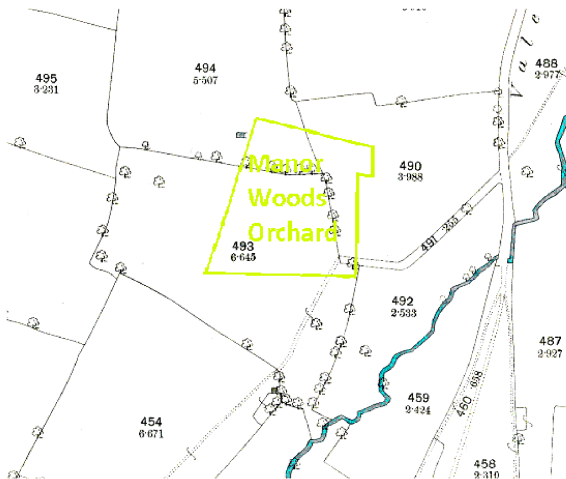


Manor Woods Valley – Manor Woods Orchard

There is an orchard at the northern end of Manor Woods Valley, on the site of former brickworks. It has apple and pear trees, which produces delicious fruit.



History: farmland

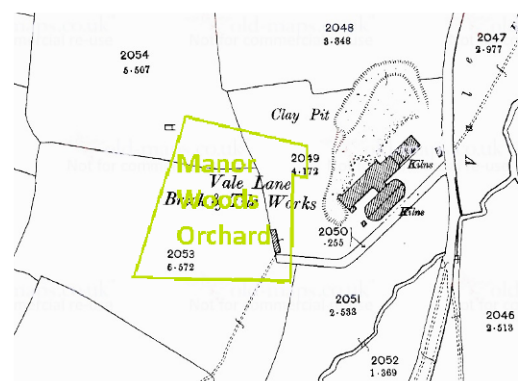


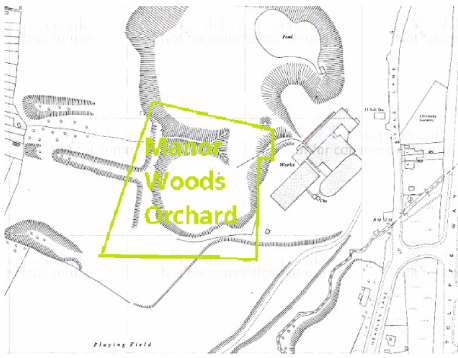
Until the late nineteenth century, the northern end of Manor Woods Valley was farmland, with hedgerows, some with large trees within them. The area will have been used mainly for grazing sheep and cattle, perhaps with some cereal and other fodder crops being grown as well.



History: brickworks

At the close of the 1800's Vale Lane Brick and Tile Works, and The Somerset Brick and Tile Works, were built at the northern end of Manor Woods Valley and beyond. By 1903 the former works had a clay pit extending to the north of the kilns and associated buildings. The area occupied by today's orchard was still being farmed.



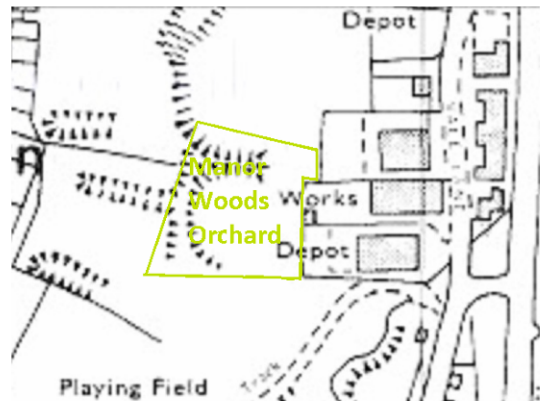


By 1929 the site was part of the Hollychome Brick Works Company. Over the next 40 years, the claypits expanded to the north and west.

The clay was extracted by blasting and hand digging. It was loaded in to trucks, and taken to the surface, up to 14m above, along a narrow gauge tramway. It was then ground, moulded and baked in kilns. Water flowed in to the pit from many springs, so a pump was continually in action to remove it.

Following the closure of the works in the early 1960's, the quarry pits were used as a landfill site for unsorted domestic and other refuse. Disinfectant had to be sprayed on to the fetid mass to manage the smell! Following land-filling, a thin soil cap was applied and the area abandoned.

The current depots and works along Vale Lane were built in the later 1960's to early 1970's.



Today: the orchard



There are 37 mature fruit trees, 31 apple and 6 pear, in Manor Woods Orchard. None are true varieties and they occur at random spacings around the edge of the filled clay pit. Their ages, type and distribution indicate that they probably grew from pips in apple and pear cores dropped by the last brick and tile workers on the site.

The orchard's fruit can be picked by anyone. Apples and pears from the orchard have been turned in to juice, cider, jam and jelly. Surplus fruit falls to the ground and is eaten by over-wintering Blackbird, Fieldfares and Redwings, other birds and small mammals.

To encourage fruiting, a wassail was held in January 2020. It is hoped that this will become an annual event.



The central area of the orchard is being planted-up with a variety of young fruit trees. These include apples and pears, plums, gages and damsons, and more 'exotic' fruits such as medlars and apricots.

Manor Woods Valley's importance

Bristol declared a Climate Emergency in November 2018 and an ecological emergency in February 2019, and health and equality issues have come to the fore during 2020. Manor Woods Valley Group is working to ensure that Manor Woods Valley contributes to solutions to these issues.



MANOR WOODS VALLEY
GROUP



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