

Pre-industrial Landscape of St Helens

Before 1600, there was little development. From this period, there survive relict features of the pre-industrial landscape including some [ancient woodland](#), some areas of the former south Lancashire mosslands and fragments of wet heath and acidic grasslands.

On the southern edge of the built-up area in Sutton, several mossland fragments survive around the fringes around the colliery spoil from the former Bold Colliery. Here, a variety of interesting plants are present including marsh pennywort, cotton grass, marsh orchids, heather and bog mosses.



Burtonwood Moss

The summit of Billinge Hill supports a good example of acidic grassland, containing heath bedstraw, heath rush, mat grass and heath grass. A tiny relic of wet heath community survives at The Dingle in Earlestown as part of managed public open space. Several plants now uncommon in this area, such as bristle club rush, mat grass and bog pimpernel can still be found there.



Goyt Hey Wood

Generally, ancient woodland cover in St. Helens is restricted in extent. Two woods of particular wildlife value at Cloghe Wood, Newton le Willows and Goyt Hey Wood, Billinge, are both contained in narrow steep-sided valleys.

One of the oldest woodlands in St Helens, Goyt Hey Wood is predominantly oak, with some birch and a rich ground flora including bilberry and many spring flowers such as wood anemone, wood sorrel, ransoms and extensive drifts of bluebells.

Other ancient woodlands are present within the Sankey Valley Country Park including Stanley Bank Wood, Red Brow Wood and Glass House Close Wood, which, on place name evidence, may have associations with early glass making.