

# Parkgate Society

(Founded 1972)

## Newsletter

Autumn 2015

Issue Number 89

### Meetings 2015/16

We normally meet at 8pm at **The Cranston Suite, Neston Cricket Club, Station Road**, on the third Monday of the month.

**21 September – ‘Badger Protection in Wirral’**  
- Lesley Brockbank

**19 October – ‘The Descendants of Emma and Nelson’**  
- Michael Corfe

**16 November** – Hot-Pot Supper at 6.30 followed by **‘History of Thornton Hough Village’**  
- Gavin Hunter

**15 February – ‘Wirral Barn Owl Trust’**  
- Steve Harris

**21 March – ‘Burton Mere RSPB’**  
- Colin Wells

**18 April – ‘Parkgate – Port & Resort’**  
- Anthony Annakin-Smith

**16 May –** AGM at 7.30 pm followed by **‘Liverpool’s Williamson Tunnels’**  
- Clare Moorhead

If you need help with transport, please ring Mrs Angela Clarke, our Secretary, giving 24 hours’ notice, on 0151-336 -1069.

**The Annual General Meeting** was held at the Cranston Suite, Neston Cricket Club, on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Chairman Moira Andrews welcomed our Vice-President Stephen Gordon and about 45 members. Our vision for Parkgate continued to be realized: following the completion of the Donkey Stand we were now concentrating on establishing a Parkgate Heritage Trail, which would comprise heritage plaques for a number of buildings and an accompanying descriptive booklet; two further interpretation boards were to be installed. It was also intended to place a retired boat at the middle slip, to be planted up with flowers, as a reminder of the former fishing industry which once operated from there. During the course of the year a Community Spirit team had been set up in order to prepare for our entry to Cheshire’s Community Pride competition.

Thanks were offered to members of the Committee for their support over the previous 12 months, and in particular to Greta Simpson, who had decided to stand down after many years of service.

The following officers and committee members were elected to serve for 2015/16:

Chairman: Jill Brock  
Vice-Chairman: Moira Andrews  
Joint Secretaries: Angela Clarke & Alan Passmore  
Treasurer: Damian Loughe  
Committee: Bryan Lecky, Dave Johnson, Derek Haylock & Jill Owen

Auditor: Ailsa Cowdell

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** - £7.00 Single / £10 Household per year. Subscriptions are due on 1<sup>st</sup> April each year. Payment can be made at any of our meetings; however, we would prefer you to make payment by Banker’s Standing Order. Membership, Standing Order and Gift Aid forms are available from our Membership Secretary Derek Haylock tel: (0151) 336-4461. Please check that your Standing Order is for the correct amount.

Articles or suggestions for items for future Newsletters are most welcome. Please contact the editor: Alan Passmore, tel: (0151) 336 2917 or by email: [alan.passmore39@btinternet.com](mailto:alan.passmore39@btinternet.com)  
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The Parkgate Society is a registered charity, No. 503718.

## **News and Views**

The unique character of Parkgate continues to draw visitors to our village, come rain or shine. Despite the ever-present wind so far this year, the weather has been generally dry this summer, and most of the businesses on The Parade appear to have benefitted from the presence of throngs of visitors. They will have noticed that, with a number of building projects now largely completed, The Parade itself is now looking more attractive than ever.

After almost two years of disruption the re-development of the former Mostyn House School site is now complete, with all the new properties sold and most already occupied. This large development has brought about a significant increase in the number of Parkgate residents: we, therefore, extend our best wishes to all these newcomers to Parkgate (and any others) and hope that they enjoy their time with us in this wonderful unique area. Still not settled is the future of the former school chapel: the carillon of 37 bells, representing each of the former pupils who lost their lives during the first world war, has been refurbished and installed at Charterhouse, in Surrey, but the future use of the building itself, which was used by the developers for storage of building materials, has not yet been determined; it is understood that this will be in the hands of the residents of Mostyn Place. We hope that they will ensure that the building is not simply closed off and forgotten, but that it will be open to visitors and promoted for future use, in order to generate income for its maintenance.

Now that the contractors have left the Mostyn House site, the Council (CWaC) are addressing the issue of parking restrictions to ease traffic congestion at the entrance to Grenfell Park; it is understood that double yellow lines will be laid down here and for a short length of Station Road. CWaC have recently confirmed their intention to introduce a permanent 20 mph limit on The Parade, and this will have been implemented by the time you are reading this newsletter. The proposal has been controversial, with many people feeling it to be both unnecessary and unlikely to be enforced any more than other traffic regulations in Parkgate. Nevertheless, we live in hope that the new limit will help change some drivers' habits and discourage those who attempt to drive at speed when that rare opportunity presents itself.

In order to relieve some of the pressure on parking on The Parade, CWaC are planning to increase the capacity of the Station Road carpark, by opening up the area a little and redesigning the layout; some of the undergrowth will be removed, but significant trees retained, so that the current gravel area can be extended and more parking spaces provided; picnic tables will be installed too. It is hoped that these works will make this a more attractive area for visitors to spend time here and leave their cars whilst enjoying the local attractions.

We continue to be concerned about the state of the seawall: the Community Spirit Team can undertake weed clearance and some tidying, but some of the growth has dug deeply into the mortar between the stones, probably affecting the integrity of the wall. CWaC, who accept responsibility for maintenance of the wall, are involving Streetscene and Natural England in their assessment of future maintenance requirements. The ownership of the wall is still not clear, but this is no longer a block to necessary work being carried out.

Since the annual general meeting in May (see front page), our former Chairman Moira Andrews has decided to stand down from the committee; we are very grateful for her leadership over the past years, particularly for her formulation of 'Our Vision for Parkgate'. Dawn Lyon has joined us as a co-opted member of the committee; many will know her as the proprietor of the Parkgate Ice Cream Shop.

We were both sad and shocked to learn in June of the death of Brenda Dowding, our local Parkgate councillor for many years. An obituary is given elsewhere in this newsletter.

## **'A Vision for Parkgate' - Update**

In the Spring 2013 edition of the Newsletter we set out details of our vision for a comprehensive scheme of maintenance and improvements to The Parade, which were expected to get under way in the Autumn. We explained that the funding for this work was being provided from a number of different sources as match funding alongside our local councillor's grant for projects in Parkgate ward and a significant donation from the Society.

As we have previously reported, things have moved on quite smartly since then, thanks to the enthusiastic commitment of the team charged with developing the plans, working to a liaison group, now called the Parkgate Action Group, representing Chester West and Chester Council (CWaC), Neston Town Council and, of course, the Parkgate Society; the RSPB and Parkgate Traders are also members of this group. This group is now chaired by Cllr Martin Barker.

We expect that everyone will have noticed that CWaC have now installed in Station Road and Boathouse Lane the long-awaited 'gateway' signs, welcoming visitors to our village and emphasising its status as a conservation area. Of course, these signs do not mark the actual boundary of Parkgate ward, but are sited where they best draw travellers' attention to the special nature of the area they are entering.

Progress with the heritage plaque scheme and the associated heritage trail has been slower than envisaged but, now we have satisfied the requirements of the Council's conservation team, we are very nearly at the point of commissioning the plaques from the manufacturers. The associated booklet 'Parkgate Heritage Trail' has now been printed: it is already available from Mozkitos Coffee House and will also be on sale at the Society's meetings (price £2.00), along with the booklet 'This is Parkgate'.

The Society has now acquired an old de-commissioned boat for installation on the Middle Slip as a reminder of the former fishing industry which operated from this place before the last war. It is a former Hilbre class boat of a type specifically designed and built in the 1960s by various builders for sailing in the Dee estuary; though not strictly a fishing boat, but one built for pleasure sailing, it will nevertheless have the look of the boats that once plied their way to and from this slipway in search of catches. A small amount of restoration work has been necessary, and members have been busy with painting etc in order to prepare it for its future role as a small seaside flower garden. The boat is to be fixed securely to the slipway in order to provide the necessary stability. It is hoped that some additional works will be carried out in the area adjacent to the slipway in order to improve the general amenity of this location.

'Our Vision' also includes a proposal for further interpretation boards to be sited at the Middle Slip and at the Boathouse Slip, the former describing the Parkgate fishing industry and the latter the Parkgate ferry services and the former ship-building industry which once took place close by. Drafting work has already commenced in advance of receiving the Council's formal endorsement of the project.

The future use of the spare capacity in the toilet block in Mostyn Square is a matter currently under consideration by the group. If this space is not required for further toilet cubicles, the Society would like it to be made available for community use; a number of possibilities have been considered: community storage (eg for the Society's Community Spirit Team and the RSPB), an interpretation centre, or even a community shop. Before any of these possibilities can be considered further, however, the Council have been requested to determine whether there is likely to be a need to provide further toilets in this space or the existing provision is adequate for the foreseeable future.

## **The Community Spirit Team**

The Parkgate Society Community Spirit Team is making a difference.

Over the past few weeks you may have noticed that Parkgate is starting to look tidier and more welcoming.



Members of the Parkgate Society Community Spirit Team have been busy making a difference.

For instance, where the seawall meets the pavement along the Parade, the weeds have been removed. This is down in no small measure to one of the volunteers of the Parkgate Society Community Spirit Team, Stella Duncan, who has been out most mornings working her way along the Parade from the Old Quay to the Boathouse pulling up the grass and weeds. As well as the work on the Parade, Stella has found time to join the other volunteers involved with tidying up various other areas in Parkgate.

The mud and plant debris left by the high tides earlier this year has been removed from the middle slipway on the Parade. Weeds have been cleared from the pavement on Station Road past the Old Quay and up to the Cricket Club. The stretch of pavement from the end of the Ropewalk up to the Wirral Way has been cleared.

Overgrown shrubbery has been cut back to the railings and the mud, left over by the flooding in 2013, has been cleared from the pavement. Low overhanging branches have been removed allowing easier passage for pedestrians. Over the past two Wednesday evenings the overgrown shrubbery on the pavement over the bridge on Boathouse Lane has been trimmed back to the railings. The full width of the pavement is now available for pedestrians to walk safely over the bridge, well away from the kerb edge.





Before and after: a lot of tidying up of weeds and overgrown shrubbery has been taking place.

Other areas for the future attention of the Parkgate Society Community Spirit Team will include the overgrown hedge and grass verge along Station Road towards the entrance of the Wirral Way car park. The area around the public toilets off Mostyn Square will be tidied and they will be working with Street Scene who have agreed to tackle other overgrown areas including the Ropewalk along to Brooklands Road. This is very overgrown in places and is a safety concern that has been raised by a number of residents who walk daily along this pathway. Road and Street name signs that are in need of a clean and refurbishment have been identified and these will be cleaned in the coming months. Those that are in need of replacement have been listed and the list sent to Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Hopefully the Community Spirit Initiative to make Parkgate a more pleasant place to live in and to visit is starting to make a difference. The Parkgate Society is grateful to the Parkgate Traders and homeowners along the Parade for their floral displays and also the lick of paint which improves the look of the Parade tremendously.

The Community Spirit team is a sub group of the Parkgate Society and they hope their efforts will enhance the village's entry in the Cheshire Community Pride competition next year. They have received tremendous support from the local and county councillors and also Cheshire West and Chester Council officers. The volunteers are particularly grateful to the staff from Street Scene who have removed nearly 250 green bags of rubbish that they have filled so far this year.

As a group of volunteers they have lots of ideas and enthusiasm and if you would like to join them and help develop a true community spirit, or if you just have suggestions for other areas in Parkgate that require attention, please either stop and chat to them when you see them out tidying up or get in touch via the Parkgate Society email [parkgatesociety@gmail.com](mailto:parkgatesociety@gmail.com).

*David Johnson, Parkgate*

## Can You Help Solve a Milestones Mystery?

Many readers will be familiar with the seven magnificent sandstone milestones that used to line the driveway to Mostyn House School and which have now been relocated to the car park on the site. An eighth stone can be seen standing at the entrance to the Leahurst veterinary school campus. I recently stumbled across a photo of one of the stones in its original location and this led me to realise that the story is more complicated than originally thought. It is clear that some of the Neston area milestones are missing and I wondered if any readers could help shed light on their whereabouts.

The milestones were originally installed on the route of the current A540 and B5134 from Chester to Neston, as a requirement of the 1787 Wirral Turnpike Act. The Act was responsible for bringing the first properly maintained roads of the modern era to the Wirral, linking Chester to the then principal Wirral town of Neston, and the major seaport of Parkgate. As the word implies, one stone was situated every mile along the route. In 1896, on the establishment of the new Cheshire County Council, the stones were replaced by triangular, cast iron black-and-white ones, several of which can still be seen on the northern side of the road today.

When the iron milestones were installed, at least seven of the sandstone ones were dumped by The Half-way House (today's Yacht Inn) on the Chester High Road, ready to be broken up for hard core. However, they were found there by the then headmaster of Mostyn House School, A. G. Grenfell, who bought them cheaply and, thankfully, took them to the school where they were erected by the entrance drive.

Each stone bore the horizontal carved word 'Chester', followed by the distance from the city in miles and then the location of the stone (usually the township name) in an arc at the bottom. The late Parkgate historian, Geoffrey Place, uncovered the milestones' story and speculated that there may have been ten in total, as follows:

1 Bache	6 Ledsham*
2 Little Mollington*	7 Puddington*
3 Great Mollington*	8 Willaston*
4 Saughall	9 Little Neston*
5 Shotwick*	10 Great Neston

The lettering on the surviving stones has deteriorated substantially over the years. Those stones with distinguishing features that were at least partly identifiable to Dr. Place when he wrote an article about them in 2002 are asterisked above. Note that, while eight stones survive, he could only identify seven, so the eighth could have come from any of the remaining locations.

I recently came across a photo postcard of a scene on Parkgate Road, just above the Moorside Lane/Buggen Lane junction, which clearly shows one of the milestones situated there. This bears a number '11' (miles) and what appears to be the location wording of 'Great Neston'. While the photograph itself is not dated, the card was posted in 1908 and is typical of picture postcards of the Edwardian age. We thus know that there were eleven milestones, not ten as surmised. Their locations correspond with mile points shown on one of the earliest detailed maps of the area, made by Christopher Greenwood in 1819. Early large-scale Ordnance Survey maps depict the milestones more specifically (abbreviated to 'M.S.'), and it is interesting to note the wordings used on them:

- Milestone 9 (by today's Leahurst): the 1872 map records 'M.S. Chester 9', but the 1898 and 1912 maps record 'M.S. Neston 2 Chester 9', indicating that the sandstone milestone had been replaced by the new council's design, which showed additional mileage

information. This is curious because it is the original sandstone milestone, not the black and white replacement, which stands there today;

- Milestone 10: this was located on Hinderton Road, a little below today's Hinderton Lane. Again, map references indicate the change in style in 1896, going from 'Chester 10' to 'Neston 1, Chester 10'. But, today, there is no sign of either the original sandstone marker, or the replacement cast iron one;

- Milestone 11: this was, as stated above, located on today's Parkgate Road. However, the maps do not show any changed wording after 1896, indicating that, for an unknown reason, this stone was not replaced when the others were. The postcard image is supporting evidence of this anomaly.

Incidentally no OS maps indicate a '12' milestone. The 12-mile point from Chester would be shortly after the Middle Slip on Parkgate Parade, beyond the end-point of the turnpike at the Assembly House at today's Donkey Stand.

A review of 20<sup>th</sup> century OS maps suggests that milestones 10 and 11 disappeared some time between 1954 and 1964/5. The mapping of milestone 9 is erratic – the cast iron milestone is present pre-war; not indicated in 1954; depicted, without mileage, in 1965; and missing again on various 1970s/80s maps. Does this somehow reflect the odd succession of milestones at the Leahurst site?

An intriguing possibility is that the 1954 survey was inaccurate regarding stones 10 and 11. Could they, as well as no. 9, actually have been removed during WWII as part of the area's anti-invasion measures (the pillbox on Parkgate's Station Road being another such measure)? This is admittedly just speculation, but many similar milestones were removed across the country for just this reason.

In any event, it appears that a number of milestones went missing at some point. These are:

- The cast iron number 9 (to be replaced, sooner or later, by the reinstated sandstone version);
- The sandstone and cast iron versions of number 10;
- The sandstone number 11. The brick wall against which the milestone stood in the postcard has now been rebuilt in sandstone. Could it, perhaps, have been removed when that was built?

Incidentally, cast iron milestone 8 was depicted on maps at least until 1980, near the junction of the Chester High Road and Hadlow Road, but this has now disappeared too.

So, can any reader suggest where the missing sandstone or cast iron milestones, or their broken remains, might be? Even if there are no physical remains, I wonder if anyone happens to have a photo or postcard that shows the stones in their original location or moved elsewhere? Or does any older reader simply remember the missing stones in place or being removed?

Any light you can shed on this mystery would be most welcome.

*Anthony Annakin-Smith, Parkgate*

See next page for the illustrations for this article.





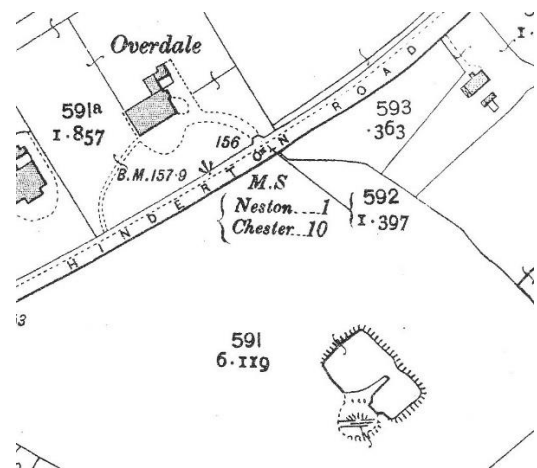
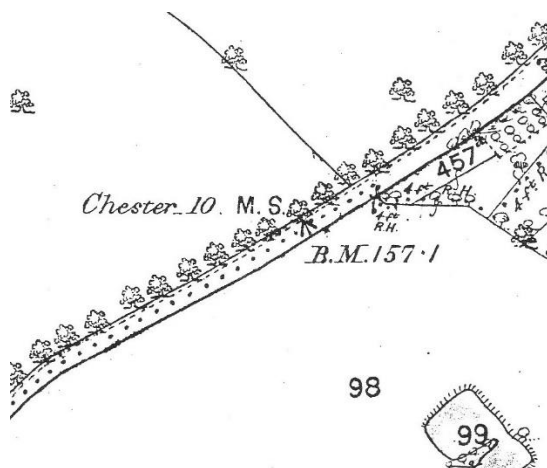
Parkgate Road c 1908, with the 'Chester 11 miles' stone of 1787 still in place



A 1787 stone now at Mostyn Park



The 1896 stone near Badgers Rake Lane



The 1872 map (left) shows the location of the original 1787 stone in Hinderton Road, while the 1912 map shows that by this time it had been replaced by the later cast iron version.



## **Some aspects of the Parkgate fishing industry**

'After the First World War trainloads of shellfish continued to leave Parkgate station, while visitors came in large numbers to Parkgate to enjoy its famous shrimp teas. Usually the shrimps were sold plain boiled and peeled, but the Dee Shellfish Company, started in 1929, and operating next to the Boathouse, investigated ways of preserving them so that they could be sent by post. Cockles could be sterilized and shrimps were potted in butter and spices. The company ceased trading in 1931.

'Mussels, by contrast, were eaten raw, and for this reason there were persistent fears that they might be polluted by sewage in the Dee. After 1911 the mussels were mostly harvested from the Salisbury Gut, near the mouth of the estuary and well away from any outfall. Nevertheless there were fears in 1927 that the Ministry of Health might close the Dee fishery, a serious threat to the local economy, for the 1921 census listed 53 fishermen in Neston and Parkgate, and in 1911 49 were listed. Not all these were necessarily working fishermen, as it was estimated that in the 1930s there were some 30 fishermen working from Parkgate.

'In the river Conwy, cleansing tanks had been established in which the mussels could cleanse themselves before being bagged, and a meeting was called in Parkgate to discuss the possibility of establishing a cleansing station in the Dee. The fishermen were against it, partly because they refused to believe their mussels were a danger to health, and partly no doubt because they foresaw where the cost would fall. A.G.Grenfell offered the use of his swimming bath in the winter, but later withdrew the offer.

'The threat became serious in 1935, when the cities of Birmingham, Leeds and Bradford all banned the sale of shellfish from the Dee. Dr Yeoman, the medical officer of health for Neston, sympathized with the fishermen, because he could not find any evidence that the mussels actually caused illness, although they certainly contained large numbers of *bacteria coli*. The councils of Neston, Wirral and Hoylake agreed to discuss the establishment of a cleansing station, but nothing was done.

'The rapid changes which took place in the Dee estuary, which were to bring the Parkgate fishing industry to a close, were entirely caused by man's interference with nature. It is not true to say that the estuary silted up naturally. .... It was a combination of ...causes which brought about the saltmarsh .... and hastened the end of the water at Parkgate. The occasional tide failed to reach Parkgate from about 1930, the outbreak of war in 1939 put an end to discussions about cleansing mussels, and after the war it was no longer possible for fishing boats to operate at Parkgate.'

Reproduced from 'Neston 1840-1940', edited by the late Geoffrey W Place, by kind permission of the Burton and Neston History Society.

## **Grenfell Cloth**

On a lecture tour in England in 1922 Sir Wilfred Grenfell talked of his life in Labrador and mentioned in passing the difficulty in finding suitable clothing for Arctic conditions. Mr Walter Haythornthwaite, a Burnley millowner, took up the challenge and, after experimenting for a year, came up with the ideal material – light, strong weather- and wind-proof and breathable. This Grenfell cloth, as it was called, was used extensively in later Himalayan and Polar expeditions – even tents were made of it! As young mountaineers in the 1950s, we heard of Grenfell cloth, but could never afford it – we were kitted out courtesy of the Army Surplus stores and could only envy members of the Climbers' Club, speeding up the Nant Ffrancon in their sports cars in this sought-after kit!

*Margaret Lello*

### **Brenda Dowding 1941-2015**

It was with great sadness that the Society learned recently of the death of former Parkgate councillor and honorary alderman Brenda Dowding, who was well-known in Wirral and Cheshire, particularly through her contribution to local government and health services.

Tributes were paid to Brenda at the meeting of the full CWaC council at Winsford on 16 July by members from all sides of the political divide, including her successor as councillor for Parkgate Martin Barker, who referred to her as a no nonsense politician, who always spoke with common sense and to the point. Cllr Louise Gittins called her a dedicated councillor, who worked tirelessly for her community and borough-wide in her role as holder of the important portfolio for Adult Social Care. Cllr Andy Williams remembered her as a hard-working councillor dedicated to representing Parkgate for many years. Cllr Myles Hogg said that she hated confrontational politics, using logic to defeat her opponents; when she spoke, people listened; she was never personal, and did not bear grudges; it was typical of her that she soldiered on giving her best to the last, despite being desperately ill.



Brenda was born at Clatterbridge on 13 May 1941, the only child of Thomas and Alice Hamilton of Heswall; she enjoyed a happy childhood but, at the age of 7, she suffered the loss of her father but, following her mother's re-marriage in 1951, she acquired a stepfather, co-incidentally by the name of Thomas J Hamilton. She started her secondary education at Pensby Girls' School, but as a result of her proven ability was offered a late transfer to Wirral Grammar School for Girls. She subsequently studied part time and achieved a HNC in Chemistry at Birkenhead Technical College in 1962.

On leaving school Brenda had taken up employment in the labs of Unilever Research at Bromborough, studying part-time and eventually qualifying to work as an analytical chemist; later she worked at UKAEA Capenhurst (now British Nuclear Fuels).

In 1991 Brenda became the first chair of the Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology NHS Trust. Later she was appointed business manager and then chief executive of Arch Initiatives, a not-for-profit organisation based at Clatterbridge, which provides treatment services for people affected by drug and alcohol misuse.

Brenda was first elected as a councillor to represent Parkgate ward on the former Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council in 1982; she became opposition spokesperson on Environmental Health, Leisure Services and Finance, before becoming Leader of the Opposition; she was appointed as the Council's representative on the Mersey Dee Alliance and importantly on the Local Government Association, which gave her a national perspective. For her long and dedicated service (27 years) she was made an honorary alderman of the borough when the council was wound up in 2009.

Following the re-organisation of the structure of local government in Cheshire in 2009 Brenda then represented Parkgate on the new unitary authority of Cheshire West and Chester, serving two terms; as a senior member of the ruling group she then served as executive member for Adult Social Care and Health, responsible for an annual budget of £120m; she was then appointed chair of the new statutory Health and Wellbeing Board on its inception in 2013, focusing on a number of key issues across the whole span of social and health care.

As a highly regarded local councillor she was also appointed, inter alia, to governorships of Parkgate Primary and Neston High schools, to membership of the Court of Liverpool University, to the management committee of Neston Recreation Centre, and as a governor of the Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Trust.

Over the years Brenda also devoted a good slice of her time to supporting local voluntary organisations, eg: Neston Scout Association, guide dog puppy walking, parent/teacher associations and local societies: the Parkgate Society and Neston Civic Society. Her advice was always helpful and constructive as a result of her wide grasp of the environment in which she operated.

Brenda first met her husband Tony, when they were both working in the labs at Unilever; they were married at Birkenhead in 1964 and eventually moved into their home in Paddock Drive, Parkgate, in 1972. For many years they kept a caravan, and Brenda enjoyed the holidays they took in this country and abroad with the van; she and Tony also paid regular visits to Hong Kong, where two of their sons are currently based. She was interested in the bird and animal life to be found in the different countries they visited and she learned scuba diving and skiing; she also enjoyed gardening, reading, walking, cooking and listening to 'The Archers', of which she was a great fan. She would probably like to be best remembered for her work with Arch Initiatives and as executive member for Adult Social Care and Health.

Brenda died at home on 6 June at the age of 74 after a long illness, which she steadfastly refused to allow to interfere with her work. She is survived by her husband Tony and her four children: Mark, Mike, Philip and Eleanor, and six grandchildren. Her funeral was held at Landican cemetery, Birkenhead, on 25 June, attended by family and a substantial gathering of friends and former colleagues, including the Lord Mayor of Chester.

**Come and Join Us for our Hotpot Supper**

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015  
in the Cranston Suite, Neston Cricket Club  
6.15pm for 6.30pm - followed by Gavin Hunter's talk**

**A two-course meal of Hotpot and Cheesecake**

**Entry is by ticket only, available at the lecture meetings  
on 21<sup>st</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> October;  
or phone Jill Brock: tel: 336 4589; Angela Clarke: tel: 336 1069;  
Derek Haylock: tel: 336 4461; David Johnson: tel: 336 7838;  
Damian Loughe: tel: 336 7541; Jill Owen: tel: 336 8184;  
or Alan Passmore: tel: 336 2917.**

**£14.50 per person**

## **Twenty Five Years Ago**

The 25years ago articles were started in the year 2000

### Parkgate in 1990

Ropewalk Play Area. The Society congratulated the Council, and in particular Councillor Brenda Dowding, for diverting funds, £14,000, into this part of the Borough to facilitate the renewing of the children's playground. Installation of the new equipment, safe surfaces and fencing was completed and a plantation of shrubs at the sides of the play area was to be planned for the near future.

Membership Snippets. Sadly, the 1990 newsletter included an obituary for Peter Taylor who became the Society's Treasurer in 1972, less than a year after the Society was formed, and had given 17 years as skilled service as Treasurer until his passing in November 1989. The Vice Chairman, Clive Edwards, kindly consented to be the next Treasurer of the Society.

The popular annual joint meeting of the three local groups, Parkgate Society, Neston Civic Society and Burton & South Wirral Local History Society was being planned.

It was requested that the 30mph speed limit at the foot of Boathouse Lane be extended up over the bridge. This was rejected as the road did not meet the strict criteria required.

The Back Path. The Society had pursued the County Council for 5 years over the status of the Back Path that runs from Brooklands Road, opposite the primary school, to Bevyll Road (and used to continue on to Boathouse Lane in days gone by). The committee were happy to report that the Council had agreed to enter the path on the definitive footpath map of the county. The committee hoped this would help in improving its upkeep.

The Anti-invasion Fort. The newsletter reported that the fort on the Wirral Country Park land near to Neston Cricket Club had had its door and rifle slit windows blocked up flush with the walls. The decision had been taken to seal the fort to prevent its continued misuse "in unpleasant ways". The Society suggested that the doorway and slits should have been sealed in a way that still leaves the walls with apparent apertures, rather than the poor way it had been done, so that the building is still recognizable as an historic fort. Interestingly, the Mersey Bat Group had wanted to take over the building as a bat roost, but as this would have involved insulating it by covering with an earth mound, the idea was rejected.

The Wirral Country Park Changes. In the near future, the status of the Parkgate to Hooton and Parkgate to West Kirby sections of the WCP will change when Cheshire County Council stops funding the Borough of Wirral's Rangers. This in future may lead to different policies on either side of the county boundary. The County boundary crosses the WCP at the southerly edge of Gayton Golf Course.

*Anne Williamson, Parkgate*

### **Contacts**

If you wish to raise issues of relevance to the Society, contact one of the joint secretaries:

Angela Clarke: Tel: 0151-336-1069

Email: [angela.clarke511@gmail.com](mailto:angela.clarke511@gmail.com)

Alan Passmore: Tel: 0151-336-2917

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