

**From:** Friends of York Walls <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:

**Mon 6 May:** Early May Bank Holiday Weekend

**Sat 25 May & Mon 27 May:** Late May Bank Holiday Weekend

**Committee:** Tues 7 May; Tues 4 June

**Annual Friends Meeting:** Sat 4 May

**York Walls Festival 2019:** Sat 10 & Sun 11 August

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## FoYW Newsletter - April 2019

### GREAT NEWS! (Bill Hill)

**The National Lottery Heritage fund grant of £10,000 towards this year's York Walls**

**Festival has been approved! The grant will enable us to:**

- Enhance the programme of the Festival, extending it to both the Saturday and the Sunday, and drawing in new partners with new activities.
- Create a dedicated website for the Festival
- Improve our visitor information and displays, and maps
- Provide some of our key literature in translation into selected languages
- Provide a programme of expert talks related to the walls leading up to the Festival and running on afterwards (Martin has already got this well under way)
- Put on training events for Friends and interested members of the public including work on archives, ecology and archaeology

- Create a Family Pack and a Schools Pack for the Walls
- Create a nature trail to enhance the experience of going round the Walls and ramparts
- Do a professional display of the archaeological dig in the Fishergate Postern Tower
- Increase the profile of Baile Hill in this year's Festival, including better signage, interpretation and activity on the Festival days
- Help the Red Tower to put on a Community Food Event on the Saturday afternoon of the Festival
- Arrange for two study visits to other cities in England with heritage walls to research useful lessons for what we do in York in the future.
- Help the Festival have a greater economic benefit for walls related businesses in York.
- Take the first steps towards enhancing the visitor experience at Fishergate Postern Tower through display, space organisation and lighting.

Our [press release](#) generated a great deal of interest in the media, and even an editorial item in the York Press:

Central development takes on,  
easy, carless route into the city centre from  
Who says York never plans ahead?

## Wonder at our walls

**H**ERE'S a wonderful thing: a whole festival dedicated to celebrating York's beautiful and historic city walls.

Yes, we know an inaugural York Walls Festival was held last year. It attracted hundreds of visitors. But the Friends of York walls have now received a £10,000 National Lottery grant to make sure this year's event, on August 10 and 11, steps up a gear. The festival aims to help both locals and visitors alike learn more about the walls. The lottery cash will go towards a schools pack, a website, improved visitor information, expert talks - and proper training for volunteers involved in the festival.

Sounds like another must date to go in the diary...

**What do you think?** Email [letters@thepress.co.uk](mailto:letters@thepress.co.uk)

CONTACTS

### York Walls Festival (Martin Hetherington)

We now have the funding we need (see above) to start planning the bigger and better Festival in earnest.



*Pictures from the 2018 Festival - Photos: Lewis Outing*

A novel feature this year will be several FREE pre-Festival talks.

John Oxley (City Archaeologist) and Janet Hopton (Chair of the WHS Steering Group) will discuss possible World Heritage Site status for the city. The talk is at York Explore, Museum Street, on Tuesday 9th July at 18.00. [Book here now!](#)

Barry Crump (University of York's Centre for Lifelong Learning) will give a talk on 'What the Walls Meant to the City in the Medieval Period', at Kings Manor on Saturday 27th July at 14.00. [Book here now!](#)

Martin will outline more of the festival plans at the AFM on May 4th. There will be plenty to get involved in over the coming months, should you wish to.

For more information, check out the York Walls Festival [website](#).

## **Open Days** (Martin Hetherington)

Saturday 6 April saw an impressive 404 visitors, meaning we have averaged 380 per day so far in 2019. Fantastic!

We also had a visit from the Sheriff's party.





*The Sheriff's Party at the FPT - Photo: Martin Hetherington*



*Martin Hetherington welcoming the Sheriff - Photo: Sam McDermott*

## **Development of the FPT** (Richard Hanage)

Now that FoYW lease the Fishergate Postern Tower from the City Council we have the opportunity to develop the tower further. It is not essential to do anything major, as the way we operate the tower now is financially viable and generates enough surplus income to make modest improvements each year, as we have done recently by repairing the door and connecting electricity.

However, the committee have decided to explore the options for more ambitious developments, partially funded by external grants, for instance from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

This would be a major undertaking and the committee decided to seek professional help in exploring the options in more depth. Qualia Ltd was chosen to produce a 'Scoping and Ideas Document', which is attached. One of the authors was Carolyn Lloyd Brown, who made a presentation at the 2018 'Annual Friends Meeting'.

You can download the report in two parts – the '[Scoping Document](#)' and '[Possible Next Steps](#)'.

If we adopted all of the ideas put forward in the report the total cost would be over £300,000, plus VAT. The committee believe that this would be too ambitious at this stage and are currently minded to propose a much more manageable project of around £50,000, focusing on three main priorities:

- Development of the ground floor: e.g. better visitor flow, improved lighting, attractive 'sales' area and more encouragement to donate or sponsor a stone.
- Better displays throughout the tower: e.g. more consistent visual style and content, themes for each floor, more models, and material on the ground floor for those that do not wish to climb the stairs.
- Full electric lighting: e.g. general lighting for access and safety, highlighting for key features of the FPT, and specific lighting for displays.

In addition, we are already committed to carrying out repairs to the roof, which will be probably be partially funded by the City of York Council

We plan to discuss the report and the proposals at the Annual Friends Meeting on Sat 4<sup>th</sup> May. Please do come if you possibly can. If not we would welcome written comments and ideas for the project to [friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com)

## **Annual Friends Meeting** (Sam McDermott)

The Annual Friends Meeting will be held on Saturday 4th May, at 2pm in Clements Hall. Nunthorpe Rd, York YO23 1BW. Everyone is welcome!

John Shaw of the York Architectural and York Archaeological Society (YAYAS) will give an illustrated talk on 'York in Old Maps'.

This will be followed by a discussion of the FPT development plans.

Any help with teas, coffees, setting up and clearing away will be appreciated.

## **More Butterflies in the Tower** (Simon Mattam/Steve Bracher)





*A Tortoiseshell Butterfly from the FPT - Photo Steve Bracher*

Simon Mattam found several of our hibernating butterflies in FPT waking up during the first open day of April. He helped three down the stairs and into the open air and to the flowers of the ramparts including this very attractive tortoiseshell. Meanwhile Richard was helping several other tortoiseshells, peacocks and even wasps to escape from the top floor window. Who knows what other wildlife lurks in the dark nooks and crannies!

### **Baile Hill Clean-up (Richard Hanage)**

Baile Hill looks much better now. Congratulations to all those involved in the clearing and clean-up. I don't know what the future plans are, but better access from the walls, and an information board would be great.



*Baile Hill from the Walls - Photo: Richard Hanage*



*Baile Hill from the Walls - Photo: Richard Hanage*

## Accolades!

"I came to the excellent open day on Saturday with my grandson. Well done to all that were involved with marshalling, describing and explaining. My grandson, who is 9 years old, enjoyed it all.[ apart from going down the staircase!]

I especially appreciated the way that the volunteers addressed my grandson and attended to his questions, a superb approach". *Regards, Jim*

Sam McDermott had responded in depth to an email asking for places to go with a wheelchair. "Wow that's above and beyond, thank you. We will definitely do that walk. Thank you so much, May"



*May and Family at Micklegate Bar*



... and later:

"Thank you for all your help and advice. As you see, we had a great time, *May xxx*"

## Update on FPT Archaeological Dig (Bill Hill)

Friends of York Walls have been involved in the first stage of the post-excavation process at the Yorkshire Archaeological Trust last month viz the washing of all the finds from the dig in December. This is a somewhat low-tech activity - it involves using a nail brush and toothbrushes and warm water to remove all the soil from the pottery, bone, shell, brick and glass fragments we found. The bone comb and metal finds are the exception in that they are not washed.

The finds will now be left to dry out for a couple of weeks, then be grouped into batches and sent to the various specialists in the Trust for assessment. The outcome comments will then be added by the supervising archaeologist, Arran Johnson, to his report on the dig and this will then be used to form a display at the Fishergate Postern Tower in a short number of months. More anon.

## From Our Tweets (Martin Hetherington)



**YorkWallsFriend** @YorkWallsFriend · Apr 10

The Friends of #York Walls annual meeting is on Sat 4th May, 2pm, at Clements Hall by Scarcroft School.

John Shaw of YAYAS ([yayas.org.uk](http://yayas.org.uk)) will talk on 'York in Old #Maps'.

There will be a look ahead to #YorkWallsFest (@WallsYork) in August.

All welcome.



See more of our tweets at <http://www.twitter.com/yorkwallsfriend>

## Rampart Flower of the Month (Simon Mattam)



*Cow Parsley by Micklegate Bar - Photo: Simon Mattam*

**April's flower is cow parsley, AKA 'Queen Anne's lace' or 'mother die'.**

It is difficult to think of three more contrasting names. The first tells us that it makes for poorer eating than its relative, parsley. The second refers to its delightfully delicate network of flowers – though its leaves are also lacy and some think it hints at Queen Anne's tragic experience of child bearing. The third says 'picking this will kill your mother', surely the direst of warnings, perhaps designed to stop children mistakenly eating its deadly poisonous, look-alike relatives, especially hemlock,.

It will probably develop into the commonest rampart flower by the end of the month and it is said to be the first flower of summer. At the start of the month similar but yellow-green flowers are on its totally edible relative 'alexanders' beside rampart trees just east of

Micklegate Bar. This relative was probably brought to York by the Romans, first builders of our walls.

Now I am worrying about May's flower. Should it be a fourth super-common flower [after daisy, daffodil and cow parsley]? Or should it be something which is more of a challenge to find? And should flowers IN the walls be candidates? [I'm fond of the 'tiny ivy in the wall, quite the loveliest of them all']

Suggestions on this – or offers of help with increasing people's enjoyment of nature on the ramparts – are very 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	
Guy Newton	

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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