

Rowntree Heritage Walk

A 1.5 mile heritage walking route in York.

Click here to catch up with all our news



Discover the communities who worked and lived around this area and the health and wellbeing active legacy which still exists today



You can use your smart phone to take photographs and upload them to our social media with the hashtag #rowntreesociety

Be Green



Walk, take the bus or use a bike, find out about local transport links here



Tag us on Instagram when you do your Rowntree walk! Our handle is: @rowntreesociety



1 Haxby Road - YO31 8TA

Rowntree Factory (The Cocoa Works) on Haxby Road

- In 1890 Joseph Rowntree bought 29 acres of land and built a state-of-the-art complex.
- In the past the 9 foot high Rowntree letters on the factory were painted out in order to prevent aerial identification.
- The buildings were popularly known by their function - such as the melangeur block (a 'melangeur' is a chocolate-grinding machine), the almond block and the cream block.

Watch video



There were interconnecting tunnels and two floors below ground level.

Take a few steps now to look at the small building with the triangular front, which is the former Joseph Rowntree Memorial Library.

2 Joseph Rowntree Memorial Library - YO31 8TA

This facility opened in 1927 and you can still see the name plaque above the doorway.

Watch video



Carefully cross the road to the Nuffield Hospital which was the former factory dining block.

3 Dining Block - YO31 8TA

- As you crossed the road did you know there was a subway that once connected the factory with the dining facilities? Many former employees remember going through the tunnel to collect their lunches!
- This building was not just used as a dining block but had many other social functions too.



Walk 80ft, approx 1 min, towards the roundabout. The theatre is on the same side of the street as the Nuffield hospital.

4 Joseph Rowntree Theatre - YO318TA

- The theatre opened in 1935, and was built in the Art Deco style. The building is still used today and many plays and musicals are performed here by the Rowntree Players.



Carefully cross the roundabout and you will see Yearsley Pool.

5 Yearsley Pool - YO31 8SB

- This was originally an open-air swimming bath for the Factory.
- Designed by Fred Rowntree, it was presented to the City of York in 1909. A roof was finally added in 1965.
- Lynne, the granddaughter of Ruby Florence who worked at the Rowntree factory, told us this story: "She used to swim here with her sisters in her lunch break & there were little sheds where the swimmers could change out of their bathing costumes."
- Take a look at this old-fashioned wool bathing costume, like the ones that swimmers used at Yearsley. How would you feel wearing a woolly costume, compared to the fabrics we have today? Why do you think they used wool?



Watch video



Now walk approx. 1 mile to New Earswick Nature reserve.

River Foss path (unsuitable for wheelchairs)

Option 1: From the entrance of the car park, take the path down the River Foss and turn left for 0.7 miles, approx. 12 minutes, following the river path. It brings you out further along Haxby Road near the Link Road, just before New Earswick, then it's 5 more minutes to the nature reserve or

Option 2: Haxby Road footpath - approx. 1 mile, you will pass the bowling green, Rowntree Playing fields (now York St John Playing fields).

Now you are at the mini roundabout you can take the path alongside the front of New Earswick Nature Reserve.

If you need facilities: toilets, parking, library, café: located at the New Earswick Folk Hall (0.2 miles, approx. 3 minutes from the nature reserve - Hawthorn Terrace, YO32 4AQ)



6 New Earswick Nature Reserve Off Alder Way - YO32 4TL

We are working in partnership with NE Nature Reserve and can offer special guided tours and bushcraft workshops. Please contact us for more details or contact NE Nature Reserve (newearswicknr.wordpress.com/)

There are many groups at the reserve including bee keeping, bird ringers, fishing (families, youths, and intro days), bird watchers, volunteer gardeners and more!

- This was the site of the original brickworks which supplied the bricks and roof tiles for the village.
- The brickworks closed in 1933 and all that remains is 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.



If you are very lucky you can sometimes spot a kingfisher!

Walk along Hawthorn Terrace to the Folk Hall, 0.2 miles, approx 3 mins.

7 New Earswick Folk Hall - YO32 4AQ

- The heart of the village was built in 1907 and it remains the centre of the vibrant community, with a swimming pool, play park, library, café, parking and green space all nearby.
- The first houses to be built in the village were at Western Terrace. You can spy these by the beck behind the bus stop on Haxby Road. Many of the houses had good-sized gardens and two fruit trees for the residents to tend to.
- Can you spot the primary school? Children used to walk 1.5 miles to Haxby Road School near the factory four times a day. This school was built in 1911, with more space, and lovely south-facing windows for fresh air and sunlight.

TRAVEL OPTIONS

Walk to Haxby Road from town.

Catch a local bus - the number 5 takes you along the route (firstbus.co.uk/uploads/maps/5_York_Map_A5.pdf)

Park on Haley's Terrace to start near the Yearsley Pool.

Park at New Earswick Folk Hall and work backwards.

Continue walking if you want to link with the Foss Walks/Huntington

Download the family friendly map here (itravelyork.info/downloads/file/46/the-river-foss-walk)

Opposite the Folk Hall is Station Avenue. You can walk for one minute along the junction to Willow Bank, YO32 4BN.

There is community allotment project here, [click this link to find out more.](#)

Cross the small bridge over the beck. This links up with the nearby area known as Huntington.