



York Civic Trust

Annual Report 2022-23



Portrait of Elizabeth, Viscountess Dunbar, by Sir Godfrey Kneller, acquired by York Civic Trust this year.

Front cover: Image taken from the roof of Fairfax House with a drone camera. Credit: Doane Tung.

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Words from the Chair

The pace of change – whether in local and national politics or in climate matters – has kept your Civic Trust busy and buzzing this past year.

In the city we have been active in instigating and facilitating debate on the big local issues of the day, and are contributing effectively to current debates on transport, street cleanliness, climate change strategy and not least, in future-proofing the city's unique heritage.

Fairfax House continues to innovate and reach new audiences through its research and displays. The *If Walls Could Talk* exhibition has intrigued and impressed both visitors and reviewers, and the relevance of the animated story of Ann Fairfax is leading to new conversations and connections.

We were sad this year to register the deaths of two significant and generous servants to the Trust, Darrell Buttery and Jill Waterson. We also thanked Verna Campbell and Stephen Lewis who stood down as long-standing trustees but continue to serve on our working groups. In their place we welcomed Matthew Seddon and Richard Smith as well as co-opted trustee David Thewlis.

We really value the contributions of all our members, and we are very grateful indeed for the legacies left to us. The Dr Michael Bearpark fund



Stephen Lusty at a new members event.

has now helped four of our Conservation Casework Interns into permanent, professional jobs in locations as diverse as Somerset and Hawaii, having all made meaningful contributions to York's planning casework load whilst in post with us. The financial strength such bequests give us also allows us to bid and succeed in applying for grants for heritage projects like the innovative Trailblazers initiative which promises to involve the community at large in researching the city's hidden heritage and the people behind it.

I hope you enjoy reading this report as we look forward to another unpredictable but undoubtedly active year ahead.

Stephen Lusty
Chair of Trustees

The year in numbers



the highlights



200
mice

used in our Christmas
exhibition (with more
sold in the shop)

94% of visitors
scored
Fairfax House 4/5 or 5/5
in a survey

2

Michael Bearpark interns
gained successful employment
this year

10

Paintings restored with a
grant from the Noel Terry
Trust

11

Events held by our writer-
in-residence, Robert Powell



800,000

views on a single Instagram
video



1,835,981

impressions across Facebook,
Twitter, Instagram and TikTok

17,592

visitors to
Fairfax House

62%

increase on
2021

£111,004

in till
admissions

£249,999

awarded by the
National Lottery for the
Trailblazers project

2,674

planning
applications
appraised

If Walls Could Talk

began in May 2022 - based on new research, it told the
story of Ann Fairfax using innovative new interpretation

We developed

Kate, Becca, Evie and Hazel's careers - beginning as
volunteers they joined our staff team across the year

York Trailblazers

York Trailblazers project began in October 2022 when we
were awarded a grant by the National Lottery Heritage Fund

Members enjoyed

over 30 different events, including walks, talks, and
exclusive sneak peeks inside exciting buildings

A TownMouse Christmas

stole hearts in December 2022, with rave reviews from
Press and Social Media



York Civic Trust

York Civic Trust has conserved and restored elements of the heritage of York, and added to the city's ambience with new features such as the Emperor Constantine statue. We relaunched our City Enhancement Fund in June 2023.

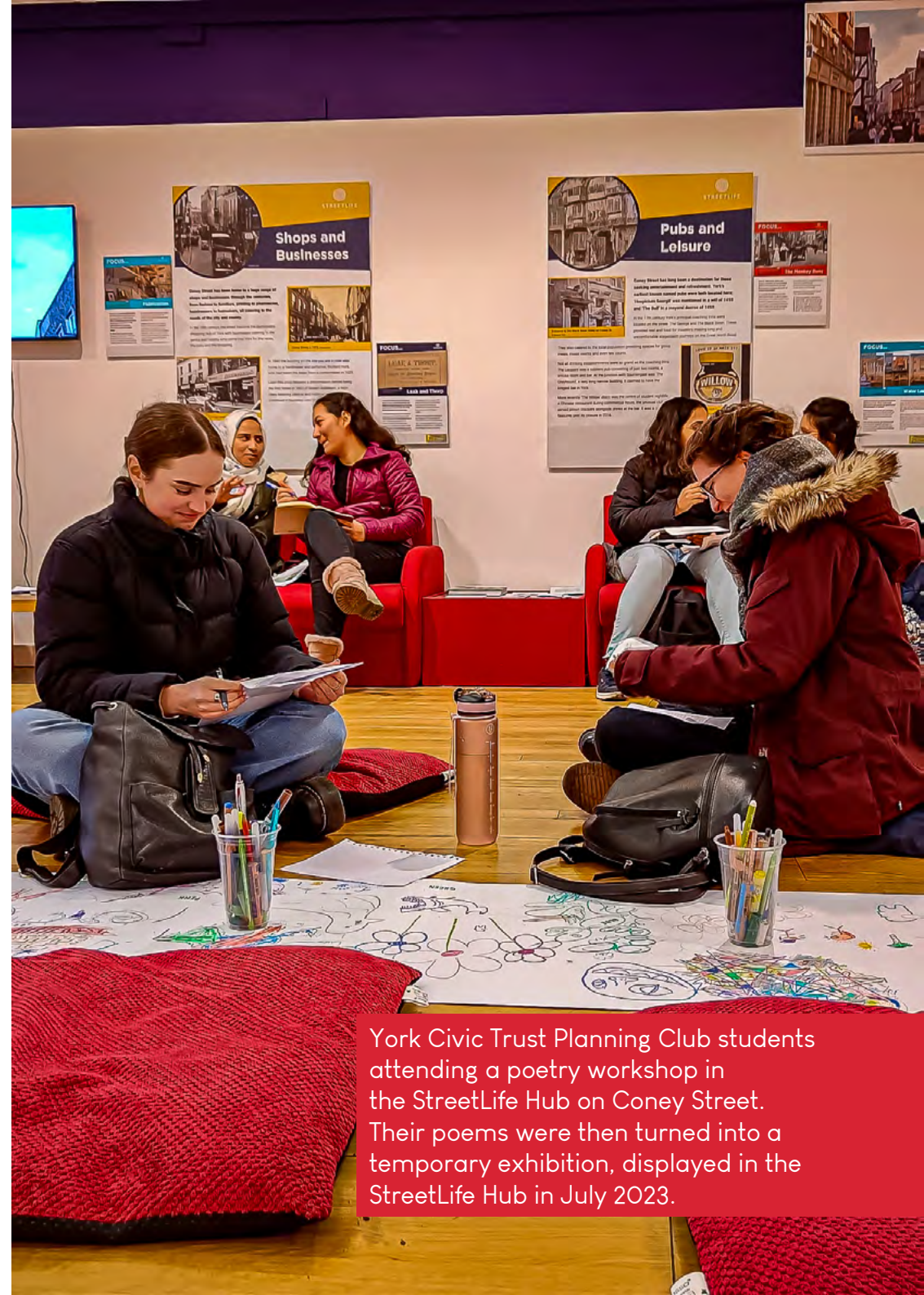
York Civic Trust's heritage review

In many ways, the past year might be thought of in terms of new heritage initiatives in the city.

After a number of previous attempts, York has overcome a large hurdle in its ambition to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS). In April 2023, it was announced that York was placed on the Government's Tentative List with six other British sites. York's bid, for which the Trust is part of the Steering Group, shall now receive support to develop its bid for WHS inclusion.

October 2022 saw the launch of York Unlocked, which gained access to some of York's most fascinating buildings and structures, including Castlegate House and Garforth House. The Civic Trust was pleased to act as a 'facilitator' to assist in the opening of some of the buildings. 2023 looks to be an even more ambitious programme!

The University of York began its StreetLife project in 2022. Partnered with the Civic Trust, City of York Council and York Music Venues Network as part of the UK Community Renewal Fund, StreetLife has engaged the public over the possibilities for the future of the street. Through over 100 workshops, drop-ins, and exhibitions, the project has spurred conversation on the heritage credentials of the street and how these can inform major plans to transform Coney Street and the riverfront.



York Civic Trust Planning Club students attending a poetry workshop in the StreetLife Hub on Coney Street. Their poems were then turned into a temporary exhibition, displayed in the StreetLife Hub in July 2023.

In Spring 2023, the Trust repurposed its exhibition space in Fairfax House as a flexible space for various uses. Currently called 'The Castlegate Hub', the space has been used for talks, poetry workshops and temporary exhibitions as well as hosting a variety of meetings and receptions. The Hub promises to be a valuable space for public discussion on the city's heritage.

In June 2023, we held a relaunch event for our City Enhancement Fund programme at the St. Sampson's Centre for the Over 60s. The event celebrated ten years of the programme, which was started by former YCT Chairman Sir Ron Cooke. During this period, the Trust has funded over £600,000 of repairs and enhancements of some of York's most charmed historic features and spaces: its statues, railings, memorials and lamps. The relaunch event also looked to the future with the announcement of the 2023-24 programme which includes repainting historic street names across the city, locating York's boundary stones and better presenting them, and a feasibility appraisal of repairing the Foss Island Cable Bridge.

In 2022, the city welcomed a statue of Queen Elizabeth II, unveiled at York Minster by King Charles III, just two months after the Queen's death. The unveiling had been intended to mark the late monarch's Platinum Jubilee, adding a sad poignancy to the occasion. The statue overlooks Duncombe Place which is planned to be transformed into Elizabeth Square as part of the York Minster Neighbourhood Plan adopted by the City of York Council.

The Guildhall reopened in May 2022 following a £21m refurbishment. Thoroughly cleaned, decluttered and with impressive architectural interventions, it has found new purpose as part of the University of York's Science Park initiative, which looks to provide support and space for start-up businesses in the creative and digital industries.

The York Design Awards – now in its fourteenth year – held its ceremony in the newly restored Guildhall. The People's Choice Award went to a small but smart extension to the rear of a historic property on Tower Street, whilst the Lord Mayor's Award went to Scarborough Bridge for its new pedestrian and cycle facility. This demonstrates a rich diversity of design happening in the city. The John Shannon Conservation Award, presented by the Civic Trust, was awarded to an attractive, sensitively converted former Age UK charity shop. The building on Walmgate is now a stylish townhouse available for short-term holiday rental. Although its current use may be controversial, it excels as piece of conservation architecture and considerably enhances the conservation area.

The arrival in Spring 2023 of the first of the city's Hostile Vehicle Mitigation ('HVM') measures on Lendal and High Petergate caused considerable dismay at the damage to the city's heritage. It was a decision made by the City of York's Council Executive to install what are fundamentally bollards without any public consultation. The first of the HVM measures began on Lendal and High Petergate in Spring 2023. The Civic Trust, amongst

others, were quick to identify issues that restricted access to the city for all users, particularly those with mobility issues and visual impairments. The bollards also damage the setting of the city's heritage – its historic spaces, vistas, stone setts and iron curbs. It is a reminder of the importance of public consultation – allowing all users to spot issues that a small number of people, however qualified, might overlook.

Striking damage to the city's heritage occurred in June 2022. The historic iron lamp on the junction of Petergate with Minster Gates was hit by a reversing delivery vehicle, which caused the lamp to topple over and break. The owner of the Braithwaite Gallery on Petergate was quick to contact the Civic Trust and we were able to make sure the Council did not extend the damage done by sending the broken lamp to landfill.

A research project commissioned by the Civic Trust, in conjunction with University of York conservation postgraduates, has unearthed fascinating details about the lamp. For example, it is the exact same type as illuminates the Royal Crescent in Bath – fine company indeed! The lamp in York is assumed to be the last of a set of similar lamps that featured in the city from the early 1900s. Following a campaign with other local heritage groups, in which YCT offered to underwrite the cost of its reinstatement as a 'funder of last resort' should an insurance claim against the driver be unsuccessful, the Council committed to put back the lamp at a cost of £33,000 and it was reinstated in March 2023. A happy note to finish this year's heritage review!



The Foss Islands Cable Bridge, which is currently undergoing a feasibility appraisal to see if it is possible to repair and restore it to its former glory, as part of York Civic Trust's City Enhancement Fund programme.

Heritage at risk

At around 6pm on Tuesday 4th April 2023, people waiting for a bus on Holgate Road witnessed the roof of the former Canteen Building of the Carriage Works collapsing, sparking a York Civic Trust project to better protect our local heritage.

York is currently almost entirely absent from the national buildings and heritage at risk lists compiled by heritage organisations such as Historic England and the C20 Society. Either York does not have any heritage at risk, or our local heritage at risk is currently not getting due recognition.

The Canteen Building was built in 1888 and had fine architectural detailing. It was the last remaining social building of the Carriage Works complex. After nearly 150 years, this important piece of the city's railway engineering heritage is no more.

Although the Canteen Building was not Listed, it was one of nearly 200 structures on York's Local Heritage List. And yet, in less than twenty years, York has lost nearly 1 in 12 of the structures on its Local Heritage List.

The startling nature of the loss of this historic building channelled the Civic Trust into action.



The Canteen Building post-collapse. Although it was not listed, it was an important part of the city's railway heritage, and often appears on old photos of workers arriving and leaving. It has since been demolished.



Found in many of the city's back lanes between terraces, these scoria setts provide evidence of York's traditional housing stock and the role back lanes played. They are at risk of incremental removal or covering over with tarmac.

We put out a call to members of the public and heritage groups in the city to help identify other 'heritage at risk' in York, all to help prevent a similar fate as the Canteen Building.

The appeal in the local press quickly resulted in over two dozen suggestions. They cover a wide range of York's heritage: from the "scoria" setts in York's terraced back lanes, at risk to tarmac replacement, to the mid-Victorian corroded railings of the former Bootham Hospital.

We have already lost one of the first buildings suggested in our appeal. The Old Tannery in Wigginton was approved by a Planning Inspector for demolition in July 2023. Although the Civic Trust supported the local community in advocating the retention of the The Old Tannery as a heritage asset, the Inspector could not be swayed. On reflection, if there had been greater public prominence to saving the building, a stronger defence could have been mobilised.

The Trust is working with the public in compiling an 'At Risk' register for York. The public appeal highlighted the strength, depth and breadth of York's 'heritage at risk'. Where appropriate, this can then inform the Historic Environment Record and national heritage bodies, with the latter being a potential funding stream to help save York's vital local heritage.

Being entirely community-led and coordinated by the Civic Trust as a local amenity society, this appeal to help make a 'heritage at risk' list for the city is understood to be a first in England.

York Trailblazers

York Trailblazers is an exciting and inclusive city-wide programme of events and activities across 2023 - 25, celebrating York's heritage, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Since January 2023 we have been working with residents, schools and community groups across the city to discover and celebrate the history and heritage stories of people who are important to our local communities but may have gone unnoticed previously.

Co-ordinated by our project curator Lou Bartley-Sophocleous, we have organised a programme of workshops to bring people together from different sectors in the city to build new creative partnerships.

The project's community grants scheme will allow these organisations to deliver their own activities to celebrate York's Trailblazers building community resilience across the city in the coming year.

The highlight of the project, for which the planning work has already commenced, will be a city-wide sculpture trail and a series of digital commissions that bring our Trailblazers to life, which will begin in 2024.



York-based artist, Wim Standish, creating a giant Tansy Beetle artwork in the Museum Gardens for the launch of Trailblazers. The Tansy Beetle is known as the "Jewel of York."

Image credit: Make it York

Uganda 50

In 1972 Ugandan President Idi Amin expelled 80,000 people of Asian descent from the country. 28,000 people came to United Kingdom, including 45 families who settled in York. City organisations including the Council, the University of York and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation all assisted in finding accommodation, necessities and employment.

Those who arrived in the United Kingdom include Shamim Eimaan, who came firstly to Birmingham with her family before making York her home. To celebrate the 50th anniversary Shamim organised a project to find out more about the memories of those who came to York.

Reminiscences, images and objects of this traumatic event detailing the terrifying persecution suffered in Uganda and the journey that ended in York were gathered by Shamim into a touring exhibition which visited Fairfax House for a month.

Shamim and Yogesh Joshi, who arrived in York in 1972 following time in a resettlement camp, were interviewed by the journalist Stephen Lewis, a former trustee of York Civic Trust. As a result, a significant episode in the city's history was highlighted. The project continues with visits to York's schools to discuss what it is like to be a refugee and what happened 50 years ago.



York Civic Trust members were able to hear firsthand from Shamim (pictured here) and Yogesh Joshi about their experiences. The exhibition went on display to the public at Fairfax House in the Castlegate Hub.



The ceiling discovery

Fairfax House folklore talked of a lost ceiling from the building's use as St George's Hall Cinema and dance hall.

The ceiling – once part of the complex's Ballroom – had been encased when a modern dropped ceiling was inserted when creating the museum's exhibition space. We decided to look for it!

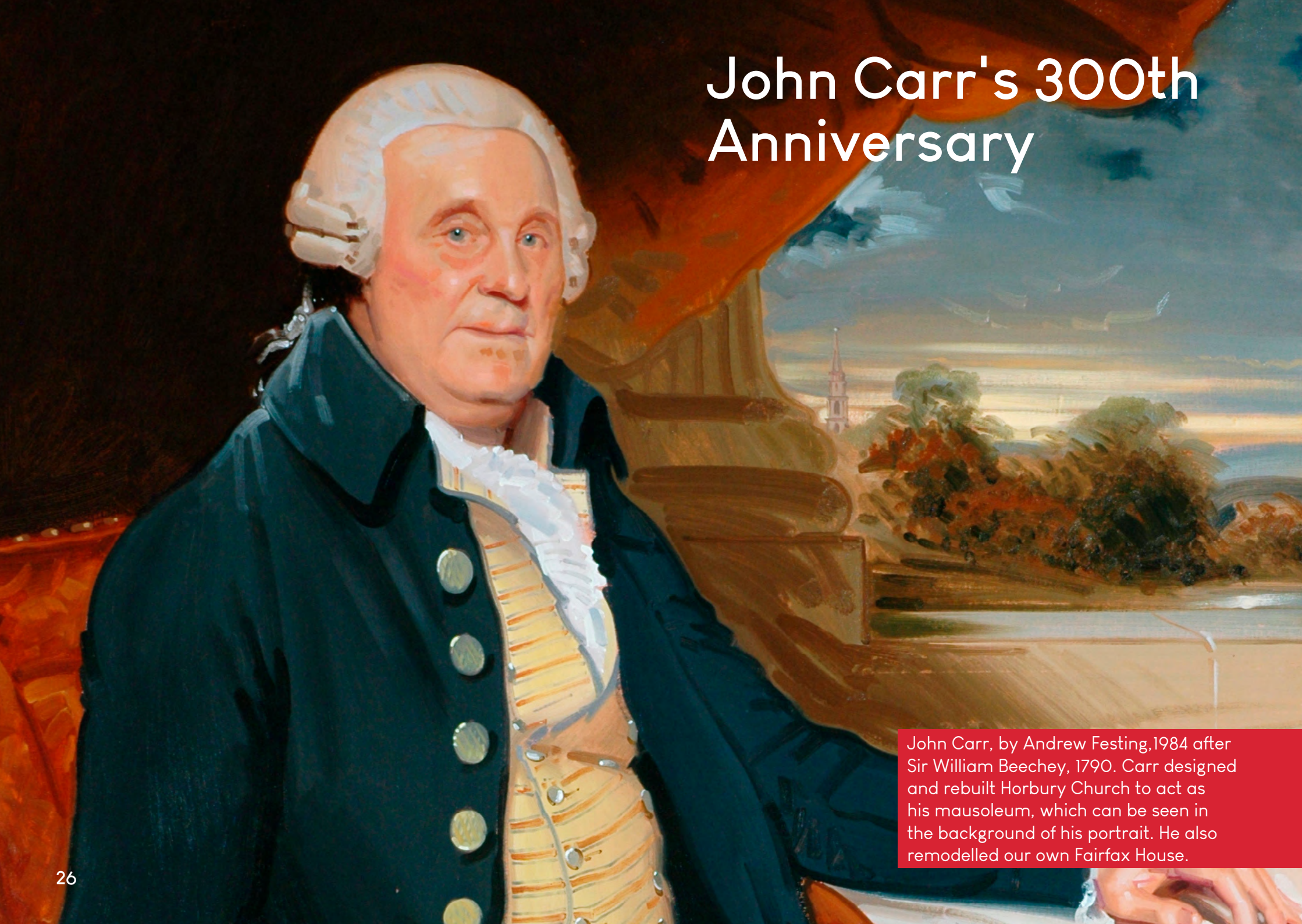
It was not long until we found a partition wall above our exhibition space. After cutting a small hole, with the aid of a light we could see flickers of red paint which promised that we were close. We then widened the hole enough for us to wriggle in and get up close to the ceiling. Although in poor condition, there remain sufficient large areas of moulding to give an impression of what the dance hall would have looked like.

In a first for the Civic Trust, we documented each stage of the investigation on social media, particularly TikTok. It garnered a surprising amount of interest with the video of the final discovery watched over 200,000 times.

The use of social media to promote the story of the investigation is evidence of the Trust's increased use of social media. It's seen a rise in followers, views and ultimately connection with a brand-new demographic over the past year.

The ceiling was obviously found in quite a state of disrepair! The discovery captured the imaginations of thousands of TikTokers, many of whom gave their suggestions for how best to bring it back to life.

John Carr's 300th Anniversary



John Carr, by Andrew Festing, 1984 after Sir William Beechey, 1790. Carr designed and rebuilt Horbury Church to act as his mausoleum, which can be seen in the background of his portrait. He also remodelled our own Fairfax House.

John Carr of York, as he was known, was born in 1723 in Horbury near Wakefield. He became one of the most prolific and famous architects of the 18th century. From 1750, Carr ran a small architectural practice from his house on Skeldergate, yet he travelled and worked extensively across the country, becoming the most famous architect to have worked in York.

The Civic Trust, working with partners including York Georgian Society, Wentworth Woodhouse and Horbury Civic Trust, have organised a series of events over the year to celebrate the 300th anniversary of John Carr's birth. Horbury Civic Society and St Peter's Church, in Horbury – designed by John Carr – hosted a weekend of celebrations in April with Andrew Morrison, Chief Executive of York Civic Trust, delivering the keynote talk of the weekend. York Civic Trust held a members' event to explore the impact of John Carr on York and ask who is the John Carr of the 21st Century. York Georgian Society and the Civic Trust have created a digital resource to further explore the work of John Carr, encouraging people to send in examples of buildings from York inspired by John Carr's work.

Whilst some of John Carr's achievements are well known, what we have discovered over the year is that his impact on the city is less well understood. John Carr's office for his architectural practice for over 50 years was on Skeldergate, now unfortunately the site of an anonymous electrical sub-station. In addition to having a national reputation for designing elegant and practical buildings, John Carr also continued to operate the

stone masonry businesses' where he had started his working life, alongside his father and brothers.

Over a period of 60 years, Carr worked on a variety of projects in York, designing buildings like Bootham Park Hospital as well as smaller jobs such as inserting a new archway into Micklegate Bar. Perhaps his most influential building was the world's first racecourse grandstand. It was so successful that every racecourse since has had one.

Carr was regularly asked for advice on design by organisations and private owners. Many buildings in York in the last 300 years have traces of John Carr in their architecture and the practice he started is still in operation in York and is now the longest-running practice in UK. Unfortunately, Carr's own residences in Skeldergate and Askham Hall in Askham Richard have been demolished. However, the remarkable church he built as a mausoleum for his family and himself still stands in Horbury and is well worth a visit



Bootham Park Hospital,
designed by John Carr.

Blue plaques in the 21st century

Did you know that York Civic Trust has two global firsts when it comes to blue plaques? The Anne Lister plaque at Holy Trinity Church, Goodramgate, is the first permanent rainbow plaque in the world. The stained-glass plaque to Lawrence Sterne in Stonegate is similarly a first of its kind. Our recent work with university students through educational placements is set to result in two further global firsts for York and the Civic Trust.

Thanks to generous funding and support from XR Stories, the Civic Trust has worked with Edmund Wei as an intern from the University of York's School of Arts and Creative Technologies. The internship has seen the development of an interactive Alternative Reality (AR) prototype that allows people to use their phones to bring our Anne Lister and Yves Mahe plaques to life.

For those who enjoy audiobooks, great news! This year the Trust worked with Richard Jones as an Institute for the Public Understanding of the Past (IPUP) placement. With a background in soundscape engineering, Richard has created two engaging podcasts, connected with the cholera burial ground plaque and the plaque to Dr John Snow. Despite there being as many as 10,000 blue plaques in the UK, it is a proud achievement for the Trust to be on the verge of releasing the first podcast directly linked with plaques.



The Anne Lister plaque at Holy Trinity Church. The AR content created by Edmund Wei challenges users to rearrange passages from Anne's secret diary in order to reveal a colourful celebration of her life.



The first of YCT's two plaque podcasts by Richard Jones tells the story of the major cholera outbreak in York in the summer of 1832, which required the creation of a cholera burial ground near the city walls - it is located near the station.

The Civic Trust is proud to be able to offer a range of educational placement opportunities each year for students in the city. In the last year we have worked with a wide range of University of York students, from the Departments of Archaeology and History in particular. The projects they develop are key to the Trust's work; their skills, ideas and energy bring fresh impetus and relevance to the promotion of the city's rich heritage.

IPUP placements with the Trust have offered several interesting projects this year. George Young undertook detailed market research to help us better understand public engagement with our blue plaques. George's analysis showed that the strongest appeal for our plaques is for people over 60 years old, and the weakest is for people under 30. However, nearly 70% of those under 30 said they would like to see blue plaques "brought to life" using AR and virtual reality. This directly informed the Trust's decision to work with XR Stories and Edmund Wei on the blue plaque AR prototype.

Joseph Keeley used his IPUP placement to investigate the history and remnants of what was the Clifton airfield until it closed in 1955. Now mostly under the Clifton Moor estate, the airfield had a role during WW2 as R.A.F. Clifton, when it was bombed by the Luftwaffe on several occasions. Joseph's fieldwork - where he found, recorded, and updated the Historic Environment Record - informs one of the Trust's partnership projects, Raids Over York. You can find out more on its website: www.raidsoveryork.co.uk.

York Civic Trust's planning review

The headline planning-related news for York over the last year is the substantial step forward taken with the city's Local Development Plan.

It is going through its final modifications, in line with recommendations by the Government's Inspectors. If fully approved, it will become York's first Local Plan to be formally adopted since 1954. Whilst the Trust would have liked a greater sense of ambition in the plan for York's development as well as recognition of the city's unique heritage, it is better served in adopting the Local Plan than not.

The last twelve months have witnessed several 'false dawns' for major schemes in the city. It has crushed hopes and, for others, appeased fears of what was intended for the city.

Starting with the most controversial of them. The Eboracum Quarter in Rougier Street promised a substantial 10-storey new building that would have offered 153 apartments, office space, an aparthotel and a major visitor attraction in the basement of the new building. The latter would have looked to do for Roman York what Jorvik has done for York's Viking history.

When planning permission was granted for the Eboracum Quarter development in October 2022,



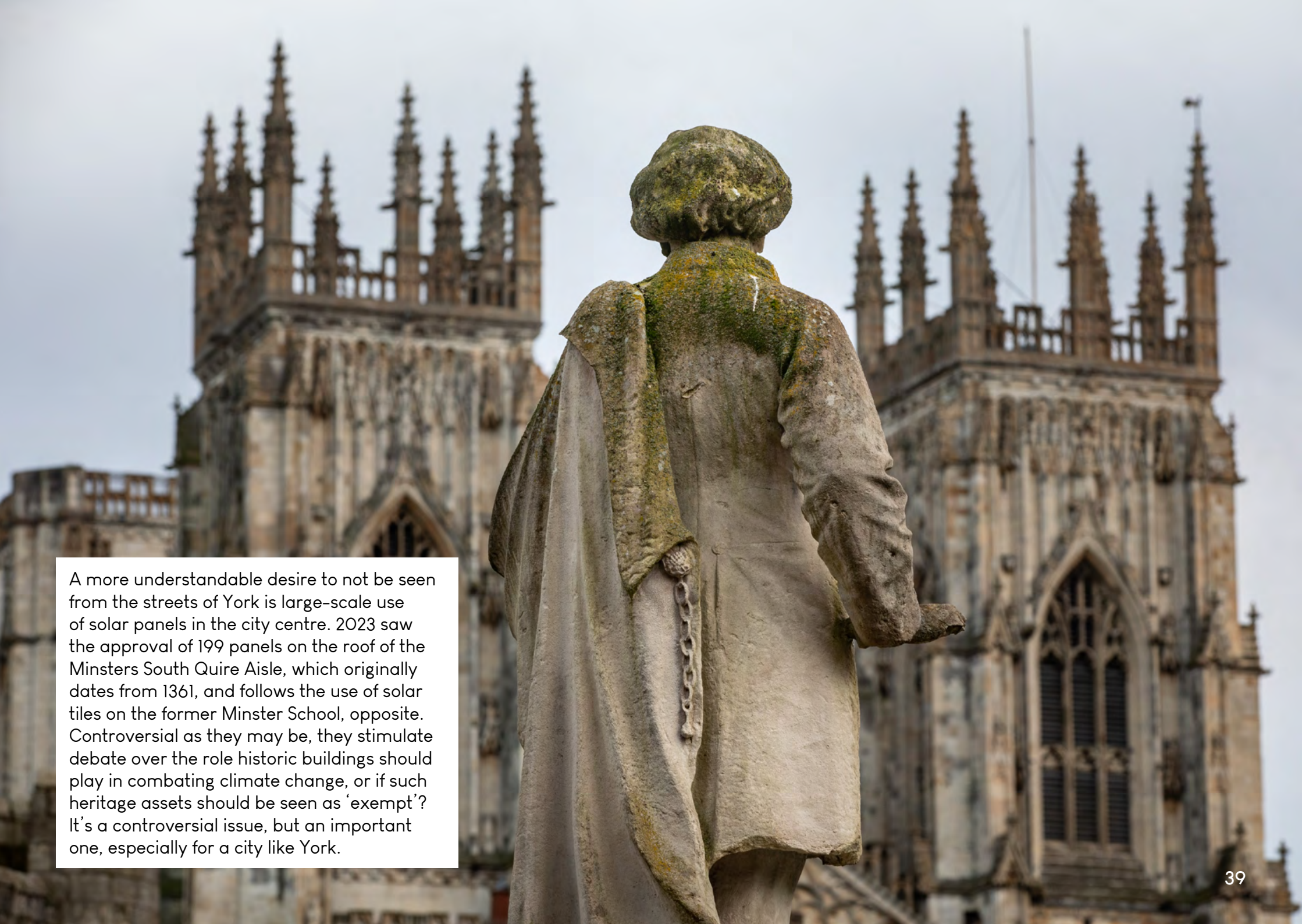
it was considered to be economically unviable. As the company behind the scheme has gone into administration and component parts of the site are for sale, it appears the assessment was correct. As the office-to-residential conversion application remains in place, the former 7-storey Norther House office block may well be given a facelift as well as a new purpose. Although it would be a modest improvement for Rougier Street, the potential public realm benefit and economic uplift of the Eboracum Quarter Scheme would be lost.

Viability issues are a common theme running through some of the largest development opportunities in the city over the last year. The former Bootham Park Hospital was set to be redeveloped into a retirement community, but the developers have walked away, despite having gained planning permission, citing the scheme as no longer viable. Notwithstanding concerns over the loss of heritage in the proposals, in particular the 'Pauper Wings', the overall historic gains were clear: a sensible reuse of a Grade I listed building with public access retained for most of the green space.

One of the conditions of planning approval was the repair of the former hospital's historic railings and piers on Bootham, which are listed. They are in a very bad state; the number of missing iron finials has risen from two to twenty-three in the last eight years. We hope that new developers for the site can be found, so that its long-term survival can be secured – before the building itself starts to follow the level of deterioration of its railings.

At Bootham Park's 'sister' site – The Retreat on Heslington Road, the Trust has concerns over the viability of the conversion of the former mental health facility to residential use. The cost of the maintenance of its extensive grounds, as well as historic buildings, is such that future occupants would be paying amongst the most expensive leaseholds in the city. Should they be unable to fill all new units, will it be able to operate? We favour greater 'enabling development' on The Retreat's land on Thief Lane to help reduce leasehold costs. A revised scheme has made headway with our advice, but more might yet be needed.

Elsewhere, achieving economic viability is often used to justify 'another storey' or large-scale extension. An extreme example is the recent approval of the conversion of the former BHS building on Coney Street and Market Street into a Hard Rock Cafe with a hotel above. Whilst sensible uses of the building, the additional storeys greatly risk bringing attention to what is essentially an unremarkable building. It also sets a hugely unwanted precedent for vertical growth in the centre of the city. The argument put forward in such applications is routinely that the additional storeys will not be visible from the street. It is a big gamble if they prove to actually be seen (and how many of us foresaw the extra storey on Stonebow House when it was converted in 2017 would make it visible from Low Ousegate, as it now is!) This approach is also a damning statement on modern architecture in the city, with newbuild presented as a success when it cannot be seen. What happened to the vision and boldness of new design!

A stone statue of a person, likely a historical figure, is shown from the back. The statue is made of weathered stone and is covered in patches of moss or lichen, particularly on the head and shoulders. It wears a long, flowing robe with a chain hanging from the waist. In the background, the intricate Gothic architecture of York Minster is visible, featuring multiple spires and detailed stonework. The sky is overcast.

A more understandable desire to not be seen from the streets of York is large-scale use of solar panels in the city centre. 2023 saw the approval of 199 panels on the roof of the Minsters South Quire Aisle, which originally dates from 1361, and follows the use of solar tiles on the former Minster School, opposite. Controversial as they may be, they stimulate debate over the role historic buildings should play in combating climate change, or if such heritage assets should be seen as ‘exempt’? It’s a controversial issue, but an important one, especially for a city like York.

Planning Club

In terms of sheer scale of York Civic Trust volunteering – the power of “Planning Club” students on a week-by-week basis is unmatched. Planning Club is a partnership programme with the University of York’s Department of Archaeology, training the postgraduates in the role of local authority conservation officers. As a nominated local consultee on planning applications, the Trust is able to provide the postgraduates with invaluable casework experience, helping to develop their careers as they scrutinise applications, working alongside experienced professionals

Our pioneering Planning Club partnership with the University of York continues to go from strength to strength. In 2022, up to 60 students have been involved, a cumulative contribution equivalent to the work of eight full-time Conservation Officers – more than twice the capacity of the City of York Council’s officers.

From this cohort, the Trust has also offered paid internships for two postgraduates through the Michael Bearpark bequest. Both have excelled in the role and used their experience to step seamlessly into full-time local authority conservation officer roles, Kate Harris with East Riding Council, Becca Bowran with Somerset Council.



“Planning Club” students admiring views from the new York St John Creative Centre during a site visit as part of York Design Awards 2023. This year we have helped over a dozen students find professional heritage positions.

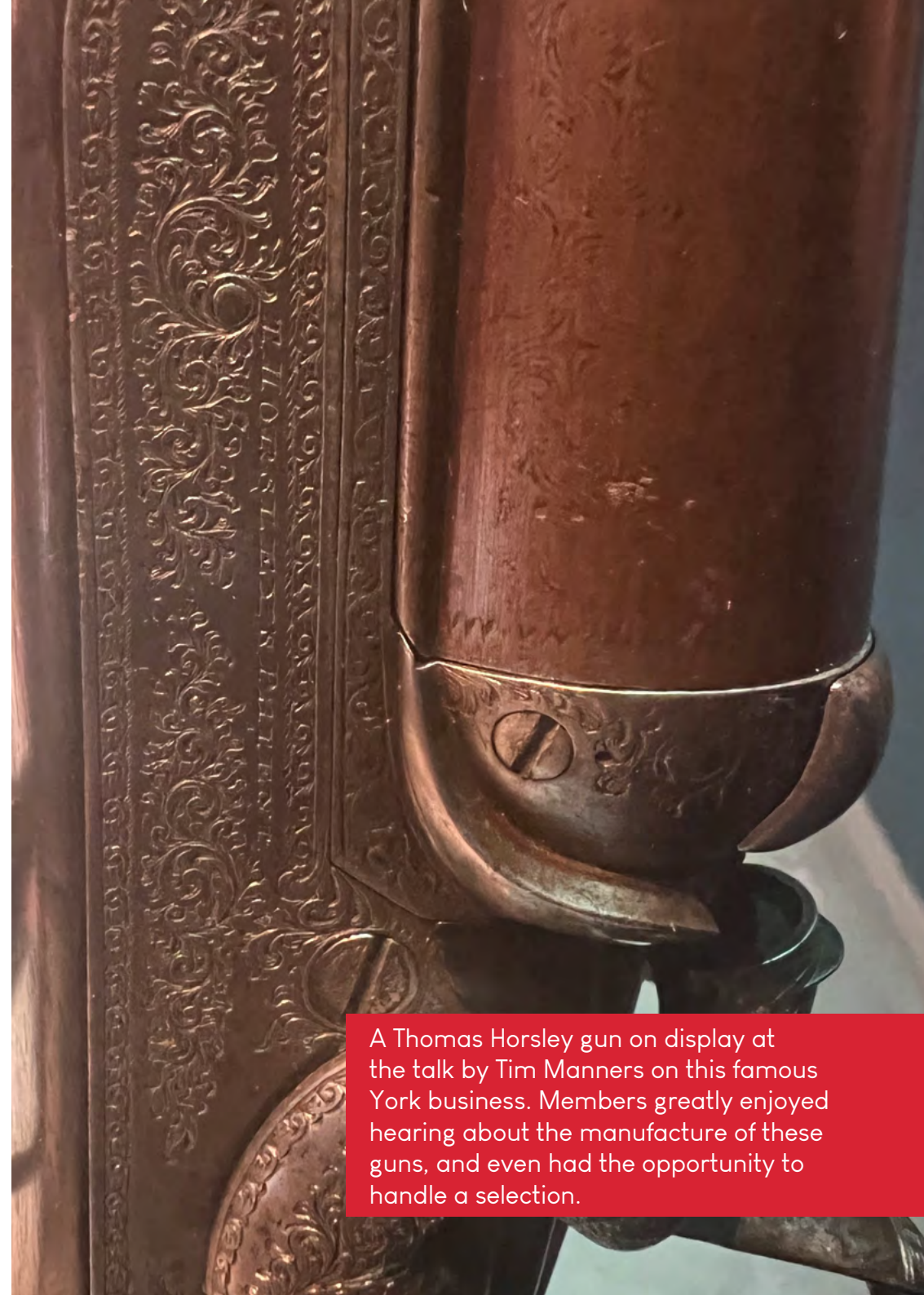
Members' events

York Civic Trust members enjoyed a rich and varied programme of events over the year including a wide range of visits, walking tours, talks and workshops.

For the first time the members' events programme welcomed non-members, greatly adding to the impact of the work of the Civic Trust. The programme was organised and led by York Civic Trust volunteers without whom this fundamental part of Civic Trust membership could not take place.

Members visits included guided tours of recent architectural projects, as well as walking tours on topics as diverse as the architecture of St Saviourgate and Darlington's Railway Quarter. Fairfax House and the nearby Friargate centre hosted talks on many subjects including the Stained Glass of York Minster, Pevsner's North Riding and Thomas Horsley – the gun-maker of Coney Street.

The University of York's Streetlife project presented the results of the heritage strand of the initiative, which has informed plans for the future development of Coney Street. The Civic Trust has continued to work with the University of York as the Streetlife project has developed into the 'Common Room' – an Urban Room for the city.



A Thomas Horsley gun on display at the talk by Tim Manners on this famous York business. Members greatly enjoyed hearing about the manufacture of these guns, and even had the opportunity to handle a selection.



The winning students of the Primary School Public Speaking Competition, from Lord Deramore's school. They had the opportunity to perform their speech live on BBC Radio York - this picture was taken at the studio.

Public speaking competitions

Teams from eight of York's primary schools and ten of York's secondary schools participated in the two annual Public Speaking Competitions in July and November, organised by York Civic Trust.

Both competitions focused on topical issues of concern, including climate change, Covid-19, and local issues such as who should be celebrated with a statue in York. The views of the young speakers on climate change differed greatly. Some thought that "bystanding is not an option", whilst others suggested that a small city like York trying to help by becoming carbon neutral was like "putting a wet paper towel on a broken leg". Most agreed that as a beautiful heritage city with a global reputation, York has a responsibility to act on climate change.

The winners of both the primary school competition, George Payne and Alessandro Garofalo of Lord Deramore's Primary School, and the secondary school competition, Amelia Murgatroyd and Katie James of The Mount School, both addressed the need to celebrate a wider range of people with new statues in York. All the teams that took part in the competitions delivered high-quality presentations with humour and fresh insights for the large audiences that filled the Merchant Adventurer's Hall on both occasions.

Darrell Buttery (1941-2022)



In July 2022 Darrell Buttery, one of the most passionate supporters of York and the Civic Trust, very sadly passed away.

Darrell was a generous, knowledgeable, and well-respected historian, author and active member of the Civic Trust.

He took over as Chair of the Civic Trust in 2001 following the retirement of John Shannon and instituted several changes including a programme of members' events. He led many events himself, such as the Young York Civic Trust and the

Chairman's Lunches at his own home.

Darrell's knowledge of the history and buildings of York and his eye for detail saw him sit on the city's Conservation Area Advisory Panel for many years. A teacher who has inspired generations of children Darrell was the head judge of the Civic Trust's public speaking competition for primary and secondary schools. He assiduously maintained a diary throughout his life and often used this rich resource to enliven many a conversation and even the Civic Trust's often dry annual reports – once describing a very eminent member of the Civic Trust in print as 'representing Victor Meldrew'.

The collections of Fairfax House have greatly benefited from the numerous paintings and objects that Darrell was able to secure. Until June of 2022, even whilst very ill, Darrell continued to scour auction houses to provide Fairfax House with antiques for its shop.

Darrell very kindly bequeathed a portrait by Godfrey Kneller of Sir Christopher Musgrave to be displayed in Fairfax House, as well as a legacy to create an endowment fund in his name to continue the work of the Civic Trust.

For nearly 40 years, the Civic Trust thrived under Darrell's influence and leadership; he will be greatly missed.



Fairfax House

If Walls Could Talk

Building on the success of our 2020/21 exhibition *Reunited: Lifting Lockdown with the Georgians* and our Christmas 2020/21 offer *A Season for Giving*, the curatorial team have been digging into the archives to uncover new stories about the House and its one-time residents.

In particular, we have been working hard to challenge some of the historical inaccuracies which, over the last 40 years, have crept into the narratives told in the museum. Key amongst these was a desire to readdress the way in which the house's creator and one time owner, Ann Fairfax (1726-1793), has been belittled and marginalised in the interpretation of her townhouse on account of her poor mental health and status as a 'mere spinster.' This ambitious task resulted in our 2022/3 exhibition *If Walls Could Talk: The Forgotten Story of Ann Fairfax*.

This exhibition brought Ann out of the shadows to tell her remarkable story; a story full of intrigue, deception and ultimately of tenacity and grit. Drawing on new research, the exhibition vividly brought to life the tumultuous events which impacted Ann following the death of her father in 1772. Visitors were invited to journey through Fairfax House meeting a cast of characters along the way; individuals who played an influential role, for good and bad, in Ann's life. People like



The *If Walls Could Talk* exhibition poster – featuring the actress who played Ann, Edith Kirkwood, alongside a digitally edited portrait of Ann, where she is seemingly breaking free of her golden frame.



The library during the *If Walls Could Talk* exhibition. It was set up to look like the day before Ann left Fairfax House after the death of her father – her belongings packed up, the black veil hanging over his portrait.

Nathaniel Pigott, her cousin, who prayed on Ann and manipulated her into signing away control of her estates; Father Bolton who valiantly sought to protect Ann and yet was spitefully punished by her detractors with imprisonment and charged with treason, and their embittered servant Elizabeth Scott who objected to Ann's status and wealth.

This impactful story was told through a variety of innovative methods, from audiovisual projections of characters who spoke directly to visitors from picture frames on the wall, through to encouraging visitors to listen at closed doors to hear the servant's gossip and grumble.

As part of this reinvigorated narrative the curatorial team devised ways to give the museum's historic rooms a more 'lived in' feel; creating the impression that the one-time residents had just left the room by taking away unnecessary barriers and incorporating interpretative material in imaginative and holistic ways.

The exhibition proved to be immensely successful, generating excellent reviews from visitors. *If Walls Could Talk* was also successful in achieving YCT's strategic priority to reach and engage with a younger demographic of visitors (those under 35). Indeed, between May 2022 and May 2023 an Audience Finder survey indicated that there had been a considerable shift in the age of visitors to the Museum – 42% being under 34, as compared to our 80% of visitors being over 45 in 2013. The legacy of the exhibition will continue online, where the audiovisual accounts will be uploaded.

A Townmouse Christmas

If Walls Could Talk was followed with a brand new Christmas offer, *A Townmouse Christmas* which opened in November 2022.

This immersive Christmas exhibition ran throughout the museum's historic interiors and took visitors on a journey through the Georgian twelve days of Christmas.

Starting with a Christmas day breakfast and a sumptuous Christmas day supper, visitors travelled through the house learning about eighteenth-century Boxing Day traditions and gift giving, finishing in the Saloon with a raucous Twelfth Night party.

These Christmas celebrations were enlivened by a cast of over 250 small mice who populated the historic rooms and appeared to re-enact their own version of a Georgian 'Christmouse.' Hidden in furniture and frequenting the hallways – with their own doors! – seen devouring treats left by the humans, skiing, drinking, sleeping and making merry.

Many of the mice were dressed in Georgian clothing – immaculate recreations made by a team of our volunteers, who hand sewed the outfits using scraps of left over fabrics.



Even our CEO, Andrew Morrison, got in on the action and made detailed miniature replicas of pieces of Noel Terry's famous historic furniture.

By interweaving the more traditional and educational historic house offer of a Georgian Christmas with these playful and complementary mice, the curatorial team were able to create a truly family friendly offer.

Certainly, feedback was extremely positive, with visitor numbers back to pre-pandemic levels and a significant increase in the number of families choosing to visit Fairfax House over the Christmas period. We look forward to doing it again in Christmas 2023!

Elizabeth, Viscountess Dunbar

One of our greatest successes over the past year was the discovery and acquisition of the portrait of Elizabeth, Viscountess Dunbar, first wife of Charles Fairfax, 9th Viscount of Emley – the purchaser of Fairfax House.

The existence of the portrait had been known about for some time, but its location lost. After years of research to find it, it was discovered last year for sale online through an antiques dealer and was in danger of being sold into a private collection and exported internationally. We knew we had to do all we could to stop this from happening and so launched a public fundraising campaign to return the portrait to public display at Fairfax House.

The support for the campaign was overwhelming. Thanks to grants from Art Fund and the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, coupled with many generous donations from the public, we were able to secure the portrait and give Elizabeth a permanent home.

Born the Hon. Elizabeth Clifford, Elizabeth was married first to William Constable 4th Viscount Dunbar before wedding Charles Fairfax in November 1720. The two were only married for six months before Elizabeth tragically died, and yet our research shows she was an integral part of the

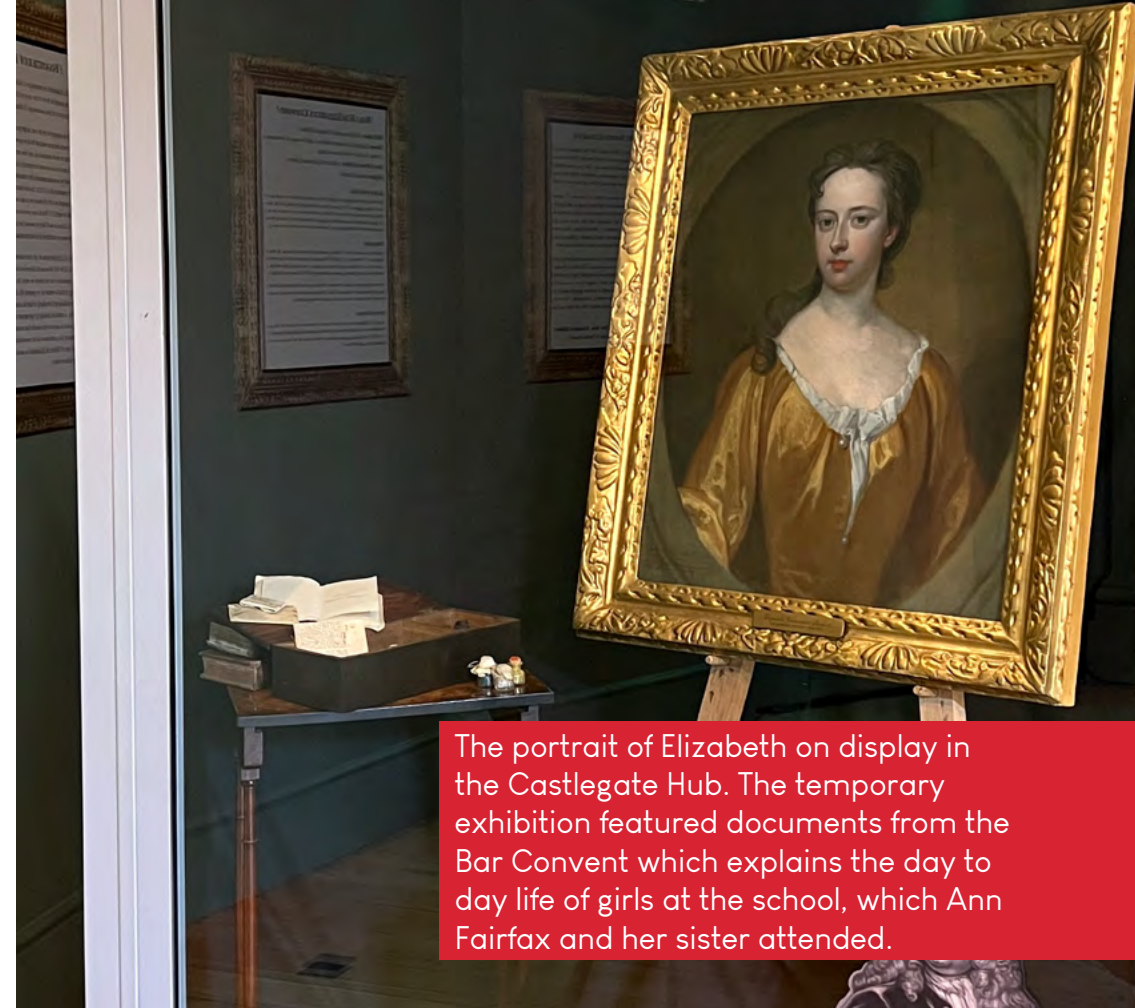


financing of Fairfax House.

The union between Charles and Elizabeth was described as the most provident marriage made by a Fairfax since the sixteenth century. Elizabeth brought a large marriage settlement, a combination of her own fortune mixed with a generous dower from her first husband, and upon her death, this vast wealth was automatically transferred to her husband. Charles then quickly remarried in 1722, to his distant cousin Mary Fairfax who was also entitled to a substantial part of Elizabeth's wealth.

The 8th Viscount Fairfax, Charles's father, was an incessant spender, so much so that the estates were in jeopardy. Elizabeth's money was therefore vital to stabilising the shaky Fairfax finances. It also allowed Charles to undertake a radical building programme at the family estate, Gilling Castle, acquire the land that made up the Ampleforth estates and even finance his purchase and remodelling of Fairfax House for his daughter Ann. Without Elizabeth's wealth, Fairfax House would not exist as it does today.

The portrait has been attributed to Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646–1723). Born in Germany, Kneller studied on the continent before moving to England. Here he established himself as the leading portraitist of the period, founding a studio that churned out portraits of the rich and famous on an almost industrial scale. Elizabeth's portrait is a fine example of Kneller's intimate female studies. The emphasis is placed directly upon the sitter's alluring femininity, enhanced by her hair falling



The portrait of Elizabeth on display in the Castlegate Hub. The temporary exhibition featured documents from the Bar Convent which explains the day to day life of girls at the school, which Ann Fairfax and her sister attended.

over her shoulder. Her fine features have been sensitively executed, the bold handling of skin tones and free fluidity of brushstrokes drawing the viewer in. The large area of grey ground is typical of Kneller's later works. A method developed by the artist to speed up the painting process, it meant his studio could better cope with the demands of a large circle of patrons. At the time of Godfrey Kneller's death in 1723, about five hundred works remained unfinished in his studio.

Noel Terry painting conservation

We are delighted to report that we have now completed Phase One of the conservation of Noel Terry's collection of paintings.

Noel Terry was a founding member of York Civic Trust and his fine collection of early English furniture, clocks and paintings were bequeathed to York Civic Trust for display in Fairfax House. Terry's paintings, which once hung at his Goddards home, have been on public display for almost 40 years where they have enhanced and complemented the presentation of Fairfax House as a Georgian Townhouse. However, many are now in need of conservation and cleaning; not only so that they look their best for visitors, but also to ensure that they can remain on display for another 40 years.

Phase One saw nine paintings – those most in need of conservation – taken offsite for treatment. This included removing old and yellowing varnish and replacing this with a modern synthetic resin, retouching or in some cases removing heavy-handed old retouching, cleaning and consolidating the gilt frames, relining where necessary and removing old glass fronts to improve access to the works underneath.

This extensive work was undertaken by ICON registered conservator Francis Downing and kindly funded by the Friends of Fairfax House and



Francis Downing in his studio.

the Noel G Terry Charitable Trust. Many are now back on public display at Fairfax House being appreciated by visitors and volunteers alike. This much needed conservation work has helped shine fresh light on Terry's painting collection – knowledge which is being shared with visitors and volunteers.

The curatorial team is trying to secure funding for Phase Two of the conservation project, which will see another twelve works restored and conserved. It is our aim to have most of this work completed in time for the 40th Anniversary of the opening of Fairfax House and the first public display of Terry's collection to the public in Autumn 2024.

The portrait before conservation.



The Conservation of Saint Catherine of Alexandria

The portrait after conservation.



Perhaps one of the most striking works to be conserved is this exquisite painting from the German School, dated between 1510-1600, entitled *Saint Catherine of Alexandria and the Conversion of the Philosophers*. On the previous page you can see the before and after images.

Painting on panel with the addition of rich gold detailing, the work recounts the story of Saint Catherine, a young aristocrat and early Christian living in the time of the Emperor Maxentius. She was famous for her protests against state religion and rebuked Maxentius for his persecutions. In response, the Emperor summoned 50 of the best Pagan philosophers and orators to dispute with her, hoping that they would be able to refute her pro-Christian arguments. However, Catherine won the debate.

Several of her adversaries, conquered by her eloquence, declared themselves Christians and were at once put to death, being burnt alive. The painting shows this event and the eventual martyrdom of the converted philosophers. The artist has depicted the philosophers bound together and manhandled by three guards, who carry sticks. A small fire burns in the foreground of the painting pointing to their eventual punishment (though this fire is merely representative and requires the viewer to imagine the full horror). Catherine herself was later tortured on a spiked wheel for her faith, but legend has it that the wheel fell to pieces and she was unhurt. Eventually, Catherine was beheaded for her beliefs.

Noel Terry purchased this painting in 1931 for the

colossal sum of £650 – around £56,000 in today's money. This was the most expensive painting Terry ever bought and one which took pride of place in his Dining Room at Goddards. Crucially, this remarkable painting points to Terry's ambition to have a noteworthy collection, with works of considerable value, by Old Masters and on subjects which required serious contemplation. Such works not only perfectly complemented his growing furniture and clock collection, but also created the impression that Terry's wealth was not new, confirming his position as a man of the establishment with gentlemanly tastes.

As the before and after images show (see previous page), conservation has brought this magnificent painting back to life and made its religious imagery accessible to viewers once again. Conservation work involved the cleaning of surface dirt, followed by the removal of discoloured varnish. Old, discoloured retouching was also removed and localised consolidation was carried out to stabilise the craquelure*, followed by necessary retouching. Finally, the painting was re-varnished with a non-yellowing synthetic resin for future protection. The frame was cleaned and consolidated and the painting was re-fitted. The glass front which once obscured so much for the painting has also been removed, enabling visitors to appreciate the work in all its detail.

*Craquelure is a fine pattern of dense cracking formed on the surface of materials. It can be a result of drying, aging, intentional patterning, or a combination of all three.

York College partnership

For the last two years, Fairfax House has had an exciting and productive collaboration with York College and their 2nd year BA Fashion Garment and Technology students.

As part of their 'Product Innovation' module, students visit Fairfax House, explore the property and its collections, and meet with our Curator to learn more about the history of the house. Students then have to create a piece of avant-garde fashion inspired by an aspect of Fairfax House. The results have been tremendously innovative and highly individual. Each student chose a different aspect of the house for inspiration: from our Rococo ceilings, through to our Chippendale style bookcases and marble fireplaces. These details were then translated and adapted to create complete outfits. The finished garments, along with their accompanying design boards, were displayed at Fairfax House in June 2023 in the Castlegate Hub for visitors to enjoy.

Programme lead at York College University Centre's BA (Hons) Fashion Design & Garment Technology course, Rebecca O'Leary, said she was "thrilled with the platform the collaboration has given her students" and described the experience as "a golden opportunity for the budding fashion designers to exhibit at Fairfax House in the heart of the city."



Two of the outfits produced by the students. These garments were displayed alongside our own dress-making project – our volunteers are making a saddleback dress using traditional 18th century techniques.


Developing talent

Evie Andrews reports on her career journey:

I started working at Fairfax House in January 2022 as a student intern with Hazel Erwee, as part of our Curating and Art History degrees at the University of York. Over several months we were given the opportunity to work hands-on with the collection and curators at Fairfax which allowed us to gain skills such as object handling and cataloguing. During this time, we were welcomed as part of the team and later offered the chance to become part-time employees.

As a member of staff, my role was divided between the front-of-house team and a weekend duty manager position. In this time, I was able to refresh my first aid training and take on more responsibilities such as our gift shop, which I now run alongside my current position as Volunteer Coordinator.

My time at Fairfax House as an intern gave me the practical experience needed to find a position in this industry, and after graduating I became a full-time member of staff. As Volunteer Coordinator I look after our 70 volunteers and through the Trust's continued dedication to my training and development I have been able to sign onto at least four training courses to further develop my skills in this position. I'm very grateful to the Trust!



Hazel and Evie soon after they became part-time members of staff. Working at York Civic Trust aided Evie's dissertation, as she was able to have open conversations with professionals in the museums sector.

Accounts

The financial year February 1st 2022 to 31st January 2023 was a year with many highlights.

Overall, our income has increased by 24%. Fairfax House saw a 56% rise in visitor numbers, with overwhelmingly positive reviews this year. As is consistent across the museum sector, Fairfax House visitor numbers have grown to 85% of pre-Covid levels.

After two years of support for our tenants, our rental income has returned to its full figure. Going forward we will help our tenants to weather the current challenging financial climate.

We continue to work hard to develop our other income streams to allow us to be able to spend more on our charitable objects. The continued commitment from our members, and the opening of our events programme to non-members, has provided increased support for our work.

This rise in income has allowed the Civic Trust to increase spend on delivering the charity's aims. Our impact is greatly enhanced through our volunteers and our work with partners. To help shape the future, we have published *A Transport Strategy for York* and worked alongside the University of York on the Streetlife project. We continue to invest in the heritage of the city, in particular maintaining and developing Fairfax House. We have continued to support city-wide initiatives including York Design Awards.

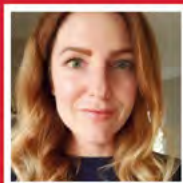
| Income | £ 2022-2023 | £ 2021-2022 | % Change |
|---|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Fairfax House Admissions | 111,004 | 71,068 | +56% |
| Investment income | 164,316 | 145,148 | +13% |
| Rental income | 80,650 | 68,150 | +18% |
| Other income | 108,325 | 88,680 | +22% |
| Total income | 464,295 | 373,046 | +24% |
| Expenditure | | | |
| Raising Funds | 42,051 | 26,863 | +57% |
| Charitable Activities | 445,336 | 375,603 | +19% |
| Total Expenditure | 487,407 | 402,466 | +21% |
| Net expenditure - deficit for the year | -23,112 | -29,420 | -21% |
| Measurable Performance Indicators | | | |
| Fairfax House Visitors | 17,592 | 10,857 | |
| Planning Applications Assessed | 2,657 | 2500 | |
| Plaques Projects | 4 | 2 | |
| City Enhancement Projects Completed | 1 | 1 | |
| Grants Awarded | 1 | 1 | |

Overall, the Trust's net assets held up well considering the uncertainty of the period, finishing the financial year valued at £7,395,199 – only 1% down on the previous year. The charity has strong free reserves and maintains a policy of always retaining a £275,000 cash reserve, equivalent to six months pre-Covid operating costs. The Trust's final accounts for the financial year 2022- 2023 are available on our website.

Our team



Duncan Marks
Civic Society
Manager



Louise Precious
Finance
Manager



Sarah Burnage
Curator



Andrew Morrison
Chief Executive
Officer



Rachel Wallis
Collections Manager
and Assistant Curator



Viv Davis
Front of House
Officer



Alana Bates
Facilities
Officer



Livvy Golby-Kirk
Marketing and
Communications Officer



Natalie Yemelyanova
Administrative
Assistant



Julie Bunney
Housekeeper



Morgan Lee
Front of House
Officer



Evie Andrews
Volunteer Coordinator
and Front of
House Officer



Jean Dilworth
Front of House
Assistant



Linda Scarbro
Front of House
Assistant

Our trustees



**Christopher
Webb**



**Helen
Dobson**



**Dr Kate
Giles**



**Elizabeth
Heaps**



**Richard
Smith**



**Wendy
Bundy**



**Professor
Tony May**



**John
Vincent**



**Matthew
Seddon**



**Andrew
Scott CBE**



**Stephen
Lusty**



**David
Thewlis**

A word from Stephen Lusty, Chair of Trustees:

Thanks to strong membership and generous members' legacies, York has become one of the foremost Civic Trusts in the UK. But it is the dedication of our highly motivated staff to the aims of the Trust, as well as the commitment of its Trustees that will continue to protect and promote our city's unique heritage and ambience into a fast-changing future.

Joining the Trust...

Join today. Shape tomorrow.

If you would like to support York's heritage, attend our events, or have the opportunity to play a role in current issues in the city, why not join us?

Recently, York Civic Trust members have volunteered their time to lead reviews of York's sustainable developments, provide city design guidance, and help form feedback on York's draft Local Plan.

If you have a skill or experience that could benefit the Trust – such as in architecture, town planning, education, or event organisation – then do let us know when you join.

Individuals and couples can join with an annual or life-time membership. Businesses can help support the work of the Civic Trust and access our networking and advisory activities through an annual or one-off supporter donation/ membership.

Join online at www.yorkcivictrust.co.uk/join, or call into Fairfax House for our hard copy membership form.





Elizabeth Montagu
1718-1800

Founder member of the
'Bluestocking' movement
writer and patron
of the arts
lived here

Leaving a legacy...

Leave a gift that supports York's future.

The Civic Trust has the long-term future of the city at its heart. For over 75 years, people like you have played their part in protecting and caring for York's heritage through the work of York Civic Trust. Thanks to your support, we have been able to protect, conserve and sustain some of our city's most-loved heritage.

If you are considering a Gift in your Will in the future and would like to be able to ensure that future generations enjoy the city that is close to your heart, we would be very happy to talk to you about how you can support the work of the Civic Trust now and in the future. Please contact our Chief Executive on info@yorkcivictrust.co.uk.

