

Richard Hanage

From: Friends of York Walls <richard@hanage.com>
Sent: 13 June 2019 09:48
To: richard@hanage.com
Subject: Friends of York Walls Newsletter - June 2019

Friends of York Walls Newsletter

[View this email in your browser](#)



Friends of York Walls Newsletter

Upcoming Events

Open Days:

Sat 29 June; Sat 13 July

Committee: Tues 2 July; Tues 6 August (to be confirmed)

York Walls Festival 2019: Sat 10 & Sun 11 August

[Click here to sponsor a stone](#)

FoYW Newsletter - June 2019

York Walls Festival (Martin Hetherington)

Two months to go and we have two new assistants:



YorkWallsFriend 🇬🇧
@YorkWallsFriend



It's a Tuesday for hellos.

Not only is it hello Holly, hello Rebecca (our @YorkStJohn assistants) it's hello #Instagram for #York Walls Festival. It's up and running at: [instagram.com/yorkwallsfesti...](https://www.instagram.com/yorkwallsfesti...)



8:47 pm · 28 May 2019 · [Twitter Web Client](#)

Our two assistants, Holly and Rebecca (pictured above) have made a flying start in their first few weeks. They have added Instagram to the Twitter and Facebook outlets we have. Both helped distribute leaflets at the Roman Festival in the Museum Gardens and have also updated the website: <http://yorkwallsfestival.org/planned-events>

The talks in July by John Oxley and Janet Hopton (York Explore) and Barry Crump (two talks at King's Manor) are now fully booked.

There will be a Festival Information Point in Museum Gardens over the weekend, thanks to York Museums Trust. We can also look forward to publicity through the Visit York website following a positive meeting with their digital team.

The detailed programme for the Festival will be in the July newsletter, and it will include:

- Pre-festival talks
- FPT at the festival (display of dig finds)
- Red Tower at the festival (food event)
- York Explore (make-a-tile workshop)
- Baz Jones ideas (music, walls video, filming at FPT)
- Mobile phone app

- Festival map (A3 size) - potential for future use as a FOYW map.
- Million Steps Man - charity side to festival
- Family Pack / Other events

Open Days (Martin Hetherington)

Our most recent opening (Sat 8th June) was very wet! Our sales pitch switched to "It's dry inside!".



Soggy Visitors to the Tower - Photo: Martin Hetherington

In the end we had 128 visitors. A special thank-you to volunteers Steve Bracher and Chris Robinson for braving the rain outside, sweeping water away from the entrance, and scooping up the drenched wall walkers into the FPT.

An Experimental Display (Simon Mattam)

I have set up an experimental display involving boots and sword apparently coming down the watchtower stairs at the top of the Tower.



The text says:

"Is the watchman round the twist? Will you meet his sword before you meet him? Some say that's why the steps twist right as you go up - to help right-handed tower-defenders".

Cards nearby for visitors to borrow and read give a bit more information about the debate over this idea.

FPT Development Project (Richard Hanage)

The 'Ground Floor' team have been looking at ways to manage the flow of visitors into and out of the Tower - and to encourage more sales and donations.

The 'Displays' team have been looking at displays in other comparable buildings.

The 'Power and Lights' team visited Escrick church to see the very impressive lighting there, and are designing improved temporary lighting for the FPT for the Festival.

If anyone would like to join the sub-groups, or submit ideas, please contact us on friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Free York Walks (Civic Trust)

On the 21st June the Civic Trust are hosting a **'Get to know your York'** day at St. Crux Hall. This consists of free walks around the city, with the opportunity to meet members of YCT and enjoy tea and cake at the venue. All walks are led by experts in their fields and include:

- Roman · Medieval
- Georgian · 20th Century
- York Castle Gateway
- Street Patterns of York
- Blue Plaque Stories
- Modernist Architecture
- Lost and Hidden walls

[Click here for walk details](#)

Further information can be obtained from their website [York Civic Trust](#).

Bitchdaughter Tower (Julian Crabb)

News that several towers of the City of York Walls are to be repaired led to a perusal of some names. One was called Bitchdaughter Tower and another Harlot Hill Tower. What history produced such gems?



Bitchdaughter Tower - Photo ex Flickr by Nican45

Bitchdaughter Tower suggests a story which might be like this: Once upon a time there lived a rich nobleman in York who possessed a most beautiful daughter. When she was ripe her father planned to marry her to an even richer nobleman. However, the suitor was old enough to be her father and ugly to boot, so the daughter refused many times. In rage the father imprisoned her in a tower in the city walls saying, 'You bitch, you will stay there until you agree'.

Now the prison was a 'nightmare' room being on a high promontory, exposed to the prevailing south-westerly winds. It was cold, damp and the wind froze the daughter to death in less than a week for she was not allowed coverings, food or drink. Amid great sorrowing she was buried in the Minster and her father cursed by all.

Years later he rebelled against the King and was executed with his head impaled above Micklegate

Bar. The head looked down the road to the south-west but overnight the head had turned south to the place where his long dead daughter had been imprisoned, the sightless eyes being drawn to the scene of his great cruelty.

Ever after the locals named the prison Bitchdaughter Tower.

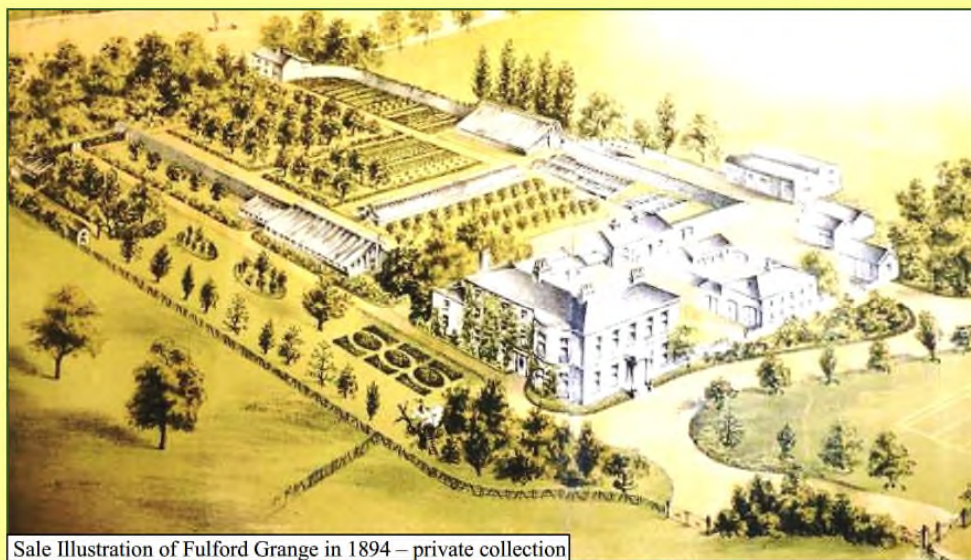
But readers the story is not true – ‘fake news’ if you like. The truth is more prosaic and is a tribute to the research done by Christopher Rainger who reported on the tower for ‘Friends of York Walls’ in January 2016. The tower is on the city walls near the old Norman castle mound of Baile Hill, between Skeldergate and Bishopthorpe Road.

The origin of the name is uncertain but in 1451 the tower was a prison and city records refer to it as *‘le bydoutre’*. By 1566 the name was adapted to *‘Biche Doughter’* because it was a ‘nightmare room’. The word *‘dortour’* is old French for bedroom or dormitory and does not refer to a women. Bitchdaughter Tower was originally part of the outer defensive wall of the bailey next to William the Conqueror’s second castle, which was built in 1069.

So there you have it – two stories and not a bleat about Harlot’s Hill Tower. Next time though.

‘The First Greens of Fishergate’ - June 15th (Chris Rainger)

Nurserymen: the first ‘Greens’ of Fishergate



Sale Illustration of Fulford Grange in 1894 – private collection

The Fishergate, Fulford and Heslington Local History Society’s ‘Festival of Ideas’ illustrated talk by Judy Nicholson about the pioneering Telford, Riggs and Backhouse family nurseries in Fishergate and York. Judy has assembled an excellent display of catalogues, illustrations and examples of gardens designed and built by York’s nurserymen.

[Click here for poster](#)

A Puzzle from the archives (Chris Rainger)

A Friend of York Walls, Margaret Scott, is part of a team of volunteers for York Explore, working their way through a huge volume of old City of York Council (CYC) records.

A few weeks ago, Margaret unrolled this drawing and was intrigued – what is it, and why does it appear to show a road heading around the inside of the walls at Fishergate Postern Tower? Margaret sent it to me with these questions hanging in the air.

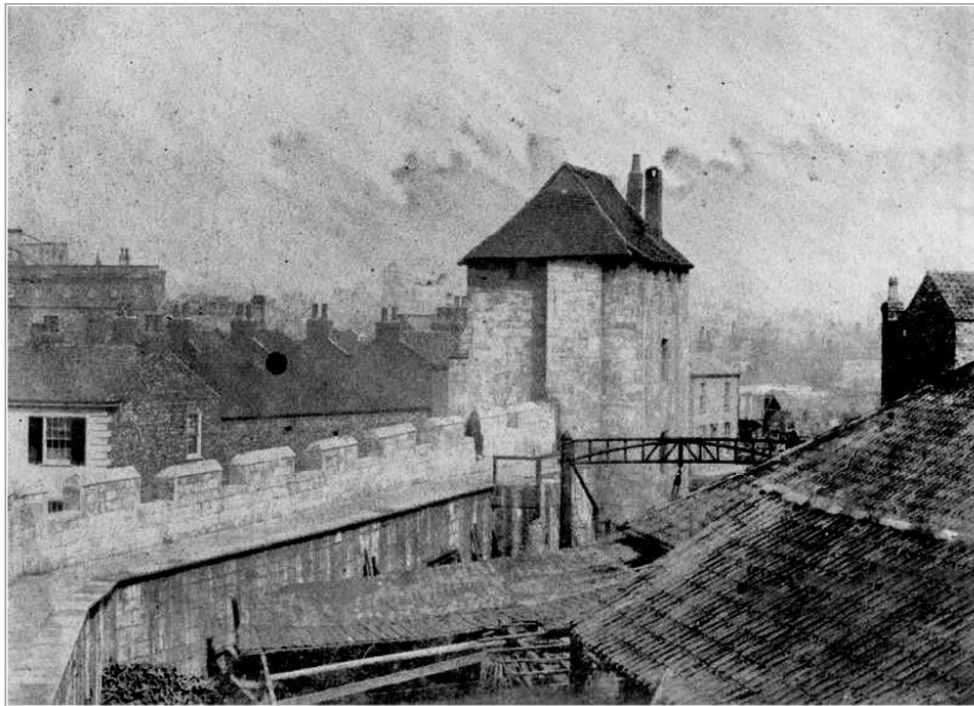


Map from the City Archives - identified by Margaret Scott

The plan is dated 1852, so I turned to the OS map of this date and as so often happens, I found details I hadn't noticed before. For example, the road layout is not what it is today, and it nearly corresponds with the CYC plan. Where the flats are now, it shows Wenlock Street, and the site of Phoenix Foundry is simply defined as Mr Thompson's.

The map is titled 'Fishergate and Leadmill Street Improvements' and the notes say:
"portion coloured blue is to be exchanged for the portion taken off [St George's] churchyard"
"the dotted line denotes the part of the street to be made 24 feet wide"
"the parts coloured red are to be given up to that street"

Although it doesn't show the foundry, Lead Mill Lane turns south into the foundry entrance, passing under the iron arch adjacent to the wall stairs, as shown on this photograph of 1853 by William Pumphrey, with the foundry roof on the right.



Photograph of 1853 by William Pumphrey (Image York Explore)

[Read the full article](#)

From Our Tweets (Martin Hetherington)

Many of the current tweets are inspired by the coming Festival.

 **York Walls Festival**  @WallsYork · 5 Jun

Here's a sneak preview of our app for the York Walls Festival 2019! Watch this space for more information about it in lead up to the 10th and 11th of August! #yorkwallsfestival #york



See more of our tweets at <http://www.twitter.com/yorkwallsfriend>

Rampart Flower of the Month (Simon Mattam)



This beauty wasn't on the ramparts but is probably a meadow buttercup - Photo: Simon Mattam

June's flower is the meadow buttercup, AKA 'tall buttercup' [USA] or 'king cup'.

With close mowing of flattish land by the ramparts and a threat of CYC-financed poisoning hanging over all plants on the Walls it seemed best to have this pretty poisoner as this month's flower.

The buttercup tastes bad and blisters the mouth - Culpepper, back at the time of the siege of York, called it a 'furious biting herb'. As a result, it does little harm with its poison because animals avoid it when fresh and it does no harm when served dry in hay.

All sorts of buttercup have these qualities - and have the glossy yellow petals that lead to the weird but common game of trying to reflect their yellow glow off the throat of a friend. If the yellow is seen reflected on the skin the friend is told "you like butter". The glossiness is caused by an unusual layer of air under the layer of yellow pigment - and it helps collect the sun's warmth in the cup of petals, so helping pollinating insects be active there

The shorter bulbous buttercups are on the ramparts as well as the meadow buttercup but they may have finished flowering by June. The creeping buttercup is probably there too - any or all of them were probably in Shakespeare's mind when he wrote:

'When daisies pied and violets blue
and lady's smock all silver white
and cuckoo buds of yellow hue
do paint the meadows with delight...'

Now I am wondering about July's flower. Should it be another super-common flower? Should it be the first un-flowery flower like stinging nettle or a grass ?

Suggestions on this – or offers of help with increasing people's enjoyment of nature on the ramparts – are very welcome. Simon Mattam ps.mattam@outlook.com

Richard Hanage (richard@hanage.com)
Editor, on behalf of the FoYW committee.

Glen McGowan	Chair
Penny Heptonstall	Treasurer
Sam McDermott	Secretary
Alan Fleming	Website
Emily Greenaway	Fund-raising
Bill Hill	Fund-raising
Martin Hetherington	Volunteers
Simon Mattam	
Guy Newton	

The committee may be contacted at friendsofyorkwalls@gmail.com

If you would like to attend a committee meeting, please contact Sam McDermott.

The meetings are normally on the first Tuesday of the month.

The 'Friends of York Walls' is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation representing York's walls & defences. Registered Charity: No. 1159300 www.yorkwalls.org.uk



Copyright © 2019 Friends of York Wall, All rights reserved.

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

Our mailing address is:

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

[Add us to your address book](#)

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

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

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

