



The Gateacre Society

A VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION

Guarding the Past - Safeguarding the Future

NEWSLETTER - January 2020

Our next meeting

SIR WILLIAM BROWN: THE MAN WHO MADE LIVERPOOL?

An illustrated talk by David Hearn
on **Sunday 2nd February at 2.30 p.m. in
Gateacre Chapel, Gateacre Brow L25 3PB**

To Liverpool residents and visitors alike, the name William Brown is a familiar one - being the name of the street in which the World Museum and Central Library are situated. David Hearn is a former banker and management consultant who went on to study History at Liverpool John Moores University and at the University of Liverpool. His curiosity about the name of the street led him to research the story of a highly influential and important man, who could lay claim to being "the man who made Liverpool".

David now runs a small publishing and heritage company with his older son, Richard - and on Twitter they are 'The Dusty Teapot'. He will be bringing with him a selection of books to offer for sale at the meeting.

ALL WELCOME - Admission free - Donations invited



An appeal for information: THE PUBS OF GATEACRE

In November 2018, Stuart Rimmer gave us a talk on 'The Old Inns, Taverns and Beerhouses of Woolton'. Now he has extended his research to cover Little Woolton and Childwall - and hopes to publish a second book later this year. He is appealing for information and photographs. In particular, he is looking for people whose ancestors were connected with pubs such as the Black Bull, Bear and Staff, Brown Cow, John Blackburn's/Railway Inn, Halfway House, Bridge Inn, Folly Vale Tavern and Childwall Abbey, or the Gateacre Brewery, and who may have stories passed down through the family which he might be permitted to use in his book.

Stuart can be contacted on tavernhistory@virginmedia.com or,
for those who don't use email, via the Gateacre Society.
(Just let any Committee member have your contact details).

LIVING FAR FROM HOME

Our November 2019 talk – *reviewed by Mike Chitty*

Prof. Michael Ziessler came to talk to us about the history of the German Church of Liverpool. He listed the 'push' and 'pull' factors that had led Germans to leave home. Economic depression, crop failures and political unrest made living in Germany less attractive, while England's industrialisation offered jobs. Liverpool had factories, and its port provided work for sailors and merchants. It was also the gateway to America; but many German emigrants found that they couldn't afford the fare. Liverpool became home to about 1,300 German people.

Sunday worship for German sailors had begun on a ship owned by the Liverpool Seamen's Friend Society in the 1820s, but it is David Jacob Hirsch, a young theologian at St Aidan's College in Birkenhead, who is regarded as the founder of the Church. The Bishop of Chester engaged him to act as Pastor to the German community (a role which he fulfilled from 1846-76) and he set up a chapel and school in the centre of Liverpool. In 1872 the congregation moved from Sir Thomas Street to the Newington Chapel in Renshaw Street. Hirsch's successor, Ferdinand Hartmann, only stayed 5 years but gave the church a new constitution, independent of the Anglican Church.

The peak decades for German emigration were the 1850s and the 1880s. An important group were the pork butchers of south Germany, who found a market for their cheap food and 'ready meals' in the working-class districts of northern cities. In Liverpool, they settled mainly in the Stanley Road/Scotland Road area, nicknamed 'Little Germany'. It was not easy to hold the congregation together. The sailors were transient, the merchants acted mainly as trustees, the pork butchers met separately in north Liverpool, and the sugar refineries (which employed many of the earlier migrants from north Germany) worked 7 days a week. However, the German Church became a centre of social life, with a choir, German classes for children, and a literature club.

After the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915, all Germans came to be regarded as enemies. There was rioting in Liverpool, German shops were destroyed and businessmen were sent to camps on the Isle of Man. Church membership fell to 250 and some of the members changed their names: e.g. Koch to Cork, Karle to Carr, Reising to Roberts. The Renshaw Street church closed in 1930, when it was bought for the expansion of Central Station. The congregation moved to a former English Presbyterian building on the corner of Bedford Street South and Canning Street. However, the outbreak of WW2 brought renewed problems, with Pastor Hermann Garcke being imprisoned in Huyton and later the Isle of Man.

By the end of the war the congregation had dwindled further, but was supplemented by new members: German wives of British soldiers, and ex-POWs who decided not to return home. The Church building itself was in danger of collapse, having been shaken by the (German) bombs that had fallen nearby during the war. It was demolished in 1951, and services were held in the Baptist Church at Princes Gate. Then in 1959 a new, small church was built on the Bedford Street South site. It is still there today, with about 40 members, and a Pastor shared with other northern cities.

Prof. Ziessler concluded his interesting talk by inviting everyone to attend the Christmas Bazaar on 30th November – one of the Church's annual highlights.

CHANGES AT THE BEAR & STAFF

As tends to happen every few years, the Bear & Staff is currently undergoing a comprehensive refurbishment. The owners (Greene King) applied for Tree Works Consent, but have not as yet submitted a planning application in respect of changes to the building or its signage. The City Council granted permission for the felling of the 5 Leylandii trees on Gateacre Brow, at the corner of the pub car park – subject to them being replaced by a single 'small-leaved lime' (*Tilia cordata*).

The removal of the conifers has revealed, for the first time in many years, the full extent of the 'flagstone fence' which separates the car park from the house (formerly a shop) at 10 Gateacre Brow. This feature – a boundary wall consisting of large stone slabs, standing vertically and linked by metal ties – was very characteristic of the Woolton/Gateacre area, owing to the proximity of sandstone quarries, but in most other parts of the country it would have been prohibitively expensive.

⌘ await the outcome of the refurbishment. Last time, the owners had to redo some of the work – repainting the gable wall and replacing the new (and overlarge) pole-mounted sign – because both we and the City Council's planners felt that it had harmed the character of the Gateacre Village Conservation Area.

GATEACRE COMP SITE TREES

When Countryside Properties were granted planning permission to build 200 houses (15F/0516) – later increased to 231 houses (17F/1805) – between Grange Lane and Cuckoo Lane, this was subject to a number of conditions. These included a requirement to adhere to the approved Landscaping Scheme. One of the claims of the applicant was that the development would result in the provision of a large number of trees (summarised in the Planning Department's Case Officer Report at the time as "*a minimum of one tree per house plot and upward of 80 street trees*") and we saw these trees clearly marked on Countryside's Landscape Masterplan.

Now that the development is complete, and the houses are occupied, we note that not all of the planned trees have yet been planted – and some that were planted early on have since died or been removed. We have asked the City Council to carry out a survey, and to check with Countryside Properties what their intentions are for the current planting season, so as to ensure that the planning conditions are fully complied with.

ALDI LANDSCAPING

When the new Aldi supermarket was opened in Gateacre Park Drive in 2014, we commemorated the 40th birthday of the Gateacre Society by installing a plaque and a time capsule within the landscaped area in front of the store. We are therefore particularly disappointed at the subsequent neglect of this area. Sections of the wooden boundary rail have rotted away, and the originally-planted shrubs are now interspersed with rampant weeds including horsetails and convolvulus.

Last November we contacted the company's Property Director – with whom we had liaised very successfully at the time of the store's construction – and he replied: "*Not a problem, I've passed it on to the individual in charge and she'll get it sorted asap*". As yet, there is no sign of any remedial work being carried out, but we remain hopeful that something will be done before the weed growth re-commences.

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Founded 1974: Registered Charity No.508024.

A member of the British Association for Local History
and the Merseyside Civic Society

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Annual Membership Subscriptions

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

The Society's membership year ends on 31st October. If you are already a member, your address label indicates the date when your next subscription payment is due.

**IF THE DATE ON THE ADDRESS LABEL READS 31/10/19,
PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

If you wish to join the Society, or to renew, please send the appropriate subscription to the Membership Secretary, David Phythian, 26 Primrose Road, Liverpool L18 2HE: cheques payable to 'The Gateacre Society'. Subscriptions may also be paid by bank transfer. Please email us for our account details. Alternatively they may be hand-delivered to any of the Committee members' addresses listed above.

Our Book - Gateacre & Belle Vale: in old photographs - is on sale at our meetings and events, price **£9** (bookshop price £12.99).

Our Tea-towel is also available, price **£4**. See our website for details.

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