

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF WEST KIRBY

West Kirby originated as a small rural community (the Old Village) clustered round St Bridget's Church and Village Road with a population of only 330 in 1841. As the village grew, reaching a population of 2,400 in 1891, a new centre began to grow around Grange Road, Dee Lane and Banks Road, encouraged by the arrival of the Wirral Railway in 1878.

The town started to attract new residents - people of independent means, merchants, manufacturers, the professional classes, people working in Liverpool and Birkenhead and those providing the services and goods for the expanding population. Development was rapid encouraged by infrastructure funding from the Urban District Council of Hoylake and West Kirby.



*The Crescent*



*The Hydro, West Kirby 1890 - 1968*

In 1890 the Hydropathic Hotel was built to host visitors especially those seeking the healthy sea air as a cure for ailments, the promenade followed in 1899, the Marine Lake in 1899 and electric lighting in 1901.

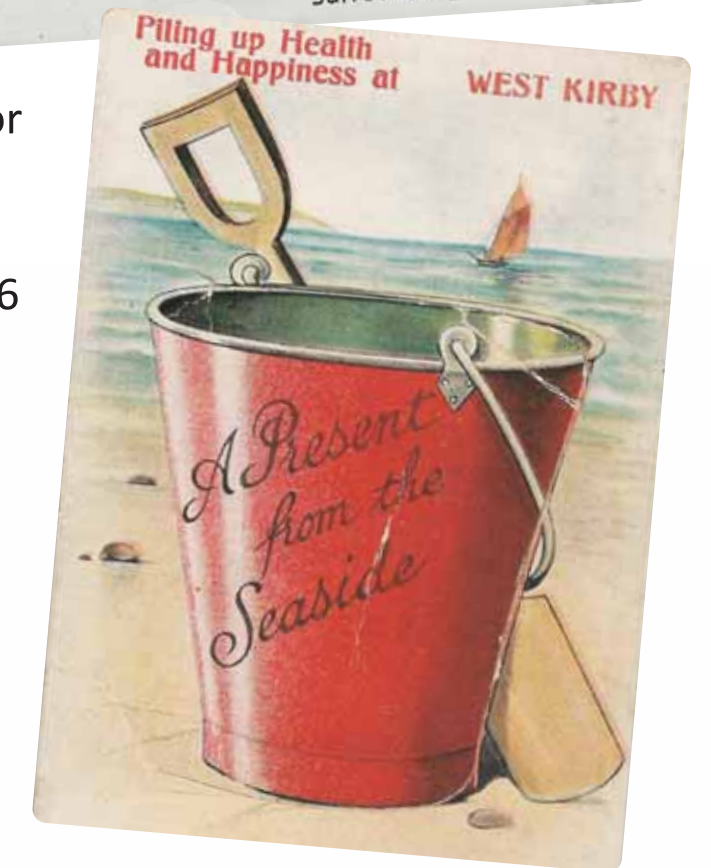
West Kirby became a dormitory town and shops were built such as those on The Crescent. Visitors stayed at the Hydropathic Hotel, the Metropole or lodged at boarding houses on the roads between the promenade and West Kirby (now Ashton) Park.

Parks were seen as an important part of any developing town and city to promote the health and well-being of residents, provide entertainment and activities and attract visitors. The example of Birkenhead Park opened in 1847 must have been an inspiration for the opening of parks in Hoylake and West Kirby.



*The Sands, West Kirby*

I am quite fascinated by the "surroundings" here



The first suggestion for a park was in 1893 overlooking the waterfront but by 1896 the focus had moved further inland on land between Westbourne Road and Carpenters Lane. The laying out of the park commenced in April 1900 and West Kirby Park (now Ashton Park) opened, without ceremony, in September 1901.

*Donated by the Hoylake and District Civic Society*



*The Marine Lake opened in 1899*

