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THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Registered with the Civic Trust  
for the North West.

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GATEACRE WALK THREE

Saturday, 30th August 1980

In 1977 The Woolton Society and 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. In 1978 The Gateacre Society took a second walk round the North West quarter of the village. This year we invite you to a third excursion. The area we have chosen is in the South West - up Gateacre Brow, along Acrefield Road, down Holly Tree Road and thro' to Sandfield Road and the Sandhole. We visit Gateacre Chapel again, the oldest and most important building, and see a range of building types dating from 1700 onwards, and find where the area's electricity was generated years ago.

These Notes are a supplement to what our guides can say in the time available as we walk. It is not our intention that you should read them during the course of the walk; we hope to be audible and so interesting that you will not want to read them. We hope that you will read them when you get home, and that they will fill out what we have been saying.

The guides to this walk would like to emphasise that they have no complete knowledge, though they have done a lot of homework on the area we are covering. In many places they are still feeling their way, and they base their statements and opinions on features that strike them and their enthusiasm for architecture and local history. In our study of this area we have been fortunate to have sight of three



sets of deeds (only a meagre three!) and these have been of immense help. We hope to gather more information from you this afternoon.

Introduction - The village of Gateacre lies within two old townships; roughly  $\frac{3}{4}$  in Little Woolton (L.W.) and  $\frac{1}{4}$  in Much Woolton (M.W.). Our walk today covers part of the area in M.W. which early developed the nucleus which, shifted a little North, we know today as Woolton Village. L.W. 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 correct, 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 in the Liverpool Record Office that the two pubs were established. The Childwall and Woolton Waste Lands Inclosure Act of 1805 brought the remaining common land into private hands, and on Gateacre Brow especially the making of small allotments defining the frontage resulted in land becoming available for building.

If the crossroads was the focus of Gateacre Village, the first building of significance was the Chapel.

A local board was set up for M.W. on 17th July 1866 and the Minute Books are a fruitful source of local information until, with the Liverpool Extension Order of 1913 both Much and Little Woolton ceased to be self-governing.

The City Council declared the centre of Gateacre a Conservation Area in 1969. In 1975 the D.o.E. revised the List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest with some 114 items listed within the Conservation Area.



## GATEACRE CHAPEL: - History

From very early days Puritanism was a reforming movement within the English Church, and for about 14 years, from the end of the Civil War (Battle of Naseby, Northants., 1646) and during the Commonwealth, the Established Church in England was Presbyterian in form. At the Restoration in 1660 Charles II himself promised "liberty to tender consciences", but the political reaction to the religious strife that had been a cause of Civil War led to the Act of Uniformity which re-established Episcopacy & the Prayer Book, and required conformity with the ceremonies of the Church of England. So from 1662 the history of Nonconformity is separate from that of the Established Church. Further difficulties were put in the way of Nonconformists three years later by an Act making those protestant dissenters who wished to meet for religious purposes within 5 miles of corporate towns subject to penalties. It was not until the Toleration Act of 1689 in the first year of the reign of William and Mary that protestant dissenters were given the right to worship publicly on condition that they registered their meeting places.

The Ancient Chapel built c.1618 in Toxteth Park was not in any parish, the building was not consecrated, and from its beginning the congregation and ministers were Puritan. Even so, Richard Mather was under the control of the Bishop of Chester when his ministry was suspended in 1633 & 1634 because of non-conformity.

In 1656 Thomas Crompton, 1632-99, became the Presbyterian Minister at the Ancient Chapel; he is described as "curate" by one authority, and said to be "licensed" by another, but as his coming was during the Commonwealth it would be not a Bishop, but the Presbyterian governing body - the meeting called the Warrington "Classis" - who appointed him. In 1665 it is recorded of Crompton and two other local ministers that they were "late prisoners (who) were released on single security for good behaviour ..", so though the Ancient Chapel was 2 miles outside Liverpool it was evidently not safe from the "5 Mile Act". Our next reference to Crompton says that "before 1685 (he) moved to live at Gateacre" though he was still preaching at the Ancient Chapel. In the Association Oath Rolls of 1696, which many people signed all over the kingdom as an oath of loyalty to William III (after an assassination attempt) the name "Tho: Crompton, Minister" heads the roll of signatures for Little Woolton. Some time later Crompton



is said to have gone to Monton Chapel, Eccles, where perhaps he was the first preacher. He died in 1699 and was brought back to Childwall to be buried in his parents grave behind the East end of the Church. He left £20 to buy books for children and to pay for their schooling. (Matriculated BNC, Oxon, 5.4.1650.)

In 1691 we hear of "Thomas Collins, a young man, att Leigh in Little Woolton, is lately come, yet his stay must be short without some aide (in money) and if this meeting failes ye country for 9 or 10 miles long and 5 or 6 miles broad is utterly destitute. Several on dying beds have told Mr. Crompton they never heard anything of the Gospell (before) he came among them" - the appeal was to national funds through the Warrington Classis. It was Thomas Collins, with Richard Mercer & Lawrence Fletcher, who made application to the Liverpool Magistrates in 1692 for a house at the end of Lord Street to be set apart for religious worship, and Collins served there alternately with Gateacre.

Further registrations include in 1693 the house of Richard Wright in Childwall, licensed by John Jolly; in 1697 Gill's Barn at Halewood, belonging to Henry Harper, registered by Charles Lythgoe; and on the 5th April 1700 a Barn in Much Woolton owned by George Davis/Davies was registered. On the 14th October 1700 "a certain building, newly erected in Much Woolton in the County of Lancaster, was recorded for a meeting place for an Assembly of Protestants dissenting from the Church of England, for the Exercise of their religious worship, according to the Act entitled an Act for exempting their Majesties' Protestant subjects dissenting from the Church of England from the penalties of certain laws ... " (Quarter Sessions at Wigan.)

Having gathered this background material, we can now move forward from our previous cautious dating of the building by the phrase "licensed in 1700" to a confident "built and licensed in 1700", since if George Davies's Barn was registered in April 1700 it seems pretty clear that the Barn was a makeshift until the Chapel was ready for occupation. Further, there is in James L. Thornely's MSS History record of a Conveyance of 30th Sept. 1700 of the land on which the Chapel stood, from George Davies to William Claughton & John Gill (representing the congregation) for £3. It is also recorded that the Chapel was built at the "cost of William Claughton, John Gill and several other protestants." (In the Association Oath Rolls of 1696 the signatures of 'George Davis' &



'William Clauhton' are adjacent under Much Woolton, a John whose second name is unfortunately illegible signs under Little Woolton (a John Gill signs in Hale)).

We do not yet know much of the agricultural background and economic history of Much and Little Woolton, especially in the years after the Restoration, but it is clear from the names and addresses of the early members of the Chapel congregation that the lesser landowners were enjoying sufficient prosperity to be able to afford to build their own Chapel.

These, then, were the men who were commissioning the building.

The source of the design ? Too little is known of architects working in Liverpool before 1700 (one shadowy figure emerges in 1700) but for other reasons it seems unlikely that the design had its inspiration there. The Warrington Classis set up about 1646-7, though no longer part of the national church, was still the regular meeting place for Presbyterian Ministers for this district, so, no doubt, when the proposal to build a Chapel at Gateacre became a practical possibility in the later 1690s the leading men of the congregation and their Minister found guidance there from others who had been building similar Chapels.

It could be that attached to the Classis meetings was someone who could fulfil the role of Consultant Architect when required.

But even without an architect, those meetings would provide an opportunity to discuss such matters as: 1) how large a building would be needed for the estimated size of congregation; 2) what sort of layout of seating had been found to serve best; 3) where, and how big, should the pulpit be; 4) how many windows should there be, their size and disposition, and; 5) most important - how much would it all cost. Many chapels were being built at this time, and a body of experience was becoming available. Even if there were few new chapels yet in the Warrington district, the Classis meetings would be opportunities to discuss chapels in the wider area, and to hear about new building all over the country and, maybe, to arrange to visit one or two good examples.

Architectural Description - We now see Gateacre Chapel, (Listed Grade II by the D.O.E.) as a plain and simple rectangular building of red sandstone, 45½ ft. by 33 ft., 20 ft. high to the eaves, with a Vestry at the East end, a West Gallery, East-west orientation of the interior with Communion Table, small Organ and Pulpit. In the North side wall are two segmental headed windows (internally a niche between them), in the South wall three windows, in the East



end one window at a higher level, and at the West a "Venetian" type of window with, externally, 2 ashlar buttresses. We also have a list of alterations (with dates) so that if we work backwards through them we may be able to find our way to the original building as it was in 1700.

1953: The most recent major work was the rebuilding of the roof after the structure was declared dangerous by the City Surveyor owing to the ravages of death-watch beetle. Externally the line of the roof was unaltered, but the green slates replace original stone flags; internally the shape of the ceiling dates from 1953; the structure is now steel replacing original timbers.

1885: James L. Thornely tells how "in 1885 the Chapel roof having shown signs of giving way and other repairs appearing to be necessary, a scheme of renovation comprising various important improvements was carried out. The flat white-washed ceiling was removed and the roof, for about half-way up the gable, was laid bare, being lined with stained pine, and the cross beams and supports were handsomely carved and decorated, resting on carved stone brackets. The windows in the North wall were reduced, while those in the South wall were heightened. That (window) at the West end was enlarged and an additional (smaller) window placed on either side of it. The inner walls were replastered and some handsome buttresses were added to the West wall. A new belfry replaced the old, and over the entrance to the Chapel was placed a stone tastefully carved with the date 1700".

From this description we can deduce that the roof timbers were showing some signs of failure, hence the supports (vertical timbers) and their carved stone brackets, to the three main roof trusses; hence also the necessity to reduce the height of all the North windows by about a foot as one of those stone brackets had to be fitted terribly close to the arched head of the West window in the North wall - a compensating enlargement of South windows was now possible (see re-siting of Pulpit.) The old flat white ceiling was replaced with stained pine boarding following the pitch of the roof to a high level - a typically Victorian device.

1872: It was in this year that the Vestry was added to the East end (a partitioned space in the North East corner had served for some time.) Other alterations listed were the re-siting of the Pulpit in its present position - for over 20 years it had stood in the centre of the East end - and the siting of a larger Organ in the



East end (formerly in the Gallery) and fitting of the Good Samaritan stained glass window, the gift of Henry Tate.

This work represents Stage 2 of the Victorian 'modernisation'.

1863: Shortly after the arrival of Mr. Beaumont, the floor was entirely renewed, the gallery strengthened with an iron plate, the whole Chapel (except gallery) re-pewed with open seats, a 63-light sun-light gas light fitted to the ceiling, and the hot water heating system installed. (Was it a result of the large gas light fitting, and the central heating, that speeded up the activity of death watch beetle in the roof timbers - resulting in signs of failure 20 years later ?) Stage 1 of 'modernisation'.

An interesting note records at this time of re-ordering, that:-

"Hitherto the pews had been arranged with regard to the position of the pulpit, which (until its removal in order to make room for Dr. Shepherd's monument) had stood between the two windows at the North side of the Chapel. Most of the pews were seated along 3 sides, some being square had seats on four sides. There were two entrances to the Chapel: the existing door at the West end and another opposite to it at the East end. Between these two doors lay the main aisle, 4 ft. wide running East and West. Branching out of this aisle on its Southern side were two others 3 ft. in width, which touched the South wall in a line with the most Easterly and Westerly of the three windows on that side to the Chapel. The pews were thus ranged in the following groups: First along the North wall to the right and left of the pulpit, Second in the centre bounded on one side by the South wall and on the others by the three aisles, Third and Fourth the two remaining rows of pews were ranged along the East and West walls respectively."

A clear picture of the original box-pew layout.

1854: The Minute Book noted "The Board of Guardians of this District (Prescot Union) having ordered a drain and tank (a soak-away ?) to be made on the South side of Gateacre Brow, have besides the contributions of the neighbouring inhabitants, made a proportionate demand upon the Chapel. The result is that the burial ground, previously soaked in water to the surface, is now perfectly dry."

1851: In February "considerable expense was incurred ... owing to the necessity of renewing much of the woodwork of the Chapel, the dry rot having for some time past done considerable damage".



Later in 1851 Dr. Shepherd's memorial was set up in a new niche in the North wall behind the site of the pulpit from which he had preached for 56 years. The marble bust, said to have been a good likeness, was copied from another made in his lifetime; Sculptor Isaac Jackson who worked in Liverpool 1851-1850, then went to Rome.

The erection of this memorial involved moving the pulpit from its original position to a new site in the middle of the East end.

c.1815: A water-colour sketch in the Binns Collection shows the high level window in the East end of the Chapel.

1743: The congregation fitted cushions to their pews.

1723: The date on the Bell, and so - it may be presumed - the date of the original bell turret, reconstructed in 1865.

1719: The original layout had become too small for the congregation and the first idea seems to have been to build an addition on the South side (hence the purchase of an extra 12 yards of land to the South). But the alteration that was made was the raising of the roof by about 3 ft - traces of this can still be seen in the stonework - and the gallery was fitted at the West end.

1700: By the imaginative effort of thinking away all the changes we have listed we can now visualise the original building. It was a simple rectangle 45'6" by 33' externally, 17' high to the eaves, with two windows to the North, with segmental arched heads with plain keystones, about a foot higher than they are today. In each gable end wall, off centre, was a simple round arched doorway - the West one survives in apparently original condition (with original folding door ?) and maybe a segmental headed window centrally in the gable above it. On the South the 3 segmental headed windows were on the pattern of the lower one - probably with the intention not to allow sunlight to blind the preacher in the pulpit opposite. The roof was covered with stone flags and finished at either end with stone copings on the gables and, the only ornament, ball finials. Inside the building was austere, walls and flat ceiling white-washed, the pulpit in the middle of the long North wall, box pews along North, West and East walls and in a central block in front of the pulpit. The materials were good and the workmanship sound, but the finish very plain. It was a typical Nonconformist Chapel designed for as many as possible to hear the preacher and to see him.



Designers ? The Chapel records seen do not name a single architect, (except for the Lectern, a furnishing - not part of the story of the fabric - which was given in memory of Dorothy Nicholson (died 1893, aged 89) designed by "Mr. Holme, architect, of Liverpool", - probably the F. U. Holme 1844-1913 whom we meet later today.) Until we have architects names for building and alterations our work is not complete, but now a further assault on the records should provide many names of architects.

New History: About 3 months ago new galvanised wire screens were fitted to windows as security - for insurance purposes.

Boundary wall to Gateacre Brow: In May 1977 the City Building Surveyor raised the question of the safety of the old wall of the graveyard; both sections were cracked by age and tree roots and the lower courses were perished. The whole was rebuilt on new foundations (the old wall had no 'foundation') 1979, & it is important to record that it was built to a new line, Sandfield Road corner was not moved, but the West end by the Bear car-park was brought forward 2'6" at the base. The Quantity Surveyor was Mr. Lawless, the stonemason Mr. Banner of Little Crosby, and the quality of his work, especially pointing, a model to be emulated.

Nos. 6 & 8 GATEACRE BROW (Listed). History: In the 1805 enclosures the frontage of this site was part of Plot No. 64 allotted to Margaret Webster (of the Bear ?); by 1840 No. 6 was owned by James Greenough, and No. 8 belonged to the exors. of John Pennington. About 1875 both houses were bought by the Chapel Trustees, and in 1878 No. 8 was enlarged for the Minister, Mr. Beaumont. Among Chapel records is the drawing for the 2-storey timber bays to both houses, sadly undated, but making it clear that No. 8 had already been enlarged. The date of the timber bays is therefore later than 1878, and the architect was Ronald P. Jones, M.A., F.R.I.B.A., Lincoln's Inn, London, author of Nonconformist Church Architecture, published in 1914.

Architectural Description: Adjoining stone houses, 2-storey & attic. No. 6, double fronted; panelled centre door in round arched moulded doorcase; 12-pane sash on 1st. floor; added rectangular stone bay to right; added 2-storey canted timber bay to left with wood mullioned & transomed windows with 'Ipswich' centre feature, archt. R.P. Jones. No. 8 has 3-light stone mullioned window below; 12-pane sash over; added canted 2-storey bay similar to No. 6, by same architect; door now in left wing (? 1878 extension); datestone carved "I P S" "1 8 0 7" on resited (?) lintel with keystone.



BROWSIDE - Built for Thomas Rodick (1789-1855) before 1814 we think, as his only child by his first wife was born, died and was buried in Gateacre Chapel Yard in that year, tho' Gore's Directory has him in Bevington Hill until 1816. Mr. Rodick was a merchant born in Kendal, whose father Mathew, mcht. and linen draper went to live and work there from Kirkpatrick Fleming, Dumfriesshire, died in 1793 and was buried at Kendal Unitarian Chapel.

Thomas, a Deputy Lieutenant of the County & Magistrate married again c1820 Judith, daughter of Robert Preston, Brandy mcht. of Lower House, West Derby and between 1821 - 1833 they had 8 children. We have a copy of his portrait owned by Alan Rodick of Salcombe, a descendant and Gateacre Society member and a bust and memorial tablet by J.A.P. McBride (1819-1890) is in the Chapel where he was a warden for 7 years. Apart from Browside Mr. Rodick owned land off Quarry St. in Woolton where Rodick St. is today.

The grounds of Browside then extended over Dale Mews, Dale Cottage, Browside Cottage and 8 & 9 Sandfield Rd - the last three built by him for stabling, coach houses and probably groom and gardener. The house, originally smaller, was called Kendal Cottage - alterations and additions came later as his family grew, more land being acquired from the garden of No.6

During his time in Gateacre he appears to have retained a house 'Beachwood' nr. Arnside, Westmorland and there he died in 1855 but was buried at Gateacre Chapel. Browside remained in the family ownership until soon after 1875 when Nos.4,6 & 8 Gateacre Brow were bought by the Chapel Trustees with money from the sale of 'The Nook' and land in Halewood Rd. to the Cheshire Lines Railway Committee.

The next family to occupy No.4 who called it Browside were the Thornelys who coming originally from Godley, Ches. called themselves the 'Godley Thornelys' with the inevitable reflection of un-Godley-ness of all other Thornelys. This family were also strong Unitarians, James Thornely (1822-1898) had among his forebears names such as Seddon, Heywood and Mather while his wife Laura was the grand-daughter of THE William Roscoe and related to the Laces and Ambroses.

James Thornely was a solicitor in Oriel Chambers, Water St.



(Listed Grade I) and Law Clerk to the Little Woolton Local Board whose meetings, previously held in the Black Bull and discontinued owing to the re-facing of this building, were held in his office until 1882 when the new Board Room in the Gateacre Institute was ready for occupation. He and his wife had 8 children, the last two James Lamport (1865-1900) and William b.1869 being born at Browside.

In 1870 Mr. Thornely was renting land on Acrefield Rd. which from size and ownership - Palethorpe & exor. of J.D. Rodick seems to be part of the site of Aymestrey Court (q.v.)

James Thornely and his family were active in affairs of the Chapel, he being a Trustee as was his son James Lamport, and after moving to Baycliff, Woolton Pk. (now Bishop's Lodge) c.1875 continued to worship there and he and his son wrote a history of Gateacre Chapel up to 1900.

Browside then became an Academy, run by John Hathersall until 1879 - Mr. Hathersall continuing to rent part of the land in Acrefield Rd. previously tenanted by Mr. Thornely.

Herbert J. Robinson was the next occupant, followed by Colin Macdonald mcht. until 1886. In this year alterations costing £477.12.9 were started by the Chapel Trustees and the house was empty until Eustace Carey Sec. United Alkali Co., came in 1889. Again the house was unoccupied till in 1901 it was leased to W.J.A. Atkinson, rent £60 p.a. with a condition that Mr. Meacock at No.6 be allowed to pass with horses, carts and carriages over the part of the premises leading to his back door. In 1911 Alfred Chapman M.I.C.E. signed a new lease, rent £70 p.a. with a condition attached prohibiting removal or cutting down of trees or shrubs. We end with Mr. Chapman in residence as in 1913 L.W. became part of Liverpool.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: Double fronted 2-storey villa, centre 4 panelled door in moulded doorcase with impost, round arch and fanlight with surviving glazing bars. Two 12-paned sash windows below, three above. Since we were here in 1978 the stucco has failed seriously, and today we can see that the house is built of stone, the surface tooling being very like that of Nos.6 & 8 (No.8 has datestone '1807') and with the proportion and character of the door and stone jambs of windows (c.f.No6) we feel confident with a date c.1814.



AYMESTREY COURT - The earliest mention of a date for the site of this house that we have so far found appears in a Conveyance dated 1865, this refers to a deed of 1813 reciting the sale of ancient enclosed land by John Weston to Robert Roskell, watch and clock maker of Gateacre Hall, now Runnymede Close.

In 1865 this land - 7 acres & 32 perches bounded on the N. by land lately belonging to James Leishman of Gateacre Hall, on the W. by Acrefield Rd., on the E. by land belonging to exor. of Thomas Rodick (Browside) & Ambrose Lace (Beaconsfield) and on the S. by land belonging to the Marquis of Salisbury - was sold by Roskell's exors. to Alfred Higgins, iron mcht. of London for £2,269.19.4 who re-sold it to Joseph L. Palethorpe, cotton bkr. of L-pool for £2,708.7.6d.

A Covenant was placed on the land by Roskell allowing only houses over £500 value to be built, not less than 10 yds from the road, and prohibiting beerhouses, flats, courts, blubber houses, rosin works, lamp black works, chemical works, tan yards, soapery, color works, herring house, slaughter house, tallow candle manufactory & anything noisome or offensive.

Wm. Graham, mcht. of Glasgow & Walter Ewing Crum a L-pool mcht. next bought the land in 1873 for £3,000. 6 yrs. later it went to Henry Tate, sug r refiner who built Aymestrey Court and gave the house in trust to his daughter Agnes Esther. She had married Herbert John Robinson, sugar brkr. in 1876 and lived at Browside from 1880 to 1882.

Henry Tate, son of the Rev. Wm. Tate (1773-1836) Unitarian Minister at Chorley came to L-pool aged 13 to learn the grocery trade, being apprenticed for 7 yrs. to his brother Caleb already in business here. Now a master grocer he acquired his first shop in the Old Haymarket and began the career which was to lead to sugar refining and great wealth. Like many successful men of his day he was a great public benefactor, among many gifts was the Hahnemann Homoeopathic Hospital in Hope St. Architect F.U. Holme, the Woolton Convalescent Home benefitted also Gateacre Chapel where Mr. Tate was appointed a Trustee in 1881, but he is nationally remembered for his gift of the Tate Gallery in London. He received the Honorary Freedom of Liverpool in 1891, was made a Baronet in 1898 and died aged 80 in 1899.



Mr. Robinson built the lodge at Aymestrey Court in 1884, a splendid billiard room (a status symbol of the time) in 1887 and added a large extension to the house itself in 1891.

From 1894 when the Robinsons moved to Upton Manor, Wirral till 1902 the property was occupied by Charles H. Hollins, cotton broker, and from 1903-1908 by the family of H.A. Watson, mineral and metal broker while it continued to remain in Robinson ownership. In 1924 it was sold for £2,500 by the Trustees - then Mrs. Robinson, Claude and Henry her two sons and Ernest Gossage to John Hinshaw, cotton broker who had been a tenant there since 1909. Mr. Hinshaw died a year later leaving his daughter Miss Ella Buchanan Hinshaw who continued living in the house until 1943.

After being empty for a year or so the property was bought by the Liverpool Corporation in 1946 for £2,000 and became the school it is today.

#### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

From the above we can identify and date stages in the building:-

First - the main block, built 1881-2 for Henry Tate (for his daughter) Architect unknown. A red-pressed brick 3 storey building with stone dressings and red-tiled roof; bold and with its heavy broad bays rather coarse. Its style carries a lingering whiff of 'High Victorianism' (period 1850-75). Inside there is a 'Jacobethan' fireplace in the Entrance Hall, very convincing in the crudity of the figures, but clearly Victorian because of the sunflower motif repeated with variations in the panels.

Second - The Lodge and Coach House, dated 1884, built for the Robinsons. This shows that subtle combination of materials - hand-made brick, half timbering, stucco & tile hanging, all ingredients of the Vernacular Revival and so beloved of the Victorian domestic architect. This block is the most satisfactory of the complex.

Third - the Billiard Room, dated 1887 and signed H.J.R., on an upper level, so that the Gentlemen could withdraw to smoke & play.

Fourth - the extension to the house, dated 1891, so much more refined & sensitive than the main block, built in a golden age for domestic building in England - Architect also unknown. A pedestrian work, but interesting because of the two styles.



We have not found Sandfield Road on any map until it makes a shy unnamed appearance on Jonathan Bennison's Map of L-pool of 1835; but the intention to make a road here, leading off from Gateacre Brow, at the lower (East) end of the Chapel site, was stated in a deed of 1818, and there is reference back to a deed of 1753 which may have held one germ of the idea.

The development of this part of the back-land at one quarter of the Gateacre cross roads seems to have been the enterprise of lesser landowners with no participation from the great and wealthy - Gascoynes, Ashtons, Okills etc. - of the area, and it is also noticeable that most (?) of the owners were members of the congregation of Gateacre Chapel. In the C18 economic prosperity and expansion was continuing in this area, probably stimulated by the rapid expansion of L-pool which provided an outlet for produce. The count of households in the 1662 Hearth Tax gives 34 for Little Woolton, by the 1821 Census there were 108. Referring to the L.W. statistics in discussing the Sandfield is most improper as the area lies in the township of Much Woolton and forms part of M.W.'s statistics - but the development of the Gateacre cross roads and Sandfield Rd. appears, from consideration of maps, to partake much more of the nature of L.W.'s development, so - we offer the Little Woolton figures as an indication of the rate of growth which seems applicable here.

As far as we have been able to unravel the story, the first houses built beside the "new intended road, 5 yds. wide" were Nos. 1, 3 & 5 (we use modern numbering throughout) which were immediately S. of the Chapel, on a plot sold by John Weston of M.W. mcht. to David Webster, labourer in Jan. 1818 - and it seems that John Weston bought the plot from Robert Roskell the clockmaker, of Gateacre Hall in May 1813. Just who built the cottages, and when, is not disclosed by the deeds, but they were there by 1818. (Demolished in 1950s.)

On the 1835 map, which is small in scale, these 3 cottages appear as a block, another block on the opposite side of the road could represent Nos. 1 & 3 Lower Sandfield, and a ?barn shows just beyond the second bend, about the site of No.10. and that seems to be the extent of the development.



On the 1840 Tithe Map (M.W.) it is clear that the block 1,3 & 5 has been joined by 6 & 7 (which survive) - all now in the ownership of David Webster's daughter Mary & her husband John Hunter, bricklayer of Huyton. The next block, Nos. 8 & 9 appear as cottages owned by Thomas Rodick of 4, Gateacre Brow (q.v.) and the first section of his stable block is also mapped. In the Lower Sandfield it is not quite clear how many cottages have been built, but Nos. 5 & 7 belonging to John Mercer, tailor & Nos. 9 & 11 belonging to (and built by ?) James Gore, builder, are recorded with occupants of two, Ellis Guy at No. 7 and Enoch Davies at No. 9, both agricultural labourers, are still in the Rates Book in 1870. The ?barn about the site of No.10 was owned and occupied by Thomas Rushton and described as "garden". As a check on the numbers of houses/households - the 1841 Census shows 10 households in what we compute to be 11 houses (excluding any dwelling in Mr. Rodick's stable block).

The 1851 Census indicated 12 households and says nothing of any houses being uninhabited (which this Census recorded), and of the 10 heads of households named in 1841 six names reappear in 1851 (one is the widow of the former tenant). The people who are living in these houses are labourers, artizans, laundresses etc., with one exception: A.J. Watt, Gentleman, born in Midd'x. aged 30 (with servant) - so where was he living? There is not enough difference in the numbers of households for us to interpret this Census as pointing to any block of new building for the ten year period, full occupation of the houses we have enumerated would account for 12 households.

"The Sandhole"- the name given to Sandfield Rd. in the first Census 1841, is explained in the Schedule to the 1840 Tithe Map where Plot 162, owned by James Gore, bldr. and occupied by him and John Fleetwood is described as "Land and Sandpit" - the area of nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre of which we can still see the remains in Lower Sandfield. If we consider the large houses, Oakfield Terrace, Acrefield, Bankside, Hillcliff to name a few of the nearest, that were built in the 1830s and 1840s, and finished with stucco, the source of the building sand to make the stucco becomes an important consideration, and it must



have involved the excavation of hundreds of tons of sand from this pit or hole which has reduced the level to make it now Lower Sandfield. In 1840 James Gore lived at Hillcroft in Church Rd., now the home of Mr. Chinn, the dentist.

Information gathered from the Deeds of Nos. 28 & 29 shows that a plot of land about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  statute acres, once belonging to John Weston passed via Richard Rushton (tho' Thomas Rushton is shown as owner in 1840) to Ambrose Lace in 1853. Ambrose Lace was the solicitor son of Joshua Lace, solicitor of L-pool was born at Throstle Nest, Belle Vale Rd., c.1793, built Beaconsfield - one of the biggest houses in L.W. (dem. 1950s) and died 1870. In 1853 Mr. Lace had Nos. 28 & 29 built on part of his new plot, and he sold a 100 year Lease for three lives to Alice Foxley at No.29, who had been living in Grange Lane in 1851; and Mrs. Cross became his tenant at No.28. Foxleys lived at 29 for about 43 years, Eliza following her mother and like her a laundress; in 28, there being no long lease occupants came and went. Two years after Ambrose Lace had died the cottages were bought by Charles Kellock, ship-broker of Grange Lane who sold them to Agnes E. Robinson wife of H.J. Robinson of Aymestrey Court (q.v.). Before selling the houses in 1900 Mrs. Robinson bought the remainder of the life interest of 100 years on 29 from Maria Heaford' (the Foxley married daughter) for £35 enabling them to go un-encumbered to Joseph Blundell of Rose Brow.

The story of No.30 is quite different: also built on part of Ambrose Lace's land, it is said to have been built for John Peters ('gardener' - 1861 Census). In the first Rates Book of 1868 it is shown as owned and occupied by William Peters, joiner and he was still there in 1891 - today it is still owned and occupied by his descendant. We have no exact date for the building but it must have been almost simultaneous with 28 & 29. The standard of joinery work at No.30 is so noticeably higher than Nos. 28 & 29 that it is tempting to speculate that Wm. Peters, the joiner, had a hand in building it. (tho' a deed of 1900 says 'erected by P. Peters'! )

The 1861 Census shows 19 households in the 'Sandhole', many names are familiar & we interpret the stage of development thus: -  
Nos. 1, 2 & 3 were subdivided by their bricklayer owner, John Hunter, to make 5 dwellings (back to back, and two were '1 up, 1 down'.)



Nos 6 & 7 - also in Hunter ownership (of 1-7 only 1 1851 tenant.)  
Nos 8 & 9 - the late Thomas Rodick's two houses, occupied.  
Stable Block, also Rodick property, apparently now has 2 dwellings.  
Nos 28 & 29 - Mr. Lacey has a new tenant at 28., Alice Foxley at 29.  
No 30 - John Peters aged 70, wife Hannah, and 2 grandchildren.  
Lower Sandhole - all three pairs of cottages fully occupied.

1866: Much Woolton Local Board (of Health) set about the urgent job of sewerage the township, it had quite a problem getting the Sand Hole drainage away without passing through Little Woolton. (The Board resolved to name the streets in 1870, henceforth the "Sand Hole" became "Sandfield Road", and by the summer of 1873 was among the "newly paved streets" inspected and adopted. )

By 1868 the Rates Book, the earliest surviving one, shows: -

Nos 1-7 - owned by Mary Hunter (née Webster) bricklayers widow.  
Nos 8 & 9 owned by Exors. of Thomas Rodick & his son R.P. Rodick.  
Nos 10-12 - owner John Hale, occupiers Leadbetter, Turton, Smith.  
No 14 - market garden - owner/occupier John Goddard, born in Berks.  
No 15 - owned by Joseph Webster, occupied by Thomas Sefton.  
Nos 16 & 17, owned by Wm. Greenough who lived in 17; 16 vacant.  
Nos 18 - 27, owned by Dutton & Gore, builders, and with tenants names allotted to each, but 8 entries in pencil, so very new ?  
Nos 28 & 29 - owner Mr. Lacey, E. Ellison at 28; Eliz Foxley at 29.  
No 30 - William Peters owner and occupier.

and in the Lower Sand Hole: -

Nos 1 & 3 owned by James Gore, occupiers Wright and Roberts.  
Nos 5 & 7 owned by John Mereer, occupiers Lawson and Guy.  
Nos 9 & 11 owned by James Gore, occupiers White and Davies.

This seems to show that the blocks 10-13, 15-17 and 18-27 had all been built between 1861 & 1868: an increase from 19 households in 1861 to 38 by 1868: the 1871 Census indicates 40.

In June 1897 plans were submitted by F. & G. Holme for a new Electric Generating Station on the market garden. They were sent back with the "request that the new structure be lineable with .. existing buildings on either side" to maintain the pavement line. In Sept. approval was given for underground electric mains to be laid. Work must have gone forward fast as in Jan. '98 complaints were being made about "sending forth of black smoke from the chimney in such quantities as to be a nuisance", on 10th Feb. the Clerk was instructed to take legal proceedings and by 10 March he reported on the recent prosecution for the suppression of the



smoke nuisance - quick work !

Here we have a private company building a fine new generating station to provide electricity for our area, and electricity was made here until c.1938, with coal brought via Gateacre Station.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION - The Cottages in Sandfield Road

Nos 1 - 5: built before 1818; as three, demolished 1950s. Photos?

Nos 6 & 7: Pair of brick cottages built 1835-40; 2-storey; (now whitened) lowish pitched slate roof with square stone lead-lined gutter; low segmental brick arched windows now have casements wider than original openings; round arched doorways with blind fanlights (c.f. York Cottages.)

Nos 8 & 9: 'Pair' - but see toothing of brickwork at left; built 1835-40; 2-storey; mellow clamp-burnt hand made local bricks (in Flemish bond); slate roof of steeper pitch than neighbours, with plain square gable coping stones, square stone gutters; stone lintels and sills but modern windows. (c.f. Stable Block)

Adjacent No. 8: see pair monolithic gatepiers, c.f. Browside.

Nos 10 - 13: Row of 4; built 1860-67 ?; 2-storey; mellow local brick but rather more pink than earlier examples, traces of 'tuck pointing' on Nos 10 & 12, headers noticeably pale, gauged arches over doors; slate roofs with 'ogee' cast iron gutter; windows have stone lintels and sills & is sash with centre glazing bar original ? No original doors.

Nos 28, 29 & 30: 28 & 29 a pair, with centre passage; 30 is separate, 28 & 29 built 1853 - when was 30 built ? All 2-storey; mellow local brick - 28 & 29 have 50 courses of brick, 30 has 45 courses only, so its bricks are slightly larger; all have low pitched slate roofs, 30 is separate with stone coping over joint. Note width of gable of 30, designed as balanced composition, asymmetrical roof, all blind windows do not correspond with rooms so this is not Window Tax avoidance (repealed 1851). Stone gutter along combined frontages is nicely worked frieze & cornice lined with lead, note scholarly return of moulding at end of 28 which, with plan form of 30 at the back, confirms that the block was designed as a single unit. Front windows of 30 are 4-panes wide, of 28 & 29 only 3-panes wide; note: delicacy of glazing bars.



Nos 16 & 17: Pair (centre passage); built 1861-65 ?; 2-storey, mellow local brick with gauged arches to 3 doorways; slate roof, wooden fascia with 'ogee' gutter; note original passage door with long panels (c.f. High Street).

No 15: Built as single cottage; 1861-5; very much altered.

Nos 18 - 27: Row of 10 'byelaw' cottages (with back alleys for water carried drainage), built in one operation - see 2-course band of pale headers swept up between 22 & 23, a polychromatic feature; built c.1867 by Dutton & Gore, builders. Bricks are much pinker than in earlier houses and not clamp burnt; slate roofs, 'ogee' gutters on fascia boards; 19 & 24 retain glazing bars; note - moulding on front stone steps.

Nos 31 - 38: Row of 'byelaw' cottages built 1906 by Messrs Rimmer, builders; machine made 'common' bricks with red pressed (Ruabon?) brick dressings to openings & to support gutter; 4 retain windows? but no original front doors.

(Former) Electricity Generating Station of the Liverpool District Lighting Co. Ltd, dated 1898, architects F & G Holme, 1 Crosshall Street. Highly specialised building type; in the centre a high Engine House for generators, with glass roof and louvred ventilation along the ridge; to left & set back, the Boiler House with similar roof & ventilation; to right Transformer & Distribution House with Switchroom behind; in front the Office Block. On the left was an open yard, the chimney site not yet located. Built in selected 'common' bricks with red pressed bricks to openings moulded 'specials' for all arches - many of them elliptical with each brick a different shape - terra-cotta dentil course on the Office Block. Most stone dressings are buff York stone. Where heavy machinery or wagons enter, the openings further protected with Blue Staffordshire bullnosed engineering bricks still unblemished. 10 ft. door to Boiler House has ample clearance for coal wagons below a lintel fabricated of 2 steel channels bolted back-to-back with welded web-stiffeners, above is a cast iron glazed fanlight, note York stone setts (grip for horses), granite kerbs and crossing. 8 ft. door to Engine House, for moving heavy generators in and out has cast iron step, cast iron lintel and cast iron glazed fanlight, and retains oak glazed doors. By comparison the Office Door is domestic in scale; and the Office window has Woolton Stone mullion and transome with, over it, a



tympanum of moulded cast stone carrying the date "A D 1 8 9 8"; the 6 ft. door to the right has cast iron step & lintel, the tympanum "L. D. L. CO L<sup>td</sup>", panelled unglazed oak door.

(Inside the Engine House is lined with white glazed bricks)  
Note - 4" cast iron rainwater pipes set well clear of the wall so that a paint brush can get behind them.

This is a high quality building, designed by an architect who understood what was required, both for the new techniques of generating electricity, and for resistance to wear and tear.

(Former) Joiners Shop (opposite Chapel Hall) 1890, by Messrs Rimmer for their own use.

MANWEB Electricity Substation (near Chapel Hall) built 1965.

Former Stable Block in Dale Mews: built for Thos. Rodick in 2 parts first (East end) 1835-40, second (West) 1840-45 (?); in mellow local brick with stone dressings; slate roof with gable copings and square stone lead lined gutters (c.f. Nos 8 & 9); East end is now 'Browside Cott.' & has, visible from Sandfield Road, architectural features including (formerly) a round-headed sash window with glazing bars. Working west along block, first Coach House with arched doorway (blocked), next a stable entrance with stone canopy (missing) all with hayloft over. In newer block, no use is recorded for the next compartment, but west again was Harness Room, and finally a second Coach House of which the original wooden doors survive. Above this the accommodation has been in domestic use for a long time.

### LOWER SANDFIELD

Nos 1 & 3: Pair (?) built before 1840, demolished 1950s. Photos ?

Nos 5 & 7: Pair; built c.1840, mellow local brick; slate roof; square stone lead lined gutter; cottages in course of rehabilitation; note satisfactory appearance of re-use of old brick, c.f. good, but not so satisfactory, windows.

Nos 9 & 11: Pair; built before 1840; mellow local brick; slate roof with 'ogee' cast iron gutter; one small paned slide-across window survives in No. 11.

. . . We hope you will come for another walk next year ! . . .

J.D.

S.M.L.

J.B.G.