

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



I Never Knew That About Yorkshire

Christopher Winn

CHRISTOPHER WINN



*I Never Knew That
About*
YORKSHIRE



ILLUSTRATIONS BY
Mai Osawa



EBURY
PRESS

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For Stephen and Carolyn,
with all our thanks for your generous
hospitality and kindness

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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PREFACE

Yorkshire, 'God's Own County', is big in every way. It is the biggest county in Britain, with more acres than there are letters in the Bible. The West Riding alone is bigger than any county in England.

Yorkshire has England's biggest vale, biggest medieval cathedral, biggest abbey ruins, biggest parish church, the world's biggest fish and chip shop and Britain's tallest man.

Yorkshire is not just big but beautiful too, an unmatched array of breathtaking scenery, with wide skies, undulating wolds and shifting shores in the east; high moors, quaint fishing villages and spectacular cliffs in the north; deep, narrow, populous valleys and empty, spectacular limestone dales in the west.

York was the Roman capital of the North, chief town to the Vikings, has Europe's best medieval streets and England's longest city walls. The Saxon town of Ripon is Britain's oldest city. The Norman walls of Richmond are Britain's oldest castle walls, the keep at Conisbrough England's oldest round keep.

York is the ecclesiastical capital of the North. The first Christian Roman Emperor, Constantine, was proclaimed in York. The English Roman church was born in Whitby. Yorkshire has not one but two of England's great medieval cathedrals, and a clutch of England's most beautiful churches.

Yorkshire has architectural treasures, palaces like Castle Howard and Harewood, stately homes such as Wentworth

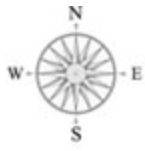
Woodhouse, Nostell Priory and Burton Agnes.

Yorkshire can boast of England's first seaside resort, first industrial model village, first railway museum, and was the first place in the world to appear on film.

Yorkshire was the powerhouse of the Industrial Revolution, had the biggest mills in the world and was the world's biggest producer of iron and steel. Yorkshire natives invented the aeroplane, stainless steel, Portland cement, the hydraulic press, cat's eyes and the tea shop.

Yorkshire is the home of the Brontës, J.B. Priestley, Alan Bennett, Philip Larkin, Tristram Shandy, Dracula, James Herriot. And in sport, Yorkshire is the birthplace of Rugby League and home to the oldest classic horse race and the oldest football club in the world.

Truly, Yorkshire is a kingdom unto itself.



Yorkshire's Ridings

Since virtually all the stories in *I Never Knew That About Yorkshire* were played out in the context of the three historic Yorkshire Ridings - East, West and North - I have arranged this book by Ridings.

The Ridings, or 'Thridings', are of Viking origin, from the term Threthingr or a 'third part', and have been inextricably wound up with the history of Yorkshire for over 1,000 years.

Each Riding is distinctive in its history, topography, feel and character. They are divided by natural boundaries, East and North by the River Derwent, West and North by the River Ouse and its tributaries the Ure and Nidd.

The East Riding is farming country and has the Wolds, gentle and rolling, the mighty Humber, the low, shifting coastline and glorious churches. The North Riding shares the Dales with the West, and has the wild North York Moors, steep fishing towns and seaside resorts. The West Riding has the Dales, an industrial heritage second to none, magnificent architecture, and the Brontës.

Yorkshire's two ancient cathedral cities of York and Ripon I have brought together in the same chapter.

York and Ripon



YORK AND RIPON



York Minster, largest medieval Gothic cathedral in northern Europe

York

*'The History of York is the
History of England'*
GEORGE VI

YORK is one of the oldest and most attractive of English cities, nestling at the heart of THE LARGEST ENGLISH VALE, THE VALE OF YORK, and is the capital and crowning glory of THE LARGEST ENGLISH COUNTY, YORKSHIRE.

There are wonderful walks along York's 3 miles (5 km) of ancient walls, which almost completely encircle the old city, enclosing some 263 acres (106 ha), and are pierced by many battlemented gates - including WALMGATE, THE LAST CITY GATE IN ENGLAND TO RETAIN ITS BARBICAN.

York sits at the head of the broad valley between the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors, where the River Fosse joins the River Ouse, and at the lowest point where the Ouse is bridgeable - and has been recognised as an important strategic site since prehistoric times.



Eboracum

Modern York evolved from the Roman fort of EBORACUM, which was established on the Ouse in AD 71, and quickly became the most important settlement in the north of Roman Britain. The Emperor SEPTIMUS SEVERUS ruled the entire Roman Empire from Eboracum for two years, before he died there in AD 211, and is buried somewhere beneath the old city. In AD 306 the Emperor CONSTANTIUS CHLORUS died in Eboracum, and his son, CONSTANTINE THE GREAT, was proclaimed Emperor there. The most substantial relic left over from the Roman city is the MULTANGULAR TOWER in Museum Gardens, which was built in 209 while the Emperor Severus was in residence, and was part of the Roman wall overlooking the Ouse.

Eferwic

In the 7th century the settlement became the capital of the Saxon King Edwin of Northumbria, and was known as

EFERWIC. A small wooden church was built on the site of the Roman fortress and here, in 627, Edwin was baptised by THE FIRST BISHOP OF YORK, PAULINUS. The well from which the water came for the baptism can still be seen in the crypt of the present minster.

Paulinus also founded ST PETER'S SCHOOL in that same year - making St Peter's THE THIRD OLDEST SCHOOL IN THE WESTERN WORLD. York was raised to an archbishopric in 735 and became the ecclesiastical capital of the North. In 2005 JOHN SENTAMU was enthroned as Archbishop of York - and as THE ANGLICAN CHURCH'S FIRST BLACK ARCHBISHOP.

Jorvik

In 867 Eferwic was captured by the Vikings and for the next 100 years was known as JORVIK, part of the Danelaw. Very little was thought to have survived of Jorvik, except the name York and the frequent use of 'gate', the Norse word for street, in many of the modern road names. However, in 1973, during excavations in Coppergate, three timber buildings and some furniture from the Viking period were discovered, so well preserved in wet peat that they could be reassembled for a new museum. The JORVIK VIKING CENTRE, in Coppergate, is now one of York's most popular tourist attractions.

Jorvik was THE LAST TOWN TO BE FREED FROM VIKING RULE before England became united under the Anglo-Saxons in 965. A survivor from that second Saxon occupation is the tower of ST MARY'S BISHOPHILL JUNIOR, THE OLDEST EXAMPLE OF ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE IN YORK. It dates from the 10th century and includes Roman brickwork.

Norman York

After the Norman Conquest, William the Conqueror came to York to crush dissent in the North, and after burning the town down, he rebuilt it with two castles to guard the Ouse, extended the walls to their present position, and gave the go-ahead for a huge new minster to replace the Saxon one that had been burned down.

CLIFFORD'S TOWER, named after Roger de Clifford who was hanged there after the battle of Boroughbridge in 1322, now stands on the mound of the principal Norman castle. Built in 1244, it is THE ONLY QUATREFOIL PLAN CASTLE IN ENGLAND, the design being based on the Château d'Etampes near Paris. The rest of the castle buildings now make up the Castle Museum and contain the condemned cell where the highwayman DICK TURPIN spent his last night in 1739 before going to the gallows. He is buried not far away in St George's churchyard.



William II founded ST MARY'S ABBEY in York in 1089. Only ruins remain of the abbey church, but the 15th-century Abbot's Lodging, called the King's Manor, is now part of York University.

The Norman city walls were rebuilt in the 13th century and the walls we walk on today date from this time. They are THE LONGEST CITY WALLS IN ENGLAND. Work also started in the 13th century to transform the Norman minster.



York Minster

By the beginning of the 13th century the Norman minster was considered unsuitable, and in 1220 work started on the present YORK MINSTER, which over a period of 250 years grew to be THE LARGEST GOTHIC CATHEDRAL IN NORTHERN EUROPE, 524 ft (160 m) in length and 249 ft (76 m) at its widest across the transepts. The nave is THE WIDEST OF ANY MEDIEVAL CATHEDRAL IN EUROPE and THE SECOND TALLEST IN ENGLAND after Westminster Abbey.

York Minster contains MORE MEDIEVAL STAINED GLASS THAN ANY OTHER CATHEDRAL IN BRITAIN and includes BRITAIN'S OLDEST GLASS, part of a Jesse window that dates from 1150. THE GREAT EAST WINDOW, built by JOHN THORNTON in 1405-8 is the EARLIEST known ENGLISH WORK OF ART BY A NAMED ARTIST. Covering over 2000 square feet (194 sq m) it is also THE LARGEST EXPANSE OF MEDIEVAL GLASS IN THE WORLD.

Medieval York

Within the city walls of York today are many reminders of the medieval city, as exemplified by its most famous old street, the SHAMBLES, with its overhanging timber-frame buildings, regarded as THE BEST-PRESERVED MEDIEVAL STREET IN

EUROPE. The name Shambles comes from the Saxon 'fleshammels', meaning meat shelves, and signifies a street where meat is sold. Alas, there are no butchers in the Shambles today, but in nearby Blossom Street can be found ROBERT BURROW ATKINSON'S BUTCHER'S SHOP, where the original YORK HAM was conceived. The meat would be cured for at least 12 months in the cellars beneath the shop.

The EARLIEST EXAMPLES IN ENGLAND OF OVERHANGING ARCHITECTURE, where the upper storeys of the buildings project out over the street, can be found in LADY ROW, off Goodramgate, where the cottages date from 1320.



In Fossgate is York's grandest medieval survival, the MERCHANT ADVENTURERS' HALL, founded in 1357 and THE OLDEST GUILD HALL IN BRITAIN. The hall itself is a paradise of wood, with oak posts dividing the room into two lengths and a superb wooden roof. The gatehouse is 17th-century and guards the entrance to THE MOST COMPLETE GROUP OF GUILD BUILDINGS IN EUROPE.

The Pricke of Conscience

Squeezed between modern hotels and some medieval cottages west of the Ouse is ALL SAINTS, NORTH STREET, originally a single Norman cell of 1089, added to over the years and now sporting a rather fine spire and octagonal belfry. The treasure of All Saints is a collection of 14th- and 15th-century stained glass to rival the minster, if not in quantity then most certainly in quality.

The most precious window, UNIQUE IN EUROPE, is the PRICKE OF CONSCIENCE WINDOW, at the east end of the north aisle, which dates from 1425 and portrays the final 15 days to the end of the world, expected then around 1500. The panels depict floods, earthquakes and fires, not unlike the scenarios predicted to ensue from global warming today. The penitent figures kneeling at the base of the window are thought to be members of the Henryson and Hesse families, who paid for the window in hope of salvation. This extraordinary wonder is the work of John Thornton, who designed the Great East Window in the minster, and is based on a poem by a 13th-century hermit, Richard of Hampole.

Haunted York

York is known as one of the most haunted cities in the world, and perhaps the most haunted house in York is the TREASURER'S HOUSE behind the minster, a restored Jacobean house built on top of the old Roman city. Roman soldiers are seen to march through the walls of the cellar, apparently cut off at the knees, but in fact walking along at the level of the old Roman road, which was discovered beneath the existing cellar floor during restoration work. The house stands on the site of the residence of the minster's treasurer, a position abolished at the Reformation. It was rebuilt in the early 17th century and then purchased in 1897 by an eccentric gentleman called FRANK GREEN, who refashioned the rooms to suit his extensive collection of antique furniture. He handed the house and contents over to the National Trust in 1930.



Georgian York

York has a number of fine Georgian houses, one of which, BAR CONVENT of 1787, houses THE OLDEST LIVING CONVENT IN ENGLAND, founded as a school, exclusively for females, in 1686.

MANSION HOUSE, which stands in front of the Guildhall, was built in 1729 and is the home of the mayor - it is THE ONLY MANSION HOUSE OUTSIDE THE CITY OF LONDON IN WHICH THE MAYOR ACTUALLY LIVES DURING HIS OF HER TERM OF OFFICE. Hanging above the stairwell is a large portrait of George

Hudson, the controversial 'Railway King' to whom York owes its position as the premier railway hub in the North.

Victorian York

The story of Victorian York is one of railways and chocolate. York's Victorian railway station, with its magnificent curved glass and iron roof, had 13 platforms and was THE LARGEST STATION IN THE WORLD when completed in 1877. Adjoining the station is the NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM, opened in 1925, THE FIRST AND LARGEST RAILWAY MUSEUM IN THE WORLD. Amongst its collection is the FLYING SCOTSMAN.

Chocolate York

TERRY'S OF YORK began life as Terry's and Berry's of York in 1823, when Pocklington-born apothecary JOSEPH TERRY joined the confectionery business of Robert Berry, who had a shop selling cough sweets close to Bootham Bar, in St Helen's Square. Not long afterwards Berry died and Terry was left running the business on his own. He decided to take advantage of York's position at the hub of the rail network and began to send his sweets all over Britain. When Joseph Terry died in 1850 his son, who was later knighted and became Mayor of York four times, took over and powered the company forward. The shop in St Helen's Square was kept as a retail outlet, but in 1926 Terry's moved to a purpose-built factory off Bishopthorpe Road, and it was here that some of their most popular brands came into the world - TERRY'S ALL GOLD in 1930 and TERRY'S CHOCOLATE ORANGE in 1931. In 1993 Terry's of York was taken over by Kraft, who closed the York factory in 2005 and moved production elsewhere.

BORN IN YORK

GUY FAWKES (1570-1606), Catholic revolutionary who attempted to blow up King James I and the Houses of Parliament on the night of 5 November 1605. He was born in High Petergate, baptised at St Michael le Belfrey and attended St Peter's School. His 'Gunpowder Plot' is commemorated every year on 5 November, Guy Fawkes Night.



JOSEPH ROWNTREE (1836-1925), Quaker philanthropist who took over his brother's chocolate business in York, in order to promote chocolate as a healthy alternative to alcohol for the working man. He eventually built the business into THE BIGGEST SWEET AND CHOCOLATE MANUFACTURER IN BRITAIN. In 1904 he established the JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION, today a leading social policy research charity.

FRANKIE HOWARD (1917-92), comedian, favourite of the Queen Mother, perhaps best remembered for the television series *Up Pompeii*. His catchphrases included 'Titter ye not' and 'Oh no, missus, nooo'.



JOHN BARRY, film composer, born in 1933 and educated at St Peter's School. He wrote the music for the earlier James Bond films and won five Oscars, two for *Born Free* in 1966, and one each for *The Lion in Winter* (1968), *Out of Africa* (1985) and *Dances with Wolves* (1990).

DAME JUDI DENCH, actress, best known today for playing 'M' in the James Bond films and consistently voted Britain's favourite actress. In 1998 she won an Oscar for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth I in *Shakespeare in Love*, although she appeared for only eight minutes - a tribute to her extraordinarily powerful presence on screen.



Ripon

Britain's Oldest City

RIPON IS THE OLDEST CITY IN BRITAIN. It was granted a charter by King Alfred the Great in 886 and presented with a horn as a symbol of the charter. At nine o'clock every night a wakeman, appointed by the people of Ripon to keep watch during the night hours, would sound the horn in Market Square to 'set the night watch', and although the wakeman was replaced by a mayor at the beginning of the 17th century, the tradition has been upheld for more than 1,100 years without a break. Today the Ripon Hornblower still sets the watch from the William Aislabie obelisk in the middle of Market Square, in ONE OF THE OLDEST CEREMONIES PERFORMED IN ENGLAND.



St Wilfrid's Crypt

Even older is the simple crypt that lies beneath the central tower of Ripon's 12th-century cathedral. Just 11 ft (3.35 m) long and 8 ft (2.4 m) wide, with a barrel roof and passages to either side, the crypt was built by ST WILFRID in 672, during the first century of English Christianity. It has survived invasions and sackings, as well as the destruction and rebuilding of the cathedral above it, and remains a rare

place of extraordinary peace and quiet, where all that has gone on outside over the last 1,300 years seems to fade in importance. For those in need of absolution, there is a narrow opening known as ST WILFRID'S NEEDLE, which is said to grant forgiveness to any who can scramble through it.

Fountains Abbey

Britain's Biggest Ruin

FOUNTAINS ABBEY, in the valley of the River Skell south of Ripon, was begun in 1132 by disgruntled Benedictine monks from the abbey of St Mary's in York, who defected to the Cistercian Order. It was only THE SECOND CISTERCIAN ABBEY BUILT IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND after Rievaulx, which was begun two years earlier, and grew to become the LARGEST AND RICHEST CISTERCIAN ABBEY IN BRITAIN. The remains of Fountains now form THE LARGEST MONASTIC RUINS IN BRITAIN.



The view from the west door down the long narrow nave, 370 ft (113 m) in length, towards the huge gaping

frame of the east window, is awe-inspiring. Perhaps the most graceful feature of the ruins is the CHAPEL OF THE NINE ALTARS at the east end: a rare place, as there is ONLY ONE OTHER EXAMPLE OF A TRANSEPT AT THE EAST END OF A CHURCH IN ENGLAND - at Durham Cathedral.

The most spectacular feature of the abbey buildings is the CELLARIUM, or storage area, a double avenue of vaulting, 300 ft (91 m) long, with pillars running down the centre from which stone ribs spring like the branches of a tree. It is THE LARGEST SUCH CELLARIUM SURVIVING IN EUROPE and, particularly when lit by the setting sun, it conveys a magical view of life in the 12th century.



The most dominant feature of Fountains Abbey is the great tower, 168 ft (51 m) high, and relatively new, having been put there by ABBOT MARMADUKE HUBY at the beginning of the 16th century, a fitting memorial to the most notable abbot of Fountains. The tower is unusual for a Cistercian house, as such ostentation was normally frowned upon by the Order.

At the Dissolution of the Monasteries, 400 years after it was begun, Fountains was sold to Sir Richard Gresham, father of the Thomas Gresham who founded the Royal Exchange in the City of London.

Fountains Hall

At the end of the 16th century the Fountains estate was sold to STEPHEN PROCTOR, who used stone from the abbey to build himself FOUNTAINS HALL, a little to the west of the ruins. This glorious Elizabethan house, which includes a banqueting hall with minstrel gallery, has passed through a number of hands over the years and been sadly neglected, apart from a brief heyday in the 1920s when Lady Doris Vyner, wife of the Marquess of Ripon, entertained royalty there. However, since the National Trust took it on in 1983 Fountains Hall has been slowly but painstakingly restored to its former majesty, and is now used as a spectacular venue for wedding receptions and parties.

Studley Royal

The STUDLEY ROYAL estate was inherited in 1699 by JOHN AISLABIE, first Tory Member of Parliament for Ripon, who was responsible for promoting the ill-fated South Sea Company, and who was then expelled from Parliament after the company's spectacular demise in the South Sea Bubble of 1720. He turned his attention to creating a garden for his property at Studley Royal, and this was enhanced by his son William, who purchased the remains of Fountains Abbey and Fountains Hall, dammed the River Skel, and developed the grounds into THE FINEST GEORGIAN WATER GARDEN IN ENGLAND.

ST MARY'S CHURCH, in the deer park at Studley Royal, was designed by William Burges in 1870, and is considered to be his ecclesiastical masterpiece. It was commissioned by the Marchioness of Ripon to commemorate her brother, who was murdered by bandits in Greece.

In 1983 the whole estate was acquired by the National Trust, with the abbey ruins being managed by English Heritage on behalf of the Trust. In 1986 it was designated YORKSHIRE'S FIRST WORLD HERITAGE SITE.



YORK AND RIPON

On 25 August 1804 York racecourse hosted THE FIRST KNOWN HORSE RACE TO FEATURE A FEMALE JOCKEY COMPETING AGAINST A MALE JOCKEY, when ALICIA MEYNELL, riding Colonel Thornton's Vingarella side-saddle, took on Captain William Flint, riding Thornville, over 4 miles (6.4 km). Vingarella, a young horse, didn't complete the course, but Alicia Meynell returned the following year and rode the six-year-old Louisa against Frank Buckle on Allegro over 2 miles (3.2 km) - and won.

In 2008 York Minster became THE FIRST CATHEDRAL IN ENGLAND TO HAVE A CARILLON OF BELLS.

Leaning up against the west exterior wall of All Saints Church in North Street, York, is a tiny half-timbered house which claims to be THE SMALLEST HOUSE IN ENGLAND.

In 1723 Ripon racecourse hosted THE FIRST-EVER RACE FOR LADY RIDERS. The race was won by the local MP's wife, Mrs Aislable.

The corn mill at Fountains Abbey is the ONLY 12TH-CENTURY CISTERCIAN CORN MILL LEFT IN BRITAIN and the oldest 'intact'