

Travel to York from CER

If you are doing service within the AAGB service structure at some stage or another it is quite likely that you will end up having to go to York, where the General Service Office is located, and where the Conference takes place annually. If you have not been there before you might feel that planning the trip is a bit daunting. For most other regions, it's simply a matter of jumping in a car, or train or even bus, from CER it can be a little more complicated, but not so much—let's consider the alternatives.

The first thing to do is start planning early, that way you can make sure you are prepared and also take advantage of cheaper ticketing options.

Obviously the problem with getting to York is the stretch of water known as the English Channel, there are many ways of crossing this, and because it's the Fellowship's money we are spending we need to choose the cheapest method, so we are probably looking at some sort of public transport. Whilst there is the Eurostar train, the plane is generally going to be the cheapest mode of transport, but spend a little time researching for yourself, people in Brussels or Paris for example might find the Eurostar a more economical choice, so might want to consider that (although my research would indicate it's still cheaper to travel by 'plane).

Also—planes are what I have most experience of...so the next question is you want to end up in York, so where must you fly to?

The nearest airport to York is Leeds/Bradford, but it is not too well served and does not have a station at the airport, however all you have to do is take the 757 bus from Leeds-Bradford airport and go to the Leeds train station where you can find frequent trains to York (a timetable for this service can be found here:

<http://www.wymetro.com/site/templates/pages/BusTimetable.PB.aspx?route=757&code=>

Other airports that do have stations in the airport include (in order of proximity to York) Manchester, Birmingham International, Heathrow, Gatwick, Stanstead, and Luton which has a station nearby, with a bus link to it

There are others but they are generally further south, and unlikely to be of much use.

Note that the last 4 are around London, be aware that some of these will require you to transit London on the underground, which you might find a bit daunting, but so long as you plan your route and changes in advance, it shouldn't be a problem. Additionally there is London City Airport, but restrictions on aircraft size mean this is less likely to be of use, many flight search engines however allow you to just specify London, and will give you details for flights in and out of these airports.

So how to pick a flight: 1. Start early – if you leave it too late there might not be flights available, or those that are, are prohibitively expensive. There is an optimum time to buy a ticket, but I've yet to find anyone who has worked out when that is, if you know, please share the information!

I use a number of different tools, you can search for these yourself, two of my favourites are Skyscanner, and Kayak –I especially like that latter as it has a tool that allows me to store and plan all my trips and has a phone app that lets me keep up with details. It also does a search among several other similar services to find the best price. However note that these are my preferences, there are a lot of flight search engines available.

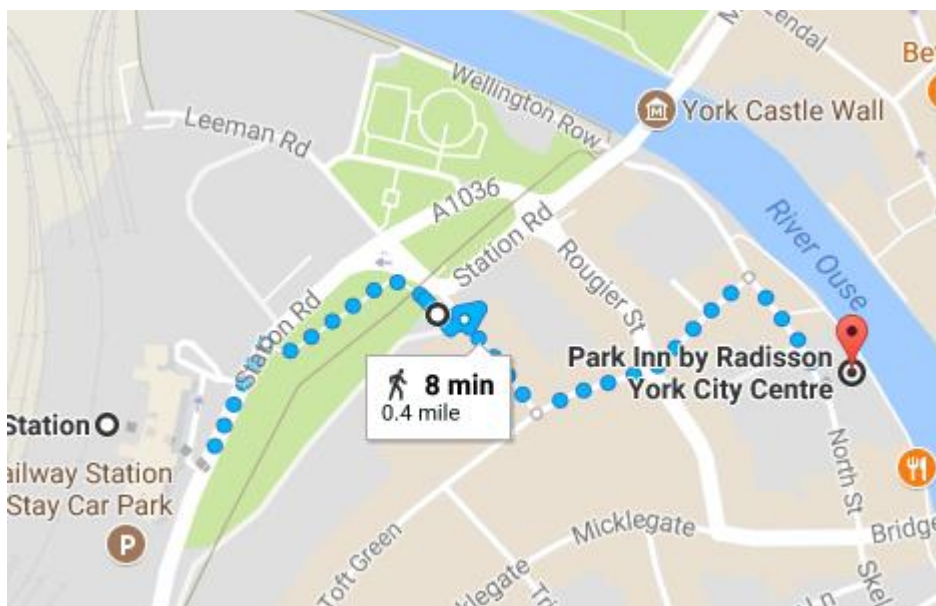
So you get to the airport, how then do you get to York? The easiest way, especially if there is a train station in the airport is by train. These can be booked in advance (by as much as three months–no longer than 3 months though, or you'll just get quoted normal prices)–booking in advance can bring the price down by almost 75%–so it's a worthwhile saving (earliest booking dates for different companies can be found at: http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/times_fares/ticket_types/44703.asp) – note too that if you book an advance train ticket from most airports (called an airport advance) then the system allows for your arrival to be delayed by as much as 3 hours, and the ticket will still be honoured – although if you are delayed you will need to call into the ticket office at the airport so they can validate this for you, in fact most of the guards on the trains are knowledgeable and helpful. If you are in any doubt try and talk to the guard before you get on the train or as soon as you do get on the train. They are the train managers, with their authority most things can be fixed, I've often been able to travel on an earlier train than I've booked (sometimes flights are early) simply by getting the guard's permission.

You normally collect your tickets at the station using your credit card and a code that will be provided for you when you book your ticket, new systems are coming into place where you can print your ticket off prior to traveling, but are not so common at the time of writing. Once again there are many systems to make the booking, but I prefer to use the Virgin Trains website as they do not add a surcharge for using a credit card.

Note that if you arrive at Heathrow airport and will use the London Underground then you will not be able to pick up your ticket until you get to the main station (which for York is London Kings Cross) as there are no ticket machines at Heathrow. The cheapest way to use the Underground is with a contactless credit card, you simply tap on one of the yellow pads on entry, and again on exit, the system will work out the bill and charge you as little as possible for the trip – you can go into the Transport for London site to get details of your charges.

For longer journeys, perhaps if you are coming via London, you might want to consider the bus. There are two main bus / coach companies in the UK, there is National Express and Megabus UK. I've been able to travel between York and London for as little as £6 using these services.

The last part of the journey from the station to the hotel (AA has negotiated special rates at the Park Inn, and in recent years has held the annual conference there, if booking direct be sure to tell them you want the rate for AA) is just a 10 minute walk.



When you exit the station turn left and walk along the main road about 100m

You will come to a pedestrian crossing controlled by traffic lights, cross the road here.

On the other side of the road walk onto the pedestrian area and follow it around to the left, and then to the right, you will come to an area of black road and to the right is the Grand Hotel, turn right here and walk in front of the hotel and out of the gates at the other side. Cross the road and turn left, at the end of this you will want to go straight across and on to the next road (there is a pedestrian crossing), and the end of that road turn right, and the Park Inn is about 100m on the left.

Here is a link to this route

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/dir/York+Station,+Station+Rd,+York+YO24+1AB/Park+Inn+by+Radisson+York+City+Centre,+North+Street,+York/@53.9582747,-1.0898884,522m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m19!4m18!1m10!1m1!1s0x4879310665704cc5:0x3675e4bf56b5974!2m2!1d-1.09319!2d53.95798!3m4!1m2!1d-1.089544!2d53.9586104!3s0x48793107b60ffe8b:0x18bc6a0e5e0b8d21!1m5!1m1!1s0x487931a846a0222d:0x6be422a8a09bfbf1!2m2!1d-1.0851949!2d53.9583077!3e2>

If you are going to GSO at 10 Toft Green, the beginning of the route is the same, once you pass the Grand Hotel and come out of the gates, turn right and 10 Toft Green is about 250m up this road on the left hand side.



Here is a link to this map

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/dir/York+Station,+Station+Rd,+York+YO24+1AB/10+Toft+Green,+York/@53.957742,-1.0903999,739m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m19!4m18!1m10!1m1!1s0x4879310665704cc5:0x3675e4bf56b5974!2m2!1d-1.09319!2d53.95798!3m4!1m2!1d-1.0894989!2d53.9585781!3s0x48793107b60ffe8b:0x18bc6a0e5e0b8d21!1m5!1m1!1s0x4879310706bda291:0x4945b16760f2e754!2m2!1d-1.0902639!2d53.9570403!3e2>

If you are left with any questions you are most welcome to ask me, I probably don't have all the answers, but I might know where to look.

Matt S.

Secretary, CER