



Parkgate Society

(Founded 1972)

Newsletter

Autumn 2016

Issue Number 91

Meetings 2016/17

We normally meet at 8pm at The Cranston Suite, Neston Cricket Club, Station Road, Parkgate, usually on the third Monday of the month.

- 19 September – ‘The Laxey Wheel’
- David Casement
- 17 October – ‘A Look at Churchill’
- Michael Murphy
- 21 November – ‘Parkgate – Port & Resort’
- Anthony Annakin-Smith
This talk follows the hot-pot supper at 6.30 pm.
- 20 February – ‘Welsh Copper’
- Rob Toomey
- 20 March – ‘240 Years of the Liverpool Pilotage Service’
- Geoff Topp
- 24 April – ‘All Things Auctioneering’
- John Cato
- 15 May – Annual General Meeting at 7.30 pm, followed by ‘One Small Step’
- Glyn Parry

Visitors are very welcome to attend our talks – first time free – after that we will encourage them to join as members.

The Society’s Annual General Meeting was held at the Cranston Suite, Neston Cricket Club, on Monday, 16th May 2016.

Vice-President Michael Potts presided and welcomed about 45 members to the meeting.

In delivering her report on activities undertaken during the previous twelve months the Society’s Chairman Jill Brock drew attention to a successful programme of interesting meetings, which had been well-attended. Progress had been made with various projects forming part of our ‘Vision for Parkgate’: the Parkgate Heritage Trail had been initiated following the installation of heritage plaques on seven Parkgate properties and the publication of a supporting booklet. A new website had been created for the Society, which contained a great deal of information about Parkgate as well as details of the Society itself. Our Community Spirit team had been active in litter picking and generally tidying up some of the neglected areas. It still remained to be seen how well we would do in the Cheshire Community Pride competition following our decision to enter this year. For the full report see page 3.

Thanks were given to the Committee for their hard work and support over the previous 12 months.

The following officers and committee members were elected to serve for 2016/17:

- Chairman: Dr Jill Brock
Deputy-Chairman: David Johnson
Joint Secretaries: Angela Clarke, Alan Passmore
Treasurer: Damian Loughie
Committee: Dr Bryan Lecky, Roger Harris, Derek Haylock, Jill Owen
Auditor: Ailsa Cowdell

Articles or suggestions for future Newsletters are most welcome, please contact:
Alan Passmore, tel: 336-2917 or email: secretary@parkgatesociety.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS - £7.00 Single / £10 Household per year. Subscriptions are due on 6th April each year. Payment can be made at any of our meetings; but we would prefer payment by Banker’s Standing Order. Membership, Standing Order and Gift Aid forms are available from Derek Haylock, our Membership Secretary, tel: 336-4461. Please check that your Standing Order is for the correct amount.

All original articles in this Newsletter are the property of the Society and can only be reproduced with the permission of the Society.

The Parkgate Society is a registered charity, No. 503718.

News and Views

We continue to have concerns about the future of the Mostyn House chapel. This grade II* listed building deserves to be cherished and made use of by local people, but it has suffered from neglect since the closure of the school in 2010. The Mostyn Place Residents Association is actively involved with the local council in seeking to ensure that the developers of the Mostyn House site hand the premises over in a sufficiently good state to enable its use without the need for further extensive repairs. The Society has also made its concerns known to the Council and supports the Residents Association, who will eventually take on management responsibility, in their efforts to achieve a satisfactory outcome. Of course, the future use of the building is another matter.

At the time of writing we do not yet know the outcome of our entry in the Cheshire Community Pride competition. We have tried valiantly to address the problems of litter and general tidiness, and have had a certain amount of success, thanks to our Community Spirit team and the help of others who have made their own individual contributions. However, some areas have proved rather intractable, so we will just have to wait and see how the judges found Parkgate this year.

More traffic lights appeared recently on The Parade! This time it was because of subsidence in the roadway right on the corner where it turns into Station Road. We understand that there has been subsidence at this point before, and the fact that it has happened again is probably indicative of a serious underlying problem requiring substantial remedial work. In effecting the repair work, let's hope that the Council have correctly identified the problem, and we won't all tumble into the abyss!

The first phases of the Station Road car park rejuvenation project have been completed, and it is now open for visitors to Parkgate to make good use of it. The final phase of landscaping will take place in the autumn, when 4,000 bulbs are to be planted by children from Parkgate Primary School. We are also hoping that the children will come up with a more suitable name for the car park, as there is also a Station Road car park in Neston, which causes some confusion for those not familiar with the area.

On Sunday 14 August we supported Cheshire Police, Cheshire West & Chester Council (CWaC) and Neston Town Council in a jointly co-ordinated event to promote use of the new car park with extra signage and by enforcing the parking restrictions on The Parade. Bike owners were able to take advantage of the opportunity to have their cycles security marked – 49 people taking advantage of this facility. The fine weather contributed to a very successful event, which we hope will be repeated soon.

As reported below, the Parkgate Heritage Trail was formally inaugurated in April. Integral to this project are the plaques which have been fixed to some of the more historic buildings. If you have ideas about other premises which might be suitable candidates for the award of a plaque, please get in touch with your suggestions: nominated buildings should be associated with well-known people of the past, have unique qualities, or otherwise have an interesting story to tell.

We have been very pleased with the responses to the additional events we have organised in the past year. We are particularly grateful to Laura Spencer of Mozkitos for her contribution to the success of the events with which she was associated. The hot-pot supper and the wine tasting/quiz evening were both sold out, and there was a good turn-out for the guided walks, despite unpromising weather on both occasions. Your favourable responses are an encouragement to us to arrange further similar activities.

We continue to scrutinize the local planning applications relating to building developments in the Parkgate ward, including the conservation area. These mostly relate to small house extensions, whilst a few involve adding a second storey to a single-storey dwelling or, as in Parkgate Road, the replacement of a modest bungalow with a much larger dwelling. For the most part these developments are uncontroversial, but in a few cases we have not been happy where a proposed design appeared to be out of keeping with the location or, perhaps, an over-development of the site; we will continue to submit formal objections in such circumstances, where we think it appropriate. Generally, we are not in favour of garden infill, except where the plot can comfortably take the development. One significant scheme currently underway is that at Sawyer's Cottage, a Grade II listed building at the north end of The Parade, where internal re-modelling will result in a much more practical design for modern living, whilst the house retains its characteristic outward appearance. Also in the conservation area the owners of White Cottage on The Parade have applied to demolish the 1920s house and garage and rebuild in the same position; they already have permission to build two houses on land to the rear.

Chairman's Annual Report to the AGM

Jill Brock began her report by greeting the membership and thanking Michael Potts, who had agreed to become an additional Vice-President of the Society and to chair the meeting.

Jill said that the death of Brenda Dowding in June 2015 had been a very sad loss not only for her family and friends, but particularly for the Society, of which she had been a very loyal supporter. As CWaC councillor representing Parkgate she had pledged her local member's allowance for the Parkgate ward to be allocated for projects promoted jointly in 'Our Vision for Parkgate', which our former Chairman Moira Andrews had had the foresight to draft. The aims were:

- (i) To promote the conservation of the historic character of the village, its buildings, etc;
- (ii) To promote knowledge about and awareness of Parkgate's historic past;
- (iii) To promote Parkgate as an attractive place for both residents and visitors;
- (iv) To promote efforts to keep Parkgate tidy; and
- (v) To prepare Parkgate for entry to the Cheshire Community Pride competition.

"So, how were we doing?" she asked.

We were extremely fortunate to have an enthusiastic and very hard-working committee, who had worked even harder this year to push forward these aims and to encourage local residents to sign up to the 'vision' and acknowledge that Parkgate was becoming a more pleasant place in which to live.

Angela Clarke had been a member of the Parkgate Society since its inception in 1972 and had an unrivalled knowledge of the area. She put together our annual programme of talks and had come up with the idea of the hot-pot supper, which had proved very popular last November, organised with Laura Spencer of Mozkitos.

The role of Secretary had become very onerous, and Alan Passmore had worked very hard as joint secretary with email updates and the Newsletters. With others he had been heavily involved in the Donkey Stand project and, particularly, its information boards. In connection with the re-development of the Mostyn House site he had suggested a heritage plaque to commemorate Sir Wilfred Grenfell, the medical missionary to Labrador; this idea evolved into the proposal for a heritage trail, highlighting some of Parkgate's most interesting buildings, an idea supported enthusiastically by Brenda Dowding. He had produced a Heritage Trail booklet to give more details of our building heritage. Seven plaques were finally installed and an inauguration ceremony was held on 1 April, when the Mayor of Neston Cllr Mike Shipman unveiled the plaque at St Thomas' Church in Mostyn Square.

The search for a suitable boat for the Middle Slip project had finally ended with the discovery of a former Hilbre class boat from the early 1960s, one of a class built for sailing in the Dee estuary and reminiscent of the boats once used by the Parkgate fishermen. A small team had worked hard to renovate the boat and prepare it for eventual transfer to the Middle Slip. We were grateful for the help of a local resident David Williams for help with the plans prepared for the planning application.

David Johnson set up the Community Spirit team in 2014 and had gathered an enthusiastic group of volunteers, who were continuing to improve the local environment by regular sessions of litter picking, weeding and cutting back overgrown hedges and shrubs in communal areas. This had enabled us to enter the Cheshire Community Pride competition in the categories of Best Kept Village and Best Community Initiative. We were also able to enter in the category of Best Community Website thanks to the industry of Derek Haylock, our Membership Secretary, who had set up single-handed a most attractive new website for the Society giving details of the Society and our activities. In fact, the whole idea of the 'Vision for Parkgate' came about as a result of our entry in the 2011 competition, when Parkgate came bottom in the County, and suffered humiliation! Not this time!

Jill said that none of the current projects would have been possible without the continued support of CWaC and especially our local councillor Martin Barker, who had been elected in 2015 to fill Brenda Dowding's place. We were also grateful for the support of our Neston Town councillors Susan Chambers and David Carter, while Mike Shipman, Mayor of Neston, had been helpful with support for our entry to the Community Pride competition.

CWaC had undertaken the clearance of vegetative growth on the sea wall and would be carrying out remedial repair work in due course. The final tranche of the 'Vision' money had been returned to CWaC to support the upgrading of the Station Road car park to relieve some of the pressure contributing to illegal parking on The Parade; this contribution was earmarked particularly for landscaping. We were also grateful to the CWaC Streetscene team for removing the huge numbers of bags of rubbish collected by the Community Spirit team. David and Alan had also been working with CWaC officers on the strategy for resilience in the event of flooding in Parkgate.

During the past year Roger Harris, owner of one of the new Mostyn House apartments, had been co-opted onto the Committee and made us aware of problems relating to the chapel and the apartments themselves. The Residents Committee had put these issues to CWaC planners, who were now said to be working closely with the developers over resolving the outstanding issues relating to the terms of the planning permission.

Jill said that a vast number of people, both officials and volunteers, were involved in the promotion and maintenance of Parkgate; she hoped that all who were privileged to live in Parkgate felt that they were part of a vibrant community and would support the efforts of the Society. She also hoped that members would support the efforts the committee were making to make the monthly meetings more sociable – the hot-pot could become an annual event – and it was hoped that the wine tasting evening would be another popular event, with admission open to all. We were also considering arranging guided tours of the area. We would welcome other ideas from members for events that might make membership of the Society even more enjoyable.

Finally, Jill expressed her thanks to our Treasurer Damian Loughe, who could not be here, as he had recently undergone major orthopaedic surgery, and wished him well and a speedy recovery.

Twenty Five Years Ago - Parkgate in 1991

25 years ago my three children were all at Parkgate Primary School where Mr J.J. Wilkinson was then Head Teacher. Mrs Janet Griffiths (former Mayor of Neston) was teaching swimming at Neston Recreation Centre to most of the children of Neston and Parkgate. In the Autumn our family all went to the first of the Parkgate Horse Trials, which was a large event on the land at Backwood Hall, Boathouse Lane.

Historic Port. In 1991 Geoffrey Place was congratulated for achieving a doctorate for his thesis on Parkgate. He had lived and worked here for several decades and amongst other roles, had been Chairman of Parkgate Society and of Burton & South Wirral History Society. He wrote or edited local books and articles, and the guide book "This is Parkgate". His thesis was "The Rise and Fall of Parkgate, Passenger Port for Ireland, 1686-1815". And after gaining his PhD, he subsequently produced a book of the same title, which was published by The Chetham Society in 1994. They publish works of scholarship on the history of the palatine counties of Lancaster and Chester. See www.carnegiepublishing.co.uk of Preston. Though out of print, I was lucky enough to purchase a second hand copy for £18 on a stall at a Cheshire steam fair recently. Although in parts, a work of scholarship and precision, it is a most interesting read, and has enriched local knowledge of Parkgate and the goods traded in the 1700s. For example, shipping imports to Parkgate in 1785 included 36 horses, 1764 yards of linen, 666 cows and 384 pigs. In 1776 the figures included 71 gross of sheep's guts, 4000 goose quills, 99cwt of glue and 10lb of snuff. The trade for Parkgate and for Chester gives a fascinating insight into times gone by. Foreign trade inward to Chester included tallow for candles, timber, hemp and flax from the Baltic regions and wine and cork from Portugal, and by far the most important export to continental countries including Mediterranean ports was lead, and to Ireland was coal. Coastal trade to London was mostly cheese and lead.

Membership Snippets. Two new committee members were appointed this year, Becky Ford and Ron Wright. Subscriptions were £3 single/family and £1.50 Senior Citizen. One of the talks was given by Wirral Country Park Ranger, Barry Jackson, marking the fact that in April, 1991 the funding and management of the Country Park had been split between Wirral Borough and Cheshire County.

Work in Hand. The main endeavours of 1991 were surprisingly similar to today: tidying up of the sea wall, in 1991 using young offenders on Community Service, provision of litter bins by the local authority,

there was only money for two large black and gold bins which were sited on the Donkey Stand, street light problems, and dog mess proliferation. The local authority decided after much lobbying to have a trial of dog poo bins on Stanney Park, and now, as a result of that trial, we take for granted the many bins throughout the area. Work took place on the updating of the guide book, "This is Parkgate", in preparation for the 2nd edition. The late David Scott, local artist, provided the colour artwork scene of the Parade for the cover of the new edition.

The Autumn Newsletter Several interesting articles appeared in the newsletter, one on a First World War lapel badge that had been bought in a car boot sale engraved with tiny writing on the back, "Parkgate 1914-19 from HN & MEG", with other initials on the front face. The initials were of Henry Neville & Maud Gladstone of Burton Manor. Maud Gladstone had shown great interest in the Red Cross Voluntary Convalescent Home in Parkgate, and it is thought that the recipients of the badges, the other initials, were the nurses there. The article chronicles the subsequent uses of the Convalescent Home until its demolition in the 1950s. The Home had stood on the northern section of what is now Deeside Court.

Other articles included, Maid of the Mill. There was a chance to purchase the painting of the racehorse, Maid of the Mill, who had won the Parkgate Steeplechase in 1843, ridden by John Grace of Whitby Hall, Ellesmere Port. However, it left the area when sold. A race meeting was held at Parkgate every year from the 1830s to about 1895.

There was a page about Nelson Burt, the boy who drowned in a great storm on the River Mersey in 1822 and is commemorated with black pebbles spelling NELSON, in front of Dee Cottages, opposite the Old Quay.

The Society had written a piece on Conservation Areas, which stated: "There is a tendency to assume that the character of a place depends on its buildings, without enough reference to the economic mix, the social life and the traffic problems. Here in Parkgate the Local Plan shows every desire to protect us, but the statutory need to enhance the conservation area by positive improvements has not yet been addressed", so says the newsletter in 1991. In 2016, with that in mind, do we still consider Parkgate to be a conserved and quaint area, with a good economic mix, are we installing the correct type of windows and has traffic and the constant squeezing in of day visitors taken the old feel of Parkgate away???

Anne Williamson

Arthur Maycock (1863 - 1928)

Arthur Maycock was a professional photographer, who for a period of about ten years in the early days of the last century lived at the bungalow, then known as The Studio, in Station Road, Parkgate. Born in Everton, but brought up by his parents mainly in Birkenhead, he appears to have worked for various employers there and in Liverpool before setting up his own business and moving to Parkgate. Very little is known of his life, or of his work, but here are a few details:

Born in 1863 at Everton, in the West Derby district of Liverpool, and christened there on 4 February 1863, Arthur was the fourth son of Nathaniel Henry Maycock, born c1828 in Barbados, West Indies, and Harriet Augusta Porter, born c1820 in Bath, Somerset. His parents were married in the parish of St George, Everton, on 19th July 1849, and in 1861, before his birth, his family were living at Everton at No 147 Church St.

1871 Census – his first appearance in the census, aged 8, resident at No 15 Victoria Road, Tranmere, living with his father (a jeweller's cash keeper), mother and three elder brothers.

1881 Census – now working as a photographer's apprentice, aged 18, living at No 12 Bratton Rd, Birkenhead, with both parents, 2 of his brothers and a servant (father a book keeper and jeweller's cashier).

1886-8 – listed as a photographer in Gore's Liverpool Trades directories: resident at No 140 Oxtou Road, Birkenhead.

1891 Census – artist and photographer's clerk, aged 26 (?), living at Nos 138/140 Oxton Rd, Birkenhead, with his now widowed mother – his father had died in Birkenhead, aged 62, during the period July to September 1890.

1892 – his mother Harriet Augusta Maycock died in Birkenhead, aged 74, during the final quarter.

1901 Census – photographer, aged 37(?), boarding at No 44 Prescot St, Low Hill, West Derby, with the family of Edward Freeman, a tailor.

Then he appears in Parkgate, as evidenced by:

1905 – 'Photograph of Neston Church exterior'.

Copyright owner of work: Arthur Maycock, Parkgate, Cheshire.

Copyright author of work: Arthur Maycock, Parkgate, Cheshire.

The National Archives, Kew Form completed: 19 June 1905. Registration stamp: 1905 June 20.

1906 & 1910 Kelly's Trade Directories – listed as a photographer at The Studio, Parkgate.

1911 Census – aged 48, single, photographer (general and portrait), living on own means at The Studio, Parkgate.

1914 Trade Directory – listed as a photographer in Parkgate

On 8 July 1914 he took and subsequently published the photographs of the visit of the aviation pioneer Henri Selmet to Parks Field, Parkgate, at the invitation of Mr AG Grenfell, headmaster of Mostyn House School, and sponsored by the Daily Mail. That story and two of those photographs were reproduced in the Autumn 2014 edition of the Newsletter.



Arthur Maycock's house and Studio, Parkgate (premises with 5 rooms), is seen at the far right in this photo – the stationmaster's house is in the centre; the colliery railway sidings can be seen on the left.

Then he vanishes!!

Good bye!

.... Or so it seemed! In fact, he appears to have died at Leicester in early 1928 at the age of 65. So, when did he take his leave of Parkgate, and how did he spend the intervening years? Is there anyone amongst our readers, who can shed further light on the life and career of this rather enigmatic figure?

Jerry Harris

The David Scott Collection

The Society is pleased to have received recently images of some of the late David Scott's collection of postcards of local views. Amongst these are a number featuring scenes of old Parkgate, a small selection of which is shown below.



This picture, dated 25 April 1923, is taken from the northern end of Manorial Road and shows the old cottages in Station Road and, on the left, the former Chester Hotel, which stood until 1962. Who is the little boy walking past No 11? In those days it was clearly quite safe to leave your bicycle or cart in full view. The dating of the cottages is considered in the **Spring 2014** edition of the Newsletter.



Previous page: Landing of the catch at the Middle Slip, probably between the wars. The bags of shellfish are being loaded onto the carts to be transported to the station, while the scene is observed by onlookers and a woman with a basket, who appears to be waiting to purchase some of the catch.



Pictures of the old houses at the corner of Mostyn Square are quite rare, as these premises were pulled down about 1900 on the grounds of being insanitary and no longer fit for human habitation. They were replaced by a new terrace in the Edwardian style in the first years of the 20th century. What was the sign by the door in the end gable wall? Note the angle of the sea wall.

Parkgate Reflections

I am sure anyone new to the Parkgate area must wonder about the cobbles spelling out the name 'Nelson' in front of the cottages at the bottom of Parkgate Road. I know we did when we first arrived and, with the connection of Emma Hamilton having stayed in Parkgate, we assumed it was something to do with Horatio Nelson.

From what I gather, Emma stayed in Parkgate to bathe in the sea water, as she had some sort of skin problem, but she had little to do with the cobbles. The story I heard was that a father called his son Nelson, more than likely after the great man, and the son was drowned, so in memory of him he laid down the cobbles. There is more information about this in the guide book "This is Parkgate". So Nelson never came here, but other well-known people did, notably John Wesley on his way to Ireland.

I find it fascinating imagining the times and the people who once passed through Parkgate, what they got up to waiting for the tides and the weather, so they could sail – also the conversations they must have had about the events of the day, while all around them the life of the village with its fishing and all that entailed went on. I should imagine the contrast would have been great. Did these visiting men (because they would mainly be men) talk of new inventions, new ideas, some coming from France, perhaps fleeing the revolutions there, the latest figures in politics and any wars that were going on? Maybe the locals heard them talk and were more informed than other labouring classes of their time elsewhere. It would be nice to go back and see, but only for a very short time!

Freddie Race

Published by The Parkgate Society September 2016. Don't forget our website: www.parkgatesociety.co.uk