

Introduction to Archaeology

Our next short course will be run jointly with the York Archaeological Trust and led by Dr Andrew (Bone) Jones.

It will be held at Bedern Hall, York, 2.00-4.00pm on the following Tuesday afternoons: January 18, January 25, February 1, February 15, February 22, March 1.

The course is designed to enable participants to understand, visit and, if they wish, become actively involved with archaeological projects currently underway in the region. We will visit excavations at Hungate (below) and assist with practical tasks for the Blansby Park Project. Participants will learn about air photography, geophysical survey, working with finds, archaeological illustration and recording. They will also be able to help prepare for publication the excavation of a Late Bronze Age barrow. Visits will be made to several York Archaeological Trust attractions: JORVIK Viking Centre, Barley Hall, Micklegate Bar Museum and DIG. There will also be an optional field visit to Blansby Park, near Pickering. No prior experience of archaeology is needed!



The course costs £25.00 (£20.00 for unwaged/retired). People can also join individual sessions for £5.00 per session. To book your place, please use the booking form enclosed with this newsletter. N.B. This course is already booking up fast!

For more details about the individual sessions, please see our website: www.place.uk.com

PLACE Spring Conference: *Yorkshire's Historic Landscapes and Buildings at Risk*

Saturday 2nd April 2011, York St John University



The historic environment faces many and varied threats, from coastal erosion (above) to urban development, from visitor pressure to neglect and under-funding. In this conference we will explore a wide range of sites at risk, from historic buildings to whole landscapes. Speakers will include:

- Dave Macleod – the role of air photography in identifying sites at risk
 - Tom Lord – Victoria Cave, Ribblesdale
 - Margaret Nieke – Castle Howard and heritage landscapes
 - Brian Walker – Heritage on the Public Forest Estate: a risky business?
 - Philip Abramson – Conservation and Stewardship of WWII sites on the Defence Estates
 - Michael Thomson – The Restoration and Operation of Gayle Mill
 - Tony Berry and Chris Dunn – The River Foss Navigation
 - Andrew Witham – The Restoration of an 18th century Merchant's House at Thorne
 - Janet Douglas – York Road Library, Leeds.
- We also hope to have a presentation from the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group.

There will be displays and bookstalls.
The cost of the conference will be £15.00 (£10.00 for unwaged/retired) and will include coffee/tea but not lunch. To book your place, please use the booking form enclosed with this newsletter.

PLACE Spring Fieldtrips

Hob Moor – Historic Stray and Local Nature Reserve

Saturday 16th April, 2.00pm – 4.00pm

On this walk, led by Elizabeth Smith, we will discuss various aspects of Hob Moor & Little Hob Moor, both of which are part of Micklegate Stray. We shall see two forms of ridge & furrow and the former City boundary, learn about the role of Hob Moor during the outbreak of plague in 1604/5 and look at some of the detail of Samuel Parsons' Map of the Manor of Dringhouses, 1624. We shall also consider why Hob Moor was given Local Nature Reserve status.

Meet at 2.00pm at the Tadcaster Road entrance to Little Hob Moor, which is very near to Pulleyn Drive (parking possible) and adjacent to the pelican crossing, grid ref: SE 591505 (explorer 290). Several bus routes (including the Coastliner service) use Tadcaster Rd; alight at Pulleyn Drive. (Do not use no. 3 P&R service, which does not stop there).

Stout shoes or boots recommended, especially if there has been recent heavy rain.

The cost of this fieldtrip is £5.00 per head. Please use the booking form enclosed.

Field visit to Millington Wood, Saturday 7th May 2011, 2.00 – 5.00pm

Roy Crossley will lead this visit to Millington Wood, an ancient ash wood on the Wolds. Most of the area was clear-felled by the Forestry Commission in 1959 and replanted with a mixture of deciduous trees and some conifers, but a compartment of young ash was retained. The wood passed to Humberside CC in 1989 and it is now being managed for its amenity value as well as nature conservation. In recent years there have been measures to remove trees not regarded as native to the area, and to encourage the natural regeneration of ash. Much of the native ground flora remains, and species such as dog's mercury, wood sorrel, ramsons and primroses should be flowering well on the occasion of our visit. The wood is on a steeply-sided dry chalk valley, with consequently steep paths, but the main path through the wood is flat-to-gently sloping, and all the plants should be easily visible without exertion. Toothwort may be out on our visit but to see it involves a fairly steep climb.

Access to the wood is via a single-track road that runs through Millington Dale from Millington village, which is 2 miles north-east of Pocklington. The car park is at grid ref: SE 838530. Meet there at 2.00pm and wear stout shoes. Please note there are no toilet facilities except in the village pub. The cost of this fieldtrip is £5.00 per head. Please book via the booking form enclosed with this newsletter.

Dayschool on Bumble Bees, led by Michael Archer

21st May 2011, King's Manor, York

The dayschool will start with an indoor meeting at King's Manor. Dr Archer will attempt to show:

- 1) How to distinguish between true and cuckoo bumblebees.
- 2) How to distinguish between females and males.
- 3) How to distinguish between the six common true bumblebees and the new species, the tree bumblebee.

Preserved specimens will be available for practice with a hand-out and hand lenses. In the afternoon, "bumblebee observation cylinders" will be used at York Victorian Cemetery, to help participants practise their skills. The cost of the dayschool is £10.00 per head. Please use the enclosed booking form.

N.B. Places are limited to 12, so early booking is advised.

PLACE Annual General Meeting

Saturday 14th May 2011

For the 2011 members' day and AGM, we shall be visiting the beautiful Colne Valley.

Morning talks will take place in the Mechanics Institute in Marsden and will introduce us to the geography, environment and social history of the area. In the afternoon we shall have a walking tour of the Marsden locality, venturing as far as the Tunnel End visitor centre on the banks of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Those who wish may then make a short tour by boat into the tunnel, which was reopened in 2001 after 20 years of restoration work.



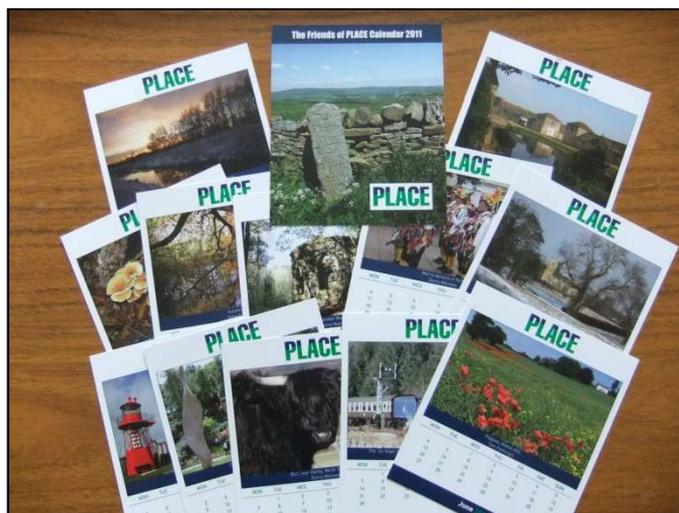
Marsden is easily accessible by train from York or Leeds. There is parking available at the Marsden Mechanics Institute for those who need it. Anyone unable to make the walk in the afternoon can go by water taxi instead, for a small charge. **Those wishing to take the boat trip inside the tunnel need to indicate this on the booking form. The cost of the whole day will be £5.00 or £8.50 for those who take the boat trip. PLEASE BOOK BY MARCH 31st AS WE NEED TO BOOK THE BOAT.** Full directions and

details of the programme for the day will be circulated nearer the time, with the papers for the AGM.

Friends of PLACE Calendar 2011

This year's calendar features gorgeous shots taken by Friends of PLACE. It comes in a handy display case and is ideal for the desk or worktop. **The calendar costs £3.00 (incl. P & P).** To order, please use the order form enclosed.

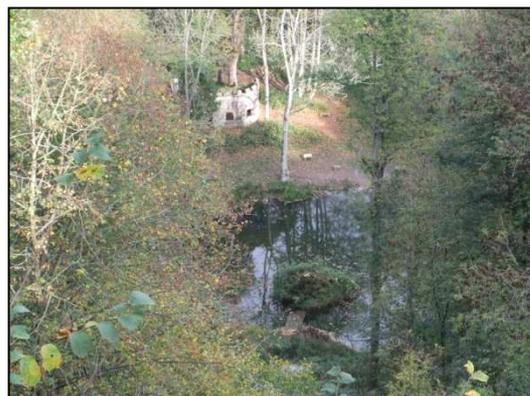
If you failed to submit any photographs this year, start snapping now for the 2012 calendar! Photographs should be taken in 2011 and feature any aspect of the people, landscape or cultural environment of Yorkshire. **Digital images should be sent by e-mail attachment to: place@yorks.ac.uk Deadline for receipt of entries: 30th September 2011.**



REPORTS ON PLACE EVENTS IN AUTUMN 2010

Visit to Hackfall Woods on 17th October.

Twelve people attended this fieldtrip to the Woodland Trust property near Masham. We were led around the site in the morning by the warden, Paul Mosley, who showed us many of the follies, including the Rustic Temple by Fountain Pond (right), Fisher's Hall (see 'October' on the 2011 calendar), Mowbray Castle and The Ruin. After a picnic lunch, Gordon Simpson showed us some of the 46 species of fungi he had found, including the candlesnuff fungus, dead man's fingers, coral spot, sulphur tuft and fly agaric. Many thanks to everyone who helped with this visit. More pictures of the visit are shown on our website.



Report on autumn conference in Goole *The Changing Role of Yorkshire's Waterways.*

A conference barge at the Waterways Museum in Goole was the unusual venue for our conference on 2nd October. The 50 delegates present heard four talks in the morning:

- Michael Hopkinson: 'A desperate dangerous design': the rise and fall of Yorkshire's canal system.
- Robb Robinson: Far horizons: from the River Hull to the Ends of the Earth.
- Clare Hunt (on behalf of Bob Watson): The 'Sobriety' Project and the Port of Goole.
- Judy Jones: Conservation and Recreation on the Waterways.

In the afternoon, the party took to the water for boat trips around Goole docks. There was also a chance to visit the fascinating exhibits in the museum. The proceedings of the conference will be published early in 2011.



Investigating Historic Landscapes of the Yorkshire Dales: Grassington, October 30th

This Day School, arranged jointly by the Yorkshire Dales Landscape Research Trust and PLACE, focussed on the area of Upper Wharfedale; one of the most attractive upland valleys in England, and presented three studies of the archaeology and palaeo-ecological history of the area from the end of the ice ages to the medieval period.

In his introduction **Roger Martlew**, having touched on the recent tourist enthusiasm for the Dales, gave a reinterpretation of the extensive field and settlement systems first identified by Arthur Raistrick in the 1950s. The vast range of earthworks extending along the Dale and across to Malham Moor, previously assumed to be of Anglo Saxon or medieval origin, are now revealed to be many thousands of years old, and modern non-invasive techniques, such as the analysis of magnetic anomalies, permit identification of building where there is no surface evidence of structures. The chemical composition of minute metal fragments shows the presence of complex alloys and hints at sophisticated metal working in brass, "gun metal" and bronze in the area, and suggests that mining of scarce metals, such as zinc, may pre-date Roman occupation. Although manual excavation continues to be necessary, spectrometric and carbon dating of finds will produce increasingly accurate dates and are likely to prove a much longer history of settlement, and enable much more accurate mapping than previously thought possible. Roger's talk was followed up by a field visit in the afternoon.



Complementing the analysis of settlements and economic activity, osteoarchaeologist **Janet Fletcher's** succinct, detailed and sympathetic account of cairn burials in the fields at Chapel House Wood, put flesh on the bones of this prehistory, and indeed provided bones themselves in abundance. The presence of numerous fragments and a wide variety of inhumations from the late neolithic and early bronze ages produced the material for highly detailed examination of foetal burials, dental attrition and hints at ritual practice, including the careful marking of graves and the protective capping and covering of burial sites, which all have strong resonance in much later cemeteries. Janet's sensitive interpretation of the finds made this a fascinating and moving presentation. Her workshop on skeletal ageing and sexing was equally interesting and valuable.

Left: participants trying to identify bones.

Graeme Swindles (below right) gave an excellent explanation of the processes of obtaining climate change data from the boring and analysis of peat samples at five sites along Wharfedale and at Malham Moor. The construction of pollen diagrams and their interpretation was clearly demonstrated and the role of indicator species, humification changes and profile colour variations as surrogates for climatic events was linked to studies throughout northern Europe. Perhaps the most surprising facet of Graeme's lecture was the revelation of a sequence of prehistoric "ash clouds" emanating from Icelandic volcanoes, the evidence for which remains in subsoil as thin layers of glassy tephra which can be accurately dated. More recent carbon layers from the 1850s mark the spread of large scale (and polluting) manufacturing industry into the Dales. Palaeo-ecology can now give us evidence of climatic change and the interaction of humans with vegetation through the last 11,000 years locally, and highly detailed histories of human impacts for the last 500 years are visible through the variations of water levels at sites such as Malham Tarn Moss. Graeme's afternoon workshop enabled microscopic viewing of the tephra particles, which most of us had never seen before.



This was a very enjoyable day school, enhanced by the beautiful autumn weather and delightful location, and it is to be hoped that more PLACE members will be able to attend such joint events in the future.

Michael Hopkinson.



Unfolding the story: the landscape around Malham, North Yorkshire

This year's joint lecture with the Yorkshire Philosophical Society and the Royal Geographical Society was given by Professor Terry O'Connor from the Dept. of Archaeology, University of York. It took place on Tuesday 16th November and was attended by about 210 people. The title, 'Unfolding the story', was taken from the preface to Arthur Raistrick's book, *Malham and Malham Moor* (1947). The breadth of Raistrick's interests and expertise has been an inspiration to many people, especially in an age of increasing specialism. Terry's talk took a similarly broad approach to the familiar, iconic landscape of Malham, updating Raistrick's writing in the light of recent research and discoveries. It was illustrated by delightful landscape pictures by Pearson, interspersed with Terry's own colour photographs.

The geology forms the natural starting point for any consideration of landscape. The Malham area offers superb karst scenery, based on the Carboniferous Limestone, featuring pavements, scars, sink holes and caves in abundance. The Middle Craven Fault separates outcropping limestone to the north from sandstone and shales to the south, the boundary forming a prominent scarp across the landscape. Glaciation has also left its mark on the Malham landscape, where there was a great thickness of ice in the last glacial period, peaking 20 – 18,000 years ago. We now know that this ice was warm-based, not frozen on to the land, so water flowing under pressure at its base was able to erode the glacial till, washing some of it down the grikes in the limestone and often blocking cave systems. Recent research has established that the North Pennine ice-cap collapsed by 16,000 years ago, leaving most of the Malham free of ice for the last few thousand years of the ice age. There are extensive wind-blown loess deposits in the area, which have recently been dated to this period by optically stimulated luminescence (OSL dating). Gorges, such as Gordale, also date from the end of the last glacial.

The natural landscape we see today is dominated by grassland, the product of centuries of grazing by sheep and rabbits. However, woodland plants and snails survive in the grikes on limestone pavement, suggesting that tree cover was formerly much greater. This is confirmed by pollen analysis from sites such as Malham Tarn and Tarn Moss, which shows that a rich mosaic of vegetation was present into historic times. Bone finds of brown bear and lynx from the Anglo-Saxon period also confirm that substantial areas of woodland must have survived at least until that time. Rabbit grazing from the eleventh century onwards probably prevented trees from regenerating, as suggested by frequent finds of rabbit bones from medieval times. An interesting feature is the abundance of water vole bones, suggesting that voles were common and widespread on the dry uplands until at least Romano-British times. The water voles seem to have undergone a major change in behaviour, which Terry thinks may have been due to the introduction of rabbits.

The human impact on the landscape is well known from historic records from sites such as Bolton Abbey and Fountains, both of which owned large areas of land in the area in medieval times. The archaeological evidence is more subtle, especially for the earlier period. Many of the visible remains are now thought to date from the Roman period, although the 'Celtic' field systems, e.g. those near Malham Cove, probably cover a wide range of dates from late prehistoric to Roman-British. The pattern of remains suggests transhumance, with large numbers of temporary structures being used in the summer period. From Anglo-Saxon times onwards, strip lynchets were constructed for cultivation. Terry questions whether these were purely functional and suggests that they may have been part of a 'monumentalisation' of the landscape – built to impress as well as to farm. The landscape is well described as a palimpsest, where each generation has reshaped the landscape left by its forebears.

A similar picture exists below ground, where archaeological remains have been superimposed on laminated clays deposited by glacial meltwater in cave systems. Many of these remains have been dated only recently, revealing a more complex picture than was appreciated in Raistrick's day. Upper Palaeolithic tools, Neolithic burials, Romano-British and occasional medieval artefacts are found, together with modern graffiti. The underground landscape of the area is arguably as important as the above ground one and merits equal protection and conservation.

Change has continued to the present day, with the conversion of former haylofts and cottages into modern dwellings and the change in economy from primarily livestock farming to recreation and conservation. Malham had its medieval fairs and cattle markets and still forms a honeypot today. Conflicts between locals and tourists are gradually being resolved and farming itself is changing to cater for a niche market, e.g. of specialised meat production. Each culture leaves its own mark on the landscape and change is continual. Terry argues that the best form of conservation is to maintain the function and purpose of the landscape, not to try to preserve it in aspic.

The talk was followed by a lively discussion, topics ranging from drove roads to water voles and from climate change to the use of caves for burials. Terry started by saying that it was easy to take a familiar landscape like that around Malham for granted. His informative and thoughtful talk ensured that members of his audience will never take it for granted again.

Margaret Atherden.

Research Projects

Hopewell House Farm Wildlife Survey

The wildlife of Hopewell House Farm, near Knaresborough, has been studied by various groups for over 30 years. The farm successfully combines commercial farming with conservation measures, such as tree planting, sympathetic hedgerow management, wide field margins and wetland creation. During 2010, volunteers have resurveyed the plants, mammals, birds, dragonflies, bees and wasps of the farm, with a view to publishing a DVD next year.



Botanists surveying a wet woodland on the farm.

Roadside Verge Surveys

Volunteers have continued monitoring the flora of road verges in the North York Moors National Park and in Hambleton District (below). The top 31 verges in Hambleton are now being actively managed by North Yorkshire County Council, with appropriate cutting regimes, raking of clippings and removal of scrub. In the North York Moors, salt bins have replaced many eroding salt heaps, encroaching scrub has been removed and some verges cut and raked by volunteers. The plant records collected by PLACE members will allow long-term changes in the verge flora to be monitored in the light of climate change and other pressures.



PLACE Autumn Conference 2011

Back from the Edge: The Fall and Rise of Yorkshire's Wildlife

Our autumn conference will be held at the Centre in the Park, Sheffield, on Saturday 29th October 2011.

Speakers:

- Ian Rotherham – Setting the Scene
- Mel Jones – 'Woodman spare that tree': the rescue of South Yorkshire's Ancient Woodlands
- Colin Howes – Dial P for Polecat
- Keith Clarkson – Changes in Yorkshire's Bird Populations: winners and losers
- Chris Firth – The Evolving Story of the River Don Fishery
- Margaret Atherden – Roadside Assistance: management and conservation of North Yorkshire's wayside flowers
- Dave Chesmore – The Conservation of Lepidoptera in Yorkshire
- Ian Carstairs – The Cornfield Flowers Project

There will also be bookstalls and poster displays. **The booking form for this conference will be distributed in the next newsletter but please note the date in your diary now!**

Other Events

We are planning several more fieldtrips for summer 2011, including:

Sat. July 16th: 10.30am. Guided walk around the WWII remains on Riccall and Skipwith Commons (joint event with Friends of Skipwith Common). PLACE members are also welcome to stay on for the butterfly walk at 2.30pm and moth trapping in the evening.

For more details, please contact Jackie Ashcroft: jackieashc@aol.com

Autumn 2011: A visit to Buck Wood, Airedale – details in the next newsletter.

To contact PLACE:

By post: PLACE Office,
York St John University,
Lord Mayor's Walk,
York,
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By phone: 01904 766291

(N.B. this is the Chief Executive's home number).

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

Take a look at our newly revamped website: www.place.uk.com

Summer 2011: An outing to the Yorkshire Wolds – details in next newsletter.

A short course led by Robert Wright on Medieval York - summer 2011.

Details in the next newsletter.

Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group events:

Sat. 26th March: Markings and Dateable Features on Vernacular Buildings. Dayschool at Leeds Metropolitan University.

Fri. 13th to Sun. 15th May: Annual Recording Conference, Long Preston.

For further details, contact:

enquiries@yvbsg.org.uk

Forthcoming PLACE Publications, 2011

'Fables When reason borrowed fancy's painted wings': Exploring Yorkshire's Folk Heroes and Legends. Ed. Aileen Bloomer.

The Changing Role of Yorkshire's Waterways. Ed. Veronica Wallace.

The Prehistory of the Yorkshire Dales. Ed. Roger Martlew.

PLACE Board and Officers

Ms Jackie Ashcroft

Ms Aileen Bloomer

Ms Barbara Hickman (Chair)

Dr Michael Hopkinson
(Treasurer)

Professor David Maughan
Brown

Professor Terry O'Connor

Dr George Sheeran

Ms Veronica Wallace

Dr Steve Watson

Chief Executive and Company secretary:

Dr Margaret Atherden

Membership and Subscriptions

If you have joined PLACE recently, renewed your subscription already or pay by standing order, your membership card for 2011 will be enclosed with this newsletter. If not, please use the renewal form enclosed to renew your subscription.

At the AGM in May, three trustees will retire in rotation but may stand for re-election if they wish. Anyone who is interested in becoming a trustee of PLACE is invited to contact the PLACE Office to discuss the nature of the role. Nominations forms, duly signed and seconded by paid-up members of PLACE, must be received in the PLACE Office by the end of March at the latest.