Founded 1822

Yorkshire Philosophical Society 1822 - 2022

NEWSLETTER

Yorkshire Philosophical Society

Promoting the public understanding of science since 1822

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From the Chair

Dear Members,

The autumn lecture programme began with our largest audience since 2019 for Lucy Creighton's lecture on "Interpreting the Ryedale Hoard". As Curator of Archaeology at the Yorkshire Museum, Lucy gave us an engrossing, erudite and enlightening account of this wonderful acquisition for York and the Museum. If you haven't seen the exhibition, do go along to the Museum to see it and share your thoughts about who buried the hoard. In the first October talk we were shown photographs from the Hanstock Photographic Collection by Ian Drake from YAYAS. Included were images of the Declaration Announcements for the accession of George V and George VI, something many of us experienced for the first time recently with our new King. Hanstock seems to have spent a lot of time in the new County Hospital with some impressive, posed photographs of patients undergoing various treatments, some of which looked rather painful. It was also fascinating to see photographs of the public events held in the grounds of Bootham Hospital including ones of the large helium balloon that got away and was chased on a bicycle by the photographer for 11 miles.

York Unlocked: queuing to look round the Lodge

October was a busy month as we also hosted our second symposium of the year, after the March Kirkdale 200 event, organised by Professor Colin Waters from the Yorkshire Geological Society on "What does the Anthropocene look like? Evidence for its formalisation as an epoch". There were four distinguished speakers from the Universities of Sheffield, Southampton, UCL and York with data rich presentations that gave us much to think about. It was explained that scientists are considering twelve locations around the world as possible Golden Spikes — formally called "Global Boundary Stratotype Section and Points". Look out for an announcement about the chosen location on 8th December 2022.

The next day we opened the Lodge for "York Unlocked", a weekend when many of the secrets of York's buildings were shown to the public. Seven

With this Newsletter

- Lecture Programme: Spring 2023
- Subscription Reminder (if applicable)

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.

YPS members volunteered for the Sunday sessions wondering if we would have any visitors. But even before the 10am opening we were busy. Rod and Margaret Leonard had arranged history displays in the reading room, including details of royal visits and signatures copied from our beautiful visitor's book beginning with that of a young Princess Victoria; the original is safely stored in the Borthwick Institute. Next door in the work room was a fossil handling session staffed by Liam Herringshaw and Paul Thornley. Outside Jon Coulson kept the queues in order and entertained them while downstairs Anne Coulson explained the beginnings of the society and the history of the building to groups of 8, (we filled the 8 chairs facing the desk constantly). Groups were then guided up the stairs and I dashed around answering questions and fighting the photocopier for back-to-back copies of Lodge history notes along with copies of the lecture programme. We estimated that over 230 people visited during our four-hour opening across the day. We would like to repeat this for two days next year but definitely need more volunteers for this and other activities: see right.

We have order forms available on the website and in the Lodge for **"Cave to Cosmos: A history of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society"** written by historian and YPS member Sarah Sheils. We plan to launch this bicentenary project on 29th November with a talk and reception and hope that members will support us by pre-ordering a copy. Thank you to everyone who has already done so.

We are delighted with the response to the invitations to the Bicentenary Dinner. The venue can hold a maximum of 80 and at time of writing there are just a few places left, so if you wish to join us, please let Sharon Lusty know as soon as possible.

Café Scientifique has continued in the Guildhall with Dr Rasha Rezk, from the University of York, giving us a presentation on her cutting-edge research on "A Novel Microfluidics device to study the impact of mechanical stresses on blood stem cells". Several of her colleagues from York and Cambridge also joined us and it was good to share the enthusiasm of these young scientists.

We still have a Zoom licence and are organising some lectures during the autumn and winter which you may join online from home. To celebrate its centenary in 2022, we started on 3rd November with a talk, "Inside the BBC", from Colin Philpott, who gave us an excellent Zoom presentation last February based on his book "Secret Wartime Britain". The Zoom invitation is sent a couple of days before these events to everyone on the YPS emailing list.

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

Catherine Brophy, Chair
chair@ypsyork.org York 499179

Help!

Despite appeals for help in previous newsletters we are still in need of a Secretary, Treasurer and volunteers to assist with other aspects of the Society's activities.

Next summer our Chair, Catherine Brophy, will step down after 8 years in the role, having kindly accepted an extension to the usual 5-year term in order to guide the Society through the Covid pandemic and our bicentenary year.

Margaret Leonard, who has led our Activities Group for the past 10 years, has given generous notice that she will also be relinquishing her role at the next AGM in June.

If we cannot fill these vacancies, the Society will be unable to continue its present activities and may have to consider closing down.

We appeal particularly to younger members and the recently retired to please come forward and talk to us about how you may be able to help. Taking a more active role in a society such as ours is enjoyable and rewarding. Even the more "responsible" roles of Treasurer and Secretary are not at all onerous for someone with relevant experience.

The more volunteers we have, the more the work can be shared out – and the more we can achieve together. Do you want to see the Society continue to put on high-quality public lectures in the heart of York, arrange interesting trips and enjoyable social events for members and encourage young scientists with grants, prizes and research opportunities?

To avoid seeing headlines like this next summer, step forward now!

THE PRESS

31 August 2023

Yorkshire Philosophical Society closes after 200 years

A Yorkshire society which celebrated its bicentenary only last year is set to close in 2023. "We just can't find any new volunteers to take the Society forward into its third century", said retiring Chair, Catherine Brophy. "It's a terrible shame."

The former office of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society

York Museums Trust News

We were very pleased to receive the Trust's announcement of its new Chief Executive and extend a warm welcome to Kathryn on her arrival from not very far away.

York Museums Trust is delighted to announce the appointment of Kathryn Blacker as its next Chief Executive. Kathryn Blacker is currently Chapter Steward at York Minster where she has worked for the last nine years. During that time Kathryn has led on the transformation of the lay workforce, overseen projects to diversify income, ensure financial and environmental sustainability, implemented systems to understand audiences and business better and led a programme to invest in the wider estate. Prior to her role at York Minster Kathryn worked in the cultural sector for 15 years, initially at the BBC as part of the team which delivered BAFTA Interactive award-winning programmes and later at the Science Museum Group where she led on public activities, exhibitions and events as Deputy Director of the National Science and Media Museum at Bradford.

Yorkshire Museum winter opening

The Yorkshire Museum will be closed to the public on Mondays and Tuesdays from 28th November, and the opening times will also change. Instead of being open from 11am to 5pm, the Museum will be open from 10am to 4pm. The Museum Gardens will remain open 7 days a week, 9am to 6pm as currently.

If you would like to support the trust and the Yorkshire Museum in these continuing difficult times, donations are welcome:

https://www.yorkmuseumstrust.org.uk/support-the-trust/donations/

Etheldred Benett and the Making of Museums

In Spring 2020 YPS and the Yorkshire Museum hosted a placement for a MA student as part of the University of York's Public Engagement with History programme. We planned to present some of the research by Emily Markham, the placement student, in the showcase in the entrance to the Yorkshire Museum. The date we had pencilled in was 23rd March 2020, but Covid then closed the Museum. We are delighted to announce that the showcase now has the display based on Emily's research, so do have a look at this next time you are in there, but don't leave it too long; the display may change in December. Thanks to Dr Sarah King, Science Curator at the Yorkshire Museum, who has facilitated this research and prepared the display.

Etheldred Benett (1776-1845) was an early geologist who built up one of the most extensive geological collections of her age. Most of her fossils came from Wiltshire, where she lived. In 1830, Etheldred wrote to the Yorkshire Philosophical Society promising to give them a selection of fossils and a catalogue of her collection.

News from the Activities Group

Our monthly Drop in Lunches at Theatre Royal continue to provide a popular opportunity to meet friends and keep up to date with YPS activities. There will be a break in December, as most of us will be busy with other things, but they will start again in January. Dates will be published on the website.

Members who took part in the joint trip with YANT (York Association of the National Trust) on the 15th September to Seaton Delaval Hall, near Whitley Bay, had a very enjoyable day, but they were surprised to discover the National Trust had chosen an unusual approach to the recent renovation, reflecting the Delaval family's theatricality and love of practical jokes. The group was fortunate to have an excellent guide, who was able to explain and interpret the result.

In October, our geologically-minded members took part in the Yorkshire Geology Society's Symposium hosted by YPS and YMT in the Tempest Anderson Hall. The Symposium explored the move to name the current time period as a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene. This reflects the dramatic acceleration since around 1950 in the changes that human activities are making to the earth.

As our Bicentenary year draws to an end, we are looking forward to our Bicentenary Dinner in the Mansion House. This will take place on 7th December, exactly 200 years after the first meeting of the Society. Tickets for this very special occasion are selling well, but a few are still available – contact Sharon Lusty via the YPS Lodge, Museum Gardens, York YO1 7DR, email info@ypsyork.org, phone 01904 656713.

Next year, as you know, we hope to take a multiday trip to Northern Ireland, exploring Belfast and Derry/ Londonderry cities, the Giant's Causeway, Mount Stewart and Hillsborough Castle – but we need more people! More information can be found on our website, and if you would like to join the tour, please contact Sharon Lusty as soon as possible – contact details above.

We are also working on a number of day trips, details of which will be published in the next newsletter.

Margaret Leonard

A date for your diary

Manuela Sowter is planning a day trip to Shibden Hall and Farnley Hall, two fascinating and very different houses, for Thursday 6th July 2023. Further information will follow next year, but please make a note of the date now.

Northern Ireland - update

Booking forms for our tour on 15th to 19th May 2023 are now available and there are still some places left. Please contact the Lodge – info@ypsyork.org; 01904 656713.

YPS Members' monthly lunch

Join us for our 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, reserved for our sole use. We will be delighted to enjoy lunch with friends new and longstanding. Come along on our first date of the New Year; no need to book.

- Tuesday 10th January 2023

Please note that there will be no Monthly Lunch in December.

Notes from the Geology Group

1. Online material for self-guided trips: Filey Brigg

Aim to explore the Brigg starting at a falling tide. Erratics, fossils, quarrying of Birdsall Calcareous Grit, karstic limestone pavement, cryoturbated sandstone and Hambleton Oolitic Limestone under tills on the South side. Boulder fields of large Thalassinoides burrow casts from crustaceans on the East, imbricated by storms or tsunamis. Regular rows of cannonball size 'ball beds' in the Saintoft member on the North side.

Best guide available is the GA Guide 'Geology of the Yorkshire Coast' Excursion 10. Not on line:

GA Guide 34_Yorkshire Coast

Online try: https://ukfossils.co.uk/2010/03/18/filey/.

Stratigraphy and map at:

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Filey-Brigg-FB-Yorkshire-magnetostratigraphy-with-placement-of-main-ammonite-levels_fig2_222959388

https://sites.google.com/site/seaanglingeastcoast/home/maps-and-guides/map-4-filey-brigg

Event

Pocklington District Heritage Trust Conference: 16th November

Recent developments in archaeology and geology within Eastern Yorkshire

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/recent-developments-in-archaeology-in-eastern-yorkshire-tickets-401118224407

https://pocklingtonhistory.com/

2. Women and Men in Geology:

Inge Lehmann ForMemRS (13 May 1888–21 February 1993) was a Danish seismologist and geophysicist. In 1936, she discovered that the Earth has a solid inner core inside a molten outer core.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inge_Lehmann

Inge Lehmann

A Journey to the Center of the Earth

https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/rosetta-stones/inge-lehmann-8220-a-small-solid-core-in-the-innermost-part-of-the-earth-8221/#

https://www.amnh.org/learn-teach/curriculum-collections/earth-inside-and-out/inge-lehmann-discoverer-of-the-earth-s-inner-core

And some mathematics:

https://www.maa.org/sites/default/files/pdf/upload_library/2/Rousseau-CMJ-2014.pdf

3. Online Study and Resources:

York Centre for Lifelong Learning has a Saturday session in November with Liam Herringshaw:

The Fossils of the Yorkshire Coast. Saturday 19th November. On Zoom

https://www.york.ac.uk/lifelonglearning/dates/202223/non-accreditedcourses/scienceandearthscience/autumn/fossilsoftheyorkshirecoast/

4. Our Museum of the Month:

Elgin Museum (in Elgin, Moray) has an excellent collection of Permo-Triassic reptile fossils as well as other geology.

https://elginmuseum.org.uk/museum/collections-fossils/

5. Books and Mags:

Riches of the Earth. Three volunteer survey teams across three South Pennine moorland areas recorded the surviving mining and extraction industrial remains and researched available historical evidence. Watershed Landscape Project

https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Riches+of+the+earth%3A+interpreting+mining+and+mineral+and+stone+…-a0352495448

Geosupplies say they have secured the final copies of the book. 2 copies for £7.95 available

https://www.geosupplies.co.uk/acatalog/Riches-Of-The-Earth-3906.html

https://www.geosupplies.co.uk/acatalog/Riches-of-the-Earth-3907.html

Paul Thornley

Winter Reading

John Stevens' book on industry in Clementhorpe is now on sale, price £8, at Pextons Hardware and Frankie & Johnny's Cookshop on Bishy Road, and also at The Slip Inn in Clementhorpe and The Swan on Bishopgate Street. Mail orders can be arranged by contacting Clement Hall Local History Group on clemhallhistory@gmail.com

Two hundred years ago …

October – December 1822

Who founded the Yorkshire Philosophical Society?

We all know the answer, don't we? William Salmond, Anthony Thorpe, and James Atkinson: who met in Atkinson's house in Lendal on 7th December 1822, talked about what was to be done with the Kirkdale fossils, founded the Society, and invited William Vernon Harcourt along to their next meeting. Voilà! The Yorkshire Philosophical Society was up and running. The rest – to use the tired old cliché – is history. Trouble is, history keeps getting rewritten, or at least edited. (Which is, of course, precisely what historians do, and what they're *for,* 'History' always being a rear-view-mirror reconstruction of events.

So – is this what *really* happened? More or less, but not quite …

William Salmond himself saw things slightly differently. A few years later the question of who founded the Society surfaced, and, in Salmond's words '***I am the person who originated that Society***.'

Jump forward in time to 1831. The Society is approaching its tenth year of existence, and establishing its position on the national stage. William Vernon Harcourt, after much correspondence with the great and the good of British Science, convenes a *General Scientific Meeting* attended by '*upwards of 300 gentlemen*', including Brewster, Babbage, Coneybeare, Whewell, Murchison … as well as members of the Society. Out of this meeting emerged the British Association for the Advancement of Science – partly as a rival to the august Royal Society. Unsurprisingly the first Secretary of the BA was none other than William Vernon Harcourt.

Of our founding Trinity, Atkinson was presumably present, Anthony Thorpe had recently died, and William Salmond was enjoying the hospitality of John Bacon Sawrey Morritt at Rokeby Park (near Barnard Castle), probably indulging in a spot of shooting. Morritt, although never a member of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, was acquainted with a number of relevant scientific gentlemen, many of whom had stayed at Rokeby Park, Humphry Davy and Roderick Murchison among them. Murchison, indeed, had decided on a scientific career while on a shooting party at Rokeby, and was again staying there a few days before the York meeting. If he didn't meet Salmond at Rokeby on that occasion, their respective stagecoaches must have crossed between Rokeby and York.

In his youth, Morritt travelled widely in Greece and Turkey, and while in Athens had made a serious attempt to acquire sculptures from the Parthenon frieze. Had things turned out differently, the Yorkshire Museum, rather than the British Museum, might today have been under pressure to return the 'Morritt Marbles' to Greece.

In the course of the Scientific Meeting at York, numerous and lengthy speeches were made. Unfortunately, in one such, Lord Milton – Patron of the Society – said that he '*could not conclude without saying a few words of well deserved praise of your Reverend friend, to whom the Yorkshire Philosophical Society owes its origins'*: the Reverend friend in question being, of course, William Vernon Harcourt.

This took place on Tuesday 27th September, and was reported verbatim in the York Courant of Saturday 1st October. By the following Wednesday the Courant had reached Rokeby Park. Salmond read the article: and exploded. In an indignant letter to Lord Milton – by now at his family seat of Wentworth Woodhouse – '*Your Lordship's most obedient, and very humble Servant'* complained that '*injustice has been done me'* in not being given sole credit for founding the Society, and for '*that Rev. Gentleman having received such a complement without correcting the mistake'* particularly as '*erroneous reports on this subject* [had previously] *circulated*'.

Salmond's letter reached Milton, at Wentworth Woodhouse, two days later and Milton replied immediately: '*I hasten to express my regret that any thing which is reported to have fallen from me, should have had the effect of appearing to deprive you of your merited honor'*. But he really couldn't remember his exact words: besides, '*a gentleman who was present'* had observed that Harcourt '*indicated by his gestures that he was not entitled to the praise of being the founder of the Society'*.

Not good enough! By the time of Lord Milton's reply, Salmond was on a tour of the Lake District: by 18th October the letter had caught up with him at Eden Hall, near Penrith. In his reply, *'your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant*' demanded nothing less than '*as public a correction of the mistake, as that to which it was given to the Scientific world*' at the York meeting.

One suspects that the Viscount Milton (later Earl Fitzwilliam) was not altogether used to demands. But, *noblesse oblige*, he bit his tongue and (October 22nd) replied rather tersely to the effect that Salmond had '*my full permission to make any use that you may think advisable, of this acknowledgement of my mistake'*.

William Salmond thereupon published the entire correspondence in the form of a booklet, and circulated it - as he thought advisable - presumably sending a copy to the Rev. Harcourt.

The sequel to this tale is a letter from Harcourt to Milton, dated 11th November, and printed (presumably

with Lord Milton's prior agreement) in the Yorkshire Gazette the following day:

'*MY DEAR LORD*

> … *The first foundation of the public collection … was unquestionably laid by Mr James Atkinson, Mr Salmond, and the late Mr Thorpe, their donation of the fossil bones … from the Kirkdale Cave. With whom the proposal to deposit these remains in a Public Museum originated, I know not. The idea was suggested to me by Dr Buckland, and I communicated the suggestion to Mr Thorpe. Having afterwards consulted on the manner of carrying it into effect, I proposed to extend the plan, and instead of a public Museum only at York, to found a Yorkshire Scientific and Antiquarian Society. I drew up a Prospectus of such a Society … and on the principles of that Prospectus our Society was formed*.'

'*With a mind intent on other things'* (such as the establishment of the British Association) he hadn't really noticed the remarks of Lord Milton to which Salmond took such exception: but that evening, at a public dinner in the York Tavern when Roderick Murchison had similarly referred to him as the founder of the Society '*I did not neglect to rectify a similar statement … an honour which I said I only shared in an inferior degree with those, who by their public-spirited contribution of the Kirkdale remains, had laid the basis of the Collections'*. (Note: 'Collections' not 'Society')

This is somewhat ambiguous: did Buckland gave Harcourt the idea of a museum and Harcourt then have the idea of a Society, which he took concrete steps towards founding? Was Harcourt first to have the *idea* of a Society, and Salmond the first to implement the idea? Everyone remembered what was important to them at the time, and only vaguely recalled the rest …

The fuss seems to have subsided at this point, although relations between the President of the Society (Harcourt) and Vice-President (Salmond) may have been a trifle strained. Perhaps the latter, all along, had thought he should be occupying the prestigious post of the former?

What of James Atkinson, the other surviving member of the founding trio? Atkinson must have issued the invitation to Salmond and Thorpe to meet at his house to discuss their respective Kirkdale collections and put together the proposal to found both Society and Museum, then to invite Harcourt to join them in this endeavour. He doesn't seem to have shown any interest, ever, in who was recognised as founder of the Society. He was certainly in York at the time of the 1831 meeting (busy raising funds for a bust of Harcourt, actually) and probably attended at least some parts of the Great Scientific Meeting. If he was present when Lord Milton made his *faux pas*, then his mind, too, may have been *intent on other things*, such as the forthcoming dinner at the York Tavern, rather than worrying about who was rightfully due credit for the founding of the Society, ten years earlier.

So the conventional account of the founding of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society is – more or less – what actually happened. But not quite.

Peter Hogarth

Post, Post-script to Kirkdale Symposium - What happened to Frances Duncombe?

The YPS newsletter, August 2022, included an article about Frances Duncombe, who as a young woman assisted at the Kirkdale Cave explorations. Ros Batchelor is now able to add interesting extra information from the excellent summary of early members of YPS, compiled by Bob Hale:

https://www.ypsyork.org/resources/yps-archive/members_1822/

- Frances' husband, Sir Thomas Digby Legard, (1803 -1860), 8th Baronet Legard of Ganton Hall was listed as a member in 1831, a year before their marriage.
- Frances' brother, William Duncombe (1798-1867), second Lord Feversham from 1841, was listed as a YPS member in 1839, and became Patron in 1843.

Bob Hale adds that in later years two more Legards were elected to the Society:

- 1869 - Rev Francis Digby Legard (1829-1883), born York, son of George and Ann Elizabeth. He was vicar of Whitwell.
- c.1885 (precise date not given) - a Lady Subscriber (ie access to gardens, but not a voting member), Mrs Henrietta Isabella Legard, nee Simpson (1817/18-1897), of 2 Bootham Terrace, the widow of Rev Digby Charles Legard - they had married at Foston 1846, he had died 1851 aged 36. It was very common in the 19th century for single ladies and widows moving to the Bootham area to become Lady Subscribers.

Note: We hope to update our 1822-55 Index of Members soon, with additions and corrections. 1855-90 is also in preparation and enquiries about that period are welcome.

Museum Gardens in Autumn

Here are a few photos for you ... The Ceratostigma (groundcover plant) at the base of the Agastache is one which bees love. The Ceratostigma foliage turns quite crimson red in Autumn and therefore is a good example of the Garden in transition at this time of year. The trees are turning. It has been a good fruiting year and whilst I wondered whether the trees would all drop their leaves very early due to the summer heatwave and drought they haven't done so far. In fact many of the trees remain surprisingly green. When the temperature drops we should see the change become more pronounced. We have a number of trees in the garden that show strong autumn colour so one to keep an eye out for.

Our photo here is of a beech tree that dropped a branch due to the drought. We lost a branch off this tree last year so we are keeping an eye on it as are our tree experts. With beech and horse chestnut trees, current thinking is it is best to leave a bit of damaged branch away from the tree (rather than cut back flush to the trunk) as these

particular trees are more prone to rot setting in if a wound is cut back flush. So this way of managing wounds better protects beech and horsechestnut - so it's not a case of we just haven't had them tidied up properly!

The third photo is of the developing Prairie planting which is in its second year and is a real boon to pollinators and a good example of our increased pollinator-friendly herbaceous planting around the Garden. These plants are late summer flowering and continue into Autumn providing some late year highlights.

We have had the ghosts (15 of them) in the Garden until early November, and we are also supporting YorkBID (who provide the ghosts) by allowing them to

locate their animal sculptures they have had scattered around the city in the Artists Garden (a relatively secure space) for a few months over Winter. It has provided some added interest to this space until it is utilised by York Art Gallery next Spring.

The team are once again bulb planting and will be managing the decline of the Garden over the next months including the annual labour-intensive job of removing the fallen leaves - although it always delivers the cyclical reward of leaf compost further down the line.

Steve Williams
York Museums Trust

The Past is for Learning, the Present for Living, the Future for Dreaming:
Selections from *A York Chronology* by John Bibby

The future continually becomes the past. Remorseless wave after remorseless wave obscures the memory and destroys the detail. It is all very messy and quite unlike the tidy narratives of history as historians teach it.

Part of history's messiness that later gets tidied up into 'disciplines' results from the fact that 'real' history is extremely *un*disciplined. Different things occur at the same time, often in the same place. We have the word 'synchronous' for the former; we do not really have a word for the latter. *The York Chronology* is an ongoing collaborative project which aims to capture some of real history's messiness by presenting in time-order a miscellany of dated happenings in and around York over the short-century of European peace that lay between 1815 and 1914. We welcome further collaborators![1] [If interested, please contact the YPS office; messages will be forwarded to John.]

Here are excerpts from the *Chronology*'s account of 1881, an altogether unremarkable year (except that the world is coming to an end).

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3 April 1881

The UK's fifth modern census estimates the total population of England, Scotland and Wales as just under 30 million. York's population is 49,530 in the Municipal Borough and 60,343 in the Parliamentary Borough. These figures are 13 and 18% higher than in 1871 and 3 and 11% lower than in 1891.

17 April 1881

Easter Sunday. The pantomime at York Theatre Royal is *"Little Red Riding Hood and Bo-Peep".* Special late trains are put on for the benefit of country visitors.

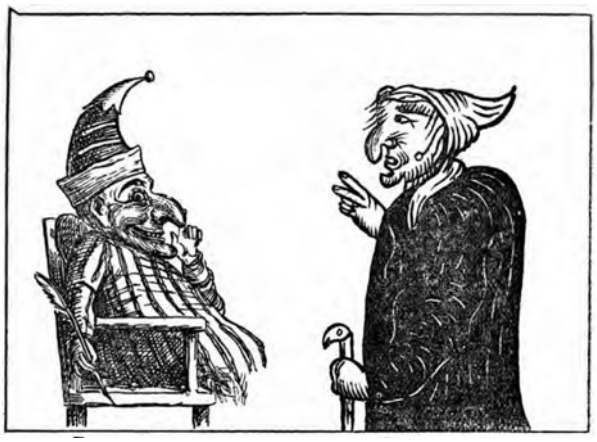
18 June 1881

The *Yorkshire Gazette* publishes a letter from "Conservator" entitled "Our Ancient Monuments":

> *Sir, - The demolitions of picturesque York are continuing apace. In one part of the city – the river side – two of the few remaining old buildings have practically disappeared. ... We shall probably always have the city walls and bars, the ruins in the Museum Gardens (which ought to be called the "Abbey Gardens"), Clifford's Tower and a few other antiquities, but York has a reputation for general picturesqueness, which increases in proportion as other towns, more careless than ours, destroy their curiosities. It is a reputation few towns can boast, but one which, if these demolitions continue, will soon be lost."*

1 July 1881

Messrs Wetherill and Son's auction of "Household Furniture, Wines, and Effects … in the matter of John Wind Coates, deceased[2]" takes place. The "Effects" includes a "Walnut Cheffioneer" (sic) and a "Pianoforte in Walnut Case" (*York Herald,* 28 June). An unrelated report (Roden 2005[3]:18) states that in the same month, July 1881, a "pianoforte in walnut case" is delivered to the Choir House of York Minster School and is "signed for by the organist, Dr Monk".



"*Resemblance of Mother Shipton to Mister Punch of Fleet St*" (1881, Source: *Wikipedia*)

2 July 1881

At this midpoint of 1881, the *York Herald* warns that the end of the world is nigh, according to Mother Shipton, "the English Pythonness". One of her predictions "finished up with an awful climax":

> *"The world to an end shall come*
> *In Eighteen Hundred and Eighty One".*

Mother Shipton was born Ursula Sontheil, "a misshaped child, of indifferent size, with big bones, large goggling eyes, a long crooked nose, and with crooked misshapen legs". Despite this and her mother's early death, Ursula excelled at school and at the age of twenty-four, "she was married to one Toby Shipton, of Shipton near York". Ursula soon developed "a reputation for insight into the future" and her entry into the world of prophecies began.

In order "to calm the public mind and to allay vulgar terror", the *Herald* also points out that this hoax was fabricated as recently as 1873. It would presumably die at the end of the year after it had been shown to be false. But it receives new life via a slight but crucial refinement so it reads:

> *"The world then to an end shall come*
> *In Nineteen Hundred and Ninety One"*
> (Simpson 1910:3, 26)[4].

However, the author of this ingenious alteration was hardly impartial. For J.W. Simpson's address was "Mother Shipton's Dropping Well, Knaresborough" where he was manager and/or proprietor. His refined prediction would have been more accurate and longer-lasting if he had been slightly more adventurous and instead forecast that:

The world to an end shall come
In Twenty Hundred and Twenty One".

For 2021 came in the middle of the Covid plague and just before the Ukraine war.

15-18 August 1881

D'Oyly Carte are on tour. After Scarborough and Hull they visit York Theatre Royal with a new Gilbert and Sullivan opera *Patience; or, Bunthorne's Bride*. George Thorne played Bunthorne.

Patience was premiered in April; and moves in October to London's Savoy Theatre. There it will become the first theatrical production in the world to be entirely lit by electric lighting and from then on, G&S aficionados become known as "Savoyards".

The opera is a satire on the aesthetic movement of the 1870s and 1880s. One wonders whether that movement had even reached York before the G&S burlesque arrived. The central character Bunthorne is not Oscar Wilde as commonly supposed, but more likely Algernon Swinburne or Dante Gabriel Rosetti, who were considerably more famous than Wilde in early 1881.

31 August – 8 September 1881

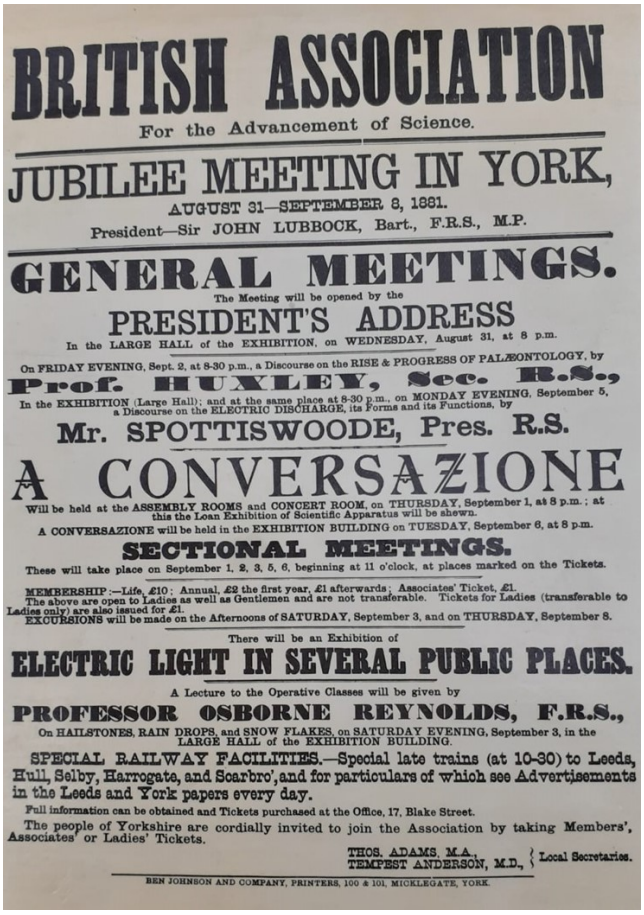
The 50th anniversary Jubilee Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science takes place in York, home of the inaugural meeting in 1831. The 80-page programme of local arrangements includes maps and details of excursions to Scarborough, Wensleydale and beyond. "Special late trains" leave York at 10.30 every evening for Leeds, Hull, Selby, Harrogate and Scarbro'.

A poster announcing the meeting lists the following among its highlights:

- "An Exhibition of Electric Light in Several Public Places"
- *A Conversazione* in the Assembly Rooms and Concert Room on 1 September
- Prof. Huxley on palaeontology in the Exhibition (Large Hall) the following day.

Life Membership of the Association costs £10; Annual Membership is "£2 the first year, £1 afterwards". An "Associates' Ticket" is just £1: These are "open to Ladies as well as Gentlemen and are not transferable". However, perhaps as a nod towards positive discrimination, "Tickets for Ladies (transferable to Ladies only) are also issued for £1".

The meeting's "Manufactories" section includes visits to Thomas Cooke and Sons, the Locomotive Works, Terry's Confectionary Works on Skeldergate, York Glass Works, a sawmill behind St. Sampson's Church, Balmford's Dyeing Establishment, Varvill's "wood turning and plane making on an extensive scale" and Richardson and



BRITISH ASSOCIATION
For the Advancement of Science.
JUBILEE MEETING IN YORK,
AUGUST 31—SEPTEMBER 8, 1881.
President—Sir JOHN LUBBOCK, Bart., F.R.S., M.P.
GENERAL MEETINGS.
The Meeting will be opened by the
PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS
In the LARGE HALL of the EXHIBITION, on WEDNESDAY, August 31, at 8 p.m.
On FRIDAY EVENING, Sept. 2, at 8-30 p.m., a Discourse on the RISE & PROGRESS OF PALÆONTOLOGY, by
Prof. HUXLEY, Sec. R.S.,
In the EXHIBITION (Large Hall); and at the same place at 8-30 p.m., on MONDAY EVENING, September 5, a Discourse on the ELECTRIC DISCHARGE, its Forms and its Functions, by
Mr. SPOTTISWOODE, Pres. R.S.
A CONVERSAZIONE
Will be held at the ASSEMBLY ROOMS and CONCERT ROOM, on THURSDAY, September 1, at 8 p.m.; at this the Loan Exhibition of Scientific Apparatus will be shewn.
A CONVERSAZIONE will be held in the EXHIBITION BUILDING on TUESDAY, September 6, at 8 p.m.
SECTIONAL MEETINGS.
These will take place on September 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, beginning at 11 o'clock, at places marked on the Tickets.
MEMBERSHIP:—Life, £10; Annual, £2 the first year, £1 afterwards; Associates' Ticket, £1.
The above are open to Ladies as well as Gentlemen and are not transferable. Tickets for Ladies (transferable to Ladies only) are also issued for £1.
EXCURSIONS will be made on the Afternoons of SATURDAY, September 3, and on THURSDAY, September 8.
There will be an Exhibition of
ELECTRIC LIGHT IN SEVERAL PUBLIC PLACES.
A Lecture to the Operative Classes will be given by
PROFESSOR OSBORNE REYNOLDS, F.R.S.,
On HAILSTONES, RAIN DROPS, and SNOW FLAKES, on SATURDAY EVENING, September 3, in the LARGE HALL of the EXHIBITION BUILDING.
SPECIAL RAILWAY FACILITIES.—Special late trains (at 10-30) to Leeds, Hull, Selby, Harrogate, and Scarbro', and for particulars of which see Advertisements in the Leeds and York papers every day.
Full information can be obtained and Tickets purchased at the Office, 17, Blake Street.
The people of Yorkshire are cordially invited to join the Association by taking Members', Associates' or Ladies' Tickets.
THOS. ADAMS, M.A.,
TEMPEST ANDERSON, M.D., } Local Secretaries.
BEN JOHNSON AND COMPANY, PRINTERS, 100 & 101, MICKLEGATE, YORK.

Advert for 1881 BAAS meeting in York

Co.'s Manure Works at Skeldergate Bridge. At the latter establishment, the proprietors will explain about artificial manures as well as "the manufacture of superphosphates from bones and other sources of phosphate of lime".

The programme includes a full page description of "The Electric Light", which was new at the time: Mr. Hammond of London, Liverpool and Middlesbrough will use "Brush" Electric Lights, each of 2000 candle-power, to illuminate York Station and several other local venues. These arc lights are named after their inventor, Charles Brush of Cleveland, Ohio. They cost 2d per hour to run "and burn for 16 hours without any attention". By contrast, the Lane Fox incandescent lamps which are used in the Feversham Gallery in the Exhibition each have 20 candle-power and cost one penny per light per hour.

10 November 1881

"Awful Occurrence at the York Gas Works": four workmen, Moran, Dalby, Whitely and Clarke are killed while sinking shafts at the 'new' gasworks on Layerthorpe.

Their inquest opens on Friday 11th with Mr J.P. Wood as Coroner. It lasts two days and commences with the jury viewing the bodies of the deceased at the hospital and in the cabin on the grounds of the new works.

The Company is represented by Mr W.H. Cobb, solicitor, and by the chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and chief clerk. Several men who worked at the works and Mr North, surgeon, also attend.

Moran had fallen from a plank into the 22-foot shaft and was then overcome by fumes. Dalby, Whitely and Clarke went to assist him and they too were overcome. George Fox also started descending but when he was part-way down "he appeared to be swooning off" and a colleague "seized him by the collar and saved him". The shaft was one of about 200 which had been dug on the site.

The coroner summed up that "the occurrence was purely accidental" and "there had been no evidence that gross negligence, or any negligence, applied to any parties connected with the Gasworks". The Jury then passed a verdict of "Accidental death". "Mr J.F. Taylor, on behalf of the Gas Company, expressed thanks to the coroner and the jury for their very patient investigation of the case. … The deceased men were buried at the cemetery on Sunday morning". (*York Herald*, 19 & 26 November)

John Bibby

Notes

1) The *York Chronology* is at present an ever-expanding file on my computer which contains a selection of dated citations relating to York in time-order, starting in 1815 with press reports from Waterloo and ending in 1914 with reports about the murder in Sarajevo. The excerpts from 1881 presented here are unconnected except that they all relate to York and were roughly at the same time. *In the perceptions of York residents these happenings were local and synchronous.* I'd welcome advice about what to do with this ever-increasing file, and I'd welcome collaboration from anybody with contributions or suggestions about how to develop the project further.
2) John Wind Coates (1828-1870) of Stokesley was a first-class cricketer; his estate was held up for a decade in legal disputes.
3) Roden, J.M. (2005) *The Minster School, York: A Centenary History 1903-2004*.
4) Simpson, J.W. (1910) *The life and prophecies of Ursula Sontheil, better known as Mother Shipton*.

Exploration from your armchair

The Yorkshire Museum is continuing its series of online talks in support of the Ryedale Hoard exhibition. Coming up over the winter:

17/11/22 – 4.30pm
Dead gods? Presenting Romano-British religious experiences in museums
Antony Lee, Durham University

15/12/22 – 5.30pm
Roman Yorkshire's metalworkers
Emily Tilley, York Museums Trust

26/01/23 – 4.30pm
Toil and Trouble: Magic, Roman Britain, and the Ryedale Hoard
Adam Parker, Open University/York Museums Trust

16/02/23 – 5.30pm
Living in the Roman Countryside
Emily Tilley, York Museums Trust

16/03/23 – 4.30pm
Gods in bronze: the pantheon of Roman Britain and the Portable Antiquities Scheme
Dr John Pearce, King's College London

All of the booking details of these are available via YMT's website:
https://www.yorkshiremuseum.org.uk/exhibition/the-ryedale-hoard-a-roman-mystery/

Nature Briefing is a free daily e-newsletter containing news from the world of science. Recent articles have covered the winners of the economics Nobel prize, underground microbes that might have swarmed ancient Mars and research at one of Latin America's leading hospitals.
Nature Briefing: Daily Science Newsletter with summarized analysis

Leeds Civic Trust has an extensive collection of talks on its YouTube channel. If you are interested in the history or architectural heritage of Leeds, you will find much to fill dark evenings here:
https://www.youtube.com/c/LeedsCivicTrust/videos

YPS Subscription Renewal

For members who pay their subscriptions by cheque, cash or Paypal, guidance on how to renew for 2023 can be found on the enclosed form (a separate attachment if you're reading this online). We would be grateful if you could return this to the office at the Lodge by Monday 12th December to enable prompt processing. If there is no form enclosed, this means your subscription will automatically be paid by standing order or has already been paid by other means, and you need do nothing.

2023 membership cards will be sent out with our first newsletter of the new year in late January or early February. Your 2022 card remains valid until then, so please retain it.

If you have any questions about your subscription, membership category or how to renew, please contact Frances on info@ypsyork.org or 01904 656713.

Thank you very much to all those who defy the years by continuing to subscribe at the full rate long after their 60th birthdays or who round up their annual payment by a pound or two. These contributions are especially appreciated during these difficult times.

Two Jewels in the Yorkshire Museum

29th November 2022, 6.30pm
Tempest Anderson Hall

We are delighted that our lecture on 29th November will not just be one of the rare occasions when we welcome two speakers but uniquely our speakers will be twin sisters. Archaeologists Dr Mel Giles (University of Manchester) and Dr Kate Giles (University of York) will focus attention on two jewels in the Yorkshire Museum's collections.

The Danes' Graves wheel-headed pin is on display in the Museum's prehistory galleries. Discovered in 1897 by the Antiquarians Mortimer, Greenwell and Boynton, this coral-incrusted bronze pin was found behind the head of a woman buried in one of the classic 'Arras-style' square barrows. Its story allows us to explore the life of an East Yorkshire Iron Age woman and her Continental connections, and the role of women in these chariot-loving, farming communities.

The Middleham Jewel is an exquisite gold locket which forms a centrepiece of the Museum's medieval galleries. Discovered by metal detectorist Ted Seaton in a cow field in North Yorkshire in 1984, this intricately-engraved reliquary pendant reveals the religious beliefs and ritual practices which surrounded elite women in the later middle ages, as they navigated their role in the great households of the north.

Whilst these two jewels are separated in time by two millennia, Kate and Mel will reflect on the ways in which modern approaches to their analysis and interpretation offer new insights into the making and meaning of decorative objects in the Yorkshire Museum's collections.

We hope you will be able to join us in the Tempest Anderson Hall for this lecture; please note the earlier time of 6.30pm.

The Middleham Jewel
& the Danes' Graves Wheel-headed Pin
Image: courtesy of York Museums Trust

Tuesday lectures in the Tempest Anderson Hall

Although the Yorkshire Museum will be closed to the public on Mondays and Tuesdays over the winter, our Tuesday lectures in the Tempest Anderson Hall will continue as normal. For afternoon lectures, there will of course be access to the toilets for attendees but, if moving through the building, please be aware that there will be other people around. Curators and contractors will be working and school groups may also be present. There will be someone in the foyer to let lecture attendees in and out but please note that the front door will not be kept open for the duration of the lecture. Any late-comers will have to knock loudly on the front door!

Jane Ewbank Diary Conference

Friday 9th June 2023, 9.30am to 12.30pm
Tempest Anderson Hall

We are delighted to be working with the Centre for Eighteenth Century Studies, University of York on a summer symposium to celebrate the diary of Jane Ewbank.

Further details will follow next year but we hope that the morning will include:

- John Christie (University of Oxford): 'Chemical Yorkshire: mineral waters, itinerant lecturers, and Jane Ewbank's account of the Eskdale-side alum works'
- Rachel Feldberg (CECS University of York): 'From crocodiles to the structure of the universe: Jane Ewbank and ways of knowing in early nineteenth-century York'
- Matthew Eddy (University of Durham); 'Rewriting nature: how Jane Ewbank learned to understand climate science through keeping a diary'

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.

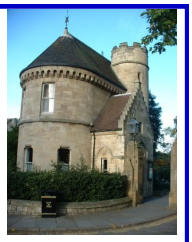
PRIVACY

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

Diary

Important Note: Please check the following times, dates and venues carefully, in particular our lectures in the Tempest Anderson Hall, as times and days of the week do vary. For the most up-to-date information, please keep an eye on our website: www.ypsyork.org

Lodge Opening



We apologize to anyone who has tried to call into the Lodge in recent weeks and found it closed. Unfortunately Frances injured her leg in September and has been obliged to rest it, which has made accessing an office with no parking facilities extremely difficult. She is recovering slowly, while working from home, and regular opening hours will be resumed as soon as possible.

In the meantime, thank you for your patience, and best wishes to Frances for her continuing recovery.

Christmas holiday

Frances is on holiday from midday on Friday 23rd December to Monday 2nd January. Back to work on Tuesday 3rd January, but do phone first to check she is there before visiting the Lodge.

Wed 16 Nov, 2.30pm – YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Jurassic Giants of Yorkshire and Wyoming
Professor Philip Manning, University of Manchester

Tue 22 Nov, 7.00pm - YPS Lecture with presentation of Wellbeloved & Ramm Awards
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Flagship of Early England: Reconstructing the Sutton Hoo Ship
Professor Emeritus Martin Carver, University of York

Tue 29 Nov, 6.30pm – YPS Bicentenary Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Two Jewels in the Yorkshire Museum
Dr Kate Giles, University of York & Dr Melanie Giles, University of Manchester

Tue 29 Nov, 7.30pm Bicentenary Book Launch
Followed by Reception by invitation only

Wed 7 Dec, evening – YPS Social Event
Bicentenary Dinner at York Mansion House

Tue 13 Dec, 7.00pm – YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Air Quality: A West Yorkshire Perspective
Dr Jim McQuaid, University of Leeds

2023

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

Tue 17 Jan, 2.30pm – YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
History of the World in 100 Pandemics, Plagues and Epidemics Paul Crystal, author

Tue 31 Jan, 7.30pm – YPS Lecture
On Zoom – an invitation will be sent out by email
Title to be confirmed
Dr Brett Sallach, Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences, University of York

Wed 15 Feb, 7.00pm – YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Joint lecture with IET North Yorkshire
Decarbonising Transport in York
Dave Atkinson, Head of Highways and Transport at City of York Council

Wed 1 Mar 7.00pm – YPS Lecture
Details to be confirmed

Tue 14 Mar, 7.00pm – YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Five Deeps Expedition. (Title to be confirmed)
Heather Stewart, British Geological Survey, Edinburgh

Wed 5 Apr, 7.00pm – YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Henry VIII and York
Professor Bill Sheils, University of York
Joint lecture with guests from Glasgow Royal Philosophical Society

Tue 25 Apr, 7.00pm – YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Engineering the Voyager Space Craft (title to be confirmed)
Professor Emeritus Andy Marvin, University of York.

Tue 9 May - YPS Lecture
Details to follow

15 to 19 May – YPS multi-day trip
Tour to Northern Ireland
Places available; please contact info@ypsyork.org

Tue 23 May - YPS Lecture
Details to follow

Fri 9 Jun, 9.30am to 12.30pm - Symposium
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Jane Ewbank Diary Conference
with the Centre for Eighteenth Century Studies, University of York
Details in a future newsletter

Tue 20 Jun, 2.00pm - YPS AGM followed by Lecture (details to follow) at 2.30pm
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall

Tue 18 Jul, 2.30pm – YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
John & Anne Phillips Lecture with University of Hull