Friends of Anderton and Marbury

Walk 5. ANDERTON SCULPTURE WALK

Anderton Nature Park's all ability Trail

Starting point is Anderton car park. The walk is a fairly short loop of a little under a kilometre taking about 12 minutes. For those with limited mobility, the paths are firmly surfaced and there are benches on the route. It is possible for most wheelchairs. The sculptures can also be leaned on or rested against. For those with visual impairment, the sculptures have been designed for a tactile experience which is described in this download.

Takes in newly planted woodland as well as an upper wildflower meadow. The regular way markers/resting points are carved oak, created and installed by Northwich Woodlands volunteers.

Welcome to the Anderton Nature Park Sculpture Walk

Anderton was once a major centre of salt production and the sculpture walk you can follow here has been designed to reflect this industrial heritage and complement Anderton's rebirth as a nature park.

1. **Walk on the new path from the Information Board near the entrance to Anderton Nature Park's car park. Pass the back of the car park on the right and come to Sculpture No.1 (Oak Post - Bare Necessities) just past a path on the right.**

Bare Necessities

The first sculpture is an abstract design carved from turkey oak. The three lobes represent to the carvers the three driving forces of the salt factories of Anderton: coal, salt and mankind.

2. **Follow the path as it winds to the right, passing a wooden bench on the left. Turn left at the junction to see Sculpture No. 2 (Mundling Stick).**

Mundling Stick Bench

A mundling stick is the shape of a cricket bat, except it has a flat, not angled, back. It is used to pack down salt into a tub and they were originally made of elm. This bench is about three times the actual size of a real mundling stick and is made of turkey oak and not elm, because elm is not very resistant when used outdoors. The mundling stick handle is supported on a lump salt block, cast from a Lion Salt Museum salt mould.

3. **Retrace your steps onto the main path. Sculpture No 3 (Beeswing Shovel) is on the left further down the path.**

Beeswing Shovel

Beeswing shovels have a distinctive pointed shape. They are not very common now but were widely used in Cheshire salt works. The shape is said to represent the shape of the folded wings of bees. They were used to fill large bags of salt.

4. **A short distance further and also on the left is Sculpture No. 4 (Box Barrow)**

Box Barrow

Barrows were used to move salt. They also carried coal around the site as fuel for steam pumps and firing the salt pans. Other barrows were used to transport loose salt to chutes that led from the edge of the land you are standing on down to the river. The salt was tipped down these chutes and was loaded into barges that went downriver to be transhipped into ocean going ships at Liverpool. Lump barrows or lump carts were used to move salt blocks. A typical load weighed more than 100kilos (220 lbs).

The barrow itself is slightly larger than full size and is made from turkey oak from Marbury Country Park. Freshly felled trees are called green oak and are full of sap. After being cut into planks they dry out and often warp. The curved sides of the barrow are made from these warped planks. The wheel was made of sections of oak and glued together. The wheel hub is made of plum tree wood. Before the barrow was placed in its location, the wheel did turn and one person was pushed around in the barrow to prove it worked.

Underneath this upside down barrow is a load falling out. It was the end of the shift we think and the lump man has had enough of this hot and heavy work. He has tipped his load over and walked off. This is one reason one person called it the “sod it” barrow. The salt lumps spilling out from under the barrow are the actual size of salt blocks made at the Lion Salt Works Museum. We are grateful to Chris Hewitson, CWAC’s Industrial Archaeologist at the museum, for the loan of the Marston salt tubs or moulds used to cast the replica salt blocks.

No metal fixings were used to make the barrow. All joints are secured by using Marbury oak pegs turned on a lathe. Some were also given threads like a screw and were screwed into threaded holes. When the oak pegs become wet, they expand and tighten.

5. **Continue past a bench on the right to Sculpture No. 5 (Skimmer)**

Skimmer

The skimmer was a shovel with holes in the blade. It was used by the lump man, or salt maker, to lift salt crystals out of the salt pan. The holes allowed the remaining liquid scooped up with the crystals to escape back into the pan.

6. **Continue past two large stones and a wood carving on the corner on the left of the path. Turn right and walk downhill to join the main path at the Dragonfly Gates. A final short walk into Anderton Car park.**

We hope you found the walk interesting and enjoyable. Further information about the country park can be found on our web site at:

www.foam.merseyforest.org.uk