

Neston Parish Church was at this time being restored by tradesmen so the coffin of the young schoolteacher, Mr. Heveran, was conveyed to Neston National Schoolroom where the crowded funeral service was held. When Mr. Heveran's coffin was carried into the schoolroom by four Neston Sunday-school teachers, his sister, who had to be helped into the schoolroom, became extremely upset and let out a piercing shriek and fainted into the arms of her stepfather. She was given water but her cries started the schoolchildren sobbing and crying and tears were shed by nearly all present, young and old. A beautiful but solemn service followed as the 16th chapter of the Corinthians was read. Mr. Heveran was a native of Athlone in Ireland, but in the two years he had lived and worked in Neston, not only had he gained the affection of the schoolchildren, but had also won the love and respect of the people of Neston and had made many friends. Many kind and respectful things were said of him. He was a kind and gentle master, but also a hardworking and painstaking teacher, using all in his power to educate the children in his care. Mr. Heveran was a 22-year-old single man, betrothed to a local girl.

Present at the service were many gentlemen of standing, including the Rev. Hugh Doig of Bolton, Rev. A.S. Grenfell of Mostyn House, Parkgate; the Liverpool wine merchant Mr. Christopher Bushell J.P. of Hinderton Hall; Dr. Blonden and others. The coffin was carried from the school where a funeral procession was formed in the road and then proceeded down the High Street to the churchyard. Nearly every house in the street had the blinds drawn and all the people turned out to watch the sad cortege. The coffin was followed by Miss Heveran, supported by her stepfather and a young lady, then the schoolchildren sobbing bitterly, followed by friends and many gentlemen. In the churchyard, on seeing her brother's coffin in the grave, Mr. Heveran's sister was badly overcome and broke down, in an agonised voice she said "Don't put him there". It was a most harrowing scene and she had to be removed from the graveside. Back in Heswall, young Henry Rathbone was buried on the Wednesday in St Peter's Church graveyard.

Apart from newspaper reports, some local residents wrote personal accounts of the storm and memories were passed down verbally through some families. Henry Totty of Lydiate Farm was already having bad luck as his cows were suffering from foot and mouth disease. He wrote about the church being struck and people being killed and hurt and "For about four hours the rain poured down very heavy, washed the road leading to the shore five to six feet deep, broke down the bridge at Barnston Dale and flooded a great many houses". In her booklet of jottings, Kathleen Carruthers wrote that her grandmother, who was 15 years old at the time, was in the church on the night of the storm. She told Kathleen about the deaths and injuries and that she ran screaming from the church and up the steps of Elder Cottage (which stood close by) where she hid behind her schoolteacher Betty Butterton. Betty had opened her cottage door after being alarmed by the sound of the church being struck. There were also a lot of stories of livestock being washed down into the River Dee. In the neighbourhood known as The Slack, cottages and both pubs were flooded out and women had to be carried to safety from the Wesleyan Chapel (now the site of Cherry Tree Mews).

On the night of the Great Storm, Heswall suffered the worst damage, but other Wirral towns and villages were also effected. The low-lying area between Hoylake and Bidston was almost entirely flooded. A house in Frodsham Street, Tranmere, was struck by lightning, but not badly damaged. The chimney of the Dock Hotel in Freeman Street, Birkenhead was also struck by lightning, causing a number of bricks to crash down onto the roof. The lightning bolt entered the Hotel, damaged a picture and rattled through the cutlery, but fortunately nobody was hurt. Also in Birkenhead, one of the horses pulling a tramway car from Woodside Ferry along Hamilton Street was struck by lightning and although it survived, the poor horse was no longer fit for work. There was a loud explosive bang in Bebington Cemetery, when a lightning bolt badly damaged the roof of the Dissenting Chapel and shattered the stone cross on the gable end. In the Trafalgar area of Lower Bebington, two semi-



The flood mark, found about 50 yards downhill from the entrance to the Fox and Hounds car park. Cut in 1875, the letter H is about 30 inches up from the footpath.



This keystone in the sandstone bridge over the brook in Barnston Dale records that it was re-built in 1876.

detached villas were struck. The lightning entered Mr. Drapers house through the roof, damaged a wall and upset several hanging pictures. It entered Mr. Picton's house through the chimney and brought down a large fall of soot which filled the room.

Neston and Parkgate were also badly hit by the storm. A party of gentlemen on Parkgate Parade saw the storm break on the Welsh side of the Dee, when at about 6.30pm there were flashes of lightning. As the storm intensified, thunderclouds gathered over Parkgate and torrential rain began to fall which built up in hollows in the fields on the high ground above Neston. The accumulated water burst out at about 7.30pm and thundered through the streets of Neston and downhill to Parkgate. At the Chester Arms Hotel (now replaced by the Old Quay) drinkers had to climb onto chairs and tables in an attempt to avoid the deluge. Along the Parade, houses and cellars were flooded as deep water gushed through the village and into the River Dee.

Not far from Heswall, Barnston Church was packed with worshippers for the harvest festival. Severe floods soon made the road outside impassable and the congregation was stranded. A gentleman attempted to get home in his horse and carriage, but it was put out of action in minutes. The section of the Barnston Road in Barnston Dale, between the Fox and Hounds pub and Gills Lane, was completely awash. The waters of the brook which flows through the Dale and under Barnston Road, rose to a terrific depth. A large tree uprooted by the torrent was washed down the Dale like a battering ram and slammed into the road bridge completely wrecking it. Torrents of water rushed down Barnston Road from the fields and cascaded down the hillsides from every direction. After some hours, churchgoers who lived in Pensby made their way home via Slack Road (now Milner Road) and Whitfield Lane. The next day, owing to