

Founded
1822



NEWSLETTER

Yorkshire Philosophical Society

Promoting the public understanding of science since 1822

The Lodge, Museum Gardens, York, YO1 7DR, 01904 656713, info@ypsyork.org, www.ypsyork.org

From the Chair

Dear Members,

On December 7th it was a great pleasure to enjoy the bicentenary dinner with more than 70 members of the Society in the splendid surroundings of the Mansion House. After all the problems everyone has faced over the last few years it felt an achievement to put on our glad rags and share an evening with so many friends who have supported and volunteered for the Society over many years. It was a particular pleasure to be joined by our Vice Presidents, including Dr Peter Addyman and Mrs Barabara Weatherley who were both present at the 150th anniversary dinner at Castle Howard in 1972 and who have organised many activities over the years for the Society. We were privileged to listen to an inspiring after dinner address by Professor Phil Manning, from the University of Manchester, who reminded us of the distinguished scientists who have led and worked with the Society from John Phillips onwards. Professor Manning then

With this Newsletter

- ♦ Lecture Programme: Spring 2023 (version 2)
- ♦ Visit to Kirkleatham, 28 February
- ♦ Cawood, Stillingfleet & Naburn Locks, 20 April
- ♦ Tour of Minster Precinct, 21 April
- ♦ Walk at Flamborough, 10 May
- ♦ Visit to Bolton Percy, 14 June
- ♦ Membership Card(s) or Subscription Reminder (as 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.



Installing the YPS display in the Yorkshire Museum foyer

challenged us to look at new ways forward for the next two hundred years.

In November we launched our bicentenary book *"From Cave to Cosmos": a history of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society* with a reception in the Medieval Galleries in the Yorkshire Museum. We congratulate and thank Sarah Sheils for writing such a lively and well researched history as part of our bicentenary

celebrations. Earlier in the evening we had an opportunity to celebrate “Two Jewels” from the Museum when we welcomed archaeologists and twin sisters Dr Mel Giles (University of Manchester) and Dr Kate Giles (University of York) to reflect on respectively *The Danes’ Graves wheel-headed pin* and *The Middleham Jewel*. They explained how modern approaches to analysis and interpretation offer new insights into the making and meaning of these decorative objects and the women associated with them.

Short reports of lectures and Café Scientifique talks are included in the printed Annual Report sent in late Spring to all members but they are also included on the website. If you search by the date the lecture was held or title, and from the original entry scroll down, you will find a report from one of our members. Thanks to everyone who has reviewed talks in 2022. Zoom lectures are recorded when the speaker has given us permission and are added to the YPS YouTube channel; see page 10.

November was a busy month starting with a Zoom talk to celebrate the BBC centenary from Colin Philpott “Inside the BBC” which was recorded. As COP 27 was taking place in Egypt we held a joint lecture with PLACE and the Royal Geographical Society on “International Climate Politics after Glasgow” with Dr John Vogler from the University of Keele. Our next guest speaker was Professor Phil Manning who gave a tour-de-force on the story of geology, an enthralling afternoon travelling the geological world with a reminder of the importance of the Yorkshire coast and a first view of a recent special find that hopefully will find a permanent home in the Yorkshire Museum. Despite technical issues Professor Martin Carver gave us a comprehensive account of the project to reconstruct the Sutton Hoo ship (see page 10). Our final lecture of the year on “Air Quality: A West Yorkshire Perspective” gave us an overview of the Bradford and Leeds programme to improve air quality, which was recently cited by Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer, as an exemplar project.

At the Yorkshire Museum you will now find guard rails in the Tempest Anderson Lecture Theatre to help you to your seat, and YPS Council was pleased to offer a small grant towards this improvement.

If you have not yet seen the Ryedale Hoard Exhibition in the Yorkshire Museum, it will be continuing for another year.

We welcome Kathryn Blacker as CEO of York Museums Trust, and we will be inviting her to join us for several of our future events.

We are still looking for volunteers for a range of jobs and in particular we would like to set up a rota for staffing the reception desk at lectures. Do talk to any of our volunteers; they are the people wearing name badges with the YPS logo at events. As we know

people enjoyed sharing a drink after evening lectures, we will be inviting members to join us for a drink in the Minster Arms on Marygate after some of the evening lectures. This will be a chance to meet Trustees and other volunteers; everyone is welcome. The monthly drop-in lunches at the Theatre Royal are continuing and are a good way to catch up with old friends and make new ones.

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

*Catherine Brophy, Chair
chair@yps-york.org*

Help still needed!

As mentioned above, we are still in desperate need of more volunteers. At time of writing we need a Secretary, Treasurer, Coordinator for our Activities Group, a representative for the committee of CBA Yorkshire and more help to organize activities and at lectures.

If you are among the members who have joined us recently and are enjoying what we do, please don’t be reticent about volunteering to help. Come along to one of our monthly lunches or join us for drinks after a lecture and meet our trustees for an informal chat about what is involved. Even the principal officers’ duties are not onerous for those with relevant experience and the more volunteers we have, the easier it is to share out the tasks.

Please do come forward and experience the satisfaction of helping to organise something like our Bicentenary Dinner (see page 5).

York Museums Trust News

In November York Museums Trust was delighted to announce that the Arts Council will be continuing its vital support for the next three years as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO).

Although Arts Council support is good news YMT, including the Yorkshire Museum, still relies on donations and if you would like to support them this is the link:

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

Yorkshire Museum winter opening

A reminder that the Museum will be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays and opening hours the rest of the week are 10am to 4pm. They will change during school holidays. The Museum Gardens is open 9am to 6pm seven days a week.

News from the Activities Group

The YPS bicentenary year came to an end in great style, with a splendid dinner at the Mansion House. Good food, interesting company, and an inspiring speaker in this stylish setting, beautifully decorated for Christmas, provided the perfect way to celebrate the many remarkable achievements of the Society. Thanks are due to many people who helped to make this event possible – Sharon Lusty, Catherine Brophy, Dorothy Nott, to name but a few.

Activities for Spring and Early Summer

By now, the days are gradually lengthening, so however miserable the weather, there is a promise of Spring, and we can start to think about getting out and making new discoveries.

We are sad to report that the planned multi-day tour to Northern Ireland did not attract sufficient bookings, and so had to be cancelled, but we have some interesting day trips for you, which are outlined below. More details can be found in the enclosed flyers.

Coaches and cars

A problem that we found last year is that coach hire has become very expensive, and often on trips we were not able to fill enough seats to justify the cost. For that reason, all the tours below are by private car. If you are in the happy position of having your own car, could you consider offering one or more places to someone who is less fortunate?

We will be offering one day trip by coach on 6th July, to Shibden Hall and Farnley Hall, so we do hope you will support that. Details and booking forms will be in the next newsletter.

Our trips by car

28 February - Kirkleatham

A geologically flavoured day-trip to Kirkleatham Museum and village, led by palaeontologist Dr Liam Herringshaw. The trip will provide a wonderful opportunity to learn about the archaeology, local history, and industrial heritage as well as the geology of the area. Organiser Paul Thornley

20 April - Cawood, Stillingfleet and Naburn Lock

These three places on the B1222 from Selby to York demonstrate a wealth of local (and national) history. Organisers Rod & Margaret Leonard

10 May - Rocks, Fossils and Ice Ages at Flamborough

Paul Hildreth of Yorkshire Geological Society will lead us in a circular walk along the shore between Danes Dyke and Sewerby returning along the cliff top path, with beautiful views of the Yorkshire coast. Total distance 3.5km. Organiser Paul Thornley

14 June - Bolton Percy

We visit Hornington Manor farm for a talk and guided tour round the hemp factory, followed by lunch in Bolton Percy, before visiting the village church and war graves. Organised by Sharon Lusty.

As well as these excursions, we are continuing our monthly Drop In Lunches at Theatre Royal. These provide an excellent opportunity to meet friends and keep up to date with YPS activities. February's lunch will be on Valentine's day ... join us for romance in the Theatre Royal!

Margaret Leonard

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 any of the dates below; no need to book.

- ♦ Tuesday 14th February 2023
- ♦ Tuesday 14th March 2023
- ♦ Tuesday 11th April 2023

Dates 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 in the next Newsletter, but please make a note of the date now ...

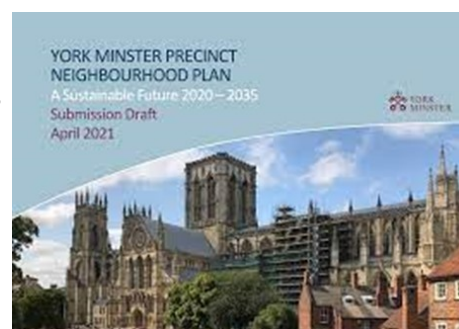
... and save the date for a trip to Sledmere to include a tour of the house, walled garden, museum and stables on Thursday 21st September 2023. Further information to follow.

STOP PRESS!

Tour the Minster precinct and learn about the new Neighbourhood Plan

Friday 21st
April 2023,
2.00pm

See flyer
enclosed



Notes from the Geology Group

1a) Online material for self-guided trips.

A trip along the Great Wold Valley, The Prehistoric Gypsy Race Trail. A Leaflet is available from East Riding of Yorkshire Council. 'The Valley of the Kings'. Geology and Archaeology.

<https://www.sewerbyhall.co.uk/outdoor-walks/>
https://www.sewerbyhall.co.uk/EasySiteWeb/EasySite/StyleData/sewerby-hall-and-gardens/downloads/prehistoric_gypsy_race_trail.pdf

Derek Gobbett's article on the last 65 million years of the Yorkshire Wolds is at

<http://www.hullgeolsoc.co.uk/hg1521.htm>

And if you don't want to leave the house, there is a YouTube tour of the area at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cZNb4OrPpg&ab_channel=Around%26AboutYorkshire

1b) Events and Talks: Online and in person

Yorkshire Geological Society events:

YGS Presidential Address is still available to watch on YGS YouTube. Nick Riley brings the Carboniferous environment to life, discussing the development of species after the great death at the end of the Devonian period, with a special mention of insects and dragonflies in particular.

The Carboniferous: a very special time on Earth.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqpyakQjITo&ab_channel=YorkshireGeologicalSociety

Saturday 25th March, **Yorkshire's natural resources and their contribution to energy transition.**

Meeting at Standedge Visitor Centre, Marsden

Saturday 29th April, **Yorkshire Geology Day** at the National Coal Mining Museum, near Wakefield.

Elsa Panciroli talk on **British Mesozoic fossils and the emergence of mammal traits** is postponed

Duncan Hawley at the History of Geology Group has offered to make the HOGG online talks available to YPS members. (Admission would otherwise be through Eventbrite for a small fee). He believed the talk on the Leeds University Bingley Archive would be locally relevant. I will forward links, when I receive them.

Thursday 16th February 2023 (lunchtime) Arthur Young and the first geological maps of Norfolk and Suffolk with Dr Peter Riches

Thursday 16th March 2023 (lunchtime) Geology, Photography and Institutional History in the Godfrey Bingley Archives - an intimate relationship between geology and scenery with Dr Rebecca Jarman, University of Leeds

2) Women and Men in Geology:

Dr Ruth Siddall, UCL, Geologist and Pigment Scientist.

Ruth Siddall will be giving a YPS lecture later in the year. I mentioned one of her sites last month, but I thought it would be useful to see a wider range. As well as lecturing in the Department of Earth Sciences at UCL, she researches minerals and pigments and studies urban building stone in London and around

the country. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ucfbrxs/Homepage/rhome.html>

<https://wildpigmentproject.org/ruth-siddall>

A talk at: <https://c-a-s-t.org.uk/projects/water-and-stone/dr-ruth-siddall-keynote-talk/>

3) Online Study and Resources:

All three episodes of the BBC programme 'The Island' The story of Ireland's epic geological journey, spanning 1.8 billion years, presented by Liz Bronnin, is on BBC iplayer.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001cd9m>

Issue 58 of Earth Heritage, the geological and landscape conservation magazine, is available at:

https://www.earthheritage.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/EH-58_final_web.pdf

This has a wide range of topics from a review of Natural Nature Reserves, a review of The Lake District, Landscape and Geology book I mentioned some months ago and a discussion of UNESCO and the important role geodiversity has in achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

4) Real Trips outside:

Tuesday 28th February. A YPS trip to Kirkleatham, led by Liam Herringshaw.

Earthleatham: A geologically flavoured day-trip to Kirkleatham Museum and village.

A flyer and booking form are with this newsletter.

Wednesday 10th May. A YPS walk from Danes Dyke to Sewerby and back, led by Paul Hildreth of YGS. Details in the enclosed flyer.

5) Our Museum of the Month:

The National Stone Centre, Wirksworth is set within six former limestone quarries in the heart of the Derbyshire Dales, on the edge of the Peak District National Park, and close to the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, the National Stone Centre (NSC) is a 40 acre Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), for its geological formations, offering outdoor and indoor activities for all. This has plans for a major new building.

6) Books and Mags:

The Rocks of Wales - Their Story - by Dyfed Elis-Gruffydd. Publisher and review:

<https://carreg-gwalch.cymru/rocks-of-wales-their-story-2239-p.asp>

<https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Geoscientist/books-arts/2019-reviews/Elis-Rocks-of-Wales>

Extra

YoCo (York Central Co-Owned) have free monthly talks at St Barnabus Church, Leeman Road, about the York Central development and what YoCo is doing to shape its future.

Saturday 25th February, Andrew Morrison of York Civic Trust is talking on the history and pre-history of the central area and landscape. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/yoco-monthly-open-meeting-launching-york-central-heritage-forum-tickets-503473792667>

Paul Thornley

Celebrating our Bicentenary



Our Bicentenary Dinner on 7th December 2022 was a splendid occasion, held in the beautiful setting of the Mansion House. Participants enjoyed good food and conversation, and a stirring after-dinner speech by Professor Phil Manning, who looked back with pride at the aims and achievements of the Society's founders, emphasized the important role amateur societies can still play in providing an interdisciplinary approach in an increasingly specialized scientific world, and laid down a challenge for our next two hundred years: to encourage the young to become involved in science.



Photos: thanks to Paul Thornley

From Cave to Cosmos a talk by Sarah Sheils on 14 January 2023

To a large and appreciative audience of U3A members Sarah Sheils delivered a vivid account of her recent publication, *From Cave to Cosmos: a History of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society*. Against the background of a burgeoning interest in science and the growth of (literary and) philosophical societies in the north of England, Sarah explained the use of the term 'natural philosophy' before proceeding to outline the genesis of the YPS. Using a progression of striking images, she took the audience from the finds in the Kirkdale Cave via the first attempts at flight by George Cayley and Tempest Anderson's trip to Mount Vesuvius through to the comet *Neowise* passing over Oxfordshire in July 2020, neatly illustrating the book's title. It would be impossible to include all the memorable events and people involved in the society over its 200 years as Sarah herself intimated as she ended her presentation

with a photograph of Sir David Attenborough opening the Jurassic exhibition in 2018. However, she certainly whetted the appetite of the audience as evidenced by the questions and the sale of the books she had astutely taken with her.

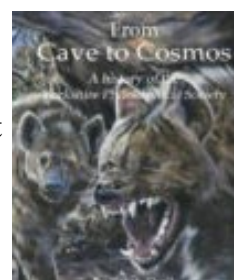
Dorothy Nott

From Cave to Cosmos: A history of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society

by Sarah Sheils

This new book records and celebrates the history of the Society over its first 200 years.

Available from the Lodge
Price: £14.99 (postage & packing extra)



Two Hundred Years Ago (approximately)

Audubon's *Birds of America* was one of the Society's most prized possessions: sadly, our copy was sold in 1947 for £2,700 when the Society found itself in straitened circumstances. A copy was recently sold at auction for £6.5 million.

How did such a treasure come to be in York? The answer as always, comes from archives.

To publish on the scale of *Birds of America* was a complex operation, involving negotiations with many engravers and printers, rounding up wealthy subscribers, and putting together various subscription 'packages' for the delivery of the 'product' by instalments. In one instance, for example, plates were issued in monthly packages – five birds. Including one large, one medium, and one small, text separate, subscriber to arrange own binding – which avoided the legal obligation (and expense) of giving copies of a very expensive book to the national Libraries of Deposit.

John James Audubon therefore had to be entrepreneur as much as author and artist, before his great work could see the light of day. This necessitated extensive promotional tours, in North America and Europe. One such tour brought Audubon to York, and into contact with the Yorkshire Philosophical Society.

Luckily, he kept a journal of his travels, which may have originated as a series of letters to his much-missed wife Lucy: nearly every daily entry began with a morning greeting and an affectionate good-night. I first came across the Journal a few years ago in the library of the *Athenaeum* of Portsmouth, New Hampshire: a venerable institution, founded in 1817, in many ways a parallel to the Yorkshire Philosophical Society and other 'Lit and Phils', although perhaps more 'Lit' than 'Phil'.

Our story begins with Audubon's arrival in York on Sunday April 22nd 1827. "Left Newcastle at eight, the weather cold and disagreeable, still I preferred a seat on top to view the country". His fellow-passengers were dull company: "not a word ... spoken except an occasional oath at the weather", and after passing through York's "disgustingly crooked and narrow" streets the travellers were deposited at the Black Swan and made a bee-line for the fire. Audubon, "anxious to find lodgings *not* at the Black Swan" immediately went to the Rev. William Turner, "son of a gentleman I had met at Newcastle" and was soon installed at Mrs Pulleyn's in Blake Street, commenting on his hosts – only in his journal, one hopes – that Mrs P. "looks like a round of beef, [Mr P] like a farthing candle", their relative weights being "as one pound avoirdupois to one ounce apothecary". (I make this a ratio of around 14:1).

The first evening in York concludes with a heartfelt "Oh that I were in Louisiana, strolling about the woods, looking at the gigantic poplars for new birds and new flowers!"

The following morning started inauspiciously. After snow, rain, and mist, Audubon set out to deliver his letters of introduction to various local gentlemen, all of whom were not in (or so Audubon was told). The Rev. Turner called. Turner was a Unitarian minister, alumnus of Charles Wellbeloved's (York) Manchester College and (of course!) a member of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society. He was accompanied by John Phillips, keeper of the Museum (then still in cramped rooms over a bank in Low Ousegate). Phillips viewed Audubon's drawings, but seems to have made no comment. Audubon spent the rest of the day exploring York in the rain, admiring the Minster and throwing pebbles over "a pretty little stream called the Ouse".

Next day he called on John Phillips, presumably at the Society's rooms in Low Ousegate: who assured him that the Society was too poor to purchase his work. He then spent the evening at the Rev. Turner's in company with four other gentlemen, who insisted on discussing politics and emancipation, rather than birds and subscriptions. (Several members of the Society were actively engaged in the anti-slavery movement.) April 26th brought a walk in the country, and a few birds - one or two warblers, a thrush, and some rooks – compared unfavourably with what would be offered by Ohio or Louisiana – but "To-day I have had a great number of visitors, and three subscribers". Things were looking up.

April 27. "A long walk early, and then many visitors, Mr Vernon among them, who subscribed for my work ... I am quite worn out; I think sometimes my poor arms will give up their functions before I secure five hundred subscribers". Mr Vernon, of course was William Venables Vernon, later William Vernon Harcourt, mainspring of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society. Was his subscription the one that led to *Birds of America* arriving in the Library of the YPS?



John James Audubon In 1836

April 28. After an attempt to capture an interesting butterfly by wielding his swordstick cane “as I whirled it round, off went the scabbard into the river ... and I stood with a naked small sword as if waiting for a duel” Audubon climbed the Minster tower with a spy-glass; “determined to push off tomorrow”; “paid an enormous bill to my landlady”; and reflected on the fact that York had yielded only five subscribers.

Next morning, Audubon duly pushed off to Leeds: after breakfasting at 5 o'clock and a refreshing walk along the Ouse, he caught the six o'clock coach. At Leeds – “much superior to anything I have seen since Edinburgh” he had an enjoyable time mixing with members of the Leeds Lit & Phil, and met a kindred spirit “a good ornithologist, – not a *closet naturalist*, but a real true-blue, who goes out at night and watches Owls and Night-jars”: probably John Backhouse, a gentleman not unknown to the Yorkshire Philosophical Society.

Nevertheless, much superior Leeds produced only five more subscribers: “poor indeed compared with the little town of York”. It may have been some compensation that while in London a few months later, Audubon received from Backhouse the present of two live Meadow Larks and some specially-concocted bird food: “I saw them with a pleasure bordering on frenzy”.

York and Leeds proving unrewarding with respect to subscription, Audubon moved on to Manchester ...

Peter Hogarth



American Flamingo by John J Audubon

Archbishop Vernon's “Bank of Mum and Dad”: preserving inequalities in 1823

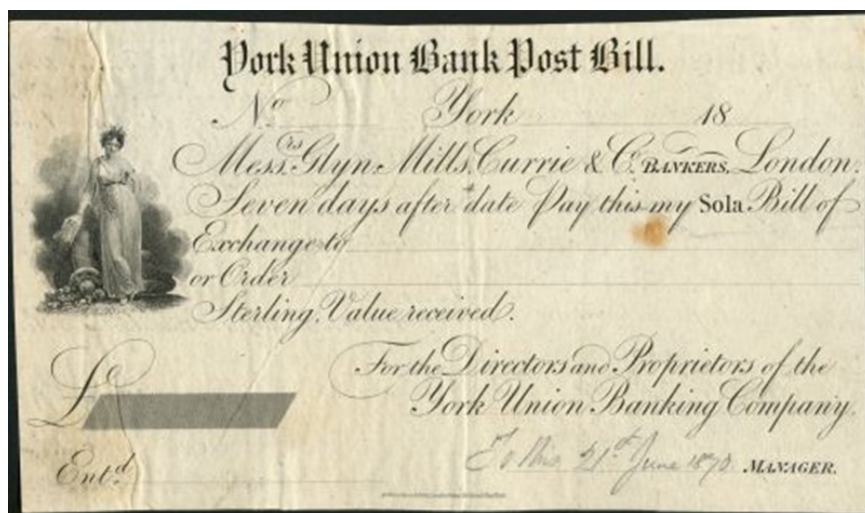
Two hundred years ago in 1823, Archbishop Vernon (1757-1847) writes from York to Charles (1798-1870), his profligate ninth son who has just succeeded his brother Leveson as Rector of Rothbury. He will remain there until his death. The 64-year-old prelate refers to his birthplace, Sudbury in Derbyshire, where he became Rector at the age of 25, the age that Charles now is. He shows great awareness, as we are aware today, of the unchanging importance of “Banks of Mum and Dad” in retaining power and unpower over profligate children and in preserving trans-generational inequalities between families. We do not have Charles's reply. (Note: £100 in 1823 would be worth some £10,000 today.)

31 July 1823

My Dear Charles.—I send you a Bank Post Bill for one hundred pounds, which the Bankers, either at Newcastle or Alnwick, will exchange for you into smaller Bank or County notes. I am well aware that you have not the great principles of character requisite for forming a good Economist, I mean activity and method, but I earnestly exhort you to endeavour to acquire them for your own comfort and credit's sake. You are mistaken in supposing that everything was so much cheaper when I became Rector of Sudbury than when you succeeded to Rothbury.

In 1782, when I commenced my Sudbury Residence, meat of all kinds, and corn, were dearer than in 1822. The articles supplied by the Oilman, the Tallow Chandler, and the Grocer, were as dear; in fact. I could not afford to buy either the superfine Green or Bohea Teas. In Coffee I did not indulge myself, but had about six pounds annually for my more particular Company, at an expense of about thirty shillings; but, then, recollect that, out of my £500 per annum, I had to pay for every individual article of my furniture (for I found only bare walls), for my Linen, Plate, China, and Wine. Of course I could not do this in one year, but I did it by instalments, out of the receipts of three years.

By strict and methodical economy I have struggled with very many pecuniary difficulties. In the first place I began by denying myself whatever I did not really want, and I made a point of entering regularly, in an account book, whatever I expended, and of settling monthly all my minor bills for meat, flour, common country groceries, etc.; and ever since I was delivered from the weight of my first setting out in furnishing etc., etc. I have invariably settled my annual bills on the 1st of January, or as soon after as I could get them in. This has placed me in the situation of independence, and of being able to provide for the necessities of my very numerous family and will, I trust, under the blessing of God, enable me to contribute further to their comfort at my death.



A pre-signed York Union Bank Post Bill from 1870

You have now my secret on this most important subject; whether you will profit by it remains to be seen. ...

*Ever affectionately yours,
F. EBOR*

We do not know whether Archbishop Vernon's reference to his "very numerous family" relates to his sixteen offspring, or to the seventy-eight cousins which his son, the founder of YPS, claims to have counted in his vastly extended family. Family loyalties often include both of these.

John Bibby

Jane Ewbank Diary Conference 8th to 10th June 2023

'Science, Gender and Sociability in a Northern City c. 1775-1820'

This conference, hosted by the University of York, is supported by the Centre for Eighteenth Century Studies, the Department of English and the Department of History, Modern Humanities Research Association, Yorkshire Philosophical Society, and the York Georgian Society.

Jane Ewbank (1778–1824) was the twenty-five-year-old daughter of a York druggist who kept a 34,000-word diary during 1803–1805, which details a conscious and informed project of self-education via reading, sociability, and her involvement in the intellectual and social landscape of a northern English city, including the theatre, concerts, science lectures, the natural world, and its materiality.

On Friday 9th June from 9.30am YPS is sponsoring a session on the history of science in the Tempest Anderson Lecture Theatre in the Yorkshire Museum. The theme for this session is "Jane Ewbank and the Acquisition of Scientific Knowledge". Lectures will include:

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

Places must be pre-booked for a small fee, there will be a special rate on 9th June for YPS members. We will let members know when the University of York booking website for the event is up and running. If you don't have internet access but wish to attend, please let us know.

Gardens News

I hope everyone has had a good start to 2023. It is late January and we have snowdrops in the Garden (planted last Autumn – I think we need more snowdrops and we will be increasing our stock over the next few years). In the last week or so we have had Steel & Maws our tree experts undertaking some of their scheduled annual winter work to ensure our trees remain healthy and in safe condition. It is good to get this work done whilst the Gardens are relatively quiet and the deciduous trees are dormant.

On the subject of trees, we now have 14 new trees planted in the Garden as part of the agreement with the Environment Agency further to the redevelopment of the Floodbank area. As some trees had to be removed to allow the floodbank to be raised and extended, I was able to negotiate that the EA purchase a number of trees for the Garden that would enhance our collection botanically-speaking, provide interest through colour and flowering, and help us ensure the ‘overstory’ (i.e. tree canopy) in the Garden for future generations.

I have been aware since joining the Trust that there are a lot of mature trees in the Garden and it was important to introduce some successional tree-planting. I am proud that we have planted 30+ new trees in the past couple of years (the majority in the last 6 months), increasing our total number of trees by 12%. This also accounts for the EA losses. That is a real positive step for the Garden. Some notables include *Paulownia tomentosa*, *Catalpa bignonioides* ‘Aurea’, *Pterostyrax hispidia*, *Stuartia pseudocamillia*...I could go on but it may get boring.

Also included in the above numbers are the apple trees forming the new orchard which has been



Snowdrops Photo: thanks to Steve Williams

planted in the location of the old swimming pool (next to the Hospitium) in recognition of the YPS bicentenary. The orchard consists of 6 old Yorkshire variety apple trees (Peter Hogarth and I worked together to identify the most appropriate cultivars) plus an Isaac Newton grafted apple tree (the cultivar is Flower of Kent). There will be a ceremony in Springtime when the weather gets a little warmer and a plaque will be planted next to the Isaac Newton tree in remembrance of Professor Jim Matthew, physicist and a leading figure in the Yorkshire Philosophical Society for many years. There will have been an orchard on the site of the Abbey from the seventeenth century onwards, and it is really great to be able to reintroduce one to the Garden. The idea is the orchard area will become a quiet part of the Garden with links to wellbeing and reflections, and orchards are fantastic environments for supporting wildlife. I am engaging with the Tansy Beetle Action Group about creating an improved planting area for Tansy with the aim of reintroducing tansy beetles once the planting has established.

I appreciate this update is very tree-focused, but I think it is interesting and uplifting for all concerned to understand how we are protecting and developing our collection of trees in the Garden. It has certainly been rewarding for myself and the team to undertake this valuable work.

There is lots going on so very briefly; the new polytunnel is entering its first season and we are gearing up for an abundance of seed sowing. We will be holding the Pop Up Plant Sales shop that we trialled last year fortnightly between April and June. It was a success, and it is a great way of increasing visitor engagement, sharing stories about gardening and plants and bringing in some revenue. We are also looking into introducing Garden Tours. Lots to do. Watch this space.

Finally, a big welcome to Kathryn Blacker from the Garden Team – its great to have Kathryn in place as our new CEO and we look forward to creating new exciting stories together in the future!

Steve Williams, York Museums Trust



*Planting the Newton apple tree
Photo: thanks to Steve Williams*

A Request for Reminiscences

The Yorkshire Architectural and York Archaeological Society would like your memories and reminiscences of former YPS & YAYAS member Florence Esther Wright. Miss Wright was a member of YPS from 1942 until her death in 1986. She was the education officer at the Castle Museum for over 25 years and many York residents remember her lessons in the museum. She is credited with being the formative inspiration behind many lifelong passions for history. To celebrate her influence and achievements YAYAS is hoping to write a memorial biography. To do this your help is needed. Please contact YAYAS archivist Anna Cook at collections@yayas.org.uk if you have any information or memories of Florence.

Archaeology Awards

Before our lecture on 22nd November we were delighted to be able to present our Archaeology Awards for 2022. Standards were so high last year that there were two winners for each award. Our warmest congratulations to all four students.

The Charles Wellbeloved Prize

Kira Crabtree for her dissertation "Assessing niche expansion in *Australopithecus anamensis* and *Australopithecus afarensis* through the re-analysis of palaeodietary evidence" and Megan Wells for her dissertation "Skeletons in the Closet: the ethics of bioarchaeological research on human remains in England"

The Herman Ramm Prize

Adam Ibbotson for his dissertation "More than Stone: contextualising Cumbria's prehistoric monuments" and Emma Trevarthen for her dissertation "Building analysis and biographies of derelict 19th century smallholders' cottages in Cornwall"

If you've ever wondered what our award winners go on to in their careers, on March 1st we will have chance to catch up with Ben Elliott, winner of the 2008 Charles Wellbeloved prize and now a lecturer at the University of the Highlands & Islands when he joins us via Zoom (see programme).

York Festival of Ideas 2023

Taking place from 3 to 16 June 2023, with the overarching theme of 'Rediscover, Reimagine, Rebuild'.

The programme will go live on 28th April 2023:

<https://yorkfestivalofideas.com/>

Exploration from your armchair

The Sutton Hoo Ship's Company

"The Ship's Company Team is a group of people with the collective desire to resurrect King Raedwald's burial ship and turn the famous ghost imprint into a living reality."

As a follow up to Professor Martin Carver's lecture in November there is a lot of information about the Ship's Company project online at:

<https://saxonship.org/>

The potential role of chemical pollution in the mass mortality events on the North East Coast

If you would like to follow up our lecture by **Brett Sallach** on Tuesday 31st January, the government report published in January 2023 is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/panel-of-independent-experts-publish-findings-into-crab-deaths>

There is a list of academics and others on the panel with the full report.

... and Science from your Armchair

If the visit of Thor the Walrus to the Yorkshire coast sparked your interest in these magnificent creatures, you may be interested to know that the World Wildlife Fund is running a "Citizen Science" project to count the world's population of them using satellite imagery ... and you can help! Visit <https://www.wwf.org.uk/learn/walrus-from-space> to find out more.

YPS YouTube Channel

Our latest Zoom lectures have been added to our YouTube channel so do take a look:

November 3rd 2022 - "Inside the BBC" - <https://youtu.be/6Vk8S7jKLCQ>

January 31st 2023 – "The potential role of Chemical pollution in the mass mortality events on the North East Coast" - <https://youtu.be/wcEkrJQikpY>

Sheldon Lecture

Tuesday 28th March at 7pm

**Bowland Lecture Theatre, University of York,
YO10 5DD**

Professor Bill Sheils is giving the Sheldon Lecture on the “**Life and works of Bill Sessions**”. It is free of charge, and people will be able to book shortly via the University’s Open Lecture links.

William Kaye Sessions was a Quaker, Printer, Publisher, Naturalist, and Philanthropist. He was Managing Director of Sessions of York, he acquired H. Morley Printers, now Quacks the Printers and established the Sessions Book Trust. He contributed to the Nuffield Trust’s Survey of Poverty among Old People, was appointed to the board of the Rowntree Village Trust and was instrumental in establishing the New Earswick Nature Reserves in 1952 and the River Foss Society in 1975. The lecture will discuss how his activities both reflected and contributed to significant changes in York’s economic, social, and cultural history.

Are you new to astronomy?

Then the British Astronomical Association and Society for Popular Astronomy ‘Back to Basics’ Workshop may be for you!

Saturday March 11th 2023 Priory Street Centre, 15 Priory Street, York, YO1 6ET Doors open at 10:00; finish by 17:45

The British Astronomical Association and Society for Popular Astronomy have designed a programme of talks with practical sessions to help you learn basic techniques in observing and develop your interest to its full potential. Experienced advisors will be on hand to answer your questions. They will cover what equipment you need to get started with an introduction to solar and planetary observing. For those already doing some observing there will be beginner sessions on Deep Sky Observing and Looking for Comets.

The cost of the meeting for non-members of the BAA and SPA is: adults £8.00, accompanied children (under 16) £6.00. Price includes refreshments but not lunch. BAA & SPA members benefit from a discounted price.

Please book online:

<https://baa-b2b-york23.eventbrite.co.uk>

or contact The British Astronomical Association office on Tel: 020 7734 4145.

Closing date 8th March 2023

A (Very) Short History of Life on Earth by Henry Gee

At the end of November the winner of the 2022 Royal Society Book Prize was announced as Dr Henry Gee for his book *A (Very) Short History of Life*, published by Pan Macmillan.

A (Very) Short History of Life is an enlightening story of survival, of persistence, illuminating the delicate balance within which life has always existed, and continues to exist today. It is our planet like you’ve never seen it before.

Life teems through Henry Gee’s lyrical prose – colossal supercontinents drift, collide, and coalesce, fashioning the face of the planet as we know it today. Creatures are engagingly personified, from ‘gregarious’ bacteria populating the seas to duelling dinosaurs in the Triassic period to magnificent mammals with the future in their (newly evolved) grasp. Those long extinct, almost alien early life forms are resurrected in evocative detail. Life’s evolutionary steps – from the development of a digestive system to the awe of creatures taking to the skies in flight – are conveyed with an alluring, up-close intimacy.

Dr Henry Gee was born in 1962. He was educated at the universities of Leeds and Cambridge. For more than three decades he has been a writer and editor at the international science journal *Nature*. His previous books include *The Accidental Species: Misunderstandings of Human Evolution*; *Across The Bridge: Understanding the Origin of the Vertebrates*; *Deep Time: Cladistics, the Revolution in Evolution*; *Jacob’s Ladder: The History of the Human Genome*; *The Science of Middle-Earth*, and (with Luis V. Rey) *A Field Guide to Dinosaurs*. He lives in Cromer, Norfolk, with his family and numerous pets.

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@yps-york.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@yps-york.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 hope now to return to regular opening hours:

Tuesday & Thursday
11.00am to 4pm

but please do telephone first to make sure Frances is there before making a special journey.



Tue 14 Feb, 12 noon
Members' Monthly Lunch
at York Theatre Royal

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

Tue 28 Feb – YPS visit
Earthleatham: day trip to Kirkleatham
See flyer enclosed

Wed 1 Mar, 7.30pm – YPS Lecture
On Zoom – an invitation will be sent out by email
Archaeology lecture (title to be confirmed)
Dr Ben Elliott, University of the Highlands & Islands

Tue 14 Mar, 12 noon
Members' Monthly Lunch
at York Theatre Royal

Tue 14 Mar, 7.00pm – YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Exploring Hades: geomorphology and sediments of the deepest places on Earth
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 11 Apr, 12 noon
Members' Monthly Lunch
at York Theatre Royal

Thur 20 Apr – YPS visit
Cawood, Stillingfleet and Naburn Locks
See flyer enclosed

Fri 21 Apr – YPS visit
Tour of Minster Precinct
See flyer enclosed

Tue 25 Apr, 7.00pm – YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Communicating with the Voyager Spacecraft
Professor Emeritus Andy Marvin, University of York.

Tue 9 May, 2.30pm - YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Wentworth Woodhouse
Peter Brown

Wed 10 May – YPS visit
Rocks, Fossils and Ice Ages at Flamborough:
a walk from Danes Dyke to Sewerby
See flyer enclosed

Tue 23 May, 7.00pm - YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Pavement Geology (title to be confirmed)
Dr Ruth Siddall, UCL
A lecture for Geology Month

Mon 5 Jun, 7.00pm – Café Sci
Venue: Bootham School
“From Cave to Cosmos”: YPS and Science in York
Sarah Sheils, Historian
A lecture for York Festival of Ideas

Fri 9 Jun, 9.30am to 12.30pm - Symposium
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Jane Ewbank Diary Conference
Details on page 8

Wed 14 Jun – YPS visit
Hemp Farm at Hornington Manor & Bolton Percy
See flyer enclosed

Wed 14 Jun, 7.00pm – YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
“A Story in Stone” from York to Oxford
Dr Nina Morgan
A lecture for York Festival of Ideas

Wed 21 Jun, 2.00pm - YPS AGM
followed by Lecture at 2.30pm
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
An Etruscan Sculpture in the Yorkshire Museum
Professor Maureen Carroll, University of York

Tue 18 Jul, 2.30pm – YPS Lecture
Venue: Tempest Anderson Hall
Title to be confirmed
Dr Bryony Caswell, University of Hull
John & Anne Phillips Lecture with University of Hull

Thur 21 Sept – YPS Visit
Sledmere House