

Walk practicalities

This walk is based on our book *Micklegate: The Great Street of York*, published in 2025.

You can start and finish where you like and take as long as you like. If you do the whole walk, you could spend up to an hour. You can climb the Bar walls to get a better view down the street, go inside a church, and wander onto the Ouse Bridge for an interesting view up Bridge Street. There are many architectural and historic details to discover, and a number of useful interpretive plaques.



The route can be covered by wheelchair, but it is on a slope and has some uneven surfaces. There are plenty of refreshment stops, but no public toilets.



If you enjoyed this walk, you might explore the adjoining area using our companion leaflet *A walk around historic Bishophill in York*.

Points of interest

- A Ouse Bridge*
- B Queen's House Micklegate
- C 27-31 Micklegate, Cromwell House
- D St. Martin-cum-Gregory Church
- E St. Martin's House at 1 St Martin's Lane
- E 47-49 Micklegate, The Artful Dodger
- F 53-55 Micklegate, Ziggy's
- G Holy Trinity Church*
- H 69-71 Micklegate
- I 85-89 Micklegate timber-framed houses
- J Prioxy Street entrance and The Prioxy pub
- K Micklegate Bar*
- L 148-150 Micklegate, Micklegate Social
- M 128-36 Micklegate
- N 118 Micklegate
- O 114-16 Micklegate
- P 112 Micklegate, Partisan
- Q 100 Micklegate, The Nag's Head
- R 94 The Falcon
- S 92 Micklegate*
- T 88-90 Micklegate, Micklegate House*
- U 86 Micklegate, Bathurst House
- V 68 Micklegate
- W 52-54 Micklegate, Garforth House*
- X Varvill's Court
- Y 26-32 Micklegate, Pop World
- Z St. John's Church

* Plaque or interpretation available



A walk around historic Micklegate

This walk explores the history and buildings of Micklegate in York, which sweeps east down the hill from Micklegate Bar in an elegant curve to the River Ouse. The architectural historian Sir Nicholas Pevsner described it as "without any doubt the most rewarding street in York".

Micklegate today is an intriguing mixture of grand Georgian houses, independent businesses, top quality cafes and restaurants, well-known pubs and intriguing doorways.



Every building has a long history and almost all have Listed status. This walk is based on our book *Micklegate: The Great Street of York*, published in 2025, which traces the history of each building. For stockists visit our website at www.clementshallhistorygroup.org.uk

Clements Hall Local History Group
2025

Start here...

A START WALK on south side of Ouse Bridge. The former bridge housed a church, a council chamber, a gaol and a hospital. The current bridge opened in 1820 on the line of earlier bridges.



Looking west at Bridge St, buildings are mostly Georgian, dating 1817–25, designed by Peter Atkinson, architect of the new Ouse Bridge. The large building on the right is the former Boyes shop, built 1911–12, closed 1983 (previously Varvills).



B Queen's House on the corner of Skeldergate. Rebuilt 1990 to replace historic 18c building and 19c hotel. Believed to be the site of York's Roman forum.



C 27–31 Cromwell House. Now Forty-Five Vinyl Café also chiropodist next door. Previously hotel and opticians/cutlers Aitkens, note prism doorway tiles.



D St. Martin-cum-Gregory Church. Parish church. Site of 17/18c butter market in churchyard. Long associated with glass makers. Note horse rings outside. Stained Glass Centre from 2008.



E St. Martin's House. Built 1867 to replace medieval buildings. Formerly wine merchants and hotel, now residential. At 47–49 The Artful Dodger pub. Long history of drinking establishments here.



F 53–55 Ziggy's Nightclub. Building dates from around 1750. Diary records sedan chair use. Later housed wine & spirit merchants, then nightclubs and restaurants.



G 69–71 Charles Dickens' brother worked here at a railway office, with a clerk, Richard Chicken, believed to be the model for Wilkins Micawber in David Copperfield.



H Holy Trinity Church. Church of extensive Benedictine priory, founded in 1089. Remains here mainly 13c. Priory closed 1537 with the dissolution of the monasteries. Replica stocks outside. Late 19c rectory.



I 85–89 Timber-framed row of houses/shops, built around 1500 by the church. The only identifiably medieval building on Micklegate.



J The Priory gatehouse stood here, once the entrance to the seven-acre Benedictine Priory estate, but demolished in 1854. The Priory pub was previously the Coach and Horses (a railwaymen's pub), with Ruddocks tailor next door.



K Micklegate Bar. Historic entrance to York, especially for royalty, from the south. Traitors' heads mounted on spikes here, from 15c to 18c. Barbican removed 1826. Once housed a police family, later a small museum.



L 148–50 now Micklegate Social café-bar. Formerly Ward's pot shop and Mallaby's scooters. Built late 1870s, replacing earlier uses.



M 128–36 Former home of the Duffin family, visited by diarist Anne Lister and interior painted by Mary Ellen Best. Housed Ordnance Survey 1850–51. Well-known firm Shouksmiths here for 100 years until 1965.



N 118 Built as a town house in 1742. Later housed a shop on ground floor. Georgian Society here mid 20c. Now residential again, regarded as one of York's finest small Georgian properties.



O 114–16 Formerly famous York furnishing store Whitby Oliver. Ghost sign on right gable end above Partisan.



P 112 Partisan café-restaurant. Timber-framed house dating from early 16c. Formerly the Red Lion.



Q 100 The Nag's Head, 18c pub on site of 14c private house.



R 94 The Falcon pub/hotel, 18c former coaching inn mentioned by diarist Anne Lister. Scene of early 18c Vavasour scandal.



T 88–90 Micklegate House. Grand Georgian house built mid 18c for Bouchier family, whose ancestor signed warrant for execution of Charles I. Crompton family here, visited by diarist Anne Lister and room painted by Mary Ellen Best. By late 19c/then 20c housed chemical works and storage for Raimés & Co. In 1960s University of York was here, with early library, before campus opened in 1963. Now SafeStay Hostel.



U 86 Bathurst House. Built early 18c for Bathurst family. YWCA hotel in early 20c. Now private house.



V 68 Henry Gyles, leading 17c York glass painter here. Housed meetings of York Virtuosi between 1670s and 1720s, scholars and craftsmen. Now Sharp men's hairdresser.



Y Former Adelphi Hotel, built mid 19c, renamed the Railway King in 1971 to mark 100th anniversary of death of George Hudson. Various nightclubs since, now Pop World.



Z Former church of St. John the Evangelist, dating from 12c. Closed 1934. Later use as an arts centre. Now Jalou bar.



Finish here



W 23 Garforth House. Built 1757 for Garforth family. St Margaret's Girls School here 1912–68.



X Varvill's Court, late 19c, named after famous woodwork plane making firm, with housing and industrial concerns in the courtyard. Note Varvill emblem above.

Micklegate through history

Early records of Micklegate date from the 12th century, when it was known as Myglagata, the Great Street. But it had existed through Roman, Viking and Norman times. By the end of the 13th century the whole street was completely filled with houses. Citizens and freemen had the right to trade from these, which would have included workshops and retail spaces, as well as living quarters for their families. There was also a large Benedictine priory estate just inside the Bar. Local industries, from tanning to comb-making, were based in and around Micklegate.

Medieval Micklegate was home to five or six churches, including a now long-gone chapel on the Ouse Bridge.

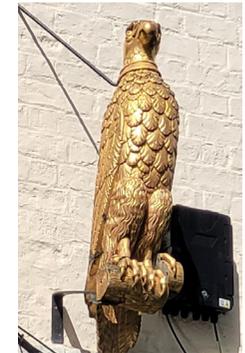


In the 17th and 18th centuries high status houses were built for wealthy merchants and aristocrats. Micklegate became one of the most fashionable quarters of York, with wealthy country estate owners building grand town houses.

Most properties in Micklegate were rebuilt or re-fronted in the Georgian period, with an increasing proportion of shops after 1800. There were many famous people living in or visiting the street.



Micklegate Bar was the main entry into the city for visitors from most of England, including London, and those on the route to Scotland. Thus it was a natural location for inns to accommodate and feed visitors and to look after their horses. There were also beerhouses serving a local trade.



In modern times it was renowned for the Micklegate Run, a drinking route into the city centre. While there are still pubs, there has been a huge increase over the last twenty years in cafes and high-quality restaurants.

Micklegate was once renowned for booksellers, but today there are just three. In the early 19th century, there many varied clothiers. Even now the street has retained some specialist independent clothing shops.

