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March 2018

An artwork to commemorate Rowntree announced.

We were very interested to read recently in *The Press* that the fountain in Parliament Square may soon disappear.

Over the past years many of our correspondents as well as social media groups have often suggested that there should be some sort of commemorative artwork to honour the Rowntree name and the huge contribution of the Rowntree family to York over the past two centuries. As well as supplying chocolate to the whole world with brands including KitKat and Smarties, Rowntree & Co guaranteed thousands of livelihoods, developed enlightened working practices, built New Earswick, created public spaces, and contributed to the civic life of the city in all sorts of ways. And the legacy lives on today in the Joseph Rowntree trusts that have their national headquarters in York, and whose work addresses modern social problems concerning poverty, housing, equality and political representation.

Moved by this interest, which is still as strong today as it was in 2000 when Joseph Rowntree was voted 'York's Man of the Millennium', the Rowntree Society plans to commission a major artwork from a well-known artist to celebrate the Rowntree contribution to the city. In the light of the present discussion, we wonder whether this might possibly take the place of the fountain.

The artwork could act as a meeting point in the same way as the fountain that is so well used as a rendezvous place today. But we think it might also act as a point of stillness and reflection about all the things that Rowntree means to the people of York. In any brief to an artist we would want to make this aspiration clear so that the 'Rowntree philosophy' is reflected in the resulting artwork.

It is possible that a visitor to York could leave the city with no awareness that The Rowntree Story is a central part of York's rich heritage and present day culture and it is our belief that a major artwork in the city centre could help change this.

We would like to commission something of a scale that is appropriate to the scale of York's townscape. So, while it will not be of the size and scale of the Angel of the North, for example, we would like to be able to commission something that marks a similar level of

ambition so that it becomes a symbol of York's Rowntree spirit, complementing the other great monuments to York's rich cultural heritage.

Our plans and ideas are still at a very initial stage. We have consulted a number of people connected with art and the city of York, and have been delighted with the positive response to this proposal. Any large-scale artwork will involve a serious fundraising campaign actively involving local people. We expect that the final artwork will be unveiled well before the centenary of Joseph Rowntree's death in 1925.

We would be interested to hear local opinions about our proposals as we embark on this exciting project.

If you would like to make a comment, please contact us info@rowntreesociety.org.uk

The Rowntree Society is a registered charity founded in 2004 to further knowledge of the Rowntree legacy and its continuing relevance.