

# THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Founded 1974. Charity Registration No.508024.

'Guarding the Past, Safeguarding the Future'

Website: [www.gatsoc.org.uk](http://www.gatsoc.org.uk) E-mail: [info@gatsoc.org.uk](mailto:info@gatsoc.org.uk)

## Officers for 2005/06

Chairman: Tony McCann  
Vice Chairman: Brian Doman  
Hon.Secretary: Joan Gadd, 59 Hunts Cross Avenue, L25 5NU (428 8884)  
Hon.Treasurer: Eryl Chitty  
Membership Sec.: Rosemary Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, L25 4SL (722 6368)  
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 our old '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. 31/10/06).

## Not a member? Want to join us?

If you wish to join the Society - or to renew - please send the appropriate subscription to the Membership Secretary, Mrs Rosemary Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, Liverpool L25 4SL: cheques payable to 'The Gateacre Society'.



# The Gateacre Society

Registered with the Civic Trust and as a Charity

## NEWSLETTER - January 2006

Our next meeting:

## THE STORY OF THE GATEACRE TIME CAPSULE

A presentation by Beryl Plent  
on Sunday 29th January 2006  
at 2.30 pm in the Chapel Hall,  
Sandfield Road, Liverpool L25

The Gateacre Hall Hotel on Halewood Road closed its doors in October 2003. During the course of demolition at the site that winter, a TIME CAPSULE was found and rescued by one of the building workers. It had originally been put together and hidden away by two teenage boys in the spring of 1881. The bundle of well-preserved documents it contained was handed over to the Gateacre Society for safe keeping, and it has helped us paint a picture of Gateacre village in late Victorian times. The discovery was featured on the BBC's North West Tonight TV programme, Radio Merseyside and Radio Lancashire in November 2005. This media coverage has since brought to light more treasures!

The contents of the time capsule were displayed at our AGM in October - but for the benefit of those who weren't there, as well as those who were but would like to see and hear more, we have arranged a special meeting on the afternoon of Sunday 29th January when our Committee member Beryl Plent will guide us through what has been discovered.

**ALL INTERESTED ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND**

Members free of charge - Non members 50p



## St Stephen's Parish Records On View

St Stephen's Church in Belle Vale Road will be open to the public on **WEDNESDAY 8th FEBRUARY 2006**, between 1 pm and 4 pm. As well as providing an opportunity to view the fine Victorian interior of the church (1874) and its stained-glass windows, this will also be a rare chance to inspect the Parish Records - e.g. of marriages and baptisms - before they are returned to secure storage. The books go back to 1893, when St Stephen's became a parish church in its own right rather than serving as a chapel-of-ease to All Saints Childwall, and should be of interest to anyone seeking to research their local family roots or local history.

## THE AMERICANS IN BRITAIN 1942-45

A review of our November talk by *Mary Champion*

Mike Murphy came to speak to the Gateacre Society on Tuesday 22nd November. It was an interesting talk - serious, witty and sometimes sad.

He set the scene by telling us that before Pearl Harbour America pursued an isolationist foreign policy. There were many German and Italian Americans, with strong pro-German views. But on 7th December 1941 two US ships and an escort ship were torpedoed in Pearl Harbour and the USA declared war on Japan. Shortly afterwards, Operation Bolero sent hundreds of thousands of US troops into Europe. The Queen Mary and the Queen Elizabeth were converted into troopships and ferried 15,000 at a time over to the Clyde and to Belfast, but most of all to Liverpool to go on to the transit camp at Burtonwood.

The Americans were generous lads, kind and friendly and won lots of hearts with cigarettes, sweets and tins of this and that. They looked so smart in their well-tailored uniforms, so different from the British troops in their serge battledress. To start with they were often billeted in Nissen huts or tents, cold and damp. To try and keep them happy - because the planned invasion of Europe was a long way off - Rainbow Corner was set up in London by the US Red Cross. It was a Lyons Corner House, taken over for the duration, which served Americans food and drink, but no alcohol, and could seat 500 at one sitting. The troops were issued with a Brown Book of introduction for meeting British families. This covered etiquette and language variations like trunk for the boot of a car.

A large proportion of the US forces were airmen, and in the early days US pilots flew with the RAF. Later they had their own flights - RAF by night, USAAF by day. After 25 missions they were sent home, Memphis Belle was the first plane. Casualties were high and the war lasted longer than expected. As well as the forces over here there were also 10,000 US Red Cross nurses. Girls were ferried to the bases in 'Passion Wagons' for dances, and had a hectic social life with these boys who earned £3 8s 6d compared with the British 14 shillings! In all, about 60,000 Americans married British girls. In 1946 the SS Argentina took GI brides aged 16-64 back to the States and 90 percent of them made a go of it.

Mike Murphy had some good photographs for us to see at the end of his talk, which was much appreciated.

## FLATS PLAN REFUSED AGAIN

In October 2005, revised plans were submitted for 10 flats on the site of Michael Taylor's garage premises at 167-169 Grange Lane. We had objected to the previous application (in April) on the grounds of inadequate parking provision - 13 spaces for 10 flats - though we had broadly welcomed the design and materials proposed. In the event, planning permission was refused, as reported in our July 2005 Newsletter. In the case of the revised scheme, we objected to virtually every aspect. It comprised two flat-roofed blocks - which we felt would be totally out of keeping with the Conservation Area - and only 6 parking spaces. In our view, this confirmed that the site is simply not large enough to accommodate ten dwellings. Once again, planning permission has been refused.

## NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

For many years now - in fact ever since the Gateacre Society was founded in 1974 - we have relied on a team of volunteers to distribute Newsletters to our members. We are very grateful to everyone who has helped in this way, but - as announced at the AGM in October - we have in recent times found it more and more difficult to maintain this hand-delivery service and have therefore decided to dispatch all Newsletters by post. This will, of course, cost us more money, and the level of membership subscriptions will need to be reviewed - but for the time being we are using a proportion of our reserves to absorb the cost.

One suggestion made at the AGM was that members might like to receive their Newsletters by email instead of by post - which would provide them with a quicker service and also, of course, save us money. IF YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS and would like to opt for this method of dispatch, please let us know by sending a simple message to [membership@gatsoc.org.uk](mailto:membership@gatsoc.org.uk) Incidentally, we now have a new Membership Secretary (see back cover): Rosemary Doman having kindly volunteered to take over from Beryl Plent, who has served as our Membership Secretary for the past 17 years. Beryl is still a member of our Committee, but will be concentrating on Local History matters.



## THE 'POWERHOUSE' PROJECT

In November 2000, planning permission was granted for the conversion of the former Liverpool District Lighting Company's generating station building in Sandfield Road - more recently used as a bedroom furniture factory - into 7 residential apartments. Demolition work was undertaken - involving the removal of the unsightly postwar extensions - and roof repairs were carried out, but the conversion itself never happened.

Now an amended application has been submitted, this time for only 5 flats. The drawings - two of which are reproduced here courtesy of the architects, Arkheion - indicate that the blank south elevation of the building (*below*) is to be part clad in opaque-glass panels, while the west elevation (*above*) will also be given a 'modern' look, though the main elevation on Sandfield Road - which bears the date 1898 - will retain its original Victorian appearance. The landscaping plans show a total of 6 off-street car parking spaces, along with rectangular lawned areas and a 'reflecting pool'.

The full set of plans is available for inspection at Millennium House, Victoria Street - Ref.06F/0033 - and any comments should be sent to Mrs S Campbell in the Planning and Building Control Department, Liverpool City Council, Dale Street, Liverpool L2 2DH by the closing date, 2nd February.

