



WHAT IS A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE?

In urban areas, access to the peace and beauty of natural surroundings is essential to human well-being and quality of life. In Stockport, Local Nature Reserves are able to provide for this by giving people special opportunities to see, enjoy and learn about wild plants, animals and natural features.

At the same time, they can protect the most important places locally for wildlife and natural features, increase peoples awareness of the importance of nature and help to forge partnerships between local people, wildlife organisations and local authorities.

Local Nature Reserves are a national, recognised, statutory designation, established under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

The **WOODBANK MEMORIAL PARK TRAIL** links two key Local Nature Reserves in the riverside area of woodland at Woodbank and the Ancient Woodland at Poise Brook.



NATURE NOTES

The woodland and riverbanks are rich in native and wild flowers, trees and animals. Spring brings carpets of bluebell and celandine. Wild garlic, sweet cicely, garlic mustard, hogweed and ground ivy all thrive near the river.

By summer Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed can be seen. These invasive plants can grow up to 3 metres and shades out all other ground flora. Together with Rhododendron they were introduced to Britain for ornamental reasons but have become aggressively dominant displacing native plants and seriously reducing wildlife interest.



RESPECT FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

Guard against all risk of fire

Take your litter home

Keep your dogs under close control and please clean up after them

Keep to footpaths

Protect wildlife, plants and trees

Enjoy the peace and respect that of others



WOODBANK MEMORIAL PARK

In the early 1800s Peter Marsland bought an old estate and built Woodbank Hall, between 1812-14, as his family home. He constructed an intricate system of water tunnels, which fed the mills on Newbridge Lane. In 1827, he established Stockport's first Public Water Works based on his two Reservoirs in Woodbank. The filter beds for this were situated where the Nursing Home stands today. His family continued to live at the Hall until it was sold, with the land, to Sir Thomas Rowbotham, J.P. in 1920. In 1921, Rowbotham gave the land to the Borough Council to be used for recreational purposes by the 'People' in Memory of the men of Stockport who died in The Great War. He never lived in the Hall and in 1924; it was presented to the Council. The building fell into decay until 1930 when the Council restored it and opened it to the public in 1931 to provide an exhibition gallery, reading room, meeting rooms and refreshment facilities. The OLD NATURE TRAIL was installed sometime in the 1970's, the original Stone Markers have been reused, and the route extended.

FRIENDS of WOODBANK, VERNON & POISE

The Friends of Woodbank, Vernon & Poise hold regular task days and events so that you can get involved with the conservation of both the parkland and its Heritage. The group have worked closely with Stockport Council to raise the funding for the Trail and the design of this guide.

Please contact them at - fvwfriends@hotmail.co.uk

GENERAL INFORMATION

Some steep slopes and steps. Surfaced and un-surfaced paths, which can get muddy in wet weather. Wear sensible footwear.

Café and toilets available at Vernon Park Museum (during opening times) SK1 4JR

HOW TO GET THERE

Buses 314 frequent service - Stockport Bus Station to Hall St.
364 (check times) to Woodbank main entrance

Car Park Main (SK1 4BN) located behind Woodbank Community Centre on Turncroft Lane.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

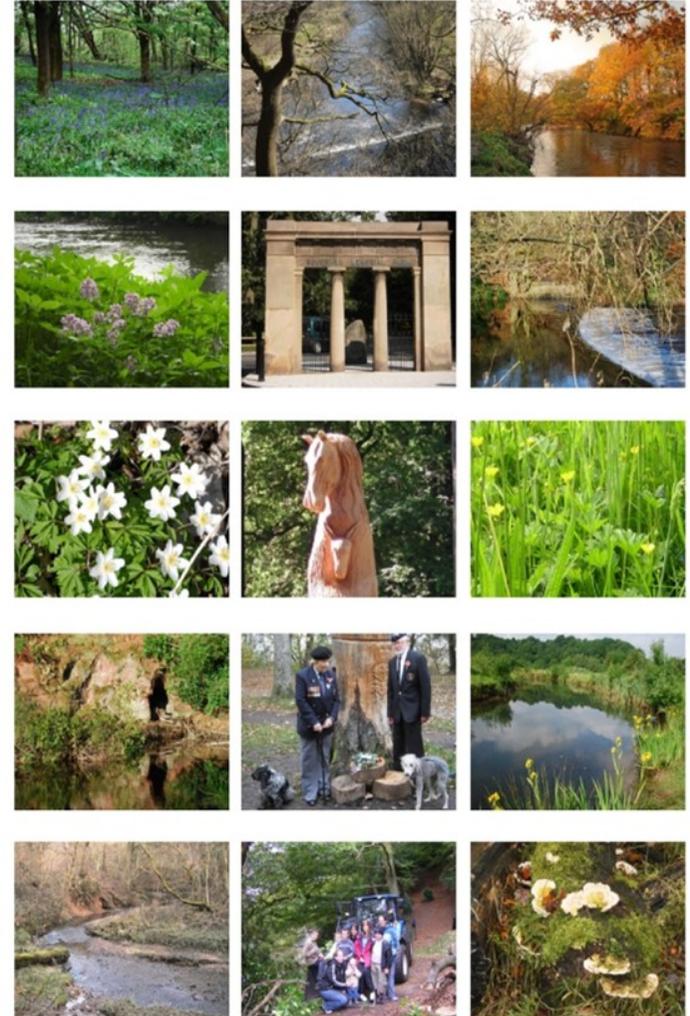
Stockport Council, Town Hall, Stockport SK1 3XE

www.stockport.gov.uk

For Emergencies Only: Daytime Tel: 0161 217 6111
Out of Hours Tel: 0161 477 5555

WOODBANK MEMORIAL PARK NATURE & HERITAGE

Self-Guide Walk



WOODBANK MEMORIAL PARK NATURE & HERITAGE TRAIL



1. WOODBANK HALL

Designed by Thomas Harrison for **PETER MARSLAND**, a local industrialist. The Villa, now a Grade 11* listed building, was built 1812-1814. **SIR THOMAS ROWBOTHAM J.P.** eventually gave the building to the people of Stockport in 1924.

2. MEADOW & WOODLAND

Play or picnic in the rich upper and lower meadowland. Bear **LEFT** at **No.2** and follow the edge of the meadow to **No3**. As you follow the Trail, you will discover lots of dead wood displaying many types of **FUNGUS**.

3. BLUEBELL WOOD

One of many Bluebell areas along the Trail in spring. Look for the **ARROW** stone and continue past it to the next path on the **LEFT**. As you walk along the riverside and through the woodland you will see oak, sycamore, birch, beech, lime, ash, alder and crack willow with shrubs such as holly, hawthorn and hazel growing under the taller trees.

4. SWAN POOL AREA

MARSLAND constructed a **RESERVOIR** here, later known as **SWAN POOL**, where water was collected and stored overnight to use the following day to drive the mill waterwheels.

5. SLIP WAY/SITE OF 9 ft TUNNEL

The **RESERVOIR** was later connected directly to his Newbridge Lane Mill via a **9FT TUNNEL** (look for the row of bricks that remain). The earlier overflow channel is broken up but still visible on the riverbank not far from the concrete slipway. The **MARSLAND** family had a boathouse in this area.

6. PEAR MILL

Built on the north side of the River Goyt in 1912 and recognised by the elaborate pear shaped water tower. Continue past the bridge, which carries power from the National Grid (opposite side of the river). Spot a **PEREGRINE FALCON** nesting way up high.

7. END of NAB WEIR TUNNEL

Water ran in a tunnel underneath the meadow from **NAB WEIR** and went directly back into the river or into this narrow part of **SWAN POOL**, which flowed into the larger Reservoir. Continue along the path passing the large sandstone inlet, which is also part of the water system. In spring you can smell the Wild Garlic and Sweet Cicely as you follow the riverbank to the next stone.

8. BREDBURY HALL

Across the river is the modern hotel. The white building at the side is **BREDBURY HALL**. The **ANCIENT BARN**, medieval in origin and of cruck-framed construction is hidden behind these buildings. Pause and visit the meadow on your **RIGHT** where you may see **GREY HERONS**.

9. SANDSTONE & MIDDLE FARM

View the sandstone rock which prevails along the banks of the Goyt and Mersey in Stockport. Watch out for **KINGFISHER**.

10. NAB WEIR

MARSLAND created the weir to increase the river flow. The entrance to his Tunnel is below the water line near the weir and is sealed with iron bars but still allows the water into the now silted up tunnel. **NAB WEIR** is probably the most beautiful spot on the Trail. Continue to the arrow directing you **LEFT** to the upper pathway.

11. VIEW ABOVE RIVER GOYT

Stop and view the **RIVER GOYT**. Try to re-visit this spot during the changing seasons. In the distance, you can see **MIDDLE FARM** and Romiley. To the **RIGHT** is **GOYT HALL FARM** and **GOYT HALL**.

12. RIVER VIEW & exit to STADIUM

Look down to the river and you may see **GREY HERONS** or **CORMORANTS** roosting in a tree.

13. RIVER VIEW & exit to WOODLANDS PARK

Here you can see the rear view of the timber-framed **GOYT HALL** built around **1570**. A good spot to listen to the birds; watch out for **the GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER, TREE CREEPER** and many others.

APPROXIMATE DISTANCES BETWEEN STONES

1 to 6	110 m	6 to 10	100 m
10 to 15	900 m	15 to 17	500 m
(Approx. 1 mile in total)			

14. END of WOODBANK LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Between these two sections, you are crossing Private Land owned by Offerton Cricket Club. Take extra **CARE** if a match is in progress.

15. START of POISE BROOK LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Poise Brook is an area of ancient broadleaf woodland, which is some of the most important woodland in Greater Manchester. It forms a valuable environment for a rich variety of plants and animals, which thrive along the River Goyt.

16. JIM FEARNLEY BRIDGE

The bridge (named after a former Park Superintendent) crosses the River Goyt near its confluence with Poise Brook and links the Goyt Valley Way. Cross the bridge, follow the path and then turn **LEFT** to pass **GOYT HALL** and then the **ANCIENT BARN**. You can circle back to Vernon Park via Osborne St. and Stockport Rd West.

OR

Turn **RIGHT** to **CHADKIRK** and **ETHEROW COUNTRY PARKS**.

17. POISE BROOK & END OF TRAIL

Geological interest is provided by the Red Rocks Fault, which marks the boundary between the sandstone (probably formed around 250 million years ago) and the older coal measures.

Move up the hill behind the stone and slightly to the **LEFT** to follow **POISE BROOK**. Cross the two small bridges leading to Holiday Lane. **HALLIDAY HILL HOUSE** (now a private residence) is the Ancestral home of the American **DODGE** family of Dodge City fame and is on the **LEFT** towards the end of the Trail. The Trail finishes at Marple Road (A626 & buses to Stockport/ Marple)

OR

Shorten your walk and return to Woodbank following the upper trail to your **RIGHT**, which passes the blocks of flats where **THE WOODLANDS** once stood – look out for the old herringbone brickwork and stone. Follow the path back towards Woodbank and passing behind Woodlands Park.

We hope you will enjoy your walk and tell others about it. Please come back and see the changes the Seasons bring



Welcome to Woodbank Memorial Park Nature and Heritage Trail

KEY - Trail Markers

- 1 Woodbank Hall
 - 2 Meadow & Woodland
 - 3 Bluebell Wood
 - 4 Swan Pool Area
 - 5 Slip way / Site of the Nine Foot Tunnel
 - 6 Pear Mill
 - 7 End of Nab Weir Tunnel
 - 8 Bredbury Hall
 - 9 Sandstone & Middle Farm
 - 10 Nab Weir
 - 11 View above River Goyt
 - 12 River View & exit to Stadium
 - 13 River View & exit to Woodlands Park
 - 14 End of Woodbank Local Nature Reserve
 - 15 Poise Brook Local Nature Reserve
 - 16 Jim Fearnley Bridge
 - 17 Poise Brook - follow the brook to Halliday Hill House
- P** Car Parking
 -  Picnic Table
 -  Café
 -  Toilets
 -  Childrens' Playground
 -  Bus Service



In the early 1800s Peter Marsland created a legacy in Woodbank, much of which is hidden today. Within the estate, he built the Hall and the town's first Public Water Works. He constructed Swan Pool Reservoir, Nab Weir and tunnels which took water down to the town to power mills.



Woodbank Hall



Rock strata on the river bank



Halliday Hill House