

Transcript of DVD: A Brief History of Kersal Dale

1. Photograph of Kersal Dale LNR now
2. Photograph of Kersal Dale LNR now
3. Photograph of Kersal Dale LNR now
4. Map of Kersal Dale 1755 – 1840

The earliest map we have, a composite dated 1755-1840, shows Kersal Dale as a series of fields: Work Field at the Great Clowes Street gateway; Round Meadow at the Radford Street entrance; and Great Meadow at South Radford Street.

5. Painting of the view from Kersal Moor
6. Painting of Kersal Dale from Great Clowes Street

In the nineteenth century as industrialization brought rapid growth to both Manchester and Salford, the Clowes family decided to develop their land in Broughton, but only for grand houses and suitable public buildings, such as St. John's Church. Kersal Dale was developed, in part for golf and in part for homes for the wealthy.

7. Photographs of Rev John Clowes 1814 and William Clowes 1820
8. Photograph of the Gate House, Bury New Road
9. Photograph of Saint Johns Church
10. Photograph of Hanover Square
11. Photograph of the Hollies

Elsewhere along the Irwell, people lived and worked in squalor. For example, nearby, at Douglas Green Weir, was Douglas Mills, founded in the late eighteenth century and nicknamed 'The Cripple Factory', where children obtained from London workhouses were over-worked in horrible conditions.

12. Photograph of Industrialisation near Kersal Dale

The first development on the site was the founding of Manchester Golf Course (sometimes called the 'Kersal Links') in 1818. The Golf Course was the oldest club between the Thames and the Tweed. The Course ceased to exist in 1960.

13. Kersal Dale golf course 1818

Manchester's original racecourse had been established in the seventeenth century on Kersal Moor. In 1847 the racecourse re-opened on its new site in the River Irwell's meander, on the opposite bank to the golf course.

14. Map of Kersal 1755 – 1840

15. Map of Kersal Moor Race Course

In 1867, the course moved to Weaste because the land had been acquired by the Fitzgerald's of Castle Irwell. The eccentric John Fitzgerald's, disapproved of horseracing, but on his death in 1898, the land was bought back by the Racecourse Company. In 1902 racing returned to the Castle Irwell site.

- 16. Photograph of the old Race Course 1902
- 17. Photograph of the old Race Course Stands 1902
- 18. Photograph of Kersal Bend
- 19. Photograph of Kersal Bend

Castle Irwell which had stood on the land since 1826 was demolished, as was the wooded knoll which it occupied. The shadow of that knoll can still be seen by looking across the river from the end of Hugh Oldham Drive.

- 20. Photograph of Irwell Castle 1826
- 21. Photograph of Irwell Castle 1826

Houses on the Cliff

East of the Golf Course, on the land bordering Bury New Road, an 1848 map shows us three houses - Kersal Lodge, Walker's Croft and Kersal House - in landscaped gardens with pools, fountains and statues.

22. Map of Kersal Dale 1755 – 1840

In 1841 according to census records there was just one house in the area – Kersal House together with a lodge. By the 1851 census Kersal lodge had been built (located on Radford Street to the rear of Garden Needs). A lodge to Kersal Lodge is first listed in 1861.

- 23. Photograph of Kersal Lodge
- 24. Photograph of the lodge to Kersal Lodge

In the 1851 census Sycamore Cottage first appears and is recorded as the home to a stuff manufacturer (stuff is the course part of flax)

- 25. Photograph of Sycamore Cottage
- 26. Photograph of Sycamore Cottage prior to demolition

In the 1861 census, Willow House first appears and is first mapped in 1888 along with Kersal Dale villa.

- 27. Photograph of Kersal Dale Villa

For fifty years or so, Kersal Dale, and the surrounding area, was elegant, opulent and bucolic. A Victorian painting of the area depicts the River Irwell at Kersal Dale as a place of recreation.

- 28. Photograph of The Brow Kersal
- 29. Painting of Kersal Dale

As Bracegirdle notes, "In the early decades of the nineteenth century the owners of the new industries often built their homes along pleasant stretches of the Irwell...

- 30. painting of Kersal Dale

but increasing pollution from their own factories gradually forced them to retreat to outlying villages".

- 31. Photograph of Brown and Polson
- 32. Photograph of industry along the River Irwell

There were landslips in the 1880's and 1920's, with various scheme attempting to deal with the areas geology. The last, a 1925 retaining wall can be still be seen behind what was Sycamore Cottage.

- 33. Geology diagram

The grand houses of Kersal Dale were occupied in 1927, according to the local directory; Sycamore Cottage by a school master, Kersal Lodge by a mantle maker; Willow Bank (cottage) by a manufacturer's agent; and Kersal Dale Villa by a sharebroker.

- 34. Photograph of the River Irwell

On 15 July 1927, flooding occasioned by a summer storm, caused severe subsidence to Great Clowes Street , part of which fell away. In 1928, there are no entries for Sycamore Cottage, Kersal Lodge, Willow House and Kersal Dale Villa in the local directory.

The Cliff then and Now

- 35. Photograph of The Cliff now
- 36. Photograph of the Cliff then
- 37. Photograph of the Cliff now
- 38. Photograph of the Cliff then
- 39. Photograph of the Cliff now
- 40. Photograph of the Cliff then
- 41. Ariel photograph of Kersal Dale now

With grateful thanks to: Peter Ogilvie at the Salford Museum and Art Gallery for the images of two paintings from the City's collection; the staff at the Local History Library for their help to Davina Miller in her research: and The Art of Seeing for the production of this presentation.