



Despite the pandemic, PLACE has continued to run events this summer, mostly open air and one on-line. We have a range of outdoor events this autumn, which we hope you will enjoy. We are planning one short course via Zoom and possibly one indoor event, in December, which will be dependent on the Covid situation not deteriorating.

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Please use the booking form for all events. As this newsletter coincides with the holiday season, please note that bookings may not be acknowledged until October.

AUTUMN EVENTS 2021



Ravenscar walk, Saturday 16th October

As a new venture, we are introducing a series of regular walks for PLACE members who like to get out and about in Yorkshire. These will take place on the third Saturday in each month except for December and January. Attendance is free but it would be helpful if people signed up in advance, so that we know how many to expect.

The first monthly walk will be on Saturday 16th October starting at Ravenscar. Park on the roadside near the toilets just south of the Raven

Hall Hotel (NZ 980015) at 11.00am (no public transport available, sadly). The walk of c.6.6 miles includes one steep climb and takes in evidence of the former alum industry near the coast and part of the old railway track from Scarborough to Whitby. The walk features in *The PLACE Book of Winter Walks* and the route is on OS Explorer sheet OL27 (North York Moors eastern area). Walking boots are recommended; bring a packed lunch.

Guided walk around Ilkley, Thursday 4th November

Colin Speakman will lead this tour of Ilkley, guiding us around the historic town and pointing out its major buildings and other features of interest, including Mill Gill, the edge of the Moor, Darwin Gardens, Heber's Gill, Heathcote (Lutyens House), the remains of the spa and finishing at the medieval and Tudor Manor House.

Meet at 11.00am at the railway station (trains every 30 minutes from Leeds; the 1032 arrives in time, as does the 1017 from Bradford). Parking is not always easy in Ilkley but should be OK in November mid-week. The walk of approximately three miles includes one steady but not too steep uphill section and will take about two hours, so we should get back to the centre of Ilkley in time for lunch. Ilkley abounds with coffee shops and pubs. There is even Betty's, if you are happy to queue for half an hour in the rain (yes even in November)!





Hovingham walk, Saturday 20th November

Our third Saturday walk in November will start at 10.30am in the centre of Hovingham (SE 667757, OS Explorer sheet 300). If coming by car, park in the car park beside the village hall (donation requested). Hovingham is accessible by bus from Malton or York.

The walk of 5.4 miles involves one short, steep climb at the beginning and another short climb further on and passes through woodland and farmland, with a short section along the road near the end. Walking boots are advisable; bring a packed lunch. The walk should take less than four hours, so there should be time for refreshment in Hovingham at the end.

Holy Places of Anglo-Saxon Yorkshire

A short course to be held via Zoom on Friday afternoons from 5th to 26th November

In 731 a Northumbrian monk named Bede completed his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. In it he described the coming of Christianity to the Anglo-Saxons, with a particular focus on this region. From the story of the conversion of King Edwin in 627 to the respected teachers and powerful bishops of his own time (many of whom he knew well), Bede's narrative supplies us with not only an enthralling cast of characters (such as Paulinus, Hilda, Chad, and Wilfrid), but also an itinerary of holy places. This short course will use Bede's *History* as a way into some of these sites – many of which still contain evidence of a rich Christian culture. Our main focus will be key sites associated with the conversion, such as York and Goodmanham; sites that were home to missionaries, such as Lastingham and Hackness; and sites of monastic power, such as Ripon (above) and Whitby.



This short course of four sessions will be presented by Dr Robert Wright via Zoom on Friday afternoons from 2.30 to 4.30pm from November 5th to 26th inclusive. The cost is £10.00 per head, payable in advance by cheque or BACS. Please use the booking form to reserve your place.

PRE-CHRISTMAS EVENT, 15th DECEMBER

If the Covid situation allows, we are hoping to have a pre-Christmas event in Bedern Hall, York, on the afternoon of Wednesday 15th December. We appreciate that not everyone will feel able to commit to such an event but others may appreciate the opportunity for a get-together in the festive season.

Please let us know via the booking form if you are interested in attending. Those who express an interest will be given further details, including cost, nearer the time and information will also be posted on our website once we know whether the event can go ahead.



PLACE Annual General Meeting, Saturday 15th May, via Zoom

We held our AGM in May 2021 via Zoom, as it was still not possible to gather in person because of the Covid situation. The meeting was attended on-line by 22 PLACE members, with our accountant in attendance. The Chairman, Aileen Bloomer, conducted the business with commendable alacrity, so it was the shortest AGM we have had. Voting had been carried out by proxy before the meeting. The Annual Report and Accounts for 2020 were accepted unanimously.

Three trustees stepped down at the AGM, all having remained on the Board for an extra year because of the pandemic: Aileen Bloomer, Hilary Moxon and Brian Walker. They were warmly thanked for their past service. Two other trustees were re-elected: David Hawtin and Linda Blenkinship (who very sadly died a few weeks later). We welcomed Joe Bailey as a new trustee and he has already proved his worth by taking over as webmaster for our brand new website. Since the AGM the Board has co-opted two other members as trustees: Nancy Stedman and Richard Myerscough. We hope to resume face-to-face Board meetings in October 2021

REPORTS ON SUMMER 2021 EVENTS

Hagg Wood, Dunnington walk, 21st May

Twenty-two PLACE members braved the rain to visit Hagg Wood, Dunnington on 21st May. Linda Maggs was our guide to this lovely woodland and explained about the history of the site and its current management. Mentioned in the Domesday Book, the site has had a woodland cover ever since, although part was felled in World War II and replanted with conifers in the 1950s. Over the years Hagg Wood has provided timber, wood, pasture for animals and shelter for game. Remains of round houses show that people lived in the wood in prehistoric times. A rich ground flora survives and the wood is well-known for its carpet of bluebells (right), which were just past their best at the time of our visit. An unusual and attractive plant is leopard's-bane (middle right) – thought to have been introduced here in pheasant feed. There is also a varied fauna of birds, mammals and insects, and in autumn an assortment of fungi can be found.



The woodland is managed by the Forestry Commission but was established as a Community Woodland in 2003, due to the efforts of the Friends of Hagg Wood, a group of volunteers who carry out practical management tasks and organise events. A long-term aim is to remove most of the conifers and restore the wood to native broad-leaved trees. Part of the site was designated as one of the BBC's 'Breathing Places', with the aims of improving the biodiversity and increasing use of the area by the local community. In 2011 the Friends of Hagg Wood obtained a grant from the Big Lottery 'Awards for All' fund to improve the ponds within Hagg Wood for wildlife. These include a series of small bomb craters which were accidentally created in June 1944 when a plane from Elvington Airfield suffered a mechanical fault and had to return to base, shedding its load of unexploded bombs in the way. The craters left when the bombs were later detonated in a controlled way now form valuable habitats for amphibians and invertebrates (right). However, the site is not without its challenges, especially since an adjacent landowner has blocked the traditional entrance from Intake Lane, much to the regret of the local people.



After the walk we repaired to the local Sports Club, where John Maggs had arranged for us to enjoy tea/coffee and biscuits. Many thanks to Linda and John for giving us such an enjoyable time on a wet afternoon.



Spofforth Castle ruins



Above and below: inside the undercroft



Some of the party on the way back on July 3rd

Spofforth walks, June 19th and July 3rd

A 6.3 mile walk was offered twice starting at Spofforth Castle and going over to Kirkby Overblow. The weather conditions were very different on each occasion.

An introduction to the Castle was given and it touched on the recent short course given by Robert Wright to PLACE members. Spofforth Castle was the main seat of the powerful Percy family from the Norman Conquest until the late 14th century. William de Percy built a manor house arranged around a courtyard in the 11th century. In 1308 Henry de Percy received a licence to fortify the manor house. The Castle is situated on a rocky outcrop. Only the western range survives. During the 15th century there was extensive building adding a stone vault with impressive windows and a solar block. The first floor was dominated by a great hall. Following the Battle of Towton in 1461 the Castle was burnt by the victorious Yorkists as the Percys were Lancastrians. It lay in ruins until 1559 when it was restored by Henry, Lord Percy. However by this date the seat of the Percys had shifted to Alnwick. The last recorded occupant of Spofforth Castle was the steward Sampson Ingeleby in 1604. Finally the Castle was reduced to ruin during the Civil War. In 1924 Charles Henry, Baron Leconfield, transferred ownership to the state by deed of gift. Spofforth Castle is now managed by English Heritage.

The walk passed under a redundant railway viaduct so a history of the Church Fenton to Harrogate line was given. It was opened in 1847 in two stages by the York and North Midland Railway at an initial cost of £5,000. Spofforth was a temporary terminus until 1848 because of complicated engineering works involving Prospect Tunnel and the Crimple Valley Viaduct. The line linking Spofforth with Harrogate was only five miles but it involved a difficult gradient of 1:36. With the opening of the Harrogate Brunswick Station, Spofforth became a through station. Livestock and barley were the main freight handled at Spofforth Station into the first part of the 20th century. Spofforth Station closed in 1964 after a public inquiry registered only 22 objections. The site is now occupied by the Station Court housing development.

The walk over to Kirkby Overblow was in the rolling countryside of the Lower Wharfedale Valley. Red Kites were spotted on the 19 June. A brief introduction to Kirkby Overblow was given, an explanation of its past as a place of medieval iron smelting. The village was mentioned in the Domesday Book. The iron smelting declined as a result of the plague in 1361, Scottish incursions, higher wage costs and competition of cheaper imports from Spain and Sweden.

The return walk to Spofforth was a gentle route through grass fields. Refreshments on both occasions were taken at the Castle Inn.

Philip Mander

Visit to Swaledale, 13th July

On what must have been one of the hottest days of summer 2021 with the thermometer well into the upper 20s (a rare occurrence in Swaledale), 19 PLACE members were treated to an unforgettable day with three inspirational guides.

The day was split into two halves. We began late morning with a brief introduction to Reeth and its history by Helen Bainbridge who, as Dr Helen Clifford, divides her time between the Victoria and Albert Museum and other academic institutions in London and Oxford, and the little Swaledale Museum housed in the former Methodist Chapel school.

Helen began our visit on the village green (above right) with a concise but highly informative history of Reeth in the wider context of Swaledale's geology, archaeology and more recent social history. In Dales terms Reeth is a relatively recent settlement, developed in the late 17th century by Lord Wharton who owned most of the mineral rights in Swaledale. The village with its many fine Georgian houses and inns became a market town and focal point of what for three centuries was a highly industrialised part of Yorkshire. Our party then were invited to visit the Museum (right) where Helen delighted everyone with a selection of fascinating objects illustrating life in the dale during and after the lead mining years. Highlights included a tankard made from metal from local bells, a lead miner's pocket-sized tea making canteen and two wonderful 18th century ladies' detachable pockets worn inside a skirt.

The superb little Swaledale Museum, just off Reeth Green, is open Mondays to Thursday 10am-5pm throughout summer and autumn. Visit www.swaledalemuseum.org for details.

Our afternoon visit to Surrender Mill (right), a former lead smelt mill some 3 miles from Reeth, was a complete contrast. But it also illustrated superbly the once intense industrial activity that had supported the communities whose lives were reflected in the Museum we had just experienced. Our guides were Douglas Mitcham, National Park Community Heritage Officer and Luke Bassnet Barker, Countryside Archaeology Adviser. Douglas and Luke provided an impressive double act, explaining the mysteries of ore heaths, flues, slag and the complex process of lead mining, smelting and transportation. Despite the intense heat, which had several of the group seeking shade, we were given fascinating insight into one of the great, transformative industries of the Yorkshire Dales.

Colin Speakman



Visits to Westerdale and Kildale, 12th and 26th August



[Denny Mallows]



[John Watts]



Two groups visited the remote and little-known valley of Westerdale in August, where Roger Inman and colleagues from the Hidden Valleys Community Project (HVCP) have been uncovering the prehistory for the past few years. In the morning we visited the Iron Age 'hillfort' of Round Hill (below left) – a scheduled monument on private land, which has been surveyed but not excavated. It has an unusual oval shape and sits on a low promontory surrounded by ditches but no obvious ramparts. The site is probably Iron Age in date but could be earlier. No-one knows why it is there! Geophysical survey shows a large circular structure in the middle, possibly a hut circle. The fields in the surrounding area have walls of a variety of dates, some including large orthostats (upright boulders, below left), some more random in design and with gaps in them, and others post-Enclosure and neater with capstones.

In the afternoon we visited a current excavation in nearby Kildale, where remains of a 13th-century chapel have been discovered (below left). The chapel was dedicated to St Hilda and was given by the lord of the manor to the Augustinian Priory at Healaugh Park, two miles north of Tadcaster. It was later returned to Sir Arnold Percy, who gave the Brothers of the Cross (or 'Crutched Friars') permission to use it. However, they were later forbidden to use it by the Archbishop of York and the Brothers left the area. The site of the chapel was lost for several centuries but there were tantalising references in documentary sources, which led members of the HVCP to locate it and start excavation in 2021. Some of the finds from the dig were shown to PLACE members.

On the first occasion, a group of PLACE members accompanied local botanist and historian, Carol Wilson, on a walk around Westerdale in the afternoon. Carol has written books on the development of the medieval settlement and on the flora of Westerdale. She was able to show us some of the interesting plants growing in the dale and to point out some of the buildings of historical interest. A Preceptory of the Knights Templar was established here in the 13th century and remains of the boundary wall are visible near Westerdale Hall. There was also a water mill established by the Templars near Hall Farm. Grange Farm was an outlying farm belonging to the Knights Templar in medieval times. The population of the dale was about 300-350 people then and included small settlements such as 'Braithwaite', now reduced to a couple of farms. Many of the farmhouses were located on the spring-line, as water was so important. The population was almost self-sufficient, only salt and millstones being imported. Carol's meticulous research has enabled her to reconstruct medieval Westerdale, even though direct physical evidence is sparse. However, the ruins of the former school can still be seen, the medieval pinfold is still there and there are 12th-century gravestones (left) in the churchyard. The main street of the village was the main road from Baysdale to Rosedale in medieval times. Today, however, it is a quiet rural road and the dale is off the beaten track for most tourists.

Margaret Atherden

Visit to Cawthorne Camps and the beaver enclosure in Cropton Forest

Brian Walker led a small group of PLACE members and one small dog around Cawthorne Camps in late August. The archaeological site is usually described as a series of 'practice camps' for the Roman army, although some sources suggest it consists of two small forts as well. The earthworks are substantial and comprise enclosures bounded by ditches and ramparts (right). There is no sign of a civilian settlement and no indication that the site ever came under attack. It is close to a Roman road across the North York Moors but the destination of the road remains unknown. The site is covered in heather moorland, which was looking at its best at the time of our visit. Bilberry is one of the plants common there and often indicates disturbed ground, such as archaeological sites.



Brian showed us the young woodland colonising the outskirts of the site, including birch, oak, rowan and European larch. We also looked at the view to the north, dominated today by conifer plantations with some surviving broad-leaved woodland. We learned about Forestry England's plans for the future, which include reducing the number of conifer plantations and replanting areas retained for timber production with tree species more suited to the future climate. Trees we may see planted in the future include Coast Redwood, Japanese Red Cedar and Armoric Spruce, intermixed with self-sown or planted native broad-leaves. This should produce future forests better able to withstand the changing climate, better for biodiversity and more resistant to disease.



Brian showing Linda Maggs the map of the area in the view to the north

The trip to Cawthorne Camps was followed by a visit to the beaver enclosure in Cropton Forest, led by Cath Bashforth of Forestry England. As numbers are limited, a second group visited the enclosure the following week. Two beavers were introduced from a site in Scotland in 2019 and are confined in a 10-hectare enclosure, as it is not yet legal to introduce them into the wild in England*. They have thrived in this secluded corner of the forest and produced two kits in 2019, two in 2020 and four in 2021. They have constructed an enormous dam (below left) and their alterations to the local drainage system have reduced the flooding downstream in Sinnington. They have also had a positive effect on biodiversity, with increases in species such as dragonflies, bats, otters and amphibians. It was a real privilege to be able to see these beautiful animals, which were once common in Britain until hunting wiped them out. Many thanks to Cath Bashforth for leading this visit.

•There is a government consultation at present: beaver.consultation@defra.gov.uk



The first group looking at the dam [Brian Walker]



Beaver swimming [Brian Walker]



Adult female beaver [Leigh Foster]

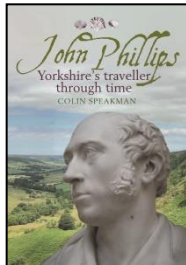
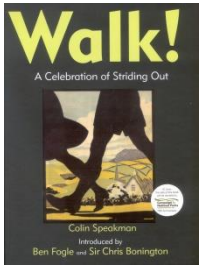
Philip Mander – My Yorkshire Place

Upper Rosedale (right) is perhaps my favourite place for walking on the North York Moors. There are a variety of walks starting at Rosedale Abbey of varying lengths and directions exploring the moors and forests. I particularly like to go up to Dale Head Farm along the valley bottom via Thorgill and Hollin Bush Farm and then climb up onto the dismantled railway built for the ironstone industry of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The archaeological remains are fascinating - the mines, the calcining kilns, the terraced miners' houses, the spoil heaps and a tramway. It is difficult to appreciate that the mining caused the population of the dale to explode from 558 to 2839 in just twenty years of the nineteenth century. The eastern mines closed in 1926. The area above Hollins Farm was the first area to be mined, yielding over 300,000 tonnes of ore a year until it was abandoned in 1874, the ore being exhausted in just 18 years. Today Upper Rosedale is very quiet. The views are magnificent and the walking is rewarding.



OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Two books by Colin Speakman are now available to buy via PLACE – please see our website for full details of these and other publications.



An intrepid team of bog-trotters carried out vegetation surveys at May Moss in the summer (above).

Our stand at the Stillingfleet Lodge Wildlife Day in June (below) proved interesting to old and young alike.



PLACE is an inclusive charity, membership of which is open to adults of all backgrounds, genders and abilities. PLACE holds members' names and addresses and, where members have supplied them, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers. These are only used to communicate with members about PLACE affairs or events. Personal data are never shared with other organisations. If you wish to change the way we communicate with you, please contact the PLACE Office.

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The next newsletter is due in January 2022