

# 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, 6 Hayles Grove, L25 4SL (722 6368)  
Hon.Secretary: Mrs Joan Gadd, 59 Hunts Cross Avenue, L25 5NU (428 8884)  
Hon.Treasurer: Mrs Eryl Chitty, 16 Chartmount Way, L25 5LB (428 7801)  
Membership Sec.: Mrs 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'.

## Your Society Needs YOU !

Inside this Newsletter you will find the formal Notice of our A.G.M., which takes place this year on Tuesday 31st OCTOBER in Gateacre Chapel Hall.

The agenda for the meeting will include the election of Officers and a Committee for the coming year, and anyone willing to help with the running of the Society is strongly encouraged to put themselves forward for nomination as a Committee member. Any existing member of the Committee (see above for some names and addresses) will be pleased to discuss what is involved.

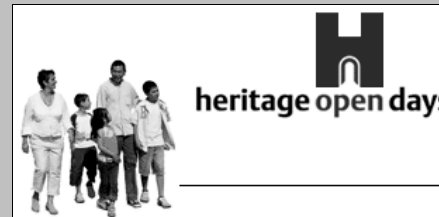


# The Gateacre Society

Registered with the Civic Trust and as a Charity

## NEWSLETTER - August 2006

### Free to explore ...



### SATURDAY 9th SEPTEMBER,

1 - 4 pm

Gateacre Unitarian Chapel,  
Gateacre Brow, L25

### SUNDAY 10th SEPTEMBER,

2 - 4.30 pm

St Stephen's Church,  
Belle Vale Road, L25

Once again the Civic Trust has put together a wide-ranging programme of special openings and events around the country. In Liverpool alone, over 40 buildings will be open to the public. For full details visit the Heritage Open Days website at [www.heritageopendays.org](http://www.heritageopendays.org). The Gateacre Society is not organising an event of its own this year, but will have an information table in St Stephen's on 10th September.

## NORTON PRIORY: Life and Times



An illustrated talk by  
Kathy Williams  
in Gateacre  
Chapel Hall, Sandfield  
Road, L25, at 8 pm  
on Tuesday  
26th September



Norton Priory and its gardens have been described as 'Runcorn's best kept secret'. Kathy Williams is a Norton Priory guide and will be telling us its story, from its foundation for Augustinian canons in the 12th century through its conversion to residential use in Tudor and Georgian times, to its demolition, abandonment and subsequent archaeological excavation in the twentieth century.

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

# NUNS IN WOOLTON

## A Review of our March Talk - *by Rosemary Doman*

Why did a group of nuns, originally English but from a French convent, come to Woolton in 1795, and why did they stay just twelve years? On a chilly Sunday afternoon in March, Dr Janet Hollinshead gave us a lucid, engaging and sometimes humorous account of the nuns' stories, based on the account of one who kept a journal.

Story one begins during the French Revolution, when anti-clerical laws in 1793 saw the nuns in Cambrai, one of about twenty convents in Northern France and the former Spanish Netherlands (Belgium), put under house arrest. A few days later, after an inventory was made, the nuns were given just fifteen minutes to leave with one bundle apiece - in their haste not choosing the wisest things, noted the journalist. An escort of light horsemen took them in carts to Compiègne, where they were imprisoned - all in one room! - for nineteen months, at risk of the guillotine. The fall of Robespierre allowed them to leave for England, paying for their own wagons and ship. After twelve days in London, during which one very sick nun died, the remaining sixteen were sent to Liverpool. On 21st May they began a new life in Woolton.

Why Woolton? Story two concerns Father John Bede Brewer, a wheeler-dealing Benedictine with his eye on the main chance of establishing a school: if not for boys, after two failed attempts, then for girls. As successor to Father Catterall, former chaplain to the Molyneux family, who had built a chapel in Watergate Lane, Father Brewer ran a small mission. The Relief Acts twenty years before the nuns' arrival tolerated Catholic clergy, provided they took a vow of allegiance.

Story three covers the twelve years living at numbers 45/47 Woolton Street, later also at number 43. The Land Tax Register showed the abbess, Mrs (Lucy) Blyde, as the occupier, though Father Brewer was the owner. The journalist records that the nuns had to equip their houses with all the basics, from furniture and linen, to wheat and straw for the underbeds. They had to pay for services, glaziers, joiners, chimney sweeps, etc. An order for blue flannel, grey linen, thread, bonnets and sixteen pairs of shoes shows the nuns having to devise their own clothes, the public wearing of habits being forbidden. Three years later, purchases of pea sticks and garden tools suggest they were more settled. The penniless nuns depended on donations in cash and food, firstly from their own families, but also from sympathisers locally and in the wider North West. The government paid them each a monthly pension of one guinea. Their school for young ladies from 5 to 13 years, at a yearly cost of 18 guineas, eventually expanded to 18 pupils, who studied French and Geography using maps and globes, as well as the traditional arithmetic, English grammar and, of course, R.E. with Father Brewer.

Having tried in vain to recover their property in France under Napoleon, in 1807 12 of the original nuns, plus another 7, moved to the Worcestershire house of a benefactress, Mrs Stanford. In the 1830s they built a convent and church at Stanbrook, still extant. Four

## Notice of A.G.M.

The 32nd Annual General Meeting of the Gateacre Society will be held on **Tuesday 31st OCTOBER 2006** in the Chapel Hall, Sandfield Road, Liverpool L25, starting at 8 pm. All members and prospective members of the Society are invited to attend.

## Another Diary Date

On **Sunday 29th OCTOBER** a Christmas Craft Fair will be held in the Woolton Social Club (better known as the Conservative Club) in Grange Lane, Gateacre. The Gateacre Society will be participating, with a table selling our usual range of books, tea towels and framed prints. Enquiries from prospective stallholders will be welcomed by the organiser, Sarah Whittle, on 07929 362003.

# CLEGG'S GIVEN THE GO-AHEAD

## Planning permission for the redevelopment of the former Cleggs Felt Factory was granted by the City Council on 7th August.

The decision to approve the plans was taken by the Council's Planning Committee (on the advice of its Planning Manager) at its meeting on 18th July, despite numerous well-argued objections from local residents, Councillors and the Gateacre Society.

Even a site visit, and verbal representations by Councillors Mace and Collinge and 7 members of the public, failed to convince the Planning Committee that certain aspects of the scheme would be severely detrimental to Gateacre's environment and to the amenities of those living nearby. Local residents from Sandfield Road, Dale Mews, Gateacre Brow and Halewood Road all drew attention to the potential traffic and parking problems arising from the scheme, the visual impact of the 'prison like' new blocks, and the lack of demand for new apartments in Gateacre.

## Our own comments on the proposal - which are fully set out on our website - may be summarised as follows:

- We welcome the proposal for residential conversion of the old Brewery building, the refurbishment of the former manager's house and residential development on the site of the portal-framed Felt Factory 'sheds'.
- We have no objection to the removal of the sections of more modern brickwork on the west elevation of the Brewery building, or to the architectural treatment which is proposed including the insertion of a glazed staircase tower.
- We object to the 'Cor-Ten' (rusty steel) slabs which are proposed for some of the staircase walls and window surrounds of the new apartment blocks. We also believe that copper and zinc are inappropriate roofing materials.
- We believe that the new three-storey Blocks 2 and 3 will adversely affect the setting of the listed buildings, and will also have an overshadowing effect on the neighbouring properties in Halewood Road and Lower Sandfield.
- We object to the inadequate level of parking provision which is proposed (22 spaces for the 22 apartments). It is difficult to see where the residents and their visitors will be able to park without causing an obstruction to other vehicles and/or pedestrians.
- We are concerned about the likely traffic implications of the development. Any increase in car traffic can only add to the existing problems in Sandfield Road, which will be the sole exit route from the development. We are also worried about the proposed vehicular access point on Gateacre Brow.
- While regarding the new plans as an improvement on those previously submitted, we feel that the number of new dwelling units proposed is still excessive. We see no reason why an attractive and profitable 'mews-style' development - ideally designed with elderly residents in mind - could not be designed.

We disagreed with many aspects of the Planning Manager's analysis - in particular his assertion that the proposed three-storey apartment blocks on the site of the Felt Works 'shed' were justified as so-called 'enabling development' to finance the restoration and conversion of the Listed Building, i.e. the former brewery building on Gateacre Brow. We could see no reason why a low-rise 'character' housing development at the rear of the site should not generate just as much income - enhancing rather than detracting from the appearance of the Listed Building, and creating a more attractive environment for the new residents.

**Who exactly will buy these 22 new apartments, people are asking, when so many similar properties - with more convenient access and parking arrangements and a more pleasant outlook - are for sale or vacant nearby?**