

## Parks and Open Spaces

NOTTINGHAM is generously endowed with public parks and open spaces which, apart from the opportunities they afford for recreation and amusement, play an important part in the excellent standard of public health enjoyed by the city. The moral effect of so many and such

carefully husbanded open-lands, all within easy access of the centre of the city, cannot be over-estimated, and the Corporation are fully alive to the benefits which they confer on the community. Airiness, brightness, clear air and pleasant surroundings are ideals sought by every municipality, and in Nottingham the parks and recreation grounds provide these features.



The Lake at Wollaton Park

Photograph by C. H. Higson & Co.

### WOLLATON PARK AND WOLLATON HALL

Within a few minutes from the centre of the city is Wollaton Park, with its magnificent Elizabethan Hall, its noble trees, its lovely lake, its sylvan charms, its bracken, and its deer. The park and its mansion, Wollaton Hall, covering 744 acres, were purchased by the Corporation from Lord Middleton, in 1924. The park is open to the public and on part of it a first-class golf course of 18 holes has been laid out.

The question, "Who was the designer of Wollaton Hall?" has involved no little discussion, and the honour is claimed not only for one "Mr. Robert Smythson, gent., architector and surveyor unto the most worthy house of Wollaton and diverse others of great account"—as his monument in Wollaton Church reads, but for John Thorpe and master workmen from Italy.

The conclusion reached by Mr. J. A. Gotch, the well-known authority on Renaissance architecture in England, is this: Sir Francis Willoughby, who was descended from a wealthy Nottingham wool merchant named Ralph Bugge, paid for the house which John Thorpe designed, Robert Smythson being the chief workman and clerk of the works, for in the sixteenth century the word



Photograph by C. H. Higson & Co

Wollaton Hall

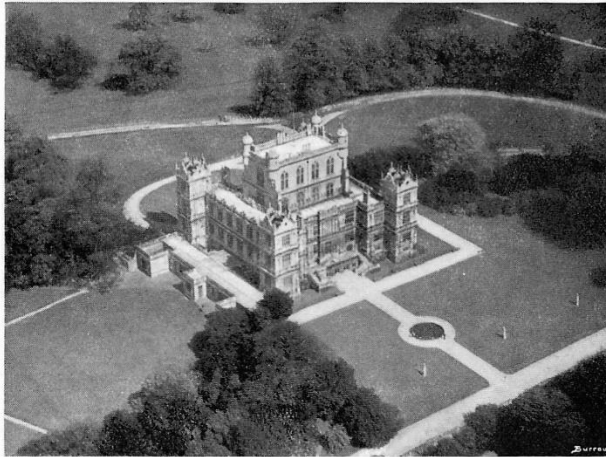




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"architector" meant little more than this. There is not much evidence in the design of Italian influence, except perhaps in the statuary and gondola rings, but there are traces of French design in the corner pavilions and of Dutch in the curly gables.



*Wollaton Hall as seen from the Air*

Photograph by Aerofilms Ltd.

By building his house round a central hall, John Thorpe had to make this hall of unusual height. It is 50 feet high and the windows are thirty-five feet above the floor level. Thorpe's plans would appear to have been modified in the course of actual building, and these changes were probably due to Smythson.

Wollaton Hall took eight years to build, and we are told that the stone was brought from Ancaster on horseback and paid for with coal from Wollaton pits. Nevertheless, the cost was £80,000. Wollaton Hall has been in constant use as a residence. Interior alterations have resulted in the disappearance of most of the Elizabethan features, including the Long Gallery, but the basement and the great hall with its roof and stone

screen are as they were built. The mansion now houses a Public Natural History Museum, with the exception of one part reserved for such purposes as mayoral receptions, etc. The availability of this spacious house provided an admirable solution of the problem of finding more adequate accommodation for the important Natural History collection previously housed for many years at the old University College in Bilbie Street. The collection as a whole is considered one of the best provincial collections of natural history objects in the country. The ground floor of the Hall is devoted to vertebrates, among which is a good series of Nottinghamshire mammals, birds and fishes. The collection of invertebrates is of great extent, importance and value, and includes one of the finest collections of exotic butterflies in the kingdom, as well as large collections of all the other orders of insects, both British and foreign. A collection of Nottinghamshire insects is an extensive and particularly interesting feature. The collections of British fossils and of British and foreign mollusca are exceptionally comprehensive, and there is a good series of minerals and rocks. A recent and highly important addition to the geological section is a collection of microscopic slides of rock slices which ranks as one of the most important in the



Photograph by C. H. Higson & Co.

*In the Arboretum*



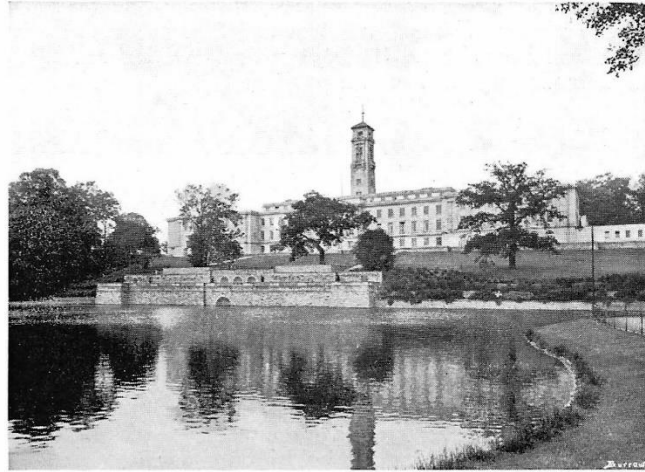
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kingdom. There is also a large herbarium of British and foreign plants. The museum is open each weekday from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m. in summer, and in winter until dusk. It is also open on Sundays during certain hours, and on Bank Holidays.

### THE ARBORETUM

Beyond the College of Art are the gates in Waverley Street which admit to that delightful spot, the Arboretum. It was opened in 1852 as a public park, and its nineteen acres of undulating ground include an ornamental lake with swans and other water fowl, extensive aviaries of rare and beautiful birds, and many tastefully arranged flower beds. Perhaps even more attractive than these commendable features are the extensive grassy slopes, where one can lounge at ease in summertime, and where the children can amuse themselves in safety to their hearts' content. A very striking object in the park is the reproduction of a Chinese pagoda. This structure was made locally, but in it hangs a bell captured by the Nottinghamshire Regiment at Canton during the Chinese War. Russian guns captured at Sebastopol during the Crimean War stand at the four corners of the pagoda, and close by is a statue of Fergus O'Connor "of the roaring forties," who represented Nottingham in Parliament for some time. Military Band concerts are given in the grounds during the summer.



Photograph by C. H. Higson & Co.

*The Lake, University Park*

### UNIVERSITY PARK

One of the most recent acquisitions of the Corporation and the third in size of Nottingham's Parks, is the fine University Park at Highfields, which was created by the munificence of the late Lord Trent. It occupies about 150 acres and includes a boating lake of some fourteen acres in extent. The Park is divided by the University Boulevard, one side of which is devoted entirely to such games as cricket, hockey, football and tennis, whilst the other side provides facilities for

quieter pastimes such as bowls, croquet, putting and boating. Here the landscape architect has had full licence, and the lay-out is all that could be desired. Masses of many hundreds of rhododendrons flank the Boulevard, and in the early summer it is a picture that is rarely seen anywhere in England. A marvellous cascade of water falls over the fine Rock Gardens. A choice variety of trees and shrubs flourish, and many other horticultural features are to be found which give the Park a dignity not often found in public parks. Adjacent to the playing fields are the athletic



Photograph by C. H. Higson & Co.

*Victoria Embankment and Trent Bridge*



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grounds devoted exclusively to the use of students of University College, Nottingham, the new buildings of which, on rising ground facing the University Boulevard, are a dominating feature of the Park.

The children are well provided for by a playground of eleven acres. For adult recreation there are seventeen cricket pitches, thirty-six tennis courts, thirteen football grounds, eleven hockey pitches, two net-ball grounds, four putting greens, three bowling greens, four croquet lawns and a running track of 550 yards in circumference. The park is well supplied with seating accommodation, shelters and pavilions.

### VICTORIA EMBANKMENT

The Victoria Embankment extends from Trent Bridge to the Wilford Bridge, a distance of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles, and covers 28 acres and forms one of the finest inland promenades in the country. The Embankment is a very popular rendezvous, and affords much pleasure to the citizens and visitors to the city.

The Rock Gardens, situate near the War Memorial, are tastefully laid out and form an excellent example of the landscape-gardener's art. In the height of the season the visitor sees an amazing blaze of colour from the variety of plants growing there. The fountains lend an added beauty to the gardens.

A children's paddling pool has been included in the lay-out of the Embankment and the pool in the season is thronged with happy children.

During the autumn of 1936 the whole length of the gardens was provided with a herbaceous border containing about 200 bold groups of choice perennial plants. A band-stand of modern design, completely enclosed, is to be erected by the early summer of 1937, from which regular concerts are to be provided.

Sport is well provided for at this park, and an excellent pavilion complete with dressing and bathing facilities give ample comfort to those taking part in sport.

**WOODTHORPE GRANGE.** Woodthorpe Grange Park of 41 acres contains a fine mansion which is now the headquarters of the Parks and Cemeteries Department, which occupies the main rooms on the first floor, whilst on the ground floor are refreshment rooms to cater for the many parties resorting to this delightful pleasure for picnics.

It is hoped that by the provision of a "Pitch and Putt" course, tennis courts and a bowling green, that this park, in addition to providing facilities for football and cricket, will become one of the chief parks in the city.

The main horticultural features are the beautiful rose gardens and borders which are devoted to special seasonal displays.

A further important development at this park is the proposed erection of an up-to-date range of propagating houses, from which a great proportion of the plants required by the

Corporation will be supplied. Band concerts are a regular feature at this park,



Rock Garden, Victoria Embankment

**BULWELL FOREST** is a very fine natural recreation ground, and its eighteen-hole golf course attracts numerous golfers. Several clubs have their headquarters here including a ladies' and an artisans' club. The course is open to any of the public upon obtaining a day or round ticket from the pavilion. Football is also provided. A bowling green has been constructed and is open for play during the season.

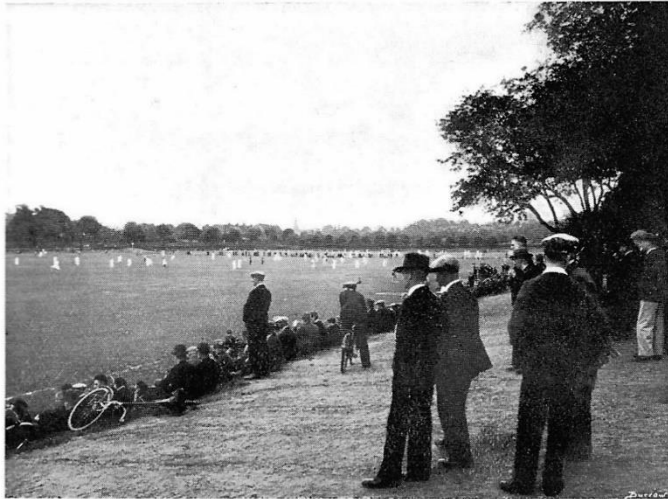


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**THE FOREST.** The recreation ground on the Forest is 70 acres in extent and is the oldest of the city's recreation grounds. It is interesting to note that it was on the Forest that the Notts Forest Football Club played its first matches well over half a century ago. The three football

pitches are in regular use and also the twelve cricket pitches. Three excellent bowling greens provide splendid accommodation for bowlers. There is also an 18-hole Putting Green.



Photograph by C. H. Higson & Co.

*Forest Recreation Ground*

**THE QUEEN'S DRIVE RECREATION GROUND** comprises 6 acres. It was on this ground that the present Notts County Football Club commenced their early games. Cricket is the only game now played on this historic ground.

**BULWELL HALL PARK.** This park is 250 acres in extent. Its main feature being one of the finest eighteen-hole golf courses in the county. In addition to golf, facilities are provided for almost all sections of the public ; including tennis, cricket and football, and sufficient space for the de-

mands of any other forms of sport. Children are provided with a paddling pool, and fishing is a sport that may be indulged in. Several acres of land are devoted to the production of all trees and shrubs required by the Corporation ; whilst thousands of the bedding plants required at various parks are raised here.

**VERNON PARK** (21 acres) provides cricketers, footballers, tennis players and bowling devotees with ample scope for their activities, whilst the lake is also an attractive feature.

**VALLEY ROAD RECREATION GROUND** (14 acres) is entirely devoted to cricket, hockey, bowls, tennis (hard and grass courts) and a putting green.

**COLWICK WOOD PARK** (95 acres) is a very fine open park, hilly and well wooded. Views of Belvoir Castle, Gotham, East Leake and Chilwell can be obtained from this vantage point. It is an ideal spot for picnics.

**MELBOURNE ROAD RECREATION GROUND**, comprising approximately 30 acres, is laid out as a sports centre. A fine pavilion with dressing rooms replete with shower baths provides a luxury for participants in strenuous games.

**KING GEORGE V. PLAYING FIELDS** is 29 acres in extent and is situated immediately in the vicinity



Photograph by A. D. Thornton, Nottingham

*"The Garden of Rest." A beautifully kept sanctuary at the Crematorium, Southern Cemetery, Nottingham*





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of one of the great housing estates. It provides recreation in varied forms. Football, cricket, hockey, etc., are at present played here, and provision will be made for other sports in the course of time. It was opened to the public in 1936.

LENTON ABBEY RECREATION GROUND, situate at the western boundary of the city and comprising  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres, is one of the most compact of Nottingham's parks. This ground contains three all-weather tennis courts, a bowling green, children's playground and a Woodland Rest Garden. Flowering trees and shrubs used in the borders have been carefully selected so as to ensure a continuous display.

Among the smaller, but none the less attractive parks, recreation grounds and open spaces, are the combined open spaces at Elm Avenue, St. Ann's Hill, Corporation Street and Robin Hood Chase, ten acres; King Edward Park, nine acres; Coppice Road Playground, eight acres; Cinderhill Recreation Ground, seven acres; Radford Recreation Ground, Queen's Drive; and Lenton Recreation Ground and Bowling Green, each about six acres; Victoria Park, Bath Street and Main Street (Bulwell) Playgrounds, each about four acres; Sycamore Road Recreation Ground and Bowling Green and Abbey Lane Playground, each about three acres. Trentside Recreation Ground and Pennyfoot Street Playground are respectively one acre and three-quarters of an acre in area. On the south side of the Trent, Trentside Walk occupies an area of one-and-three-quarter acres.

Besides these, many of the great Nottingham industrial concerns, as for instance Boots, Players, and Lewis's, provide their employees with recreation grounds of their own. These athletic grounds are very well equipped, having the dual interests of the employees and the firms concerned in their welfare and upkeep.

In addition to the foregoing, the playgrounds of a number of schools are opened after school hours for the use of the scholars at play centres. These include the schools at Percy Street (Basford); Blue Bell Hill Road; Coventry Road and Quarry Road, Bulwell; Haydn Road, St. Ann's Well Road; Shelton Street, and Sneinton Boulevard.

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