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## 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.

### 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.



# The Gateacre Society

Guarding the Past - Safeguarding the Future

## NEWSLETTER - April 2010

### Our next meeting:



## THE CHARACTERS, CURIOSITIES AND ECCENTRICS OF LIVERPOOL

An illustrated talk by Ken Pye on Monday 26th April, 7.30pm, in Gateacre Chapel, Gateacre Brow, L25

In his talk, local author and broadcaster Ken Pye will tell tales of some of the lesser-known, but certainly entertaining, aspects of Liverpool life during the past 200 years. He will tell of Rat's Castle, Blondin and the Lion, Dr Solomon's Cure-All, the Sanctuary Stone, the 'lost' Castle moat, Pogo the 'Man Monkey', Liverpool's own 'King Kong' ... and much, much more.

In fact, Ken takes his lead from his audience, inviting them to choose tales from his extensive 'menu' of tasty topics! "I'm like Ken Dodd", says Ken, "only better looking! But you do need a hook to get me off the stage, once I get started!"

Admission Free - Donations invited

### Other local events this month:

**Friday 16th April**  
Friends of Gateacre  
**QUIZ NIGHT** at the Gateacre Institute  
£5 on the door, 7pm

**Saturday 17th April**  
Friends of Gateacre  
**CLEAN-UP DAY**  
10am-1pm  
Meet on the Village Green

**Sunday 25th April**  
Gateacre Chapel  
**SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING**  
11am

**ALL ARE WELCOME** to participate in any of these activities. Former Belle Vale Prefab residents are especially invited to the Chapel service, which will be followed by refreshments for everybody.

For further details of the Friends of Gateacre events please contact Terri Holcroft (421 0329) or Ernie Hodgkinson (428 3044).

## PAINTERS OF POETRY

A review of our February talk - by Mike Chitty

Beryl Plent's copiously-illustrated talk on 14th February was about the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, many of whose works are to be seen in our local art galleries. Her title was a reference to a disparaging remark by R A Stevenson - one-time Professor of Fine Art at Liverpool University - who described the Pre-Raphaelites' paintings as 'poetry for the middle class'. Beryl told us of the artists' struggle to gain acceptance within the 'establishment' of the day, but her pictures and commentary reminded us of the reasons why their style became so fashionable in the late nineteenth century and has enjoyed a revival of popularity in recent years.

Unlike earlier painters such as Turner - whose expertise was in capturing 'atmosphere' - the Pre-Raphaelites painted in photographic detail. They followed John Ruskin's advice to 'paint what you see, not what you imagine' but they often inserted the resultant portraits and figures into elaborate re-creations of historical or mythical scenes. Beryl told us some of the stories which were depicted, explained some of the symbolism used, and pointed out hidden details such as the initials PRB carved into a chair leg! The subjects were often 'moral tales' which appealed to Victorian sentiment: for example *The Hireling Shepherd* depicting a man too easily distracted by young women.

The realism and everyday nature of some of the scenes brought criticism. Charles Dickens, for one, disliked the depiction of Mary ('looking like a woman from the lowest gin shop') in Millais' painting *Christ in the House of his Parents*. However they were popular with collectors, including wealthy Merseyside businessmen such as the soap manufacturer William Hesketh Lever and the shipowner George Holt. Some of them also became the subject of mass-produced prints and even (e.g. in the case of *Bubbles*) advertising material.

Beryl took us through the members of the Brotherhood - Millais, Rossetti, Holman Hunt and the rest - and their models/wives/mistresses including Elizabeth Siddal, Effie Gray and Jane Morris. Her anecdotes revealed that the 'realism' of the paintings was sometimes deceptive; for instance the two figures in *The Black Brunswicker* - a painting in the Lady Lever Art Gallery depicting a soldier saying farewell to a young woman before leaving for Waterloo - had been required to pose separately. And Rossetti tended to give his female subjects red hair, irrespective of their natural colouring.

Beryl explained how fortunate we are to have such ready access to Pre-Raphaelite works. In thanking her on behalf of the appreciative audience, our Chairman said that Beryl's talk would undoubtedly inspire people to visit (or re-visit) the Walker Art Gallery, the Lady Lever and Sudley House. In response, Beryl offered to lead a tour of the Walker on 7th March, and this offer was promptly taken up by several of those present.

### MARY ROSE SILCOCK

We were very sorry to hear of the death of our long-standing member Mrs Silcock on 23rd February. Mary Rose held fundraising events on behalf of the Society in the 1980s, and was also a stalwart member of our team of Newsletter deliverers. Our condolences go to her family.

## A NEW LIFE FOR GATEACRE CHAPEL HALL

Gateacre Chapel Hall in Sandfield Road was built in 1897 to house the Sunday School of the Unitarian Chapel, and served as a venue for community events (including our own meetings) for many years. In 2009 the Chapel trustees decided to sell the building, and it was auctioned off last September. Now the new owners - Silvano & Doran Developments - have submitted a planning application (ref.10F/0581) to turn it into two dwellings, accessed from Dale Mews.

If planning permission is granted, the interior of the building will be transformed, the roof space being utilised and dormer windows being inserted to provide 4 bedrooms for each of the dwellings. The applicant's declared aim, however, is to preserve the external character of the building and its Victorian architectural details. Parking spaces for four cars will be created, behind gates, off Dale Mews, the gate piers being relocated from the existing pedestrian access in Sandfield Road where the sandstone wall will be extended to fill the gap. Any comments on the planning application should be sent to Ms Sheridan Scott, Development Control Division, Liverpool City Council, Municipal Buildings, Dale Street, Liverpool L2 2DH. (The official deadline for comments is 16th April; phone 0151 233 3021 for further information).

## GATEACRE IN BLOOM 2010

The Friends of Gateacre - winners of the 'Best Small Village' award in North West in Bloom 2009 - have reluctantly decided not to take part in the event this year. But this does not mean that Gateacre will not be blooming! Instead of concentrating their limited resources on preparing for a summer 'judgement day', the small band of volunteers who comprise the Friends will be aiming to bring colour to the village throughout the year.

The spring planting has already begun, and the first of this year's Clean-up events has been organised. Anyone who would like to help is invited to contact Terri Holcroft on 421 0329 and to attend the Friends' A.G.M. at the Gateacre Institute, Grange Lane, at 7.15pm on Wednesday 19th May.

## A 'CIVIC VOICE' IS BORN

As reported in our May 2009 Newsletter, the Civic Trust - the national charity with which the Gateacre Society had long been associated - went into administration a year ago. The steps being taken to create a new national body, to represent and assist local civic societies such as ours, were discussed at our A.G.M. in October. That new body is being launched on 17th April, and the name chosen is 'Civic Voice'.

The Society's Committee has decided to join Civic Voice, at least for its first year of operation, in order to give the new organisation a chance to become established and demonstrate what it can do for us. The cost for this first year is £1.50 per Society member (which is being met out of our accumulated funds, including the substantial book sales income of the past few months) but next year - if we decide to continue our membership - this will rise to £2 per head. There will be some specific benefits to Gateacre Society members - for example each member will be entitled to receive a free one-day admission pass to any National Trust property of their choice - details of which will be circulated in due course.