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NEWSLETTER

Yorkshire Philosophical Society

Promoting the public understanding of science since 1822

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From the Chair

The first special event of the YPS Bicentenary year was held on Saturday March 12th at Ryedale School with over 70 participants. This “Kirkdale Cave 200: Lost Beasts of the North” symposium had a lively programme of presentations facilitated by Dr Liam Herringshaw from Hidden Horizons. We learnt a lot about the latest archaeological and geological research linked to the cave findings of 1821 and finished the day with a discussion of the importance of Kirkdale cave today. The following day Paul Thornley, YPS, and Paul Hildreth, YGS, organised an excellent field day – see the details on page 6. We are grateful for financial support for this event from The Yorkshire Geological Society and the Geological Society’s Curry Fund.

Included with this newsletter is the 2021 Annual Report, which is the Bicentenary edition. Mrs Carole Smith, Editor, is to be congratulated, with her team, on



Kirkdale 200: Lost Beasts of the North Symposium, 12 March 2022 Photo: Catherine Brophy

With this Newsletter

- ◆ Trip to Sheffield, 16th June
- ◆ Garden Party, 23rd June
- ◆ Visit to Bedern Hall, 14th July
- ◆ Annual Report – coming separately to those who receive the Newsletter by email
- ◆ Membership card – for members who have not received it previously
- ◆ AGM Papers

If anything is missing, contact Frances Chambers as below.

LARGE PRINT COPIES OF THIS NEWSLETTER ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST FROM info@ypsyork.org or 01904 656713.

Opinions expressed in the articles that follow are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the YPS.

an excellent publication. Our thanks to Carole for her hard work as Editor since 2016 and best wishes on her retirement from the role.

We have been exploring possible new venues for a relaunch for York Café Scientifique, as City Screen Basement is no longer available for us. YPS trustees had a site visit to the Guildhall in February which the University of York has taken over on a 15 year lease. Although the builders are still working on site, we are now exploring holding Café sessions here from late summer onwards, as part of the university’s community engagement. Details will be available on the YPS website and by email in late May. In the meantime, we will continue the series of occasional Café Scientifique sessions via Zoom.

As the Yorkshire Museum reopened on Friday 8th April, we will be returning to holding some of our lectures in person here. However as Zoom lectures are proving popular, particularly with members and guest

speakers living away from York, we will continue to provide some lectures on Zoom. April to July lectures have been planned for Wednesday afternoons or evenings, and please do check the time. We plan to hold evening lectures at 7pm in future (however be aware that May 25th is at 7.30pm). To hold hybrid lectures, i.e. filmed and in person, we need a bigger team of volunteers so if you might be able to help, particularly with technical or reception duties, do let us know.

Enclosed with this newsletter is information about the AGM, to be held at 2pm on 8th June in the Tempest Anderson Lecture Theatre. After the AGM we will have an afternoon lecture at 2.30pm given by Professor Jon Mee of the University of York.

The Activities Group has organised another Garden Party on Thursday 23rd June, a day by coach in the Sheffield area on Thursday 16th June, and a visit to Bedern Hall with tea and cake on Thursday 14th July; booking forms for all these are enclosed. We have sponsored a "Pint of Science" event at Spark on Tuesday 10th May (see p 12). We are also holding a lecture with the York Festival of Ideas on June 15th in the Tempest Anderson Lecture Theatre with Professor Zion Tse on "Medical Robotics".

The plans for the second half of the Bicentenary year are still being finalised but some of the important dates are indicated in the diary on p 13. The Bicentenary dinner will have to be more expensive than last year, partly because costs have risen, and partly because we are looking at a special venue. There will be a separate reception for the launch of the new short history of the Society by Sarah Sheils. Booking forms for these events will be distributed with future newsletters.

On behalf of the YPS Trustees and myself I send you our good wishes.

Catherine Brophy, Chair
chair@ypsyork.org York 499179

Volunteers please!

We are still in need of:-

- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Representative for the committee of CBA Yorkshire
- Help to organize visits and excursions
- Help at lectures

The number of members actively engaged in running the Society's activities is dwindling, which puts additional pressure on our core group of dedicated volunteers. If you enjoy our lectures and visits, please do consider giving a little of your time to ensure we can continue to run these in the future.

Catherine Brophy

York Museums Trust News

We were delighted to see the Yorkshire Museum re-open its doors on Friday 8th April with an exciting new exhibition entitled *The Ryedale Hoard: A Roman Mystery*. The Ryedale Hoard contains some of Yorkshire's most significant Roman objects, including an 1,800 year old bust of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. For the very first time, visitors will be able to see this fascinating new discovery and explore the mystery of who buried the Hoard and why.

In association with the exhibition there is also a series of online talks from expert lecturers and YMT's own curators. For details please see:

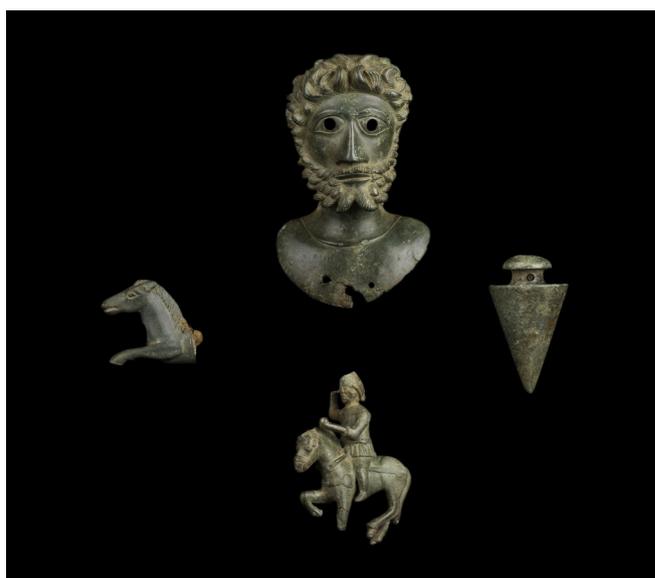
<https://www.yorkshireromancollection.org.uk/exhibition/the-ryedale-hoard-a-roman-mystery/>

Alongside the new exhibition, visitors will also be able to enjoy the Museum's other exhibitions; *Yorkshire's Jurassic World*, *Medieval York: Capital of the North* and *After the Ice: Yorkshire Prehistoric People*. From 25th April, the Museum will be open from Tuesday to Sunday, 11am to 5pm, and seven days a week during school holidays.

... And more good news from the Trust: the Museum Gardens opening hours are now 9am to 6pm.

The Trust continues to welcome donations to support its work in these difficult times:

<https://www.yorkmuseumtrust.org.uk/support-the-trust/donations/>



The Ryedale Hoard
 Photo: courtesy of York Museums Trust

Annual Report

Our *Annual report for 2021*, which accompanies this newsletter (or will be delivered separately to those who receive the newsletter by email), is particularly special in two ways.

Firstly, it is our official “Bicentenary Edition” and despite the limitations and restrictions of recent months it records a thriving lecture programme, the use of Zoom to provide other activities for members, and the cautious return to “in-person” activities, as well as providing a selection of articles which look back to the earlier years of the Society and forward to contemporary research projects.

Carole Smith, the Hon Editor of the *Annual report*, is grateful to all those who contributed to this bicentenary edition. She would especially like to thank Beth Shurter for her invaluable assistance with the design of the cover, which has enabled her to fulfil the requirements of the printer we have employed since 2019.

Secondly, this is the sixth and last report to be edited by Carole, to whom grateful thanks are also owed. She helped and contributed to reports for several years before taking up the post of Hon Editor and we hope the benefits of her long experience will continue to be available to us. But for now we wish her a relaxing “retirement” with lots of time for reading!

News from the Activities Group

On 27th January, a group of YPS members tried their hand at codebreaking, as part of a virtual tour of Bletchley Park, in which we learned about the important work done there in WWII. We felt very grateful to the thousands of people, many of whom were young women, fresh from school, whose work helped to shorten the war.

Our monthly get-togethers at the Theatre Royal continued in February and March. These casual gatherings over lunch are proving a popular way for members to meet and catch up with YPS news. Check the website for the next date. February also brought a Fire Walk, which, like January’s Water Walk, was so popular it needed to be split into two groups on two different days.

In March, a conference and field day celebrated an event of great significance to the YPS in its bicentennial year – the discovery of the strange fossilised bones in the Kirkdale Cave, which led to the founding of our society. A full description can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

We were sad to learn that our April Beverley Walk, looking at the varied architectural styles of the buildings in this historic town, had to be cancelled as

our guide, Jim Godfrey, had a sudden heart attack. We were very glad to hear that he is making a good recovery, and hopes to reschedule the walk for the autumn.

5th May sees the start of our multi-day tour of Manchester and Liverpool, with a varied programme including Central Manchester and Media City in Salford, a canal trip experiencing the Anderton Boat Lift, a visit to Jodrell Bank and a day in Liverpool. This is a busy month – on the 10th the YPS is sponsoring a talk at Spark, as part of the ‘Pint of Science’ festival, which takes place from 9th to 11th May, and on the 19th the Geology Group is arranging a walk in the steps of John Phillips, for a small number of fit people. For details contact Paul Thornley, ypsgeology@gmail.com On 25th May we have a much less strenuous visit to see the remains of the kilns and railways at Rosedale, which processed and transported iron ore to feed the major ironworks in Middlesbrough. A few places are still available - you can find further details and a booking form on the website at <https://www.ypsyork.org/events/rosedale-kilns-and-railways/>

On 16th June Catherine Brophy is organising a one-day coach trip to Sheffield, and on 23rd June, we will hold our bicentennial Garden Party in the lovely setting of the York Medical Society Rooms, hidden behind Stonegate. Do come and celebrate this special occasion. Flyers for both of these events are enclosed

14th July brings a visit to Bedern Hall, another ‘hidden gem’, also described in a flyer. We will be able to have tea or coffee and cake, while learning about the fascinating history of this lovely little building.

In the autumn we will have further opportunities to celebrate the YPS Bicentenary, which really falls at the end of the year - our first meeting was held on December 7th 1822. Historian Sarah Shiels has been writing a history of the society, and in place of our normal Annual Dinner we hope to hold a special Bicentennial Dinner. Watch out for news of this exciting event.

Margaret Leonard

YPS Members’ monthly lunch

Join us for a drop-in monthly lunch thanks to staff of the Theatre Royal Café who have agreed to host YPS, provided we purchase lunch or light refreshments. Meeting from 12pm onwards, order your food and drink at the Café and then join us upstairs in the Upper Foyer, booked for our sole use. We will be delighted to enjoy lunch with friends new and longstanding. Come along on the following dates; no need to book.

- ◇ Tuesday 26th April (NB not the usual second Tuesday of the month)
- ◇ Tuesday 10th May
- ◇ Tuesday 14th June
- ◇ Tuesday 12th July
- ◇ Tuesday 9th August

Notes from the Geology Group

Further notes on geology in the time of Covid.

1a) Virtual Trips and Field Guides

Shetland is a UNESCO Global Geopark, an area with internationally important rocks and landscapes, all of which are managed responsibly for tourism, conservation and education. Shetland Amenity Trust is the manager of the Shetland Geopark.

The link gives an account of Shetland geology and tours of geosites.

<https://www.shetlandamenity.org/geopark-shetland>

1b) Virtual Events and Talks:

Climate change, sea level rise and ocean acidification are now inevitable; is there a role for geengineering? Nick Riley YGS president. Thurs 14th April 2022, 7.30 pm and available on YouTube afterwards. Webinar

<https://www.yorksgeolsoc.org.uk/events-list/climate-change-ygs-president-address>

The Earth Heritage Trust and Herefordshire Wildlife Trust have been running a project on Ice Age Ponds, linking ice age geology and modern biodiversity. A recent conference was recorded and available online. I recommend **Beth Andrews on Ice ages in Herefordshire** **Tim Holt-Wilson on the structure of ice age ponds in East Anglia.**

<https://www.herefordshirewt.org/ice-age-ponds-conference-2nd-march-2022>

Talks still available:

Deep Geological Disposal of Radioactive Waste. The role of Geoscience. RWM

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcy9MOJMTOnYRCQ4GvbdQRFLcf4qQLm81>

Yorkshire Fossil Festival September 2021, five talks. Now on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_f6YWPvDUF4K2JmfbG_Q

2 Women and Men in Geology:

Charles Darwin (1809-1882)

Geology was one of Darwin's main occupations on the five-year journey of 'The Beagle'. He had been tutored and supervised by John Stevens Henslow and Adam Sedgwick and wrote three geological books based on his 'Beagle' observations. Darwin's geological experiences imbued him with a grasp of the immensity of geologic time and a realization of the contribution of both gradual and abrupt geological processes in shaping the physical environment, processes that affect the adaptation and survival of species.

<https://darwin200.christs.cam.ac.uk/geology>

<https://theconversation.com/revealed-the-great-geologist-behind-the-origin-of-species-42783>

<https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Geoscientist/Archive/February-2009/Early-settler-Darwin-the-geologist-in-the-Galapagos>

3 Online Study and Resources: Darwin

The Darwin Correspondence Project has a number of relevant sections on Darwin and Geology.

<https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/commentary/geology/darwin-geology>

4 Real Events and Trips outside:

Sedgwick-Phillips-Smith Bicentennial Meeting - Developments in N England Geology

YGS in-person meeting, 9th April 2022. Illustrated abstract booklet still available to download.

<https://www.yorksgeolsoc.org.uk/events-list/sedgwick-phillips-smith>

YPS Events:

18th May: Talk on Geology and natural resources in Yorkshire – "Is it time to rethink our approach to natural resources in Yorkshire? What contribution to the energy transition is possible?" by Nick Shaw

19th May: Trip - In The Footsteps of John Phillips

Bill Fraser of Leeds Geological Association will lead a small group on an energetic tour of sites identified as Yoredale Cyclotherms by John Phillips at Mill Gill, Askrigg. Paths are steep and uneven. See details overleaf.

25th May: Trip - Rosedale Kilns and Railways

Chris Hall will lead this tour of Rosedale Top, organised by Margaret Leonard.

Booking form available on the YPS website:

<https://www.ypsyork.org/events/rosedale-kilns-and-railways/>

5 Our Museum of the Month:

Shetland Museum and Archives in Lerwick.

<https://www.shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk/>

<https://www.shetland.org/visit/do/wildlife/geology>

6 Books and Mags:

Orkney and Shetland: A Landscape Fashioned by Geology by Alan McKirdy; Scottish Nature Heritage.

<https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2017-06/Publication%202010%20-%20Landscape%20fashioned%20by%20geology%20-%20Orkney%20and%20Shetland.pdf>

Paul Thornley



*Kirkdale 200 Field Trip, 13 March 2022
Photo: Paul Thornley*

In The Footsteps of John Phillips Askrigg, 19th May 2022

Bill Fraser of Leeds Geological Association will lead a small group on an energetic tour of sites identified as Yoredale Cyclotherms by John Phillips at Mill Gill, Askrigg.

John Phillips (1800-1874) was the first Keeper at the Yorkshire Museum and was Secretary to the YPS and the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Yoredale was the original name for Wensleydale carrying the River Ure. Phillips named the distinctive set of Carboniferous rocks which underlies the series of terraces the Yoredale Group. These sit on the Askrigg Block and demonstrate up to eleven cycles of sedimentation called cyclotherms.

Transport will be by own vehicles and the party will be a maximum of twelve.

Paths are steep and uneven. Rock surfaces close to the stream can be slippery. Good boots and protection from the weather is advised.

If interested, please email Paul Thornley on ypsgeology@gmail.com

York Fire Walk

On a grey February morning, Liam Herringshaw and Simon Rogerson led the last of their planned geological walks for YPS, the fire walk. Starting close by the multangular tower in Museum gardens, Simon took the group back to Roman times in the age of the Emperor Severus, and in particular to his death in AD211. The custom was for deceased Roman emperors to be cremated on a hill and as was pointed out in Rome there was no shortage of hills. York must have proved more of a challenge, though not without some success. With the aid of photographs and with a view of the skyline in Acomb where a certain Severus Hill rises above the horizon, a hill which presumably took its name from the event.

Passing through the gardens to the rear of the art gallery, the damaged tower at the corner of Bootham and Marygate gave evidence of the 1644 siege of York by the Parliamentarians who, unable to breach the walls by cannon, used gunpowder to blow up the tower. At the same time, one of four Byron brothers, ancestors of the poet Lord Byron, said to be engaged in the action on behalf of the king lost his life by bursting through a gate from King's Manor onto the bowling green at an inopportune moment.

Before motorised vehicles six-sided 'cobbles' were used throughout York, but the uneven surface was not conducive to this new form of transport and they were relegated to back alleys and gaps between pavements and the road. These 'cobbles' were a by-product of slag, known as scoria and became a very lucrative business, being used widely both nationally and internationally.

The walk continued into Exhibition Square where the army connections with the De Grey rooms were highlighted, disabusing those of the group who imagined the connection was with the 13th century archbishop of that name. Then onto High Petergate where the plaques adorn the upper storeys of several buildings just through the bar, indicating the companies paid to come to the aid of property so marked in the event of fire. It must have been a busy street when all the different companies arrived to put out fires in adjacent buildings.

From there into Precentors Court and a wonderful view of the Minster. Passing by the West Front the group stopped outside St Michael Le Belfrey to remember Guy Fawkes and his ill-fated attempt to blow up Parliament and King James and where the various connections with York were revealed as well as Fawkes' training in incendiaries. No fire walk, however, would be complete without descriptions of three of the most recent conflagrations at the Minster. The first chosen was the fire of 1829 started by the unfortunate Jonathan Martin whose artist brother John painted enormous canvases of apocalyptic scenes. Martin, who disliked the established church, stayed in the Minster after evensong on the night of 1 February and started a fire in the quire, using soft furnishings and prayer books, resulting in the destruction of the roof, the organ (which he detested) and virtually all the misericords. He was easily apprehended in Hexham and spent his last few months in Bedlam, visited by Charles Dickens. The second fire, only eleven years later was started by a clockmaker, William Groves, working in a West Tower, and who left a candle burning overnight. This led to the collapse of the nave roof. The most recent, and remembered by many in the group was the fire on 9 July 1984 which brought down the roof of the South Transept and nearly put paid to the Rose Window. A lively discussion then ensued as to the reasons for the fire, including the wrath of God following on from the enthronement in York of the Bishop of Durham who had questioned the virgin birth. The general consensus was the more prosaic explanation that the roof had been struck by lightning.

The next stop was in Coney Street where the group was reminded of the Baedeker Raids in the Second World War and the heroic work of Yves Mahe, a French pilot who flew over to intercept German bombers. It is largely thanks to him that York was not more badly hit and he well deserves his plaque at the entrance to City Screen by the remains of St Martin Le Grand, which shows concrete evidence of the bombing. Yves Mahe in turn owes his memorial to the efforts of a York Primary School, which on hearing of his bravery campaigned for recognition.

Several churches in York have lantern towers, but none more spectacular than All Saints Pavement where fires were burned in the lantern either to keep unwanted animals away or to warn of danger. The

tour moved to the Eye of York where Clifford's Tower bears evidence of the massacre of the entire Jewish community in York in 1190, when an angry mob herded them into the Tower where they took their own lives rather than be murdered or baptised into the Christian faith and ending in a mighty conflagration. The final stop was in Coppergate to consider the fires used by the Vikings in their industrial processes.

Dorothy Nott

Earth, Fire, Water

A message from Dr Liam Herringshaw (YPS member) and Dr Simon Rogerson:

If you enjoyed these walks this winter, please would you write a review on "Trip Advisor" to encourage more people to take part?

The links to the specific walks are as follows:

York Air Walk: https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/AttractionProductReview-g186346-d23962404-York_Air_Walk-York_North_Yorkshire_England.html

York Fire Walk: https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/AttractionProductReview-g186346-d23680310-York_Fire_Walk-York_North_Yorkshire_England.html

York Earth Walk: https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/AttractionProductReview-g186346-d23962392-York_Earth_Walk-York_North_Yorkshire_England.html

York Water Walk: https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/AttractionProductReview-g186346-d23962402-York_Water_Walk-York_North_Yorkshire_England.html

A Walk around York Cemetery

7th August at 2pm

Some of us had the pleasure of joining Manuela Sowter, YPS member, for a virtual tour of York Cemetery in February 2021, a pioneering and very successful first attempt at using Zoom for our activities programme. Now we have the chance to see both Manuela and the cemetery in person, when she guides a walk for the Friends of York Cemetery on Sunday 7th August at 2 pm. Entitled 'Chocolate, trains, science and philosophy. Where is the link?', the walk will visit the graves of YPS members among others and participants will be able to guess the answer to the question by the end.

This is a non-ticket event so just turn up; no need to book. No charge, but a donation of £5 is suggested or £2 for Friends of York Cemetery and children.

Walks meet at the Harriet Centre, last 1½ to 2 hours and finish with a drink and biscuits.

For more information about Cemetery walks, see: <https://www.yorkcemetery.org.uk/guided-walks-and-events>

Kirkdale 200: Lost Beasts of the North

Field Day, 13th March 2022

Following the Symposium at Ryedale School on 12th March, 25 participants met with Paul Hildreth, Liam Herringshaw and Paul Thornley at Spaunton Moor Quarry, to the East of Kirkbymoorside. Mr Winn-Darley, the owner of the now disused quarry, asked to join us in the tour of the geology.

The quarry provides safe and easy access within a short walk to faces in Coralline Oolite and Upper Calcareous Grit formations. This is in the Oxfordian of the Upper Jurassic. Quarry faces show the Coral Rag with its patch reefs below and sandy sediments of the UC Grit above it, separated by a distinctively bored horizon. This was all quarried for aggregate by Cemex. Extraction of crushed rock ceased in 2007 in the North York Moors National Park, upon closure of Spaunton Quarry.

Paul Hildreth led one group on a tour of sites, discussing the palaeogeography of this Upper Jurassic landscape of North Yorkshire, coral seas and the marine limey sandstones and sandy limestones that followed. Examples of potential local building stones were examined. Liam Herringshaw led another group to the far North of the site to an area rich in detached fossils. Others conducted their own investigation of strata, fossils and burrows.

Some details can be found on pages 5-12 and locality 3 in a field guide from 2014:

https://www.palass.org/sites/default/files/media/annual_meetings/2014/field_guide_2014.pdf

The party dispersed for lunch then gathered again at St Gregory's Minster, Kirkdale where we met the Vicar, the Revd. Susan Binks and others from the parish. Liam Herringshaw made his best impersonation of the eccentric Revd. William Buckland who had visited Kirkdale Cave in December 1821, investigated the nature of the bones and understood the site as a formerly active hyaena cave into which had been dragged bones from carcasses from many species, including elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, cave lion, wolf and deer. Buckland rejected the idea that the bones had been washed into the cave by the force of a great Noachian Deluge. Liam read a short version of the paper by Buckland from February 1822 which was read to the Royal Society. See:

<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/pdf/10.1098/rstl.1822.0017>

There was then an opportunity to look round the church building inside and out, with its famous sundial from before the Conquest and its great West Doorway and early Saxon crosses. See:

http://wasleys.org.uk/eleanor/churches/england/yorkshire/north_yorkshire/north_yorkshire_two/kirkdale/

We then moved to the ford of The Hodge Beck with rock outcrop in the stream bed. Small fossils can be

seen in the Yedmandale Member there, below the Malton Oolite in the tops of the banks.

Moving to the Cave area nearby, the small bedding-plane entrance is high up in the Coral Rag, just above the boundary with the Malton Oolite. There was discussion of the appearance of the area before any quarrying, how much had been quarried away by the time of its examination in 1821 and how much lost since then. The Cave has clearly been inaccessible since occupied in the warmest period of the Last Interglacial (Ipswichian) around 120 000 years ago. It had not been affected by glaciation during the last (Devensian) ice age or submerged in any subsequent glacial Lake Pickering.

Buckland's achievement in working up ideas about the nature of the bones and Cave in a short two-month period was celebrated. As was the subsequent founding of the YPS in December 1822 by three avid collectors of the bones from the Cave wanting to make their collections available for wider study in a museum.

Paul Thornley

Two hundred years ago ...

March 1822 – and Kirkdale goes viral! At least by eighteenth century standards ...

On 23rd February 1822, the *Yorkshire Gazette* quoted a letter received from an unnamed person familiar with Kirkdale, describing “a geological phenomenon ... which has much interested me ... a cave of limestone, near a quarry, [containing] the bones of elephants, rhinoceroses, hyaenas &c &c”.

Shortly afterwards someone forwarded the anonymous letter, or an extract from the *Yorkshire Gazette*, to the *Hereford Journal*, where it appeared verbatim. Then, in the course of March, the news reached the *Worcester Journal*, the *Sheffield Independent*, the *English Chronicle & Whitehall Evening Post*, the *British Luminary*, and the *Cumberland Pacquet & Ware's Whitehaven Advertiser*. Among other journals. Then, during April, May and June, the *Caledonian Mercury*, the *Perthshire Courier* and the *Plain Englishman*; and, by November, after a long sea voyage, the *Bombay Gazette* caught up with exciting developments in a small Yorkshire cave.

More important than accounts in the Press, of course, were the informal discussions and correspondence between the learned gentry of Europe, much of which was unrecorded, or not easily accessible: science – still generally termed ‘natural philosophy’ had not been formalised or institutionalised. Even the term ‘scientist’ did not exist: it was coined only in 1834, by William Whewell (who was, naturally, an Honorary Member of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society).



*Entrance to Kirkdale Cave, 2022
Photo: Paul Thornley*

William Buckland, we may assume, was busy: because William Buckland was *always* busy, and also because he was tracking and tracing the dispersed Kirkdale fossils, developing his ideas on fossils, reconstructing ancient landscapes from fossil environmental data, corresponding with anyone who might be able to supply information: and, of course, preparing his monumental work on Kirkdale and other comparable caves, which was published, in 1823, as *Reliquiae Diluvianae* ... And, of course, there was also the day job. Billy the hyena had by this time probably delivered all that was asked of him and entered a well-earned retirement.

And in Yorkshire?

The Rev. George Bird and his artist John Bird were hard at work on *A Geological Survey of the Yorkshire Coast* ... (&c – all 19th century geological texts need to be abbreviated!), containing a full chapter on the Kirkdale discoveries. Remarkably, this achieved publication within the year. And the Rev. William Eastmead's history of Ryedale, *Historia Rievallensis* ... (&c), was not far behind, with its own account of Kirkdale.

Otherwise Yorkshire saw little overt Kirkdale-related action: although it is likely that the locally-flourishing trade in fake Kirkdale fossils continued to supply the needs of the less discriminating collector.

The future founders of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society – William Salmond, Anthony Thorpe, and James Atkinson – have left few traces of their activity in the Spring of 1822. Inevitably, they will have been discussing Kirkdale matters, possibly even the question of depositing fossils in some form of a museum, or even forming a learned society. More, perhaps, in the next *Two Hundred Years Ago*. The Rev. William Venables Vernon (aka William Vernon Harcourt) was no doubt aware of developments, corresponding with William Buckland, and continuing with his chemical experiments in his Bishopthorpe laboratory (whether or not these included *album graecum* from Kirkdale).

Ironically, there was one man in York who had experience of collecting fossils and founding museums and learned societies, but was unable to mention this: Philip Francis Sidney, editor of the *Yorkshire Observer*. Sidney arrived in York some time around 1820. He first appears, anonymously, in the *Yorkshire Gazette*, writing a series of anonymous essays on various aspects of life in York, under the nom de plume of ‘The Hermit of St Mary’. In 1822 the first edition of *The Yorkshire Observer* appeared, with Sidney as proprietor, editor, and (probably) sole writer. The Hermit moved to his new home, continuing the (numbered) sequence of essays started in the *Gazette*. In the course of 1822, Sidney commented on the Kirkdale finds and – slightly later – claimed that a York Literary and Philosophical Society had actually come into existence, and was undertaking various scientific discussions – all of which seems to have gone un-noticed by the *York Herald*, the *Yorkshire Gazette* or, indeed, the people of York at large. Then, when the Yorkshire Philosophical Society actually formed, he criticised it for being too aristocratic and undemocratic (fair comment?), before concluding that it was, on the whole, probably A Good Thing.

Finally, in June 1823 the *Yorkshire Observer* abruptly ceased publication and Sidney disappeared, leaving his financial affairs for an agent to disentangle.

Which, almost certainly, was impossible to achieve, since Philip Francis Sidney did not actually exist. There is no trace of him having been born, or died. No Census record. Nothing, either before or after his time in York.

He was in fact an Irish adventurer, Thomas Ashe. Before coming to York, Ashe had a rather varied career, including duels, fighting as a soldier of fortune in various continental wars, capture by the French and escape, smuggling diamonds from a Brazilian Imperial diamond mine while masquerading

as an emissary of King George IV, editing a newspaper for Thomas Jefferson, fighting off marauding Indians ... and, in passing, embezzling a collection of fossil mammoth bones, intending them for a museum. He also published the first novel set in the Isle of Man, travel books on various countries – several of which he had actually been to – and three volumes of his memoirs, up to 1815 (much of which is actually true). His career after leaving York included editing a Manx newspaper, setting up a Museum (or, possibly, two), insolvency and incarceration, writing political pamphlets, threatening to kill the Duke Of Cumberland, blackmail, and an Old Bailey trial in which Irish charm seems to have outweighed forensic evidence, resulting in an improbable acquittal (which greatly upset the Duke of Cumberland).

Sadly, Philip Francis Sidney is almost completely irrelevant to the Kirkdale story. And Thomas Ashe even more so. But I do find both of them irresistible, and may find an excuse to bring them into the story again ...

Peter Hogarth

YORK
Literary and Philosophical Society.

It is announced in "A CARD" in our last page that, a Society, having for object the acquirement and diffusion of literal knowledge, under the title of "The York Literary and Philosophical Society," is finally established in this City. The Society's Address to the Public evinces much philosophy and intelligence. It runs mainly in these terms.

"In this, which is emphatically and properly designated an enlightened age; when literature is no longer considered the exclusive property of the Cloister and the Closet; when Science is seen to illumine our Streets—direct our Manufactories—and give life and energy to the Commerce of which as a Nation we may so justly boast, it cannot be necessary to urge any thing as to the utility of an Establishment of the description of that to which this Address is designed to call the attention of our fellow Citizens, but especially the youth of this ancient place.

"Knowledge is power, said one of the most eminent of men; and though the expression and the fact are known, and too often abused by the Zealots of political party, (a description of men seldom remarkable for comprehensiveness of mind or profundity of research,) it is as true now, as in the time of him whose favourite maxim it was; since they who reason and who think, will always have to govern those who act.

Yorkshire Observer 8 March 1823

The Next MEETING of the YORK LITERARY and PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, which falls in due course on TUESDAY, the 25th. is, on account of the ASSIZES, postponed till MONDAY, the 31st INST. when, the following THEMES will be opened for investigation:-

THE MISFORTUNES OF GENIUS.
GEOLOGY.
THE THEORY OF LIGHT.
THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

March 20, 1823.

Yorkshire Observer 22 March 1823

‘Von der Arbeitsunermüdblichkeit im Alter’, or ‘Why old codgers never stop’

Wikipedia credits Jürgen Kuczynski (1904-1997) with many insights, including nearly 4000 publications. One of his last must have been *‘Alte Gelehrte’* (‘Old Scholars’), published in 1989 as he approached ninety years of age. He came from an interesting family of statisticians and Marxists: I may have almost overlapped with him in location if not in ideology at LSE in the 1960s, and also in East Berlin some ten years later. So I was delighted to pick up his little book on eBay a couple of months ago.

One short section in the book caught my eye with its long *Zungenbrecher* which I have pretentiously cited and liberally translated above. As with other *Longgermanwords*, its Lego-like structure may be deconstructed using more familiar words such as *‘Arbeit’*, *‘müde’* and *‘Alter’*, which mean ‘work’, ‘tired’ and ‘age’ respectively. The contents of this section may interest and/or reassure YPS members who are either *‘alt’* or *‘gelehrt’* or both or neither. I am encouraged by the fact that Shakespeare is still publishing, despite having been dead for over 400 years.

Kuczynski begins by citing Isocrates, who was 94 when his *‘Panathenaicus’* was published. This included an *apologia* and an admonition to us all that ‘it is not becoming to the ninety-four years which I have lived nor, in general, to men whose hair has turned grey to speak in a rhetorical fashion’. Isocrates lived till he was 99. However, Georgias of Leontini ‘needed a full 107 years before he stopped working’.

‘Many scholars start in old age on works that they know they will never complete’, Kuczynski notes. He cites Jakob Grimm’s tale of an elderly philologist constructing a dictionary who notes his completion-date is a ‘distant, ever-receding target’, and concludes it cannot be reached within the narrow timeframe of his remaining life ‘with the raindrops falling thick and fast’.

Coming more up-to-date, Kuczynski cites Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) who died just short of ninety while revising the fifth volume of *Kosmos*; Theodore Mommsen (1817-1903), still publishing in 1898; and Lujo Brentano (1844-1931) who ‘in 1924 ... travelled with his daughter to England as an eighty-year old, in order to study the latest works in the British Museum’.

Although Kuczynski spent a decade in England, most of his long life was in Germany and he wrote mainly for *Deutsche Kameraden*, so it is unsurprising that the ‘Old Scholars’ he refers to are largely German and/or far better known to German readers than to their British counterparts, who generally are notoriously illiterate where foreign authors are

concerned. However he does cite Thomas Hobbes, ‘the great English philosopher’, who translated his autobiography into Latin when he was 84 and published new translations of the *Iliad* und *Odyssey* when he was 86.

The final ‘Old Scholar’ cited is Richard Lepsius ‘the great Egyptologist who left his *magnum opus* until the last moment’. He was correcting the proofs on his death-bed, and ‘died with the stylus in his hand’, says Kuczynski. I am reminded of my dear mother who on Christmas Eve 1993, after we had returned from enjoying Berwick Kaler’s panto, told me of a friend of hers who had recently dropped dead while addressing the London Society of Antiquaries. ‘What a way to go!’, she said with quivering enthusiasm as she set off for Hull. Three days later she was dead.

John Bibby

Kuczynski, J. (1989) *Alte Gelehrte* [‘Old Scholars’]. Akademie-Verlag

If John’s article has inspired you, read on

The Davy Notebooks Project

Members of the public are being asked to help transcribe notebooks by the early nineteenth century’s “foremost man of science” Sir Humphry Davy, as part of a project to shed light on his unpublished work.

Sir Humphry Davy (1778-1829) discovered more chemical elements than any individual has before or since. His achievements saw him rise up through society’s ranks from relatively modest origins to become, just over 200 years ago, the President of the Royal Society. In 1815, he invented a miners’ safety lamp that came to be known as the Davy Lamp, saving countless lives in Britain and Europe, and vastly improving the nation’s industrial capability.



Image credit: Front endpaper and p. 1 of Davy notebook RI MS HD/15/F (c. 1805), courtesy of the Royal Institution of Great Britain

The £1 million project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and led by Lancaster University with the University of Manchester and UCL, uses the crowdsourcing platform Zooniverse to bring to light Davy's notebooks – the documents he used to work out scientific ideas alongside lines of poetry, philosophical musings, geological drawings, and accounts of his life.

Davy kept notebooks throughout his life, but most of the pages of these notebooks have never been transcribed before. Most entries have yet to be dated or considered in the light of what they tell us about Davy, his scientific discoveries, and the relationship between poetry and science.

In 2019, AHRC funding enabled Professor Sharon Ruston and Dr Andrew Lacey, both of the Department of English Literature and Creative Writing at Lancaster University, to crowdsource transcriptions of five of Davy's notebooks, dating from between 1795 and 1805, using the people-powered research platform Zooniverse.

Following on from this successful pilot project, during which more than 500 participants from around the world transcribed 626 notebook pages in under 20 days, the project team is now crowdsourcing transcriptions of Davy's entire 75-strong notebook collection. Some 70 notebooks are held at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in London and five are held in Kresen Kernow in Redruth, Cornwall. The edited transcriptions will later be published online, alongside images of the notebooks, on a free-to-access website, as part of Lancaster Digital Collections.

Online and in-person discussions with participants will enable the project team to find out how transcribing Davy's notebooks changes their views of how poetry and science could co-exist today. On the wider benefits of the project, project lead Professor Ruston said: "The consequences of seeing the arts and sciences as divided and separate are serious. Viewing them as 'two cultures' hinders our ability to solve major world problems. The Davy Notebooks Project will ask what we can learn from the example of Davy's notebooks that will help us rethink what we understand about the relationship between the arts and sciences in the nineteenth century and today."

If you are interested in taking part or would like to know more (or just take a look at pages from the notebooks) please see the links below. There is no cost to participate and no experience is necessary.

wp.lancs.ac.uk/davynotebooks

<https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/humphrydavy/davy-notebooks-project>

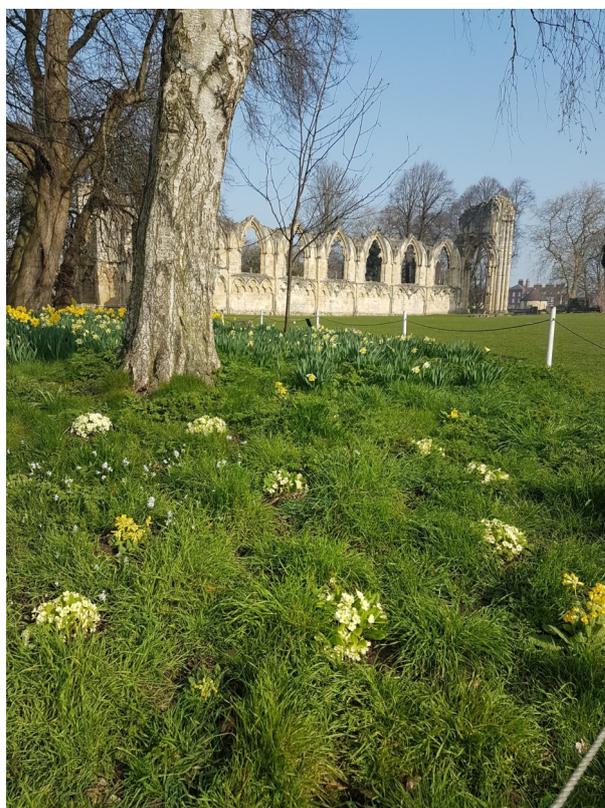
Museum Gardens in Spring

I trust that by the time you are reading this you have been enjoying the sunshine, the temperature has increased a little and we are all experiencing that lifting of the spirit that Spring delivers.

I am delighted that the Trust has been able to commit to opening the Gardens at the earlier time of 9am from 1st April. We know how important our green space is for residents and visitors alike for a myriad of reasons not least general wellbeing, and the mornings are such a lovely time to walk through the Gardens. The team and I and everyone in the Trust are thrilled with the earlier opening hours and it feels like another very positive step on the road to recovery.

The engineering work on the newly-extended flood bank has been completed and received its first test during the flood in February (which peaked at a considerable height of 4.6 metres), and passed with flying colours. In previous years there has been an accumulation of water around the rear of the Hospitium, but during the works and associated investigations of the YMT flood pump this issue appears to have been addressed and there was no moat to speak of. Encouraging.

Once the newly extended and raised flood bank has been cleared of stones and general debris then the Environment Agency's landscape contractor will reseed with a mixture of hard-wearing grass and some wildflower mix in certain areas. Following the reseeded, the terracing behind the Hospitium will be the first area to be planted.



Primroses and Cowslips
Photo: Steve Williams

We are really looking forward to the tulips / Spring bulbs show on the back of the mass (7000+) bulb planting last Autumn which was courtesy of the First Bus Social Club generous donation to the Garden. The team and I are watching the emergence of the tulip foliage with a tangible excitement at the thought of a spectacular display across the Garden from around mid-April.

I'm keen on introducing more native wildflowers to the Garden, specifically to those areas that I am developing as a habitat for wildlife. In early March we planted some Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and Cowslip (*Primula veris*) on the east of the bulb bank and in the area opposite the Pavilion on the other side of the path where we are allowing the grass to grow longer. They are both attractive native plants flowering early in the season, providing an early source of nectar for various insects including bees, beetles, and butterflies such as the Brimstone which frequent the Garden. This fits with my belief that to encourage biodiversity in the Garden you need to support the food chain from the bottom up (i.e. insects).

The team have been sowing some annual plant seeds as we want to increase our resilience by growing some of our own tender plants to complement the perennial planting in the Garden. We have had success over the last couple of years with the likes of introducing the long-flowering Cosmos 'Purity' to the Tempest Anderson flowerbed. We have taken some hardwood cuttings through winter to see if we can produce a few young shrubs. All of these exercises are good for the team and we build knowledge and skills that can be put into good practice when we obtain the polytunnel, hopefully in autumn this year so we have time to prepare and plan for the 2023 growing season.

Steve Williams
York Museums Trust

Improved Hearing Loop for TA Hall

The York Museums Trust is currently doing a major refurbishment of the Tempest Anderson Hall. This includes renewal of the complete projection and sound system partly funded by a grant from the Yorkshire Philosophical Society. Part of the refurbishment is the renewal of the audio loop system for the hard of hearing. In the past this has suffered a number of problems including intermittent operation and interference from the loop in the King's Manor university lecture theatre immediately adjoining the hall along its rear wall. Andy Marvin and Rod Leonard have designed, installed, and tested a trial hearing loop that should solve these problems when the hall is back in use. YPS member Geoff Hutchinson of YMT has already installed the permanent loop to the YPS design - it works perfectly- and he is now installing a new electronic control system. The new loop covers only the lower front block of seats rather than the whole hall. The reduced area ensures a stronger and more reliable signal within the loop and eliminates the interference from the university loop.



Pictured are Rod and Andy installing the trial version of the new loop prior to testing it.

York Festival of Ideas

This year's Festival runs from 11th to 24th June and as usual we are contributing a lecture to the programme, ***Sensors & Data-driven Generation of Medical Engineers*** by Professor Zion Tse of the University of York's Department of Electronic Engineering. This will take place in the Tempest Anderson Hall at the Yorkshire Museum on Wednesday 15th June at 7 pm (**please note the new start time**).

The talk will look at how digital health has been developed during the time of Covid to assist the UK's currently overwhelmed healthcare system and the roles of doctors and patients in future medicine. It will discuss state of the art technologies near or already in the market as well as ongoing research prototypes and how the pandemic has helped accelerate the development of the healthcare internet of things.

Tickets are free and will be available to book via Eventbrite once the Festival programme goes live on 29th April: <https://yorkfestivalofideas.com/>

If you don't have access to Eventbrite, don't worry. We also have a number of places reserved for YPS members so just come along on the evening.



Road Radar to Reveal York's Roman Secrets

The biggest investigation ever undertaken into Eboracum, the Roman city buried beneath York, is set to begin this summer. Ground penetrating radar will be used to map as much of the influential ancient settlement as possible in a bid to learn more about its evolving layout and use.

Did the Romans alter their legionary fortress at Eboracum in the late Antique period? What was the settlement around it like and how did this change? Did Eboracum receive a makeover when emperors came to town?

These are just some of the questions which Cambridge archaeologist Professor Martin Millett and his colleagues hope to answer without lifting a single spade or trowel.

Over summer 2022, a vehicle equipped with specialist radar equipment will survey 20km of streets around York – the first time a project on this scale has been undertaken in the UK. The team behind the scheme are working with City of York Council to access as much of the city centre road network as possible, including some pedestrianised streets, during the survey, with minimal disruption to the public.

The initiative is a joint project between Universities of Cambridge and Reading, York Archaeology and the York Museums Trust, funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The 30-month-long project aims to collate everything archaeologists and historians know about the whole of Roman York into a single database which will then be made freely available to the public.

For further details see:

<https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/road-radar-to-reveal-yorks-roman-secrets>

<https://www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk/romanyork>

Pint of Science 9th to 11th May 2022

Pint of Science is a worldwide Science Festival which brings researchers to your local pub/cafe/space to share their scientific discoveries with you. Thirty-three UK cities are taking part including York.

This year the YPS is pleased to sponsor an evening at Spark on 10th May: **Fixing York's Food and Water**. See: <https://pintofscience.co.uk/events/york> for details of this and other events including technology themed evenings at Walmgate Ale House and a geology evening at Fulford Arms and how to book.

Exploration from your armchair ... and in person

A “new” Yorkshire Scientist

Do keep an eye on our own website, both for what's coming up and the addition of new articles. The latest in our collection of Yorkshire Scientists and Innovators is John Hughlings Jackson: <https://www.ypsyork.org/resources/yorkshire-scientists-and-innovators/john-hughlings-jackson/>

Secret Wartime Britain

If you enjoyed (or missed) Colin Philpott's lecture to us on February 22nd and would like to know more, his books on this and other related subjects are available via his website: https://www.colinphilpottmedia.co.uk/n_Books.asp

Big Ideas by the Sea

Scarborough will host its second *Big Ideas by the Sea* festival in May, with music, poetry, history and archaeology. Contributors include Professor Carenza Lewis and Professor Joann Fletcher, who gave an inspiring lecture to the Society some years ago. The programme can be found at: <https://www.bigideasbythesea.com/>

YPS YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIQv7I8oVKCRgdzv8WeabBw/about>

The new YPS YouTube channel is now live or search for “Yorkshire Philosophical Society” on YouTube.

Please click “subscribe” and you will be sent an update when we add a new video to the channel. With 100 subscribers we will be able to include our official name in the URL above.

As you see right, we have just added Professor Tony May's presentation on York's traffic management “What can we do to reduce congestion?”

Note that some lecturers do not wish us to record their Zoom talks.

What can we do to reduce congestion?
(1): Increasing capacity: new construction

- Construction
 - Wider roads
 - Redesigned junctions
 - New roads
- These change the supply curve
 - And hence attract more users
 - E.g. Poppleton Bar roundabout upgrade
 - Traffic increased by 20% in two years
 - But still congested
- And are very difficult in inner York
 - York Inner Ring Road as proposed in 1971
 - And rejected in 1975

York Civic Trust: Promoting Heritage - Shaping Tomorrow

Diary

Important Note:

Please check the following times, dates and venues carefully, as there have been some changes since the listing in our last Newsletter. In particular, our evening in-person lectures in the Tempest Anderson Hall will now start at 7pm instead of the previous 7.30 (with the exception of 25th May).

For the most up-to-date information, please check the website: www.ypsYork.org

Tues 26 Apr, 12.00pm - YPS Social Event
Members' monthly lunch at York Theatre Royal

Wed 27 Apr, 2.30pm – YPS Lecture & book signing
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Northerners: A History from the Ice Age to the 21st Century Brian Groom

5 to 8 May – YPS Study Tour
Tour to Manchester, Liverpool, Canals & Jodrell Bank
4 days; 3 nights *See website*

9 to 11 May Pint of Science in York
Including on **10 May** YPS sponsored event at Spark:
Fixing York's Food and Water
See page 12

Tues 10 May, 12.00pm - YPS Social Event
Members' monthly lunch at York Theatre Royal

Wed 18 May, 7.00pm - YPS Lecture for Geology Month **NB change of date from 11th May**
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Is it time to rethink our approach to natural resources in Yorkshire? What contribution to the energy transition is possible?
Nick Shaw, University of Leeds

Thur 19 May – YPS Geology Group Walk
In The Footsteps of John Phillips
See page 5

Wed 25 May – YPS day visit
Rosedale Kilns and Railways *See website*

Wed 25 May, 7.30pm – YPS & Yorkshire Gardens Trust Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Thomas White (c. 1736-1811): Redesigning the Northern British Landscape Louise Wickham

Wed 8 Jun, 2.00pm - YPS AGM
followed at 2.30pm by YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
The World in 1822
Professor Jon Mee, University of York

Lodge closure
Frances is on holiday during week beginning 13 June

Tues 14 Jun, 12.00pm - YPS Social Event
Members' monthly lunch at York Theatre Royal

Wed 15 Jun, 7.00pm – YPS Lecture for York Festival of Ideas
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Sensors & Data-driven Generation of Medical Engineers
Professor Zion Tze, University of York
For booking information see page 11

Thurs 16 Jun – YPS day trip
Visit to Sheffield
See below and enclosed flyer

Thurs 23 Jun, 2.30pm – YPS Social Event
Garden Party
York Medical Society Rooms
See enclosed flyer

Tues 12 Jul, 12.00pm - YPS Social Event
Members' monthly lunch at York Theatre Royal

Thurs 14 Jul, 2.00pm – YPS visit
Tea, Cake and History at Bedern Hall
See enclosed flyer

Wed 20 Jul – YPS Lecture & presentation of John & Anne Phillips Prize
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
To be confirmed

Tues 9 Aug, 12.00pm - YPS Social Event
Members' monthly lunch at York Theatre Royal

Dates for your diary – full information and booking forms will follow in future newsletters

Sat 15 Oct, half-day – Symposium
The Anthropocene as a viable stratigraphic unit

Wed 7 Dec
Bicentenary Dinner

Launch of new YPS History Book
Date to be confirmed

Bread and Steel

Day visit to Worsborough Mill, Barnsley, and Kelham Island Museums in Sheffield

Thursday 16th June, 8.30am to 6pm, by coach

See the full details on the enclosed flier. Starting at Worsborough Mill with a talk and tour with Simon the Miller we will continue by coach to Sheffield to tour at Kelham Island the 1916 street and explore the Steel Industry and Transport galleries. We plan to conclude our day with a visit to the Glass Museum at Sheffield University.

Lunch is available to buy at the Millowners Café or the Island Café or bring a packed lunch.



SAFEGUARDING

The Yorkshire Philosophical Society (YPS) takes seriously its obligations and responsibilities to protect and safeguard the welfare of any child, young person or vulnerable adult who attends our events.

Unless otherwise stated, all our events are open to members and non-members. We welcome children provided that they are accompanied by a responsible adult.

The Safeguarding Policy is displayed at the Lodge. The Safeguarding Officer is the Chair, Ms Catherine Brophy (chair@ypsyork.org) to whom all safeguarding concerns should be addressed.

PRIVACY

The Yorkshire Philosophical Society (YPS) holds members' names and addresses and, where supplied, telephone numbers and email addresses. This personal information is used for sending out details of our activities. The information remains confidential and is retained within the Society. Members may have access to their personal information on request by contacting the Clerk at info@ypsyork.org