



OPENING DOORS

Newsletter of the York Mansion House Restoration Project



In this issue

Updates on the commencement of the restoration project, including the official handover to the contractors.

More information about the programme of Hard Hat Tours that begin later this month.

The 360° photography project to record every aspect of the Mansion House before and during the project.

The re-enactment and recording of a banquet to celebrate 'Lord Mayor's Day' to be included on future Mansion House audio tours.

Development of workshops for schools and other learners focusing on the 'coconut cup' and the silver collection.

An update on the York Oral History Society's project to interview those who have lived and worked at the Mansion House over the years.



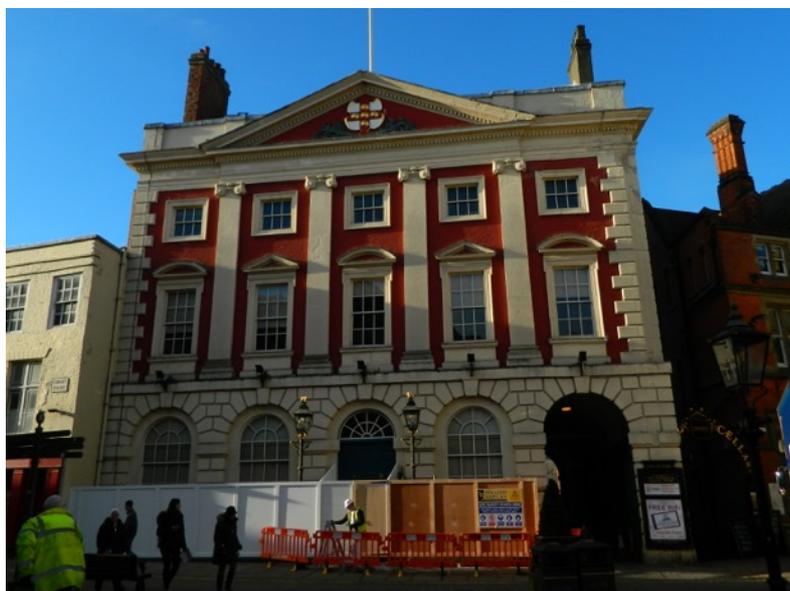
Welcome to the second edition of the 'Opening Doors' newsletter.

With 2016 just two months old, the project is moving forward apace. Construction work has begun and our programme of 'hard hat' tours has been planned. This edition also brings news of activities taking place behind the scenes to ensure an exciting experience for future visitors to the Mansion House.

Construction work update



On the 11th January 2016, the Mansion House was officially handed over to contractors William Anelay Ltd., who are carrying out the refurbishment under the supervision of architects De Matos Ryan. The story was featured in the [York Press](#) on the same day.



Hoardings have now been erected in front of the house, protective covers have been placed around vulnerable areas such as the stair banisters and the process of stripping out the modern kitchen has begun.



Some interesting features have already been revealed, including a wooden ventilation screen in the basement, possibly of late 18th century date, a piece of railway track inserted in the State Room fireplace and even the skeleton of a mouse!

We'll bring you further updates in future editions.



Hard Hat Tours

Our first hard hat tours will take place on the 18th February. Further tours are planned for 2nd April, 9th June, 29th July, 12th & 27th August and 23rd & 28th September. Tours will start from the Guildhall (where hard hats will be issued) at 11am, 12:30pm and 2pm. Each tour lasts approximately one hour and is led by the project architect, with input from the building contractors and one of our guides. Places are limited to 12 per tour.

To book your place, contact Visit York - you can drop in to 1 Museum Street, call 01904 550099 or email info@visityork.org

360° Photography

As part of our mission to record every aspect of the Mansion House before and during the project, Richard and Leanne Brigham of York Past and Present have worked with Joe Simpson to produce a magnificent 360° interactive tour of the house. We'll be making this available on our website for everyone to enjoy.

Audio Recording for the Mansion House Tours

Actors from York-based theatre company *Not Cricket Productions* recreated the sounds of an 18th century Lord Mayor's dinner in the ancient surroundings of the Guildhall's inner chamber when they came to record a piece for the Mansion House audio tour. With scripts created by our partners at York Archaeological Trust, and a sandwich buffet standing in for roast meat, the cast did a fantastic job of transporting us to back to the 3rd of February 1785, when guests gathered for a banquet to celebrate Lord Mayor's Day.



Once completed, the audio tour will form an integral part of the visitor experience at the Mansion House, bringing to life the voices of long-gone occupants, guests and servants.

The Coconut Cup

Our Education and Learning Officer, Gillian Waters, has been working hard on projects to enhance our understanding of objects in the collection and create interesting workshops for schools and other learners.

Sometimes, experiments are required! Gillian has enlisted the help of Mansion House Assistant Robert Thompson to work out how a 17th century craftsman would have created one of the more unusual items in the collection - a silver-mounted coconut cup.

So far, Robert has completed the following steps:

- Removing the coconut milk and husk
- Cutting the coconut in half and removing the flesh
- Smoothing and polishing the surfaces
- Finishing with linseed oil to waterproof the inside
- Creating and attaching a base

Further updates to follow!





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Silver Activities

Gillian has also devised a number of activities involving the silver collection. These include; discovering the silver content of objects using weights and magnetic slides, learning about manufacture with wire drawing and 3-D puzzles, and exploring decorative techniques like embossing.

Consultation will take place with various groups across York in the weeks to come, before a decision is made on which activities will be incorporated into the learning programme for 2017.

Oral History Project Update

York Oral History Society are well on the way to completing their interviews of those who have lived and worked at the Mansion House over the years. To date, 24 interviews have been carried out. Capturing the unique experiences of people connected with the house is vital work. Their words and voices help the building come alive and will form a valuable archive for the future.

If you, or someone you know, has worked at the Mansion House in the past and would like to contribute to the project, then do please get in touch. You can email mansionhouse@york.gov.uk or call (01904) 551027.

Restoration Fund

We still have a funding shortfall, so donations to our Restoration Fund are always welcome!

For further information, please email or call us.

