

Geology in Yorkshire's museums

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[Jump to navigation](#) [Jump to search](#)

Scrutton, Colin and Powell, John, Editors. [Yorkshire rocks and landscape: a field guide](#). 2006. 3rd edition. Published by the Yorkshire Geological Society. Copyright Yorkshire Geological Society.



Figure 22 Location of museums of geological interest in Yorkshire.

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Contents

- [1 A historical perspective](#)
- [2 What value museums?](#)
- [3 Museums](#)
 - [3.1 1. Baildon](#)
 - [3.2 2. Batley](#)
 - [3.3 3. Doncaster](#)
 - [3.4 4. Filey](#)
 - [3.5 5. Grassington](#)
 - [3.6 6. Harrogate](#)
 - [3.7 7. Hawes](#)
 - [3.8 8. Huddersfield](#)
 - [3.9 9. Hull](#)
 - [3.10 10. Hutton-Le-Hole](#)
 - [3.11 11. Keighley](#)
 - [3.12 12. Leeds](#)
 - [3.13 13. Pateley Bridge](#)
 - [3.14 14. Reeth](#)
 - [3.15 15 Richmond](#)
 - [3.16 16 Rotherham](#)
 - [3.17 17 Scarborough](#)
 - [3.18 18 Settle](#)
 - [3.19 19 Sheffield](#)

- [3.20 20 Skipton](#)
- [3.21 21 Wakefield](#)
- [3.22 22 Whitby](#)
- [3.23 23 York](#)
- [4 Glossary](#)
- [5 Bibliography](#)

A historical perspective

The earliest museums of Yorkshire developed during the 19th century at a time when geology, a new science, found itself in conflict with the accepted teaching of the Church on the Creation. Examples of early museums are the Leeds City Museum (1821) and Hull City, Whitby and the Yorkshire Museums (1823). Each was the product of a learned society based in an urban area. The collections of societies in Bradford and Sheffield also formed the basis of public museums. The Rotunda Museum (1829) in Scarborough is noteworthy, having been designed by (*the*) William Smith and Richard Sharp of York. William Smith spent his last years in North Yorkshire, and his nephew, John Phillips, who as his assistant received a sound geological education, became first Keeper of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society's museum and later Professor of Geology at Oxford. Many of Yorkshire's museums have their origins in the 20th century. The Tolson Museum in Huddersfield was a memorial to the two nephews of Legh Tolson who died in the First World War and the Craven Museum in Skipton (1928) grew from the Craven Museum and Archaeological Society.

What value museums?

Local museums are often the perfect entree to the geology of an area. A better guide can seldom be had to what may be seen in the vicinity, thanks to generations of collectors — professional and amateur — all with an eye for the informative, the curious or the beautiful. Displays may elucidate the landscape's foundations and show the rock types, minerals and fossils likely to be encountered. Man's exploitation of coal, iron, lead and stone often figure in exhibits describing the social and economic history of the area. Archives, including photographs, add another dimension to the potential of these treasure houses.

The following list gives basic information about Yorkshire's geological museums, allowing the reader to assess what each one has to offer.

Museums

Note: Information correct as at 2006 when the print version was published. Website addresses updated 2019.

1. Baildon

Museum name and address	Bracken Hall Countryside Centre , (Bradford Museums Galleries and Heritage). Glen Road, Baildon, Shipley, W. Yorkshire, BD17 SEA.
Displays	Local
Temporary exhibitions	Occasional
Enquiry service	Yes* via Cliffe Castle Museum
Geological activities	As advertised
Sales	Basic

Opening hours Open throughout year but not every day.
Website <https://www.friendsofbrackenhall.org.uk/>

2. Batley

Museum name and address **Bagshaw Museum.** Wilton Park, Batley, W. Yorkshire, WF17 OAS.

Temporary exhibitions

Collections Local and UK, minerals (world wide), rocks, fossils, particular strength (especially local Carboniferous)

Enquiry service Basic

Geological activities Occasional

Opening hours All year.

Website <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/museums-galleries-history/bagshaw-museum.aspx>

3. Doncaster

Museum name and address **Doncaster Museum & Art Gallery.** Chequer Road, Doncaster, DN1 2AE.

Displays Local

Collections Local and UK, minerals (particular strength), rocks, fossils (especially Carboniferous)

Opening hours All year.

Website <https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/culture-leisure-tourism/doncaster-museum-and-art-gallery>

4. Filey

Museum name and address **Filey Museum.** 8/10 Queen Street, Filey, N. Yorkshire, YO14 9HB.

Displays Local and Yorkshire fossils and general geology, minerals

Enquiry service Yes

Geological activities Occasional

Admission charge Yes

Opening hours Good Friday to last the Sunday in October, Sunday to Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Website <http://www.fileymuseum.co.uk/>

5. Grassington

Museum name and address **Upper Wharfedale Museum.** The Square, Grassington, Skipton, N. Yorkshire, BD23 5AQ

Displays Local, industrial heritage lead mining

Collections Local and Yorkshire minerals (particular strength) rocks, fossils, photographic

Admission charge	Yes
Opening hours	April-July afternoons daily, August 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. & 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m., Sept afternoons daily, October weekend afternoons only.

6. Harrogate

Museum name and address	Royal Pump Room Museum. Royal Parade, Harrogate, N. Yorkshire, HG1 2RY.
Displays	Local. Development of 19th Century Spa
Collections	Local, minerals, rocks
Geological activities	Sample the waters!
Admission charge	Yes
Opening hours	All year.
Website	https://www.harrogate.gov.uk/info/20151/royal_pump_room_museum

7. Hawes

Museum name and address	Dales Countryside Museum. Station Yard, Hawes, N. Yorkshire, DL8 3NT.
Displays	Local
Collections	Local, connected with lead mining
Catalogues	Yes
Enquiry service	Yes
Sales	Local geology
Admission charge	Yes
Opening hours	All year.
Website	https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/

8. Huddersfield

Museum name and address	Tolson Museum. Ravensknowle Park, Wakefield Road, Huddersfield, W. Yorkshire, HD5 8DJ.
Temporary exhibitions	Yes
Collections	minerals(world wide), rocks, (local), fossils (local and UK)
Enquiry service	Yes
Geological activities	Yes
Sales	Basic
Opening hours	All year.
Website	https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/museums-galleries-history/tolson-museum.aspx

9. Hull

Museum name and address	Hull and East Riding Museum , (Hull Museums Service). 36 High Street, Hull, HU1 1PS.
Displays	Limited permanent displays on geology of the area
Collections	Local and Yorkshire minerals, rocks, fossils, photographic, archive, No curatorial staff. Limited access to the collections by appointment only.
Geological activities	Occasional Open Days.
Opening hours	All year except 5 days at Christmas, New Year's day and Good Friday.
Website	https://www.hcandl.co.uk/museums-and-galleries/hull-and-east-riding-museum/hull-and-east-riding-museum

10. Hutton-Le-Hole

Museum name and address	Ryedale Folk Museum . Hutton-le-Hole, N. Yorkshire, YO6 6UA.
Displays	Local North York Moors extractive industries
Enquiry service	Basic
Sales	Basic
Admission charge	Yes
Opening hours	Daily mid January to mid-December.
Website	https://www.ryedalefolkmuseum.co.uk/

11. Keighley

Museum name and address	Cliffe Castle Museum , (Bradford Museums Galleries and Heritage). Spring Gardens Lane, Keighley, W. Yorkshire, BD20 6LH.
Displays	Local, geology of area & use of geological resources. Minerals
Temporary exhibitions	Yes
Collections	Local and UK, minerals, rocks, fossils (particular strength) (especially Upper carboniferous, plants and Palaeozoic invertebrates)
Catalogues	Yes
Enquiry service	Yes*
Geological activities	Yes
Sales	Basic books
Opening hours	All year, but closed Mondays except Bank Holidays.
Website	https://www.bradfordmuseums.org/venues/cliffe-castle-museum

12. Leeds

Museum name and address	Leeds City Museum . Cookridge Street, Leeds, W. Yorkshire, LS2 8BH.
Displays	Local & general geology
Collections	Local, Yorkshire & world wide minerals, rocks, fossils including Carboniferous and Jurassic plants
Enquiry service	Yes

Geological activities	Yes
Sales	Basic
Opening hours	*Displays reopening 2008.
Website	https://museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/leeds-city-museum/

13. Pateley Bridge

Museum name and address	Nidderdale Museum. Council Offices, King Street, Pateley Bridge, N. Yorkshire, HG3 5LE.
Displays	Local. Special reference to quarrying & mining
Collections	Local, minerals, rocks, fossils
Sales	Local quarrying
Opening hours	Afternoons Easter-end October & winter Saturdays & Sundays.
Admission charge	Yes
Website	http://www.nidderdalemuseum.com/

14. Reeth

Museum name and address	Swaledale Museum. The Green, Reeth, N. Yorkshire, DL11 6QT.
Displays	Local. Lead mining, dressing & smelting. Lime production
Collections	Lead industry
Sales	Local lead industry
Admission charge	Yes
Opening hours	Easter-end October Wednesday – Friday, Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays 10.30 a.m.-5.30 p.m., and Sundays 10.30 a.m.-5.30 p.m. from November – Easter. Able to open at other times by appointment.
Website	http://www.swaledalemuseum.org/

15 Richmond

Museum name and address	Richmondshire Museum. Ryders Wynd, Richmond, N. Yorkshire, DL11 4JA.
Displays	Local. Mining
Collections	Minor collection, minerals, rocks
Enquiry service	Basic
Admission charge	Yes
Opening hours	Easter-October.
Website	http://www.richmondshiremuseum.org.uk/

16 Rotherham

Museum name and address	Clifton Park Museum. Clifton Lane, Rotherham, S. Yorkshire, S65 2AA.
Displays	Local especially Upper Carboniferous plants
Collections	Local minerals (particular strength) (world wide), rocks, fossils (particular strength)

Enquiry service	Basic
Sales	Basic
Opening hours	All year, but closed Fridays & 25 December-1 January inclusive.
Website	[1]

17 Scarborough

Museum name and address	Scarborough Museums & Gallery , including the Rotunda Museum . Contact address: Town Hall, St Nicholas Street, Scarborough, N. Yorkshire, YO11 2HG.
Displays	*Local, Yorkshire and general geology
Temporary exhibitions	Yes
Collections	Local, Yorkshire and UK minerals and rocks (UK), fossils (particular strength),(local)
Enquiry service	Yes
Geological activities	Yes through Dinosaur Coast. General, local and regional geology
Opening hours	*Displays will reopen in The Rotunda Museum in Autumn 2007.
Website	https://www.scarboroughmuseumstrust.com/ https://www.scarboroughmuseumstrust.com/rotunda-museum/

18 Settle

Museum name and address	Museum of North Craven Life . Chapel Street, Settle, N. Yorkshire, BD24 9H5.
Displays	Local including some bone cave material. Working model of Ebbing & Flowing Well of Giggleswick Scar
Collections	Display specimens only, rocks, fossils
Sales	Basic local geology including local caves
Admission charge	Yes
Opening hours	All Bank Holiday weekends, and from the 1st July-30th September, Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday from 10.30 a.m.-4.30 p.m.
Website	https://www.museums.co.uk/details/museum-of-north-craven-life/

19 Sheffield

Museum name and address	Weston Park Museum . Weston Park, Sheffield, S. Yorkshire, S10 2TP.
Displays	Local and Yorkshire
Temporary exhibitions	Yes
Collections	Local and UK & world wide. minerals, rocks, fossils (particular strength) especially Coal Measure plants of South Yorkshire
Catalogues	Yes
Enquiry service	Yes (professional geologist on staff)
Geological activities	Yes

Sales	Basic
Opening hours	All year.
Website	https://www.museums-sheffield.org.uk/museums/weston-park/home

20 Skipton

Museum name and address	Craven Museum and Gallery. Town Hall, High Street, Skipton, N. Yorkshire, BD23 1AH.
Displays	Local minerals and fossils
Collections	Local especially Craven Reef Knoll fossils
Opening hours	Open throughout year except Tuesdays. Closed Sundays October-March.
Website	http://www.cravenmuseum.org/about-us/craven-museum-gallery/

21 Wakefield

Museum name and address	nr: National Coal Mining Museum for England. Caphouse Colliery, New Road, Overton, nr Wakefield, W. Yorkshire, WF4 4RH.
Displays	Coal mining history, science and technology
Temporary exhibitions	Yes
Collections	Items associated with mining industry for the whole of England, photographic, archive and library. Appointments should be made to examine collections, libraries, etc.
Enquiry service	Yes
Sales	Basic
Opening hours	All year.
Website	https://www.ncm.org.uk/

22 Whitby

Museum name and address	Whitby Museum. Pannett Park, Whitby, N. Yorkshire, YO21 2AH.
Displays	Local including Zechstein evaporites & Whitby jet jewellery
Temporary exhibitions	Occasional
Collections	Local minerals, fossils (particular strength)
Geological activities	Yes
Sales	Yes
Admission charge	Yes
Opening hours	All year.
Website	https://whitbymuseum.org.uk/

23 York

Museum name and address	Yorkshire Museum. Museum Gardens, York, N. Yorkshire, YO1 7FR.
Displays	Yorkshire
Temporary exhibitions	Yes
Collections	Local, Yorkshire and UK. Minerals, rocks, fossils (particular strength) Library, Photographic (world wide volcanoes)

Catalogues	Yes
Enquiry service	Yes (professional geologist on staff)
Geological activities	Yes
Sales	Basic and more detailed
Admission charge	Yes
Opening hours	All year.
Website	https://www.yorkshiremuseum.org.uk/

[Glossary](#)

[Bibliography](#)

At all times follow: [Countryside code](#) and [Code of conduct for geological field work](#)

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[Categories:](#)

- [9. Eastern England from the Tees to the Wash](#)
- [8. The Pennines and adjacent areas](#)
- [7. Northern England](#)

Navigation menu

Personal tools

- Not logged in
- [Talk](#)
- [Contributions](#)
- [Log in](#)
- [Request account](#)

Namespaces

- [Page](#)
- [Discussion](#)

Variants

Views

- [Read](#)
- [Edit](#)
- [View history](#)
- [PDF Export](#)

□

More

Search

Navigation

- [Main page](#)
- [Recent changes](#)
- [Random page](#)
- [Help about MediaWiki](#)

Tools

- [What links here](#)
- [Related changes](#)
- [Special pages](#)
- [Permanent link](#)
- [Page information](#)
- [Cite this page](#)
- [Browse properties](#)

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- [Disclaimers](#)

