

## The Scold's Bridle

It has been historically conceived that women were of little more spirit than their male counterparts. As far as history goes, the unequal balance of roles of both men and women were strictly followed. That being most likely due to strict religious beliefs or the local lifestyle of the time. Some strict religious beliefs regarding women were that the male husband was the 'head' of the house and women were nothing but the housewife and mother. This way of life was carried throughout history until equal rights for women were established just a century ago.



In a time when equal rights for women were far from accepted, brutal punishments toward women were common in medieval England and Scotland. Fortunately, its usage was discontinued in the mid-1600s.

### *The Scold's Bridle*

The Scold's Bridle was an instrument of punishment for women whose 'harsh chiding' was a source of annoyance to the family or neighbourhood. Similar to that of a horse's bridle and bit, a 'bridle' was fastened upon the woman's head and the iron 'bit' was fitted into the mouth, rendering movement in the mouth and speech impossible without severe pain.

Alike most all forms of punishment from the past, the Scold's Bridle was used to humiliate the person in question and to 'teach' them a lesson.

The term 'Scold's Bridle' refers to its literal title and usage. Being a punishment for excessively 'talkative' women, "scold" refers to the silencing of the woman, or 'scolding' her for her behaviour.



*Scottish sketches of diagrams of the Scold's Bridle mounted.*

