



Parkgate Society

(Founded 1972)

Newsletter

Spring 2013

Issue Number 84

Meetings

We meet at 8pm at **Neston Cricket Club, The Cranston Suite.**

If you need help with transport please ring Mrs Angela Clarke, our Secretary, giving 48 hours notice, on 0151-336 -1069.

2013

18th February – “Norway” - *Gordon Reid*

18th March - “Local Author Hilda Gamlin”
- *Michael Corfe*

15th April – “Victoria Cross Holders in the Wirral Peninsular”
- *Denis Rose*

20th May – AGM followed by “HMS Thetis”
- *Derek Arnold*

16th September - Atlantic Rowing Challenge
- Neil Gullenship

21st October - London-Holyhead Mail Coach Route - David Waller

18th November - Leverhulme’s Rivington
- Gavin Hunter

First Time Visitors are very welcome.
On your second visit we will invite you to join the Society.

The AGM will be held on ? May, at 7.30pm, at the The Cranston Suite, Neston Cricket Club

The Officers and committee members are willing to stand for election, as follows.

Chairman: Moira Andrews,
Vice Chairman: Greta Simpson,
Secretary: Angela Clarke,
Treasurer: Damian Loughe

Committee members - Jill Brock, Jerry Harris, Jill Owen, Rob Naybour and Alan Passmore.

The meeting will also be asked to ratify David Roberts, a co-opted member of the committee, as a full member of the Committee.

There are no resolutions, from the Committee, to put before the meeting.

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS

£7.00 Single / £10 Household per year

Payment can be made at any of our meetings, however we would prefer payment by Banker’s Standing Order. Membership, Standing Order and Gift Aid forms are available, from our Secretary.

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Rightway Bevans

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NEWS & VIEWS

We would be pleased to hear members' views and or suggestions, at any time. Speak to any member of the committee, at one of our meetings, email us on parkgatesociety@googlemail.com , or phone our secretary, Angela Clarke.

We have decided that while Visitors are very welcome to our meetings, we should encourage them to join the Society on their second visit. We have had a decline in member numbers this past year, so please bring along your friends and neighbours.

The Society's 40th Anniversary was celebrated on 19 November last, at the Cranston Suite, Neston Cricket Club. See below.

Christmas Lights arrived in Parkgate this year, around the Donkey Stand. More than we had anticipated. Very festive. Thank you Neston Town Council for providing them. Hopefully they can be extended year on year.

In **Mostyn Square** the new lamp post has been installed, but the old one has not yet been removed and the notice board will be moved, to the left. *We now have a door on the phone box* and there are now very smart gates on the new entrance to the Churchyard.

Station Master's House is now occupied. The new build behind Station Master's is reaching completion, The cottage on the Parade at the end of the cottages, by Jill and Jimmy Pratt has, at last, been completed and occupied and fits in well with it's neighbours. It now has it's old name plaque on it, "Pendle Cottage".

Cheryl Swift has opened up Seven Steps, every weekend, for people to view the C18th Murals . She is creating a museum downstairs, which is free, and one can go upstairs to view the Murals for £2.50 each. Well worth a visit!

An Open Day at **Mostyn House School** was held on 6 December, where the favoured developer, **PJ Livesey** Heritage Homes North West, presented their initial plans to convert the Listed Buildings, and to develop the former playing fields. This would be by a mixture of flats, apartments and housing amounting to some 90 units. A comments book was available and a Planning Application was submitted on 21 February. A further Open Day was held on 12 March for viewing the application. Only when consent is achieved will the purchase of the site happen. So resolving the front wall, supported by the mass of scaffolding, will have to wait till then! If you want to read more about the developer, see <http://www.pjlivesey.co.uk/siteNorm/index.php> .

The Society's response to the development is –

"To the Planning Officer

The committee of the Society has studied these plans and made the following comments.

We are well aware of and have been concerned about the development necessary for the preservation of this historic site and we believe the plan to be in the best interests for its future. The alterations to the internal parts of the existing building are inevitably essential to maintaining usage.

The new build is satisfactory in regard to the site and we are pleased by the styles of the dwellings as illustrated and the general layout, provided the 3 storey mews houses do not overshadow any existing properties in Grenfell Park.

We draw your attention to our concern about ingress and egress to and from Station Road into Grenfell Park. The B5135 road is narrow and there will be a considerable increase in traffic flow. We believe some form of traffic control is necessary perhaps in the form of Traffic Lights and we expect this will be pursued by you. We would be grateful if you will keep us informed of your progress on this issue.

Other than the above paragraph, this Society has no further comments on the general plans, elevations and designs at this time.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully."

A Grenfell Residents Group has been formed. At their inaugural meeting, on 28th January, they agreed that they were in favour of 'sympathetic development of the site' and wanted to have a part in influencing how this happening. They have employed a Consultant and together they have now formulated a strong case for outright refusal. We fear that if refusal comes about, this developer will walk away leaving us to face rapid deterioration of the entire site. There could be worse to come from another developer. We must be pragmatic and everyone must be prepared to accept a compromise is inevitable.

Two **Community Forums**, held at the Cricket Club, were organised by Councillor Brenda Dowding to discuss and get ideas for developing and improving the Parade. The first became more of a discussion about traffic flow and parking, so a second forum was called on 28 November to give residents an opportunity to discuss their views and ideas on the proposed **Parkgate Parade** improvements. Brenda explained that she intended to put forward her Councillor's annual allowance for local causes, over the next 4 years, to be matched funded, to create improvements along the Parade.

The first priority would be to tackle the **Donkey Stand**, with an attractive and more appropriate surface and a revised layout of the seating and litter bins. A possible planter and an additional information plaque, high lighting the local flora and fauna. See below for more details.

Parkgate Society 40th Anniversary, 19 November 2012

This was the 40th Anniversary, and began with a complimentary glass of wine. This was the third meeting in the new venue of the Cranston Suite of Neston Cricket Club, and very pleasant it is.

Chairman Moira Andrews quickly learned how to use the microphone, but the first speaker, Steve Norris had no need of it, having spent 15 years as a politician. He recalled how he had attended the Liverpool Institute, along with Paul McCartney, and they both help what is now the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts. He came to live in Brooke House, Parkgate 40 years ago, when the Dee Barrage Scheme was mooted.

He and others decided that would be the death of Parkgate, and that stimulated the formation of the Parkgate Society, with Steve Norris as Chairman. He soon moved away, but the Secretary, Mrs Angela Clarke, is of course still in that post, and received a heart-felt round of applause.

The second speaker was Gavin Hunter, who spoke on *Parkgate and Beyond*. He told me afterwards that he reckoned he had spent 80 hours preparing the slides of this new talk, and I could believe it. He had a splendid collection of slides, many with old maps of the area. One showed the Mostyn Estate, when it was sold, with three railways, one of which - though approved by Parliament - was never built. We saw Parkgate with fishing boats, high tides and snow. Old pictures of Mostyn House School, Balcony House, and the garage brought back memories. The audience's appreciation was shown by many questions. I think member, Tony Mould, spoke for all of us when he said it was the best he had ever seen.

Rob Ward, Chairman of Neston Civic Society.

Subscriptions

Most of the members are now aware of the changes made to the level of subscriptions to the Society:- £7.00 for a single membership and £10.00 for Family membership.

Unfortunately, many members have failed to update their Standing Orders to the Society where that is the preferred method of payment. This has left a shortfall in the Society's expected income at a time when there have been (and will continue to be) substantial outgoings in support of local projects - in particular St. Thomas' Church gardens and the "Vision for Parkgate". Also, the use of Neston Cricket Club for monthly talks, while providing a very pleasant and comfortable setting, has to be funded.

I would appeal, again, to all those members who have to date neglected to make the appropriate amendments to their Standing Order Mandates to do so immediately, to enable the Society to continue its financial support for projects within our community.

Those failing to do so will, I am afraid, no longer be entitled to receive the twice-yearly newsletter.

Thank you, in anticipation.

Damian McDermott Loughe - Treasurer

"A VISION FOR PARKGATE"

Parkgate's name originated from Neston Park, where deer were kept in the middle ages. Around the 1600's it became an anchorage for boats departing for Dublin, a fishing village and then in the 18th century to a fashionable resort for sea bathing, where people paraded along the seafront, and along Cheltenham Walk when it was inclement weather (now The Ropewalk).

Visitors still like to parade along the sea wall, although the sea has long gone, except at very high tides when it can lap the wall. However they now come for the marvellous views, which Turner painted, and of course the famous ice cream. The Parkgate Society was formed in 1972, and now pledges to try and match fund its own income with other funding towards the upkeep of this historical coastal village.

Our journey takes in the Conservation area and concentrates on The Parade and the general first impressions that visitors get as they travel along the old sea front.

The Conservation area should have a unified appearance with appropriate conservation style street lighting and street furniture, with information plaques describing historical facts etc.

Starting at the South Slip end of the Parade. (The Old Custom House once stood near this Slipway).

SOUTH SLIP END OF THE PARADE:-

The Slipway requires weeding and a certain amount of the marsh cleared from it and a new or refurbished bench seat. The small island triangle to be made into some sort of flower container or alternatively stone pots for plants. The nearby sea wall steps to be cleared and cleaned where necessary.

ACTIONS; Weed slipway and tidy – seawall steps (some to be cleared) Re-furbish seat -island to have planter trough with flowers.

THE DONKEY STAND: - FIRST PRIORITY

Parkgate's first Assembly Rooms stood here, later became a seawater bathing house, and later a place for donkey hire. This area requires completely re-furbishing with new benches, a view map of opposite coastline, and historical information. New surface of cobbles or setts.

ACTIONS; Work to be undertaken by CW&C/NTC re. Xmas lights (the first phase installed for Christmas 2012). Refurbish seating and alter placing – rubbish bins to be relocated to the sides – further stone plinth to match other, with view map of opposite view points on coastline and mountain – historical info. On previous history. New surface re-using cobbles, setts and stones, replacing concrete with appropriate surface. Plant container between two plinths.

Chester West & Chester Council has drawn on the Society’s ideas for the Donkey Stand, and their proposals can be seen below.

THE DONKEY STAND
Public Realm Improvements

PROPOSALS

Existing Layout Scale 1:100

Proposed Layout Scale 1:100

PROPOSALS

1) Benches
2) Benches and tables
3) Benches and tables
4) Benches and tables
5) Benches and tables
6) Benches and tables
7) Benches and tables
8) Benches and tables
9) Benches and tables
10) Benches and tables

THE DONKEY STAND Proposals

Drawing No: 001
Date: 28
Scale: A3
Rev: 001/12

Cheshire West and Chester

MOSTYN SQUARE;-

Named after the welsh family who owned Parkgate until 1849. The Fishermen’s Church was built in 1843. The Church, now re-furbished and open for the community by the Bishop’s Trust. The bus shelter has been demolished, the old gateway to the Churchyard has been re-opened up and a gate is now in place and the street light has been re-positioned with a new conservation, heritage type light. Suggest the monitoring of the public toilets and the times open by CW&C, (the public do not find them very friendly and ask to use shop toilets instead.) ?

MIDDLE SLIP:-

Once used by fishermen and donkey carts collecting shellfish. This area to be cleared of weeds and marsh and an old boat drawn up on the Slipway, secured permanently and made suitable for planting displays. (Boat already identified) Possibly a historical information board here, also describing the Watch House in the past housing Customs officers.

ACTIONS ; Place boat on weeded slipway, secure, line and plant, Historical info, board.

BOATHOUSE SLIP:-

A shipbuilder's yard existed on the shore near here during the 18th century. It requires weeding and clearing. Possible historical information board.

ACTIONS; Weeding of some of the slipway – historical info board

OLD BATHS SITE :-

Weeding of road and wall from Boathouse to Old Baths area and general tidying up of area.

ACTIONS; Weeding of road and wall from Boathouse to Old Baths site

These ideas were formulated by the Parkgate Society as a vision of work required to bring the old seafront of the ancient port of Parkgate up to standard for the many tourists who visit Parkgate, because of its history and because of its views and interesting bird life on the protected marshes, which have ASCV and SSSI status.

Chester West & Chester Council has drawn on the Society's ideas for the Donkey Stand, and their proposals can be seen below.

Moira Andrews, Chairman

Funding for "The Vision of Parkgate"

As you have seen above, the Society has produced a document entitled "A Vision for Parkgate", in direct response to the adverse comments made concerning our village when we last entered the "Community Pride" competition. Its specific intention is to improve the general appearance of Parkgate and, in particular, the Parade.

As a direct result of the close interest shown by Councillor Brenda Dowding, to whom we are particularly indebted, there have been two forums held at Neston Cricket Club to help identify the concerns of local people and move forward with "The Vision"

On February 27th 2013, there was a meeting between your Chairman, Moira Andrews, myself and the Senior Officer of the CW&C Locality Team – Mr. Rob Callow. The upshot of this meeting is that needed improvements, identified in "The Vision" are to be made to the Parade. These improvements are to be funded by Departments in Cheshire West and Chester Council, including:-Rural Support Grant Funding; Locality Team Funding; Street Scene Funding; Local Councillor Grant Funding; and a contribution from the Parkgate Society.

In total, this will add up to between £80,000 - £90,000 over four years.

Detailed planning involving the (above) departments will begin this summer and work on the improvements to the Donkey Stand and the Middle and Boathouse slipways should begin in Autumn 2013. The Society has been invited to be closely involved in all aspects of this project and as the instigator in the production of "The Vision for Parkgate" this is, only as it should be.

Members of your Committee will be present at all decision-making meetings to represent your interest and the interests of the Parkgate community as a whole.

Damian Loughe

GEOFFREY PLACE'S PAPERS

Before Pendmore was cleared for sale, the Parkgate Society and the Burton & Neston History Society were allowed, by the family solicitor, to go through Geoffrey's papers and to take anything that belonged to the Societies and his local research papers. The majority of papers were taken by the History Society. Geoffrey was a member of the History Society Research Group, so many of these were relevant for use in possible future publications and will be looked after.

We, the Parkgate Society, took a number of items which Geoffrey had held on behalf of the Society. Amongst which were –

- A full set of the society Newsletters, Nos 1 to 83, to date.
- 1976 Olive Wilcox's scrapbook of Parkgate and Wirral History. She died in 1975 and her sister Mrs DM Turner donated the scrapbook to the Society.
- OLIVE DEHN'S STORY, "The Price of Shrimps" (publ. during 2nd World War) and "The Caldys Crab". A copy of these was given by a member of the Society. "The Price of Shrimps" was originally published in "The Children's Own Wonder Book".
- Original artwork by David Scott for the cover of the booklet "This is Parkgate".
- Copies of old maps, OS and others, of Leighton, Parkgate and Neston.
- Parkgate Races. Race card – Wirral Hunt Steeplechases 27th April 1895, given to Society.
- Publications – early editions of "This is Parkgate", "A Stroll Through Parkgate", "Parkgate Panorama", 1980s greeting cards.
- A copy of the Parkgate Cartoon, similar to the one printed in the last newsletter.
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We also removed Geoffrey's four albums of local photographs, that he had collected over the years. We knew that it was his and Valerie's wish that these be lodged with the Cheshire Records Office. Before they went, we were given permission to scan them all. So we now have a copy of this unique record in the Society Archive.

In addition to these photo albums lodged with the CRO, the Society has also deposited with the CRO:

- 1985 Domesday Collection Photos. Approx 1500 photographs and negatives taken by committee member Leonard Walker
- Millennium Book, A record of everyday Parkgate, produced by Anne Williamson and Becky Ford, to celebrate the Millennium.

These can be seen at the CRO, with advance notice.