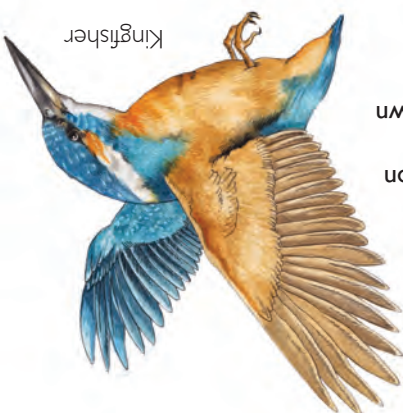




A recreational trail exploring the green corridors of north west Leeds



Kingfisher

Large still water bodies such as Paul's Pond and Yeadon Tarn contain a variety of wildfowl with numbers increasing in winter months with migratory wildfowl looking for feeding areas. Come the evening then Natterer's and Dabentons bats make an appearance at Paul's Pond. On fast moving water habitats such as Meanwood Beck and Oil Mill Beck dippers and the metallic blue and orange kingfisher will be seen diving for caddis fly larvae and bullheads respectively. Close inspection of the deep pools in these backs may reveal young brown trout while on the surface mayflies flit over the water laying their eggs.



Foxglove

If any woodland ground becomes disturbed then there is a good chance that foxgloves will emerge in the newly created glade. Grassy glades and fields during the summer will yield a profusion of wild flowers with butterflies such as peacock and tortoiseshells moving among them seeking nectar. Wherever bare sandy ground appears during the late spring, holes arise indicating the activity of solitary mining bees as they prepare their nest chambers with collected pollen. With time open grassy areas become colonised with dispersed young trees and bushes such as hawthorn, hazel and blackthorn creating a scrubby habitat. In these areas whitethroats, chaffinches, greenfinches and willow warblers will be seen. Moving to the higher ground in the Chevin Forest Park, the heathland is dense with ling and bilberry. The latter is a source of nectar and pollen for the bilberry bumble bee. During the late spring cuckoo bees, mimicking wasps in their colouration, can be seen quartering bare ground in the heathland area looking for solitary bee nests to lay their eggs in.



Great spotted Woodpecker

Speckled Wood

A quiet early morning walk in our oak/birch woodlands may reveal roe deer quietly moving through the vegetation or a fox returning from a scavenge in one of the local residential estates. Various calls from black caps, chiffchaffs, robins and the raucous nuthatch will arise from the trees as they proclaim their territories. Listen out also for the tapping of the Great spotted woodpecker. A close look at the flowering plants on the woodland floor can reveal wild garlic, bistort and opposite leaved golden saxifrage in moist areas, while drier areas yield wood anemones, lesser celandine, bluebells and wood sorrel. Generally these plants will flower in late spring and die back as the tree canopy develops casting a dense shade. Moving into areas of hedgerows or woodland glades the speckled wood, comma and orange tip butterflies will be spotted. The latter will lay their eggs on mustard garlic and ladies smock.



Roe Deer

Fox

## Wildlife

There is a huge diversity of wildlife in the Northwest Leeds Country Park and much of that can be attributed to the mosaic of different habitats present in the green corridors and green spaces around the conurbations.

## The Trail

This Trail takes you on a journey through some of the parks and green spaces in the north west Leeds area. Throughout the trail you will visit important historical sites and pass through/by different wildlife habitats such as woodlands, wetlands, meadows, scrubland and heathland.

The trail starts at **Woodhouse Moor**, and goes east to follow the Meanwood Valley green corridor in a northerly direction before going northeast to **Eccup Reservoir**. The route swings west to take in **Golden Acre Park** before going north through Bramhope village and dropping down into the river Wharfe valley then up to the **Chevin Forest Park**. An alternative route avoids the drop into the river Wharfe valley.

The trail then meanders southward taking in **Yeadon Tarn** before climbing up to the Billings with its vistas. A more westerly route is taken via **Micklefield Park** to reach the river Aire green corridor. A walk south alongside the river then climbs onto **Hunger Hills** with its views.



A downward south easterly route is taken to reach the Oil Mill Beck green corridor which is followed southwards to the Ring Road. Thereafter the trail climbs to reach **Butcher Hill** before dropping down to the **Kirkstall Forge** Development site and **Kirkstall Abbey Park** by the river Aire. Thereafter the trail ascends eastwards to **Becketts Park**. An alternative flatter route is available from Butcher Hill through West Park before reaching Becketts Park. After Becketts Park the route meanders southwards before returning to **Woodhouse Moor**.



Kirkstall Forge

## History

The green corridors within the Country Park have provided a place for settlement over millennia, and there is evidence of Neolithic and Bronze Age communities, as well as Roman occupation as evinced by the remains of a Roman settlement in the Adel area. The most important development came with the Cistercian order of monks, who built Kirkstall Abbey in 1152. When the monastery was dissolved the monks owned around 800 hectares of land much of it in the Northwest Leeds area.

Over the centuries water powered mills arose, they include the Grade II listed Corn Mill Fold by Oil Mill Beck in Horsforth which was built in the late 18th century. Similarly Meanwood Tannery by Meanwood Beck started life as a corn mill during



Archway at Avenue des Hironnelles

mediaeval times. Sometimes the water power had to be improved depending on the mill's usage. Thus Kirkstall Forge started life as a cornmill under the Cistercian Monks utilising water from Abbey Mill Race that originated from Oil Mill Beck. However in the 17th century when the mill was working as a forge more water power was required so Kirkstall Forge goit brought water from the River Aire.

Seven Arches Aquaduct in Scotland Wood was built in 1837, but as Leeds grew the need for fresh water became paramount so the 91 hectare Eccup reservoir was built in 1843.

Over the years notable stately homes were built and New Grange adjacent to Becketts Park is a fine example. Built in 1626 by Benjamin Wade and then purchased in 1834 by the Beckett Family, the building is now part of the Leeds Becketts University. William Beckett commissioned the classical archway in Queen's Wood to commemorate the visit of Queen Victoria in 1858 to inaugurate the Leeds Town Hall. A housing development on Avenue des Hironnelles near Pool in Wharfedale was initiated by the builder Thomas Swallow in the early 1900s.





This leaflet has been generously funded by



**When visiting countryside areas please act responsibly and follow the country code:**

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people.

This map shows the route of the trail (indicated by the yellow dots). The full circular route is 41 miles (66 km) long. Further leaflets will be available providing more detailed information on the route and its local and natural history.



Set sail at **Yeadon Tarn**



Meet the animals at **Meanwood Valley Urban Farm**



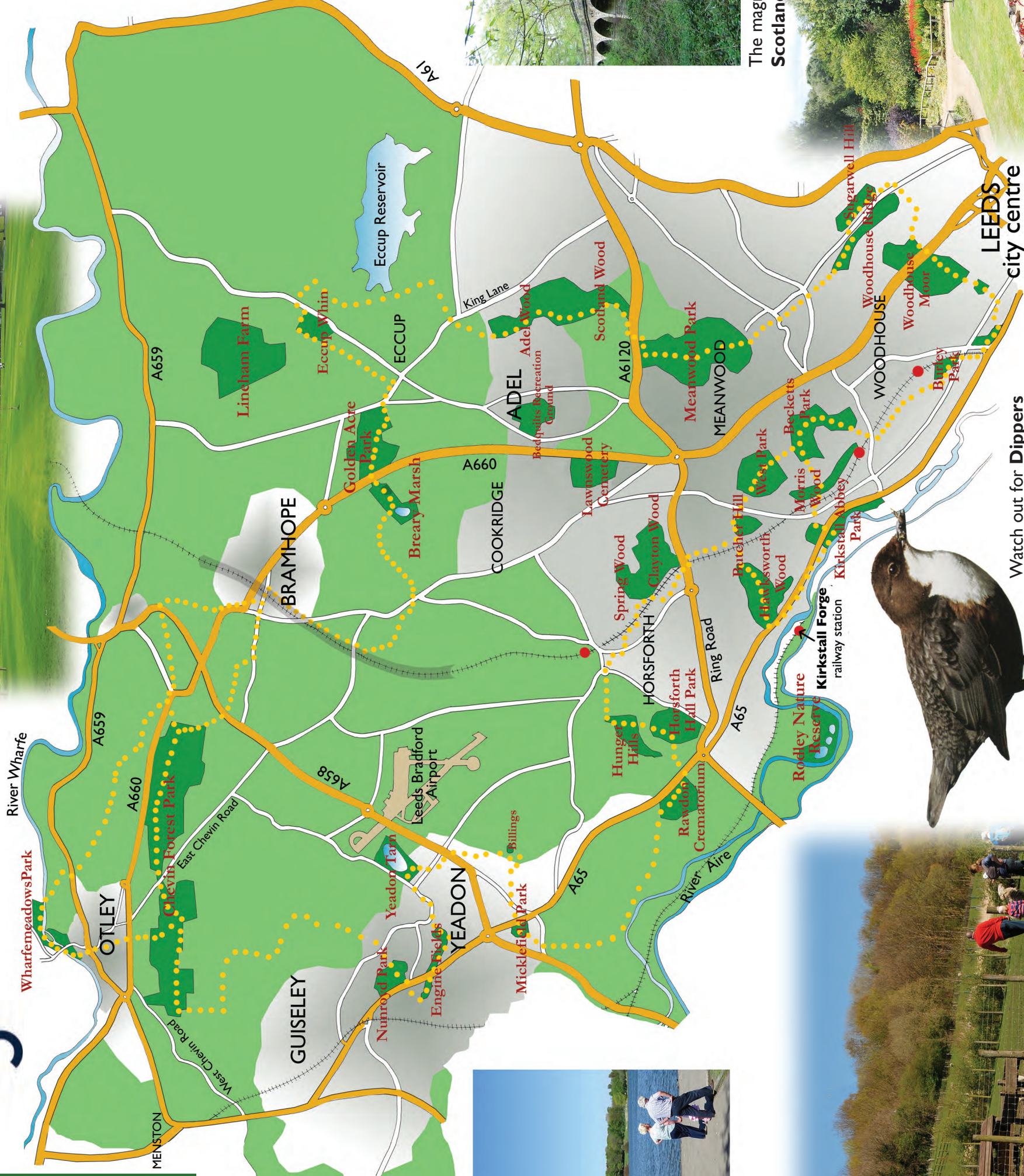
The grand **New Grange** is now part of Becketts University



## Green Gateways

The Trail helps you explore the green spaces and corridors in northwest Leeds which have a rich local and natural history. The green corridors are important routes used by our wildlife to colonise new green spaces and for sources of food during migration periods. In turn the corridors are a great way for us to access the wider countryside avoiding busy roads and large residential areas.

Starting at Woodhouse Moor, close to the city centre, the trail explores some 43 miles of paths, some of which may be rugged underfoot. Sensible footwear is recommended.



The magnificent Seven Arches aquaduct in **Scotland Wood**



Enjoy the horticultural splendours at **Golden Acre Park**



Watch out for **Dippers** along the water courses