



Above: Sunset at Sale Water Park. Sunset at Sale Water Park, 26 July 2003. The lake was formed by excavation of soil and gravel to build the M60 embankment.



**Fengshui, Leylines & Cheeses** - If there is any truth in Chinese ‘fengshui’ or Alfred Watkins’ Leylines, then this is the place in Manchester where these all gather into one knot and bundle. A place where the lines of power, the dragon’s spine, are literally made manifest.

Perhaps it is the navel of Manchester. Because here is the Great Intersection, the conjunction at the Mersey of the M60 motorway (AD 1957-1998) with the A56 trunk road (Roman), the Bridgewater Canal (AD 1760), the Metrolink and the railway to Chester (AD 1849), the Manchester section of the National Cycleway (passing under the M60 next to the Railway), and the Transpennine Trail (passing under the M60 by a culvert as a footpath). The electricity pylons also cut through here. There is even a set of stepping stones over brooding Sale Water. Previously there was also a ferry here - Jackson’s Boat across the Mersey. The Barrow, Ousel and Chorlton Brooks are also nearby. This is also a place where disused arms of the Mersey languish - inexplicable dry grooves in the landscape. In contrast to the predictable numbered bridges of the M60, there are several named bridges here - Eye Platt Bridge, Eye Platt New Bridge (both on the A56).

These ‘eyes’ are small islands - we are in the Mersey floodplain. Barfoot Bridge carries both the Bridgewater Canal and the Metrolink, while Cut Hole Bridge stands a little to the North in Stretford. White’s Bridge (after Beswick’s embalmer) and Crossford Bridge lie to the south in Sale. The name Stretford gives the game away: this where the Romans chose to locate their access to Mamucium, where the Roman street forded the Mersey.

And the Mersey, ancient boundary between Northumbria and Mercia, Lancashire and Cheshire, has not moved as much as you might suspect. Its line in 1636, at Northenden at least, was the same as today, already embanked against its surges from rainfall in the distant Peaks. The boundary between Stretford and Chorlton still runs down the middle of the Mersey here - curious to