

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,

Before joining the YPS Council, I was a trustee of York Centre for Voluntary Service (CVS). The CVS brings together over 300 voluntary groups and charities ranging from local football clubs to branches of international aid organisations and everything in between.

It always amazes me how many people volunteer with local groups and causes close to their heart. In the words of Alison Semmence, Chief Executive at York CVS,



Afternoon tea at the Grand Hotel

With this Newsletter

- ◆ Programme for Spring 2026
- ◆ Membership Card or Subscription Reminder for 2026 (Cards will be sent separately to members receiving this newsletter by email.)
- ◆ Visit to Burniston Foreshore and Betton Farm Quarry, 5 March
- ◆ Visit to Louth & the Lincolnshire Wolds, 23 April

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.

“Trustees are at the heart of every charity – large or small. They ensure organisations meet their legal and financial obligations while staying true to their charitable purpose. They give generously of their time, expertise, and energy, and most of them do so as unpaid volunteers.”

As a way of thanking and recognising local trustees, the CVS recently hosted an event at the Grand Hotel. Charities were invited to nominate trustees who had gone above and beyond. I gather there were many more nominations than places available, so I was absolutely delighted when Catherine Brophy received her invitation.

This was Catherine's citation:

Catherine Brophy has been a trustee of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society since 2013. She was chair from 2015 to 2023, which included the period of the pandemic. Her leadership enabled the Society to move online very quickly, running Zoom lectures in place of in-person events.

Catherine has led the Society's lecture programme for many years now, always creating a fascinating and varied programme with leading speakers from across the UK and beyond. She also led a recent "Trailblazers" project, which helped local people research the history of the Museum Gardens.

On top of all that, Catherine managed the annual subscription programme in spring 2024 when the Society's clerk [Frances Chambers] was absent following an operation.

Congratulations, Catherine!



Trustees at the Grand Hotel; Catherine is third from right

David Harbourne

York Museums Trust News

Chariots, Treasure and Power: Secrets of the Melsonby Hoard

Just announced is this brand-new exhibition opening at the Yorkshire Museum in May 2026, giving a first look at the unprecedented find of over 800 Iron Age objects unearthed near Melsonby in North Yorkshire. From chariot wheels and cauldrons to horse bridles and spears, this is the largest hoard of Iron Age metalwork

ever to be discovered in the United Kingdom, and was acquired by the Museum following a fund-raising campaign in 2025.

Further details including a programme of talks and events will follow.

Meanwhile, at the Art Gallery ...

Making Waves: The Art of Japanese Woodblock Print

27 February-30 August 2026

This exhibition explores the history and development of Japanese woodblock printing, revealing its origins and techniques alongside the influence of nature, society and cultural change on this art form.

Supporting YMT

Exhibitions like these cannot be staged without financial help. For general support for York Museums Trust, including the Yorkshire Museum, this is the link:

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



*Part of the Melsonby Hoard at the Yorkshire Museum
Photo credit: Gareth Buddo*

News from the Activities Group

We have had a rather gloomy and wet winter but at last the days are getting longer so I hope you feel inspired to join us on one or more of the activities or trips we have planned.

Our second Tuesday of the month lunchtime get-togethers on the first floor of the Theatre Royal have continued to be popular. Do try to come along to catch up with old friends, or to meet new ones in a relaxed and informal atmosphere.

On 23rd October, the Geology Group had planned a trip to Burniston Foreshore, but the weather forecast was so poor that it was postponed by a week. The outing went well and thanks to Paul Thornley and Peter Rawson, a geology expert, it was very interesting. This outing is to be repeated on 5th March (flyer enclosed).

We had a most interesting guided walk round the grounds of The Retreat on 2nd November. The grounds were integral to William Tuke's treatment of the patients and staff in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The sites of farms, fields and garden walks remain, as do lawns which were used for bowling, cricket, croquet and other sports in the late 19th century.

On 12th November, we travelled in our own transport to Allerton Waste Recovery Park, near Knaresborough. Here we had a very informative talk and saw a film about the processes involved in sorting out our domestic waste. Some of us were surprised to discover that certain types of paper, such as receipts, must go in domestic rubbish, not paper recycling. After the talk, we donned hi-vis jackets and walked across to the plant with our guide. We could see the rubbish travelling around on conveyor belts as items suitable for recycling were removed. At all times we could smell the anaerobic digester which handles food waste extracted from the domestic waste!

This visit was due to be repeated on 26th November, but had to be called off at very short notice due to the illness of Laura, our guide. Fortunately everyone could be contacted on the day, by email or text message, so nobody made an unnecessary journey. The new date for the second visit is Wednesday 25th March. At the time of writing there is space for one person to join the second visit. Do get in touch if you would like to come.

Our final event of the year was the Annual Dinner,

which was held on Tuesday 2nd December at the central Novotel. Once again, the food and service were excellent. Our Chair, David Harbourne gave a reflection upon the Society's achievements over the past year, and we were treated to a talk by Professor Nicky Milner, an archaeologist at the University of York, who has made a great contribution to our understanding of settlements of the Mesolithic period. Many of us will know about Star Carr near Scarborough from the exhibition at the Yorkshire Museum. We must note our thanks to Sharon Lusty who organised the event. She has been planning and organising the Annual Dinner for about ten years, with her trademark good humour and efficiency. She and her husband Stephen are moving out of the area so this was her last Annual Dinner as organiser. We hope she and Stephen may return for some YPS events in the future.

Other future events planned:

We will continue our monthly second Tuesday lunchtime get-togethers at the Theatre Royal. Look out on the website and see page 4 for more details.

In March, we have the two repeat visits previously described. On 5th March there is the visit to Bretton Farm and Burniston Foreshore, and on 25th March, the visit to Allerton Waste Recovery Park.

An outing by coach is planned to Louth and the Lincolnshire Wolds on Thursday 23rd April. This will include visits to Louth, Tattershall Castle and the Joseph Banks Museum at Horncastle. Further details of this trip and how to book are included with this newsletter.

There is a study tour planned in conjunction with Just for Groups for 14th to 18th May 2026, to Kent. Details of the tour itinerary and how to book were included in the last newsletter. There are very few places left (see page 4) so do get in touch if you wish to join this study tour. There will be a waiting list once maximum numbers are reached.

On 21st May, the Geology Group is hoping to arrange another day trip to the coast, using our own transport. Further details of this outing will follow.

I look forward to the sunnier and soon warmer weather as the year progresses and I hope to meet some of you at one or more of these events.

Rosemary Anderton

YPS Members' monthly lunch

Our monthly drop-in lunches are continuing in 2026. Join us upstairs in the Circle Bar at the Theatre Royal from 12.00pm onwards (order your food and drink in the downstairs café) on any of the dates below; no need to book. New members are particularly welcome.

- ◆ Tuesday 10th March
- ◆ Tuesday 14th April
- ◆ Tuesday 12th May
- ◆ Tuesday 9th June

Tour to Kent

14th—18th May 2026

At the time of writing there are still two double or twin rooms available for this tour but, sorry, no more singles. If you are interested in joining us, even for a single place, please do get in touch as soon as possible. We will be operating a waiting list in case of cancellations.

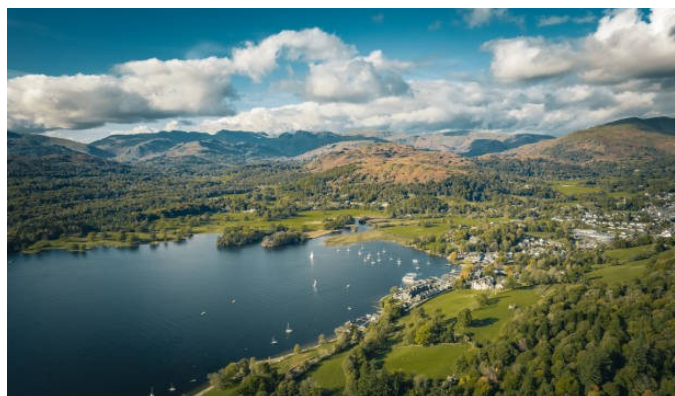
Details of the very interesting itinerary can be found at: <https://www.ypsYork.org/events/yps-tour-to-kent/> or at lectures or from the Lodge.

Lake District Study Tour

9th - 12th October 2026

We are planning a 3 nights 4 days study tour to the Lake District from Friday 9th to Monday 12th October staying at the Riverside Hotel in Kendal. Including visits to Tullie Museum, Carlisle and John Ruskin's home at Brantwood after crossing Coniston Lake by Gondola (NT). There will be visits to Blackwell Arts and Crafts Museum followed by the Windermere Jetty Museum then a 40-minute cruise on Windermere to the Lakeside Motor Museum.

A flier and booking forms will be available shortly.



Lake Windermere

The Lodge Library

We will have a volunteer in the Lodge Library for members to drop in on days when there is an evening lecture. The session will be from 2pm to 5pm and feel free to pop in for a few minutes or an hour or two. The following sessions will be:

- ◆ 24th February
- ◆ 24th March
- ◆ 14th April
- ◆ 28th April

At present I am stock taking this collection of about 500 books that forms the Members' Library and exploring, reviewing and pricing software to add the collection online using a suitable product for schools and small community groups. As it is five years since I worked as a professional librarian, if anyone has recent experience of using software for small libraries, please do get in touch via the YPS office. Using tools such as Library Thing/TinyCat to input ISBNs produces entries linked to MARC records from the British Library/Library of Congress which provide automatic full catalogue entries. Members would be able to search the catalogue online. At present there is a list of titles/authors on an Excel spreadsheet on the YPS website at resources/lodge library, but it needs updating with recent acquisitions.

Catherine Brophy, Hon Librarian

Wills Presentation, 19th January 2026

Thank you to Emma Morris, Senior Associate Solicitor from Crombie Wilkinson Solicitors, who gave us an excellent overview via Zoom of arranging a will and ensuring it is up to date.

Crombie Wilkinson, 19 Clifford Street, York YO1 9RJ
Phone: 01904 624185
<https://www.crombiewilkinson.co.uk/>

Important Notice—Insurance

The YPS accepts no responsibility for any loss or injury suffered while taking part in one of its trips or events. Participants are advised to take out appropriate travel insurance, which should include cancellation and accident cover. For full details please see <https://www.ypsYork.org/groups/social-group/yps-activities-booking-terms-conditions-2/>

NB our insurers are no longer able to provide any cover for participants in our activities who are aged over 80.

Remembering Professor Agnes Winter

We were very sorry to receive the sad news of the death of Agnes Winter on December 1st last year. Agnes had been a member since 2010 and was a regular supporter of all our activities, as well as being a willing helper behind the scenes. At the lecture reception desk we attributed her calmness in the face of a hundred or so members trying to collect their newsletters all at once to her long experience as a vet and sheep farmer. Sheep were her great enthusiasm and she twice lectured to the Society on their history and breeds.

Before she retired to York, Agnes enjoyed a distinguished career as a veterinary surgeon and lecturer and a full obituary will appear in our next Annual Report. We understand there is to be a memorial service for Agnes on 11th April at the Merchant Taylors' Hall, and we are hoping to dedicate a lecture to her memory after our AGM on 23rd June.

Trailblazers Project

Local History Group

The group has met twice so far this year and our third session will be on 7th April, 2.30pm, in York Explore Library. Members continue to research their own projects, including the history of families, houses, institutions and individuals who have blazed their own trail, all with Yorkshire connections. We enjoy exchanging research tips and ideas over tea and cake. YPS members and non-members are welcome to join us. Please email cafesci@ypsyork.org

Catherine Brophy, Project Lead

YouTube

Newly added to our YouTube channel are:

Little Kingdoms. An A-Z of Early Medieval Britain by Alex Harvey, recorded on 21st January this year:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nq6Fg5G6jRc>

Is Healthcare AI safe? by Dr Mark Nicholson, recorded on 5th November 2025:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eumcok6QP4>

Can you help?

Postage costs are rising all the time. If you currently receive a paper copy of the YPS newsletter, would you be willing to have a paperless version sent by email instead?

If so, please let us know by emailing or phoning the Clerk, Frances Chambers, at info@ypsyork.org, phone 01904 656713.



Subscriptions

Thank you to all members who have renewed subscriptions promptly. Your memberships cards are enclosed with this newsletter, if you have not already picked them up. If you're receiving this by email, your cards are available for collection from the Lodge or at a lecture, or will be posted to you if necessary.

If you have not yet got around to renewing, a reminder with form is enclosed or attached.

We are sorry to find that a few members have still not increased their standing order amount to cover last year's increase in subscriptions. If you think this might apply to you, please get in touch with Frances to arrange to make up the shortfall.

Please contact Frances at the Lodge (01904 656713 or info@ypsyork.org) with any questions.

The Lodge is open again

Frances was delighted to be able to return to the Lodge on a regular basis in December, and the office is now again open on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The times are very slightly different to accommodate commuting by train: 11.30am to 4.30pm (instead of the previous 11.00 to 4.00).

Please do telephone in advance before making a special journey. With a 25-mile trip door-to-door, there is always a chance Frances may be delayed, or she may have to leave the office on an errand during the day. She sometimes even takes time off!

Notes from the Geology Group

1a) Online material for self-guided geology/building stones tours: Sheffield & Barnsley area

Sheffield Area Geology Trust has a range of geology walks and resources:

City, Cemetery, Porter Valley, Trans-Pennine Trail near Barnsley [SAGT Website](#)

South Yorkshire Geology link gives the map and geological outline. The "More" link gives building stones.

[SAGT Geology Walks](#) [SAGT Walks in Sheffield](#)

1b) Events and Talks: Online and in person:

Thursday 19th March. 7pm. YGS Webinar. **Mike Benton. Dinosaur Behaviour.** [YGS 19th March Webinar Registration: Dinosaur Behaviour](#)

2) Women and Men in Geology

Alice Wilson (1881-1964), Frances Wagner (1927-2016). Canadian Palaeontologists and Geologists

Dr Alice Evelyn Wilson was the first woman in Canada to achieve a successful career in geology and is credited as Canada's first female geologist and palaeontologist.

[Trowelblazers article on Alice Wilson](#)

Prevented from extensive field working in remote areas, she became an expert in the geology around Ottawa. She became the first women member of the Royal Society of Canada.

[Royal Society of Canada on Alice Wilson](#)

[Geoscienceinfo \(Canada\) on Alice Wilson](#)

Dr Frances Wagner was a pioneer in the study of micropalaeontology. She was also part of the first generation of Canadian geologists with the privilege of being mentored by other women scientists, which directly contributed to her success in the field and the lab.

[Trowelblazers article on Frances Wagner](#)

[Geoscienceinfo \(Canada\) on Frances Wagner](#)

Wagner went out on fieldwork working aboard the CSS Hudson surveying the floor of Hudson's Bay.

[Science.ca account of Frances Wagner's work at sea](#)

3) Study and Resources:

Tyrannosaurus rex is now believed to have matured more slowly than previously considered.

[Graeme Churchard link to articles on T rex](#)

[Original Academic paper](#)

The Glacial History of Northern Greenland: The Prudhoe ice dome disappeared during a warm period 7000 years ago. Global warming could cause similar temperatures by 2100, showing the Greenland ice sheet's vulnerability.

[New Scientist article on Prudhoe Glacier](#)

[Original academic article in Nature](#)

Scientists will lower instruments to the seafloor to figure out how metallic nodules are generating oxygen in the depths of the Pacific Ocean, an unexpected phenomenon that has fuelled controversy over deep-sea mining.

[New Scientist article on dark oxygen in deep water mining zones](#) [Oceanographic magazine article](#)

4) Real Trips outside:

YPS field trip to Betton Farm Quarry and Burniston fossils on 5th March. Booking form enclosed.

Yorkshire Coast Rocks:

[Yorkshire Coast Rocks website](#)

York's Hidden History:

[York's Hidden History link to Eventbrite](#)

Earth Science Outreach UK:

[Earth Science Outreach website](#)

5) Our Yorkshire Museum of the Month: National Coal Mining Museum, near Wakefield

Open Wednesday to Sunday. Underground tours are currently unavailable owing to strike action.

[National Coal-Mining Museum website](#)

6) Books and Mags:

Down to Earth Extra for February: articles and commercial geological tours.

[Down to Earth Extra February 26](#)

Taste the Limestone, Smell the Slate. Alex Maltman

Geologist and viticulturist Alex Maltman has rather upset the wine tasting world with his account of minerals, soils, and their role in wine. The fact is that since rocks have neither smell nor taste, whatever your nose might pick up is likely organic but definitely not geological in origin.

[World of fine wine review of Taste the Limestone](#)

Also, an earlier book of his:

Vineyards, Rocks, & Soils: The Wine Lover's Guide to Geology by Alex Maltman

[World of fine wine review of Wine Lover's Guide to Geology](#)

Paul Thornley

Gardens News

January is now behind us and the snowdrops and winter Aconites are flowering along with other winter staples such as Mahonia, Hellebore and some of the Viburnum.

The flower borders are dormant and we have been tidying them up ahead of some much needed division of the herbaceous perennials in certain areas to improve the planting balance and revitalise the plants.

It has been a month of seemingly constant rainfall which means the water table in Yorkshire should be in a much better position than it was in autumn and I would welcome a drier period soon.

The Team has been hard at work creating a Japanese karesansui (dry) Garden at the rear of the Art Gallery, which will feature as part of the exciting forthcoming Japanese prints 'Making Waves' exhibition running from the 27th February through to late August. I've taken inspiration from the renowned 20th Century Japanese garden designer Mirei Shigamori who incorporated strong links with traditional Japanese gardens with his contemporary ideas at a time when his peers were stepping away from the traditional to align with more Western influences. There were a number of reasons for liking Shigamori's work outside of his sensitively considered aesthetic – for one, he created a number of dry gardens in locations with religious significance, which seems appropriate as the footprint of the Benedictine Abbey precinct is effectively the template for the Museum Gardens.



Japanese Garden location in the Artist Garden; view from York Art Gallery balcony Photo: Steve Williams

I also wanted to create a different experience for visitors, so that after they have experienced the artwork depicting the hedonism and pleasure-seeking nature of the 'floating world' (a focus on cultural pursuits and leisure time) in the Art Gallery, they can step outside and reflect on our dry garden / Zen garden – a minimalist space designed to encourage meditation and mindfulness, which I think is essential for all of us in an increasingly busy world. I'm very excited to see this one come together to find out if we managed to create a Japanese karesansui garden of substance!



Hayden & Kev constructing the Japanese Garden bamboo fence Photo: Steve Williams

A further enhancement to the area behind the Art Gallery that I'm keep to progress is the utilisation of the two Valerie Fox sculptures 'Abstract Figure in Reverse Motion' and 'Sentry I'. They have been situated in the passageway to the side of the Art Gallery for some time and I thought they would make a great focal point if we relocated them within the wildflower meadow. Conversations are underway to make this happen in Spring so that's something to look out for. I think they will add a grandeur to the meadow and echo some of the verticals that will be part of the Japanese Garden.

*Steve Williams
York Museums Trust*

Diary

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

Unless otherwise stated, the venue for YPS lectures is the Tempest Anderson Hall, Yorkshire Museum.

Tue 24 Feb, 7.00pm—YPS Lecture
Seeing the Unseen: How the latest developments in Microscopy are solving global challenges
 Professor Peter O’Toole, University of York

Thur 5 Mar—YPS Visit
Burniston Foreshore and Betton Farm Quarry
See flyer enclosed

Tue 10 Mar, 12 noon - YPS Social Event
Members’ Monthly Lunch at York Theatre Royal

Tue 10 Mar, 2.30pm—YPS Lecture
These Isles: a People’s History of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales
 Brian Groom, author
With book launch and signing

Wed 18 Mar, 7.30pm—Café Scientifique
The wavy nature of Nature
 Dr Benito A Juárez Aubry, University of York
Venue: City Screen Basement Bar

Tue 24 Mar, 7.00pm—YPS Lecture
New Discoveries of an Ancient City: Advancing Perspectives on Roman York
 Dr Paul Flintoft with Kate Allenby & Ben Savine, York Archaeology
Joint lecture with Friends of York Archaeology

Wed 25 Mar—YPS Visit
Allerton Waste Recovery Park
One place left—see page 3

Lodge Opening Times

Tuesday & Thursday, 11.30am to 4.30pm

NB Please do telephone first to make sure Frances is there before making a special journey.

The Lodge will be closed for Frances’ holiday on:

- ◆ Thurs 12 March
- ◆ Tues 17 March



Tue 7 Apr, 2.30pm – YPS Event
History, Tea & Cake *See page 5*

Tue 14 Apr, 12 noon - YPS Social Event
Members’ Monthly Lunch at York Theatre Royal

Tue 14 Apr, 7.00pm—YPS Lecture
York Central
 Rob Auld, Construction Director, McLaren Property
Joint lecture with the York Society of Engineers

Thur 23 Apr—YPS Visit
Louth & the Lincolnshire Wolds
See flyer enclosed

Tue 28 Apr, 7.00pm—YPS Lecture
Challenges and Opportunities for conserving Historic Parks and Gardens in the 21st century
 John Watkins, Chair of Trustees, The Gardens Trust
Joint lecture with Yorkshire Gardens Trust

Wed 6 May, 7.30pm—Café Scientifique
"The collapse of tropical forests" during the Permian-Triassic mass extinction: new research
 Zhen Xu (Jane), University of Leeds
Venue: to be confirmed

Tue 12 May, 12 noon - YPS Social Event
Members’ Monthly Lunch at York Theatre Royal

Tue 12 May, 2.30pm—YPS Lecture
The Causes of Mass Extinction
 Professor Paul Wignall, University of Leeds
A lecture for Yorkshire Geology Month

Thur 14 to Mon 18 May 2026
Tour to Kent *See page 4*

Fri 9th to Mon 12th October 2026
Tour to Lake District *See page 4*

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 Mr David Harbourne, Trustee, (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