

# Friends of Roundhay Park

## Newsletter December 1996

### Harry Hurst, Chairman

Working to ensure the proper use, maintenance and enhancement of Roundhay Park

It was originally intended that this Newsletter be circulated to members during October. Its delay was because of developments that made themselves known at about that time. These concern the creation of the proposed Gardens of the World and funding either available, or being applied for, from millennium, national heritage and other independent local funds.

We are informed in the local press that plans for Gardens of the World are well in hand and we feel we have no further useful information. We will however keep a watchful eye on its development. Regarding the other possibly available funds, one is for the restoration and refurbishment of Victorian Parks, another being for development and maintenance of public areas. Future Newsletters will keep members informed of further progress.

During the summer months, weather permitting and together with the Community Nature Conservation department, we continued our monthly clearing of the Upper Lake. Regular users of the Park will have noticed, and many actually commented on, the appearance in its appearance. We hope to continue this activity on March 1997.

Waterloo Lake is still disappointingly low and although plans are actively in hand it is unlikely to return to its former glory before May or June 1997. Because of the size and area covered by the lake an independent investigation had to take place before repairs could be put in hand. The good news is that it is happening.

During the course of the year we became members of the Leeds Civic Trust, Roundhay Conservation society and Eye on the Aire, with all of whom we have joint interests. It is hope that we may be able to combine some activities and members will be informed of these.

We recently attended the inaugural meeting of the Roundhay Park Consultative Group which, under the Chairmanship of Councillor Neil Taggart, invited and attracted representatives from all the Park's user Groups. There were representatives of the anglers, bowlers, cyclists, footballers, gardeners, a number of local residents' associations and our local councillors. It is planned to have the group meetings three times a year.

During the year we also had meetings with the heads of those departments responsible for the Park and discussed with them matters of mutual concern and, I am happy to say, satisfaction. Although we cannot claim credit for some developments, we like to feel that we influenced them in some way. We are happy, for example, about the removal of many of the-ice cream vans from the vicinity of the Canal Gardens and the removal of the permanent barbecue

shack by the Mansion. We look forward to the continuation of these meetings and hope that the happy relationship between us will be maintained.

We are in frequent touch with all our local councillors whose influence and encouragement is of great value. In addition to the above, we have had excellent co-operation from the Planning, Conservation and Cleansing departments.

The year saw three large events in the Park. The biggest was Ballet in the Park which I am sure, most of us hope will be repeated in future years. We do expect however that those responsible will anticipate the possibility (if not the probability) that it will rain during its installation. The Asian Mela was also hugely popular, even though arrangements for its clear-up did not seem to go according to plan. The Ski-Boat Racing, held for the first time in the Park was a limited success and its future will also partly depend on the renovations to the lake referred to above.

We have had a few disappointments during the year. Some of the (very expensive) litter bins provided by us, jointly with the Council, have shown that in the phrase *almost vandal proof*, the word *almost* is more operative than *vandal proof*, two of the bins having been wantonly rendered unusable. However in addition to more bins of the same type already ordered new ones of another type are being examined and it is hope that, not only being less expensive, they will be less liable to deliberate destruction.

We are also disappointed that, despite having been discussed on many occasions, the traffic calming sleeping policeman on Park Avenue has not been repaired, nor have the unsightly metal screens on the Garden Cafe been replaced or painted.

Whilst being fully aware of the wants of cyclists and the needs of dogs and dog-lovers, we are also very concerned with the problems caused by cycling on unsuitable pathways in the Park and of dog faeces throughout the Park, particularly on the football playing areas of the Military Fields. Both of these problems were also brought to the attention of the recently convened Consultative Group and will continue to receive consideration.

Another cause for some concern is the continued presence of the wattle fencing at the side of the Mansion. Its only advantage to the general public would appear to be that it prevents the sight of the dilapidated and continuously deteriorating conservatory, erstwhile tea-rooms. The notice of the relevant authorities is constantly being drawn to this.

In recent months, Joyce Miron, our Treasurer, felt that she was unable to give FoRP the attention it needed and tendered her resignation, which was regretfully accepted by the Committee. Robert Henderson was appointed the acting Treasurer until the next AGM to be held in April 1997. You will see that we now have support from Lloyds Bank #plc for which we are very grateful. However, support from companies or other concerns will also be very much appreciated, and any members who can assist in obtaining this should contact our Treasurer. The Committee is looking into the possibility of forming a group of voluntary rangers at Roundhay, similar to those at Temple Newsam. We are also looking into other ways of forming voluntary groups for other activities in the Park, and any FoRP member who

has an idea for such a group should contact one of the members of the Committee, so that this can be looked into.

We are happy to state that our membership now consists of over 250 households of whom, unfortunately, less than half are fully paid-up. We hope that this Newsletter will act as a gently reminder to those others, and also remind all that the annual membership fee of £3 is due in April.

In conclusion, may I extend Seasonal Greetings and best wishes for the New Year to you all.

Harry Hurst

Chairman

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Re-typed by Peter Dyson 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009