

PLACE

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Autumn Newsletter 2017

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AUTUMN CONFERENCE, Saturday 4th November 2017, York St John University

We are teaming up with the Royal Geographical Society to present a conference featuring some of the young researchers from the region, based on the theme of 'LANDSCAPES'.

Seven research students will talk about their research projects:

- Andrea Drewitt (University of Salford) An estuarine landscape under change: planning for the future under an ecosystem approach.
- Pip Roddis (University of Leeds) The role of landscapes in public acceptance of onshore wind and solar farms.
- Isabel Cook (University of Sheffield) Coastal heritage in North Wales: impacts of future climate change on the historic landscape.
- Philippa Carter (University of Newcastle) Experiencing nostalgia in 'lost' landscapes.
- Karla Beltran (University of York) The effects of climate change on the Ecuadorian Moors and the implications for the sustainable management of key ecosystem services.
- Andy Fraser and Micheal Butler (University of Bradford) Mapping and modelling of submerged landscapes in the North Sea.
- Rowan Jaines (University of Sheffield) Rural subjectivities: understanding the embodied demands of global capitalism.

There will also be a keynote lecture by Prof. Vincent Gaffney (University of Bradford), who is well known for his research on archaeological landscapes and 'hidden landscapes', including Doggerland.

The conference fee of £15.00 includes tea/coffee and buffet lunch. Full details and a timetable for the day will be sent to those who book. Booking closes on October 21st.

PLACE Christmas event

7.00 – 9.00pm Wednesday 13th December

St Anthony's Hall, Peaseholme Green, York

Back by popular request! *Ars Ludendi* will explore the origins of our Christmas traditions, and celebrate the approaching festive season in their own inimitable way, with dramatized readings and enactments. From puritan rants against Christmas, to mummers plays, Victorian celebrations and contemporary skits, this promises to be an entertaining as well as informative evening.

Ars Ludendi was founded in 2005 among a group of friends who all do indeed enjoy 'the art of playing'. They specialise in bringing to life history and literature both medieval and modern. They also quite like dressing up! Regular members of the group are: Joanna Huntington, Paul Toy, Mike Tyler, Gillian Tyler, Lesley Wilkinson and Robert Wright.

**A seasonal cold buffet will be served during the evening.
Cost: £12.50 per head, payable in advance.**



REMINDER: Dark Skies event, 7.00 – 9.00pm, Monday 2nd Oct.

There are still places available for our visit to the astronomical observatory at Lime Tree Farm, Hutts Lane, Grewelthorpe near Ripon. From the village, follow the signs for "The Hutts" and the guiding red lights. We will be introduced to telescopes both inside and outside the observatory and, if the sky is clear, will be able to observe the moon and stars. There will be a presentation by Martin Whipp and tea and biscuits will be provided. **Meet at 7.00pm at the observatory, wearing warm clothing and boots. Binoculars will be useful. Cost: £5.00 per head, payable in advance. If you wish to join the party but have not yet booked, please do so a.s.a.p.**



Please use the enclosed booking form for all PLACE events

REPORT ON 'STOPPING THE FLOOD' CONFERENCE

This year's first conference was held in two separate parts of Yorkshire: the North York Moors and the Yorkshire Dales. The theme, 'Stopping the Flood' was addressed by indoor talks and field visits to sites where measures to alleviate flooding are in place. The increased frequency of floods, and particularly the Boxing Day 2015 floods, have focused attention on alternatives to traditional 'hard engineering' solutions. Flood managers are now trying to work with nature to reduce the flood peaks and even out the flow of rivers, using more natural materials and 'softer engineering'.

THE PICKERING SLOWING THE FLOW PROJECT

In April we visited a successful project on the North York Moors, led by Philip Roe of the Forestry Commission (FC). We started with an illustrated talk in the visitor centre at Low Dalby and later visited sites in Cropton Forest and north of Pickering.

The project is led by the FC in partnership with the Environment Agency (EA), the North York Moors National Park (NP), Natural England, the University of Durham et al. The incentive for the project was to reduce flooding in Pickering, where there had been a long history of flooding. In 2009-2015, the Defra Flood Management Demonstration Project was set up, led by Forest Research. Measures trialled included the installation of woody debris dams, woodland planting on floodplains and blocking of upland drains – all natural measures and all complementary.

Two rivers are included: the Pickering Beck and the River Seven. The Pickering Beck catchment has just 3 large landowners (FC, NP and the Duchy of Lancaster), which makes it easier to get agreement for interventions. Forest Research came up with a scheme to de-synchronise the peak flood events by slowing the flow of the upper stretches of the rivers. As part of the project 167 woody debris dams were installed and 187 heather bale dams. Two timber bunds were also built and 45ha of woodland were planted on the floodplains.

Dams on channels less than 5m wide proved effective at slowing the flow. Problems in the early stages included silting up behind the dams, creation of a step effect on the river channel and movement of some debris downstream. Experience showed that it is better to leave a gap below the dams, so that water can flow freely when the weather is dry. Built of locally-grown sitka spruce, the dams are estimated to have a lifespan of about 10 years and are very cost effective. The bunds proved good for water storage (made of timber in the forest and clay in the town). They are up to 9m wide and up to 50m long. Their role is complementary to that of the dams; they store water on the floodplains during flood events. They are designed to cope with a 1 in 25 years flood event and the data gathered shows that they can reduce the flood peak by 4% in such an event.

The FC has also restored riparian land with sustainable drainage, eg designing some drains to flow uphill during flood events. Improved tracks and routes for cattle on farmland and woodland planting on the floodplains are other effective methods, eg 15 ha have been planted up alongside the River Seven. Attempts have been made to incentivise farmers, eg by a wood-burning stove initiative in one village and woodland planting in memory of a loved one in another case. Another part of the project is the blocking of moorland drains (or 'grips') on the surrounding uplands and the restoration of eroding footpaths and heather reseeding (carried out by the NP).

These measures seem to have protected the town of Pickering, which avoided flooding in December 2015. In fact, only c10% of the storage area behind the main bund was used and the flood peak was reduced by 15-20%, about half due to upstream land management and about half to flood storage. Overall, it is estimated that the project has reduced the risk of flooding in Pickering from a 25% chance in any one year to a less than 4% chance. However, these sort of measures only really work for catchments up to 100km² - there are decreasing returns for flood alleviation after that.



The party discussing the flood alleviation measures in Cropton Forest



One of the woody dams. Note the gap between the level of water at the time of our visit and the bottom of the dam. In flood events, the dam will encourage water to spread out over the adjacent floodplain, thus slowing its flow downstream



The concrete bund on the floodplain near Blansby Park, north of Pickering, designed as a water storage feature

THE COVERDALE CATCHMENT

The second part of the conference took place in late July, when we met for a morning of presentations in Masham Town Hall, followed by a visit to Coverdale, a 22km-long tributary of the River Ure. The day was arranged for us by Zora van Leeuwen from the University of Leeds (UoL), with help from Dan Turner of the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust (YDRT), Alex Scott from JBA Consulting and Pazit Ziv from the 'Water at Leeds' project. Zora van Leeuwen outlined the need to manage flood risk. The 2007 floods had cost the UK £3 billion and the 2015 ones £0.5 billion. Although flooding is a natural process, we create problems, eg by building on floodplains. Some strategies to increase resilience are well known, eg putting sockets higher up walls, installing flood gates to individual properties. Traditional approaches, such as flood walls and storage reservoirs, are now being replaced by catchment-based flood management. Techniques include pushing back embankments, reconnecting rivers to their floodplains and using in-stream wood. Countryside Stewardship money is available to landowners.

Zora's research is looking at the role of large woody debris in rivers. Fallen trees, etc are usually removed from rivers, as this is traditionally thought to improve flow and aid navigation. Zora and colleagues at UoL are testing out some of the methods of flood alleviation described above for the Pickering project, especially the effects on channel morphology of introduced large woody debris and natural accumulations of wood in upland rivers. The EA has published recommendations for headwaters but these are based largely on studies of lowland rivers and it is not certain whether these ideas are transferable to steeper upland rivers with 'flashier' flow regimes. Zora is investigating the effects of woody dams and comparing rivers with dams with control areas.

Dan Turner talked about the work of the YDRT, which has projects throughout the Dales, including on the Wharfe, Ure, Ouse, Nidd, Wiske and Laver, as well as the Cover. The upper part of the Cover catchment has been heavily modified, eg by drainage for agriculture and moorland gripping. It is rich in biodiversity and is now an important spawning site for salmon. YDRT are encouraging landowners and others to slow the flow of water in the upper reaches. Initiatives include increasing riparian tree cover, which helps to keep the river cool in summer and creates cover for fish. They are also trying to restore meanders in areas where rivers have been straightened in the past. Tree planting on floodplains provides new habitats for wildlife; buffer strips alongside rivers increase surface roughness and therefore permeability of soils.

Alex Scott outlined the role of JBA Consulting, a firm of engineers, environmental consultants, designers and scientists, who are committed to improving the natural and built environment. Pazit Ziv introduced us to the 'Water at Leeds' multidisciplinary project based at UoL – one of the largest centres for water research in the world. It has over 150 water experts from departments across the university, including physical, biological, chemical, social and economic sciences, engineering and the arts. They carry out research in areas like catchment management, flood modelling and climate change; sponsor research projects and students and provide training and information to other bodies.

After a buffet lunch, kindly provided by the UoL, we drove to Coverdale, to meet James Mawle, who owns the 500 acre Coverhead Farm. The property is all within the one catchment at 1000-2200 ft altitude. The Mawle family bought the estate in 1983 and manage it for cattle, sheep and grouse. When they took over, there were no fish in the river. However, from 1999 on Countryside Stewardship funding allowed moorland grips to be blocked and peat plugs were used to re-establish blanket bog on the surrounding upland. This evened out the flow of the river and now it teems with aquatic invertebrates and sea trout have returned. James described how people had interfered with the river bed in the past, eg scraping it and straightening it, culverting some of the side streams and building flood walls around the meadows. All this led to increased speed of flow in the river and more erosion. James is keen to reconnect the river to its natural floodplain and store flood water in the upper catchment rather than lower down. He is taking practical measures, eg inserting large tree trunks in the river and putting in gabions to prevent further erosion. His enthusiasm was impressive and showed what can be achieved with a sympathetic landowner.



The River Cover, showing a terrace on the left and a section of river channel with material eroded from the bank in the middle



The landowner, James Mawle, addressing the group in the field in Coverdale



A section of bank reinforced with gabions to prevent erosion



One of Zora's river level measures, which can store two months' data

PLACE Annual General Meeting 2017

The historic town of Beverley was the setting for this year's AGM and members' day in

May. We met in the Parish Room opposite Beverley Minster for a talk on 'Dating Beverley Minster' by John Phillips. He described his research on masons' marks and explained the light these shed on the phases of building.

At the AGM itself, Hilary Moxon and Brian Walker were re-elected as trustees. Christine Handley stood down and did not seek re-election and Cath Neal stood down, as she is moving away soon. The chairman thanked them both for their past service. After the elections, we welcomed Linda Blenkinship and David Hawtin as new trustees.



In the afternoon, members divided into three groups for guided walks led by John Phillips (Beverley Minster), Colin Bradshaw (Medieval Beverley) and Ann Perret ('plagues, plays and patriots'). Many thanks to Richard Myerscough and John Brown for organising the day.

VIKING YORKSHIRE

Our last short course, led by Robert Wright, was a great success, attracting a total of more than 60 participants. The course considered the background to the Viking period, settlement, Jorvik, art and architecture and the end of the Viking Age. It was followed by a visit to Danelaw 'Viking village' at Murton, led by Mike Tyler. This is part of a large educational site, which gives children the chance to experience at first hand some aspects of life in the past, eg farming, hunting and domestic life. We saw several of the reconstructed buildings and discussed how the staff inspire children to appreciate our heritage. Many thanks to Mike for a fascinating evening and to Robert for another excellent course.



Some of the reconstructed buildings



Mike Tyler demonstrating how to cook food the Viking way – with stones heated in the fire



The party discussing Viking life with Mike

REPORTS ON SPRING/SUMMER FIELDTRIPS

Walking in the footsteps of William Smith

On a sunny day in June, we celebrated the publication of Peter Robinson's book with a walk in the Hackness area. As Peter himself was sadly unable to join us, the walk was largely self-guided but still very enjoyable. We followed the route in the book, which took us from Suffield Heights down Crossdales Slack into Thirsley Bottoms, where we saw the beautiful meadow saxifrage in bloom. We then walked past Hackness Hall to St Peter's Church, where we ate our packed lunch in the churchyard. We passed the quarry landslip and Hackness Rock Pit near Lowdales, then walked south, stopping for tea at The Everley, before climbing up and through Hawthorn Wood, past Suffield Ings Farm and back to the start.



Reading about geological strata in Crossdales Slack [John Watts]



Meadow saxifrage [John Watts]



The impressive gates of Hackness Hall [John Watts]



Exposure of Lower Calcareous Grit on the right; Forge Valley on the left

Fieldtrip to Rosedale to learn about 'This Exploited Land of Iron' project



Tom Mutton

The PLACE party with Tom on the right

'This Exploited Land of Iron' is the name of a project about Rosedale ironstone mining. The project was planned by the Rosedale Local History Society, with the aid of the National Park's Landscape Partnership Scheme; the project got underway ten years ago. The project is funded until the end of March 2021 at a cost of £2.8 million, with a further £1million from local landowners, and includes provision for the study of the environment and history of Rosedale via leaflets, apps, and walks.

This walk was led by Tom Mutton from The North York Moors National Park Authority and Paddy Chambers from Rosedale Local History Society. Ironstone has been mined in Rosedale since Roman times; there is evidence of mining to be seen at the start of the walk. There is also evidence of mediaeval mining on land owned by St Mary's Abbey, York. Ironstone mining first began in relatively recent times in Rosedale when the West Mine was opened in 1856. The ore was haematite containing 60 to 70% iron and this ore was at first transported via pit ponies in open wagons and taken to Pickering for rail transport to Teesside, where it was smelted.



John Watts

Paddy explaining about the history

In 1861 The Rosedale Railway opened, carrying ore from West Mine to Battersby Junction via the Ingleby Incline, on which loaded wagons were lowered down the incline and empty wagons were raised up on an adjacent line via the inertial pull. The Rosedale Railway was extended in 1865 to Rosedale East Mine and in 1873 the Blakey mines were opened; production was at a peak. The Rosedale iron ore seam became depleted using vertical shafts and the two seams of inferior ore above, mainly Dogger, were mined via drift mines, which extended for up to 3.5 km. It was more economical to treat this ore at the site for transport. The ore was roasted in calcining kilns with coal to produce pig iron, reducing the load to be carried by up to 20%, which was then transported to Teesside for refining. The by-product of this process was slag, which would have made a spectacular show for the population in the valley at night as it was tipped down the banks. The 1871 census gives a population of 78 in miners' cottages, but Welsh, Irish, Cornish and Durham miners worked here living in temporary camps from time to time. The mines closed in 1879 but reopened in 1881 until 1911. The East Mines reopened in 1912 and throughout the First World War, finally closing during the General Strike in 1926. Some of the slag was removed by Ward's of Sheffield, as it contained profitable amounts of iron, but the railway closed on 13th June 1929.



Walking along the old railway line

The first restoration project has been the East Mine; the kilns have been cosmetically repaired with stone. Baskets with soil have been placed at strategic sites to encourage grass growth and prevent landslip. The railway line has been replaced with a footpath using local and Teesside slag. All of the waste ironwork on site was purchased by Ward's of Sheffield. Florence Terrace at the opposite side of the valley had 18 cottages, a shop and stables for the ponies; today only 9 cottages remain as ruins.



View across Rosedale from the railway line

Paddy Morrison.

VISIT TO AMPLEFORTH ABBEY IN JUNE

In the morning Tim Saxby gave us a guided tour of the orchard. Originally in the early twentieth century the monks developed a formal orchard on south facing slopes. The current orchard is on a new site by the sports centre and they extend to 10 acres. Three employees look after approximately 3000 apple trees of around 60 varieties. There is no mechanised cultivation. A lot of the apples are used to make cider on site. The orchard is not formally organic but herbicides and insecticides are not routinely used. The heavy soils are mulched for water retention in the summer. Several key themes emerged from our tour. It is important to maintain the diversity of the orchard to avoid a monoculture and to encourage the benefits of varied seasonality. The genetic mix is also furthered by the adoption of some heritage varieties. We also learnt about the importance of different sizes of root stock and how the choice affects the development of the grafted cultivars. The original M9 root stock is now giving way to M106 as the former produced brittle trees even if they yielded a crop within three years. Pruning has to be done carefully bearing in mind that there needs to be a balance between fruit production and vegetative growth. It is also important to realise that different apple trees fruit in various places. There can be no uniform approach to managing the orchard as the varieties of apple trees all need different care. We learnt about some varieties such as Spartan and Discovery. To conclude the orchard tour we saw where the cider crop was pressed and allowed to ferment.



Part of the apple orchard



Tim explaining how the cider press works

After lunch we were shown round the Abbey by Father Christopher. He explained the development of the monastic community from its origins. Initially the monks were housed in Ampleforth Lodge, a donation by Anne Fairfax in the 1790s. The numbers of monks were increased by those fleeing the French Revolution. We learnt about the three stage evolution of the Abbey from a small chapel in the Lodge to the present building which was completed in 1961. Father Christopher showed us the Choir, the various chapels and stained glass. The sixth century rule of St. Benedict was explained and the changes of Vatican 2 on Catholic worship were discussed. We saw the refectory and discovered how a monastic community is organised under the Abbot with some monks being ordained as priests working in parishes elsewhere. Six daily Offices are observed by the monks. The number of monks at Ampleforth peaked in the 1950s and currently there are about 30. Only a few are employed in the school.



The party outside the abbey buildings

Philip Mander.



Walking through Swaledale [Chris Robinson]

WALK IN SWALEDALE

In August, 23 walkers set out from Richmond on a joint RGS/ PLACE walk led by Margaret Atherden. We left the car park at Nuns' Close and proceeded up to West Field, an ancient open field with lynchets, which was not enclosed until the early nineteenth century. We noted the views over Richmond with its impressively situated Norman castle. We stopped for lunch at Willance's Leap and learnt about its macabre history of 1606. After lunch we walked along the top of Whitcliffe Scar to the top of Deepdale and enjoyed the extensive views over lower Swaledale. We noted the evidence of lead mining and learnt about scrins and adits.

The geology of Swaledale was explained. We were introduced to the concept that rock type is often associated with different flora e.g. the yews of Whitcliffe Scar favour limestone whereas the oaks are found on the more siliceous Richmond Chert. There was evidence of glaciation in the forms of morainic deposits and pro-talus ramparts. We examined the flora and noted typical limestone types such as agrimony, marjoram, harebell, lady's bedstraw, thyme, rock rose and lesser knapweed. The profusion of large anthills is one indication that the pasture has been undisturbed for a long time. We took a detour to examine a Scheduled Ancient Monument, an Iron Age enclosure with massive defensive banks and the remains of corbelled structures. There has only been limited excavation of the site. The walk concluded with a route through the secondary woodland of Whitcliffe Wood. During the walk a buzzard, a peregrine falcon, swifts, swallows and martins were all spotted.



The party inside the Iron Age enclosure

Philip Mander.

Norton Conyers Hall Visit

Members of PLACE visited Norton Conyers Hall in July. The Hall sits in beautiful parkland with a 400 year old walnut tree. Lady Graham, the current owner of the Hall, met us near the clock tower of the 17th century stables. She told us tales from the past including how the 5th Baronet changed the landscape and survived a poison attempt. The 4th Baronet was not so fortunate as he was poisoned by a cup of tea that was meant for the housekeeper who was his mistress.

We moved inside and Sir James Graham, the 11th Baronet, joined us. Together they gave us a delightful introduction to their home. Norton Conyers is first mentioned in Domesday Book (1086) and was owned by the Diocese of Durham to accommodate visitors. The Hall takes its name after being owned by two families; the Conyers and the Nortons. In 1569, it was confiscated by Queen Elizabeth I, after the "Rising of the North" and subsequently sold to the Musgrave family. Richard Graham, whose family had a reputation for stealing cattle, married Cathrine Musgrave in 1624 and bought the Hall from his father-in-law. The 7th Baronet inherited the Hall at only 7 years of age, along with 4 other estates including Nunington Hall. He died in 1866 after a life of extravagant spending on horses and women, forcing the sale of all the houses. His son Sir Reginald served in the Crimea war, married a distant ancestress of the former Duchess of York, and bought the Hall back in 1879.

In 2005, the Grahams discovered to their horror that they had a Deathwatch beetle infestation in the Hall. A restoration project is currently ongoing and lots of photos were passed around showing the hall floor being removed. Beetles collected and monitored over a year were on view in small plastic boxes. During renovation archaeologists discovered signs of the Anglo Saxon hall and discarded wood was found underneath the stairs which is thought to have encouraged beetle infestation.

Portraits around the house dated from 1590 to the present day, including one of Fergie's (former Duchess of York) ancestress complete with red hair. Family toys and games were left around the house giving it a very homely, lived-in feeling. In the corner of the landing is a concealed, roped-off staircase leading to a servant's room which was rediscovered in 2004. Legend says that Charlotte Bronte, after visiting in 1839, used the main staircase, servant's staircase and tales of a mad woman, as inspiration in Mr. Rochester's Thornfield Hall in her much-loved novel *Jane Eyre*. In King James' room a fireplace, dating from the Tudor period, was found during renovation work carried out to repair damp in 2004.

With time running out, we made our way to the 3 acre, walled garden, the source of the numerous floral arrangements throughout the Hall. The herbaceous borders were a haven for many insects and butterflies. In the centre is a forcing house which still contains the original heated wall and remains of the stoke holes. Other glasshouses contained fig, peach, grapes and tomatoes. I could have stayed for hours in the garden soaking up the atmosphere and listening to the bees. Norton Conyers is a very welcoming home with a garden that should be visited.

Jackie Ashcroft



© Leigh Foster 2017

The exterior of the house



© Leigh Foster 2017

The party in the hall



Gate into the north park [Tom Fothergill]



© Leigh Foster 2017

The 'Jane Eyre' staircase



© Leigh Foster 2017

The garden

In June PLACE had a stand at the Wildlife Day at Stillingfleet Lodge, giving information to visitors and selling books. The gardens are run organically and abound in insects, birds and other wildlife.



PLACE member Eileen White and Peter Brears have put together an exhibition entitled, 'Cooks and their Books' in the Leeds University Library Gallery.

It runs until the end of January 2018. There are accompanying events, eg a talk by Eileen and a demonstration by Peter. For further details, see their website: library.leeds.ac.uk/treasures

South Yorkshire Vernacular & Barnsley's Best Buildings, Saturday 21st October 2017, 10.00am – 4.30pm, Leeds Beckett University

This day school is organised by the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group and features talks by Peter Ryder, David Cook and Peter Thornborrow. For further details, contact David Cook: dcook0@talk21.com.

Shadow Woods: a search for lost landscapes
A new book by PLACE member Ian Rotherham

This book explores the ecological history of woods and their landscapes, including lost woods, 'ghost woods' and 'shadow woods'. It is intended for the general reader and should be of interest to a wide audience. It is available from Amazon:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Shadow-Woods-Search-Lost-Landscapes/dp/1904098665/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1496222464&sr=1-4&keywords=ian+d.rotherham

An important date for your diary!
Saturday May 12th 2018 – PLACE AGM and members' day, Skipton.

PLACE subscriptions are due on 1st January each year. If you have not paid for 2017 (or do not have a standing order), please send your subscription a.s.a.p.

We take DATA PROTECTION very seriously. All personal data, e.g. addresses, are kept in 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 do not engage in active fund-raising activities.

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 some outings, subject to the agreement of the leader (please ask in advance).

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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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 2018