

From: Friends of York Walls <richard@hanage.com>
Sent: 26 October 2020 14:58
To: richard@hanage.com
Subject: Friends of York Walls Newsletter - October 2020

Friends of York Walls Newsletter - October 2020

[View this email in your browser](#)



Friends of York Walls Newsletter

[Click here to sponsor a stone](#)

Open Days:

Sat 31 October (Halloween)
[Next ones in January]

Contents: Coronavirus Update 10 Years History From the Walls Manager
Tower 2 Tours Volunteers Needed FoYW Videos Virtual FPT.... Twitter Which
Elm? Dandelions

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, and the last for 2020, is on the 31st October.

Please keep in touch on the [WEBSITE](#), and through our social media channels on [TWITTER](#) and [FACEBOOK](#)

Friends of York Walls - 10 Years of History (Alan Fleming)

It was in late 2010 when a group of York friends got together to explore the possibility of forming a group to promote York's City Walls - which they saw as an under-supported, under-publicised and under-used resource. By early 2011 the first public meetings were held and "The Friends of York Walls" was formed.

So, early 2021 will be the 10th Anniversary of the formation of FOYW. Discussions are taking place, and plans are being formulated, on how best to "celebrate" the first ten years - bearing in mind that Covid19 restrictions may still limit the options available. We may be able to have some special event(s) in Spring 2021 - perhaps combined with a special Annual Friends Meeting, virtual or in person?

One related idea being discussed is a document to chronicle the first ten years of the many FOYW activities which have taken place over this time. There have been so many activities, events, festivals, achievements, and other happenings that it should not be difficult to find enough material to produce a small souvenir booklet.

If you have any special memories of The Friends of York Walls (as a founder member, a volunteer, a supporter, a committee member, a bystander, etc..) that you think should be included in the "First 10 Years Chronicle" then you are invited to share your thoughts and experiences by e-mail to 10thanniversary@yorkwalls.org.uk

Alan Fleming (Chronicle co-ordinator)

From the Walls Manager (Louisa Hood)

Tower Two Stabilisation

Work has started on-site to stabilise Tower Two. With the tower now moving by approximately **1mm a month**, the intervention comes at a good time. Once the scaffolding is up, a two-phase excavation will see the tower's infill removed and three trial pits dug into the top of the rampart.

The public will be able to view the excavations from a temporary walkway around Tower Two, with access via the Baile Hill entrance to the City Walls. [see next section about YAT tours]

Once the excavations are complete on site, works will be paused to allow a thorough inspection of the interior wall of the tower. With this information in hand, plans to improve the condition of the stonework can be finalised (removing the infill will help a lot, but we will probably need to consolidate some of the tower's stonework too) before the walkway is replaced.

Floodlights

Following receipt of capital funding from City of York Council to renew floodlights on the city walls, work is progressing to replace the lights at Micklegate, Bootham and Monk Bars

Tower Two Tours (YAT)

The York Archaeological Trust (YAT) had hoped to have run tours of the walls from Tower Two to Micklegate Bar during the school holidays, but these have been postponed and replaced by a walking tour of Bishopshill and Micklegate Bar.



You can book tickets for the [Bishophill and Micklegate tour](#) now.



YAT Archaeologists working on Tower Two - Source YAT web-site

You can read more about the stabilisation project on the [YAT website](#)

Volunteers [Always] Needed

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.

More FoYW Videos (Baz Jones)

The 'Friends of York Walls Video Episodes' are a series of short videos detailing the history and interesting facts about particular sections of York's famous Bar Walls, and some of the buildings and locations that form part of the city's historic defences. Three videos have now been produced and can be found in our new [FoYW Video Library](#)

The videos are copyright Friends of York Walls and produced by Baz Jones, of SharpStick Films.

Episode : 'Fishergate Bar'

(2m 08s approx, captioned; no audio)

[This episode](#) explores the gateway in the Fishergate stretch of York Walls, called 'Fishergate Bar',

revealing mason's marks, and the impact of the 1489 'Yorkshire Rebellion'.



Fishergate Bar - Source: Friends of York Walls videos

Episode 2: 'Fishergate Walls'

(1m 36s approx, captioned; no audio)

[This episode](#) explores the stretch of York's famous Bar Walls between Fishergate Bar and Fishergate Postern Tower, highlighting its importance in defending the southern approach to York Castle, and revealing a 14th century mason's mark.



Fishergate Postern Tower - Source: Friends of York Walls videos

Episode 'Fishergate Postern Tower'

(2m 05s approx, captioned; no audio)

[This episode](#) focuses on the history of the tower and how it has changed over the centuries, as the landscape around it has also changed dramatically.



Fishergate Postern Gate - Source: Friends of York Walls videos

FPT: Virtual Tours (Simon Mattam)

I am determined to feel trusted, rather than neglected, but the evidence is similar: few Friends have made suggestions for developing the virtual tour of Fishergate Postern Tower.

The background is that Jonathan Mallory of Sky Filming is interested in this project, so is working cheaply to develop a fuller virtual tour from the one he devised and delivered for free [\[and which is still on our website\]](#). VT1 [as he's labelled it] is 11 special photos linked and presented by computer; users can look all around them at 11 viewpoints, zoom in on details and use a link to move to the next viewpoint. So VT1 is like a tour with no guide: "Have a look round on your own".

My aim [backed by the committee] is to add the option of a brief general commentary at each viewpoint and also details about some features: to add what a tour guide could add.

This draft introduction explains how it will work:

'Virtual tour of Fishergate Postern Tower July 2020: 14 all-round zoom-in views. To move on: use a '>' that points to another viewpoint. Use the loudspeaker icon on the top left of a view to hear about it. To read about it: use the book icon. Use question mark icons to see a page about the feature to the left of the icon – at the top right of the 11 feature pages is a return icon. '



Damaged oak beam visible in 'FPT virtual tour' - Source: Friends of York Walls

The above photo is from a draft 'feature page' which starts:

Roof timbers

[from viewpoints 13 & 14]

These big oak beams were fitted together more than 400 years ago

The roof is made of big, roughly shaped oak timbers fitting into each other with pegged 'mortise and tenon' joints.....'

For a short while, any ideas you send me on what a real guide SHOULD add can still influence the new VT.

Many thanks, Simon ps.mattam@outlook.com

Follow us on [Twitter!](#)



'Which Elm?' - Follow-up (Simon Mattam)



English elms from the walls at Nunnery Lane - Photo: Simon Mattam

In the last FoYW e-News I wrote of my puzzles about the "nationally scarce mature elms" mentioned in the professionally written 2004 Conservation and Management Plan for the city walls. The elms were said to be near the walls at Nunnery Lane and Baile Hill, and care for them was recommended.

Marvelous Map

I asked for help with my puzzles and Keith Myers, FoYW's first Chair, kindly helped me contact CYC's tree expert who helped me find a wonderful map at this [address](#)

If you zoom in on this map you can find individual trees represented by a tree icon. Click on this icon and its species and the department of the council responsible for it appears.

Of course there are a few mistakes and there is a note warning that every individual tree is not shown in its right place but the map is a splendid resource and confirms my impression that the 2004 plan-writers got things wrong. The elms I had photographed on the left of the start of the steps going up Baile Hill seem to be there on the map but labelled as a resistant hybrid from the USA - where universities with capitalist enterprise discovered/developed then patented and marketed many varieties of elms that were resistant to Dutch Elm Disease.

The elms on Nunnery Lane, according to the map are the other side of the carpark from the city walls. They are the English Elm and, according to the CYC's arboriculturist, are dying from the same Dutch Elm Disease that killed so many trees in the 1970's. They once dominated hedgerows in the south but have become rare in their fully mature, tall, full-crowned dignity.



July elm-fall near Barker Tower - Photo: Ann Mattam

I looked at the map for elms closer to the city walls and when I saw one where the wall-walk is ending by Lendal Bridge I remembered the big branch which fell across the wall-walk there in July. I think the photo above of the fall is just good enough to identify the culprit as an elm, and in places amongst the leaves, I think you can see roundish bunches of its round-winged seeds. There is also a group of elms just west of Micklegate Bar.

None of the elms I found are particularly picturesque at the moment so I thought I'd add a piece about dandelions

Dandelions (Simon Mattam)



Hoverfly enjoys a dandelion by Fishergate Postern - Photo: Simon Mattam

This month dandelions, the sunniest of flowers, shine in the sun along the ramparts with the fellow yellows of buttercups, ragwort and sow thistle. It amused me to read that dandelions might be widely farmed for

their white liquid rubber sap - were it not for problems with weeds. It reminds us that to call something a weed is just to abuse it. Using a dandelion to coat a finger with fresh white latex [it is probably easiest to get it from the stems but is everywhere in the plant] then rolling the coat off it makes you a weakish rubber band. Dandelions can also be eaten - all parts of them.

Its names are as fine as its flowers. The image of a dandy, glorying in his showy clothes fits the flower so well, as does the image of a full-maned lion in the savanna's sun. Then there is the earthy contrast of its common name 'piss-a-bed' [it is diuretic]. There are interesting complications too: 'dandelion' probably started as 'dent-de-lion' - but whether the tapering root or the jagged leaves are the teeth-of-lion being referred to is unclear.



Time frozen on the ramparts by the Barbican - Photo: Simon Mattam

'Chimney sweepers'?

Then there is the dispute over Shakespeare's lines [in a gentle song for death] - 'golden lads and lasses must, like chimney sweepers, come to dust' - it has been plausibly claimed that 'golden lads' was a local name for dandelion flowers, while 'chimney sweepers' was a name for the individual seeds that take to the air under a ring of fluff structured remarkably like the chimney sweeping brushes that are still sold. Sadly, these probably weren't local names in Tudor times - but this didn't stop a version of the play being put on with the lines: 'golden lads and lasses must, like dandelions, come to dust'.

When the seeds come to dust, if water and sunlight are added, they will rise again as new plants in the following spring but dandelions also survive the winter as perennials, usually dying back to their deep tap root but sometimes staying green and even flowering in cold months.

Oddly, another widely used name seems to make it fit well in a song about life and death; 'clock' was used in Yorkshire [and many other counties] because of the childhood game of 'telling the time' by counting the number of times a fluffy seed head had to be blown on before it was completely fluff-less. This game also

leads to the lines: 'once I was gold, now I am old, time flies - I am bald'.

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

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 [virtual] 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!)



Copyright © 2020 Friends of York Wall, All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because you are a supporter of the 'Friends of York Walls'

Our mailing address is:

Friends of York Wall
50 Grey Towers Drive
Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS7 0LT
United Kingdom

[Add us to your address book](#)

We send you this newsletter because you signed up with us and are on our mailing list. We keep your data secure, do not share it with any other organisations and only use it for our newsletters and relevant mailings.

To opt out just email 'friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com' or unsubscribe by clicking below.

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

