

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Founded 1974. Registered Charity No.508024.
A member of the British Association for Local History
and the Merseyside Civic Society

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Annual Membership Subscriptions

Household £5 Single pensioner £4 Company, etc. £10

The Society's membership year runs from 1 Nov-31 Oct.

If you are already a member, your **address label** indicates the date when your next subscription payment is due.

If it reads '31/10/22', please renew as soon as possible.

New members joining the Society after 1 July are regarded as 'paid up' until 31 Oct the following year.

If you wish to join the Society, or to renew, please send the appropriate subscription to the Membership Secretary, David Phythian, 26 Primrose Road, Liverpool L18 2HE: cheques payable to The Gateacre Society.

Subscriptions may also be paid by bank transfer.

Please email us for our account details.

DO YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS?

If so, and if you would like to receive your Newsletters by email instead of by post, please let us know by sending a message to membership@gatsoc.org.uk quoting your name and postcode.

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Our next meeting:

FROM MIDWIFE TO LORD-LIEUTENANT

A talk by Dame Lorna Muirhead on Monday 22nd May, 7.30pm in Gateacre Chapel, Gateacre Brow, Liverpool L25 3PB

In 1965 Lorna Muirhead – a Nurse and a Midwife – came to work at the Liverpool Maternity Hospital in Oxford Street. She had only planned to stay for two years but, like many others who come to this city, she fell in love with it and is still here!

Dame Lorna says that her professional passion is the care of labouring women. She has shared many joys, and a few sorrows, delivering Liverpool babies. Aged 50, she was elected to the council of The Royal College of Midwives – the oldest and largest midwifery organisation in the world – and three years later was elected president. For services to midwifery, she was made Dame Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in the Millennium honours list.

In 2006, the late Queen Elizabeth II invited Dame Lorna to become Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside, her own personal representative in the county. This was a post she held for what she describes as “eleven wonderful years”.

On standing down from the post of Lord-Lieutenant, Dame Lorna was made Dame Commander of the Royal Victorian Order. Now, in retirement, she reflects on her good fortune “from being a midwife on a bicycle, to being driven in a chauffeur-driven car with a flag on it!”.



DIARY DATES (our future talks in Gateacre Chapel):

Monday 17th July, 7.30pm, Jim Doran on his time as a Lighthouse Keeper

Monday 18th September, 7.30pm, John McCombs on Childwall Woods

Please see our next Newsletters for confirmation and further details.

GATEACRE CELEBRATES

Bank Holiday Monday, 8th May, was the day when the flags came out in Gateacre and everyone had fun! The day began and ended with heavy rain – but, when it mattered, the skies brightened and the sun even peeked through at times. The Friends of Gateacre had organised a community event on the village green, with face-painting and craft activities for the children and, later on, live music for all to enjoy.

At 1 o'clock we were honoured to welcome Mr Mark Blundell, who as Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside is King Charles III's personal representative within our ceremonial county, and had agreed to visit Gateacre to join in the celebrations. The excuse for all of this, of course, was the Coronation which had taken place two days previously. In 1953, when Queen Elizabeth II was crowned, a copper beech tree was planted on Gateacre Village Green. In 2023, as mentioned in our last Newsletter, we decided to plant another special tree: a silver birch.

At 1.30 p.m. the Lord-Lieutenant unveiled a plaque, recording the fact that the tree (*see top photo*) had been planted "to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III".

Our thanks go to the Lord-Lieutenant, who showed such an interest in our activities and the various volunteers to whom he was introduced, to the Friends of Gateacre, who planned the event so thoroughly, to the three Woolton Ward Councillors who arranged the funding – and of course to all those local residents who attended and made the event such a success. A special presentation was made to Councillor Barbara Mace, the current Chair of the Friends of Gateacre, who had just retired from the City Council after 24 years as one of our elected representatives. Finally, special thanks and congratulations are due to Councillor Kris Brown, who masterminded the event and who continues in office as the elected member for the new Gateacre Ward.



LOOKING BACK TO 1953

It was the copper beech tree by the Wilson Memorial which inspired this year's Coronation event. In mid-April we managed to identify one of "the children of Gateacre" who, according to the plaque alongside, had planted it in 1953. She is Mrs Margaret Simm – now retired, but for 27 years a teacher at Belle Vale Primary School. She has written down what she remembers of the occasion:

"My memories of 1953 are that the village celebrated with an event on the Cricket Field, then several children went to the Green to plant the tree. I was nine, and the eldest, so I took the spade and put soil around the roots and my Father told me to 'heel it in'. I have lived in Gateacre all my life, and have watched it mature into a lovely tree".

(There's a photograph of the children – including young Margaret – dancing round the maypole on the Cricket Field on page 57 of our book 'Gateacre & Belle Vale').

On 18th April we were pleased to welcome BBCtv journalist Davinia Ramos, who interviewed Margaret about the 1953 event for the North West Tonight news programme. Sadly, it would seem that the footage ended up "on the cutting-room floor" – though Gateacre (and our 2023 plaque) was still featured, thanks to a contribution from Barbara Mace, when the programme was eventually broadcast on 3rd May.



REMEMBER 1977?

At the Coronation event on 8th May we were reminded about the festivities which had taken place 46 years ago, on the occasion of the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Local children were again involved, and we hope to make this the subject of a future Newsletter article. If you have any personal memories of the event, please let us know by emailing info@gatsoc.org.uk