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REPORT OF THE HON. SECRETARIES, PRESENTED TO THE 15th ANNUAL
GENERAL MEETING OF THE GATEACRE SOCIETY ON THE 31ST OCTOBER 1989

There have been seven meetings held in the Gateacre Institute.

- 22nd November - John Dewsnap "The Treasures of Clwyd"
29th November - Coach trip to York
7th February - Jack Cooper, Merseyguide, "Villages of Merseyside"
21st March - Peter Richardson BA MCD "Building in Context"
25th April - Ann Macphee BA "The Queens Pictures"
27th May - Coach Trip to Llandudno and Bodnant Gardens. Both coach trips were joint outings with the Woolton Society
13th June - Bob Maton 2 films "Martin Mere 1978-79"
"Ainsdale National Nature Reserve"
24th July - Alan Heath, Manager, Gateacre Nurseries, Whiston
"Trees and Flowers in our Garden"
3rd October - Dr. T.D. Yeomans "Conservation at Home and Abroad"

These excellent lectures were mainly arranged by Mrs. Lothian, our Public Relations Secretary, with great resourcefulness.

Eight Newsletters have been published. These have been folded, stamped and distributed by Miss Howie, to whom we send our grateful thanks, as we do to all the deliverers.

Last November, the Secretaries attended a workshop meeting arranged by The Civic Trust UK 2000, on obtaining funds for environmental projects. From this came the idea to try to obtain funds to improve the appearance of the shops in Grange Lane. An Architect, David Backhouse has been instructed to prepare suitable sketches.

Following questions asked at the last A.G.M. we took up the problem of timing of the traffic lights in the village, and flooding in Halewood Road, with the City Engineer, and we hope that there has been some improvement.

Mrs. Lewis wrote to Bishop Sheppard and Eddie Loyden M.P. regarding the proposed closure of Gateacre C of E School, Halewood Road. We have no definite news on this matter, to date.

Also in November we were in touch with Jeftex Builders, about their development in Chapel Fields, Sandfield Road. They provided us with drawings of their scheme. This same firm wrote to us again on 4th May saying they had acquired La Girelle in Oakfield Avenue, and were proposing to build three traditional cottage style executive homes, nestling among Country style shrubbery and trees. Outline planning permission was granted in June but we are waiting to see detailed drawings from the Architect David Backhouse, (Designer of Cavern Walks).

On 20th December we wrote in support of The Calderstones/Woolton Greenwedge and the seven control policies formulated by the C.P.O. for its retention and protection. This has been agreed by the full City Council, and we are shortly to put forward a plan for a further Greenwedge stretching up Beaconsfield Road over the hill to the Black Woods and on to Childwall.

We have since co-operated with The Woolton Society against several proposals to build in the Greenwedge, and also with the Childwall Society after its launch in April about land there which is threatened by a Corporation sell-off for housing. We wrote to our Lord of the Manor, The Marquess of Salisbury, who confirmed that much of this land was protected by covenants.

We were happy in January to see an application for the conversion of 4. Gateacre Brow into two houses, dividing the building vertically, internally. The new owners have a big job in front of them in this listed house. Much of the history of the house has been researched by the Local History Unit. We welcome the new owners as members of the Society and wish them well.

On 29th January we wrote to the C.P.O. objecting strongly to a proposal to break into the grounds of Gateacre Grange which is in the Conservation Area, to build 6 houses on the site. Two residents petitions were set up and letters supporting our objections were sent by the Director of the North West Civic Trust, The Merseyside Civic Society, and Mr. Loyden our M.P. This matter is now the subject of an appeal to The Department of Environment.

Another appeal decision awaited is on 40, Gateacre Brow, listed and in the Conservation Area. Here the owner contravened a planning condition and installed UPVC windows. There have been other cases of UPVC replacement windows this year, and the city Planning Officer was so concerned that a letter and further guidance notes were sent out to all residents within the Conservation Area emphasising that any change to buildings must have planning permission.

The missing GATEACRE sign from the corner of Gateacre Park Drive/Woolton Road, was found near Widnes and handed in to Belle Vale Police Station. It is now with the City Engineer in Kent Street, but we have been told it cannot be refurbished, and the cost of a new sign is being investigated.

During the year No. 1 and No's 2-5 Paradise Row (listed) were bought and internally well refurbished and most of these have now been sold. The developer, Mr. Calhoun then acquired 10, Gateacre Brow which is also listed and in The Conservation Area, and, without planning permission, stripped off the perished stucco, sandblasted the stonework, and re-pointed. We attended a site meeting on the 18th September when the Development Control Sub-Committee said an Enforcement Notice was to be served requiring the owner to replace the stucco. After a second site meeting, it was decided that it could remain as it was, providing a coat of clear silicone was applied.

On 12th April the Secretaries attended a meeting on "Voluntary Environment Activities" at The Bluecoat Chambers.

In May we wrote to the City Planning Officer, reminding him of the enforcement notice requiring the owner of 29 Sandfield Road (within the Gateacre Conservation Area) to remove the white paint from the brickwork of the front elevation. We are pleased to report that this work was done in September.

The appeal decision from the D.O.E. on hours at Grange Manor arrived in March. The restaurant may remain open until midnight Monday - Saturday and 22.00pm on Sundays, but the bars must close by 11.00pm during the week and 10.30pm on Sundays. Unfortunately, Council Committees do not seem to liaise with each other and in August, the Licensing Sub-Committee granted a Public Entertainment Licence whereby the bars may stay open until midnight. The new owners of this establishment appear to be attracting a younger element, resulting in an increase in late night noise and disturbance. We hope that members will let us know if they have problems from this source.

In April the Gateacre Hall Hotel applied for planning permission for a two storey extension. Our great concern here is with what remains of the 17th century house built by the Williamson family, which is embedded within the Georgian building. This includes a stone door-way, originally the front door, with - I.W. : S.W. 1652 carved on the lintel, which we very much hope will remain insitu. After attending a site meeting we feel much happier, as the owner and his architect came to a gentlemen's agreement with the Chairman of the Development Control Sub-Office, that the door casing should remain in its original position.

Environment Week was held from Saturday 22nd April - 29th. We had the usual clean-up of the Green, but this year the response from members was very poor indeed, only about seven members of the Committee turned up. We could achieve more if we had more help. I have been in touch with the Parks and Gardens Department to see if we can get The Green generally smartened up.

We were consulted in June by Transportation Planning Associates about the route of the proposed M57 - A562 link road. We replied, welcoming any scheme which will alleviate traffic problems in the village, and chose a route which we thought would achieve this.

On 26th June Mrs. Lewis, attended The Merseyside Civic Societies A.G.M. Miki King, Liverpools Conservation Officer was the guest speaker.

In July we were invited to mount an exhibition at Gateacre Comprehensive School for their Summer Fair. Miss Borrowscale, Mrs. Plent, Mrs. Lewis, and Miss Gnosspelius were involved, but the response from the staff and parents was very disappointing.

On the 15th September, we sent Mrs. Lewis to Oxford as a delegate to the Civic Trusts Congress, held in Christs College. The theme being 'Vision for the 1990's'. There were excellent speakers and useful discussions, and a report of this important conference is available for members to read.

4th October, members of the Committee attended the launch by The Duke of Westminster of The North West Civic Trust's book "The Treasures of Lancashire", at Hoghton Towers, near Preston.

The Society also submitted comments, suggested conditions, or opposed applications in a number of other cases i.e. Knotty Cross where a large house was proposed in the garden. At Knolle Park an extension was suggested to the very good listed lodge. We were critical of the proposed extension at the Bear and Staff to some effect, and are trying to get the re-instatement of the pictorial Pub sign.

A pre-cast concrete garage was asked for by the Black Bull. Other cases thought to enhance the area or particular buildings, gained our approbation.

We have given our support to other Local Amenity Societies when needed, and are grateful for the support of The Merseyside Civic Society and the North West Civic Trust, but we still feel a great sense of deprivation at the loss of the Liverpool Office of the NWCT and Elizabeth Scarland who knew our area so well.

We would like to thank the Chairman for giving of his very valuable time, The Committee Members, and all members who have helped in any way during the year.

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SERIALS

Local History Report presented at the 15th A.G.M. of the Gateacre Society held 31st October 1989

The Local History Unit - Mrs. Lewis, Miss Gnospelius, & Miss Borrowscale have continued their research into the history of Little Woolton when other commitments, both in and outside the Society have allowed.

Miss Gnospelius has now translated and transcribed the first 10 years of the 16th century Little Woolton Court papers written in a mixture of Latin and English. The papers cover the period 1547 to 1587 and it is our hope that this work will have been completed before the next A.G.M., together with an index.

We now have copies of all the surviving Land Tax records from 1781 - 1830, and going back to an earlier date, Miss Borrowscale has found and typed Rentals from 1759, held by the Record Office. So we continue to extend our knowledge both backwards and forwards in time, hoping one day to know the whole story.

We wrote about the history of 28a,b,c,d, Gateacre Brow for Mr. McVeigh's Woolton Annual; and then we were asked to trace the history of the Grange Hotel in Holmfield Road by Mr. John Dewsnap for a brochure, this was fascinating but very time consuming.

Last Christmas, Miss Gnospelius, Mrs. Lewis, and Mr. Chitty were asked to comment on the new Liverpool Heritage Walk a book produced by Philip Browning of the City Planning Office and shortly to go on sale.

We have continued to search for and supply information about Daniel James of Beaconsfield House to John Lowe, the biographer of Daniel's grandson Edward James, patron of the arts, particularly of the surrealist painters.

For 3 days in July we assisted in the archaeological dig at Childwall led by Ron Cowell, Merseyside's field archaeologist and paid for by the Burtonwood Brewery. Finds included a Victorian rubbish tip, and, an hour before the digging had to cease a 17th century potsherd was discovered.

In March we visited Brettargh Holt a house near Kendal now owned by the Silesian Sisters. They knew little of the history of the name of their house and its builder and were delighted with information we gave them, and to know of the connection with Brettargh Holt in Little Woolton.

We have continued to help students of all ages with their local history projects, and Miss Gnospelius is at present preparing a set of maps of Gateacre from 1845. These will show how the area has grown over the years and will be cheaper to reproduce than those we have been using previously. We have also been able to help a number of people with their family history, and in this connection we are in touch with families in San Francisco and New Zealand.