

From ‘the People’ to ‘the Citizen’: Municipal Leisure in Manchester’s Urban Parks

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Introduction

This paper examines the transition from the Victorian to the Edwardian municipal park in Manchester. It focuses on the acquisition and development of the 650 acre Heaton Park by Manchester City Council during the years 1902 – 1912. It argues that the purchase of the park marked the transition from the Victorian idea of parks as improving spaces for ‘rational recreation’ to the Edwardian idea that parks offered spaces for many diverse activities centred around active citizenship and social responsibility. Although this represented a re-framing of many Victorian ideas about leisure, it also resulted in a redefinition of the role of a municipal park in the Edwardian city. It is this redefinition which forms the focus for this paper. Manchester provides a useful example of the development of open space in an urban environment. It was without a resident aristocracy from the early XIX century, a situation which permitted a relatively unencumbered urban development. This opportunity to develop without the constraints of a landowning aristocracy differentiates Manchester from other British cities such as Birmingham, whose expansion was heavily influenced by the Calthorpes¹. Although the work of Prendergast identifies urban parks as neutral spaces, free of the tensions of city life, this paper suggests that, in fact, parks such as Heaton Park reflected these tensions, replicating and, at times, enhancing them².

With its purchase of Heaton Park in late 1901, Manchester City Council undertook the management of the largest municipal park in Europe and thus commenced a new era for the urban park. Manchester was to be one of the most active local authorities in providing municipal parks. Even so, as late as 1895, the Manchester philanthropist T.C. Horsfall, was arguing that most of the inhabitants of the city grew up in virtually complete ignorance of birds, flowers and trees due to the lack of open spaces³. From the mid-1840s, Manchester had begun to acquire public spaces such as Queen’s Park in Harpurhey which was gifted to the city in 1846 by the Hoghton family. Philips Park was also given to the city as a gift by the Philips family in 1846. Academic studies of public parks tend to concentrate on the emergence of the Victorian park and regard them as emblematic of the wider Victorian project of providing leisure time activities as

¹ D CANNADINE, *Lords and Landlords: The Aristocracy and the Towns 1774-1967*, Leicester, Leicester University Press 1980, p. 59

² C PRENDERGAST, *Paris and the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1995, p.174.

³ T. C. HORSFALL, “The Government of Manchester”, *Transactions of the Manchester Statistical Society*, 8, 1895, p. 4.

an alternative to other, less acceptable past-times like drinking or gambling. Latimer has pointed out that the parks were approved of by both the Church and the police as a source of good moral influence and as a form of social control, particularly of the working classes⁴. Parks have also been identified as an expression of civic pride or municipal authority⁵; as having a civilising effect on their visitors⁶; providing an escape from crowded city life⁷ or as a microcosm of the wider society and its reinforcing of class differences⁸. Some vestiges of these ideas remained into the Edwardian era – especially parks as emblems of civic pride and as a refuge from the city. However, these original ideas were also being continually refined and enhanced as the XX century developed. The Victorian idea of rational recreation in particular was enhanced to include notions of public spiritedness, accountability and communal responsibility. Beaven and Griffiths have suggested that citizenship in the Edwardian period was refocused away from the urban arena and onto the Empire⁹. This paper contests this view and demonstrates that active urban citizenship remained a potent social force in the landscape of the urban park. Such parks offered the opportunity to both establish and display not only a sense of civic pride in the city but pride in collective ownership of that space, as we shall see. The experience of Heaton Park can be used to refine and redefine the Victorian ideal of a public park and can provide a new approach to the study and understanding of the municipal park in the Edwardian era. This paper will demonstrate how Heaton Park set the agenda for subsequent municipal park development in Manchester and how this new agenda was driven by evolving ideas about citizenship and social responsibility.

Redefining the Edwardian park: access and usage

Situated four miles north of the city centre, Heaton Park was some distance from the major centres of population to the south of the city. Reliable information about the number, gender and social background of visitors to the park during the early years is difficult to ascertain, but some clues are available. A 1905 statement about music in the Manchester parks collated by the General Superintendent, demonstrates that £475 was spent on providing music in Heaton Park

⁴ C. LATIMER, *Parks for the People: Manchester and its Parks 1846-1926*, Manchester, Manchester Art Galleries, 1987, p. 9.

⁵ D. FRASER, “The Edwardian City”, in *Edwardian England*, D. READ, ed., London, Historical Association, 1982, p. 56-74.

M. BILLINGE, “A Time and A Place for Everything: An Essay on Recreation, Re-creation and the Victorians”, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 22, 4, 1996, p. 443-459.

⁶ H. CONWAY, *People's Parks: The Design and Development of Victorian Parks in Britain*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

⁷ J. SULLIVAN, *Illustrated Handbook of the Manchester City Parks and Recreation Grounds*, Manchester, Parks and Cemeteries committee, 1915, p. 6.

⁸ A. R. RUFF, *The Biography of Philips Park, Manchester 1846-1996*, University of Manchester, Occasional Paper, number 56, 2000.

⁹ B. BEAVEN and J. GRIFFITHS, “Creating the Exemplary Citizen: The Changing Notion of Citizenship in Britain 1870-1939”, *Contemporary British History*, 22, 2, 2008, p. 209.

during the season, which attracted an estimated number of 693,600 visitors¹⁰. Visitor numbers at other, smaller parks like Alexandra and Philips Parks show 232,000 and 242,000 visitors respectively in the same period¹¹. We know from contemporary photographs that the park was often crowded and was far from offering a rural idyll to its visitors (Figure 1). The numbers of people in this photograph confirms the popularity of music in the parks at this time (1906). Conway points out that music was perceived to have an important moral influence but it also leant another element to the cultural education of the people and complemented art galleries and museums¹².

These photographs help to confirm the consistent popularity of the park with all age groups and the sheer numbers of those who were able to access it. They also demonstrate that some of the use made of the park was now on an individual basis. Earlier parks had emphasised use by a family unit who would visit the park and promenade together. Group outings to Heaton Park are still evident in some contemporary photographs (Figure 2). This image shows a group outing in the refreshment tent, with a mixture of men, women and children.

The Edwardian recreational park, however, also facilitated a different kind of visitor – one who could concentrate on their own individual needs and interests and did not depend on being in company. Crantz has argued that this individual usage allowed visits to the park to be dictated by the free time schedules of individual visitors and permitted park keepers to divide up each day into sections to offer facilities to different types of visitors¹³. This was in an era when even working people had an increased amount of leisure time¹⁴. While Crantz was writing about urban parks in the United States, there is support for such individual usage in the photographs of park visitors at Heaton Park.

There is also the question of whether the working classes were able to access parks like Heaton Park based on the availability and cost of transport to them. In the 1906 municipal elections, Philip Cohen, the Liberal candidate for Medlock Street ward, argued that the poor of Hulme received no benefit from the money spent on Heaton Park as they could not afford the sixpence tram fare to get there¹⁵. Therefore, Heaton Park was not a park for all of the people but for those who lived nearby or those who could afford to pay to visit it. The Victorian ideal of the people's park that inspired Olmsted was not in fact a reality but a myth. Parks such as Heaton Park were contested spaces, whose meaning was often volatile and unpredictable.

Henry Coupe, writing to the *Manchester Guardian*, protested the holding of political demonstrations in favour of votes for women in municipal parks on a Sunday, claiming that churchgoers like himself had to 'pick their way...to their places of worship' through parkside streets past 'men and women whose cleanliness...(was) an open question'¹⁶. The fact that some

¹⁰ Manchester Archives, Parks and Cemeteries minutes, 25, p.146.

¹¹ Ibid., 145.

¹² CONWAY, p. 131.

¹³ G. CRANTZ, "Women in Urban Parks", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 5, 3, 1980, p. 86.

¹⁴ B. BEAVEN, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working Class Men in Britain 1850 – 1945*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 2005, p. 16.

¹⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, Municipal Contest, 1 November 1906, p. 4.

¹⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, letters, 22 July 1908, p. 5.

park visitors felt that the park was attracting the ‘wrong type’ of visitor, suggests that the parks were not people’s parks in the true meaning of the term – parks were contested spaces in which people confronted each other without the possibility of the more delineated demarcation prevalent in other urban spaces, all of which were less easy to establish in the open space of a park. These protests are also indicative of an attempt by some park visitors to encourage or impose their values on others. Historians such as Wyborn have argued that it was the City Council that tried to do this but it is clear from this evidence that park visitors themselves did not agree what constituted a municipal park, how it was to be used or by whom¹⁷.

Redefining the Edwardian park: recreation and citizenship

While the provision of amenities was initially pragmatic at Heaton Park, the later developments such as the golf course and the boating lake were more characteristic of the Edwardian park than the Victorian. The earlier emphasis on rational recreation gave way to more segregated sports facilities, reflecting the differing appeal of certain sports to men and women¹⁸. Cycling and tennis were enjoyed mainly by women while football and cricket were more popular with men. Such facilities are in contrast to the earlier Victorian inclination to provide more general amenities for walking, sitting and observing the planting schemes and often had the effect of dividing up park visitors by gender and class. The *Manchester Evening Chronicle* welcomed the opening of Heaton Park as conducive to ‘healthy and manly’ development¹⁹. The yoking together of physical health and masculinity indicates the slow provision for women’s recreational needs in the late Victorian period. Often participation in such sporting activities was regarded as unladylike and women were welcomed in public parks more for their stabilising influence than their ability to make active use of the facilities²⁰. However, this situation did not persist in the longer term, mainly due to women’s desire to actively participate in sports such as tennis and to the growing acceptance of at least some sports as permissible for women.

The first municipal golf course in Manchester was opened at Heaton Park in 1911. The course covered 140 acres of the park and it is clear that, in part, the impetus was due to other cities making similar provision in their public parks²¹. The Lord Mayor, Charles Behrens expressed the hope that the working classes would use the course and that they might ‘find the game well

¹⁷ T. WYBORN, “Parks for the People: The Development of Public Parks in Manchester”, *Manchester Region History Review*, IX, 1995, p. 8.

¹⁸ K. MCCRONE, *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women 1870 – 1914*, London, Routledge, 1988, p.13.

¹⁹ *Manchester Evening Chronicle*, editorial, 25 September, 1902, p. 2.

²⁰ CRANTZ, p. 82.

²¹ SULLIVAN, p. 23.

within their means²². At a price of one shilling for the first round of golf and sixpence for each subsequent round, this was not likely to be the case²³.

Golf was an increasingly popular sport during this period, there being more than twenty golf clubs within a twelve mile radius of the city of Manchester, many with memberships of three hundred or more²⁴. The existence of municipal golf courses like the one at Heaton Park did not fulfil its aim and actually contributed to the social stratification of park visitors and the exclusion of many. Cunningham has suggested that, by the end of the XIX century, public leisure facilities reinforced the desire for class exclusivity as a result of the appropriation of formerly aristocratic pursuits such as hunting by the middle-classes, the invention of class-specific sports like golf and tennis and the imposition of a middle-class ethos on sports such as rowing and athletics²⁵. While this may be difficult to prove, it does provide an explanation for the increasingly class-bound nature of leisure at the end of the XIX century and militated against the ideal of recreation as a tool for unifying social classes advocated in the 1840s. It also marks the gradual abandonment of ideas such as rational recreation.

The Parks and Cemeteries committee used unemployed men to excavate, line and fill a 12 ¼ acre boating lake at Heaton Park which was opened in March 1913. The lake complemented those already in existence in Boggart Hole Clough and Platt Fields Park and some 2,333 men worked on it²⁶. The use of working men for this purpose has a poignancy when one returns to one of the original arguments for the purchase of Heaton Park – to provide a sanctuary for the working classes, a peoples' park. Here, the people or, more specifically, the working classes were being used to build amenities that they likely could not afford to use themselves.

The didactic nature of the public park was refined further with a proposal to move the Greek classical façade of the old Manchester Town Hall (built 1822 – 1825) to one of the city's municipal parks in 1912. A campaign to support the saving of the colonnade was undertaken by some prominent individuals such as the Bishop of Salford Louis Casartelli, the artist Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema and Middleton architect Edgar Wood.

In May 1912, the committee resolved to erect the colonnade at Heaton Park (Figure 3). Half of the estimated £2,000 cost of relocating the façade was to be met by the Corporation and the other half by public subscription. The symbolic nature of this decision cannot be underestimated. It has been suggested that town halls have functioned as important symbols of municipal authority²⁷. The use of a classical façade of a former town hall in this manner served as a reminder of the civic history of Manchester. It re-emphasised the public ownership of the park and the civic vision of those instrumental in the purchase. The façade was to act as a potent symbol of the history of the city and those who served it and created it. Relocating the façade to the park

²² *Manchester Guardian*, Municipal Golf, 8 September, 1911, p. 3.

²³ *Manchester Guardian*, editorial, *ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁴ *Manchester Evening News*, editorial, 24 September, 1902, p. 2.

²⁵ H. CUNNINGHAM, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, London, Croom Helm, 1980, p. 132.

²⁶ *Manchester City News*, Manchester, Salford and District News, 22 March, 1913, p. 7.

²⁷ J. STOBART, "Identity, Competition and Place Promotion in the Five Towns", *Urban History*, 30, 2, 2003, p. 168.

moved a part of Manchester's civic history into what had previously been a privately owned space developed by generations of one aristocratic family. The removal of the Town Hall façade to Heaton Park was both an attempt to preserve an element of Manchester's civic and architectural history and to connect the park visitors directly to their own history and that of their city. A newer form of park history was emerging that could co-exist with the park's original history but that had a different meaning for its visitors and served not only to legitimate the municipal owners but all of the people of the city²⁸.

The original Town Hall building itself was not considered for preservation in its entirety and the transfer of the façade to Heaton Park meant a loss of its original context. Nevertheless, it meant that the colonnade was preserved for the public and its consequent visibility gave any passer-by the opportunity to gain an immediate impression of the past²⁹. Linking park visitors so strongly to a reminder of the city's past can be interpreted as an attempt to make people feel like custodians of their own civic history. A sense of national pride in Britain's heritage was beginning to establish itself, accompanied by the idea that the past was worth preserving for more than just aesthetic reasons. The National Trust has been established in 1893 and had acquitted its first property in 1895³⁰.

The Edwardian period gave rise to an increasing tendency to conceive of poverty as a national problem characterised by the need for physical efficiency³¹. There had been much discussion about the poor physical condition of army recruits from the industrial cities during the Boer war. This had led to an acknowledgement that the people of Britain were an important national resource who needed to be nurtured and encouraged towards the peak of physical fitness³². The provision of facilities for physical exercise in municipally owned parks was a consequence of this perception of the need to maintain levels of physical fitness among the population. Exercise facilities in public parks were not exclusively an Edwardian idea – the three original public parks in Manchester and Salford all had gymnasia (Peel Park had archery butts). The provision of this kind of equipment was an acknowledgement that parks were not simply open spaces for polite perambulations but had a more pragmatic purpose.

The Edwardian period gave rise to a new understanding of social democracy that emphasised the idea of the community and good citizenship³³. This vision of democracy was defined by the harmony between nature and the individual and one that worked to idealise the past and improve on the present. This idea reached its artistic high point in the garden city movement of Raymond Unwin, Barry Parker and Ebenezer Howard during the early years of the XX century. The garden

²⁸ D. LOWENTHAL, *The Past Is A Foreign Country*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 44.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 245.

³⁰ M. WATERSON, *The National Trust: The First Hundred Years*, London, The National Trust, 1994, p. 37.

³¹ E. P. HENNOCK, "The Measurement of Urban Poverty: From the Metropolis to the Nation 1880 – 1920", *Economic History Review*, New Series, 40, 2, 1987, p. 214.

³² G. R. SEARLE, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought 1899 – 1914*, London, Blackwell, 1971, p. 60.

³³ S. MEACHAM, "Raymond Unwin 1863 – 1940: Designing for Democracy in Edwardian England", in *After the Victorians: Private Conscience and Public Duty in Modern Britain*, S. PEDERSEN and P. MANDLER, eds., London and New York, Routledge, 1994, p. 79.

city was specifically designed to merge the country and the city and to encourage communal activities such as tennis and bowling. Here, amenities were a right not a privilege and their proper use was a cornerstone of good citizenship³⁴. Such an idealisation of the past and an attempt to improve the present can be seen in the Edwardian developments in Heaton Park – the relocation of the old Town Hall façade and the provision of amenities dedicated to particular sporting activities.

Harris points out that the Edwardian era was characterised by the ideal of active citizenship which included a commitment to good physical and moral health³⁵. She suggests that trade unions, co-operatives and friendly societies all provided opportunities and models of good citizenship but this could also be extended to the role of public parks at this time. A healthy citizenry contributed to a healthy nation and formed the building block of a well-ordered society³⁶. Fraser has developed this idea further and argued that it was city councils themselves that operated as the personification of citizenship through their closeness to the communities which they served³⁷. Both of these authors, in contrast to Beaven and Griffiths, emphasise the continuing importance of the local context of citizenship, as opposed to the national or imperial. The environment of a public park could offer the opportunity to develop not just physical health but a sense of public spiritedness and civic identity. This was very much linked to emergent ideas about citizenship and collective responsibility for one's surroundings – a substantial move away from the Victorian idea of parks as patrolled by park-keepers and attendants who bore total responsibility for the park's upkeep and maintenance.

The Edwardian park offered both a continuity and a breach with its Victorian forebear. With increasing amounts of free time available for leisure, citizens took full advantage of the municipal park but those who benefited most had both the recreational skills and the access to the space. The urban poor remained on the periphery and the needs of particular groups such as women were yet to be met or even explicitly acknowledged. Parks continued to function as social arenas where models of good behaviour and citizenship could be observed and imitated. The restrictive atmosphere of the Victorian park gradually eased as responsibility for rectitude passed from the park-keeper to the individual visitor. The effect of this was a transfer of emphasis from the passive strollers (whose needs continued to be accommodated) to the active users whose various recreational needs could also be served. A new type of diverse park landscape was now capable of serving a new kind of citizen – one whose demands for public leisure facilities and amenities was only nascent (Figure 4).

Social responsibility and citizenship can be viewed as later and more subtle re-workings of rational recreation. The influence of ideas about citizenship in the Boy Scout movement, for instance, has been read as a form of social control³⁸. While this view has also been challenged by

³⁴ Ibid., p. 93.

³⁵ J. HARRIS, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: A Social History of Britain 1870-1914*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 193.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 250.

³⁷ D. FRASER, *Power and Authority in the Victorian City*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1979, p. 159.

³⁸ A. WARREN, "Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Scout Movement and Citizen Training in Great Britain, 1900-1920", *The English Historical Review*, 101, 399, 1986, p. 376.

historians, it would be an error to dismiss completely the endurance of rational recreation to explain one of the impetuses behind the creation of public parks in the Victorian period. What is being suggested here is that the later Edwardian municipal park refined and redirected this momentum and in so doing, rendered the urban park a contested space offering multiple possibilities to its many visitors.

Conclusion

Heaton Park's history cannot be solely accounted for by an examination of the social and political factors in its development. Its transformation from a private, rural estate into a public recreational space necessitates a more thorough approach that acknowledges the competing interests not just of the City Council, but of its visitors and of commentators like the local press. A new appreciation is needed of the connections between physical space, urban history and local political agendas.

The notion that a public park had a civilising affect on its users (or 'rational recreation') has been a popular one among academics. Writers such as Billinge, Conway and Wyborn have interpreted parks as spaces where it was intended that the individual user underwent a behavioural transformation and adopted middle class (or 'rational') values³⁹. Wyborn has suggested the model of 'rational recreation' as the most appropriate explanation for the creation of public parks in Manchester but this is problematic.

There has been an over-emphasis on the Victorian park at the expense of later Edwardian advances, and too much emphasis on rational recreation and social control which offer a limited view of the practical usage of parks. The concept of rational recreation does not allow for unintended uses made of these parks for meetings and games and offers no prospect of the visitor's individual enjoyment of the space. While Edwardian public parks were an evolution of those which originated in the Victorian period, they also developed their own character and established new ways for some people to spend their increasing amounts of leisure time.

It is difficult to view the actions of Manchester's Parks and Cemeteries committee as merely a direct desire to replicate or transmit middle class values to park users as suggested by rational recreation. The political allegiances of the committee members at this time offer few clues to its decision-making processes. It mirrored the changing composition of the wider City Council in those years, with a slight decline in the numbers of Tory and Liberal members, combined with a small increase in those from Labour and Independents. It is certainly the case that the committee did try to regulate visitor behaviour in all of its parks and elements of this desire remained in place in the Edwardian years. As Gunn has remarked, one of the earliest types of behaviour encouraged in public parks was promenading, which provided park visitors with a model of orderly public behaviour⁴⁰. This explains the need in the early parks to create walkways lined with plants and trees to facilitate gentle strolling. The 1833 Select Committee had singled out Manchester as particularly in need of such spaces due to the temptations of alternative pursuits

³⁹ BILLINGE, pp. 443 – 459. CONWAY, and A. OFFER, *Property and Politics 1870-1914: Landownership, Law, Ideology and Urban Development*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

⁴⁰ S. GUNN, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City 1840 – 1914*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000, p. 76.

such as drinking and gambling⁴¹. Rational recreation, therefore, grew out of an attempt to provide role models for public behaviour and to encourage the adoption of the values of a new urban middle-class which considered itself both culturally and morally superior⁴². This idea resulted in regulated and monitored public parks where noticeboards were erected to inform visitors of the park rules which were enforced by park attendants.

Marne has suggested that the concept of 'the people' was originally intended to be classless and inclusive of all social classes⁴³. However, this social inclusion did not include everyone as women, and working class women in particular, were not especially perceived as having recreational needs at this time and were excluded from discussions about how municipal parks should best be used. Frow has argued that 'the people' are not a homogenous group and cannot all appropriate any space equally⁴⁴. Furthermore, Joyce has pointed out that shifting definitions of 'the people' resulted in the emergence of such concepts as the common good and social citizenship⁴⁵. The evidence from Heaton Park demonstrates that it was not a people's park in the Victorian sense of the term – it was mainly visited by those who lived nearby or who had access to public transport. It promoted an active engagement with its facilities and amenities, although passive strolling and contemplation were also encouraged.

Heaton Park's status as a former aristocratic estate is also noteworthy. Many urban parks were developed from donated land or paid for by public subscription. Hugh Prince failed to differentiate between estates or private parks which subsequently became public spaces, and public parks which were created from scratch⁴⁶. Taylor has recognised that almost all of these once-private landscapes were originally designed as an immediate and insistent revelation of personal political power⁴⁷. However, she does not develop this point to accommodate parks which were previously part of aristocratic estates and which were then acquired by public bodies. Nor does she discuss the implications of a change from private to public ownership and the subsequent opening of the space to visitors. The symbolic significance of former landed estates like Heaton Park was altered from representing the political, social and economic power of the aristocracy to that of the municipal authority. Offer has suggested that local councils now had 'levels of power, patronage and prestige', all aspects of the social position previously enjoyed by the local aristocracy⁴⁸. This was certainly evident in Manchester, with its lack of a resident aristocracy and relatively unconstrained urban development from the 1830s. While the landscape

⁴¹ WYBORN, p. 4.

⁴² Ibid., p. 4.

⁴³ P. MARNE, "Whose public space was it anyway? Class, Gender and Ethnicity in the Creation of Sefton and Stanley Parks, Liverpool 1858-1872", *Social and Cultural Geography*, 2, 4, 2001, p. 437.

⁴⁴ FROW in A. RODRICK, *Self-Help and Civic Culture: Citizenship in Victorian Birmingham*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004, p. 424.

⁴⁵ P. JOYCE, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class 1840 – 1914*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 191.

⁴⁶ H. PRINCE, *Parks In England*, Shalfleet Manor, Pinhorn, 1967.

⁴⁷ H. A. TAYLOR, *Age and Order: The Public Park as a Metaphor for a Civilised Society*, London & Gloucester, Demos/ Comedia, 1994, p. 17.

⁴⁸ A. OFFER, p. 221.

of the park was now more accessible to the public, it remained a space that could only be experienced by those who had easy access to it.

Nonetheless, the park was a powerful symbol of the new Edwardian active citizenship and the enthusiasm with which people embraced and used the new park demonstrates the close correlation between civic pride and the individual citizen. While Beaven and Griffiths have identified this period as one in which the idea of the individual urban citizen was on the wane to be replaced by the imperial citizen, this paper has shown that the municipal park provided an ideal space in which to continue to develop local citizenship skills and values⁴⁹. These could be experienced in multiple ways and could be contested by groups or individuals but they were no less significant for that. While many at national government level were free to focus on the future demands of the Empire, the local aspect of citizenship did not disappear but continued to be debated and forged, no where more so than in the public space of the municipal park. While Heaton Park did not live up to the ideals of Olmsted's people's park, it continued to be successful as a recreation space and contributed to the territorial enlargement of the city of Manchester, a fact that should not be overlooked. The addition of Heaton Park consolidated that expansion and sent a clear message to surrounding townships like Prestwich and Middleton of Manchester's territorial ambitions. In that sense, it is illustrative of the civic pride of Manchester and her City Council and represents the first real flourish of the Edwardian municipal public park in the city.

⁴⁹ BEAVEN and GRIFFITHS, pp. 209-10.



Figure 1 – Crowds near the Heaton Park bandstand, 1906 (Manchester Local Image Collection, Manchester Central Library)



Figure 2 – Crowds in the refreshment tent at Heaton Park, 1906 (Manchester Local Image Collection, Manchester Central Library)



Figure 3 – The old Town Hall colonnade near the lake, Heaton Park 1913(Manchester Local Image Collection, Manchester Central Library)

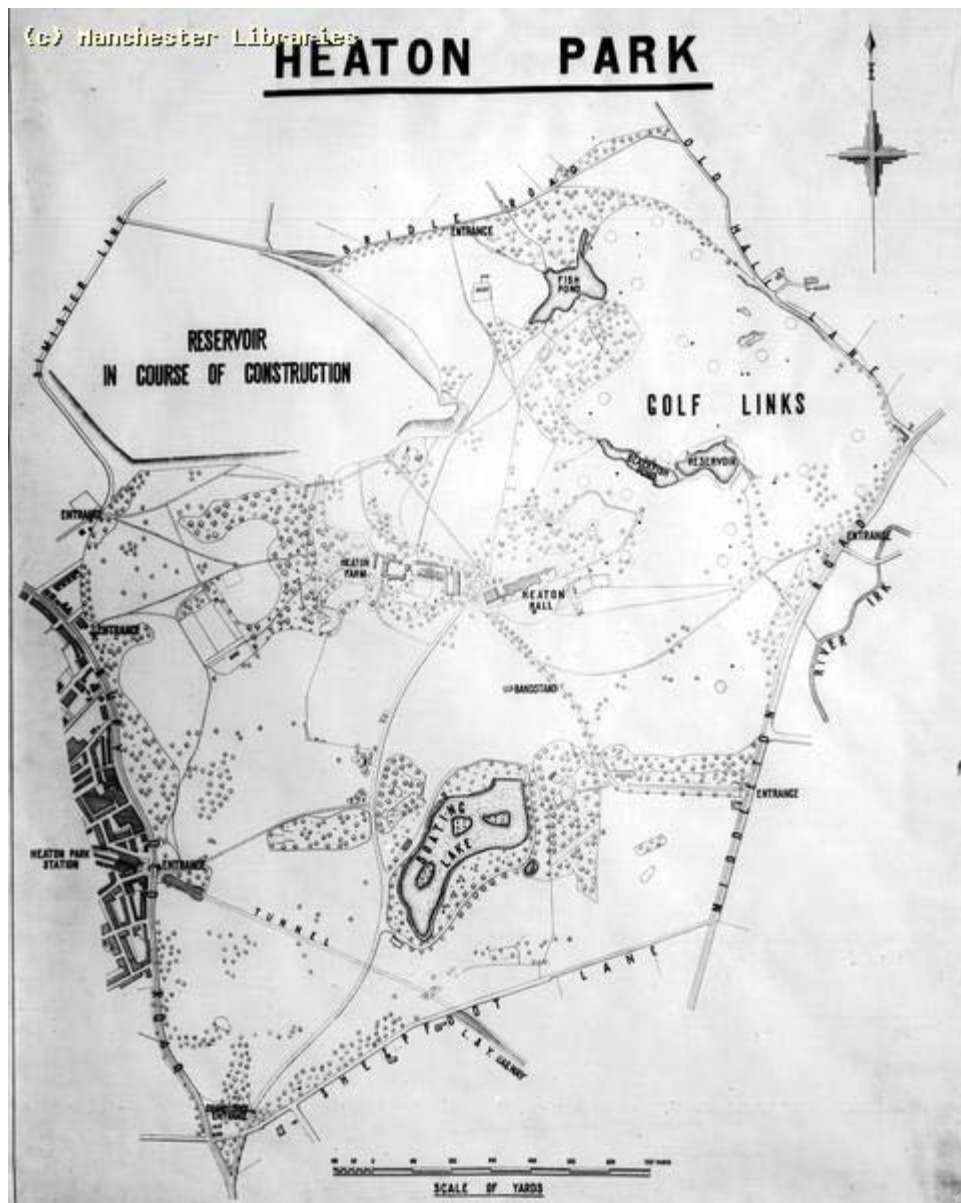


Figure 4 – Map of Heaton Park, 1914 (Manchester Local Image Collection, Manchester Central Library)