Magic, Witches and Saints: the Folklore of some Objects in Whitby Museum

by Christiane Kroebel

Introduction

One of a museum's roles is to inspire an understanding of the past and how this shapes the present as a place distinctive from others. Whitby Museum is an old-fashioned museum: it continues to show a great variety of artefacts in object-intensive exhibition cases. Amongst the pieces on display are a number that have a story to tell beyond their label and a history that is worth recounting. For this article, I have focused on just six items, three of which are dotted about in the Social History section of the museum, the other three are one each in Geology, Natural History, and in the glass cabinet. They have in common that myths or magical stories are associated with them and I wanted to search for the reason behind these tales associated with the objects. Visitors could use them to create a trail around the museum as a starting point for their own discoveries of the history of Whitby, its people, and their connection to a place.

Myths¹, magic², witches³ and, to a lesser extent, saints⁴ have intrigued people for a long time. To most of us they are just curiosities, but to some they may generate fear, to others a sense of wonder. When objects can be linked to myths, magic, witches and saints they attract visitors to museums. The 1823 foundation document of the Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society, which owns and manages the museum,⁵ states that the museum should acquire curiosities along with fossils, antiquities, interesting objects of natural history and a few books. The founders did not specify what these curiosities were to be but those chosen here are ones that fascinate museum visitors today. They are 'The Hand of Glory', a hangman's locket, witch post, witch bottle or ball, the snakestones or ammonites, and a unicorn horn. Most of these curiosities have little or no information or explanation and there is not much known about their history before coming into the Museum. This article tries to explore these items, what they are and the stories associated with them because myths about magic objects and mythological creatures linger in our consciousness. When one hears these stories, or sees the objects or creatures, it is with a sense that they are invested with something beyond the everyday. I hope to throw some light on their meaning and the motives of some of the collectors and donors, even if those of the original owners cannot be ascertained for certain.

The objects in their setting

The history of magic is a fascinating topic. Magic is at times difficult to distinguish from nature and people have interpreted events as magical when we now know that they are quite natural.⁶ Although magical beliefs are older than the Christian era, I will set the objects into a medieval and early modern background. The church discouraged magical traditions but many Christian church practices could have appeared rather magical to some people. At the conversion, the appropriation of pagan sites and festivals and using them for Christian practices was encouraged by Pope Gregory the Great in the early seventh century. Churches were built on temple sites and sacred wells turned into holy wells associated with a particular

saint, usually a local one. The ability of the religious to cure disease through the use of relics was an important aspect of sainthood after death, sometimes even before, and is present in the *lives* of saints. Whitby's abbess Aelfflaed was cured after St. Cuthbert sent her his girdle thus reinforcing Cuthbert's holiness during his own lifetime.⁷ After his death his bones and other items were kept in a special casket and used for veneration and miracles.

The church tried to stamp out paganism and magical practices because they involved the use of demonic powers. Prayer was the main method to relieve one's suffering or to fulfil one's wish and though it was not always successful that was explained with the mystery of God's will. The ceremony of mass must have appeared very curious as the priest described the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine at the altar. The bread, wine and water used were sometimes believed to be magical and attempts were made to steal them for use outside of church. Despite the prohibition on magic, much older practices continued to be followed, as well as new ones invented or adapted, such as the use of a prayer written on a piece of parchment or paper and carried as a charm.⁸

Life for the majority of people was governed by making a living. Agricultural productivity was not high, so there was limited scope to set aside extra grain for lean years. Most people lived at subsistence level or below. They had to produce enough to eat, to sell some to pay rents, taxes and tithes and to buy items that they could not grow or make themselves. Then there was misfortune in that their and their neighbours' houses might burn down through no fault of their own. Or the harvest failed because of too much or too little rain, too hot or too cold temperatures, etc. The reality was that the population declined from the beginning of the 14th century due to poor weather resulting in bad harvests and the series of plague outbreaks later in that century; it did not recover until the seventeenth century. It could happen very quickly that a family was comfortable situated and within a short time had lost everything through death of family members, drought, fire or war.⁹ Inequalities in society accentuated the powerlessness of the poor and left them few options when they fell on hard times.

Further issues facing people over which they had little or no control were disease, high infant and maternal mortality and limited life expectancy. There were few options for remedies to diseases even if a correct diagnosis was given. It is not surprising that when prayer, relics or herbs failed to provide relief or a cure, other methods were sought, such as various parts of animals and gems.

The Reformation brought changes: relics were destroyed or they disappeared, the power of the saints was curtailed and many rituals were discontinued bringing uncertainties and insecurities as well as requiring a profound re-adjustment to people's psychological state. The relationship between the people and their God was changed as church services were reformed. It seems that the comfort and assurance felt previously was not replaced through new ways. One result was that both church and civil government had a confused attitude towards magic unable to distinguish between bad magic, *maleficium*, or good, such as the use of magic to find lost items or a thief. All types of witchcraft were considered a pact with the devil and any 'practitioner of such arts was therefore a heretic, guilty of dualistic beliefs.'¹⁰

North Yorkshire seems to have had relatively few witchcraft prosecutions; it may be 'because the Protestant governing clique did not feel itself unduly threatened by witchcraft.'¹¹ However, the assize court records seem not to have survived and the church court cases dealt with minor forms of witchcraft. Two of the very few cases in the Quarter Sessions Record tell of Robert Conyers, gentleman late of Guisborough, who was tried in 1657 for 'certain detestable arts called witchcraft and sorcery wickedly to practice the same' but there is no mention of punishment; and an earlier one of 1606, which supports the point made above that the law was not always heavy-handed:

That Ralph Milner of Rashe, yeoman, being accused of sorcerie, witchcraft, inchantment and telling of fortunes, shall make his submission at Mewkarr Church upon Sunday next, in the tyme of Divine Service, and confesse that he hath heighlie offended God and deluded men, and is heartily sorie, and will offend no more.¹²

A surviving assize record in the National Archives shows that the supposed witch was not necessarily defenceless. In a late case in Whitby, a 'fisherman's wife was beaten by a butcher in 1664 for bewitching his cattle, and both parties at once clamoured to secure a warrant to apprehend the other.'¹³

Despite centuries of prohibition against magic, belief may have waned but did not disappear.

The Objects and their stories

'The Hand of Glory'

Many stories survive in the folklore of this and other countries that show the benefit that the hand of an executed criminal or drowned person can provide. Most of the 'hands' were used to cure an illness, specifically the swelling associated with goitre. Goitre is a swelling of the thyroid gland in the neck that usually results from an iodine deficiency so was relatively common in earlier times – without knowledge of the cause it would be (and was) impossible to cure. In some cases, the afflicted person was to visit a corpse alone and place the lifeless hand on the growth. At other times, the hand was cut off the body, preserved and kept so that it could be used repeatedly. Then, the hand would be passed seven or nine times over the swelling or growth, depending upon which custom was practiced.¹⁴

Pliny's *Natural History* (first century AD) was read in the Middle Ages and he considered the use of body parts as a virtue and gave an example for cures by the use of a hand.

Scrofula and throat diseases may be cured by the touch of the hand of one who has died an early death, although some authorities do not insist upon the circumstance of early death but direct that the corpse be of the same sex as the patient and that the diseased spot be touched with the back of the left dead hand.¹⁵

At some point Pliny's words were embellished. Though not all myths specified the use of the hand of a convicted and executed criminal, it was the belief that those who had died before they would have done so naturally could still have life-giving forces in their bodies until the end of what would have been their normal life span.¹⁶

Healing of diseases and injuries was a mixture of folk medicine and magic. Many people would go to wise women or cunning men for their knowledge of herbs and gems;¹⁷ they would collect and pass down family recipes, which included the use of plants to cure an illness or give relief;¹⁸ they would use prayer as another ‘remedy’.¹⁹ However, there were many diseases that had no cure and so other means were sought to give respite to the sufferer. Though the difference between the medieval church’s uses of relics to cure illness and the magical use of human body parts was well known, the step to call on demonic powers was used to give relief. In the post-Reformation period when relics were no longer available, body parts must have filled this need. This was the era before effective medicines and extensive medical knowledge so even if people had access to a physician or doctor few could afford his services. Doctors might be able to give a correct diagnosis but did not have many medicines at their disposal to affect a cure. Clearly, alternatives were needed and used.

In folklore, another myth is associated with the hand of a criminal, which has been shaped so that the fingers are bent to hold a candle resulting in a ‘hand of glory’. Burglars would use this hand to cast a spell over a household by making sure that they were asleep and did not wake up while they robbed the house. The hand could open bars and unlock doors to let them burgle the house with impunity.²⁰ These myths and legends of the ‘hand of glory’ have grabbed the imagination of generations of people since the Middle Ages for its element of gory detail and feelings of powerlessness in the face of criminal intent.

Whitby Museum’s hand²¹ was discovered in the parish of Danby, on the North York Moors, in the early twentieth century on the roof wall plate of Hawthorne Cottage and given to Joseph Ford, a mason in the village, who was interested in local history and legends. He had heard many legends about the ‘hand of glory’ and the criminal uses made of it when shaped to hold a candle and believed this hand to be one such. Most likely he was familiar with the tale collected by Richard Blakeborough, in which the burglars were apprehended through the vigilance of a quick-witted maid, who extinguished the flame with milk and then roused the sleeping occupants.²² Ford retold it in his *Reminiscences* and included a recipe on how to make this hand.²³

However, as the museum’s hand is not shaped to hold a candle nor has any remnants of candlewax, it suggests that it was more likely to have been used for its curative effect. This aspect is less well known and usually overlooked but equally interesting. Whoever had created this resting space in the wall of the house must have thought that it would continue to offer magical cures as he or she passed by. The survival of the hand after its discovery should be attributed to Joseph Ford and his well-known interest in local folklore. There exists another hand in a pub in Salisbury but I have been unable to find out anything about it.²⁴

Hangman’s Locket

The hangman’s locket²⁵ is supposed to contain a piece of rope used to hang a criminal. The hangman had the right to sell the rope as well as the clothes and body parts of the executed person to supplement his income. The rope was popular as a cure for sore throat and epilepsy²⁶ and any other illness that the seller could convince the public to believe. Whitby Museum’s locket shows a hanged man on the gibbet and a piece of rope in a glass locket on a

chain to be worn around the neck thus preventing sore throat. The object lacks specific details to date it but is obviously Victorian and would be expected to precede 1868 when the last public execution took place. Afterwards executions took place in prisons, so one would expect there to have been less scope to acquire pieces of rope. However, the Pitt Rivers Museum has such a locket from France in its collection dated to 1899²⁷ and this would make it more of a tourist trinket. Closer inspection of the rope indicates that it would seem unlikely to have been used to hang anyone because it is far too thin. The museum's locket is catalogued as an untraced find, meaning there is no information on who brought it or when it was donated.

'Witch' Post

The witch post is a carved wooden post positioned near the fireplace of a house and believed to prevent witches, fairies or evil spirits from entering the occupants' house. It was placed at the end of a screen or thin wall at right angle to the fireplace and was also referred to as a heck post.²⁸ Witch posts in this form are thought to be distinctive to the North York Moors with one example in Lancashire. The posts have been found in seventeenth-century farmhouses and were still considered an integral part of the house and sometimes replaced after rotting away as late as the early twentieth century.²⁹ The post³⁰ in Whitby Museum was presented by R. Lionel Foster, Esq., J.P., in 1936 and came from East End Cottage in Egton. The origin of these carved posts is obscure but would seem to be linked to the lay-out of seventeenth-century farmhouse buildings. The fireplace was located on an internal wall with a passageway separating areas from farm animals with doors at either end of the passage to the outside. A screen to prevent drafts would be an early development. The screen or divider was usually a wooden partition; sometimes on top of a low stone wall, which often served as the back for a bench as well, and was set at right angle to the fireplace with the post at the end. The posts have the distinctive saltire (X) at the top with other carvings within the arms of the cross and below. Some posts are particularly decorative such as one from near Scarborough now at the Pitts Rivers Museum. Although folklore associated 'witches' with Rowan wood, the posts examined by Hayes and Rutter were made out of oak, as were the crucks, beams and other structural framework for the houses. They found a number of these posts were re-used as lintels in barns, byres and earth-closets.

Our knowledge of these posts as witch posts goes back to the very end of the nineteenth century, so it is difficult to be certain how the term originated and why only on the North York Moors. When Canon J.C. Atkinson, vicar of Danby, sent such a post to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford in 1893, he was cautious about calling it a witch post because only one informant wished to discuss it. This post, thought to be from a shoemaker's house in Danby, was the second post in the Pitt Rivers Museum, joining one collected at least twenty years earlier from the Scarborough area, but which had (probably) not been labelled as a witch post until Atkinson's example came to the museum. Unfortunately, we do not know what prompted Pitt Rivers to collect one but it seems likely that Atkinson's attribution was the first mention of it.³¹

When Joseph Ford of Castleton wrote his reminiscences in the 1930s or 40s, he attributed these posts to eighteenth-century witch-laying ceremonies.³² These were carved after the

priest conducted the ceremony and would prevent the witch from practicing any more evil. More recently, Peter Walker has proposed an alternative explanation for these posts. He has hypothesised that these are mass posts to indicate safe meeting houses for catholic recusants in the seventeenth century.³³ The occupants would carve the cross at the top of the post after a visit and blessing from Nicholas Postgate. Postgate was born into a Catholic family *c.*1596 in Ugglebarnby, near Whitby, and educated to the priesthood at the English College in Douai, France, before returning to Yorkshire as chaplain to gentry households and later to farming families on the Moors.³⁴ According to Walker, the varying number of scrolls appearing on most posts, would be linked to a code to identify the next mass house in which Nicholas Postgate said mass.

Related but dissimilar posts are found in Wales. There they appear as pairs of figures on either side of the doors and have a phallic element leading to the conclusion that the figures were meant to protect the house from witches and evil spirits.³⁵ This, that is to say at the door to the house and on either side of the entrance, appears a more plausible position for the post to be an effective symbol to ward off witches from coming the house. The window might be another position to place markings to prevent witches from entering and this idea has been taken up by Historic England, who have asked the public to record symbols and inform them of their location.³⁶ It appears that there may be similarities to posts in East Netherlands and across the border in Westfalen, Germany, and are referred in the Dutch as *stiepeltekens*.³⁷

Before discussing the various theories just described, I digress into the long history of witchcraft which is intricately tied up with magic, cunning men and wise women. These men and women were often healers or helped others to detect thieves and recover lost or stolen property. This type of magic was seen as doing good and had been acceptable to most, or at least overlooked, especially by the clergy. It was only when magic was used to do harm that witches were identified and pursued. Witchcraft was alleged when misfortune happened to someone who thought it was caused by a person in their community.³⁸ A study of court cases of accusations and resulting convictions, or acquittal, has been used to investigate the people involved – the accused and the accusers – and what they thought about the situation in which they found themselves.³⁹ In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, 'witches, witnesses, magistrates and jurors alike sincerely believed that supernatural forces could be manipulated for good or ill, a belief which formed part of their understanding of the world.⁴⁰ Although there were attempts to demystify belief in witchcraft, many contemporary views were either reflected by or shaped by pamphleteers who produced countless tracts on witches and their craft. The image they created of the witch as an old woman is the one we have still.⁴¹ Actual cases show that witches could be men or women, old or young, married couples, or several generations of women, but at the base of it was the belief that they used diabolical power.⁴² The cases researched show a variety of accusations from disputes over land or other transactions, or charity granted or denied, which were the economic tensions between neighbours competing for the same resources and any tensions spilled over into witchcraft accusations.⁴³ Gaskill concludes that he aimed to show

some of the things which it *could* mean in different contexts: religious deviance and secular crime; an explanation of misfortune and a focus for blame; an expression and manifestation of fear and anger; and, finally, a potential source of

power by which the weak sought to free themselves from the constraints of daily life and re-route their destinies.⁴⁴

In Yorkshire, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Edward Fairfax of Fuyston wrote an account of the occurrences that made him believe his daughters were bewitched.⁴⁵ From this it becomes clear that the supposed witch was a neighbour and well known to the family, had frequent contact with the daughters amongst others and could not have been excluded easily from the house. She was accused of being a witch, taken to court but found not guilty to the disbelief and chagrin of Edward Fairfax. It is instructive to read a first-hand account of the children's illness and the only explanation of its cause that seemed credible to the parents was witchcraft. However, the father did not appear to have resorted to any protective measures or to have used any form of detection other than public accusation and court. The manuscript breaks off when the women were found not guilty and the episodes of illness or bewitching had stopped. The editor of the manuscript traced some of the children and they appeared in later marriage records.

To return to a discussion of these posts, their original meaning has so far not been found in the historic record and can no longer be established with certainty. It may be appropriate at this point to mention that there is little understanding of how people used space and what this space meant to them, especially their own rooms, areas or openings in their homes in the past. Additionally, the meaning of these spaces to individuals and families may change over time and between families.

It is possible that the witch post might have been thought to offer protection to households on the North York Moors but in what way is not immediately comprehensible unless the carving represented some sort of invocation and would force the 'witch' to depart or prevent her from practicing her craft. Atkinson described many examples of tales of witchcraft in the area around Danby but never mentioned the witch post.⁴⁶ His cautious attribution in his letter to the Pitt Rivers Museum is the first mention of it. Ford's anecdote places the timings in the mid-eighteenth century and is far too late to seem credible.

The alternative explanation that it is a mass post appears doubtful, too. Nicholas Postgate spent the first 30 years as chaplain to Catholic families after his ordination in France before returning to the North York Moors in the 1660s and ministering to recusant families there. He claimed to have 600 penitents and by 1676 one-third of the adult population were Catholics.⁴⁷ These could hardly be unknown and his activities could not have been kept secret. Non-conformists were well known and regularly fined. Nicholas Postgate's arrest and execution at the age of 82 in 1679 came as a result of fears over a Popish Plot.

There is little doubt that these posts are remarkable. The association with witches seems to have its origin with Rev. Atkinson in the early 1890s and were picked up with alacrity after that. When Lionel Foster, an Egton landowner, brought this one to the museum, he will have known that he was adding a unique object to the collection and that it should be preserved for the future. In conclusion, I suggest that they are neither witch posts nor mass posts but are decorative features for the home but that this does not detract from their value. Maybe someone will come up with another theory.⁴⁸

Another method for guarding against witches was the witch's bottle.

Witch's Bottle or Ball

Persons who thought they were victims of a witch would place their own hair, nail-clippings, and urine into this bottle and then bury it. The alleged witch would be unable to urinate and have other symptoms of discomfort thus revealing the witch to the accuser. Once exposed, the victim could take steps to stop the witch from doing further harm.⁴⁹ The museum's witch's bottle does not contain anything; it appears to have been washed before it was donated sometime in the 1920s, when it was called a ball with the following story: it had been hung up to keep away evil spirits and if an animal fell ill, the ball was rubbed (or stroked) along its back down to the tail to drive out the devil.⁵⁰ This was based on Roman medical theory that illness (evil humours) could be removed by stroking and the body restored to equilibrium. Rubbing or stroking the bottle along the animal's back would create a magnetic force thus the evil humours moved down through the limbs and out through the extremities.⁵¹

St. Hilda

Hilda was the first abbess at Whitby from the middle of the seventh century until her death in AD 680. Bede, the eighth-century monk and historian at Jarrow, County Durham, described her life and work in terms of admiration and approval. Becoming a saint in the early years of the Christian church was a matter of leading a saintly life and having a miracle story arising from that life. In Hilda's case it is the tale of Begu, a nun living at the monastery in Hackness, who told of the miracle of seeing the soul of Hilda carried to heaven by angels on the night that Hilda died in Whitby. In the tenth century, Hilda's renown was such that her bones were supposed to have been taken from Whitby to Glastonbury to enhance that monastery's status. When the monastery was re-founded at Whitby in about AD 1078, it was dedicated to St. Peter and St. Hilda and the monks would have hoped to attract pilgrims to Whitby. Although much admired, the cult of St. Hilda was mostly local to North-East Yorkshire with a number of parish churches dedicated to her in the Middle Ages and some in modern times. St. Hilda still evokes strong feelings because she played a pivotal role in the early Christian church as it changed to conform and adjust to standards imposed from Rome after the Synod of Whitby in AD 664.

The first mention of any other miracles or myths associated with Hilda is attributed to the fourteenth-century vicar and chronicler John of Tynemouth.⁵² The first one told of Hilda banishing serpents from the site of the monastery. As they fell, they turned to stone and can be found at the bottom of the cliff as fossil ammonites or 'snakestones'. The second one called Hilda the protector of the fields and that she banned birds from the fields for eating the corn. Both myths were first published in 1516, one in Latin and the other in Middle English, and later found their way into William Camden's history in the late sixteenth century.⁵³ By 1600 the two tales made their appearance in a MS written about 1604–6 to Sir Thomas Chaloner, who owned land at Guisborough.⁵⁴ The writer retold these stories as historical fact tempered with a large dose of scepticism of the tale that wild geese could not fly over the beach near Whitby and that St. Hilda's prayer had drawn the surfeit of serpents into the rock and they became as hard as the thunderbolts that are found nearby. Camden's later editions

attributed both tales to St. Hilda, though considered both fabulous stories.⁵⁵ The myth that she sent the birds away from the fields became the tale that geese would drop dead over the town because St. Hilda had expelled them for eating all the corn.⁵⁶ Tourists visiting Whitby in the nineteenth century found shops selling ammonites with snakeheads carved onto them – clearly the product of enterprising shopkeepers.

Fossil folklore is a large topic deserving its own article but a few examples may be mentioned here because they relate to stones found locally. Belemnites were thought to be ‘thunderbolts’ resulting from lightning strikes, bivalves such as oysters and gryphaea were called ‘devil’s toenails’, shark’s teeth were referred to as snake’s tongues and ground up, mixed in food and eaten or drunk as an antidote to poison.⁵⁷ The belief in the curative powers of these fossils comes from the idea that shark’s teeth resemble snakes’ tongues and, since many snakes are poisonous, these teeth must be an antidote. The reasoning is based on the belief in the sympathy or affinity between things that are similar (or look similar) and, therefore, can affect each other.

‘Unicorn Horn’

The belief in the existence of unicorns is very old.⁵⁸ How old is impossible to determine. Single horned animals have appeared in Persian, Indian and Chinese writings, as well as in the Old Testament of the Bible. Whether these were all unicorns is somewhat uncertain because one has had to rely on translators to interpret the old texts and they may have been influenced by their own preconceptions. When the animals were described or illustrated, they were composites of many known animals. It is not until the twelfth century that they were shown with most of the features of a horse and one white horn growing from the middle of the forehead and that is how most people have been thinking of the unicorn for centuries in Western Europe because that is the image seen in medieval tapestries and paintings.⁵⁹

As late as the nineteenth century, people were looking for unicorns, hearing from someone, who claimed to have seen one or who knew someone who had. But the unicorn was an elusive animal, so in different place and times diverse myths were told as to how to capture one. In the European Middle Ages, it was believed that a unicorn was inexplicably attracted to a virgin and the hunter was supposed to place a virgin in a forest to entrap the animal. No one ever caught one. Miraculously, however, unicorn horn was available but only kings and popes could afford such a horn.

What does the unicorn symbolise? There are several explanations: it seems that the unicorn stands for pure goodness and the fight against evil sometimes depicted as a lion; it may also be an explanation of the sun and the moon appearing daily across the sky and the moon waning and waxing every four weeks; and in Christianity, the unicorn represents Christ with the virgin being Mary. It is ‘a Christian allegory for the Incarnation of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and his subsequent vulnerability as a human at the hands of men. The unicorn was thus seen as a natural-world counterpart for Christ.’⁶⁰

With these myths came magical powers ascribed to the unicorn and curative powers of the horn. But first people had to find one to enable them to make use of those powers. In Indian

and Chinese folklore, the rhinoceros is ascribed these powers and its horn is widely sought in much of Asia even today. In ancient Greece and Rome, the oryx was thought to be the unicorn and its horn was used widely, which is why it was described as black in colour. The supposed curative powers of the horn were the ability to purify water, to treat plague, measles, fevers and as an antidote to poison.

By the twelfth century, unicorn horn appeared in Western Europe as a white horn but it was not until the second half of the sixteenth century that questions were asked. From then on, the efficacy of the horn and the origin and habitat of the animal were queried. Very soon, it was identified as a marine animal but the myth was perpetuated and an imaginative sea-unicorn was illustrated, even comparing it to the narwhal with the first one's horn growing out of its forehead. By the seventeenth century, belief in the unicorn declined and trade in narwhal horn lost its exclusivity. However, it was not until the nineteenth century that people gave up the quest to find a unicorn.

The Museum has several narwhal tusks and the complete skeleton of a narwhal⁶¹, where one can see that it is an ivory tooth growing from the upper jaw. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the donor, T. Broderick. He was not a member of the Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society but gave many other items to the museum at the same time; the entry in the annual report for 1833 reads :-

Thomas Broderick, Esq – Skeleton of the Narwhal, with the Horn attached; Head of a Female Walrus, and of a Male Cub, preserved; Skeleton of a Walrus' Head, and of a Bear's Head; Shark's Mouth, and Back Bone; Vertebra of a Whale; two Seals; Jackal, Fomart, Viper, Snake, Guiana, Antelope's Feet; Esquimaux Boots; Pheasant, Woodcock, Partridge, pair of Moor Birds, three Starlings, Woodpecker, Sparrowhawk, Waterhen, Raven shot in lat. 71 ½ N., and twenty-five other Birds, chiefly from the Arctic Seas.⁶²

The name was quite common in Whitby and information in the Society's museum and library shows one being a ship-builder, another a mariner, and one whose profession was unknown but known as Thomas Brodrick, Junior.⁶³ When this donation was made, the Society had been in existence ten years and was actively collecting specimens to enhance the exhibits. It is difficult to know whether the ship-builder or the mariner had more opportunity to acquire the animals and bring them back to Whitby. It seems certain that the narwhal was hunted in the arctic and was not one that had found its way into the North Sea and was washed ashore at Whitby (Colin Howes *pers.comm.*) because there are no records of such an event and the presence of the other arctic fauna in this gift.

... and finally

This Recipe is an example of several points raised in the article; the belief in life-giving forces in this case from an animal, the use of herbs, fruit, and other rare animal products as well as unicorn horn. This would have been used when all other methods and medicines had failed.⁶⁴

A raire watter, which hath restored severall out of deep consumptions

Take a red Cock, pluck him a live, then slit him down the back & take out all his entrells, cut him in quarters & bruse him in a mortar, then put him in a still with a pottle of Sacke, a quart of new red Cows milk, a pound of Currants, beaten & a pound of reasons of the sun ston'd & beaten, of penney roiall, two handfulls of wild time, roasmary, & burredge, one handfull, on quart of red rose water, of Hartshorn & China [root] of eatch one handfull, & past up y[our] still & still it with a soft fire D[r]up in the Glass where in it stills one pound of sugar candey, beaton, twelve penceworth of Leafe Gold, 7 grains of musk, 10 graines of amber greece: 7 grains of unicornes – horne. 7: graines of beasor stone, & when the Watter is all still'd mix these ingredients with it & use it Thus. Every morning fasting, & every evening, when you goe to Bed, take 4 or 5 spoonfulls of it warme, for a month together. This hath cured a man whome the Physicians had given over.

Conclusion

Some of these stories make us smile or shudder today but one can imagine how they may have given comfort and an explanation for something that seemed incomprehensible to our ancestors. By the nineteenth and early twentieth centuies, when the objects were donated, they had acquired the essence of curiosities to be preserved. I suspect that the collectors and donors no longer believed in the efficacy of the artefacts but believed that people in the past believed in their powers. The exception may be the narwhal which comes from the natural history collection and is likely to represent the nineteenth-century interest in the natural world. The fabricated 'snakestones' and hangman's locket must stem from resourceful shopkeepers playing on the public's knowledge of past beliefs. Though the individual objects are not unique, many are rare and the collection with the information on the donors lets us approach beliefs through real individuals. Hence, these stories engage us today because they create a link to the past and give a sense of place distinctive from any other.⁶⁵

¹ Although these words are commonly understood, it may be useful to quote from the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), which defines myth as '[A] traditional story, typically involving supernatural beings or forces, which embodies and provides an explanation or justification for something such as the early history of a society, a religious belief or ritual, or a natural phenomenon.' Available at <http://www.oed.com> [accessed 15 October 2015].

² The OED defines magic as '[T]he use of ritual activities or observances which are intended to influence the course of events or to manipulate the natural world, usually involving the use of an occult or secret body of knowledge; sorcery, witchcraft.' [Accessed 15 October 2015].

³ The OED defines witch as '1. A man who practises witchcraft or magic; a magician, sorcerer, wizard. 2. A female magician, sorceress; in later use *esp.* a woman supposed to have dealings with the devil or evil spirits and to be able by their co-operation to perform supernatural acts. 3. Applied generally or vaguely to various trees having pliant branches: Wych Elm, Mountain Ash, Witch Alder.' [Accessed 15 October 2015].

⁴ The OED defines saint as 'One of those persons who are formally recognized by the Church as having by their exceptional holiness of life attained an exalted station in heaven, and as being entitled in an eminent degree to the veneration of the faithful; a canonized person. In Pre-Reformation use, the term implies that the persons so designated may be lawfully addressed in prayer for their intercession with God, and that miracles have been wrought through their aid after death.' [Accessed 15 October 2015].

⁵ Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society [hereafter WLPS], Archive bound in vol.1 Annual Reports; Whitby Museum's object reference numbers are in the form of WHITM:[...]

⁶ Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science, during the First Thirteen Centuries of our Era* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1923) 2 vols.; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventh-Century England* (London: Penguin, 1973).

⁷ *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1940).

⁸ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 36-7, and post Reformation, p. 211-4; Richard Kieckhefer, 'The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic' *The American Historical Review* 99(3), 1994, p. 813-36.

⁹ Christopher Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages: the People of Britain, 850-1520* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale U.P., 2002).

¹⁰ Philip Tyler, "The Church Courts at York and Witchcraft Prosecutions 1567-1640," *Northern History* 4 (1969), p. 84-110, at p. 86.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.107.

¹² J.A. Sharpe, *Witchcraft in Seventeenth-century Yorkshire: Accusations and Counter Measures*, (York: Borthwick Institute of Historical Research – Borthwick paper 81, 1992), 2-3; North Riding Record Society. *Quarter Sessions*, ed. J.C. Atkinson 7 vols (London, 1884-89), v. 1, 58 (Richmond, 13 October 1606); v. 5, 259 (Helmsley, 12 January 1657/8).

¹³ Malcolm Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 51.

¹⁴ Mabel Peacock, "Executed Criminals and Folk-Medicine," *Folklore*, 7(3) (1896): 268-83.

¹⁵ Thorndike, *History of Magic*, v.1, p. 82.

¹⁶ Wayland D. Hand, "Hangmen, the Gallows, and the Dead Man's Hand in American Folk Medicine," in *Medieval Literature and Folklore Studies: Essays in Honor of Francis Lee Utley*, edited by J. Mandel and B. A. Rosenberg, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers U. P., 1970): 323-29; and his 'Folk Curing: the Magical Component.' *Béaloideas*, Iml.39/41, 1971-73, 140-46.

¹⁷ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 209-300.

¹⁸ Katherine Knight, 'A Precious Medicine: Tradition and Magic in some Seventeenth-Century Household Remedies,' *Folklore*, 113(2) (2002): 237-47.

¹⁹ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 133-78.

²⁰ Alberti Parvi Lucii, *Les Secrets merveilleux de la magie naturelle & cabalistique du Petit Albert [pseud.]*, traduits exactement sur l'original Latin, intitulé *Alberti Parvi Lucii Libellus de mirabilibus naturae arcanis ; Enrichi de figures mistérieuses*. (Lyon, 1743).

²¹ WHITM:SOH869 came into the museum in 1935 through S. J. Buckton.

²² J. Fairfax-Blakeborough, ed., *The Hand of Glory, and further Grandfather's Tales and Legends of Highwaymen and Others Collected by the Late R. Blakeborough* (London: Grant Richards, 1924), chap. 1, 'The Hand of Glory: a Thrilling legend of Stage-coach Days', 13-23.

²³ Joseph Ford, *Some Reminiscences and Folk Lore of Danby Parish and District* (Leeds: M.T.D. Rigg Pub., 1953, rep. 1990).

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- ²⁴ It is a smoked and mummified hand (left?) in Salisbury – Haunch of Venison pub <http://haunchpub.co.uk/site.aspx?IID=2844067&SECTIONID=2844056> [accessed 2016].
- ²⁵ WHITM: SOC1050.
- ²⁶ Peacock, 'Executed Criminals and Folk-Medicine', esp. 268-9.
- ²⁷ See <http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/amulets/index.php/hangman-locket-france/index.html> [accessed 15 September 2017].
- ²⁸ Raymond H. Hayes and J. G. Rutter, *Cruck-framed Buildings in Ryedale & Eskdale* (Scarborough: Scarborough and District Archaeological Society, 1972), 87-95; Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHM), *Houses of the North York Moors* (London: HMSO, 1987), 218.
- ²⁹ Mary Natrass, 'Witch Posts and Early Dwellings in Cleveland.' *Yorks. Arch. J.*, 39 (153) (1956):136-46.
- ³⁰ WHITM:SOH1483.
- ³¹ Jeremy Coote, Curator and Joint Head of Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum, has communicated that he concluded that the post from near Scarborough was not described as a witch post until after the arrival of the post from J. C. Atkinson. [*pers. comm.* 24 June 2015]. Information about the posts in the Pitt Rivers museum is available at <http://objects.prm.ox.ac.uk/pages/PRMUID127939.html> and <http://objects.prm.ox.ac.uk/pages/PRMUID26310.html> [accessed on 24th June 2015].
- ³² Joseph Ford, *Reminiscences*, 93-96.
- ³³ Peter Walker, 'Witch Posts,' *Yorkshire Buildings: the Journal of the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group* 39 (2011): 51-55, and writing under the pseudonym Nicholas Rhea in *Blessed Nicholas Postgate: Martyr of the Moors* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2012).
- ³⁴ William J. Sheils, 'Postgate, Nicholas (c. 1596-1679)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press | <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/67458> [last accessed 21 Dec 2016]
- ³⁵ Eurwyn William, 'The Protection of the House: some Iconographic Evidence from Wales,' *Folklore*, 89 (2), (1978): 148-153.
- ³⁶ Historic England has asked the public to inform them of such markings: see <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/Help-Hunt-for-Witches-Marks> [accessed 2 November 2016].
- ³⁷ John Dean *pers.com.* [7 May 2019] on the work of Jan Jans.
- ³⁸ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 517-698.
- ³⁹ Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities*, 4-20.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 37.
- ⁴¹ See Reginal Scot, *The Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584 <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-discovery-of-witchcraft-by-reginald-scot-1584> [accessed 5 May 2019]; Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities*, Bibliography: Contemporary Works, 319-26; see also Fawkes family of Farnley Hall Estate Collection, upper Wharfedale, 'Presumption against Witches' Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society, Archives YAS DD 146 now housed at University of Leeds, Brotherton Library.
- ⁴² Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities*, 41.
- ⁴³ *Ibid*, 57-65.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 78.

⁴⁵ William Grainge, ed., *Dæmonologia: a Discourse on Witchcraft, as it was acted in the family of Mr. Edward Fairfax, of Fuyston, in the County of York, in the Year 1621; along with the only two Eclogues of the same Author known to be in Existence, with a Biographical Introduction and Notes Topographical & Illustrative.* (Harrogate: printed by R. Ackrill, 1882).

⁴⁶ J.C. Atkinson, *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish: Reminiscences and Researches in Danby in Cleveland.* (London: Macmillan, 1891).

⁴⁷ Sheils, 'Postgate, Nicholas'.

⁴⁸ Thanks to Belinda Wassell for drawing to my attention Linda Hall, *Period House Fixtures & Fittings, 1300-1900.* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 2005): 150-3. And thanks to John Dean for a discussion on these posts in the Netherlands in May 2019 but it was too late to research these.

⁴⁹ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 648-9.

⁵⁰ WHITM:PyG26 label.

⁵¹ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 242.

⁵² *Nova Legenda Anglie: as collected by John of Tynemouth, John Capgrave, and others, and first printed, with New Lives, by Wynkyn de Worde a.d. mdxvi*, ed. Carl Horstman, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1901), v.2, p. 29-30; and a separate 15th-century manuscript, A.I. Doyle, A Miracle of St Hilda in a Migrating Manuscript, in *Crossing Boundaries*, ed. Eric Cambridge and Jane Hawkes (Oxford: Oxbow, 2017), 243-7. The article has the text of the tale in both Latin and English.

⁵³ *Nova Legenda Anglie*; Manfred Görlach, *The Kalendre of the Newe Legende of Englande, ed. from Pynson's printed edition, 1516* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1994), 113; William Camden, *Britannia.* (London, 1587), 485.

⁵⁴ British Library, Cotton MS, Julius F vi, 431 in Dan O'Sullivan, '“Some Rarities that Lye in this Lordshipp of yours Called Gisbrough”: The Cottonian Manuscript Transcribed,' *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 84(1), 2012, 140-159, at 152. 'Not farre from Whitby is a peice of grounde called Whitby strande over which the inhabitantes afyrme that noe wildgoose can flye. If the reporte be as true as it is old there must needes be some secret antipathie betwene the ayre of that place and that kinde of fowle. If it be a tale I wonder much that soe palpable a lye shoulde from many adges be nurished by many men of worthe when it ill beseemeth to give vent to such base ware. Another wonder they ascribe to a certaine Saint Hilda or St. Hilr who, by his powerfull prayers when the contry theraboutes was overlayd by serpentis, drawe them into the harte of the hard rocke where they nowe remaine hardned into a strong substance not unlike that which we suppose to be the thunderbolt. Little did the first inventors of the weake fable consyder that god from the begining made nature sporte her self in the varyetie of miraculous workes, and as in these serpentis the head is wantinge, soe have I seene in ther states out of which they drawe copper at Mansflet in Germanye, the perfecte shape of a fishe traced out with fynnes and scales and all other partes thereof the head onely excepted, the reason wherof I referre to be discussed by such as take pleasure in the speculation of natural philosophie. But by the waye, this much I thought not impertinent to put in my note book, that sperstycion is always credulous and antiquitye for the moste parte superstycious.'

⁵⁵ William Camden, *Britain: or a chorographical Description of the most flourishing Kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Islands adjoining, out of the depth of Antiquitie.* (London: for Joyce Norton and Richard Whitacker, 1637): 718.

⁵⁶ Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500-1800* (London: Penguin, 1984): esp. 74 and 77.

⁵⁷ Walter W. Skeat, '“Snakestones” and Stone Thunderbolts as Subjects for Systematic Investigation' *Folklore* 23(1) (1912): 45-80; Natural History Museum, 'Fossil Folklore' <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/earth/fossils/fossil-folklore/index.htm> [accessed 28 June 2015].

⁵⁸ The following section is based on Odell Shepard, *The Lore of the Unicorn*. (New York: Harper, 1930) with some additional information from Elmer G. Suhr, 'An interpretation of the Unicorn' *Folklore*, 75(2) (1964): 91-109.

⁵⁹ For illustrations of medieval tapestries see for example the V&A at <http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/t/tapestry/> esp. the 'Triumph of Chastity over Love'; and <http://www.musee-moyenage.fr/collection/oeuvre/la-dame-a-la-licorne.html> the 'Lady and the Unicorn' [accessed 26 October 2015].

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Morrison, 'Beastly Tales from the Medieval Bestiary' https://www.bl.uk/medieval-english-french-manuscripts/articles/beastly-tales-from-the-medieval-bestiary?_ga=2.247108301.873338266.1557258575-509148331.1554183519 [accessed 3 May 2019].

⁶¹ WHITM:NHW622.

⁶² 11th report of the Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society presented at the annual meeting, October 31st, 1833 (Whitby: the Society, 1833): Donations presented to the Museum, since the publication of the tenth report, 14.

⁶³ WLPS Library family tree file under Broderick; Museum accessions for 1825.

⁶⁴ Wellcome Library, Egerton MS 1071 in Knight, 'A Precious Medicine', 245.

⁶⁵ Objects form part of folklore tradition but words, phrases and behaviours are another; the Whitby glossary is a very good source for these. F.K. Robinson, *A Glossary of Words used in the Neighbourhood of Whitby*. (London: for English Dialect Society, 1875-6 in 2 parts): chapter on folklore at the start of part 2.

The Georgian Poor of Sawdon

by Chris Evans

The reader may be helped by reading the notes at the end of the article first.

My last contribution to the *Transactions* was about the Victorian working class of Brompton.¹ This contribution deals with a century earlier; a step down the social ladder and a settlement a mile north – the Georgian poor of Sawdon. It is made possible by the survival of the Sawdon Poor Book 1779-1837, now in the North Yorkshire County Record Office.² Augmented by information from the Parish Registers³ and other sources, this enables us to look at the lives of the poor of Georgian Sawdon.

Before discussing the contents of the book it may help to outline its context in terms of time, legislation and place.

Time

The book covers part of the reign of George III and the reigns of George IV and William IV. Among the events between 1779 and 1837 were

- 1783 American Independence
- 1789 French Revolution began
- 1799-1815 Napoleonic Wars
- 1815 Battle of Waterloo
- 1816-1836 agricultural depression
- 1819 Peterloo Massacre

Despite these events taking place far from Sawdon they did have some influence on the village as will be discussed later.

Legislation

We still have not found the right way to deal with "the poor", particularly in locating the boundary between the deserving and undeserving poor. The legislation to try to deal with the problem goes back to 1388. So far as the poor of Sawdon were concerned at the time of the Poor Book the legislation which tried to deal with the problem was:-

- | | | |
|------|-------------------|---|
| 1662 | Law of Settlement | Strangers could be removed from a parish. |
| | | Settlement Certificates introduced. |

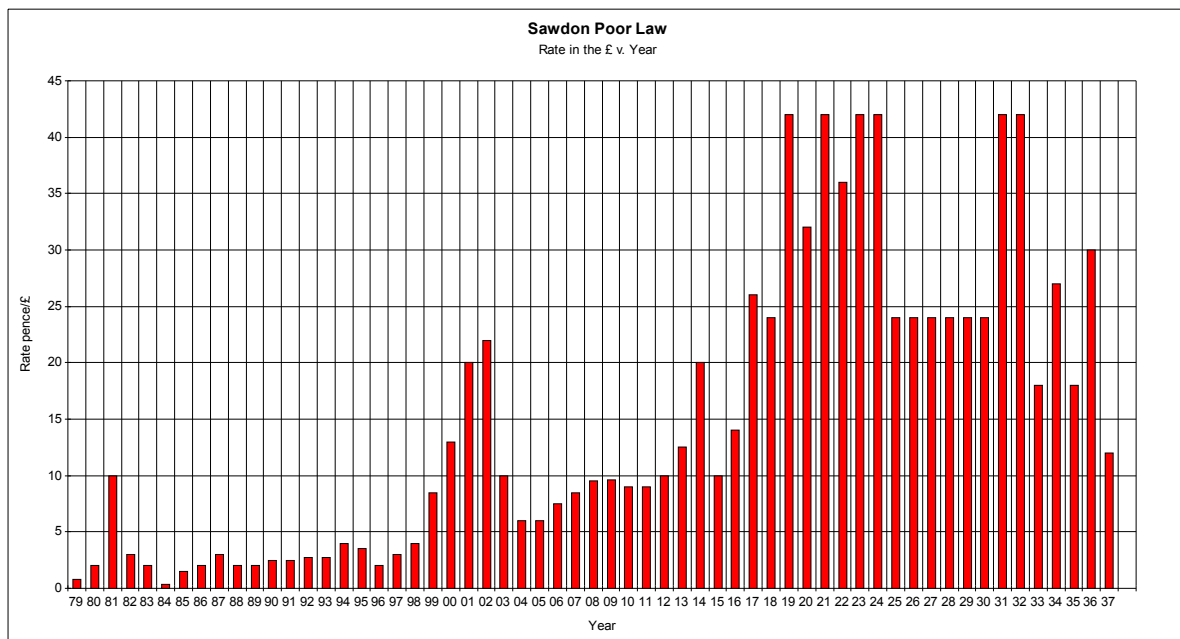
1723	Workhouse Act	Setting up of workhouses.
1782	Gilbert Act	Poor Law Unions, groups of parishes providing relief indoor [workhouse]; outdoor [at home].
1834	Poor Law Amendment Act	Minimised outdoor relief and made workhouse the main source of relief

Place

Over the time covered by the Poor Book the social structure of Sawdon will not have been very different from that of the year of the Census 1841. The 1841 Census⁴ tells us that of the 26 heads of households in Sawdon there were:-

- 14 Agricultural labourers
- 7 Farmers
- 1 Publican
- 1 Cartwright
- 1 Shoemaker
- 1 Tailor and draper
- 1 Independent

Turning now to the information from the book itself, starting with a consideration of the larger picture before looking at particular features and life stories. The graph shows the rate of pence in the pound against the year for the years 1779 – 1837.



The most notable feature is the rise from 3 farthings in the pound in 1789 to an average of 28 pence in the pound between 1819 and 1832, a thirty-sevenfold increase.

In 1779 the Overseers had only to fund Dorothy Hutton. The accounts do not say how much Dorothy Hutton was receiving in 1779 but in 1787 she was receiving 1/- per week. In 1832 some nine people were receiving 2/9 per week for various lengths of time. This was in addition to other expenses such as the work house rent, "Population Enquiry", "Keeping and giving up accounts", "Lunatic List", "Barrister list". As was noticed earlier this was at a time of agricultural depression.

Militia Men

Other spikes in the graphs occur at around 1781 and 1801. These were expenses incurred in supporting militia men's families. In 1781 there was one family receiving 3s per week and in 1782 they received 2s per week. Between 1799 and 1809 the amounts disbursed to militia men's families (number and names unspecified) were about 40% of the total disbursements.

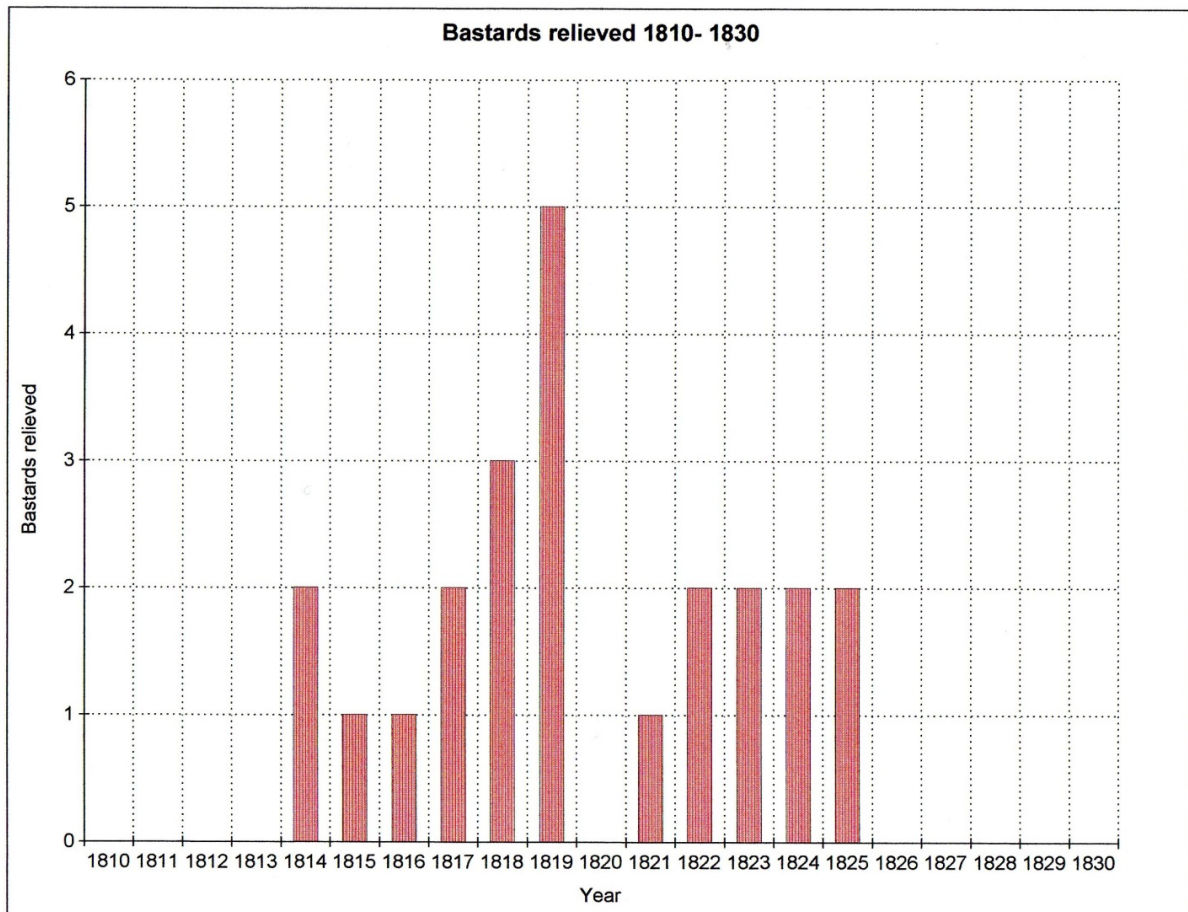
The militia were recruited to counter the threat of French invasion and possibly as a response to the stirring of the masses as evidenced by the French Revolution and the American Declaration of Independence. This culminated in the Peterloo Massacre at which out of a crowd of about 70,000 who had gathered in the cause of the reform of parliamentary representation 15 were killed and about 500 wounded by a cavalry charge initiated by the authorities.

A quota of able-bodied men was required from each county and at the parish level they were chosen by lot, but substitutes could be hired. This may well have been to the advantage of the affluent who would lose income by absence and the poor who would have an extra source of income.

Bastards

I originally titled this section "Single Mothers" but the Poor Book calls their children bastards, so I have followed its example.

Not conspicuous as a spike but egregious in the accounts is the numbers of single mothers and their children supported between 1814 and 1825. The bar chart below shows how the numbers varied.



Among the women who had bastards were Betsy and Jane Forbes. The Forbes (Forbus, Firbiss) seem to have been what we now call "a problem family". William Forbes married Mary Atkinson of Sawdon in 1769. They had two sons, the first in Sawdon in 1770 and the second in Snainton in 1772. At some point they moved to Falsgrave but returned to Sawdon in 1792. In 1800 the family was relieved for the first time. Mary Forbes died in 1812 at the age of 63. Her funeral cost the Overseers of the Poor £2 2s 0d. Oddly for a pauper she has a gravestone just to the west of the clock tower of Brompton church. The stone is wrongly ascribed to Mary Morris in the Brompton by Sawdon Monumental Inscriptions of the East Yorkshire Family History Society. William continued to be relieved until 1825. In the same year Betsy Forbes continued the family's dependency on the Overseers, probably as a result of giving birth to a bastard (an entry of 1829 in the Poor Book is to "Betsy Forbus Child"). Payments to Betsy Forbes continue until 1837. Betsy Forbes sister Jane is likely to have given birth to a bastard in 1830 when she appears in the Poor Book for the first and last time. The Forbes family were a charge on the Sawdon Overseers of the Poor for 32 years.

Two Sterricker sisters also gave birth to bastards. The sisters in question are Mary Sterricker and Elizabeth aka Betsy or Betty. Both were daughters of John and Betty Sterricker, who farmed at Sawdon, and were eminently respectable; in fact John Sterricker was one of the Overseers. One of his brothers moved even higher up the social scale and was even more successful founding a tea merchant's business in London and initiating the Sterricker Charity which still exists. A nephew William Sterricker became a surgeon. Mary was baptised in 1795 and Betsy in 1804.

Of the two Mary is the most interesting. Mary had a son Plaxton in 1810, when she would have been 14 or 15, unless she was baptised some time after she was born. Mary was a farm servant at the time of her son's birth and it seems very likely that his father was George Plaxton who also farmed in Sawdon. Plaxton died at the age of 6 months but Mary went on to have a second illegitimate child Mary in 1813 and received 2s 6d per week until 1824. Mary Sterricker was living with her parents in 1841.

Elizabeth/Betsy Sterricker was a concern of the Overseers from 1819 to 1821. What we know about her is summed up in the entries for these years:

1819 "Meeting about B. Sterricker"

1820 "Lying in month E. Sterricker"

1821 "E. Sterricker £1 6s meeting 3/6"

Absent Fathers

It was not only women who came to the Overseers of the Poor. In 1812 the Expenses seeking Rob^t Stephenson" were £1 15s 0d. In 1813 there was " a journey to Rillington about Rob^t Stephenson". In 1814 16s 8d was expended "to Summons, Warrant & Expenses of apprehending Rob^t Stephenson". It is not clear why there was a need to apprehend Robert Stephenson but he was probably the father of one of the bastards.

In 1818 and 1819 three men came to the attention of the Overseers –Thomas Holtby, Mark Wilson and William Stephenson. So far as Thomas Holtby was concerned money was expended as follows

18 April 1818 to apprehend Thomas Holtby and Edward Coultas for Thomas Holtby

19 June 1818 John Hopper for taking Thomas Holtby

13 August 1818 Received from Thomas Holtby for a bastard child £1 1s 0d

1 January 1819 Warrant to apprehend Thomas Holtby

12 January 1819 John Sterricker and John Hopper going to Scarborough and Cloughton about Thomas Holtby. John Hopper for apprehending Thomas Holtby

25 March 1819 Thomas Holtby child from 18 April 1818 to 13 February 1819 43 weeks at 3s per week. Paid for child going to Haysthorpe (Haisthorpe - a hamlet on the A166 between Bridlington and Burton Agnes GR TA 276646)

Thomas Holtby must have caused the Overseers a great deal of trouble.

Mark Wilson was not quite as troublesome. The entries for Mark Wilson are:-

15 March 1818 Received from Mark Wilson for bastard child £2 5s 0d

25 March 1819 John Hopper going to Wyton to apprehend Mark Wilson. Wyton is a hamlet on the B1238 between Hull and Aldborough GR TA 177332) and on the same day a warrant to apprehend Mark Wilson.

2 April 1819 "Warrick" was paid 2 guineas for conveying Mark Wilson to the House of Correction.

3 March 1820 Mark Wilson's child 12 weeks at 2s/week and Wilson carrying child to workhouse.

Another Stephenson came to the attention of the Overseers in 1819. The entries for William Stephenson are:

25 March 1819 Paid to William Stephenson bastard child ... to 28 March £3 19 6d..

9 April 1819 the Overseers recouped £3 7s 0d from William Stephenson

6 April 1820 expended £5 18s 0d supporting William Stephenson for 59 weeks to 4 April 1820.

The Overseers were still trying to get money from William Stephenson in 1824 and 1826.

The final entries are in 1828 and 1829, both to Thomas Robinson "for Stephenson Child".

The reasons for this apparent outbreak of extra-marital sex are obscure. No doubt it provoked much gossip at the time but we, sadly, are not privy to this.

Some Sawdon families

There are tantalising snippets referring to what must have been dramatic episodes in the lives of Sawdon people scattered through the Sawdon Poor Book. These rarely tell the full coherent story. For two families it is possible to partially piece together their lives from the Poor Book and other sources. These are the families of Eshelby and Greenlay

Eshelby

The major source of information about the Eshelby family comes from Danny Hall of Salt Lake City including this pedigree:-

Robert Percy m. Mary Agar

1670-1751 1670-1730

? Sawdon Seamer Wykeham

I

William Edmund m. Jane Percy

1701-1762 1702-1779

Burton Fleming Sawdon Wykeham Sawdon

I

William Eshelby m. Jane Edmon/Edmund

1727 -1798 1735 - ? eloped in 1765 not sure where she went

I

William Eshelby m. 1784 Mary Reed

1756- 1836+

1759-1831

Ripon Sawdon

London Sawdon

I

William Eshelby m.1812 Mary Lickis

1786-1876

1794 - 1878

London Canada

Hull Canada

A Mary Eshelby had an illegitimate daughter Sarah in 1810.

It will be noticed that there are three generations of William Eshelbys who it is difficult to disentangle. They will be referred, in so far as they are distinguishable, as:-

William Eshelby I 1727-1798

William Eshelby II 1756-1836+

and William Eshelby III 1786-1876

But we start with Robert Percy. His daughter, Jane, married William Edmunds, a blacksmith from Burton Fleming, who inherited Robert Percy's land and also bought land from John Dickinson. So that at enclosure in 1760 they had 7 acres 3 roods and 7 perches in High Middle Field just to the west of Sawdon Village and 26 acres 1 rood and 22 perches in "Sawdondale, Moory Brow, Hackness Gill, Twine Gill, and Slack Row Whins", all of which are either in Sawdondale or to the east of Sawdondale around Rowe Howe. Some of the place names are no longer current. The next descent was also through the female line when William Eshelby I married Jane Edmund. Danny Hall has Jane eloping in 1765. If this is the case William must have re-married for he was fathering children in the late 1770s and 1790s and the Poor Law book has Widow Edmund owning land worth £6 in 1779 followed by William Eshelby I in 1780. William Eshelby I continued to own this land until his death in 1798 but from 1790 until 1798 rented it to Robert Vitch. More significantly, shortly after starting a

family he obtained a "settlement". A settlement certificate would confirm that he would be taken back to his home parish if he became in need of poor relief.

William Eshelby II inherited in 1798. William Eshelby II must have moved away from Sawdon: his wife Mary and his eldest son, William Eshelby III, were both born in London. William Eshelby II paid the poor rate until 1816 in which year there is an entry in the Poor Book: "To Wm. Eshelby for Ann Thompson Board 17 weeks at 3/6 per week from December 8th to April 5th". Ann Thompson was one of the single mothers. In 1818 Dr.Smart attended her and she was in receipt of relief from 24th July to 18th December. The last entries in the Poor Book for Ann Thompson are in 1819 and are:

"[June] 26th Mr Robson for Bond given to Thornton Overseers For Ann Thompson Child"

"Aug 6th Meeting about A Thompson 1/6 expenses at Thornton Ann Thompson 1 week at Wm. Eshelbys"

"Aug 5th To William Goodram going to Workhouse with Ann Thompson" (The workhouse was at Thorntondale)

Returning to the Eshelbys. In 1820 two entries concern the Eshelbys on

"May 15th Wm.Stubbs Wm.Eshelby rent" and

" Geo Hall for Carrying Eshelby family to Hull"

My supposition is that the first entry refers to Willam Eshelby II and the second to William Eshelby III. In 1812 William Eshelby III married Mary Lickis (Lucas?). We can assume that in 1820 they emigrated to Lachute, 62 kilometers north-west of Montreal, Canada where they died, William in 1876 and Mary in 1878.

William Eshelby II remained behind. In 1822 there was a meeting about him and he was in receipt of poor relief at the rate of 2s per week for 9 weeks and 2s 6d per week for 21 weeks. William Eshelby II's problems are likely to have arisen from trying to make a living out of 7 acres of arable land and 26 acres of rough pasture. William Eshelby II continued to receive poor relief until 1836. The final entry reads "For Cleaning and Funeral expenses £1 14s 6d".

Greenlay

In 1779 David Greenlay, a tailor, the son of Richard Greenlay, a weaver of Allerston, as a widower married Mary Belt, a widow of Brompton. David was then 57 and Mary 58. Eight years later Mary received 3s relief. There is no mention of David. From 1791 Mary received varying sums, about 6d per week, until 1798 when she was rejoined by David and they both received about 1s per week. In May 1800 a meeting was held about David Greenlay and Thomas Donkin was paid 1s 6d for bringing him from Scarborough. In 1801 7 yards of cloth was bought at 1/4/yard so that Elizabeth Plaxton could make him two shirts. Elizabeth Plaxton was paid 1s 8d for her work. In 1803 Mary Greenlay got 1s per week for 51 weeks and David Greenlay was getting 8s 6d per week until February 21st, when an entry reads "To David Greenlay Berying £2 15s 10d".

Mary Greenlay continued to be relieved but at the rate of 1/- per week rising to 2s per week in 1812 and her house rent paid. In 1812 this was £2 per year. In 1813 she had her windows repaired at a cost of 3s 4d. In 1814 Mary Greenlay was given tea and "shaugar" at a cost of 5s and coals worth 5s. In 1815 clothing and a new blanket were bought for her at a cost of £1 3s 9d. In 1816 Dr. Smart of Snainton was called to Mary Greenlay at a cost of £2 10s 6d. This was prior her being taken to the workhouse at Thorntondale. It all came to an end in 1824 when the Overseers of the Poor paid £1 17s 4d for her funeral.

To these two families could be added the Stelling family but I dealt with them in the Victorian Working Class of Brompton. The overall impression of the Sawdon Poor Book is that the Overseers of the Poor tried to act humanely towards their fellow villagers and moved the boundary as far as they could from the strivers into the territory of the shirkers.

About 40 people come to the attention of the Sawdon Poor Law Overseers between 1779 and 1837 all of whom had difficult and interesting lives. I have managed to tell a partial story of two families and sketch out brief dramatic episodes in the lives of another ten. How much better it would be if, in the early nineteenth century, we could spend an evening in Edward Coultas' Board Inn and eavesdrop on the gossip there.

Sources

The main source for this work is the Sawdon Poor Book 1779-1837 at the North Yorkshire County Record Office Reference Z939 supplemented by the Brompton by Sawdon Parish Registers PR/BRO 1/4-11 and from the now defunct web site of Danny Hall of Salt Lake City whose latest web site is www.ancestralsleuths.com.

Notes

The Overseers of the Poor of Sawdon were compiling their accounts not for future amateur historian but for their successors as Overseers, who would know the people involved and the context of their actions. To this end it would be right to include the word "probably" in almost every sentence. To avoid grammatical clumsiness I have omitted "probably". Again to avoid clumsiness Overseers means Overseers of the Poor of Sawdon. The late eighteenth century/early nineteenth century Overseers used a different vocabulary to ours and were casting accounts not writing a narrative so I have frequently paraphrased the words in the book but direct quotations are in quotation marks.

Some readers may not be familiar with imperial money notation of £ s d: 1s = £0.05 = 5p; 1d = £0.0042 = 0.42p.

Also unfamiliar are some of the measures used and the price comparisons are themselves of interest. These are tabulated below:

Year	Item	Modern measure	Price	Decimal price	Price/unit
1789	16 bushels of coal	1333kg	9s	0,45p	0.034p/kg
1789	2 shirts		11s	55p	26.5p/shirt
1808	3 bushels of barley	60kg	18s	90p	1.5p/kg
1808	3 bushels of potatoes	27kg	7s4d	44p	1.6p/kg
1831	Bed and bedding		£2 5s	£2.25	
1831	Shoes		10s	50p	50p/shoe
1831	Blanket		7s	35p	35p/blanket
1832	Shoes		10s6d	53p	53p/shoe
1834	1 chaldron of coal	2.667kg	17s	85p	0.032p/kg

¹ *Transactions of the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society*, vol. 44 (2012-15)

² Sawdon Overseers of the Poor Account Book, NYCRO Z.939

³ Brompton by Sawdon Parish Registers, NYCRO PR/BRO 1

⁴ Public Record Office HO 107 / 1260/3

From the City of Beer to the Queen of Watering Places: Bass Brewery Trips to Scarborough

by Keith Johnston

Introduction

The coming of the railway to Scarborough in 1845 was followed by a great many excursions to the town, arranged by a variety of different organisations, including railway companies, churches and Sunday schools, friendly societies and temperance societies. Many were organised by breweries, which had a paternalistic concern for their workers, one feature of which became an annual brewery trip. Notable among these were the very large excursions to Scarborough organised by the major Burton-on-Trent brewing company Bass, Ratcliff, and Gretton Ltd, hereafter referred to as Bass, the largest brewing company in the world, in 1881, 1890, 1894, 1898, 1902, 1906, 1910 and 1914. These day trips – often described as the largest of their kind organised by any company – had a very great impact and the many newspaper reports contain much interesting and revealing information about the town as a seaside resort in the decades preceding the outbreak of the First World War, as also do the guidebooks produced for the trippers.

In their monumental history of the British brewing industry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Gourvish and Wilson state that ‘the great feature of brewery life by the late nineteenth century was the annual brewery excursion’.¹ Bass excursions were prominent amongst such trips.² Beginning in 1865 with a visit to Liverpool, they at first took place every other year but from 1883 they were annual events. A variety of towns and cities – including London, Brighton and Wolverhampton – was visited, but eventually they were confined to places by the sea and the trips became so large that only four such places within reasonable distance of Burton-on-Trent could accommodate them – Blackpool, Great Yarmouth, Liverpool and Scarborough.³ The numbers involved in the excursions to Scarborough were large and generally increased over time. In 1881 they totalled about 3,600 and one account said it was ‘the largest party of excursionists, as a single party, that ever visited Scarborough ...’.⁴ Nine years later there were about 6,000 on the trip and in 1898 the total number, including friends of the Bass excursionists, was said to be about 15,000.⁵ It seems that later trips were not quite as large as this one, but were still on a very large scale, the final trip, just days before the outbreak of the First World War, involving between 8,000 and 9,000 people.⁶ This represented more than one-sixth of the population of Burton-on-Trent.⁷ No other excursion to Scarborough took place on that day.⁸

Organisation and preparation

Such excursions required a very great deal of organisation and Bass was fortunate to have a very able and efficient traffic manager, Mr William Walters, who was instrumental in the organisation of the trips from the earliest days. He was frequently referred to in very complimentary terms in newspapers. ‘To Mr. Wm. Walters, traffic manager of the firm, the credit applies for not only organising, but carrying out the excursion to the happiness and gratitude of all participators’⁹ ‘The whole of the arrangements on behalf of the firm were

once more undertaken by Mr. William Walters, Bass and Co.'s traffic manager, who has on so many previous occasions proved himself a prince of caterers.'¹⁰ 'Since 1867 the annual holiday has been organised by Mr. Wm. Walters, the general secretary, and too much cannot be said in praise of this gentleman's tact and skill in the arrangement of so great an event.'¹¹ Of course, Walters was not the only person involved in this work, but he was the key figure:

'The organisation of such a gigantic pleasure excursion, and the many and great arrangements it involved, both at Burton and at Scarborough, must necessarily have cost an immense amount of thought and solicitude, the exercise of which has occupied intervals during several months past. Indeed, it may be conceived that not long after each of these annual excursions, the managers set about preparing for that of the following year. ... The arrangements for the occasion were carried out with consummate ability and success by Mr. W. Walters, the traffic manager for the firm.'¹²

Walters' work did not finish with the organisation of the excursions. He also accompanied the trippers, as shown by the 1890 programme: 'I shall accompany the excursion, travelling each way in the last train, and shall endeavour to have all carried out satisfactorily, for the comfort and enjoyment of everyone, and shall be happy to give anyone applying to me any further information or advice.'¹³

In 1914 it was said that 'A feature of this excursion is the care manifested of [sic] the comfort and enjoyment of those taking part, and the perfection in every detail of the arrangements.'¹⁴ This necessitated close cooperation with the railway companies, as Walters acknowledged in his speech at the dinner provided for the company's chief officials and guests in 1894: 'He expressed his obligations to the railway companies for so ably assisting him in successfully accomplishing the arrangements, and for the excellent accommodation they had provided.'¹⁵ It also meant working closely with many Scarborough people:

'The department has no sooner successfully carried through one trip than they have to commence to think about the details of that of the following year. ... The dumping of 8,000 merrymakers in a place is to bring along an extra Bank Holiday crowd, and so the departmental head, affable Mr. William Walters, asks "On which day next summer can we buy you right up/?" The question has to be asked not of one man but of a score of managers of pleasure houses, steamboats, piers, and the like. Then the replies have to be sorted out, and it would make the average man shiver to see the pile of correspondence which results.'¹⁶

Part of the preparation for a Bass excursion was the production of a detailed guide book for the trippers: 'A programme was issued to everyone participating in the day's pleasure, giving minute particulars of all the proposed doings of the day, together with the trains; the names of the lieutenants in charge of each train; the sights that could be seen, and the hotels, restaurants, and dining-rooms in the town where refreshments could be procured; and a special note was made of the customers of the firm supplying "Bass on draught," in capital letters.'¹⁷ The usefulness of these guide books to the visitors is illustrated by a newspaper comment on the visitors shortly after their arrival in Scarborough: 'One could not help noticing the majority of women amongst the visitors, many of whom were eagerly scanning

their guide book, with its capital photographs, specially taken by Mr. R. Keene.¹⁸ That these volumes are also useful to today's researchers is clearly indicated by the following newspaper account:

‘Wonderfully systematic and methodical had been the working of the whole, and yet so concisely were all the features of the excursion put together that every member of the party, when the time came, was easily made acquainted with every item that was desirable to be known. This was accomplished through the compilation of a special guide book, of which Mr. Walters caused about 10,000 to be printed for gratis circulation. The book is a handsome souvenir of the occasion. It opens with a lucid setting forth of the railway arrangements, shewing what classes of passengers should occupy each of the fifteen trains, the times of departure from Burton, and of arrival at and departure from Scarborough. Then follows a sketch of the journey and a few particulars respecting Scarborough. Next is a list or synopsis of the various amusements the people might enjoy on their arrival. The list occupies an entire quarto page, and enumerates every variety of entertainment Scarborough can yield. Drives into the country; trips to sea by three specially-engaged steam-vessels and several sailing cobs; the all-day round at the Aquarium; the Museum; the special opening of Mr. Croueste's Circus, with two performances during the day; three organ recitals, kindly given by Mr. Owen Williams, organist of St. Martin's Church; all-day admission to the Cliff Bridge and Spa; to the Belvedere Gardens, by the kind permission of the Mayor (Mr. G. L. Beeforth); the tramways; the Londesborough Rooms for dancing; the North Promenade Pier; the Baths on the Foreshore-Road; Sarony's Studio; donkeys for ladies and children; Mr. Morrison's bathing-machines; the Holbeck and Clarence Gardens; &c. ... Mr. Walters's book gives several pages of descriptive notices of the places of amusement, &c.; and the whole is finely illustrated with nearly forty well-executed views, forming altogether a really desirable guidebook as well as a charming memorial of the occasion.’¹⁹

Furthermore, the booklets are also revealing about the Victorian experience of the seaside. ‘It was felt necessary to point out that prolonged exposure to sea water could be recognised by “chattering of the teeth, blueness of the skin and depression of the spirit.”’²⁰

The outward journey

The journey from Burton-on-Trent began at an early hour, the first train in 1890 leaving at 3.50 a.m. and the thirteenth and last one two hours later.²¹ Four years later, when fifteen trains were required to accommodate the excursionists, an even earlier start was made, the first train leaving at 3.30 a.m. In that year the journey of 134 miles took 3¾ hours.²² There was also in 1894 a sixteenth train bringing employees from London.²³ A Todmorden newspaper praised the transport arrangements:

‘The trip is this year to Scarborough, and 8,000 people are to be conveyed thither to-day in 16 trains. It is wonderful, this migration of a whole town in the early morn! Why does not the War Office send an underling down to Burton-on-Trent to study the transport arrangements? Here is Train No. 1, that leaves in the first light of day, say at 3-30 a.m., and arrives at Scarborough at 7-10. And every ten minutes thereafter a snorting

locomotive gives its preliminary cough or two, the Burton railway men lift their hands, and away goes one more happy train load, so that all the 16 trains are on the road together with ten minutes between each.’²⁴

On the days of these trips many railway miles were filled with Bass excursion trains. ‘During the passage of the trains no other traffic was allowed to intervene, so that the Bass specials monopolised nearly a hundred miles of the Midland Railway for two hours, while at Scarborough, by a prior arrangement, all other excursions were to be excluded for that day.’²⁵

Of course, the excursionists had to get to their departure point in time to catch the trains to Scarborough. For many this meant getting up very early indeed and, in order to save time, not having anything to eat before setting off. As one 1881 report put it, ‘Owing to the early hour at which the start was made, a number of the excursionists breakfasted with “Duke Humphrey.”’²⁶ Arrangements were made to get people to Burton-on-Trent station. In 1906 ‘To accommodate the employees residing in the surrounding towns and villages special trains were run from all directions, and the Corporation trams were put on full strength from three o’clock onward.’²⁷ Four years later it was reported that ‘Burton-on-Trent station was crowded for several hours early on Friday morning, when Messrs. Bass, Ratcliff, and Gretton provided the annual excursion for their workpeople, their wives, families and friends.’²⁸

Such excursions required very special arrangements on the part of the railway companies. ‘From Burton to York, the excursion necessitated the sole use of the line, and to give an idea of the magnitude of the excursion it may be said that when the last train was leaving Burton, No. 1 train had arrived at York.’²⁹ At Scarborough in 1894 two miles of railway sidings were monopolised by the 250 coaches that made up the fifteen excursion trains from Burton and ‘the safe depositing of these for the day was a feat that reflects the highest credit on Mr. G. Brown, the Scarborough station-master, and his staff’.³⁰

The passengers had various ways of occupying themselves during the long journeys. For some this presumably included studying their guidebooks, which, in 1894 at least, contained details of the journey and included photographic views of York, through which city the trains ran.³¹ No doubt many, particularly those who had missed breakfast, looked forward to the brief refreshment break at that city. In 1894 there was a break of 10 minutes and the staff at the York station refreshment rooms where ‘special arrangements for the quick supply of tea, coffee, &c. ... was made by the manager, Mr. J. Kaye’³² Sixteen years later ‘At York station the refreshment rooms were so besieged that 500 cups and saucers had to be sent back from Scarborough’.³³

Some of the excursionists availed themselves of the chance offered to them to extend their stay.³⁴ In 1910 eight hundred, or about ten per cent of those arriving at Scarborough, had extension tickets to prolong their holiday in Scarborough and four years later over 1,000 remained behind when the day trippers returned home.³⁵ These people often had trunks and other luggage with them which had to be got to the places at which they were going to stay and Scarborough’s cab drivers did good business.³⁶

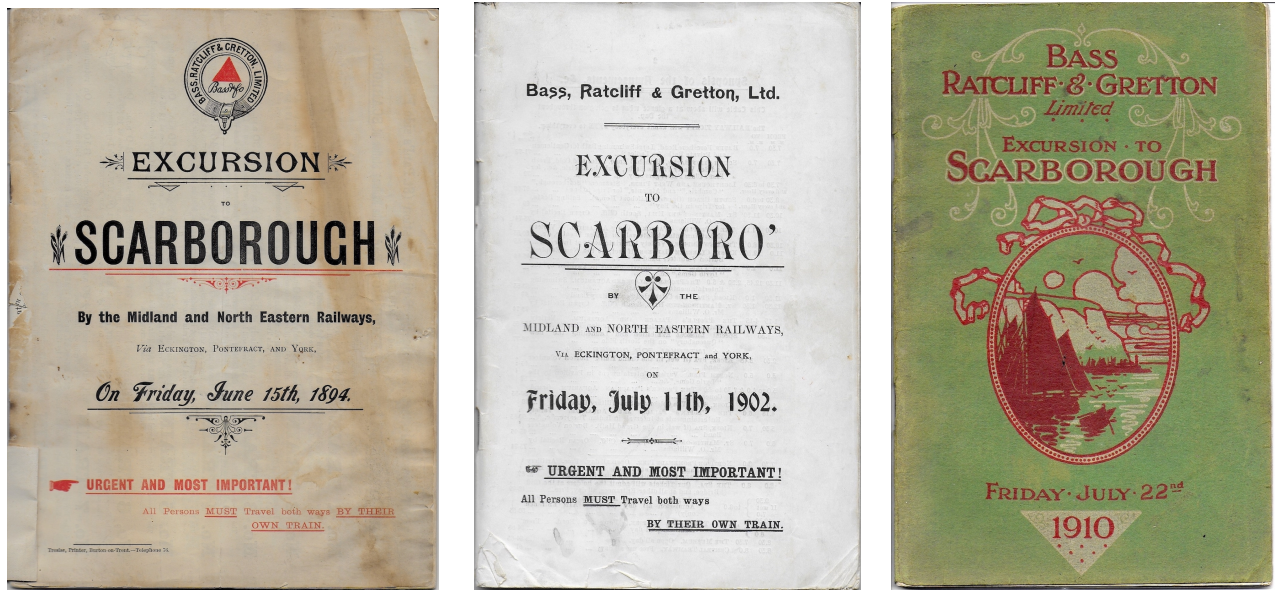


Figure 1 Guidebooks from the 1894, 1902 and 1910 Bass trips to Scarborough

At Scarborough

Those who were at the seaside for only one day soon thronged the principal thoroughfares of the town 'and as was to be expected after such an early start, many had an appetite that certainly required spoiling before they sought for pleasure in the many ways provided. The restaurants thus commenced at an early hour to be exceedingly busy'.³⁷ In 1890, the members of the band of the Burton Volunteers, which participated in the excursion, 'on their arrival were conducted to the Grill Restaurant for breakfast, which was provided for them by the firm'.³⁸ Four years later those on the train from London, who had a much longer journey than those travelling from Burton-on-Trent, breakfasted *en route*, 'in one of the Great Eastern Railway's magnificent continental dining cars'.³⁹

Given that the excursionists had many hours in Scarborough it was necessary for further meals to be consumed. Some had everything laid on for them. 'The firm's guests were entertained to breakfast and supper on the outward and return journeys, and at 1.30 in the afternoon lunch was provided at the Grand Hotel. A complimentary toast list was honoured'.⁴⁰ Others could eat when they chose to, with some help being provided by the organisers of the excursions. During the first trip to Scarborough, 'An ample cold collation was served in the Aquarium from noon to two o'clock, each of the party, however, having a *carte blanche* for admission and food during the day'.⁴¹ A detailed description contains much interesting information:

'The question of providing dinner for so large a party was not an easy one to answer, but fortunately Mr. Shaw, the lessee of the Aquarium restaurant and Spa buffet, was applied to, and he undertook the task of dining the whole lot at the Aquarium. For this purpose tables were placed along the whole of the centre corridors, in addition to the grand dining hall, and a staff of between seventy and eighty waiters were employed to attend to the wants of the visitors. As they were allowed to dine when they felt inclined, overcrowding

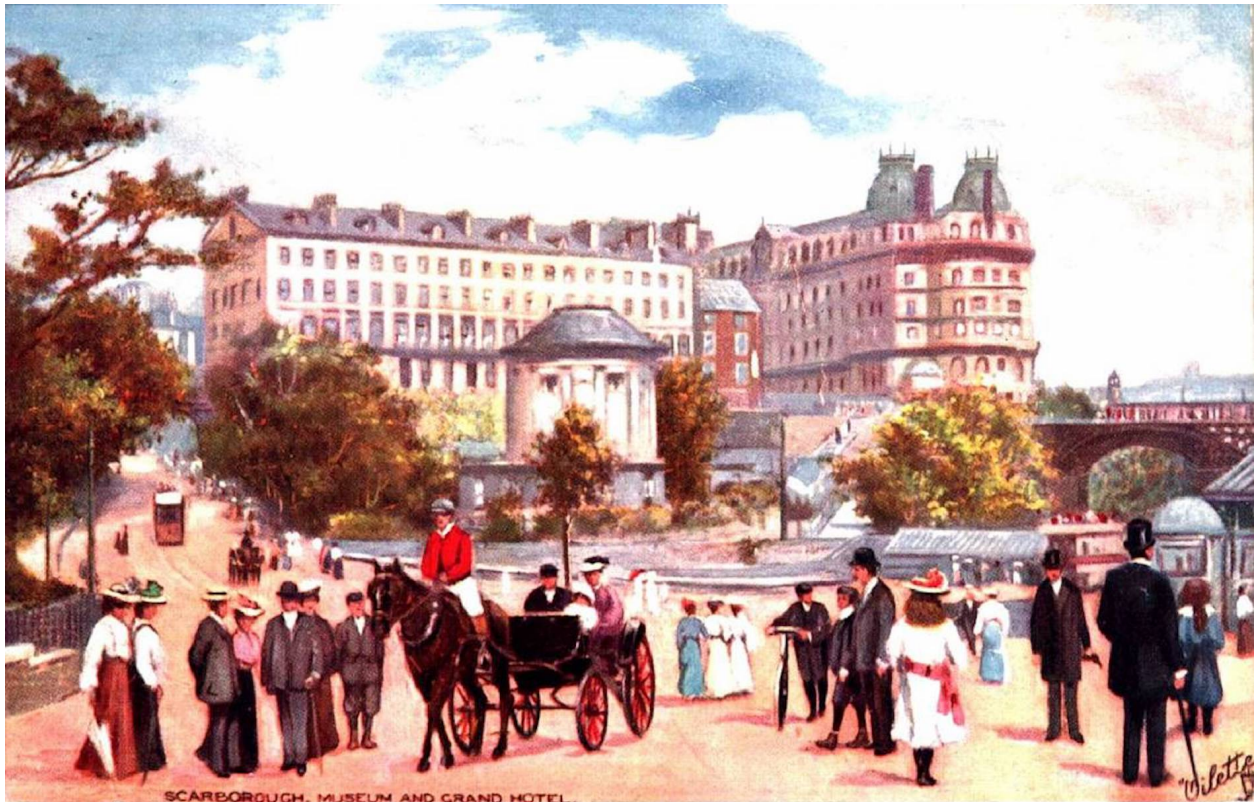


Figure 2 Situated between the Rotunda Museum and the Cliff Bridge, the Aquarium was a popular destination for the Bass visitors

was prevented, but when towards mid-way some thousand people were sat down with well-sharpened appetites, rendered all the keener by reason of a sea-excursion in the steamboat, which many had enjoyed – and some had not – the waiters found ample employment in satisfying the demands made upon them, but they were equal to the emergency, and the vast multitude were refreshed in orderly and excellent style, and they expressed unbounded satisfaction with Mr. Shaw’s arrangements, and also the most intense admiration of the beauties of the grand marine temple, in which they dined.’⁴²

As the trips increased in size so also did the benefits received by catering providers, as shown in 1910: ‘The restaurants had a splendid day, tons of provisions being consumed by the army of excursionists, which is the biggest organised by any other firm in the world.’⁴³

The Bass excursionists did not spend all day eating! They filled their time with a wide range of activities, as shown by this 1881 account: ‘... a rush was made for the “briny,” and a considerable number enjoyed a morning “dip.” Others visited the Aquarium, the Spa, strolled on the sands, had a sea voyage, and patronised the many attractions for which Scarborough is so justly famous. Each excursionist was presented with a map of the town and the aquarium, and thus every excursionist had an equal opportunity of seeing the sights in the short time allowed them.’⁴⁴ The range of activities will now be examined in more detail.

The sea naturally attracted many of the visitors. Some had a dip.⁴⁵ In 1894 twenty bathing machines were hired by the firm and the same number four years later.⁴⁶ Others went on boat

trips. During the first visit ‘the steamer *Scarborough* had been specially engaged to make short trips to sea of about an hour’s duration. ... At a comparatively early hour the Foreshore-road and the piers were thronged with the numerous visitors, and the *Scarborough* was soon to be seen with a full complement of passengers steaming in the direction of Filey Brigg.’⁴⁷ Nine years later the steamers of the North-Eastern Railway Company, the Nunthorpe and the Cleveland, were used for trips to sea, as also were local cobsles.⁴⁸ On this occasion, and perhaps others also, ‘The embarkation and disembarkation of those who went down upon the sea were superintended by Mr. W. Pattison, the head of the police force.’⁴⁹ In 1894 there were trips to sea by three specially-engaged steam-vessels and several sailing cobsles. ‘The trips to sea by the Scarborough, Cleveland, and Nunthorpe were crowded, whilst the fleet of cobsles ... afforded the greatest of pleasure.’⁵⁰ Eight years later ‘Three steamers are chartered – two coming specially from Gainsborough for the day – to make hourly trips out to sea, and a fleet of sailing boats are placed at any or everybody’s disposal’.⁵¹ Those who did not want to go on or in the sea could during some of these excursions watch a display by the local lifeboat. In 1906, for example, “In the afternoon there was a special lifeboat exhibition, and launching of the new Queensbury on the South Foreshore-road, opposite the St. Nicholas Gardens. Needless to say, it attracted a large share of attention.”⁵²

Some enjoyed the simple pleasures of the beach, including riding on donkeys. One of the rare criticisms made of the arrangements for these excursions appeared in 1898 when a writer in one newspaper felt that the organisers had not arranged for enough animals to be made available for the trippers. “Forty donkeys among ten thousand is not a liberal allowance. Surely Scarborough can raise one or two more.”⁵³

Other outdoor activities were also participated in. Some went on drives into the nearby countryside.⁵⁴ “Char-a-bancs were run continuously through all the lovely drives in the district, ... Mr. John Robinson, Mr. W. Foxton, and others must have reaped a good harvest.”⁵⁵ Many saw Scarborough’s increasing number of gardens. According to one account, trippers in 1894 visited the Belvedere, Holbeck and Clarence Gardens.⁵⁶ In 1910 the Alexandra Gardens were a new attraction to the Bass visitors.⁵⁷

Many excursionists visited places where entertainments were provided for them. In 1890, for example, “Many visited the Spa, Aquarium, and Promenade Pier, where the attractive programmes were much enjoyed. Some inspected the Museum.”⁵⁸ During this excursion a special display of daylight fireworks was given by Messrs. C. T. Brock and Co.⁵⁹ Four years later

“At the Spa, those who can appreciate good music, found plenty of entertainments, and this afternoon, when by kind permission of Lord Burton and officers, the celebrated Burton Volunteer Band is to occupy the kiosk, and there is also to be a special display of daylight fireworks, the attendance is sure to be very large. At the Aquarium, in addition to the excellent Ladies’ Orchestra, there is a continuous round of entertainments, which seemed to be thoroughly appreciated by the large number who found their way under the Scarborough umbrella. At the Museum many of the visitors viewed with much pleasure the grand collection of stuffed birds, local curiosities and fossils. On the North Pier the entertainments were largely patronised,



Figure 3 The Clarence Gardens overlooking the North Bay was one of the locations where the Bass visitors could enjoy a musical performance

and at Croueste's Prince of Wales' Circus the two day performances, as was to be expected, were very largely attended."⁶⁰

The variety of activities participated in by the visitors from Burton-on-Trent is shown in this account from 1910: "... production of a corresponding card of membership at Burton made them honorary members for the day of the Liberal Club, the Constitutional Club, the Masonic Club, and the Y.M.C.A. Parties were permitted to look round the brewery, stores, etc., of the Scarborough and Whitby Breweries, Ltd., and Messrs. Walshaw and Son allowed inspection of their nurseries and greenhouses."⁶¹

Music of various kinds played an important part in the Bass brewery trips to Scarborough. In 1881, during the first visit, there were special performances at the Aquarium and the Spa.⁶² In addition members of the St. Paul's Society of change ringers, Burton-on-Trent, participated in the excursion and rang the bells of St. Mary's Church.⁶³ Organ recitals were given at Holy Trinity Church in 1902 and at St. Martin's Church in the same year and again in 1906.⁶⁴ On a number of occasions the band of the Burton Volunteers accompanied the excursionists and played at Scarborough. In 1890 a Scarborough newspaper reported "There are thirty instrumentalists in the band, and their appearance at the North kiosk and the Spa during the day was regarded as a special feature of the day's proceedings."⁶⁵ In 1898 an advertisement stated

THE SPA, SCARBOROUGH. – FRIDAY AFTERNOON, June 17, on the occasion of Messrs. Bass and Co.'s Excursion, instead of the Company's Band, the BURTON-ON-TRENT VOLUNTEER BAND WILL PLAY, from 3 to 5.⁶⁶

In 1902 it played on the North Side in the morning and at the Spa in the afternoon and evening.⁶⁷ Four years later a similar set of performances took place.⁶⁸

The official dinner

It became traditional for the company to entertain some of the visitors to Scarborough to a special meal. In 1890 it was reported that "At five o'clock in the afternoon, a party of gentlemen, comprising several of the departmental representatives of the firms, and a few invited guests, partook of dinner in the dining-hall of the Spa, the repast being ably provided by Mr. Rider, of the Spa refreshment-room."⁶⁹ On this occasion the chair was occupied by the Bass's Newcastle agent, Mr. J. Shorthose, and the vice-chair by Walters and others present included the firm's managers and heads of department, important gentlemen from Burton and Scarborough and representatives of railway companies. The meal was followed by speeches. In his, Walters referred to a telegram received from Lord Burton, the head of the company, in which the latter gave his good wishes to the excursionists. No doubt all this was very enjoyable, but there was also a serious purpose, and one which featured on similar occasions in the future, the publicising of the good health and prospering business of the company. This was done not just at the meal itself but also in newspaper reports of it.⁷⁰

On subsequent occasions the meal, which became a luncheon rather than a dinner, mainly so that those who had had especially long journeys like the London staff could commence to return home at a reasonable hour, took place at the Grand Hotel and the detailed reports of these occasions provide much information about the state of health of the brewing company, as well as about the excursions themselves.⁷¹

The return journey

When the Bass excursionists first visited Scarborough in 1881 the return journeys, like the outward ones, were very carefully planned. A newspaper report stated 'The first return trains leaves to-night at 6.10, and is timed to reach Burton shortly before eleven; the last train leaves at 7.25, and will arrive about 12.25.'⁷² The excursionists had had over ten hours at the seaside. Later visits lasted longer and in 1914 things were arranged so that every day visitor had thirteen hours in Scarborough and its neighbourhood.⁷³ Generally the return journeys went as smoothly as the ones earlier in the day, the occasional problems that occurred being of a minor nature. In 1890 a Scarborough newspaper commented

'Everything appears to have gone pretty smoothly both in the journey to Scarborough and in the return. As an indication of the care generally observed both by managers and people, we may anticipate the close of the day by saying that out of the 6,000 who departed from Scarborough in the evening, only six persons had had the misfortune to lose their tickets, somehow, during the day. This might well be, as each little "scrap of paper" was frequently in request while the party remained in Scarborough – the railway

ticket having to serve as an admission-pass to the several places of amusement in the town.’⁷⁴

Conclusion

The evidence certainly suggests that the Bass excursions to Scarborough, like those to other places, were a great success for the participants, the hosts and the brewery company – the latter, after all, would not have carried on arranging and paying for such excursions if it had not thought that it gained from them. Much of this was due to a combination of very careful planning and the efforts of those in Scarborough who catered for the visitors. After the Burton day trippers had returned home in 1894, the Scarborough Stationmaster, Mr Brown, received a telegram from Walters stating

‘We all arrived quite safely. The last train only five minutes late. Every one very sensible of the kindness extended to us by all concerned. Opinion general that this excursion has been the best of all; so expect us again shortly. Convey my hearty gratitude to all for what only seemed a pleasure to them to do, but which we thoroughly appreciated.’⁷⁵

It seems typical of Walters that he should praise the work of others when much of the success of the Bass trips was a result of his efforts, something that was often acknowledged, as in this newspaper report from 1890:

‘The programme drawn up by Mr. Walters was of so complete and varied a character that only a crooked stick of the most bilious type could fail to enjoy the outing. Every place of attraction was open to the visitors, through the generosity of the firm.’⁷⁶

The weather on the day of the excursion was also important. In 1902 its importance was acknowledged in a newspaper report that stated ‘Fine weather favoured the gigantic excursion of Messrs. Bass, Ratcliff, and Gretton (Limited), to Scarborough yesterday, and consequently it was an unqualified success’.⁷⁷ The Burton visitors to Scarborough were generally fortunate in the weather on the days of their visits, as in 1914 when two different newspaper reports use the word ‘brilliant’ to describe it.⁷⁸ Even in 1894 and 1910, when on both occasions there was a some rain towards the end of the day at the seaside, the weather was generally fine for the trippers.⁷⁹ And such weather brought benefits to Scarborough people: ‘Scarborough tradesmen, must, one would think, have had a most satisfactory day as regards takings; for, usually, people spend more freely when sunny skies and soft balmy breezes put them in good humour’.⁸⁰ Only in 1890 did bad weather last for any length of time, though this of course worked to the advantage of the amusement proprietors, it being reported that

‘... the Aquarium was early crowded with the excursionists, very many of whom were satisfied to pass the hours of the day in the spacious and elegant building, enjoyed the varied shows and performances which Mr. Morgan so amply provides. Amongst these, the swimming feats of the famous Beckwith party, and the afternoon concert of the Viennese Ladies’ Orchestra were apparently much esteemed.’⁸¹

However, another report of this particular excursion stated that ‘... the fine weather presented the town in its most attractive garb’.⁸²

The 1914 Bass trip was the last one of its kind as the First World War brought an end to such excursions by the brewery company; they were not resumed after peace was restored. An important episode in Scarborough’s history as a seaside resort was now over. But while they lasted these Bass brewery outings provided a great deal of pleasure to very many people and they left behind much to fascinate the historian. And they were immortalised in literature in the form of Rony Robinson’s *The Beano*, a novel well worth reading by those who would like to experience what such excursions were like for the participants.⁸³

¹ T. R. Gourvish and R. G. Wilson, *The British Brewing Industry 1830-1980* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 198

² An interesting and well-illustrated article on the trips is Jeffrey Wells, “The Last Four Bass Day Trips 1911-1914,” *Backtrack* 33 (11) (November 2019), 655-659. It covers the first excursion, that of 1865 to Liverpool, as well as the ones referred to in the title. For further information see Rod Pearson, *The Bass Railway Trips* (Derby: Breedon Books, 1993)

³ The places concerned were, in the order in which they were first visited, Liverpool (1865, 1873, 1877, 1887, 1891, 1895, 1899, 1904, 1908, 1912), Crystal Palace (1867, 1875), London (1869, 1871, 1873, 1875, 1879, 1883, 1886), Scarborough (1881, 1890, 1894, 1898, 1902, 1906, 1910, 1914), Wolverhampton (1884), Manchester (1887), Brighton (1888), Great Yarmouth (1893, 1897, 1901, 1905, 1909, 1913).

⁴ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 18 June 1881, 7

⁵ *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 August 1890, page 5; *Scarborough Post*, 17 June 1898, 8

⁶ *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 25 July 1914, 6

⁷ *Derbyshire Advertiser*, 1 August 1914, 4

⁸ *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 24 July 1914, 5

⁹ *East London Observer*, 23 August 1890, 5

¹⁰ *Derbyshire Times*, 18 June 1898, 5

¹¹ *Scarborough Post*, 17 June 1898, 8

¹² *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 June 1894, 4

¹³ Quoted in *East London Observer*, 23 August 1890, 5

¹⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, 25 July 1914, 7

¹⁵ *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 June 1894, 4

¹⁶ *Birmingham Gazette and Express*, 20 July 1906, 6

¹⁷ *East London Observer*, 23 August 1890, 5

¹⁸ *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 June 1894, 8

¹⁹ *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 June 1894, 4

²⁰ Ray Riley, “Ale by Rail,” *The Local Historian* 23 (4) (1993), 237 – a review of Pearson’s book.

²¹ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 16 August 1890, 7

²² *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 June 1894, 8

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- ²³ *Derby Daily Telegraph*, Saturday 16 June 1894, 2
- ²⁴ *Todmorden Advertiser*, 11 July 1902, 4
- ²⁵ *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 23 July 1910, 2
- ²⁶ *Derby Daily Telegraph and Reporter*, 17 June 1881, 4. The reference is to the phrase ‘dine with Duke Humphrey’, which meant to go without dinner. According to one online article, this refers to a man who while visiting the tomb of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester was locked in Westminster abbey—and thus missed dinner. <https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/dine+with+Duke+Humphrey> consulted 29 January 2020.
- ²⁷ *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 21 July 1906, 2
- ²⁸ *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 23 July 1910, 2
- ²⁹ *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 June 1894, 8
- ³⁰ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 16 June 1894, 5; *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 June 1894, 4
- ³¹ *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 June 1894, 4; *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 June 1894, 8
- ³² *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 June 1894, 8
- ³³ *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, 25 July 1910, 6
- ³⁴ *Scarborough Mercury*, 6 June 1902, 3
- ³⁵ *Scarborough Mercury*, 22 July 1910, 10; *Derbyshire Advertiser*, 1 August 1914, 4
- ³⁶ *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 June 1894, 8
- ³⁷ *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 June 1894, 8
- ³⁸ *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 August 1890, 5
- ³⁹ *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 16 June 1894, 2
- ⁴⁰ *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 21 July 1906, 2
- ⁴¹ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 18 June 1881, 7
- ⁴² *Scarborough Gazette*, 23 June 1881, 3
- ⁴³ *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, 25 July 1910, 6
- ⁴⁴ *Derby Daily Telegraph and Reporter*, 17 June 1881, 4
- ⁴⁵ *Derby Daily Telegraph and Reporter*, 17 June 1881, 4; *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 June 1894, 8
- ⁴⁶ *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 15 June 1894, 3; *Daily Mail* (Hull), 10 June 1898, 2
- ⁴⁷ *Scarborough Mercury*, 18 June 1881, 5
- ⁴⁸ *Yorkshire Herald*, 15 August 1890, 8; *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 August 1890, 2; *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 August 1890, 5
- ⁴⁹ *East London Observer*, 23 August 1890, 5
- ⁵⁰ *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 June 1894, 4; *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 June 1894, 8
- ⁵¹ *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star*, 11 July 1902, 2

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- ⁵² *Leeds and Yorkshire Mercury*, 21 July 1906, 5
- ⁵³ *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 10 June 1898, 3
- ⁵⁴ *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 June 1894, 4
- ⁵⁵ *Yorkshire Herald*, 16 June 1894, 6
- ⁵⁶ *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 June 1894, 4
- ⁵⁷ *Scarborough Mercury*, 22 July 1910, 10
- ⁵⁸ *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 August 1890, 5
- ⁵⁹ *East London Observer*, 23 August 1890, 5
- ⁶⁰ *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 June 1894, 8
- ⁶¹ *Scarborough Mercury*, 22 July 1910, 10
- ⁶² *Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal*, 24 June 1881, 6
- ⁶³ *Derby Daily Telegraph and Reporter*, Saturday 18 June 1881, 4
- ⁶⁴ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 12 July 1902, 7; *Scarborough Mercury*, 11 July 1902, 10; *Leeds and Yorkshire Mercury*, 21 July 1906, 5
- ⁶⁵ *Scarborough Mercury*, 15 August 1890, 5.
- ⁶⁶ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 17 June 1898, 1.
- ⁶⁷ *Yorkshire Post*, 12 July 1902, 10.
- ⁶⁸ *Scarborough Mercury*, 20 July 1906, 10; *Leeds and Yorkshire Mercury*, 21 July 1906, 5.
- ⁶⁹ *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 August 1890, 2.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid*; *Yorkshire Herald*, 16 August 1890, 6; *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 18 August 1890, 8]
- ⁷¹ See, for example, *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 June 1894, 4; *Scarborough Post*, 17 June 1898, 8; *Scarborough Mercury*, 11 July 1902, 10; *Scarborough Mercury*, 20 July 1906, 10; *Scarborough Mercury*, 22 July 1910, 10.
- ⁷² *Derby Daily Telegraph and Reporter*, 17 June 1881, 4.
- ⁷³ *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 25 July 1914, 6.
- ⁷⁴ *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 August 1890, 2.
- ⁷⁵ *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 June 1894, 4.
- ⁷⁶ Jottings, *Scarborough Mercury*, 22 August 1890, 8.
- ⁷⁷ *Yorkshire Post*, 12 July 1902, 10.
- ⁷⁸ *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 24 July 1914, 5; *Leeds Mercury*, 25 July 1914, 7.
- ⁷⁹ *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 June 1894, 4; *Scarborough Mercury*, 22 July 1910, 10.
- ⁸⁰ In column “Ladies’ Chit-Chat” by Marie in *Scarborough Mercury*, 24 June 1898, 5.
- ⁸¹ *Scarborough Gazette*, 21 August 1890, 2.

⁸² Jottings, *Scarborough Mercury*, 22 August 1890, 8.

⁸³ Originally published 1987. Not still in print but second-hand copies are available. It is also possible to purchase second hand, via well-known internet auction and book sites, are copies of guidebooks issued in conjunction with the Bass trips to Scarborough, including the 1977 reprint of the one produced for the 1914 excursion to Scarborough, and also relevant postcards.

Archaeological Investigations by the Society 2014 to 2017

By Christopher Hall, Trevor Pearson and Marie Woods

Since the last fieldwork report, which appeared in *Transactions* 44, the Society has commenced three major pieces of fieldwork, all of which are ongoing at the time of writing. The Hanging Grimston Community Archaeology project on the Wolds, which is a partnership between the Society and the High Wolds Heritage Group, will be the subject of a separate article. In this article we concentrate on work done at Brompton Castle Hill and in Raincliffe Woods over the period in question. The article ends with a report on a trench we inspected on Seamer Moor.

Brompton Castle Hill

Castle Hill lies south of the A170, Brompton High Street. Topographically, it is a natural spur formed by limestone bedrock and gravel which rises steeply on the south and west sides but on the north and east it is far less pronounced as it merges into the general south-facing dip slope of the Tabular Hills. The hill would probably have formed quite a distinctive landmark when viewed from the lower ground to the west and south before the expansion of the village of Brompton. Very little is known about Brompton Castle. Although Castle Hill receives passing reference in several local guidebooks in the 19th and 20th centuries, these sources do not add any substantial information about it. However, large scale Ordnance Survey mapping published in the late 19th and early 20th centuries show a series of linear and sub-rectangular earthworks in the field which forms the top of the spur. This field, which is down to pasture is designated a Scheduled Monument and the official description identifies the site as a fortified

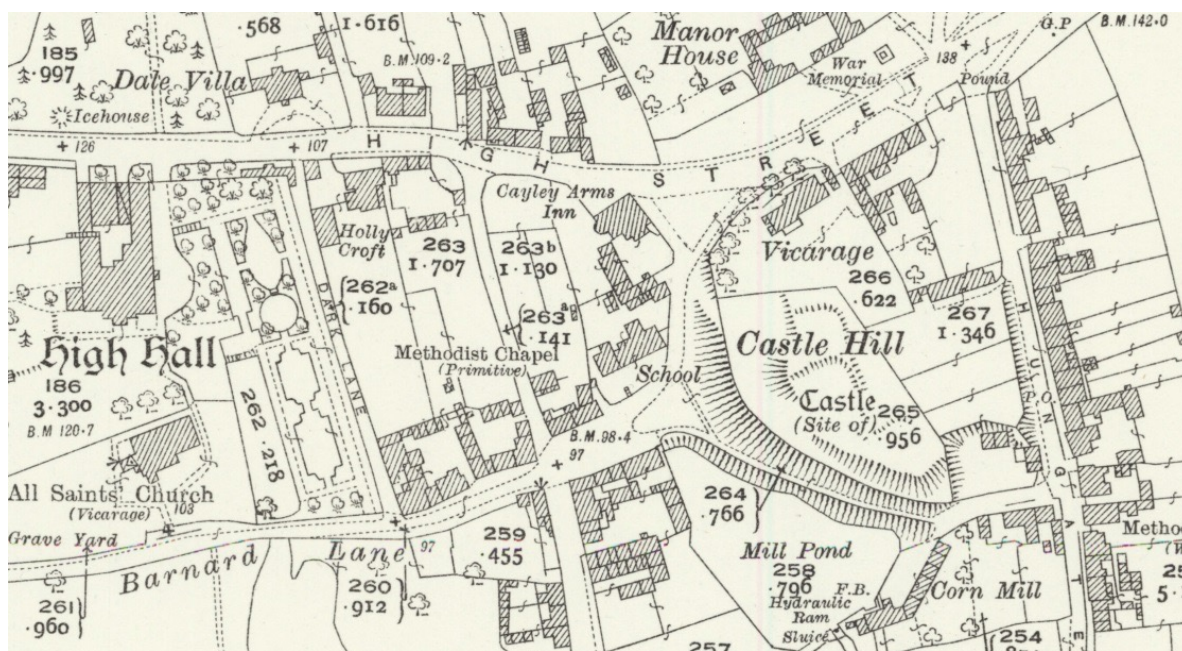


Figure 1. Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map published in 1928 showing Castle Hill in relation to the village of Brompton-by-Sawdon. Map reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland

medieval manor which includes the remains of two possible buildings. Three pieces of investigation have been carried out in order to shed more light on the archaeology of this area.

In 2014 the Society, through its Trustees Fund, grant aided Brompton Local History Society to commission a geophysical and topographical survey of the Scheduled site. That survey was carried out by James Lyall of Geophiz.biz and it showed that more archeological remains survive on the site than are visible on the surface.¹ The survey indicated the survival of a possible boundary bank or ditch curving around the crest of the slope on the west side of the hill with a rectilinear arrangement of possible structures across the eastern half of the site most of the latter equating with current upstanding earthworks. Geophysical anomalies located by the survey also indicated the position of two possible refuse pits.

Following on from this 2014 geophysical survey, in April 2016 the Society carried out a more detailed topographical survey of the surviving earthworks in order to enhance the earlier survey.

The earthwork survey mapped a small rectangular building with an associated yard to its south and with a route leading into the yard from the west. The survey also recorded a possible second building further to the south, though this is not necessarily of the same date



Figure 2. General view of Castle Hill with survey in progress

as the complex to the north. A north-south bank overlying the yard suggests a later arrangement of field boundaries presumably after the yard had fallen into disuse. There is no evidence to securely date either of the two buildings though a medieval or early post-

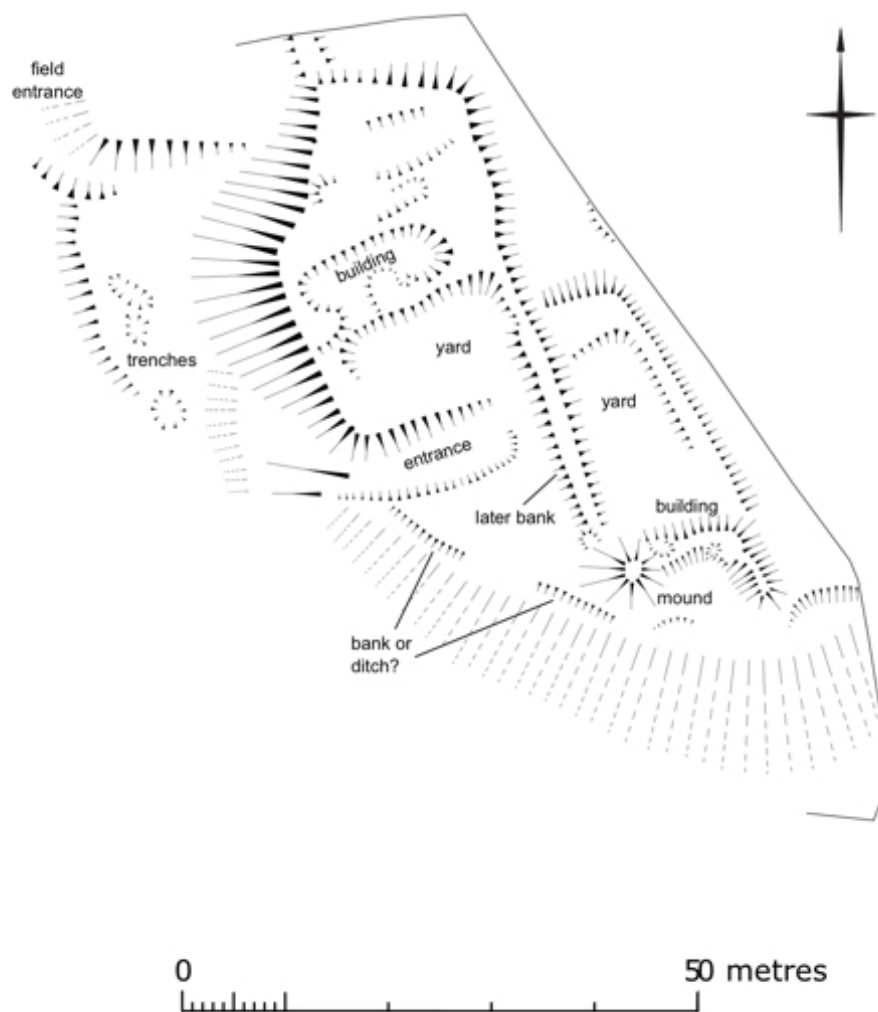


Figure 3. The completed topographic survey

medieval date seem the most likely and they probably had an agricultural purpose with the yard used for livestock. However this is not to discount the possibility that more impressive buildings stood elsewhere on the hilltop and have now been lost which would explain why this part of the village is called 'Castle Hill'. This topographical survey is covered by a more detailed report which is available through the Society's web site.²

The third piece of investigation was carried out in early May 2017 when two trenches were excavated in a garden to the north-east of the pasture field surveyed in 2014 and 2016. This part of Castle Hill is not within the area of the Scheduled Monument and the trial excavation gave us the opportunity to test the level of survival of archaeological remains.

The excavation revealed that buried below the garden are the remains of a medieval building. We came upon what is thought to have been one corner of the building which seems to have had stone foundations suggesting it may have been more than one storey high. On the inside of the building sandy mortar had been laid to provide a level surface for a floor, though none of the actual floor survived. On the outside of the building it was discovered that a yard

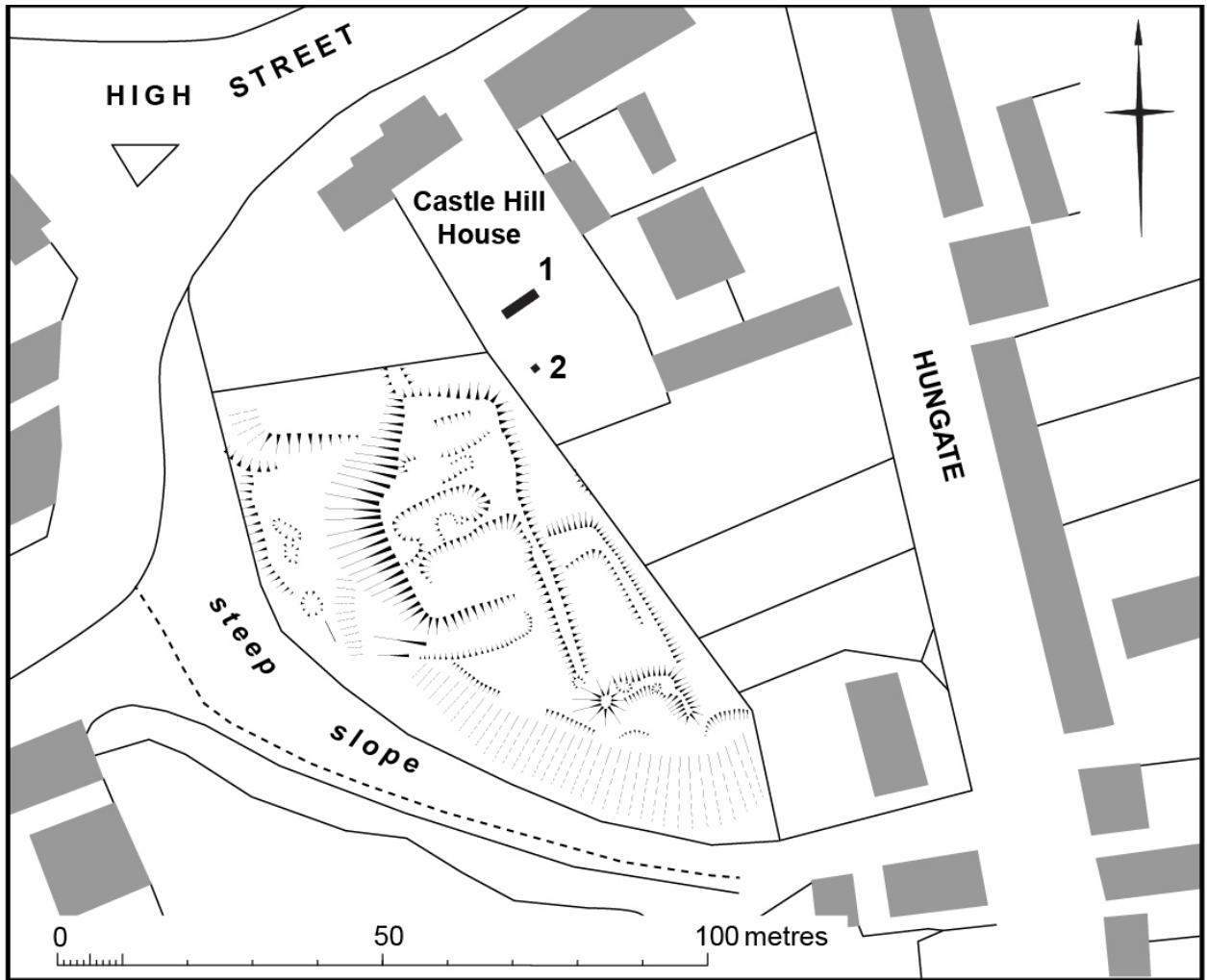


Figure 4. The location of trenches 1 and 2 and their relationship to the earthworks on Castle Hill

surface, composed of a spread of small pebbles and some larger stones rammed into the ground, had existed. As this was purely a trial excavation there was not time to investigate the building or the yard in too much detail but the pottery found indicated these features date back to the medieval period, around six or seven hundred years ago. The finds also included fragments of glazed roof tile which is a very rare find and suggests whatever the building was it must have been roofed with expensive ceramic tiles rather than stone slates or thatch.

It is too early yet to say that the actual castle commemorated by the name 'Castle Hill' has been found, but as a result of the excavation it is clear that at least one important building stood on the hilltop in the middle ages. A second small trench was excavated in another part of the garden to see if more of the yard or the building could be found. However, all that was found here was stone rubble thought to be spread from the demolition of the building. An unexpected discovery was a flint microlith which dates to the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age period around 9,000 years ago. Also found in the same trench was a flint core, which is the raw material from which pieces of flint were struck to make tools. A more detailed Interim Report is available on the Society's web site.³

The Raincliffe Woods Project

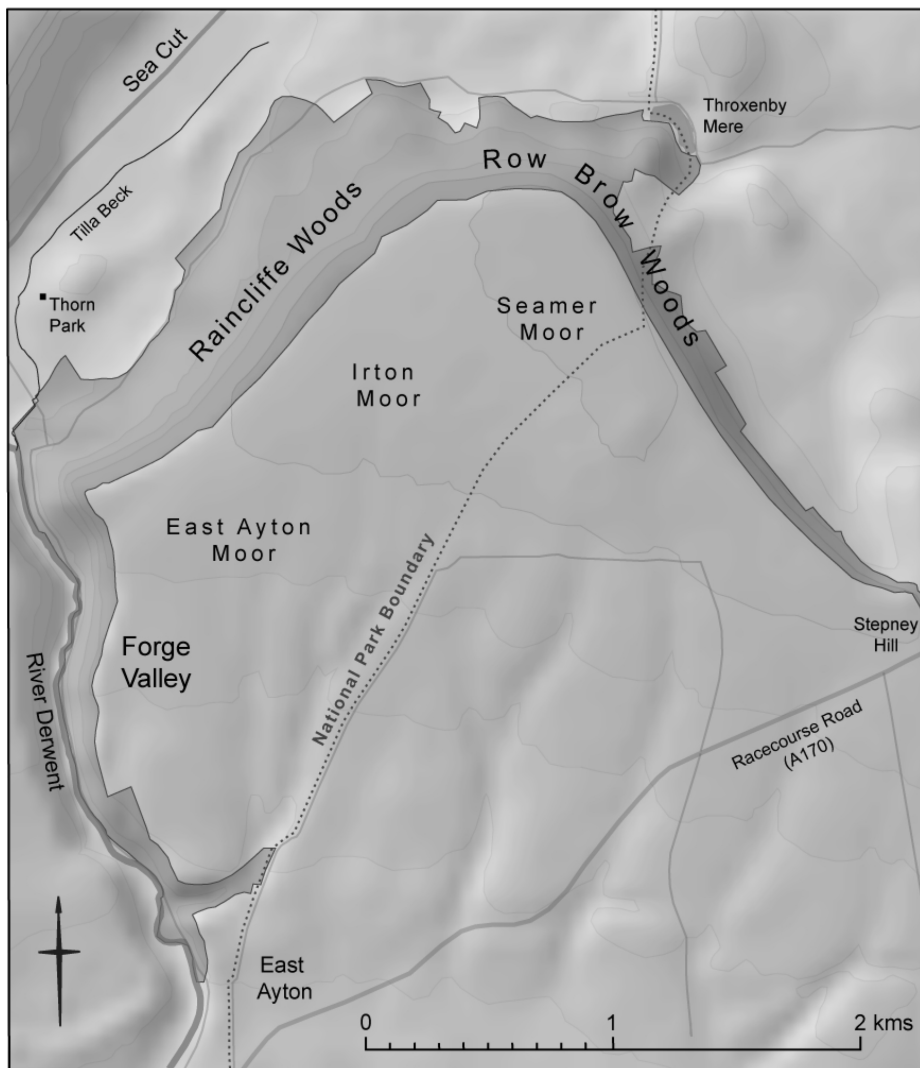


Figure 5. The area of the woods surveyed

The Raincliffe Woods project covers the Forge Valley, Raincliffe and Row Brow Woods which form a continuous belt of trees extending for a distance of nearly five miles from East Ayton in the west to the A170 Racecourse Road on the western outskirts of Scarborough. Row Brow woods occupy the east facing scarp slope of an outlier of the tabular hills which form East Ayton, Seamer and Irton Moors, whilst Raincliffe Woods occupy the north facing scarp slope. Forge Valley Woods occupy both slopes of the glacial overflow valley known as Forge Valley, though the survey work was confined to the eastern valley side.

Commencing in December 2015 and continuing until September 2017 the Society carried out archaeological survey and mapping of this area, using the newly-acquired Trimble Juno 5B GPS mapping receiver. The aim of this survey was to make the first systematic record of archaeological features surviving in the woods, as a means of better understanding how the area has changed over time. It is hoped that an improved understanding of the archaeology

will also assist in the future management of the woods and will enhance people's enjoyment by giving them a greater appreciation of the area's heritage.

The woods have been in public ownership since they were purchased by Scarborough Corporation in 1926⁴ and are now a much-valued amenity offering a wide selection of walks, cycle routes and picnic spots. An Interim Report on the work carried out over period December 2015 to April 2016 is available on the Society's web site⁵ and a further report is being produced which as well as giving a more complete picture of the archaeology also benefits from further research into the documentary and cartographic sources.⁶ What follows in this article is a precis of our findings.

The woods cover an area of about 190ha. They are a mixture of broadleaf and coniferous planting of which about a third is classified by Natural England as 'ancient and semi-natural woodland' and the remainder as 'ancient replanted woodland', which includes areas of conifers planted during the 20th century. The conifer planting is mostly found on the north



Figure 6. A group of deep hollow ways mapped as part of the project

side of the hill in Raincliffe Woods while the adjacent Row Brow Woods and Forge Valley Woods are mostly broadleaf trees. Because of the varied flora and fauna, Forge Valley Woods and some of the broadleaf woodland in Raincliffe Woods have been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by Natural England. In addition the whole of Forge Valley Woods and a section of Raincliffe Woods just below the hilltop are also a National Nature Reserve. Forge Valley, Raincliffe and the west end of Row Brow Woods are also within the North York Moors National Park.

One of the most unexpected findings of the survey has been the large number of disused tracks which survive among the woods, many of which have formed deep hollow ways where they cross the steepest parts of the slope. Many of the hollow ways are so deeply eroded that they must have been in use for several centuries by both livestock as well as people moving between the high moor tops and the valleys leading to Scalby and Hackness. In several places the hollow ways are braided, that is there are several ways in close proximity suggesting that routes periodically changed alignments as existing tracks became impassable.



Figure 7. The figure stands on a slight platform close to the Green Gate car park

The survey also highlighted that preserved in the woodland are around 30 small circular platforms made by cutting into the hillside at the back and piling up material on the front to create a level area. As yet we are not sure what these were used for and how old they are, although geo-chemical analysis carried out later than the period covered by this report suggests that some of them were created to form level areas for bonfires for making charcoal. Selective burning of timber to make charcoal has been an important woodland industry for many centuries and in these woods may have been connected with the production of charcoal for the iron-making forge at the north end of Forge Valley which was in operation from about 1730 until the turn of the 18th century. It is also possible that other platforms mark the locations of small buildings or animal pens, but further, more detailed, work is needed before we can be certain what they were used for.



Figure 8. Exposed rock face forming part of the Cock Hollow Quarry

The fieldwork has also mapped extensive areas of quarrying, particularly on the slopes above Throxenby Mere where the rock face called Cock Hollow quarry is just part of a much more extensive area of quarrying indicated by tree-covered pits and hollows. Other large quarries are found on the slopes of Forge Valley such as Whetstone, Wallis and White Quarries. It is likely stone was taken from this area for building material whilst smaller quarries recorded elsewhere in the woods may have produced stone for field walls or for lime burning. In addition the Forge Valley quarries would also produce a stone for use a roof tiles.

Seamer Moor

In September 2017 a Society member (Chris Hall) alerted the field team to a 750m long trench that had been dug by a local farmer alongside a field boundary and next to a public footpath on Seamer Moor. In view of the proximity of the trench to several known archaeological sites, including Seamer Beacon 500m to the east and to the prehistoric Seamer Beacon Dyke, two members of the field team (Trevor Pearson and Marie Woods) inspected the trench to look for archaeological features. They noted several features cutting into the natural subsoil and were able to map their position to an accuracy of around 2m using the Society's Trimble Juno 5B GPS mapping receiver.

Without undertaking excavation it is impossible to be certain of the date or function of the various features, although they are mostly ditch-like suggesting they could be part of field systems that have left no visible trace as earthworks or as cropmarks. A bullet case was seen lying on the spoil by the side of the trench and probably dates to when the moor was used for military training in the early part of last century.

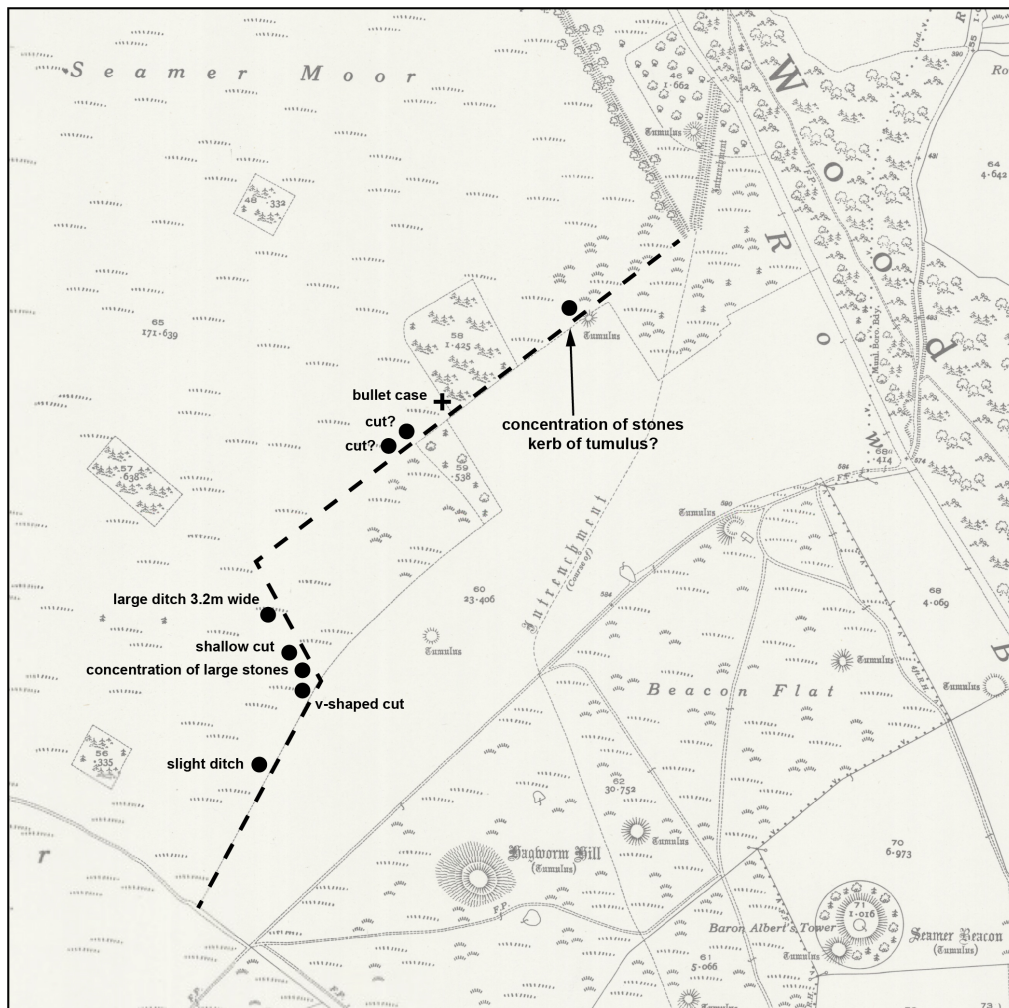


Figure 9. Map of the trench on Seamer Moor (dashed line) showing the location of possible archaeological features (dots) and a find (cross). Map reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland

¹ J. Lyall (2014), Report on a fluxgate gradiometer and topographic survey carried out at Castle Hill, Brompton-by-Sawdon, North Yorkshire.

² C. Evans, C. Hall, and T. Pearson (2016), An Earthwork Survey of Castle Hill, Brompton, Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Site Report 46: [https://www.sahs.org.uk/admin/kcfinder/upload/files/Report%2046%20-%20Brompton\(1\).pdf](https://www.sahs.org.uk/admin/kcfinder/upload/files/Report%2046%20-%20Brompton(1).pdf).

³ T. Pearson and M. Woods (2018), An excavation at Castle Hill House, Brompton. Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Site Report 48: https://www.sahs.org.uk/admin/kcfinder/upload/files/Report%2048_BC17.pdf.

⁴ R. Missin, (1992), "Raincliffe Woods" in *A Guide to Newby and Scalby: Celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the Scalby Village Trust* (Scarborough: Scalby Village Trust): 21-2.

⁵ T. Pearson, C. Hall, M. Bland, and G. Davies, G. (2016), Raincliffe Woods Archaeological Survey: December 2015–April 2016. Site Report Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Site Report 47: [https://www.sahs.org.uk/admin/kcfinder/upload/files/Raincliffe-report%20\(web\).pdf](https://www.sahs.org.uk/admin/kcfinder/upload/files/Raincliffe-report%20(web).pdf).

⁶ Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society (2018), An Archaeological Survey of Forge Valley, Raincliffe and Row Brow Woods, Scarborough, North Yorkshire. Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Report 49: <https://www.sahs.org.uk/admin/kcfinder/upload/files/Raincliffe%20Final.pdf>.

The future for museums and heritage – a report

by Mark Vesey and Stewart MacDonald

At the 11th UK Maritime Heritage Forum conference in Glasgow, in November 2019, 120 delegates from across the UK came together to discuss the future of museums and heritage. The key theme of the conference was heritage and wellbeing.

The keynote speaker was Mark O'Neill, former head of Glasgow Museums and Associate Professor, College of Arts at the University of Glasgow. He asked, 'what and who are museums?' The earlier mission statements had been about educating and bringing culture to the poor and working classes, but they have since been reduced to merely the protection of heritage. Recent studies show that visiting museums can significantly improve the health and wellbeing of people compared to those that do not (this also applies to singing in choirs and gardening). Loneliness and poor mental health are growing problems in our population with 6500 suicides in the UK last year (ten times the murder rate). Inequality is on the rise and studies show that life expectancy in less equal societies is worse for the rich as well as the poor. We all need a sense of belonging, trust, growth and meaning in our lives and museums can provide this. People who engage with cultural activities have higher levels of self-esteem, memory, semantic fluency and better health. Low educational attainment is the biggest barrier to participation so all museum and heritage attractions should aim to reach out to the poorest and most vulnerable in our society and invite them to participate. Attendance by those without a high level of formal education was, therefore, the key issue for museums today.

A recent example of reaching out to new audiences was given by Sarah Lockwood and Rosalind Croker from the Royal Museums in Greenwich. They said that dementia and obesity are significantly on the rise along with climate change and pollution induced illnesses such as asthma. Maritime museums can be a 'blue space' for creativity and inclusion but we have to undertake outreach work with minority groups such as refugee organisations, dementia groups, etc. Every local council should have a health and wellbeing policy so that museums can work to this standard. A 'Tea and the Sea' workshop was given as an example of good practice. In Glasgow, a boat-building workshop that included homeless people and recovering drug addicts provides another example, as does the Firth and Forth Canal restoration project, which involved the young, old and asylum seekers. These projects gave people meaning in their lives, new skills, confidence and hope. Heather Robertson, from Glasgow Museums, gave examples of inviting deaf and disabled people into the museum to create exhibitions about the history of people with these disabilities. The museum had also invited the Glasgow Show People in to create an exhibition about the lives of the travelling fairground culture.

Laura Boon, from the Royal Museums Greenwich, gave examples of engaging new sectors of society whilst fulfilling the role of collecting modern heritage. The museum approached the radical environmental group 'Extinction Rebellion' (XR) to see if they would donate or loan the pink or blue sailing yachts they had used to block Trafalgar Square in London. It turned out these items were impounded by the police as evidence but were eventually released and put on display in Greenwich. They brought in a whole new group of people and families to

the maritime museum. Laura also spoke about collecting Brexit propaganda, including flags and beer mats used in Weatherpoons pubs, which put the UK fishing industry and maritime identity at the heart of the debate. She concluded that museums must engage with the contemporary as well as the past.

Ian Clark, from 'Ian Clark Restoration' spoke about projects his company has been involved with and the dire situation of fewer and fewer skilled workers being able to work on boats and ships. There are many skill sets that are now at risk of extinction and one has already been lost in the UK, that of cricket ball maker!

On a positive note the conference heard from Hannah Hurford and Kate Tatlow, two young people who had just completed a two-year maritime heritage restoration-training scheme with the Shipshape Heritage Training Partnership. They have learnt how to assess vessels, do research, write reports, and carry out repairs, restoration and conservation.

On the second day of the conference we heard from Dr David Mitchell, Director of Conservation, Historic Environment Scotland. They have 1400 staff members, 653 buildings and 107 gardens. They employ 107 stonemasons and have 40,000 objects in the collection. David outlined the problems they face particularly from climate change as the average rainfall has doubled in the West of Scotland in the past ten years. It is speeding up erosion of many of their historic buildings and sites. The famous Skara Brae site in Orkney is under threat from increasing shoreline erosion and footpath erosion due to cruise ships with 5000 people visiting Orkney at a time! Rocks and masonry are crumbling at Holyrood in Edinburgh at a faster rate than ever whilst the list of compliance regulations for buildings and sites is increasing, 140 at the last count. TV and film shows were described as 'heritage soft porn' and are driving visitor numbers ever higher. HES's budget can only cope with essential maintenance and repair so a state of 'managed decline' has to be accepted.

Some exciting new projects were unveiled including the passenger and crew list of the SS Great Britain in Bristol. 33,000 names and records have been digitised along with the ship's voyage details and diaries. These are available online. They have proved very popular with families seeking relatives and have been effective in attracting people to the museum. See <https://www.ssgreatbritain.org/global-stories>

Clare McComb, a freelance historian, gave an enthusiastic presentation about her work, including a publication sponsored by the Weatherpoons pub chain, about the Jolie Brise sailing yacht that won the Fastnet yacht race three times. Clare follows stories like a detective, interviewing relatives and descendants, finding old photographs and diaries, following the 'trail of a story' to produce a gripping human tale that gives life to an historic artefact. She advocated popular participation in historical research and writing, so that families and communities feel a sense of pride and inclusion.

A presentation on 3D scanning of objects and even ships was given. It raises the possibility that in Scarborough we could 3D scan the town's medieval model, making it available online for schools, colleges and the public to utilize.

Finally, a visit was arranged to 'Fairfield Heritage', once the head offices of the largest shipyard in the UK. The development of the museum was part of a regeneration project in Govan, a declining area of Glasgow. Many of the museum's volunteers have personal and family connections to shipbuilding at Fairfield's. The Fairfield yard produced a third of UK warships in the early 1900s and employed many of the 100,000 shipyard workers on the Clyde. See <http://www.fairfieldgowan.co.uk/heritage>

The UK Maritime Heritage Forum meets every year and brings together heritage enthusiasts from small, one-boat operations, to the largest National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. People share their knowledge and experience to help guide the sector into the future. Mark Vesey and Stewart MacDonald are members of the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society and the Scarborough Maritime Heritage Centre. This year's forum will take place in Portsmouth dockyard from 30th September to 2nd October 2020.

[Since the above was written it has been decided that the current pandemic means that the 2020 forum will not take place. The wider impact of this year's health crisis upon museums and heritage is yet unknown but is a matter of very great concern to all those with an interest in the sector. – Editor]

BOOK REVIEWS

John Heywood, *Beside the Seaside: A History of Yorkshire's Seaside Resorts* (Pen and Sword History, 2017, ISBN 978 1 52670 464 1), Softback £15.99

Kathryn Ferry, *Seaside 100: A History of the British Seaside in 100 Objects* (Unicorn, 2020, ISBN 978 1 912690 84 8), Hardback £14.99

Val Williams and Karen Shepherdson, *Seaside Photographed* (Thames & Hudson, 2019, ISBN 978 0 500 02206 1), Hardback £19.95

Will Scott, *Seaside Shelters* (HENI Publishing, 2018, ISBN 978 1 9121220 4 2), Hardback £14.99

At a time when there is a renewed interest in taking seaside holidays in the British Isles, caused largely but perhaps not entirely by the current pandemic, it seems appropriate to review some of the best books on the British seaside and its history published in recent years. The books under consideration are varied in their content and approaches but have a number of things in common, including great knowledge on the part of the authors, clear written style, good illustrations and high production values, something for which the various publishers ought to be congratulated.

John Heywood is well known for his knowledge and understanding of many aspects of Yorkshire history; he is a well-known speaker and author of short articles and also a frequent and effective communicator on Yorkshire history on Twitter as HistoryandHeritageYorkshire. His book *Beside the Seaside* packs a great deal of useful information into less than 200 pages. The arrangement is essentially thematic and, after a brief introduction that includes a description of the Yorkshire coast, he deals with many of the key features of Yorkshire seaside holidays over the centuries. Inevitably Scarborough features a great deal in this book, but other places are also written about, including Bridlington, Filey, Redcar and Hornsea. Readers will learn a great deal about the ways in which the experiences of visitors to the Yorkshire seaside resorts have changed and developed as time has gone by and will probably want to follow up their reading of this informative volume with further reading. The brevity of the book means that some interesting and important matters are not dealt with, notably in the rather generic chapter on seaside bathing fashions: it includes no mention of the nineteenth-century controversies about naked bathing. But this is a relatively minor criticism and the book is highly recommended.

Kathryn Ferry, who has worked with the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society on a number of occasions, is Britain's best-known seaside historian. The author of a large number of books and articles, Kathryn also appears a great deal on radio, particularly BBC local radio stations, and television. Furthermore she makes frequent and effective use of Twitter as SeasideFerry. This year she has summarised her extensive knowledge in a fascinating book which tells the history of the British seaside in a thematic yet chronological way through an examination of 100 of the key objects associated with it. It does not just cover

Yorkshire, of course, but there are many references to the county's seaside resorts. Scarborough features a great deal – indeed the very first chapter is entitled 'Scarborough Spa' – but other places in Yorkshire are also mentioned – Whitby, Bridlington and Staithes; furthermore, many of the sections which do not specifically feature Yorkshire resorts are about objects which could or can be found on the county's coast. This book cannot be too highly recommended, not least for the number and range of its illustrations. If reading it does not make you want to find out more about seaside history nothing will!

Another very well illustrated book, as one might expect from the title, is *Seaside Photographed*. There is much to be learned from this book and a great deal in it to enjoy. It is essentially a collection of essays on different themes, with titles like 'Shell Stories', 'Seaside Bohemias' and 'Halcyon Days'. I found it to be a fascinating read, not least because of the information about the development of beach photography from Victorian days in the chapter 'Waves on the Beach'. This section begins with the provocative but true statement: 'Excitement is not a word customarily associated with Victorians'. It certainly made me want to read on and I'm glad I did as I learned a great deal from the chapter. Like the books referred to above, this volume comes right up to the present day and includes interesting material about the range of people who now go to the British seaside.

The final volume under consideration contains very little text – just an informative introductory essay and then picture captions naming the towns in which the shelters depicted are located – but the excellent photographs are well worth careful study. They illustrate not just the shelters themselves and the variety of their styles and building materials, but also many key features of the British seaside experience, for example the photograph taken at Cromer shows shelters on the town's pier. Whitby and Redcar are the two Yorkshire resorts featured. An unexpectedly thought-provoking book!