

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Founded 1974. Registered Charity No.508024.
A member of the British Association for Local History
and the Merseyside Civic Society

Website: www.gatsoc.org.uk Email: info@gatsoc.org.uk

Executive Committee 2014/15

Brian Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, L25 4SL (722 6368) *Chairman*

Beryl Plent, 27 Grange Lane, L25 4RZ (428 5379) *Vice Chairman
& Local History Sec.*

Mike Chitty, 16 Chartmount Way, L25 5LB (428 7801) *Hon. Secretary,
Environment Sec. & Newsletter Editor*

Margaret Gofton *Hon. Treasurer*

David Phythian, 26 Primrose Road, L18 2HE *Membership Sec.*

Pam Ball, Flat 1 St Stephens Court, Halewood Road, L25 3PG (428 0500)
Sales Officer

Sandra Sandland *Assistant Sales Officer*

Eryl Chitty

Rosemary Doman

Membership Subscriptions

Household £4 Single pensioner £3 Company, etc. £6

If you wish to join the Society, please send the appropriate subscription to the Membership Secretary, David Phythian, 26 Primrose Road, Liverpool L18 2HE: cheques payable to 'The Gateacre Society'.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you are already a member, your address label indicates the date when your next subscription payment is due. **If (but only if) the date on your address label reads 31/10/15, please RETAIN THE ENVELOPE and use it to enclose your subscription (for 1, 2 or 3 years). Hand it in at our AGM or our November meeting, or send it (with a cheque payable to The Gateacre Society) to our Membership Secretary. Thank you for your co-operation.**

Our Book - Gateacre & Belle Vale: in old photographs - is on sale at our meetings and events, price **£10** (bookshop price £12.99).

Our Tea-towel is also available, price **£4**.

Visit our website - or contact Beryl Plent or Pam Ball for further details.

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



The Gateacre Society

Guarding the Past - Safeguarding the Future

NEWSLETTER - October 2015

Our next public meeting:

THE GORSEY COP

**An illustrated talk
by David Wilson**

**on Sunday 29th November
at 2.30pm in Gateacre Chapel
Gateacre Brow, L25 3PB**

*(Please note start time, which is
later than previously advertised)*



In the mid 19th Century, Liverpool's cotton trade was booming and the railway network was expanding, but the Childwall and Gateacre area was very much rural countryside. There were just a few clusters of houses dotted along a dirt path, and it was along this path (nowadays called Grange Lane) that one particularly wealthy family from Manchester, the Cunninghams, decided to settle down.

David Wilson has written a book entitled 'The Gorse Cop - 145 years of almost forgotten history', about their house, which he describes as a 'jewel' on the outskirts of Gateacre Village. Most recently known as The Crying Tree Bar and Grill, it remains beautifully intact inside, with many original features showing off the wealth of its original owners. However, the house has been anything but a peaceful place to live. Its stories include the death of the matriarch from gout, at an age enviable by today's standards, to the loss of children as young as 9. The house is reputedly haunted by caring spirits who 'test' new owners for their honesty.

We shall hear about the families who later lived in the building, including the McKechnies and the Overds. The talk will also cover the running of the businesses (Chez Philippe and Grange Manor), the conversion of the building to a public house, and the building's future.

ALL WELCOME - Admission free - Donations invited

Don't forget our ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Sunday 25th October, 2pm in Gateacre Chapel

The 41st AGM will receive reports of our activities and our finances, hear members' comments on what we've been doing, and elect a Committee for the coming year. This will be followed by complimentary refreshments and a chance to chat - and view a selection of photographs from our archives. Newcomers welcome, as always.

MODERN HERITAGE AND THE BEATLES

Our June 2015 talk – reviewed by Mike Chitty

Dr Donna Jackson called her talk 'I Believe in Yesterday'. She explained that it was not about the Beatles, but about the phenomenon of Beatles Heritage in Liverpool – and, more particularly, Woolton/Gateacre.

What is heritage? 'Anything that matters to us – that we'd miss if it wasn't there'. It is the 6th biggest industry in the UK. Over 3 million people a year cite the Beatles as a reason for visiting Liverpool; and they spend an estimated £400 million a year in the city.

It was John Lennon's death in 1980 – ten years after the Beatles broke up – that started the 'pilgrimage'. There are now statues, themed hotels and the Beatles Story exhibition. The new Museum of Liverpool includes a corner of the stage from St Peter's Church Hall, Woolton – including the wooden steps where John first met Paul. There are tours – some good, some not so good.

Strawberry Field was a Salvation Army children's home on the edge of Gateacre and Woolton. When Strawberry Fields Forever was released in 1967, John explained that he – having lost his mother as a teenager – had identified with the orphan children. Its gates are now a stopping point on the daily Magical Mystery Tour of Liverpool. The Salvation Army is hoping to reopen the building (closed since 2005) as a training school, to improve the lives of people with learning difficulties, funded by a heritage centre and café. Donna is their consultant and (without giving away too much about the plans) she discussed its 'authenticity' and 'aura' – concepts which are crucial to an understanding of the heritage industry.

Beatle fans, she said, want to 'walk in the footsteps of their heroes'. They respond to the Cavern Club, a 1980s rebuild. They photograph the replica gates at Strawberry Field, installed because fans were destroying the originals. The gates weren't even featured in the Strawberry Fields Forever video, but they've become the symbol. Will the stone steps in the grounds, 'which John must have run up and down', and the woods 'where John must have played' come to have the same attraction?

Some visitors to Liverpool are mere tourists ('who go somewhere because they feel they should') but others are pilgrims ('who have a personal reason for going, a connection'). Donna argued that Strawberry Field and St Peter's Church Hall both have an 'aura' – once visitors have been made aware of their significance.

Beatles tourism has benefits. It makes people happy, it brings income through souvenir sales and church donations. But it also has disadvantages – intrusion, damage, traffic. People walk over graves at St Peter's, on their way to that of 'an' Eleanor Rigby. Donna suggested that there is a need for official regulation. Some guides are well trained and qualified – knowing how to keep the neighbours, not just the visitors, happy – but others invent stories, or fail to control their clients.

When Donna invited questions, one of the first was about John Lennon's supposed connection with Gateacre. He has said to have lived there (age 5) with his mother Julia, in 'a small flat in a large house'. Where was it exactly? This led to a question back to the audience: if it was your house, would you want people to know that John had lived there? Would you want the Magical Mystery Tour to be extended into Gateacre village?

Donna's talk, and the subsequent discussion, gave us much food for thought.

Another forthcoming event:

Friends of Gateacre **FUNDRAISING QUIZ NIGHT**

**Friday 13th
November**

at the Gateacre Institute,
Grange Lane, L25 5JX.

7.30pm start

(doors open 7pm)

*Admission £5 per person
(inc. buffet) pay on the door.*

A 20mph ZONE FOR GATEACRE?

Back in July – in connection with the Gateacre Comp Site planning application – we were told that "there are proposals for a 20mph zone covering the Cuckoo Lane / Grange Lane area". Most local residents will now have received a questionnaire from the City Council's Road Safety Services unit, seeking their views on the proposal to introduce a 20mph speed limit (without speed bumps) across a wide area of south-east Liverpool. The Council's website – at liverpool.gov.uk/20mph – states that "All residents within their specific area will be fully consulted on the scheme before the scheme starts on site".

However, all that has been asked so far is a simple yes/no question: "Are you in favour of the speed limit on your road being reduced to 20mph?".

We cannot understand why residents are not being asked to comment on the proposed introduction of a 20mph limit (or its non-introduction, as the case may be) on nearby roads. Nor can we understand why Grange Lane residents, for example, have been excluded from the consultation.

PLANNING ROUND-UP

BRIDGE INN, Childwall Valley Road. Outline planning application 15O/1445 proposes the demolition of the building and its replacement by a supermarket. We understand that efforts are being made to have the pub designated as an Asset of Community Value. More information on our website.

ROSE COTTAGE, Grange Weint. Planning application 15F/2029 to use the building as a day nursery for 12 children, with living accommodation above. The Planning Dept's deadline for comments is 29th October. We have submitted an objection on traffic grounds, fearing that cars dropping-off/picking-up children on the corner of Grange Lane, or reversing in Grange Weint, will be hazardous.

FELT FACTORY SITE, Gateacre Brow. Planning application 15F/2296 to erect a three-storey block of 9 apartments to the rear of the former brewery building. When the original scheme for this site was submitted in 2006, we objected to this newbuild element and suggested that a low-rise 'mews-style' development would be more appropriate. We are likely to be reiterating this view. The deadline for comments to the Planning Dept is 12th November.

FALSTAFF SITE, Gateacre Park Drive. Application 15F/1550 to vary conditions attached to permission 13F/0625 (see our May 2014 Newsletter). The new houses have been built closer to Gateacre Park Drive than originally envisaged, and we are seeking reassurances about the promised 'green strip' alongside the road.

GRANGE LANE SERVICE STATION. Application 14F/1948 to build a pair of semi-detached bungalows to the rear (see our January 2015 Newsletter) was granted planning permission on 27th May. We have questioned why this decision was taken by planning officers using 'delegated powers' – rather than being referred to the Planning Committee – bearing in mind that objections had been submitted. The permission is subject to a condition that a detailed site investigation be carried out, and a remediation strategy be drawn up to deal with any contaminants, before building work commences.

GARDEN CENTRE SITE, Acrefield Road. Application 15F/0359 to build 10 houses (see our May Newsletter) was approved by the Council's Planning Committee on 28th July. It is subject to a legal agreement being signed, regarding the payment to the Council of £10,000 in lieu of open space provision on site. The original plan to include security gates – to which we had objected – was withdrawn.

FOR INFORMATION about local planning decisions, or how to comment on new applications, please visit our website – or phone the City Council on 0151 233 3021.