

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SUNNYHURST WOODS

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

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SUNNYHURST WOODS

Name: SUNNYHURST WOODS

District: Blackburn with Darwen (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Darwen

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Parish: Tockholes

label.localisation: Latitude: 53.700150
Longitude: -2.4911819
National Grid Reference: SD 67669 22747
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001358
Date first listed: 26-Nov-1996

Details

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC INTEREST

An area of woodland first planted in the early C19, later developed as a public park opened in 1903.

CHRONOLOGY OF HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1800, the then arable land at Sunnyhurst was planted up by the owner, Henry Brock, for hunting purposes. The estate was sold to Eccles Shorrock (d 1853), from whose family the land was purchased by Darwen Corporation in 1903. The necessary funds were raised by public subscription, through the efforts of Alderman John Tomlinson, Mayor of Darwen (1900-1 and 1901-2), to commemorate the coronation of Edward VII in 1902. The opening ceremony took place in 1903. Sunnyhurst Woods is one of three registered parks in Darwen, the other two being Bold Venture Park and Whitehall Park.

DESCRIPTION LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Sunnyhurst Woods, an area of 32ha, lies to the west of the Hollins Grove area of Darwen, on the west side of the town. It extends from the built-up area, following the line of the Sunnyhurst Brook, south-west through the agricultural lands beyond, to the Earnsdale Reservoir. The site occupies the steep-sided valley of the Sunnyhurst Brook, with a secondary valley entering from the south-east at a point roughly midway along the length of the park.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are a number of entrances into the Woods which join with the extensive path system. The main entrances are from Tockholes Road at the south-eastern tip of the Woods, and several at the north-eastern end of the Woods: Falcon Path from Falcon Avenue, Earnsdale Path from a lych gate on Earnsdale Road, and Dingle Path from further east along the same road.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The basic structure of the layout comprises three roughly parallel walks along the long axis of the park: Top Path North Side, Middle Path, and Top Path South Side, these being joined by a network of cross paths up the steep sides of the valley.

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The 'Old English Gateway', a lych gate presented by John Chadwick in 1903, marks the entrance at Lower Sunnyhurst Farm on Tockholes Road at the south-eastern tip of the site. From here, a winding path, Top Path South Side, leads along the south side of the site, along Beech Hill Clough, to join with the walk from the Dean Lane entrance at the southern tip of the Woods. From the Tockholes Road gate a walk leads northwards through beech woods, along the east side of the Sunnyhurst Clough to where it joins with the Sunnyhurst Brook and the path, Middle Path, which runs alongside it. At the junction is a circular shelter, the gift of Charles Spencer Greenway in 1912, the area round it being intended for a 'cafe chantante'. Further up the valley from here, on Middle Path North Side, stands an aviary. Downstream, the brook is dammed to form a large informal paddling pool marked by footbridges at either end. The pool was constructed in 1905 by Messrs J B Kershaw, R Preston, E Gibson, C Fish and J Walmsley using voluntary labour. The stone drinking fountain presented by Mrs T Lightbown in 1907, which stood on the pool's northern bank, was destroyed by vandals in 1981.

To the east of the pool, the water is channelled into a canal on the north bank of which stands The Kiosk, erected 1911-12 by public subscription to commemorate the coronation of King George V. Adjacent to The Kiosk is Sunnyhurst Cottage (listed grade II), an C18 cottage now renovated as the park office and visitor centre, the steeply rising north side of the valley forming a wooded backdrop to the two buildings. The small stone bridge (dated 1903, listed grade II) standing adjacent to the cottage bears two inlaid stone tablets, one stating that, to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VII, a sum of £2737 was raised by public subscription to acquire the Woods for the use and enjoyment of the inhabitants of the Borough for ever, the other acknowledging the efforts of Tomlinson in its acquisition. Nearby is an oak planted in 1913 to commemorate a visit by King George V and Queen Mary, 'one of the most important trees of British Woodland', as the inscribed stone by it informs. The carved-stone bridge (dated 1912, listed grade II) over a fall in the brook west of The Kiosk was put up by employees of The Wallpaper Manufacturers Ltd, in honour of William Bailey Huntington.

A lych gate on the Earnsdale Road, the gift of John Charles Potter in memory of the years passed at Earnsdale by Charles Potter, J Gerald Potter and himself, marks an entrance to the Woods from which Earnsdale Path leads down to The Kiosk, this converging with the drive into the park from its northern tip.

Much of the planting along the main walk was the gift of John Tomlinson through a trust fund set up to ensure further planting.
REFERENCES E M Cooper, History Notes on Sunnyhurst Woods (1977)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1848 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1894

Description written: February 1999 Register Inspector: CB Edited: April 1999

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.