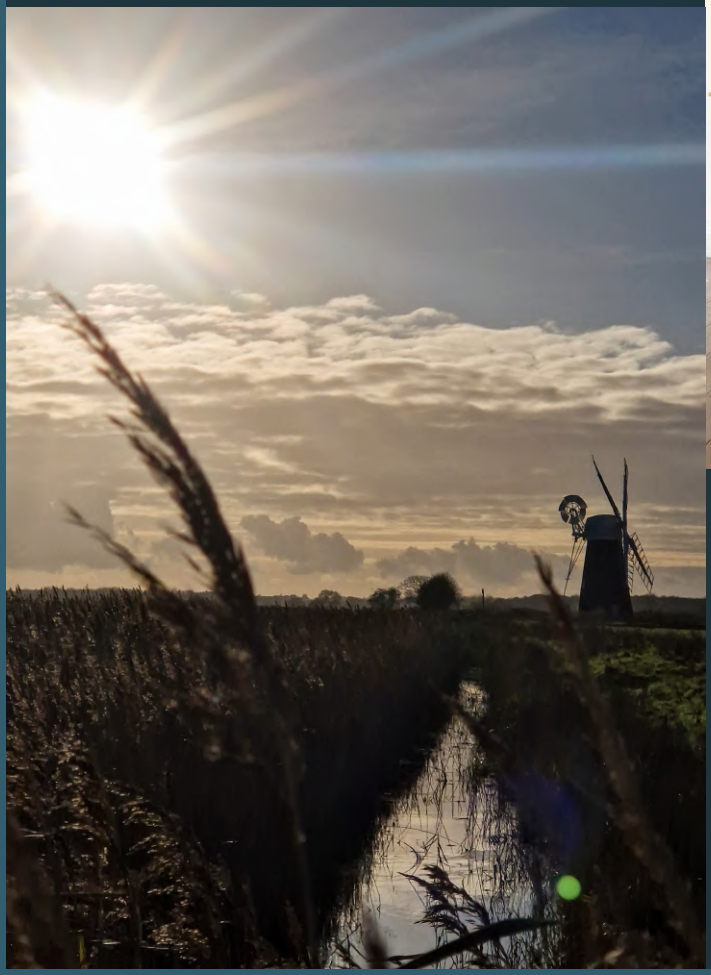
Autumn 2026

RESONANCE

Newsletter of the

York Consortium *for* Craft and Conservation





Featuring articles from **craftspeople & conservators**, **academics**, and **local businesses**

A Quarterly Insight into York's Heritage Sector

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Message from the Chair

Welcome to the autumn edition of RESONANCE, and a particularly warm welcome to our new members.

It's been a pleasure to see this edition come together, with contributions from across our membership and the wider world of craft, conservation and heritage. Many thanks to everyone who has so generously shared their work, experiences and ideas.

As RESONANCE develops, we're introducing a series of recurring features that offer different ways of exploring the things we make, conserve, and care for. From Form + Structure to Nature + Environment and In Conversation, the intention is to bring together different perspectives and encourage connections across disciplines. It's particularly interesting to see how naturally these ideas overlap.

What a pleasure to have Michael Lewis contributing an article on the Bayeux Tapestry, exploring its extraordinary craftsmanship, narrative rhythm, ambiguity and the individual decisions behind its making. Daniel Cheetham's beautifully personal account follows the wind as a thread through his life and work, from the historic mills and landscapes of England to Antarctica. His appreciation of the natural world, and the way it has shaped both his craft and his experiences, is wonderfully expressed. And in our conversation with paintings conservator Francis Downing, there is a real appreciation of the patience, expertise and restraint involved in allowing the painting itself to guide the conservator's decisions.



Corin Ewbank's account of discovering the viola da gamba was particularly compelling. His enthusiasm for the beauty and individuality of these instruments, and the creative freedom he found within an established tradition, speaks to the importance of encouraging emerging craftspeople to develop their own interests and direction.

"Across our different disciplines there is a shared curiosity and commitment to looking more closely, developing our understanding and recognising the value of what we encounter."

Our cultural heritage reflects an extraordinary breadth of human ingenuity, imagination and experience. The buildings, objects and landscapes we value carry the traces of the people who made, used and cared for them, and each offers different possibilities for understanding the past and our relationship with it. York Conservation Trust's fiftieth anniversary contribution, exploring historic buildings through the lives of the people associated with them, is another lovely example of this. Across our different disciplines, there is a shared curiosity and commitment to looking more closely, developing our understanding and recognising the value of what we encounter.

It's equally encouraging to see the work of our members represented throughout this edition, including Iain Broadbent's beautifully carved tracery and the fascinating projects at Thin Ice Press, alongside the continuing achievements of our bursary recipients and alumni. These contributions reflect the breadth of knowledge, skill and enthusiasm within our community, and we hope to see even more members sharing their work in future editions.

Thank you again to all our contributors, members, supporters and volunteers who make the Consortium what it is. We hope you enjoy this edition and that it encourages you to share something of your own work, interests or discoveries with us.

Kibby Schaefer, Chair



© Thin Ice Press

York Perspectives

Research, practice, and reflections from across York's craft, conservation, and heritage community

PEOPLE NOT WALLS: YORK CONSERVATION TRUST AT 50

York Conservation Trust celebrates fifty years as a charity in 2026, but its story of caring for York's historic buildings began several decades earlier.

The Trust's origins lie in the work of John Bowes Morrell and his brother Cuthbert, who began rescuing historic properties in the city during the 1940s. In 1976, William Morrell turned that work into a charitable building preservation trust, established to conserve historic buildings for public benefit. Today, the Trust cares for around seventy historic buildings across York, including Fairfax House, York Theatre Royal, St Anthony's Hall, the Assembly Rooms and the De Grey Rooms. Together, they represent almost nine centuries of the city's history.

"...buildings are much easier to care for when they have a purpose and remain part of the everyday life of the city."

The Trust has always believed that the best way to protect historic buildings is to keep them in use. Across the estate, its buildings provide homes, shops, offices, restaurants, cultural venues and community spaces. The income they generate is then reinvested in their repair and conservation. It is a simple model, but an important one: buildings are much easier to care for when they have a purpose and remain part of the everyday life of the city.



Completed Project: 83–89 Micklegate

In 2024, the Trust undertook a strategic review of its entire estate. For the first time in its history, this involved looking at all of the buildings in its ownership together and thinking strategically about what each one needed, how it should be used in the future and how the necessary work could be funded. That review led to the Trust's Ten-Year Plan, which sets out a programme of conservation and investment across the estate. The aim is to move away from simply responding to problems as they arise and instead make meaningful plans for the future of each property, ensuring essential repairs are carried out, and buildings are put to the best possible use.


Completed Project: Brereton Cottages, Goathland
© York Conservation Trust

The first year of the plan has already seen four major projects completed. These included the terrace at 83 to 89 Micklegate, which contains fabric dating back to the post medieval period; 77 Walmgate, one of the few surviving timber framed buildings on the street, where two apartments were converted back into a single house; 60 Goodramgate, where the discovery of a partially intact nineteenth century interior led to the careful conservation of surviving original wall finishes; and three historic cottages at Goathland. The Trust was delighted that both 60 Goodramgate and 77 Walmgate received conservation awards at the York Design Awards 2026.


© York Conservation Trust
Completed Project: 60 Goodramgate

The next significant projects in the Ten-Year Plan begin with 12 to 22 High Petergate, where work is due to start in autumn 2026. Further projects are planned in the near future at 5 Colliergate, 7A Tanner Row, 4 Jubbergate and Herbert House. The scheme at Herbert House will be the largest single project in the plan, combining major conservation work with the challenge of finding the right long term use for an important group of historic buildings. In total, the Trust expects to invest more than £17 million in its properties over the next decade.


© York Conservation Trust
Future Project: Herbert House



Trailblazer Programme: Joinery Workshop at Herbert House

The fiftieth anniversary has also been a chance to celebrate the people behind these buildings. The theme for YCT50 is People Not Walls, drawing on a principle often expressed by William Morrell: that it is people, not walls that make a city. The theme reflects the idea that historic places matter because of the people who built them, lived and worked in them and continue to use them and care for them today.

A further main theme running through the anniversary year is Curating Unique Places, which is the title of the Trust's new book and short film. The phrase reflects the fact that the Trust's role is not simply to preserve a collection of old buildings. Each property has its own unique history, character and purpose, and caring for them means making considered choices about repair, change and use. In that sense, the Trust is curating places: looking after what is important, allowing buildings to adapt where they need to, and helping ensure that they continue to contribute to the character of York.

Events and activities during the year have included public open days, educational activities, heritage craft demonstrations and a city wide art competition. More than 1,200 visits were recorded during the Trust's open day in May, showing just how much interest there is in seeing inside York's historic buildings and learning more about their stories.

The anniversary is also about looking ahead. The Trust is currently delivering a new Heritage Conservation Training Programme in partnership with Pinnacle Conservation and York Learning, supported by North Yorkshire Combined Authority. It gives adults seeking employment practical training and work experience in construction and heritage skills, helping them build experience that can lead to employment. It is also helping to make sure the practical skills needed to repair and care for historic buildings are passed on to another generation.

As York Conservation Trust enters its second half century as a charity, the challenge is to build on what has been achieved while planning properly for the future. Our job is not simply to preserve old buildings, but to make sure they are cared for, used and valued, and that they continue to play a meaningful part in the life of York for generations to come.

Guy Bowyer, Chief Executive, York Conservation Trust



If you would like to learn more about the Trust and our work, please visit our website www.yorkconservationtrust.org or, better still, buy a copy of Curating Unique Places, which is available from Topping & Company Booksellers at 1 Museum Street. Every copy includes a specially commissioned YCT50 map of York, showing the Trust's buildings across the city.

Form + Structure

Exploring the patterns, systems, and principles that shape objects, buildings, and places



THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY

The Bayeux Tapestry is a remarkable survivor of medieval art, rightly considered a wonder of the world. Nothing quite like it exists. Its extraordinary length – almost 70 metres long (though just 50 cm wide) – still bewilders the viewer, as it must have done over 950 years ago. It also stands out for its degree of preservation, especially the vibrancy of its colours, though they have faded significantly over time.

The simple materials used in the Tapestry's creation – linen and sheep's wool, the latter dyed with plant dyes – disguise the extraordinary resources needed to produce it. An individual of significant wealth and influence made it, though no one knows for sure who that was, when it was made, or why. Nowadays, most scholars think its patron was William the Conqueror's half-brother, Bishop Odo of Bayeux, and that English monks connected with Canterbury scriptoria likely designed it. They sketched their drawings directly onto the linen, with English women executing the embroidery thereafter.

The Tapestry has a central frieze where the main story – the events leading to the Norman Conquest of England from 1066 – is told. Here, various characters (627 in all) gesticulate in and around buildings, ships and many aspects of everyday life and the natural environment. These depictions are borrowed from both manuscript art and the real world, a treasure chest of imagery quarried by archaeologists, art-historians and others. Towards the top of the main frieze are pity Latin inscriptions, likely conceived as part of the original design, although executed separately.



© Michael Lewis

The borders above and below the main action are filled with birds and beasts of all kinds, as well as some people, many dressed, some not. Often, these creatures ignore what is happening in the main frieze, but other times they get involved, sometimes heightening the tension or simply expressing emotion. Occasionally, events in the main frieze spill into the borders: for example, ship sails and architectural elements protrude upwards, and men in battle fall into the lower register. The varying nature of their depiction and some examples of ingenuity suggest the embroiderers may have had some agency in shaping them.

Although made of nine linen panels sewn together (which could have been worked in separate workshops), the Tapestry's design suggests a high degree of artistic oversight (which would otherwise be unexpected), as shown by its display at the British Museum in London as a single length. There might be some speeding up in the storytelling and certain design elements – for example, in the execution of mail, from circles to hatching – but overall, the visual narrative is coherent.

Like a film, the Tapestry's story speeds up and slows down; it includes possible flashbacks, but scenes connect through a single narrative arc. Some scenes are reversed to bond them with others, again implying a well-thought-out overall design. Its storytelling is often ambiguous, perhaps deliberately so. Importantly, it presents a certain version of events. It focuses on just two main protagonists – Harold of Wessex and William of Normandy (ignoring all others), as they vie for the English crown. As such, it likely served a political purpose, connected to Bishop Odo's ambitions in his new English lands.

Michael Lewis (FSA, MCIfA)



Michael is Curator, Bayeux Tapestry Exhibition (British Museum) and Visiting Professor in Archaeology at the Universities of Exeter and Reading, and in Social Sciences at the University at Helsinki. Between 2015 and 2025 he was Head of Portable Antiquities & Treasure. He has an interest in medieval small finds, particularly those associated with everyday life and religious practice, but is best know for his research on the Bayeux Tapestry; he is a member of the Bayeux Tapestry Scientific Committee. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, and a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Art Scholars.

Nature + Environment

Reflections on the natural forces that shape materials, making, and conservation practice

THE HEARTBEAT OF THE WIND

My craft will always be guided by the natural world. The wind and rain that slowly wear away at the surfaces of a mill are the same forces that give it purpose. Repairing these machines preserves historic buildings, but also their relationship with the landscape and the forces they were built to harness. That is why I became a millwright: to help these old machines meet the wind again.

I spend much of my life tracing ancient pathways between wild places and the communities that grew around them. As a millwright, my work takes me to mills and windpumps scattered across the landscape: machines shaped by nature, built to harness it, and ultimately shaped again by the forces they capture. Since my life-changing experience as Millwright Fellow on the 2023 SPAB William Morris Craft Fellowship, the work has carried me into the Norfolk Broads, rural Lincolnshire, coastal Kent and the Yorkshire Wolds to name but a few. Each landscape leaves its mark on the machines within it.



"Each landscape leaves its mark on the machines within it."



In the Norfolk Broads, windpumps rise from the reeds beside the winding waterways, their silhouettes etched against immense skies; some drain the land while others grind grain. Their boat-shaped caps echo the clinker-built boats moving slowly beneath them, while herons and marsh harriers share their horizon. There is a timeless beauty in these machines: weathered, painted timber standing amongst rush and water, sun and wind, their silence disguising the forces within.

Over the past three years, working with the Suffolk Millwright team, I have helped repair and maintain Stracey Arms, Horsey and Muttons windpumps on the Broads. It is satisfying to shape oak in the shadows of these machines, the wind that once wore at their timbers brushing past as I work. The fatigue of climbing endless flights of stairs and working at height somehow becomes easier when knowing the same wind will eventually bring the machine back to life.

Millwrighting demands a thorough understanding of timber and machinery: its sails must withstand the wind while transferring their movement through gearing, shafts and bearings. The cap must turn to meet the wind, driven by its own winding gear. Every repair must therefore contend not only with decay, but with the immense forces created as wind becomes mechanical power, driving the great cap slowly around on its kerb. It feels like a full circle moment to repair these machines with natural materials. Oak, douglas

fir and cedar replace what has been lost; steel, oak pegs, linseed oil paint and traditional putties bind the repairs together. Timber from the natural world is shaped by our hands, and is finally set moving once again by wind or water.

The wind has, at times, carried me much further afield. In early 2026 I experienced katabatic winds pouring down from mountains and across glaciers in Antarctica, as I worked on carpentry repairs. In this bleak landscape, and amidst the threat of a changing climate, the buildings still remain. It is this commitment to conservation using natural materials that guides all my work, regardless of location and the impact of the elements.



This was reinforced recently, when our team completed the repair and reinstatement of the cap and sails at Skidby Windmill in Yorkshire.

After extensive interventions to the timber frame, roof, winding gear and bearings, I traced the furrows of the adjacent field to the hedgeline, and watched with satisfaction as the wind caught the newly-repaired machinery. The fly began to turn. The clanks and bangs that had filled our memories slowly disappeared, replaced by the whispering chatter of the repaired gearing, the heartbeat of the wind.

Daniel Cheetham



Daniel Cheetham is an apprentice millwright working in the conservation and repair of historic windmills and windpumps. His work has taken him across England and, in 2026, to Antarctica, where he worked on the conservation of historic British Antarctic Survey buildings. A 2023 SPAB William Morris Craft Fellow, Daniel is particularly interested in the relationship between traditional materials, machinery and the natural forces that have shaped the buildings he works on.

In Conversation

Conversations with practitioners, researchers, and makers about their work, experiences, and perspectives

WITH FRANCIS DOWNING

Can you briefly describe your current role and the work you are most involved in?
I am a fine art paintings conservator and have run a studio in Harrogate for 50 years. My main role is surveying painting collections at historic houses, museums, galleries and churches; assessing, advising, and carrying out remedial conservation and restoration on paintings in the studio or on site, as required. I often travel throughout the UK and sometimes abroad.

How did you come into your field of practice, and what first drew you to it?
Whilst at school I had always thought of working for myself in some form of speciality which would allow me to remain independent. My mother was Italian and I spent many long holidays in Italy, often riding around Rome on the back of an uncles Vespa. Touring the artworks of the Vatican and Campidoglio etc. I developed a great love of paintings and the skills involved in their creation.

Then one year I was introduced to an Italian conservator/restorer of paintings whose studio worked for numerous galleries. After visiting his studio and talking with some of his students, I was hooked! I was an assistant to a financial director in the UK at the time, working in a buying capacity and had been sent on a business course. However, two years later I was training in the conservation studio in southern Italy. I was working with painting conservators, mixing resins, waxes, oils, and adhesives, learning how they were used, how they reacted on drying and ageing.



I realised that conservation was a combination of both art and science, which suited me well. When I left to work at a studio in Rome, I gained the opportunity to attend the Instituto della Restauro there.

Is there a tool, material, or technique that is particularly central to your work?
Good quality lighting, magnification, and patience. Conservation is very much based on science with a competent understanding of chemistry and molecular structures.

This is essential in knowing how substances react with each other and subsequent effects. As conservators we should never introduce or use a substance unless we know the effect it would have on a particular painting. So, instruments for pH testing and microscopic examination are essential. Photographic records and notes are kept at each stage of work.


© Francis Downing

Can you describe a recent project or moment where material or practical considerations shaped your decisions?
This is a difficult question for me to answer. All paintings are different and each require individual considerations. However, artists' techniques are always a joy to discover. Revealing and often removing previous restorations can be an interesting journey into conservation timelines which often guides towards the next stage in each project.

How do you approach the balance between established methods and adaptation in your practice?
New materials and techniques evolve as conservators meet difficult problems or improve on previous methods. Through a continuing science supporting network, materials and equipment are tried, often laboratory tested, and successful results are published in our professional periodicals.

However, always at the background are the ethical guidelines agreed upon at the first International Congress of Picture Restorers (Rome 1930) under the auspices of the League of Nations: 'The International Conference for the Study of Scientific Methods for Examination and Preservation of Artworks' -

'To preserve and show to its best advantage every particle that is left of a painting.
Never interfere with the intentions of the Master.
Not to finish unfinished passages or to improve on any failings by the Artist.
Try to recover as far as possible the original appearance where it is obscured.
Never introduce a substance that cannot easily be removed.
To do the minimum that will suffice to preserve the picture in good condition.'

What does care mean in your work, particularly when working with historic material, objects, or built fabric?
The approach of the conservator for care follows the principle that the intentions of the artist are paramount, tempered only by the needs of the artwork.

What changes have you observed in your field over time, and what has remained essential?
When I started conservation in the UK the viewpoint of many people was that 'painting restorers' were specialist craftsmen with their own secret methods and materials.

Gradually conservation has become more science based and open, with appropriate examination using X-ray, Infra-red photography, chemical analysis of resins and pigments and record keeping.

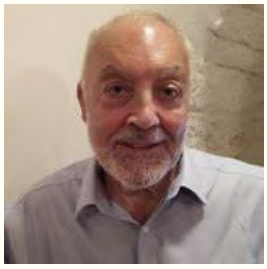
While practical experience will always be essential, academic training from the level of MA degree to Doctorate has become the measurement for future painting conservators. Today, students who wish to work in most established painting conservation studios are expected to have at least an MA in Fine Art Conservation.

"...artists' techniques are always a joy to discover."

Is there an object, material, or piece of work that has particularly shaped your understanding of your practice?
In the late 1970's I examined a painting purported to be the 'Royal Sovereign' by Willem Van de Veldt II. Infra-red and pigment analysis showed later paint and provenance additions indicating that the painting had been altered to appear to be the Royal Sovereign by Van de Velde and was in fact an attempted fake. This experience allowed me to appreciate that painting conservators have the ability to assist the art world in more than just remedial conservation work.

What do you feel is most important to carry forward into the future of your discipline or practice?
When I started in conservation there weren't any painting conservation training establishments in the UK. The importance of academic learning as well as practical experience is more than ever essential in the training of conservators. There is also a great need to emphasise that conservation is not a craft where artisans create without boundaries or restriction but a profession where judgement and ethics form the framework. Paintings conservators do not create; their responsibility and aim is to preserve and protect the work of others.

Francis Downing, Paintings Conservator



Francis Downing has been involved in the conservation of paintings for over fifty-six years. For fifty years he has run his own Studio, dealing with conservation and heritage throughout the UK and Europe. From 1989 to 1997 he worked with North Yorkshire, UK, and European police through Interpol, identifying forgeries and investigating networks during a long-term investigation into over one thousand fraudulent paintings which had extended into Europe and the United States. He is an Associate Lecturer and tutors students on the 'Conservation of Fine Art MA degree' course at Northumbria University. Francis Downing is an Accredited Conservator with the Institute of Conservation and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Bursaries + Awards

Supporting emerging talent and recognising contributions to craft and conservation


© Corin Ewbank

My decision to start on the musical instruments course at West Dean was admittedly inspired by a lack of direction and a turning to assumed familiarity in the uncertainty that follows graduation from secondary school. The thought process was very much "I am good at Design Technology, I love guitars, and I need to be around music." So the plan became to be a guitar maker!

Upon arriving at West Dean, I soon realised making a guitar was not like building plywood boxes in Design Technology. I struggled. It was incredibly challenging and I had no confidence. I found the culture of guitar making restrictive. There seemed such cemented ideas of how things should be and any creative design seemed shoehorned into the design until it arrives at some kind of orthodoxy that did not speak to me. I was starting to wonder if this was the right place for me.

Five terms and two guitars later, still with a similar feeling to the first term, it was time for the departmental trip that happens at West Dean. This year, we were going to Paris. It was there I became truly acquainted with the viola da gamba, an instrument that is made at West Dean but I hadn't paid any mind to. I was greeted by an expansive taste in aesthetics and an evidence of craft culture that sits proudly on the body of each surviving instrument. The decoration was decadent, fine, and expressive. Tool marks showing the evidence of confident making with intimate knowledge of wood and tolerances. In the viol, I found a celebration of beauty that is open minded, unstandardised, and brave. We then went to a consort in which I heard first hand the instruments being played. The warm understated beauty of the viol cut through me completely, transferring emotion with efficiency I hadn't quite experienced before. I was sold, and in the last term of my second year I made a treble viol with speed, confidence and eagerness unlike I had experienced in the workshop.

The money I have received from the Martin Stancliffe award has enabled me to invest in myself and the tools I need in order to become a luthier, an expensive and difficult task. I am not subject to the limitations I once was exclusively due to the investment of the YCCC. I now look to be able to open my doors to the set up, repair and making of viols. Incredibly grateful is an understatement!

Corin Ewbank, Luthier
Recently graduated student of West Dean College of Arts and Conservation and the recipient of the Martin Stancliffe Award 2026. Corin's specialism is in the viola da gamba; his practice gravitates towards Baroque instruments with a strong visual identity.

Alumni

Following the journeys, achievements, and ongoing impact of bursary recipients

Funding from the YCCC contributed towards my attendance at two Building Conservation Masterclasses at West Dean College, namely 'Conservation and Repair of Timber' and 'Conservation and Repair of Plasters and Renders'. Completion of these two courses are key to my long-term goal of achieving the Professional Development Diploma in Historic Building Conservation and Repair.

Both courses comprised lectures and hands-on activities, a combination that I found really useful and informative. The theoretical aspects helped introduce me to new concepts and ideas about historic building conservation, while the demonstrations and workshops allowed me to put that theory into practice. I learned a diverse range of skills on these courses including, but not limited to: traditional lime use on historic buildings; moisture and porosity testing of historic surfaces; identification of timber defects and failures; and the reconstruction of historic framed buildings.

There were so many aspects of the courses that are relevant to my work at York Minster. For example, the information I gained on timber construction, decay and pests will be particularly useful in my ongoing monitoring of the historic timber in and around the Minster precinct, most notably the thirteenth-century Chapter House timber roof. I am looking forward to integrating this new knowledge into my day-to-day activities, and I feel confident that I now have the skills to make more informed decisions about the assessment, care and repair of historic timber, plaster and renders.


© Glen Smith

Many thanks to the YCCC for their generosity; I would not have been able to undertake these components of my Professional Development Diploma without their support.

Glen Smith, Heritage Builder
Following a varied career in commercial buildings demolition, property maintenance, and other trade roles, Glen joined the Works Department at York Minster where he has been employed as a Heritage Builder for the last eight years. This role encompasses essential routine maintenance of the historic fabric of the Minster and the historic properties within the Minster precinct, with a particular focus on traditional lime and lath plastering.

Consortium News

Updates from across the Consortium, its members, partners, and projects

THIN ICE PRESS

The team at Thin Ice Press: the York Centre for Print have enjoyed a busy few months. One high-profile commission debuted during York's 'Ghost Week', launching on Saturday 24th October. Gift cards printed by Thin Ice Press will also be presented to Indian officials later this month by Mayor David Skaith and his team, to accompany gift boxes containing North Yorkshire crafts and delicacies.

Concerning the Work is Thin Ice Press's first full-length fine press publication. This remarkable book will appeal to anyone with a love of craft, and of reading. Michael Cope, a Cape Town author, artist and jeweller, plans to bequeath the contents of his workshop to a young South African jeweller, chosen through a competition. Concerning the Work is his letter to his successor: an evocative memoir of Michael's time in 'the trade', and a lyrical hymn to a craftsperson's relationship with his tools. The press are proud to have created a hand printed and bound edition of 150 copies, and 5 specials, that does justice to Mike's passion and expertise.

On a slightly smaller scale, The Marker Committee is a collection of poems by Lydia Kennaway, which explores the ephemerality of the written word and our compulsion to leave our mark. The book contains multiple examples of experimental printing, including taking a hammer and nail to the type of the final poem, a tipped-in section of code, printed using a dot matrix printer, and a folded love letter, commemorating the Budapest apprentice who swallowed the letters of his girlfriend's name in type. At the centre of the book is a fold-out poem recounting the remarkable story of the Doves Press. The final letters of this poem have been printed using mudlarked Doves type which lay beneath the Thames for over a century before being recovered. The Marker Committee is published in an edition of 100.


© Thin Ice Press


© Thin Ice Press





TRACERY FOR ST MARY MAGDELANE CHURCH

I was asked to carve 4 panels of gothic style tracery for St Mary Magdelane Church in Paddington, London.

The panels are to form movable screens that will help to partition areas of the church for the various functions that take place there.

The brief was to make them decorative and fitting for this Gothic Revival church and the tracery patterns were influenced by the existing tracery used around the church.

All carved in oak and made in collaboration with York based Newton and Dunn Joinery and Caroe Architects.

St Mary Magdelane Church is by renowned gothic revivalist George Edmond Street Church. It was fantastic to work on a G E Street church, especially knowing out of his practice came William Morris, Philip Webb and Norman Shaw.

Iain Broadbent, Consortium Member



Events

Highlights from recent events and opportunities to connect through future programmes and activities

PAST EVENTS

MATERIALS Day 2026: Adhesion

On Saturday 17 October, the York Consortium for Craft and Conservation, in partnership with the University of York, held its annual MATERIALS Day. This year's theme was adhesion — how materials stick together, why they sometimes fail, and what this means for the way we make, repair and conserve things.



The day brought together craftspeople, conservators, archaeologists and scientists to share their knowledge and experience of working with materials. We began at St Olave's Church and Church Hall with talks and practical sessions exploring earth and timber, before heading to the National Railway Museum to consider the challenges of conserving historic railway vehicles and working with new materials. Back at St Olave's, the afternoon took us from stained glass conservation to prehistoric adhesives, finishing with a public lecture on green chemistry and sustainable technologies.

Some fascinating threads ran through the day, particularly our long history of working with adhesives and the sensory experience of understanding and manipulating materials. Research into prehistoric adhesives, including birch bark tar and pine resin, offered an insight into the ingenuity of early makers and their experimentation with the properties of sticky substances. It was a reminder that curiosity about materials, and the desire to explore what we can do with them, is something deeply human.

Across the sessions, questions of compatibility, flexibility, setting time, strength, appearance, longevity and the influence of moisture all came into play. Beyond the science and technical knowledge, much comes down to experience and judgement — understanding how materials behave through handling, observation and practice.



Our speakers and demonstrators brought an extraordinary depth of knowledge, generously sharing not only what they know, but how they have come to know it. There was a real appreciation of both traditional approaches and new technologies, and interesting discussions about how earlier methods of making and joining materials have shaped our built environment, and what we might learn from the past when addressing the challenges of modern materials and industrial processes.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the day was recognising how much we share across different disciplines. Whether working in a workshop, a historic building, an archaeological excavation or a scientific laboratory, there is a common curiosity about materials, an enjoyment of experimentation and discovery, and a desire to understand not only how things work, but the consequences of our choices and the need to adapt our approaches in light of what we learn.

It was an enjoyable and thought-provoking day, bringing people together, opening up new conversations and reminding us of the value of sharing knowledge across disciplines. We hope some of these conversations will continue.

Our thanks to all our speakers, demonstrators, partners and participants for their generosity, enthusiasm and contributions to the day.

Kibby Schaefer, Chair

UPCOMING EVENTS FROM THE YORK CONSORTIUM

14th November:

Layers of York: Autumn 2026

- **York Consortium for Craft and Conservation in collaboration with Donald Insall Associates**
- **York City Centre, 11am-1pm**
- The timber framed structures of York go hand in hand with its reputation as one of our best medieval cities, with streets such as Shambles gaining international reputation for their evocation of the period. This walking tour, guided by Cameron Stebbings from Donald Insall Associates, will delve deeper into the fascinating architecture of some of these buildings.
- Learn about how medieval houses were planned and constructed by observing some of the most significant buildings in York and some which are hidden down the city's alleys and Snickelways. We will also take a more detailed look at several of the structures that DIA are working on and have conserved in the past on Shambles and Colliergate, revealing the conservation challenges and opportunities that timber buildings pose in a modern city.

- **Tickets are available to members of the YCCC - access codes have been circulated via email. Spaces are limited, so get in quick.**

3rd December:

John Shannon Memorial Lecture

- **York Consortium for Craft and Conservation in collaboration with York Civic Trust**
- **Berrick Saul Building (University of York, West Campus)**
- **6:30am–8:30pm**
- Introduction by **James Grierson**, President of the York Consortium, and **Andrew Morrison**, CEO of York Civic Trust, including a short discussion on John Shannon — his importance and impact on York, and his contribution to the York Civic Trust.
- Keynote lecture from **Professor Kate Giles**, University of York, who is a buildings archaeologist with a specialism in the recording, archival research and theoretical interpretation of historic buildings. She is particularly interested in communal buildings of the medieval and modern periods, from guildhalls to parish churches, and how we tell their stories in ways that inspire interest and encourage people to visit and care for them today.
- **Tickets currently available to members of the YCCC and York Civic Trust here. Tickets will go on sale to the public on 12th November.**

20th July 2027:

AGM and Bursary Awards Evening

- **York Consortium for Craft and Conservation**
- **Merchant Adventurers' Hall**
- Save the date! Next year's AGM and Bursary Awards Evening will be held on the 20th July. Watch this space - details to come at a later date.

UPCOMING EVENTS FROM OUR SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, AND ALUMNI

14th November:

Lime Mortar Repair Study Day

- **The Building Limes Forum in partnership with Build & Restore Ltd and Earth Stone & Lime Company**
- **Old Lodge, Malton, Yorkshire, YO17 7EG**
- **Saturday 14th November 2026 9.30am-4.30pm**
  - Join us for a day of insight and discussion at the Grade II* Old Lodge Hotel, set within a Scheduled Monument, site successively of Malton Roman Fort, Medieval Castle and Eure Prodigy House.
  - The day will include presentations of work, past and present craft practices with lime in the region, as well as demonstration mixing of the repair mortars to be used at the Lodge. There will also be a tour of the scaffolded works and hopefully a good deal of discussion.
  - Morning coffee, a sandwich lunch and afternoon tea with scones will be provided. Some PPE will be provided, but please bring your own hardhat if you have one, and wear suitably robust clothing, shoes or boots.
- **Tickets £35 BLF members (£45 non-members) can be booked here.**
- **Places will be strictly limited so book early to avoid disappointment.**

18th November:

The Heritage Alliance's 17th Annual Heritage Debate

- **The Heritage Alliance**
- **Online webinar**
- **11:00am to 1:00pm**
- What do people want from heritage in 2026? How can we communicate its value more effectively? And what can the sector do to ensure heritage stays relevant today? Join the conversation online on Wednesday 18 November to hear leading voices from across the sector explore the role of heritage in contemporary public life.
- Speakers include:
- Mary-Ann Ochota – Broadcaster and Author; President of CPRE (The Countryside Charity); and Protected Landscapes Partnership Chair
- Celia Richardson OBE – Director of Communications and Fundraising at the National Trust
- Matthew Mees – Chief Executive of the Old Royal Naval College
- Katie Kennedy - Author, Historian and Content Creator (@TheHistoryGossip)
- Bernard Donoghue OBE – Director of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, sharing expert insights
- Whether you work in heritage, are studying, volunteer, or simply have an interest in heritage and its contribution to society, you're warmly invited to join the conversation. With thanks to Ecclesiastical Insurance, attendance is free for all.
- **Secure your free ticket here.**

UPCOMING EVENTS FROM OUR SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, AND ALUMNI

26th November:

Aldwark Synagogue Blue Plaque Unveiling

- **York Civic Trust**
- **1 Aldwark; moving to Bedern Hall**
- **1:00pm to 2:30pm**
- Join York Civic Trust and representatives of York's Jewish community for the unveiling of a new commemorative plaque marking the site of the former Aldwark Synagogue, which served York's Jewish community from 1893 to 1975.
- The event will celebrate an important chapter in York's Jewish history, reflecting on the communities who have shaped the city over the centuries and the continuing presence of Jewish life in York today.
- **Admission is free, but advance booking is requested due to limited capacity at Bedern Hall. More details and booking information here.**



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Thank you for supporting our work through your membership.