

# Parkwood Springs

## into Action

our country park in the city

**Less than a mile north of Sheffield city centre lies a vast area of open land, almost as big as the city centre itself. Yet few people know of Parkwood Springs, its secret places and its enormous potential as a country park in the city.**

You might know it as the site of the dry ski slope. From the top of the hill on which many people learn to ski, there are views across the city into the Peak District National Park. At the base of the hill flows the River Don, and just above it runs a railway line, now used just once a week. The line cuts through the neglected and atmospheric Wardsend Cemetery (see p.2). Nearby are ancient woodlands, heathlands, and sites of special scientific interest of national importance.

Its centre is currently occupied by a landfill site. After ten years this site will be covered over so that it blends in with the rest of Parkwood and most of it will be opened to public access. But the rest of the area is open for you to use now.

### Forest Garden Project launch

**Fruit and herbs for local people to harvest while enjoying great views across Sheffield: that's the aim of the Forest Garden Project.**

On 28th February local families and residents joined City Council Rangers and BTCV volunteers to celebrate the launch of the Forest Garden Project. After months of hard work by Conservation Volunteers, a bracken-covered old allotment has been transformed into a community garden.

As well as joining in the fun activities and picnic, children helped to plant fruit trees alongside the paths and dry stone walls, plots for herbs and borders of fruit bushes.

The garden on the sunny south facing slope, sheltered in woodland above the ski village, is wheelchair accessible through the car park on Cooks Wood



*Tim Shortland, originator of the forest garden*

Road using the level track across the football fields.

The garden will be self-sustaining. The soil is nourished by nitrogen enriching plants. Wildlife can find a haven in the hibernaculum (for lizards) and the wetland (frogs and toads). Local people can come to enjoy the benefits of the garden, pick and eat the fruit and herbs, just sit in the sunshine or walk round Parkwood Springs to discover the wonderful views over the city.



### The Group

Parkwood Springs Steering Group are publishing Parkwood Springs into Action to tell you about the area and what's happening in it. We are local residents, members of Parkwood Landfill Action Group and the Ramblers Association, officers from Sheffield City Council's Parks and Countryside Service and the Wildlife Trust.

Since 2002 we've been promoting conservation of the area's wildlife, geological and historical heritage; organising improvements to paths and access to the area (see map on p.3), and sporting events such as mountain biking. Local schools use the area for environmental learning and awareness classes. Family and cultural events include the spectacular Beacons Project events (see back page)

We want you to make use of Parkwood: walking, running, sport (there are two full size football pitches), wildlife watching or investigating Parkwood's history. We want you to tell us what you want from Parkwood – what would encourage you to go there more. You can contribute to the development of a great park in the heart of our city.

(Contact details on back page.)



Anyone interested in joining the BTCV to help with the garden can contact John Thompson at 0114 290 1255 e-mail: [J.Thompson@btcv.org.uk](mailto:J.Thompson@btcv.org.uk)

## A brief history of Wardsend Cemetery

by P. Quincey

Wardsend was opened in the early 1850's, when a nearby churchyard became full. The name, Wardsend is a corruption of "Worldsend", which is reputed to be the site of the second



coming of Christ, and is listed in a land agreement in 1161.

The site of the cemetery (see map opposite) occupies 5.5 acres and once included a small chapel, office and a sexton's house. The railway line runs

through the cemetery, dividing it into a western half which is wooded and an eastern half which is open (see pictures).

The first burial was in 1857 and was of Mary Ann Marsden aged 2 years. By tradition the first body was always given the title of "Guardian of the Cemetery". By 1900 the number of burials totalled 20,000 and the site was extended.

### Body snatcher

The cemetery achieved notoriety in 1864 when the sexton was accused of body snatching and the vicar of falsifying Church Records. Both stood trial, the former receiving a sentence of six months, the latter 3 weeks, though he later was awarded a full pardon by Queen Victoria.

Along with the normal burials there are bodies from the nearby Hillsborough Barracks; the Workhouse and the Medical School. Wardsend

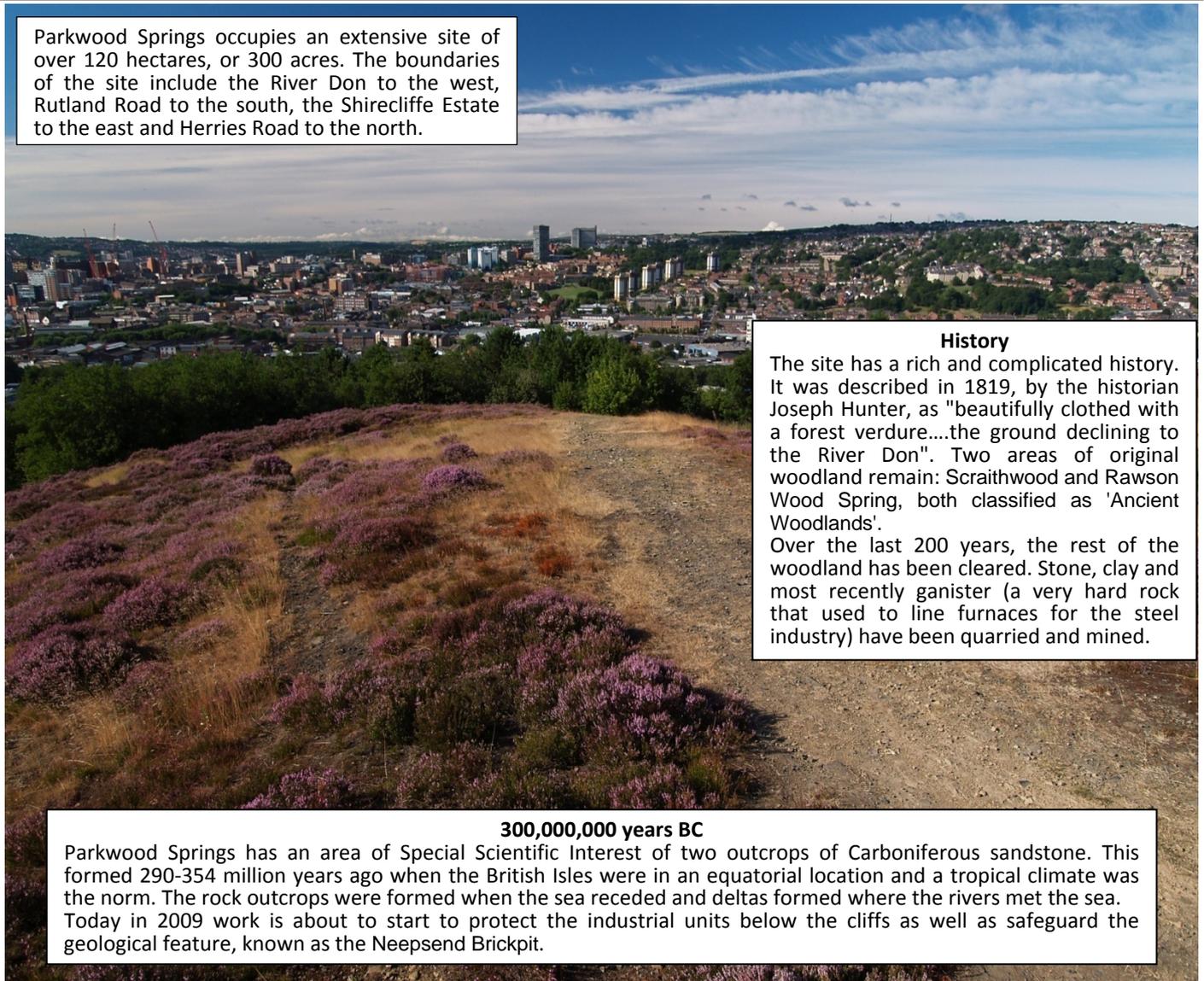
Cemetery is connected to an important part of Sheffield's history, the Sheffield Flood of 1864, which claimed many of the lives now buried in the cemetery. The cemetery was closed in 1968.

Friends of Wardsend Cemetery promote the site and research its history. If you would like more



information about the group please contact Michelle Gane, Parks and Countryside Service on (0114) 250 0500, and your contact details will be passed to the Friends of Wardsend Cemetery.

Parkwood Springs occupies an extensive site of over 120 hectares, or 300 acres. The boundaries of the site include the River Don to the west, Rutland Road to the south, the Shirecliffe Estate to the east and Herries Road to the north.



### History

The site has a rich and complicated history. It was described in 1819, by the historian Joseph Hunter, as "beautifully clothed with a forest verdure...the ground declining to the River Don". Two areas of original woodland remain: Scraithwood and Rawson Wood Spring, both classified as 'Ancient Woodlands'.

Over the last 200 years, the rest of the woodland has been cleared. Stone, clay and most recently ganister (a very hard rock that used to line furnaces for the steel industry) have been quarried and mined.

### 300,000,000 years BC

Parkwood Springs has an area of Special Scientific Interest of two outcrops of Carboniferous sandstone. This formed 290-354 million years ago when the British Isles were in an equatorial location and a tropical climate was the norm. The rock outcrops were formed when the sea receded and deltas formed where the rivers met the sea. Today in 2009 work is about to start to protect the industrial units below the cliffs as well as safeguard the geological feature, known as the Neepsend Brickpit.



1. Scraithwood
2. Rawson Spring Wood
3. Shirecliffe Allotments
4. Household recycling centre
5. Wardsend Cemetery
6. Viridor Landfill
7. Neepsend Railway Cutting (SSSI)
8. Little Pear Tree Fields
9. Sports Fields
10. The viewing platform
11. Car park
12. Pond
13. Helipad
14. Ski Village
15. Forest Garden
16. The "Boy and the Bird" Sculpture
17. Neepsend Brick Pit (SSSI)
18. Heathland



- Parkwood Springs Site
- Landfill Site
- Ski Village
- Woodland
- River corridor
- Main entrances
- Main footpaths
- Railway line
- Main roads

0 0.1 0.2  
Km



Philadelphia

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (C) Crown Copyright 2009. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or Civil Proceedings. OS License No. 100018816. 2009

## Lots of activities and events coming up in 2009

### Springwatch: BBC & Wildlife Trust

6 June Saturday from late morning onwards: animal tracking, bird watching, wildlife information and advice, storytelling, refreshments and much more for all ages

**Contact** Rachel Stevenson on 263 4335 watch the Burngreave Messenger and [www.wildsheffield.com](http://www.wildsheffield.com)

### Parkwood Spring Playday

30 July Thursday 10am - 4pm

All welcome! High ropes, climbing wall, games and more!

### Playscheme days

Thursdays in the Summer Holidays from 23 July - 27 August

11 am - 4 pm

Just drop in! at main entrance on Cookwood Road/Shirecliffe Road Biking, sports, games and activities

**Contact** Catherine Nuttgens Woodland Play Project Officer 2736199 or see [eventsheffield.com](http://eventsheffield.com)

### Mountain biking

Why not get involved in Mountain Biking (MTB) at Parkwood Springs? Help us with plans to develop the MTB provision at Parkwood springs.



Whether you have never ridden a bike, are an expert downhill racer, urban extremist, 4x rider, xc rider or just interested in giving it a go, come along to one of the

Playscheme days (see above), where bikes, helmets and instruction are all provided.

Contact Woodland Project Officer: Jon Dallow for more info: 2500 500

### Evening walk with the Ramblers

4 June Thursday

Walk from Spital Hill, across Parkwood Springs and through the Wardsend Cemetery and Hillsborough Park to finish at the Hillsborough Interchange.

This 4 mile walk will go the full length of Parkwood Springs, and is a good opportunity to explore it. Meet at the Arundel Gate mini-Interchange to catch the 6.45pm 33 bus to Spital Hill, or meet us as we get off the bus outside the Mangla Restaurant on Spital Hill at about 7 pm.



Everyone is very welcome - Ramblers member or not. Please wear stout shoes and sensible clothing for the weather. You may like to bring a drink and a snack, as we will stop for a few minutes for a break.

**Contact** details:

Sheffield Group of the Ramblers - Neill Schofield 0114 272 4499 [neill.schofield@googlemail.com](mailto:neill.schofield@googlemail.com)

### Explore Historical Parkwood

5 July Sunday, 1pm to 3.30 pm

Join the Rangers on a short walk of approx. 3 miles exploring the history of Parkwood Springs. Lots to stop and talk about, ancient deer park, quarries, cart tracks, railways, landfill to country park. The BEST views of the city of Sheffield. Meet at Little Pear Tree Field, Shirecliffe Road/Cookwood Road

### Orienteering

7 August Friday, 11 am - 2 pm

28 August Friday 11 am - 2 pm

Maps and Things at the Springs! Come along and test your map reading skills at Parkwood Springs with our orienteering course. Prizes for the 1st and 2nd quickest.

Meet at the car park on Cookwood Road/Shirecliffe Road



image by Graham Higgins

Lord Fox attends the

### Beacons Project 2009

17 October Saturday (to be confirmed)

2007 saw a flaming phoenix light up the night sky. 2008 saw the 'Thread of fire' continue as the Beacons project unfolded into its second year.

Celebrating Parkwood Springs, the now annual Beacons project sees storyteller Shonaleigh working with schools and the local community in this exciting event, telling the story of Jenny Greensleaves and lighting up the night sky. Read the story to date at [www.shonaleigh.f9.co.uk](http://www.shonaleigh.f9.co.uk) - click on the Beacons Project.



For more details see local press for October 17 2009

### Football

There are 2 full size football pitches with changing facilities and parking.

Currently 7 teams are allocated for the 2 pitches. South Yorkshire amateur football league division 2: leaders Burngreave United, St Thomas Wanderers, Masons Arms, Dev FC, Ecclesfield Albion, The Pheasant 2007 and the newest team to play matches at Parkwood, Sured United.

For football pitch bookings contact: Parks & Countryside: sports bookings: 273 4234

### Shirecliffe Allotments

You can help reduce crime on Allotments by reporting all incidents, no matter how small to the police on 0114 2202020 or on 101

Could your site benefit from an Allotment Watch? If you would like more information please telephone 2734528

### Contacts

#### Sheffield City Council contacts

Parks and Countryside - general enquiries 0114 250 0500

[www.sheffield.gov.uk/out--about/parks-woodlands--countryside](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/out--about/parks-woodlands--countryside)

**Streetforce:** to report fly-tipping etc 0114 273 4567

**Police:** to report nuisance, motor-cycling etc 0114 296 4854 or call 101 for non-emergency reporting

#### Environment Agency

To report problems with the landfill site call 0800 80 70 60

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

#### Parkwood Landfill Action Group

PLAG works to secure the closure of the landfill and the return of the site to public use. **Contact** c/o Green City Action, Abbeyfield Park, Abbeyfield Road, Burngreave, Sheffield, S4 7AT, tel. 244 0353

#### Parkwood Springs into Action

is published by Parkwood Springs Steering Group, with financial support for this issue from Sheffield City Council.

To contact the editor, phone 0114 244 6122 or email [sia@fitting-up.org.uk](mailto:sia@fitting-up.org.uk).

To contact the **Parkwood Group**, email [parkwood.springs@googlemail.com](mailto:parkwood.springs@googlemail.com) or visit our web site at

[www.parkwood-springs.org.uk](http://www.parkwood-springs.org.uk)

Do you want to be sent copies of future editions? If so, let us know.

**Please email us with any info, events, or news we should know about.**



Planting heather

*We look forward to seeing you at Parkwood Springs!*