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Friends of York Walls Newsletter

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## Friends of York Walls Newsletter

### Upcoming Events

#### Open Days:

Sat 23 Feb; Sat 9 Mar

**Committee:** Tues 5 Mar; Tues 2 Apr

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## FoYW Newsletter - February 2019

### Residents Weekend: 26/27 Jan (Martin Hetherington/Alan Fleming)

On the Friday before Residents Weekend BBC Radio York gave the Friends of York Walls, and Fishergate Postern Tower, some very useful publicity when Alan Fleming was interviewed at FPT by Adam Tomlinson and Anna Wallace for their daily radio show. A recording of the interviews is available [here](#).

The Saturday of Residents weekend certainly stood out. Our 538 visitors (second highest ever) were also boosted by a mention in the York Press website.

### **"Huge queues build after York Residents Festival gets underway**

The Fishergate Postern Tower, one of the attractions to open their doors today."  
(York Press, 26 Jan 2019)



*Fishergate Postern Tower, and volunteer Steve. - Photo; York Press*

<https://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/17387340.more-than-100-tourist-attractions-available-for-residents-to-visit/>

The successful open days for Residents Weekend certainly boosted our Twitter presence. Graham Smith, in particular, seems to have gone viral:

<https://twitter.com/YorkWallsFriend/status/1089122072893317121/video/1>

That was over 10% of our monthly activity!

## **Development of the FPT (Martin Hetherington)**

The Friends committee met recently to discuss ideas for the future of Fishergate Postern Tower, informed by recent work undertaken by our heritage consultants Qualia and the Heritage Angel. It was agreed that a small sub-committee of volunteers should consider these ideas in more detail, and report back to the wider membership soon. If you are a volunteer but not a current committee member, and would like to get involved in this, please email to [friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com). We are looking for a couple of people to work alongside Bill Hill, Emily Greenaway and myself to discuss the plans.

## **York Walls Festival 2019 (Martin Hetherington/Bill Hill)**



*Launch of the 2018 York Walls Festival - Photo: Lewis Outing*

It is six months until the second York Walls Festival, and preparations went up a notch in January with a meeting of interested parties at York St. John University. Events this year will have a community feel, giving those who live close to the Walls the chance to participate. Ideas suggested include:

- A Saturday event at Red Tower e.g. picnic or barbecue, perhaps with a local history display that the Walmgate residents will put together
- A Sunday event at Baile Hill, celebrating the sprucing up of this area
- A children's event at York Explore, where stories linked with the Walls can provide inspiration for a tile that youngsters will paint
- Open days at Fishergate Postern Tower and Red Tower on both days. FPT could see an exhibition about the YAT dig

The festival is set for Sat 10<sup>th</sup> & Sun 11<sup>th</sup> August, and in the months before this there will be several events of interest to Friends. Talks linked with heritage are planned, including one on York's World Heritage Site bid. A further archives session is planned for York Explore.

In the coming weeks Martin & Bill will be setting up a festival website, and exploring further sources of funding for the festival from the Shared Heritage Lottery Fund. Any enquiries about the festival can be sent to our dedicated email address: [yorkwallsfestival@gmail.com](mailto:yorkwallsfestival@gmail.com)

## **2018 Archaeological Dig Follow-up (Bill Hill)**

Yorkshire Archaeological Trust (YAT) have offered to host a taster session at their York HQ for up to three volunteers on Wednesday 20 February, during the day, to include an introduction to finds and processing (and washing our finds from the December dig) and also an introduction to collections and archive management, plus a trip to their store. If anyone is available and interested, please contact Bill Hill on 07810 833625.





*Pottery Shards from the Dig - Photo YAT Fieldwork*

## **Next Open Day: 23 Feb** (Martin Hetherington)

Our next open day is Sat 23rd February, and you are welcome to come along and see what we do. We also help at Red Tower, so you can do a combined visit if you wish.

## **FPT Electricity Connection Completed!** (Alan Fleming)



After many weeks of planning, and numerous negotiations, on Tuesday 22nd January 2019 The Friends of York Walls started a new era at Fishergate Postern Tower when the electrical power was turned on for the first time. We now have a fully working mains electricity connection, with improved lighting and sockets.

Each floor now has some sockets suitable for low power use, AND, the existing LED strip lighting is now powered by 12V transformers (so no more 12V battery charging!). The lighting on the spiral staircase is now a 600 LED x 11 M Rope Light - giving much more light than the previous globe LEDs.

The hanging lights on the ground floor and the third floor are working again (the old Curiouser 2014 fittings). A new floodlight illuminates the roof rafter features on the top floor.



*The Completed Cabinets - Photo: Alan Fleming*

The meter cabinet, consumer unit assembly and the lower cable cabinet form a neat and not too obtrusive unit, especially when covered by display materials.

The current building installation is very simple, with just TWO Master Switches. When both switches are OFF there is nothing consuming power within the building. The present design has been planned and completed with future "whole building wiring" in mind, when we know more about future exhibition plans and other building improvements. This will be the subject of further discussions.

Our new supplier British Gas do not issue free "Electricity Usage Monitors" to new small business customers. Do you perhaps have one that you do not want or need that you could donate to FOYW for use at FPT ? If so please contact Alan via [friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com) with details.

## Baile Hill Update (Cllr Jonny Crawshaw)

Sleightholme Landscapes have now been appointed as the contractors to complete the Baile Hill tree works (ie clearing the self-seeded saplings, etc). The start date is still to be confirmed but they are aware that all works must be completed by March 31st (this is the funding deadline).

## From the Committee Room (Sam McDermott)

- **Further illumination:** Possibilities to further illumination in the FPT were discussed, including a hanging lantern on the first floor (to match the ground and second floors) and spotlights in the recess and the garderobe. However, it was decided to wait until we have a better idea of how to progress overall plans for the tower.
- **Masons Marks:** Simon will set up a frame to highlight one of the mason's marks that are now visible, as a result of the better lighting
- **Rampart Flowers:** Simon will see if he can set up a 'rampart flower of the month' display outside
- **Roof Repairs:** We expect to be able to move ahead with this shortly

## Sheriff's Army (Tom Gibson)

This years Sheriff, Verna Campbell, will be raising her Army to patrol the City Wall on Saturday 6th of April 2018.



***You are invited  
to join the  
Sheriff's Army  
2019.***



*Note that the year is incorrect on the attached poster. The event is on 6th April 2019.*

At 2.15pm the army will process to the Mansion House where the Proclamation shall be read. It will then proceed round the City Wall, a guided walk led by local historian Cllr Keith Myers. This is expected to take up to two and a half hours, with various stops en route, including Fishergate Postern Tower which will be open to look round, and Red Tower where refreshments and toilet are available. [More Information.](#)

If you would like to take part contact Tom Gibson, Clerk to the Gild of Freemen of York on 01904 423153 or [thomasg624@aol.com](mailto:thomasg624@aol.com)

## City Walls, Past Present and Future (John Oxley)

The Gild of Freemen of the City of York.



**The Harry Ward  
Memorial  
Lecture  
2019.**

John Oxley will be delivering the Harry Ward Memorial Lecture in Bedern Hall on Wed 27th February on the 'City Walls, Past Present and Future', [More information](#)

## Bids for Funding (Bill Hill)



As signalled in the last issue of this newsletter, a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund has been submitted seeking funding for this year's Festival of the Walls and related activities leading up to and following on from the actual event in August. Included are requests for extending the Festival from two days, engaging with a wider range of groups to provide additional events on each day, and enhancing the visitor experience at Fishergate Postern Tower to include:

- A display of the findings of the archaeological dig of the underfloor of the tower.
- An enhanced display of information, photographs and documents relating to the tower and the walls.

We also wish to Improve the range and user-friendliness of the forms of interpretation of the walls, targeting new audiences and interest groups including:

- Generating foreign language versions of material for visitors from overseas;
- An improved map;
- Learning materials for schools;
- The creation of a dedicated Festival website
- The creation of a family pack.

We also propose to:

- Undertake surveys of visitors to evaluate the success of the festival and inform improvements for future years.
- Raise the level of marketing of the festival.
- Take on a project manager to help with the organisational demands of the enhanced Festival.

Further bids are also in preparation.

## **Rampart Flower of the Month** (Simon Mattam)



*Bellis Perennis: Rampart Flower of the Month - Photo: Ann Mattam*

Yes, you have seen this photo before. It was in the last e-news -but this time it is celebrating 'The Rampart Flower of the Month (RFM)'! No-one has yet e-mailed Bill Hill or me to join us helping people to enjoy nature on the ramparts but we are still pressing ahead on a number of fronts, and the RFM is one of them. The FoYW committee are letting me put up a trial 'Rampart Flower of the Month' display at Fishergate Postern Tower [outside if weather permits].

February's flower is the daisy, *bellis perennis*, AKA 'bessy-bairnwort' [apparently a Yorkshire name] or 'day's eye'. It is the commonest of the ramparts' flowers this month, especially where there was once ditch, but flower numbers will multiply as the days lengthen so that it was said 'Spring has come when your foot can cover 6 [or 7 or 10] daisy flowers'. I think I have noticed geese sparing daisies while they grazed all the grass around them and this might explain how some of York's grassy areas come to have more daisies than grass.

Scotland's Rabbie Burns called it the 'gowan' -memories of picking them with a childhood friend feature in Auld Lang's Syne; he also wrote in praise of this 'wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower' which needed no shelter even in the worst weather, and he likened it to a beautiful, trusting, easily victimised, country girl - and then, later in the poem, to himself!

Medieval England's Chaucer called it, 'the empress, flower of flowers all' but many gardeners treat it as a weed. This 'weed: so kill it' reaction probably explains its use in rhyming slang, a use referred to in a sixties skiffle song I half remember: 'my old man's a dustman, he wears big hobnailed boots, it takes so long to pull them up, he calls them 'daisy roots'.

A quick internet search will turn up talk of modern scientific evidence for its effectiveness as a herb of healing, traditionally it was particularly applied to wounds.

Now I am worrying about March's RFM: does it have to be the daffodil? Or should it be something wild or thoroughly naturalised? Suggestions on this -or on extras about daisies - are welcome. Simon Mattam [ps.mattam@outlook.com](mailto:ps.mattam@outlook.com)

**Richard Hanage ([richard@hanage.com](mailto:richard@hanage.com))**  
**Editor, on behalf of the FoYW Committee.**

Glen McGowan	Chair
Penny Heptonstall	Treasurer
Sam McDermott	Secretary
Alan Fleming	Website
Emily Greenaway	Fund-raising
Bill Hill	Fund-raising
Martin Hetherington	Volunteers
Simon Mattam	

The committee may be contacted at [friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com)

If you would like to attend a committee meeting, please contact Sam McDermott.

The meetings 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](http://www.yorkwalls.org.uk)





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