

942-7211
CAT

LIVERPOOL
LIBRARIES
21 DEC 1979

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Registered with the Civic Trust
for the North West

CHRISTMAS
NEWSLETTER

1979



Next meeting -

NORTHUMBRIAN KALEIDOSCOPE

A journey with slides showing some of
the interesting features of this
little-known countryside

by: LIONEL SHEPHERD

January 21st 1980
8.00 p.m.

at:- Gateacre Chapel Hall, Sandfield Road. Tea 10p.

WANTED SUBSCRIPTIONS - Will all members who have not yet
paid their 1979/80 subscriptions (indicated by a
red star, with apologies to those who have paid
within the last few days) PLEASE let the member-
ship secretary, Mrs. Sheila Bee 'Velova' Grange
Lane, have these before the New Year ? Thank you.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

29 members attended the meeting which was held this year in The Gateacre Institute on 23rd Oct. The following Officers and Committee Members were elected -

Chairman: Mr. T. Brakell, Linden Cottage, Halewood Rd 428-310
Vice Chairman: Mr. A. McCann, 5 Greendale Road 428-104
Hon. Secretary: Mrs. S. Lewis, Grange Lodge, Grange La 428-367
Ass. Hon. Sec: Miss A. Lythgoe, 168 Gateacre Pk. Drive 428-396
Hon. Treasurer: Mr. H. Winsor, 26A Thornside Walk 428-833

Committee -

Mrs. Sheila Bee, 'Velova', Grange Lane 428-549
Mrs. Patti Beecham, 15 Chartmount Way 428-675
Miss Hannah Coleman, Elmsvale, Belle Vale Road 428-298
Mr. Albert Globe, 2 Downham Close 428-360
Miss Janet Gnosspelius, 14 Hightor Road 428-412
Mrs. Jessica McKenzie, 7 Grange Weint 428-293
Mrs. Daphne Roberts, 23 Belle Vale Road 428-271
Mr. Lionel Shepherd, Browside Cottage, Sandfield Rd 428-698
Mr. Leslie Wheeler, 3 York Cottages, Grange Lane 428-864

We welcome our four new members - Miss Coleman, Mr. Wheeler, Miss Gnosspelius and Mrs. McKenzie and hope they enjoy helping to run the Society, they will bring fresh ideas and perhaps help us to see new ways of tackling our problems.

THE WORK OF THE MERSEYSIDE CIVIC SOCIETY.

This was a joint meeting with The Woolton Society, held on the 26th Sept., and we were happy to have so many of our friends from 'up the Brow' with us. Dr. J.A. Skovgaard, Chairman of the Civic Design Panel of the M.C.S. started his lecture by saying that he is also currently involved in assessing buildings for 'listing' and areas for Conservation in Denmark, and that this work requires him to ask the question "what makes a building important and worth saving"? He then illustrated the answer with many interesting slides of various important aspects of the built environment - starting in London and travelling via other British examples to farms in Denmark.

Dr. Skovgaard quoted many of the things on which the quality of our environment depends, one being regular street

sweeping ! Interest is often derived from the variety and contradiction of the different 'languages' buildings 'talk' which, however, without care can become a gabble. Our surroundings would often benefit from being quieter in design, especially by the use of less strident signs and lettering. He reminded us that the inter-relationship of buildings is all important, and here mentioned a local political club which does nothing to enhance the appearance of Gateacre.

We were reminded that 'Society very often gets what it deserves', and Dr. Skovgaard stressed the importance of participation by ordinary people in matters relating to their particular area - he had been very impressed by The Woolton Society's team at the Woolton Hall inquiry, he felt that this had set a good example of how such an exercise should be tackled.

Concluding his very interesting talk, Dr. Skovgaard asked what we felt the Merseyside Civic Society ought to be doing to help that it isn't already doing, and how can we encourage the right sort of building ?

Repairing Speke Hall

"One of the finest timber-framed buildings in the country" was Carol Thickers' description of Speke Hall in introducing her talk on the 3rd December. She then went on to show us, with the help of excellent slides, her work as the Architect in Charge of the repair work currently in progress.

Speke Hall was substantially built as we see it to-day in 1600, and structurally has changed very little since. Mrs. Thickers told us of the difficulties even in making a schedule of defects; the internal panelling covers many faults, and with so many sections of roof the junctions have leaked in many places causing rot and beetle damage to the timbers underneath. Some frame members no longer meet while others could be scooped out as dust and emergency props were needed while repairs were effected.

The scale of the surgery was such that it was decided to remove the roof altogether, and in January 1976 work started on the S.E. wing. The building was encased in a shed of

scaffolding and corrugated sheeting enabling work to continue in all weathers while the exposed interior and framework were protected.

Each oak member was examined and assessed and if unsound either repaired or replaced, Mrs. Thickens illustrated the considerable pains taken over ensuring that as much of the original timber with its moulding was preserved. She had much praise for the carpenters, who had not only to splice and even sandwich new and old wood but also to produce mouldings to match the originals. It was heartening to hear that not only have the craftsmen become very interested and involved but that young apprentices are being trained.

Although the timber frame is the main concern, the roof of sandstone slates needed repair too, as well as the leaded glazing. Various other items also received Mrs. Thickens' attention including the replacement and concealment of electric wiring and the strengthening of the stone chimney stacks. The emphasis throughout is on thoroughness and attention to detail, and we were made to feel sure that Speke Hall is being very well looked after.

The Great Hall is now almost finished and permission has been obtained for work to go ahead on the Great Parlour block, we wish Mrs. Thickens every success with this next phase. We have written to ask if it would be possible for her to show a small party of members round the Hall, perhaps next summer, if you are interested please let Miss Lythgoe have your names.

P.B.

Footpath - Grange Lane to Cuckoo Lane.

A letter setting out our objections to the application covering the closure of this footpath together with petition forms containing over 600 signatures were handed in to the Planning Department in October, and on the 29th five members of the Society were present at the Development and Building Control Sub-Committee to hear the application refused. This was good news indeed and we would like to thank all those members who worked so hard obtaining signatures. We have asked the City Engineer if it would be possible to have a sign saying 'public footpath' at the Cuckoo Lane end and he has agreed.

He also said that he would see that the path was swept, but maybe he is waiting until the new wall has been completed.

Architectural Salvage - Following on from the mention in the last Newsletter of the load of valuable sandstone which had been lost because no transport was available, we recently had an inquiry from one of our members whose front door had been kicked in while his 'listed' house was empty. A second-hand door 6'2" x 2'10½" x 1⅞" with four panels was required. We rang all the demolition contractors who might be expected to have stocks of such items but were told that they didn't save them they burned them, so our member has had to have a new one made to the old pattern.

Again, when is Liverpool going to start a scheme for architectural salvage? 'Listing' buildings then telling their owners that replacement windows, doors, slates and walls etc., should be as original is only one side of the coin - on the other there should be stocks of these items readily available at a price they can afford to pay. Such a scheme need not cost the City money, a revolving fund is the answer we think - an initial sum of money is required, demolition contractors should be informed of which items they were required to save, these would then be purchased and made available to anyone needing them at a small profit which would go to repay the initial loan and increase stocks as necessary.

The Heritage Bureau recently granted a sum of money to salvage four marble fireplace surrounds and two cast iron grates - hurray, but where do we go from there? A continuous programme and readily available transport is what is needed.

Bolton Watches, Chemist & Lynton - We are pleased to see that repair work to these buildings has started at last - even though plywood is being used rather than oak which would last for so much longer.

Christmas Cards - The Society has again produced cards - this year it is a view of Gateacre Chapel, with 'Best Wishes' inside so that they can be used on other occasions too. The

price is 10p. and they can be obtained from the secretary.

Heavy Goods Vehicles -

Our Spring Newsletter reported the 3 ton weight limit signs erected in mid February on Belle Vale Road and Kings Drive, and suggested that warning signs were needed at the top of the Brow.

Mr. Disley, Mrs. Lewis and Miss Gnosspelius, not understanding the grey picture of a 3 ton lorry (on a black background) set out to make a survey of these signs which are erected around the Woolton and Gateacre Areas from Hunts Cross to Allerton Maze and Five Ways. These are designed to indicate a route avoiding our Conservation Areas and using Menlove Ave, Queens Drive and Childwall Valley Road, roads suitable for heavy traffic. We think we found some inconsistencies and some gaps in the system. On the 13th November we took our survey to Mr. Mitchell in the County Surveyor's Department, and we hope that the scheme will be made better as a result though we are still bothered by the effectiveness of the message "Netherley" to those who want to join a motorway.

We also found out that lorries over 3 tons have red and yellow reflective strips on their tails - this is how you can recognize them.

J.B.G.

Photographs ordered at the Exhibition -

We do apologise for the long delay in sending these out to those members who ordered them. John Roberts assures me that at last he can see a light at the end of the tunnel, so they shouldn't be much longer.

Planning Applications -

- Midland Bank, Gateacre Brow - single storey extension to provide additional administration & sanitary facilities.
- 16, Blackwood Avenue - to incorporate within the curtilage the land adjacent to the dwelling house.

Trees -

Members will have noticed the loss of a number of trees from the Rockfield, Cuckoo Lane site. These trees had a Tree Preservation Order covering them so the Planning Dept was informed and on the 3rd December the City Solicitor was instructed to take legal action against the owners.

A very happy Christmas to all our members.

S.M.L. 14.12.71