

**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:** Saturday 26 Oct; Saturday 2 Nov.

**Committee:** Tues 5 Nov; Tues 3 Dec

[Click here to sponsor a stone](#)

## FoYW Newsletter - October 2019

**Contents:** Chris Dowell ..... Festival Report extracts ..... Full Festival Report ..... Flower of the Month

### In Memory of Chris Dowell



It with the greatest sadness that The Friends of York Walls have to report the death of Christine (Chris) Dowell – a founder member and Trustee of FOYW. Christine Jennifer Dowell passed away on Tuesday, September 24th 2019. She died peacefully at home in the loving care of her family following a brave journey with motor neurone disease.

Chris Dowell, and husband John, with a small group of friends, were founder members of The Friends of York Walls in 2011. They worked tirelessly for a number of years to build up

the group and promote York's City Walls. Chris was Committee Secretary and later a Trustee. They took a very active part in the early days of openings at Fishergate Postern Tower until poorer health forced them to take a step back. Chris will be fondly remembered by all her friends and colleagues at FOYW, and we pass on our deepest sympathy and condolences to John and to all of her family. Rest In Peace, Chris.



*Chris on a visit to Chester, and in the York 'Dragon Parade' - Photos: Alan Fleming*

## **York Walls Festival (Martin Hetherington)**

We have now published the final report of the 2019 York Walls Festival. Below are some extracts from the report, which give a good impression of the broad scope of the Festival, and the large numbers of visitors it attracted.




**The full report is available in the next section of this newsletter.**


**NB. Next month we will feature the Festival 'app' and specially commissioned films.**

### **York Walls Festival 2019 – A review**

The second York Walls Festival took place on August 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> 2019 at venues across the city centre. There were also talks held in the lead-up to the festival in July. This review contains many photos; those marked (LO) are by Lewis Outing, all others are by the festival team. The festival was supported by a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant.



 <p><b>Visitors: 498</b></p>	<p><b>Red Tower</b></p> <p>It was a busy weekend of activities over on Foss Islands Road. The Saturday saw a community BBQ, with Lord Mayor Janet Looker in attendance and a goat stew prepared by Mariama, a Sierra Leonian local resident. Not even a flying gazebo could dampen the spirits. The tower, which dates to 1490, held its first music and performance art event on the Sunday, thanks to Sharpstick Productions. See p20 for the films shown here.</p>
 <p>The BBQ was prepared by York Nurturing Community</p>	 <p>(LO)</p>
	<p>People tucking in to the tasty offerings on Saturday afternoon</p>

 <p><b>Visitors: 1,145</b></p>	<p><b>Fishergate Postern Tower</b></p> <p>Volunteers gathered on the Thursday before the festival to ensure all was spick and span. Saturday saw the unveiling of the new display on the second floor, showcasing the finds from the excavation the previous winter by York Archaeological Trust. On the first floor there was a book stall by Fox Lane Books. The ground floor hosted 'Rot or Not' and the top floor 'On the Scent'. Visitor numbers across the weekend were the highest ever at Fishergate Postern Tower.</p>
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Above: a family discusses whether objects rot or not



Right: there were around 25 objects to classify into columns for 'rot', 'not' and 'maybe'. Sometimes it is hard to say what will survive the passing of time and what won't

January 2019 saw mains electricity connected to Fishergate Postern Tower for the first time. In the weeks before this happened, York Archaeological Trust (YAT) led a community excavation of the ground floor, involving several FOYW volunteers. For the York Walls Festival, FOYW, YAT and local designer Dick Raines worked to produce a new display to tell the story of what was found. The NLHF grant helped towards this new addition to the second floor. YAT archaeologist Arran Johnson, who led the dig, was on hand to show visitors the finds, including a 400-year-old ivory comb.



A visitor reads about the dig [LO]



Bill discusses what he found at Fishergate Postern Tower



**Visitors: 142 (tile-making) + 36 (Found Fiction)**

## Explore York

Thanks to Laura, Wendy and the team at the main library, families took advantage of the chance to make a tile based on the city's heritage. They also hosted our info point on the Saturday (see page 4).

Steve from Found Fiction brought two story-writing activities to the festival. The writing desk saw a story build line-by-line, while the 'Writing's on the Wall' board encouraged people to complete sentences using post-its.



Wendy sizes up the venue



Young artists getting creative with the tile paint

# explore

Libraries and Archives

**Attendees: 25 (talk at Explore + 46 (talks at King's Manor)**



## Pre-festival talks

During July 2019 talks about York's heritage were held in the run-up to the York Walls Festival. July 9<sup>th</sup> saw City of York Council archaeologist John Oxley and chair of the World Heritage bid steering committee Janet Hopton talk about previous work to join the UNESCO list and current work to get on the UK's tentative list of sites for inclusion in future.

July 27<sup>th</sup> saw Barry Crump of the University of York's Centre for Lifelong Learning give two talks on what the walls meant to the city in the medieval period. A great selection of images helped Barry cover the City Walls, the walls of the abbey, and the castle walls too.



**Attendees: 25**

## Red Brick Treasures walk, Ian Tempest

Red Tower stalwart Ian Tempest led a walk through York on the Saturday afternoon of the festival. The group had the worst of the weather, but those who made it learned much about some of York's built heritage.

Below: the poster for Ian's walk



Walkers gather in Exhibition Square at the start





**Visitors: 260**

### **River Foss Society (Stall on Foss Islands Rd)**

Volunteers from the River Foss Society manned a gazebo on both days of the festival, informing visitors about the history of the area where there was never a need for a wall – the King's Fishpond. The railings along the Foss showed off five new display panels, created using NLHF money. There was lots of info about the river in the gazebo, and children were able to have a go at sampling the water.



**Spectators: 30**

### **Ebor Morris Dancers**

The Sunday lunchtime of the festival saw the Ebor Morris dance at both Walmgate Bar and Fishergate Bar along the southern section of York's walls.



goodorganisation

### Good Organisation – walks & postcards

This local charity works with people affected by homelessness. In spring 2019 they started walks around York, led by guides trained by the charity. FOYW volunteer Simon helped train Gavin (pictured below in yellow) to lead a walk around Museum Gardens and Exhibition Square. This ran twice on Saturday and twice on Sunday. Many children enjoyed the walk.

**Attendees: 31**

A further project saw two photos taken by homeless people turned into postcards, which were distributed to publicise the festival and the work of Good Organisation.



Gavin in Museum Gardens, with activities near the Roman Wall



A walk reaches Exhibition Square.



# EH!

**Print Run:**  
**2,500 maps**  
**1,000 activity**  
**booklets**  
**1,000 explorer**  
**trails**

## **Festival map, activity booklet & explorer trail**

One of the key aims of the 2019 festival was to produce a new walls map. The first staging of the event in August 2018 highlighted that many different maps were available, and that visitors often struggled to bridge the gaps between sections of the City Walls.

Illustrator Emily Hayes worked with us to design a combined map and programme. The A3 size map, with the main bars shown clearly along with sights of interest and street names, was a great success during the festival weekend.

See below for more on the other printed materials. Thanks to Fulprint for helping supply our maps & leaflets in good time.



Mini maps, for choosing a cover



## **Million Step Man – charity event**

In May 2019 the festival was approached by Brian Mullins, who was raising money for mental health charity York Mind by walking one million steps every month during 2019. This includes a 24-hour challenge each month, and August saw York Walls as the venue.

The challenge began at 11am on the Saturday morning of festival weekend, with York town crier Ben Fry on hand to set him off. Brian walked clockwise around the walls, with a short rest for food every six hours. By 11am on Sunday he had completed 26 laps of the walls, and a whopping 182,119 steps (101 miles).

Brian raised over £350 over the weekend, including from guesses as to how many steps he would manage. His sponsorship page is still live, and by mid-September he had walked over 6,000 miles in 2019!

Donate to MIND <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/remember-breathe>



The town crier announces the start of the walk. [LO]



L to R: Rebecca, Martin, Brian, Ben Fry & Holly by the Art Gallery. [LO]



## York St John University interns & media coverage

The decision to take on extra staff in the 12 weeks before the festival was crucial to the success of the festival. Bill and Martin approached the Internships Team at York St John, and with help from Suzanne and Eliza, we appointed Holly Graham and Rebecca Spencer to help with the events.

**Fab assistants: 2**

## YORK WALLS FESTIVAL

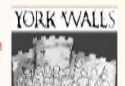
**10th and 11th August 2019**

### Fishergate Postern Tower

- Open days
- Dig Display
- Bookstall
- 500 year old watch tower!

### York Explore

- Make a Tile workshop
- Story writing activities with Found Fiction



- ### Red Tower
- Barbecue Plus
  - Live Music
  - Open days



Date: July 7, 2019  
Categories:  
Uncategorized  
Comments: 0

### Walls Weekly 5

As we celebrate the fifth instalment of our Walls Weekly blog posts and only five more weeks until the festival itself, I thought I'd keep with the theme of five and give you five exciting updates that have taken shape this week



Festival Meeting

See [www.yorkwallsfestival.org](http://www.yorkwallsfestival.org) for the blogs





Our festival assistants made it onto Page 3 of the Yorkshire Post

## Festival Feedback

Here are some comments from visitors to the 2019 York Walls Festival:

### 3. What have you learned from this talk?

This talk has widened my understanding of the purposes of the walls - toll, trade, civil pride etc - and given me a greater appreciation of them.  
Nice to understand the preservation of the walls over the past few hundred years.

### 4. Has this talk changed your attitude toward the Walls? If yes, in which ways?

Whilst I have always enjoyed the walls this talk has given me a greater appreciation of their purpose and pride in their uniqueness on a national scale.

An attendee at the Barry Crump talk



And finally, from our visitor books at venues over the weekend. Top: Explore York;  
Middle (shaded): Info Point; Bottom: Fishergate Postern Tower

# Adults	# of kids	Where do you come from?	How did you find out about the event?	Space for your comments
3	2	York	Museum Gardens - Info Point	Lovely activity for kids (tile making) - loved it!
2	2	Liverpool	Festival Information Point	Fantastic workshop to experiment with something new.
1	1	Ely, Cambridgeshire	Visit York website	Enjoyed being creative with my daughter.
2	1	Washington DC, USA	Festival Information Point	Great activity for kids and adults
1	1	York	Signs in the library	Enjoyed the tile painting
2	4	Norwich, Norfolk	Internet	Engaging tile painting and wonderful assistance
2	2	Birmingham	Volunteer in library reception	Really enjoyed this and the volunteers were wonderful with my children
4	4	York and Darlington, Durham	Walls poster	Two happy tile painters
4	5	York	Walls Festival	Brilliant idea, thank you
1	3	York	The library	Fun and exciting
2	3	Nuneaton, Warwickshire	Person on wall	Awesome city/awesome festival - please do again!!
2	0	Australia	Online	Interesting visit
1	0	UK	Passing visitor	V interesting, good information
2	0	Cambridge	Passing	Enthusiastic volunteers
10	0	Cheshire	Walking wall on Sunday	Very interesting, great to be able to explore, love everyone's enthusiasm
5	0	Cyprus	Walking around	Very interesting! Learnt a lot about the history
1	0	York	Local link	Good to refresh memory and see developments e.g. Red Tower hub
3	0	St Andrews	Leaflet in hotel	Interesting and great to hold the artefacts
2	0	York	Passing by a volunteer advised	Really interesting piece of York history

All told, the total of visitors was approx. 2,250. This was well up on the 1,200 in 2018.



Cheers, and see you next year!

York Walls Festival 2020:  
Sat Aug 15 & Sun Aug 16

## Full Festival Report (Martin Hetherington)

The full 36-page document is available in two parts:

**Part 1:**

P2	Festival Information Point
P4	Red Tower (incl. BBQ & music)
P8	Fishergate Postern Tower (incl. YAT display & Fox Lane Books)
P14	Explore York (incl. Found Fiction)
P15	Pre-festival talks
P17	Ian Tempest walk
P18	Ebor Morris dancers

*Contents of Part 1 of the 2019 Festival report - Author: Martin Hetherington*

[Click here for Part 1](#)

## **Part 2:**

P19	York Walls Festival app
P20	Sharpstick Videos – Richard III & Walls in 14 minutes
P21	River Foss Society
P23	Good Organisation – walks & postcards
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P30	York St John University interns & media coverage
P35	Visitor feedback and dates for 2020

*Contents of Part 2 of the 2019 Festival report - Author: Martin Hetherington*

[Click here for Part 2](#)

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



*'ivy by the Walls east of Robin Hood Tower' - Photo: Simon Mattam*

October's flower is ivy, AKA 'Ivin' or 'English Ivy' [in the USA].

The wasp in the photo reminds us that ivy is one of the few flowers in full bloom at this time of year, this makes it a very important food for pollinators. Ivy has two types of shoot: one spreads by crawling or climbing and has the familiar multi-point leaf, the other has flowers and a simple spear-shaped leaf. There's a lot of ivy between Bootham and Monk Bars, it can be seen on the inner and outer sides of the rampart and on the walls itself.

Ivy on old walls divides opinion. Of course some feel it adds romance, beauty and a sense of age while others say it speaks to them of neglect and loss as they see less of the stonework; this division is little more than a matter of taste. Facts and further research may help when the division is over the damage done or the protection given by ivy. Thoughtful seminar papers can be found [using this link](#).

One important suggestion is: never cut ivy at the root and leave it clinging on a wall that you value. If it is cut off from the water and minerals at its roots in the earth, an ivy will try to survive by sending roots into the wall it is climbing up. In a cracked wall such roots may develop anyway and this can be damaging but a blanket of ivy also protects the wall's stone by smoothing out damaging variations in moisture and temperature and mostly an ivy just clings to a wall as a support.

This clinging to something taller and stronger is said to explain why traditionally ivy was described as female. The old carol mysteriously tells us 'the holly and the ivy when they are both full grown, of all the trees that are in the wood the holly bears the crown' -then it never mentions ivy again so probably these 2 lines wandered in from another old song which compares the holly and ivy very strangely. This song includes a verse saying: the ivy only has black berries, the pigeon eats them, lifts his tail and 'cakkles' before it goes, but it wouldn't treat the holly this way [because of the prickles?].

Now I am wondering about November. Will there be the blewits or other fungi there to be treated as honorary flowers? What flowers will still be hanging on in there -as surely the ivy will be the



last to be at its best?

Suggestions on this – or offers of help with increasing people's enjoyment of nature on the ramparts [perhaps by devising a nature trail] – are very welcome.

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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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