



News from the Chair

I hope that you are continuing safe and well and learning new tricks for coping with the challenges.

Although talks and events have been cancelled we are as busy as ever with activities which support our charitable objectives – research, publishing and providing supportive grants for post-graduate projects and our local historic fabric.

The publishing highlight was the issue of David Johnson's new book *Settle: A Historic Market Town* just in time for the re-opening of bookshops. Size A5, with 106 well-illustrated pages it retails for just £5 thanks to a generous grant from Stories in Stone. As the Duke of Devonshire pointed out in his foreword "... Every page holds a gem of the past.... I am sure that you will thoroughly enjoy this book which I heartily recommend". It has been selling like the proverbial hot cakes from Limestone Books, Car and Kitchen and the Farm Shop at Airton, and will be on sale in the Folly and elsewhere as outlets re-open.

If you can't get out, Michael Pearson is offering it in his on-line bookshop on behalf of NCHT.

Go to www.abebooks.co.uk and enter in the search terms: 'Settle. A Historic Market Town'. If you wish to save on the postage, copies of the book can be collected from Austwick Hall - just phone beforehand (015242 51794) to ensure that someone will be in.

You will see that included in this mailing is a uniquely-North-Craven greeting card, produced by Mike and Mary Slater from their datestone research. We hope that they will shortly be going on sale in local outlets.

Programme

Many thanks for the responses to our survey about whether and how we can offer a programme to members at the moment. 33 members were supportive of holding talks on Zoom and almost the same number was happy to see a video on the website. Fortunately, Zoom will allow us to do both! Our September and October programme will therefore take place on Zoom. This could give us an audience not a mile short of the numbers who turn out for talks.

We are acutely aware that this will exclude some members. It is likely that this situation will last for several more months. If you have a computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone and use email it is very easy indeed to link into a Zoom meeting. Few members of the general public had used Zoom at the start of the year. It has added millions of users because it is cost-free and very simple indeed to use.

There are many sources of help and tutorials on the web, mainly covering more advanced uses, but to join a talk it can be as simple as just clicking a link sent to you in an email. If you have a PC with speakers but without a camera or microphone, you can still join in to watch and listen. You can even listen on an ordinary phone!

If you want help using Zoom, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODxxqhGh-3k&feature=youtu.be>

Also, Frank Woodhams and John Parry have kindly agreed to help by email or phone. Contact details are: frankwoodhams@btinternet.com or jamatcv@gmail.com

Our first talk of the autumn will take place as planned at 7.30pm on Monday 7 September via Zoom. Robin Bundy will share with us *Malhamdale: Journeys Through Time*.

Invitations to join will be sent out a few days before to all our members on email. The meeting will be open to join about half an hour before, so if you are a new user log in early and we can smooth out any uncertainties.

Our next event will be our joint environmental conference with Friends of the Dales *A NEW GREEN DALES: Year one of the Climate Emergency*. Local government and community leaders will join with environmental experts to consider for the special environment of The Dales, what has been achieved, what the challenges are for Year two (including the pandemic) and to set the next goals.

Because of Covid restrictions this has been moved from a 1-day in-person event to a Zoom conference spread over two Saturday mornings – October 3 and 17. Publicity and pre-booking arrangements will be coming out in the next few weeks.

The AGM on Wednesday 14 October is also to be moved on-line via Zoom. We need to make a minor change to our Constitution in any event so will take this opportunity to build in advice from the Charity Commission about the use of on-line meetings. Further details will be issued with the AGM papers.

And do check the NCHT website in coming weeks to look at the Quizzes held at Christmas times past, prepared by Mary Slater. Look in 'Publications'. The quizzes and answers will be kept separate!

Appointment to the YDNPA

Our Trustee Mark Corner has been appointed by the Secretary of State to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. Mark is a doughty champion of our Dales and we offer our hearty congratulations and best wishes to Mark in this role. It will be great for the Park as a whole and North Craven in particular to have his wisdom and expertise in the Authority.

As a member of the Authority, it would be inappropriate for Mark to be involved in planning issues on behalf of NCHT and he will have to step aside with immediate effect as our planning coordinator. I am delighted, however, that he is willing to remain a Trustee linking the National Park with our work.

We are therefore looking rather urgently for a new planning coordinator from amongst our membership. This was the cause which brought us into being over 50 years ago, and is still important. This could be done by a new trustee or by volunteer without being a trustee.

If you feel you may be able to help, please call on 01729 825975 or email: john@joesclose.co.uk

The Windows Mystery

A somewhat arcane subject! Why are there so many 17th-century yeoman style houses in North Craven with one small arch-topped window, where all the other windows on the building are rectilinear? If near the fireplace they are sometimes called fire-windows but why go to the trouble of making one curved lintel for such a modest window? Does the design have any special significance? Are they functional or just decorative and status symbols? Is there some underlying superstition about them? None of the recognized authorities on vernacular architecture venture to discuss the topic.



A typical arch-top single-light window at Manor Farm House, Langcliffe

A collection of 70 photographs of local arch-topped windows in about 40 places can be seen on the NCHT website. They are just a selection, not identified by age, and by no means comprehensive in scope. There are just a few in

each village or township and several on isolated farmsteads. There are many more to be found! There are variations on the idea, with instances of multiple light windows with arch-tops.

M J Slater

The Settle Manor Court Records

Recently a grant from the NCHT Historical and Archaeological Projects Fund was used to pay £400 for translation (from Latin) of the Settle Manor Court Records for the period of Edward VI, 1547 to 1553. The job is now done, and the results are to be seen on the NCHT website under Archives, then Archive Index, then Settle Manor Court Rolls Edward VI. Simon Neal, professional translator of such documents, has done an excellent job and has also provided a transcript of one of the pages plus its translation which will be of help to anyone working on similar material. Indeed, the records for Mary, then Mary with Philip, 1553 to 1558 are also available, only partially translated, awaiting attention. Unfortunately, the writing has faded and is hard to read. There is then a gap in the records and the next set covers 1578 to 1603, Elizabeth I and James I (again only partially translated).

The original documents are held at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire because the Duke of Devonshire is currently lord of the manor of Settle. The photographs taken are copyright Chatsworth House Archives so cannot be seen on the website.

M J Slater

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Survey of Veteran Ash Trees

The ash, along with the sycamore, is probably the most common tree in the Dales. Whether in woodland or as a solitary tree on a field boundary the ash is an important feature of our landscape. What is also remarkable is that it is the food plant for over 100 insects and provides a home to 600 species of lichens (more than a quarter of the total UK flora). The older trees provide more varied habitats and are richer in insect and plant species.

Unfortunately, a fungal disease, ash die-back, was imported into the UK in 2012 and has

already reached the Dales. The aims of the survey are twofold: to identify the location of the veteran ashes in North Craven and to investigate whether older trees are more or less prone to die-back.

Unlike the oak, the ash lives for some 200 years but if coppiced or pollarded it can survive for 400 years. The girth or circumference of a tree gives a guide to its age. In the case of the ash a girth of more than 2m means that the tree is over 150 years old. There is an ash at Malham Tarn with a girth of nearly 5m.

Perhaps you have an old ash growing in your garden or have spotted one locally. So, when out walking why not take a tape measure and start measuring. The girth should be taken 1.5m from ground level and remember to note the OS grid reference and take a photograph of the tree if possible. A handy tip is to take a piece of chalk! It is useful to mark the starting point for the tape measure so that as you work your way round the tree you know where to stop. Please record the girth to the nearest cm.

The Woodland Trust keeps a register of old trees which can be found on their website (www.woodlandtrust.org). Their map lists very few old trees and even fewer ashes. They are out there, just waiting to be discovered. You can either upload the details of trees you find directly to their website or send them to me, and I will do it for you.

There is one final point to look out for. How do you identify ash die-back? If there are numerous bare branches and twigs with very few leaves it is likely that the tree is infected. If not, sure we can always re-visit the tree to check its health.

Michael Pearson

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Dated doorheads: Whose initials do they represent?

We would like to develop a co-operative project carried out by members on determination of the family names which lie behind the initials on dated doorheads in our area. This needs access to Parish Registers, as printed books at home or in libraries, as electronic versions in our possession, or as online versions (which may

need subscription to one of the genealogical websites). The publications concerning the history of Austwick, Horton, Settle and Stainforth are also helpful. Wills available online are a source of information which might support a conclusion.

In recent years a collection of images of over 500 dated doorheads to be seen in our area was made and the results are to be found on the NCHT website under Archives and then Archive Index. No attempt was made at that time to determine the names of those whose initials are on the doorhead. Usually there are three initials, one for a surname and two for Christian name initials. Such lintels were probably incorporated into a house to celebrate a marriage or a rebuilding date. One should remember that capital I usually represents our modern J.

How does one set about the task of identifying the names? The primary source is the Parish Registers. The Registers for Giggleswick Ancient Parish (Giggleswick, Settle, Langcliffe, Rathmell, Stainforth) are available in book form, edited by Professor Hoyle. The register for Clapham and Austwick is available electronically, on CD and as a zip file for emailing. That for Long Preston is also available as a zip file. For Clapham/Austwick the marriage register only starts at 1683 and this limits the chance of finding names. For other parishes the data are generally available for the late 1500s onwards. One simply has to search the index looking for surnames, then checking the marriages to find the Christian names of the husband and wife matching the initials set. The date needs then to be considered to see if a good match is possible. Occasionally some imagination is needed if the surname initial is uncertain for example. In the registers Elizabeth may be recorded as Isabell. Not all searches will give results!

The online Listed Buildings of England may sometimes be helpful but only of course for a limited set of buildings. (historicengland.org.uk).

Ideally one or two volunteers from each township could co-ordinate the work, supported by others. The work can be done at home, but if access at home to printed works or online registers (subscription needed for Ancestry, genuki, Family Search for example) is not possible, then Settle Library has the Giggleswick Parish Registers and Skipton Library has a large set of local Parish Registers. Since there are relatively few dated doorheads in each township and a date limit of 1800 is suggested, the task is not substantial; it is not expected that every dated doorhead can be identified with a family name – but that remains to be seen. Giggleswick township has about 22 datestones, Settle about 18, Clapham 9, Ingleton 7, Austwick 5. Langcliffe and Stainforth have very few. There of course many others in other townships if volunteers are willing to join the project.

Michael Slater
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Yorkshire Festival of Story

The Yorkshire Festival of Story will run free and online from 1 – 31 August. Developed here in North Craven by Settle Stories, it will include performances by Joanne Harris, Ben Okri, Jenni Murray and the Yorkshire Shepherdess. There are events for all interests and all ages – and pre-booking is generally required.

Of particular interest to NCHT members will be *The Great Botanical Adventure* which is on Tuesday 4th August at 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm.

Nick Hennessey tells the tale of Reginald Farrer's plant collecting adventures in the Far East just over a century ago, when he brought back to Clapham some of the varieties we can still see today.

See:

<https://yorkshirefestivalofstory.com/event/the-great-botanical-adventure/>