

One Hundred and Fifty Years of Ogden Water



An Introduction

When Ogden reservoir was built by Halifax Corporation, it had a profound effect on the people of Halifax. As well as providing the main source of water for the town, it also created an early visitor attraction and amenity where the people of Halifax would come to take the air and enjoy the scenery.

Almost 150 years later, Ogden Water is now a Country Park and Local Nature Reserve, attracting around 300,000 visitors a year. It is one of the top Green Flag awarded sites in the whole of Yorkshire, and is seen as one of the most progressive and forward looking country parks. Ogden is held in high regard by the people of Halifax which evokes strong feelings of ownership from the people of the town.

Though Ogden is owned by Yorkshire Water P.L.C, the area around the reservoir has been managed since 1987 by Calderdale M.B.C's Countryside Service.

Since taking over the management of the estate, the council have created a fine network of paths, many of which are wheelchair accessible. Other improvements have included a small visitor centre, a classroom, public toilets and a never-ending list of educational and seasonal community events.

Along with the Calderdale staff, Ogden has a large number of Volunteers. The Friends of Ogden Water has an ever growing and influential membership. This was recently acknowledged by The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust award for the best community group in Yorkshire.

In acknowledgement of Ogden Water's place in the history of Halifax, its popularity, and local interest, it was felt that we mark the one hundred and fifty years of the reservoir in a significant way. This document looks at the history of the estate and how we hope to celebrate the one hundred and fifty years of its service to both Halifax and to the County.

Contents

1. The History.
2. How will we celebrate 150 Years of Ogden Water?
3. Shopping List.
4. Funding

1. The History

John Frederick Bateman was born in Lower Wyke Bradford in 1810; he was originally a mining engineer. He was called upon by the then Halifax Corporation to prepare a scheme to provide drinking water for the people of the town. His idea was to build a series of reservoirs high in the hills and moors above the expanding industrial town. Ogden was the first to be built, and is a testament to his foresight and skills, as this, his first creation is still doing the job it was created to do, so many years later. Bateman became a very wealthy man and later owned the Moor Park estate at Farnham Surrey. He died in 1889.

On the 11th August 1854 the foundations were already in place and a stone was laid at the outflow of what was to be Ogden Reservoir. At a cost of £7,873, 4 shillings and 11 pence, the reservoir was to take almost four years to build, and was completed in the summer of 1857. Ogden was reputed to be the first clay lined dam in Europe. It holds some 222 million gallons of water, and covers 34.25 acres, and supplies Halifax with drinking water.

Back in August 1854 it was reported that every cab and carriage in Halifax was engaged from one o'clock onwards. In the locality of Ogden there were large crowds, and all the stabling and local beerhouses were full. At two o'clock a procession moved off from the Waggoners Inn, (Northgate?) towards the site of the reservoir. In the following order:

Mixenden Brass Band

The Beadle of Halifax on horseback, bearing the corporation banner.

The Mayor and his lady in a carriage.

The corporation – two abreast.

E.M.Wayell – Engineer. Town Council.

W.F.Holroyd – Clerk of the Borough Magistrates.

The contractors.

The Navvies – four abreast.

After a ceremony laying the stone the procession walked to a monster tent where 400 excavators were fed. The Mayor's party was fed by Mr Cockerham of the Upper George Inn, the food being supplemented by an



2. How will we celebrate 150 Years of Ogden Water?

To celebrate and mark the one hundred and fifty years of Ogden Water it is proposed that:-

1. We recapture the feeling of the Victorian times by recreating the Ogden Promenade much as it used to be.
2. We install and unveil at a ceremony, a mosaic depicting the history of Ogden.
3. We stage a series of events over the period 2007/8 at Ogden Water including a photographic exhibition showing a collection of old prints and photographs, that have been taken at Ogden over the years.

The Ogden Promenade

In days gone by the Promenade, as it was then known, was used by the people of Halifax, as a place to take the air. Ladies and gentlemen would walk on either side of the promenade and occasionally pass the time of day. Many a relationship started in this manner.

The promenade had big wrought iron gates at either end of the dam, and three gas lamps along its length. It is proposed to reinstall the gas lamps, though not gas powered, and place Victorian type bench seating with occasional planters. This will be done on the one lower side of the promenade, so as not to impede vehicular traffic provided by Yorkshire Water or the Calderdale Council. The reservoir dam path will be renamed the Promenade. It is also proposed to remove the farm type gates installed by the Council and replace with wrought iron gates more in keeping with the period.

We hope to create a safe secure and comfortable place where people will relax take in both the scenery and the air. The location commands one of the best views of the estate and is one of the most accessible, with easy access for both wheelchair users, and people with limited mobility.

With the footfalls of millions of visitors having crossed the Ogden dam since it was completed, a 150th anniversary celebration is a fitting tribute to the contribution Ogden has made to the local area.

And to commemorate 150 years, we need some help!

The Promenade viewing area

This area overlooks the full length of the Promenade in the direction of the Rhododendrons. It is in an elevated position and as such will require an appropriate safety fence. Historically the area above this was once referred to as the recreation ground as it contained bench seating and a see-saw.

This is an ideal location for interpretation panels to tell the history of the estate

Clare Nixon has created an impression of how the proposed promenade might look.



The Mosaic

As the event will be of major interest to the people of Halifax, it is proposed to unveil a mosaic depicting the history of the site. The unveiling it is hoped will be performed by the Mayor of Calderdale and a dignitary of Yorkshire Water PLC together with invited guests and viewed by members of the public.

Suggested date September 1st 2007

This will be placed at the entrance to the car parks within the circular walled feature.

A plaque listing sponsors, and contributors to the project will be placed in a prominent position on the Ogden Promenade.

Events

A series of events will be planned for this period both to encourage visitors to the site, and to tell the story of the reservoir

These will include.

A photographic exhibition showing the Ogden Water collection of old photographs telling the history of the estate

A painting exhibition of the Ogden area hosted by the Friends of Ogden Water.

And many more TBA

3. The Shopping List

The Promenade

Promenade sign (1) Approx cost £150

Park type benches (4 – 6) (picture just for example)



These benches will provide a pleasant place to sit and enjoy the scenery. It is envisaged they will be especially useful for our disabled visitors and perhaps the more elderly that no longer want, or are unable to, roam the moors and woodlands of Ogden. Cost approx £400 each

With the 150th Anniversary of Ogden Water in September 2007, it is now possible to purchase a memorial seat for a loved one. This will be placed on the dam or 'The Promenade', to be enjoyed by many of the 250,000 visitors to Ogden every year.

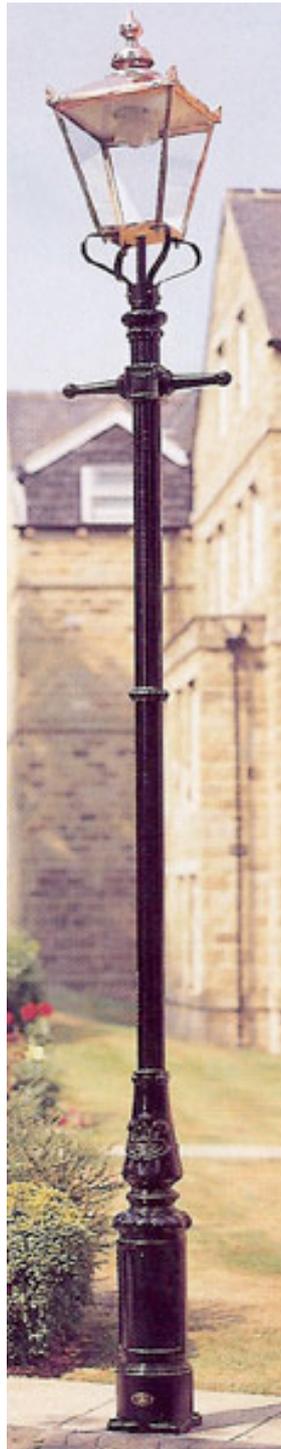
For further information, please contact a member of staff in the visitor centre, or telephone (01422) 249136.

However, please be quick as availability is limited!

Gas lamps (3)

The gas lamps will help set the mood for the project. They will be the main focus in recreating the promenade.

They will be solar powered for effect only and to prevent light pollution, though installed in such away that it may be improved at a later date should it be required in the future.



(for example)

Cost Annrox £500 each

Planters (3)
Waste bin (1)

Cost Approx £100 each

Wrought iron gates (2 Sets)

See artists impression for an idea.

Cost Approx £3,000

The gates not only add security to the project, but will make a statement, they are the bookends to the scheme and are another of the main features that will set the atmosphere of the promenade

The Mosaic

Using the existing walled circle

A talented local artist has already volunteered her services.

Materials including concrete, adhesives, tiles etc.



A Mosaic of a similar type to the one envisaged for Ogden Water

Method

It is envisaged that most of the work be carried out by Calderdale/ Ogden staff, however it is hoped that members of the friends of Ogden Water, together with the Ogden volunteers, and other interested parties and groups will also be involved.

4. Funding

Whilst the total cost for the project is not a huge amount
The funds will have to be raised by various means.

The seats, lamps and planters, it is envisaged, will be paid for by public donation as a number of people have already expressed an interest.

It is suggested that a single plaque be installed in recognition of all who contribute.

Gates, railings and other expenses will have to be raised by fundraising, by any grants or sponsorship that can be acquired.
For this reason it is suggested that the Friends of Ogden Water manage this fund.

Leaving a Legacy

If you can help, all donations are very welcome, and will go towards leaving a lasting legacy to the thousands of visitors who come to Ogden Water. The target for the fundraising is £8,000. Towards this total, we would also be very pleased if anyone would like to donate a memorial bench or lamp post. If you are interested, please ask a member of staff for further information.

Special Events

A number of special events are planned for the forthcoming year. A Victorian street market on the Promenade and a special 'Boggarts' Festival are amongst these. Keep your eyes on the notice boards and leaflets for details.

Thankyou for reading and your support,

From

All of the staff, volunteers and Friends of Ogden Water.