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THE GATEACRE SOCIETY  
Registered with the Civic Trust for  
the North West



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GATEACRE WALK TWO.

Saturday 8th July 1978

In 1977 The Woolton Society in conjunction with The Gateacre Society walked through the centre of Gateacre, discussing the history of the roads, buildings and features that make up the fabric of the village. This year The Gateacre Society invite you to a second excursion. The area we have chosen - along Grange Lane, up Oakfield Avenue, by Cuckoo Lane to Rose Brow and then down Gateacre Brow contains a wide range of domestic building types. For those who did not see Gateacre Chapel last year, we will revisit this - perhaps the most important building.

Introduction. The story of Gateacre is quite different from the story of Much Woolton, though part of the area we are considering lies within the old township of Much Woolton. But the greater part lies in the township of Little Woolton, and it looks as if the two Wooltons have been separate since before Domesday. Much Woolton early developed the nucleus which, shifted a little north, we know today as Woolton Village. Little Woolton never had such a nucleus; it was to the east an area of rich farming land with scattered farmsteads, westwards higher heath and common. When, towards the end of the C17 (?) a hamlet did begin to develop, it was clustered around the crossroads on the old road from the Ford at Hale to West Derby, Old Swan and Liverpool. The line of this road, Mackets Lane, Halewood Road and Grange Lane, seems to be very old, and if the identification of Wibaldeslei in Domesday Book with Lee Park is right, the 'T' junction and Belle Vale Road could have been here for a long time - the track which became

Gateacre Brow probably began as the way to the common grazing lands.

Maps from the latter half of the C18 show a loose cluster of buildings around the crossroads, and by about 1815 we know from watercolour sketches in the Binns Collection that the 3 pubs were established. The Childwall and Woolton Waste Lands Inclosure Act of 1805 brought the remaining common land (about one sixth of the area of the township) in to private hands, and on Gateacre Brow especially the making of small allotments defining the frontage resulted in land becoming available for building. In 1838 the National School was built, by 1840 a brewery was established (on Clegg's factory site) and the 1841 census figures of the whole township show a population of 969, more than double the 1801 figure. (In the same period Much Woolton's population had multiplied by five.) Andrew Barclay Walker (Walker's Warrington Ales) came to Gateacre in 1851, began the rebuilding of Gateacre Grange, and for the first time the village came under the influence of a rich landowner.

If the crossroads was the focus of Gateacre Village, the first building of significance was the Chapel licensed "for a meeting place for an Assembly of Protestants dissenting from the Church of England" on 14 October 1700. The design must owe something to the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, but that was built about 80 years earlier, so more useful comparisons may be made with Chapels at Knutsford, Macclesfield and Wilmslow which are nearer to it in date.

A local board was set up on the 8th of January 1867 for the township of Little Woolton and the Minute Books are a fruitful source of local information until, with the Liverpool Extension Order of 1913, Little Woolton ceased to be self-governing. But the rural character of the village persisted until Queen Elizabeth II came to the throne. In the next ten years suburban development really began and by 1969, so great were the pressures of development, that the City Council declared the centre of the village a Conservation Area. In 1975 the D.o.E. revised the List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest with some 110 items listed within the Conservation Area.

The guides to this walk would like to emphasise again that they have no complete knowledge, they are feeling their way, and they base their statements and opinions on features that strike them and their enthusiasm for architecture and local history. The eagle-eyed may notice that some items have been revised since last year, the guides hope to gather more ideas on the way.

## G A T E A C R E      B R O W

No. 2. (Listed) Small 2-storey double fronted brick villa pre-1840 (? 1835); centre panelled door (later glazing) in moulded stone doorcase with impost, round arch and fanlight with original (?) lead glazing bars: sash windows (replacements ?) and added canted bay. In 1840 owned by John Gore (joiner) and occupied by J.A. Pearson, in 1874 Edward Brown M.D. lived here, and by 1890 the property was owned by the Unitarian Chapel Trustees.

No. 4. (Listed) Double fronted stucco villa, 2-storeys, apparently shown on 1835 map; centre panelled door (a wider proportion than No. 2,) in moulded doorcase with impost, round arch with fanlight and glazing bars, 2 12-paned sash windows below, 3 above; stone side walls; large early Victorian extensions (? before 1840). Thomas Rodick J.P., merchant (15 Temple Street, Liverpool) born in Kendal 1789, died 1855, (memorial in Gateacre Chapel) appears as of 'Kendal Cottage', Gateacre as early as 1825, and he owned and occupied the house in 1840. In 1874 the solicitor, James Thornely was living here, and by 1890 this too was owned by the Chapel Trustees.

Nos. 6 & 8. (Listed) Adjoining stone houses on 1835 map; 2-storey and attics. No. 6, double fronted, has panelled centre door (wide proportion) in round arched moulded doorcase; 12-paned sash on first floor (note jambs) and added rectangular stone bay to right; 2-storeyed canted timber bay to left with wood mullioned and transomed windows and 'Ipswich' centre feature (c.f. Black Bull, Gateacre Grange etc.) No. 8 has 3-light stone mullioned window below with 12-paned sash over (note keystone worked in lintel,) and added canted bay similar to No. 6; doorway in left wing; at high level see resited (?) datestone carved "I P S" "1 8 0 7" on a lintel also with keystone. In the 1805 enclosures the frontage of this site seems to be part of plot No. 64 allotted to Margaret Webster (of the Bear and Staff ?); by 1840 No. 6 was owned by James Greenough (of Quarry Street, Woolton) and No. 8 was the property of the executors of John Pennington (the name Pennington (or Pinnington) appears in Quarry Street in 1813 and 1840 too.) By 1890 both houses belonged to the Chapel Trustees, and No. 8 was the residence of the Minister of Gateacre Chapel until 1961.

(We have not come to a conclusion as to which house was built first - the clue may be in the mullioned window.)

Nos. 10 & 12. Square mid C19 cottages; indicated (?) on 1848 map, scored stucco, hipped roof; ground floor has simple (Listed) Victorian shop front; 2 12-paned sashes above: No. 12 is on the left round the corner, with panelled door, 1 16-paned sash window & 1 blocked one on each floor. The front of this site with the front part of the Bear and Staff car park seem to be Margaret Webster's allotment No. 65 in 1805, and in 1840 John Webster owned the whole site to the present back wall of the car park (it was then described as '6 cottages, stables, fold and garden'.) In 1874 No. 10 was William B. Lott, grocer and provision dealer (Philip Lott was the grocer at 30 Allerton Rd., Woolton at the same time) and No. 12 was Thomas Burrows, gardener and there were 5 other street numbers before the Bear and Staff at No. 24; these buildings are still shown on the 1891 map.

Bear and Staff pub (No. 24.) This may be indicated on the 1768 map by Yates and Perry; a building is shown here on the enclosure map of 1815 and a sketch of Gateacre Brow with the Bear and Staff sign clearly shown (dating from c.1815) is in the Binns Collection. Stables c.1840. Pub refronted in the Edwardian period (?) and much rebuilt. Bowling green however is shown as such on the 1840 map and survives in very similar form. (Occupants: 1825 - Richard Webster, 1840 - Mrs. Fleetwood, 1874 - Joshua Ledger.)

Unitarian Chapel. Licensed 1700 (for an English Presbyterian congregation already formed here); enlarged upwards 1719, with mid Victorian re-ordering. This is a plain rectangular red sandstone building (Listed). The plan is typical of a Dissenting Chapel designed for preaching, an austere auditorium of good materials with plain fittings. To the North are 2 segmental headed windows; to the South 3 (2 of these have had their heads raised); 1 segmental headed window to the East over the added vestry; and a later Venetian window at the West over the gallery. Entrance by the original round arched doorway with keystone, off centre, at the West end; traces of a similar arch at the East. Ashlar buttresses at the West end and the date '1700' on a carved stone all added in mid Victorian times. Interior now has E. to W. orientation with a Communion Table, small organ, and C18 Pulpit (resited), some C18 panelling, C19 West gallery on cast iron columns. Bust of Rev. William Shepherd (1768-1847) for 56 years minister here, in niche in centre of N. wall - traditionally the position from which he preached.

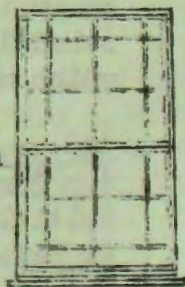
## OAKFIELD AVENUE

Oakfield: Datestone '1865'; in rockfaced sand stone, typical of the High Victorian parsonage house, with touches of muscular Gothic and including a corbelled turret as seen on Scottish castles (a bartizan) - Balmoral Castle was built 1852-4 - and a variety of windows, note especially the unusual stone transomed windows with double hung sashes set behind them, c.f. St. John's Vicarage, Middlesborough, of 1865. Internally the hall is Gothic but marble fireplaces are in the classical tradition.

History closely linked with Oakfield Terrace q.v.; if we read the monogram correctly as E.&M. H - in 1845 George Bennion (by that time of Oakfield Terrace ?) bought the site; in 1865 his trustees conveyed it to Elkanah Healey (c.1816 - 1893) who then built this house setting upon it a monogram of the initials of himself and his wife (Mary, nee Bennion,); in 1902 his daughter Florence, born in the Parish of Childwall c.1846, sold the house to G.W. Mumford. (The Corporation of Liverpool bought the house in 1946.) Elkanah Healey was a founder member and first Chapel Steward of St. James Methodist Church, Woolton (built 1866, architect C.O. Ellison.)

## GUCKOO LANE

Oakfield Terrace. On the evidence of maps built between 1835-46; a block of 3 'Regency' villas facing North East and formerly with a carriage sweep all around. Scored and painted stucco in a generally Georgian tradition, with deep wooden eaves and low pitched roof. Of the 7 bays, the centre 3 break slightly forward with a wide open-pediment/gable defining the centre villa. The first floor windows retain their original 12-pane sashes. Large bays with recessed quadrant corners and a Classical type of cornice were added to both end villas (after 1848) and canted bays to the ground floor windows of the centre house, leaving the original centre Front Door with rectangular moulded surround with rosettes in the top corners - the Front Doors of the end villas are in the return elevations, of similar design and on the South the rosettes remain. The layout of the glazing bars in the lower windows and doors would appear to indicate a later alteration, but this variety of layout occurs in Holland Place, Edge Hill of pre 1835, (? original), in Milner Square, London, 1841-3, and in the North end of St. George's Hall, Liverpool 1841-56. In 1848 the three villas were owned by George Bennion who was born c.1784 at Farndon, Cheshire; by 1825 he



seems to have been of 'Fox & Bennion' Coach Builders, 7 Berry St. and living in Upper Parliament Street, by 1832 he had moved his shop to 12 Berry Street, in 1851 he was living at one of the Oakfield Terrace villas - and we find in the other two Emma Bennett (a widow) and Elkanah Healey with his wife and 5 young children. The Coachbuilding firm became 'Bennion and Healey' and, though George Bennion died c.1864, the firm carried this name into the 1890s.

Smithy Cottage. Shown on 1835 map (earliest information available), typical of early C19 small stone house of vernacular kind. In 1848 this building and the four cottages almost adjoining on Rose Brow were owned by John Ashcroft and occupied by James Blundell & others. Not long after this it seems that the group (?) came into the ownership of Andrew Barclay Walker who built 'The Cobblers Shop' and (?) rehabilitated this cottage with a new caves course, ? new roof, and porch.

## R O S E      B R O W

'Cobblers Shop' not shown on 1848 map; on stylistic grounds we suggest this was built c.1851 by Andrew Barclay Walker with High Victorian features - note: polychromatic slated roof, blocks in caves cornice, rock faced sandstone walling. By analogy we suggest Cornelius Sherlock as architect - see Gateacre Grange; and that this was built as a smithy.

Rose Brow Cottages. Building shown here on 1813 map, and indeed an indication on Yates & Perry's map of 1768 that something was here then. Can it be that these are indeed a row of 5, or at least 4 (the South one is 'different') cottages surviving from the latter half of the C18? Inspection of the rear elevation hints that they are/were stone, so the present brick fronts may be a C19 rebuilding - if this is so they are an interesting contrast with York Cottages of mid C19. In the 1813 enclosure schedule there is a passing reference to 'Barrow's cottages' which might refer to these; in 1840 they belonged to Ashcroft.

'Grange Cottage' (Rose Brow) - so named in 1932 when Dr. G.C. Mort the Coroner lived here. A stone carries the date "1787" and the initials "E.B." and a rainwater head carries the date "1837" so we have clues to two building dates. The elevation to the road

is confused (even when seen from the top of a bus), but we may attribute the wide and low 8-paned sashes to an 1837 rebuilding and the low half-octagonal extension to the right of the front door is perhaps of the same date. But what of the oak front door with a Queen Anne flavour, the polygonal porch and the gate in the wall to Rose Brow with a teasing strapwork pattern (echo of a stone in Childwall church?) - can Dr. Mort have added these with his new bathroom? The North East side is equally confused, but again we may be able to suggest 1837 alterations, and place the 2-storey stone bay in period. In 1848 the house belonged to Miss Fanny Speakman (aged 67) who lived there with her unmarried sisters Betty, Sarah and Rachel - in 1825 'Speakman F.' is recorded as having one of the Academies in Little Woolton - here or elsewhere?

Gateacre Grange. Main house - two building stages apparent: -

First (South) section: built 1851 (?) architect Cornelius Sherlock; rock-faced sandstone, Gothic revival in massing and mood though not wholly in architectural vocabulary. Note the High Victorian features e.g. polychromatic fish-scale slating, blocks in the eaves cornice, chimney stacks with each flue separate (tops have recently been removed) and lancets in gables and compare with the 'Cobblers Shop'. (Square cut bays to East and South are additions.)

Second (North) section: built c.1883-4: architect not named (also Sherlock?) in rock-faced sandstone and very much in keeping with Domestic Revival architecture of the late C19, with gables reminiscent of Cotswold vernacular buildings; note also relieving arches over larger windows, massive chimneys. The bays probably of this same date added to the mid C19 block include 'Ipswich' window features popularised by Norman Shaw - but with the curved transoms cut in stone as a technical tour de force.

Stables: buildings round three sides of the stable yard, stables coach houses etc.; contemporary with the first section of the house; architect also Cornelius Sherlock (?) with similar rock-faced sandstone and eaves cornice detail and polychromatic slating and High Victorian details. Post-war alterations to the block facing Rose Brow when the upper floor was converted to domestic use.

Gate Piers. (Octagonal caps of High Victorian type adorn the grounds) The present caps - on stylistic grounds - probably date from c.1883 and the small grotesque carvings (including a portrait of the owner?) repay a look. From the fact that the motto 'CURA ET INDUSTRIA' now faces the building instead of the road, we deduce that the caps have been reversed at some time since the Walkers left c.1917.

Indications on the 1768 map suggest that there was a building on this site then, a sketch in the Binns Collection shows a large building here about 1815 and the 1835 map shows the extent of that house (also confirmed by the 1848 map). The owner in 1848 was Sarah Lawrence, the occupier Sarah Anne Holland - who was still living there on the 30th of March 1851 with 13 boarding pupils - girls from 12 to 21 from all parts of the kingdom. Andrew Barclay Walker was born at Auchinflour, Ayrshire in 1824, educated at Liverpool Institute, followed his father as head of the Warrington Brewery, and came to Gateacre in 1851. He is said to have built Gateacre Grange in the same year - presumably clearing the site of the former buildings. In 1853 he married a girl from Fife, they had 6 sons and 2 daughters, and in 1882 she died. A.B. Walker was Mayor of Liverpool in 1873-4 and again in 1876-7 and was knighted in December 1877. From the Little Woolton rates book we find that the rates of Gateacre Grange doubled between 1883 & 1884 which suggests the date for the second block. Sir Andrew was High Sheriff of Lancashire in 1886-7, created a Baronet in 1886, remarried in 1887 and died in 1893. In 1874-7 he gave the Walker Art Gallery to the City, architects Sherlock and Vale.

### GRANGE LANE

York Cottages. Two terraces of 14 artisans cottages built between 1835 & 48; made of the local brick, 2-storey, each front with a round-arched doorway and blind fanlight and 1 segmental arched window to each floor; yards at rear with entry between; strip cottage gardens (c.f. Castle Street & Church Terrace, Woolton.) In 1848 they were owned by Thomas Yeoman, a painter who was born at Knaresborough, Yorkshire c.1786 - in 1851 he was living, it would seem, in the Lynton/Post Office block in Gateacre Brow where his daughter Elizabeth was a grocer and tea dealer. By 1876 the cottages had passed into the ownership of Andrew Barclay Walker.

We visited these cottages last year when the rehabilitation scheme for more than half was newly completed and they were reoccupied - this year a return visit to see how the site works are getting on.

(We hope that you will come for another walk next year.)

J.D.

(C)

The Gateacre Society

J.B.G.