

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Founded 1974. Registered Charity No.508024.

A member of Civic Voice, the British Association for Local History
and the Liverpool Cultural Heritage Forum

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Officers for 2011/12

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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. 31/10/12) when your next subscription payment is due.

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 quoting your name and postcode

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The Gateacre Society

Guarding the Past Safeguarding the Future

NEWSLETTER - January 2012

Our next meeting:

THE CAST IRON CHURCH St Michael-in-the-Hamlet

A talk by
Alan Matthews
on Sunday
29th January
at 2pm
in Gateacre
Chapel,
Gateacre
Brow,
L25 3PB



The church of St Michael-in-the-Hamlet, Aigburth, was built in 1814-15 by John Cragg, the proprietor of the Mersey Iron Foundry. Designed by the architect Thomas Rickman, the church had a cast iron frame, cast iron 'gothic' windows and cast iron finials (painted to look like sandstone) on top of the brick tower. Cragg lived close by and his house - part of the new 'hamlet' which he had created - also incorporated cast iron features.

Alan Matthews is a former St Michael's churchwarden who now looks after the archives of the church, and has written the official guide book.

ALL ARE WELCOME to attend.
Admission free of charge
(Donations invited)

JOAN GADD 1931-2011

We were saddened to learn of the death of Joan Gadd, just before Christmas. Joan and her husband Harold were elected Joint Honorary Secretaries of the Gateacre Society in 1987, and Joan continued as Hon.Secretary after Harold's death five years later.

From 1997 onwards Joan was the Society's Social Secretary, responsible for arranging a memorable series of talks - and A.G.M. refreshments. She was again persuaded to take up the reins as Hon.Secretary in 2002 until finally, four years later, her ill-health forced her to stand down from the Committee. Even after that, though, Joan managed to summon up the energy to help out at our sales tables in Belle Vale and elsewhere.

Brought up in Huyton, Joan spent much of her working life in city centre retailing, but in retirement she worked hard for her adopted Gateacre. In more than one sense, Joan was a 'fighter'. She had been battling cancer for many, many years, and donations in her memory will be welcomed by Marie Curie Cancer Care. We shall miss her.

SUGAR

A review of our September talk - by Rosemary Doman

Ron Noon visited us on 19th September. It was an impassioned talk, which highlighted the true cost of what our speaker called a 'legal drug', refined sugar.

Classical historian Pliny called sugar cane the Persian reed, 'that makes sugar without the intervention of bees'. However, the story of sugar is bittersweet. The Tate & Lyle sugar refinery was founded in Liverpool by Henry Tate, from Chorley. Having sold sugar in his grocer's shops from 1839, he set up in Love Lane in 1872. The Love Lane refinery was closed on 22nd January 1981, after a ten year struggle to keep it open led by two workers, Albert E. Sloane and John McClean. Today, Tate & Lyle has divested itself of all its sugar business interests. This is a long way downhill from the days of 'Mr Cube', a campaign launched in 1949. The refinery's closure marked a key point in Liverpool's overall sense of decline, Margaret Thatcher's government having resisted pressure to consider its disastrous impact on the mainly elderly work force and more widely on employment and poverty. Today a memorial plaque to Henry Tate in Hamilton Street, Birkenhead, and the Love Lane Project recording the workers' lives, undertaken by two local primary schools, serve as reminders of its former importance.

The growth of the sugar industry in the UK tells the tale of great wealth spawned by this initially luxury product. Feasted on and feted by the rich in the 17th century, it became a staple of all by 1900, supplying almost a fifth of daily calories. This 'white gold' helped transform Liverpool from little more than a sleepy fishing village to the epicentre of the business world. By the 19th century it was a city of millionaires, like John Moss, a plantation owner, and Henry Tate himself, the equivalent of Rockefeller, financing Liverpool University among other philanthropic ventures. Our fine buildings, not least the Waterfront Graces, witness to this affluence.

However, Ron went on to show that 'capitalism's favoured child' has its bitter side. Ever since Christopher Columbus transferred sugar cane to the New World, the trade has been blighted by its dependence on slavery. The sugar trade was hugely influential in politics, for example shaping the Treaty of Paris after the Seven Years War, so that Britain took Canada instead of Guadeloupe, to avoid competition with the West Indies plantations. In this 21st century sugar is largely responsible for our current Western obesity and the prevalence of type 2 diabetes in children. It is not a 'natural' food but an industrial product, which distorts our taste for other forms of sugar on which for many millennia we depended.

PREFABS CALENDAR AVAILABLE

The Belle Vale Prefab Project has published a Calendar for 2012 featuring another selection of photographs from its collection. Copies - as well as copies of the Project's two books *Prefab Days* and *More Prefab Days* - are available from the Project (tel. 07570 832294 or 0151-421 0376 for details) or from the Post Office in Belle Vale Road.

GATEACRE COMP DEMOLITION

A planning application (11PM/2776) has been submitted to demolish all buildings on the site of the former Gateacre Comprehensive School, Grange Lane. Our response was an email to the Council's planning department expressing regret that it is taking so long for the long-term future of the site to be determined, emphasising the importance of retaining its Green Space character following redevelopment, and asking for restrictions to be imposed on noise, dust and vehicle movements during demolition so as to safeguard the interests of local residents.

The official deadline for comments was 26th December, and permission was granted on 16th January. It is anticipated that the demolition work will take place between February and July 2012.

PLANNING APPEAL SUBMITTED

Vodafone Ltd are appealing against the City Council's refusal of planning permission for a phone mast off Lower Sandfield (projecting through the roof of the so-called 'Gateacre Brewery Shed' - see our last two Newsletters). Previous objection letters, etc., will be taken into account by the Planning Inspector; the deadline for any further comments is 30th January.

CLEAN-UP DAY

The Friends of Gateacre are planning another Clean-up Day on **Saturday 11th February, 10am-12.30**, in preparation for Gateacre in Bloom 2012. Volunteers welcome. For further details phone 0151 428 3044.

THE FOLKS WHO LIVED ON THE HILL

A review of our November talk - by Anna Alexander

On 20th November, the Gateacre Society was pleased to welcome back Beryl Plent. This time we heard about the people who lived in some of the big houses in and around Acrefield Road; and what a celebrated group they were.

Henry Tate lived in 'Highfield'. Born in Chorley in 1819, he started a career as a grocer in Liverpool, eventually owning six shops. Approaching 40 he moved into the sugar business. With two sons as partners, he built Love Lane refinery, which opened in 1872. A Unitarian, he attended Gateacre Chapel and donated the Good Samaritan window to the chapel. Beryl showed us a photograph of the illuminated scroll which marked his inauguration as a Freeman of the City of Liverpool. Henry went on to build a sugar refinery in London and used his great wealth to build the National Gallery of British Art, 'The Tate'. A true philanthropist, he gave away much of his wealth. Bequests to Manchester College at Oxford University were to encourage the teaching of Unitarianism. Retired at 77, he died age 80 in 1899. Sir Henry Tate had moved to London in the 1880s but his son, William Henry, lived at Highfield until the 1920s, then the house became the Liverpool Babies Hospital.

'Aymestrey Court' was the home of Colonel H.J. Robinson who married Tate's daughter Agnes. He commanded the 6th Lancashire regiment and died in 1906. Subsequently the house was a special school, then the Redbourne Hotel. It is now a private house once again. Henry H. Bardswell, president of the Liverpool Cotton Exchange and well-known cricketer, lived at 1 Woolton Mount. His daughter married a member of the Walker family. We viewed a photograph of Sir Andrew Barclay Walker, in mayoral robes for he was twice Mayor of Liverpool. Moving to Gateacre in the 1860s he rebuilt 'Gateacre Grange', Rose Brow, in 1867-69. The Walker Art Gallery, his gift to the city, opened in 1877. Sir Andrew, head of the well-known brewing firm, died in 1893 and is buried at Childwall church. His son William Hall Walker kept polo ponies at Gateacre Grange and a stud farm in Ireland. In 1896, age 39, he married Sophie Sheridan, a descendant of the poet. To celebrate the marriage 2,500 guests were invited to Gateacre Grange, many being brewery employees.

'The Priory' on Woolton Hill Road was the residence of Sir Arthur Bower Forwood, merchant, shipowner, magistrate, Lord Mayor of Liverpool in 1877, MP for Ormskirk, and a secretary to the Admiralty - the only one to have ever lived outside London. A monument to him can be seen in St John's Gardens. Later, living at The Priory, was cotton broker Mr Paul E.J. Hemelryk consul to Japan in Liverpool who spoke five languages.

Thomas Rodick built No.4 Gateacre Brow (originally 'Kendal Cottage') in the early 1800s. A Unitarian, born in Kendal, he also had an estate in Arnside. His youngest daughter, Janet Preston Rodick, inherited all his property. She moved to the Nook and then to London on her marriage. The Thornely family moved into the house, renaming it 'Browside'. James Thornely was a solicitor as well as law clerk to the Little Woolton Local Board. He married Laura Roscoe, granddaughter of the famous William Roscoe. They moved up the hill to 'Baycliff', later the home of iron merchant George Rathbone, which now, as the residence of Liverpool's Anglican bishops, is known as 'Bishops Lodge'.

Thanks to Beryl for another fascinating talk.