

Off to York...



The debtors' prison at night. The infamous cells of York Castle Museum are being unlocked this July, unleashing the powerful, moving and sometimes gruesome tales of those who were once imprisoned there. Photo courtesy York Museum Trust.



Dig Hungate is the single biggest excavation in York in the past twenty-five years. Until 2012, York Archaeological Trust will excavate Hungate to reveal the rich heritage and archaeology of this important area of York's city centre. Photo: © York Archaeological Trust.

Friends preparing to invade York (which is used to it – after all, what's a thousand or so Quakers when you've coped with the Viking hordes?) might want to mug up on some interesting bits of the city's Quaker history.

The Rowntree Society is there to help them do just that – Joseph Rowntree and his son Seebohm did much more than make chocolate. In the city, they were responsible for progressive employment practices, the village of New Earswick, enlightened philanthropy and much else besides; beyond it, Seebohm's studies of York poverty influenced the likes of Winston Churchill and Lloyd George and contributed to the foundation of the modern welfare state. Arnold Rowntree, a nephew of Joseph's, is less well-known – he was Liberal MP for York from 1910 to 1918, when he was voted out by an electorate which didn't see eye to eye with his support for first- world-war conscientious objectors and his opposition to the war. All this and more is covered by The Rowntree Society's new website, www.rowntreesociety.org.uk – why not visit before you visit?

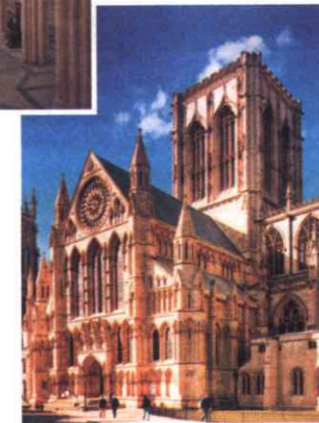
And if you make it to York physically rather than just virtually, you could do the Rowntree Walk, now available in a new reduced version (the original was over seven miles and only a few hardy soles/souls were up to it) – just three miles or so all around the city centre. Your walk might include the area around Walmgate, to where many Irish families moved in the 1840s, escaping from the Potato Famine, and Black Horse Passage, site of the York Soup Kitchen – and also the route through which seemingly respectable Victorian gentlemen would walk when heading for the brothels of Hungate. You might pause at Lady Peckitt's Yard (*top right*), where Joseph, his brothers John and Henry Isaac and others used scripture to teach men – and eventually women – to read and write. The walk leaflet is available from the city's tourist information centres – or you can download it from the Society's website. Of course, if you opt to do the guided version of the Walk as a Wednesday activity, you won't have to.

Steven Burkeman

Steven is chair of The Rowntree Society.



York Minster's West Nave and the South Front. Photos: © York Minster/Jarrolds.



Lady Peckitt's Yard (above) and Joseph Rowntree's birthplace – now a Pizza Hut (below). Photos courtesy The Rowntree Society.



Hartrigg Oaks, the hart and the entrance to Joseph Rowntree Foundation's retirement community on the edge of New Earswick, Joseph Rowntree's 104-year-old-model village, an experiment in social housing. Photo courtesy Hartrigg Oaks.



The York Millennium Bridge. Photo courtesy Visit York.



The Retreat, a psychiatric hospital founded in 1792 and opened in 1796 by Quaker William Tuke, is noted for its humane treatment of the mentally disturbed. Seen from the air and close up. Photos © The Retreat.



Enjoy wandering the city streets. Photo: Trish Carn.



Brunswick Organic Nursery, which provides productive work for people with learning disabilities: above, David with Sue Parker, a volunteer, pricking out; and below, their open day. Courtesy BON.



Foss Barrier and pump. Photo: carlos62/flickr CC.



Jorvik Viking Centre. Photos: © Jorvik.



National Railway Museum. Photo courtesy NRM.