Exhibit of the Week

.oman chimney — Malton Museum, Assembly Rooms, Malton

Rare object displays skill of Roman potters

This magnificent Roman object, made from fired clay and standing some cm high, was found during cavations in Norton 1954, together with a gment from a second one.

Only about 30 similar jects, or fragments of em, have been found Roman sites from the hole of Britain, although her fragments may lie recognised among the any bits of tile found on any man excavation.

These objects are all llow and perforated and st of them taper towards e conical top. This one is lbous, with roughly-cut angular openings, and ided into three sections parated by narrow corative flanges formed the maker pressing his gers into the wet clay.

We do not know where as made but the red clay imilar to that used for tiles from the roofs and ating systems in Roman lton and Norton.

The function of these cinating objects is still a tter for debate. Some have t bases and it has been gested that they might ve been used as covers lamps or when burning matic substances.

However, this one m Norton is relatively usual not only because s virtually complete, but cause, importantly, it nds on a curved base. s base is pierced below 'pot' and it can therefore suggested with some tainty that it was made to nd on the apex of a roof to be used as a chimney. gments of others with ilar integral ridge tiles known from York and ewhere, although some ght have been used as orative finials rather n functioning mneys.

Roman homes not have places as know them it is known, m Pompeii elsewhere, that rooms re heated by braziers on ich only very dry wood or charcoal was burnt, thus preventing smoke and making chimneys unnecessary. Other rooms had under-floor heating, the well-known hypocaust system, examples of which have been found in Malton and Norton, and at Langton Roman villa a few miles away. Bake houses did incorporate chimney-type structures to draw off smoke, but chimneys such as this one were more likely to be have been used on the roof of either a kitchen or bath house.

Fragments of similar objects have been found in York

Although it has not yet been found, there must have been a bath house connected with the fort and possibly another within the civilian settlement which spread across the river into what is now Norton.

Roman chimney which will be on display at The Hidden Monkey Cafe on September 17.

● Handle the object and find out more about Roman bathhouses at the next meeting of Tea and Hidden Treasure, Wednesday September 17, 2.30pm at The Hidden Monkey Café, 3 Market Place, Malton.

To book ring 01653 694982 or 01653 697845.