

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

'Guarding the Past, Safeguarding the Future'

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Officers for 2002/03

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Membership Subscriptions

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

Already a member?

To find out whether you are a paid-up member of the Gateacre Society, please check your address label. The date 31/10/03 (or later) or code 'HON' or 'LIF' means that you are eligible to attend our July event.

Not a member? Want to join us?

If you wish to join the Society - or to renew - please send the appropriate annual subscription to the Membership Secretary: cheques payable to 'The Gateacre Society'.



The Gateacre Society

Registered with the Civic Trust and as a Charity

NEWSLETTER - June 2003

Our next event:

A visit to the PRINCES ROAD SYNAGOGUE

on Thursday 3rd July
for Gateacre Society members only

Meet there at 7.30 pm

The interior of the Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation synagogue in Princes Road, Liverpool 8, is one of the city's 'hidden gems'. Opened in 1874, the building is a spectacular example of Victorian decorative art and architecture. It is not normally open to the public, but we have arranged a special visit (for paid-up members only) on the evening of 3rd July. We shall have a talk about the history and use of the building, followed by a guided tour.

If you intend to come, please phone 722 6368 beforehand. If you need or can offer a lift, please mention the fact and we'll do our best to help.

**THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR THE VISIT - BUT
DONATIONS WILL BE INVITED TOWARDS
THE BUILDING'S UPKEEP.**



On Saturday 19th July, between 1-4 pm, a **SUMMER BARBECUE** will be held in and around the Chapel Hall in Sandfield Road, to raise funds for Gateacre Chapel. There will be a white-elephant stall, a bookstall, tombola and a raffle. For further details phone 428 1988.

NATURAL HISTORY OF MERSEYSIDE

A Review of Colin Twist's talk *by Mary Champion*

On Tuesday 18th March, Colin Twist came to talk to us with many lovely slides.

On the Southport salt marshes Colin has seen pink-footed geese, which come in from Iceland for the winter. Also at Marshside he has seen redshanks - a national study has been done on them there - and the scarce black-tailed godwit.

In late May on the Sefton Dunes, Colin has seen bee orchids, and at Altcar Rifle Range green-winged meadow orchids. He showed us a picture of the unusual blue-eyed grass from America, which closes its petals when the sun goes in.

Burnet moths can be found on thistles in the Ainsdale/Formby area. They fly at the same time as grayling and, when alighting, close their wings. The common blue butterfly can also be found in the dunes, along with the green-flowered helleborine, marsh helleborine, tuberous pea and the field and autumn gentian.

At Seaforth goldeneye, pochard and shelduck - which nest in rabbit holes - can be seen. There are Mediterranean gulls from the Black Sea, little gulls and turnstones from the Arctic, and the ringed plover which has bred at Seaforth. Also to be found there are seaside centaury, dark mullein, safflower, small heath butterfly and a small skipper butterfly.

In our parks we get red admirals from abroad, peacock butterflies and painted ladies. Also long-tailed tits, increasing in numbers, and bramblings amongst the chaffinches from abroad. On the park lakes are pochard and Canada geese - and Newsham Park has pink-footed and barnacle geese too.

On Martin Mere we find feral grey-lag geese, wild swans from Siberia and Iceland, whooper swans and Bewicks, gadwall and many teal and ruff. In old woodland alongside the East Lancs Road are found, occasionally, broad-leaved helleborine and adders tongue fern.

Industrial sites are important for wildlife. Dippers are seen occasionally near Carr Mill Dam and ramsons, common spotted orchid and sometimes marsh and bee orchids. At Parkside Moss we find marsh gentian in August and September, dragonflies, reed bunting, yellowhammers, tree sparrows and bullfinch, while in the flashes alongside the Sankey Canal are ruddy duck hybridised with white-headed duck in Spain. In the meadows alongside the Blackbrook in St Helens are wild anemones, wood sorrel and speckled wood butterfly in the woodland, with damsel fly and dragonfly in the ponds and streams.

At Hilbre are large flocks of waders, with oyster catchers, razorbills, cormorants, black-throated and red-throated divers in the winter, and great crested grebes. Up to 100 Atlantic grey seals may also be seen there, with jellyfish and meadow pipits passing by.

Colin told us so much more, but we will end with the knowledge that black redstarts live on the site of the Old Post Office in Whitechapel, and goldfinch in Chavasse Park.

It was an evening of treats.

Pines under threat AGAIN

The owner of the as-yet uncompleted house in Hunts Cross Avenue (north of Hollytree Road) is making a further attempt to fell two of the large pine trees at the rear of the property. Accompanying his planning application No. 03T/1599 is an arboriculturist's report which acknowledges that 'they are both of high amenity value and their loss will be felt by a wide number of residents in the area'. The report also states that 'the development should have been moved back by a substantial amount to take into consideration the size and prominence of these two trees'.

This was exactly what we said when the plans for the house were first submitted for approval in 1996 (and revised in 1998) - but the Council's planning officers assured us that there would be no problem and imposed conditions to protect the trees during the construction phase. The fact that these conditions were not enforced - and perhaps that the position of the proposed house was wrongly indicated on the submitted drawings - does not seem to us a valid reason for allowing the destruction of such fine specimens.

Grange Lane GREENSPACE campaign

Both the Merseymart and the Liverpool Echo have recently featured the efforts of Grange Lane residents to secure the removal of 'temporary' classrooms from the Gateacre Comprehensive School site. The block at the north end of Grange Lane - which occupies part of the School's original playing field - is particularly obtrusive; but the Council does not seem at all concerned that its retention is contravening the terms of the planning permission granted in 2000. As we have previously reported, this specified that the building was to be removed, and the site returned to its original condition ('i.e. grass turfed') by mid-2002.

Colour CONFUSION in Belle Vale Road?

As most members will already have noticed, the former Texaco/Save petrol station in Belle Vale Road has now closed down. Hoardings have been erected by the new site owners, Bellway Homes, together with signboards advertising the forthcoming development of apartments ('The Parklands'). Those members who saw the architects' drawings at our last Annual General Meeting may have been surprised by the 'artist's impression' currently displayed on the site. The picture shows most of the proposed front elevation faced in a yellow material - rather than the Woolton-red 'reconstructed sandstone' shown on the approved plans - and also omits the black-and-white detailing in the gables which we particularly welcomed in our comments on the scheme.

We have drawn these inconsistencies to the attention of both the original architects and the City Council's planners, and trust that they are the result of artistic error rather than of any real change to the design of the building.