

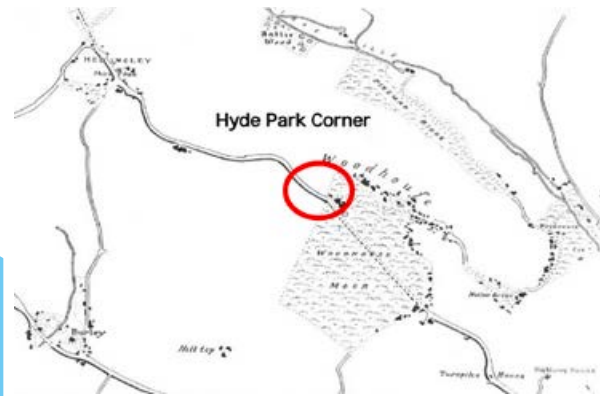


**WOODHOUSE MOOR**  
*Hidden Histories Tour*



1

## WOODHOUSE MOOR



Woodhouse Moor, or Hyde Park, as it is known by many, became Leeds' first public park after being bought by Leeds Corporation in 1857 for £3,000. Prior to its purchase, it was originally moorland—hence its name. An uncultivated area on the edge of Leeds (see left), it was used for grazing, hunting, and later military gatherings. During the 1870s, the Moor was first formally landscaped, with many features you can still see today: tree-lined walkways, seating, a bandstand, and a fountain. In 1902, ornate arches with gas lamps were added to pathways to facilitate evening Edwardian 'promenading', but these no longer exist today. The image to the right shows one such path with smaller sapling trees, compared to the mature trees that line today's paths. The pathway leads to the fountain in the distance.



Image credits: Left, Leeds City Council, 2012 Right, Woodhouse Moor, by kind permission of Leeds Libraries, leodis.net



## THE BANDSTAND

In 1879, a bandstand and ornate drinking fountain (not pictured) were presented by Alderman William North and situated in the park. The image on the left shows the original bandstand, surrounded by gas lamps, flagpoles, green hedges, and flagged paving.

During the 1800s, for two days every week in June and July, the bandstand was home to free music concerts, attended by local working-class audiences, sometimes in their thousands, and likely often financed by Alderman North. These were extremely popular events, attended by children and adults alike. The bandstand was removed during World War II, to be melted down to supply metal for armaments for the war effort. It is suspected that the fountain also met the same fate.

Image credit: Woodhouse Moor Bandstand, by kind permission of Leeds Libraries, leodis.net

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# 3

## PAVILION DARKROOM

Where Akmal's Tandoori Bistro now stands, once stood the UK's first ever women's photography centre. Originally built as a park refreshment pavilion, The Pavilion Women's Photography Centre opened a gallery and darkroom space there in May of 1983. Run by graduates from the Fine Art Department at the nearby University of Leeds, Pavilion worked with local working women, teaching them how to make photographs and use equipment and resources not usually available to them. Over the course of the next 10 years, Pavilion ran a programme of events, exhibitions, and workshops. They exhibited work that sought to examine issues around the representation of women in media—the 'politics of representation'—and highlight areas of women's lives that were often hidden or ignored, like domestic labour, child-rearing, and working. Pavilion still exists as an arts organisation in Leeds today, but as a visual-arts organisation, quite different from its roots as a Feminist Photography Centre. In 2014, they commissioned a 70-minute film exploring the origins of The Pavilion Photography Centre.

Image credits: Pavilion's original gallery and workspaces on Woodhouse Moor, late 1980s, early 90s, courtesy of Pavilion.



# 4

## WOMEN IN REVOLT!

Woodhouse Moor has a long history as a site of Feminist and Working Class protest.

On July 28th, 1908, Woodhouse Moor was the site of the UK's largest Women's Liberation rally in the North of England. Led by the Women's Social & Political Union (WSPU), 100,000 women marched from The Town Hall to a demonstration on Woodhouse Moor, advocating for 'Votes for Women'. Major figures of the Women's Lib movement at the time, including Adela Pankhurst (daughter of Emmeline Pankhurst), addressed the demonstration. This photo on the right was taken on 28th July 1908 and shows a group of women carrying placards and banners as they take part in the march.

There was also the Clothing Strike of 1970, which saw 20,000 textiles workers, the majority of them women, begin an unofficial strike. Striking workers marched from factory to factory gaining more support as they went, and the strike snowballed. The strike lasted about two weeks and saw workers appealing a decision to reject a shilling pay rise. On the 25th of February 1970, 5,000 workers gathered on Woodhouse Moor to reject an offer of negotiations on the condition they immediately returned to work.

From 1977, women in Leeds began the 'Reclaim the Night' protests, which would go on to become a worldwide movement advocating for women's right to safety in public spaces. The Leeds group was formed in response to the 'Yorkshire Ripper' murders that were happening across Leeds, and the police response, which was to tell women not to go out at night—effectively imposing a curfew on them. The Leeds Revolutionary Feminist group called for women to march in cities across the UK on the night of 12th November 1977, against rape, and for a woman's right to walk at night without fear. They advertised this in national newsletters and publicised it to women's groups. In Leeds, two groups marched, one from Woodhouse Moor and a smaller one from Chapeltown, into the city centre with placards and flaming torches. Reclaim the Night has a legacy still relevant today, highlighting gender-based violence, and the ways in which our policing and justice system enact and enable gender discrimination and violence.

Image credits, top to bottom: W.S.P.U Procession to Woodhouse Moor, 1908 by kind permission of Leeds Museums and Galleries, leodis.net Woodhouse Moor, Strike Meeting, 1970, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds, WYL5000 Still of an ITV New report, 2020, ITV



# 5

## PARTY &

Woodhouse Moor has long been a place for large social gatherings and celebrations. As early as the 1800s, the Woodhouse Feast (left) was an annual event that took place on the Cinder Moor and featured music, performances, stalls, and later fairgrounds. The photo to the right shows an image of The 7th Lord Mayor's Annual Parade, 1980. The Parade took place each June, setting off from Woodhouse Moor, walking into the city centre, before returning to The Moor. In 1980, over 300,000 people and over 70 floats took part, with a theme of 'Leeds into the 80s'. The photo to the right shows a young woman dressed in 18th-century costume offering sweets to toddlers. In 1997, the Moor was home to 'Hyde Out', the precursor to what we now know as Leeds Pride. The daytime celebration, organised by LGBTQIA+ volunteers, featured AIDS awareness, LGBTQIA+ charities and community groups, performers, and live music. More recently, Unity Day champions diversity and community with their annual event, started in response to the 1995 local riots.

Image Credit: Right, 7th Lord Mayors Parade. Centre, Woodhouse Feast by kind permission of Leeds Libraries, leodis.net



# 6

## ...PLAY!

Leeds' first children's playground and outdoor gymnasium were located on Monument Moor (image to the right, taken in 1888). For a time, this area was known as 'Swing Moor' as a result. The swings and playground were relocated during the Second World War to make way for an air raid shelter.

The photo on the left, taken in 1945, shows children playing on another more recent playground, which bears a closer resemblance to today's playground. Wrangthorne Church is visible in the background of the image, and the park contains a slide, roundabout, and spinning frame in the foreground of the image, known as a 'Witches Hat'.

Image Credit: Left, by kind permission of Leeds Libraries Right, by kind permission of Leeds Museums and Galleries, both leodis.net



# 7

## AIR RAID SHELTERS

During the Second World War, large public air raid shelters were built all over the city, including under Woodhouse Moor. After the war, these shelters were sealed up and filled in. Some evidence of the air raid shelter off Hyde Park Road still exists today...can you find it? The shelter would have been accessed via a main doorway facing out onto Hyde Park Road, at the junction with Brudenell Avenue—now visible mostly as a large mound of earth under the green grass. The shelter would have been laid out with separate sections for men, and women and children, and several escape hatches to the ground above. One of these hatches is still visible, now concreted over and easy to overlook amongst the grass. Each of the tunnels was lined with benches for people to sit and wait out an air raid.



Image Credit: Phill D





Created by Emma Bentley Fox,

With thanks to The Cultural Institute, University of Leeds and our partners Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Combined Authority  
To find out more about the WoW Park project and listen to an audio recording of this map, visit:  
<https://www.leeds.ac.uk/cultural-institute>

## SOURCES

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