

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BEAUMONT PARK

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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Name:	BEAUMONT PARK
District:	Kirklees (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.620984 Longitude: -1.8086866 National Grid Reference: SE 12752 13844 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001432 Date first listed: 27-May-1999

Details

Huddersfield's first public park, laid out in 1882 by the Borough Surveyor R S Rugdale, on land donated for this purpose in 1879 to the Huddersfield Corporation by H F Beaumont of Whitley Beaumont.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1879, the wealthy local landowner H F Beaumont offered the area of Dungeon Wood, situated to the south of Huddersfield town centre, to the Huddersfield Corporation, in order for them to create the town's first public park and recreation ground. During the ceremony for the transferring of Dungeon Wood in May 1880, Beaumont stated in his speech: 'public parks and open spaces are almost necessities to large and populous towns and they tend to increase the life of people'. Two years later, in 1882, work in the park began under the supervision of Reuben Hirst, the Chairman of the Parks Committee. The Borough Surveyor R S Rugdale was in charge of the constructions. In the same year £500 was donated from the will of Richard Bancott, a wealthy local industrialist, and the money was used towards the further creation of the park. Subsequently the Huddersfield Corporation bought a section of disused land to extend the southern end of the park. The construction of Beaumont Park Road formed part of the park design. On 13 October 1883, the park was officially opened by the Duke and Duchess of Albany. They opened the main gates with a golden key, handed to them by the Mayor. The ceremony was attended by approximately 4500 people. The park, named after Beaumont, had been specially decorated with flags and banners. After its opening the park was frequently visited by people living in the Lockwood area and other parts of Huddersfield. After the opening of Huddersfield's second public park however, called Greenhead Park, only two years later, Beaumont Park became less popular with the public. Greenhead Park, conveniently situated in the centre of Huddersfield, was easier to visit than Beaumont, which, being situated out of the town centre, could only be reached by tram or carriage. Beaumont Park has since the mid C20 been owned and managed by Kirklees Metropolitan Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Beaumont Park lies to the south-west of the town centre of Huddersfield in the area of Crosland Moor, situated to the west of the A635. The long and narrow park, of c 11ha, is laid out on the site of Dungeon Wood, of which only the northern part survives, on land which slopes steeply up to the east.

The site is bounded to the west by Beaumont Park Road and the early to mid C20 residential area beyond. The south boundary is marked by Butternab Road (formerly known as Butternab Lane), with Butter Nab Spring, Round Wood and Delves Wood

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(formerly called Butternab Wood) beyond it. Along the south and west boundaries the park has decorative cast-iron railings made by the Coventry Art Metal Group in c 1882. To the north the site is bounded by a series of steep steps, with the remaining part of Dungeon Wood to its north. The steps link Beaumont Park Road with the valley below and lead to a dismantled railway which runs along the full length of the east boundary into a tunnel (disused) running under the south-east corner of the park. During the late C19 the railway line was operated by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company. It was opened in 1869 for goods and passengers, but was closed just one month after its opening, following dangerous land slips in the area. Since 1971, when it was bought by the Council from the British Railways Board, the disused railway line has been managed as a nature trail. Beaumont Park offers extensive and fine views of valley to the east, and especially of the Lockwood Viaduct to the north-east of the park, as shown on several contemporary postcards and other illustrations.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Beaumont Park has five entrances. The main entrance is situated halfway along the west boundary on Beaumont Park Road. It has four decorative square gate piers and a lodge to its south. A second entrance on this road is situated further to the north, adjacent to the steep flight of steps forming the north boundary to the side. There is also an entrance on Butternab Road along the south boundary.

In addition, there are two entrances along the east boundary of the park reached via Meltham Road situated in the valley to the east of the site. The main entrance on this side of the park is situated in the northern part of the site, and has a decorative castellated entrance, which gives access to a fork-shaped flight of steps leading up into the park. The second entrance on this side of the park, now (1999) no longer used, lies further to the south along the disused railway. Here the park could formerly be entered by a pedestrian bridge which crossed the railway, now demolished. This bridge used to link Beaumont Park with the private grounds of the former Woodfield House to the east.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The park can be divided into two main areas: a formal and open park layout in the southern part of the site (partly laid out on the land bought by the Huddersfield Corporation following Mr Beaumont's donation), and an informal layout situated in the northern part of the site, where the scarp is steeper and where the pre-existing woodland has been mostly retained. During the layout of the park, Dungeon Wood, mainly comprising dwarf oak, was cut in places in order to create various walks, and birch, Scotch fir and ash were planted to give greater variety. Stone excavated from the site itself, supplemented by ashlar quarried at nearby Crosland Moor, was used for the construction of various other features, including a large artificial lake with a fountain and a cascade. The layout of the park is dominated by the Main Walk. It runs along the full length of the site, and is linked with various smaller paths and steps leading down the cliff, creating a network of woodland walks. Along the Main Walk are various flower beds, now (1999) grassed over, and to its north, set into the cliff side parallel to Beaumont Park Road, is a long stretch of rockery, made of natural stone with small pockets for plants. South of the main entrance on Beaumont Park Road, halfway along its route, the Main Walk crosses a cascade, now (1999) standing dry. The cascade runs down the cliff side under a second bridge, which forms part of one of the lower walks situated further to the east. In the southernmost part of the site the Main Walk ends at a square terrace elevated by steps on all four sides. This is the site of the former bandstand, demolished in the late C20. Late C19 and early C20 postcards show the building resembling a Chinese pagoda. To the south-east, steps from the site of the bandstand lead down a double flight of steps, which in turn lead to the lower woodland walk. Currently (1999) the broken steps are dangerous to use and thus closed to the public. To the south-west of the bandstand is a lawn with, in the centre, a mount built of rockwork and planted with shrubs and trees, with to its north the circular site of the flag stand. This is the area of the former lake, the mount being formerly one of the islands which could be reached by a small bridge, as indicated on the plan of 1883. The lake was filled in and grassed over in the late C20, and at present (1999) its comma-shaped plan is still visible in the lawn. In this area also stands a stretch of cast-iron railings and the remains of a late C19 rustic park bench. To the south-east of the site of the former lake are two terraces with central steps and long rectangular flower beds, now (1999) planted with roses. On the terraces stand several early C20 park benches giving visitors an opportunity to overlook the triangular lawn and children's playground (the latter was introduced in the late C20) situated in the south-east corner of the site. To the west of the terraces is the site of the former rectangular pavilion, demolished in the late C20. As shown on late C19 photographs, the pavilion was open on both sides with back-to-back seats, offering views of the lake and the lawn.

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The northern part of the site has a complicated network of woodland walks, now (1999) overgrown in places, made of narrow paths and steps (some with railings) laid out on the steep cliff. In some places along the path, small alcoves in the cliff side have been created for benches. In the centre of this part of the park stood the former Refreshment Rooms, called The Castle, demolished in the late 1960s. As shown on contemporary postcards, the decorative castellated building (very similar to the main east entrance to the park), was set in the hillside and had a terrace on its flat roof. Along one of the smaller paths, parallel to Beaumont Park Road, in the northern part of the site, stands a straight brick wall opposite the cliff side. It was built during the Second World War to create an air raid shelter.

REFERENCES

Programme of the Royal visit to Huddersfield on 13 October 1883, including plan of Beaumont Park, prepared by John Ward, the Chief Constable (Huddersfield Public Library, Tomlinson Collection, KC 174/Box 5/84) Illustrated Albany Memorial and Royal Programme, 1883 (Huddersfield Public Library) P Vickers and H Taylor, Public Parks Survey (theme study for English Heritage 1995) The Friends of Beaumont Park, A Presentation to English Heritage: Proposal for inclusion on the Register of Parks and Gardens (1998) Report on the history of the park (nd), pp 75(8 (Huddersfield Public Library) 'The splendour of Beaumont Park', Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 23 January 1999, pp 6(7

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1854 2nd edition published 1894 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1895 Illustrations Series of views of Beaumont Park and its features, late C19 (Huddersfield Public Library, KC174/Box 4/32; KC174/Box 4/3) Photograph of Mr Arnold Cousen in front of the castellated entrance to Beaumont Park, c 1900(10 (Local History Collection, Huddersfield Public Library)

Archival items Minutes of the Beaumont Park Committee, (10 October 1882), pp 59(60 (Huddersfield Public Library) Minutes of the Beaumont Park Committee, (15 September 1883), p 90 (Huddersfield Public Library)

Description written: April 1999 Amended: May 1999; July 1999 Register Inspector: FDM Edited: June 2000

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.