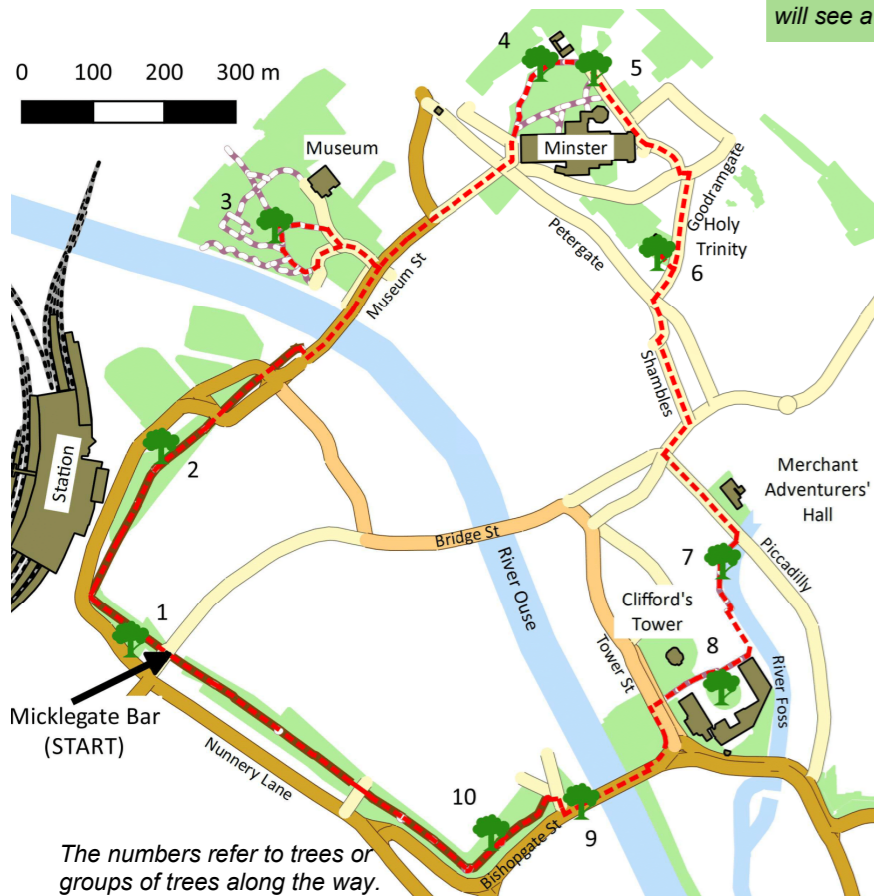


YORK TREE TRAIL

The York Tree Trail is a walk around the city centre revealing several green areas with trees of age, interest and beauty.

10 trees or groups of trees, which are all native to Britain, are picked out to show something of their history, mythology and uses.

The trees form a perfect setting for, and complement to, the city's famous historical buildings.



Start at Micklegate Bar, facing out of town. Go up the steps to the right of the Bar, and you will soon see 2 large cherry trees below you on the left.

1 Cherry

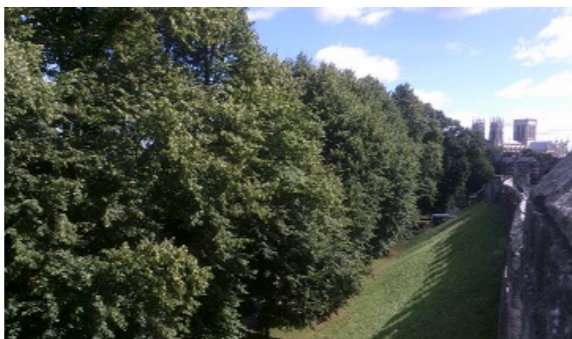
These are cultivated cherries, with red flowers, as opposed to the white flowers of the Bird Cherry, or the Wild Cherry (Gean). Cherry gum was once used to cure colds and sore throats, and the wood was used for smokers' pipes



Continue along the wall, with the station down to your left. You will see a row of lime trees by the old cholera cemetery.

2 Lime

Limes are often placed along the sides of avenues, and on the approaches to large houses; they can grow very tall – up to 30 metres. In medieval times, a lotion made by boiling lime leaves was used to treat skin complaints; but nowadays, the drips of honey dew produced by lime aphid are the bane of motorists.



Continue along the wall and join the road to cross the bridge. Turn left into Museum Gardens. Take time to explore the wide range of trees in the Gardens, many of them named; but focus on the collection of yew trees in the central area.

3 Yew

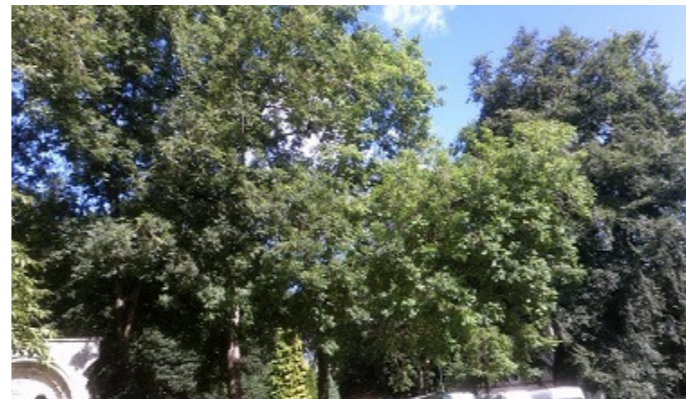
The yew, a symbol of immortality or doom – and for this reason often used in cemeteries - can live for more than 1000 years. Its heavy wood has long been used to make weapons, such as the longbow. The seeds are distributed by the birds which eat the bright red berries.



Leave the Museum Gardens by the same gate, turn left and walk towards the Minster. Enter Dean's Park via the gate to the left. Take the left fork in the path and as you approach the Minster Library building, note the large ash trees overhanging the fence.

4 Ash

The ash, distinguishable in winter and spring by its big black buds, is now threatened by the lethal Ash Dieback disease. Should the disease eventually kill all ash trees, the species will be sorely missed. But work is going on to help it survive. Its hard, flexible wood is used for tool handles, furniture and sports equipment. More poetically, it has been associated with good luck and true love.



Before leaving the gardens, admire the many other old trees there – and the two newly-planted walnuts, part of the continuous process of rejuvenation. The two gates at the far end take you to an enormous beech tree in Minster Yard.

5 Beech

The beech is said to protect against lightning, and, like hazel, can be used for water divining. Its wood is excellent for making tools and furniture, and for the production of charcoal. Like so many trees, it encourages biodiversity by hosting 64 insect species in its leaves and its bark.



Exit Minster Yard towards Goodramgate, with the impressive East Window of the Minster on your right. Turn right into Goodramgate, with the Cross Keys on your right. Just before the end of the street, find the narrow entrance on the right to the exquisite Holy Trinity Church. The small churchyard contains two large hawthorn trees.

6 Hawthorn

Though most commonly used as a hedge, the hawthorn, if left to grow, develops into a sturdy tree. Its berries encourage birds and wildlife, and the famous mayflower brightens up the hedges in spring. The berries are believed to have medicinal properties, and fair maids who wash in its dew on the first of May are said to become even fairer.



Leave the church and continue right down Goodramgate. Turn left into Kings Square, noting the large lime trees which have been pollarded, or trimmed, to avoid falling branches and excessive shade. Continue down the Shambles, York's old street of the butchers, and at the bottom turn right to the traffic lights. Here look right to see the plane trees in Parliament Street, again heavily pollarded. Then turn left down Piccadilly to Merchant Adventurers' Hall, on your left. This fine old hall is enhanced by the large lime trees behind the fence, and the more delicate trees and bushes on the lawn below.

Cross the road and take the path along this side of the river Foss. Alongside the river are two memorial trees, and a number of sturdy willows. These are weeping willows, with draping branches dangling in the river.

7 Willow

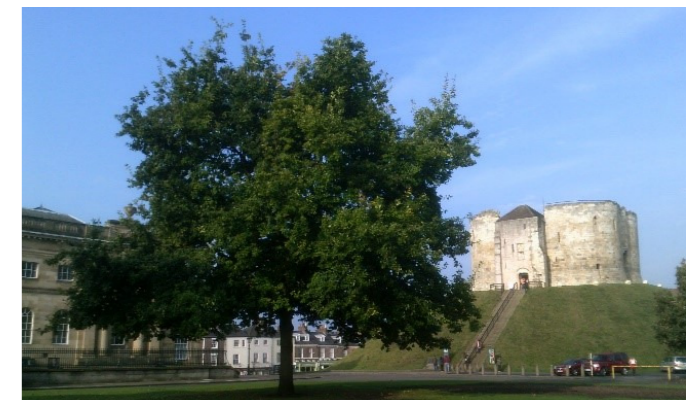
Traditionally found along river banks because they thrive in wet soils, willows provide the traditional wood for cricket bats. They are often coppiced (cut down regularly) to provide material for basket weaving and fencing. They are also a good source of bio-mass, which is burned to produce energy.



Continue into the car park by Cliffords Tower. To the left in a green area in front of the Castle Museum is one of York's rare oak trees.

8 Oak

Possibly the best known of British trees, the oak has been used for hundreds of years to build boats, houses and all kinds of furniture and tools. Its leaf and its seed, - the acorn - are well known symbols of countryside pursuits.



Descend to the main road, and cross by the traffic lights into Tower Gardens, a small square by the River Ouse. Cross the nearby Skeldergate Bridge and immediately look for two holly trees on your right.

9 Holly

The holly is traditionally associated with Christmas, and is a symbol of eternal life. Smooth-leaved varieties are supposed to be lucky for women, whereas the prickly ones (!) are allegedly lucky for men. The bright berries are an important source of winter food for birds.



Climb the steps on to the wall. To your right is Baile Hill, the mound or motte on which stood the keep or castle matching Cliffords Tower on the other side of the river. Just after Baile Hill and close to the wall is a rowan tree.

10 Rowan

Noticeable for its relatively small size, the rowan also protects you from witches! This is another tree whose berries are an important source of winter food for birds. Their other popular name - mountain ash - is deceptive: they are not in fact related to the ash family.



Follow the path as it turns right, and continue back to Micklegate Bar.

About trees

Some of the areas you have visited have a wealth of trees which are worth further exploration – particularly Museum Gardens and Dean’s Park, behind the Minster.

Trees can be incredibly spectacular or beautiful specimens; but they can also provide an impressive setting for other features, such as rivers, lakes, mountains and, and, as in the case of York, for old buildings. Look, for example, at the way trees add to the visual impact of St Mary’s Abbey in Museum Gardens,



or to the wide expanse of Parliament Street,



or to the sunken splendour of the Merchant Adventurers’ Hall.



The value of trees

As well as their aesthetic value, trees have a large part to play in improving the health of the environment - and of the human race.

Clean air

They absorb carbon dioxide and emit oxygen.

Flood prevention

They absorb and hold back water, especially in the upper reaches of rivers, slowing down the rush into cities which often causes flooding. York has been a particular victim of flooding in the last few years.

Fuel

Dry, seasoned logs provide a relatively cheap, clean and comforting source of heat, especially when burnt in efficient wood-burning stoves.

Wild life

Berries and other fruits are a valuable source of food for a wide range of birds, animals and insects. Shelter from predators encourages wildlife to thrive and so increases biodiversity

Timber products

Oak, beech, ash and cherry are just some of the trees that provide a wide range of furniture, tools and other products.

Recreation

Woodland walks, benches with woodland views, play areas and dens are some of the ways trees can help people of all ages to relax and enjoy themselves. Dogwalkers know that their charges revel in a wooded environment.

Education

Watching and studying trees gives an example of and an insight into phenomena such as growth, propagation, reproduction and animal behaviour.

Property value

Estate agents claim that trees, a hedge or even a solitary tree in or close to a property can make it more attractive to potential buyers. Studies suggest a 7% increase is not unusual.

Shade

Not only for wildlife, but humans also – even in the fickle British climate it can sometimes be hot enough to make shade desirable!

Health and peace

More studies suggest that patients – in hospitals and at home – recover more quickly when they have a view of trees through their windows or from balconies.

Overall economic benefits

By their ability to reduce air pollution and flooding, as well as their overall value in increasing people’s physical and mental health, millions of pounds per year are saved on the cost of the NHS, drainage and sewerage.

Useful contacts

Treemendous York Partnership

www.treemendousyork.com

✉ treemendousinfo@gmail.com

🐦 <https://twitter.com/@TreemendousYork>

📘 <https://www.facebook.com/TreemendousYork>

City of York Council

www.york.gov.uk



Woodland Trust

www.woodlandtrust.or.uk/

Tree Council

www.treecouncil.org.uk

Treemendous

is a group of volunteers with a mission to plant trees in and around York to make the city more attractive to both residents and visitors as well as providing a more sustainable environment for all.



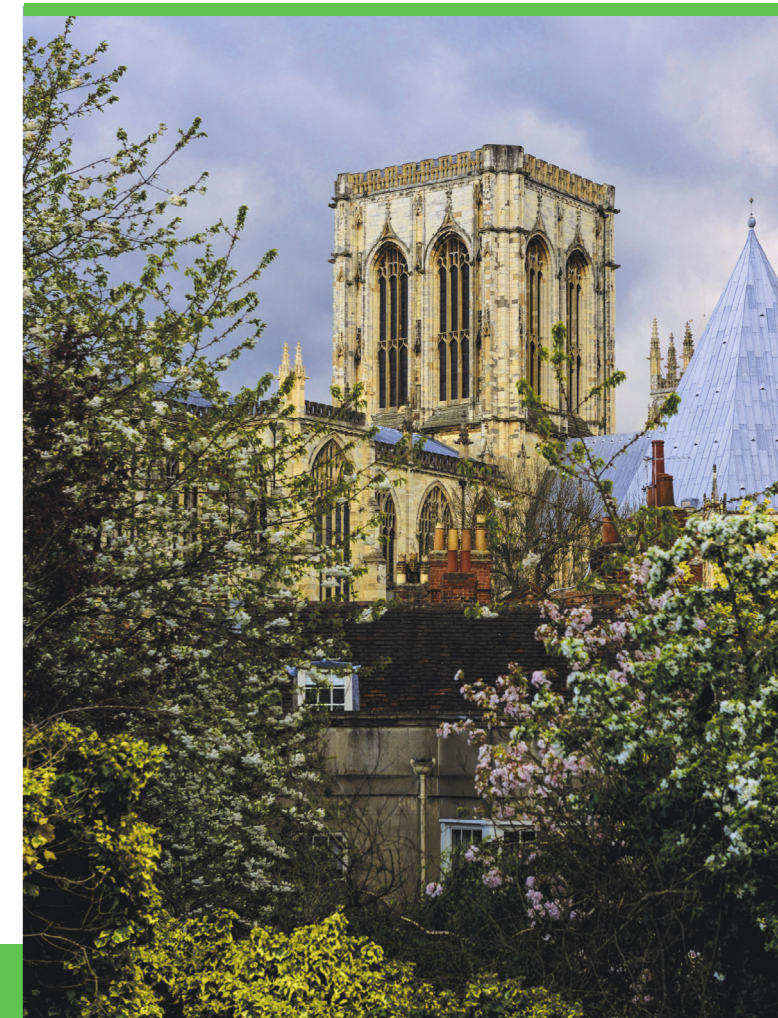
We rely on the support of the City of York Council, residents, local schools and businesses and other community groups and organisations.

Leaflet design by Victoria Beale - dipper.design@gmail.com

Front cover image courtesy of stevenericparker.com
imagesofyork.blogspot.co.uk

Map data © OpenStreetMap

The York Tree Trail



“We care about trees”