

20 Open Spaces off Botham Street



Introduction

There are open spaces on both sides of Botham Street. The character of the two are quite different. One (Botham Street East) is primarily rank grassland and scattered scrub, while the other (Botham Street West) is amenity grassland and plantation woodland.



Site details

Site name

Open spaces off Botham Street

Location

Ordnance Survey Grid Reference	SK 372 899
Botham Street East	SK 372 899
Botham Street West	SK 371 898

Land owner

Sheffield City Council

Nearest road/street

Grimesthorpe Road

Cyclops Street

Botham Street

Petre Street

Petre Drive

Adjacent land use

East of the site is the landscaped grounds of the Jehovah Witnesses.

West of the site are industrial units.

South of the site is green space (Hunsley Street).

Southeast of the site is green space (Petre Street).

Southwest there is quarrying – industrial.

To the north of the site is Grimesthorpe Open Space and the Cyclops Shrubbery.

Size

Botham Street East	0.474869 hectares
Botham Street West	0.383871 hectares

Present management

The open space east of Botham Street shows the least amount of management. The interior of the site is not managed at all. Only the perimeter of the grassland that is bounded by pavements and roads (Grimesthorpe Road, Botham Street and Petre Street) is managed. Sheffield City Council mows approximately a 3.5 meter strip of grassland along this boundary to create and maintain a sight line. They do not do this as regularly as they would mow amenity grassland and consequently many flowering herbs flower in the perimeter grassland strip. The mowed grassland is quite rough in texture as the grass cuttings are left in clumps to rot down naturally.

The open space west of Botham Street on the other hand has a large rectangular area of amenity grassland along Cyclops Street. This is mowed approximately once a month creating a relatively fine sward though the cuttings are not raked up and removed from here.

Warehouses form the southern boundary of this part of the site. The mowers do not mow right up to the edge of these buildings; they leave approximately a 4 meter wide strip of unmowed grasses along the rear of these buildings.

In addition there is a metal enclosure fencing off a small electricity substation. The mower cuts to about 1 meter to the east side of this enclosure. The area between the metal enclosure and rear of warehouses, where there is a liberal scattering of white pebbles is not mowed. This particular area of tall grasses unfortunately encourages fly tipping.

An area approximately 6.8 meters wide between the metal enclosure and another warehouse to the west is also not mowed.

There is no indication that the plantation woodland along Botham Street is actually managed, but the narrow strip of grassland on either side of it is mowed to create and maintain a sight line.

UDP designations

Botham Street is an Open Space Area within a Fringe Industry and Business Area.

Location map



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Ecology

Phase I ecological survey

Site description

This site is effectively divided into two compartments by Botham Street. Compartment one is the plot of land east of Botham Street adjacent to the landscaped grounds of the Kingdom Hall of Jehoval Witnesses. On the western side of Botham Street, the second compartment is in the shape of a dog's leg around the warehouses of Clearline Communications and Recut Grinding & Engineering Services.

Compartment one, Botham Street East, is surrounded on three sides by pavements alongside roads – Grimesthorpe Road to the north, Botham Street to the west and Petre Street to the south. Except for a strip of grassland approximately 3.5 metres wide along these roads that is mowed occasionally by Sheffield City Council to maintain a sight line for vehicle drivers, the site is unmanaged. Sycamores grow abundantly along its eastern perimeter especially on the northern half of the site. Where this tree line stops, foliage and flowers from shrubs and climbers of the neighbouring property spill over and through the fence. In this area garden escapes (*Brachyglottis* Dunedin hybrid 'Sunshine') have become established. There are also indications of intentional planting (a small conifer and tiny hydrangea).

Scattered scrub include several apple trees, hawthorn, saplings of Swedish whitebeam, and roses (dog roses as well as a later flowering cultivar rose). Unfortunately, by the time the cultivar rose flowers, it is engulfed by creeping thistles.

There are some fine grasses such as yellow oatgrass and red fescue to be found, but breast high rank coarse grass throughout the site is the norm as summer progresses. Creeping thistle is abundant, but it is concealed in the tall grass. Tufted vetch is locally abundant. Other flowering herbs include common vetch, lesser stitchwort, Michaelmas daisies, red clover, white clover, bird's-foot trefoil, hogweed, Oxford ragwort, mugwort, fennel, yarrow and common poppy. In the spring lesser celandine can be seen flowering in the mown perimeter. The southern perimeter of the compartment is dominated by tall ruderals and Japanese knotweed. Japanese knotweed has also encroached into the mowed perimeter along Grimesthorpe Road.

There were no signs of territory defense or breeding of birds here during 2003 despite the presence of suitable trees and scrub for nesting. A kestrel was however seen hovering over the site. Few invertebrates appeared to be present until late summer then the creeping thistle was in bloom. Butterflies could be seen emerging from tall grasses to bask on the shorter sward of the mowed perimeter.

Compartment two, Botham Street West, has been landscaped. A double line of trees (cotoneaster, Norway maple, hornbeam, Swedish whitebeam, common lime, sessile oak, London plane, hawthorn and goat willow) effectively conceals the Petre Drive entrance to the warehouse from Botham Street.

There is a break in the tree line allowing access to rear door of warehouse. A group of whitebeams have been planted on the corner of Botham Street and Cyclops Street.

The warehouse extends westward parallel to Cyclops Street. Its brickwork is clearly visible and forms the rear boundary of this part of the Botham Street site. Goat willow, clumps of Japanese knotweed, scrub (brambles) tall ruderals (stinging nettles) and coarse grasses grow along this brick wall. There is an electricity substation enclosed within a metal fence in front of part of the warehouse. Grasses near the fence are left to grow tall. However there is a large rectangular expanse of amenity grassland in the foreground of the warehouse which is mowed regularly by the City Council.

Habitats of interest

Botham Street East is an urban common – a habitat of high conservation value in Sheffield. It is a green space where there was once terraced housing. It's likely that its numerous apple trees and shrub roses are remnants of old gardens. Other shrubs may be more recent additions perhaps having arrived courtesy of the neighbouring Jehovah's Witnesses' garden.

In the years since the terraced housing has been demolished, this site, with a few exceptions, has been left to develop as it will. Sycamores, opportunists that they are, are colonising the north-eastern boundary. Saplings of Swedish whitebeam, probably from seeds borne from trees across the street are now growing here. Hawthorn scrub may have arrived by the same route.

The grassland is quite fertile. Rank grasses are the norm and creeping thistles are abundant. Even so, there are a number of flowering herbs present - tufted vetch (locally abundant), common vetch, meadow vetchling, lesser stitchwort, Michaelmas daisy, bird's-foot trefoil, black medick, creeping buttercup, meadow buttercup, red clover, white clover, common field speedwell, yarrow, garlic mustard, colt'sfoot, dandelion, goat's-beard, common ragwort, Oxford ragwort, white deadnettle, and red deadnettle. A full list can be found in the Appendix.

Despite the abundance of trees and scrub, the common did not appear to be attractive to breeding birds. In fact few birds were recorded at the site at all. No evidence of mammals could be found.

There was only a cursory recording of highly visible invertebrates. It is not known whether a specialist invertebrate survey would uncover a greater diversity of insects hidden in the grassland.

Japanese knotweed is mostly confined to the southern boundary, but there is a patch in the mowed perimeter along Grimesthorpe Road.

Species of interest

There are no botanical species of high conservation value.



On a site like Botham Street East which is dominated by rank coarse grasses, it is a pleasant surprise to come across a small patch of yellow oat-grass, *Trisetum flavescens* in the sward.

There was also *Festuca rubra*, but that fine grass was common to many of the surveyed grassland sites in Burngreave.

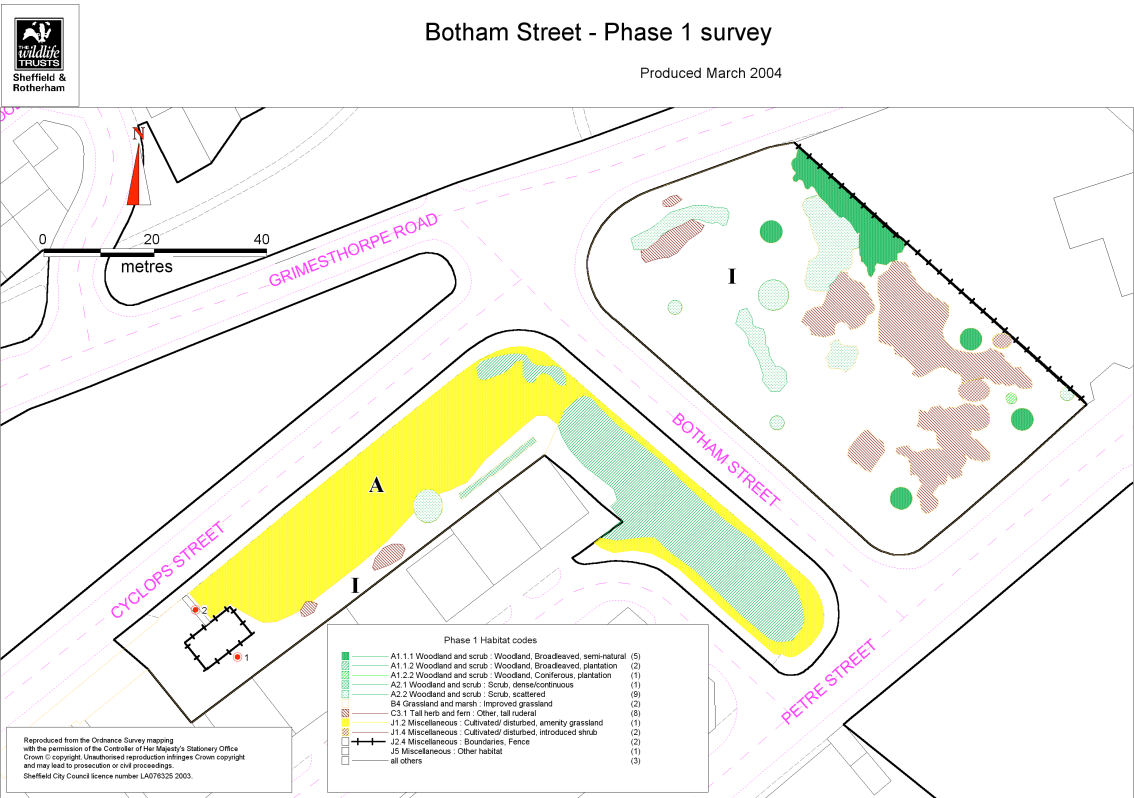
In the spring Lesser Celandine, *Ranunculus ficaria* can be seen flowering in the mowed perimeter sight line along Grimesthorpe Road. There are also a few small patches of them growing in the amenity grassland of Botham Street West.

Growing through cracks in the pavement and along the kerb of Botham Street West is the wonderfully scented *Melilot altissima*.

Of all the trees in the plantation woodland, it is the Cotoneasters that put on a spectacular show in the autumn, continuing well into winter.

The RSPB recommends the planting of Cotoneasters to provide winter food for birds. Although many berries still remained on the trees in February, mistle thrushes were now being seen in the plantation woodland.

Phase I habitat map



Invertebrates

Noted on site:

<i>Arachnid:</i>	spider webs
<i>Coleoptera:</i>	7-spot ladybird
<i>Gastropod:</i>	snail
<i>Hemiptera:</i>	aphid, cuckoo spit of leaf hopper
<i>Hymenoptera:</i>	bee, bumblebee, queen buff-tailed bumblebee
<i>Lepidoptera:</i>	micro moth

Specialist Lepidoptera survey

Small skipper

Large white

Small white

Small tortoiseshell

Gatekeeper

Meadow brown

Burnet moth

Cinnabar moth

Vertebrates

Bird survey

SPECIES RECORDED ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION DURING THE BREEDING SEASON	<u>POSSIBLE</u> BREEDING SPECIES	<u>PROBABLE</u> BREEDING SPECIES	<u>CONFIRMED</u> BREEDING SPECIES	NUMBER OF TERRITORIES HELD BY SELECTED SPECIES
Blackbird Dunnock Goldfinch Kestrel Magpie Pigeon, wood Robin Swift Tit, blue Tit, great				

Mammals

No mammals were recorded on the site.

Evaluation

Botham Street East has potential. A number of flowering herbs are growing in the grassland, but they are primarily concentrated near the perimeter of the site. The interior is dominated by breast high grasses and creeping thistles. It is almost a no-go area in midsummer.

The site is relatively free of fly tipping; garden waste probably from the adjacent Jehovah's Witnesses property, however, is dumped along its southeastern boundary.

The site does not appear to be particularly attractive to wildlife. How it could be developed to be more attractive to wildlife is a difficult question to answer. Putting up bird boxes is probably not the solution, as there is no water on the site.

Protective actions:

Botham Street East

- Perimeter grass could be mowed more frequently than it is. Cuttings should not be left to rot on site and increase the fertility of the soil as this encourages the growth of coarse grasses
- Discourage tipping of garden waste
- Discourage planting of garden flora
- Remove conifer while it is still small

Botham Street West

- Mow tall grasses between warehouse and electricity substation to help discourage fly tipping there

Potential improvements

Botham Street East

- Introduce grassland management plan to reduce creeping thistles and coarse grasses to allow flowering herbs and fine grasses to flourish

Botham Street East and Botham Street West

- Eradicate Japanese knotweed

Species found

Botham Street East

A (tree or shrub)

<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	sycamore
<i>Brachyglottis 'Sunshine'</i>	Dunedin hybrids
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	hawthorn
<i>Cupressocyparis leylandii</i>	Leyland cypress
<i>Hydrangea sp.</i>	hydrangea
<i>Malus domestica</i>	apple
<i>Rosa canina agg.</i>	dog rose
<i>Rosa sp.</i>	rose sp.
<i>Sorbus intermedia agg</i>	Swedish whitebeam

B (herb)

<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	yarrow
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	garlic mustard
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	cow parsley
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	mugwort

<i>Aster novi-belgii</i>	michaelmas daisy
<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>	hairy bitter-cress
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	common mouse-ear
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	rosebay willowherb
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	creeping thistle
<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Japanese knotweed
<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	fennel
<i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	hogweed
<i>Hyacinthoides hispanica x non-scripta</i>	hybrid bluebell
<i>Lamium album</i>	white dead-nettle
<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	red dead-nettle
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	meadow vetchling
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	black medick
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	common poppy
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	ribwort plantain
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	meadow buttercup
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	lesser celandine
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	broad-leaved dock
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	common ragwort
<i>Senecio squalidus</i>	Oxford ragwort
<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	lesser stitchwort
<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>	tansy
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	dandelion
<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	goat's-beard
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	red clover
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	white clover
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	colt's-foot
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	common nettle
<i>Veronica persica</i>	common field-speedwell
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	tufted vetch
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	common vetch

C (grass)

<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	false oat-grass
<i>Bromus sterilis</i>	barren brome
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	cock's-foot
<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	common couch
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	red fescue
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	perennial rye-grass
<i>Poa pratensis</i>	smooth meadow-grass
<i>Trisetum flavescens</i>	yellow oat-grass

Botham Street West

A (tree or shrub)

<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	sycamore
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	hornbeam
<i>Cotoneaster</i> sp.	cotoneaster
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	hawthorn
<i>Malus domestica</i>	apple
<i>Platanus x hybrida</i>	London plane
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	bramble
<i>Salix capraea</i>	goat willow
<i>Sorbus aria</i> agg.	common whitebeam
<i>Sorbus intermedia</i> agg.	Swedish whitebeam

B (herb)

<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	mugwort
<i>Aster novi-belgii</i>	michaelmas daisy
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	daisy
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	common mouse-ear
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	creeping thistle
<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Japanese knotweed
<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	fennel
<i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	hogweed
<i>Melilotus altissima</i>	melilot
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	ribwort plantain
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	meadow buttercup
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	lesser celandine
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	common ragwort
<i>Senecio squalidus</i>	Oxford ragwort
<i>Sherardia arvensis</i>	field madder
<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	dandelion
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	white clover
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	common nettle

C (grass)

<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	false oat-grass
<i>Bromus sterilis</i>	barren brome
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	cock's-foot
<i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>	wavy hair-grass
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	red fescue
<i>Poa annua</i>	annual meadow-grass
<i>Poa pratensis</i>	smooth meadow-grass
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	rough meadow-grass

Habitats/species of nature conservation importance

UK BAP Priority Habitats

None

Sheffield LBAP Priority Habitats

Grassland

Urban common

UK BAP Priority Species

None

UK BAP Species of Conservation Concern

Kestrel

UK Red List Birds

None

UK Amber List Birds

Kestrel

Local Red Data Book Species

Lepidoptera Grade A Species

Comma

Previous surveys

None found.

History and Geology

Geological survey

The solid geology of this site lies within the Lower and Middle Coal Measures of the Upper Carboniferous period and is characterised by mudstone, flaggy sandstone and siltstone. The boundary between the Lower and Middle Coal Measures is defined by the Clay cross marine band.

Archaeological survey

No archaeological or historical features were identified within the open spaces off Botham Street in the South Yorkshire Archeological Service SMR, English Heritage NMR or on historic Ordnance Survey maps.

Five 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 Grimesthorpe Grinding Wheel (SMR 4243).

Historical survey

The open spaces off Botham Street were created on the site of former terraced housing on Botham Street, Cyclops Street, Grimesthorpe Road, Hunsley Street, Ludlow Street, Margate Street and Ruthin Street. This housing was first shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25" map (1905). The site is previously shown as agricultural land associated with *Bower farme* on Harrison's survey of Southall Soake (1637). It would appear to have remained largely unchanged until the late nineteenth century when residential development would appear to have encroached upon the site. Terraced housing is shown within the limits of the open spaces on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25" map (1905).

Recommendations

The open spaces off Botham Street are of limited archaeological or historical significance. They would appear to have been used for housing during the late nineteenth and early to mid twentieth centuries. Following the demolition of the housing, the site remained undeveloped and has since become one of the many open or green spaces in the Burngreave NDfC area. Consultation of census records will help identify former residents of Botham Street, Cyclops Street, Grimesthorpe Road, Hunsley Street, Ludlow Street, Margate Street and Ruthin Street. This information may help improve understanding of local social history.

Community

No community survey was carried out.