

## 10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY REVIEW YORK 50+ FESTIVAL



Model Boats in  
Rowntree Park

**2005** The York 50+ Festival was launched under the banner of the York Older People's Assembly (YOPA) with the support of The Press amidst much speculation with 75 events attracting thousands of people of all ages – it turned out to be a winning idea and part of a nation-wide move towards celebrating International Day of Older People on 1<sup>st</sup> October. The YOPA 50+ Information Fair at the Guildhall was a success under the guidance of Roisheen Childs of OCA (Older Citizens Advocacy York) and has continued to thrive. There was even a presentation of a

Press award for the best story at the 50+ Festival Show at the Theatre Royal – remember Ivy Eden's plane hop in Blackpool? The 50+ Festival Show continues each year, now organised by the storyteller Adrian Spendlow, as does the poetry evening now organised by Rose Drew of the Spoken Word open mic. The Ebor Ruggers made a colourful splash at the Spurriergate Centre and have kept in touch over the years. The Healing Clinic led by June Tranmer has been involved from the start and the annual Model Boat Regatta under the leadership of Don Parlabeau, then YOPA Chair, was for years an integral part of the 50+ Festival programme. The participation of businesses and church groups was sparse to begin with but as the potential benefits became clear their involvement has increased year by year.

**2006** saw the first York 50+ Games which has now morphed into the Eng-AGE 50+ Games organised by CYC Sport & Active Leisure. Is your club involved? Contact Catriona Sudlow on 01904 553377. Watch for their ongoing events. Don Jackson introduced pétanque to festival-goers and Carole Green organised dance, pétanque and tennis in Bishopthorpe. Michael Hjort of the Food & Drink Festival ran a cookery competition in the Guildhall with a winning performance by Mayor Janet Horton and the two festivals continued to work together for some years.



English Pétanque  
Association



Sustrans cycle ride

**2007** The 50+ Games continued for one more year only, fittingly to be resumed in Olympic year! Brenda Mackfall entered the festival with the *Stage Door Canteen Show* which packed St Sampson's, Flashback presented *The Big Beat Show* and Chris Cade added his two shows at the National Railway Museum to the festival programme. For the first time, the 50+ Festival Show and the Theatre Royal Backstage Tour and Cream Tea became an afternoon package deal which has provided a highly enjoyable afternoon's entertainment ever since. Abbeyfield House put on a coffee morning and have

since invited the nearby Dringhouses School choir to give an annual concert as part of the 50+ Festival. The Sustrans Voluntary Rangers organised 5 cycle rides around the city while the Alzheimers Society continued its annual "Memory Walk" which has since grown to become a major event with about 300 walkers last year!

**2008** invited us to a *Day of Absolute Indulgence* at the York College and a talk on the Samhain Festival by York Interfaith. YREN (York Racial Equality Network) launched its Ethnic Elders Group and 50+ festival-goers were invited to participate in the Dashahraa Hindu Festival. Fairtrade at St Helen's became part of the 50+ Festival programme and Mo Burrows held a *Chance2Dance+Drum Bash* at the Cemetery! Scottish Country Dancing entered the fray with Lesley Digby and the Sports Centres continued to encourage 50+ participation.



Scottish Country  
Dancing



Annapurna  
Indian Dance  
Workshop at  
Bridging the Gap

**2009** YOPA received funding from the CYC Social Inclusion Working Group to run the first of two **Bridging the Gap** days at the Friends Meeting House where the displays, workshops, talks and public meeting brought together people from marginalized communities to inspire and empower. “What Do We Do in Dunnington” brought village groups together to share their work and interests. The Tea Tasting event at the Dean Court Hotel with Taylor’s of Harrogate and the York Hospital Open Day proved immensely popular and St Michael Le Belfrey hosted a 50+ exhibition of fine artwork. The Glaziers’ Trust began their participation in the 50+ Festival with their tours of stained glass conservation in the Bedern Studio, Age Concern York entered 6 of their day clubs in the Festival programme, and Andy Webster opened the doors of the New Earswick Indoor Bowls Club to 50+ festival-goers. An Earth Collection fashion show raised £595 for the Tubakunde work with children in Rwanda at the Clifton Parish Church which shows how successful fundraising can be for events that appear in the 50+ Festival programme with a distribution of 3,500 copies around the city attracting around 5,000 participants.

**2010** A book sale raised money for Palestine, John Craig Innes sang at the Grand Opera House to raise funds for Help for Heroes, and workshop leaders continued to offer laughter, creative writing, Alexander Technique, Tai Chi, yoga, Pilates, reflexology, kinesiology and chiropractic with the list of participating specialists increasing over the years. Yorkwalk led a “Famous Fabulous Over Fifties” walk and the CYC advertised its health walks in different areas of the city. People of all ages also enjoyed line dancing, sequence dancing and a tea dance.



John Craig Innes



YOPA Auction of Promises

**2011** New events included an open meeting on York becoming a City of Sanctuary, a piano recital at the Guildhall, managing long-term health costs, Castle Mills Lock open day, aquafit, guitar classes, computer drop in, celebrating our living and dying, self-hypnosis, zumba and nordic walking. The highlight for YOPA was its **Auction of Promises** held in the Guildhall with a candlelit dinner as part of the Festival of Food and Drink and Elly Fiorentini of Radio York auctioning an amazing variety of items donated by the generous businesses around York – a wonderful evening which will remain in the memory of those who attended. All this while business participation increased and the 50+ Information Fair had to turn stand-holders away with the York 50+ Festival having established itself as an invigorating addition to the city’s calendar of annual events.

**2012** Brenda Mackfall’s musical shows continued to entertain and remind older audiences of songs they’ve enjoyed all their lives and Monica Nelson’s historical walks became an event to look forward to as she led us round the city sharing fascinating details of its past. The Old Palace “show and tell” delved back even further – fascinating! Roaming further afield, we heard about the wisdom of Tibet and the situation in Iran, visited the Buddhist Centre at Kilnwick Percy and heard about the plight of the children in Palestine. We were lucky enough to be partners in the last major YKSoul event at the Post Office Club and after a hugely enjoyable evening received a cheque for £300 from Nick Bielby. The Dragon Boat Races were part of our programme that year owing to rain and flooding earlier in the summer – remember?



Monica Nelson



Bake Off in Bishopthorpe

**2013** The intergenerational nature of our Festival was enhanced this year by a concert from visiting students from New Zealand, a bake off judged by the Lord Mayor in Bishopthorpe and a family fun day at the Poppleton Road Memorial Hall. The International Service encouraged older people to consider volunteering abroad, the French choir organised by the Alliance Française sang with gusto, and Amnesty International shared their concerns. The annual Festival Show at the Theatre Royal showcased a storyteller, actors, a comedian, line dancers, Egyptian dancers and a lovely harpist – together with a backstage tour and cream tea all for £8, what more pleasant way to spend an autumn afternoon! Sailing to cycling, football to dru yoga, a diversity of 50+ Games were once more on offer. Human rights were explored by the York LGBT Forum and cuts to the NHS and Green ways of living provided springboards for intense discussion.

**2014** The 50+ Information Fair overflowed to the Spurriergate Centre, All Saints Pavement and St Sampson's Centre with 44 participating stands offering services, tasters, course details, legal advice, hobbies, clubs, business deals, city attractions and ways to improve health and wellbeing. The new mutual-benefit society, York Explore libraries, offered all kinds of computer, ipad, e-reader, social media and Skype training in branches all over the city (a good thing while the central library was closed due to renovations) and topped it all off with a book and clothing sale and vintage quizzes! Sport & Active Leisure offered 49 events around the city plus a special course on becoming dementia friendly for all clubs – a hugely helpful initiative as part of York becoming a dementia friendly city. The Real People Theatre's presentation of ***Dementia & Me*** at Clements Hall was also much appreciated. From Food and Cooking by the Kyra Women's Project to Cruises on the Ouse by the Inland Waterways Association, from Boogie Your Belly with Larissa to Qi Gong at the York Yoga Studio, from knitting to rag rugging, from pamper sessions to funeral planning and peace talks...there were 130 events in this year's Festival – a huge achievement for our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!



Poppleton Road School  
choirs singing for their  
family and neighbours

Programme and photos from previous years can be found at [www.yorkassembly.org.uk/festival](http://www.yorkassembly.org.uk/festival).

### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

**If you would like to be involved in the future, phone Sue Lister, 50+ Festival Coordinator,  
on 01904 488870**