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THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Registered with the Civic Trust  
for the North West.

Chairman: Mr. T. Brakell, Linden Cottage  
Halewood Road. 428 - 3105

Hon. Sec: Mrs. S. Lewis, Grange Lodge  
Grange Lane. 428 - 3671

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER - 1979

Next meeting -



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FORTY YEARS OF CARING  
FOR MERSEYSIDE

The work of the Merseyside Civic Society

by

Dr. JOAKIM A. SKOVGAARD

F.R. of Dbg., M.A., Ph.D., Dip.Arch., R.I.B.A

A joint meeting with the Woolton Society.

WEDNESDAY the 26th of September

Slides.

at 8 p.m.

Tea 10p.

Gateacre Chapel Hall, Sandfield Road.

Advance notice - Annual General Meeting 23 October 8 p.m.

## EXHIBITION - 2nd to 7th July.

Those of us used to seeing Harriett Stein's elegant shop in the Prudential Building on Gateacre Brow found quite different items on display recently. For a week the Society held an exhibition to mark the first 10 years of the Gateacre Village Conservation Area, and the passer-by was enticed by the Conservation Area sign in a flamboyant rosette sharing one of the windows with the stones from Brettargh Holt, while the other window contained Miss J. Gnosspelius' impressive drawing of the Prudential Building with illustrations of the later works of Architect W. Aubrey Thomas, designer of the Liver Building.

Although the shop is small the exhibition was varied in content including an attractive display of items discovered during a 'dig' in Lower Sandfield prior to new building work, continuous slide show of Gateacre's listed buildings and a miniature gallery of childrens' paintings of Gateacre besides many scores of photographs and drawings. Exhibits included achievements of the Society such as the refurbishing of the Village Green, York Cottages, the Conservation Area Signs, the ban on H.G.Vs in Vale Road, the trees planted to screen the Conservative Club and the Graffiti Squad in action. Displays showing photographs of long changed views and past inhabitants of Gateacre were as popular as ever. The City Planning Officer kindly lent part of his exhibition of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings in the City including Gateacre and Woolton.

Visitors were able to see photographs of restoration work on 'Queen Victoria' by the Museum, and other interesting items such as a reproduction of the Tissot portrait of Mrs. Chapple Gill 1877 painted in her father's house Lower Lee in Beaconsfield and recently acquired by the Art Gallery.

Due to the generous efforts of a few people the exhibition was open daily from 10 am. to 8 pm. and fortunately good weather literally allowed an open door. As well as nearly 400 visitors who signed the visitors book many of the children from the local schools enjoyed a visit and found it instructive. Although it was necessary to charge a nominal 10p. admittance the liberal supply of free leaflets on a variety of related subjects ensured that no-one needed to leave empty handed.

The shop premises were kindly lent by the Prudential Assurance Company and thanks must go to the people who worked



so hard to make the exhibition a success, in particular Mrs. Lewis, Miss Gnosspelius, the Revv. John and Daphne Roberts, Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd, Miss Lomas and, not least, to all the children who contributed their works of art. P.B.

### CONSERVATION WORK IN LIVERPOOL - J.M. Harrison

On Wednesday 4th July (during Exhibition week) Mr. John Harrison the Conservation Officer in the City Planning Office, gave a lecture to the Society about his work. He is the officer with special responsibility for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas in the City.

Mr. Harrison told of the post war Town & Country Planning legislation which introduced the idea of listing buildings that were of special architectural or historic importance. The first list for Liverpool of 1952 contained the unquestionably important buildings, the revised list of 1968 included much Georgian building as ideas of which buildings ought to be listed developed, and the current list (of 1975) includes over 1,000 buildings and other things - statuary, gateways, lamp posts and letter boxes. The 1957 Civic Amenities Act introduced the idea of Conservation Areas and there are now 27 designated in Liverpool.

In working on Conservation we must consider the difference between preservation as a kind of pickling and conservation of a living area or building where change of use may have to be accommodated. Liverpool was an incredibly rich city in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and we now appreciate the heritage that has been handed on to us. Mr. Harrison showed us slides of Rodney Street, Canning Street and parts of Upper Parliament Street where conservation work is in progress and those extra embellishments can be restored with funds from the Historic Buildings Council because they are in Conservation Areas considered "outstanding" in the national context.

He also told us of the part Housing Associations are playing in rehabilitation and showed slides of stone cleaning in Percy Street, work in Princes Park, Sefton Park, Lark Lane and Adassah Grove; and Wavertree Garden Suburb started in 1909 and the influence that the garden-suburb idea had on Municipal housing in the inter-war years.



Mr. Harrison answered a number of questions from the audience, and in answer to a question about why Sandfield Road is not in the Gateacre Village Conservation Area he suggested that if the Society and the residents put forward the case it might be considered favourably by the City Council.

40 YEARS OF CARING FOR MERSEYSIDE. We have invited Dr. Skovgaard, a Senior Lecturer in Urban Design in the Dept of Architecture at the Liverpool Polytechnic. to talk about the work of the Merseyside Civic Society. The M.C.S. has been the amenity society caring for our environment for more than 40 years, using the words "Merseyside" and "the environment" long before they became familiar to us as everyday terms. The Merseyside Civic Society is, in many ways, the daddy of all local amenity societies, having long experience of trying to influence development for good, and responding to changes in our needs. Before the end of the war the Merseyside Civic Competition was a valiant effort to gather and articulate ideas for the post-war shape of Merseyside and its amenities; as the idea of conservation has become widespread the Society has done much for the Lyceum (that campaign started in 1971) and Irwin Street - to quote just two recent examples from Liverpool, and over many years has been one of the best sources of informed opinion on the Merseyside Structure Plan.

Kim Skovgaard is the Chairman of their Civic Design Panel - looking at planning applications for Merseyside with the aim of encouraging high standards of architecture and civic design. He is at present working with the Liverpool Council for Voluntary Service on proposals for the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. Because of the importance of understanding how our work should relate to that of the M.C.S. we are making this a joint meeting with the Woolton Society.

MERSEYSIDE STRUCTURE PLAN - The "Draft Written Statement" - a book of 175 pages with a considerable number of maps - has now been published, and can be bought from the County Planning Officer at Metropolitan House, Old Hall Street; or seen in any library. There is also a coloured broad-sheet which is freely available.

On the 31st August the Wavertree Society nobly played host to the meeting for public consultation in Liverpool. Mr. Michael Houlston of the County Planning Dept. showed the tape-slide



presentation of the plan, and then spoke and answered questions from the audience. The Secretary attended on behalf of the Society with the Assistant Secretary and two members and will be making comments on the plan in due course.

FOOTPATH, Grange Lane - Grange Weint - Cuckoo Lane.

We had thought our troubles regarding this useful footpath were over last February when the City Engineer declared that it had been closed illegally and sent some of his staff to re-open it. But there has been a recent planning application to "include this public footpath within the boundary of the new development at 'Rockfield' also within the boundary of vacant land at the rear of Grange Weint also within curtilage of 21 Grange Weint" which was advertised in the Daily Post 12 September - this translated means the closure of the footpath.

According to the Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr. A. McFarland giving judgement on another matter concerning Grange Lane in 1956 this public right of way is shown on Bennisor's Survey of 1835, and we think it may very well go back even further to the time when Cuckoo Lane was built in 1748 by Isaac Greene, ancestor of Lord Salisbury.

We have written to Mr. E.S.P. Evans, City Planning Officer sending copies to our local Councillors pointing out that the path is extensively used by people going to and from the bus stops on Rose Brow, by many elderly people - particularly from the Home for Aged Seamen at Gateacre Grange, also by many mothers with young children - the footpath providing a safe traffic-free route rather than using Oakfield Avenue, where to avoid the overgrown shrubs near the top means stepping out onto the roadway.

If you feel this closure would be a lost amenity please write to the City Planning Officer before 4th October and sign one of the petitions you will find either in Grange Lane Stores or the Smithy Tuck Shop on Rose Brow.

No. 2 Rose Brow. - The new owners of this 'listed' cottage are doing some extensive rehabilitation work (with planning permission) which entailed demolishing the rear wall in order to build a kitchen and bathroom extension. This wall was of local stone which is a costly material, hard to come by when



required (particularly so now that Woolton quarry has closed

The owner had no further use for it, so we phoned Mr. Harrison - the Conservation Officer who made every effort to lay hands on a vehicle to cart the stone to Calderstones where it could be stored until needed. It lay in a skip on the pavement for a week, but as no transport was available during that time it was eventually taken away by a demolition contractor and dumped. This dreadful waste is going on all the time, how can we prevent it? Do we have to use the Society's funds to hire a truck next time or is there some other way?

We rang the demolition contractor concerned to see if there was still any possibility of salvaging the stone only to find that it had already been crushed for use as 'hardcore'; but he was most sympathetic, knew that Chester had a scheme for salvaging valuable materials and would have co-operated if he had known, he also said that he would welcome a list of items required for storage so maybe this is something which can be done.

FURNISAVE LTD. The new tenants of Howells Grocery Store in the centre of the village were refused planning permission for an illuminated fascia sign earlier this year. We have noticed recently that the sign is lit up each evening and have informed the Planning Office. They are going to take enforcement action to see that the law is complied with - an illuminated sign so near the traffic lights is confusing to drivers.

HALEWOOD HOUSE. - A planning application is under consideration for the demolition of this house in Halewood Road and for building 4 detached dwellings on the site (which is in the Woolton Society's area but much nearer to Gateacre Village). We went to look at it with the Woolton Society and found it to be a pleasant Victorian house of good design for the period, and notable for being very little altered. We felt it would be a pity to lose it so we alerted our local Councillors and Councillor McVeigh has arranged a site meeting with a senior planning officer on September 21st to consider whether permission for demolition should be given.



WOOLTON WATCHES, CHEMIST & LYNTON - These black and white 'listed' buildings next to the Black Bull, refaced nearly 100 years ago, probably by Cornelius Sherlock (Architect of the Walker Art Gallery and the Picton Reading Room) are looking very shabby and delapidated. Twelve months ago we wrote to the owners, Tetley Walker the brewers, to whom they belong, drawing their attention to the need for restoration and re-painting. They replied that it was their intention to put this work in hand as soon as weather permitted - since which time we have had a long hard winter. We have written again reminding them of what they had said last year and asking for the work to be done before this coming winter.

REINSTATEMENT OF DOUBLE YELLOW LINES - One of the privileges allowed to Conservation Areas by the Highway Authority is that double yellow lines 4" wide on most roads may be only 3" wide within Conservation Areas as a concession to visual amenity, so we rang the City Engineer to ask for this. When "Redland" Contractors turned up in Gateacre on Sunday the 26th August we watched with great interest to see how the change from the 4" line to 3" was achieved. The modern method is to use an Ingenious Small Vehicle fitted (on the off side, presumably to suit most of Europe's right hand drive roads) with a pair of spray nozzles adjustable for height above the road surface. The yellow plastic material has a working temperature of about 300° (if overheated it turns green and becomes unusable).

Under the supervision of a member of the Highway Authority's staff with a marked map in his hand this I.S.V. was ambling along the wrong side of Belle Vale Road, in a cloud of steam, drawing double yellow lines 3" wide until he stopped it at the boundary of the Conservation Area. At this point the spray nozzles were raised and readjusted so that the spray would cover a 4" width of road and the I.S.V. trundled off under the railway bridge leaving behind bright new 4" double yellow lines.

BOUNDARY WALL OF RECREATION GROUND - We were told that part of this wall had been vandalised, so we rang the Recreation and Open Spaces Dept. and within one week the wall had been repaired.

5 and 7 LOWER SANDFIELD - On the 9th August we wrote to M.A.N.W.E.B. asking that any renewal of the supply cable to these houses should enter underground rather than overhead, looping across from house to house (see York Cottages). We sent copies of our letter to Mrs. Scarland of the Civic Trust for the North West and to the Electricity Consultative Council.

On the 10th September we had a reply from the Consultative Council saying that undergrounding was expensive and that M.A.N.W.E.B. couldn't be expected to shoulder all the cost; but we are pursuing this question as the houses are within the Conservation Area.

CHAPEL GARDEN PARTY - This was held in the grounds of the Chapel Hall on the 18th August to raise money towards the cost of re-building the Chapel Wall on Gateacre Brow - which amounted to nearly £4,000. It was opened by His Honour Judge Paterson, an extremely witty speaker who ensured a good start to the afternoon. The sun shone and a good time was had by all - a most successful occasion raising a little over £420.

NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS -

- 2 Rose Brow To make repairs to existing bldg and erect kitchen & bathroom extension (£200 grant from Heritage Bureau).
- Former Goods Yard off Belle Vale Road. To erect sports & social club.
- Rockfield, Grange Weint. To erect 1 dwelling house.
- Gateacre Riding School, Grange Lane. To convert existing building and construction of new for residential purposes.
- 3 Gateacre Brow. To form brick plinth under shop window for security.

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J.B.G.