PLACE subscriptions are due on 1st January each year. The price is still only £5.00!

Most members now pay by standing order, which is a great help to us. If you do not do so, please send a cheque, payable to ‘PLACE’, to the PLACE Office (address on back page). If you are receiving this in paper form, a renewal form is enclosed, if appropriate. If you are receiving this as an e-mail attachment, please download a renewal form from our website.

A VERY HAPPY (IF WET) NEW YEAR!

In this newsletter you will find news of PLACE events and projects this spring, a notice about the 2016 AGM, reports on autumn 2015 events and news of future publications and events. You will also find enclosed a questionnaire about your interests and skills, which we’d be grateful if you could complete and return to the PLACE Office or attach to an e-mail. This will replace the questionnaire we used to send out to new members, so we’d like everyone to fill it in, please.

RESEARCH GRANTS FROM PLACE

PLACE is prepared to offer up to 3 grants of £500-£1000 to encourage and support projects by individuals or amateur groups researching the landscape and cultural environment of Yorkshire. These grants can be used, for example, for travel, equipment, consumables, or other research costs. PLACE normally expects to publish results of the research in an appropriate form. If you are not sure whether your project would be considered, do feel free to contact us to discuss your research.

PLACE Spring Conference: YORKSHIRE WOODLANDS
Saturday 23rd April 2016, Clarke Foley Centre, Ilkley, 9.30am – 4.30pm

This conference is intended as a tribute to the late Oliver Rackham, who delivered the keynote lecture at our first conference in 1997. The focus will be on recent research on Yorkshire Woodlands and we plan to publish the proceedings of the conference. Five morning talks will be followed by an afternoon walk in Middleton Woods, where we hope the bluebells will be in full flower. Ilkley is easily accessible by public transport. There is a public car park opposite the Centre or free roadside parking near the woods.

Morning speakers:
Professor Melvyn Jones – Walls, woodbanks and worked trees
Tim Laurie – Relict limewoods in the north-east Pennines
Tom Lord – Wood pasture in Upper Ribblesdale
John Weir – Climate change and forestry
John Grimshaw – The Yorkshire Arboretum

Tea/coffee will be available during the morning. Lunch is not provided but there are plenty of places to eat in Ilkley or you can bring a packed lunch. The cost of the conference is £10.00 per head. The full programme and timetable for the day will be sent to those who book.

Please use the enclosed booking form for all PLACE events
SHORT COURSE
CURTAIN UP! Yorkshire on Stage and Screen

The ‘taster’ session for this course, held in the University of York’s Theatre Department in November, was enjoyed by all who attended and we are grateful to Dr Gavin Kearney and colleagues for giving us such an interesting afternoon. The course continues in April, on the four Wednesday evenings of that month, at Bedern Hall, York, all starting at 7.00pm and finishing by 9.00pm. Coffee/tea will be provided. Here is the programme:

April 6th  An evening with Robert Wright, who will tell us about Ars Ludendi (and perhaps bring more members of the group with him). Robert is of course well known to us and will be sure to give us something dramatic and entertaining.

April 13th  A talk by Liam Evans-Ford. Liam is Associate Producer at York Theatre Royal; he was Community Producer for the Mystery Plays in Museum Gardens, i.e. responsible for two interchangeable casts of 250, all amateur except two, working on the biggest stage area in the UK, and a total of 1500 people, including musicians, stagehands, costumiers, front of house staff, etc. He was also responsible for Blood and Chocolate, another successful York community performance, moving through the streets of the city – a quite different skill is directing stage fights…

April 20th  A talk by Professor Nick Rowe. Nick is Director of Converge, a service based at York St John University which provides help and educational support to people with mental health needs, including students on courses at the university. He will talk about the role of the arts, including drama, in the development of social and learning skills, both as therapy and in creating opportunities for students to develop creative talents.

April 27th  A talk by Paul Burbridge, who is Artistic Director of Riding Lights Theatre Company, and has overseen the company’s development from its community touring roots into a group known for its pioneering new work, varying from Three Men in a Boat (York Theatre Royal 2008) to Edinburgh Fringe award-winning reviews. He is also a writer and an actor, and under his direction the company, now based at the Friargate Theatre, has dramatically tackled issues such as slavery, terrorism and safe water provision, to name a few.

In May there will be two meetings, the first on Wednesday 4th at the Counting House Museum, Malton, the home of The Charles Dickens (Malton) Society. The museum is opening specially for us; we should meet there from 2.00pm for a dramatic reading, in costume, which starts at 2.15pm. The Museum will remain open afterwards for us to look round. It is a very small building so numbers are limited to 20. It is situated in Chancery Lane, which runs from Yorkersgate to the Market Place, conveniently near to the bus station – and also to car parks, most of which are not free. (Malton has some interesting cafés if lunch before the visit or tea afterwards is needed!)

The second meeting in May will be a tour round the Georgian Theatre in Richmond, probably in the week beginning 16th: details and cost to come later.

The cost for the first five sessions will be £6.00 per meeting. Please use the enclosed booking form.
PLACE Annual General Meeting, Saturday 7th May 2016

Our AGM this year will be held in the Key Centre in Middleham. The Centre is close to the town centre, on Park Lane. There is free parking on site but public transport is difficult. However, we may be able to arrange lifts for some people. Tea/coffee will be provided during the morning; please bring a packed lunch or sample one of the many eating places in Middleham. As usual, a full day of activities will be arranged, including a tour of the castle or a walk in the afternoon. The morning session and the AGM are free; there will be a charge of £5.00 for the afternoon.

Above: Racehorses approaching the centre of Middleham
Left: Middleham Castle

The AGM itself will take place during the morning. Three trustees step down each year, in accordance with our Memorandum and Articles of Association, but they are eligible for re-election. Anyone else wishing to stand for nomination as a trustee of PLACE should contact the PLACE Office for further information and a nomination form. Completed nomination forms must be returned to the PLACE Office by 31st March 2016.

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Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group annual day school, 12th March, Headingley Campus of Leeds Beckett University. INNS AND PUBLIC HOUSES

Five speakers will discuss the development of these buildings and how they have been used, drawing on documentary sources and the buildings themselves. For costs and a booking form, contact Tony Robinson, 68 Thirsk Rd, Northallerton, DL6 1PL (tel: 016099 772673, E-mail: bridgetandtony@hotmail.com)

Royal Geographical Society guided walk and boat trip, Whitby. Saturday 30th April: Fish, Fossils and Fangs

Whitby’s story is dominated by the sea, including smuggling, whaling and shipbuilding. This trip will provide an opportunity to view it from both land and sea. Cost: £8.00 per head. For further information and to book your place, contact Chris Speight. E-mail: GSChris@CSpeight.Plus.Com.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Village Studies update

There is still time to volunteer and contribute your own village study to this project. We are hoping to include case studies of different types and locations of settlements to the forthcoming publication on Yorkshire Villages. A simple guide sheet is available from the PLACE office, but we welcome a variety of approaches, so if your interest is in the history, present character or future of your community do get in touch. If you have never considered looking into what makes your village a place you value, this could be your opportunity to share a part of Yorkshire with the rest of us. We would be delighted to hear from you. Michael Hopkinson

Several PLACE publications are in the pipeline and will be available later this year:

- Yorkshire’s Religious Heritage, c.1780 – c.1910, the proceedings of the autumn 2014 conference
- Industrial Legacy and Landscapes of South Yorkshire, the proceedings of the spring 2015 conference
- Famous Geologists of Yorkshire, the proceedings of the autumn 2015 conference
- The PLACE Book of Winter Walks
In autumn 2015 we held two conferences:

In September we collaborated with our partner the Historic Towns Forum to organise a conference in Whitby, entitled *Heritage Tourism and the Regeneration of the Seaside Town* and based at the Sneaton Castle Hotel.

The keynote address was by Christiane Kroebel, who summarised the history and historicity of Whitby as a destination and location. This was followed by a presentation from Catriona McLees on the North York Moors National Park. Michele Grant from BlueSail then talked about the ‘unique selling points’ of seaside towns. The party then walked down through the town to enjoy a fish and chips lunch, followed by a tour of Whitby led by Mike Yates and Alan Appleton.

**Above:** Whitby upper harbour.  
**Right:** We were lucky enough to be invited inside a merchant’s house with this impressive staircase.

Three more talks were delivered after lunch. Lyndsey Swift from VisitEngland spoke about opportunities, challenges, partnership working and funding for tourism. Sara Crofts of the Heritage Lottery Fund talked about seaside heritage and regeneration. Liz Philpot considered coastal regeneration and government intervention. The conference ended with a discussion session. PLACE is very grateful to Noël James from the Historic Towns Forum for co-organising such a successful event.

**Famous Geologists of Yorkshire** was the title of our October conference held in York.

In the morning there were four speakers at York St John University. Prof. Robin Butlin’s presentation was on *Geological knowledge and its influence on the development of physical geography in Leeds, c.1874 – 1930.* Peter Robinson talked about William Smith’s time in Scarborough and Martin Simpson of Whitby. Chris Hill introduced us to Thomas Harris, the ‘plant man of the Yorkshire coast’. Tony Cooper talked about Yorkshire geology as seen through the eyes of notable British Geological Survey geologists.

In the afternoon we moved to the Yorkshire Museum, where Stuart Ogilvy and colleagues led guided tours of the geology collections. We also had a chance to see the newly-installed walk-on geological map of Yorkshire, based on William Smith’s 1815 map – the first geological map of England and Wales.

**Above:** The conference delegates looking at the market in Whitby.

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Visit to the Washburn Valley
On a sunny afternoon in September 2015, PLACE members visited this delightful valley, situated between Lower Wharfedale and Lower Nidderdale. The valley was important in the late 18th and early 19th centuries for the textile industry, with many mills and a thriving local population. Following the Leeds Waterworks Act (1867) three reservoirs were built to provide drinking water for Leeds. A fourth reservoir, Thrushcross, was built in the 1960s. Today the valley is a peaceful rural area, part of the Nidderdale AONB. Our group, led by Terry O’Connor, started by circumnavigating Swinsty Reservoir (right). We passed Swinsty Hall, a grade 1 listed building dating from the late 16th and early 17th centuries, combining Elizabethan and Jacobean architectural styles (below).

The diversion of the river into the reservoirs has lowered the flows and led to declines in fish populations. A restoration project is now under way, with the aim of modifying the valley downstream to restore a more natural river and increase oxygen levels and wildlife populations. **Left:** the outflow from Swinsty reservoir.

Fewston Village was much larger in the 19th century, with houses stretching right down to the river from the church (right). Dedicated to St Michael and St Lawrence, the present church dates mostly from 1697 but has a 14th century belltower. It is grade 2* listed as a rare example of a 17th century church built in the medieval style with a nave and clearly defined chancel (far right).

We ended the day with a walk around Timble village (left). It is the site of the well-known 18th century Timble Inn (below centre) and has several other interesting features, e.g. a VR post box (below left) and a stone dog house (below right)! The village was made famous by the book, *Timble Man: diaries of a Dalesman* by John Dickinson, written just as industrialisation was starting to make an impact on the valley.
IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER was the title of our 2015 pre-Christmas event in Bedern Hall. Organised by Aileen Bloomer, the evening began with a talk by Roger Walton of Bishopthorpe Camera Club about taking good photographs outdoors in winter. PLACE members brought along their own photos taken in winter and prizes were awarded for the best entries, as voted for by the participants. This was followed by mulled wine, mince pies, Christmas cake and Wensleydale cheese. An excellent way to start the festive season!

Some future events

Our next short course by Robert Wright will be Lives of the Northern Saints. It will take place at Bedern Hall, York, on Monday evenings from June 13th to July 18th. Please note the dates in your diary now; booking will be advertised in the next newsletter.

We are also planning visits to Harewood House, Boynton Hall (23rd July), York Cemetery, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park at Bretton Hall and Yearsley Mill, as well as the postponed visit to Wortley Top Forge. Details of these outings will appear in the next newsletter.

We take DATA PROTECTION very seriously. All personal data, e.g. addresses, are kept on a secure database which is updated regularly. We will only use such data for PLACE administrative purposes and never pass them on to third parties.

We sometimes take photographs at events for publicity purposes. If you do not wish to be photographed, please tell the event organiser at the time.

The next newsletter is due in May