3. ROSEBANK MILLENNIUM GREEN

This steep five and half acre site, once seventeenth century fields, left in trust to maintain St John’s Church, New Briggate by its founder, woolman merchant John Harrison, is again run by a trust.

The Rosebank Millennium Green Trust now looks after the Green. In 1997 the Trust, formed by local community groups, leased the site for 999 years from the City Council and after neighbourhood consultation obtained Millennium Green funding to improve it. Local trainees helped create the Millennium Green, opened by Hilary Benn MP in 2001.

"From green to Green", the fields disappeared when the St John’s Trustees built the steep steps (now the Millennium Way) in 1861, selling the land to small builders who put up the Rosebank and Rillbank cobbled streets of terraced housing in the 1880s.

In the 1970s they were demolished in the modernisation of post-war Leeds. Among replacement housing was a sheltered complex for elderly people, named Benson Court after Leeds Housing Director Sydney Benson, and proudly opened by him in 1973, as the culmination of his career from office boy to director spanning 47 years.

By the 1990s its neglected state sparked the Millennium Green project, ensuring the site remains green for a thousand years!

4. BENSON COURT

A small park with young children’s play area, teenage shelter, stepped amphitheatre and seating, created in 2004 in response to requests from the tenants of nearby St John’s estate.

The Verdun streets were built here when Henrietta Street (now Hyde Park Road) was created to link Woodhouse Moor with Burley Road in the 1870s, along the ancient boundary between Leeds and Headingley cum Burley.

Sadly he died within two years. Within twenty years Benson Court proved unsatisfactory. Empty and damaged by fire it was demolished in the 1990s. Sydney Benson believed strongly in tenant consultation, which was used to plan the park that bears his name.

The sole relic of the former busy streets is the white building at the side of the park. Now extended as student housing, it was formerly the site named Little Park pub.

5. ALEXANDRA PARK

Takes its name from Alexandra Road, built after the popular Danish Princess Alexandra married Queen Victoria’s son, Edward, Prince of Wales, in 1863. Once part of the Kirkstall Abbey estate, the 1860s the site belonged to George Thomas, (Lambton’s 7th Earl of Carldigan, famous for the Charge of the Light Brigade and the invention of the cardigan), and his eccentric wife Adelina.

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To fund their extravagant life style the Cardigan lands were leased and sold to speculative builders. Albert Terrace, Spring Grove Terrace, Wakefield Place and Maryland Terrace were built here. Albert Terrace (with date stone 1862) probably built as working class homes by the Model Cottage Building Committee, although accountants, cashiers and solicitors appear as local residents in the 1872 Directory.

Leeds City Council's clearance policy meant the houses were demolished in the 1970s and the present park created. Railings erected in the 1990s and the fixed equipment play area (now sadly vandalised) confirmed it as a public park.

The park is due to be improved in 2004 after community consultation as part of the Burley Lodge Housing Renewal scheme.

Useful Info:
- Burley Lodge Centre with Green Room cafe, Hindu Temple (formerly Spring Grove House), Makthai Mosque
- Easy Walking or disabled access: return to Woodside Road. Go down and through side of Health Centre to Hyde Park Road
- Health tip: gentle walking round the park

Walk along Burley Lodge Road, noting the houses improved by the Housing Renewal Programme. Turn up Spring Grove Terrace into ...
6. ROYAL PARK GREEN

Another post-war demolition site, lying between King’s Road and Queen’s Road, behind the imposing former Royal Park School (built 1892) The Holderness streets stood here from the 1880s. Landscaped in the 1980s with a sports area for the school, now upgraded, it is now enjoyed by the community. Most years of consultation, plans awaiting approval include a hard surface multisports pitch, an informal play area with seating, an informal grass kickabout sports pitch, restored paths and possibly railings.

It takes its name from Thomas Clapham’s “Royal Park”, across Royal Park Road in 1873, on the western side of Woodhouse Moor. These public gardens existed from 1858 under various names, all including the word “Royal”. Up for sale from 1885 at the Royal Horticultural Gardens, the 43 acres stretching along Hyde Park Road to Brudenell Road.

included a cricket ground, skating rink, bowling green, dancing platform, orchestra, concert hall, ballroom, refreshment room and brewery, conservatory and waiting rooms. They were finally sold for housing in 1892, the year Royal Park School was built.

Exploring Green Spaces in LITTLE WOODHOUSE, BURLEY & HYDE PARK

a healthy walk between six local green spaces with map, historical details and useful information

produced by Freda Matthews with Funding from The Seafarers Trust Can Do Fund & Active Life