

HAVE YOUR SAY ON WOODHOUSE MOOR!

Woodhouse Moor, often referred to as Hyde Park, sits right on the edge of the University of Leeds campus, directly opposite the Law School. Students are among the most regular visitors to the park, especially during the summer term and end-of-exams celebrations. But how much do you know about the history of the Moor? What is it that makes the park such a treasured spot for so many students? And how can we ensure that it remains a valuable and accessible green space for all?

A team from the Universities of Leeds and Bradford are researching the past, present and future of public parks in Leeds, and they are calling upon students at the University of Leeds to help them by sharing their experiences of Woodhouse Moor. They want to hear your views on the park, as well as your hopes and fears for its future.

Acquired by the council in 1857 to improve public health in the city, Woodhouse Moor was commonly known as ‘the lungs of Leeds.’ The move to purchase the park was triggered by ‘encroachments’ upon the space; parts of the land were being parcelled off for development, and rumours circulated that a substantial section might be given over to the army as an encampment. A grass roots campaign in support of a public park gathered momentum, spurred by a sense of threat to the Moor’s heritage. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Moor was widely used for a variety of purposes, including sport (mainly cricket), musical concerts and political meetings. Yet there were still fierce debates about how the park should look, who it was for, and who would have to pay for it.

‘The Future Prospects of Urban Parks’ project examines the social significance, role and prospects of parks as places of social mixing in cities, from the Victorian era to the present day. As well as considering the changing role of parks over time, the research team want to think about the ways in which parks might be regulated and used in the future. Current issues such as cuts to local services, the rise in mental health problems, and climate change – to name just three – all have implications for the way that parks are run in the future. The team want to uncover a diversity of experiences and opinions about the future of the city’s parks and green spaces.

They are also looking for historic images of any Leeds parks up to World War 2, and images of different aspects of park-life in contemporary times. A selection of these images will be uploaded to LEODIS, a public online image archive run by Leeds Libraries and Information Service, and will form part of a broader exhibition on Leeds parks at Roundhay Visitor Centre in Spring 2017.

- Upload a photo of your experiences in the park at leedsparksproject.wordpress.com
- Give your views – arrange a time by emailing futureofparks@bradford.ac.uk, or fill out the form on leedsparksproject.wordpress.com
- See us in the Leeds University Union on 6 June, or at our park events over the summer
- Look out for our citizens survey on parks in September
- Follow us on twitter, [@leedsparksstudy](https://twitter.com/leedsparksstudy), for project updates