

Dayschools

Castle Eden, an unusual name first of all where's the castle and is this Eden. The first bit of the name Eden is actually a corruption of the old Anglo Saxon Yew Dene, the Dene the steep sided valley of the yew trees.

Today's are a number of what we call training days for the Limestone Landscapes. Training sounds a bit official really, it's a way of getting people engaged, motivated and out there and showing them just what a wonderful landscape it is in this part of East Durham. Church at one end, castle or hall at the other with village in between but Mr Burdon wanting his nice fashionable residence with his parkland had the village moved down there.

The day schools programme for the Limestone Landscapes project is really about trying to encourage as many people as possible to come along on a day they can learn about the history or the geology or the biodiversity or maybe a combination of all three, so they'll get like an introduction to what they can find out in the Limestone Landscapes.

St Helen, St Helena, you just might not realise it was the world's first archaeologist. In mediaeval times people used to think she was British, but she was actually the mother of Constantine the Great, the Roman Emperor.

Well, I think I've come to appreciate much more, the richness of the culture of the landscape and the geology of part of Durham which we think of as 'Oh that's just a boring flatlands, there isn't much going on there, let's go off to the hills' but there's such a tremendous lot interesting here too.

So we've been taking people from Penshaw Hill where we started off, wonderful high point, iconic building on the top which everyone probably drives past, looks at on a daily basis and then we're taking them this time on a bit of a mystery tour. In the past we've told them where we're going on these kind of days and walks but this time around, apart from me and Ken and hopefully the bus driver no one else knows where we're going so it's a series of pleasant surprises, hopefully.

Heritage Lottery fund landscape projects I think are just absolutely amazingly good schemes, because rather than just focussing on one little thing which one community group might like, which is really very valuable. They've got a much wider remit and hopefully they get a lot of different people from a lot of different backgrounds involved in an awful lot of different projects and the key thing about limestone landscapes right from the beginning has been that it's not just about 'I'm an archaeologist, this is important, I'm an ecologist, the plants are important'; everybody's worked together so the projects that have come through have been hitting lots and lots of different buttons so you get lots of interesting projects which enlighten and enthuse people about the whole environment which surrounds them.

You get the feeling a lot of it was to do with his mum 'Constantine, Constantine make them Christian', you get a feeling he was nagged into it a bit, but it was basically

It's nice just taking the time to stroll around without having any timetable and any deadlines, just take your time and look and talk and see. Wee I think it's very important that everybody should appreciate the richness and history of the culture of the place where they live. We spend so much time watching television and looking at other exotic parts of the world we forget that we live in exotic places too.