

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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WE NEED NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

If you would like to know more about what is involved,
please have a word with any existing member

Annual 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'.

*The Society's membership year ends on 31st October. 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

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The Gateacre Society

Guarding the Past - Safeguarding the Future

NEWSLETTER - March 2018

Our next meeting:

MERCY SHIPS

**An illustrated talk
by Dave Fryer**

in Gateacre Chapel,
Gateacre Brow L25 3PB

on Sunday 11th March, 2.30pm



Dave Fryer, who lives locally, is a retired Marine Engineer and Lecturer. He served with 'Mercy Ships', a Maritime Medical Charity, for a five-year period until 2011, as a volunteer seagoing Engineer Officer. Dave's commercial seagoing career was with the Blue Funnel Line and lately with Container Fleets. After leaving the sea, he joined Riversdale College of Technology as a lecturer, mainly involved with the education and training of Merchant Navy Engineer Cadets.

Dave's second sea-going career started in 2006 when he joined 'Mercy Ships'. This required him to revalidate his Engineer's Licence (Ticket) and to complete all the necessary safety courses. At that time he was working on the 'Africa Mercy' - the charity's latest hospital ship, which was undergoing conversion work in a shipyard in the north-east. After completing conversion and certification, the AFM sailed on its second 'maiden voyage' to Liberia in West Africa, where the ship operated as a hospital, providing free medical treatment to local people.

The talk will cover some of Dave's personal maritime history, as well as his work with Mercy Ships. It will be illustrated with powerpoint slides, supplemented by some patients' stories on DVD.

ALL WELCOME - Admission free - Donations invited

DIARY DATES

Mon 21st May, 7.30pm. "The Hungarian
Revolution of 1956, its aftermath and
my escape" by Dr Andrew Zsigmond

Mon 9th July, 7.30pm.
'Liverpool Cowkeepers'
by Dave Joy

Both speakers come highly recommended by other societies.
The talks will take place in the Chapel as usual.

THE HISTORY OF THE BLACK BULL

Our November 2017 talk – reviewed by Mike Chitty

Alan David Wilson came to talk to us about his latest book. Records of Gateacre's 'Bull Inn' go back to 1753, when the Alehouse Recognizances give the licensee's name as David Edwardson. We saw photographic evidence that the building is much older than that, some of the roof timbers having been identified as 16th century. By superimposing an 1815 drawing of the pub on top of a present-day photograph, David was able to demonstrate that the left-hand gable, with a distinctive small window at the top, is older than the rest of the building, and that the official description in the Listed Buildings record – '19th century' – is wrong.

David talked us through the various licensees. The Edwardsons (David for 35 years, Margaret in 1789), were followed by the Shepherds, and then by Jonathan Tatlock – a saddler by trade – which raised the question of the Black Bull's possible role as a coaching inn. The pub certainly had stables, which would have been available for the use of travellers. Tatlock – there till 1837 – ran a billiards team. A man called Charles Davies took over, but ended up in Lancaster Castle debtors' prison. Is the name of one of the building's resident ghosts – 'Charles' – just a coincidence, David wondered? The Tithe Map of 1848 indicated that the pub had been enlarged by that time. From 1841 the licensee was Ellen Ramsay, who later ran the pub in conjunction with her cabinetmaker husband Thomas May. They had to leave after being found guilty of allowing drunk and disorderly conduct, being fined 5 shillings. When James Ratcliffe took over, it became very much a focal point of the Gateacre community. In 1858 a local newspaper described a march of 500 supporters of the Little Woolton Friendly Society, which ended with their Annual Dinner at the Black Bull.

In parallel with the list of licensees, David has drawn up a list of the owners of the building. Along with the Brown Cow and the Gateacre Brewery, the Fleetwood family owned it for many years. In 1876 Andrew Barclay Walker – of Gateacre Grange, with his own breweries in Warrington and Burton – bought it. In 1887 his favourite architect, Cornelius Sherlock, gave it the Mock Tudor look that we know today. The interior mouldings, fireplaces and stained-glass windows still contain reminders of the Walker years, including the 'cornucopia' symbol which can also be seen at Gateacre Grange. David mentioned the 'alleged arson' by servant Catherine Moss, reported in the local press in 1881, which may have been the reason for the re-modelling of the building. On A.B.Walker's death in 1893, ownership passed to his son William Hall Walker, who renamed it the Black Bull Hotel, added a large billiard room (now a kitchen) and employed a Billiard Marker (who is recorded as such in the 1911 Census).

Finally, David talked us through the 20th century, when the licensees included the Wicks and Formby families. The bowling green became a car park, and a large restaurant extension (now used for beer storage) was built at the back. The more recent changes of ownership have all been the result of company restructuring, mergers and de-mergers, rather than any sale on the open market. David worked at the Black Bull quite recently, and was given privileged access to the roof space and the sandstone basement (which has to be pumped out every two weeks). David showed us some of the photographs he had taken, which made his talk all the more interesting and informative.

Copies of David Wilson's book 'The Black Bull, Gateacre' are on sale at our meetings.

SANDFIELD ROAD: WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Since the 1990s, when large vehicles started to access the builders' merchant's yard in Sandfield Road on a regular basis, we and others have been trying to find a way of mitigating the consequences. The black-and-white Listed Building, 28a-d Gateacre Brow – a local landmark for 100 years – began to suffer damage as drivers unfamiliar with the area failed to allow for the overhang. Some changes were made, e.g. in 2004 we reported that Travis Perkins had banned the use of articulated vehicles and the City Council had widened the pavement alongside the Listed Building so that the kerb was now in line with the projecting first floor. Nevertheless, the problems continued, the bollards on the two corners were regularly uprooted, the Chapel wall was scored and – despite the installation of CCTV cameras and metal 'chimes' – the decorative plaster features of the building kept getting hit.

Now the Listed Building has new owners (see our July 2017 Newsletter) who are in the process of converting it to 5 apartments. Two separate incidents have resulted in further damage, and not surprisingly Messrs Winter & Melia are keen to find a permanent solution. Signage has been suggested in the past by us, but rejected. (*The sign in the picture was spotted in Ilfracombe, Devon, where a similar situation exists*). The new 20mph sign on the Chapel corner has, if anything, made things worse, by encouraging drivers to steer away from it. A site meeting between the interested parties has been arranged, and we hope to have some progress to report before too long.



ANOTHER SUCCESS

We are pleased to report that, following objections from ourselves and local residents, the application for retrospective planning permission for the black-and-gold fence in Childwall Lane (see last Newsletter) was REFUSED by the Planning Department on 19th January. The official Decision Notice describes it as "an incongruous and obtrusive feature within the street scene, that adversely affects the open character and nature of the area and is to the detriment of visual amenity".

PUBLIC INQUIRY REMINDER

Anyone familiar with the (now blocked) pedestrian route from Acrefield Road via Glenacres to Woolton Park is encouraged to attend the Public Inquiry at Woolton Golf Club, Speke Road, on Tuesday 27th March, starting at 10 am. A Rights of Way Inspector will listen to the evidence from the City Council, ourselves and our witnesses in support of the route being reopened. He/she will then hear the objections from the Byron Court Management Company, who built a brick wall across the path in March 2016 and do not want it to be designated as a Public Right of Way. Further information, and copies of the various submissions from both sides, can be found on our website.