

# THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Founded 1974. Charity Registration No.508024.

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

## DO YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS?

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

## Officers for 2009/10

Chairman:	Brian Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, L25 4SL (722 6368)
Vice Chairman & Local History Sec.:	Mrs Beryl Plent, 27 Grange Lane, L25 4RZ (428 5379)
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

## 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. 31/10/10) when your next subscription payment is due.

## IS YOUR SUBSCRIPTION DUE FOR RENEWAL?

We are pleased to report that 90% of our members are now paid-up for the current year. **IF THE DATE PRINTED ON YOUR ADDRESS LABEL READS 31/10/09**, please send your subscription to Rosemary Doman as soon as possible.

## Our Book - Gateacre & Belle Vale: in old photographs -

was published by The History Press in October 2009 and is available, price £12.99, at Grange Lane Stores. Copies are also on sale at our meetings, and via our website - or contact Beryl Plent for further details.

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# The Gateacre Society

Guarding the Past, Safeguarding the Future

## NEWSLETTER - February 2010



## PAINTERS OF POETRY

An illustrated talk by  
Beryl Plent  
on Sunday 14th  
February, 2 pm, in  
Gateacre Chapel,  
Gateacre Brow, L25

Joseph M W Turner was the most important early Victorian artist, whose works were the mainstay of the Royal Academy exhibitions in London. By 1848 he was seventy-three and considered past his best. Who was there to take his place?

Three enthusiastic and ambitious young men, John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who had all studied at the Royal Academy, decided they would show their old masters what they were capable of. Inspired by early Renaissance art, Shakespeare and poets such as Keats and Tennyson, they formed a 'Brotherhood' which they named 'Pre-Raphaelite'. Their new style would follow the doctrine of John Ruskin, the most eminent art critic of the day, which was 'Go to nature in all singleness of heart, selecting nothing, rejecting nothing'. Young and headstrong, they went so far as to re-christen Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first President of the Academy 'Sir Sloushua'!

Although the brotherhood did not last very long, its impact and influence altered the nature of English art for the next fifty years. The founder members, Millais, Hunt and Rossetti became accomplished artists whose works differed in style and content. Their paintings received public acclaim and commanded high prices, which the new merchant princes from cities such as Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool were only too eager to pay.

In the last fifty years there has been a revival of interest in Pre-Raphaelite paintings and we are fortunate that many examples can be viewed and enjoyed at local galleries on Merseyside.

**ALL WELCOME - Admission Free - Donations invited**

## LOST TREASURE

A review of our November talk - by Beryl Plent

On November 9th 2009 we learnt from Don Allerston of the vast number of shipwrecks scattered on ocean beds around the world, still waiting to be found. Of the 15,600 Spanish ships which travelled to South America, over a period of 300 years, more than 10,000 were sunk! Gold neck chains were used by the natives as money - to barter for goods - and Christopher Columbus sent home at least one ship a week with gold and jewels aboard. Jesuit priests made written records of the cargoes, as the Spanish king and the Catholic church each received 20% of the treasure. This led to melted-down nuggets of gold being hidden in the barrels of tar kept on deck, so passing unnoticed. It was after Cortez got greedy and killed the king that gold started to be made into bars.

It was intriguing to handle a 'piece of eight', knowing it was literally one eighth of a silver coin. Sailors would cut them up, despite the risk of violent punishment if they were caught carrying scissors or clippers. Sir Francis Drake was one Englishman who profited from his exploits at sea, owning a London house as well as a 200 square mile estate on the coast.

In 1859 the steam ship 'Royal Charter' foundered off Anglesey, with the loss of 450 passengers and the sovereigns aboard. Lord Kitchener lost his life when the cruiser 'Hampshire', en route for Russia, was torpedoed on 5th June 1916. This is one of many ships which serve as memorial wrecks - the most famous being the liner 'Titanic'. The bell salvaged from the frigate 'Lutine' is rung at Lloyds of London every time a ship is sunk. Jacques Cousteau's invention and use of the aqualung, in the 1950s, made underwater exploration easier and today divers are often sponsored by TV or film companies. There is an archaeological survey planned for an early 'HMS Victory', which sank in the English Channel. Roland Morris, now the owner of a large restaurant 'The Admiral Benbow' in Penzance, has tales to tell of his finding of 'The Association', wrecked in the Scilly Isles.

The delights of metal detecting were discussed, with a reminder that portable antiquities (small finds) would only belong to the finder if worth under £100. Valuable articles are now Government property, under the title 'Treasure Trove'.

## BELLE VALE PREFAB PROJECT - AN UPDATE

The Belle Vale Prefab Project was created in 2005 to celebrate and record the lives of the people who lived in a remarkable community after the Second World War. The Project's first book *Prefab Days* (2006) contained many contributions from the 'prefabbers' themselves, who explained just what was so special about their unique community. There were lots of photos as well, and its publication found the Project many new members. Although *Prefab Days* has now sold out, it can be borrowed from any Liverpool library. A second book, *More Prefab Days*, was published in 2008. It is on sale at Belle Vale Post Office, price £10. There is also a 2010 Calendar available for £4.

The last of the 1,157 'temporary' prefabs were finally demolished at the end of the 1960s, but the memories live on! The Project meets for a social get-together (usually there are between 20 to 30 people present) at 7pm in Lee Valley Millennium Centre, on the last Thursday evening of every month, and new members are always very welcome to attend. Besides these regular monthly events, there are outings and parties, and there are plans for a celebration and thanksgiving to be held in the spring.

### THE BIG HISTORY WEEKEND 20th-21st March 2010

We shall once again be taking part in the event, at St George's Hall, organised by Radio Merseyside. We shall be sharing a display and exhibition table with our friends the Wavertree Society, and members of our Committee will be 'on duty' there on Sunday 21st March.

Please come along and see us!

## TONY McCANN (1933-2009)

We were saddened to learn of the death of our former Chairman, Mr Tony McCann, on New Year's Eve. Tony was Chairman of the Gateacre Society for 28 years until he retired owing to ill health in February 2009. At his Requiem Mass at St Mary's Catholic Church, Woolton, he was described as a 'larger than life character' with a sense of humour that persisted until the very end. Members of the Society who have attended any of the meetings over which he presided will recognise this description, as do Committee members who were in touch with Tony during his long period of illness.

Tony McCann was also the Headteacher of Our Lady of the Assumption Primary School, Belle Vale, for many years, an active member of his trade union, and an adviser to the Archdiocese of Liverpool on educational matters. As a teacher he was much loved and respected by his pupils, not least Terry Leahy (now Sir Terry, Chief Executive of Tesco plc) who was brought up on the Belle Vale prefab estate. In a Liverpool Echo article in 2003, Sir Terry was quoted as saying: "Tony was perhaps the outstanding example of the many dedicated teachers who ... pointed me in the right direction. Tony had a natural authority and gift for teaching that made it easy to listen ... he made connections to the big wide world beyond the council estate and broadened my horizons".

Our condolences go to Tony's widow Marguerite and to the rest of his family. Donations to the Marie Curie Hospice in Woolton are invited in his memory, and in tribute to the care given to him during his final weeks.



Above: Tony McCann in his teaching days at Belle Vale. (A photo from the Belle Vale Prefab Project 2010 Calendar).

Below: Tony McCann, as Chairman of the Gateacre Society, shows the Lord Mayor of Liverpool the newly-refurbished bust of Queen Victoria, 1980. (Reproduced from Gateacre & Belle Vale: in old photographs).



## GATEACRE 'BEST SMALL VILLAGE' IN THE NORTH WEST

Our congratulations go to the Friends of Gateacre who were awarded a Silver Gilt medal by the North West in Bloom judges in October 2009. This was in recognition of the floral displays and planting organised during the summer of 2009, and the way in which the Friends had worked in partnership with others (notably Gateacre Comprehensive School, who have created allotments maintained by the pupils, and the Gateacre Society, who provided the heritage lectern on the Green) to establish a high level of 'community participation' within the village. The Friends meet monthly, at the Gateacre Institute, to discuss future planting, clean-ups and fund-raising activities; for details visit our website or phone Terri Holcroft on 421 0329.