

Moses Gate LNR, Bolton

Development of the Reserve

Moses Gate Local Nature Reserve is situated in the Croal Irwell Valley to the south west of Bolton town centre and extends south to the Salford Boundary. Centred on Rock Hall and Crompton Lodges, the site was designated a Local Nature Reserve in 2009 and attracts many visitors to enjoy the countryside between Leverhulme Park and Kearsley.

Much of the reserve is on reclaimed industrial land which was polluted and degraded during the industrial revolution and through to the mid-1900s. This now attractive and diverse landscape provides valuable habitats for wildlife and attracts many recreational visitors who enjoy walking, cycling and horse riding in this landscape now restored to nature.

What Can be Seen

The reserve consists mainly of native broadleaf woodland covering nearly half of the area with other habitats of wildflower meadows, marshland areas, developing heathland, ponds and lodges that are also managed for wildlife. The rivers Croal and Irwell provide the backbone of the reserve with some extended views beyond the reserve to the moors at Winter Hill. Crompton Lodges support a variety of waterfowl, bird life and wetland plants with car parking and a children's playground close to hand. A network of paths and bridleways provide routes to explore the rest of the valley, discovering remnants of industrial features not yet reclaimed by nature.

The fragile habitats at Darcy Lever Gravel Pits (pictured below), provide another treasure to the north of the reserve. Managed by the Gravel Pits Action Group, disused gravel extraction has provided a valuable patchwork of habitats supporting mosses, dragonflies and damselflies, amphibians, birdlife and heathland vegetation. The adjacent woodlands and grassland adjacent replace what was once a sewage works and landfill site but now supports a range of wildlife in a pleasant tranquil setting.

Canal Wood is situated across the river from Rock Hall on the retaining bank of the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal. This popular woodland is well known for its autumn colour and is popular with visitor being close to the Hall and car parks as well as being on a main linear route through the valley. To the south of Rock Hall, Kearsley Park provides a woodland link from Farnworth to Stoneclough with the Kingfisher Trail linking to Clifton Country Park and beyond. Riverside views, woodland and secluded heathland pockets are to be found along the path, occasionally disturbed by a passing train.



Darcy Lever Gravel Pits

When to Visit

The site has many access points and links to the wider Public Rights of Way footpath network. With an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways, walks and rides of varying length and duration from a short stroll to over 3 ½ km (over 2 miles), may be enjoyed and we would expect that other users are given consideration so they too may also enjoy the reserve. For those who seek further involvement, the Gravel Pits Action Group host regular events to improve and manage the habitats. (www.gpag.co.uk) The Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal Society (www.mbbcs.org.uk) also undertake practical task events to protect and enhance the historical transport link.

All Year - An array of bird life is always present throughout the reserve and the woodlands change their character depending upon the season.

Spring - woodland flowering plants on woodland walks and birdlife around Crompton Lodges

Summer – An array of wildflowers and plants in the woods and grasslands. Darcy Lever Gravel Pits with its frogs, toads and newts with dragonflies and damselflies around the ponds.

Autumn - Enjoy the autumn leaf colours and various plants and wildflowers setting seed.

Winter – A winter landscape where industrial archaeology and the rivers can be more easily seen.



Crompton Lodges, Moses Gate LNR

How to Get There

Train services on the Bolton-Manchester line provide access to the reserve stopping at Kearsley, Farnworth and Moses Gate, with each station within short walking distance of the reserve.

Bus services stop near the reserve providing links from;

- 8 Bolton to Manchester alighting at Manchester Road, Moses Gate
- 544 Bolton to Little Lever alighting at Radcliffe Road
- 536 Bolton and Breightmet Circular also alighting at Radcliffe Road
- 521 Blackrod to Little Lever alighting at Hall Lane, Moses Gate
- 524 Bolton to Bury also alighting at Hall Lane, Moses Gate
- 512 & 513 Bolton to Bury alighting at Stoneclough, Kearsley