

A Walk in Philips Park

Two walk options are suggested, a route around Philips Park and a slightly longer route taking in Waterdale. Both the walks shown on the map start from the Play Area. They then take you through the ancient woodlands of Mid Wood and Mere Clough before dividing at Dams Head Lodge, where you have the option of walking down to the River Irwell or taking the old Carriage Track through South Wood. The walks then rejoin at the Formal Gardens before returning along the main drive to the start point.

1. The Barn

Part of the original Estate Farm built by the Philips family around 1840. The Barn was converted with grant assistance from the Countryside Commission, opening in 1996 as an Environmental Education Centre.

2. Beech Trees

Beech trees were fashionable in the 19th Century as a landscape tree. The Philips family followed this fashion, planting the many fine specimens to be seen around the park, like these two by the play area.

3. Mid Wood

The path through Mid Wood would have been well known by the Philips family forming part of a circular woodland walk, now severed by the M60. Mid Wood is ancient oak/birch woodland, with the occasional beech, lime and rhododendron added by the Philips family.

4. Cobsters Field

Spoil was tipped during the construction of the M60 to a depth of several metres. Fifteen years of 'neglect' have led to it being the most important grassland for wildlife on the Park. Grazing was reintroduced in 2003 to stop the spread of willow scrub.

5. Ox Gap

A few courses of brickwork and some stonework is all that remains of the East Lodge. This was probably the main entrance prior to the Philips Family purchasing the site. The lodge was demolished around 1884.

6. Deer Pale

The oldest known structure in the park. It comprises a ditch and earth bank, which would once have carried a fence. It marked the boundary of Pilkington Deer Park, established in 1291, which covered an area that included, Ringley, Stand and Unsworth.

7. Mere Clough and Bradley Brook

Mere Clough is a sharp contrast to Mid Wood, with alder, willow, hazel and ash being more frequent and the ground layer a mass of cellandine, and ramsons in spring. The lime, poplars and cherries were planted by Prestwich UDC in the 1960's.

8. Dam's Head Lodge

Dams Head provided water for the Waterdale Dye Works. An interesting feature is the brick built 'glory hole' outfall that takes water back to the Bradley Brook.

9. National Cycle Network Route 6

Cycling Charity Sustrans is co-ordinating a project to develop 10,000 miles of cycle route throughout the country. The Manchester to Preston leg of the Network passes through the Reserve.

10. Thirteen Arches

This viaduct carried the Clifton to Accrington line. Closed in 1966, it is now a grade 2 listed structure.

11. Kingfisher Lodges

These three mill ponds were associated with the Outwood Bleach Works. The platforms on the two smaller lodges are used for pond dipping by local school children.

12. Gardens and Hall

The Park, the Philips family home which stood where the car park is, was demolished in 1950, but the gardens, conservatory and estate buildings can still be seen.

13. Irwell Sculpture Trail

The Irwell Sculpture Trail follows the Irwell for 30 miles from Salford to Bacup. Currently one sculpture is found in the Park, a set of benches around the garden and on the lawn by Paul Bradley called 'Our Seats are almost Touching'.

KEY

Circular Route	--- --	Woodland	
Sustrans Route	--- --	Waterbodies	
Major Pathway	— — —	Fence	
Minor Pathway	- - - -	Pylon	
Steep Gradients in excess of 1:10			

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