

WHY ASHTON PARK?

The park was generally known as West Kirby Park through to the 1970's: thereafter it became generally known as Ashton Park. It was named after the Ashton Family, local landowners till 1935.

In 1899 land for the park was leased by the Urban District Council of Hoylake and West Kirby from Miss Emma Mary Ashton and Canon Blencowe, Rector of St Bridget's, for the construction of a park. The park opened in September 1901. Miss Ashton's willingness to lease such a sizeable plot gave West Kirby its attractive town park.

In 1843, Ralph Ashton (Emma Mary's father) owned some 80 acres of land in West Kirby, the largest local landowner at that time. Ralph Ashton was the son of Henry Ashton who, it is believed, at some stage in the 1830 - 1840 period bought land in West Kirby including Manor Farm. He is recorded living at Manor Farm in 1841.

Henry Ashton was born in Wigan but moved to Liverpool to seek his fortune as a merchant. Ashton family members settled on the Island of Dominica in the West Indies, trading with the port of Liverpool but Henry

Ashton also owned, some jointly with his brother, Ralph, two coffee plantations and 67 slaves.

Henry died in 1842, a wealthy man, and passed his wealth and the extensive lands in West Kirby onto Ralph, his son, who died, aged 30 years in 1850 leaving Emma Mary Ashton inheriting at the age of 6 years. Miss Ashton lived to the age of 90 years, never marrying, for many years in a huge town house at 9, Marloes Road, Kensington, London and supporting charitable work in poor areas of London. She sold land for development in West Kirby over the years, Ashton Drive being named in her memory.

The leased park land was sold in 1937 to the Hoylake Urban District Council after her death in 1935.

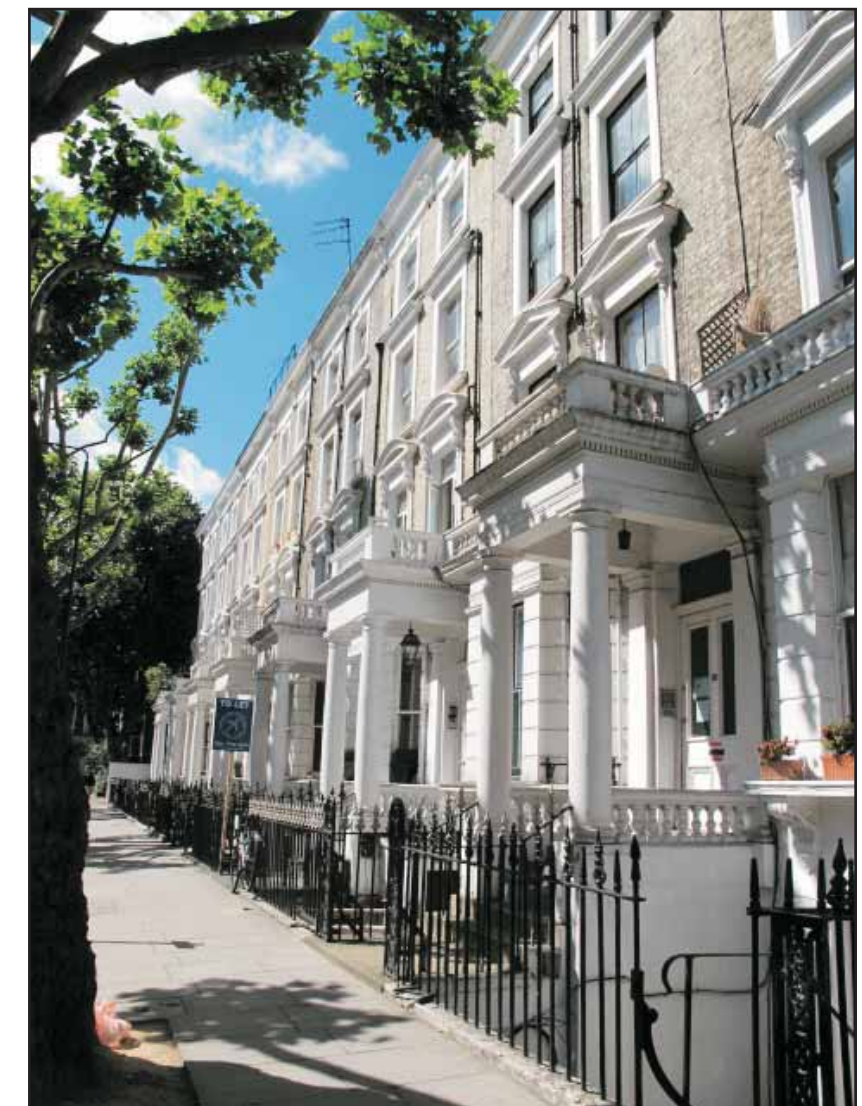
Funded by Grant from the Wirral West Community Fund



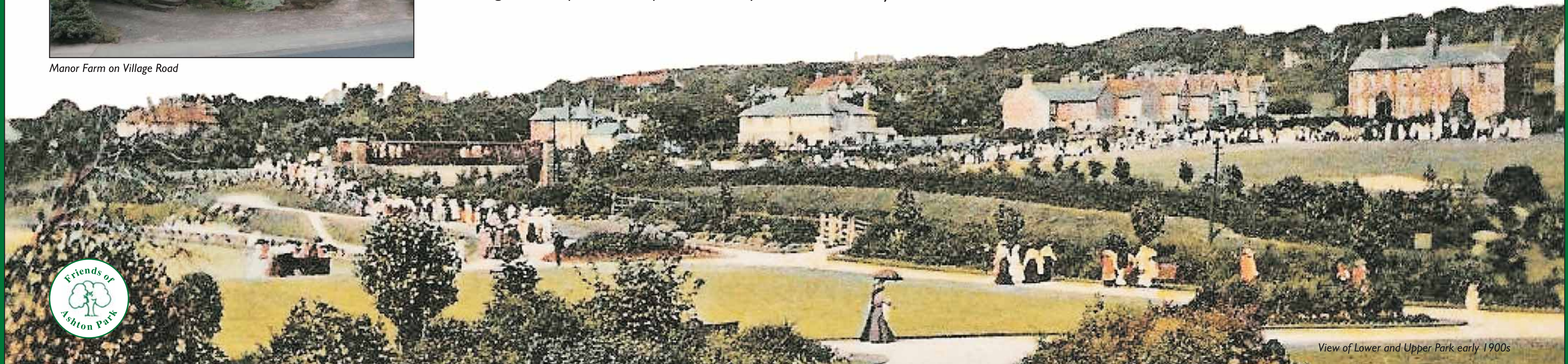
Village Road, West Kirby



Manor Farm on Village Road



9, Marloes Road, Kensington



View of Lower and Upper Park early 1900s

