

# Slums, squalor and salvation

A self guided walk around Victorian Manchester



Corporation Street, Angel Meadow (c1908) © St Michael's Flags and Angel Meadow: Then and Now

Find out the other side to Manchester's industrial boom  
Visit where many Victorians lived and worked in poverty  
Discover how religious organisations tried to improve people's lives

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This booklet is to be used alongside the audio commentary for this walk

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# Slums, squalor and salvation

**Discover how religious organisations helped the poor in Victorian Manchester**

## Introduction

1840. Manchester is booming. Its cotton industry is world famous. But life expectancy is just 26.

The story of Victorian Manchester is usually one which celebrates industrial expansion, technological advancements and economic growth. But there was another side. For ordinary people who worked in the mills and factories, life was hard, poverty was widespread and life expectancy was very short.



Crown Lane, Angel Meadow (1899)  
By kind permission of Manchester Libraries

On this walk, you will discover another side of nineteenth century Manchester: teeming slums and squalid living conditions, widespread disease and chronic health conditions, child labour and illiteracy, drinking and prostitution.

In those days, the state did not provide any financial or material support to the poor. But many religious people were moved by the appalling living conditions of the working classes and decided to do something about it. Find out about the institutions that provided a variety of welfare services and made the difference between life and death for the urban poor.



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## Practical information

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Location</b>                   | Manchester, Northwest England  |
| <b>Getting there</b>              | <p><b>Train</b> - Both Manchester Victoria and Manchester Piccadilly are in the city centre.</p> <p>Victoria services include to Leeds and Liverpool. Piccadilly services to London Euston, Birmingham New Street, Edinburgh Waverley, Glasgow Central and South Wales</p> <p><b>Tram</b> - Manchester Metrolink covers most of the city, including a route between Victoria and Piccadilly mainline stations</p> <p><b>Bus</b> - served by over fifty operators, from local to long distance routes. Routes to the start of the walk (Manchester Victoria station) include 2, 8, 31, 59, 67, 71, 73, 89, 93, 94, 96, 98, 100, 110, 135, 149, 167 and X25</p> <p>Three city centre Metroshuttle bus routes connect the mainline train stations. They are free of charge and run every 10 minutes.</p> <p><b>Car</b> - Easily accessible from M6 and M62. Plenty of car parks though charges apply.</p> |
| <b>Start point &amp; postcode</b> | Manchester Victoria railway station, M3 1PB  |
| <b>Finish point</b>               | Manchester Cathedral, M3 1SX   |
| <b>Distance</b>                   | 3 miles  |
| <b>Level</b>                      | Gentle – A largely flat route around the city centre and its fringes   |

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**Conditions**

This city centre walk can be very busy, especially on Saturdays. Take care crossing busy roads and look after your valuables. The route tends to be quieter on Sundays if you want to avoid the crowds.

**Suitable for**

**Wheelchairs/pushchairs** - an entirely step-free route

**Refreshments**

There are plenty of places to stop for food and drink in the city centre

**Facilities**

Public toilets at Manchester Victoria station (Stop 1), though charges apply. Along the route are free facilities at:

- The Arndale Centre (between Stops 9 and 10)
- Albert Square, before the Friends Meeting House (between Stops 10 and 11)
- The Great Northern Warehouse, opposite the former Albert Hall (Stop 14)
- Manchester Cathedral (Stop 17)
- various others in the city centre

**Other info**

**Manchester Cathedral** is open daily. Entry is free though donations are recommended. A free Explorer Trail is available for children

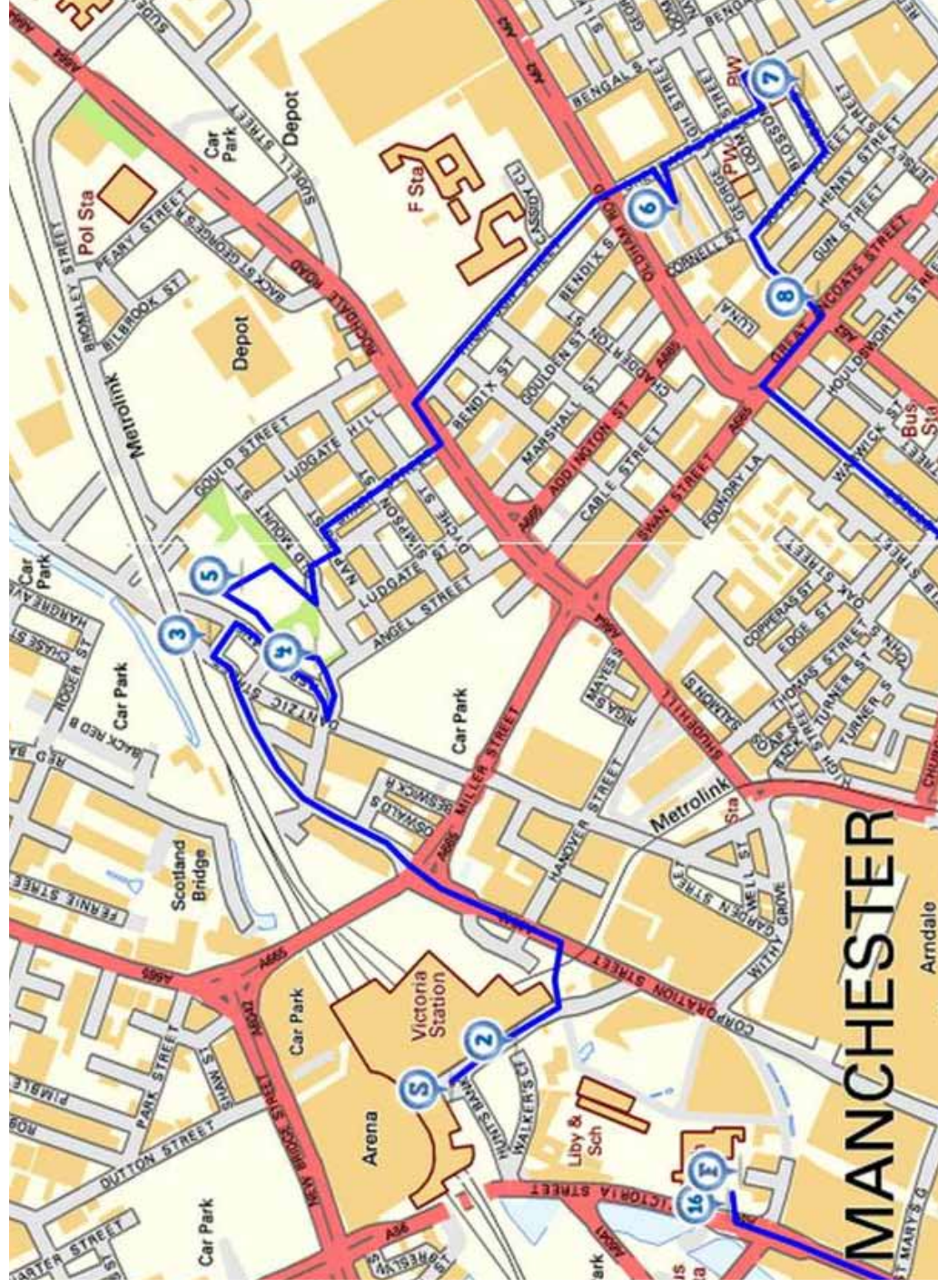
Typical opening times are:

- Monday - Friday, 8.30am - 6.30pm
- Saturday 8.30am - 5pm
- Sunday 8.30am - 7pm

The Cathedral is used for daily for services and special events, so it is advisable to check admission times before visiting (Tel: 0161 833 2220)



## Detail of the first part of the route

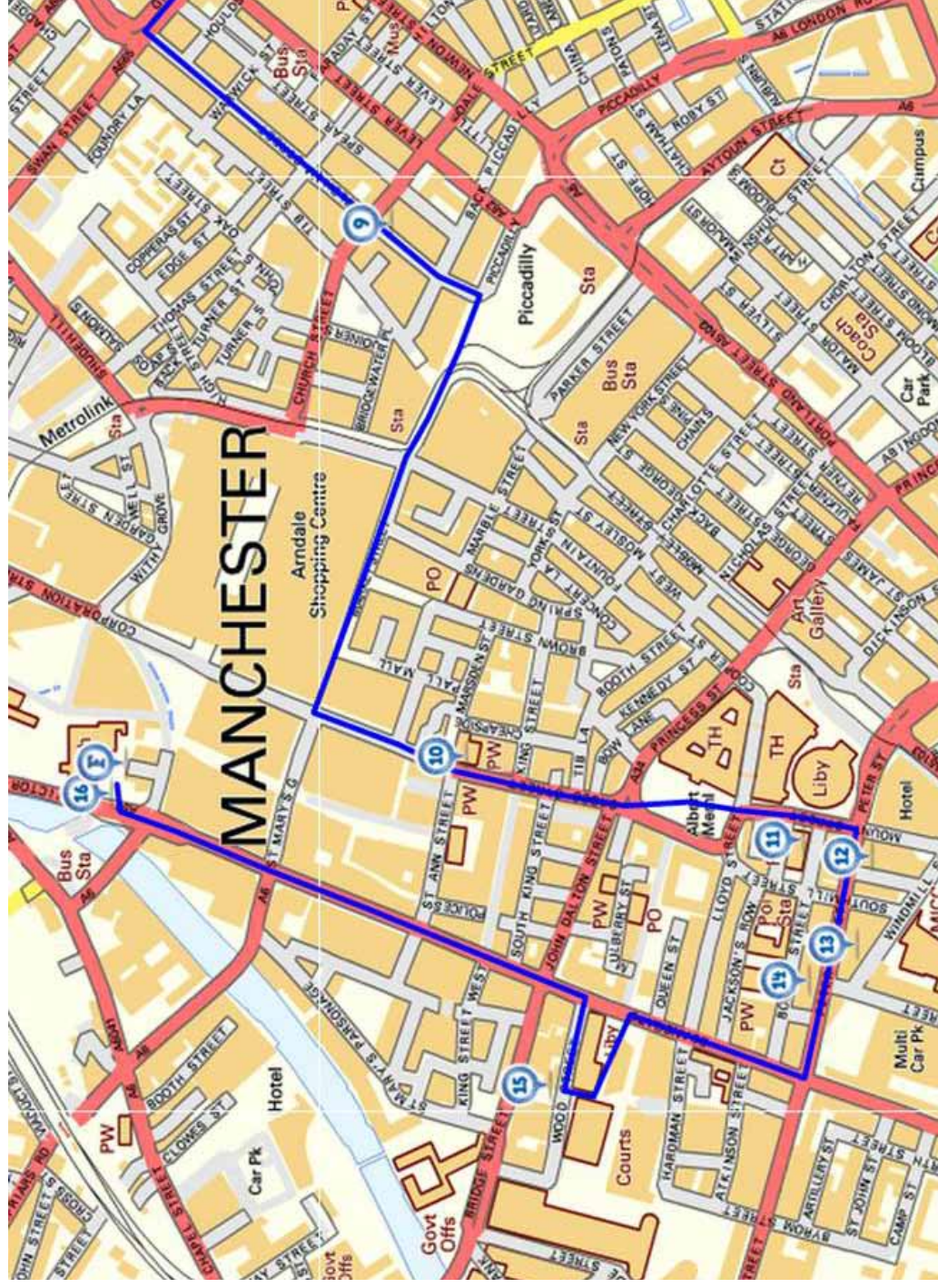


### Stopping points

1. Victoria railway station
2. Victoria railway station
3. Charter Street Ragged School and Working Girls Institute
4. St Michael's Flags and Angel Meadow
5. St Michael's Flags and Angel Meadow
6. Anita Street
7. Former Methodist Men's Hostel, Hood Street
8. Former Methodist Women's Home and Night Shelter, Great Ancoats Street



## Detail of the second part of the route



### Stopping points

9. Methodist Central Hall,  
Oldham Street
10. Cross Street Chapel
11. Friends Meeting House,  
Mount Street
12. Former YMCA, Peter Street
13. Former Free Trade Hall,  
Peter Street
14. Former Albert Hall,  
Peter Street
15. Wood Street Mission, 26  
Wood Street
16. Manchester Cathedral
17. Manchester Cathedral

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## Directions

These directions are for use with the Manchester Victorian audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

### 1. Welcome to Manchester

#### Victoria railway station

##### Directions 1

Whether you have travelled to Manchester by train or other means, make your way to Victoria railway station and listen to Track 2.

### 2. Teeming slums

#### Victoria railway station

##### Directions 2

If you are inside the station, make your way out of one of the exits onto Station Approach and turn left towards the city centre. At the corner of the station building, keep left and cross the tram tracks to Corporation Street. Turn left along Corporation Street. At the first major junction, make your way straight across, where Corporation Street continues. Keep the railway on your left hand side. Just before the railway bridge is a four-storey red brick building. Stop outside and listen to Track 3.

### 3. Cultivating respectable citizens

#### Charter Street Ragged School and Working Girls' Home

##### Directions 3

Turn right along the front of the ragged school (Little Nelson Street) and then right again along Aspin Lane, keeping a stone wall on your left. At the junction, double back left up St Michaels' Square. Turn left into the park called St Michael's Flags and Angel Meadow. Stop inside the park and listen to Track 4.

### 4. A paupers' graveyard

#### St Michael's Flags and Angel Meadow

##### Directions 4

Remain in Angel Meadow Park and listen to Track 5.

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## 5. Hell upon Earth

### St Michael's Flags and Angel Meadow

#### Directions 5

Leave the park by the top exit onto Style Street. Almost directly opposite the park entrance is an area of rough ground where cars often park. Cut through here onto Naples Street. Turn left and then take the first right into Sharp Street. On the right hand side is another former ragged school which has been renovated and is now used as offices.

As you continue up Sharp Street, note the street pattern in this area. The distance between each street in the grid pattern is very small. This was where there were rows of back-to-back terraced houses.

Turn left onto Rochdale Road. Cross over at the lights and go along Thompson Street. When you reach Oldham Road, go straight across into Sherratt Street. Stop at the top of the second street on the right, which is the pedestrianized Anita Street, and listen to Track 6.

## 6. Private toilets

### Anita Street

#### Directions 6

Continue along Sherratt Street towards St Peter's Church. Turn left onto Blossom Street and then immediately right into Murray Street to go round the church to look at the building at the far side. Stop at the corner of Murray Street and Hood Street and listen to Track 7.

## 7. Finding work

### Former Methodist Men's Hostel, Hood Street

#### Directions 7

Walk along Hood Street with the Methodist Men's Hostel on your left. Turn right along Cotton Street. Note other street names such as Loom Street which recall the textiles industry that built this city. Turn left into George Leigh Street. Stop at the corner with Great Ancoats Street, looking at the red brick building on the left hand side, and listen to Track 8.



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## 8. Fallen women

### **Former Methodist Women's Home and Night Shelter, Great Ancoats Street**

#### **Directions 8**

Cross over Great Ancoats Street at the pedestrian crossing and turn right. Then turn left into Oldham Street. Continue along Oldham Street. Immediately after the crossing of Dale Street is a large grey stone building on the left hand side. You may need to look above the shop facades to appreciate it. Stop outside the entrance and listen to Track 9.

## 9. A radically new kind of church

### **Methodist Central Hall, Oldham Street**

#### **Directions 9**

Continue along Oldham Street towards Piccadilly Gardens. Turn right along Market Street and follow it through the pedestrianised area past shops. After passing underneath part of the Arndale Centre, you reach Cross Street. Turn left. After about 200 metres, there is a pedestrian alley on the left hand side called Chapel Walks. Stop on this corner looking at the modern-looking building that is Cross Street Chapel and listen to Track 10.

## 10. Reformers

### **Cross Street Chapel, Cross Street**

#### **Directions 10**

Continue along Cross Street until you reach Albert Square. Go across Albert Square in front of Manchester Town Hall and into Mount Street at the far corner. The Central Library should be on our left and the Quaker Friends Meeting House on your right. Stop outside the Friends Meeting House and listen to Track 11.

## 11. Dissenters and campaigners

### **Friends Meeting House, Mount Street**

#### **Directions 11**

Continue a short distance further along Mount Street. At the junction with Peter Street, look on the opposite side to the five-storey building faced with brown and orange tiles. Stop here and listen to Track 12.

## 12. Muscular Christianity

### **Former Young Men's Christian Association, Peter Street**

#### **Directions 12**

Turn right along Peter Street. On the left hand side after a short distance is a very grand stone building with a series of arches along the front. The best vantage point is possibly on the opposite side of the road but you may wish to go closer. Stop outside and listen to Track 13.

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### **13. Filling the hall**

#### **Former Free Trade Hall, Peter Street**

##### **Directions 13**

Continue a short way further along Peter Street. Stop at the junction with Watson Street and look at the building opposite. At the time of creating this walk it was a bar called Brannigans. On the tower at the top of the building, you should be able to see the words Albert Hall. Find a suitable vantage point and listen to Track 14.

### **14. The Band of Hope**

#### **Former Albert Hall, Peter Street**

##### **Directions 14**

Continue along Peter Street. At the first set of traffic lights, turn right into Deansgate. After about 200 metres, there is a very modern glass building next to a Victorian Gothic building, which is the John Rylands Library. Cross the pedestrianized plaza between the two buildings and then turn right round the back of the library. This leads to Wood Street and immediately opposite is the Wood Street Mission. Stop here and listen to Track 15.

### **15. Clogs, clothes and camps**

#### **Wood Street Mission, 26 Wood Street**

##### **Directions 15**

Turn right along Wood Street and back to Deansgate. Turn left along Deansgate. After about 500 metres, you will see Manchester Cathedral on the right hand side. Go into the cathedral grounds and listen to Track 16.

### **16. The work continues**

#### **Manchester Cathedral**

##### **Directions 16**

Stay in the cathedral grounds and listen to Track 17.

### **17. An alternative history**

#### **Manchester Cathedral**

##### **Directions 17**

You are now at the end of the walk. You are on the edge of the shopping district and just a short distance from Victoria Station

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## Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this Discovering Britain walk:

- **Angela Connelly** for creating the walk
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- **Manchester Libraries** for kind permission to use archive images
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- **Wood Street Mission** for kind permission to use archive images



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