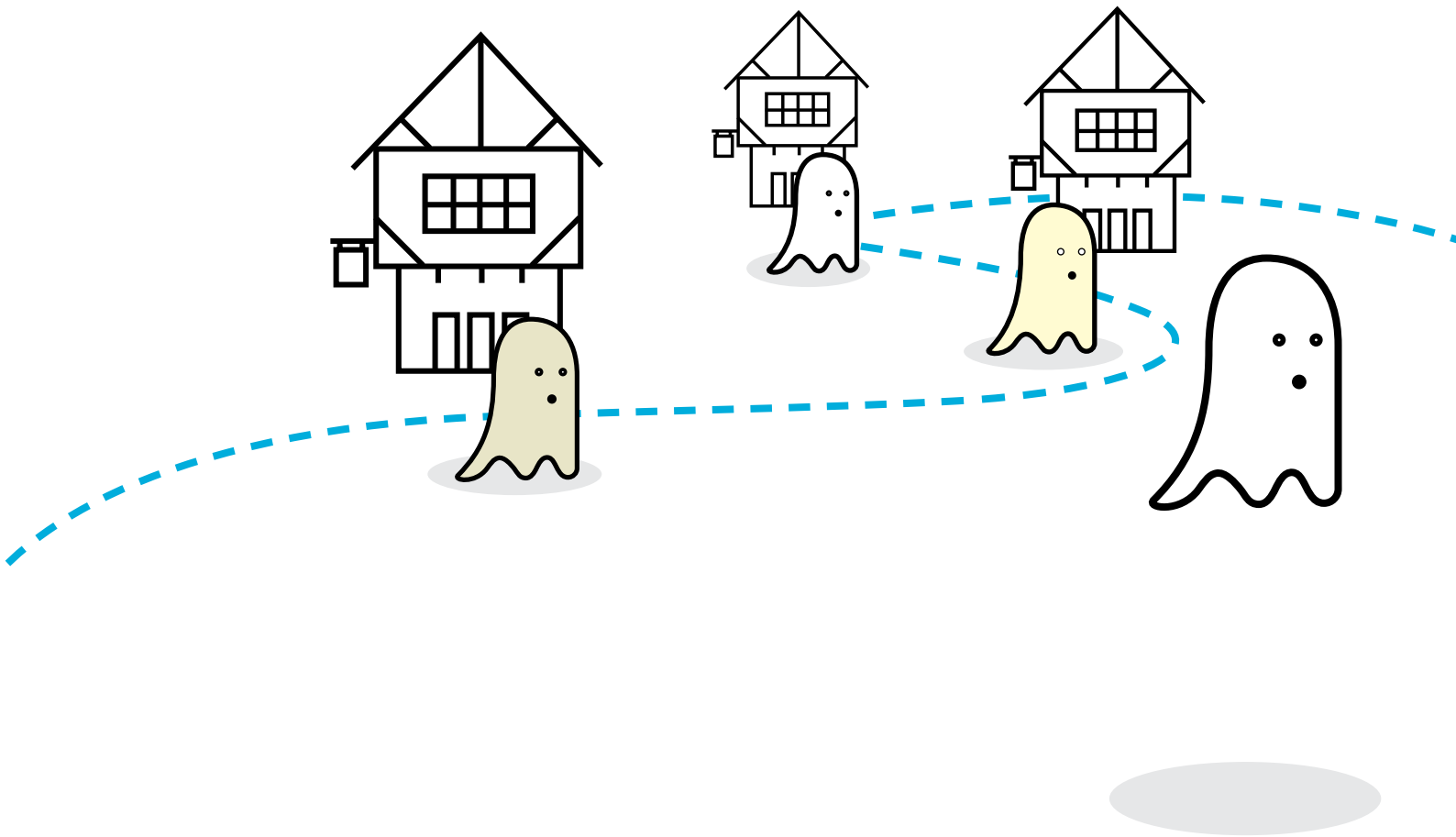


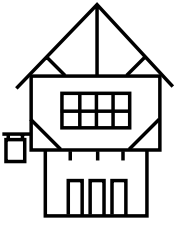
HISTORY OF YORK

The Ghostly Pub Trail

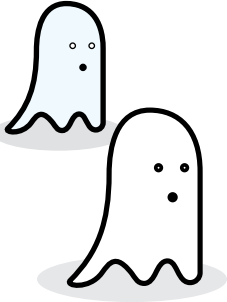


York is full of ghost stories; some of them give entertaining insights to the history of the city. Enjoy this haunted pub trail and pick up a pint and a bit of history along the way.

Start at Bootham Bar



The northern entrance to the city, on the Great North Road, Bootham Bar is the only gate that still stands on the site of a previous Roman one. Parts of the current structure date from the 11th century. Two upper storeys were added in the 14th century and the late 19th century.



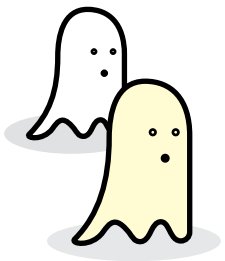
The Bar was threatened with total demolition in 1832 but saved by public outcry, although it lost its barbican (a walled enclosure to an outer gate). It is reputedly haunted by a contemporary ghost of a man in modern polo shirt and shorts.

Go through the Bar and carry on up High Petergate, about 100 metres up on the left is:

York Arms

This former Georgian Chapter Coffee House is allegedly haunted by one of York's several grey ladies, said by some to be a nun. Former landlords and their families – mostly the men – have seen a floating grey mist, floating bellows and other small objects, locked doors opened and open doors shut.

The pub is named after the city's coat of arms. The arms date from 1587 when the Lord Mayor received them, drawn on parchment, from the Queen's Herald of Arms. They contain the red cross of St George, suggesting York's religious connections, and five gold lions of England, emphasising its strong support of English royalty.



In heraldic terms, the five lions are 'passant', meaning that they are walking, and 'guardant', meaning their heads are turned to face the viewer. They are active and aware!

Leaving the pub, turn left towards the city centre. Continue to the right of St Michael-le-Belfrey Church. About 100 metres up the road take the right turn into the cobbled Stonegate. Head for the banner over the street that marks the entrance to:

Ye Olde Starre Inne

A Royalist officer haunts this pub, from 1644 when the pub was a field hospital in the English Civil War. Described as imposing figure, he wears a beaver hat, smart breeches and doublet, and stands in a commanding pose. He shares his 'billet' with two black cats. The cats are said to upset any dogs in the pub; their bodies are reputedly buried in the large pillar in the bar. Finally, there have been occasional reports of an old lady climbing the stairs, seen only by children.

A contender for the oldest pub and most haunted pub in York, The Star has the longest continuous licence, dating back to the Civil War period. It was mentioned in a pamphlet of the time.

The famous sign across the road has been there since 1733, the terms of the agreement included a rental being paid to the property on the opposite side of the street, the money paid then had to be spent in the company of the landlord of the pub.

The Star has been known under various spellings and abbreviations of the current name, the current spelling using Ye is not a mock old English spelling, it uses a Saxon rune in place of 'th', but is pronounced the same. The old star it refers to is said to be King Charles I, reflecting the Royalist leanings of the landlord in the 1640s.

On leaving the pub, turn right until, over the road, is:

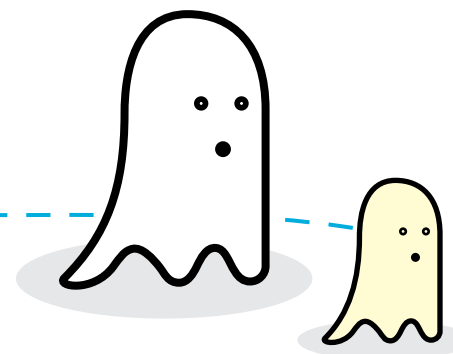
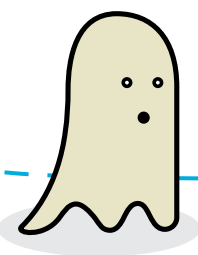
Punch Bowl Inn, Stonegate

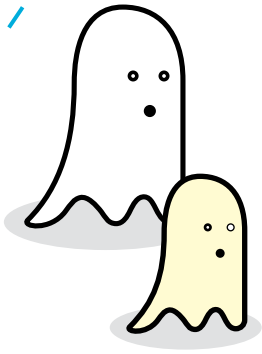
A Punch Bowl in Stonegate is mentioned during the Siege of York in 1644, but there is no proof that it stood on this site. Part of the present Punch Bowl was built in 1675 but the oldest parts inside can't be easily viewed, and the present frontage was built in the 1930s. It is one of the many York pubs that boast a selection of ghost stories.

The first story told of a former landlord who was killed in a fire, his spirit still walks down the cellar steps, despite them having since been moved. He follows the route of the ones he remembers and disappears into the floor.

The pub also has a grey lady, reputed to be a woman who committed suicide after her lover cheated on her, she is said to have come back looking for her unfaithful man.

The third ghost is another young woman, and there are two theories as to who she is. One story is that she's was strangled by a drunk in the 18th century after she rejected his advances. She still runs from room to room trying to evade him. At the time, the pub reputedly was a brothel, although there is no proof of this. The other version is that she was a barmaid beaten to death in the 16th century, again trying to evade her murderer she runs around the pub, a pub wasn't even built at the time!





Cross over to:

The Yorkshire Terrier

A girl is supposed to haunt the cellar of this pub, reputedly the daughter of a prostitute from the Punch Bowl across the road.

In this area is a house where Laurence Sterne, the author of the novel 'Tristram Shandy', stayed for a while. The locals told him a ghost story, explaining why he could hear banging in the house next door, every night just after midnight.

The story went that a previous occupant was an old man who lived in fear of robbers. Every night, after the Minster bells tolled midnight, he thought it would frighten any robbers off if he banged his walking stick on the wall near his bed several times. After his death, his ghost continued to scare off the burglars.

On leaving the pub, turn right in to St Helen's Square. Cross it heading for the far right corner. Pass by Harkers and cross the road in to the cobbled alleyway leading to:

Lendal Cellars

This pub, in the Lord Mayor's former wine cellars, stands on monastic land. From about 1272 this site was home to the Austin Friars. The Friary was around 35-members strong and had a famous library of more than 2000 works on theology, philosophy and science. In 1538 the monastery became one of the many institutions dissolved by King Henry VIII.

Glimpses of ghostly figures have been reported by visitors in the lower seating area; when they turn their head to look, the figures have vanished.

On leaving the pub, turn left and walk to the end of Lendal. Turn right onto Museum Street and about 100 metres up on the right is:

Thomas's Hotel

Late at night strange things have been reported in here: at the top of the building is a function room, which has a strange cold air current running through it. It passes the double doors in to the room where it would appear the furniture holds unearthly parties of its own: the chairs and tables up here have been seen moving about on their own, and ghostly figures seen wandering the staircases.

Reports of hauntings seem to have increased since the disappearance of a pair of ballet shoes which used to be in a glass case on the wall.

At the time, the pub was covered in show bills as many of the regulars were connected to the Theatre Royal, across the way. It was 1744 when the first playhouse was built on the site of the present theatre. It was enlarged 20 years later to seat 550 and has seen various improvements since and now seats 1400.

The theatre and all the other buildings opposite Thomas's Hotel sit over and around the ruins of the massive medieval hospital called St Leonard's. This was the largest hospital in the north of England, a religious order that cared for the bodies and souls of the sick and dying. Like the Austin Friary, St Leonard's was abolished during Henry VIII's reformation of the church.

On leaving this last stop: turn right towards York Minster for a taxi rank, turn right and then first left, for another taxi rank and Bootham Bar, turn left and over the river to head towards York Station.

