

# 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) Instagram: @TheGatSoc

Email: [info@gatsoc.org.uk](mailto:info@gatsoc.org.uk) Twitter: @TheGatSoc

## Executive Committee 2019/20

Brian Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, L25 4SL (0151 722 6368) *Chairman*

Rosemary Doman *Vice Chair*

Mike Chitty, 16 Chartmount Way, L25 5LB (0151 428 7801)  
*Environment Sec., Newsletter Editor & Acting Hon.Treasurer*

Eryl Chitty *Hon.Secretary*

David Phythian, 26 Primrose Road, L18 2HE *Membership Sec.*

Sue Coldwell, 30 Killester Road, L25 3QD *Local History Sec.*

Pam Ball, Flat 1 St Stephens Court, Halewood Road, L25 3PG (0151 428 0500)  
*Sales Officer*

John Wood, 3 Soarer Cottages, Grange Lane, L25 5LF *Assistant Environment Sec.*

Sandra Sandland *Assistant Sales Officer*

Geraldine McAndrew

## Annual Membership Subscriptions

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

The Society's membership year runs from 1 Nov-31 Oct. If you are already a member, your address label indicates the date when your next subscription payment is due. **If the date reads '31/10/20', please renew now.**

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.*

Owing to the Coronavirus Pandemic, all Gateacre Society indoor meetings have been cancelled until further notice. We continue to monitor and comment on local planning applications, and the Committee meets via Zoom. Please keep us informed of local news or issues that you feel deserve the Society's attention. Until such time as an A.G.M. can be held, the existing Committee members (listed above) will remain in post.

## 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.

*If you are a member of the Society and you have notified us of your email address, you will be sent details of our Zoom talks and invited to participate.*

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# The Gateacre Society

A VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION

*Guarding the Past - Safeguarding the Future*

**NEWSLETTER - March 2021**

*Our next talk (on Zoom):*

## SEEING HISTORY THROUGH STAMPS

by Bill Douglas

Monday 15th March, 7.30pm



It's 180 years since the appearance of the famed Penny Black, the first universal postage stamp in the world. Since then, nearly two centuries of change, development and progress have been captured and reflected in the thousands of small sticky squares of paper created by nearly every country in the world.

This illustrated and entertaining talk examines why the Penny Black came to be. It then looks at dozens of postage stamps from all corners of the earth, highlighting social change, conflict, celebration, struggle and the best of design. Some stamps are humorous, while others shock; the talk reminds us of the myriad of themes which have defined modern history. It concludes with a look at the rarest and most valuable stamps of all time.

Bill Douglas is an I.T. professional and a Modern Languages graduate. One of his favourite ways of relaxing after his day job in the NHS is to delve into his lovingly curated stamp collection. An out-of-the-blue aspiration to own a Penny Black led him into a burgeoning hobby, where he seeks out the most interesting and unusual stamps on the market.

*This is a 'members only' meeting. If you attended either of our previous Zoom events, you'll automatically be sent a link for this one a couple of days beforehand. Otherwise, if you're a Gateacre Society member and wish to attend the talk, please email [membership@gatsoc.org.uk](mailto:membership@gatsoc.org.uk) and we'll add you to the list (and send you guidance notes, in case you're new to Zoom).*

# THE HISTORY OF OUR GREEN SPACES

## No.4: WOOLTON WOOD & CAMP HILL

Camp Hill, with its panoramic views across the Mersey estuary, was the site of an Iron Age encampment. It is also reputed (without any evidence) to have been used by the Romans. In the 1820s a large house known as Woolton Wood was built on top of the hill, in what had been part of the grounds of Woolton Hall. From the 1870s onwards this was the home of Liverpool-born Holbrook Gaskell, a prominent chemical manufacturer with an alkali works (Gaskell, Deacon & Co.) in Widnes. The 1881 Census lists him at Woolton Wood, age 68, with his wife, daughter, son, 3 visitors and 9 servants. The Gaskell family were Unitarians, and the proximity of the house to Gateacre Chapel may have been a consideration.



Above: The Woolton Wood mansion in 1880

Holbrook Gaskell was a keen orchid grower, his collection being described as "one of the finest in the north of England". After his death (age 96) in 1909 his head gardener, Henry Corlett, remained at Woolton Wood and further developed the walled garden, which also included a notable fernery. The estate – the mansion and its surrounding woods, gardens and other land – was acquired in 1917 by Col. James Reynolds, who in turn sold it to Liverpool Corporation for recreational use.

The walled garden opened to the public in 1921 as an Old English Garden, and in 1927 a Floral Cuckoo Clock was presented by the family of James Bellhouse Gaskell (Holbrook's son) in memory of his long connection with the area. The house itself was demolished in 1948, but of course the woods and garden still survive as a much appreciated local amenity. Sadly the cuckoo clock is no longer operational.

Meanwhile another estate – known as Camp Hill – had been created to the south of Woolton Wood. The two mansion houses stood close to one another on the west side of School Lane, but this was the 'tradesmen's entrance'. Other visitors would have entered via the gates next to the respective lodges: in High Street (near Quarry Street South) for Woolton Wood, and in Hillfoot Road for Camp Hill. This was not an unusual arrangement; the wealthy residents wanted their guests to be impressed by the long drive through their grounds before reaching the house!

The Camp Hill mansion, built in the 1850s, was by 1881 the home of Droitwich-born Frederick Herbert Gossage (1832-1907). He owned a large soap factory in Widnes and was, as a result, a business acquaintance of his neighbour Holbrook Gaskell. At the 1881 Census he and his wife were away from home, the house being occupied by their 2 daughters, 2 sons, 1 niece, 2 nephews, 1 visitor and 11 servants.

In 1921 a subsequent owner, Charles James Williams, bequeathed the estate to Liverpool Corporation. Once again, the house has now gone, but the lodge and the grounds – including the sunken Dutch Garden of Meditation created in 1928 – survive as part of the wider 'Woolton Wood & Camp Hill' public open space.

Below: Relics of the demolished Chapel of the Liverpool School for the Blind, Hardman Street, can be found close to the site of the Camp Hill mansion



### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Payment of subscriptions has not been helped by the Covid lockdowns, and the absence of face-to-face meetings for over a year. Nevertheless we are pleased to report that 80 per cent of our members are 'paid up' to October 2021 or beyond.

Please take a look at your Newsletter ADDRESS LABEL (or email header) to check your renewal date. If (but only if) it reads 31/10/20, please help us by paying online – or by sending a cheque, payable to The Gateacre Society, to the Membership Secretary (see back page for further details). Personalised Final Reminders will be issued with the next Newsletter.

### SANDFIELD ROAD PROGRESS?

Following further recent HGV damage to the decorative plasterwork of 28a-d Gateacre Brow (the listed building on the corner of Sandfield Road) we contacted Travis Perkins and the City Council to discuss what can be done. The result was two Zoom meetings, attended by Travis Perkins' regional director and local manager, along with Phil Melia (the building's owner) and Councillor Malcolm Kelly.

Various options for signage, bollards and kerb realignment were discussed, and at the second meeting LCC highways engineer Ian Wiggins promised to come back with costed proposals (which Travis Perkins may be willing to part-fund). We look forward to seeing and commenting on these in the near future.

### BROWN COW SIGNAGE



The owners of the Brown Cow have been advertising for a new tenant to restore the pub to its place at "the heart of the village ... A place to meet friends and family, to relax with your partner ... Perhaps even bump into Liverpool players again". The tenancy is now 'under offer' – and applications for listed building consent (21L/0096) and advertisement consent (21A/0095) for new signage – as illustrated here – have been submitted. Meanwhile we sent in comments on the main planning application (see last Newsletter) welcoming the proposed refurbishment of the pub, but suggesting the need for conditions to restrict the opening hours, noise and lighting levels of the new beer garden at the rear.