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Registered Charity No: 529709 An affiliated society of the British Science Association

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2014

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter, which as always is accompanied by our Annual Report and an invitation to join us at our AGM on June 3rd. With the end of the current lecture programme approaching rapidly, we hope you will take advantage of the light evenings to come along to our last few talks ... and to the bonus lecture we've managed to squeeze in at the end. Read on for details!

You should find the following with your Newsletter. If anything is missing, please contact Frances at The Lodge.

- A Walk Round Edwardian Leeds
- "Historic Newcastle" Walking Tour & Visit to Newcastle Lit & Phil
- AGM papers

And of course

- Our 2013 Annual Report

YPS in Partnership with the Festival of Ideas!

In our last newsletter we said how pleased we were to have entered into a partnership with the University of York's increasingly prestigious Festival of Ideas.

This year, the fourth in the Festival's history, the theme is 'Order and Chaos'. Between June 12 and 22 there will be over a hundred and twenty mostly free events with talks from world-class speakers, performances, exhibitions and interactive experiences for people of all ages.

The joint YPS/Festival of Ideas event will be on June 17 at 7.30 pm in the Tempest Anderson Hall at the Yorkshire Museum: Leslie Webster of the British Museum will give a talk entitled 'The Enigma of the Escrick Ring'. This is one of the many events in the theme of 'Eoforwic: A Celebration of Anglian York'. The ring was found at Escrick, near York, in 2009 and is now one of the treasures of the Yorkshire Museum. Leslie Webster will explore its exotic origins and significance, who might have owned it and how it might have come to be lost in Escrick. An enigma indeed!

Leslie Webster joined the British Museum as an Assistant Keeper in the then Department of British and Medieval Antiquities at the British Museum, curating the Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Celtic and Continental early medieval collections. She became a Deputy Keeper in 1984, and Keeper (Head of Department) in 2002. Since 2002, she has also been an Honorary Visiting Professor at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

This joint event is free but ticketed.

Booking is via the Festival of Ideas website www.yorkfestivalofideas.com or by phone 01904 324778 – and if you email 'subscribe' in the title line to yorkfestivalofideas@york.ac.uk you can be one of the first to find out when the programme is online.

Post AGM Wine and Nibbles - 3 June 2014

To mark the end of this year's lecture season, and to provide a pleasant opportunity to mix with old and new friends at the start of summer, we will be serving wine and soft drinks, accompanied by nibbles, after the June 3rd lecture, which follows the AGM. The reception will take place in the Atrium of the Museum, and there will be a charge of £2, payable as you leave the lecture. All will be very welcome – do join us.

Special YPS pre-season event on Tuesday September 2nd

The YPS is hosting a special pre-season lecture in the Tempest Anderson Hall on September 2nd at 7.30pm.

The lecture will be a joint one with the Hull York Medical School and the YMT and will be the opening event of a 3-day Symposium on Palaeontology which is being held by the Hull York Medical School on Vertebrate Palaeontology and Comparative Anatomy. The subject of our lecture will be fossils in Yorkshire.

Drinks, which are being sponsored by the Hull York Medical School, will be served in the Atrium from 6.45pm.

September 2nd - a date for your diary!

President's Evening

The 2014 President's Evening dinner will be held on Wednesday 22 October, when we will once again enjoy the comfortable surroundings of the Churchill Hotel. Details and a booking form will follow with our Summer Newsletter.

Help with posters

A (very) small team of volunteers currently distributes our lecture posters to venues around the city of York and further afield. If you know anywhere in your locality where a poster might be displayed, please do pick one up at a lecture or contact Frances at the Lodge. Posters are available about two weeks before each lecture (usually at the preceding lecture).

Of course, in this digital age, we also send out our posters by email. If you are in a position to "cascade" them to colleagues or have spotted a distribution channel we should be using, please let Frances know.

Ideas for Café Sci

The team responsible for Café Scientifique is currently working on our 2014-15 programme and welcomes suggestions for topics to cover. If there's a subject you have always wanted to explore, or you know of a young scientist doing exciting research, please contact Catherine Brophy on catherine@brophy.org.uk

Website

We should record a big thank you to all those who keep the website up-to-date. They do a splendid job with little thanks as it is not, in a sense, a very visible activity, so we express our appreciation here to Catherine Brophy, Frances Chambers, James Karran, Margaret Leonard, Patrick Mason and Carole Smith.

A recent Communications Meeting highlighted our weak spots and we would like to supplement the team in the following functions:

- Lecture audience targeting
- News collator/editor
- Photographer

So if you feel the call ...

YPS and Wikipedia: New ways to share knowledge

In 12 short years since its inception, Wikipedia has become the world's first stop for knowledge and the sixth most popular website in the world. For something founded in the 21st century it has a mission that chimes uncannily with the enlightenment and the principles of the YPS:

“Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge.

That's what we're doing.” - Jimmy Wales, Wikipedia Founder - 2004

For the last six months York Museums Trust has had Pat Hadley as their Wikipedian-in-Residence, helping them share their collections and expertise through image donations related to Tempest Anderson, the Middleham Hoard and trace fossils as well as fine art and social history. This is part of a global partnership between museums and Wikipedia to help improve the quality of the encyclopedia and help museums get collections out across the web.

Now there are opportunities for the YPS to get involved with Wikipedia - in a myriad of ways!

- How does Wikipedia work? Why doesn't an encyclopedia that literally anyone can edit immediately fill with rubbish!? We could have a mythbusting talk
- The knowledge and enthusiasm of YPS members might make them excellent Wikipedia editors: there are opportunities to run training sessions.
- Members might be interested in the technological and social implications of Wikipedia and Open Knowledge generally: we could have a seminar.
- The YPS archives contain many undigitised historic documents: we could upload these to Wikipedia articles.
- New, undreamt ideas! Once we get the ball rolling there is infinite scope for sharing knowledge through Wikipedia and related sites.

Though it may seem odd to offer a confusing array of ways for the YPS to get involved, it is within the democratic spirits of both Wikipedia and the YPS. Pat is happy to help out in any way he can. What would members like?

Changes at the British Science Association

Many of you will know that the YPS instigated the birth of the British Science Association back in 1831 and that the Association is still today the principal body representing science in the UK.

For many years the YPS has represented the BSA in North and East Yorkshire, inviting their members to our lectures, and bringing science to outlying towns with our annual outreach lecture. More recently the YPS rescue of Café Scientifique with its monthly science lecture programme has also supported the BSA in this area.

As with many organisations, cutbacks have caused a number of redundancies and the BSA has now lost its regional officers. This means that we sadly have had to say farewell to Pam Buchan, who, as the BSA representative, has been a YPS Council member for a number of years.

We are sad to lose the services of Pam and wish her the very best for the future.

Apology

After over a decade of producing newsletters the photocopier at The Lodge is beginning to show its age (and it was second-hand when we bought it), so we apologize if the quality of your newsletter is not as good as it should be. Research into a replacement is underway.

Congratulations

We would like to offer our warmest congratulations to member Bill Fairburn on the completion of his PhD at the University of Sheffield at the age of 79. His thesis *A re-interpretation of the physiographic evolution of the southern end of the Vale of York from the Mid-Pleistocene to Early Holocene* (or the last "Ice Age" to the non-expert) was completed in under 2½ years. A tremendous achievement by a very mature student!

A long-standing friend

A long-standing friend of the YPS, Gary Bateson, Manager of the Yorkshire Museum is leaving this summer, and with his departure the YPS is losing a much-valued supporter.

Gary has filled various roles within the Museum during the past 12 years, ending with his appointment as Museum Manager. He and his team set up the Tempest Anderson Hall for our lecturers on Tuesday evenings and always provide an additional welcome to the proceedings.

The YPS has been very fortunate in having such a willing partner in the Museum, and he has helped us out on numerous occasions when things have threatened to go wrong. We shall miss his smile, friendly nature and always helpful attitude ... and we wish him all the very best in his retirement, in which he will be able to indulge himself even more in his passion for the theatre.

We will be officially saying goodbye to Gary at the drinks reception after our AGM and lecture evening on June 3rd.

... and a new permanent sound-system for the Tempest Anderson Hall

For as long as we can remember we have had battles with the sound system in the Tempest Anderson Hall. And there will be very few who have not witnessed these battles. The Yorkshire Museum has taken the bit between its teeth and is now installing a new sound system in May at no small cost, and for this we are very grateful.

The new system will be similar to the temporary system which we are now enjoying, so we can look forward to interference-free lectures. What it will not change is the idiosyncrasies of individual lecturers' presentation styles and voices - but we aim to counteract this by being more thorough on our pre-lecture testing and training of the individual presenters on the night.

Our thanks to Gary Bateson for pushing this to a successful conclusion.

Dr Richard Crossley

Dr Crossley, a member for 15 years and known to many through his articles in our Annual Report, has sadly had to withdraw from the Society due to failing health. His brother reports that he is now settled comfortably in a care home. Any friends wishing for further news are welcome to join his brother's mailing list to receive occasional bulletins. Please give your email address to Frances at the Lodge

Office closures

The Lodge will be closed on the following dates, when Frances will be on holiday:

- Monday 19th to Friday 23rd May
- Monday 4th August
- Monday 20th to Monday 27th October inclusive

A talk on John Phillips

As part of York University's Lifelong Learning programme of free public lectures, Dr Liam Herringshaw will speak about John Phillips "The Time Lord of York". John Phillips, the first keeper of the Yorkshire Museum, did ground-breaking work on the study of fossils, geological time, and the calculation of the age of the earth. He is buried in York Cemetery, where his grave is now maintained thanks to YPS funding.

The lecture will take place on 22 May at 7.00 pm in Vanbrugh College. Admission is by free ticket only, and tickets can be obtained from www.york.ac.uk/tickets or 01904 324778.

Medical talks at the University of York

"Forced Pregnancy", Access to Reproductive Rights and its Bio-Political Modalities

By Dr Nayanika Mookherjee, Durham University

6.00 pm on 13th May 2014

This talk seeks to highlight the contradictions that the claim to reproductive rights throw up, in the face of traumatic and gendered violence of "forced pregnancy" as a result of wartime rape.

Anatomising the Genome: Chromosomes and the Search for Disease

By Professor Andrew J Hogan, Creighton University, USA

6.00 pm on 29th May 2014

Beginning around 1980, influential clinicians and geneticists increasingly defined the human genome as being a visible and tangible component of the human anatomy. This talk examines the growing role of genetic testing in identifying, understanding, and treating clinical disorders.

Both lectures will be held in The Treehouse, Berrick Saul Building, University of York. All welcome; no booking necessary.

Cloning at York Theatre Royal

York Theatre Royal has drawn our attention to "A Number", the play running in its Studio Theatre from 1st to 24th May, which looks at the ethics and consequences of cloning human beings. To make it even more genetically interesting the main characters are played by father and son George and Niall Costigan. Find out more from www.yorktheatreroyal.co.uk/shows/

Deer Shed Festival

We have received the following request for help from the organisers of the Deer Shed Festival. If anyone would like to get involved, please let us know.

I work for Deer Shed Festival which is near Thirsk; we are an 8000 capacity family music festival. Over the last couple of years we have had a science tent, which is full of electronic and science lab experiments and workshops for the kids to participate in. We are looking for a few volunteers who would be interested in a running a few of the workshops we have planned. I wondered if any of the members from your group would be interested in coming for the weekend and getting involved in this project. Below are the links to the website and Science page.

<http://deershedfestival.com/>

<http://deershedfestival.com/science/>

Look forward to hearing from you.

Megan Evans, Deer Shed Festival