

H9 942. 711 GAI



The Gateacre Society

Registered with the Civic Trust and as a Charity

NEWSLETTER - November 2002

A.G.M. REPORT

As a result of the elections held on 22nd October we now have a full complement of 14 Committee members to run the Society's affairs for the coming year.

The Officers are Tony McCann (Chairman), Brian Doman (Vice-Chairman), Joan Gadd

(Hon.Secretary), Eryl Chitty (Hon.Treasurer), Beryl Plent (Membership Sec.) and Mike Chitty (Environment Sec.) while the other Committee members are Pam Ball, Mary Champion, Joan Cohen, Sylvia Davis,

Rosemary Doman, Rev. Alan Kennedy, Freddie Simm and Margaret Simm. Joan Gadd - who has been Social Secretary for several years, arranging our programme of speakers - let it be known that she is taking on the title of Hon.Secretary very reluctantly! We are able to co-opt further Committee members at any time, so if you would like to help us out - or simply attend a couple of Committee meetings to see what is involved - please contact any Officer of the Society. (Addresses and phone numbers are on the back page).

Our next meeting:

THE PRIVATE PALACES OF LONDON

An illustrated talk by Mike Murphy on **Tuesday 12th November** at 8 p.m.

in Gateacre Chapel Hall

Mr Murphy is a retired history teacher who has made a study of the 'great houses' of London. His talk, illustrated by slides, will consider the rise, the flourishing and the decline of the capital's aristocratic residences, from their origins in the late seventeenth century to their virtual disappearance - either literally or in the form in which they were best known - in the twentieth century.

The meeting will be held in the Chapel Hall, Sandfield Road (off Gateacre Brow), Liverpool 25, starting at 8 o'clock.



The future of Belle Vale Road? See inside for details.

THE LIFE AND WORK OF FATHER NUGENT

A review of our September meeting *by Mary Champion*

On 24th September the Revd Dr Ben Rees gave us a comprehensive account of the life of Monsignor James Nugent (1822-1905). Most of us have seen Father Nugent's statue in St John's Gardens and have heard of the Nugent Care Society, but may not be aware of the huge amount of work he did in and for Liverpool in the nineteenth century.

James Nugent's Irish Catholic father was a Liverpool greengrocer and his English mother was a convert. James went to college in Durham and then to the English College in Rome, and became a priest in Blackburn. In the 1840s, due to the Potato Famine, many thousands of Irish people came to Liverpool. Forty people sleeping in a cellar was not uncommon and disease became rife. A leader was needed to provide comfort and care - and James Nugent came back to Liverpool from Blackburn.

He set up schools for the poor Catholics, and also arranged weekly concerts and public lectures. Among the invited speakers were Cardinals Wiseman and Newman. He set up a children's refuge in Soho Street - a census in 1869 having found 541 boys and 172 girls selling matches or begging on the streets of Liverpool at midnight. Nugent later established a printing works and newspaper for the Catholic community, but came into conflict with the Irishman James Whitty who was founder and editor of the Liverpool Daily Post.

Nugent had many contacts in the United States and Canada, and arranged for children to be sent there to work and start a new life. He also supported Father Theobald Matthew's temperance crusade, seeing drunkenness - and the money spent on drink - as a great social evil. It is said that 40,000 Irish Catholics in Liverpool signed the pledge at that time! Nugent also campaigned for prison reform - and in the 1860s became Catholic chaplain at Walton Gaol.

Finally, he became interested in local politics. The Irish Nationalist Party was strong in Liverpool, because neither the Conservatives nor the Liberals welcomed Catholics into their clubs. Like the rest of his Church, though, Nugent was opposed to the Fenians and tended to favour the Catholic Liberal Party.

In 1890, Father Nugent was made Monsignor. He gave up his duties as a priest to concentrate on lecture tours of America and the establishment of new churches all over Liverpool. By 1904 he was frail and living in Formby, and the following year he died of pneumonia. His funeral was huge - and even today he is remembered as one of the 'great men' of Victorian Liverpool.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

Just a reminder that we have a number of items for sale at our meetings, some of which make ideal gifts for people now living far away from Gateacre. Our tea towels of Gateacre Village (£2 each) have been selling well for a number of years. We also have a brand new item this month: 'Woolton Voices' from Tempus Publishing (£10.99), a collection of local photographs and memories which makes fascinating reading. Anyone who wants to buy these items but is unable to get to our meetings should phone Joan Gadd on 428 8884.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

We recently had an e-mail from TONY HEMESLEY - now an Army officer living in Yorkshire - who was a member of St Stephen's choir and youth club in the 1940s and 50s. Tony wonders whether any of the 'lads and lasses' from that era remember him and would like to get in touch. If so, please contact our Committee member Mike Chitty (428 7801) who will pass on the details. We have also been asked for information about the BELLE VALE PREFABS which occupied the area around Besford Road for many years after the Second World War. Please contact Beryl Plent (428 5379) if you have any particular memories or photos of life on the estate.

FORTY FLATS FOR BELLE VALE ROAD?

A planning application (ref. 02F/2634) has been submitted to build a three-storey block of private flats on the site of the petrol station and adjoining EHW contractors' depot in Belle Vale Road. This proposal has aroused a great deal of controversy in the village and has, we understand, resulted in a large number of objections from local residents concerned about the visual and traffic impact. The Society's Committee has studied the plans and discussed them at some length. These are our views, as submitted to the Council's Planning Department:

- ◆ We feel that residential redevelopment of this site is appropriate. The present buildings on the site are unattractive, and the existing land uses potentially attract heavy vehicles which would not otherwise be permitted to use Belle Vale Road owing to the 'access only' weight restriction.
- ◆ We are impressed with the application drawings and with the care which has obviously been taken in the preparation of the scheme. We welcome the choice of materials and the multi-gabled design, which is very much in the 'Gateacre tradition'. While we would have preferred a two-storey building, we feel that the use of dormer windows as proposed will greatly reduce the adverse impact which the development might otherwise have had.
- ◆ There will be a relatively short distance between the back-of-pavement line and the front wall of the flats. We feel that the building may appear over-dominant as a result, and would suggest that it be moved back say another 2 to 3 metres from the Belle Vale Road boundary.
- ◆ We regret the loss of a highway tree to make way for the vehicular access. We feel that setting the building further back would mitigate this loss by allowing more planting of trees and shrubs in the front garden area of the flats. We also hope that a replacement highway tree will be provided between the vehicular access and the former railway bridge.
- ◆ While the flats at the front of the building will have a pleasant view across public open space, those at the rear will, it seems, look out on a large and fairly bleak car park. We understand that the Council requires 1.5 parking spaces to be provided per flat. If this is unavoidable, then we would suggest that the number of flats be reduced so as to permit the provision of more amenity space and less tarmac around the building.

Although the official deadline for objections was 14th October, it is unlikely that a decision on the application will be made before mid-November. So if you wish to submit your own comments, please write as soon as possible to Ms C. Bates, Development Control Division, Millennium House, 60 Victoria Street, Liverpool L1 6JF. (To inspect the plans at Millennium House, phone Ms Bates beforehand on 233 5647 to check that they are still available).

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Website: www.gatsoc.org.uk **E-mail:** info@gatsoc.org.uk

Officers for 2002/03

Chairman: Tony McCann
Vice Chairman: Brian Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, L25 4SL (722 6368)
Hon.Secretary: Joan Gadd, 59 Hunts Cross Avenue, L25 5NU
(428 8884)
Hon.Treasurer: Eryl Chitty
Membership Sec.: Beryl Plent, 27 Grange Lane, L25 4RZ (428 5379)
Environment Sec.
& Newsletter Editor: Mike Chitty, 16 Chartmount Way, L25 5LB (428 7801)

Membership Subscriptions

Individual £2 Pensioner £1 Family £3 Two pensioners £1.50
Company, etc. £5 *(all plus £1.50 postage if outside hand-delivery area)*

Already a member?

Your address label indicates the date on which your membership expires.
PLEASE NOTE that if the date on the label is 31/10/02, your subscription
for the year 2002/03 is NOW DUE.
You may pay for up to three years in advance if you wish.

Not a member? Want to join us?

Please send the appropriate annual subscription to the
Membership Secretary.