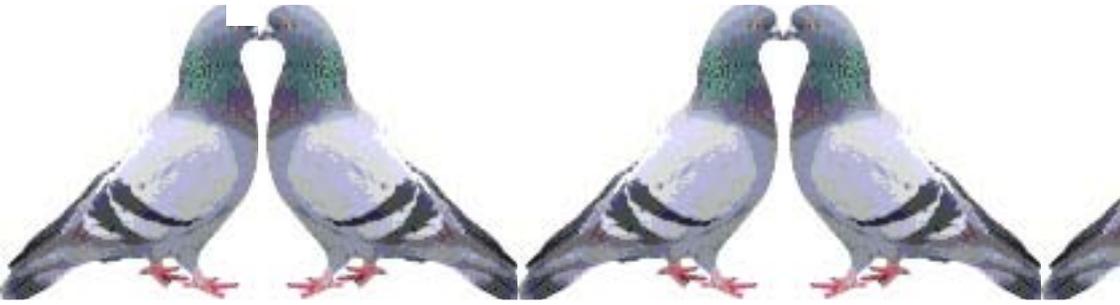


A bunch of completely random

strange, weird, wonderful ^{and} silly facts about Yorkshire



By Kate Goldstone

A word from the author

As a Yorkshirewoman I'm allowed to poke fun, in the nicest possible way, at my home county. Which is why, when a small independent publisher asked me to write a 'random book of Yorkshire', I more or less bit their arm off.

Sadly, after a shameful debacle with a popular British bookshop chain my publisher was forced out of business. So here's the book in electronic form.

I hope you enjoy my strange, weird, wonderful and very silly facts about Yorkshire, whether you love the county, have relatives or ancestors there, drove through it once, want to visit, have never heard of it or hate the bloody place.



Yan, Tan, Tethera... zzzzzzz

Sheep are important people in Yorkshire. And Yan Tan Tethera is a system Yorkshire folk once used to count them. Based on an ancient Brythonic Celtic language, it was used extensively by sheep farmers 'til about 1910, when it fell of the edge of the known world into obscurity. There's a different version for Nidderdale, Swaledale, Teesdale, Kirby Lonsdale, Wensleydale and so on, each subtly different. Here's how to count from one to twenty in broad Swaledale. It might come in useful if you find yourself up in the Dales one day, absolutely desperate to count stuff but having forgotten how to do so in proper English. You never know.

- 1 – Yan
- 2 – Tan
- 3 - Tether
- 4 - Mether
- 5 - Pip
- 6 - Azer
- 7 - Sezar
- 8 - Akker
- 9 - Conter
- 10 - Dick (which is remarkably similar to the French word for ten, dix)
- 11 – Yanadick
- 12 – Tanadick
- 13 – Tetheradick
- 14 – Metheradick
- 15 – Bumfit
- 16 – Yanabum
- 17 – Tanabum
- 18 – Tetherabum
- 19 – Metherabum
- 20- Jigget

Are we as tight as a gnat's chuff in Yorkshire?

Apparently so. *“See all, ‘ear all, say nowt. Eat all, sup all, pay nowt. An’ if th’ivver does owt for nowt, allus do it for thissen”* means *See everything, hear everything, say nothing. Eat everything, drink everything, pay nothing. And if you do something for nothing, do it for yourself.”*

Ten famous folk born in Yorkshire (some of whom are actually rather posh)

1. Vic Reeves, funny and silly in equal measure
2. Ade Edmonson, veteran Young Ones comedian, Bottom star and all round good egg
3. Patrick Stewart, AKA Captain Jean-Luc Picard from Star Trek. Make it so
4. Jimmy Saville. Urgh. Enough said.
5. Henry Moore, sculptor of majestically blobby artworks
6. Jeremy Paxman, who says it like it is, scaring the bejesus out of the great and good
7. Chris Moyles, host of Radio 1's longest running breakfast show
8. David Hockney, Bradford bloke and one of Britain's best loved painters
9. Arthur Ransome, of Swallows and Amazons fame
10. Geoffrey Boycott... aye, bugger it

Scary Yorkshire

Beware of Pocklington. It might look pretty and sleepy. But it was the last town in England to burn a witch: apparently a certain Old Wife Green was burnt to death there in 1630.

And take care in Filey too, home of the last heathens in England. In the 1800s the town's fishermen chased a bunch of evangelists out of town, pelting them with dried skate in a fit of exasperation. Sadly they soon gave in, becoming extremely devout (and considerably less violent) after being converted by one 'Praying Johnny' Oxtoby.

The biggest recorded earthquake in Britain took place off Dogger Bank in 1931, measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale and causing significant damage to Filey. It was even felt down south, scaring southern softies silly and causing consternation in Madame Tussaud's, where Dr Crippen's head was shaken right off.

York is pretty scary too if you're of a tartan persuasion. It's still perfectly legal to shoot a Scotsman in the city, as long as you use a bow and arrow and refrain from shooting him on a Sunday. And whatever you do, don't go swimming off The Deep in Hull. It's home to Europe's only gang of grey reef sharks, fast and agile predators that have been known to attack errant humans... Yorkshiremen included.

Silly Yorkshire place names

Go nuts about Crackpot. Snooze in Booze. Exercise your laughing gear in Giggleswick. Eat well in Thornton-Le-Beans. Fall in love with Swine. Find out how to do it in Sexhow. Take a leap of faith in Jump. Meet a big lass in Blubberhouses. Enjoy the many pleasures of Pigbaner, Humpswaite, Goinislong and Wham. Brew a proper cuppa in Maunby Twale, Ladaleworth, Oindley and Fathungton. Or hit the high life and visit the splendid Yorkshire hamlets of Glastonbury, Newcastle, Liverpool and

Clapham junction.

Top ten highest Yorkshire hills

The Lake District is nothing short of spectacular. But Yorkshire has more than its fair share of bloody big hills. Here are the ten highest. Is there summat on the summit? Climb them and see.

1. Whernside – 736m above sea level
2. Ingleborough – 723m
3. Great Shunner Fell – 716m
4. High Seat – 709m
5. Wild Boar Fell – 708m
6. Great Whernside – 704m
7. Buckden Pike – 702m
8. Gregory Chapel – 695m
9. Penyghent – 604m
10. Hugh Seat – 689m

Yorkshire pudding facts

The earliest recorded Yorkshire Pudding recipe dates way back to 1737, when it was called a Dripping Pudding. Which sounds completely disgusting, about as appealing as lard on a stick. Ten years later Hannah Glass, a sort of Georgian Delia Smith, re-named it Yorkshire Pudding: stunningly unimaginative yet much tastier-sounding than its predecessor.

Mrs Beeton created her own recipe in 1866, which was pronounced ‘rubbish’ and roundly ignored in its county of origin thereafter. These days some locals eat their Yorkshire pud as a starter, with gravy. Which is fine. On the downside, some follow the main course with even more Yorkshire Pudding, this time with treacle. Which seems wrong on so many levels.

Ecky...what?

No self respecting Yorkshireman has ever knowingly uttered the word Eckythump. You can blame The Goodies - Graham Garden, Tim Brooke-Taylor and Bill Oddie - for that one.

The Devil's arrows

The Devil's Arrows, three massive standing stones, can be seen where the A1 crosses the River Ure at Boroughbridge. The biggest of the three is 22 feet 6 inches high,

making it the second tallest menhir in Britain. According to a legend started in 1721 the Devil threw the stones, aiming at the nearby town of Aldborough, standing on Howe Hill and shouting, “*Borobrigg keep out o’ way, for Aldborough town I will ding down!*”. Luckily he was a crap shot and the stones fell near poor old Boroughbridge instead. You win some, you lose some.

Hair-raising Hedon

Hedon shot to fame in August 2000 when a freak mini-tornado in the Humber Estuary caused flash floods and massive hailstones to drop on the town. Ouch.

York Minster’s firestarter-stoppers

York Minster has its own police force, dating back to 1285 and originally called *Constables of the Liberty*. In 1829 a local fruitloop firestarter, Jonathan Martin, set a blaze and there’s been a constable on guard at the Minster at night ever since. Disappointingly, they don’t wear flowing ecclesiastical robes or sport tonsures. Just bog standard police-type uniforms and short back ‘n’ sides. Shame.

Less poop, more posh

The Shambles doesn’t look much of a shambles these days. It’s downright posh. But back in the 1400s, residents would hurl buckets of excrement from their upper storey windows into the narrow street below. Mixed into a river of poop from passing animals, plus blood and guts from the butcher’s shops that lined the streets back then, it must have been revolting. You can still see the ancient raised pavements either side of the cobbled street, with channels down which the slaughtered animals’ blood and spare bits washed.

How to speak Yorkshire – words beginning with B

Backend = autumn

Bad ‘un = no good

Badly = in poor health

Bairn = a child

Bait = packed lunch

Bap = bread bun

Beck = a stream

Berg = mountain

Boff = a fart

Bog = toilet

Bonce = your head

Bonny = pretty

Butty = sandwich

Friend or foe?

York's Clifford's Tower is a popular tourist haunt. But it has a nasty past. Roger de Clifford, its namesake, was hanged on a chain over the battlements after the bloody Battle of Boroughbridge in 1322. So watch yourself. The natives might *look* friendly, but they're a tad touchy.

Yorkshire movie quote 1: From *How to Lose Friends and Alienate People* (2008)

Sidney Young to his dad: *"You thought Brad Pitt was a cave in Yorkshire"*.

10 movies filmed in Yorkshire

1. 1920 – filmed at Allerton Castle, Bolton Abbey, Bramham Park and Ripley Castle
2. A Boy, a Girl and a Bike – filmed in Elland, Hebden Bridge, Halifax, Mytholroyd, Ilkley, Grassington, Skipton, Kilnsey, Buckden, Arncliffe and Malham
3. A Chorus of Disapproval – filmed in Scarborough
4. A Private Function – filmed in Ilkley and Bradford
5. Agatha – filmed in Harrogate and York
6. All Creatures Great And Small / It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet – filmed in Pickering, Thirsk, Whitby and The Dales
7. Among Giants – filmed in Sheffield and Doncaster
8. An Angel for May – filmed in Barnsley, Grimethorpe, High Bradfield, Penistone, Sheffield, Leeds, Marsden and Slaithwaite
9. Another Man's Poison – filmed in Malhamdale
10. Billy Liar – filmed in Bradford, Leeds and Baildon

Rogue Builders

It took 252 years to build York Minster. Kicked off by the Anglo Saxon King, Edwin of Northumbria, in 627 and not completed 'til about 877, it's a sure fire case for TV's Watchdog. *"Ethelred's Builders Ltd said it'd take just two months to build, but it ended up taking two hundred and fifty years. So here they are, in pride of place on Watchdog's Ye Olde Walle of Shame."*

The rise and fall of Pocklington

Pocklington's name can traced back to 650 AD and the site has been inhabited since the Bronze Age. Back then the settlement was the regional capital of the Parisi tribe and by the time the Domesday Book in 1086 it was the second largest settlement in Yorkshire. The village thrived through the Middle Ages, mostly because it was a

centre for wool trading and on the main route to York. Today it's a tiny place inhabited by fewer than 8,000 people and famous for the National Collection of Hardy Water Lilies at nearby Burnby Hall Gardens. How the mighty have fallen.

The earliest mention of cricket in Yorkshire

The earliest definitive reference to cricket in Yorkshire dates back to 5th August 1751 when the Duke of Cleveland's Eleven played the Earl of Northumberland's Eleven at Stanwick, probably in tights. It's thought Sheffield Cricket Club was formed around the same time.

Zombie flesh eating monsters

If you spot crowds of people drooling and vacant-eyed, stumbling through the streets of York, don't worry. It isn't an invasion of the un-dead. They are not zombies. They're merely being drawn, Pied Piper of Hamelin-style, towards Rowntrees and Terry's of York, fatally attracted by the luscious scent of chocolate on the breeze.

Beware of Jack-in-irons

If you ever find yourself wandering the lonely roads of Yorkshire look out for the supremely spooky Jack-In-Irons, a mythical Yorkshire giant who lurks in waiting, covered in chains, wearing the heads of his victims as grisly jewellery and wielding a huge, spiked club.

Spooky Roman re-enactments

York is the most haunted city in Europe, with around 140 ghosts to its name and at least 500 recorded spooky sightings. One of the most famous is the 1953 tale of Harry Martindale who, when installing a heating system in the cellars of the old Treasurer's House, heard a weird horn sound in the far distance.

He stopped work only to see an exhausted-looking Roman soldier on horseback, emerging from the brick wall, bristling with weaponry and followed by hundreds more, all of whom seemed to be walking on their knees.

Apparently there's a Roman road about fifteen inches below the cellar floor, which explains the knee thing. Plenty more people have since seen the ghostly Romans as they bundle along down there in the semi-gloom, walking through brick walls and compacted city soil for eternity.

Bad to the bone...

Lancelot Blackburne, York's Archbishop from 1724 to 1743, was a pirate in his youth, terrorising shipping in the Caribbean. The cheeky bugger. Nor did he mellow with age, being thrown out of church once for demanding his pipe and pint and berating his poor wife for objecting when his mistress moved in. Mucky old devil.

10 famous folk born in York

1. Frankie Howerd of *ooh er Mrs* fame
2. Guy Fawkes, failed revolutionary
3. John Snow, one of British journalism's national treasures
4. Various members of the Rowntree family, whose chocolate has made literally billions of people happy over the decades
5. Judi Dench, doyenne of stage and screen
6. Martin Rees, cosmologist, astrophysicist and Astronomer Royal
7. Vince Cable, politician
8. W H Auden, Anglo-American poet
9. William Rosse, pioneering astronomer and finder of fabulous nebulae
10. William Vernon Harcourt, founder of the British Association for the Advancement of Science

Expensive infestations

Robert 'Mousey' Thompson, the famous Kilburn furniture maker, carved a mouse on everything he made. These days 'Mouseman' pieces are worth a small fortune, and St Steven's church in Acombe, York, is infested with the little buggers.

Elizabeth of York

Unlike her lethal son King Henry 8th, Elizabeth of York was apparently kind, loyal and obedient.

10 facts about the North York Moors National Park

1. The North York Moors includes 1408 miles' worth of public rights of way
2. It covers a massive 554 square miles...
3. ... and has 26 miles of coastline
4. The highest point is Urra Moor at 454m above sea level
5. it includes the biggest expanse of heather moorland in England and Wales, an impressive 44,000 hectares
6. It's a European Special Protection Area for merlin and golden plover...
7. ...and contains Britain's largest inland Site of Special Scientific Interest

8. It is designated a Special Area of Conservation for rare moorland vegetation
9. It includes the largest concentrations of ancient and veteran trees in the north
10. It's home to more than 700 Scheduled Monuments and 3000 listed buildings.

Off with 'is 'ead!

The Halifax Gibbet was an early decapitating machine installed in the town during the 1500s as an alternative to rudely parting people and their noggins with a sword or axe. At the time Halifax was part of the Manor of Wakefield and the lord of the manor had the authority to execute anyone who stole from him when the goods they nicked – or confessed to nicking - were worth more than 13½ pence.

This type of law was relatively common in Britain but Halifax's guillotine was unique. And they kept on beheading folk much longer than other places, up until the mid-1600s.

Almost 100 people had their heads chopped off in Halifax between 1286, when records began, and 1650 when Oliver Cromwell decided it was a barbaric practice and had the machine taken down.

In 1840 the townsmen rediscovered the guillotine's stone base and preserved it, and in 1974 a replica was erected on the site... thankfully, a non-working one. 52 of the hapless headless whose names are known are commemorated on a nearby plaque.

Well 'ard Iron Agers

The North York Moors are full of archaeological remains, dating from the end of the last Ice Age onwards. You'll find the North's biggest Iron Age hill fort at Sutton Bank. They must've been well 'ard living up there, with the razor sharp winds and frigid winters. Stuff that for a lark.

Fame in 27 letters

At the foot of Sutton Bank, there's the little village of Sutton-under-Whitestonecliffe. So what? So at 27 letters long, it's England's longest place name. It's nowhere near as long as Wales' Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch. But you can't win 'em all.

Roman roamers

There's a famous Roman site in the North York Moors, the Cawthorn military complex. There's also a fort at Lease Rigg, a couple of villas and five military signal

stations along the coast. According to the famous Northumberland stone 'postcards' written by Romans and their families during the occupation, they hated the north with its stubborn, aggressive, often drunken natives, terrifyingly warlike Scots neighbours and unremittingly grey weather. Hah – serves them right. What, after all, did the Romans ever do for us?

A quote about Yorkshire by Paul Tonkinson, radio and TV presenter

"People from Yorkshire are very proud of their underachievement. You see these old fellas in the pub going: 'I've had a great life, me. Gone nowhere. Done fuck all. Aye.'"

Famous folk from Hoyland

- Tommy Boyle, the footballer, was born in Platts Common in 1866 and was buried in an unmarked grave after his death in World War Two. Thankfully they found him again in 2010 and erected a proper headstone
- Rod Clarke, the engineer and writer, whose great-great-great-great-grandfather James Burtoft came to Hoyland from Lincolnshire in 1745
- Barry Hines, the writer, was born and raised in the town
- Geoffrey Howse, actor, author and local historian, was brought up in Elsecar and Hoyland
- Brian Wildsmith, the children's illustrator, was born and bred in Hoyland
- Comedian Harry Worth was born in the town in 1917

Yorkshire death march

The Lyke Wake walk was dreamed up in 1955 by Bill Cowley. You start, assuming you're mad/fit/bold enough, at Osmotherley and walk to Ravenscar on the east coast, finishing within 24 hours to avoid being officially designated a woofter. The walk includes a mighty 5000 feet of up-hillery in total and there's only one pub, the Lion Inn at Blakely Moor, which, as you can imagine, is pretty popular.

Yorkshire death march 2

We're gluttons for punishment. As if the Lyke Wake walk wasn't enough, there's also the Cleveland Way to 'enjoy'... all 109 miles of it.

Pottering around the North Yorkshire Moors Railway

The film Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone saw Goathland Station transformed into Hogsmeade, home of the school of wizardry and witchcraft. The railway shop on the platform became the Prefect's Room and the Ladies loo was turned into the

Wizard's Room.

Leeds leads the way...

Leeds is Yorkshire's main city, the financial capital of the North and one of Britain's fastest-growing cities, the third largest after London and Birmingham.

Yorkshire sayings

- *Is it 'eck as like* = no it isn't
- *In't* can mean either in the or isn't it
- *By 'eck* = blimey
- *You daft 'ap'orth* = you silly thing. *A'porth* means half a penny's worth, meaning you're not quite all there, daft as a brush
- *By gum* = bloody hell
- *Get away* = I don't believe a word you're saying
- *Christ in a barn* = blimey, much the same as *Christ on a bike*
- *'Appen* = maybe
- When you're *mardy*, you're having a really good, satisfying whinge, so much so that your face looks like a slapped arse
- *There's nowt as strange as folk* = aren't people weird
- *Daft arse* = you silly thing
- *Give over* = don't, or stop it
- To *chuck* something means to throw it. You can also be *chucked*, when your loved one finishes with you
- A *swizz* = a rip-off
- *Goolies* = testicles
- *Bugger that for a lark* = no thanks, I don't fancy that much

The great South Yorkshire flood of 2007

In June 2007, the wettest summer since records began in 1776, the South Yorkshire region was hit by the biggest natural disaster in living memory when rainfall flooded 5,395 homes and flattened several communities including Knaresborough, York and Harrogate. The authorities called it the biggest rescue effort in peacetime Britain.

Ripon Grammar School boy made good

Bruce Oldfield OBE was born in London but educated at Ripon Grammar School. He has dressed a whole load of famous ladies in considerable sartorial splendour including Sienna Miller, Barbra Streisand, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Diana Ross, Emmanuelle Seigner, Rihanna, Kelly Brook, Taylor Swift, Elizabeth McGovern, Rosamund Pike, Anjelica Huston, Faye Dunaway, Melanie Griffith, Charlotte Rampling,

Joan Collins, Queen Noor of Jordan, Queen Rania of Jordan and Diana, Princess of Wales.

Screen yawn

In October 1880 Louis le Prince, local inventor and pioneer of cinema, recorded the very first moving images, of a Leeds back garden. You'd think he'd have filmed something a bit more interesting. But maybe not... his first motion picture, filmed eight years later, was called *Crossing Leeds Bridge*. Yawn.

Yorkshire movie quote 2: Flushed Away (2006)

Le Frog: *"You stupid English, with your Yorkshire puddings and your chips and fish!"*

The curse of Upsall castle

John Constable, who lived at Upsall Castle in North Yorkshire in 1610, supported the Royalists during the civil war and is said to have left a curse on any owner of Upsall who is disloyal to his king and country.

Are you lost?

Leeds castle is not in Leeds. It's in Kent, about 250 miles away.

Market madness

Kirkgate Market, in Leeds, is Europe's largest indoor market with over 600 stalls. Michael Marks opened his famously innovative Penny Bazaar there in 1884, eventually going on to found Marks & Spencer in 1890. I hate the way they display their trousers, flat fronted and face on. But what do I know, when M&S is one of Britain's best loved brands?

Ghosts on film at Hull Aquarium

21 year old Emma Place caught a spooky disembodied head on her mobile phone camera at Hull aquarium. Aquarium staff have since unsuccessfully tried to recreate conditions in which such a reflection could appear.

The aquarium sits on the River Humber's banks, the site of an isolation hospital where miserably spotty, doomed smallpox victims were held. In the immediate vicinity stood the Blockhouse, a place with a horrid history of torture and death.

Roman resonations

The Roman name for the settlement where Leeds now stands was Loidis, or Leodis. To this day, locals call people who live in Leeds Leodensians. I've heard 'em called worse things...

It's official... Britain's driest place is in Yorkshire

If you live there you wouldn't believe it, but Leeds is one of the driest places in the UK with an average of less than two inches of rain a month. And it rarely gets colder than 4 degrees or warmer than 21 degrees Celsius.

A star is born...

Yorkshire County Cricket Club was formed on 8 January 1863, with membership costing a minimum of 10 shillings and sixpence.

Entertainers and comedians born in Yorkshire

- Mark Addy, the actor, was born in York
- Julian Barratt, Matthew Lewis, Tom Wilkinson and James Frain were all born in Leeds
- Sean Bean, actor, was born in Sheffield
- Brian Blessed, the planet's noisiest, most bearded man, was born in Mexborough
- Peter Firth, actor, was born in Bradford
- Brian Glover, actor and comedian, was born in Sheffield, as was Python Michael Palin
- Sir Ben Kingsley was born in Scarborough, as was Hollywood star Charles Laughton
- James Mason was born in Huddersfield
- Andrew-Lee Potts was born in Bradford

Greedy murdering bastards

Richmond Castle's magnificent walls are the oldest castle walls in Britain outside London, begun in 1071 after William the Conqueror's famously nasty Harrying of the North and intended to quash further rebellions.

William handed over the region to his nephew Alan the Red, who built the Norman fortress you can still see there today. The richest man in British history, he owned 250,000 acres of land and managed to squirrel away a personal fortune worth £80 billion in today's money. The greedy bastard.

Grimsby's Elton John connection

You wouldn't instinctively put them together. But poet and singer Bernie Taupin, Grimsby and Sir Elton John are intimately connected. Taupin wrote the words to Elton John's 1974 song, *Grimsby*, which describes his time in the town.

Famous people born in Richmond, North Yorkshire

- Celia Johnson, who appeared in New York playing Ophelia in *Hamlet* 1931 and shot to fame as a result, winning a British Film Award for the film *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, of *crème de la crème* fame
- John WycliffeBorn, the 12th century religious reformer. When his works were declared heretical in 1415, his bones were dug up, publicly burnt and cast into the River Swift.

Invaders: Find yourself a decent hill...

Richmond, these days billed as Gateway to the Dales (for goodness sake), was founded by the invading Normans in 1071 around the forbidding castle they built on the river-surrounded riche-mont, AKA 'strong hill'. Today is boasts one of the biggest Georgian marketplaces in the UK and was home to one of Europe's first gas works. Now there's a claim to fame.

Yorkshire movie quote 3: *The Mighty Boosh* (2004)

Howard Moon: *"I want to be the greatest Jazz player in Yorkshire."*

The Spirit of Jazz: *"Yorkshire? What is Yorkshire?"*

Howard Moon: *"Yorkshire is a place. Yorkshire is a state of mind."*

How to speak Yorkshire – words beginning with C

Cack-handed = clumsy

Cack = pooh

Chat = a fir cone

Childer = children

Chippy = a fish and chip shop

Chucking up = being sick

Chuddy = chewing gum

Chuffed = delighted. (dead chuffed = really delighted)

Clarty = dirty

Croggy = riding on the cross-bar of a bicycle, also known as giving someone a 'tan'

A topping place

Roseberry Topping has a distinctive and dramatic outline leading to its nickname, the Cleveland Matterhorn. Sailors once used it to gauge the weather, giving rise to the rhyme: *When Roseberry Topping wears a cap, Let Cleveland then beware of a clap.* 'Clap' meaning, one has to assume, a clap of thunder rather than an unpleasant personal itch.

The word Topping has Viking origins, being one of many ancient words meaning 'hill'. But the Vikings actually called it Odins Beorge, or Odin's Hill. Over the millennia it has seen numerous name changes, going through Othensberg, Ohenseberg, Ounsberry and Ouesberry like a dose of salts.

Scare your kids silly with the legend of Peg Powler

Peg Powler is a hag with green skin, long hair and sharp teeth who inhabits the River Tees. If you wander too close to the river's edge she'll grab your ankles, especially if you're a naughty child. Then she'll pull you under and drown you. Up in the far reaches of Teesdale, in Middleton-in-Teesdale, she's called the High Green ghost. If you visit Middleton, don't be surprised to encounter the county's best-behaved kids.

Vikings ahoy

Langbaugh ridge, in the Cleveland Hills, was once the central meeting place of a wappentake, a Viking settled district. Langbaugh wappentake was eventually divided into two parts, East and West Langbaugh, bordered by Roseberry Topping and Ayton Moor. The whole wappentake was known by its other ancient name, Cleveland, for many centuries. There's still a borough of Langbaugh in Cleveland today, but the natives no longer wear horned helmets. Not often, anyway.

Aye aye, Captain Cook

Captain James Cook was born in the village of Marton, just north of Great Ayton, and lived at Aireyholme Farm at the foot of Roseberry Topping as a boy, later moving to the picturesque fishing village of Staithes. There's a massive monument to him on Easby Moor, sadly often covered with graffiti. You've got to admire the 'artists' for going to such lengths just to create a few random (and not particularly creative) daubs, bless 'em. Mind you, I'd tan their little vandal hides if I caught them.

The legendary Zetland

The little seaside town of Redcar is home to the planet's oldest lifeboat, called the Zetland. It's displayed in the museum on King Street. Built in 1810 by Henry

Greathead of South Shields, the Zetland originally worked out of Spurn Head until it was bought for posterity by Redcar's fishing community.

10 more movies filmed in Yorkshire

1. Blow Dry – filmed in Dewsbury, Batley and Bradford
2. Brassed Off – filmed in Grimethorpe, Wakefield, Halifax, Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham
3. Elizabeth – filmed in York and Leyburn
4. Fairytale: a True Story – filmed in Ramsgill, Kilnsey and Keighley
5. Fanny & Elvis/ Sweet Surrender – filmed in Leeds, Farsley, Rodley, Otley, Hebden Bridge and Halifax
6. Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone – filmed in Goathland, Pickering and York
7. Hell is a City – filmed at Marsden Moor
8. Kes – filmed in Barnsley
9. LA Without a Map – filmed in Bradford and Elland
10. Lady L – filmed at Castle Howard

Miniscule ministry

Make your way towards Upleatham, on the Guisborough to Marske road just south of Redcar, and you'll discover the smallest church in England, St Andrew's, measuring just 17 feet 9 inches by thirteen feet. Just don't blink - you'll miss it.

Salty sea dog stories from Saltburn

In Roman times Saltburn was a fortified coastal signalling station. In the 1200s it was inhabited by a hermit. In Victorian times it became a popular bathing resort, where thousands of northerners turned stiff, blotchy and blue every year swimming in the frigid North Sea. Saltburn pier is the North East's only pleasure pier, just 600 feet long today but originally an impressive 1400 feet until, during a massive storm in 1924, the ship Ovenburg crashed into it. On the cliffs above the pier there's Britain's oldest working water-balanced inclined tramway, dating back to the 1870s and designed to transport visitors between the town, pier and beach.

If at first you don't succeed...

You'll find Saltburn's fortified Roman signalling station at Hunt Cliff, 365 feet above the wild North Sea, built as a watchtower to warn against persistent Anglo-Saxon raiders barging over from Denmark and Germany with rape, pillage and murder in mind. They eventually conquered the station in the late 300s, killing its occupants and dumping their bodies in the well. The Romans finally left in 410... and good bloody riddance, too.

Unreliable weather, reliable beer

Yorkshire is home to more than 80 real ale breweries which, together, produce almost a third of the UK's home-brewed beer.

Wetherby

Wetherby is 198 miles from London and 198 miles from Edinburgh.

The Gytrash: much scarier than a Shagfoal

The Gytrash is a black dog that haunts lonely Yorkshire roads. It can be either malevolent or friendly, helping travellers find their way or getting them hopelessly lost. In some parts of Yorkshire it's called a Shagfoal and appears as a ghostly mule or donkey with glowing eyes. Which, although it's supposed to be 100% malevolent in its donkey form, doesn't really sound that scary. Beware the donkey of death.

Cliff land

Cleveland means 'cliff land' and it has to be said... it's as cliffy as a cliffy thing from a very cliffy place. The cliffs at Boulby, north of Staithes, are a hair-raising 679 feet above sea level, the highest on the east coast of England and a past haven for smugglers. The Vikings weren't deterred by the North Yorkshire coast's cliffiness, setting up house there in large numbers. It must have seemed positively tropical after Denmark's horrid winters. Skinningrove, Carlin Howe and Loftus are all Viking names, meaning Skinner's Pit, Witches Hill and House with a Loft respectively.

Whooooooo

A young headless girl haunts scenic Staithes.

If you're going to build a folly, do a proper job of it...

Wainhouse Tower is a folly near Halifax. At 275 feet high, 84 metres if you're under fifty years old, it is the tallest structure in Calderdale and the highest folly in the world. It took four years to build, from 1871-1875, and boasts 403 stairs. Oof.

Whitby – Burial place of Bram Stoker's Dracula

Beware Whitby, on the surface a delightful little fishing port with cobbled alleyways, jet-filled jewellery shops and pastel-hued tourists clutching dripping ice creams,

sweating their way up the Abbey steps. But the town has a dark side, wreathed in legend and laced with household name horror. Bram Stoker's tale of Dracula was conceived in Whitby and legend has it the big bad bat boy is buried here too. Some say his spirit still roams the streets. Others say it's a load of bollocks.

Super-intelligent sheep

A recent University of Illinois study of sheep found they're just a little less intelligent than pigs and have about the same IQ as cattle. Some sheep have even displayed problem solving abilities – a West Yorkshire flock apparently figured out how to get across cattle grids by rolling on their backs. Not as daft as they're woolly-looking, then.

North Yorkshire Poll tax payers in the year 1377

They moaned about the Poll Tax in 1377 too. Here's a quick count of how many of us were taxed 'til we squealed in various North Yorkshire villages more than six hundred years ago.

- Northallerton – 372 tax payers
- Brompton 114
- Great Smeaton 124
- Borrowby 104
- Danby Wiske 100
- Osmotherley 55
- Ainderby Steeple 51
- Romanby 78
- Dighton 62

The original Queen of the Desert

The life of the scholar, explorer, and Arabist Gertrude Bell, now popularly known as Queen of the Desert, is celebrated in a fabulous stained glass window in East Rounton village hall.

Home of Heartbeat

Peter Walker, who wrote the books that inspired the Heartbeat TV series, was the village policeman for Oswaldkirk between 1963 and 1967. They filmed Heartbeat in Whitby. If anyone's interested. Hello? Hello? Are you still there? Tumbleweed moment...

Fit as a fit thing

If you can run up the 100 steep stone steps to Whitby Abbey, you're a better man than I.

How to speak Yorkshire – words beginning with D, E and F

Dale = valley

Delve = dig

Dowly = dull, gloomy weather

Dursn't = daren't

Eeh by gum = OMG! (EBG?)

Faffing = wasting time messing about

Fair t' middlin = Not bad

Fast = stuck

Fell = moor

Flayed / flaysome = scared/scary

Flippin 'eck = a polite way to say 'kinell

Fliting = moving house

Flummoxed confused

Foss = waterfall

Frozzed = frozen

Old style celebrity-spotting

Lewis Carroll and Charles Dickens both took holidays in Whitby. Dickens recommended it to his author mate Wilkie Collins. Samuel Barnett, of The History Boys fame, was brought-up there. Batty St Hilda, who swore fossil ammonites were snakes, was the Big Cheese at the Abbey in 664AD. And Captain James Cook learned to drive a big ship there.

What's in a name?

Whitby's sister town is also called Whitby. In Durham, Ohio, it had a population of 122,022 in 2011.

10 more movies made in Yorkshire

1. Like Minds – filmed at Bradford, Haworth, Carlton Towers, Giggleswick School and Settle
2. Little Voice – filmed in Scarborough
3. Monk Dawson – filmed at Leeds, Pickering and Malton
4. Mrs Radcliffe’s Revolution – filmed in Halifax
5. Nicholas Nickleby – filmed in Hebden Bridge
6. Rita, Sue and Bob too – Bfilmed in radford, Baildon Moor and Haworth
7. Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves – filmed in Wensleydale
8. Room At The Top/Life At The Top – filmed in Bradford, Bingley, Halifax and Keighley
9. Solo Shuttle – filmed in Sheffield
10. The Dresser – filmed in Bradford, Halifax and York

The Thankful Village of Scruton

Scruton village, originally Scurfa’s Tun and named after the Viking lord Scurfa, is a Thankful Village, which means every one of the village’s young men sent to fight in the First World War returned home. I’m proud to say that my great grandfather Frank Hutchinson was one of them. Only 31 other villages in England were as lucky as Scruton. Yorkshire has four more Thankful Villages: Catwick, Cundall, Helperthorpe and Norton-le-Clay.

Billions of brass bands

OK, it isn’t exactly billions. But Yorkshire has at least 89 brass bands.

Tree-mendous

The yew tree in the middle of the Conduit Court in 900 year old Skipton Castle was planted by Lady Anne Clifford in 1659. Just think what that tree has seen. The tallest lime tree in the UK is at Duncombe Park, Helmsley, at a staggering 46 metres high. Phew - that’s about 150 feet. And the longest lime tree avenue in Europe lines Castle Howard’s splendid driveway.

Yorkshire movie quote 4: Calendar Girls (2003)

“A while ago I asked John Clarke to give us a talk here at Knapely WI. Annie asked me to read it to you here tonight, and this is what he wrote: “The flowers of Yorkshire are like the women of Yorkshire. Every stage of their growth has its own beauty, but the last phase is always the most glorious. Then very quickly, they all go to seed.”

Bolted in at Bolton

Mary, Queen of Scots was once imprisoned at Bolton Castle. Luckily she had staggeringly beautiful views to take her mind off the thought of being beheaded... if it's possible to put such horrors out of your mind just because you can see a few fields.

Fat Betty and co

Fat Betty, Young Ralph and Old Ralph are the names of ancient stone crosses in the North York Moors National Park. Jailhouse Rock, Carrot Hall and Taffy Turnip's Trepidation are all rocks in a cave stream at White car caves near Ingleborough.

It's the beer talking

It's always good to be able to talk about beer. These Yorkshire beers, all brewed by the excellent Cropton Brewery, are named after local fables, facts, tall tales and legends.

- Monkman's Slaughter, named after the brewery's Mr. Monkman who grows the malt, and Mr. Slaughter, the brewer and chemist
- Scoresby Stout, named after Cropton's great explorer William Scoresby
- Endeavour Ale, dedicated to Captain James Cook and his famous ship, The Endeavour
- Haunting Hanks, named after the friendly ghost who has been living at the New Inn for more than 300 years
- Yorkshire Moors bitter, which celebrates the 50th birthday of the North Yorks Moors National Park

Claims to fame in Sinnington

There's a bridge over nothing on Sinnington's village green, and they're world famous for the planet's first ever stainless steel maypole. I do hope you are suitably impressed.

Post-war cricket frenzy

After World War Two huge crowds flocked to watch Yorkshire play cricket. 47,000 spectators turned up at the 3 days of the Roses Match at Bramall Lane in 1946. Yorkshire won the first post-war Championship with a collection of new players who are famous to this day: the spinner Johnny Wardle, the fine all-rounder Brian Close and the astonishingly talented fast bowler Fred Trueman. And, of course, Bob Appleyard, the first bowler to take 200 wickets in his first full season in 1951.

Yorkshire Ripper

In 1981 Peter William Sutcliffe, AKA The Yorkshire Ripper, was convicted of murdering 13 women and attacking seven others. He is currently serving 20 life sentences in Broadmoor Hospital. In 2010 The High Court refused his appeal and confirmed would never, ever be released.

All steamed up

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway is the country's longest steam-operated railway, with 18 miles of track running between Pickering and Grosmont. And proper chuffa-trains too. Result.

Top 29 Yorkshire waterfalls to avoid falling over the edge of

1. Aysgarth Falls on the River Ure
2. Beezley Falls on the River Doe
3. Catrake Force on the Swale
4. Catrigg Force on the Ribble
5. Clapham Falls on the River Wenning
6. Cote Gill Waterfall on the River Skirfare
7. Cotter Force on the Ure
8. Currack Force on the Swale
9. East Gill Waterfall on the Swale
10. Force Gill Waterfall on the Ribble
11. Gordale Scar Waterfall on the Aire
12. Hardraw Force on the Ure
13. Hellgill Force on the Eden
14. Janet's Foss on the Aire
15. Kidson Force on the Swale
16. Linton Falls on the River Wharfe
17. Mill Gill Force on the Ure
18. Pecca Falls on the River Twiss
19. Posforth Gill Waterfall on the Wharfe
20. Scaleber Force on the Ribble
21. Stainforth Force on the Ribble
22. The Strid on the River Wharfe
23. Swinner Gill Waterfall on the Swale
24. Thornton Force on the Twiss
25. Uldale Force on the River Rawthey
26. Wain Wath Force on the Swale
27. Waterfall Gill on the Aire
28. West Burton Falls on the Ure

29. Whitfield Gill Force on the Ure

Sheriff Hutton's royal connections

King Richard 3rd held court at Sheriff Hutton Castle and the tomb of his only child, Edward Prince of Wales, lies in the village church, St Helens.

Archaeology bears witness in Kirkdale (pun intended)

In 1921 a dig at a cave in Kirkdale disgorged the remains of hundreds of bears, tigers, elephants and wolves. Back then some people thought it proved Yorkshire had been covered by Noah's flood. But other less fanciful folk decided it was probably a hyena's den.

14 American Richmonds

As well as Richmond in Yorkshire, there are plenty more Richmonds to be found, in the good old U S of A:

1. Richmond Arizona, in Cochise county, near Tombstone and now a ghost town
2. Richmond California, in Contra Costa county, first settled by the Ohlone Indians 5,000 years ago
3. Richmond Illinois, in McHenry county, named by Isaac Reed after his childhood home, Richmond, Vermont
4. Richmond Indiana, in Wayne county, founded in 1806 by North Carolina Quakers
5. Richmond Iowa, in Maddison county, laid out in 1849
6. Richmond Iowa, in Washington county
7. Richmond Kansas, in Franklin county, named after John C Richmond, an early settler from Ottawa who gave land for the settlement's railway
8. Richmond Kentucky, in Madison county, which no longer exists
9. Richmond Maine, in Sagadhoc county, bought from local Indians in 1649 by Christopher Lawson and one of the earliest Maine settlements
10. Richmond Massachusetts, in Berkshire county, named after Charles Lennox, the Duke of Richmond
11. Richmond Minnesota, in Stearns county, known as the Gateway to the Horseshoe Chain of Lakes
12. Richmond Missouri, in Howard county, extinct since the early 1900s
13. Richmond Missouri, in Ray county, the Morel Mushroom Capital of the World
14. Richmond New Hampshire, in Cheshire county, whose first charter dates back to 1735

Gutless wonder

Kirkbymoorside was home to George Villiers, the Second Duke of Buckingham, between 1628 and '87. By all accounts he was a bit of a lad, a dazzling courtier who led a life of drunkenness, violence and generally appalling behaviour. Weirdly, his intestines were buried at Helmsley but they buried the rest of him next to his dad in Westminster Abbey.

Railway King

I bet you've never heard of George Hudson, the Railway King, pioneer of the York to Scarborough line. I hadn't, to my utter horror and shame. Either way, he's buried in Scrayingham churchyard.

Bard of the Dales

The poet John Castillo wrote in Yorkshire dialect. Nicknamed The Bard of the Dales, he was born in 1792, the son of an itinerant Irishman who married a Yorkshire lass. You'll find an extract from his most famous poem, Auld Isaac, on his gravestone in Methodist Chapel churchyard, Hungate, in Pickering. If you can make sense of it, I reckon you can call yourself fluent in Yorkshire.

*Bud noo his eean's geean dim i' deeath
Nee mare a pilgrim here on earch ;
His soul flits fra' her shell beneath
Tee reealms o' day
Whoor carpin' care an' pain, an' deeath
Are deean away.*

Hard work in Helmsley

Helmsley's Workhouse, by all accounts a horrid place, employed ex-Prime Minister Harold Wilson's great-grandfather as Workhouse Master. His ancestors were from Ryedale and these days he's the Baron of Rievaulx, a totally cool title.

Devilish glacier and hill mischief

The Hole of Horcum is a curious amphitheatre-shaped valley on Levisham Moor, roughly 120m deep and two thirds of a mile wide. Legend says it was made by a Giant called Wade, who scooped the earth out to chuck at his wife, Bell. It was actually scooped out by a glacier in the last Ice Age. They also say the devil flung a handful of earth over the moors to make Blakey Topping. But that's just silly.

Castle Howard revisited

Smash hit telly series *Brideshead Revisited* was based at Castle Howard, which was also the location for the 2008 film.

7 more movies filmed in Yorkshire

1. *The Railway Children* – filmed at Oakworth Station, Keighley Station, Oxenhope and Haworth
2. *The Water Babies* – filmed at Denton Hall, Ilkley, York and Bolton Abbey
3. *This Sporting Life* – filmed at Wakefield, Leeds, Halifax and Bolton Abbey
4. *Turn of The Tide* – filmed at Robin Hood's Bay, Whitby, Ramsdale and Staithes
5. *We of the West Riding* – filmed at Halifax, Huddersfield, Haworth, Blubberhouses, Bolton Abbey, Skipton and Wharfedale
6. *Wuthering Heights* – filmed at Wensleydale, Grassington, Halifax and Keighley
7. *Yanks* – filmed at Keighley, Silsden, Steeton, Marsden and Halifax

Telly vets

The 1975 TV film *James Herriot film All Creatures Great and Small* was filmed around Malton and Pickering, although the book's town of Darrowby is actually based on Thirsk.

A quote about Yorkshire by Sydney Smith, writer and Cleric

"My living in Yorkshire was so far out of the way, that it was eleven miles away from a lemon."

Let's do the Saxon time-warp again

There's a Saxon sundial at St Gregory's Minster at Kirkdale, the world's most complete example, reflecting the eight hour Saxon day. The inscription is fantastic, as clear as a bell blast from the fantastically instant past:

"Orm Gamal's son bought St Gregory's Minster when it was all broken down and fallen and he let it be made new from the ground to Christ and to St Gregory in the days of Edward the King and of Tosti the Earl."

Calling a spade a spade

You've got to love microclimates. Take Terrington, an unusually warm and dry place where you'll find Britain's most northerly lavender farm called, with typical Yorkshire straightforwardness, Yorkshire Lavender.

The amazing whaling adventures of William Scoresby Senior...

Born near Cropton, near Whitby, in May 1760, William Scoresby came from farming stock. But he loved the sea. In 1780 he was apprenticed by a Quaker ship owner on the ship 'Jane'. Several years later, having first returned to dry land to get married and have children, he set sail again, this time with Captain Crispin Bean on the 'Henrietta'. When Bean retired in 1790, Scoresby became Captain.

His first voyage was disastrous, with the crew rebelling against his captaincy. He dumped them and chose his own crew for his next voyage, returning home with 18 whales, a record breaker for Whitby. In 1776, the Government offered £10,000 reward to anyone who made it further than 89 degrees north, travelling either east or west on the treacherous Bering Straits. Scoresby didn't win, but in 1806 he managed to sail just 510 miles south of the North Pole, again breaking records.

During his forty three years at sea Scoresby caught 533 whales, countless thousands of seals, a handful of walrus and around sixty polar bears, one of which he kept at his Church Street home back in Whitby. In those days he was a hero. These days, conservationists would probably cut off his jibblies and hang them from a lamp post.

... and William Scoresby Junior

Born in 1789, William Senior's son William also had a passion for the sea. So much so that he stowed away on his father's ship, the 'Dundee', when he was just ten.

Sent back to school with a flea in his ear, Scoresby Junior eventually became his dad's apprentice on the 'Resolution' in 1803. They worked eight voyages together, one of which was the record-breaking 1806 voyage which smashed the record for the highest latitude reached by ship.

In 1807 Scoresby began studying the polar regions and made revolutionary observations about snow crystals. In 1813 he established for the first time that the polar ocean is warmer deep down than on the surface. In 1819 he wrote a paper, *On the Anomaly in the Variation of the Magnetic Needle*, and a year later published *An Account of the Arctic Regions and Northern Whale Fishery*.

In 1822 Scoresby surveyed and charted 400 miles of the east coast of Greenland, between 69° 30' and 72° 30', with amazing accuracy, his final Arctic voyage. He made one final trip to Australia in 1856 to verify his theories about compass behaviour on iron ships before, completely knackered, he died in 1857.

Seven places named after William Scoresby Junior

1. A crater on the moon
2. Scoresbysund, AKA Ittoqqortoormiit (pronounce that if you can) on Greenland's east coast
3. The Scoresby Sund fjord system
4. The Melbourne suburb of Scoresby, in Australia
5. The RRS William Scoresby, an early-twentieth-century research vessel
6. Scoresby Land in Greenland
7. Cape Scoresby, a bluff marking the north end of Borradaile Island, one of the Balleny islands south of the Antarctic circle

Yorkshire movie quote 5: Creature Comforts (2003)

Trixie: *"They use mice, don't they, for things."*
Captain Cuddlepuss: *"What? Eyeliner?"*
Trixie: *"Its not nice, really is it?"*
Captain Cuddlepuss: *"What, lipstick on a Yorkshire terrier?"*

Swearing in Yorkshire for extra impact

It's surprising how much ruder swear words sound with a Yorkshire accent. Why not give it a go when you're bored, on the bus to work or stuck in traffic.

Chalk it up to the warm weather

The Yorkshire Wolds is as far north as the UK's seventy to one hundred million year old chalk beds reach. It's weird to imagine the corpses of all those tiny chalky creatures slowly building up over the eons in clear, warm seas. The North Sea's clear enough. But it's about as far from warm as you can get. It'll send you blue in seconds.

How to speak Yorkshire – words beginning with G, H and I

Gaffer = your boss
Gander = to look at
Garth = back yard
Gear = stuff, items or things
Gill = stream
Ginnell = alleyway
Goffs = something which smells awful
Goosegog = a gooseberry
Gormless = stupid
Gripe = a garden rake

Guff = a fart
Hell fire = good gracious me
In a bit = goodbye

Wild natives

Remote Farndale smells heavenly in spring with thousands of wild native daffodils blooming around Lent every year. Which is why Yorkshire people often call daffs Lentern Lilies.

Brainy bloke

Edmund Burke, born in 1729, was the MP for Malton for fourteen years from 1780. He was also a 'famed Irish thinker', which presumably means he thought about all sorts of really useful, clever, interesting, innovative things instead of the stream of everyday randomness most of us manage to generate with our sub-standard noggins.

Rough journey

You think it's rough being stranded on a train for an hour because of the wrong sort of snow the vagaries of uncooperative leaves. Until you think about the Ryedale men John Board and Joseph Pilmore, who were amongst the first missionaries to accompany the Christian theologian John Wesley to America in the mid 1700s. It took them many months to cross the Atlantic, having barely survived what Pilmore described as *a fearful storm* at Gloucester Point near Philadelphia.

Just say NO to idolatory

The walls of Pickering's Church of St Peter have some fabulous ancient wall paintings, once covered with paint by a zealous vicar who was worried they'd encourage the worship of idols. They were uncovered again in 1878 and show a mix of Bible scenes, history and legend, including St George slaying the dragon and the grisly murder of Thomas-a-Becket.

Crow's nest nightmares

The famous Whitby whaler, William Scoresby, invented the crow's nest, the tiny basket thingy that sways terrifyingly high up on a ship's main mast, occupied as a lookout point by some poor bugger who had to climb up rope ladder to reach it whatever the weather, storm or no storm. Rather them than me.

Running the Yorkshire Wolds Way

The Yorkshire Wolds Way is a 79 mile walk along the banks of the mighty Humber estuary, through the dry chalk valleys and up to the tops of the rolling hills, finishing on the dramatic headland of Filey Brigg. Some say it'd be a crime to rush this walk. To others, it'd be a crime to *do* this walk. But in August 2011 a crack team of long distance runners broke the record for the fastest time ever, running the Yorkshire Wolds Way in just 13 hours 23 minutes. Respect.

5 Yorkshire-related Guinness record breakers

1. The record for the longest sausage, measuring a massive 59.14 km (36.75 miles) was achieved by J.J. Tranfield on behalf of Asda, at Sheffield, South Yorkshire, on 27th to 29th October 2000
2. The world record for the most bedding plants planted in an hour is 2,021, set by Steven Thorpe at Haworth Central Park, Haworth, West Yorkshire on 21st October 2006
3. The biggest scooter parade, with 860 participants, was won by the Yorkshire Scooter Alliance on the Humber Bridge, Hull, on 14th August 2010
4. A grand total of 186 dancers performed a traditional Yorkshire Longsword dance in groups of 6 to break the record on 26th September 2003 in Halifax, without cutting a single participant's head off
5. The record for the biggest ever Space Hopper race was achieved by 771 people at an event organised by Yorkshire Cancer Research at the Don Valley Grass Bowl in Sheffield on 25th July 2010

Sheep and ancient justice

The village of Hutton le Hole's common land and the surrounding area is administered by a Courts Leet, a historical manorial court of England, Wales and Ireland, and is one of the few remaining Courts Leet in the country. Common grazing rules mean you can still see sheep wandering around the village, happily grazing the roadsides, greens and gardens.

Sheep cause village to die

Wharram Percy is a deserted village in the Yorkshire Wolds, looked after these days by English Heritage. It was abandoned in the 1500s when local farming methods changed radically from growing food to raising sheep. Bloody sheep.

Christian sheep

Rievaulx Abbey, dating back to 1132, is Yorkshire's first Cistercian Abbey and was once

home to 150 monks and 500 lay brothers. They were brilliant sheep farmers, farming a whopping flock of 14,000 sheep on the moors and selling the wool to cloth merchants from as far afield as Flanders, France and Italy.

How to speak Yorkshire – words beginning with J, K, L and M

Jammy = really lucky (you jammy nowt = you lucky thing)

Jiggered = knackered

Keks = trousers or underwear

Laiking/larking = playing

Lass = young girl, woman or wife, as in 'our lass'

Lavvy = toilet

Leg (also 'chuck') = to throw

Lughole = your ear

Maffin / mafted = humid weather/hot and sticky

Manky / Minging = unpleasant or dirty

Mester = mister

Middin = a muck heap

Middling = average

Mithered = annoyed

Bhaji magic

The biggest onion bhaji on the planet was created at the Jinnah Restaurant near Flaxton, Malton. It weighed an unfeasible 3.12 kilos and, at 51cm in diameter earned an official pat on the back from the universe's masters of record breaking silliness, the Guinness Book of Records.

I'm Yorkshire too, an anonymous poem in Yorkshire Dales dialect

*By t' side of a brig, that stands over a brook,
I was sent betimes to school;
I went wi' the stream, as I studied my book,
An' was thought to be no small fool.
I never yet bought a pig in a poke,
For, to give awd Nick his due,
Tho' oft I've dealt wi' Yorkshire folk,
Yet I was Yorkshire too.*

*I was pretty well lik'd by each village maid,
At races, wake or fair,
For my father had addled a vast in trade,
And I were his son and heir.*

*And seeing that I didn't want for brass,
Poor girls came first to woo,
But tho' I delight in a Yorkshire lass,
Yet I was Yorkshire too!*

*To Lunnon by father I was sent,
Genteeler manners to see;
But fashion's so dear, I came back as I went,
And so they made nothing o' me
My kind relations would soon have found out
What was best wi' my money to do:
Says I, "My dear cousins, I thank ye for nowt,
But I'm not to be cozen'd by you!
For I'm Yorkshire too."*

Four traditional Yorkshire recipes

1. Yorkshire curd tart has been delighting local palates since the 1750s or even earlier, traditionally made using rose water
2. Parkin is a sweet ginger cake made with oatmeal and treacle
3. Yorkshire gingerbread includes a layer of crystallised ginger in the middle
4. Liquorice plants were brought to Yorkshire by returning Crusaders and Dominican monks in the 1300s. A Pontefract man, George Dunhill, eventually decided to mix the essence with sugar in the 1760s to create Pomfret cakes, now simply called liquorice. The plant needs deep soil to thrive and Pontefract has plenty of it. Although they no longer grow the stuff locally, there are still two huge confectionery factories in the town

Local ethno-botanist's anti malaria triumph

Richard Spruce, a 19th century naturalist, lived at Coneysthorpe and was buried at Terrington. He discovered that quinine was effective against malaria and brought it into mass production as an antidote. He even explored the Amazon, in those long gone days when men were men and maidens were scared, and has been hailed as one of the world's first ever ethno-botanists.

Burn her!

There's a witch post in Ryedale Folk Museum. Witch posts stood above the hearth and were used to protect homes from witches. There are fewer than twenty left, nineteen in north east Yorkshire and one in Lancashire. Which suggests, if you're not too bright, that there was a flurry of Yorkshire witches causing utter mayhem and chaos, while Lancashire remained relatively witch-free.

Merlin magic

The North York Moors National Park is one of the country's greatest strongholds for the breeding of merlins... that's little falcons, not wizards.

A Yorkshire-related quote by Lesley Garret's father

"What do yer want to go to London for? It's nowt but 20 Doncasters end to end."

Giant fish and chip record comes back home

In July 2011 the record for the world's biggest plate of fish and chips was broken in Yorkshire, by staff at the Wensleydale Heifer pub. It took three burly blokes armed with garden forks to lift the vast 44lb fillet (was it a whale?) into a vat of oil. The finished article was served with 52 pounds of chips, beating the previous record set by a restaurant in the USA. Oh, it's enough to bring tears of pride to Yorkshire eyes.

Yorkshire movie quote 6: Undeclared (2001)

"Man, you Americans are such nancies about fighting. Back in the East End, you can't even finish a Yorkshire pudding without some guy - BWAMM! - to the back of the head."

Top Yorkshire beaches

In 2011 Keep Britain Tidy voted Yorkshire's beaches are amongst the cleanest in the world. The fifteen national beaches winning Quality Coast Awards included Bridlington North and South, Robin Hoods Bay, Sandsend and Runswick Bay, which makes Yorkshire the proud owner of a higher concentration of beautifully clean, pure beaches than any other county. What a shame the North Sea is so effing cold.

Talk about cold...

In the big freeze of early December 2010, when Yorkshire temperatures hit a record breaking low, Topcliffe, near Thirsk, fell to minus 19C, giving it the dubious honour of being the coldest place in England and 'enjoying' the lowest temperature ever recorded in the county.

Lonely insect

A type of Mayfly called *Electrogena-affinis* is only found around the River Derwent in Ryedale. Poor, lonely bugger. And one of the Great Bustard's last breeding grounds was in Ryedale too. That's a bird, by the way, and they've since been re-introduced

to the UK with great success. If you see a great big bastard of a bird on your travels, it might be a Great Bustard. Ask it and see. But don't be surprised if you get a punch on the nose.

Robin Hood, prince of... Yorkshire?

Kevin Costner braved the slippery steps at Aysgarth Falls to film the famous Robin Hood Prince of Thieves fight scene between Robin Hood and his large friend Little John.

Gooseberry triumph

One of the biggest ever gooseberries was grown by one Bernard Harland of Pickering in 1994, a fantastic Yellow Woodpepper Gooseberry weighing in at more than 62 grams, or 2.19 ounces if that's the way your brain works. Egton Gooseberry Fair has seldom seen such excitement, before or since.

Yorkshire Riding confusion

Modern Yorkshire covers about 12,000 square kilometres and about five million people live there. It's Britain's biggest county, split into four areas based on the old 'ridings'. The word Riding comes from the Norse word for third, 'thridding', and the Ridings system was originally created by the Danes. Bloody Vikings.

These days the North Riding of Yorkshire is called North Yorkshire. The East Riding has become the East Yorkshire. The West Riding is now called West Yorkshire. Just to keep you on your toes, there was never a South Riding, but now we have a South Yorkshire.

Celebrating Yorkshire-ness

1st August is Yorkshire Day, held to celebrate the county's unique culture and dialect.

Gnarly folk song by gnarly folk

The unofficial Yorkshire anthem is the folk song *On Ilkley Moor Baht 'at*, which translates as *On Ilkley Moor without a hat* and warns the unwary about the horrible death you'll suffer if you're daft enough to wander about up there without sensible head gear. All a bit dour.

Major achievements

Major Will Lacy, born in 1907 and a resident of Whitby, went to the North Pole on April 9th 1990 aged 82 and the South Pole on December 20th 1991 at aged 84, both times via a light aircraft. What a hero. If the most adventurous thing you've ever done is hike to the corner shop, you'll be seriously impressed. Dude.

Record breaking potato mash-up

How much mashed potato can you eat in half a minute? You'd need to go some to beat Hasib Zafar, who smashed the record for eating the most mash spud in 30 seconds during late November 2011, snarfing down a remarkable 266 grams of pulverised spud, considerably warmed up first as per the official guidelines.

Attendees at the British Potato Conference in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, looked on in fear and wonder as Hasib beat a colleague to grab this most prestigious of world records.

How to speak Yorkshire – words beginning with N, O and P

Narky / narked= cross or angry

Neb = nose

Nesh = cold

Nithered = very cold

Nouse = common sense

Nowt = nothing

Now then = hello

Ow do = how do you do?

Owt = anything

Pack it in = stop it

Paggered = exhausted

Plother = mud

Pot washing = washing up

Pudgy = fat

Ex-crazy wheelie speed freak

The fastest ever motorbike wheelie over one kilometre whizzed by at an astounding 156.50 miles per hour, driven by the adrenaline monster Terry Calcott at Elvington Airfield, Yorkshire, on 12th September 2005. Sadly Calcott died in a road accident in May 2007, but his record remains unbroken.

7 more famous Yorkshire people...

1. Eccentric and precocious Anne, Emily, Branwell and Emily Bronte, writers of tedious Victorian melodrama
2. Deadpan Alan Bennett, one of Britain's best loved playwrights
3. Barbara Cartland, bad romance writer and queen of everything pink
4. J.B.Priestly, novelist, playwright and broadcaster
5. Ted Hughes, poet and children's writer
6. Brian Clough, footballer, footie manager and prolific scorer of breath-taking goals
7. Fred Trueman, one of England's finest ever fast bowlers

Yorkshire ladies' sporting triumphs

Beryl Burton hailed from Morley, West Yorkshire, and found fame as one of the best female cyclists on earth. She won the world championship seven times, once even breaking the men's 12 hour time trial record over 277 miles. Blimey. And Jessica Ennis, the Heptathlete from Sheffield, is a shining star in the British Olympic team. A Heptathlon, by the way, is where you do seven horribly challenging sports in one go: 100m hurdles, the high jump, shot put, 200m run, long jump, javelin throw and an 800m run. Just one of those would see most of us flat on the floor.

Yorkshire movie quote 7: Topsy-Turvy (1999)

"Your performances were, on the whole, promising, which is more than can be said, alas, for that of the sliding doors. One of which might have thought it was in Japan, but the other was apparently stubbornly labouring under the misapprehension that it was on holiday in Yorkshire."

Record breaking canal

Standedge Tunnel, Huddersfield, is the highest, deepest and longest canal tunnel in Britain: 643 feet above sea level, 636 feet underground and three and a quarter miles long.

Hard times at the coal face

Yorkshire was once home to countless coal mines, until a year-long strike and Maggie Thatcher combined to bring the industry to its knees in 1984.

These days there are only three coal mines left, at Kellingley, Maltby and Hatfield. Despite everything, the World Coal Carrying championship is still held in Yorkshire every Easter Monday. The most successful entrants tend to be builders, farmers and, bizarrely, window cleaners.

TV series' made in Bradford

- The Red Riding Trilogy
- The Royal
- Emmerdale
- Spooks
- Wuthering Heights
- Sunday Life

Old nag

England's oldest horse race, the Kiplingcotes Derby, has been run every year since 1519 at Kiplingcotes near Market Weighton.

6 weird and wonderful Yorkshire facts

1. Saltaire, the model village, was built between 1851 and 1872 by Titus Salt, the famous Victorian businessman and philanthropist. The village provided its inhabitants, most of whom worked at Salt's enormous mill, with decent housing, almshouses, a hospital, a school and bathhouses
2. Bradford was known as the wool capital of the world, mainly because of the town's plentiful supply of soft water used for washing raw wool
3. In the 800s York was a Viking stronghold, and the Kingdom of Jórvík was a prosperous Viking outpost. Horned helmets 'r' us.
4. Huddersfield is famous for its Luddite activity. A platoon of 1,000 soldiers were posted there to deal with the mill workers' violent protests against high unemployment and unfair conditions
5. The Rhubarb Triangle lies between Wakefield, Morley and Rothwell and once grew 90% of the entire planet's forced winter rhubarb
6. Sheffield has the highest ratio of trees to people in Europe

Yorkshire speak

Many regional accents these days are threatened with extinction as younger generations across Britain adopt today's magnolia semi-posh accent. But just in case you ever run across someone with a real Yorkshire accent...

What is your 'noggin'? It's your head.

What does it mean when someone has *the monk on*? It means they're sulking, sometimes also called 'having a cobb on'

What does it mean if something is blogged? It's a mixture of clogged and blocked

What is a 'Snicket'? It's a path, usually a short cut.

What are you doing if you're fettling? You're cleaning, in other words getting things in fine fettle.

What is furtling? Furtling means fiddling or faffing about

If someone asks if you were *born in a barn* they're asking you to shut the bloody door.

Yorkshire telly quote: One Foot in the Grave (1990)

Victor Meldrew: *"I asked him if, for the time being, he'd put it in the downstairs toilet for me, and you know what he's done? He's only planted it in the pan! Yes, actually in the lavatory pan, with compost and everything! I mean, how anyone can be so utterly goofy just boggles the mind... a mistake anyone could have made? Are you stark... I mean, what am I supposed to do, cock my leg against the trunk like a Yorkshire terrier?"*

How to speak Yorkshire – words beginning with R and S

Radged = furious

Reeks = smells terrible

Reet = right

Rum 'un = a cheeky bugger

Sam up = tidy up

Scran = food

Shoon = shoes

Siling down = heavy rain

Sithee = goodbye (see thee)

Skeg = to have a look

Skell over = fall down

Skip = ship

Skrike = scream

Slape = slippery

Snap = food

Snicket = footpath

Spelk / spell = splinter

Spice /spoggs = sweets

Sprog = a child

Spuggy = sparrow

Sten = stone

Strand = shore

Sup = drink

Mobbed

When Halifax's Town Hall was opened in 1863 by the then Prince of Wales, the future Edward 8th, more than 70,000 people travelled on 358 trains to watch the ceremony.

Yorkshire born and bred

1. William Wilberforce, the famous anti-slavery campaigner, was born in Hull
2. Alan Titchmarsh was born in Ilkley
3. George Russell, the lupin grower, was born in Stillington
4. Amy Johnson, the aviatrix, was born in Hull
5. Percy Shaw, inventor of the cats eyes in roads, was born in Halifax
6. Helen Sharman, the first British astronaut, was born in Sheffield. Is that t' moon?

Hannah Hauxwell, woman of steel

Hannah Hauxwell is famous for her harsh medieval lifestyle at Low Birk Hat farm, complete with absolutely no mod cons. Widowed early, she endured a life of abject poverty, bearing it with typical Yorkshire humour, spirit and grit until a 1972 Yorkshire Television documentary about her, *Too Long a Winter*, gripped the nation and gave her celebrity status.

Almost two decades later the same TV crew returned to her farm to make a second documentary, *A Winter Too Many*, which followed her journey to London to appear at the Women of the Year gala. Around that time Hannah was forced to sell her still relatively primitive farm home and beloved animals because of ill health. As I write she's still with us, living in a cosy cottage in a nearby village. If you've ever been up Low Birk Hat Farm way you'll know how bleak it is. She's one rufy-tuffy lady. Go Hannah.

The legend of Hell Mary Hill

Hell Mary Hill is a wooded hill near Sheffield which, according to legend, features a cave in which a chest full of money is hidden. An 1827 publication called *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, says there's "a great iron chest, so full that when the sun shines bright upon it, the gold can be seen through the key-hole". Why hasn't some opportunist broken in and nicked it? Apparently an enormous black cat guards the treasure. And when the cat is otherwise occupied, having a pee or eating

his tea or whatever, the treasure is so heavy that “no mortal rope” can lift it. Bugger.

The Yorkshire Rhubarb Triangle

The famous Yorkshire Rhubarb Triangle covers just nine square miles of West Yorkshire between Wakefield, Morley and Rothwell. It’s famed for creating fabulous early forced rhubarb by candlelight and back in 2010, Yorkshire Forced Rhubarb was awarded Protected Designation of Origin status by the European Commission’s Protected Food Name scheme. If it ain’t from Yorkshire, you call it Yorkshire rhubarb at your peril.

3 interesting facts about Halifax

1. Halifax’s Piece Hall, a 230 year old Grade 1 listed cloth market, played a role in the 1996 Mark Herman film, *Brassed Off*
2. Legend has it Halifax is a corruption of ‘holy face’, and that John the Baptist’s head is buried there. He’s on the town’s coat of arms. But it’s more likely that Halifax’s name comes from *hay ley*, which means *hayfield*, and *flax*
3. The parish church of St John the Baptist’s first organist was William Herschel, an exceptional musician as well as the bloke who discovered Uranus in 1791

Doggy fashion

Your average Yorkshire terrier only weighs five to seven pounds and stands just 6 to 9 inches to shoulder height. You can take the whole tiny, weeny dog thing even further with a Teacup Yorkie, a Teeny Yorkie, a Micro-Mini Yorkie or a Pocket Yorkie. Adult Teacup Yorkies only weigh between two and four pounds, the poor little buggers.

Apparently Yorkies were originally bred to catch rats in the county’s clothing mills. Today they’re known for their upright carriage, which ‘conveys an important air’ – which is dog breeder-speak, but you get the picture. They’re feisty little beasts and often a challenge to train because they’re so independent. They bark a lot, which makes them excellent watch dogs, if a bit ‘all mouth and no trousers.’ And last but not least, their sweat glands are located between their toes... a proper conversation starter if you’re ever marooned at a party, stuck for small talk.

Yorkshire quote from *Play for Today* (1970)

Vivian Nicholson: *“I was born in 1936 in Castleford, Yorkshire. You’ll find it on the map – I’m the bugger that put it there. Where we lived, all the fellers were coal miners. Except me dad - he was a full-time, fully-paid-up, fully-fledged bastard.”*

Spend, spend, spend

Yorkshire lass Viv Nicholson won the Pools in 1961 and coined the phrase *spend, spend, spend* by blowing all £152,319 of it by 1965. That's like you or I blowing about four million quid in four years, which is pretty good going. Despite being broke, her fame rumbled on and on. In 1976 she co-wrote an autobiography called *Spend, Spend, Spend*, later dramatised as a BBC Play for Today and filmed, winning a BAFTA. A musical based on her life, also called *Spend Spend Spend*, had a decent West End run. And she's the lady who inspired the Smiths' tracks *Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now* and *Barbarism Begins At Home*. Oh, that Morrissey's such a cheery chappie.

More pointless yet interesting facts about Yorkshire Terriers

How come it's so much easier to remember ridiculous facts than useful facts? Here are five more Yorkie facts to clog up your long term memory.

- In the first two weeks of its life a Yorkie will sleep 90% of the time
- the smallest dog ever recorded was a Yorkie, Sylvia, from Blackburn in Lancashire, who was only two and a half inches high to the shoulder, three and a quarter inches long and weighed four ounces. Sadly she only lived two years
- Yorkshire Terriers have appeared in the films *Meet the Fockers* and *Urban Legend*, and stars Bruce Willis, Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, Hilary Duff and Paris Hilton have owned them. Just trying to imagine Bruce Willis with a Yorkie. Nope, it isn't happening...
- Just 15 years ago no self-respecting American would be seen dead with a toy dawg. These days there are three toy breeds in the US top ten

The Kilburn white horse

The Kilburn white horse, on the southern flank of Sutton Bank, is far from ancient, created in 1857 by local lad Thomas Taylor. The biggest and most northerly of its kind in the country, it can be seen from Julian's Bower near Alkborough in North Lincolnshire, more than 45 miles away, and was covered over in the Second World War to prevent German bombers using it as a landmark.

Shite

Observation: Because the r is right next to the t on a regulation qwerty keyboard, it's far too easy to type *Yorkshite*.

A Yorkshire joke

A Yorkshireman takes his cat to the vet. "Ay up, lad, I need to talk to thee about me

cat.”, he says. The vet says, “*Is it a tom?*” The Yorkshireman replies, “*Nay, you daft beggar, I’ve brought it with us.*”

4 more Yorkshire-related Guinness record breakers

1. The biggest ever bag of crisps weighed in during 2004, created by Seabrook Potato Crisps Ltd in Bradford and measuring an astonishing six feet by four, more than two feet deep. The total weight? 52kg. That’s 114lb 10oz in old money
2. The biggest game of musical bumps was played by 370 people in a very silly event organised by Scarborough’s Yorkshire Coast College in September 2011
3. The first mother and daughter team to row any ocean is Sarah and Sally Kettle, who rowed east to west across the mighty Atlantic in a boat called Calderdale Yorkshire Challenger, landing on the other side in May 2004. I bet they were a bit tired, she says with typical Yorkshire understatement
4. Back in the olden days when cricketers wore white, in 1948, the record for the biggest ever England cricket match went to England v. Australia at Headingley, Leeds. The match attracted a whopping 159,000 live spectators

Yorkshire Saints, martyrs and bishops

- Saint and Northumbrian king Edwin of Northumbria was born in Yorkshire in the year 586
- St Hilda, born in the year 614, lived and worked in Whitby
- Bishop John of Beverley was born in Beverley and died in the year 721
- Bishop John Fisher was born in Beverley in 1469
- Margaret Clitherow, AKA St Margaret, was born in York in 1556
- The martyr Blessed Nicholas Postgate was born in Egton in 1596

Cave life

You’ll have heard of stalactites and stalagmites. But what about Helictites? They’re out-of-control cave formations that grow spirally, sideways or at random. You can find some amazing examples at White Scar cave, where there are also spooky goings on: a weird disembodied voice regularly follows the last guide out of the cave.

An 1780 book called, long-windedly, *A Tour to the Caves, in the environs of Ingleborough and Settle, in the West-Riding of Yorkshire*, was a pioneer in treating caves as a fun thing to explore instead of nasty places to avoid. If you visit White Scar caves watch out for the seam of coal near the entrance, laid down hundreds of millions of years ago in a vast, steamy prehistoric swamp. The name White Scar comes from the ancient Norse word *Skær*, meaning a low reef in the sea.

How to speak Yorkshire – words beginning with T-Z

Ta = thank you

Tata/tara = goodbye

Thee / tha = you

Thissen = yourself

Threp = a kick

Tyke = a Yorkshire person

Un = one

Up-skelled = Spilled or knocked over

Vexed = angry

Wick = alive / lively

Yan = one

Yam = home

Yat = hot

Yune = oven

Yorkshire movie quote 8: Of Human Bondage (1934)

Thorpe Athelny: *"I don't think women ought to sit down at table with men."*

Philip Carey: *"Oh, don't you? Why not?"*

Thorpe Athelny: *"It ruins conversation. I'm sure it's very bad for them. It puts ideas in their heads. And women are never at ease with themselves when they have ideas."*

Philip Carey: *"You sound like the voice of old England!"*

Thorpe Athelny: *"I am, sir. And it is this fine old Yorkshire pudding that gives me the strength to carry on."*

An ode to Sheffield

- Sheffield is the fourth biggest city in Britain
- More people than average in Sheffield have no religion, at 17.9%
- Sheffield boasts the planet's oldest football club, Hallam, created by a bunch of renegade cricketers in 1857
- Hallam footie club plays at the world's oldest football ground near Crosspool
- There are more 20 to 24 year-olds than any other age group in Sheffield,
- The Sheffield Ski Village is Europe's biggest artificial ski resort
- The Lyceum, Crucible and Studio theatres make Sheffield the biggest UK theatre complex outside London's West End
- The land where the city stands has been occupied by humans since the last Ice Age, possibly longer. Brrrr
- Sheffield became a city in 1893

- The city has been twinned with Anshan in China, Bochum in Germany, Donetsk in the Ukraine and Esteli in Nicaragua
- Sheffield's Don Valley International Athletics Stadium is the biggest in Britain
- The Crucible Theatre has hosted the World Professional Snooker Championships since 1977
- The city's the home of Liquorice Allsorts, made there for 100 years
- More than 50% of the planet's surgical blades are made in Sheffield. Cutting edge stuff

The Yorkshire Football League

The Yorkshire Football League was a competition founded in 1920. In 1982 it merged with the Midland League to become the Northern Counties East League. It was preceded by a Yorkshire League, founded in 1898 and featuring 10 teams, which was dissolved a year later.

5 Yorkshire politicians and activists

1. In 1759 William Wilberforce was born in Hull, a social campaigner who brought about the abolition of slavery. Good bloke
2. Robin Hood, legendary anti-hero and the common people's favourite thief, was allegedly born in Barnsdale
3. William Bradford was born in Austerfield in 1590, a Plymouth governor and pilgrim father, which means he was one of the first people to bravely bugger off to America
4. Ex-PM Harold Wilson was born in Huddersfield in 1916
5. Herbert Henry Asquith, ex-PM, was born in Morley in 1852

Knickerless parsons

If you thought your life was hard, try the monks at Fountains Abbey for size. They were dedicated to eating bugger all, committed to long periods of silence, wore scratchy undyed sheep's wool clothing and were forbidden from wearing knickers. Blimey, I never knew God disapproved of underwear.

Harrogate water scam

It's mineral water Jim, but not as we know it. In the late 1500s William Slingsby drank from a common or garden well and realised it tasted just like spa water. In other words, disgusting. He'd discovered the Tewit Well, an iron rich chalybeate well full of magic water that was supposed to heal illnesses. Previously just a village, the posh spa town of Harrogate was born. A Dr Michael Stanhope discovered a second well, St John's, in 1631, shooting the town to further stellar heights of poshness. Harrogate's

name comes from the ancient Har-low-Gata, meaning Grey Hill Road, and the nearby RHS Gardens are called Harlow Carr.

The town that baffled Dickens...

Charles Dickens visited Harrogate in 1858 and called it, "*the queerest place with the strangest people in it, leading the oddest lives of dancing, newspaper reading and dining.*"

... and Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie famously disappeared in 1926, later found suffering from amnesia at the Hydro Hotel in Harrogate, now renamed the Old Swan Hotel.

Ripping Ripon yarns

- The building of Ripon cathedral started in 672AD, inspired by St Wilfrid
- the Ripon tradition of the Wakeman, unbroken for over 900 years, is celebrated every night at 9 o'clock in the Wakeman pub with the sounding of a horn. The Wakeman was the keeper of law and order in ancient Ripon and the Town Hall still bears the inscription, *Except ye Lord Keep ye Cittie ye Wakeman waketh in vain*. Gloomy lot. Last orders ladies and gentlemen, please
- Ancient Poll Tax returns indicate the Unicorn Hotel in Ripon has been around since 1379. In the 1760s it was famous for Tom Crudd, also known as Thomas Spence or 'Old Boots', whose nose and chin were so enormous he could hold a coin between them. And he did... at every opportunity. Every local has a pub bore, and he was obviously it

Brimham Rocks rock

320 million years ago a huge delta covered half of Yorkshire. Today the exposed sections can be seen at spectacular Brimham Rocks, at Summerbridge, eroded by wind and water into strange shapes known by odd names. Look out for the dancing bear, eagle and writing desk.

The meaning of 10 Yorkshire place names beginning with 'A'

1. Ackroyd - a clearing amongst oak trees
2. Acaster Selby – Roman fort at the river
3. Ackworth – Acca's enclosure
4. Acomb – place of oak trees

1. Addingham – the place of Adda’s people
2. Adel – dirty place
3. Aire – strong river
4. Aiskew – oak wood
5. Aldborough – old fort
6. Allerton – alder farm

It’s grim at Ripon Workhouse

Horrid Ripon workhouse was built in 1776. In 1832 it housed 33 poor buggers: eleven men, eleven boys - the youngest of whom was just two years old - nine women and two girls. The able bodied amongst them broke rocks for eight hours a day. These days if you’re strapped for cash, you just sign on and claim benefits. We don’t know we’re born, as they say in Yorkshire.

Wild horse fights at Folifoot

The Viking sport of horse fighting (ie. where horses fought one another, rather than humans fighting horses), took place at Folifoot or ‘foal fight’ between Wetherby and Harrogate, and was one of the invaders’ favourite pastimes. Don’t they sound nice.

He was a big lad...

Once upon a time the Penhill giant lived in a fortress on Penhill in Wensleydale, terrorising the locals by scoffing entire flocks of sheep in one sitting. The fat, greedy bastard. As they say in Yorkshire.

The Barnsley-Johnny Depp connection. No, really!

Joanne Harris, the author, was born in Barnsley in 1964 and now lives in Huddersfield. A teacher, she wrote *Chocolat* in 1999, which was made into the Oscar-nominated film starring Juliette Binoche and Johnny Depp.

Another Yorkshire joke

A Yorkshireman’s dog dies and he decides to have a gold statue made to remember it by. He says to the goldsmith, “*Can tha mek us a gold statue of yon dog?*”, who replies, “*Do you want it 18 carat?*”, and the Yorkshireman replies, “*No I want it chewin’ a bone, yer daft a’porth*”

Thirsk

James Herriot, AKA James Alfred Wight, 1916 – ‘95, vet and writer, centred his hilarious tales of ‘vitnery’ life in Thirsk.

Thomas Lord was also born in Thirsk in 1755, a keen (although by all accounts not very good) cricketer who founded Lord's cricket ground and the Marylebone Cricket Club.

The Brontes – Creators of Victorian melodrama laced with hysteria

If you were removed from school and made to stay home for five years, you'd go a bit mental too. No wonder the Brontes made up stories about imaginary worlds, with Charlotte and Branwell creating *Angria* and Emily and Anne conjuring up *Gondal*.

Lost in space – Some facts about the Yorkshire Dales National Park

The Yorkshire Dales National park was set up in 1954. It covers a whopping 176,200 hectares and contains 912 miles of footpaths and 389 miles of bridleways, 5,430 miles of dry stone walls and 635 miles of hedgerows. More than 7.7 million people take a day trip there every year. So if you get lost, you can always ask one of the several million other lost people for directions.

Cheers, big ears

The brown long-eared bat, which lives in the Dales, has ears three quarters the length of its head and body. Funny looking bunny.

Ghosts in Sheffield

It could only happen in Yorkshire... it's the terrifying tale of the phantom chip shop!

On their way home one evening a mother and daughter spotted a new chippie, with the lights blazing, full of eager punters. A couple of nights later, they decided to purchase said chips only to find it wasn't there... instead there was a DIY store.

There's a ghostly maid at Ashdell Grove house, who committed suicide after her secret lover, a local policeman, left her.

There's a scary pregnant girl at the Ball Inn, Darnall, a thin, grey, sad person reputed to be an ex-staff member who committed suicide there when she found out she was expecting a child.

The white lady at Beauchief Abbey and Hall haunts the grounds of both buildings, which are also home to a ghostly monk. And tragic lovers haunt Bunting Nook, thrown off their horse while eloping. Apparently birds don't sing there – it's eerily silent.

Moth frenzy

If you're scared of moths, steer clear of the Dales where there are around 1,500 species of 'em fluttering around the place willy-nilly after dark. Very few of us are scared of birds but if that's you, there are more than 100 species to terrify you there, plus 36 species of butterflies and 30 species of mammals... not including humans, who are probably the scariest and most dangerous mammals currently wandering (and trashing) our lovely, blue planet.

Can we do it? Er... probably not!

The 'real' three peaks run is bad enough. But the Dales have their own version, taking in Whernside, Ingleborough and Pen-y-ghent, with thousands of crazy people completing the 24.5 mile circular route in 12 hours or less.

As many as 120,000 people climb Ingleborough each year. It's surprising it hasn't been worn down to a fraction of its former splendour by now.

Mind the gap...

Malham Cove is a vast natural limestone cliff formed by the Craven Fault, once home to a massive prehistoric waterfall. The valley is dry these days and the original river runs deep underground.

Malham Cove Rising is the entrance to the river's submerged cave system, which is in the process of being mapped by the nuttiest of the nutty, a band of cave divers only beaten in terms of complete craziness by North Sea oil rig divers, famous for their passion for risk-taking.

Above the cove there's a limestone pavement scarred by Clints and Grikes which, while they sound like characters from Lord of the Rings, are actually channels eroded into the stone by water.

You thought you were rugged? Meet the Swaledale sheep

Swaledales are a particularly hardy breed of sheep, so much so that they're exported all over the planet to rough, difficult terrain where other sheep can't survive. Along with Herdwicks, which hail from Cumbria, they form the flocks that conserve the grassy uplands of the South Downs, too bleak and windy for ordinary sheep.

Wikipedia describes Swaledales as hardy, thick coated, able bodied and bold. A bit like Yorkshire folk.

The meaning of 10 Yorkshire place names beginning with 'B'

1. Baildon – curved hill or berry hill
2. Bankside – the side of a hill
3. Barden – barley valley
4. Barkston – Borkr's farm or enclosure
5. Barlow – Hill with a barn or barley hill
6. Barnsley – Beorn's wood or clearing
7. Batley – Bata's wood or clearing
8. Bawtry – Balda's tree
9. Beckwith – beech wood
10. Bedale – Beda's corner of land

Out and about in Arkengarthdale

The northernmost Yorkshire dale, AKA valley, is Arkengarthdale, for a thousand years or more dotted with lead mines but today beautifully bleak, dramatic and sparsely populated. Arkle Town starred in the opening scenes of The James Herriot film *All Creatures Great and Small* and the pub at the valley's head, Tan Hill, is the highest in England. If you manage to find your way up there, you deserve a stiff drink. Then follow the narrow track from Langthwaite and you'll eventually reach the splendidly named settlement of... Booze. Honest.

Railway drama, death and destruction

Ribblehead, at the top end of Ribblesdale, is famous for its magnificent Viaduct carrying the Settle-Carlisle Railway. Today Grade 2 listed by English Heritage, the viaduct is an impressive 400m long, 32m high, made up of twenty-four arches each spanning 14m, with 15m deep foundations.

Designed by the engineer John Sydney Crossley, it took four years to build, between 1870 and 1874, and 100 workmen were killed in the process. In 1964 a bunch of new carriages were blown off the viaduct by the wind. If it was built today, it would be an official health and safety nightmare.

Lost villages in East Yorkshire

- Hartburn, on the Holderness coast, was deserted in the 1400s and has long since been washed away by coastal erosion
- Winkton, in the parish of Barmston, was abandoned for the same reason in the 1800s, as was Auburn
- Ravenser Odd, also called Ravensrodd, was a port during medieval times, on the sandbanks of the Humber estuary. The name means Hrafn's Eyr, Viking for raven's

tongue, after a sandbank that predated Spurn Point. In the 1200s it was a vital port until the shifting sandbanks swept it away and winter storms in 1356 and '57 completely flooded what was left. It finally fell apart for good in the so-called Grote Mandrenke storm of January 1362 and now it's totally under water in an area being drilled for natural gas. The village appeared in Shakespeare's Richard II, Henry IV, Part 1, and Henry VI, Part 1, spelled Ravenspurgh.

Boroughbridge

When I searched Google for 'interesting facts about Boroughbridge', one website returned the statement, *sorry, there are no interesting facts about Boroughbridge.* Hm.

Blind Jack of Knaresborough

Nicknamed with a stunning lack of imagination, Blind Jack of Knaresborough (1717-1810), was blinded (no!) aged six. But he still managed to ride a horse, swim like a fish and walk enormous distances, all alone, at speeds faster than a horse-drawn carriage. He even walked from London to Harrogate, more than 200 miles. His job? He built excellent roads and bridges, one of which is the iron bridge over the River Tutt in Fishergate.

Butlins Filey

Butlins Filey was a prime holiday destination for forty years. Built in 1939 and used as an Air Force station, R.A.F. Hunmanby Moor, until 1945, post-war the site fast became a popular resort with its own railway station, hosting more than 10,000 holidaymakers at any one time by the late '50s. It finally closed its doors in 1984. If it was haunted it'd be full of happy, carefree male ghosts wearing knotted hankies or flat caps on their heads, and female spooks sunbathing in vast, cantilevered bras like Yorkshire ladies did back then, before the invention of the bikini.

Penance at the Penny Hedge

In the year 1159, three hunters cruelly murdered a hermit who lived peacefully in a hermitage in Eskdaleside. The Abbot of Whitby, suitably miffed, imposed a penance on the men and their descendants *'for all time'*. Every year on the eve of Ascension Day, on Whitby beach, they were forced to build a short hedge from stakes woven together, strong enough to withstand three tides, using a knife that cost a penny. The ceremony is still performed today, by the people who know occupy the land the Abbot once owned: a horn is sounded, followed by the cry *"Out on ye! Out on ye! Out on ye!"*

Filey facts

There's been a community on the site of Filey for at least 1,200 years. The town's name means 'Five Leys', a ley being a clearing in a forest or meadow. Church records show that in ancient times, hardy Filey blokes fished the chilly North Sea waters as far North as Whitby and Grimsby.

Who'll start me off at £1,290 for Knaresborough castle? Going, going...

£1,290 isn't to be sneezed at in the 2000s. But back in the early 1200s it was a king's ransom... King John's to be precise. He loved Knaresborough and spent the breath-taking sum on the castle there, enlarging the moat while he was at it. Guy Fawkes once lived in nearby Scotton. King Richard 2nd was imprisoned in the town. And the four murderous knights who killed off Thomas Becket allegedly hid there.

Siege, death and collapse in Scarborough

Scarborough's famous Mount was apparently named after everyone's favourite puritan misery-guts Oliver Cromwell, who besieged the seaside resort from the hill during the English Civil War. Anne Bronte died of TB there on 28th May 1849, just four days after arriving to take a sea air cure. Which obviously *didn't* do exactly what it said on the tin. And in 1993 the Holbeck Hotel crashed into the sea because of the area's relentless coastal erosion.

The meaning of 10 Yorkshire place names beginning with 'C'

1. Calder – rapidly flowing stream
2. Calverley – clearing of the calves
3. Catterick – the place of waterfalls, or the place of the hill fort
4. Cawkhill – cold spring
5. Cawood – Jackdaw wood
6. Cawton – calf farm
7. Chew – narrow valley
8. Clapham – homestead on a hill
9. Cleckheaton – enclosure on high ground
10. Cloughton – enclosure in a ravine

Sheep Town

Skipton is Anglo Saxon for 'Sheep Town', home to the aptly named Sheep Street and The Woolly Sheep Inn. There's even an official Sheep Day on the last Sunday in July. Wander around the town and once you get your eye in you'll see the little woolly buggers everywhere, ornamenting old buildings. Thomas Spencer, co-founder of

retail giant and posh persons' shop Marks & Spencer, was born in Skipton in 1858. He has nothing to do with sheep per se, but there you go. They sell woolly stuff, which is a tenuous yet logical link.

Knotty facts about Hawes

Did you know there are 3,854 different types of knot on the planet, and they're all described and illustrated in a book by knot maniac Clifford W. Ashley, published in 1944? If you're suffering a knot obsession, you'll love Hawes, a delightful little town that's home to the Hawes Ropemakers. If you can make up a new knot from scratch, that doesn't already exist, you'll be shot to knot stardom in no time by the international knot-lovers' community. All four of them.

Marauding Scots scared of Bedale

If I was a marauding Scot, I'd be scared witless at the very sound of the name 'Bedale'. It's listed in the Domesday Book as part of Catterick wapentake, also known as Hangshire after Hang Bank in nearby Finghall, where there were a load of gallows used to hang marauding Scots. I wonder if they also hanged non-marauders, or just the marauding ones? Either way, if I was from Scotland I'd steer well clear, just in case.

Two flavours of Catterick

As well as the world's biggest British Army garrison, home to about 12,000 soldiers, Catterick was a TV comedy hit for the extremely silly Bob Mortimer and Vic Reeves. Robert Baden-Powell, who founded the Scouting movement, decided on the garrison's site in 1908 while based at the army barracks in Richmond Castle. The site was called Richmond Camp until it was renamed Catterick Camp in 1915.

Robin Hood's Bay? Bugger all to do with Robin Hood

The first recorded mention of Robin Hood's Bay was in 1536 when Henry 8ths topographer, a chap called Leland, described it as *A fischer townelet of 20 bootes with Dok or Bosom of a mile yn length*. It's a long way from Sherwood Forest, in Nottinghamshire, and Robin Hood is a legend anyway so he obviously had nothing to do with the place name. But Robin Hood was also the name of an ancient forest spirit, used to describe local elves and spooks, so that's probably more like it. Either way, the village marks the end of Wainwright's exhausting 190 mile Coast to Coast Walk and regularly fills to the brim with polite gangs of exhausted, half-hysterical hikers who clatter down the sloping cobbled streets in their walking boots straight into the sea in an excess of pure relief. Havigng done the walk myself, I empathise.

It's those Scanhooligans again...

Ainderby Quernhow and Ainderby Steeple, both North Yorkshire villages, have Scandinavian origins. The Ainderby bit means *the village belonging to Eindrithi*, a Viking whose name meant 'sole ruler'. Quernhow means 'mill hill', from the ancient Norse *Kvern*, and a How or Howe is another ancient word for hill.

Another Yorkshire joke

Q: What do you call a sarcastic cowboy from Barnsley?

A: Tex Piss

The legend of Wilfred Rhodes

In 1930 the handsome Yorkshire cricketer Wilfred Rhodes, born in Cleckheaton, retired aged 53. In his final season the veteran player took an impressive 73 wickets and scored 478 runs, no doubt bowling all sorts of maidens over with his prowess in the process. The Yorkshire Post wrote: *"He had bowled at Grace, and he bowled at Bradman. At 20, at 30, at 40 and at 50 he had shown himself master of his world, and his kingdom was never usurped."* Grand.

Ripley ripoffs

Past Ripley residents include Henry Ingilby, a tax collector for Edward 3rd, and Francis Ingilby who, like many other prominent people in the area, became fatally embroiled in Catholic plots against the monarchy and was executed for his pains in 1586. King James stayed at Ripley Castle in 1603 and a couple of years later the family who owned it got involved in Guy Fawkes' Gunpowder Plot. Some people have absolutely no sense of self preservation.

The meaning of 10 Yorkshire place names beginning with 'D'

1. Dalby – village in a hill valley
2. Danby – village of the Danes
3. Darfield – open land with deer
4. Dee – goddess or holy river
5. Dent – place by a hill
6. Dewsbury – Dewi's fort (Dewi actually translates as David)
7. Dishforth – a ford by a dyke, ditch or drainage channel
8. Doncaster – the Roman fort called Dano
9. Dore – water place
1. Drakedale – dragon's valley

Mealtime confusion

Never ask a Yorkshireman to dinner. He'll arrive at noon. In Yorkshire there's no such thing as lunch. You eat your dinner at dinnertime, around twelve in the afternoon, and your tea at dinner time, in the early evening.

Goole ghoolies

In 2005 the Goole Courier reported ghostly goings on at the three storey Dock Art Gallery, formerly the Goole Steam Shipping Company, in the shape of a mysterious wet patch on the stairs that quickly expanded to cover the entire staircase. Artists and staff thought the mysterious stair-cleaning had been carried out by a super-keen cleaning lady, but it turned out it was happening spontaneously. Many people since have experienced an eerie feeling of being watched. There's no pleasing some folk. If you disliked housework, you'd probably be delighted to discover a clean-minded live-in ghost.

Beverly Beverley

Ancient Beverley is about 1,300 years old and has the oldest grammar school in the country, Beverley Grammar, dating back to 700AD. The town was founded by Saint John of Beverley who died in the year 721. He was made a saint in 1037 and the Catholic Church still celebrates him with a feast on 7th May every year. The town's original name, Beoferlic, means 'beaver clearing in the wood' and beavers were once common in the area until the locals ate them all. Apparently they were hunted to extinction because the church classified them as fish, (sorry, I had to stop to laugh out loud there), which could be safely eaten on holy days when meat wasn't allowed. The town crest still includes a beaver.

Musicians and bands with Yorkshire connections

- David Coverdale, of Deep Purple and Whitesnake, was born in Saltburn-by-the-Sea
- The Arctic Monkeys were formed in Sheffield
- Melanie Brown, AKA Mel B from the Spice Girls, was born in Leeds
- John Barry, writer of James Bond film sound tracks, was born in York
- The Beautiful South were formed in Hull
- Tony Christie, the singer, was born in Doncaster
- Joe Cocker of the gravelly voice was born in Sheffield
- The Cribbs were formed in Wakefield
- Kiki Dee, singer and songwriter, was born in Bradford
- Def Leppard, Heaven 17 and The Human League were all formed in Sheffield
- Gang of Four, the post-punk band, were formed in Leeds

- Paul Rodgers, of Free and Bad Company, was born in Middlesbrough
- The Kaiser Chiefs were formed in Leeds
- Gareth Gates was born in Bradford
- Robert Palmer was born in Batley
- Pulp were formed in Sheffield
- Corinne Bailey Rae was born in Leeds
- Chris Rea was born in Middlesbrough
- Shed Seven formed in York
- Kimberley Walsh, Girls Aloud member, was born in Bradford

Hauntings in Wakefield

At East Ardsley, where mining ceased more than a century ago, you might be unlucky enough to hear the echoing sounds of ghostly miners, with hobnailed boots, making their way along the pavements. The Grove Inn is home to a mischievous spirit that smashes reflective surfaces and moves heavy furniture. One landlady even said the ghost had tried to smother her as she lay in her bed. HMP Wakefield Prison, cell number D336, is said to be haunted by serial killer Harold Shipman. People at Kirkgate railway station have spotted a woman in Victorian clothing in the subway connecting platforms 1 and 2. The Old Vicarage Bookshop on Zetland Street is haunted by a poor soul who died of the plague. Sandal Castle is haunted by a yappy little dog who, when touched, disappears. And at Wakefield Bridge passers by have seen a ghostly crawling figure of a man who apparently fell from there, broke both legs and died.

Barnsley blows sky high

In late December 1866 the Oaks Colliery near Stairfoot, Barnsley, blew up as flammable gases caught fire in a series of massive underground explosions. More than 380 miners and rescuers were killed. It remains England's worst ever colliery disaster and the UK's second worst ever mining accident.

Another Yorkshire joke

Apparently there's a new kind of chewable Ecstasy in Leeds. It's called 'e by gum'.

Blubberhouses

What an excellent place name. Blubberhouses has several potential origins including the blueberry and the ancient Blue Boar Inn, and has been spelled several ways over the millennia: Bluburgh, Bluborrow, Bluburhouse and Bluberhusum. Nobody knows where the name actually originated but in Anglo Saxon *burh* means fort, *blueberg* means blue mountain and *bluberhus* means the house at the bubbling stream.

'Poncey' Barnsley

Michael Parkinson was born near Barnsley and went to Barnsley Grammar School. The town was mentioned in a Monty Python sketch, where the black sheep son of a family of pretentious actors had run off to Barnsley to become a 'poncey miner'. It's home to the country's biggest stately home, Wentworth Woodhouse. The famous Barnsley mutton chop weighs 3lbs, one hell of a lot of sheep to eat in one sitting. Brian Glover, Dickie Bird, Arthur Scargill, Daren Gough, Jenni Murray, Mick McCarthy and Sam Nixon all hail from this much-maligned West Yorkshire town. Barnsley's massive market is more than 700 years old, with more than 300 stalls. Which, if you dislike shopping, sounds like the purest of hells.

Can you tell he's from Yorkshire?

Yes, you can tell a Yorkshireman. But you can't tell him much.

Ghosts in Leeds

Leeds has plenty of paranormal stuff to spoil a good night's sleep. There's a Victorian Lady at 10 Woodhouse Square who manifests footsteps, odd noises and doors opening on their own, suspected to be a nanny looking for two children who died in the Nursery. Spooky laughter haunts the Abbey Inn, Newlay, emanating from the cellar. The pub also boasts (if that's the right word) a grey lady, a cloaked figure and a man sporting a seriously camp Guy Fawkes-style hat. Armley Prison is home to clanking chains and phantom lights. The Cardigan Arms pub loos are haunted by an old woman with long, straight hair, spotted as a reflection of the mirror and seen out of the corner of peeing ladies' eyes. There's a ghostly pianist at the City Palace of Varieties and an unknown lady who brings weird cold patches of air with her. And there's a man in jeans and a checked shirt at Copperfields College School, which doesn't sound very scary but he apparently waves at people then disappears into thin air. Why 'thin' air? Who knows.

Mary Bateman, the Yorkshire Witch – 1768-1809

Mary Bateman was born in Asenby and worked in Thirsk. During the 1780s she became a con artist, convincing her hapless victims she had supernatural powers. By the end of the 1700s she'd created a reputation as a fortune teller in Leeds. In 1806 William and Rebecca Perigo approached her for help, certain they'd been cursed. Over the next few months Bateman fed the couple platefuls of poison-laced pudding. William couldn't stomach it (Bateman was obviously no cook) but Rebecca scoffed the lot, eventually dying in 1806. William Perigo reported Bateman to the authorities and she was arrested. A search of her home revealed a stash of poison as well as a load of personal belongings nicked from her victims and in early 1809 she was tried

in York, found guilty of fraud and murder and sentenced to death. She tried to claim she was pregnant but, once her deception was discovered, she was hanged on 20th March 1809, after which her dead body was put on public display. Locals even sold strips of her skin as charms against evil, and the bits that were left over are still on display at Leeds' Thackeray Museum. The moral of the tale? Don't try to kid a Yorkshireman. It'll end in tears.

It simply isn't cricket, chaps

Yorkshire County Cricket Club has won the prestigious County Championship 30 times. Second come Surrey, who have won it a mere 18 times.

Bad luck for Thirsk

The first Thirsk rail crash happened at Manor House signal box in 1892, on the North Eastern Railway about 3 miles north of Thirsk. The second took place in 1967, killing seven people and injuring forty five more. I think I'll walk.

Stone me... it's Mother Shipton's Cave

Mother Shipton was an infamous prophetess and seer, which basically meant she made all sorts of weird stuff up that scared the wits out of people who should have known better. She lived about 500 years ago, spanning the reigns of King Henry 8th and Queen Elizabeth 1st, both of whom were pretty scary in their own right and definitely not to be messed with.

Mother Shipton's prophecies caused consternation right across the kingdom, so much so that people were convinced she'd somehow managed to predict the Spanish Armada, the Great Fire of London in 1666 and even the plague. In 1665, when the disease raged particularly fiercely, the diarist Samuel Pepys wrote, "See - Mother Shipton's word is out".

She was supposedly born at Mother Shipton's cave, a geological phenomenon known as The Petrifying Well. It's Britain's oldest visitor attraction, which opened to the public in 1630 and forms part of the Mother Shipton Estate, a leftover from the Ancient Forest of Knaresborough. It's a creepy place, festooned with everyday objects that, very slowly, become covered in a crust of limestone that crystallises out of the calcium-rich water. If you've never seen a teddy bear, a trainer or a baby's shoe turned to stone, now's your chance. How can you possibly resist?

The world's most famous cricket umpire

Dickie Bird is from Barnsley.

The meaning of 10 Yorkshire place names beginning with 'E', 'F' and 'G'

1. Easby – Ese's village
2. Ecclesall – Eccel's corner of land or a piece of land with a church on it
3. Eelmere – eel pool
4. Farndale – fern valley
5. Farsley – furze clearing
6. Ferrensby – place of the Faeroe Islander
7. Filey - the five forests
8. Gledhill/Gledhow – kite hill (as in the bird)
9. Grassington – grazing farm
10. Gristhwaite – a clearing for young pigs

It's make your mind up time...

So is the 'Boro' in Cleveland, Teesside or North Yorkshire? Middlesbrough was originally part of the North Riding of Yorkshire but in 1968 it became the centre of the new County Borough of Teesside. Teesside was absorbed by the non-metropolitan county of Cleveland in 1974. In 1996 Cleveland itself was abolished and Middlesbrough became a unitary authority within the ceremonial county of North Yorkshire.

An Honest Yorkshireman

An incomprehensible poem in Yorkshire dialect by Henry Carey, who died in 1748

*I is i' truth a coonry youth,
Nean used to Lunnon fashions;
Yet vartue guides, an' still presides
Ower all my steps an' passions.
Nea coortly leer, bud all sincere,
Nea bribe shall iver blinnd me ;
If thoo can like a Yorkshire tike,
A rogue thoo'll niver finnd me.*

*Thof envy's tongue, so slimly hung,
Would lee about oor coonty,
Nea men o' t' earth boast greater worth,
Or mair extend their boonty.
Oor northern breeze wi' us agrees,
An' does for wark weel fit us ;
I' public cares, an' love affairs,
Wi' honour We acquit us.*

*Sea great a maand is ne'er confaand
'Tiv onny shire or nation,
They gie un meast praise whea weel displays
A larned eddication;
Whaal rancour rolls i' laattle souls,
By shallow views dissarnin',
They're nobbut wise at awlus prize
Good manners, sense, an' larnin'.*

Another Yorkshire joke

A bloke from Barnsley, plagued by piles, ask the chemist *"Nah then lad, does tha' sell arse cream?"* The chemist replies *"Aye, Magnum or Cornetto?"*

Frank Wild, born in Skelton

You'll have heard of Ernest Shackleton and Scott of the Antarctic. But what about Frank Wild, born in Skelton in 1873? He survived an astonishing five Antarctic expeditions, drawn back time and again by the 'little white voices', and was awarded the Polar Medal with four bars, one of only two men to be so honoured. You thought Captain Scott was well 'ard. Well, Wild made him look like a complete poofter.

In 1901 Wild joined Robert Falcon Scott's crew as an Able Seaman on the Discovery. He accompanied Shackleton on the famous Nimrod Expedition between 1908–1909 and was also a member of the ridiculously stalwart team that crossed the Ross Barrier and Beardmore Glacier at a record-breaking latitude of 88 degrees, 23 seconds. He joined Douglas Mawson's Aurora expedition in 1911, placed in charge of the western base on the Shackleton ice shelf. And he was Shackleton's second-in-command on the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914–1916.

Darlings!

Leeds' West Yorkshire Playhouse puts on more productions per year than any other theatre outside London.

Yorkshire UFO sighting

According to The Sun newspaper (so it must be true) a UFO that was first spotted hovering over Rotherham in November 2010 was spotted 'days later' 50 miles away in Harrogate. Hardly high tech, then. A barmaid, Sylvia Horsman saw the craft, lit by three bright lights, moving slowly across the sky and apparently 'felt sure' they were the same lights seen over Rotherham. *"It makes you wonder if someone up there is having a look around Yorkshire."* She said.

More Yorkshire ghosts

At the spooky A58 / A641 junction, AKA Hell Fire Corner, passers by have spotted a ghostly horsemen and a phantom car. In 2001, on the A684 between Northallerton and Leeming Bar, two women were driving along when a huge black dog ran in front of their car. They saw it pass through the bonnet, and noticed it had no face. There's a scary Barguest at Appletreewick, a Barguest being a dog-like creature that's thought to be a harbinger of doom. And there have been several sightings of Mary Queen of Scots, in a black velvet dress, at Nappa Hall in Askrigg.

Three more Yorkshire UFO sightings

1. At RAF Topcliffe, near Thirsk, in September 1952, several men from 269 Squadron saw a silver, disc-shaped unidentified flying object swinging in a pendulum motion. Their report was supported by civilians who also spotted the weird object
2. In 1972 there were three separate reports of an unidentified flying object at Menwith Hill, the RAF station near Harrogate. Similar objects were seen over the base for weeks on end, with no logical explanation
3. A UFO "the size of a battleship" was spotted near Fylingdales Moor in 1998

Glacial Lake Pickering

You thought Yorkshire was a bit chilly. But go back to just after the last ice age and you'd freeze your bits off in no time. Back then, there was a vast glacial lake covering the Vale of Pickering between the North York Moors and the Wolds. When the ice eventually blocked the lake's drainage it overflowed southwards, cutting itself a new route between Malton and Stamford Bridge, which is where the River Derwent flows today.

Five sets of thieving scallies who have invaded Yorkshire over the aeons

- Celts
- Romans
- Angles
- Vikings
- Normans

Yorkshire: according to FIFA, it's the birthplace of club football

Yorkshire is officially recognised by FIFA as the birth-place of club football. Sheffield FC, founded in 1857, is the oldest association football club in the world.

South Yorkshire hosted the planet's first inter-club match and the first ever local derby on 26 December 1860. The Sheffield rules code was highly influential in developing the Football Association's 'Laws of the Game' now the world standard, drafted by a bloke called - marvellously - Ebenezer Cobb Morley, who hailed from Hull.

Lone FA cup winners

Barnsley is the only Yorkshire football team to win the FA cup, way back in 1912.

Ferret legging

How's your ferret legging skills? Unless you're from Yorkshire, they're probably less than perfect. But it's in our blood. Ferret legging allegedly became popular in the 1970s and, according to Marlene Blackburn of the Richmond Ferret Rescue League, originated in pubs. The sport involves seeing how long you can keep your ferret down your trousers. Retired miner Reg Mellor, of Barnsley, set the world record time of five hours and twenty-six minutes on 5 July 1981 at the Annual Pennine Show at Holmfirth. He said he'd grown accustomed to keeping the animals inside his kecks to keep the poor beasts warm when he was working out in the rain, a feeble excuse if there ever was one. In 1986 Mellor attempted to smash his own record in front of a 2,500 strong crowd but after five hours most of his audience had wandered off, bored beyond tolerance, to the pub, despite his protests. Mellor retired "*disillusioned and broken-hearted*" but with his dignity (and his manhood) thankfully intact.

Bowie claim to fame

David Bowie's dad came from Tadcaster. And the great man's fellow musicians, creators of Ziggy Stardust Mick Ronson, Trevor Bolder and Mick Woodmansey, all hailed from Hull.

Conisbrough tragedy

The Denaby Main Colliery Company started digging the Cadeby Main Colliery in 1869. In 1912 two massive explosions killed 35 and 53 men respectively, leaving behind 63 widows and 132 children. Only two days before the accident, the King and Queen had visited for tea.

Flat caps, pigeons and whippets

Far from being a feature of working class Yorkshire, poor folk from all over Britain once wore flat caps, kept whippets and fancied pigeons.

7 almost-fascinating facts about Doncaster

1. Doncaster was founded in around 40AD with a Roman fort at Rossington Bridge. By the year 71AD they'd built a bigger, better fort, called Danum, on the site of the current town. They finally left in disgust in the 300s, having never really quelled the rebellious locals
2. Doncaster got its name from the Saxon word *ceaster*, meaning fort, and the area, which was called Don. Don plus ceaster = Doncaster
3. Adwick-le-Street, just to the north of Doncaster, was ancestral home to the Washington family, the forbears of the US president George Washington
4. Doncaster is the fourth-largest town in South Yorkshire.
5. The Doncaster Cup is the oldest regulated horse race on earth
6. The biggest ever unclaimed National Lottery win came from a ticket bought in Doncaster in 2005. If you found out it was yours, imagine how you'd feel. Sick as a parrot, I imagine
7. The Mallard steam engine was built in Doncaster plant and holds the world speed record for a steam engine at 126mph, achieved by Doncaster men Joe Duddington and Tommy Bray

Wasted in Penistone

In 1069, after the Norman Conquest, the poor little village of Penistone was razed to the ground in the famous 'Harrying of the North', which basically meant trashing everything in sight. In 1086 the Domesday book described the place as "wasted".

The meaning of 10 Yorkshire place names beginning with 'H', 'I', 'J' and 'K'

1. Haigh – grazing enclosure
2. Haltemprice – high enterprise
3. Hampole - cock pool
4. Idle – uncultivated land
5. Ingleborough – hill fort
6. Ireton – farm of the Scandanavians or Irish
7. Jervaulx – river valley
8. Kewick – market place or trading place/building
9. Kippax – Cyppa's ash tree
10. Kirklees – a clearing belonging to a church

Ghostly Rotherham romps

The Alpine pub, just outside Greasbrough near Rotherham, is home to a spooky hooded figure that wanders about the bar. There's also an unexplained grey mist.

Both apparitions are supposed to be the ghost of a woman called Henrietta whose drunken father used to beat her up. The pub was once exorcised by a priest after a séance went awry and the person conducting it suffered a heart attack.

Aston Rectory, now called High Trees, is haunted by a rector who murdered his unfaithful wife and there's even a grisly bloodstain on the floor where it happened, which nobody can wash off. And the Bluecoat pub in Rotherham, once a school, echoes with footsteps and children's cries, and features unexplained chilly spots.

13 notable folk from Mexbrough

1. Keith Barron, actor
2. Dan Clarke, Minardi Team USA Champ Car World Series driver
3. Albert Fox, trade unionist
4. William 'Iron' Hague, British heavyweight boxing champion 1908 to 1911
5. Kenneth Haigh, actor
6. Mike Hawthorn, 1958 Formula 1 World Champion
7. Ted Hughes, Poet Laureate from 1984 to 1998
8. Harold Massingham, poet
9. Graham Oliver, guitar-wielding founder of the heavy metal band Saxon
10. Ian Parks, poet
11. Dennis Priestley, twice world darts champion in 1991 and '94
12. John William Wall, author
13. Donald Watson, Vegan Society founder

Bingley's bloody big oak tree

The St. Ives Estate was home to the 250 year old Ferrands Oak, which weighed an impressive twelve and a half tons when it was felled in 1985. The wood was used to renovate York Minster's transept.

City of the dead

Bingley's 26 acre Undercliffe Cemetery is one of the best in Britain, absolutely jammed with decadent Victorian carved stone statues and supremely spooky. If you fancy making a horror film, it's a great place to start.

Days out at Diggerland

Castleford is home to Diggerland, a theme park where adults and children can try their hand at driving gargantuan construction machines. 'No driving licence required', they blithely advertise. So you will literally need eyes in the back of your head.

Rebellious Dewsbury

In the early 1800s the Luddites, protesting against the mechanisation of industry, made Dewsbury their headquarters. In the 1830s it was a centre of Chartist agitation. In 1838 a mob of several thousand or so people besieged the town's Poor Law Guardians, trapping them in the Royal Hotel until the crowds were dispersed by troops. Trouble raised its head again in 1840 when the place was seized by radical agitators and the troops were sent in yet again. The town's first MP, elected in 1867, was John Simon, a Liberal Jewish lawyer from Jamaica, whose background was utterly scandalous at the time. These days Dewsbury is probably most famous for its ancient and enormous market, in which there's a Tripe Shop. Yum... not.

5 famous people from Halifax

1. Brian Turner, celebrity chef
2. Ed Sheeran, singer-songwriter and musician
3. John Kettley, the weatherman, made famous by the Tribe of Toffs song, *John Kettley is a Weatherman*
4. John Walker, biochemist and Nobel Chemistry Prize winner in 1997
5. Sir Matthew Smith, artist, born in 1879

Pre-history and mystery up on Ilkley moor, without a hat

The Romans called Ilkley *Olicana*. But back in 11,000 to 9,000BC the Wharfe valley, where Ilkley lies, was an inhospitable swamp. The surrounding high ground, where hunter-gatherers lived, was covered in dense forest. There's a magnificent stone circle up there called The Twelve Apostles, 2000 years old and 52 feet across. Like Stonehenge, it is still used for solstice celebrations. There have been several sightings of mysterious floating white spheres among the stones, one by the Royal Observer Corps in 1976, whose members followed a white ball three feet in diameter as it danced around the stones. Sounds like they were probably on magic mushrooms.

Famous folk who fell for Otley

Thomas Chippendale, the cabinetmaker whose works are valued at zillions of pounds when they turn up on the Antiques Roadshow, was born in a cottage where Otley's Boroughgate and Wesley Street meet, and went to the old Grammar School in Manor Square.

J.M.W. Turner, the artist, visited Otley in 1797 aged just 22. The massive storm in the background of his painting, *Hannibal Crossing the Alps*, was apparently inspired by a fierce storm over the moor.

Death and misery at Pontefract Castle

Pontefract castle was built on top of an Anglo-Saxon burial ground and has always been a nasty place. Richard II's infamous murder took place there and hundreds of soldiers were either killed or imprisoned there during the Wars of the Roses. The castle has a huge network of dank, dark dungeons hollowed out of the bedrock as deep as 35 feet down and you can still see the names the miserable prisoners carved into the walls during the long, grim, cold days and desperate nights. Last but not least Henry 8th's fifth wife, Catherine Howard, began her ill-advised love affair with Thomas Culpepper there, which eventually got them both beheaded. Talk about asking for trouble. If the psychopathic, unpredictable, pox-ridden murderer Henry 8th was your husband, would you risk an affair? Cromwell hated the place with a passion and the castle was finally knocked down completely in 1648, on his instructions, at a cost of £800.

Shakespeare on Pontefract castle

Here's how the character Rivers describes Pontefract castle In Shakespeare's Richard III:

*O Pomfret, Pomfret! O thou bloody prison!
Fatal and ominous to noble peers!
Within the guilty closure of thy walls
Richard the Second here was hack'd to death.*

The Masbrough ship disaster

A boatyard on the River Don in Masbrough, South Yorkshire, was the scene of a terrible tragedy in July 1841. Sixty four people, fifty of whom were local children, were drowned in the river when the ceremonial launch of a new ship went horribly pear shaped.

Pudsey, of bear, cricket and Monty Python fame

Yes, Pudsey Bear of BBC Children in Need fame was named after the town. Yorkshire and England cricketers Sir Len Hutton, Herbert Sutcliffe, Ray Illingworth and Matthew Hoggard all learned to play in Pudsey and for more than 100 years, Yorkshire County Cricket Club had at least one player from the town on the team. Pudsey is also mentioned frequently in the Monty Python TV series Ripping Yarns, probably because 'Pudsey' is such a silly-sounding word.

What is the meaning of Liff?

The Meaning of Liff is a spoof dictionary of toponymy and etymology written by Douglas Adams (of Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy fame) and John Lloyd in 1983. According to the book, a Pudsey is, *The curious-shaped flat wads of dough left on a kitchen table after someone has been cutting scones out of it.*

Marvellous metaphysical poems

Yorkshire poet Andrew Marvell, from Winestead-in-Holderness, wrote metaphysical poetry during the 1600s. There's not a lot more you can say about that.

Yorkshire's most famous folk song... not

What a swizz. The song *Scarborough Fair*, recorded by Simon and Garfunkel, was actually a version of the Scottish ballad *The Elfin Knight*. My life is ruined.

6 national museums in Yorkshire

- Royal Armouries in Leeds
- National Railway Museum in York
- National Media Museum in Bradford
- National Coal Mining Museum in Wakefield
- Eureka! Children's Museum in Halifax
- National Fishing Heritage Museum in Grimsby

Yellow Belle moths found off piste in Lower Derwent

In October 2011 the first ever Yorkshire breeding colony of the Yellow Belle moth was discovered on a new 'green' roof at Natural England's Lower Derwent Valley National Nature Reserve between York and Selby. The moth usually breeds in hotter, drier places further out on the coast and it was very unusual to find them so far inland. The roof's natural matting was grown in the Breckland, Norfolk, where the moths thrive, and it's thought they cadged a lift on it.

The Great Sheffield Flood

The Great Sheffield Flood devastated parts of Sheffield on 11th March 1864, as the newly built Dale Dyke Dam failed at Low Bradfield on the River Loxley when being filled for the first time. Doh. About 3 million cubic metres of water, that's 700 million imperial gallons, swept down the valley through Loxley village, Malin Bridge and Hillsborough, where it joined the River Don and engulfed Sheffield's centre, trashed Attercliffe and eventually swamped Rotherham. It ruined every bridge along the way,

destroying 800 homes and killing 270 people. An official enquiry concluded the dam's construction was to blame, with a tiny leak growing horribly quickly until the entire structure failed. The damages resulted in one of the Victorian era's most expensive insurance claims, and the cheerfully optimistic (not!) Armageddon Online website ranks the disaster as the world's 20th most deadly flood. Eat your heart out, Noah.

Famous sons of Todmorden

The town of Todmorden boasts two Nobel Prize winners: Sir John Cockcroft, who gained the prize for Physics in 1951 and was the first man to split the atom artificially, and Sir Geoffrey Wilkinson, who won the Chemistry prize in 1973 in recognition of his work on the chemistry of organometallic sandwich compounds. That's what I call a butty. Weirdly Todmorden's postmark is Oldham and its telephone code denotes Rochdale, both in Lancashire. But it's in Yorkshire. And it's also where Supertramp's John Helliwell hails from.

Wetherby runs red with blood

Between 1318 and 1319 the north was raided mercilessly by the Scots. Wetherby was burned down after the battle of Bannockburn and many of its residents murdered, and Scott Lane is so named because it ran red with blood that day. Gory stuff.

Local heroes

Flight-Lieutenant 'Ginger' Lacey, the Battle of Britain flying ace, was born in Wetherby and the town's Lacey Grove is named after him. Clark Gable, debonair star of the silver screen, was stationed at Marston Moor Airfield during the Second World War, as was Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, who became Commander of the 617 Dam Buster Squadron.

And local villains!

Posh bloke the sixth Duke of Devonshire sold the entire town of Wetherby, bar one house, to finance work on the Chatsworth estate. That's the stately home, not the ironically-named inner city housing estate from *Shameless*.

The meaning of 10 Yorkshire place names beginning with 'L', 'M', 'N' and 'O'

1. Langsett – long hillside
2. Langstrothdale – the valley of long, scrubby marshland
3. Layerthorpe – a secondary settlement in a muddy place

4. Malham tarn – gravelly place at the hill pool
5. Manningham – the settlement of Maegen’s people
6. Martley – marten wood (as in the pine marten, a member of the weasel family)
7. Normanby – village of the Norwegians (‘Northmen’)
8. Nosterfield – open country with a sheep fold
9. Ossett – the fold where thrushes abound, or Osla’s sheep fold
10. Oxenhope – a blind valley with oxen

Shakespeare on Yorkshire

A Yorkshire Tragedy is an early Jacobean domestic tragedy printed in 1608 and originally attributed to William Shakespeare. Today most of the seriously clever people who know about such things believe it was actually written by Thomas Middleton.

8 ways to spell ‘Huddersfield’

- in 1086 the Domesday Book spelled Huddersfield Odersfeld, Odersfelt and Odresfeld
- in 1131 the Dodsworth Notes spelled it Huderfeld
- in 1215 the Calendar of Charter Rolls called it Hudresfeld
- in 1275 the Wakefield Court Rolls named it Hodresfeld
- in 1297 the Yorkshire Lay Subsidies spelled it Hudresfeld
- in 1413 the Wakefield Court Rolls called it Hodresfeld
- in 1610 Speed’s Map of the West Riding called the town Hutherfield
- in 1634 the Ramsden Estate Map named it Hothersfield

Your journey time?

In the 1840s it took about twenty six hours by horse drawn carriage to get from London to Huddersfield. Pretty fast ... but they were lucky. Back then there was no such thing as the ‘wrong’ snow.

Bah humbug to Humbug Billy

In 1858 more than 200 people were poisoned and twenty died in Bradford after eating arsenic-laced sweets, sold from a market stall run by greedy bastard Humbug Billy. Billy apparently accidentally added 12lbs of arsenic trioxide arsenic to the mix, in a disaster which helped push through the 1868 Pharmacy Act and finally made the adulteration of foodstuffs a big legal no-no.

Fancy a quick game of Knurr and Spell?

Forget football. Let's all play Knurr and Spell instead. You might well ask... it's a long forgotten Yorkshire game that attracted huge crowds in the 1700s and 1800s and handed out equally huge cash prizes. A bit like golf, the game was played across the county using a Spell – a wooden frame stuck into the ground with spikes – and a spring-loaded cup attached to the Spell in which a wood or pottery ball, or Knurr, was placed. When the ball was sprung from the cup at breakneck speed, you'd hit it as far as possible. Some games attracted 800 or more spectators, many of whom laid bets on the outcome.

9 musicians with Kingston Upon Hull connections

1. John Bacchus Dykes, who wrote hymns in the 1800s
2. Roland Gift, the singer with the Fine Young Cannibals
3. Paul Heaton of The Beautiful South.
4. Lene Lovich, who had a number three hit with 'Lucky Number'
5. Henry Priestman, record producer and singer/songwriter for 1980s band The Christians
6. David Whitfield, 1950s tenor vocalist, one of six artists to enjoy 10 or more consecutive weeks at number one on the UK Singles Chart
7. Fatboy Slim, AKA Norman Cook, moved to Hull in the 1980s and became a member of indie pop band The Housemartins
8. Tracey Thorn and Ben Watt from Everything but the Girl
9. Trevor Bolder, bass player with David Bowie, Uriah Heep and Wishbone Ash

Pier pressure

55 seaside pleasure piers stand around the coast of England and Wales but there's only one on the Yorkshire coast, at Saltburn.

Danes' Dyke

Danes' Dyke, at Flamborough Head, is a series of dramatic prehistoric earthworks and woodland that has bugged all with the Danes. It's a lot older, probably Bronze Age. When Major-General Augustus Pitt-Rivers excavated the site in 1879 he found Bronze Age arrowheads there. The earthwork creates a boundary that effectively cuts off the peninsula, turning it into a fortified area which once contained all the resources needed to support a large number of people.

It's make your mind up time, Bridlington

Bridlington was previously called Brellington, Britlington and Bretlington, all

mentioned in Domesday book (when they obviously didn't know their spelling arose from their elbow), and the town was called Burlington until the 1800s.

Monster Minster

York Minster is the biggest Gothic cathedral in Northern Europe and contains 128 stained glass windows.

Yorkshire sulk

In 1865 Yorkshire Cricket Club suffered a players' strike led by George Anderson, George Atkinson, Roger Iddison, Joe Rowbotham and Ned Stephenson, all of whom refused to play against Surrey after a dispute concerning a bowler from Kent. Anderson took it so hard he never played for Yorkshire again.

Samuel Standidge and the whalers

Not a band, but a bunch of fishermen with a difference. The first whaling ships left Hull in 1598 for the Arctic Ocean, Greenland, Iceland and Norway. The region's most famous whaling company was founded by Samuel Standidge, a Bridlington lad, in Hull during the 1760s. Nearly half of Britain's Whalers sailed from Hull and the trade peaked in the 1820s, when the city boasted the biggest whaling fleets in the country with more than 60 ships employing more than 2,000 men. The poor whales didn't stand a chance.

7 places to find amazing fossils in Yorkshire

1. Whitby - dinosaur footprints
2. Whitby to Robin Hood's Bay – fish, lizards and crocodiles
3. Ravenscar – leaves, flowers and ferns
4. Scarborough – ammonites, bivalves and starfish
5. Filey Brigg - corals
6. Filey to Bempton - ammonites
7. Bempton to Flamborough - sea urchins, corals and sharks' teeth

Yorkshire fairy nonsense

Fairies? Pah. The Cottingley Fairies are a series of five infamous photos taken by Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, two young girls who lived in Cottingley near Bradford. The first two were taken in 1917 when Elsie was sixteen and Frances aged ten. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle used them to illustrate an article on fairies for the Christmas 1920 edition of *The Strand Magazine* and managed to convince himself they were genuine. The fairy photos continued to hold the public imagination until, in 1966,

a Daily Express reporter traced Elsie, who made it clear she believed she had 'photographed her thoughts', which sounds mad but brought the story roaring back to public prominence. In the early 1980s Elsie and Frances, by now very old ladies, admitted that the photos were fakes created with cardboard cut-outs of fairies taken from a popular children's book. But Frances continued to claim that the fifth and final photograph was completely genuine. In retrospect, looking at the photos, they look totally faked and it's hard to believe anyone actually thought they were real. The story is testament to the way human beings kid themselves against all the odds. Even straightforward, no-bullshit Yorkshire folk.

Interesting facts about Goole

When you type interesting facts about Goole into Google you get a query back asking Did you mean 'interesting facts about Google'?

- Embarrassingly, people who live in Goole are known locally as Goolies
- Goole was built in the early 1820s to serve the Aire and Calder Canal and the town was officially 'opened' in 1826
- Goole is Anglo-Saxon for 'open sewer' (nice) or 'outlet to a river'
- A Dutch engineer, Cornelius Vermuyden, diverted the river Don by 10 miles to make it flow into the River Ouse rather than the River Aire, which made the waterlogged land around Goole habitable
- Goole was bombed to bits during the Zeppelin raids of World War I and there's a mass grave for the victims in the town's cemetery
- In World War 2 Goole was only bombed once, by a lost German pilot who was desperately trying to find Leeds

Vikings were definitely NOT horny

Picture a Viking invader clambering up a Yorkshire beach, sword in hand. He's wearing a horned helmet, right? Wrong... there's absolutely no historical or archaeological evidence whatsoever that Viking helmets were horned. It's most likely that those naughty Victorians, who were known for their creativity, made it up. It's official – according to the Yorvic Museum in York, the Vikings were definitely *not* horny.

The Holmfirth Floods

The Holme Valley in West Yorkshire has been plagued by floods for centuries. If you're heading that way, take wellies.

In 1738 heavy rain burst the banks of the River Holme and flooded the valley

In 1777 it happened again, killing three people and washing away a church dating back to 1476. In 1821 the River Home was up to its old tricks again, creating yet another massive flood. In 1852 the bank of the Bilberry reservoir collapsed and the resulting flood killed 81 people, the world's 23rd most serious flood in terms of loss of life. The inquest found the reservoir was "defective in its original construction", as the Commissioners apparently knew very well, being "guilty of great and culpable negligence". In 1944 flash flooding killed 3 people in the Holme Valley but wartime reporting restrictions meant it wasn't widely known. German prisoners of war helped rescue locals and a 14 year old boy, Geoffrey Riley, who lost his dad in the disaster, was awarded the Albert Medal for trying to save an old lady caught in the waters. The Royal Warrant was discontinued in 1971 and Riley exchanged his Albert Medal for the George Cross at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace in 1973.

Bingley Five Rise locks

Bingley Five Rise Locks is a staircase lock on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at Bingley where boats are lifted in five stages. A major feat of engineering at the time, the lock series opened in March 1774 to great celebrations, with a 30,000 strong crowd arriving to watch the first boat use the locks, which took just 28 minutes. A local newspaper, The Leeds Intelligencer, covered the story as follows:

"From Bingley to about 3 miles downwards the noblest works of the kind are exhibited: A five fold, a three fold and a single lock, making together a fall of 120 feet; a large aqueduct bridge of seven arches over the River Aire and an aqueduct and banking over the Shipley valley. This joyful and much wished for event was welcomed with the ringing of Bingley bells, a band of music, the firing of guns by the neighbouring Militia, the shouts of spectators, and all the marks of satisfaction that so important an acquisition merits".

The meaning of 10 Yorkshire place names beginning with 'P', 'Q', 'R' and 'S'

1. Penyghent – head of the open country
2. Pickering – the place of Pica's people / place of the peak or hill people
3. Queensbury – queen's fort
4. Ravenscar – raven cliff or rock
5. Rawdon – red mill
6. Redcar – marsh with lots of reeds
7. Ribston – the stone of the Hrype people
8. Saxton – farm of the Saxons
9. Scholes – place of temporary huts
10. Shepley – a sheep clearing in a wood

Ill-fated Withernsea pier

You build a pier. Then, no sooner do you turn your back than some bugger knocks it down. Withernsea once had a pier, and a grand one it was, at least for a few short years. The Withernsea Pier, Promenade, Gas & General Improvement Company, formed in 1870, hatched the idea of a pier and took on Thomas Cargill to design it. Work began in 1875 and, after a minor hiccup caused by storm damage, all 1200 feet of it were completed two years later. Designed to last forever, the pier's life was cut short in 1880 when a coal barge, the 'Saffron', crashed through its central section. The section was rebuilt using wood instead of the original metal in a move that tempted fate and in 1882 a storm knocked the entire end of the pier off. In 1890 a fishing boat, the 'Genesta', smashed into the structure and destroyed more than half of what was left. The famously scary storms of 1893 saw the 'Henry Marr' and another un-named ship trash yet more of the pier, leaving just fifty feet of the original structure standing. Locals gave up in disgust in 1903, when the remainder was finally demolished. Some things just aren't meant to be.

Caves in the Yorkshire Dales

If you thoroughly enjoy fumbling around in the pitch black and freezing cold with tons of solid rock hanging above you, caving is the perfect activity. The Yorkshire Dales, being famous for limestone landscapes, is full of caves to explore if you're mad enough. Gaping Gill caves on Ingleborough, Alum Pot in Ribblesdale, Mossdale Caverns in Upper Wharfedale, the Kingsdale Master System in Kingsdale and the Goyden Pot and Manchester Hole systems at the top end of Nidderdale are a few of the best. And the Leck Fell area includes the famous Lancaster Pot and Easegill Caverns System, offering more than 43 miles of damp, dripping darkness to explore. It's one of Britain's biggest and most complex cave systems, so take a torch and butties. So-called 'show caves' open to the public include Ingleborough Cave in Clapdale, Stump Cross Caverns near Pateley Bridge and White Scar Caves near Ingleton.

Hauntings at York's Theatre Royal

If you hear music wafting from York's Theatre Royal after closing time, not to worry. It's probably a ghost. Like many theatres, it's haunted in several ways. There's also a grey figure, thought to be the spirit of a nun who was bricked up and left to die after 'seeing angels' back when a hospital stood on the site. Oddly, seeing her is supposed to be good luck. There have also been reports of a ghostly actor, killed in a dual nearby.

Ye olde seaside resort

Scarborough Spa is Britain's first seaside resort and has been welcoming families since the 1650s.

Sweet nonsense

Pateley Bridge is home to England's oldest sweet shop, opened in 1827 and still going strong.

Snow way!

Castleford has the UK's longest indoor real snow slope at 170 metres long, made of more than 1,500 tonnes of real snow. They also have Europe's highest indoor ice-climbing wall. The Sheffield Ski Village has a third of a mile of 'alpine' slopes and the Olympic size swimming pool at Pond's Forge contains Europe's deepest diving pool.

A great place to get high

Hardraw Force, in the Yorkshire Dales, is England's highest single drop waterfall at 100 feet. And the highest point on England's east coast is Boulby, near Staithes, with cliffs soaring more than 200m. That's 656 feet in old money, so step AWAY from the edge.

Dare you stay at the Courtyard Inn in Guisborough?

The Courtyard Inn in Guisborough is jammed to the ceiling with scary spooks. Once a funeral parlour, it's known for rattling doors, taps that unaccountably turn on and lights that switch themselves off. Several customers have been scared out of their wits after seeing ashtrays fly off the tables. A ghostly man in a pink hat has been spotted, and one of the building's previous owners fled in terror, never to return, after he saw an elderly lady vanish into thin air right in front of his eyes.

Grim of Grimsby

Although there are signs of a little Roman settlement on the site 700 years earlier, Grimsby was founded by a Danish fisherman called Grim in the 9th century AD. The word 'by' means 'village' in Old Norse, the same in modern Swedish, and means 'city' or 'town' in Danish and Norwegian. Locals call themselves Grimbarians. Grimsby is listed in the Domesday Book and also stars in the Orkneyinga Saga, which says, "*We have waded in mire for five terrible weeks; there was no lack of mud where we were, in the middle of Grimsby. But now away we let our beaked moose [ship] resound meerily on the waves over the seagull's swamp [sea] to Bergen.*"

Little Driffield

Little Driffield, next to Driffield, is the burial place of King Aldfrith of Northumbria, who died in 704 or 705 AD.

Hornsea

Nineteenth century Bettison's Folly in Hornsea contains the only fully working retractable flag pole in the country. I hope you find yourself breathless with excitement and amazement. If not, here's another top Hornsea fact. Short-lived Hornsea pier was opened in 1880 but was so badly damaged by a ship a year later that it was demolished in 1897. Which just goes to show, you don't mess with the North Sea.

8 Yorkshire castles

1. Richard 3rd grew up at Middleham Castle
2. Helmsley Castle, once a formidable fortress, is a beautiful battle-scarred ruin today
3. Conisbrough Castle's 90 foot keep was built in 1180AD and is the oldest surviving keep of its type in England
4. Skipton Castle has guarded the Dales for more than 900 years and is one of England's best kept and complete medieval castles
5. Richmond Castle is set on a bend in the river and offers spectacular views over the Yorkshire Dales
6. Ripley Castle near posh Harrogate hosts archery, falconry, concerts, plays and a classic car rally
7. Forbidding medieval Bolton Castle overlooks beautiful Wensleydale
8. Scarborough Castle is ideally placed to defend the headland and the site has been fortified for at least 2,500 years. That's what I call being on the defensive

1960s cricketing triumphs

Yorkshire won the County Cricket Championship six times during the 1960s, twice under the leadership of Vic Wilson and four times under Brian Close. The team included the world famous England fast bowler Fred Trueman, who took 307 Test wickets, the legendary all-rounder Ray Illingworth and the opening batsman Geoff Boycott who still represents, to many, the very essence of no-nonsense, dry-as-a-bone Yorkshire-ness.

The seven hills of Morley

Like Rome, Morley in West Yorkshire is built on seven hills: Scatcherd Hill, Dawson

Hill, Daisy Hill, Chapel Hill, Hunger Hill, Troy Hill and Banks Hill.

Four more Yorkshire sayings

1. *Ah'll go to t'foot of our stairs* is a sarcastic exclamation of non-surprise
2. *It's neither nowt nor summat* means it doesn't fit into any particular category
3. *Where there's muck, there's brass* means where there's dirt there's money... for example, coal
4. *I'll tell you that fer nowt* means it's blindingly obvious

Dead famous

Utley cemetery in Keithley contains the grave of brave Christopher Ingham, a veteran of the Napoleonic war who died in 1866. A member of the Duke of Wellington's 95th Rifle Regiment, he fought in ten bloody battles against the French in Spain, France and Belgium, including the Battle of Waterloo, for which he was awarded the Peninsula Medal.

Keighley, birthplace of town twinning

In 1905 Keithley was made the 'sister city' of the French villages of Suresnes and Puteaux. And Keithley was also the first town in the world to be twinned under the current system, back in 1920, with the French town of Poix-du-Nord. Today, weirdly, the town is also twinned with Myrtle Beach in South Carolina and Manzini in Swaziland, Africa.

Making the earth move

On 19th September 1508 an earthquake hit the North Sea and was felt right across England and Scotland. Recent research indicates it had a possible magnitude of 7.0 on the Richter scale. There were similar quakes felt in Yorkshire during 1601 and 1602, 1703, 1750, 1753 (Skipton), 1754 (Whitby), 1843 and 1864 (Todmorden), 1859 (Settle), 1944 (Skipton), 1970 (Kirkby Stephen) and in 2011, when a 'quake measuring 3.6 on the Richter scale was felt by folk right across Yorkshire and Cumbria, including my Mum.

13 more American Richmonds

1. Richmond New York, on Staten Island, became part of New York colony in 1683
2. Richmond New York, in Ontario county, settled in about 1790 by Captain Pitts and James Coddling
3. Richmond Ohio, in Jefferson county. Descendants of the Talbotts, who bought the land in 1808, still live there

4. Richmond Oklahoma, in Woodward county
5. Richmond Oregon, in Wheeler county, now a ghost town
6. Richmond Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia county
7. Richmond Rhode Island, in Washington county, originally called Little Narragansett after the indigenous people whose land was stolen to build it on
8. Richmond Texas, in Fort Bend county, established in 1837 and named, by some poor homesick soul, after Richmond in North Yorkshire
9. Richmond Utah, in Cache county, was laid out in 1861
10. Richmond, Vermont, in Chittenden county, dates back to 1795
11. Richmond Virginia, named after the London suburb in 1737
12. Richmond Wisconsin, in Shawano county, founded in 1856
13. Richmond Wisconsin, in Walworth county, founded by three men who hailed from Richmond, Rhode Island



