

3. At the junction of several paths (with an exit to Ivy Green Road on the right), take the second exit passing the bench on your right.

From the 1800s, Ivy Green and Hardy Farm were used for waste disposal.

4. At the end of the path, by the metal gate, turn left into Hawthorn Lane. See the Friends of Chorlton Meadows information board. To the north are Moss playing fields, on your right.

Hawthorn Road was the main road linking Chorlton and Stretford before the Edge Lane and Wilbraham Road were built in 1869. In 2018 local people successfully campaigned to stop a substantial area Turn Moss being fenced off as private football grounds. To the south were farmed fields all the way to the River Mersey; more trees here now.

5. Continue down Hawthorn Lane to the junction with the Transpennine Trail track coming in on your left. Here climb up the steps to the riverbank of the River Mersey and turn left.

The Trans Pennine trail is a route 215miles/364km for cyclists, walkers and horse riders.

See Chorlton Brook disburse into the Mersey. [Straight ahead, to the left of the brook is a short cut back to the starting carpark]. *Look out for our Chorlton Brook walk coming soon! Over 100km long the River Mersey was probably an ancient boundary between the kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria and more recently between Lancashire and Cheshire.*

6. Cross over the bridge and turn left down into the woods. Some of the area is fenced off. *This area is possibly a defunct gas works, now a safe haven for birds like herons.*

7. Ignore the first right turn. Take the second right into the woods.

8. At the next junction turn left.

9. At the next junction turn right walking towards the river. To your left is a field previously used as filter beds for the Withington sewage treatment works.

Withington Sewage works were built in the 1870s to support Manchester City's ever-growing population. The sewage system was probably functional into the 1950s, with a number of remnants still visible today, such as the channel at the bottom edge of the sewage farm that is now used as a brick walkway.

10. Turn left onto the old brick sewer path, walking to the end.

11. Turn left on the track. There's a living hawthorn hedge on the left and meadow on right.

*With cows still grazing in **Old Cow Field** into the 1990s, this field is now favoured by birds of prey like sparrowhawks. The Friends group has erect stock-proof fencing with the hope of reintroducing cows and maintaining a damp wildflower meadow.*

12. At the end of the path, **either** turn right down the cobbled lane to reach Brookburn Road where you'll find the starting carpark on your left for the most direct return.

The cobbled lane was built as the main access route to the sewage works.

Or to walk alongside Chorlton Brook, turn left towards the carpark in the woods

13. Cross the bridge

14. At this intersection of many paths, turn right to walk alongside Chorlton Brook, ignoring any paths on the left to head back to the carpark on Brookburn Road.



Our Green Chorlton

Guided exploration walks

Walk 1 Exploring Chorlton Ees

We hope you enjoy this walk exploring our local wildlife area, Chorlton Ees.

Our guided in-person walk was at 6pm in the winter so involved walking in the dark!

Devised by walk leader and navigation instructor Cath Dyson, supported by Danielle Lowy from Our Green Chorlton.

Length: About 2 miles/3km, 1.5 hours long.

Terrain: Mainly flat wide paths, some areas can be muddy.

Walking in the dark: In Chorlton, like other urban areas, we are rarely in complete darkness due to light pollution so a torch isn't essential. It takes about 15 minutes for eyes to adjust, and as your night vision improves, your other senses are also heightened. Do try it.

Nature Reserve status

Since being used as rubbish dumps and sewage works, the area has experienced a curated 'rewilding' to becoming a protected nature reserve (*Natural England*) to safeguard its wildlife habitats, home to water birds, voles, willow tits, three types of bats and other important flora and fauna. Interestingly, Chorlton and Sale Water Parks benefited from urban development in the 1970s when they were excavated to bank up the new motorway, now the M60, creating two lakes and the Broad Ees Dole nature reserve.

Until it closed in 2013, the Mersey Valley Countryside Warden Service looked after the area. Responsibility is now held variously by Manchester and Trafford Councils and the Environment Agency. A number of volunteer groups are active including Friends of Chorlton Meadows, RSPB and Groundwork Trust and the Conservation Trust TCV among others.

With thanks to Cath Dyson and Claire Stocks for historical content. Any errors Danielle's—do email me any comments or additional information so we can create more in-depth records for the Our Green Chorlton website; danielle.lowy@gmail.com

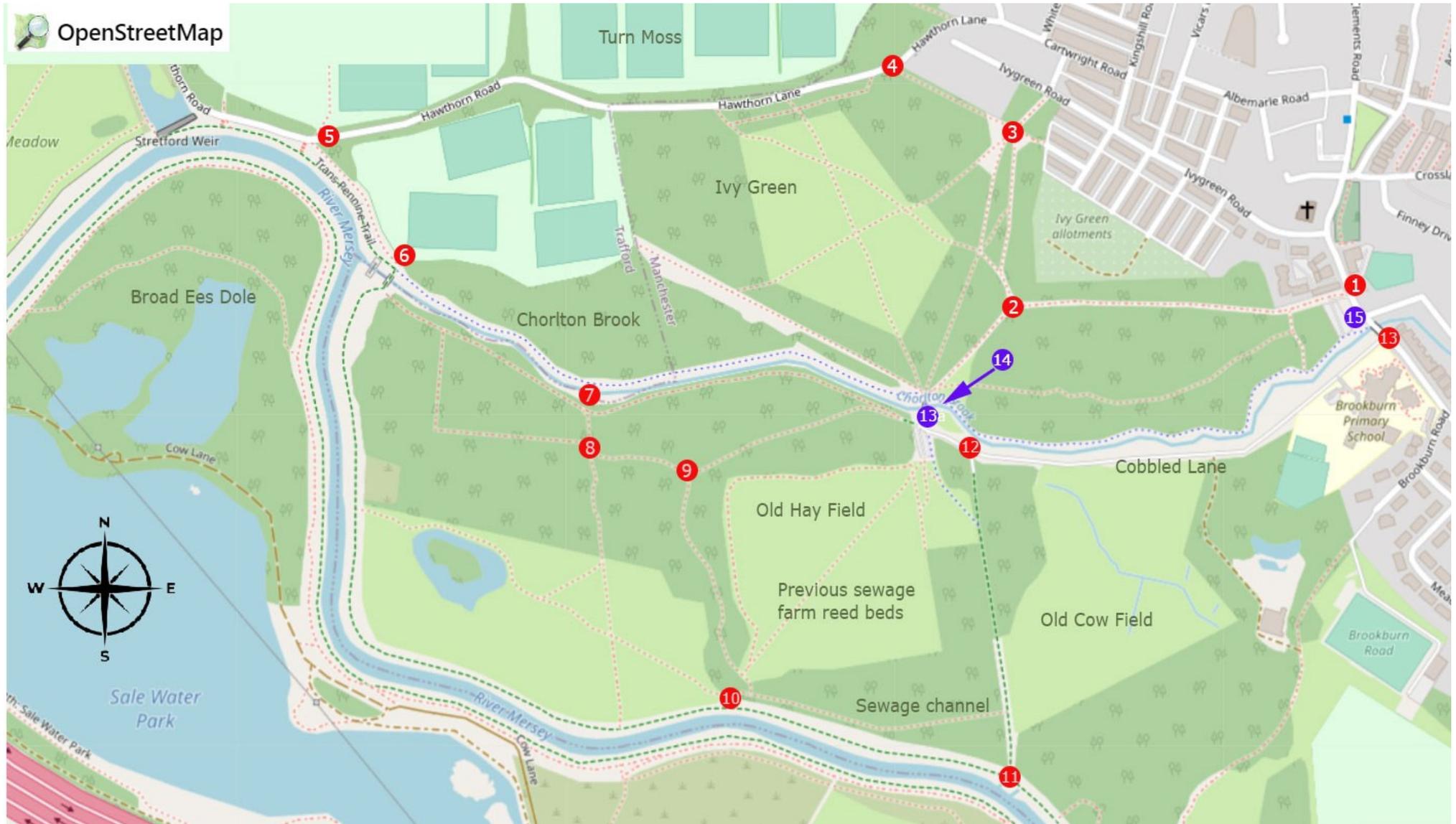
Walk guide and points of interest

1. Start at the carpark on Brookburn Road opposite the Bowling Green pub (postcode M21 9ES). Take the path by the noticeboard on the right side of the car park (on the opposite side to the bike rack). Head into the woods, staying on this wide path.

Chorlton Ees is the collective name for Chorlton Meadows, Ivy Green and Hardy Farm. *Ees means land liable to flood - or water meadow - a technique to increase soil fertility for use as pasture for grazing animals.*

2. Keep right, ignoring any forks to the left, passing Ivy Green allotments on your right.

... map overleaf ...



Look up these information sources to find out more about this wildlife area

Mersey Valley River Trust. Wikipedia on River Mersey. The Transpennine Trail. Greater Manchester Records Centre, to record wildlife sightings. Web archived Mersey Valley website <https://bit.ly/3rwYQQG>. www.wikiwand.com/en/Chorlton-cum-Hardy

Can you help to look after our green spaces? Find these volunteering organisations online.

Friends of Chorlton Meadows. Chorlton Wombles. Friends of Kenworthy Woods. TCV Conservation Volunteers. Groundwork Trust. Friends of Turn Moss
Our Green Chorlton. Enjoy exploring with our map of green spaces; find more groups to get involved with.

We are lucky to have these protected wildlife areas in our urban environment, partly protected by the River Mersey. Some rewilded after being used as dumps, as here and on nearby Ryebank Fields. Please cherish our green spaces and try to stop them from disappearing.

Thank you to Buzz Manchester for supporting these free walks.

