

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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Membership Subscriptions

Household £4 Single pensioner £3 Company, etc. £6

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

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

Our Book - Gateacre & Belle Vale: in old photographs - is on sale at our meetings and events, price **£10** (bookshop price £12.99).

Our Tea-towel is also available, price **£4**.

Visit our website - or contact Beryl Plent or Pam Ball for further 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



The Gateacre Society

Guarding the Past - Safeguarding the Future

NEWSLETTER - January 2016

Our next meeting:

MEMORIES OF GATEACRE VILLAGE AND CHAPEL, 1943-54

An illustrated talk by
Alexander Stewart

on Sunday 7th February
at 2 p.m. in
Gateacre Chapel,
Gateacre Brow L25 3PB



Professor M A (Sandy) Stewart was born in Norwich in 1937 but grew up in Gateacre. His father was the Minister of Gateacre Chapel, and the family lived at 'Chapelstead' - No.8 Gateacre Brow. Later on, following his father's early death, Sandy and his mother moved to Gorse Cop Farm.

Sandy's boyhood memories were rekindled when he came across our book, 'Gateacre & Belle Vale in old photographs'. Although he now lives in Edinburgh - after a 30 year academic career at Lancaster University, where he was Professor of the History of Philosophy - he has kindly agreed to come and talk to us. He will be adding his own verbal 'captions' to a selection of photographs from the book.

ALL WELCOME - Admission free - Donations invited

CUNARD LINE - 175 NOT OUT

Our September 2015 talk – reviewed by Beryl Plent

On 28th September Les Cox took us through the 175 year history of the Cunard shipping line, beginning with the first Atlantic crossing in 1840 by the Royal Mail Steam-Packet Co. steamship 'Britannia' from Liverpool to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and ending with the 2015 anniversary celebrations which took place in Liverpool.

Among the colourful array of ships illustrated were RMS Lucania, built in 1893, and Mauretania, a sister ship to the Lusitania, so tragically sunk by enemy torpedo in 1915. Carpathia was the ship whose honoured Captain Rostron rescued the Titanic's 706 survivors. Caronia, the elegant 'green goddess', was the first to be purpose-built for cruising. Aquitania served from 1914 until 1950, carrying 618 1st class, 614 2nd class, 2000 3rd class passengers and 972 crew. Franconia was famous for the on-board conference of Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt in 1945.

Cunard ships served in the Crimean war, and in WW1 twenty were lost. As they could outrun German U-boats, they were utilised as WW2 troop carriers. From the 1920s onwards liners became a popular mode of travel. Cunard passengers included famous filmstars, dignitaries and even royals. Despite a new head office having been established in Southampton in 1919, operations continued at Cunard Building, Liverpool until 1967 and the ships still bore LIVERPOOL on their sterns.

Now the most prestigious cruise-liner company, Cunard's huge ships, such as Queen Mary 2, Queen Elizabeth 2 and Queen Victoria transport thousands to all corners of the globe. The historic maiden voyage made by Samuel Cunard and 65 passengers, 175 years ago, was commemorated by QM2's departure from the Liverpool terminal on 4th July 2015, and when the three modern-day Queens sailed up the Mersey on 25th May, they were welcomed over a three-day period by an estimated 1.3 million people!

A WALL REBUILT

A year ago, a section of sandstone wall collapsed, alongside the public passageway linking Gateacre Brow with Chartmount Way. The City Council had previously felled four trees adjacent to the wall, and the collapse seems to have been due to a combination of their roots having undermined it and their removal having exposed it to the full force of the wind.

We had always assumed that the trees were Council-owned, and that the Council would take responsibility for rebuilding the wall. However, the Council has adamantly refused to admit liability. We sent evidence to the Chief Executive, indicating that the wall was part of the Gateacre Grange estate and – along with the adjacent passageway – passed to the Council in the late 1960s following the completion of the Chartmount Way/Gateacre Rise estate. He has rejected this, and claims that the trees belonged to a defunct company called Chartmount Ltd and the wall belongs to the owners of York Cottages.

The rebuilding of the wall is now underway, paid for by Mr Jackson whose garden wall it is. The stonemason is David Churchill, who has worked in Gateacre before, and he is doing an excellent job.

REMEMBERING HORACE JONES (Part 1)

We have recently been emailed by Christopher Gibbins, who is one of the 11 surviving grandchildren of Horace Jones (the man who gave his name to Jones Farm Road). Chris, who now lives in the West Midlands, has sent us the following memories of his visits to Gateacre in the early 1950s:

"I can just remember the old Lee Hall in a state of disrepair. In Netherley Road was the gate which I used to jump out and open when my grandfather and father were driving in to Lee Hall Farm.

My aunt, Lilian Brown, had a sweet shop on Halewood Road between the school and where the traffic lights are now. She was 'open all hours'. There was a half-glazed door leading from the shop to the sitting room behind and, when we visited, she would sit on an upright chair in the sitting room by this door and continually look through the net curtain on the door to make sure she wasn't missing out on any customers. As children we could choose which sweets to have as a gift when we parted!

My aunt inherited the tenancy of this shop from her father, and moved to Lydiate in late 1963 when she retired. Her sister, Ella Brown, also a lifelong spinster, taught at Gateacre School for a while – this might even have been before or during the First World War. She felt she couldn't maintain good discipline because parents would say "Oh don't take any notice of her, she's only from the sweet shop." Eventually she moved to Wokingham where she lived and taught for many years before moving back, in old age, to share a bungalow at Lydiate with my widowed grandmother, Marian Jones. I believe there was another sister, Dorothy, who died during the flu pandemic around 1918."

Please see our website for details of 'The Story of the Lee and its People 1086-2012' by the late Sylvia Lewis (edited and updated by Ken Williams) which we have recently published, and which contains a wealth of information about Lee Hall, the Farm and Lee Park Golf Club.

A TREE LOST

Local residents were shocked to witness the felling of a large horse chestnut tree in the car park of the former Grange Manor/Crying Tree pub on 14th January. They – and we – were under the impression that it was covered by a Tree Preservation Order, but the City Council's Planning Department has since confirmed that no TPO existed on this site (only on the nearby Grange Hollies site). As mentioned at our talk in November, the Crying Tree building – which is Grade II Listed – has recently changed hands, and proposals for its future are awaited.

GATEACRE COMP SITE UPDATE

The Marquess of Salisbury's surveyor tells us that he has met with the City Council, and an agent for the developers, and has agreed terms for relaxing the covenant on the former Gateacre Comp site. Meanwhile the Countryside Properties website advertises the housing development as 'coming soon', and invites prospective purchasers to register their interest.

GREEN SPACE REPORT

Shortly before Christmas, Simon O'Brien published his Interim Report on the future of green and open spaces in Liverpool (see our March 2015 Newsletter). Copies can be downloaded from the City Council's website – at bit.ly/LCCsgos – and comments are currently being invited.