

PLACE

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Autumn Newsletter 2016

LAST CHANCE TO BOOK!

Yearsley Mill archaeological visit

Wednesday 28th September, 1.30 – 4.00pm

As advertised in the summer newsletter, we have arranged to visit the site of an old water mill at Yearsley on the Howardian Hills. Meet on the road between Yearsley and Ampleforth, near the forest gate (SE 583752) at 1.30pm. There will be a short drive along forest roads followed by a walk of about 200 metres. Wear strong shoes or walking boots. **Cost: £5.00 per person.**

PLACE AUTUMN CONFERENCE The Yorkshire Wolds Landscape:

Past, Present and Future

**Saturday 8th October, 10.00am – 4.00pm
Wolds Heritage Centre, Warter**



Speakers:

- Derek Gobbett – Geology and Landscape
- Peter Halkon – Archaeology
- Jon Traill – The Natural Landscape
- Paul Moon – Photography of the Hidden Landscape
- Malcolm Hodgson – The Wolds Way and Other Trails
- John Gatenby – Farming on the Wolds
- Thomas Julian – The Halifax Estate and Diversification
- Helen Wright – Rural Policy and Strategy
- Liz Brown – Commercial Opportunities and Education

The cost (including coffee and tea) is £10.00 per person. Please bring your own packed lunch.

BOOK LAUNCH!

You are invited to the launch of

The PLACE BOOK OF WINTER WALKS IN NORTH YORKSHIRE

By Margaret Atherden

In the Village Hall,
Aldbrough (SE 405665)
at 4.30pm on Wednesday
9th November



The author on a winter walk

This is a free event; light refreshments will be provided. Please book so that we know how many people to cater for.

For those who wish there will be a chance to try out one of the walks before the launch, starting from the public car park in Boroughbridge (SE 397667) at 2.00pm. Wear walking boots but bring other shoes to change into for the launch.

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS IN AN HOUR

**A home-produced DIY event
to begin our celebrations of
the festive season**



We will meet at **Bedern Hall, York**, at **7.00pm** on **Thursday 8th December**. Relevant, if somewhat eccentric, items to interest, delight and inform you will be presented. A flavoursome yuletide collation will be offered at about 8.00pm and the evening will close by 9.00pm. **Cost: £12.00 per person.**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE VISIT TO DRAX
POWER STATION IS NOW FULLY BOOKED**

**Please use the enclosed
booking form for all PLACE
events**

The 2016 Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM was held at the Key Centre in Middleham on 7th May and attended by 32 members. At the meeting Terry O'Connor stepped down as a trustee after many years' service. Aileen Bloomer and Michael Hopkinson were re-elected and Jean Dixon was elected as a new trustee.



Middleham Key Centre

There were two presentations in the morning. Rob and Harriet Fraser talked about the Yorkshire Dales Farming Heritage Project – see below. Robert Wright gave us a talk on the history of Middleham and the connection to Richard III. He led part of the group on a tour of Middleham Castle in the afternoon. The other group went on a walk through the woodland in Coverdale and enjoyed the spring flowers.

Middleham Castle
Photo by Adrian Bailey



The group setting off for the woodland walk
Photo by Adrian Bailey



The Yorkshire Dales Farming Heritage Project

Those of you who attended the AGM will remember the wonderful presentation by Rob and Harriet Fraser on the Yorkshire Dales Farming Heritage Project. They are now looking for volunteers and are hoping some PLACE members will want to get involved in interviews, oral history collection, transcribing and archiving.

Their project, called *Voices From the Land*, is running until July 2017, will explore farming and landscape in the Yorkshire Dales and reflect on changes in farming practices, buildings, landscape and environmental issues in the last fifty years. The material recorded will be added to the Dales Countryside Museum's collection and archived at the University of Leeds. The work will be shown in an exhibition at the museum from October 2017 – February 2018 (excluding January when the Museum is closed).

Volunteer opportunities include:

October 2016 – June 2017

Interviewing and photographing farmers at 1-2 farms (volunteers working in pairs)

Transcribing interview recordings (1-2 days' work or more if you wish)

Summarising recordings held in the museum archives (1-2 days' work or more if you wish)

An Information and Training Day will be held at the Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes on September 26th, 10am – 4pm.

Contact:

Numbers are limited so if you'd like to be part of the team, please contact Harriet Fraser to find out more: inspire@somewhere-nowhere.com Tel: 015397 35647 / 07813 829368.



Leigh Weston and
Neil Heseltine, Hill
Top Farm, Malham

Report on the short course 'Curtain Up'

The course comprised six meetings, the first of which was the 'taster' already described: a visit to the University of York's Theatre Department in November 2015.

Three evening meetings were held at Bedern Hall (the 4th unfortunately had to be cancelled). We had hilarious entertainment from *Ars Ludendi*, all of whose six members turned up and performed in their inimical style, though fortunately this time not speaking in Middle English, as they had been wont to do in their early (student) days. Robert Wright described these early days with the aid of colourful slides showing them performing their varied repertoire, which included significant involvement in the York Mystery Plays. We were then hugely entertained by the dramatic reading of a story from *Decameron Nights*.

Two talks followed on successive weeks. Paul Burbridge, among his more serious account of Riding Lights Theatre Company, of which he is Artistic Director, gave us an amusing performance of how a theatre manager feels (and acts!) if he is forced to fill in time in front of an audience because of some disaster on stage. The company itself is long-standing; it was founded in York over thirty years ago and continues to perform all over the country, with the aim of creating entertaining theatre in response to current issues; for example, a play about dementia is to appear later this year. While the company's roots are in a Christian ethos, their work concerns and is open to everyone. It also provides educational opportunities, through its annual Summer Theatre School, its Youth Theatre and a new Youth Theatre for young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Continuing this theme, the following week Professor Nick Rowe from York St John University described how the University is able to accept people with mental illness as students, and to involve them in performing theatre and other arts, much to their benefit and the benefit of other students who interact with them.

The course continued with two visits, the first to the Counting House Museum in Malton, where about 22 PLACE members squeezed into the small room there to hear Linda McCarthy and Brian Oxberry, of the Charles Dickens (Malton) Society, dressed in impressive Victorian style, entertain us with dramatic readings of Dickens and an account of the time Dickens spent in Malton with his friend Charles Smithson of Easthorpe Hall. His visits to Malton produced, it is thought, 'Yorkshire connections' in some of his novels; for instance, John Brodie in *Nicholas Nickleby* is modelled on Barnes, a Barnard Castle attorney, and Sairey Gamp on Smithson's housekeeper (Dickens wrote part of *Martin Chuzzlewit* while staying with Smithson). Dickens was very fond of ravens, apparently, and Smithson sent him a present of one when his favourite died. The raven, stuffed, appeared in front of us. Hmm, very small, we thought, and rightly so; it turned out to be a magpie disguised with black paint. However, it was appropriate for this museum, which is very small, crowded but endlessly fascinating.

Visit to the Counting House Museum, Malton



Our second visit was to the Georgian Theatre Royal in Richmond. Nine PLACE members enjoyed a fascinating tour of this small theatre, founded in 1788 by Samuel Butler. It was probably adapted from an existing building on Friar's Wynd, the main thoroughfare between the market place and the well in the Friary grounds. Sixty years later it was closed as a theatre and used variously over the next hundred years as a Methodist chapel, an auction house, a Freemasons' meeting place and a storage area. It was rediscovered during World War II and eventually restored as a theatre, opening in 1983. Some people remembered seeing productions there in the 1980s and 1990s, when the theatre was rather basic, with uncomfortable wooden bench seating and few modern facilities. It was refurbished in 1999, funded by a £1.6m lottery grant, and a new entrance area was built on the front, with two bars and new toilets. It is now run by a small skeleton staff, supported by willing volunteers, two of whom showed our party round.

The theatre has been lovingly restored on the same basic design as in the Georgian period. It is a courtyard arrangement, with boxes and a gallery surrounding stalls and a small orchestra pit below the stage (which may or may not have been an original feature). Clouds have been painted on the ceiling and pale green paint has been selected for the colour scheme, as seen in other theatres of the period. The number of seats has been reduced to include more space for gangways and wheelchairs, and cushions have been added to make the seats more comfortable. 'Kicking boards' in front of the seats were originally used to show the audience's disapproval (which could include the throwing of rotten eggs or tomatoes at the players!), but nowadays the audience indicates its appreciation by banging feet on them. The theatre in the Georgian period could seat 400 people, who paid between 3/- for the boxes, 2/- for the pit (stalls) and 1/- for a gallery seat. The maximum number is now 212, with 180 people the usual number. We had a 'behind the scenes' peek at the orchestra pit and the cramped accommodation for props and wardrobe, and saw the trap door through which actors could appear on stage from below – as demonstrated on TV by Lucy Worsley. We learned about the 'pay box', where people paid for a general ticket and then had to bag a seat on a 'first come, first served' basis. This was later changed to the 'box office', where specific seats in the boxes could be reserved.

Samuel Butler also founded eight other theatres, for example in Ripon, Thirsk, Northallerton, Harrogate and Whitby. The Theatre Royal in Richmond is the only one remaining as a theatre today. This is clearly a little gem, which is well worth preserving.

Veronica Wallace.

Lives of the Northern Saints

Our latest short course, ably led once again by Robert Wright, covered a wide group of (mostly) men, some more 'saintly' than others. Many were related to the ruling families of the period and were much involved with politics, alliances and military campaigns. We started in the 600s with Paulinus and Oswald. The former is renowned for baptising many people in the Kingdom of Northumbria (in which York was situated). The latter had the distinction of being killed in battle, following which his body was dismembered and displayed on trees. There are four possible locations for the resting place of his head. We then moved on to Hilda, Cuthbert, Cedd and Chad. It was Hilda who hosted the 664 synod at the double-monastery at Whitby, where it was agreed that Northumbria would calculate Easter and observe the monastic tonsure according to the customs of Rome, rather than the customs practised by Irish monks.

Wilfrid of Ripon and William of York, were both seemingly difficult characters who appeared to make as many enemies as they had supporters. In fact, it is quite likely that William's death was due to poisoning. The formal course concluded with several monastic saints: John of Beverley, Aelred of Rievaulx (never formally canonised), Robert of Knaresborough and John of Bridlington. It was followed by an 'after hours' visit to York Minster, kindly organised by Chris Adams and Hilary Moxon, where they pointed out depictions of many of the events from these saints' lives in the stained glass windows which could easily be missed by the casual observer.

Doreen Leach



Chris Adams addressing the group



The back of the house and the terrace

PLACE visit to Harewood House

Twenty PLACE members visited the Harewood estate on 9th June as part of the tercentenary celebrations of the birth of Capability Brown, the gardens here being one of his finest creations. We were ably led by Peter Goodchild and by the Head Gardener Trevor Nicholson and were blessed with lovely summer weather.

As there is so much to see in the house we spent the morning going round individually after a short introductory talk. Harewood House was built in the mid-eighteenth century by Edwin Lascelles (unfortunately on the profits of West Indian slave plantations). The architects were John Carr and Robert Adam (with alterations in the mid-nineteenth century by Sir Charles Barry) and the interiors are some of Adam's finest creations matched by the furniture of Thomas Chippendale; especially noteworthy as regards the latter being the wooden curtain pelmets in the Gallery. There are also important collections of porcelain (principally Sevres) and Old Master paintings as well as modern and contemporary artworks collected by the late 7th Earl of Harewood. There are rooms devoted to temporary exhibitions, with the emphasis this year being on Capability Brown.

In the afternoon we had a guided tour of the grounds beginning on the terrace added by Barry to the south front of the house, from where there is an excellent view of the eighteenth-century park and lake. The use of tree plantings to enclose the view and to give variety to the landscape was explained to us. We then descended to the site and exposed foundations of Gawthrop Hall, the predecessor of Harewood and turned east on to the Lowthrop Drive, which was the original carriage drive to the house. We then proceeded to the Northern Pleasure Grounds (specially opened for us) to see the splendid views of Wharfedale and particularly of Almscliff Crag and finally returned to the house. All in all this was a splendid day and we are very grateful to Peter Goodchild and Trevor Nicholson for an informative and enjoyable day out.

Richard Leggott.

Visit to York Cemetery

Place members enjoyed an interesting and informative evening visit to York Cemetery on 8th June, which included a historical narrative and guided walk around the cemetery by Clive Dawson, Chair of The Friends of York Cemetery.

The cemetery was opened in 1837 for the citizens of York and is one of only two private cemeteries in England (the other being Highgate Cemetery in London). It started as a site of 8.24 acres, but has now expanded to 24 acres and contains 125,000 graves. It is open to the public during the week and at weekends, and is a beautiful, tranquil, and moving place, well worth visiting.

Clive started the evening visit in the chapel, (a grade 2 listed neo classical building), giving a very informative talk about the history of the cemetery and the chapel. He described the change in burial practices in the 1800s, which led to people no longer being buried in their parish churchyards, but outside the city walls. The cemetery was in constant use until the 1960s, when the opening of the crematorium caused a decline in its use. It subsequently went into voluntary liquidation, and fell into disrepair until the 1980s, when The Friends of York Cemetery, and then The York Cemetery Trust, were set up to restore it. Approximately 100 volunteers help with the upkeep of the cemetery, and provide educational and conservation opportunities (it is the third most important wildlife site for butterflies in Yorkshire).

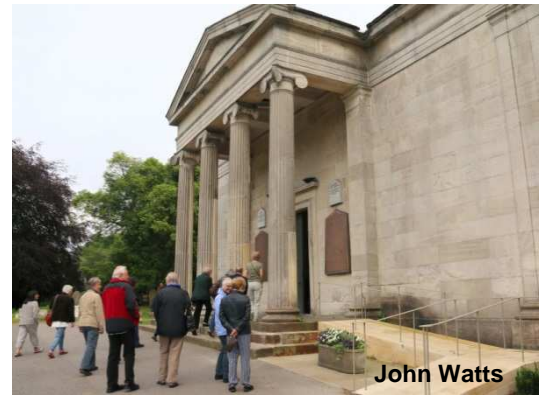
Clive then took us on a tour of the cemetery, pointing out various sections within it, such as the scented walk (initially laid out for the partially sighted), the butterfly walk, the Bolton Percy area, the herb garden, and the area for public graves (for those who could not afford a plot). He pointed out various species of trees, and particular mention was made of the Tulip Tree, the Snowdrop Tree, the corkscrew Hazel Tree, the Lime Avenue, the Dawn Redwood Tree, the *Ginkgo biloba* Tree, and the fern area (planted by the York University Fern Society).

Of the many graves in the cemetery, a few were singled out for special mention: those of Mary Craven (who ran a confectionary business in York), Thomas Cooke of Crooke, Trout and Sons (an industrialist who specialised in making lenses and periscopes), Jimmy Melrose (a well known figure in York), John Phillips (first keeper of the Yorkshire Museum), and John Gray (whose family owned Gray's Court).

There are several graves relating to wars, including those of Thomas Wilkinson (a private and bombardier in the Crimean War) who won the VC and Legion of Honour, and the World War I victims of the Zeppelin raids on York. The Commonwealth Graves Commission tend to approximately 100 World War II graves in the cemetery, which include those of the family killed by German bombing. The tour ended with a visit to the Catacombs under the Chapel. They were opened in the 1840s, but were closed in 1888. Only 14 people are buried there, including two Quakers.

Members may be interested to learn that they, too, may apply to be buried in York Cemetery!

Kay Murphy.



Outside the chapel



One of the war graves



Trees create an atmosphere of peace in the cemetery



Plants surrounding some of the graves

Visit to the Dutch House, Crayke

A group of 26 members were shown around the ecological and sustainable garden designed by Sjaak Kastelijn, a former manager of York Museums Gardens. The 1.6 acre plot has been developed since Mill Green Farm was first acquired in 2010. The garden has a mixture of native trees, herbaceous borders, a vegetable plot using raised beds and a wildflower meadow. It is managed according to organic principles with no chemical pesticides and manufactured fertilisers being used. Mushroom compost is imported. The garden is an oasis amidst the monocultures of the surrounding intensive agriculture. The garden is also intended to increase the local biodiversity. Wild areas of the garden are being reclaimed by the periodic cutting back of the vegetation. Nettles are a source of nitrogen and attract a variety of butterflies. The garden is intended to be a feeding station for a variety of insects and birds.

The garden has to be self-financing and incorporates a café and a contemporary art gallery run by Cecile Creemers. Many of the plants have been donated and the emphasis is on using locally sourced native species. The plot was originally used for sheep farming on the Crayke Estate. Initially a digger was used to level the site. It is an on-going project with a limited amount of time and labour. A volunteer works two mornings a week. The River Foss edges the garden and there is periodic flooding of the wildflower area by runoff from the fields. The long term goal is to alter the flow of the river by widening and damming, which will eventually increase the fauna.

The idea of the Kunsthuis art gallery is to feature a wide range of Dutch and British art which confirms the idea that art is a form of nature. There are adventure trails through the garden for children. After our tour of the garden, we enjoyed a delicious tea in the café.

Philip Mander.



View across the wilder part of the garden



Colourful flowers are planted to attract pollinating insects



The group in the wildflower meadow



Sjaak (third from right) addressing the group in the garden. Photo: Sheila Armstrong

Sadly, the planned visit to Boynton Hall in July had to be cancelled.



The herb border leading to the café and art gallery

Visit to the Goathland area

Twenty PLACE members enjoyed a 6-mile walk around the Goathland area in beautiful sunshine in August. We started at the site of the original 'Bank Top' station on the 1836 railway line from Whitby to Pickering. Designed by George Stephenson, this was the third railway in England and was originally horse-drawn. We walked down the inclined plane (gradient 1 in 10), where trains were pulled up on a thick rope by a hydraulic system (later replaced by a stationary steam engine). Following a fatal accident in 1864, a 4.5 mile deviation line was built to avoid the incline, and a new 'Goathland Mill' station was built (still in use today). The railway lasted until 1965, when it was closed under the 'Beeching cuts', but it re-opened in the 1970s as a heritage line.

At the bottom of the incline we came to the sleepy hamlet of Beck Hole, where quoits were played on the green. In the 1860s this was the site of an ironworks, with furnaces built near the beck and 33 houses for the workers in the woods. However, the period of industrial activity was short-lived, as the ironworks proved unprofitable after only a few years, and the buildings were demolished, leaving little sign today. A station opened at Beck Hole in 1908, when the old railway line was re-opened to bring tourists from Whitby as far as Beck Hole. There was a station master's house here and the railway brought new life to the hamlet for a few years.



Part of the old incline between Goathland and Beck Hole



Mallyan Spout.
Photo: Adrian Bailey



Richard Mallows

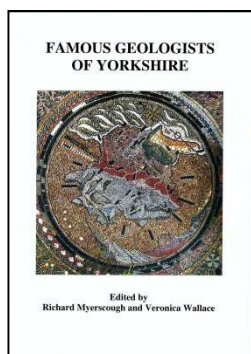
Looking at the view of Goathland

We walked along the West Beck to Mallyan Spout waterfall, where the more adventurous members of the party scrambled over the rocks to see the cascade. After lunch we walked up the hillside overlooking Goathland to explore the heather moorland and see some of the glacial features of the area. Moss Slack is a glacial drainage channel carved around the side of the hill, which was formed at the edge of a lobe of ice that occupied the whole valley during the last glacial period. When the ice receded the channel gradually filled in with peat, which has preserved pollen grains within it. These allow the vegetation history of the area to be reconstructed from prehistoric times onwards. One curious feature at the end of the channel is 'The Tarn' – an artificial water body created to provide skating for visitors in Victorian times!

From the path up to Moss Slack we had a good view over Goathland village. The original settlement was by a band of Christian brothers and their priest, Osmund, who established a hermitage near the Eller Beck in the 11th century. A few dwellings grew up around the hermitage but there was no lord of the manor, as it was part of the Royal Forest of Pickering (later passing to the Duchy of Lancaster). Goathland remained an isolated agricultural community until the turnpike arrived in 1759. There are still many footpaths and pannier 'trods', as the only means of transport was on foot or horseback until then. The village green was converted into a golf course in the late 19th century and the remains of bunkers can still be seen. We visited St Mary's Church, which incorporates some features from the old hermitage chapel, as well as stained glass windows of northern saints and the hermitage. A walk through the fields brought us back to the other end of the village, which is well known today as 'Aidensfield' in the TV series 'Heartbeat', filmed here until 2009. This, together with the North York Moors Railway, has led to a modern boom in tourism.

Modern stained glass window depicting Osmund's hermitage.
Photo: Richard Mallows





NEW PUBLICATION!

The proceedings of last autumn's conference on Famous Geologists of Yorkshire has just been published. The books cost £2.50 each + £2.00 P & P.

In the pipeline ...

- *Industrial Legacy and Landscapes of South Yorkshire*
- *Report on the Yorkshire Villages Project*
- *Yorkshire Woodlands*

SUPPER WITH SHERLOCK HOLMES AND FRIENDS

Robert Wright informs us that *Ars Ludend*'s next event will be held in Bedern Hall on Fri 30th September, from 7.00pm to c.10.30pm. As well as entertaining dramatic readings, there will be 'hearty seasonal food'. Tickets cost £20.00 each. To book your place, please contact Bedern Hall: laura.drinkeld@bedernhall.co.uk or phone 01904 646030.

Volunteers wanted!

We have just set up a group to assist with the PLACE website. We are now looking for volunteers to help with editing the newsletter and marketing PLACE publications. If you can help with either of these, please get in touch via the PLACE Office.

If you wish to order any of the PLACE publications for sale, please see the list on the back of the order form.

You can use the same cheque for events, books and subscriptions.

All our events are open to the general public. Children are welcome, provided they are accompanied by a parent or guardian. Dogs on leads are allowed on most outings, subject to the agreement of the leader.

ARE YOU A TWEETER?

If you are a user of Twitter, please consider posting occasional tweets about PLACE events you have enjoyed. It all helps to spread the word!

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.

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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. Messages may be left at any time)

By e-mail: place@yorks.ac.uk



Website: www.place.uk.com

Please remember to tell us if you change your e-mail address or other contact details!

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The next newsletter is due in January