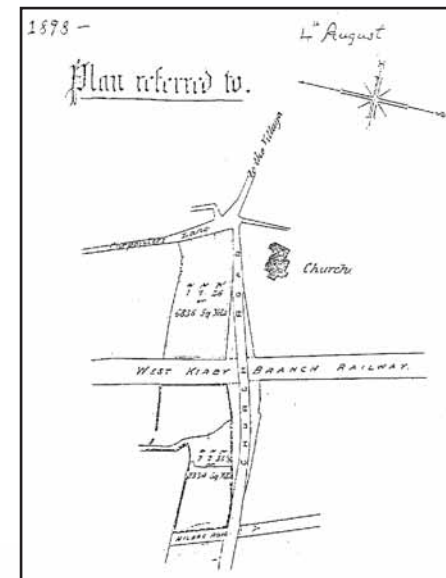


WEST KIRBY PARK - THE EARLY YEARS

The site chosen for West Kirby Park lay between the old village and the new town centre and was bounded by Westbourne Road, Church Road and Carpenters Lane. It was bisected by the Hooton - West Kirby railway line - an area of sloping arable land and meadow above the railway and marshy ground below through which ran the River Birkett. The land required was leased from 2 landowners - 3.1 acres of Glebeland from St Bridget's Church and 9.8 acres from Miss Emma Mary Ashton.

The Borough Surveyor, Thomas Foster, was authorised to proceed in April 1900 with a budget of £2150 but soon hit problems, delays and overspend and to save money the park was left initially without shelters and fountains and the Upper Park remained as open land. The two sides of the park were joined by a footbridge over the railway and the lake formed a feature in the Lower Park. The Park Lodge was provided for the Park-keeper and his family. West Kirby Park opened in September 1901 without ceremony.

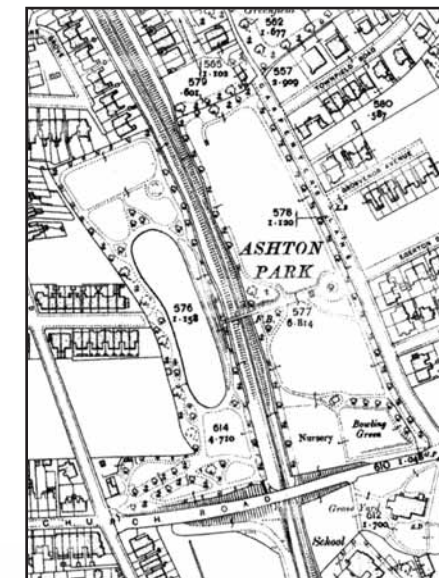
The park opened as a place to promenade without provision for sports. It changed greatly over the early years as the Upper Park was laid out, shelters, bowling greens and tennis courts were provided and quoits and croquet introduced.



Land leased from St Bridget's Church



Land leased from Emma Mary Ashton



1909 Map showing the completed park



West Kirby Park circa 1902



Lower Park circa 1902

Brassband concerts, shows and fetes were held in the early years until Council support dried up. The park was a picture with well-maintained flower beds, shrubberies, trees - looked after by a Park-keeper and a team of gardeners: Joseph James Stanley (1901 - 1911) the first 'parkie' was succeeded by Edward Hadwin.

Other smaller parks in West Kirby followed - Victoria Gardens in 1916, Sandlea Park and House (to become the West Kirby library) were purchased in 1936 and Coronation Gardens in 1938.

Dedicated to the Memory of Colin Mutch

Promenading in the Lower Park circa 1910

