

Professor Angela Hobbs

Born in 1961, Angela Hobbs is the Professor of the Public Understanding of Philosophy at the University of Sheffield. A writer and broadcaster, she was recently given the accolade of appearing on *Desert Island Discs*.

What's your first Yorkshire memory?

I was born in Surrey, and went to school in Sussex, so my first memory of the word "Yorkshire" has to be Sunday lunches and the Yorkshire puddings that my mother made to perfection. My first recollection of it as a specific place was when I was 15 years old, and we stopped off in North Yorkshire *en route* to visit one of my mother's relatives. I can't recall the specific place, but I do vividly remember the beautiful deep purple of the heather on the moors.

What's your favourite part of the county – and why?

This is a work in progress as far as favourites are concerned. So far, I've had some lovely days out in both Wharfedale and Swaledale. Wharfedale in particular because it brings back happy memories of speaking at a big conference in Leeds. When the work was done, a few of us went up Wharfedale with picnic baskets. It was an idyllic afternoon.

What's your idea of a perfect day, or a perfect weekend, out in Yorkshire?

Drinking in buckets of fresh air at places like Fountains Abbey or the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Another place on the list for later in the year is a trip to explore Whitby and to get a flavour of the place.

Do you have a favourite walk – or view?

It's been three years since my appointment at Sheffield University, so to pin down one "favourite" would be a bit presumptuous. Let's say I am constantly finding out new things about this marvellous county, that I love walking, and that the place is full of surprises.

Which Yorkshire sportsman, past or present, would you like to take for lunch?

I never realised, until I was a little more grown-up, that cricket was always regarded as a "man's thing". Wrong. My mother always used to have *Test Match Special* on the radio, and would listen to it avidly, and it sort of grew on me too. So may I please take along Sir Len Hutton, Freddie Trueman and Herbert Sutcliffe, and may I be allowed to sit at their feet and just listen to their stories – three of the greatest players of the game, ever.

Which Yorkshire stage or screen star,



THINKING ABOUT YORKSHIRE: Sheffield philosopher Professor Angela Hobbs.

past or present, would you like to take for dinner?

I have always admired Michael Palin, because I grew up in the Python era and he has shown himself to be a fascinating writer, a social commentator, and a fearless campaigner for the charities he believes in. With him, I'd like to ask Sir Tom Courtenay, who is one of our finest actors, and who seems to be one of the most self-effacing of men.

If you had to name your Yorkshire 'hidden gem', what would it be?

Howden Minster. I have a great friend who used to work for English Heritage in Sheffield who introduced me to this lovely church, tucked slightly out of the way.

What do you think gives Yorkshire its unique identity?

Its many landscapes. The Wolds, the amazing coastline, the Dales, the heaths, the great cities. There's enough variety for a country, never mind a county. But above all, the people, with their generosity, their resilience, their strength and their gritty determination. I've been bowled over by the warmest of welcomes since I took up

my post and I've had more invitations in three years in Sheffield than I had in 20 elsewhere.

Do you follow sport in the county, and if so, what?

Cricket, cricket and cricket. When I was invited to be the guest on *Desert Island Discs* recently, I asked for one of my choices to be a *Test Match Special* commentary, and as soon as people heard that, I had two invitations to pop up to Headingley later in the year – invitations which I have accepted, and which I know I will enjoy immensely.

Do you have a favourite restaurant, or pub?

There's The Thyme Café, in Sheffield, where I often eat, and the lovely warmth and atmosphere of The Strines pub, in Bradfield. Lovely, helpful, friendly staff in both of them. Oh, and further afield, I do like The Blue Bicycle restaurant on Fossgate in York. Whenever I'm in the city, and time allows, I make a beeline for them.

Do you have a favourite food shop?

I'm going for the Porter Brook Deli,

on Sharrow Vale Road in Sheffield. A marvellous selection of cheeses, meats and pickles and chutneys. A foodie's heaven.

How do you think that Yorkshire has changed, for better or for worse, in the time that you've known it?

So much for the better – and I'm really talking about Sheffield here, because I used to visit in the Eighties, and coming out of the station was really rather depressing. Now it's a delight. The city is a pleasure to walk around, it is full of public spaces and gardens, there are some first-rate restaurants, we've got great theatres, and there's a real buzz in the air.

If you had to change one thing in, or about Yorkshire, what would that be?

The appalling rail communications from Sheffield to Hull, where I often have to go – it takes forever, the train stops everywhere, and it adds hours to the day. It's all terribly frustrating.

Who is the Yorkshire person that you most admire?

William Wilberforce and Captain Cook, both of whom have been heroes of mine since my childhood. Cook for his physical courage, and his incredible intellectual abilities, and Wilberforce for putting up with all the ridicule directed at him as he attempted to bring about the abolition of slavery.

Has Yorkshire influenced your work?

Yes indeed, because moving jobs, especially when you do it in your fifties, is incredibly energising. But I had terrific support at the university, right from the very start. I am deeply grateful for that.

Name your favourite Yorkshire book/author/artist/CD/performer.

Where shall we begin? Top of the list is Jane Gardam, who writes amazing books for both children and adults (try out her *Old Filth* novels), then there's Andrew Marvell, the poet, and also here is Simon Armitage, Delius the composer (I am ashamed to say that I had never realised that he was a son of Bradford, because I always thought that he had such a luscious name) and Dame Janet Baker, whose voice is simply sublime. All of them give me a lot of pleasure.

NEXT WEEK: LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHER RICH BUNCE.