

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 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.

New members joining the Society after 1 July are regarded as 'paid up' until 31 Oct the following year.

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 NEW account 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.

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 2022

Our next talk takes place on Sunday 13th March at 2.30pm in Gateacre Unitarian Chapel, Gateacre Brow, Liverpool L25 3PB

LOST MANORS FOUND ... at last!

A history of the townships and alehouses of Gateacre and Childwall
by Stuart Rimmer



It's 'third time lucky', as our previous attempts to hold this talk (in June and September 2021) were foiled by Covid-19. Stuart Rimmer has been delving into the Manor Court and other local records, and has uncovered an amazing amount of information about the many long lost – as well as the few surviving – pubs of Little Woolton and neighbouring parts of Much Woolton and Childwall. He has been reading through local newspapers, and his book includes accounts of a variety of misdeeds and tragic events, as well as a few amusing stories. His researches have also collected evidence about places like The Holt, The Lee and The Grange, which were of great historical importance but whose ancient boundaries are now largely forgotten.

Stuart's book – entitled 'Lost Manors' – was published in March 2021 and is available from his website <https://capalettpublishing.co.uk> price £12.99 (plus £2 delivery if ordering from outside the local area). He will also, we hope, be bringing plenty of copies along on 13th March!

*Gateacre Chapel's 'Covid safe' procedures have now been relaxed, but if you wish to wear a mask you are welcome to do so. In order to regulate the number of people attending, the event will be open to **Gateacre Society members only** – though membership application forms will be available at the door for anyone wishing to join (or to renew their subscription) on the day.*

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

No.2 in an occasional series



If you look in Wikipedia, you will read that there are "two parallel theories" about the derivation of the name Gateacre. The first explanation is that it denotes "the way to the acre field", and the second is that it means "a plot where goats are kept". On the Gateacre Society's website we have, up till now, supported the first of these theories, arguing that "the acre field" (of Much Woolton) is in turn derived from "Ac-lowe-feld" or "the hill of oaks". However, Stuart Rimmer has come up with a much simpler – and more plausible – explanation. He has concluded that the name arose (and is mentioned in 16th/17th century Court Rolls) as "the Gate Acre", meaning "the field by the gate". The gate in question was situated in Grange Lane, and the (original) Gate Acre was the piece of land west of Grange Lane and north of Gateacre Brow (or 'Creep Hole Lane' as it was once called).

Here is Stuart's explanation – which is set out in more detail on pages 30-33 of his book 'Lost Manors':

In times when the area was predominantly rural, parcels of land needed names by which they could be recognised and referred to. They were mostly given local or 'customary' names which were not necessarily permanent and could be subject to change through the generations. Pieces of land named after the owner or, quite often, the occupant, could see their names changed at the advent of a new occupier. Another way in which land was named was to reflect a physical feature, something which was on the land or nearby. Examples of this are the Mill Hey, the Brook Croft and the Bridge Meadow. The term 'acre' was used in a similar manner. It did not refer to land which was only one statute acre in size, but was a general term like 'close' or 'croft'. It therefore follows that the name Gate Acre is consistent with this common practice of naming land.

In the early 1600s the Halewood family are described as "of the Gate Acre", their house (on the west side of Grange Lane) being near "the gate". This gate across Grange Lane – referred to in the late 17th century as the Smithy Gate – appears to have been something of a landmark, and is mentioned a number of times in the manorial records.

Stuart concludes: "As development progressed around the Gate Acre, the settlement began to take on its name. Over time a handful of dwellings, a court house and a chapel were built and the 'the' was dropped. Eventually the name Gate Acre merged into its present name of Gateacre, and the settlement became a village in its own right, with its own identity".

THE BRIDGE INN IS NO MORE

The final chapter in the history of Gateacre's Bridge Inn was written in late November 2021, when the demolition crew moved in to clear the site for a new Home Bargains store. When it was built in 1938, an advertisement (reproduced here) explained that it had taken the place of "a little wayside inn, built over two hundred years ago". "It is what the original might have looked like had the builders of bygone days used the choice woods and lovely decorative materials that are at hand to-day. ... The Garden Hall is considered one of the finest reproductions of the Tudor style in the country, while on a Summer's day or evening the view from the Terrace across pleasant countryside well repays the visit".

Stuart Rimmer tells the story of the Bridge Inn, in detail, in 'Lost Manors'. He describes the struggle which Higsons Brewery had, in the 1930s, to get permission for the rebuild from the Liverpool Magistrates. A Gateacre residents' group argued that "very few people lived within half a mile of the Bridge Inn, so the demand did not exist" – and the magistrates agreed. It was only after the firm scaled down their proposals that a licence was granted. Strangely, no mention appears to have been made of the pub's strategic location at the junction of the new Childwall Valley Road (a widening of part of the original Belle Vale Road) and the proposed Liverpool Outer Circle ring road (to be known as Kings Drive) which seemed destined to make it highly accessible to the owners of the "motor cars" for which "ample parking space" was to be provided.



Above: Demolition underway, 2021

Below: An advertisement from July 1938

