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PARKGATE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Number 30

Spring 1986

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

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Please put these dates in your diary !

Monday, 10th March 8 pm at the Parkgate Hotel

The ROYAL LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

described by Alan Shenton

Monday, 14th April 8 pm at the Parkgate Hotel

PORT SUNLIGHT VILLAGE

a talk by Mrs Treacy

10th & 11th May On this weekend, we shall be publicising

The Civic Trust Environment Week

by advertising our Society's activities on the  
Donkey Stand

Monday, 19th May 8 pm at the Parkgate Hotel

A POSTAL HISTORY of WIRRAL

by our very own Geoff Topp

Friday, 20th June A GUIDED WALK, led by Geoffrey Place,

round the BOUNDARIES of NESTON PARK

We shall meet at 7 pm at the Wirral Country Park  
car park off Station Road (next to the Cricket Club)

(In case you cannot come on this occasion, the walk will be  
repeated on Sunday, 21st September, at 2.30 pm)

: If you need TRANSPORT to reach our meetings, :  
: do ring Mrs Clarke, 336 1069 :  
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SUBSCRIPTIONS for 1986 should be paid to the membership Secretary,  
Mrs V Place, Pendmore, Station Road, Parkgate.

The rates are: Single or family membership, £2

Senior Citizen membership, £1

One of our founding members, and the last of those actively  
involved in the formation of the Society to remain in the  
district, has now moved away from us. Mrs Hylida Wall-Jones  
served the Society for many years as committee member and as  
vice-chairman. Until her recent move she continued to deliver  
Newsletters for us. She has now gone to live in Caldy (an  
even more prestigious address than Parkgate ?) although she  
continues to be a member of the Parkgate Society.

### Parkgate from afar

Naturally we like to hear kind opinions of ourselves, and we were touched by this comment from a member who sent his subscription from the Isle of Man. He added:

"Perhaps I might take this opportunity to tell you what a delight it is to receive the Newsletter and read its contents. We have a fine painting of Parkgate promenade over our fireplace, and so it is quite easy to put things into perspective. We are reminded of the many friends we made, and still have in the area, so keep sending it to us."

Your own opinion of the Newsletter, whether favourable or critical, will be very welcome.

### Planning Applications

After several years of relatively little activity on this front, things have warmed up recently. Two important projects, for a large estate of houses next to the Ropewalk, and for old people's flats on the site of the garage on the Parade, are having predictable trouble in negotiating the Planning Committee.

The opinion of individual members is of great importance in matters of this kind. This Society always responds to all local planning applications of which we receive notice; but our letter to the Planning Officer will be one letter only. If he receives a dozen letters, he will report the fact to his committee. So we urge you, if you have strong views about a planning proposal, to do two things: tell us (most easily by phoning our Secretary) and write to the Planning Officer. Our own expressed opinion will reflect any constructive idea from our members, even if some of them contradict each other.

In the case of the garage site, any building here will become an important part of the Parade. First reactions might well be that anything will be better than the old garage! But this is an opportunity to find a worthy successor. Although we think that a large building is justified on this site, it must not be out of scale with its neighbours, whether in height, number of storeys or decorative detail.

### You've Arrived

The two handsome wooden signs which announce that the traveller has reached Parkgate were originally carved for this Society by the Wirral Country Park. The one in Station Road was looking rather sorry for itself after the last winter, and we are grateful to Mr Wilson, the Chief Ranger, for refurbishing it.

We are also glad to see the Borough's new signs which announce localities, including Parkgate. It is just a pity that theirs in Station Road should be immediately in front of ours, rather upstaging it. We might move ours if we can think of a better place.

### A Parkgate Mural

An interesting find has been made in one of the tall eighteenth century houses in the centre of the Parade. The owner's daughter was stripping layers of accumulated wallpaper when she discovered a wall painting underneath. The plaster on the upper part of the wall has been painted with a parkland scene, with a lake and prominent trees in the foreground. The lower part is painted to look like wood panelling. It is probable that the other walls, or some of them, were also painted but it may not be possible to reveal them. To our inexperienced eye the painting may well be eighteenth century; we reported the find to David Hillhouse, curator of the Williamson Art Gallery, who will have a look.

### Litter Bins

We are now hoping to get three litter bins, and the Borough Engineer, in accepting our offer, has agreed to fix them in place. Since our last Newsletter, this project has received help from the Parkgate Hotel, from Mostyn House School, and from two private residents. Unfortunately the organiser from the Keep Britain Tidy Group, who is going to collect the money, has had severe family problems, so things have been delayed a little. We hope they will be fixed on the Parade in the spring.

### The Foreshore

The Borough Solicitor says that renewed investigations are in train to see if the foreshore between the sea wall and the old course of the river, about fifty yards in width, can be taken into public ownership. It may then be possible to drain this land, which will get rid of some nuisances.

During the autumn, the Neston Arts Society held two exhibitions on the Donkey Stand, and they have told us that they will repeat them, perhaps once a month on Sundays, in the spring. If you are interested in the activities of the Neston Arts Society, their secretary is Mrs Sylvia Summers - 336 5926.

Once more we are glad to acknowledge the public-spirited contribution to the appearance of the Donkey Stand of the Parkgate Nurseries, which replenishes the flower pots there at intervals throughout the year.

### The Saxon Cross Fragments.

The plan to display these carved stones on plinths in the nave of Neston Parish Church has been agreed by the vicar and Parish Church Council, and we hope that we shall very soon receive diocesan permission for a Faculty to undertake this work. The most expensive part is to remove one stone from the belfry wall, and we are fortunate that the Cheshire Archaeological Fund has agreed to pay for this "dig" above ground. We are now looking for funds to build the plinths and form the display. The plinths have to be stout enough to support some very heavy stones, and with no possibility of being pushed over. As soon as formal permission is received, we hope to get the project under way.

### Hail, but not Farewell

Parkgate residents in the eighteenth century must have been accustomed quite often to seeing soldiers, who would take ship here for Ireland. Sometimes a complete packet ship would be hired to take soldiers to Dublin. Occasionally the military left a disagreeable impression: the landlord of the George Inn, Thomas Spencer, was in trouble when he allowed a suspected deserter to escape the custody of an army sergeant and the local constable; and some deserters who were confined the Neston House of Correction broke the dungeon to pieces.

More recently, Parks Field was used as a camp site every summer from 1899 to 1921. Usually these visitors were Artillery who fired field guns from the north end of Parkgate across the estuary, until this range was condemned in 1922.

One visit which Parkgate did not have, however, was from the army of William III which crossed to Ireland in August 1689. The embarkation from Hoylake in 200 to 300 ships (the Parkgate and Neston waterfront could hardly take more than about six) is well documented; and although Neston received individual ships, and small parties of soldiers, during that campaign, the official

records of the time do not mention Parkgate at all.

The Borough Council has had the excellent plan of conferring the freedom of the Borough on the Cheshire Regiment, and we look forward to seeing the regiment march through Ellesmere Port and Neston on Friday, June 27th. We were less pleased to see that the Council's resolution stated that the Cheshire Regiment sailed from Parkgate on its formation in 1689. We have checked with the regiment itself, and their records say no such thing.

This Society has worked hard to research the true history of Parkgate, which we find more interesting than the layers of myth which, for lack of proper research, had overlain it. We have written to the Chief Executive and expressed the hope that a splendid occasion will not be marred by false history.

### Caravans ?

The local newspapers have reported that an idea has been raised within the Council to put a caravan park on Parks Field. Apparently this arises from a desire to justify the building of changing facilities for footballers. We earnestly hope that the plan comes to nothing, and we shall keep a cautious eye on it.

### Domesday

Christmas 1085 saw the start of the Domesday Book project, and Christmas 1985 saw Leonard Walker clicking away with his camera, making a modern record of Parkgate. The Society is prepared to go to considerable expense to make this survey a thorough one.

### Our Meetings

Our second Guided Walk round Shotwick was even better than the first, and we are truly grateful to the two householders who let us in to their homes. Shotwick was certainly a popular choice.

Our musical evening was very successful as music, but not many people came, so we draw the conclusion that not many of our members are interested in an instrumental concert. If you think we are wrong, tell us ! In fact, those who came were delighted by the young but talented musicians whom Philip Benbow had gathered for our entertainment.

The Annual General Meeting was conducted by the Chairman in the absence of the President. He explained the reasons for increasing the subscription, and the meeting accepted these as well as the excellent accounts prepared by Mr Taylor. The committee was elected according to the nominations published in our last Newsletter. From the floor, some problems about the new yellow road lines were mentioned.

After the business part of the meeting, Peter Cunnington from Ness Gardens gave a very interesting talk about his visit to the Himalayas, collecting plant seeds.

"Samkin and Sandpipers" was the title of a splendid double act by David Britt and Colin Wells, who provided a comprehensive description of the estuary's flora and fauna. Their authoritative information was backed by some excellent photographs.

A large audience again filled the chapel at Mostyn House to hear their choir, which was handicapped by the illness of their soloist. As much a part of the evening as the singing was the long chat afterwards over coffee, for which many people stayed.

Finally, we owe our heartfelt thanks for their hospitality to Michael and Ginny Potts, who once more let us hold our cheese and wine party in their home.

Mosquitoes Again

Andrew Prince tells this story of Dr Yeoman, who was irritated in the 1930s by a woman who complained about being bitten by mosquitoes. He said, "Madam, mosquitoes cannot bite - they have no teeth !"

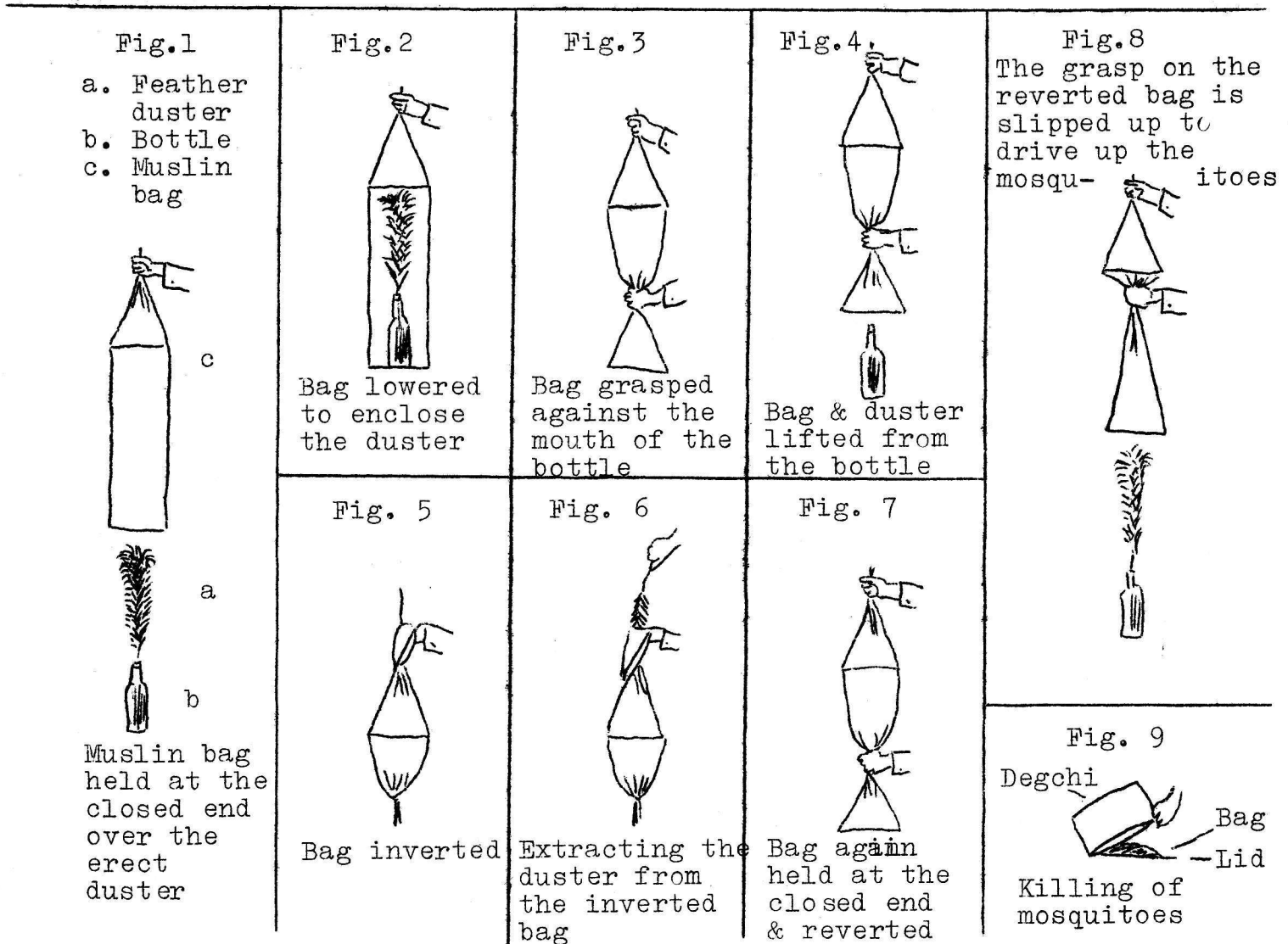
Our latest information is that you can keep mosquitoes away by putting Epsom Salts (magnesium sulphate) in your bath.

David Britt, who wrote that learned article in our last edition, discovered in the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine a pamphlet written in 1933 by Dr Ramkrishna Goré of Bombay, called, "The Feather-Duster Mosquito-Trap". The author had noticed that the insects like to settle on feather-dusters. We now offer you his method of control.

Chart B

THE FEATHER-DUSTER MOSQUITO-TRAP

(Devised by R.N.Goré)



Note: A Degchi is a pan in which the bag is placed, covered and heated on a stove to kill the mosquitoes (Ed.)