

Down your Street.

This is the first in a series of articles looking streets of local interest.

Fairhills Road.

Start from the junction of Fairhills road and Liverpool Road.

Fairhills Road was a pleasant country lane leading to Fairhills farm near the old river. At this end of the road where Lidl now stands once stood Woodhall's farm house on the other side of the road was Wash Farm. The farm house was approximately where the bus stop near the baths is now. It was only knocked down in the 1960's when the land was given to the local council.

On the corner where the Youth Club stands, there was once a Methodist church.



From the youth club walking down Fairhills Road, the bungalows on the left side of the road were erected to replace some post war pre-fabricated bungalows which were built to house people quickly after the war when there was a great shortage of houses. If you look along the road there is still one of these pre-fabricated houses left. When the time came to up date these building a lot of the residents didn't want to change into a brick built property as they enjoyed living in these prefabricated building.

We are now walking past the vast car park of Tesco. This land was once the playing fields of the Soap Works. In its heyday the Soap Works fielded ladies and gent's football, cricket and hockey teams. They also would have first aid and fire competitions where the fire team would compete against other CWS teams in national competitions.

Tesco opened in 1973 and at that time it was one of the first hypermarkets built in the country with the new innovations of selling clothes electrical products and other articles rather than just food, this was a new concept in the 1970's. Now this is normal but back then it was a great novelty. The main thing I remember about the opening of Tesco was the traffic jams. Irlam and Cadishead were practically gridlocked especially on a Thursday and Friday.

Tesco was rebuilt around the turn of the century and was made much bigger than the original hypermarket unfortunately the planners built at the furthest point away from the road.

Just past Tesco there is the entrance to the CWS Soap works. At the end of the bungalows is the fire station, it moved from Clarendon Road to here in the 1970's. The fire station stands on the site of Fairhills farm close by the old river. The old river is a cut from the time when the Manchester Ship canal was built by straightening the river Irwell. The CWS soap works is on the opposite side of the road. At one time the Soap works employed 700 people, it closed down the soap manufacturing in 1970. The soap works warehouses are now a wine and spirits stores.



Opposite the soap works offices there is now a large housing estate. This was built during the first part of this century. The housing estate is built on land where once stood a Kwik Save.

Between Kwik Save and the Old river there was some waste land that for many years was known as the Jerry Works and many years ago a factory was built here which was intended to manufacture soda ash, unfortunately the factory never commenced operations. It was known as the Magadi soda company. The old buildings were used in the first world war (1914-1918) to repair army boots and was manned by German prisoners of war hence the name the Jerry Works.

Once on the new A57 by pass road you can see the high level railway bridge that was built in 1893 along with the building of the Manchester Ship canal. The railway line had to be lifted to allow boats to sail along the canal. The bridge's strength was tested by driving 10 steam engines across the bridge at the same time. They did the same thing on the railway bridge in Cadishead.

The lower railway line that was made redundant by the high level railway was taken over by the soap works and was used to transport it's employees to Irlam station here they could catch either buses or trains to their destination.