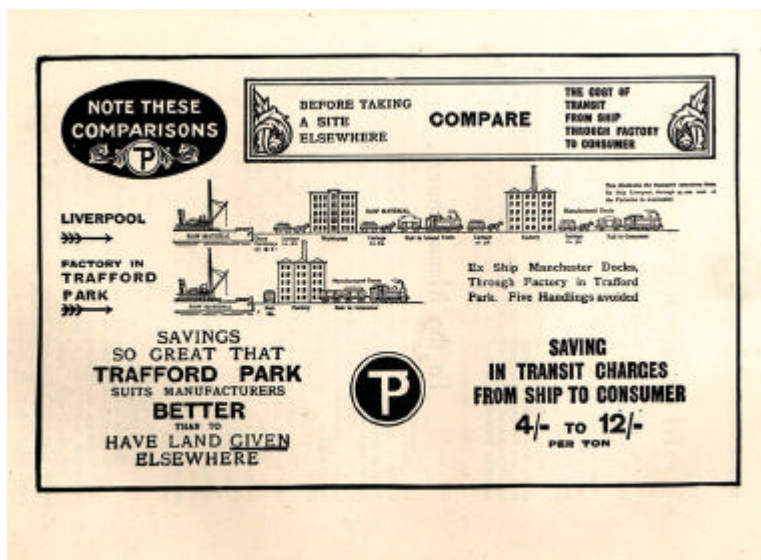


Trafford Park

The Museum holds a number of collections relating to manufacturers based in Trafford Park. These collections include the photographic archives of W. T. Glover and the General Electric Company.

Opened in 1896, Trafford Park was one of the world's first industrial estates. It is bounded by the River Mersey to the south, the River Irwell to the north and the Manchester Ship Canal to the north and west. Trafford Park's main asset was its good access by rail and canal. The land was originally owned by the de Trafford family, who had been associated with Trafford Park since at least the late twelfth century. During the mid- to late nineteenth century Trafford Park was a rural estate with a wooded deer park.

The opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894 changed the economic potential of Trafford Park. Ernest Terah Hooley, a financier from Risley Hall, Derbyshire, was fast to



An advertisement for Trafford Park from the 1920s.

spot this new business opportunity. He decided to acquire Trafford Park for development as an industrial estate. Hooley had problems raising capital until he met Marshall Stevens, general manager of the Ship Canal. The Canal was not making as much money as had been expected but Stevens realised that Trafford Park could be used to increase traffic. Hooley's company, Trafford Park Estates Ltd. was registered in August 1896.

Hooley resigned from the company in October 1897 and was declared bankrupt shortly afterwards. However the company was proving successful. Trafford Park was particularly attractive to companies that had to transport heavy or bulky raw materials or finished goods, or needed good links with North America. The Manchester and Liverpool Transport Company took a site, as did the cable manufacturer W. T. Glover. In 1899 the American entrepreneur and engineer George Westinghouse acquired a site to set up British Westinghouse, which later became Metropolitan Vickers (Metrovick).

Westinghouse introduced 'scientific' American production methods to Britain. The factory was laid out to facilitate the flow of production. Westinghouse also built a 'village' for the workforce near to the factory, as Trafford Park lacked housing. It was based on the American grid system, with streets and avenues identified by numbers rather than names. Over 700 dwellings were built, and shops and a school were added later.

Manchester's first aerodrome was built in Trafford Park in 1911. This was also the year when the American car manufacturer Ford opened a factory. Three years later Ford introduced its pioneering assembly line production methods. By 1914, Manchester had become the third-ranked port in Britain. There were 10,000,000 people living within a 50-mile radius of the docks. Trafford Park contained electrical, mechanical and constructional engineering companies, flour mills, timber works and specialist firms, such as a company which rejuvenated rubber tyres. It became a food-processing centre and regional food distribution centre, because of the Manchester Ship Canal.

Trafford Park expanded rapidly during the First World War and was used extensively for war work by the Ministry of Munitions. However, by the end of 1914 one third of the workforce had volunteered to join up. This resulted in a serious loss of skills in Trafford Park and the War Office began to refuse factory workers. Employment in Trafford Park fell significantly during the economic depression of the 1920s and 1930s. However, new factories continued to open. The British Alizarine Co. set up production in Trafford Park in the 1920s. It later became part of ICI. Other residents included W. & R. Jacob & Co. Ltd., biscuit manufacturers, and the Lancashire Dynamo and Motor company, which employed over 1000 people and had branches in London, Birmingham and Cardiff and agencies in South Africa, Australia, Russia, and Canada.

Trafford Park was very important to the local economy and became of national importance in the late 1930s because of the threat of war. Most of the factories in Trafford Park could quickly be turned to war use. For example, the Metrovick factory was rapidly adapted to make munitions. During the Second World War, employment in Trafford Park rose from 50,000 to 75,000. Employment also held up well in the 1940s and 1950s, but the 1960s brought the first closures. For example, the General Electric Company (GEC) took over Lancashire Dynamo and the factory closed at the end of 1967. There was a glut of property in the area because of the closures.

In 1979, the government asked the Trafford and Salford local authorities if they wanted to become part of the Enterprise Zones experiment. Local support for the idea was strong, although the councils involved had some doubts. The Enterprise Zone came into effect in August 1981. It was arguably a mixed blessing because while existing companies expanded, few new companies moved to Trafford Park. In 1987 Trafford Park Development Corporation was set up to promote the area and encourage redevelopment. During the 10-year life of the Development Corporation, employment in Trafford Park grew from 25,000 to 46,000. Trafford Park is now used by light engineering firms and retailers.

For more information:

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