

24 AUG 1982

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THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Registered with the North West Civic Trust

Chairman: G. Anthony McCann, O.L.A. School  
Hedgefield Road: 487 9301  
Hon. Sec: Mrs. Sylvia Lewis, Grange Lodge,  
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SUMMER NEWSLETTER - 1982

Next meeting -

G A T E A C R E W A L K I V

Saturday, 28th August 1982

Conducted by Miss Gnosspelius and Mr. Dewsnap

Miss Gnosspelius and Mr. Dewsnap have invited us to walk with them along Belle Vale Road, through The Nook and along Halewood Road, considering the architecture, early residents and possible builders of the houses we pass.

We will meet on Gateacre Green at 1.30 p.m., historical notes will be provided free and strong shoes are advised.

A Victorian Tea will be laid on afterwards in Gateacre Chapel Hall, Sandfield Road - price 25p., and a small exhibition of old photographs, maps etc will be on view.

A VISIT TO THE TOWN HALL - On the 30th March several members of the Committee visited the Town Hall at the invitation of the Lord Mayor. A guided tour of the building had been arranged by Mrs. Scarland of the North West Civic Trust, and so we were joined by representatives of other amenity societies - Woolton, Princes Park, Sefton Park, Mossley Hill and West Derby. As we waited in the Entrance Hall we had an opportunity to acquaint ourselves and exchange ideas with colleagues and friends.

After a cordial welcome from Mr. Landman, the Lord Mayor's Secretary, we were introduced to our two Merseyguides who were to show us round. As we paused at the foot of the splendid staircase, our guide outlined the history of the building. Liverpool's first Town Hall, built roughly on this site, had been little more than a barn, but as the City grew in size and prosperity a larger more elegant building became necessary and work was begun in 1671. This building was doomed to subsiding foundations and in the mid 18th century the famous architect John Wood of Bath was at work on the 3rd. Town Hall. His building was gutted by fire in 1795 and James Wyatt of London with Liverpool's own John Foster (Snr) rebuilt it and added the portico in 1811.

Our guide led us up the staircase, pausing for us to take in the splendour of the dome, a breathtaking sight 106 ft. above ground level. All three front reception rooms are now re-decorated in their original colour schemes and contain many fine paintings and ornate Regency furniture. On to the Small Ballroom and then to the Large Ballroom where the giant mirrors and magnificent chandeliers (28ft. from tip to toe) could not fail to hold everyone's attention. In the Dining Room the scene is dominated by two great marble urns at each end, the roundels of carved cherubs and the pilasters of simulated Carniola marble. All the ceilings, of subtly varying shapes, deserve a good long look.

Our visit to the Council Chamber (Wyatt 1797) brought us back to the reality of the present day problems which face those running our City, but we were impressed with the skill of the craftsmen who had executed the magnificent carvings. We paused for thought in the Hall of Remembrance dedicated to the 13,000 men of L-pool who lost their lives in the first World War.

Our tour was all too soon over and we returned to the Centre Reception Room to take tea with the Lord Mayor - a pleasant way to end our visit. We extend thanks to Cllsr. Ross & Mrs. Scarland for an interesting afternoon.

N.B. The Town Hall is open to the public 16-28 Aug. (not Sun. 22nd), admission is free - have you been? We think you will enjoy your visit, it is a very fine building. (S.A.B)

WILD PLANTS AS GARDEN FLOWERS - On the 30th Mar. Dr. Hugh McAllister, Asst. Director of Ness Gardens, came again to talk to the Society. He showed us many beautiful slides and he speaks with such fluency and Latin names trip from his tongue so easily that we are left amazed at his encyclopaedic knowledge. Dr. McAllister must be one of those rare and happy people whose job is also their hobby. The slides proved the extent of his travels and no difficulty of terrain, harshness of climate - whether extremes of hot or cold - seem to daunt him if there is some plant he wishes to photograph.

The aim of the lecture was to show how these species flourish in their natural environment and so make it easier for us to provide the conditions they like. His informed eye uncovered for us what a small clump of different species consisted of, looking at the slide without his guidance it looked just a mass of green with an odd flower here and there but he picked out all the different plants and showed us how prolific and generous Nature is to us.

Some of our members who are my own age or more (1) may remember a famous play "The ascent of F6" where each of the members of the climb died as he reached his objective - the botanist on reaching the rarest of flowers he had coveted all his life. Please, Dr. McAllister, do not go so far. We need you again and again and look forward to that Gardener's Question Time which you promised us. (A.L.)

GENTLEMENS MANSIONS INTO PEOPLES PLAYGROUNDS - Mr. E.H. Smith's talk to the Society on 26th May started at the Manorial seat of Allerton, anciently the home of a branch of the Lathoms, Percivals & then Hardmans who built the west part of the present Allerton Hall. William Roscoe completed the bldg. and lived there 1799 - 1816. Springwood was built by Wm. Shand and named after his estate in Antigua, the home of the

of the Brocklebanks from c.1839 - 1914. Allerton Tower built by the Hardman Earle family whose fortune was made in the slave trade and privateering (Architect H.L. Elmes). Allerton, now the 'Fletcher Rooms' by the golf links, was built for Jacob Fletcher in 1815 (Architect Thomas Harrison of Chester) and destroyed by fire in the 1940s, very little remains. Calderstone, now the Mansion House, was built for Joseph Need Walker in 1828 near the site of the Old House Farm; and after the McIvers took over in 1873 one of the first private telephone lines in L-pool was installed between this house and Verdala Tower.

John Bibby's Hart Hill is now represented only by the sumptuous entrance (with 2 gigantic 'atlantes' & statues of the four seasons) brought from Browns Bldgs. in the City centre (architect J.A.Picton 1861-3.) Greenbank, part of the Rathbone estate, a small Gothick house of c.1800 with a charming 2-storey cast iron verandah on the south - the filigree lightness of this has found N. American echoes. The front lawn of Greenbank has a good example of a 'ha-ha' sunk fence; and the River Jordan, fed by one tributary from Greenbank lake and another from Sefton Park Lake, crossed Aigburth Road near the Vale and made its way through Otterspool to the Mersey. Otterspool House, where the tea-room is now - part of the terrace is still visible - was built for John Moss c.1810 and earlier there had been a water mill and a dock at the mouth of the Otterspool. Sudley was built c.1830 for John Robinson, a corn merchant, & bought some half century later by the shipowner, George Holt. The bay windows were added in the 1880s and, with the collection of her father's pictures it was bequeathed to her native city by Emma Holt when she died in 1944.

All these fine houses in their extensive grounds have come to us for our enjoyment because of the wealthy people who chose to live in the south of Liverpool in the 19th century.

GATEACRE SIGNS - (E.Q.)

Have you all seen our new signs erected on 21st/22nd July? We hope members approve of them, but no one has actually rung to say how smashing they are .... so now we no longer have Gateacre Parish Church being in 'Netherley' and Gateacre C. of E. School, Gateacre Chapel and Gateacre Post Office in 'Woolton' and GATEACRE is no longer a lost village but seen to be just where we knew

it was all the time. We asked the City Engineer if the signs were insured against damage, but the answer was that due to the financial state of the City we would have to be responsible for this, so we have insured them ourselves.

If we have any money over when they are paid for (we have not yet received the account) we would like to put it towards a seat somewhere in the village, but where? We feel it would be too vulnerable on the Green, and thought maybe one would be useful on the corner of Cuckoo Lane/Woolton Rd. or perhaps in Sandfield Road when Mr. Rees-Jones has landscaped the corner at the top of Lower Sandfield? If you have any ideas please let the Chairman or Secretary know.

WILSON MEMORIAL - One of our most recent members, Mrs. Sangster, a student at St. Katharine's College is helping with our local history research. She thinks she has found the name of the architect of this Memorial but is still searching for proof of this in time for Gateacre Walk IV. We salute all her hard work and wish her success.

DISUSED RAILWAY LINE - On the 12th May the County Planning Office arranged a public consultation meeting at Gateacre Comprehensive School to discuss their idea of turning the line into a linear park with footpath and cycleway. The meeting was very well attended and we were shown drawings of their scheme for the whole length of the track. Three speakers explained what they would like to do, and then residents were asked for their views. There were several people who were in favour of this sort of new use but many who had misgivings, & all points were noted. At the end Peter Wood, the County's Director of Development & Planning said that he and his colleagues would want to talk to local residents again, so it would seem that a further meeting may be expected in the future. When we receive more information we will tell you and put it on the Notice Board.

CIVIC TRUST SEMINAR - This was organised by Mrs. Scarland, North West Civic Trust (Liverpool) on the 22nd June at Ness Gardens. The seminar/workshop was for local amenity societies under the heading "Positive Participation in the Planning Process" and was to help societies do their work more effectively, and show the sort of arguments we can put

forward which will carry weight with the professionals. The Hon. Sec. and Miss Gnosspelius went and had a very interesting and instructive time.

The speakers were David Rhodes, Senior Planning Officer, Manchester; Howard Garner, Chief Development Control Officer, W. Lancs; Martin Boyett, Architect & Group Leader, Vale Royal; Oliver Bott, Conservation Officer, Cheshire County Council and Len. Ward, Borough Planning Officer, Ellesmere Port. They talked about their work and how amenity societies can help them to produce the sort of environment we all want. We hope that we will be more efficient for having attended.

IRVINE ST., EDGE HILL - In 1978 we were lending a hand to the Merseyside Civic Soc. who were trying to save these Georgian houses from demolition, now we are happy to say they are being rehabilitated. They were listed in Oct. 1977 and declared part of the Edge Hill Conservation Area in 1981 but still their future was uncertain. Councillor McVeigh played a key part in their rescue, and we understand they are being converted into flats - interesting that the two houses in the worst condition & looking frankly hopeless are the ones which are being tackled first.

H.G.V. SURVEY - We were hoping, in this Newsletter, to ask for volunteers to take part in a survey of vehicles over 3 tons in weight ignoring the 3-ton weight limit on Belle Vale Rd. We approached the police, hoping for their co-operation but failed to receive any assurance that the survey would be acted upon if made. We now intend seeing the County Engineer - who had the signs erected - and find out whether his department would be willing to make use of such a survey.

#### NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS ?

In August we start thinking ahead to the A.G.M. in October, and the business of attracting new members to come on the Committee. We need at least 2 new members but the problem is how do we find them ? Being on the Committee (meetings every 6 weeks) means taking an active part in running our Society, helping to make decisions about the Society's business in the light of your own experience and views. We have sometimes filled vacancies by coercion because of lack of volunteers - "but 1 volunteer is worth 10 pressed men". What we need, to ease pressure on the Hon. Sec.

are volunteers who have the interest to offer practical help by taking responsibility for a part of the organisation of the Society.

E.g. We need especially someone to be responsible for drawing up a programme of appropriate speakers from suggestions made by Committee members and others, producing an attractive 'trailer' for publicity, reminding the speaker beforehand, arranging for notes to be taken at the meeting by someone who will produce a report for the next Newsletter, and finally sending a letter of thanks. This need not all be done by one person alone, but a Speakers Secretary is needed to organise this side of our work.

ANY OFFERS ?

LAND OPPOSITE ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH - Residents of Church View estate have had awful problems with this land and their drains for years. They now appear to be sorting things out nicely - Well done ! A team of unemployed men belonging to M.O.V.E. (Merseyside Organisation for Voluntary Enterprise) have been cutting the grass recently and removing the rubbish which is inevitable in such places - we wish we could say the same for the land at YORK COTTAGES, but we are told by Merseyside Improved Houses that it is not high on their list of priorities and they are short of money.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS - All applications for the area of the old Township of Little Woolton are now displayed on our Notice Board each week.

Rees-Jones (Riverside) Ltd., Sandfield Road. We are pleased to report that this application has now been granted.

Knotty Cross, Halewood Road, we have written opposing the scheme for a block of six flats on the front lawn of this listed building, saying that we feel that this application should be refused.

STOP PRESS We would like to offer our congratulations to The Woolton Society on the erection of their Conservation Area signs.

S.M.L. 11.8.1982.

