

11 Green Footpath between Petre St and Scott St



Introduction

The footpath is little used despite being signposted on both Petre Street and Carlisle Road East mainly because it is fairly secluded and it is surrounded by industrial works. Scott Street is actually an access road for the quarrying concern of Topmix. This is a hard hat area. To reach the stone steps at the southern terminus of the footpath, it is necessary to walk up this access road keeping as far left as possible. The stone steps are not visible from Carlisle Road East and given the noise and dust coming from the adjacent quarry in summer and the muddy access road in winter, it is not surprising that this route is seldom taken.

The northern terminus of the footpath is a narrow strip of land off Petre Street between the car park of Sheffield Electric Co (Contractors) LTD and a building to let. A few metres from the road there is a set of stone steps which leads down to the bottom of the slope, then the footpath curves to the left and runs parallel to Petre Street.

At the bottom of the steps immediately to the left is a Cable Tunnels structure. To the right is a wire fence and signs warning that the area is under camera surveillance. In the beginning of the survey period in April 2003 there was a metal structure with a footbridge within this area of the footpath, but it was removed by April 15th.

The main section of the footpath runs east-west along the base of a steep slope below the back gardens of the industrial properties of Petre Street. This area appeared to be relatively free of vandalism until oil drums were set alight in June 2003 causing fire damage to vegetation near the Cable Tunnels structure.

Unlike many other sites in Burngreave, fly tipping is not a major problem here. In the summer of 2003 some of the hillside within boundary of Topmix property was littered with rusty junk, but this was all removed in preparation for their expansion of their quarrying activities.

Suitable wildlife habitat, seclusion and the absence of people especially dog walkers make this site extremely attractive to wildlife. The rank grassland, scrub and scattered trees of the site contrasts with, yet complements, the short grass, mature trees and shrubs of the landscaped grounds of the adjoining electricity substation. Birds and invertebrates can often be seen moving between the two. The adjacent quarry also attracts a large range of wildlife at night when human activity ceases (private communication from employee of Topmix).

Site details

Site name

Green Footpath between Petre Street and Scott Street

Location

Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SK 372 896

Land owner

Sheffield City Council

Nearest road/street

The footpath is signposted on Petre Street and on Carlise Road East. Scott Street is an access road to the quarrying concern of Topmix off Carlise Road East.

Adjacent land use

The immediate surrounding areas are industrial. However, the eastern grasslands of Smith's Field located behind industrial properties are within sight from the Petre Street signpost for the footpath. East of the quarry that adjoins the site are the open spaces of Carlisle Road and Hunsley Street.

Size

0.50 hectares

Present management

In the spring of 2003 there was a metal structure constructed at the base of the slope between the cable tunnel and the electricity substation. This metal enclosure included a walkway so that the footpath could be used. The path was probably used by engineers to access either the cable tunnel or the security fence of the electricity substation. They may have removed some vegetation in the course of their work.

During the summer the site appeared to be unmanaged yet the western half of the footpath was clearly more visible than the eastern half. The eastern half which runs along the perimeter of the quarrying activities of Topmix was overgrown with vegetation. Although the surveyor tramped through here, there was no evidence of anyone else doing so.

In the winter of 2003/2004 the situation changed considerably. The eastern half of the site underwent dramatic changes. All the vegetation along the security fence of the electricity substation was cleared. Roses that had arched through their fence inhibiting passage along footpath had been pruned back. *Cotoneaster divaricatus* which had spread from electricity substation into footpath were taken out, although the ones within substation grounds still poked a couple of branches through the fence. A small apple tree was felled.

In addition, there were major changes taking place along the property line of Topmix which required them to erect a fence to safeguard the public. This fence, which replaced an older one, was erected higher up the bank indicating just how narrow the footpath was near its Scott Street terminus.

Vegetation between the fence of the electricity substation and the fence of Topmix was cut to ground level leaving just a grassy/mossy footpath and bare ground. The footpath had definitely been used since it had been cleared; there was a pile of fresh dog mess in an area where dogs had not been previously that year.

Trees (silver birches, oaks and ashes) were growing on the Topmix side of the boundary with the footpath. All of these were removed. Of all the trees growing along the east side of this area, only one rather unsubstantial tree remained as it was definitely within the boundaries of the footpath site.

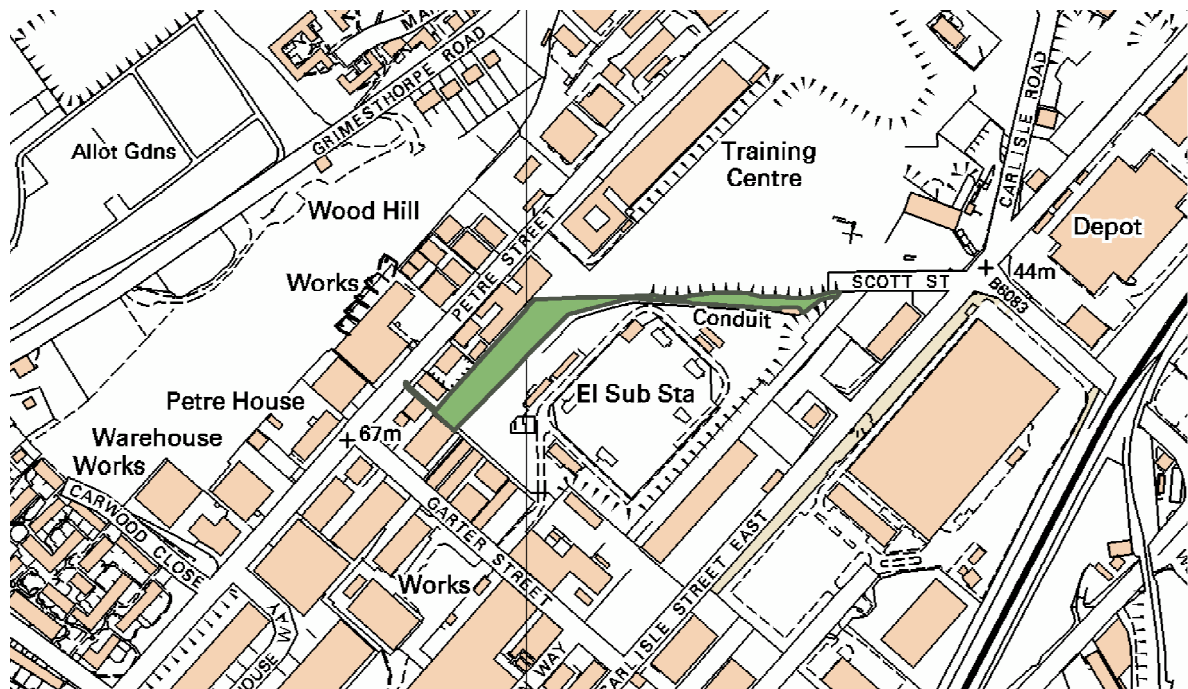
UDP designations

On the border of

Fringe Industry and Business Area

a General Industry Area with Special Interests

Location map



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Ecology

Phase I ecological survey

Site description

This is a little used footpath despite being signposted on both Petre Street and Carlisle Street East mainly because it is fairly secluded and is surrounded by industrial works. The main section of the footpath runs east – west along the base of a steep slope behind factories and warehouses on Petre Street. The path is sandwiched between this slope and the landscaped grounds of an electricity substation. The path eventually bears south towards Scott Street following along the eastern perimeter of the electricity substation and the western perimeter of a huge working quarry.

There are mature trees on the hillside as well as scattered along the lower slope which provide valuable breeding habitats for birds. There are large expanses of south-facing bramble banks that provide nectar for invertebrates in summer and fruit for birds and mammals in the autumn.

Field horsetail is the dominant flowering herb on much of the Petre Street hillside. Rosebay willow herb grows in abundance especially once the footpath begins to veer southwards and Michaelmas daisies grow densely along the stretch of the footpath leading to the steps down to Scott Street. Other flowering herbs on the site include black knapweed, teasels, dandelions, spear thistles and crucifers. Melilot is abundant and scents the air with its honey fragrance.

There is some evidence of previous gardens or intentional planting along the footpath bank. *Buddleja davidii*, Montbretia, *Spiraea salicifolia* and Shasta daisy can be found growing quite close together. Two other ornamental shrubs – snowberry and *Cotoneaster divaricatus* – were growing along the eastern perimeter of the site, but these were removed in the winter of 2003/2004. There are also apple trees. All the roses found on site are dog roses rather than introduced cultivars.

Habitats of interest

There are no habitats of high conservation value. This site's primary habitat value lies in its secluded location. Most of it is situated on a steep slope hidden behind industrial properties. Immediately to the south of it is a large electricity substation entirely enclosed by a high security fence with surveillance cameras, so that access to the site from that direction is extremely limited. To the east is an operational quarry. That too is fenced off to a certain extent.

Scrub, both native and introduced, dominates the hillside. There are large stretches of south-facing bramble banks. Goat willow and *Buddleja davidii* are clustered together centrally; a little further east towards the western boundary of Topmix elder begins its march down the hillside. Silver birch has also

colonised this area of open hillside. Surveyors also noted that some species such as Cotoneaster were beginning to self-seed on this part of the hillside.

Beneathe the scrub a large portion of the hillside is covered with field horsetail.

Winter clearance of vegetation along eastern strip of footpath revealed that the grassy path contained a fair amount of the moss *Brachythecium rutabulum* .

Species of interest

The species of high conservation value noted are all fauna. If protected, this site could prove to be a haven for wildlife for generations to come when other nearby sites may be lost to development. It has already proved to be attractive to breeding birds such as the summer migrant, common whitethroat. No evidence of mammals was detected by the surveyor, but the neighbouring quarry attracts foxes and rodents according to employee, Len Shepherd. The vegetation of the footpath bank supports a variety of *lepidoptera* and other invertebrates.

Invertebrate survey

<i>Diptera</i>	hoverflies
<i>Gasteropod</i>	snails
<i>Hymenoptera</i>	ants, buff-tailed bumblebee – queen and workers, bees
<i>Lepidoptera</i>	cinnabar moth caterpillars, unidentified micromoth

Specialist Lepidoptera survey

Species Recorded

Small skipper

Large skipper

Large white

Small white

Common blue

Red admiral

Painted lady

Small tortoiseshell

Peacock

Speckled wood

Wall brown

Gatekeeper

Meadow brown

Cinnabar moth

Silver Y

Vertebrates

Bird survey

SPECIES RECORDED ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION DURING THE BREEDING SEASON	<u>POSSIBLE</u> BREEDING SPECIES ¹	<u>PROBABLE</u> BREEDING SPECIES ²	<u>CONFIRMED</u> BREEDING SPECIES ³	NUMBER OF TERRITORIES HELD BY SELECTED SPECIES
Blackbird Chaffinch Chiffchaff Dunnock Goldfinch Kestrel Magpie Pigeon, Wood Robin Thrush, Song ⁴ Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Warbler, Willow Whitethroat, Common ⁵ Wren	Magpie Pigeon, Wood	Blackbird Dunnock Goldfinch Tit, Blue Tit, Great Wren	Whitethroat, Common	Whitethroat, Common - 2

¹ Evidence: present on more than one occasion in suitable breeding habitat

² Evidence: singing/displaying male in suitable breeding habitat on more than one occasion; pair in suitable habitat showing courtship or territorial behaviour; bird visiting probable nest site; nest building; anxiety calls; recently used nest

³ Evidence: adult carrying food or faecal sac; adult sitting on nest; nest with eggs/young; egg shells found away from nest; recently fledged young.

⁴ Priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

⁵ Species of conservation concern in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan

Mammals

No evidence of mammals was actually noted during the survey.

Evaluation

This out-of-the-way site is worth preserving. At present it is part of an excellent green corridor. It is a link between the green spaces east of the Topmix quarry, the quarry itself, and Burngreave sites such as Woodhill / Smith's Field. Because of its location on a steep slope, it probably won't attract the attention of developers. The only threat to the site is from the expansion of the quarrying activities of Topmix. And this threat is not one foreseen for the distant future, but one for the near future.

In the winter of 2003/2004, Topmix began working much closer to the boundary they share with the Green Footpath from Petre Street to Scott Street site. Trees and shrubs (shown in the photo on the previous page) were removed along the shared eastern boundary. These trees and shrubs provided bank stability as well as a buffer zone between the two sites.

They removed an old rusty fence along their boundary and replaced it with one which looked more temporary in nature, i.e. its posts were not sunk into the ground.

During this period vegetation between the new Topmix fence and the security fence of the electricity substation was cleared leaving only mossy grass and a fair amount of bare ground. This type of work, as drastic as it appears to be at the time, is probably essential to keep the Footpath open for pedestrians.

During the summer, the lower hillside of the Petre Street Topmix property was a riot of colour. It also proved to be a lure for butterflies despite rubbish having been dumped near their fence. But now Topmix have begun excavating the soil on the Petre Street hillside practically down to the property boundary reducing the habitat available for invertebrates.

Fragmented habitats are just a step away from habitats lost. The Footpath from Petre Street to Scott Street's role as a green corridor will be less valuable in the future if it becomes an isolated green sliver of land.

In general the site suffers little abuse possibly because few people know of or use the footpath. Improvements to footpath should be kept simple so that its wildlife value is not diminished simply to encourage more people to use the site.

Protective actions

- insure that bank along Topmix boundary is not allowed to erode
- encourage vegetation buffer zone along Topmix boundary

Potential improvement

- improve footpath surface along entire route

- remove cultivars
- remove Japanese knotweed while it is still of a manageable size

Species found

A (tree or shrub)

<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	sycamore
<i>Betula pendula</i>	silver birch
<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	butterfly-bush
<i>Cotoneaster divaricatus</i>	
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	hawthorn
<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	broom
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	ash
<i>Hedera helix</i>	ivy
<i>Malus domestica</i>	apple
<i>Quercus petraea</i>	sessile oak
<i>Rosa canina</i> agg.	dog rose
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	bramble
<i>Salix caprea</i>	goat willow
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	elder
<i>Spiraea salicifolia</i>	
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	snowberry
<i>Ulmus</i> sp.	elm sp.

B (herb)

<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	yarrow
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	garlic mustard
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	cow parsley
<i>Artemisia absinthium</i>	wormwood
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	mugwort
<i>Aster novi-belgii</i>	michaelmas daisy
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	daisy
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	hedge bindweed
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	shepherd's-purse
<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>	hairy bitter-cress
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	common knapweed
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	common mouse-ear
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	rosebay willowherb
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	creeping thistle
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	field bindweed
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	foxglove
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	wild teasel
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	great willowherb
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	broad-leaved willowherb
<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Japanese knotweed
<i>Galega officinalis</i>	goat's-rue
<i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	herb-robert
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	hogweed
<i>Hieracium umbellatum</i>	leafy hawkweed
<i>Hyacinthoides hispanica</i>	Spanish bluebell
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	ox-eye daisy
<i>Leucanthemum x superbum</i>	shasta daisy
<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>	common toadflax
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	black medick
<i>Melilotus altissima</i>	tall melilot

	<i>Montbretia</i>	
	<i>Myosotis</i> sp.	forget-me-not cultivar
	<i>Narcissus</i> Division 2	daffodil cultivars
	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	ribwort plantain
	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup
	<i>Reseda luteola</i>	weld
	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	curled dock
	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	broad-leaved dock
	<i>Sedum reflexum</i>	reflexed stonecrop
	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	common ragwort
	<i>Sisymbrium officinale</i>	hedge mustard
	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	bittersweet
	<i>Spiraea salicifolia</i>	bridewort
	<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	hedge woundwort
	<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>	feverfew
	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>	tansy
	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	dandelion
	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	colt's-foot
	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	common nettle
	<i>Vicia cracca</i>	tufted vetch
	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	common vetch
C (grass)		
	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	false oat-grass
	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	cock's-foot
	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	red fescue
	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog
	<i>Holcus mollis</i>	creeping soft-grass
E (Pteridophyte)		
	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	male-fern
	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	field horsetail
	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	bracken
F (Bryophyte)		
	<i>Brachythecium rutabulum</i>	rough-stalked feather moss

Habitats/species of nature conservation importance

UK BAP Priority Habitats

Sheffield LBAP Priority Habitats

UK BAP Priority Species

Song thrush

Sheffield LBAP Priority Species

Song thrush

UK BAP Species of Conservation Concern

Blue tit

Chiffchaff

Common whitethroat

Dunnock

Goldfinch

Great tit

Song thrush

Willow warbler

Wren

UK Red List Birds

Song thrush

UK Amber List Birds

Dunnock

Willow warbler

Local Red Data Book Species

Lepidoptera Grade A Species

Speckled wood

Previous surveys

AUTHOR/RECORDER	DATE	COVERAGE	LOCATION
J. Fox	13/10/87	Sheffield Habitat Survey Inner City Phase 1	Site 150 – Petre Street Footpath bank Site 148 – Scott Street Waste Site

History and Geology

Geological survey

The solid geology of the site lies within the Lower and Middle Coal Measures of the Upper Carboniferous period and is characterised by mudstone and siltstone.

Archaeological survey

No archaeological or historical features were identified within the Footpath between Petre Street and Scott Street in the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service SMR, English Heritage NMR or on historic Ordnance Survey maps.

Nine features, however, were identified from archive records within the immediate vicinity (i.e. 500m) of the site. These included a section of the Roman Ridge (SMR 4039) and the Atlas and Northern Steel Works (NMR SK 38 NE 280).

Historical survey

The Footpath between Petre Street and Scott Street is first shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25" map (1905). It ran along the northern edge of the Carlisle Street Recreation Ground, now the site of the electricity substation on Scott Street. The site of the footpath is previously shown as agricultural land on Harrison's map of Southall Soake (1637) and cuts through a series of plots of land labelled as *Meadow Banks*, *Over Wheate Cliffe* and *Wheate Cliffe*.

Community

No community survey was carried out.