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THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Registered with the Civic Trust
for the North West



Chairman: Tony McCann, Our Lady's Jun. School
Hedgefield Road 487+9301
Hon. Sec: Mrs. S. Lewis, Grange Lodge,
Grange Lane 428-3671

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER - 1980

Next meeting:-

ARCHIVES HELD BY THE COUNTY MUSEUM

a lecture with slides

by GORDON READ M.A., D.A.A.
Keeper of Archives

TUESDAY the 13th January 1981 at 8 p.m.

Gateacre Chapel Hall, Sandfield Road. Visitors welcome.

Many of us may not be aware that in addition to the material held in the Record Office at the Central Library, a most interesting collection of Archive Material relating to Liverpool is being built up in the Museum. Mr. Read, an enthusiastic archivist will tell us, with slides about the range of material he has collected and how he came by it.

Those of you who find subscription reminder slips inside PLEASE pay up - it makes life so much happier for our Membership Secretary - Mrs. Bee.

A.G.M. 28th October -

This was our 6th A.G.M. and held, like last year, in the Gateacre Institute. 25 members were present.

We were sad to lose Mr. Brakell - to whom we extend our sincere thanks, who as Chairman has steered the Committee so well over the last four years, and represented the Society so ably on numerous public occasions by his 'presence'. Happily however he is remaining with us as Vice-Chairman and the Society will continue to benefit from his knowledge and charm.

We extend a warm welcome to our new Chairman - Tony McCann, Headmaster of Our Lady's Junior School in Hedgefield Road. He became a founder-member of the Society way back in 1974, and has, apart from humour - always a great asset - a wide range of interests and organising experience which will be of great value.

The following Officers and Committee were elected:-

Chairman: Tony McCann, Our Lady's School, Hedgefield Rd. 487-93
Vice Chairman: Tim Brakell, Linden Cottage, Halewood Rd. 428-31
Hon. Sec: Mrs. S.M. Lewis, Grange Lodge, Grange Lane 428-36
Asst. Hon. Sec: Miss A. Lythgoe, 168 Gateacre Park Drive 428-39
Hon. Treasurer: Harry Winsor, 26a Thornside Walk 428-81

Committee:-

Mrs. Sheila Bee, 'Velova', Grange Lane 428-51
Roy Carruthers, 2 Gateacre Brow 428-8
Miss Hannah Coleman, Elmsvale, Belle Vale Road 428-2
Albert Globe, 2 Downham Close 428-3
Miss Janet Gnosspelius, 14 Hightor Road 428-4
Mrs. Jessica McKenzie, 7 Grange Weint 428-2
Rev. Daphne Roberts, 23 Belle Vale Road 428-2
Lionel Shepherd, Browside Cottage, Sandfield Road 428-6
Leslie Wheeler, 3 York Cottages 428-8

We were sorry to lose Mrs. Patti Beecham, when the family moved to Woolton, and thank her for her work, especially on the Technical Services Sub-committee - our loss is the Woolton Society's gain as she is now part of their Sub-committee which remaining one of our members. We welcome Roy Carruthers, and look forward to a new face and new ideas at Committee meetings.

This is the time of year the Committee likes to say a big 'thank you' to all those people who have helped the Society in many different ways during the last year, especially we would mention our deliverers - without whose help all our subscriptions would have had to rise, the Chapel Committee for the use of their hall for meetings and the Gateacre Institute for allowing our Committee to meet there. Thank you very much.

GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN -

I am delighted to have this opportunity of sending Seasonal Greetings to all our members, and to introduce myself to those who were unable to attend the A.G.M. For the past 3 years I have been Vice-Chairman of the Society, serving my apprenticeship under our excellent ex-Chairman, Tim Brakell. To him the Society and myself owe a real debt of gratitude, his guidance, concern and leadership during those years were freely given and invaluable.

As Chairman I would like to thank our untiring, indefatigable Secretary, Sylvia Lewis. The amount of time and effort she gives to Gateacre is staggering. Nothing seems to be too much trouble & her concern for our area is evident in all she does. Thank you Sylvia. Finally 'thank you' to all members, without your interest and assistance the Society cannot achieve anything. I ask for your continued support during my term of office and, on behalf of the Committee, wish all members a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. T.M.

THE DAY THE LORD MAYOR CAME TO GATEACRE -

Apparently the visit of the Lord Mayor - Councillor James Ross, to Woolton and Gateacre on Oct. 7th did not quite get off to the smooth start we had planned. He arrived half an hour early at Woolton Hall (when he had been expected at St. Peters Hall in Church Road) but luckily Mr. Hibbert - the new owner of Woolton Hall, Tony McCann and Mrs. Hemmings of the Woolton Society were there to welcome him and serve him coffee until the arrival of the official reception committee. He then saw the Exhibitions of both Societies and left, with Councillor and Mrs. McVeigh, Mr. Disley - Chairman of the Woolton Society and Mrs. Scarland of the C.T.N.W. to be shown round Woolton. Our party made its way back down the Brow ready to receive him when he arrived at Gateacre Chapel - in which he took a good deal of interest.

The Lord Mayor was then escorted up the Sandfield - which he

didn't know existed, and which we are hoping to have included in the Conservation Area shortly - dodging rain showers the while. Later he admired the Village Green & Queen Victoria and had several of our problems explained. Before taking his leave he accepted our offering of Gateacre Society publications, waved to the watching local residents and thanked us for the visit which he had enjoyed.

Our thanks to Mr. Hibbert for allowing us the use of Woolton Hall, to Mrs. Hemmings for arranging coffee in the Octagon Room, to John Roberts for taking the photographs and to everyone else who contributed to such a successful occasion. L.S.

C.T.N.W./LORD MAYOR/AMENITY SOCIETIES - On the morning of the 28th October (a busy day for the Gateacre Society, with the A.G.M. in the evening !) the Civic Trust for the North West held an informal reception for the Lord Mayor and members of all the Liverpool amenity societies. There were 8 of us from Gateacre and the party was a great success - very lively and useful - there were members from Woolton, Mossley Hill, West Derby, St. Michaels Hamlet, Wavertree and Professor Gardner-Medwin represented the Merseyside Civic Society. We were delighted that Professor Graham Ashworth, Chairman of the C.T.N.W. and Pauline Roscoe, the new Secretary, were there too.

The Lord Mayor showed a genuine interest in all our work, and was most helpful to us with advice about our 'Gateacre' signs, we were able to give him copies of the photographs taken on his visit to Gateacre - and add them to the Exhibition there. Talking with our colleagues from the other societies - exchanging problems, news, views and information left us all feeling that we had gained much and hoping that similar meetings will take place in the future. Thank you Mrs. Scarland.

JANET & SYLVIA IN GREECE - From Athens we went to Nauplion for a few days and visited the site of 'Tiryns of the great walls' - Homer, the enormous stones of which it is built leading to the foundation of the myth of the Cyclops - the one-eyed giants - for surely only giants could build with stones that size ? illustrated by comparison with Sylvia's watch. Golden Mycenae, the great city fortress, is quite near and there we marvelled again at the Lion Gate. We visited the classical theatre at Epidaurus, which seats 14,000 but from the back seats we could

hear a drachma dropped on a stone in the centre of the orchestra. No one knows why the acoustics are so good, the Greeks marvelled c400 B.C. and it is still a wonder.

At Nauplion we saw jellyfish, like fried eggs but 2' across, and other sea creatures by the light of a torch, and bathing next day, Sylvia poked a squid/cuttlefish which responded by squirting sepia ink at her. She caught it and we have a photograph - but will someone tell us the difference between a squid and a cuttlefish ?

Our next stop was Olympia - rather too much geared to the tourist trade - but the site under the whispering pines cannot lose its magic, and the starting line of the stadium is still a talking point - did they have starting blocks for the international athletes ? The sculptures from the pediment of the Temple of Zeus, preserved for us in the silt of the Alpheus River, made us realise how much St. George's Hall has lost now that its south Pediment is void.

We went on to Kalamata, and to Nestor's Palace at Pylos, where Telemachus went for news of his wandering father Odysseus and saw the throne room where Nestor told the young man stories of the siege of Troy. We saw the hearth with its painted flame pattern round the edge, and could even see the layers of stucco from at least 4 redecorations - a record of the times that Mrs. Nestor said to the King 'really dear, we must have the throne room done up, its looking so shabby.'

Walking along the sea-front at Kalamata Sylvia became intrigued with 2 houses; one dated 1899 and showing Art Nouveau features in the shape of the window heads & iron work details; the other so obviously built in the 1930s with a rounded corner and columns with neither cap nor base - reminding us of details in blocks of L-pool Corporation flats of similar date. When we knew we had to give this talk tonight she wrote, resourcefully in Greek, to Kalamata, asking about the history of each building, and the reply arrived the day before the lecture telling us that the Art Nouveau house was designed by the famous German architect Ernest Ziller, who had done a lot of work in Athens too, and that the house was 'preserved'-(listed?). But of the other house, our correspondent said that as it was built in 1935 it had no historic significance. (We think that

just because we could look at it and say ' that was built in the 1930s ' it does have significance, and is now historic.)

We went to the little-visited Temple at Bassae but space does not really allow us to do that justice - and this resume of our talk is, like the talk itself, going on too long. But we must record that to get to Bassae we had to stay at Andritsena - a small bandit hill town, far from everywhere - but even in that isolated spot they knew about conservation, and we have a photograph of a tree more than half rotted at the base which has been carefully infilled with bricks and mortar - care of a tree in the village street ! But back in Athens we were upset to see grass growing out of a crack in the cornice of the Parthenon. J.B.G.

'NETHERLEY' & 'WOOLTON' SIGNS - We imagine that most of you will know the outcome of the meeting of the Highways and Environment Committee on the 17th September, but for those who don't:- The Chairman - David Croft, seeing the Gateacre Society secretary anxiously sitting on the edge of her seat, very kindly brought the item forward on the Agenda.

The City Engineer - Mr. Cucksey, in his report related the history of signposting from 1965, when the City Council cut the number of districts within the City from 87 to 20 to facilitate direction signing, and 'Gateacre' was omitted because "... of its purely local importance and traffic significance ". He said there were 3 alternative courses which the Committee could take to meet the petitioners' wishes -

- 1). The destination district 'Gateacre' could be introduced as an extra district name, necessitating boundary amendments and the erection of new signs.
- 2). The existing boundary between Woolton and Netherley could be formally amended by extending the Woolton district to cover the area from the railway east to Childwall Valley Road.
- 3). The 'Netherley' and 'Woolton' district boundary signs in Belle Vale Road could just be removed without any formal change in the boundaries.

He suggested that while Option 1. would be most welcome by

the petitioners, it would mean changes in the wording on about 20 Direction Signs at an estimated cost of £1,000. He also pointed out that such a concession may lead to renewed (!) requests from other similar 'lost' districts and the cost could escalate. His recommendation was that Option 3. would afford a quick and cheap solution to the problem, and this was the one agreed to by the Committee.

On the 11th Nov. 1980 THE TWO SIGNS WERE REMOVED - HURRAY.

On the 13th November Mrs. Lewis went to see Mr. G.E. Taylor, the deputy City Engineer, to discuss the possibility of our having 'GATEACRE' signs erected round the perimeter of the area. We understand that it may be possible for us to achieve such signs - subject of course to the City Council's approval, but that if so they must be different from the 'district signs and associated direction signs', and as extras could not be funded by the Highway Authority.

We suggested that we - the Gateacre Society and other local residents, should make a contribution towards the cost, but what percentage would be considered reasonable we have yet to learn. In the meantime consultations are going on with the Merseyside County Engineer and the City Planning Officer, and a further report will be presented to the next meeting of the Highways & Environment Committee on January 7th 1981.

PRUDENTIAL BUILDING Architect - W. Aubrey Thomas (1889).

We are happy to say that since our last Newsletter the gutters on this building have been cleared and the untidy area at the rear has been tidied up and a new fence erected - well done the Prue.

GARFIELDS, PRENDERGASTS & LYNTON - This is not such a happy story - once again we have written a strong letter to the Estates Dept. of Tetley Walker about the shabby condition and botched repairs to these potentially attractive buildings. We appreciate their careful maintenance of the Black Bull, but wish that such concern extended to their other 'listed' buildings - not obviously recognizable as being in their ownership.

PLANNING APPLICATION -

Land at the junction of Cuckoo Lane/
Oakfield Avenue to erect 3 detached
houses

Permission for this application will mean the demolition of
'Hillside' Cuckoo Lane, Architect Wm. Wrennell, 1877 (we think).

LOCAL HISTORY UNIT -

We have recently purchased photocopies
of a Norris Rental dated 1549 from the British Library. Wm.
Norris (of Speke Hall) as Seneschal, was required to collect
the rent of tenants leasing land belonging to the King (Ed. VI),
which until the Reformation had belonged to the Knights
Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem. This Rental lists the
names of the tenants in Much and Little Woolton, how much land
they each held and the amount of rent they paid and so is an
important document in the history of our area.

Now our problem is the translation of the C16 writing, in
Latin. But we are fortunate in that Miss Hollinshead, who is
a lecturer in history at St. Katharine's College, is also a
member of the Society and has offered her help.

VIP's in GATEACRE. -

Apart from the visit of the Lord Mayor
in October (only the 2nd time that the first Citizen has
honoured us this century, as far as we know; the first being
when Sir Sydney Jones was Lord Mayor, and as Chairman of the
Chapel Trustees he visited the Chapel c1938) we understand
that Dennis Thatcher, husband of the Prime Minister, attended
a coffee morning in Oakfield Avenue on 6th December.

CHANGES IN THE VILLAGE -

Last September the dress shop in
Grange Lane closed, and almost immediately opened as a Chemist.
Norton & Co, Solicitors have recently moved from 2 Halewood Rd.
to No. 8 and there is a Planning Application to use No. 2 as a
Training Studio for a Youth Opportunity Group.

28a Gateacre Brow is empty once more - the greengrocery
business not proving successful? O how we miss the attractive
windows of Harriet Stein - if this shop remains empty for any
length of time maybe we could have another Exhibition?

Another subscription reminder, see RED STAR on front of this
Newsletter if yours is still due. 17.12.80. S.M.L.