

# PRESTWICH FOREST PARK

## ENJOYING THE FOREST PARK

Prestwich Forest Park offers 200 hectares of land for quiet enjoyment of woodland in a particularly built-up part of the Borough of Bury. From time to time more organised activities and events will take place, but mostly it will be a place for relaxing.

### Walking, Cycling and Horseriding

One of the main aims of the Forest Park is to offer a pleasant local area to walk or ride around which is big enough to give a countryside feel.

Paths, sometimes separated, are identified for cyclists and horseriders.



### Natural History

Much of the Forest Park is designated as a site of biological importance, encompassing a good variety of rich habitats. Mere and Prestwich Cloughs have large bird populations. There are interesting marsh floras in Mere Clough and Waterdale.

### Archaeology

With a bit of searching it is possible to find evidence of 800 years occupation.

Remains of the deer park pale (boundary) can be found in Mere Clough and the foundations of Peter Drinkwater's Irwell House have recently been exposed. The former industrial reservoirs survive. The remains of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal can be found crossing Clifton aqueduct (1796) near Thirteen Arches former railway viaduct (1846).

Many other buildings or structures have existed in the Forest Park area, but for the most part only map evidence remains.

### Other Activities

There is an orienteering course on Philips Park and Waterdale. There is fishing on Dams Head and Kingfisher Lodges. Guided walks and other activities are organised by the Croal Irwell Warden Service.





## **Prestwich Forest Park**

Prestwich Forest Park is 200 hectares of land in and around the Irwell Valley, which is being developed as a Wooded Park as part of Bury Council's contribution to the creation of the Red Rose Forest.

It is managed by Bury MBC Leisure Services Department and the Croal Irwell Warden Service. The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers also have a base in Philips Park.

## **A BRIEF HISTORY**

Prestwich Forest Park is made up of a number of sites with different pasts. This leaflet introduces a few of them. More information can be unearthed in Prestwich Library.

### **Philips Park**



Philips Park is thought to have been part of a medieval deer park belonging to the Pilkington family from about 1185. The Pilkingtons, being on the wrong side in the War of the Roses, had their land confiscated by the King and given to the Earl of Derby in 1485. The land may have survived as a game park until it was bought by Manchester merchant, Robert Philips, in 1799. He built a large house ('The Park') here which was demolished in 1950. The estate was bought by Prestwich and Whitefield Councils in 1948. The park is the only listed park in the Borough.

### **Drinkwater Park**

Drinkwater Park is believed to have been a farmed part of the medieval estate of Robert de Prestwich. It was acquired by the Langleys of Middleton in 1389, who lived in Agecroft Hall and held by them for 200 years, hence passing by marriage to the Coke family. Agecroft Hall was shipped to the USA in 1925.

The Fleams Farm part of Prestwich Manor was sold to Manchester merchant, Peter Drinkwater, in 1788. His house, Irwell House, was set on fire in a civil defence exercise in 1958 after a period of use as an isolation hospital.

### **Waterdale**

Bradley Brook was the historical boundary between the Manors of Pilkington and Prestwich, dividing the area now known as Waterdale. The valley bottom is likely to have been farmed until overwhelmed by industrial development. Both Bunkers Hill Dye Works and Molyneux Bleach Works had their foundation in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the former growing to cover much of the valley floor until demolition in 1974. Both sites have been reclaimed and only the factory reservoirs survive. The old Prestwich to Pendlebury Road crossed the River Irwell at Bradley Ford.

## **Prestwich Clough**

Both Mere and Prestwich Cloughs are relic Ancient Woodlands, though Mere Clough is the more 'natural' of the two, being famed in the Victorian period for its rare and beautiful flora.

Twenty-two acres of Prestwich Clough were acquired (partly by donation) in 1906 by Prestwich Council for use as a public park, with bandstand and tea rooms. At the bottom of the Clough used to stand a Bleach and Dye Works along with the house of its owner, John Buckley.

### **HOW TO GET THERE**

#### **By Tram**

Get off at Prestwich and walk down Mere Clough or Prestwich Clough. The Metrolink Walks leaflet No. 2 may help.

#### **By Bus**

The 92, 93, 97, 485 and 513 pass close by the Park.  
Further information on 0161-228-7811.

#### **By Bike**

Via the Outwood Trail, Park Lane, Clifton Road and Agecroft Road.

#### **By Horse**

Via Philips Park Road, the Outwood Trail, Clifton Road.

#### **By Car**

Via Park Lane to Philips Park. By Agecroft Road to Drinkwater Park.

#### **Further Information**

Bury Tourist Information Centre	<b>0161-253 5111</b>
Prestwich Information Desk	<b>0161-773 6233</b>
Croal Irwell Warden Service/BTCV	<b>0161-796 6404</b>



**Development Services**  
Creating a Brighter Borough



**e** Prestwich Forest Park has been developed with the assistance of:  
**ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS**

**Prestwich Forest Park**  
Finding Your Way



- River Irwell
- Streams
- Lodges and Ponds
- Trees and Woodlands
- Pylons and Power Lines
- Sports Pitches
- Railway Lines
- Metrolink Line
- Bus Stops
- Steps
- Bridges
- Buildings
- Main Footpaths
- Other Footpaths
- Routes for Horseriders
- Routes for Cyclists
- Access on Foot
- Access on Foot or Cycle
- Access on Horseback
- Access by Road
- Car Parks

**FACILITIES**  
There are as yet no toilets or refreshments in the Forest Park although Prestwich Clough is close to the centre of Prestwich.

**Ease of Access**  
Whilst efforts are made to make paths useable by everyone, terrain, distance and "informal" surfacing do impose their limitations. People with mobility difficulties will probably find the valley floor of Drinkwater Park the easiest going.

**Future Developments**  
At present there are just a few routes recommended for horseriders and cyclists. Over time, as new trees mature it is planned to open up more.

**Larger scale Plans**  
Larger scale plans (in sections) are available from Development Services by phone on 0161-253-5269



Scale in Miles: 0, 1/2 Mile, 1 Mile  
Scale in Kilometres: 0, 500m, 1 Kilometre, 1.5 Kilometre