

being brought to court. In the meantime however, the Council has received a Planning Application to develop the land for housing. The Society has made the case to the Council that it should at least hold off making a decision on the Application until the legal situation is resolved. We continue to watch the situation with interest.

**Some current Society Casework – Landscape**

National Character Assessment: The Society has been invited to comment on the newly-issued draft Assessment that relates to the Peninsula. The Assessment is part of a National initiative being undertaken by Natural England. These Assessments set out in detail how landscapes are made up and records their important features. Once agreed, this information will be of great help to the planners when preparing future strategic documents.

**Former Champion Spark Plug site, Upton:**

Wirral Council has advised the Society that it is in contact with the owners regarding possible improvements to the site, which will include sorting out the issues of seeing suitable signage is erected and that a replacement for the tree 'screen' is undertaken with suitable re-planting.

**Litter**

The Society is liaising with Wirral Council with a view to seeing how the problem of litter on Merseyrail embankments and on the lines at stations can be resolved. It is hoped to use the Open Golf tournament next year as the target for seeing some sort of resolution to this issue. The Society is now contacting Merseyrail over this matter.

**JOY HOCKEY  
MADE PRESIDENT OF  
WALLASEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Eminent local historian, and Wirral Society committee member, Joy Hockey has been inaugurated as the President of Wallasey Historical Society by the Mayor of Wirral, Councilor Dave Mitchell.

“Joy Hockey’s 36 years service as committee member and chairman is unlikely ever to be surpassed,” said the society’s Chairman, Geoff Adams, “and she has shared her love of Wallasey history through teaching, lecturing and writing.” The Mayor commented on Joy’s contributions to the life of Wirral in her work on planning committees over many years.



*On Thurstaston Common*

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**HELP SUPPORT OUR WORK**  
*send your name and address and tel.number and email address to Avril with a cheque for £7 (£10 for a society) for one year’s membership (Jan to Dec)*



The Holm Oak, planted by the Woodland Trust and Friends of Storeton Woods in the Millennium is thriving. Both organisations have worked together since they bought the woodland in 1990

**AUTUMN + WINTER 2013 - looking at trees**

**Green Belt Matters**

**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**

**The Last Days of the Great Eastern**

Seventy members of the Society enjoyed a hot pot supper at the Heatherlands Restaurant in October. This was followed by an engrossing talk by Mr. Peter Bingham on the last days of the Great Eastern, the biggest steamship in the world and its sad demise on the Mersey. Some members will remember the Great Eastern Pub in New Ferry which was burnt down under suspicious circumstances a few years ago, and which had retained some of the artifacts of the great ship.

It had a varied and interesting career – launched in 1857, built to sail to Australia and back without fuelling it did instead get to New York. It laid telephone cable across the Atlantic and was laid up, rusting, in Milford Haven. It creaked up towards Liverpool and was reinvented as an entertainment ship in the Mersey – advertising Lewis’s store on the hull. There was Bob the Missing Link and daring trapeze artists, theatres and stalls.

Eventually it was sold to a demolition firm who took 2 years to break it up, so strongly had it been built. One of the masts went to Anfield football pitch as a flagpole.

If you want to comb the shoreline between Rock Ferry and New Ferry you just might find a relic of its glory days – Time Team did just that in recent years.

*Diana Lane and Judith Railton*

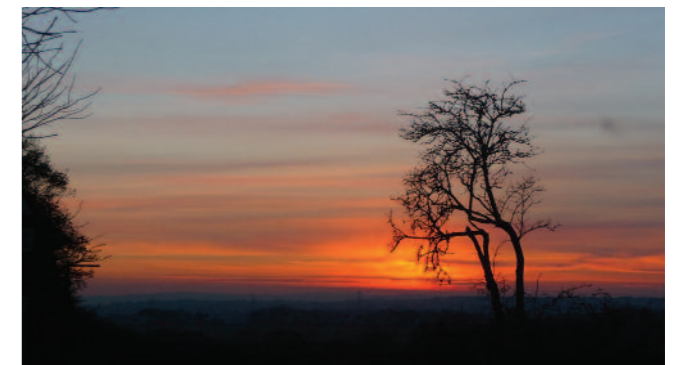
The issues with the management of the Planning Committee in Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) continue, although there may be some changes before going to press.

The big success was the resounding defeat of the repeat application for the “Student Village”, just to the north of Chester on Green Belt land. However, this is tempered by a near repeat application for a huge estate off Ledsham Rd, Little Sutton, for Redrow, refused only in July 2013. This land has now appeared in the CW&C Draft Local Plan. This would be a significant loss of good agricultural land, and surely to lose valuable food producing land does not meet the NPPF test of “Sustainability” when there is brown field land available in the area with far better links to essential services.

Another application that has reappeared is for two wind turbines at the University site a Leahurst, Neston. Again arousing much local protest. We can only hope that they will not become the first “rural” turbines to wreck the “Openness” of the Green Belt on the Wirral.

In comparison, Wirral MBC has been “subdued”. We have responded to the latest draft of Wirral MBC’s Core Strategy, and are heartened with the high status afforded to Green Belt land. However, we have just been notified that the grand “Golf Resort” scheme for Hoylake, is now going out to tender. Surely if it was a good idea (or not) it would have been decided years ago? The site is Green Belt land and much of it is owned by the Council! The issues with the “Warrens” site at Thingwall spring to mind.

Any further information on the Green Belt in the Wirral please email:- [neil101parry@gmail.com](mailto:neil101parry@gmail.com)



*From the Storeton ridge looking to Wales*



## Trees in the Wirral



Wirral was once a royal forest. That was not a woodland, but a maintained area of rides and heath for hunting which became the best basis for the subsequent spread of trees. The name, "Wirral" is said to derive from the Norse meaning a slope of myrtles and Greasby's name means a wooded settlement. There are areas of ancient woodland, local nature reserves and large areas of woodland managed by the National Trust and the local authority maintains significant parks and many thousands of trees in public spaces and roadsides. Wirral's greatest riches, however, are the people in the many conservation areas, allotment, wildlife and community groups actively retaining, repairing and replacing the local treescape.

As tree wardens, we're a small band, succeeding where we do, only because we work in conjunction with those other groups and their volunteers. We have many struggles ahead as the local authority may find it increasingly harder to look after tree stocks with diminished resources. We need to be more vigilant to get a quicker response when trees are threatened by development or by any of the various tree diseases. We're planning sessions for local groups, ramblers and dog walkers so that more can spot early signs of infection or other potential disasters. We support tree plantings and also the planting of shrubs and smaller hazels, willows and the like, creating spaces for trees to spread into, to keep a balance of trees of different ages, just like the earlier scrubland.

Our projects include the community orchard in Brimstage where we've started a three year cycle of extensive pruning, planting, grafting and clearing and are happy to share the abundant apple, pear, plum and damson harvests with helpers. We've

also given away fruit and freshly-squeezed apple juice at events to raise awareness of tree, woodland and community orchard issues.

We're learning all the time and we need to build up our effectiveness in helping trees thrive in our area. It can be fun, so winter pruning and clearance work starts with a Wassail party on Sunday 5th January, when we'll also inspect recent work at Dibbinsdale and Brimstage. We're very happy to pass on skills and our enthusiasm to anyone who'd like to help, either with us or in their own neighbourhood, school or community. If you are in a conservation group, neighbourhood forum, allotment group, wildlife project, community orchard, "Friends of." group, would you be a contact so tree wardens can update you about what's happening to our trees?

Dates for sessions about tree and orchard awareness and skills will be available from mid-December, so call Margaret Coles after then on 0151 639 6797, to learn more about our work, or to find out the details for the Wassail celebration on 5th January 2014 and various "Walk in the Woods" events.

The Tree Warden Scheme is a national initiative to enable people to play an active role in conserving and enhancing their local trees and woods. The scheme was founded and is coordinated by The Tree Council.

Tree Wardens are volunteers, appointed by parish councils or other community organisations, who gather information about their local trees, get involved in local tree matters and encourage local practical projects related to the trees and woods.

Wirral's Tree Wardens are part of the Wirral Environmental Network.

*Philip David Ellwand*



## W. Victor Smith Lectures 2014

Lectures in 2014 will be on **Thursday** 30th January and **Thursday** 6th March.

### AGM Thursday 6th March 2014

The costs of printing and posting the AGM papers has increased dramatically over the past year and in an attempt to save more of our resources, the AGM papers will **NOT** be distributed by post. The papers will of course be available at the AGM and on line from 28th February 2014

Members who are unable to attend the AGM or do not have access to the internet will be able to request paper copies after 28th February by contacting the Membership Secretary, Avril on 0151-200-3920

**Please note that this information applies to the AGM papers ONLY.** You will continue to receive Wirral Matters and notification of other events throughout the year by post unless you have already provided your email address.



### Mostyn House School

Trees on site include a copper beech and three horse chestnuts of about 150 years old, a century old hawthorn and sycamores, several small alders, a collection of variegated hollies and a Japanese acer. Work is being done with the developer to ensure the trees are kept, along with the swimming pool and the chapel.

## Woodland Trust

Is the UK's leading woodland conservation charity. They own and care for more than 1200 woods, all freely open to the public. In the last decade they have fought to protect more than 1079 ancient woods threatened by development. They tackle tree disease on a national scale and have planted 22 million trees.

Would you like to know more and think about supporting Woodland Trust?

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)  
or ring free 0800 026 9650



## Chairman's Comment

In our last issue of Wirral Matters, we highlighted some aspects that relate to the natural environment of Wirral Peninsula.

This time, we continue with an element of this theme by looking at some 'tree-related' issues. One of the features that make our peninsula so special, is we are so well blessed with trees. Being living structures they have a limited life; but the lives of certain trees are sometimes shortened when found to be in the way of development proposals. Sometimes we accept there has to be compromise but not in all cases.

The well-treed Noctorum Ridge is a major feature of the landscape of north Wirral. In the summer of 2012, a contractor cut down a significant number of trees on the lower slopes of the ridge without permission, knowing the trees had the 'protection' of a Tree Preservation Order.

We have been assured the Council is unwavering in its determination to bring a prosecution against the landowner and we look forward to the case eventually

*Continued.....*