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To: richard@hanage.com
Subject: Friends of York Walls Newsletter - February 2021

Friends of York Walls Newsletter - February 2021

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Friends of York Walls Newsletter

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Next Open Days:

Sat 20 February (Viking Festival): **Cancelled**
Sat 13th March: **Please check [website](#) closer to time**
Sat 27th March: **Please check [website](#) closer to time**

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Coronavirus Update - Open Days

The Fishergate Postern Tower (FPT) is currently closed. Please check news of the 2021 openings on our [website](#) closer to the time. The originally planned list can be downloaded as part of our [2021 leaflet](#).

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! - FOYW is 10 years old (Alan Fleming)

On 28th February 2011, the first public meetings of The Friends of York Walls was held at the Mansion House. The meeting was so popular that a second meeting at the Bar Convent followed and "The Friends of York Walls" was officially formed. After these first two initial public meetings a new management committee was assembled, and a website and social media accounts were set up. The early committee meetings were held in the back room of the Acomb Conservative Club. The new group was supported by the City Of York Council and by Historic England.

During the early years the membership and support grew, and since then many new traditions and events have been formulated and established.



York Walls - South of Red Tower - Photo: Alan Fleming

In May 2011 the first guided tour of Fishergate Postern Tower (FPT) by John Oxley (City Archaeologist) was arranged, and negotiations started for the use of FPT as a FOYW base. The first public openings of Fishergate Postern Tower in almost 500 years were started, and regular opening have followed ever since.

"Sponsor a Stone" fundraising was initiated in January 2012 when the "First Stone" was presented to the then Lord Mayor at a ceremony outside FPT with press coverage. The Lord Mayor inspected the walls in March, we visited Chester's Walls and organised a "Dragon Parade" for St Georges Day.

In January 2013 an "East Meets West" concert was organised at St Helens Church. FPT openings became a regular event. A visit to Berwick-on-Tweed was organised. A successful Walk In The Dark was held in November.

The first public openings of **The Red Tower** started at Residents Weekend 2014, and in that year FOYW became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), and we hosted several of the York Curiouser 2014 art displays

The book **"A Walking Guide to York's City Walls"** was published in 2014. A web version, based on the book's text, followed in December 2014. The Walls Trail HOME web page had achieved over 200,000 hits by January 2021.

In 2015 Tower 39 was first opened to the public as part of the Heritage Weekends. A visit to Howsham Mill was organised.

In 2016 we acquired a 30 year lease from CYC for the use of Fishergate Postern Tower.

In 2017 FOYW held a Photo Competition, and helped youth players for the York Theatre Royal - Take Over Festival - Walls Performance Trail.

The very successful annual **York Walls Festivals** have been held in 2018, 2019, 2020 and it has now become an annual August event.

The FPT **archaeological dig** took place in December 2018, with connection of electricity into FPT in January 2019. A new display of the archaeological finds was installed in FPT for the August Walls Festival.

In 2020 the planned FPT openings were disrupted by Covid19 restrictions, with the forced lockdowns and closures. Committee meetings and some other events went "on-line".

There have been many other events over the past ten years - far too many to list all of them here! Without our band of dedicated volunteers and supporters (past and present) may of

them would not have happened, so **"Thank You" to you all.**

So on **28th February 2021** it will be the 10th Anniversary of the formation of FOYW. It would be great to celebrate some special event(s) in Spring and Summer 2021, perhaps combined with a special Annual Friends Meeting (virtual or real) - HOWEVER - with the current Covid19 restrictions the available options are still limited. Watch this space !

If you have any special personal memories of The Friends of York Walls (as a founder member, a volunteer, a supporter, a committee member, a bystander, a visitor to FPT, etc..) then you are invited to share your thoughts and experiences on our FaceBook and Twitter social media sites.

Birthday Treat for You! (Hannah Garton)

As we are turning ten years old on the 28th of February we've decided to share our birthday with you.

We are giving away 10 copies of our 'Guide to York City Walls' to our followers!

The giveaway notice will be posted on the 28th of February on our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages. All you have to do when you see it is to comment what your favourite part of York is, then share our post and tag us in it!

You tag us, for instance on Twitter, by adding the tag @FriendsofYW in the comment. The tags are listed below:

- Twitter: @FriendsofYW
- Facebook: @Friends of York Walls
- Instagram: @friendsofyorkwalls

I'll see everyone who has shared the post, and all entries will be entered into a draw and the winner will be announced the following week!

The Red Tower

Serving the Community from a 500-year-old Building (Ian Tempest)

The Red Tower on Foss Islands Road continues provides weekly support to the local community in Walmgate and the surrounding area every Monday morning. It is open from approx. 10.00-12.00 on Mondays for supermarket surplus food distribution to support local residents, with food distributed from the door of the Tower to ensure social distancing and customer safety. Budgeting and Council advisory services are also provided.



Red Tower food distribution - Photo: Ian Tempest

For more information on the history of the Red Tower and current activities, see the website www.redtoweryork.org.uk

From the Walls Manager (Louisa Hood)

Works are now progressing at Tower Two, with further archaeological investigation to help understand the construction sequence of the tower and adjacent wall, beginning this week. Designs for the new walkway and interpretation, which will allow people walking on the city walls to see down into the tower, are being finalised.

In other news, the road arch in the walls facing Rougier Street is due to be repaired in February and March, and so a very short section of the wall walk over the arch will be closed. The Conservation Management Plan is in the final stages of preparation, and so I'd like to say thank you to all consultees, particularly the Friends of York Walls, for their feedback and support.

FOYW Social Media (Hannah Garton)

Hi everyone!

My name's Hannah Garton and I am on a six week graduate placement with the Friends of York Walls helping to build up their social media profile.



Hannah Garton - Social Media Placement

I'm in my fifth week now, and in that time we've increased the number of followers on Facebook by 177 (34%), on Instagram by 74 (7.2%) and on Twitter by 5 (0.2%). I post everyday on Instagram and every other day on Facebook and Twitter.

If you're not already following us, why not have a look by clicking on the following link:

<https://linktr.ee/friendsofyorkwalls>. Any feedback would be really welcome.

Our first post on Tower 2 in January had 1,385 engagements (i.e. visitors clicked on the post so they could read the additional text not visible on the newsfeed). This compares with engagement figures in only 10s and 20s for posts in the past.

Similarly, our Twitter is reaching 400-4000 people with every post and we are consistently getting 50+ engagements on each post. Instagram is also doing well and we are consistently obtaining 40-80 likes on our daily post

I am constantly looking for good photographs and stories so if you have anything I could use, I'd really appreciate it. Please tag us in any photos you upload or send them to us via facebook messenger. [just click on [Facebook](#) and then click the 'Message' tab.

Portcullises - Simon Mattam



St Olave's Forecourt - Photo: Simon Mattam

This little item seems to come from the story of Goldilocks. We all know York's big portcullises, and loyal FoYW volunteers probably think that Fishergate Postern's was just right [FoYW Chair Bill even wants to rebuild it] - but where was York's smallest portcullis? My guess is that it was in the dark little doorway in the photo.

St Mary's Abbey's defensive wall runs all down Marygate but one house still sticks out from it, its garden wall is the lower part of walls of the Abbey's almonry, you can see slit windows and a doorway. This doorway has grooves much like those at the bars and Fishergate Postern, grooves for a portcullis to slide down in. The almonry was outside the main gates to the Abbey to help it provide food and warmth to the needy - but it seems the monks wanted it to be defensible too.



An even smaller portcullis (the model inside the FPT) - Photo: Simon Mattam

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.

We are also looking for volunteers to help support the 2021 York Walls Festival on the weekend of August 14th/15th. Any help very gratefully received. Please contact yorkwallsfestival@gmail.com

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Friends of York Walls is in York.

21h · 🌐



Throwback Tuesday [#tbt](#)

Fishergate Postern Tower in 1853! 😲

This photograph of Fishergate Postern Tower in 1853 is showing how industrial parts of inner York were in those days in strong contrast to how it is today. 🚫🏰

T... [See more](#)



February on the Walls (Simon Mattam)



Groundsel below the city walls at Jewbury - Photo: Simon Mattam

Ground Swallower

This is the Old English name which became 'groundsel'. The photo was taken this month but the plant got its name by its ability to take over ground at any time of year. It flowers, sets seed and springs up in all seasons. Variants can survive salt and some weed-killers and it is said that a single plant has the ability to have a million descendents within a year.

Common Old Man

This is what its botanical name means, it is *Senecio Vulgaris*. It is a close relative of a ragwort whose name translates as Dirty Old Man! Groundel is rather like a ragwort with no petals. The two plants have similar ragged-edged leaves but the name comes from their seeding 'head' of long white hair which blows away leaving a poor, bald, pore-covered 'head' –much like a small dandelion.

Canary Plant

This is apparently another alias, one suggesting long use as food for small birds, oddly, at Jewbury it was growing beside a large patch of 'chickweed'. It is also eaten by the cinnabar moth, which is in turn eaten by birds. On the internet you'll find people telling you it is also good for rabbits, there's a tangle of rabbit-sized holes at the side of the pavement in Jewbury but I suspect rats rather than rabbits.

Purple Monster Lips

Some might think groundsel's flowers aren't real flowers as they haven't petals, it is probably less important for them to use petals to attract insects as technically each groundsel flower is a pack of flowers and they can fertilise each other. Close by the groundsel at the edge of the old moat at Jewbury were these 'real flowers', the red version of the white dead nettle featured in the last newsletter. 'Purple monster lips' is a rough translation of the Latin in its botanical name.



Red Dead Nettle below the city walls at Jewbury - Photo: Simon Mattam

Sticky Buds

Up on the walls here the prettiest close bit of nature last week was the wall screw moss featured about this time last year [back copies of news letters are together on the FoYW website]. But above St Anthony's Gardens were these 'sticky buds' of a horse chestnut tree. Their shiny red-brown reminds me of their autumn 'conkers' but their shape is full of the promise of spring



'Sticky Buds' by the wall-walk at Jewbury - Photo: Simon Mattam

The end bud in the photo is spring-swollen but still some way off from bursting into green life. While it waits, its stickiness protects it from insects by acting like fly-paper –though, unlike with fly-paper, its job is also well done if the insects avoid it! Some think that the stickiness is also to prevent water loss from the tree –it came to Britain in Tudor times from drier places around the Mediterranean.

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!)



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