

Update of outline sent April 2010 to YDMT – revised January 2015 sent in march 2015 to HLF

North Craven History and Archaeology for Everyone

Since late 2002, when the NCHRG was formed with a Heritage Lottery Award of £5,000, some 25 group members have been visiting relevant archives in North and West Yorkshire, and further a field, gaining information, converting text to searchable PDF and data sets, with the specific aim of providing a locally based North Craven digital historical archive open to the general public, as well as schools and researchers. The group was instrumental in getting public archives to open up their collections for photographing rather than just tracing maps or transcribing deeds in situ. This has made collection of data much more accurate, simpler and faster, enabling transcription and further work to take place as, when and where convenient to local researchers.

Since its inception, the group have been provided with free office space and facilities with a 'drop in' centre for visitors and local people by Hudson History of Settle at their premises in Procter House, Kirkgate, Settle. This has included the free use of a private library of local historical books, several net-worked computers, b/w and colour printers, A4 and A3 scanners and digital cameras. Over the years, with awards from various bodies, the group have bought their own computer, projector, exhibition boards, digital camera and light table, sound recording, GPS and surveying equipment which have all been, and still are, freely available for other individuals and local community groups to borrow.

NCHRG members have, from the beginning, been cooperating with other local history groups in the area, helping and teaching them how to collate, copy and digitalise their archive material, whilst encouraging them to deposit original documents in an appropriate Public Record Office such as NYCC at Northallerton. So 80% of some local groups' primary material is already in NCHR group's digital system.

In early 2009 the group opened a simple web page at www.northcravenhistoricalresearch where members of the public could view and search our first collection of deeds/maps/photographs etc. free of charge. This facility is still available on line and includes local Parish Registers, Census details, Tithe Award Maps and Schedules, Early Wills, Inventories, Land Purchases, Township Boundaries, Monument Sites, Estate Maps, and thousands of photographs of Vernacular Architecture, landscapes, Field and Road Furniture etc. The web page includes reciprocal links to other local history groups' web pages, and to useful National historical web pages.

However, since that time, the NCHR group members have undertaken several major projects including the Giggleswick Scar Project; the Long Preston Deeps Project; the Winskill Stones Project; as well as individuals' projects on a wide range of subjects. This has entailed field walking the entire areas; photographing all the natural and man made features on the ground and in the dry stone walls; surveying any site or building remains found, and recording as searchable data sets or reports. The group have also been entrusted with various family collections to record in the archive e.g. the Dugdale Family (traders in Settle for decades) collection of photos, books & pamphlets; the Stan Lawrence (head master & local historian) collection, the Butt collection (he was the last Clerk to Settle Rural District Council) of original deeds for the Giggleswick Poor House, council minutes from 1897, photos, reports

on planned railways, water and sewage systems, road making and repairs etc. etc. All of this material, including the Deeds, was deposited at North Yorks. Record Office. The group do not hold on to original primary material but deposit it in public archives for preservation.

The main aim of this new project would be to build upon this previous work and provide an exciting community and educational interactive website, openly accessible to the general public as well as to schools and researchers. The primary focus would be the history, archaeology, heritage and landscape of North Craven, centred on Settle and the three peaks area, although the information/photos/maps etc. we hold regarding a much wider area would also be made available. The NCHRG now probably hold the largest digital archive of historical material in the North Craven area; far too much material to fit onto our existing web site. We have estimated that we hold over 1 million items in our digital archive, amounting to 2.8 terabytes of information.

The results of the Projects we have run since our formation in November 2002 require a much more suitable interpretation and explanation outlet, as much new information discovered, not yet in the public domain, needs disseminating in an interesting but simple way. Field walking over some of the area has also revealed many unrecorded archaeological, mining and cave sites which need to be properly surveyed and mapped in greater detail. OSL, Cosmogenic and C14 dating results on recent samples and on bones and artefacts from previous local excavations, have also revealed much new information that is of national and international importance. All this information is copyright to North Craven Historical Research Group as being undertaken by its members, therefore there will be no problem with copyright issues on the new advanced website that the group want to set up. This would also be an opportunity to open up members' individual research to the general public, record the various exhibitions we have held over the years, and to list the remainder of copyright materials that can be viewed at the group's office at Procter House.

The new website would be resource rich and include all the recent specialist reports, data sets, searchable PDFs, live geo-referenced maps, photographs, and, hopefully in the near future, new video and audio podcasts, including themed walks around the Craven area covering geology/caves/quarrying/mining; natural history/plants/animals/farming; archaeology/history/heritage. The website would be professionally built to a high standard, updated weekly with an interactive blog site, and maintained for at least five years. To this end, we need to upgrade our Server and main computer, and purchase new soft ware, to store all the new information and to be able to support or host other local groups' web pages, and link into many other projects in the area. To accomplish this NCHRG would need to employ an expert I.T. person part-time to set up the new initial web site and then to enter all the digital information the group has gathered over the years, in a suitable simple format that will encourage the general public, as well as schools and local historians to learn more about their local heritage. This expert I.T. person would also be expected to train volunteers to assist in the input of the group's materials onto the website, so that this work can continue after the project has officially finished.

The group already have in-kind funding eg. existing premises and computer equipment to undertake the project, and members have the skills required as authors and teachers and for computing, dataset management, etc. to prepare documents for inputting to the website. We also have sound recording equipment and the expertise to edit recordings for computer output. Our individual and team research is ongoing and developing in many different subject areas to appeal to a wide audience. We already help visiting members of the public in our 'drop in' centre/office with any historical enquiries they may have about the area, particularly vernacular buildings, family history and landscape features. Additional in-kind funding will be provided by volunteer time spent surveying and mapping newly discovered sites, writing up results and producing material in suitable web formats. The data information on sites already discovered will be made available to local Schools, YDNP, NYCC, and HERS to enable them to update their records.

Estimated Costs for five years include Webcam £2,000, new computer and software £5,000, travel/expenses £2,000, Own I.P. Web Server £12,000, website development and maintenance including wages £26,000, contingency fund £3,000, making a total of £50,000.

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