

# 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) Email: [info@gatsoc.org.uk](mailto:info@gatsoc.org.uk)

## IF YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS

and would like to receive your Newsletters by email instead of by post, please let us know by sending a simple message to [membership@gatsoc.org.uk](mailto:membership@gatsoc.org.uk) quoting your name and postcode

## Officers for 2006/07

- Chairman: Tony McCann  
Vice Chairman: Brian Doman, 6 Hayles Grove, L25 4SL (722 6368)  
Hon.Secretary: *Post vacant*  
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. 31/10/07).

## 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 2007

*Our next meeting:*

## THE BELLE VALE PREFABS

The Story of a Vibrant Community  
from Post-war Beginning until  
Break-up in the Sixties

A presentation on Sunday 4th February at 2.30 p.m.  
in Gateacre Chapel Hall, Sandfield Road, L25

After the ravages of war there was an urgent need for re-housing, especially in heavily bombed, poorly resourced Liverpool. This talk will show how the Belle Vale estate came into being, how its people, many from the inner city, some returning soldiers, grew into a strong and vital community with its own new schools and churches, its local characters and way of life ... until twenty years later, to the great sadness of its residents, it was split up. Now forty years on, this project on the prefabs has given many of those residents the opportunity to put on record their experiences of that time.

**The Belle Vale Prefab Project will tell the story.**  
**ALL WELCOME - ADMISSION FREE**

## PREFAB DAYS



**A COMMUNITY  
REMEMBERS**

*Above:* The Project's book, 'Prefab Days', which is full of photographs and reminiscences of former residents, was published in December 2006. It is on sale, price £9.99, at Belle Vale Post Office, 121 Belle Vale Road, L25 - and copies will also be available at our meeting.

## Friends' Events

The Friends of Gateacre are now holding regular meetings: on the first Thursday of each month, at 7 p.m., in the Conservative Club (Woolton Social Club), Grange Lane. They will be pleased to see anyone who wishes to help with the arrangements for Gateacre in Bloom 2007. The Friends are also holding a Quiz Night on Friday 26th January, 7.30 p.m., at the Gateacre Institute, Grange Lane. For details, phone Barbara Collinge on 722 6862.

# FLAYBRICK MEMORIAL GARDENS

A Review of our July talk - by *Mary Champion*

On Tuesday 18th July we heard an excellent talk from Simon Petris on the Flaybrick Memorial Gardens - a cemetery now closed.

By 1840 Birkenhead had virtually run out of burial space in its churchyards. The old ones were full, no new churches were being built and the population was rapidly growing. It was decided that a municipal cemetery should be built - but the original idea came to nought and it was May 1864 before the Cemetery was eventually opened. The site was Flaybrick Hill, overlooked by Bidston Hill. Edward Kemp, Curator of Birkenhead Park, was the design competition winner. Three chapels were built: one for Roman Catholics, one for the Church of England and one for Nonconformists. There was also a Registrar's Office and a Sexton's Lodge.

There are many interesting graves to be seen. For example the grave of a ship's fitter and an electrician lost in the Thetis, which sunk while on sea trials in 1939. Edith Jones, a clippie, killed in a tramcar accident in 1918. James Taylor Cochran, died 1916, who had built in 1879 the Resurgam, the world's first mechanically propelled submarine.

The last burials took place in 1975, and gradually the beautifully-landscaped site has been developed into a Memorial Garden. As well as the graves there are many trees, flowers, birds and other wildlife. In October 1995 a Ranger was appointed for Flaybrick and his role is to manage the gardens for the benefit of visitors and wildlife. Self-guided trails and guided walks covering various subjects are also available. The gardens are open every day, and there are loos and a café nearby at the Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm, Boundary Road. The main gates to Flaybrick are on Tollemache Road. The Ranger's telephone number is 0151 653 9332.

## MEETING OUR NEIGHBOURS - AND OUR CONSERVATION OFFICERS

On 10th January, five of our Committee members met with Committee members of the Woolton and Wavertree Societies, and Steve Corbett - the City Council's Conservation Team Leader - who brought with him Wendy Morgan, the Principal Conservation Officer responsible for Conservation Area and Listed Building matters within our area. On the agenda were: planning enforcement in Conservation Areas, highways work (including pavement repairs), the role of the Conservation Section in advising on planning applications, and the need for Conservation Area Appraisals and Advisory Leaflets.

All of these topics were the subject of lively discussion. We were not happy with everything we heard, but we came away from the meeting with some ideas for future collaboration - like the production of advisory leaflets for Conservation Area residents and businesses. It was particularly good to see such a strong contingent from the 're-born' Woolton Society, and we look forward to further get-togethers later on in the year.

*If you are interested in taking part in these and similar discussions, why not join our Committee? You will be made very welcome. Please ask any existing member for information about when we meet and what is involved.*

## RAY KIRKHAM 1918-2007

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Ray Kirkham, a former Committee member of the Gateacre Society who was actively involved in many different aspects of practical conservation work in the south Liverpool area. Ray died on 11th January, just a fortnight after celebrating his 88th birthday on Christmas Day. Many people will remember Ray with affection, whether as a neighbour in Lee Park, Scout leader, conservation volunteer, defender of trees and public rights of way, or participant in environmental discussions. Even after he found it difficult to get around on foot, Ray was a familiar sight on his scooter, keeping a watchful eye on the local environment and keeping in touch with others who sought to protect it. He will be sadly missed.

## A REVAMP FOR BELLE VALE SHOPS

The new owners of Belle Vale Shopping Centre - the Frogmore Property Company Ltd (FREP) - have submitted a planning application to extend the shopping centre, redesign the entrance, and provide a covered walkway along the car park frontage. Their architects state that their approach has been "to create a striking and contemporary building of its time which will contrast with and enhance the surroundings, acting as a catalyst for further development".

The design of the proposed extension - which comprises three new retail units behind a curved frontage on the car park side of the building - is certainly striking, with raised, silver-coloured 'halo' features above the entrance and at the corners of the building. The proposed covered walkway will provide a direct link from the bus stops in Hedgefield Road to the shopping centre entrance, to a new circular 'public space' beyond (at the entrance to Belle Vale Park) and perhaps - at a later date, subject to Morrisons' agreement - continuing on to the supermarket entrance as well. There will be some loss of existing car parking spaces, but the developers argue that the improved facilities for bus passengers will make up for this.

When the Society's Committee commented on the original plan for a supermarket at Belle Vale - as long ago as 1999 - we argued strongly for the integration of the new store with the existing shopping centre, in terms of both car parking provision and pedestrian links. We therefore welcome the Frogmore scheme, which should make Belle Vale an even more convenient place to shop than it is at present.

The Planning Application - ref. 06F/3657 - can be inspected at the City Council's offices in Millennium House, Victoria Street, Liverpool. The official closing date for any comments is 25th January.

## PLANNING UPDATE

On 2nd November, the City Council granted planning permission for the 7 proposed town houses on the Michael Taylor Garage site, on the corner of **Grange Lane** and South Station Road. (See last Newsletter for an illustration of the approved scheme).

Also in November, revised drawings were submitted in respect of the former electricity generating station in **Sandfield Road** (see our January 2006 Newsletter). We had earlier supported this proposal to convert the building into 5 flats, but had expressed reservations about the south elevation which is to feature large panels of opaque glass at first-floor level. The amended plans show the area of glass slightly reduced (though not enough to satisfy our objections), an extra window to be inserted in the east elevation (which we feel will harm the character of the building) and long 'lantern' windows to be created on top of the roof (which we regard as unnecessary - and which were apparently suggested by the Council's Conservation Officer against the wishes of the owners' architect). A decision on this application is expected very shortly.