

HOLLYBANK ROAD (AREA 3)

ED BROWN

Hollybank Road runs for a kilometre between Wheelers Lane in the North West to Haunch Lane in the South East, in the suburb of Billesley. The name Billesley is Anglo-Saxon, Bill's leah meaning simply 'Bill's clearing'. As you can imagine, people have lived here for quite some time. The area used to be farm land with Billesley Farm and Hollybank Farm.

In 1919 Birmingham City Council bought Billesley Farm and the surrounding fields and by 1931 had built over 3000 council houses in the area. In the early 1950's the mid Hollybank Road blocks of flats were erected (using a design first used over in Tile Cross), with conventional housing built on the opposite side. There's a real mix of housing here – something for everyone so to speak.

On the west of Hollybank Road, as it drops away towards Kings Heath Boys School, is the Hollybank Spinney, a small semi natural woodland with mature ash, beech and oak trees.

Following the road back up the hill, beyond Kings Heath Boys School, you find yourself walking past flats, maisonettes and bungalows and a small row of shops that serve the local residents (convenience store, takeaway, café). Hollybank Road drops away here and ends at the junction with Haunch Lane.

There's a real sense of space along Hollybank Road and the mature trees really help to soften the residential developments. The whole area feels incredibly green and the blossom trees in spring time are wonderful.

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