

Man of the Trees

Every year, as you know, the Wirral Society presents The Keith Davidson Award to the person or persons who have made a significant contribution to protecting or improving the Wirral environment during the previous twelve months.

Had the award existed some 40-odd years ago one undoubted winner would have been a young man in his early twenties named Rod Tann.

And in this, the Society's 80th anniversary year, we salute him and relate the story of how a highly commendable one-man campaign to save a belt of trees from being felled led to a near-lifelong and active membership of the Executive Committee.

Rod, of course, is now the Society's Chairman and he has held office in one guise or another for over 40 years.



One day, in his early twenties, Rod was horrified to hear that it was proposed to fell a group of mature trees growing in a field between the Rectory and St. Bridget's Church in West Kirby. He protested to the then Hoylake and West Kirby Urban District Council but getting nowhere he seized the nettle and decided to go

straight to a man whose voice would certainly be listened to.

With some apprehension one day he knocked on the door of his Member of Parliament, the then Speaker, Selwyn Lloyd MP. Unlike the UDC, Selwyn Lloyd listened to what he had to say and declared he would take the matter straight to the Tree Officer at Cheshire County Council.

As a result the trees are still standing proudly today and Rod could be forgiven if, when he sees them, he quietly congratulates himself on his initiative.

Soon after this episode Rod bumped into the legendary Victor Smith, a Liverpool solicitor who lived in Caldby and whose deep love of Wirral and its flora and fauna knew no bounds.

Mr Smith was at the time the Society's Vice-Chairman and anybody who knew him will not be surprised to hear that within a toot of the Wirral Horn Rod found himself on the Executive Committee as Hon. Sec.

He was 24 and can probably claim that he has been the Society's youngest secretary so far.

Rod (short for Roderick) was not born in Wirral but in Beverly, East Yorkshire, and has lived in Wirral since the age of four after his RAF Squadron Leader father moved in to take over the erstwhile RAF West Kirby camp.

Rod was educated at Calday Grange Grammar School and after a brief flirtation with the Civil Service moved into local government, first in Birkenhead and later in Liverpool. When the Merseyside Council came into being he took a post in their Planning Department. In that capacity, the Committee agreed, he could possibly find himself in embarrassing conflict with the Society's views and though he remained on the Committee he gave up the Secretaryship.

That situation ended when Mrs Thatcher's government brought the Merseyside County Council (and all others like it) to a premature end. Rod moved to the Merseyside Fire and Defence Authority to become Wirral's Emergency Planning Officer, a post from which he retired last year.

After leaving the County Council Rod was elected Vice-Chairman of the Society and following the very sad death of Keith Davidson he became the Chairman.

Rod may have been born in Yorkshire but having lived in Wirral for well over 40 years or so he is a Wirralian through and through. He has also been connected with the West Kirby parish church of St. Bridget's for most of that time. He is an Assistant Church Warden and is Honorary Curator of The Charles Dawson Brown Museum which contains a collection of early Christian, Saxon and other medieval relics, most of which were found when the church was restored in 1869-70.

Apart from his wife Jane and his two grown up children, Rod's other great love is the 60-70 strong Wirral Symphony Orchestra of which he is the Chairman and, seemingly, also the general manager, programmer, and factotum. He is also a violinist in the orchestra.



Rod captures a moody view of Parkgate – one of Wirral's 38 Conservation Areas.

He also enjoys cycling and whilst not up to Beijing standard most highways and byways of Wirral have seen his tyre tracks at some time. However, with all his interests and commitments it is hard to imagine how he finds time for any relaxation.

'If you feel strongly about something,' he explained, 'you'll always find time for it. And I like to keep busy.'



WIRRAL MATTERS

NEWS and VIEWS from THE WIRRAL SOCIETY - FOUNDED 1928
THE WIRRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND (CPRE)

President: Professor John Tarn OBE DL FRIBA FRSA FRHistS FSA

What's the Wirral to YOU?

A high viewpoint from the top of Liverpool's Anglican cathedral shows the Wirral peninsula laid out between the mountainous Dee coast of Wales and the River Mersey. It gives a snapshot of what makes and has made Wirral a good place to be. Work – the development of the shipping trade with all its associated industries, patches of woodland and countryside, varied shorelines and easy access to wilder places and the rest of Britain.

When major industry first descended on Wirral, it was welcomed. People generally were not interested in the countryside as any sort of special resource. Workers came for the quarrying, shipbuilding, soap-making. Houses spread across field and common. It was then that people started caring for what was left and pushed for better planning and conservation of public open spaces.

In 1936 Viscount Leverhulme wrote, as a preface to The Wirral Society's book - 'Wirral Countryside, A Cautionary Guide',

'Of recent years there has grown up in all parts of England an increasing realization of the natural beauties of our country and a deepening apprehension of the dangers which threaten them.'

We see the benefits now in better landscaping of our environment through tighter planning controls and the efforts of groups of individuals who have discovered they can make a difference.

The Wirral Society, a pioneer in this movement to take responsibility for change, continues to energetically discuss and actively enquire into Wirral planning and supports projects which enhance our small, but rich and varied peninsula.

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Ch-ch-changes

By the 1980s people began to shop more by car than by bus. Shopping centre development reflected this. In 1988, architect Keith Davidson advised:

'Each of Wirral's Urban villages should have its own shopping precinct and a square as a meeting place with activities for senior citizens and youth nearby to promote a spirit of community and identity.'

The building of Birkenhead's Pyramids Shopping Centre and multi storied car park embodied these ideas – by 2008 the norm in any shopping area. It also gave the opportunity to all to see panoramic views - to Cammell Laird's shipyard and down to tree-lined Borough Road, once the country lane called 'Happy Valley'. Hilda Gamlin wrote in 1892 –

'A lovely vale with primroses covering the banks, the wild violets and woodbine so profuse that a stroll in the early dewy morning enabled one to secure a graceful decoration for the breakfast table. Honeysuckle, wild roses and blackberries followed in seasonable succession.'



A Village of Vision

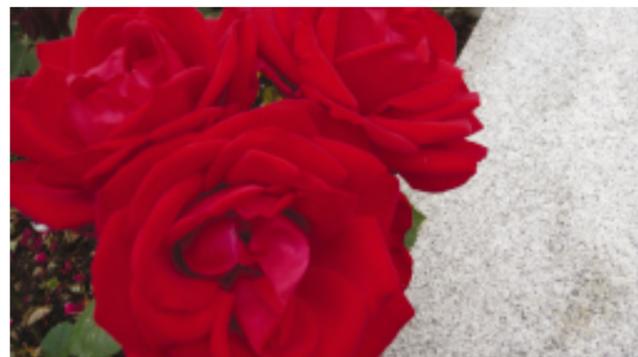
This year's Wirral Society Summer Outing to Port Sunlight, led by Elizabeth Davey, gave members the opportunity to visit one of country's most heralded industrial villages and the best known of Wirral's thirty eight Conservation Areas. The tour took in many of the village's 900 listed buildings, ranging from the former 'Fire Engine Station' to the schools in Church Drive.

William Hesketh Lever began work at Port Sunlight in 1888; over the years transforming an initially unpromising site into a unique model community. Among the later additions to the village were the Lady Lever Art Gallery and Sir William Goscombe John's moving War Memorial, with its theme of 'defence of the home'. Unveiled by two of Lever's employees, one blinded and one a recipient of the V.C., it lies at the heart of the village. Lever's own memorial, standing to the west of the Art Gallery, celebrates his contribution to Industry, Art, Education and Charity.

Conservation Areas, like Port Sunlight, will form the subject of the Society's Conservation Area Conference, being organised as part of its 80th Year Celebrations, to be held on Saturday 1st November at Birkenhead Town Hall. For information and booking Contact the Secretary (See Right →)



Detail from the 1921 war memorial by Sir W. Goscombe John RA, with roses blooming all around



Exploring the Southern Borders Old villages discovered just off dual carriageways

Backford - St Oswalds church 1270



The Barons of Dunham Massey gave the church to Birkenhead Priory in the fourteenth century and part of the church dates from that time. Inside is an oak chest from the early 17th century made of wood from Chester Cathedral and an aumbry – a rare cabinet made to hold chalices. The building is of sandstone with a slate roof and is a Grade II listed building.



THE WIRRAL SOCIETY - Small grants are available for suitable community projects. Contact the Secretary with your group's proposals. News snippets to the Editor.

Editor: Judith Railton, 22 Bracken Lane, Bebington, CH63 2LZ TEL: 0151-608-4498
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www.wirralsociety.net

See the website, designed by Nick Lauro, for up-to-date news and views

All Photos- by Judith Railton except - Parkgate view and West Kirby Old Village by Rod Tann, Neston Ladies' Walk by Doreen Grey, Spital Dam by Gill Wollers

Personal views expressed in WIRRAL MATTERS may not be the views of the Wirral Society or the Editor.

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THEN and NOW

1934

Acknowledged founder of The Wirral Society, Joan Royden wrote in Cheshire Life - "Local Authorities now possess, under their Planning Schemes, power to disapprove any plan submitted to them on the grounds of unsuitability of design or of the materials to be used."

At this time the Cheshire CPRE branch gave free advice on all plans submitted to them. They also supported a scheme where any builder could buy designs for small houses for a nominal fee. In this experimental stage it was hard to organize this. She also referred to the Ministry of Health Housing Manual of 1927 -

"With a little care it is possible, even within the limits of strict economy, to avoid the grotesque and unsuitable buildings which so frequently disfigure the English countryside."

1952 - From Birkenhead News 24th.December



In 1962

The Society was concerned about street lighting

We now accept this in many places as an aid to safety on the roads. The view today, along Arrowe Brook Road is little changed in 46 years, although on the left a dense hedge now covers the original railings to Arrowe Park.



1962

Was it post war economy or lack of planning that led to erection of

'Ugly concrete and wire fencing at Pensby Secondary Modern School... (which) one can hardly imagine being tolerated on the playing fields of Eton.'

In 2008

Pensby High School now sports trees and a new painted iron fence. But is it all just a matter of taste?



Summer 2008

Atelier - a good example of sympathetic development of old sandstone buildings at Burton Manor, for a Visitors' Centre, Studios for rural artisan craft industries and a Café. Support from North West Development Agency Rural Recovery Fund and Chester University made it happen.

It is hoped to restore Edwardian greenhouses and develop themed gardens on the site.

www.burtonatelier.co.uk



"It's a Green Belt Planning Inquiry from the eighties"

And over all these years - hundreds of miles of varying coloured local sandstone walls continue successfully to do their job

CELEBRATIONS

Neston Ladies' Walking Day -



every year in June.

The Wirral Show



A huge annual event on open land by the sea at Wallasey.



'Is Birkenhead Wirral's Capital of Culture?'
 'Culture Chalk' by Jacqueline Boylan – painted with a matt black surface for anyone to write their comments with chalk during summer 2008. See all 100 Superlambananas on issuu.com/Liverpool/docs/superlambananas

A merry dance on village green

Mersey Morris Men pay an annual visit to Willaston Village Green on Boxing Day – performing their traditional dances and a Mummings' play. There has been a local group, or 'side' of Morris Men since 1928.

Thornton Hough Scarecrow Festival



Hundreds of topical and witty 'crows' are made by villagers in most recent years. For weeks thousands of visitors make a beeline to see them and enjoy a fair on the Green.

38 Conservation Areas in Wirral
To be discussed and celebrated at our 80th Anniversary Conference – November 1st
The peninsula can proudly boast -

Barnston Village Bidston Village
 Birkenhead Park Bromborough Village
 Bromborough Pool Burton Caldby Capenhurst
 Clifton Park Eastham Village
 Ellesmere Port Docks Flaybrick Cemetery
 Frankby Village Gayton Hamilton Square Ince
 Ledsham Meols Drive Mountwood Ness Neston
 Oxton Village Parkgate Port Sunlight Poulton
 Puddington Rock Park Saughall
 Saughall Massie Shotwick Stok
 The King's Gap The Magazines
 Thornton Hough Thurstaston
 Wellington Road, New Brighton
 West Kirby, Old Village Willaston

The Chairman Writes

When we look back at the way successive Governments allowed town and country to be treated in 1960's Britain, it may seem to have been all 'doom & gloom'. Many of us remember the loss of much agricultural land to the construction of vast soul-less housing estates complete with their tower-blocks; the destruction and soul-less re-building of many historic town centres, and the demolition of many individual historic buildings, both grand and vernacular.

However, there was at least one important change for the good, which has enriched this Country ever since; that was the passing of Duncan Sandys' Private Member's Bill, which became the Civic Amenities Act, 1967.

This legislation principally laid down guidelines which formalised the idea of 'Conservation Areas'. Under its provisions, Local Councils were required to -

'seek out areas of special or historic importance, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.'

Here in Wirral, there is a certain irony in the fact that the first Conservation Area so designated in the Peninsula, Bidston Village, was by none other than that most philistine of local councils – the then County Borough of Birkenhead! I was present at a full Council Meeting in 1971 to hear it agreed to be so designated. Again, it was also ironic that this was a village from which the Council had, only a few years previously, irreparably removed its historic context by building the Ford (now Beechwood) Estate on most of the open land that surrounded it.

Forty years on since the legislation was passed, it is good to report that there are no fewer than 38 Conservation Areas within the Peninsula. The Wirral Society, now celebrating its 80th year, has decided to recognise this achievement by our local Councils, by hosting a day conference which will focus on how the appearance of these historic areas can be both maintained and enhanced. (Further details are included on pages 2 and 10) **Rod Tann**



A good example of a modern conversion in West Kirby Old Village Conservation Area

Where's that face?



Find the carving on the drinking fountain given by Charles Hill in 1863. It was reinstated in the 1990s on a new roundabout at the junction of Heath Road and The Village, Bebington. Rescued from a forgotten corner in Mayer Park it was replaced in its original location. A traffic safety warning comes if you want to examine it at close range.



Entries sought for the Keith Davidson Award
Closing date 20.3.09.

The Wirral Society has a special award for people who care about Wirral. This is presented to the person or organisation making an outstanding contribution to preservation or improvement of the borough's environment, especially over the last 12 months. Nomination forms from Doreen Grey, 0151 336-6109 or sospel@talktalk.net

What does Wirral Society do? by Dr. Lilian Potter

Prospective members often ask 'What does Wirral Society do?' If you are already a member you will be aware that, as well as producing this newsletter, the Committee arranges lectures, walks and the popular Hot Pot Supper. Enjoyable as these social events are, you need be aware that the main purpose of the Committee is to examine the planning applications received by both Wirral Borough and Ellesmere Port and Neston Councils to ensure that current policies are adhered to and inappropriate developments are avoided. The following paragraphs give an outline of some of the work of the present committee and, as we celebrate the Society's eightieth year, a brief look at our founders.

The inaugural meeting of the Society was held at St Michael's church institute, Claughton in May 1928 with the aim of preserving Wirral's natural beauty. The status of committee members was such that it was said if an afternoon meeting was called, business in Liverpool would come to a stand-still! Lord Leverhulme was the first president and vice-presidents included a Liverpool cotton broker and a Cunard director. Sir Ernest Royden's daughter, Miss Joan Royden, was the first Secretary and is usually acknowledged as the Society's founder. Other officers included Patrick Abercrombie, instrumental in the formation of CPRE and Professor L.B. Budden, holder of the Chair in Civic Design at Liverpool University.

Doubtless the officers of the original committee had clerical assistants to deal with correspondence etc. but the present committee takes a hands on approach and if their names are not instantly recognizable, their commitment to the aims of the Society is no less enthusiastic than that of their predecessors. Today's committee meet each month in St John's church hall, Meols and its members are drawn from varied backgrounds. It can still boast two Professors, one, a former holder of the Chair in Civic Design, the Senior Partner of an accountancy firm and a couple of Doctors et al, but their attendance at meetings would not halt the business of the Capital of Culture!

Until a few years ago, one committee member processed all planning applications which included visiting sites, viewing plans at Council offices, reporting to committee and undertaking relevant action if it was necessary to object to a proposed development. With the pace of development and

the increase in local and Government building quotas, this became an onerous task. Each committee member is now responsible for dealing with applications within a specific area of Wirral, usually adjacent to their home and a network of support and expertise has been established. The facility to view plans on Council websites and to contact relevant departments by email has enabled applications to be dealt with more swiftly and effectively.

Each officer also represents Wirral Society at other local Societies and strong links are maintained with Wirral Green Belt, Friends of Birkenhead Park, Heswall Society, the Footpaths association, Irby, Thurstaston and Pensby Amenity Society (ITPAS) and Friends of Storeton Woods amongst others. As the Society also continues to act as a District Committee for the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), a dual role it has taken since its foundation, another Committee member represents the Society on the Cheshire Branch Executive. At present the committee is without representatives from Eastham and Ellesmere Port and anyone wishing to assist with these or any area of Wirral is ensured of support and advice from existing officers.

The over-development envisaged in 1928 has been exacerbated by planning regulations and legislation never imagined and we look to new and current members of Wirral Society if we are to maintain and promote the aims of our predecessors.

CHANGES? WHAT CHANGES?

February 1967 - angry discussion over siting of a new school.



July 2008

Golf course: We want the truth

So - is the proposed new golf course on the Lower Birkett Valley flood plain a smoke screen for using it as a landfill site first?

Current issues - with more news on the website

Is the building of a children's nursery at Spital Dam a good idea?

A delay was requested on the start of building work as the site is (or was) one of special archaeological interest. The request was ignored. Trees have already been felled and the building work is well under way. There are unresolved issues on traffic safety and congestion. Heavy rainfall in early September caused high flood levels at a point which always has a severe flood risk warning.



Information from Gill Wollers and Sue Nicholson

Super Surgery on Green Belt Land at the Warrens, Thingwall?

This issue will not go away; although thrown out twice by Wirral Borough Council, the Primary Care Trust keep trying, claiming that no other site is suitable. It's a good example of the need for the continued, informed vigilance and perseverance that the Society provides.

A Seafront hotel at West Kirby?

Everyone loves a sea view. We'd like to keep the open view for all. Promises of a public café and below sea level car park in this proposed 'boutique' hotel are not good enough reason to build here, on a well used car park, prone to flooding at high tides.

Plant a tree in every Wirral Peninsula park

An 80th birthday Wirral Society initiative – offering a tree to all Friends groups with an interest in a local park. For progress – read the next issue.

Heswall Dales and Cleaver Heath

Highlighted by Liz Hommel

A site of Special Scientific Interest, a rare heathland habitat overlooking the Dee, is crowded in by increasing property development.

More news on this in the next Wirral Matters.



Alternate technologies continue to be controversial. Various groups including the Wirral Society are questioning the efficiency, quantity and visual impact on the seascape of wind farms off the Wirral coast.

CEMETERY COUP

John Moffat and the Friends of Flaybrick Cemetery welcomed 92 delegates from 17 countries - from Europe, Australia and UK to a conference on 'The Role of Volunteers in Cemetery Care and Restoration'. Two of the world's most famous cemeteries were represented – Highgate, London and Père Lachaise in Paris.

The Wirral Society sees Friends of Flaybrick as an important conservation and education group and has given a small grant for this event.

Alongside the conference, Wirral Museum has a photo exhibition of Italian cemetery sculpture – open to the public until December.

More details: www.gavinrymill.com/flaybrick

Interesting websites about Wirral

Put 'Wirral 1950s' into Google and you get to a fascinating series of ten minute films of various decades on You Tube produced by Angus Tilston.

We see short snippets of harvesting at Thurstaston pre-war, the Ritz cinema in Birkenhead, the Hooton to West Kirby train: Swimming in Harrison Derby Pool, in Riveacre pool and in the Manchester Ship Canal at Ellesmere Port; on to 1979 and the controlled destruction of notorious Birkenhead flats – Oak and Eldon Gardens.

Other Wirral Ways

The M53 Motorway



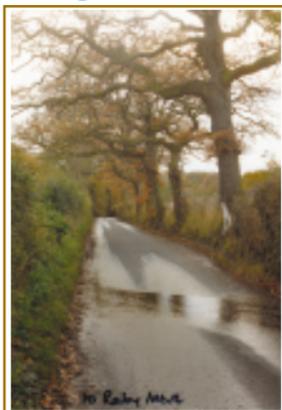
Built in the early 1970s, the Society accepted the inevitability of this major intrusion into the Wirral landscape. It supported this less damaging easterly route which is substantially in cuttings. The banks are now important wildlife habitats.

The busy rural minor road



Often busy with fast traffic – these Wirral roads present the problem of how pedestrians, cyclists, cars, lorries, tractors, runners and horses can safely share the route. Speed limits needed!

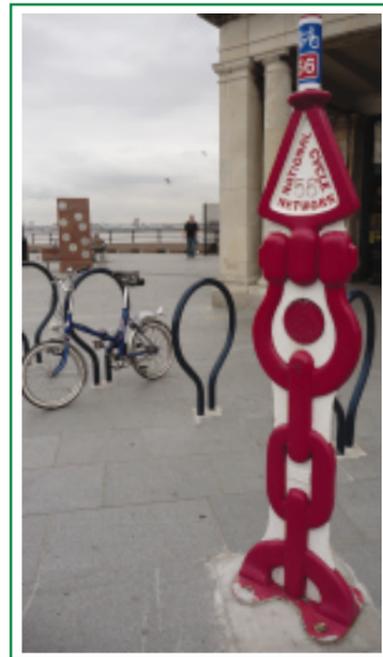
The single track road



These roads wind about all over Wirral and have been made more user friendly by construction of passing places. These have had a minor impact on the ancient forms.

The cyclepath

After campaigns at national and local levels many miles of off-road routes have been created. At Seacombe you can pick up part of Route 56, head off along the promenade into a stiff breeze up to New Brighton. Views of the Liverpool coast open out into Irish seascapes. Cut inland through Bidston Moss or, turning the North West corner, pedal through Thurstaston, Parkgate and Neston along the Wirral Way.



The footpath

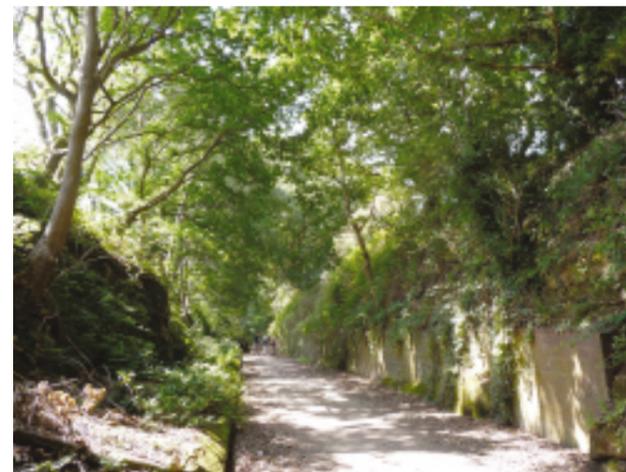


Just one of many Wirral footpaths – in Irby near the Anchor Inn. We have the Wirral Footpaths and Open Spaces Preservation Society to thank for a long term dedicated attention to keeping these routes open. The Wirral Society has offered financial help towards restoration work.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WIRRAL OPEN SPACES



March 1985 – people power overcame a plan to give over public parkland in Bebington to a hotel developer. In 2008 a bee enjoys the abundant lime flowers in Brackenwood Park.



Wirral Way - The rock cutting at Neston
A wonderful planning decision in the 1970s to keep the route of the West Kirby to Hooton railway line. This provides a great corridor for all sorts of leisure pursuits – walking, cycling, horse-riding, geology, wildlife



From the Old Quay, Ness, there is a well-worn path out onto the marshes with marvellous views of Wales, Wirral and changing skylines



Wirral Way – Hadlow Road Station
Kept as it was in the 1950s, now a small museum and resting spot for visitors to Willaston





A millennium cheirotherium

can be found in Storeton Woods near the Travellers Rest pub in Higher Bebington. This particular dinosaur left its footprints in mud, that gradually became the sandstone which was quarried from Roman times.

Gordon Plumb, with the aid of Eric Forsyth, both Friends of Storeton Woods made a life-size carving, further celebrating the saving of the Woods from development in the 1980s. Money raised by local subscription had been matched by funds from the Woodland Trust.



How it all began by Elizabeth Davey

CPRE or the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, as it was first called, was formed in 1926, just two years before the Wirral Society. The idea for a national committee to campaign to preserve the countryside came from the pioneering planner, Sir Patrick Abercrombie. Abercrombie had published his 'The Preservation of Rural England' that same year and it was he who became CPRE's first Secretary. Over 80 years later, CPRE continues to campaign for a sustainable future for the countryside, highlighting threats and lobbying at a national level. By becoming a member of CPRE you could make a crucial contribution to its work, since its strength and effectiveness derives from its membership. For further details go to the CPRE website - www.cpre.org.uk - or contact CPRE National Office, 128 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SW, Tel: 020 7981 2800.

WIRRAL SOCIETY
Membership Secretary wanted
Please contact
Mrs. Audrey Platt - 0151 342-5522

Small urban spaces are developed by and for the local community

How does your garden grow?

A sensory garden developed from derelict land at Liscard Community Facilities Complex will provide a great resource for environmental education, local children, community groups and residents

THE PUZZLE BOX
****80th Birthday Competition****
Entries to the editor
by January 12th 2009
Send your photo of
'What Wirral means to me' with a brief caption
£10 voucher to the winner
The best photos will be printed in the next issue

Congratulations
Winner of 'Name the public parks and open spaces in Wirral' - Mrs. M. Middleton
Can you add to the list?
Harrison Drive Park, Wallasey Embankment, Central Park, Wallasey, Moreton Shore, Red Rocks, Bidston Hill, Taylor's Wood, Birkenhead Park, Grange Hill, Caldy Hill, Kirby Park, Arrowe Park, Thurstaston Hill, Thurstaston Country Park, Victoria Park, Stanley Woods, Storeton Woods, The Dungeon, Puddyle, Heswall Dales and Cleaver Heath, Whitfield Common, Manor Wood, Higher Bebington Park, Mayer Park, Thornton Hough Green, Eastham Woods, Hooton Wirral Way, Raby Mere, Brimstage Green, Brotherton Park, Dibbinsdale, The Arno, Ashton Park, Haddon Wood, Stanney Wood, Mersey Park, Royden Park, Harrock Wood, Leasowe Common, North Wirral Coastal Park, Hilbre Island, Little Eye, Tanksey Rocks, Brackenwood Park

Further Winner from the Spring Competition
- Mrs Sarah J. Powell

Hare and Tide by May Minter

In the headlight glare
A hare sprang up
Sharp soft fur halo
Poised on the grass bank
Sensing the slowing car
Bounding across
Red Hill Road
Quiet and remote
On a November night

Earlier, at Caldy cliff
Watching a grey estuary sky
Turn to dull pervasive pink
Catching the small pools and streams
Of the low tide sands

Protecting the Balance

However necessary building and other developments seem to one group, others often disagree. It is right that any interested parties should speak up to 'test' the development. For, if we don't speak up and add our voices to the debate, we cannot use the power we all have to protect and change our environment.

Change is necessary to life. Viewpoints change over time. We work for some kind of acceptable balance between all the differing needs. A new shopping centre or supermarket alters the flow of business and the character of traditional areas.

Protection of historic buildings is only appropriate if they can serve a purpose for us in the present day.

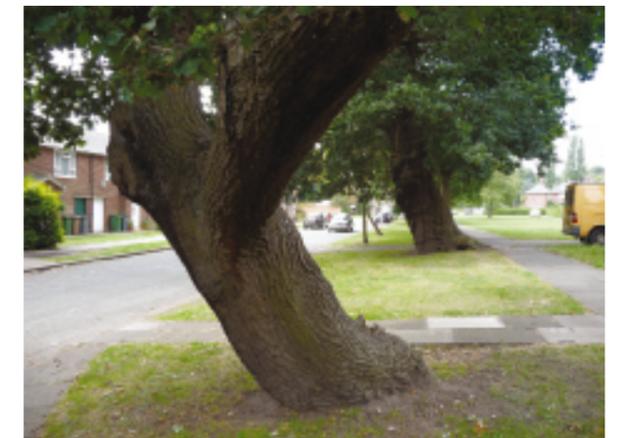
Huge mansions, abandoned by their wealthy owners, who lavished fortunes in their construction and decoration have sometimes found other uses for a time – as colleges, golf clubs and nursing homes. But neither their beauty nor their architectural design always make them fit for any purpose in the current age. Often it has been the smaller, manageable domestic properties that have successfully been modified and translated into 21st century living space.



Of the 'rash' of 1930s housing which covered field and common in their thousands some are now hailed as great examples of the Arts and Craft Movement. Many of their gardens are rich in plants and wildlife.



In places, such as the post war housing estate at Brackenwood, big old boundary trees were incorporated in a sympathetic development by foresighted planners and are still to be enjoyed today. The largest of the old oaks in Heather Road measures 15 feet (over 4.5 metres) around its trunk.



Elsewhere, as in Highcroft Avenue, Bebington, trees were planted - now mature, beautiful and supporting wildlife. The effect of trees on how we feel in our environment cannot be over-emphasized.



A Bebington cottage is newly thatched in 1991