



YORK WALLS FESTIVAL 2018

Festival Launch Event (Martin Hetherington)



The Festival Launch Dignataries - Photo: Lewis Outing

The launch at York St. John went very well, with staff from the Jorvik Group in costume to add some medieval flavor to the event. Carolyn Lloyd-Brown (Red Tower) thanked people for attending and Martin Hetherington thanked those who helped put the festival on, and expressed the hope that it would grow in the future. John Oxley gave a potted history of the walls, and said that the walls in York were unique because of the love that the community had for them.

Looking ahead, he was looking forward to special events to celebrate two important anniversaries in 2022: the Yorkshire Philosophical Society (200 yrs) and York Archaeological Trust (50 yrs).

Martin then presented the Mayor and Sheriff with copies of the newly published 1850 map of York.



Presenting the Mayor and Sheriff with the newly published 1850 map of York.



Martin's Opening Address - Photo: Lewis Outing

Keynote Speech (John Oxley)

John Oxley Making the Keynote Speech - Photo: Lewis Outing

As York's 'Cultural Heritage Manager' John welcomed the First York Walls Festival which demonstrated the historic, communal, and aesthetic values of the walls. The great thing is that this festival has emerged from the community and is under community management.

The walls were commenced by Romans in AD 71 as an initial defensive wall and have been developed by succeeding generations over nearly 2000 years, leading to our unique "perched walls". They are a statement in stone.

There are larger ones in China and Europe but those in York meet the UNESCO criteria of having 'outstanding universal value'. They will therefore be an important part of the possible 'World Heritage Site' bid.

The City Council are developing a 'Conservation Management Plan' for the walls - a revision of the earlier 2004 plan for which FOYW (and other local groups) will be consulted when this is released in draft later this year.

A very useful additional project would be to update the 1972 report on 'York Defences' by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England.



John Oxley Making the Keynote Speech - Photo: Lewis Outing

Festival Summary (Martin Hetherington)

To get a festival up and running in under 2 months, and to see 1,200 people attend events (not counting the Bootham Bar footfall) was amazing. A few numbers:

- Double the usual visitors at a summer Fishergate Postern opening. 508 was the third busiest ever day.
- Red Tower estimated 300 visitors. I think most ate cake in the garden!
- Monk Bar & Micklegate Bar - had 'one of the busiest days of the year'.
- York Explore staff were happy with 50+ attendees
- The launch event had 42 attendees including the Lord Mayor and his Civic Party, who stayed for two hours
- A further 57 came on walks by Simon Mattam (14 am & 16 pm), Chris Rainger (11) & Martin (16)

Lewis Outing's photos, as used in this newsletter, are fantastic.

<https://twitter.com/LewisOuting>

The media took a great deal of interest in the event, including local Radio and TV:

RADIO

Thurs 9 th August	BBC Radio York	Interview PM at the offices
Fri 10 th August	BBC Radio York	60-second sell on the Georgey Spanswick Breakfast show
Fri 10 th August	Minster FM	David Dunning recorded a piece for new. Also put on Twitter, Minster FM website & Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgtZ-K3qF-Q#action=share
Sat 11 th August	BBC Radio York	5 minute segment on Joanita Musisi's breakfast show

TV

Fri 10 th August	That's York TV	2-3 minutes on local TV news, filmed by the library
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A total of 721 people engaged with us on Facebook, which was handled by Leo O'Brien. <https://www.facebook.com/yorkwallsfestival/> There were also 316 Twitter followers, <https://twitter.com/WallsYork> which meant that overall we attracted over 1,000 interested people on Social Media. There was a really positive atmosphere around the event, giving us much to build on. *(See comments at the end of this e-News)*

Red Tower (Carolyn Lloyd-Brown)



Very Popular Cakes at Red Tower at Red Tower - Photo: Lewis Outing



Passport Stamping at Red Tower - Photo: Lewis Outing

The Red Tower enjoyed one of its busiest days ever for the Festival, welcoming over 300 visitors and benefiting from generous donations for refreshments. The tower's detailed Civil War passport stamp was popular - we set up a stamping station in the garden with Wall leaflets and maps, and a steady stream of explorers came to get their next stamp. The sunshine meant that the garden cafe tables were full most of the day and much tea and cake was consumed!

Next year we would have more time to book Civil War re-enactors and tell that episode of York's history in relation to the tower and the city walls so that we complement the other tower stories and time periods. Everyone who then explored the walls would have chance to glimpse into different episodes of the city's history and some key highlights. We could also set up storytelling on the upper floor, and show images or films on the new screen - there are plenty of ideas for next year!

Micklegate & Monk Bars (Ronald Kane)



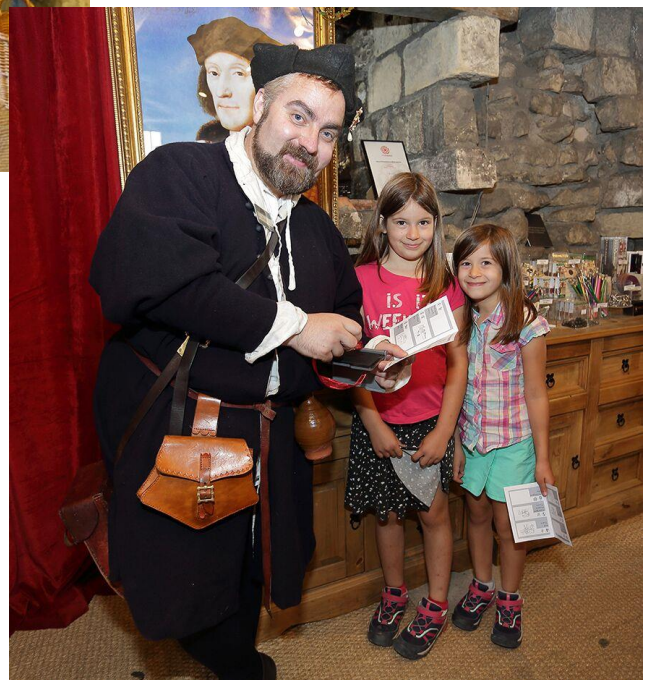
Following the Trail at Monk Bar - Photo: Lewis Outing

At Monk Bar we had a Bishop who was able to relay an account of the Battle of Myton when a levy of York men, led by the Archbishop and the Lord Mayor of York, faced battle hardened

Scotsmen. While at Micklegate we had a 15th century gatekeeper talking about the gruesome practice of mounting the heads of traitors at the Bar.

Many families who might not have otherwise come to our venue came as result of the Walls Trail to get their stamp and this created as real buzz about the place. People really bought into the concept behind the festival and were delighted to learn something about the history on their doorstep

As manager of the Walls Attractions for the Jorvik I was delighted by the response from visitors on the day to the festival as a whole. For our part we had staff in medieval costume at both Monk Bar and Micklegate. They gave visitors an insight into the stories of both Bars and enhanced the stories of Richard III and Henry VII.



Medieval Costumed Staff at Micklegate Bar - Photo: Lewis Outing

Our visitor numbers were up at both sites and we got very favourable feedback from them. As a result I am already planning for next year and hope to have even more to offer our visitors. I am also looking forward to working with the other members of the organising committee to build on the success of this year and turn this into a regular part of York's festivals.

Bootham Bar (Leo O'Brien)



Chilean Students at Bootham Bar - Photo: Lewis Outing

We had a stall in Bootham Bar, providing information and stamping Walls Explorer Trail passports. Bootham Bar was the starting point for Simon Mattam's treasure trail.

Between 9.00 and 4.30, Simon, Leo and Eirini counted 2,621 members of the public passing through the Bar, including a large group of 83 Chilean teenagers.

Explore York: 'Map Attack' (Laura Yeoman)



Map Attack at York Explore - Photo: Lewis Outing

Explore York Libraries and Archives was delighted to be able to participate in the inaugural York Walls Festival. Our 'Map Attack' event, where participants are challenged to recreate historic York – and its walls – out of Lego and Duplo, was a great success. Using copies of maps from the city's archives as inspiration, 54 adults and children spent Saturday afternoon working on a number of amazing creations, and our feedback was universally positive. This is an event we have

run at Explore a number of times before, and it was great that it fitted the bill for the festival as well.

Archive Images of City Walls (Laura Yeoman)



Archive Images at Fishergate Postern Tower - Photo: Lewis Outing

Explore York Archives were also very happy to provide the Friends of York Walls with 25 images of the city walls through the years, taken from City of York Council's image collections, for a temporary display at Fishergate Postern.

Over 500 people saw the exhibition on the open day, which was brilliant, and we are delighted that the Friends will be showcasing the images on future open days this year as well. These events will hopefully bring more attention to the city's amazing photographic collections in our care, and the 5,000 digital images of York that we hold on the Imagine York website.

Fishergate Postern Tower (Martin Hetherington)



It certainly felt good to see Fishergate Postern Tower in the limelight for the York Walls Festival. There was lots of media attention and over 500 visitors, of whom a higher proportion than normal were local to York. The archive photo display we put up for the York Walls Festival will remain in situ for all the remaining 2018 open days, ie. until Oct 27th.

Outdoor Display at Fishergate Postern Tower - Photo: Lewis Outing

Fishergate Walk (Chris Rainger)

We had just over a dozen people come for the Fishergate walk and all seemed to enjoy it. Starting with the waterside origins of Fishergate Tower, we walked along the walls to the corner tower (39) and looked at the tops of the arches on which this section of walls seem to be built.

Then to Fishergate Bar, with its scorched masonry blocks, still visible from the fire of 1489. Leaving the walls, we walked past the former cattle market to the site of All Saint's Church, where archaeologists found the skeletons of civil war soldiers and an



The Fishergate Walk - Photo Chris Rainger

anchoress. Crossing Fishergate, we looked at Walter Brierley's magnificent school and then to Fishergate House, where archaeologists found a huge number of medieval graves, but not the church of St Helen, which is believed to be under a wing of the house.

At Blue Bridge, we looked at the new Foss barrier pumping station and discussed how it operates when the Ouse is in flood. Across the Foss, the Novotel stands on the site of St Andrew's church and priory, and the Anglian trading and manufacturing Wic. We finished at Castle Mills Lock, where the huge mill complex was demolished to make way for Leetham's barges in 1865.

Treasure Trail (Simon Mattam)



Simon's Treasure Trail - Photo: Lewis Outing

Ever since York Museums Trust changed its mind about using my Treasure Trail I've hoped to rescue it from redundancy. It was conceived as a do-it-yourself trail but there seemed no good reason why it could not be used to add interest and more active participation to a led walk during the festival.

Martin wanted an early event to fit in with other things on his timetable so, as I thought 9.30 too early for many takers, we included a second walk,

tucked in after his walk and before Explore's Lego activity.

Young children often get parents out early so the early walk was entirely used by these. The later walk had no children at all, an interesting contrast as children find it easy to grab my attention. I remember the curse of continual counting from school trips so I gave myself the luxury of not counting these groups but there were probably about a dozen in each, a very comfortable number to deal with.

We found the probable mason's mark in St Mary's Abbey's defensive walls within an hour [40 minutes for the childrens' group] -and the two wooden medals [inscribed 'first finder, FoYW'] that my daughter had made for me were worn with pride. It is difficult to tell but I think a good time was had by all. Someone even wrote a complimentary email to the website.

'Off the Wall' Walk (Martin Hetherington)

This walk connected two of the towers on the Walls but did not go along the Walls themselves. I intended there to be an event that was accessible for those who could not manage the steps, and also to shine a light on some less-visited corners of York. That said, there were plenty of views up at York Walls on the journey from Red Tower to Bootham Bar.

I had Eirini to thank for ensuring we started on time, as I was busy doing an interview for York Press with Chloe Laversuch whilst sat outside Red Tower. There were 16 walkers, and we took in the Hungate site, St. Anthony's Garden, Merchant Taylor's, Monk Bar, Chapter House Street, the

Dean's Park and Minster Library en-route to Bootham Bar. The walk lasted an hour and a half, and allowed time for people to take photos and ask questions.

Having a helper made it easier to show maps and photos to those on the walk, and it was useful to practise prior to the day to see where was best to avoid the midday sun and the crowds. It was also useful to link to other events on the day, and Ronald Kane made a guest appearance at Monk Bar in period costume. Some people on the walk commented that they had seen places they hadn't been to before, despite living in York for decades.

Comments on the Festival

John Oxley (CYC): "What an amazing day ... I am only sorry I wasn't able to take part on the day itself - but I will next time!"

Carolyn Lloyd-Brown (Red Tower): "Thanks to all who made a fabulous event possible and hugely enjoyable and successful. We really enjoyed being part of a brilliant collaborative team and would be keen to join together for future events to help promote our wonderful walls. Many thanks to John for all your support and encouragement – it's a great confidence booster!"

Laura Yeoman (York Explore Archives): "We were delighted with how Map Attack went on Saturday – the grand total was 54 people (27 adults and 27 children!) over the course of the two hours, and there were some brilliant sections of walls and buildings on our floor mat. I'm really glad to see that our positive experience was echoed elsewhere in the city as well!"

Eirini Dimerouki (FOYW): "I am very glad it went so well, you all did an amazing job and I am very happy that I was around too. When the Festival grows - and it will be a big thing - I will proudly say that I was here on the first occasion".

Ronald Kane (YAT): "I can echo what everyone has said. The event was a great success and tremendous fun. We had great feedback from visitors and saw a measurable uplift in our numbers on the day".

Contributors

Martin Hetherington, Friends of York Walls: www.yorkwalls.org.uk

Ronald Kane, YAT: <https://richardiiiexperience.com>

Carolyn Lloyd-Brown, Red Tower: www.redtoweryork.org.uk

Simon Mattam: Friends of York Walls: www.yorkwalls.org.uk

Leo O'Brien: FoYW: www.yorkwalls.org.uk

John Oxley, CYC: https://www.york.gov.uk/info/20214/conservation_and_archaeology

Chris Rainger, Fishergate, Fulford & Heslington History Society: <https://ffhyork.weebly.com>

Laura Yeoman, York Explore Archive: <https://www.exploreyork.org.uk/archives>

STOP PRESS: York Walls Festival 2019 (Martin Hetherington)

The York Walls Festival will be back next year on Sat 10 & Sun 11 August 2019. More news on this in the New Year, including a call for festival committee helpers.

Richard Hanage, Editor, on behalf of the Friends of York Walls Committee.

The 'Friends of York Walls' is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation representing York's walls & defences. Registered Charity: No. 1159300 www.yorkwalls.org.uk