

The Nouse Pub Guide 2016

A mix of classy, classic and claustrophobic establishments comes courtesy of York regular, [Jack Richardson](#)

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Image: Adam Bruderer



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Image: George Lowther



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York is a city with literally hundreds of pubs. That sentence still makes me smile. Having over 200 in such a small area means you're unlikely to run out, but also raises the question of where to start, particularly during Freshers' Week. Unlike the clubbers, relegated to a few dark and sweaty (but not necessarily unenjoyable) boxes in the main areas of town, pub-goers are spoilt for choice before they even reach the city walls. No list can be complete or uncontested, but here are my personal favourites from my time at York so far.

10. The Fossgate Social

To some, The Fossgate Social is small, cramped and expensive... which it is. Make no mistake, this is not a pub in which to spend the whole night. It is, however, home to excellent food and a small but very well-

chosen selection of beers, and a decent showing for cocktails too. Its location (Fossgate, unsurprisingly) means it's a fantastic waypoint on your way into town and some of the bigger and cheaper names on our list.

9. The Rook and Gaskill

The Rook and Gaskill is in many ways even better placed for those on the way to or from town looking for a quick (or not so quick) one before either moving on to the city proper or home to bed. The size is deceiving, and many can be crammed into the cosy seating areas before things really start to feel cramped. The large selection of ales, as well as a decent showing of cider, make this a solid choice.

8. The Cross Keys

A little less known than others on this list, The Cross Keys is nice and spacious but rarely full, making it an excellent choice for large groups. Despite this, it still feels cozy enough for small groups. The choice of ales on tap often isn't quite so quick to change as in other pubs, but the regulars are good enough that you won't miss the latest and greatest of the moment.

7. The Lowther

I can almost hear the Real Ale Society's sharp intake of breath at the mention of this place. The Loather may not have much by way of ale or proper cider, nor may it have the best atmosphere. With many pub crawls the only real variable is time, however, and this is where the Lowther shines by remaining open later than just about any other pub in York: until 4am on Fridays and Saturdays. This makes it excellent as the last stop on the aforementioned pub crawls and as a bolthole in case you get caught out when everyone else is heading to Kuda.

6. The Maltings

The curiously postmodern matte black paint on the outside of The Maltings belies the cosy and traditional decor within. An oft-rotating selection of beers on tap is always welcome, and the food is well worth a try. The reasonably small space means that it fills up quickly on weekends, but not enough to threaten its very public pride in being a place for great conversation.

5. York Tap

Surely it is a testament to this city's booze-soaked layout that one can have a choice of pubs... in the station. This is the better of the two, in this writer's humble opinion, by virtue of the fancy central bar, comfortable booths and enormous black board full of real ales. Despite the location, drinks aren't horrifically priced, and certainly beat a £5 can of Heineken on the trains just a few feet away.

4. The Golden Fleece

Mentioned in the York City Archives from the beginning of the 16th Century, The Golden Fleece is not only one of the city's oldest pubs, but also one of the most haunted. If you can get over the legions of Roman soldiers in the cellar and the Canadian airman who fell through the window during WWII, The Fleece is a cosy pub that stretches back (in time and distance) further than one would think. A good selection of craft ales at its two bars and plentiful live music make this a solid choice.

3. The House of Trembling Madness

What list would be complete without this bastion of the York pub scene? A perennial favourite, it is slightly let down by the rather cramped bar on the top floor, necessitating a 'one out, one in' policy at weekends and a bit of a risk even on weekdays. If you can get a seat, however, you're in for an excellent choice of beers on tap, very taxidermy-focused decor and humorously Norse-themed bar snacks (I'm looking at you, Viking willies!). Even if you don't make it to the bar, a veritable library of bottles on the ground floor

and a basement full of spirits is enough to bring a tear to the eye of any drinker. Beware, though — it's set to close in 2018, so get in while you can!

2. Pivní

Pivní seems to be one of those pubs that no-one can find on the first attempt, despite it being practically within falling distance of the Shambles. If you do manage to complete the journey, however, you will find a formidable selection of beers both on tap and bottled, and three floors in which to drink them. Pivní should also be applauded for its good selection of spirits, and the honesty of the bar staff when you try to order 14% imperial stout as a first drink.

1. Sutlers

With more than double the number of taps and a bottled selection approaching that of The House of Trembling Madness (not to mention a separate cocktail bar upstairs), Sutlers makes it far more comfortable to explore beery tastes with plenty of space available, even at weekends. The staff are knowledgeable and friendly, and offer a similarly enormous selection of spirits, just in case you thought an Olympic swimming pool's worth of ale wasn't enough.



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