

Mersey Park

Wirral Parks, Coast and Countryside

Mersey Park

Mersey Park is thought to have been designed at least in part by Edward Kemp and opened in July 1885. The park gives great views across the shipyards and the Mersey. The Park originally boasted fine railings and gate posts and a fabulous bandstand on the lower lobe field and can be seen on the 1912 map below.

The photo (below) shows Mersey Park Staff including the infamous 'parkies' or 'park bobbies' that gave many a wayward youth a clip around the ear. The photo below shows the replacement bandstand taken from Birkenhead Park in 1926, which was sited at the top of the hill and can be seen on the 1936 map below.



In January, 1884 Mr Thos. C. Thorburn, C.E. borough surveyor, under the instruction of the Road and Improvement Committee of the Corporation, prepared a plan for the laying out and planting of the park. Contracts for the carrying out of the various works were prepared, the forming, draining and laying of the footpaths and levelling of the land for the cricket ground was undertaken by Mr Samuel Johnson, South Grove Nurseries, Oxtou. Messrs. Jas. Dickson and Sons, of Chester, supplied the plants and gardeners from Birkenhead Park, under the supervision of Mr. John Cowan the deputy park superintendent, carried out the planting. The total cost of the works, including the widening of Church Road adjoining the estate, together with the cost of maintenance for three years was about £33,000 this cost was off-set by the sale of building land surrounding the park.



The area on which Mersey Park now sits was a part of the 86 acre farm called Lightbounds Farm. The Farm (buildings) itself was probably constructed in 1660 and was a wattle and daub and stone construction. Mr Lightbound owned Tranmere Mill and was living on the farm in 1843, which all formed part of the Orred Estate.

Tennants on the land included Mr Quirke, Mr Hitchmough, Mr Ross and Mrs Mary Jones and her son-in-law Thomas Ravenshaw (a surname which enters into Victoria Parks History). In 1891 the farm buildings were listed as derelict and all the buildings were demolished.

The map below from 1875 shows the land structure prior to the creation of Mersey Park.

The land for the creation of the much needed Mersey Park was purchased in 1880 after local temperance groups protested the need for recreation facilities for the area after increasing urbanisation, during the late 1870's and future plans for further development through the 1880's. The land was purchased on the 7th April 1880 for £5180 7s and 6d.

On August 9th, 1902 Oak trees were planted for the Coronation of Edward VII, and on the 22nd June 1911 there was a large fireworks display in celebration of the Coronation of George V.

The 1912 map shows the original Bandstand position in the lower field and the extent of the increased urbanisation, the semi-rural communities, tenant farms and open country now completely gone. There was provision for local children with a play area on the top corner of the park by Sidney Terrace, near the new corporation depot at the Back of St Luke's Church.

During the Great War, 1914-1918 What is now Mersey Park school was used to billet 'bantams' troops and the park itself was regularly commandeered for inter-battalion games and exercises.

