

HINDE COMMON & BRUSHES WOOD



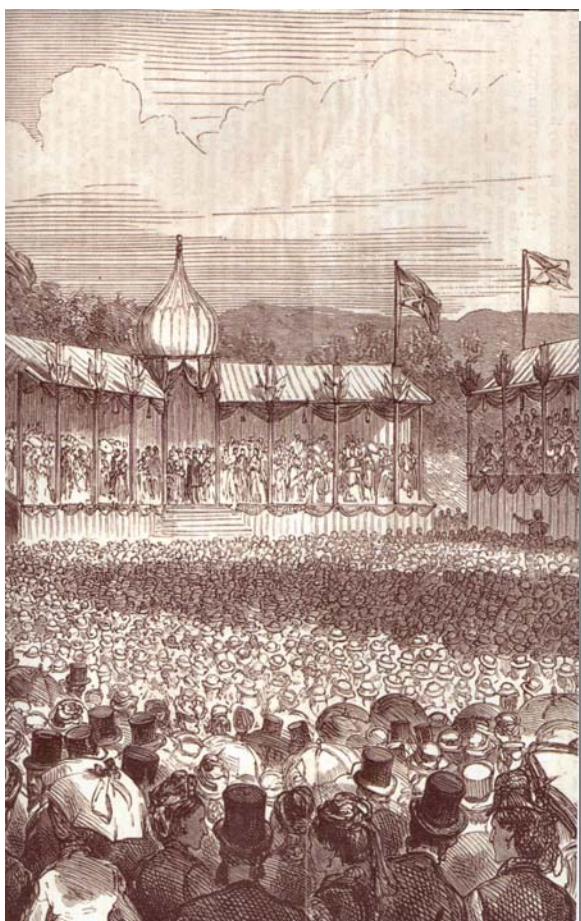
Although only a short walk from Wincobank, Hinde Common Wood could not be more different in character. This is a healthy broadleaved wood with a wide variety of tree species of different ages. There is an attractive and rich shrub and ground flora. As part of Firth Park the wood is valued and well used by the local community.



Hinde Common Wood forms an attractive backdrop to Firth Park

HISTORY OF HINDE COMMON

Formerly known as 'The Brushes', the woodland is first described in a document of 1637. From this evidence and from its location on a steep slope, Hinde Common Wood is believed to be an ancient woodland, in other words, one that is at least 400 years old.



In 1875 the area adjoining the woodland achieved the distinction of becoming Sheffield's first public park when it was donated to the city by the industrialist Mark Firth who was living at the Page Hall, a house, now demolished, which stood in the lower part of the grounds of the present park, as shown on Fairbank's map on page 5. He was shortly to move to Oakbrook, a far grander house at Ranmoor. It was not until 1909, however, that the area of woodland was taken into public ownership and became part of Firth Park. The opening ceremony which took place on August 16th 1875 was an extremely grand affair, attended by Edward, Prince of Wales and his wife, Alexandra, the first Royal visitors to Sheffield since Mary Queen of Scots! The grandees were seated in a fantastic pavilion, shaped, for some reason, to resemble a Turkish

minaret. On the field in front of them 15,000 school children were assembled to sing the National Anthem.

The park itself was still some way beyond the built up area of the town. The main entrance was at this time beside the Clock Tower and this was as far as Firth Park Road extended. Here were refreshment rooms, the park keeper's house and an ornamental lake with ducks and swans. For the next hundred years the park was a busy and popular, with concerts at the bandstand and huge crowds turning out for the Whit Sings on Whit Mondays.

After the 1970s, however, the park's maintenance was scaled down and it entered a period of decline and neglect. Since 2000, when a group called the 'Friends of Firth Park' was created, plans have been advancing to regenerate the park. Most exiting of all is the building at the north entrance to the park of a new modern community building to house the Shiregreen Children's Centre. Within this masterplan for the park's regeneration are the plans to upgrade the woodland which had received

little management for many years.

Funding has been secured to build a new Round Walk, part of which will focus on a series of mosaics and sculptures such as the 'Old Man of the Woods' by Jason Thomson and the mosaic of local landmarks by children from a local school.



Further details of the plans can be viewed on the website of the 'Friends' at www.firthpark.org.uk



THE WOODLAND

The woodland on the site is semi-natural and broadleaved. It is dominated by oak and sycamore and also has a significant number of beech and a few ash. The trees vary in age from young saplings to mature trees. In the northern part of the wood, there is a considerable amount of oak regeneration along with some re-growth of elm and elder. This mix

makes it a very attractive piece of woodland to visit, especially since there are such good tarmac footpaths through it. Parking is available on adjacent streets from which there is easy access into the wood.

There is some evidence that this area was attractive to early settlers for there have been some interesting finds in the wood over the years. In 1921 the upper parts of quern stones and a polished Neolithic stone axe were discovered. These finds are now in the City Museum.

By following the footpath across Hinde House Road and through the allotments it is possible to combine a visit to Hinde Common with a walk to Wincobank.

Under the *Fuelling a Revolution* programme, woodland restoration and access improvement work is taking place to



This superb mosaic, designed by children from local schools, depicts historical and industrial features as well as trees and plants. It forms part of a mosaic trail through the park.

restore Hinde Common Wood to its former glory and to maximise its potential as a recreational and educational resource.

Some thinning and group felling of trees will be carried out in order to create a more varied woodland structure and to

encourage the regeneration of native trees such as oak, ash and hazel. Sycamore, a non-native and highly invasive species, will be particularly favoured for removal. Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed, two non-native and highly invasive herb species will also be controlled.

Access to the wood will be improved by upgrading the path system and additional seating will be installed. Although the woodland's boundaries are generally in a good state of repair, four metal barriers to control unauthorised access will be constructed and 200 metres of new hedgerow planted to mark the woodland boundary. Work is also required to reduce problems of fly tipping and litter, the latter being a particularly severe problem along some paths. Finally, the potential of the site as an educational and recreational resource is being developed through guided walks, events relating to the natural history and historic interest of the site, children's events and practical management tasks.



Nuthatch.
These fascinating birds nest in holes in trees in Hinde Common Wood and are easily seen.