



Celebrating 150 years of promoting the study of Yorkshire's past

Kirsty McHugh¹

¹Yorkshire Archaeological Society (archivist), Clarendon, 23 Clarendon Road, Leeds, LS2 9NZ

Email: yas.archives@gmail.com

This year the Yorkshire Archaeological Society (YAS) celebrates its achievements over 150 years. The YAS exists to promote the study of Yorkshire's past. It was founded in 1863 (as the Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association) to promote interest in the history and archaeology of the Huddersfield area. In 1870 it expanded its interest to cover the whole of Yorkshire, and today it is the main society in this field for the historic county and is based in Leeds, West Yorkshire.

The Society has always been a broader historical society rather than one strictly concerned with archaeology in its modern sense. Its interests and activities are broad, including lectures, excursions, publishing, and providing access to extensive library and archive collections (Figure 1). Within the Society, specialist groups arrange their own programmes of events and lectures on family, industrial (Figure 2) and medieval history, as well as Roman antiquities and prehistory.



Figures 1-2 (L-R): A heraldic manuscript from the YAS archives on display at Leeds City Museum; a walk around Leeds guided by the YAS industrial history section (Image Copyright: Yorkshire Archaeological Society)

Throughout its history, the Society has been active in publishing articles on many aspects of the past of Yorkshire and transcripts of important Yorkshire records. The *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* was first published in 1869, and the Record Series initiated in 1884. The YAS also publishes material on the history and archaeology of Yorkshire in its Occasional Papers and Archaeological Reports series. In addition, it has publications dedicated to transcripts of Yorkshire parish registers and the Wakefield Manor Court Rolls.

The YAS library collection of around 45,000 works is probably the largest single resource, outside the British Library, for research on the past of Yorkshire. Its archive collections mainly comprise of deeds, estate and manorial archives and antiquarians papers and contain collections of local and national significance.

This year, in addition to its ordinary programme of events, the Society has arranged a number of new and exciting initiatives, including day schools, a community excavation (Figure 3) and exhibitions. Full details of all the anniversary events are available on the YAS website at www.yas.org.uk.



Figure 3: A community excavation on the lawn outside the YAS headquarters in Leeds held in association with the WEA Digability Project (Image Copyright: Yorkshire Archaeological Society)

The Society has a small paid staff to administer access to its collections; however, it relies heavily on volunteers. If you would like to get involved with the Society by becoming a member, contributing to one of the publishing series, volunteering, or supporting the YAS in some other way, please get in touch via yas.enquiries@gmail.com.