

Parkgate Society

(Founded 1972)

Newsletter

Spring 2005

Issue Number 68

Meetings

We meet at 8pm at the **Boathouse**.
If you need help with transport please ring
Mrs Angela Clarke, our Secretary, giving 24
hours notice, on 0151-336-1069.
Diary dates for 2005

- 7 February - Eric Johnson – Friends of
Leasowe Lighthouse
7 March – Steve Harris – Wirral Barn
Owl Trust
4 April – Colin Millington – The
Fender Valley
16 May – John Moffat – History of
Flaybrick Memorial Gardens.
19 September – John Graham – Wildfowling
on the Dee.
24 October - AGM, followed by Leslie
Brown – Diving and working
below water.
28 November – Dr Hilary Ash – New Ferry
Butterfly Park.

Visitors are welcome

SUBSCRIPTIONS

£4.00 Family or Single per year

Payment can be made at any of our meetings or
directly to
Mrs Valerie Place,
Pendmore,
Station Road,
Parkgate.

Standing order forms are available, if required.

DONATIONS ARE WELCOMED

AGM

The AGM took place on Monday 25 October 2004.

1. The chairman paid tribute to Julian Grenfell, who died earlier this year. He was a founder member of the Society and had generously provided whatever we needed.
2. The chairman welcomed the president, Jim Cochrane, who conducted the formal business.
3. The Minutes of the 2003 AGM were taken as read.
4. The Treasurer presented the accounts, which were accepted without comment.
5. The committee was re-elected, as follows: Geoffrey Place (chairman), Philip Owen (vice chairman), Angela Clarke (secretary), Clive Edwards (treasurer), Valerie Place (subscriptions secretary), Becky Ford, Stephen Gordon, Peter Knight, Anne Williamson (newsletter) and Jerry Harris (newsletter).
6. On the nomination of the secretary and Valerie Place, Suzi Grenfell was elected to the committee.
7. The chairman thanked Michael Potts for his 21 years service on the committee. He reported the success of our nomination of The Bishop's Trust for a county award. He proposed that the subscription should become £4 for all members, without age discrimination, but to include family and guests – members expressed approval to this change. He also mentioned that the Borough Council planning committee had refused Neston Cricket Club's application to sell part of their land for housing.
8. The meeting was followed by a talk on "Chester - Gateway to Ireland", by Geoffrey Place.

Articles or suggestions for future Newsletters are most welcome, please contact:
Anne Williamson 336 6146 or
Jerry Harris 336 7406

NEWS & VIEWS

It is with sadness that we have to record the death of **Arnold Whiteway**, in November last year. Members will recall the article on his involvement in the purchase of the first Flint Rescue Boat 'C.E.M.E', and in this issue is the follow-up about when he was 'marooned' on the sandbanks off Parkgate. It gave him a lot of pleasure to recall these memories.

In late November, a number of committee members 'walked' **The Parade**, from the Old Baths to the South Slip, noting 'obscured, damaged and excessive signage', lack of 'dog' bins, damaged seating, and areas where maintenance and a general tidy up would enhance the image of Parkgate. Our list of approximately 30 observations will be passed on to the appropriate authorities.

So, the outline planning application, submitted by **Neston Cricket Club**, has been refused. Let us hope that they can find other ways to raise the money they need to survive and that the cricket ground, an attractive asset of Parkgate, will continue to be part of the village life.

The Society put forward The Bishop's Trust's work, on phase 1 of the restoration of St. Thomas', to the **Cheshire Community Pride Scheme**. They won the Community Based Project Award and £100. Well done.

St Thomas's Church

The barometer total (Oct. '04) was £162,400, including successful VAT and gift aid reclaims. A summary of the fundraising for 2004 is posted on the notice board opposite the church in School Lane.

A planning application is being submitted to the local authority to allow permission to build two small, sandstone-faced extensions to the sides of the church. One is to house a WC (accessible for the disabled), and the other a small office/vestry, with access to both from inside the church. The original vestry, currently located within the building is proposed as a kitchen with a serving hatch through to the body of the church. The proposal to extend has involved much discussion and has taken into consideration the views of all involved, and the advice of English Heritage.

As well as the award mentioned above, the Bishop's Trust for St. Thomas's was also awarded the Champion Team Award from Scottish Power sponsored Chester Chronicle newspapers 'Champions Competition'. Thank you to our anonymous proposers for this and for the community's continued support in the project to save the church.

On Thursday April 21st at 7.30pm, at the United Reform Church, Moorside Lane, there will be a 'Ceramics Evening' with Sue Lunt (Curator of Ceramics - Walker Art Gallery). You are invited to bring along items for discussion. (Tickets available late Feb. phone 336 6146 for details)

EXERCISE WILDFOWLER

Following the purchase of the Flint Rescue Boat "C.E.M.E." (see Autumn 2004 Newsletter), it was decided to carry out a 'rescue exercise' of a wildfowler. Arnold Whiteway, his son, John, and their dog were the 'stranded wildfowlers'. As an insurance that they would not be stranded on the sandbank, Arnold Whiteway insisted on a Bithell family fishing boat being close to them all through the exercise!

The details of the exercise were -

PURPOSE

1. To test a new type of hand distress signal in the possession of a wildfowler.
2. To obtain information as to whether the distress signal is seen by a large number of persons, or by a few, or if it could be missed altogether.
3. To give the Rescue Boat's team practise in rescuing a wildfowler caught by the incoming tide at night time, towards the Cheshire shore.
4. To test new parachute illuminating flares purchased by the Committee, and carried as night equipment on the Rescue Boat.
5. To form a practical link between the wildfowler on both sides of the Estuary, and the Rescue Boat's team.

SCENE

At a point near the saltings off Parkgate.

NARRATIVE

At 1900 hours a wildfowler is trapped by the incoming tide on the Estuary at a point between Parkgate and Flint. He is standing on the highest point of a sandbank, and the tide is rising rapidly.

Finding himself cut off, he discharges one of the distress signals, which he carries. This consists of red stars being propelled to a height of 200 feet.

Persons on the shore see this, and inform the Police, who in turn call out the Rescue Boat.

The boat is launched near Flint Castle with the aid of magnesium flares.

A rocket is discharged near the Castle to indicate to the wildfowler that his signals have been seen, and help is on its way.

Upon reaching a point near where the distress signal has been seen, the Rescue Boat's engine is stopped and the Coxswain calls out, "Rescue Boat here, where are you?" a reply should then be received.

A parachute flare is then discharged when the wildfowler can be seen.

The Coxswain picks his way towards him as quickly as possible, keeping his eye on the wildfowler the whole time.

The wildfowler is lifted into the boat, and the Coxswain ascertains whether there is anyone else.

The mission completed, the Rescue Boat returns to the launching site with the wildfowler aboard.

A number of photographs of "C.E.M.E." have been located in the Lifeboat Station at Flint, one of which is reproduced on page 8. When the RNLB took over the Flint Lifeboat duties, "C.E.M.E." was redundant, and was last seen in Trearddur Bay, Anglesey, being used by a group of divers, in about 1986.

PARKGATE RACES 1895

A member of the Society has very kindly given us a race card for the Wirral Hunt Club steeplechases, held on 27 April 1895, on Parks Field, Parkgate.

The Whitsun races began in the 1720's on Windle Hill, behind Hinderton Hall, but were moved to Parkgate in about 1830. Details of the race meetings are given in the book *Neston 1840 - 1940*. They were organised by the Wirral Hunt Club from 1881 until the last meeting, which is said to have been in 1896. The 1895 race card therefore represents almost the end of Parkgate races.

In 1895 there were seven races, starting at 12.30. Prizes for the winners varied from £25 to £80! The distances were 2, 2½ or 3 miles - the course was probably half a mile round.

The *Chester Chronicle* reported that a jockey was seriously injured at this meeting.

A photograph of the racecard appears on page 8.

THE MURDER OF MOREEN BRANAGAN

Much of this story has been told in the book *Neston at War*, but thanks to Arthur Draper, who referred to the story in his recent *Memories of Parkgate*, it is now possible to add some details.

Moreen Branagan was a Parkgate girl, the daughter of a ship's officer, and she lived at 2 Brookland Road. Like a good many other girls, Moreen took advantage of the absence of family men folk in wartime to "have a good time", and she gave birth to an illegitimate daughter during the war.

In December 1945 she was working as a barmaid at Holywell House in Parkgate. She had a boyfriend, said to be her fiancé, who was a soldier in the Northumberland Fusiliers, known as Yorkie.

On 18 December she took a pair of shoes to Arthur Draper, who was then doing some cobbling, for repair. He never saw her again or her money. She then met a sailor, a ship's steward called James Palmer, who had just been demobilized and paid off at a naval camp in Liverpool Road, Neston, called *HMS Mersey*. She agreed to spend the evening with Palmer in the Brewer's Arms, where they drank port with beer chasers.

At closing time, Palmer walked Moreen home along Wood Lane. When they reached the entrance to the house called Roseacre, near the gate to Parkfield, they kissed, fell to the ground and, in Palmer's words, "intimacy took place". Moreen then screamed and struggled, and in trying to calm her, Palmer struck her. Moreen was a frail girl with breathing problems and the blow killed her. Palmer left her lying there and fled to Glasgow.

Next morning, several people saw the body lying on the grass before the police cordoned it off. They briefly arrested a local man, Ronnie (Bonk) Mellor, because he had blood on his shirt; but he had acquired it in a fight and was soon released. Palmer was arrested in Glasgow, tried for murder, convicted and sentenced to death. Although Moreen lived locally, Neston people got up a petition in support of Palmer, apparently because they thought her death was bad luck. Palmer was reprieved and served nine years in prison.

Geoffrey Place.

Parkgate and its names. (Part 1)

Seems like a silly question, but where does Parkgate start and finish and what does it consist of? It is not that easy to define because it is not a manor or a parish and is therefore not strictly a village, but is a district of Neston. Villages are likely to have been founded centuries ago and can originate from as long ago as the 5th or 6th centuries, and generally spring up around a farmstead with a good water supply. They usually have a church and a parsonage, a manor house, fields, a tithe barn, a mill, a pub and, of course, dwellings. Neston was considered to have been an agricultural settlement dating from the Saxon times and is listed in the Domesday Book of the 11th century.

Neston historically included eight townships, Great Neston, Little Neston, Ness, Leighton, Raby, Ledsham, Willaston and Thornton Hough. Parkgate sprang up from an anchorage hamlet in the 17th century situated near the gates of the old Neston deer park, which gave it its name. The present day Parkgate consisted of partly Great Neston and partly Leighton townships. Those researching families in Parkgate need to look through tithe records for Great Neston or Leighton. Neston deer park was enclosed about 1250 and lasted for about 350 years, with the first recording of the Parkgate name considered to be 1610. From that date onwards Parkgate was recorded as an anchorage, a point of embarkation to Ireland, a ferry terminal for Wales, a fashionable seabathing resort and a fishing village.

Nowadays, Parkgate consists of the area surrounded by Moorside Lane (and its adjoining roads), Wood Lane to Boathouse Lane and the land beyond to the county boundary with Merseyside (Heswall) down to the estuary to the stream beyond the Old Baths and back along the estuary to the Moorside area. There are approximately 50 roads with the Parkgate address and it is these road names that indicate the history and nature of Parkgate.

BARNACRE DRIVE - On the Mostyn map of 1732, there was a field named Barnacre situated between what is now Wood Lane and Leighton road, adjacent to Boathouse Lane

BEVYL ROAD - Is named after the daughter (born 1925) of A.G. Grenfell who built the first houses here. Dr Bevy Cowan currently lives in Burton.

BOATHOUSE LANE - At the foot of this road where the Boathouse Restaurant stands, there used to be an Inn known as the Ferry House or the Boat House. From this point until 1860, a ferry operated to Flint. See also **Greenway**.

BOUNDARY PARK - This area off Moorside Lane is considered to be the boundary of Parkgate and Neston. The name also brings to mind the Neston Cricket Club, which is situated nearby (in Parkgate) and was founded in 1895 by Dr Henry Speechly.

BOWRING DRIVE - Named after Emma Bowring who owned a field here in the 1920/30s.

BROOK HEY - is behind Brooke House and on land that used to belong to that house. Brooke House is not named after the Parkgate brook, but was a name imported by John Nicholson, chairman of the Ocean Steamship Company (who lived

imported by John Nicholson, chairman of the Ocean Steamship Company (who lived here after the war) because he had always lived in a Brooke House.

BROOK LANE - off Wood Lane, has a brook that flows down to the river.

BROOKLAND ROAD - Named after brooks or streams. The brook, now piped beneath Brookland Road flowing down to the marsh, once formed the boundary between Great Neston and Leighton townships. **BROOKLANDS GARDENS** is off this road.

BUGGEN LANE - A Buggen is a ghost. It has been suggested that this was a smugglers' route, so named to keep people away in the dark.

CARLTON CLOSE - any suggestions?

COASTGUARD LANE - The Coastguard Cottages were built in 1858. Four coastguards lived here until 1875.

DEESIDE COURT - (The Parade) built in the late 1980s on the edge of the Dee and on the site of Bowman's Garage, this large building was sympathetically designed to blend in with Parkgate's buildings.

EARLE DRIVE - named after Nicholas Albert Earle who bought the land for development in 1902. **ALBERT DRIVE** (off **Parkgate Road**) is also named after him.

EMSLIE COURT - any suggestions?

GREENWAY - Is Sited On The Car Parks And Gardens Of The Former Parkgate Hotel, Which Was Redeveloped as Parkgate House and Greenway in 2000. The name Greenway was taken from the 1732 Mostyn Map, where, what is now known as Boathouse Lane, was marked as Green Waie (Up To Its Junction With Leighton Road). Beyond this point and up to Chester High Road was called **Leighton Lane**.

GRENFELL CLOSE, GRENFELL COURT and GRENFELL PARK - named after the Grenfell family of Mostyn House. The pioneering missionary doctor, Sir Wilfred Grenfell was born at Mostyn House (1865 - 1940). The Grenfell family still run the school. They built the swimming baths (now the Wirral Country Park car park) at the north end of Parkgate, laid out part of Bevy Road and built several houses in Parkgate. They sold the land for **Grenfell Park** and **Grenfell Close** in 1985 and for **Grenfell Court** in 2003.

HAMILTON CLOSE - named after Emma, Lady Hamilton, born in Ness and famous mistress of Nelson.

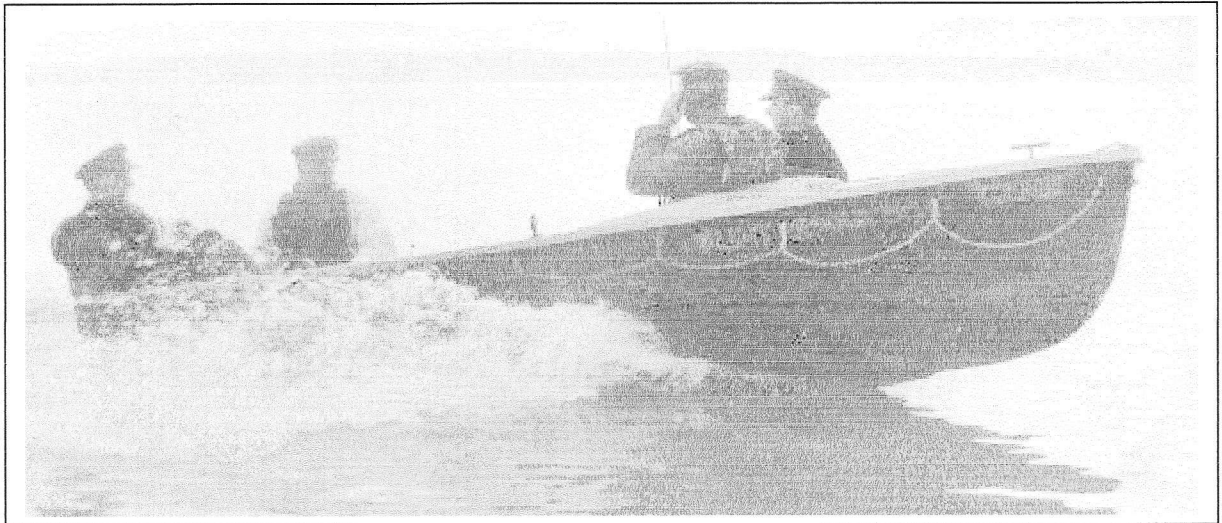
HAWTHORN ROAD - any suggestions?

HERON COURT - the Parkgate salt marsh is famous for its RSPB reserve. Herons are common on the marsh.

HOLYWELL CLOSE - the town of Holywell is roughly opposite Parkgate, on the Welsh side of the estuary.

HUNTERS WAY - any suggestions?

TO BE CONTINUED.....



FLINT RESCUE BOAT "C.E.M.E."

Price of Card 6d.



Wirkal

WIRKAL HUNT CLUB

HUNT CLUB

Steepchases

Saturday, 27th April, 1895.

AT PARKGATE.

President:
J. JOHNSON BAUGHTON, Esq.

Stewards:

K. BYRNE, Esq.	M. M. GLENN, Esq.	T. LONEDALE, Esq.
J. R. CROFT, Esq.	J. CRANE, Esq.	H. H. NICHOLSON, Esq.
A. COMBERFORD, Esq.	T. D. HASSALL, Esq.	H. NICHOLSON, Esq.
P. HUNTER DALE, Esq.	A. HASSALL, Esq.	G. S. SCHULTZ, Esq.
H. GLENN, Esq.	T. H. JACKSON, Esq.	

Starter: H. NICHOLSON, Esq.
 Handicapper: R. H. STAINWARING, Esq.
 Clerk of the Course: F. H. VIDARY, Esq.
 Stakeholder: P. O. DALE, Esq.
 Clerk of the Scales and Judge: Mr. FURBERING.

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**THE WIRRAL SELLING HANDICAP
STEEPLECHASE**

1-45 of £50. Winner to be sold for £25. Distance £2. 2 miles.

1-12	7—Lord Shrewsbury's <i>Surprise</i> , 3 yrs.	Yellow and red hoops, yellow sleeves and cap
2-12	4—Mr. C. H. Tinsley's ch.g. <i>Schubert</i> , 3 yrs.	Scarlet, white spots, black cap
3-12	3—Mr. B. Goodall's <i>Careless</i> , aged	Yellow, purple cap
4-11	12—Mr. H. G. Harper's b.m. <i>White Heat</i> , 2 yrs.	Blue
5-11	10—Mr. O. H. Jones' Lord <i>Danbrough</i> , 2 yrs.	Red, white sleeves and cap
6-11	10—Mr. C. Griffiths' ch.m. <i>May Day</i> , aged	Chocolate, pink sleeves and cap
7-11	8—Mr. C. J. Robinson's b.g. <i>The Hammer</i> , 3 yrs.	French gray, violet belt and cap
8-11	7—Lord Shrewsbury's b.m. Mr. H. Somers' <i>Somnambulist</i> , aged	Yellow and red hoops, yellow sleeves and cap
9-11	7—Mr. O. J. Neill's <i>High Project</i> , aged	Cherry and black cap
10-11	6—Mr. H. Major's <i>The Wain</i> , aged	Black sleeves, purple cap
11-11	6—Mr. Jas. Croan's b.g. <i>Cassiopeia</i> , 3 yrs.	Bronze, white hoops and bronze cap
12-11	3—Mr. S. Coleman's <i>New Moon</i> , aged	Blue, white stripes, blue cap
13-11	6—Mr. F. J. Thorneill's b.m. <i>Wind of Barton</i> , 6 yrs.	Black, scarlet sleeves and cap

1895 Racecard