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THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Registered with the Civic Trust  
for the North West

Chairman: Anthony McCann, O.L. Jun. School  
Hedgefield Road 487-9301  
Hon. Sec: Sylvia Lewis, Grange Lodge,  
Grange Lane 428-3671

SPRING NEWSLETTER - 1982

Next meeting -

GARDEN PLANTS FROM  
THE WILD

A lecture with slides by

DR. HUGH McALLISTER  
of Ness Gardens

on TUESDAY 30th March - 8 p.m.

at Gateacre Chapel Hall, Sandfield Road.

Tea 10p.

visitors welcome 25p.



WANTED - Jumble of all sorts, books, clothes, household.

We would like to start this Newsletter by welcoming our many new members, we hope they will find the activities of the Society interesting and worthwhile, and will let us know when they notice anything concerning the environment in Gateacre which should have our attention.

PUBLICITY LEAFLETS - Next we want to say publically a very sincere "thank you very much indeed" to our band of deliverers who distributed 2,500 leaflets so efficiently and quickly - Sarah & Rodney Bee, Miss Hodgetts, Miss Lythgoe, Miss Doyle, Mrs. Quin, the Woolton Boy Scouts, Miss Beswick and Helen and Maria McCann.

MEDIAEVAL FARMING - It was heartening to see such a good turnout of Woolton & Gateacre Society members and friends on the afternoon of February 18th when Mr. Paul Wright came to talk about Mediaeval Farming. Mr. Wright confessed to some nervousness at having to address his first public meeting but this was soon dispelled by the friendly atmosphere, and he proved a most competent speaker. If you ever thought that school history was dull (as I did!) then you can count on the Woolton & Gateacre Societies to open your eyes to the history that lies around us.

Mr. Wright referred us to way back in the sixth century when the Lord of the Manor would rely on his villagers for the cultivation of the land. At that time cultivation was of a temporary nature with no means of consistent production. This led to the street pattern of villages with houses on either side with strips of land behind. Later came the 'three field system' with rotation of crops - two fields arable and one lying fallow each year. Farming was basic and primitive and Mr. Wright showed slides of drawings from early illuminated manuscripts, and some implements dating from the eighth century from a Wirral excavation can be seen at the Grosvenor Museum in Chester.

Fish provided a useful and important alternative to meat and villages had their own fish-ponds. But the Lord of the Manor could change the use of his land and there was a movement towards sheep farming. Woolton must have held large flocks of sheep, as in the fourteenth century there is a record of 400 sheep being moved from Woolton !



Looking round our pleasant suburbs today, it is hard to imagine a time when the areas of Allerton, Woolton and Gateacre developed under these conditions - a time when people were really poor and houses no more than shacks. All the land around here was owned by the King as part of the Royal Forest of West Derby, and Allerton was held by three thanes with three manors - probably Allerton Hall & possibly Short Butts Farm and Springwood Farm. It is interesting to note that digging for marl and collecting honey in the 'forest' were forbidden - it wasn't until c. 1350 that the 'forest' laws were relaxed.

Residents of Gateacre will, no doubt, be happy to note that land in Little Woolton was richer, though more heavy to cultivate than that in Much Woolton. The Lee and Brettargh Farm were, like Much Woolton, lighter land more easily worked with primitive tools but not so productive as the heavier land around Cockshead Farm. Uctred and Ulbert of Little Woolton and Wulfa of Much Woolton are no longer with us and it may no longer be possible to buy a 'carucate' of land (120 acres ?), but at least you can't be 'done' for collecting honey or digging for marl to-day.

There were some interesting and beautifully produced maps on display - it was intriguing to see our modern area superimposed on the lay-out of by-gone days. Whether you are a native of the district with a long tradition behind you, or a 'Johnny-come-lately' (like me) you cannot help but be fascinated by the past of this delightful spot. E.Q.

'GATEACRE' Signs - The donations resulting from the appeal towards the cost of these signs are coming in steadily. Will those of our 'established' members, who have not already made their contribution please let Mrs. Bee or the Secretary have their offering as soon as possible.?

GREEN BELT - In January 1981 we were asked by the County Planning Department for the Society's comments on the Merseyside Draft Green Belt Plan. We replied suggesting that the Recreation Ground and the disused railway line should be incorporated within the Green Belt. The City Planning Officer's view was that the Recreation Ground would have more protection as a 'public open space' for which the land was allocated in the Outer Areas Plan of

1974 and so only a small portion of the old railway line alongside Lee Park Golf Club has now become part of the Green Belt.

DERELICT DUMPING GROUND or LINEAR PARK ? -

The whole of the railway line from Hunts Cross to Aintree is now derelict - a sort of no-mans land, where rubbish is left, rats breed, motor cycles cause a disturbance and yet the peaceful walker out with his dog can be prosecuted for trespass by British Rail.

The County and City Authorities set up a working party a year ago to discuss possible uses, likely cost of landscaping, management and maintenance and came up with the cycle way, long distance footpath and bridle way scheme for which money would be available from Central Government (not the rates). We wrote last March giving our support to this idea.

How much better it would surely be if it were planned, trees planted in a proper landscaping scheme to shield neighbours from overlooking, maintenance regularly attended to and the use as a footpath etc. properly supervised by rangers or wardens as is done on the Wirral Way ?

We have heard of no alternative suggestions for its use from those who oppose this scheme, but we would be glad hear of any positive ideas anyone may have.

NEXT MEETING -

On the 30th March Dr. McAllister will tell us how the wild flowers from other countries grow in our gardens. He shows the plants in their native soils and by pointing out the conditions in which they flourish in the wild we can see how to grow them more successfully ourselves by giving them similar conditions. His slides show these flowers growing in various countries and climates, and they are beautiful as well as interesting. Dr. McAllister will be quite prepared to answer any sort of gardening queries which members may have, and those who have heard him before will know that he is a first rate speaker and that we are all set for an enjoyable and informative evening.



## EXTENSIONS TO THE CONSERVATION AREA -

In response to our request in January 1981 we now have two further extensions to the 'Gateacre Village Conservation Area'. The first covers Sandfield Road and all the houses from No. 10 to No. 38, and the second takes in Rose Brow and includes all the buildings belonging to Gateacre Grange, Nos. 1 - 5 Rose Brow and Smithy Cottage and the Tuckshop - built as a 'shoeing shed' by Sir Andrew Barclay Walker and designed by Cornelius Sherlock in 1870.

We have written to all the residents concerned telling them of their new status as the official notice from the City Planning Department will not be sent to them until the " Article 4 direction " is confirmed by the Department of the Environment - and this may take some time.

All trees within these areas are now protected and any alterations to windows, doors, walls, fences etc. - even exterior painting, requires the approval of the City Planning Officer. On the other hand some restoration work ( such as replacing modern 'picture' windows by the original style with glazing bars ) may be eligible for a Heritage Bureau grant. Anyone who would like further information or advice WHICH IS FREE should telephone 227 3911 ext. 762 and speak to Mr. Harrison or Mrs. Unsworth.

## JUMBLE SALE -

On Saturday 22nd May we are holding our annual Jumble Sale in aid of the Society's funds. We do rely very much on this event to keep our bank balance up and our subscriptions down, so PLEASE - offers of help on the day (even just for an hour or so in the afternoon while the mad rush lasts) would be very much appreciated. Don't throw anything away during your spring cleaning, keep it for the sale, and if you feel that you must get it out of the house bring it along to Grange Lodge and the Secretary will put it in store.

Mrs. McKenzie, who organises the event, has asked me to appeal for one or two strong young men. Last year we had a fridge, T.V. set and a sofa which caused a certain amount of difficulty !!

## GATEACRE GREEN - a Village Green ?

Once upon a time, in 1965 to be exact, there was the "Commons Registration Act" which said that all Common Land and Town or Village Greens should be registered. In August 1968 a local resident, Mr. W.G. Richards registered the Lodes Pond in Woolton and Gateacre Green as Village Greens, seeking to ensure their survival and protection.

The then Town Clerk, Stanley Holmes (now Sir) lodged an objection to this registration on the grounds " that the land was not a town or village green at the date of registration " ! Because the registration was disputed a case has to be heard before a Commons Commissioner, and in January this year we were told that the hearings are likely to take place in St. George's Hall early this summer.

We are fortunate in having on our Committee Mr. Leslie Wheeler - a solicitor who is familiar with this Act, and he feels that we, in Gateacre, have a strong case but that we need to prove that the village green has been used, over the years, for " exercise, recreation or lawful sports and pastimes by the inhabitants ".

We have a photograph of someone sitting on a seat on the green c1920 - a perfectly "lawful pastime", we know that doves were kept in the dove cote from 1912 until when ? and we have the photographs of the Jubilee celebrations on the green, but if any members or friends have early recollections or photographs of anything which took place there we would very much like to hear from them - please let Mrs. Lewis know.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS -

The typists strike is now over and the Planning Office is rapidly catching up with all the work which had accumulated. From a recent visit we collected the following -

- Bridge Inn, Childwall Valley Rd. to retain mobile shop & continue to use car park for retail activity.



PLANNING APPLICATIONS cont.

- 103 Gateacre Park Dr. to continue use as hot take away food but until 11 p.m.

This was refused & must close at 10.30. It was felt that 11 p.m. could cause material harm to amenities, particularly having regard to proximity of licensed premises.

- Land at St. Francis Xaviers to erect 2 det. dwellings Beaconsfield Road. with double garages.

Granted, with many conditions e.g. existing sandstone wall to be retained, no extra opening made. Specified existing trees to be protected.

- Land adj. former Gateacre to extend existing land-Rly. Station, Belle Vale Rd. scape contractor's yard. E.H. Williams.

Granted - permission for E.H. Williams only, no additional access on to Belle Vale Road.

- Rees-Jones (Riverside) Ltd., to re-develop existing bldg. Sandfield Road. materials yard & offices.

This has not yet been decided. We wrote to the P.O. supporting the application and, with Mr. Rees-Jones, visited all the houses likely to be affected to show residents his plans - favourable response, worthwhile exercise. (If only all new residents would take as much trouble to show good neighbourliness how much happier life would be).

- Land at Knotty Cross, to erect block of six flats. Halewood Road.

This is quite a new application and not having seen the drawings we cannot comment. It is in the Woolton Society's area but very much part of Gateacre, so both Societies will be keeping an eye on this one.

CIVIC TRUST FOR THE NORTH WEST - Mrs. Scarland has moved her office, her new address is 69 Rodney Street.

She has arranged for six members from all the Liverpool Amenity Societies to take tea with the Lord Mayor on 30th March and have a conducted tour of the Town Hall.

C.T.N.W. cont.

We are looking forward to this occasion with much pleasure and interest and feel that it is a privilege and an honour to the Society.

LOCAL HISTORY - Through Mr. Gordon Read, Keeper of Archives at the Museum, we are fortunate to have acquired a photo-copy of an Auction Sale held in 1759 at the house of Mr. William Davis - the Sign of the Bear and Ragged Staff, Gateacre.

This is a terrific find and we are most grateful to Mr. Read for passing it on to us.

There is a detailed account of the auction itself - just who was bidding and how much, also details of the estate for sale " .. A Copyhold Messuage and Tenement .. commonly called Nodsby's .... and the Several Closes.." It gives the extent of the holding (in old acres, which were roughly twice the size of statute acres), and all the field names. From the Tithe Map we have been able to identify the estate as Naylor's Farm, and now are in a fair way to being able to trace its ownership from the 16th century onwards. Thank you, Mr. Read.

HILLSIDE, CUCKOO LANE - You will have noticed that this crumbling Victorian house is being pulled down at last (planning permission for 3 houses on the site was granted early last year). It was built, we think, in 1877 together with its neighbours 'Rockfield' and 'The Slopes', and designed (again, we think) by the Architect William Wrennell, of 9 Harrington Street, who lived at 149 Smithdown Lane and designed St. Stephen's Vicarage (we know) in 1894.

The house had little architectural merit and we did not fuss when we saw the planning application, but ... we feel a little sad when driving past. We told the planning office that demolition had started and that there was sandstone to be salvaged - we hope they have been able to arrange for its transport, otherwise it will just go for hardcore. We wonder what we will get in its place ?

STOP PRESS - A new member, Mrs. Silcock had a coffee morning to-day and raised £10 for our signs. THANK YOU.  
S.M.L. 19.3.82.