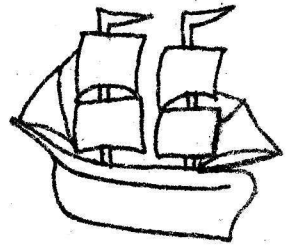


# PARKGATE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Number 16

Spring 1979

Chairman	JR Cochrane	336 2378
Vice-Chairman	HO Vollers	336 1359
Secretary	Mrs AM Clarke	336 1069
Treasurer	EPD Taylor	336 4321

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

→ Wednesday, 21st March, 8 pm at The Boathouse

Mrs Dorothy Dewhurst will talk about

### ANTIQUITIES IN THE HOME

Mrs Dewhurst will gladly try to identify any small antiques which members may like to bring with them.

→ Sunday, 25th March, at 2 pm

Please come and help us to

### CLEAN THE FORESHORE

We will meet as usual at the South Slip (by the Old Quay inn) and clear the debris after the spring tides. Clive Edwards will provide sacks and (we hope) a lorry. Wellingtons are essential; old gloves advisable. It is surprisingly good fun !

→ Tuesday, 8th May, 8 pm at The Boathouse

Geoffrey Place will give the fifth in his series of annual talks on Parkgate's history. His title this year is

### PARKGATE and the IRISH INVASIONS

If you wonder what on earth that could mean, come along on May 8th and find out ! As a rather obscure clue, though, he says that his talk will include the story of the Old Quay House.

→ Saturday, 21st July, at 10.30 am

Geoffrey Place will conduct a WALK, starting at the bottom of Moorside Lane. The walk will take in the story of Moorside, and we shall follow Old Quay Lane to the site of the Old Quay.

Although our Autumn Newsletter will give details of the AGM and any subsequent meetings, you may like to know that the date of the AGM is Tuesday, 2nd October.

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

### Our New Publication

It is with pride and pleasure that we announce that our new publication, THIS IS PARKGATE, will soon be ready. It is a guide to the buildings of Parkgate, profusely illustrated by Michael Barton, and with words by Geoffrey Place. We have been preparing it for a long time, and we have great hopes that it will be found both attractive and informative. Mr Barton has done thirty most beautiful pencil drawings; there are illustrations on one side of every page, and the text tells the story not only of the buildings illustrated, but of Parkgate as a whole.

We intend to unveil the new booklet at our meeting on May 8th, and on that occasion it will be possible for members to buy copies which have been signed by both artist and author. Mr Barton will also have the original pencil drawings for sale. Those who have seen them consider that many members may jump at the chance to buy these delicate works of art, or to commission others like them.

These guide books will replace the pamphlet "A Stroll Through Parkgate" which we published in 1974. It has proved an immense success; nearly 7,000 copies have been sold, and we feel that this is the time to let it go, while it is still saleable. A great deal of new evidence about Parkgate's history has been uncovered since 1974, and a new guide is now justified. The "Stroll" was written by Hylde Wall-Jones and the late Olive Wilcox, with designs by Tony Meyers.

### Reports of our Meetings

We had a full house for our AGM in October, and we acclaimed a most interesting and informative talk about the birds of the Dee estuary given by Mrs Valerie McFarland. Not only did our speaker know her stuff in entertaining detail; she showed us some really excellent photographs.

Our November meeting was also a success, despite a string of difficulties which threatened to wreck it. First, our advertised speaker found that he had two engagements booked for the same night. Then our replacement speaker was involved in a car accident, and it was very sporting of her to come at all. We were most grateful to Mrs Elizabeth Davey for accepting our invitation at short notice, for reaching Parkgate despite her difficulties, and for giving us a fascinating talk ranging over much of Wirral, which invited us to look at local buildings with fresh eyes.

It was one year ago that we said we would meet at The Boathouse and see if members liked it. As our three meetings there have attracted between 85 and 100 people, which is a remarkably large number for a society of our kind, we feel justified in supposing that you do like it, and wish us to continue meeting there.

### Litter ? Bins ?

Our efforts to point out to the Borough Council that we really must have new litter bins, met only with the bald statement that the coming year's budget provides no money for litter bins. So, after a weary sigh, we must try once again to see that such provision really is made in the budget for the year after.

Meanwhile we have continued to search for something suitable, even if we cannot afford to buy any ourselves. You may remember that we have been looking for a design which is inoffensive to the eye, proof against raids by seagulls, and tough enough to withstand certain other hazards of the Parkgate Parade. Mr Vollers, our vice-chairman, thoughtfully employed his holiday in Italy by studying

the local litter bins; he returned with a good idea, had it made up to his own design, and has fixed it to a lamppost opposite the Ship Hotel. We are delighted by his enterprise. Whether anything else will come of it is difficult to predict, but at least we are trying.

#### Other News

We offer our congratulations to Chris Morrison, who has married since our last Newsletter and has left the district. We have asked John Reynolds, who lives in Parkgate and works for the Wirral Country Park, to fill the vacant place on the Committee.

We had a Parkgate Society stand on the occasion of the Open Evening for new residents held at the Civic Hall in Neston. It was looked after by Mrs Place and Mr Vollers.

Much of your Committee's time has, as usual, been occupied in keeping a wary eye on possible changes in Parkgate buildings. As usual, there have been one or two sticky ones where we have expressed doubts as to whether a proposed change will benefit its surroundings. It is agreeable to report, though, the imaginative plans which will rescue Ivy Cottage from its long period of decline and will restore it as a valuable member of an attractive group of 18th century houses. Elsewhere, we continue to watch with interest proposals which may effect, for example, the nurseries in Boathouse Lane, the Watch House, the grounds of Leighton Banastre, and Riverside in Manorial Road.

#### Help Wanted

From time to time the Society has provided flowers, which our members have arranged, for special occasions at St Thomas' Church in Parkgate. We have now agreed to accept a regular responsibility for a part of the floral decorations at the annual harvest festival. We need to know of any members who would be able and willing to arrange these flowers. It seems a far cry from harvest festivals just now, but our next newsletter will be too late for such a plea. If you will be kind enough to offer your services for the next harvest festival, will you please ring Mrs Clarke (336 1069) and let her know?

#### Subscriptions

You may remember that we very carelessly got into a muddle with subscriptions last year, and found at our audit date that we had received only half the sums we expected. Entirely the Committee's fault for failing to keep in touch. We then wrote to a large number of members at the time of our last newsletter, and the response was of course excellent. As we explained at the time, we intend to write to any members, with the Spring and Autumn newsletters, if we do not seem to have received a subscription in the previous twelve months. But that is a safety net; in theory, subscriptions are due by 31st March. If you would like to pay your subscription at either of our next two meetings (on 21st March or 8th May), that is probably the easiest way for members and treasurer alike. By all means give your subscription to any chance-met Committee member, or send it to our membership secretary, Mrs Valerie Place; her address is Pendmore, Station Road, Parkgate.

The subscription rates, believe it or not, are only:

£1 as a single or family member  
50p as a Senior Citizen member

### The Story So Far

The Parkgate & District Society is now seven years old. It was formed in 1972 to focus local attention on several threats. The Dee Barrage scheme threatened to destroy the whole nature of the estuary and Parkgate's outlook; proposals to build houses and a "leisure centre" on the northern approach to Parkgate might destroy that marvellous descent of Boathouse Lane; the imminent changes in local government might leave us in a neglected corner of the new borough. There were some more positive ideas in the air, though. The County of Cheshire was considering a Conservation Area at Parkgate under new legislation; the country was becoming aware that the "environment" needed vigilant attention to survive, and the recent loss of the ancient sandstone barn at the foot of Boathouse Lane had underlined the need for a local committee to be aware of such threats.

The first task of the Parkgate Society, then, was to advise on the boundaries of the Parkgate Conservation Area, declared in 1973. A programme of tree-planting was undertaken, with 68 trees planted. The Society's members turned out in force to clear the foreshore of litter, and this demonstration of local pride and willing has been repeated each year. The Society was instrumental in providing some new litter bins on the Parade, although this sad story lingers on. We have sought expert opinions on problems of drainage on to the foreshore, and on the general future of the changing marshland.

The Society has been concerned to play a constructive part when public issues have been discussed: for example, the County Structure Plan, the Cheshire Green Belt proposals, the Neston Town Plan. We have maintained close contact with the Borough's officers, with whom we are constantly in touch with an endless stream of suggestions, queries, complaints. We have made our views known on major threats to the locality (such as estates on Leighton Road, the destruction of Buggen Lane, the plans for Parks Field) as well as on a regular procession of planning applications.

We suggested the refurbishment of the Donkey Stand and the repointing of the Sea Wall. We framed some engravings of Neston Church and lent them to Neston Library, and it was in this library that we located some valuable water-colours of local scenes and had them mounted and framed. We have offered prizes for local scenes at exhibitions of children's art. The Society presented a seat on the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee and placed it near the South Slip. We designed signs which announce our village, and these were made for us by officers of the Wirral Country Park and placed on our two approach roads.

We have sought to interest and entertain our members with a regular series of talks, many of which have described the history, and the natural history, of the Parkgate area. We have provided speakers for many local organisations. The Society has published a brief guide called "A Stroll Through Parkgate" which has proved remarkably popular; a "Panorama of Parkgate" which records the unique appearance of the Parade; and is now producing a guide to Parkgate's buildings in greater depth, called "This Is Parkgate". A full-scale history of Parkgate is in preparation.

In these ways have our first seven years passed. We face with determination the opportunities and challenges of the future.

### Advice from the Past

On the next page we reproduce a rather splendid letter which was printed in 1900. We hope that its author would not be too disappointed in the present efforts of those who share his affection for Parkgate.



## HOW TO MAKE PARKGATE A PROSPEROUS HEALTH RESORT.

(From a Correspondent.)

How frequently the wearied man of business, the invalid, the anemic, or the broken-down in health sighs for or anxiously enquires after some locality, east, west, north, or south, where he may have a change of air and recover his health and spirits, or prevent the early development of pulmonary symptoms. While looking up the various seaside resorts, each of them loudly proclaiming by pictures or advertisements their claim to sympathy and support, he quite overlooks the fact that within a radius of twelve miles from Chester or Liverpool there is such a place. It is true there is no puff or advertising placards; no, the place is old, decayed, and has nearly passed out of mind. Perhaps it may be because the waters have left the shore, or the indifference of the inhabitants; but it is nevertheless true, there is such a place supplied, not so much by man as by the vast resources of nature, with just the air jaded or unhealthy humanity requires. This is no other than the old, quaint, and lapsed village of Parkgate on the banks of the Dee.

How often we speak of the good old times, forgetting that our ancestors of 200 years ago were wiser than we are, for they appreciated in those far-away days the beautiful air of Parkgate better than we do of the present day. Why did they do so? Why were more than 14 hotels and numerous private houses built and crowded with the fashion of the day, as also the many invalids in search of health? It was not the houses or hotels, or even the medical advisers; but it was that which nature has so lavishly provided, free to all—the salubrious air of the locality. This air is peculiar to the vicinity of Parkgate owing to its wonderful combination. It is created by the fresh invigorating breezes which blow from the Welsh mountains across the vast expanse of sand and mud which extends for miles, and blends with the fresh tidal waters from the Irish Sea. These health-giving waters come up the estuary of the Dee, spread right over the immense area, and produce the ozone which is so valuable to health. It is not too strong for the invalid or the weakly, but yet it permeates the whole system, so that the blood is renewed and enriched; it gives brightness to the eye, coolor to the cheek, and animation to the mind.

The air of so many seaside resorts is too strong, and its effects are seen at once—frequently overpowering and even deceptive. The patient for the moment feels recovered and stronger, but on the return to city life he is soon in the same abnormal condition as before. Now the health ensured by this combination of air in Parkgate is produced in a natural way. It enters into every part of the patient, and is therefore more permanent; it is nature's remedy for human weakness or disease. The results are marvellous. I do not speak from personal experience only, but from the testimony of many others. It may be summed up in the words of one who herself had received its blessings. She said: "I derived more real benefit from the air of Parkgate than I possibly could have done elsewhere."

Ask the residents of Parkgate or the Scripture readers from Liverpool who during their holidays reside in the mission house; or the many invalids who for a few weeks stay at the well-conducted convalescent home. Ask the visitors who crowd here in the season, or the more numerous visitors who come for the pure air, many of whom would like to make a longer stay if facilities were afforded them. One family were so benefited in health that they are anxious to book the same apartments for the whole of August next year. On inquiry of the volunteers who have just left here, the consensus of opinion was that it is a delightful air, and its effects would be lasting.

The scenery surrounding Parkgate is well worthy of notice. As we stand on the railway bridge adjoining Moorside, what a glorious vista of sea and mountain! As we gaze on the sloping hills of Flintshire, crowded with houses, smoky chimneys, towns and works, hamense woods, hundreds of fields covered with verdure of every gradation of shade, we may well explain:

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood  
Stand dressed in living green.

When the sun shines out on the silvery waters of the Dee, and we look on the magnificent panorama stretching out before us, we feel it can scarcely be equalled in quiet beauty for fifty miles round. Opposite stands Flint Castle, hoary with age and its exciting Plantaganet traditions. On the summit of the hill close by is Halkyn Castle, the Welsh seat of the Duke of Westminster. On the other

hand, should we confine our thoughts and walks to the neighbourhood of Parkgate, there are plenty of quiet sequestered nooks, with shady lanes and secluded spots,

Where peaceful waters, soft and slow,  
Amid the verdant landscape flow.

Here we may always enjoy the scenery and vitalizing air. I do not profess to know, but certainly think some local authorities should take the matter up; this duty may fall on the county council, the urban authorities, or the immediate owners of land and house property; but if a united effort were made satisfactory results would follow. As one of those benefited by the air of the place, I will venture to suggest a few of the needs and requirements wanted so that Parkgate as in the olden days may stand on its merits.

1. None should be allowed to throw decaying matter, or anything to cause a nuisance, on the foreshore.

2. As arrangements may be made, the houses on the narrow part of the promenade be thrown back, leaving a broad footwalk and a noble roadway.

3. Plant some lime or other trees, protected, all along the promenade, also a few seats for visitors. It is not very dignified to be seated on the stone wall.

4. A few gas lamps, or better still, the electric light, introduced in the principal thoroughfares would throw a charm on autumn or winter evenings.

5. Get rid of the old and insanitary dwellings up many of the courts and on the front. Rebuild suitable boarding houses, hydros, also some small, neat villas with gardens, to take in visitors, not to exceed £20 per annum, all of them of modern construction, with up to date appliances, such as bathrooms, etc.; also recreation and tea rooms for day visitors.

6. The railway companies should have a better service. No train to Liverpool or Chester ought to take longer than half an hour with through carriages.

7. Let a syndicate be formed, or the authorities and owners bestir themselves, and do their best to make the place and its surroundings inviting and comfortable, then the future of Parkgate is secured.

8. If man will only do his duty as suggested in the above, nature, so lavish and free, will continue to do hers. Parkgate, rising like a Phoenix from its ashes, purified and rejuvenated, may yet rival or even surpass the proud position she held upwards of 200 years ago, as one of the leading health resorts in the United Kingdom.

September 12th, 1900.