

### ***Our next short course:***

Dr Robert Wright will be leading another short course for us this spring, this time on the theme of **'York: Medieval to Modern'**.



The course will take place at Bedern Hall in York, from 7.00 to 9.00pm on the following Tuesday evenings: March 27<sup>th</sup>, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup>. Coffee/tea will be served in the interval. The course costs £25.00 (£20.00 for people who are retired/unwaged). *It is bound to be very popular, so please book your place as soon as possible, using the booking form enclosed with this newsletter.* If there is room, people may be able to attend individual sessions at a cost of £5.00 each but please check with the PLACE Office first. We hope to arrange a fieldtrip to follow the course, on a date to suit participants.

**This two-part fieldtrip will explore some of the cultural heritage of South Yorkshire.**

**Morning: Elsecar Heritage Centre, SK 386999.** The Centre is an antique, history and craft centre located within former ironworks and colliery workshops. There are individual craft workshops and exhibitions of Elsecar's past, and entry is free. Across the road is a reservoir and surrounding park, and the stately home of Wentworth Woodhouse is nearby. **Meet at 10.30am in the car park of the Heritage Centre for a self-guided visit.** Bring a packed lunch.

**Afternoon: New Hall Barn, SE395053.** New Hall is part of a medieval manorial site. The cruck-framed barn (right) is a restored Grade II listed building, dated by dendrochronology to 1530. The whole area is rich in archaeology, from prehistoric crop marks to relics of the former coal industry. The barn is now used as an educational centre. There is an interesting farm walk. Access is by car but people are encouraged to share transport.

**Meet at 2.00pm in the farmyard. Please use the booking form enclosed. Numbers are limited to 25 for the afternoon visit.**



### ***Early spring fieldtrips:***

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March, Myton Grange, 1.30pm – 4.30pm.**

Our first fieldtrip of the year will be an early afternoon visit to the stud farm at Myton on Swale, near Boroughbridge. The farm was built in 1870 for an American, who bred trotting horses. It was state-of-the-art at the time, including its own piped water supply, stables, cart sheds, feed rooms and a piggery. The entrance was very impressive, with a fine carriage shed and an ornamental tower. The farm eventually became the base for the Myton estate hunt and in World War I it was a way station for thousands of horses going off to the war. [People may wish to see the film 'War Horse' before our visit]. It continued in use through the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but its buildings were in a poor state of repair by 2010, when a Higher Level Stewardship grant from Natural England allowed the surviving historical features to be restored. We shall have a tour of both Home Farm and the Stud Farm, followed by a trailer tour of the farmland. **Meet at 1.30am at Home farm, SE 453675. Numbers are limited to 25. Please book your place using the booking form enclosed with this newsletter.**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> April, Elsecar Heritage Centre and New Hall Barn.**

## PLACE Annual General Meeting, Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2012

Our 2012 AGM will be held in **Wath**, near Ripon. Meet at 10.00am for coffee in the village hall, followed by the AGM at 10.30am. At approximately 11.15am, Dr Margaret Bastow will give a short introductory talk about the village, followed by a walk to the church, where Jane Bastow and Peter Hills will explain points of interest. The party will then drive to **Thorp Perrow Arboretum**, near Bedale, where members can eat their packed lunches or buy refreshments in the cafeteria. As well as the renowned tree collection, there is a bird of prey and mammal centre and falconry flying displays take place. Cost: £6.00 per person. If enough people are interested, we hope to arrange a guided tour (free for PLACE members).

Entry to the AGM in the morning is free but **please book on the enclosed form by Friday 13<sup>th</sup> April if you intend to come to Thorp Perrow in the afternoon.**

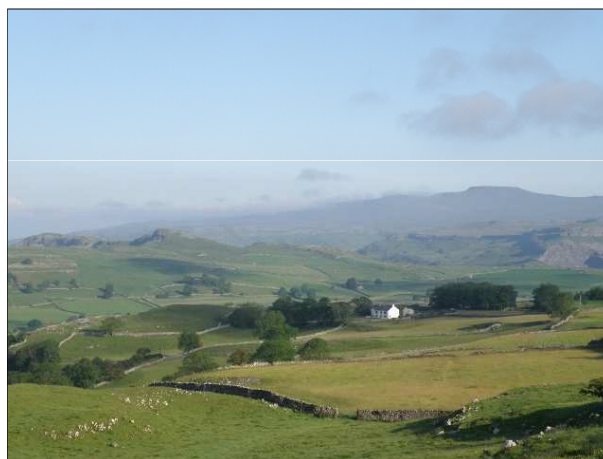
**The AGM agenda will be sent out nearer the time to those who book for the day. It will also be shown on our website. At the AGM we shall be electing trustees to serve for the next three years. We anticipate that there will be at least two vacancies to fill. Anyone interested in standing for election should contact the PLACE Office for a nomination form (to be returned by 31<sup>st</sup> March).**

### Fieldtrip to Hardcastle Crags and Gibson Mill, Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> May

The Hardcastle Crags estate lies in the beautiful Hebden Dale wooded valley. There is an interesting mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees, mostly planted in the 1870s. The woods are rich in fungi, lichens and mosses, as well as birds and mammals, not to mention northern hairy wood ants. Bluebells carpet the woodland floor in April and early May. The estate is owned by the National Trust, which has also restored Gibson Mill, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century cotton mill. We shall have a tour of the mill as part of our visit, and learn about the technology, based on self-sufficiency and now featuring photovoltaic cells, solar panels, hydro turbines, composting toilets, a biomass boiler and a leach field.

**Meet at Midgehole Road car park (SD 988291) at 11.00am for a riverside walk to Gibson Mill. After the tour of the mill and eating lunch (bring your own or use the cafe at Gibson Mill), we will have a circular walk through the woodlands and past Hardcastle Crags. For those wishing to travel by train, we will arrange transport from the station at Hebden Bridge, leaving at 10.45am and returning at c.3.30pm if requested in advance.**

**Numbers for the tour of the mill are limited to 25, so please book your place without delay!**



### Lower Winskill Farm, near Settle, Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> June

Situated in Upper Ribblesdale, in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, this upland sheep farm lies in a landscape steeped in history. The owner, Tom Lord (a speaker at our spring conference in 2011), is an expert on the archaeology of drystone walls and will introduce us to the agricultural history and ecology of the area. Our visit coincides with an Open Studios event, when sculptor Sarah Smith and painter Margaret Utley will be showcasing their art.

**Meet at the farm (SD 827664) at 11.00am. Bring packed lunch, a drink and stout footwear. The area is high up on the Pennines, so warm clothes may be needed! Numbers are limited to 25, so please book your place using the form enclosed.**

## PLACE spring conference 2012:

### *Yorkshire's Forests in the twenty-first century* Dalby Forest Visitor Centre, Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April

As advertised in the previous newsletter, this conference will examine the current debate about the use and function of forests and woodlands, both public and private. It will include morning talks and an afternoon walk, led by Brian Walker. Speakers:

- Vince Carter: 'Forestry – an evolving agenda'
- Will Richardson: 'Sustainable Forest Management in the Private Sector'
- Adrian Carter: Commercial aspects of recreation in the forests
- Brian Walker: Wildlife and Heritage in the Forests.

**The cost of the conference, including coffee/tea, is £20.00 (£15.00 for unwaged/retired people).** There is a cafeteria in the visitor centre or people can bring their own packed lunch.

***If you have not already booked your place, please use the booking form enclosed.***



## REPORTS ON AUTUMN 2011 EVENTS

### **Sheffield conference, October 29<sup>th</sup>** ***Back from the Edge: The fall and rise of Yorkshire's Wildlife.***

This event, our first held in South Yorkshire and organised jointly with the South Yorkshire ECONET, was a great success. It was attended by over 60 people and, as well as the wide-ranging talks, there were many fascinating displays and posters. The proceedings will be published later in the year.



### ***Six Yorkshire Legacies short course***

Dr Michael Hopkinson led this autumn course in Bedern Hall, looking at the lives and achievements of John Carr (architect), George Hudson (railway magnate), Titus Salt (industrialist), the Rowntree family (housing and welfare), the Sitwells (literature) and William Etty (artist). The final session was held in the Art Gallery, where we viewed the current Etty exhibition.

Right: Baldersby Park, the country residence of George Hudson.



The course is being written up as a PLACE publication, which will be available later in the spring.

**Our joint lecture with the Yorkshire Philosophical Society in November was given by Michael Hopkinson on '*Letters from America: nineteenth century emigrants writing home to Yorkshire*'. The book to accompany the talk is available from PLACE, price £1.50 + P & P (see list on order form enclosed).**

## Report on PLACE outing to Buck Wood on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011

By Eileen White

Buck Wood lies on the south side of the Aire Valley, within a distinctive curve of the river between Shipley and Apperley Bridge. It adjoins Thackley, part of the former Township of Idle. In the morning, Christine Alvin and Eileen White gave a slide-show presentation on 'All you ever wanted to know about Buck Wood'. The Friends of Buck Wood was established in 2004 with the encouragement of Bradford Council, the owners of the site. A Heritage Initiative Grant enabled various surveys to be made, and the archaeological survey discovered a previously unknown prehistoric enclosure within the wood. A Heritage Lottery Fund grant enabled a more detailed examination to take place, under the guidance of John Buglass, a professional archaeologist, using volunteers from the local community and a local school.

Buck Wood can be classed as ancient woodland, and is included in the Survey of idle made in 1584. It is connected with the manorial corn mill that stood on the bank of the River Aire through the Buck family, who purchased the freehold of the Mill and Wood by 1620. They retained possession until 1744, when it was sold to Sir Walter Calverley, by then the Lord of the Manor, who owned Esholt Hall on the other side of the river. Sir Walter's son sold the whole of the Esholt Hall estate to the Stansfield family in 1755, and this family retained the property until 1906, when Bradford Corporation bought the whole estate in order to build a much needed sewage works for Bradford.



Ancient woodland, Buck Wood



The Plateau area covered by scrub and good for butterflies

One of the earliest activities of the Corporation was to build an Open Air School just inside the wood, to provide fresh air and good food, along with education, to children whose health was affected by the poor conditions of the polluted and smoke-filled inner city of industrial Bradford. During the Second World War the school was used for military purposes, and then as a temporary base for children awaiting the construction of a new local primary school. In 1966 the buildings were damaged by fire, and were demolished and razed to the ground.

In the afternoon, PLACE members were taken on a walk through the wood by Norman Alvin and Eileen White. Starting from Ainsbury Avenue, a road built to give access down to the Esholt Sewage Works, the main entrance leads to an area now called the Plateau, but formerly known as the Tip, as it was covered over with spoil from Thackley railway tunnel. This Midland Railway line was first taken under the eastern part of the wood in 1845, and a second tunnel was dug in 1900. An air vent is visible near the entrance. Due to the spoil dump, the Plateau supports a different range of shrubs as opposed to the tall trees elsewhere, and so provides a good site for butterflies. It also supports a newly created mountain bike track for the use of local children, which has not proved a good idea for the butterflies.

Adjacent to the Plateau is the site of the Open Air School, which demonstrates how quickly a wood can recolonise and hide previous human activity. Since 1966 trees, mainly birch, had grown over the foundations of the School so even the locals had forgotten where it stood. One of the first activities of the Friends of Buck Wood, led by Norman Alvin, was to uncover the site of one of the resting sheds, the tiled base of the shower block and the line of the path along the front of the once extensive buildings.

Following the path into the wood, the PLACE group admired an old rowan tree, and pondered what Christine Alvin calls a 'toothache tree', an oak with several iron nails hammered into the trunk. The theory is that the pain of a toothache could be transferred to the tree through the nails; but another theory is that the nails were put in many years before to enable boys to climb up into the branches.

These two trees fringed the large prehistoric enclosure site. And the raised oval-shaped edge formed by the remains of the wall's foundations became obvious once the archaeologists had pointed it out. The PLACE group were shown the sites of the trenches taken through the perimeter wall and the interior roundhouse hut foundations, and also the line of an orthostat wall stretching away into the wood that could indicate an attached field system. There were also shown the cup-and-ring marked stones that were discovered in and adjoining the enclosure during the investigation. These examples of rock art, linking Buck Wood to the more well-known examples on Baildon Moor and Ilkley Moor across the valley, are thought to date from the Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age, c. 2500 BC, and make the enclosure a site of national importance. The enclosure itself could have been inhabited throughout the Iron Age and after the Roman period.



Rest area of the former Open Air School



PLACE members round the old rowan tree

The walk continued down a sunken path, with examples of modern rock art on display, where a sculptor has recently carved animals (a buck, a squirrel) and words on suitably shaped boulders. Norman Alvin pointed out several trees of interest, including types of oak as well as birch and beech. Holly is ubiquitous. In the 1930s Bradford Corporation planted an area of conifers, but never felled them, giving further variety to the ecology of the wood. Clearing of trees and undergrowth underneath a line of electricity pylons suggests what the wood must have looked like when it was a 'working wood', and the owners exploited it for tall timber trees and coppiced trees over the centuries. Breaks in the trees gave views across the valley, revealing how the glaciers of the Ice Age shaped the valley.



Modern carving of a buck



Watching a boat ascend the lock

The path led down to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, a feat of engineering that was initiated by the desire of Bradford and other local businessmen to get much needed limestone from the Skipton area. The first stretch from Skipton to Bingley was opened in 1773, and the stretch to Field Lock in Thackley in 1774. Leeds was connected by 1777, but the whole length to Liverpool was not completed until 1816. Field Lock marks the boundary of Buck Wood and Field Wood, and also represents an early style of lock construction. The right-angled kerbs of the entrance to the lock had to be modified with wooden guidance posts because boats were damaged against the sharp edges as they manoeuvred into the lock. Walking back along the towpath towards the site of Buck Mill swing-bridge, there were views of some of the fields within the wood, and the remains of a now dismantled bridge put in for the convenience of the farmer whose land had been severed by the Canal. Now most of the ground between Canal and river has been left to go wild.

Buck Mill, once the manorial water corn mill and fulling mill serving the whole of the Idle Township, continued in use until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, when further warehouses were built, but by the time of Bradford's purchase of the estate it was unused. Around 1920 all the buildings of the mill, the 16<sup>th</sup> century house and barns were demolished and only the foundations remain. They were not accessible at the time of the walk, because of waterlogging and the summer growth of vegetation, but in winter it is possible to examine the line of the former goit, now silted up, and the site of the mill wheel. However, the group could examine the iron footbridge, erected by the Idle and Baildon Local Boards in 1889, after 17 years of prevarication. It replaced the stepping stones which had been the only way to cross for centuries before. There is no road bridge over the river between Shipley and Apperley Bridge, which has no doubt preserved the tranquillity of the wood. From the bridge, it was possible to see how various small islands have encroached into the river, and a new one is even now being formed, putting the former mill further from the river bank. The faint line of the weir, that used to divert water through the goit, is still visible.

On the walk back up the hillside along the old Buck Mill path, the group walked over the top of the Thackley Tunnel where the railway emerges towards Shipley. There was also a glimpse of Idle Hill, the highest point of the former township. The fields at the summit are called Idlawe in early documents, meaning 'the barren hill', and probably the name was corrupted and transferred to the whole of what is now known as Idle. The hill marks the divide between a coal seam that stretched down to the river, and a sandstone layer across the moor behind. By the end of the walk, the PLACE participants had heard about people, landscape, prehistoric culture and a variety of environments, natural and manmade, all contained within Buck Wood.

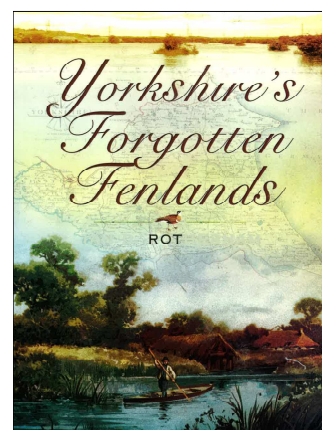
**YORKSHIRE'S HISTORIC  
LANDSCAPES AND  
BUILDINGS AT RISK**



*Editors*  
**George Sheeran  
Veronica Wallace**

**New PLACE book!** The proceedings of our spring conference 2011 have now been published, price £2.50 + P & P. To order your copy, please use the order form enclosed with this newsletter, which also lists our other publications for sale.

**New book!** Those who attended the autumn conference in Sheffield will remember Ian Rotherham's fascinating talk on 'Yorkshire's Forgotten Fenlands'. This delightful book covers the topic in greater detail and is a must for anyone interested in wetlands and their history.



**Available from Pen and Sword Books, 47 Church St, Barnsley, S70 2AS. Price £10.99**

## **Advance notice: PLACE autumn conference**

**Our 2012 autumn conference will take place on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September on the theme of *Food and Sustainability: Past, present and future.***

The event is being organised as part of the York Food Festival and will focus on topics relating to Yorkshire. Morning talks will be held in York St John University. Participants will then find their own lunch in the city and browse through the many stalls selling local produce. Activity based sessions at Bedern Hall in the afternoon promise to provide a tasty experience! You will be able to book for the morning or afternoon sessions separately or for both sessions. [Further details and a booking form will follow in the next newsletter but please put the date in your diary now, as the event is likely to be very popular.](#)

***Trees Beyond the Wood* conference, Sheffield Showroom and Workstation, 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2012.** For further details of this major international event, please see their website: [www.ukeconet.co.uk](http://www.ukeconet.co.uk)

**Our Friends of PLACE calendar 2012 has already sold out. Don't forget to take pictures during the year for the next one .....**



Calendar cover picture

## **To contact PLACE:**

**By post:**  
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YO31 7EX.

**N.B. This is a 'virtual' office and is not staffed.**



**By phone:** 01904 766291  
(N.B. this is the Chief Executive's home number).

**By e-mail:** [place@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:place@yorks.ac.uk)

**Website:** [www.place.uk.com](http://www.place.uk.com)



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Ms Aileen Bloomer (Chair)  
Dr Michael Hopkinson (Treasurer)  
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Dr Margaret Atherden