

The Wild Tulip, *Tulipa Sylvestris* in the Don Gorge

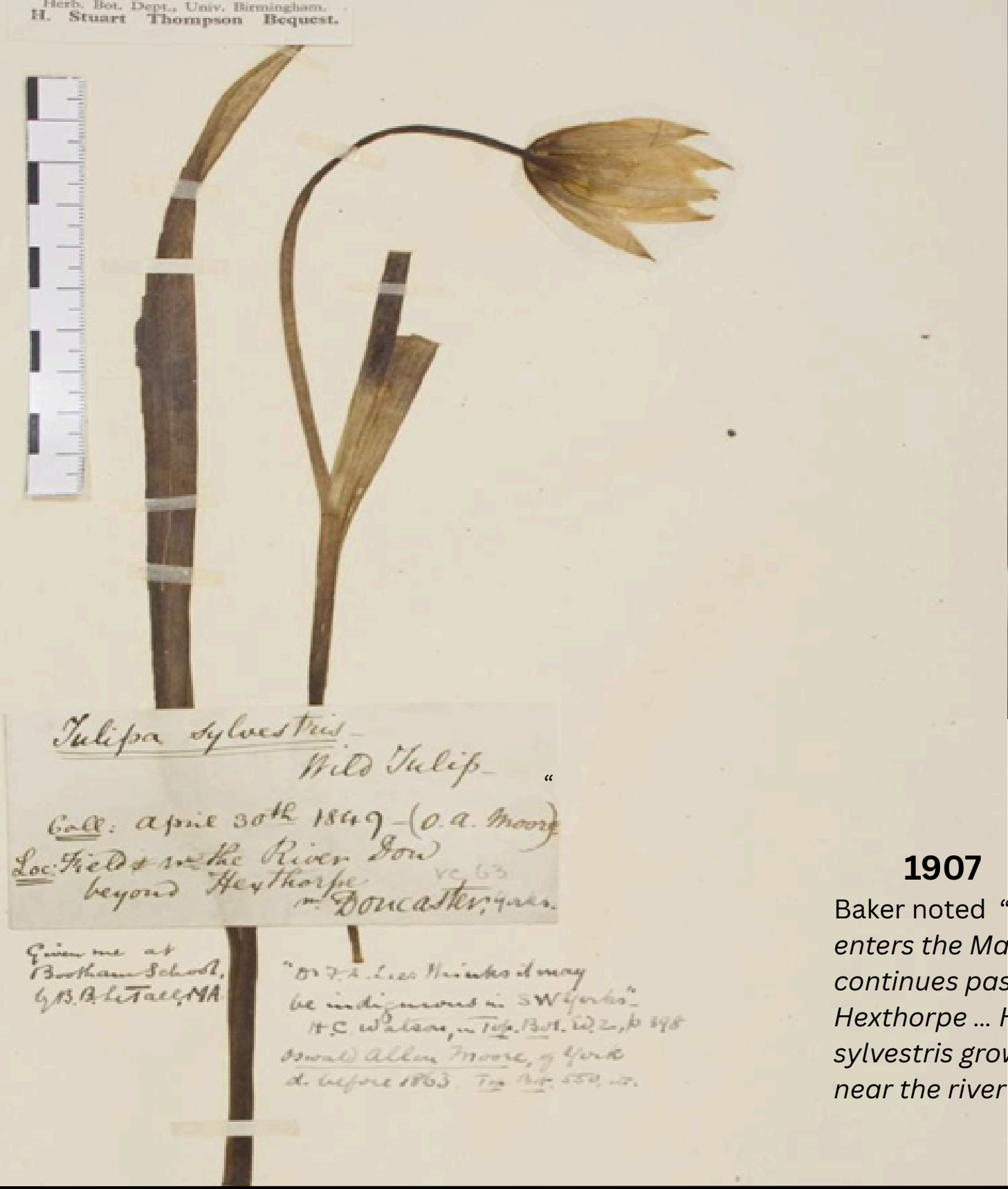
The Wild Tulip is a naturalised UK species. It was formerly cultivated in Britain in the 16th century, and frequently found in the wild by the late 18th to 19th century.

Timelines of records of the flower, show that it was spotted regularly on the river Don, until the 1960s, when it declined dramatically. By the 1990s *Tulipa* was considered a rare plant.

1840
Baines knew of it "In a field between Hexthorpe [SE/5501] and Sprotbro' boat [SE/5301], on the banks of the river Don; covering a considerable space, but flowering only sparingly".

Oswald Allen Moore of York collected a specimen from a "field near the river Don, beyond Hexthorpe" pictured:

1849



1907

Baker noted "Below Conisbrough the Don enters the Magnesian limestone and continues past Sprotborough and Hexthorpe ... Here the wild tulip *Tulipa sylvestris* grows in considerable quantity near the river"

1935

A.A. Dallam found "upwards of 3000 leafy plants ... only two flowering examples were observed"

1936

"in some abundance and has every sign of being indigenous. There was no sign of flower on any of the several thousand plants here"

1930

A.A. Dallman found "about a dozen plants but with no signs of bloom"

A Timeline of Wild Tulip Records: Doncaster

1831

Samuel Appleby recorded it on "low warp lands liable to be overflowed, immediately adjoining the river Don".

1846

John Tatham collected a specimen from "the Don Banks, Doncaster"

1871

F. Lees collected a specimen "In a field at Sprotbrough"

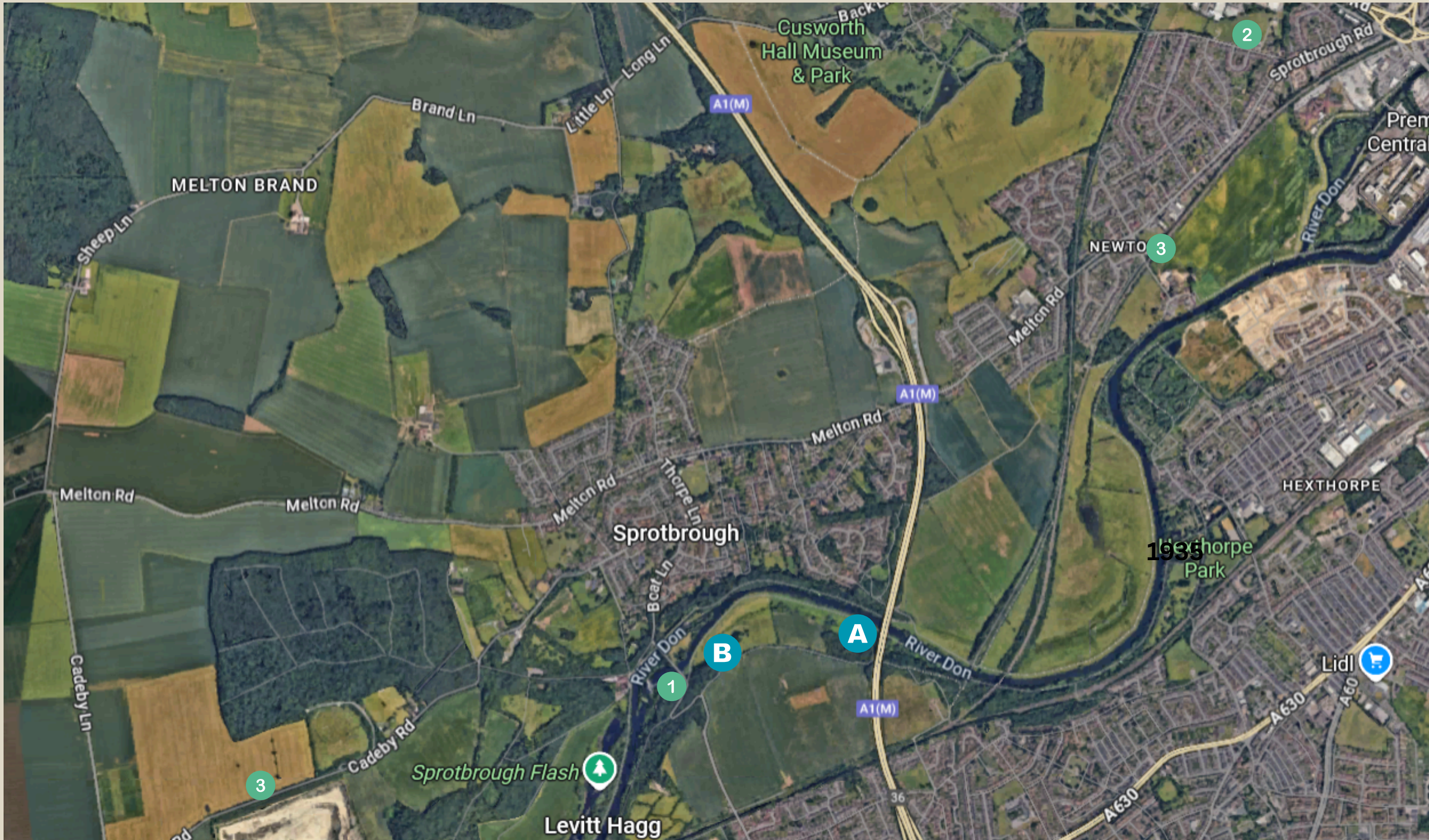
Taken from - Colin A. Howes (2013) *The Wild Tulip, Tulipa sylvestris*, in the Don Gorge, *The Doncaster Naturalist* (2013) 2 (3): 113-116.

1960s

A botanist called Lesley Smith visited the Tulipa site up to the mid 1960s describing its location as “a riverside pasture on the Warmsworth/Hexthorpe (south) bank of the Don, up stream of where the current A1M road bridge spans the Don Gorge. The plants were not seen after the bridge was constructed”, perhaps due to the land becoming arable farmland and scrub. **A**

Colin Howes from the Doncaster Naturalists suggests that “The unimproved pasture, adjacent to the Don Gorge woodland at Mill Lane contains a marshy, alluvial zone liable to seasonal flooding, a zone of sandy old river levee and to the rear, steep species-rich limestone grassland. Visits here at the appropriate time of year may again confirm the presence of Tulipa” **B**

Reintroducing the species to the Don Gorge aims to bring back the lost display of wild tulip.



Don Catchment Rivers Trust - Wild Tulip Reintroductions

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund as Part of the *All Hands on the Don* project.

Wild tulip bulbs sourced from a native UK supplier will be introduced to two wild sites, with planting carried out by local community groups such as the Don Gorge Group and the Conisbrough Scouts. The distinct populations will be monitored by volunteers in Spring.

- 1** Banks of the Don near Mill Lane, Sprotbrough
- 2** Anchorage Lane Park, to create a wild tulip meadow by the Swaithe Dike.
- 3** Community planters of wild tulips will also be planted at the Goldsmith Centre

