

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Yet another year has passed by and the Parish Council has been as busy as ever. We attended the service at Victoria Square on Veterans Day and the sunshine was great.

At the council meeting when Triplex site was on the agenda for the very first time we had the largest number of visitors ever, the council was visibly outnumbered, fortunately only very provisional information was available so the meeting was cool.

Growing weather for the trees and shrubs was also very good this year so that clipping and pruning became a super exercise across the Parish sites

After the Remembrance Day Service, held at St James's this year, we went again to our War Memorial at Eccleston Lane Ends where residents also paid their own tributes.

Our tree lighting ceremony at Eccleston Library was supported by pupils from Bleak Hill School who provided entertainment for us by singing their best carols and songs. The Library staff also helped by sorting out the decorations and refreshments which again was much appreciated by the boys and girls. We must also thank Mrs Rainford for the Christmas tree, which looked really good when all the lights were switched on.

The lights around the Walmesley Road shopping area and the tall illuminated Christmas tree along St Helens Road at Eccleston Park were well received by the residents and people who drove past. These were provided by the Ward Committee which is able to budget for improvements and other changes currently beyond the limits of the Parish Council. To take full advantage of this condition the residents need to attend the Eccleston Ward Committee Meetings and raise their issues when the opportunity to do so is given.

Our Curators at the Smithy have excelled themselves this year with the preparation of programmes and presentations for the visiting public. These include schools and other groups of people seeking information about Eccleston in the past and its evolution. They have also recorded a programme for Radio Merseyside talking about the Smithy Museum and what it does. Last year the Smithy had more than a thousand visitors, some from as far away Canada.

Our Curators were one of three groups to be nominated for the prestigious St Helens Community Heritage Award. The Ceremony took place on 28 February 2009. So keep a weather eye open and watch out for announcements of the Programme of Events. A visit to the Smithy Heritage Centre is well worth it!

Being Chairman requires the help and support of my colleagues, and I thank them all, particularly Lynne our Clerk without whom our tasks and objectives would but rarely be successfully achieved.

COUNCILLOR LIONEL PERRY

WHERE THE MONEY GOES

The expenditure for 2007/08 is £55,512.17 with the receipts and expenditure as follows:

<u>RECEIPTS</u>	2006/07	2007/08
	£	£
Brought Forward	14,892	21,774
Precept	44,286	45,785
Administration, incs VAT repayments	3,038	3,588
Ecclesfield Insurance	195	283
Hall Charges	4,892	5,240
Parks – Insurance Claim	4,305	0
Ecclesfield Electricity Refund	1,132	757
Total	72,740	77,427

EXPENDITURE

Ecclesfield Changing Facility	4,162	3,600
Administration	26,530	28,207
Smithy 4,190		4,432
Open Spaces – not inc V Hall grounds	476	2,517
Grants 1,450		990
Village Hall 12,748	14,056	
VAT Payments	1,410	1,710
Total	50,966	55,512

PARISH COUNCIL TENDERS

The Parish Council wishes to expand its list of contractors prepared to tender for work in the areas of grounds, building, electrical, fencing and all similar maintenance. Any contractor wishing to be placed on the Eccleston Parish Council list of approved contractors who will be invited to tender for Council work, should apply in writing to: **Mrs L Scott, Clerk of Eccleston Parish Council, 416 Newton Road, Lowton, WARRINGTON, WA3 1JE.**

ECCLESTON VILLAGE HALL

KILN LANE

is available for hire on a regular or one-off basis

**CHILDREN'S PARTIES, COFFEE MORNINGS,
MEETINGS, CLASSES, EXHIBITIONS**

Contact Mrs L Poole 01744 638554

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

ELECTORS for the Parish of Eccleston are invited to attend the Annual Parish Meeting which will take place on TUESDAY 28 April 2009, at 7.30 pm in Eccleston Village Hall, Kiln Lane, Eccleston.

AGENDA

- 1 Election of Chairman
- 2 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22 April 2008
- 3 Financial statement of Receipts and Expenditure to April 2008
- 4 Township affairs
- 5 Light refreshments will be available

**COUNCILLOR LIONEL PERRY
CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
LYNNE SCOTT, CLERK OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

ECCLESTON PARISH COUNCIL holds meetings every second Tuesday of the month, except for August, when the Parish Council is in recess. Four months of the year the meetings take place at St James's Church Hall, St Helens Road, Eccleston Park. The remainder of the year the meetings take place at Eccleston Village Hall, Kiln Lane, Eccleston. Agenda are posted on the two Parish Council Notice Boards – outside the Village Hall and St Helens Road, Eccleston Park – as well as Eccleston Library. Minutes of meetings can also be found in Eccleston Library.

WEBSITE – Our website address is www.ecclestonpc.org.uk and, amongst other information, you can find copies of the recent Agenda and Minutes of meetings.

All residents are welcome to attend meetings and can bring up topics at the beginning of each meeting. If a detailed discussion and decision is necessary, this must be submitted to the Clerk **at least 8 working days** before the meeting so that it can be put on the Agenda.

BREAKING NEWS!

Re St Helens Community Heritage Award, our two brilliant Curators **WON** the award on Saturday 28 February 2009 – just in time to report in the Annual Parish Magazine. The evening at the World of Glass began with a champagne and canapés reception and the Leader of St Helens Council, Councillor Brian Spencer, welcoming guests. The guest speaker was Professor Phil Redmond CBE, deputy Chair and Creative Director of Liverpool Culture Company.

The three final nominees for the Award were Shining Lights Heritage Group, St Helens Association for Research into Local History and the Smithy Heritage Centre and the award itself was presented by Ranvir Singh of BBC North West Tonight.

Many congratulations to Joanne Chamberlain and Vicky Hiron. Please visit the Smithy Heritage Centre to see their work for yourself.

Vicky Hiron & Joanne Chamberlain

ART COMPETITION

Once again, we are hosting an Art Competition for all connected with Eccleston/Eccleston Park in collaboration with De la Salle School. Some of you may have already learned about the competition from posters that have been put around Eccleston recently. For those who have not, see below. The closing date is 24 April 2009 so if you are artistically inclined, do “have a go”.

3 THEMES: **Who am I?**
 Aspirations
 Peace in the Community

3 CATEGORIES: **Junior/Primary**
 Secondary School
 Age 16 plus

PRIZE GIVING: Eccleston Village Hall – 3.00 pm Saturday 23 May 2009

Work to be taken to De la Salle School or Eccleston Library by 24 April 2009 with Name, Address, Category & Phone Number/Email address on the reverse

CHURCHES TOGETHER

St Julie's and Christ Church continue to hold joint events for the ecumenical work of Churches Together in Eccleston (CTE). We no longer have the URC or the Methodist churches in Eccleston, which leaves the CTE short of premises to hold functions, as Christ Church hall is no longer in use.

We have, however, managed to share in worship in various ways during 2008.

Our first venture was celebrating the 100th anniversary of "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" at the Metropolitan Cathedral, where the speaker was the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Rowan Williams. It was lovely to see the cathedral full, and we had an excellent representation from CTE.

We had a second trip to Liverpool, this time to the ever popular "Churches Together in Merseyside" celebration, which is held in one Cathedral followed by a procession along Hope Street to the other Cathedral. The service in 2008, the City of Culture year, was marked by the unveiling of a statue in Hope Street of Bishop David Shepherd and Archbishop Warlock, two men who worked so hard for Christian Unity in Liverpool.

The Women's World Day of Prayer is also part of CTE and it is held each year on the first Friday in March. The service concentrates on a particular country each year and prayers are said continuously on this day, in churches through all the world's time zones. This year's Service is to be held at St Julie's, on Friday, 6th March at 1.30 pm followed by tea or coffee. All are welcome, male or female.

Easter Week, 2008, started with our annual Seder Meal on Monday, followed by a Walk of Witness on Good Friday around the parish, following the Cross and singing Easter Hymns. On Easter Sunday morning we had our Sunrise Service at the Mere to see in a new day and celebrate the Risen Lord, followed by "bacon butties" which are always very welcome after the early start.

Christmas cards were delivered around the area with the times of services for both churches and a good will message. We tried a new venture, singing Christmas carols, starting from Gillars Green and making our way to Walmesley Road shops, stopping off at St Julie's for mince pies. Everyone enjoyed it and we hope the true meaning of Christmas was rekindled in people's hearts.

To see what CTE are doing in Eccleston in 2009, look out for details in the local press and posters in local shops.

JOAN BROWNBILL & MARGARET GAVIN

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR HOME FROM FIRE

Making your home safer from fire couldn't be easier with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's Home Fire Safety Check. This is a free service offered to all residents which involves operational firefighters visiting your home to carry out a safety inspection, offer advice and fit free smoke alarms where needed. As well as English, these HFSCs can be carried out in Arabic, Chinese, Somali, Bengali or British Sign Language.

The Fire Service started this pioneering initiative in 1999. Since then more than 400,000 free smoke alarms have been fitted across Merseyside; a simple, practical way of helping save lives and reduce the misery of fire. The smoke alarms have a 10-year battery that cannot be removed.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service has developed a team of advocates to help its community safety work. The advocates deliver a more skills-orientated home fire safety approach and are often representative of the target groups they work with either through ethnicity, gender, age, skills or other

characteristics. This helps us influence and communicate better with these residents. They have already broken language or cultural barriers with thousands of residents, and promoted key fire safety messages. This has helped to improve the quality of life for many people by improving safety in their homes.

Arranging a Home Fire Safety Check is simple. Just call the free phone number **0800 731 5958** and an appointment will be made at your convenience for firefighters to visit your home.

PHIL LINGLEY **Eccleston Fire Station**

ARCHERY & BLACKSMITHING

The daily commute to work rarely yields any pleasant surprises. How many times we had drove past the unassuming little museum, heaven only knows. Tucked away, sitting perfectly within its suburban surroundings, the Smithy Heritage centre was introduced to us by pure chance rather than by our less-than keen observational skills.

Admittedly, Wiganer's with little knowledge of the Eccleston area, it was quite a wonder to find a museum dedicated primarily to blacksmithing, sitting silently on our doorstep. The Smithy no longer has the rattle and hum of the hammer against the anvil, nor the billowing smoke rising steadily from the open forge. Motor vehicles have now taken the place of nervous horses waiting to be shod. What the Smithy does offer, however, is a delightful insight into a world almost lost and very nearly forgotten - much to the detriment of the modern world. Some would argue that this is a view seen through glasses tinted heavily with rose.

The traditional blacksmith's life was undoubtedly one built around hard labour and not a particularly over-paid one. Dangerous to the uninitiated yes, but mesmerising to the acquainted. I have seen first hand the amazement in young eyes as they see for the first time an inanimate piece of metal being heated to a dull cherry colour, and then shaped seemingly effortlessly by a blacksmith's hands, often producing something purely utilitarian or something of astounding beauty. Quite often, a mixture of both. And not just the young. People of all ages and backgrounds often stand agog as the spectacle of heated creation takes place and enquiries are made as to how one can learn or find out more about this diminishing skill. Well now there is a chance.

The Smithy Heritage Centre will be celebrating International Blacksmith Day on 23 May 2009 and as part this ancient art form, Blacksmith, Andy Flatters, will be demonstrating the skills and techniques finely tuned by our ancestors over millennia. Complementing a marvellous display inside the Smithy, Andy will fire up his forge and momentarily take us back to a bygone age that truly deserves resurgence in these technological dependent times. Accompanying him will be a silversmith who plies her skills in the production of beautiful and bespoke jewellery, and the Museum's curators whose efforts have yielded magnificent results. And we will be there also. We, that is Broadway Archery and Activity Club will be giving demonstrations and have-a-go sessions at the noble and ancient art of archery. Panic not, however, we will be using foam arrows ensuring total safety. Incidentally, that is the connection between us. We learnt the basics of blacksmithing to produce our own arrowheads. As a result of the attraction, we can now produce our own gates. Such is the fascination of this wondrous art.

Hope to see you all there.

STEVE WILLIAMS **Broadway Archery Club**

HOSPICE UPDATE

The Willowbrook Hospice is there for the people of St Helens and Knowsley who are suffering from life threatening diseases. Care is given by people from different professions who work together as a team. They welcome a new Medical Director – Dr Alison Coakley.

The new expansion will bring excellent facilities for outpatients. Further funding is required to complete the project. There is a new way in which you can help – by buying a brick. Sponsorship forms are available from the Fundraising office. When this phase is completed they hope to start Phase III, which will increase the number of beds and Day Therapy places.

The Volunteers Team was awarded the Team Award at the St Helens Voluntary Service Awards for 2008. Congratulations to them! Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers and the Fundraising Committees.

If you wish to help in any way contact

Julie Garner
Director of Fundraising
Telephone 01744 453798 **or**

Neil Wright
Chief Executive
Telephone 0151 430 8736

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Skydive	Sunday 26 April
Fashion Show	Thursday 30 April
It's a Knockout	Monday 4 May
Rainhill Gala	Monday 25 May
Moonlight Walk	Saturday 6 June
Great North Run	Sunday 20 September
Walk of Hope	Saturday 26 September
Masquerade Ball	Friday 9 October

COUNCILLOR CHRISTINA DUNCAN

A LITERARY LOT

Have you ever stopped to notice what an incredible body of literature has been produced with an association to the North West?

We can begin with a short trip to Daresbury. This is the home of Charles Dodgson or as we all recognise him today, Lewis Carroll. The tale of '*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*' arose on the 14th of July, 1862 as a means to amuse a young girl by the name of Alice Liddell and her sisters. Dodgson uses a myriad of fantastical beings and creatures to tell the story of the young girl's trip into another world from which he incredibly drew inspiration from the things around him. Part of the joy of reading his work is to play at being detective and unravel who actually was the dodo, was there really a Cheshire Cat and, where is the entrance to Wonderland?

Keeping with the theme of amusing creatures is the work of Edward Lear. Who can say that they have never heard of '*The Owl and the Pussycat*' and '*A Book of Nonsense*'? Lear had a very wealthy patron in the shape of Edward Smith-Stanley, 13th Earl of Derby, an English politician, landowner, builder, naturalist and art collector (to name but a few of his passions). Indeed, rumour circulated that "Edward Lear" was

actually a pseudonym of the Earl of Derby as both men bore the forename of Edward and it was suggested that Lear was, in fact, an anagram of earl.

An earlier member of the Stanley family, Ferdinando, the 5th Earl of Derby (1559?-1594), was himself a supporter of the arts, who adored music, dance, poetry but above all the theatre. He was patron to both Robert Greene and Edmund Spenser, but there is a more intriguing link with the bard himself, William Shakespeare.

By far a more gritty approach to literature is that of George Orwell (real name Eric Arthur Blair). Often described as “perhaps the 20th century’s best chronicler of English culture”, (*Still the Moon Under Water*”, Economist com, 28 July, 2008). On the 31st of January, 1936, Blair set out to investigate the social conditions of Lancashire and Yorkshire. At the suggestion of trade union official Frank Meade, he headed for Wigan and throughout February of that year he lived in dirty lodgings above a tripe shop, all the time recording in his notes details such as the wages earned and the conditions lived in. He painstakingly researched public health records and reports on working conditions. An incredibly vivid account told in the novel is that of his trip down a coal mine, the men involved and the place of their labour.

But there is much more; the Gawain Poet of the 14th century is reputed to have been a member of the local Cheshire gentry, a gentleman by the name of John Massey and, of course, we cannot forget the brilliance of Beatrix Potter, who chose to adopt Cumbria as her own. Indeed, the list could go on and on and on.

So, there is only one thing for it, if you want to know more, then you shall just have to visit the Smithy Heritage Centre between the 4th of July and 13th of September to enjoy “*Once Upon a Time in the North, Tales With a Northern Accent*” or learn more about the Shakespeare connection from a talk by Rosemary Tyler on *Elizabethan Prescott* on the 12th of July (booking recommended).

JOANNE CHAMBERLAIN

Joint Curator

CAROL’S KITCHEN

TIGER CAKE – Use a round or oblong tin

Ingredients: 6 oz butter or margarine
8 oz caster sugar
3 eggs
8 oz plain flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
4 teaspoons cocoa powder
1 tablespoon milk

Method

Cream fat and sugar well, add the beaten eggs slowly. Add the flour. Take out one third of the mixture and put in the tin. Take out another third and add the cocoa powder, mix and put on top of mixture already in the tin. Finally, add the remaining mixture.

Bake in a moderate oven Gas 3 or Electric 170°, for approximately 1 – 1 ¼ hours, making sure you test the cake.

When cooked you can eat as it is or ice and decorate for a party cake.

COUNCILLOR CAROL PEARL

NEWS FROM LESTER DRIVE CENTRE

We were honoured with a visit from royalty, albeit 500 years after his reign! Resplendent in full regalia and sporting a fashionable codpiece, (but alas, no crown jewels) King Henry VIII of England, France and Ireland held Royal court with the members of the '89 Society. In the guise of the Tudor king was Ray Irving, who tours the country giving an entertaining insight into the life and loves of Henry. Ray can be seen in Henry mode as a regular feature at Salmsbury Hall.

A Victorian Millionaire also enthralled us with tales of adventure and excess from around the Empire. Liverpool Ranger Richie Baker donned top hat and tails to give a fascinating peep into the world of the Liverpool Victorian millionaire newspaper magnate and philanthropist Mister Henry Yates Thompson. "Who's he?" I hear you ask. He was the man responsible for the original Palm House in Sefton Park. The '89 Society has been entertaining and enlightening members for twenty years with varied programmes of historical subjects, travelogues, music and the arts and wildlife and nature, in the form of talks, slideshows and workshops... and contrary to the name you don't need to be 89 to join.

In response to numerous enquires and in addition to the regular bridge clubs our bridge guru, Derek, has started a beginners bridge club on a Wednesday morning. Anyone interested should contact 29388.

The Gardening Circle were consistent in their performance at the annual inter clubs Gardening Quiz hosted by the Croxteth Gardening Club in the library at Croxteth Hall – well done team!

What's on at the Centre?

Monday mornings the Art Club meet from 9 am 'til noon. In the afternoon on alternate weeks we have an Afternoon Tea & Bingo from 2.30 to 4.30pm. The event is very popular with the elderly as they meet and enjoy fellowship with their peers, play a few games of prize bingo and have a nice afternoon tea. And around 3-ish the Rington's man calls with baskets of tea, coffee, sweets, jam, marmalade and other seasonal goodies for our people to buy. In the evening the Weight Watchers meet.

Tuesday mornings the very popular Jo-Jingles pre-school group meets, followed in the afternoon by the Day Opportunities Scheme run by Social Services. In the evening The Bridge club meet from 7.15pm. If you are, or have been a bridge player, why not come along, it costs £1.

Wednesday morning at 9.30 am Beginners Bridge meets.

Thursday evenings (alternate weeks) the Bingo club meets for prize bingo and refreshments. We always have room for more players so don't be shy give it a try.

Friday afternoons the Helen O'Grady Drama Academy runs classes for children. In the evening the St Helens Contract Bridge Club meets.

Saturday morning the St Helens Gospel Choir rehearses.

In addition to regular weekly events we have monthly meetings of: The Ladies Guild (2nd Tuesday), The Lady Farmers (3rd Wednesday), The '89 Society (2nd Thursday) and The Gardening Circle (4th Thursday). The '89 Society & The Gardening Circle have enjoyed a successful year with increased membership numbers and first-rate speakers covering a wide range of topics. If you are a gardener or a would-be gardener, or if the '89 Society programme appeals to you, or if you would like to know more about any of the activities at The Lester Drive Centre please ring 0174426813 or e-mail lesterdrivecentre@googlemail.com

Andrew Martlew

WEARING THE TROUSERS

The phrase “wearing the trousers” is usually used to refer to the person in charge, whether in business or a relationship, and for many years this has been the case for men. However, trousers as we know them have not existed for long.

Originally, trouser-like garments were worn almost as underwear. When the Romans invaded Britain, the auxiliary soldiers (soldiers from the many Roman provinces not classed as Roman citizens and therefore not entitled to wear the toga) adopted woollen *braccae*, breeches fastened with a drawstring, to combat the cold weather. Similar breeches were worn by men across Northern Europe, people the Romans saw as savage and uncultured, and so their clothing was identified as uncivilised; in the 1st Century AD the Emperor Honorius issued a decree prohibiting men from wearing "barbarian" trousers in Rome!

Anglo Saxon men wore woollen breeches beneath tunics and robes, enabling them to move freely and remain warm. Over the centuries, the style of men’s clothing developed at a slow rate compared to that of women. Woollen breeches varied in length, from knee to ankle, and hose (stockings) came into use. The hose were not knitted the way socks are, instead they were cut from woven wool cloth and stitched together.

As jackets and tunics became shorter, the codpiece became necessary attire for modesty’s sake as the hose were often two separate leg coverings which did not cover the entire lower body. It was originally a small triangular piece of cloth attached to the hose which doubled as a pocket, but during the Tudor period codpieces became fashion accessories padded to ridiculous proportions.

Breeches and pantaloons then became popular, usually ending at the knee and worn with stockings of wool or silk. Wool, linen, buckskin, fustian (a hardwearing type of cotton twill) and silk were common fabrics for breeches depending on the wealth of the wearer and the occasion. By the end of the 1700s matching jackets, waistcoats and breeches were popular and developed into the suit as we now know it.

References to “trousers” appeared in the late 1600s as ready-made clothing for the common working man, loose fitting and made of linen, and the same word was used to refer to sailors and soldiers’ garments in the late 1700s. It was only in the 1800s when they were widely worn by civilians, and became standard during the late Victorian era. The practicalities of trousers are such that they have changed little since then, and are a staple of all men’s (and most women’s) wardrobes.

Short trousers were popular for young boys from the early 1900s onwards. Even today many men remember their first pair of full length trousers, marking their coming of age. “I was still in short trousers when...” is often used as an introduction to a childhood anecdote. In recent years short trousers have become less common, but growing up in the 80s they were still acceptable for juniors. Most of my brother’s long trousers had to be cut down into shorts following various ‘adventures’, but advances in fibre technologies such as Teflon coatings have now made trouser fabrics marginally more childproof!

Jeans have become a favoured article of clothing for everyone of every age, and have a very interesting history of their own. Denim trousers have been a practical hardwearing garment for cowboys, farmers and even sailors for hundreds of years. Levi Strauss sold denim trousers to miners in America in the 1850s as “Levis”. Jean fabric, as it was then known, made sturdy trousers but as it was so tough and thick, it was difficult to sew, and the pockets often ripped off. He used copper rivets to reinforce the seams, and jeans as we know them were patented in 1873.

Jeans became an outward symbol of rebellion for the newly-emerging teenagers in the 1950s, a style popularised by James Dean and Marlon Brando. The practice of shrinking the jeans to fit became a widespread craze. Before the recent innovation of stretch denim with a Lycra and elastin mix, to get an extra-tight fitted pair of jeans, the wearer would have to sit in a hot bath with their jeans on for hours at a time. Their appeal continues today and almost everyone has, or has had, a pair.

For women to wear trousers nowadays is completely socially acceptable and normal, not the taboo it once was. The Smithy will open for the 2009 season at 1.00 pm on Saturday 11th March with a new exhibition, "Wearing the Trousers - Fashion and Women's Role in Society" exploring the changes in women's lives, the clothes they wore and how each affected the other.

Many items from the Smithy's collection along with some loaned from local people and the Curators themselves will illustrate this fascinating topic, from Victorian kid gloves which protected delicate ladies' hands whilst simultaneously preventing them from doing any laborious or dirty task, to masculine wartime uniforms worn when women temporarily replaced men in the workplace. There will even be items for visitors to try on!

VICKY HIRONS
Joint Curator

JU-JITSU AT ECCLESTON VILLAGE HALL

For over twenty years there have been Ju Jitsu classes at the Village Hall on Kiln Lane. Many children both boys and girls have completed training - as well as adults.

Ju Jitsu was the original Japanese martial art. It gives students confidence as well as keeping them fit and learning to defend themselves.

The classes are on a Monday and Friday evenings, starting with the first children's class from 6 pm to 7.00 pm. This class is for beginners up to and including Green Belts.

The second class starts at 7.00 pm until 8.10 pm, with the adult class from 8.10 pm until 9.45 pm.

We take children from the age of 5 upwards. It is never too late to start as some of our adult students have started in their forties. The instructors have over twenty-five years' experience at teaching Ju Jitsu.

All new comers are welcome.

GEOFF PEARL
Ju Jitsu Instructor

A GLIMPSE INTO THE LIFE OF A PARISH COUNCIL CLERK

I started my employment with Eccleston Parish Council in 1997 and, at the time, thought it would be a stress-free, no hassle, part time job working mainly from home. Well, I do work mainly from home, apart from visits to the Village Hall, Smithy Heritage Centre, and trips around the Parish of Eccleston and St Helens!

When I joined the Council there was just myself, Caretaker Joyce, and a young lady who joined at the same time as I did, looking after the newly-built Smithy Heritage Centre. Both Joyce and the Curator left shortly afterwards – nothing to do with me! Now we have two Curators, Joanne and Vicky, Lisa who acts as Caretaker and watchdog to any problems in the Village Hall and Bob who is the Caretaker of the Ecclesfield Changing Facility. Without the "team", my job would be much harder. Of course, there is the nuisance value of calculating their salaries and deductions and dealing with the Inland Revenue but they are worth it! The empire has grown so much due to the hard work of all members of staff – the Smithy Heritage Centre has flourished and is a valuable asset to the Parish. The Village Hall is well looked after by Lisa who also takes bookings for parties, user groups and events. Most nights are booked but we have

plenty of room for groups wishing to use the Hall during the day-time – except for Tuesday mornings when one of our long-time users – the Art Club – is in there.

My office in the spare bedroom of my home is packed with a desk, telephone, computer, fax machine, photocopier and filing cabinet and my main responsibility is carrying out the “commands” of the Councillors. These come from discussions at meetings of the Parish Council (12 Councillors who are residents of Eccleston/Eccleston Park and who give their time and expertise free of charge), held on the second Tuesday of every month – except August. In addition, we hold an Annual Meeting, which usually takes place in April – see the invitation and Agenda on page 3 of this Magazine. The meetings take place mainly in the Village Hall, Kiln Lane, but four times a year we hold meetings in St James’ Church Hall, Eccleston Park. There are often committee meetings beforehand, which help speed up the decision-making process later. Some of the committees we have are Planning (the Parish Council is one of a list of “consultees” invited to respond to planning applications in the Parished area), Open Spaces (we currently lease 7 open spaces from St Helens District Council), Hall & Personnel, Smithy, Ecclesfield Management, Finance, War Memorial, and Editorial. The newest addition is the Chain of Office, which has grown so unwieldy, it could be the cause of repetitive strain injury to the current wearer, not to mention the ruination of the “best suit”. Therefore, we have invited tenders for making a simple chain and installing an Honour Board with the names of all past Chairmen of the Parish Council – and room for more in the future! This is still very much in the planning stages as yet – we would welcome your advice.

The routine office duties include processing payments, sending responses to plans, passing on information from residents to relevant Councillors and obeying the demands of the E-mail system which, as everyone who is on the Internet knows, can overtake life as we know it! It is the Clerk’s job to set up the meetings, deliver Agendas and Minutes and make sure the Parish Council is kept up-to-date with legislation. Quite a lot of the work is taken up with Accounting duties. Parish Councils are the first tier of local government and as such are governed by the same rules as district councils. Since roughly 2002 (it might be longer, certainly seems like it) the annual Council audit was restructured and entitled “The Lighter Touch Audit”. This, in essence, became a lighter touch for the external audit company (appointed by the Audit Commission) and heavier for the Clerk, who is very often entitled the Responsible Financial Officer as well as Clerk, aided very much by the Chairman of the Finance Committee. In addition, we are required to employ an Internal Auditor who is not internal to the Council but who is impartial. His/her task is to check on the way we conduct our finances and to make sure we leave an “audit trail”; only spend what is stipulated in the Budget; make the best possible use of Residents’ money as collected in the annual Precept and ensure the money is used to enhance life in the Parish.

Of course, at this time of year a good deal of my time is taken up with assembling the Annual Parish Magazine. All Town and Parish Councils are required to “inform” residents of how money is spent and keep them abreast of what is going on. For that reason, we invite people to submit articles of interest to Eccleston and Eccleston Park residents and some have this year, although we would have preferred more. If anyone feels able to contribute, please do not hesitate to contact me – see the **Local Contacts** pages at the back of this magazine.

Just a glimpse into the job - all in all, not a bad life, and who gets to have a new “boss” each year in the fashion of “Yes Minister”? Certainly an advantage if you don’t get on but it hasn’t happened yet – watch this space!

LYNNE SCOTT
Clerk to the Parish Council

ADVENTURES IN ECCLESTON

‘Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, “and what is the use of a book,” thought Alice, “without pictures or conversations?”

(Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll)

The Daresbury Lewis Carroll Society was founded in 1970 and is still going strong to this day. As part of the society’s events, each year the appointment of the official Daresbury "Alice" takes place. She reigns from October to October and is always a young girl from the area. This year it is 11 year old Charlotte Theis.

To mark the anniversary of the day that this wonderful story was first told to a young Alice Liddell and her sisters, the Smithy Heritage Centre is proud to play host to Daresbury’s official Alice.

On Saturday the 4th of July, Alice will officially open the Smithy’s exhibition ‘**Once Upon a Time in the North**’ and a tea party will be held in her honour, with lots of jam tarts (what else!). Everybody is welcome, there is no need to book and entrance is free.

“So she sat on, with closed eyes, and half believed herself in Wonderland....”

For further details ring 01744 730744 or e-mail smithyheritagecentre@hotmail.com

JOANNE CHAMBERLAIN
Joint Curator

**CHAIRMEN AND CLERKS OF
ECCLESTON PARISH COUNCIL 1894-2008**

CHAIRMEN

1894-1917	Thomas Garner	1962-1963	H Broughton	1989-1991	W R Crosby
1917-1928	Joshua Simm	1963-1964	C Ackers	1991-1992.....	Mrs T V Sims
1928-1931	Chris Pennington	1964-1965	W R Crosby	1992-1993	D Bayliss
1931-1939	Ch Taylor	1965-1966.....	L Prest	1993-1994	Mrs T V Sims
1939-1940.....	T Wright	1966-1967	McCormack	1994-1995	Mrs A Melia
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1941-1942	D Saunders	1968-1969	H J Hunter	1996-1998	Mrs T V Sims
1942-1943	H E Moody	1969-1970	W R Naylor	1998-1999.....	Mrs S A Evans
1943-1944	Harry Taylor	1970-1971	R D Foster	1999-2002.....	Mrs T V Sims
1944-1945	J C Ackers	1971-1972	W S Paton	2002-2004.....	D Bain
1945-1946	G Foster	1972-1973	G Brownlow	2004-2005	Mrs M Maloney
1946-1947	J T Tyrer	1973-1974	P A Brosnan	2005-2008	Mrs C Duncan
1947-1948	Jas Rainford	1974-1975	F Smith	2008-2009	L Perry
1948-1949	Ch Taylor	1975-1976	R Pennington		<u>CLERKS</u>
1949-1950	D Saunders	1976-1977.....	H J Hunter	1894-1912	E Range
1950-1951	H E Moody	1977-1978	W R Crosby	1912-1934 ...	J Stead (Grandfather)
1951-1952	J C Ackers	1978-1979	T McCormack	1934-1967.....	V Stead (Father)
1952-1953.....	J T Dudley	1979-1980	W R Naylor	1967-1976	J Stead (Grandson)
1953-1954	J T Tyrer	1980-1981	R D Foster	1976-1979	G T E Lewis
1954-1955	J Barron	1981-1982	W S Paton	1979-1982	D T Thomas
1955-1956	Ch Taylor	1982-1983	G M Brownlow	1982-1986	D S Grimley
1956-1957	G Palin	1983-1984	W R Crosby	1986-1991	Mrs D Worsley
1957-1958	H E Moody	1984-1985	T McCormack	1991-1997.....	Mrs C Roberts/Relph
1958-1959	H J Hunter	1985-1986	W R Naylor	1997-Present	Mrs L Scott
1959-1960.....	J C Ackers	1986-1987.....	G M Brownlow		
1960-1961	J T Dudley	1987-1988	Mrs C Pyke		
1961-1962.....	J Ducker	1988-1989	J Hockenhull		
1961-1963	H	1989-1990	W R Crosby		

LOCAL CONTACTS

PARISH COUNCIL – COUNCILLORS

West Ward

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Vicky Hirons Tel 01744 730744
Smithy Heritage Centre Tel 01744 730744

Caretaker

Lisa Poole Tel: 01744 638554

ACTION LINES

Ring these numbers to report problems or poor service:

Street Lights – Call Centre Tel: 01744 45600
quoting the number painted on the street light
Refuse/street cleaning Tel: 01744 45600
Information Unit Travel Time Table Tel: 0151 236 7676
Traveline (National Number) Tel: 0871 200 22 33

CHURCHES

CHRIST CHURCH, ECCLESTON – Rev W Forster
Christ Church Vicarage, Chapel Lane Tel: 01744 22698

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS RC CHURCH
Fr David Melly, Portico La, Ecc Park Tel: 0151 426 6251

ST JAMES CHURCH, ECCLESTON PARK
Rev Harry Welch, St James Church Vicarage
St Helens Road, Prescot Tel: 0151 426 6421

ST JULIE RC CHURCH
Fr T Naylon, St Julie Presbytery, Howards Lane
Tel: 01744 28196

SCHOOLS

BLEAK HILL PRIMARY,
Hamilton Road. Head: Mr I Wellens Tel: 01744 678190

DE LA SALLE HIGH SCHOOL,
Mill Brow, Head: Mr W Daunt Tel: 01744 20511

ECCLESTON LANE ENDS CP, off Albany Avenue,
Ecc Park, Head: Ms C Gowan..... Tel: 01744 678270

ECCLESTON MERE CP, Saleswood Avenue
Head: Mr P Friend Tel: 01744 678280

ST JULIE RC PRIMARY, Brooklands Road,
Head: Mr P F Martin Tel: 01744 25032

TODDLERS/PLAYGROUPS/ACTIVITIES

Jo Jingles, Lester Drive Centre, every Tuesday morning
1-2 years 9.30; 2-3 years 10.30; 3-4 years 11.30 am
Contact Fran Harrop Tel: 01744 454000

MUMS & TOTS, St James Church Hall
Tue 1.00-3.00 pm, Mrs Jolly, Tel: 0151 4939251
24 Vining Rd, Prescot, St Helens

ST JULIE MUMS & TODDLERS
Hall behind St Julie's Church, Howards Lane
Tue & Fri 9.00-11.00 am
Mrs Audrey Baines Tel 01744 631095

ECCLESTON PARK NURSERY
V Simm/J MacGowan Tel: 0151 431 0008

PLANET KIDS PRIVATE DAY NURSERY
Broadway, Eccleston Tel 01744 754555

KEEP FIT/SPORT

SLIMMING WORLD
Mrs T Potter - Weds Village Hall Tel: 01744 630899

BOYS SOCCER
Bleak Hill Rovers, J Monsvoll Tel: 01744 615466
Millfields Jnrs, J Potter Tel: 01744 630535

ADULT SOCCER
Eccleston United, J Armitage Tel: 01744 754535
Cricketers FC, C N Sutton Tel: 01744 750746
Villa Rainhill, S Leigh Tel: 01744 608918

ECCLESFIELD CHANGING FACILITY
Caretaker Bob Kelsey Tel 07880 538387
Secretary Lynne Scott Tel: 01925 292747

ECCLESTON LIONS RLFC
Mr P Anders Tel: 01744 616469
19 Ledbury Close, Eccleston E-mail: panda19@aol.com

PRESCOT CRICKET CLUB
Burrows Lane – applications in writing or phone in season:
Bowling Section, Mr S Whitaker Tel: 0151 426 6853
Applications: Tel: 0151 426 6811

JUJITSU, Eccleston Village Hall, Kiln Lane
Mon & Fri 6.30-9.30 pm

SAILING ON ECCLESTON MERE
Mr Rob Jones Tel: 01744 756330

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL Tel: 01744 456000
Town Hall, Victoria Square – all departments, Call Centre

ECCLESTON LIBRARY Tel: 01744 677575

