

Exploring Greater Manchester

a fieldwork guide

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Paul Hindle, John McKendrick and Chris Perkins

Discovering history, spiritual peace and tranquillity in Didsbury: West Didsbury and Albert Park

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Aims: This walking tour investigates historical aspects of a hamlet which through urban expansion has become one of the most desirable residential suburbs of South Manchester. It considers the influence of cultural, demographic and economic change over time and concentrates on places of worship, changes in the use of buildings and areas of outdoor leisure offering peace and tranquillity.

Starting point: Didsbury Library, across Wilmslow Road from Didsbury Village Metrolink Station.

Estimated time: 2–3 hours. The time will also depend on the inclusion of diversions.

Further information:

France, E. and Woodall, T. F. (1976) *A New History of Didsbury*. E.J. Morten, Manchester.

Leitch, D. (2011) *Looking back with Diana Leitch. Glimpses of people and places in South Manchester. Volumes 1-5*. David Leitch, Manchester.

Million, I. (1969) *A History of Didsbury*. Didsbury Civic Society and E.J. Morten, Manchester.

Maps:

Geographers' Greater Manchester A-Z Street Atlas; Ordnance Survey Explorer (1:25,000) no 277 Manchester and Salford; Google Maps.

Date of Last Revision: October 2019.

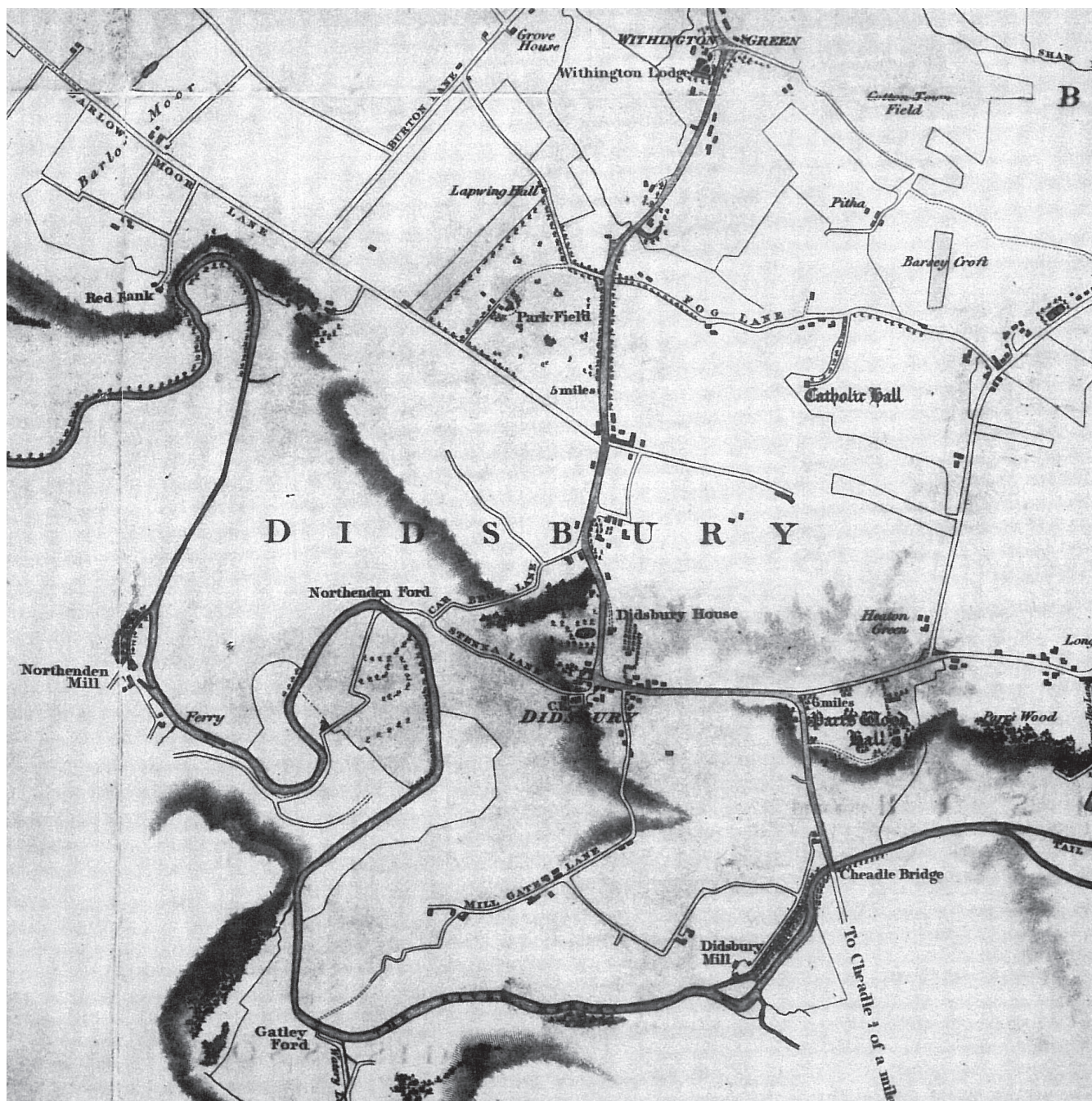
Introduction

Before the Industrial Revolution, Didsbury was a small agricultural hamlet on the northern bank of the River Mersey between Stockport and Stretford in south Lancashire. For several centuries after 1300, it was part of the manor of Withington, a feudal estate, which included Withington, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Moss Side, Burnage and Denton, governed by the Hathersage, Longford and Tatton families. In 1235 a chapel was built that became the parish church of St. Oswald which changed its name to St. James in 1855. A spring (or well), near the church on Stenner Lane, provided water for the growth of the hamlet over four centuries. The ford across the Mersey, one of the few crossing places between Stretford and Stockport, became significant for Civil War troop movements when Manchester was on the Parliamentary side. The Royalist commander, Prince Rupert, stationed himself at Didsbury Ees, to the south of Barlow Moor. It is also likely that Bonnie Prince Charlie crossed the

Mersey at Didsbury in 1745, in the Jacobite march south from Manchester to Derby, and again in his subsequent retreat (Didsbury Civic Society, 2005).

By 1764, Didsbury was described as a township in its own right. It became a civil parish in 1866, later being incorporated into the Withington Urban Sanitary District in 1876. When Withington was amalgamated into the city and county borough of Manchester in 1904, Didsbury became part of Manchester, although it remained a civil parish until 1910.

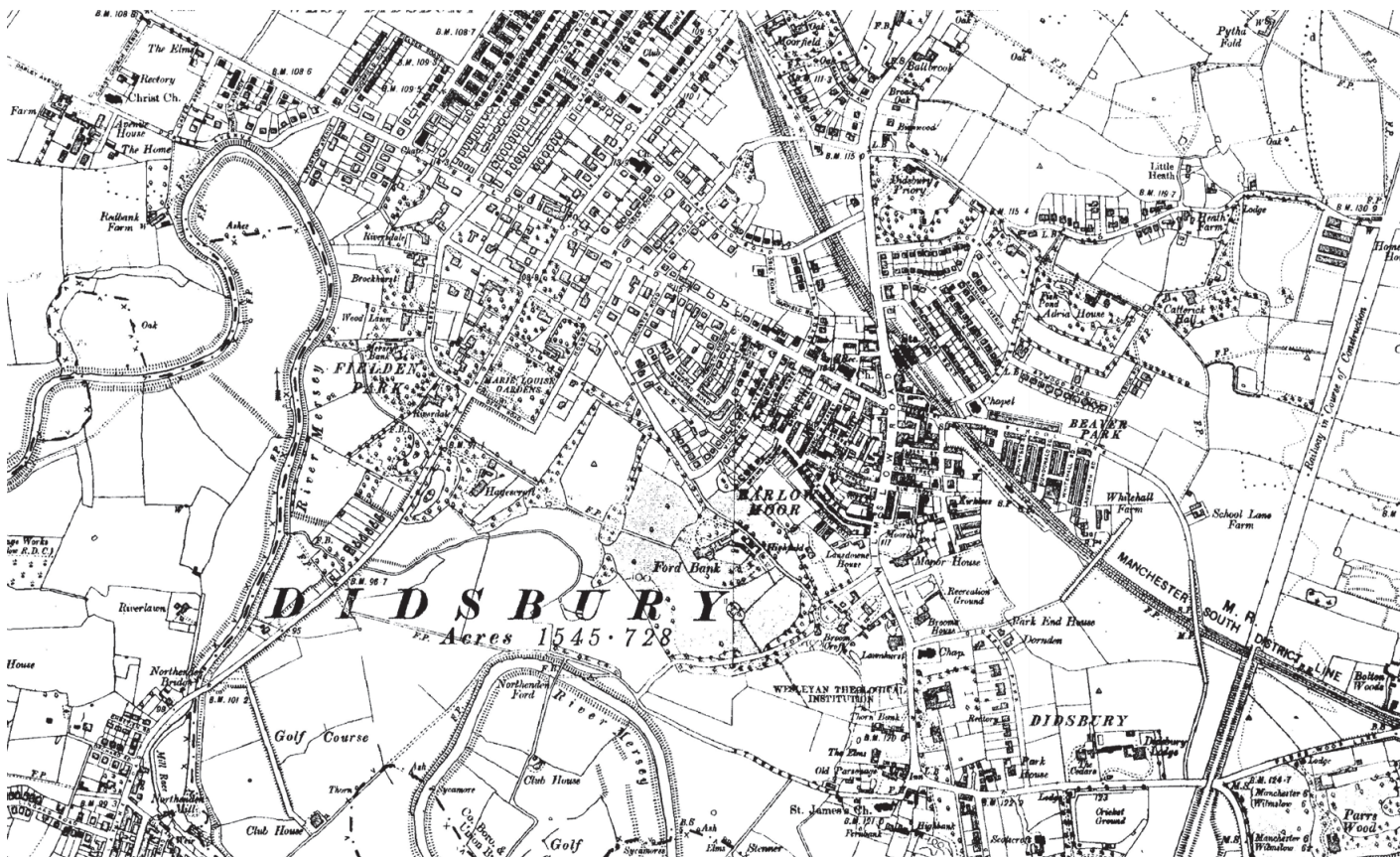
During the Victorian expansion of Manchester, Didsbury developed as a prosperous suburb as local landowners developed new estates such as Albert Park and Fielden Park. Didsbury grew more rapidly following the opening of the Midland Railway line from London to Manchester Central Station in 1880. Although closed in 1967, this route was re-opened for Manchester Metrolink trams in 2013.



Didsbury in about 1820: William Johnson's Plan of the Parish of Manchester, in the County of Lancaster (1820), Withington and Didsbury. (From a survey made in the years 1818 and 1819 by William Johnson, Manchester. Published by William Johnson, Surveyor, Faulkner Street, July 1st, 1820).

Many of the institutional buildings originally developed in the nineteenth century, in this expanding suburb of Manchester, such as the former Chorlton Barlow Moor Work House (later Withington Hospital which closed in 2002) and the former Wesleyan Methodist Theological College (later part of Manchester Metropolitan University's Didsbury Campus) have become 21st century housing developments. Many large Victorian and Edwardian houses have either been converted into flats or care homes or have been demolished to make way for modern town houses and

apartment buildings. Commercial and office developments on part of the Withington Hospital site and at The Towers (former home of the Shirley Institute), together with the expansion of nearby hospitals, such as the Christie and University Hospitals, have brought high technology and other professional employment to Didsbury. This influx of young, upwardly mobile people has resulted in increased leisure and restaurant facilities, some of the latter being listed in the Good Food Guide.



This OS map of 1905 demonstrates the rapid growth of Didsbury following the arrival of the railway in 1880.

The Walk

Starting from Didsbury Village tram stop, walk west along School Lane to Wilmslow Road by the station clock. The Library will be across Wilmslow Road from the clock.

American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie to provide the funding (Moss, 1915).

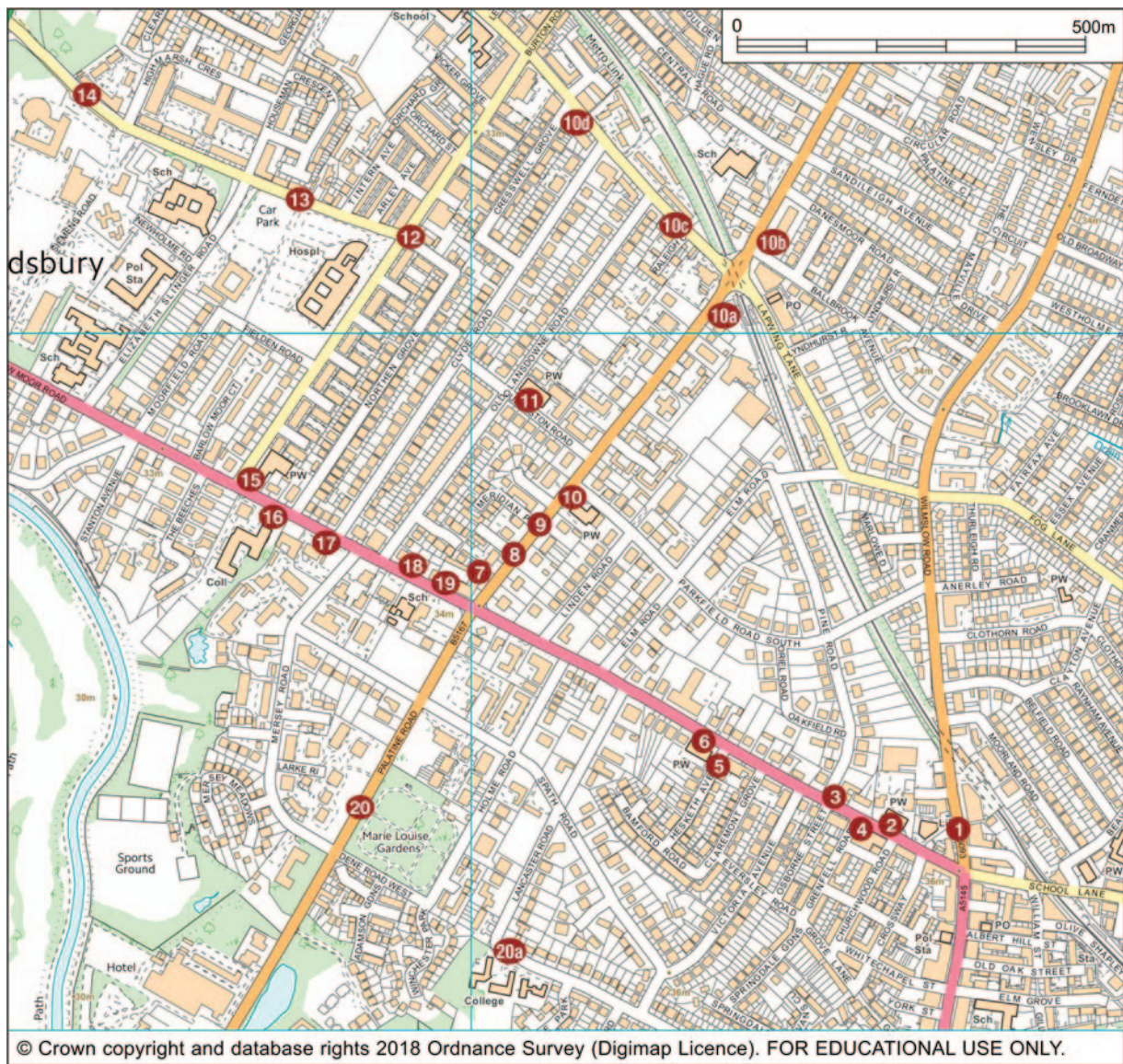
Stop 1: Didsbury station clock and the Library.

Unveiled in 1911, the station clock and water fountain is dedicated to the memory of local doctor and civic activist campaigner for the poor, Dr. John Milson Rhodes who was a GP in Didsbury from 1874 until his death in 1909. He made much needed reforms to the way the workhouse (Stop 13) treated its inmates and patients.

Designed by Manchester City Architect Henry Price and opened in 1915, the Grade II listed Didsbury Public Library was built as a brand new library fit for the 20th century. The architect said that its exterior was 'designed in the fifteenth-century gothic style with tracery windows and emblems of Science, Knowledge, Literature, Music and Arts and Crafts in stone distributed over the building'. The walls were tiled to dado height, the floor cork carpeted and the oak furniture, fittings and partitions were all supplied for £600. Didsbury resident, Alderman Fletcher Moss, had fought for a public library in Didsbury and eventually persuaded Scottish-



Didsbury station clock



The area of Didsbury covered by this walk and the stopping points along the route.



Didsbury Library

Two blue commemoration plaques can be seen through the foliage on the south facing side of the library. The first commemorates King Charles I's nephew, Prince Rupert of the Rhine who was the commander of the Royalist cavalry during the English Civil War and was stationed in a building which formerly stood on this site. The second commemorates Sir William Brereton (1604–1661), soldier, writer and MP for Cheshire who was also stationed in Didsbury during the English Civil War. As Commander in Chief of Parliament's forces in Cheshire, Shropshire, Lancashire and Staffordshire he developed a network of spies and campaigned against the Royalists (Worthington, 2014).

> From the left-hand side of the library, as seen in the photograph, proceed along Barlow Moor Road to the nearby Emmanuel Church.

Stop 2: Emmanuel Church, Didsbury Village.

The Anglican Emmanuel Church, originally built in 1858, was enlarged sometime after 1872. It has a notable William Morris coloured glass window dating from 1889 featuring three figures with a panel of gold leaf scrolls below (Leitch, 2011). Like many areas of South Manchester, the rising population led to a growth in the number of churches. In 1976 the parish of Emmanuel joined with that of St. James, in old Didsbury village, to form the Church of England Parish of St. James and Emmanuel. After a fire in 1977, Emmanuel Church was transformed in the mid-1980s when the pews were replaced by chairs and the altar by a removable podium. Attached to the church is the delightful Home Community Café which is run by volunteer Home-Makers and dedicated to nurturing relationships with all profits reinvested locally. Both the church and the adjacent vicarage are listed buildings.

> Continue west along Barlow Moor Road to Pine Road.



Emmanuel Church, Didsbury Village.

Stop 3: Former Liberal Club, Barlow Moor Road on corner with Pine Road.

Originally the Conservative Club, this fine Victorian building became the home of Didsbury Liberals in 1899. It was extended a number of times during the following 12 years. 100 years later it has been converted into flats and Didsbury no longer has any clubs affiliated to a political party. Interestingly, Didsbury is in the Withington Parliamentary Constituency. The Withington MP was either Conservative or Liberal until 1987 when the seat was gained by Labour which has since retained it, save for the period 2005–2015 when it was held by a Liberal Democrat.

> Cross Barlow Moor Road to the shops on the opposite (south) side.



Former Liberal Club, Barlow Moor Road.

Stop 4: The Art of Tea, 47 Barlow Moor Road.

Symptomatic of today's West Didsbury is *The Art of Tea*, at 47 Barlow Moor Road, an independent café-bar offering fresh, locally sourced produce. One review says: "*The Art Of Tea* rescues a little old English tearoom from recycling, gives it a wallop of great dose of San Francisco boho vibes, decorates it with dark green walls, art posters and local artists' daubings, sticks tables out the front and a second-hand record shop-cum-bookshop out the back and then sits down with a huge chunk of homemade cake".

> Continue west along the south side of Barlow Moor road to Hesketh Avenue.



The Art of Tea, 47 Barlow Moor Road.

Stop 5: Hesketh Avenue.

Hesketh Avenue was named after Bamford-Hesketh, a 19th century land owner. It leads into Bamford Road, also named after him. Howard Spring, the novelist, author of 'My Son, My Son!' and 'Fame is the Spur', lived at No. 26 for some time. He worked at the Manchester Guardian for 15 years before moving to London to work the Evening Standard, becoming their book reviewer.

Stop 6: Ivy Cottage Evangelical Worship Hall, 97 Barlow Moor Road, at the corner of Hesketh Avenue.

The Ivy Church started in 1893 as a men's Bible study group meeting in a cottage opposite which was covered in ivy giving a name to this new place of worship. This building was erected in 1900. By 1908 a Women's Bible Class held monthly business meetings and had 218 registered members who attended weekly. From its inception, Ivy saw itself as a mission of evangelism, but when it became a church and started looking at various rules and regulations, some of the pioneering and evangelistic work by women was truncated. <http://anthonydelaney.com/2014/10/14/the-role-of-women-in-the-history-of-ivy-church/>

> Cross to the North side of Barlow Moor Road and continue west, noting the many surviving Victorian/Edwardian buildings, to Palatine Road.

Stop 7: Palatine Road and the start of Albert Park Conservation Area.

Didsbury in 1850 looked much the same as it had done in 1800 (Million, 1969). Everything changed with the building of Palatine Road in 1862. Originally known as Northenden New Road, the road was built across land given by Lord Egerton (Withington to Lapwing Lane), Henry Bury (Lapwing Lane to Barlow Moor Road) and Robert Fielden (most of the stretch from Barlow Moor Road to the Mersey) (Million, 1969). The value of the land along the road increased rapidly. The Rusholme and Withington Estate Benefit Building Society bought land where Old Landsdowne Road, Clyde Road and Cresswell Grove are now situated and developed a new housing area that they named Albert Park, after the Prince Consort who died in 1861. The housing was mainly formed of three-storey pairs of semi-detached houses, slightly less grand than those along Palatine Road itself. Many of these residences have been converted into flats and bedsits, while most of those along Palatine Road have been converted to institutional or hotel uses, or have been demolished and replaced by apart-



Ivy Cottage Evangelical Worship Hall

ments or new housing. The area is now the major part of the City of Manchester's Didsbury Albert Park Conservation Area (<http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation-areas/1210/albert-park-conservation-area/1>). The next part of the walk goes through this area.

> From Barlow Moor Road cross Palatine Road to the west side and turn right to examine old and new buildings.

Stop 8: Changes along Palatine Road.

At 158-160 Palatine Road there is a row of small mews houses that may have been servants quarters or stables for the large residence there prior to redevelopment.

> Continue up Palatine Road's west side.



Stanton Grange Mews, 158-160 Palatine Road.

Stop 9: Meridian Place.

Meridian Place provides an excellent example of the changes that have taken place with large old family homes originally constructed for people like textile and other industrial 'Barons' being converted into apartments or care homes or being demolished, and the site redeveloped into purpose built care homes, small town houses and apartments. At Meridian Place a single large Victorian house was converted into 6 flats in the late 1940s. The house, which also included a lodge, garages and large rear gardens, was demolished in the 1980s and the area now comprises a block containing 12 two bedroom apartments and 5 four bedroom town houses.

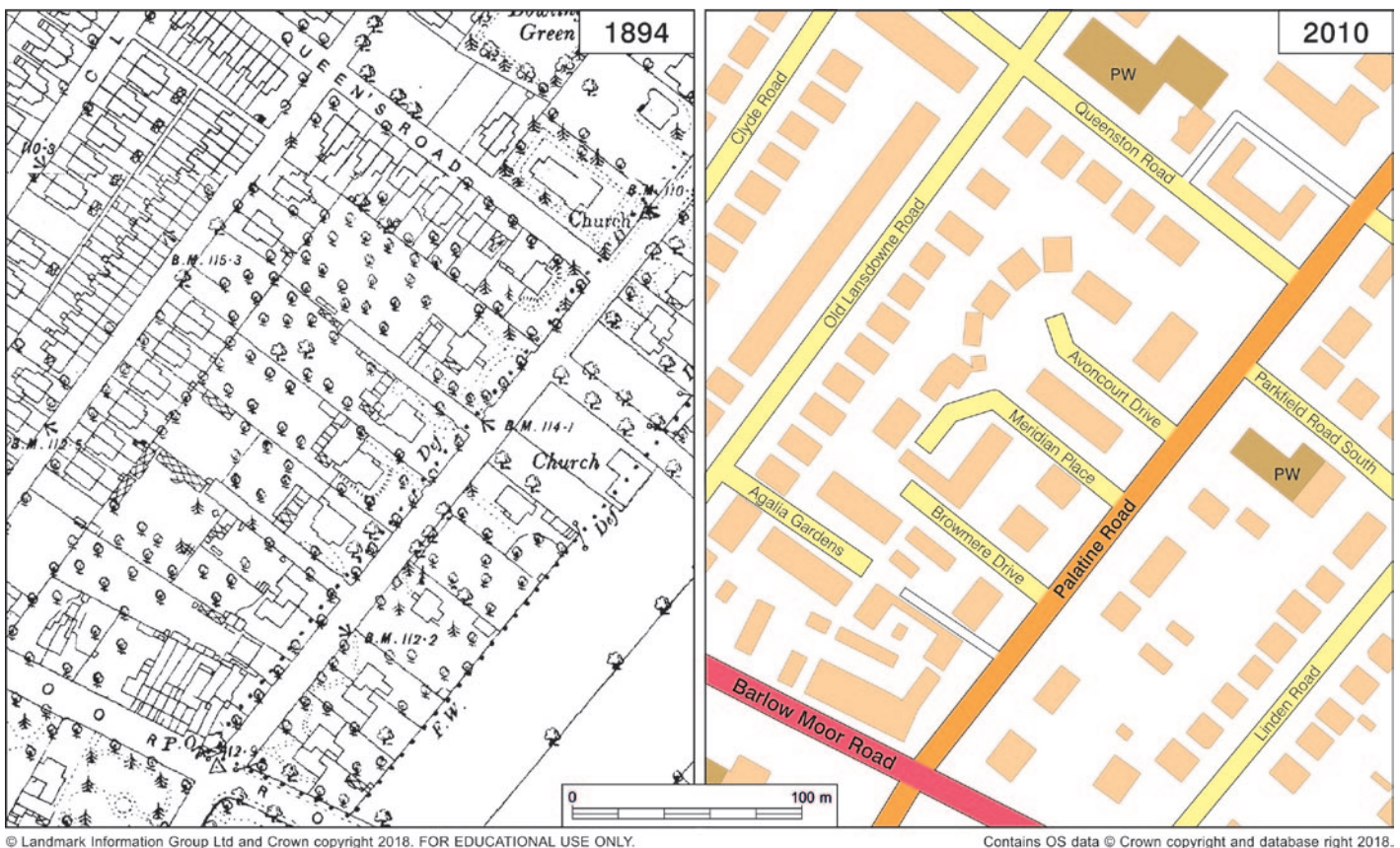
> Continue up Palatine Road.

A little further on a small cul-de-sac leads to another housing development in the grounds of a former large house, while across Palatine Road stands St. Aidan's Church, built in 1901 to serve the residents of Albert park and adjacent streets.

> Cross Palatine Road to examine the Church.



Meridian Place.



Map of the large properties on the west side of Palatine Road north of Barlow Moor Road in 1894 showing the large garden plots that have subsequently been redeveloped into mini housing estates (note the church on the site of St. Aidan's church which was to be built some years later) compared with the current roads and buildings.

Stop 10: St. Aidan's Presbyterian Church, now Didsbury United Reformed Church.

The Grade II listed Accrington brick and Westmoreland slate church building was opened in 1901 with support of a largely Scottish congregation. Of particular interest are stunning Art Nouveau stained glass windows designed by local artist Walter John Pearce. Fortunately many of the windows survived the 1992 fire (Leitch, 2011).

In 1971 St. Aidan's merged with Grosvenor Presbyterian Church (Withington) becoming Grosvenor St. Aidan's. This was soon followed by the formation of the United Reformed Church, when the Presbyterian Church of England and the Congregational Church in England and Wales united, later being joined by the Churches of Christ and the Congregational Union of Scotland. In 1992 the church sanctuary was badly burned in an arson attack and extensive restoration was required and the opportunity was taken for some modernisation. In 2009 the name was changed to Didsbury United Reformed Church (<http://didsburyurc.org.uk/about-2/>). The main church building is now also used by the Manchester Korean Church.

Nearly opposite St. Aidan's Church are four houses completed in 2018 that replace a residence that had long been used as a hotel. They represent the continuing gentrification of this part of bed-sit land.

An optional diversion is possible here, see Diversion 1. Turn back across Palatine Road, where a post 1945 block of flats stands at the corner of Queens Road where St. Mary's Church (mentioned in relation to stop 12) once stood, and then walk along Queens Road to the synagogue at the corner of Old Lansdowne Road.



Didsbury United Reformed Church.

Stop 11: Sephardi Congregation of South Manchester, Sha'are Hayim Synagogue (translation; "Gates of Life").

Jewish immigrants started to arrive in Manchester from the late 18th century, initially settling mainly in the suburbs to the north of the city. From the 1920s onwards, many of them moved to what were seen as the more "sophisticated" suburbs in the south, such as Cheadle and Didsbury. The influx of Jewish immigrants led to West Didsbury being nicknamed "Yidsbury" and Palatine Road "Palestine Road".

The Withington Congregation of Spanish and Portuguese Jews (founded in 1904) moved in 1926 from a converted house in Mauldeth Road to this then new building in Queens Road capable of seating 336 men and 240 women in an upper gallery. The architect was Delissa Joseph, under the supervision of Joseph Sunlight. Listing it as a Grade II building, English Heritage describes it as a fine example of a synagogue of this period. In 1924 a group of congregants of mainly Arabic speaking Jews of Egyptian, Aleppan and Baghdadi origin with more Eastern Oriental Sephardic traditions separated from the more westernised Sephardi members of the congregation and founded a breakaway community and a new synagogue, Sha'are Sedek, (translation; "Gates of Righteous") in nearby Old Lansdowne Road (Jewish Community Records, accessed on line).

Starting in the 1970s many young Jewish families migrated south from Didsbury to Hale and Bowden where they have formed new vibrant communities. With membership of both Didsbury synagogues declining the two amalgamated in 1997 as the Sephardi Congregation of South Manchester. Sha'are Sedek Synagogue in Lansdowne Road finally closed in 2004; it was subsequently demolished and



Sha'are Hayim Synagogue.

there are now 13 new houses on the site. The continuing migration south of Didsbury Jews is nowadays bringing the long-term viability of this one remaining synagogue in Didsbury into doubt. (Rabbi Shlomo Elituv, Personal Communication 14/06/2018).

> From the synagogue continue west along Queens Road and cross Clyde Road. Walk through the passage straight ahead to Northern Grove and turn right. Here there are several mid twentieth century semi-detached houses built to replace war-damaged older buildings. Follow Northern Grove to Burton Road.

Stop 12: Former St. Luke's Church at the corner of Burton Rd and Northern Grove.

St Luke's Church was originally built in 1881 (as a 'chapel of ease' for St James', Didsbury) to accommodate the large number of domestic servants resulting from the development of the of the Albert Park area between 1850 and 1880. When horse-drawn trams were first introduced in Manchester in 1877, the low frequency of the horse bus service did not justify the high capital cost of laying down tram tracks, further growth stimulated by the opening of

the Midland Railway in 1880 eventually led to horse-drawn trams along Palatine Road (Manchester Corporation Transport Department, 1935). Local population increases led to such demand that the mission church of St. Mary's was built on Palatine Road in 1890 (see note at Stop 10). The next 20 years, until the First World War, were the 'golden years' for the parish with the building of three new churches. The War itself and the subsequent decline of the cotton industry and the Great Depression initially caused St. Luke's to close. The extensive buildings with a school, halls, kitchen, and church offices were then rented out. However, in 1934, St. Mary's, built of wood and corrugated iron, and expected to last just fifteen years, was closed and services were resumed at St. Luke's (Bartlett, 2018). The church was finally vacated in 1983, having been a full community church with a youth club, scouts, cubs, guides and brownies and even a junior football team in the 1950s and 60s (Corlett, 2018). It is currently occupied by the British Mountaineering Council.

> From St. Luke's continue across Burton Road westward along Nell Lane to the complex of mid-Victorian buildings on the right hand side.

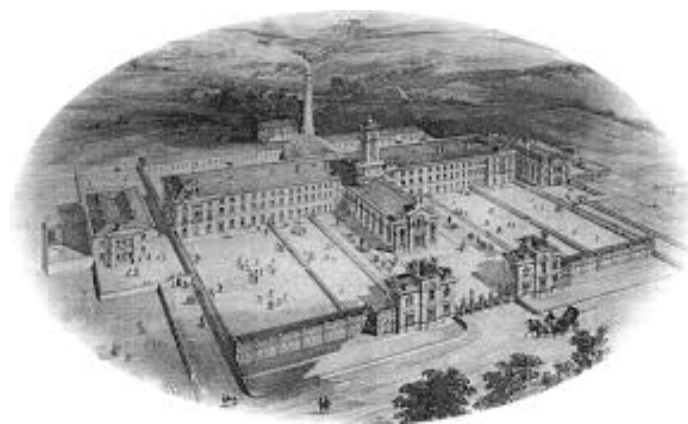


Two views of the former St. Luke's Church, currently occupied by the British Mountaineering Council.

Stop 13: Old Chorlton Workhouse and the former Withington Hospital.

The gatehouse buildings and main hospital block are all that remains of the former Chorlton Union Workhouse which became Withington Hospital. Withington Hospital closed in 2002 and these buildings have been converted into 121 apartments and 14 town houses. All other buildings on the site have been demolished to make way for 92 three story houses and 139 self-contained flats.

The workhouse, originally known as the Chorlton Barlow Moor Work House, was purpose-built in 1854–55 as a workhouse for the poor of the Chorlton Poor Law Union district, which covered most of south Manchester. In 1859 it housed 458 adults and 195 children. The original construction centred on a large cruciform main building which included a chapel in the south wing nearest the site entrance and a dining hall in the north wing to the rear. Female accommodation was at the west of the workhouse, and male at the east. The appearance of the building is well illustrated by an architects' "bird's eye view":



Bird's eye view of Chorlton Workhouse from the south-west.

Demand for medical care increased rapidly. 1864 saw the opening of the 480 bed Chorlton Union Hospital, designed by the architect Thomas Worthington. This was the first hospital to be planned as a pavilion hospital with 10 wings off an interconnecting corridor. It became a national model for hospital architecture and organisation.



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Part of the 1911 map of Albert Park, showing the Withington Town Hall, the former Workhouse and the Church and School at the corner of Burton Road and Northern Grove. Note the former Withington and Albert Park Railway Station opposite Clyde Road, north of Lapwing Lane.

Florence Nightingale, the celebrated pioneer nurse is reported to have told Thomas Worthington that his “hospital plan will be one of the best, if not the best, in the country”. Chorlton Union Hospital also introduced a new system of nursing, using trained nurses under superintendent sisters. Nurses’ homes were erected in 1885, 1903 and 1913-15 at the north-west of the workhouse. In the 1880s, Dr. John Milson Rhodes (see Stop 1) led many improvements, including the removal of the children to Styal. In 1894, a British Medical Journal “commission” investigating conditions in provincial workhouses and their infirmaries gave Withington a glowing report. The medical facilities were further expanded in 1902 by the erection of two new hospital pavilions at the north of the site (see map).

At its height, in the mid-20th century, the hospital was the largest teaching hospital in Europe, thanks in part to its affiliation with the large medical school of the University of Manchester. After 1970 collaboration with the University expanded and further hospital renovation occurred. A new department of psychiatry was opened, with space for 170 patients and teaching facilities. In 1994, South Manchester University Hospitals Trust was formed, joining Wythen-shawe and Withington Hospitals. Following reorganisation, in 2002 the original Withington Hospital closed and the new Withington Community Hospital at the junction of Nell Lane and Burton Road was opened.

<http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Chorlton/>
<https://www.uhsm.nhs.uk/hospitals/withington/>
<https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/b489e047-e6b1-3992-aaa3-5e40e2147729?component=0959129d-85c4-3165-b7a4-21febed73267>



Didsbury Gate development on the site of the former Withington Hospital.

An eye-witness account of a visit to the workhouse published in 1871 that makes noteworthy reading is available at: <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/lit/ADayAtWithington.shtml>

> Continue west along Nell Lane to the distinctive modern Siemens building.

Stop 14: Siemens – story of economic change and future developments.

This iconic Bauhaus inspired 1989, 13,400 m³, headquarters building for the Energy and Automation division of Siemens plc immediately became a local landmark. It was one of the first overtly modernist buildings to be built in Manchester for 20 years. Office accommodation with management and conference facilities, a training school, exhibition areas and restaurant are accommodated in a four and five storey building around a courtyard. Semi-mature trees have been planted to the full perimeter of the site, incorporating 4,000 shrubs and trees. The plan, formal articulation and materials embody the themes of clarity, lightness and transparency (<http://mbia.net/projects/siemens/index.html>).

New developments in the vicinity: In March 2017 commercial property company Bruntwood had planning permission for a three-storey office building, 48 surface car parking spaces and 92 new homes on the site. The scheme will be delivered in stages, creating over 155,000 sq. ft. of Grade A office space with a mixture of surface and multi-storey parking. The vision is to create a vibrant, sustainable mixed-use development on the site with the office space aimed at professional services, life sciences and technology companies. (<https://www.manchesterevening-news.co.uk/business/business-news/plans-new-office-block-92-12721027>).



Sir William Siemens House, Nell Lane.

Squire Spire Manchester Hospital opened in 2017 at the southern (Barlow Moor Road) end of the Siemens site. This private hospital was previously located in Whalley Range.

> Turn back along Nell Lane, past the new development to the south and turn right on to Elizabeth Slinger Road and walk down to Barlow Moor Road. Turn left to the corner of Burton Road where the former Methodist Chapel has been converted in a mosque.

Stop 15: Manchester Islamic Centre, Medina Mosque.

The Manchester Islamic Centre was originally the Albert Park Wesleyan Methodist Chapel built in 1881 and operated as such until 1965. At that time the growing Syrian Arab community in Rusholme was looking for larger premises and learnt of the vacated church. Interestingly the church refused to sell the premises to Tesco for conversion to a supermarket. They wanted it to remain a place of religious worship and were happy to sell it to the Muslim community at the knock down price of £6500 in 1967 (Imam Mustafa Graf, personal communication 14/06/2018). The property consists of two large buildings; the first one is used as a mosque and library, while the second is used as prayer hall for women, a lecture and events room, classrooms and a kitchen.

The Manchester Islamic Centre is among the oldest Islamic centres in Britain. The centre represents a wide range of Muslim community members of various origins and/or Islamic schools of thought. The Centre also seeks to provide information on the Islamic faith in order to foster cooperation and build bridges with non-Muslim communities.



Manchester Islamic Centre, Medina Mosque.

Medina Mosque demonstrates the change in religious affinity and cultural change in Didsbury and elsewhere in Manchester over the last 50 odd years. There has been a general decrease in church attendances; many of the Jews who moved to Didsbury early in the 20th century have now moved again to new communities in Hale and Bowden; and they are now being replaced by newer immigrants from former Commonwealth countries in Asia. (<http://didsbury-mosque.com/Page.aspx?id=2&type=4>).

> Nearly opposite the mosque is Fielden Park College.

Stop 16: The Fielden Campus of The Manchester College.

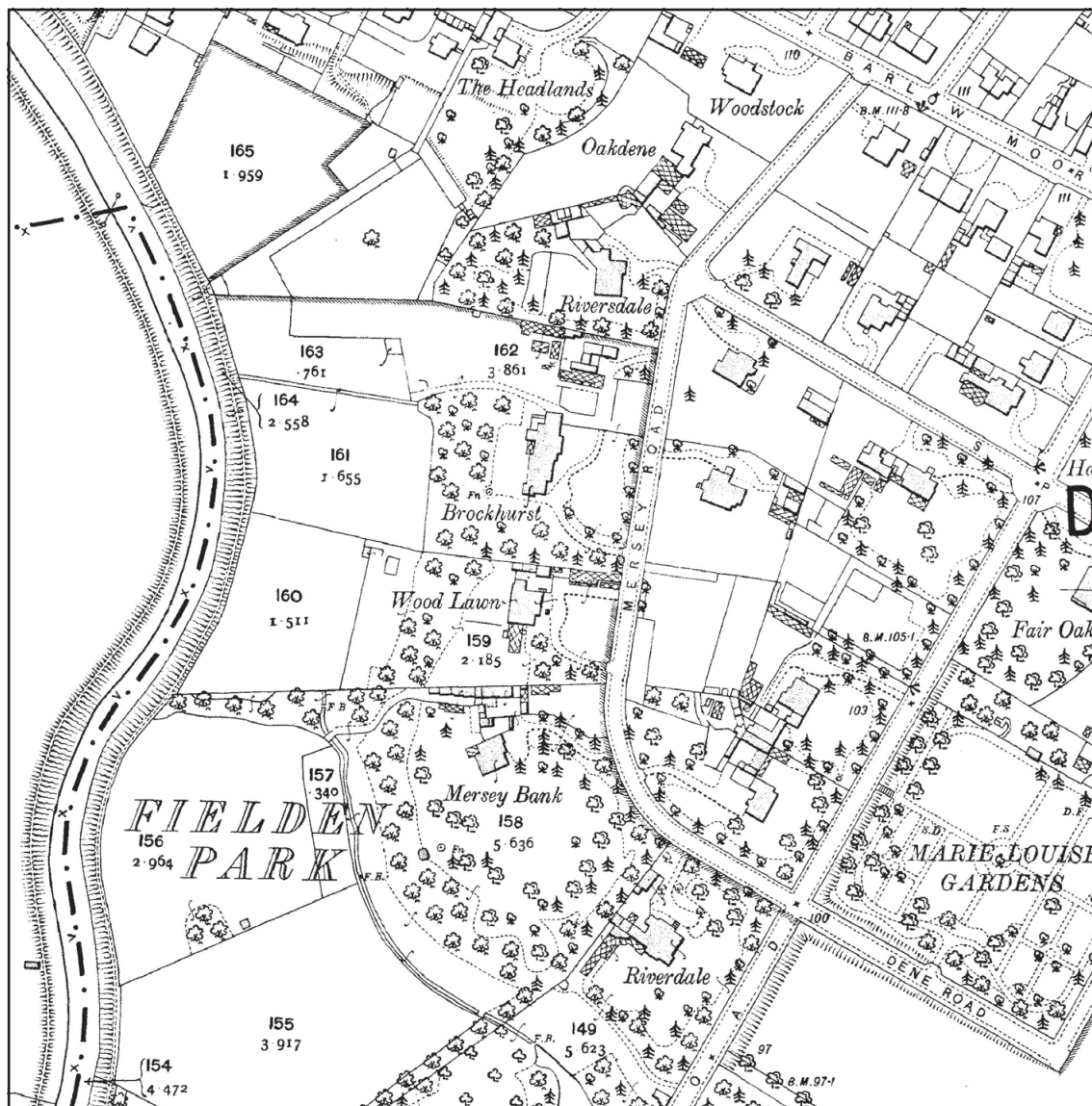
Robert Fielden owned much land between Barlow Moor Road and the River Mersey. He sold some of for the erection of the Beeches just west of the College site and he laid out Fielden Park in 1869 (Million, 1969). Fielden Park occupied the whole of the area west of Palatine Road and south of Barlow Moor Road down to the River Mersey. Large residential properties were built overlooking the Mersey Valley.

The education campus was opened in 1972 by Margaret Thatcher, then education minister but later Prime Minister. Today the Fielden Campus offers courses for school leavers, adults, professionals and university-level students. The campus is equipped with industry-standard technology in areas such as catering, film production and digital media. The college has invested £9 million in improvements to the campus, including a 'green roof' that insulates, soundproofs and improves air quality.

> Continue east on the south side of Barlow Moor Road to the Woodstock Arms.



The Fielden Campus of The Manchester College.



The Fielden Park area in 1905 showing the large residential properties along the Mersey, such as Wood Lawn and Mersey Bank.

Stop 17: Former British Council Building, now the Woodstock Arms.

The Woodstock (139 Barlow Moor Road) is a large 2 storey detached property dating from the late 19th Century. Originally built as a house, it was then occupied by the British Council and used as offices before it was converted into a public house. The Woodstock is a Grade II listed building. Trees within the site are covered by a Tree Preservation Order. The two storey building with cellars is in Queen Anne style with a square plan and a porch at the north and is in red brick with a red tiled roof. The entrance front has a stair turret with a doorway, a balcony with wrought iron railings, a canted oriel window, a parapet with a central pediment, and a hipped roof with an upstand (Hartwell *et al.*, 2004).

> Cross to the north side of Barlow Moor Road.



The Woodstock Arms

Stop 18: Oakbank.

Oakbank, 112-114 Barlow Moor Road is a listed building forming a pair of houses dated 1851 but subsequently altered. The building is of red brick in Flemish bond with some yellow headers and a slate roof. Double-depth in plan, each house is single-fronted, with their built halls-adjoining, similar to typical Georgian style. It has a distinctive iron lattice porch in the centre of the façade and a projecting bay to the left.

> Move next to Oakbank at the corner of Palatine Road.

Stop 19: Tripp's Corner.

When the Albert Park Estate was first developed, covenants restricted the development of trade or business premises except doctors or schools and only permitted shops at Tripp's corner (France and Woodall, 1976). The present block of shops in the northwest corner of the Barlow Moor Road and Palatine Road junction is the result of those covenants. Originally, Mr Tripp owned the property and ran the West Didsbury Supply Stores and the Post Office.

> Turn back into Palatine Road and go south across Spath Road to the steps up on the east side into Marie Louise Gardens.

Stop 20: Marie Louise Gardens.

Marie Louise Gardens is a relatively small park to the west of the centre of Didsbury. The park was originally owned by the Silkenstadt family as part of the grounds of their house. The land was bequeathed to the people of Manchester by Mrs. Silkenstadt in 1904 in memory of her daughter, Marie Louise. The park was at the center of controversy in 2007 after Manchester City Council proposed unsuccessfully to sell a portion of it to a private property developer.

The Silkenstadt family originated from Bremen in Germany. Johann Georg Silkenstadt moved to Manchester around 1865 and became a very wealthy cotton merchant. He married Josephine Helene Genth from Huddersfield and they lived at Rose Bank in West Didsbury which he had built in 1872. The Silkenstadts only had one child, a daughter they named Marie Louise, who was born on 26th March 1865. Marie Louise died of peritonitis on 20th October 1891, only three years after her marriage. On 27th October 1892, Mr Silkenstadt also died, leaving Josephine alone. Broken-hearted, Mrs Silkenstadt decided to do something in memory of her daughter and bought the piece of land along Palatine Road. The design of the Lodge and the Gardens was undertaken by Joshua Cartwright, a very well respected civil engineer in Manchester (<http://www.marielouisegardens.org.uk/>).



Oakbank, 112-114 Barlow Moor Road.



Tripp's Corner, Barlow Moor Road.



Dene Road West entrance to Marie Louise Gardens.

> The walk ends here. To get a bus to West Didsbury tram stop or straight into central Manchester return to Palatine Road and use a bus stop on the west side. Buses back to Didsbury village run along Barlow Moor Road.

From the gardens it is possible to walk a little further to see the Nazerene College and then to continue back to Didsbury village. The route is given in Diversion 2.

Diversion 1:

Stop 10a: The Northern Lawn Tennis Club.

The Northern Lawn Tennis Club was established in Old Trafford in 1881. Sir Humphrey de Trafford was elected the club's first president, with a membership of 56 life members. At the turn of the century the club moved to Didsbury with land purchased by members and local residents. In 1912 the club officially registered with the Croquet Association and by 1936 squash was added to the games played at the club.

The Northern had by then successfully run its international tennis tournament and also started to host Davis Cup matches. Tennis greats such as Ken Rosewall and Maureen "Little Mo" Connolly had success in the tournament, both winning here in the 50's. In 1969, The Northern made history as the first club in the North of England to have an indoor tennis court. In 1974 not only did the club introduce glass backed squash courts, but Jimmy Connors won the international tennis tournament. The 80's and 90's went on to be glorious decades for the tournament with John McEnroe, Jeremy Bates, Stefan Edberg, Pete Sampras (winning his first ever grass court tournament), Goran Ivanisevic and Patrick Rafter all becoming victorious.

The club has continued to expand and enhance its facilities, introducing two new indoor tennis courts in the mid 90's along with 3 clay courts and fitness facilities, a restaurant and function rooms. It is due to hold the Fuzion 100 Manchester Trophy Tournament in June 2019 and continues to foster young squash and tennis players.

(<http://www.thenorthern.co.uk/about-the-club/history>).



The Northern Lawn Tennis Club.

Stop 10b: Former District Bank.

Across Lapwing Lane at the corner of Ballbrook Avenue is the Grade II listed former District Bank, 1914-15, Designed by Barker, Ellis & Jones of Manchester, it is of brick with applied mock timber framing and cement render panels, and has a deep pitched and half-hipped roof with Westmorland slate coverings. In Tudor Revival style, it is mainly a two-storey structure, with a basement. (The West Didsbury tram stop provides a convenient point for those wishing to either return to Didsbury Village or access other parts of Manchester at this stage).

Stop 10c: Former Withington Town Hall, Lapwing Lane.

This Grade II listed 1881 building housed the Withington Local Board of Health offices, the centre of local government for the area from 1876 to 1894 when the Board became an Urban District Council. Probably built c.1880-90 of buff brick with dressings of red brick and red terracotta, and a slate roof, the building is a good example of a modest late 19th



The former District Bank, Palatine Road.



The former Withington Town Hall, Lapwing Lane.

century civic building, representing an important phase in the development of local government (<https://britishlisted-buildings.co.uk/101291512-former-withington-town-hall-didsbury-west-ward#.W3L7o8InZhE>).

Stop 10d: Former Mercantile Bank of Lancashire, Lapwing Lane.

This former Bank dated 1903, was designed by Joseph Swarbrick. It has finely-pointed red brick with red and yellow terracotta detailing, and a hipped 2-span red tiled roof with crested ridge tiles. In its L-shaped plan, the longer range contains the former banking hall and general office, and the smaller range (to the left) housed the former manager's office. On 1 July 1904, the business of the Mercantile Bank of Lancashire was transferred to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank. Amongst the many Manchester branch sites that were transferred to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank was this very attractive and unusual building in Lapwing Lane, West Didsbury. When the L&Y merged with the Bank of Liverpool and Martins, the Didsbury Branch became part of Martins Bank in 1928. It remained open beyond the merger with Barclays by almost twenty years, closing at the end of 1987. In 2016 it was occupied by Versus Law.

> From Lapwing Lane either continue to Burton Road and take a tram or bus to end the walk or re-join the walk by turning back to Old Lansdowne Road and walking down to the Synagogue.



The former Mercantile Bank of Lancashire.



The Martins Bank in Lapwing Lane around 1930.

Diversion 2:

- > Walk through the Gardens to Holme Road, turn left, walk up to Spath Road and then right along Spath Road. Turn right out of Spath Road into Lancaster Road. Proceed down Lancaster Road to the end where the College is across Dene Road.

Stop 20a: Nazarene Theological College, Dene Road and Didsbury Community Church.

The Nazarene Theological College (NTC) began life over seventy years ago in Glasgow, moving to Didsbury in 1959. Originally, students were given a college diploma but since 1992 the college has been in partnership with the University of Manchester and all the qualifications, from certificates to doctorates, are University of Manchester degrees. Belonging to the World Methodist Council, NTC is one of fifty-three colleges and universities around the world associated with the Church of the Nazarene, a denomination originating in the nineteenth-century holiness movement. As a growing world-wide fellowship, the church now numbers over two million members in over 150 countries. It stands firmly within the historic Christian faith and is evangelical.

Didsbury Community Church describes itself as 'a family-friendly church which is seeking to create a community where everyone is loved, accepted and valued'. It is part of the worldwide Church of the Nazarene (Evangelical Methodist) and meets at the church on the college grounds. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_Theological_College_\(England\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_Theological_College_(England))). See also <https://nazarene.ac.uk/> and <https://didsburycommunitychurch.co.uk/>.

The College has extensive grounds overlooking the Mersey Valley and claims to have the largest private woodland in South Manchester. It is thus a significant contributor to Manchester's green infrastructure.

- > From the College, return to Didsbury along Dene Road. On reaching Wilmslow Road, turn left to walk up to School Lane for the Didsbury Village tram stop, or right for the hostelrys of Didsbury Old Village and Fletcher Moss Gardens.



Nazarene Theological College.



Didsbury Community Church.

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