

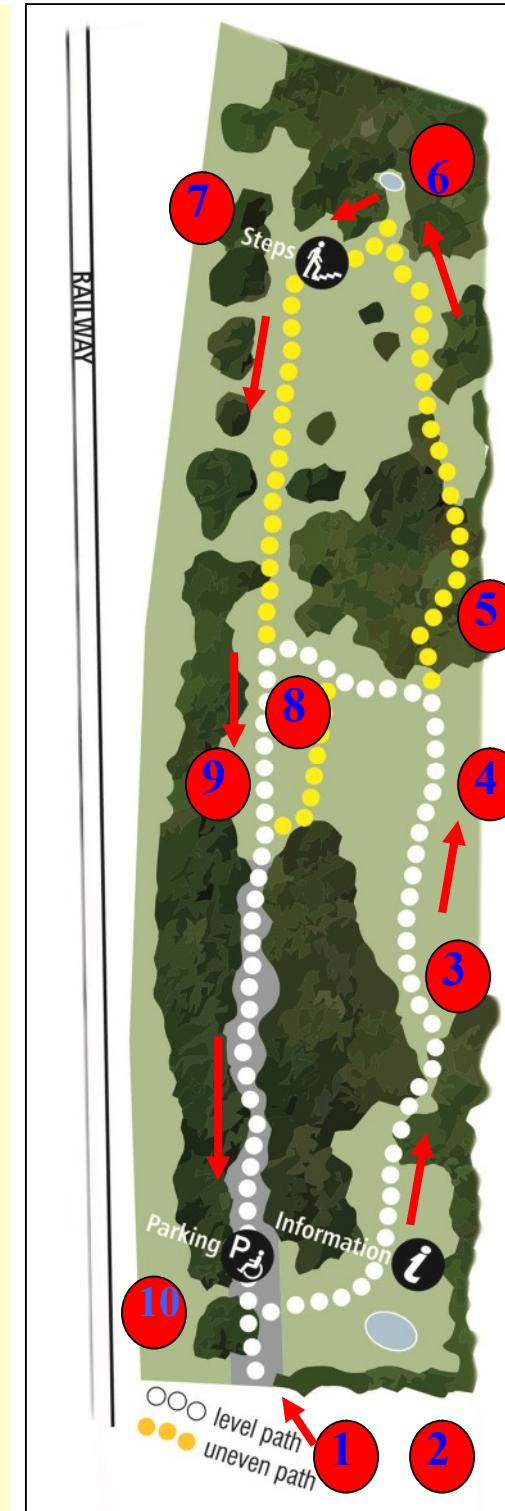
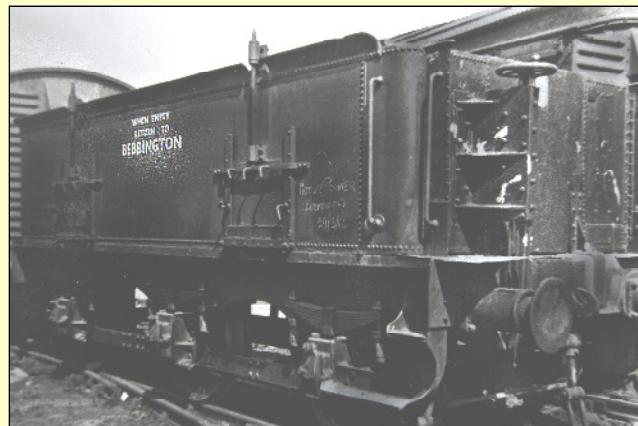
1 By entrance board

1839-40: Birkenhead to Chester railway was built which included "Bebington & New Ferry" station. This had two lines. By 1900 there was a goods yard with one long siding. Soon after this the line is quadrupled (4 sets of tracks). The goods yard developed to have two sidings - one coal and lime waste, and one general goods with a platform and crane



Coal was side-tipped from railway trucks in the coal siding onto an area where a pond now stands (which was about 1m lower than). It was left in heaps on the ground, bagged up and taken off by the merchants, who would deliver it to people's houses. Coal was important for fuelling the steam engines and the main source of household fuel. The coming of natural gas and electricity made household coal a thing of the past. (There was also a weighbridge) Empty trucks were then pushed down onto the rest of the siding. The shunting engine would collect them from there.

In 1969 tracks were reduced to 2 lines again. These were electrified in the mid-1980s.



Outside Charlie's Gate - The goods yard road access was originally up Alma Street, (through what is now Aldi's car park), continued through the dip in the area behind Charlie's gate, and up where the pond was made. When the pond was dug a pavement leading to the coal merchant's huts was found. The present road access was put in late in the life of the yard, possibly 1950s.

The ditch at the south end of the eastern lime meadow (alongside a row of alder buckthorns) is the last remnant of the field system before the railway.



A water purifying plant was built, it is thought, between the 2 wars. This was to provide soft water for steam engines (Lime would reduce their performance)

There was a filtration system housed in a steel tower (as above). The waste from this process (which contained much lime) was spread on land nearby. It was then loaded into railway tankers on the siding (see truck left) before being taken to farmland as a fertiliser. However, up to 30cm of lime waste was left behind when the yard closed. The water for the plant came from a borehole by Bebington Road. Look for the re-railing ramp.

Path leading to the top level

Here there were allotments between the wars (white currant and big blackberries that are found here came from these)

5

6 18th Century Brickpit: Bricks were made by hand, probably by a family business. Some of these were left behind in the brickpit (including one that a hedgehog left its footprints on). A long-handled wrought iron tool was found here. This would have been used for opening the "kiln" (bricks would have been fired on structure of twigs covered with turves. The tool would have been used to pull turves away at the end of firing). By 1825 (see the map on the noticeboard), the brickpit and its neighbours became ponds. In 1993, the brickpit was without standing water and full of rubbish. The pit was cleared out in 1996 and forms a small nature pond.



7 Steps down to siding path - where sidings came off the main line.

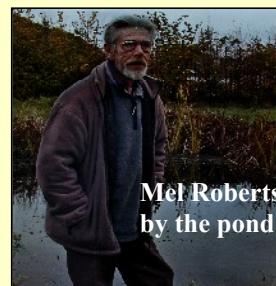
8 Lime waste siding path. Here tankers had to be washed on the outside to prevent waste washing down and blocking the drainage. Here the steam loco that shunted the yard had to be filled with water, so there were valves nearby to control the water supply. An "elephant's trunk" water filling pipe was found here when this section of siding was cleared. A point changer handle was also found.

9 By the perching wall. Metal base for a lifting crane used in the goods yard.



10 Modern History

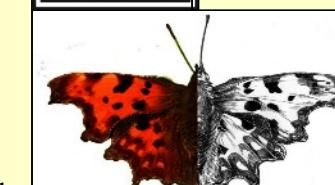
The goods yard fell out of use after 1967 and lay derelict for 25 years. Inspired by the campaigning efforts of Mel Roberts, a local resident, a lease of the land was obtained from British Rail Property Board to Cheshire Wildlife Trust, signed in Sept 1993.



A dedicated body of volunteers backed by a management committee work tirelessly to improve the wildlife value of the park. Carol Ramsay became the artist-in-residence and brought outdoor art onto the park. Open Days started in 2010. A programme of events and educational activities is on-going.



Cheshire Wildlife Trust
www.cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk
Tel:01948 820728



New Ferry Butterfly Park
www.wirralwildlife.co.uk
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New Ferry Butterfly Park

History Trail

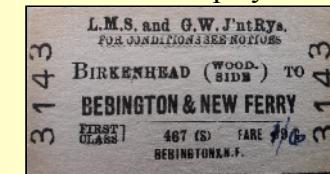
Steam train to London passes the station



Photos.Glyn Parry

The Butterfly Park stands on what remains of New Ferry and Bebington railway goods yard. The trail inside looks at the journey that has transformed a railway sidings into a place for people and wildlife. The Butterfly Park is now managed by its own group, as part of Cheshire Wildlife Trust, for the benefit of the community.

Hope you enjoy your visit



Bebington and New Ferry Station in 1960
(note the number of platforms and waiting rooms)

