

# 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 £5 Single pensioner £4 Company, etc. £10**

The Society's membership year ends on 31st October, but new subscriptions paid from 1st July give membership until 31/10/21. If you are already a member, your address label indicates the date when your next subscription payment is due.

If you wish to join the Society, or to renew, please send the appropriate subscription to the Membership Secretary, David Phythian, 26 Primrose Road, Liverpool L18 2HE: cheques payable to 'The Gateacre Society'. Subscriptions may also be paid by bank transfer. Please email us for our account details.

**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 HISTORY OF OUR GREEN SPACES

### No.1: REYNOLDS PARK

Reynolds Park was given to the city of Liverpool in 1930 by Sir James Reynolds. It was, he said, "a thank-offering to my city for a successful business life of forty-seven years". The Reynolds family had bought 'Dove Park' (the original name of the estate) in 1907. James Philip Reynolds, born in 1865 at Hillside, Acrefield Road, Woolton, was a cotton broker in the family firm, Reynolds & Gibson, which had been founded in Liverpool in 1810 by his great-grandfather. He and his wife had spent their early married years at Elm House in Halewood Road, Gateacre, before moving to Fern Lea in Quarry Street and then to Dove Park.

The Reynolds family had long been known for their philanthropic work. James Reynolds was knighted in 1920 and created a baronet in 1923. In 1929, having retired from active cotton broking, he became M.P. for the Liverpool Exchange division, with houses in London and Abercromby Square, Liverpool. (Dove Park had remained empty since a serious fire in 1921). He died in 1932, and – as a Roman Catholic – was buried in the churchyard of St Mary's Woolton.

*(Continued overleaf)*

*Right: An extract from the Ordnance Survey six-inch map of 1849*



*Owing to the Coronavirus Pandemic, all Gateacre Society meetings and events have been cancelled until further notice. We have continued to monitor and comment on local planning applications, and our aim is to publish Newsletters every 2-3 months as previously. Please stay safe, keep well – and keep us informed of any local news or issues that you feel deserve the Society's attention.*

*(Continued from previous page)*

Several of the present-day features of Reynolds Park are the result of alterations commissioned from Professor Charles Reilly by James and his wife Leila, who Reilly, in his autobiography, called "the lady in white". These included a lily pond (now gone), clipped yew hedges (still there) and an "outdoor dining place" (adjacent to the sundial) where she entertained some of Liverpool's leading literary figures. Other amenities – all now gone, but in some cases visible as brick outlines in the ground – included a swimming pool (above the ha-ha steps down to the wildflower meadow) and a summer house. 'The Dell' – a landscaped former quarry, still visible over the wall alongside the Woolton Hill Road driveway – was once accessed by a tunnel and a zig-zag path from the main grounds.

Before the Reynolds family – with their 12 children – took over, Dove Park was the home of George Cope, a tobacco manufacturer ('of Liverpool and London') who had bought it at auction in 1873 and whose widow sold it in 1907. It was the Cope family who had enlarged the original estate (and its house, on the site of the present-day sheltered housing complex, Calvert Court, Church Road) by acquiring an adjacent property which had its entrance in Woolton Hill Road. This next-door house, which was demolished around 1886, had been the home of John Dennison (d.1865), a retired Liverpool ironmonger who was also a 'conchologist' (his collection of shells was acquired by Liverpool Museum). Woolton Park was called Dennison Road in the 1861 Census, so presumably he had been involved in its creation.

The Walled Garden – one of Reynolds Park's finest features today – was the responsibility of an even earlier owner, John Crosthwaite. It was he who, in 1828, had bought 8½ acres of land from 'Richard Weston & others', the assignees of John Weston, a Liverpool merchant who had acquired land under the Childwall, Great and Little Woolton Inclosure Act of 1805 but by 1813 was bankrupt.

John Crosthwaite (c.1793-1866) was a West India Merchant, a Trustee of the Blue Coat school, and a director of the Demerara Railway (Guyana) – a man who had undoubtedly profited greatly from the slave trade and slavery. Bennison's Map of Liverpool shows that by 1835 he had built a substantial house, walled garden and outbuildings. The Much Woolton Tithe Map of 1840 shows that, by that time, the walled garden was almost complete, and the ha-ha or sunk fence at the boundary of the 'pleasure grounds' was in place.

Reynolds Park is a much-appreciated local asset. The Friends of Reynolds Park help with maintenance and litter-picking, and have produced a Heritage Trail leaflet containing a map of its main features. For further details, please visit our website.



*Above: Dove Park mansion circa 1908, drawn by the late Janet Gnosspelius from an old photograph. The house was rebuilt in the 1920s, and was in use as a functions venue until being demolished in 1997.*

## BREWERY GARDENS UPDATE *by Sue Friar*

"We are now in the last six months of the development of Brewery Gardens. The apartment block is built and work is continuing internally.

"Externally, the cladding is being added, according to planning approval and specification. The timber from the insulating panels has been covered with a sheathing board. This provides an element of weather proofing but more importantly, it is a fire-proofing material. The final finish is a standing seam metal finish, which is what is being fitted at the moment. These sheets will be cut back and then folded over the top of the parapet wall. The white background with the red symbol on it is a protective plastic coating which will be peeled off when installation is completed to reveal the dark grey approved colour.

"The sheathing boards have been visible for quite some time because we have had to go to a lot of effort to find a product which fulfilled our requirements and met planning approval, particularly after the Grenfell Tower disaster. The final external finish will be revealed when the protective plastic coating is removed next month.

"We are going to have the four cottages, which can be seen from Lower Sandfield, painted in August to enhance them, and will endeavour to finish Brewery Gardens with some small shrubs if there is room. Hopefully by Christmas, our project will be completed."

## MASTS AND POLES in Gateacre

New wooden poles have started appearing on the streets of Gateacre (and elsewhere) as BT strives to extend its fibre broadband network to every house. In response to a notice displayed on a lamp-post in Gateacre Brow, we contacted the 'BT Pole Objection Team' to find out why such a profusion of poles and overhead wires was necessary. The initial response was "we only put up poles where we absolutely have to" – and one of these places, they said, was the top end of Gateacre Brow. When we pointed out that it was in a Conservation Area, and they'd need to apply for planning permission, they had a re-think: "The notice now no longer applies as we have found an Underground solution and therefore will not be putting up the pole".

Meanwhile the expansion of 5G mobile phone coverage into our area continues. On 2nd June, the Council's Planning Committee gave permission for a 20 metre high mast at the junction of Blackwood Avenue and Woolton Road (as mentioned in our September 2019 Newsletter). The same network operators (EE/Three) have now applied for a further mast (though 'only' 19 metres high) adjacent to Othello's Restaurant in Gateacre Park Drive: application ref 20PT/1407. They are proposing to retain the existing 10 metre 4G mast alongside, arguing that its removal "would result in a loss of service to existing customers". We have asked why its functions cannot be incorporated in the new mast. We have also drawn attention to the out-of-date address list which the Council has used for consultation, and asked that the residents of Tollgate Close (Falstaff site) and some of the new houses on the former Gateacre Comp site should be invited to comment on the proposal.

**WATCH OUT for our Picture Quiz, coming up on Instagram – @TheGatSoc**

**Just a bit of fun, but see how many places (all within a 20-30 minute walk of Gateacre Village) you can recognise.**

## HISTORY OF WOOLTON TOWER

Local historian Alan David Wilson is about to publish a new book. The subject is the very distinctive, castellated house in Woolton Park (just opposite the rear entrance to Reynolds Park) known as 'Woolton Tower'. The number to be printed depends on the number of orders received. If you are interested in buying one (at £10, plus £2.50 postage) please phone the author on 07717 216018, or email your contact details to [info@gatsoc.org.uk](mailto:info@gatsoc.org.uk) and we'll pass them on.