

**West Leeds Country Park and green Gateways leaflet  
Phase 3.  
Apperley Bridge to Woodhall Lake.**

**Ancient Woodland.**

**Points**

- 1 - Lodge Wood
- 3 - Calverley Wood
- 6 - West Wood
- 6 - Hill Wood
- 10 - Round Wood
- 11 - Ravenscliffe Wood

The name Calverley is of Anglo Saxon origin. A ley was a clearing in a woodland, and is widespread in this part of West Yorkshire (e.g. Farnley, Bramley and Armley). In this case it translates to "a clearing in a woodland grazed by calves." This would suggest woodland has existed here since at least the 7<sup>th</sup> Century, but there is also documentary evidence to prove that within these woodlands trees were being felled for timber as early as 1336.

**Calverley Old Hall and The Calverley's Point**

The Calverley family arrived from Scotland in about 1100, and remained at Calverley for some 600 years, until the last in line, Walter, changed his name to Blackett and sold the estate to Thomas Thornhill in 1754, before moving to Esholt.

During the reign of Elizabeth I, William Calverley was persecuted for the family's Catholic beliefs, and suffered a series of heavy fines and imprisonment, until he died in 1596, aged just 39.

The most notorious family member however was his son, Walter Calverley, who was just 17 when his father died. In 1699 Walter married Phillipa Brooke, but by the following year was in debtors prison. Over the next few years continuing debt and persecution dogged the Catholic family. Finally, in August 1605, Walter snapped and stabbed to death his two eldest sons at their home, **Calverley Hall**.

Following his arrest, Walter Calverley was eventually taken to York and tried at the County Assizes. He refused to enter a plea and was pressed to death on the 5<sup>th</sup>. After his death it was said that Walter Calverley's regretful spirit rode the Calverley countryside on a headless horse, until they were laid to rest by a local vicar. However, should holly ever disappear from the woods, it is said that the ghost will return!

## **The Drives.**

### **Point**

#### 5 – The Drives

In addition to the lodges, several drives were also laid out, including **Thornhill Drive, Clara Drive and Eleanor Drive** (Clara and Eleanor were Thomas Thornhill's oldest and second daughters).

The exclusivity of proposed residential scheme resulted in the closure of the old pack horse route, which ran across the woodland. This stone wall-lined sunken trail, which runs down through the woods, can still be followed today.

The old trail was replaced by **Calverley Cutting**, a direct, though steep road which leads from Apperley Bridge to Carr Road, and which was blasted into the sandstone through the woods in 1854. The steepness of this new route made it unpopular though and it was claimed to be *"almost impossible for a weakly person to ascend"*.

## **Quarrying**

### **Point**

#### 2 – Quarry

The first commercial quarrying venture in Calverley Woods was undertaken in the early 1830's by John Whinn, a Cornishman resident in Apperley Bridge. The resulting high quality gritstone was either transported from site by barge, which were loaded at a specially constructed wharf on the adjacent canal, or was hauled up the steep incline through the woods on carts, using a purpose built flagged causeway, and used locally. Parts of the causeway still remain, and in some stretches, grooves made by the cart wheels can still also be seen.

The last quarry owner was Thomas Clough and Sons, who ceased quarrying in 1905. However, between 1955 and 1960 stone was again taken for use in road construction.

## **Ravenscliffe Mill**

### **Point**

Built by James Harper in 1872, Ravenscliffe Mill specialised in the manufacture of cloth for uniforms. Initially this included scarlet tunics such as those worn by the British army during the Anglo-Zulu conflict, but as the nation entered the Boer War, production changed to khaki, continuing up to 1957, when production ceased due to lack of demand.

## Ravenscliffe Medieval Iron Works Point

13 - Medieval Iron Workings

Located at the northern end of Ravenscliffe Woods, straddling Fagley Beck, once stood a medieval iron works. At this point the stream was dammed to provide a head of water, which was used to power drop hammers.

Charcoal for heating the metal was made from wood collected from the surrounding woodland. The smith was obliged to gain permission from the Calverley family, who owned the woodland, and in 1377 documents from the Calverley Estate show that he was indeed given permission to fell a given number of trees.

## Fagley Lodge Point

This is one of the four lodges built by the Thornhill Trustees in the area the 1850's, the forerunners of what was hoped to be a prestigious complex of dwellings. In the mid 1850's the Thornhill Trustees earmarked much of woodland within the Calverley Woods complex as the intended location for a set of superior luxury homes.

To this end, three Acts of Parliament were granted which allowed drives to be set out, and for leases to be sold in order to release the land for construction.

Four lodges were built - **Fagley Lodge, Apperley Lodge** (or the Needles Eye as it was known locally), **Carr Lodge and South Lodge**.

Unfortunately for the Trustees the scheme did not take off and the luxury houses were not built. Today just the road lay-out and three lodges remain, though by the mid 1960's Apperley Lodge had become unsafe and was subsequently demolished.

## Woodhall Lake Point

14 - Woodhall Lake

Calverley moor, now Bradford Moor, on which Woodhall Lake is situated, came into the ownership of the prominent Gott family following the 1755 Calverley Enclosure Act.

Prior to this the estate had been allotted to Dr. Cyril Jackson of Halifax, who sold it on to John Gott, civil engineer and Surveyor of Bridges for the West Riding, and father of the famed Benjamin

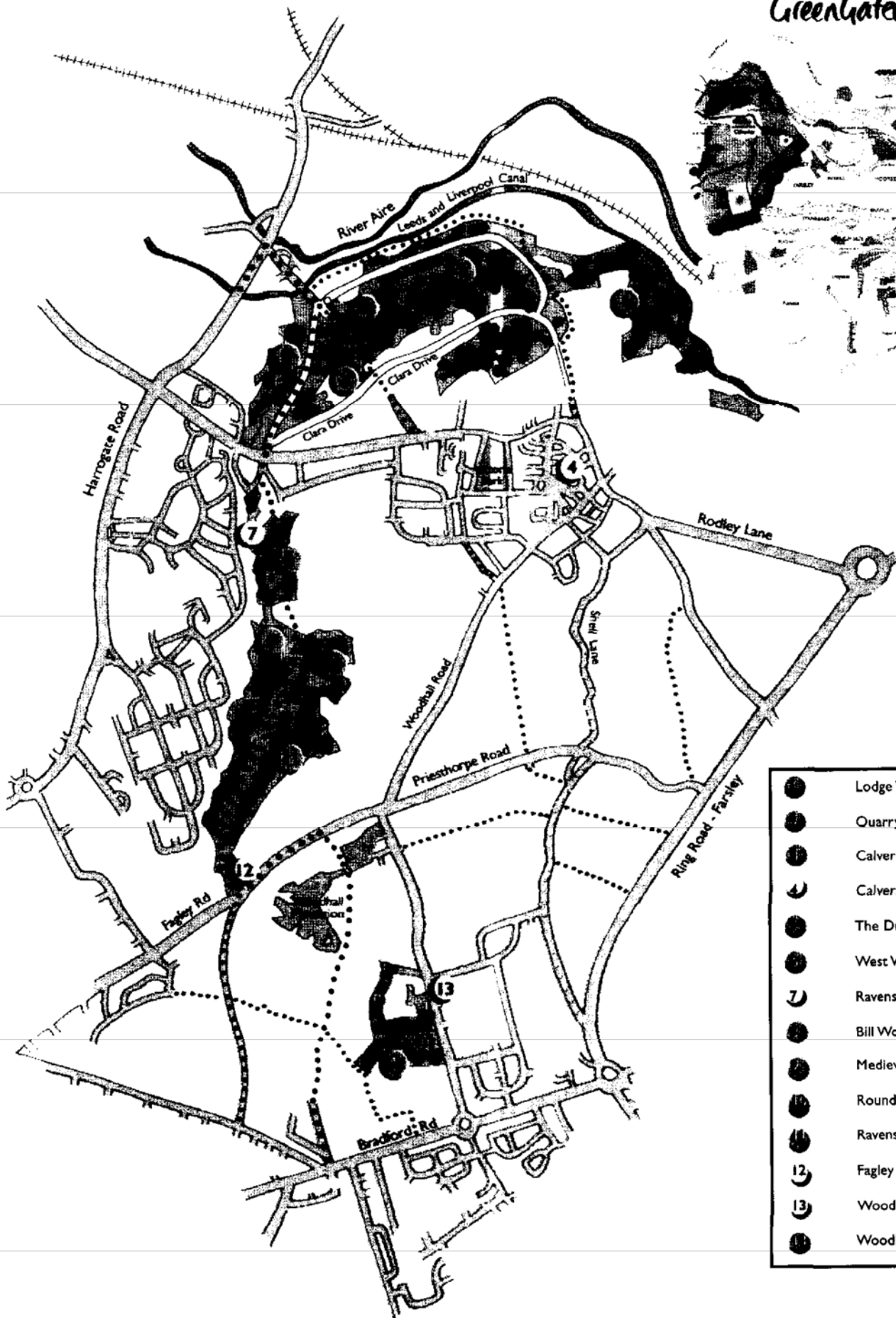
From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the Gotts leased the estate. An early tenant was the Quaker Daniel Peckover, who occupied the property from the 1830's. At the same time the benevolent tenant also looked after the local poor by providing food and employment during the laying out of his Lower Woodhall estate, including Woodhall Lake.

## Woodhall Point

For a short while the estate was occupied by John's older brother, William, a builder who was probably responsible for the building of "Woodhall". The house, which is positioned almost opposite Woodhall Lake, was at that time was the joint highest valued property in Calverley-cum-Farsley.

By 1787 John was resident at Woodhall, together with his second wife Susanne, and it was here they raised Benjamin.

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	Lodge Wood
	Quarry
	Calverley Woods
	Calverley Old Hall
	The Drives
	West Wood
	Ravenscliffe Mills
	Bill Wood
	Medieval Iron Workings
	Round Wood
	Ravenscliffe Wood
	Fagley Lodge
	Wood Hall
	Woodhall Lake