

Tilgate Park through the 1960s, 70s and 80s

When Tilgate was bought by the council in 1966, the lakes were very overgrown. A survey was undertaken to establish the shore line and depth, after which clearing and dredging were carried out. The height of the dam was then raised and the banks built up to form a wide footpath across the head of the lake. Below the dam the ground, which was previously marshy and unsafe, has been reclaimed by depositing large quantities of clay and by tree planting. Indeed the entire area surrounding the lake was very swampy and overgrown, making clearing a difficult task.

Development of the park continued with constant replanting and land reclamation. For example, the heather garden was made by clearing the site once occupied by the army ablutions. It was opened to the public in 1978.

The Peace Garden was opened in 1981. This was opened by altering the ornamental waterfall which was constructed between the two main lakes when Tilgate Mansion was built.

Special picnic areas were cleared and paths and tracks were cut through some of the wilder parts of the park to feature interesting walks and cycle rides.

The Nature Centre

The [Nature Centre](#) which is on the western side of the Estate started life in 1966 when interest arose from the work done in breeding ducklings to stock the lakes. Since then it has grown into one of Crawley's most popular amenities, appealing to people of all ages.

Tilgate Forest Golf Course

When the M23 was constructed in 1973 the Forestry Commission offered the council 212 acres of land that had been severed from their main land holding. This land, which joined the council's existing land at Tilgate Park, had been economic forest plantation which had suffered from fire damage and neglect for a considerable number of years. The council purchased it in 1975. Work commenced on designing and developing a municipal golf course, which was opened in 1982.