



## Part one Woodhouse Moor to Meanwood Park

**Welcome to the start of the Meanwood Valley Trail.** From here you can visit Woodhouse Moor, the oldest public park in Leeds. Bought in 1857 it became the 'lungs of Leeds' - a green respite from the smog and grime of Victorian Leeds. Its history and present day use are as diverse as one another with allotments, recreation, nature conservation and public gatherings always proving popular.

Alderman Henry Marsden whose statue you start from, was an inspiration to ordinary folk. Starting life as a mill hand in Holbeck he eventually became a Liberal MP and Mayor of Leeds from 1873-76.

- Starting at the statue of H.R. Marsden, close to the junction of Woodhouse Lane and Raglan Road, follow the latter down to where it meets Rampart Road. Turn right then continue down to Woodhouse Street, crossing over to Delph Lane.

So close to the heart of the city you will still see and hear our wild neighbours. Look out for swallows in the summer feeding over the grassland in the Moor and dunnocks bobbing out from the adjacent hedgerows and flower beds on their hunt for insects and seeds to eat. Peacock butterflies flutter by reminding us of the beauty that comes from everyday plants like the nettle.



- Continue to the end of Delph Lane, where it ends at the wooded slopes of Woodhouse Ridge. Turn left into the site, and follow the footpath which runs along its top edge, keeping the stone wall to your left. At the metal gate and boulders take the far right hand fork in the path, down steps, towards the beck and meadows below. Turn left at the bottom of the hill, keeping the beck on your right, and continue on to Grove Lane.



Woodhouse Ridge was a gift to the people of Leeds from Sir Thomas Beckett & Mrs Meynell-Ingram in 1876 enhanced by the addition of Batty's Wood from Alderman John Warburton in 1901. Like much of the Meanwood Valley the site has been host to working mills and farming but then came over to public recreation and enjoyment. The mix of rhododendron and sweet chestnut trees with the native ash, oak and birch remind you of its Victorian influence.



In the spring you will see (and smell) the ramsons (left), wood anemone and bluebells which carpet Battys Wood and together with the sounds of drumming woodpecker and the tawny owl calling from within the woodland, you can forget for a moment how close you are to the city centre.

- Crossing Grove Lane, follow the footpath ahead, taking you past Woodhouse Ridge & Grove Lane nature area and through the gardens of the Brooklands until it emerges on Monkbridge Road. Turn right and walk the short distance down to the pedestrian crossing.

After crossing Monkbridge Road, enter Mill Pond Lane, and follow the footpath immediately off to your left.

At this point you will bypass Tannery Park the site of the former Meanwood Tannery built in 1857 by the brewer, Sam Smith. Prior to this it was a paper mill called Wood Mills and the probable location of a medieval corn mill which serviced Kirkstall Abbey (only 1 1/2 miles away as the crow flies).

# MEANWOOD valley trail



## Introduction

The Meanwood Valley has long been celebrated as a 'green artery' in Leeds, bringing rural countryside into the heart of the city. This 7 mile linear walk takes you through some of the highlights of the cultural and natural history of the Valley and why it is so important to its residents - both human and otherwise.

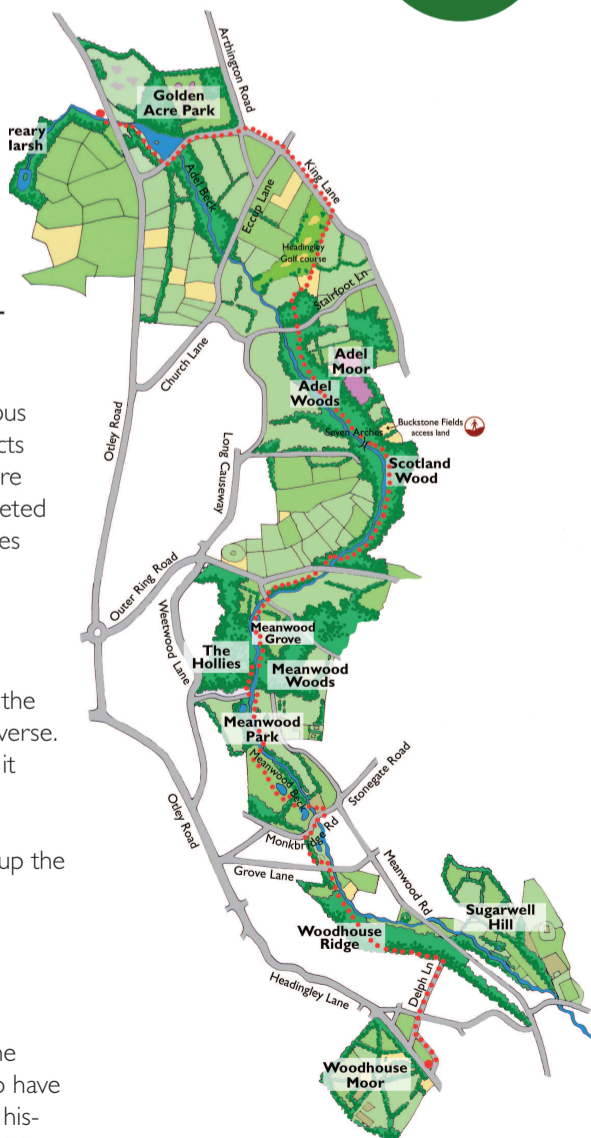
The number X84 bus is a regular bus service along the A660 and connects Woodhouse Moor and Golden Acre Park enabling the trail to be completed as a linear walk. For up to date times and information please look up [www.wymetro.com](http://www.wymetro.com) or call (0113) 245 7676.

The cultural and natural history of the Meanwood Valley is fascinatingly diverse. We can only give you a glimpse of it here.

For more information please look up the Natural Habitats team, Parks & Countryside Service on [www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk) or contact Parks & Countryside on (0113) 3957400.

We also advise that you look up the Meanwood Village Association who have published fascinating books on the history of the Valley ([www.meanwoodvillage.org.uk](http://www.meanwoodvillage.org.uk)).

The publication of this leaflet has been sponsored by **The Myrtle Tavern** in Meanwood and local community group, The Meanwood Valley Partnership. We are grateful for their continued support of the Trail and the Meanwood Valley.



# MEANWOOD valley trail



## Part three Scotland Wood to Golden Acre Park

Scotland Mill, a former flax spinning mill in the late 1780's, was the first factory in the world to successfully use water power to spin flax! Flax (or linseed as its otherwise known) can be grown for its oil or its fibres which are very strong and were the primary source for cloth in Europe until the nineteenth century.

Look out for tree creeper, goldcrest and roe deer as you stroll, all of which enjoy the woodland cover. Look out too for the hint of Scots pine on the eastern side of the Valley.

The Seven Arches aqueduct which marks the end of this part of the trail was in fact Leeds' first aqueduct carrying water from Eccup Reservoir. Built in 1840 for a rapidly growing city it was an essential source of drinking water as the industrialised River Aire was less than wholesome.

- 8** Keep to the higher footpath through the woodland, with Adel Beck flowing below you, to your left. You will pass the slopes of Adel Moor on your right and the Slabbering Baby as you meet a junction of paths. Go straight on, down and over the small beck. The steps lead you to a small mill pond where you should bear right. Bear left at a fork in the paths, keeping to the woodland edge and then straight on to Stairfoot Lane car park.

Adel Woods and its surrounding habitat mosaic is a wonderfully diverse area. Step just off the trail a little and you may find yourself in bogs and wet woodland or dryer grasslands and heath. Heather, bilberry and gorse remind you that this woodland was once predominantly heathland, though the oak, birch and holly have moved in. Take a few moments and you may be lucky enough to spot common lizard in the heather, palmate newts in the old mill pond and weasel in the scrubland.

The 'Slabbering Baby' is the stone carving around a spring at the junction of paths. Its origins are unknown but stand a moment and try to imagine the Victorian scene that you would have once met here with wide open paths, only a few



You are now nearing Golden Acre Park, originally built in 1825 as a dam to feed the mills downstream, unfortunately the dam breached in 1829 leaving bridges, streams, mills and pubs in its wake. The land was then bought in 1932 by Frank Thompson and turned into a hugely popular amusement park. After WWII Leeds City Council acquired the land keeping it for the people of Leeds as a horticultural venture.

- 9** Cross Stairfoot Lane at the car park entrance to continue along the bridleway directly ahead of you. Turn right after the bridle gate to follow the bridleway as it skirts around the eastern edge of Headingley Golf course, until it eventually emerges out onto King Lane. Cross King Lane and follow the track downhill, keeping the road on your left. Take care along the roadside.

- 10** At the junction of Five Lane Ends, continue on to a T-Junction where you will cross Arthington Road to follow the bridleway directly ahead. Look out for a gate on your right, which leads into Golden Acre Park. Once through the gate, bear left, following the path around the lake, until you come to an arched underpass.

For the Leeds Road (A660) and bus stops, or for a rest at Golden Acre's cafe go straight on. Alternatively, you can go through the underpass where it will take you to Golden Acre car park or if you bear left you could take an extra loop walk into Breary Marsh Local Nature Reserve - a rare and beautiful habitat.

The park and surrounding natural habitats are full of rare and endangered plants and animals. The lake at night is a favourite with bat surveyors where at least 5 species of bat can be heard dancing over the water surface catching insects. On the hillsides where wildflowers flourish there are butterflies aplenty including the showy Peacock, Painted Lady and Orange Tip as well as the more subtle Ringlets and Meadow Browns. Take a walk into the surrounding Breary Marsh nature reserve and you will find the finest remaining example of alder carr (a wet woodland) in West Yorkshire.

**Well done! You have completed the Meanwood Valley Trail.**

It was only in 1954 that the estate was brought into public ownership after the owner Georgina Kitson-Clark passed away. The old house that was home to so many is now long gone. As you walk through the park you will see remnants of its historical gardens and planting, goits and dams from mill works and tanneries and even the homes of local quarry workers on Hustler's Row, built by the quarry owner John Hustler in 1850.

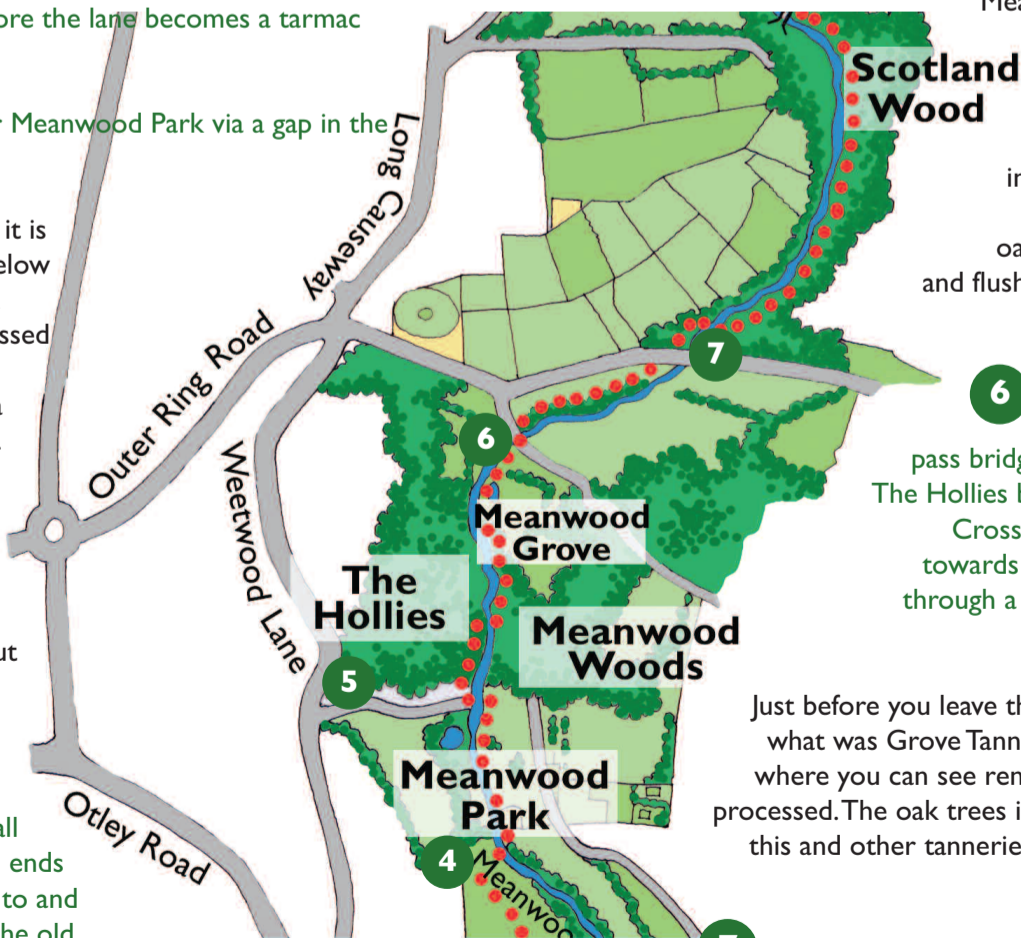
Meanwood Park itself is a hub for local wildlife. It is one part of a designated Local Nature Reserve and is an essential link in the green corridor of Meanwood Valley. There are bats and birds aplenty, roe deer in the woodlands and damsel and dragonflies amongst the ponds. The vegetation includes oak woodland, a hazel coppice, wet woodland and flushes and mires. Stop still and enjoy the sights, sounds and smells around you.

- 6** Continue along this path, and once up the slope keep the goit on your left. You will pass bridges which lead up into the public gardens of The Hollies but keep ahead until reaching the large weir. Cross the bridge over the weir and then turn left towards the meadows of Meanwood Grove, passing through a gateway, to follow the beckside path until it emerges out onto Parkside Road.

Just before you leave the Park you pass a picnic area on the site of what was Grove Tannery, one of the few places in West Yorkshire where you can see remnants of a local tannery where leather was processed. The oak trees in Meanwood Woods were planted to serve this and other tanneries as the bark and acorns were harvested to provide a source of tannin.

- 7** Turn left along the footway and take the second opening on your right just before the Ring Road. Follow this path, which runs parallel to the Ring Road, until it passes beneath the road, via an underpass.

On emerging from the underpass, turn right up a small flight of steps, then follow the path as it runs close to what is now Adel Beck. Take the left hand fork in the path. Looking down to your right you may be able to see the old ruins of 'Scotland Mill'.



- 4** On crossing the wooden bridge over Meanwood Beck, turn right then after a short distance left, following the path as it skirts the edge of the mill pond. The path takes a sharp turn to the right and passes through some allotments and smallholdings to emerge onto an informal lane. Look out for the small bridge on your right by an old gatepost (before the lane becomes a tarmac road) and cross the bridge over the goit.

Continue on to the second bridge and enter Meanwood Park via a gap in the stone wall ahead.

As you traverse and follow Meanwood beck it is worth sparing a thought for the creatures below the water level. Over the centuries the beck and its many outlying tributaries were harnessed for the power they could bring to industry. That industry would have undoubtedly had a detrimental impact on the watery life below. Today, however, we can see the survivors which include fish such as the stone loach, bullhead and brown trout as well as our native white-clawed-crayfish. Protected in Law because it is so endangered in the UK, the white-clawed crayfish is found throughout the Meanwood Valley, a regionally important area for the species.

- 5** Once in the park, follow the paths ahead keeping the beck on your left. Cross the small bridge over the beck where the tarmac path ends and follow the path on the opposite side up to and around an old pond. Continue on and over the old humpback bridge and then turn left to the archway in the stone wall. Once through the archway, turn left to cross a small wooden bridge, then just beyond this, follow the footpath which bears off to the right.

Meanwood Park (or Meanwoodside as it was known) has a long history of landownership from the Cisterian monks of Kirkstall Abbey to the famous Oates family, including Captian Lawrence Oates, the polar explorer who died with Scott and his comrades during their race to the South Pole.



## Part two Meanwood Park to Scotland Wood