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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.M. Lewis, Grange Lodge
Grange Lane. 428 - 3671

SPRING NEWSLETTER - 1980.

Next meeting -

' ROCKET 150 '

Mr. J. Hayes

Public Relations Officer of British Rail.

Mr. Hayes is coming to talk about the Celebrations
to be held on the 150th Anniversary of the opening
of the first passenger railway (Liverpool-Manchester).

WEDNESDAY the 19th March 8 pm.

Gateacre Chapel Hall, Sandfield Road.

Tea 10p.



THE THUMBRIAN KALEIDOSCOPE - Mr. Lionel Shepherd.

We started our journey at the end of one of those long straight Roman roads which cut the landscape into two - but what a landscape with its rolling hills and small woods.

The Emperor Hadrian commenced building his wall c 120 AD and it was manned by the Romans for the next two hundred years against the Picts and Scots - originally 15' high, 6' wide and with a 15' wide ditch 9' deep on the North side. It runs from Bowness on Solway Firth to Wallsend on the East coast, and we have some idea of what the Mile Forts looked like from reconstructions built near Chesters. First built of timber and turf these were later converted to stone. They were manned by 25 to 50 soldiers and were so called because there was exactly 1 Roman mile between each fort and between each pair of forts were built 2 signal towers. At various points settlements were built behind the wall where the soldiers' families could live and trading took place. Here were the first centrally heated homes in our islands, with hot air channels under the floor - hypocausts, and running hot water. If a soldier served on the wall for twenty-five years with good conduct, he was given Free Citizenship of Rome, even though he could have been recruited from any part of the Empire.

Next call was the beautiful fortified City of Berwick-on-Tweed. Then on to Holy Island or Lindisfarne, with its approach road submerged at high tide. St. Aidan arrived here in 634 AD and started his religious foundation to convert the local heathens to Christianity. By 657 Cuthbert was Bishop and was eventually buried here, but c 900 his body was transferred to Durham for safe keeping on the site later to become the Cathedral. Back on Lindisfarne St. Mary's Priory was built about 1150 and, four hundred years later, the castle to house the garrison still defending the country from the Scots. It became a ruin, was bought in 1902 by Edward Hudson, founder of Country Life, restored by Sir Edwin Lutyens and is now owned by the National Trust.

Durham Cathedral, begun in 1096, took 4 centuries to complete the great sanctuary knocker on the main door is unfortunately not the original but a replica, the original is kept safely elsewhere. What grand Norman columns there are in the nave, highly decorated with a wonderful clock in the South transept; and the tomb of the Venerable Bede in the Galilee Chapel.

The tour finished at breakneck speed with a glimpse of the beautiful Forest of Kielder, possibly soon to disappear under a

dam; lovely views near Otterburn close to the Border; the Alnwick Fair where all the stallholders and some of the townspeople dress in period costume (from Medieval to Renaissance all at the same time!); on through the attractive gardens of Rothbury; and finally to Hexham Abbey, built 1300 and now having a new organ with stainless steel pipes.

Back home again we were up at dawn to see the sunrise over Gateacre, travelled round Liverpool as it was a few years ago, and saw once more our own village with our Exhibition shop of last summer (albeit back to front). We saw too, Miss Berrington on her 100th birthday with the Lord Mayor - and so to sunset.

Thank you Mr. Shepherd for a very interesting tour. D.M.R.

BLACK AND WHITE in and out of Gateacre - On the 18th Feb. 28

members and friends met to enjoy a talk by Mr. Dewsnap, already familiar to many of us by his informed leadership of Gateacre talks.

The subject was 'black and white' buildings, or as we soon learned, alternatively 'brown and cream'. For Mr. Dewsnap began his talk with that picturesque building Little Moreton Hall in Cheshire. It surprised many to hear that the National Trust are currently restoring it to its reputedly former brown and cream - claiming that black and white was a 19th century interpretation.

Mr. Dewsnap pointed out that our heritage of timber buildings includes little prior to the C14, and that most survivors are C16 and C17 or later. Even these are not representative as inevitably only the more substantial and important buildings have been saved. The picture we have today is further distorted by such alteration and rebuilding, and it is often only during demolition or alteration that half-timbered buildings are revealed as such.

The two basic forms of timber construction - the 'cruck' and 'box' frame were then described with many interesting details of the variations to be found both geographically and chronologically. We were told about the regional differences in the design of bracing and the many variations in panel size and shape at different times.

We were shown many delightful slides of these attractive buildings in many parts of the country, and given a most interesting insight into the many factors in the development

of these buildings.

Details such as the rarity of glass in houses other than those of the very wealthy late into the C17, and the differences in availability of various roofing and infill materials gave us an idea of the clues to be looked for in identifying such structures.

Mr. Dewsnap then came to local examples - first Speke Hall and then to the 'black and white' of Gateacre. Although the Black Bull and its neighbour were described as heavy-handed Victorian imitations (their 'black and white' is applied decorative motif not a structural frame at all). He was rather more enthusiastic about the Prudential Building (W. Aubrey Thomas - Architect of the Liver Building) which brings together details from many sources, combining them skilfully in the true spirit of Victorian eclecticism. He was very complimentary about the little Midland Bank building (Weightman & Bullen) with its sensitive scale and proportion, considering it a valuable contribution to the 'black and white' of Gateacre.

We are grateful to Mr. Dewsnap for such a fascinating and informative lecture, and look forward to a return visit before long - maybe even another Gateacre Walk ? P.B.

PUBLIC FOOTPATH - Since our last newsletter the applicant has put in an appeal against the City Council's refusal to allow the footpath to be closed. We re-activated the Petition very quickly, and in about four days brought the total number of signatures up to over 700. We sent these to the D.O.E. in Bristol as the appeal was to be by written representations (not a Public Inquiry) and we now await their findings.

TREES ON ROCKFIELD SITE - Tree Preservation Order No. 142 covers all the trees between Oakfield Avenue and the footpath referred to in our last paragraph i.e. the sites of Hillside, The Slopes and Rockfield, and it has been in force since 1975. It was on Friday 9th November that we received a telephone call saying that the trees up at Rockfield were being felled; so knowing about the T.P.O. we immediately contacted the Planning Office to ask whether consent had been given for this tree work. An arboriculturist came to inspect, but unfortunately too much damage had already been done for any of the trees to be saved. Photographs were taken both by the Society and the Council.

Members will, no doubt, have seen the Newspaper reports of the prosecution of the owners of the trees who were fined . £500 - (the maximum could have been £1,000 each), and we do hope that the publicity given to the incident will serve as a warning to others who may be considering "tidying up" their trees. Do make sure, by asking the Planning Department, whether trees are covered by a T.P.O. or are in a Conservation Area before cutting them about.

FLOODLIGHT IN CONSERVATIVE CLUB CAR PARK - For about the last two months driving along Grange Lane towards the traffic lights at night, especially in the rain, has been made hazardous by the floodlight erected in this car park. This is badly adjusted and shines down the Lane straight into drivers' eyes. We understand the necessity for the light (many cars have been stolen or broken into during the dark evenings) but positioned as it is it does constitute a danger - the Police are working on this problem.

JUMBLE SALE - This important fund-raising event will be held in the Chapel Hall on Saturday 31st May. As always we will need as many helpers as possible (we never have enough) and your jumble too. Please contact Mrs. McKenzie, 7 Grange Weint 428 - 2938 and let her know if you can be there to lend a hand &/or if you need jumble collecting.

VISIT TO BODENHAM - The Hon. Sec. and Miss Gnosspelius were invited to visit Mrs. Brian at Bodenham near Hereford, and went a few weeks ago. Mrs. Brian is a descendant of the Thornelys who lived at Browside (4 Gateacre Brow) and Baycliff (Bishops Lodge) and she has inherited a vast collection of family papers and photographs. The Thornelys are important to the history of Gateacre because James Thornely, Solicitor, and Clerk to the Little Woolton Local Board lived here from c.1865 until his death in 1898. He and his son, James Lamport Thornely (died 1900 from typhoid) were descended from Unitarian families and left records of Gateacre Chapel and its associations. If we are to do justice to the history of the Chapel their records will be a chief source since the majority of the Chapel records were deposited, for safe keeping in a strong room in Liverpool and destroyed in the blitz.

We collected a resumé of the Thornely descent - they were related to about half the Unitarian families of Liverpool - and portraits of many of them, and of Dr. Thom himself.

J.B.G.

HISTORY OF TARBOCK - Mr. James Ambrose Carter of Tarbock has recently written the history of this township, which adjoins Little Woolton on its Eastern boundary and so is of particular interest to us. The book, beautifully illustrated by Mr. Carter, has been published by the Knowsley Library Service - price £1.95 (only 500 were printed and they have very nearly sold out). We called to see Mr. Carter and were interested to learn that his father lived in Sandfield Road and attended the C. of E. School in Halewood Road, and he has also lent us a number of records - printed leaflets etc., of interest to Gateacre and these we will xerox and add to our collection. We had no picture of Netherlee Farm (near the pumping station) demolished some years ago, and Mr. Carter has made us a delightful drawing from an old photograph.

'WALKS IN THE CITY CENTRE' - A new edition of this popular pocket sized guide by Thomas Lloyd-Jones has just been brought out - it is available from W.H. Smith, Church Street, price £1.00.

NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS -

- Lutheran Church site
Rockbourne Avenue. erect single storey Church, 2 storey parsonage & 8 flats in united 2 storey block.
- 9 & 11 Lower Sandfield erect kitchen and bathroom extension at rear and front porch.
- 36 Gateacre Brow A two storey dining and morning room extension at the rear.

We understand that the application for the conversion of the Riding School into housing accommodation has now been granted.

NOTES - The St. Michael's Hamlet Society has arranged what will be a most interesting visit to The Cloisters and The Hermitage on Saturday 22 March at 2.30 p.m. The walk will be guided by Mr. John Dewsnap, and any members wishing to join the party are asked to contact their Secretary Mr. Arthur McKay at 727-5190, so that they will have some idea of the numbers involved.