

Winter 2018

The Newsletter

WINTER EDITION 2018



Updates - News - History - Activities - Working Parties - Nature

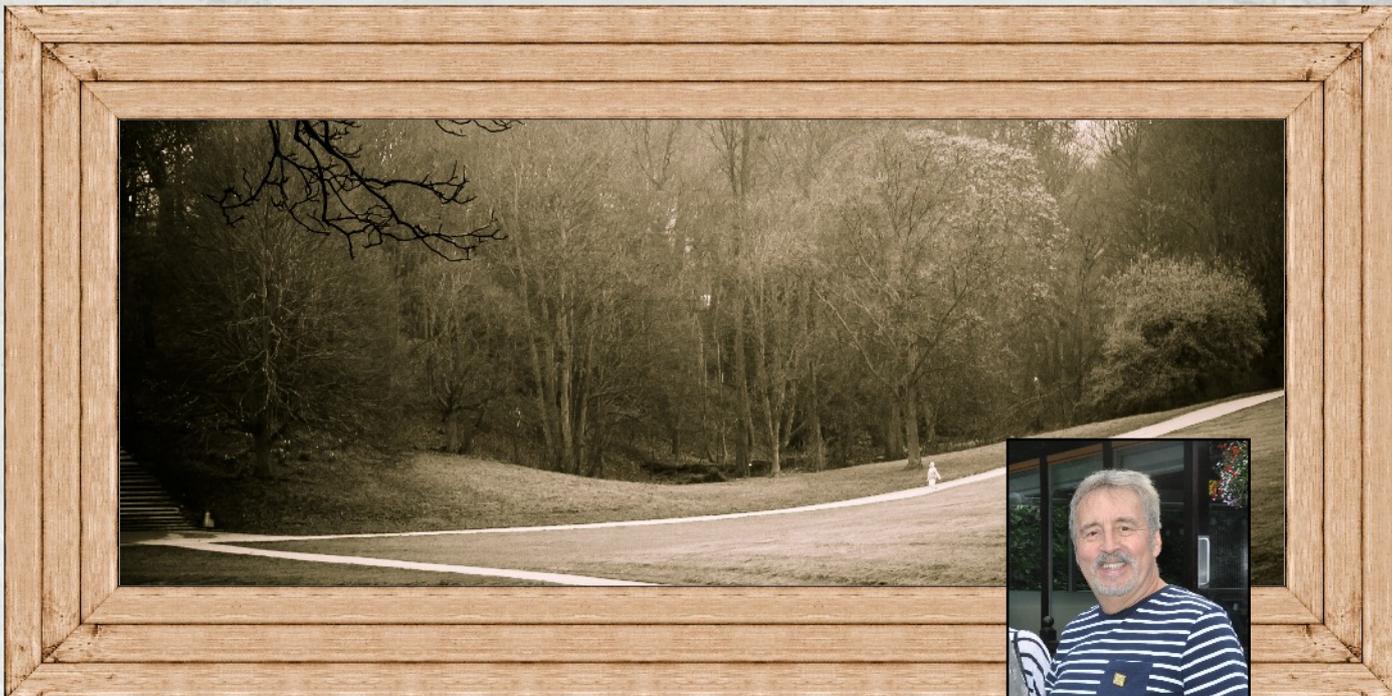
Award winning Friends Garden volunteers!

A New Playground for Christmas!

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Chair's Letter

2018 has been another successful year for the Friends of Roundhay Park. It is only when one sits down and reviews the year that you realise just how successful we have been.

However, there are always challenges, and unfortunately, at the start of the year, attempts to secure the leaks in the canal were unsuccessful. The good news is that work to improve drainage around Mary's Tree mainly solved the problems of flooding in that area.

In May we said farewell to two of our local councillors and long-time supporters, Christine Macniven and Ghulam Hussain. Also, councillor Lucinda Yeadon, who had been so helpful, stood down at the local elections. But we have met with our two new councillors, Jacob Goddard and Angela Wenham together with Eleanor Tunnicliffe and Mohammed Rafique, who has stepped into the vacancy created by Lucinda Yeadon, and together we have already secured a very supportive working relationship. We also have an excellent relationship with Kris Nenadic who was appointed Operations Manager. He is interested and approachable and we frequently walk the park together. Of course, the great summer caused its own problems maintaining the park. But as usual, the park staff managed the situation and kept the park looking good, throughout.

The changing rooms on Soldiers Fields, which were destroyed by an arson attack, have now been demolished and work is expected early next year to replace them. Work is also to be carried out to improve the drainage and surface of the footpath around Waterloo Lake.

But it is the supreme efforts of the FoRP volunteers who comprise the various working parties that deserve special recognition and praise. They give their time and physical efforts freely and cheerfully to maintain and make improvements to the park, in so many areas. One example that delighted us was that the work of the volunteers who maintain the Friends Garden was recognised by winning the highest Platinum award in the Yorkshire in Bloom Competition, despite the difficulties caused by the drought-hit summer.

And finally, the supreme achievement of the year is the building of the new children's playground by the lakeside car park. Work commenced immediately after bonfire night and the playground should be open in time for Christmas. The greatest credit must go to the 'playground team' whose fund raising was so successful and whose drive and efforts have resulted in such a great outcome. Thanks also to all the local businesses who made such generous financial contributions.

These are just some of our achievements this year, showing positive examples of what can be achieved when the council and community work together.

Finally, our thanks to you, the members of Friends. May I take this opportunity on behalf of the committee to wish you all a very happy, peaceful and joyous Christmas and a healthy, prosperous new year. We look forward to seeing you in the park in 2019.

Richard Critchley



In many previous issues we have featured fascinating historical items about Roundhay Park provided by Neville Hurworth. Once again we must thank Neville for these extracts from the Yorkshire Evening Post in 1941, with another eye witness account of the park in bygone days. This time our witness is someone directly connected to the Nicholson family, who tells us there was nearly a third lake in the park.....or was there?

With his eye for detail, Neville points out that the eye witness's memory might be hazy e.g. he could not have known 'the old gentleman' (Thomas Nicholson) as Thomas died years before the 'witness' was born. So, at best, the story of the third lake must be second hand -which goes to show you can't believe everything you read in the papers.....

Diary of a Yorkshireman - Nearly a third lake

A few days ago this column answered a reader's query about the artificial nature of the ruined castle in Roundhay Park. Mr Charles Mills, a man now nearing his 87th birthday, can not only recall much about the "castle" but that the Park might have had a third lake.

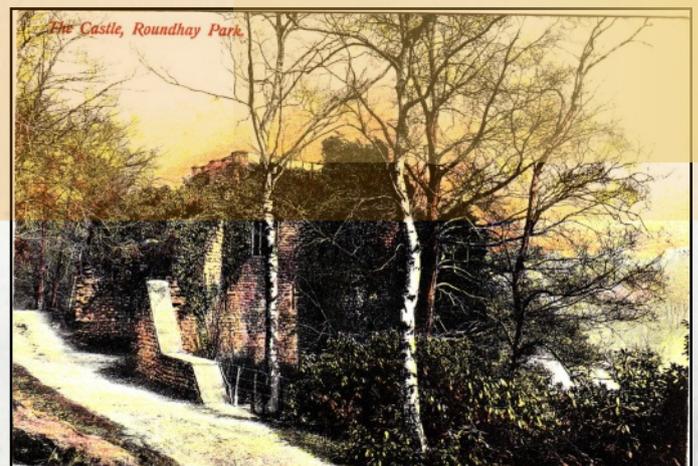
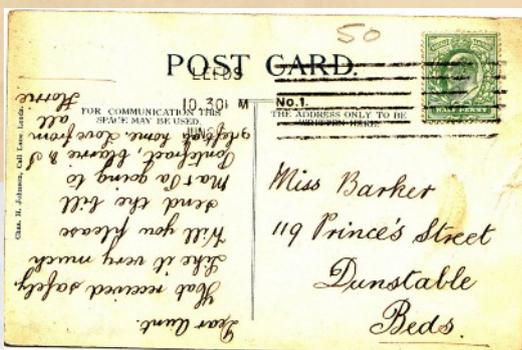
Mr Mills was the last footman to the Nicholsons, from whom the Leeds Corporation bought the park. His father had been butler. He moved with the family when they went to Torquay in the early 1870s and in 1885 he returned to Roundhay to act as ranger until he retired in 1924. He says that if "the old gentleman" had lived a third lake would surely have been made where the sports ground is and where the Tatos were staged. "Mr Nicholson always had that intention" Mr Mills says. "He used to say that he had made his money out of water (the Nicholsons were bankers and shippers), and that he was going to have water round him"

(Referring to the family life of the Nicholsons in Roundhay Park) Mr Mills says "When I was footman, there were Miss Fanny, Miss Lucy, Miss Gertrude and Miss Emily Nicholson there with the old people. They found it a wonderfully pleasant place. In those days there was a wooden roof

on the "old castle" and it had an upper room in which the Nicholson girls did their sewing. They would have tea served there, and from the windows they had as lovely a view as can be imagined.

Another beautiful little spot was "The Hermitage" near the Upper Lake. That was a summer house with stained glass windows on which were some verses, and there also the Nicholsons kept a small boat for use on the Upper Lake"

(More on the third lake can be found in Neville's essay in 'Oak Leaves' via the the Oakwood and District Historical web page - courtesy of Oakwood Church).



Our Yorkshireman gives us a mental picture of the old castle. For something visual, the editors would like to thank Gwyneth Spurr, who shared some of her postcard collection with us some time ago. This one shows the castle in a view partly obscured by trees. It is difficult to read the postmark, but the stamp looks like an Edward VII half penny, so it may be 1906. As ever the message provides a teasing glimpse into past life. Sent to a Miss Barker in Dunstable, the message reads "Dear Aunt, Hat received safely. Like it very much. Please send the bill. Ma and Pa going to Pontefract. Clarrie and I left at home. Love from all, Florie".

Congratulations to our award winning Friends Garden volunteers! Cecily Jarvis and Carol Haughton report on a great achievement and reward for years of hard work,

Platinum Award for the Friends Garden

"The conversion from the original derelict site to the Friends Garden we saw is an outstanding achievement". (YIB Judges)



Working party hero - Jon Vogler (centre) leading by example in early work on the Friends Garden (2004)

As reported in the summer newsletter, the Yorkshire in Bloom judging took place in July, and we are proud to report that the Friends Garden achieved a Platinum

proved by the lack of distress in a difficult year. The natural methods of pest control is proving successful with a natural balance having been achieved to maintain control. A cohesive and committed group of friends with a sense of direction and love both for the Friends Garden and Roundhay Park".

The Friends Garden is located at the end of Canal Gardens (Old Park Road end). It is a small woodland garden designed and built by the Friends of Roundhay Park on a site made available by Leeds Parks in 2001. With grant funding, construction was carried out entirely by FoRP volunteers with some help from The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. No commercial builders were employed. The garden was officially open in July 2005.

The Friends are currently developing an extension to the garden. This area includes our new bench purchased by FoRP in memory of member Jon Vogler BEM (1939 - 2017). Jon was an active member of FoRP, leading the working parties for many years. The bench is located in a pleasant sheltered corner and affords a panoramic view of both Canal Gardens and the Friends Garden.

The garden features in the 2019 edition of the Friends of Roundhay Park calendar, available from our website www.forp.org. All proceeds from the sale of the calendar will go towards protecting, preserving and improving the facilities and natural beauty of Roundhay Park for the enjoyment of all its users.

(Full results and judges' comments can be found at www.yorkshireinbloom.co.uk/results)



Judgement Day - July 10th FoRP volunteer, Judith Rothenberg with the judge

Award - the highest award in category C6 (Parks, Gardens, Cemeteries and Public Building). The aim of this category is to acknowledge the work that groups such as the Friends put into improving the local environment.

The award was collected at a presentation on September 11th at York Racecourse by FoRP working party members, Alison House, Judith Rothenberg and Secretary Carol Haughton.

The judges comments included the following:

"The conversion from the original derelict site to the Friends Garden we saw is an outstanding achievement. The plant selection is excellent as

Photos: Cecily Jarvis



Reward and recognition

There is no 'resting on laurels' for the Friends Garden volunteers. Having achieved the Yorkshire in Bloom Platinum Award, our valiant volunteers are back, hard at work keeping the garden beautiful all through the seasons. Our thanks go to Cecily Jarvis for this update.

Winter in Friends Garden

The last work of the year, putting the garden to bed for the winter, is now underway and as ever, a good turn out of regular Friends Gardeners has been hard at it. The first task is to clear fallen leaves, especially from the footpaths so that visitors can pass through safely. The hardest task is clearing the fallen leaves from the 'stone river'. Unless we keep this area clear, at the first good rainfall the leaves turn black and begin to decompose into a sludge, spoiling the visual effect and making a bed for weeds to establish.

A special thank you therefore to the Friends Gardeners who, (I don't think this is an exaggeration) made it a matter of principle at our latest session, to pick up every fallen leaf, leaving the stone river looking pristine..... for now!

Shrubs have been clipped, plants re-positioned, dying foliage cut back and the roses pruned ready for next year, then we'll let winter into the garden to "do its thing" for a few weeks.

Stonework in Friends Garden

Many of you will know the stones in Friends Garden carved some years ago by our greatly missed late Friend, Jon Vogler. One stone acknowledges those who supported and volunteered in the making of the garden which opened in 2005 whilst the other stone shows a short poem by Emily Dickinson. The 'poem stone' is now part of a treasure trail which can be downloaded from the internet and it was when we noticed people visiting the stone and ticking it off their list that we began to see it with new eyes.

Over the years the stones have weathered, and the poem stone in particular is now quite hard to read. With the agreement of Jon's family and FoRP members at the October Open Meeting, a firm of monumental masons has been instructed to remove the stones and re-engrave them. Although the engraving will be computer driven, the layout and fonts will be as the originals and should give the stones a new and longer lease of life. As yet we do not have a start date for the work, but it is hoped the revived stones will be back in place in the spring.

Cecily Jarvis



Where to start?



Nearly finished



Shadows on the poem stone



A New Playground for Christmas!

Writing in early December, Julia Wilson brings us this great news. What an achievement by the Playground Team!

By the time you read this, children will be exploring our brand new playground or will be doing so very shortly.

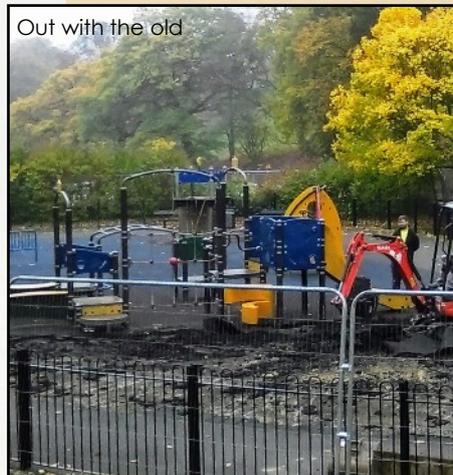
Hopefully (fingers crossed for no unforeseen circumstances!) 8.45 am on Saturday 22nd December will see the children of 5 lucky winning families, drawn from buyers of the children's badges, attending an exclusive preview play before the gates are opened to all at 9.15 am. Party bags, bunting and at least one friendly monster/cuddly character will be there to help the children celebrate. The more formal official opening with our sponsors is scheduled for 18th January. Don't forget to check our social media channels for the latest information and updates.

Since the launch of our appeal at the Oakwood Farmers Market in April 2018 there has been a whirlwind of activity. Summer flew by with approaches being made to local businesses for support, funding applications being made, the sale of the children's animal badges, the online auction, quiz night and BBQ at the Lakeside Cafe and lots of PR activity both online and in other media.

Having won a matched funding competition worth £50,000 from the playground supplier Kompan, we were also working behind the scenes with their design team on deciding what we ideally wanted our new playground to be like so that the order could be placed the minute we knew we could pay for it. That time finally came in early September when Roundhay Ward Members added £10,000 to our appeal and we also learnt that our bid for £30,000 from Veolia Environ-

mental Trust had been successful. With other contributions, we had raised sufficient funds, helped by the generous support of Peoples Post-code Lottery, Wades Charity, Lakeside Cafe, Mr Whippy Leeds, Scott Pullen and Son Fairgrounds, Oakwood Solicitors, Winston Solicitors, OneWellness, Foot-Tech Academy, Adair Paxton, Manning Stainton, Roundhay Rotary and St James Place Foundation.

As soon as the order for the playground was placed at the start of September, park staff and our FoRP working parties sprang into action to take advantage of continued good weather so that they could complete the painstaking task of painting the railings before work on the playground itself began. We are really grateful to them for doing this.



5th November saw the team from Kompan arrive on site, fence it off and begin stripping out the old equipment and rubber



Taking shape - almost finished



crumb surfacing. Their every move since then has been watched by eager children (and parents/grandparents) excited initially by all the wonderful diggers and construction vehicles and then by each piece of equipment as it has emerged from its packing and taken shape in the playground. We'd decided at the outset that we would keep the design of the playground as a surprise rather than sharing the plan. This has made people even more eager to pop down to see progress on site and look at pictures regularly posted on our social media channels.

Now it is complete you will see that the play equipment includes references to the history of the park – a boat (pirate ship rather than steam launch or rowing boat though!), a castle and train. These elements and many other aspects of the park's history are also covered in a child friendly history time line which will be revealed at our 18th January launch. The timeline, along with the animal badges, will capture the interest and imagination of children and parents alike.

Throughout the project there has been huge interest and very positive feedback from the public. The project has also, however, highlighted the poor state of the upper playground – but that's another story!

Don't miss our official launch event and ribbon cutting at the playground on Friday 18th January at 10 am.



The Playground Appeal Team - from left to right Julia Wilson, Laura Webb, Lexi Moffat, Petra Smith, Sara Dawsonand two future playground clients.

Photo taken when the team visited 'FastSigns' where the name signs have been produced. Look for these in the new playground.

Photos on pp 6,7 courtesy of Julia Wilson and Tony Quinn

Blackburn Aircraft Company Display

Regular readers of the newsletter will have seen previous articles about the remarkable history of the Blackburn Aircraft company which built aircraft at their factory on Roundhay Road and carried out flights from Soldiers Fields in the early years of the 20th century. In July 2017, FoRP hosted a special talk by Professor Robert Blackburn, the grandson of the company's founder, and Rowland Burley, the grandson of Rowland Ding

who was the chief test pilot for the Blackburn Aircraft company. Rowland Ding was tragically killed when his plane crashed as he attempted a second 'loop the loop' manoeuvre having taken off from Soldiers Fields in a flying display. 2017 marked the centenary of this tragic event. In February this year a model of a Blackburn Mercury monoplane went on public display suspended from the ceiling in the Tropical World cafe.



We are pleased to announce that the interpretation board for the model is now in place on the wall in the cafe. We are grateful to Carol Haughton and John Ferguson from FoRP, and Kris Nenadic (Operations Manager, Leeds Parks and Countryside) who produced the wording for the board, and to Daisy McMurdo (Tropical World Estate Officer) who arranged the framing and siting of the board and provided the photos.



Leeds and its birds

On September 29th, Linda Jenkinson of 'Start Birding' gave a talk organised through FoRP at the Education Centre. Linda described the best places in Leeds to see birds, including Roundhay Park, and proved that you do not have to be an expert to get huge pleasure from observing the birds around us. Linda arrived slightly late for the talk, but had the best possible excuse – rescuing a juvenile goldfinch!



Many thanks again to Dave Johnston for giving us another bird to look out for on winter walks in the park

A small bird with plenty of community spirit

Although there is little birdsong from our smaller birds from now until spring, you may hear sudden bursts of song for a minute or so, high up in trees near the Upper Lake, around the Mansion House, the Waterloo Lake café and along the gorge. A flock of up to 20 small birds may be seen, with characteristic long tails, quickly moving from branch to branch. These are long-tailed tits, a

resident bird of the UK and now seen in many gardens in Roundhay as well as in the Park.

They are around 13 to 16 cms long, of which 9 cms is the black tail, and weigh 7 to 10 grams. The black, white and pinkish colouration on the body distinguishes it from our six other UK tit species. Their numbers have increased by 79% over the last 25 years, mainly due to their colonisation of suburban areas. They feed mainly on insects, insect larvae and seeds, but in autumn and winter will take fat/suet/seed mixes from garden feeders.

They are easier to see in autumn and winter, as families of long-tailed tits congregate in parties of up to twenty (groups of fifty have been

recorded) in search of food. It seems that this behaviour increases their chance of finding food over these two seasons. The group moves from tree to tree or from garden to garden, constantly calling to keep the group together, and to indicate a good source of food. This often attracts other small birds, such as blue tits, great tits, goldcrests and treecreepers (all small birds, desperately looking for food to survive the winter).

The groups of long-tailed tits also stay together at night. They roost in thick vegetation, such as hawthorn bushes, and perch as close together as possible to conserve heat. They may even do this in holes in trees, or nest boxes. Like all our resident small birds, a long cold winter can be disastrous for them. Some areas of the UK may lose their long-tailed tits for 4 or 5 years after long cold spells.

The birds which survive, court and start nest building as early as February. The nest can take three weeks or more to build. It is dome shaped, fist sized and made mainly from moss, hair and cobwebs. It is covered with lichen for camouflage and lined with up to 1500 feathers. Six to eight eggs are laid, which take 18 days to hatch, and a further 18 days before the young leave the nest. During this time another interesting form of behaviour takes place. The parents are assisted by two or more other long-tailed tits, which help with feeding and protection of the nest. It is now thought that these helpers may be birds which have lost their own nest to predators such as stoats, grey squirrels, magpies etc. Some may also be immature youngsters born in the previous year.

If you see them close up, look carefully at the ring of skin around their eyes. The colour of these rings range from yellow to orangey pink to red, often in a matter of minutes. The final red colour may be due to increased blood flow to this area, due to excitement at finding food, to courtship, or to stress at the approach of a predator.

So keep your eyes and ears tuned in as you walk around the Park this winter and you should see a flock of these charming birds, together with other species, frantically looking for food in the branches above you.

Dave Johnston



FoRP's working parties have been hard at work through the autumn. Thanks to their leader, Tom Cooper for this update.

A colourful and sunny Party in the Park

Since the summer newsletter, many of the working parties have taken place under autumn colours and in bright sunshine. As well as finding time to admire the park in these conditions we have also got lots done.

We have been helped in our work by our old friends from the Roundhay Runners and some new ones from the Co-op.

Earlier this year I learned that what, in the past, I have called "water shoots" have a much more impressive name – epicormic shoots. These are the small twigs/branches that grow from the base of some trees and spoil the "avenue" look. Knowing the proper name encouraged me to include pruning these shoots in as many working parties as possible,

(and caused great amusement when I missed the "r" out of epicormic in one e-mail). It should be easy to spot where we have done this work

The autumn has been quite dry and this has given us an opportunity to cut back the saplings and brambles growing up the sides of the waterfall. We haven't finished the job yet but already it is beginning to look like its (very) old self. (Thanks to Kathy Johnston for spotting this picture dated 1893 in a

book called 'A Richer Dust' by Colin Gordon, Book Club Associates, 1978).

Bill Fraser, Roundhay's own geology expert, regularly takes groups of people around the park to show them its unique geological features. Who knew that the northern end of the West Yorkshire Coal field was under Waterloo Lake? He was worried that much of his time was spent clearing brambles out of the way, so that the features could be seen. As regular readers of the newsletter will know, clearing brambles and saplings from an area is one of our specialities. As a result of our endeavours, on his most recent walk, Bill was able to spend all his time talking about geology.



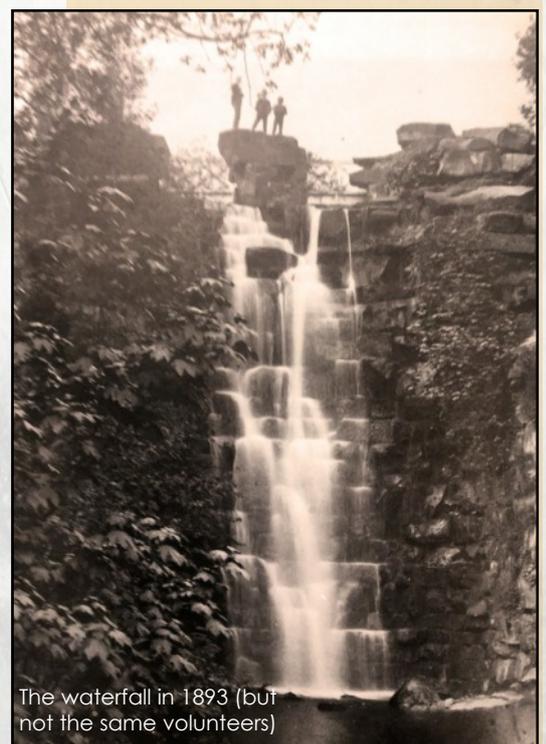
Cutting epicormic shoots



The waterfall in full flow



Mountain goats? No, FoRP volunteers working on the sides of the waterfall



The waterfall in 1893 (but not the same volunteers)



Site of the old quarry



Replanting ferns

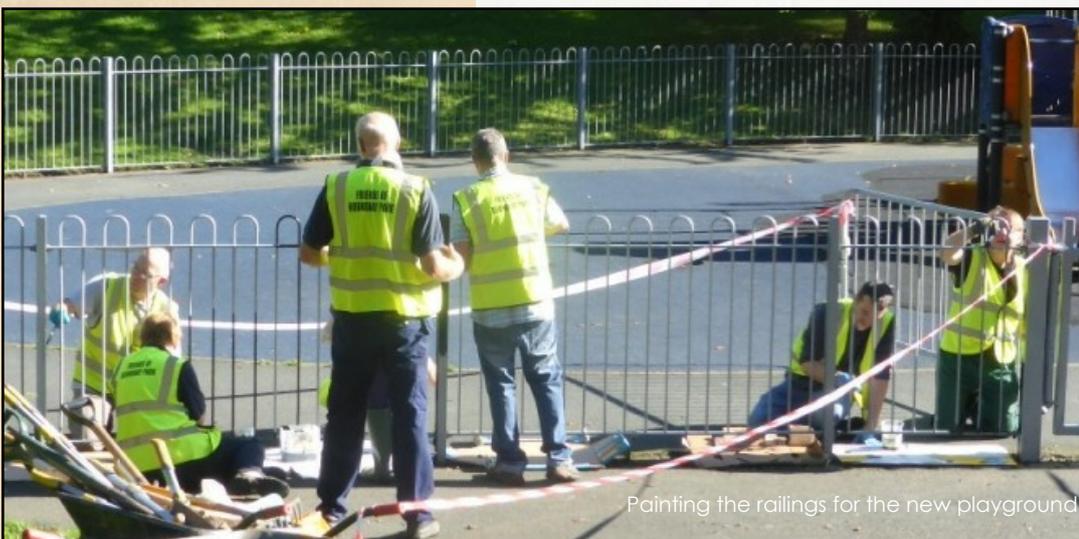
I finally got the team to remove some of the bracken which is spreading from bottom of Ram Wood, by the golf course. We have not removed all the bracken at this stage. Last year when we did a tidy up of that area we found lots of daffodils growing happily underneath it.



Getting in deep - cutting back saplings

We have not neglected our usual tasks of clearing streams and paths. To clear some of the saplings from the path along the edge of Upper Lake, Ian put on waders and got into the water, to reach those saplings landlubbers could not reach. There has been no new planting this autumn, in fact we have cut our losses on the newest "garden" and moved some of the ferns to extend the old Fernery.

Not content with all this we dedicated one regular session and one extra session to helping the park staff paint the railings round the playground. It was all hands on deck as we were working in October, well past the time when sane



Painting the railings for the new playground

people have given up trying to paint outside. We were lucky, the weather stayed fine and all the railings were primed then top coated before the playground was put out of bounds for the machinery to move in.

If you fancy joining our exciting adventures, e-mail me [at \(tomandcath@ntlworld.com\)](mailto:tomandcath@ntlworld.com). We meet on the 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

Notice Board

Easy Funding – is a way of raising donations when you shop online. It's simple to use and it's free. It was set up by Alan Jackson who used to edit our newsletter. Sadly, Alan died several years ago, but the account is still running and we have continued to receive payments. The most recent payment we received was for £222.67. We have 16 'supporters' at the moment. We don't know who you arebut thankyou! If we all used Easy Funding when we shop online we could raise far more. The website address is www.easyfundraising.org.uk. You just need to create an account and select 'Friends of Roundhay Park' as your cause.

Family Workshop and Walk – April 2019

FoRP has been contacted by Claire Garside from the Foundation for Digital Creativity (a not-for-profit organisation helping adults and children improve their digital skills). There are plans to run a morning workshop and walking activity in Roundhay Park for about 16 people starting from the Education Centre. The focus will be on environmental monitoring and air quality. Interesting and healthy!
For more information contact Claire at claire@digitalcreativity.foundation

In Memoriam: 'Mac' - The Working Party Mascot R.I.P.

For 10 years Mac ensured the regular attendance of his assistant, FoRP committee member John Ferguson, at working parties, group litter picks and many solo litter picking sessions in the park.

Mac liked to wander between the various working groups, probably checking that the work was of an acceptable standard. Although his own direct involvement was restricted to the occasional bout of digging, he was always around to assist with biscuit consumption during coffee breaks.

Sadly a few months ago he began to have trouble with his back legs and the problem progressed until he could barely get around his own garden, so Tom Cooper (working party leader) now has to check the quality of work on his own.



The Tree Trail – The Roundhay Park Tree Trail booklet is no longer available but there is a free 'app' available at <https://ticl.me/ticlapp> which you can download onto your mobile phone. Using this, you can select 'Roundhay Park' and the tree trail, with pictures of the trees and location maps. Full details about how to use the app will appear on the FoRP website. You can also find instructions on a board by the park entrance near the Roundhay Fox.

Next FoRP Open Meeting - Wednesday 13th February 2019, 7pm in the Education Centre, the Mansion

Next FoRP Trustees and Committee Meeting - Wednesday 10th April 2019, 7pm in the Education Centre

Happy Christmas to all our readers!

And don't forget your 2019 FoRP calendar - see www.forp.org

