

# 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'

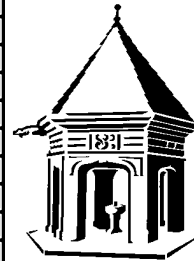
**Our Book - Gateacre & Belle Vale: in old photographs** - is on sale at our meetings and events, price **£9** (bookshop price £12.99).

**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](mailto: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*

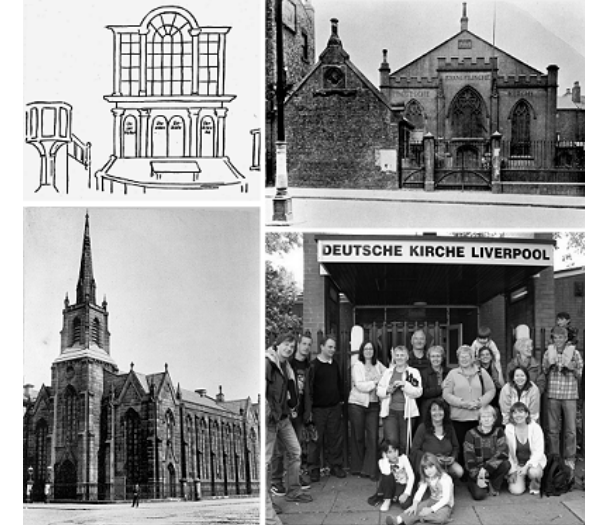
**NEWSLETTER - November 2019**

Our next meeting:

## LIVING FAR FROM HOME

An illustrated talk  
by Michael Ziessler

**on Sunday 17th  
November, 2.30pm  
in Gateacre Chapel,  
Gateacre Brow  
L25 3PB**



The German Church of Liverpool was founded in the middle of the 19th century. German sailors and immigrants - many of them working in sugar factories or as pork butchers - felt the need to gather and to worship in their familiar language. In the early 20th century the Church had about 1,000 members, and was (outside of London) the biggest German congregation in the UK. The two World Wars were major setbacks for the congregation; however the German Church is still, today, a home for German people living in the UK.

Michael Ziessler is a retired professor of psychology from Liverpool Hope University. He came to the UK in 2001 and moved to Liverpool in 2006 where he served for 10 years as treasurer of the German Church. During this time - as an immigrant himself - he developed an interest in the history of the congregation, its origins and the changes over time. His talk will show us how the Church has developed during the last 170 years.

**ALL WELCOME - Admission free - Donations invited**

# THE GENIUS OF BRUNEL

Our September 2019 talk – reviewed by Rosemary Doman

Isambard Kingdom Brunel is correctly rated a genius. Third child and only son of (later 'Sir') Marc Brunel and French mother Sophie Kingdom, who narrowly escaped the terrors of the French Revolution, his first name comes from a Norman saint. He inherited his father's brilliant gifts for mathematics and design, exhibiting at a very early age the ability to draw buildings quite accurately from memory. Marc Brunel ensured his son's education fully developed his talents, sending him from school in Hove to the Henri Quatre Lycee, then apprenticing him to a foremost watchmaker, Louis Braguet. In London, at the workshop of Henry Maudsley, Isambard further honed his skills in precision engineering.

His father was a skilled inventor, but poor with money. Imprisoned for debt after the failure of timber contracts, he was rescued by friends. A tunnel begun by Richard Trevithick under the Thames was abandoned after a roof collapse at 1000 feet. In 1825 Marc Brunel began a second tunnel, with Isambard his engineer. He invented a shield to protect the workers, but sewage dripped through, causing sickness and death. Sometimes Isambard worked 20 hours a day on the project, ignoring his more patient father's warnings. The workforce escaped after a roof collapse and tidal wave, one man trapped in a shaft being rescued by Isambard himself. Taking 3 months to clear up the mess, Isambard proceeded at a more sensible pace. A huge celebration involving a feast (beer and cheese for the workmen!) and the Coldstream Guards Band took place to mark the tunnel's three quarters advance, but a week later another flood blew Isambard onto shore with a broken leg, leaving others to complete the tunnel.

Isambard turned his attention elsewhere. By 1829 he had improved and extended the Bristol Docks. In 1830 his design for the Avon Gorge Bridge was originally rejected, but accepted upon modification, an impressive 230 feet above water, 680 feet in length and 7,000 tons in weight. Inspired by travel on the new Liverpool & Manchester Railway, in 1833-1834 he built the Great Western Railway, replacing the standard track gauge of 4 ft 8½" with one of 7 ft for speed and comfort. The Chippenham to Bath tunnel of 2 miles took 6 months to build, using vast quantities of blasting powder, man and mule power.

In 1835 Isambard had married Mary Horsley. They had three children, but he was not a family man; he pursued his own interests. His ship building career began with the Great Western paddle steamer, made of oak not iron, and screw-driven for stability, but surviving for only four trips before running aground off the Isle of Man. In 1843 his much faster and larger transatlantic Great Britain was launched in Bristol, its maiden voyage being from Liverpool to New York. The ship later carried troops to the Crimea and emigrants to Australia, and it is now back in Bristol, restored. Finally, delayed by the dishonest supervisor, Scott Russell, in 1858 came his huge five-funnel 19,000 ton Leviathan, launched sideways at the sixth attempt. After unremoved funnel cladding caused an explosion costing 53 lives, it was used to lay transatlantic cabling. Isambard, a heavy smoker with high blood pressure, died in 1859 after a stroke. His statue, sculptured by Carlo Marochetti, stands on the Victoria Embankment.

Thanks to Mike Murphy for a truly informative and engaging account.

## VILLAGE IMPROVEMENTS

Our thanks go to Mr Andrew Bentley for restoring No.3 Gateacre Brow (the black-and-white house which some will remember as Garfield's jewellers shop, and others as the Old Post Office) to its former splendour. Also to the Conservative Club, for removing the plastic banners which had accumulated on the railings and were detracting from the floral displays created and maintained by the Friends of Gateacre.

## CALLING ALL ARTISTS

In a previous Newsletter we invited local photographers to submit images for inclusion in a Gateacre Calendar for 2020. Sadly we had no response, so the project has been abandoned (at least for this year). Now we are considering producing a range of notelets featuring Gateacre buildings and street scenes. Ideally we'd like to make use of original paintings (watercolours, etc.) produced by a local artist or artists. If you know of any suitable candidates, please contact any Committee member.

## A DEFIBRILLATOR FOR GATEACRE?

Simon Galley, who lives in Killester Road, is an advocate of Automated External Defibrillators (AED). He has been a St John Ambulance volunteer for the past 30 years, and is an AED trainer. He has himself used them to treat people in cardiac arrest, and is keen to see one installed in Gateacre Village. He believes that it would be a huge asset, delivering life-saving interventions should the worst occur. We have previously mentioned a defibrillator as a possible use for our historic telephone kiosk (if we are successful in getting it back) and we therefore asked Simon to tell us more:

"The North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) is keen to see defibrillators installed, but they do not receive any direct funding for this. They are reliant on members of the community to support installation. NWAS do, however, have access to recovered defibrillator stock, and could provide us with an AED and a cabinet. The location can be determined by us.

"Installation of the cabinet requires a qualified electrician, and normally costs around £200. Next a guardian is appointed: a volunteer to look after the equipment, check it weekly and report to NWAS. I'll happily take on this role.

"NWAS will require the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This sets out who is responsible for what. The Ambulance service will replace consumables if the defibrillator is used, but the custodian or other named person/organisation is responsible for funding items such as the battery and pads when they expire. The cost would be about £250 for a 4-year period. The custodian might be a community organisation, or one of the local businesses.

"I will also commit to delivering training sessions in CPR and the use of the AED. Although the machines are specifically designed to be used by lay-people, this will remove the 'fear factor' in the unfortunate event that someone is required to use the machine.

"For security the machines are held in a code-opened box, entry to which is controlled by the Ambulance Service. If someone suffers a cardiac arrest, a bystander dials 999 and is given the code to the cabinet. Upon returning to the patient with the AED, the rescuer is given instructions in its use."

*If you are interested in helping with this project, or learning more about it, please contact any Gateacre Society Committee member (see back page).*