



# The Heswall Society

*Established for the public benefit to conserve the heritage of Heswall*

[www.theheswallsociety.org.uk](http://www.theheswallsociety.org.uk)

## NEWS LETTER

### AUTUMN 2021

#### NEW LIFE MEMBERS



High Sheriff of Merseyside, Nigel Lanceley DL, has presented two residents of Heswall with Honorary Life Memberships to the Heswall Society. They are also both recipients of Wirral Awards from Wirral Borough Council. Dennis Clegg, the Society's recently retired Planning Officer and former Chair, and Caroline Cartwright, proprietor of The Village Shop, Lower Heswall,

received their honours for their tireless work on behalf of the people of Heswall.

Current Chair, Steve Anderson, described how Dennis's work with the Society has helped Heswall to retain its unique character and, in particular, how he designed a model for Friends groups which is now in use throughout the borough.



He praised Caroline as a constant major support of the community and in particular during COVID. Mr Lanceley referred to her efforts as 'the epitome of humanity'.

To mark his retirement from the Committee an etched vase was presented to Dennis Clegg, in recognition of the many years of work and support that he has given to the Committee, the Society and to the Heswall community.



## MEMORIAL TO STUART MARSDEN



As a memorial to Stuart Marsden, who died in May 2020, the Society has refurbished the two benches outside the gates to St Peter's Church.

Stuart worked tirelessly for the Society for over 20 years including as its planning officer. He took a particular interest in the Lower Village

Conservation Area and was Chair of the Society from 2000 till 2009.



## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

What a year it has been and more!

Encouragingly, with the increase in uptake of the vaccine, the situation does seem to be gradually improving, albeit not at the pace that all of us would desire.



Although Covid case numbers are high, fortunately the death rates are keeping much lower than in the past and hopefully that trend continues. Most importantly, I hope you have managed to stay safe during this exceptionally long and protracted period that is putting such a strain on us all.

Caution remains the key word at present, and that will be the approach we adopt before reverting to face-to-face meetings. Despite the difficulties posed by the pandemic, the work of the Society has not diminished much as you will read in the following pages, and your Committee has maintained its monthly meetings using the Zoom platform. I would therefore like to reassure members that their subscriptions are still very much needed, both to support the current work

and help us build up our reserves for the increasing challenges facing the Society.

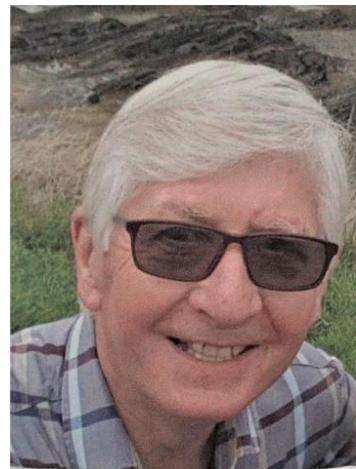
Hopefully, it will not be too long before we get back to something approaching normal.

On certain matters, readers are referred to the Society's website for further detail. Alternatively, you may prefer to contact myself or a Committee member for more information on the Society's work.

***Steve Anderson***

## **OUR COMMITTEE**

At the March AGM Bob Lewis was formally voted onto the Committee. Having served as an invaluable member of the Society's planning group for two years, Bob was co-opted onto the Committee last year, and his input is very welcome.



It is also pleasing that we have two further potential additions to your Committee. This does not mean that we aren't still looking for more members to help with the work of the Society: you don't have to become a Committee member to help us!

## **MEMBERSHIP**



Despite going through such a challenging time with the pandemic, it is encouraging that the Society continues to attract new members. There remains, however, a very large untapped potential membership base in Heswall. We would encourage you all to become membership champions whenever the opportunity arises, be it with family, friends or even just casual acquaintances. It is also worth reminding members that, even if you cannot attend meetings or our virtual ones, your membership fees are vital for the Society to be able to continue its varied work, conducted on your behalf and outlined in this newsletter.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS



Unfortunately, some membership subscriptions remain outstanding. For those paying by Standing Order, we ask you all to check your bank statements for last December to check that your payment has been forwarded. Sad to say, banks have not always been enacting these Standing Orders correctly. For the small number of you paying by cash/cheque,

please remember that annual subscriptions for this year were due on December 1 last year. For any questions, please contact the Membership Secretary or Treasurer.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Unfortunately, for cost reasons, it is not possible to alert members relying on postal communication to all important developments, particularly about consultations or indeed Zoom meetings. We encourage those of you who can to receive the Society's communications by e-mail. Simply contact [chairman@heswallsociety.org.uk](mailto:chairman@heswallsociety.org.uk) saying that you wish to switch to e-mail communication. This allows us to keep you more easily up-to-date with developments, while also saving us both time and money.



Equally, it is important to inform us if you change your e-mail address or any other contact details.

## MEETINGS

Since the Spring Newsletter we have only managed to have one meeting conducted by Zoom. This was in March and was a combined AGM and talk. Despite having to use this virtual medium because of the pandemic, the meeting was well attended. The subject of the talk was the Manchester Ship Canal, the so-called channel tunnel of the Victorian Age, and our two speakers furnished the talk with a fascinating history of the canal, ably augmented by period photos.



It is hoped that you liked the new (for us) A5 booklet format for presenting the AGM documents. Any comments on this would be welcome.



Your Committee had considered September for our next meeting but with (at the time!) likely Covid restrictions on travelling being removed, we thought that many of you might take the opportunity to go on holiday. For this reason, our next meeting is scheduled for Monday 15 November when, hopefully, we can move from a virtual Zoom to a face-to-face meeting in Heswall Hall.

Further details will be communicated nearer the time.

## LOCAL PLAN

Over the last six months or so the Council has released a large number of lengthy studies and reports for public consultation to inform the forthcoming Local Plan. The Society commented on the following:



- Consultation on the Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy.
- Consultation on the Environmental Sensitivity Study.
- Draft Employment Land and Premises Study.
- The Wirral Housing Density Study.
- Consultation on Local Green Space Designations: Review of Sites.

The Society copied members with all its reasoned responses to these consultations in time to support individual members composing their own, should they so wish. Those who have looked at any of these studies and the Society's responses will appreciate the considerable amount of time and effort that has been invested by the Society in the interest of members. They can be found on the Society's website.

The Local Green Space Designations consultation is especially important as such areas would be given essentially the same protection as Green Belt. The Society nominated a total of 14 green space sites in Heswall of which ten are to be recommended for Local Green Space Designation by the consultants. The Society has challenged the consultant's conclusions not to recommend the remaining four sites. Further details including a list of the sites proposed can be found on the Society's website.

The Wirral Green Space Alliance (WGSA) Steering Group (of which the Society is a member) and the Council had one meeting in late Spring. A number of conclusions were drawn from that meeting, all of which can be found on the Society's website, but the general gist remains that **our Green Belt is still under threat.**

The Society's membership of the Wirral Green Space Alliance has proved greatly beneficial in helping in responding to Local Plan issues and, with over 20 local organisations as members, it is in a very strong position in trying to protect the interest of Wirral residents.

## **HESWALL IN BLOOM**

The Heswall in Bloom (HiB) team has managed to remain active into the summer, always respecting social distancing where required, and I hope members appreciate their efforts. Without it the centre would be a very dull location indeed. The Team is composed of a small number of volunteers mainly, but not exclusively, Society members. Indeed, the Heswall Society is an integral part of the initiative. The Society helps to steer the work through our chairman, and the Society looks after the HiB accounts.



The two benches by the Catholic Church (funded by donations from the Catholic Church and the Rotary Club of West Wirral) have now been installed and are already being put to good use.

The summer flowers in the beds and planters are really making visiting the centre a colourful experience, and are a real credit to the work of the volunteers. We are grateful for the support given to us by the Fire Station, which has allowed us to use its water supply, and for the increasing number of local shops that also assist with watering.

As usual, the changeover from winter to summer planting at Castle Buildings was again undertaken by Angie Mounsey and her team in May. Watering is always a challenge during the summer months and was particularly so during July's heatwave. We are extremely grateful to The Mill Shop, Claire House, Hallmark and Cain's of Heswall, each of whom have stepped in to 'adopt' a bed and water it as and when needed.

HiB has a WhatsApp Page (Heswall In Bloom) and an Instagram page (@Heswallinbloom). Additional help is always welcome.

Following our request for donations in the last newsletter and the recent setting up of a HiB Crowdfunding appeal (<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/keep-heswall-blooming>), we are pleased to say donations have been received from both local businesses and individuals that will help us continue with the work. We would like to sincerely thank all of you who have parted with your hard earned money, especially at this difficult time.

### **LOWER VILLAGE PLANTERS**

Although not officially part of the HiB team, we are pleased to report that one of our members has set up a small group in the Lower Village which has purchased and filled some planters and this has greatly brightened this historic area. The Society has also recently agreed to fund the establishment of an additional two planters.



### **CHERRY COTTAGE**



The saga with Cherry Cottage on Wall Rake continues. The Society is appalled that the Council has approved a boundary wall at the front being faced with concrete tiles instead of sandstone as required in the planning approval, and is considering its options to challenge such a blatant disregard of conservation values.

### **TELEPHONE KIOSKS**

The telephone kiosk in the Lower Village is being converted into a small book exchange. Marilyn Phillips, have very kindly agreed to carry out and pay for the conversion work.





The telephone kiosk at the Gayton roundabout is shortly to be decommissioned by BT, and the Society is exploring the possibility of it to being moved to a site within the Devon Doorway that would still be visible to the public. Funding from the Council Ward money has been obtained to cover the cost of such a move, and discussions with the Devon Doorway are ongoing.

## **HESWALL POLICE STATION**

The Society has contacted Merseyside Police to clarify the current position with the Police Station. The sale of the station has been delayed by Covid, but it is now back on the market again.



The Society has been contacted by a small number of individual parties potentially interested in purchasing it, two of which are with the idea of establishing some type of community benefit function. The Society would generally be supportive of initiatives that involved retaining the existing façade.

## **FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS**

The Society has alerted all those members on e-mail about the Government having set, in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, a cut-off date of 1 January 2026 for identifying unrecorded footpaths and bridleways. The Society is keen to make sure that any public rights of way in Heswall, that were on the 1929 definitive maps before the Councils merged, are still on the current Council definitive map and are not lost forever.



Members are asked, therefore, to examine the Council's definitive map for Wirral and email [richardheswall@gmail.com](mailto:richardheswall@gmail.com) to alert us to any that may be missing in Heswall. The Society will collate responses and forward to the Council and copy to Wirral Footpaths and Open Spaces.

## HESWALL FORESHORE



Members should be aware that some residents have written to our Councillor Andrew Hodson (and copied to the Society) about the continued 'boat graveyard' and general state of Heswall foreshore. Our Councillor has been in contact with Council officers concerning the matter for a number of years. More recently he has also met with Mark Taylor, principal officer with Maritime

Management (affiliated with Defra).

The matter was taken up in 2019 by Colin Clayton, Assistant Director, Parks & Environment for the Council, but progress has been delayed by the current pandemic. The Council totally accepts the longstanding nature of the issue. Part of the ongoing delay is that the Council needs to await legal advice as options are developed. Colin has indicated that there is some way to go before he anticipates Council options will become clear.

The shoreline has been in a sorry state for a number of years now, and it is owed to both Wirral residents and visitors alike to get this cleaned up as quickly as possible. The Society fully supports the effort of our Councillor in getting a speedy resolution.

## PLANNING MATTERS

The various Covid lockdowns have had no impact on the number of planning applications. Not surprisingly, we have seen fewer retail applications and more applications to extend houses as people spend more time at home. In the six months since the Spring Newsletter was prepared, your Committee has considered 117 planning applications, of which we objected to 14, and made comments on seven. This level of scrutiny is only possible due to the sterling efforts of the Planning Group, who review every planning application in the Heswall Ward and make recommendations for possible action to the Committee. We have welcomed Jane Lane on to the Planning Group and would encourage any member who would like to learn more about planning, and might be interested in joining the group, to help champion good development in Heswall, to contact us on [planning@heswallsoc.org.uk](mailto:planning@heswallsoc.org.uk).



We would like to bring your attention to a number of developments highlighted in the last newsletter which had not been decided at that time or where new applications have been submitted. Please visit the Society's website for fuller comments on these proposals, and links to the relevant planning application documents on the Council's website:-

1. An application at **22 Farr Hall Drive** (APP/19/00910) was submitted in June 2019 for six apartments, and refused by the Council in March 2020, with the refusal upheld on appeal. An amended application has been submitted in July 2021 which is identical in external and internal layout to the refused application except for window details on the two elevations facing the neighbouring properties. The Society is objecting.
2. The requester of the new application (APP/20/01717) for ten flats at **Inchbroom, Farr Hall Road**, following the refusal of their previous application (APP/19/01814), took the unusual step of applying for an appeal against the Council not deciding the application within the statutory period. The appeal was not upheld.
3. The appeal against the Council's refusal to approve a large extension to a pair of old sandstone cottages at **28 Boundary Lane** has been completed. The inspector upheld the Council's refusal. A fresh application has recently been submitted (APP/21/01113), for an even larger extension which we feel does not address the Inspector's reasons for refusal of the previous application.
4. The Society objected to the demolition of a bungalow at **Witch Wood, Mere Lane**, and replacement by a block with seven apartments (OUT/20/00967). This application has still not been decided. A previous application for four houses submitted in March 2016 has also still not been determined.
5. The J D Wetherspoon's application for extended hours at the old **Exchange** premises on the Mount plus other changes has been withdrawn. There were many objections from local residents to this proposal.
6. We made a very detailed submission supporting the Council on the appeal against the refusal of the Council to designate an attached large paddock and old access road to the caravan park as being part of the garden of **Sandy Mount, Broad Lane** (LDC/20/01057). We were pleased that the Inspector upheld the refusal, which prevents permitted development in terms of outbuildings etc. on a significant plot in the Green Belt.

Turning now to new applications:

7. The Society is distressed about the way Green Belt restrictions have been circumvented on the site of **Willow Cottage, Banks Road** (opposite Sheldrakes), where planning consent has been granted for demolition and two new dwellings.



8. The Heswall Society was one of many objectors to an application to demolish **Scotby, 53 Brimstage Road** and to replace it with a building containing eight apartments (APP/21 00082). We were concerned that the building was too large and represented an overdevelopment of the site. The application was subsequently withdrawn.

9. Despite the Society's objection, an application (APP/21/00629) to replace **15 Delavor Road** with a much larger three storey property has been approved.

We have raised through Andrew Hodson, a ward Councillor, four concerns where approved building plans have not been followed:

1. **Cherry Cottage Wall Rake** (see Chairman's report).
2. Failure to rebuild the sandstone wall at **Highfields, The Mount**, located in the Lower Village Conservation Area.
3. The roof being constructed at **49 Pipers Lane** which has a ridge higher than approved.
4. The wall at the apartment development known as **Sandstone House, 1 Rocky Lane** where the front wall has been built in brick not sandstone, and the lack of screening of the refuse container.

Apart from Cherry Cottage, we await the outcome of these representations.

For many years the Society has been concerned about the possible fate of **The Cave, Thurstaston Road** following the death of one of the owners. This is the last remaining residential property on the Wirral designed by the prominent architect James Francis Doyle, who designed many local churches (including St Peter's in Heswall) and is most famous for the former Royal Insurance building on North John Street, Liverpool. The Cave is a fine example, and one of the last surviving residences wealthy merchants from Liverpool built in Heswall in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It survives

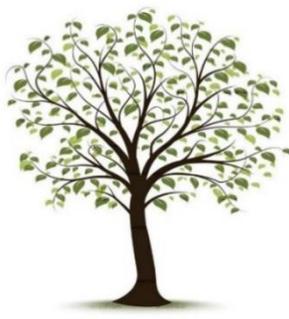
intact in its original grounds without impact from later suburban development, and is very visible from the public highway. In 2014, with professional help, we prepared a detailed architectural review outlining The Cave's significant heritage value, but were unable to proceed to a national listing request as it was not under proven threat at the time. An alternative approach of local listing failed as the Council has never initiated a local listing process. The Cave has now been put up for sale, and following encouraging advice from Historic England, The Victorian Society, and a professor of architecture at Liverpool University, we are compiling the information needed to evaluate if we have a strong case for listing.



*The Cave*

## **Roger Lane**

## **TREES**



The Society is concerned about the loss of trees in the Ward, the current inability to respond to resident queries about identifying suitable locations for trees to be planted, and a way of better protecting trees that are very important to the local amenity. Consequently, the Society's Chairman and Tree Officer have had meetings with Hellen Ellis (Secretary: Wirral Tree Wardens Network) and Nicola Wallbank (the recently appointed Council Landscape Officer) to discuss these issues and start a dialogue about how they can best be addressed.

So far this year there have been twelve applications for work on trees either subject to Tree Preservation Orders or within our two Conservation Areas. The majority were for branch removal or crown reduction rather than felling. The Society partially objected to two applications. The Council's Tree Officer agreed with both when coming to his decision.

## **OPEN SPACES**

We have responded to several matters raised with the Society by local residents via email or facebook.

Covid 19 restrictions have, until recently, affected the work of the Friends groups, however work has continued to be carried out either with social distancing and/or by individuals.

## CONSERVATION AREAS



We wait to see what is meant by 'more stringent' controls on development within 'protected areas' (which includes Conservation Areas) in any Bill laid before Parliament following the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's White Paper 'Planning for the future'.

We also wait to see if, how, and when Wirral Council can find the human and financial resources to commence the process of Local Listing, which would help retain designated buildings both within and outside Conservation Areas.

## DAWSTONE PARK

The Friends of Dawstone Park have now been able to hold volunteer working parties again and the grass has been regularly mown. Many people have been visiting and enjoying the Park during the lovely warm weather. Dawstone Park celebrated its 90th birthday in July. You may have seen the banner if you drove or walked past! July 1931 - July 2021.



## LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Our researches have had a military theme over the past few months. In the April edition of the Heswall and District Magazine, we wrote about Major James Shaw who figured so prominently on the photographs of local Heswall volunteers at the Cross on their way to enlistment in World War 1. He was a leader of the Heswall Volunteer Battalion and also headmaster of Heswall Church School between 1880 and 1920. This article prompted a local reader to contact us to see if we could identify the owner of a WW1 medal which had come into his possession. Using the amazing power of the genealogical and historical databases available to us nowadays, we were able to piece together the sad story of the medal

winner, and even locate some of his living descendants. This formed the basis of our June article.

For the August Edition of the magazine we have prepared an article on the three Heswall Festivals which were held between 1998 and 2000.

We are currently researching the architect of the Cave, James Francis Doyle, to help explore the possibility of listing the building.

We continue to receive many queries being sent through the Society's enquiry page as people try to trace ancestors or to find out about the history of their houses. If you have any interesting family history, or an old house in Heswall, and would like to see if we could help you explore the stories behind them, please contact Roger Lane (roger.m.lane@btinternet.com , 0151 342 9269).

### ***Roger Lane***

## **EVENTS**

There is little to report due to not being able to meet face-to-face. Hopefully, next season this will change, and we will be able to welcome you all back again to Heswall Hall and resume having our meetings, followed by a talk.

We are hoping that we will be able to start our face-to-face meetings on a light note in November with illusionist Peter Turner returning to entertain us.

Dates for our next meetings are below:-

**Monday 15th November 2021** 'Heads I Win-Tails you Lose', by Peter Turner, Illusionist - number three in his series of talks.



**Monday 17th January 2022** - Speaker - Peter Enevoldson. Title:- 'The Parkgate Mosquito.....' Apollo, Luna, Neptune, Zephyrus....and the American President!

**Wednesday 23rd February 2022.** Speaker Stephen Ross. Title '34 years of Working for the Probation Service - The Highs, The Lows, Humour and the Occasional Terror'.

**Wednesday 23rd March 2022** - AGM followed by Speaker Gavin Hunter. Title 'Crossing the Mersey'. Looking back at the problems faced by people getting from Wirral to Liverpool over the centuries.

**Wednesday 21st September 2022** - Speaker to be arranged.

**Wednesday 16th November 2022** - Speaker to be arranged.

**NOTE:** Meetings will start at 8.00pm in Heswall Hall. Regrettably at the moment we are unlikely to be able to provide tea and coffee beforehand.

We are expecting to host our usual annual '**Carols Around The Tree**' event on **Wednesday 8 December 2021** starting at 7.15pm at the gates of St. Peters Church in the Lower Village. More details will follow nearer the time.



## **TREASURE HUNT**



The Heswall Society has produced a Treasure Hunt/Quiz for parents/carers and grandparents. The trail is approximately 50 minutes in length, depending on how many stops are made. It is principally aimed at primary school children and takes you through the main Heswall Village, pointing out refreshment stops and play areas along the way.

For further details, please visit the Society's website.

## **PUBLICITY.**

Full details of the Society's activities can be found on our website at [www.theheswallsociety.org.uk](http://www.theheswallsociety.org.uk).

## **MEMBERSHIP**

If you are not already a member of Heswall Society and/or can think of anyone who might be interested in becoming a member, please complete and/or pass on the **Membership Application Form overleaf**. Further copies can be downloaded from our website [www.theheswallsociety.org.uk](http://www.theheswallsociety.org.uk).



## THE HESWALL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP AND GIFT AID FORM

Your membership will include all the members of your family living at the same address.

I (details below) wish to become a member of THE HESWALL SOCIETY:

Reference (HS use only)

Title ..... Surname ..... Forename(s) .....

Address .....

..... Post Code .....

e-mail address.....

Please write YES in this box if you are happy to receive all further communication electronically. Otherwise information will be sent by post.

### GIFT AID

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made today and in the future. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

#### Please notify the Heswall Society if you:

- \* want to cancel this declaration
- \* change your name or home address
- \* no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

Signed ..... Date .....

### STANDING ORDER FORM

Reference (HS use only)

To the Manager ..... Bank Sort Code .....

Address .....

..... Post Code .....

I hereby authorise and request you to debit my/our account No: ..... the sum of £..... (Minimum Ten Pounds) and credit Barclays Bank plc, Sort Code 20-29-50 for The Heswall Society Account No: 63505251 **on RECEIPT of this order AND ON DECEMBER 1 ANNUALLY** until cancellation; and to cancel any previous standing order payable to The Society.

Name(s) .....

Signed ..... Date .....

Please return this form to: Membership Secretary, The Heswall Society, c/o Heswall Hall, 111 Telegraph Road, Wirral CH60 0AF