

ENTRY IS FREE



**YORK
UNLOCKED**

EXPLORE DISCOVER ENJOY

Celebrating York's
architecture, hidden
places and open spaces

3rd - 4th October

2026



York Unlocked Autumn Festival

www.york-unlocked.org.uk



Welcome to the fifth year of York Unlocked

Once again, we are opening doors across the city and inviting you to discover York from a different perspective. Each location in this year's programme offers something special – revealing the architecture, design, heritage and stories that shape the city and its surroundings.

From familiar landmarks to hidden spaces and places rarely open to the public, York Unlocked is an opportunity to explore, discover and enjoy more of the city - all for **FREE**.

York Unlocked is made possible by people. Our volunteers give their time and enthusiasm throughout the weekend, while building owners, organisations and stewards generously open their doors and share their spaces. We are enormously grateful to everyone whose support makes the festival possible.

Whether you are visiting somewhere for the first time or seeing a familiar place through fresh eyes, we hope you enjoy unlocking York with us.

The York Unlocked Team

Help Keep York Unlocked Free For Everyone

York Unlocked is free to attend, but not free to run. With your support, we can keep opening doors and sharing York's hidden spaces with everyone. If you enjoy exploring the city in a new way, please consider making a donation, every bit helps. Simply scan the QR code or visit our website to contribute. Thank you!



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Getting Around

Plan Your Weekend

Admission is free to all locations.

Volunteer stewards will be stationed in and around our buildings to welcome you.

Venues with listed opening hours are accessible on a drop-in basis; no ticket is required. Some venues require tickets to control the numbers of visitors – all tickets are free. Tickets will be released on 4th September 2026 at 1pm through our website: www.york-unlocked.org.uk

Tickets are booked very quickly, though keep an eye on the booking links for any cancellations that can be rebooked.

Accessibility

Accessibility information for our included buildings can be found on a PDF document on our website. As many of our venues are historic buildings, access can vary between locations. Please check the individual venue information before visiting and follow any guidance provided by our volunteer stewards.

If you're planning to explore York further, AccessAble's detailed guide to the city is useful for information about hotels and places to eat and drink.

Getting Around

Many York Unlocked locations are within walking distance of one another, although some are further afield. Our programme maps will help you plan your route.

York is well served by buses and Park & Ride services, and bicycles can be hired across the city. Visit the iTravel York website for up-to-date public transport, cycling and parking information.

Bikes can be hired for the weekend. Go to www.getcycling.org.uk for further information and cycling routes. Information on car parks and Blue Badge parking around the city is available on the City of York Council website.

Stay Connected

website: www.york-unlocked.org.uk
Facebook: York Unlocked
Instagram: @yorkunlocked
X: @YorkUnlocked

Bishopthorpe Road and York South

- 1 Kentmere House Gallery
- 2 Bishopthorpe Palace
- 3 Terry's Factory Clock Tower
- 4 St Andrew's Church



Bishopthorpe Road and York South

1 Kentmere House Gallery

Scarcroft Hill

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

Built 1898 by the Primitive Methodist Chapel Aid Association, this is a beautifully crafted Arts and Crafts home - now art gallery. Its name evokes trips to the Lake District village and in honour of its namesake, the roof is Westmorland green slate which has been quarried in the Lakes for centuries.

2 Bishopthorpe Palace

Bishopthorpe Road

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : BOOK ONLINE

Grade I listed residence of Archbishop of York. Originally built in 1241 by Archbishop Walter de Grey. Gothic stable block and gatehouse designed by John Carr's architect firm, added in 1766-9. Gatehouse clock W Potts & Sons Ltd in 1913.



Bishopthorpe Palace

3 Terry's Factory Clock Tower

Bishopthorpe Road

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : BOOK ONLINE

This iconic clock tower features a clock with a 'waiting train' mechanism, powered by an electrical impulse from a master clock. The tower is part of five buildings designed by J G Davies and L E Wade for Terry's chocolate factory (built 1924-1930). Tours in partnership with York Clock Group.

4 St Andrew's Church

Church Lane, Bishopthorpe

Sat 3rd Oct : 10am - 4pm

Sun 4th Oct : 12pm - 4pm

Following continual flooding, the church was relocated and built in 1885-1899 opposite Bishopthorpe Palace. Designed by ecclesiastical architect C Hodgson Fowler. Gothic Revival in style with pointed archways and clustered columns.



Kentmere House Gallery

Bootham and Museum Gardens

5 Bootham School

6 The Hospitium

7 King's Manor

8 Museum Gardens Lodge



Bootham & Museum Gardens

5 Bootham School

Bootham

Sat 3rd Oct : DROP IN Tour 11am & 2pm

Originally the school opened in Lawrence Street before moving to this Bootham site in 1846. Its mix of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings (including an observatory with a 17-sided heptadecagon dome roof) is contrasted by the 1966 assembly hall designed by architect Trevor Dannatt - an example of concrete modernist architecture.

6 The Hospitium

Museum Gardens

Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

Built in the 14th century, the Hospitium may have housed St Mary's Abbey guests or been used as a warehouse due to its proximity to the river. The building looks like it's split in two with its timber-framed upper floor and limestone ground floor - necessary for when the river floods.



The Hospitium

7 King's Manor

Exhibition Square

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

Grade I listed mediaeval manor, originally Abbot's house of St Mary's Abbey. Headquarters of Council of the North following dissolution of the monasteries. 1541 Henry VIII visits and building becomes 'King's Manor'. Manor school from 1813, then Yorkshire School for the Blind (1833-1956).

8 Museum Gardens Lodge

Museum Street

Sat 3rd Oct : 10am - 12pm & 2pm - 4pm

Designed by architect George Fowler Jones in 1874, the lodge features offices, a workroom and reading room. It was built for the Yorkshire Philosophical Society founded in 1822 and owned by Yorkshire Museum and gardens.



Museum Gardens Lodge

City Centre

- 9 Assembly Rooms (ASK Italian)
- 10 Bettys
- 11 Holy Trinity, Goodramgate
- 12 York Medical Society
- 13 Uncomfortable York



City Centre

9 Assembly Rooms (ASK Italian)

Blake Street

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

The Assembly Rooms were built to be at the centre of life in York, hosting entertainment and gatherings during the social season for the Georgian elite. Built in 1730, this is the first neoclassical building constructed outside Italy and it retains its classical grandeur.

10 Bettys

St Helen's Square

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : BOOK ONLINE

Opened in 1937, Bettys' upstairs dining room was modelled on the art-deco glamour of transatlantic liners. Our insider tours will explore the basement that was an informal WWII ops room, the staff canteen and store rooms that were once a ballroom.

11 Holy Trinity

Goodramgate

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 11am - 3pm

Tours : BOOK ONLINE

In 1834, Anne Lister and Ann Walker sealed their union at mass in this medieval church. It features rare box pews, a stained glass window illustrating the social order and cultural changes in York and a hagioscope (an angled window between the main church and chapel). Ticketed Tours discover the connections between Holy Trinity Goodramgate and other heritage sites across York

12 York Medical Society

23 Stonegate

Sat 3rd Oct : 11am - 4pm

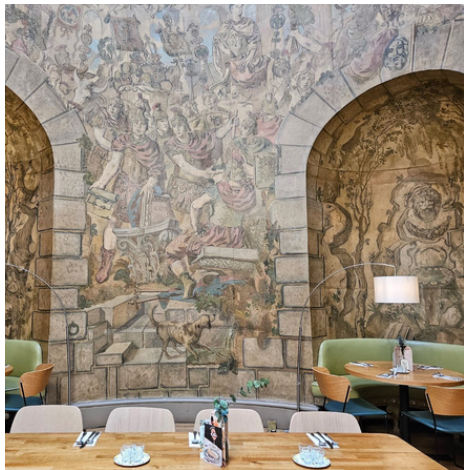
Once home of explorer and surgeon Tempest Anderson, the majority of this building was built c.1560 as two or three houses. It's now occupied by York Medical Society, with a restoration project in the mid-1970s creating seven flats. The garden is an oasis in the heart of the city.

13 Uncomfortable York

City Centre

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : BOOK ONLINE

Explore York's diverse, medieval, and industrial history through the perspective of women, people of colour and LGBTQIA+ individuals. This 1 hour 30 minute walking tour invites you to see beyond the stone facades and uncover the lesser known narratives of York.



Assembly Rooms (ASK Italian)

East

- 14 Bedern Hall
- 15 Merchant Taylors' Hall
- 16 RAFA House
- 17 St Anthony's Hall & Garden
- 18 Thin Ice Press



East

14 Bedern Hall

Bartle Garth

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

This dining hall was built c.1370 for the College Vicars Choral - a college for priests who sang services in York Minster. Over time its purpose changed from a school to a bakery to a venue/café. 1970s excavations revealed a window with fan-vaulted roof and original green floor tiles.

15 Merchant Taylors' Hall

Aldwalk

Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

Built in 1415, this guildhall has been continuously in use since. It's two halls: the Great Hall (with a modern stained glass window by Helen Whittaker and roof timbers that unusually combine triangular trusses and curved arches) and the Blue Hall (a later addition with stained glass by Henry Gyles).

16 RAFA House

Aldwalk

Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

Home to the York branch of the Royal Air Forces Association, this club offers the local RAF community a special place to socialise. It was two 18th-century homes, possibly built as tenements, until the Association bought them in the 1950s. This little-known club is now completely filled with RAF memorabilia.

17 St Anthony's Hall & Garden

Peasholme Green

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

St Anthony's Hall was built between 1446 and 1453 as a guild headquarters, later served as a workhouse, prison, theatre, school, and archive. Its original 15th-century arch-braced roof still features intricately carved decorations. The garden was designed by Annette Parkes and Bishop Burton College students. The sensory garden features heraldic patterns, tactile plants, and a sandstone shield representing the Guild of St. Anthony.

18 Thin Ice Press

Peasholme Green

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

Based in the schoolhouse in St Anthony's Garden, Thin Ice Press uses printing presses and typesets to keep traditional printing alive. Originally a University of York project to build a printing studio, the press now prints books and cards in the heart of the city. Why not try using the presses yourself?



Merchant Taylors' Hall

Castlegate and Walmgate

- 19 Castlegate House
- 20 Fishergate Postern Tower
- 21 The Golden Fleece
- 22 Herbert House



Castlegate and Walmgate

19 Castlegate House

Castlegate

Sun 4th Oct : 11am - 3pm

This townhouse was built in the 1760s by Harewood House architect John Carr. It later became the Quaker Girls School but is now a Masonic Lodge. The unmissable Temple extension was added in 1920, designed by architects Ward and Leckenby.

20 Fishergate Postern Tower

Piccadilly

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

This 500 year old tower is virtually unchanged since first built, with an original stone spiral staircase, medieval garderobe (latrine), a sense of medieval space - pure time-travel. Now embellished with display of commissioned paintings and drawings of the walls, plus refreshed information and illustration boards.



Fishergate Postern Tower

21 Golden Fleece

Pavement

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 12pm - 4pm

First mentioned in city records in 1503, this historic inn was once owned by York's Merchant Adventurers and later by John Peckett, Lord Mayor of York in 1702. Established as an inn by the mid-17th century, the site has more than 500 years of recorded history. Today, it is widely reputed to be York's most haunted public house.

22 Herbert House

Pavement

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

As the birthplace of Sir Thomas Herbert, historian and Charles I courtier, Herbert House is steeped in history. The black and white timber-framed building was built c.1545, featuring a traditional jettied upper floor. It was home to four Lord Mayors between 1573-1702 before becoming shops in the 18th century.



Herbert House

Micklegate

23 Methodist Chapel (Q York)

24 Micklegate Bar

25 St Columba's Church



Micklegate

23 Methodist Chapel (Q York)

Priory Street

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

Opened in 1856 on land once forming part of the grounds of Holy Trinity Priory, this grand chapel was designed by James Simpson of Leeds to accommodate 1,500 worshippers. Built in a striking classical Italianate style, it features an orange-red brick façade. Tours are available every hour from 10am.

24 Micklegate Bar

Micklegate

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

Dating back to the 12th century, Micklegate Bar was York's principal gateway from the south and the traditional ceremonial entrance for visiting monarchs. Its medieval walls have also witnessed a darker history, with the heads of rebels and traitors once displayed above the gate. Today, this remarkable space is home to Proof of York, a print studio, workspace and gallery.



Methodist Chapel (Q York)

25 St Columba's York United Reformed Church

Priory Street

Sat 3rd Oct : 10am - 4pm

This church dates to 1879, with its first minister Reverend James Collie. In 1912, his family donated three stained glass windows in his memory. The church was designed for 700 people and this space now fills with music of the Lewis Organ. Installed in 1907, it's fondly known as 'Mildred'.



Micklegate Bar

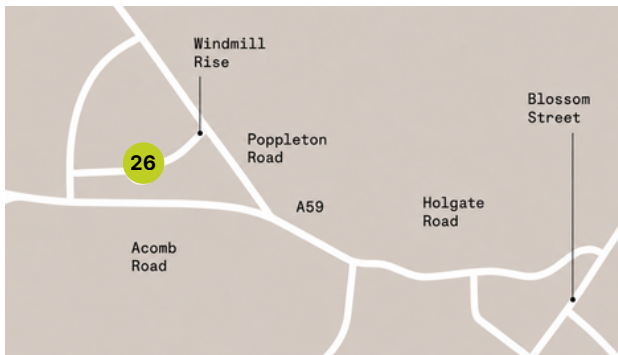
Holgate and Heslington

26 Holgate Windmill

Windmill Rise

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th Oct : 10am - 4pm

Built in 1770, the last private owner of the windmill was author/folklorist Eliza Gutch. It was bought in 1939 by the York Corporation before falling into disrepair. Thankfully Holgate Windmill Preservation Society formed in 2001 and installed 35ft windmill blades. It now stands as York's last surviving five-sailed windmill.



27 Heslington Hall

Heslington

Sat 3rd Oct : BOOK ONLINE

Built in 1568 for Elizabethan courtier Sir Thomas Eynns, Heslington Hall was substantially remodelled in 1852 by architect Philip Charles Hardwick. Requisitioned during the Second World War, it served as the headquarters of No. 4 Group RAF Bomber Command. The Grade II listed Hall became part of the University of York in the 1960s and remains part of the campus today.



Note: These buildings are on opposite sides of York, 45 minutes walking from the centre.

Education

York Unlocked runs an education programme that works directly with schools and universities in York to inspire among their pupils a love of architecture, design and the urban landscape. This includes running workshops at schools throughout the year and produces other educational materials that are available across York.

If you would like to know more about our education programme, or would like to collaborate with us on a project for school children please contact education@york-unlocked.org.uk

Thank You

York Unlocked would not be possible without the generosity of the building owners, organisations, stewards and volunteers who open doors, share their knowledge and help visitors explore the city.

Core and Operational Team

Joyanne Ball · Martin Harmer · Karen Hillier · Anna Hughes · Molly Jenner · Nick Jones · April Mitchell · Eleanor Neilson · Alison O'Sullivan · Lorraine Penon · Marisa Perez · Bella Scott-Hall · Olivia Sharrard · Amelia Spanton · Christopher Styles · Steve Westwood

Trustees

Lesley Dolben · Lorraine Farrelly · James Grierson · Charlotte Harrison · Anna Hughes · Martin Jeffery · Matt McCormack-Evans · Belle Richer-Hill

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We are also grateful for the support of: University of York · York Clock Group · York Conservation Trust · York St John University.

Funders

We would like to say a special thank you to our funders:

York Conservation Trust · **Everyone** who has donated money throughout the year to help make this event possible.

York Unlocked is a Registered Charity inspired by the successful models of Open Doors and Open House events across the UK and Europe. During our annual weekend, we organise the opening of buildings to the public, free of charge, to celebrate the built environment of York. We aim to educate and inspire discussions on the value of architecture and urban design excellence across all sections of our community, from decision-makers through to young people.

Stay Connected

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