

Continue up the hill and turn right into West Avenue. On your left is...

### 6 Soldiers' Field

From the field there are views across Leeds to Emley Moor T.V. Mast. In the early days of flying before the First World War flying exhibitions took place and Blackburn aircraft (manufactured on what is now the site of Tesco's Roundhay Road stores) were tested on Soldiers Field. During both the First and Second World Wars the Park was used for military-training. In 1977 the first free Leeds municipal 5th November bonfire and firework display proved to be a great success, and this continues to be held on this field.

When you reach the end of West Avenue turn left and walk along the top of the hill towards the children's playground

### 7 Hill 60

You are now standing at the top of Hill 60. Most people seem to think it is named after the famous World War One high point outside Ypres in Belgium, although considerable research through newspaper archives has failed to find any definite information as to how it got its name. An alternative suggestion is that it is 60 feet high.

Continue in the same direction past the playground and skate park to the car park

### 8 Tram Car Park

Because the Council adopted a typical Yorkshire money saving idea and reused the poles that supported the tram wires as lighting standards in the car park, most people assume that trams stopped here. In fact the original 1891 electric trams ran from Burmantofts only as far as Oakwood. When the major expansion of tram routes all over Leeds took place the extended route followed the same route as the number 12 and 2 buses take today going past the car park and along Street Lane.



As you walk along the top of Hill 60, looking to your right, at the bottom of the hill is the Arena

### 9 The Arena

Below you is the Arena which is used as a cricket pitch at weekends and as a cycle track on Monday evenings in summer. The Arena has been used for many purposes. The banking around it was crowded on Children's Day when it seemed that all the school children in Leeds assembled for a parade and mass gymnastic display, election of the Children's Day Queen and a wide variety of successful entertainments. Children's Day, an annual event in the thirties and forties, continued for forty-three years. The Arena and the playing fields beyond have been used for many popular events. The Military Tattoo was another regular attraction. The first Tattoo in 1926 attracted 120,000 visitors to the park. Princess Margaret attended the 1954 Tattoo. The last one was in 1965.



Cross the car park and turn right along the main road - Princes Avenue

### 10 Princes Avenue and Park Gates

Princes Avenue (correctly Prince's Avenue) was built in 1878 and named after Prince Arthur who performed the official opening of the Park in 1872. The magnificent gates and the paths to the Mansion were constructed about 1894.



Continue along Princes Avenue past the Roundhay Fox public house and turn right into Mansion Lane.



### 11 The Cottages

On the left hand side of Mansion Lane is a row of cottages. During the Nicholson's ownership of the estate these were largely occupied by estate workers, especially grooms, as the ground floor had stabling for horses. The stable doors are still there but are hidden by the high wall in front of the cottages.

### 12 The Carriage House

On your right is the Carriage House topped with a magnificent clocktower. Currently owned by the Council it is a Grade II listed building and is on the Buildings at Risk register.



To complete your tour continue along Mansion Lane to the Mansion for some well deserved refreshment

For more information about Roundhay Park we recommend An Illustrated History of Roundhay Park by Steven Burt which is available for purchase on the website of the Friends of Roundhay Park [www.forp.org/shop](http://www.forp.org/shop) The Oakwood and District Historical Society have published a number of articles about aspects of the park in their Oak Leaves magazine. Copies of the magazine are available in Oakwood, Chapel Allerton and Moortown libraries. © Friends of Roundhay Park May 2017



This leaflet has been produced by the Friends of Roundhay Park. For more information about the Friends and how to become a member visit our website [www.forp.org](http://www.forp.org)

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## ROUNDHAY PARK

# History TRAIL

The story of a much loved park





# ROUNDHAY PARK

# History

## TRAIL



Roundhay Park has been used exclusively for leisure for much of its history. It was part of the estates granted to Ilbert de Lacy by William the Conqueror in return for his loyal support, particularly in 1066 and in the harrying of the North in 1069. (The brutal crushing of the revolt by the northern Barons following William the Conqueror's victory in the Battle of Hastings in 1066.)

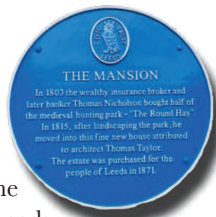
It is thought that members of the de Lacy family created the hunting park, which was surrounded by about six miles of perimeter bank and ditch topped with vertical pales of oak to keep the herds of deer and other wild animals in, the poachers and trespassers out. The deer park covered an area that today encompasses Roundhay, Moortown, Chapel Allerton, parts of Harehills and Oakwood. The perimeter is roughly a circle and as the Norman French word for a deer park is "Hey" the area became known as the Round Hey.

This Trail takes you on a pleasant walk around the park and points out some of the interesting features along the way.

Start at the Mansion (outside the Garden Cafe by the Blue Plaque)

### 1 The Mansion

Thomas Nicholson was born in Chapel Allerton in 1765. He is believed to have made his fortune in London before returning to Leeds to be near his family. The Mansion was designed by the architect Thomas Taylor, who also designed the Union Bank on Commercial Street where Nicholson was one of the owners, and also St John's church on Wetherby Road. The Mansion had 17 bedrooms on the first floor, including two water closets. On the ground floor were a library, dining room, drawing room, study and morning room plus kitchen, scullery, three larders, and storerooms.



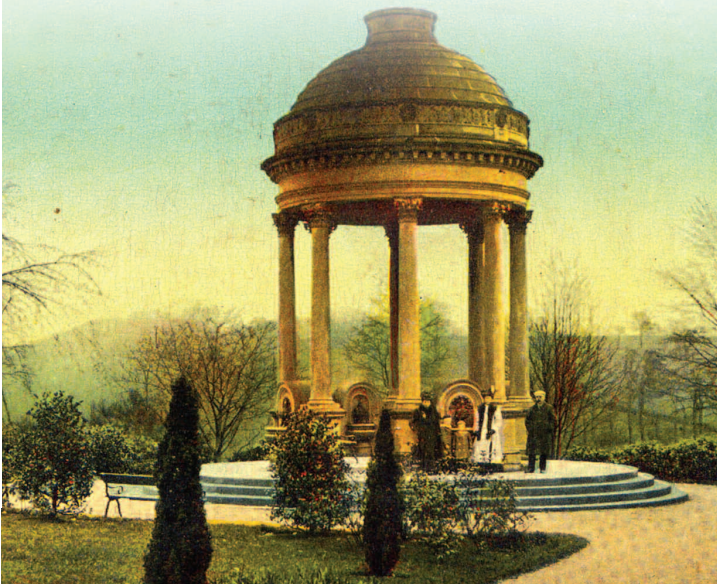
Go round the Mansion and go through the bollards down the Main Carriage Drive to Barran's Fountain

### 2 Barran's Fountain

John Barran was an important Leeds businessman and Mayor of Leeds, whose vision and determination provided this Park for our use, despite opposition, including some from his wealthy friends who had estates bordering the park.

The park was formally opened by Prince Arthur, Queen Victoria's third son, on 18th September 1872. Princes Avenue (or for pedants) Prince's Avenue commemorates this event. Unfortunately there were two problems regarding the use of the park by the townsfolk of Leeds. Firstly the difficulty of getting there, and the fact that there was no drinking water available in the park. John Barran commissioned Thomas Ambler to design this elegant drinking fountain which remains one of the most recognisable features of the park. It was fed directly from Eccup, which today does not seem significant but in the 1880s there was virtually nothing but open fields between Eccup and the park, so it was a major undertaking. While the fountain reminds us of John Barran's vision in purchasing the park for the citizens of Leeds it is appropriate to apply to John Barran the inscription on the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren in St Paul's Cathedral "If you seek his monument look around you"

Continue along the Carriage Drive to the Lakeside Cafe.



### 3 Waterloo Lake

As you walk look to your left for the view over Waterloo Lake. As part of Thomas Nicholson's estate landscaping, the valley bottom of Great Heads Beck was deepened and widened before the construction of a dam to form the lake. The work was undertaken by unemployed soldiers who had returned from the Napoleonic Wars. Hence the name.



### 4 Lakeside Cafe

The Lakeside Cafe offers a superb view over Waterloo Lake as well as excellent refreshment and toilet facilities. There is still a boathouse under the cafe. This is now used by private clubs. For many years there were rowing boats for hire from here, and a steam boat "The Maid of Athens" which took passengers on short trips round Waterloo Lake. This boat was replaced by "The Mary Gordon" named after the Lady Mayoress in 1899. The pleasure boats stopped in the 1930's and the rowing boats ceased to be used when the lake was emptied for the flood alleviation scheme in 1991. In the area now used as car park and children's playground were a former cafe - a long narrow wooden building - a maze, an aviary, and a commercial playground run by a Mr. Miller and his family who lived in caravans parked next to his amusements.



Walk up the hill "Park Avenue" towards Oakwood.

### 5 Parcmont

The large house on your right as you ascend the hill is Parcmont, possibly the first example of a "Show House". When the park was purchased, initially by John Barran who was then repaid by the Council, the plan was to recoup the cost by selling off building plots. Unfortunately the distance from town and the lack of public transport made sales very slow. In order to encourage others the Barran family constructed Parcmont for John Barran Jr. in 1883.

