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Sent: 11 August 2020 12:28
To: richard@hanage.com
Subject: Friends of York Walls Newsletter - August 2020

Friends of York Walls Newsletter - August 2020

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Friends of York Walls Newsletter

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Open Days:

Sat/Sun 15/16 August (Festival)
Sat 29 August (Late Summer Bank Holiday)
Sats 12 & 19 September (Heritage Open Days)

Contents: Coronavirus Update York Walls Festival Volunteers Needed
Tweets Wall Barley on the Walls

Coronavirus Update - Open Now!

The Fishergate Postern Tower (FPT) is now opening on the previously planned dates for the remainder of the year (subject to any changes to Covid regulations). The next opening is for the York Walls Festival 15/16 August, followed by the 29th August and the 12th and 19th September.. Please keep in touch on the [WEBSITE](#), and through our social media channels on [TWITTER](#) and [FACEBOOK](#)

York Walls Festival (Martin Hetherington)

York Walls Festival vision

When the team met (in person) in January and March some time was spent describing what we would like the festival to do. With the help of Carolyn Lloyd-Brown (of Heritage Angel) the aims arrived at included the following:

- To engage families and be family friendly
- To engage with those that may not usually engage with archaeology, heritage and local history
- To be inclusive and work in partnership
- To foster appreciation and involvement in heritage through visiting, volunteering and researching
- To inspire people to develop greater appreciation and valuing of the medieval walls

- To promote the walls as living heritage, integral to the city's vitality
- To promote volunteering as an important part of caring for the city's heritage
- To combine the power of archaeology, archives, social history, arts and theatre to inspire and celebrate

We might not be able to tick every box in 2020, but by carrying on this year some of the momentum built up in the first two years is preserved and it keeps the City Walls in the spotlight. The anniversary celebrations of various heritage groups in 2022 are not far away now. Friends of York Walls is also nearing its own milestone - 10 years this winter since we were founded.

The full version of the festival vision is here: <http://yorkwallsfestival.org/festival-vision>

'Red Brick York' talk, by Ian Tempest, Wed 12th August at 7pm



YORK'S RED BRICK TREASURES

For a poster with details of this event click here: [poster](#). The event will be on Zoom, and those wishing to listen in will need the password ahead of time:

1. Email yorkwallsfestival@gmail.com for the Zoom meeting password
2. Visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83684967204> on the evening of Wednesday 12th August. The talk starts at 7pm, so please connect between 6.45pm and 7pm.

Note: there is no need to have the Zoom App on your computer, laptop or other device. You can access the talk through your internet browser.

Thanks go to Sam McDermott for helping out with Zoom. After practice runs in the last few weeks we are hoping it will be alright on the night. If you cannot make the Wednesday evening, a pdf version of Ian's slides will be added to bit.ly/walls2020 in the days after the talk.



Red Tower from Foss Islands Road - Source: Northern Echo

The image above is a fantastic one, taken just after World War Two, looking north along Foss Islands Road.

River Foss video - in conjunction with River Foss Society



River Foss - Photo Sally Hauser

Baz and Sally were up very early one July morning to film the shots:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CCu7JH8HF1U/>

We are combining the new footage with some historic shots from John Millett and Mike Gray of the RFS, plus Imagine York images, to show how the area has changed over the years. It's a common question that visitors have: why is there a gap in the walls? The information boards along Foss Islands Road this coming weekend should help answer that too.



River Foss Information Board - Photo: River Foss Society

For more about the river, see the River Foss Society (RFS) site:
<https://www.riverfossociety.co.uk/>

York Liberal Jewish Community video - Clifford's Tower



Clifford's Tower - Photo Baz Jones

Baz and Sally again to the fore. I met Shannon Kirshner at last December's 'My Castle Gateway' event, and as chair of YLJC she gave a talk about the massacre of 1190 and how they hope it can be better commemorated. Fast forward via a few Zoom meetings, and possibly the longest email trail in existence, and English Heritage granted Baz permission to film in July before the site reopened to the public.



Filming in Clifford's Tower - Photo Sally Hauser



Filming in Clifford's Tower - Photo Sally Hauser

See more on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CDPAT-xn8VY/>

Tweets about the day: <https://twitter.com/WallsYork/status/1288894782866104322>

See also the York Liberal Jewish Community (YLJC) site: <http://jewsinyork.org.uk/>

Hidden Spaces Videos

One of these videos was shared in June: Fishergate Corner Tower (Tower 39):

<https://twitter.com/WallsYork/status/1292044871226843139>

Upcoming soon is one on the Sadler Tower, near Victoria Bar. Thanks to Dr Louisa Hood at CYC for arranging access. We must take some WD40 next time for the padlocks.

https://www.instagram.com/p/CC_H3sPH9Ek/

Also see: <https://twitter.com/WallsYork/status/1286043480188497925>

Links Already live

Please see bit.ly/walls2020 for these links, or click below:

Flickr gallery of archive shots:

<https://twitter.com/WallsYork/status/1290397460750381056>

York World Heritage Site steering committee

presentation <https://twitter.com/WallsYork/status/1292176840140959751>.

Visitors to Red Tower next weekend can chat to Ian Tempest about this

Quiz! How many UK World Heritage Sites can you name? (No peeking...

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_World_Heritage_Sites_in_the_United_Kingdom)

There will also be a blog post on **conservation** by Dr Louisa Hood, featuring walls images by Olivia Brabbs.

Simon Perry

And finally, as we approach the festival weekend, thoughts of **Simon Perry** will not be far away. The festival will be held in his memory. See some of the many tributes to Simon:

- York Press: <https://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/18438825.tributes-paid-following-death-man-brought-red-tower-back-use-community/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WallsYork/status/1292178017524080642>
- YWF blog: <http://yorkwallsfestival.org/festival-2020-in-memory-of-simon-perry>

Further Links

Details of how to see our online features are also on the [Festival website](#) and on social media: @Yorkwallsfestival on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and @WallsYork on [Twitter](#).

Volunteers [Always] Needed

New Volunteers: As always, we would like to welcome more volunteers to help run the Friends of York Walls and especially to greet visitors at the Fishergate Postern Tower. If you think you might like to join us, please email friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com or just turn up for a chat when we are open.

Existing volunteers: Please [sign on](#) for this weekend. We have two days to cover.

Follow FoYW on Twitter

For the most up-to-date news please follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WallsYork> . Examples of recent posts:

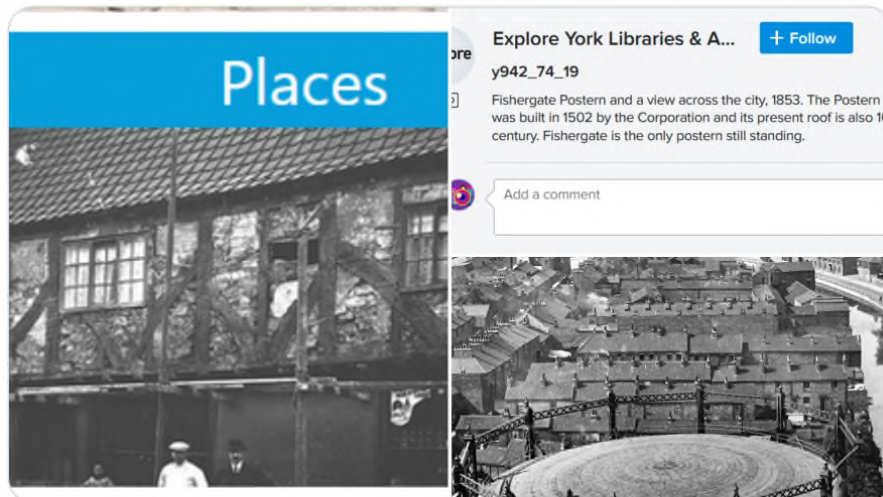
York Walls Festival @WallsYork · 21h

As part of [#YorkWallsFestival](#) 2020 you can visit one of the watch-towers on the City Walls for [#free](#), 10am-4pm, on Sat 15 & Sun 16 August.
[@YorkWallsFriend](#) [#volunteers](#) will be there to guide & answer any questions. Visitors to Fishergate Postern Tower must wear face masks. [#York](#)



York Walls Festival @WallsYork · Aug 3

The [#photos](#) in the Flickr Gallery are taken from the collection at Explore [#York](#) Images. Have a browse - who knows what you might discover?
images.explore.york.org.uk/default.aspx
[@YorkExplore](#) have also helped with images for the River Foss talk at [#YorkWallsFestival](#) - like the Layerthorpe pic.



Wall Barley by the Bar Walls (Simon Mattam)



Wall barley north of Monk Bar - Photo: Ann Mattam

I think the current, apparently aimless, mowing regime for the main ramparts reduces their interest but there's quite a wide variety of grasses still to be seen. I mentioned the thorough mowing last month [- and the one before? - Oh dear, is this obsessive monomania? - Ah well, it has become fashionable to be open about one's mental problems, so perhaps this display is allowed.]

There seems to have been another cut around Monk Bar in late-ish July so it is difficult to enjoy the flowers and seeds of the grasses there. The grasses have mainly lost their heads, so to speak - but this patch of 'wall barley' looked lovely last week waving in the wind by Lord Mayor's Walk.

P.S. The grass-heads in the above photo were cut down by another mowing before 9.8.20!

John Barleycorn

This grass is very common in towns and is very recognisable to anyone who knows its close relative, the barley you get in handsome, wind-waved fields in the local countryside. The cropped barley of the fields traditionally provides us with beer [some think the words' similarity is no coincidence], barley wine and whisky - Robbie Burns rewrote a traditional song in its praise: the traditional version says John Barleycorn grows a long, long beard, Burns says he is set about by spears. They are both referring to the crowded, long, almost-parallel 'awns' coming from its head of seed. It is this 'beard' that makes wall barley an instantly recognisable relative of the crop. It looks more like a beard when the barley crop starts to hang its head, wall barley doesn't usually hang its head because its head is less heavy, as it has smaller seeds.



Wall barley heads - Photo: Simon Mattam

Mouse

Strangely its botanical name sounds as if it is to do with the walls that it often grows by in towns - it is Hordeum [=bristles, this is the name it shares with the crop] Murinum. But it seems the 'mur' here is not referring to walls - unlike the medieval 'murage' that was charged when goods were brought into the walled city for sale - and which was supposed to be spent on the upkeep of the city walls. It is from the Latin word 'mus', which meant [surprise, surprise!] mouse.

Trick 1

At this point I would like to be able to give you a link to a Youtube video that would demonstrate mousiness - please tell me if you find one - it would show someone break off the head, awns and all, put it upside down in their fist. and then gently tighten and loosen their fingers until the silky, hairy head appears then escapes from the top of their fist. - It really works - try it!

Trick 2

Apparently it can also work as a trick played on a sweater wearer [perhaps not easy to find in August, nor to approach if you respect social distancing!]. You slip the 'mouse' in under the bottom of someone's sweater at the back, ideally. Powered by the normal everyday movements of the sweater-wearer, the 'mouse' works its way up till it tickles the wearers neck.



'Flea-darts', seeds of wall barley stuck vertical on sofa arm - Photo: Simon Mattam

Mature heads break up into 'flea-darts', seeds with a set of awns. Children threw them at each other. They stick to clothing [and work the mouse tricks] because each awn is covered with tiny upward-pointing barbs. Presumably, even without the games, this aids seed dispersal.

Some farmers try to keep it out of their fields because the bristly heads can irritate the mouths and stomachs of livestock.

Richard Hanage (richard@hanage.com)

Editor, on behalf of the FoYW Committee.

Bill Hill - Chair

Penny Heptonstall - Treasurer

Sam McDermott - Secretary

Alan Fleming - Website

Glen McGowan - Committee member

Simon Mattam - Committee member

Martin Hetherington - Committee member

Baz Jones - Committee member

The Committee may be contacted at 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

Postern Tower location: YO1 9AF (please do not send mail here - no letterbox!)



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