

## Talk: “Ancient Orchards in and around York” & short Edible York AGM

Welcome - 7pm start!

Ruth Jennaway & Bill Eve, Edible York,



# Ancient Orchards of York

- ▶ Lots of history!
- ▶ Orchards Map
- ▶ Bishopthorpe
- ▶ Fulford Community Orchard
- ▶ Clifton & Dormouse Orchard
- ▶ Poor Clares Convent / VITA student accomodation



# Orchards and fruit in York

- ▶ Archeological digs, dating as far back as Roman time show many types of fruit were consumed locally
- ▶ Apple, plum, bullace, cherry and sloe
- ▶ Strong heritage of fruit growing developed around the city
- ▶ During the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and for 300years after the area outside Micklegate was popular a site for orchards
- ▶ Monasteries were often important sites for orchards,
  - ▶ Clementhorpe Priory, St Andrews Priory at Fishergate, and Blackfriars at Tanners Row
- ▶ Orchard at Tanners Row passed to Matthew Wharton then George Telford who established “the most distinguished (plant) nursery in the North
- ▶ The Telford premises or Fryars gardens were sold to T&J Backhouse, who founded the famous Backhouse Nursery (1815-1955)



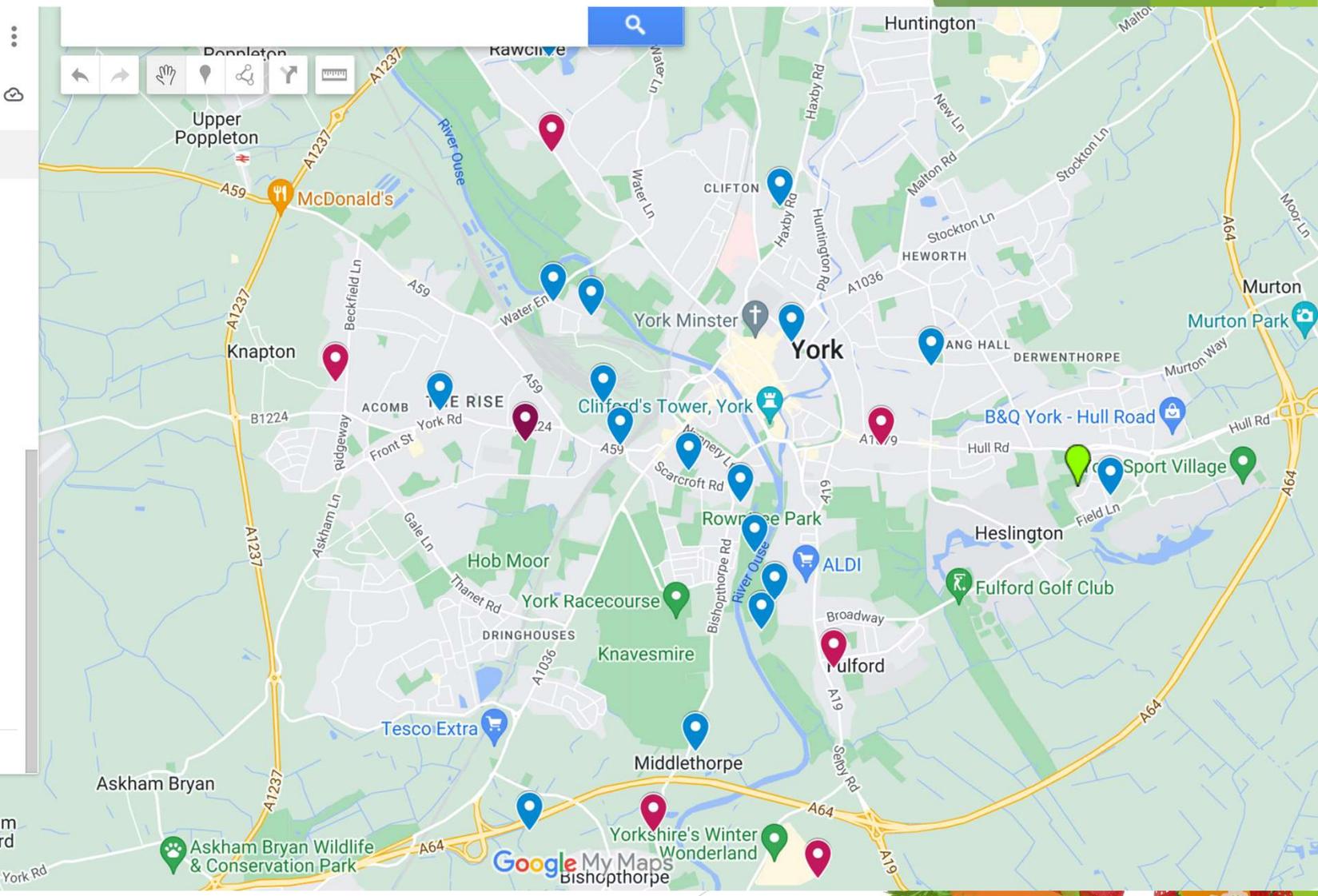
# Orchards in and around York

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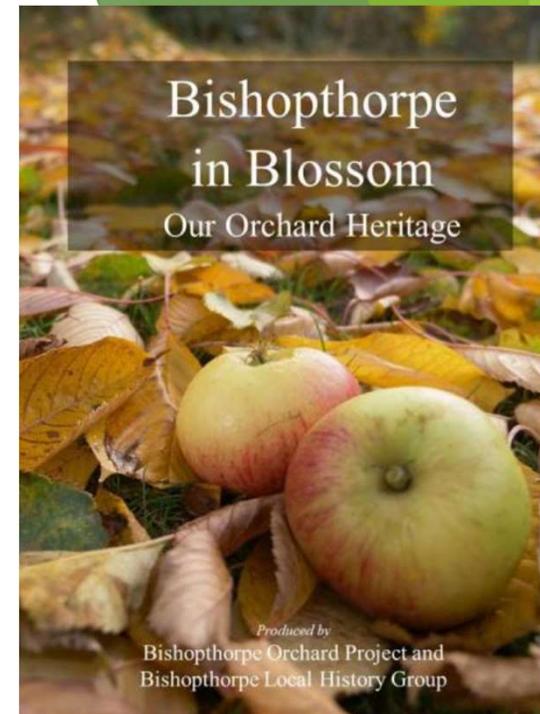
- Greenfields Community Garden
- Alex Lyon House
- Manor Farm Pears
- Holgate dock
- Westbank Park/old James Ba...
- Rawcliffe Orchard
- St Barnabus Church
- Scarcroft Green Orchard
- Duck Garden
- Rowntree Park Orchard & Wil...
- Danesmead Orchard
- Poor Clares Convent / Vita St...
- Knapton Lane
- Carr Lane Acomb - many mat...
- Old apple trees in private gar...
- Badger Hill - New tree plantin...

Base map



# Bishopthorpe

- ▶ Home of the Archbishop's palace and walled garden
- ▶ Contains a number of old pear trees planted in Victorian times
- ▶ From early 19<sup>th</sup> Century - 1920s the village was dominated by orchards and market gardens
- ▶ Lots of trees in many gardens and open spaces
- ▶ History beautifully told in the recent book: 'Bishopthorpe in Blossom,'
- ▶ 'Bishopthorpe in Blossom,' is now on sale at Bishopthorpe library, Brunswick Organic Nursery and the Bishopthorpe archive in the village hall. It will also be available on loan from the library. The book includes photographs, interviews with local residents, information about local fruit varieties, and the fascinating history of the Archbishop's walled kitchen garden.



# Fulford Community Orchard

- ▶ Fulford Community Orchard is what remains of a much larger orchard that dates back to **1906** when this was the site of the York Asylum (later Naburn Mental Hospital and subsequently Naburn Maternity Hospital).
- ▶ Many of the trees were planted some ninety-plus years ago. When the hospital was demolished in the 1980s to make way for York Designer Outlet the orchard was neglected and uncared for.
- ▶ Later saved from development, over **fifty trees** have survived (a mixture of plums, damson, pear and apple). They have become the basis of a community orchard for Fulford.
- ▶ Since the orchard was designated as a community orchard in 2008, maintenance has been undertaken by a small but dedicated group of volunteers.
- ▶ This has included identifying the trees, managing the open grassland, pruning the trees and coppicing some of the surrounding woodland, planting new fruit trees, putting up bird and bat boxes and enhancing the site as wildlife habitat.



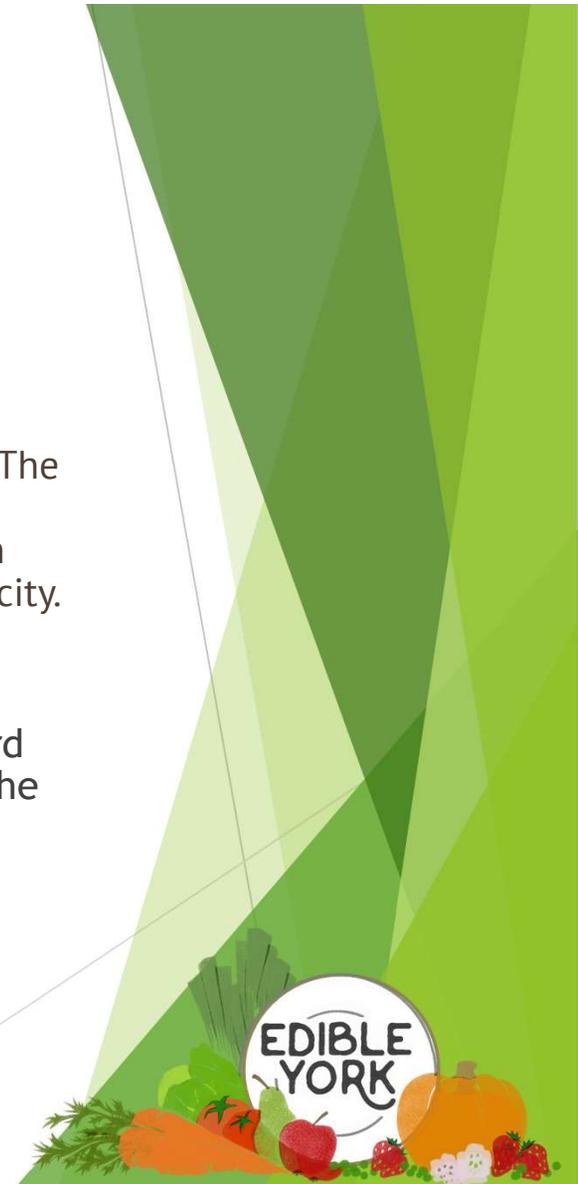
## Naburn

- ▶ Asylums were often large and remote. These were vast and complex buildings covering hundreds of acres and numerous structures and buildings.
- ▶ Veg, fruit and orchards were worked by the inmates as part of their rehabilitation
- ▶ (From the air, before WWII. – Image kindly donated by the family of Arthur William Stannard) (worked at Naburn 1918-1938)



# Dormouse Orchard - History

- ▶ Clifton Hospital  
**Previous Names:** North and East Ridings Asylum, North Riding Mental Hospital
- ▶ The city was already home to the York Lunatic Asylum, established in 1777 and The Retreat, opening in 1796. The new complex at Clifton opened in April 1847 and inmates were relocated from their previous asylums to the new building. Within two years plans were already in place to expand the asylum due to lack of capacity. Only at the turn of the century was another asylum built at Naburn (Fulford Orchard)
- ▶ During it's life as an asylum and hospital it had a market garden and orchard and aimed for 100% self sufficiency. This was maintained until the 1960s! The main hospital final closure took place in 1994.
- ▶ More history:
- ▶ <https://www.countyasylums.co.uk/clifton-york/>



Clifton Asylum



Rowley.

N.R. ASYLUM. N.Y.

N.R. ASYLUM.

Cifton  
asylum -  
Female  
infirmary



Female Infirmary

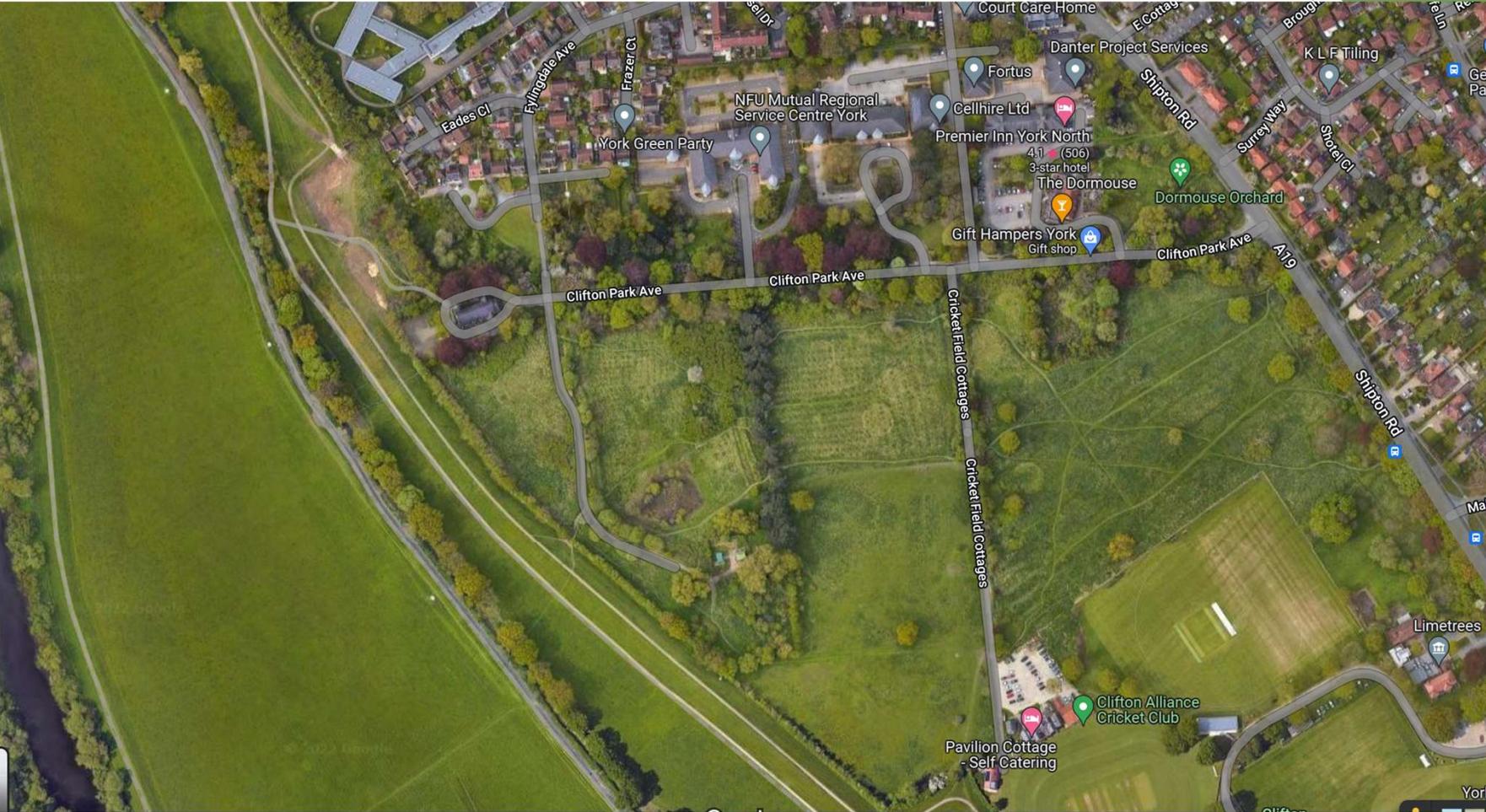
# The land, farm and orchard expanded as the asylum did

The benefit of outdoor work and connection with the land was recognised even then as therapeutic, and the North Riding Asylum also owned nearby farmland. The buildings, in 1859, stood ‘in a garden of above thirty acres attached to which is a grazing farm of above fifty acres’. By 1890 the asylum had

expanded: ‘The premises . . . Parliamentary paper from 1868 described the beneficial effects that had been noticed at the Clifton asylum from the policy of 700 inmates. The farm and p that had been noticed at the Clifton asylum from the policy of ‘giving patients exercise beyond the Asylum precincts’. Many institution occupy about 15 of the women had daily walks, male patients went into the city, ‘and on Sunday upwards of 100 of them go for walks at a the asylum, 108 were at wor distance.’



# Dormouse Orchard site (google maps, Dormouse orchard)



# Both picking and pruning at the orchard

<https://www.facebook.com/profile/100064620855405/search/?q=dormouse>



FRI, 28 OCT

Big Community Apple Day 2022, (free Half Term event at the Dormouse Orchard, Clifton Without)

★ Interested ▾

 **Abundance York**  
28 October at 12:50 · 🌐

Lots of different varieties of apples to discover in the ancient orchard today.  
Dormouse Orchard  
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/ts467SpMvcaQ2D2F9>



# Tour of some of the outlying areas of the Dormouse Orchards

- ▶ Blog and pictures of the outlying areas of the Clifton hospital site:
- ▶ <https://edibleyork.blogspot.com/2021/05/dormouse-orchard-visit-and-blossom.html>
- ▶ And a video of the main orchard Here is a link back to the video clip of the Dormouse orchard in bloom with birds singing in spring (Early May 2021):
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=333994155328536>



# Poor Clares Convent / VITA student accomodation

- ▶ ROMAN CATHOLIC NUNNERY (Co  
1867 AD



'Monastery of Poor Clares' signs, 24 October 2004 Item 2 of 11



# Any Questions?

Do get in touch!

[info@edibleyork.org.uk](mailto:info@edibleyork.org.uk)

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