



# Marks, Graffiti, Wall Paintings and Decoration in Yorkshire Buildings

**Saturday 27 April 2024 9.30am to 5.45pm**

York St John University, De Grey Lecture Theatre, York

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It's back! After a four-year hiatus, the YVBSG is proud and excited to offer a Day School again. We hope that you will come and support our event that features talks by members as well as distinguished academics and guest speakers.

Due to the spiralling costs of the venue hire, and in an effort to keep costs down to a minimum, we regret that we cannot offer a lunch option. Attendees should bring their own food, or eat at a local café nearby in the hour available for lunch – between 1pm and 2pm.

After the AGM you may like to consider joining us for a meal at 6.30pm before returning home – at the spectacular **Grand Assembly Rooms** on Blake Street that is occupied by **ASK Italian**. Please tick the box on the booking form to indicate if you would like to do this and we will reserve sufficient tables to accommodate us all – please order and pay for your meal separately.

The venue for our Day School is the ground floor (and easily accessible) **De Grey Lecture Theatre of the York St John University in York** (where we held our last Day School) – see link to map overleaf. Tea, coffee and biscuits on arrival, and other refreshments at intervals through the day are all included. The programme may be subject to change. **Booking Form overleaf.**

The talks start *promptly* at 10.00am after registration; please register immediately on your arrival and then help yourself to a hot drink and biscuits. The Day School will be followed at 5.10pm by the AGM of the YVBSG.

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## Outline Programme

Talk 1: David Cant - Markings on timber and stone.

Talk 2: Professor Kate Giles & Professor Mel Giles - Farm Graffiti of the Yorkshire Wolds.

Talk 3: Andrew Bower & Andy Bentham - A Farmer's Daybook Carved in Oak. Beam Carvings at Manor Farm, Upper Midhope.

Talk 4: Caroline Stanford - The Painted Chamber at Calverley Old Hall.

Talk 5: Professor Kate Giles - The wall paintings of Pickering church: their discovery, restoration and meaning.

Talk 6: Peter Thornborrow - Painted decoration on plasterwork, carved oak & panelling, and stained glass in West Yorkshire's mid-16th and 17th century vernacular houses.

## Booking Form

	Members of YVBSG £33	Others £37
No. of Tickets		
Total cost		

To pay by bank transfer, please use your name as the reference and make your payment to:  
Sort code 09-01-56; account number 52840000, account name Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group.

I have paid by BACS

When you've made the payment, please return this completed form to **archivist@yvbsg.org.uk**.

To pay by cheque, please make it payable to YVBSG and post it with your completed booking form to  
**David Cook, 34 Porter Close, DURHAM, DH1 5ZL Phone 07810 668975. Email [archivist@yvbsg.org.uk](mailto:archivist@yvbsg.org.uk)**

Closing date **14 April 2024**. If you wish to book after this date, phone/email to check availability of places.

I enclose £ \_\_\_\_\_ (cheques to Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to join us for the post-Day School meal at Ask Italian in York, please indicate the number of places you need in the box below.

I would like this number of places for dinner, please.

The venue for the Day School is the De Grey Lecture Theatre in De Grey Court, on the Campus Map:  
<https://www.yorks.ac.uk/map/>

For details on how to find and contact the venue, please visit:  
<https://www.yorks.ac.uk/find-and-contact-us/>

To call the venue reception, please dial 01904 624 624.

# The Programme

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09.30 Registration: Tea, Coffee and Biscuits served in foyer

10.00 Welcome from *Peter Thornborrow* (*Chair YVBSG*)

10.05 Organisation and housekeeping information – *Mary Cook*

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10.10 Talk 1 – David Cant (40 mins)

10.50 Talk 2 – Professors Melanie & Kate Giles (50 mins)

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11.40 Comfort break, 20 minutes: Tea and Coffee and biscuits served in foyer.

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12.00 Talk 3 – Andrew Bower & Andy Bentham (45 mins)

12.45 Discussion/questions for the morning speakers. Chair

13.00 Lunch break – please make your own arrangements – no lunch supplied

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14:00 Talk 4 – Caroline Stanford (45 mins)

14.45 Talk 5 – Professor Kate Giles (45 mins)

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15.30 Comfort break, 20 minutes: Tea, Coffee and Biscuits served in foyer

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15.50 Talk 6 – Peter Thornborrow (45 mins)

16:35 Discussion/questions for afternoon speakers. Chair

16.50 Close of the Day School.

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17:00 – 17:45 AGM for YVBSG members

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# The speakers

**Talk 1: David Cant MA** (in Social Science, Birmingham University)

## ***Markings on timber and stone***

Over a long period, David has built up a collection of photographs of marks and symbols found on buildings, mainly in Yorkshire. He will show us a variety of different types of markings and pose the question who they were made by, and answer how they were made, and why. Possible explanations may include aids to construction, identification marks, apotropaic purposes and....graffiti. The interpretation of their significance can inform our understanding of both the construction processes involved and the ideas of those who commissioned and worked on the buildings.

**David Cant** comes from Eastbourne and has lived in the Calder Valley of West Yorkshire for 35 years. His initial interest in local history stems from a WEA course he attended in Norwich in the 1970s. After studying for a master's degree in industrial archaeology at Ironbridge, he moved to Bradford, where his enthusiasm for buildings, particularly vernacular buildings, flourished. He has been a member of the YVBSG for many years, having been its Chair twice, and is also a member of the VAG. He is particularly skilled at building recording, and their interpretation, and is keen on co-operative working with others having helped organise several local courses and day schools on history, farming, and buildings, for both the Hebden Bridge Local History and the Halifax Antiquarian Societies. He joined a 17<sup>th</sup> century probate document transcription course initiated through the WEA by Alan Petford and has been actively involved in the production of several books of probate inventories of the various parishes of Halifax. He has a love of maps and has participated in a national project using computer imagery to interpret early maps and encourage their use in research.

**Talk 2: Professor Kate Giles (FSA) University of York and Professor Mel Giles (FSA)**

## ***Farm Graffiti of the Yorkshire Wolds***

Tucked away on meal bin lids in empty stables, drawn and painted around the windows, doors and walls of granaries of the High Wolds farms are graffiti dating from the late 19th to mid-20th century. Created by the '*Horse lads*' - a distinctive group of men who lived and worked in a hierarchical system distinctive to the Wolds - these traces in pencil and chalk offer a unique insight into a lost way of living. In this lecture twin Archaeology professors, Mel and Kate Giles will share discoveries made nearly two decades ago of this fascinating and ephemeral mark-making, much of which has now disappeared, and set it in the context of the significant oral history work of oral historian Stephen Caunce.

**Mel Giles** is Professor of European Prehistory at the University of Manchester and fellow of the British Academy. Her most recent publication, *Bog Bodies: Face to Face with the Past*, won the CBA's Archaeology Book of the Year 2022.

**Kate Giles** is Professor at the University of York and Director of its Centre for the Study of Christianity & Culture.

**Talk 3: Andrew Bower MA** (Manchester School of Architecture; under Ron Brunskill) & **Andy Bentham**.

***A Farmer's Daybook Carved in Oak. Beam Carvings at Manor Farm, Upper Midhope***

Manor Farm, Upper Midhope, South Yorkshire has a special place in the study of Vernacular Architecture having featured in Sidney Addy's pioneering work of 1898 'The Evolution of the English House'. Recording work done by members of the YVBSG in 2019 included the transcription of a series of remarkable beam carvings that record daily events during the period 1846-1851. The presentation throws some light on this curious record of life in Upper Midhope in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> C.

**Andrew Bower:** Resurveyed the listed buildings of most of South Yorkshire 1984-87 (12 lists). Also resurveyed Wetherby & Boston Spa, Barrow-in-Furness and Bakewell, Derbys (list review). Has acted as a listed-building caseworker for English Heritage. Currently engaged in historic buildings research.

**Andy Bentham:** has been recording mark making and older graffiti both independently and with groups, such as the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Medieval Graffiti Survey, for the last decade. Living and working in the Peak District National Park has seen Andy focus his recent recording work on buildings of working farms.

**Talk 4: Caroline Stanford, FSA (BA (Oxon), MA, MSC)**

***The Painted Chamber at Calverley Old Hall***

This talk will explore the remarkable find of a near-complete scheme of mid-16th century grotesque work at Calverley Old Hall in Leeds. This was discovered in 2021 during the Landmark Trust's restoration of the derelict building and is now fully revealed and undergoing conservation. After a brief introduction to the site and its history, the talk will include information on pigments and substrate as well as considering possible provenance of the designs.

**Caroline Stanford** has been the in-house research Historian for national building preservation charity the Landmark Trust since 2001. She lectures and writes widely about their projects.

**Talk 5: Professor Kate Giles (FSA)**

***The wall paintings of Pickering church: their discovery, restoration and meaning***

In 1852 a series of remarkable late medieval wall paintings were discovered on the walls of Pickering church, North Yorkshire. They became the focus of local and national antiquarian and popular interest but they horrified the religiously-conservative vicar, who saw them as meaningless works of art, but deeply meaningful as Catholic symbolism and sought to destroy them. In this lecture Kate will reflect on how Pickering offers an insight into the fate of many medieval painted churches, as the significance of such religious decoration was recognised and debates in Victorian Yorkshire.

Kate's book, *The wall paintings of Pickering church: their discovery, restoration and meaning* recently won the Historians of British art book prize, 2023.

## Talk 6: Peter Thornborrow GNSM, PGDipELH (CNAA)

### ***Painted decoration on plasterwork, carved oak & panelling, and stained glass in West Yorkshire's mid-16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century vernacular houses***

This talk will feature some of the finest yeoman and gentry houses in the County and how their interior decoration reflected the status of the owner, often celebrating a marriage, not just by carving their initials and a date above the entrance door or above a fireplace, but often incorporated in white painted plaster decoration, often featuring the Royal Stuart arms above fireplaces. A few examples in gentry houses are painted with the correct heraldic tinctures using real gold and silver leaf: *New Hall* Elland, *Hawksworth Hall*, and *The Howroyde* Barkisland where the open-hall window is infilled with contemporary stained-glass, as is *Shibden Hall*'s. A few houses feature fine carved-and-inlaid fireplaces with painted decoration such as at *Bolling Hall*, *Todmorden Old Hall* and the former Savile town house in Halifax that became an inn, *The Old Cock*, in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. At *Woodsome Hall* were hanging portraits of the owners combined with their family-tree. We will also look at the few examples of *trompe-l'oeil* decoration, over-painted on earlier panelled rooms, and on overmantels, and mural decoration - painted in imitation of tapestry - preserved on earlier timber-framing found under later panelling as at *Shibden*.

**Peter Thornborrow:** longtime member of the VAG, former *Architectural Historian* appointed by Calderdale to re-survey the Borough for listed buildings, and after, the rest of West Yorkshire for the DOE. Former *Historic Buildings Officer* for WYAS, and latterly *Conservation & Urban Design Officer* for Rotherham MBC. Current Chair of the Group since 2016.