

President	JR Cochrane, CBE	
Chairman	GW Place	336 2891
Vice-chairman	SC Edwards	336 1190
Secretary	Mrs AM Clarke	336 1069
Treasurer	EPD Taylor	336 4321

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Please put these dates in your diary !

Monday, 4th March 8 pm at the Parkgate Hotel,

ROUND the WORLD in 60 MINUTES

or perhaps just a little longer ! Leonard Walker, expert photographer and keen Parkgate Society stalwart, will show us highlights of his recent world tour.

Monday, 15th April 8 pm at the Parkgate Hotel,

A JOURNALIST LOOKS BACK by Brian Danger

Brian Danger recently retired as the editor of the Heswall & Neston News, and he knows our area well.

Monday, 20th May 8 pm at the Parkgate Hotel,

EXPERIENCES of a LOCAL VET by B.H.Coles

Mr Coles has a practice in Neston, and does work for the RSPB as well as on domestic creatures.

Friday, 14th June 7 pm outside Shotwick Church,

A GUIDED WALK round SHOTWICK

led by Lavinia Whitfield, who has written a guide to the church.

This walk forms part of Cheshire County Council's Guided Walk Scheme. For those members who cannot come on 14th June, the walk will be repeated (primarily for the Burton Local History Society, but our members are welcome as well) on

Sunday, 15th September 2.30 pm.

If anyone needs TRANSPORT to reach our meetings, do ring Mrs Clarke, 336 1069

Money, Money, Money ! If we have only just extracted your 1984 subscription from you, don't relax. It's now 1985 ! If you're not sure, we won't let you pay twice. But seriously, though we often have to wait for subscriptions until the autumn (and then have to ask people specially) we would much prefer that they came in during the spring.

The subscription is still an unbelievable £1 for single or family membership, or 50p for Senior Citizens. Please pay it to our membership secretary (Mrs V Place, Pendmore, Station Road, Parkgate.)

Farewell to the Green Bottle Mr LND Williams has given tremendous support to the Society by selling our publications for many years. We are very grateful. Not only shall we miss the Green Bottle, that essential halt on the Parade, but our funds will sorely miss this source of revenue.

Congratulations !

Our President, Jim Cochrane, has been awarded the CBE in the New Year's Honours. He has just stepped down after two years as President of the Lawn Tennis Association, having previously been its Chairman. He has been a pillar of tennis administration in the north-west for nearly forty years, and has recently joined the Sports Council. He is prominent as a Justice of the Peace, and is Chairman of the Ellesmere Port and Neston Bench of Magistrates. He was, of course, Chairman of the Parkgate Society for seven years before becoming our President.

Litter-Picking Progress

We are delighted to report that, at long last, the Borough Council has acknowledged that the problem of litter on the Parkgate foreshore deserves its attention.

Thanks to the persistence of Councillor Mrs Dowding, the Environmental Health Committee has agreed that a scavenging service, which already tours parts of the Borough, will clean the foot of the sea wall once a week during the summer, and once a fortnight during the winter.

Is This Your Marsh ?

During the discussions about scavenging at the foot of the sea wall, the hoary old question was raised about the ownership of that stretch of land. Fortunately that vexed question was very properly set aside as irrelevant to the problem of litter, but the Parkgate Society has put together some ideas on the subject, which have been forwarded by Mrs Dowding to the Borough Solicitor.

The stretch of land between the sea wall and the old course of the Dee, roughly fifty yards away, was not owned by the British Steel Corporation (they specifically denied any claim to it) and so was not part of the RSPB's purchase in 1979. So who owns it ?

Sometimes the Crown claims ownership of tidal foreshore, but a court case reported in 1795 (The River Dee Co v. Spencer and others) ruled that such land along the Wirral shore belonged to the owners of the adjoining land. In 1795 the land at Parkgate belonged to Sir Roger Mostyn. When his grandson sold Parkgate in 1849, his land was sold in lots with carefully delineated boundaries, none of which included the foreshore. The present owners hold no title to parts of the foreshore, and the present Mostyn estate office, who might be residual owners, deny that they own any land to which they also have no specific title. This problem has arisen with the sea wall, which was built by the Mostyns, and which might hold the key to the foreshore ownership, since the wall is the structure immediately next to it.

So who owns the sea wall ? The old Neston Council tried to get the Mostyn estate to repair it, but without success. In fact the Council has repaired it at various times in the last hundred years, and may be said to have assumed de facto ownership. The Council has also entered and used the foreshore land at various times as if they had rights of ownership.

In 1817, the Burton Enclosure Act treated the foreshore at Burton Point as Common Land and arranged for its enclosure. By the same token, could our Council arrange for the Parkgate foreshore to be registered as Common Land ? This would be an agreeable solution, and we have suggested it.

The Old Quay Inn

This public house is closing for five weeks for an interior re-fit which will change its 'black leather' image for a more up-market style.

With any luck, the problems with motorcyclists at the south end of Parkgate will be, at least, considerably modified. This response to our hopes, and to market forces, causes us to feel a great relief as well (dare we say) as that regrettable smugness which comes of having predicted this outcome to the brewery owners.

.... and Parking Opposite

In our last issue we promised that we would monitor the effects of shortening the double white lines on the corner opposite the Old Quay Inn, and report accordingly.

We wrote, therefore, a letter to the Borough Engineer which included these paragraphs:

"We found that cars were parked illegally on the stretch of road approaching the corner on most weekends. We therefore recommend that some further warning signs are justified on two counts: public safety, and Parkgate's reputation as a tourist resort. This latter point was brought home to us when a motorist, fined for parking at this spot, was quoted by the press as saying, "Parkgate does not want visitors." However silly this remark may be, it is in Parkgate's interests to guard against it.

We recommend that the double yellow lines at present on the Parade should be continued round the corner to coincide with the double white lines."

The Borough Engineer replied that the police had made a similar report, and that he was recommending the continuation of the yellow lines, but with the double white lines modified to a single line. We think that this solution will prove satisfactory.

Not Guilty !

You may have seen press reports of a local councillor who stringently criticised societies which did not respond to planning applications by returning an opinion. That's not us, we thought (smugly again, I fear), because we are meticulous in always sending an opinion to the Planning Department on any matter which they refer to us.

Imagine our embarrassment when, in two successive weeks, it was reported that the Parkgate Society had failed to give an opinion on two unrelated matters. But really, we were not guilty ! One was an illuminated sign for the Ship Hotel, an application which unusually had not been sent to us and which therefore we had not considered. The other matter concerned the alterations at the Boat House, which as you know from our last Newsletter we had considered in detail and had responded to in plenty of time. The report was, therefore, mistaken, and the matter is being looked into for us.

We firmly believe that our responses to planning applications, as well as other contacts between ourselves and the Borough's officers and councillors, represent the chief way that this Society can play a useful democratic role. You have our assurance that we shall continue to work hard at it.

Developments

The Abbeyfield Society, which does good work by providing homes for the elderly, is seeking planning permission for a house in Earle Drive. Our past chairman, Hendrik Vollers, was a keen supporter of Abbeyfield and was always looking for a suitable house in this area. Although some of the residents in Earle Drive view the proposal with mixed feelings, we are inclined to welcome it.

A proposal of great interest has been made for the site of the garage in the centre of Parkgate Parade. What was originally Leeman's Garage, formed originally in Station Road (roughly where our President's house is), moved here in the 1920s, and when the adjoining house, formerly the Convalescent Home, was pulled down in the 1950s, its site became a parking area for the garage. Nobody could claim that the present building and park does anything to enhance the Parade, and one is tempted to think that almost any change would be an improvement. As it is, the owners (Texaco) have applied for permission to remove the garage entirely and to build flats for the elderly, with a warden, along the whole frontage. The plan seems to have been designed with great care to fit in with neighbouring buildings, and the style might be described as reproduction late Victorian. We were impressed with the general idea (only outline permission is sought at this stage) and think it will benefit Parkgate.

We understand that the tenants, Bebington Ford, have two years left of their lease, so development may take some time.

We are pleased to report that all the points of criticism which we made, and reported at the AGM, to the proposal to build houses on Swift's Field and part of the Mostyn House playing field next to the Ropewalk, have been accepted and incorporated in a revised plan. Our points were chiefly, that the present course of Little Lane must be retained, that the density of houses should be reduced, and that further thought should be given to landscaping. It is now proposed to keep virtually all the existing trees.

The vexed question of parking by patrons of the Parkgate Hotel has been much discussed. If the parking in Boathouse Lane is prohibited by laying down yellow lines, the cars may be left in the nearby residential roads, which might be the worse of two evils.

Both the councillors for Parkgate, Mrs Dowding and Mr Bryan, have been interested in possible ideas for Parks Field and have discussed them with the Society. You may remember a fairly grisly proposal, six or seven years ago, to put large numbers of football pitches on Parks Field. This idea is not dead, and must be kept well chilled. As it is, the Borough is going to build a 'Trim Trail' there. A Trim Trail has been described as an adventure playground for adults! We think it is a kind of assault course to keep you fit.

We are very pleased to see that the seats on the Donkey Stand have been repaired.

Towards a History of Neston

Now that the Burton & South Wirral Local History Society have completed their mammoth undertaking to publish a History of Burton, they are planning what to do next. If, as seems likely, they undertake a full-scale History of Neston, we have agreed that they shall have the full support of this Society. The Neston Civic Society has also pledged its support.

Our Meetings

Clive Edwards conducted a second walk round Raby in September, and it went very well.

At our Annual General Meeting on 15th October, the Chairman gave an account of our activities during the year. He asked for any comments or criticisms about this Newsletter: some feedback from its readers will be very welcome.

In order to make room for a new Committee member, Mr JCM Davies very nobly agreed to withdraw his nomination and to become an advisory and non-voting member. Jim Davies is our legal adviser.

The committee were elected as follows: GW Place as chairman, SC Edwards as vice-chairman, Mrs AM Clarke as secretary, EPD Taylor as treasurer; and as committee members, Mrs S Britt, ADJ Grenfell, Mrs V Place, MS Potts, Miss M Tinker, GA Topp, DL Walker.

Councillor Herbert suggested that a copy of the Newsletter should be supplied to Neston Library, and we shall do so.

The only other question raised by a member concerned a planning application by the Parkgate Hotel, which from the description given sounded like an extension which we had not heard about. On later examination it turned out to be a modification, which we had seen, to the car parking arrangements.

After the formal business of the AGM, Edward Hilditch gave us an entertaining introduction to the history of Burton, and showed us the new book which he has helped to write.

In November we were treated to an enthralling description of the furniture collection in the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, by its keeper, Lucy Wood. The talk opened our eyes to the treasures of that museum, as well as providing an education in 17th and 18th century furniture.

As usual we were represented at the Civic Evening in Neston during November.

Before Christmas we had a real treat - a concert by the choir of Mostyn House in their chapel. Some two hundred people came to hear a recital which lasted for well over an hour, followed by a well-attended gathering for coffee. We are very grateful to David French, the choirmaster, and to Philip Benbow the organist, as well as to Julian Grenfell. The Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor and Mrs Angel, were present.

Finally, our most recent event, our splendidly successful wine and cheese party at Brooke House. The Society is truly grateful to our hosts, Mr and Mrs Potts, for allowing us into their beautiful home, without which the occasion would have amounted to little. It was interesting to notice that this social occasion attracted many of our members whom we rarely, if ever, see at our regular meetings.

Racster Dingwall entertained us in the course of the evening with some stirring tunes on the bagpipes. He was intending to talk as well, but everyone seemed so comfortable and occupied in conversation that he was unwilling to disturb us.

Would you believe that, as late as 1920, visitors who intended to spend the summer in Parkgate were advised to hurry, because the best houses to let were being snapped up so fast ?