

# 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 2008/09

- Chairman: Brian Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, L25 4SL (722 6368)  
Hon.Secretary: Bill Blundell, 6 Sussex Gardens, Ty Gwyn, Wrexham LL11 2YB  
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)  
Sales Officer: George Mason, 83 Grange Lane, L25 4SA  
Local History Sec.: Beryl Plent, 27 Grange Lane, L25 4RZ (428 5379)

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

If you are already a member, your address label indicates the date (e.g. 31/10/09) when your subscription is due for renewal.

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# The Gateacre Society

Registered with the Civic Trust and as a Charity

## NEWSLETTER - May 2009

Our next meeting:

Tuesday 2nd June, 7.30 pm  
in Gateacre Chapel,  
Gateacre Brow, L25

## A PADDLE IN THE POOL OF LIFE

The story of Liverpool with  
caricatures and music

A multi-media presentation by

John Minnion



John Minnion is the author and illustrator of 'Pool of Life', published last year, which tells the Liverpool story by means of caricatures and biographies of 150 individuals whose lives and work have influenced the city. This presentation uses caricatures and music to connect up Liverpool's remarkable personalities in an entertaining and informative way. From King John to John Lennon, from William Roscoe to Bessie Braddock, from Doctor Duncan to Dixie Dean - it's an all-star cast!

John Minnion worked in London as a newspaper and magazine illustrator throughout the 1980s and 90s. But in 2002 he gave that up, moved to Liverpool, and started Checkmate Books in order to produce books of his illustrations. His current project 'Where there is Discord' revisits the Thatcher years, a period in which he served as the New Statesman's political caricaturist.

Please note that John will have copies of 'Pool of Life' for sale at £13 (£2 off!), as well as some of his other books. He'll also be very happy to sign copies.

Admission free of charge - ALL WELCOME - Donations invited

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## THE IRISH IN AMERICA

A review of our March talk - by Mary Champion

On St Patrick's Day, Tuesday 17th March, Mike Murphy gave a talk to the Gateacre Society on the Irish in America. He is a former Head of History at Francis Xavier School and part-time lecturer at the University of Liverpool.

In the 16th century Ireland and the British mainland were in disharmony - Protestant England and Catholic Ireland. The north and south of Ireland were also in conflict: Scottish Protestants had settled in Ulster and the Catholics, mostly tenant farmers, were penalised by harsh laws and had no rights. The Northern Irish immigrants were, however, also subject to discrimination: they were mostly Presbyterian, and many of them went to the New World. By the late 17th century there was already quite a large Catholic presence in America. In the 18th century more Catholics went over, and also Irish Protestants some of whom became prosperous farmers and plantation owners.

In 1843 there were riots in Philadelphia because of fears of increased Catholic immigration. In 1845 and 1846 the Irish potato crop failed, and over the next few years hundreds of thousands of people died. Many of the poor Irish came to Liverpool and sailed on, in appalling conditions, to the New World: mainly to Boston and New York. The Catholics had few skills to offer and settled in places like New York's Lower East Side, New York - where Gaelic speakers were packed into squalid rooms and population densities reached 300,000 per square mile.

One child in four didn't live beyond infancy. Many priests went and ministered to the people and set up welfare organisations. Corruption was widespread in local government. Tammany Hall, the New York City headquarters of the Democratic Party, became involved with dishonestly giving jobs to Irish immigrants. Boston was also corrupt - and little was done to improve the living conditions of the poor.

Eventually, however, Irish Catholics in America forged ahead. In the cities they became a force to be reckoned with. Teddy Roosevelt did not approve of the distinction between Americans and 'Irish-Americans', but in the cinema in the 1920s, 30s and 40s, films showed Irish-Americans as they liked to see themselves.

The Irish also became State Governors, and stood for Congress. To this day they remain a force in American politics. Altogether this was a most interesting talk, and full of facts.

## THE CIVIC TRUST IN TROUBLE

In mid-April we received the shock news that the Civic Trust - the national body to which we and other civic societies are affiliated - has gone into administration. The Trust's financial problems apparently came to a head when key contracts - in particular the administration of the Green Flag Awards scheme - were lost and the flow of business sponsorship dried up. With an office in Liverpool as well as in London, the Civic Trust has been helpful to us in a number of ways over the past 35 years, and we hope that a new organisation will take its place before too long.

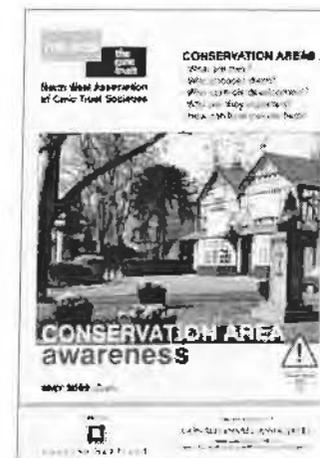
## FRIENDS OF GATEACRE NEWS

The Friends of Gateacre are about to embark on a new season of planting, ready for North West in Bloom 2009. They have been meeting monthly throughout the winter and spring, and held a Community Spring Clean on 25th April. This was followed on 1st May by a walkabout with Neighbourhood Management officers from the City Council, discussing some of the problems which both we and the Friends are concerned about: dilapidated street furniture, the weed-infested forecourt of the Black Bull, and the outbreak of 'fence graffiti' which is currently disfiguring several of our local passageways. **The Friends' A.G.M. takes place on Wednesday 27th May in the Gateacre Institute, Grange Lane, starting at 7.15 p.m. All interested residents of Gateacre are welcome to attend.**

## CONSERVATION AREA AWARENESS

The North West Association of Civic Trust Societies (nw.acts) is about to issue a colourful booklet publicising the region's Conservation Areas and explaining what designation as a Conservation Area actually means. We are delighted to report that - out of the 800+ Conservation Areas which exist in the North West of England, it was Gateacre Village which was selected to appear on the front cover!

Along with over 20 other civic societies, we were represented at a meeting in Preston on 6th May, when the draft booklet was launched. Various speakers emphasised the importance of carrying out Conservation Area Character Appraisals - identifying the key features (both positive and negative) of each area - to provide an effective basis for development control by the local planning authority. One of these speakers was Steve Corbett of Liverpool City Council, who agreed to revive the discussions we had in 2007 with a view to producing a character appraisal and advisory leaflet for Gateacre Village.



## GATEACRE PARK DRIVE SHOPS - REVISED PLANS

In March we were notified that a new planning application (ref. 09O/0322) has been submitted by the owners of the Gateacre Park Drive shopping precinct. They already have outline planning permission - granted in June 2007 - to demolish the existing buildings and replace them with a new centre, but the current application proposes a modified layout, with Aldi and Tesco Express as the main stores separated by a row of smaller shop units.

We have written to the Planning Department welcoming the proposed redevelopment, but criticising the plan to seal off the pedestrian access from Hathaway Close. While recognising that this closure was requested by local residents concerned about criminal activity and anti-social behaviour, we feel that the provision of gates - open only during daytime hours - would greatly reduce the problem. In our view a shopping centre which can only be accessed from Gateacre Park Drive cannot truly be described as a 'neighbourhood' centre, as many of its potential customers will be inconvenienced and encouraged to shop by car rather than on foot.