

The Lives of the Common People – Project Update March 2012

The Lives of the Common People: Castleton and Hope's Hidden Medieval History: Project Update March 2012

Residents of Hope and Castleton are getting stuck in to the Medieval Common People Project being organized by Hope and Castleton Historical Societies. The project has got off to an exciting start with visits to three record offices and a training day in landscape archaeology. The project is also drawing in people from other parts of the Hope Valley and Sheffield.

We have made visits during February to learn how to use Derbyshire Record Office, Lichfield Archives and Sheffield Archives. Archivists at each have shown participants how to use their catalogues and do searches, as well as what types of documents they have. At Derbyshire and Lichfield we even had the chance to begin our research on the day, because the Archivists kindly brought a selection of documents from their stores for us to see and look through.

A good example is the day we spent in Lichfield. Andrew George, Principal Archivist, gave a clear and enjoyable introduction to the types of records available. Both villages were part of the Medieval Diocese of Lichfield, therefore a wealth of ecclesiastical records are stored in the Archives. There are wills, inventories, Bishop's Registers, charters and a range of other documents which give an insight into Medieval life in Castleton and Hope. The group left the excellent training day enthused and buzzing – both with what they discovered on the day and the potential discoveries to be made.

We are following the documentary research up with more visits to the record offices and monthly research sessions. Our next one is on Wednesday 25th April, 7pm at the Old School Hall, Hope. All are welcome. We will discuss what subjects we hope to research and share discoveries to date.

The landscape survey got off to a great start with a training day on how to do archaeological survey. After an introduction to the subject, we headed up the valley side north of Hope to practice some of what we had learnt. Our aim is to record the archaeological features associated with the old routes between the two villages – which may date to the Middle Ages.

If you would like to find out more about the project, and how you can get involved, please contact Di Curtis, 01433 620724, dicathope@aol.com or Angela Darlington, 01433 620281, amstafford@hotmail.co.uk.

