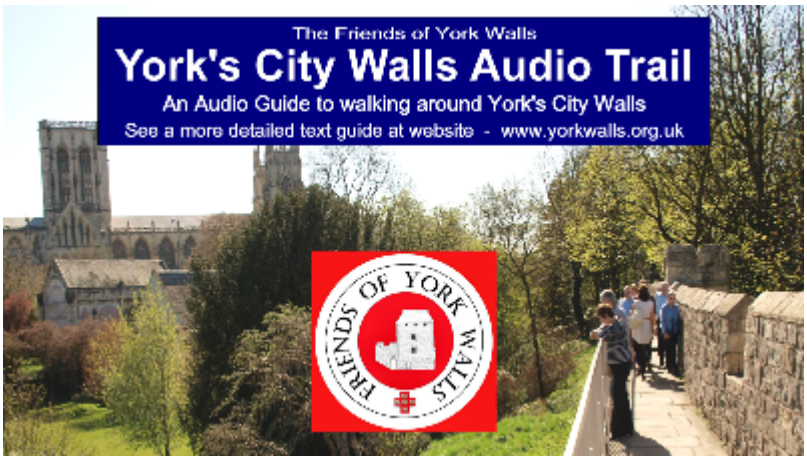


Name: York's City Walls Audio Trail

Summary

York's medieval City Walls, or "Bar Walls", are a scheduled ancient monument encircling the historic City of York, and have 3.4km (2 miles) of surviving masonry. They are the longest town walls in England. They were built mainly in the 13th century of magnesian limestone, and uniquely in England, were set on earthen ramparts. Up on the walls, behind battlements there is usually a wall-walk, which is free to walk on from about 8.00am to dusk, daily. These lengths of wall-walk are part of the way-marked City Walls Trail. This York City Walls Trail audio guide is provided by The Friends of York Walls, and is based on their website Walls Trail at yorkwalls.org.uk, and associated book, where there is a lot more detail.

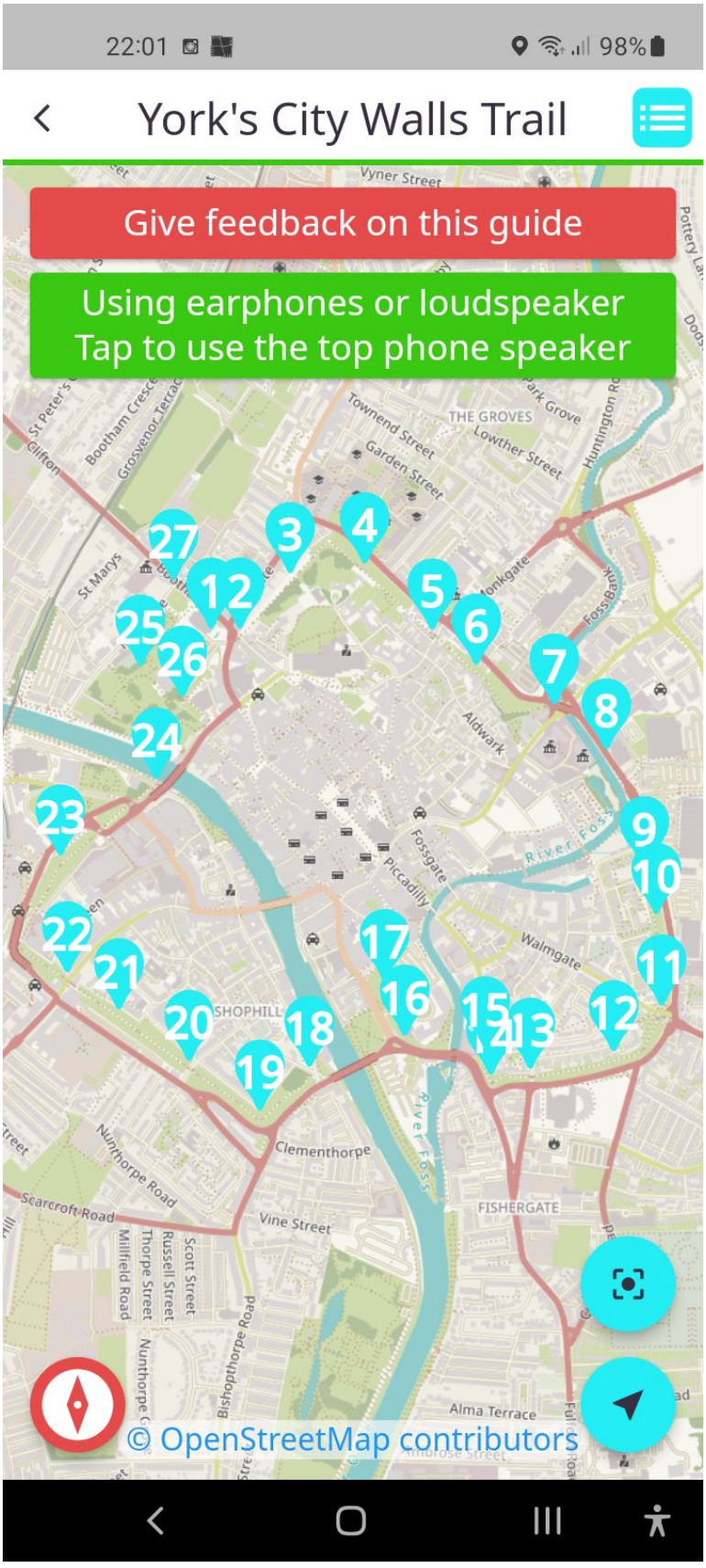
York's City Walls offer a splendid elevated walk around the City of York, UK. Use this Audio Guide to learn about York's Walls from a new angle, and make sure you don't miss what others walk straight past.

Website: https://www.yorkwalls.org.uk/?page_id=3690

Keywords: York, Walls, Trail, walking, ancient, monument, Roman, medieval, historical, ramparts, stone, masons, Victorian, wall-walk

Guide ID: 80

Map View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York's City Walls Trail
Give feedback on this guide
Using earphones or loudspeaker
Tap to use the top phone speaker
Vyner Street
THE GROVES
Townend Street
Garden Street
Lowther Street
Bootham Crescent
Grosvenor Terrace
St Peter's
Clifton
St Marys
Monkgate
Foss Bank
Aldwark
Fossgate
Piccadilly
River Foss
Walmgate
SHOPHILL
Clementhorpe
Nunthorpe Road
Scarcroft Road
Vine Street
FISHERGATE
Millfield Road
Thorpe Street
Russell Street
Scott Street
Bishopthorpe Road
Alma Terrace
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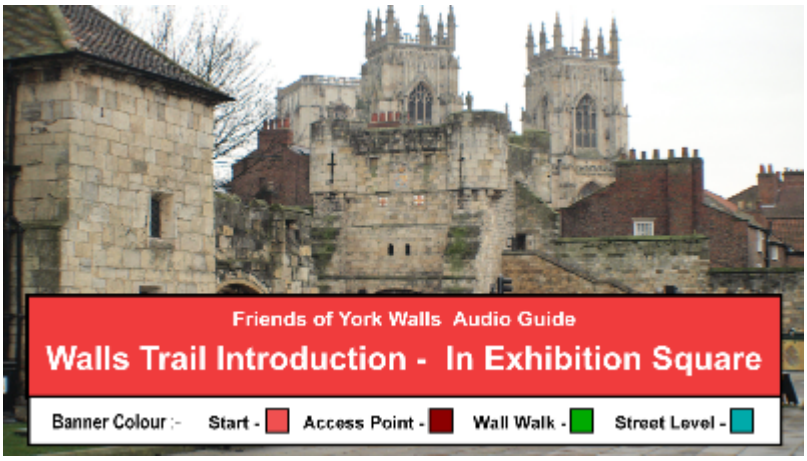

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Latitude: 53.96274268

Longitude: -1.08604755

Name: Introduction York Walls Trail

Display Text

Introduction - starting from Exhibition Square.
This trail is around York's medieval City Walls. The Walls are a scheduled ancient monument, encircling the historic City of York. There is about 3.4km (2 miles) of surviving masonry, more than for any other town in England.

York still has most of the medieval walls, towers, and fortified gateways, that surrounded the city 700 years ago. The tops of these walls were repaired and partly rebuilt, about 150 years ago, so the public could walk along most of them. These wall-walks are normally open from before 8.00 am till dusk, and are free to use.

The walks, along the top of the walls, are linked to make a circular route, called the 'City Walls Trail'. Where this route is not on a wall-walk, it is along pavements or paths, marked with brass studs. Walking the trail, all round the city, takes about 2 hours, if you take a little time to look at the walls, and the views from them.

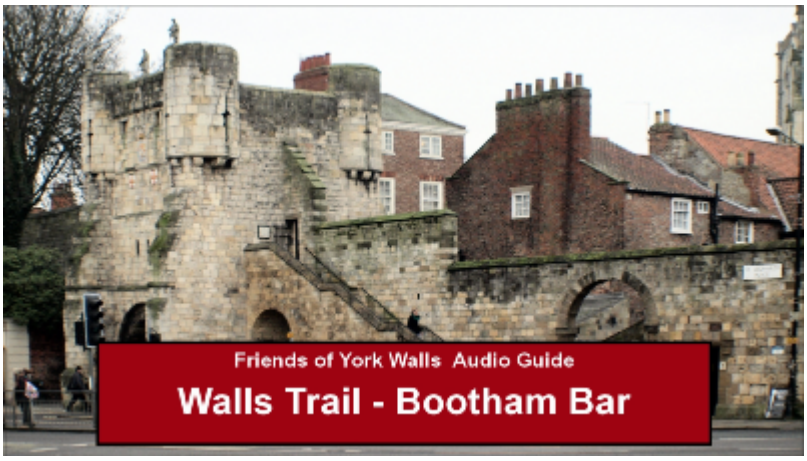
There are four main bars, or fortified gateways, two smaller gateways, with more modern stonework, and one postern, a much smaller gateway defended by a tower. Locals sometimes refer to the walls as, 'The Bar Walls'. The walls you see today, were mainly built in the 13th century of magnesian limestone, and uniquely in England, were set on high earth banks, called ramparts. York's defensive Roman walls are mainly hidden, within these earth ramparts. There are frequent

smaller towers, and details like battlements, arrow slits, gun ports, sculptures, and masons' marks. There are often good views of the Minster, and other important buildings.

A short part of the trail is in the Museum Gardens, where you can see the best surviving stretch of the Roman fortress wall, and the Roman Multangular Tower, with medieval stonework above it. Also in the Museum Gardens are the ruins of St Mary's Abbey, and the defensive walls, around two of its sides. These walls were built at the same time as the City Walls, and are England's finest surviving example of defensive Abbey walls.

This audio guide divides the 'City Walls Trail' into sections, as indicated by the 'Map Points', and a 'List View'. It starts at Exhibition Square, by Bootham Bar, and is designed to help you enjoy a circular walk, with descriptions, and Map Point numbers, going clockwise. However, the Walls can be walked in either direction. You can also select particular bits of the Walls to walk on, as there are about a dozen places where you can access the wall-walk. These are indicated by a dark red 'Title Banner' on the Map Point images. This 'York City Walls Trail' audio guide gives you an introduction to each section, with more details available on the Friends of York Walls website at yorkwalls.org.uk .

Now select the next 'Map Point', to follow the trail. The starting point is at Bootham Bar.



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Latitude: 53.96272969

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Name: Bootham Bar

Display Text

Bootham Bar is best seen from Exhibition Square, the square outside it. The square is separated from the bar by a busy road; the traffic lights will help you cross safely. The view of the bar [with the red roofs and the Minster beyond] is very popular. The best view is probably from immediately below the statue of William Etty, a Victorian professional artist. He is shown painting, and a model of the bar is behind his knee, because he campaigned to protect the Walls and bars. The busy road in front of his statue was built straight through the Walls.

Looking from here you can see the oldest visible part of the bar – the round Norman arch [about 900 years old]. Above the arch is medieval stonework [about700 years old], with cross shaped slits for arrows to be shot from. The remains of a Roman gateway here are under the ground. Victorians repaired the bar [about 130 years ago], replaced the 3 stone figures, and added the steps up to it.

The painted stone shields on the front of the bar are modern replacements for ones that had become weathered. They show a royal coat of arms, and York's coat of arms, [gold lions on a red cross of St George]. The 3 statues on the top are by a Victorian mason who had his workshop beside the bar. They are of a Lord Mayor, a knight and a mason, and replaced earlier statues. There are information boards about the bar and the gateway of the Roman fort that is underground here, and one of a series of metal maps for rubbing.

After crossing the road the trail goes up the steps. From the top of the steps, before going into the

bar: look down the steps then up, and a little to the right to see where the Walls start again. It is about 100 metres away, on the other side of the road, that York's corporation built through the Walls in the 1830s. To the right of this is the King's Manor. It was built around the house of the abbot of St Mary's Abbey [a house which King Henry VIII took for his own in 1539]. On the right of the square are the postern tower and defensive walls of St Mary's Abbey. They were no defence against King Henry.

Pass through the heavy, anti-pigeon gate and into the room above the arch. A portcullis is on your left and a 19th century wall is on your right. The original builders had larger windows here, as they didn't expect attacks from the York City side of the bar. From the 19th century slit windows: you can look into York along Petergate, one of York's picturesque, mostly car-free streets. This street follows the line of one of the two main roads running through the Roman Fort. It is not quite as straight a line now as it was 19 centuries ago.

The trail continues on through the room, and the iron gateway, out onto the elevated wall-walk.

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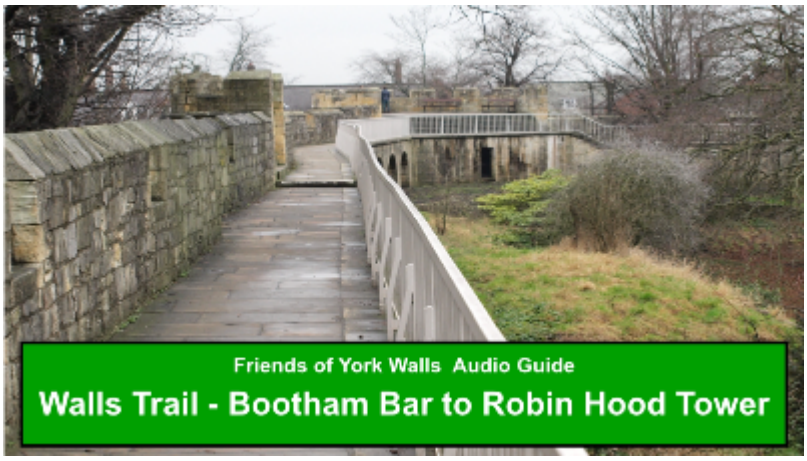

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Name: Bootham Bar - Robin Hood Tower

Display Text

As you leave Bootham Bar - you will be walking on a wall-walk Victorians built, beside battlements they rebuilt on walls that are basically medieval. These walls are on an earth rampart that was started by the Romans, but then was built up to cover what was left of the Roman walls.

This is the Minster corner, look to your right for many glimpses of it. The present Minster took 250 years to build, so it has windows of all the three major Gothic styles. First you see glimpses of the 'decorated' style of the lovely 'Heart of Yorkshire' window at the west end, and the 'perpendicular' style of its towers, built 100 years later. The name 'perpendicular' is because of the repeated uprights in the stone tracery.

The first part of the Walls here didn’t have a full stone wall-walk in medieval times. It probably had a narrow ledge that could be used to support a timber walkway in times of danger. The wall was also defended from interval towers. The towers stick out from the walls, so defenders on them could see the sides of those attacking the walls – and deliver what is called 'enfilading fire'. The first five towers are relatively close together, perhaps because there was no permanent wall-walk here for defenders. This is also where a Scots army burnt the suburbs of York in around 1319. The road through Bootham Bar is the main route to Scotland.

The Victorians built the wall-walk on arches, and rebuilt the battlements and sometimes the top part of the Walls. Oddly, they included features that would have brought problems to medieval

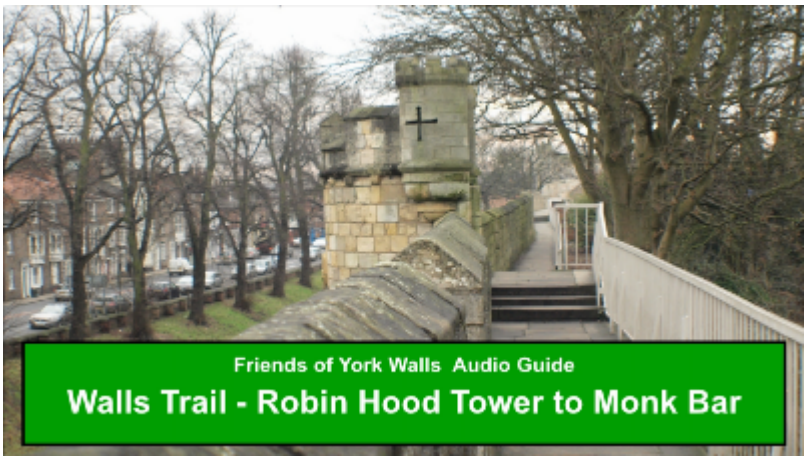
defenders. Some slit windows are narrow for the full width of the parapet – so that aiming through them would be almost impossible. Along this section the views out to the left are of the rear gardens of properties along Gillygate.

After the first 50 metres, as you walk, you can soon look down, right, onto a complex and varied bit of open ground where medieval archbishops once had their palace. The inner ramparts here are wooded. They look best in May when their bluebells are in flower. Unfortunately they are mainly Spanish bluebells, and not the true English Bluebell.

The main thing that is left from the archbishop's palace is its chapel, now the Minster library. You'll see glimpses of it to the left of the Minster, but closer to you. Its back is to the dean's beautiful big garden. It is linked to a modern building of a similar size, shape and stone, which is closer to you. This is its recent extension.

30 metres before you get to Robin Hood Tower, the tower at the corner, you have the first good view of the Minster. The simple spear shaped windows, in the central and closest bit of the Minster, are the oldest ones. They are in the 'Early English' style of the 1220s. The large garden below you at this point belongs to the dean, who is in charge of the Minster and its grounds.

The corner tower at the right angle bend is Robin Hood Tower.



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Name: Robin Hood Tower - Monk Bar

Display Text

Robin Hood Tower is a Victorian replacement for a ruined medieval tower. It had this name from about 1600, but not in the time of Robin Hood. Not even this legendary archer could have aimed arrows successfully through the arrow slits, now in its battlements. The tower has benches and a good view of the next bit of wall, and the ditch outside it.

The carving of crossed keys, set into the paving of the tower, points to the Minster [which is dedicated to St Peter - who the Bible says was given the keys of heaven]. Trees block the view of the Minster from here, but it is worth looking in other directions.

With your back to the Minster: to your right, and running beside the best bit of town ditch that we still have, is Lord Mayors' Walk. It was laid out as a paved, tree lined promenade in Georgian times. The old looking building, on the far side of this road, is not as old as it looks. It was built in Victorian times for a college that has developed into York's second university, the University of York St John. You can see some of the modern buildings, to the left of the older buildings. Almost a kilometre away you can just see, the flat roofed, red brick building, of Rowntree's old sweet factory. Sweet making, with the railways, provided the main new jobs in Victorian York. The newer part of the sweet factory is still an important employer in York, still making Polos and Kit-Kat here.

Some tree felling has created a good view of the Minster, from the wall-walk a little after the tower. Only the top half of the next tower was built by the Victorians. The two 'pepperpot turrets'

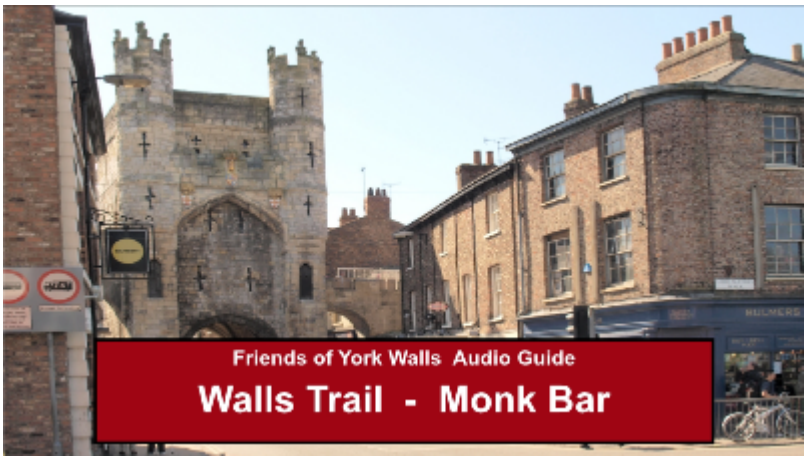
on this tower seem to have been put on as a bit of fun – certainly an adult in them would have problems shooting out of the thigh-high arrow slits.

About 70 metres further on there are private steps down to a splendid house and garden. Around here the third good view of the Minster starts. The steps lead to Grays Court, now a hotel. In the 1880s, the owner of this garden and the dean reluctantly gave up what they saw as 'their' bits of the Walls to complete the trail you are now on. Soon after the steps there is a plaque set in the battlements, to tell us that Edwin Gray 'restored to the city', the length of city wall he was treating as part of his garden.

Soon there is an image of a Roman helmet, set into the paving of the wall-walk. For the whole of the north corner of the trail you walk along the line of the walls of the Roman legionary fort of Eboracum. This is why you have walked a neat right-angle. You started at the site of Eboracum's north-west gate, at Bootham Bar, and the helmet marks the site of its north-east gate. It is thought that York's north-east gate was moved to Monk Bar 700 years ago, because Minster priests did not like a major route going through their part of the city.

Looking outside the Walls here, you can see where the route of the main Roman road from the gate survives, as a slight dip in the ramparts, and then a narrow alley beyond the road. If you look inside the Walls, the line of this road runs by the left side of the linked set of old buildings, on your right. The buildings were all once the Minster's Treasurer's House, and a cellar under the far part is York's most famous ghost site. Harry Martindale, and others, convincingly reported seeing and hearing a troop of Roman soldiers marching along the old route.

If you look along the wall-walk in front of you, you see Monk Bar with its wild men threatening to throw stones from the top of its extra storey. As you approach the end of this section you enter Monk Bar.



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Name: Monk Bar

Display Text

Monk Bar is mostly 700 years old, but its top storey was probably added at the time of King Richard III. This addition helped make it the strongest bar. The ‘wild men’ throwing rocks from its roof are less useful. The wall trail, from the north, enters Monk Bar and turns down narrow, low roofed, steep steps. These are very different from the Victorian steps up to Bootham Bar, as the steps here seem designed for defence.

Turn left at the pavement and enter the bar’s arch. On your right, there is a blocked doorway. Traders were once stopped here, and made to pay 'murage'. Murage was a tax on goods being brought into York for sale. This tax went to pay for the Walls - and for the murage collector, who came through this door. The arches through the wall on either side of the main arch are 19th century.

The space under the bar’s main arch, is stone vaulted, so it could resist attacks by fire. There are masons’ marks here. The easiest to find is at eye-level, on the second stone to the right of the blocked up doorway. It is a bit like a modern wind turbine, but with just two broad blades.

Go to the exit from the arch. Look up to see the spikes of the portcullis, waiting to slide down between its grooves, and seal off this arch. The spikes were to fix it firmly in the earth – not to pierce attackers caught underneath, as it came down. Probably every gateway through the Walls once had a portcullis, but this is now the most complete. It still has the winch to wind it up – but it

is said that the last time anyone actually tried to use this equipment, to lower the portcullis was in 1953, to celebrate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. It took 2 weeks to get it up again, because a chain broke and jammed it firmly into its stone slots. Go a metre further, and you can see above you the dark 'murder holes', through which things could be dropped on anyone attacking the portcullis.

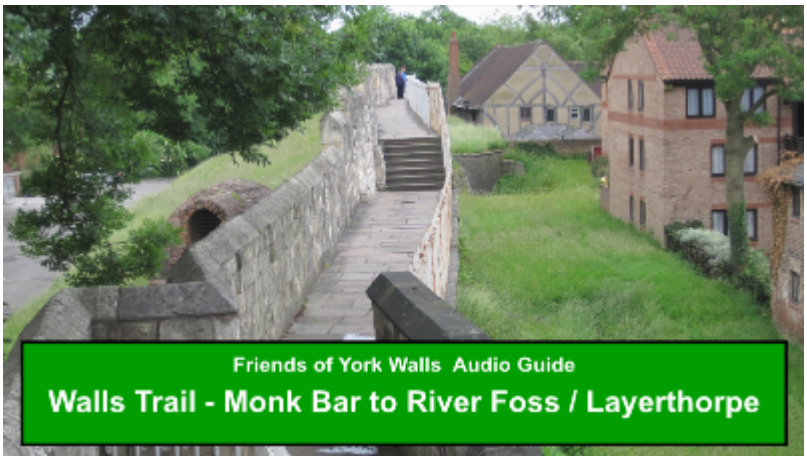
Walk about 15 metres further out and look back at the front of the bar. Towards the top are two small square holes with a small cross-shaped slit above each one. These holes were for cannons, the slits were used to aim them.

Near the corners, at the level of the lowest arrow slits, are two small, metal studded, wood doors. They make sense because the bar once had a barbican stretching out from it. The doors let guards get to the wall-walks of the barbican. The barbican reached roughly to where you are standing. It had an outer gate you had to get through, and then you were in 'the killing ground', faced by a portcullis ahead, and surrounded by guarded walls above. York's barbicans were mostly demolished in the early 19th century. Just one survives at Walmgate Bar. The painted stone shields are a royal coat of arms, and York's coat of arms.

Now walk back through the arch, and go 10 or so metres into the City of York, away from the bar. You can now look up at the only medieval back wall to a bar that York still has. You can see that it has proper windows, rather than arrow slits. The bar was designed to be defended against attacks only from outside York, and it doubled as a home in the Middle Ages. Rents from the use of the bars, as homes, were one way money was raised to pay for the repair of the Walls. The balcony, just above the arch, is thought to have been one of the places used for public proclamations.

The small museum inside the bar was run by the York Archaeological Trust, but has not re-opened since the pandemic of 2020 / 2021.

Now retrace your steps to the city side of the arch. The trail continues, up the open steps to the right and in front of you.



Ref: 6

Latitude: 53.96204079

Longitude: -1.07711407

Name: Monk Bar to the River Foss

Display Text

The Monk Bar to the River Foss section starts with open steps going up to the Walls.

As soon as you get to the wall-walk you'll see 'musket loops'. These are like short upright arrow slits, and were probably added to the medieval walls for the English Civil War of the 1640s. The wall-walk you are on is probably from the late Middle Ages, though Victorians repaired it, and the battlements. They made some new musket loops, but at least one of the loops, just after the steps up, seems to have been created by filling an embrasure in the battlements, to give a musketeer more protection, and not as a Victorian imitation.

Very soon, there is an ice symbol set in the paving of the wall-walk. It shows where to see the brick dome of a Georgian ice house, cut into the outer ramparts. This is a bit like an igloo in reverse. It was filled with ice in winter, to provide iced foods and drinks in other seasons.

Archaeologists have cut into the inner ramparts here, to show us the remains of a Roman interval tower in the walls that surrounded the legionary fort 1800 years ago. The hole the archaeologists have left, gets deeper further along the Walls, ending with a short tall wall at the corner of the Roman fort. After this Roman corner tower, the line of the Walls is less straight, as it has left the ramparts the Romans started, and is probably on ramparts first built by Vikings, and then Normans.

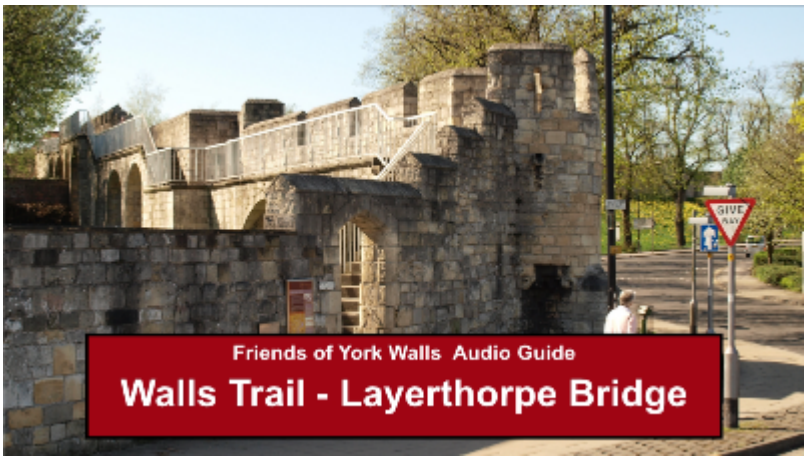
The large medieval building, partly cut into the inner ramparts is the Merchant Taylors' Hall. It was mostly encased in brick about 300 years ago. This medieval guild hall is one of several that survive in York. Guilds were part trade association, part charity, and part religious fellowship. Tailoring was one of the biggest trades in medieval York, with 128 master tailors in 1386 when records started. These were the full members of the guild, allowed to employ journeymen, [paid by the day], and apprentices who would usually live in a master's home.

The next tower has been rebuilt by Victorians, with chimney-like little turrets. Soon a star of David, set in the wall-walk's paving, tells you to look at a red brick car park outside the Walls. This area is called Jewbury. All Jews were expelled from England 700 years ago, so this Jewish cemetery was lost until the ground was dug up for the car park. It was recognised as Jewish because it was organised so respectfully, with no overlapping graves. Modern English Jews rescued the remains, and reburied the medieval dead. Most of the site of the Cemetery is now covered by the Sainsbury's car park, but you can see the modest, one metre high, red granite plaque, commemorating the dead. To the left of this is Georgian housing. Turn further to the left and you are looking back at the Minster.

At a round tower, called 'New Tower' since 1380, the Walls suddenly turn outwards. From just past New Tower there is a good view looking back to your left: a hint of a grassy ditch, the ramparts, the Walls, Monk Bar, and a little of the Minster.

As the Walls go down towards the River Foss, there is a small, quiet public garden immediately below you on the right. The Walls and ramparts end with two older, more angular towers, and views across the busy road junction ahead.

Go down the steps to pavement level. You are now at Layerthorpe Bridge, over the River Foss.



Ref: 7

Latitude: 53.96125414

Longitude: -1.07448611

Name: Layerthorpe Bridge

Display Text

This location marks the end of the raised wall-walk south from Monk Bar, and the start of a ground level walk along the River Foss to the Red Tower, where the walls trail goes up onto the wall-walk again.

As soon as you reach the pavement there is an information board about two things we have lost from here. One is a short length of City Wall, ending in a tower with a gate going through it into the city. The gate was a metre narrower than at Monk Bar, so it was called a ‘postern’ or minor gate into the city. Layerthorpe Postern was in a very dangerous state by 1820, and in 1830 it was removed. During this work a 10th or 11th-century coin hoard, and a medieval Jewish amulet, were found. The second thing we’ve lost here was a big marshy lake, stretching south from the postern tower. The lake explains the gap in the City Walls.

Before crossing the road and river, you may wish to visit a hidden garden, just off the trail. It is a small quiet, public garden just below and inside the Walls. It is as good as any garden without lawns, can be, and has many benches. The two entrances are easy to miss, and are about 80 metres from the steps down from the City Walls. Turn right as you come off the Walls, and carry on along the pavement instead of crossing the roads on your left. You pass the medieval church of St Cuthbert’s, then find the entrances on your right, just before St Anthony’s medieval guild hall.

The official name of the garden is 'St Anthony’s Garden'. It was created for the public by the York

Conservation Trust. It is a pleasant newly established garden - without lawns, but with solid paths weaving between mixed flower and shrub borders. There are some interesting views of the arches supporting the wall-walk above them. There are many benches, to sit and enjoy the quiet peaceful atmosphere. After the garden visit, return to the busy junction to cross the roads.

To continue along the Walls trail, you need to cross the busy road junctions at the traffic lights. Cross to the first little traffic island, then turn right and cross two flows of traffic, to get to a pavement overlooking the River Foss. Turn left along this pavement and you will soon be walking beside the River Foss.

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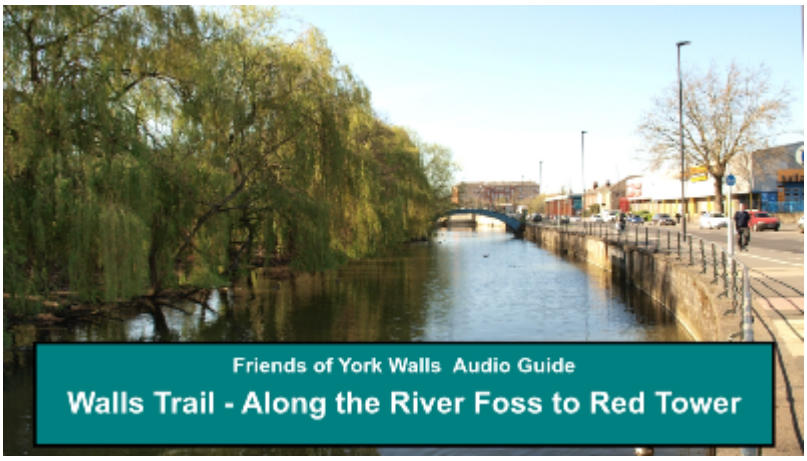


Ref: 8

Latitude: 53.96036363

Longitude: -1.07273130

Name: Along the Foss to Red Tower

Display Text

This section of York's defences was once a large, marshy lake that neither the Walls nor attackers could easily cross.

You need to be on the pavement on the most southerly, furthest downstream, side of a complex bridge over the River Foss. Turn to walk downstream, with the river on your right. You can look back to the modern bridge you have just crossed, and beyond this to the Walls and the Minster. The bridge, with its round tower-like extras, quietly echoes the Walls. A little to the left of the Walls is the medieval church of Saint Cuthbert's, but the buildings around you are late Victorian or later, built on what was once a marshy lake.

Walk on and an arched metal footbridge, usually closed, leads over the river to a small nature reserve by a quiet backwater. This reserve was used to reintroduce swans to the river in the 1990s. As well as swans, you can probably now see moorhen, coot, ducks and geese. The lake here provided bream, pike and waterfowl to eat.

It was called the King's Fishpool, because William the Conqueror ordered the river to be dammed to create a moat around his castle, half a kilometre downstream. Laws strictly limited who could fish the lake, or even have a boat on it, and laws tried to prevent its being polluted by refuse. But the lake silted up, so when canals became superhighways at the end of the 18th century, the dam became a lock, and the present river channel was dug out as a canal, so barges could use it. In the

mid 19th century, what was left of the lake was seen as a health hazard. It smelled, and this was thought to be linked to sickness, like the cholera epidemic of 1832. So instead of trying to keep it clear of rubbish, the corporation decided to build up the ground level, by paying people a bounty if they dumped a cartload of refuse, into what was once the King's Fishpool.

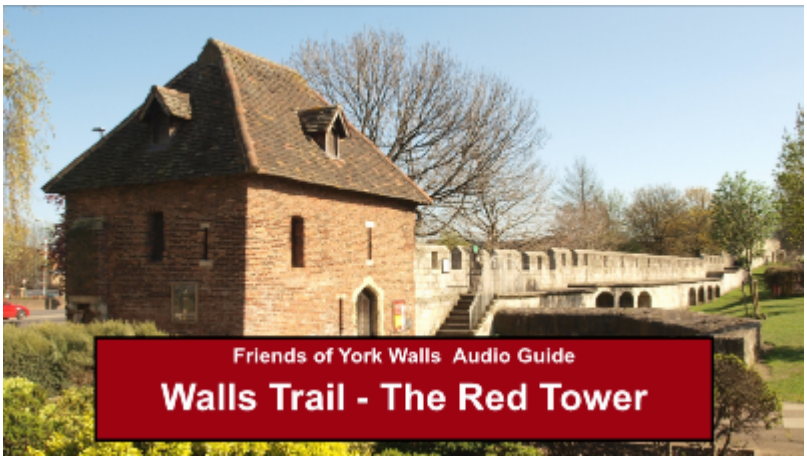
When this land-fill scheme finished, York people continued to bring their rubbish here. In 1899 the tall brick chimney ahead, and to your left, was built for a Victorian waste incinerator, which burnt the city's waste. The chimney was shared with an electricity generator, and when the rubbish was burnt the heat was used to generate steam, which worked a stone crusher, a mortar mixer, and if there was any energy left, the generator. The chimney now stands close beside a supermarket, with toilets and a café.

Where the river swings away from the road there is a new information board, mainly about what was built first on the new land by the canalised river. Look up from reading the board, and you can see the little nature reserve and its backwater. You can imagine the shallow lake that once stretched for about a hundred metres in front of you, and more than 200 metres behind. The road that runs along the river here is called Foss Islands Road.

Your route continues on the pavement by the road, but if you keep looking down river, you can see a red brick Victorian warehouse come into view. Barges unloaded here, most recently for Rowntree's sweet factory, so it is called Rowntree Wharf. Now the warehouse is converted into flats and offices.

In about 100 metres, after crossing a side road, you see the Red Tower on your right. Beside it is Rosemary Place, with benches, a few things for young children to play on, and even some bushes of rosemary. You are surrounded here by some of the most conveniently placed council housing in York.

Go down the path to the Red Tower, and the start of the next walls trail section.



Ref: 9

Latitude: 53.95801682

Longitude: -1.07145257

Name: The Red Tower

Display Text

At the Red Tower the Walls start again, and the trail leaves the side of the road, and goes right to join the wall-walk behind the tower.

The part of the trail, that goes around the tower, goes under a 'garde-robe', [a medieval toilet]. This sticks out a little from the wall, but there is no longer the hole that would have allowed human waste to drop down here, apparently straight into the lake.

The tower was built of brick around 1500, when there was a lot of anger, and little money in York. Every other tower is built with large blocks of magnesian limestone, cut from quarries about 10 miles away, at Tadcaster. Much of modern York is built on clay, so locally made bricks were a much cheaper building material.

In the middle of the15th century, York became poorer. Ships were getting bigger, and docking at Hull rather than coming up river to York. Newer towns like Leeds, where the guilds were less powerful in controlling competition, were taking business away from York. Sometimes there was even open fighting over who should be King, this was 'The Wars of the Roses'. For a while York had a friend in the local man, crowned as Richard III. He forgave York its taxes, and had plans to rebuild the castle, but then he was killed, and his enemy became King.

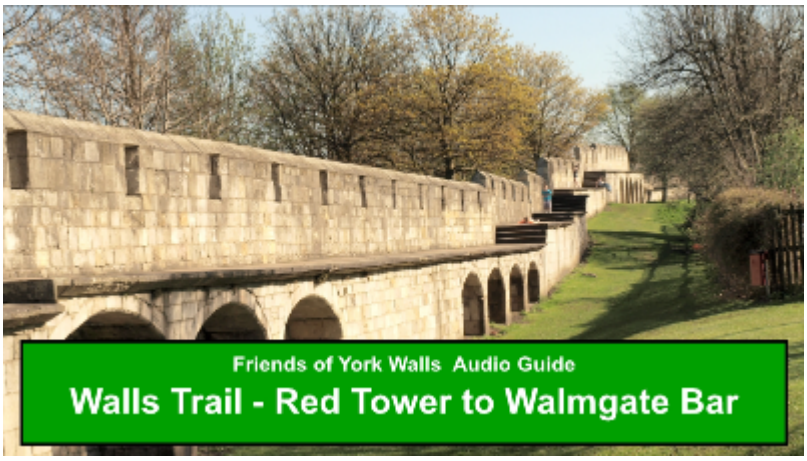
The new King, Henry VII, was locally unpopular, and in 1487 a rebellion against him made an

unsuccessful attack on Bootham Bar. Two years later attacks on Fishergate Bar and Walmgate Bar damaged them badly. So in 1490 the city corporation wanted a tower built where the Walls ended, south of the great marshy lake. They decided they couldn't afford to have it built by members of the masons' guild, so they asked the tilers to build the tower of bricks. The tilers soon complained that their tools were being broken, or stolen. Officials of the masons' guild were sent for by the corporation, and the language they used in their defence got them locked up in prison for the night. Then a tiler was murdered. An official of the masons' guild was accused of the murder, but never convicted. The tilers finished the Red Tower, but nearly all future work on the Walls seems to have been done in stone, by masons.

More than 3 centuries later, the Victorians heavily restored the then ruined tower, and built up the land around here, by about 2 metres, so the tower now seems much lower than it did, when it guarded the large marshy lake that reached up to it.

The tower is occasionally open. The inside shows little history, but it has recently been attractively transformed. Since 2016 the Red Tower has been 'managed' by volunteers. Their vision is, "to bring this historic building to life by offering an inclusive, welcoming space for creative learning, and social activities; run by local people, encouraging local and wider community participation".

The walls trail continues on, up the steps and towards Walmgate Bar.



Ref: 10

Latitude: 53.95709295

Longitude: -1.07105419

Name: Red Tower to Walmgate Bar

Display Text

The best views from around the Red Tower, are of the tower and the wall-walk beyond, but as you walk along this section, you can pause and look back at features that have already been mentioned; Rowntree Wharf [the red-brick Victorian warehouse with its battlemented tower], the Destructor [the Victorian incinerator chimney], and the Minster between them.

The wall-walks often have no inner railings for the rest of the trail, but are generally low on the inside. The Walls here protected the newest bit of the walled city, the part that grew up about 800 years ago as a suburb, called Walmgate, east of the River Foss, on land that was just above the level of the King's Fishpool. The ramparts here have only had stone walls on them since the mid 14th century, and the walls close to Red Tower are even younger. The parapet defending the wall-walk is pierced by a mix of musket loops, simple embrasures, and cross shaped arrow slits.

Most of the cross shaped arrow slits, along this part of the corner, have an unusual extra. These extras are not easily seen from the walkway, but on the outside the top of each slit is crowned by a small stone gable, or hood. These extras were noted before the Victorians did their usual restorations of the parapet, but there seem to be more of them now than there were before the restorations.

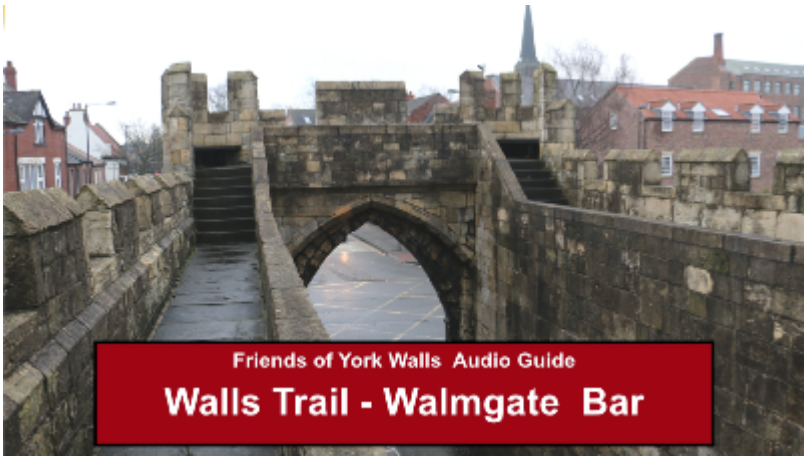
In the century before the Victorians did their restorations, and established the present paved walkways, on the Walls, this was a length of wall-walk used for recreational walking. There are

twin flights of access steps, under the present wall-walk, at the second interval tower.

On the city side of this part of the trail there is mainly council housing, from the mid 20th century, because in Victorian times this was an area of very poor housing. However, just after the first interval tower, at the end of the second little road there has been on your right, there is a medieval, low towered church; this is St Margaret's. This can remind you that the Walls were still protecting the old city here. This church was heavily restored by Victorians, and then it became one of the many York churches converted to another use; as it is now the National Centre for Early Music.

This is a good part of the walls for spotting the small brass markers, embedded every 25metres along the middle of the wall-walk. The easiest to spot are domed and a centimetre across [every 100metres]. Others are smaller and flatter, circular or hexagonal. These are simply to help those involved in maintenance of the walls to map problems that need attention. Cracks in the first interval tower here were mapped recently. Spotting the little brass markers is one of the less rewarding ways of using your time on the Walls, but it can be addictive.

This part of the trail ends at Walmgate Bar. There are fairly good views of the bar as you approach it. The next section of the trail begins as soon as you get to the pavement.



Ref: 11

Latitude: 53.95528260

Longitude: -1.07086772

Name: Walmgate Bar

Display Text

Walmgate Bar is the only bar which still has its medieval barbican, and which seems to show the scars of military attacks on it.

One place you can see both from, is the pavement at the bottom of the steps off the Walls, north of the bar. The blank wall of the barbican runs out to your left, running out from the main bar building above and in front of you. A barbican is a defended extension, sticking out from a fortified gateway. Look carefully at the bottom 2 courses of stone, in the barbican wall which faces you, and you'll see a crack and dip in them, about a third of the way along from the main bar building. The crack and dip are thought to be the result of a mine, dug towards the main bar building in an attack in 1644, during the English Civil War. The defenders discovered the plan, so dug their own shallow tunnel across the probable route of the attackers' tunnel, and flooded it. This flooded the mine below, so it was abandoned, but the bar still needed a lot of repair after the war.

The trail continues by crossing the road at the traffic lights to your right. Look left, down through the bar's archway, to the roofless passage of its barbican. Walk into the barbican passage way. It was this passage that was the defence provided by the barbican. If attackers broke through the gate, that would have closed the far end of the barbican, they would come into this passage, or 'killing ground'. They were surrounded on all sides by manned walls above them, as they continued towards the bar's portcullis, and main gate. You can stand in the passage, and imagine what it would have been like. The old wooden gates are still on either side.

If you go to the far end of this passage, [watch out for bikes], and turn left onto the very narrow bit of pavement, then you should be able to see a dent many think is cannon ball damage. When you retrace your way through the barbican look up to the bar's turret on your right. You may be able to see the many little dents that are said to be musket ball damage.

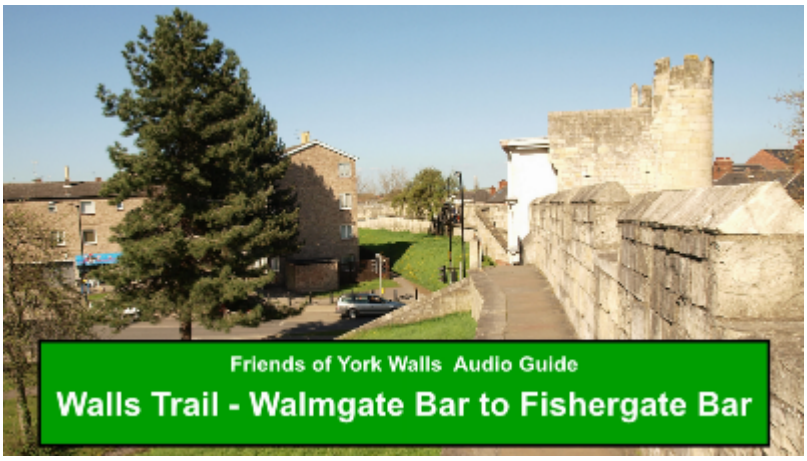
The last time that the Walls were attacked was also the only time that York has been besieged with armies circling the city. This was in 1644, during the English Civil War between forces loyal to the King [the Royalists], and those supporting a parliament which wanted to limit the King's powers [The Parliamentarians].

The Walls and bars were already three or four hundred years old at this time, and gunpowder and large cannon had made them much less of a protection than they had been in the Middle Ages. The King moved an army into York, personally inspected the old defences, and arranged for them to be strengthened.

Parliament's supporters, in York and Yorkshire, created their own army, and in the summer of 1644 this army was outside this Walmgate section of the Walls. It had been joined by a Scots army on the south side of the city, and another parliamentarian army on the north side. Walmgate Bar was badly damaged by cannon fire.

The Walls were actively defended until a Royalist army arrived to relieve York. The Royalists however were defeated in the battle of Marston Moor, and so gave up hopes of being able to hold York. After their defeat the Royalists effectively abandoned Northern England, and that then led to the loss of the Civil War. King Charles I was imprisoned, and then executed. For eleven years England was ruled without a king.

At the steps up to the next section of the Walls, turn back to the bar, to see the extension to its living space that was added at the time of Queen Elizabeth I. It rests on recently repaired pillars. The 'Gatehouse café' usually gives you access to all of the bar's living space, the roof of the bar, and the wall-walk around the barbican.



Ref: 12

Latitude: 53.95441899

Longitude: -1.07235542

Name: Walmgate to Fishergate Bar

Display Text

This part starts with the steps going up to the Walls, at the south side of Walmgate Bar. The wall-walk here has just simple battlements for a while, then musket loops, probably made for the Civil War. They are currently of a height useful to a kneeling soldier.

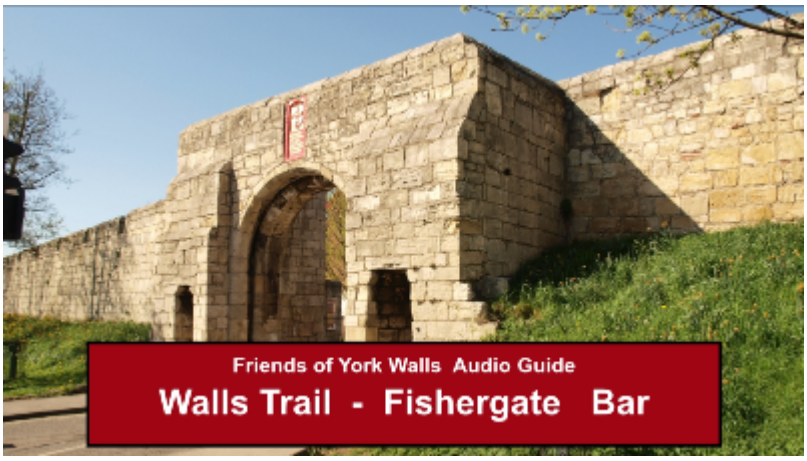
The first interval tower has excellent views, a bench, and broad low embrasures you can sit in. Looking back there are the Walls, Walmgate Bar with its barbican, and further away and to the left, there is a brick side of the low, rebuilt tower of St Margaret's church, Victorian Rowntree Wharf with its brick tower, and the Minster. Closer than the Minster, you can also see other medieval church towers. For example the lantern tower of All Saints, Pavement and, much closer and amongst houses, St Denys. Most of the housing close to the walls here was built as council housing from the mid 20th century, because in Victorian times this was an area of very poor housing. The council forced owners to sell them their houses, 'cleared the slums', and re-housed residents, in council built housing.

Looking outside the Walls there is a neat, red brick, early Victorian flax factory, now flats. Trees and buildings, behind and to its right, suggest the rising ground of Lamel Hill, where cannon were based to fire on York during the Civil War. Close behind the factory there is the Victorian spire of a church, on another site where there were cannon.

Below you, and to the right, you see wide roads, a fairly gently sloped rampart, and a number of

modern buildings, including a hotel, and the Barbican Theatre. There was room for these because, for most of the last two centuries, this area was a large cattle market.

As you walk on towards Fishergate Bar there are good views of the Walls in front of you. You are forced off the Walls to cross a little road at Fishergate Bar.



Ref: 13

Latitude: 53.95409375

Longitude: -1.07530330

Name: Fishergate Bar

Display Text

Fishergate Bar once had a tower, or towers, to defend a gateway, almost as wide as those at the other medieval bars. The gateway is still there, but this bar was so badly damaged in an attack in 1489 that it was left bricked up for 340 years. The towers have gone, but it has medieval foot tunnels and early Tudor inscriptions, carved on stones above the arch.

When you get to the pavement at Fishergate Bar watch out for passing bikes. On your right, there is the Phoenix pub which has respect for its own history, and has kept much of its late Victorian look inside. It is named after an iron foundry that was just across the road here in Victorian times. About 100 metres past the pub, just beyond the first little cross roads, there is a Victorian church on the right of the road, and opposite it, on the left, an older churchyard. This is where highwayman and folk hero Dick Turpin is buried.

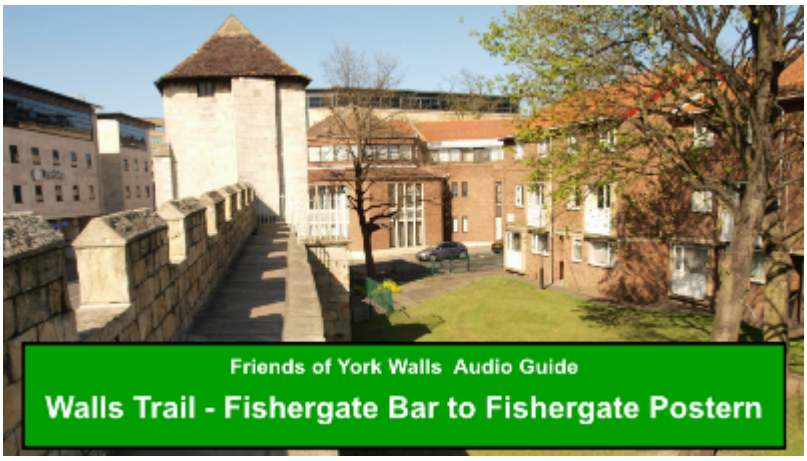
Turn back to Fishergate Bar, and go to the inner part of the main archway. Notice the reddened and cracked stones there, most obviously on the left, 3-4 courses of stone from the ground, just before the archway itself. Some magnesian limestone seems to redden from extreme heat, and it is thought this stone experienced that heat, when the bar was burned down in 1489. The burning seems to have been a mass protest against the rule of Henry VII, and in particular against a new tax he was imposing. The corporation decided to save money on repairs, and on paying someone to man the bar, by simply bricking up the gateway.

A little further on you can see the deep grooves its portcullis would have slid in. Go further still and look back at the outside of the arch, there is carving above the arch to commemorate repairs to the Walls you have just walked along, repairs completed at the expense of Mayor William Todd in 1487.

The foot tunnels, on either side of the main gateway, are probably late medieval, and can remind us of when all gates into York were short tunnels through the earth ramparts. It was in late Georgian and Victorian times that the ramparts were cut back from the sides of the bars, and extra stone arches built for cars, or pedestrians, or both.

It is possible to spot masons' marks in both tunnels. For example, if you go back into the walled city through the right hand tunnel, you can find a three line arrow head on your right. It is on the stone that is four in, and four up; and also on the stone that is above, and to the left of this stone. The shaping of stone, with claw chisels, is also still clear in these tunnels, where there has been little weathering of the stones, probably cut almost 600 years ago.

Now climb the steps, up onto the wall-walk, for the next section.



Ref: 14

Latitude: 53.95395854

Longitude: -1.07636845

Name: Fishergate Bar to The Postern

Display Text

The wall-walk here has just simple battlements for a while, then musket loops probably made for the Civil War.

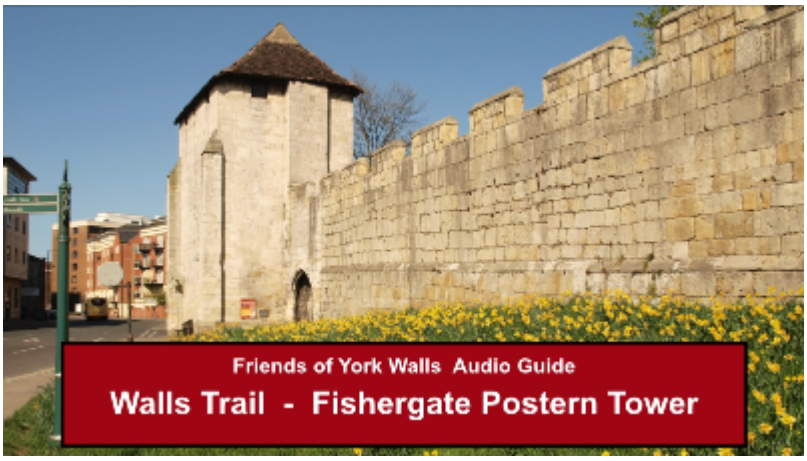
This length of wall was built after a contract to build it was signed in 1345, almost 100 years after the City Walls started to be built in stone, on the other side of the River Foss. This was probably the first length of wall to be stone-built on this side of the river, as the contract seems to say that the builder can build more walls in Walmgate, if he can stick to the same price that the corporation agreed in this contract. The price was £7 for 7 metres of wall, built 7 metres tall, and 2 metres thick, up to the wall-walk. The builder was also to get a robe each year, and he could use anything he found when digging the foundations. It seems that people then, knew even less than we know today, about what is in the mounds of earth, that the City Walls are built on. They seem to have expected to dig up re-usable stone here, or even to find stone foundations they could build on. Sadly for the builder, the Romans had no defensive walls here, so the builders probably found just clay and earth. This meant that the walls here had poor foundations, which has been confirmed with recent surveys and repairs.

The Walls take a strange pointed route here, swinging outwards, then sharply inwards, at the rectangular corner tower. This is not mentioned in the contract. Perhaps the route was to help defend the dam across the Foss. If the dam had been broken by attackers, this would have drained the defensive moats in this area, and eventually would have drained much of the water from the

marshy lake that was used for defence further upstream. This is one of the few areas where we are sure that the Walls had water in their moat.

At the rectangular corner tower, there is an interesting view of the next bit of wall. Ahead you see Fishergate Postern Tower. It is guarding a small entrance gateway, at the end of this bit of the walls. It was also guarding the dam on the River Foss. This dam was where the dual carriageway road now turns left, and crosses the river Foss. The dam was to flood the castle's moats. The moats have been filled in, but from here you can see what remains of the castle wall, and half hidden behind it, Clifford's Tower, which was the castle's keep. Between the keep, and the castle wall, is the 1705 prison, now part of the Castle Museum. Some say the new pub and hotel in the middle of this view has spoilt it, but architects have tried hard to make the building fit in.

This part of the trail ends with the small, late medieval gateway that is to your left as you get to the bottom of the steps at Fishergate Postern Tower. This is the only postern gate left in the Walls.



Ref: 15

Latitude: 53.95445169

Longitude: -1.07682276

Name: Fishergate Postern Tower

Display Text

This is Fishergate Postern Tower. It was built around 1502, to defend a small gateway, and the space where the City Walls met the River Foss. This is the second Postern Tower on this site, and the rebuild seems to have been ordered because the small gateway, through the Walls it is protecting here, had suddenly grown in importance. This was because Fishergate Bar had been blocked up, after suffering a lot of damage when it was attacked in 1489. This space was also just above a dam that crossed the river and carried a road going to York Castle on the opposite bank of the river. The dam was from the time of William the Conqueror. It raised the level of the river so it flooded the land between the tower and the castle, and also flooded the moat around the other sides of the castle. Now the level of the land has been raised, so that the modern road called Piccadilly, and the Postern Gate pub, lie on flat ground between the tower and the river.

A ‘postern’ is a small gateway into a castle or city. York had several posterns, but this is the only one that is left. When the walls were no longer needed to defend York, the posterns were a nuisance, specially when vehicles got stuck trying to get through them. Raised land levels, and Piccadilly, saved this postern, and its tower by allowing them to be bypassed.

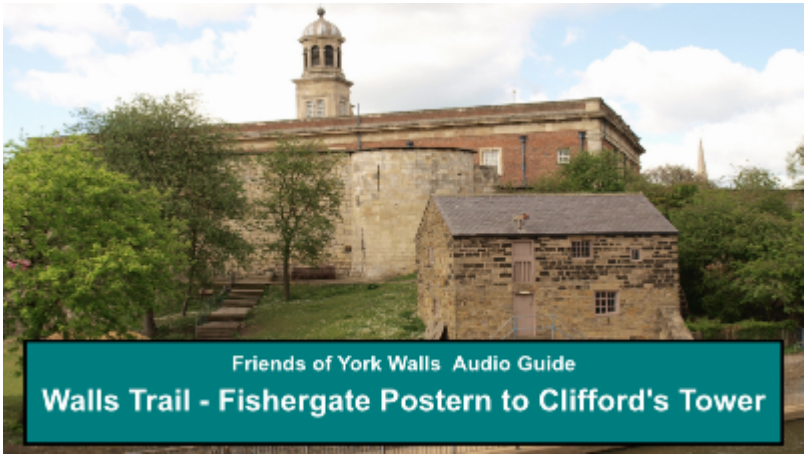
The Friends of York Walls occasionally open the tower, with free entry (especially at holiday weekends), so you might be lucky, and be able to go into this four floor tower, and climb its narrow spiral staircase. The Friends provide guides to the tower, a display on the history of the Walls, the archaeology of the tower, etc. They plan to open the tower on a more regular basis, and

are trying to raise funds with a 'Sponsor a Stone' scheme. Please see the Friends of York Walls website at yorkwalls.org.uk for further information. The website also gives details of tower open dates, and has a virtual tour of the tower, so you can see the inside, even if you cannot get to it when it is open.

Inside the tower, the narrow 500 year old stairs twist tightly up to all the floors, and even a little higher. The first floor room has a small twisted corridor off it, leading to the garde-robe, or medieval toilet. It seems that human waste from this used to drop straight into the River Foss, which came right up to the tower when it was built.

You can see something of the garde-robe from the outside of the tower, on the north wall. It sticks out a little from the tower wall, with a small window, and larger waste-hole. Above this garde-robe is a slit window, and above that, two small water chutes to drain rainwater, off what was once an open air roof fighting platform, behind battlements. You can see that the battlements have been made into a row of windows, all round the tower, immediately below the roof. The present roof was added, possibly as an after-thought. It is very old, and may be Tudor, like the rest of the tower. Some of the roof timbers may be re-used wall beams, from a timber framed house. The tower has a long history of being lived in, and the present roof must have made the top floor much more useful to residents.

The walls trail continues through the Postern Arch, and across the road, using the junction island.



Ref: 16

Latitude: 53.95469906

Longitude: -1.07935662

Name: Postern to Clifford's Tower

Display Text

This next part of the trail is off the Walls. It crosses the River Foss, and runs beside the castle which was built between the River Foss and River Ouse.

From the small arch by Fishergate Postern Tower, carefully cross the road that is immediately in front of you, by using the island at the road junction. Then go ahead, along the right hand pavement of the busy dual carriageway road. You are soon on the bridge over the Foss. There is a good view behind you of the Walls, and Fishergate Tower.

Soon, slightly to your right you can see the south wall of the castle. Part of it looks newer, because it replaced a main gateway. In front of this there is what is left of a drawbridge pit. The inner part of a drawbridge sank down into this pit, when the drawbridge was raised. The castle wall here is now part of the Castle Museum. This part of the castle was used as a prison, from the end of the 17th, until the early 20th century.

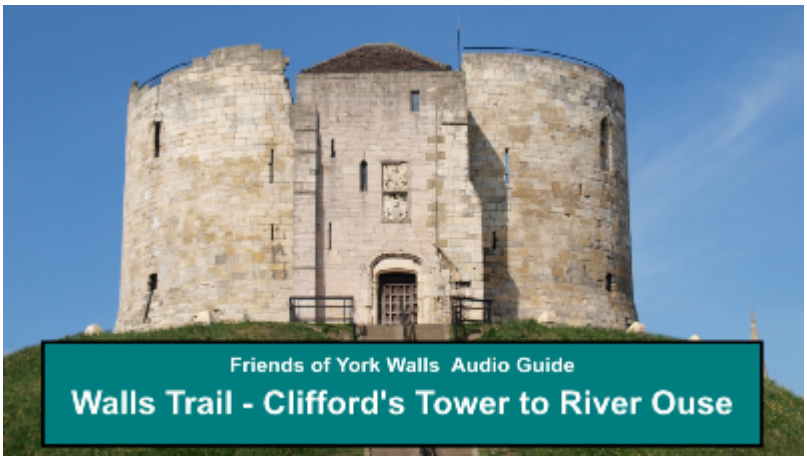
Continue along the pavement, to a road, going right. At this point, you can see Clifford's Tower on the top of its steep man-made hill. Clifford's Tower was York Castle's keep, and look-out post. The man-made hill dates from 1068, when William the Conqueror came to York and needed a castle, and the 500 soldiers in it, to keep York conquered. When his wood castle was destroyed within the year, he returned, rebuilt it, and realised that it would need two castles to keep York conquered. The stone castle, and its keep, were built about the same time as the City Walls, and are part of the

defences that ring the city.

The quiet road, going right, leads to the steps up to Clifford’s Tower, and round to the Castle Museum. This area is known as 'The Eye of York'. You can visit Clifford's Tower, and the Castle Museum, if you have the time. The walls trail does not turn down this road, but crosses it, where almost immediately there’s a simple lion sign set in the paving. The sign points to Clifford’s Tower. From here you might be able to see cracks running down the walls, through a window which has been half closed up by a repair, and see how the walls of the gatehouse, to the right, seem to lean out.

If you wish, you can go right, just to the steps that lead up to the gatehouse. When you reach the bottom of the steps, there is a fine, partly tactile information board, and a time-line history of York, set into the paving. There is also a large commemorative plaque, for York’s 12th century Jews who died here in a mass suicide when a mob threatened them with a worse death.

Even without going up the steps, you can probably see that the roofed gatehouse, at the top of the steps, doesn’t match the main walls of the tower. Looked at from above, it is like a stubby stem, to the four-leafed clover of the main tower. This gatehouse was mostly built in the 1640s, to prepare for the Civil War, and cannon fire from outside the city. The royal coat of arms, the top one, weathered but recently carefully cleaned, was also carved at this time.



Ref: 17

Latitude: 53.95554828

Longitude: -1.08043137

Name: Clifford's Tower to River Ouse

Display Text

English Heritage are happy for you to climb the steps up its Norman hill, without paying for entry to the Tower. They are however, very unhappy if people walk on the grass, and earth of the hill. The tower has a platform at the top, with very extensive views, perhaps the best in York. The top platform and gantries leading to it, and to a remarkable, rainwater flushed medieval toilet, were opened in 2022. Creative sound installations now hint at the history of the tower, while elegant interpretation boards describe its history, and the views. The boards largely ignore the actual fabric of the ruin. New gantries, and the 13th century spiral staircases, can be used to get to the roof. You can spot masons' marks for yourself on the staircases.

The stone plaque at the bottom of the steps, explains that more than 800 years ago, in 1190, something deeply sad happened on the hill, where Clifford's Tower now stands.

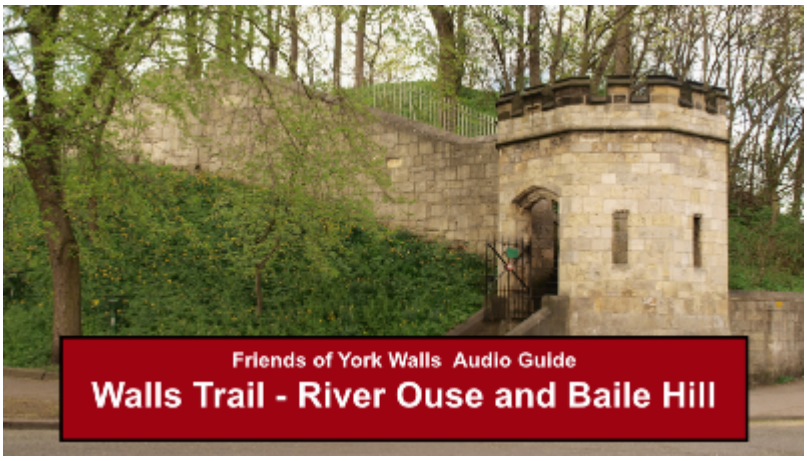
There was a community of religious Jews living in York, and some other cities, but everyone else in the country was officially Christian. The Christians accepted the pope in Rome as the head of their Church. The pope had asked Christians to go on a military crusade, to put Jerusalem under Christian control, but to most of the Muslims who lived in and around Jerusalem, of course, this was a military invasion of their lands. The new king of England was also getting ready to go on this crusade. It was rumoured that he no longer wanted to protect the non-Christian Jews of England, and there were a lot of anti-Jewish attacks at this time.

The attack in York was a particularly bad one, and the Jews of York went to the King's Tower, at the top of its hill, for protection. They were surrounded by a large crowd of armed knights, and ordinary people. After holding out against the crowd for a while, most of them decided to choose their own death, rather than fall into the hands of their attackers. They probably organised into families, and committed a mass suicide rather than be killed by the attackers. Then the wood tower on the hill was burnt down. Probably about 150 men, women and children were killed, the whole Jewish community in York.

Return to the main road, and use the pelican crossing to cross the road. Carry on walking in the same direction, through into the gardens, and to the banks of the river Ouse – unless the river is in flood. In this case, or if you want a short cut, go left and stay on the pavement, going over the bridge. Once you are in the gardens the Walls start on your right – but look strangely low, as the ground here has been raised to lessen flooding. The trail goes straight on to the River Ouse. Just before you reach it, there is a stone and steel sign set in the paving. The sign suggests that once the river was sealed off, as a route of attack, by a chain that ran from Davy Tower, here, on this bank of the Ouse, to a tower, now gone, on the opposite bank.

These gardens have long been common land, once used for archery practice, washing and drying clothes, and starting processions. The trail then turns left, along the bank of the Ouse, and then left again, to steps going up to the near side of the road bridge which crosses the Ouse.

Go up to the road level, and onto the bridge.



Ref: 18

Latitude: 53.95407851

Longitude: -1.08273487

Name: Across the Ouse & Baile Hill

Display Text

Skeldergate Bridge, over the River Ouse, was opened in 1881. This was the third modern bridge built to cross the river. The bridge has an eastern end span, which opened to allow tall ships to reach the busy quaysides, further upstream, to your right. Hull and the sea are 50 miles downstream, left. This route made York an important naval trading city, until sea-going boats got bigger, at the end of the Middle Ages. The Ouse at York was tidal, until Naburn lock was built in 1757, one of the earliest examples of canal engineering in the country.

After crossing the bridge, the trail markers lead you straight on, crossing a relatively quiet road, to where the Walls start again at Baile Hill, with a set of steps in the stone tower ahead of you. There is an information board in this Victorian tower.

This little bit of the Walls replaces a medieval wall, that ran down to a tower at the river's edge, and included a postern gate, and a tower to guard it. The tower and postern were the first bits of city wall that the corporation knocked down, and the archbishop successfully sued it for damages. The rest of the medieval walls, from the river to the foot of Baile Hill, were removed in 1878, when the area was cleared to make the approaches to Skeldergate Bridge, which replaced a ferry.

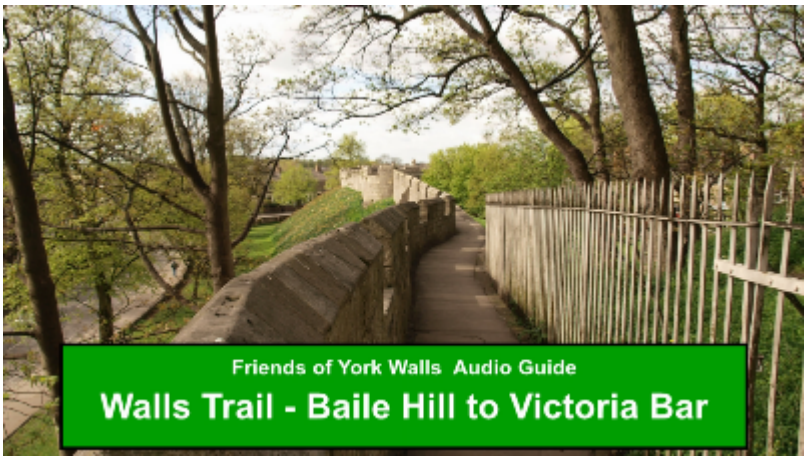
The next part of the trail is on the wall-walk. The steps you go up climb a flat topped hill, that was made for William the Conqueror about 950 years ago. The hill is known as Baile Hill, and was the 'motte' of a 'Motte and Bailey Castle'. William had many such castles built, to bring England under

his control. The bailey was the defended space next to the hill. The keep was even better defended, as it was on top of the hill, and surrounded by a moat.

This castle was William's second castle in York, or just possibly his first, no-one is really sure. He decided he needed two castles to control York, when his first was destroyed in its first year. His other castle's keep, Clifford's Tower, now on the other side of the river, was eventually rebuilt in stone. Records and archaeology show that Baile Hill's keep was only ever built of wood, but its moat was a deep one.

The wall-walk climbs almost to the top of the hill. A gate, which you may find unlocked, leads to the top. If the gate is locked, you might risk using the end of the railings to clamber down. The walls run on two sides of the bailey, built on the mounds that the Normans had wood walls on.

There is another information board mentioning Baile Hill in the next tower along the wall-walk.



Ref: 19

Latitude: 53.95320691

Longitude: -1.08440823

Name: Baile Hill to Victoria Bar

Display Text

Once past Baile Hill, the wall-walk takes you along what were 2 sides of the defences of a castle bailey, beside the hill. These defences were part of William the Conqueror's castle here, and were at first wood, on top of an earth mound.

Archbishops have a long history of being in charge of this area of the Walls. In the early Middle Ages, they were responsible for the defence of the castle here, and there were conflicts with the citizens, when this was one of the last sections of York's defences not yet built in stone. In the 1320s the danger from Scotland increased, and Archbishop Melton arranged for the wood walls to be replaced by stone ones, where they were part of the walls around the city. It is said he pulled masons off their work building the Minster, in order to get the work here done fast. Evidence that this happened comes from reports that masons' marks, low on the outside of the City Walls here, seem to match some found in the Minster. A simple mark that can be seen from the trail is in the first interval tower after the steps, it is on the fourth stone from the right, 2 stones up, from where sloping mortar half covers the bottom stones of the parapet. It looks like a triangle, with two of its sides extended at one corner. The present parapet here is probably Victorian, but the mark is not in a usual Victorian style.

This tower, tower 2, has recently been studied by engineers and archaeologists. It was found to be in danger, because it had been filled with rubble, that was pushing against its walls. Probably the rubble was added, when a wider wall-walk was constructed for leisure walking, perhaps 200 years

ago. Starting in 2021, the tower was emptied of infill, its walls were repointed, and information boards were put up.

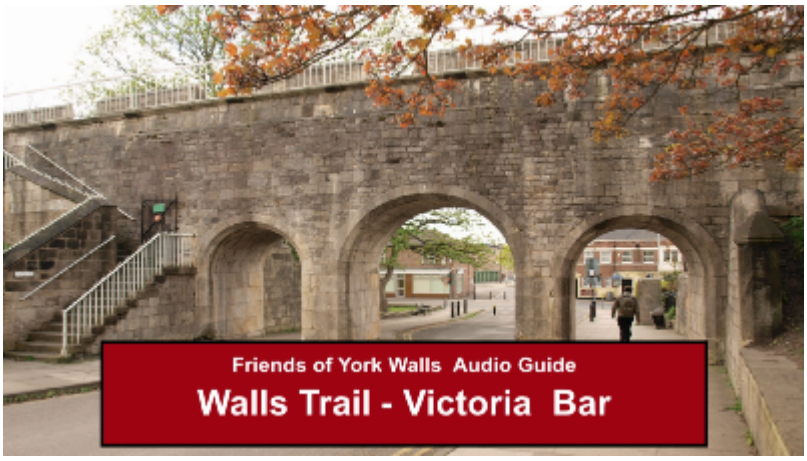
The corner tower ahead has a stylised map set into its paving. It is to remind you that, if you look back, you can see the near motte, called 'Baile Hill', of one of William the Conqueror's castles, and that the motte of the other castle is on the other side of the River Ouse. Clifford's Tower, may be just visible from this point, if the trees are not in full leaf.

This corner tower is intriguingly called Bitchdaughter Tower, but why it has this name seems a puzzle. It is thought to have been a royal prison in the 1450s. If you look over its battlements, you can see its walls splay out at the base, for structural strength, or to deflect heavy rocks etc. dropped on attackers. Much of its stonework may be of the Civil War period, as records suggest a tower here slipped away from the Walls, so had its stone taken and used for repairing York bridge in 1566.

There is another small puzzle 50 metres past the next tower. It seems to be a gaming board, roughly cut into the paving.

The majority of the buildings around here are late 19th century terraced cottages, and larger terraces, probably designed for the lower middle classes. They have white brick fronts, slate roofs, bay windows and small dormer windows, some with attractive decorative barge boards.

Continue on to Victoria Bar.



Ref: 20

Latitude: 53.95418687

Longitude: -1.08678616

Name: Victoria Bar

Display Text

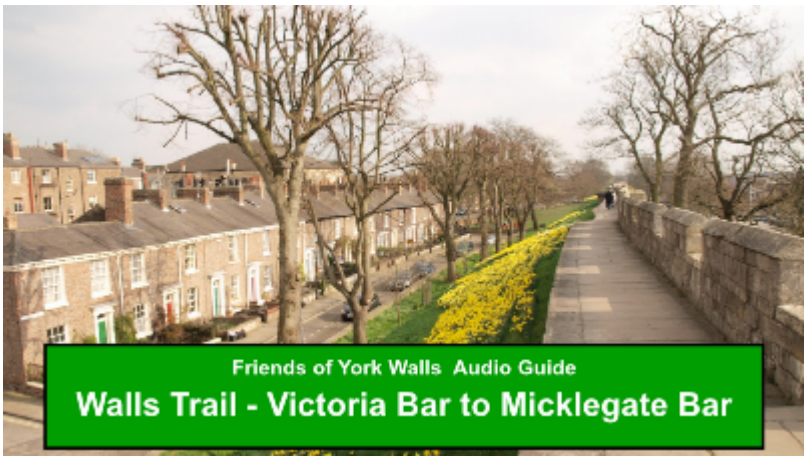
Victoria Bar is an uninteresting and unfortified set of Victorian arches, built in 1838. There are steps down from the wall-walk here, so you may wish to use these to have a look at the bar at ground level. There is an information board here about the bar.

In York's records about its Walls, there are all sorts of snippets of information. For example there are records of the taxes that were paid at the gates of York on goods brought in to be sold in the city's markets. In 1226 there was a charge of 1 penny for a loaded cart, or a halfpenny if it was loaded in Yorkshire, and a halfpenny for each cow or horse. A halfpenny then was the daily pay for a female unskilled labourer. The Walls and bars made it fairly easy to collect this tax. The problem of the rivers was solved by having chains slung across. A loaded boat was charged four pennies to enter York.

There are also old records, circa 1200, that mention a gateway called Lounelith – but then all mention of this gateway ceases. Lounelith is said to mean 'secluded gate', but we like to think of it as 'the lonely gate'. Sadly, if a gate is lonely it is not going to have many people pressing to have it kept in good repair. If a muremaster should think that repairs, and the pay of the gatekeeper, are going to cost more than the murage collected, then he'll want it closed up, rather than be repaired. Whether this is what happened, or whether the Lord Mayor and wardens decided they wanted fewer gates to guard at some time of danger we will probably never know. For a long time it was never know where the lonely gate was.

Then in 1838 businessman George Hudson, 'The Railway King', became Lord Mayor of York. He organised a collection to finance the building of a new gateway through the Walls here. He thought this would be a busy gate, because there was new housing both inside and outside the Walls at this point. The collection was successful, the Walls were dismantled at the chosen place, and the ramparts dug away for the building of the new arch. A strange discovery was then made. The ramparts were not just medieval wall foundations, earth and Roman wall. They seemed to contain an old gateway - blocked with large stones laid on edge so as to fill the gateway as thinly and quickly as possible. Historians think that the lonely gate had been found. The new gateway, however, was named Victoria Bar, after the then new Queen.

Return to the wall-walk, up the steps.



Ref: 21

Latitude: 53.95520526

Longitude: -1.08915580

Name: Victoria Bar to Micklegate Bar

Display Text

The first tower after Victoria Bar is called Sadler Tower. From here you may be able to see signs of repair after cannon damage on the outward face of the next bit of city wall. It is difficult to see the single, large, apparently shattered stone, but easy to see that the general pattern of stonework is much more uneven than it is just the other side of the tower.

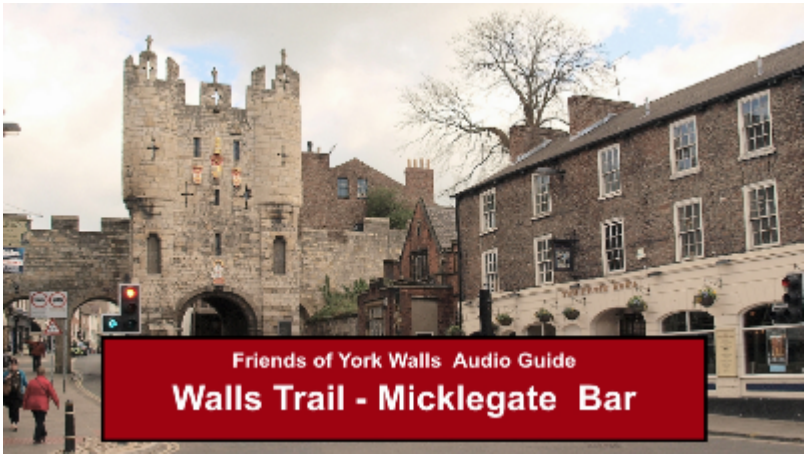
In this tower there is a sign, set into the paving of the wall-walk, to tell you to look slightly to your right, to see the oldest church tower in York. This is St Mary's Bishophill Junior, its tower was built of Roman stone, some years before the Norman Conquest. It was built about 100 metres inside the ramparts, which were later to carry the Walls. It is probable that the ramparts you will be walking on from now on, contain the remains of the walls that the Romans built around the important civilian town, that grew up across the river, from their legionary fort. You can see the Minster from here, a kilometre away, built on top of the headquarters of that fort.

Looking out of the city from Sadler Tower, you can see, slightly to the left and almost a kilometre away, the clock tower of what was York's second largest sweet factory. It was closed down shortly after Terry's, originally a York family firm, was taken over by multi-national Kraft's. Rather closer and a little to your right is an attractive late Victorian school, looking a little like a palace castle, in a Disney cartoon. It is pleasing to imagine that its architect, like Disney, wished to delight children. After all, it was built when the law had just been changed to rescue those under eleven from employment. Sociologists say the Victorians invented childhood, by developing the idea that

children should be treated as special. As you walk on, you can soon see this palace of childhood quite well, at the end of a road leading to the Walls.

On the outer ramparts, there is a patch of an interesting wild flower, that may have been there since it was brought to York by the Romans. It is called alexanders. To find it, look out for a tree, very close to the Walls quite a way past Victoria Bar, and only about 100metres short of Micklegate Bar. Then look down the outer ramparts, to the base of the lowest trees in the group. The darkish green, fairly glossy leaves, come up in February, and it flowers yellow in spring.

We now arrive at Micklegate Bar.



Ref: 22

Latitude: 53.95594490

Longitude: -1.09090122

Name: Micklegate Bar

Display Text

If you are really short of time, and are doing the basic trail, then stay on the wall-walk as it goes through this bar. You will, however, be missing most of the principal bar of York.

Micklegate Bar is called the principal bar, because it guards the main road south. It is the place where monarchs are greeted, and it is the main place where the heads of people, these monarchs called traitors, were shown off. The heads were probably put where the statues are now, on the battlements. The last heads were of supporters of Bonny Prince Charlie, in 1745. He brought a Scots army further into England than York, scared York people into hurried repairs of the Walls, but then retreated back to Scotland, and defeat.

In Royal greetings here, the ceremony involves a loyal speech of welcome to the Monarch, and the city's sword bearer's presenting, and reversing, his ceremonial sword. It is said that King Richard II gave the city a sword from his side, and permission to hold it upright, more than 600 years ago. When James I was welcomed 400 years ago, he was politely offered the city's sword. He took it, then returned it.

When modern British monarchs are welcomed to York, the ceremony involves their being presented with the sword and touching it while on the outside of the bar. They only go through the bar when they have symbolically confirmed that the sword belongs to the city. The sword stands for power in the city. Monarchs have used many royal charters to give, or sell, some of their powers

to the city, since even before King John's 1212 charter. In spite of its gift having been confirmed, the sword is courteously held point downwards when the monarch is actually in the city.

To see more of the bar, if you are walking the walls clockwise, go down the first steps, and turn left along the pavement. After about 30 metres look back, at the front of the bar. It is basically a much renewed 14th century building, on top of a Norman archway. You'll see numerous straight and cross shaped arrow slits in the bar. The two small, studded wooden doors led to the wall-walk, around a defensive barbican. This was built out from the front of the bar in medieval times, to strengthen its defences, and was pulled down in late Georgian times.

There is a royal coat of arms, and the city's gold lions, on a red cross. The lowest, and most striking coat of arms, is of the Lord Mayor responsible for an early restoration of the bar. There are information boards on the right and on the other side of the bar, on a wall by the pavement, and on the other side of the road.

As you walk back to the bar, look at its arch, and the low parts of the passage immediately behind it. The arch is believed to date from Norman times, and the passage is built with some re-used Roman stone, including coarse sandstone coffins. Watch out for bikes, going out of the walled city through this passage.

The small museum, inside the bar, is run by the York Archaeological Trust. It is the 'City Walls Experience', open from Spring to Autumn. Its website gives details.

The next section is on the wall-walk, again.

Ref: 23

Latitude: 53.95817793

Longitude: -1.09123576

Name: Micklegate Bar to River Ouse

Display Text

Go up the steps, on either side of the road, on the city side of Micklegate Bar, and turn right half-way up.

From the first interval tower: look back to the buildings at the cross-roads, outside Micklegate Bar. Facing you is the Georgian 'Bar Convent'. In the 1760s Roman Catholic worship and teaching was not generally tolerated, so it was done secretly, and the corner chapel was described as 'a new front wall' to the house. The outer ramparts, before the corner tower, probably have the most varied wild flowers, of anywhere on the ramparts.

The corner tower, known as 'Tofts Tower', was rebuilt after being 'shot down' by cannon fire from the Scots army, in the Civil War siege. At the corner tower, which has a bench, the view out over the city gives you an idea of how much it has expanded in the last two centuries, and reminds you that railways were the major cause of this expansion in Victorian times. The closest building to you on your left is the Railway Institute, where railway employees where encouraged to improve themselves. To the right of this, and behind, there used to be factories for making railway rolling stock, as well as important railway junctions. From an older era, and a kilometre away, you may be able to see a black bodied, white-sailed windmill. It was from high ground here, that the Scots army canons fired on this tower, almost destroying it in 1644, during the civil war siege.

Almost 100 metres after the corner tower, the great arched holes, in the Walls, were created to let

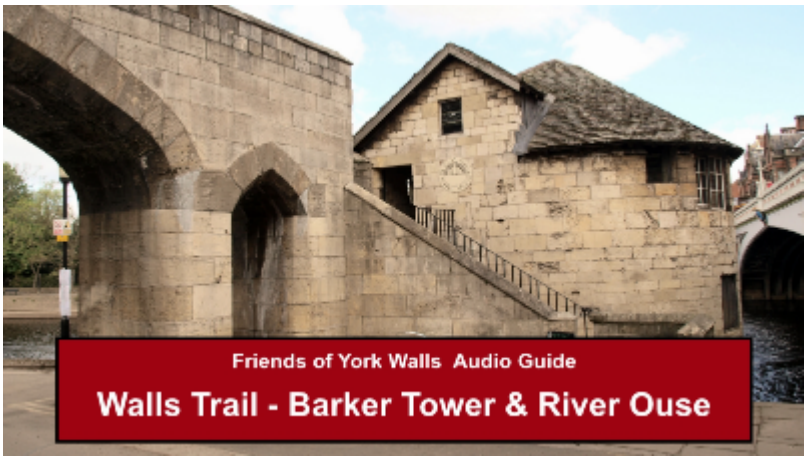
trains steam into York, in the 1840s. There is a stone sign, set in the paving of the wall-walk. It suggests that ahead of you, and to the right, is the old railway station, but this is now hidden behind new buildings. In the opposite direction, if you lean over the battlements, to look at where the ramparts have been dug away completely, you can see a very small, old, railway building. It is unlikely that this was ever what is technically a ‘signal box’, but it possibly controlled traffic going under the Walls, into and out of the old station.

Outside the Walls here is the present, 1877 railway station. It was the largest in the world, when it was built, so perhaps its modest fore building, of pale brick, was designed to fit in with the Walls. It is thought the finest Victorian building in York, but it is much better appreciated from inside. The hotel to the right of the station, was built soon after 1877. Its octagonal entrance hall is turned to the station, and its grand front is on the opposite side, facing its gardens. Just to the left of the octagonal entrance hall, you see the station’s only original 'end screen', for the canopies arching above the railway lines, and platforms. The replacement screens, in the rest of the station, have squarer, simpler, less attractive glass panels. It is the roof, 250 metres, by 75metres, comprising 4 curving canopies, supported by arches on elaborate pillars, that is usually most admired in the station.

A fine view develops, and changes, in front of you till the end of this part of the trail. You see the Walls arching over two roads, built to give city people access to the present station . These lead the eye to Lendal Tower, and then to the Minster, with the half spire of Saint Wilfrid’s, to the left of the Minster.

Closest to you on the right is the light coloured mix of buildings that make up the new council offices. These now include the 1840s railway station. Beyond these, is the elaborate 1906 railway office building, now a hotel. The contrasting, simple, white memorial is to the war dead of the railways. From the top of the last 2 arches you can see, on the near bank of the river, the conical top of a tiny medieval tower, and to the right, the large modern Aviva building, also on the river bank, also built in local magnesian limestone.

At the end of this section you have come to the River Ouse, and to Barker Tower below Lendal Bridge. There are some benches here.



Ref: 24

Latitude: 53.95978177

Longitude: -1.08788820

Name: Barker Tower & River Ouse

Display Text

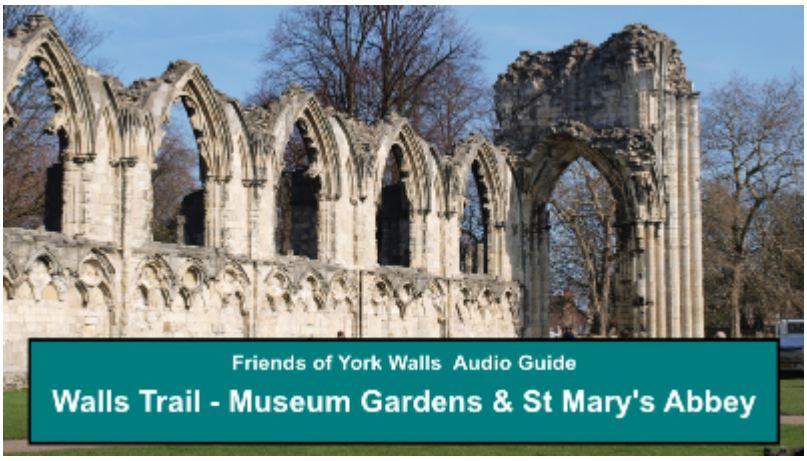
At the end of the wall-walk round from Micklegate Bar, the trail turns right to the pavement. If, instead of going to the pavement, you look down the steps to your left you see Barker Tower, about 20 metres away. It is on the banks of the river, and is occasionally surrounded by the river in flood. This medieval tower has a beautiful café, called the Perky Peacock. If it is open, it will have tables and chairs outside it. The archways, through the Walls beside the tower, replaced a medieval postern gate, which survived till an early railway company needed better access to its coal yards. These archways are still sometimes called North Street Postern.

Lendal Bridge over the River Ouse, opened in 1863, and is a Victorian replacement for a ferry at this point. It is decorated with the Minster's crossed keys and crown, York's coat of arms, England's lions, and the white rose that became the symbol of Yorkshire in Victorian times. The Duke of York had also used it in the Middle Ages.

Cross the river on the bridge. The tower on the bank ahead is Lendal Tower. In medieval times it roughly matched Barker Tower. There used to be a chain that could be stretched between the two towers, to bar entrance to York for those wishing to attack by boat, or wishing to trade without paying a tax. Lendal Tower grew in size because, for 200 years from 1631, it was used as a pump house, and water tower. Water was pumped from the river, to be distributed through pipes, to paying customers, throughout York. The little dark sandstone towers, at each end of the bridge, on the other side of the road are Victorian.

Continue on the pavement, after you have crossed the river. The pavement here is often too busy for you to enjoy the views, but try to look past the people in front of you. A yellow, grey and pink Victorian church half spire appears, towards the end of the road. Due to the perspective, it soon seems cheekily, to look down on the massive, elegantly monochrome Minster. While this is the view ahead, on your left there is a small length of the city wall which you can’t walk on. This length ends with a Victorian Gatehouse, and the main gates to the Museum Gardens.

The trail continues, through these gates.



Ref: 25

Latitude: 53.96115670

Longitude: -1.08733634

Name: Museum Gardens & The Abbey

Display Text

Go into the Museum Gardens. Entry is free, but for the opening times see the Museum Gardens Website. The trail goes along the main path, staying right, at two forks. On your right, behind the lawn is the Multangular Tower, with a section of Roman wall, leading up to it.

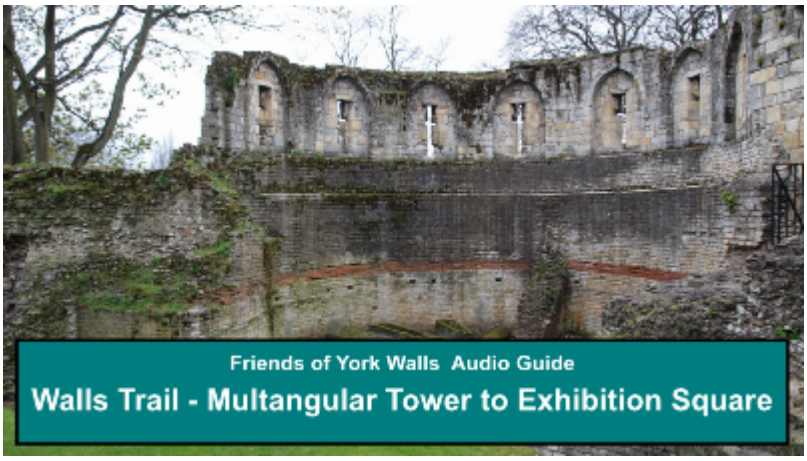
These are York's best Roman walls above ground level, built of neat, small, pale limestone blocks, with a stripe of red tiles running through them. They were built at the corner of the legionary Roman fort, probably around 100AD. That is about 200 years before Constantine the Great was declared emperor in York. Like many of York's best older buildings, the tower doesn't belong to a single time period. It is capped by a medieval wall, which is pierced by tall, cross-shaped arrow slits. In the 13th century, the Roman wall, which runs up to the tower, was made part of the ring of stone built City Walls defending the city. The wall has a rough repair across its red stripe, about 3 metres from where it joins the tower. This may well be a repair of cannon ball damage, done in the Civil War. In 1644, York's walls were being defended by soldiers loyal to the King, and the walls were surrounded by armies loyal to Parliament. Both sides used cannons, and a drawing from just after this time shows what it describes as war damage, where the repair is now. This small section of wall unites the three most important times for the Walls: the Roman building, the medieval building, and the times when they were last, and most actively, involved in the defence of York.

The walls trail turns right, off the main path. Just before turning off, you can see ahead of you the Yorkshire Museum, and beyond it, the ruins of St Mary's Abbey's church.

The museum was built in the 1820s. It is one of the oldest in the country, and allows close contact with exhibits. It is particularly good on Roman York, and the parts of the medieval Abbey that were discovered, where the museum's lower floor is now. For entry details, see the Yorkshire Museum website.

St Mary's Abbey was founded in early Norman times. It held 50 monks, following the Benedictine rule. It became one of the richest land owners in the north of England. In the late 13th century, they totally rebuilt their church. The ruin windows you can see, were down one side of the nave, which was about a quarter of the whole church, so it was big. It was still in active use in1539 when Henry VIII ordered its destruction. Nearly all 'religious houses' were torn down at this time, because they were seen as a threat to the power of the king, who had just become head of the Christian Church in England.

Turn right, off the main path to the museum, and immediately after the Multangular Tower. Then, at a small mosaic, set in the path, go first right again, up a little path that takes you to a gate through the walls, where you can look at the inside of the Multangular Tower.



Ref: 26

Latitude: 53.96167157

Longitude: -1.08659938

Name: Multangular Tower & Trail End

Display Text

As you stand in the small gateway, with the Multangular Tower to your right, you see a lawn to the left of the rough and rather damaged Roman wall. At the far end of the lawn, are the medieval ruins of the chapel and undercroft of Saint Leonard's Hospital.

At the near end of the lawn is the inside of the Multangular Tower, with several Roman coffins in a coarse, hard sandstone, called millstone grit. The medieval parts of the tower have arched embrasures, to let long bowmen get up close to the arrows slits, designed for them to shoot from. Below these slits the Roman stonework starts. The stones have a standard, and small height, compared with the medieval stones. The stones are said to have been cut from the same quarries near Tadcaster, about 10miles away. The layer of red tiles goes deeper, into the rubble and mortar core of the wall than the cut stones, so it helps to hold the wall together.

To your left, a low Roman wall runs away from you, towards a much smaller, much rougher-looking tower. Here you are seeing what was under the medieval wall's ramparts, until these were dug away. This Roman wall is about a metre into the city from the medieval wall that the gateway passes through. The walls of rounded cobbles here are recent, built to support and retain the walls, after the excavations.

The small, roughly built, tower is a mystery, called 'the Anglian Tower'. Anglians have left us very little building, and it is now thought that this is late Roman work. In either case, it is probably from a time when the fort walls were beginning to weaken, and fall. This rough extra tower is built with

new stone, from the hills north of York, rather than robbing old walls, or using the main Roman quarries. It was the accidental discovery of this tower which led to the excavation of this bit of the ramparts. Beyond the small tower, archaeologists have left us a labelled impression of how the ramparts, under York's medieval walls, were built up over the centuries. The Romans started the build up, by piling earth against the inside of their walls, except where there were towers like the Multangular Tower, as the inside of its walls are well finished.

Retrace your steps, out through the little gateway, and back as far as the wider path, and flat ground. Turn right, leaving the Museum Gardens, by a large wooden gate. The Walls are on your right here, but you can't walk on them. Soon the walls suddenly stop. This is where the corporation knocked them down to build a new road into York, almost 200 years ago.

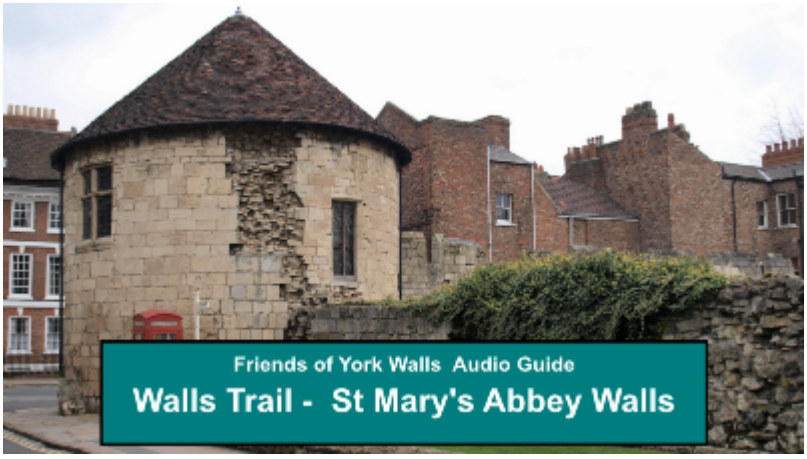
The building on your left is 'the King's Manor'. This started as the house of the Abbot of Saint Mary's. He was the leader of the monks who once owned the site of the Museum Gardens, so Henry VIII took his house, and renamed it. It then developed as the headquarters of the Council of the North. Its Lord President lived here, and in a sense, ruled the North of England for the monarch from the time of Henry VIII, till the English Civil War.

The trail continues into Exhibition Square. When you get to the square (where the trail ends, and it also began), you'll see York's public art gallery, built in a corner of the grounds that were once part of St Mary's Abbey. To the right of the art gallery are some of the defensive walls of the Abbey. These were built in the 13th century. The little round tower, in the Abbey's defensive walls, is early Tudor, built to guard a new gateway, into the Abbey grounds. A plaque tells you this gate was built for the convenience of Princess Margaret, but it is now thought that it was really built for her father, Henry VII.

On the opposite side of the square to the art gallery, the buildings are set well back from the square, as a length of city wall was knocked down, in the 1830s, to make room for a wide road. The main buildings on the opposite side of the road are, from your right, the Theatre Royal, the De Gray Rooms, and Bootham Bar.

This is the end of the York's City Walls Trail.

Follow the extra Abbey Walls section, if you have time. The little road through Bootham Bar, on the other hand, goes to the Minster, and the centre of the old city.



Ref: 27

Latitude: 53.96371888

Longitude: -1.08731346

Name: St Mary's Abbey Precinct Walls

Display Text

This is an extra section, which you can do on its own, or at the end of the City Walls Trail.

St Mary’s Abbey’s defensive walls were built in stone, at the same time as the city’s, but not on top of older ramparts.

Start in Exhibition Square, beside the late medieval tower, at the edge of the square. Go through the archway beside the tower, turn left, to carry on walking down the pavement. The walls soon appear left, in a small gap between buildings, and then at a small park. Here the wall has simple masons’ marks, an interval tower, and places where its neatly cut facing blocks are missing, so its rubble core is showing. The walls appear for a third time at their corner, and St Mary's Tower. There is a dramatic scar down its side. This is a vivid reminder of the English Civil War.

To the left of the scar, the walls are thicker, with a slit window. They are medieval walls, built for defence, but to the right the walls have been rebuilt, thinner for more peaceful times. Rebuilding was needed because, in 1644, soldiers loyal to parliament dug a mine under this tower, exploded gunpowder in the mine, and so destroyed its front wall. The defenders concentrated all their forces on this one attack, and it was driven back.

The next part of this walk continues along the pavement, turning left down quiet Marygate. 10 metres into Marygate look back at the tower, to see the door sized window, that shows the tower

once supplied guards to a wall-walk.

Soon, an information board on the walls explains rare, swing-down wood shutters, to protect those shooting from the battlements here. Grooves, at the side of embrasures, show where the shutters were fitted. Look for the two reproduction shutters.

Continue on, past a garden wall with slit windows. They once belonged to the Abbey's almonry. Go past medieval St Olave's church, continue on past the old main entrance to the Abbey, and the rear of the museum gardens, and down to a medieval tower at the River Ouse. Marygate Landing Tower, also known as Marygate Water Tower, is part of the remains of the defensive precinct walls of Saint Mary's Abbey. The water tower was built around 1324 and the pedestrian arch added around 1836. The tower exterior is circular in plan, but the interior is hexagonal, with a single opening to each inner face. This tower has good embrasures behind its arrow slits, to allow archers to get up close to the slit.

There is little left of the defensive walls on other two sides of the Abbey. From here you can either turn left, when you reach the Ouse, and walk back to Lendal Bridge along its banks, or, if the Museum Garden's gates are all open, go back up Marygate, to the rear gate. Go through the gate, into the gardens.

Take the first path on the left, and pass through the ruins of Saint Mary's Abbey. You will then be behind the Yorkshire Museum, in a quiet part of the Museum Gardens. Continue on, bearing left, to head for a gate in the wall, to the right of the old bowls pavilion. Pass the pebble representation of a historically important geological map of Yorkshire, by the pavilion, to the gate, and a path into the 'edible wood'. Go through this garden area, to the open space behind the Art Gallery, opened in 2015.

There are good views of the inside of the Abbey walls, and the rear of Marygate Tower, from across the lawn behind the Art Gallery. This is also a nice quiet place to sit. Go to the interval tower which looks furthest to the right. It seems to have had its stones scorched pink, and some think this is incendiary bomb damage, from World War II. At this tower carry on down the passage way, with the Art Gallery on your right. The next interval tower has a clear, deep-cut mason's mark, at knee height, slightly to the right of its centre. This, and other masons' marks, can also be seen on the walls leading from this tower, until the path exits through a gate into Exhibition Square, where this section ends.

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This 'York's City Walls Audio Trail' is provided by 'The Friends of York Walls', and is based on their website 'Walls Trail' pages at yorkwalls.org.uk and associated book, where there is a lot more detail.