

## **ROMANTIC YORK**

*Love stories, old and new, from the city of York, some passionate, some romantic and some tempestuous!*  
*Devised by Lynn Harper.*

### **St Valentine**

St Valentine; there may have been two St Valentines, one a Roman priest martyred under the Emperor Claudius in the mid 1<sup>st</sup> C AD on the Flaminian way near Rome, and the other a Bishop martyred by beheading in Rome in the 3<sup>rd</sup> C AD, but whose bones were taken to his see at Terni. But some say they are one and the same person! His relics are said to be in the Carmelite Monastery in Dublin, while others say his bones were found in a cardboard box on top of a wardrobe in the Gorbals in Glasgow and now kept by Franciscan Friars.

His Festival 14<sup>th</sup> February corresponds with the Roman fertility festival of Lupercalia (dedicated to Juno and Pan; Lupus is Latin for wolf) where young men dressed up in wolf skins drew lots for girls. The Festival took place on the spot where Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were found being suckled by a She-Wolf. There is also legend that birds choose their mates on 14th February. Whatever the origin, this date has become inextricably entwined with romantic love.

### **York Love Songs**

By Anthony Dunn from St Peters School.

‘They fined me a hundred pounds for a handful of daffodils  
I took them from around the City walls  
So don’t ever say never buy you flowers’!

### **Cartimandua and Venutius**

Cartimandua was queen of the Brigantes, a confederacy of tribes in Northern Britain, and co-operated with the invading Romans in 71 AD. Her husband, Venutius, disagreed and led resistance to the Romans. So Cartimandua divorced him and married his armour bearer! The Romans marched from Lincoln on Venutius at his stronghold at Stanwick and killed him. She moved south for protection.

### **King’s Manor-Henry VIII and Catherine Howard**

Henry married Catherine, his ‘Rose without a thorn’, in 1540 after his divorce from Anne of Cleves ‘that fat Flanders mare’, at Oatlands Palace near London, on the very day that his former chief minister, Thomas Cromwell was executed. He was 50, obese, with advanced syphilis and an ulcerous leg; she was 18.

The royal couple stayed in King’s Manor and the buildings of St Mary’s Abbey in August 1541 for 12 days. They were met at Fulford Cross (still standing by Iceland and Aldi on Fulford Rd) by the City Council grovelling because of their implication in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536. The King was placated by the gift of a cup of gold containing £100, including £40 for Catherine. While she was in York and other places she is alleged to have indulged in nocturnal love affairs, aided by Lady Rochford and Thomas Culpepper, the King’s personal attendant, whom she was in love with. Catherine was catholic and there were intrigues by the Seymours and Crammer to get her removed. In 1542 she was executed for alleged adultery.

### **Exhibition Square-statue of William Etty (1787-1849)**

His mother married a miller 11 years older than herself when she was 17. Her brother, head of the family, opposed the match, so after 6 years of moving about they settled in York. William was born on 10<sup>th</sup> March at No 20 Feasegate. He later had a house on Church Yard off Coney St. He was 7<sup>th</sup> out of 10 children; 5 died in infancy and he had smallpox, which scarred him for life. He did not marry but wanted to He had a kettle for a wife: -“It sings sweetly and gives me warmth when I come in”. He was slovenly, short and awkward with a large head, hands and feet, and long wild sandy hair. He was described as ‘One of the oddest looking creatures’. He was in love when he made an ascent of Vesuvius and he described his heart as a ‘Volcano of itself’. He struggled with uncertainty, and agonized waiting for letters to arrive. He eventually found

satisfaction in his art and excelled in painting voluptuous nudes of both sexes, many of which are in York Art Gallery. He wrote, "For 6 months past I have scarcely known Happiness but by name, and even now I could exchange life with a dog. I have only found existence tolerable by applying vigorously to my Art". He travelled widely in Europe and met Delacroix. His work was much admired, and in 1828 he defeated Constable in the elections to the Royal Academy. He campaigned to save the Walls from demolition in the 1830's and in 1910 his statue was erected, with a little model of Bootham Bar half covered by a drape at his feet. He is buried in St Olave's churchyard, though his tomb is visible from St Mary's Abbey ruins.

### **ART GALLERY PAINTINGS**

#### **Young Woman in a red shawl by Gwen John (1876-1939)**

Few works by women on show-this is one of them. Painted 1912. Gwen John was the mistress of Rodin and she wrote him thousands of letters. But he rejected her for an American heiress. She lived in a wooden hut in an overgrown garden with many cats. She died at Dieppe with no luggage at the outbreak of war. Biographies by Susan Chitty and Sue Roe.

#### **Old Theatre Royal, Duncombe Place-Dorothea Jordan**

Mrs. Jordan was a popular actress who came over from Dublin. She was a great success in York especially playing male roles, so she could show off her legs, so she moved on to Drury Lane in London. There she became mistress to Duke of Clarence (later William IV), brother of the Prince Regent and son of mad King George III !! She appeared in York when she arrived from Dublin in 1782 and stayed at Theatre Royal for 3 years. Appeared regularly to raise money for Duke of Clarence and his 10 illegitimate children by her over next 30 years. She also had a child by her manager in Ireland and 4 by Sir Roger Ford. Her 3 daughters all married into the aristocracy. She wrote 'The Bluebells of Scotland'

#### **Old Theatre Royal, Duncombe Place-Lydia Sterne**

Lydia, the daughter of Laurence Sterne, got so fed up of being called 'Miss Tristram' and 'Miss Shandy' after her father's novel 'Tristram Shandy' that she retaliated by writing fake love letters to the girls under the signatures of members of the theatre. As expected they were intercepted by the girls' parents who were outraged. Laurence Sterne would have probably enjoyed the joke.

### **ST. MICHAEL-LE-BELFREY CHURCH - GUY FAWKES**

Guy Fawkes baptised here 16th April 1570. Go in and see photocopy of baptismal entry. Born not on Petergate, but somewhere off Stonegate near Godfreys bookshop. His father Edward Fawkes was a church lawyer. Guy went to St. Peters Free School, then in Gillygate, now in Clifton. In c.1580 his mother remarried on his father's death, and his new stepfather Dionis Bainbridge, was a Roman Catholic living in Scotton, Yorkshire. Guy could have been married, as there is a record of a Guy Fawkes marrying Maria Pulleyn in Scotton in 1590.

In 1987 Rev Sylvia Mutch was the first woman deacon in England to conduct a marriage ceremony in Clifton Parish Church. On 10<sup>th</sup> July 1994 Rev Jane Morris celebrated Communion in this church immediately after the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Minster a few days before.

### **STATUE OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT**

Constantine was proclaimed Emperor in York in 306AD on the death of his father Constantius Chlorus. His wife Fausta married him in 307 when she was just 14. Some years later Constantine heard that his eldest son-not by Fausta- was in love with his stepmother, Fausta, and plotting to kill him. This prompted him to have his son and wife killed and Fausta was killed by immersion in a scalding bath.

**St Helena** (or Helen) was Constantine's mother. C.250-330 AD. Born at Drepanum in Bithynia (now Asia Minor) -later renamed Helenopolis. She was originally possibly an Innkeeper's daughter. She is said to have been a courtesan and Bede says she was the concubine of the Roman general Constantius Chlorus She bore him a son, Constantine, at Naissus (now Nis in former Yugoslavia) on the Danube. When Constantius Chlorus became

Emperor in 293 AD he got rid of her as unfit to wife of an emperor. But Constantine greatly honoured his mother and upon becoming Emperor made her Dowager Empress. She converted to Christianity in about 312 AD, aged over 60, but was so devout and pious that contemporaries could not believe her colourful past! She dressed quietly, gave to the poor and prisoners, built churches and went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Here she is said to have discovered the True Cross on the hill of Calvary, where a great basilica soon rose on Constantine's orders. She died in the Holy land and her body brought back to Rome. She is a Saint in Eastern and Western Churches, but Constantine only in the Eastern Church.

### **MINSTER INTERIOR-** **Great West Window**

Often called the 'Heart of Yorkshire' but originally probably represented the Love of God or the heart of Jesus, though the idea of the Sacred Heart did not emerge until the 16thC. It was glazed in 1338 by Robert Kettlebarn and paid for by Archbishop Melton, who officiated at the wedding of Edward III and Philippa of Hainault. Sometimes called the Bradford Window as repairs to it in 1930 paid for by City of Bradford.

### **Marriage of Edward III and Philippa of Hainault 1328**

The only ever marriage of an English King in York Minster. Philippa was the youngest of 5 daughters of the count of Hainault. Before the marriage she was visited by the Bishop of Lichfield, Edward, his mother Isabella of France (who along with her lover Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, had just arranged for the brutal murder of Edward's father and her husband, Edward II). It seems to have been a genuine love match, though he was only 15 and she 14. According to Froissart, Edward, magnificently clad and arrayed, met her took her by the hand. Then they embraced and he kissed her and so riding side by side with great plenty of minstrelsy and honours they entered the city. The wedding was on 24<sup>th</sup> January and was followed by 3 weeks of rejoicing, though some of this got out of hand. The King and Queen had a banquet in the Franciscan friary and some of the continental entourage of the Queen got very drunk and rampaged round the city, seeking women to ravish. Anti French rioting broke out, and some of the French barricaded themselves in the Chapter House of the Friary. Bowmen of Northampton and Lincoln intervened and the riot ended in a pitched battle outside Walmgate Bar, which left approximately 527 Foreign, and 242 English dead! Some of the bowmen were buried in the Carmelite Friary. Quite some wedding reception! The marriage was a happy one and they had 12 children (the cause of the Wars of the Roses!); their 4<sup>th</sup> child Prince William of Hatfield (born at Hatfield near Doncaster) died in 1337 aged a few months and was buried in York Minster-the only visible Royal tomb in the Minster.

### **South Transept- Rose Window**

Popularly meant to represent the wedding of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York on 1486, with the red roses representing the House of Lancaster and Henry VII and the white roses Elizabeth of York. The roses are Tudor roses, red with white centres. The marriage was just 5 months after the Battle of Bosworth where Henry became King by killing her uncle Richard III. Elizabeth was the daughter of Edward IV, and with the illegitimacy/disappearance of the Princes in the Tower, was the last remaining heir of the House of York. John Morton, Bishop of Ely, proposed she should marry Henry. A previous suitor had been the Dauphin of France. There were also rumours that she had had a liaison with her Uncle, Richard III. After Bosworth she was brought from Sheriff Hutton Castle to Westminster Palace. Henry was crowned in October 1485, and the next year on January 18<sup>th</sup> the couple were married-she was just 20. She wore white cloth of gold encrusted with pearls-she must have looked stunning as she was nearly 6 feet tall. She was crowned Queen in Westminster Abbey on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1486. She died aged 38, 9 days after the birth of the last of her 7 children; 3 died in childhood, and she was buried in Westminster Abbey. Her surviving children were:-

- Arthur, who married Catherine of Aragon before his brother Henry, but died aged 16.
- Margaret, who married James IV of Scotland and is the ancestor of the House of Stuart and the present Royal Family. She is the Queen of Hearts on playing cards. She stayed in York on her way north to her wedding in Scotland in 1503.
- Henry VIII from whom the House of Tudor is descended
- Princess Mary, who married Louis XII of France.

### **South Transept – tomb of Walter de Grey**

Two Kings of Scotland were married in York Minster. Alexander II married Joan, the daughter of King John, in 1215. Alexander III (aged 10) married the 11-year-old Margaret, the daughter of Henry III, on Boxing Day 1251; the Bride was led by her brother Edward, later Edward I, the ‘Hammer of the Scots’. She had 3 bridesmaids in gowns of cloth of gold with the arms of England embroidered on them. There were 1000 knights in suits of silk as well as Henry III, his Queen and her retinue. This was followed by enormous feasting with 3 score oxen, deer, bucks, does 100 wild boars, salmon, strong liquor and wine-some inferior! The party were entertained by jesters and revellers.

### **Wedding of Duke and Duchess of Kent – 8<sup>th</sup> June 1961**

The last recent Royal wedding in the Minster, and the first to be broadcast on TV. Katherine Worsley was born 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 1933, and she married Edward Duke of Kent, grandson of George V. She was the sister of Sir Marcus Worsley of Hovingham Hall, hence her Yorkshire connection. Special trains brought the guests from Malton to York. They met when he was at Catterick and lunched at Hovingham. They were engaged Jan 1961, with a ring of sapphire flanked by diamonds. There were thousands of white roses at their wedding. Princess Anne aged 11 was a bridesmaid as was Jane Spenser, sister of Diana. The train included 237 yards of white silk gauze and iridescent thread. The dress had a high boat neck and she carried a bouquet of white roses. The bride had 3 veils, one for the ceremony, one for rehearsals and one for emergencies. The wedding march was ‘O Praise Ye the Lord’ instead of ‘Here comes the Bride’. And the service was according to the 1928 liturgy and the bride promised to ‘Obey’. The reception was at Hovingham, and the Honeymoon at Balmoral followed by Majorca.

### **North Transept Five Sisters Window – the Queen Mother**

She unveiled the restored window on Midsummer Day 1925 as a memorial to the women of the British Empire who died in the First World War. She was born in August 1900 and married the Duke of York (later George VI) on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1923. As Girl guides District Commissioner she became friendly with Princess Mary, the Duke’s sister, and was her bridesmaid when she married Viscount Lascelles of Harewood. King George VI died in Feb 1952 of lung cancer.

### **Choir-statue of King Edwin (to left of High Altar)**

*There is a new rather ugly statue of Ethelburga on the screen to the North Choir Aisle; there are paintings of Ethelburga and Edwin-the nearest to a couple-on the lid of the crypt font.*

Edwin was the King of Northumbria, and due to marry Ethelburga, the Christian daughter of the King of Kent. She demurred from the marriage because he was pagan. When he asked a second time he agreed she could practice her religion and he might adopt Christianity if it was a religion ‘more holy and worthy of God’. They were married in 625 AD. The Pope wrote to her to urge her to convert her husband as there could be no true marriage between them because of his ‘dark and detestable error’, and they could not have union after death. Eventually Edwin converted and was baptised on Easter Day 627 AD in a hastily built wooden church-the origin of the Minster.

### **Lady Chapel-Tomb of Frances Matthew (left of altar)**

Frances was the daughter of Bishop Barlow; she married first the young son of Archbishop Parker of Canterbury and then Archbishop Tobie Matthew of York. She was also sister to 4 Bishops! On the death of her husband in 1628 she gave his collection of books on Religion, Geography, Mathematics, the Classics and Medicine to the Minster, thus forming the nucleus of its Library. She died aged 78 a year later.

### **TREASURERS HOUSE –Elizabeth Montague**

Born in 1718, married at 22 to the grandson of the Earl of Sandwich, who was older than her father. “Gold is the chief ingredient in the composition of earthly happiness”. Her only child died aged 1. So she formed a literary society of drawing room meetings. She was called the ‘Queen of the Blues’, the original ‘Blue Stocking’ as some of the members of the circle wore bohemian blue worsted stockings instead of the more usual white ones-the 18<sup>th</sup>C equivalent of ‘come in your jeans’. She made it respectable for women to publish their work and was admired by Dr Johnson, who said, “she has a constant stream of conversation and it is always impregnated, it always has meaning”. She died aged 81 and is buried in Winchester Cathedral alongside her husband and son.

## ST WILLIAMS COLLEGE

Built in 1461 to control activities of the 30 chantry priests who served in the Minster. College St is also known as 'Little Alice Lane', perhaps after friends of chantry priests, so slim that they could slip in at night and make them a bedtime drink! Many of them kept mistresses here or in the Bedern. In 1417 William Easington faced 6 separate charges of fornication and slander. In 1415 John Middleton confessed to fornication and had to give 100 shillings to the Minster Fabric fund. In the 92 years following 1388 there were 3640 such offences or nearly one a week!

### St William's College-Charlotte Richardson

Born in 1775 in very unfavourable circumstances, and went to the Grey coat School at 12. At 16 she became a servant and rose to be a cook. She began to collect books and write poetry. At 27 she married a shoemaker and opened a shop. Both were taken ill and he died 2 months after the birth of their first child. Her previous mistress published her poems in 2 volumes and she earned enough to open a small school. She wrote the following on Feb 14th 1802; -

“Custom, whose laws we all allow  
And bow before his shrine  
Has so ordained, my Friend, that you  
Are now my Valentine.

Ah, could my humble Muse aspire  
To catch the flame divine  
These are the gifts that I'd require  
For thee, my Valentine.

May Virtue oe'r thy steps preside  
And in thy conduct shine  
May Truth and wisdom ever guide  
And guard my Valentine.

May Piety, seraphic maid  
Her influence divine  
Shed on thy head, and ever lead  
And bless my Valentine”

### National Trust Shop College St –George Hudson (1800-1871)

George Hudson was born in Howsham and had to leave when he was 15 for getting a girl pregnant. He moved to York and was apprenticed to Nicholson & Bell, Drapers and Silk Merchants, in College St (now the National Trust shop-see plaque). He lived on the premises, worked hard and became a partner. He later said “The happiest part of my life was when I stood behind the counter and used the yard measure in my own shop”. His wife was Elizabeth Nicholson, the daughter of a solicitor; they met as she used to help in the shop. They married when he was 21 and she 26. They had 3 sons and a daughter Anne, but one of the sons was killed in the Indian Mutiny, and 3 others died young. He became very rich in 1827 when his uncle Botterill died leaving him £30,000 and his house in Monkgate. Elizabeth was noted for her malapropisms such as ‘When in Turkey, do as the Turkeys do’. When asked at a Mansion House Dinner if she would prefer sherry or port she replied ‘A little of both, please’. She was asked what sort of shoes she would like to buy and replied ‘The French ones by Messrs Gauche and Droit!’. She was however quite shrewd and said of her husband “He’s like a pat of butter on a hotplate – you never know when you have got him”. He went into politics and Railways, was Lord Mayor 3 times and set himself up as a country landowner at Londesborough Hall. He eventually fell from grace in 1849 for financial chicanery. This also ruined Elizabeth’s brother who committed suicide by jumping into the River Ouse. George could not be arrested for his debts, as he was still MP for Sunderland and MP’s could not be arrested for debt. But as soon as he lost his Parliamentary seat in 1853, he fled to the continent. They lived much of this period apart, due to his wanderings. He died in 1871 in relative poverty and is buried in the little churchyard at Scrayingham, near his birthplace. She died in 1886 and is buried next to her husband.