

York Museums Trust

Our Organisation

York Museums Trust is an independent charitable trust, which was created in August 2002 by the City of York Council to manage York Art Gallery, York Castle Museum, Yorkshire Museum, Museum Gardens, York St Mary's and our extensive designated museum and gallery collections.

Mission Statement

Our Vision is for York Museums Trust to play a major part in positioning York as a world class cultural centre.

Our mission is to cherish the collections, buildings and gardens entrusted to us presenting and interpreting them as a stimulus for learning, a provocation to curiosity and a source of inspiration and enjoyment to all.

Our Strategic objectives are:

- To protect and conserve the collections, gardens and buildings
- To promote access to the collections, gardens and buildings appropriate to the 21st Century
- To attract more visitors to our sites, thus contributing to the local and regional economy
- To create learning opportunities for all and develop innovative programmes springing from the collections, gardens and buildings
- To network and collaborate with partners and contribute to the development of the economic and cultural life of the city and the region
- To raise substantial funds to realise these aims

Our Headline priorities are:

- Deliver the York Castle Museum major capital project, including collection and storage rationalisation, and develop the Castle area as a cultural quarter
- Excellent, high profile programming, including strategic YMT-led events to attract visitors to York and high quality exhibitions at York Art Gallery
- Expanding Enterprises and fundraising activities, building on success, becoming a more business-like charity and increasing resilience
- Ensuring a 21st century Visitor Experience, pro-actively engaging visitors to our sites and online
- Improving York's and York Museum Trust's profiles through local, regional and international leadership, partnership and delivering on all the expectations of key stakeholders

The Trust management comprises the Chief Executive, and a Senior Management team, overseeing functions such as governance, fundraising, forward planning,

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marketing, finance, commercial and enterprises, human resources, premises management, health and safety, collections and learning.

Our Venues

York Art Gallery

Built in 1879 as the venue for the second Yorkshire Fine Art and Industrial Exhibition, the building was purchased by the local authority and re-opened as York Art Gallery in 1892. The main gallery was refurbished in 2004 with support from Heritage Lottery and there has been an ongoing programme of refurbishment. In 2013 we closed the gallery for an £8,000,000 capital project, and it re-opened in the summer of 2015, with the exhibition space having been extended by 60%, including a new Centre for British Studio Ceramics and a new garden entrance.

York Art Gallery has outstanding designated fine and decorative art collections comprising paintings that range from 14th century Western European paintings through to 20th century British work, an extensive collection of British Studio ceramics and over 15,000 works on paper. There is also a changing programme of temporary exhibitions.

Yorkshire Museum and Museum Gardens

The Yorkshire Museum is set in 10 acres of historic gardens, both of which were originally founded in the 1830s by the Yorkshire Philosophical Society. The Yorkshire Museum houses the designated archaeological, geological and natural history collections. The museum recently underwent a major refurbishment programme costing £2,200,000 and reopened in 2010.

Within the Museum Gardens are the ruins of the 13th century St Mary's Abbey, a medieval Hospitium and guest lodge, and a 19th century Observatory. The site is a scheduled ancient monument, all of the buildings are listed and the gardens are a registered garden of special scientific interest.

York Castle Museum

The York Castle Museum was founded by Dr Kirk in 1938 and houses his extraordinary collection of social history which reflected everyday life in Yorkshire and the North of England. One of its renowned displays is the reconstructed street, Kirkgate that has been hugely influential in museums displays worldwide. A number of galleries have been refurbished in recent years including Kirkgate, the Prison Cells, The Sixties, the Toy gallery and Chinese Reflections. In addition, we have created, three interactive collection spaces called the Studios, including a working kitchen.

The York Castle Museum is housed in the Debtors prison and the adjoining Women's prison, both of which are Grade 1 listed and are located on part of the city walls which is a scheduled monument. We have recently completed a project

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to refurbish the Debtors Prison on the first and second floors, with exhibitions in commemoration of the First World War. This is a changing exhibition running for the five years of the anniversary of the war until 2018. In addition, a new exhibition was opened in March 2016, entitled 'Shaping the Body' which looks at how our bodies have changed over the last 400 years, through fashion, food and lifestyle.

York St Mary's

This is a 15th century deconsecrated medieval church situated in Castlegate and runs a programme of site specific contemporary art installations and exhibitions.

Collections Storage

In addition to our public venues we are responsible for 4 off site collection stores.

York Museum Trust Designated Collections

Fine and Decorative Art

The Fine Art Collection numbers in excess of 1,000 paintings including a nucleus of Continental paintings from the 14th to 18th centuries, and British paintings from Elizabethan times to present day. The paintings are complemented by an extensive collection of works on paper including the Evelyn collection of local topographical prints. The ceramics collection across the Trust consists of over 11,000 items ranging from over 300 complete prehistoric pots to the WA Ismay Collection which is widely considered to be the most important collection of British post-war studio pottery in existence; also included are major holdings of medieval, 18th and 19th century Northern ceramics, as well as the Dean Milner-White collection of 20th century studio pottery. For its depth and breadth, the ceramics collection is unparalleled in regional museums in Britain. We have recently accepted as a long term loan the Anthony Shaw Collection of contemporary sculptural ceramics dating from the 1970's to the present day.

Archaeology

The archaeological collections have been acquired from across York and Yorkshire, with strengths in all periods from the prehistoric to the medieval, and a regionally important post-medieval collection. Intensive excavation and excellent preservation conditions in York has produced one of the most comprehensive excavation archives outside of London. The numismatic collection contains a wealth of material from across northern and eastern Yorkshire, including an impressive collection of Anglo-Saxon stycas, and Roman, Viking, medieval and Civil War coinage and hoards.

Science

The Geology and Biology collections contain many type and figured specimens which are essential to the taxonomic research of their respective disciplines – they are the touchstone against which similar material is assessed. There are extremely rare items in these collections including a selection of meteorites, dinosaur footprints from the North Yorkshire Coast and material from Kirkdale

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Cave, the hyena's den in North Yorkshire which led to the foundation of the Yorkshire Museum collections. There are also items of scientific importance from international sources such as skeletons of Moa birds and bones from the first Dodo bird ever discovered.

History

The History Collection encompasses those collections previously categorised as Social History, Military and Costume & Textiles, all of which are historically associated with York Castle Museum. Extremely wide-ranging in date and material, much of it relates to York and the Yorkshire region circa 1500 to present day, although some objects and collections are nationally relevant and internationally renowned. Significant subject areas include: Domestic Life, Local History and Community Life, Personal Life, Furniture, Glass, Greeting Cards, Metalwork, Miscellaneous Decorative Arts, Music, Paintings and Prints, Photographs, Plastics, Vehicles, Working Life, Agriculture, Clocks and Watches, Retail Material, Medical material, Military History, Costume and textiles.

Funding

York Museums Trust is partially funded by the City of York Council. We are also one of the Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations. In addition, we raise some £3,000,000 per annum through membership and admissions tickets, commercial activity and Gift Aid. We also fundraise for projects and acquisitions through applications to charitable trusts and foundations or private giving.