



## **YCCSA Seminar Series Spring 2016**

An interdisciplinary seminar series hosted by the York Centre for Complex System Analysis aimed at researchers from all disciplines

### **The Autism Paradox: A view from Prehistory**

**Dr Penny Spikins**

Department of Archaeology, University of York

3 June 2016  
Ron Cooke Hub, RCH/204 at 13:30

The prevalence of autism seems hard to explain from an evolutionary standpoint. If autism is a 'disorder' then why are so many people affected? In contrast if autism is a 'difference' why and how could it have been incorporated into past human societies given selection pressures on complex social understanding and social skills? Here I consider the contribution that the archaeological evidence from Palaeolithic and from modern hunter-gatherers can make to understanding selection pressures acting on the integration and maintenance of genes associated with autism. I will argue that the question is both very much simpler, and much more complex than it might appear.

The seminar includes a refreshment break to fuel interdisciplinary discussion

*Ron Cooke Hub is on Heslington East Campus – accessible by free bus services  
Nos. 66 and 44 running at frequent intervals from Heslington West.  
The YCCSA Seminar room is on the second floor*