

PARKGATE SOCIETY

Newsletter 37

Autumn 1989

President	JR Cochrane CBE	
Chairman	GW Place	336 2891
Vice-chairman	SC Edwards	336 1190
Secretary	Mrs AM Clarke	336 1069
Treasurer	EPD Taylor	

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday, 18th September, 8 pm at the Parkgate Hotel

An expert from SOTHEBY'S in Chester will come and entertain us with aspects of the auctiineering world

Monday, 23rd October, at the Parkgate Hotel

At 7.30 pm, the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, followed by

At 8 pm, VICTORIAN and EDWARDIAN SHOPPING, an illustrated talk by Michael Benson

There will be an interval between the AGM and the talk, so if you would rather just come to the talk, please do so.

Monday, 27th November, 8 pm at the Parkgate Hotel

This meeting will take the form of a Social Evening at which we shall display the eagerly-awaited photographic survey of Parkgate by Leonard Walker.

We have invited the Neston Civic Society to join us and display their own survey of Neston, the work of Harry Leech and Susan Chambers.

This promises to be a fascinating show, and a rare opportunity to examine in detail the many aspects, both architectural and general, which make Parkgate and Neston an interesting place to live.

There will be a bar open throughout the evening for refreshments including coffee, so please bring along any friends who might be interested.

Monday, 15th January, 8 pm at the Parkgate Hotel

This is out joint meeting with the Neston and Burton Societies, and this year we hope we have catered for a wide range of interests in our choice of subject:

The TREASURES of the GROSVENOR MUSEUM
an illustrated talk by its Director, Nicholas Moore

If you need TRANSPORT to reach any of our meetings, do ring Angela Clarge, 336 1069

Subscriptions Many thanks to those of our members who have paid their subscription for 1989, and so don't have to be asked ! The rates are:

£ 3 single or family membership
£ 1.50 senior citizen membership

Mrs Valerie Place will be pleased to receive your subscription, at meetings or at her home: Pendmore, Station Road, Parkgate.

The Annual General Meeting Our constitution requires that 'Nominations for the election of officers shall be made in writing at least fourteen days before the AGM. Such nominations shall be supported by proposer and seconder, and the consent of the nominee must first have been obtained.'

Any nominations should therefore be sent to the Secretary (Mrs AM Clarke, Sea View, The Parade, Parkgate) by 9th October. The present officers and committee are willing to serve again and offer themselves for re-election. They are:

GW Place (Chairman), SC Edwards (Vice-chairman), Mrs AM Clarke (Secretary), EPD Raylor (Treasurer), Mrs S Britt, Mrs V Place, MS Potts, Mrs S Synge, Miss M Tinker, DL Walker.

Our Recent Meetings

In March, Adrian Jarvis, Keeper of Social and Industrial History at the Merseyside Museums, laid a few myths and opened some locked doors to us on the work of Brunel, Telford and the world of the 19th century engineers.

In April, Harry Jones, former coxswain of the Hoylake lifeboat, regaled us with stories and details of the valiant work carried out by the RNLI. Mr Jones has a wealth of experience and strongly conveyed to us the pride that the lifeboat crews take in their often hazardous work. He told us that the financial support locally for this charity has always been phenomenal.

In May, Martyn Jamieson, from the Wirral Country Park, recounted his experiences when acting as protector of the nest and eggs of peregrine falcons on a remote cliff in Cumbria. He showed some wonderful photographs taken in some precarious places. A fascinating evening.

Another Seat for Parkgate We are most grateful to David Clarke, local businessman and the son of our secretary, for generously giving a seat for the benefit of Parkgate. This seat has been placed by the Council on the Parade, near the Old Quay inn.

The supply of seats, as of litter bins, is now quite good in Parkgate. If anyone has ideas of where either are needed, do please let us know.

And Further Thanks ... to the Parkgate Nurseries, who have again kindly offered to provide plants for the tubs on the Donkey Stand, and keep a splash of colour going during the Spring and Summer.

.... to Mr and Mrs Collier, owners of Nicholls, who sell our Guide Book at no profit to themselves. Their ice cream is once again one of the joys of Parkgate and (after a lapse in previous hands) has risen to new heights of excellence.

.... to the Wirral Country Park centre at Thurstaston, and particularly to Mrs Jervis, who also sells our Guide Book with all proceeds benefiting the Society's funds.

Cheshire Railings An attractive feature of Cheshire crossroads used to be the white-painted railings which allowed drivers to see round the corners. Where they still remain, these railings are falling into disrepair: an example is halfway up Boathouse Lane. We have made the suggestion that they be repaired, and have been heard with sympathy. Let us see what comes of it! Unfortunately the ownership of the railings is not always clear.

The Parkgate Play Area The children's play area beside the Ropewalk has for long been in a poor state, particularly as the grass seems more for the convenience of dogs than of children. Mothers of energetic young children, of whom your editor is one, will be delighted to learn that the play area is due for revamping at long last.

Thanks to the persistent badgering of Councillor Brenda Dowding, the Council has agreed to spend over £14,000 on making this area a safe and attractive place for children to play.

The Draft Local Plan and how it affects Parkgate

Members of the Society's committee attended two meetings at which Council representatives explained the local plan which will govern policy and development for the next ten years. We found little to criticise and much to applaud.

Parkgate is preserved as a distinct place by the Green Belt, which prevents building on the north side of Boathouse Lane. There is also a finger of Green Belt on either side of Wood Lane, and an island of Green Belt beyond Moorside Lane which halts the spread of Little Neston. It is intended to confirm these boundaries, and indeed to tighten them by declaring the coastal strip to be an Area of Special County Value. This Society has informed the Council that it welcomes these policies.

There are two specific proposals which affect our village directly. The first is the formation of a Dee Coastal Walk. This will link with Wirral Council's coastal walk and continue you it to Denhall. This will mean that the existing walkers' route will be improved and signposted. The only possible area of controversy will be if car parks are called for to service the walk.

The second proposes a Heritage Centre for Parkgate, suggested as "the provision of an interpretative display depicting the history of the town and surrounding area, the story of key local buildings and institutions and information on the wildlife of the Dee estuary." Many members will remember that the Parkgate Society proposed just such a Heritage Centre several years ago but could find no one willing to undertake the running costs. We are therefore delighted that this plan has surfaced as official policy. There are no details in the official mind at present, and we have arranged that an officer of the Borough Planning Department shall come to one of our committee meetings so that we can discuss the ideas involved.

However, before this or any other tourist promotion of Parkgate is attempted, the Borough has pledged itself "to relieve the traffic and parking congestion at Parkgate". While we applaud the principle, how to achieve this aim is another matter and we hope to discuss this also.

The committee of this Society has also expressed misgivings about the Neston relief road, which would allow pedestrianisation of the High Street at the cost of losing a very large part of the car parking space. As this is an extremely controversial plan, the Council at present wants to build only half the relief road. We have expressed the opinion that the ample provision of free parking space is the one great advantage that shopping in Neston has, and that it would be folly to lose it.

On the whole, though, we have been impressed by the good sense of the Borough Council's plans and the thoroughness of the consultation process.

A View of the Future We have in the locality a noted organic farmer, Mr Geoffrey Nicholls of Ashfield Farm. (His uncle founded Nicholls, the Parkgate ice cream shop). He has been a Green Party candidate in local, national and European elections. At a time when we are considering the Draft Local Plan and environmental concerns generally, we have asked Mr Nicholls to voice a 'Green' opinion. Let it speak for itself.

The European Election has brought to the attention of the electorate the arrival of a new force in politics, the Green Party. There is a danger that many will recognise us as being environmentalists. The environment is central to our philosophy; around it all our policies reflect its importance. The vast majority of problems which beset mankind are man-made (male values) and it is this status quo that we have to change internationally. A balance between the masculine and feminine values is needed which will provide a direction for sustainable life on planet Earth. Sustainable is one of the Green buzz words that will crop up time and time again. If our great grandchildren and theirs too can enjoy the same opportunities as we do, without hindrance from pollution, ill health, starvation and resource depletion, then the policies advocated have to be sustainable. Growth economics lead us (into temptation) to make decisions which promote greed in our society - we ignore the planet, the animal kingdom and human rights in our desire to achieve more. Growth economics are not sustainable.

In the short term, there needs to be growth in recycling, alternative energy, energy conservation. Certainly drastic reductions in the consumption of energy for the sake of consumption to reduce the effects of global warming. We have to work towards an international society that can live together in harmony, that respects freedom but does not promote greed, that respects the animal kingdom (a society that respects animals also respects people), that respects human rights, not just in the currently Communist countries but also in the Third World and indeed in places like South Africa. There is a Green party in Poland. How long before one in South Africa?

Another important word is LOCAL. Local democracy, local decision making, local taxation. We know how much development we want in our Borough, we know how we want taxes spent: local democracy will find out. This is in direct conflict with central government knowing best and overriding local opinion on any subject. Also local production for local needs reduces energy consumption and makes producers more accountable, eg, how farmers treat the environment. Also how employers treat their work force. We wouldn't want to work in a sweatshop, but most of those who produce goods for us in the East do so.

So, the key word is responsibility. That's what it's all about, and being prepared to make sacrifices before it is too late!

Geoffrey Lane Nicholls

The Landmark Trust We should like to draw your attention to a charity which rescues buildings of architectural or historical interest by repairing them and letting them as holiday houses. Their houses are an experience to stay in and are warmly recommended. Anyone who is interested is welcome to contact Mr or Mrs Place (336 2891) who can supply further details.

Robert's first letter

Parkgate Oct 16th 1835.

Dear Mama,

As I have an opportunity of sending to Chester, I write to tell you that I am quite well and hope you are so too. Miss Salkeld will return by the Coach this evening and will bring some cakes for me or any thing else you will please to send me. I remain

Dear Mama

Your dutiful Son

R. Topham.

This letter was written by the eight year old Robert Topham, to his mother in Chester, when he joined the school run in Parkgate by John Salkeld and his sister Maria between 1831 and 1861. The school was at The Warren, which has since been rebuilt. Robert Topham attended the school from 1835 to 1842.

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Secretary, Mrs AM Clarke, Sea View, The Parade, Parkgate
Newsletter Editor, Sheila Syngé, 9 Flint Meadow, Neston