



OUT OF TOWN ROWNTREE WALK

FROM
CHOCOLATE
COMES CHANGE

3

Out of Town Walk

This walk takes you to some significant establishments and resting places connected with the Rowntree family.

Begin at Walmgate Bar with the walls and city centre behind you. Turn right onto Paragon Street and shortly after turn left onto Barbican Road. At the crossroads turn left onto Heslington Road and follow this up the hill until you reach the entrance to The Retreat.

The sites on this walk are rather far flung, so get your walking shoes on!

Duration

2-3 Hours

Calories

(in KitKat fingers)
5 fingers

The Retreat

The Retreat, still today a Mental Health Care Provider, was opened in 1796 by Quaker William Tuke to provide a place where the mentally ill (initially Quakers only) could be treated with respect and dignity. This happened after the tragic death of Hannah Mills in York Lunatic Asylum (see [Clifton walk](#)).

The Retreat was groundbreaking. Tuke tried to create a 'community' rather than an asylum, where there were no doctors, only 'attendants' who lived with the patients, encouraging a familial atmosphere.

The 19th century saw the emergence of the new discipline of psychiatry, and the 'moral treatment' practised at The Retreat was influential on the developing treatment of mental illness.



Look out for 🔍

Many of the buildings date from the 18th and 19th centuries and include work of several of the foremost architects of the city. The architect Walter Brierley added extensions, including the adjacent building Lamel Beeches, originally the home of the superintendent of the hospital.

Link to next place 🔗

Retrace your steps briefly down **Heslington Road** and look for a **green metal gate just before no.103**. Go through this and follow the country path downhill onto **Walmgate Stray**. **Turn left** at the bottom and **follow the high wall** along until you reach the **white 'milestone' post**.

Quaker Burial Ground

The quiet oasis that is York's historical Quaker burial ground (pictured below) lies behind this wall (No public access). It was created here after the closure of Bishophill Quaker burial ground in 1855 (that you will visit later on this walk).

Look out for 🔍

The plaque stating: *'Behind this wall in the ground of The Retreat is a Quaker burial ground with the graves of many York friends including Joseph Rowntree.'*

Link to next place 🔗

Retrace your steps on this footpath and follow it across the **Stray** and away from the **University of York buildings**.



The University of York

As you cross this stretch of open land, you will leave behind the main campus of the University. Two key names in the founding of the University, Oliver Sheldon and John Bowes Morrell, were both Directors of Rowntree & Co. The University was founded in 1963 with the help of a £100,000 joint donation from the Joseph Rowntree Trusts. The Social Sciences building is named after Seebohm Rowntree.

Link to next place

Pass through the **gate at the far side of the Stray**. **Turn right** to pass by **York Barracks**. Continue straight on over **Fulford Road**, and into **Hospital Fields Road** opposite. Continue ahead until you emerge at the side of the **River Ouse**. **Turn left** towards **Millennium Bridge** and **cross over the bridge**. **Turn right** and continue citywards along the river bank path until you reach the **large wrought iron gates** of **Rowntree Park** on your left.

Rowntree Park

These 25 acres were a major gift donated to the people of York by Joseph Rowntree in 1921 as a memorial to the members of the Cocoa Works' staff who had fallen in the First World War. They became York's first public park, designed by Fred Rowntree and J.W. Swain to be a '*quiet restful memorial park*', where people could remember their loved ones. Some of the original planting was selected from the Quaker James Backhouse's nursery, then located at West Bank, Acomb.

Look out for

The park's beautiful shallow curving lake spanned by a lych-gate and dovecote, formal gardens, playground, tennis courts and the Rowntree Park Reading Café. Find the memorial plaque under the dovecote which dedicates the area to the company's workers who died during two World Wars.

Imagine

The flood of January 1920, described by Joseph Rowntree '*the water flowed over the entire ground, the lower portions of which were covered to a depth of 5 to 6 feet*'. Flooding is something sadly still known to today's residents around the park.



Link to next place

Head to the **Richardson Street entrance** of the park (up the slope and behind Explore Café). Look for the **small audio post** that is embedded in a flower bed right opposite the gates. Here you can experience the Rowntree Society's '*Minute Memories*' using the wind-up handle.

Listen to fascinating selections from our 'York Remembers Rowntree' interviews and hear the real voices of ex-Rowntree employees remembering the factory at work in the mid-20th century.

[Link to next place](#) 

Continue along **Richardson Street** and straight on to **Southlands Road**. Turn **right** into **Millfield Road**, **left** into **Scarcroft Road**, and **left** into the main road called **The Mount**. **Cross The Mount** and walk a short distance until you reach the right hand turning into **Dalton Terrace**. **Walk along Dalton Terrace** until you reach **The Mount School**.

You might like to know that further out of town on this side of York, beyond The Mount, was the home of Joseph's nephew, Arnold Rowntree MP—a house called Chalfonts in the Dringhouses area, which is no longer there.

Chocolate fact 

Arnold was popularly known as '*Chocolate Jumbo*' apparently because he had a '*great liking for the products of the industry*'. He had a jovial character, was a great raconteur, and full of huge compassion. He had a horse that he rode on The Mount, called '*Business*', and when people called his servant could rightly say he was '*Out on Business*'. He introduced some imaginative advertising schemes at Rowntree's, such as a huge mechanical swan on the Thames pulling an outsize tin promoting Rowntree's Elect Cocoa. Arnold was MP for York for the duration of World War 1.

The Mount School

Another vital establishment in York's enduring Quaker community, responsible for the education of women. Founded by Esther and William Tuke, its first location was Castlegate (see [City Centre walk](#)) before it moved to the present site in 1857. (No public access)

Imagine 

The women of the Rowntree family being taught here throughout the nineteenth century. In more recent times the authors Margaret Drabble and A.S. Byatt, the actress Judi Dench and the astrophysicist Jocelyn Bell Burnell were pupils here.

[Link to next place](#) 

Head back down to the main road, **The Mount**, and **turn left** towards the city centre. This becomes **Blossom Street**, and you will see **Micklegate Bar** dominating the road ahead.

Blossom Street

Watched over by Micklegate Bar, this street was the location of another Rowntree home (number 11, no longer there).

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Imagine 🗨️

Nine-year-old Joseph moving to this area in 1845. The grander residential buildings of this area contrasted with their previous home on Pavement, giving the children far more space to play. Their house had a large garden.

Link to next place 🔗

Continue **under the Bar** and down **Micklegate**. Take the **second turning on the right** into **Trinity Lane**, and at the end at a five-way junction **continue straight** on into **Bishophill Senior**. **Walk past the graveyard** of St Mary's Bishophill Senior, and **exactly opposite the Golden Ball pub**, you will see a block of flats called **Tuke House**. By the **plaque** mentioning John Woolman and the Tukes there is a **gate** that is the entry to the garden.

Bishophill Quaker Burial Ground

This piece of land was purchased in 1667 and used as the first burial ground in York for Quakers. The grave of American John Woolman (friend of Benjamin Franklin and early advocate of the abolition of slavery) is here. Now it is a serene garden with lime trees, terrace and flower beds, and 32 round-topped headstones fixed around the edges along the old walls.

Look out for 🔍

The grave of Sarah Rowntree (daughter of J and S Rowntree. Died 19th of 12 month 1847 aged 4 years) (see [City Centre walk](#)). Note the simplicity of the Quaker headstones and note how the Quakers shunned the names of the months (in this case December) because of their pagan associations, using instead the sequence of the month in the year (in this case 12 month).



Link to next place

Now **take Carr's Lane**, the little cobbled lane beside **Tuke House**, down towards the river and at the bottom **turn left** to rejoin **Micklegate**. **Cross Ouse Bridge**, and you will now be back in the city centre.



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