

Plan to Restore the 3rd Section of the Former Norton Nursery Site to Parkland

Background to Chantreyland Meadow Arboretum

The Friends of Graves Park launched the Chantreyland project in 2000, to restore to parkland what had been the previous expanded section of Norton Nursery site and which was declared by SCC to be no longer in use. This had become a despoiled landscape with huge accumulations of waste material and was designated as derelict. Our aim was to develop an ecologically enriched environment, sufficiently biodiverse to boost the ecosystem productivity and natural sustainability for all life systems.

Since then, FOGP have managed to achieve much of this, including the very important free access to the people of Sheffield, which was of course in J G Graves's mind when he acquired the whole of Norton Park.

The site in question, when handed over to SCC in 1935, was ancient woodland, with walks up to the walled nursery garden (constructed in 1815 or probably earlier, as identified on a plan 1741) and beyond towards Norton Church and Norton Hall. (In 1929 the Chantreyland Viola was hybridised in the walled garden.)

As a result of some considerable thought, planning and hard work, our aim began to be achieved within Chantreyland Meadow (Area 1), still utilising the framework of the existing tree scape.

The current Arboretum (Area 2) was reclaimed from a similar despoiled area in 2010. The restoration of this land has been achieved (opened to the public in 2016) and needs to be expanded into what is a similar area, which remains a despoiled site, with remnants of the previous expanded Norton Nursery along with other accumulations of materials, skips, portable units, bark mulch collection and vehicle parking.



Chantreyland Meadow (Area 1)

Current Achievements in terms of Biodiversity

Created is a collection of trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants (including thousands of cowslips), all capable of producing nutrition for a wide variety of bees, butterflies, bats, birds, three badger setts, foxes, rabbits, weasel and frogs to list but a few. Please see "Chantreyland Meadow Wildlife Summary" below for further details.

The area is acclaimed by members of the public using it as, to quote one group, "An oasis of calm, colour and interest!"

NB All achievements on these two areas were done in collaboration with SCC Parks and Countryside and the meadow is mown down once each year by parks staff to prepare for the cowslip blossom.

In addition the wooded margins of the Meadow have been left to achieve a re-wilding process.



The Arboretum (Area 2)

Future Plans: The Arboretum Extension

The proposed extension (Area 3) would be developed to achieve a tree scape and ecologically enriched environment, opened up to the public once completed. This area, which was once ancient woodland, would once again be returned to its former glory, supporting wild flowers, bulbs, shrubs and trees, which in turn would support wildlife within the park.

Statement of Support from Professor Ian D. Rotherham

"I would like to add a few words of support for the FOGP proposals. Firstly it is worthwhile simply stating what a fantastic job the Group and its partners in the City Council have done so far. They have created a beautiful example of a community-based, biodiversity-rich habitat in the heart of our best-loved local park.

- "The work to date has created a genuinely 'rewilded' garden from a largely derelict site and this is now a significant asset for local people and for nature.
- "The next phase is vital in order to keep and maintain the impetus so far established. The arboretum extension will provide a further and different experience for the overall site.
- "An additional and extended resource will enhance the usability of the site for local people, community groups, and schools too.

"The garden thus far created and lovingly managed is a source of great pleasure for local people and should be a source of great pride for the wider city.

"Finally, I like to see this as the latest phase of a project begun by myself and the late Dr Oliver Gilbert of Sheffield University back in the 1980s and 1990s. This was the work to identify ancient meadows and to change expensive, short-mowing of grass to foster attractive species-rich meadow areas. Across Graves Park we now have several extensive zones of importance wildflower meadows and these are fully appreciated by children that play there and families that picnic there. The garden (Arboretum) is the next phase of this longer journey."

Professor Ian D. Rotherham, Sheffield Hallam University

Friends of Graves Park 2020

Recorded over the period 2006-2020 (Summary) by Dr. Gavin Baxter

Chantreyland Meadow Wildlife – Summary

Species recorded in Chantreyland Meadow between 2006 and September 2020. Species of note or significance cited for each category.

Wild Flower Species: 163 Species Recorded

- Cowslip covering the Meadow in spring;
- Black Knapweed, Oxeye Daisy, Hogweed, Purple Loosestrife and Common Ragwort attracting insects in the summer;
- Common Spotted Orchid and Common Centaury in the Meadow, Smooth Rupturewort and Blue Eyed Grass in the Arboretum.

Birds: 78 Species Recorded

- Breeding Bullfinch, Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit, Chiffchaff, Blackcap and Ring-necked Parakeet;
- Sightings in the area of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Whitethroat, Waxwing and Crossbill;
- Snipe, Mallard and Moorhen in the pond area, Goosander and Mandarin flying over;
- Regular sightings from the area of Buzzard, Sparrowhawk and Kestrel. Red kite seen once.

Bees: 39 Species Recorded

- 7 species of Mining Bee;
- European Wool Carder Bee – a pair of which set up territory around a patch of Foxgloves;
- Hairy-footed Flower Bee;
- 2 species of Leafcutter Bee;
- 5 species of Nomad Bee;
- 12 Species of Bumblebee.

Butterfly: 23 Species Recorded

- The rare White-letter Hairstreak which has declined across the UK and favours Elm Trees on the edges of deciduous woodland;
- Brimstone – which has been recorded annually in small numbers since the Arboretum was created;
- Large Skipper, Small Skipper, Small Copper, Common Blue, Comma, Peacock, Painted Lady.

Ladybirds: 10 Species Recorded

- Predominantly 7-spot and Harlequin Ladybirds;
- Records of 2-spot, 10 spot, 14 spot, 22 spot, Cream spot, Adonis, Eyed and Orange Ladybirds.

Dragonflies/Damselflies: 7 Species Recorded

- Broad-bodied Chaser, 3 species of Hawker, 2 Damselfly species and Common Darter;
- Only 1 or 2 recorded annually in the Meadow area.

Other Insects of Note

An abundance of Hoverflies on the wildflowers – many still to identify.

Yellow-legged Bee-grabber Fly, Mason Wasps, Digger Wasps, Fly-wolf Wasps.

Lunar Hornet Clearwing Moth, Hummingbird Hawkmoth, Horned Stag Beetle, Hornet, Golden-bloomed Grey Longhorn Beetle, Large Elephant Hawkmoth, Six-spot Burnet, Cinnabar Moth, Wasp Beetle, 5 species of Shieldbug.

Other Wildlife of Note

Regular sightings of resident Rabbit, Fox, Badger, Field Vole, Common Shrew, Wood Mouse, Weasel, Brown Rat. Muntjac Deer, Hedgehog, Noctule Bat, Pipistrelle Bat.

In the ponds: Frog, Toad, Smooth Newt, Amphibious Leech, Great Diving Beetle, Pond Skater, Lesser Water Boatman.

PLAN OF CHANTREYLAND MEADOW AND ARBORETUM
INCLUDING PROPOSED NEW SECTION: THE ARBORETUM EXTENSION

KEY

1. Chantreyland Meadow (Wildlife Area)
2. Chantreyland Arboretum
3. Proposed extension to Arboretum: currently skip/material/depot
4. Frog ponds constructed by SCC (in need of pond liner)
5. Shallow pond constructed by FOGP
6. Cowslip/meadowsweet/geranium/black knapweed/betony collection
7. Bird thicket tree planting areas
8. Notice area display plan in shrub planting surrounds
9. Small badger setts
10. Extensive badger sett
11. Hay store barn for Animal Farm
12. Discontinued poly tunnel areas
13. Selected tree/shrub/herbaceous planting
14. Green walk pathway
15. Tree planting by FOGP/SCC ranger
16. Obsolete brick built potting shed and mess room
17. Proposed fenced boundary line to Arboretum extension
18. Existing timber constructed mess room (not fit for purpose)
19. Portable steel-clad storage units (x7)
20. Steel skips x 2: rubbish collection point
21. Timber bay for bark mulch collection

Scale = 1:1000



PLAN OF CHANTREYLAND ARBORETUM, INCLUDING PROPOSED NEW SECTION: THE ARBORETUM EXTENSION (Area 3)

PARK ACCESS FROM NORTON PARK VIEW

ANIMAL PADDOCK

SCALE 1:1000