



# **NEW EARSWICK ROWNTREE WALK**

**FROM  
CHOCOLATE  
COMES CHANGE**



## 5

## New Earswick walk

This circular walk gives you a glimpse of a unique Garden Village situated three miles north of the city. From the city centre take the bus no 1 (there are stops at the station, Museum Gardens, or Exhibition Square) and alight at the Folk Hall. If travelling by car there is free parking at the Folk Hall. There are good cycle track links from the city centre to the village as well.

**Duration**

1.5 Hours

**Calories**

(in KitKat fingers)

3 fingers

## New Earswick Village

In 1901 Joseph Rowntree bought 123 acres of land next to land already owned by the Rowntree Company, with the intention of building a new village. He employed the renowned architects Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin who went into partnership as Parker and Unwin in 1896 to plan the project.

The estate was built in four phases, with 30 houses built before the founding Trust Deed (1901-1904); then a more expansive phase of building (1905-1914); followed by the government subsidised 'Homes for Heroes' and inter-war development (1919-1936); and finally housing where new ideas were introduced with a new aesthetic (1950), largely to the plan of Louis de Soissons who was consultant in the post-war period.

The original plan of the village can still be well observed today and broadly speaking this walk follows Joseph Rowntree's original plan.

In creating a village Joseph Rowntree was matching Lever Brothers in Port Sunlight and Cadburys in Bournville. But New Earswick was more experimental with the ideas that came out of the garden city movement. It was less paternalistic than these places, not philanthropic housing for the relief of slum occupation, but social engineering designed to change the way people lived. The village was created in large part as a direct response to Seebohm Rowntree's groundbreaking study of poverty in York, published in 1901.

Its purpose was '*the improvement of the condition of the working classes...by the provision of improved dwellings with open spaces and, where possible, gardens to be enjoyed therewith, and the organisation of village communities with facilities for the enjoyment of full and healthy lives*'.

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Contrary to a common assumption that the houses were intended for rent only by employees at the Cocoa Works, tenancies were available to 'artisans and mechanics ... and all persons who earn their living, wholly or partially, or earn a small income, by the work of their hands or their minds...' By 1954 only a third of the residents were company employees, the remainder from York itself, thus ensuring the mixed community that had been envisaged by Joseph Rowntree.

#### Imagine

As you walk through the village how Joseph stipulated that the houses should be '*well built, convenient, healthy and artistic in design*'.

#### Link to next place

Start your walk in the car park at the back of the **Folk Hall**.

## The Folk Hall

The Community Hall at the heart of the village was built in 1907 and extended in 1935. While in the car park look around you for a sense of the integrated community, with the Doctor's Surgery, Quaker Meeting House, a children's playground, tennis courts and a swimming pool, all surrounded by a lot of green space.

The Hall was intended to meet the needs of the community and social life of the village and provided '*facilities for recreation, billiards, popular lectures with the magic lantern, musical gatherings, debating or literary societies and photographic exhibitions*' as Joseph Rowntree stated at its opening on 5 October 1907.

#### Imagine

How Seebohm Rowntree noted that by 1936 there were many forms of recreation that had been unknown to workers in 1899, such as the cinema, wireless and bicycles. He believed that providing leisure opportunities would ensure fewer drunken people in their homes and in the streets. And of course there has never so far been a pub in New Earswick!

#### Look out for

The large framed photograph of Joseph Rowntree that hangs in the café. There are information boards about events and facilities, and a café inside the Folk Hall, open to all.

#### Link to next place

From the car park, cross carefully over Haxby Road and take the right path behind the bus stop along the beck (**Westfield Beck**) from where you get a good view of the first houses, **Western Terrace**.



## Western Terrace

Western Terrace has the very first houses, built in 1902.

**Link to next place** 

Go back to join the main road, Station Avenue.

## Station Avenue

The houses in this part of the village were part of the first phase of building, and despite modernisation they still retain their original character, built in blocks of four houses. A lot of innovations were introduced in these early houses. They lacked a bathroom upstairs and had an outside earth closet. It was probably the first time that '*social housing*', as it was later called, was planned with true consideration of the needs of tenants. Innovations in the design included a cupboard under the stairs large enough to house a pram, and the first '*through*' living rooms allowing the house type to be orientated in different ways. These became a model for thousands of workers' homes across the country.

**Imagine** 

Having a garden that was the right size, with two fruit trees, for you to cultivate after finishing a day's work, according to Joseph's wish.

**Look out for** 

The '*pleasing irregularity*' of the designs of the houses as you walk through the village. Each conveys a personal character. Also note how some of the roads follow the natural features of the land, also demonstrating the architects' principle that roads should be purposeful and not '*mere aimless wiggles*'.

At the bottom of Station Avenue you'll see a small bridge over the beck. This is the River Foss that runs alongside the Rowntree factory towards the city centre (see [City Centre walk](#)). A grove of cherry and almond trees was once created here.

[Link to next place](#) 

Turn back up **Station Avenue** and right at the signpost for **Ivy Place** and **Chestnut Grove**. Here you will see a little **cluster of shops**.

### Ivy Place shops

Today there is a bakery and cobblers with living accommodation provided. As far as possible local shopping has always been encouraged in the village.

### Ivy Place

These roads (1907-10) illustrate how the motor car was catered for only later, in the 1960s, by laying new roads to the rear of the properties with parking bays and garage blocks. The front entrances were pedestrianised, with pleasant outlooks over their gardens.

[Imagine](#) 

Joseph and Seeböhm deeply immersed in all the detail of the planning. Acknowledging the natural features they tried to retain as many existing trees as possible, and all the roads were named after trees.

[Link to next place](#) 

Walk past some small shops and into the pedestrianised **Chestnut Grove**. Continue past **Sycamore Avenue**. At the end, go left and walk up towards the main road, noting the **allotments** on your right.



## Joseph Rowntree School

The redbrick building in the distance beyond the field is the Joseph Rowntree secondary school. It was completely rebuilt with exciting new premises in 2010.

### Imagine

The opening of the original school on this site by the Education Minister Rab Butler in 1942.

### Link to next place

At the main road turn right and cross over. At the roundabout take the turning on the left, walking into the area of **Hartrigg Oaks**.

## Hartrigg Oaks

Demographic changes in the second half of the twentieth century led to new accommodation that was opened in 1998. A care scheme of bungalows for independent living for the retired and elderly was supported by central supported care as need arises. The central building, the Oaks Centre, also contains facilities for the whole community.

### Look out for

The statue of The Hart in the forecourt outside the Oaks Centre, by the sculptor Sally Arnup (1930-2016).

### Link to next place

Take the path away from the **Oaks Centre** crossing **Lucombe Way** and walk back in the direction of the village. Turn left at the footpath (**Millennium Path**), bearing right until you reach a road (**Rowan Terrace**). Turn right.

## Rowan Avenue

The first bungalows were built here in 1920. The road layout was generally culs-de-sac off a main feeder road rather than the linear form as found on the eastern side of the village.

### Look out for

The cul-de-sac is a noted characteristic of the Parker and Unwin planning concept and was first used at Hampstead Garden Suburb in 1906.

### Imagine

How experts from all over the world regularly make visits here to learn about the trailblazing ideas that were put into practice by Joseph Rowntree and his son.

### Link to next place

Continue past **Rowan Place** and **Rose Tree Grove**. At **Almond Grove**, turn left and walk towards the school building with the **Clock Tower**.

## New Earswick Primary School – The Open Air School

Initially, pupils had to walk the 1.5 miles to Haxby Road School near the factory four times each day. So Joseph Rowntree persuaded the local education authority to approve the building of a school at the Trust's expense. It was built in 1911-12 to better standards than existing school building standards, with more space per pupil in the classroom, and classrooms facing south with large windows which could be folded back to allow in fresh air and sunlight. National standards did not catch up with New Earswick Primary School until the 1944 Education Act.

### Look out for

Some of the original architectural features are still in evidence.

### Imagine

The scenes captured in the early educational films from this ultra-modern school, today held in the Yorkshire Film Archive.

### Link to next place

Carry on along the path past the school and when you reach the main road (Hawthorne Terrace) turn right towards the Folk Hall noting the Explore Library that adjoins the school buildings. Note also the row of shops on your left, and the Methodist Church on the right, built in 1926 on land provided by the Trust and with financial support from it.

## Red Lodge

Next you'll pass Red Lodge, the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust's first sheltered flexible care housing scheme built in the 1970s with 60 flats or bedsits with an on-site warden, communal dining room and community room—but residents could be independent if they wished.

### Link to next place

As you re-enter the car park note the large modern building on the corner of Haxby Road.

## Elm Tree Mews – Eco Houses

Built in 2008, this is a mixed tenure scheme of houses and flats that has trialled modern heating systems with underfloor heating and solar panels. Its timber frame panels give a high level of thermal insulation.

### Imagine

The continuity of the Rowntree legacy. Today the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust holds the freehold of the greater part of all the properties in the village and acts as landlord to the residents and supports the village with community and educational activities. But New Earswick village constantly continues to be adapted and new work initiated in response to contemporary demands and needs.



### Link to next place

The walk ends here. You may also wish to know about some further places of interest and relevance.

## New Earswick Nature Reserve

On the south side of the village is the site of the original brickworks that supplied the bricks and roof tiles for the village. It closed in 1933 and all that remains are the clay pit, the concrete base of an old pump, a well and area of brick pavement. It gradually filled with water and is now designated as an Educational Nature Reserve that monitors local wildlife. There are and plenty of unusual birds and trees and plants of interest. (Entry is by appointment only, or look out for the regular guided walks—information available at the Folk Hall.)



### Look out for

A series of Nature walks all over the village, along the beck and in the woodland areas, and old railway line path. If you're very lucky you might see a kingfisher.

## Derwenthorpe

You might now like to travel to south-east York near Osbaldwick, to the new mixed-tenure development of over 500 homes created by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Trust continues to be at the forefront of new forms of housing for the future.



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