

History

Clayton Vale has experienced many changes throughout history. Originally an area of countryside, it was later turned into a municipal tip and more recently returned back to the green haven you see today.

Over the years it has been know by a number of names, including The Dingle (a nickname for a small wooded valley or hollow) and Clayton Alps (due to the steep sides on the south of the river).

Print and dye works, Bradford Cord Colliery and Stuart Street Power Station were all established around Clayton Vale during the 1800s.

In 1907 Manchester Corporation began to purchase buildings, such as the smallpox hospital and nunnery, and turned the site into a

tip for the ash cinders from Stuart Street Power Station. It later became a municipal tip for general household waste.

During the miner's strike in the 1920s, local people, desperate for coal, went in search for free coal on the tip, taking shovels and picks to help their search.

In the 1920s larger scale tipping began and by 1966 the entire area of Clayton Vale had either been tipped on was in current use as a landfill site.

On 16th July 1919 a statement by the Chief Engineer for Manchester Corporation and Electrical Department stated: "The time has now arrived when it is necessary for us to demolish the cottage and divert the footpath at Clayton Vale in order to extend the ash tip".

Tipping ceased in the 1970s, leaving behind a barren landscape. Manchester City Council purchased and began reclamation of the land in 1982. Over a 10-15 year period, approximately 250,000 trees, such as willows, poplars and oaks were planted. A path network and ponds were also improved and developed. The aim was to attract wildlife and create a pleasant landscape setting, accessible for everyone.

Extracts from the Manchester Weekly Times during 1859 were produced in a booklet called "Manchester Walks and Wildflowers" where Clayton Vale was described as having "pleasant walks, especially near the borders of the Medlock, which winds among trees and green fields that are really picturesque."



Environment & Wildlife

Clayton Vale offers a number of different habitats for wildlife. These include:

Ponds
There are four ponds in Clayton Vale all teeming with a variety of wildlife including frogs, toads, minibeasts, fish and water birds. Two of the ponds are Sites of Biological Importance because of their reedbeds which are locally scarce. We hope to improve facilities for fishing in the future.

The River Medlock flows west from Tameside & Oldham into Manchester, it runs for 21 kilometres before merging with the river Inwell at Castletield. It is an important river draining many urbanised areas including parts of Fallowfield, Droylsden and Manchester.



The Industrial revolution exacted a heavy toll on the river with factories & waste tips lining its banks, these decreased the water quality to such an extent that the river stopped being able to support a fish population. But it is not all bad news, recent restoration has improved water quality, the river was restocked with fish, and wildlife such as herons and kingfishers can often be seen.



▲ River Medlock

Meadows

Our meadows are as important for wildlife as the wooded areas. We leave many areas uncut through the spring and summer to encourage grasses, flowers and insects.



▲ Wildflower Meadow

Woodland

As many of the trees were planted at the same time, we are carrying out extensive management to improve safety and ensure the future health of the trees. With the help of local schools, the Friends of Clayton Vale have planted many bluebells as well as putting up boxes for birds and bats.

People

Clayton Vale is managed and cared for by a variety of people, including volunteers and paid workers. The Friends of Clayton Vale volunteer time and energy to help look after the area (visit www.friendsofclaytonvale.org.uk). The Medlock Valley Project leads on improvements to the Medlock Valley and Manchester City Council's Leisure Department is responsible for all of the city's parks and open spaces. The park wardens liaise with the community and organise events with schools and local groups.



▲ Friends of Clayton Vale

Things to do

Health Walks

Monday 1.30pm and **Wednesday 10.00am**
Clayton Vale Centre, Edge Lane
Contact **NHS PACE team** on **0161 681 0940** for more information.

Fishing

Fishing is a popular activity at the pond near the Iron Bridge. Please respect the site and its wildlife and remember to dispose of rubbish responsibly.

Nature Walks & Bird Watching

Pathways around Clayton Vale allow you to take a gentle stroll along the river or to admire the view from above the Vale. Watch out for wildlife including butterflies, dragonflies, squirrels and many different birds.

Pond Dipping

The dipping pond near Clayton Vale Centre at Edge Lane is full of wildlife. Watch out for advertised events (all equipment provided).

Public Events

The Vale is host to a wide range of public events. Contact **Leisure Services** on **0161 223 8278** for more information.

Welcome

Clayton Vale local nature reserve is located in the heart of the Medlock Valley in east Manchester. The Vale covers approximately four square miles of urban countryside that you are free to roam and enjoy at your own pace.



▲ Bridge over the River Medlock



East Manchester's Countryside Clayton Vale



Contact Information:

- To organise a group visit, make a booking for an event or report a problem, contact **Manchester City Council** on **0161 223 8278**
- To report a security incident, contact **Park Security** on **0161 223 3678** or **Greater Manchester Police** on **0161 872 5050** (in an emergency dial **999**)
- To find out more about Clayon Vale, contact the **Medlock Valley Project Officer** on **0161 220 1000**

For all other information visit www.medlockvalley.org.uk



▲ View down the Vale



Project Park-Financed by the European Union



