

# THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

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

Website: [www.gatsoc.org.uk](http://www.gatsoc.org.uk) Email: [info@gatsoc.org.uk](mailto:info@gatsoc.org.uk)

## Executive Committee 2015/16

Brian Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, L25 4SL (0151 722 6368) *Chairman*  
Mike Chitty, 16 Chartmount Way, L25 5LB (428 7801) *Environment Sec. & Newsletter Editor (& Joint Hon. Secretary)*  
Eryl Chitty *Joint Hon. Secretary*  
Margaret Gofton *Hon. Treasurer*  
Beryl Plent, 27 Grange Lane, L25 4RZ (428 5379) *Local History Sec.*  
David Phythian, 26 Primrose Road, L18 2HE *Membership Sec.*  
Pam Ball, Flat 1 St Stephens Court, Halewood Road, L25 3PG (428 0500) *Sales Officer*  
Sandra Sandland *Assistant Sales Officer*  
Rosemary Doman

## 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](mailto:membership@gatsoc.org.uk) quoting your name and postcode



# The Gateacre Society

*Guarding the Past - Safeguarding the Future*

## NEWSLETTER - May 2016

*Our next meeting:*

## FURTHER ANECDOTES OF A REGISTRAR

**A talk by Carole Codd  
at 7.30pm on Monday 23rd May  
in Gateacre Chapel,  
Gateacre Brow L25 3PB**



Carole Codd, a Liverpool registrar of births, marriages and deaths, came to talk to us in June 2010. Her talk was very well received, and we have decided to invite her back to give us Part 2. After a career spanning over 40 years, she has many interesting stories to tell about the people she has met while 'hatching, matching and dispatching'.

**ALL WELCOME – Admission free – Donations invited**

## OUR POTTERIES COACH TRIP

**Saturday  
23rd July**



The Wavertree Society has organised a coach outing to the Staffordshire Potteries. The Potteries Heritage Society will be showing us heritage projects in Longton and regeneration projects in Stoke-on-Trent. The cost will be £15 a head, and the trip is open to Gateacre Society as well as Wavertree Society members.

The coach will depart from Gateacre Brow (Black Bull) at 8.45am, and Lake Road Wavertree at 9.00 - returning by about 6.30. If you would like to come, please send the full amount (cheques payable to The Wavertree Society) to Mike Chitty, 16 Chartmount Way, Liverpool L25 5LB. Please remember to include a contact phone number, plus S.A.E. for the tickets.

# MEMORIES OF GATEACRE 1943-1955

Our February 2016 talk – reviewed by Mike Chitty

Professor Alexander (Sandy) Stewart travelled from his Edinburgh home to talk to us, on 7th February, about his early life in Gateacre village. His father, Rev. Duncan Stewart, was Minister of the Unitarian Chapel, and Sandy's first journey to Gateacre was on the luggage rack of a train from Norwich, during the wartime blackout, at the age of five. The family lived at 'Chapelstead', 8 Gateacre Brow.

Sandy didn't have a script, nor any photographs of his own. Instead he had given us a list of the pictures in our book 'Gateacre & Belle Vale' that he wanted to talk about. He began with the newsagent's shop next door to Chapelstead. Sandy recalled that the owners, Mr & Mrs Davies, were Ulster Catholics, and "very nice to us". Mr Davies gave him his very first banana, and Sandy had to ask his mother how to eat it. Mrs Davies called round the day after his father's death, saying that she'd been "praying for him all morning". His mother, he said, "didn't have the heart to tell her that Unitarians don't believe in Purgatory".

Photographs of Gateacre Grange – which Sandy knew as a Nursing Home run by nuns – brought back memories of the annual summer fête. In those days the grounds extended right down the Brow, and the open-air festivities went on all Sunday afternoon. His father sent the Chapel caretaker across the road "to tell them to stop the racket" and allow his evening sermon to be heard.

The house described in the book as 'Elm Cottage' was in fact, according to Sandy, Oakfield Cottage. The occupiers were Mr & Mrs Harold Magnay – Mr Magnay being the city's Director of Education. They were "very generous" to Sandy and his mother. Mrs Magnay gave him her son's Greek and Latin dictionaries, while Mr Magnay personally authorised his mother's absence from her teaching post to attend his graduation ceremony at St Andrew's University.

Sandy's memories were mainly those of a teenage cyclist – and temporary Christmas postman. He rode to Taylor's Farm, on the east side of Grange Lane, with non-Cheshire cheese, which his mother had obtained on ration but preferred to 'trade' with Mr Taylor for extra eggs. Some of the eggs "had an unhappy ending" owing to the potholes. Sandy's comment that Grange Lane "doesn't seem to have any potholes nowadays" was greeted with laughter.

Between Taylor's Farm and Gateacre village was Gateacre House. He recalled the "Joyce Grenfell type" who lived there. The estate had "gone to rack and ruin", quite different from the pictures in the book. Closer to the crossroads was Guy's shop: "A hive of activity, and full of character". Sandy also remembered Miss Brown's tobacconist's shop in Halewood Road, where he was sent to buy Capstan Full Strength pipe tobacco for his father. Pictures of Gateacre Station and St Stephen's Church triggered further anecdotes about his childhood, and the "perfectly cordial" relations that existed between the local churches. The talk ended with a picture of Gorse Cop Farm, to which Sandy and his mother had moved following his father's death. The main problem, he recalled, was accommodating all the furniture – including numerous bookcases and beds – from 8 Gateacre Brow.

As Sandy himself pointed out, he had overshot his allotted time for the talk very considerably. But the audience had listened attentively, and had enjoyed the stream of anecdotes as he 'relived the past' in painstaking detail.

## GLENACRES - A LOST PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

In early March, a brick wall was built at the top of Glenacres (off Acrefield Road) preventing people from walking through to Woolton Park. This means long detours for people living in Glenacres, Hollytree Road, etc., who want to visit Reynolds Park on foot, and similar detours for people in the Woolton Park area who want to reach the bus stops in Acrefield Road. For many years we have campaigned for the protection of local public rights of way, and this path was on a list of 21 that we submitted to the City Council in 2002.

Unfortunately, it seems that our list was lost, because the highways and planning officers' advice to the owners of Byron Court – the private block of apartments adjacent to Glenacres – was that they did not need permission to block off the access.

We have pointed out that, under the Highways Act 1980, a Public Right of Way exists if people have been able to walk along a route for 20 or more years - which they have in this case - without hindrance. Also, when planning permission was given to build Byron Court (on the site of the Council-owned Acrefield Bank care home) in 1999, it was subject to a condition that "Prior to the commencement of development, full details of the means and method of closure (to vehicular traffic) of the access between Woolton Park and Acrefield Road ... shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. For the avoidance of all doubt, the agreed method of closure shall be designed to safely and conveniently accommodate pedestrian and cycle access".

*If you have used the path in question for any or all of the past 20 years, and would like to support our claim, then please get in touch with our Environment Secretary Mike Chitty (0151 428 7801). Copies of 'Form E' – the Evidence Claim Form that has to be completed – can be downloaded from our website.*



## MORE ON THE 20mph SCHEME



As mentioned in our last Newsletter, the City Council has published a draft Traffic Regulation Order to authorise the introduction of a 20mph speed limit on many of our local roads. When we studied the list, we noted that some of them were cul-de-sacs where it is not possible to drive at over 20mph, and where the installation of '20' signs would, in our view, result in unnecessary expense and clutter – and reduce the impact of the more-relevant signs elsewhere. We also noted that the 'isolated' section of Hunts Cross Avenue, accessed via Orient Drive and Hollytree Road, is to remain at 30mph, even though it will be completely surrounded by roads subject to a 20mph limit. As a consequence, we lodged a formal objection to the TRO (see our website for details).

*We anticipate that the final decision will be taken by the Council's Traffic & Highways Representations Committee, and we would welcome members' views.*

## WOOLTON OPEN GARDENS

Twelve intrepid Garden Owners across Woolton Village – from Victorian Terraces to allotments and the splendid Bishop's Lodge – will play host to visitors on **Sunday 26th June** (12 noon – 5pm). Entry will be by programme, costing £5, on sale at the Woolton Farmers Market (14th May and 11th June), Browns newsagents, and at the individual gardens on the day. The proceeds will go to Woolton in Bloom. Further information is available from Viv Hicks (0151 428 3268).