



YORK MINSTER FUND

York Minster Fund Christmas Newsletter

Christmas Issue 2025



THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IS OPEN AND LEADING INNOVATION

York Minster's long-awaited Centre of Excellence opened this year, setting a new standard for heritage craft and estate management. The two new sites combine world-class facilities with cutting-edge technology to train apprentices and preserve traditional skills for future generations. This milestone marks a major step in caring for the Minster and ensuring its long-term sustainability. We would like to extend our gratitude to all who supported the Centre; every contribution matters.



Visiting stonemasons from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in India



INSIDE THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE: LATEST UPDATES AND ACHIEVEMENTS



Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, the Centre is already transforming heritage craft and conservation. Here are some recent highlights:

In August, we celebrated the Centre of Excellence's completion with the York Minster Heritage Fair. Over 750 visitors explored the state-of-the-art facilities in the Heritage Quad and Works & Technology Hub. They enjoyed live demonstrations from stonemasons, joiners and gilders, and discovered how digital modelling and precision tools are supporting centuries-old conservation techniques.

A marquee in the Refectory Garden hosted a skills and careers pavilion, inspiring future craftspeople with support from local and national organisations. The weekend also featured an online Partner Symposium with speakers from cathedrals across Europe and the USA, and concluded with a moving Choral Evensong themed around sustainability and gratitude, preached by the Bishop of Selby.

Reflecting on the event, Alex McCallion, Director of Works & Precinct, said:

"A huge thank you to everyone who helped make the York Minster Heritage Fair such a great few days. There have been so many positive conversations about caring for our heritage in the 21st century and finding new opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing and supporting the next generation of craftspeople."

Over the summer, we celebrated the opening of residential bedrooms for apprentices and visiting craftspeople, several funded by generous donors. In June, rooms sponsored by the Friends of York Minster and the King Athelstan Memorial Foundation were officially opened. In August, the United Grand Lodge of England's (UGLE) room was unveiled, with Sir Michael Snyder representing the Duke of Kent. Sir Michael cut the ribbon alongside the Minster's newest apprentice stonemason and his set of tools - a fitting symbol of UGLE's longstanding support for stonemasonry at the Minster.

Also in August, we welcomed four stonemasons from the Commonwealth War Graves in India as part of a new partnership with the Commonwealth Heritage Forum. During their two-week visit, they worked alongside the Minster's team, sharing expertise and gaining valuable insight into the advanced technologies now supporting traditional craft at the Centre.

The Centre has been the recipient of awards that reflect both its architectural excellence and its pioneering approach to heritage skills. Designed by award-winning architects Tonkin Liu, it earned recognition as Best New Building in York at the 17th annual York Design Awards in June. Early autumn brought a further accolade: a Princess Royal Training Award, acknowledging the extensive research and development behind the Centre's work. This achievement particularly highlights the dedication of Laura Cotter, Research and Innovation Manager. Her role, funded through your support, has been instrumental in exploring and developing new ways of working that blend technology and craft.

Laura then spoke alongside Alex McCallion, Director of Works and Precinct, and Lord Halifax, our President, at our annual Founder and Benefactors event in September. We were delighted to see those who were able to attend the celebratory evensong and drinks reception.

The Centre of Excellence has already had a significant impact in helping the Minster's long-term sustainability and preserving heritage craft skills. We look forward to updating you further on its progress.



SEASON'S REFLECTIONS FROM YORK MINSTER FUND

It has been another busy year for York Minster Fund, with much to celebrate. Following years of research, development and a major commitment of both reserves and fundraising, we have been delighted to see the Centre of Excellence in active use during 2025.

The generosity of our donors has made this innovative and much-needed project possible. We are immensely grateful for your support.

We have also been privileged to receive continued generous funding for craft apprenticeships from Benefact Trust and the Worshipful Company of Constructors. The young people involved have been well-supported in their studies and practical skills.

Cate Birch continues to lead the fundraising and will continue to be your first port of call for this, but there have been some changes within the team since Neil Sanderson's retirement earlier this year. Ashley Mason, formerly a Trustee, has become the Interim Director of the Fund, and in May we welcomed Phil Bond as the Grants and Bids Manager. Ruby Burling, our Fundraising Assistant, moved on to a new role in the summer – we thank her for her work and wish her every success.

We hope to see you over Christmas at the Minster if you are attending an event, but please do let us know if you would like to come on site to see our projects first-hand. We always welcome our friends and supporters, and remain deeply grateful for your support.

With all good wishes for a peaceful Christmas.

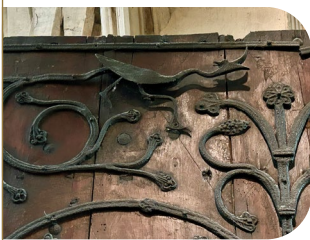


Abbie Jones (former YMF-funded conservator) and Adam Dives (current YMF-funded glazing apprentice)

THE COMPLETED CONSERVATION OF FIVE SOUTH TRANSEPT WINDOWS

We are pleased to share that the York Glaziers Trust have completed work on the windows s11-s15 in the South Transept. This project involved stabilising cracks, repairing leadwork and installing protective glazing to shield the windows from the elements. As reported previously, the Noel Goddard Terry Charitable Trust generously donated £9,000 for the work on s14, which features the crest of Noel Goddard Terry.

CONSERVATION OF THE CHAPTER HOUSE DOORS



A vital project in 2026 will be the conservation of the Chapter House doors. This will involve work on its medieval ironwork, wood and paint.

The doors are of great significance to the Chapter House's art and architecture. Constructed in the 1280s, they are among the oldest doors still situated

in their original location in the UK. Their exquisite design and technically accomplished construction – including rare decorative ironwork and remnants of medieval paintwork – give them outstanding historical significance.

Despite retaining their majesty, the doors are in a fragile and unstable condition due to gradual deterioration, pest infestations, and wear over the last 700 years. There is a risk that, without urgent conservation, the decline of these remarkable feats of medieval craftsmanship will accelerate.

The project's principal donor is the Friends of York Minster, whose support has been central to its development. We have also had generous contributions from The Headley Trust and The Leche Trust. We are now fundraising for the remaining

£10,000 towards the 13th-century decorative ironwork. On each door, this takes the design of a vertical stem of a tree, with a pair of winged dragons at the top. This metalwork is exceptional in both its outstanding quality and rarity, but is currently at risk.

We would be extremely grateful if you could contribute towards the conservation of the medieval ironwork. Every contribution helps, and we will be delighted to invite all donors to this project to a drinks reception opening when the doors are reinstalled in early 2027. Please see the back page if you can help.





YORK MINSTER FUND



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Please check the York Minster website for further details and all services and events: www.yorkminster.org

Christmas Tree Festival:

Saturday, 29th November 2025 – Monday, 5th January 2026

Entry is included with admission to the Minster

Sankta Lucia: Festival of Light:

Monday, 15th December 2025 19.00-20.30

(livestreamed via the Minster's YouTube channel)

Nine Lessons and Carols:

Tuesday, 23rd December 2025 16.00-17.30 (not livestreamed);

Wednesday, 24th December 2025 16.00-17.30

(livestreamed via the Minster's YouTube channel)

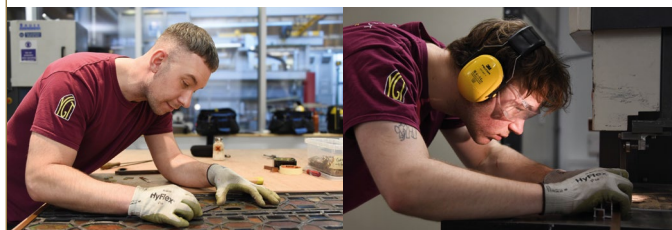
Free pre-booked tickets

Crib Service:

Wednesday, 24th December 2025 11.30-13.00

Free, no tickets required

INTRODUCING THE YMF SUPPORTED APPRENTICE GLAZIERS



We are proud to support the York Glaziers Trust with the partial funding for two of their apprentices, Adam Wilkinson (*left*) and Theo Dives (*right*).

Both have played a key role in projects at the Minster, including creating protective glazing for its windows. They have also worked on prestigious external commissions such as repairs at the Merchant Adventurers' Hall in York, 19th-century glass at Rochdale Town Hall, and Merton College, University of Oxford.

They say they feel incredibly fortunate to do the work they love and get a real thrill from helping to preserve historic sites across the UK.



RIDE RETRO

In September, we were delighted to welcome our regular supporters, Ride Retro, to present a generous donation to York Minster Fund. In attendance at the presentation were the Lord Mayor, Cllr Martin Rowley, and D-Day veteran Ken Cooke, who celebrated his 100th birthday the month before.

This followed a fundraising event hosted by Ride Retro in August, where they displayed motorbikes and scooters on College Green. Thank you to Ride Retro for your continued and wonderful support.

CHAPTER HOUSE DOORS CONSERVATION DONATION FORM

✂ Name

Donation Amount

Please tick the relevant form of donation:

☐ BACS ☐ Cheque ☐ Cash

Acc No: 4089 9585,
Sort Code: 40-57-31

Made out to York
Minster Fund

☐ Gift Aid – Please tick for Gift Aid

Yes, I would like York Minster Fund to claim Gift Aid on this and any future donations I make. I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay the difference.

Please complete and send to York Minster Fund, 8-10 Minster Yard, York, YO1 7HH together with your donation.



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