



The Newsletter

Friends of Roundhay Park

Spring 2019



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2018 was another very successful year for 'Friends' culminating in the opening of the Lakeside Playground just before Christmas with the official opening in January.

The incredible success of this initiative can be measured by the number of children who now enjoy this exciting facility. But not to rest on their laurels, the young mums who worked so hard to raise the money and oversaw the design are now planning to raise more funds to improve the playground for older children on Hill 60.

Also looking forward to 2019, 'Friends' have a number of other plans and initiatives to improve the park. Perhaps the most ambitious is to remodel and restore the shelter in Canal Gardens at the far end and facing along the length of the canal. Plans have been drawn up and application for planning permission is about to be submitted.

Chair's Letter

Sadly, 'Mary's Tree' is suffering severe internal rot and will need to be taken down. However, we are exploring plans to maintain as much as possible of the original carvings by dividing the tree into three and placing them in secure bases around the existing site.

Work has also begun to restore the carving in the Friends Garden created by John Vogler which should be completed in time for the better weather.

But all these major works are nothing compared with the dedication and the number of hours put in by members who volunteer to work on the various working parties which meet throughout the year (assisted at times by groups who use the park), planting, weeding, pruning, cleaning, restoring and generally improving the maintenance and appearance of the park.

Of course, all the work that we do is with the permission and encouragement of the park management and their staff to whom we are most grateful. We appreciate that there are limits to what they are able to achieve and that they, in turn, are grateful for our efforts to support them. Together, we strive to keep Roundhay Park looking at its best and to make improvements where feasible and possible.

Like the Council, our funds are limited and we could not do the work and make the improvements without your subscriptions and support which I am sure you will agree is used with care to maximum effect. Naturally, any additional donations or initiatives would be appreciated, but regardless of that please come and enjoy the beauty of the park. We look forward to seeing you, soon.

Richard Critchley

Improving the path round Waterloo Lake Good News!

In recent years significant stretches of the path round Waterloo Lake have been in poor condition. During wet weather it became very muddy and slippery. The problem was made worse in places due to natural springs and run-off from the slopes above. This path is one of the most popular walks in the park and it was frequently difficult especially for people with pushchairs or mobility issues. However if you have walked round the lake recently you will have seen work progressing to achieve major improvements to the most problematic sections of the path. This will make it easier and more pleasant for all visitors to the park. Many thanks to the park management, and the council for all this hard work.



Friends of Roundhay Park – Stars on the Radio



Sara Dawson (seated) and Carol Haughton from FoRP, with Tim Crowther (left) and Graham Porter from Radio Leeds

On 3rd February FoRP was featured on the BBC Radio Leeds 'Sunday Gardening' show. Carol Haughton and Sara Dawson from FoRP were invited in for a friendly, but in depth discussion about our work and contribution to the park and its gardens. In his invitation the presenter, Graham Porter said *"With so many Friends groups around the country, and our parks suffering from underfunding over recent years we thought it would be an opportunity for you to tell us the story of the gardening and other work that you do.....The team spirit and the contribution you are making to the care of Roundhay Park. I suspect that you have an activity programme for the public to be involved in as well. So lots to talk about....."*

And Graham was right. This gave Carol and Sara an opportunity to talk to Graham and his co-presenter Tim Crowther about many of FoRP's activities including the new playground, litter picking, the duck food project and the working parties. They also talked at length about the history of the Friends Garden leading up to the achievement of the Yorkshire in Bloom Platinum Award. It was a thoroughly relaxed and enjoyable conversation. (Carol and Sara especially enjoyed the home made cake provided!). Listeners will have been very impressed by the all the good work done by FoRP, and hopefully this will inspire some more people to join up and get involved.

Sunday Gardening is a regular show broadcast every Sunday morning on Radio Leeds between 9 and 12. Previous programmes are available on line, and hopefully the 3rd February show can still be found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p001d7nt/episodes/player>. Carol and Sara come on after the 11 o'clock news, just over 2 hours into the programme.

Well done, and thanks to Carol and Sara. Do try to have a listen. It will make you proud to be a member of the Friends of Roundhay Park.

Four seasons in one month?

The Spring issue of the newsletter means that Spring is here.....or was that in February? The weather has been truly extraordinary. Did someone mention climate change? These photos were all taken in February.



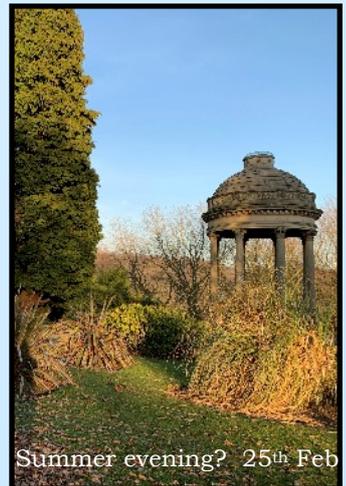
Canal Gardens 3rd Feb



Editor's car - gales 9th Feb



Crocuses 14th Feb



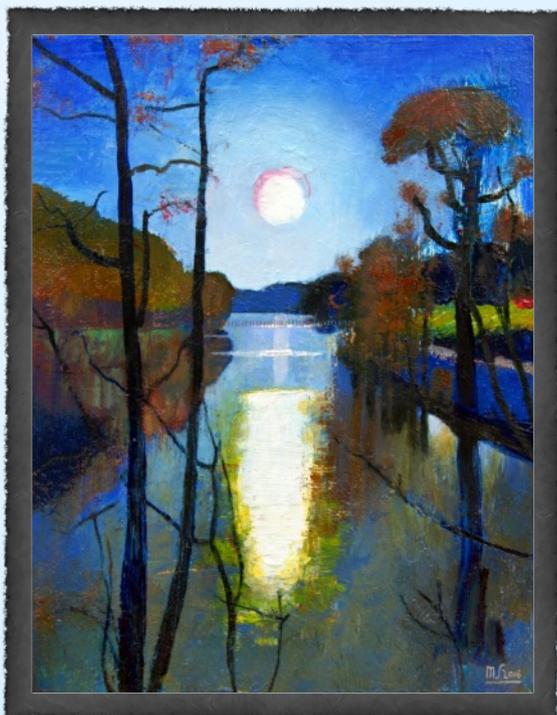
Summer evening? 25th Feb

Celebrating the Friends Garden

Spring came early to the Friends Garden this year. As reported in previous issues of the newsletter, FoRP's achievement in creating and maintaining the Friends Garden was recognised in 2018 by winning the Yorkshire in Bloom Platinum Award.

On a beautiful February morning, FoRP committee member Malcolm Jarvis fixed the plaque denoting the award to the wall of the garden beside the Old Park Road entrance to Canal Gardens. Malcolm also took these photographs.

Next time you are walking in Canal Gardens, pause for a moment to appreciate the beautiful corner which is the Friends Garden. We all owe our thanks and appreciation to the dedicated working parties who have created and looked after this garden over the years. Thank you all!



'Winter Sun' (a view of Waterloo Lake) by Mark Sofilas <https://www.marksofilasart.com>

Art in Roundhay Park

We hope that FoRP members will have managed to visit one of the art shows that have been set up in the Garden Room at the Mansion in Roundhay Park in recent years. The last day for the show, for the time being was on Sunday 17th March. The organiser, Catriona Moore from the English Art Company, has been in touch with FoRP with thanks for our work and that of the Mansion and Leeds Parks Department in keeping the park so beautifully and providing a wonderful setting for art displays. Catriona reports that over the three shows that have taken place, more than 11,000 visitors have passed through. The interest shown, and sales of work help to support the artists in continuing the work we enjoy so much. We hope the art shows will return to Roundhay Park in the future.

Unfamiliar visitors to the Park

Sightings reported by Dave Johnston

Not everyone looks forward to winter, but birdwatchers certainly do. They expect to see the usual winter visitors from Greenland, Iceland, Russia and Eastern Europe. There is always a chance of a rarity or unusually large numbers of a bird species.

Some unfamiliar ducks have been noticed on both lakes in the Park this winter.



Gadwall: A dabbling duck feeding on stems, weeds and leaves. It is slightly smaller than the common mallard and basically a grey / brown duck. It is often overlooked, as it can look just like a female mallard. The adult male, however, stands out in the winter, especially on sunny days. His beak is black, and he has a distinctive white patch on his back. Originally a rare duck in the UK, its numbers have increased due to escapes from wildfowl collections and colonisation from the continent. The UK has 1200 breeding pairs of Gadwall, and the number rises to 25000 in the winter due to migration from Europe. 32

Gadwall were counted in the Park on January 30th. Golden Acre Park and Paul's Pond have also had large numbers of this species this winter.

Wigeon: Another dabbling duck, feeding on aquatic plants and roots. 22000 pairs of this duck overwinter in the UK. Smaller than the Gadwall, they are usually seen in flocks of 500 or so at Eccup reservoir during the winter. Thousands of them are seen at Wheldrake Ings near York. One pair were seen at Roundhay Park in January. The male has a distinctive chestnut head with a cream / yellow forehead. The female is light brown. Both male and female have bluish beaks.



Shoveler: A strange looking duck has been seen on Waterloo Lake swimming mainly with the Gadwall. It is in fact a male Shoveler. Almost as big as a mallard, the distinguishing feature of this duck is its huge black beak, which it uses to filter out insects and plants from the mud and water. The

male at Roundhay seems to have taken much longer to get its full breeding plumage than normal, and at first glance does not seem to match any of the ducks usually seen in the UK. It is, however, slowly getting its dark green head and white chest. 700 pairs of Shoveler nest in the UK, with the numbers rising to 9000 pairs due to migration here in the winter.

Goosander: These fish eating ducks have visited Roundhay Park for many years now in the winter. They are bigger than a mallard. Once a rare sight in Britain, their numbers have built up to 1000 pairs in the summer, rising to 10000 pairs in the winter.

Originally a shy bird, they now seem quite content to swim close to the banks of the Upper Lake, oblivious to people and dogs walking by. On February 27th 8 Gadwall were present on the Upper Lake. 3 pairs of Goosander and 9 pairs of Tufted duck were there too. Wildlife has sprung into action early this year, with the high February temperatures. 62 Mute swans were counted on Waterloo Lake, and 3 pairs were showing courtship behaviour. Amazingly, a Chiffchaff was calling in the woods above the Lake. This little warbler may be an early spring arrival, or an overwintering one, eager to attract a mate.

However, keep your eyes open as you walk round the lakes. Anything can turn up, especially if we return to more traditional winter weather.

Dave Johnston

New Lakeside Playground - Open

Our thanks go to Julia Wilson who provided this article on behalf of the Playground Appeal team

Saturday 22nd December 2018 dawned cold and damp, but despite the weather we had an amazing turnout for the launch of our new playground.

Families were queuing to enter even before we cut the ribbon at 9.15! It was an event very much geared to children and it was wonderful for all of us to see the joy and excitement on their faces as they explored everything the playground has to offer.

Our formal opening with sponsors and councillors took place on Friday 18th January allowing those whose support helped to fund the playground to come and see it for themselves. Moo Music kindly came along to give us some musical background and entertainment for the children. We were also delighted to welcome children from John Jamieson special school who had a good play and gave everything their seal of approval. Staff from the school and from Physcap provided invaluable advice on the planning of the playground and this clearly paid dividends as we now have a truly accessible playground. Richard Critchley, our FoRP Chairman, hosted the event. Councillor Mohammed Rafique, Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles, formally opened the playground and cut the ribbon to unveil our 'history time line'.



Julia Wilson thanked him on behalf of the Roundhay Playground Appeal Team. Councillor Rafique said: *"It is such a great pleasure to be here today to see for myself what can happen when the local community come together as one with the local authority to make something special happen! This playground is fantastic and is the culmination of lots of hard work from five busy mums, my friends from the Friends of Roundhay Park, local businesses and my department.....I would like to thank everyone who worked so hard and everyone who gave money, goods, services or time to make this happen. I am also really pleased to see that the Roundhay Park playground is designed and built for children of all abilities, a truly integrated play area."*





The History Boards

The history time line, mounted on the railings directly opposite the animal badge boards, traces the history of the park from medieval hunting ground to the present time. We would like to thank FoRP member and local historian Helen Hodgart (who some of you may recall delivering fascinating history talks for FoRP), and Lynda Kitching for the help they gave Sara Dawson in developing the boards. Sara said, *“Our new timeline provides a fascinating insight into how the people of Leeds have enjoyed using the park over 200 years. We worked with local historians to gather images from various sources including Leeds Museums, Friends of Roundhay Park and Yorkshire Post Newspapers. We are so excited to finally reveal the history boards today.”*

Although the boards are aimed at children, there's plenty there for adults too, so pop into the playground and have a look.

Thanks to Sara, who as well as being a member of our Playground Appeal team is also FoRP's very first Publicity Secretary, there was excellent media coverage of both our December and January openings including Yorkshire Evening Post, Radio Leeds, Made in Leeds TV and BBC Look North and on social media. This spread the word far and wide and since 22nd December the playground has been

very busy each day. We've been delighted that despite the range and variety of equipment, it never seems too crowded even though the playground is no bigger than before.

Although the Lakeside playground is now finished you may have noticed, if you shop at the Co-op, that our Playground Appeal is one of the charities selected for their Community Fund for this year. We are still eligible for this funding and would ideally like to use the money to improve the Upper Playground which has been very heavily used for some years now and is in great need of care and attention.

We understand that work is likely to be carried out at some point in the Spring to reseed some of the grass areas in the Upper Playground which are badly worn and to extend the area of safe surfacing but nothing is planned regarding the equipment. The biggest piece of equipment at the Upper Playground is made of wood and we have been told that it is well worn and will only last another 18 months at most.

If you are a Co-op member, please choose our cause and tell your friends all about it. If you are not already a member you can join online at <https://www.coop.co.uk/membership/local-causes> Staff at the Co-op at the Street Lane filling station are also happy to provide any help you may need in joining.

Julia Wilson
The Roundhay Playground
Appeal Team.



The Animal Badges

Successful fundraising initiatives for the playground included local families donating £50 or £80 for a personalised animal badge to be displayed at the playground, and local businesses and groups donating over £250 for recognition on a board in the entrance to the playground.



(From left) Lexi Moffatt, Julia Wilson, Laura Webb, Sara Dawson and Petra Smith

Other generous supporters included Lakeside Cafe, Mr Whippy Leeds, Scott Pullen and Son Fairgrounds, Oakwood Solicitors, Winston Solicitors, OneWellness, Foot-Tech Academy, Adair Paxton, Manning Stainton, Roundhay Rotary Club and St James's Place Foundation

A quiz night was held at the Lakeside Cafe in June and the committee held a silent auction throughout July of gifts donated by local companies.

The playground team won a writing competition to describe their dream playground and were awarded £50,000 in match funding by the playground supplier Kompan. They were also successful in bids for money from the Veolia Environmental Trust (£30,000), People's Postcode Lottery (£20,000), and Wade's Charity (£5,000). The local ward councillors in Roundhay (£10,000) and FoRP itself, also made donations



Official opening with Richard Critchley, Cllr. Rafique, Kompan, the playground team, with sponsors present including Mr Whippy, Roundhay Rotary Club, Oakwood Solicitors, Lakeside Cafe, Foot Tech Academy, One Medical Group, Adair Paxton, Winston Solicitors, and Manning Stainton

A Knitted Roundhay Park

The editors would like to thank FoRP member Alison House for telling us about this unusual project, and for putting us in touch with Sandra Dennis of the Roundhay Knit 'n' Natter Group. Sandra has kindly provided the information about their project, and also the photographs.

Sandra Dennis set up the Roundhay Knit 'n' Natter group which has met twice a month in the Lakeside Cafe in Roundhay Park for over 6 years. (Their purpose should require no further explanation). During last year they were approached by Nick and Natasha Milton who are organisers of the 'Spring

groups involved in creating 'Knitted Leeds' got together to sew the pieces together on to a knitted background. The 'Knitted Leeds' creation will be unveiled to the public by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress at the Spring into Wool Show on April 13th 2019. The show runs on both Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th April. The Saturday event is ticket only entrance, but on Sunday people can pay at the door. Further information, and tickets for Saturday can be found through the website www.springintowool.co.uk.

In the meantime, while all this has been going on, the Roundhay Knit 'n' Natter group has been so successful, and has grown so much they have recently had to find a new home and now meet on the first and third Friday of the month at the Arium on Thorne Lane, under their new name 'North Leeds Knit 'n' Natter'.

It is lovely to hear of another highly original way to celebrate the beauty of Roundhay Park. Thank you to the Knit 'n' Natter group for all their work. We hope FoRP members will visit the show to see Roundhay Park in the Knitted Leeds exhibit, which we understand will be displayed at Fabrication on Albion Street for a few weeks after the show, and will eventually be kept on display at Armley Mills.



Part of the Knitted Leeds creation produced by the Roundhay group

into Wool Show' asking if the Roundhay Knit 'n' Natter group would like to take part in a major project aiming to create a piece of work called 'Knitted Leeds'. The final work would be about 7 feet long and would feature aspects of the whole city. The original idea was the brainchild of Nick and Natasha. The Spring into Wool Show is an annual event held at Leeds Grammar School each April.

The Roundhay group were very enthusiastic about the idea and got busy with their needles working on a panel depicting key features of Roundhay Park, while groups elsewhere were working on depictions of other parts of the city. The Roundhay Park designs were first pinned onto paper, and then in January all of the various knitting



A Spring Cleaning Party in the Park

FoRP's intrepid working parties continue their tireless work throughout the year, as the seasons change. Tom Cooper, their leader has provided this item on recent working party activities and all the photographs

As you know from previous newsletters, winter and early spring working parties usually involve lots of cleaning and tidying. The cleaning took several forms this year. We swept leaves from paths, and, where a path is adjacent to a slope, carefully scraped the mud that builds up. We have to be careful, as we need to remove as little of the path itself as possible. If we get too carried away, in time the surface of the path will be ruined. Most of the paths in this area were renovated for the millennium and so are nearly 20 years old. They must have seen the passage of thousands and thousands of feet.

The tidying involved digging out brambles and removing saplings of ash and sycamore from the edge of Upper Lake on two working parties. Some people worry that this destroys habitat, but it must be born in mind that the Upper Lake is a formal area. There are still large stretches of the park that receive minimal intervention.



On one very windy Saturday we worked on the landing stage of Upper Lake. We scraped out the grass and debris from the gaps between the boards, and cleared the area around it.



If you fancy joining our exciting adventures, e-mail me at (tomandcath@ntlworld.com). We meet 2nd Saturday and 4th Thursday of each month. We meet at the Carriage House behind the Roundhay Fox at 10.00am and are done by 1.00pm.

Tom Cooper

During most winters we usually spend at least one working party in Fox Wood. This is the wood to the left of the steps that run down to the arena from the main car park/skate park. I have to say however, that in all the times I have been working there I have never seen a fox, but that is its official name. This year we thinned yet more saplings of ash and sycamore that were growing in clusters in the wood.

One of our regulars spotted gaps in the hedge in Lidgett Park Road, opposite the allotments. As there are also beech saplings in Fox Wood we carefully dug out the smallest we could find, keeping as much soil as possible around the roots. We carefully transported these to Lidgett Park Road, and there they were planted in the gaps. Hopefully we moved plenty of the beneficial fungi and bacteria that have a symbiotic relationship with the beech trees. These will help the tiny saplings to thrive in their new location. You can judge for yourself whether the move has been successful. You should be able to see new leaf growth by now.

Our working party at the end of February went on to the island in Upper Lake to cut back more of the rhododendron. Ideally this should have happened in November, but painting the playground railings took priority. We are trying to make it obvious that this is an island and not something attached to the bank. As we had the services of a boat we also cut back many of the trees growing out of the wall in the vicinity.





Situations Vacant

Do you have a talent for raising money for a good cause? FoRP needs a Fund-Raising Co-ordinator to help us become more organised and effective in raising cash for projects which benefit the park. If you think you have the skills and are interested, please contact Carol Haughton, FoRP Secretary at secretary@forp.org

Are you a quantity surveyor or someone with similar skills? FoRP needs a volunteer to help with a small project (budget c£10,000) to improve the shelter at the end of the canal in Canal Gardens. Outline drawings have been prepared, but we need someone to help write specifications, schedules and a simple contract to put out to tender. If you think you can help, please contact David Binns at david.binns3@virginmedia.com

Events

Pub in the Park 31st May – 2nd June 2019. Tom Kerridge, Michelin starred chef, is bringing this major festival to Roundhay Park, with a team of chefs, pop-up pubs, a shopping village and lots of live music including Tom O'Dell, Basement Jaxx, Will Young, Toploader and many more. Information and tickets from www.pubintheparkuk.com/roundhay

Ed Sheeran at Roundhay Park Friday 16th and Saturday 17th August 2019. Further information available from www.roundhaypark.co.uk/ed-sheeran-roundhay-park.html

ITU World Triathlon Series – returns to Leeds for the fourth time on 8th and 9th of June 2019 with Roundhay Park's Waterloo Lake once again providing the swimming course. Further information from www.leeds.triathlon.org

Meetings

FoRP Trustees and Committee meeting – Wednesday 10th April 2019 at 7pm in the Education Room, the Mansion, Roundhay Park

FoRP AGM – Wednesday 5th June 2019 at 7pm in the Education Room, the Mansion, Roundhay Park

