

January Newsletter 2022

PLACE
YORKSHIRE



A very happy and healthy new year to everyone!

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If you do not pay your subscription by standing order or have not joined via the website during the past year, your subscription is now due. The cost is still only £5.00 p.a. Please pay by BACS, if you are able to do so, or by cheque payable to PLACE. Details of BACS payments are on the bottom of the attached booking form. Please put your surname and 'sub' as a reference.

SPRING EVENTS 2022

THIRD SATURDAY WALKS As announced in the autumn newsletter, we are organising PLACE walks on the third Saturday in each month this year. By popular request, we are including a walk in January. These are free events – everyone is welcome. There is no need to book – just turn up on the day.

Saturday January 15th, starting at 11.00am from the car park (free) at Beningbrough Hall (SE 520586). The walk will only be about 4 miles long and the terrain is flat but the path near the river may be muddy, so sticks may be useful. Beningbrough Hall itself will be closed but the farm shop nearby will be open and has a café and toilets. We suggest only taking a drink and perhaps a chocolate bar with us and then having refreshments at the café after the walk (probably between 1.00 and 2.00pm).



[Denny Mallows]



[Margaret Atherden]

Saturday February 19th, starting at 11.00am from the car park (pay and display) at Sutton Bank top (SE 516831). The walk will be about 4 miles long and the terrain is flat. The walk includes a section along a minor road passing the glider club, then a firm path around the headland, with views over the White Horse of Kilburn to the south and the Vale of Mowbray and Lake Gormire to the west. We suggest only taking a drink and chocolate bar with us and having refreshments at the café near the car park after the walk, where there are toilets.

Saturday March 19th, starting at 11.00am from Welburn village (SE 720680). Park along the road and meet outside Dogh café in the middle of the village. The walk will be between 4.5 and 6.0 miles long, depending on the weather and the abilities of the participants. It will include a few short hills, for which sticks may be useful, and some muddy patches. Bring a drink and snack with you but there is an excellent café at Dogh in Welburn at the end of the walk.



[Richard Mallows]

**Saturday 12th March, 9.30am to 5.00pm.
Lost Beasts of the North: 200 years
of Kirkdale Cave**

A symposium organised by the Yorkshire Philosophical Society. To be held in Ryedale School, Nawton, near Helmsley, YO62 7SL.



Speakers will include:

- Dr Laura Eddey – the Quaternary landscapes of the Vale of Pickering
- Drs Jed Atkinson and Rebecca Bennion – the Jurassic geology of Kirkdale Cave
- Dr Ross Barnett – The Missing Lynx, cave lions and other felids
- Professor Hannah O'Regan – cave bears
- Professor Terry O'Connor – frog earths and herbivores
- Becky Knight – the lost beasts of Star Carr

Cost to be confirmed. Booking via YPS but not yet open, so register your interest via PLACE and we will keep you informed.

'Ellerburn Church & not the thatched cottage - an alternative tour of Thornton le Dale'. Wednesday 16th March

Meet at Ellerburn Church Car Park at 10.30. There is room here for about 8 cars (SE841842). We will have a guided tour of this ancient church by Liz Cowley, who is very knowledgeable and will be able to point out all the interesting features, such as an early medieval cross and hogsback gravestone remains.



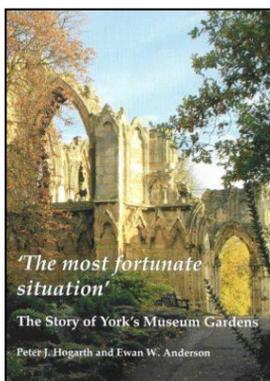
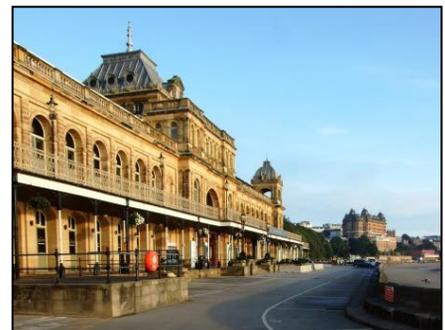
Reconvene for the afternoon walk at 1.30pm at the pond near the public toilets adjacent to the main car park in Thornton le Dale (SE835830). Brian Walker will lead a walk up to the site of Roxby Castle, the former home of the 'Black Knight of the North' Sir Richard Cholmley, followed by a walk through the fields to Westgate past a truly magnificent ash tree, returning to the car park via 'The Walks' and the Ha-Ha of Thornton Hall by c.4.30pm.

Cost: £5.00 per head. Booking essential.

Second tour of Scarborough, Wednesday 6th April

Last year we visited Scarborough to view the residential area of South Cliff. This year's Scarborough walk, led by Dr George Sheeran, will take in some of its major buildings and leisure areas, and will include the Grand Hotel and Spa (left). The route will be along metalled paths with one gradual ascent/descent near to the Spa and will take c.1.5 hours. This is a free event but booking is essential, as numbers are limited to 20 people.

Meet at 11.00am outside the Grand Hotel on the clifftop (TA 044883).



Tour of Museum Gardens, York, Tuesday 12th April

Dr Peter Hogarth, co-author of a recent book about the gardens (left), will lead this tour for up to 15 people. Meet inside the main gate off Museum Street at 11.00am. The tour will be repeated at 2.00pm if there is enough demand. The Museum Gardens are of major botanical, geological, archaeological and horticultural importance, and feature several rare trees, including the rarest native tree in England, currently threatened by flood embankment enhancement.

Cost: £5.00 per head. Booking essential, as numbers are limited to 15 per tour.

FUTURE EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

Annual General Meeting, Saturday 14th May, Huddersfield

Our AGM 2022 will be based in the Heritage Quay in Huddersfield. The speaker in the morning will be Professor Richard Morris. There will be a guided tour of the town in the afternoon. Full details and booking with the next newsletter.

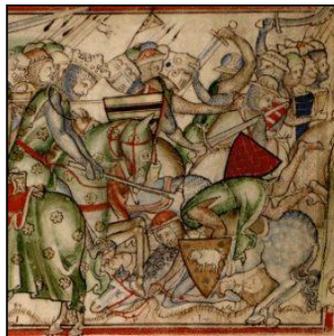
At the AGM, some trustees will step down, including three who have been co-opted this year and are eligible to stand again. We can have up to 12 trustees, so there is room for others to join the Board. If you are interested in standing for election, please contact the PLACE Office for a nomination form, which should be returned to the PLACE Office by Friday 15th April.

Short course: Yorkshire Battles Wednesday evenings, 7.00 – 9.00pm, April 20th and 27th, May 4th and 11th

Towton and Stamford Bridge were some of the bloodiest battles fought on English soil. In fact, more major skirmishes have been fought in Yorkshire than in any other county. During the Middle Ages, in particular, the region was permanently on the front line. This short course will chart that bloody history, from the battles of the Norman Conquest, through the period of the Scottish wars, to the great baronial conflicts of the later Middle Ages, especially the Wars of the Roses.

It will be presented by Dr Robert Wright. We hope to hold it 'in person' at Bedern Hall, York, and also make it available to people via Zoom. Further details and booking with the next newsletter.

PLACE member Veronica Wallace has recently moved to Scotland. She had been studying Yorkshire sundials for several years and is now looking for someone to take on the project from where she left off.



Left: The
Battle of
Fulford



Right:
The
Battle of
the
Standard

UPDATING MRS GATTY'S YORKSHIRE SUNDIALS *A project not completed*

There must be hundreds, if not thousands, of extant sundials in Yorkshire, though not all of them could now fulfil their purpose: some of the old ones lack gnomons, some have been moved to an area or wall that receives no sunshine and some are not properly aligned. Nevertheless it is fascinating, as you travel around Yorkshire towns and villages, to keep your eyes open for sundials. Some you will see on house walls, some on (or in!) churches, some on pedestals in gardens or on village greens and some on the ground.

Mrs Gatty, whose life spanned a large part of the 19th century, noted the mottoes on sundials wherever she went throughout her life. I don't think she was particularly interested in the technicalities of how sundials work, but her observations resulted in a lengthy book listing all the sundials she saw, where she saw them, and their mottoes, sometimes accompanied by anecdotes and related observations of her friends. Many of her sundials were in Yorkshire: she and her family moved from the south to Catterick when she was in her teens; her father was a vicar, and she met and married a vicar from the Sheffield area, so it's not surprising that a lot of her observations were clustered around those locations. She had an interesting life, of which a fuller description might well be appropriate to include in a possible PLACE publication.

Hers is a fascinating book to dip into, but I thought it deserved more, and would serve as a basis for some interesting research, primarily to find out whether the sundials listed by Mrs Gatty are still in place and incidentally to see some more out-of-the-way sundials in Yorkshire. The preliminary work took far longer than I expected. First I trawled through the whole book to pick out the Yorkshire references. It was easy to dismiss the many Italian entries, but a lot of the English ones were identified by the name of a small village which could have been in any county, and here an atlas and online information became essential. The atlas also enabled me to organise my list of 'Mrs Gatty's Yorkshire sundials' into areas that could be visited on the same outing. These areas are, provisionally: York and its vicinity; East Yorkshire; South Yorkshire (probably to be subdivided, with certainly a category 'Sheffield area'); West Yorkshire; further-west (!) Yorkshire; North Yorkshire Richmond area; North Yorkshire A1 vicinity south of Richmond.

It would have been a big task to travel around and check on them all, armed with Mrs Gatty's text and maps, a notebook (ipad?) and camera. Sadly, time (i.e. old age) has caught up with me, and the somewhat anecdotal report that I intended to offer PLACE for publication will not now materialise. I had hoped to include a little more technical information than Mrs Gatty did about some of 'her' sundials that still exist. There are of course many Yorkshire sundials not mentioned by Mrs Gatty, including some beautiful modern ones, and I had looked forward to recording a personal view of some of those too.

If any PLACE member(s) would be interested to take on this project, or something along the same lines, they are welcome to have the information I've collected, namely a photocopy of Mrs Gatty's book* (over 500 pages), some details of her life, my photographs of Yorkshire sundials and, for what they're worth, all the notes I've made. I believe PLACE would be willing to consider this as one of their research projects so there would be an allowance for necessary expenses. Please contact Margaret Atherden at PLACE initially if you are interested. I hope to encourage someone with the following 'taste of Mrs Gatty'.

One famous Yorkshire sundial that has existed for centuries is the Saxon sundial on St Gregory's Minster in Kirkdale, not far from Kirkbymoorside, illustrated below.



Saxon Sundial on St Gregory's Minster, Kirkdale

Mrs Gatty gives the following translation of the inscription:

Orm Gamalson bought S. Gregory's monastery when it was all utterly broken and fallen, and he let it be made anew from the ground to Christ and S Gregory in Edward's days the King and in Tosti's days the Earl.

She quotes the translation of the inscription on the sundial itself as:

*This is the day's sunmarker at every tide
And Hawarth me made and Brand Provost*



The sundial over the entrance door to Fountains Hall, in the National Trust Fountains Abbey site, is illustrated by Mrs Gatty on page 276 (item 502) of her book, followed by a listing of sundials known to her that have the same commonly found message: *Sic transit gloria mundi*

Photograph of part of a page from Mrs Gatty's book showing the sundial above the entrance to Fountains Hall





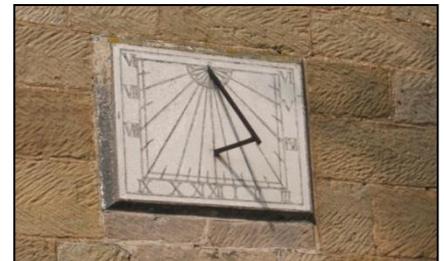
Left is a photograph I took in 2007 of the sundial in the same location. It looks as if the two sundials may be different, and more examination is needed. The sundial does not appear to be included in the National Trust's list of sundials, and the entry in the British Sundial Society's list (below) is not very informative:

| SRN | Name | Town | County | Year | Coords | Grid Ref | Type | Maker |
|-----|----------------|---------------------------|---------------|------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|-------|
| 262 | Fountains Hall | Fountains Abbey, nr Ripon | Yorkshire (N) | 16xx | N54 06 39, W01 34 40 | SE 277 68 4 | Vertical (S) | |

And, finally, a vertical sundial I really like, not in Mrs G's book:

Sundial on the wall of the National Park visitor centre (The Moors Centre), Danby. Neither date nor maker is given in the British Sundials Society's list.

* About fifteen years ago there was a copy of the book in York Library, which I borrowed and photocopied (it was out of copyright), which cost me less than buying one of the few I found for sale online. In one of the library's 'facelifts' the book was assigned to the basement and, fearing it might be sold, I asked the library to inform me if it ever was put on the market. I heard no more.



Veronica Wallace

REPORTS ON EVENTS IN AUTUMN 2021

Walk Around South Cliff, Scarborough

On Wednesday 15th September, 2021, a group of PLACE members met near the Grand Hotel in Scarborough for a heritage walk around Scarborough's South Cliff. Scarborough in the nineteenth century was a select sort of place. If some have described it as a sedate middle class resort, this does not really capture its character, for Scarborough attracted and continued to attract aristocratic families as well as those who had made their fortunes in business and commerce. Along with these went a sprinkling of international visitors from Europe or North America. As the resort expanded in the nineteenth century, accommodation for visitors and residents spread across the South Cliff which was to become Scarborough's premier suburb.



[Richard Mallows]

We first walked around the Crescent (left), a development scheme conceived in 1832, although not completed until the 1850s. Among some of the villas that appeared around the edge of Crescent Gardens we noted the house of the Sitwell family as well as that of the lords Londesborough. We then proceeded to the South Cliff proper where we examined the first terraces to be built there along with the Crown Hotel. All had appeared by 1845 which prompted the question of how people reached Scarborough in the days when a railway had either not been built or the railway system remained under-developed.

The answer was the horse – either stage coach or private carriage. The latter required a good deal of stabling, and behind the Crown Hotel we discovered the site of its stables, a vast area, and although converted to other uses these days, is a rarity nonetheless.

Finally we arrived at our last buildings, the remarkable church of St Martin-on-the-Hill (Anglican) and Ramshill Congregational Church. The former is a church of 1863 by the architect G.F. Bodley in an early French style with a gabled tower reminiscent of early churches in Normandy, yet with a startling interior decorated by William Morris and members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. I also commented on how much of this was paid for by Mary Craven and her sisters Sarah and Ann, who lived around the corner in the Esplanade. But only just across the road, a Congregational church was built within a year or two of the completion of St Martin's. Much was contributed by the Bradford industrialist Titus Salt and his family, himself a Congregationalist and a regular visitor to Scarborough. It is surely no coincidence that the Salt church, if less lavishly decorated internally, had by far the larger spire, thus making a telling impact in the townscape.

George Sheeran



Above: St Martin-on-the-Hill
[Simon Green]



Right: Stained glass window in St Martin-on-the-Hill
[Richard Mallows]

VISIT TO LIME TREE FARM ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY, OCTOBER 5th

We couldn't have chosen a worse night for our return trip to the astronomical observatory at Lime Tree Farm, Grewelthorpe – wet, wild and windy! However, the nine PLACE members who braved the elements were in for a big surprise. During lockdown, Martin Whipp and friends had built a planetarium and, although it is not yet open to the public, we were privileged to have a demonstration of this fabulous new facility. Sitting in reclining chairs, we looked up at the domed roof, on to which a simulation of the night sky was projected via a variation of the 'Stellarium' computer programme. The landscape around Grewelthorpe was depicted around the horizon, with the night sky above in all its glory, revealing far more stars and other features than we could have seen on even a clear night. Lines of latitude and longitude can be projected on to the dome, together with the constellations with/without beautiful illustrations of 'Taurus the bull', 'Orion the hunter', etc.

Aby assisted by Richard Darn, Martin gave us a guided tour of the night sky and introduced us to the constellations, planets, nebulae and galaxies visible in early October. We learned that 'the plough' or Ursa Major never sets in the northern hemisphere. Moving from that to 'the little bear' takes us to the pole star or Polaris at the tip of its tail. This represents the north pole, around which everything else in the northern sky appears to rotate, and from which we can calculate our latitude as well as our longitude. The planet Jupiter is conspicuous in the night sky at this time of year. With a small telescope it is possible to see the four largest of its more than 70 moons. Saturn is also visible, with 82 moons recognised today and its spectacular rings. However, all four of the gas giants have rings, Jupiter's only having been recognised from a recent fly past by a spacecraft. There are other objects to be seen with good binoculars or telescopes, including galaxies, such as our nearest companion the Andromeda galaxy, and various 'fuzzy objects' first spotted by French astronomer Messier. Some of these are the remains of supernovae, such as the Crab Nebula, seen exploding by Chinese astronomers in 1054 and now a mere shell. One star which will become a supernova when its fuel runs out is Betelgeuse in the belt of Orion. Of course, as it is 650 light years away, it may already have done so but the light hasn't yet reached us! The Pleiades or 'Seven Sisters' are a group of hot blue stars all moving together, recorded on the walls of the Lascaux Caves. The Orion Nebula is a stellar birthplace, which is now known to include many stars with their own solar systems.

However, the software enables us to do far more than explore a simulation of the night sky here and now. The scene can be changed to show the night sky from any point on earth or at any time in the past or future. We looked at the sky as seen from Australia, where a different set of constellations are to be seen. Whereas the northern hemisphere constellations were named after Greek mythological characters, the Australian ones include things like the Wombat, the Southern Cross (the smallest but brightest constellation, with four first magnitude stars) and various scientific



instruments, reflecting the period when Europeans colonised the continent. The aborigines had been looking at the stars long before that, of course, and recognise different constellations in different areas. Perhaps most fascinating of all was to wind the clock back to see the night sky as it appeared in prehistoric times. In 2000BC, for instance, Polaris was in a different position and a star named Thuban marked the north pole. On a 26,000 year cycle, Polaris will be closest to the north pole in AD2100. We can also wind the clock forward several centuries into the future, when the constellations will look more and more distorted, as the stars which they comprise move to different positions. We spent a totally absorbing two hours exploring the stars, past, present and future. Those of us who were there can't wait to return to see yet more; those who didn't make it missed a real treat! Many thanks to Martin and Richard for giving us such a fascinating evening.

Margaret Atherden.

RAVENSCAR WALK, 16th October 2021

A group of 8 walkers met at Ravenscar for a circular 6.6 mile route. We descended to explore the former alum works, a National Trust site. Heading north along the Cleveland Way there was a discussion of the coastal geomorphology and geology of Robin Hood's Bay. From Stoupe Cottage Farm we ascended a minor road to reach the Cinder Track, a redundant railway line between Scarborough and Whitby. Once back in Ravenscar we had refreshments at the Raven Hall Hotel.

Philip Mander



Hovingham walk, Saturday 20 November 2021

A group of 21 people undertook a circular 6 mile walk, initially following the Ebor Way and Centenary Way south of Hovingham before turning west by Airyholme and Moor House Farm. Crossing the Terrington road, the group returned to Hovingham via Hovingham Lodge, Horse Coppice and the permissive path through Hovingham Park. The village and local geology was discussed en route.



Above: Leaving Hovingham [Angela Clark]
Left: Walking through the fields [Denny Mallows]

Philip Mander

PLACE VISIT TO ILKLEY, Thursday 4th November

This very well supported walk 3-mile walk around Ilkley took place in near perfect conditions - pleasant temperatures, little wind and soft autumn sunshine heightening autumn leaf colour. Local guide and PLACE trustee Colin Speakman began the morning with a brief history of the town of Ilkley, from its beginning as a small Celtic settlement at a crossing of the River Wharfe, which became an important First Century Roman fort, known as Olicana, on the military road network through the colony of Brigantia. Following the ending of the occupation, it became a village serving a small Anglian and medieval farming community, now known as Ilkley.

However, after the opening of the turnpike road between Otley and Skipton in the 1780s, Ilkley enjoyed local fame as a spa, thanks to a small plunge pool and bathhouse – White Wells – built around a spring high up on the moorside, with boarding houses and inns and a small town to serve its new clientele. By the mid 19th century, and especially after the coming of the railway in 1865, ‘The Heather Spa’, as Ilkley became branded, or ‘The Malvern of the North’, boasted several large Hydropathic spa hotels, where wealthy Victorians came from all over England to take the water cure but also to enjoy the clean air on specially laid out walking trails on nearby Ilkley Moor and along the riverside. The railway also transformed Ilkley into a popular suburb, first of Bradford in the great days of its wool industry, and then during the 20th century, of the increasingly dominant city of Leeds.

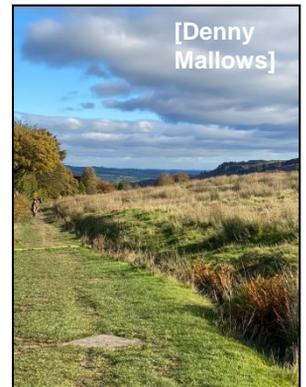
‘Heather Spa’ became the theme of the PLACE walk. First came the ascent through pretty Mill Gill, transformed into a Victorian park, up to Wells House, the former hydro designed by Cuthbert Brodrick of Leeds Town Hall fame. Charles Darwin spent three weeks here in 1859 recovering from writing *The Origin of Species*, published on the day he left to return home. The group then followed roads and tracks along the edge of iconic Ilkley Moor to picturesque Heber Ghyll, a challenging descent of steps and wooden bridges through a deep ravine of semi-natural Pennine woodland, past waterfalls, rocks and ferns. The walk continued past grand villas of Victorian and Edwardian Ilkley, pausing to admire Heathcote, the astonishing Italianate villa, a Grade One Listed Building, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1908 for Bradford wool magnate John Hemingway, with gardens laid out by Gertrude Jekyll. Our visit ended at Ilkley’s medieval and Jacobean Manor House, now the town’s museum and cultural centre, built with the stones of the Roman fort, whose surviving fragments lie to its rear. Close by is Ilkley’s much restored 13th century Parish Church, containing three famous Anglo-Viking preaching crosses.

Colin Speakman



[John Watts]

Above: the group near the start of the walk



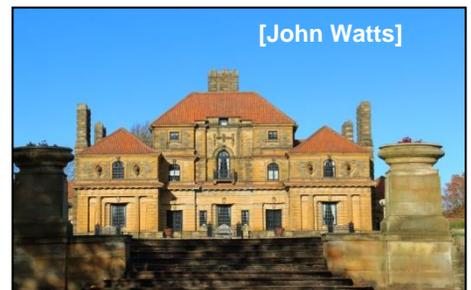
[Denny Mallovs]

Right: The edge of Ilkley Moor

Below: descending Heber Ghyll



[Margaret Atherden]



[John Watts]

Above: Heathcote
Below: the Manor House



[Simon Green]

HOLY PLACES OF ANGLO-SAXON YORKSHIRE

Our last short course of 2021 was an updated and shortened version of one given a few years ago. It was attended by 48 people on-line from Yorkshire and beyond and was delivered by Dr Robert Wright with his usual aplomb. The story was based mainly on the venerable Bede's monumental *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, starting with the conversion of the south of England by missionaries from Canterbury and the conversion of the north by Irish monks from Iona. Yorkshire was known as Deira and was part of Northumbria, ruled in the seventh century by King Edwin. His queen Aethelburgh from Kent brought her bishop Paulinus with her and Edwin was converted by him. A meeting was held in a royal palace at Yeavering, near Morpeth, after which Edwin chose York as the site for his church, on the site of the former Roman fort. He was baptized here on Easter Day in AD627. His family and then his subjects all converted to Christianity. Pagan shrines at places such as Goodmanham in East Yorkshire were destroyed and replaced by Christian ones.

However, these were turbulent times and in 633 Edwin was slain at the Battle of Hatfield Chase. Northumbria returned briefly to paganism until Christianity on the Irish model was re-established by Edwin's nephew Oswald, who defeated the pagans at the Battle of Heavenfield in 634. Monks initially preached in the open air next to a cross. They were based in 'minsters' and some were mixed establishments with both monks and nuns. A large number of places of worship existed in Yorkshire, ranging from St Mary's Abbey, York to smaller sites, e.g. Sancton, Stonegrave or Lastingham. Well-known spiritual leaders of the time included Aidan at Lindisfarne, Hilda at Whitby ('Streoneshalh') and John of Beverley. Oswald was killed at the Battle of Maserfield in 642 and was succeeded by his brother Oswiu.

The Roman tradition, followed in the south of England, also survived in the north, alongside the Irish one. A key proponent was Wilfrid, who founded monasteries at Ripon and Hexham. The two traditions were in competition in the north, culminating in a heated debate at the Synod of Whitby in 664, convened by King Oswiu to settle, amongst other things, the question of the date of Easter and the correct tonsure for monks to wear. In the end, the Roman tradition was accepted, with its authority claimed from St Peter. The decision was accepted rather reluctantly by many, and it is worth noting that as late as 1138 at the Battle of the Standard, William's men raised the standards of the northern saints, e.g. Oswald, Aidan and Cuthbert. St Cuthbert was particularly important in the north and had many miracles associated with him, both before and after his consecration in York in 685 by no fewer than six bishops. He is particularly associated with the Farne Islands, where he lived as a hermit for some years and where he died in 687. His coffin was moved from Lindisfarne in 875 because of Viking raids and spent the next seven years being moved from place to place, including Cumberland and Galloway as well as Chester-le-Street and Ripon. It was intended that it should end up in Chester-le-Street but it stopped in Durham en route and remains there to this day.

Robert showed photos of surviving seventh and eighth century stonework and sculpture from many sites in Yorkshire, e.g. All Saints, Hovingham, and St Mary Bishophill Junior, York. Many churches in the north of England are dedicated to the northern saints, including Old St Oswald's Church in Fulford and St Everild's church at Nether Poppleton. There are also many stained glass windows commemorating their lives, including the recently restored St Cuthbert's window in York Minster. We learned a great deal about Christianity in Anglo-Saxon Yorkshire from this course but in many ways we only scratched the surface of this fascinating, complex and significant period in our history.

Margaret Atherden

Members may be interested in a new book by one of our members, Paul Jennings:
Working-class Lives in Edwardian Harrogate.
 Carnegie Publishing, 2021, £14.99. Available from www.carnegiepublishing.com

While Shepherds Ate Pre-Christmas event, December 15th 2021

Our pre-Christmas event in Bedern Hall attracted 31 people. The main event of the afternoon was an illustrated talk by Dr Eileen White, based on the food eaten by the shepherds during mystery plays in the sixteenth century. Two plays were considered: one from Chester and one from Wakefield. Extracts from the plays were presented and lists of the food items referred to in the texts, some of which are still made by local butchers. The Chester play featured three shepherds, who were hired hands, and a boy called Trowle. They carried sacks of food, which they would have eaten while watching their flocks during the night. Some of the food items mentioned are familiar to us, e.g. onions, garlic and leeks. Others need some explanation. 'Jannock' was a sort of outmeal bread; 'greene' cheese was young or fresh cheese; sour milk was milk evolved from natural fermentation. A 'pudding' was the stomach or entrails of an animal stuffed with meat, often with a 'prick' or skewer in the end to hold it together. They ate a lot of meat, including a sheep's head, pigs' trotters and ox tongue, all washed down with ale from Halton, a town north of Chester. The food was local; some was surprisingly cheap, e.g. the sheep's head at 2d, while the most expensive items were the 'haggises', made throughout England at the time, not only in Scotland.

The Wakefield cycle of mystery plays includes six pageants and two shepherds' plays. As in the Chester play, there were three shepherds in the first play. 'Brawne of a bore' was a general term for pig's meat, which often formed a starter to the meal. A chicken 'endosed' was cooked on a spit. Black pudding was known as 'bloodlings'. There were also references to a leg of goose and a partridge, as well as a 'tart for a lord' – suggesting that this delicacy was reserved for the local lord. In the text for this play there is reference to their having no 'sponys', i.e. no cutlery, so they could not have potage (soup). Interestingly, the text mentions gathering up the leavings to give to the poor.

In both plays, after the angels appear to them, the shepherds go to Bethlehem, taking gifts for the baby. In the Wakefield play these include a bell, a spoon and a cap. Eileen has published accounts of the plays and some recipes based on them: in the proceedings of the International Medieval Congress in Leeds in 2016 and the Leeds Symposium on Food History in 2018. The accounts give a fascinating insight into the food enjoyed by ordinary working people in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. After the talk, we enjoyed a modern version of some of the food: mince pies, oatcakes and cheese, washed down with mulled wine, tea and coffee. A merry time was had by all!

Margaret Atherden

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and is not
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Richard Myerscough
(co-opted until May 2022)
Nancy Stedman
(co-opted until May 2022)

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.

The next newsletter is due in April 2022