

Parkgate Society Newsletter

Autumn 1999

Issue Number 57

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE

Meetings at **THE BOATHOUSE**

Due to the planning application by the Parkgate Hotel to redevelop the site for housing, we have decided to change our venue to upstairs at the Boathouse.

If you need help with transport please ring our secretary Angela Clarke (336 1069) giving 24 hours notice.

AGM

An Addition to our Constitution

At the AGM on 18th October, members will be asked to approve a change to the Society's objectives as listed in our constitution.

At present the objectives are to

- a) stimulate public interest,
- b) promote high standards of planning and architecture
- c) secure the preservation and improvement of features of historic or public interest.

To this list we wish to add the following:
d) promote, encourage or financially support any activity or enterprise which tends to the benefit of Parkgate or its people.

The purpose of this amendment is to give us more flexibility, particularly in how we spend our funds.

No changes are proposed to the committee, whose members are all willing to serve again. They are: Geoffrey Place (chairman), Michael Potts (vice-chairman), Clive Edwards (treasurer), Angela Clarke (secretary), Becky Ford, Stephen Gordon, Fiona Gow, Jeremy Harris, Liz Marrs, Valerie Place, Anne Williamson.

Any nominations from members (with proposer, seconder and the consent of the nominee) should reach the secretary by 3rd. Oct.

NON-MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

Diary Dates - 1999-2000 8pm **THE BOATHOUSE (except 22 Sept.)**

- 20 Sept. *The Battle of Rowton Moor*
by David Hemmings
- 22 Sept. Book Launch at **Neston Town Hall.** talk on *Churchill's War Speeches* by Frank McDonough
- 18 Oct. AGM - *John Wesley at Parkgate*
by Geoffrey Place
- 22 Nov. *A Life of Crime*
by Bill Wickham (retired judge)
- 21 Feb. *St. George's Hall*
by Valerie Hozack (blue badge guide)
- 20 Mar. *Argyle Music Hall*
by Gloria Wood
- 17 Apr. *Local Archaeology*
by Keith Matthews (from the Grosvenor Museum, Chester)
- 22 May. A talk by Geoffrey Place,
"When Burton was a port."

NEWS AND VIEWS

DOGS AND ALL THAT

The intractable question of **dog fouling** has been much in the news lately and we have welcomed the Borough Council's initiative in raising awareness of the problem.

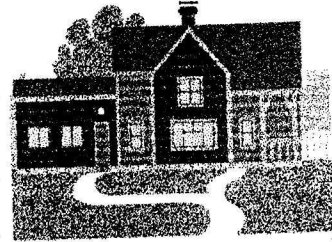
This Society has been in touch with our councillors and council officers several times in the past. In April, following a letter from one of our members, we sought the help of Mrs Downey, the headteacher at Parkgate Primary School. A letter, signed jointly by Mrs Downey and Geoffrey Place, our Chairman, was sent to all parents of children at the school. The letter pointed out the dangers of dog dirt to children with particular reference to the Ropewalk. The letter included this paragraph:

The only effective way of tackling this problem seems to be an appeal to the individual dog owners. Can you help us to do this? Just talking to your neighbours about the dangers of dog fouling may help.

The fence at the station Road end of the Wirral Way has been rebuilt.

A new edition of the booklet "**This is Parkgate, its buildings and its story**" has been printed and is now available locally.

Copies of the former editor will hopefully soon become collector's items.



Three public meetings were held (March 23rd, April 13th & 27th, to discuss the future of **St. Thomas' Church**. The turn out on each occasion was tremendous and the planning for the Church and Parkgate generally was given a thorough airing. See article in this newsletter. There was also a service and barbecue (also well attended) on St. Thomas' day, held at Parkgate Primary School.

THE BURTON & SOUTH WIRRAL LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

invite the members of

THE PARKGATE SOCIETY

to the launch of their new book

NESTON AT WAR, 1939 - 1945

on Wednesday, 22nd September 1999

8 pm at Neston Town Hall

There will be a talk by Frank McDonough on

CHURCHILL'S WAR SPEECHES

Friends and guests will be welcome. There is no charge.

NEWS AND VIEWS Contd.

Mrs Marjorie Shaw, who celebrated her 100th birthday last year when living in Parkgate, was recently in the news for receiving the Legion D'Honneur medal.

The following article has been copied directly from the **Wirral Champion Magazine**.

We are most grateful to the Editor for granting permission for us to use this article.

French Honour for Local Lady

Mrs Marjorie Shaw, who celebrated her 100th birthday last year, was presented with the medal of the Legion D'Honneur by the French Consul, M. Yvan Besnard.

The simple ceremony took place recently at Caldý Manor where Mrs Shaw is a resident. She received the honour, bestowed by the President of France in recognition of her services to France during the First World War.

a little bit of history happened right here in Caldý....

In 1918 she was an ambulance driver based in Boulogne, where she joined her twin brother, then serving as a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps.

The President of France, Jacques Chirac, had decided to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the ending of the First War by awarding these medals, the highest honour that can be given to a serviceman or civilian, to all survivors who had taken part in the action in France.

decorative medal

After a short explanation of the background to and the reason for the honour, M. Yvan Besnard pinned the delightfully decorative medal on Mrs Shaw and sealed the ceremony with two kisses in true Gallic style.

Mrs Shaw, née Evans, was born in Wallasey on 23rd May 1898 and is a long established Wirral resident, living recently in Parkgate. She had volunteered for war service in 1916 as soon as she reached the age of 18 and after the war was chosen to represent the Women's Legion at the Peace Procession in London in 1919.

During the Second World War she was again involved with caring for the injured



M. Yvan Besnard, the French Consul, pinned the delightfully decorative Legion D'Honneur medal on Mrs Shaw

as Commandant of the Altrincham Ambulance Depot.

The daughter of Mr & Mrs J G Evans of Wallasey, she married Mr Bertram Shaw of Rochdale. They lived in Altrincham and as a talented violinist she played with the Beethoven Society Orchestra for many years. On retirement, she and her husband moved to Parkgate.

A lively centenarian she said, "I am thrilled by this great honour, but I ask myself, Why me?"

moving ceremony

Although she had no children of her own, many nieces, nephews and other relations, who had travelled from as far afield as Guildford and Edinburgh, together with representatives of the British Legion locally, attended this simple but moving ceremony, admirably hosted by Jeremy and Sue Tetley of Caldý Manor.



Marjorie in her ambulance driver uniform

People

The Pubs & Hotels of Parkgate - Part 3

THE RED LION by Geoffrey Place

It is not known when this house first became a pub. The name Red Lion is first recorded in 1822, but that is because 1822 was the first time that ale-sellers' licences were recorded with the inn sign, rather than merely the name of the licence holder. For some 20 years after 1822, John Wood was the innkeeper, succeeded by 1850 by Lee Wood (1812-1875), described as carpenter and publican. Lee's wife Elizabeth held the licence after her husband died, but she died in 1881. For the rest of the century another John Wood, probably her son, described as a ship's carpenter, was the landlord.

The house next door, to the south, called Clontarf, was a cafe between the wars. From about 1980 it has gradually been incorporated into the Red Lion.

THE TOWNSHIP AND MANOR HOUSE OF LEIGHTON

- part three - (final part)

by Clive Edwards

Life in the 1600s and Later

William Whitmore married William Hough's daughter and inherited the estate. William Whitmore's 1620 lengthy and detailed inventory covers the contents of the Hall and of the outbuildings, together with the farm equipment, livestock and crops.

The 1620 Inventory

a) The Grander Style.

The house had been greatly enlarged by William Whitmore. A gate house was added, probably by the inner court gate. The ox house by this gate was converted into bed chambers, and possibly a new structure was built along the north of the green court, connecting the ox house to the hall. Certainly seven extra bedrooms were added, and a new upper parlour, together with a new staircase.

Since compilation of the 1574 inventory, the contents of the house in 1620 show a move to a life-style of a country family rather than a parochial family. For example:-
 "The Coach with furniture and all things thereunto belonging". This must have been a rarity and an uncomfortable conveyance on the poor roads of the time and was presumably used for travel on the Wirral and to Chester.

There was "the clock". Clocks were rare at this date and it probably chimed the hours to regulate the household.

Other expensive and imported items were "In his own chamber a looking glasse"; "In the kitchen Chamber, one payle of grene silke valens and curtens, one payle of watched silke curtens".

b) Weapons

There must have been some anxiety about security, as weapons were held in several bedrooms. William Whitmore himself had "one cuple of pistolls, one pollaxe". There was a halbert in the gentlewomen's chamber (presumably the daughter's bedroom) and in the serving men's chamber, a halbert and another "pollaxe".

c) Scale of Entertaining

Unfortunately, although the contents of most rooms are listed in detail, those of the three reception rooms, (the upper and lower parlours, and the hall) give nothing but the monetary value of unspecified furniture. However, the closet in the higher parlour includes "one pep-perboxe . . . 6 glasses . . . two glasse jackes, the alabaster mortar". In the buttery were "two jugs lipt with silver".

Entertaining, judging by the number of plates and dishes, must have been on a large scale. There were 26 dishes in the closet mentioned above and 72 "Coarse Trenchers" in the Buttery. In each of these two rooms were also a "case of a dozen trenchers". According to the book "Treen" by Edward H. Pinito, it was the fashion to have sets of decorated plates for dessert. After the meal was ended, each person had to give a party piece on the subject depicted on their trencher.

The household plate was valued at £43.6.8 and there was a great deal of pewter ware. Condiment utensils listed were a nutmeg grater, a pepper box and a vinegar case.

d) Dialect and Obsolete Words

The inventory is rich in unfamiliar words.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Cadow | a rough, woollen padded bed cover. There were many of these. |
| Moatle | a bed cover made of variegated woollen yarns. |
| Hillinge | a covering for cupboards and chests made of fabric. There was one bedhillinge. |
| Cratch | a hanging framework for holding cheeses. The mice were unable to reach cheese or bacon placed on these hanging holders The Leighton cratch held 34 cheeses. |
| Postnet | a small metal pot with a handle and three feet. |
| Hatchew | a comb used for carding flax prior to spinning normally called a hetchel. |
| Clues of yarn | balls of linen yarn as they were taken off the spindle. |
| Covershets | a pinafore or apron. The last known reference to this word is 1639 (Oxford English Dialect Dictionary). |
| Garnytt | a store for malt or corn. |
| Barty | a loft store. |

e) Livestock

Mixed stock farming was necessary for a community which had to be self-sufficient. The Hall inventory of 1620 shows a variety of cattle. There were eight oxen and six steers for draught work. There was "one fat ox" which was presumably destined for the pot. There were eighteen cows, nineteen heiffers and six year-old calves, as well as three bulls. In addition there were six bullocks and seven bullocks of the bigger sort". William Whitmore died in June when the cattle had not yet been culled by the autumn slaughter. "Peeles of beefe" were still in the wet larder. If these dated from the previous winter then curing methods must have been quite effective.

The Hall kept twenty sheep and twelve lambs. Tallow fat from sheep was used for candles and soap, which are mentioned in the inventory.

Horses were kept at the Hall. William Whitmore gave his kinsman John Hough his best filly in his will. He also gave in-calf heiffers to two of his servants, thus emphasising the value of livestock to people in those days.

Some domestic poultry was kept in the "little hen house" in the woodyard. We know that two tenants gave one hen each year as part of their rent. Possibly, in an area teeming with wild fowl and with land birds which we no longer eat, there was no need to keep many hens. Pigs are of course mentioned in the inventory, and would have foraged in Leighton Wood.

f) Money

In 1620 William Whitmore left £704.10.8. This represents only the movable goods and livestock. It did not include the house. It did not include any part of the second home which was Thornton Hall at Thornton Hough.

He left a sum of £20 to be distributed by his wife and daughter "upon such and soe many poore people as they in their discrecions shall think best". To bring this sum to a modern equivalent, it should be multiplied by at least 500. This gives a better idea of this generosity. Two women servants were each given a half-year's wage of 20/- and 12/- in his will. Thus these two women earned in modern terms £1000 and £600 per annum.

The Tenants and their Holdings

a) The Tenants. The most detailed description of the tenants comes from the Leighton Manor Survey c. 1583 (see parts 1 & 2).

The number of families was small, about twelve families in the 1580s. Two were of higher standing than the others - the Cooks and the Garrats. We know that these two families lived in relative affluence. Both had houses 4 bays in length, i.e. 64 feet and both were lofted at NE end - probably for sleeping accommodation. Both had a barn and a sheep house - in Garrat's case 64ft and 32ft respectively. Both had an orchard, garden and yard. Cook had an inner court, so that his house must have resembled a small copy of the Hall with its inner and outer courts. For this the yearly rent was 21/- "One rente herne 2 days plowing, 2 days repping (reaping), 2 days ceding (seeding) and aparence (appearance) at the Lordes court at homage at his manor". "After the death of everye tenante his best picke given for a heriate and be holdeth the sameat the will of the Lorde of the Soyle".

b) Cultivation of the Land. The whole arrangement of field, meadow and common land was very compact about village. However in the 1580s extra land was taken in from the waste and parcelled out to tenants in lots of 4 Cheshire acres. (The Cheshire acre is more than double the modern statute acre). Presumably the old cultivated land was being worked out, and was not sufficiently productive. On the Estate Map of 1732 these pieces are named as slangs, the old Cheshire term for land taken in for cultivation. On named allotments, presumably by those who had no ear for the subtleties of local dialect.

William Hough, William Whitmore's father-in-law and predecessor, gave these instructions:- "See yt wyell dycheid and thenge yt good yor ploud the ground befoure the inclosure and so to fanke (harrow) yt against the next yeare for wyeit".

c) The River Dee. The river was a valuable source of food. The fishing was regulated as strictly as land-tenure, as is shown by the Survey c. 1583. Nineteen fishyards were fixed along the Leighton river frontage. A fishyard was a form of fishtrap. Four poles were sunk into the river bed, two in front and two behind placed at a wider distance to each other. A handle was fixed on either side between two poles. Between the two front poles, two more hurdles were hung like gates. As the tide came in, the two front hurdles were pushed open. As the tide receded, these gate hurdles were pushed closed. The fish were caught behind the gates and trapped behind the side hurdles.

The Lord of the Manor took a good part of the fish so caught. Lawrence Cook and William Garrat gave the Lord "all manner of ffishe by what means soever the same be taken . . . in the ffirst tydes after midnight upon every Mondaie, Wednesdaye and Fridaye" "for the provicon of his House or other to employ otherwise at his pleacyre".

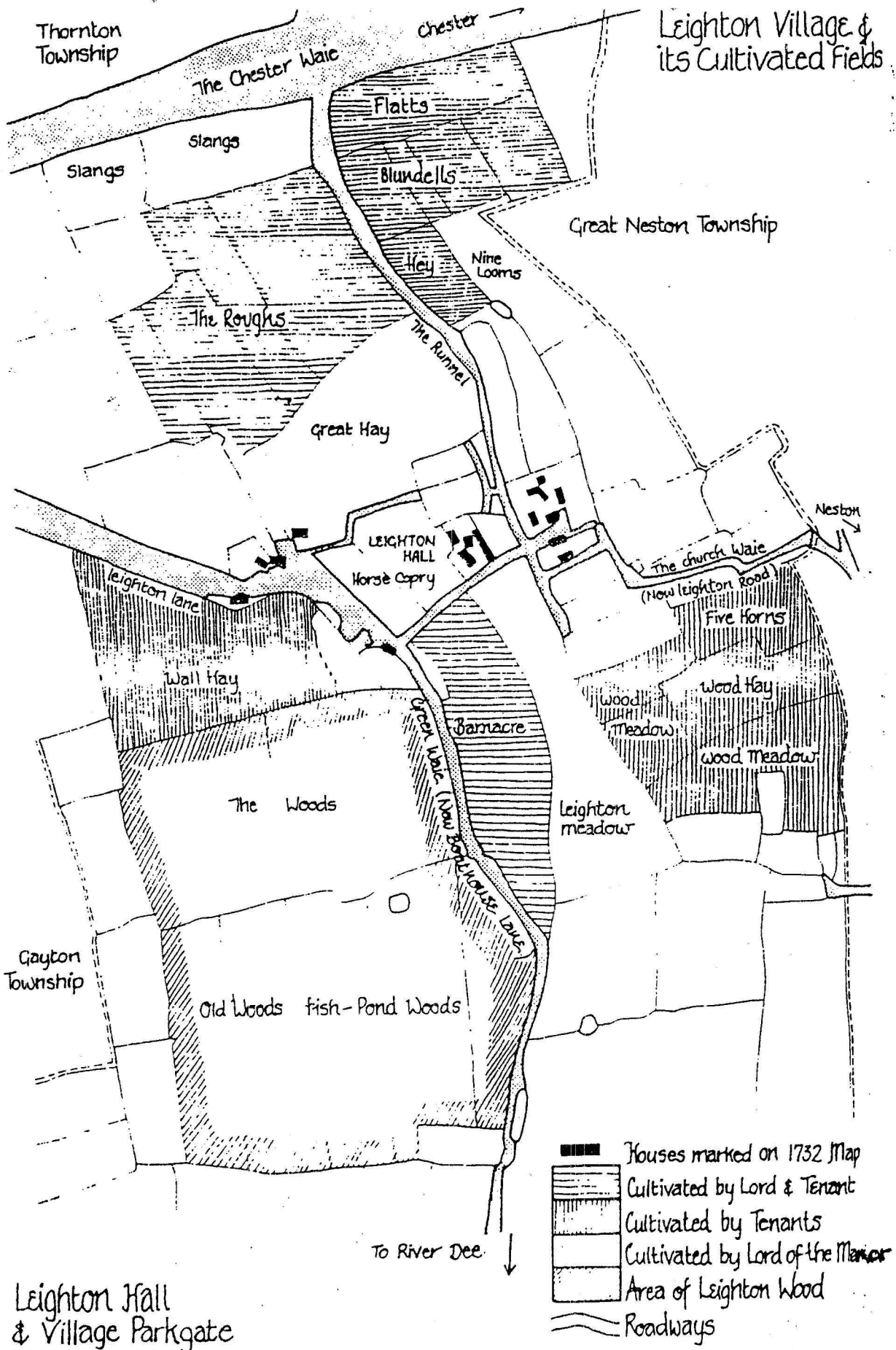
Notes Relating to the Map

The map of Leighton village is taken off the Estate Map of 1732.

A small number of houses cluster on each side of the Hall. The number of tenants in 1732 would be approximately the same as in 1580.

The road system, with its rather haphazard, broad and narrow areas had not changed from Tudor times. The names of the roads are given in the Manor Survey c. 1583. Chester Waie is now the Chester High Road, running from Hoylake to Chester. The Church Waie led through Neston park to Neston parish church.

The road running to the south of the site is the Runnel, which means a stream or water course, although no stream is now visible.



Thornton Township

Leighton Village & its Cultivated Fields

Great Neston Township

Gayton Township

Leighton Hall & Village Parkgate

- Houses marked on 1732 Map
- Cultivated by Lord & Tenant
- Cultivated by Tenants
- Cultivated by Lord of the Manor
- Area of Leighton Wood
- Roadways

Thornton Township

Slangs

Slangs

Chester

The Chester Waie

Flatts

Blundells

Hey

Nine Looms

The Roughs

The Runnel

Great Hay

LEIGHTON HALL

Horse Copry

Neston

The church Waie

(New Leighton Road)

Five Horns

Leighton Lane

Wall Hay

Jamacre

Wood Meadow

Wood Hay

Wood Meadow

The Woods

Leighton meadow

Green Waie (New Leighton Lane)

Old Woods

fish-Pond Woods

To River Dee

The field names mentioned in the 1583 survey, are still largely present in the Mostyn estate map of 1732, and in the Tithe map of 1847, showing a remarkable continuity over three centuries, and there is still a modern working farm on the site.

The cultivated fields are arranged closely about the Hall and cottages. The Hall had the exclusive use of the field known as the Great Hey and of the Horse Coppy and Nine Looms. Some fields are shown as being used solely by tenants and another block is cultivated jointly. The Manor Survey was incomplete. Those fields left unmarked on the map are areas which cannot be ascribed to Lord or tenant with any certainty.

Leighton Wood was important to the community and much of the building of Leighton Hall will have benefited from a very local supply of timber. A vestige of the Wood was still standing in the 1840s.

The River Dee is off the map.

Decline of the Estate

Thomas Savage married Bridget the daughter of William Whitmore the younger and inherited the estate. In the Civil War the Savages supported the Royalist cause and were heavily fined by Parliament. A further inventory of 1670 shows the contents of the house in a greatly run down state, with lower monetary values.

The house passed to the Mostyn family through the marriage of Bridget Savage, granddaughter of the above Bridget. The Mostyns never lived in the house, which was let to a farmer.

Links with the Present

The house now standing on the site was erected in the 20th century, although the principal barn is a handsome building and has a date stone of 1665 and the initials of Darcy Savage who died in 1670.

Leighton, which was based on fisheries and woods, never had a large population, but there is evidence that there was a village centre near the sharp bends in Leighton Road, and the site of the lost village may lie below the surface of the modern fields.

SPIRITUALS CONCERT

In support of St Thomas' Parkgate Church Restoration Fund

In St Mary & St Helen Church, High St., Neston

7.45pm for 8pm Friday 17th September.

BY THE SAVOY JAZZMEN & GUESTS



This tuneful concert mainly of spirituals played in the New Orleans style, will have plenty of vocals and opportunities to join in the singing. There will even be a New Orleans funeral march "a la James Bond" and the young at heart can join in a march to "When the Saints go marching in".

The Savoy band will be joined by the talented reedman Terry Perry and the joyful vocalist, Carole Oldham. The accent will be on melody and there will be special features for the church's own organist, Ken Fayle and the classical baritone voice of David Eddowes.

The concert has been arranged by Wirral Jazz Friends, who follow a long tradition of supporting charities. This year already £2100 has been raised for Claire House. The Parkgate Society Treasurer, Clive Edwards also belongs to the Wirral Jazz Friends and has organised this special concert to provide an opportunity for everyone in Neston and Parkgate and elsewhere of any denomination or none to enjoy together an evening to help with the restoration and extension of St Thomas'.

Clive's ambition is to create a wonderful atmosphere for the concert by filling the church with 600 people !! Please help by buying tickets and if possible by involving your family, friends, neighbours and relatives to do the same and not miss this unique evening!

Tickets £4 /children up to 16yrs £2.

Soft drinks for purchase.

FOR TICKETS PLEASE SEE OVERLEAF

NEW LIFE FOR ST. THOMAS' CHURCH

At long last some progress is being made towards restoring this building as a church. The Neston Parochial Church Council (PCC) arranged three public meetings in the spring, and at these their architects encouraged discussion about what the people of Parkgate really wanted. This process was at the particular request of the Borough Council's Planning Officer who, having been deluged with letters about this building, was determined that everybody should have the chance to comment.

The turnout for each meeting was very encouraging with an attendance of some ninety people on average. The architects were criticised for prompting discussion of wider issues than the church itself, such as car parking in Parkgate as a whole, but their intention was to capture the interest of the public at large and in this the meetings succeeded. The atmosphere of community co-operation was very encouraging.

Parallel to these public meetings the vicar, the Revd. Neil Robb, formed a joint working party with representatives from the Parkgate Society, the Parkgate Preservation Trust, the Family & Friends and the PCC. The first product of this body was a Trust that will receive and control all funds raised for the St. Thomas' appeal. The Trust is independent of the PCC or any other organisation. In the unlikely event that the St. Thomas' restoration cannot go ahead, known donors will have their money returned to them and money raised by concerts and the like will go to the Cheshire Historic Churches Trust. It will not be possible for money to "leak" elsewhere.

On St. Thomas' Day (July 3rd) the costings for the architects' proposals were unveiled, at a very well supported service and barbecue at the Primary School which raised some £600 for the appeal. At first sight the architect's plans seem very expensive, but

it is now the task of a project management committee (on which this society is represented) to reduce the proposals to a realistic level. Until that is done, the appeal cannot be launched in full. When this is ready, we will be in touch with all our members.

Meanwhile, we hope to see you all at a concert, devised by our Treasurer, Clive Edwards, to be held in Neston Parish Church on Friday, 17th September.

SPIRITUALS CONCERT

**17th September
Neston Church
(St Mary & St Helen)
8pm
THE SAVOY JAZZMEN
AND GUESTS**

Tickets on sale from

PARKGATE STORES

JA ALLISTER (opticians)

**LITTLE NESTON
POST OFFICE**

or

by post SAE to
**Wirral Jazz Friends
22 Woodlands Road
Parkgate, Neston,
CH64 6RT**

**Enclosing Cheque to "Wirral
Jazz Friends"**

**Stating No. of tickets at £4 &
at £2 (Children under 16yr.)**



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