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Carriage driver injured as Shire horse gallops through York streets

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By Mark Stead

Updated: TOURISTS and shoppers had to jump to safety when a shire horse broke free of its carriage and galloped through the centre of York.

The driver of the carriage was thrown from his seat to the ground when the animal pulling the cart, which takes passengers on sightseeing trips through the city, became startled and broke free of its reins outside York Minster yesterday afternoon.

The white horse charged down Goodramgate and through Monk Bar before being captured shortly afterwards by a member of the public in the Heyworth area.

Paramedics were called to the scene to treat the driver, who is in his 50s.

He was left lying near the Minster's west entrance after being flung to the ground when the carriage collided with a set of bollards at 3.40pm. The driver was taken to York Hospital but he was later released.

Eyewitness Andy Forde, 34, from Haxby, said: "I was shopping in Goodramgate when I saw the horse galloping down the road towards Monk Bar and then Monkgate.

"People were jumping out of the way and fleeing, almost in a state of panic. I was concerned about what might happen and went down to Monk Bar, but by the time I got there the horse had already run off towards Heworth."

One tourist from Colchester, who was spending the weekend in York, was on another horse-drawn carriage which had to take evasive action in Goodramgate when the escaped animal ran towards it.

"We didn't see it until it was right in front of us, but our driver managed to swerve out of the way and calm the horse pulling his carriage," she said.

"The horse which had broken free was absolutely flying towards us, so something had obviously spooked it.

"Everybody's concern was just for the man who was injured and we hope he recovers quickly."

A spokesman for North Yorkshire Police said the animal was caught and brought under control at about 3.50pm yesterday by a member of the public.

The carriage involved was run by Malton-based Myles Conrad Horse-Drawn Carriage Services. A member of staff declined to comment on the accident yesterday.