

Exploring Greater Manchester

a fieldwork guide



Edited by Paul Hindle

Chorlton-cum-Hardy: From village to lively, diverse suburban centre in 150 years.

The Keith Sutton Memorial Walk

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Dedication

We dedicate this walk to the memory of Keith Sutton (Fig. 1) who became ill the evening after he had walked around Chorlton with us, recalling his childhood there and pointing out the former cinemas and the swimming pool that he had known well.

Keith attended Chorlton Grammar School. His route by bicycle to school involved crossing the railway bridge and dashing down a narrow passage parallel to the railway tracks to reach Corkland Road. His great sporting activity was swimming, particularly at the baths on Manchester Road. He made lifelong friends at school, some of whom went with him to university in London. He joined the distinguished geography department at University College London (UCL), where he was well-liked and engaged in many sporting and social activities with his fellow students. Here he began his life-long interest in both North Africa and in government policies for resettlement and planned agriculture. Thereafter, Keith spent the remainder of his working life at Manchester University and was totally professional in all his teaching, administration and research. He always remembered his youth in Chorlton and talked excitedly about it with the other authors of this walk shortly before he died. (An obituary for Keith Sutton may be found at: https://www.mangeogsoc.org.uk/pdfs/sutton_obit_18_2.pdf).



Figure 1: Keith Sutton in the Wildlife Garden at the Methodist Church in Chorlton in August 2018.

Aims: To discover traces of the stages of evolution from a Saxon rural settlement to a reviving, lively, twenty-first century Manchester suburb with a distinctive character. The walk emphasises past transitions driven by changes in transport, the growth of local institutions and evolving social and demographic characteristics.

Starting point: St. Werburgh's Road Metrolink Station

Estimated time: 2 hours

Further information:

Simpson A (2012) *The Story of Chorlton-cum-Hardy*, The History Press.

Sutton K (2016) Vestiges of the pre-urban landscape in the suburban geography of South Manchester, in *Manchester Geographies* (ed. W H Theakstone), Manchester Geographical Society, 37-46.

Maps: Ordnance Survey Greater Manchester Street Atlas

Date of preparation: May 2020

Related walk

This walk can be taken as a comparison to the walk around West Didsbury and Albert Park, also in the Manchester Geographical Society's 'Exploring Greater Manchester' Series, (https://www.mangeogsoc.org.uk/egm/1_10_Didsbury.pdf).

Introduction

Chorlton is one of a series of Saxon settlements on either side of the River Mersey from Stockport to Partington. In most of these settlements, a church stands on a high terrace overlooking the Mersey floodplain (Fig. 2). Both the Northenden and Didsbury churches have short, but steep, slopes up from the river level to the churchyard. To this day, the floodplain remains largely an open greenspace, much of it, apart from the golf courses and a few farms, is accessible to everyone. It is disrupted by transport infrastructure, mainly routes across the river, but particularly the embankment of the M60 which runs along the whole floodplain and which led to the development of the waterparks at Chorlton and Sale.

Chorlton's neighbours on the north bank of the Mersey are Stretford to the west and Didsbury to the east. These three settlements differ greatly in character, mainly due to the ways in which they changed during the nineteenth century. Stretford had had a bridge carrying the Manchester to Chester road, following the old Roman road route, over the Mersey at Crossford since at least 1538 (Swain, 1987). Didsbury had two places where the Mersey could be crossed by fords and gained a road bridge across the Mersey in 1755 when the Manchester and Wilmslow Turnpike Trust built a stone bridge across the river. Stretford was then the first

to gain a new form of Mersey crossing when the Bridge-water Canal aqueduct over the river was opened in 1774. A few years later, near Chorlton Green, a local farmer began ferrying people across the river by boat near the location of the present Jackson's Boat pub. Thus, Stretford was both on the route to Chester and the new canal, and Didsbury on the new turnpike road, while people wanting to cross the river near Chorlton would have had to walk to the ferry boat, or after 1816 to the new wooden footbridge for which they would have had to pay a halfpenny (0.2 pence in modern UK currency) to cross. That footbridge was rebuilt and became a public right of way by 1900. There were later plans to build a road across the Mersey a short distance upstream of Jackson's Boat, at the site where the Metrolink tramway bridge is now located. The eighth edition of the AZ Manchester Street Atlas shows a proposed Hardy Lane extension from Junction 8 of the then M63 motorway at Sale Moor running across the golf courses on the floodplain to Hardy Lane and eventually the Mauldeth Road dual carriageway. Thus, unlike Stretford and Didsbury with their river crossings, Chorlton lacked major access to the south until the Metrolink to Wythenshawe and Manchester Airport was opened in 2014.

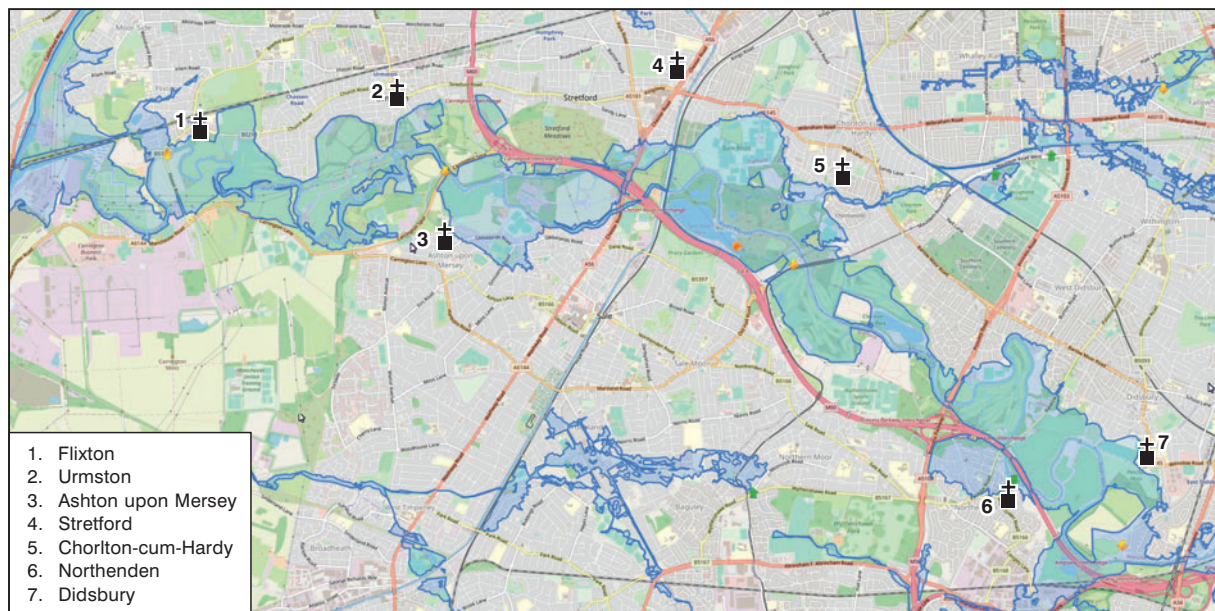


Figure 2: The locations of medieval village churches on the edge of the floodplain of the River Mersey south of Manchester. The areas shown in blue are taken from the Environment Agency's modern flood map and provide a good indication of the extent of the natural floodplain except where it has been modified by transport infrastructure, such as that of the M60. (Source: <https://riverlevels.uk/>).

Chorlton was thus less well placed to develop urban functions and during the first six decades of the nineteenth century remained primarily an agricultural settlement producing food for the expanding city a few kilometres to the north. The key factor in its urban development was the arrival of the Midland Railway in 1880, which also gave Didsbury its first station, 30 years after a railway station was opened in Stretford. The contrast in population growth in the three settlements is striking (Fig. 3). Stretford grew steadily until 1891 and then in the next decade had a spurt in growth with the opening of the Trafford Park industrial estate. Didsbury was almost twice the size of Chorlton in 1871, but following the coming of the railway, by 1901 they were nearly the same size.

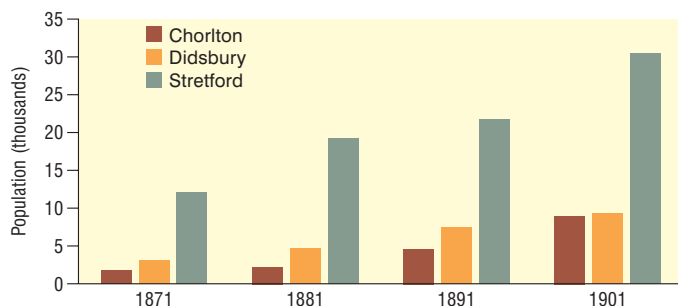


Figure 3: Changing populations 1871–1901 in the three settlements north of the Mersey.

A brief history of Chorlton

Following its original settlement by Saxons in 610 CE, four hamlets, known as: Chollerton; Hardie; Manslache or Martledge; and Hughend developed in clearings in the surrounding oak forest. The name Chorlton is possibly derived from the Saxon Ceorlaton or Churl'stun, meaning the enclosure of the ceorls or peasants, or from Ceolfripton, meaning Ceolfip's enclosure. The four hamlets joined together to create a single parish, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, the Latin word 'cum' meaning 'with'. The hamlet of Withington joined the parish in the year 1641, bringing the total population to 84. The southern border of the township was the River Mersey, then an abundant source of salmon and trout. The river was not only the county boundary between Lancashire and Cheshire, but had also been the boundary between the Kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria until England was united by Alfred the Great (see: https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/906/chorlton_green_conservation_area/2).

The small community remained a quiet and secluded rural backwater township until the mid-19th century. Chorlton's first church, a chapel, dedicated to St Clement, was established south of Chorlton Green early in the 16th century, probably in 1512, as a chapel of ease to the Church of St James, Didsbury in the then huge ecclesiastical parish of Manchester, in the Diocese of Lichfield. In 1845 Chorlton covered 517 ha, 359 ha of which were owned by William Egerton of Tatton Park and 93 ha by

George Lloyd, with 21 other owners sharing the rest. 198 ha were classified as arable land, 275 ha as pasture and meadow, and 4 ha as woodland. Much of the remaining land was devoted to smallholdings and orchards.

The real growth of modern Chorlton started in 1862 when a horse-drawn bus service opened to Stretford railway station, followed in 1864 by another horse-drawn bus service to Manchester city centre (Kennedy, 1989). With mains water becoming available in 1862, along with gas and sanitation in the 1870s, a housing boom occurred with a new village centre arising to the east of the green, centred on Beech Road. The population rose from 734 in 1861, to 1653 in 1871, and 2332 in 1881. Socially some differentiation occurred with high status residents in the Edge Lane – High Lane area and skilled artisan families living around Beech, Church and

Cross Roads. In the late 1870s the Egertons and the Lloyd Estate sold off land. By taking a chief rent rather than cash payment they helped to create a development boom after the recession of the late 1870s. The opening of the Midland Railway station in 1880, led to the rapid expansion of new developments on both sides of the railway bridge. When the electric tram service opened in 1907 the horse-drawn buses were finally rendered obsolete (Simpson and Topping, 2017).

Intensive residential development took place after the First World War. Particularly since 1945, there has been much multi-ethnic immigration into Chorlton. The Polish community became established in the 1950s and 1960s. Others came from the Indian subcontinent, including Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. The gentrification of the area proceeded rapidly after 1980 with young professionals taking advantage of the

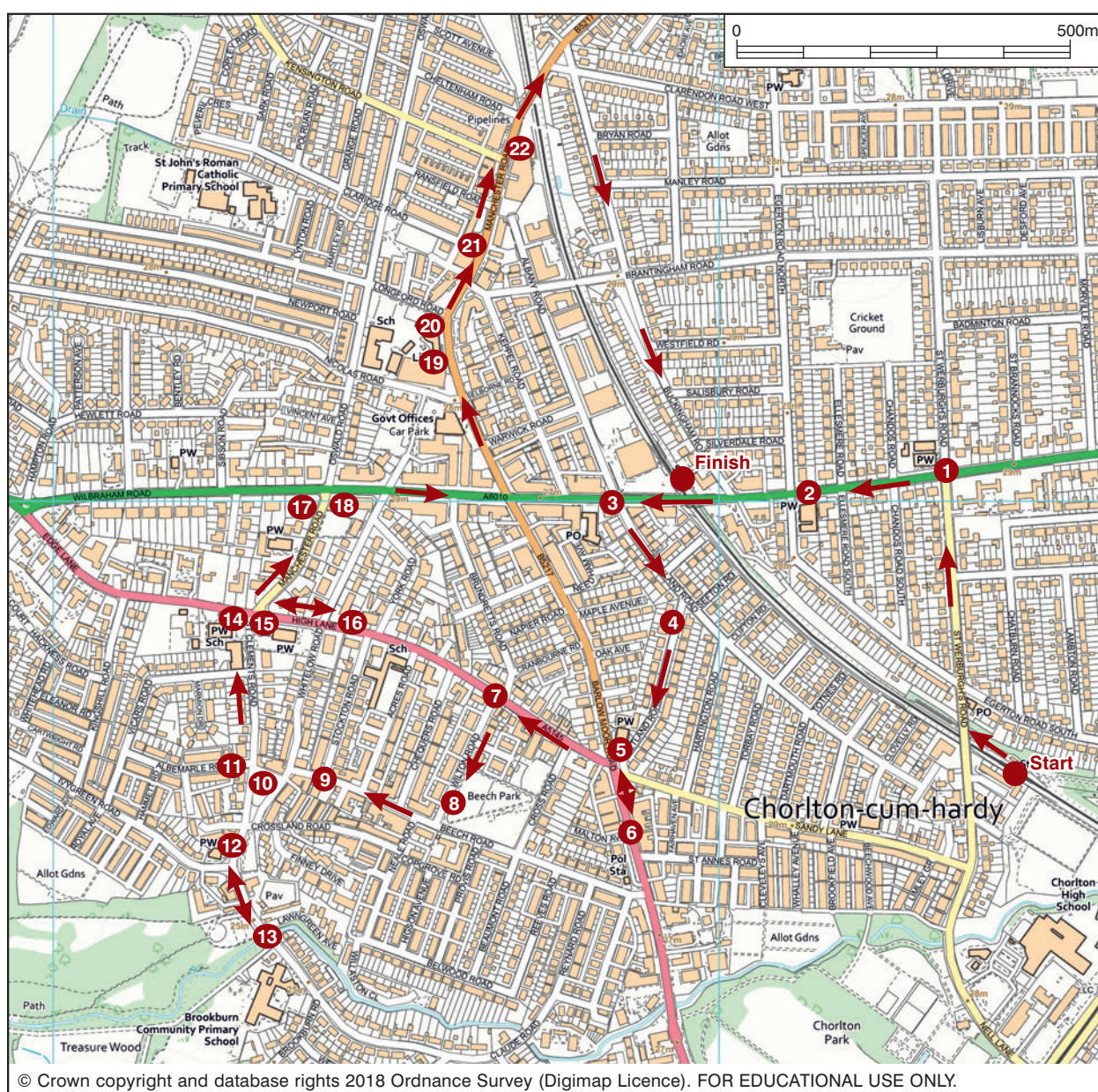


Figure 4: Map of the route around Chorlton-cum-Hardy.

unmodernised, smaller terraced properties that came up for sale. By 2020 Chorlton was considered to be one of the most up and coming areas of Greater Manchester with many young professional couples seeking to put down roots. There are good primary and secondary schools. Chorlton also has much green space with Chorlton Meadows and Chorlton Ees linking to the Mersey Valley and the Trans-Pennine Trail.

Many consider the area to represent the liberal heart of Manchester, awash with organic delis, small independent bars and trendy restaurants offering European, Middle Eastern and Asian cuisine. Beech Road is often cited as *“the trendiest road in Manchester”* because of its abundance of boutiques, cafes and restaurants. Chorlton has been described as *“The hip and happy nappy valley”* and Manchester’s funkier suburb (The Sunday Times, March 18 2018). Work on a £13m Chorlton to Manchester city centre cycling and walking route began in November 2019. The 5 km route runs from the Barlow Moor Road tram stop, northwestwards along Barlow Moor Road, Manchester Road, Upper Chorlton Road and Chorlton Road to the A56 and Mancunian Way roundabout and underpass near Cornbrook.

The Walk

The walk (Fig. 4) starts at St. Warburg’s Road Metrolink Station (close to the site of the former grammar school where Keith Sutton was a student) and examines two churches east of the railway along Wilbraham Road before seeing vestiges of 1930’s retail and leisure activities on Barlow Moor Road and then making its way via Wilton Road and Beech Road to Chorlton Green, one of Manchester City Council’s conservation areas in Chorlton. It then turns north up St. Clements Road to High Lane, visiting the listed buildings of St. Clements Church on High Lane and Lloyd and Platts Hotel at the junction of Manchester Road and Wilbraham Road in another of Manchester City Council’s conservation areas in Chorlton. From here, it proceeds to Manchester Road to see the architecturally interesting Chorlton Library and Sedge Lynn pub (formerly the Temperance Billiard Hall). From Manchester Road it is a short walk back south to Wilbraham Road to access trams and buses at or near the Chorlton Metrolink Station.

Stop 1: St. Werburgh’s Church (Figs 5 and 6).

> As you leave the lift at St Werburgh’s Road Metrolink Station, cross the road and go to the left to the end of the bridge. The modern houses and apartments below the road were built in the 1980s on the site of Chorlton Grammar School. Turn back across the bridge proceed north up St Werburgh’s Road to Wilbraham Road where you will see the church across the road.



In 1898, Chorlton (St. Clement’s) parish was divided. St. Werburgh’s Church was consecrated in 1902 on land taken from the eastern part of St Clement’s parish to serve that area and Whalley Range. St. Werburgh’s is Anglican but part of the Inclusive Church, a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate. It was initiated in 2003 in response to a particular incident within the life of the Church of England. The Revd. Dr. Jeffrey John had been nominated as Bishop of Reading; this was withdrawn when it became publicly known that Jeffrey John was in a long-term same-sex relationship. The unease felt by so many led to the creation of an online petition, asking individuals and churches to support what became known as the Inclusive Church ‘Statement of Belief’. The response was immense and soon the petition reached nearly 10,000 signatories. Subsequently a small group of supporters met to consider this overwhelming response, and concluded that the Inclusive Church was here to stay.

Figures 5 and 6: St. Werburgh’s Church and its foundation stone.

The first stone of the church was laid on the 29th September 1899 by Wilbraham Egerton, 1st Earl Egerton (17 January 1832 – 16 March 1909) who was an English Conservative Party politician from the Egerton family. He sat in the House of Commons from 1858 to 1883 when he inherited his peerage and was elevated to the House of Lords.

Stop 2: St. Ninian's United Reformed Church.

> Go back across the road and walk west along Wilbraham Road as far as the church at the junction with Egerton Road South.

The foundation stone on the old church building at the present site of St. Ninian's (now the Old Hall) was laid in September 1907. The congregation of the Chorlton-cum-Hardy Church, which had been meeting in the Masonic Hall in Chorlton from 1903 onwards, moved to its new home in March 1908. The church continued to grow in the early decades of the 20th century and to create a strong and vibrant identity for itself within the Presbyterian tradition and among many Presbyterian Manchester residents of Scottish descent. During the Second World War, the nearby Whalley Range Presbyterian Church was severely damaged by bombing in December 1940, and by July 1941 it had been agreed that the Whalley Range and Chorlton churches would amalgamate on the Chorlton site under the name of St Ninian's Presbyterian Church.

Over time, the need for more accommodation became apparent and this, coupled with a significant amount of war damage compensation received from the government for the damage to the Whalley Range church, led to a decision in 1949 to build a new church, adjacent and connected to the existing building. The new church opened for worship in November 1951, the crowning glory of the beautiful new building being the three panels of the stained-glass window which was installed in the south wall of the sanctuary by the highly reputed artist-craftsman Francis Spear. These windows can be seen from the outside in the gap between the present church and the old building (Figs 7 to 10).

St. Ninian's is now also home to the Metropolitan Congregation, a Christ-centered congregation which serves, celebrates and affirms the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (lgbt) communities of Manchester and North West England (see: <https://metropolitanchurch.org.uk/>). The original building now behind the church is currently used by the charity Chorlton Good Neighbours Care Group.



Figures 7, 8 and 9: Views of St. Ninian's Church.

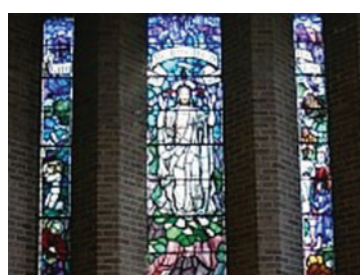


Figure 10: The stained-glass windows in St. Ninian's.

Stop 3: Chorlton Post Office.

- > From St. Ninian's, continue west along Wilbraham Road, crossing the bridge and continue until you reach the Post Office on your left.

The site of this modern building used to have residential properties to which shops were added at a later date: a common form of development in Chorlton. The old post office that was bombed in World War II was located in what is now the phone shop.

Stop 4: The gentrification of Chorlton (Figs 11 and 12).

- > From the Post Office go back a few metres and turn right down Corkland road and the first right into Zetland Road.

You will pass many houses that have been divided into flats and are in varying states of maintenance. However, at numbers 6 and 8 on Zetland Road you can see houses that have refitted, modernised, with the front gardens being paved over to provide motor vehicle parking spaces (Fig. 13).



Figures 11 and 12: Houses in Zetland Road.



Figure 13: Modernised house in Zetland Road.

Stop 5: Chorlton Central Church.

- > Continue down Zetland to the junction with Barlow Moor Road and the church is on your right.

This building was the MacFadyen Memorial Congregational Church founded in 1894. It closed in 1975. Later it was re-opened as a Baptist and United Reformed Church. Styled an inclusive church, the building is also used for a wide range of general activities from yoga to meditation (Figs 14 and 15). (website: <http://www.chorlton-central.org.uk>).



Figures 14 and 15: The Chorlton Central Church.

Stop 6: Legacies of old 1930's Chorlton.

- > After looking at the Central Church, turn round and proceed southwards down Barlow Moor Road where after some 200 m you will see the row of shops with wrought-iron canopies, typical of many suburban shopping centres before 1940.

Few such parades of shops with canopies remain now (Fig. 16). Opposite them is the former cinema which became a Co-operative food store but at the time of writing (May 2020) is vacant (Fig. 17). Further down the road the bus station is on the site of the original terminus of trams from Manchester.



Figure 16: Parade of shops with canopies.



Figure 17: The former cinema and Co-operative store.

Stop 7: The Manchester Centre for Buddhist Meditation and garden.

- > Turn back and go northwards towards the Wilbraham Road traffic lights, but after a short distance turn left along High Lane.

Just beyond Cross Road, on your left is the Manchester Centre for Buddhist Meditation with its beautiful meditation garden (Figs 18 and 19). The Centre aims to increase dialogue and engagement between different Buddhist schools and welcomes other interested people or groups to work together to increase compassion and understanding in our society.



Figures 18 and 19: Buddhist Meditation Centre, High Lane.

Stop 8: Beech Road Park.

- > From High Lane turn left and walk down Wilton Road to Beech Road Park on your left, once known as Chorlton Recreational Ground.



Figure 20. Beech Road Park

The park (Fig. 20) was originally situated south of Beech Road until 1896, when Lord Egerton gave the present site to the Council in 1904, when selling the original recreation ground for a housing development. In the 19th century Beech Road Park was farmland and James Higginbottom (see stop 11) farmed one of the long, narrow pieces of land that had been enclosed but retained its strip pattern as shown on the 1847 tithe map (Sutton, 2017). Under the open-field system, each manor or village had two or three large fields divided into many narrow strips of land each cultivated by different individuals or families.

The park acquired its first beech trees on St. Valentine's Day in 1968 when 50 were planted by the then Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress together with local school children. Such small pocket parks are key components of urban greenspace networks, bringing ecosystem services, such as summer heat intensity reduction and uptake of carbon dioxide, into suburbs and city centres.

Stop 9: Beech Road, former police station and Methodist Chapel (both were eating and drinking venues before the COVID-19 pandemic).

- > At the southern side of the park turn right along Beech Road towards its cafés and shops.

Beech Road now has about a dozen places where a cup of coffee can be bought at (or from) many proudly independent small businesses (Figs 21 and 22). Locals claim that it is somewhere like nowhere else. It attracts visitors from other parts of Greater Manchester to its bars and restaurants.

Beech Road and Chorlton Green were the heart of Chorlton before the railway was built in 1880. There are many pre-1870 buildings (Fig. 23) On the left-hand side of the road, is Chorlton's original police station built in 1885. Further along on the same side of the road is Zitano, which occupies the former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, built in 1805 on land given by a local farmer, Jeremiah Brundett, and reconstructed in 1827 to cope with a larger congregation; it lost regular services in 1873, when a much larger chapel was built on Manchester Road (Stop 17). Between 1780 and 1805 a small Methodist Society had met in homes around Chorlton Green and in two farm barns, one of which, Higginbotham's, still stands (see Stop 11; Higginbotham farmed one of strip fields near the park shown in Figure 23).



Figure 21: The former police station.



Figure 22: The Former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel.

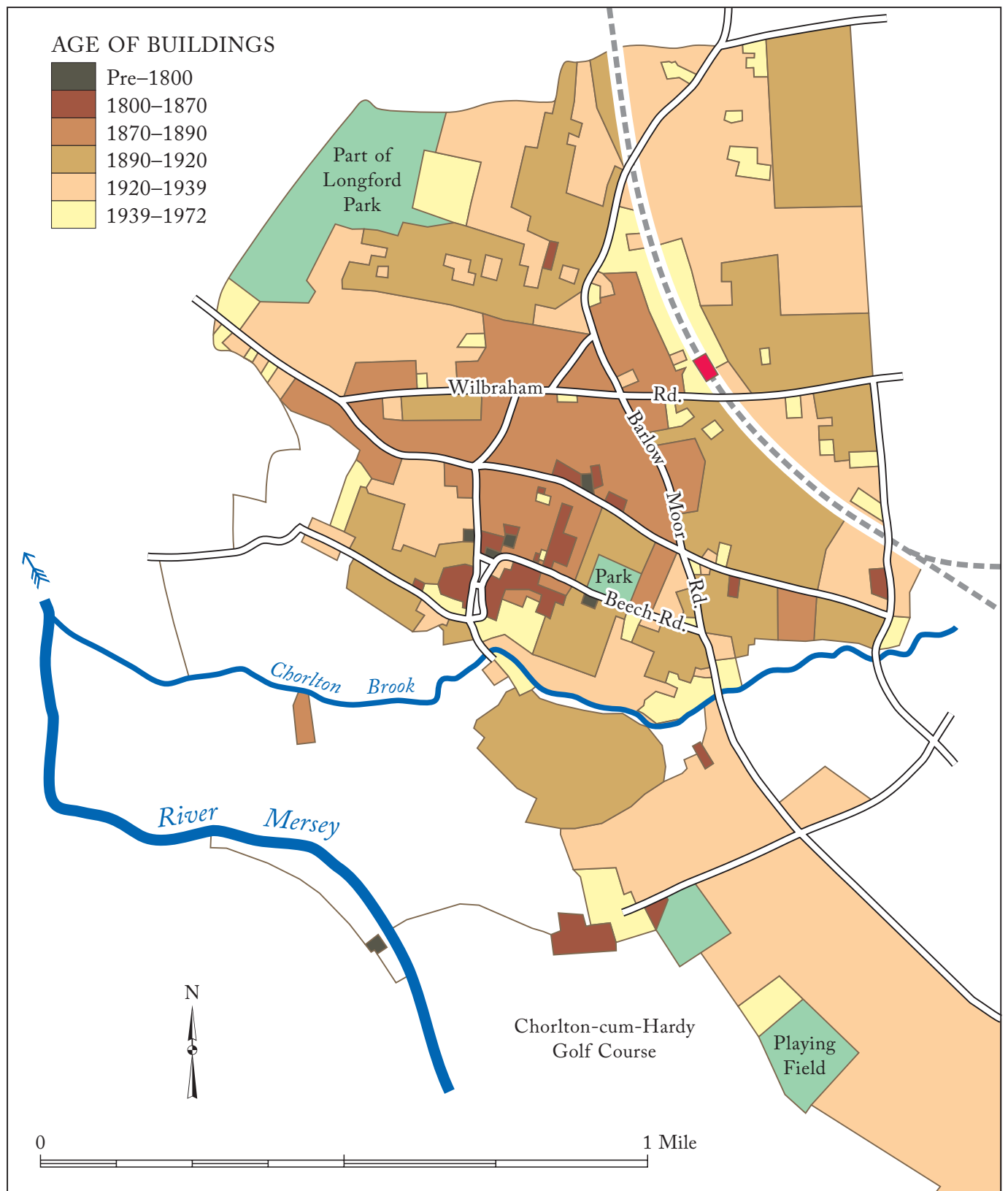


Figure 23: Map of the ages of buildings in Chorlton (after Sutton, 2017).

Stop 10: Chorlton Green conservation area, gatehouse and graveyard.

> Continue along Beech Road to Chorlton Green.

Although Chorlton Green has a long history, all its ancient buildings were gradually replaced by new ones over the centuries. No records are available to identify the oldest remaining claimant. One possibility is said to be the Horse and Jockey (Fig. 24), which dates from around 1512, but little if any of the present building is as old as that. In fact, the timber-framed frontage was applied as recently as 1908 (see: https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/906/chorlton_green_conservation_area/3). The Horse and Jockey was licensed in 1793. For most of its existence it was contained in the rooms either side of the entrance, with the other two properties being residential, one of which was the home of Sam Wilton who enclosed the village green in the early 19th century. Not until 1894 did the green revert to public use following the death of Wilton's daughter.

On the east side of the green are late 19th century buildings, one being the former St. Clement's Church of England National School erected in 1878 (Figs 25 and 26). It is on the site of two earlier schools which opened in the early 19th century and were replaced in the 1840s. The building was converted into three residential properties around 2012.

Zetland Terrace, a row of houses built in 1883, stands quite close to the road, in contrast to the old farmhouses opposite with their generous forecourts and gardens.

The lych gate is the gateway to the original Church of St Clement which was relocated to Edge Lane in 1866 (Stop 14). The lych gate is a Grade II listed building, noteworthy



Figure 24: The Horse and Jockey at Chorlton Green.

for its octagonal, half-timbered bell tower (Fig. 27). Built in 1888, it was a gift from one of the parishioners, Sir Cunliffe Brooks, the leader of a faction which objected to the re-siting of the new church. It was restored in the 1980s after a series of archaeological digs carried out by Angus Bateman, when the green was seeded and other landscape work was carried out. The gatehouse is in brick with a semicircular arch, ramped side walls including a round-headed doorway on the south. It is surmounted by an octagonal bell turret with a tiled spirelet.

The old St Clement's churchyard (Fig.28), next to the Bowling Green public house, was in use for about 160 years although interments ceased in 1882 except for spaces in existing graves. The extant burial registers begin in 1753 and end in 1916 although the Rev John Edmund Booth said there was a gravestone dated 1660. Among the graves is that of Thomas Walker resident of Barlow Hall and later Longford



Figures 25 and 26: The former National School at Chorlton Green.



Figure 27: The lych gate at Chorlton Green.

House, Manchester Borough Reeve, a radical activist in the abolition of the Slave Trade, and supporter of the French Revolution, who was indicted for conspiracy and had his Manchester home attacked by a king and church mob (Simpson 2019). By 1881 re-burials caused a scandal which was resolved by the appointment of a Home Office inspector in November of that year. He recommended an order be made to close the burial ground to new interments, save for certain exceptions. The order was made in 1882. In 1930 bodies remaining in the churchyard were exhumed and buried in Manchester's Southern Cemetery.

The Bowling Green public house (Fig. 29) claims to have been licensed since 1693, though the present building (the third on this site) dates from 1908.



Figure 29: The Bowling Green Hotel.



Figure 28: The St. Clément's churchyard.

Stop 11: Chorlton Green West Side: Higginbottom Farmhouse (Grade II listed).

The farmhouse (Fig.30), later a private house, in red brick with a slate roof is situated behind the hedge. It has two storeys, a double-depth plan, a symmetrical front of two bays, a service wing, and a dairy in the angle. Above the doorway is a canopy, and the windows are casements, those on the front with segmental heads. Whilst much of 18th and 19th century farming in South Manchester was relatively small-scale, typically only 0.4–3.6 ha, Higginbottom farmed 9.7 ha. Some three quarters of his land out towards the River Mersey was meadow irrigated and drained by a series of ditches which required constant maintenance. During the winter months in the early 20th century he regularly flooded one of his fields to provide a skating facility for the village. Adjacent to the farmhouse and constructed in a similar style, is the previously mentioned barn where the first Methodists held some of their services.



Figure 30: The Higginbottom Farmhouse.

Stop 12: Chorlton Evangelical Church.

> Downslope from the Higginbottom farmhouse and opposite the lower end of the former churchyard is the somewhat austere looking Evangelical Church.

Originally founded in 1930 (as the Chorlton Christian Fellowship) by a group of believers who felt that they could no longer worship at any of the existing local churches. The Fellowship acquired the tenancy of a small hall over the grocery shop on the corner of Beech Road and Wilton Road which is now the launderette, and services were held there until the opening of the present church on Chorlton Green in December 1951 and the change of name to Chorlton Evangelical Church (Fig. 31). The focus on the scriptures has been maintained to the present day (see: <http://chorltonevangelical.org/>).



Figure 31: Chorlton Evangelical Church.

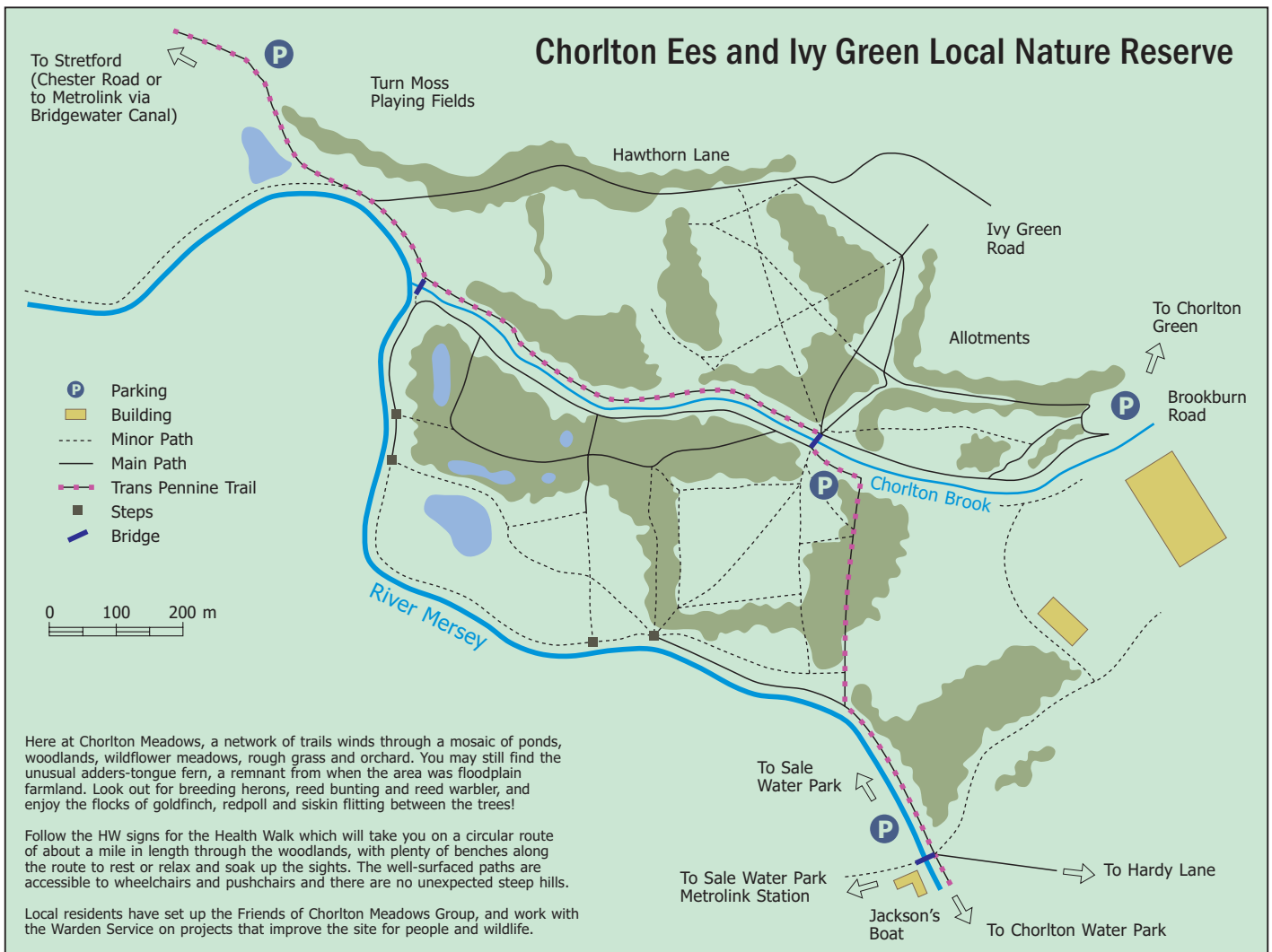


Figure 32: Map of Chorlton Ees and Ivy Green Local Nature Reserve showing the trails leading to Jackson's Boat and the Mersey River bank. (Text information taken from the notice board near Brookburn Road).

Stop 13: Chorlton Brook.

- > From the Evangelical Church walk downslope further away from Chorlton Green to Ivy Green car park on your right and the entrance to Chorlton Ees.

A short distance downslope from the Evangelical Church, the road crosses Chorlton Brook which at this point is flowing westwards, almost parallel to the River Mersey. Once farmed as meadow land, the public open space here, known as the Chorlton Meadows, has several walking routes, one of which leads to the site of the former Withington sewage works, now largely a wooded area with trees only a few decades old. Ponds in the woods occupy the sites of the settling ponds of the former works. This is a much larger component of the green infrastructure network around Chorlton and, like Beech Park, provides many ecosystem services that brighten and enhance people's lives. Walking tracks from here link to the many routes along the Mersey Valley Corridor, including the Trans Pennine Trail (Fig. 32).

Further east along Brookburn Road and its continuation, Claude Road, is the Chorltonville conservation area, built in 1911 as a garden village at the same as the well-known garden cities at Letchworth and Welwyn. Originally intended as affordable rental housing for skilled artisans, today the estate is almost entirely owner-occupied, with most roads, footpaths and green areas owned by a Board of Trustees on behalf of all house owners.



Figure 33: St. Clement's Church.

Stop 14: St. Clement's Church.

- > From Ivy Green car park return north up St. Clement's Road to the church on the left at the junction with Edge Lane.

The new Anglican St. Clement's Church (Fig. 33) on Edge Lane opened in 1866. The church is in sandstone with slate roofs. It consists of a nave with a clerestory, north and south aisles, a northwest timber framed porch, north and south transepts, a chancel and a southwest tower. The tower has an octagonal belfry stage, and a short spire. The architects, Pennington & Bridgen, used the Decorated Gothic style. Building work began in 1860 and the roof was added in 1866; but the church was not consecrated until 1896. After this three additions were made: the north transept in 1883, the Lady Chapel in 1895 and the south transept in 1896 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Clement%27s_Church,_Chorlton-cum-Hardy).

Stop 15: St. John's Church.

Situated across St. Clement's Road from the Anglican Church some 20 metres down the main road is St. John's Catholic Church (Fig. 34). The Catholic mission to the Chorlton area commenced in 1892 when St. Peter's Priory in Woodlea House on Edge Lane was founded. After a short-lived relocation to a building on High Lane, land on Chequers Road was purchased in 1897 and a new school and chapel were opened in 1898 and dedicated to St. Augustine. These buildings survive, being used as a parish centre and sports club.

The site of the present church was acquired by the Rev. Joseph Kelly in 1917, with the church, dedicated to Our Lady and St. John, being built in 1927, largely through the generosity of the John Leeming family (Kelly, 1928). The architect of the new building was Harold Greenhalgh, while the contractor was George Powis. The church is of brick with terracotta dressings. It consists of a nave with a projecting northwest baptistery, chancel flanked by chapels,



Figure 34: St. John's Catholic Church.

and sacristies in transeptal projections behind, linked to the presbytery.

Stop 16: Buddhist Centre; The Kadampa Meditation Centre Manchester near St. John's Church.

Nearly opposite St. Johns across the main road, the Buddhist Centre, offers daily classes, prayers and is the home of their vegetarian/vegan World Peace Café (Fig. 35). The building was formerly the studio and school of the artist Tom Mostyn, subsequently briefly taken over as a school and later the home of the photographer Charles Ireland. It is now the residential centre of the Kadampa Meditation Centre in central Manchester which was first established by Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso Rinpoche in 1992 (see: <https://kmcmanchester.org/the-centre/>).



Figure 35: The Kadampa Meditation Centre.

Stop 17: Methodist Church and community wildlife garden.

> Walk back westwards (away from central Chorlton) and turn right up Manchester Road to the Methodist Church.

The original Methodist chapel has been seen at stop 9. The chapel moved to Manchester Road in 1873 when this Neo-Gothic chapel was built (Figs 36 to 39). It has a memorial to those who lost their lives in the First World War in the grounds. The Sunday School Hall, which was a Red Cross hospital during the 1914–18 war, is now home to the Edge Theatre.

In response to the 'State of Nature 2016' report (Hayhow *et al.* 2016) the church community has developed the garden into a community wildlife garden. It includes a variety of nest boxes, hedgehog homes, bat boxes, bug houses, log piles, bird feeders, a pond, wildflowers and some wildlife cameras. This is another important “pocket park” sized piece of urban green infrastructure.



Figures 36–39: Images of Chorlton Methodist Church and the community wildlife garden.

Stop 18: Lloyd and Platts Hotel.

> Continue along Manchester Road to Wilbraham Road.

On your right is a Grade II listed public house and hotel in typical Manchester red facing brick with sandstone dressings, bracketed eaves, and a slate roof, on a corner site (Fig. 40). The Lloyd and Platts Hotel is a high two-storey building with a third storey contained within the steeply pitched roof that is covered in blue/black welsh slate. Brick and sandstone corbels form the brackets to the eaves and are emphasised by a course of blue brick at the lower level with the wall junction. The building would have had an increased presence in the area by virtue of its tall chimneys, but these structures have been reduced in height and capped. The licence was granted in 1868 at a time when the adjacent area was being expanded. It was the first 'modern' public house in Chorlton and the hotel and associated bowling club with clubhouse and a tennis court provided recreational facilities for the local residents, helping to fulfil a social role. It was listed grade II in 2005.



Figure 40: The Lloyd and Platts Hotel.

The bowling club building, to the rear of the hotel, effectively at right angles to Manchester Road, is also two storeys high, the upper storey projecting beyond the ground floor and supported by four cast iron columns. The ground floor elevation is a screen wall of glass and timber. An adjacent red/orange brick single storey building, rising from the pavement of Manchester Road, has a hipped roof covered by patterned slates.

Stop 19: The Sedge Lynn public house.

> Cross over Wilbraham road and turn right past the shopping arcade until you reach the crossroads with Barlow Moor Road at the traffic lights in the centre of Chorlton. Turn left (north) and proceed to the Sedge Lynn public house on the left.

Originally the Temperance Billiard Hall, built in 1907, its architect was Norman Evans, who designed nearly 20 halls from 1906 to 1911. Its historic building description reads "It is in red brick and terracotta, and has a barrel vaulted roof (Figs 41 and 42). The front wall is semi-circular with a nine-light bow window, to the right is a double doorway with a triple fanlight, and above is a Venetian window. Protruding from the left corner is a hexagonal pavilion with a domed roof acting as a porch. Along the right return are four five-light dormers under curved heads".



Figure 41: The Temperance Hall just after opening 1907.



Figure 42: The Sedge Lynn in 2019.

Stop 20: Chorlton Library.

> Continue north along Manchester Road to the Library.

The library was built on the site of Redgate Farm in 1914 to a design by Manchester City Council architect Henry Price, with a grant from Andrew Carnegie. It is in Edwardian Baroque style of red brick and Portland stone, with a parapet, flat roof and octagonal dome. The entrance front has three bays, with a semi-circular small Ionic temple-like structure with two columns (a distyle) in the centre (Fig. 43).

The library has survived threats of closure. In 2013 Manchester Council announced plans to sell the library after its reorganisation of the provision of leisure and library services in Chorlton into a new £5.7 million “joint service centre” to be built on the site of Chorlton shopping precinct. Fears that the library would then be demolished were allayed when on 21st August 2013 it was designated a Grade II listed building following a campaign by local Liberal Democrat Councillor Victor Chamberlain. It has continued to be the library and has been refurbished and has become the second busiest suburban library in the City of Manchester.



Figure 43: Chorlton Library.



Figure 44: The Barbakan Delicatessen and Bakery.

The changing nature of Chorlton from a village to a vibrant cosmopolitan suburb is further exemplified by two locally well-known retail establishments that today attract customers from all over south west Manchester and further afield.

Stop 21: Barbakan Delicatessen and Bakery.

> Further north along Manchester Road on the left is the Barbakan Bakery and Delicatessen.

Described on one website as “A priceless piece of living history in a revitalised city”, Barbakan (Fig. 44) is named after the Krakow Barbakan, a historic gateway leading into the Old Town of Krakow, Poland, from which its immigrant founders came in 1964. Since 1985 it has been owned and run as a family business by a half Polish/half Italian family. Reviewers are ecstatic about the range of bread on sale, one more general Tripadvisor comment being “Nowhere like it, so wish London had somewhere like this”.

Stop 22: Unicorn Grocery Workers’ Co-operative.

> Continue northwards along Manchester Road. Shortly on the right is the Unicorn Grocery.

Unicorn (Fig. 45) was established in 1995 by a small group of people committed to social change, who had a vision for the kind of shop that they wanted to shop in themselves. Operating as a democratically run grocery to meet the needs of the community, has a strong eco-friendly agenda, paying attention to packaging and such customer facilities as a water-bottle refilling station. Unicorn’s policy is to have no management hierarchy and not to sell animal products. In 2007 a rooftop wildlife garden and pond were installed and 8.5 ha of prime growing land near Leigh were purchased to supply the co-op (<https://www.unicorn-grocery.coop/our-co-op/our-history/>). In 2019, it was named Lancashire Life Independent Retailer of the Year.



Figure 45: The Unicorn Grocery Workers’ Co-operative.

- > The walk ends here. To get to Chorlton Metrolink station continue along Manchester Road, turn right into Clarendon Road West and right again into Buckingham Road. Finally, turn right into Wilbraham Road and walk towards the bridge over the tram lines, from which steps and a lift lead down to the platforms.

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