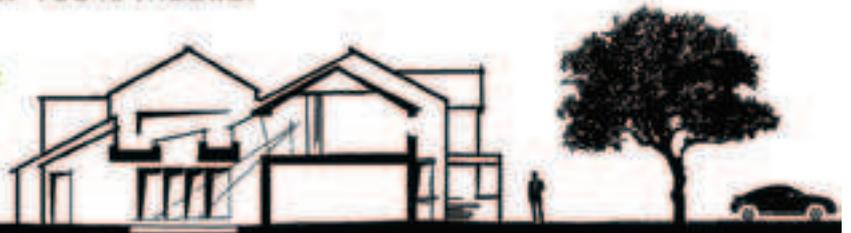


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At a charity garden fete to raise funds for the Church of England Waifs' and Strays' Society held at Barnston Towers in 1904, car rides organised by a Mr Taylor of Chester were exceptionally popular.

Many recreational activities were reported. A bowling green had just opened at the side of the Glegg Arms and the first competitive match of the newly formed Golf Club took place in May 1903. Quoits was a popular game, and cricket matches on the Puddydale and football matches at Farrhall were described. The cycling club also organised athletic tournaments. There was a move to set up a photographic society. The key proponents of this were Mr CH Schumacher who ran a pharmacy on the Mount and Mr WG Beavan of the Dingle, Quarry Road. The latter is now famous for the thousands of photographs he took all over the country which were used on postcards. Mr Schumacher was involved in many magic lantern shows of photographs by guest speakers describing foreign travel. He gained a moment of notoriety when he purchased an adder caught on the Dales which he exhibited in his pharmacy. The snake escaped, which caused great consternation until it was found asleep on a bottle shelf. It was re-exhibited, but this time safely preserved in alcohol.

Social events, dances, lectures and concerts took place at the Hotel Victoria, the Assembly Rooms on the Mount, or at the Mission Church, the Presbyterian Church and the Wesleyan (Methodist) church halls on Telegraph Road. During this period a Temperance Hall opened on Poll Hill. The annual Heswall summer camp for the boys from the Akbar Reformatory Ship moored in the Mersey provided much entertainment, as joint activities and matches with the local inhabitants and teams were organised, and the Akbar band was very popular. At this time it was already known that the Akbar Reformatory would move to permanent premises to be built on the Dales.

The social activities of Mr and Mrs Brocklebank, who lived at the Roscote on Wall Rake, were reported very frequently. They owned a villa in Florence and their departures south to Italy to avoid the colder part of the year in England before and after Christmas were



always announced by Litrebili. They held a very successful Fruit and Flower Show in their extensive garden every August. Their son, Lieutenant Hugh Brocklebank of the 9th Lancers, came on a furlough from service in India in 1904 and brought a lynx to the Roscote. The animal managed to slip its chain during the night and escaped. A great hue and cry ensued with many different sightings reported, often at the same time in very different places. Litrebili had great fun describing all the antics, including the purported capture of the lynx, which always turned out to be a completely different animal. Eventually the poor animal was killed when it was struck by a train on the railway to Crewe from Chester.

Litrebili did not mention much about the commercial activities in Heswall, but did describe the opening of the Esther Kelly bakery at the top of Poll Hill and of Gayton Dairy on the Mount. He recorded how a sweetshop owner on the Mount became so irritated by pilfering of his sweets that he prepared some special ones filled with chilli powder, and how the anguish of the culprits caused great amusement.

There is so much information in these cuttings and the authors wonder how future historians will be able to capture such information on our current lives, now that the local press no longer has the resources to record everyday events in any detail. As always, we would be very pleased to receive any additional information readers may have on the topics covered.

Submitted by Roger Lane and Jenny McRonald (roger.m.lane@btinternet.com or 0151 342 9269) on behalf of the Heswall Society, which was established in 1953 "for the public benefit to conserve the heritage of the Ward of Heswall". For more details of membership and activities please call Roger Lane or visit theheswallsociety.org.uk