



# HISTORIC OWNERS OF MIDDLETON PARK

Middleton Park is a large green open space of over 500 acres. The woodland is the second largest semi-natural ancient woodland in West Yorkshire. The park was part of the manor of Middleton, which has been owned by the Gramaire family (1166-1300), the Creppings, the Leghes (1330-1706), the Brandlings (1706-1865) and the Tetleys (1865-1920). Further information can be found on the History section of the Friends' website.

**Lake (1)** – The lake is artificial and part of the historic parkland. It was probably originally a smaller winter fish pond for the medieval owners. The walk goes round the lake and into the woods, past the top of the clearings, and down the North facing slope to the old tram track.

**Ice House (2)** – In 2006, Robin Silverwood recalled the name “Ice Hill” for a north facing slope. The Archaeologist, Martin Roe, guessed that would be where the Lodge's Ice House would be. Paul Hebden searched and found a few old bricks showing through the soil. Excavations by South Leeds Archaeology in May 2013, and Leeds YAC in July 2017, confirmed that this was indeed an Ice House. There will be a further excavation in June 2019 by Leeds YAC. The Ice House would have been built in the 1760's when Middleton Lodge was built.

**Medieval Boundary Ditch (3)** – In 1200, in the reign of King John, William de Gramary of Middleton and John de Beeston had a long running dispute over who owned parts of Beeston Wood. William locked up Adam's Forester in his stocks, and later, William and his men robbed Adam of a cape, sword, cap and gold ring, and locked him up in the stocks too! In court William denied everything and eventually a Judicial Duel was ordered for the last day of Easter, 1201. However William didn't turn up and the duel didn't happen. In 1204 the court appointed local Knights to oversee the division of the wood and ensure a large boundary ditch was dug, which can still be seen in the park woodland today. Adam continued the dispute in 1205, and there was a final settlement in Adam's favour in 1209. Beeston Wood was not a part of the later Middleton Estate until 1767 when the Brandlings bought it for mining purposes.

**Middleton Lodge (4)** – Built in about 1760 by Charles Brandling, though he never lived permanently here. It may have been designed by Paine, who had designed Brandling's main residence, Gosforth House, near Newcastle. The woodland down to the lake had been cleared in the 1750's, and the wood sold, probably to make the park land, and in preparation for the Lodge to be built. There were extensive outbuildings, a bacon room, a mans room, knife and shoe house, hen house, coal yard, brewhouse, laundry and stables. Last century the Lodge served as the Golf house, and was demolished in 1991, after vandalism and a fire.

**Old Entrance (5)** – the walk follows the original track (5) from the Lodge to the old estate entrance. Leeds Council moved the entrance after it took over the park in 1920.

**Middleton Hall Town Street (6)** – It is not known when Middleton Hall was originally built, but it certainly predated the Lodge and was home to the Leigh family and the Brandlings. It was remodelled in the 1780's. It had a Catholic chapel, as the Leighes and the Brandlings were Catholic. In 1755 the chapel was closed down and its contents sent to Felling, in Northumberland. It is claimed that a miracle happened at that time, when a picture, about to be removed, broke out in a “bloody sweat”, twice! After the Brandlings moved to the Lodge, the Hall was

the home of the various Mine managers. It was demolished in the 1960's after a fire.

**St. Mary's Church (7)** - in 1771 Charles Brandling renounced catholicism, and embraced the Church of England. His son, Ralph Henry, took holy orders and was Vicar of Rothwell. Ralph Henry inherited the estate in 1826 and in 1845 provided land from the park for St. Mary's to be built. It cost £3,000 and tradition says that local miners either paid a week's wage or gave a week's labour. In 1883 Miss Helen Bulmer gifted the church its clock. In 1939 mining subsidence damaged the church spire, which had to be demolished, leaving just the tower. Subsidence damage to the west wall was remedied in 2016 with a £15,000 grant from the Yorkshire Historic Churches trust.

