



Parkgate Society

Newsletter

Spring 2018

Issue Number 94

Welcome to this new edition of our Newsletter. We hope you will find it an interesting read.



Parkgate: St Thomas' Church, Mostyn Square, on a cold, but sunny February afternoon.

'Working together to preserve and enhance the unique character of Parkgate'

Notices

Meetings 2018	The Committee
<p>We normally meet at 8pm at The Cranston Suite, Neston Cricket Club, Station Road, Parkgate, usually on the third Monday of the month.</p>	<p>At the Society's AGM last September the following officers and committee members were elected for 2017/18:</p>
<p>19 March: 'Curious and Amazing Tales of the Wirral' - Ken Pye</p>	<p>Chairman: Jill Brock Deputy-Chairman: David Johnson Joint Secretaries: Angela Clarke, Alan Passmore</p>
<p>16 April: 'Royden Park' - Paul Greenslade</p>	<p>Treasurer: Roger Harris</p>
<p>21 May: 'Liverpool Cowkeepers – a family history' - Dave Joy</p>	<p>Committee members: Derek Haylock, Bryan Lecky, Jim Lycett & Damian Loughe</p>
<p>17 September: Annual General Meeting at 7.30 pm, followed by 'Nelson, the Navy and Tradition' - Michael Murphy</p>	<p>Appointment of Auditor: Clive Edwards</p>
<p>15 October: 'the Beauty & Interest of Wirral' - Colin Millington</p>	<p>It is with great sorrow that we have to say that Angela Clarke, founder member and long-term secretary, died early in the new year and that Jerry Harris, another long-time member of the Committee, died before Christmas – see obituaries.</p>
<p>19 November: Hot-pot Supper at 7.00 pm followed by 'The Liverpool Overhead Railway' - Gavin Hunter</p>	

TRANSPORT - If you need help with transport to our meetings, please ring Alan Passmore, our Secretary, giving 24 hours' notice, on (0151) 336 - 2917.

VISITORS - We are always on the look-out for new members and, therefore, would like to encourage you to introduce your friends to the Society. Visitors are very welcome to attend our talks – first time free – after that we will encourage them to join as full members.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - £7.00 Single / £10 Household per year. Subscriptions are due on 6th April each year. Payment can be made at any of our meetings; but we would prefer payment by Banker's Standing Order. Membership, Standing Order and Gift Aid forms are available from Derek Haylock, our Membership Secretary, tel: (0151) 336-4461. Please check that your Standing Order is for the correct amount.

News and Views

We have just experienced a colder winter than for many years and then came a sign of Spring; the birds were getting active and the air seemed to be full of their song. Now, as I write this, more snow – nice to see, but better when it has gone! This cold weather has had a disastrous effect on our local roads, which now resemble the battlefields of some forgotten war. Particularly bad are Leighton Road and The Parade, while Wood Lane (unadopted) must be a safety hazard for all users, especially the cyclists on what is a designated cycleway. There has been talk of repairs being carried out shortly, but the situation is now far beyond the sticking plaster approach that has been used in recent times.

Let's hope that Spring will provide some more settled weather, so that we can enjoy the outdoor events that have been planned and we will be supporting. The first of these will be **Parkgatefest** on the weekend of Sat/Sun 2 & 3 June at Marsh Nurseries in Boathouse Lane. This event was a great success last year and will be an even better experience this time, with more events and more catering facilities – and the sheep will be back again! More information can be found on the website. We also expect to be manning stalls at **Neston Fair** and **Parkgate Carnival** in July. Come and visit us.

This year we are also supporting a revived **Neston Music Festival**. We have been involved in the overall arrangements and are promoting and sponsoring one of two concerts being held at St Thomas's Church in May. The Festival provides a wide range of music from opera to jazz and details of the various concerts will be given in the many flyers that are being widely distributed in the area. There is also a website. Our concert is being held on Wednesday 16 May when Sue Reid and her group 'Reid between the

Lines' will present a programme of music from the American songbook. Sue is a top singer, and this will be a great evening of quality entertainment, so please make sure you get your tickets in good time from Mozkitos or from members of the Committee. Billy Thompson is likely to fill St Thomas' the following week on Thursday 24 May when he presents his programme of music in the style of Django Rheinhold and Steffen Grapelli. We commend the whole programme of concerts in this festival, and hope that you will at least support our own event at St Thomas'.

Our **Community Spirit** team continue to do good work around the village, despite the vagaries of the weather. The plan is to meet in Mostyn Square at 10 am on the first Saturday of the month and sally forth from there to different areas in need of our attention. The high tides early in the year left a substantial amount of debris on the marsh, requiring a concentrated effort to collect and bag up. We have been concerned about hedge growth reducing pavement capacity in some places; thanks to our efforts we have met with some success in this area, though not universally. We are entering the **Best Kept Village** competition again this year, so our efforts will be concentrating on general tidiness and in particular on flower planting. We hope to provide additional planters this year. It is not true that flowers will not flourish in our sea-side atmosphere, so don't be afraid to have a go in your own gardens. If you would like to join our team of volunteers, just let David Johnson know, so that he can contact you about specific events.



'Parkgate in Bloom 2017'

The **Boundary Commission** has just announced the final result of its enquiry into arrangements for local government in Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC). So far as this local authority area is concerned, the final proposals are for a reduction in the overall number of CwaC councillors from 75 to 70 – a reduction of one in the Neston area. The Commission have in the end accepted the proposal of the Town Council, which we had supported, that Neston, Little Neston, Ness and Parkgate, the area represented on the Town Council, should be divided into three single wards, rather than one 3-seat ward. The three new wards will be known as **Neston, Little Neston and Parkgate**. However, to balance out the numbers of electors in each new ward there will be significant boundary changes from the existing arrangements (5 wards). So far as the Town Council is concerned, the number of councillors will remain at 17, with Neston having 6, Little Neston 6 and Parkgate 5. Implementation of these changes is subject to parliamentary approval in the Spring.

We have recently learned that organisations such as our charity are affected by new regulations which have been made under the provisions of the **Data Protection Act 1998**, as updated. These regulations were made in May 2016, and all businesses and organisations have until 25 May 2018 before the law actually applies to them. In order to comply with these regulations we are in the process of formulating a data protection policy to cover all aspects. One of the provisions of these regulations is that businesses and other organisations may not hold personal information on their employees or members without having first obtained the specific agreement of the person whose details are to be held. In addition, such information must be held securely and may not be transferred to other parties. Information we hold on our members is very limited and consists of name, address, telephone number and email address; where subscriptions are paid by standing order we will also hold a copy of the bank mandate form. The purpose of our holding this information is to enable us to communicate with you, our members, and to facilitate payment of subscriptions; as you can imagine, without holding this information it would not be possible for us to continue to run the Society. To comply with these requirements we are therefore asking all existing and new members to signify their agreement to their personal information being held by the Society for the purposes indicated – we made a start at our meeting on 19

March, and are now following this up a personal visit or a postal communication, where necessary. Without your agreement I'm afraid that we will have to delete your record, which would be tantamount to ending your membership. We very much regret that this imposition is necessary and trust that you will bear with us during the process.

We continue to scrutinize the local **planning applications** for the Parkgate ward and monitor the progress of approved schemes. In recent months applications for building permission have been rather few, though it appears that many Parkgate residents are now having to address the problems caused by mature trees that are getting out of control and beginning to threaten property and roadways. Three projects in Earle Drive are now complete and the fourth is almost ready for occupation. Work is proceeding apace at White Cottage on The Parade, both in regard to the new access and the new homes in the former rear garden. Also on The Parade at Broad Beams, adjacent to Parkgate Fish & Chips, renovation work continues; when the scaffolding and screening comes down I think a very satisfactory outcome will be revealed. In Manorial Road permission has been granted for the demolition of the bungalow Sherwood, which has been empty for a while, and its replacement by a two-storey house. Also in Manorial Road a substantial rebuild of Stella Maris will change the orientation of the house. Outside the village planning permission has been granted for quite a sizeable extension at Brook House in Brook Lane, already quite a large home by modern standards! Elan Homes have been marketing homes in their new development at Boundary Meadows for some time. There seems to be no limit to the demand for homes in this area.

As mentioned previously, we continue to have concerns about the future of the **Mostyn House chapel**. The Mostyn Place Residents Association is actively involved with the local council (CwaC) in working to ensure that the developers of the Mostyn House site hand the premises over in a sufficiently good state to enable its use without the need for further extensive repairs. Our local MP Justin Madders has taken a close interest in this matter, and the Council have made it clear that final planning approval to the whole development will not be granted until the necessary reparations to both the apartments and the chapel have been signed off by them.



Mostyn House Chapel (Sept 2017)

In recent years property owners have generally been very good in ensuring that their premises are well presented, although some specific areas have proved noticeably intractable, for example the empty property in Brooklands Road. Those who regularly use the Ropewalk will be well aware of the obstruction caused by excessive vegetation from a number of properties in Springcroft, whose owners have unfortunately been neglecting their responsibility to keep under control the growth of the vegetation originating from within their boundary. The Council have written to the residents involved, but only minor progress has been made to date.

We are considering the feasibility of putting forward a Heritage Lottery Fund bid in conjunction with CWaC to seek funding for some of the various projects identified in our 'Vision for Parkgate' and so far not achieved. This idea is still at a very early stage in our thinking.

As part of the **Heritage Open Days** programme in early September we are again organizing guided walks based on our Parkgate Heritage Trail. On Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th we meet at the Batbox (the former WW2 pillbox) on the Ropewalk carpark in Station Road at 3.00 pm. The walk is about 1.5 miles, but lasts about 1.5 to 2 hours. Participants should come appropriately dressed and shod for the weather conditions. St Thomas' church is also taking part in the HODs scheme and will be open to visitors on the Sunday afternoon from 12.00 midday to 5.00 pm.

Angela Clarke (1937-2018)

Angela was a founder member of the Parkgate Society and for over 45 years its secretary. During that time she worked with many different chairmen, from the dashing Steve Norris to the late Jim Cochrane, with whom she had an especially good working relationship, and, of course, with that great scholar Geoffrey Place.

Angela was born Angela Mary Gooding at Crosby, Lancashire, on 15 May 1937, the only child of Edwin Thomas Gooding and Nora Proudman. Her father was a salesman for John Haig & Co, the whisky distillers, becoming their north of England manager during the late 1950s. In those early days the family moved around as work dictated, and they also lived at Morecambe and Chester before finally settling in Parkgate in the late 1940s. The house they chose was Sea View, an 18th century double fronted building on The Parade; it had at one time been a shop, but Angela's parents ran it for a time as a guest house, their customers being holiday makers and travelling salesmen. From here Angela attended The Queen's School, Chester, on a scholarship, along with a number of friends from the village. After 'A' levels she went on to secretarial college and, after entering the field of work, eventually became personal assistant to the managing director of Morgan Ceramics, whose factory was then in Liverpool Road.



In her early days Angela developed an interest in singing and took part in productions with the Chester Operatic Society; she had a particular affection for the comic works of Gilbert & Sullivan, which still have a great appeal, particularly for amateur groups.

At the age of 24 Angela married James Clarke at Neston Parish Church on 24 March 1962; he was in the RAF, based at Sealand, and for a short time they lived in married

quarters there. Their son David was born the following year. During the period when Jim was posted abroad, Angela and baby David returned to live at Sea View, and the family continued to live there after Jim's discharge from the services in 1970.

Angela was very proud of having passed her driving test at an early age and became a member of the Wirral branch of the Institute of Advanced Motorists, later becoming their secretary for over ten years. Another of her enthusiasms was for the canals; for a time they kept a narrow boat at Chester, and enjoyed the peaceful navigation of the Shropshire Union into deepest Cheshire, calling in at pubs like the Shady Oak at Tiverton. The Matlock area of the Derbyshire Peak District was another favourite place for exploring and spending some time.

After Jim's death in 1996 Angela decided it was time to downsize and moved the short distance to her bungalow in Tithebarn Drive, where she spent the next two decades of her life. It was in this period that she took to holidaying abroad with Saga cruises in France and Spain, then northern waters with Fred Olsen to Norway, Svalbad, Greenland and Canada. It was in about 2005 that she made her first visit to South Africa, where she was introduced to elephants in the wild, whilst staying with David and Heather at their winter retreat – her last trip being in 2017.

Angela was particularly supportive of her son and daughter-in-law's business and continued to assist them one day a week, visiting their many branches in Cheshire and north Wales, and sorting out the paperwork – no doubt with a certain amount of chat! She was clearly well liked and much respected by all the staff. She died after a short illness at Arrowse Park hospital on 7 January 2018, leaving her son David, daughter-in-law Heather and their two daughters Francesca and Esther. She was to the end a true lover and devotee of Parkgate.

Parkgate Pottery?

There is a brief reference in Mortimer's 1847 'Hundred of Wirral' to there once having been a pottery at Parkgate, ie:

"Parkgate is now quite neglected as a packet station. The customs-house still remains, as also the ruins of a pottery."

This may be the only reference known to a pottery having existed in Parkgate; the statement could be an error, of course. Does anyone know anything about this, as it might be an interesting piece of Parkgate history to investigate? If the reference is correct, there may even be some Parkgate pottery still in local possession.

Jerry Harris (2015)

Some of Parkgate's Animal Inhabitants by Linda Haylock

Many works on the history of Parkgate have concentrated on people and events and so, for a change, I thought I'd take a look at the contribution that animals have made to Parkgate.

First Animals

Parkgate is first shown on a chart of the Dee estuary by Capt. G Collins (1693). His survey map shows that along the shoreline a submerged forest used to exist, similar to that at Meols, and that the fossilized teeth of now extinct animals have been found there.¹ I have found nothing to substantiate this but there's no reason to believe it isn't true.

Deer

Moving on thousands of years, we find Roger de Montalt, a baron and steward to the Earl of Chester. He created a deer park in Neston which was enclosed around the mid-thirteenth century. Local people were forbidden from clearing this land for their own use, settling on the land, and killing the deer. A small, pastoral element of the park was leased out to local people on which to keep domestic livestock. There were conditions attached, however – they could disturb the pasture at their peril, as there had to be sufficient grass for the feeding of the deer herd. The deer park was for the preservation of deer, not people.



Red Deer

© Charles J Sharp

Whether the deer were kept primarily for hunting purposes or for venison, or both, is not entirely clear but given that Baron Roger was a keen hunter, the deer were presumably kept to further his hunting interests.

Approximately 350 years later, the parkland was sold and people began to settle on the foreshore of the River Dee close to the former park's entrance. This budding community eventually became known as Parkgate. The name, of course, derived from Neston Deer Park; the 'park' element of the name being the deer park, and the 'gate' element of the name being presumably, the gate or entrance to the park. It's strange to think that, if it wasn't for the deer, Parkgate might today be called an entirely different name.

Cattle/Farmstock

The first mention of Parkgate as a place name, and also the first hint of cattle in Parkgate, occurred in 1610 when a sailor gave evidence in an enquiry into illegal exports of calfskins. The sailor stated that a merchant had hired him to take a boat at night, laden with "*packe skins and other Comodities*", "*from the watergate to the parkegate*".²

In the 17th century a whole raft of legislation was implemented in an attempt to stop the import of cattle and other livestock from Ireland to the Dee Estuary; the purpose being to protect the English fat-stock market. There were partial bans, temporary bans, total bans, getting around Irish Cattle Act loopholes and repeals of the Act. The livestock didn't know whether it was coming or going. Finally, an outbreak of cattle plague in England

caused the price of cows to rise sharply and the Irish Cattle Act was repealed in 1759. Forget protection of the fat-stock market – Irish cattle were once again chewing the cud on English fields.

The following years saw a steady increase in landings of cows, sheep and pigs at Parkgate. Ships carrying cattle and pigs became regular visitors. These imports were encouraged by the Neston Fairs which were revived in 1776.

The livestock trade carried on throughout the early 1800s. It is thought that, before the sea wall was built in 1800, the animals were landed on the site opposite Alma Cottage. After work commenced on the wall, they were landed at the slipway (the remains of which can still be seen today) between the Old Baths car park and Gayton Cottage and penned in the fields where the golf course is now situated. The boats were unable to sail directly up to the slipway and so the poor cows were forced overboard by the sailors and had to swim from the boats up to the slipway and thus to safety.

There exists a photograph from the 1950s of cattle grazing on the marsh in front of Mostyn House school³ – a very precarious situation for them and not a practice that happens today.



Cattle on the marsh, probably in the 1950s

Horses

Horses have been a prominent feature in Parkgate since its beginning. During the seventeenth century, horses were regularly transported via ships to Ireland. Troop horses were often carried from Parkgate to Dublin, for example. Horses for trade and horses travelling with their owners were also carried to and from Parkgate. John Wesley himself found himself sharing space on board with a post chaise, mixed merchandise and three horses. Dangerous times could be had for passengers when stormy weather caused the horses to panic. No duty was paid on horses but Customs staff continued to list them. The number of horses listed gave an indication of increasing numbers of passengers.

Horses have also been made much use of in Parkgate:

a) For carrying passengers:

Horses conveyed passengers to, from and through Parkgate from its beginnings until after World War II. It was the prevalent mode of transport here and elsewhere until cars and trains became preferred choice.

Modes of horse-drawn transport include the stage coach, horse-drawn omnibus, horse and carriage (liveried coachmen giving a clue as to the wealth or importance of the passengers) and single horses ridden by their owners or hired for travel.

To be continued

1. O'Brien, Pat (compiler). *The Archive Photograph series: Burton to Heswall*, Chalford Publishing Company 1996
2. Place, Geoffrey W. *The Rise and Fall of Parkgate, Passenger Port for Ireland 1686 – 1815*, The Chetham Society 1994
3. Greatorex, Vanessa. *Parkgate and Neston Through Time*, Amberley Publishing, 2014

Jerry Harris (1938-2017)

Jerry Harris was a very valuable member of our Committee for 20 years and until quite recently the editor of this Newsletter. Since settling in Parkgate in 1987, he had also been closely involved with the Burton &

Neston History Society as assistant treasurer, with Probus, and with the Neston Cyber Centre, which he helped set up.

Born at Beaconsfield, Bucks, on 3 August 1938 Jeremy Charles Saunders Harris was the eldest son of Gerald and Eileen Harris; he went on as a boarder to Dauntsey's School near Devizes in Wiltshire and from there he took up a position as an engineering apprentice with Associated Electrical Industries (AEI) at Rugby.

While at Rugby Jerry became involved with the local amateur theatre and in so doing met the local girl who was to become his wife. He married Sheila Anne Bathgate at Rugby on 22 September 1962; he was 24 and she 23. There soon followed a move to Knutsford, when Jerry took up employment with British Nuclear Fuels at Risley, near Warrington; their three daughters were all born at Knutsford: Caroline, Julia and Katherine. During his time at Knutsford Jerry continued his interest in the theatre and was often in the role of stage manager for the Knutsford Operatic Society.



Then came a job transfer to BNF at Capenhurst and the family followed in 1987 to take up residence at the Mill House in Wood Lane, Parkgate. When Sheila became ill, Jerry decided to take early retirement and, after her death in early 2003, found some consolation in getting involved in local activities; he was also interested in sport – he had been captain of one of Knutsford's hockey teams; he followed the rugby and enjoyed cricket. He formed a new relationship with Polly; they shared a lot of interests and enjoyed travelling to visit places all over; his interest in Chinese pottery was the result of their visit to China.

Even during his last illness he kept up his interest in what was going on locally and continued to offer his advice from his bed, particularly to those groups that he was associated with. He died at Arrowe Park hospital on 31 October at the age of 79, leaving three daughters and their families, which include five grandchildren.



**Neston
Music
Festival**
14 April-25 May 2018

'Reid Between The Lines'

Sue Reid has made a very strong impression on the local musical scene in recent years with her expressive voice and inherent sense of timing.

Sue presents a varied programme of songs, largely from the Great American Songbook, but also with some blues. She is supported by a group of experienced musicians, who accurately reflect the mood of each song. Special guest Alan Watson will also add some vocals.



**St Thomas' Church, Mostyn Square, Parkgate
7.30 pm, Wednesday 16 May 2018**

Tickets **£7.00** available from Nicholl's Ice Cream Parlour and Mozkitos' Coffee House, Parkgate, & Allister's, Neston; also from the Parkgate Society:

Phone: (0151) 336-4461; or 353-1008; or 336-2917

Email: secretary@parkgatesociety.co.uk; or
membership@parkgatesociety.co.uk

Refreshments available

Concert promoted and sponsored by *The Parkgate Society*



Diary Note: Heritage Open Days 2018

Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 September

Parkgate Heritage Trail: Guided Walk

Meet at the Ropewalk carpark, Station Road, at 3.00pm

Contacts

If you wish to raise issues of relevance to the Society, please contact our secretary:

Alan Passmore: Tel: (0151) 336-2917

Email: secretary@parkgatesociety.co.uk

Queries about membership should be addressed to our membership secretary:

Derek Haylock: Tel: (0151) 336-4461

Email: membership@parkgatesociety.co.uk

Articles or suggestions for future Newsletters are most welcome, please contact the Editor:

Alan Passmore, tel: (0151) 336-2917 or email:

secretary@parkgatesociety.co.uk

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The Parkgate Society is a registered charity, No. 503718, founded 1972.

Published by The Parkgate Society March 2018. Don't forget our website: www.parkgatesociety.co.uk – also the heritage trail for pictures of old Parkgate: www.parkgateheritagetrail.org