

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 £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.

Subscriptions may also be paid by bank transfer. Please email us for our account details. Alternatively they may be hand-delivered to any of the Committee members' addresses listed above.

Our Book - Gateacre & Belle Vale: in old photographs - is on sale at our meetings and events, price **£9** (bookshop price £12.99).

Our Tea-towel is also available, price **£4**. See our website for 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

A VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION

Guarding the Past - Safeguarding the Future

NEWSLETTER - June 2019



Our next meeting:

STRAWBERRY FIELD: Opening the Gates for Good

**An illustrated talk by
Major Allister Versfeld**

*on Monday 17th June at 7.30 p.m. in
Gateacre Chapel, Gateacre Brow L25 3PB*

ALL WELCOME

Admission free – Donations invited

Allister Versfeld has been a Minister with the Salvation Army for the past 19 years. He now has the title 'Mission Development Officer (Strawberry Field)', and his role is to look at how the resource of Strawberry Field can be used across Liverpool and the wider Merseyside area. He will be talking through the history, the redevelopment and what is at the heart of the project as they prepare to 'Open the gates for good'.

Strawberry Field, in Beaconsfield Road, Woolton, was the Salvation Army children's home that inspired the song 'Strawberry Fields Forever'. The ornate metal gates of the original Victorian house have become an essential part of the Beatles' Liverpool itinerary. Now the site is being redeveloped as a training facility and visitor attraction, due to open this summer. It will incorporate a café (open to all) as well as an exhibition highlighting the work of the Salvation Army and John Lennon's childhood memories.

CALENDAR REMINDER

In our last Newsletter we invited members (and others) to send us seasonal/colourful photographs of local scenes, for use in a 2020 Gateacre Calendar. Our deadline was May 31st, but if you have any suitable images and haven't yet submitted them, it is not too late to email them to info@gatsoc.org.uk so we can make the final selection.

THE FORESIGHT OF MARY WAINWRIGHT

Our March 2019 talk – reviewed by Mike Chitty

On Sunday 24th March we welcomed Margaret Guppy, who came to talk to us about the origins and history of Bradbury Fields – previously known as the Liverpool Voluntary Society for the Blind. Mary Wainwright was the charity's founder in 1857, and Margaret has written a book about her life and legacy.

In the mid-19th century, any form of disability among the poor of Liverpool led almost inevitably to the workhouse – Britain's largest, at the top of Brownlow Hill. Mary Wainwright, an evangelical Christian, was a visitor seeking to improve the conditions and prospects of the inmates. She recognised that learning craft skills, such as basket weaving and mattress making, was not enough. Blind children needed to learn to read as well, and the original object of the charity was to teach blind people to read the Bible using Moon (a system of raised alphabetic characters, developed by a Dr Moon).

The charity also established workshops – initially in Bold Street, and later on in Cornwallis Street. Even here, life for the employees was not easy. They had to walk to and from work, and were not allowed to go home early on foggy days (it being argued that the fog would not be a problem for them). In the 1990s Margaret had interviewed some of the older workers about their memories of Cornwallis Street. The men were strictly segregated from the women. If they arrived 10 minutes late for work, they would lose half a day's pay. The only toilet was on the roof of the building. But, in spite of these hardships, the employees felt that what they were doing was worthwhile, and it gave them a form of independence. Until the 1950s the charity owned two hostels, in Aigburth Road and the Dingle – one for men and one for women. Margaret had also brought along an old Minute Book of the charity's school in Devonshire Road. One girl had been taken before the Board for 'insubordination', having refused to do cleaning work on the grounds that she was unable to see the dust!

No-one knows what inspired Mary Wainwright to found the charity. She came from a relatively wealthy family – brewers from Halewood – and had two brothers who ran a sugar refining business. Another brother was a doctor in Everton. Margaret speculated that it was he who had, perhaps, drawn her attention to the plight of poor blind people. Mary died at the age of 56 – she is buried in Childwall churchyard – but her work was carried on by a niece, Eliza.

The charity is now 162 years old. Renamed Bradbury Fields (after the Bradbury Trust, a major donor) it is based at Youens Way off East Prescot Road. They organise social activities, including quizzes and even tandem riding. Margaret's research had been assisted by a history written by Admiral Rupert Wainwright (the great-great-grandson of one of Mary's brothers) and also by the charity's archives ("If you've not waded through 150 years of annual reports, you haven't lived", said Margaret). For this task she had had the help of a sighted friend.

Overall, this was an informative and thought-provoking talk. Margaret was accompanied by her guide dog Nicola, and our members used the question-and-answer session to find out more. We heard that it takes just under two years to turn a puppy into a guide dog, which will then serve its owner for 8 or 9 years. Most are labradors, but Nicola is a golden retriever and other suitable breeds include German Shepherd dogs and labradoodles.



A COACH TRIP TO SALTAIRE on Thursday 25th July

Once again our friends at the Wavertree Society have arranged a day outing across the Pennines. Our destination will be Saltaire, the village created by Sir Titus Salt in the mid-19th century for the employees of his woollen mill on the River Aire. The mill itself is

now an art gallery featuring the work of Bradford-born David Hockney, and incorporates a shop, restaurant and café. The whole complex is designated as a World Heritage Site and draws visitors from far afield.

This visit is a very special one, as it will begin with an 'in costume' guided walk – the guides in Victorian costume, that is, not the participants – to introduce us to the village and the people who used to live there. To cover the cost of the coach and the guides we shall be selling tickets at £20 per person. (Admission to the Salts Mill gallery is free of charge). To reserve your places on the trip, please give or send cash or cheque – payable to 'The Wavertree Society' – to Mike Chitty. The coach will depart from outside the Black Bull at 9am on Thursday 25th July, and also pick up at Lake Road, Wavertree, at 9.15am.

THE MISSING GRASS VERGES

In our May 2018 Newsletter we said that we were trying to get the grass verge in Grange Lane reinstated, in between the driveways of all the new houses on the west side. The replacement verges were clearly shown on the Countryside Properties layout plan – as issued to prospective house buyers – and on the Landscape Masterplan submitted to the City Council as part of the original planning application. We have now been informed that:

1. The Grange Lane footway and grass verge lay outside the official boundary of the planning application (being owned by the Council, not the developer), so the planning permission did not require that particular part of the landscaping to be implemented.
2. The reinstatement of the footway and verge was a matter for the Council's Highways Department, not the Planning Department, to negotiate. This process was separate from the planning application, and there was no requirement for public consultation.
3. "Due to changes in personnel", Countryside Properties are unable to explain why the landscaping plans were changed. However, they point out that "the potential verge area in front of plot 7 is peppered with manholes, gas governor and associated equipment, leaving little room for a continuous verge".
4. The final plans agreed between Countryside Properties and the Highways Department did NOT show verges on either corner of Chantry Road. They will not, therefore, be provided.
5. To reduce the chance of pavement parking occurring at this junction, a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) will be published in due course, and double yellow lines painted as and where necessary.

PROW No.77 LATEST

On 15th May, Liverpool City Council sent an enforcement notice on the Byron Court Management Company (who built the path across the walk from Glenacres in 2016) and on Mr Christopher George (whose company Hayne Securities Ltd is the legal owner of the land).

This instructed them to "remove the structure" from the Public Right of Way "within 14 days". If they fail to do this within one month, then the Council will undertake the work – and send them the bill.