



YORK MINSTER FUND

York Minster Fund Summer Newsletter

Summer Issue 2026

WELCOME TO THE SUMMER NEWSLETTER



Above: York Minster's proud Works Team on the completed Quire Ramp.
Inset: Stonemasons hard at work on the project.



York Minster and YMF feels a little to me like the Hotel California: “You can check out any time you like, but you can never leave”. It is just over four months since I returned to the Fund, this time as Chair of Trustees. I have been delighted to get back involved in the fantastic work the team are doing as well as working with them on our future plans.

In this edition, you will meet some of the young people we support as we continue to build the heritage workforce of tomorrow and equip them with the latest technology and skills. You will also hear about how these new skills and equipment from the award-winning Centre of Excellence have begun to be deployed in the recently-completed Quire Ramp.

We will also share with you some of the progress on the ongoing projects in the South Transept as we work towards the next phase of conservation on the iconic Rose Window in 2027.

None of our work is possible without the ongoing funding of our supporters and recently we have had the pleasure of meeting several of you in person. Sadly, however, in this edition we will also remember with thanks one of the Minster's greatest friends and supporters, Gordon Horsfield, who recently left us after a long battle with cancer.

The Hotel California may have been described as “such a lovely place... any time of year”, but it surely had nothing on the Minster. When the sun is shining its early morning light through the Great East Window there can be no more beautiful place, and it continues to be one of my greatest privileges to be involved in preserving this magnificent building. So, thank you again for all your contributions to our work.

NEIL SANDERSON
Chair of Trustees, York Minster Fund



THE COMPLETION OF THE MINSTER'S QUIRE RAMP

The Quire Ramp has successfully been installed and is open for use. The largest permanent structure created inside York Minster since the 1830s, the Quire Ramp provides full accessibility into the Quire, the heart of the Minster and the home of services. It is a key part of the Minster's commitment to make the cathedral welcoming and accessible to everyone.

The project, which would previously have taken 18 months to complete, instead took under 5 months as our team of skilled heritage craftspeople leveraged the new technology on offer in the Centre of Excellence. The project has demonstrated the capacity of the state-of-the-art equipment in the Centre to realise our essential projects across the Minster and its precinct and has given our team the opportunity to develop new skills.

The work was completed with minimal disruption to the Minster's daily operations as a living church and visitor attraction, enabled by the hard work of our team.

We are immensely grateful to our donors who made this essential work possible: the principal donor, Friends of York Minster, as well as Benefact Trust and the Mark Benevolent Fund.

MEET TWO OF OUR STONEMASON APPRENTICES

As part of our commitment to passing on heritage craft skills to younger generations, York Minster offers stonemasonry apprenticeships. This is funded by YMF and with support from generous donors.

Ben, from Rochdale, recently finished the first year of his stonemasonry apprenticeship. *"Working as a stonemason at York Minster was what I wanted – somewhere that culture, history and a trade all meet in one."*

Since the Centre for Excellence opened in 2025, apprentices like Ben have benefitted from affordable on-site accommodation. *"Everything I need is here: it's warm, comfortable, and right in the centre of York."*

Ben speaks highly of his training: *"Amazing mentors. I'm surrounded by the best of the best here."* He particularly appreciates the quality of the Centre's facilities: *"I love the adjustable banker and the movable hood. There aren't many workshops with underfloor heating!"*

Freya has completed her four-year apprenticeship. She says: *"My training was both broad and focused, equipping me with the skills needed for a 21st-century stonemason."*

Freya has not only appeared on BBC's *The Repair Shop on the Road*, but has also featured in *National Geographic* and *Rock Chisel Surface Stone* magazine. She was selected as one of the King's Foundation '35 under 35', a network of individuals making a positive impact. In recognition of her craft skills, she was also awarded the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust RW Armstrong Emerging Maker Grant in 2025.

Freya looks forward to completing an additional qualification offered by the Cathedrals' Workshop Fellowship.

Thank you to everyone who has supported our apprentice programme, particularly Benefact Trust, the Worshipful Company of Constructors Charitable Trust, and the Cathedrals' Workshop Fellowship.



THE COMPLETION OF THE KING ATHELSTAN GROTESQUE

We are pleased to share that York Minster's Experienced Stonemason, Richard Bossons, has completed his grotesque of King Athelstan, first king of all England. The grotesque was commissioned and generously funded by the King Athelstan Memorial Foundation.

The design was initially completed in clay, before being 3D scanned and printed to create a reference for hand-carving the stone grotesque. Completed in the Centre of Excellence, the project demonstrates how York Minster's heritage craftspeople blend heritage craft skills with the latest in digital technologies and innovations.

Looking ahead, there are plans to create a set of additional grotesques depicting representations of the Ten Commandments.





S20-S22 CONSERVATION UPDATE



The conservation of windows s20-s22 in the South Transept is now largely complete, thanks to the hard work of the York Glaziers Trust. These lancets, which contain stained glass originating from 1220, depict four substantial saints: St William of York, St Peter, St Paul, and St Wilfrid.

A generous donation of £300,000 from the project's principal donor, the Julia Rausing Trust, enabled work to begin on securing these medieval

windows. Upon the discovery that the works needed were far more extensive than initially anticipated, with the two largest windows needing complete re-leading, the Trust donated a further £460,000 in January 2026. We are immensely grateful to the Julia Rausing Trust for their generosity, without which these vital works could not take place.

Additionally, the Friends of York Minster donated over £88,000 towards the initial stage of the project. This included using the scaffolding to also examine the Rose Window, also in the South Transept, for the first time in 40 years. We are extremely grateful for their contribution to this project.



NOEL GODDARD TERRY CHARITABLE TRUST VISIT

We were delighted to welcome the Trustees of the Noel Goddard Terry Charitable Trust to the Minster Precinct in May.

The Trustees first visited the Centre of Excellence, where they saw current work and met some of our skilled stonemasons. They also visited the York Glaziers Trust to meet the talented craftspeople who conserve the Minster's enormous collection of stained glass.

A recent project was the conservation of s14, a 15th-century window located in the South Transept. s14 features the crest of Noel Goddard Terry, introduced in the 1970s to commemorate the Trust's kind donation towards the window's major restoration intervention at that time. We are deeply grateful for the Trust's generous £9,000 donation to support the vital work needed to protect this precious medieval window for future generations.

SUPPORT OUR APPRENTICES WITH ESSENTIAL TOOLS

Essential to the work of our stonemason apprentices are their tools, which allow them to take part in the craft as their medieval predecessors would have done, hand-carving stone using mallets and chisels. The tools allow our apprentices to gain the increasingly rare skills necessary to care for and preserve this magnificent building and its precinct.

Each year, the cost of our first-year's apprentices' tools is generously funded by the Yorkshire North and East Ridings Freemasons. We are now fundraising for tools used by apprentices in subsequent years. Please see the back page if you can help.

In our Christmas newsletter, we informed you about the planned conservation of the 13th century Chapter House Doors and asked for your help in reaching our fundraising target of £10,000 towards the decorative ironwork. We are delighted to report that we have reached over £4,000 of our target to date. We are extremely grateful to all who have made a donation so far - every contribution counts towards the conservation of these exquisite and historically significant doors.





PATRON GARDEN PARTY



We were delighted to welcome our Patrons to the York Minster Fund Garden Party in June. Our Patrons' monthly donations make a valuable contribution to the conservation and maintenance of the Minster. Thank you all so much for your continued support!

Our Patrons also enjoyed viewing some of the Minster's priceless collection housed in the Old Palace, kindly facilitated by Research Coordinator, Dr Jennie England, and York Minster Librarian, Sarah Griffin.

We would also like to thank the The Grand, York for donating a delicious selection of canapés for the occasion.

If you are interested in joining our Patrons scheme, please go to: <https://yorkminster.org/get-involved/donate/> to find out more.

STONEMASON APPRENTICE TOOLS DONATION FORM

Name

Donation Amount

Please tick the relevant form of donation:

☐ **BACS**
 Acc No: 40899585
 Sort Code: 40-47-31

☐ **Cheque**
 Made out to York
 Minster Fund

☐ **Cash**

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, 8-9 Minster Yard, York, YO1 7HH together with your donation.

GORDON HORSFIELD - IN MEMORIAM

Written by Michael Benson MBE, former Director of the York Minster Fund.

Gordon, who died in May, was a distinguished accountant, being a partner with PwC, and a businessman of note, being chairman of Drax Group and overseeing its restructuring in the early 2000s. He was also a significant philanthropist, establishing the Holbeck Charitable Trust with his family in 2006. Over the years the Trust has been very supportive of the York Minster Fund, making a significant contribution to the York Minster Revealed project, which centred on the restoration of the Great East Window.

Gordon was appointed to the York Minster Court of Benefactors and also served on the Minster finance committee. Fittingly, a stone lies beneath the Great East Window inscribed with his name and that of his wife, Francesca, which recognises the support he and his family gave to the Minster over the years. The Trust was also supportive of other Yorkshire-based operations such as Opera North, the University of York and the Richard Shephard Music Foundation, to name but a few.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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

Summer Organ Recitals:

**Thursday evenings from 16th July 2026
-20th August 2026, beginning at 19:00.**

Nights of spectacular organ music performed by six acclaimed musicians.

Tickets can be booked online via the York Minster Box Office or by calling 01904 557200.

Founders and Benefactors Event:

Wednesday, 30th September, beginning at 17:30.

Founders and Benefactors are invited to join us for a special Evensong in the Minster. We would really love to see as many of you as possible for this special event.

Following the service, a drinks reception will be held.

Christmas Carol Concerts:

Thursday, 3rd of December 19:00-20:15 and Friday, 4th of December 19:00-20:15 (Provisional).

One of the Minster's most cherished seasonal events.

Ticket release date to be announced so please keep an eye on our website and emails for updates!



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