This spring has been a busy time for YPS members, particularly involving projects with partner organisations. On 19 April we were delighted to welcome members of Newcastle Lit and Phil, on their reciprocal visit to York - a wonderful day of walks, tours and talks. See more on this below and our other recent collaborations - a Blue Plaque to commenorate John Phillips, first keeper of The Yorkshire Museum - and our new partnership with the University of Hull encompassing the launch of the John and Anne Phillips Prize.

YPS Council is also looking at strengthening our links with other organisations, including the British Science Association which, as many of you will know, was founded under the auspices of the YPS in York in 1831. The YPS already acts on behalf of the BSA across the North and East Yorkshire region and we are considering rolling out some of our Lectures and Café Scientifique events to more towns and villages across the region.

This winter’s flooding posed serious challenges across the city, hitting hard several of York’s heritage buildings and tourist attractions. Amongst those to suffer was our partner York Archaeological Trust, whose Jorvik Viking Centre has been forced to close for an extended period. The YPS was pleased to make a modest donation to YAT’s Canute Campaign, towards reopening the JVC and reimagining the Viking story in York for the 21st Century.

On a brighter note, in March our Social Group led a highly successful tour to Staffordshire and Derbyshire, providing the opportunity to study Pugin’s Gothic architecture. Also in March new members enjoyed a visit to the Lodge to hear more about the Society over a delicious tea. Fortunately for all of us, Margaret Leonard, organiser of this enjoyable first event, is planning another ‘Behind the Scenes at the YPS’ on 24 June, which will be open to all members (see flier enclosed, but please note booking is essential).

As we develop future events and projects, alongside our lecture programme, it is always good to hear your feedback and suggestions.

Finally a reminder that the Society’s AGM will be held on Tuesday 31 May, followed by the lecture “Redefining Roman Castleshaw: recent investigations at the Agricolan Fort site in Saddleworth” - information for members is included with this newsletter.

Catherine Brophy, Chair YPS Council

With this Newsletter
- Details of the Society’s AGM
- YPS Annual Report 2015
- Lecture Programme for Sept-Dec 2016
- ‘Behind the Scenes at the YPS’
- ‘The Four Seasons in Museum Gardens’
- A Walk around Georgian Leeds
- Charles Rennie Mackintosh study tour to Glasgow
- Tour of Northumbria

The Four Seasons in Museum Gardens
7.30pm Tuesday 14 June
Tempest Anderson Hall
Chris Shepherd and Peter Hogarth

We are pleased to offer this extra event in our current programme.

Chris Shepherd will present her stunning photographic record of a year in the life of Museum Gardens.

Peter Hogarth will talk about the History of Museum Gardens Book Project to mark the Society’s 200th Anniversary. Members and guests welcome!

Lodge Closure:
Monday 30 May to Monday 6 June inclusive
A Phil, a Lit & Phil and a Phil & Lit

April saw a YPS first: Our Chair, Catherine Brophy and YPS Council members welcomed members of the Newcastle Lit and Phil at the start of an enjoyable day of tours and talks, a chance to compare experiences and share good banter as we got to know one another. Their visit followed the inspired day that YPS members spent in Newcastle in November 2014, organised by John Bibby.

The 17-strong group of visitors met us at St Martin le Grand in Coney Street, where Andrew Hingston presented the history of the church. The group courageously clambered over St Martin’s roof to view in detail the great 1.5 ton, Newey ‘Little Admiral’ clock which overhangs Coney Street.

After lunch in the Assembly Rooms Stephen Lusty led a walking-tour taking in some of the hidden and less salubrious snickelways of York. The startlingly warm spring sunshine added to our enjoyment as Peter Hogarth provided an illuminating historical tour of Museum Gardens and Rod Leonard rounded-off the afternoon with a fascinating talk on the Geological Map Project’s development.

The day culminated in a lively reception in the Yorkshire Museum, organised by Margaret Leonard’s team, and a very apt YPS lecture on the Northern Literary and Philosophical Societies, presented by Jon Mee, University of York.

Stephen Lusty

“Transpennine Enlightenment: the Lit Phils in the North, 1780-1830”

Synopsis of lecture by Prof Jon Mee, 19 April 2016

Politicians like to talk about the Northern Powerhouse. They usually hark back to an age of prosperity associated with technological and scientific innovations of the industrial revolution. This story often underestimates the extent to which the take-off period to industrial prosperity, roughly 1780-1840, was committed to ‘improvement’ more generally. Jon Mee discussed the role of the literary and philosophical societies in the north in circulating knowledge of advances in the arts and sciences, from Wordsworth’s Lyrical Ballads to the operation of the steam engine. Starting with the foundation of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society in 1781, these societies aimed to create networks of improvement free from religious and political controversy, no easy task after the ideological polarization brought by the French Revolution in 1789. A key role was played by Dissenters, especially Unitarians, many of whom had links with the Warrington Academy, the premier educational institution in the north. Not everyone agreed what constituted ‘improvement’, and in practice it wasn’t easy to keep religion and politics out of things, and it proved difficult to sustain the conditions that would encourage what they thought of as the productive collision of ‘mind with mind’. Nevertheless, Manchester was followed by Newcastle in 1793, Liverpool in 1812, and a second wave, which included Leeds in 1819 (where there was a debate about whether to include ‘literary’ in the title), Sheffield in 1822, and then the YPS itself, also in 1822. YPS dropped the word ‘literary’, but kept up with many other aspects of the transpennine enlightenment, not least the association with Warrington, which had migrated to become Manchester College, York. Not only did these societies make a vital contribution to the flourishing culture of the Northern Powerhouse, Mark I, but they also had a national and global reach, influencing similar societies set up in London and elsewhere, and reaching out to the colonies at the Cape and New South Wales.

John Phillips’ Blue Plaque Unveiled

On 25 February, a blue plaque to the York geologist John Phillips FRS was unveiled by David Fraser, Chief Executive at York Civic Trust, affixed to St Mary’s Lodge on the Marygate side of Museum Gardens. This was a joint venture between three local organisations: York Civic Trust, the YPS and York Museums Trust. A number of representatives of each organisation were present, amongst them Peter Addyman, President of York Civic Trust, Reyahn King, CEO of York Museums Trust, and for YPS, Catherine Brophy, Chair, and Rod Leonard, Geological Map Project Manager.

John Phillips (1800-1874), nephew of William Smith, was appointed, aged 25, to the post of First Keeper of the Yorkshire Museum. He went on to pursue a distinguished academic career in London, Dublin and Oxford, with many publications to his name. Part of his legacy was to identify and name the three major geological eras: Palaeozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic, and to demonstrate the mass extinctions between them.

St Mary’s Lodge was a fifteenth century addition to the Abbey Gatehouse and when YPS took possession of it in 1838 it was in a poor state of repair. Phillips reconstructed the interior and made it his home until 1853. Although he resigned his post as Keeper of the Museum in 1840, he retained a lifelong interest in YPS, and continued to serve as an Officer for many years.
John & Anne Phillips Prize
Twenty YPS members supported the launch event at the University of Hull on 14 April. The prize will be awarded for the best final year Undergraduate Geology mapping dissertation, when the first cohort graduates this summer. The YPS group were taken on a tour of the Department of Geography, Environment & Earth Science, and enjoyed interacting with their newest educational tool - an augmented reality geomorphology sandbox. We then visited The Deep Aquarium and there admired the Total Environment Simulator, an innovative large flume tank in which the movement of water is controlled around and within sediment beds, generating waves, rainfall and water flows. The effects of macro-algae, fallen trees, and organic slimes can all be simulated to measure rates of process, and the shapes of evolving landforms.

The formal launch of the prize took place in the evening when we were joined by University staff and students for an informal reception, and two fascinating talks on both John and his sister Anne Phillips, who worked as JP’s assistant and made her own significant contribution to the field of geological science.

History of the Museum Gardens
A small group of YPS members is currently researching the history of the Museum Gardens, with a view to producing a book to mark the Society’s 200th Anniversary. With the help of a succession of graduate students from the University of York, work has been going on over the last three years, interrogating archives across the country. The accumulated information comprises about 70 maps and 260 images, dating from the 17th century to the present day, and we are now almost ready to start writing!

It’s impossible to summarise the history of the Manor Shore - Museum Gardens - in a few words. The pre-YPS history is important, as it explains how the space was available for YPS to occupy. There are traces of Roman buildings (in addition to the Multangular Tower) and a road running roughly between the Lendal and Marygate entrances, and on to Clifton. Later the area was probably part of ‘Earlborough’, explaining the dedication of the church to (Scandinavian) St Olave. The period of St Mary’s Abbey is quite well understood: much of
the Abbey is still visible, and the monastic precinct defines the Museum Gardens to this day. At the Dissolution, the Abbey and the precinct - thanks to Henry VIII, who stayed on the site in 1541 - became Crown property. But the Manor Shore fell on hard times. The Abbey ruins were quarried for building stone (to build a new Gaol and repair Beverley Minster) and burnt for lime, and parts of the land were leased as a boatyard, a coalyard, a wood store, and as pasture. Proposals were made to build a school, a prison, or an up-market Georgian square (with attached pleasure garden), but nothing came of these plans. The Manor Shore grew popular with visitors who came to admire the romantic ruins, and witness militia parades, the holding of pistol-shooting competitions, and the launching of balloons.

Then in 1826 the Yorkshire Philosophical Society persuaded Lord Grantham to relinquish his lease of the Manor Shore, and the Government Office of Woods & Forests to lease to the Society the upper portion of the Manor Shore, to “construct a Museum and create a Scientific Garden”. The area comprised roughly that between the back of King’s Manor and a line just beyond the Observatory. The lower Manor Shore as far as the river, and most of the Abbey church and the area behind the Art Gallery were acquired in later transactions of the 1840s and 1860s, becoming the Gardens more or less as we know them today.

The YPS and other Archives hold a wealth of detailed information about the Gardens throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. We know quite a lot about Sir John Murray Naesmyth’s design for the Gardens (but not how he came to be involved, or what he was paid - the Secretary forgot to fill in the amount in the Council Minutes!) We have patchy information about planting schemes, plants purchased and donated, pruning, lopping of trees, and the gardeners’ pay. Much of the 19th century was dominated by sub-curator Henry Baines, who seems to have had a fondness for ‘stove’ (hothouse) plants, and who was largely responsible for acquiring a collection of orchids, and a giant Victoria Regia waterlily, installed in its own building. Other sideshows in the Gardens included a menagerie and aviaries. The Botanic Garden came to be restricted to a formally planted area near the Hospitium whilst most of the area became a pleasure garden for members of the Society. Subscribers held keys, and members could issue Admission Orders for friends. Respectable members of the public were allowed in, at certain times, on payment of a small sum. None of these restrictions, of course, prevented periodic occurrences of misbehaviour, usually by boys! The nature of this is rarely specified - sometimes it involved balls and windows, or following around young ladies (on improving school excursions), or releasing the lawn roller to run downhill! The Society’s response was relatively swift: Henry Baines reported incidences to the next Council meeting and, after due deliberation, a letter was sent to the parents of the miscreants.

In the case of ‘improper behaviour in the Gardens after dark’ the problem was addressed by the appointment of a Ranger. Judging by the number of repeat offenders, it is not obvious that either approach was efficacious.

In the early years of the 20th century, increasingly the Society seems to have felt an obligation to allow the gardens to be used ‘for the public good’, whether by allowing admission to horticultural shows and band concerts, or to railway excursions, or during the First World War offering the grounds for quartering troops and horses. Meanwhile, the City Corporation made sporadic attempts to acquire the Gardens as a public park, starting with a suggestion that the Society might like to celebrate Queen Victoria’s Jubilee in 1897 by handing the entire Garden over to the city. In the end, YPS had little option but to concede and in 1961 both Gardens and Museum came under the control of the City of York Council.

This is just a taste of what we hope will be a fascinating account of the history of Museum Gardens. Meantime, if you know of any sources of information about the Gardens that we might have overlooked, or if you have any personal reminiscences of the Museum Gardens, particularly before their acquisition by the City Council, we’d love to hear from you.

Peter Hogarth peter.hogarth@york.ac.uk

2016-17 Lecture Programme

Enclosed with this newsletter are details of the first half of next season’s Lecture Programme, for September to December 2016. I have constructed this under the guiding principle of increasing public understanding of science - YPS’s mission for the past two hundred years, using a broad definition of science as a range of fields of organised knowledge. I very much hope that you will find its variety and range of speakers of interest.

The eagle-eyed amongst you will see that October does not have the usual quota of lectures, and that there is a 3-week gap after our Nuffield/STEM awards and Prof Akhavan on 4 October - due to the Tempest Anderson Hall having been hired out for a block booking. We resume on 1 November, when Frank Dobson will speak from the perspective of a politician receiving scientific advice (the other side of the coin to Prof Beddington’s lecture in this season’s programme, when he spoke about his role as a scientist giving advice to politicians).

I am very close to finalising the second half of the programme (Jan 2017 onwards) which includes a mini-series of three lectures on the broad theme of engineering. Singling out lectures is perhaps invidious but I would like to mention two innovations in the new programme: an ‘Art and Science’ lecture held jointly with YEDFAS “Josiah Wedgwood: the Arts and Sciences United” by Dr Gaye Blake Roberts, Director of the Wedgwood Museum Trust, and a joint lecture with York...
Museums Trust by Prof Judith Jesch, University of Nottingham, which prefaces YMT’s major 2017 exhibition “Vikings and Hoards”.

Thank you all for supporting the lecture programme in growing numbers. Since 2010 York Museums Trust, whose technical support team is invaluable to us, has recorded numbers attending which show an increase from the 2010-11 figure per lecture of 139, to 167 for 2014-15 (the last complete year for which we have records) when there was a high of 211 for Jim Al-Khalili’s ‘Life Scientific’.

Special thanks to Frances Chambers and to the team of lecture chairs for their support and to those who take up the task of running around with the Q&A microphone. And, of course, to the Social Committee for organising drinks in the Lodge afterwards.

The 2016-17 programme will be my last task as Lecture Secretary, a role that has been demanding but enjoyable. Members’ feedback has been very useful, and I will make sure that my successor(s) are aware of both what you do, and don’t, like!

Judith Glover, Lecture Secretary

NOTICES

New Social Event
Coffee at The Star Inn, Museum Gardens, 2.30pm, 9 June:
One of the outcomes of the questionnaire regarding the last President’s Evening was a desire expressed by several members for more chances to meet socially and get to know other members better, outside lectures. The Social Committee has decided to try out the idea of once-a-month informal social meetings, and this is the first! You are invited to buy yourself a drink and Catherine Brophy, our Chair, will provide a welcome and give a short address about the YPS. All members are very welcome - no need to book, just turn up. We look forward to seeing you there. Sharon Lusty, Organiser

President’s Evening 2016
Our YPS social highlight, this year’s event will be held on Wednesday 19 October at Hotel du Vin, York. An invitation and further details will appear with the next Newsletter. Please reserve the date in your diary! Sharon Lusty, Organiser

Remember Yorkshire Scientists and Innovators!
On the Resources pages of our website there are numerous articles on Yorkshire Scientists and Innovators, some well-known, others less so. They make fascinating reading and are being added to all the time! The most recent additions include several eminent geologists, contributed by YPS member, David Rowe. I am aware that there are quite a few people who should be in our pantheon - if you have any suggestions please let me know - or even better contribute an article yourself!

Peter Hogarth peter.hogarth@york.ac.uk

Summer Reading!
We have a number of second-hand magazines and journals which are surplus to requirements and on their way to the recycling bin, unless they can find a better home. They will be available in the Lodge for a few weeks for members to help themselves free of charge (or for a small donation if wished). If you’re here for wine after a lecture or passing during opening hours, you’re welcome to drop in to browse through the pile on the table in the rear office.

Help Needed
YPS Council would like to continue to expand the scope of our lecture programme by repeating an occasional lecture outside York. Suitable venues could include locations such as Ripon, Easingwold, Helmsley and Pickering. It would be very helpful to have a local representative who could assist in the planning of these events. If you could help us in this way please email info@ypsyork.org. Robert Pauer, Council

Annual Report Delivery
If you receive your newsletter by email, your Annual Report will be posted or hand-delivered to you. Alternatively, please let Frances know if you are able to collect it at a lecture or from the Lodge.

DIARY

Café Scientifique
Wed 4 May 2016, City Screen, Coney St.
Doors open 7 for 7.30pm
“Roman Medicine and Modern Medicine”
Dr Nick Summerton, GP
Recent generations of classical scholars have argued that the study of ancient Roman medicine is of purely academic interest, revealing little of relevance to modern medical practice. Dr Summerton’s own parallel research interests in current clinical practice and Roman medicine has led him to question this position. It now seems that a substantial legacy has been largely ignored over the last couple of centuries, and he will suggest that our Roman forebears have much to offer to the modern physician seeking to improve the care of patients. The talk will focus on diagnosis, specific medical remedies and a more holistic approach to healthcare.

Tickets are free from City Screen and can be pre-booked by phone (0871 902 5726) or online or, space permitting, on the night at the City Screen Ticket Desk.

Café Sci sessions are held on the first Wednesday of the month. Further events are planned for 1 June and 6 July, see details on the YPS website: www.ypsyork.org/events/categories/cafe-scientifique/

Tour of Dorset 16-20 May FULLY BOOKED

YPs Lecture, Tuesday 17 May, 7.30pm
“Excavations on the site of the former All Saints Church, Peasholme” Ben Reeves and Ruth Whyte

Geology Field Trip 21 May FULLY BOOKED
(Apply to join waiting list in case of cancellations)

YPs AGM: 6.45pm Tuesday 31 May
Tempest Anderson Hall
YPS Lecture 7.30pm, Tuesday 31 May
“Redefining Roman Castleshaw: recent investigations at the Agricolan Fort Site, Saddleworth”
Norman Redhead

The Four Seasons in Museum Gardens
14 June 7.30pm, Tempest Anderson Hall
(See flier enclosed)

Aysgarth Edwardian Rock Gardens
16 June FULLY BOOKED
(Apply to join waiting list in case of cancellations)

Behind the Scenes at the YPS - Then & Now 24 June, 2.30pm
The Lodge, Museum Gardens - flier enclosed

A Walk round Georgian Leeds, 27 June
Leeds Civic Trust event - flier enclosed

Study Tour of Northumbria 4-8 September
Draft itinerary includes: Cragside (NT), Seahouses, Boat trip to the Farne Islands, Bamburgh Castle, Grace Darling Museum, Lindisfarne Castle and Priory, Angel of the North (see flier for details).

Friargate Community Archaeology Project Events
Sessions run from 2-4pm and are free of charge (there will be a collection to cover costs). All welcome, no previous experience needed!
Contact the meeting House: 01904-624065
16 May – a Session on Bricks, Tiles and Mortar
13 June – a Session on Soil Samples
11 July – Open Day

The Pint of Science Festival is back in York this May, bringing the finest Yorkshire Science to 6 city pubs
Between the 23rd and 25th May over 40 University of York researchers will be talking about their cutting edge science, as well as bringing experiments, demonstrations and games out of the lab and into the pub. Grab a drink, sit back and learn about anything from quantum physics to healthcare to the science behind chocolate. Find out more and get tickets (just £4!) at http://pintofscience.co.uk/events/york
For updates follow @pintofscience #pint16 on twitter

Roman Festival in York: 2-5 June 2016
Details are currently being confirmed but there will be a variety of events, talks and activities taking place in the Yorkshire Museum, the Museum Gardens and around the city.
Over the weekend re-enactors will encamp in the Gardens providing demonstrations throughout the day. This will be a great weekend for anyone interested in the Roman history and archaeology of York.
Further information: Melody.Beavers@ymt.org.uk

Warrior Treasures: Saxon Gold from the Staffordshire Hoard
Royal Armouries, Leeds 27 May-2 October
The Royal Armouries will play host to a group of specially selected sword fittings and decorations from the Staffordshire Hoard on their first ever UK tour. Find out about the exhibition on our dedicated microsite http://warrior-treasures.uk/

Day Conference, Saturday 11 June
A range of experts - archaeologists, historians, conservators, researchers and swordsmiths - will explore many aspects of this amazing find and what it adds to our understanding of the culture and people that made, used and then buried this magnificent hoard. For further details of the Conference, please email Keith.Dowen@armouries.org.uk

Charles Rennie Mackintosh Study Tour
Friday 30 September to Sunday 2 October
NB: Rescheduled date!
We will visit several of the places designed by this celebrated architect and his artist wife Margaret Macdonald, capturing the spirit of a resurgent Glasgow in the late 1800s and early 1900s: Queen’s Cross church, Scotland Street School, The House of an Art Lover, The Lighthouse design centre, Willow Cafe and the Kelvingrove Museum which in addition to designs of the Mackintoshes, has paintings by the contemporaneous “Glasgow Boys” group of artists. A drive past Loch Lomond will also be made to Mackintosh’s major design project at Hill House in Helensburgh. See flier for details.

For up-to-date information on all future YPS events see our website: www.ypsyork.org, or enquire at the Lodge
Please send any relevant news stories, forthcoming activities and announcements for the Website to web@ypsyork.org
New Website Blog: please send items for the blog to chair@ypsyork.org