

# Who are York's heroes?

## Sue Clayton

**That was the question I posed as I set out on an ambitious project to paint six of the city's great and good.**

Earlier last year I began my campaign to persuade the public to nominate people they thought worthy of being captured in a portrait.

The idea for the York Heroes project came after the devastating floods of Boxing Day 2015. I was aware that in York we all came together in the floods. It made me realise there are people out there who do amazing things and it would be nice to celebrate them in painting.

The six subjects are not flood heroes, but heroic in their lives. I wanted to find people who deserve recognition for making a difference to the lives of people in York and its surroundings.

Importantly for me was to meet and chat with each hero, giving me an insight to both their personalities and characters. There are also some hidden references in the paintings as I asked each sitter if they would like me to add anything personal to them to be added to the finished piece. Whether it be a traditional oil painting, an illustration ready for a storybook or a papercut collage of press cuttings – each portrait is unique, in content and style as I have given my artist response to each hero.

**The original paintings will be on display at York Open Studios on 14/15 and 21/22 April, and in York Hospital main corridor from May until August.**

[www.sueclaytonart.com](http://www.sueclaytonart.com)

# Andrew Fair

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*Andrew greets everyone as a friend and makes you feel so welcome.*

*Always smiling and cheery, makes a difference to my day.*

*Andrew even wrote to the Prime Minister when he knew our nearby offices were closing as he felt so strongly about it. A lovely man.*



Andrew has worked at Sainsbury's Monks Cross for over 30 years. Always ready to lend a hand and greet everyone with a friendly smile, Andrew was one of the heroes to receive the most nominations.

He has also raised over £16,000 for causes including MacMillan Cancer Support and the Lullaby Trust.

# Suzanne Asquith BEM



Suzanne joined the police force in 2000. She was diagnosed with cancer in 2012 preventing her from working on the frontline. Undeterred she then developed and co-ordinated projects for North Yorkshire Police helping young people improve their communities during school holidays.

She was awarded the Gold award for Inspiration at the North Yorkshire Police Annual Awards ceremony in October 2015, and was awarded a BEM in the Queen's Birthday Honours for this. Suzanne sadly passed away in 2016.

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*However saddened or despaired we feel, we should smile, chuckle or even laugh and always be thankful we shared the life of Suzanne Asquith, a superstar in every sense of the word.*

*I found her creativity and zest for life a real inspiration. She fought for life and treasured it to the end. Her determination created an ongoing legacy of giving.*

# Berwick Kaler



Berwick Kaler is a British actor most famous for playing the dame in York Theatre Royal's annual pantomime, which he also writes and directs. He has been awarded the Freedom of the City, and in 2002 received an honorary degree from the University of York.

This year will be a record breaking 40th year as Britain's longest serving dame. Despite undergoing a double heart bypass in summer 2017, he still starred, wrote and directed *Jack and the Beanstalk* the same year.

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*York's finest Dame has now entertained me, my daughter and now my granddaughter.*

*York Hero...? It's got to be Berwick Kaler!*

*Berwick Kaler has entertained, delighted and made so many people laugh. He not only stars but writes and directs the pantomime.*

# Ian Donaghy



Ian Donaghy, more commonly known as ‘Big Ian’, fronts the party band *Huge*. His *Night to Remember* charity concerts held in March at The Barbican raised over £22,000 for St Leonard’s Hospice and three York Dementia projects last year. He’s responsible for *Xmas Presence* (Christmas dinner, entertainment and companionship) the last couple of years for people on their own on Christmas Day and for *Forever Young* a free concert for all ages for the last few years. Ian has just launched his latest book, *The Missing Peace*. The book is a series of short stories and monologues about how different people from different age groups deal with the loss of their loved one. As with Donaghy’s previous book *Dear Dementia*, he has sought to fill a gap to “get people talking and, even better, listening.”

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*He has done A Night to Remember for the last few years too for dementia care plus fundraises for St Leonards Hospice amongst others and much more.*

*He is a good role model to people young and old. My 13 year old daughter used him as a good role model for her Life Skills homework.*

*He was and is the front man for the York band Huge. He is currently working with people with dementia and raises thousands of pounds for St Leonard’s Hospice and for Dementia.*

# Prof. Steve Leveson

The York Against Cancer story began when Steve Leveson, a consultant surgeon at St James's in Leeds with a background in cancer research, came to York Hospital in the mid 1980s.

Compared to what he had seen in Leeds, cancer patients in York weren't getting a very good deal. Previously, cancer surgery was 'one size fits all', with no attempt to distinguish between different kinds of the disease. Over the last 30 years, York Against Cancer has raised more than £14 million. Some of its key projects include Cancer Care Centre at York Hospital, a free minibus service, respite breaks and a mobile chemotherapy unit.



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*He's one of the York surgeons that founded York Against Cancer. This year is their 30 anniversary of starting and he and his wife work endlessly to raise money and have just spent one million pounds buying and equipping a chemotherapy bus to take treatment out to sufferers. I know he has a team of people working with him now, but he was one of the founder members and as far as I know he's not really had any recognition for this. He's my hero.*

# Mary Chapman



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*We absolutely love Nuzzlets. Everyone is so welcoming and patient. The world needs more Marys!*

*My daughter loves going to Nuzzlets, Mary and the team makes sure she has access to all the wonderful animals.*

*I have witnessed first-hand the difference Mary and her animals can make to a person's day.*

Mary Chapman is the founder of Nuzzlets Animal Charity. The farm based at Great Ouseburn has up to 100 rescued animals for therapy and education. They have just celebrated their tenth anniversary of achieving charity status.

Nuzzlets specialise in visits for children with disabilities, special needs and life threatening illnesses. They work closely with Martin House Hospice and link with special-needs schools, Age UK, local primary schools and care homes. The service has recently extended to visiting adults with mental health issues and people with brain injuries.