

Richard Hanage

From: Friends of York Walls <richard=hanage.com@mail125.suw111.mcdlv.net> on behalf of Friends of York Walls <richard@hanage.com>
Sent: 17 June 2018 09:15
To: richard@hanage.com
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Friends of York Walls Newsletter

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Friends of York Walls Newsletter

Upcoming Events

Open days:

Sat 16 June: Fathers Day weekend

Sat 21 July: Festival of Archaeology

Sat 11 August: August Saturday

Sat 26 Aug: August Bank Holiday weekend

Committee: Tues 3 July; Tues 7 August

[Click here to sponsor a stone](#)

FoYW Newsletter - June 2018

**Station Frontage FPT Openings Soft Topping? Graffiti Patrol
From Committee Civic Trust Walks Marguerite Chapman (Early Days
of FoYW) Off the Walls**

Station Frontage & Walls (Simon Mattam)

CYC are collecting views this month on their plans for the Walls beside the Railway Station. They hope the works will be carried out the winter after next (2019/20), partly to improve the context of the Walls and restore the ramparts outside Toft Tower.



Map of York Station Front Proposals Source: CYC website

To find out more, and have your say, go to <https://www.york.gov.uk/StationFrontQueenStreetBridge>

FPT Openings (Martin Hetherington)

There were 302 visitors on Sat 26th May, taking our total to well above the 3,000 mark for the year so far.

Soft Topping? (Simon Mattam)

The last meeting of the Walls Liaison Group was told that a length of Roman wall near the Library [aka YorkExplore] was to be experimentally topped with earth and plants. It is thought that such 'soft topping' might, via stabilising the dampness of the wall beneath it, help preserve the wall.

Does this photo of the walls to the Ouse side of the Library on the 6th of June show such experimental topping is complete, or is it natural growth on top of the wall? I can't remember if the top of this wall has always been so flowery in June. It certainly looks different from the 'hard topping' of lower Roman walls, round the corner behind the Library.



Soft Topping. - Photo: Simon Mattam



Hard Topping. - Photo: Simon Mattam

5-minute Graffiti Patrol: Help Welcome

Tower 39 on the Walls [sometimes called Fishergate Corner Tower] should soon have a pop-up display of work from two neighbouring primary schools. This will be on two big boards that have been put on the wall-walk to block the way to the tower during repair work on it [the wall-walk is diverted].



Tower 39 Repair Board - Photo: Richard Hanage

CYC would only give permission for the display if FoYW promised to inspect the boards each day for unwelcome additions [and tried to remove any]. If you are willing to do any date[s] [from mid-June to the end of July, possibly longer] I'd be grateful. Please just email me with your offer ps.mattam@outlook.com

Of course my '5 minutes' estimate is based on my thinking that CYC are wrong in their belief that one sort of display will encourage the other, but even if I am wrong there would be no need for volunteers to spend long trying to remove graffiti from the board - you could just report the problem to me and I'd try to do the removal while chewing on my humble pie.

From the Committee (Sam McDermot)

- The new data protection policy has been agreed, and the wording at the bottom of this e-News is updated accordingly. [Download Policy](#)
- Glen is working with a student from the Conservation Studies programme at the University of York to produce a condition survey of the roof. Once the condition survey is ready we will seek quotes for the work and permission to carry it out. We hope to have more news later in the summer.
- We also hope to have more concrete plans for a "Festival of the Walls" soon. If you have any ideas, please get in touch!

- Granville is leading a short-term project to repaint the York badge in the centre of the gate at the bottom of the Walls by FPT.



York Badge on Walls Gate by FPT - Photo: Richard Hanage

Incidentally, the 'C. Dearlove, Fetter Lane, York', who made the badge, was a 'whitesmith'.

'[This is] a roundel made in Fetter Lane, presumably in the late 19th/early 20th century. Mr Dearlove is listed as a 'whitesmith' in the old trade directories of the time'. [source: <http://yorkstories.co.uk/the-forgotten-industries-of-fetter-lane/>]

Civic Trust Free Walks: Fri/Sat 22/23 June

This is an opportunity for people interested in York – *its present, past and future* – to learn about the history of York, as well as a chance to chat with volunteers and learn about the events, activities and membership benefits of York Civic Trust.



“Get to Know Your York”

FREE WALKING TOURS by York Civic Trust

There is no pre-booking for these specialist walks except on the day in the marquee located in St Samson’s Square. Find out more at <https://yorkcivictrust.co.uk/heritage/freewalks/>

Early Days of the ‘Friends’ (Marguerite Chapman)

As a city tour guide for many years the Fishergate Postern Tower has always held a fascination for me. So, when the ‘Friends of York Walls’ was formed and they started to explore the opportunities for bringing the Tower back to life, I was interested and was present when the original planning took place in Chris and John Dowell's living room. As the project grew it was heartening to see the plans for the tower and some of the first alterations taking place. I became a Friend of the Walls and a volunteer, and purchased a stone in my name.



Marguerite Chapman - Early FoYW Member

My job as a city guide was both on walking tours and on the Open Top buses. In the latter case a job I did for sixteen years. As the tour bus drove past the FPT I always thought what a shame it was that it was closed and looked rather forlorn standing empty and perhaps forgotten whilst the rest of the gates and towers in the city proclaimed their history for visitors to enjoy.

I do recall many years ago that there was an artist who was showing his work there for as far as I can remember one week. This was soon after I came here, thirty years ago. It must have been very dusty and dark inside the tower and I imagine the exhibition was on the ground floor only. Apart from this one time, I do not recall the tower every being open to the public. I could however be wrong about that and will no doubt promptly be informed if someone else knows of an 'opening' at any time. Then along came the 'Friends' and things began to look up for the neglected tower.

We were invited to inspect the tower one evening right at the beginning of the planning. Warned to wear old clothes as it was very dirty inside the building, we turned up and were handed a torch and warned how dark it was inside, and off we went. On reaching the top floor with its rather unsafe flooring we found old dead leaves, a dead pigeon as I recall and much dirt and dust.

It was so exciting and interesting to see the layout of the tower and imagine how it

looked when inhabited by a watchman and his family all crammed into the rooms with no heating except for the fireplaces on ground and first floor and no lighting apart from tallow candles and rush lights. How spoilt we all are these days with electricity, gas and central heating. It is no wonder that so many people did not live to a ripe old age. I fear that Health and Safety would have a fit now if they could have seen us all by the light of torches making our way up those dark, winding stairs.

I could climb the stairs in those days, but I would be hard pressed now to get even to the first floor with that narrow staircase to negotiate. How the occupants with probably arthritis, rheumatism and various old age complaints managed is quite a miracle.

At first on the days the tower opened, we handed visitors a torch and warned them to "mind your heads" as they entered the first staircase. I, being about five foot three could clear this but so many tall visitors arrived that it was necessary to repeat the mantra every time anyone went up the stairs. We had the odd occasion when a small child insisted on going up the staircase then getting scared and wanting to come down again. I got quite skilled at telling them to "look up the chimney' on the ground floor and assuring them that there were not ghosts or monsters lurking in the dark (and those days they were dark) corners.

I found that the atmospheric feel to the place came across fairly strongly. If only those stone walls could talk, what tales they could tell. As far as I know only one watchman's name has come to light and he was John Wilson who was the city watchman in 1652. No details seem to be available about this man and his family within the tower. An 1818 resident is also mentioned. He is described in the records as "a poor Freeman of the city" but, of course, no name has surfaced for him. As is common in history, the rich folk are named and the poor remain shadowy figures which we today wish we could pad out with a description, or a name, but it is not to be.

As a volunteer at the tower I met many interesting people and other volunteers who shared my interest in the building. I look back on my volunteering as a happy time but as always there is a not so good side to volunteering in a building that has no heating or really good light even as it is at present. That is, come winter you end up with frozen feet, hands, and face and even body after a while, no matter that you are wearing extra sweaters, body warmers etc. The cold seeps in everywhere. Just think, as I have said, of those poor folk in the olden days with their chilblains and frost bitten hands and feet.

Previous 'Off the Walls' (Richard Hanage)

[Croque Monsieur](#) at Bootham ("The Coffee Shop in the Walls"). They are sponsors of our 2018 leaflet.

[True Story](#) (aka 'Me and Mrs Fisher', at 18 Lord Mayor's Walk (by the 'Bile Beans' advert). They host our committee meetings

[Lion and the Lamb](#), at Bootham, which was the subject of an article by Julian Crabb [St Marys Tower](#), corner of Marygate and Bootham. A reminder of an often forgotten tower, by Alan Fleming

Hoping to see you at the Fishergate Postern Tower soon.

Richard Hanage (richard@hanage.com)

(Editor, on behalf of the Committee).

The FoYW Committee

The committee may be contacted at friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com

Glen McGowan	Chair
Penny Heptonstall	Treasurer
Sam McDermott	Secretary
Alan Fleming	Website
Richard Hanage	e-News/Accounts
Granville Heptonstall	
Martin Hetherington	Volunteers
Simon Mattam	
Emily Greenaway	Fund-raising

If you would like to attend a committee meeting, please contact Sam McDermott friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com. They are normally on the first Tuesday of the month.

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



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