

Carriage House
update

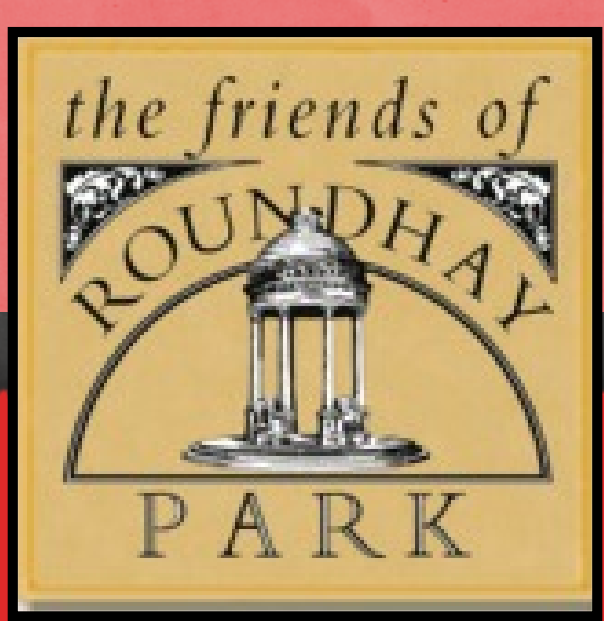
The Newsletter

Friends of Roundhay Park

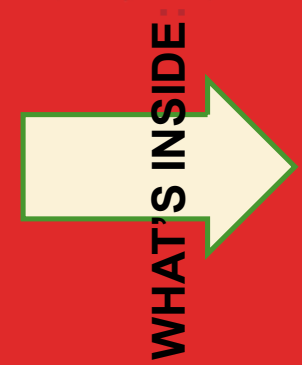
Winter
December 2015



PRESIDENT: MARJORIE ZIFF MBE CHAIRPERSON: JULIA WILSON



www.forp.org



PARK
NEWS

TEAM
NEWS

EVENTS

Changes ahead for FoRP - Julia has decided to stand down from next summer.



NEW CHAIRPERSON FOR FoRP PLANNED

If you were at our AGM in June or read the minutes, you will know that at our next AGM (June 2016) I will be stepping down as chairperson of FoRP after 6 years. I am delighted that Richard Critchley, a relatively new member, will be taking my place. We have already been working together so the transition will be very smooth and Richard will have the advantage of already having met key people and knowing about various FoRP issues by the time I step down – an advantage I didn't have when I took the role.

When I became chairperson I wasn't even a member and knew very little about FoRP, so it was something of a baptism of fire. At the time, FoRP had been chairless for some time and David Binns, our wonderful secretary, was doing both jobs. I had just retired and so my neighbour Alan Jackson, who was then editor of our newsletter (and one of the world's best salesmen, as those of you who

knew him will testify!) somehow managed to persuade me, and other people, that I was right for the role and so it all began. As an aside I should point out that Alan was also responsible for persuading our current newsletter editors to take on the role from him!

I have really enjoyed my time with FoRP and will miss being so heavily committed but I am of the firm belief that successful organisations thrive on change and bringing in new people with fresh ideas.

One of the first things I did on becoming chair was to hold a one day workshop with key people in FoRP to get an understanding of the dynamics of the organisation and the issues involved. Our very first action plan came out of this and is used to form the agenda for each of our meetings, to make sure we don't run off track.

The action plan has been revised each year (except 2014) with our last review, attended by 26 of the most active members of FoRP (including Richard) taking place in October. We spent a full day at the Mansion thrashing through ideas and as well as revising our action plan, we came up with a list of serious/big topics to be raised with park management, and a list of things achieved since the previous action plan review. The achievement that particularly stands out for me is that FoRP volunteers have spent 2,497 hours in the last 12 months doing hands on work in the park (working parties, Friends Garden, litter picking etc). And this doesn't include all the many hours of administration work involved with FoRP! Well done everyone!

Wishing you a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.

Julia Wilson
Chairperson.

TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF TROPICAL WORLD

Tropical World will be closed for two weeks for essential maintenance work from February 22nd to March 6th 2016.

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INTRODUCING OUR NEXT CHAIRPERSON— RICHARD CRITCHLEY



Following the next FoRP Annual General Meeting (2016) Julia Wilson will be stepping down after giving six years of great service to FoRP as our chairperson. We are delighted to be able to inform members that Richard Critchley has agreed to take on the role of chair following on from Julia.

Richard was born in Birmingham but brought up in Pudsey. On leaving school at eighteen he joined a firm of accountants but was released from articles two years later to allow him to join the West Yorkshire Police where he served in Huddersfield, Pudsey, Leeds and Bradford. Then, for the second half of his career, Richard was elected as leader of the Police Federation in West Yorkshire, representing all officers of the ranks of constable, sergeant, inspector and chief inspector. This gave him the opportunity to develop a wide variety of skills and experiences.

Richard retired from the police in 2002 and was immediately recruited by a large national insurance brokers in Liverpool in the capacity of public relations

consultant, dealing with clients, promoting business opportunities and influencing advertising initiatives until his retirement in 2012.

Since retiring from the police, Richard has also been an active member of the National Association of Retired Police Officers as secretary of the Wakefield branch, chairman of the West Yorkshire group and, since retiring from paid employment, he has been elected a member of the National Executive Committee.

Richard says:

“In 2006, I moved back to Leeds from Boston Spa and was really fortunate to be able to live in ‘the Park’. My interest in the park has grown and I recognise that although Leeds has many jewels in its crown, Roundhay Park is by far the largest and most used not only by its populace but also by visitors from further afield. As we all know, we are in difficult times financially and budgets for the upkeep of the park have taken a knock. It is very much to the credit of the park staff that they still manage the upkeep of one of the largest

municipal parks in Europe to such a high standard with ever fewer numbers.

But it is also extremely fortunate that ‘The Friends of Roundhay Park’ exists and that it has so many active volunteers who regularly give of their time not only to help maintain but also to develop many of the park’s assets.

It is a great honour and responsibility to have been elected as the next chair of FoRP and I do not underestimate the challenge of trying to maintain the high standards set by Julia Wilson who has led the ‘Friends’ with fortitude for the last six years.

I relish the challenge and, with the help of the excellent members of the committee, I hope to bring what skills and attributes I might still retain in order to develop and expand membership, reaching out especially to younger potential members, to make sure that FoRP will continue and flourish, ensuring that ‘the Park’, in all its glory, is retained and maintained for current and future generations”.

LAKESIDE PATHS – LEAVE YOUR OWN FOOTPRINT?

Many FoRP members take regular walks around Waterloo Lake and the Upper Lake, and so do many thousands of other visitors to Roundhay Park. The paths around the lakes, however, are in a sorry state, especially around Waterloo Lake. During the winter months significant stretches turn to a sea of mud and unavoidable puddles, and it is getting worse with each passing year. It is not a good advert for our park, and it is depressing to see people trying to negotiate the paths with buggies or prams, or wearing their brand new white trainers. Patchwork repairs have been carried out from time to time, but the time has surely come to look for a comprehensive, lasting improvement.

FoRP is indebted once again to Jon Vogler, who has carried out a detailed survey of the path around Waterloo Lake, drawing in expert advice. The resulting report estimates a cost of almost £200K to produce a durable path all the way round the lake. This seems a daunting amount of money, but the FoRP committee is

developing a proposal to tackle the problem. With so many people enjoying the walk around the lake, how many might like to leave a permanent 'footprint' in the form of a donation which would buy a stone carrying their name – a way of saying thank you for all the hours of pleasure the park has provided? The committee is still discussing this idea, possibly beginning with a trial stretch of path (50 or 100 metres?) to see if the idea attracts enough donors.

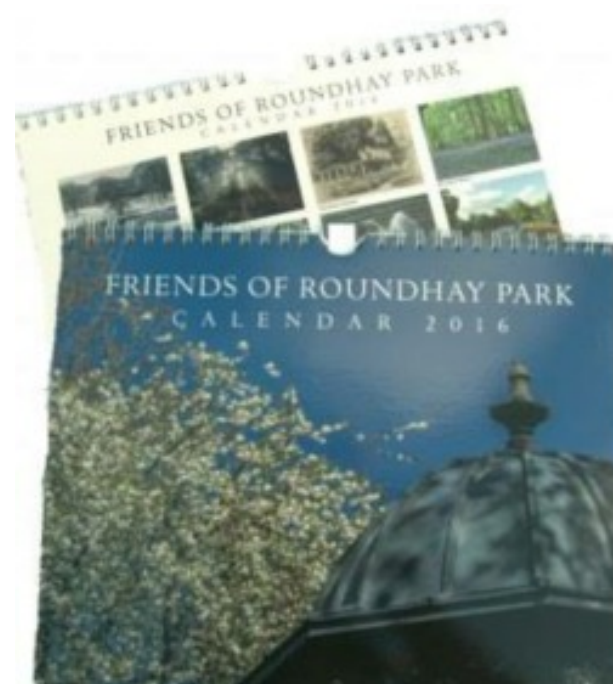
What do FoRP members think of this idea? Please let us know. If you had your own stone, would you tell all your friends? Would everyone want one? How much would you pay? Keep watch on the FoRP website www.forp.org and in future newsletters for further information.



The editors take their regular walk round Waterloo Lake, Stout footwear needed!

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE BOUGHT A CALENDAR

Our calendar is an important source of income for us and helps to support the work we carry out in the park. The beautiful 2016 calendar is still available for you to buy either online at www.forp.org or through one of our high street retailers. These include City Stationers, With Love (Oakwood Parade), Lakeside Cafe, Headrow Galleries (Harrogate Rd Alwoodley), Dine at the Mansion, Philip Howard bookshop (Street Lane), Tropical World shop.



ON THE TREE TRAIL - THE GRAND FIR OR GIANT FIR (*ABIES GRANDIS*)

Our thanks go to Cecily Jarvis for this regular feature – a seasonal offering, though we would need a lot of Christmas lights to decorate this giant!



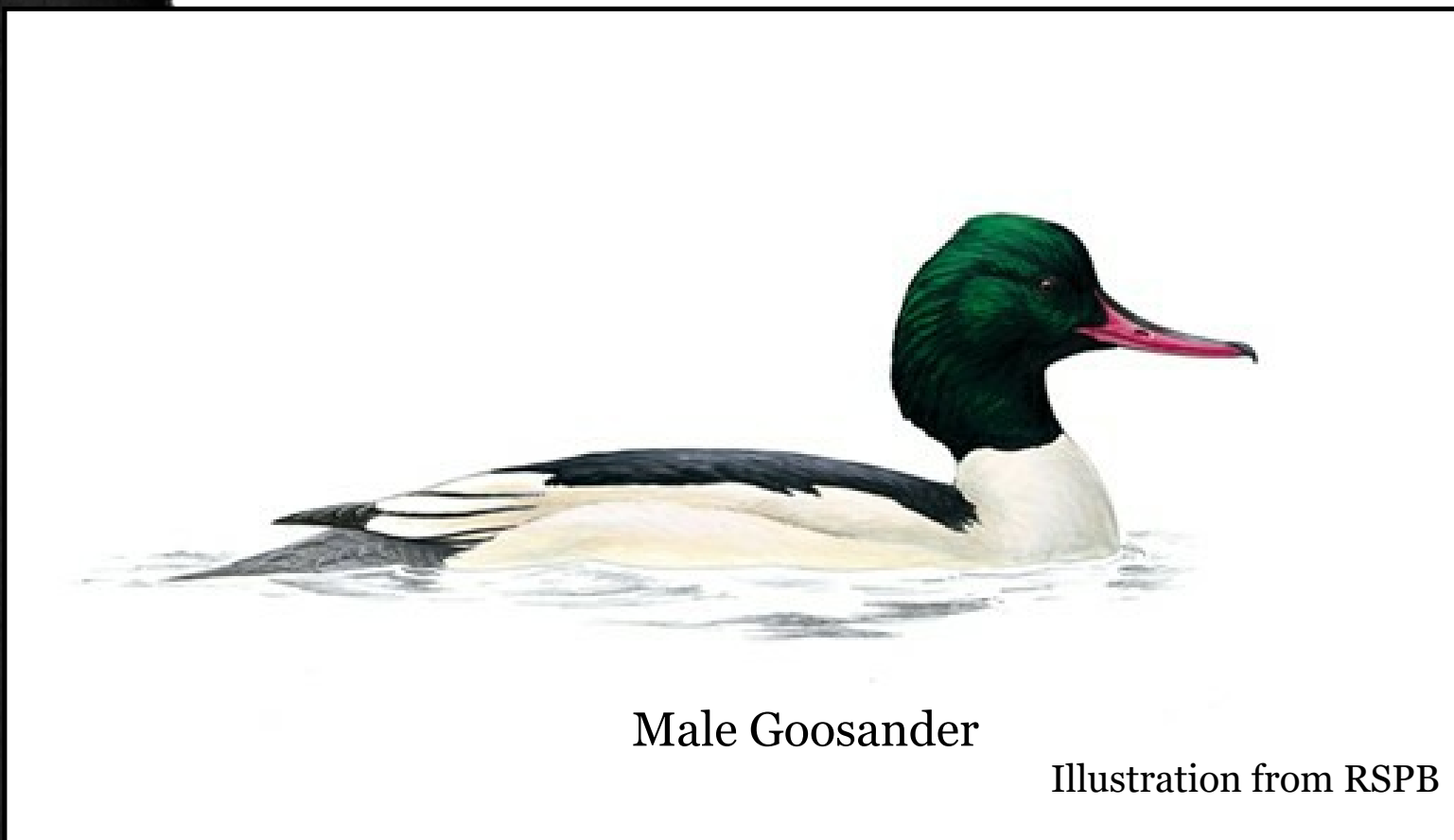
This great tree is a member of a big family known as Silver Firs. It is native to North America from British Columbia to California, enjoying the mild, moist conditions of the Pacific coastal areas. Where it is allowed to grow on, it can reach up to 62m (200ft) in height. Introduced to the UK in 1832, the Grand Fir finds growing conditions ideal here and it is one of our fastest growing firs.

The specimen in Roundhay Park, one of a group of conifers near The Mansion, is estimated to be around 20m high (65ft) so it still has some way to go!

The needles of this tree are arranged in flat, paired rows and have distinctive white bands on the underside. When crushed they give off a lovely spicy scent.

Grand Firs are one of the varieties sold as Christmas trees, most commonly in the USA.

BIRDS ON THE LAKES - GOOSANDER



Male Goosander

Illustration from RSPB

We have featured most of the resident birds on the lakes of Roundhay park in previous newsletters, but we are always on the lookout for less frequent sightings. On the 1st of December the editors were walking across the dam at the end of Waterloo Lake, and saw three goosanders – two males and one female (or immature?) on the lake. These handsome birds are diving ducks belonging to the group known as 'sawbills', due to their distinctive narrow saw-edged bills. The males have a very dark green head and upper neck (looks black from a distance), with a conspicuous white breast and flanks. Females have a chestnut coloured head and neck and more grey on the flanks. Perhaps other members have seen these birds?

THE CARRIAGE HOUSE – AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE?



The Carriage House is a familiar sight for visitors to Roundhay Park. This historic Grade II listed building has stood empty for many years forming part of the landscape of the park, but gradually deteriorating through lack of maintenance, with its fine clock (made by Potts, as was the Oakwood Clock) in its tower, with its faces worn away and its hands missing. The Carriage House, along with the rest of Roundhay Park was given to the people of Leeds by John Barran in the late 19th century. The building was later bought by Leeds City Council who are the current owners of the Carriage House.

FoRP members will have noticed that for some time the Carriage House has been up for sale. FoRP, and many people in the local community have a strong interest in the future of the Carriage House, and in securing and restoring the fabric of this fine building. Indeed, a partnership of local groups including FoRP submitted a proposal to the council for acquiring the Carriage House under the Asset Transfer Scheme and developing it for community use. However, this proposal did not find favour with the council. It has proved very difficult to find information from the council about the progress of the sale or the nature of any commercial interest that has been expressed. We are not aware of any consultation with the local

community or residents. There is natural concern about the future of the Carriage House. Who would buy it? What would it be used for? And will it be properly restored and maintained?

Recently word spread on the grapevine that the Carriage House had been sold to an estate agent, prompting a number of local residents, including some FoRP members to write to the council expressing serious concerns about the prospect of the Carriage House being owned by an estate agent, and the way the whole process had been handled. These messages prompted a reply from Councillor Lewis including the following:

“.....It is not realistic for the council to invest the significant sums needed to refurbish the building, and we have no plans to use it ourselves.

I'm aware of the idea from the consortium of community organisations for community asset transfer of the Carriage House. Unfortunately, this proposal was reliant on securing significant sums of unidentified capital funding and would have required challenging levels of ongoing revenue generation to be realised. Officers have considered that proposal with its potential benefits and risks, against the offers received in response to our marketing exercise and decided that the risks were too significant in the

face of a good financial offer from an organisation with access to the funding necessary to bring the building back into use. The income generated from the proposal will be used for the good of the people of Leeds and not commercial profit.....

Although for reasons of confidentiality I am unable to give too much detail about the identity of the purchaser, the intention is for the building to be used as offices for the headquarters of a local company, not as an estate agent's retail premises”

It is clear that the council has decided their course of action, but there are many unanswered questions for FoRP and the local community. What sort of deal is being done? Why would any commercial organisation want to take on premises requiring refurbishment at an estimated cost in the region of £800K? And, if the income generated is to be used “for the good of the people of Leeds”, how much of this will we see invested back into Roundhay Park? No doubt, we will gradually learn more and will return to this in future newsletters, but in the meantime if members want to comment or keep more closely in touch with events a Facebook page has been set up. This can most easily be found if you go into Facebook and simply enter “Save the Carriage House” in the search bar.



POSTCARD FROM THE PARK



While the Carriage House is in our thoughts, we are grateful to Jonathan Brown for searching through his wonderful collection of postcards and coming up with this one, showing the Carriage House, postmarked 1954. The clock face and hands are clearly visible. It is a peaceful scene, and carries greetings from Dorothy to a Mrs June Bryant who is in East Glamorgan Hospital, near Pontypridd.

Dorothy says *"Having a nice time here. So far the weather hasn't been too bad. I've managed to go out every day. Yesterday John and I went to Blackpool for the day. I expect to go to York tomorrow. Love Dorothy"*

We hope June was soon discharged from hospital and made a full recovery.

CALLING ALL YOU SOCIAL NETWORKERS.....

DO YOU TWEET?

Our (relatively) new website is proving effective in raising the profile of FoRP and recruiting new members. However we are not making use of the links to other social media that are available on the site. Although Julia Wilson and Malcolm Jarvis are doing an excellent job with Facebook, nobody is using our Twitter and Google Plus links. So if you are a keen tweeter we would love you to tweet for FoRP. **For more information contact our webmaster at john.ferguson@forp.org**

The editors are always grateful to Neville Hurworth who regularly provides fascinating historical stories based in the park. In this issue, Neville shares two newspaper articles from the late 19th century. Thanks again, Neville!

A 'PYROTECHNIC DISPLAY' AT ROUNDHAY PARK

(After a few words from Neville Hurworth the text is mainly from the Leeds Mercury 9 April 1883).

Another bonfire night has disappeared into the recent past and the spectacular firework display has once again quickly faded away from the visual memory. I came across a newspaper account recently of a 'pyrotechnic display' in the park that took place almost a century and a half ago and I thought that readers of this newsletter might enjoy some of the details. It was certainly different from what is staged these days in November and it had the advantage of occurring much earlier in the year in good weather. The event had the luxury of a fortnight's postponement due to bad weather, - not possible on bonfire night!

Here is the newspaper account almost in full and unedited.

"On Saturday there was a great concourse of holidaymakers at Roundhay Park, the special attraction being the display of fireworks by Mr. Pain of London ... the beautiful weather had tempted many to wile away a half-holiday in strolling about the shady paths, in boating on the lake or in lounging

beneath the trees. On the greensward a band was playing, and dancing was here indulged in by many others. In another part of the grounds might be seen a crowd intently watching the acrobatic feats of members of a troupe from Mr. R. Fossett's circus. Thus the hours passed.

At length a loud report directed all eyes to the upper lake, one side of which had been illuminated with a double tier of Chinese lanterns. The effect of these was greatly enhanced by the reflections in the water. Presently the scene was further lit up with fires of various colours, and a large balloon was seen slowly ascending, carrying a powerful magnesium light. Flights of rockets diffusing stars of varied hues and showers of golden rain followed.

There came a beautiful device representing the Falls of Niagara, and the roar produced, as when what appeared to be liquid fire descended, was very realistic. Great diversion was caused by the portrayal in fire of the elephant "Jumbo." The limbs of the animal

were made to move in a lifelike manner, amid shouts of laughter from the spectators.

Representation of a prairie fire and the Aurora Borealis followed, and then the event of the evening was reached, namely, a representation of the bombardment of Alexandria. The English ships, presented in various coloured fires, poured forth showers of shells which exploded with deafening detonation. From an opposite corner the "guns" replied, the whole forming a brilliant and striking spectacle. The "bombardment" was brought to a conclusion with a tremendous *salut de joie* representing the blowing up of the Egyptian forts. The display was a great success and gave much pleasure to the vast gathering of spectators."

(From the editor – What wonderful description! Any FoRP members who are Beatles fans may be reminded of Sergeant Pepper – Being for the Benefit of Mr Kite - and John Lennon's words taken from an old poster....."And a splendid time is guaranteed for all!")

THE SPIRIT OF THE WOODS

FoRP members will be very familiar with the charming little statue which today stands in the middle of the canal in Canal Gardens. This is the 'Spirit of the Woods' and it was previously located on dry land in Roundhay Park. Some members may have personal memories of this statue and our thanks go to Wendy Burrows for this special photograph (opposite). Wendy says:

"We were looking for some information about the 'spirit of the woods' at Roundhay Park and came across an article dated 10th August 2011 which said Friends of Roundhay Park were looking for photos of the statue from when it was in the park. I know it's a few years ago now but thought I would send this photo in of my mum with the statue which was taken in 1962."

Perhaps other readers have memories of the Spirit of the Woods? We wonder where exactly it stood in the park? When and why was it relocated to its current watery surroundings? Is it true that it was moved because some mischievous human spirits kept pinching his/her flute? We would love to know more.....

Neville has found this remarkable report of a show put on by the legendary tight-rope walker Charles (Chevalier) Blondin in Roundhay Park. Blondin came out of retirement in the 1880s leading up to this appearance in the park – only just in time, as he died in 1897.

BLONDIN IN ROUNDHAY PARK



We don't have a picture of him in Roundhay Park but here is Blondin in action carrying his manager.

From Wikipedia

This account is from the Leeds Mercury 4 August 1896 on the occasion of the Hospital Gala.

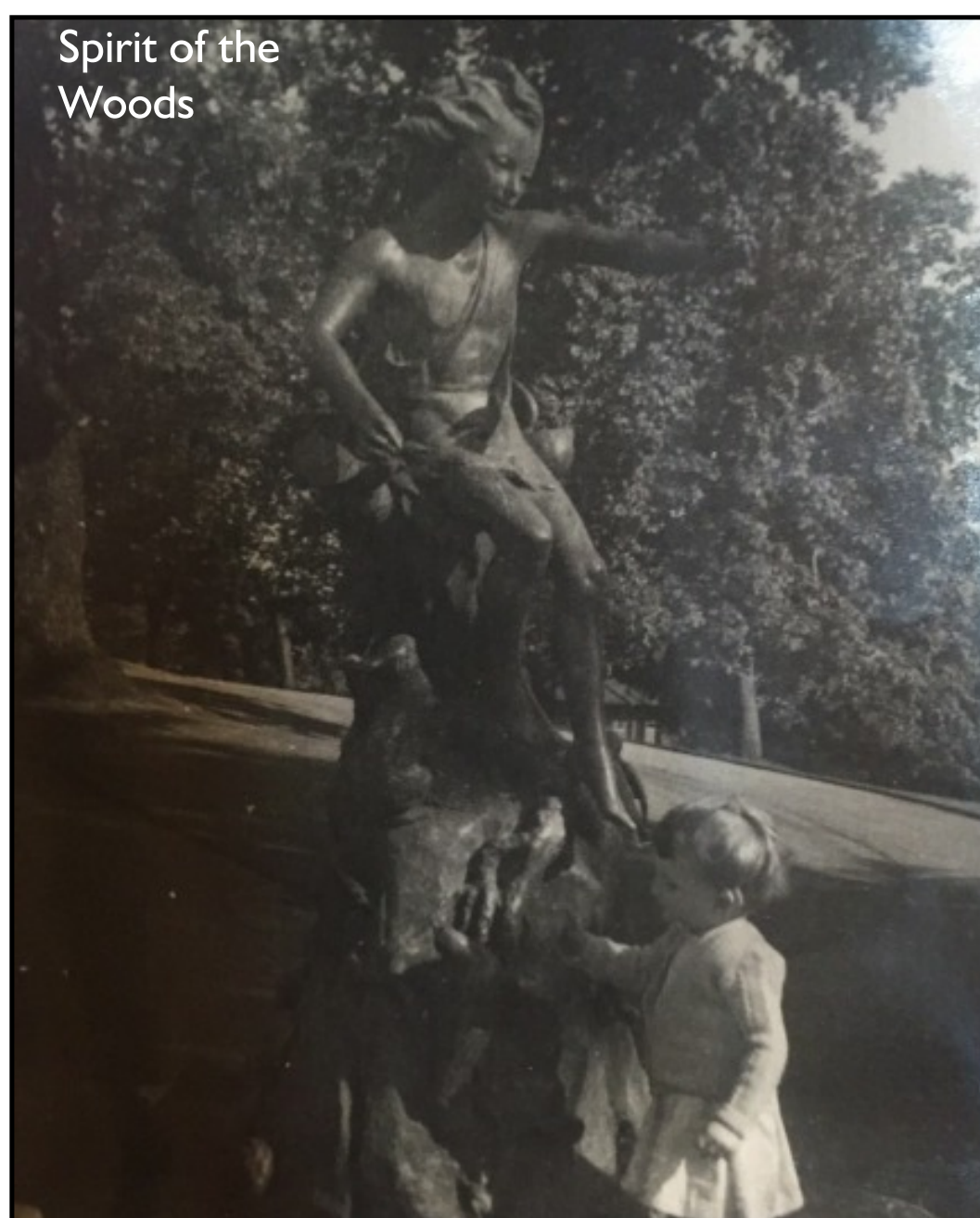
“The chief attraction of the day, however, was the engagement of the celebrated high-rope walker, Chevalier Blondin, the hero of Niagara, who gave two exhibitions of his daring skill on a tight rope stretched at a great altitude over the Upper Lake.

First he crossed the lake in the full panoply of an armour-clad Chevalier, running back in wonderfully sprightly fashion for a veteran of 72 years. Then he crossed again in ordinary tights and before returning, blindfolded himself with a voluminous handkerchief that precluded the possibility of vision, after which to make assurance doubly sure that he could not see, he enveloped himself in a sack.

Ere re-crossing in this darkened guise, he kept the great crowd beneath him in a continuous ripple of laughter at his amusing by-play, while now and again he excited the keenest apprehension, marked by frequent involuntary exclamations among the spectators by pretended slips on the rope as he started his blindfold backward journey.

His performance was concluded by leisurely cooking an omelette on an apparatus he conveyed for the purpose to the centre of the rope, and throughout its continuance his every motion was closely watched with interest.

In the evening the Chevalier gave a repetition of his feats, the effect of the second occasion being heightened by some of them taking place amid a display of fireworks”.



Spirit of the Woods

'BACK IN TIME' - THE OAKWOOD CLOCK RESTORATION FILM



Published on You Tube on Nov 2, 2015

This film can be found on You Tube and is now in a time capsule buried beneath Oakwood Clock in Leeds along with other items relating to the restoration. The



capsule is to be opened in the year 2112. Produced by Oakwood Traders and Residents Association and made by Tony O'Reilly, it will be shown at the FoRP lecture on Tuesday 19th January 2016 (see back page).

CREATING A SUCCESSFUL WILDFLOWER MEADOW

A message from Cecily Jarvis

Jackson's Field Flower Meadow

Many of you will have seen the "wildflower meadow" near Barran's Fountain which in the first year after sowing was a riot of colour. With a mixture of annuals and perennials, including wildflowers, flowering lasted for months.

Summer 2015 however has been disappointing with certain perennials taking over where growing conditions favour them and many annuals, failing to flourish or appear at all. There has been a significant invasion by grasses and perennial weeds. So what to do?

Estates Manager, John Roebuck organised a meeting with representatives of Rigby Taylor Limited, the seed suppliers together with members of FoRP and as a result of our discussion and a visit to the meadow, a plan of action has been devised. Briefly, it has been decided to go for an annual urban meadow

flower mix which will give long lasting colour. Many of you will have seen this type of planting by the Council along the city's ring roads. This kind of meadow however calls for cultivation *every* year which on an area the size of the one we have, is a significant project.

The plan is that John Roebuck and his team will spray the area to kill all current growth and will rotavate the ground. FoRP will then take over, cultivating the soil to the required depth and working it down to a suitable tilth for seed sowing. It is likely this work will now take place in spring after which the new annual seed mix will be sown, probably in April and it is likely interim weeding will be needed as well.

Because our existing working party volunteers are fully committed with their work in the park we are looking for specific "Meadow Group" volunteers. An

e-mail appeal in October has attracted over a dozen interested members but there is always room for more. You don't need to be an experienced gardener, although that would be good too, you just need to be enthusiastic and willing to put in a few Saturday mornings over the year to create and maintain the meadow. It need not be a regular monthly commitment and there is no requirement to undertake heavy work. In fact a lighter hand for making a seed bed would be an advantage.

With the park management's blessing and help we have the opportunity to make a stunning feature which can be enjoyed by the park's many visitors and be a source of pride to those of us who made it happen.

If you are interested, please contact Cecily Jarvis at cecilyandmalc@talktalk.net



GLOBAL WARMING? CONFUSED ABOUT THE SEASONS?

We wonder how many FoRP members, like the editors, noticed a patch of purple crocuses flowering in October near the children's playground by the Lakeside Café? Our thanks go to Hilary Brosh for sending in this photo.



AN AUTUMN PARTY IN THE PARK

The editors thank Tom Cooper for providing this update on the sterling work done by the working party volunteers, enhancing the beauty of our park. More volunteers are always welcome!

The members of FoRP working parties know from experience that autumn is bulb planting time and 2015 has proved no exception. However this year we only took delivery of 5,000 bulbs, rather than the 10,000 of previous years. It was hoped that by taking more time, and choosing sites with deeper soil we would get better flowering next year. Good results will be more important than ever, as our chosen planting site is extremely high profile - the margins of our beautiful new tennis courts.

Two working parties have been devoted to this task already, and we have a party of volunteers from the Lloyds Banking Group booked to spend a day planting. In previous years it has been daffodils, daffodils and yet more daffodils, but this year we have had a change. Don't worry, plenty of daffodils have been planted. However, among the trees by the

bus-stop, you should be able to see bluebells next spring, although it will be a while before they provide a show to match the one put on by the bluebells at the back of the park every year.

We planted a third type of bulb in a very prominent position, but I will leave its identity a mystery for now. Don't worry, if the planting proves successful, you will not be able to miss our work early next spring.

Talking of next spring reminds me of another flowering project that needs FoRP's attention. After the disappointment of this year's show, we plan to set up a group specifically to improve the display in the wild flower meadow near the Lakeside Cafe. If you are interested, see the article by Cecily for details.

Despite all this bulb planting frenzy, we have not neglected our

usual weeding and clearing. You should notice that the zig-zag path into the ravine is much wider, now that we have trimmed the margins right back to the original path edges. Over the winter we will extend this work right up the Sham Castle. We also hope to remove the mud that has built up over the path hard surface. It should make walking this route less of a daunting experience.

If you would like to join in any of our working parties, e-mail Jon Vogler who organises them, at jon@vogler.co.uk. He will add you to the working party e-mail list and he will e-mail you before each session to tell you what is planned (We meet 2nd Sat & 4th Thurs of each month). We usually assemble at the Carriage House behind the Roundhay Fox). There is no long term commitment and we would love to see you.

Tom Cooper



We dig
We plant
We cover
We leave no trace
BLUEBELLS!



Forthcoming FoRP lectures

Tuesday 19 January 2016 – ‘Back in Time’ – a film showing the story of the restoration of the Oakwood Clock, with commentary from camera man and producer Tony O’Reilly.

Tuesday 15 March 2016 - Trams to Roundhay. Jamie Guest will present a talk on trams to Roundhay. Jamie is a regular speaker on behalf of the Leeds Transport Historical Society and is putting this talk together especially for the Friends of Roundhay Park.

Both these events start at 7pm in the Education Rooms next to the Mansion. Entrance is £3 for FoRP members and £5 for non-members.

