

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Founded 1974. Registered Charity No.508024.
A member of the British Association for Local History, the
North West Association of Civic Trusts & Societies, and the
Liverpool Cultural Heritage Forum

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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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NEWSLETTER - May 2012

PERIODICALS



Our next meeting:

THE WALLED GARDEN OF NORTON PRIORY

Kathy Williams came to talk to us in 2006 about Norton Priory. She explained how the medieval priory became the site of a Georgian mansion, occupied by the Brooke family. Now she is returning to talk in detail about the Walled Garden which was created by the Brookes, and which has recently been restored as part of 'Runcorn's best kept secret'.

An illustrated talk by Kathy Williams on Monday 28th May, at 7.30 pm in Gateacre Chapel, Gateacre Brow L25 3PB

ALL WELCOME - Admission free of charge (Donations invited)

GATEACRE'S JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Tuesday 5th June, 2 pm - 4 pm
on the Village Green and around the village

The Friends of Gateacre have put together a programme of activities to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. On the Bank Holiday Tuesday, between 2 and 4 in the afternoon, there will be a variety of stalls and information tables on the Village Green - including one staffed by our own Society's Committee members - while on the Cricket Field in Belle Vale Road there will be craft stalls, games, a book stall, a plant sales table and other attractions (mainly in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support). The Woolton Social Club - a.k.a. the Conservative Club - will host a Tai Chi demonstration (2-2.30) and afternoon teas (2.30-4), and it is hoped that the Gateacre Institute will offer musical entertainment.

For further information look out for local publicity nearer the day.

A TALE OF TWO FAMILIES

A review of our March talk - by Anna Alexander

On 26th March Beryl Plent once again gave us the benefit of her knowledge of the families who lived in and around Gateacre, when she told us about Messrs Chapple Gill and Daniel James and their families. The men lived in their country estates on Woolton Hill, Gill in Lower Lee, and James in Beaconsfield, though sadly neither of these houses now exists.

Chapple Gill grew up in Gateacre, in Knotty Cross on Halewood Road. He was a Liverpool cotton broker who took over his father's firm. He married Catherine Smith Carey, daughter of Thomas Carey who built Lower Lee where their wedding took place in 1868, and we were shown a photograph of their wedding. Beryl also showed us a lithograph of Lower Lee from 1852. Another lithograph of the Lower Lee estate from the 1850s showed Garston's St Austin's church and Moel Famau in the distance. We were shown a photograph of Chapple Gill with his groom, and also the well-known James Tissot painting of Catherine Gill with her two children which now hangs in the Walker Art Gallery. A photograph of the drawing room of Lower Lee was followed by one of a sample of colourful, floral wallpaper which may have hung in the house.

Chapple Gill died in 1899 and his wife in 1916. Gill family members are buried by the lych-gate in the Unitarian churchyard, but Chapple Gill and his wife are buried in the Gill family vault.

Daniel James was a metal mining merchant who helped to found the Santa Fe railway in America, as part of Phelps, Dodge and Company. He moved to England with his wife and bought the Beaconsfield estate in 1867. Their son (also named Daniel) returned to New York to work in the firm after the death of his mother. Daniel James senior married for a second time and there were three sons from this marriage, one of whom (Frank) died in Africa after being trampled by an elephant.

Another son, William Dodge James, married the daughter of a Scottish baronet, who was a friend of Edward, Prince of Wales. Daniel James married for a third time to Ruth L. Dickinson from Cumbria. In 1885 William Dodge James paid for the building of Woolton Village Club as a gift. We were shown photographs of William Dodge James and his wife Evelyn Forbes, a society beauty and a good actress and mimic, excellent qualities to have when giving house parties. In 1896, William Dodge James moved to a 9,000 acre estate in West Dean, near Chichester in Sussex. Photographs of the interior of West Dean House were shown.

William Dodge James and his wife had four daughters, and finally a son Edward who wrote poetry and was a great patron of the arts, music and the ballet. In 1964 Edward gave his West Dean estate to the 'Edward James Foundation', which now runs it as a college housing one of the largest tapestry workshops in the world. He moved to Mexico towards the end of his life and built a concrete village, full of surreal statues, and a menagerie, selling much of his art collection to fund this. He died in 1984 aged 77.

Thanks to Beryl for another fascinating talk.

SIGNPOST UPDATE

Liverpool City Council has obtained a quote for the full refurbishment of the damaged 1897 signpost in Belle Vale Road (see last Newsletter). The total cost will be just under £3,600, of which £1,500 will be paid by the North West Gas Alliance. The Gateacre Society has offered £500, leaving £1,600 to be raised from other sources. We hope that, by the time of the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, the City Council will have decided on its own contribution. Meanwhile donations from individuals and local businesses towards the cost will be very welcome; the sooner the money is raised, the sooner the restoration work can begin.



GATEACRE COMP SITE LATEST

A press release from Sigma Inpartnership Ltd - who are partners with Liverpool City Council in a joint venture called 'Regeneration Liverpool' - states that the former site of Gateacre Comprehensive School "will be developed to accommodate around 200 new family homes". However, no planning application has yet been submitted, and the 'planning brief' which we were told would guide the redevelopment has not yet been produced. The previous Outline planning application - submitted in 2007 but never decided - was for only 114 dwellings, and we are puzzled to know how 200 can be accommodated, bearing in mind the land's designation as Green Space in the Liverpool U.D.P. and the fact that much of it is a potentially-contaminated landfill site, which was used for tipping in the early 1950s in order to (literally) create a level playing field for the school.

PHONE MAST AGAIN

A second attempt (application ref. 12PT/0732) has been made by Vodafone Ltd to obtain planning permission for a 'replica telegraph pole' mobile phone mast off Lower Sandfield. The proposal was once again to build a mast projecting through the metal roof adjacent to the Travis Perkins warehouse. We objected to the design of the mast, and suggested that other sites, further away from the Conservation Area, should be considered. Planning permission was refused by the City Council on 3rd May.

ST GABRIEL'S CONVENT

We have backed the Woolton Society and local residents in their objection to the creation of a 'care village' (planning application 12F/0196 & 12L/0197) within the grounds of Knolle Park, the listed building at the junction of Beaconsfield Road and Church Road. Beaconsfield Road forms the boundary of the Gateacre Society's area, and as members will know from recent talks we take a keen interest in its history and environment. In our letter of objection, we stated that "We have no objection in principle to the creation of a 'care village' within the grounds of Knolle Park. Such a development would, if sensitively designed and implemented, enable elderly people and their visitors to enjoy the amenities provided by the landscaped grounds. We feel, however, that the word 'village' is not an accurate description for the current proposal. The new buildings shown on the drawings are too tall, and their footprint occupies too much of the existing Green Space (particularly when the associated car parking areas are taken into account)."

The planning application was withdrawn on 9th May, which is presumably an indication that the proposal is to be re-thought and (hopefully) scaled down.

