

THE MANCHESTER GREEN TRAIL

SOME NOTES ON BACKGROUND HISTORY AND POINTS OF INTEREST ON THE ROUTE

1 – CHAPEL STREET PARK to DELAMERE PARK – 5.8 miles

If you arrive via Levenshulme Station, you may wish to make a short diversion south along the A6 Stockport Road to the **Levenshulme Antique Village**. This was once the Town Hall and is an imposing Victorian edifice in Italianate style. Inside is a staircase leading to the old council chamber. A little further along the road is **Levenshulme South railway station** which is now a very good café serving homemade cakes and freshly made food. The Fallowfield Loop walking and cycle path runs underneath. To get to Chapel Street Park, from here follow Crayfield Road then Broom Lane, turn left into Elmsworth Avenue then right just before the church and follow Lostock Lane to Chapel Street.

On the north side of Chapel Street Park, you emerge onto Barlow Road adjacent to **The Blue Bell Inn**. It is reputed that the highway robber Dick Turpin frequented the former pub on this site. His life was romanticised in a novel after his death, but in reality, he was a violent thief and a murderer and was hanged in York in 1759 (age 33). The original pub was destroyed by a bomb in WW2.

Matthew Lane on the south side of Nutsford Vale follows the line of the **Nico Ditch**. This was a 6 mile long medieval dyke which ran south of Manchester centre from Urmston to Ashton and was made up of a ditch with a 2 metre high bank on the Manchester (northern) side. Its origin is uncertain, but it is possible it was built as a defensive measure after the Danes sacked Manchester in 870; it followed the border between Northumbria (to the north) and Mercia (south). The line can be traced from Platt Fields Park along Old Hall Lane, Matthews Lane and Laburnum Road. Physical evidence of the ditch can be seen in Platt Fields Park (Walk 7), at the east end of Matthews Lane, in Gorton Cemetery, and across Denton golf course.

Sunny Brow Park is the start of the **Gorton Heritage Trail** for which there is a leaflet online highlighting several points of interest. The Lodge at the junction of Far Lane and Old Hall Drive originally marked the entrance to Gorton Hall which was on the land to the right of the Drive. This was the home of Richard Peacock (1820-1889), the co-founder of a local company manufacturing steam locomotives, and a philanthropist. He funded Brookfield Unitarian Church on the other side of the park. He was buried in the ornate Gothic Mausoleum at the church and there is a bronze memorial plaque on the church which describes him as “a kind and unostentatious friend to the poor and needy”.

At the end of Tannery Way the route meets the Fallowfield Loop again. Shortly before the line was dismantled, a temporary station called Debdale Park was constructed just south of here in 1987 to test out the proposed new Metrolink.

The **Gorton Reservoirs** by Debdale Park were built around 1825 by the Manchester and Salford Waterworks Company and were possibly the first to be built specifically for the supply of clean drinking water. The route from Debdale Park towards the Ashton Canal follows what was once the Stockport Branch Canal which was made redundant by the railways and ceased to be used in about 1920. The path is now known as the

Yellow Brick Road. There is an attractive looking café called 'Les the Baker' at 420 Abbey Hey Lane (near Aysgarth Avenue).

The Max Trax is an all-weather track in Delamere Park, in the heart of the Openshaw community and commemorates Max Rimmer-Chambers, who was obsessed by bikes but died in a tragic accident aged only four. Max Trax is a place for people and families of all ages and abilities to come to have fun, meet friends, be active, learn a new skill, explore the outdoors and be part of creating a community hub. His mother Kerrie raised the funds for this project as a memorial for Max.

2 – DELAMERE PARK to CENTRAL PARK METROLINK – 6.4 miles

This section of the **Ashton Canal** was completed in 1796. It leaves the Rochdale Canal in Ancoats in Manchester and goes to Ashton where it becomes the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and continues to Huddersfield under the Pennines through the Standedge tunnel which is the longest and deepest in Britain.

A short detour takes you to **Clayton Hall** which is a 15th century manor house built for the Clayton family and subsequently owned by the Byron family (of whom Lord Byron was a later descendant). In 1620 it was bought by the Chetham family, who founded Chetham School which later became the School of Music. The hall is open to the public two Saturdays per month. The rooms have been set out in Victorian style and there is a tearoom, and toilets.

At **Alan Turing Way** the towpath changes sides so the footbridge is really a hoofbridge, hence the cobbles to prevent slipping. Unusually, the layout of the bridge means that the towrope would have to be untied and retied on the other side. Alan Turing was a pioneer in computer science and predicted Artificial Intelligence. He was also part of the team that cracked the Enigma code at Bletchley Park which is reputed to have shortened the war by several years.

The **Manchester Velodrome** was built in 1994 and was a major factor contributing to the success of Britain in World cycling. It was the only Olympic standard cycling track in the UK for 18 years until the Lee Valley VeloPark was built in London, just in time for the 2012 Olympics. **Co-op Live** is Manchester's latest music venue and has the largest capacity in the UK.

Philips Park was opened in August 1846 at the same time as Queens Park (Walk 5) and Peel Park in Salford, and these were the first free municipal parks in the World. There were other parks in Manchester at that time, but they charged for entry. After 170 years with no parliamentary representation, Mark Philips was one of two MPs elected to serve Manchester in 1833. He was active in many areas including setting up publicly funded schooling and the first free public library. He also donated money towards parks such as this one.

Clayton Vale at one time was the site of the Clayton Infectious Diseases Hospital which was founded to treat sailors arriving via the new Manchester Ship Canal. It was also home to several industries including a tannery, rubber works, print works and a dye works, and later used as a tip. In the 1980s the area was cleaned up and trees planted to form parkland. There are benches dotted along the paths, some picnic tables, and a Visitor Centre near Edge Lane which serves hot drinks.

Rochdale Canal was built around 1800 and links Manchester with Sowerby Bridge in Yorkshire via Rochdale (and thence Leeds). Part way along the canal on the left is a

large area of wasteland which once was the site of a Jackson's brickworks, one of many needed to keep up with the building of factories and houses. On the far side of Ten Acres Lane once stood the Mather and Platt foundry that supplied pumps around the world. It is immortalised in the painting by LS Lowry called 'Going to work'.

3 CENTRAL PARK METROLINK TO BOGGART HOLE CLOUGH – 4.5 miles

Central Park Metrolink station has an impressive and futuristic looking copper and glass canopy. This became slightly infamous because it was built first but then the tram system was delayed and so it remained unoccupied for 7 years.

In the late 1960s **Moston Vale** was used as a domestic landfill site and the brook that once flowed through the vale now runs 30 feet underground. A remediation scheme was started in 2005, and the area now boasts woodlands, a wildflower meadow, and a sports pitch. The blue path follows the route of the old Moston Brook (possibly).

Broadhurst Clough is a pleasant nature reserve of mature woodland, mown grassland, and mixed habitats. The clearing at the end Old Hall Lane was the location for Moston Hall which was built for the De Moston family in the 1300s, and in the 1600s was owned by a member of the Chetham family. The last tenant was a pig farmer known as Piggy Dixon. The football stadium to the north of the park is **Broadhurst Park**, home to FC United of Manchester which was founded by ex-Manchester United supporters who were disaffected by the Glazer takeover.

Boggart Hole Clough is a large area of woodland and urban country park. It is named for its steep sided valleys, or cloughs, and the boggart, a mischievous spirit that was supposed to live there. The park was traditionally used by activists for open air meetings, one of the largest being a suffrage demonstration in 1906 that attracted a crowd of 15,000. There is surprisingly large boating lake with an attractive lakeside café. The visitor centre, and toilets are near the Charlestown entrance. There are impressive wrought iron gates at the Rochdale Road entrance. Buses 17,18 and 163 should take you into Manchester city centre (but check).

4 BOGGART HOLE CLOUGH to HEATON PARK METROLINK – 4.7 miles

Bailey's Wood surrounds Dam Head Brook which is in a deep fairly inaccessible ravine and is one of the few remaining semi-natural ancient woodlands in Manchester. **Dam Head Park**, unusually, has an outdoor play area for over 60s. Most of Blackley was owned by the Byron family in the 1600s.

Heaton Park is the largest municipal park in Greater Manchester, and in fact in Europe, and includes woodlands, grassed areas and ornamental gardens. The park has various attractions including a boating lake with lakeside café, stables café, golf course, adventure playground, animal farm, and historic tram line. The lake was dug by hand in about 1910.

Heaton Hall is a Grade 1 listed house in Palladian style. Sir Thomas Egerton had the old hall completely rebuilt in 1772 and the park was landscaped. Alderman Fletcher Moss helped persuade Manchester City Council to buy the park and house in 1902 to prevent them from being sold to developers. Unfortunately, they could not afford the

furniture and paintings, and these were auctioned off. The hall is open for tours at intervals.

The park contains a number of other notable buildings including an Orangery, Stable block, Temple, Observatory, Grand Lodge, and Smithy Lodge. The Dower House is the home of a beekeeper's association complete with hives and apiary. The columned façade near the lake originally formed the portico for the old Manchester Town Hall in King Street. It was moved here after the building was demolished in 1912 and the new town hall built.

Horse races were held in the park in the 1800s before they were transferred to Aintree. In 1909 William Grimshaw recorded Enrico Caruso in the Free Trade Hall and played the recording to 40,000 people in the park in one of the first such concerts. There is an emotive memorial to the Battle of the Somme near the tram museum. In 1982 Pope John Paul II celebrated mass in the park for over 100,000 people and the event is commemorated by a rather modest rock! Today there are occasional open-air plays and concerts in the summer.

5 HEATON PARK METROLINK to QUEEN'S PARK – 4.8 miles

Blackley Forest follows the Irk River and was planted in 1953 by Manchester Corporation and local residents to commemorate the Queen's coronation and local people killed in WW2. It has been designated a Site of Biological Importance. **Crumpsall Park** was once the location for Crumpsall Hall the main residence of the Chetham family. In the late 1800s it was planned as a cemetery (yes, another one) but became a park in 1890. I believe that the obelisk was relocated here from Manchester, but I do not know what it commemorates as the plaque is missing.

North Manchester Hospital was originally three separate hospitals, Crumpsall, Delauneys, and Springfield, all associated with the Workhouse. In 1948 they merged and joined the newly formed NHS. **Harpurhey Ponds** in the Irk valley are remnants from an industrial era.

Queen's Park was opened in 1846 on the same day as Philips Park. The original Hendham Hall was demolished in 1880 and replaced by the current building which was intended as a museum and art gallery. There is a rather forlorn plinth that was once graced by a statue of Benjamin Brierley a weaver who took up writing in Lancashire dialect and became a working-class hero. Unfortunately, it was vandalised in 1980 and removed. The Queens Road Metrolink station is a short walk from the Queens Road entrance.

6 QUEEN'S PARK to MAYFIELD PARK and ARDWICK GREEN – 5.4 miles

Sandhills is the area between Eggington Street and Fitzgeorge Street and used to be a quarry and the source of Collyhurst Sandstone. This was a red sandstone used by the Romans to build the fort at Castlefields, and much later the original buildings for Manchester Cathedral, Chetham's School, and St Anne's Church. There are artistic contemporary gates at the north end of Fitzgeorge Street. The area where **Peachstone Henge** sits was once a brick works. Looking approximately west from the henge there

is a curious block of concrete about 100m away. This is a well-executed artwork which depicts Industry, but I cannot find out any information about it.

Below Sand Street Park there is a bridge an access road over the Irk. On the other side is a footpath with a long flight of steep steps leading to up a footbridge over long-gone railway tracks. It is known locally as the 'impossible bridge' and was captured in a painting by LS Lowry called "A Footbridge".

On the corner Dantzic Street (once called Charter Street) and Little Nelson Street is the entrance to the **Charter Street Ragged School and Working Girls' Home** which opened in 1847. The school catered for both girls and boys, but accommodation was also provided for working girls. The old **CWS Tobacco Factory** is near the east corner of the Meadow.

In the 1800s the area around Angel Meadow was an overcrowded slum with high levels of crime, poverty, and disease, and a death rate to match. In 1845, Friedrich Engels commented that "*Angel Meadow was in one of the most notoriously squalid districts; there is a black irony to its name.*" The church of St Michael's and All Angels once stood at the Angel Street end of the park, and the remainder was a large cemetery mainly for paupers. When the cemetery was full it was flagged over to stop grave robbers and the church became known as St Michael's Flags. The flagged area became a children's playground, one of the few such spaces available at the time. LS Lowry did several paintings of and around Angel Meadow.

The area has been completely re-developed with new offices and blocks of flats. The impressive NOMA building, the Coop HQ, at 1 Angel Square overlooks the Meadow and is reputed to be one of the most energy efficient buildings in the world. It has a small but attractive landscaped garden. This section finishes near Victoria Station.

The land off Thompson Street, where the Fire Station and Royal Mail Depot now stand, was originally the site of **Oldham Road Station** which was the terminus for the line from Leeds. But not long after it was opened, they realised it was in the wrong place, so just built a new station at Hunt's Bank in conjunction with the Liverpool railway company. This was named Victoria Station. Oldham Road station became a goods depot serving Manchester Smithfield market.

The Skyline Central building has a swimming pool on the top floor. **Anita Street** used to be called Sanitary Street as it was among the first terrace housing with indoor toilets. Once the novelty wore off the residents dropped the first and last letters.

Ancoats was at the heart of Cottonopolis in the 1800s and packed with cotton mills. The area has been completely revitalised in recent years and many of the original mill buildings have been imaginatively re-developed into offices and apartments. There is a Y shaped canal bridge at the end of Bengal Street. If the water is calm, you may see the words "**Cast No Shadow**" reflected beneath it, the title of a song by Oasis.

Mayfield Park opened in 2022 and is Manchester's newest park, the first for 100 years. It borders the Medlock River which has been opened up and adds to the biodiversity of the site. Where possible existing structures and materials have been reused. Some original steel beams have been incorporated into a bridge. Tiles from the Mayfield Baths have been saved for later reuse. There is a futuristic children's playground, social areas, food outlets and toilets.

Ardwick Green in the 1830s was one of the first parks in Manchester but access was restricted by an annual subscription. The glacial erratic is slightly underwhelming.

Tanzaro House at the northwest corner of the park was once a fizzy drinks factory and has some attractive Art Nouveau details. The Apollo Theatre at the other end is an Art Deco building and a venue that has hosted some of the greatest 1960s bands.

7 ARDWICK GREEN to WHITWORTH PARK – 5 miles

Birchfields Park once had a bandstand and ornamental drinking fountain. Their glacial erratic is moderately more whelming.

The area in Rusholme known as **Victoria Park** was planned in 1836 as a walled ornamental estate with villas and mansions for the wealthy. Toll bars were installed at the park gates to stop traffic avoiding the tolls on Wilmslow Road and to exclude the riff raff. A number of residences were built but the scheme lost steam due to fraud and a slump in the market. Some of the mansions are now halls of residence for the universities.

In 1872, Belle Vue Zoo acquired Maharajah the elephant from Edinburgh Zoo. The plan was to transport him by rail, but he had other ideas and wrecked the carriage, and so his keeper walked him the 200 or so miles to Manchester. There is a story that when they reached the toll at Victoria Park an argument broke out because, inexplicably, the tariff list did not include elephants. This was ended when Maharajah removed the toll bar and walked off with it. Maharajah was a great favourite at the zoo for 18 years. After he died his skeleton was displayed in various places including Piccadilly Station for a while. This had a touch of irony bearing in mind his dislike of railways. He can now be admired at Manchester Museum.

Bordering on **Old Hall Lane** are the iconic Grade II Toast Rack and the Poached Egg buildings. The lane also marks the route of the Nico Ditch first met in Walk 1. There is evidence of the ditch itself in **Platt Fields Park** running along the southern boundary of the school (formerly a hospital). Platt Hall and Fields were owned by the Worsley family, but the Council bought them both in 1908 to protect the land from development.

Curry Mile on Wilmslow Road is reputed to have the biggest concentration of South Asian and Middle Eastern Restaurants in the UK.

8 WHITWORTH PARK to ALEXANDRA PARK – 2 miles

Whitworth Park, including Grove House, was once owned by Beatrix Potter's uncle and known as Potter's Field. Sir Joseph Whitworth, a Victorian industrialist best known for his standardised screw thread, left most of his fortune for 'good causes'. After his death in 1887 some of his money was used to buy both the Park and Grove House which became the Whitworth Institute and later an art gallery.

Alexandra Park was opened in 1870 and is attractively laid out with a raised terrace, oval paths, a lake and lakeside café. Chorlton Lodge has a display of information about the park. St Bede's College on the west side of the park has an interesting façade.

9 ALEXANDRA PARK to CHOLTON BUS STATION – 2.4 miles

The brook that the trail follows from Houghend Crescent started life as Gore Brook, which we met in Gorton in Walk 1, then became Platt Brook in Platt Fields Park in Walk

7, and finally **Chorlton Brook** here (with Red Lion Brook as a tributary). Chorlton Brook originally separated the hamlets of Chorlton (to the north) and Hardy. In WW2, Hough End playing fields was the site of the Alexandra Airfield. The route rejoins the Fallowfield Loop we first met in Walk 1. This was originally a local line that allowed trains from Sheffield to loop round the south of Manchester and access Central Station. It finally closed in 1988 and was later converted into a shared footpath and cycleway.

The path that crosses **Chorlton Park** on the east side was once the drive to Hough End Hall on Nell Lane (see later).

10 CHOLTON BUS STATION to SOUTHERN CEMETERY – 3.8 miles

Beech Road is a lively location with cafés, restaurants, bars, and shops with gifts, artwork and jewellery. **Chorlton Green** was the scene for bull baiting until the 1830s. The Narnia style lamp celebrated the arrival of gas to the area. The impressive lych gate is all that is left of the original St Clements church after the new larger church was built on Edge Lane. **Chorltonville** is an attractive 'Arts and Crafts' style garden village.

Jackson's Bridge was named after an enterprising farmer who set up a ferry across the Mersey before it became superseded by the bridge in 1816. The current bridge was built in 1880 and is Grade II listed as it is a rare example of the use of wrought iron and a minimalist design. A diversion around **Sale Water Park** will add about 2½ miles. (The hide at Broad Dole Ees is very good for bird watching.)

Southern cemetery is the largest municipal cemetery in the UK. Notable burials are John Rylands, Victorian philanthropist; Sir John Alcock, pioneering aviator; LS Lowry, artist; and Sir Matt Busby, England football manager.

The Barlow Moor Road Metrolink is only ½ mile from the Cemetery. If you travel by tram from here towards Chorlton, you can see Hough End Hall on the left after about 300m. The Hall was Elizabethan, built in about 1600 but has lost many of its original features. It is now used as an Academy and Mosque.

11 BARLOW MOOR ROAD METROLINK to MARTINSCROFT METROLINK – 4 miles

A slight detour down Barlow Hall Road brings you to **Barlow Hall** which is an ancient manor house dating to 1584. It was the birthplace of Ambrose Barlow a Catholic priest who was martyred in 1641 and canonised by the Pope. The hall is currently the home of the Chorlton-cum-Hardy Golf Club.

Both Chorlton and Sale Water Parks started life as gravel pits. The Bailey bridge across the Mersey from **Chorlton Water Park** to Kenworthy Woods has been removed but is due to be replaced. The current diversion follows the riverbank. **Kenworthy Woods** is a reclaimed tip and now a Local Nature reserve. There is a pleasant footpath through the woods on the south side of the river to the east of the concrete track.

Wythenshawe was once a deer park owned by the Tatton family from about 1300. They lived at the Hall, which dates back to 1540, and is a timber framed Tudor House. The Tatton's were Royalists and in 1644 the house was captured by the Parliamentarians but returned to the Tatton family after the Restoration of the Monarchy. In 1926 the Hall and surrounding land was purchased by Sir Ernest Simon and donated to Manchester with the stipulation that the Park be retained as a

recreational green space. A large statue of Oliver Cromwell, which had become a traffic hazard on Deansgate, was rather ironically relocated to the park. There is a tearoom, and toilets. The Hall is open to the public on one Sunday a month.

A short diversion on Hall Lane brings you to **Baguley Hall**. Part of the current building dates back to the 1300s and has possibly the oldest timber great hall surviving in England. It is owned by English Heritage but not currently open to the public.

12 MARTINSCROFT METROLINK to PEELHALL METROLINK – 4.2 miles

Rodgers Park is also known as Alderman Rogers Park, but I could not find out anything about him. There is a leafy path through the Brundit, an ancient woodland in the corner.

After WW1, Manchester Council realised that conditions in the inner-city slums had become dire and they needed to do something to improve the quality of housing. They decided to build a 'garden city' south of the Mersey at Wythenshawe which until then had been a farms and woodland. However, they struggled to afford to buy the land until Sir Ernest Simon bought Wythenshawe Hall and Park and gifted it to Manchester. Ernest Simon is one of the lesser-known philanthropists. He lived in Didsbury but was from an immigrant family of German industrialists. He became Lord Major of Manchester and campaigned avidly for better housing; his wife Shena also fought for better education and equal rights for women.

Wythenshawe grew to being one of the biggest estates in Britain with a population of about 100,000. Many of the districts are named after the farms that were there before. Ernest Simon gave his name to Simons Way. Princess Parkway was built in 1930 to give access to and from Manchester and was one of the first dual carriageways in Britain. There was originally a tramway along the central reservation.

13 PEEL HALL METROLINK to NORTHENDEN RIVERSIDE PARK – 4.2 miles

Peel Hall Farm was an Elizabethan moated manor house owned by the Egerton family (who were related to the Tattons of Wythenshawe by marriage). It fell into disrepair in 1960 and was demolished. The moat was not defensive but probably just a feature to keep animals out.

The exit from **Rosehill Wood** onto Bronington Close comes out adjacent to Rose Hill house bought by Absalom Watkin in 1832. He made his money as a cotton merchant and campaigned avidly for abolition of the Corn Laws, for Manchester to get its own MP, and more public parks (hence Mark Philips and Philips Park). His memorial stone is in the woods nearby. His son Edward was a visionary who supported his father's ideals. He was a railway entrepreneur with projects in Canada, Greece, and India, as well as Britain, where he was responsible for the high-speed Great Central Main Line from London to Manchester. He started to build a tower at Wembley pleasure gardens to rival that by Eiffel. He also made a start on a channel tunnel in 1880, but the project was blocked by Parliament for fears of a French invasion through it.

The **Sharstone** in the garden of Rose Hill is a glacial erratic, thought to have come from in the Lake District. It was originally found by Edward at his farm in Woodhouse,

Wythenshawe. The Green Trail from here to St Wilfred's Church in Northenden follows the Watkin Walk (in reverse). There is information online.

Northenden gained importance from medieval times as it was the site of a ford on the old salt road from Cheshire to Manchester. The ford on Ford Lane was at the site of Simon's Bridge (see Walk 14). This was the only crossing point between bridges in Sale and Stockport until the mid-1700s.

14 NORTHENDEN RIVERSIDE PARK to FLETCHER MOSS PARK – 3.8 miles

Mill Lane in Northenden was the site of a weir and mill dating back to the 1300s. In the 1500s it was owned by the Tatton Family. Both structures were demolished in the 1960s.

Simon's Bridge is at the site of an old ford across the Mersey. It was paid for by Henry Simon in 1901. (He was the father of Ernest who funded Wythenshawe Park.) The ford was unusual because those crossing had to wade about 100m or so along the riverbed. This probably explains why Ford Lane on the Disbury side is a distance upstream of the bridge.

The Williamson family bought The Croft, the house near the **Alpine Garden**, and surrounding land in 1882. They were keen botanists and collected plants from their travels to the Alps and built the rockery. When they left in 1912, they sold the house and garden to Fletcher Moss.

Emily Williamson was an ornithologist and having been banned from joining the all-male Ornithologists' Union she set up an all-women Society for Protection of Birds in 1889. This later became the RSPB (which now allows men). She campaigned avidly to prevent the trade in bird plumage which was fashionable for hats at the time, and an Act to prohibit the importation of plumage was finally passed in 1921.

There is an Alpine Café at the Croft and toilets nearby. The nearest Metrolink stop is at Didsbury Village.

15 FLETCHER MOSS PARK to CHAPEL STREET PARK – 6 miles

Alderman Fletcher Moss was the son of wealthy corn traders and had a keen interest in nature. He lived at the Parsonage until he died in 1919 and left it, together with the Croft, Alpine Garden, and park, to the City of Manchester. The Parsonage is now used as an art gallery and has a restful garden. The Eagle Gate on Stenner lane came from the Spread Eagle pub on Corporation Street in Manchester after it was demolished.

Fog Lane Park gets its name from a grass commonly known as Yorkshire Fog that still grows throughout the park.

Highfield Country Park was once an industrial site with a claypit (supplying clay to Jackson's brickworks) on the southwest side, and a bleach works to the northeast. The claypit became a landfill site and for a while there was a tripe factory supplying a chain of MacTripe restaurants across the country. In the 1970s it was designated a country park but was still a wasteland. In 2004 it was transformed into a wildlife sanctuary and is now a designated Local Nature Reserve.

A return to **Chapel Street** completes the circuit and you can celebrate with a visit to the Levenshulme South Station Café, mentioned in Walk 1, for a pot of tea, or perhaps something stronger.

CONCLUSION

The route also reveals glimpses of the history of Manchester. It passes many grand halls such as at Heaton, Clayton, and Wythenshawe, which were homes to the families that owned the land dating back to when the area was still mostly agricultural. As Manchester grew it absorbed many villages and some still retain their character, especially at Chorlton Green. In Ancoats we can see some of the cotton mills that were responsible for Manchester's prosperity, now repurposed as offices and apartments. There is also evidence throughout of other past industries, although much of it is now gone. Some of the railways and canals that facilitated trade, are now used for leisure as footpaths and cycleways. In areas like Victoria Park, we get a glimpse of how the wealthy lived. But the walk highlights the phenomenal building programme in the 1800s and 1900s to provide housing for the workforce. Thankfully, some benefactors in the 1800s and Councillors in the 1900s recognised the importance of green spaces and ensured the provision of most of the parks and recreational areas visited on the walk.

Peter Spence February 2026