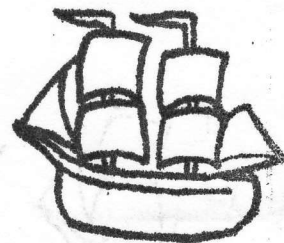


PARKGATE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Number 17

Autumn 1979

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

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

—Please put these dates in your diary !—

→ Tuesday, 2nd October, at The Boathouse,
at 7.30 pm the Annual General Meeting, followed by
at 8 pm an illustrated tour by FJ Camenisch of
HISTORIC LIVERPOOL

Mr Camenisch is an excellent photographer, and his scenes of Liverpool and North Wirral are designed to open our eyes to the unexpected aspects of a district we might otherwise disregard. Mr Camenisch is a lively speaker and we think you will enjoy his talk.

→ Tuesday, 13th November, at 8 pm at The Boathouse.

Mr R Gomes, the warden of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' new purchase of 5,000 acres in the Dee estuary, will speak about THE R.S.P.B. and PARKGATE

Mr Gomes has only just been appointed, and we are most fortunate to have secured him; it will be his job to help shape RSPB policy towards their new reserve, so that we cannot expect him to have all the answers. He is very willing, though, to discuss the questions.

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

Betty Moore

Mrs Betty Moore, who died in February after a courageous fight against illness, was a founder member of the Parkgate Society. It is with great sadness, and also with gratitude, that we remember the energy, the concern, the kindness and the good sense which she brought to her work on the committee right to the last. As our membership secretary, and latterly as the member responsible for meetings, she was tireless in furthering the Society's aims. She nevertheless found time to use these same qualities in support of the Riding for the Disabled Association, and in training guide dogs for the blind. She appreciated Parkgate; not only the scene, but the people; and we miss her.

Our Activities

In March we heard an interesting talk from Mrs Dorothy Dewhurst about antiques which have not yet reached an impossible price, illustrated by some intriguing photographs of furniture in her own home. It was one of those agreeable meetings when there is a lot of conversation afterwards.

Also in March we performed our annual clean-up of the foreshore, which attracted a satisfactory number of willing hands, despite the unpromising drizzle in which we began. There is no doubt that, token though this action sadly must be, it causes the participants to glow with a pleasing sense of community spirit. We are grateful to the Borough Engineer for his cooperation and to Clive Edwards for marshalling us.

Our May meeting was a most surprising one. No less than 135 people came to hear Geoffrey Place speak on "Parkgate and the Irish Invasions". This is by far the largest audience in our history, and gratified though we were to see so many people, it was worrying that we were unable to provide seats for everyone. In October and subsequently, though, we will be in more spacious quarters upstairs. The talk itself described the story, often hazardous and sad, of the Irish labourers who used to stream through Parkgate in the 18th century, and how many of them, reduced to destitution, were confined in the Old Quay House before being shipped back to Ireland.

At this meeting we launched our new publication, a guide book called "THIS IS PARKGATE". If you have not yet seen this book, we do urge you to get a copy from Nicholls on the Parade. Some members have told us that they have been into Nicholls but failed to notice it; but it is indeed displayed there, above the ice-cream counter on the left. The book is only 65 p, and we think it is excellent value. There are 32 pages; half these contain beautiful pencil drawings by Michael Barton, and on each facing page there is a description of the buildings illustrated, interwoven with the history of Parkgate. May we suggest that a copy would make a welcome present for anyone who knows Parkgate.

It is unfortunately true that most books which mention Parkgate are in some degree mistaken, and often absurdly wrong. Our new guide, packed with facts not hitherto published, is as accurate as intensive recent research can make it.

You may like to know that quite a large number of other organizations borrow our tame historian and speaker. Geoffrey addressed eight organizations in 1978, and in 1979 will have spoken to at least eleven.

In July we were invited to take part in the "Summer Fayre" run by the Parkgate Primary School's Parents Association. Nobody who saw Clive Edwards bravely dressed up as a pirate could doubt that Cheshire Life was correct, last April, in describing the Parkgate Society as "lively". Clive performed a near-miracle in finding a pony-trap for the procession despite a variety of setbacks up to the last minute. We are grateful to the four young pirates who rode in the trap, and especially to the one who painted the fine pair of ships with which our vehicle was decorated. We further supported the Parents Association by giving a framed copy of the Panorama of Parkgate as a raffle prize.

Our final meeting of a very busy six months was a "walk"

following Old Quay Lane, led by Geoffrey Place. We were grateful to Mr EL Boston for fortifying some committee members beforehand; though it was scant gratitude to tell him that the site of his house was once a prison, the Moorside House of Correction ! Those brave souls who turned up despite showery weather were rewarded by a sunny morning and an enjoyable tour over some historic ground.

Our Friends

We would like to congratulate the Wirral Country Park on its tenth birthday. Parkgate is an important part of the Country Park and its associated treats, and this Society has always been closely interested in its fortunes. Peter Moore, the Director of Countryside & Recreation for Cheshire, has only recently left our committee after years of loyal service and encouragement which began with the setting up both of the Country Park and of the Society. A Park Ranger, John Reynolds, is a committee member at present, and the making and placing of the two Parkgate road signs by officers of the Park, after their design and siting by this Society, was a recent piece of collaboration. Frank White, the Head Ranger, spoke at a meeting of the Society in 1973. We wish the Park and its officers well for the next ten years.

We are once again deeply indebted to those loyal friends who sell our publications for us, for no reward except pride in Parkgate. These friends include the Country Park centre at Thurstaston, as well as Nicholls and the Green Bottle in Parkgate.

The task of making and distributing this Newsletter is borne more or less willingly by the committee, but we are grateful to Len Walker and the Morrison family for their help.

Finally, we are most grateful to Peter Barnes for making us welcome at The Boathouse for our meetings.

The Local Scene

At long last School Lane has been given No Entry signs at its upper end, and the traffic problem here has now been given that same solution which this Society has been urging for years. We are very pleased to see it. We are also pleased to see that the public lavatories off the Square have been repainted. It is probable that residents rarely notice these necessities for our visitors, but their appearance has for some time reflected poorly on Parkgate. Let us hope the new image is lasting.

Our pleas and prayers about litter bins are at last getting some answers. The Council placed a few new bins, stopgaps only, in April. Mr Webster of the Borough Engineer's department has taken the trouble to come and discuss with us a covered type of bin more suited to the needs of the Parkgate Parade, and although the money available will not permit us to have many, we are delighted at this prospect of help with our litter problem.

We have been promised repairs for the three damaged seats on the Donkey Stand, though nothing has yet been done. We were again pleased by the three attractive flower pots placed there by the Parks Department - less pleased when one of these pots totally vanished !

The field of planning permission, usually an active one, has been remarkably quiet in the last six months. After the

enthusiasm which we voiced in our last Newsletter at the plans to rescue Ivy Cottage, it was very sad when the remains of the house collapsed when the top floor was taken off. But those who saw the house before the work began, and noticed the rotten or crumbling state of every part of it, were not at all surprised. We are hopeful that its rebuilt successor will look well.

The Society wanted to be represented at the public enquiry which heard the appeal by Parkgate Nurseries in Boathouse Lane against an order which restricted the goods which could be sold there. Two members of the Society generously assisted us with legal advice, for which we are very grateful. In fact we could not be represented without going to unjustifiable expense; but a letter expressing our views was handed to the Inspector.

We were most interested when the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds bought the Parkgate marsh, and much else, from British Steel. The new warden, Mr Gomes, will be able to tell us more about the implications of this purchase when he speaks to us on November 13th. Meanwhile the RSPB has written to us to say:

"It is not our intention to make any changes in the status of the area for at least twelve months while the detailed ornithological and other ecological interest of the site is monitored by a warden, so that the existing privileges extended to the public will be continued on the present basis. Our purpose in acquiring the area, is not only to maintain and enhance the existing ornithological interest by wardening and management, but also to safeguard the area against development in perpetuity."

Another possible threat to the estuary seems to have receded now that the proposed British Gas terminal is likely to be sited near Barrow in Furness.

You may have seen in the local newspapers that the Borough Council has published its plans for a Neston Conservation Area which will include the west side of the Neston High Street as well as Buggen Lane, Mill Street, Church Lane and the top of Parkgate Road. Most of this land lies within our Area of Interest. We have made the suggestion that the Conservation Area should be slightly enlarged to go a little further down Moorside Lane to include the houses at the mouth of Old Quay Lane. We are awaiting with great interest the outcome of these proposals.

The Society has been concerned for some years about the worsening state of the footpath which leads along the shore from Moorside to the Old Quay House, and then up to join the Country Park. We recently repeated our concern, not only for this path, but for the ancient stone footbridge, once part of a "county road" to the Old Quay, where the path crosses a stream. In July there was a meeting between the County Director of Countryside, the County Planning Officer, the Head Ranger of the Country Park and the farmer of the land to discuss these points. It emerged that there are problems of flooding from various sources which must be solved before the bridge can be restored or the path improved. We are delighted at the interest being shown, and we hope that improvements can be made in due course.

The Civic Trust

We are requested by the Civic Trust to encourage our members to join the Trust at £2.50 a year. The address is - The Civic Trust, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1. It publishes a fortnightly newsletter written

by experts for all members of local amenity societies registered with the Trust (which we are), giving news of other societies and ideas for all those interested in their surroundings.

The Annual General Meeting and the 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 to the Committee should therefore be sent to the Secretary (Mrs AM Clarke, Sea View, The Parade, Parkgate) by 18th September at the latest.

The four present Officers of the Society, named at the head of this Newsletter, are willing to continue and offer themselves for re-election. The remaining elected committee members are SC Edwards (responsible for trees), ADJ Grenfell, GW Place (responsible for historical research, and also editor of the Newsletter), Mrs V Place (Membership Secretary), and Mrs H Wall-Jones. All are willing to continue and offer themselves for re-election. In addition, JH Reynolds was co-opted during the year, and is now proposed for election.

Members alone can take part in the AGM, although there is no objection if their guests happen to be present. The AGM will start at 7.30 pm on 2nd October, and there will be a pause between the Society's business and Mr Camenisch's talk, planned to start at 8 pm, in case you prefer to come for the talk only.

The PARKGATE PILOT's JUG

In a small dining room of the Mersey Docks & Harbour Company, in the Port of Liverpool Building, there is kept a commemorative ale jug, holding 10 pints, which was made at the Herculaneum Pottery in Toxteth. On the jug's side is the painted inscription,

Banrad Rilton
Pilot, 1805
Parkgate

The Society was asked if we could find any information about this strangely-named pilot, or about any pilots in the Dee, or why this jug was made. We were able to help with the first two queries, but unfortunately not, so far, with the third.

It seems that the pilot's real name was Barnard Relton, and the mistaken spelling on the jug suggests that the painter was asked to copy something without being able to read it. Barnard Relton was a mariner from Parkgate, born about 1755 who died between 1806 and 1808. This information comes from the records of the Point of Air Lighthouse Trust. When that lighthouse was built in 1777, the Trust was given the duty to license pilots for the Dee estuary, and ships were obliged to use them. In the first thirty years of the Trust, most of the pilots came from Parkgate; Barnard Relton was first licensed in 1787 and was regularly re-licensed until 1806.

We are grateful to the Port Services Director and his staff, and to the County and City Record Offices in Chester, for their help in a most interesting quest.