

Hon. Secretary's Report for the year 1981/82.

During the year there have been 7 members meetings in Gateacre Chapel Hall -

- 8th Dec. Liverpool Walkabout by Alex. Grant
- 26th Jan. Lancashire Story by Margaret Seagroatt
- 30th Mar. Garden Plants from the wild by Dr. Hugh McAllister
- 28th Apl. Vernacular Architecture in Gateacre by Janet Gnosspelius
- 26th May. Gentlemens' Mansions into Peoples Playgrounds by E.H. Smith
- 6th Jly. How to avoid accidents on the road by Stella Owen
- 21st Sep. Walking the towpaths of England by Albert Cliffe

On the 18th Feb. we shared a successful afternoon and evening meeting with the Woolton Society at St. Peter's Parish Rooms, when Paul Wright gave a lecture on Mediaeval Farming in Allerton, Much Woolton and Little Woolton.

We went for the 4th Gateacre Walk on the 28th August, when we looked at the John H. Wilson Memorial Fountain, the conversion at the Riding School, went down Belle Vale Rd. and along the disused railway line to the Nook and then back along Halewood Rd. for tea at the Chapel Hall. We were shown features of the buildings we passed and learnt a little of how it is possible to date them, we also heard something of the history of their owners from our excellent guides Janet Gnosspelius and John Dewsnap.

8 Committee meetings have been held during the year and 4 Newsletters and 5 Notices have been delivered to members.

THE YEAR'S WORK.

This started with taking the mock-up of the 'GATEACRE' sign to the City Engineer's workshop in Kent St. for fabrication, and the decision to have a Publicity Campaign in order to seek donations to pay for the signs and to increase membership. The Deputy City Engineer had thought, at that time that the cost of the signs might be in the region of £22 each - in fact they turned out to be more than double that amount.

Over 2,000 copies of the leaflet were prepared and delivered over the whole area in February - a mammoth task undertaken by the Committee, members and their friends to whom we are very grateful.

The idea of the signs aroused much enthusiasm, and donations and subscriptions ranging from 50p. to £80 were received amounting to nearly £300. We also had a bequest of £100 in the will of Frank Ledson, a member who had expressed great interest in the signs before he died last year. The signs were erected 21/22 July after being insured against theft or vandalism.

Membership increased by nearly 100 and now stands at 327. Subscriptions for 1982/83 are due from to-day, they remain the same £1 single, £1.50 family and 50p. for pensioners and students plus £1 postage if living outside the hand delivery area - please pay Mrs. Bee, the Membership Secretary.

Last November we had some much appreciated co-operation from the City Engineer's Dept. when we asked for and obtained bollards & setts to replace the broken paving outside the Institute - this was very heartening.

Also in November we were asked for help by residents on the Church View estate in Belle Vale Road. They had been left with several serious problems after the developer had gone bankrupt. We made a number of enquiries, passed on the information we had obtained and understand that a solution is in sight.

The waste land at York Cottages continues to be a problem. A landscaping scheme by Merseyside Improved Houses has been agreed by residents, but M.I.H. are short of money and this is not one of their top priorities - so how do we make it happen? We heard recently that we are now in the Partnership Area - this means that Government money may be available so we must try to get some diverted to Gateacre - a top priority for us next year?

On January 25th the Gateacre Society & the Woolton Society attended St. George's Hall ready to prove to one of Her Majesty's Commons Commissioners that both Gateacro Green and the Lodes Pond, Woolton were 'Village Greens' within the meaning of the Commons Registration Act 1965. The hearing was adjourned at the request of the City Solicitor who was not ready to present his case. We are

attending an informal meeting on the 4th Nov. in the City Solicitor's office when we intend trying to persuade him to withdraw his objection to the registration.

Our efforts to have a bottle bank sited on the car park at the Gateacre Park Drive shopping precinct were thwarted when in January the owners refused to give their consent.

The two extensions to the Gateacre Village Conservation Area, which we had asked for, were agreed by the Planning & Land Committee in January and passed by the City Council on the 27th February. The Planning Dept. have now applied to the Secretary of State for 'Article 4 directions' which give them a tighter control in these areas. This is always a lengthy business and meanwhile official notification to those affected is held up. The Society was asked to inform residents of their new status and responsibilities and this we did.

Early in the year we learned that the fume extraction unit at the Black Bull was faulty and dripping black grease on to the pathway at York Cottages. We contacted Tetley Walkers and the Environmental Health Officer who has now taken this matter up but so far without result. We are both pursuing this.

We supported Mr. Rees-Jones, Builders Merchant in Sandfield Rd. in his application to demolish and rebuild his premises. This involved a house to house visit, with Mr. Rees-Jones, to all those who might be affected, showing plans of his proposals and noting residents' comments. We attended a Planning & Land Committee meeting and took part in a site meeting of Councillors at which the decision to grant the application was agreed on the 22nd April.

We gave much thought to the future of the disused railway line. A linear park with facilities for cycling and walking seemed a good solution, but some members living alongside the track opposed this idea. A meeting was called by the County Planning Dept. and held at Gateacre Comprehensive School on May 12th and was well attended. All the implications were discussed but no decisions taken.

In July we heard that the Green Belt Plan, with its modifications, was to be the subject of a Public Local Inquiry starting on 21st Sept. at Bootle Town Hall. We will receive the Inspector's Report towards the end of the year. Our request for the inclusion of the railway line and recreation ground was turned down and here we note that Liverpool has no policy for its open spaces.

Although some uncertainty exists as to ownership, we persuaded Tetley Walkers to assume responsibility for the vandalised sandstone wall outside Garfields and have it repaired. The owners of Gateacre Grange were asked by the Planning Dept. to repair their sandstone wall alongside the Grange Weint footpath - we understand that this has now been done.

We have been watching over Barry Kelley's rehabilitation of Druids Cross, giving advice and encouragement when required. This week Miss Gnosspelius provided him with drawings showing the type of windows we think ought to be used, a copy has also gone to Mr. Harrison, the Conservation Officer.

We have also made friends with Barry Eckman who is working on the Riding School and are much impressed with this sympathetic conversion.

We continue to examine the Planning Register and make comments where we feel necessary. In May the Committee decided that all local applications should be displayed on the Notice Board and members be urged to contact the Planning Office immediately if they saw anything which might give cause for concern.

The application for the block of flats on the front lawn of Knotty Cross (listed) in Halewood Rd. is still causing us some anxiety - not having yet been decided. We trust that this application will be refused.

We are pleased to report that the advertisement has been removed from the front of Rose Cottage, and that the twice-missing '7' from Queen Victoria's Jubilee Memorial has been replaced by the City Estates Surveyor (Civic Bldgs. Dept). We also report the demolition of 'Hillside', Cuckoo Lane last February. This was the last of three Victorian houses designed we think by William Wrennell, the architect of St. Stephen's Vicarage in 1894.

On the 28th October Mrs. Scarland of the North West Civic Trust arranged an evening meeting at Wavertree Town Hall for representatives from all Merseyside amenity societies, and on the 30th March she arranged a tour of Liverpool Town Hall conducted by a Merseyguide, after which we took tea with the Lord Mayor.

In April we were invited to join the Georgian Group from London and here for the weekend to see Liverpool. We were somewhat appalled at their great surprise in finding such fine buildings north of Cheltenham.

On the 22nd May a Jumble Sale was again held under the expert guidance of Mrs. McKenzie and £169.60 was raised for the Society's funds.

We have had two visits from Edmund Gray, an Inspector of Historic Buildings from the D.O.E. We showed him a number of buildings we thought worthy of listing and had an interesting and instructive time - but so far with no tangible results.

Research into Local History continues whenever time permits. We think we now know the architect of the Wilson Memorial Fountain - Cornelius Sherlock, and we have recently been working on several title deeds of local houses which are helpful in finding out the ownership and extent of land held in the late C18 and early C19.

An event which is now part of our local history occurred on the 31st May when we were able to photograph the Pope driving through Little Woolton when on his way to the airport.

The survey of Vernacular Architecture is progressing more slowly than we could have wished but this should be complete up to 1848 before the next A.G.M. This deadline also applies to the survey of the Chapel graveyard and the story of The Lee. The transcription of the 1841 census has been done and work has already started on that of 1861.

We continue to give help to teachers and students - suggesting sources of information, answering their questions if within our knowledge and providing them with maps and reading matter.

With the Woolton Society we were asked to mount an Exhibition for a week at Gateacre Comprehensive School to help celebrate their 25th birthday. We feel that it was successful and would like to thank a number of people for their photographic work - Kathleen Atkinson, John Roberts and Joe Taylor of Valley Line who produced the photographs we needed so urgently.

This year, perhaps for the first time, we would say that a spirit of co-operation has been noticeable between a number of City Departments and ourselves. This has always been the case with the Planning Dept. but this year we would include the Engineers Dept., the Lighting Dept., the Building Surveyors Dept., the Estates Dept., and the Environmental Health Dept. This has been most encouraging, perhaps they are getting to know us, realising that we are not a 'pressure group' opposing them but reasonable people trying to achieve the same ends and that we can be useful to each other ?

Tomorrow, 26th October there is to be a Local Inquiry into an appeal by the owner of the chip shop in the Gateacre Park Drive precinct who wishes to remain open until after 10.30 p.m. - the Society will be represented.

Outside our area we have continued to take an interest in what is going on in the City - the Lyceum, Albert Dock, Irvine Street - where some excellent rehabilitation work is being carried out - and the Clayton Square scheme about which there is to be a Public Inquiry at the Municipal Buildings at 10 a.m. on the 9th November.

I apologise for the length of this report but feel that it is important that all the work of the Society throughout the year is drawn together and recorded in one place.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Chairman for his guidance, the Committee for their hard work and support and all the members who have helped in so many different ways to cope with all the work involved in running the Society.