

PARKGATE and District SOCIETY

Chairman	J R Cochrane	336 2378
Vice-Chairman	H O Vollers	336 1359
Secretary	Mrs A M Clarke	336 1069
Treasurer	E P D Taylor	336 4321

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NEWSLETTER

September 1977

We hope you like our new cover. In case anybody doubts whether we should spend our income putting mere icing on the cake, we are glad to be able to say that the cake itself is produced at no cost to the Society, thanks to the generosity of some of our members.

Our Next Meeting

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society will be held at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 4th October, in the Hall of the United Reformed Church, Moorside Lane. The procedure for the election of officers is explained at the end of this Newsletter.

After the AGM, at 8 pm, Mr Timmins of the North of England Zoological Society will speak about
CHESTER ZOO.

The rules of an AGM require that members only may participate. Your guests are very welcome, though, to hear Mr Timmins speak at 8 pm, and there is no objection to their presence in the Hall while the AGM is in progress.

If you need TRANSPORT, do ring Mrs Clarke at 336 1069 and she will try to provide a car for you.

Reports of our Meetings

On 7th February we welcomed Mr John Cooper who spoke about tennis and showed two films. We intended this talk to be an experiment, to see whether members would be interested in such a subject. As there were only 38 in the audience, the answer appears to be no, and that you would prefer talks on matters of local interest which we know will be well attended. A member who questioned our good sense in bringing Mr Cooper from London, was reassured that he was staying with a personal friend on the Committee, and had refused any payment for expenses.

One or two cynical friends declared that the low turnout in February should be attributed to the lack of a bar in our new meeting-place! Members re-established our corporate good name by turning out in remarkable numbers on 4th May to hear Geoffrey Place describe the 18th century packet service from Parkgate in "Set Sail for Ireland". No less than 124 people heard this talk; we still don't know how everybody found a seat. Mr Place is now hard at work on yet another instalment in the history of our village, which he promises for next May.

After both these meetings, coffee and biscuits were served, and seemed very popular. We hope to continue to serve coffee, but there are severe practical difficulties to be overcome.

On 27th March Chris Morrison organized another successful "Clean Up" of the shore. Thank you, everyone who came, including a troop from the local Sea Scouts. More will be said on this topic later under the heading "Litter".

On 23rd July Geoffrey Place led a Conducted Walk along the Parkgate Parade. Despite the late notice, and some confusion about the starting point, a gratifying number of people joined the walk. There were 42 present at its peak, and about a dozen lasted the full 1½ hours.

The Jubilee Seat

Have you been to see our new seat? We have put it near the South Slip, which seems a good place because it is a peaceful and traffic-free spot, and the seat cannot obstruct a pavement which goes nowhere. The Borough Council fastened it to the ground on August 26th, and the Mayor will unveil it at 11 am on Saturday 17th September. If you would enjoy one more piece of Jubilee ceremony, do come. It is a fine and solid seat, with a plaque suitably engraved to commemorate this Royal year.

We had some discussion within the Committee, and comment from outside, on whether we should not have organized something more human and sociable for Jubilee year, instead of providing an inanimate seat. Our considered view is that we must use the talents we find available to us, as best we may. The sort of sociable event people had in mind was in fact organized exceptionally well, and much more appropriately than we could have done, by the Parkgate Primary School Parents Association. Their "Summer Fayre" on Parks Field was a great success, and we offer them our congratulations.

Meanwhile our seat fulfils a need, at least expresses human and sociable intentions and will (we sincerely hope) continue to express them for years to come. Still, if members feel the Committee is being unenterprising, it is up to you to kick us into action, preferably with constructive ideas and offers of help! It is worth pointing out that the rather vague Jubilee suggestions made to us, came too late to be put into effect.

We would like to congratulate our Chairman, Jim Cochrane, on his receipt of the Jubilee Medal. His involvement in our Society is only one small part of his considerable interest in public life.

The Sea Wall and the Marsh

You will have seen the good work of clearing and repointing the Sea Wall by the Job Creation team organized by Councillor Goldstein. It is difficult to see how this task could have been done otherwise, and we are delighted that the Wall has now been given a renewed lease of solidity. One interesting result is visible at the South Slip. We asked Mr Goldstein to see if the cement covering could be removed; it has been, to reveal the original sandstone steps. One can see from old photographs that once there were 15 steps, of which 7 are now visible above the marsh. It is generally true of other parts of the wall, that over half its height has been lost to the rising saltmarsh over the last 40 years.

The Sea Wall was built in four separate stages. The first stage ran from the Watch House to the Donkey Stand, and was built in the first decade of the 19th century. It is said that it was built with stone, sold by the City of Chester to Sir Thomas Mostyn in 1799, from the derelict Old Quay a mile up river; that part of the wall was certainly built by 1811. Before that there was no Parade or road of any kind. It was made not for ships, which by then were leaving Parkgate, but as a promenade for fashionable visitors to the sea-bathing resort. The wall was extended to the South Slip in two stages by about 1830; and the northward extension to the Boathouse was built in the 1840s when it was hoped to sell building plots there.

There has been further development in our long discussions about the marsh. In May we held a meeting with Mr George, representing the Borough Engineer, and our two local councillors, Mr Sander and Mr Topp. Mr Goldstein, who suggested the meeting, could not be present. We discussed in detail the problems of the marsh. Mr George accepted that in theory the only long-term solution is to lead the water from six separate outlets at the base of the wall, as well as the surface water from the Parade, into one pipe which would take it out to a channel of the river. He also explained how many

different authorities were or might be involved, and how difficult it would be to get them to agree on spending money they have not got. He undertook to make contact with a view to initiating a joint scheme. The Borough is trying to work out why domestic waste water appears at one of the outlets and to eliminate it; and the Health Officer has assured us that there is no hazard to health in the present state of the marsh.

We feel we have done all that we can for the present. Every responsible body now knows our views about this problem, and we will not fail to remind them from time to time. Meanwhile, the Job Creation team have dug out the channels through the mud from the main outlets, which will help for a while.

Litter

We often discuss the ever-present and growing problem of litter which too often disfigures Parkgate. Our annual clean-ups have little lasting effect and their value is the demonstration that we are prepared to help ourselves. Our local roadsweeper has retired (and we gave him a small gift) but there is no permanent replacement. The existing bins are falling to pieces, and to replace them would be an expensive business from which the Borough is so far flinching. We are still searching for an effective design of bin; besides being reasonably attractive it must be seagull-proof and so must have a cover. As seagulls are adept at throwing paper out of our bins, perhaps some member can train them to throw it in again.

We have been asked by Councillor Topp to clean up the so-called "Black Path", a footpath which runs from the top of Bevy Road to Brooklands Road, and is a useful but messy route to shops and school. On investigation, though, there is more involved than just the removal of litter, and we have asked the Highways Department of the Borough Council to attend to it. One problem is that a stream crosses the path; while it would not be difficult to provide some simple bridge, this Society could not afford the consequences if someone slipped and broke a leg on a bridge provided by ourselves. Again, litter is one thing, but a tip some 30 yards long is another. We will keep an eye on this path.

Conservation

Under this general heading we take notice of any kind of activity, actual or proposed, which might enhance or prejudice the Parkgate Conservation Area. A constant stream of planning applications and the like come our way; most are of little importance to the Conservation Area and require no comment. There are a few occasions, inevitably, when there are different interests within Parkgate which clash, and the Society may then be criticised whatever we say. We feel, though, that such criticism tends to misunderstand our role and our intentions. Let us explain.

We do not presume to judge issues, and we do not seek to usurp the roles either of our elected councillors, or of the officers of the Borough with whom we have a most cordial relationship. We do seek to act as the eyes and ears of our membership, and where we have misgivings about some action or inaction, we seek to draw the attention of the proper authorities to all possible snags. Both councillors and staff of the Borough have been kind enough to say that our comments are useful because they seek to be constructive. We try hard to avoid a negative or short-sighted opposition. We seek to make sure that those who have to make the decisions are given the best evidence on which to do so.

Some recent examples may help to explain our role. The Boathouse Café went through a difficult phase in recent years; the building was deteriorating and provided an unfortunate gateway to Parkgate; the attempt to revive it by painting it bright yellow went down very

badly locally, and we expressed our concern, though in vain. When attempts to revive its fortunes by seeking a permanent late-night licence were made, we thought it proper to point out what a nuisance to nearby residents such blanket permission would cause, and the application was turned down. Now that Mr Barnes of the Devon Doorway has bought the building, we saw and welcomed the plans which should improve its appearance and its prospects. We have taken the opportunity to suggest how the car park might be screened to cut down some noise.

There has been much interest in the plan to change the Marie Celeste into a dining club. Views both for and against have been expressed to us by members, but we could not judge the issue and have not sought to do so. What we have done is to draw the Planning Officer's attention to certain areas of concern, and to ask for further details.

At a more trivial level; the Neston Cricket Club cleared part of their bank along Station Road, as they were required to for the sight line of cars using their drive, and we found that cars were being parked on this verge, making things worse rather than better. The Highways Department have assured us that they will take over this verge in due course, and stones have been placed meanwhile to stop parking.

Where is Parkgate ?

We never did find out which Parkgate housed T. Newbould, watchmaker in 1860, whom our last Newsletter mentioned. Our search, though, did reveal a list of 25 places called Parkgate. 6 of these are in Cheshire, which explains why we have to put "Parkgate, South Wirral" on our address. Here is a list of the Parkgates we have found. If you know of any others, do let us know.

Cheshire	Parkgate, near Neston (ours) Parkgate House (farm), Shotwick Parkgate, Peover Superior, near knutsford Parkgate farm, east of High Legh Parkgate & at N & SW entrances to Lyme Park West Parkgate,
Lancashire	Parkgate, locality in Ulverston RDC
Yorkshire	Parkgate, near Whitby Park Gate, north of Rotherham on A 633 Park Gate, 2½ miles SW of Otley
Staffs	Parkgate, 2½ miles E of Abbots Bromley
Worcester	Park Gate, 1½ miles NE of Bromsgrove
Essex	1 mile S of Great Bardfield
Kent	Parkgate, NW of Tenterden
Surrey	Parkgate, 4½ miles SE of Dorking
Sussex	Park Gate, 1½ miles SW of Battle
Hampshire	Park Gate, 7½ miles SE of Southampton
Dorset	Park Gate, 5 miles SW of Sturminster Newton
Devon	Park Gate farm, Tawstock, 3 miles S of Barnstaple
London	Parkgate Cres & Av, Barnet, N of Hadley Common Parkgate Gardens, N of Richmond Park Parkgate Road, W of Battersea Park
Dumfries	Parkgate, 8 miles NE of Dumfries
Kirkcudbright	Parkgate, 2½ miles S of Kirkcudbright
Antrim, N Ireland	Parkgate, 3 miles N of Templepatrick

Development Plans

We have had a brief look only at the Cheshire Green Belt proposals; at first sight they provide all that we could hope for. In particular, the land to the west of Leighton Road which a public enquiry recently saved from housing, will be further protected as part of the Green Belt. We shall examine the Neston Town Plan with interest, and meanwhile we have provided the Borough Planning Officer, at his request, with details of the known history of the 18th century houses between Buggen Lane and the Cross in Neston.

Other matters

We have again provided some flowers for St Thomas' Church, this time for the Jubilee service, and are grateful to Mrs Morrison for arranging them.

The Rotary Club's art competition for schools included a section for scenes of local interest, and we provided once more a prize of £3. "Local" does not necessarily mean Parkgate, but local to the artist.

Our new printing of "A Stroll Through Parkgate" required the price to go up to 15 p, but we still think it is excellent value. When the Christmas card and present season hits you, please consider not only these leaflets, on sale at Nicholls, the Green Bottle and Mealors, but also the Panorama of Parkgate, on sale at Nicholls.

Mrs Jean Quaile, who has done excellent service for us as our Membership Secretary, has been obliged to resign temporarily because of ill-health. We were glad to accept the offer by Mrs Paula Bidgood to fill this vacancy, and as you will see in the final paragraph, Mrs Bidgood now stands for election to the Committee.

MONEY ! If you are reading this Newsletter in the knowledge that you have not paid your subscription for 1977, worry no longer ! Absolve your conscience by sending £1 (for single or family membership) or 50p (Senior Citizen membership) to Mrs Paula Bidgood at 20 Brooklands Road, Parkgate.

Annual General Meeting - ELECTION of OFFICERS

Our Constitution lays down that, "Nominations for the election of Officers shall be made in writing at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. Such nominations shall be supported by proposer and seconder and the consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained. The election of Officers shall be completed prior to the election of further committee members."

Any nominations should therefore be sent to the Secretary (Mrs AM Clarke, Sea View, The Parade, Parkgate) by 20th September at the latest.

Mrs P Bidgood has accepted nomination to the Committee in place of Mrs J Quaile who has resigned. The other serving officers and Committee members are willing to continue and offer themselves for re-election. Therefore the nominations already received are as follows:

Officers: Chairman, JR Cochrane. Vice-Chairman, HO Vollers.
Secretary, Mrs AM Clarke. Treasurer, EPD Taylor.
Committee: Mrs P Bidgood, FW French, ADJ Grènfell,
Major PV Moore, Mrs B Moore, C Morrison,
GW Place, Mrs H Wall-Jones.

We look forward to seeing you on Tuesday, 4th October !