

WORTHINGTON PARK & LODGE

Documentation indicates the park land was purchased with a donation of a little over £7,000 from an anonymous benefactor, later identified as Mrs Mary Worthington, widow of Mr. James Worthington and one-time owner of Sale Old Hall.

In an estimate for the laying out of the grounds, a costing of £350 for the building of the lodge was included.

The 16½ acre site was designed by and laid out by a famous local engineer and surveyor Mr A.G. McBeath; his equally famous architect son Mr Robert J. McBeath designed the buildings - the lodge, summer houses, bandstand and ornamental lake.

The first recorded resident of the lodge was 'Mark Marsland, gardener' who resided there for 5 years. Various other resident Park Keepers each resided a number of years, the longest time being by 'Mr Arthur Barlow' who followed Mr. Marsland and lived at the Lodge for 35 years. The last occupants left in 1966, after which the property was utilised for various Council uses.

Records also reveal a fascinating and emotive history attached to the very existence of the Park and the Lodge.

In early 1897, a Committee appointed by the Urban District Council, met to consider 'the question of providing Open Spaces or other forms of commemorating the Queen's long reign.'

The philosophy behind the idea was to provide for the present and the future residents of Sale, the facilities for the recreational welfare of the young, with open spaces for popular games and for the elder inhabitants, bowling greens, quiet retiring places, garden seats, etc., whilst 'the park-like character of the ground has also been considered'.

Such proposals also necessitated consideration of provision of an on-site residence for the custodian and carer of the grounds.

The appropriate site for the project was considered in terms of suitability of size and access, purchasing and maintenance costs and layout; negotiations were entered into with the landowners with a view to purchasing the site - two large fields bounded by Broad Lane and Northenden Road, land belonging to John White who had inherited it from his grandfather Dr. Charles White the eminent, well respected surgeon.

Sadly, at a meeting of ratepayers, called later that year, the proposal did not meet with their approval for the spending of ratepayers money. Consequently, the Council felt bound to cancel the provisional agreements of purchase.

However, at a special Committee meeting called two weeks later, the Chairman announced the generous gift 'of the amount required to purchase the whole of the land to be used as an open space for all time, from a noble and generous-hearted resident of the Township'. This benefactor was revealed as Mrs Mary Worthington, who declared the Park open in June 1900, when she planted a commemorative Red Oak tree, with an accompanying explanatory plaque.

Alderman Morley, in his introductory speech, said: 'Though this park and recreation ground cannot be regarded as commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of our most Gracious Sovereign, yet it is a moment of the spirit of the Victorian age, which whilst producing its roll of eminent statesmen, heroes, literary, scientific and other great men, is more especially characterised by its list of noble and generous women'.

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A report in the 'Sale and Stretford Guardian', in May 1935, writes in glowing terms of the display in Sale Park to honour the Royal Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary. It reports on the park's tidy and well-cared-for appearance and beautiful floral displays - 'gorgeous' splashes of colour, tastefully laid out with tulips, wallflowers and azaleas. Indicative of the skills of Mr Barlow, the then Lodge-resident Park Keeper.

Another report, in the 1950's notes that 'Worthington Park has always been pleasantly laid out with trees and shrubs' and the report verifies that large holly trees, aucubas and rhododendrons were brought for the original layout, from the old Sale Botanical Gardens, (Now Sale Hotel and the residential area behind.) when the Gardens were closing down.

In August 1950, at the ceremony celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the opening of the park, Viscount Leverhulme JP the Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, planted another commemorative Oak tree and declared that the Borough Council had decided that in memory of the benefactress, and so that her name should ever be associated with the Park, it should be named 'Worthington Park'.

Information collected from directories, electorate rolls, newspaper reports, records and documents deposited at Trafford Local Studies Centre, Sale.

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September 2003

Residents - Worthington Park Lodge.

1906 - 1911	Mark Marsland - First recorded resident
1911 - 1946	Arthur Barlow
1946 - 1947	Frederick and Joyce Boddy, and Arthur Barlow
1947 - 1951	Frederick and Joyce Boddy
1951 - 1954	Mostyn A. Goodwin and Muriel Goodwin
1954 - 1966	Sidney and Elizabeth Ashton