

**PRESS**

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## FAIRFAX HOUSE TURNS 250

**Jewel in York's Crown celebrates its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary:**

The year 2013 is a very special year for Fairfax House, marking the 250th anniversary of Fairfax House, the finest Georgian townhouse in England. In 1763 Lord Fairfax's splendid townhouse opened after an extensive programme of remodelling, alterations and new decorative schemes by York architect John Carr which transformed this formerly unremarkable Georgian dwelling into a fashionable townhouse of the highest quality, a masterpiece of architectural design.

This landmark anniversary will be celebrated by Fairfax House with a year-long programme of major events and celebrations, including two major exhibitions. The anniversary season begins on **Friday 8 February** with the opening of **CROWNING GLORY**, a glittering exhibition of jewellery from York and Yorkshire. Jewels, diamonds, coronets, tiaras and other precious objects from the county abound in this truly magnificent exhibition that will set many hearts racing, and envious eyes gleaming. The highlight of the exhibition is the famous *Fairfax Jewel*, on loan for the first time from the National Trust collection at Seaton Delaval. The presence of this important jewel with its rich historical associations make this a very special occasion. The exhibition will be officially opened by Earl of Ronaldshay (Yorkshire Region Chairman of the Historic Houses Association) on 7 February and will open for public admission at 10.00am on 8 February.



'Crowning Glory' will be followed by our second major exhibition, **IN THE NAME OF THE ROSE**, opening in August. Exploring the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745 and shedding light on the secretive world of Jacobite allegiance during this troubled period, *'In the Name of the Rose'* uncovers the use of symbolism to convey covert messages of loyalty to the cause of the exiled Stuarts. At the heart of this exhibition lies the rose, the most potent and evocative of Jacobite symbols, inspiring faith, courage and hope.

Throughout the year a dazzling programme of other special events will continue alongside these exhibitions. Our Flower Festival will fill the house with a jewel-themed floral extravaganza (24 May-2 June), while tasting events for **champagne** (*Exploring Lord Fairfax's Cellar*, 12 June) and **chocolate** (*In Due Praise of Chocolate*, 10 July) will offer our visitors a taste of luxury.

The first half of the 2013 programme will also feature special lectures and events taking their inspiration from the exhibition *Crowning Glory*. The Head of Jewellery at Christie's, London, Raymond Sancroft-Baker, will be speaking on **'From the Mine to the Finger'** (21 February), and Dr Hannah Greig of the University of York will be asking **'What was a duchess without diamonds?'** (26 July). Families will enjoy **'Who Stole the Crown Jewels?'**, half term holiday storytelling with Mud Pie Arts (26 May & 2 June).

Two tantalising and 'juicy' talks will also come from **Nigel Arch (Kensington Palace)** – *'Servant, Mistress, Scoundrel and Princess: Secret Stories of Kensington Palace'* (11 April), and **Lars Tharp (BBC Antiques Roadshow)** – *'Harlots, Rakes and Crashing China: An Accidental Introduction to 18th-century Ceramics and to the Works of William Hogarth'* (26 June).



The major celebration for the year will, however, take place on 19 April with a **Georgian Townhouse Party** in the presence of Lord Crathorne, North Yorkshire's Lord-Lieutenant. Marking both the date of the Viscount Fairfax's birthday and the grand party he held for 200 guests to celebrate the opening of the house, this evening of Georgian revelry, food and entertainment will be highlight of York's social calendar year.

Coinciding with these celebrations, Fairfax House will also be showcasing ten superb new artworks on loan from York City Art Gallery including magnificent portraits by **Joshua Reynolds** and **Sir Peter Lely**, a battle-scene by **Watteau** plus works of key significance to York including **Nolleken's** bust of John Carr himself, architect of Fairfax House and many other important buildings across Northern England. The closure of York City Art Gallery for renovations over the next two years allows these artworks to be displayed in an appropriate



eighteenth-century setting evoking the manner in which they would have been seen 250 years ago. For art lovers this is a rare opportunity to see some works not always on public display but most especially the chance to see them in context and in a setting for which they might have been created.

Fairfax House Director Hannah Phillip comments “This is the year in which Fairfax House is truly York’s must-see attraction. If you have visited before, we urge you to come again and see the two fabulous once-in-a-lifetime exhibitions we have on offer for 2013. If you have not yet visited Fairfax House, this is the perfect opportunity to see this beautiful house and revel in the

special celebrations and all that our anniversary programme has to offer.

Our 250th anniversary marks a historic moment for which everyone at the House has been planning and working for years, and we intend to pull out all the stops to make it a memorable highlight for the house and for all our visitors. We are conscious that such an anniversary milestone will not come around again in our lifetimes and we want this to be a fitting celebration and tribute not only to the family, architect and craftsmen who created Fairfax House but to all those people who have known, experienced and enjoyed this magnificent townhouse over the past 250 years.

We are delighted to be able to offer the opportunity for as many people as possible to become involved with Fairfax House in this special year, through visiting the House, joining in the events and celebrations, perhaps even becoming a volunteer or by contributing their own memories of Fairfax House through the 20th century. We encourage everyone to take this chance to be involved”.

For more information visit the website at [www.fairfaxhouse.co.uk](http://www.fairfaxhouse.co.uk)

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