

Newsletter

Autumn 2019

Issue Number 97

Welcome to this further edition of our Newsletter. We hope you will find it an interesting read.



Parkgate: The Balcony House and the Little Teahouse (August 2019)

'Working together to preserve and enhance the unique character of Parkgate'

Notices

Meetings 2019/20 Season

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

- **16 Sept. Annual General Meeting** at 7.30 pm, followed by
 - 'Medicine on the Wirral a History of the BMS'
 - Dr Chris Brace
- 21 Oct. 'Rock around the Wirral'
 - Hilary Davies
- **18 Nov. Hot-pot Supper** at 6.30 pm followed by 'The Rows of Chester'
 - Tom Jones
- 20 Jan. 'The Parkgate Mosquito ...

 Apollo, Luna, Juno, Zephyrus and the American President'
 - Dr Peter Enevoldson
- 17 Feb. 'Lost Halls of Wirral
 - Gavin Hunter
- 16 Mar. 'Wirral Smugglers & Wreckers'
 - Gavin Chappell
- 20 Apr. 'The Bibby Line'
 - Christina Spencer
- 18 May 'Raptors of the Wirral and their Conservation'
 - Jimmi Hill

The Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Society's AGM will be held at the Cranston Suite, Neston Cricket Club, on Monday, 16th September 2019, at 7.30 pm.

Election of Officers for 2019/20: to be proposed en bloc:

Chairman: Bryan Lecky

Deputy-Chairman: David Johnson

Secretary: Alan Passmore

Treasurer:

Membership Sec.: Derek Haylock

Election of Committee for 2019/20: to be proposed en bloc:

Jill Brock, Carol Fearnett, Marie Lycett

Co-opted members to be ratified: Peter Enevoldson, Tim Lunt

Appointment of Auditor:

Clive Edwards

Any proposals from members to be considered at the AGM and any further nominations for the Committee must be submitted to our Secretary Alan Passmore at least 14 days before the AGM. You will note from the above that we are still looking for someone to look after our accounts. See News & Views.

Passmore, our Secretary, giving 24 hours' notice, on (0151) 336 - 2917.

VISITORS - We are always on the look-out for new members and, therefore, would like to encourage you to introduce your friends to the Society. Visitors are very welcome to attend our talks – first time free – after that we will encourage them to join as members.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - £7.00 Single / £10 Household per year. Subscriptions are due on 6th April each year. Payment can be made at any of our meetings; but we would prefer to receive payment by Banker's Standing Order. Membership, Standing Order and Gift Aid forms are available from Derek Haylock, our Membership Secretary, tel: (0151) 336-4461. Please check that your Standing Order is for the correct amount.

News and Views

We were very saddened by the loss of our treasurer Roger Harris, who died on 24 April, after a lengthy struggle with pancreatic cancer. During the course of his illness he had kept very active physically and maintained a great interest in local history, so his sudden death came as a shock to all who knew him. Roger had taken on responsibility for the Society's finances only a couple of years ago, when Damian Loughe stood down, and he soon got to grips with the accounts. A great gathering of friends, family and former colleagues paid their respects at his funeral at St Winefride's on 16 May.

Unfortunately, we have not yet been able to find a replacement for Roger, and we are, therefore, asking whether there is someone within our membership, preferably with some experience of accounts, who would be prepared to help us out with the task of looking after our finances. For someone with such a background this would not be particularly onerous work; it involves reporting to and advising the Committee, plus limited contact with HMRC and with the Charities Commission. Any member with an interest in taking on the role of treasurer of the Society should get in touch with the Secretary as soon as possible to talk the matter over.

We were further saddened by the loss on 30 July of Jim Lycett, another active member of our Committee; he had been diagnosed a few months previously with esophageal cancer and had been undergoing treatment for

this, but was subsequently admitted to Arrowe Park with pneumonia, which failed to respond. Formerly a mining engineer, Jim helped us with the care of our boat Hi-C on the Middle Slip, with our litter picks, and was an expert on the subject of Parkgate's watercourses and drains.

Our current chairman Dr Jill Brock will be standing down at the annual general meeting, but will continue as a member of the committee. Dr Bryan Lecky is proposed to take over her position as chairman. David Johnson is to step down from his role looking after the Community Spirit team and their 'gardening' activities and, subject to members' approval, will take over the position of deputy chairman. Likewise, Tim Lunt will take on the Community Spirit role. The role and powers of the Society are quite wide-ranging, and we are looking for people with particular interest in local history, planning or conservation to join our team and help us carry out our responsibilities in these areas. Again, if you think you could help, please get in touch.

On the subject of membership we appear to be managing to keep our numbers fairly steady by recruiting about the same number as we lose; attendances at our monthly meetings has been on the increase recently, however, which is a good sign. We don't keep statistics on our members, but it is clear that we are an aging group. This is, therefore, not a healthy position for the Society in the long term. I am, therefore, again asking all our existing members to consider whether they could introduce new friends, preferably of a slightly younger age group, to the Society. We are particularly on the look-out for new people who can work actively on behalf of the Society as well as those who are attracted by our annual programme of interesting talks.



This year we were again very pleased to support the **Neston Music Festival**, by promoting and sponsoring two concerts this time. The first was held at the United Reformed Church on 27 April, when the Wirral Baroque Players – a group formed from the very popular Wirral Symphony Orchestra – entertained us with an eclectic choice of music from the 18th century. The group 'Reid between the Lines' returned to St Thomas's Church on 15 May, but unfortunately Sue Reid herself was seriously ill and unable to appear; however, Annie Long was an excellent substitute and with male colleague Brian Hall they presented an entertaining programme of music from the American songbook. Once again the whole festival was a great success and we are now making preparations for further concerts next year.

Our **Community Spirit** team continue to do good work around the village, collecting litter and tidying up any grotty areas. We meet in Mostyn Square at 10 am on the first Saturday of the month and sally forth from there to the various different areas in need of our attention. We have been concerned about hedge growth reducing pavement capacity in some places; thanks to our efforts we have met with some success in this area, though not universally. We have again entered Cheshire Community Action's **Best Kept Village** competition this year, so our efforts have concentrated on general tidiness and in particular on flower planting – some additional planters have been installed since last year's inspection. By now the inspectors will have made their two visits to the area and be considering their decision on this year's entrants; we expect to hear the outcome in October. Unfortunately, the main sponsors Essar Oil have withdrawn their sponsorship for this competition, so this will be its last year. Anyway, if you

would like to join our team of volunteers, just let Tim Lunt know (336-3854), so that he can contact you about specific events.

We have heard that funding has been approved to complete a further section of the English coastal path in our area; this is the stretch between Marshlands Road, Little Neston, and Moorside Lane, Parkgate; between there and Station Road the route will continue, as now, via Manorial Road and Manorial Road South to avoid going in front of the housing here which directly overlooks the coast. Another (and more significant) scheme for which funding has been approved is the A494 crossing of the Dee at Queensferry, where a new carriageway is to be constructed alongside the existing road, starting in the second half of 2020 – expect long delays as the work is progressed. Completion of the new bridge will enable essential repair work to be carried out on the existing bridge, built in 1960.

We continue to scrutinize the local planning applications for the Parkgate ward and monitor the progress of approved schemes. Plans have been submitted for the construction of a largely subterranean house in the greenbelt on land opposite the lodge to Backwood Hall in Boathouse Lane; the scheme includes the development of a community orchard at the southern end of the site. This 3.5 acre plot has been left fallow for some years, but the Society can see no reason why this piece of greenbelt land should be sacrificed for this eco project, particularly in view of recent decisions relating to other properties in the same vicinity, where applications for building extensions have been refused. Close by we have noted things happening in the area of woodland on the opposite side of the road, where gates have been erected at a newly constructed access, and wonder if the landowner may be intending to pave the way to some development of the greenbelt here. Further on, at the top end of Boathouse Lane, the small copse with ponds, situated just over the boundary in Gayton, is again the subject of development proposals, despite being part of the green belt and a previous refusal by Wirral MB.

In the conservation area the refurbishment of Broad Beams on The Parade is nearing completion, and the premises will soon, hopefully, be opened as a shop – much needed by Parkgate residents. In the meantime the restoration of No 14 Station Road also continues. Seven Steps on The Parade has recently changed hands and, we understand, is likely to

undergo sympathetic refurbishment by the new owners, who are aware of the responsibilities of owning a listed property.

The latest series of Grand Designs by Neston Civic Society included a presentation by the owner on the refurbishment of 'Stella Maris', formerly an undistinguished inter-war house in Manorial Road; the audience were afterwards invited to inspect the house, which had been completely transformed to take proper advantage of its superb location overlooking the estuary. Close by – and within the conservation area – construction of a new 2-storey house is continuing apace on the site of the former bungalow 'Shardlow'.

We have heard from CWaC that the application by Wirral Methodist Housing Trust to build 10 semi-detached bungalow homes for the over-55s at the bottom of Moorside Lane has been refused. The scheme was not seen to meet the need for local affordable housing, which is the criterion for use of green belt land for housing purposes; occupying part of the Moorside Meadow local wildlife site, it would have had an urbanizing effect on the rural landscape and a deleterious impact on the Deeside SSSI; moreover, access arrangements and site layout were considered to be unsatisfactory. It is good to see that the Council appear to want to uphold the status of greenbelt land in this neighbourhood; we hope that they will continue to do so, wherever it is threatened in Cheshire West.

Concerns have been expressed about the future of green belt land in Boathouse Lane, now that Marsh Nurseries have ceased trading. We are not aware of any plans for development on this land, and you can be assured that the Society will fight to ensure that its status is not compromised as a result of proposals for inappropriate future use. We understand, however, that Cheeki Chilli have a licence to hold a limited number of events each year on the adjacent land, which was used for Parkgatefest in 2017 and 2018; the first such event took place on July 27. It has now been confirmed that Parkgatefest itself is to go ahead again in 2020.

As mentioned previously, we continue to have concerns about the future of the **Mostyn House chapel**. It is still our hope that it will eventually be possible for this building to be opened to the public even on a limited basis, once all the practical difficulties have been sorted out.

As part of the **Heritage Open Days** programme in September we are again organizing guided walks based on our Parkgate Heritage Trail. On Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd we meet at the Batbox (the former WW2 pillbox) on the Ropewalk carpark in Station Road at 3.00 pm. The walk is about 1.5 miles, but lasts about 1.5 to 2 hours. Participants should come appropriately dressed and shod for the weather conditions. St Thomas' church is also taking part in the HODs scheme and will be open to visitors on these days from 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm.

Twenty-five Years Ago - Parkgate in 1994

by Anne Williamson

In 1994, how did Parkgate look? Do you remember? It had a busy and popular hairdresser's shop, now Mozkitos Café. The Parkgate Hotel (now Parkgate House and Greenway) was an active hotel for visitors to Parkgate, also hosting the Society's meetings. The post box outside Nicholls Ice Cream shop had a yellow top, signifying that it had a Sunday collection and, of course, there was still a post office there. The Indian Restaurant, Jhinook, at the Old Quay end of the Parade was closed after a fire, and Elm Grove House up Parkgate Road (Neston territory!) was in a sorry state after it too had suffered a similar fate.

After years of work to try to protect the iconic, but long neglected, **Balcony House**, there was success, with the planners at last giving up the idea of demolition and 6 new flats, in favour of conserving and converting the building into three homes. After all, Parkgate is a Conservation Area and the Balcony House had its origins as long ago as the mid-1700s as a Billiards room. The master of the Billiard Room in 1801 was George Harrison, who married Widow Grimes, the head bathing woman. He was described on his death in 1814 as "a most lively and eccentric character". From 1808 the building was also known as the Assembly Room, where public events were held. The balcony was added in 1868 and is reproduced in the rescued and refurbished building we see today (front cover). There have been several

notable, historic buildings in Parkgate that have been saved by The Parkgate Society, The Parkgate Preservation Trust, and The Bishop's Trust for St. Thomas's, ensuring that this unique area is preserved sympathetically for all to enjoy and admire.

General improvements. There was action at last to deal with the annoying quagmire at the top of Little Lane, where a thick layer of chippings was laid, and the flaking sea railings along the Parade by Middle Slip also received some care in the form of new black paint, topped off with golden painted knobs. Refuse bins for dog waste were installed at Parks Field and the Ropewalk. The replacement Wirral Way wooden bridge was completed adjacent to the Primary School in Brookland Road.

Parkgate Primary School had celebrated its 25th Anniversary with a weeklong series of events; some of you may still have a commemorative mug that was given to each pupil, "Parkgate Primary Silver Jubilee 1968-1993". Sadly, the general store of Tony and Norma Smith, in the cottages opposite the Old Quay, closed after 26yrs of trading. A small presentation was made to them by the Society and we wished them well in their move. A further change at that end of Parkgate was the opening of the new site for Mostyn House School Nursery in the former buildings of Brynhir School, now Bramblings Nursery.

Across the Dee, the view was changing too, the Connahs Quay power station chimneys which had been demolished a year or two previously were replaced by Power-Gen's new power station, to be fuelled by gas, which was planned to come ashore at Point of Ayr and be linked by a pipeline along the estuary shoreline. Work was about to start on the third Dee crossing road bridge, to link Wales beyond Shotton Paper Mill, around Deeside Industrial Park to England near to the fields below Burton. The dual carriageway bridge is supported by a beautiful 100metre high A-frame, a design that the Royal Fine Arts Commission see as "a striking gateway into North Wales".

Gentleman Jack by Steve Race

Many of you probably watched the recent BBC series with this title

concerning Anne Lister of Shibden Hall Halifax. I suspect several did not know she visited Parkgate on many occasions, particularly during 1826, staying for several days and weeks with her aunt and her then lover Marianna Lawton (wife of Charles Lawton). They stayed at Mrs Briscoe's Hotel (formerly the George Inn). This establishment was situated on The Parade, near the north end of the Mostyn House School building. My information comes from the latest decoding of her diaries under the title 'No Priest but Love' edited by Helena Whitbread covering the period 1824-26. The BBC are planning a further series, but covering a later period.

The Railway at Parkgate (Part 2)

by Alan Passmore

Part 1 of this article in the Spring edition of this newsletter related the origins of the Hooton to West Kirby branch, its subsequent development and early services. Part 2 describes the line's services in the 20th century, its decline in the face of road competition, and its final closure.



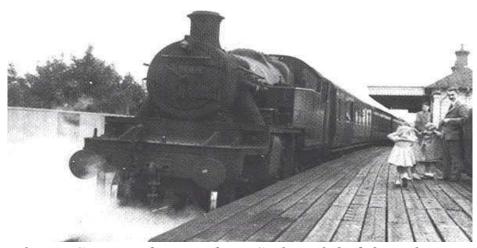
Parkgate station about 1910, looking towards Neston. The presence of uniformed soldiers suggests this photo was taken at the time of the RGA's summer camp.

Before World War 1 special trains were run for volunteer servicemen to attend summer camp at Parkgate. Various different battalions of the Royal Garrison Artillery used to arrive by train at Parkgate station and march with their baggage the short distance to Parks Field, where they encamped for a week of artillery practice. Their arrival must have been publicised, as photographs show crowds of people gathered to greet them and watch the spectacle. The practice firing took place on what is now North Parade, with the guns set up to fire over the sands of the estuary – no marsh yet! Each practice session would involve mounted soldiers with horses drawing their limbers and guns along The Parade between Parks Field and North Parade. Local people used to hang around during practice, hoping to pick up the used shell cases. After a few years this artillery practice ceased here, as it was considered dangerous by the authorities, and locals were thus deprived of this annual entertainment.

There were also goods services on the line. The coal trains from Neston/Wirral colliery had to reverse at Parkgate, if travelling via Hooton, but a few continued north via West Kirby, the empty wagons doing the same journey in reverse. The branch was also served by a pick-up goods train, which brought wagon-load freight to individual station sidings, these being shunted in turn by the train's locomotive as it made its slow progress along the line. All stations on the line, except Caldy, had sidings for the reception of goods; wagons were picked up as well as dropped off by the pick-up goods. However, parcels and the produce from the Parkgate fishery were carried by passenger train, travelling in the guard's compartment, because of the need for swift delivery.



A crowd has assembled at the station entrance to greet the arrival by train of the Royal Garrison Artillery (Volunteers) for their annual camp on Parks Field, where some tents have already been erected.



At Parkgate Stanier-designed LMS class 3 2-6-2 tank engine No 40144 heads a train for Hooton; the small children block their ears against the noise of escaping steam.

As this was a joint line, passenger trains were latterly in charge of GWR large prairie 2-6-2 tank engines or LMS class 3 2-6-2 tanks, supplied by the joint locomotive shed at Birkenhead Mollington Street (6C); freight locos of both companies were supplied for goods trains by the same depot. Just a few freight trains used the connection with the Wirral Railway at West Kirby and no passenger trains until 1923, when the LMS introduced a new service whereby one or two coaches from a train originating at New Brighton were designated as through coaches for London Euston, being attached at Hooton to a Chester-bound train from Birkenhead Woodside. Some of the trains on the main line from Birkenhead Woodside were through services to London Euston (via Crewe) or Paddington (via Birmingham Snow Hill), those for the latter route having to reverse at Chester, involving a locomotive change there.



Parkgate station with what appears to be an Ivatt-designed LMS class 2 2-6-2 tank engine, waiting for the signal to clear, operating a push-pull service to Hooton with an old clerestory coach. The seated gentleman, posed for the photo, seems to be here to watch the trains rather than take one. The signs hanging from the canopies indicate the position of the pedestrian subway, while the gap in the fence marks the start of the path leading down to the Ropewalk.

Decline

The service on the Hooton to West Kirby line continued in much the same way as above during the post-war years and during the early British Railways years, when more modern (steam) traction began to take over. It was only in 1948, with the nationalisation of the country's railways, that the line's status as a joint line came to an end, when all Wirral's railways became part of British Railways' London Midland Region. By 1950, however, the branch service seems to have been pruned back somewhat, but still provided at least ten trains each way Monday to Friday, with two extra services on Saturdays and a total of five on Sundays. The school train now left Parkgate at 8.28 am, leaving little time for pupils to walk to their schools from Kirby Park or West Kirby stations.

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West Kirby dep Kirby Park Caldy Thurstaston Heswall 12 Parkgate Naston Hadlow Road	a.m F 6 17 6 25 6 30 6 35 6 89	a.m. F 7 20 7 29 7 84 7 88 7 49 7 49 7 53		.m a.m F F 50 8 30 52 8 32 55 8 35 7 59 8 38	a.m F 9 0 9 4 9 13 9 18 3 9 25	::::	1119 1122 1126 1131 1136	124 124 125 125 127 1	0 1 57	::			p.m V 4 25 4 27 4 30 4 34 4 39 4 44 4 48 4 53 4 57		E F 5 47 5 49 5 57 6 9 6 13 6 90	p.m 6 56 6 58 7 1 7 17 7 21 7 22 7 22	

Extract from Bradshaw's winter 1950 timetable (omitting late evening and Sunday services)

Local bus services began to pick up more passengers, car ownership expanded, and the number of rail customers began to decline quite quickly; besides, the railway was not entirely convenient, as many of the stations were rather remote from the population they were intended to serve, and other methods of travel became more convenient. Another, earlier factor may have been the opening of the Bidston to Wrexham line in 1896 by the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway (later Great Central); the coming of this interloper would have had the effect of siphoning off some of the potential users of the Hooton to West Kirby line.

Closure

The decline of passenger traffic became a serious concern in the post-war years, as receipts declined and financial losses began to spiral out of control; the closure of Neston Colliery in 1927 had already brought an end to the lucrative coal traffic. Things became critical, and passenger traffic ceased on 17 September 1956: the grammar school children, who had latterly been a mainstay of the service, now had to travel to West Kirby on the bus. Following the end of passenger services, the West Kirby to Hooton line was used for a short period for the training of staff in the operation of the new diesel multiple units, which were beginning to take over from the old steam loco-hauled trains elsewhere: this was not the case here, and passengers

were not carried during this brief period. Meanwhile freight traffic stumbled on for a further few years, until that service too came to an end in May 1962.

British Railways then wasted no time and the demolition crews were brought in soon afterwards. By 1964 most of the structures had been removed and there is now little to show for the existence of the former railway, which for nearly 100 years played an important part of local life in Neston and Parkgate.



A Stanier-designed 8F 2-8-0 loco is in charge of one of the demolition trains on the stretch of line between Station Road and Moorside Lane. The houses to the right are in Parkgate Road. The track in the foreground is the former branch to Neston Colliery. The loco is one of a large class that latterly were the mainstay of London Midland freight work, surviving until the end of British Railways steam haulage in 1968; about a dozen were based at Birkenhead.

The present

Following the closure and demolition of the Hooton to West Kirby line the former Cheshire County Council (CCC) stepped in and bought the line in 1968, as was permitted in these circumstances, to secure the 12-mile course of the track bed. Over the next few years discussions took place and work was put into hand to turn this land into a linear country park, formally declared

open in 1973, though already in use for a year or two; it was the first such country park in Britain. Today management of the park is shared between Cheshire West & Chester Council (CWaC) and Wirral Borough Council as successors to the former CCC.

What remains of the former railway today? Well, the track bed is largely intact, although there are significant gaps at Heswall and Neston, where in each case houses have been constructed on land in the vicinity of the former stations; at West Kirby too urban re-development has erased the northern extremity of the track bed, where the station once stood. Otherwise, with slight deviation at these points, the route is entirely traversable by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. The highest point of the line was at Leahurst, and the rock cutting at Little Neston, previously referred to, remains as an indicator of the huge amount of stone that had to be excavated in the construction of the line in order to achieve a suitable gradient for operational purposes on the ascent from Neston and Parkgate – and the amount of labour involved – still visible is the evidence that it was men with pick-axes who cut the rock over 150 years ago.



Site of the former station at Parkgate: view towards Heswall (author)

The pride of the country park must be the former station at Hadlow Road, Willaston, which was saved from demolition. It is now restored as a splendid museum with an occasional café, run by a voluntary 'friends' group. With its free carpark it is an excellent place to visit and/or use as a base for a walk or cycle ride. Station platforms also remain at Thurstaston, which became the headquarters for the park. A very informative visitor centre has been built

close by, adjacent to a large dewpond, and there are also a café and campsite. Here the park incorporates a large tract of land which includes the sandstone cliffs and affords magnificent views over the Dee estuary. It is a very popular venue for groups of every age.



The surviving platform and buildings at Hadlow Road 2017

© Paul Wright (<u>www.disusedstations.org.uk</u>)

The station at Parkgate was unusually of timber construction, both platforms and buildings, so easily erased but, if you look carefully, you may still find in the undergrowth the remains of the former pedestrian subway which once connected the two station platforms; the access points appear to have been covered over with large stone blocks. What does remain at Parkgate, however, is the former stationmaster's house, a brick-built building erected for the first station, recently renovated and extended after a lengthy period out of use; situated in Station Road by the entrance to the Ropewalk carpark, it overlooks the adjacent Neston Cricket Club field, commanding fine views over the estuary towards the Welsh hills. All that remains at the other stations on this line are the former driveways, now providing access to the Wirral Country Park. Gone are the station buildings and platforms, the goods sheds, signal boxes and the signals and all the other apparatus associated with the working railway. With the exception of a few remaining bridges, retained for strategic purposes, the demolition gang did a very thorough job of clearance, eliminating almost every piece of evidence that a busy railway once operated here.



Parkgate Station: the remains of the cobbled pathway leading from the down (north-bound) platform to the Ropewalk and Station Road (author).

Sources: 1. A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain: Volume 10 – The North West – Geoffrey O Holt – Second Edition 1986 – David & Charles Ltd

- 2. Bradshaw's July 1922 Railway Guide reproduced 1985
- David & Charles Ltd
- 3. Disused Stations (<u>www.disusedstations.org.uk</u>)
- 4. Photos by kind permission of Burton & Neston History Society David Scott card collection

See also: Railway Memories by John Reney Smith (1903-78) – www.nestonpast.com

Alan Passmore March 2019

A year in the Life of The Cabbage Patch – Part 2

Here is a further extract of Gill Downey's diary of her life rearing young lambs rejected by their mothers at her farm on Leighton Road. "Visitors are always very welcome", she says. "Wednesday afternoon is usually a good time".

July and August

These were happy times full of children playing, friends visiting and beautiful sunsets. We also welcomed 4 new ex battery ladies to Feathers Lodge. Kiki, Hamble, Florence and Jemima found freedom and scratched around like proper chickens for the first time in their lives.

Some of our boy sheep from Dave and Kate's field found freedom too. They pushed their way through the garden gate, wandered down the driveway and went straight into Ken and Marion's property where they promptly tucked into their Laurel bush. The naughty sheep found their way back before I got to them. Ken and Marion were very understanding and laughed when the "apology eggs" arrived on their doorstep.

All our little ones needed worming and flystrike was still a danger. I found 2 sheep riddled with it in Jan's field next door. One was already dead and the other died in my arms as I tried to treat it. It is a horrific way for a sheep to die and an awful thing to have to witness. It only highlights the need for good



animal husbandry.

September



Angus our beautiful big black sheep is a Zwartble and prone to flystrike. Even though he has the preventative treatment, those flies love him. His wool is black and dense, and they bury deep inside to lay their eggs. Two years ago he had it and we nearly lost him so I'm obsessively vigilant with him. I noticed some eggs had been laid on his undercarriage so

I spent the next few weeks clipping and spraying him twice a day. Anyone

watching from afar would have wondered what on earth was going on as I rummaged around in his nether regions with my scissors, clippers and spray.

Our Jeep (Lady Boss) was so filthy we couldn't take anyone out in her so we decided we needed a farm vehicle. Ralph our Ford Ranger fitted



the job perfectly. We can get all our supplies in him, transport sheep in him and get a good amount of rubbish to the tip with him. He's even been loaned out a few times. Lady Boss has transfers of the silver fern on her doors so it was only right that Ralph got his own set. Patrick's mum and dad were straight on the job and sent them over from NZ to us.

Then it was decision time. Which of the 19 through the nursery could we realistically keep? Ginny, Number Nine and Heathcliff had already been given their forever ticket so they were safe. The Donkey Sanctuary in Pensby were looking for some pet lambs and so we decided to give them No. 8 (Number Nine's twin) who became Thornton and No. 7 who became Maggie. Once weaned Maggie was sent into the Mums & Tots field next door but she just kept coming back. Here she is trying to drive Ralph. She seemed perfect for the Donkey Sanctuary but then they took the Church Farm 11

which meant they didn't have room for Maggie and Thornton. What a relief – we'd got rather attached to them ourselves.

Diary Note: Heritage Open Days 2019
Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 September
Parkgate Heritage Trail: Guided Walk
Meet at the Ropewalk carpark, Station Road, at 3.00pm

Contacts

If you wish to raise issues of relevance to the Society, please contact our secretary:

Alan Passmore: Tel: (0151) 336-2917

Email: secretary@parkgatesociety.co.uk

Queries about membership should be addressed to our membership secretary:

Derek Haylock: Tel: (0151) 336-4461 Email: membership@parkgatesociety.co.uk

Articles or suggestions for future Newsletters are most welcome, please contact the Editor:

Alan Passmore, tel: (0151) 336-2917 or email: secretary@parkgatesociety.co.uk

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The Parkgate Society is a registered charity, No. 503718, founded 1972.

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Don't forget our website: www.parkgatesociety.co.uk
– also the heritage trail for pictures of old Parkgate:

www.parkgateheritagetrail.org