

Marsden is moved to the Moor

Prior to being erected on Woodhouse Moor in 1952, the Marsden statue used to stand in the town centre. Here is a Yorkshire Evening Post article from the 17th June 1952 which describes the unveiling of the statue in its new home.

Marsden is restored to public view

THEY dropped the Marsden Statue today with a faint “clonk” on its plinth in Woodhouse Moor, Leeds.

After spending 72 years at the corner of Albion Street and Merrion Street, and two years in a Corporation store, the figure of Ald. Henry Rowland Marsden now has an uninterrupted view, to his left, of Peter’s Patent Powder Works. On his right there opens the vista of a public-house, a public library and a public convenience, in that order. Behind him lies a stretch of ground know to the locals as “Mucky Moor.”

They gave him a place on Woodhouse Moor because those who remember his services to Leeds thought scurvy treatment to leave him in storage to gather dust.

It was almost inevitable that the statue should end up on Woodhouse Moor. It is the Valhalla of Leeds statues. Queen Victoria, the Iron Duke, and Sir Robert Peel have all been moved from the city centre to languish there in semi-obscurity.

Trussed in canvas

Whatever were Ald Marsden’s views on the new site, there was no escape. He arrived trussed up in canvas, wire rope and chains, like Houdini before an escaping feat.

At 10.05am, I asked a Corporation official for a few facts about the statue – weight height etc.

“Sorry,” said the official, “but we’re not allowed to give information to the Press.”

I could see that this was going to be difficult. It looked like being a hush-hush affair – more like the Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna than the Hoisting of Henry Marsden on Woodhouse Moor.

At 10.25 they stripped the canvas from Ald. Marsden. Some thoughtful hand had wrapped a green blanket round his neck to stop the chains chafing his throat.

Consciences eased

For the next hour a crane juggled with the inert form of Ald. Marsden. By 11.20 they had him on the plinth, teetering over at an angle of 20 degrees. By 11.30 the crane had planted him neatly in position, and consciences had been eased.