

Addendum to Walk No 9.

Walk No 9 to The Meadows included a section on Jesse Boot and the last section of the walk was back along the riverside path on the West Bridgford side of the Trent. Included was a photo of an interesting house, with a conical roof, next to Rivermead flats. I have since learned that a similar period house next door (on right of 1st photo) was called 'Plaisance' (Middle English meaning 'pleasure or a source of pleasure') and was Jesse Boot's summer house. Built around the end of the C19th, it was demolished in 1960 when Rivermead was built.

The remaining building has been used as offices but is currently for sale as a development plot with planning permission (Rushcliffe Borough Council, 27/03/2020) for 'Demolition of disused office building, erection of two new buildings comprising a total of five apartments'.

Source of photos: Geocaching website www.geocaching.com WB #8 Then and Now - Jesse Boot's Plaisance Summer House



1901



JESSE BOOT'S 'PLAISANCE' DURING THE 1910 FLOODS

1910



1920



1960



Planning Application: Illustrative Streetscene View from Victoria Embankment.

Red dashed lines indicate the building to be demolished.

Jesse Boot and 'Plaisaunce'

Extracts from the book 'Jesse Boot of Boots the Chemists' by Stanley Chapman, 1973.

'Up to his late forties, Jessie Boot was a strong, well-built man who loved the country and strenuous physical exercise'. However, in his early 50s he developed rheumatoid arthritis, initially in his legs. This 'was cumulative and gradually paralysed him. By 1908 he had to be moved about in a wheel chair and had a Rolls-Royce limousine specially fitted to accommodate the chair. His leisure was confined to week-ends on a couch at 'Plaisaunce', watching the river run by.'

Early in his illness, Boot 'acquired some land by the River Trent a few hundred yards from Trent Bridge, built a pavilion in stone and wood and laid out a recreation ground with tennis courts, summer house and children's amusements. He called it 'Plaisaunce', and took his family there almost every week-end in the summer....[his wife] Florence Boot loved entertaining and, regally dressed, moved easily among a large company of guests, while Boot sat in his bath chair on the verandah dressed in his immaculate brown velvet jacket and surveyed a sequence of convivial occasions with paternal satisfaction'.

Boots employees were invited to Plaisaunce on 'several carefully-planned dates each year....[with entertainment from] Boots Plaisaunce Brass Band ...and Boots Choral Union. Boots Athletic Club...held their meetings at 'Plaisaunce', and Boots Baden-Powel Boy Scouts held parades, inspections and demonstrations there. [There were] athletics, water polo and swimming races [and] in the evening, the dance hall....or fire-work displays....became the centre of attraction....The employees thoroughly enjoyed the fun and cherished the memories for years afterwards.'