



CLIFTON ROWNTREE WALK

FROM
CHOCOLATE
COMES CHANGE



Clifton Walk

A circular walk from Bootham Bar that goes northwards away from the city, and returns by the riverside footpath to Lendal Bridge. It takes you to some of the Rowntree's homes in Clifton which in their days lay right on the leafy outskirts of the city.

Duration

1.5 Hours

Calories

(in KitKat fingers)
3 fingers

Link to next place

Begin on the right side of **Bootham**, walking away from the Bar. Pass the plaque to the Dr William Arthur Evelyn (1860-1935) who created a significant photographic archive of historic York. Pass **Wandesford House**, an 18th century alms house (a reminder of the care of the needy in earlier periods in York). Pause at **no. 49 Bootham**. (No public access)

49 Bootham

This row of splendid Georgian buildings is today all part of Bootham School, a co-educational independent school. In this house Joseph Rowntree Senior lived with Sarah and family. They moved here in 1848 when young Joseph was twelve.

Imagine

All the little children—John, Joseph, Henry, Hannah, and the youngest, Sarah, who died of scarlet fever, aged four (see [Out of Town walk](#)), just before the family moved here.

Look out for

The plaque praising Joseph and his contributions to York.

Link to next place

Continue a little further and stop in front of **51 Bootham**.

Bootham School

Founded by Quakers in 1823 initially in Lawrence Street with help from Joseph Rowntree Senior. The school was attended by Joseph Junior and his sons. In total 45 Rowntree boys attended, including the sons of the Rowntrees of Scarborough. Arthur Rowntree (son of Joseph's cousin John from Scarborough) was headmaster here from 1899 to 1927.

The school buildings and playing fields that spread behind the street façade include buildings in the Arts and Crafts style, including the library, rebuilt after a major fire caused by an experiment with boiled snails in the Natural History room in 1899. The architect was Fred Rowntree (son of John Rowntree of Scarborough). (No public access)

Imagine 🗨️

Boys taking part in a progressive Quaker education, where science and natural history prevailed over classical subjects, and competitive sports and writing '*lines*' (called '*columns*') replaced corporal punishment. Many outstanding natural scientists were educated at the school, including Joseph's brother-in-law, Henry Seebohm.

Look out for 🔍

The plaque for Silvanus Phillips Thompson, nationally renowned physicist, water-colourist, and author of the classic *Calculus made Easy*. He taught several of the Rowntree boys.



Link to next place 🔗

Continue to the end of the block of Georgian buildings and **cross to the other side of Bootham** using the pedestrian crossing.

'Top House'

The austere building on the corner of Bootham and St Mary's was built by Joseph Rowntree Senior in c.1850. The architect is unknown. It was known as '*Top House*' by the family, because of its position at the top of St Mary's.

The house had two entrances, and was ingeniously divided to allow two generations to live separately under the same roof. The main entrance with the portico on St Mary's belonged to Joseph's widowed mother, Sarah. The entrance door on Bootham was home to her son Joseph and his first wife Julia in 1862. After her untimely death, leaving a young daughter who died soon afterwards, Joseph lived here with his second wife Antoinette until 1905. He acquired the whole house on his mother's death.

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Now privately owned, the house was donated by Joseph to Bootham School early in the 20th century and it became a boys' boarding house. Several members of the extended Rowntree family also had houses down St Mary's at various times.

Look out for 🔍

Look out for the plaque commemorating Seebohm Rowntree, who was born in this house.

Imagine 🧠

Seebohm Rowntree using the house as an office in the early 20th century, researching and writing his studies on the life of the urban poor.

Link to next place 🔗

Continue along **Bootham**. As you reach the pillar box look over the road at the imposing **redbrick building** in the distance.

Bootham Park Hospital

York's grand 18th century '*County Lunatic Asylum*' (architect John Carr) was in its day among the first purpose-built institutions for the treatment of the mentally ill.

The mistreatment of patients here and death of a Leeds woman, Hannah Mills, would later prompt local Quaker groups, including Joseph Rowntree Senior, to reassess the treatment of the mentally ill and to establish The Retreat (see [Out of Town walk](#)).

Link to next place 🔗

Continue along **Bootham**, passing some more 18th century almshouses, then walk **under the concrete footbridge**. You will see **St Peter's School** on your left. On your right notice the **Clifton Bingo building**, previously a cinema, opened in 1937.

At the **Clifton shops** cross the road using the crossing and **returning to the right side**. Keep **straight ahead over the traffic lights**. At the point where the road splits into **Shipton Road** (left) and **Rawcliffe Lane** (right), cross the road to look at the gates of **Clifton Lodge**.

Clifton Lodge

In the house beyond these gates Joseph Rowntree created a peaceful haven for his retirement years. He lived here from 1905 until his death in July 1925. Gone from the stables were the hunting horses of the previous owner, replaced by sedate carriage horses and his bicycle. The 1911 census lists just a housemaid and kitchen maid in charge of the 16-roomed house while the Rowntree family were abroad. (No public access)

Look out for 🔍

Views of the house from the main gates at the front and at the rear, just up Rawcliffe Lane.

Imagine 💭

Joseph setting out from here on his way to his office right up until only five days before his death.

Link to next place 🔗

Continue up **Rawcliffe Lane**, and when you reach the **first entrance** walk a few steps up the driveway towards **Rawcliffe Holt** and **Joseph's Nursery**.

Rawcliffe Holt

Joseph Rowntree built Rawcliffe Holt, adjoining Clifton Lodge, in 1907 for his youngest daughter Winifred Rowntree Naish (pictured); there was a communicating door to the Lodge on the first floor. Winifred was a nurse, but sadly she died in 1915 aged 30, possibly in childbirth.

After Joseph's death Clifton Lodge and Rawcliffe Holt were left to the Joseph Rowntree trusts. Clifton Lodge was sold into private hands in 2011.
(No public access)



The Pavillion

The thatched roofed garden Pavillion (pictured) (today Joseph's Nursery, No public access) was designed by Fred Rowntree in 1908 and equipped with tables and chairs. It was used constantly by young people's organisations for their regular group meetings; at one time an average of 36 different organisations held meetings here.



Link to next place

Continue along **Rawcliffe Lane** and turn left at **Malton Way**. Walk down this tree-lined wide avenue.

Clifton Estate

You are now passing through the Clifton Estate that backs on to the old landscaped grounds of Clifton Lodge. The estate was part of a scheme devised by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust to demonstrate that larger houses could be built in a well-planned manner. Barry Parker (architect of New Earswick) designed the layout and the houses. The scheme was developed from 1926 but built over quite a long period because of the inter-war slump and the Second World War.

Imagine

How several of the houses were occupied by Rowntree managers. Note the relative modesty of these houses and the emphasis on the greenery, cul-de-sac and shared space.

Link to next place

Join **Shipton Lane** taking great care when crossing over. Turn left past the **Sports Club** and large villas to enter **Homestead Park** on your right. As you enter look out for the housing development on your left.

Ouse Lea

Originally the site of the home of Joseph's daughter Agnes who married the Haxby Road Cocoa Works doctor, Peter MacDonald. The building was later offered to the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust and demolished in 1961 in order to build the new estate, designed by Michael Butterworth, that still occupies the site today.

Link to next place

Turn left into the **park**, and keep straight on all the way to the **exit at Water End**. The park is a good place to take a short rest!

Homestead Park

Today, the park houses a hugely popular children's playground, in a garden setting and a wildflower meadow managed by expert gardeners. It was little more than a field when first opened to the public in 1908 (pictured right).

Imagine

The Monkey House and Aviary that existed in the park until they were destroyed during a wartime air raid in April 1942.

Chocolate fact

The gardeners sometimes put on chocolate-related displays in their planting, and there is a horse see-saw in the park dating from the 1950s that still passes Health and Safety regulations (even though the horse had to lose his legs in the process!).



Look out for 🔍

The Heritage boards documenting the history of the Park and the work of the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust in particular. They are situated by the entrance to the children's playground.

Link to next place 🔗

As you approach the **Water End** exit, beyond the herbaceous borders you will see a **private driveway**. Beyond that is a **redbrick house**.

The Homestead

The redbrick building (No public access) is a fine Arts and Crafts styled house, yet modest in size, built for Seebohm Rowntree and his family. It was designed by architect Fred Rowntree. This, along with the more modern buildings nearby, is the national centre for all the Joseph Rowntree trusts (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, and Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust). Each of the trusts is completely separate from the others, but all share a common thread in Joseph Rowntree's Founding Memorandum of 1904.

Imagine 🗨️

Seebohm Rowntree and family living in this brand new Edwardian villa. The Prime Minister David Lloyd George visited him here in 1920, as did Nancy Astor, the first female MP to sit in the House of Commons.

Link to next place 🔗

Leave the park and turn right along the main road. Turn right into the drive up to **YHA York** and follow it round to the rear of the building.

YHA York

This building was originally known as Cliff Villa but when Seebohm Rowntree purchased about 3 acres of land in 1905 adjacent to his home he renamed it Haverford, in memory of his brother John Wilhelm Rowntree (a Quaker theologian) who died prematurely and was buried at Haverford College in Pennsylvania in 1905. His death deeply affected their father Joseph.

In 1945 the property was sold to the (then-named) Joseph Rowntree Village Trust, who leased it to the Youth Hostel Association. It has been enlarged and adapted over the years, but it still retains its character as a family residence, and there are display boards internally that commemorate the building's Rowntree connections.



Imagine 🗨️

The reaction of Lydia Rowntree, Seebohm's wife, to a Zeppelin raid in Clifton in November 1916, while he was away with the Friends Ambulance Unit. She wrote to him: *'It came so quietly ... I stood at the door and watched, it was coming from the Mount ... the gun was splendid, it hit more than once and seemed to turn turtle. There were enormous cheers from the crowds ... then they came and told us it had been brought down.'*

Look out for 🔍

As you exit, notice the small tree stump plaque in the grass on your right in memory of *'Peter Rowntree, for many years' service to the YHA*. Peter was Seebohm's son.

Link to next place 🔗

Cross to the other side, using the crossing near **Clifton Bridge**.

Clifton Bridge

In the Rowntrees' days there was no bridge here, and the River Ouse had to be crossed by ferry a little further downstream. Access to Clifton was improved when Clifton Bridge was opened in 1963. The bridge was built on the site of the old ferry crossing from 4,000 tons of concrete and 50 tons of reinforced steel. A couple of years before, the Army built a temporary bridge as a trial for the permanent bridge and to ease traffic flow for the wedding of the Duchess of Kent at York Minster.

Link to next place

Go **down the slope** to the left of the bridge, **turn left** and enjoy a relaxing walk alongside the **River Ouse** to return to **under the railway bridge**, passing on the paths called the **Joseph Rowntree Walk** and the **Dame Judi Dench Walk**. Finish the walk at **Lendal Bridge**.



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