

On My Doorstep

Steadily I stroll through
Heeley People's Park, heading
for the Café ensconced
cosy in Heeley City Farm.

Nestled beside the Garden Centre, burgeoning
herbs – chives, rosemary, basil, thyme; and blooms –
pansies, scented geraniums, climbing clematis.

The People's Park listens to people – 'we want a
bit of the Peak District in here – millstones, rocks, heather and gorse';
'We want flower beds', 'a playground and an adventure bike track';
'climbing rocks'; 'weeping willows, seating, and mosaics'.

As I walk and appreciate the diversity
of this People's Park, I hear
the buzz of traffic on London Road, the A61,
and remember – there could have been
a bypass here! A massive dual carriageway
sweeping through our village of Heeley,
on this green hilltop.

There was going to be a bloody bypass!
Plans were all in place and approved.
Compulsory purchase made of huddled
terrace houses, people's homes; and
then demolished – en masse!

The shops and pubs along London Road
and Chesterfield Road were set to go
under the wrecking ball.

But Heeley folk spoke out –
No! We don't want this bloody
bypass – wrecking our community,
polluting our air. Traffic noise
shaking our windows. Waking our kids.
Keep The White Lion, The Red Lion;
the Motorcycle Shop, the betting shop.
The main road we've got
will do for us, to get from A to B.

Such was the volume of the campaign
that voices were heard!
Opposition to threat!
No Heeley bypass emerged.

Thankfully, I tread past heather, wildflowers,
millstones, climbing rocks, kid's playground.
Yes, a People's Park and a City Farm.
Breathe relief,
The buzz of traffic is just from the
old main road, and not from an
imposing, bloody bypass.

Rita Willow
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