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*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

PORTER VALLEY PARKS

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**PORTER VALLEY PARKS**

Name:	PORTER VALLEY PARKS
District:	Sheffield (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.361388 Longitude: -1.5409855 National Grid Reference: SK3064585044 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001502 Date first listed: 30-Mar-2001

## Details

Porter Valley Parks is a sequence of municipal parks and green spaces, created in phases between 1885 and 1938, along the valley of the Porter Brook, incorporating Endcliffe Wood, laid out for public use by William Goldring, Bingham Park, Whiteley Woods, Forge Dam, and Porter Clough.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the C18, cutlery manufacture in Sheffield was centred around steep fast-flowing streams coming off the moors west of the town. The Porter Brook was a typical example, dammed to provide power to a series of small grinding mills. As industry relocated to the east of the town, the water-powered workshops were abandoned. Towards the end of the C19 attention focused on using the Porter valley to serve the needs of the rapidly expanding western suburbs. Accounts describe a well-established walk following the Porter valley linking from 'the immediate vicinity of the town ... [at] Endcliffe Wood' to the upper reaches of the Porter and 'one of the most perfect cascades that a lover of nature could wish to see', in the 'small glen' at Porter Clough (Pawson & Brailsford 1862).

In 1885 the Corporation purchased 20 acres (c 8ha) of land at Endcliffe Wood from the trustees of Mr Robert Younge of Greystones, for £5232 (Pawson & Brailsford 1889). The intention was not only to provide public walks and pleasure grounds but also to improve sanitation. Sewage from the newly built housing north of the Porter Brook was flowing into the river from small tributary streams causing a serious health risk; acquiring the land enabled a sewer to be laid across the Wood.

In March 1886, William Goldring (1854-1919) was commissioned to adapt Endcliffe Wood for public use. A contemporary account (Pawson & Brailsford 1889) describes the natural beauty of the woods, improved with gravelled paths, flower beds, and ornamental shrubberies. Rustic bridges and stepping stones crossed the stream which was stocked with trout. Seating, a refreshment room, and a lodge were also provided. The millpond, or dam as it is referred to locally, for Endcliffe Wheel mill at the east end of the Wood was adapted for bathing; the dam for Holmes Wheel mill, in the middle, for skating; and the dam for Nether Spur-Gear Wheel mill, at the west end, for waterfowl. Walks were created alongside the dams, and their outfalls modified into waterfalls and cascades. A new road, Rustlings Road, was established along the southern boundary of the park, creating a new link between the south-west suburbs of the town and Ranmoor (ibid). In 1887 the Queen Victoria Jubilee Committee purchased an additional 9 acres (c 3.6ha) of level land to the south-east for £5045. In 1927 Lieut Col H K

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Stephenson DSO, JP of Banner Cross Hall gave 5.5 acres (c 2.2ha) of land to the Lord Mayor for public use, completing the area of Endcliffe Park that exists today.

Improvements continued as surrounding housing developments burgeoned and the town's new tram system provided better access. South-west of Endcliffe Park, other parks and green spaces, which also incorporated elements of the earlier industrial landscape, were developing along the Porter valley. These were formed around and linked by a walk closely following the valley floor. Bingham Park was acquired gradually between 1911, when Sir John E Bingham presented 11 acres (c 4.5ha) to the Corporation, and 1927, when an early water-powered scythe works and an associated dam were incorporated. Whiteley Woods, incorporating an existing dam and its goit, was acquired in stages in 1897/98, 1913, and 1932, and presented to the City by T Walter Hall, the Town Trustees, and the J G Graves Charitable Trust respectively. Thomas Boulsover (1704-88), the inventor of Sheffield Plate, lived at Whiteley Wood Hall, situated south of Whiteley Woods. The grounds of the Hall were closely linked physically and visually to the Porter valley. Boulsover established a forge on the Porter in Whiteley Woods to forge and roll steel to make saws and fenders (Hey 1998).

The commitment by the Corporation to develop recreational space along the Porter valley was recognised in 1924 in the Civic Survey carried out by Patrick Abercrombie. By that date a sequence of linked parks was well established along the valley, and this he described as:

The Porter Brook Parkway, consisting as it does of a string of contiguous open spaces, is the finest example to be found in this country of a radial park strip, an elongated open space, leading from a built-up part of the city direct into the country, the land occupied being a river valley and so for the greater part unsuitable for building. (Abercrombie 1924)

In September 1938 the J G Graves Charitable Trust acquired the 49 acre (19.8ha) Old Mayhouse Farm and Forge Dam, creating the public open space known as Forge Dam. In the same year, the acquisition of Porter Clough by the J G Graves Charitable Trust completed the walk linking from close to the city centre, up the valley of the Porter, to the edge of what was to become the Peak National Park.

The walk through Endcliffe Park, Bingham Park, Whiteley Woods, Forge Dam, and Porter Clough became an important part of the Sheffield Round Walk, which was completed soon after the Second World War, a route now (2002) linking publicly accessible open spaces within the city boundaries. The Round Walk celebrates the contribution made by public benefactors such as the J G Graves Charitable Trust to the provision and preservation of such places in the city.

The Porter Valley Parks remain (2002) in public use in the ownership of Sheffield City Council.

#### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** The Porter Valley Parks lie on the south-west side of Sheffield, with the entrance to Endcliffe Park situated 2.75km, and the western extremity of Porter Clough situated 7.25km, from Sheffield Town Hall.

Endcliffe Park occupies an area of c 15.5ha with a narrow neck extending west along the bottom of the valley. The south-east boundary is marked by land belonging to Hallamshire Squash and Tennis Club, while to the south it is bounded by Rustlings Road. The north-west boundary is defined by Oakbrook Road and Riverdale Road, where a substantial retaining wall forms part of the park boundary. The north boundary is formed by the grounds of Sheffield University Halls of Residence, the grounds of the private residence The Glen, and back gardens of housing near Hunter's Bar. The park is bisected from west to east by the Porter Brook. To the north the largely wooded slopes form a south-facing bank. The slopes are steep in parts, particularly adjacent to Riverdale Road on the north-west boundary. There is a gradual fall in landform from west to east across the park, following the course of the river. A large open space occupies an area south of the river, rising gently towards the south boundary with Rustlings Road. Fine views extend across the park to housing on rising ground beyond to the south-east, and there are good views to the north and north-north-east towards Broomhill and Sheffield University.

Bingham Park occupies an area of c 24.5ha to the south of the west end of Endcliffe Park. The long north and north-west boundaries are defined by allotments and housing along Westwood Road, Oakbrook Road, and Rustlings Road. Further east the boundaries are defined by allotments and the back gardens of housing along Rustlings Road. The long south-east boundary is defined entirely by the residential areas along Stainton Road, and the back gardens of Bingham Park Crescent, Bingham Park

Road, Cliff Farm Drive, and Greystones Road, and by the north side of Greystones Road. The west boundary is defined by the steep, sharp bends of Highcliffe Road. The Porter Brook runs close to the north-west boundary of the park, the valley side rising steeply to the south-east providing occasional level terraced areas, from which excellent views are afforded to the west, north-west, north-east, and east towards the city centre.

Whiteley Woods is a narrow linear park which occupies an area of c 11.5ha. The long boundary to the north is formed by adjacent fields, the grounds of the former Fulwood Hospital Annexe, the grounds of the former Whiteley Wood Clinic, and the residential area along Woofinden Avenue. The short eastern boundary is defined by the steep, sharp bends of Highcliffe Road. The long south boundary is formed by derelict allotments, Whiteley Wood Road, and adjacent fields. The short west boundary is defined by Ivy Cottage Lane. The Porter Brook runs through the centre of the park with narrow, fairly steep, well-wooded valley sides to the north and south, allowing limited views within the park, but affording views outwards from all the boundaries. Forge Dam is a small, roughly rectangular green space occupying an area of c 9.5ha. The irregular north boundary is defined by Quiet Lane, adjacent fields, Whiteley Lane, and the back gardens of housing on Whiteley Lane. The east boundary is formed by Ivy Cottage Lane and the southern boundary is defined by adjacent fields. The short western boundary is formed by Wood Cliffe. The Porter Brook runs close to the south boundary, the short, steep and wooded valley side to the south offering limited views, while the fairly steeply rising northern valley side affords good views in parts to the south and south-west.

The Porter Clough section of the Porter Valley Parks is situated at the south-west extremity of the parks and green space sequence, linking directly to the edge of the Peak District. The narrow linear green space occupies an area of c 7.2ha, bounded on the long north-west boundary by adjacent fields and on the long south-east boundary by Clough Lane and adjacent fields. The short east boundary is defined by Wood Cliffe and the short south boundary is defined by Fulwood Lane. The Porter Brook runs close to the south-east boundary, the steep, well-wooded valley sides offering limited views within the green space but affording good views from the boundaries, particularly to the south-east towards the city centre.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The main entrance to Endcliffe Park is located at the eastern end, at Hunter's Bar. At the entrance, the arrangement of low stone boundary walls, railings and gates, combined with raised planting beds, affords good views directly into the park. Major alterations were carried out here in 1956 as a result of road improvements, involving the loss of c 1400m<sup>2</sup> of the park. Some 50m south-west of the entrance is a late C19 pavilion and lodge (listed grade II), built as the refreshment pavilion and made into a park keeper's house in 1936. On the north side of the entrance, the river falls over a weir into a large culvert, to emerge to the east in the grounds of the Woofinden Almshouses (outside the area here registered). A monument to Queen Victoria (listed grade II) is located 50m west-north-west of the main entrance; the bronze figure on stone base was relocated from the town hall in 1930. A vehicular entrance off Rustlings Road, along the western boundary with the Hallamshire Squash and Tennis Club, leads to a small area of roadside parking, 150m west-south-west of the Queen Victoria monument. There are a number of small pedestrian entrances via the southern boundary off Rustlings Road. A further entrance stands at the western end of the park, c 1km from the main entrance, close to the junction of Rustlings Road and Oakbrook Road. This entrance is formed from a wide gap in the railings (mid C20) with ornamental shrub and tree planting to either side. This, like the Hunter's Bar entrance, provides vehicular and pedestrian access. There is a direct link from this entrance, south-west across Rustlings Road, to the entrance to Whiteley Woods and Bingham Park. Further pedestrian entrances give access on the north side of the park, off Riverdale Road.

The OS 1st edition map of 1894 shows the former main entrance to Endcliffe Park near Hunter's Bar leading off Brocco Bank, and the main walk situated to the north of the river, leading directly towards the boating pond. There was an arrangement of two weirs (now gone) close to the entrance, one of which could be viewed directly from the main walk.

The main entrance to Bingham Park is situated close to the junction of Rustlings Road and Oakbrook Road, with a park lodge located immediately south-east of the entrance. The main walk proceeds 750m to the south-west to a combined occasional vehicular and pedestrian entrance situated immediately south of the bridge (listed grade II) on Highcliffe Road and a pedestrian entrance, reached by a flight of stone steps, immediately north of the bridge. There are a number of informal access points into the park from the allotments to the west and open access along many parts of the boundaries, particularly off Greystones Road to the south-east.

The eastern entrance to Whiteley Woods is situated on Highcliffe Road. Some 240m west-south-west of this entrance Whiteley Wood Road bisects the park, running from north-east to south-west creating two informal entrances on either side. There is a vehicular access point off Whiteley Wood Road, adjacent to which is a car park, which links to Wire Mill Dam. Immediately north of the car park are three C18 cottages, Ivy Cottages (listed grade II). There are a number of informal access points into the park including those on Whiteley Wood Road, a link off Woofinden Avenue, and one from the south-west corner of the park off Ivy Cottage Lane. The western entrance to Whiteley Woods is situated on Ivy Cottage Lane.

The main entrance to Forge Dam, for both occasional vehicular and pedestrian access, is situated on Ivy Cottage Lane, with a further pedestrian entrance 60m north and an additional entrance 20m to the south of the main entrance. Near the main entrance, there is informal parking along Ivy Cottage Lane. The western entrance to Forge Dam is situated on Wood Cliffe, 580m west-south-west of the main entrance on Ivy Cottage Lane. There are two pedestrian entrances on the northern boundary off Whiteley Lane.

The Porter Clough green space is traversed in two places by roads, Mark Lane, 350m west of Wood Cliffe, and Clough Lane, 500m south-west of Mark Lane. The entrance at the eastern end is from Wood Cliffe, with entrances to each section off the respective roads, Mark Lane and Clough Lane. At the west end of Porter Clough, the entrance and car park on Fulwood Lane mark the western extremity of the Porter Valley Parks.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The Porter Valley Parks are a sequence of municipal parks and green spaces created around the valley of the Porter Brook, linked by a walk that connects from the main entrance at Endcliffe Park, close to the city centre, and extending in a south-westerly direction to the upper reaches of the Porter and the moors on the edge of the Peak National Park at Porter Clough. There is a gradual transition in style from Endcliffe Park, a formal Victorian municipal park, towards the less formal character of Porter Clough, modified for public use and incorporating approaches more typical of the 1930s. Features of industrial archaeological interest, natural history, ecological interest, and archaeological interest, found throughout the valley in the various parks and green spaces, are connected by the walk which provides a coherent element around which the ornamental designed landscape has been shaped. The following description of the Porter Valley Parks proceeds from Endcliffe Park and leads south-west, following the Porter Brook upstream through Bingham Park, Whiteley Woods, and Forge Dam to Porter Clough.

At the Queen Victoria monument, 50m west-north-west of the main entrance to Endcliffe Park, the main path divides. The northern walk proceeds west via a stone bridge to the north side of the river, past the site of a drinking fountain (now gone) formerly situated 50m north-west of the main entrance. The fountain was erected in 1889 in memory of Thomas Jessop, founder of the Jessop Hospital. Some 100m to the west, the stream flows in a channel below the path. On the north side, an open elevated level area marks the former position of the mill pond of Endcliffe Wheel mill, which, in the early days of the park, was used as a bathing pool. When the park first opened the workshops were used as dressing rooms and as a boathouse. The pool was still used in 1931, when it is recorded that the bathers' accommodation was replaced with a more modern building (Dickson 1994). The southern walk follows the northern boundary of the Hallamshire Squash and Tennis Club and opens into a wide grassed area, 220m west of the main entrance. This land was acquired in 1887 by the Jubilee Committee, a fact marked by the Jubilee Monument (listed grade II) sited in the north-east corner, 140m west of the Queen Victoria monument. This area was used for the Sheffield Show in the late 1950s until the show moved to a larger space at Hillsborough Park; it is currently (2002) the main sports area in the park. The Jubilee Obelisk (listed grade II), situated 280m west of the Jubilee Monument, stands in an elevated position in the west corner of the space, adjacent to the boundary with Rustlings Road. It is a granite monolith, inaugurated on Jubilee Day in 1887. It originally stood in Town Hall Square where it provided a popular site for orators addressing the citizens of Sheffield, before being moved to its present position in 1904.

Immediately north of the Jubilee Monument, the northern and southern paths converge and an avenue of mature trees lines the main walk as it proceeds west, with play areas on the north side, towards a cafe, the latter standing 170m west-north-west from the Jubilee Monument. Some 25m east of the cafe, the river comes close to the north side of the main walk. A bandstand, removed in 1957, formerly stood here south of the main walk. Immediately opposite on the north side are large gritstone stepping stones, now well-worn but still in use (2002), part of the original park landscaping, leading over the river to Endcliffe Wood, an

area of ancient woodland. The walks created in the woodland area, described in early accounts (Pawson & Brailsford 1889), are still in use. In a prominent position in the Wood, 40m north-east of the cafe, a memorial to US airmen killed when an American fighter plane crashed in the park on 22 February 1944, erected by the Sheffield RAF Association, is visible across the river.

Ascending the valley, the main walk proceeds south-west, now tree-lined, to the former site of a grinding mill, Holmes Wheel. Immediately north of the path the dam outlet has been modified to create an informal cascade, embellished with rocks and ornamental planting. A small flight of stone steps leads to the level of the dam. The main walk proceeds west, edged in stone, leading up to the dam, elevated above the river course to the south; it then continues on the south side of the dam. At the western end of the dam, paths converge: a path from Rustlings Road to the south, defined by a substantial bed of evergreen structural planting; and a path descending steeply from the Wood and the Riverdale Road entrance to the north.

West of the dam, the river runs on the north side of the main walk and the park narrows substantially, with Rustlings Road to the south and Riverdale Road to the north. A large retaining wall topped with railings was constructed in 1928 on the north-east boundary adjacent to Riverdale Road. The main walk gradually ascends the valley westwards through mature woodland towards the most westerly dam, that of a former grinding mill, Nether Spur-Gear. The dam outlet has been modified to form an impressive waterfall, with gritstone boulders and ornamental planting. The path climbs to the level of the dam, elevated above the river running on the north side. As part of the original landscaping of the park, the dam was modified for wildfowl and has two large islands. The path then proceeds towards the gateway at the junction of Rustlings Road and Oakbrook Road, leading out of the park towards the entrance to Bingham Park.

Close to the Rustlings Road entrance to Bingham Park, the area inside the park is formal with grass areas and shrub and tree plantings, creating a strong visual boundary and screen along Oakbrook Road. To the south and west the land rises to broad level terraces with bowling greens, tennis courts, and a miniature golf course at the highest point on the south side. The main walk proceeds in a south-westerly direction following the line of the Porter Brook which is north-west of the main walk at this point. Paths lead west across the river towards one of the dams modified for public amenity (late C19), situated 250m south-west of the Rustlings Road entrance and now (2002) stocked with a collection of wildfowl. Flanking the south-east side of the main walk throughout much of the length of Bingham Park, on the steep valley sides, is an extensive area of oak woodland. Shepherd Wheel and Shepherd Wheel Dam (scheduled ancient monument, listed grade II\*), 575m south-west of the Rustlings Road entrance, is a former water-powered scythe works and associated dam.

The main walk proceeds across Highcliffe Road and enters Whiteley Woods, the first part of which is an area of woodland on either side of the river. There are the remains of a dam between Highcliffe Road and Whiteley Wood Road and the main walk follows one of the goits or mill laids, flowing a few metres above the level of the Porter Brook. The walk continues towards a bridge, stone-built with seating niches and ornamental copings, linking across the Porter on Whiteley Wood Road. Crossing Whiteley Wood Road, the walk continues west-south-west through woodland with Wire Mill Dam to the south. On the north side of Wire Mill Dam, 80m west-south-west of Ivy Cottages, stands the monument to Thomas Boulsover (listed grade II). Boulsover lived at Whiteley Wood Hall, now (2002) gone, which formerly stood in an elevated position to the south, overlooking the Porter valley. The main walk follows the Porter Brook upstream, with the river on the north side of the walk, through an area of woodland with occasional bridges crossing small rivulets feeding into the river. There are remnants of ornamental plantings throughout this area of woodland, particularly at path junctions.

The main path proceeds west-south-west to the junction with Ivy Cottage Lane where it enters the area known as Forge Dam. Immediately north of the walk is a children's playground and, south of the walk, the site of a former dam, now in-filled and levelled with mown grass and perimeter shrub planting. Some 70m west-south-west of the junction with Ivy Cottage Lane, the main walk passes a cottage and after a further 30m a cafe (mid-late C20). This occupies the site of a former forge, with remains of the water wheel evident immediately north of the cafe. The path continues steeply uphill to the level of the dam, formerly used for boating and skating and now maintained as a habitat for wildlife. The wider area of Forge Dam consists of woodland and informal open space, with a network of paths giving access throughout. The main walk passes around the northern perimeter of the dam and leads towards Wood Cliffe.

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Crossing Wood Cliffe, on the western boundary of Forge Dam, the main walk enters the Porter Clough section of the Porter Valley Parks. Here the walk continues gradually more steeply uphill, closely following the course of the Porter Brook upstream, crossing to either side of the Brook at intervals, with the Porter Falls as a focal point in this section. The surrounding landscape is rural in character and the nature of the Clough is informal, with woodland and grassland and a network of paths giving access throughout. The main walk proceeds across Clough Lane to a deep wooded valley or glen. A network of footpaths weave around and above the glen, affording views down the Clough. There is evidence of an early cobbled footpath route, on the north side of the glen, from which excellent views are afforded to the north-east towards Fulwood and to the city centre beyond. The main walk terminates at Fulwood Lane where there is an informal car park and information board.

#### REFERENCES

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Maps OS 25? to mile: 1st edition published 1894 1935 edition

Description written: February 2002 Amended: July 2003 Register Inspector: JS Edited: July 2003

## 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.