



NEWSLETTER

Yorkshire Philosophical Society

Promoting the public understanding of science since 1822

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NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Our 2017 lectures began with one in the mini-series on Engineering: Bill Grose, Chartered Civil Engineer and Tunnelling Consultant gave us a wide-ranging and illuminating lecture on Tunnels and Tunnelling. This was presented as a Memorial Lecture for Dennis Martin, himself an engineer, who served on YPS Council for 25 years until his death in December 2015. We were grateful to Mrs. Margaret Martin who gave us a short memorial address, giving us insights into Dennis's professional and personal life that was much appreciated. There will be a change to the lecture programme for 28 February when Professor Jon Timmis, University of York, will talk to us on "What can an engineer learn from Biology?" We are looking forward to hearing about this cutting-edge research. We have also confirmed the lecture for The Festival of Ideas on 13 June, to be given by Dr Claire Horwell, Department of Earth Sciences, Durham University: "Volcanoes and their Health Hazards". Revised versions of the Lecture Programme will be available from the YPS reception desk on lecture evenings, or can be picked up at the Lodge.

YPS has a tremendous team of volunteers amongst the membership, who really work hard to help the society to thrive. One team has been working with YMT to improve the sound system in the Tempest Anderson Hall and we are particularly grateful to Peter Wheatcroft and Rod Leonard for leading the innovations, which are already a great improvement. The Activities Group, chaired by Margaret Leonard, is preparing a varied programme of study visits and social events and the Lecture Planning Group, chaired by Roger Pinder, is preparing a wide ranging programme for the 2017-18 season. We are always pleased to involve new people in the planning, research and hosting of activities, on both sub-committees and Council. Even if you are tentative about getting involved do speak to volunteers



and Council Members at lectures, easily identified by their YPS name badges.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a letter about the AGM on 6 June and a nomination form for new Members of Council. As we approach the bi-centenary in 2022 we hope to include more members in the work of the Society, particularly those who can offer fund-raising, legal or networking skills and experience. However we do appreciate all our members, whose support keeps the Society lively and relevant in the 21st century. Thank you. *Catherine Brophy*

With this Newsletter

- ◆ 2017 Membership Card/s or subs reminder
- ◆ Notice of AGM & call for nominations to Council
- ◆ YPS Spring Social details
- ◆ My Kingdom for a Horse! Study Day in Richmond
- ◆ Visit to Jim Austin's Computing Shed
- ◆ Geology Field Trip to Coldstones Cut
- ◆ Excursion to Bridgewater Canal and Manchester Museum of Science & Industry

If anything is missing contact Frances Chambers at the Lodge, 01904-656713, email info@ypsyork.org

**LARGE PRINT COPIES OF THE NEWSLETTER
ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE LODGE**

Marygate entrance - Update

We know that members with mobility issues appreciate that we are the only group allowed to enter the Gardens in the evening via the Marygate entrance, however YMT now have to employ an extra security guard to staff this entrance for us. In November we undertook a survey of YPS members with the result that we are continuing to pay for the security staff but at the same time requesting a donation of £1 per lecture from each person using this entrance. There is a poster and moneybox for donations on the YPS reception desk. Thank you in anticipation for your support with this request.

Catherine Brophy, Chair, YPS Council

Membership cards

If you have renewed your subscription, your 2017 membership card should be enclosed with this newsletter. If it is missing, please contact Frances at the Lodge on 01904 656713 or email info@ypsyork.org.

If you receive the Newsletter by email, we would be grateful if you could save postage by collecting your card from the Lodge or at a lecture.

YPS Activities Programme

You will see from the enclosures with this newsletter that we have been working hard to come up with an interesting and varied programme of activities. The study tour to the Portsmouth area, the first venture in our new collaboration with the travel firm Just for Groups!, is now fully booked, and we are planning a further three-day tour with them in October. In the meantime, we have several full-day tours on offer: On 5 May, Catherine Brophy is organising a Study Day in Richmond entitled "My Kingdom for a Horse!", including a talk on running the Middleham Racing Stables. In June Paul Thornley is planning a trip to Stump Cross Cavern and the Coldstone Cut and in July Manuela Sowter will take a group to Manchester's wonderful Museum of Science and Industry, followed by a trip on the Bridgewater Canal. Shorter activities include a trip to Hull for the John and Anne Phillips annual lecture, an opportunity to try out the first of the York Science Trails being put together by John Bibby and his team, a visit to the Jim Austin Computer Museum and, by popular demand, a YPS Spring Social in April, organised by Sharon Lusty.

My apologies that not all of the details are yet fixed for some of these activities, but if you are interested in any of them do contact the appropriate person who will make sure that you are informed as soon as possible. I will also keep the information on the website updated. *Margaret Leonard*

John and Anne Phillips Lecture

Members will recall that, as a side project associated with the Geological Map, YPS has instituted a prize for the best Undergraduate Geological Map disserta-

tion at the University of Hull. Associated with this, the University established the annual John and Anne Phillips Lecture. This year's lecture will be held on 16 March when Professor Sanjeev Gupta, of Imperial College London, will talk about the challenges of carrying out geological mapping on Mars, which should give a fascinating new insight into the subject of geological maps.

YPS members are invited to attend this lecture, in Hull, and it is hoped to arrange a group visit by own and shared transport. We will meet before the lecture for a pub meal (probably in the Old Grey Mare, opposite the University) but as this is the year when Hull is the City of Culture, it is anticipated that members may choose to arrive earlier and take in one of the museums, or the newly refurbished Ferens Art Gallery, with a last chance to view the 'Blade' installation, due to be removed two days later!



If you would like to take part in this event, please email Paul Thornley: ypsgology@gmail.com or write to him c/o the Lodge. Paul will try to facilitate car-sharing, so please let him know if you need a lift, or could provide one, and whether you plan to spend some time in Hull before the lecture.



YPS Spring Social - Date for your diary!
Wednesday 26 April 6.30pm - See flyer enclosed

Pioneer the first York Science Trail

28 March, 2pm, starting at the Lodge. There is no charge, and no need to book this activity.

YPS member, John Bibby, is spear-heading a move to establish a number of walks around the city and its environs highlighting the contributions made by York people in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM).

The first trail, which will be around the city centre and include Museum Gardens, is being prepared for the conference of the British Society for the History of Mathematics, in early April. YPS members are invited to try out a preliminary version, and provide valuable feedback. Do join us, and help to make this a resource for the future.

Anyone who would like to be involved in the development of this project is invited to attend the meetings which take place in the Kings Manor Refectory. For further information on dates and times, email

John Bibby: jb43@york.ac.uk

YPS Awards

Professor John Schofield, Head of the Department of Archaeology, University of York, gave this address to the YPS, on the occasion of the Herman Ramm and Charles Wellbeloved Awards on 29 November 2016. It was followed by Professor Joann Fletcher's lecture "Ancient Egypt in Yorkshire".

"The University of York has had a Department of Archaeology since Philip Rahtz's appointment in 1978. We started small, but this year had an intake of 80 undergraduates and 140 taught postgraduates, with some 40 PhD students currently registered. We have over eighty staff, including a large number of postdoctoral researchers, meaning that the Department is now 500 strong. Our annual research income exceeds £2 million, with projects covering the arts and humanities and sciences, with significant inroads also into the social sciences through heritage and conservation.

Specialist areas include bioarchaeology, heritage and conservation, as well as early prehistoric, and medieval and historical archaeology, to name a few. We are based close to the Yorkshire Museum, in the King's Manor. We also have a presence on Campus: some staff in the Hull York Medical School and our internationally renowned BioArCh facility located in a new Environment Building.

Our research and teaching activities include various references to Egypt and Egyptology. Professor Joann Fletcher (our speaker this evening) has had links to the Department over many years, and with her research partner (and husband) Stephen Buckley has worked with BioArCh on a number of projects. Dr Sara Perry is also now working in Egypt, on the Memphis project, which helps train future heritage practitioners in Egypt, especially in heritage interpretation. Various of our taught modules incorporate or focus on these topics. And interest is such that the students have recently launched their own Egyptology Society. So we may not have the strength in depth that other departments have for this, but we can say that we 'do Egypt', and what we do is outstanding and has real impact!

Celebrating our students' achievements is one of the highlights of my role as Head of Department. And the most prestigious of the prizes our students can win are the two offered by the Yorkshire Philosophical Society: the Charles Wellbeloved Prize for the best undergraduate dissertation; and the Herman Ramm Prize for the best postgraduate dissertation. Previous winners are listed on a prominently-displayed and elegant board in the department's foyer at King's Manor.

Those of you who attended last year will recall Blessing Chidimuro and Samantha Presslee, winners

of the Charles Wellbeloved and Herman Ramm Prizes respectively. Blessing completed her Masters with Distinction at Durham and is due to return to York for her PhD research in January, exploring 18th-19th Century diets using isotopic analysis. Samantha is also now undertaking her PhD at York.



Joann Fletcher, Caitlin Kitchener & Jon Finch

This year's Charles Wellbeloved Undergraduate prize-winner is Stuart Henderson, and the Herman Ramm Postgraduate prize-winner is Caitlin Kitchener. Both produced outstanding and original dissertations in the area of historical archaeology, that are deserving of these prestigious awards, and both were supervised by Dr Jon Finch. It just remains for me to thank everyone at the Yorkshire Philosophical Society for your generosity in awarding prizes, that mean so much to us and to the students. Across the Archaeology Department your support continues to be very much appreciated."

Read more about the 2016 prize-winners, and the subjects of their winning dissertations on the YPS Blog: www.ypsyork.org/blog/

Birthday Congratulations!!!

To John Hampshire, YPS Vice-President and former Chairman, who has recently celebrated his 90th birthday.

Well done John!



York Museum Gardens bulletin

Alison Pringle, YMT Gardens Manager

The winter season is a surprisingly busy time in Museum Gardens. Although visitors are thin on the ground compared to the summer, there are always plenty of jobs to be getting on with. Recently, the gardeners have been edging off all the lawns and mulching flower beds to get everything tidy for the spring. They are gradually replacing the white stakes around the mature trees and getting these areas roped off to protect the spring bulbs growing there. Last autumn the team planted 10,000 bulbs throughout the garden including Daffodils near the Pavilion and in the Art Gallery planters, Anemone and Chionodoxa in the Winter Bed near the Rock Garden and a mixture of Crocus, Eranthis, Muscari, Chionodoxa, Narcissus and Galanthus under the *Tilia tomentosa*

'Petiolaris' (weeping silver lime).

Plants of interest flowering now include *Lonicera x purpusii* 'Winter Beauty' with a sweet lemon fragrance, various *Hamamelis* cultivars, *Galanthus nivalis*, *Viburnum x bodnantense* 'Dawn' and *Cyclamen coum*.

Notable dates coming up are the Royal gun salute celebrating the Queen's Accession to the Throne on 6 February, and the Spring Flower Count on 1 March.

Birdwatch

York Museum Gardens team works actively to make the gardens a home for birds, with nest boxes and feeders placed throughout the ten acre site, whilst Alison Pringle also looks to create habitats which provide natural food sources and homes for the birds and other wildlife.

At the end of January, the Gardens again took part in RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch. Results will be published nationally in March. Meanwhile York Ornithological Trust have reported on this winter's unusual sightings of Waxwings. Up to a dozen were seen in the Bishopthorpe Road/Nunnery Lane area on 27 December, building up to 44 in the following days. Over the New Year they were spotted regularly in the Castle Mills area behind the Castle Museum peaking at 45 on 1 January. Since then there have been reports of smaller groups at a variety of locations including Micklegate, Queen Street, Beckfield Lane Acomb, Woodthorpe and Haxby. YOT has also been monitoring the regular and spectacular Pied Wagtail roost in the city centre - this year 1100 birds were estimated on both 27 December and 3 January, in Parliament Street.

Do you have any news?

Our item in the last newsletter on "The rocket in the heart of York" (sent in by Graham Williamson) received a good response! If you come across any inter-

For up-to-date information on current and future YPS events see our website: www.ypsyork.org/events

Keep up to date with reports on events, follow-ups and links via the YPS Blog: www.ypsyork.org/blog/

Please send any news stories, notices of activities, etc, for the newsletter or website to info@ypsyork.org, and items for the YPS Blog to chair@ypsyork.org

"Noble Prospects: Capability Brown and the Yorkshire Landscape" by Karen Lynch

The Yorkshire Gardens Trust has kindly provided us with a number of complimentary copies of its illustrated book, produced for the exhibition on Capability Brown at the Mercer Gallery in Harrogate, last summer. Now surplus copies are being given away free, to further the exhibition's aims of raising awareness of Brown, Yorkshire landscapes and the work of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust.

If you would like a copy, please contact Frances at the Lodge. There is no cost if you are able to collect from the Lodge or at a lecture, but postage & packing will be payable for any copies sent by mail.

esting scientific snippets concerning York or Yorkshire, we would be delighted to share them with members via our newsletters or website.

DIARY

Tuesday 14 February 7.30pm - YPS Lecture
"Before, during and after industry: North York Moors 'This Exploited Land' project" Louise Cooke
Joint lecture with PLACE & Royal Geographical Society

Tuesday 28 February 7.30pm - YPS Lecture
"What can an engineer learn from Biology?" Jon Timmis

Wednesday 1 March 7 for 7.30pm - Café Scientifique
"Faeces, hair and spit - how we measure the welfare of our wildlife" Julie Lane, APHA

Tuesday 14 March 7.30pm - YPS Lecture
"Can beautiful ideas be also useful? Decoding the mysteries of quantum mechanics" Jiannis Pachos

Thursday 16 March, University of Hull (time tbc)
"Geological Mapping on Mars" Sanjeev Gupta
John and Anne Phillips Lecture

Tuesday 28 March 2pm at the Lodge
"Pioneer the first York Science Trail" - see p2

Tuesday 28 March 7.30pm - YPS Lecture
"Perspectives on a sustainable energy future"
Andy Heyes - Joint lecture with the Institution of Engineering and Technology, North Yorkshire branch

Wednesday 5 April 7 for 7.30pm - Café Scientifique
"Perfectionism" - how perfectionism influences the experiences of participants in youth sports and other contexts - Researchers at York St John Univ, School of Sport

Tuesday 11 April 7.30pm - YPS Lecture
"Josiah Wedgwood: the arts and sciences united" Gaye Blake Roberts - Joint lecture with YEDFAS

Tuesday 25 April 7.30pm - YPS Lecture
The people behind the runes: Scandinavians in the British Isles" Judith Jesch - Joint lecture with YMT

Wednesday 26 April 6.30pm YPS Spring Social
See enclosed flyer for details

Wednesday 3 May 7 for 7.30pm - Café Scientifique
Presentation linked to Geology Month - details tbc

Friday 5 May Richmond Study Day "My Kingdom for a Horse" - see flyer enclosed

YPS Lectures are held on various Tuesdays at 7.30pm, in the Tempest Anderson Hall and are free to members. Non-members are welcome to attend and are asked for a voluntary contribution.

Café Scientifique presentations are held on the first Wednesday of each month, meeting at 7 for 7.30pm in the City Screen Basement Bar, Coney St. YO1 9QL. Tickets are free and can be pre-booked by phone or online with City Screen (0871-9025726).

Office Closure

Please note that the Lodge will be closed 3-10 March re-opening on Monday 13 March