



Community Archaeology Workshop: 3

Reading old documents, Saturday 23rd July 2005

Workshop 3 was held at Copmanthorpe WI Hall and focussed on 'Reading old documents', a discipline also known as Palaeography. The workshop was very popular and provided people with a hands-on opportunity to interpret and decipher medieval and post-medieval documents.

**GREATER YORK
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CONTACT

The workshop was led by a local historian, Marjorie Harrison. We began by learning some of the basic principles of Palaeography. We looked at different forms of letters in the alphabet and some of the abbreviations that were commonly used. We also went through Roman numerals (j, ij, iij, iv, v, x, L, C, D, M etc), regnal years (eg. 7H8 = 1515, the seventh year of the reign of Henry 8th), and the symbols used for money - pounds (£ or li), shillings (s) and pence (d).



Marjorie had prepared a number of copies of documents, including 16th-century wills and inventories, letters, jail delivery documents, musters of soldiers, and 17th-century manor court rolls. Participants took it in turn to read through the documents and copy them out. Everyone found it to be a fascinating insight into the written record and learnt skills that can be used for archive research on their own projects.

Contact

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