

# THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

*'Guarding the Past, Safeguarding the Future'*

**Website:** www.gatsoc.org.uk **E-mail:** info@gatsoc.org.uk

## Officers for 2003/04

Chairman: Tony McCann  
Vice Chairman: Brian Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, L25 4SL (722 6368)  
Hon.Secretary: Joan Gadd, 59 Hunts Cross Avenue, L25 5NU  
(428 8884)  
Hon.Treasurer: Eryl Chitty  
Membership Sec.: Beryl Plent, 27 Grange Lane, L25 4RZ (428 5379)  
Environment Sec.  
& Newsletter Editor: Mike Chitty, 16 Chartmount Way, L25 5LB (428 7801)

## Membership Subscriptions

Household £3 Single pensioner £2 Company, etc. £5  
(all plus £1.50 postage if outside hand-delivery area)  
You may pay for up to three years in advance, if you wish, at these annual rates.

## Already a member?

To find out whether you are a paid-up member of the Gateacre Society, **please check your address label**, which indicates your membership expiry date (e.g. 31/10/04).

## 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, Mrs Beryl Plent: cheques payable to 'The Gateacre Society'.



*Our next meeting:*

## LIVERPOOL 800

A talk by Dr Jon Murden  
on Tuesday 30th March  
at 8 p.m.

in Gateacre Chapel Hall, Sandfield

Liverpool 800 is a project based in the School of History at the University of Liverpool, the aim of which is to write a substantial new work outlining the history and development of the City of Liverpool. This will be published in the Year of Heritage 2007, which will celebrate the 800th anniversary of the granting of Liverpool's first 'charter' by King John.

The authors of the book hope to 'reflect the character and culture of Liverpool' and to base the later chapters on the memoirs of local people. They are also keen to receive comments and suggestions from community groups and Societies such as ours. So on 30th March one of the Project Team, Dr Jon Murden, will be visiting us to talk about what they have in mind - including the creation of an oral history archive - and to listen to our ideas.

The meeting will take place in Gateacre Chapel Hall, Sandfield Road (off Gateacre Brow) starting at 8 p.m.

**ALL WELCOME -  
Gateacre Society members  
free of charge - Visitors 50p**

## Gateacre in Bloom?

For three years now, Woolton Village has taken part in 'Britain in Bloom'. A team of Woolton residents, with the support of the City Council and local businesses, and under the guidance of a Committee chaired by Councillors Barbara Collinge and Barbara Mace, has successfully undertaken a programme of colourful planting of decorative beds, boxes and hanging baskets in and around the village. Various environmental improvements have also been carried out, and events organised which have raised money both for the planting itself and for local charities.

Now there is hope that the scheme can be extended to Gateacre Village - but that will require the active participation of Gateacre residents and businesses. Following consultation with our Society, the two Councillors have organised an Open Meeting at the Chapel Hall, to be held on **Wednesday 31st March** at 7 p.m. They have distributed invitations in and around the village centre, and are hoping for a good response. For further information please phone Councillor Collinge on 722 6862.

# THE NEW PEVSNER GUIDE TO LIVERPOOL

A review of our February talk by *Mary Champion*

On February 3rd, Joseph Sharples spoke to the Gateacre Society about his forthcoming Pevsner Architectural Guide to Liverpool. For the past three years Joseph has been working on the guide, which will be published in May 2004.

Nikolaus Pevsner grew up in Leipzig but settled in England in the 1930s. He was one of the founders of the study of the history of art and architecture in Britain. Ultimately he became Professor of the History of Art at Birkbeck College London, and held other prestigious appointments. He started his great series of architectural county studies in 1951, finishing in 1974 – all the fieldwork being done during college vacations. The South Lancashire book, which included Liverpool, was published in 1969.

Joseph explained why Pevsner's guides need revising: they were relatively small books, more knowledge is now available, tastes have changed, old buildings have come down and new ones have gone up. South West and South East Lancashire are being revised as separate volumes and, in addition, 'City Guides' are being published for Manchester and Liverpool.

Our talk was illustrated by excellent slides. We saw the former Midland Goods Warehouse in Crosshall Street, now the Conservation Centre. Pevsner mentioned it but could give no detail - Joseph found the date 1874 on the building and discovered that the architects were Culshaw & Sumner who designed other buildings in Liverpool. Church Street was very much neglected by Pevsner, but Joseph showed us Compton House – now Marks & Spencer – which was built in 1867 as one of the first departmental stores, complete with living accommodation for staff on the top floor.

Joseph has found a lot of information about Liverpool's Victorian buildings in an old architectural periodical: 'The Builder'. For example Ashcroft's Building in Victoria Street was a billiard table factory, with a showroom on the ground floor and a flat roof for seasoning the timber. He has also identified and included many 'new' buildings by Liverpool architects such as James Francis Doyle and Walter Aubrey Thomas. Thomas is best known for the Royal Liver Building, but we were shown slides of his Lord Street Arcade and the

Crane Building in Hanover Street, influenced by American skyscrapers. We also saw examples of 'forgotten' Liverpool buildings by nationally-famous architects. The former Evans Pharmaceuticals building in Wood Street was by Aston Webb, who designed the Victoria & Albert Museum. The office/shop building on the corner of Church Street and Paradise Street was designed by E.W.Pugin, better known for his Catholic churches.

Pevsner admired nineteenth-century buildings in Liverpool which 'anticipated' twentieth century design - like a shop in Bold Street with lovely windows, and Oriel Chambers in Water Street. But he didn't like the Adelphi, and failed to mention other early twentieth-century buildings like the Athenaeum by Harold Dod or the former Boots on the corner of Church Street/Hanover Street by Gerald de Courcy Fraser.

Among the buildings mentioned by Pevsner in 1969, but since demolished, are the Sailors Home in Canning Place and many churches, especially in Everton. Under threat at that time were the Albert Dock and the Lyceum, but they were both saved as a result of vigorous campaigns.

Of the Liverpool buildings completed since 1969, Joseph could find very few to commend. But the Aldham Robarts Learning Resource Centre in Maryland Street and the FACT Centre in Wood Street were, he thought, both wonderful new buildings. We also saw slides of some excellent conversions by Urban Splash and others – including the former Wilberforce House which has become Beetham Plaza.

One thing is certain. When the new Pevsner Guide to Liverpool is published in May 2004 – at just £9.99 – it will be a wonderful illustrated read!

## A Trip to Nottingham

Our friends in the Wavertree Society are organising a coach outing on Saturday 19th June, and have invited us to join them. The trip will be hosted by the Nottingham Civic Society, who will be providing guides to show us round their city, talking about recent developments as well as its history and 'sights'. Further details will be published in our next Newsletter, as soon as costings and pick-up points have been finalised – but meanwhile please put the date in your diary if you are interested.

## WOOLTON SOCIETY REPRIEVED

A Special General Meeting of the Woolton Society was held on 18th February, to discuss the proposal to wind up the Society. This arose because of the failure to elect sufficient Officers and Committee members at the A.G.M. last October. The meeting was well attended, and several people agreed to 'join the team' with a view to keeping the Society going. When the motion was eventually put, not a single member voted in favour of dissolution. The future of the Society is now in the hands of the new Committee, and we await developments with interest. Meanwhile the Society can be contacted via P.O.Box 127, Woolton, Liverpool L25 8WY.

## PINE TREES APPEAL DECISION

On 11th February the Government Office for the North West announced that consent was being granted for the felling of two Corsican pines on land between numbers 32 and 38 Hunts Cross Avenue. The Secretary of State agreed with his consultant arboriculturalist, Mr D H Thorman, that "there has been considerable ground disturbance and root damage during the construction works carried out at the site which has compromised the long term stability and safety of the trees" and that felling would therefore be justified.

We have mentioned the threat to these trees several times in previous Newsletters, and feel that the Arboriculturalist's report is worth quoting at some length. We hope that the City Council will learn lessons from this unfortunate saga, and will be more wary in future when granting planning permission for new houses close to existing trees.

"The two trees ... are extremely prominent in the locality, and ... have significant amenity value. Although part of a stand of 5 pines ... their removal would constitute a very noticeable loss.

"The local authority in granting consent for the development were satisfied that the two appeal trees could successfully be incorporated into the development. ... This decision is questionable in view of the trunk diameter and the tree architecture, but would have been dependant on suitable protective fencing being erected ... However, it is evident that there has been no protective fencing, with the result that many damaging activities have occurred up to 2m from the trees ... The ground has been excavated by approximately 0.75m, there is ongoing compaction of the ground, and there could be spillage of cement and other materials.

"The trees appear healthy, with no abnormal needle loss, so they appear to have tolerated the damage up to now, considering that the digging of foundations began over 2 years ago. It is not possible to assess the extent of the effect on stability, but there has been root loss close to the tree, and further damage is ongoing at present. Corsican pines have in their favour that they are relatively deeper rooting, but nevertheless, stability has been compromised by construction activities around these trees."

The Secretary of State's decision is subject to two 150-200 cm high root-balled replacement trees being planted within the rear garden of the new house. The full text of the decision letter, and of the arboriculturalist's report, can be viewed on our website.