

A WITHINGTON CIVIC SOCIETY BOOK

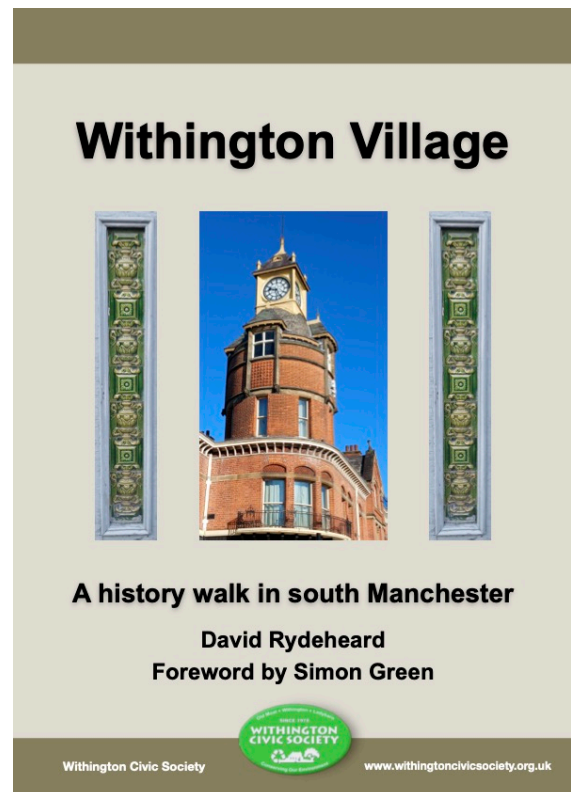
Withington Village

A history walk in south Manchester

This book is a history of Withington Village, the central area of Withington in south Manchester.^{1,2} It may be used on a walking tour to guide you through the history around you on your walk. There is a map to orient yourself, and instructions in the text as to where to go. The tour begins at Withington Green, but you may start at any point by going to the appropriate section of the book. Alternatively, the book may be read as a history of the Village. A series of maps at the end of the book illustrates the development of Withington over the years.

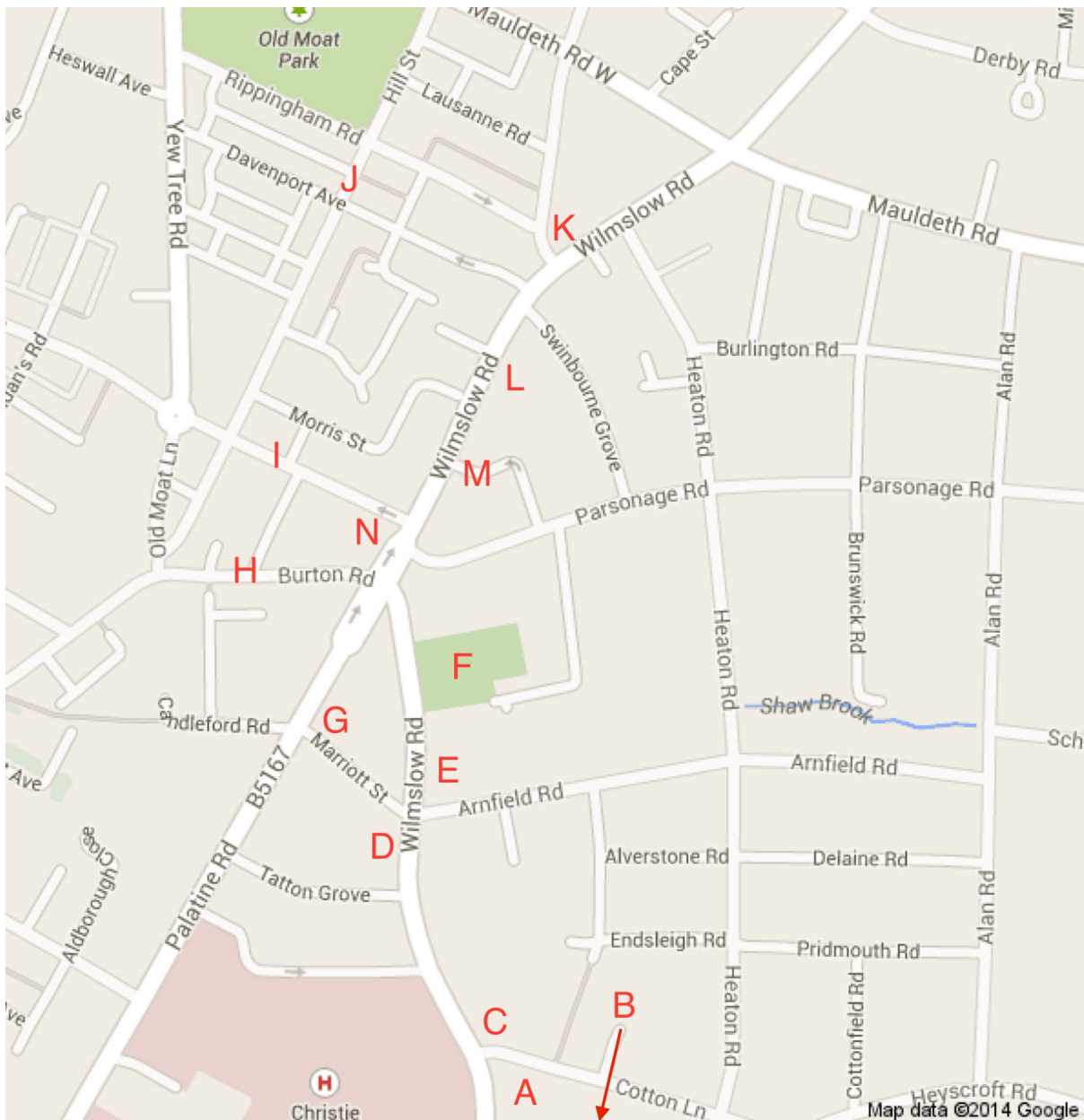
The Manor of Withington once controlled a large part of what is now south Manchester, and yet Withington, at the time, was tiny. Travelling along what is now Wilmslow Road at the beginning of the 19th century, one would see a few single cottages, and a few rows of cottages, several farmhouses, a few more substantial houses, a smithy and two public houses. Apart from this, on both sides of the road, it was farmland. There were no church, chapel or school buildings, no industry except cottage industries—almost everyone was employed in agriculture. There were few roads but there was, at one time, an extensive network of footpaths, most of which are now lost.

The buildings and landscape we see around us today tell the story of how Withington was transformed in Victorian and Edwardian times from a small



This book is available from the Withington Civic Society website, and from outlets in the Village.

village to a township on the outskirts of the great industrial city of Manchester, and later to a thriving and diverse suburban district centre. It is the purpose of this book to help readers appreciate this history. The story is not just written in brick and stone, but also is the story of the people who made this history and lived through it, and the changing communities of Withington over the centuries.



A HISTORY TOUR: You may start the tour at any place in Withington Village by finding your location on the map and in the text. We start the tour at Withington Green—location [A] on the map—at the junction of Cotton Lane and Wilmslow Road.

A. Withington Green

Withington Green is the triangular piece of land where Cotton Lane joins Wilmslow Road. It is an ancient feature, recorded from the early 19th century, but most likely much older. Withington was once centred around the Green, and the settlement itself was sometimes called Withington Green.³ From Victorian times until recently, ornamental trees and flower-beds were planted here in a variety of designs. With the building of the adjacent Manchester Cancer Research Centre in 2015, the Green has undergone further redesign.

B. Maggie’s Manchester

Just south of Withington Green, on Kinnaird Road, is Maggie’s Manchester.⁴ This is well worth a diversion from the walking route. There are Maggie’s Centres across the UK providing support for people with cancer, and for their families and friends. The Centre in Withington, The Robert Parfett Building, was, at the time of opening, the largest in the country. The building has a striking and innovative design by Stockport-born architect, Lord Norman Foster.⁵ The gardens were designed by Dan Pearson, a TV presenter and Chelsea Flower Show award winner. The facility was opened in 2016 by the then Duchess of Cornwall. Both the building and the gardens are a splendid addition to Withington.

- [Return to Cotton Lane at Withington Green.](#)

C. Cotton Lane

Cotton Lane runs east from Withington Green. It is an old thoroughfare—originally a field footpath but, by the early 19th century, it had become a country lane from Withington through to Burnage, via local farms. The unusual name pre-dates Manchester’s historical role as an important centre of cotton manufacturing. It is derived from the name of a large field formerly to the east of Withington, called Cotton Field, Cotton Tree Field or Cotton Doles—a remnant of one of the ancient open fields of Withington.⁶ The now-demolished public house, the Cotton Tree, took its name from this field.⁷

The Christie

The first Christie hospital building on this site was opened in 1932 by Lord Derby. This brought together two institutions: The Christie Hospital, named after Sir Richard Copeley Christie, once chancellor of Manchester University; and the Holt Radium Institute, named after Sir Edward Holt, a brewer who became Lord Mayor of Manchester.⁸ The hospital is now (2026) one of the largest cancer treatment, research and education centres in Europe.

The Grange and Tatton View

The Grange, at the junction of Wilmslow Road and Cotton Lane, is a substantial mansion in its own grounds, built c1870 for Max Baerlein, a textile manufacturer from Bavaria.⁹ The building itself has something of a 'Bavarian style' with its square plan and spire-topped towers. The interior was grand, with a central top-lit staircase, three large reception rooms, and sufficient domestic rooms for the family and at least 7 servants. The Baerleins were amongst a large population of German engineers and manufacturers living in Manchester in the 19th century, some of whom set up family homes in Withington.

The Grange has had a number of uses over the years since being a family home. It was once the property of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers —hence the ASW initials on the gatepost. It then became a 'rest home' and then a Muslim preparatory school for girls. It is now owned by the Christie Charity. This building replaced a farmhouse on the site, Mill House Farm (also called Milldam Farm).

- Walk across Wilmslow Road to Tatton View, off Tatton Grove, and to the Red Lion public house.

The date of the houses in **Tatton View** is 1879. It is named after Tatton in Cheshire, where the Hall was the principal residence of the Egerton family—formerly, the major landowners in Withington. The houses here are some of the best examples of Victorian terraced houses of this size in the area. All the house numbers are even. Similar houses, taking the odd numbers, were planned but never built.

D. The Red Lion

The Red Lion is Withington's oldest existing building, and is Grade II Listed.

The exact age of the building is unknown, but it is at least 200 years old, and possibly goes back as far as the 17th century or earlier.¹⁰

The Red Lion was not only a place of hospitality, but also served as a seat of local governance. A court, called a Court Leet (a manorial court under the Manor of Withington), was held here until 1841. The building was also used for inquests and other legal proceedings. In addition, it provided a meeting place for various civic organisations, including the Overseers of the Poor (who provided for the poor under the Poor Law), and the Trustees of the local Turnpike Trust (1751/53-1881).¹¹

Notice the red lion plaque over the entrance. This is a recent addition to the building. It went missing for some years, then returned after the present refurbishment. The design of the windows is unusual— horizontally-sliding sash windows, sometimes called ‘Yorkshire windows’. The interior has low ceilings with some roughly-chamfered old beams, possibly from the 1600s.¹²

- **Walk across Wilmslow Road to the corner of Arnfield Road.**

On the south side of **Arnfield Road**, the first house is a replacement. In 1940, the original house had part of its front blown off by a bomb during World War II, and was subsequently demolished. Fortunately the residents were safe in an Anderson shelter in their garden.¹³ During the war, the centre of Manchester sustained very heavy bombing, especially during the Blitz of 1940-41. The suburbs suffered as well—more than a dozen bombs fell in the Withington area during the war.

E. The Fire Station, Old Police Station and Forge

The present **fire station** (1931, attributed to local architect John Swarbrick¹⁴), on the corner of Arnfield Road and Wilmslow Road, is said to be the first suburban fire station in Manchester.¹⁵ The current building has flats for accommodating fire-fighters. It once housed a **police station** as well. The smaller of the two doors on Wilmslow Road was the entrance to the police station and had the traditional blue lamp above it. The police station moved from here to Copson Street/Hill Street in 1981, but is now closed. The earliest police station in Withington, however, was in a previous building on the site of the present fire station.

Look for the old **milestone** nearby. In 2013, it was Listed Grade II as a monument of special historical interest, thanks to the efforts of Anna and Alan Highfield on behalf of Withington Civic Society. Milestones and mileposts

were a common sight in times gone by, but this is the only remaining milestone on Wilmslow Road.

The next building northwards is the **forge**. This was owned by the Priday family, and founded by William J. Priday—see the initials ‘WJP’ on the left-hand side of the entrance, and the date of 1881 on the right-hand side. The forge undertook a wide variety of work, from traditional smithy work, such as shoeing horses, to elaborate coachwork for vehicles. Upstairs, at the front of the forge, there was a loft displaying a collection of the coach-builder’s craft. William Priday is buried in St. Paul's churchyard where you can still see his **gravestone**. Before this building opened, the Priday family ran a forge on Burton Road opposite the Public Hall. One member of the family, Jack Priday, until his death in 1991, was the official farrier to the Manchester police force. He used to attend the police horses at Hough End Farm.

Children would enjoy the excitement of the forge. Kenneth Whittaker, the local historian, recounts one such memory: “How we loved to watch the horses being shod—the sparks flying, the clanging of the anvil and the burning smell peculiar to a smithy.” Boys from the adjacent school used to climb over the playground wall to go and watch the blacksmith in action.¹⁶

In the forge yard, **Shaw Brook** is visible. It is then culverted under Wilmslow Road, and re-appears at Hough End Clough where it runs into Chorlton Brook, which flows into the Mersey.¹⁷ The village pump was once in the forge yard. The forge building has now been adapted to provide residential accommodation.

Wilmslow Road

Across the road is the **Turnpike** public house (closed in 2018). The name reminds us of the one-time status of Wilmslow Road, which, from 1751/53 to 1881, was a turnpike road run by the Manchester and Wilmslow Turnpike Trust. The Trust maintained and upgraded the road from Ardwick Green to the bridge at Corn Mill in Wilmslow, funded by tolls charged on road users, and often through borrowing as well. Milestones and mileposts were installed along the road at one-mile intervals. Toll bars prevented people getting free access to the road and, at various times in this area, bars were at Mauldeth Road, Burton Road, Cotton Lane and Fog Lane, but no remains of these are now visible.¹⁸

The River Mersey formed the boundary between the counties of Lancashire and Cheshire. It also acted as a barrier to north-south traffic. For the people

of Withington, before Palatine Road and Kingsway were built, the nearest bridge across the River Mersey was Cheadle Bridge (near Abney Hall) built by the Turnpike Trust in the mid-18th century. Building the bridge proved difficult—the first attempts collapsed. Before this, crossing the river meant fording it. The ford was reached via Ford Lane, or Stenner Lane, in Didsbury, and went on a diagonal route across the river at Northenden Ford.

In the centre of the Village, Wilmslow Road has been a commercial and shopping street since the last decades of the 19th century. Many of the shops were family-owned and some continued through the generations.

- [Walk northwards along Wilmslow Road to St. Paul's church.](#)

F. St. Paul's Church

For most of its history, Withington was in the parish of Manchester with (what is now) Manchester Cathedral as its parish church. The local place of worship, however, was a chapel in Didsbury which is now St. James' Church, standing above the flood-plain of the River Mersey.

The population of Withington increased throughout the 19th century, eventually outgrowing the capacity of the chapel. In 1840, a committee was formed to raise funds from wealthy individuals and landowners for a parish church to be built in Withington to serve the people of Withington, Fallowfield, Ladybarn and Burnage.¹⁹ Architects Hayley and Brown of Cross Street, Manchester, were commissioned to design a church “on the most economical principle to contain about 600 sittings, more than one third to be appropriated for the use of the poor.” The building was of a simple rectangular design in brick, with stone dressing and slate roof. The three-stage tower was set into the nave.

The opening service, on 21st October 1841, attended by the bishop of Chester, was full and crowded” and “offered a veritable feast of music”. Although the church had a choir, it had no pipe organ—the first organ was installed in 1843. **Felix Mendelssohn**, the great German composer, conductor and performer, visited Withington several times and is said to have given a public performance on the organ in 1847, and pronounced it to be “an excellent instrument”.²⁰ The organ was replaced in 1890.

In the 19th century, people paid for seating during the church services. Annual payment for seats in the middle of the century at St. Paul's varied from 5 shillings (there were 20 shillings to the pound), through to 15 shillings

for front seats. Some side seats were free of charge.

Kenneth Whittaker, in his history of Withington, describes an incident at the church one Sunday in 1855.²¹ Sundays were to be strictly observed. This particular Sunday, the churchwardens, sidesmen and duty constable, left the church, as usual, to check that there was no inappropriate activity in the parish during the service. "Two men were brought into church just before the sermon. They had been found in the fields gathering nettles into bags to make nettle beer. On capture, their bags had been confiscated, but, after the service was over, the bags were returned to them, and they were sent on their way, with an admonishment from the vicar that they should, in future, treat the Sabbath as a day of rest."

Little over twenty years after its opening, one of the churchwardens wrote "the accommodation afforded by this church is totally inadequate to the spiritual wants of the increasing population of the parish and it is absolutely necessary that further accommodation be provided." Major works were put in place in 1863. The eastern wall of the church was taken down and the nave extended, a chancel, an organ chamber, Lady Chapel and vestry were all added, resulting in a building with seating for 748, of which 266 were free. A new organ was installed, and a porch and choir vestry added in 1890, and additional pictorial windows in 1901. The present windows in the chancel are by Ward and Hughes (a national company), and, in the nave, the 'Light of the World' and a young Queen Victoria are by Walter J. Pearce (a Manchester glass designer).

The two world wars affected life in Withington considerably. In the church, there is a plaque to the soldiers of Withington who served in World War I, not only to those who died, but also, unusually, to those who returned, often injured and traumatised. During World War II, in the bombing of 1940/41, a parachute mine fell near the church, but became caught in a tree. Everyone in nearby buildings was evacuated, but the mine failed to explode and was later defused.²²

In the 1960s and 1970s, the church was modernised, with a function room built at the western end, pews were replaced by chairs, the graveyard was grassed over, a garden of remembrance created, and a church hall built to the north of the church.

St. Paul's School

Adjacent to the church is a building which was once St. Paul's primary school.

On the wall is a **plaque** recording the dates: Erected 1844, enlarged 1865, 1878, and rebuilt 1896, resulting in the present building, which has been described as “in a Flemish Renaissance style, and attractively asymmetrical in header brickwork and stone”.²³ The architects were possibly Royle and Bennett, who were, at the time, school architects for Manchester Corporation.

The headmaster between 1896 and 1926 was Herbert Thomas Scholes. It is said he would send misbehaving children, as a punishment, to the forge next door, with a note to the owner that the child was to pump the forge bellows during playtime!²⁴

The school has moved to modern premises nearby on St. Paul’s Road, and the interior of the building has been converted into flats.

- Go down Marriott Street (the houses here are c1880) to Palatine Road.

The splendid mural of an orchestra, called ‘Songs Without Words’ (by Tea One), on the walls of the electricity substation, celebrates the composer and musician, Felix Mendelssohn, who wrote a collection of Lieder with this title. On several occasions, Mendelssohn stayed in Withington at Eltville House (along Wilmslow Road at Fog Lane) as a guest of one of his wife Cecilia’s relatives, John Souchay.²⁵

The public gallery of street-art in the Village is the product of **Withington Walls**, which is a pioneering community-based project in which artists are commissioned to create paintings for walls and shutters on a range of topics, some of which illustrate our local history. The project has attracted national and international attention to Withington, and is seen as a catalyst to help regeneration of district centres.

Palatine Road

Palatine Road from Withington to Northenden was constructed by the Manchester and Wilmslow Turnpike Trust. It opened on 26th December, 1862, and took one day short of a year to build, crossing the River Mersey on a girder bridge. The Turnpike Trust was dissolved in 1881.²⁶

Palatine Road was originally called Northenden New Road. In the late 1880s, the Post Office requested that the section as far as Northenden be renamed Palatine Road: The road links two ‘Counties Palatine’—Lancashire and Cheshire. In the past, these counties had a degree of autonomy from the Crown and government.

The new road quickly became populated with large houses and magnificent villas and mansions standing in their, sometimes extensive, grounds. Many of these have now been lost, or adapted for non-residential use, but enough remain to recall the former wealth of the residents and grandeur of the road.

A tram service to Manchester ran along Palatine Road. Originally, a private company ran horse-drawn trams. Manchester Corporation took over the service, improved the infrastructure and electrified it, with the first electric trams running on 1st December, 1902, along Palatine Road, Wilmslow Road, through Fallowfield and Rusholme, along Oxford Road into the city, running on an 'interlaced track' (where trams could not pass each other) through the narrowest part of Withington Village. Buses replaced trams on the route in 1938.²⁷

Other means of transport at the time were horse-drawn buses and horse-drawn cabs. Railways arrived in Withington with the opening of Midland Railway's Withington Station in 1880 on Lapwing Lane near Palatine Road. The route of this line is now used by Manchester Metrolink trams. On different lines, Fallowfield Station on Wilmslow Road opened in 1891, and Mauldeth Road Station in Ladybarn in 1909.

G. St. Cuthbert's Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic church of the Holy Ghost and St. Cuthbert on Palatine Road, by architect George Goldie, who specialised in Catholic churches, opened in 1881. The building was completed in 1902 by W.T. Gunson (see the date-stone). A school/parish hall was added (1891) and a presbytery (1911). This is an impressive church on a small corner plot, built of red brick and sandstone in a Byzantine/Romanesque style, with large transepts and a porch. The spacious interior is dominated by the transepts, with the altar in a semi-circular apse. Notice the gilded figures of St. Cuthbert and attendant angels over the door.²⁸

Before the church opened, the Catholic community in Withington worshipped in a large room loaned to them by a householder living in Marriott Street. Earlier still, Mass was held in another house called 'Mount Saint Joseph' on the site of the present Withington Library.

The parish hall was used as a school until a purpose-built Catholic School (1908) was built on the corner of Cotton Lane and Heyscroft Road.

Candleford Road and Passage

Across Palatine Road is Candleford Road and Passage, leading to Burton Road. The passage was known locally as 'Boggart's entry'. 'Boggart' is a dialect word, related to 'bogeyman', meaning a ghost or spectre, "especially a local goblin or sprite supposed to haunt a particularly gloomy spot, or scene of violence".²⁹ The passage is a former farm bridleway, and was edged on one side with 5ft-high flagstones, which have now disappeared.

- Walk down Candleford Road and through the passage to Burton Road.

H. Burton Road

Burton Road is an ancient thoroughfare, and has had a number of names over the centuries: Back Withington Lane, White Lion Lane, Burton Lane and Burton Farm Lane.³⁰

Withington Baths

The large building ahead of you on Burton Road is Withington Baths: a building with considerable presence and an interesting social history.³¹

The story of the Baths begins in the early years of the 20th century, when Manchester Corporation took over the governance of Withington in 1904. The incorporation agreement included an undertaking to build two swimming baths in the area formerly governed from Withington Town Hall on Lapwing Lane.

The City Architects' Department, under Henry Price (1867-1944), proposed a magnificent three-pool 'water palace' on the present site, which was a field at the time. However, objections were raised by councillors on the grounds of cost and over-provision. New plans for a reduced building, with two pools and less elaborate architecture, were accepted and built, leaving space on the south side of the building for a third pool. There is a date-stone of 1911. On the 1st May, 1913, the Baths were officially opened by the Lord Mayor. The building shows a mix of architectural styles, and an interior attractively decorated with ceramic tiles and a variety of window designs.

The Baths had a pioneering role in social history. When the Baths opened, the larger pool was for 'Males 1st Class' and the smaller (now the gym), was for 'Males 2nd Class'. Women and girls were allowed to use the pools on only

one day a week, when men and boys were excluded. The Baths had separate entrances for men and for women (see the signs over the two front doors). Provision for women and girls increased only slowly over the years. No 'mixed bathing'—women and men in the pool at the same time—was allowed. Such an idea was viewed with suspicion at the time. However, a Corporation committee agreed (by a majority of one!) to 'an experiment' of mixed bathing, under very strict, and somewhat bizarre, rules. On Wednesday, 15th July, 1914, the doors of Withington Baths opened for a day of mixed bathing. This was seen as a great event—the press were present and filed long reports, treating the day not just as a social experiment, but also as an opportunity to observe human behaviour. Queues formed outside the Baths and people came from afar for the new experience. The Baths were full, and opening hours were extended.

Thus, Withington Baths became the first outside London, and the fourth in the country, to allow mixed bathing, albeit on just one day per week. Gender segregation in the pools was finally abolished only in the 1950s.

Two rooms at the front of the building now are 'studios' for leisure and exercise classes, but were built to provide personal baths, so that the public had an opportunity to wash and keep clean, at a time when many houses had no facilities. There were 14 personal baths to the left for women, and 14 to the right for men. Unlike many swimming baths at the time, there was no laundry at Withington Baths. There had been a public laundry in Withington since 1886.

Between the wars, swimming baths throughout the country were popular venues for local, national and international competitions, not only swimming races on 'gala' days, but also water polo competitions. The most accomplished swimmers associated with Withington Baths were the Wolstenholme sisters, who lived in Withington. Cecilia Wolstenholme (1915-1968) was a world-record holder and represented Britain at the Olympic Games. Her younger sister, Beatrice (1920-2008), also won international competitions and was dubbed "the most wonderful girl swimmer England has ever known".

The Baths continue to serve as a social hub for the community. Often many generations of local families learn to swim here and come, as adults, for exercise and recreation. From the late 1940s, the social role of the Baths was enhanced during the winter months when the smaller pool was boarded-over to become a dance floor. Dance evenings, with a variety of musical styles, from 'traditional' through to jive, bop, rhythm-and-blues, etc. were popular,

sometimes attracting over 150 people in an evening. The dance hall closed in the mid-1950s, partly because of what we now call ‘antisocial behaviour’.

The Baths celebrated their centenary in 2011 with a grand party. However, in January 2013, the Council proposed closing the Baths permanently as part of cost-saving measures and a re-organisation of sports and leisure facilities. There was considerable local protest, a protest march and rally, and a petition of over 8,000 signatures. A group, ‘Love Withington Baths’, was set up with a view to taking over the management of the Baths to ensure a future for the facilities. After prolonged negotiations with the Council, the Baths re-opened on 22nd June, 2015, under a new community-focused management.

The Baths are now thriving and, as well as providing sports and leisure facilities, serve as an active and well-used social hub and community workspace. They have recently undergone a major restoration.

Waterloo Hotel

Across Burton Road from the Baths used to be the Waterloo Hotel, where **Brigadier Close** is now. The public house was named after the Waterloo Cup, an annual hare-coursing event. William Foulkes, who lived in a house previously on the site, picked up a stray dog, which he called ‘Brigadier’. In 1866, it won the Waterloo Cup, a feat that was reported in *The Times* newspaper.³² When the dog died, it was buried in the grounds. The gravestone read: “In Memory of a Faithful Friend, Brigadier, Winner of the Waterloo Cup, 1866. Died September 18th, 1877, aged 14 yrs 3 months.”³³

The pub has been replaced by a housing development, but the name of the dog has been preserved in Brigadier Close.³⁴

- Walk along Burton Road towards the Village.

Buildings on Burton Road

There are several interesting buildings on Burton Road between the Baths and Wilmslow Road.

A **Primitive Methodist Chapel** stands near the corner of Burton Road and Old Moat Lane. There is a date-stone (much defaced) of 1891. The red-brick building was designed by Joseph Swarbrick, a local architect, in an early Gothic style, and seated 300 people.³⁵ Primitive Methodism was a movement within Methodism from about 1807 until the Methodist Union in 1932. There

was worship in this chapel from 1892 until 1954. Since then, Methodist worship moved to the Methodist Church in the centre of the Village. The building is now (2026) an Adult Learning Centre.

The Orion is a Joseph Holt's public house on Burton Road. It owes its origins to John Hamnet Norbury (born in Withington, 1837), who entered the Royal Navy in 1855 and served on the second HMS Orion. In 1867, Norbury, who became a stonemason and builder, bought the plot of land on which The Orion now stands, and built two houses on it. He lived in one and the other became a public house, run by his parents.³⁶ The ship depicted on the sign is a more recent warship.

Further along on the north side, there is an unusual building which is **Withington Public Hall and Institute**, with a date of 1861 in the brickwork. William Tatton, 1st Baron Egerton (1806-1883), the Lord of the Manor and local landowner, presented the Public Hall as a gift to the people of Withington. Originally, in the main room of the building, there was a large fire in the winter for members and visitors. Upstairs, there was the first lending library in Withington (1861-1911, with 1,200 books in 1895), a forerunner of Withington Library. The Hall was a members' club since 1906 (with a membership of around 400 in the 1990s). It was originally men-only, but moved to admit women in 2017, then closed in 2019. The building re-opened under new management in 2020 as a popular multi-purpose community venue.³⁷

- **Cut through Patten Street, by the Orion Hotel, into Copson Street.**

I. Copson Street and Withington Trough

Copson Street was formerly called Cooper Street after a local landowner. It has been a shopping street since the late 19th century, originally offering mainly family-run shops.³⁸ The eastern end was partially pedestrianised and landscaped in 2025.

The yard on the south-side of Copson Street, containing Surcon House, has a collection of buildings used by small businesses. Some of these buildings are 19th century—a former stables with a hay-loft, and a cart/coach house.³⁹

Just off Copson Street are impressive examples of **Withington Walls'** artwork—two large portraits celebrating famous footballers: Marcus Rashford (born 1997), the Manchester United and England footballer, who lived as a child in Old Moat; and Billy Meredith (1874-1958), one of the earliest 'football

superstars', who played for both City and United, and moved to Withington when he retired.

Withington trough (c1876) is at the west end of Copson Street. The biblical inscription [2 Kings, 3:17] on the trough

"... that ye may drink, both ye and your cattle and your beasts"

is well chosen—the trough provided water (a) for people, with a cup on a chain at the front, (b) for horses at the top, and (c) for dogs at the side.

The trough has been on a curious journey. Its exact movements are uncertain.⁴⁰ In the late 19th century and the first half of 20th century, it moved between two sites: (a) At the junction of Wilmslow Road and Wellington Road, near the present library, and (b) at the other end of the Village, at the junction of Palatine Road and Wilmslow Road, near the White Lion public house. Here are recollections of the trough when it was near the White Lion:⁴¹

At the junction of Wilmslow Road and Palatine Road, there was a large horse-trough, and a drinking fountain with a drinking cup fastened by a chain. This was later moved to a new location in front of Withington Library, but disappeared from there many years ago. (Jack Jordan, writing in the years after WWI)

At the White Lion stood the Horse Trough where the horses which drew the milk floats, the bread vans and the coal carts could stop for a refreshing drink. (K. Glyn Jones, c1927)

The trough then moved to Withington Green:

The horse trough was at the bottom of Cotton Lane alongside Withington Green from my earliest memory in 1953, until we left in 1968. My Dad used to take a drink from the enamel cup that was attached to a chain at one end, so it was plumbed in with fresh water at that location. (Steve Partington)⁴²

From here, the trough disappeared.

The story of its rediscovery is worth recounting. In a free newspaper, the 'Withington Reporter', an advertisement was placed in 1978 seeking information about the missing trough. A number of sightings were received, in a number of locations! It was Mrs. Tidmas of Old Moat Lane who reported

seeing it in a field at Chamber Hall Farm, Heald Green. The City Corporation/Council had moved it there, where it was serving as a cattle trough. The farmer asked for a tin bath as replacement, and this was provided.

In 1985, the trough was returned to Withington, thanks to the efforts of Withington Civic Society. The Society secured planning permission for its installation, arranged its removal in sections to the current site, and restored the area around the trough.

Old Moat

The area immediately to the west of Withington Village is known as Old Moat. Here, there was once a moated manor house, Withington Old Hall, reputed to be 14th century. The Lords of the Manor of Withington owned the hall, though most had their principal residences elsewhere. The Manor of Withington covered a large part of what is now south Manchester. In the mid-1700s, the manor house was replaced with a farmhouse, still within the moated site. The farmhouse and moat were lost when public housing was built in the area from the 1920s. The site of the moated house is marked with a plaque on Eddisbury Avenue, in the NW corner of the public housing scheme. On the plaque is a map showing where the moat was in relation to the present streets.

- Walk along Hill Street, then Davenport Avenue.

J. Hill Street, Davenport Avenue and Rippingham Road

Davenport Avenue and Rippingham Road were both named after local residents/landowners/builders, and each street has a curious tale to tell.

On Davenport Avenue, there was once a wall, called ‘Waller’s Wall’, built across the pavements and the street, where there are alleyways now on both sides. A photograph shows the wall as a substantial barrier, with spikes on top. The wall was built as the result of a dispute—the details of which are unclear. The houses on the two sides of the wall are built in different styles by different builders. It is conjectured that the dispute was about the roadway—either access, or surfacing and maintenance. When the building plots were sold, the ownership of the roadways was retained by the Egerton family. What we do know is that Withington is not alone in having a wall built across a street: In Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Grange Road (and its continuation Edward Charlton Road) once had a wall built on it. Why? This again is unclear.⁴³

As for Ripplingham Road, it sometimes used to reek of vinegar! A small pickle factory operated from two locations: In a shed on land between Davenport Avenue and Ripplingham Road, and on the opposite side of Ripplingham Road in a long building going through to what is now Lausanne Road. Modern residences have replaced this building. The quality of 'Olde Farm' pickles is fondly remembered: "they were the best, all hand peeled", "they were very good and all the grocery shops round Manchester used to sell them", "still can't find pickles as good as they tasted".⁴⁴

The general streetscape in this area is essentially unchanged since the houses were built. Notice the carved street sign dated 1895, and the signs for Claremont Terrace (1890) and Oak Bank (1891).

Old Moat Park

Old Moat Park, covering 5.6 acres, can be reached from Ripplingham Road or Hill Street. Formerly called the 'Ripplingham Road Recreation Ground', the park was laid out in the 1890s on farmland, at a time when housing developments were advancing westward from Wilmslow Road and Wellington Road.⁴⁵

The park had a bandstand, a bowling green with an ornate pavilion, a water fountain, a shelter and wide avenues, with lawns bordered by trees. Tennis courts were added later. The park now has a children's play area, a ball court, a dog exercise area, and flower-beds, shrubs and trees, all set in grassland.

- [Walk eastward towards Wellington Road and Withington Library.](#)

K. Wellington Road

Wellington Road runs northwards from the library on its west side. Kenneth Whittaker, the historian, describes the early days of the road: "The road was previously called Raspberry Lane but John Baird, writing in the 1896 Bazaar Handbook, suggested that this was a corruption of Rasp[e]ré Lane. The name [Mons] Rasp[e]ré had been taken from a Frenchman who resided there. Whatever the correct explanation, the Ordnance Survey map of 1848 gives an added twist by naming it Rassbeaur's Lane."⁴⁶ By 1892, the road had been upgraded and the name had changed to Wellington Road.

Two streams cross the road. At the former railway bridge, Fallowfield Brook is visible alongside a path to the west of the road. Further south, Leigh/Ley Brook is culverted under Wellington Road near Withington Girls' School.⁴⁷

Opposite the library on Wellington Road is Wellington Garage. The office building (c1900) is a former stables, with hayloft above. The business here has been a car repair workshop since before World War II, and has been in the same family since 1961, passed from father to son.⁴⁸

It is said that the village stocks once stood near the southern end of Wellington Road!⁴⁹

Withington Library and Rutherford Place

Before Withington Library was built, there was a lending library in Withington Public Hall on Burton Road. This had 1,200 books in 1895—a considerable number for the time. Fletcher Moss, who lived in the Old Parsonage, Didsbury, campaigned for the building of local libraries. His account shows the state-of-mind of some people at the time:

In 1895 and several succeeding years, I moved a resolution for the adoption of the Public Libraries Act and was always sat upon by the Conservative majority. Mr Joe Lunn (Conservative builder) of Withington told us that there was a library in Withington in an upper room somewhere behind the White Lion and all the folk that ever went into it were a few women a week. What was the good of having another library?⁵⁰

In 1911, a library was set up by Manchester Corporation in a house on the site of the present building. This had a stock of 1,861 books, as well as a newsroom.⁵¹

The present building was designed by the City Architect for Manchester Corporation, Henry Price (1867-1944), who also designed other nearby libraries, and Withington Baths. The library is on a triangular site between two roads, and is in a neo-classical style, built of brick finished with Portland stone. Behind a classical doorway is a rather splendid hexagonal entrance hall with cupola and black-and-white marble floor.⁵²

The library is one of many 'Carnegie libraries' in the UK—partly funded by the Scottish-American industrialist, Andrew Carnegie. His donation to Withington Library was £5,000, from a total cost of £15,500. The building was opened on 30th May, 1927, by the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, who was the treasurer of the Carnegie UK Trust and President of the Library Association. Inside, there is a plaque on the wall recording the opening ceremony. At the time, the library held 11,000 books.⁵³

Between 1907 and 1919, **Ernest Rutherford**, later Lord Rutherford, the pioneering atomic physicist, working at Manchester University, lived on Wilmslow Road, on the east side, north of the Mauldeth Road junction, in a substantial house, now called Rutherford Lodge. There is a blue plaque on the building.

The public space outside the library is named **Rutherford Place** to commemorate his local connections. The space was redeveloped in 2025. The designs in the paving depict Rutherford's contribution to our understanding of the structure of the atom as a positively-charged nucleus surrounded by electrons. The circular seating and table is a novel feature, and the gardens are engineered to conserve rainwater (as 'rain-gardens'). Stepping stones run through one of the planted areas for children's play.⁵⁴

- **Walk across Wilmslow Road to the former bank building.**

Buildings at the north end of the Village

In 1877, a branch of the Manchester and County Bank opened on Wilmslow Road, on the south corner with Davenport Avenue, in the **Oak Bank** building. This building, with a date-stone of 1876, is in an attractive Italianate style, with polychromatic brickwork. The site of the building was formerly gardens.

In 1890, the bank moved across the road to the present **Old Bank** building, designed by the Manchester architects Mills and Murgatroyd, and Grade II Listed. It is a fine sandstone building, in a Jacobean style, with a decorated parapet and frieze, and an ornate entrance-way. The interior is well-furnished with an octagonal cupola.⁵⁵ The building has an attached house on Swinbourne Grove in which the manager was required to live.

Although built as a bank, part of the ground floor originally served as a shop. From 1903/4, G.F. Leather (Draper & Outfitter), held the tenancy of the shop, trading here until 1912 when the shop moved across the road. The shop traded at various premises from 1898 until 1978—making 80 years of continuous trading in Withington. No sign of the shop remains in the Old Bank building.

The original banking company was taken over several times: By the District Bank in 1935, the National Provincial in 1963, and the National Westminster (NatWest) in 1970. The building was vacated in 2016 and bought by a local developer. It is now a cafe and bar.

- Walk southwards through the Village, looking out for the following buildings.

L. Withington Methodist Church

Withington Methodist Church (1865), in the centre of the Village, is built in “the early ornamental Gothic style”, with two entrances on a gabled west end and originally matching porches, one now a modern replacement.^{56,57} There was an extensive remodelling of the interior in the 1990s, with an additional floor dividing the nave horizontally. At one time, there was a school at the rear.

The beginnings of Methodism in Withington are recounted on the church website:

Withington Methodist Church owes its origin to the vision of two twelve-year-old girls, Hannah Hesketh and Hannah Langford, who, in the 1790s, heard the gospel in neighbouring Burnage and asked that a bible class be run for them in Withington. From this class, held originally in farmhouse kitchens, a worshipping community developed who, in 1832, erected a small chapel in Old Moat and subsequently built the present building in 1865.⁵⁸

The first Methodist services in Withington were held in a room, hired from a weaver in the Village, in a building (now demolished) on the south corner of Egerton Crescent and Wilmslow Road. Services were held as early as 1801. There was a Wesleyan Methodist chapel on Old Hall Lane in Old Moat, in use from 1832 to 1864. The congregation then moved to the present building. There was also a chapel for Primitive Methodists (another branch of Methodism) on Burton Road (see above) which closed in 1954.

Victoria Hotel

This imposing building, in brick and terracotta, is late 19th century. It became a Hydes' pub in 1905 when the brewery bought it from the owner, W.M. Kay. At the time, there was accommodation on the first floor, a basement below, a stable and a small cottage in the yard behind. In 1906/7, Hydes demolished the cottage and stable, and extended the public house at the rear. It has also been extended into the shop next door. The interior has been renovated several times, but the exterior has remained unchanged, and it is still a Hydes pub—after more than 120 years.

Albert Hotel

The Albert Hotel and the adjoining cottages are the oldest buildings in the centre of the Village. Between 1824 and 1829, Edward Langford, a local joiner, built three cottages here. In 1852, these were sold to Thomas Holt, a cashier, who converted the three cottages to form a beer house, a shop and a dwelling house. These three cottages still exist amongst the otherwise Victorian buildings around. The first mention of the public house by the present name (as the 'Albert Inn') was in 1897. The pub is resplendent in exterior ceramic tilework, some of which goes back to the 19th century, but the tiles on the ground floor were replaced in the 20th century.

Queen Street West

This is a short street built around 1859, running west off Wilmslow Road and retaining several early buildings. At the end, on the right, is what used to be a **smithy**, and is now a car repair workshop.⁵⁹ On the left is a former **stable building** with hayloft and hoist. Both buildings are decorated with horseshoes (possibly as good-luck charms). When horses were the principal means of transport, stables and smithies were a common sight throughout the country. Most are now lost.

The former **Barclay's Bank** building, on the east side of Wilmslow Road, is one of three former old bank buildings in the Village. This fine stone-faced building originally cost £5,100, and opened as a bank in 1904. It closed in the early 21st century, and has since been used as a bar and restaurant.

M. Egerton Crescent

Egerton Crescent takes its name from the Egerton family of Tatton Hall—formerly Lords of the Manor and major landowners in the area. On the north side of the entrance to the crescent, in the 1930s, there used to be a chemist's shop, operating from a cottage on the site. For a prescription, one walked down the garden path and knocked at the door!

On the south side of the entrance to Egerton Crescent, the building here was once a branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland, closed 2018. It was originally **Williams Deacon's Bank**. It is a fine Portland stone building at the end of the ornate terrace of Lansdowne Villas—all now shops.⁶⁰ Before this building, there was a house on this site, belonging to Mr. Cash, a weaver. Methodist services were held here from 1801, and a Sunday School from 1829.

N. The Scala cinema

On the south corner of the junction of Copson Street and Wilmslow Road, there used to be a cinema, one of two in Withington (the other being 'The Palatine Picture House' on Palatine Road, near Lapwing Lane, which closed in 1960). The Scala ('Scala Electric Palace') was, in later years, called Cine City, and was one of the earliest cinemas in Britain, opening in 1912, and then becoming one of the longest surviving cinemas in the country.⁶¹

Before sound pictures, there was a performance space between the screen and the audience so that musicians could accompany silent movies. Two people of later fame performed here: Sir John Barbirolli (conductor of the Hallé) played the cello, and Violet Carson (one of the original cast of Coronation Street) played the piano. People often went to hear the musical performances as much as to watch the films.

The Scala survived the bombing of Manchester during World War II, though a bomb exploded in the road outside, killing a messenger boy who was cycling past. The manager of the cinema was blown backwards through the glass doors, and had a lucky escape.⁶²

The cinema closed in July 2001 and, despite protests, was demolished in 2008. A mixed-use building, with a frontage recalling that of the cinema, has been built on the site (opened 2019).

Across Wilmslow Road from the Scala building, is Parsonage Road, named after the original parsonage (1855) for St. Paul's Church, which is now demolished.⁶³ Notice the stables and hayloft, converted into a house, on the north side of the road.

The White Lion Hotel

The large and imposing building on the north corner of Wilmslow Road and Burton Road was the White Lion Hotel, a Grade II Listed building, once called the 'Withington Ale House'. There was a previous public house on this site, built sometime in the 18th century, also called the White Lion Hotel.⁶⁴

The present building, which has an inset on the north wall with a date of 1880, was designed by William Mellor, a Hulme-born architect.⁶⁵ It is an impressive landmark, with decorative brickwork and a large circular clock-tower, sporting a white lion. Unfortunately, the architect died before the

building was completed. The bars were on the ground floor and, with a separate entrance near the cinema, in the basement, where there was an old well. From 1904, the White Lion served Wilson's beer, brewed in Newton Heath.

Renovations to incorporate a supermarket took place in 2010-11. Much of the interior has been preserved, including some fine coloured glass. The pillars in front of the building are historical features, Grade II Listed.

Withington Walls

The numerous (more than 100) artworks that you see when walking around Withington Village are the product of Withington Walls, a pioneering community-based arts project, led by Ed Wellard, in which artists are commissioned to create paintings for walls and shutters on a range of topics, many of which are of local interest, and often feature aspects of our local history. This public arts project is 'crowd-funded', with donations from individuals, local organisations and businesses, and grant-giving bodies.⁶⁶

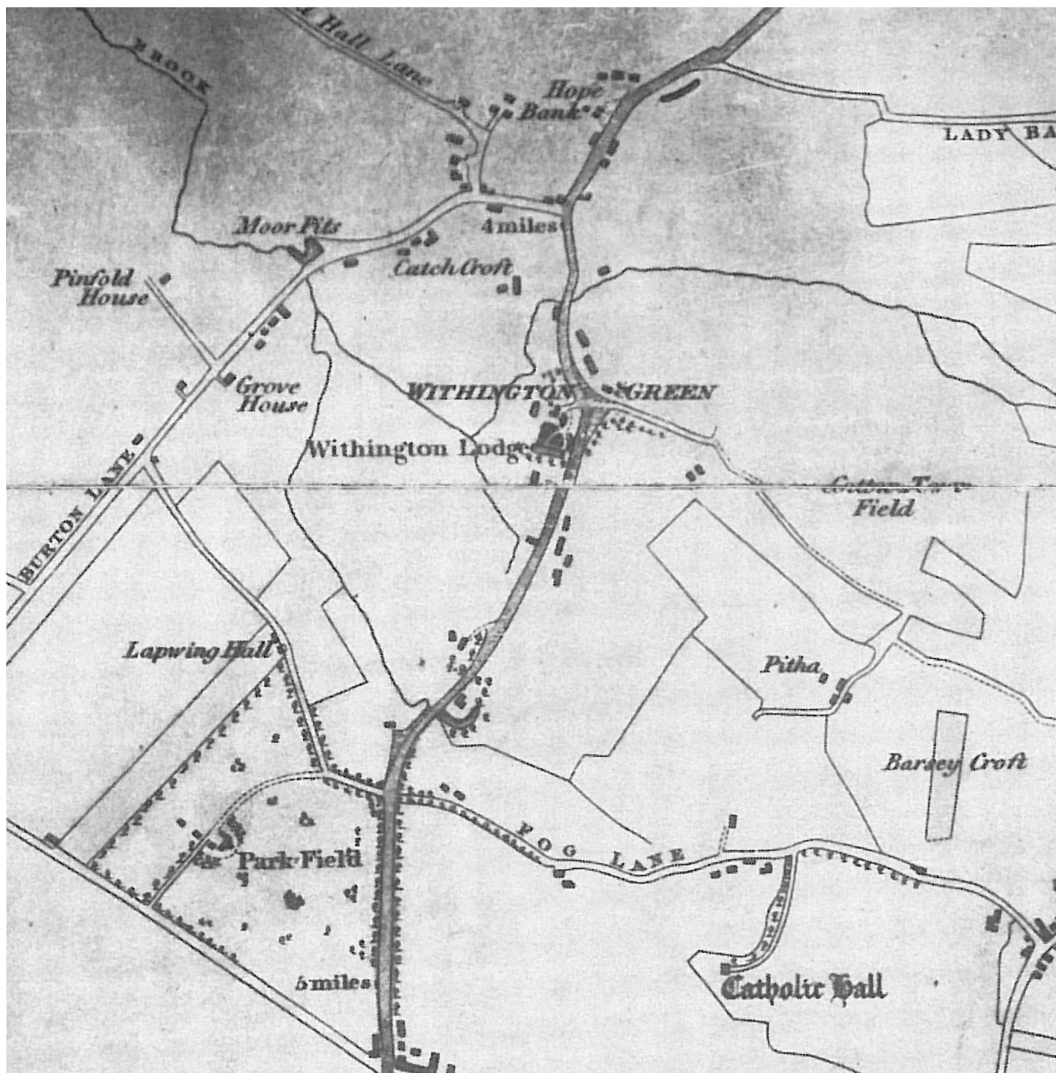
The project has brought local, national and international attention to Withington. Street-art is becoming recognised as a contributor to the regeneration of urban areas.

Appendix: The development of Withington

Using five maps, we trace the development of Withington over the past 200 years from a small Lancashire village, through its transition to a township on the edge of one of the earliest and greatest industrial cities in the world, to its present state as a thriving suburban district centre with a large and diverse community. The population figures are indicative of the enormous growth of Withington over the last 200 years. However, boundaries have changed over the period, so the figures are not strictly comparable.

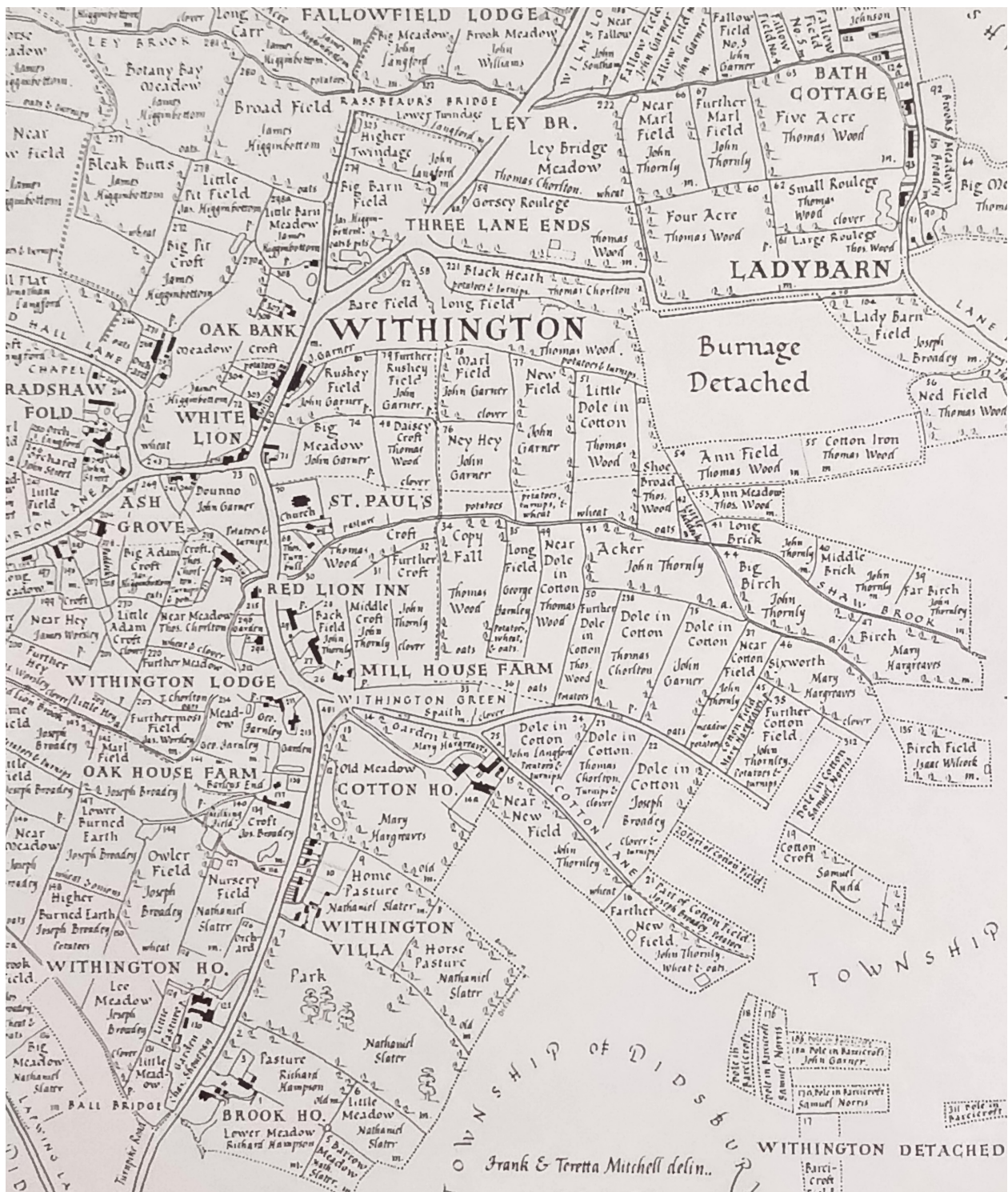
Withington 1820: A small rural village

Population: c800. William Johnson's *Plan of the Parish of Manchester*, 1820, surveyed 1818-19. The main road running N-S is an ancient thoroughfare, now called Wilmslow Road. Notice that the settlement is mainly around the Green (and the place is called 'Withington Green').



Withington 1845-1848: An agrarian economy

Population: c1,500. Drawn from an original Tithe Map by Frank and Teretta Mitchell. Remnants of the old open-field strip-farming can be seen, but most of the land has been enclosed to form arable and hay fields, or used as pasture. The centre of the village has moved northwards, and the parish church of St. Paul's has just been built.



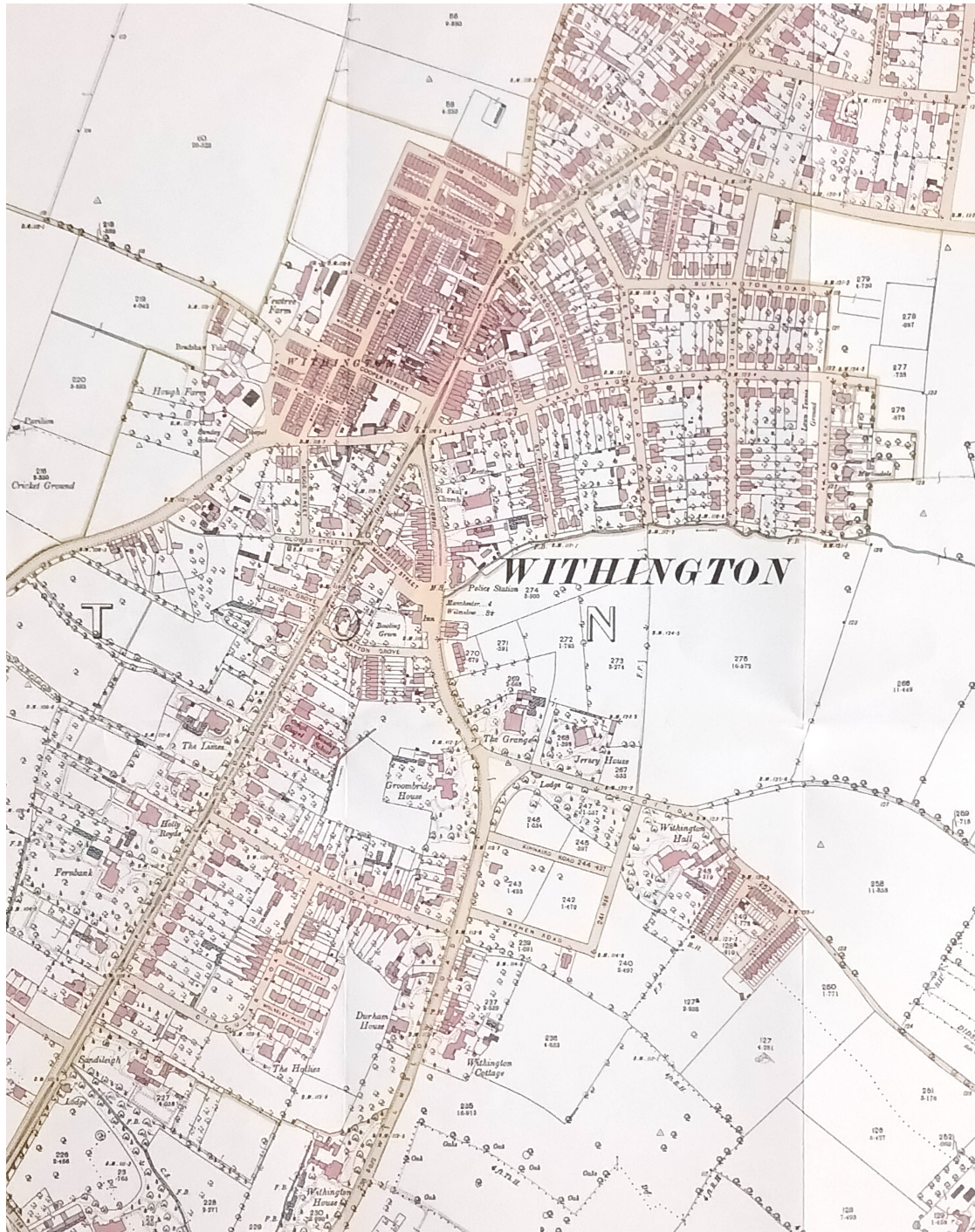
Withington in the early 1860s: Building plots for sale

Ordnance Survey 1845 (publ. 1848), with later annotations (1860s?). From a map in the Egerton family archives, copied by Cliff Pelham (courtesy of Manchester Libraries). Plots for sale, and sold, are marked in red. The Egertons of Tatton Hall were the major landowners in the area and held the Lordship of the Manor of Withington. The planned route of Palatine Road running southwest from the centre of the village is shown, as are other planned roads (not all of which were built), and a proposed route for a rail line on the right.



Withington 1892: A time of transition

Population census: 14,213 in 1891. Ordnance Survey (1892), published 1894. Buildings now occupy most of the plots previously for sale, with larger houses and gardens to the south and east, and terraced houses to the west. However, the built area is still surrounded by farmland. Palatine Road is now in use, including a horse-drawn tramway into Manchester. Withington railway station (not shown) opened in 1880 on Lapwing Lane. Withington was self-governing, but was incorporated into the city of Manchester in 1904.



Withington 1934: A suburban district centre

Population: c30,000 (Old Moat, Withington and Ladybarn). Ordnance Survey, County Series, 1934 revision. All farmland is now lost, with the Old Moat publicly-built housing to the west and the privately-built Hartley estate to the east, and some remaining open areas yet to be developed. Early buildings of the Christie Hospital/Holt Radium Institute are in the centre of the map.



Further reading

Withington Civic Society's website contains a collection of articles covering topics in the history of the area, as well as a list of resources for the history of Withington: www.withingtoncivicsociety.org.uk.

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[CLICK HERE FOR A FULLY-ILLUSTRATED TOUR OF THE HISTORY OF WITHINGTON VILLAGE, with directions, maps, references and further information.](#)

BOOK DETAILS

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Withington Civic Society History Series No. 1.

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- [4] *Looking Back at Withington and Didsbury*. Gay Sussex and Peter Helm. Willow Publishing, 1988, reprinted 1993.

- [5] *Illustrated History of Manchester's Suburbs*. Glynis Cooper. Breedon Books, in association with Manchester Libraries, ISBN: 1-85983-292-X. www.breedonbooks.co.uk. 2002.
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- [9] *Didsbury, Withington and Fallowfield: today and yesterday*, C. Hayes. Memories Publication, 2000.
- [10] *A history of the ancient chapels of Didsbury and Chorlton*. J. Booker. Chetham Society, Vol XLII, 1857.
- [11] *Fifty years Public Work in Didsbury*. Fletcher Moss. Published by the author. 1915.

Notes

¹ The name 'Withington' is Old English *Withen-tun*. *Withen* is the plural of *withig/withy*, meaning willow trees, and *tun/ton* (i.e. town) meaning a settlement. The area lies on post-glacial deposits, making the land damp and ideal growing conditions for willow trees. Place-names with a 'withy/withen/wythen' element are fairly common around the country.

² Most of the buildings in this book are in the Withington Conservation Area. This designation means that certain developments are restricted, and the heritage value of the area is to be respected. Conservation Area status was awarded in July 1983, partly through the campaigning of Withington Civic Society. The Area extends from Tatton View in the south to Withington Library in the north, eastwards including some properties on Parsonage Road and Egerton Crescent, and westwards to Gledhill Street and part of Palatine Road. See www.manchester.gov.uk/parks-leisure-and-the-arts/parks-playgrounds-allotments-and-open-spaces/conservation-areas/introduction14.

³ See the Appendix for old maps recording Withington Green. As a name for the settlement, it is perhaps a ‘cartographic name’ used by map-makers to distinguish it from other Withingtons around the country. There are Withingtons in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire, as well as Lower Withington in Cheshire. Withington Common, near Astley in Lancashire, takes its name from a local family.

⁴ For more details, see www.maggiescentres.org/our-centres/maggies-manchester.

⁵ *ArchDaily website*. Award for Maggie’s Cancer Centre Manchester—voted building of the year 2017. See www.archdaily.com/786370/maggies-cancer-centre-manchester-foster-plus-partners.

⁶ The origin of the names Cotton Field, Cotton Tree Field, Cotton Doles and Cotton Croft, as well as Cotton Lane (and Cotton Hill and, formerly, Cotton House), is unclear, though ‘Cotton’ is a long-established name in the area. There are many Coton/Cotton/Cottam place-names around the country, mostly derived from OE *cot(e)* (‘a cottage’), in the plural forms *cotan/en* (‘cottages’) or *cotum* (‘at the cottages’). However, Kenneth Whittaker (in reference [1] above) suggests the name of the lane may come from “co-town strips making up the fields at the far end [of Cotton Lane].” The open field strip-farming system became, over the centuries, quite complex and fragmented, with detached pieces of land scattered around, sometimes called ‘co-town strips’. Another possible origin: the name ‘Cotton Tree’ suggests poplar trees (or even willow trees), from their cottony seed coats. Poplars are known as cottonwoods in the US. The Cotton Tree public house on Cotton Lane was demolished in 2011, and replaced by flats. Without further evidence, the origin of the name of the lane remains uncertain. There are other Cotton Lanes around the country. Thanks to Richard West for his advice on place-name derivations.

⁷ The ancient route from Withington to Burnage along Cotton Lane can still be traced amongst the modern housing. Old farms names along the route are preserved as road names, including Pytha/Pitha/Pithy Fold and Barcicroft/Barsey Croft. Cotton Lane crossed the more recently-built Kingsway to meet Burnage Lane near Green End. See early maps of the area in the Appendix.

⁸ For the early history of Christies hospital, see:

- The history of radium in medicine in Manchester, *Clin Oncol (R Coll Radiol)* 10 (2): 115–24. B.W. Fox, 1998.
- *The Book of Manchester and Salford*, British Medical Association. Manchester. George Falkner & Sons, 1929.

⁹ For details of the Grange as a building, see reference [3] above. For details of the family, see charneyhall.blogspot.com/2022/05/lieutenant-colonel-honourable-arthur.html and ecclesoldroad.uk/person/max-baerlein. The Baerlein Building (1884) in Blackfriars Street, Salford, was once the company's offices and warehouse (now converted to flats). For more about this building, see manchestervictorianarchitects.org.uk/buildings/baerlein-company-warehouse-10-12-blackfriars-street-salford.

¹⁰ The Red Lion as a building is likely to have developed and changed over the years, possibly from original domestic use. By 1819, there was a building on the present site on the south bank of Shaw Brook (which is now culverted at this point). However, historians conjecture that the Red Lion is 17th century (see e.g. references [1] and [3] above).

¹¹ See reference [1] above.

¹² Red Lion building: Some details are from the Historic England (Grade II) Listing entry.

¹³ See reference [4] above. Cliff Pelham gives an eye-witness account of the damage. A photograph of the damaged house is available.

¹⁴ See reference [3] above.

¹⁵ The status of the fire station is mentioned in the Conservation Area appraisal of Withington.

¹⁶ See reference [2] above for details of the forge (pp 47-48), including the memoirs.

¹⁷ Shaw Brook runs past the forge. 'Shaw' means a small woodland in OE. The brook rises in Shawfield, Heaton Moor, near to Shawfield School, and flows through Burnage to Withington. It is visible from Alan Road (near the corner with School Grove) running through to St. Paul's Primary School, and then to the forge, where it enters a culvert and passes under Wilmslow Road. It runs to the north and west of the Red Lion (it was called the 'Red Lion Brook'), then by the houses of Tatton View. It then turns westward to flow into Chorlton Brook (a confluence of Platt Brook, Fallowfield Brook and Leigh/Ley/Cringle Brook) at Hough End Clough, and then runs into the Mersey. See reference [6] above for a general account of the watercourses in Withington.

¹⁸ *The Toll Bars of Manchester (including the toll bridges and the origins of our public institutions)* by S.W. Partington (illustr. F.L. Tavaré), 1920 (reprinted 1983) is a detailed history of toll roads in the Manchester area. References [1] and [2] describe the turnpike and the toll-booths in Withington. As for the antiquity of Wilmslow Road, reference [1] suggests that it may have served as part of a medieval 'saltway' to distribute salt from the salt mines of Cheshire. Milestones and mileposts are marked on the OS map 1845 (publ. 1848).

¹⁹ Most of the material of this section is sourced from *A history of St. Paul's Church 1841-1985*, by R. Boyle, printed by Richard Boyes and Co. Ltd., Stalybridge, Ches. 1985 (available from the church). This is a detailed account of the development of the church, and the people involved. There is a summary on the church website: stpaulswithington.org.uk/church-history. The church provides a number of leaflets on aspects of its history. Details of the building are from reference [3] and the Historic England listing entry.

²⁰ The source of the information about Felix Mendelssohn's performance at St. Paul's Church in April 1847 is a remark by the churchwarden, John Kay, written in 1896, almost 50 years after the event: "Mendelssohn played a service and gave a recital upon the organ and it was pronounced by him to be an excellent instrument."

On several occasions, Mendelssohn stayed in Withington at Eltville House (along Wilmslow Road at Fog Lane) as a guest of one of his wife Cecilia's relatives, John Souchay. In April 1847, he stayed here for a few days, during which, at St. Luke's church in Cheetham Hill, he gave a recital on the organ to a packed house. Mendelssohn was already ill at the time of this visit to Britain, which left him exhausted. He died towards the end of the year (on November 4th, 1847) in Leipzig at the age of 38. There is a detailed article on the church website examining the precise dates of Mendelssohn's visit to Withington in 1847, as well as listing some of the locations of his performances elsewhere in Britain, including performing for Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace.

²¹ See reference [1] above.

²² ARP warden's report, December 1940.

²³ The quotation is from reference [3] above.

²⁴ This story is recounted by Kenneth Whittaker in reference [2] above, p49.

²⁵ See Note 20 for more about Mendelssohn's visits to Withington.

²⁶ For more about the Manchester and Wilmslow Turnpike Trust, see Page 8. *The Manchester Guardian* 27-12-1862 has an interesting article on the construction of Palatine Road, and the opening ceremony: “the road trustees... met at the Red Lion Inn, and went thence, in a procession of carriages, along the line of the road. A merry peal on the village bells rang on the occasion...”. See also Andrew Simpson’s History Blog (17-3-2025).

²⁷ Trams, and other public transport in Withington, are described in references [1] and [2] above. Thanks to Cliff Pelham for clarifying the details of the public transport. There are a number of books on the history of trams, buses and trains in Manchester.

²⁸ For further information about St. Cuthbert’s, see the reference [3] above, as well as the online material ‘Taking Stock’ at taking-stock.org.uk/building/manchester-st-cuthbert. The reopening of the church is reported in the *Monitor and New Era* 28-11-1902.

²⁹ Oxford English Dictionary.

³⁰ The origins of the ‘Burton’ of Burton Road/Lane may lie with Thomas Burton who, in a mid-18th century deed, is recorded to have a cottage with a blacksmith’s shop, orchard and croft in Withington. This may have been the smithy later taken over by the Pridays on the south side of Burton Road, on a site now opposite the Public Hall. This suggestion is from Kenneth Whittaker’s booklet *Withington Worthies*.

³¹ For a full treatment of the history of Withington Baths, see *Withington Baths: The story of an Edwardian public swimming baths in south Manchester*, David Rydeheard. Withington Civic Society History Series No. 5. 2025. This book covers the history of the building, as well as its role in the community, its engineering history, recent management changes and the restoration of the building. Relevant references are given in the book. There is another book about the Baths: *A Bigger Splash—Withington Baths: Ten Years as a Community-Run Leisure Centre*. Len Grant. Published by Withington Baths and Leisure Centre. 2025. This covers more recent history and is attractively illustrated throughout with the author’s pictures. This surely makes the Baths unique in the world—to have two books published about them, and in the same year!

³² *The Times* newspaper, 17-2-1866.

³³ See reference [1] above.

³⁴ A plaque on the wall commemorating Brigadier's achievement has repeatedly disappeared (it is missing at the moment, 2026).

³⁵ *Manchester Courier* 15-2-1892.

³⁶ Thanks to Andrew Simpson for clarifying the history of the Orion public house, see chorltonhistory.blogspot.com/2020/06/in-orion-on-burton-road-with-memories.html, and also *Manchester Pubs—The Stories behind the Doors: Didsbury*, P. Topping and A. Simpson. Topper Productions, 2019.

³⁷ The re-opening of the Public Hall and Institute in 2020 is described in www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/whats-on/whats-on-news/withingtons-old-snooker-hall-relaunch-19184165.

³⁸ See *Slater's Directory of Withington and Didsbury* (c1903).

³⁹ Information from a local business owner who kindly shared his detailed knowledge of the history of Copson Street, Surcon House and nearby buildings. The changing buildings in the yard can be seen on maps in the Appendix.

⁴⁰ See reference [2] above. Sources disagree on the trough's travels.

⁴¹ These recollections are from *Bygone Withington: Essays by local residents*. City of Manchester Cultural Services, 1977. Available at: www.withingtoncivicsociety.co.uk/BygoneWithington.pdf

⁴² Personal note, 2010.

⁴³ The story of Waller's Wall is indeed unclear. There is a partial account in reference [4] above, which names the protagonists as Ralph Davenport Waller and Hough Fullerton. Other accounts, however, differ in details and in the people involved. The possible involvement of the Egerton family because of their ownership of the roadways was drawn to my attention by Cliff Pelham. *The Manchester Guardian* twice published news items about Bills tabled by the Corporation to "authorise the acquisition or appropriation of land forming the site of the wall across Davenport Avenue, Withington" (12-10-1905 and 8-10-1907). The Corporation clearly had a problem getting authorisation to demolish the wall! Thanks to Dominique Tessier for finding these newspaper articles, and to Andrew Simpson for the information about a street-wall in Chorlton.

⁴⁴ Thanks to Cliff Pelham for drawing my attention to the pickle factory in Withington, and sharing his reminiscences of it. The comments about the pickles are from postings on the 'Old Moat Reunion' Facebook Group.

⁴⁵ *The Manchester Guardian* (23-6-1897) reports celebrations on 22nd June 1897 at Ripplingham Road Recreation Ground for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

⁴⁶ See reference [1] above. The name Mons Raspré is from Withington Bazaar handbook 1896.

⁴⁷ See reference [6] above for an account of the streams in the area.

⁴⁸ Thanks to Tim Crawshaw for details of the history of Wellington Garage. Tim reports finding many horseshoes at the rear of the garage.

⁴⁹ See reference [1] above. The Withington Bazaar handbook 1896 reports, referring to this location, that it is “the site given to the restored stocks when again set up in the early part of the [19th] century”.

⁵⁰ The quotation is from Fletcher Moss’s *Fifty Years Public Work in Didsbury* (1915). Fletcher Moss was an Alderman and a Justice of the Peace. He lived in the Old Parsonage in Didsbury (opposite St. James’ church). He arranged a meeting with Andrew Carnegie to secure funds for Didsbury library. His account of meeting the wealthy industrialist and his entourage in an hotel in London is entertaining, as is his commentary on life in Didsbury.

⁵¹ Some of the material about Withington Library is drawn from *Seventy Years of Withington Library 1927-1997*, published by Manchester Library Services.

⁵² Building details from reference [3] above. Fuller details of the building are published in *Architect and Building News* 18-11-1927, pp 789-790.

⁵³ Documents from the opening ceremony of the library, and photographs of its interior when opened, are available at: www.flickr.com/photos/manchesterarchiveplus/albums/72157635797983173.

⁵⁴ The designers of Rutherford Place are Pell Frischmann and the City Highways' Department, with the landscaping by Allison Walters, Principal Landscape Architect at Awscape. The atom depicted in the paving is physically impossible.

⁵⁵ More details of the building can be found in reference [3] above. Some details are from the Historic England (Grade II) Listing entry.

⁵⁶ *The Manchester Guardian* 22-8-1864 describes the construction of the church and the ceremony of laying a corner stone on 20th August 1864: "... provision will be made at once for a congregation of 470 persons, including 100 children When additional accommodation is required in the chapel, the partition between the transept and the nave will be removed, and there will then be accommodation for a congregation of 700 persons... Another building for schools and vestries will then be erected... The plans have been prepared under the direction of Mr. Thomas Willshaw, the contractor." A similar report was published in the *Manchester Courier* on the same day. Andrew Simpson's Blog (1-3-2022) has an account of this history.

⁵⁷ For more details of the building, see reference [3] above.

⁵⁸ See www.withingtonmethodistchurch.org/about.

⁵⁹ Shown on the OS map of 1916.

⁶⁰ Details of the bank building are from reference [3] above.

⁶¹ There is an extensive Wikipedia page, with references, about the Scala cinema in Withington, and the development of the replacement building.

⁶² The history of the Scala recounted in this section is based on reference [2] above, p53.

⁶³ See reference [10] above for details of the original parsonage (p 129).

⁶⁴ See reference [1] above.

⁶⁵ See reference [3] above.

⁶⁶ See withingtonwalls.org for some details of the Withington Walls public art project.