

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

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Officers for 2000/01

Chairman: Tony McCann
Vice Chairman: Joe Brannigan
Hon. Secretary: *Post vacant*
Hon. Treasurer: Sylvia Davis
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Membership Subscriptions

Individual £2 Pensioner £1 Family £3 Two pensioners £1.50
Company, etc. £5 (all plus £2 postage if outside hand-delivery area)

Already a member?

Your address label indicates the date on which your membership expires. If your label reads '31/10/00' then your membership has *lapsed*, and regrettably this is the last Newsletter you will receive.

Not a member? Want to join us? Or want to renew?

Please send the appropriate annual subscription to the Membership Secretary.



The Gateacre Society

Registered with the Civic Trust and as a Charity

NEWSLETTER - June 2001

Our next event:

A WALK ROUND WOOLTON

on Tuesday 3rd July

starting from the Coach & Horses,

Kings Drive/Speke Road, at 7.30 p.m.

Our leader will be Margaret Benham, a qualified Blue Badge guide who lives locally and has a wealth of historical information to pass on to us as we stroll through Woolton Woods and around the village. The walk will include a look inside Woolton Hall (*pictured below circa 1819*).

There will be no charge for this event, and no need to book in advance; but participation is limited to Gateacre Society MEMBERS ONLY.

Please meet outside the Coach & Horses ready for a prompt start at 7.30, so we can make the most of the daylight.



WILLIAMSON'S TUNNELS REDISCOVERED

A review of our May meeting

On Tuesday 15th May David Head, a Friend of Williamson's Tunnels, gave us a talk with slides. It was a fascinating story. Joseph Williamson came to Liverpool in the late eighteenth century to work for Richard Tate, a tobacco merchant, eventually marrying his daughter Becky and taking over the business when Tate retired. He had a country house in Wavertree Road and a town house in Wolstenholme Square.

There was a great deal of unemployment in Liverpool after the Napoleonic Wars, and Williamson used labour to build houses, excavate the sandstone and construct a labyrinth of brickwork tunnels under Edge Hill. At one time, it is said, he employed a third of the Liverpool workforce! Williamson died in 1840 and was buried in the Tate family grave in St Thomas's Church, at the bottom end of Paradise Street. A car park now occupies the site.

Now that the tunnels have been rediscovered, some of them have had to be reinforced and an enormous amount of rubbish, dropped down from above, has had to be removed. Thanks to David Head and the other Friends, though, the Tunnels should now be safe from destruction - and maybe eventually open to the public.

MSC

EDITOR'S NOTE: Further information about the Friends - and about the tunnels themselves - can be found on their excellent website at www.williamsonstunnels.com. Membership costs £5 a year, which brings regular issues of 'The Mole' (the Friends' fact-packed newsletter), along with invitations to meetings and, occasionally, underground visits. Details from FOWT, 15-17 Chatham Place, Liverpool L7 3HD.

DIARY DATES

Our first meeting after the summer break is scheduled for **Tuesday 25th September**, when we hope to have an illustrated talk on the history of Bold Street, Liverpool, by Roger Hull.

Heritage Open Days 2001 take place between **7th and 10th September**, when many buildings all over the country will be open to the public free of charge. Although the Society will not be participating this year, we understand that Gateacre Chapel will once again be included in the programme. Watch out for local publicity regarding dates and times.

NEW BUS SHELTERS - AND INFORMATION?

As most members will be aware, several of the bus shelters in our area have recently been removed by Merseytravel, and are in the process of being replaced by yellow-and-grey 'Smart' style shelters. We have, for some time, been trying to persuade the authority to spend more on passenger information (no timetables have been displayed in Gateacre for many years now) rather than on expensive hi-tech shelters, but without success. We note, however, that the new shelters incorporate large 'Information' panels. Is it too much to hope that these will be used for their intended purpose?

AN OPEN COMMITTEE MEETING: Tuesday 17th July

For some time now, the Society has been operating with a Committee which is, numerically, well below strength. We are keen to remedy this, and we are sure that the Society has members who could play a useful part in our discussions of local issues and Society activities. The Committee has therefore decided to issue an OPEN INVITATION to members to attend its next meeting, which will take place at the Gateacre Institute, Grange Lane, on Tuesday 17th July, starting at 8 p.m.
We very much hope to see you there.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The new signage scheme for the **Black Bull** pub was approved by the City Council, with modifications, on 29th May. A proposed direction sign on Gateacre Brow was deleted from the scheme, and the 'flag' sign already erected on the Grange Lane frontage will have to be removed by the end of June. We commented adversely on the new 'three-dimensional' Ember Inns sign - which was described on the application as a 'refurbishment' of the existing hanging sign - but our objection was overruled by the Planning Committee.

Meanwhile, the **Bear & Staff** is currently in the process of conversion from a Henry's Table to a Chef & Brewer establishment. Once again, we have objected to the loss of the traditional hanging sign, which is proposed to be replaced by a 'painted feature' (a 3D bear, we believe) on top of a timber post.

GATEACRE GRANGE GO-AHEAD

The City Council's Planning Committee has granted planning permission and listed building consent for the conversion of Gateacre Grange to 13 apartments, the former stable block and lodge to 5 self-contained units, and Barclay House (historically Grange Cottage) to 2 units. In his report, the Planning Officer commented that 'a sensitive and appropriate scheme for these important listed buildings is proposed'. The permissions are subject to a number of detailed conditions, including one that 'prior to work commencing on site, full details of long term maintenance arrangements and programmes ... must be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority' and 'full details of a maintenance and management programme for all the landscaping, including all tree planting and all boundaries, must be agreed by the Planning and Building Control Manager in consultation with the City Council's Trees and Woodland Manager'.

Meanwhile we have received a letter from Mrs Beverly Doyle, joint owner (with her husband) of the property, stating that they propose 'luxury apartments for private letting. We aim to provide the best accommodation for both professional and retired people, offering secure and comfortable accommodation ... We will be renovating the building back to its former glory ... We also own the Archbishop's House in Woolton and The Holmstead in Mossley Hill, both are listed buildings and both kept to exceptional standards'.