

BIZARRE YORK



Some strange stories about York, the original city adventure...



Barley Hall

A medieval town house was uncovered in the 1980s from its hiding place concealed under a jumble of run down derelict offices and workshops in the centre of York, between Grape Lane and Stonegate. Alderman William Snawsell, goldsmith and Lord Mayor of York is known to have lived here at the end of the fifteenth century and the house is now lovingly restored to reflect this period and is

open to the public. Silent for nearly 500 years... how many more undiscovered secrets like this does York hold?

The Black Swan

The Black Swan at Peasholme Green was originally built as a rich merchant's house and is a fine Tudor building. An inn and hostelry since the eighteenth century it still retains its original outer door complete with Black Death spy hole, which was used to check that whoever was knocking, was not infected with plague.

Guy Fawkes

Guy Fawkes of Gunpowder Plot fame was born in Stonegate. Minster Library records confirm that Mr and Mrs Fawkes lived in the street. Guy attended St Peter's School, Bootham, York and to this day the school refuses, as is the usual tradition, to burn effigies of their old boy on bonfire night, November 5th.



Little Red Devil

A little red devil sits outside no 33 Stonegate, not because the inhabitants were diabolical, but because the building was once a printers. ('Printers devils' were errand-boys who had to carry hot metal type).

Jane Hodson

Jane Hodson has one of the many memorials in the Minster dedicated to her. She died in 1636, presumably of exhaustion, aged 38. The wife of a chancellor to the Minster, she had given birth to 24 children.



Bar Convent

The Bar Convent, the oldest living convent in England, established in 1686, has a beautiful neo-classical chapel dating from 1769 which has a priest's hiding hole and eight separate exits to facilitate the escape of the congregation in the event of a raid during the time Catholicism was outlawed in Britain.

Margaret Clitheroe

Margaret Clitheroe's severed hand is part of an exhibition at the Bar Convent dating from the penal times when Catholicism was banned by the monarchy. She became known as a Catholic martyr and saint and was canonised in 1970, her shrine is in the Shambles.

Fires at the Minster

A lightning bolt struck the Minster in 1984 and started a serious fire three days after the consecration of the controversial David Jenkins as Bishop of Durham. But the worst fire of modern times was in 1829 when religious fanatic Mad Martin set fire to the quire.

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