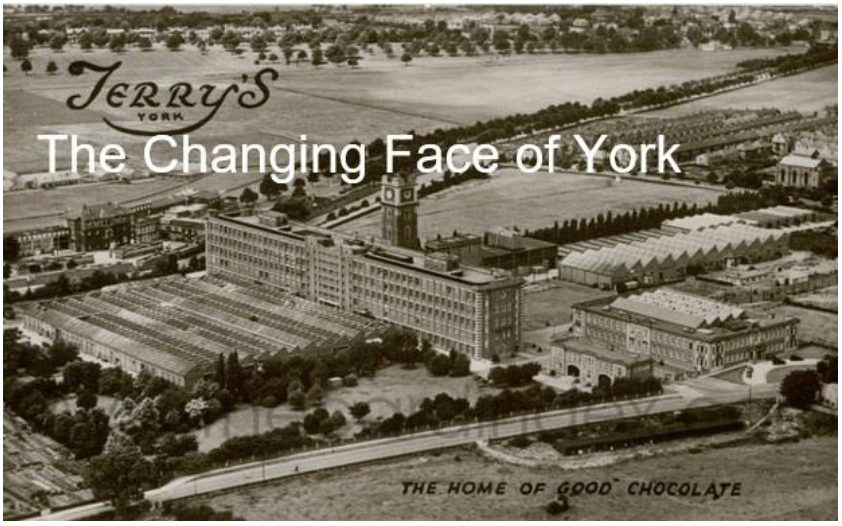

This walk (around five kilometres/three miles) will take approximately 90 minutes, or a further 40 minutes if you choose to do the full racecourse circuit.

It explores the southern stretch of the River Ouse in York. The commentary considers the impact of the river on the development of the City, the redevelopment of the iconic Terry's Chocolate Works, and the importance of horse racing. It is full of variety, and includes elements of geography and geology as well as much about the history of the area.

We have designed the walk to start at the Millennium Bridge, on the west side of the River Ouse, but you can start it at any point. The starting point is easily reached from the city centre on foot or bicycle, or the 11, 21 and 26 buses travel from the railway station along Bishopthorpe Road. If coming by car, you can park free on Campleshon Road or Knavesmire Road.

For some background, follow this link for the Ordnance Survey map published in 1853 (https://maps.nls.uk/view/102344815) you will see that this area was almost all fields at this time. Then look at the Ordnance Survey map published in 1932 (https://maps.nls.uk/view/100945733) where you will see many changes.

Perhaps the best place for a drink and something to eat is the Winning Post on Bishopthorpe Road (just a couple of hundred metres north of the junction with Campleshon Road).

This walk has created by John Stevens for Clements Hall Local History Group.

PLEASE NOTE This walk is unsuitable for wheelchair users and those with mobility problems, as it involves stiles, sometimes wet and/or muddy patches, and ducking under the racecourse rails.

Stop 1 Facing the Millennium Bridge

The River Ouse is both a unifying factor and a dividing one. There was a ferry near here – a motor-boat in the 1950s replaced earlier rope-drawn and oared vessels of very limited capacity. Now, the two banks are connected via the Millennium Bridge.

The 80-metre main span – properly described as a bowstring-arched bridge – has made a strategic improvement to the communications network, enabling pedestrians and cyclists to cross from one bank to the other, from Fulford in the east to South Bank on the west.

Opened on 10 April 2001, at a cost of £4.2 million, the bridge design was by Whitby Bird & Partners. The bridge forms part of Sustrans National Cycle Route 65/66, and is a critical link in the orbital bicycle route round York.

Stop 2 On the Millennium Bridge

Face North and Look Down…

Can you see the bottom of the River? The River Ouse at this point is normally about 3 metres deep at its centre. The depth of water in the River is continuously monitored at recording stations throughout its length in order to provide warnings of impending floods. Floods are a regular feature in York.

In the most severe case, the depth of water at Millennium Bridge can rise by up to 2.5 metres, and much of the surrounding area is liable to flood. Sometimes the flood waters prevent access onto the Bridge. Just imagine the potential impact of climate change! Remember that York City Council has recently declared a ‘climate emergency’.

Looking North…

To the immediate right lies the quay where, in the early nineteenth century, the ‘powder boats’ would tie up to unload their cargoes of ammunition for the Fulford Barracks. The boats would have made their way up the coast and river system from Woolwich Arsenal in London. A small detour will allow you to make a closer examination of the river-bank at this point, revealing a short length of the narrow gauge railway which was used to transport the ammunition from the quayside into the barracks. This reminds us how important the military has been in the history of York. However, from 2031, the barracks are scheduled for closure, and the site is to be redeveloped. In the warmer months you can buy an ice cream here from the ‘Two Hoots’ floating ice cream shop.

The foot and cycle path follows the east bank of the River Ouse towards the City centre. Known as the New Walk, this was laid out in the 1730s as a tree-lined promenade. Such promenades were highly-rated for leisure and socializing in the Georgian era. The River would have been full of pleasure boats.

Looking straight along the river into the far distance you can spot a tall chimney. This lies next to the Morrison’s Superstore on Foss Islands. At one time it jointly served the City’s refuse destructor and power station. Built by Parker & Sharp in 1899, it is 55 metres high.

The route along the west bank of the Ouse is now known as Terry Avenue – named after the eponymous confectioner – manufacturer of the famous 'Chocolate Orange'. If you had walked this route in earlier years, you would have passed a variety of industries – shipbuilding, confectionery, dye and thread making, glass making, malting and fertilizer making – in the area known as Clementhorpe. One of the largest employers in this area was Joseph Terry & Sons. The company was active in the export market from an early date. Raw materials and coal would arrive by boat. There would have been a bustle of activity all along the river's edge, and the clatter of horse transport on the land. These are now all gone, replaced by houses and apartments, but traces of the industrial past remain for the careful observer to spot.

Looking ahead and to the more immediate left, you can just make out an entrance to Rowntree Park. This much-loved recreational area was donated to the City by another of the City's famous confectioners – Rowntree & Company – in 1921 as a memorial to their staff who were killed in the Great War.

Turn round and move over to the other side of the Bridge, watching out for bicycles, dogs and children.

Looking South…

Immediately ahead of you and to the left is the area of flood plain known as Fulford Ings. If you had looked this way in 1066, you might have spotted the stragglers of the defeated army of the Earls Edwin and Morcar. Harald Hardrada's Norwegian soldiers, having just won the battle of Fulford, were now making their way to Stamford Bridge for their disastrous encounter with the English King Harold II, of Hastings fame.

In this direction the river appears largely natural, flowing gently between wooded banks. The Roman fleet would have come this way, to found the fortress of Eboracum – later to form the core of modern York. Almost a thousand years later, the Viking fleet would have passed on its way to found its northern capital at Jorvik.

Walk westward a few metres and leave the bridge by the short flight of steps on the right. Pause to read the information board. Turn right again under the bridge and continue along the riverside path heading south out of town.

Stop 3 South along the Ings

The palace of the Archbishop of York lies about two kilometres to the south, on the western bank, in the historic village of Bishopthorpe. Around 40 kilometres further south the Ouse joins the mighty Humber, with its docks and connected canal systems.

To the right you can see the Victorian residential areas of Terry Street and Finsbury Avenue. Beyond these lies Reginald Grove, built in the 1930s, and further south still, are newer houses, some built on the sites of earlier Victorian and Edwardian mansions. You will pass some of these shortly. The immediate foreground forms part of the flood plain and is often under water during the winter. This is known as Nun Ings.

Ings is a word of Norse origin used in the York area to describe water meadows and marshes, including areas liable to river flooding. North and south along the River Ouse, as seen from the Millennium Bridge, lies in the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 3a 'High Probability'. Land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding.

Away, behind the immediate residential area, lies the tower of the Terry's factory complex. This is where we are headed, though not in a straight line!

Where the asphalt path turns sharply to the right, continue straight ahead along the river path.

On the right, now hidden in the undergrowth, lies the water pumping station that served the Terry's Works. River water played a significant role in the development of industry in York. It was used both in the confectionery products, but also to drive the steam-powered machinery. Terry's was a very innovative company that made widespread use of the latest technologies.

Continue for two hundred metres or so until you emerge into the open countryside via a stile.

Stop 4 On the Ings

From here you have a good view over Nun Ings and towards Middlethorpe Ings. Nearest the river are stock-grazing areas, while the higher land away from the river supports arable farming. These were manorial land holdings through medieval times, and there are still traces of 'ridge and furrow' ploughing.

This area is designated by the Environment Agency as a 'flood storage area', i.e. an area where the river can safely flood without doing any great damage. Officially it is a Zone 3b, 'the functional flood plain'.

These days the area forms an important part of York's Green Belt. When flooded it attracts numerous birds, and the area along the river bank provides a valuable habitat for insects, birds and plants.

Continue forwards about 250 metres until you get to the field boundary fence. Turn right and follow the path diagonally up the hill to the stile on Bishopthorpe Road.

(If the ground is very wet you can retrace your steps along the river path, noting the numerous pleasure craft moored at York Marina on the far bank. At the asphalt path turn sharp left up hill. Watch out for bicycles!)

The first thing that you may notice is that you are going quite steeply up hill. You are climbing the ridge of glacial moraine that parallels the river at this point. Our ancestors recognised the advantage of this route, lying above the marshy and frequently flooded areas on either side. It seems likely that the Romans built a road along the line of what is now Bishopthorpe Road, running north to Eboracum. In more recent times this area has been quarried for sand and gravel.

Cross Bishopthorpe Road and proceed right along the brick wall for about 100 metres until you get to the gateway to the Terry's site.

Stop 5 Terry's Chocolate Works

Chocolate and confectionery was a key industry in York right up to the mid-twentieth century, when it still employed around 14,000 people. Of these rather more than half were women and girls. These days it is but a shadow of its former self. But, confectionery – especially chocolate – is an important part of York's industrial heritage.

The Terry's site was symbolic of this industrial heritage, with its imposing group of buildings. These were variously described as being in Baroque revival, Neo-Georgian or Art Deco style, with matching materials and design features. The distinctive materials are red brick and buff ashlar sandstone dressings. The main buildings were constructed on steel frames. The 41 metre high clock tower, with its distinctive 'Terry York' clock face, is now a major York landmark. The buildings were designed by notable architect J. E. Wade, and built by the firm Dorman Long of Middlesbrough, known as the designers of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The planners recognised the architectural and historic value of the area by declaring it a Conservation Area, and by Listing the key buildings that you are looking at.

Terry's moved to the Bishopthorpe Road site in the years running up to 1930, having been at Clementhorpe since 1862, and before that in the city centre at St. Helen's Square. The products included a wide variety of boiled sweets, lozenges, marzipan, marmalade, ketchup and calves' jelly. In total there were around 380 different lines of confectionery. From 1867, Terry's produced at least thirteen chocolate products.

At its peak, Terry's employed over 2,500 staff, declining to around 300 at the time that its closure was announced. About 60% of the employees were women.

In 1993, Terry's was taken over by the multinational food corporation Kraft Foods. In 2004, Kraft decided to switch production of the remaining products – All Gold and Chocolate Orange – to other factories in Europe. Terry's closed on September 30th 2005, with the loss of around 300 jobs. A classic example of the process of globalisation.

At its fullest extent, the Terry's buildings and ancillary uses covered most of the area from here to Campleshon Road. The redevelopment of the Terry's site has been a large and complex affair that has gone through many changes. It took four years for a master plan to gain approval, and a further two years before work actually started. The first building – the Time Office, to your left – was only occupied some twelve years after the plant closed, followed shortly thereafter by the first apartments in the main Factory Block ahead of you.

In April 2013, the whole site was acquired by Henry Boot Developments. Henry Boot undertook to redevelop the southern part of the site with its listed buildings. The northern part of the site was sold to David Wilson Homes, part of the Barratt group, for mainly residential development.

The impact of the 'financial crash' and the changing market for residential and industrial buildings had a significant effect. And so, the actual development, as realised, has far fewer employment opportunities and much more housing than originally visualised. A higher proportion of the dwellings are apartments rather than family houses, and there are, as yet, few community facilities and services.

We will now take a quick tour of this part of the site, in order to understand the scale and nature of change. You can walk along the boulevard to turn left round the end of the main factory building. Left again brings you back to the entrance gate.

Stop 6 At the Residence (1)

The building on your immediate right was once the HQ of Terry's, housing the boardroom and administrative offices. It has been converted into a care home – The Chocolate Works Care Village – by Springfield Healthcare. It comprises 82 care bedrooms and 8 care apartments, and preserves some of the important internal features of the original building, featuring a central atrium providing a wide range of social and leisure facilities for residents.

Further along, behind the care home, the site on your right is being developed as a block of affordable apartments. The next buildings are the so-called Liquor Store (actually the electricity transformer station), the Clock Tower and Boiler House. The first of these was intended to be an eating place, while the last two are being converted into 22 apartments. The main block on your left was built as a 5-storey factory for the manufacture of chocolate. It now houses 165 apartments of various sizes, with ancillary facilities. The building, which was refurbished by the P. J. Livesey Group, is now branded 'The Residence'.
As you proceed around the block, you can see how the architects have tried to retain the key features of the buildings, whilst making them into attractive places to live. A further 'penthouse' floor has been added, together with steel balconies.

Stop 7 At the Residence (2)

Before we leave the area, there are three more features to note. The vacant land south of The Residence may eventually be developed for housing. An application by Stonebridge Homes for two blocks totalling 85 apartments, plus seven town-houses, was recently turned down. The small park in the south-east corner of the site has been retained. This was always a green area – the Memorial Park or Peace Park – provided by Terry's for the use of its workforce. Finally, on your right, on the way out, is the Time Building. This once housed the factory's clocking-in area, offices and recreation rooms. It has been converted to form high-quality office space, and is now known as Stanley Harrison House. But, what is that strange bird on the roof?

Retrace your steps to Bishopthorpe Road and turn right along the pavement the way that you came. On the other side of the road is a car park – you can spot the old 'Kraft' sign if you look carefully. This is the last reminder of the fate which befell Terry's in York, when the US giant Kraft Foods took it over and closed it down. At the end of the wall you will see a right turn onto a pedestrian and cycle path. This follows the southern boundary of the Terry's site. To the left are the open fields that are used as coach and car parks on race days. In earlier times these housed allotments; now, when not being used for parking, they host car boot sales and an open-air cinema. Continue straight ahead until you arrive at the racecourse buildings.

Stop 8 York Racecourse (1)

You are now approaching York Racecourse. Stop to examine the plan on the wall in front of you. This is just to the right of the Bookmaker's Entrance. The plan shows

the various components of the racecourse. There are other direction boards that you can read as you go round the Race Course.

Turn left and go straight ahead past the modern red brick changing rooms. Turn immediately right and head towards the gap in the white fence. The official path crosses the race track at this point, though you may have to duck under it, and its precise location varies. And, do watch out for galloping race horses! On the other side of the track, stop on the asphalt service road.

Stop 9 York Racecourse (2)

Here, you have a choice. If you are feeling fit and have the time, you can turn left and follow the service road all the way round the racetrack. This will add around 40 minutes to your walk, but it does give a good impression of the racecourse and its neighbouring buildings. Alternatively, you can turn right past the main racecourse buildings.

Take a few moments to look at the racing infrastructure. There are grandstands of various dates and sizes to the east of the track. To the left is the Enclosure, with its historic clock tower. Several of the racecourse structures, including the Clock Tower, have been Listed.

In the early 18th century a certain Alderman John Telford was given the job of laying down a racecourse here, when the earlier one at Clifton Ings proved too soggy. He ran the course around the edge of the boggy area, flattened it out and supplied drainage. The first races were held in 1731, and it grew from there. Crowds sometimes reached 100,000 people. In the early days, a race-goer could also take in a public hanging or two, as the scaffold, known as 'The Three-Legged Mare', was located close by near Tadcaster Road. In April 1739, famous highwayman Dick Turpin was one of the unfortunates.

The first grandstand was erected in 1754, to a design drawn up by the eminent York architect, John Carr. Three large stands – the Melrose, Ebor and Knavesmire Stands – were added towards the end of the twentieth century. Further development continues today, including the incorporation of the original 18th century grandstand into the Guinness Bar.

A large culvert runs from NW to SE across the site, draining into the River Ouse at Bishopthorpe. However, the racecourse does flood from time to time. It lies within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 2 'Medium Probability' (between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding).

In addition to its significance as a sporting venue and visitor attraction, York Racecourse makes a very significant contribution to the local economy. Crowds of over 40,000 can be expected on a sunny Saturday, with over 350,000 attending the races in the course of a typical season. It is estimated that racing attracts comfortably in excess of £60 million per year to the City's economy.

Before we move on, here some more facts for the pub quiz:

• Over 10 tonnes of ice is used on a race day.

• Annual prize money amounts to over £8.5 million.

• The Sky Bet Ebor is the richest flat handicap in Europe, valued at £1 million.

• Juddmonte International was in the top five best races in the World in 2018.

• Frankel, rated by many as the best racehorse of all time, won here in August 2012.

• All the water used to irrigate the course comes from two boreholes, allegedly falling as rain on the Romans!

• Pope John Paul II visited the Racecourse in May 1982, though it was not a race day.

• The Duke of York is the Racecourse's Royal Patron

• The course hosted Royal Ascot at York in June 2005

• It hosted the St Leger in 1945 and 2006

Whether you have taken the long or short route you will eventually end up where the path re-crosses the racetrack. Stop here and take a look around.

Behind you, across the racecourse, you can see the large hotels on Tadcaster Road. Hidden in the trees in this area is Goddards, the family home of the Terrys, now occupied by the National Trust regional office. You may be able to spot the greenhouse in the garden.

Stop 10 The Knavesmire

The open area that you are looking at is known as The Knavesmire. This was once an undrained bog. It was a network of hollows, ant-hills and streams. The racecourse area is essentially a low-lying bowl with higher ground all round.

During the last Ice Age the ice flowed to a point south of York. When it slowly retreated it left deposits of moraine, mainly comprising sand and gravel, together with a wider smear of till or boulder clay. Trails of moraine were dumped along the lines of Bishopthorpe Road and Tadcaster Road, raising them a few metres above their surroundings. In other places, such as the bank on which the A64 now runs, east-west moraine along the frontage of the ice sheet, trapped water from the melting ice to form lakes and bogs. Askham Bog Nature Reserve is one the last remaining areas where these conditions can be seen.

The British Geological Survey describes the superficial deposits as 'Elvington Glaciolacustrine Formation - Clay, Silty', overlying the bedrock of 'Sherwood Sandstone Group.' The soil is officially classed as: 'Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey'.

The Knavesmire forms part of the large open space known as Micklegate Stray. 'Strays' were a traditional form of common land in the City, managed by a pasture master, and on which the hereditary Freemen of the Wardhad the right to graze their stock.

Protected by an Act of Parliament of 1907, horses and cattle were a regular sight on the Stray until the 1960s. The Act maintained the Stray as an area of open space, with leases for various temporary and leisure uses. Indeed, The Knavesmire has hosted a wide variety of activities. For example:

• It was used as a landing strip by the army from the early days of aviation.

• The Great Air Race took place in October 1913, Yorkshire versus Lancashire.

• It became a base for 33 Squadron following the German raids on Hartlepool, Scarborough and Whitby in December 1914.

• During WW1, the racecourse area was used to accommodate troops. Photos of the period show soldiers tending their horses and participating in mock battles.

• In WW2, the Racecourse Enclosure became a POW camp. The Knavesmire was also use for military training, including parachute jumping from tethered balloon. It was a base for anti-aircraft guns and searchlights, and the area within the race-track was cultivated in a ‘dig for victory’.

• Nowadays it hosts circuses, fairs, open air concerts, charity runs and dog walks, as well as hot air balloon rides.

On the way out of the racecourse glance in through the gates to your right. You will see a full-size statue of Frankel – possibly the greatest flat racer of all time. Move to previous stop?

Go straight ahead across the road and onto the tree-lined Campleshon Road.

Stop 11 Campleshon Road

Until the turn of the twentieth century Campleshon Road marked the southern boundary of the City’s growth in this area. At that time is was just a simple track linking Micklegate Stray and The Knavesmire to Bishopthorpe Road. You will notice that you are walking back up the hill formed by the glacial moraine. At the highest point you are about 15 metres above sea level.

Incidentally, the name ‘Campleshon’ is a bit of a mystery. Most probably it is a variation of an old surname ‘Camplejohn’ that originated in Norfolk.

On your left you will see the red brick St. Chad’s Church. This Anglican Church was largely built in 1925-6 to a design by Walter Brierley – a York architect known as ‘the Lutyens of the North’. A little further on lies Knavesmire Primary School, opened in 1916, which serves this area of South Bank.

The open land and Terry’s site on your right would have been in mainly agricultural use up to the twentieth century. There was also some sand and gravel extraction, together with areas of allotments.

Incidentally, Campleshon Road lies within the Environment Agency’s Flood Zone 1 ’Low Probability’ (less than 1 in 1,000) annual probability of river flooding). Early maps show a very large pond covering the low ground north of the road, now fully built-up.

Take the first right turn into the northern part of the Terry’s redevelopment

Stop 12 Clock Tower Way

You are now looking south down Clock Tower Way. In the distance is the familiar Clock Tower with its ‘TERRY YORK’ face and, beyond it, the main factory building. Unlike at The Residence that you saw earlier, this part of the site has a significant number of family houses.

A revised Master Plan was published in late 2009, comprising 312 homes, commercial, office and leisure uses. This was criticised, mainly on the grounds that it was too ‘suburban’, and that it did not relate strongly enough to the surrounding areas. A modified plan was finally approved by the City Council in February 2010,

having a more rectilinear layout, and comprising a core of town houses edged by apartment blocks. In May 2013, David Wilson Homes acquired this part of the site with the intention of creating 229 new homes.

The houses, which were designed by Richards Partington architects, have won a number of design and housebuilder awards. The architects say that they drew inspiration from the Art Deco factory building.

As you walk round the Chocolate Works development, you will note that all the roads and buildings have a 'Terry's theme' – either relating to the family or the company's products. The small block of apartments on your right is called Cocoa House, for example.

Proceed along to the end of Clock Tower Way, taking time to assess the quality of the development. At the end, turn left along Banks Drive and then left again down Robert Street.

On the right you will pass a grassed area of amenity space, known as Bayldon Square, where there is a 'Chocolate Orange' water feature. The Chocolate Orange was possibly Terry's best known and well-loved product Chocolate Orange sculpture made at Malton's Sherburn Foundry.

At the bottom of Robert Street you come to the intersection with Joseph Terry Grove. Take a few minutes to look around.

To the left and right you will see a number of small blocks of apartments. One of these has a retail unit at ground floor level, currently used as the site sales office, but scheduled to become a convenience store. Another block, Devon House, is managed by a housing association, providing affordable homes to rent. Across the site 20% of all the homes are classed as affordable – either to rent or for sale at reduced cost.

Turn right and follow Joseph Terry Grove all the way to Bishopthorpe Road. You will pass first Devon House, then between Carousel and Medallion Houses. Hallmark, Devon, Carousel and Medallion are all names of Terry's chocolate products.

If you wish to return to the Millennium Bridge and riverside walks into the City, cross straight over (watching out for speeding traffic), turn left then right into Reginald Grove and look for a gap in the hedge at the bottom. Here a short path will take you back downhill to the Ing and bridge. The walk from here along the River into the City Centre will take you around 20 minutes.