



Museum Development **Yorkshire**

Annual Review
2019 - 2020



Working for a stronger, more resilient museums sector

2019-20 was the financial year that ended in a blur of frenetic uncertainty, as the UK went into the first weeks of Covid-19 lockdown. Like all non-essential services, museums were required to close to the public, and museum staff and volunteers were largely cut off from their buildings and collections. As we prepare this Review, the Museum Development Yorkshire team have not met in person since March 2020. Like our museums, we have learnt to work differently and have been as busy as ever, connecting with the museum workforce and supporting our museums at a distance throughout.

In this context, it's more important than ever that we capture and reflect the great progress being made in museums in our region prior to the pandemic, to help us see a way through to the rebuilding that will follow.



Museum Development Yorkshire provides advice and development support to museums in Yorkshire and the Humber. We support museums large and small to enable them to achieve their ambitions: to understand and care for their collections, to share them with wide audiences, and through this to become more sustainable as organisations.

We work directly with museums, providing one-to-one support and group learning that builds on existing skills and progress, giving information and advice, awarding grant funding, and connecting museums with expert, bespoke consultancy. We also provide confidential advice and support for museums, where needed.

Captivating colours catch the sunlight at Ilkley Manor House, one of the region's new museums working towards Accreditation.
Image © Ilkley Manor House






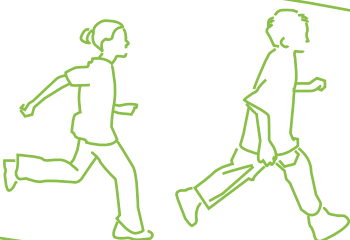
Learning together

A growth area of MDY's work is the delivery of learning programmes focused on a key skill or theme of work which is essential to operating a secure and sustainable museum. Through an extended learning programme, museums are enabled to develop and embed new skills. In 2019-20, we piloted new learning cohorts for audience development, innovation skills, fundraising, and enterprise and income generation.

In 2019-20, working with our partners we delivered 7 learning cohorts, benefiting over 30 museum sites or services.

 the audience agency

 Collections Trust



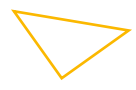
What does a learning cohort involve?

Following advertising in the MDY e-bulletin and direct contact with museums, we establish a group with a shared development need to form a learning cohort. Together, participants attend a series of training events over several months which support them to develop new skills, test new ways of working, and embed new practices.

Cohort members benefit from the specialist knowledge and skills of the MDY team, support from expert consultants, and learning from each other's challenges and solutions. The programme of full-day, group workshops is usually supported with individual mentoring or coaching from MDY or a consultant, and sometimes the opportunity to implement new learning with a grant.



Learning in a cohort provides people with thinking space and helps them build momentum with new developments.
Image © York Museums Trust



Innovation

Five museum services completed our first **Everyday Innovation** cohort, including Kirklees Museums and Galleries.

Kirklees Museums & Galleries

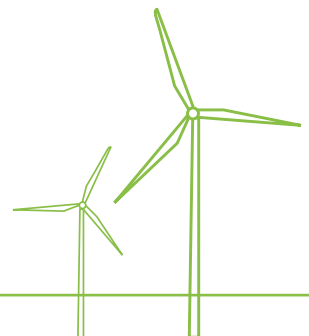
Kirklees Museums & Galleries participated in three new cohort programmes this year, Everyday Innovation, Fundraising and Enterprise & Income Generation. The programmes worked together in support of their National Lottery Heritage Fund Resilient Heritage project, *Bringing Out the Best* and built on learning from their Arts Council funded *Sustainable Collections* programme.

Following extensive cuts to the museum service in recent years, Kirklees Museums & Galleries had begun a long-term advocacy and strategic planning campaign focusing on how heritage can present positive opportunities and solutions to the challenges local authorities currently face. Two days of training with University of York innovation expert Dr Jo North validated their new way of thinking and inspired them to further develop innovation and ambition, as well as providing tools to use in their advocacy and new partnerships.

“The innovation training gave us space to think long term, and also to think about a concise vision, so that we’re always on message. We were introduced to the Business Model Canvas through the Arts Marketing Association’s Futureproof Museums programme and with Jo’s input we now use it to marshal our thinking for developing new ideas and for making a pitch, and we use horizon scanning to keep an on-going risk and opportunity log. It was about our attitude and culture too: seeing opportunities not barriers, flipping disruption into a positive, finding shared solutions with partners, and encouraging an experimental culture – ruling nothing out, trying new things, learning from things that don’t go to plan and not judging them as mistakes.”

This linked in with the fundraising and enterprise cohorts, which showed us how to make a case for support. We’ve learned how to break down what we need, having a long-term vision but with the flexibility to take opportunities as they arise. We can sift opportunities, recognise when they fit our vision, and when they don’t, and knit together packages of work. We take smaller pots of money that allow us to test and pilot ideas. We produce internal documents as we would a funding application, so requests become compelling opportunities.”

Deborah Marsland,
Museums and Galleries Manager,
Kirklees Museums & Galleries





Through long-term advocacy and building relationships with this positive win-win approach, Kirklees have become much more integrated within their local authority, supporting strategic priorities and feeling first and foremost that Kirklees Museums & Galleries are part of a wider public service.

Their new approach of flipping challenges into opportunities has changed how the service's buildings and collections are perceived - as valuable assets not as costly challenges. When the Covid crisis struck in spring 2020, they were already in the right mindset to respond strategically to the threat. As a result, Kirklees have secured a Museum Development Network Art Fund grant of £9,000 for *My School is in the Museum*, which will bring some

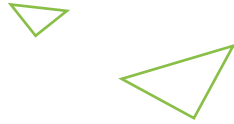
of the authority's most in need schoolchildren into the museum for a trial project in 2021. With stronger relationships and fewer barriers, a once-unimaginable project with great potential is coming to fruition.

"Through the cohort development, we built our knowledge and gained confidence to work with a range of officers across the local authority. We're now equipped to work alongside their expertise, and we've established greater mutual understanding. They now recognise the value of heritage skills and actively ask for our involvement in strategic planning."



Some of the creative thinking behind Kirklees Museums and Galleries' new strategic developments, and a request for public comments on new plans. Image © Kirklees Museums and Galleries





Health & Wellbeing

This year, we delivered our fifth annual **Health & Wellbeing** cohort, and to celebrate we held an alumni event in September 2019 bringing together 64 delegates. Museum participants from all five years of the programme sat alongside health and wellbeing professionals to explore developing partnerships between the cultural sector, health and other key stakeholders.

In recent years, health and wellbeing has become an established aspect of museum delivery. For some museums, it has become a core part of their work.

Heritage Doncaster

One example is Heritage Doncaster, which joined Arts Council England's National Portfolio for the first time in 2018, with a proposal which grew out of their community engagement and health and wellbeing activity. Victoria Ryves, Heritage Doncaster's Programme Manager for the National Portfolio describes how this came about and the impact their work is having.

History, Health and Happiness builds on Heritage Doncaster's work since 2015, developing and testing community outreach projects and health and wellbeing initiatives. Through their National Lottery Heritage Fund award, *Doncaster 1914-18*, Heritage Doncaster observed the impact on participants of engaging with heritage through community outreach. An Arts Council England Resilience Fund grant then enabled them to further explore new community engagement methods.

"Heritage Doncaster's focus, as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, is "History, Health and Happiness", a programme which uses our collections and storytelling skills to tackle social isolation and improve the wellbeing of people living in Doncaster. We do this by delivering social clubs and outreach activities, working independently, with other local authority teams, and with third sector organisations."



Trying something new: woodturning.
Image © James Mulkeen for Heritage Doncaster



At the same time, Heritage Doncaster staff participated in MDY's Health and Wellbeing cohort. This enabled them to fully grasp local wellbeing challenges, and explore how their community engagement could have a significant social impact. It also enabled them to explore ways of evaluating this work. This was incorporated into their National Portfolio proposal.

The first impact report for *History, Health and Happiness*, published in 2020, reveals the difference that the programme is making to the lives of participants. People reported a 20% increase in optimism about the future, a 23% rise in confidence, and 11% rise in feelings of belonging and connectedness. 93% of attendees had met new people and 94% had learnt something new. Over 400 accessioned museum objects were used in an outreach setting for the first time, and 40 topics chosen by participants were discussed in over 300 hours of social sessions - whilst drinking over 2,500 cups of tea!

Heritage Doncaster has now made improving wellbeing for people in Doncaster core to its delivery, through its new public building and business plan. The Danum Gallery, Library and Museum will include a 1960s lounge to enable reminiscence: co-curation is embedded into the museum's design, and community groups have loaned items for display.

History, Health and Happiness has broadened Heritage Doncaster's reach and widened their audience. It resulted from a combination of project grants to test and develop new practice, and development support from MDY which provided new tools and insights to structure the work. The service's strategic focus has shifted significantly as a result, and their delivery is being recognised as best practice in the cultural sector. As a next step, Heritage Doncaster is a partner in a pilot to assess how an Arts on Prescription scheme might function in the borough.



Participants in one strand of the project, Herstory, commented:

"Herstory has changed my life. It gives me something to look forward to."

"Herstory for me prevents isolation, forms friendships, gives good learning and is well presented. I love all the topics we do and how much we have learned, and the places we have been, the people we have met over the last year."



Herstory (above) and handling museum objects (below).
Image © James Mulkeen for Heritage Doncaster





Audience Development

Seven museums are completing our first **Audience Champions** programme, part of a national, audience development pilot scheme co-ordinated with The Audience Agency, and supported with additional funding from Arts Council England. Programme completion has been extended because of unplanned museum closures due to Covid lockdown.

Kiplin Hall and Gardens

Recognising their limited audience data, Kiplin Hall and Gardens felt this was the perfect opportunity to understand why audiences attended their site and where they came from. The programme provided training by The Audience Agency, who run the Audience Finder visitor database system, as well as support from MDY and museum peers. Kiplin also received additional mentoring from marketing and audience development expert Marge Ainsley via MDY.


As well as learning how to collect visitor data, Kiplin wanted to produce an audience development plan, and they were supported in learning how to structure it, what to consider and include, how to use the information to make informed decisions, and how to use it in fundraising.



Audience Champions has made a major difference:

“We can now prove our observed audience knowledge, that our visitors are mainly older, affluent, white British couples from further afield. We have used this knowledge to target the same audience in our immediate area, who were not typically visiting our site. Through local advertising, for example in parish magazines, we have been able to increase this existing audience. We are also looking to build a new family audience in our local area.”

**James Etherington, Director
Kiplin Hall and Gardens**

 the audience agency



Family visitors exploring artwork at Kiplin Hall and Gardens, one of the new audiences being targeted as a result of Audience Champions.
Image © Kiplin Hall and Gardens

Dales Countryside Museum

Through participation in Audience Champions, Dales Countryside Museum have built on their existing audience development work, begun previously with MDY's support. They have explored existing audience data, and considered and introduced new methods of collecting audience data which will improve their audience knowledge and inform their public programme.

"A significant change has been the introduction of visitor surveying using a tablet, which sends the data directly to the Audience Finder system. We will be able to collect more visitor surveys, analyse our own data, and see it in a regional context. By using Audience Finder, we will gain a far deeper understanding of our visitors, their motivations and interests, and will be able to use this knowledge when programming our exhibitions and events.

We have also benefited from a day of audience development consultancy to look at how we can better satisfy our visitors' needs and wants, enhance our relationships with them, and make changes so that people can engage with us more easily. Alongside the research and analysis that we can obtain through Audience Finder, this will ensure that we respond more effectively to our visitors' needs, maintain high satisfaction rates, and continue to build our audiences."

**Fiona Rosher, Museum Manager
Dales Countryside Museum**



Visitors to the Dales Countryside Museum getting hands-on to learn about making butter.
Image © Dales Countryside Museum

Epworth Old Rectory

Epworth Old Rectory recognised their need to understand their visitors, and plan their audience development activity. They rely on their volunteers for the vital activity of visitor surveying.

"We joined the Audience Champions programme because our Accreditation return showed us that we lacked a robust audience development plan. Joining the programme was a vital action in our business plan to show how we are addressing this issue. It was just what we needed! Our fundamental flaw was in making too many assumptions about who our audience is, what their profiles are, and why they are visiting. At the outset, it was a challenge to introduce visitor surveying to our volunteers but we are proud to say that they have grasped the nettle and are succeeding in collecting visitor responses. I am looking forward to the first year audience data report because our preview of the data on the Audience Finder dashboard confirms some of our existing assumptions but, more excitingly, is challenging others."

**Gillian Crawley, Manager
Epworth Old Rectory**





Increasing Income

This year we also launched cohorts for **Fundraising** and **Enterprise & Income Generation**, working with ten museums to explore new ways of increasing their income.

Kiplin Hall and Gardens

After several years of limited growth in visitor income set against a rising cost base, Kiplin Hall were seeking new ways to generate income through their existing assets. Staff changes also provided opportunities for new thinking. MDY's new Fundraising and Enterprise cohorts came at the right time, with training sessions supplying tools to assess current activities, opportunities to share ideas and learn from peers, and time to think about on-going problems.



Visitor feedback during 2020 suggests that the aims and intentions of the changes are being met.

"The house has lots of interesting things to see and then you can explore the grounds and lake. The admission also allows free return visits for a year, really great value and the grounds will look different throughout the seasons. At the moment the trees are showing their lovely autumn colours."

"What a fantastic first visit here. The price is great value for money and the Hallowe'en trail for the kids is fantastic."

Some of the growing number of local, repeat visitors to Kiplin Hall and Gardens, after the change in admission ticketing.
Image © Kiplin Hall and Gardens

Changes great and small have resulted, reflects director James Etherington.

"The programme contributed to a decision to change our visitor ticketing model from individual tickets with Gift Aid added, to an annual pass with Gift Aid included. This has tripled Gift Aid contributions. Since re-opening in summer 2020, visitor numbers have increased by 30% against 2019-20, with visitors returning more often and being more likely to agree to Gift Aid."

Reflection time also led to a decision to allow dogs into Kiplin's tearoom, enabling the many dog walkers to enjoy refreshments while on site and leading to a small but steady income stream. An unexpected benefit also arose from networking, *"While discussing legacy-giving, we heard about the Annie Marchant Collection. As a direct result, we have acquired this significant collection with an endowment of £700,000. This will make a major contribution to Kiplin Hall's development."*

In 2019-20, we awarded over £29,000 in Small Grants to 14 museums.



Small Grants

MDY offer grants of up to £3,000 for smaller projects. These are ideal for testing a new idea, or completing a small refurbishment project.

Hedon Museum

Hedon Museum in East Yorkshire secured MDY funding of £3,000 towards a much improved stair lift for their active, volunteer-run museum. Hedon's *Upstairs for Everybody* project showed that a replacement stair lift was needed to give full access to the museum's facilities for both volunteers and visitors, including people from local care homes.



The new stairlift at Hedon Museum, giving visitors and volunteers a comfortable ride and full access to the facilities.
Image © Hedon Museum

The museum's busy temporary exhibition space, toilets, archive and office are all located on the first-floor. An outdated stair lift gave visitors a jerky, two-stage ride and has been replaced by a smooth glide up two staircases. Hedon Museum successfully fundraised through small grants and individual donations to match MDY's award at 50%.

Consultancy support as match funding

Cartwright Hall Art Gallery

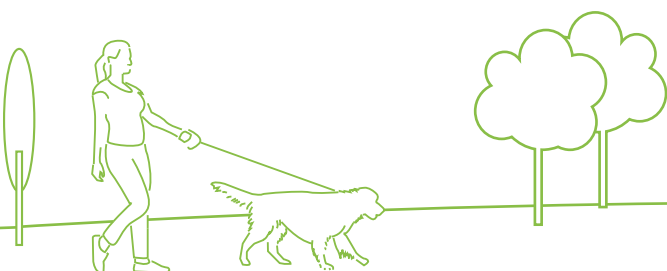
There had long been a desire to create a café at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, and MDY consultancy support enabled Bradford Museums & Galleries to advocate for, and match the internal funding to make it happen. Situated in the well-used public space of Lister Park, the Art Gallery can sometimes feel detached from its surroundings unless specific projects are being run. Both Lister Park and Cartwright Hall also lacked a suitable refreshment offer.



The Refreshment Room at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, which attracts users of popular Lister Park into the gallery.
Image © York Museums Trust

Named after an original space in the Gallery, the Refreshment Room has a light, Arts and Crafts feel, showcases collections in special Perspex cases, and has quirky table displays to draw café users upstairs to view paintings in the Gallery. It is already a popular meeting place with a wide range of users, from parents with babies, to dog walkers and business lunchers.

The café offers a softer, less formal way of accessing Cartwright Hall Art Gallery and looks like going from strength to strength, with plans for special community events such as pop-up Desi breakfasts, craft events using the space next to the café, and work with community wellbeing groups.





Visitor Services

Our well-established and popular **Front of House** cohort provides valuable development support for visitor services staff who are in constant contact with museum visitors. The group benefits from four full-day workshops, plus intensive mentoring support for non-NPO museums.

Working with a range of specialist consultants, development covers: barriers to interaction, the visitor journey and strategies to encourage secondary spend, dealing with difficult situations, gathering and responding to feedback, developing visitor tours, improving visitor interactions in gallery spaces, and making everyone feel welcome - with a focus on families and people with disabilities.

“A huge range of subjects were covered, all revolving around customer service and improving the visitor offer. The tailored sessions on site enabled a thorough review of current processes and procedures, and ignited new ideas and ways of doing things. The mentoring that MDY provided for me was truly invaluable.”

Rosie Kluz,
Front of House & Volunteers Manager
Kiplin Hall and Gardens

Bradford Museums & Galleries

Following participation in the Front of House cohort and to meet Accreditation requirements, Bradford Museums & Galleries received MDY support to obtain an access survey for Cliffe Castle Museum. They found the process truly comprehensive, with consultant Phil Chambers working in line with, and beyond, the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by applying the principles of universal design and least restrictive access to explore the fullest physical, intellectual and social access for a Listed building created as a house, not a public museum. Visitor services assistant Tony Carruthers and colleagues were central in supporting this work.

The access report made simple, achievable recommendations in every area: from orientation and entry, to accessible displays and content. Cliffe Castle’s Paralympics heritage exhibition was seen as an exemplary way of generating inclusive content, and Phil Chambers also made helpful suggestions about training and support for staff and volunteers. As well as improving access, moving the retail area to a larger space also supported Covid-safe working. The process has developed staff and provided Bradford Museums & Galleries with a model to follow for their other sites.





Collections Development

Our on-going partnership with Collections Trust delivered the **Banish the Backlog** cohort to six museums in 2019-20.

The Peace Museum

After completing a lengthy collections audit, and with their Accreditation return due, The Peace Museum identified an opportunity to re-evaluate their priorities in collection documentation. Banish the Backlog, a cohort delivered by Collections Trust for MDY, was a perfect opportunity to support this work.

Curator Charlotte Hall attended three peer support sessions, and also received a site visit from Collections Trust outreach officer Sarah Brown, and museum development officer Alan Bentley. Each session was tailored to explore the issues and experiences of dealing with a collection backlog. Between sessions, participants set themselves tasks, for example Charlotte updated The Peace Museum's collections management procedure.

As a result of the programme, the museum's backlog is now Spectrum-compliant with all items having an inventory record.

The Peace Museum have now moved onto the next stage of checking discrepancies against all documentation records. Being in a good position with the backlog has also freed Charlotte to move onto a new collections management project: digitising collections.



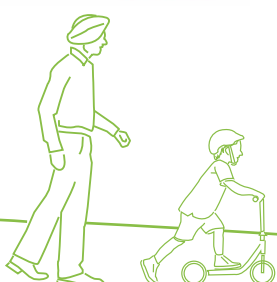
“Participating in the cohort helps you break a large task down into manageable actions. It enables you to see tackling the backlog as positive and achievable, with the end result that you will be able to banish that backlog. Following the process through means that we will have a more accurate database, which will allow our audiences to see more of our collection.”

**Charlotte Hall, Curator
The Peace Museum**

A banner by Thalia Campbell, displayed on the fence at Greenham Common Peace Camp during the 1980s, one of the collection objects to be digitised following The Peace Museum's successful participation in Banish the Backlog.
Image © Thalia Campbell Design

Our evaluation showed that 93% of respondents had gained or improved skills, due to our training.

Collections
Trust





Professional Development

MDY Internship

This year we welcomed Lily Wilks as our third, annual intern to the MDY team. We created this post to offer an opportunity for an aspiring museum professional to develop their museum knowledge and skills.



“Working as the Museum Development Yorkshire Intern I gained valuable experience and developed my skills. I met fabulous people from museums all over Yorkshire, and learnt so much from their contributions to our events.

I used my existing skills from working with the public to support hosting of MDY events and run our communications, especially our Twitter account and website updates. I also practised project management skills by organising events.

I expanded my existing knowledge of geological collections to include collections management and different issues arising from all types of collections. I also learnt about fundraising, different types of funders and how best to approach them. I developed my understanding of working with communities to create mutually beneficial projects, and managing volunteers. I learnt about best practice in a front of house role, and how to deal with complaints and criticisms. I also saw how museums delivering health and wellbeing can improve people’s lives, and support museum staff.

I also learnt so much more: with MDY I found myself, and furthered my passion for museums and the wonderful work they do.”

**Lily Wilks, Intern
Museum Development Yorkshire**

In 2019-20, MDY provided 38 learning events providing 675 professional development sessions for individuals.

Volunteer development and rewards

Museum Development Yorkshire works with Museum Development North West and North East to offer a complimentary pass for volunteers, giving them free access to other participating museums across the North of England. Originating in a small group of Yorkshire museums, the scheme included 178 museums by March 2020.

Museums appreciate the scheme because it provides an enjoyable benefit for volunteers, encourages them to broaden their knowledge of museum practice, helps them feel part of the museum sector, and enables them to welcome other volunteers to their site.

“It’s a nice thank you for our volunteers, and a way of picking up new ideas for Hedon Museum – there’s always something to learn.”

**Martin Craven, Trustee
Hedon Museum**



Accreditation

In 2019-20, our focus was on helping museums understand what the revised 2018 Accreditation Standard meant for them. Working with Collections Trust, we provided information through regional museum forums and training sessions, and provided templates to help museums identify their priorities for renewing their Accreditation.



Rebecca Griffiths, our Regional Accreditation Adviser in 2019-20. Image © Catherine Candlin Photography

With Museum Development North West and North East, we hosted much-needed workshops for Accreditation Mentors, to help them feel confident in supporting their museums with Accreditation requirements.

MDY also provided more support to organisations wanting either to become accredited for the first time, or returning to the Accreditation scheme. Ilkley Manor House and Nidderdale Museum were amongst those supported this year.

Nidderdale Museum

Nidderdale Museum has rejoined the scheme and is now working towards Accreditation.



“We wanted to rejoin the Accreditation scheme because it helps us manage our collections and public services to a professional standard, and in line with other museums. It also enables us to secure advice and training, and vital public funding. We were grateful for MDY’s assistance in completing the Accreditation eligibility questionnaire, and we look forward to working with our Accreditation Mentor.”

**Sue Welch, Chairman of Trustees
Nidderdale Museum**

Collections documentation at Nidderdale Museum will be strengthened by working towards the Accreditation standard. Image © Nidderdale Museum

Ilkley Manor House

The trustees of Ilkley Manor House recognised the importance of appropriately caring for their building and collections, managing the organisation in a sustainable way, and gaining a good reputation. Trustees also realised how important accredited museum status might be whilst developing an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

“MDY helped us think through whether museum Accreditation was the right route for us. We needed to consider whether our constitution and lease allow us to be a museum, the size of our collections, and how many days per year we open to the public. Accreditation enables us to access funding, and obtain free, professional advice on diverse areas including collections management, forward planning and catering. We have been encouraged by MDY’s flexible approach, offering the right level of support at the right time.”

**Sarah Thomas, Chair
Ilkley Manor House Trust**



Joining the Accreditation scheme has helped volunteers at Ilkley Manor House develop their museum practice, raise their profile, and secure funding. Image © Ilkley Manor House

Museum Development Yorkshire is funded as an Arts Council England Sector Support Organisation to provide advice and development support to museums in Yorkshire and the Humber, and is part of York Museums Trust.

Museum Development Yorkshire is one of the nine regional museum development providers in England. Together, we form a national Museum Development Network to share our knowledge and learning, and to access opportunities for museums.

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Your Museum Development Yorkshire team.

From left to right: Alan Bentley, Joanne Bartholomew, Michael Turnpenny, Dieter Hopkin and Liz Denton.

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Museum Development Yorkshire



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