



**MINUTES FROM THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PROJECT BOARD FOR THE  
GREATER YORK COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT  
TUESDAY 24<sup>th</sup> MAY 2005, 2pm  
YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST'S OFFICES, CROMWELL HOUSE,  
OGLEFORTH, YORK**

**PRESENT** Catrina Appleby (CA), Community Representative  
Eliza Gore (EG), Community Archaeologist  
Richard Hall (RH), York Archaeological Trust (YAT)  
Cllr Janet Hopton (JH), City of York Council (CoYC)  
John Oxley (JO), City of York Archaeologist  
Steve Roskams (SR), York Archaeological Forum (YAF)

**1. Receipt of Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from John Hampshire.

**2. The purpose of the Project Board**

RH outlined the purpose of the Project Board. The members of the board will advise on ways to improve and develop the project over five years. They will review the project's progress and achievements twice a year, and evaluate the success of the project after its first pilot year.

EG mentioned that she had had a meeting with SR and RH in April to outline the structure of these meetings. It was decided that the Advisory Group would meet first, then the Project Board would meet a fortnight later. After the two meetings a short report would be prepared by EG, outlining the key points raised, which will be distributed with the agenda for the next York Archaeological Forum. JO asked that the minutes from the meetings of the Advisory Group and the Project Board be made publicly available on the Community Archaeology website. It was agreed that this was a good idea.

- EG to prepare a report for YAF and post the minutes from the meetings of the Advisory Group and Project Board on the project website.

### **3. Development of the project so far**

EG outlined the publicity the project has received since it started in March 2005. This included articles in the Yorkshire Evening Press and the Yorkshire Post and an advert in the Local Link magazine. EG has also discussed the project on BBC Radio York. Project leaflets have been distributed to all York libraries and parish councils, and the workshops have been advertised widely. A project website is also live at <http://www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk/community.htm>. The Community Resource has been built up over the first few months of the project and items are now available to borrow and use by community groups.

New groups were starting to make contact; including those at Wigginton, Strensall, Haxby, Holgate Windmill Preservation Society, Friends of St. Nicholas Fields and the Young Archaeologist's Club. EG has also met Future Prospects, a learning and work advice centre, to discuss the possibility of getting young people involved from Tang Hall, Foxwood and New Earswick.

EG has consulted with members of Timeline York Plus (TYP: an umbrella organisation, consisting of local archaeology and history groups, that meets four times a year to share information, ideas and resources) over the training workshops and community resource, and will continue to attend their meetings. Over the next few months EG will develop Information Packs for new groups, Pro-forma recording sheets, and will make contact with local schools, community centres and evening groups.

JH suggested that EG starts by contacting schools that are undergoing new building works, as there might be an opportunity to involve the school children in any archaeological work. CA suggested that any archaeology projects be linked to other aspects of the curriculum, for example maths (surveying), geology (soils), history, IT etc. JO described such a project that had been carried out at St. Wilfrid's by Martin Bartlett. It was agreed that EG would talk to Education officers and start contacting schools.

- EG to contact schools, Don Henson (Education Officer at the CBA), and Steve Dobson at the University of York about the project he undertook with Future Prospects.
- JO to pass on contacts to EG for details of the Learning City Initiative, the Leisure and Heritage Scrutiny Report and the Community Arts Officer.

### **4. Training workshops**

EG outlined the programme of workshops, which is being advertised in local libraries. The first workshop had been very successful with 25 people attending, including representatives from seven local archaeology groups, members of the general public and a good age range of people; the youngest aged 4, the eldest aged 92. Groups brought along a sample of their finds and had some of them

identified. There were talks on how to identify pottery, brick and tile, and flint, reference collections were handled, and a start was made on how artefacts should be recorded.

SR suggested that follow-up resources be put on the website, such as reading lists, contact details and photos of the event. It was agreed that EG would implement this.

JO pointed out that the Heritage Lottery Fund would be interested and pleased to know that links are being forged between two local HLF-funded projects through the workshops – the Borthwick Institute and the Greater York Community Archaeology Project.

SR asked whether building recording would be included in the workshop on historic buildings. EG said she would think about the best way to structure the day and use appropriate specialists. SR also mentioned that a workshop on Health and Safety could be run alongside one on standing buildings, and that training exercises such as carrying out Risk Assessments would be worthwhile.

JH asked how wide the brief is for the Community Archaeologist as there is a danger of expanding too far into other areas with the training workshops. CA said that TYP wants to be a broad church and there is much more to community archaeology than its name implies. EG said she is happy to cover all aspects of community archaeology and that anything outside her area of expertise would be referred to a specialist. JO felt that archaeology had to be the central point of the project, which was agreed by the other members of the Project Board.

- EG to put follow-up resources from the workshops on the website, such as reading lists, contact details and photos of the event.

## **5a. Accessing background information**

EG stated that a number of issues had been raised at the meeting of the Advisory Group, which were detailed in the minutes from that meeting. The three principal issues would be discussed. The first was the problem of accessing background information detailing what has already been done/found in a group's area.

EG listed a number of sources that could be used as starting points. The HER (Historic Environment Record) based at CoYC, which contains details of sites, monuments, surveys and excavations carried out in the York area (formerly the SMR (Sites and Monuments Record)), the NMR (National Monuments Record) at Swindon, which is the national inventory of sites and monuments maintained by English Heritage, the YAT online Gazetteer, the Vale of York project (soon to be published by YAT), and YARF (Yorkshire Archaeological Research Framework -

yet to be published). JO said that the HER would be computerised by next April, which would help people to find information online. Before that happens he needs to know is what the user's requirements are. What do people want from the HER and what sort of searches will they be doing? CoYC also want local groups to be able to add their own data onto the HER.

EG raised the idea of a day school. CA said that we need to get local groups and archaeological units to put their work in a wider context to improve overall understanding of the development of York and its hinterland. RH questioned whether we are ready for that as many groups are just starting out with their projects and research. He suggested that the idea be broken down into two events:– 1), a day on the evolution of the York area, from prehistory to modern day, and 2), a more detailed look at each parish and its landscape.

JO suggested that a day school on 'Later prehistoric and Romano-British settlement in the Derwent area' could be an idea for later next year. This could pull together the research carried out by Dunnington Through the Ages, the Stamford Bridge Archaeology group, the University of York and York Archaeological Trust. SR suggested this could be prefaced with research questions about those periods/sites that have been covered in that area.

CA said that it must be pitched at the right level and not be too academic. What is needed is a general understanding of the archaeological periods and their basic chronological framework. Keep it fun to keep people interested. JH agreed that we need to foster interest in amateurs and not turn people off attending such events by making them too overwhelming or detailed. We need to remember that the audience will be interested members of the public, not academics. Any focus on a particular area would have to show how the principles could be applied to other areas so that it makes sense to other groups.

SR said that there would still be a gap between learning about the general chronology and people *doing* research in their own area. Instead we could break it down and spend one day looking at each period and asking research questions about particular areas (Pre-Iron age, Iron Age, Roman, early medieval, medieval, post medieval etc). This might be more useful than one big day event. JO said that we should use other providers such as the WEA, who might already be running relevant evening classes.

CA said we could start with a general session on the evolution of York's hinterland to get groups thinking about what's relevant in their area. It was agreed that this was the way forward and that CA will ask the local groups what they want at the next TYP meeting and report back to EG. A decision on the appropriate type of seminar/day school would then be made.

- CA to ask groups what sort of research days they want at next TYP meeting

## **5b. Recording pro-formas**

EG stated that she would be designing some recording sheets that the different groups can use for their fieldwork. This would create a standardised recording system and all the groups would be encouraged to use the same format. It would also enable comparisons of results between parishes. All agreed that any recording pro-formas must be MIDAS compliant (A Manual and Data Standard for Monument Inventories, which provides standards and thesauri for recording sites and events such as fieldwalking, excavation, hedgerow surveys etc., published by English Heritage and can be viewed at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/MIDAS3rdReprint.pdf>).

CA said we must establish the minimum data requirements and work from that. Certain fields could be kept blocked to aid confidentiality (eg. landowner). JO said that we don't need to reinvent the wheel and that we could base the pro-formas on existing forms. SR suggested EG talks to Ben Gourley at the University of York about the data fields that the students use when they are carrying out fieldwork. It was agreed that EG will design some basic pro-forma recording sheets, which will be distributed at the next TYP meeting and given a trial period.

- EG to meet Ben Gourley to discuss recording methods and data fields
- EG to design recording pro-formas to be distributed at the next TYP meeting

## **5c. Accessing archives and reference collections**

EG outlined that some groups were having difficulty getting hold of archives and collections from archaeological units and local museums. EG said she would try to discuss this with Andrew Morrison at The Yorkshire Museum. It was suggested that EG provide the groups with the relevant contact details for the archaeological units. JO left the meeting at this point.

EG mentioned that pottery and brick and tile recording sheets were distributed at the workshop on identifying finds and that guidance notes on identifying pottery from different periods had been prepared by Ailsa Mainman of YAT. All agreed that these were useful documents for community groups to have and EG will make them available to the groups.

SR suggested that finds identification sessions be combined with learning about typologies, data inputting and databases. EG will talk to Ben Gourley about the database model the university uses. SR also mentioned that the x-ray facilities at the university have been improved and that they could be used for metal finds.

- EG to meet with Andrew Morrison to discuss community access to the collections held at the Yorkshire Museum

## **6. Any other business**

SR suggested that an event be held focussing on the lessons of community archaeology, building on the contacts EG made and research that EG did for the project design. This event could involve Community Archaeologists from across the UK and look at what community archaeology projects have been successful and issues of best practice. RH mentioned that Peter Liddle, one of the pioneer Community Archaeologists, would be talking at a CBA conference in Leicester in September 2005. SR suggested that a regional event could take place promoting community archaeology in Yorkshire. It was agreed to leave this idea for now until further into the project.

RH mentioned that a publication entitled *Archaeology and Metal Detecting: A model for engaging the local community in greenfield development* has been produced, based on a joint project carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and YAT in Osbaldwick in 2003. It can be downloaded for free from <http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/>.

## **7. Date for the next meeting of the Project Board**

The next meeting of the Project Board has been provisionally booked for Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2005.

EG thanked everyone for coming. The meeting closed at 15.50pm.