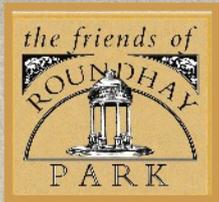


# NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2022

PRESIDENT: MARJORIE ZIFF MBE CHAIRPERSON: RICHARD CRITCHLEY



# FRIENDS OF ROUNDHAY PARK

Friends of Roundhay Park,  
PO Box 129, Leeds LS8 1WY  
Website: [www.forp.org](http://www.forp.org)  
Email: [editor@forp.org](mailto:editor@forp.org)  
[secretary@forp.org](mailto:secretary@forp.org)



## CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER DECEMBER 2022

We now come to the end of another year and what a year this has been - a year full of contrasts that will be remembered for the rollercoaster chain of events.

The year started on a high with the nation happily preparing to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee. But then, early in September, just two days after the Queen welcomed one of the new Prime Ministers into office, we received the very sad news that she had passed away. There then followed a state funeral and, of course, we welcomed our new King and Queen Consort.

Turning now to FoRP's year, our outstanding highlights include the celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official opening of the park culminating in the 'FoRP Festival 2022' which was held on Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> July and to which three and half thousand happy park-lovers turned up, including three descendants of John Barran (who was mainly instrumental in the founding of the park). Everyone enjoyed a fine day of entertainment including live music, dancing and food. It was certainly a day to remember.

It is most important that I pay a worthy tribute to the work of all our fantastic volunteers who give their time and efforts to help keep the park in tip top condition and to keep you, our members, and the wider public informed of our activities. Sadly, once again, the council has reduced the budget for the park making any increased maintenance or improvements more and more difficult.

In the council's efforts to raise money from use of the park, the current light show is causing concerns regarding both the effects on the environment and wildlife and we question how much of the receipts will be returned to the park management, and possibly FoRP, to try to make restoration, where possible.

On the other hand, an exciting initiative that has just been announced by private backers is a proposal, supported by the Civic Trust, to renovate and reclaim the two lodge buildings at the entrance to the carriage drive off Wetherby Road by specialists in heritage buildings. This would give these historic buildings a new lease of life and is to be welcomed.

So, 2022 will be a year of so many differing memories leading to the inevitable line, "Where were you when ...?" There is no doubt that in 2023 we will all have to face the challenges that will ensue, but the park will continue to provide a haven of peace and tranquillity for us all.

In closing, and behalf of your committee, volunteers, helpers, advisors and myself may I wish you all a most peaceful and joyous Christmastide with the hope of a wonderful and, dare I say, prosperous New Year.

Richard Critchley



### The People's Favourite Park

We were delighted to learn that Roundhay Park was voted as one of the 'local favourites' in the prestigious Fields in Trust's UK Favourite Parks 2022 awards. This award is for parks and green spaces across the UK and is earned through a two stage process. Firstly, the park has to be nominated for consideration, and then there is a public voting process in which the general public can vote for their own special favourite. Voting took place between 7<sup>th</sup> July and 18<sup>th</sup> August this year. Since the award is based on a public vote, it provides an excellent demonstration of the value of the park to its visitors, local residents and the community.

The award certificate is shown here with members of FoRP at the open meeting held in October. Roundhay Park thoroughly deserves this recognition, and FoRP is proud to have made our contribution to this success.



## 'A QUIET WORD' INVITES YOU TO TAKE A WALK IN THE PARK

### A sonic stroll through Roundhay Park - past and present

*A Quiet Word is a performing arts company, based in Yorkshire, engaging with people to create performances which reflect their experiences of the places where they live and work. They have now created a set of fascinating commentaries you can listen to as you walk around the park.*

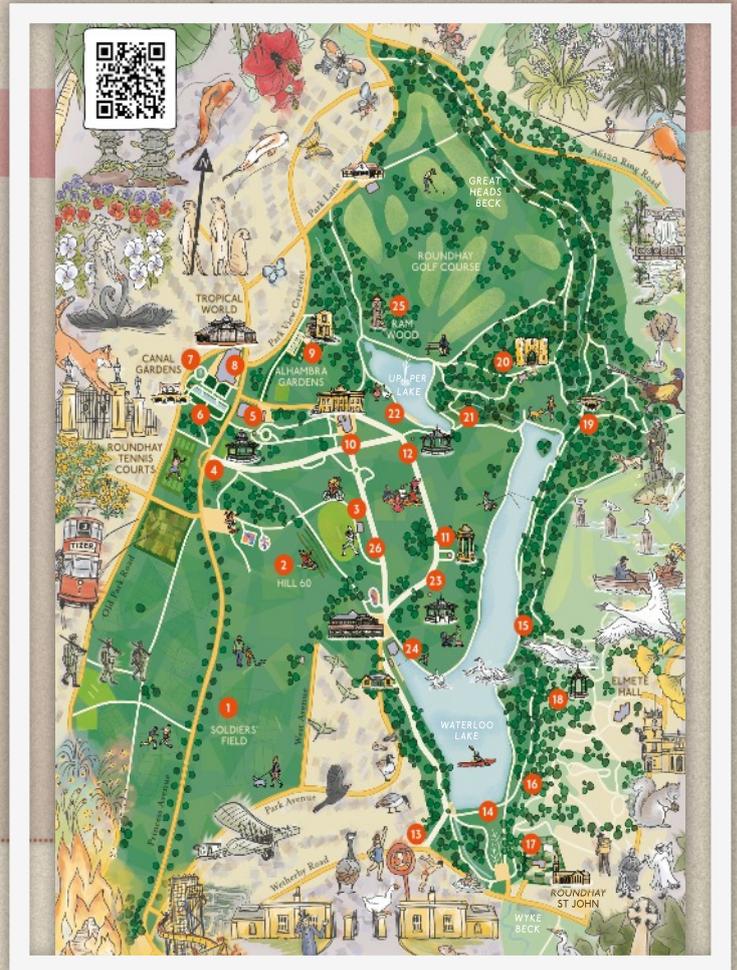
A Walk in the Park was created as part of 'Meet you at the Mansion', a site-specific performance event presented in association with Friends of Roundhay Park during the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in September 2022. The 'Walk' follows a map, and a whole set of audio files have been created, full of fascinating information about those areas of the park. You can download the audio files and the map via the link below. Then, all you need to enjoy the walk is a smart phone and a pair of headphones. There are twenty-six stops marked on the map. Each one corresponds to a numbered audio track, so you can listen as you walk. You can visit the stops in any order and at your own pace. Visit one or two, or all of them, walking in the park alone, with friends, family, dogs... or you can even sit at home and take a virtual walk!

So, why not take a look, download the audio files and map and have a walk in Roundhay Park today?

**'A Walk in the Park' was produced by A Quiet Word and the map was designed by Amy Levene.**

To download the map and audio files use the following link:

<https://www.aquietword.co.uk/park/?s=09>



## After the Rain – inspired by the park



Photo by Lizzie Coombes

As part of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations 'A Quiet Word' organised 'Meet you at the Mansion' events where people were invited to join 'performance walks'. The idea was to share and collect experiences and stories of what the park means for us all. Following those events, in partnership with Chapel FM, Pyramid of Arts and two local schools, a special performance of an original work 'After the Rain' composed by Dave Evans and performed by the Fruit Tree Project was featured at Seven Arts in Chapel Allerton on 17<sup>th</sup> November. Their own description says it all.....

*"The park is my friend, my companion, my therapist. I come here every day"* After the rain is a paean of thanks to Roundhay Park, a unique merging of live and recorded music, spoken word and personal testimony.

Once again we are grateful to our regular contributor, Dave Johnston, for news of his latest sightings of birdlife in the park, and new species to look out for.

Pied flycatcher (male)



## EXCITING FEATHERED VISITORS TO THE PARK

Spotted flycatcher



Waxwing



The park provided more excitement for birdwatchers this summer, with visits from both a spotted flycatcher and a pied flycatcher. Both birds were seen at the upper lake area for several days. Neither bird is common in our area. They are summer visitors from Africa, and are slightly smaller than our common chaffinch.

Spotted flycatchers are grey/brown in colour on the head, back and tail, and whiteish underneath, with faint streaks and spots at the front of the head and on the breast. They are found in deciduous woodland, parks and sometimes gardens. They choose a favoured branch on a tree next to open spaces and fly from the perch to catch passing insects. Successful nesting produces 4 to 6 offspring.

Pied flycatchers have a more contrasting plumage, being dark on the back, white underneath, and with white patches on the wings. The dark parts are black on the male, but browner on the female. They prefer deciduous woodland, but may nest in parks and gardens. While nesting they catch caterpillars for their 6 to 8 young. They have been seen from time to time in Gledhow Valley woods and Adel Dam nature reserve, but probably the best place to see them is in the Strid woods at Bolton Abbey, where they take advantage of the many nest boxes on the trees there. Like many of our summer visitors, the numbers of both flycatchers visiting the UK have dropped significantly over the last few years, so it was a delight to see these 2 birds in the park this summer.

*....and something special to look out for....*

At the time of writing, many birdwatchers and photographers have been flocking to Scarborough to see waxwings arriving from Scandinavia. It could be the beginning of a "waxwing winter". This is not a regular occurrence, but some autumn and winters see large numbers of these birds arriving in the UK. They are roughly the size of a starling and have spectacular colouration. They fly in search of red berried fruits. Rowan berries are a favourite food. Keep an eye on trees with red berries, either in the park, or often they seem to like supermarket car parks. You may see something quite special.

Dave Johnston

## A Treat for the Senses – sensory garden update

*Led by Sarah Jackson, FoRP's team of volunteer gardeners have continued to develop the delightful sensory garden within the walls of Canal Gardens. Thanks to Sarah for providing this update and the photos.*

It has been a busy few months in the Sensory Garden as we continue to develop new areas for visitors to enjoy. We considered several options to improve the 'flowerbed crossing' area near the willow den before deciding to develop a herb rockery. New rosemary and thyme plants have been added. If you brush past them and step across from path to path at this point, they will release their wonderful fragrance. Some pebbles left over from the Roundhay Adder have had a new bright coat of paint to turn them into bees and flowers to further brighten up this area.

The area next to the willow den suffered with the dry, hot summer and, after careful research, we have made a log pile into a natural, organic bug 'hotel'. Larger tree stems have been 'planted' to house a bird bath and next year we plan to add a bee drinking station with bee houses made from slices of tree trunk. A new bird house has also been discreetly sited in the garden and we hope to be able to report on birds nesting there next spring.

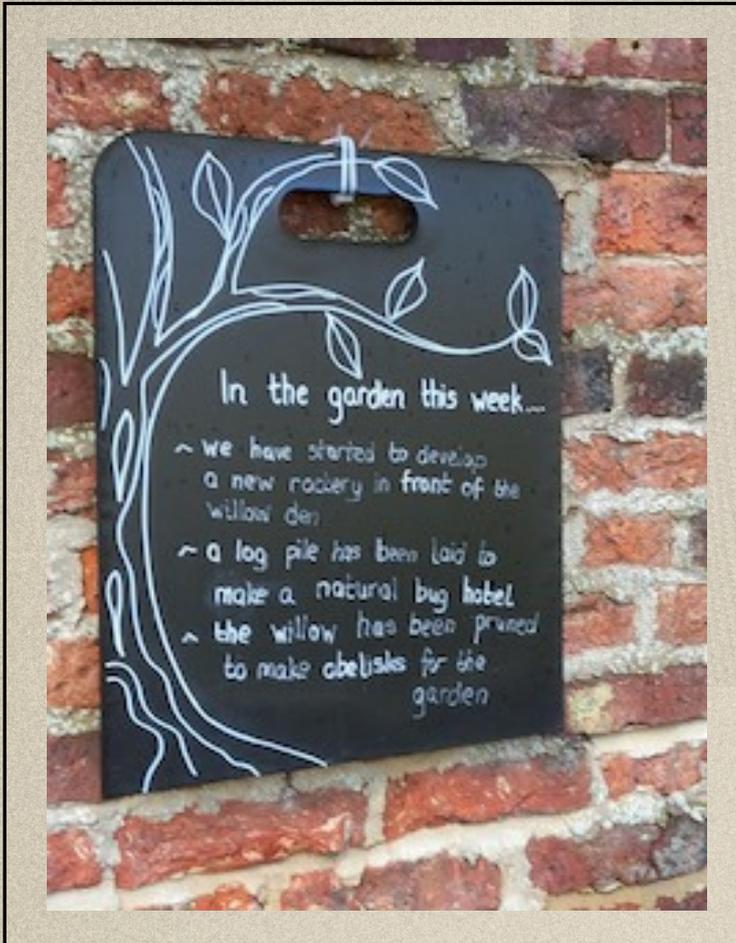
With the help of Ian, from the FoRP working party, we have harvested the very tall willow stems from the willow tunnel. Some were 11 feet tall! Some stems were woven in to reinforce the back of the willow den, the 'fedge' was strengthened, tall willows have been turned into obelisks for both Friends Gardens and smaller stems have been woven into basic wreaths to be decorated for Christmas front doors. The wreaths have been offered to friends and family for a donation towards new plants for the sensory garden. So far we have been able to purchase 5 more ajugas for the front border and more daffodil bulbs for the wildlife corner.

As previously noted, some of the original plants had not survived and we have chosen to plant some new hydrangeas near the willow tunnel, together with verbena seedlings gathered from the garden, to add some autumn colour in this area.

As visitors seem to have enjoyed our 'seasonal' signs in the garden, we have now established a blackboard near the Roundhay Adder to keep everyone up to date with our work in the garden and highlight areas of interest.

As we move into winter the tree fern will be wrapped up, fallen leaves gathered and plants cut down as they go dormant. Our weekly gardening sessions will then move indoors as we plan for the new gardening year.

Sarah Jackson



Harvesting tall willow stems

## Memorial to Rowland Ding – Test Pilot

*In previous issues of the newsletter we have told the story of Rowland Ding, the test pilot who flew planes taking off from Soldiers Field. He was tragically killed when his plane crashed in Oakwood in May 1917. A permanent memorial has now been erected in his memory. Take a walk to find this. Thanks to John Ferguson for providing this information.*

On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August a small group of local residents gathered to view the unveiling of the memorial to Rowland Ding by his grandson, Julian Ding, and great grandson, Charlie Hayhurst-Ding, on the site of his fatal crash on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May 1917 at the junction of Oakwood Grange Lane and Tatham Way.

Rowland Ding was the chief test pilot for the Blackburn Aircraft Company who built a number of different types of aircraft in Olympia Works which was situated on Roundhay Road where Tesco, Sports Direct and Wickes are now. Completed aircraft were towed by horses up Roundhay Road to Soldiers Field which acted as an aerodrome and where Rowland would test them. He was keen on aerobatics and had his own plane The White Falcon, a monoplane, which he kept in a hanger on Soldiers Field and when not test flying he would often give impromptu displays attracting large crowds.

On 12<sup>th</sup> May 1917 he was scheduled to test a Blackburn BE2c. This biplane was designed for reconnaissance and bombing and not for aerobatics or combat. Just before he took off he was warned by Harry Goodman the erection shop foreman “No fancy flying now”. Rowland ignored Harry’s warning and on his second loop the wings on one side of the plane collapsed and it plunged to earth. Rowland’s body was pulled from the burning wreckage by a Major Seecker-Wilson of the Royal Army Medical Corps at home on leave who thought that the aircraft would hit his house, but unfortunately Rowland was already dead.

If you find the memorial you will note the date on the plaque is not the 21<sup>st</sup> August 2022. This is because the plaque was originally handed to the family on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the crash. However because of Covid and some other problems the stone mounting block was not in place until a few days before the unveiling this summer.

*Much of this information comes from an article published in Oak Leaves (Part 8), the magazine of the Oakwood and District Historical Society by David Hanson. <http://www.oakwoodchurch.info/odhs.html>*



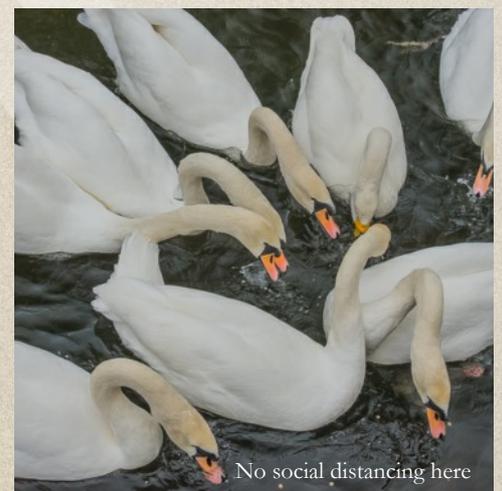
## Avian Flu – a Real Cause for Concern

*You will have heard the widespread concern about the spread of bird flu. Tom Cooper, with advice from the park management and Dave Johnston has provided this information about the situation in the park*

Eggs rationed in the supermarket! Worries about turkeys for Christmas dinner! Lack of free range chickens in the shops! No swan and duck food on the rack at Lakeside Cafe. The common factor in all these events is bird flu (Avian Influenza). Bird flu causes serious problems when large flocks of a species are found close together. There is not much you can do if you are a poultry farmer. If the virus gets into your flock, it gets culled, then burned, to try and stop the spread to other flocks. In the wild, birds are usually spread out. Ducks are usually found in small groups. Mute swans usually live as individuals or breeding pairs. However on Waterloo Lake things are a bit different. A large flock of mute swans has built up taking advantage of the food that the public loves to feed them. So, if any individual contracts bird flu, probably from a migrating bird, the whole flock becomes exposed to the virus. It is a growing problem in the whole of West Yorkshire.

We have stopped making swan and duck food available at the Lakeside Cafe at the request of the park management. The aim is to try

to get the swans to disperse, ideally away from the park. With this in mind, please don't feed the birds anything, especially bread. If you come across a dead swan or any other dead bird please do not go near it, and if you are walking your dog, keep it away from the bird as well. Also please report it to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) tel: 03459335577.



So far about 15 dead swans have been collected by park workers for disposal, and the presence of Avian Flu in Roundhay Park has now been confirmed by DEFRA. Interestingly there has been only been one dead goose found. This is a naturally flocking bird so may have a better immune system. No dead ducks had been discovered

## Roundhay Rudolph is Back!



In 2021 Roundhay residents, the McLoughlin family (John, Vicky and their two children Jessica and Alexander) came up with the brilliant idea of creating a festive route for running, cycling or walking, covering parts of the park and surrounding areas of Roundhay. They called the route the 'Roundhay Rudolph' – (see map) and invited anyone to participate with the aim of collecting money for charity. The event was a resounding success raising over £3000.

With the McLoughlins having been inspired by Kevin Sinfield and Rob Burrow at the Leeds 10k run in June, John has signed up for the inaugural Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon to be run in May 2023. The family has also decided to re-launch the Roundhay Rudolph for this Christmas period and right through until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Funds raised through Roundhay Rudolph will be split equally between the Leeds Hospitals Charity appeal to build the Rob Burrow Centre for MND (Motor Neurone Disease), and the MND Association.

*So, this Christmas and into next year – don't be a couch potato! Join in the Roundhay Rudolph in whatever way you can and support the McLoughlin family in raising funds for this vital cause.*

You will find all the necessary details online at: <https://bit.ly/3FGOsgt>

## Christmas Lights in Roundhay Park

Between 8<sup>th</sup> December and 1<sup>st</sup> January a special Christmas lights trail will be open to ticket holders, running around the Upper Lake and parts of the surrounding woodland. Spectacular light and sound installations designed by a range of international artists will be on display. Street food vendors, drinks and other festive fare will be available. As this newsletter was being put together, preparations for the trail were still under way. Fingers crossed for some dry weather!



Preparing for the Christmas lights



## Reflections –Another year in the Friends Garden

*Seasons may change, but FoRP's great team of volunteers continue to keep the Friends Garden looking lovely. Thanks to Janet Wilkinson for these reflections on the past year.*

At this time of year we pause our regular sessions in the Friends Garden until the better weather returns. We use this time to reflect on how the garden has performed in the past year and start planning for next year. We always think that next year the garden will be even better! I think that is definitely the case next year as, like all gardens, the dry summer has posed a number of challenges. As always, FoRP is very fortunate to have a willing group of volunteers who regularly turn up to keep the Friends Garden looking its best come rain or shine.

This year the garden looked lovely in spring with the flowers as always putting on a wonderful show. However the new plants we put in to provide more summer colour did not perform as well as expected due to the hot dry weather. The volunteers watered when possible, but this was not as easy as it involved lots of carrying of watering cans. This should be easier next year as, thanks to one of our fellow FoRP volunteers, Ian Nicholson and the park gardeners, we have now identified a water source that we can bring directly into the garden. The solution relies on the use of hosepipes, so we are hoping we can use this next year, hosepipe restrictions permitting. Thankfully most of the new plants we put in do appear to have survived. Hopefully these will do better next year.

This year we planted foxgloves that were grown from seed by some of the FoRP volunteers. These did perform well and we have already planted some more for next year. The volunteers have also been busy planting more daffodils and snowdrops that should add to the spring display.

Sadly this summer there were no reflections to be seen in the water in the Friends Garden. The water that is usually there comes directly from Canal Gardens. Unfortunately, as a result of the dry summer water levels were low which meant there was no water coming into the Friends Garden for most of the year. We do have plans to resolve this next year by making a pond in the garden that is not reliant on water coming from Canal Gardens. We aim to start the work when the better weather arrives.

One of the areas of the Friends Garden that we are continuing to develop is the newer part to the right as you enter from Old Park Road. Our fellow FoRP volunteers who look after the Sensory Garden are making us an obelisk from the willow that was recently cut from the willow tunnel. We are hoping this will act as a centrepiece with new plants to complement.

So as we say goodbye to another year we look forward to coming back next year and meeting up with our fellow volunteers and visitors as we all continue to enjoy the Friends Garden

Janet Wilkinson



The Friends Garden Team

## A new Estate Officer for Roundhay Park – James Watson

Earlier this year we were saying thank you and farewell to John Roebuck as he retired following many years of great service leading the council team looking after Roundhay Park (among other duties). Now we are delighted to welcome James Watson, who has taken over from John in this role. James officially took up his post on 5<sup>th</sup> September. FoRP sends our best wishes to James and we look forward to working in close partnership with him and his team for the benefit of the park. **Welcome and good luck, James!**

## Still Partying – the work goes on

*FoRP's regular working parties are now led by Ian Nicholson, who has taken up the baton carried for so many years by Tom Cooper. Thank you, Ian, and all the regular volunteers for all your great work. Ian has provided this latest report.*

The hot weather during the Summer meant some pleasant working conditions for the working parties. In July we concentrated on weeding the stumpery and the borders adjacent to the sensory garden. Some Himalayan balsam was removed from the path down from the Mansion. The Himalayan balsam is not such a major problem nowadays as the park staff and previous working parties have kept on top of it, but we continue to keep an eye on it.

The major job for August was the removal of the mountain bike ramps in Scouts Quarry. Bill Fraser who leads the geology walks was concerned about the large ramps which were obstructing and potentially damaging geological features in this area. We were joined by four young people from Acardis who brought their technical expertise and muscle to the job (very welcome). Tom was recalled, stepping up for the first September working party whilst the Nicholsons swanned off on holiday.

The snowdrop bed was weeded ready to be planted up with the left-over crocus bulbs. The fence area by the swan's nest was weeded – the other end was done in July. The first job of October was to complete previous year's crocus planting. This was done with the help of the 'little FoRPer's' (See below).

Once all the leaves on the willow arch had been shed we worked with the sensory gardeners to prune the willow arch in the sensory garden and store some of the willow for future constructions. Also in November we spent a session clearing the grids in Ram Beck and planting more crocuses by the serpentine path.

Ian Nicholson



Clearing the grids in Ram Beck



## Little Friends of Roundhay Park

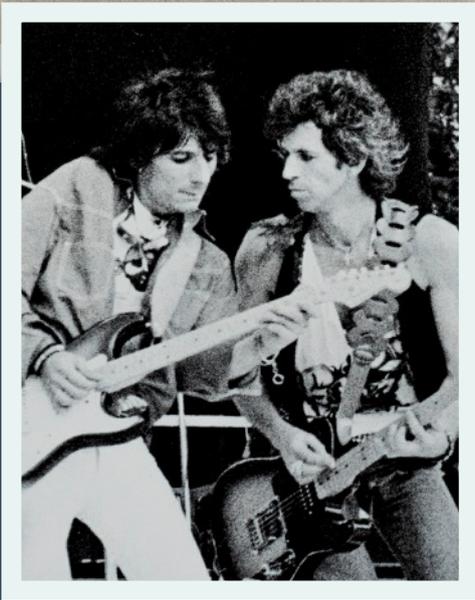
*Encouraged and led by FoRP's vice chair, Sara Dawson, 'Little FoRPer's' work hard to support our work in the park. Thanks to Sara for this account.*

On 8<sup>th</sup> October, Little FoRP joined forces with the FoRP working party for a morning planting crocuses in Roundhay Park. The green-fingered volunteers met at the Carriage House at 10am and made their way to the flower beds near the top band stand. They set to work digging holes in the grassy verges around the beds with gusto and in just over an hour had planted 3000 bulbs.

While the holes were being dug, the children collected the crocus bulbs and delicately planted them in the square holes - shoots up - being careful not to crush the many worms that they uncovered. Rather less delicately, perhaps, the children then stamped on the earth to bed the crocuses fully. The weather was perfect for a morning of planting, and a thoroughly pleasant working party was had by all.

Thanks to all the volunteers and FoRP regulars who took time out of their busy weekend to help make the park look even more beautiful come spring time.

Sara Dawson



## Rocking in Roundhay Park

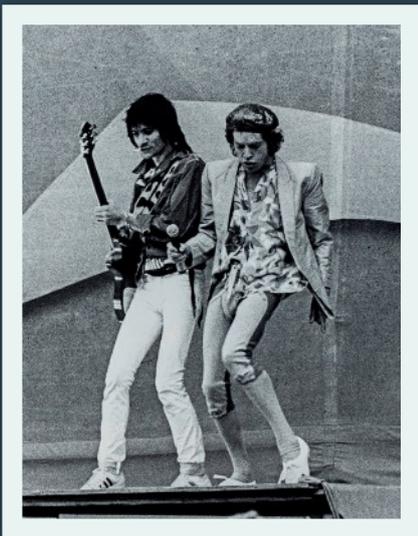
*Everyone knows that Roundhay Park has been the venue for many major music events over the past 40 years. Now we are grateful to Charles Shepherd for providing an eye witness account of two of the biggest events of all in the 1980s.*

*Luckily for us, he smuggled his camera in (but don't tell anyone!). Charles tells his own story....*

All the adverts for the gigs said 'no cameras', so my Olympus OM2 with Tamron 90mm SP lens and a x2 teleconverter were separated and wrapped in tinfoil with my sandwiches! All were reassembled once in the park. For both gigs we stood for the whole time and didn't move as we'd never have found each other again.

We weren't very close to the front but with the 90mm lens and the x2 converter I could just get the whole stage in the viewfinder. Using a darkroom and chemicals the images come out very well - on a photo of Keith Richard you can even see individual guitar strings and what rings he was wearing. The Stones images are photos of prints I had made in the 1980s. I cannot find any prints of the Springsteen gig, therefore these are scans of the negatives and therefore not as clear.

*Thank you, Charles, for sharing this great story and photos. Our newsletter cannot do justice to your unique photos, but hope they capture some of the excitement for our readers.*



# Still Pickin' – litter in the park

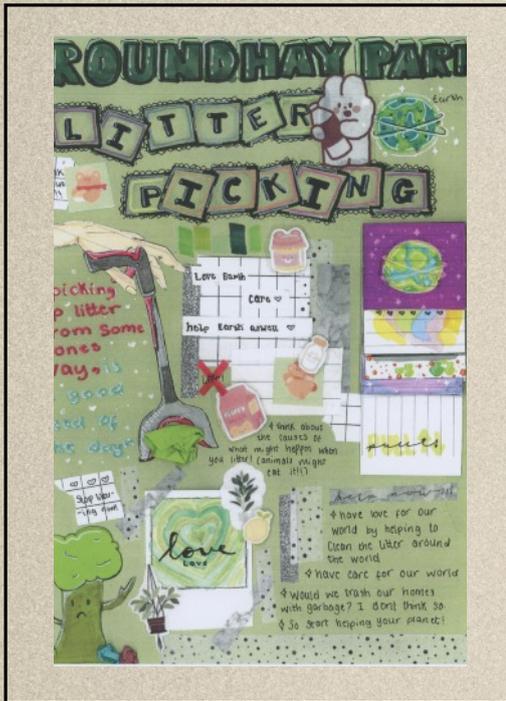
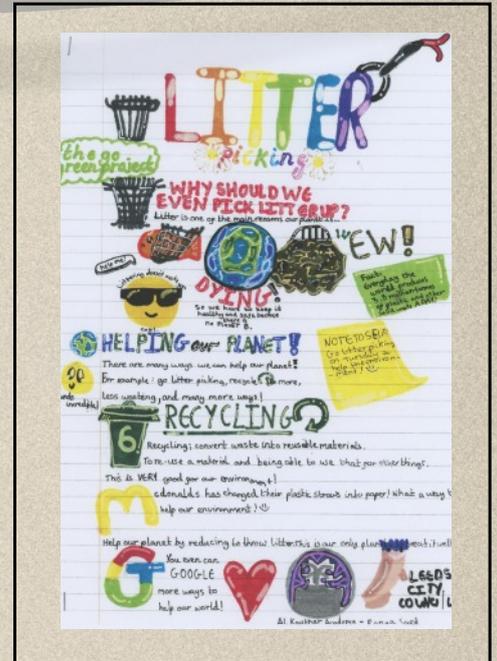
Seasons may change, but (regrettably) there is always litter to be picked. FoRP's volunteers never give in, whether working together in teams or as individuals. We all say "Thank you" to Martin Child for his fantastic leadership and organisation of our litter picking efforts, and for providing this update and photos. Thanks also to all our great volunteers and other helpers. Martin writes:

We had a very quiet late summer/early autumn with business as usual. We enjoyed good weather for all those sessions. We hosted a small team from Schneider Electric in September. They were a very enthusiastic group who greatly enjoyed the session and for some it was a great introduction to Roundhay Park.

We were also able to host a group of students from the Al Kathaur Academy (previously the New Horizon school) in Chapel Allerton at our session on October 3rd. This was their second visit, a smaller group came last summer. This year we had 27 students and 4 staff which was something of a challenge! It was clear that the girls enjoyed their visit and thanks to our regulars who helped bring a semblance of control to the incipient chaos. It was great fun for all and I very much hope we can make this a regular event. The students produced some great posters to mark the event.

One final event of note, I have been formally awarded the coveted status of Litter Free Leeds bag holder! This is obviously a great honour and thanks to Carmel Bell and Sandra Maclean for organising this. It means we have now converted completely to using the purple Litter Free Leeds bags which are now so recognisable city wide. In our November 7th session we did a sweep across both Connaught and Soldiers Fields to clear the firework (and other) debris - a very productive session with many spent fireworks and rocket sticks collected. We were also able to remove a dumped mattress from the wooded area at the Oakwood end of Park Avenue. Our December litter pick was on Monday 5th December and the refreshments had a festive theme, of course.

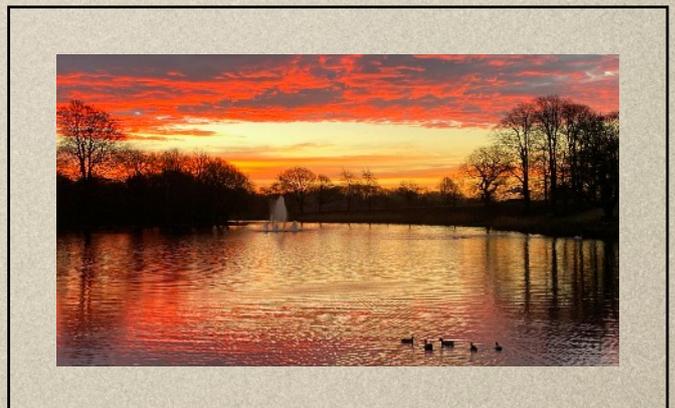
Martin Child



## Calendars 2023

The English Art Company has once again produced a limited edition wall calendar featuring a selection of photographs taken in the park by Catriona Lyon (wife of artist David Lyon). Priced at £12.50, a donation from each sale will go to FoRP. Don't miss out – buy your 2023 calendar now! For further details and to order, follow this link:

<https://www.theenglishartco.co.uk/wall-calendars2023/roundhaypark-photos>



## ENGLISH ART COMPANY SEEKS VOLUNTEERS – CAN YOU HELP?

Catriona at the English Art Company beside the Mansion is a great supporter of FoRP, selling our merchandise and prints and by producing a beautiful calendar where a percentage of the sales come to FoRP.

She is looking for volunteer members to add to her team. If you have a spare morning or afternoon, any day of the week or month, and would like to spend it within a creative, relaxed environment, selling art and meeting art enthusiasts, then please get in touch. Sarah Jackson, who leads FoRP's team on the sensory garden volunteered and gave us this feedback.

*"Just thought I'd share my experience of volunteering at The English Art Company. I've spent two days volunteering in the gallery, one day on my own and one with a friend. Both days were really enjoyable, I had time to look at the products more closely than when I pop in during a walk, I learnt about the different artists and products from Catriona, I enjoyed spending time meeting and chatting to a wide range of visitors as well as reading and sewing for a few minutes in between visitors. Catriona was extremely helpful in showing us around and explaining everything really clearly. So all in all quite a pleasant way to spend a day!"*

**Address labels**



*Merry Christmas!*