

# York Castle Museum

## A Victorian Christmas Cracker Teachers' Workshop Pack



**Image:** Performance of **A Christmas Carol** on Kirkgate. © Photo by Gareth Buddo, courtesy of York Museums Trust.

Email: [schools@ymt.org.uk](mailto:schools@ymt.org.uk)

## Workshop overview

Step back in time to Victorian York at Christmas in our **A Victorian Christmas Cracker** workshop. Enjoy a one-man performance of Charles Dicken's **A Christmas Carol** on our snow-covered Victorian street, discover the origins of some of our most treasured Christmas traditions, and make a Victorian Christmas cracker – complete with sugar mouse – to take away with you!

## Location

York Castle Museum  
Eye of York  
York  
YO1 9RY

## Workshop times

10am–12.15pm.

## Age group

Key Stage Two.

## Numbers

Maximum group size of 33 pupils per workshop.

## Session fees

£7.50 per pupil. For groups of 24 or less, there is a flat fee of £180 per workshop.





## What to expect

In this session, your pupils will:

- Enjoy a 30-minute theatrical performance of Charles Dicken's **A Christmas Carol**.
- **Explore Kirkgate**, our reconstructed Victorian street, to find out about Victorian Christmas traditions and how these are similar, or different, to those of today. Notes for teachers will be provided to support this activity.
- Make their own festive **Victorian Christmas cracker**, complete with sugar mouse, to take home with them.

Our **A Victorian Christmas Cracker** workshop is led by an expert member of our Learning Team.

## Risk assessment

You will be sent a copy of our **A Victorian Christmas Cracker Workshop Risk Assessment** once a booking has been made.

## Curriculum links

Our **A Victorian Christmas Cracker** workshop can be used to cover the following curriculum areas:

### Key Stage Two

Pupils should be taught about:

- A local history study
- A study or an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066.



## Workshop outline (single class of up to 33 pupils)

Time	Activity	Location
10–10.25am	Arrival at York Castle Museum. Pupils will store their belongings and receive a welcome briefing from the session lead.	Dick Turpin's Tuck Room and Kirkgate
10.25–11am	Pupils will take a seat in the snowy streets of Kirkgate for a one-man theatrical performance of Charles Dicken's <b>A Christmas Carol</b> .	Kirkgate
11am–12.05pm	<p>Pupils will split into two groups and alternate between the following activities:</p> <p><b>Kirkgate Christmas Trail</b> Pupils will explore Kirkgate and find out what Christmas was like for the inhabitants of Victorian York. This is a <b>self-led</b> activity. Notes for teachers will be provided.</p> <p><b>Victorian Cracker Craft</b> Pupils will discover the origins of Christmas crackers before making their own, complete with sugar mouse, to take away with them. This is a <b>led</b> activity.</p>	Kirkgate and The Green Room
12.05–12.15pm	Conclusion and workshop evaluation.	Kirkgate
12.15pm onwards	Visiting groups can choose to have lunch at York Castle Museum and/or make a self-guided visit to the rest of the site.	Dick Turpin's Tuck Room

## Key vocabulary

Department store, middle-class, lower-class, outdoor privy, confectionery, Quaker, Methodist, temperance, Yule, draper.

## Cancellation Policy

If you need to cancel your workshop booking, then please give us as much notice as possible so that we can offer your slot to another group.

If a booking is cancelled less than one week before your visit date, then your school will be charged a cancellation fee amounting to 50% of the visit fee.

If a booking is cancelled less than 24 hours before your visit date, then your school will be charged a cancellation fee amounting to 100% of the visit fee.

## A Christmas Carol: about the performance

**A Christmas Carol** will be performed by **Chris Cade**, a freelance actor and storyteller in educational theatre.

Chris will take on the role of narrator, Scrooge, and the ghosts of Jacob Marley, Christmas Past, Christmas Present, and Christmas Yet to Come.

### Audience participation

There are opportunities for pupils to take part in the performance as specific characters. You may wish to select pupils for roles in advance of the workshop or ask for volunteers on the day.



The following roles are available, some of which have optional speaking parts:

Character	Notes
Bob Cratchit	Bob Cratchit will be invited up twice during the performance to sit at a desk with Scrooge, once at the start of the performance and once at the end. The character will be required to look busy and can speak if desired.
Mrs Cratchit	Non-speaking role.
Tiny Tim Cratchit	Tiny Tim Cratchit will give the final line of the performance, 'God bless us, everyone!'
Martha, Belinda and Peter Cratchit	Non-speaking roles.
Scrooge's nephew Fred	This character has one line to speak when prompted to do so by Scrooge, 'Merry Christmas Uncle'.
Gentlemen collecting for the poor and destitute	These characters will be asked to shake collecting tins during the performance and to act visibly disappointed when Scrooge chooses not to make a donation.
Scrooge's fiancé Belle	Non-speaking role.
Little boy in the street	When asked by Scrooge 'What day is it today?', this character will respond 'Christmas day'.
Queen Victoria	Non-speaking role.

Pupils will be asked to act as carol singers towards the end of the performance.

Carol sheets for the following carol will be provided on the day:

**'God rest ye merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay  
For Jesus Christ our saviour was born on Christmas day  
To save us all from Satan's power when we have gone astray  
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy  
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy.'**



There are no loud noises during the performance. The usual sound effects and lighting changes on Kirkgate will be suspended during the performance.

Pupils will watch the performance seated on the main street in Kirkgate. Cushions will be provided for seating, as well as benches for accompanying adults. Please be aware that members of the public will also have access to Kirkgate during the performance.

## Dress like a Victorian

To make your **A Victorian Christmas Cracker** workshop extra special, your class could make their visit to York Castle Museum dressed in period clothing.

If you are planning to dress up, then here are some ideas which you might like to try:

### Boys

- Dark trousers
- A plain or pinstriped shirt
- A neckerchief or knitted scarf
- A plain waistcoat
- Dark shoes
- A flat cap

### Girls

- A simple dress or skirt that goes below the knee, preferably plain, or with small flowers, or pinstripes
- A plain blouse
- A straw boater or headscarf
- A knitted or fabric shawl



## About Chris Cade

Chris Cade is a freelance actor and storyteller in educational theatre. Chris Cade regularly delivers educational theatre for museums, schools and community groups across Yorkshire and beyond. He portrays costumed characters through the centuries from Viking and Victorian times to the World Wars of modern day. As a former teacher, with over 25 years' experience in Museum Theatre, Chris offers quality heritage learning opportunities from Key Stage 1 to U3A.

For more details about Chris and his work, please visit his [website](#).

## Get in touch!

If you require further information about our **A Victorian Christmas Cracker** workshop or making a visit to York Castle Museum, then please get in touch with our Learning Team at [schools@ymt.org.uk](mailto:schools@ymt.org.uk) or call [01904 650348](tel:01904650348).

York Castle Museum is part of York Museums Trust. Charity number 1092466.

