



Foggy Day on Soldiers Field
Jeanne Hopley

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2014

FRIENDS OF ROUNDHAY PARK

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CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER DECEMBER 2014

Our illustrated lecture series, introduced 4 years ago by Lynda Kitching, has been a huge success, attracting average audiences of 50 (though we once had so many we had to turn people away because there simply wasn't enough space in the room). Over the 4 years we have been both entertained and educated on a great variety of subjects relating to the park and Roundhay generally. Thank you Lynda for all the hard work you have done – and I hope you will continue to do in the future.

The lecture given in September by Steve Dickie, Head Animal Keeper at Tropical World, came at a very fitting time as work was already under way on the second phase of improvements. Steve spoke with great passion about his work and made us realise what a key place Tropical World occupies in the zoo world with animals coming to Tropical World from far and wide whilst ours make the reverse journey. It has firmly established relationships with other zoos across the world, who greatly respect the work carried out there. We all came away feeling very fortunate to have such a place in our park – and such enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff running it.

By the time you read this, Tropical World will be closed to complete the work and although it's sad we won't be able to escape into its welcome heat during the coldest months, we very much look forward to an even better Tropical World opening in the Spring.

If you fancy another way of keeping warm (and keeping fit) during the cold winter months don't forget you are welcome to join our working parties led by the intrepid Jon Vogler. Among the many other tasks completed by our working parties this year is the autumn bulb planting, the fruits of which we will see in the spring. We also look forward to seeing how our beautiful new wildflower meadow will look in 2015, its second year.

It's encouraging to see so many FoRP members taking part in working parties and litter picking, and park users who happen to stumble upon them never fail to express their thanks and gratitude for the work we do. So if you want to share in the warm glow pop along and see for yourself.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Julia Wilson

IT'S OFFICIAL – ROUNDHAY PARK IS THE BEST!

In October we were thrilled to hear that Roundhay Park had been named 'Best Public Park' in the country by the Royal Horticultural Society in this year's Britain in Bloom awards. Congratulations to all the park staff and management. FoRP members can rightly feel proud of our own contribution to this achievement, and being part of the team that cares for the park we all love.



TREES OF ROUNDHAY PARK



Thanks to Cecily Jarvis for providing another example from the book on trees in Roundhay Park (available through news@forp.co.uk). In this issue we feature:

The Persian Ironwood (*Parrotia persica*)

A member of the witch hazel family, Persian Ironwood is a small, slow growing tree rarely reaching more than 15m in height. It might easily be mistaken for a shrub with its tangle of branches. It has wonderful autumn colour but most surprising of all are the dark red flowers which appear in mid to late winter on the bare twigs. The bark flakes, giving a mottled effect in greys and pinky-brown.

Persian Ironwood is a native of northern Iran and the Caucasus, introduced into Britain in 1841. The tree is named after Dr. Friedrich Wilhelm Parrot (1792-1841), a German naturalist who it is claimed was the first European to climb Mt. Ararat (borders of present day Turkey and Iran).

In Roundhay Park we are fortunate to boast 4 of these trees growing in a cluster in the lawns opposite the house on Mansion Lane called "Ramwood".

Cecily Jarvis

Persian Ironwood in October



Persian Ironwood flowers in January

Persian Ironwood bark in February



WATERFOWL OF ROUNDHAY PARK

A NEW INFORMATION BOARD

We are well aware that you won't be able to read much of the detail on this picture of the wonderful information board which is to be displayed in the park. It is, however, easy to see the quality of the drawings and to appreciate how useful it will be to all our visitors. It will probably be sited near the feeding area in front of the Lakeside Cafe. John Ferguson who has worked so hard to get this up and running has been informed that the board will be ready as the editors work on this newsletter, but he has to confirm with John Roebuck the actual site before it can be installed. Hopefully by the time you get this newsletter it will have been installed ready for the school holidays. Thanks John for all your hard work! Thanks also go to our Ward Councillors, headed by Christine Macniven who secured funding to support this valuable addition to the park.

MOV?

RUNNING FOR MOVEMBER IN ROUNDHAY PARK

On Saturday 22 November Roundhay Park provided the venue for the 'Leeds MoRun'. This was one of 14 such running events taking place across the country during the month of November as part of the worldwide annual Movember campaign. Movember began in Melbourne, Australia in 2003, and by 2014 over 20 countries, including the UK have been taking part, with over £346 million raised through charitable fund raising events such as the MoRuns. Focusing activity each year in November, men are encouraged to grow moustaches and the community to support them in order to raise awareness and funding for men's health issues, in particular prostate and testicular cancer, and mental health.

Runners of all ages and abilities took part, choosing either a 5km or 10km course around the park. Following heavy rain the night before, parts of the course were muddy, but the runners were undeterred with over 500 people taking part. Many magnificent moustaches were on display, including quite a few of the ladies (probably not real?), and many colourful costumes were worn to brighten up a misty November morning in such a worthy cause. Congratulations to all the participants and to the organisers. This was the second time Roundhay Park has hosted Leeds MoRun and the park provides a wonderful setting for the event.



Participants happy to have their photos taken for the newsletter



A very murky day!



NICHOLSON'S MODEL GALLEON

By Neville Hurworth

More Fascinating History of Roundhay Park

Once again the editors must thank Neville Hurworth for more fascinating historical insights into our wonderful park. Neville has already contributed several articles to previous newsletters, and we are lucky to be able to share his deep knowledge of the history of the park. Thank you, Neville!

I have spent a lot of time researching Thomas Nicholson, the founder of our modern Roundhay Park. In a decade or so, he made a fortune from insurance, and shipping, and later, in banking, but details of how he set out to make money on this scale is not clear to me. There are reports that an investment in a single trading ship may have been the beginning.

It was once said by an old retainer of the Nicholson family that Thomas created the lakes at Roundhay Park in celebration of the part water played in his financial success. If this were so, then it's perhaps not surprising that he is also reputed to have had a model ship made representing the beginning of his money-making ventures.

In 1919 Frederick Lincoln Armitage, a local plumber who was also something of a local historian, wrote a letter to the Yorkshire Weekly Post about a model ship that was then on the lake in Canal Gardens. Apparently, it was made entirely of wrought copper – 'the hull, masts, rigging, sails, ropes and ladders.' He wrote, it was 'a model of the ship which built up the Nicholson fortunes on the Spanish Main.' He went on to describe how, after Thomas Nicholson 'had made the Park, the lakes and built the Mansion, he had the model ship made to crown and complete his works, placing it over the clock tower as a weather vane.'

In time, it was taken down and it disappeared after a sale at the Mansion, possibly about the time of the death of William Nicholson Nicholson in 1868 and before the Park was taken over by Leeds Corporation. Many years later, in 1899, it was rediscovered in a Chapel Allerton plumber's shop by Mr Beilby, the Head Gardener at the Park who had been searching for it.

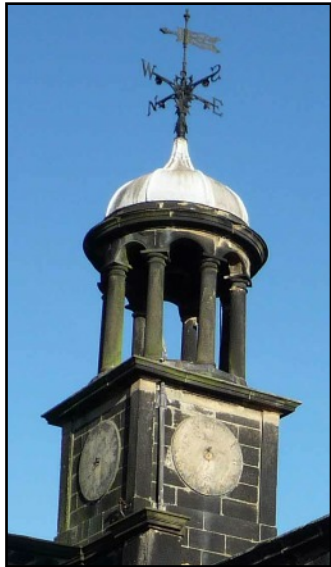
An account appeared in the Leeds Mercury that year, a letter to the editor by 'Veritas', confirming the model ship's existence, its

earlier loss and the recent rediscovery. Veritas and a friend were being shown round Canal Gardens by Mr Beilby and the model was in one of the plant houses. Veritas writes of the Nicholson connection and the copper construction of the model. He referred to several brass guns in the hold, which made him think the model was that of an East Indiaman carrying guns to protect against pirates. According to the Park Management Committee records, it was offered to them by the plumber, Mr Bedford, and they accepted it as a free gift. However, when they received a quotation of thirty pounds to repair the model and place it back onto the stable clock tower, they decided it was too much and they approached the Museum authorities to ask them to take it. The latter refused, saying it was not a suitable exhibit for their collections.

When Armitage was writing, years later in 1919, the model was on the water at Canal Gardens. He complained of the poor state it was in, which he blamed on boys throwing stones at it. He appealed to the Park Management Committee to have it repaired and 'placed in a glass case or otherwise cared for, and suitably inscribed.' According to later account it was removed from the water soon afterwards and the authors believed it was put into the Museum.

Several years ago, an approach was made to the Museum authorities by Carol Fenner, who was then the manageress of the Park Information Centre, to try to locate the Nicholson model galleon. She was hoping to place it in the new Information Centre, but she didn't succeed in finding it.

For years, Fredrick L Armitage lived over his plumber's shop on the Oakwood Parade which was built for him in



Weather Vane above the clock tower as it is now.



about 1900. Currently the building is occupied by the Tasty Café. Until a few months ago, before they were taken down by the owner, there were two rain water header tanks with his initials 'FLA' on one side of the frontage and '1900' on the other (see above).

Frederick Armitage had three sons all of whom survived WW1. I wonder if there is just a chance that a living member of this family might know what has happened to Nicholson's model galleon? As things are, it seems to have sunk without trace!



GOLD MEDAL GARDEN!

Congratulations to FoRP member Janet Wilkinson, who won the gold award for the best small garden in the Leeds in Bloom competition. Janet is also a regular in the FoRP working parties who all helped Roundhay Park win the RHS Best Public Park award. Janet tells her own story below:

I joined FoRP a few years ago as I wanted to get involved in the regular working parties where I get an opportunity to help to make Roundhay Park the wonderful place it is and enjoyed by so many people.

I have been interested in gardening for a number of years but as I have got older my interest in gardening has grown. My husband Stephen and I moved to our current house about 16 years ago and I was lucky that the previous owners had done a lot of work which meant that the garden was fully stocked and good hard landscaping was in place. Today only a few of the original plants still remain and those that have survived my cull have been moved, sometimes more than once and not always at the best time of the year. I was told that a Mahonia I had to move in July due to building work would never survive. However, 18 months on the Mahonia in its new position has been in full flower so I guess I must be doing something right.

I spend a lot of time in the summer visiting garden centres with Veronica my friend and neighbour whilst her husband is fishing and Stephen is watching his beloved Yorkshire County Cricket Club. It was during one of these trips to the Leeds Council nursery that I picked up a leaflet for Leeds in Bloom. I have never thought about entering any garden competitions although my garden is always admired by friends and family along with passers by. So buoyed on by Stephen, Veronica and a few glasses of wine I decided it might be a good idea to enter.

I should mention the contributions made by other members of my household. Stephen could never be described as a gardener,



Janet and Stephen's beautiful garden

too busy watching cricket, but over the years his interest in the lawn has grown to the point where he has become a little obsessive. I have even had to threaten to hide the rake on a number of occasions! I also have a cat called Spike who does his bit as chief fertiliser!

In September I got a letter from Leeds council to say that my garden had been chosen for an award and I was invited to an awards ceremony at the town hall on 1 October. I felt quite apprehensive on the evening wondering whether in fact there had been a mistake and I would come away empty handed. As the evening progressed we got to the awards for the council ward where I live, the bronze medal winners were announced, then the silver and nothing for me. Then to my complete surprise and delight my name was announced as the gold winner for the best small garden and overall winner for my council ward.

Whilst being very proud of my own personal achievement I was absolutely thrilled when I found out that Roundhay Park had also received a gold award. I know there is a lot to live up to next year but with or without awards I am just looking forward to another year in my garden and helping out at Roundhay Park.

Janet Wilkinson



Proudly showing her gold medal. Well done, Janet

NATIONAL TREE WEEK - GUIDED WALK

Very recently (in the week commencing 1st December) we will all have received an email from our secretary telling us that not only was Christmas coming, but it was also National Tree Week!

As part of this, Robert Driver (who is an Education Officer based at Temple Newsam) arranged a walk in Roundhay Park to look at the different species of British trees in the park.

The guided walk was free and took place on Wednesday, 3 December 2014. The meeting place was outside Tropical World, with the walking party departing soon after 10.00am, returning about 1.00pm. There was no need to book and the walk was for all members of the public. Robert and his colleagues also run bat walks as well as informative walks and talks on the bird life in the various parks in Leeds. When we arrived it was pleasing to see a number of FoRP members as well as some new faces. It was a really bright sunny day, but bitterly cold. Stopping to look at a particular tree in the shade was not quite the pleasure it might have been, and I soon began to wish I had worn a hat and bought my thicker gloves with me. However, Robert was so well informed the time soon passed by and I realised I should have taken notes if I was going to report on the event!

Suffice to say the park is full of an amazing range of British trees but we also took time out to look at some of the birds that also live in the park. We spent quite a few minutes watching a tree creeper climbing upwards by clinging to tree trunks. Our guides were rather good at identifying birds by their call and we were supplied with binoculars to try and pick the birds out.

Having spent quite a few hours raking up leaves in my small garden on the edge of the park I have wondered why the sycamore tree leaves were covered in large black spots. Robert knew all about this. I understand now that the presence of the spots is not due to a disease, but indicates clean air!

Apparently it has not been a good year for conkers, but there are masses of beech nuts! If I heard correctly, an old wives' tale suggests this means we will have a hard winter! On an earlier walk I had noticed some young men from Eastern Europe collecting the beech nuts. I did not feel brave enough to ask them what they did with them but I understand they can be eaten or used to extract oil.

Carol Stagg



Robert Driver leading the walk



Plenty of berries on the holly bushes



Spot the FoRP members.

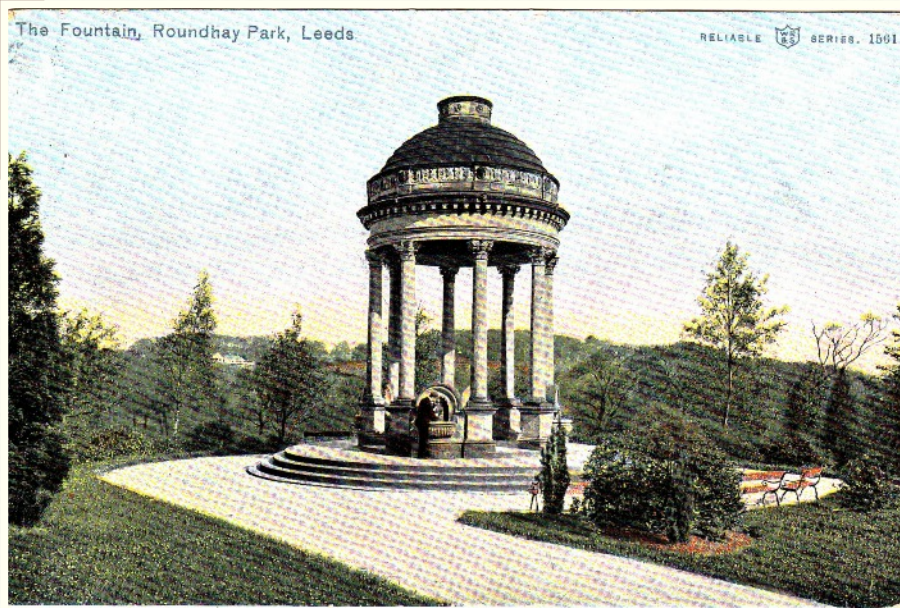


A Bleeding Canker - a common canker of horse chestnut trees



Spot the little metal markers when you next visit the park. This means the park staff are keeping an eye on the particular tree.

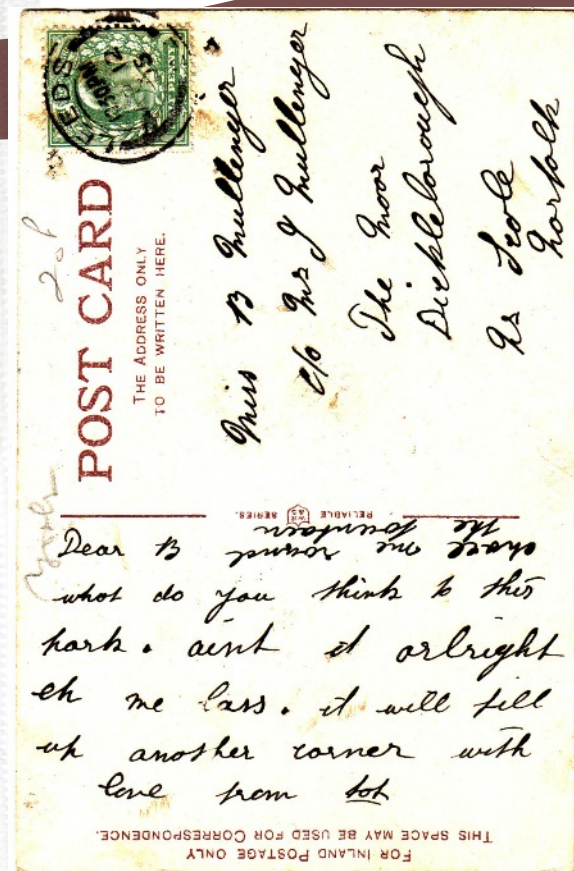
POSTCARD FROM THE PARK



Our thanks once again go to Gwyneth Spurr for this card from her collection. Is there just a hint of romance in this slightly cheeky message from ? (name not clear) to a Miss B Mullinger, c/o Mrs J Mullinger, The Moor, Nr ?, Norfolk. The card carries an Edward VII halfpenny stamp and is dated April 12, 1905. It reads:

Dear B. What do you think to this park? Ain't it alright, eh me lass. It will fill up another corner. Love ? (Tom?)
(And, written upside down at the top of the message)...*Chase me round the fountain.*

Intriguing, but very respectful since the card was sent c/o Miss B's mother. Or perhaps there is some other story behind this little piece of personal history.



DIARY OF A SCHOOLBOY

The editors thank Michele Jackson for supplying some extracts from a 1918 diary written by a 17 year old Leeds schoolboy, containing some references to Roundhay Park. This provides brief glimpses into a young life with friends and fun, but touched by wider events. The year began with a severe cold spell of weather, and links us to previous newsletter items on skating in the park.

January 14 – Went skating with N & G. Ice in fine condition. Upper lake. Fine fun

January 16 – School. Went sleighing in Roundhay Park with N

By mid February, the snow must have cleared.

February 17 – Played footer in park. Read Barnaby Rudge, and did some history

March 6 – House match. Blue v Brown. We won 2-0. Scored 1, and N scored the other from my corner. Rather slow game....

November 11 – Went up to field for a game. Won 3-0.....Joined Headingley Victoria Football Club. Went for rents. Dad worse. Armistice signed

Clearly, this young man was keen on football, and possibly future football management, judging by his concise analysis of the team's performance in the following entry. Refreshingly, there are no complaints about the referee! And was Christmas a low key affair?

December 4 – Stayed at home to do errands. Went to fields. Senior house match v Greens. Draw 1-1. A fast, hard game. Poor combination. Good play by a few (O, C, D, I) neutralised by poor play by rest of team.

December 25 – Went to GPO for wages (19/-) Walked round Roundhay Park with W. Went to L for tea

ROUNDHAY & OAKWOOD FESTIVAL



FIRST ROUNDHAY AND OAKWOOD FESTIVAL -A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

This event was organised by the Oakwood Traders and Residents Association (OTRA). Alexis Keech took the lead in the huge task of organising a wide range of events, and the editors are grateful to Alexis for providing this account of what went on in the area around the park.

The first ever Roundhay and Oakwood Festival was held across Roundhay over the October half term and successfully provided a wide range of activities from local companies, artists, literature, poetry, comedy and kids' activities with craft making taster sessions.

Roundhay artists exhibited their work at the Stew and Oyster, Preston bar and the Oakwood Library and local residents could learn how to make bunting for Christmas, Japanese calligraphy and felt making. Oakwood and District Historical Society gave a very interesting talk on the history of Oakwood and the Oakwood Clock refurbishment scheme as well as data collection for nostalgia and heritage across the area.

Local writers, Frances Brody, Chris Nickson, Peter Mills and Rob Endeacott gave interesting talks on their books and writing as well the local comedian, Silky holding court at Jackrabbits Pottery whilst the audience munched on pizza from Ricos.

Aardman films kindly provided little seen cartoons and skits for kids and adults alike to enjoy whilst the Roundhay Environmental Action Project (REAP) hosted a film about climate change.

Clandestine Cake Club sneaked into the Stew and Oyster with their products for cake lovers to indulge in and have a natter. The Lidgett Park Methodist Drama Group entertained the audience with a murder mystery play. The Firm of Poets entertained the Sunday audience with comic poems.

Halloween was kicked off by decorating Halloween signs at Jackrabbits Pottery, and scary little ghouls had their faces painted, and they also decorated pumpkins at the Stew and Oyster. The Chapel Allerton Runners ran the Halloween run around Roundhay. Mrs Gales on Street Lane played host to a Halloween themed Knit and Natter.

It is hoped that there is a passion for another Roundhay and Oakwood Festival to be held next year. If you would like to run an event, help to organise the festival or have some ideas on things you would like to see, please drop OTRA a line with your ideas.

Alexis Keech



Lots of people post wonderful photos as well as short comments to our Facebook page. The editors could not resist posting this wonderful photo taken by Steven Dennis Parker. If you are on Facebook take a look at Steven's page where you will find many more wonderful photos. There are some particularly amazing photos of fungi also.

DO make use of the Facebook site as it will always be more up to date than our newsletters and emails and everyone is able to contribute.

Tropical World

UPDATE

Exciting things are happening during the next few months. The third phase of improvements is underway and will make a trip to Leeds most visited family attraction even better.



The Aquarium area is being refurbished. The council are installing state-of-the art fish tanks that will bring you even closer to nature.

They are putting in a brand new eco-friendly heating system that will make Tropical World greener and fuel efficient. Currently, if you look up, you will see that our heating system takes up a lot of room. The new system will open up the roof space so you will be able to see a whole lot more.

If you visit the area over the next few months you will see that there is a lot of building activity going on around the outside of Tropical World.. This is where they are building new a new conservatory-style extension to the Explorers Cafe with more space and seating to enjoy. They are also building a modern, family-friendly toilet block.

To help the council achieve these improvements they will be closing from December 12th. They will reopen early in 2015 with an even better experience for everyone.

You can keep up to date with all the changes by following the developments on Twitter and Facebook. Keep an eye open on YouTube for films about Tropical World!

Here is a web address for the council's electronic version of 'Out & About':

<http://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Final%20out%20and%20about%202014-15.pdf>. This booklet covers activities and events provided by the council for the next few months. Here are some examples of activities in Roundhay Park. The booklet also covers all the other council owned spaces in Leeds. Thanks to Emma Trickett for reminding us about this useful booklet.

Sunday 25 January 2015 Big Garden Birdwatch

10 am - 12 noon Take part in the National Big Garden Birdwatch. Learn to identify garden birds and how to make your garden more bird and wildlife friendly! Meeting place: Outside Tropical Word

Contact: Robert Driver on 0113 336 7553 or robert.driver@leeds.gov.uk

Monday 9 February 2015 Winter Tree Observations

1 pm - 3.30 pm Do you want to get to know the trees that live near you a little better? Join us to take a walk around Roundhay Park and learn how to identify native trees and shrubs by looking at the bark, buds and twigs. Children must be

accompanied by an adult. Meeting place: Lakeside Cafe

Contact: Kate Whitehead on 01484 868405 or kate.whitehead@rspb.org.uk or visit www.rspb.org.uk/events

Wednesday 18 February 2015 National Nest Box Week

10 am - 1 pm National Nestbox Week: Design a nest box for one of the birds at tropical World! Draw a plan for a practical nest box that can be used in the collection - will you design a Hornbill Hotel, Finch Flat or a Turaco Tower?

Meeting place: Workshop marquee, outside Tropical Word

Contact: Robert Driver on 0113 336 7553 or robert.driver@leeds.gov.uk

Saturday 14 March 2015 Meerkat March!

10 am - 3 pm The new meerkat pups should be emerging from their underground nest in early March. Celebrate the new arrivals by making meerkat masks and looking at meerkat-like animals we have in Britain!

Meeting place: Workshop marquee, outside Tropical Word

Contact: Robert Driver on 0113 336 7553 or robert.driver@leeds.gov.uk

NOTICEBOARD

Oakwood Clock – work on restoring the clock should commence early in the new year. The clock and tower will be removed from the site to a specialist workshop for repair. While the clock is away, work will continue on the surrounding area, aiming to complete the whole scheme by the summer of 2015. OTRA still need to raise more funds to support this work. You can find out how to contribute by visiting their website at www.loveoakwood.co.uk. For example, for £100 you can have your own pavoire (paving stone) engraved with a brief inscription of your choice – a lasting contribution to the improvement of the area.

Tropical World – a reminder that Tropical World will be closed from 12 December for 8 weeks (planned) for improvement works. Members should check before visiting as these dates may change.

A Plea (Tropical World) – One of the privileges of FoRP membership is free access to Tropical World, but only with a current membership card. Please note that each membership card admits one member only. If you are visiting Tropical World with family or friends, please ensure that all members bring their cards with them, as Tropical World staff will not be able to allow free access to anyone without a membership card. Thank you.

NSPCC Roundhay District Quiz – Saturday 17 January 2015, St Edmund's Church Hall, Lidgett Park Road, starting at 7.30. Tickets £12, including fish and chip supper, and a £5 donation to NSPCC, with a pay bar and raffle. Always a good night, perhaps FoRP should make up a table? (up to 8 people).

FoRP Talks – dates have been set for the first two FoRP talks of 2015:

Tuesday 20 January – subject to be confirmed

Tuesday 17 March – Photos of Roundhay Park – past to present

The talks will, as usual, be held in the Education Centre at the Mansion, commencing at 7.00pm. Further details are to be confirmed, and will be sent out prior to the events.

Working Parties - The working parties, led by Jon Vogler continue their excellent work around the Park, always seeking to improve the environment, plant life and habitats within it. The working parties operate on the second Saturday and fourth Thursday of every month, meeting at 10am at the Mansion car park. Just wear your best gardening clothes. Tools and guidance are provided. At the FoRP Trustees and Committee meeting on 8 October, John Vogler reported that numbers of participants in working parties had been reducing. New volunteers are always welcome, and are much needed – especially the under 65s! For more information, contact Jon Vogler at jon@vogler.demon.co.uk or 0113 266 1885.

Tennis Courts – We were informed in late September that the funding had been secured from the Lawn Tennis Association to allow the painting of the refurbished tennis courts to be completed. At present only some of the courts have been painted. We await suitable conditions for the painting to be completed - Something to watch out for!

No Calendar Competition in 2015 – There will be no calendar competition in 2015, but members are still encouraged to send in their best photos of our wonderful park.

Friends of Roundhay Park 2015 Calendar still available . Excellent Christmas presents.

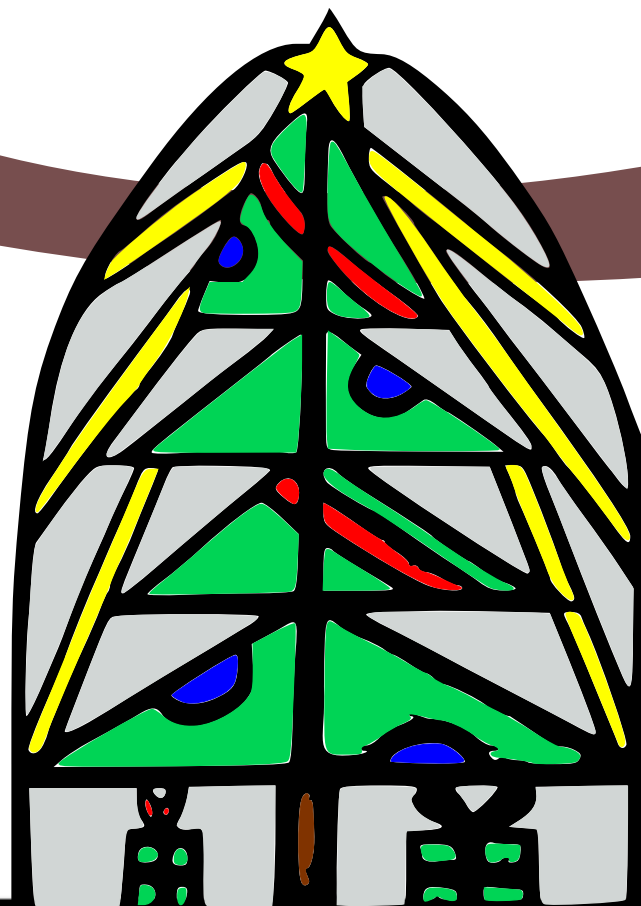
There are still copies of the calendar available for purchase at £6.99. The calendars is stocked by City Stationers, Timoney's and "With Love" (all at Oakwood), Philip Howard Bookshop (Street Lane) and Headrow Galleries (Harrogate Road, Alwoodley). We shall also be at The Farmers' Market on Saturday, 20th December OR

You can order direct from FoRP – Cheques should be made payable to FoRP and sent to FoRP, PO Box 129, Leeds LS8 1WY

If you have any queries, please email news@forp.co.uk or ring David Binns on 0113-293-2893



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS



Space needed for
Address labels

A REMINDER

Your contributions

This is your newsletter so we always welcome your articles of up to 800 words accompanied by photographs wherever possible. Copy due date for the next publication 1st March 2015.

We also welcome your bite sized items. Please send contributions to editor@forp.co.uk

Please note that photographs are normally reproduced here with the permission of those concerned. However, on some occasions photographs are taken from FoRP archives of previous events.