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# THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Founded 1974. Charity Registration No.508024.

'Guarding the Past, Safeguarding the Future'

Website: [www.gatsoc.org.uk](http://www.gatsoc.org.uk) Email: [info@gatsoc.org.uk](mailto:info@gatsoc.org.uk)

## IF YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS

and would like to receive your Newsletters by email instead of by post, please let us know by sending a simple message to [membership@gatsoc.org.uk](mailto:membership@gatsoc.org.uk) quoting your name and postcode

## Officers for 2007/08 (and until the A.G.M.)

Chairman: Tony McCann  
 Vice Chairman: Brian Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, L25 4SL (722 6368)  
 Hon.Secretary: *Post vacant*  
 Hon.Treasurer: Mrs Eryl Chitty  
 Membership Sec.: Mrs Rosemary Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, L25 4SL (722 6368)  
 Environment Sec.  
 & Newsletter Editor: Mike Chitty, 16 Chartmount Way, L25 5LB (428 7801)

## Membership Subscriptions

Household £4 Single pensioner £3 Company, etc. £6

You may pay for up to three years in advance, if you wish, at these annual rates.

## IF YOU ARE ALREADY A MEMBER

please check your address label, which indicates the date to which you are 'paid up'.  
If (and ONLY if) the date reads 31/10/08, then your membership is in need of renewal. Please send your subscription, as soon as possible, to the Membership Secretary (see below).

## Not a member? Want to join us?

If you wish to join the Society - or to renew - please send the appropriate subscription to the Membership Secretary, Mrs Rosemary Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, Liverpool L25 4SL: cheques payable to 'The Gateacre Society'.



# The Gateacre Society

Registered with the Civic Trust and as a Charity

## NEWSLETTER - January 2009

*Our next meeting:*

**Sunday 15th February  
in Gateacre Chapel  
Gateacre Brow, Liverpool L25**

The Annual General Meeting of the Gateacre Society will take place at 2 pm, followed immediately by

## SEFTON PARK AND ITS 'MAGICAL' PALM HOUSE



**An illustrated talk by Dianne Cox**

Dianne is a Merseyside and North West Blue Badge Tourist Guide who often includes visits to the Palm House as part of guided tours of Liverpool - and who also speaks to groups on pre-arranged visits to the Palm House. Now beautifully restored to its original Victorian glory, the Palm House is truly a 'phoenix that has risen from the ashes'. However its story cannot be told without that of Liverpool's Sefton Park! Dianne will talk about both the park and the Palm House and their place in Liverpool's history. The demise of the Palm House in recent years and its present day renaissance brings the story full circle.

## ALL WELCOME - ADMISSION FREE

Please note that we shall be holding a SHORT A.G.M., immediately prior to Dianne's talk, in order to approve the Annual Accounts, make Constitutional Amendments as set out in the October 2008 Newsletter, and Elect a Committee for the current year.

Members are asked to arrive promptly, so that we can start and finish the A.G.M. as quickly as possible. Our Constitution requires us to give members 28 days notice of such meetings, hence the early appearance of this Newsletter.

## FORT PERCH ROCK

A review of our November talk - by *Mary Champion*

On Tuesday 4th November 2008 we had a talk from Derek Arnold about the Fort Perch Rock at New Brighton. Derek's talk gave us facts about the Fort, interspersed with anecdotes and lots of funny stories.

The Romans, while in Britain, set up two trade routes to Ireland, one via Chester and one via Liverpool. Eventually this led to Irish people coming east to Liverpool and the Vikings to the Wirral. In Henry VIII's time, salt and coal were shipped to Ireland from Liverpool.

In the 1700s we were embroiled in the Seven Years War against the French. There was piracy against French vessels and their cargo was seized and taken to Liverpool which became a target of the French as a result. Their ships would come to the Bar; therefore some form of defence was needed on the river. Five lots of fortifications were built between the town and Formby.

The Black Rocks - at the end of the Wirral Peninsula - were a hazard to shipping at the entrance to the Mersey. Bonfires were lit there, and a wooden marker 'perch' was built on what became known as Perch Rock. A heart-shaped castle was also planned there by a Colonel Pilkington of the Royal Engineers.

Napoleon wanted to conquer the world, but was defeated by Wellington at Waterloo and by Nelson at Trafalgar. Captain John Kitson was asked to look into the defences which Pilkington had started but not finished. In 1829 a flat base was created for the Fort. It was suggested that a lighthouse should also be built, and the Eddystone Lighthouse plans were borrowed. The lighthouse was 63 ft high and could be seen from 13 miles out to sea.

Eventually veterans were housed in the Fort, but it became outdated and the veterans moved out. The Fort was offered to Liverpool Corporation, who declined the offer. Instead it was bought by a businessman, and then in 1951 by an architect who kept the lighthouse and sold the rest to a local man who lived there. Exhibitions are held there and it is open to the public.

## FORTHCOMING BOOKS:

We have been told by the publishers that our long-awaited book - which is to be entitled 'Gateacre and Belle Vale in Old Photographs' - is scheduled for release in September 2009. We are very grateful to all those members and friends who, in response to previous appeals, have allowed us to borrow, copy and use their postcards and other pictures of Gateacre people and places. We have to supply the publishers with all the material by the end of March, and Beryl Plent is currently hard at work preparing the captions. If you have - or know of - any further photographs which you feel are of particular interest, please let Beryl know (phone 428 5379) as soon as possible.

We have also been contacted by the author of a new book, to be published in 2010, about the history of the Irish National Stud. This will include a biography of William Hall Walker - of Gateacre Grange - who bred his racehorses in Tully, County Kildare, and in 1916 presented his Stud to the (then British) government. The significance of 2010 is that it marks the centenary of Walker's Japanese Garden - nowadays open to the public as part of the Irish National Stud Museum - which is regarded as one of the finest in Europe. The whole Walker story is a fascinating one - he had horoscopes prepared at the birth of each foal, and only retained those whose prospects were deemed favourable - and we shall be supplying the author with information and contacts to ensure that the Gateacre connection is not overlooked.

## YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

We were unable to hold the Society's 34th Annual General Meeting in October because only 16 paid-up members were in attendance; the quorum being 20. Those who did come - some of them from many miles away - greatly enjoyed Beryl Plent's presentation of old Gateacre photographs (and the refreshments!) but it was disappointing that we were unable to formally approve the Society's Accounts or to elect a new Committee. Although the existing Committee has continued to meet and to plan future events, it is obviously important that they be given a proper mandate from the membership - and ideally that we find some 'new blood' to help with the various administrative jobs that need to be carried out. We very much hope that as many members as possible will attend the re-scheduled A.G.M. on 15th February. This meeting - which will take place at 2 pm, immediately prior to Dianne Cox's talk (see front page) - is open to prospective as well as current members of the Society. So if you know anyone - perhaps new to the area - with an interest in what we do, or an opinion on what we should be doing, please encourage them to come along and find out more.

## PLANNING NEWS

We were concerned to hear of two recent planning applications affecting WALNUT COTTAGE, 30 Sandfield Road. Although not a listed building, we have always thought that this is one of the most attractive houses in Gateacre - and that, along with its neighbours, it contributes very much to the character of the Gateacre Village Conservation Area. The first application (ref.08T/2518) proposes pruning of trees within the garden, including 'crown lifting' of the very distinctive walnut tree which gives the cottage its name. The second application (ref.08H/2885) proposes the insertion of UPVC replacement windows and a UPVC door. We have been notified by the Planning Department that, despite our objection, permission has been granted for the work to the walnut tree (though not for crown lifting of the nearby sessile oak tree). A decision on the windows/door application is still awaited.

**Advance Notice:**  
**THE IRISH IN AMERICA**  
A talk by Mike Murphy on Tuesday 17th March, at 7.30 pm in Gateacre Chapel. More details in our next Newsletter!

## LEAVES LEFT AGAIN



In last February's Newsletter we reported on the problem of uncollected leaves and litter on various pavements and passageways in Gateacre. This autumn, the same thing happened once again. It is not surprising that large deciduous trees shed lots of leaves in a short space of time; but it seems that the City Council and their contractors are unaware of the existence of such trees alongside some of our busiest pedestrian thoroughfares (Gateacre Brow and Belle Vale Road being the most glaring examples). And if the leaves are not cleared promptly, they turn into a wet, slippery mulch which is hazardous to people walking to and from local bus stops, shops and surgeries. Despite having been reported to the Council in October/November, it was 23rd December before the pavements complained about were properly cleansed. We are still awaiting an explanation of what went wrong.