

# Voices of the Archives



A journey through the community archives at Explore York Libraries & Archives as told through the words of our volunteers, researchers and community partners.

# Acknowledgements

Explore York Libraries & Archives would like to thank all volunteers, community partners, staff and researchers who contributed their knowledge and time to this booklet.

We would also like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund and City of York Council for providing the essential funding for the York: Gateway to History Project.

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“An archive should never be the domain solely of academics. You certainly do not need a beard, white gloves or a tweed jacket to access or enjoy the collections at York Explore.”

KAREN, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER



South Bank Amateur Football Club, 1916 - 1917 (ypsou\_10136)

“The City of York is expanding its interest in current activities and encouraging groups to think ‘archive’.”

YORK ARCHIVE CHAMPION

## Introduction

Our community archive collections reveal the history and culture of York from the 1500s-Today; whether that’s through a personal diary, account book of a local business or photograph of a community event. Don’t take our word for it; explore the community collections as told through the voices of our community partners, and discover why we’re all so proud to be part of York’s past, present and future.

Interested in discovering more? You can search our community archives by clicking on the three-letter reference number next to each collection title, or by using the online catalogue at [www.exploreyork.org.uk](http://www.exploreyork.org.uk).

Everything in this booklet is available for hands-on access in our Reading Room, upstairs at York Explore (pictured right).

Left: A list of arms and materials kept in Cliffords Tower from 1667-1670 from the Yorkshire Philosophical Society collection (YPS/6/3)



“The Archives are a treasure trove of the unexpected and the unusual.”

ALISON BACKHOUSE, AUTHOR OF THE WORM-EATEN WAISTCOAT

# Community Groups

“Wherever you are in York there’s an amazing community spirit, and it’s something that communities seem to build very easily.”

MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC, YORK

## Spotlight item: York Rugby Club photograph, 1920-1921 (YRC/3)

“It was really lovely to watch members of the York City Knights Foundation’s ‘York and Proud’ heritage programme engage with the York Rugby Club collection during a recent visit to Explore. In it, they found photographs like this one, featuring old faces they recognised or grounds they have played at. To see what a collection means to someone in that way is truly special.”

JENNY, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT

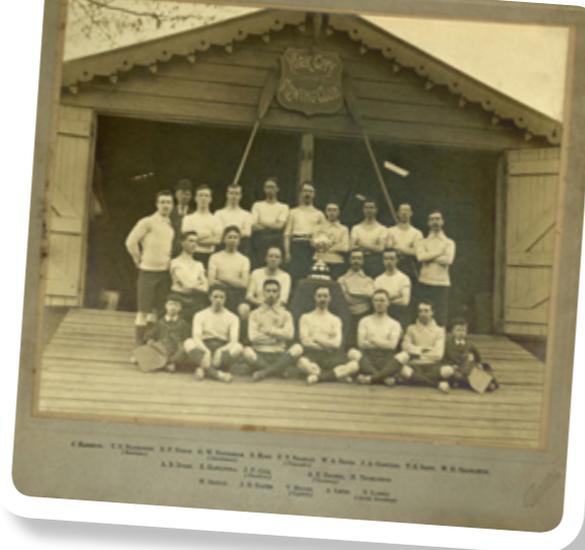


Rugby Club (YRC/3)

## Records of the York City Rowing Club, c1890s - 1983 (ROW)

The York City Rowing Club was founded in 1863 and is still in existence today, with a membership of over 200 people. Team photographs and minute books tell the story of how the club was run.

Stuart Gill's grandfather is pictured as President; middle row, third from the left, 1890s (ROW/1)



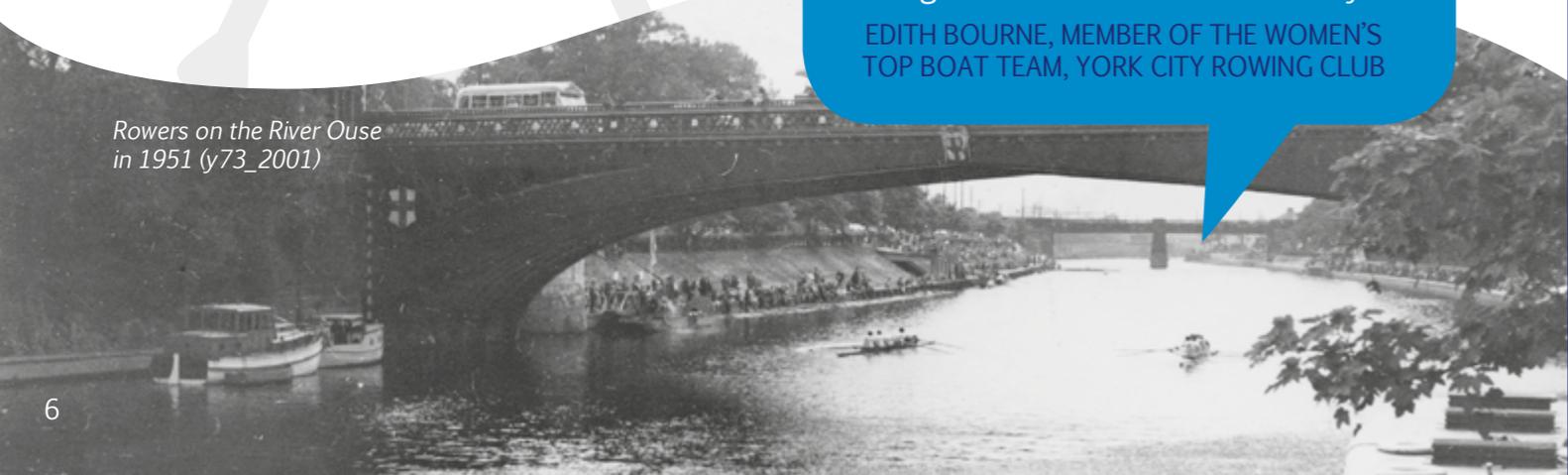
“My Grandfather was President until his death in 1942. His family of five including my father all became members of the club actively rowing... My brother Ian and myself also took to rowing and rowed for YCRC in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. I resumed rowing 18 months ago after an absence of 27 years.”

STUART GILL, YORK CITY ROWING CLUB MEMBER

“...neat ink handwriting carefully documents the meetings and as I looked through the books, I noticed that similar... issues [to today] dominated the meetings... A boat house rebuilding project ... and ever increasing membership numbers. YCRC is a sports club and a social club. This was as true then as it is today... It's been fascinating to take a step back from training and appreciate the history of the sport and the growth of the YCRC community.”

EDITH BOURNE, MEMBER OF THE WOMEN'S TOP BOAT TEAM, YORK CITY ROWING CLUB

Rowers on the River Ouse in 1951 (y73\_2001)



Layerthorpe Cycling Club in the early 20th century (yplay\_10140)

The Ebor Cycling Club logo (ECC/4/3)



## Ebor Cycling Club, 1931 - 2010 (ECC)

This collection tells the story of the Ebor Cycling Club through minute books, correspondence and publicity materials. Established in 1931, the club held weekly cycling runs, social nights and competitions.

“There were more than 4 cycling clubs active around York from the 1900s. The above image of the Layerthorpe Cycling Club includes members from some of the poorest parts of the city, which shows that York really has always been a cycling city.”

SARAH, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS & OUTREACH ARCHIVIST

“I have enjoyed cycling ever since I was a child, but this collection has inspired me to get back into it. The collection offers a glimpse of their annual dinner dances and weekly social nights, and shows a club that fostered strong friendships and provided plenty of good times. What a fun club to be a part of!”

JENNY, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT

Ebor Cycling Club Annual Dinner Dance tickets (ECC/5/7)



## York Lambretta Club, c1956 - 1968 (LCY)

The Lambretta Club was in operation in the mid-20th century, and sought to develop interest in scooter activities in and around York through rallies, sporting events and social gatherings.

A Lambretta Club member on his scooter (LCY/5/3/2)



Members of the Lambretta Club during an outing (LCY/5/3)

“[We] went out for runs on a Sunday... [and] met at Library Square or Regent Cinema. The committee planned the runs and a committee member led and one [went] at the rear to ensure no one got lost. Lambrettas... carrying two persons and luggage at times did mean passengers walking up hills.”

FORMER YORK LAMBRETТА CLUB MEMBER

“We were keen members of the club and attended rallies and competitions all over England and the Isle of Man.”

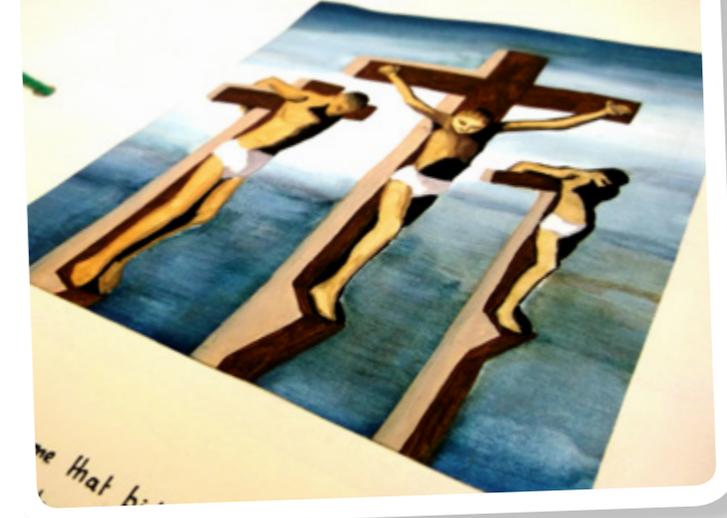
FORMER YORK LAMBRETТА CLUB MEMBERS

A York Lambretta Club rally banner and tenth annual dinner ticket (LCY/5/1-2)



## York Mystery Plays, 1951 - 1984 (YMP)

The Mystery Plays are a series of biblical outdoor performances that have taken place in numerous venues across York. The archive includes costume sketches, set designs and flyers advertising events throughout the years.



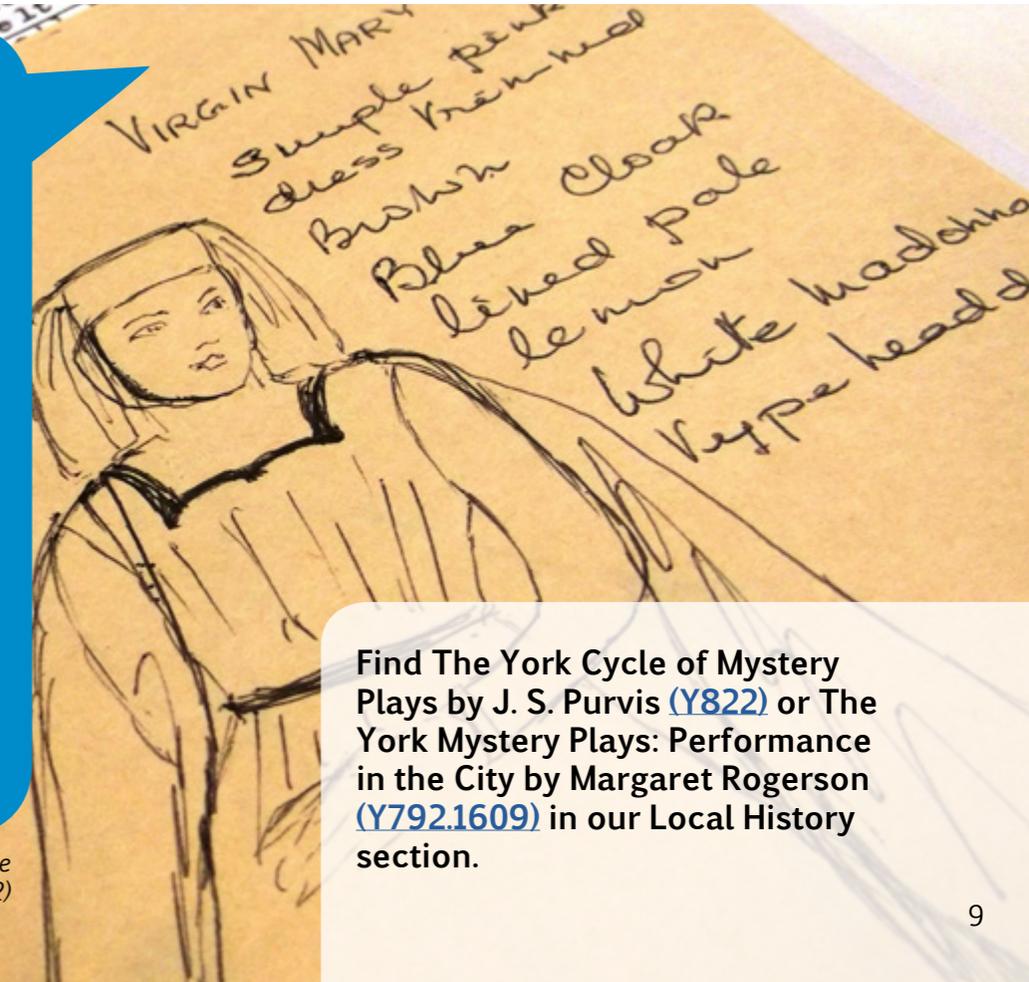
A beautiful sketchbook full of stage designs (YMP/2)

“The Mystery Plays add hugely to York’s heritage and reputation both as a medieval city and as a modern city of culture and drama.

The York Cycle of Mystery Plays is noted as being ancient in 1394. The medieval performances took place annually on Corpus Christi day on pageant wagons... [and] continued until c1570... in 1951 the city revived [them] as part of York festival.”

MARGARET SCOTT, VOLUNTEER ARCHIVIST, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR EARLY MUSIC

One of many costume design sketches (YMP/2)



Find The York Cycle of Mystery Plays by J. S. Purvis (Y822) or The York Mystery Plays: Performance in the City by Margaret Rogerson (Y792.1609) in our Local History section.

# York Normandy Veterans Association, 1944 - 2015 (NVA)

Featuring photographs, personal memoirs and oral histories, this collection documents the inspiring lives of York's Normandy Veterans, who were part of the 1944 Normandy Landings in France during the Second World War.

Watch the York Normandy Veterans project short film on our website: [www.exploreyork.org.uk](http://www.exploreyork.org.uk)



"I'm thrilled to announce that over the coming months we'll be running a Normandy Veterans York Legacy project to collaboratively catalogue the archives of individual York veterans, and the official archive of the Normandy Veterans: York Branch."

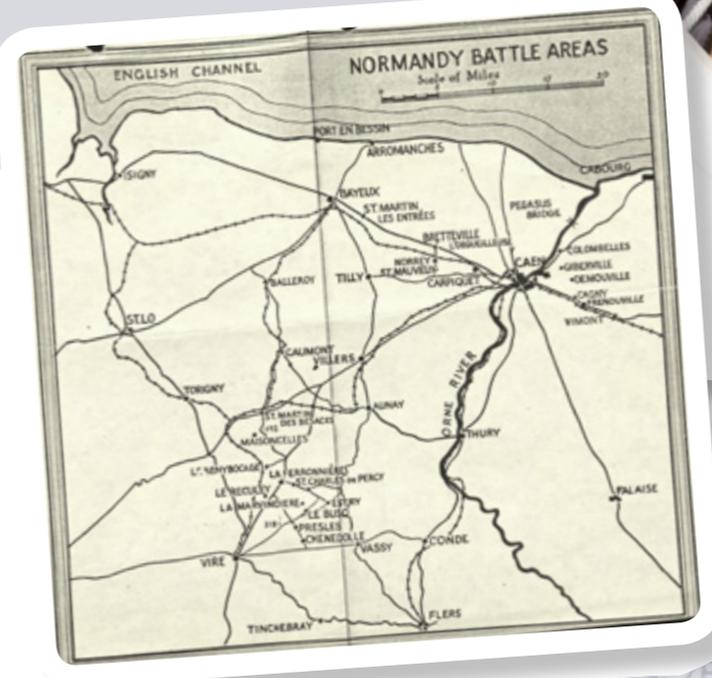
SARAH, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS AND OUTREACH ARCHIVIST, ON THE LAUNCH OF THE VETERANS PROJECT IN 2014

"You're given a number when you join up and then you remember it for the rest of your life."

EXTRACT FROM BERT BARRITT'S ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW, YORK NORMANDY VETERANS ARCHIVE

Photograph of the Guards Armoured Training Wing including York Normandy Veteran member, Dennis Haydock (NVA/2/6)

A map showing Normandy battle areas, donated by Veteran Dennis Haydock (NVA/2/1)



The Veterans at Explore's celebration event for the York Normandy Veterans Legacy project, 15th April 2015

"[This archive has] captured information that otherwise would have been lost and importantly, given a great sense of pride to those individuals providing the information... and will be a lasting memorial to the York Normandy Veterans."

NICK BEILBY, HONORARY MEMBER OF THE YORK NORMANDY VETERANS ASSOCIATION

"The heroes are the people who never came back. They are the ones who at eighteen, nineteen, twenty and even younger that didn't survive and then I get seventy years of wonderful life."

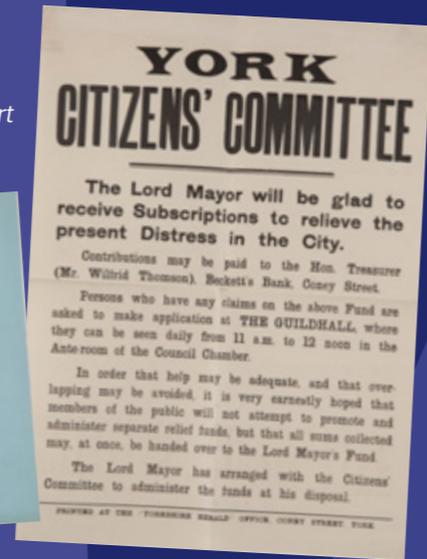
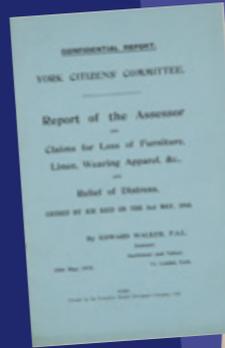
EXTRACT FROM KEN SMITH'S ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW, YORK NORMANDY VETERANS ARCHIVE

Find A Traveller's Guide to D-Day and the Battle for Normandy by Carl Shilleto ([Y940.542](#)) in our Local History section.

# York Citizens' Committee, 1914 - 1935 (CCR)

In operation from 1914 to 1935, the York Citizens' Committee provided relief to local people during and after the First World War. In particular, the collection documents the reparations for war damage caused during the 1916 Zeppelin Raids.

York Citizens' Committee Report for the Assessor (CCR/2/2)



A notice from the Lord Mayor to York citizens establishing the support of the Citizens' Committee for those affected by the First World War (CCR/2)

“Documents picture the extent of damage by the Zeppelin attack, and how compensation was subsequently organised...including...81 cases of replacement of household furniture, linen, bedding, apparel damaged or destroyed [totalling] £659.”

DICK HUNTER, MEMBER OF CLEMENTS HALL LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

“A goldmine for discovering how York responded to the First World War on the Home Front.”

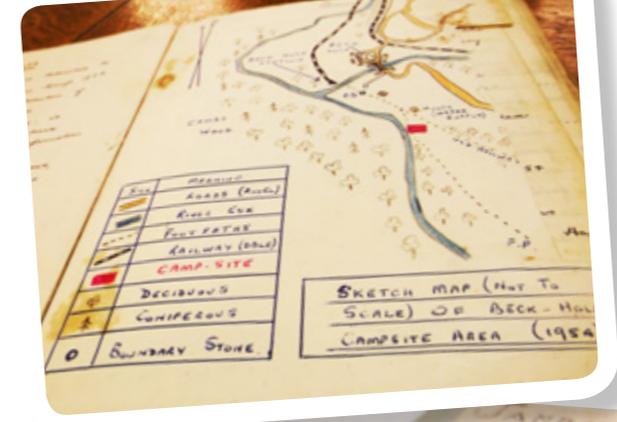
DICK HUNTER, MEMBER OF CLEMENTS HALL LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

A map of York with plotted paths of Zeppelins over the city in the 1916 raids (ZEP/1)



# The Scout Association, York, 1900 - 2015 (SCO)

The Scout Association was founded in 1907 by Robert Baden Powell. Today, it is Britain's largest mixed youth organisation and this collection gives a unique insight into the camp activities and events hosted by various York branches.



Above: A hand-drawn map of a Scout campsite area (SCO/2/1/4/4)



Right: A postcard celebrating the St. Pauls troop Jamboree, 1920 (SCO/2/1/6/10)

“Scouting has flourished in York for over a century, during which time tens of thousands of young people have been members and a huge number of adults have been leaders...”

The archive at Explore holds some fascinating material. A particular example is the original material relating to 1st St. Paul's Scout Group, which tells the story of its growth and development a century ago.

Press cuttings highlight successes over the years, with appointments, promotions, awards, foreign travel and, of course, a great deal of fun – particularly in York's strong history of Gang Shows.”

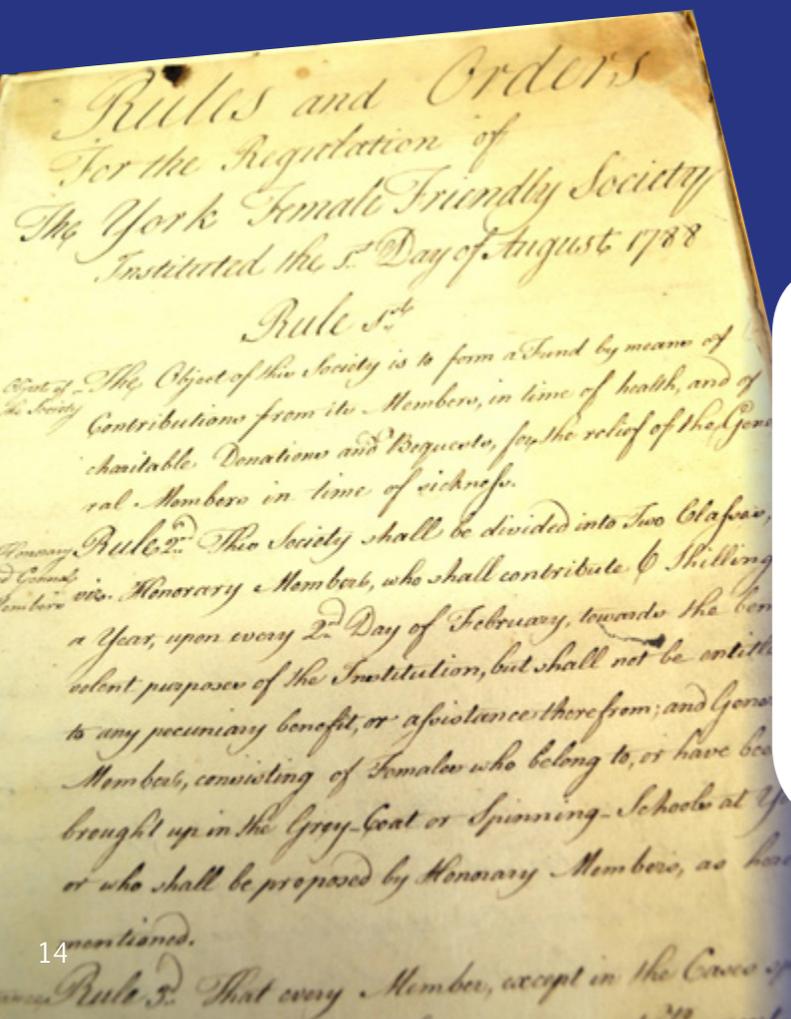
CRAIG SHAW, YORK JOINT SCOUT TRUST ARCHIVIST

Publicity on the Scout Association (SCO/2/1/6)



# York Female Friendly Society, 1786 - 1986 (YFF)

This collection documents the life of the York Female Friendly Society from its inception through to its dissolution. It features minutes, membership lists and publicity materials.



York Female Friendly Society members around the time of the Society's dissolution in 1984 (YFF/6)

“The York Female Friendly Society was created by Faith Gray and Catherine Cappe in 1788. The original purpose was to provide a safety net for girls offering sick benefits, pensions and grants for medical care for those leaving York’s Grey Coat and Spinning Schools.”

The society closed in 1984 and the archive offers a fascinating insight into one of the most important social movements of the 20th century.”

JULIAN, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER

Rules and orders of the York Female Friendly Society (YFF/1/3)

# Acomb Local History Group, 1631 - 2008 (ACO)

The Acomb Local History Group collection includes research notes that have formed the basis of lectures and talks hosted by the society. The collection is also the home of photographs and printed material on the local area.

Map of Yorkshire printed by Leak and Thorp Ltd. in 1949 (ACO/3/1)



A booklet relating to St Stephen's Parish Church, Acomb (ACO/2/4/1)

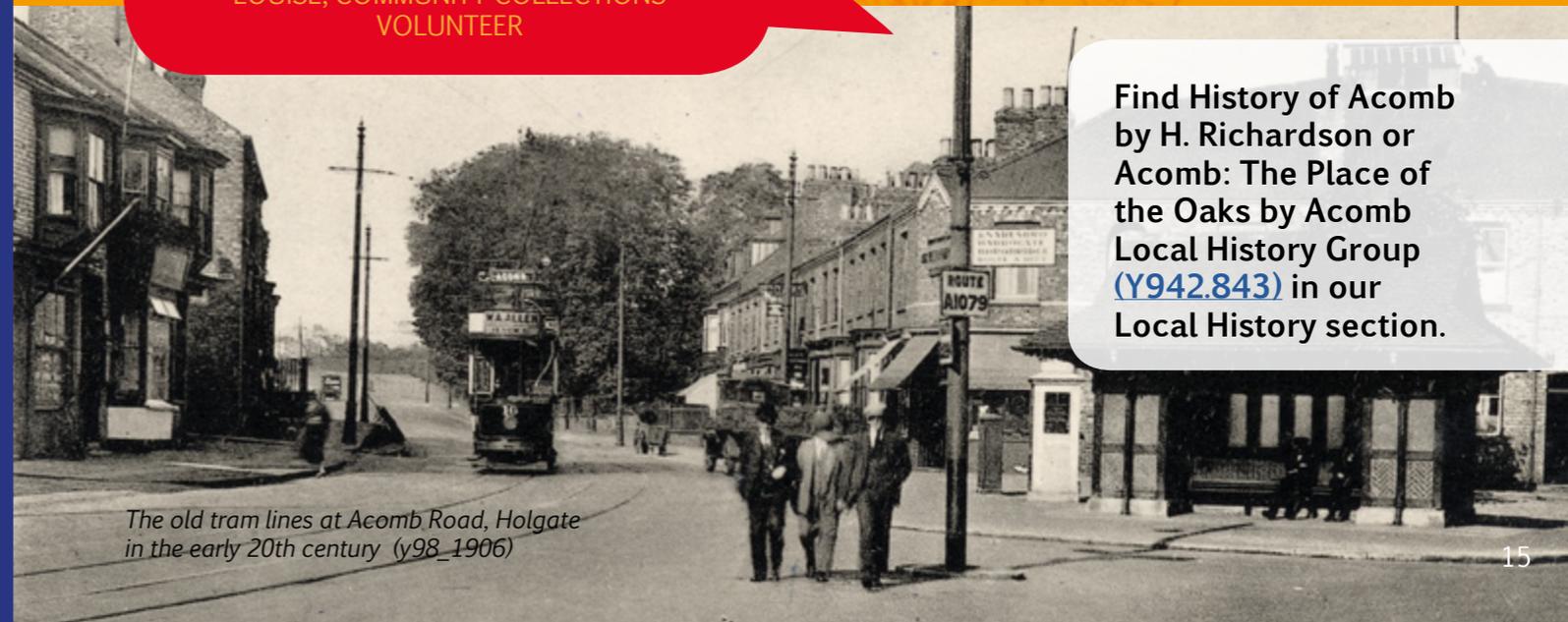
“If you live in the Acomb or Holgate area of York, or wonder what life was like in Acomb in the past, then this collection is a must see for you. Covering the fifteenth to the twenty first century, you can learn how Acomb changed from a village into the suburb it is today.”

LOUISE, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER

“The group was formed in about 2000 by Geoff Hodgson, a noted local historian. The present committee... considered [the collection] should... be made available to a wider public for research.”

MARY CLARKE, CHAIRPERSON, ACOMB LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

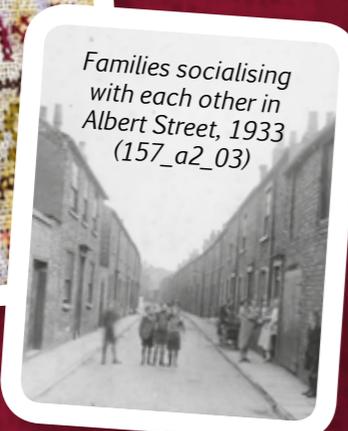
Find History of Acomb by H. Richardson or Acomb: The Place of the Oaks by Acomb Local History Group ([Y942.843](#)) in our Local History section.



The old tram lines at Acomb Road, Holgate in the early 20th century (y98\_1906)



A delicate piece of embroidery recording names and dates of the Carter-Thorpe family (WSC/2/20)

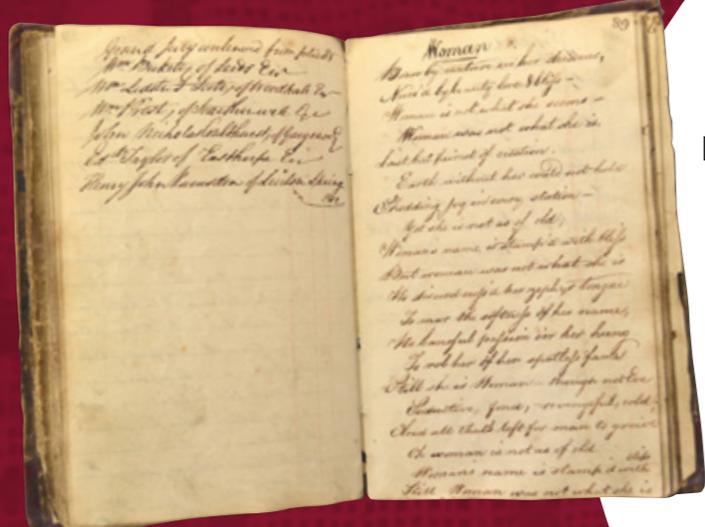


Families socialising with each other in Albert Street, 1933 (157\_a2\_03)

**“It is good to be able to handle the actual material and realise that these are real people’s real thoughts and feelings, some from hundreds of years ago.”**  
RICHARD, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER

# Families and Individuals

**“History...is a complex tapestry and each and every person is an individual thread within it.”**  
KAREN, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER



Christopher Ware’s Diary (CWD/1)

*Spotlight item:*  
**Christopher Ware’s Diary, 1813 - 1878 (CWD/1)**

“The diary of Christopher Ware, who was a York saddler in the 19th century, fascinated me... it is thrilling to handle something which another person physically touched and wrote in by hand. I like that Christopher Ware seems to have been just a ‘regular’ businessman... I wonder if Mr Ware had any idea his diary would one day end up in an archive.

My favourite extract is a very amusing entry entitled ‘How to Attract Woman’ which suggests that a gentleman must be prepared to talk ‘trifles!’

GEORGIE, EXPLORE READING & LEARNING ADVISOR

## Gray Family, 1623 - 1932 (GRF)

The Grays were a prominent York family who resided in Gray’s Court near the Minster from 1788 until 1945. The Gray solicitor firm was founded in 1695 and is still in existence today.

(GRF/4/4/7)



(GRF/4/4/7)

A clock with movable hands from a Gray family newspaper (GRF/4/4/7)

“The collection spans from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries and includes: diaries and memoirs, correspondence, genealogical notes and travel journals.

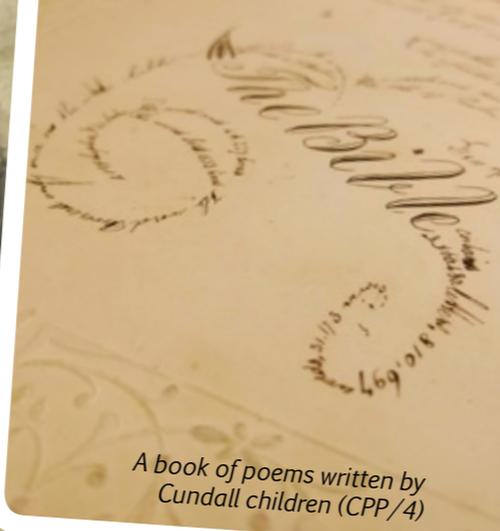
A personal favourite is the series of newspapers written mostly by the children for their parents and siblings when family members were away. Written between 1826 and 1840, they include an eclectic mix of family and local news, with some having been illustrated with paintings or sketch cartoons. One dated the 14th August 1826 mentions: how cholera morbus affected the family, the making of a flotation device for a child to learn to swim, marbles, beautifully coloured pattern drawings, a model clock and tales of country life.”

LOUISE, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER

**Find A History of the Grays of York by William Cobb in our Local History section ([Y338.761](#)).**



Women from the Cundall family climbing a glacier on holiday in Switzerland (CPP/5)



A book of poems written by Cundall children (CPP/4)

## Cundall Family, 1826 - 1990 (CPP)

A notable local family, the Cundalls were heavily involved in village life in Acaster Malbis, donating money towards the building of a new chapel and fundraising for a school for poor boys. The collection features copious family photographs as well as legal documents, correspondence and press cuttings.

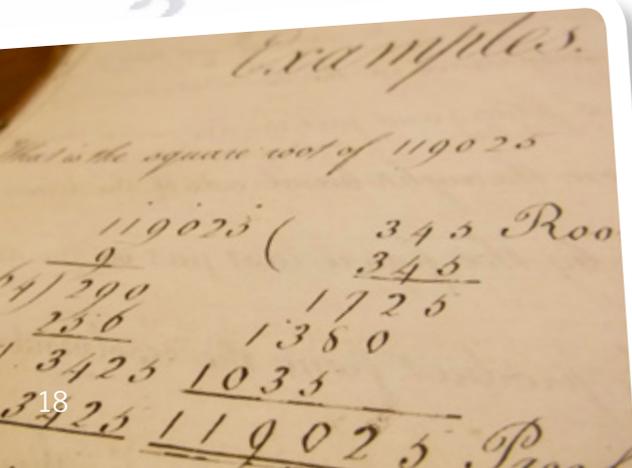
“Tucked within the Cundall family collection this photograph shows a group of intrepid female mountaineers.”

JULIAN, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER

“This family collection [includes] a large number of legal documents, correspondence and photographs. There are also some press cuttings from the 1830s, 1930s and 1960s, indicating the family’s prominence within Acaster Malbis, the town where the family lived for many years.”

“[Exercise books, poems and] education certificates... [belonging] to members of the family show that they likely possessed considerable wealth to be able to enrol their children in prestigious institutions.”

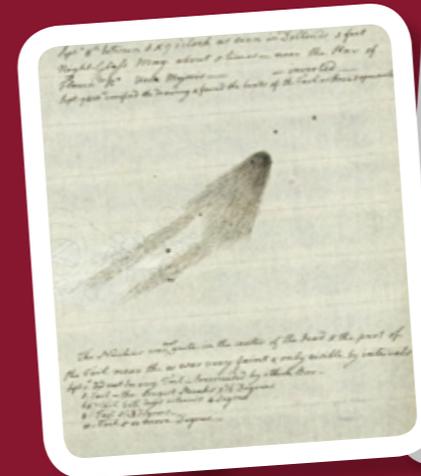
ALEX, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER



An exercise book for arithmetic (CPP/4)

## Goodricke & Pigott, 1760 - 1815 (GPP)

John Goodricke and Edward Pigott were astronomers most widely known for their work on the variable star Agol, observed from Treasurer’s House.



Astronomical sketches from Edward Pigott’s journal (GPP/3)



An illustration from Goodricke’s ‘Journal of Astronomical Observations’, York, 1789 (GPP/1)

“John Goodricke was born in 1764 and started astronomical observations in 1781. Goodricke was deaf and sadly died of pneumonia aged just 21, 4 days after being appointed a Fellow of the Royal Society.”

RODNEY, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER

Edward Pigott’s first astronomical journal, 1773 - 1789 (GPP/3)



“[This collection] is full of measurements, drawings and descriptions of astronomical phenomena including wonderfully detailed observations of solar (and lunar) eclipses seen from the UK and Europe... the archive is as much a work of art as it is a record of their scientific achievements.”

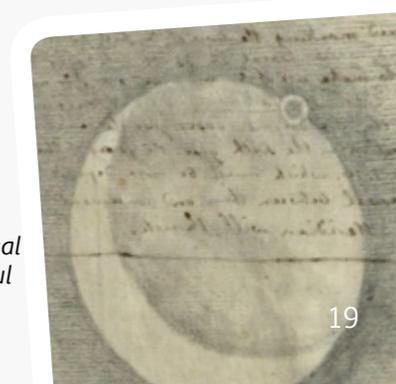
FRANCESCA, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT

### Account of a fireball by a watchman of Kensington Square, 18th July 1789.

“It was brilliant round, bigger than a plate, and larger than any he had ever seen, having a tail of about two yards, hanging down, which continued to lengthen, as by little jerks, till it was he thinks about 6 yards; it then returned or apparently withdrew in a similar manner, up to the body of fire.”

EDWARD PIGOTT, FIRST ASTRONOMICAL JOURNAL (GPP/3)

Edward Pigott’s first astronomical journal features lots of wonderful sketches (GPP/3)





## The Allen Family, 1812 - 1901 (ALL)

The Allen family were heavily involved in the Church of England and were dedicated historical researchers. Featured within this collection are their diaries, research notes and colourful illustrations.



Paintings of family shields in a research volume compiled by Samuel James Allen (ALL/3)

“Over several years, I was brought into contact with a most intriguing 19th century family. I’ve been able to admire their qualities, get a real insight into their domestic life, and almost share their good times and the bad.

The local connection is that Samuel Allen, one four brothers, was Vicar of Easingwold (1839- 1856). He was both a conscientious priest and a talented artist. The collection contains... his sketches of landscapes and historical buildings, chiefly in Yorkshire and Lancashire.

The collection also includes the diaries of Ebenezer Allen (Samuel’s younger brother), also a priest. These cover the years 1814 to 1880, and give a full and often moving account of the family during this period, and offer an amazing insight into many aspects of life during a century of change.”

MIKE ROGERS, FRIENDS OF YORK CITY ARCHIVES

The Allen family collection is a fantastic combination of historical notes and colourful drawings (ALL/3)

## Charles Piazzi Smyth, 1831 - 1970 (YMR)

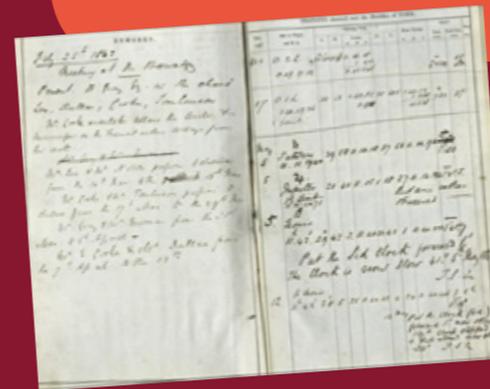
Meteorology, astronomy and pyramids were the three main research interests of the well-known Charles Piazzi Smyth, who was a regular visitor to the observatory and weather station in York Museum Gardens. The collection consists of over 200 photographs of cloud forms, detailed charts of York’s rainfall from 1938-1940 and various other astronomical, meteorological and barometric recordings.

One of many photographs of cloud forms taken by Charles Piazzi Smyth in Ripon in 1892 (YMR/5)

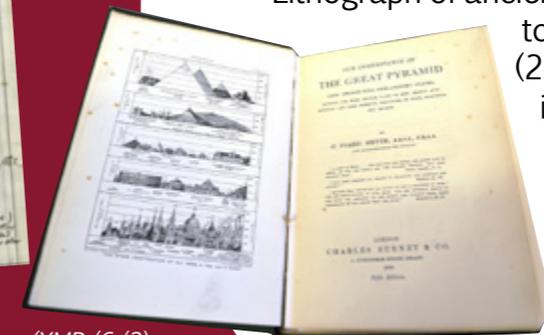


“Charles Piazzi Smyth championed photographic techniques. He used a wet, small one-inch square negative as opposed to the big glass plates his peers were using. In 1869 he went to Egypt to photograph the inside of the Great Pyramid at Giza using magnesium lightening. In other words he was using flash photography way before it became popular.”

ANGI, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER



Recordings of Charles Piazzi Smyth’s astronomical sightings (YMR/1)



(YMR/6/2)

### Spotlight item: Our Inheritance of the Great Pyramid by Charles Piazzi Smyth, 1890 (YMR/6/2)

“This book was written in 1890 at the height of the British Egyptomania, which saw a growing academic interest in the science and culture of ancient Egypt. Like most of Smyth’s work, this book focuses on the mathematical and cultural research into the great pyramids. [It] contains several fascinating plates including a Photo Lithograph of ancient hieroglyphics dating back to the reign of Pharaoh Khufu (2589-2566BCE), whose tomb is the Great Pyramid of Giza, which is the main focus of [much] of Smyth’s work.”

JULIAN, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER

## J. W. Knowles, 1804 - 1960 (KNO)

Born in 1838 and later a pupil of the York School of Design, John Ward Knowles was a stained glass painter, restorer and writer. In 1863, he began conservation work on the 'Fifteen Last Days of the World' window in All Saints Church, York, and in the 1880s and 1890s, he completed vast conservation work on the St. Cuthbert and St. William windows at York Minster.

Paintings of stained glass window designs by J.W. Knowles



“Eye-boggling is the word that springs to mind when you start rifling through the Knowles collection. Sketchbooks, photographs and beautifully handcrafted paintings astonish and amaze the eye.

Knowles is a name synonymous in York with stained glass. The family run glass-painting business, J. W. Knowles & Sons, continued from the late nineteenth century up to the 1970s.

When you open the boxes you are given the impression that their work might only have stopped and been put away yesterday. Many of the pictures still... have traces of the adhesive tack which would have displayed them on the studio walls.”

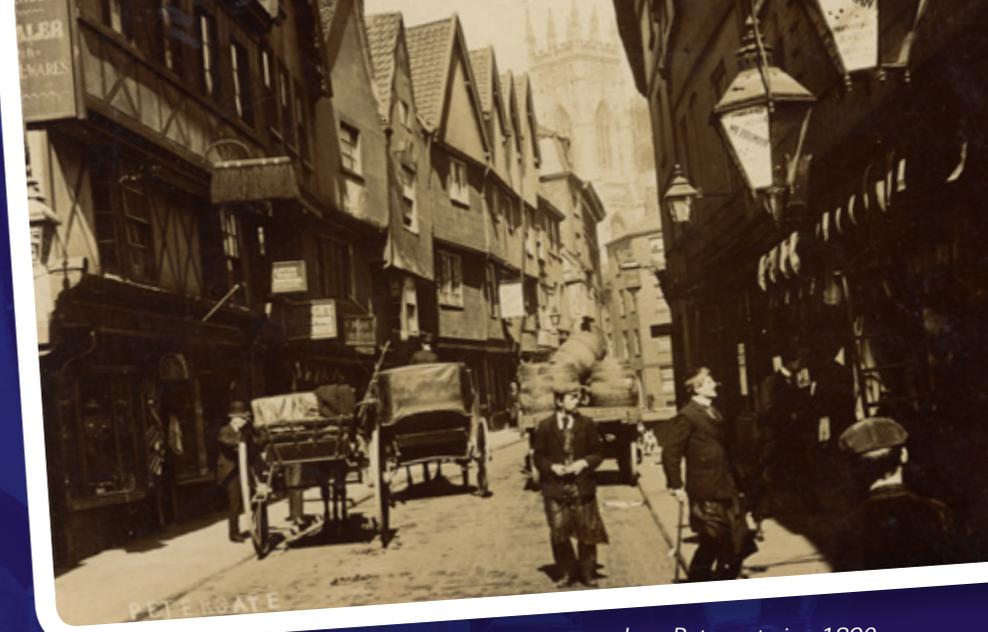
KAREN, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER

Find Technical Notes on the St. William Window in York Minster by John A. Knowles ([Y748](#)) in our Local History section.

Artwork for stained glass window designs by J. W. Knowles (KNO/15)

“Our business collections are quite diverse, ranging from big national companies based in York to smaller, local shops. These collections tell a unique story of York’s working life.”

JENNY, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT



Low Petergate in c1890 (y9\_pet\_264)

## Local Businesses



Lady Peckett's Yard in c1890 (y9\_lad\_1562)

“York has been a city renowned for shopping for centuries- Viking Jorvik thrived as a place for craftsmen, metalworkers, blacksmiths and more. Today, tourists come to the city to explore not only its history, but its wonderful shops, cafes and restaurants.”

SARAH, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS AND OUTREACH ARCHIVIST

## Spotlight item: The Pawnbroker's Pledge Book, 1777 - 1778 (PAW/1)

“This intriguing book dates from the 1770s and speaks so clearly of people struggling to eke out their money in York over 200 years ago.

Customers of George Fettes, Pawnbroker of Lady Peckett's Yard, would leave almost anything as security for a small loan. During the 18 months covered by the book, more than 11,000 loans were taken out. As well as the usual clothing and household items pawned, there was also 'a basket of feathers', 'an old saddle', 'a pair of garden shears' and lots more.

The pledge book contains other fascinating tit-bits - we learn that a quack doctor lived in Coney Street, Ann Crampton stole and pawned property of her landlady so she could pay the rent, John Nailer only wore his wig at weekends, and so on.”

ALISON BACKHOUSE, AUTHOR OF THE WORM-EATEN WAISTCOAT (AN ILLUSTRATED BOOK ABOUT THE PLEDGE BOOK)

(PAW/1)



Find The Worm-Eaten Waistcoat by Alison Backhouse (Y332.34) in our Local History section.



Signed and sealed legal documents from the Wares Solicitors Collection

## Wares Solicitors, 1554 - 1977 (WSC)

Wares Solicitors was originally founded in 1812, and yet this complex collection contains documents from as early as 1554 in the form of family deeds and leases. The firm is still in operation today, with the Ware line of the business only coming to an end in 1966.

“One of our largest community collections is Ware & Co. Solicitors. It's a complex legal collection with documents relating to a wide range of Yorkshire families, properties and businesses.”

SARAH, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS AND OUTREACH ARCHIVIST

“With legal documents relating to over 68 local families, this collection is a valuable resource for conducting family history research. We've already had enquiries from people living overseas who are tracing their ancestry.”

JENNY, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT

A Comprehensive Family Bible stands out amongst a family's legal papers (WSC/2/44)



The community collections volunteers making unexpected discoveries in the Wares Solicitors collection NEW blog post - Discover how we took on the 78 archive box challenge with our volunteers! #teamwork #G2H

[https://citymakinghistory.wordpress.com/2015/09/15/ware-and-tear-the-challenges-of-cataloguing-a-large-solicitors-archive/...](https://citymakinghistory.wordpress.com/2015/09/15/ware-and-tear-the-challenges-of-cataloguing-a-large-solicitors-archive/)

City of York Archive @YorkArchivesUK





Left and right: This volume consists of wonderful 'Designs for Sepulchral Monuments' by William Powell Ruddock (CEM/5/14). Above: Illustration of the original area of York Cemetery, produced in 1843 (CEM/5/9/1).

## York Cemetery Company, 1641 - 1980 (CEM)

In operation since 1837, the York Cemetery Company became the city's main burial ground in 1854. York Cemetery Trust, a registered charity, now manage and maintain the historic site.

"The York Public Cemetery Company commenced in January 1837 [and] the great majority of local deaths were accommodated in the Cemetery. The burial records totalling 124,000 deaths have all survived in detail. They cover all denominations except Quakers, and they include people of all classes and ages."  
DAVID POOLE, VOLUNTEER GENEALOGIST AT YORK CEMETERY TRUST

"Death, as the proverb goes, is the great leveller. Working on the York Cemetery Trust records has been a reminder that history is not just the events that changed the world or the tales of the great and terrible."  
KAREN, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER

"We can see... names and payments for the team of stonemasons... the issues involved in re-opening up graves, and the upkeep of the chapel. Researchers can now see a much more rounded view of York Cemetery, and not just its citizens laid to rest."  
PHIL, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER

Find This Garden of Death: the History of York Cemetery by Hugh Murray (Y363.750) in our Local History section.

## Backhouse Nurseries, 1898 - 1947 (BAC)

The Backhouse Nurseries were originally located in Toft Green, and later in the Fishergate and Holgate areas of York. They were owned by Quakers James and Thomas Backhouse from 1815 to 1955. By 1821 the Backhouse family were advertising their ability to undertake 'plantations by the acre' and supply 'gentlemen with experienced gardeners.'

"It has been really very interesting to use the James Backhouse archive at York Explore. To actually see documents that were so much a part of the plant nurseries really has brought the history to life. The 'Descriptive Catalogue for Fruit Trees of All Types' describes trees that were grown commercially on the original nursery site. No doubt some of these trees are still in local people's back gardens today. It really is fascinating.  
As the West Bank Park Heritage Project we plan to convert the old park-keeper's lodge into a Heritage Centre and Cafe. To be known as The Backhouse we hope it will encourage the community to share memories and protect the extraordinary legacy of the James Backhouse Plant Nurseries, once known as 'The Kew of the North.'"  
JANE CULLEN, FOUNDER AND CHAIR WEST BANK PARK HERITAGE PROJECT



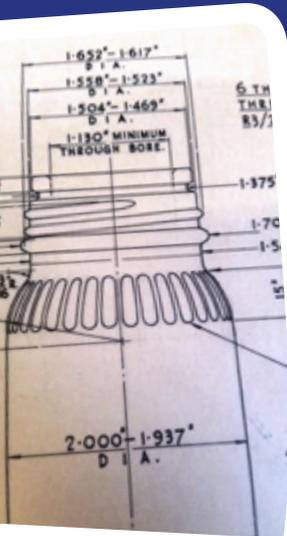
A horse-drawn tram passing Backhouse Nurseries in the early 20th Century (y98\_9861)

## Redfearn National Glassworks, 1930 - 1990s (RED)

In its heyday, the York and Barnsley-based Redfearn National Glass Company was the third largest glass company in the UK. Operating from Fishergate between 1967 to 1984, the company developed designs and glass products for companies nationwide.

Product designs produced by Redfearns (RED/5)

Organised files of Redfearn clients (RED)



Redfearn National Glass



Bottles by the million...

“The Redfearn collection shows a snapshot of York’s lost industrial past. There had been a glass factory on the Fishergate site since 1794. The site became Redfearn National Glassworks in 1967, 37 years after it was bought by the Redfearn family of Barnsley on the 3rd March 1930.

The collection features large selections of plans, schematics and advertising ephemera, and offers a unique insight into interwar business and York’s changing approach to business during the mid-20th century.”

JULIAN, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER



We’d love to hear what you know about Redfearns National Glassworks! Tweet us using #voicesofthearchives!

City of York Archive @YorkArchivesUK @YorkArchivesUK @ellyfyork a former Lord Mayor of York Bill Fairclough was an employee

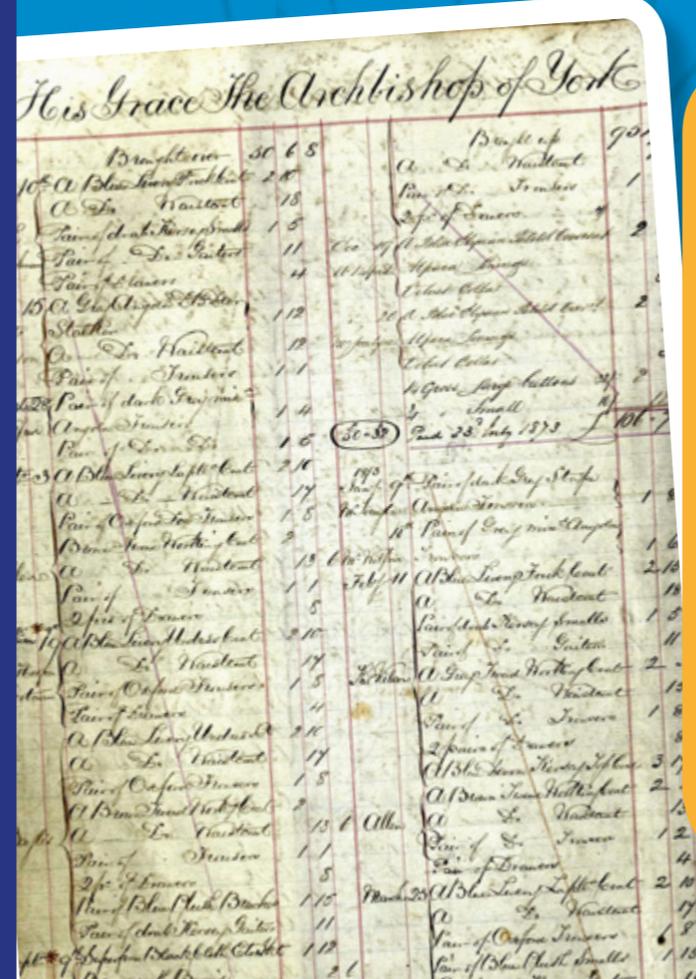
SUE GALLOWAY @SUEGALLOWAYK

Promoting Redfearn National Glassworks (RED/10/4)

## Anderson’s Tailors, 1866 - 1986 (AND)

The Anderson’s Tailors collection features detailed pattern and club colour books, amongst business finances and operational material.

A volume listing items purchased by individual customers (AND/1/3)



A pattern book showing military colours (AND/4)



Right: A book featuring cut-outs of fashion trends (AND/5/5)

“The Anderson family owned three shops; two in Coney Street and a third (originally Robinson & Sons, hosiers) in St. Helen’s Square. Their main business was high quality, general tailoring but they also made shirts, church robes, clothes for hunting and military uniforms. The third shop specialised in wool and silk underclothes as well as socks and stockings for all ages. Customers included the city’s middle class, Yorkshire landed gentry and a few royal patrons.”

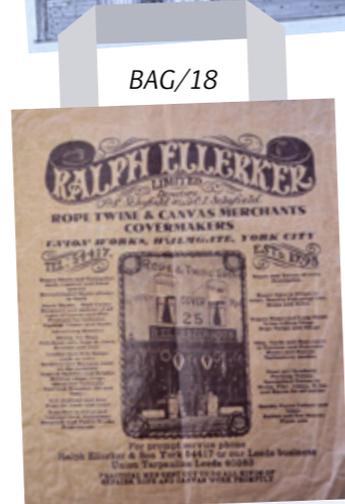
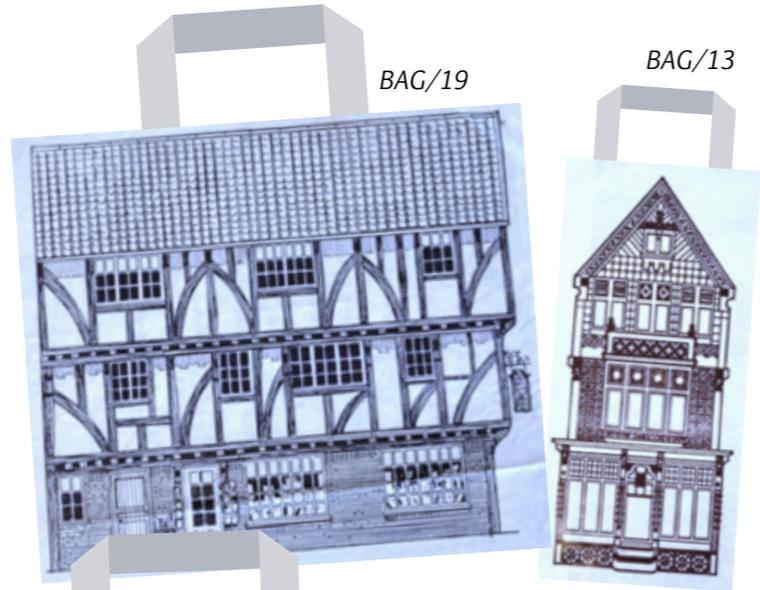
SYLVIA HOGARTH, RESEARCHER

Find “The Very Best of Everything”: R. W. Anderson & Sons, Gentlemen’s Outfitters, 1863 – 2008” by Silvia Hogarth, York Historian, 29 (2012), pp 9 – 20 (open access magazines, 942.843) in our Local History section.



# York Retail Businesses, 1904 - c1980s (BAG)

This small collection features a range of York shopping bags from York's recent past. It includes famous businesses like Bettys, and shops that are perhaps less well-known such as Renaissance clothes shop.



BAG/20

“What I love about the small collection of York shopping bags is the way some of the businesses are still around today. Just looking at the bags takes you on a journey back in time and forces you to imagine the very different world that these places were surrounded by in the past.”

JENNY, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT

“There is something extremely satisfying about diving into the archives, exploring and making your own discoveries. The barriers to the past are dropped and it... becomes tangible, and you experience the past as it was lived without others' interpretation. It is history in the raw.”

LOUISE, COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEER

“I think [York] should remember just how many different things have come together to make it what it is and was, and will be in the future.”

MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC, YORK

A crowd gathers on Blake Street to see the Military Sunday Parade in the early 20th century (y942\_843\_loa\_90)





**YORK**  
Gateway to History



**explore**



*Grace The*

Brought over	50
Blue Linnen Truckcoat	2 10
Do Waistcoat	18
Drab Kersey Smalls	1 5
Do Gaiters	11
Browsers	4
Angola St Slen	1 12
Do Haultcoat	1

*Angola Trussers*

*Thoape Dist C*

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