

PARKGATE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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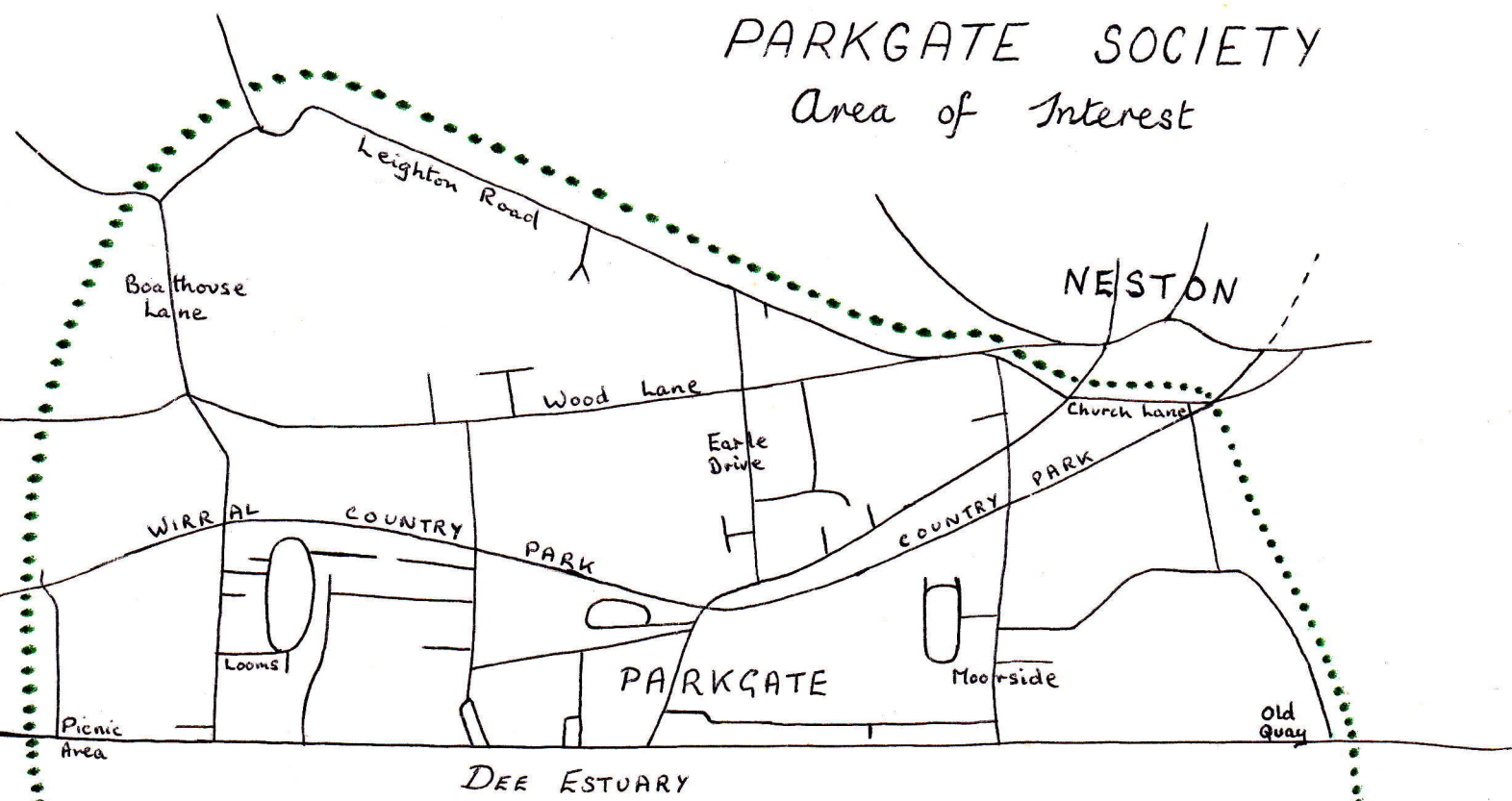
Chairman	J R Cochrane	336 2378
Vice-Chairman	H O Vollers	336 1359
Secretary	Mrs AM Clarke	336 1069
Treasurer	E P D Taylor	336 4321

Our Area of Interest

We propose to make some alterations to the boundaries of our declared "Area of Interest". When the Society was formed, it was settled that by Parkgate and District we meant an area between Leighton Road and the Dee, with Boathouse Lane at one end and Moorside at the other. Since then, several changes have suggested a need to revise these limits. First, the Cheshire Green Belt proposals show not only the north side of Boathouse Lane as Green Belt, but also a finger of land on its south side stretching as far as Parks Field, and the area between Moorside and the Old Quay. Secondly, the Borough Council is considering a new Conservation Area to protect the older houses at the Neston end of Parkgate Road. Thirdly, the untidy Baths site at the north end of Parkgate has been turned into a picnic area and linked to the Wirral Country Park.

We therefore want to adjust our boundaries to show that we take an interest in the approach to Parkgate on both sides of Boathouse Lane; to include the Dee shore as far as the picnic area at one end and the ruins of the Old Quay house at the other; to include the Green Belt land between Moorside and the Old Quay; to include Church Lane as our limit on the Neston side.

We can then truly say that our Area of Interest stretches "From Neston to the Dee".



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

→ SUNDAY, 2nd APRIL, 2 pm

Help us to CLEAN THE FORESHORE

Once again Chris Morrison will provide sacks and a lorry. Bring wellingtons and old gloves: we will meet at the South Slip (by the Old Quay inn) and seek to clear the debris from the season of storms.

→ TUESDAY, 9th MAY, 8 pm at the BOATHOUSE INN

GEOFFREY PLACE will talk about

"OLD PARKGATE - ITS CHURCHES, INNS and SCHOOLS"

This is the fourth in his series of talks on local history, which have so far proved immensely popular.

→ WEDNESDAY, 7th JUNE, 8 pm

in the CHAPEL of MOSTYN HOUSE SCHOOL

GEOFFREY PLACE will describe the chapel and its associations.

Members should enter the school grounds by the Drive opposite the Cricket Club drive in Station Road. Cars may be parked near the chapel at the end of the drive.

You will see that we are trying out a new meeting place. Members did not seem to like coming to the United Reformed Church, where car parking space is limited; our preferred room at the Parkgate Hotel no longer exists in that form, and another room which was offered to us at a reduced price would still be a strain on our funds. We hope that the rebuilt Boathouse will give us what we want.

We have had one disappointment with our programme. We hoped that, following "China Week" on television, we would have a talk on that country from Lord Hewlett, who has recently visited China as part of a parliamentary delegation. Unfortunately he has to be in the United States at the time planned for his talk. He hopes to be able to come another time, possibly in November. It is possible that we may be able to give you only short notice, but do come; he is a first class speaker, and will show his own excellent slides. Lord Hewlett received his early education in Parkgate and is still a regular visitor here.

To fill the gap in our programme, Mr Julian Grenfell has with great kindness lent us Mostyn House Chapel on 7th June. It is a building rich with stories, and Geoffrey Place knows most of them !

THE BEHREND SKETCHBOOK

A small artist's sketchbook containing watercolours of local scenes, painted in 1936 by G.L.Behrend, was presented to the Neston Library in 1951. The paintings are most attractive in themselves, and also present a record of the past which will not be seen again. Twelve of the sketches show the Parkgate shore with its sands and boats, and another six show the Old Quay House which was demolished in the 1940s.

This little book has proved vulnerable. Five of its original pages have disappeared, and the book itself was missing for a long period. We felt that action to preserve this charming record should be taken in case it should disappear for ever. We therefore have

suggested to the County Libraries Department that the sketches should be detached from the book, mounted and framed at the Parkgate Society's expense, and put on display in the Library. We are very pleased to report that our offer has been accepted. The Divisional Librarian, Miss S.M. Challinor, has written,

"It is a very generous offer of the Parkgate Society and will enable us to display the prints, in a safe manner, for the enjoyment of visitors to Neston Library."

The framing will be done by the local artist Mr David Scott, who is a member of the Society and has generously offered us his skill. We hope that the work will be finished in time for us to display the framed sketches at our meeting on 9th May. We are grateful to Mr Scott, to Miss Challinor, and to Mrs Davies of the Neston Library for their concern to save these sketches.

PLANS FOR NESTON

The Cheshire Green Belt proposals, made public last summer, contain from our point of view two admirable features. First, there is further protection for the land on the river side of Leighton Road, including Parks Field. Secondly, the farmland between Moorside and the ruins of the Old Quay House is protected, thus preventing the spread of Little Neston, which in the last few years has seen all its land towards the river covered with houses, from encroaching any further towards us. As the first page of this Newsletter points out, we have sought to recognise this protection by extending the Society's Area of Interest as far as the Old Quay.

Anyone who attended the public meeting last Autumn in the Civic Hall which discussed the planning proposals for Neston will know that all the argument, and a good deal of heat, was expended on the proposal to close parts of the High Street to traffic. Our chief feeling as a Society was one of relief that the original plan to bring a major road through Buggen Lane, thereby destroying it, had finally been abandoned. We did not feel that questions of closing the High Street concerned us directly, and we confined our comments to those proposals which lie within our Area of Interest. These were explained to the Committee in detail by Mr Dorrell and Mr Stuart from the Borough Planning Department, who took the trouble to come and see us one evening. There are plans, not very definite at the moment, to create a Conservation Area at the Neston end of Parkgate Road, from Mill Street and Church Lane to Buggen Lane and Moorside Lane. We were able to offer a number of suggestions about the possible boundaries of a Conservation Area which would preserve the 18th and early 19th century houses there.

We would like to register our appreciation, once more, of the interest and trouble which the staff of the Borough so willingly take towards our suggestions.

The problem of a relief road round Neston to Parkgate might have been solved 130 years ago, when there were plans to make a road on the line which was later taken by the railway, and is now the Wirral Country Park. This road can be seen on the sale plans of Neston made in 1849, but nothing came of the idea.

THE JUBILEE SEAT

Our seat was duly accepted by the Mayor of the Borough on 17th September. We were not sure what to do to "open" a seat, but the Mayor revealed it by removing the largest Union Jack we could find, and there was much sitting on it for the photographers. The Mayor and Mayoress were then entertained by Mr and Mrs Grenfell. Prompted by the fact that the mayoral car had some difficulty in finding the seat, our Chairman invited the Mayor to pay a visit with his staff to Parkgate one day so that we could show them round, and no doubt slip some of our problems in their ears. The Mayor readily accepted, but no date has yet been arranged.

The seat suffered some damage before Christmas. A piece of wood was broken off it, but luckily it was retrieved by a keen-eyed member. We have stuck it on again.

REPORT of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

An AGM can often be a dull recital of formalities. Our own on 4th October was made interesting by Major Peter Moore, who showed us a design of litter bin which he hoped he could obtain for the Parkgate Parade; and one of the oak signs which we intend to place on each of the two approach roads to Parkgate. Unfortunately Major Moore has been ill for several weeks, and both projects must await his recovery.

Although our speaker from Chester Zoo was unable to come, his place was admirably taken at short notice by a most able deputy. He showed his own excellent slides of animals in the Zoo, and had something interesting to say about each.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We were very sorry to hear from Mr F.W.French that he would have to resign due to pressure on his time. Freddie French has held the positions of Secretary and Chairman of the Society, as well as serving as an ordinary but hardworking member of the Committee. We are very grateful to him for all the help he has given us. In his place we have asked Mr S.C.Edwards to join the Committee as a co-opted member until he can stand for election. Clive Edwards is an accountant with a strong interest in his local community.

Many members will have seen the television programme about Wirral on "Home Ground", in which Hylda Wall-Jones was able to mention our Society. Geoffrey Place has published two articles recently: on "The Mills of Neston" in the Cheshire Sheaf, and on "The Chester High Road" in the Bulletin of the Burton Local History Society.

Several members made kind comments on the new look given to the Newsletter last August. Geoffrey Place is its editor, and Julian Grenfell generously provides the materials.

The present Committee members are the four officers named at the head of the Newsletter, together with:

Mrs P Bidgood, 20 Brookland Road	CJD Morrison	336 4319
ADJ Grenfell 336 1010	SC Edwards	336 1190
Major PV Moore 336 2882	GW Place	336 2891
Mrs B Moore	Mrs H Wall-Jones	336 2420

OTHER MATTERS

We have passed to the proper authorities our comments, and in many cases the comments of members, on a wide range of matters, ranging from planning applications for new houses to the abrupt disappearance of a length of hedge near the bottom of Boathouse Lane.

The question of parking restrictions in School Lane was referred to us, and after consulting nearby residents we have suggested some changes to the yellow lines which will make it possible to park on the church side only, so that driveways on the other side will not be impeded. We have repeated our suggestion that there should be a "No Right Turn" sign at the Brookland Road end of School Lane.

Councillor Goldstein, who runs the Job Creation Programme, has once again asked us to suggest tasks for his team. We hope that they will clear the Back Path which runs between Brookland Road and Bevyl Road; perhaps also decorate and repair the public conveniences in Mostyn Square. We collected, on behalf of the Borough Council, evidence that the Back Path is a Right of Way.

WHERE IS PARKGATE ?

Nobody has offered any additions to the list of 25 places called Parkgate which we published in the last Newsletter. There are sure to be others, and we hope that members will find some for us.

Parkgate arose initially where Neston Park met Leighton Wood, and it grew up in the two townships of Great Neston and Leighton. Leighton is quite a common name, and we have 12 examples in England. Besides our own, there are three other Leighton Halls - in Cheshire near Crewe, in Lancashire, and in Shropshire. There is also a Leighton Park not so far away, near Welshpool, which may have encouraged certain careless writers to invent a wholly fictitious Leighton Park here, as a supposed origin of Parkgate.

Neston is less common, but not unique. The only other Neston, which also has a Neston Park (still surviving) is in Wiltshire, near Chippenham and Bath.

HELP WANTED

Does anyone know, to the exact year, when the Old Quay House was demolished? We know that it was used by soldiers for demolition practice during the Second World War, and therefore was reduced from an uninhabitable ruin to a pile of bricks during the early 1940s. Can anyone be more exact?

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