

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

SPRING NEWSLETTER - 1981

Next meeting:-

THE SHUTTLEWORTH COLLECTION

presented by

BARRY GILMAN

on TUESDAY 5th MAY at 8 p.m

RICHARD SHUTTLEWORTH 1909-1940, started collecting early aeroplanes in 1933 to add to his veteran cars. He joined the R.A.F. in 1939 and was killed while night flying in 1940. The SHUTTLEWORTH TRUST was founded by his mother in 1945 as a memorial to her son and to perpetuate his interests. It is housed at Old Warden Aerodrome, Biggleswade, Beds. & this is a rare opportunity for us in Liverpool to see a slide/tape programme of the collection

at Gateacre Chapel Hall, Sandfield Road. (off Gateacre Brow).

Members free.

Visitors 25p.

Tea 10p.

NOTE: Don't forget the JUMBLE SALE on Saturday 23rd May 2 pm.
so far we have had few offers of help from members -
PLEASE spare an hour or two - ring Mrs. McKenzie 428-2938.

LIVERPOOL
CITY LIBRARIES



Gordon Read, Keeper of Archives in the County Museum, came to talk to the Society on 13th Jan. treating us to a glimpse behind the scenes. There are archives - like Domesday Book - of such importance as to be virtually untouchable. But there are also ephemera - interesting & instructive items, but not of such value that they must be preserved for all time. Mr. Read ranged over some recent finds - Sir John Gladstone's 1814 share certificate in Herculaneum Pottery; a letter from Sir Ben. Johnson's dye works in Bootle (he lived at Higher Lea, Beaconsfield Rd), a note from the Jackson rope works in Edge Lane of 1853; a programme of the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1881 and a Freedom of L-pool certificate of 1816.

Among his more valuable discoveries have been a map of the Dock 8' long by 5' made in 1765 by architect Timothy Lightoler for the Corporation; and an illustrated catalogue by Wyke and Green, Liverpool clockmakers.

As well as showing slides & bringing examples of ephemera Mr. Read told us of some sources from which he has collected material. The Mersey Docks & Harbour Board archives are now in his hands, and in 1976 the Museum bought the collection amassed by Mr. Bryson who commissioned agents at waste paper depots to retrieve 'any paper with a stamp on it' - that contains e.g. letters from architect Norman Shaw to shipowner Hastings Ismay; the 1892 priced sale inventory of Woolton Hall; & papers of 1821 about Woolton School. The Danson Collection is an example of 1 way in which family papers may be saved - 3 generations of Liverpool men retired to their country home, Dry Close, Grasmere, taking their papers to put in the attic. Now they have been recovered by the Museum to Liverpool's great enrichment. Know any good attics ?

Coping with masses of papers involves massive sorting and listing & Mr. Read told us the Dutch have the right idea with their job creation programme. An out-of-work clerk in Holland may be told "Right, there is a 2-year job for you, go into the archive department and help the Archivist."

Mr. Read's work is providing us with vivid glimpses of our forebears, and as he spreads his nets wider the picture of past trade, maritime associations and social conditions on Merseyside will develop into something of more than national interest.

J.B.G.

MEMORIES OF GATEACRE

- Tim Brakell's father was a cavalry officer in the first World War. A prisoner of war, he was brought back from Germany on a stretcher, married in 1919 - and bought a house in Gateacre because it had stables. This is where Tim was born, and where he still lives.

There was style in Gateacre 50/60 years ago, resident maids & a nurse for the children (not really a Nanny) and people gave tennis parties. Gateacre Hall (now a hotel) was then still 2 houses - the von Sobbes lived at the back & Col. Field lived in the front. He was retired from the Marines, had a butler, and kept Cromwell's death mask in the library - a thrill for little boys to see. Miss Duncan lived at Kingsley & had a kindergarten, and at Elm House was Capt. Trant, Commodore of the White Star Line - 'chatty Trant' to Miss Brown who kept the sweet shop, because he talked so much. Rupert Bremner, who had a tea & coffee business in School Lane, was 'Brigadier' in Gateacre - he belonged to the League of Frontiersmen and on special days might be seen walking up the brow in splendid uniform complete with spurs - followed by about 20 small boys, including Tim and his brother - to catch a bus for his parade.

Excitement rose high at Grand National time when race trains went through the village every 3 minutes taking the world and his wife to Aintree, and the 'Empress' was very often at Gateacre Orange with the Walkers - the village knew because Miss Brown's father was the gardener there. For Tim the way to Liverpool, and the dentist, was by Cheshire Lines train to Central and then to Rodney St. by hansom cab up Bold Street, with tea afterwards at Frisby Dykes in Lord Street.

Tim saw the first proving flight of Imperial Airways from Speke airfield - just 1 wooden hut - the machine was a Handley Page 404, Prince Henry Class, it had wicker seats for 16 passengers and it did the Croydon-Birmingham-Liverpool flight in 5½ hrs. at 86 mph. If it was hot in the cabin you opened 1 of the sliding windows!

When he was away at the war, Tim remembered Gateacre with great affection. He came back in a hospital ship, and returned saying "I'm back" ! - and there were flags everywhere - this was Gateacre ... another world. This is only a fragment of his talk, but a tape was made of the evening, including contributions by others, if anyone would like to hear it, please get in touch with the Sec.

D.R.

On the 31st Mar. Diana Pulson, the distaff side of the Brakell family came to talk about her work as a journalist on the staff of the Daily Post & Echo. She had been up at 6 a.m. and at the office by 7 a.m. to write about the Reagan assassination attempt, so it was extremely kind of her to fulfil her promise to talk to us. However, I'm sure she will agree that she had a most attentive and interested audience, who also satisfied their curiosity by having their many questions answered. Indeed we came away knowing much more about the life of a journalist - one of those whose influence on the public is great but with whom we rarely come face to face unless we belong to the elite or commit some crime.

Miss Pulson's special interest is politics and she has seen the human side of Michael Foot, Ted Heath and Margaret Thatcher (they are mentioned as she spoke of them, as well as being in alphabetical order - in case you see any bias there) Did you know that Ted Heath has cartoons of Harold Wilson pinned up in his loo and that the Iron Lady can discuss cleaning the brass and making cakes? Miss Pulson finds the Blessed Margaret "fascinating", and thinks highly of Shirley Williams - to even things out.

Of course we wanted to know about the Royal Family, but they do not give press interviews. We hope that Miss Pulson gets her ticket for St. Paul's, even though this will mean another crack-of-dawn start to a hectic day.

As for her job, Miss Pulson finds it "super" and an exciting way of life. She got into the profession by a chance meeting at a Bridge Drive which led to her being a tea-making junior in the office, working 12 hours a day with 1 Sunday off each month. Now she has the thrill of also being involved in the work behind our Daily Newspapers and will give a very affirmative answer to the two questions most aimed at her - "Do you meet some very interesting people?" and "Do you have to travel a lot?"

She spoke of the difficulty in entering the profession to-day but to any who manage it she gave the cardinal rule for keeping out of trouble - "Never reveal the source of your information". Thank you Miss Pulson, we enjoyed your talk, but most of all we look back with pleasure to meeting a lively personality - we wish you continued success & hope to hear you again

FOOTPATH - GRANGE WEINT/CUCKOO LANE - At long last we have received, from the Dept. of the Environment, a copy of the Inspector's decision on the footpath. We have lost this appeal - Mr. W.G. Richards and Mrs. Blackall have won the right to include the footpath within the curtilage of their gardens. The Inspector says that of course the proposal would not result in the closure of the public footpath and goes on "... However, it is perhaps unusual, but by no means unprecedented that a public footpath should cross a domestic curtilage. This would be the consequence if the intervening brick wall was removed in pursuance of your proposal ... I suppose there might be some reluctance on the part of a few to skirt what would appear to be private gardens, but if the route were signposted as at present the right-of-way would be more obvious and I suspect used with confidence .."

We wonder whether we may now look forward to the removal of the wall on the north side of the footpath, so that we may have the pleasure of walking through the Rockfield gardens ?!

The whole of the Inspector's letter may be seen on the Society notice board. (A footpath/right-of-way can only be closed by a "stopping up order" granted in the Magistrates' Courts).

'GATEACRE'SIGNS - On Jan. 7th the Secretary attended the Highways & Environment Committee meeting when it was agreed that we may have our 'GATEACRE' signs, but owing to lack of finance it is not possible for any of the cost to be met by the highway authority. The next job was to get the signs designed in a form which the City Engineer would approve; the City Planning Office and Miss Gnosspelius pooled their ideas and have come up with a design which seems to meet the requirements. When we find out how much they will cost we will be looking for donations - from members, residents and traders in Gateacre, and of course we are having the Jumble Sale in May. On the success of these fund raising exercises will depend whether we can have the signs or not.

UNTIDY SITE AT YORK COTTAGES - You will recall that in our Autumn newsletter 1980 we were bothered about this site and

trying to obtain a skip so that it could be cleared of rubbish.

In January we were told by the Community Liaison Officer that small grants, previously only available for voluntary organisations within the Inner City Partnership Area, were now to be available throughout the City. We applied for a grant of £30 to cover the cost of hiring a skip for a day and were fortunate enough to have it approved. We then remembered Mr. Dunn of Community Industry - an organisation for employing young people on jobs of benefit to the community - who saw the site and said he would be delighted to help.

We went back to Merseyside Improved Houses, who own the land and most of the cottages but have little spare money and on the strength of a free skip and free labour they are now preparing a landscaping scheme. When the design is completed a meeting will be held and the plans shown to the residents of York Cottages for their approval. If this endeavour works out as we hope this part of the village will be greatly improved.

MERSEYSIDE GREEN BELT - In Jan. we received a copy of the Merseyside Draft Green Belt Subject Plan from the County Planning Dept. asking for our comments. We studied how it would affect our area and saw that it included Lee Park Golf Club, so we wrote suggesting that the now disused railway line be incorporated and perhaps developed as a linear park. We received a most encouraging reply - a Working Party of Officers from both the City and County Councils has been set up to look at all the implications of acquiring the line from British Rail and its possible use as a linear park and cycleway.

On the 2nd April the Secretary and a member of the Society went to a meeting, called by Mrs. Scarland of the Civic Trust for the North West, to hear John Wesencraft of the County Planning Dept. telling the story of the Green Belt and what, by discouraging green field development, it is hoped to achieve for urban regeneration.

UNLISTED BUILDINGS by HARVEY LONSDALE ELMES - Our interest in this Architect, who designed St. George's Hall, started with Druids Cross, the house in Little Woolton designed by him in 1846 and sadly demolished in 1978. The stable block (unlisted) is still there and deteriorating rapidly, although we understood the developers had agreed to convert it to residential

use. We had written to the Department of the Environment asking for it to be listed before it was too late but met with little response. Quite recently we 'found' 3 other Elmes houses also unlisted - Raby Hall, a house in New Brighton and Thingwall Hall (Knotty Ash). We wrote again to the D.O.E. and this time have succeeded in arousing their interest and they are sending one of their Investigators to see these houses, and some in our own area which we feel have been overlooked.

VIP's in GATEACRE - After the piece in our last newsletter under this heading we were reminded by Lady Steward that Princess Margaret had paid a visit to Gateacre in August 1963 when she opened the Gateacre Youth Club next to St. Stephen's Church, she was accompanied by the then Lord Mayor John McMillan. And what about these stories we hear of the Empress of Russia staying at Gateacre Grange - are they true ? which Empress was it ? are there any photographs ?

BELLE VALE ROAD SIGNPOST - This signpost, together with the avenue of trees leading to St. Stephen's Church, was given to the village on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 by Col. William Hall Walker, third son of Sir Andrew Barclay Walker and later Lord Wavertree who inherited Gateacre Grange. It has been looking very shabby for some time now and we asked the City Estates Surveyor's Dept. if they would help. It wasn't on the list of monuments in their care, but after coming to look at it they have agreed to a refurbishment which has already started.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS - From the 1st April charges will be made for all planning applications and payment must accompany the application. The scale of charges is available from the Planning Office, Wilberforce House, 25 The Strand and ranges from about £20 for alterations or extensions to about £40 for a new house (Local Government Planning & Land Act 1980. Town & Country Planning Regs. 1981).

Some new applications -

10 Gateacre Brow	Illuminated projecting box sign
Midland Bank, Gateacre Brow	to crown reduce 2 trees.

28A Gateacre Brow

Gateacre Riding School,
Grange Lane

Former goods yard between
Belle Vale Rd. & The Nook

Salisbury House, Woolton Rd.

to use vacant shop premises as
offices in connection with
adjacent insurance offices.

to convert former riding school
into 4 dwelling units and erect
2 dwellings.

to erect Sports & Social Club
and lay out car park.

to erect junior school & nursery
& convert existing school into
offices & develop remainder of
site for residential purposes.

(the last of these applications is outside our area but we
feel it to be of general interest).

The application for the Sports & Social Club came up again
because the applicant wishes to make the building about 12'
longer, we wrote objecting but fear we are unlikely to
succeed as the first application had already been granted. Also
in connection with this club you will have seen, on the iron
gatepost of the old coalyard a statutory advertisement giving
notice that a licence to sell intoxicating liquor was being
applied for on the 14th April. The Secretary & 2 other members
Miss Coleman & Mrs. Wilkinson registered our objections in the
Licensing Court together with a representative of Gateacre
Institute & a resident from Lee Vale Rd. Because there were
objections to be heard the hearing was adjourned to 15th May.

Gateacre Riding School - we have not yet seen the drawings for
this new application, but will make representations as necessary.

WASTE RECLAMATION - In Nov. 1979, in connection with the
Structure Plan, we wrote to the County Planning Dept. advocating
the reclamation of household waste. In June 1980 we wrote to the
Environmental Health Dept. who were to report on the feasibility
of such a scheme, suggesting a trial run in an area of the City
which had an amenity society & so a nucleus of interested people.
On April 7th we were told that 4 sites had been selected for
Bottle Banks, one of these being Gateacre - so save your bottles
and let us make it a resounding success.

P.S. Please remember JUMBLE SALE Sat. 23rd May. Helpers & Jumble

S.M.L. 22.4.1981