Inside this Summer edition:

Archaeology and Art Join Forces for Summer

An exciting blend of archaeology and art are being brought together for a special summer exhibition at the Craven Museum and Gallery. The joint exhibition, which aims to look at some of the museum's collections in a new and inspiring way, has been developed mainly as a result of work done by staff of the Heritage Lottery funded Phoenix Project, who are based at the museum.

‘Archaeology Technology’ is an exhibition of technology, invention and discovery. Many societies of the past not only developed their own, unique technologies but also built on advances made by the people before them,’ said Amy Ball, Assistant Curator at the Museum.

Amy explained that visitors will be able explore the progress made by the Romans as depicted in mosaics, fresco wall paintings and hypocaust heating. Evidence of this can be seen in the archaeological finds of Kirk Sink Roman Villa at Gargrave. The exhibition also looks at prehistoric flint tools and the first uses of metal.

Members of Skipton Young Archaeologists’ Club have contributed to the exhibition by writing labels and displaying artefacts they have made.

‘Stories and Symbolism’ caters for the artistic content of the exhibition featuring a selection of paintings from the Roebuck Collection. It focuses on still life, portrait and landscape paintings that tell stories or have a hidden meaning.

‘We hope that these exhibits will help people to uncover all the stories behind Clement Roebuck’s fascinating and varied collection,’ said Anna Bowman, who was the driving force behind this.

The exhibitions run from Saturday 17 May to 1 September and will be open on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm and on Sundays from 12 noon to 4 pm but closed on Tuesdays. Admission is free. In addition there is a Family Fun Day on Saturday 19 July.
Quite a number of modern day cures began as folk remedies, although it seems hard to believe. Perhaps we could practice some of these cures today and save ourselves a trip to the doctors.

In the Dark Ages, systematic medical knowledge was confined to religious houses which cared for the sick and dying. When the Council of Tours in 1169 and a Papal Bull in 1215 forbade priests and monks from ‘spilling blood’, their surgical knowledge was passed on to barbers because of their skill with sharp instruments. The herbalists and medical doctors looked down on these barber surgeons which is why surgeons are called ‘Mr’ and not ‘Dr’.

One of the mysteries of anatomical science was the whereabouts of the soul. Although it could not be found, it was thought to be dislodged and escaped when a person sneezed ~ hence the ‘Bless you’ when some one sneezed / sneezes.

In old England, powerful laxatives and emetics were used to cure many ailments including headaches, fever, bowel disorders, deafness and insanity. (Author: This does not work, I am still deaf and slightly ‘nutty’!)

For centuries, scrofula, a tuberculous swelling of the lymph glands, known as ‘the King’s evil’ was allegedly cured by the touch of a monarch. Edward the Confessor is said to have cured one thousand, seven hundred and thirty six individuals by touch and Charles II ‘touched’ more than ninety thousand sufferers.

A book, ‘Old Fashioned Remedies’ recommended cures that had been used for centuries. One cure for athlete’s foot, blisters, bruises and other foot ailments was to soak the feet in a bowl of hot urine. Fresh urine was also recommended as a mouthwash ~ don’t try this one!

There are a number of cures for earache set out in an ancient medical book ‘The Primitive Physic’ ~ black wool, a clove of garlic dipped in honey, a cockroach dipped in oil, snail juice and ants eggs beaten in onion juice.

The cures for warts are many. The ‘Bedale Book of Witchcraft’ of 1773 advocates frog spit rubbed on a wart or wash your hand with water in which eggs have been boiled. The monks of Glastonbury, when afflicted by a plague of warts in the Tenth Century, had virgins hang seven wafers around their necks. This was said to be a sure cure ~ I bet it was! But … this is the best tried and tested cure for warts:

Rub a piece of raw beef on a wart, bury it in a secret place at full moon and, as the meat rots, so will the warts. This is known as ‘charming’ warts and it works! (Author: I cured the four year old Editor of twenty five warts after the NHS had caused her a great deal of suffering to no effect.)

For the common cold, the sufferer should go to bed with a filthy sock around their neck with the heel over their larynx. Alternatively, stick orange peel up your nostrils. Chest complaints could be warded off with a plaster of brown paper covered in goose fat. This cure was used right into the Twentieth Century.

According to Thackray Medical Museum in Leeds, the old Yorkshire cure for a child with whooping cough was to pass it under the belly of a donkey. John Wesley’s ‘Primitive Physic’ prefers to rub the feet of the sufferer with hog’s lard by the fire before going to bed and keeping the child warm and swallow four woodlice alive in a spoonful of jam and the whoop will vanish.
But the ‘Bedale Book of Witchcraft’ prefers to catch a frog, open it’s mouth, cough into it three times and then throw the frog over your left shoulder. In Seventeenth Century Lincolnshire, children with the whooping cough were fed fried mice.

The Tudors had some very strange cures despite their knowledge of herbology with their physic gardens where medical herbs were grown. Burnt feathers and dung were administered as a cure for quinsy or tonsillitis and to banish haemorrhoids ~ Brother Cadfael would probably not have agreed!

Some Sixteenth Century doctors dictated that wounds should be treated with oleum catellorum ~ cats boiled in olive oil. However, the more traditional folk remedy was also proffered ~ covering the wounds with spiders’ webs or rotting leaves and stale bread; modern day penicillin.

Gold has been used for centuries to cure a number of ills. A Roman medical stamp found in Bath (Aqua Sulis) shows that a doctor, Junianus, sold golden ointment to clear sight. (Author: I used ‘Golden Eye Ointment’ to heal my children’s poorlie eyes.)

The Sixteenth Century Swiss physician, Paracelsus, introduced chemistry to medicine although some of his remedies were bizarre. He was particular keen on powdered mummy ~ a cure-all for everything from asthma to poisoning. The best mummies, he said, came from criminals who had been hanged. As late as Victorian times, a woman asked for a pinch of dust from a priest’s grave to ward off epilepsy in her children.

A gold ring rubbed on the eyeball was believed to be a cure for sties ~ this was a remedy still practised in the Twentieth Century before the NHS.

Henry VIII went one better; he is believed to have worn a cure-all ring made out of metal from coffin hinges.

In 1577, a London vicar said in a sermon that sin caused the plague, particularly the performance of plays on the public stage. Hence, when plague broke out, the theatres closed. There were many alleged cures for the plague ~ special foods to eat, onions highly recommended; foods not to eat, olive oil was thought to be fatal. A note to those trying to give up smoking ~ children as young as three were encouraged to smoke tobacco to keep the plague at bay and boys at Eton College were beaten for not smoking during the Great Plague.

Tuberculosis (consumption/TB) was a dread disease from ancient times; many were the remedies ~ food specialities from diary products to cooked cockeral torn to shreds whilst alive. If this sickened you, you could always swallow slugs instead. (This didn’t do much for Ron Weasley though. As Hagrid said as he passed Ron a bucket, ‘better out than in!’)

A Seventeenth Century doctor, Thomas Sydenham, claimed horse riding as a sure cure. The poet John Keats, was hoisted on horseback for a canter but died at twenty five. For TB and other chest complaints, garlic was diagnosed. Science has since confirmed that chemicals contained in garlic are effective.

Our ancestors have been obsessed by the use or urine and faeces in cures; and sexual remedies were legion ~ as terry jones said in one of his history programmes, ‘You won’t get those prescribed on the NHS.’ Some Victorian remedies for impotency and sexual afflictions were outrageous and read like a pornographic treatise and I leave you to discover those for yourselves!
The sun was shining but the weathermen had threatened heavy snow throughout the country! So, with cold weather clothing and a request from Robert for them to bring wellies, a group of eight set off for Harewood House.

Following the Bradford Road instead of the Leeds Road, Robert lead the party on a detour that took the party through villages they had always driven past and never visited, until they pulled onto the verge of a narrow country lane.

With wellies on, the group followed the adjacent footpath past ploughed fields and across grassland to a beautiful little packhorse bridge spanning Weeton Beck. This is a single span bridge whose surface is of large cobbles and whose camber closely follows the curvature of the arch making it quite steep and slippery to walk on when wet.

Following an inspection, both over and under the bridge, the group continued along the footpath across a field and over a large embankment into a small wood. The group had now entered Rougemont Carr (Castle), a scheduled monument recorded on the SMR as a ‘Ring work and Bailey’ or ‘Fortified Manor House’. The footpath took the group into the centre of the site where they found the inner Motte or further defended Manor House area, its defence being a “D” shaped ring work approximately 1m high and 3m wide which in the past has yielded evidence of being topped by a stone wall. It is possible within the inner court was a hall for the lord of the manor and probably other ancillary buildings such as a kitchen and a chapel.

Rougemont would have been the administrative centre of the Harewood Manor from the late Anglo-Saxon period until it was abandoned c.1366 when Harewood Castle was built. It is an example of a ring work of which there are forty recorded in Yorkshire and of a rare type of ring work with an outer bailey, of which there are less than sixty recorded nationally.

Following discussions on site, it was decided the group should make a further diversion to Harewood Castle to progress the story from Rougemont Castle. Harewood Castle is a Fourteenth Century stone hall house and courtyard fortress, founded by Sir William Aldeburgh. He was granted a licence to crenellate in 1366 and built the rectangular tower house on a steep slope. The main block of two storeys is flanked by four angle towers, one being a plain entrance tower, with the chapel situated over the portcullis chamber. The lower kitchen wing is of four storeys, with a barrel-vaulted basement that contains the well. To the north-west, are the rectangular earthworks of a possible outer bailey.

All Saints church on the Harewood estate was the group’s next port of call. This Fifteenth Century church sits hidden away behind trees at the top of the parkland that is now the Harewood Estate. The church comprises of a nave with attached shorter flanking chapels. Within these chapels can be found the alabaster monuments of the Aldeburgh heiresses and their husbands.

Harewood House as it stands was built in 1759 to 1772 by Edwin Lascelles who commissioned John Carr of York to design it, Thomas Chippendale to furnish it and Robert Adam to carry out the interior design. The ground floor is open to the public featuring the work of these fine designers and also the great artists of the day as well as displaying works by more modern artists. A new attraction this year is the display of original Chinese wallpaper which was found in an outhouse restored and is now hanging in the East Bedroom. This beautiful wallpaper tells the story of tea growing, packing and exporting as well as the story of rice growing and that of pottery manufacture in China in the Eighteenth Century; no two scenes are the same.

Below Stairs and The Princess Mary Exhibitions are also fairly new additions to the Harewood House tour and are well worth a look.
Bradford Metropolitan District: Archaeological Heritage
Adapted from www.heatonwoodstrust.co.uk

Bradford Metropolitan District has a rich and diverse historic and archaeological heritage, which stretches back into prehistory. The importance of this diversity has been recognised in the designation of various different types of sites and features under a variety of legislative and advisory schemes. The Metropolitan District includes over 5,800 Listed Buildings, 56 Conservation Areas, 10 parks and gardens on the Register of Parks and Gardens Special Historic Interest, 202 Ancient Monuments, one battlefield on the National Register of Historic Battlefields and one World Heritage Site. In addition to this there are thousands of known archaeological sites recorded on the West Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) database. This large total shows that the area contains significant historic and archaeological remains from all periods. The presence of the scheduled monuments, listed buildings and a World Heritage Site show that the remains are significant on international, national as well as regional and local levels.

Bradford District falls into three land-use zones that are based upon the nature of the topography and underlying geology: upland, lowland and urban. The upland zone comprises unenclosed moorland and enclosed rough pasture. The lowland zone roughly follows the lines of the area’s watercourses and comprises improved enclosed pasture and other agricultural land, centred on scattered farmsteads. The urban zone consists of all intensively settled land.

The upland landscape has not been subject to much development and contains a large number of Prehistoric archaeological sites that sit in a landscape of rough pasture and moors. There are a variety of Scheduled Ancient Monuments such as carved rocks on the moorland above Ilkley, Keighley and Baildon together with other Prehistoric funerary/ritual sites within the District. The presence of settlement sites are represented by a number of earthworks although there is likely to be considerably greater evidence as yet unrecognised beneath the surface. In the Roman period a network of Roman roads crossed Bradford Metropolitan District, although the exact routes are still a matter of conjecture, and it is likely that Roman sites may survive along the road lines. Medieval settlement in the uplands was scattered in small, dispersed settlements or farmsteads rather than discreet nucleated villages. It is likely that some of the farm buildings, apparently of Eighteenth or Nineteenth Century date, may have medieval origins. Redundant farm buildings have been little studied, and represent a finite and diminishing building stock of archaeological interest. From the Medieval period onward, mineral deposits in the uplands have been extensively exploited, and well-preserved associated remains survive.

The lowlands lie along the base of the valleys and consist of agricultural land and improved enclosed pasture. Prehistoric settlement is hinted at in this zone with flint and stone artefacts recovered along the River Aire corridor suggesting Mesolithic and Neolithic sites which indicates that the area had attracted the attention of both early hunter-gatherers and the first farmers. Although only a few known Prehistoric settlements, various finds of Bronze Age metalwork, and scatters of Roman artefacts suggest that occupation did occur.

The Medieval settlement pattern seems to have followed that of the surrounding uplands with little evidence of nucleated villages. A small number of sites were administrative centres for the surrounding area, and here a number of fine late Medieval and Post-Medieval houses survive which may have early subsurface remains. At Eskholt the site of a Medieval convent survives and a number of granges (small agricultural/industrial sites owned by the Medieval church) survive in the District. Well-preserved industrial sites survive, including iron-working sites, pottery kilns and corn mills. Some Medieval settlement sites evolved over into prominent private estates after the mid-Seventeenth Century. These were often furnished with significant landscaped grounds. Early water-powered industrial sites were also redeveloped in the Eighteenth Century and later. Many of the District’s numerous textile mills retain late Eighteenth, early Nineteenth Century features or contain evidence for the development of technology over the course of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

The evidence for Roman occupation in Bradford District roughly coincides with the areas of modern settlement, with occupation along the Wharfe valley with the Roman fort and associated civilian settlement at Ilkley being the most significant, although there is evidence for other Roman activity in Bingley and central Bradford. Occupation continued into the Anglo-Saxon period with remains apparently surviving within Addingham, Ilkley, and central Bradford. Medieval settlement in the Bradford area seems to have consisted of small dispersed building groups lying along a network of roads and access tracks. Industrialisation and population growth during the Nineteenth Century led to ribbon development on these road lines which enveloped pre-existing settlements. This type of development can be traced in areas where the Late Medieval and Post-Medieval building stock survives and forms a settlement ‘core’. In areas such as central Bradford where the ‘core’ of earlier buildings has not survived, the modern building stock may mask Medieval and Post-Medieval remains. Recent work in urban centres has made it clear that the effect of Nineteenth/Twentieth Century cellars on the below-ground archaeology has not been as severe as formerly believed, and that apprciable pockets of early material may survive in situ.
With the advent of the Post-Medieval period comes the development of better cartography. This, coupled with the increased survival of documentation, allows the growth and spread of settlements and related industry to be studied. Maps of the study area tend to be divided between county maps that show large areas of land, parish maps (including tith and enclosure awards) which deal in more detail with smaller areas and maps/plans of individual plots, which are often related to land sales.

From the Seventeenth Century onwards the economic growth of the Bradford district continued and the launch of manufacturing in the early Eighteenth Century marked the start of the town's development whilst new canal and turnpike roads encouraged trade. The Bradford canal was built in 1774 to link Shipley with the Leeds/Liverpool Canal.

Significant changes were to take place within the city of Bradford in the next century. In 1801, Bradford was a small rural market town with a population of 6,393, where wool spinning and cloth weaving was carried out in local cottages and farms but by 1901 it had risen to 280,000. The textile industry started as a small-scale cottage type industry in the medieval period and developed to a point in 1773 where the cloth trade in Bradford was large enough to warrant its own piece hall in Piece Hall Yard, off Kirkgate. By 1836 the population was 97,191 and by 1851 it had increased again to 181,964 (with almost 10% of the 1851 population originating from central and western Ireland). This massive increase the Bradford's population was down to the booming textile industry and the demand for mill workers.

This demand for a work force was fuelled by the building of textile mills, particularly for the production of worsted cloth. By 1841 there were 38 worsted mills in Bradford town and 70 in the borough and it was estimated that two-thirds of the country's wool production was processed in Bradford. Less than ten years later, Bradford had become the wool capital of the world with a population of c.100,000. This rapid construction of mills and housing had a knock-on effect on other industries such as engineering and coal mining developing in tandem in order to supply the needs of the textile industry. By 1866 there were 46 collieries in Bradford produced some two million tons of coal.

This industrial growth led to the rapid expansion of the city to form much of the urban landscape that is seen today. Between 1800 and 1850 Bradford changed from a rural town amongst the woods and fields to a sprawling town filling the valley sides. The town centre was expanded and remodelled and the earlier medieval streets were swept away and replaced with new Victorian architecture.

Iron working has for some considerable period been undertaken in the Bradford District with this being attested to back into the medieval period with the activities of the Cistercian monks of Rievaulx working at places such as St Ives and possibly active close to, or in, Heaton Woods.

With the decline in the cloth and iron industries during the Twentieth Century Bradford developed different aspects of commerce and the old industrial areas such as those associated with its various woodlands were abandoned.
It was in spring 2007 that I had first become aware of the village of Aldfield. Linda Smith, the county’s Rural Archaeologist, had just been the guest speaker at one of our meetings. Although I was unable to attend that meeting, Linda kindly sent me a small list of possible archaeological sites that the society might like to investigate.

I had been hoping the society would be able to carry out the excavations at Gates Hill that we had been discussing with the Woodlands Trust and the landowner, but due to some bureaucratic nonsense emanating from the offices of Harrogate Borough Council about the position of a footpath, the Trust postponed the dig.

Conscious that the society had not had any digging experiences since the closure of the Tower Hill excavations, I went out to investigate the sites Linda had recommended we take a look at. Aldfield looked the most promising and after speaking to the landowner, I gained permission for John Buglass and myself to take a closer look at all the land they had in Aldfield.

John and I had a general look at the site and then invited John Madillwaine of Bradford University to give us his assessment of the features we could see. Also, Nick Boldrini, of the HER supplied me with the information held on their system.

At first sight, the land has the appearance of parkland with specimen trees dotted about the landscape. Other features we noticed were platforms, old stone kerbed hedge lines, boundary ditches, hollow ways, managed water systems, possible cart wash, a drove way, a burial mound with an associated cup and ring marked stone, a pond, lynchets, a derelict building and a ridge and furrow field system.

In the autumn we received permission to field walk one of the fields on the site following ploughing and rolling. This proved to be very successful, for amongst the Victorian pottery etc. probably from earlier manuring, we found several worked flints which were identified by Liz Andrews-Wilson, the Finds Liaison Officer for the area, as being mainly blades and flint knapping debris and Mesolithic in date.

I have now arranged for the society to survey and record some of the features on the site and will hopefully be able to bring you up to date in the next newsletter.

Below left: Cup marked stone
Below: Pond, derelict building and lynchets

AD 763: Hopeful entrants in the first ‘Easter Island Idol’ competition.
The reason behind the outpouring of the people from Scandinavia that represented the Viking Age is unknown. However, suggested stimuli include population pressure, dynastic strife, political hierarchies, commercial expansion and both a natural and technical progression.

The movement and migration of the Vikings overseas was determined to a great extent by the nature of the Scandinavian landscape. By sailing westwards from the main area of population, across the North Sea, the Norse Vikings reached the Shetland Islands, the Orkney Islands or the Scottish mainland. From the Northern Isles, the Norsemen could traverse northwesterly to the Hebrides, Ireland, the Isle of Man and Northwest England. Travelling in a westward direction, they could reach the Faeroe Islands and Iceland.

The Orkneys, comprising some seventy islands, offered good land for agriculture. As these islands were, in many respects, similar to Norway and on the same latitudes, it is likely that the early experiments in farming were successful. The maritime location and position in the North Atlantic Drift are important factors that did, and still do, condition the Orkney environment. In addition, large fish processing sites have been found in excavations at Freswick and Caithness.

There is archaeological and linguistic evidence that indicates that it was predominantly the Norse Vikings who occupied land in the Northern Isles. Indeed, it seems that there may have been contact between Norway and the Orkney Islands as early as the Seventh Century. It would have been possible to conquer the Orkney Islands in one expedition thus opening the way for settlers. The main documentary source is the Orkneyinga Saga (Saga of the Orkneymen) that was written down in Iceland in the early Thirteenth Century. The saga chronicles are difficult to reconcile due to the potential for bias and exaggeration so it is necessary to treat this source with caution but it reflects the Icelandic historical tradition, which deems King Harold Fine-Hair of Norway as the primary cause of the Norwegian emigration to Iceland via Shetland and the Orkney Islands.

... He subdued Shetland and the Orkneys and the Hebrides, and sailed all the way down to the Isle of Man and destroyed all the settlements there. He fought many battles there, and extended his dominion farther west than any King of Norway has done since then.

Extract from Chapter IV of the Orkneyinga Saga.

The archaeological evidence for the Viking period in the Orkney Islands is definitive albeit limited. Christianity did not embrace the Norse Vikings until circa the late Eleventh to the early Twelfth Century and although fewer than one hundred pagan graves have been found in Orkney, they are not significantly different from graves which date to the same period in Scandinavia. Such discoveries confirm that the islands were populated by 'heathens' of Scandinavian origin.

In the late Viking Age, Birsay on Orkney was of particular importance. The Brough of Birsay is a small island in the Bay of Birsay; it is connected with the northwestern coast of Mainland at low tide. Excavations have revealed long-term habitation but due to coastal erosion, much has disappeared into the sea. This tidal island was the main residence of the Orkney Earldom, a political elite in Northern Britain during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries. The greatest Earl to hold the seat was Thorfinn the Mighty who died in 1065.

There is a reference in the Orkneyinga Saga that relates to the Earls of Orkney as having had a residence and estate, referred to as a Bu, in the parish of Orphir on Mainland during the Twelfth Century. It was whilst working in Birsay that the archaeologists' attention was drawn to a site known as Earl's Bu at Orphir on the north side of the Scapa Flow. The remains of a fragmentary medieval 'round church' and an adjacent Norse Hall have been identified as belonging to the Earl's residence. Later excavations on an area lying adjacent to this site have further substantiated Norse occupation. A stone-built underhouse, lade, or head-race and the tail-race of a horizontal mill, all constructed during the Viking period, were recovered and all the structures were either infilled or covered by Late Norse midden material. These midden deposits comprised the debris discarded from the Earl's Hall and buildings in association. Later midden deposits were dated from the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries. This bioarchaeological material is important as it was excavated in stratified contexts. A vast faunal assemblage, in excess of eighty thousand bone fragments, was recovered from the 1979 – 1993 excavations at the Earl's Bu. After complete analysis, these will serve in the understanding of the economic and social significance of animal in Late Norse Orkney.
I hope you have enjoyed this June edition of ‘Dig This! If you have any stories, articles, photographs, etc that you would like including in the next edition, (approximately September 2008), please forward them by email to: pergamond@blueyonder.co.uk

Ray xxx

3D Meetings 2008

18 June
16 July
20 August
17 September ~ Speaker: Dr Andrew Jones
15 October
19 November

December ~ Festive Gathering

And Finally, ...

King Ozymandias of Assyria was running low on cash after years of war with the Hittites. His last great possession was the Star of the Euphrates, the most valuable diamond in the ancient world.

Desperate, he went to Croesus, the pawnbroker, to ask for a loan. Croesus said, "I'll give you 100,000 dinars for it."

"But I paid a million dinars for it," the King protested. "Don't you know that I am the king?" Croesus replied, "When you wish to pawn a Star, makes no difference who you are."

A famous Viking explorer returned home from a voyage and found his name missing from the town register. His wife insisted on complaining to the local civic official who apologized profusely saying, "I must have taken Leif off my census."

A sceptical anthropologist was cataloguing South American folk remedies with the assistance of a tribal brujo who indicated that the leaves of a particular fern were a sure cure for any case of constipation.

When the anthropologist expressed his doubts, the brujo looked him in the eye and said, "Let me tell you, with fronds like these, who needs enemas?"

If any member knows of a particular place of interest that the Society could visit, please contact the Events Coordinator, Robert Morgan.

Please advise potential speakers to the Secretary, Rachel Bithell.

Thank you

And Finally,...