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York Walking Quiz - answers and explanations

1. The Guildhall (currently under repair at the time of printing) and it was Charles I whose ransom was counted out here.

During the early years of the English Civil War the mostly protestant parliamentarians feared that the catholic king might call on other catholic countries to send arms. King Charles had already gained the support of Irish Catholics and had moved to change Scotland's official religion towards Catholicism. Therefore, both parliament and the majority of ordinary Scots saw common purpose in joining forces and were keen to sign an agreement of cooperation. The Scots sent an army to England to fight alongside the English against the king. In May 1645 King Charles I surrendered to the Scottish army at Newark. He chose the Scots because he thought he had a better chance of survival with them than with the English. However, the Scots were keen to ransom the King and set a price of £200,000 on his head. The money was collected and counted out in The Guildhall.

2. Lord Mayors of York. The building dates from 1725.
3. Terry's. The business began in 1767 at a shop in Bootham. The head office moved to St Helen's Square in 1818 and stayed there until the business was sold in 2005.
4. Ye Olde Starre Inne. In 1644 York was held by the Catholic Royalists and was under siege by the Parliamentary forces led by Lord Fairfax. The siege ended in July 1644 after which Ye Olde Starre Inne had to put up with protestant parliamentary soldiers.
5. The Red Devil was the nickname given to the printer's apprentice whose job it was to set the type and inevitably made spelling mistakes. There is a door in the Yard named the printer's apprentice.
6. Coffee Yard was not only the site of the first printed newspaper (1719) but also it was where coffee was roasted. Barley Hall is a reconstruction of a medieval townhouse. The original townhouse was built in 1360 by monks who used it as a base for when they visited York to do business. It bears witness to the fact that monks did financial business and were successful enough to afford a townhouse in the city.

7. Grope Street. Francis Drake (the travel writer not the sailor) wrote in 1736 that “our ancestors used to call a spade a spade” and given the occupation of this part of town, Grope Street was, apparently, well named.
8. It was a college for girls. Opened in 1908 with 12 pupils and closed in 1997 with around 200 pupils. Now called La Vecchia Scuola (the old school, in Italian). Great conservatory with views of the Minster.
9. Minerva was the god of wisdom. The lane is also the site of gates into what was known as the Liberty of St Peter, (see the wall plaque for details). The Liberty was an area of enclosed land surrounding the Minster and until 1838 was an independent jurisdiction within the city. It had and still has its own police force.
10. Guy Fawkes or Guido Fawkes as he was also known. Born somewhere in that area, depending on who you choose to read but was baptized in St Michael’s April 1570. Guy was caught, sentenced and was on the scaffold to be hung drawn and quartered when he managed to fall off, breaking his neck in the process and thus sparing himself the pain of execution.
11. The investiture of Richard III’s son who was born at Middleham in 1474. He was invested in September 1483, 3 months after his father became king in June 1483 but died in 1484 before his father was killed at Bosworth in August 1485. The building was the chapel and part of the Archbishop’s palace. It is now the Minster library and has papers dating back to 1150.

The memorial to the armed forces mentions every campaign and battle that York has been involved in. The centre piece commemorates the Battle of Kohima, a small hilltop town in northeast India that took the lives of around 10,000 soldiers. On Remembrance Day it is usual to say the words of a short poem that says “when you go home, tell of us and say that for your tomorrow we gave our today”. Those words were written specifically for Kohima and are immortalised on a marble in what remains of the old palace wall.

12. The answer is a sword. But for an extra point, it is a broken sword, no doubt symbolising peace. The sculptor must have been carried away when producing this work because Constantine could not relax in that pose for another 18 years. After being declared Emperor by his army against the designed wishes of the Roman authorities he then had to fight to secure his position.
13. The column was part of the Roman Headquarters. The plaque tells the story of its find and the Minster Under Croft holds an excellent display of Roman artifacts.
14. The statue of St Peter is believed to weigh around 2 tons.

The window itself is thought to be either the biggest collection of medieval glass in the world or 50% of all that is left of the medieval glass in the world. It was installed in 1408 and by sheer luck or perhaps the grace of God has remained intact for all that time. Its first trial came in 1540 when Henry VIII closed the monasteries, changed the service away from Catholicism and removed church imagery. The willingness of the Minster clergy to adopt the new protestant religion might have been responsible for saving the window from destruction. Its second trial came during the English Civil War. In other cities captured by the fiercely

protestant parliamentary forces, for example Winchester, the troops destroyed the windows but in York, the supreme commander was Thomas Fairfax who was from York and he protected the window under threat of a firing squad. The third test came in the form of the Luftwaffe during WW II. The windows were removed to safety in the cellars under the tower known today as Robin Hood's Tower in the North corner of York's walls.

15. George Hudson built many railways locally. He funded them by taking out bank loans and by selling shares which were not supported by profits, eventually falling foul of the law. This is a noticeably short description of a very colourful character, but we do thank him for causing the main line from London to Edinburgh to bend to York rather than Leeds, bringing tourists and wealth to the city.
16. This fabulous building was constructed in 1465. At that time and for many years thereafter the rich upon death would pay or bequeath property to the Minster in exchange for having a priest sing psalms and pray for their souls to have a quick passage through purgatory and into heaven. This 'service' took place in one of the 60 chantries in the Minster and business was brisk. So brisk in fact that the official Vicars Choral who were provided for by the Minster had to have their numbers supplemented by specialist chantry chaplains known as parsons. The parsons did not benefit from the organised communal life of the Vicars Choral but had to make their own sleeping and eating arrangements. This led to drunken and disorderly behaviour to the embarrassment of the Archbishop who decided to get them off the streets by offering them accommodation in the form of St Williams College where they could be locked up at night.

In 1642 Charles I set up his printing press in the college from where Royalist pamphlets and propaganda was issued.

17. The Chapter House is where the Chapter (Dean, Treasurer, and other dignitaries) meet to handle the business of the Minster. After the Civil War the Minster did not occupy the spiritual life of York to anything like it did in the previous centuries. To this extent the Chapter offered and accepted a bid from an interested farmer for the bricks and timber of the Chapter House. The farmer wanted the material to repair his barn. The price was agreed but fortunately for us, unfortunately for him, he died a week before the due date and the deal collapsed.

Harry Martindale reckons he saw the ghosts of Roman soldiers. There is plenty of material on YouTube and Google if you are interested.

18. The entire 'C' shaped building once belonged to the Minster Treasurer. It points to the wealth held by religious establishments up to 1540 when Henry and later his son Edward stopped the various financial practices. The complex is now shared between the hotelier Greys Court and the National Trust.
19. Frank Green renovated the left-hand part of the property filled it with period furniture and gave it to The National Trust.
20. There are many beautiful properties in this old street. Notice as you turn the corner the old properties on your right that have what is called "jetting". Jetting is the design of the first

floor that sticks out. It is not, as many think, to avoid soaking anyone below when emptying the chamber pot, but for reasons of tax. Properties were taxed on the size of their base. The house in question is towards the end of the street on the right-hand side. Its other name is The Dutch House. The owl sits on the ledge of the top left window. This building confirms York's position as a major player as a European trading post. European traders bought premises here to have a base for trade. The property dating from the late 1660's is thought to be one of the first brick-built houses in the city.

21. The wall plaque confirms the date of build as 1316.

22. Kings Square is also a good place to stop and enjoy some street entertainment especially if you can nibble a bar of the local chocolate or warm meat pies.

It is hard to imagine just how important this place was to the Vikings. It was where they had their Long House or palace. From here Viking power radiated out across England to the borders of Wessex. The last Viking King to rule (AD 948) was the wonderfully named Eric Bloodaxe, son of King Harald Finehair of Norway. Imagine a short-tempered screaming berserker with a mania for death and you have Eric. He was so bad even the Vikings threw him out, twice.

Directly behind you, looking towards The Minster is one of the main roads into the old Roman fortress then called Via Principalis, since renamed Lower Petergate. There would have been an impressive stone gateway marking the entrance.

23. Church Street follows the line of the Roman fortress wall and the market square is situated just inside where the wall would have been. Also inside the line of the wall is the Roman Baths the ruins of which can still be seen inside the appropriately named pub.

24. The homeward straight takes you back to St Helen's Square and as you stroll remember that under your feet lies 2000 years of life from the earliest iron age settlements via Roman, Anglo Saxon, Viking and Norman to the present day.

Taking York as a typical example, with all the wars, invasions, battles and plagues it's a wonder that any of us are here at all. That this thin line of life somehow got through to bring us here today. We hope you have enjoyed this stroll through York and may you continue to stay lucky.

We hope you enjoyed this walk and if you have, please show your appreciation in the usual way and donate to The Friends of York Hospital either by the QR code or through the website at foyh.org.uk.



19 May 2021