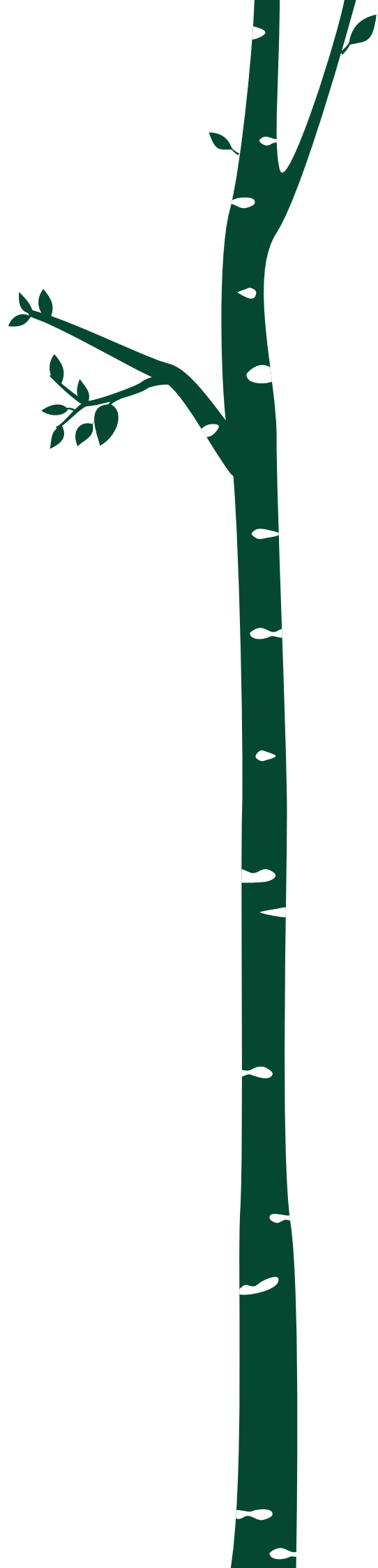


01 | Introduction



Manchester is the world's first industrial city. The city's growth and prosperity were founded on the rapid expansion of its cotton industry in the early 1800s and were further fuelled by heavy industry and manufacturing which, by the latter half of the 19th Century, saw Manchester become firmly established as a global trading powerhouse.

The term "Cottonopolis" was coined to describe Manchester's status as the world's leading city in the production of finished cotton products. Manchester's role as a centre of cotton materials production began to change during the 19th Century, and 'by 1840 only 18% of the work force worked in cotton manufacture' (1). The other districts in what was then Lancashire, Oldham in particular, were the main centres of production. Manchester evolved to become the trading centre for finished cotton products and the Royal Exchange became the biggest and most famous trading house in the City.

Manchester was also a transport pioneer and was host to the world's first inter-city passenger railway station, which opened on 15 September 1830 on Liverpool Road, in the Castlefield area of the City.

The growth in the City's industry and associated trade resulted in a population explosion which saw the number of people living in the city nearly double from 75,000 in 1801 to 142,000 in 1831 (2), with many of the new migrant workers living on low pay in appalling slum conditions. The poor social conditions were instrumental in the development of working class movements and the call for social reform which was embodied in the infamous Peterloo massacre of 1819.

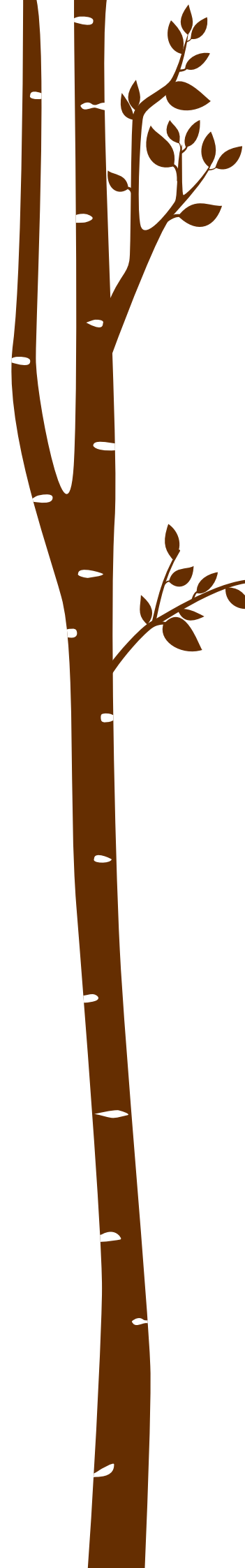
In the early 20th Century, the City's fortunes began to change with its cotton industry heading into steep decline through lack of investment and being unable to compete with cheaper textile production in countries that were closer to the source of cotton growing. This signalled the start of the City's transformation from the world's first industrial city to the world's first post- industrial city.

But what impact did this economic transition have on the City's environment and in particular its trees?


This narrative will explore how Manchester's tree resource and its open spaces have evolved over the last 100 years in tandem with the continuing evolution of the City with respect to changes in its population, industrial decline and regeneration, policies and initiatives, both local and national and an increasing environmental awareness of the people that live and work in this great city.



02 | Manchester, 1919-1945



Our journey starts in 1919 after what was the biggest man-made disaster to affect humanity at that time and finish with how Manchester is now pioneering a way forward to address the next biggest challenge facing our environment and global population, Climate Change.



The First World War was the first mechanised war which resulted in an appalling rate of casualties. Over 9 million military personnel lost their lives, with more than 1.3 million of these servicemen and women from Great Britain and Ireland.

Records show that 23,792 people from Greater Manchester were killed in the First World War (3) and although no evidence has been found of commemorative tree or woodland planting at the time, 100 years later Manchester City Football Club planted 11 trees near their training ground to commemorate the 11 players who lost their lives fighting in the War.

While in Debdale Park in Gorton a commemorative woodland was created by City of Trees in Partnership with Manchester City Council and the Friends of Debdale Park, called [Heroes Wood](https://www.cityoftrees.org.uk/project/heroes-wood) (<https://www.cityoftrees.org.uk/project/heroes-wood>).

02 Manchester, 1919-1945

The War affected every facet of British life and took its toll on the island's tree cover as timber was a crucial raw material for the war effort. In 1919 Britain's tree cover had reached an all-time low accounting for only 5% of land cover (4), compared to 13% today (5).

The huge decline in Britain's Forest resource led to the passing of the Forestry Act on 1st September 1919, and the formation of the Forestry Commission. The first trees were planted by the Forestry Commission in December of that same year. The start of the nation's reforestation had begun!

In its early years, the Forestry Commission purchased land and planted hundreds of thousands of acres of new woodlands. However, the Second World War resulted in a renewed demand on timber and many forests were once again plundered,

including Blackley Forest. After the War, the Forestry Commission continued with its programme of planting more forests.

In 1919 Manchester had a population of over 700,000. Although the cotton industry was starting to decline, manufacturing compensated for this downturn, so Manchester was still very much an industrial city epitomised by back to back, poor quality terraced housing and skies blackened by the smoke of industry. Despite the harsh working and living conditions Manchester was blessed with over 1,000 hectares of parks, woodlands and open spaces which were crucial places of recreation and escapism from the bleak industrial landscapes inhabited by the City's workforce. Grazing land continued to coexist with industry in east and north Manchester and in the floodplains around the river Mersey in the south, while the affluent suburban areas such as Didsbury



Photograph of Heroes Wood Memorial, Debdale Park | Source City of Trees, 2018

and Whalley Range were characterised by tree lined streets many of which prevail to this day.

Heaton Park acquired by the Manchester Corporation in 1902 was the flagship destination for the north of the city. Philips Park, one of the world's first municipal parks opened in 1846, had similar status for east Manchester and in the south Alexandra Park, Platt Fields and Whitworth Park were key to the welfare of the people living and working in the city centre and its southern suburbs. Wythenshawe, which was part of Cheshire at that time was home to 18 broadleaved woodlands and Wythenshawe Hall and Gardens, which were officially opened to the public in 1926. It also hosted the city's oldest trees, English Oaks, and a number of these specimens continue to thrive.

After the first world war heavy industry and manufacturing fast overtook the cotton industry as the main source of employment in the city. Ancoats, the main centre for cotton production in Manchester was beginning to decline. At its peak in 1861 it housed 56,000 residents many of whom were Irish and Italian economic migrants, by the end of the 20th Century the population stood at less than 1,000 (6).

Bradford in East Manchester was dominated by collieries, the Stuart Street Power Station built in 1900, and the Bradford Road Gas Works. West Gorton was famously home to the Beyer, Peacock & Co Ltd Locomotive works which built 8,000 locomotives, many of which were exported around the world.

On the edge of Hulme and the City Centre the Macintosh works (later Dunlop) produced waterproof

cloth for making raincoats.

In north Manchester, Blackley was a centre for the dyeing and chemical industries in the city, while the brickworks in Harpurhey and colliery in Moston, were major sources of employment for local residents. The City Centre continued to be the focus for the financial, retail, commercial and entertainment sectors.

The industrial revolution had seen a huge influx of people into the City of Manchester in the 1800s and to accommodate these new workers rapid but poorly built dense terraced housing was provided, much of which continued to prevail in many parts of the City into the 1950s.

Hulme was typical of the working class neighbourhoods in Manchester. After the First War Hulme had a population of over 63,000 residents living in 477 acres (7), which accounted for 9% of the City's population. In 1951 a housing conference took place in Manchester and it was concluded that the majority of the housing in Hulme at that time was unfit for human habitation. There were 13,000 houses of which over 11,000 were without bathrooms!

Hulme's most famous industrial resident was the factory of Henry Royce which was established in the 1880s and saw the production of the first Rolls Royce car in 1904. The factory was located on Cooke Street which has long since disappeared. The site is now the location of Hulme's most well-loved green space, Hulme Park. A boulder in the park with a commemorative plaque on it marks the approximate spot of where the factory once stood.



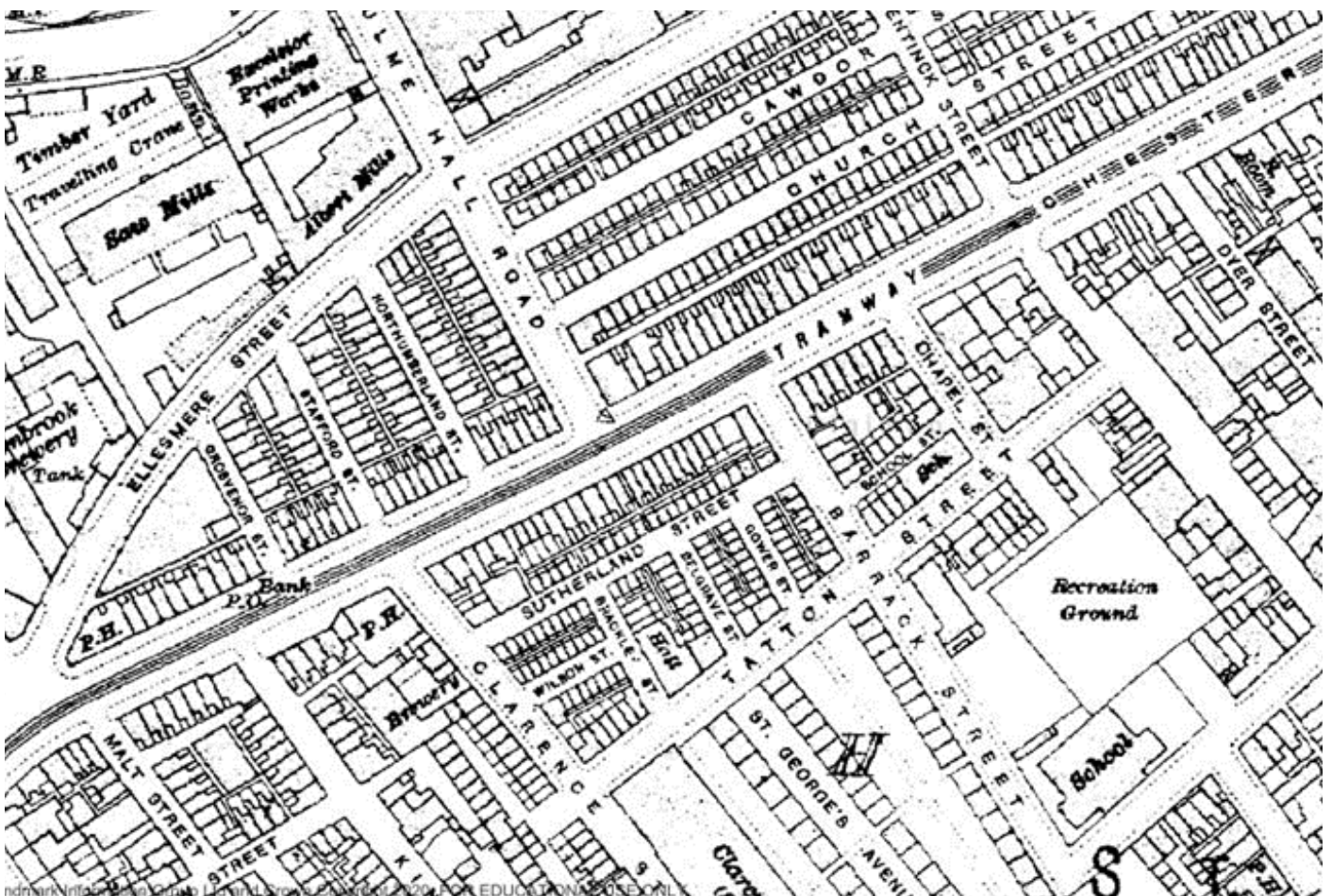
02 Manchester, 1919-1945

The map extract below from the 1920's demonstrates the density of housing and the very limited amount of open space that Hulme had to offer its residents.

Hulme had very limited open space, gardens or trees but perhaps the most important green space was Barrack Park, formerly and famously home to the battalion of the 15th King's Hussars who were implicated in the Peterloo Massacre in 1819. In 1914 the Barracks were sold to the Manchester Corporation and shortly after demolished to make way for St

George's Park which was renamed Barrack Park in 1994.

However, Pooley's House lives on as can be seen in the photograph of the park with the house in the background. In 1817 two years before the Peterloo Massacre the house became the officers mess for the nearby Barracks (8). The area where the trees can be seen below used to be a formal garden with an orchard.



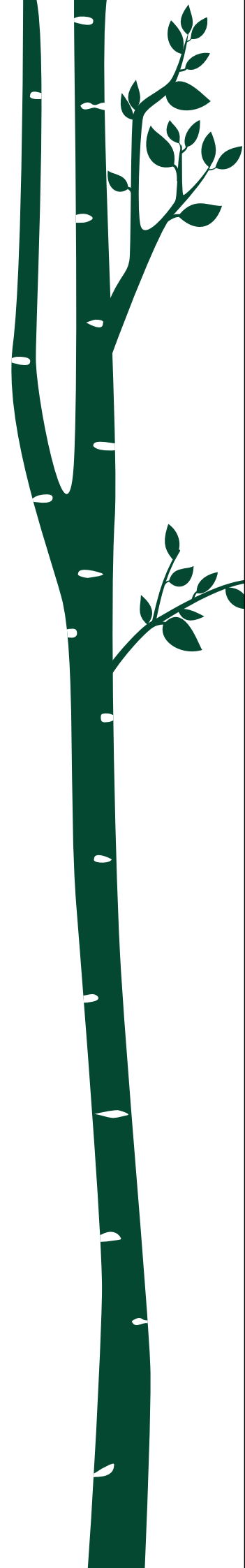
Dense Housing in Hulme 1920 | Source; Digimap circa 1920




Photograph of Barrack Park with Pooleys House in the Background in 2021 - Source; Matt Doran



03 | Wythenshawe, Manchester's Garden City



Wythenshawe, in the south of Manchester, is famously home to one of the last and largest Garden Cities built in the UK. Wythenshawe includes the wards of Sharston, Woodhouse Park, Northenden, Baguley, and Brooklands.

 The township derives its name from the old English word 'Withy', a flexible branch of an osier or other willow, used for tying, binding, or basketry (9).

Wythenshawe is well known for its parks and beautiful native broadleaf woodlands, most famously Wythenshawe Park, which was opened to the public in 1926. The park covers 109 hectares and at its heart is Wythenshawe Hall, dating back to 1540, which was originally home to the Tatton family. The hall and parklands were donated to the people of Manchester by Lord Ernest Simon.

03 Wythenshawe, Manchester

The aerial photograph to the right is of the park and hall from 1931 showcasing its impressive tree cover and thirteen beautiful woodlands which are home to Manchester's oldest trees, English Oaks, that are over 400 years old!

Wythenshawe hosts numerous diverse and important small woodlands. Many of these are rich in ecological value, from Manchester's only Site of Special Scientific Interest (Cotteril Clough) and many of the City's 37 Sites of Biological Importance (SBI):

Site Name	SBI Grade
Cotteril Clough	Grade A
Sunbank Wood	Grade A
Well and Double Woods	Grade A
Chapel Lane Wood	Grade B
Blackcarr Wood and Baguley Bottoms	Grade B
Gibb Lane Wood	Grade B
Nan Nook Wood	Grade B
Round Wood	Grade C
Big Wood, including, Hatchetts, Ash and Little Woods	Grade C
Park Wood	Grade C
Princess Spinney	Grade C

The parks and Woodlands of Wythenshawe are hugely important to and loved by the local residents. A group of volunteers, the Wythenshawe Waste Warriors, work tirelessly to keep the parks and woodlands clean and safe for everyone to enjoy. They strongly believe in working together towards building a more sustainable community.



Source: Britain From Above 1931

Local urban poet, Ged Austin sums up his appreciation of Wythenshawe Park in his poem 'Wild Wythenshawe':

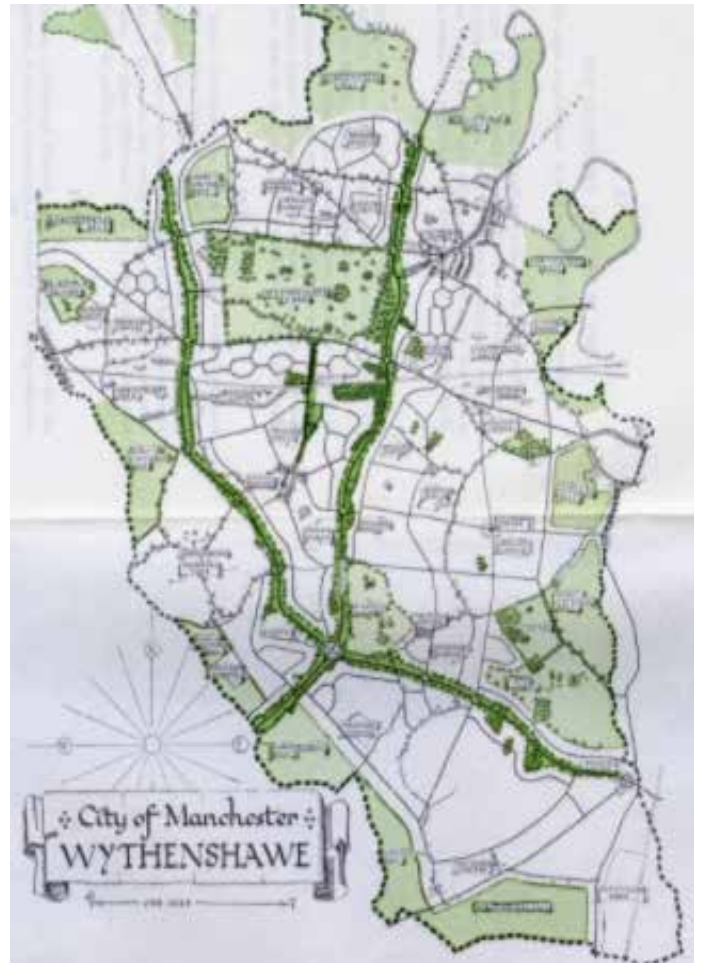
Wild Wythenshawe
 The beautiful queen of the woods
 Long ago Cheshire's Jewel
 Manchester came and decided to rule
 Put buildings up almost everywhere far and near
 But not in this place of Gib Wood so dear
 This is the beautiful face of Wythenshawe
 Always rich and never poor
 (Ged Austin, 2020)

Wythenshawe was created from three ancient North Cheshire townships of Northenden, Baguley and Northern Etchells which officially became part of Manchester in 1931.

The large scale transformation of Wythenshawe began with the construction of one of the UK's largest public housing estates on former farmland. In 1926, 2,569 acres of land were bought by the Manchester Corporation to build new homes for the people living in the substandard housing in the industrial heart of Manchester.

The design concept for Wythenshawe was based on the Garden City movement pioneered by Ebenezer Howard who believed in creating new economically self-sustaining communities with 'cottage' like housing set in green surroundings. Wythenshawe Garden City's chief designer and planner was Richard Barry Parker.

Parker's master plan (1926) shows the new housing areas surrounded by green spaces, pockets of woodlands and tree-lined roads, with Wythenshawe Park at its centre. Construction started in the late 1920s, and by 1939 over 8,000 new dwellings had been built with the population rising from its 1921 figure of 5,551 to over 40,000 (10).



Parker's Master Plan for the New Garden City – source Manchester City Council, Wythenshawe Town Centre, Development Framework



03 Wythenshawe, Manchester

Parker's vision was to retain existing trees to create a natural backdrop to the new housing. This is nicely demonstrated in the two maps which show the existence of green spaces with trees on them (areas surrounded by pink lines) before and after the construction of the new housing. These green spaces and many of the trees on them remain to this day.

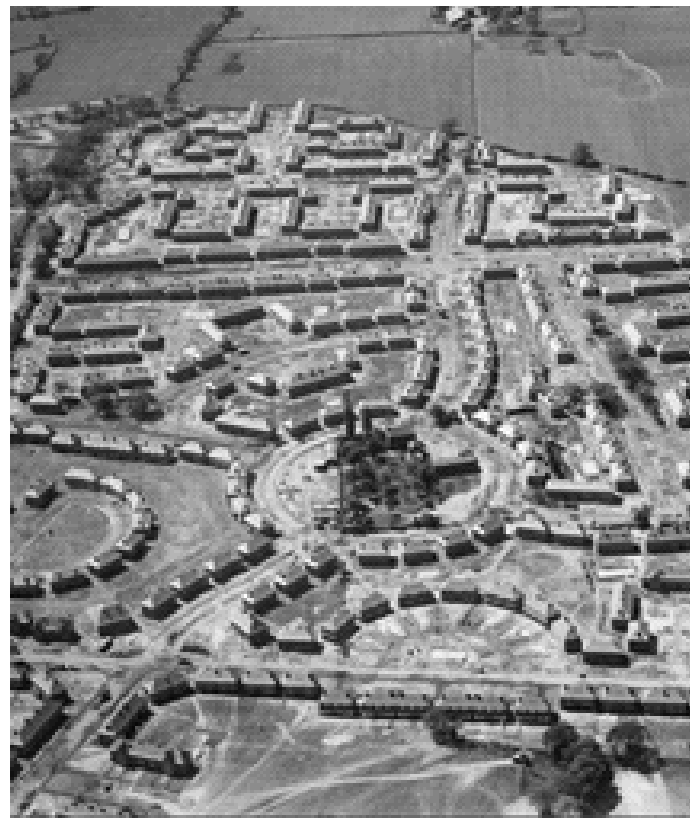
The following aerial images demonstrate not only the current day retention of trees and key green spaces in the estate design but how trees planted at that time in many of the new gardens have matured and now create distinct linear landscape features along garden boundaries.



1910 Map showing Farmland Between Baguley and Northenden Prior to Garden City Construction - Source: Digimap, Scale: 1:5,000.



1930's map showing the new Garden City Development source - Digimap, Scale: 1:5,000.



Aerial image of Haveley Road and Alders Road in Wythenshawe 1933 – source Britain From Above, n.d.



Aerial image of Haveley Road and Alders Road 2021 - Source Ordnance Survey 2021

"The woodlands of Wythenshawe and in particular Princess Spinney have been such an important part of my life. They never cease to amaze me when it comes to the wide variety of wildlife that they provide homes to. I love going into the woodlands and immersing myself in them, they provide a refuge from the pace of modern life, and you feel energised after being there. We are so lucky to have them, and we need to protect them so they are there for future generations to enjoy".

-Tex Alexander Barlow, Friends of Princess Spinney



03 Wythenshawe, Manchester



Photograph of Wythenshawe Road Circa 1920 - Source:Wythenshawe History Group & Together One CIC, n.d.

The two images of Wythenshawe Road, although around 100 years apart demonstrate that the green, tree lined character of Wythenshawe continues to persevere, albeit walking down the middle of Wythenshawe Road today would not be advisable!



Looking down Wythenshawe Road 2021 - Source: City of Trees



03 Wythenshawe, Manchester



Ashstead Road 1973 - Source: Manchester Local Image Collection

Tree cover has continued to increase in Wythenshawe since the building of the Garden City in the 1930s. As part of the Government's "Plant a Tree in '73", initiative trees were planted along Ashstead Road in Brooklands, while Red Rose Forest and later City of Trees have planted over five and a half thousand new trees in the last 20 years in various locations across Wythenshawe.



Ashstead Road 2021- Source: City of Trees



3.1 Manchester Airport

After the construction of the Garden City, it was the Woodhouse Park area of Wythenshawe that was next in line to experience massive change. Manchester Ringway airport opened its doors in 1938 and in its first 14 months of business handled 7,600 passengers (11). The airport fulfils an important role to the local economy and is one of the two main employers for the area, the other being Wythenshawe Hospital. The airport was built on farmland, the aerial photograph from before 1927 below shows the area prior to construction.

The fingers of a clough woodland following the tributaries of the River Bollin can be made out. This is Sun Bank Wood which still thrives to this day and is designated as a Site of Biological Importance. The site occupies two steep-sided cloughs and the land between. The lower part of the clough is a mix of ash, maple and dog's mercury woodland, while the higher part consists of oak, bracken and bramble woodland.



Aerial view of Sunbank Wood before the construction of Manchester Airport - Source; Britain From Above, n.d

The map extract below is from the 1940's, the central area is now cleared of field boundaries with the distinctive shape of the airport now visible. On the white area of the map just to the south of the purple line next to the red star you can make out an area of woodland. This is Cotterill Clough which is Manchester's only Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) , an incredibly valuable place for Nature. It was purchased by the Wildlife Trusts in 1934 from funds raised by public subscription for a memorial to T.A. Coward, a famous Cheshire naturalist who died in 1933..



Map showing Cotterill Clough in 1940 - Source; Digimap, scale 1:10,000



Aerial image showing Cotterill Clough & Sunbank Woods - Source; Ordnance Survey 2021

The SSSI citation describes the site as "the most diverse clough woodland on base rich soils in Greater Manchester." It is classified as ancient woodland which means that a woodland has existed there since 1600. According to the Woodland Trust only 2.5% of the UK is covered by ancient woodland. The woodland is characterised by a lot of standing deadwood which is extremely important for fungi, insects and birds but because of ecological sensitivity and safety issues, Cotterill Clough is not accessible to the general public.



3.1 Manchester Airport

During the Second World War the airport became a centre for wartime engineering activity and began to manufacture aircrafts for the war effort, and an estimated 60,000 parachutists were trained there (11). After the War, Manchester airport saw many years of regeneration and expansion, the first being an extension of the runway in 1951, from 1280 meters to 1798 metres (11). A £2.7 million terminal was then opened in 1962, followed by an expansion of the runway to 2745 meters in 1969 (11). The construction of the terminal can be seen in the photograph below.

The biggest phase of airport expansion came in 2001. After the opening of a second terminal in 1993, building commenced on the second runway in 1997. As part of this construction project, Cedars Wood in Styal, Cheshire was felled despite the efforts of many protesters to save it. However, a new woodland comprising of 150,000 trees, was planted on the 850 acres of land that surrounds the runway (12).



Photograph showing airport terminal during construction in 1961 - Source: Manchester Local Image Collection



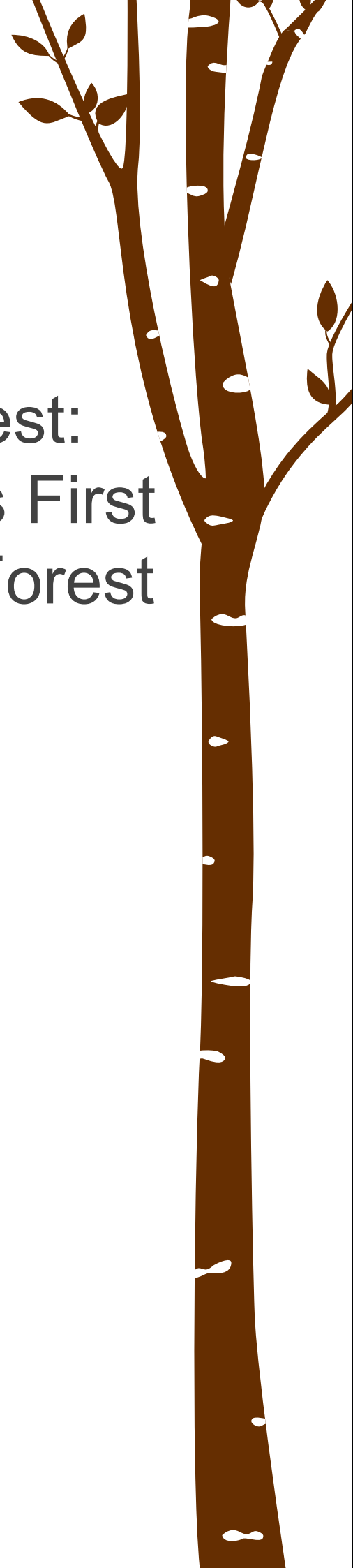
Aerial Image of The Airport in 2015 | Source; Cheshire Tithe Maps, 2019b.


In 2014 a Metrolink service and route was opened for the airport, providing important transport links to the site (11). Following the opening of the tramline, in 2018 the airport celebrated its 80th birthday by planning to plant 80 Oak trees, a further 100 trees were planted on Enterprise Way, to create a green link between Wythenshawe and the Airport City.



04

Blackley Forest: Manchester's First Community Forest





Situated in the Crumpsall and Higher Blackley areas of Manchester in the north of the city is Blackley Forest, a beautiful deciduous broadleaved woodland covering 20.5 hectares. The river Irk forms the western boundary of the forest and on its eastern slopes can be found a locally rare area of heathland.

The name of the river is derived from the old English word *lwrcke* which means swift. The valley of the Irk has a long history in textile development. In medieval times cloth making was a cottage industry and the pieces of cloth were naturally bleached on the banks of the Irk using sunlight, rain, sour milk and the daily collection of urine from Blackley Village! This process was called *Bowkering* which explains the derivation of the place name, *Bowker Vale* (13).

The site of Blackley Forest has had woodland on it since the Norman Conquest in 1066 but over the last 1000 years the forest and surrounding area have been subjected to change with farming, textiles and dyeing works all playing their part in the evolution of the landscape (13). Until the 1940s the area of grassland that sits above Blackley Forest on its eastern flanks continued to be managed by a local farmer as a hay meadow for livestock feed. After the Second World War this area was transformed into a new settlement comprising pre-fabricated housing providing temporary accommodation as a short term solution to housing shortages following the end of the War. The 'prefabs' were demolished in the late 1960's and this area reverted to grassland once again.

04 Blackley Community Forest

The map extract to the right from the 1890s shows the current Blackley Forest location largely denuded of trees although street trees can be seen on Blackley New Road.

Much of the remaining tree cover had been lost to meet fuel demands between 1939-1945. Until 1953 the land was grazed and tree cover was very limited.

After the Second World War the site of the forest and the land to its east were purchased by Manchester Corporation to provide space for Blackley Cemetery and the temporary housing area, however, the land was considered too wet and steep to support the construction of any buildings and so the decision was made to reinstate the forest and give it its current day title.

In 1953 the forest was replanted by Manchester Corporation, local residents and school children. It is, therefore, Manchester's first true community forest, predating the establishment of the Red Rose Community Forest initiative by 38 years. The forest was planted to commemorate the Queen's coronation and local people who gave their lives during the Second World War. Sadly, no images can be found of this historic planting event.

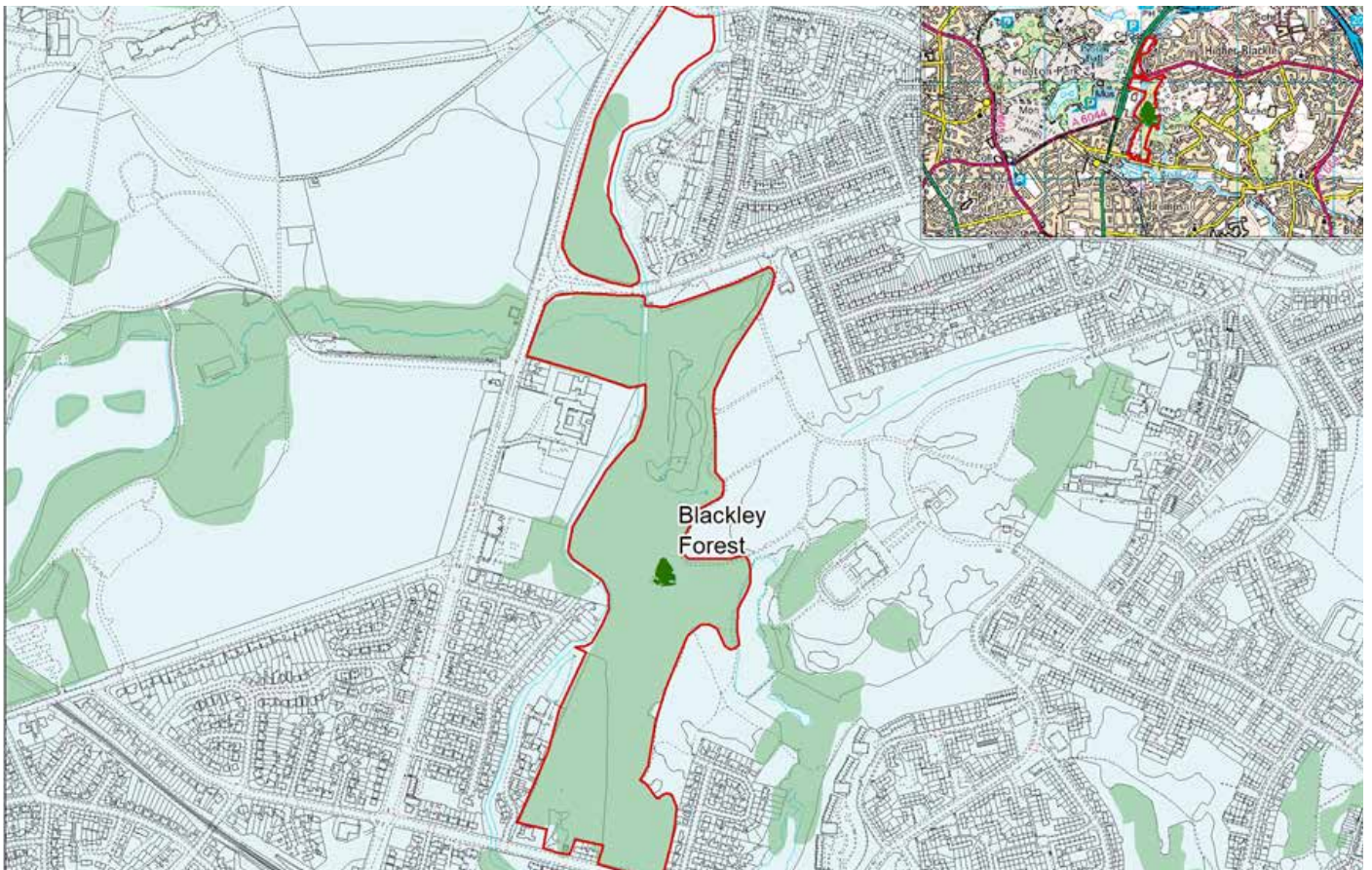
The map extract to the right from the 1960's now shows a large area of planting, albeit there is a significant gap to the east of the River Irk and housing now dominates the area to the west of the river.



1890 map extract showing location of Blackley Forest, without the forest! - Source; Digimap Circa 1890



Ordnance Survey Map Extract Showing the Extent of Blackley Forest in 1960 - Source; Digimap circa 1960



Map showing Blackley Forest and Blackley Forest Extension – source Ordnance Survey 2021



04 Blackley Community Forest

Further tree planting was undertaken in the 1960s and 1970s. In the late 1970s an area of Beech which was one of the dominant tree species in the Forest, was subject to thinning work and heather was planted to create the now established heathland area.

In 1976 the former allotment site adjacent to the Irk on the north side of Victoria Avenue stretching to Sainsbury's supermarket was planted with trees to further extend Blackley Forest. In the 1980s tree planting continued adjacent to the right bank of the Irk and a network of new footpaths was constructed. The aerial view below demonstrates the extent of the tree cover that now exists in Blackley Forest compared to the Digimap extract from the 1960s. It is also possible to see the open area of grassland that was re-created after the prefabs were demolished.



Aerial View of Blackley Forest - source © Getmapping Plc and Bluesky International Limited 2021

'The forest has been a wonderful haven during lockdown and a lot of people have been in, some of whom have never been before. It is such a quiet relaxing place to be, and you wouldn't know it is surrounded by busy main roads. I feel very fortunate to live so close to the forest, all our grandchildren love it as well and our youngest who is now 7 often asks to go there'. Dot Keller, Friends of Blackley Forest

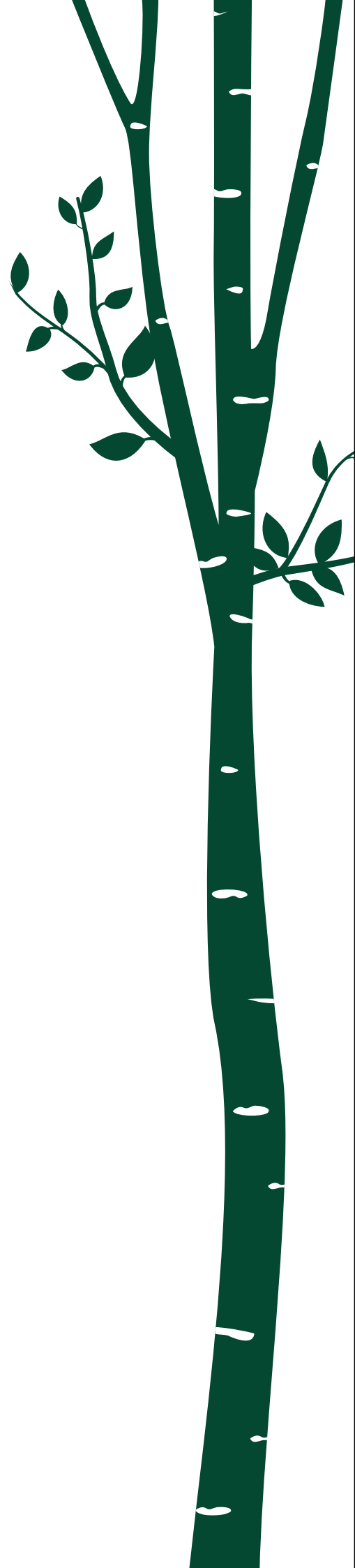


Photograph of Blackley Forest and the River Irk, 2021 - Source; City of Trees

Since 2000, Blackley Forest has benefited from a significant programme of access, interpretation, and habitat management improvements, driven by the Friends of Blackley, Red Rose Forest, Manchester City Council and the Irk Valley Project partnership. The forest is a Site of Biological Importance and was designated as Local Nature Reserve in June 2005 by English Nature and Manchester City Council.

The Friends of Blackley Forest epitomise the impact that local communities can have on managing and transforming their local green spaces into places that are cherished by people and valuable habitats for wildlife. For more information about the Friends of Blackley Forest visit; <http://www.blackleyforest.com/home>

05 | The River Valleys



A significant driver behind Manchester's rise as the world's first industrial city was its rivers which were instrumental in providing power for the first generations of cotton spinning mills, industrial processes and initially transporting materials, before the canals were dug.

Manchester has five main rivers running through and along its borders; the Irk, Medlock, Mersey, Irwell and Bollin. The Medlock and Irk flow into the River Irwell which forms a natural border between the city and neighbouring Salford. The Mersey flows east to west through the southern half of Manchester, whilst the Bollin which forms the southern boundary near Manchester Airport, joins the Mersey near to Lymm, to the west of Manchester.

This chapter will focus on the fortunes of three of the City's key river valleys and how they are being transformed from unloved landscapes into jewels in Manchester's crown where trees and woodlands form a major part of their appeal and character.



Map showing the 5 main rivers in Manchester – source; Crown Copyright & Database Right 2022 Ordnance Survey 10050594



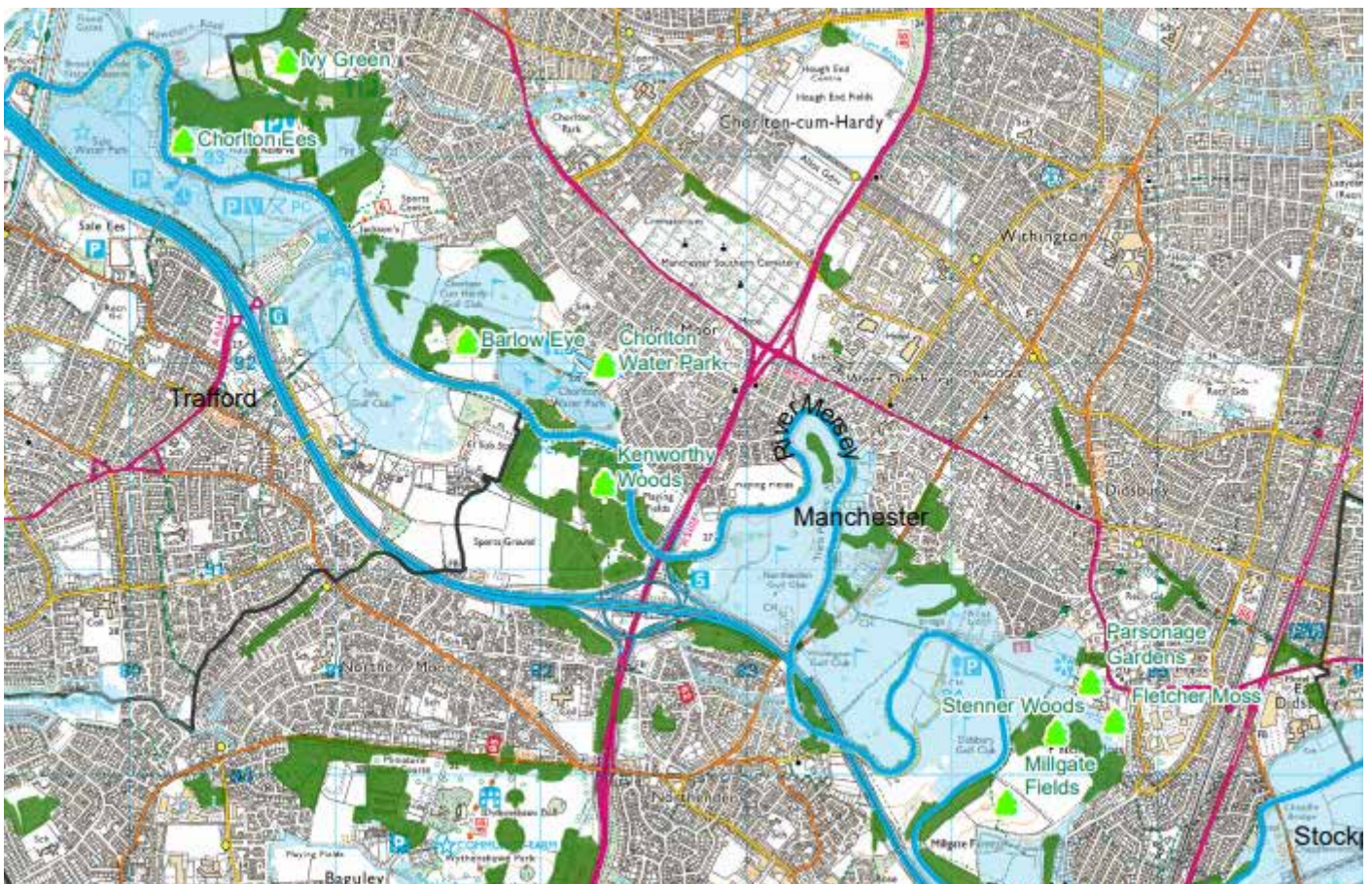
5.1 The Mersey Valley

The Mersey Valley in South Manchester is a large area of urban countryside stretching from the Stockport border in the east to Sale Water Park in the west. The source of the Mersey is found in Stockport Town Centre where the River Goyt and the River Tame meet. In Manchester a number of tributaries feed into the river including the Gore, Platt, Chorlton, Fallowfield and Cringle brooks, sections of which are often hidden from view in culverts below the ground's surface.

The River Mersey's name originates from the Anglo Saxon term for boundary river. It is likely that the Mersey originally formed the boundary between

the Kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria and later became the dividing line between parts of Lancashire and Cheshire. In south Manchester, the Mersey Valley runs through Didsbury, Northenden and Chorlton. It is hugely important to local residents as it provides an area of open countryside in the city that can be accessed easily, on foot or by bicycle. However, the Mersey Valley also attracts visitors from much further afield which is testament to the natural beauty and tranquillity of this place.

The Mersey Valley comprises 217 hectares of parklands, meadows, wetlands and woodlands including 11 named green spaces 5 of which have



Map showing the Mersey Valley in Manchester and its Woodlands in 2021 – source; Ordnance Survey 2021

been designated as Sites of Biological Importance. Three of these sites are Local Nature Reserves; Chorlton Water Park, which is of regional importance because of its winter wildfowl populations, Chorlton Ees and Ivy Green which host a mixture of woodlands and wildflower meadows and Stenner Woods and Millgate Fields which contain wet woodlands, plantation coppice, grassland, ponds and ditches. Ees (plural of ee) is a term meaning land prone to flooding, or a water meadow, and is derived from the Anglo-Saxon meaning 'island'.

However, the Mersey Valley as space for informal public recreation and wildlife conservation is a relatively new phenomenon. In the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, 3 golf courses, Withington, Chorlton (home to Barlow Hall) and Didsbury were established on former pastoral land and now provide important flood storage areas, protecting adjacent housing. The golf courses contain some pockets of well-established woodland and parkland trees. There are also a number of sports grounds within the Mersey Valley most notably the Wythenshawe Sports Ground (University of Manchester), Parkway and Mersey Bank Playing fields and Didsbury sports club.

Until the early 1970's pasture was still the main land use in the Mersey Valley and remnants of this land use continue to this day on the Trafford side of the Valley at Stretford Ees and on the border with Stockport between the river and the M60. Much of the land was farmed in small parcels by local families.

The first big change occurred towards the end of the 19th Century when 78 acres of pasture was acquired for the construction of Withington sewage farm which remained in operation until 1972. Following

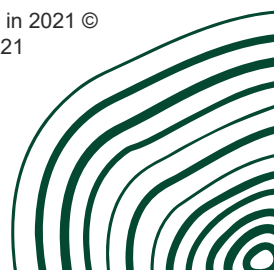
the decommissioning of the sewage treatment works the footprint of the operational area was restored to grassland and new woodland belts were planted around the site. The comparison between the historic map of the 1920's and the present-day satellite image highlights the change in land use, in particular the well-established significant areas of woodland.



Circa 1920 map showing part of the Mersey Valley and Withington sewage works - Source: Digimap, 2020d



Aerial image showing same part of the Mersey Valley in 2021 © Getmapping Plc and Bluesky International Limited 2021



5.1 The Mersey Valley

To the north of the former Withington Sewage Works separated by the course of the Chorlton Brook is Ivy Green which was a former brick rubble tip. Following the cessation of tipping activity this was restored to grassland and was framed by new woodland planting, which can be seen in the satellite image on the previous page. Together with the site of the former sewage works, Ivy Green now forms part of the Chorlton Ees Local Nature Reserve.

Chorlton Water Park

Chorlton Water Park is probably the most visited part of the Mersey Valley in Manchester. It is a Local Nature Reserve and stands on the site of the former Barlow Hall Farm. The formation of the actual park began in the 1970s with the excavation of gravel used in the construction of the M60 motorway. The gravel quarrying left two large pits, the bigger of which was flooded to create the lake that now forms the centre piece of the Water Park. In the late 1970s the lake was stocked with different species of fish, including Perch, Roach, Carp and Bream and it soon became a popular place for anglers. The drought of 1976 saw the lake becoming hugely popular with local people looking for somewhere to sunbathe and take a dip to cool off. In 1978 the Mersey Valley Warden Service was established to manage the Water Park and other sites within the Mersey Valley across Stockport, Trafford and Manchester. The Manchester sites are now managed by the City Council's Parks Department.

The second gravel quarry pit is now known as Barlow Eye. Following gravel extraction, the site operated as a landfill tip before it was capped, seeded and planted by the early 1990's. It is now characterised by woodland, grassland and scrub and because of its landfilled past, it is the highest point in this part of the Mersey Valley.

Another Mersey Valley former tip is now known as Kenworthy Woods. As part of the development of the Red Rose Forest, the Co-operative Bank celebrated its 125th anniversary by helping to create over 250 hectares of community woodlands in Trafford, Wigan, Salford and the Mersey Valley. The chosen site for Manchester was Kenworthy Wood. In 1997 and 1998, 13 hectares of new woodland and over 1km of new path networks were created here. Approximately 30,000 trees of predominantly native species such as silver birch, alder, oak and ash, were planted. Part of the woodland was planted as an orchard with over 100 fruit and nut trees plus several beds of soft fruit.



Photograph of the lake in Chorlton Water Park in 1975 Source; Manchester Local Image Collection



Photograph of the Lake in Chorlton Water Park in 2021 - Source; Manchester City Council



5.1 The Mersey Valley

Fletcher Moss Park and Stenner Woods

Fletcher Moss was an alderman and local historian who lived in The Parsonage opposite St James' Church, Didsbury, until his death in 1919. Moss donated the Parsonage house and gardens to the City of Manchester in 1915 on the condition that he was allowed to live there until he died.

Much of the present layout of the Parsonage gardens is the result of the work of Fletcher Moss and his mother. An impressive collection of ornamental trees can be found, a number of which have been introduced over the years by head gardeners employed by the

City Council, including Yew, Cedar of Lebanon, and an unusual Common Laburnum and Purple Broom cross. The map and key below highlight 40 different species and varieties of trees.

The Botanical Gardens are also home to an interesting collection of trees and more exotic plants. A 2004 survey by Dr Owen Johnson (Manchester City Council, 2020b) revealed that Fletcher Moss Botanical Gardens is now home to the Adams laburnum tree (a unique hybrid tree) and a 55 foot

TREE GUIDE

- 1) Sorbus sargentiana
- 2) Phyllostachys nigra
- 3) Nyssa sinensis
- 4) Cornus kuosa chinensis
- 5) Nyssa sylvatica
- 6) Oxydendron arboreum
- 7) Liquidambar styraciflua
- 8) Eucryphia x nymansensis
- 9) Parrotia persica
- 10) Cotinus cogria
- 11) Euonymus yedoensis
- 12) Viburnum opulus sterile
- 13) Euonymus alatus
- 14) Viburnum carlesii
- 15) +Laburnocytisus 'Adamii'
- 16) Magnolia soulangeana
- 17) Viburnum 'Park Farm hybrid'
- 18) Acer japonicum Aconitifolium
- 19) Magnolia liliflora nigra
- 20) Ficus carica
- 21) Embothrium coccineum
- 22) Eucalyptus gunnii
- 23) Calocedrus decurrens
- 24) Sorbus cashmirina
- 25) Ilex camellifolia
- 26) Taxodium distichum
- 27) Taxus baccata 'Fastigiata'
- 28) Taxus baccata
- 29) Hammamelis mollis
- 30) Fraxinus excelsior 'Pendula'
- 31) Prunus subhirtella 'Autumnalis'
- 32) Cedrus libani
- 33) Cedrus atlantica 'Glauca'
- 34) Corylus maxima purpurea
- 35) Fatsia japonica
- 36) Eucryphia glutinosa
- 37) Tilia x europaea (inc. Visoum album)
- 38) Morus nigra
- 39) Corylus avellana 'Contorta'
- 40) Trachycarpus fortunei

Significant trees in Parsonage Gardens 2011

We hope you have enjoyed a trip round the gardens. If you are interested in joining the 'Friends of the Parsonage and Fletcher Moss Gardens' please contact Heather Stemp on 0161-434-3107. Many thanks to John Steedman and Mike Parker for their help, patience and kindly sharing their expertise.

Please feel free to copy and distribute this guide. C.E. 2011 ©

Table of Trees found at Parsonage Gardens and Corresponding Tree Location Plan Source: Friends of Fletcher Moss and Parsonage Gardens, 2011

tall Amur Cork tree, once believed to grow only in the south of England.

The building next to the gardens is called the Croft, and is the former home of Emily Williamson, co-founder of the Royal Society of Birds in 1981. THE RSPB is now the largest nature conservation charities in the UK with over 1 million members. A plaque on the building commemorates this.



Photograph of The Rockery, Fletcher Moss, 2021 - Source; City of Trees



Photograph of The Rockery, Fletcher Moss in 1955 - Source: Manchester Local Image Collection



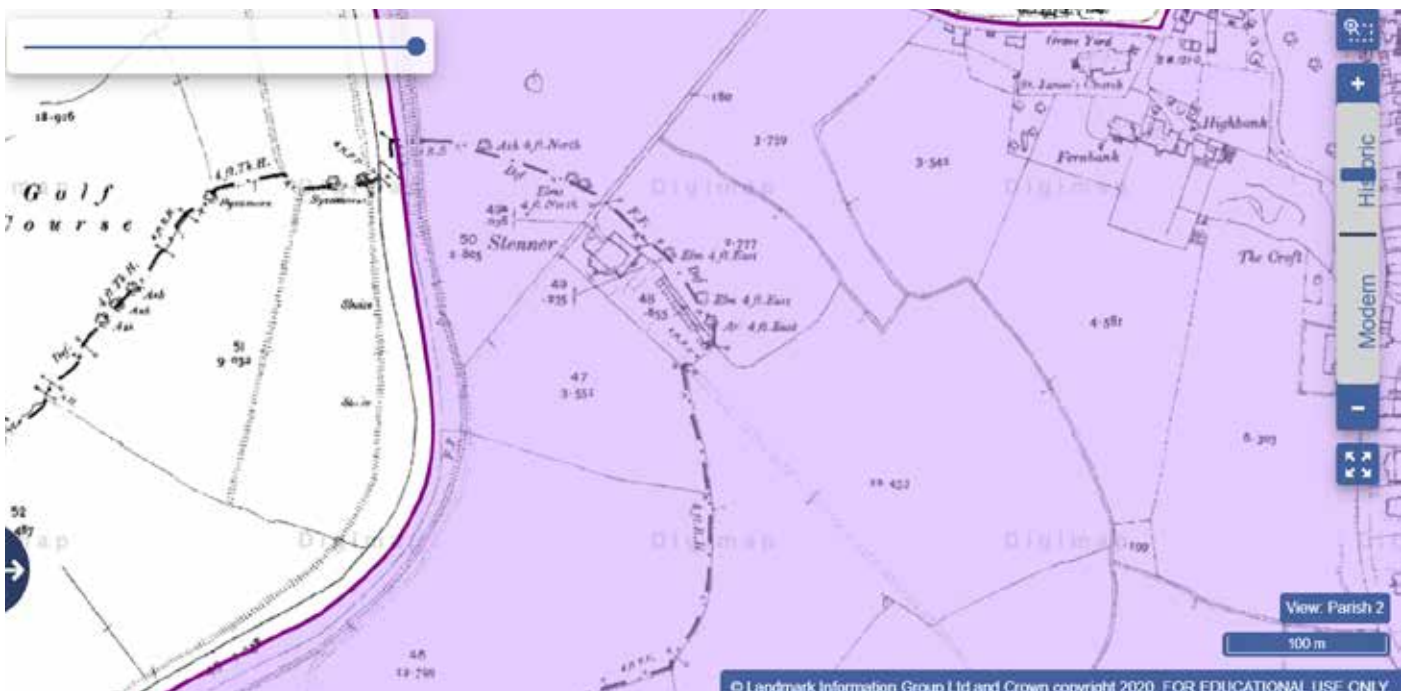
5.1 The Mersey Valley

Fletcher Moss Park has been voted by Fields in Trust as 'one of the UK's Best Loved Parks'. It is a very special place for its many visitors and for the volunteers who maintain it. It is somewhere to interact with nature and a place to 'get away from it all', even though it's not far from Manchester city centre. Throughout the park there is a wonderful collection of native and non-native trees. Alan Hill, Friends of Fletcher Moss Park.

The map extract below from circa 1910 covers the area which is now home to Stenner Woods, Fletcher Moss Park, and the open meadow areas that surround them known as Millgate Fields). Close inspection of the map shows the diligence of the cartographer who recorded the actual tree species present; Ash and Elm. Over the years, further parkland trees have been planted by City Parks' staff which has resulted in a good species diversity across the park.

The c.1910 map demonstrates that the current site of Stenner Woods was largely fields, save for the Ash and Elm trees that are highlighted on the map and the satellite image from the early 1970's below demonstrates that the situation had changed very little. It wasn't until later in the 1970's with the advent of the Mersey Valley Warden Service that Stenner Woods were planted.

Stenner Woods and Millgate Fields now comprise a variety of habitats, including woodland, mature plantation coppices, grasslands, ponds and ditches. Stenner Woods is classified as a grade B Site of Biological Importance as it contains a rich area of wet woodland which is a UK priority habitat. Other habitats include open water and marshy grasslands. A variety of breeding birds have been recorded while frogs, toads and newts are also present. It was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 2008.



A map extract from circa 1910 of open space surrounding the Parsonage, with tree species referenced - Source; Digimap 2020. Scale: 1:2,500.



Aerial image from 1973 of Fletcher Moss Park - Source; Cheshire County Council



Aerial image of Fletcher Moss Park and Stenner Woods in 2021 – source: Ordnance survey 2021



5.2 The Irk Valley

The River Irk flows for a distance of 22km from Royton in Oldham to Manchester City Centre, where it passes underneath Victoria railway station in a large brick tunnel at Ducie Bridge before joining the River Irwell.

The name 'Irk' is derived from the old English word *lwrck* or *Irck* which means swift. Prior to the industrial revolution the land surrounding the Irk was open countryside and the fast-flowing river supplied clean water to the settlements it passed through. It was the speed of the water as a source of power and as a solution / material used in the bleaching and dyeing process that saw the whole nature of the river valley transformed from rural to industrial. Industrialisation and associated urbanisation saw the river subject to modification, such as straightening, hard banking, the addition of weirs and a number of its tributaries being culverted.

The industrialisation of textile production can trace its origins back to the early 18th century, but it was not until the early 19th century that the Irk became dominated by textile mills.

The growth of the textile industry came at a price for the Irk with increasing levels of pollution rendering the river lifeless. It is described in Wentworth's 'The History and Annals of Blackley' (1892) as "not only the blackest but the most sluggish of all rivers".

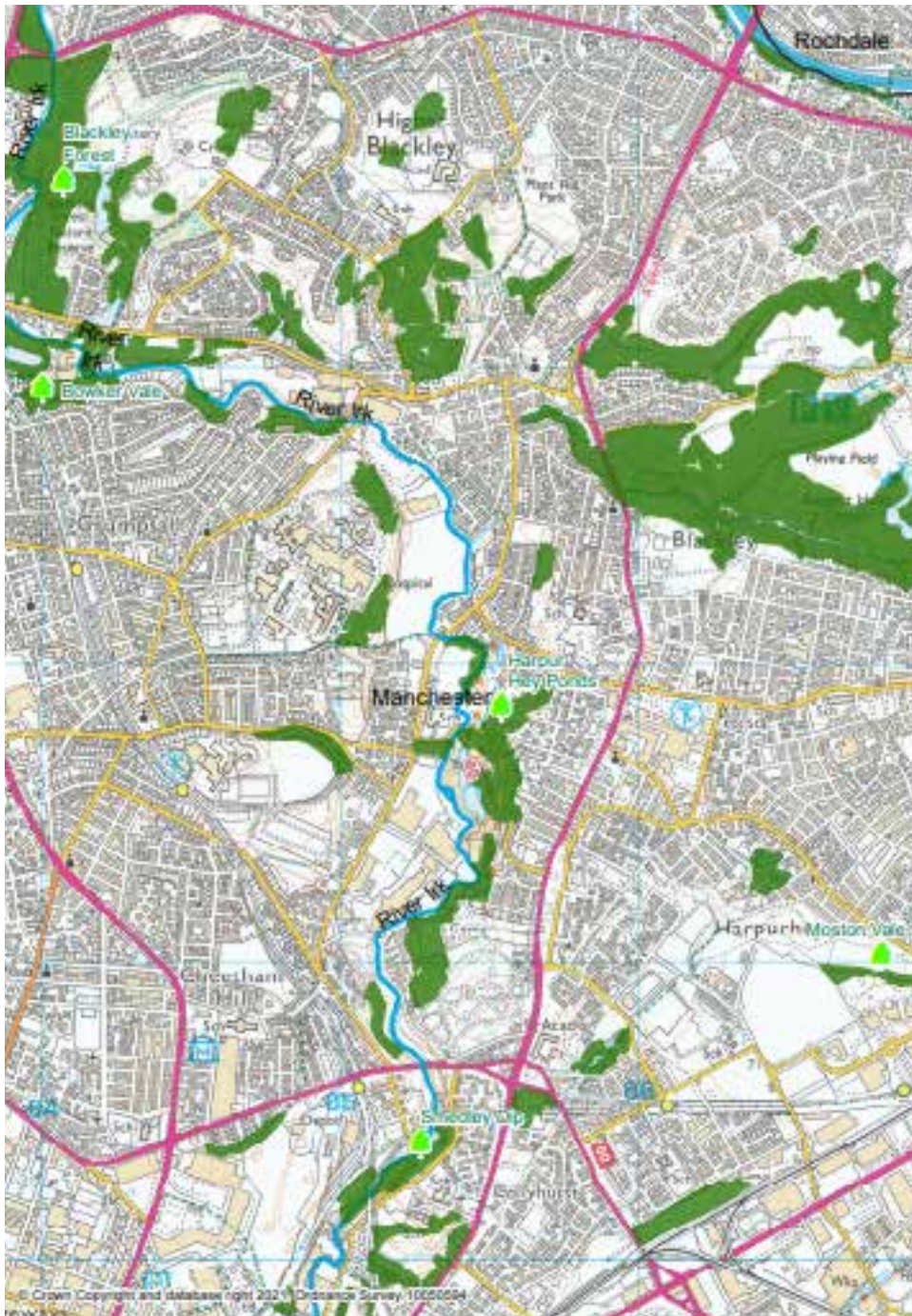
As textiles and other industry in the area declined in the first half of the 20th century, the River Irk and its surrounding green space were left in a very neglected and degraded condition. But the situation began to change in the 1950s, with work beginning on improving adjacent green spaces such as Blackley Forest and Baileys Wood.

In 2001 the Irk Valley Project was established to bring about the regeneration of former industrial and neglected sites and to establish a linked network of green spaces along the River Irk and its tributaries across North Manchester right to the heart of Manchester city centre.

Initial work helped to secure and define sites, giving them a managed look. This has provided the essential foundations for establishing site-specific maintenance programmes and long-term management plans. There is still a way to go but as resources are secured and management plans implemented this will provide key recreational benefits to local people, including a network of riverside walks and help bring back wildlife to the river valley.

In addition to the green spaces along the Valley the river itself has been the focus of a new initiative co-ordinated by the Environment Agency. Following an assessment by the River Restoration Centre, a plan is being developed that will focus on how the flow and function of the river can be improved to enhance biodiversity and promote natural flood management. The vision will be a collaborative 10-year initiative covering the river and its tributaries under the title of Bringing the River Irk to Life (BRIL).

The Irk Valley Project covers the course of the river from the M60 to its confluence with the River Irwell near Victoria station taking in 39 green spaces covering 600 hectares including Blackley Forest in the far north to Angel Meadow in the City Centre. Many of these degraded sites have already been improved through comprehensive landscaping, tree planting, and access works. Two examples of major transformational change can be found at Moston Vale in Harpurhey and Angel Meadow in the City Centre.



Map showing the Irk Valley and its Green Spaces in 2021 – Source; Ordnance Survey 2021



5.2 The Irk Valley

Angel Meadow

Angel Meadow is confined by Rochdale Road, Miller Street, Cheetham Hill Road, and Gould Street, covering an area of approximately 13 hectares on the edge of the city centre. Prior to the industrial revolution the area was predominantly open space dominated by fields and meadows. In the late 18th century, construction began on Richard Arkwright's cotton Mill next to Angel Meadow. Other industry that developed there included a tannery, dyeworks, iron foundry, brewery, tripe works and the Gas Works on Gould Street (demolished in 2016). With further industrialisation and an influx of Irish potato famine migrants subjected to substandard housing, many living in cellars, the area became one of the worst slums in the City (14). According to a record provided by the Rev JR Mercer in 1897, the population of Angel Meadow was around 7,000 people. The area was famously described by Friedrich Engels as 'hell on earth' in his 1845 book 'The Condition of the Working Class in England'.

The most infamous part of Angel Meadow was the former burial ground of St Michael's Church (demolished in 1935), which contained the mass graves of 40,000 paupers.

The land adjacent to the church became the largest cemetery in Manchester; a place of burial for individuals with no family or too poor to afford a proper funeral. As social and living conditions worsened some residents resorted to digging up the cemetery and selling its soil as fertilizer to nearby farmers. The situation became so bad that the Burial Act of 1855 was passed to cover up graveyards with flagstones, hence the name St Michael's Flags (15).

In 1998 the CWS Tobacco Factory Warehouse conversions, at Ludgate Hill, Ancoats, marked the start of the area's regeneration and this has been followed by further large-scale residential developments, with more to come! The scale of the regeneration programme has demonstrated the importance of Angel Meadow to this new residential community.

Friends of Angel Meadow

In 2004 the Friends of Angel Meadow (FOAM) was formed to campaign for the regeneration of the park. Over £200,000 was raised and spent on re-landscaping the park, installing street furniture including seating & bins, interpretation boards, new streetlights, an arched entrance way and planting wildflowers and trees.

In 2006 Angel Meadow was awarded the Green Flag Award, the national award for green spaces in England & Wales.

A second phase of regeneration in 2014 saw the reopening of the "Lowry Steps" to Aspin Lane named in tribute to the artist L.S Lowry who produced sketches and a painting of St Michael and All Angels and Angel Meadow.

Phase Three saw further environmental improvements including a new entrance arch and landscaping outside the park, new railings, a new seasonal bedding area, bulb planting, further tree planting and significant tree management work (15). Further funding has been made available from section 106 contributions associated with new residential schemes and it is proposed that this will enable the completion of the regeneration of the park to complete the story of a transformation that a latter day Engels would hopefully now rebrand as a heaven and not a hell!

5.2 The Irk Valley

Moston Vale

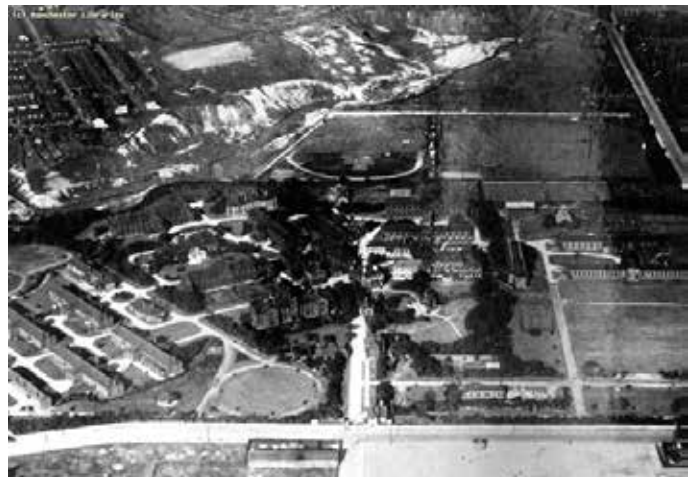
Originally the valley of Moston Brook, the area was once at the centre of the city's industrial development and enjoyed a colourful past. At one time overlooked by the employees and patients of the now demolished Manchester or Monsall Fever Hospital (1871-1973), and Manchester United, then Newton Heath FC, who had their pitch a stone's throw away. The photograph below from 1897 shows that the Vale was very much a green open space at the turn of the century.

The images below show a section of the Moston Brook in 1897 before it was culverted and Manchester Fever Hospital with Moston Vale in the background.

During the Second World War, the area suffered serious bomb damage and in the late 1960s the site became a domestic landfill - the stream that once flowed through the green space, the Moston Brook was culverted, before being tipped on. It currently lies at a depth of 30ft below the current surface. In the 70s and 80s the site was grazed by a variety of animals from the Moston Vale Animal Sanctuary. Located in the northern corner of the Vale was the Manchester Dogs home founded in 1893 and nearby are the foundations of a building where LS Lowry lived for a short time.



Photograph of Moston Brook in 1897 – Source; Manchester Local Image collection



Photograph of the Fever Hospital adjacent to Moston Vale in 1925 - Source: Manchester Local Image collection

Once tipping was completed, the site was resurfaced for use as public open space, but the standard of restoration was poor. In places the tipped landscape suffered from subsidence leaving manhole covers standing some feet into the air, while in other areas soil cover started to wear thin with glass and other materials emerging at the surface. In the 1990s the site became blighted by antisocial behaviour such as fly tipping and burning out stolen cars.

In the early 2000's Red Rose Forest, through their landfill restoration project, Green Tips, began working at Moston Vale helping to secure the site

and to reintroduce the community back to the area, with various events and school activities. However, significant investment was needed to expand this work across the whole project area. This came in the form of the Newlands Programme, New Economic Environments through Woodland. Launched in 2003 Newlands was a £59 million scheme, led by the North West Development Agency and the Forestry Commission that focused on reclaiming large areas of derelict, underused and neglected land across England's Northwest.



Photograph of animals on Moston Vale from animal sanctuary Circa 1980 – Source Newlands



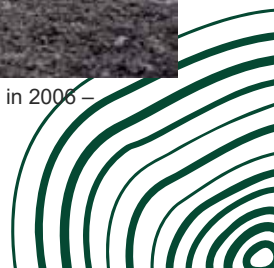
Photograph of exposed tipped material on Moston Vale in 2005 – source Newlands



Photograph of burnt out car on Moston Vale in 2005 - Source; Newlands



Photograph of site preparation works on Moston Vale in 2006 – Source; Newlands



5.2 The Irk Valley



Photograph of Wildflower Meadow on Moston Vale in 2006 - Source; Newlands



Photograph looking Across Moston Vale in 2021 - Source; City of Trees

£1.7 million was provided to fund a complete regeneration of the site that would involve huge levels of soil importation to support new woodland creation, an impressive avenue of street trees, wildflower meadows, new footpaths, a new sports pitch and a significant programme of community engagement to ensure that the project reflected the needs of the local residents. Works were completed in 2006.

“Moston Vale was the first site to be developed under the Newlands scheme. It is now a popular place for the surrounding community and in particular dog walkers. It is a ‘green’ access route between neighbourhoods for pedestrians and cyclists and It also provides some welcome peace at lunchtimes for workers at the nearby One Central Park business park”, Kay Clark, Community Forester, Forestry England.

The next big regeneration project for the Irk Valley will be Victoria North (previously called the Northern Gateway). Over £1 billion of new investment will deliver 15,000 new homes and a world-class City River Park for Manchester. Covering an area of approximately 155 hectares, between Queens Park and the fringes of Manchester City Centre, enhanced and connected green spaces with new tree planting will form the backbone of this new regeneration initiative.

5.3 The Medlock Valley

The River Medlock runs for a length of 16km from Oldham into East Manchester where it passes through Clayton Vale and Philips Park, before finally entering the River Irwell at Castlefield in Manchester City Centre. The word Medlock is derived from the Old English 'meadow stream' or 'the river that flows through a meadow'

Before the industrial revolution the Medlock Valley was largely pastoral farmland and two farmsteads survived in Clayton Vale well into the first half of the 20th Century. The pigsty for one of these two farms was demolished during World War Two to facilitate the construction of an ARP Warden hut which is where the visitor centre stands today.

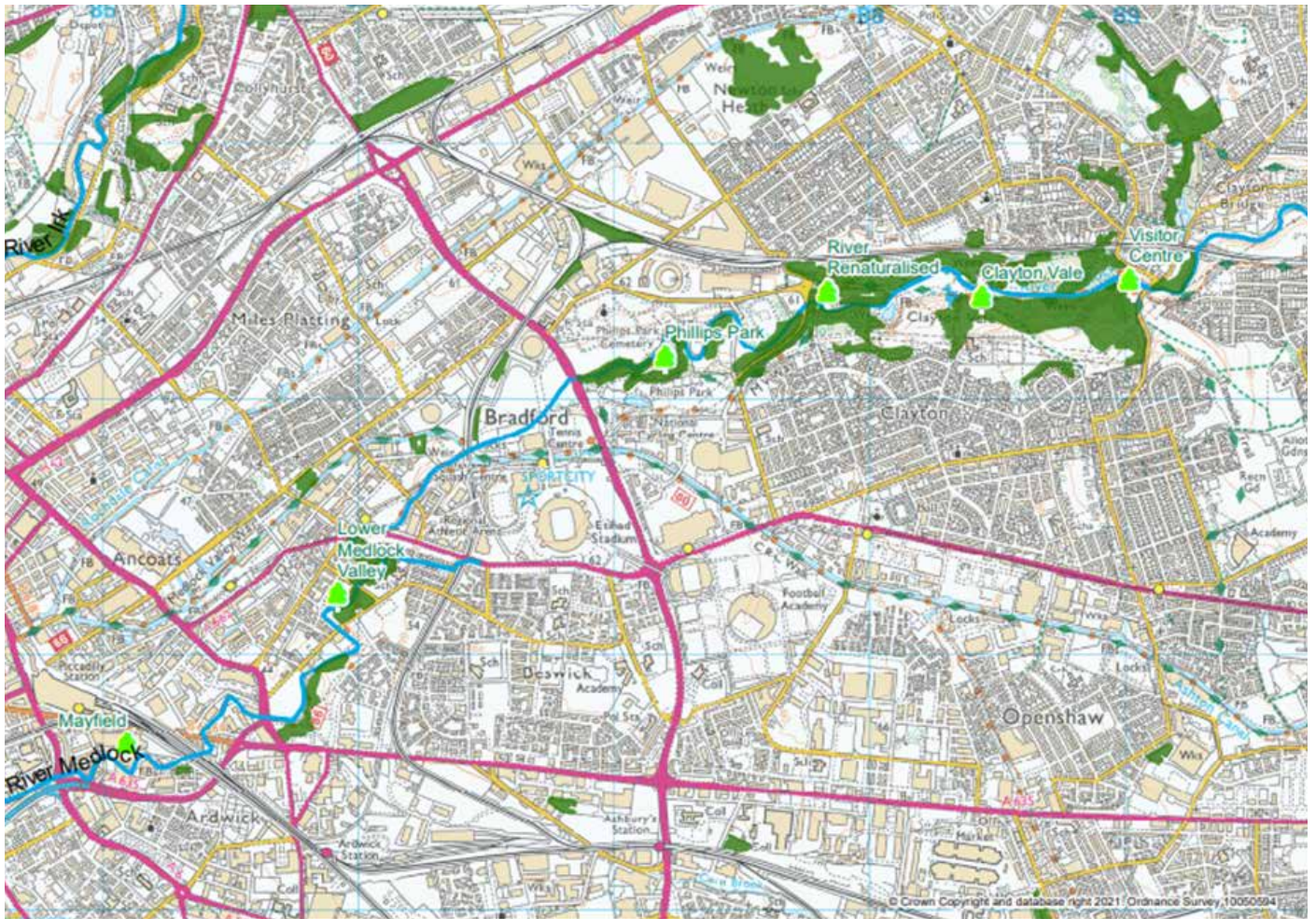
Industrialisation began in the latter half of the 18th century with textiles and coal mining being the industrial pioneers. In the early 1790's work began on the nearby Ashton Canal which would transport raw materials, coal and finished goods for the cotton mills in the area.

Other industries which colonised the valley were dying, sanitation, lime works, wire works, glass production, engineering, printing, and chemical works. It was a major industrial hub and its blackened skies were testament to this. The growth in industry led to a rapid expansion in the area's population with housing for the industry's workers developed either side of Clayton Vale and into Miles Platting and Ancoats towards the City Centre.

Deep coal mining in Bradford began in the 1840s the coal was an important source of power for Manchester's cotton mills. The coal was also supplied to the Stuart Street Power Station which was constructed at the turn of the 20th Century. The Bradford Colliery closed in 1968 a key moment

in East Manchester's industrial decline and by the 1980s, most of the traditional industries had shut down leaving dereliction, high unemployment, and social problems in their wake. A swathe of lighter industrial uses has continued along the east side of Alan Turing Way. The start of East Manchester's Regeneration began in earnest with the setting up of the New East Manchester (NEM) urban regeneration company in 1999 while the construction of the City of Manchester Stadium for the 2002 Commonwealth Games has been a catalyst for a huge programme of investment and regeneration.

In 2003 The Medlock Valley Initiative was launched to facilitate a joined-up approach to regenerating the whole of the Medlock Valley in East Manchester to help create a sense of place and a better and more accessible network of open spaces for people and wildlife that would complement and integrate with the wider regeneration plans for East Manchester. The initiative can be broadly broken down into three focus areas in East Manchester; the Upper Medlock comprising Clayton Vale, Philips Park and the Lower Medlock from the City of Manchester Stadium to Great Ancoats Street



Map showing the Medlock Valley and its Key Green Spaces in 2021 – Source Ordnance Survey 2021



5.3 The Medlock Valley

Clayton Vale

Clayton Vale covers an area of 57 hectares and stretches from Edge Lane in the east to Philips Park in the West. Between the early 1900s and 1974 virtually the whole of Clayton Vale was used as a landfill site. The plan below shows the extent of the area that was tipped on.

In 1982 Manchester City Council purchased the site and the reclamation of the tipped area began, taking five years to complete. Then 250,000 trees and shrubs were planted over a period of 10-15 years, a network of paths was installed, and two ponds were developed and improved. Many of the trees planted were fast growing species such as Willow and Poplar to help bring about a rapid visual transformation. Other species included Aspen, Sessile Oak, Red Oak, Bird Cherry and Silver Birch which were planted to create new habitat space for a range of birds and small mammals (16).

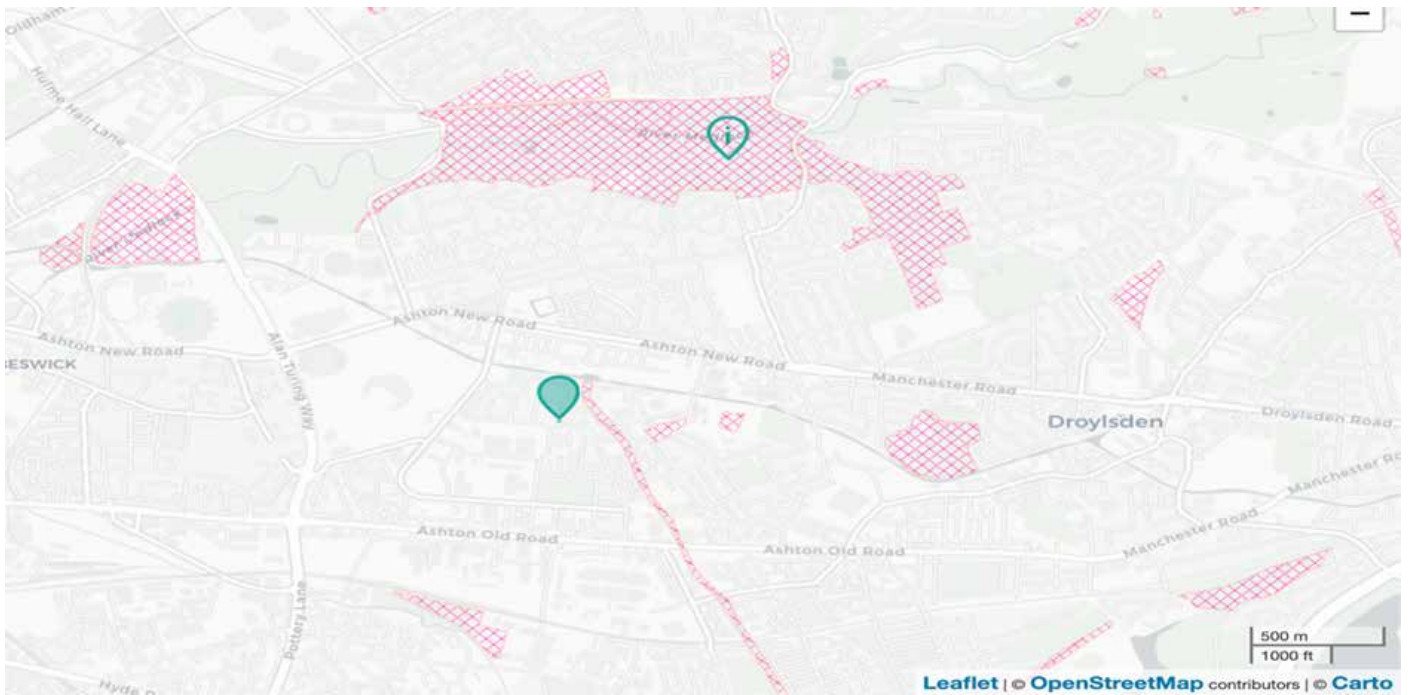
In 2003 The Friends of Clayton Vale was established, and they continue to work with the City Council to manage and improve the site and organise events to encourage more local people to visit the park and benefit from this beautiful place. The combined efforts of the Friends and the City Council previously helped the Vale to achieve Green Flag status.

In 2006 The Medlock Valley including Philips Park and Clayton Vale was awarded £1.3m of funding from the Northwest Regional Development Agency, European Regional Development Fund and East Manchester New Deal for Communities to support further environmental improvements. In that same year Clayton Vale gained Local Nature Reserve status.

In 2013 work began on removing the red brick lining in a section of the river in Clayton Vale to recreate the Medlock's natural course. In October 2014, the project won a Wild Trout Trust Conservation Award. Since the re-naturalisation of the Medlock, brown trout, minnows, hunting kingfishers and Roe deer drinking by the river's edge have all been seen in the re-naturalised area, the images below demonstrate the level of transformation achieved.

Over the last 40 years Clayton Vale has been transformed from a rubbish tip to a place of nature, tranquillity, and recreation for the communities of Clayton, Openshaw, Miles Platting and Newton Heath. With the arrival of the Manchester to Ashton Metrolink in 2013 Clayton Vale has also become an accessible piece of countryside for the residents of Manchester, including the fast-growing residential population of Manchester City Centre.

The new woodlands that have been created are benefiting from management including selective thinning and City of Trees is now working with the City Council to plant more trees in appropriate locations to provide further biodiversity and amenity benefits. The images below demonstrate the transformation from a post-industrial wasteland in 1913 to the beginnings of a beautiful tree lined river valley in 1981



Map showing tipped areas in the Medlock Valley - © Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2021.



Photograph showing The Red River in 2013 - Source; Environment Agency



Photograph showing renaturalised River Medlock in 2021- Source; City of Trees



5.3 The Medlock Valley



Photograph showing Clayton Vale in 1913 - Source; Manchester Local Image collection



Photograph showing Clayton Vale in 1981 - Source; Manchester Local Image collection



The View looking along the River Medlock in 2021 - Source; City of Trees



5.3 The Medlock Valley

Philips Park

Philips Park is one of the first municipal parks in Manchester dating back to 1845, when 12.5 hectares of land were purchased from the estate of Lady Houghton for the sum of £6,100 (16). It was opened in August 1846.

A report from the Head Gardener at Philips Park in 1872 noted that trees and shrubs had to be replaced every 3 years due to heavy pollution! The same year, Robert Smith, a chemist in Manchester coined the term 'acid rain' and described the damage it caused to plants and materials (16).

In 1872 there was also a severe flood and the Medlock burst its banks, flooding the surrounding area, which had a rather gruesome impact on the cemetery immediately to the north of the park with bodies being washed away downstream. As a consequence, the river was culverted using eight million red Accrington bricks laid onto concrete foundations in a U-shaped flume through Clayton Vale and Phillips Park. This earned the Medlock the nickname of the red river (17).

In 2000 a new Community Orchard was created and in 2004, 500 new woodland trees were planted in the park. In 2001 Philips Park was placed on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, obtaining a grade II status. In 2003 the Friends of Philips Park was established who work closely with the City Council to manage and improve the park and organise public events. The collaborative working between the Friends and the park wardens was instrumental in the park being awarded a Green Flag by the Civic Trust in recognition of the high standard to which the park was managed.

There are also plans to re-naturalise the course of the Medlock as it runs through Philips Park, which would not only see the river return to its meandering ways but the delivery of a range of other improvements including an avenue of trees and wildflower areas to encourage more wildlife into the park.

Tulip Valley Visualisation Location



Tulip Valley Re-naturalised Channel



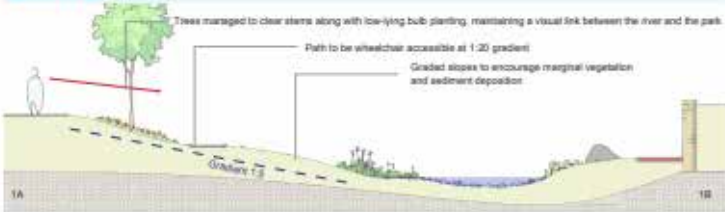
Attractive and Safe River Bank

Clear stemmed Silver Birch and swathes of bulbs can be set out across the river bank, maintaining views through to the river and recognising the heritage of this important part of Philips Park.

A new gravel path can be created enabling the public to safely experience the shallower sections of the restored river channel.



Section 1A-1B



Sediment Deposition and Natural Colonisation

Graded slopes and a meandering channel will improve flow diversity and encourage deposition of sediment and the formation of a natural gravel bed.

Colonisation of native riverside plants will also increase the aesthetic and biodiversity value of the river.

Plan showing potential renaturalisation of the Medlock in Philips Park - Source JBA Consulting



5.3 The Medlock Valley

Lower Medlock Valley

The Lower Medlock consists of a series of smaller green spaces along the river valley. The wider area has been identified as an area for strategic housing market renewal. It is hoped that this will provide the catalyst and means for investing in this section of the Medlock Valley to create a high-quality recreational space and green link between the City Centre and the Etihad Campus, Philips Park and Clayton Vale. There will be scope for further tree planting to help define this route but there will also be a need for further management of the existing trees.

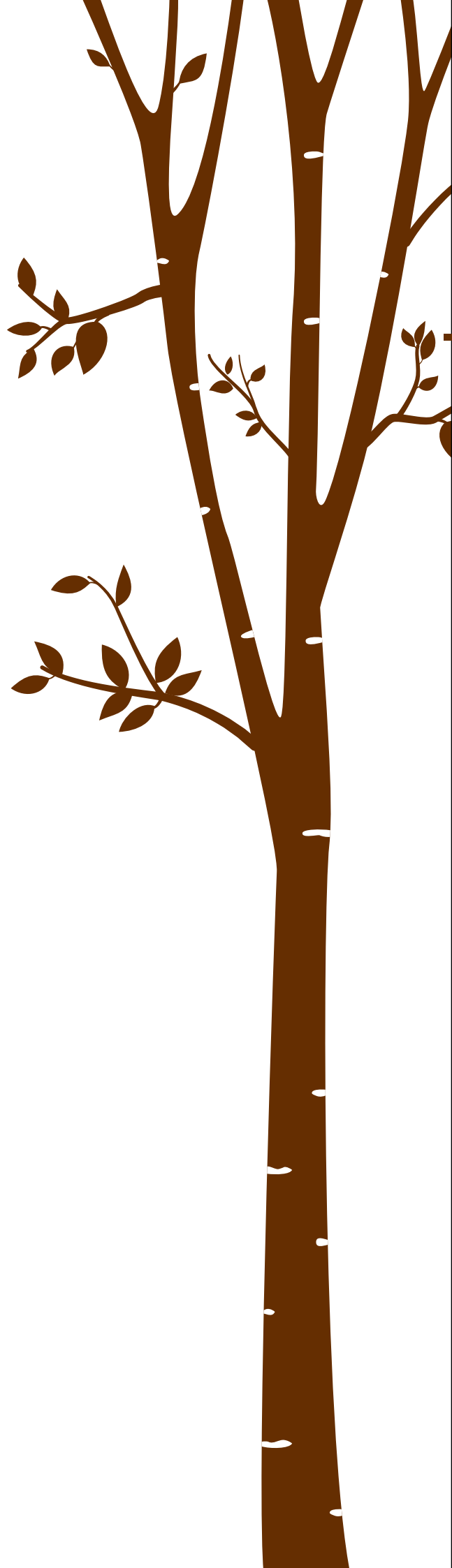
The Medlock is culverted under Great Ancoats Street after which it disappears and re-emerges in a number of locations as it winds its way through the City Centre before joining the Irwell. One of these locations is at the back of the former Mayfield Railway Goods Yard. This site is the focus of a major regeneration project which will see the development of 1400 new homes, shops, restaurants, bars and offices. The centrepiece is a new 2.5 hectare park, the first new park for the City Centre in over 100 years. 150 mature and semi mature trees have been planted to create an immediate impact and help frame and create both formal and more natural and wild spaces. These spaces include floodable meadows and biodiverse ecological areas beside the river, with quieter places for escape and contemplation. The Park was officially opened on September 22nd, 2022.



Mayfield Park 2022, Manchester's First City Centre Park in 100 Years - Source; Manchester City Council



06 | Green Streets





Having good access to parks and woodlands is not something that all residents might benefit from. So, it is important that wherever we can, we should bring the trees to where people live so that householders can enjoy the visual and other benefits that trees provide from the comfort of their home. This is particularly important for people who have no gardens or whose gardens are not big enough to accommodate a tree.

The Victorians and Edwardians were visionary when it came to street and verge planting as they recognised the value that these trees would bring to adjacent communities. However, many of the planting locations were in the more affluent places which is why we often use the term “leafy suburbs” to describe traditionally middle class residential areas such as Didsbury, Chorltonville and Whalley Range. However, the Victorians and Edwardians also recognised the value of planting trees on high streets to create a village feel to help detract from the encroaching sense of urbanisation.

This chapter will showcase some of the great street tree legacies that the Victorians and Edwardians have given us and what has been happening in Manchester in more recent times.



6.1 Whalley Range



Photograph of street trees outside Brantingham Court Flats circa 1960 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection

The Whalley range is one of the earliest districts of the City of Manchester built by local businessman Samuel Brook in the 1830s, his intention being to create "a desirable estate for gentlemen and their families" (18). The area is still characterised by many impressive Victorian Villas although there have been waves of redevelopment which has seen some terraced housing constructed at the turn of the 20th century, low rise flats after the Second World War, demolition and redevelopment of some individual houses in the latter part of the 20th Century and infilling developments on vacant sites. Despite some

of the building changes, tree lined streets continue to define the character of the area.



Photograph of trees outside Brantingham Court Flats 2021 - Source; City of Trees 2021

6.2 Didsbury



View from Barlow Moor Road looking down Lancaster Road, 1959 | Source: Manchester Local Image Collection

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, Didsbury was a small agricultural hamlet within the sub-district of Withington.

During the Victorian expansion of Manchester, Didsbury developed as a prosperous suburb, this expansion grew apace following the opening of the Midland Railway line from London to Manchester Central Station in 1880. Didsbury officially became part of Manchester in 1904.

West Didsbury was home to the wealthiest residents, it was characterised by large gardens and tree lined streets, and this green, leafy feel continues to this day.



Photograph of tree lined Lancaster Road, 2021 - source; City of Trees

6.3 Burnage



Photograph of verge trees Errwood Road, 1954 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection

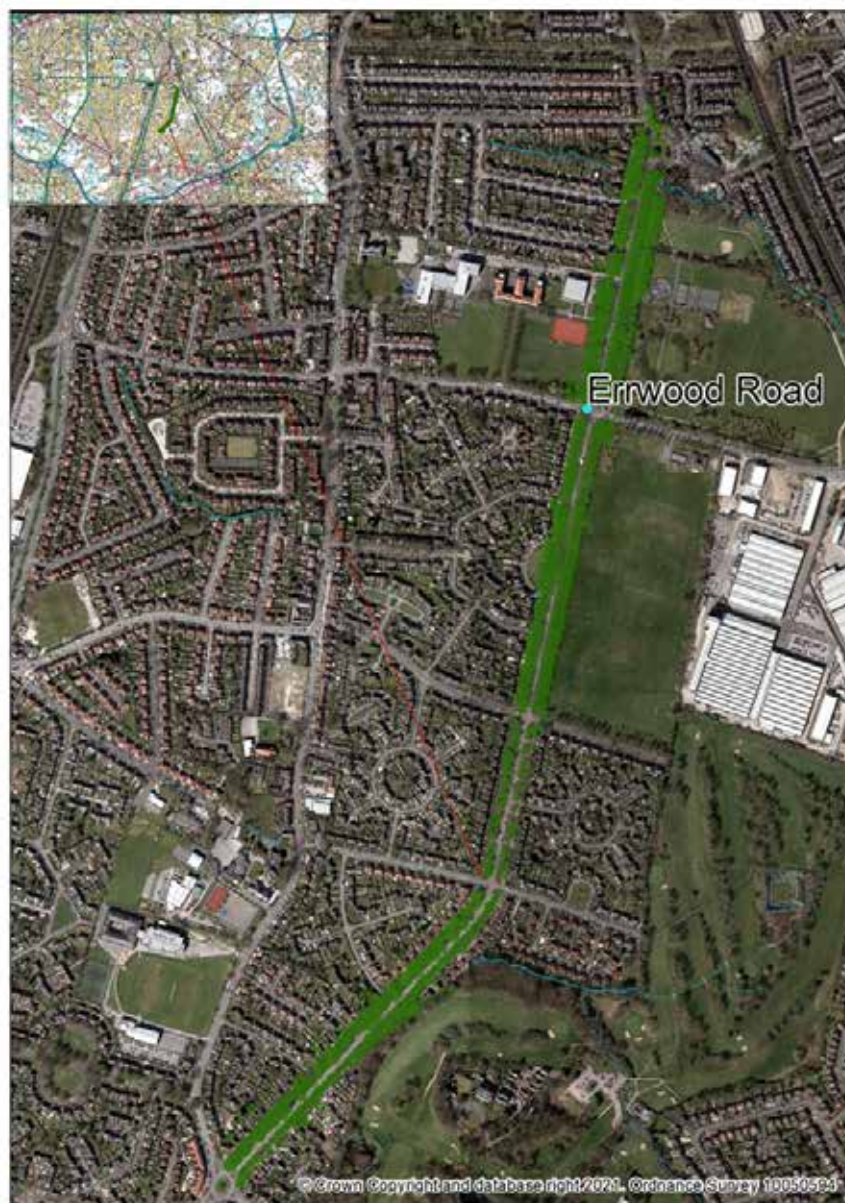
The photograph below is of Errwood Road in Burnage in 1954 where an avenue of two staggered rows of Lime and London Plane trees were planted on either side of the road shortly after the Second World War.

The avenue of trees runs for a distance of 1.75km, see map on the following page, from the junction of Errwood Crescent in the north in Levenshulme to the roundabout at the junction of Burnage Lane and Mauldeth Road in the south.

These street trees prevail to this day and truly define the character of this area and is perhaps the most impressive example of a tree lined avenue in Manchester.



Photograph of verge trees Errwood Road, 2021 - Source; City of Trees



Aerial image showing the extent of the tree lined avenue Errwood Road - © Getmapping Plc and Bluesky International Limited 2021

6.4 Princess Parkway



Photograph of 'green fringed' Princess Parkway Hulme / Moss Side 1960 - Manchester Local Image Collection

The Princess Road/Parkway was one of two new arterial roads. This high capacity urban road built by Manchester Corporation leads into Manchester City Centre through Hulme and Moss Side. Richard Barry Parker's scenic Parkway route from the south from Barlow Moor Road to Altrincham Road was significant for its landscaped verges and rose beds as seen below.

Tree planting has continued to be used to help screen housing from the busy road as demonstrated in the two photographs showing Quinney Crescent shortly before the houses were completed in 1975 and the outlook in 2021.



Photograph of Quinney Crescent, 1975 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection



Photograph of Quinney Crescent in 2021 with well-established trees screening Princess Parkway - Source; City of Trees



6.5 Crumpsall



Photograph of trees on Hermitage Road off Crumpsall Lane in 1959 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection

The village of Crumpsall, whose name is thought to mean a crooked piece of land by the river, is first mentioned in 1291. One of Crumpsall's most famous residents was the Chetham family, a prolific benefactor to the people of Manchester, who lived at Crumpsall Hall until it was demolished in 1825.

Like neighbouring Blackley, textile dyeing in Crumpsall was a key industry from the late 18th Century. Another major employer was the Crumpsall Biscuit Factory. The factory employed over 600 people and was renowned for its jammy dodgers.

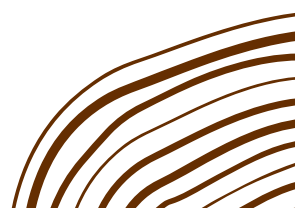
As with other parts of Manchester, Crumpsall saw significant growth in the latter part of the 19th Century, but it still managed to retain its village feel especially in and around Crumpsall Lane where street trees and leafy front gardens give the area a very suburban feel.

Although some of the garden trees and border hedges have gone, the street trees still remain to retain the leafy character of the street





Photograph of trees on Hermitage Road off Crumpsall Lane in 2021 - Source; City of Trees



6.6 Green Streets

Going into the 1990's Manchester continued to have an impressive legacy of street and verge trees but as more and more of these trees were approaching old age it became apparent that although they were beautiful and character-defining for the streets they lined, they were quite literally getting too big for their boots. Many of the streets in Manchester were not wide enough to accommodate large species trees. The Victorians and Edwardians could not have predicted the impacts that some of these trees would have, such as causing obstructions in the highway or encroaching too close to buildings.

From the late 1990's there was a growing need for Manchester City Council to assess whether certain trees that were too big for their location needed to be removed or could be retained following pruning and crown lifting / crown reduction. This often proved to be a very emotive issue as many householders and residents were protective of their street trees and for some it would have likely been a defining factor in where they decided to live.

So, the City Council began a phased programme of removing the most obstructive and encroaching trees and specimens nearing the end of their life. These trees were frequently replaced by smaller more ornamental varieties which were appropriate for their surroundings in terms of the height and spread that they would achieve at maturity, the philosophy being to select "the right tree for the right location". Although the replacement trees would not define the character of the street in the way that their predecessors had done through their scale, the new trees were selected not just on the basis of their size but on their ability to provide interest through the seasons in terms of spring blossom, autumn leaf colour, bark colour, leaf shape and the benefits that they would provide to wildlife.

In 2001 Red Rose Forest launched a new initiative called Green Streets, the aim of which was to work with Manchester City Council and other Local Authorities in Greater Manchester to deliver street tree planting projects in areas where street tree provision was low. The focus of Green Streets was to engage with householders in a way that would give them the opportunity to define where new trees would be planted, the choice of tree (from a list of appropriate species) and to participate in the establishment of the trees through the provision of training and tree maintenance guides.

The objective was only to provide a tree to those households that requested one, and a tree consent form had to be signed. Both Red Rose Forest and Manchester City Council were acutely aware that not everyone wants a tree on the street outside their house and the best way to reduce the potential for wilful damage and vandalism was to plant a tree where local residents genuinely wanted one. Because of this Green Streets has proven to be a great success and giving householders the opportunity to select their preferred species of tree helped to generate a real sense of ownership; or some the street trees became an extension of their home. The photograph below of street trees planted in Longsight epitomise how people take them to their hearts by customising the area around the base of the tree with flowers and in this case, rosemary plants!





Photograph of trees on Stovell Avenue, Longsight surrounded by flowers and herbs - Source; Red Rose Forest, 2010



6.7 Thornton Road



Photograph looking down Thornton Road, from Lloyd Street end in 1969 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection

Thornton Road in Moss Side / Rusholme benefited from a transformational green makeover in 2005 when over 60 street trees were planted as part of an environmental regeneration initiative supported by funding secured from the European Regional Development Fund by Manchester City Council. This was to be the first of many street tree planting projects in Rusholme and Moss Side which responded to local demand from the success of Thornton Road and neighbouring planting schemes.





Photograph looking down a tree lined Thornton Road, from Lloyd Street end in 2021 - Source; City of Trees

6.8 Lightbowne Road



Photograph looking north along Lightbowne Road 2008 - Source; Groundwork Manchester

In 2008 as part of the Government's Housing Market Renewal Initiative to reinvigorate and regenerate housing areas in decline, Red Rose Forest worked with Groundwork and Manchester City Council to deliver an impressive verge planting scheme adjacent to Lightbowne Road in Moston.

The aim was to create a beautiful avenue of trees that would enhance the appearance of an area dominated by a road that bisected the two housing estates and to help screen the householders from the noise and the pollution living on the south side of the road. A

double staggered row of beautiful Chinese Dawn Redwoods was planted which have now formed an impressive avenue which in the future could help to create a scene as impressive as the Limes and London Planes on Errwood Road in Burnage.



Photograph of a tree lined Lightbourne Road, 2021 - Source; City of Trees



Photograph looking down Whitworth Street West towards City Road Inn, 1965 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection

The photograph above is of Whitworth Street West in Manchester City Centre with the railway viaduct on the left hand side, the City Road Inn at the bottom of the street while the building at the end of the terrace on the right hand side was home to the legendary Hacienda night club between 1982 and 1997.

In 2012 the street received a green makeover that saw 16 Snow Goose Cherries planted. The planting was funded by Manchester City Council and the European Union. Every March the cherries produce a beautiful display of spring blossom and in autumn the leaves change from dark green to fiery red.



Photograph of Cherry Trees in blossom on Whitworth Street looking towards City Road Inn 2016 - Source; City of Trees


Currently Manchester has 19,550 street trees, an impressive figure but going forward a key objective of Manchester City Council will be to plant more street trees across the City and in particular to concentrate this activity in parts of the City where street tree cover is currently low so that leafy suburbs become a city wide phenomenon.

Between 2020 and 2022 Manchester planted over 2000 new mature, climate resilient trees as part of a targeted, pro-active campaign - TreeAction MCR (see Chapter 8, Making a Difference, for more details). In less than 2 years then, this has contributed to more than a 10% increase in the number of street trees managed by the Council.



07 | The Regeneration Game





From the early 1970s Manchester's primary (coal mining and extraction) and manufacturing industries went into a rapid and major decline. The City's status as industrial powerhouse disappeared. Competition from elsewhere in the world which utilised cheaper labour and modern production methods, coupled with advances in transportation that allowed goods to be imported more efficiently, left many of Manchester's industries obsolete, outdated, and unable to compete.

Between 1981 and 1989 employment in Greater Manchester's manufacturing sector fell by 18.2% while those employed in primary industries plummeted by 37% (19). By 1986 unemployment in Manchester had peaked at over 43,000 (claimants of unemployment benefit) after which there was a period of recovery with unemployment falling to around 27,000 in 1990. However, the situation began to deteriorate again with a recession in early 1990's. Unemployment steadily rose, peaking in 1993 at around 35,000 (20).

The change in fortunes for employment coincided with significant falls in population. Between 1951 and 1971 the city's population fell from a peak of 703,082 to 543,650 and from 1981 the numbers fell again from 459,200 to 432,700. However, the 2001 census returned the lowest population figure over the previous 100 years at 422,900 (21).

The high levels of unemployment between the 1970s and mid 1990s culminated in areas of social deprivation across the city with few opportunities for the unemployed to find alternative jobs to support their families. Something was therefore needed to address this situation and the City Council began to formulate plans to improve the city's economy.

Area based regeneration teams were established in the 1990's across the city to devise plans for the regeneration of parts of Manchester blighted by the impact of rising unemployment. This chapter provides an overview of the impacts of some of these regeneration initiatives and what this meant for open space, tree provision and improved access to the city's green assets.



Graph showing population change in Manchester, 1951 to 2011- Source; census data ONS

7.1 New East Manchester

In East Manchester, 60% of its economic and employment base was lost between 1970 and 1985 (22). The New East Manchester (NEM) urban regeneration company was established in Autumn 1999 as a partnership between Manchester City Council, the North West Development Agency, English Partnerships and local communities. In 2001, the NEM launched The East Manchester Regeneration Framework, which set out a long-term strategic plan for economic, physical and social improvements.

Alongside employment, education, transport and social objectives, environmental regeneration was considered to be a key piece of the jigsaw. As described in the River Valleys chapter, the local environment had become blighted through industrial waste, neglect and antisocial behaviour.

Notable environmental achievements were:

- A £24 million investment programme in the Ashton Canal corridor to provide a safe, attractive, and accessible pedestrian route from the city centre to Sport City;
- Major refurbishment of five community parks;
- A large number of smaller community gardens;
- The completion of the first phase of improvements to Philips Park.

In 2002 East Manchester hosted the Commonwealth Games which were held at the City of Manchester Stadium complex (Sport City) which was built on the site of the former Bradford colliery. The Commonwealth Games were a resounding success and proved to be a major catalyst in the regeneration of East Manchester.



Photograph showing the Bradford Colliery in 1928 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection



Photograph showing the City of Manchester Stadium sitting behind a beautiful avenue of trees in 2021 - Source; City of Trees



7.2 The City Centre

In the 1980s Manchester City Council had started the process of regenerating the City Centre. In 1988 the Central Manchester Development Corporation (CMDC) was established to assist with the regeneration of around 180 hectares of the western part of the City Centre including Castlefield, the area around the former Manchester Central Railway Station now Manchester Central Convention Complex and Whitworth Street West. CMDC was wound up in

1996 but work continued on significant environmental improvements to the canals, the green spaces in Castlefield and an increase in the provision of street trees especially around the former Manchester Central Railway Station, Deansgate Locks, along Lower Mosley Street and the canal basin opposite the Bridgewater Hall.



Photograph showing Central Manchester Station in 1971 - Source; Mcr Local Image Collection



Photograph showing former Central Manchester Station flanked by trees in 2021 - Source; City of Trees



Manchester Libraries
Photograph looking down Whitworth Street West from Knot Mill towards Deansgate Locks – 1902 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection



Photograph looking down Whitworth Street West from Knot Mill towards Deansgate Locks – 2012 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection



7.3 The Millennium Quarter

On Saturday June 15th, 1996, a 1500kg bomb packed into a lorry parked on Corporation Street next to the Arndale centre was detonated by the IRA. This was the biggest single bomb explosion on mainland UK since the Second World War. Although 212 people were injured thankfully nobody was killed. The photograph below demonstrates the level of damage caused.

The explosion caused around £700m of damage (equivalent to around £1.4bn today) across 100,000m² of commercial space. Part of the key retail area of the city centre was put out of action for three years (23).



Photograph showing aftermath of the IRA Bomb, 1996 – Source; Manchester Local Image Collection

With financial support from central government Manchester City Council commissioned a redesign of the damaged area, later renamed the Millennium Quarter. Following an international design commission, the winning submission focused on; 'a new square bordered by the Arndale Centre, the Corn Exchange and a new Marks & Spencer linked to St Ann's Square by a new pedestrianised street; an extension of the Arndale Centre to the north including a Winter Garden; a cultural building and leisure development at Maxwell House (now the Printworks); and a new transport interchange' (23).

The Winter Garden is what we now know today as Cathedral Gardens and was created between Chetham's School of Music and the new Urbis museum.

Covering nearly an acre on land formerly occupied by shops, a hotel and subsequently car parking, this new open space comprises terraced lawns, water features and an arboretum of over 40 mature trees both on the lawned area and surrounding pedestrianised streets. Tree species include birch, cherry, blue cedar and ornamental pear.



Photograph showing Cathedral Gardens with Urbis in the background, 2009 - Source; Manchester City Council

The two images below from 1932 and present day demonstrate how this part of the city has been transformed from a dense building core to an area with a much greater feeling of space with Cathedral Gardens at its heart.



Photograph showing the Cathedral and surrounding area in 1932 – Source; Manchester Local Image Collection



Aerial view showing Cathedral Gardens in 2021 – Source; © Getmapping Plc and Bluesky International Limited 2021



7.4 St Peters Square

St Peter's Square is named after St Peter's Church which was built around 1788 and demolished in 1907. It has a long association with the Peterloo massacre which happened nearby in 1819 and saw the death of 15 people following a cavalry charge into a gathering of 60,000 peaceful demonstrators.

In 2015 the Square was the focus of a major regeneration programme which saw the upgrading of the Metrolink infrastructure including the spur for the Second City Crossing to Victoria Station. The regeneration was a £185 million vision which also saw the Square closed off to vehicles to create a pedestrianised space with a distinctly piazza style continental feel. The Square was paved with high quality materials but arguably its most impressive new features are the 42 mature trees that were craned in and planted in state of the art tree pits. Huge rooting volumes were created to provide lots of space for root growth and modular soil cell systems were installed that would prevent soil compaction making it easier for water and oxygen to get down to the trees' roots.

The trees planted included, pin oaks, plane trees and pagoda trees. However, it is the foxglove trees (*Paulownia tomentosa*) that have stolen the show owing to their very large leaves and spectacular spring blossom.

The transformed Square was reopened in August 2016 and alongside the redevelopment of the buildings on the south side, St Peter's Square creates a big impression on workers and visitors arriving in the City Centre and has become a destination for people to sit and take in the trees and the majestic Town Hall, Town Hall Extension, Central Library and the Midland Hotel.



Photograph showing trees being craned into position in St Peter's Square, 2016 – Source; Manchester City Council.



Photograph showing Foxglove trees in blossom in St Peter's Square, 2021 - Source; Dave Barlow

The night time economy is vital to the vibrancy of the city centre. It provides numerous jobs and underpins city-centre living. Arguably one of the most important contributions of the trees in St Peter's Square is their role as features of the "after-dark" landscape.

However, there is more to come with two significant new green spaces to be added to the City Centre by 2023. At the back of the former Mayfield Railway Goods Yard opposite Piccadilly Station a new 2.5 hectare park is being created. While in the Medieval Quarter, near to Chethams School of Music the Glade of Light memorial has been created as a permanent memorial to the 22 people who lost their lives in the 22 May 2017 terrorist attack. The memorial garden is filled with beautiful shrubs and trees and provides a place for quiet contemplation and reflection.



Photograph showing St Peter's Square Trees up lit at night, 2020 - Source; L, Wyman



Artist Impression of 'The Glade of Light' - Source; BCA Landscape and Smiling Wolf, 2021



7.5 Moss Side & Hulme Partnership

The first wave of significant post Second World War regeneration began in Hulme in the 1950s with the demolition of the remaining substandard back to back terraced housing which had been built to house workers of the nearby factories.

By the 1950s many of Hulme's occupants had already been relocated elsewhere with the Garden City of Wythenshawe being one of the destinations. The population of Hulme fell from over 130,000 in the 1930s to just 12,000 in the 1960s (24).

The decline in population and the huge swathes of cleared housing underlined the need for a major regeneration of Hulme. The photograph below demonstrates the scale of clearance.

By 1972 over 5,000 new homes had been built in less than eight years, and 3,000 of these were contained within the now infamous crescents, four huge, curved blocks of flats (based on the Bath Georgian Crescents) and maisonettes linked together by walkways and bridges (25). The linked access made them vulnerable to crime and the poor construction, insulation and ventilation meant that they deteriorated rapidly. The green spaces that accompanied the new flats were poorly designed and offered little in terms of diversity. They were mostly a monoculture of grass, which save for the trees failed to bring any sense of nature to the residents of the adjacent flats. By 1995 the Crescents had been demolished ending one of the shortest lived housing regeneration programmes.

The photograph below is of the newly built Nash Crescent in 1973 and you can see that although the landscaped area benefited from the planting of trees it was bland and very exposed to the adjacent road.



Photograph showing housing clearance area City Road 1969 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection



Photograph showing Nash Crescent flats, 1973 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection

The failure of the Hulme Crescents was to provide a valuable lesson learned for the next phase of regeneration.

In 1992, under the Hulme City Challenge Partnership, plans were drawn up to build up to 3,000 new homes, with new shopping areas, roads and community facilities. A more traditional pattern of housing development was designed, with streets, squares, two-storey houses and low rise flats, where residents would be less anonymous and more able to connect with their neighbours. A £37.5 million government regeneration package was provided to kick start the regeneration process.

In 1997 the Moss Side and Hulme Partnership was established by Manchester City Council to coordinate the areas' regeneration. It was funded by Central Government's Single Regeneration Budget and European Regional Development Funds. The Partnership had a 5 year target to complete a transformational regeneration programme. Over £400million of European, private and public sector resources was invested (26).

In addition to the building of new homes, a new youth centre, Birley Fields Business Park and the landmark Hulme Arch, the Partnership also orchestrated the creation of 4 new parks and green spaces. This was accompanied by major street tree planting on Stretford Road and several streets in Moss Side such as Thornton Road (see Green Streets Chapter). The images below show the view along Stretford Road adjacent to the Zion Institute in 1958 and present day where trees along the edge of Hulme Park create a green avenue into Manchester City Centre.



Photograph of Zion Institute Stretford Road 1958 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection



Photograph showing a tree lined Stretford Road, 2021 - Source, Matt Doran



One of the new parks created was Hulme Park, a beautiful green space which extends north from Stretford Road in the centre of Hulme to Jackson Crescent where it provides an important buffer to the Mancunian Way.

When Hulme Park was created in 1999 it was the first new park in Manchester for 50 years. The park hosts a children's play area, multi-use games area, football pitch, BMX and skateboard park and wildflower meadow. The Park is also home to a variety of beautiful mature trees including Himalayan Birch, Poplar, Limes, a Blue Cedar which has become a Christmas Tree centre piece and a Giant Redwood which has the potential to grow to over 100 metres tall!

Hulme Community Garden Centre (HCGC) is, like Hulme Park, a hugely important resource for the people of Hulme and further afield. Established in 1998 on wasteland, the Garden Centre covers an area of 2 acres next to Old Birley Street. 'Up to 100 volunteers contribute each week, from a wide range of backgrounds and age groups. HCGC also offers spaces for community groups to use and has a dedicated education team to work with schools and young people in Hulme' (27).

HCGC sells trees and fruit trees and provides buyers with all the advice they need to get them established, which is a great opportunity to increase tree cover in private gardens and other green spaces in the area.

7.6 The MetroLink

The first Metrolink line in Greater Manchester opened on April 6th, 1992, providing a service between Bury and Victoria Station, 43 years after the last tram service had operated in Manchester. The second line running between Manchester City Centre and Altrincham was opened on 15th June 1992 but officially opened by the Queen on the 17th July 1992.

The first electric trams began service in Manchester in 1901 and by the 1920s more than a thousand trams were operating across Greater Manchester (28). The trams were affordable and popular however, as motorbuses were introduced in the 1920's it became apparent that they were cheaper to maintain than the trams which ultimately became their undoing. The tram network provided a good coverage across Greater Manchester however, this provision was not extended to new housing areas like Wythenshawe which had a significant impact on the ability of these communities to access employment and services. 1949 saw the final electric tram service in Manchester however, a section of tramway in Heaton Park was reopened in 1979 and continues to provide park visitors with tram rides today.

Since 1992 another 6 Metrolink routes have opened, connecting Manchester to Eccles, Oldham and Rochdale, Ashton, Didsbury, Wythenshawe / Manchester Airport, and the Trafford Centre, which was the last route to open in March 2020.

The extensive coverage provided by the Metrolink system has given a big boost to Manchester's economy opening up new employment opportunities for communities living outside of the City Centre whilst making Manchester a more convenient destination for shoppers, tourists and patrons of the many restaurants, bars and clubs. However, what the Metrolink has also provided is improved access to the City's woodlands and parks. Not everyone has

the benefit of a beautiful woodland on their doorstep but for many the Metrolink now provides the means to visit these places without having to rely on cars to get them there, a far more sustainable option!

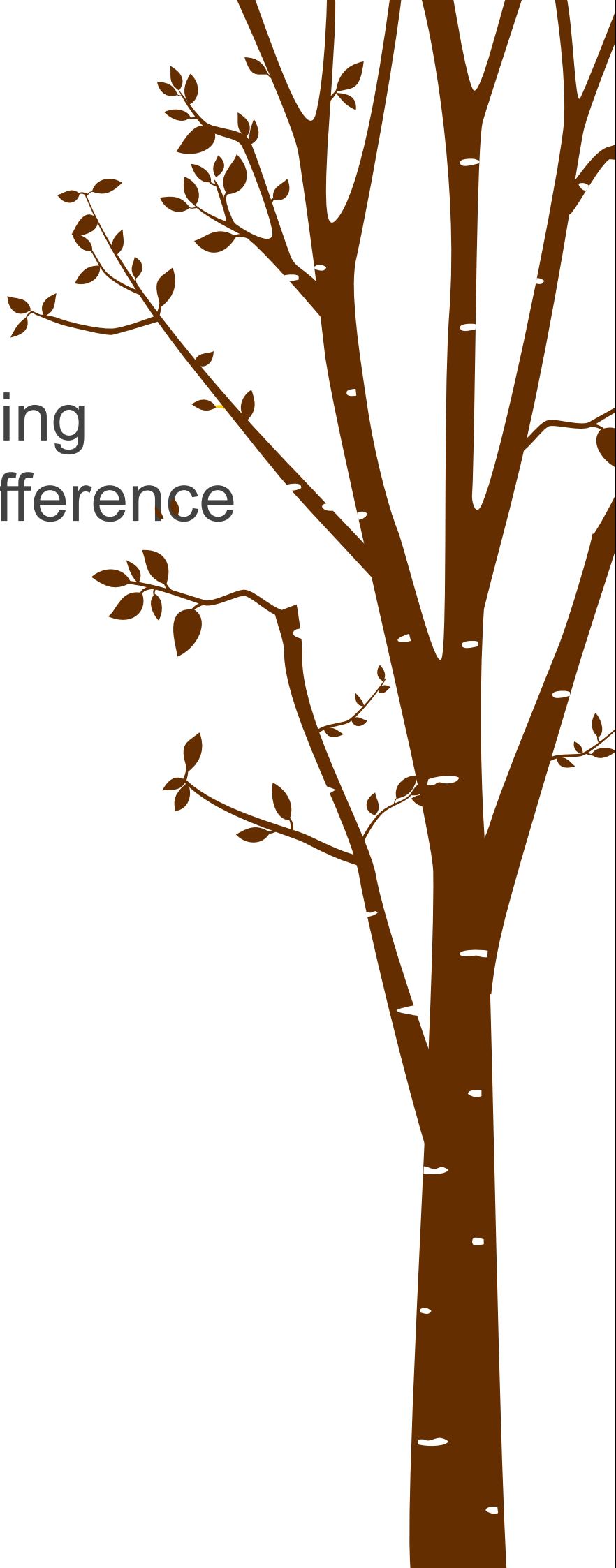
The map below shows the Metrolink routes that traverse Manchester and a few of the woodland gems and river valleys that can be accessed within a short stroll of a tram stop. The Metrolink network of course extends beyond Manchester's borders providing even more scope for the City's residents to access woodlands and green space in neighbouring Trafford, Salford, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.



Map showing the Metrolink network and key stops close to parks, woodlands and river valleys in Manchester – Source; Ordnance Survey, 2021

08

Making A Difference





Celebrating our Partners

Forestry Commission

The creation of the Forestry Commission in 1919 was a huge step in addressing the national environmental issue of dwindling tree cover. However, the rationale was borne more out of the need for the UK to address its lack of timber supplies than from attempts to restore habitat or provide other benefits, which we now classify as ecosystem services.

This chapter focuses on the tree based initiatives and policies put in place by Central Government and Manchester City Council since the Second World War, the environmental charities that facilitated the delivery and management of Manchester's trees, the global drive for protecting and enhancing our environment and how communities took the initiative themselves to improve their local environment.



08 Making A Difference

The Tree Council

In 1973 The Tree Council was established as the umbrella charity for UK organisations involved in tree planting, care, and conservation. It was created to keep up the momentum of the Plant a Tree in 73 Initiative. In 1975 The Tree Council organised the first National Tree Week which continues to this day and runs from the last week in November.

It was not until the 1970's that the first signs became apparent at a National Government Level that something needed to be done to reinvigorate tree cover beyond the remit of the Forestry Commission whose activity was predominantly in rural areas. In 1973 in response to the loss of huge numbers of elm trees to Dutch Elm disease, over 170,000 trees were donated to schools and local authorities for planting. The Government dubbed 1973 a National Tree Planting year under the banner of 'Plant a Tree in 73'. The success of the initiative led to a repeat in the following year, 'Plant Some More in 74'.

Trust for Conservation Volunteers

Although the Government's role in promoting tree planting in urban areas was not re-established until 1973, others were beginning to take matters into their own hands. The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, now the Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV), was established in 1959 with the aim of engaging volunteers in the conservation and management of green spaces, and tree planting and tree management is a key component of their work. TCV have been delivering conservation projects in Manchester for over 20 years.



Photograph showing TCV Manchester Mid-Week Group volunteers, 2021 - Source; TCV

Groundwork Trust

In 1981 Operation Groundwork was launched by the Countryside Commission as 'a radical experiment to bring together communities, businesses and government in a joint effort to improve the quality of life and promote sustainable development in places that had become run-down and neglected'.

The first Groundwork Trust was established in St Helens and Knowsley in that same year. With the environment providing the focus for engagement, Groundwork works with communities to help address poverty and social exclusion and to provide people with training and support to access the labour market. Engaging communities in improving their environment and acting on climate change is at the heart of everything that Groundwork stands for. Groundwork have delivered countless schemes in Manchester over the last 30 years transforming some of the bleakest places into beautiful community spaces with trees often at the heart of what they deliver.



Photograph showing Groundwork's Pop Up Garden as Part of Dig the City in Manchester City Centre, 2016 – Source; Groundwork Greater Manchester

England's Community Forests - Red Rose Forest

The Community Forestry initiative for the West of Greater Manchester was launched in 1990 as one of 12 Community Forests in England. It operated across Bury, Bolton, Manchester, Salford, Trafford and Wigan. The following year saw that Forest renamed as Red Rose Forest and it was initially supported by the Countryside Commission (now Natural England), the Forestry Commission and the six local authorities.

The concept of establishing community forest initiatives in England was developed in the 1980s as a vehicle for regenerating degraded and treeless landscapes particularly in areas of social deprivation. It was intended that the Community Forest initiatives would be able to demonstrate the economic and social benefits that could be derived from physical

landscape improvements.

In 2015 the Red Rose Forest planted its last trees and a new movement; City of Trees was born. City of Trees was instigated by The Oglesby Charitable Trust and Red Rose Forest with support from Creative Concern. The new Community Forest movement was joined by the Local Authorities of Oldham, Rochdale, Tameside and Stockport so that the initiative could operate at a Greater Manchester level. This would bring with it many strategic and funding opportunities to enable a greater level of delivery and a much wider audience of beneficiaries.

Since 1991 Red Rose Forest and City of Trees have worked with Manchester City Council, other partners and the people of Manchester to deliver many amazing planting and woodland management projects. Over 393,000 trees have been planted in parks and open spaces in Manchester, the equivalent of 157 hectares of new woodland!



Photograph showing City of Trees Team working at Heroes Wood in Debdale Park, Gorton, 2018 - Source; City of Trees

08 Making A Difference

The Wildlife Trusts

The wildlife trusts like Groundwork, the Community Forests and TCV are registered charities. The first wildlife trust was established in 1912, by the banker and naturalist Charles Rothschild. His aim was to identify and protect the UK's best places for wildlife. There are currently 46 wildlife trusts in the UK. In Manchester two wildlife trusts, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Cheshire Wildlife Trust, are involved in helping to protect, manage and enhance places for wildlife, which includes wooded areas such as Cotterill Clough SSSI and the Failsworth Sidings SBI. A key part of the wildlife trusts work is to engage communities in raising the awareness of local wildlife and to engage volunteers in practical conservation work.



Photograph showing avenue of Plane trees in Fog Lane Park, 2021 - Source; D. Barlow

Friends of Parks and Community Groups

The essence of community forestry is local people taking a direct role in shaping their environment, this was first seen in Manchester with the creation of Blackley Forest in 1953 and then followed by "plant a tree in 73" and the establishment of Red Rose Forest in 1991.

In the last 25 years, Manchester like other local authority areas has seen significant levels of interest from residents who cherish their local parks, green spaces, river valleys and woodlands, wanting to take both an active and strategic role in the management and development of these places.

Manchester hosts over 160 parks and open spaces and a key component of many of these places is trees, ranging from wooded areas to magnificent tree lined avenues such as those found in Whitworth Park.

There are currently 49 Friends of Groups in Manchester that actively contribute to the management and upkeep of their local green spaces, as well as arranging activities to encourage more people to use these spaces. The proliferation of Friends of Groups demonstrates the value that local people attach to these spaces which is a real positive for the future of these crucial resources. The City Council's commitment to Friends of Groups is shown by the co-ordinating role played by the Parks teams.

In addition to the Friends of Groups, the wider communities, schools, scouts and businesses also put huge amounts of volunteer time into looking after and improving their local green spaces with the support of the City Council and the Environmental

Charities. Mancunians are very proud of their open spaces and with Climate Change being a challenge for everyone, many more people are now volunteering to do their bit to make a difference.

As part of National Tree Week, on Saturday 5th December 2009, between 11am and 12 noon, a national tree planting event was organised. Over 230,000 trees were planted during that hour (29). In Northern Ireland volunteers set a then new Guinness World Record for planting the most trees in one go at a single site, 26,422 trees in total. In Manchester multiple planting events across the City took place that day and 11,958 trees and hedge whips were planted in one hour.

During the 5 years that Breathing Places ran for, over half a million new trees were planted across the UK.



Photograph showing Friends of Fog Lane Park on Tree Management Duties, 2021 - Source; Dave Barlow



Photograph showing Tree O'Clock Volunteers in Wythenshawe Park, 2009 - Source; Manchester City Council

Taking Practical Action

Tree O'Clock

In 2005 the BBC set up Breathing Places, a 5 year campaign that encouraged the people of the UK to make a difference by doing one thing for helping nature on their doorstep.

08 Making A Difference

The Big Tree Plant

In 2010 The Big Tree Plant was launched, the first government public tree planting campaign since “Plant a Tree in ‘73” and “Plant Some More in ‘74”. The aim of the Big Tree Plant was to increase the amount of tree cover in areas of greatest need in towns and cities across England. The campaign was a four year initiative that received £4 million of grant funding and was organised and delivered by The Tree Council, The Community Forests, TCV, the Woodland Trust and Trees for Cities (30). Central to the delivery ethos of the campaign were local communities which formed part of the Big Society initiative launched by the Conservative Government in that same year.

Funding secured by Red Rose Forest from the Big Tree Plant supported the planting of 5,925 woodland trees, 8 mini orchards, 51 verge and park trees and 11 street trees at 26 different locations across Manchester.

“From Brown to Green” – the Landfill Woodlands Programme

In 1998 an experiment was undertaken across the North West which saw the planting of new woodland plots on closed landfill sites. The aim of the experiment was to understand how trees planted on former tips responded to the site conditions, which UK guidance at that time considered to be unsuitable for tree growth and survival, and whether former landfill sites could, therefore, be suitable places for community forestry.

An assessment of the planting projects was undertaken by the University of Liverpool and the

Mersey Forest (31) concluded that these closed landfill sites could sustain new woodland planting.

21 different species of tree and shrub were trialled. It was found that the biggest initial inhibitor to the tree’s survival was competition from weed growth, while the lack of soil depth and high soil pH values affected tree growth rates right across the study area. Nevertheless, the successes far outweighed the failures. The most successful species ‘were late successional species, native species, shrubs and broadleaves’(31). Of the 21 species planted, 8 generally responded well to the site conditions (Common Ash, Sycamore, Hawthorn, Common Alder, Rowan, Bird Cherry, Blackthorn, Sessile Oak and Crab Apple).

In Manchester, two former landfill sites were included in the study, Nutsford Vale in Gorton / Levenshulme and Tweedle Hill in Blackley. In the early 1900s clay had been excavated from Nutsford Vale which was supplied to the nearby brick factory, Jackson’s Brick Works. The hole left behind from the clay removal operations was used as a landfill site (Matthews Lane Tip) until the early 80s, after which a very basic restoration scheme was delivered, with only a thin layer of topsoil and little aftercare.

The trial planting plots on both sites are now well established community woodlands, having been supplemented by additional woodland planting.

The experimental plots on Nutsford Vale were the catalyst for a much bigger programme of investment by Manchester City Council in partnership with Red Rose Forest and the Friends of Nutsford Vale. This has seen the creation of wildflower meadows, a community orchard, pond, new footpaths, interpretation signs, entrance features and access

controls to stop unauthorised vehicles getting onto the site. The Friends of Nutsford Vale continue to secure further funding for environmental improvements and actively participate in the management of the Vale.



Photograph showing Nutsford Vale – Matthews Lane Tip in 1973 - Source; Manchester Local Image Collection



Photograph showing a lush Nutsford Vale in 2010 with Experimental Tree Plot in the Background - Source; City of Trees 2010

08 Making A Difference

Tree Action MCR (2019-22)

“From a Council point of view, I think this is one of the biggest street tree-planting programmes undertaken in recent years by a local authority.

“Consulting on, sourcing and eventually planting 2,000 big trees in around two years – that’s an increase of approximately 10% in the number of street trees that we manage. It’s unprecedented.”

-Chaz Farghaly, Operations Head, Manchester City Council

Despite all the challenges presented to the city by the Covid Pandemic in 2020/22, people have worked together to facilitate large scale mature tree planting on an unprecedented scale. Community Groups, Councillors, Council staff and environmental organisations all got involved to get big trees established in every neighbourhood in Manchester.

Working with City of Trees, even more trees have been planted than expected, as funding support by Government's Urban tree Challenge Fund helped the City identify new areas for planting.

In the two years Tree Action MCR has been running, Council controlled street tree numbers have increased by 10%, planting over 2200 mature, climate resilient specimens.

All the trees will be looked after and watered individually for the next three years, supporting their establishment and helping them on their way to making the city lovelier, and more climate resilient. 8 new community orchards have also been planted, working with communities that will also benefit from ongoing training and support by leading experts the Orchard Project.



Photograph showing volunteer watering a newly planted fruit tree, 2020 – Source; Manchester City Council

Wild about Manchester, Manchester's Biodiversity Strategy

In 2005 Manchester City Council launched its Biodiversity Strategy, Wild About Manchester. The aim of the Strategy was to 'Conserve, protect and enhance biodiversity in the city for current and future generations.'

Lowland Broadleaved Woodlands, Wet Woodlands and Hedgerows were highlighted as priority habitats in the Action Plan. A subsequent action plan followed 2012 – 16, and a new 10 year biodiversity strategy with a strong focus around nature recovery networks is planned for 2022. This again will feature woodland as priority habitat.

Manchester Tree Management Principles

In January 2019 Manchester published a new set of guiding principles for the management of Manchester's trees. The guidance aims to highlight the value of Manchester's trees and the need for sensitive, consistent, and appropriate management practices to protect this crucial resource for generations to come.

The document sets out the Council's roles and responsibilities in relation to tree management as well as the rights and responsibilities of the public.

It contains a series of tree-management principles relating to specific queries the City Council is often asked regarding trees on highways and in relation to private property.

The Council receives many requests for the removal of trees, but more often than not, practical solutions that do not require the felling of the tree can be found.

The Council's philosophy is one of not removing healthy established trees if this can be reasonably avoided; as big old trees can be the most valuable in terms of the many benefits they provide. In principle the Council will only remove a tree if it is dead, diseased, damaged, or dying.

The Manchester Tree & Woodland Strategy

Manchester produced its first tree and woodland action plan in 2005, with a refreshed Tree Action Plan in 2016-20. Actions are grouped into four main themes– involving and engaging people, planting more trees, managing our trees, and protecting them. These themes provide the structure for the main objectives of the strategy and formed the basis for producing five year Action Plans. In 2022, building on extensive new research, a new tree and woodland action plan will be developed.

09

The Challenges For Trees





Climate Change now has a firm focus in the city. The extent, function and resilience of our treescape is vitally important in helping us adapt to a changing climate.

These broader environmental concerns have been highlighted in key international, regional, and local policy areas over recent years.



09 Making A Difference

1992 Rio Summit and Local Agenda 21

By the end of the 1980's scientists and governments were becoming increasingly aware that there was a need to act more sustainably to conserve finite resources and to arrest the scale of damage that was being inflicted on the environment resultant from industry, transport and mass consumerism.

In 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, at which Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Statement of principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests was adopted by more than 178 Governments.

It could be argued that this conference and the Agenda 21 declaration was the turning point for the future of our environment at which it became globally apparent that we could no longer act with impunity if we wanted a sustainable future for both humanity and the environment.

In 1995 the first UN Climate Change Conference was held in Berlin, and in 2021 the 26th UN Conference on Climate Change was held in Glasgow. The UN Climate Change Conference or COP, Conference of Parties, was established with the aim of assessing progress in dealing with climate change and to negotiate the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 and later the Paris Agreement in 2015 to create legally binding obligations for developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

The protocols and agreements that have evolved from The Rio Summit and the Climate Change Conferences have highlighted the importance of protecting and enhancing our tree resource and this has been pivotal in the UK Government's strategy

to address climate change. In 2020 the Government made a commitment to increase tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year (300 million trees) by 2025. This objective will be supported through the £640m Nature for Climate Fund.

Manchester: A Certain Future

In 2010 a steering group was set up to oversee and champion the delivery of Manchester's first ever climate change strategy, for the period of 2010 to 2020 - Manchester: A Certain Future. In 2015, a commitment was made in the Our Manchester Strategy to limiting the impacts of climate change that by 2025 will put Manchester on a path to being a zero carbon city by 2050'.

The Steering Group has now evolved into the new Manchester Climate Change Board which was established in February 2018. The Board is responsible for championing climate change action in the city. In February 2020 the Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25 was launched, the strategy that will drive making Manchester towards becoming a thriving, zero carbon, climate resilient city. The Strategy has four key objectives;

1. Staying within our carbon budgets
2. Climate adaptation and resilience
3. Health and wellbeing
4. Inclusive, zero carbon and climate resilient economy

To enable Manchester to become more resilient to climate change a target of increasing the amount of urban green infrastructure cover of 10% by 2038 from 2018 levels has been set. Planting more trees and managing existing trees so they achieve their growth potential is a significant component in achieving this target.

Manchester Declares A Climate Emergency

On 10 July 2019, Manchester City Council declared a climate emergency in recognition of the urgent need to act against current climate change. Alongside the 2020-25 Climate Change Strategy Manchester City Council has already begun to put actions in place to reduce the City's carbon footprint and increase its resilience to climate change. This includes a Civic Quarter Heat Network, purchasing electric bin lorries, reallocating road space for active travel and a commitment to plant at least 1,000 new trees, 1,000 hedge trees and four community orchards a year.



Photograph showing people using trees for shade in St Peter's Square, 2022 – Source; D Barlow

Trees Under Threat

Manchester's Most "Poplar" Tree

Manchester's manufacturing, heavy industry, gas works, coal fired power stations and its transport infrastructure conspired to pollute the City's air. By 1919 many of the trees in the City's industrial areas had died, suffocated by layers of soot, sulphur dioxide and other air pollutants, created from the burning of vast amounts of coal. The cocktail of pollutants had different effects on different trees but would have caused damage to leaves, reducing the trees' ability to photosynthesise and making them more vulnerable to other diseases and pests.

However, one tree epitomised the Mancunian spirit of resilience and adaptation. That tree was the Manchester Poplar, *Populus nigra* subsp. *betulifolia*, a subspecies of the Black Poplar.

These were known as large fast growing trees that could withstand the extremely poor air, and this unique ability to survive air pollution allowed the Manchester Poplar to thrive. It became a tree that championed the industrial landscape while giving people a green distraction on their weekend escape from the factories.

Men were hired to go out on bicycles with a bunch of poplar saplings and a small iron bar to create holes in the ground and plant the saplings. This led to Manchester Poplars popping up in parks, towpaths and fields right across the city.

However, since the summer of 2000, a virulent disease hit the Manchester Poplar which in most cases led to the death of the tree within 5 years.

09 Making A Difference

This disease is an airborne fungus - poplar scab (*Venturia populina*). Many thousands of trees have been killed or removed because they became unsafe. There is no effective treatment for the disease and because the Manchester Poplar is one clone, there is no genetic diversity in the Manchester population.

Another reason why there are so few Manchester Poplars now is that as the city grew, its natural habitat, the flood plain, was slowly drained so that the land could be cultivated or developed for industry and housing

Sadly, the Manchester Poplar has struggled to produce healthy seedlings – trees of both sexes are needed and even when present, viable seeds/seedlings are not often produced. A few good specimens remain in Alexandra Park, Whalley Range and Crumpsall Park, as well as St. John's Gardens in the City Centre.

The female tree creates masses of white fluffy material that surrounds the seed allowing it to disperse long distances on the wind. Though this might be a very effective method of spreading genetic material far and wide, it made the female variety very unpopular with urban gardeners, municipal planners and farmers. This led to only male trees being planted creating a very low genetic stock in our trees today.

However, there is some more positive news on the horizon, in 2020 City of Trees began planting Manchester Poplar in each of the 10 boroughs of Greater Manchester in partnership with Chester Zoo.

In total around 80 trees have been planted, 25 of which have been grown as seedlings by Chester Zoo.



Photograph showing Manchester Poplar Seeds, Source; City of Trees

Trees, Pests and Diseases

The partnerships and strategic framework that have been established in Manchester to protect, manage and enhance the City's tree resource are now more crucial than ever as our trees are under threat from a growing number of pests, diseases and of course climate change.

Various insects and diseases can affect trees, reducing both their health and value, and therefore the sustainability of our urban forests. As most pests generally tend to have a specific range of tree

hosts, the potential damage that can be caused by each pest will differ. Pests that we should be on the lookout for include alder beetle, emerald ash borer, Asian longhorn beetle and the Oak Processionary Moth. The caterpillars of the Oak Processionary Moth feast on oak leaves. Where heavy infestations occur whole trees can be stripped bare of their leaves which can leave them vulnerable to other threats. The caterpillars also have fine hairs on their bodies which if touched can cause itching and skin rashes and, less commonly, sore throats, breathing difficulties and eye irritations!



Photograph showing Oak Processionary Moth caterpillars, in Procession! Photograph courtesy of Forestry Commission / © Henry Kuppen

09 Making A Difference

Many of the pests that are affecting our trees have been brought into the UK through imported timber. Any imported timber and wood products must now be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued in the country of export which demonstrates that all the necessary checks have been undertaken to ensure the materials are disease and pest free. Forestry Commission inspectors also carry out around 10,000 physical checks of timber coming into the UK.

We have already highlighted how the Manchester Poplar, which was able to cope with the extreme pollution of the City's main industrial areas has been badly affected by poplar scab (*Venturia populina*).

However, there are two other prevalent diseases that currently present a threat to Manchester's forest canopy;

Bleeding canker is a disease that affects horse chestnut trees. It was first reported in Britain in the 1970s. However, its incidence has increased dramatically since 2000 with around half of all horse chestnut trees now showing symptoms. This disease could affect around 46,449 trees in Greater Manchester.

Ash dieback, *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (also known as *Chalara fraxinea*), is the most significant tree disease to affect the UK since Dutch elm disease, which ravaged the landscape from the 1960s. It is expected to lead to the decline and death of most of the two billion ash trees in Britain. The i-tree Eco assessment for Greater Manchester found that European ash was the fourth most common tree species within Greater Manchester accounting for 7.9% of the total tree population, which amounts to 889,612 trees being at risk in GM. Thankfully we will not lose these trees overnight and some in fact may

prove to be genetically resilient to the disease which gives us some hope that we may be able to restock our landscape, something we were not able to do with the elms lost in the 1970s and 1980s.

Losing so many ash trees will have a big impact on Greater Manchester's treescape and in particular in its parks. It is therefore key that we start to plant 'replacement' trees in our parks to compensate for those ash trees that we may need to remove in the future.

Manchester City Council has a plan for monitoring the condition of its Ash trees but there is still the big challenge of, when the time comes, finding the resources to remove and replace them.

The Government has recently launched the Ash Die Back Resilience Fund that will provide funding to plant new trees where Ash trees have succumbed to the disease.

Climate change is also a concern, it is bringing incremental changes and more frequent extreme weather events, both of which could have major impacts on our trees. Although many trees are resilient to a certain degree of drought, any increases in temperature could make droughts more damaging to them.

The summer of 2018 for example was exceptionally dry and resulted in the loss of many young trees. Likewise severe storms along with an increase in precipitation can be destabilising to trees, in the great storm of 1987 an estimated 15 million trees were lost.

Climate change will also see likely more pests and diseases as the conditions will support an increase

in their geographical range.

However, there are trees that we can plant that are more able to cope with the projected changes to our climate and Forest Research has produced a tool that can assist us with making the right species choices (32).

10 | The Way Ahead





The last 100 years has seen huge change in the City of Manchester with the fortunes of its textile, primary and manufacturing industries waning. As a result, the city's working population shrank until the 1990's but is now growing fast as Manchester builds its reputation as the centre of a new "Northern Powerhouse", based on a diverse mix of modern industries and services.

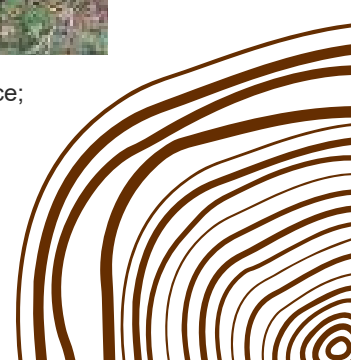
Since the end of World War 1, Manchester has seen significant waves of housing regeneration where different models of housing provision were applied to move away from the appalling slum conditions of its industrial past. Some of these models like the Wythenshawe Garden City were a great success while others such as the Crescents in Hulme failed due to poor design and construction. But lessons have been learned.

Today Manchester has around 68,000 social and affordable rented homes; almost a third of all homes in the City. More is still needed however, and Manchester City Council has therefore set an ambitious target to support the delivering 10,000 new affordable homes by 2032 to increase housing options for lower income residents. (33).

However, regeneration is not just about housing and jobs it is also about the environment. Without trees and high quality greenspaces, we will not have the places that people need to relax and exercise in. Access to this Green Infrastructure is crucial for physical and mental wellbeing, increasing productivity at work and learning capacity in our schools. Going forward developers and housing providers can play their part by helping to manage and protect our existing tree stock and wherever possible add to it to create healthier and more resilient places to live and work.



Photograph showing foraging session for local residents in Ash Wood Wythenshawe - Source; City of Trees, 2019



10 The Way Ahead

Trees and green space are essential in our fight against climate change. We all need to get involved in managing, enhancing, and space wherever we can to help lock up carbon and reduce our vulnerability to increasingly more frequent flooding and heatwave events. Our wildlife is also under threat and the Government has recognised this through the recent launch of the Nature Recovery Network (NRN).

Greater Manchester has been selected as one of 5 NRN pilots in England. 'Local Nature Recovery Strategies' will map the most valuable sites and habitats for wildlife in an area and identify where nature can be restored. Trees will form a key component of this strategy. It is essential that our towns and cities become places that wildlife can survive and flourish, as seeing and hearing nature in particular bird song can improve our mental wellbeing (34). It's simple no trees, no birds!

In Manchester 80% of all the City's Sites of Biological Importance have a key woodland element, as do all the 8 Local Nature Reserves, this speaks volumes about the role of trees in supporting nature.

Trees are the true "Swiss Army Knives" of environmental regeneration – they have many ways of helping to create more sustainable and more liveable places. The collective benefits that they provide make them the highest scoring card in any game of environmental top trumps, or perhaps top trunks!

During 2018, City of Trees undertook possibly the largest physical survey of trees in the UK to better

understand the extent, make up, function, and value of Greater Manchester's whole urban forest.

Using the US Forest Service i-tree Eco software (adapted for the UK climate) Greater Manchester's estimated 11.3 million trees were calculated to provide the following benefits each year;

- Removing 847 tonnes of air pollutants
- Intercepting 1.6 million cubic meters of storm water runoff
- Sequestering or locking up 56,530 tonnes of carbon, which cumulatively accounts for over 1,573,015 tonnes of carbon stored
- Producing 122,450 tonnes of oxygen

The annual cash value of all the above benefits provided is over £33 million

The restoration of Manchester's River Valleys has been a major component in the regeneration of the City over the last 30 years which alongside the creation of new woodlands, orchards, hedges, more street trees and more trees in our parks has achieved a level of change that would be unrecognisable to the Mancunians of a 100 years ago who had to endure the City's blackened skies, filthy rivers and grey streets.

What are our “Prioritrees”?

The table below demonstrates the level of tree cover that currently exists across each of Manchester’s 32 wards. City wide the average tree cover (the percentage of land that falls underneath tree canopies) is 18.77%. According to Forest Research the average tree canopy cover in England in 2017 was 16% so Manchester is doing well, but we know we can do better! The Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee (FWAC) Network, advisers to the Forestry Commission on urban forestry have recommended that 20% is the level we should be aspiring to (35).

Ward	Area (Hectares)	Tree Canopy Cover (Hectares)	Tree Canopy Coverage (%)
Ancoats & Beswick	294	32.3	11.00%
Ardwick	405	45.2	11.18%
Baguley	383	75.5	19.70%
Brooklands	431	99.5	23.10%
Burnage	263	48.0	18.22%
Charlestown	383	93.7	24.45%
Cheetham	337	30.4	9.01%
Chorlton	250	71.7	28.74%
Chorlton Park	502	119.5	23.82%
Clayton & Openshaw	495	68.9	13.93%
Crumpsall	324	74.3	22.90%
Deansgate	198	10.0	5.06%
Didsbury East	365	96.8	26.51%
Didsbury West	335	101.4	30.27%
Fallowfield	205	39.0	19.02%
Gorton & Abbey Hey	389	61.8	15.87%
Harpurhey	417	77.0	18.47%
Higher Blackley	733	204.8	27.92%
Hulme	268	32.0	11.95%
Levenshulme	252	43.8	17.37%
Longsight	287	39.5	13.74%
Miles Platting & Newton Heath	530	88.6	16.72%
Moss Side	164	12.1	7.39%
Moston	345	65.3	18.96%
Northenden	525	133.7	25.49%
Old Moat	180	37.1	20.68%
Piccadilly	193	11.1	5.72%
Rusholme	215	46.9	21.81%
Sharston	327	56.2	17.19%
Whalley Range	226	62.7	27.72%
Withington	185	37.1	20.00%
Woodhouse Park	1158	154.8	13.37%
Total City-wide	11,565	2,170.9	18.77%

Table Showing Manchester’s Tree Coverage By Ward in 2020 | Source: Blue Sky

10 The Way Ahead

Whilst opportunities for largescale woodland creation are limited by the amount of space that is available in Manchester, we all need to work together to increase tree cover where it is lowest, not least of all in the City Centre and Moss Side - tree equity for all!

We must therefore be innovative and look to the streets and we must work with developers to explore every opportunity for integrating trees into new developments or on the hard landscaped areas around them. Although planting street trees is not always easy, the efforts are worthwhile. Our Victorian and Edwardian forebearers knew this but their efforts were mainly directed towards the affluent leafy suburbs. Given all we now know about the value of trees to health, urban tree cover should not be the privilege or the preserve of the more affluent areas but the right of everyone.

Schools will also have opportunities whether it is space for individual trees that can provide shade on hot sunny days, mini orchards where the pupils can learn how to grow and benefit from eating fruit or hedgerows that can help to trap or disperse harmful pollution which is the major cause of childhood asthma. Numerous studies have shown that green / tree orientated environments around schools can improve cognitive ability.

We must also establish opportunities for outdoor education, places that children can learn in where the trees form the classroom. Forest Schools are places that enable play, exploration and supported risk taking. They help children develop confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting. For many children it may be their first experience of visiting a woodland environment, every child should have this opportunity. Householders can do their bit if they have some

garden space or even if they only have a backyard, small ornamental trees can be planted in free standing pots or planters as long as someone can keep them watered and fed during the spring and summer.

Our parks are homes to many fantastic mature trees, but those trees will not be there forever, so we need to start thinking about planting trees for the future to enable a seamless continuation of tree cover when existing trees succumb to old age, pests and disease. However, it is not just about planting new trees it is also about looking after the ones that are already here to make sure that they continue to thrive and provide us with their so many benefits. We need to better understand the management needs of our trees so that we can plan ahead and secure the resources needed to maximise their longevity.

The Friends groups have shown us the way and the Covid 19 pandemic has demonstrated how crucial our parks and woodlands are to people, but these places will not look after themselves. So, a call to arms, join your local Friends group or set up one and do your bit to make a difference now and for the future.



Photograph showing woodland management with volunteers at Sandilands, Wythenshawe, 2020 - Source; City of Trees

More Trees on the Horizon

City of Trees (CoT) is part of the Northern Forest initiative to plant 50 million trees along the M62 corridor between Liverpool in the west and Hull in the east. CoT has received funding from the Government's Grow Back Greener and Nature for Climate Fund to deliver a substantial programme of tree planting across Greater Manchester over the next 5 years, the target is to plant at least 3 million trees, one tree for every person living in the City Region.

The Government is also piloting new initiatives such as the Environmental Land Management Scheme, which is intended for full launch in 2024, this will support farmers and private landowners to manage their land (including planting trees) to provide benefits to people and wildlife and increase our resilience to climate change.

As part of the new Environment Act an England-wide system of spatial Nature Recovery Strategies will be required to establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies will be a powerful new tool that will help the public, private and voluntary sectors work more effectively together for nature's recovery and 'tree habitats' will form a key component of these strategies.

Manchester City Council has launched a £1 million initiative for planting more trees where they are needed the most. However, it is not just about new trees; this funding will also be there for nurturing our existing mature trees and woodlands which is crucial if we are to reap the many benefits, they provide us with. And more good news, funding secured by City of Trees from the Government's Urban Tree Challenge fund enabled the planting of 359 semi mature trees in the City's parks and grass verges.

In September 2021 Groundwork Greater Manchester, City of Trees and the Mersey Rivers Trust began delivering the 'Resilient River Valleys' project in Manchester. Resilient River Valleys which is being funded from the Government's £80 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund will focus on a range of measures to improve Manchester's River valleys and associated urban green spaces. This will include woodland management, more tree planting and using trees felled from woodland management operations to create leaky dams to reduce flood risk. Collectively this programme of works will create better places for people and wildlife, a more climate resilient landscape and new jobs. The Green recovery Challenge Funding will support 41 green jobs, including Urban Rangers, Team Leaders, Community Link Officers, a Natural Environmental Tutor and even a Drone Pilot!! This project will therefore demonstrate that in addition to all the other benefits that trees and green spaces provide they can also make a valuable contribution towards supporting local jobs.

10 The Way Ahead

Deeds Not Words

Like 100 years ago Manchester is facing a huge environmental challenge. Back then the degradation hung heavily in the choking air and could be seen coursing through its rivers. Now the challenge is climate change which manifests itself in extreme heat waves and more frequent heavier rainfall which contrive to demonstrate our vulnerability to nature. However, rapid progress has been made in the last 30 years and there is a renewed vigour and appetite from all age groups to create a more sustainable Manchester.

We now have the evidence to demonstrate the importance of Manchester's trees to its economy, people, wildlife and climate resilience, and we have access to new funding to help support the management and development of the City's tree resource. So now is the time for collective action we all need to do our bit. It is time for "Deeds not Words", as one of Manchester's most famous social campaigners, the suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst said in 1903.

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