

3. Neston life, the third week of July 1914.

England's big worry was still the threat of civil war in Ireland, and the diplomatic comings and goings between Serbia, Austria-Hungary, Russia and so on were not as yet being viewed with any really serious concern. Neston life with its ups and downs carried on as usual in that third week in July, 1914.

Neston schools broke up on Thursday 16th July and on the following day 150 Neston children went on the Congregational Sunday School Treat to Thornton Manor, obviously a popular location for a day out for the youngsters, as the Liverpool Road school children had also been there the day before. The following Wednesday was the Sunday School Treat day for the 70 Little Neston Methodist children who went to Barnston Dale for fun and games. Grown-ups had their day out on the Saturday when the colliery organised the annual trip to Blackpool for over 150 of its workers.

A series of accidents in the town had made the news in the previous couple of weeks: - a man from Olive Road who was felling trees at Backwood was seriously injured when one fell and pinned him to the ground; a chauffeur at the Manor House down Moorside Lane was badly injured when the car's petrol tank exploded; Hugh Thomas from Belmont Cottage (now under Sainsbury's) got a fractured skull when he was thrown out of the trap he was driving; Thomas Dodd who was removing sleepers from a train wagon in the rock cutting part of the line at Little Neston, ended up with a broken leg and a bad scalp wound when a sleeper fell on him; and one of the officers who was with the Territorials on Parks Field fell from his horse when it stumbled on Parkgate Parade, and broke his arm in three places. The worst accident was the drowning of young George Peters in one of the Dee gutters; George, from Birkenhead, was staying with his cousins in Neston, and could not resist going in the water for a swim as they walked along the shore towards Burton, despite being warned of the dangers.

There were plenty of options for those looking for something to keep them occupied. The Girls Friendly Society (nothing to do with the Neston Female society) was a group that provided support for working-class girls, through the help of the better-off local ladies. A sale of work in aid of funds was held in the vicarage gardens (on Parkgate Road at this time). The Girls Guildery (the female version of the Boys Brigade) held a similar event in the Presbyterian (now URC) schoolroom, and on Sunday 19th the GG and the BB were at church parade for the anniversary of the

Presbyterian church. The children of J.R.Hughes, the High Street grocer, also Norah Coventry (*“Into their hands”*) and Eddie Wright (*“Love your enemies”*) all showed their talents.

Sporting activities included Neston District Bowling Club, The Institute Bowling Club (and of course the Institute Football Club), billiards, quoits, and a first class cricket team, though on that hot sunny Saturday of the 18th July 1914, the cricket did not go so well, as all Neston’s men were all out for 57 against Wallasey.

Neston lads William Chrimes and James Bedson were hauled up in court for stealing two hand-reared ducks from Gayton, and bound over for six months; Henry Jones was fined five shillings for being drunk and disorderly in High Street. Willaston dentist Henry Field had been driving his motor-bike at ‘a reckless pace’ of between 20-28 mph as he rounded a corner near Windle Hill- fined £1 and costs.