

Richard Hanage

From: Friends of York Walls <richard@hanage.com>
Sent: 21 March 2021 08:42
To: richard@hanage.com
Subject: Friends of York Walls Newsletter - March 2021

Friends of York Walls Newsletter - March 2021

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Friends of York Walls Newsletter

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Next Open Days:

Sat 22nd May?: Late Spring bank holiday. Please check [website](#) closer to time

Sat 29th May?: Late Spring bank holiday. Please check [website](#) closer to time

Mon 31st May?: Late Spring bank holiday. Please check [website](#) closer to time

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FPT Open Days.... Getting Closer?

The Fishergate Postern Tower (FPT) is currently closed. However, we are hoping to open in May - probably first on Sat 22nd and then on Sat 29th and Mon 31st, for the Late Spring Bank Holiday. Please check news of openings on our [website](#) closer to the time.

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

Mommies for York?



Alan Fleming - our website guru - spotted an unusual and unexpected USA site with a (slightly inaccurate) link to our FoYW web-site:

"The city walls in York, this is the longest stretch of preserved Roman city walls in Britain

and stretches for 2 miles, taking approximately two hours to [enjoy an elevated walk](#) around the city".

You can check out their site link to "The Best Kept Historic Locations in the UK" and the York reference at <https://www.thebraggingmommy.com/the-best-kept-historic-locations-in-the-uk/>

So, people brag about our York's City Walls all over the world!

The Red Tower (Ian Tempest)

Work is being carried out on the roof of the Red Tower at the moment by contractors. The work consists of a roof inspection and various repairs.



Red Tower roof repairs - Photo: Ian Tempest

Customers can be reassured that the Red Tower remains open to provide 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.

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

York Walls Festival (Baz Jones)

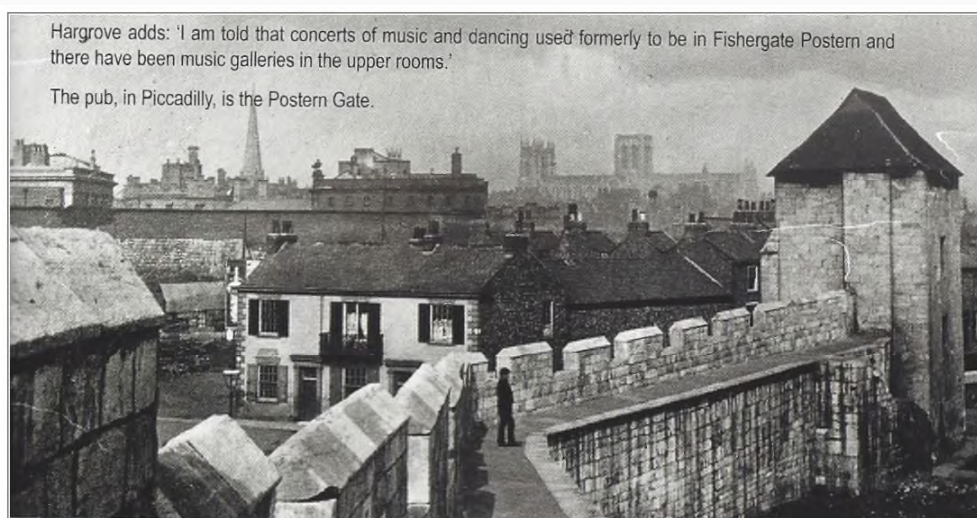
Planning for the 2021 York Walls Festival is in full swing, and with less than five months to go we're very excited about the activities we're hoping to bring to you in August. Keep checking the newsletter and our social media for updates. If you'd like to get involved as a Festival volunteer please contact

yorkwallsfestival@gmail.com or message us via Twitter (@YorkWallsFest) or Instagram (friendsofyorkwalls).

Update on the Social Media Project (Bill Hill)

Hannah Garton, our graduate placement from York St John University helping to enliven our social media presence, has now come to the end of her 6 weeks funded by the university.

The most spectacular gains over the period have been in our Facebook presence. The number of followers has doubled, which is a pleasing outcome in itself, but overshadowing this has been the success of some specific posts. For example this photograph of Fishergate Postern Tower in the mid 20th century attracted 342 likes, which is some 300 more than we ever attracted before she became involved.



Hargrove adds: 'I am told that concerts of music and dancing used formerly to be in Fishergate Postern and there have been music galleries in the upper rooms.'

The pub, in Piccadilly, is the Postern Gate.

The Postern Tower in the mid 20th Century

The amount of interest in this image caught the eye of one of the journalists working for the Yorkshire Post, Ruby Kitchen, and she has contacted us about doing an article about us – emerging from the gloom of lockdown, etc. We'll let you know when it's due.

The latest post (below) around this photograph of the interior of Tower 2 has reached an amazing 21,708 people, 2,567 of whom 'engaged' (i.e. clicked on the text to read the second page of information), 532 people 'liked' it and 52 people 'shared' it. These figures dwarf anything Hannah has posted before, and anything we have ever posted before her time. Clearly the subject matter has found a real point of interest. And and that is after only a few days!



Excavation in Tower 2 - Photo: York Archaeological Trust

If you are not yet a follower of our Facebook and other social media sites (Twitter and Instagram), it would be great to have you with us - @friendsofyorkwalls.

Update on Tower 2 (Bill Hill)

The photograph above shows the interior of Tower 2 on York City Walls at the point where the archaeologists have begun to excavate the earlier layers of earth. You can see how serious the cracks are which have opened up in the stonework in the tower walls. These have been caused by the infill of earth which has been inside this tower since Victorian times and has now been removed. The cracks are now stable, it's good to report.

The lower courses of stone you can see are the original medieval foundations to the tower, put down in the 1320s, so they are nearly 700 years old! They are not sitting on a great deal so it is no wonder they have moved over time.

The excavation by the archaeologists in the centre has reached down to the top of the original earth rampart, which is finely sieved, well compacted earth, so a lot of trouble was taken to make it a stable structure. Auger holes have been driven down into this rampart earth to a depth of 4 metres. Intriguingly they hit something solid down there. The archaeologists are not speculating what this might be, but it is a really interesting development given that in other parts of the city walls, for example behind the library, excavation has revealed the original Roman stone walls buried deep inside the ramparts. Fascinating stuff!

We'll be posting more about the Romans in the near future. Stay with us.

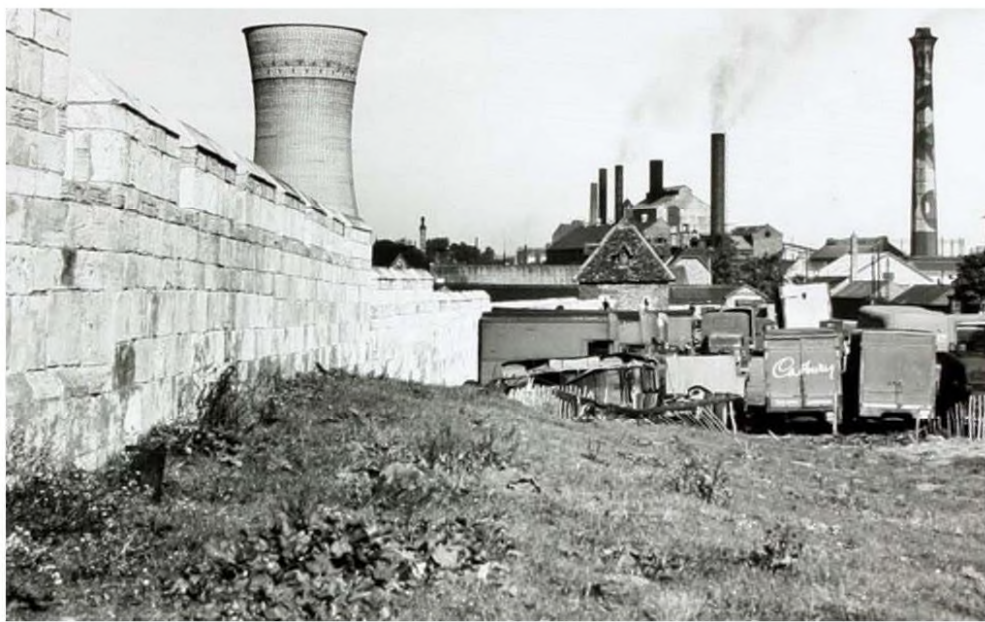
King's Fish Pool (Bill Hill)

There's been a lot of interest on Facebook in posts we have put up showing the area outside the Red Tower. This early 20th century image shows the area as a playground. Its flat nature and absence of ramparts suggests it was once part of the King's Fish Pool and the Red Tower was out in the water approached by a causeway:



Playground near Red Tower - Photo: YAYAS Evelyn Collection

And this next one, taken around 1946, shows the same area as a commercial van park.



Vehicle park near Red Tower - Photo: Northern Echo

Finally, the area is topical because it is where we are planning to site a labyrinth cut into the grass as part of the 2021 York Walls Festival – more on this anon!



Planned site of grass labyrinth - Photo: Bill Hill

New Notices? (Simon Mattam)

Sorry! Sadly, this heading is a bit misleading. New notices are being printed for the city walls but their wording is not new and, though Louisa Hood (CYC Walls Manager) is considering where they will be put, I suspect they will mainly be used to replace damaged notices.



Notices by Tower 2 - Photo: Simon Mattam

Full Census

The "new" notices being printed are to do with the one-way system. But soon Louisa will be doing a full census of signage on the City Walls because the outside heritage professionals currently completing their final final draft of the 'City Walls Conservation and Management Plan' seem to be dodging difficult issues of signage by suggesting a thorough review is needed.

Louisa has promised to involve FoYW in this and I am acting as the link so your thoughts on signs [including interpretive ones] might influence action if you send them to me.

Good Signs?

Perhaps I am too critical but I've not noticed any specially good signs on the walls - please tell me if you have. This one I found in the Dales.



Good in every way? - Photo Simon Mattam

It doesn't spoil the scene but it is difficult to miss, it is clear and polite yet brief and it gives a good, interesting reason for its order. I thought it put to shame York's notices on Clifford's Tower's slopes - but perhaps when they emerge to public view again they will have learned some manners and something about the slopes that explains why they shouldn't be climbed.

Not all bad?



A try at York Castle - Photo: Simon Mattam

I laughed when I saw this try by someone at the Castle Museum to discourage entry over their gates. It reminded me of the painting 'this is not a pipe', and seemed such a splendidly anti-educational, unwelcoming notice for a public museum to post. But it was clear, brief, eye-catching and did give some information - so not all bad.

Gate Problems



Trying to improve - Photo: Simon Mattam

Gates are a problem. On this one [at Monk Bar?] the official notice tells those who cannot get onto the city walls - because the locked gate bars their way - that they should take care while they are on the walls! The unofficial notice was a try at explaining why the gate might be locked - but some didn't like the non-brief way it briefed readers on how they could get information on closures and even get a FoYW map on how to enjoy the walls when they couldn't climb up on them.

A big problem with the current '**no entry, one way**' notices is that they are mainly on open gates - to many people an open gate shouts 'no need to read'.

The reverse problem occurs at Bootham Bar. There's a gate there which automatically closes against the pigeons. This closed gate [and its bolt?] says to some walkers 'No Entry' - so that notices on the gate which explain entry are ineffective.

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.

Follow us on [Twitter](#)

Friends of York Walls Retweeted

York Walls Festival 2021: Sat 14/Sun 15 August @YorkWa... · Mar 11 ...
#YorkWallsFestival is just over five months away! #History #Heritage
#Community #Events #Talks #Walks #Explore #Enjoy #Children
#YoungPeople #Family #Friends #Visitors #Neighbours #SocialDistancing
#York #Yorkshire 14th & 15th August 2021 📸 @sharpstickfilms and
@FriendsofYW



..... and follow us on [Facebook](#)



Friends of York Walls

25 February at 11:30 · 🌐



York's watery walls 💧

Look at the first photo here (from our website's guide to the city walls) and you could be looking back 700 years to when this was part of York's defences 🤯

The photo is from Foss Islands Road 🚗 It shows the River Foss, then a half-island and a backwater be... [See more](#)



March on Baile Hill (Simon Mattam)

My title is to remind me that I'm lucky, locals no longer need to gather to rid this hill of Norman conquerors. Instead of violence, this year's March has brought pinkish bobbles of flowers to the elms on the left of the Victorian steps up the Norman motte.



Elms in flower - Photo: Simon Mattam

The CYC map of city trees shows these as an American hybrid but the flowers and twigs seem much like the English wych elm.

Which Elms?

I wrote about these elms back in September and October [the FoYW website has a full set of e-news back

copies]. The CYC tree expert told me then that the American hybrid elms had a falling sickness. They drop branches and just fall over. If you walk to the right from the bottom of the steps then you come quickly into touching distance of a new low stump with saw-slashes across it, this was a hybrid elm cut down in the autumn because it was leaning at a dangerous angle.

Stumps have ears

I suppose the saw-slashes were cut to help the stump rot. Fungi are wonderful rotters and I photographed these about 2 metres from the pavement a little further round the hill. They are the fruiting body of what used to be called 'Jew's ear fungus', possibly because they were most commonly found on elder trees and in legend Judas hanged himself on an elder.



Jelly ear fungus on Baile Hill - Photo: Simon Mattam

The rest of the fungus body is microscopic and busy inside the stump. These 'mushrooms' are not the slightest bit mushy, they are common at any time of year and are tough and rubbery; they are classed as edible but they seem to have no taste and I've found no way to cook them that makes them less rubbery than when they are fresh; I've tried slow cooking, drying and liquidising. Amusingly ear-like, they can also be beautiful when young, slightly translucent with a bloom like a plum.

New-comers



Snowdrop below Baile Hill - Photo: Simon Mattam

FoYW chair, Bill Hill, has hopes of planting more spring flowers on the hill. These snowdrops probably came to its foot through guerilla-gardening.

Bill and the local Bishophillbillies are trying to get CYC permission and ecological advice before supporting pollinators through planting. Snowdrops probably only started to be introduced to Britain in Tudor times, so, though snowdrops often have a semi-wild look, true native wild flowers are probably preferable, perhaps cheery celandines, the delicate wood anemone or the primrose, which is not so much prim as prime or first [they, along with celandines, are in flower in my garden].

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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