

# PARKGATE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Number 15

Autumn 1978

Chairman	JR Cochrane	336 2378
Vice-Chairman	HO Vollers	336 1359
Secretary	Mrs AM Clarke	336 1069
Treasurer	EPD Taylor	336 4321

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

→ Wednesday, 4th October, at The Boathouse  
at 7.30 pm the Annual General Meeting  
followed at 8 pm by an illustrated talk by Valerie McFarland,  
BIRDS of the DEE ESTUARY

→ Tuesday, 7th November, 8 pm at The Boathouse  
LORD HEWLETT will give an illustrated talk on  
his recent VISIT to CHINA

As usual, if anyone needs TRANSPORT to reach our meetings, ring Mrs Clarke at 336 1069 and she will try to arrange a lift.

Members are welcome to bring friends to our meetings, although members alone can take part in the AGM. Their guests can of course be present at it. There will be a pause between the AGM and Mrs McFarland's talk at 8 pm, in case you prefer to come only for the latter.

### "Wings Across a Wilderness".

Many members will already know of Mrs Valerie McFarland through her newspaper articles, and if you have not yet bought a copy of her new booklet, "Wings Across a Wilderness", it is remarkably good value at only 40p. You may have seen its predecessor, "The Dee Estuary", published in similar format by the Dee Estuary Conservation Group two years ago. The new book is a guide to bird-watching on the Dee, but for armchair Deewatchers it has pictures of thirty-seven birds and a first-class text. It could possibly be criticised for giving very little information about where the migrant birds are flying to and from, but perhaps Mrs McFarland will mention this point when she speaks to us on October 4th. The publishers deserve encouragement, perhaps to produce further booklets, on the Dee's other animal life, and on its plant life.

Lord Hewlett is an eminent industrialist and an active member of the House of Lords who has visited China with a parliamentary delegation. He went to school in Parkgate, and he is still a frequent visitor here. He is a public speaker of the highest class, and will show his own slides. We very much hope that you will come and hear him on November 7th.

## The Visit of the Mayor to Parkgate

When Councillor Williams, the then Mayor, unveiled our Jubilee Seat last year, he said that he would appreciate a closer look at Parkgate in our company. Jim Cochrane, our Chairman, invited him to come one day, and on 5th May he arrived together with four officers of the Borough. The purpose of the visit was to see Parkgate and to discuss some of its problems.

The first visit was to Parks Field, where Mr Cochrane referred to his request, made in October 1975, that there should be full consultation with the Parkgate Society and other local interests before any plans to develop this area for recreation were agreed. Once again, he explained, local residents were concerned. Rumour had it that plans were being laid, and that these fields would be laid waste with a desert of stark football pitches. He pointed out that Parkgate was already used to playing host to large crowds of visitors, and the prospect of adding up to sixteen football teams and their supporters, was more than the local nerves could stand. The Borough's officers assured us that no plans were being prepared, that so large a number as eight football pitches had never been considered, and that the Parkgate Society would be consulted at an early stage whenever this question should arise again. Mr Cochrane's request for a public meeting, which he had offered to arrange, would be given the most serious consideration.

The party then drove along the Parade, and discussed the problems of drainage on to the marsh, which are aggravated by the steadily rising level of the estuary floor. A wrongly connected drain was causing domestic sewage to enter a surface water drain; it was explained that the long and tedious business of checking each household's drains separately was going on, and would presently trace the fault. It was also explained that the estuary floor was still permeable enough to absorb all the surface water. The Borough's officers had checked all the outlets at the Society's request, and were in touch with the river authority who had promised cooperation should further drainage works become necessary.

A number of smaller problems were also discussed. The tour ended with a visit to Neston Library, where the Planning Officer showed the newly completed landscaped area with a small parking space which has been made behind the Library. The party was entertained by Julian Grenfell at Mostyn House, where the Mayor asked that his officers should see the school chapel, which had so impressed him on an earlier visit.

We all felt that the visit had been successful and useful. We were particularly pleased when Mr McGarva, the Borough Engineer, who has since retired, said that he had found the Parkgate Society most helpful to him in his work. Mr Cochrane added his own appreciation of the excellent relationship which continued between the Borough's officers and the Society.

## Flower Tubs

One result of this visit, following a suggestion from our Secretary, was the appearance on the Donkey Stand of three small tubs of flowers. To our delight, and to the confusion of several local Jeremiahs, these tubs have survived undamaged, and have helped to brighten a dull summer. Next year we shall encourage the Borough to go a little further.

### A Meeting with our Local Councillors

Following a request from Councillors BF Sander and GA Topp, who represent Parkgate on the Borough Council and who are members of the Society, the Committee arranged to meet them on July 11th to discuss those areas where our interests overlap, and where a greater exchange of information would be beneficial. Although Mr Topp was detained by other business, Mr Sander spoke most ably for them both. The Society has taken pains to be seen to be non-political, and it has been our stated principle to avoid usurping the roles of our elected representatives. Nevertheless there are bound to be occasions when Society and councillors are concerned about the same problems, and we agreed that there must be dialogue between us.

### Reports of our Meetings

We were heartened once again to see so many friends on 2nd April when we cleaned the foreshore. Alas, it has been a bad year for litter, and the decayed state of our surviving bins make the gloomy scene worse. We were hoping to acquire some new litter bins at little or no cost; this hope has now receded, and we need to attempt a different form of self-help. We are devising a plan which the Chairman will say more about at the AGM.

Our first meeting at the revived Boathouse seemed a great success, and we think that members will find it even more suitable when its new car park and bar are ready. You may have seen a letter in the local paper from Lesley Bibby of the Wirral Society, in which he welcomed the new Boathouse as a gateway to Parkgate.

On 9th May Geoffrey Place spoke about the churches, schools and inns of old Parkgate. This proved to be a subject rich with information, and was evidence of the very considerable amount of Parkgate's history which the Society's researchers have uncovered in the last few years. It was gratifying to see 92 people at this talk.

At this meeting we handed over the Behrend sketches which the Society had had framed. This series of eighteen most attractive water colour sketches, painted of Parkgate and the Old Quay House in 1936 by GL Behrend, have been beautifully mounted and displayed in six frames by David Scott. Mrs Jennifer Davies of the Neston Library received them from us and they now hang in the Library. It is unfortunate that, at present, the only wall space available is so high up that the sketches cannot easily be seen.

On 7th June, a dark and wet evening, over 60 people came to the chapel of Mostyn House School. As one of the chief features of this building is its fine series of stained glass windows, a bright evening would have been welcome. Geoffrey Place was nevertheless able to tell the stories of many of its associations.

### The Back Path

This footpath between Bevyl Road and Brooklands Road has now been cleared of accumulated rubbish by the Job Creation team. We are hoping that a permanent bridge will be made for the little stream which crosses the path. The Council's Highways Committee discussed this path at length in July, and in particular wondered what could or should be done about boundary fences which seem to have encroached on the path. The Society feels that the path is well worth saving in a usable and agreeable form.

### The Parkgate Signs

Our signs which announce to the approaching motorist that he is entering, not merely Parkgate, but a Conservation Area, are now in place on Boathouse Lane and Parkgate Road; in each case, just beside a bridge of the former railway. We hope you agree with us that the signs look very handsome. We are very grateful to the officers of the Wirral Country Park for their help in providing and placing them. The signs have been placed where there are suitable grass verges, and where motorists can easily see them, rather than on any boundary.

### The Tulips of Parkgate

At a meeting of the Wirral Footpaths Society, Dr Hugh McAllister of Ness Gardens said that the rich mudflats of the Dee estuary were much the same as the shores of the Zuider Zee in Holland, and would make excellent land for flower growing and food production. If our part of the estuary eventually dries out as natural meadowland, as our experts predict, we can think of many worse fates for Parkgate's outlook than an expanse of tulip fields.

### Committee Members

Since the last AGM, FW French has resigned and SC Edwards was co-opted to serve in his stead, as already reported. CJD Morrison has also resigned; he is getting married and leaving the district. We are grateful to Chris for his efficient organization of our marsh clean-ups, and we wish him every domestic joy. Clive Edwards has nobly offered to take up his responsibility for Litter.

Mrs Quaile, our former Membership Secretary, has now left the district. It was hoped originally that she would resume her Committee work when her health recovered, and Mrs Bidgood very kindly agreed to fill the gap. As Mrs Quaile will not return, and as Paula Bidgood's other commitments tended to clash with those of the Society, the task of Membership Secretary has been undertaken for the past few weeks by Mrs Valerie Place. We are most grateful to Paula for her help.

On the subject of Membership, we have experienced some difficulty this year in getting our subscriptions in. We propose for the future to deliver reminder notes with the Newsletters, each Spring and Autumn, to any members whose subscriptions we do not seem to have arrived in the previous twelve months.

### 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.

As explained in the last paragraph, SC Edwards and Mrs V Place have accepted nomination to fill vacancies on the Committee. 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 Volliers.  
Secretary, Mrs AM Clarke. Treasurer, EPD Taylor.

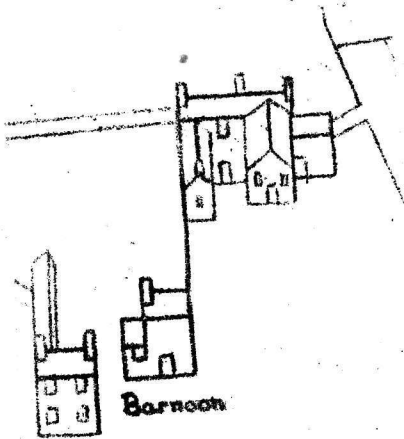
Committee: SC Edwards, ADJ Grenfell, Major PV Moore, Mrs B Moore,  
GW Place, Mrs V Place, Mrs H Wall-Jones.

### Dating the Station Road Cottages

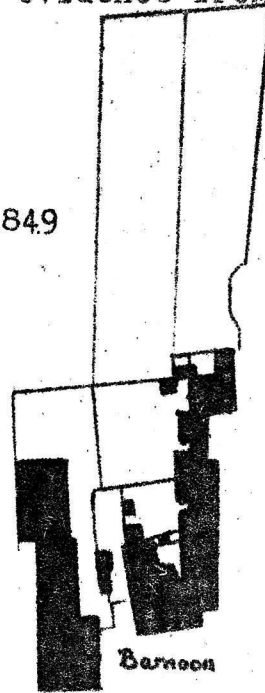
How does the historian go about dating buildings? In the case of the Station Road Cottages, the main evidence comes from four maps, three of which are shown below, and some documentary evidence from title deeds.

The maps have been redrawn to the same scale.

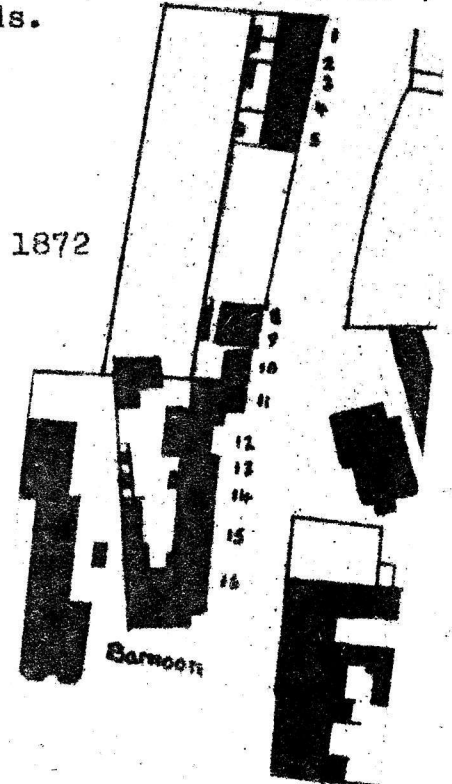
1732



1849



1872



The 1732 map shows, on the left, the building now called the Marie Celeste, which was then eleven years old, and next to it the site of Barnoon, which was later rebuilt as a taller house. It will be seen that there were then no houses on the right side of Barnoon, where Numbers 16, 15 and 14 were built later. There is a group of houses higher up, where Number 12 is now; and this group stretches across the line of the present roadway. The road to Neston was made in 1787 as part (the only completely new part) of the Turnpike Road to Chester. Before that date, the road to Neston was along the open shore to Moorside.

We know, then, that none of the Station Road cottages were built as early as 1732. The next map (not shown here) drawn in 1811, shows that five cottages had been built by then. These were the ones now numbered 11, 12, 14, 15, 16. The site of 13, a very narrow house, was at that time a short passageway leading to the garden of the Marie Celeste.

By the time the Mostyn family sold their Cheshire estates in 1849, including the whole of Parkgate, we can see from the Sale Plan that two more cottages have been built; Number 10, and 13 which has filled in the narrow passageway.

In that sale, the land fronting the road above the cottages was bought by Richard Matthews, a fisherman, and we know that by 1852 he had built four cottages on his land. These were Numbers 1 to 4, and he seems to have added Number 5 soon afterwards. After this, but before the first large-scale Ordnance Survey map was made in 1872, Numbers 8 & 9 were built. The remaining group, numbered 6 & 7, were built after 1872 but before 1898.