

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

Founded 1974. Charity Registration No.508024.

'Guarding the Past, Safeguarding the Future'

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

Officers for 2005/06

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, 16 Chartmount Way, L25 5LB (428 7801)
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 £4 Single pensioner £3 Company, etc. £6
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'.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - A NOTE TO MEMBERS

As mentioned in the January Newsletter, we have recently changed our distribution arrangements, as a result of which our postage costs have increased quite considerably. The Society's Committee has discussed the financial consequences, and has decided to increase our basic subscription rates by £1 per annum, while at the same time abolishing the 'postal surcharge' which formerly applied to members living outside the local area. With immediate effect, the Society's annual subscription rates will therefore be as follows: £3 for a single-pensioner household, £4 for any other type of household, and £6 for 'company/group' membership. Existing members who have not yet paid their subscription for the current year (2005/06) will be allowed to renew - for one year only - at the old rates.

We hope members will agree that the new rates still offer good value for money, bearing in mind that admission to our talks remains free of charge to paid-up members.



The Gateacre Society

Registered with the Civic Trust and as a Charity

NEWSLETTER - May 2006



Our next meeting:

THE HISTORY AND WORK OF THE NSPCC

by Caroline Walsh
on Tuesday 23rd May, 8 pm
in Gateacre Chapel Hall,
Sandfield Road, Liverpool L25

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was founded over 100 years ago, following the establishment of local societies in Liverpool and London to draw government and public attention to the evils of child cruelty. Since then the NSPCC has helped more than 10 million children - and the emergence of new and different social pressures means that, unfortunately, there is still a need for its services today. Caroline Walsh, from the NSPCC's Wavertree office, will be speaking to us about the origins of the Society and the range of work in which it is currently involved.

ALL WELCOME
Gateacre Society members
free of charge,
Non members 50p

NSPCC 
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

If the Gateacre Society is to continue to thrive, we need more members - and, in particular, more Committee members - who are willing to help share the load organising events and activities, and assisting both with specific projects and with general administration. To find out what is involved, please contact any existing Officer (see back page). We shall be pleased to invite prospective Committee members to attend one of our meetings, which take place on Tuesday evenings about every 5-6 weeks.

Dates for your Diary

Our summer outing:

A COACH TRIP TO BRADFORD
on Saturday
8th July

And another talk:

FLAYBRICK MEMORIAL GARDENS

by Simon Petris
on Tuesday
18th July at 8 pm
in the Chapel Hall

PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF THESE EVENTS,

as there may not be another Newsletter issued before they take place.

Further details inside

THE STORY OF THE TIME CAPSULE

A review of our January event *by Mary Champion*

On Sunday 29th January, Beryl Plent gave a presentation about the Gateacre Time Capsule to a packed audience in the Chapel Hall.

When the Gateacre Hall Hotel in Halewood Road was being demolished in the winter of 2003/04, a time capsule was found by one of the workers as he took down a stone doorway in one of the bars. The Gateacre Society had previously suggested that this doorway - dated 1652 on the lintel - should be saved in view of its age. Fortunately the developers agreed, which is why the sandstone door casing was being carefully dismantled before being sent away for cleaning. The 123-year-old capsule was picked out of the rubble, having probably been hidden behind the door. It consisted of a cylindrical wad of documents, about 8 inches long, sealed into a round container of some sort which unfortunately seems to have broken as it fell to the ground.

We only learned of the existence of the time capsule several months later, when the father-in-law of the finder emailed the Gateacre Society asking for more information about the building and its former occupants. Soon afterwards we were surprised and delighted to hear that he had decided to present the precious bundle of documents to the Society for safe keeping and study. They have given us a fascinating glimpse of life in Gateacre in Victorian times - which was the theme of Beryl's talk.

The contents of the time capsule were clean, dry and remarkably well preserved:

- The Liverpool Daily Post for April 13th 1881.
- The New York Weekly Herald (4 pages only).
- Handwritten notes by George H Finlay Robertson, aged 15.
- Handwritten notes by his brother James Robertson, aged 11.
- An unsigned drawing of the 1652 stone doorway.
- Advertisements for local businesses, and two calling cards.
- A Cheshire Lines railway timetable and Index of Fares.
- An invitation to a Town Hall reception from the Mayor of Liverpool.
- An illustrated 4-page catalogue of Welsh Woollen Goods.
- A contractor's estimate for redecorating the Dining Room.

Copies have been made of the originals, several of which are now protected in glass picture frames and kept out of the light.

Great interest was shown by Radio Lancashire, Radio Merseyside, Radio 5 and BBC TV's North West Tonight programme - though not, strangely enough, by the Liverpool Daily Post! Five minutes of film was shown on North West Tonight in November 2005, with pictures of The Nook and Gateacre Village used as background shots.

Beryl told us that George Finlay Robertson and James Robertson lived in 1881 at what was then called 'The Laurels', Nook Lane, off Halewood Road. The family had a cook, a waitress, a housemaid and a laundry-maid, according to the Census records. Their father, George Hunter Robertson, was a cotton broker and obviously well-to-do. He opened the first Sub Telephone Exchange in the area - at 1 Gateacre Brow - in 1882.

In his notes for posterity, James gave us information about local people, and the fact that 'Lord Beaconsfield died to-day, April 19th 1881'. George junior gave us the different dates when the house was altered: 1652, 1770, 1853, 1869 and 1881. The two boys must have put their time capsule together when those latest alterations were being carried out - 'the old doorway again being opened' as one of the notes recorded.

Beryl concluded her talk by thanking the two boys for their foresight, and speculating on where their descendants might live today. (We know that the family moved to Plas Newydd, in the Vale of Llangollen, in the 1890s).

Beryl then invited the audience to see for themselves the various items - both originals and copies - which she had put on display, and to view the North West Tonight feature which was being shown on video. Many of the 60 people present took her up on that invitation!

A COACH TRIP TO BRADFORD on Saturday 8th July

Following the success of previous excursions to Nottingham and Leeds, our friends in Wavertree have organised another day trip exclusively for the members of the Wavertree and Gateacre Societies.

This time our hosts will be the newly-formed Bradford Civic Society, who have kindly agreed to show us their city's sights both from the coach and on foot.

Bradford - once known as the 'wool capital of the world' - has a legacy of fine Victorian architecture and a cosmopolitan population. It has its social and economic problems but, like Liverpool, was one of the candidates for European Capital of Culture 2008. It also has one of the country's most-visited museums, the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.

Why not join us on what should be another interesting trip? The coach will depart from Gateacre Brow (Black Bull) at 8.45 am and from Lake Road (near Picton Clock) at 9 am. Tickets, at £10 a head, are available from our Hon.Treasurer, Eryl Chitty (see back page for contact details).

FLAYBRICK MEMORIAL GARDENS, BIRKENHEAD

A talk by Simon Petris
on Tuesday 18th July
at 8 pm in Gateacre
Chapel Hall

Flaybrick Memorial Gardens (formerly Birkenhead Cemetery) is recognised as one of Europe's most significant nineteenth century cemeteries. Opened in 1864, it is the final resting place of many famous and interesting people with Liverpool connections, and contains a wide range of memorial architecture with inscriptions relating to events both local and international. Simon Petris will give us an illustrated talk about the history and features of the cemetery, which is now being restored and developed as an arboretum.

**ALL INTERESTED ARE
WELCOME TO ATTEND**

Gateacre Society members free of charge - Visitors 50p

VILLAGE GREEN IMPROVEMENTS

We are currently pursuing a number of projects on and around the village green at Grange Lane/Gateacre Brow. These include:

- the removal of verdigris from the bronze bust of Queen Victoria, and repair of the granite plinth;
- the restoration of the water supply to the Wilson Memorial Fountain, and repair of the sandstone font; and
- the installation of a cast metal 'lectern' containing a map and details of the many nearby historic buildings.

At the moment we are in the process of obtaining cost estimates for the work involved, and identifying possible sources of funding.

MAY WE E-MAIL YOU?

The January Newsletter invited members to let us know if they wished to receive Newsletters by email, in future, instead of by post. So far just 8 out of our mailing-list of over 200 households have opted for this form of communication. If more members agreed, then we could potentially save a considerable amount of money on postage and printing - and, while we are unable to offer a concessionary subscription rate, those people on the email list get their news from the Society a day or two earlier than the rest of the membership. **To receive future Newsletters electronically** - even just for a trial period, if you wish - please send a simple message to membership@gatsoc.org.uk (remembering to give us your surname and postcode so that we can identify you and remove your name from our postal list).