



The Gateacre Society

A VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION

Guarding the Past - Safeguarding the Future

NEWSLETTER - January 2025

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY CELEBRATES ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY!



OUR NEXT TALKS:

**Sunday 2nd February 2:00pm
at Gateacre Unitarian Chapel**

Christina Clark will be able to talk to us on February 2nd on the Glasgow Architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh who amongst other things designed the Glasgow Art gallery.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh as a major figure in the art nouveau movement. He is also famous for his strikingly modern interiors of his houses such as 'The Hill House' in Helensburgh, 'The House for an Art Lover' in Glasgow, together with his buildings, including the famous Glasgow tea rooms he executed for his greatest patron Miss Kate Cranston. He also designed the Glasgow School of Art Building which was severely damaged in 2014 and finally burnt down in 2018. Mackintosh collaborated in much of his interior design with his wife Margaret Macdonald who was a gifted artist.



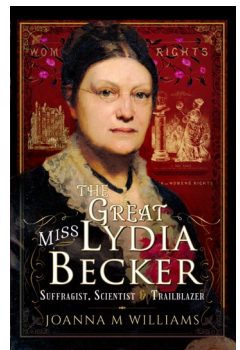
PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION - We would like to take the time to inform members that when attending our talks, it would be advisable to avoid using the Bear and Staff car park, which operates with ANPR parking cameras. Users of the car park need to make sure they remember to go inside the pub and register their vehicle on the machine to ensure they don't incur a fine. Therefore the best option to avoid a fine would be to park on the road along Gateacre Brow. **Please note that the society are unable to provide transport for members to and from talks due to financial and insurance restraints, and attendees must arrange their own transport.**

Sunday 23rd March 2:00pm at Gateacre Unitarian Chapel

Joanna Williams will be presenting a talk on Lydia Ernestine Becker.

Fifty years before women were enfranchised, a legal loophole allowed up to a thousand women to vote in the general election of 1868. This surprising event occurred due to the feisty and single-minded dedication of Lydia Becker, the acknowledged, though unofficial, leader of the British women's suffrage movement in the later 19th century. Brought up near Manchester in a middle-class family as the eldest of fifteen children, she broke away from convention, remaining single and entering the sphere of men by engaging in politics. Although it was considered almost immoral for a woman to speak in public, Lydia addressed innumerable audiences, not only on women's votes, but also on the position of wives, the abuse of women, and their rights at work. She battled grittily to gain academic education for poor girls, and kept countless supporters all over Britain and beyond abreast of the many campaigns for women's rights through her publication, the *Women's Suffrage Journal*.

Steamrolling her way to Parliament as chief lobbyist for women, she influenced MPs in a way that no woman, and few men, had done before. In the 1860s the idea of women's suffrage was compared in the Commons to persuading dogs to dance; it was dismissed as ridiculous and unnatural. By the time of Lydia's death in 1890 there was a wide acceptance that the enfranchisement of women would happen, sooner or later. The torch was picked up by Lydia's younger colleague on the London committee, Millicent Fawcett, and by a woman she had inspired as a teenager, Emmeline Pankhurst; the rest is History.



ONE MORE STEP AROUND THE WORLD

Written by Julie Lomax - Luckily a fresh sunny day for a walk, this area has connections in my life because we lived in Halewood in the 1970's, and I have memories of Gateacre because of our GP there as well as walking through the area when at uni. I also have been driving to Our Lady of Assumption Primary School. A frequently over the past couple of years and have always wondered about the history of some of the pretty features on certain buildings, especially around St Stephen's church. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing about who was connected to various buildings, especially Mr Walker who funded our art gallery and other buildings. My husband also has a personal connection with the Wilson memorial and it was interesting for me to see and appreciate our familial link with the history of Gateacre. I particularly liked seeing the cottages behind St Stephen's church, it was a little oasis of peace despite a busy road so close by. I would love to do this walk again one day to share it with family. **Julie also kindly informed us that descendants of John Hays Wilson can now be found in Oakville, Canada.**



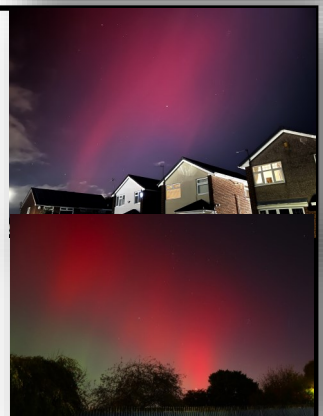
A SIGN OF THE TIMES

It has recently come to our attention that the 1897 sign post on Belle Vale Road is looking a bit unkempt and has nearby branches encroaching onto it. The sign post is a Grade II listed building which was most recently renovated in 2014. We have contacted the council in the hopes that the branches can be lopped and some TLC applied.

AN ASTRONOMICALLY SMALL CHANCE?

On 21st October, a solar flare reached Earth during our star's solar maximum, part of an 11 year solar cycle. Whilst this is not uncommon, the cosmic conditions happened to be perfect to view Aurora Borealis, and with no cloud or moonshine, a strong glow was visible in Gateacre with the naked eye.

The results from phone pictures and camera lenses were even more spectacular.



LET THEM EAT CAKE!



Our annual AGM took place on 20th October 2024 in which we celebrated the successes of the past year, as well as reflected on the contributions of Mike Chitty who continues to support our endeavors through the structures and articles he entrenched over nearly half of the lifetime of the society.

Sandra took the lead as Chairperson after her first year leading the Society's meetings and gave a comprehensive review of the events of the year, as well as raising the profile of other committee members and their contributions to our successful talks, walks, events and outings of 2024.

Alan took the time to inform the Society of the acknowledgment of walking in Mike's footsteps, and the importance of being able to port Mike's online legacy and newsletters into our newly built website. Dawn was pleased to report to the society that our finances were balanced and that our 50th anniversary 3D models had helped the society's financial accounts improve.

Once the AGM business was over and done with, Sue arranged for Florrie and the Ukes to perform a number of popular hit songs as the society members helped themselves to a buffet and champagne.

However, the most important event of all was the cutting of the celebratory cake which was arranged by Rosemary for all to enjoy. Rosemary and Brian were asked to cut the cake in honour of their long term commitment to the society. It was as delicious as had been promised and was a fitting celebration to cap off our 50th year of guarding the past and safeguarding the future of Gateacre.

Our 100th anniversary will take place in 2074. Rosemary, we are already looking forward to the next cake!

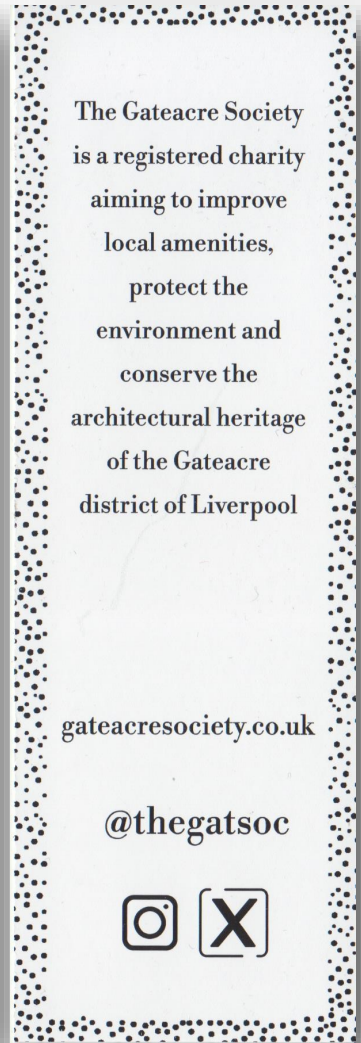


GATEACRE BOOKMARK

A huge thank you to Lynn, our membership secretary, who arranged a commemorative bookmark to celebrate our 50th anniversary of guarding the past and safeguarding the future of Gateacre Village.

Lynn did a brilliant job in ensuring the society was able to provide something back to its members to celebrate the occasion which would also be useful and memorable for years to come itself.

Thank you Lynn for all your time and effort in producing this bookmark. It is very much appreciated.



WAT-ER MESS!

As we entered another Winter, the flooding on Gateacre Park North continued to be an issue. Whilst residents have received updates from Councillor Kris over the last year, we are yet to see any action on the ground. We are thankful to Kris that he continues to pursue this issue with the local council and United Utilities.



TREEMENDOUS NEWS

Last year it was suggested that Gateacre could have a permanent Christmas Tree on the village green. A new tree was planted on 29th October 2024 courtesy of the Council. Prior to this, in 2023 a tree was also planted in commemoration of the King's coronation after the felling of three dangerous trees, and although the old stumps remain, they will hopefully be removed some time in 2025 leaving space for a number of new trees. The newly planted tree is a Nordic Fir.

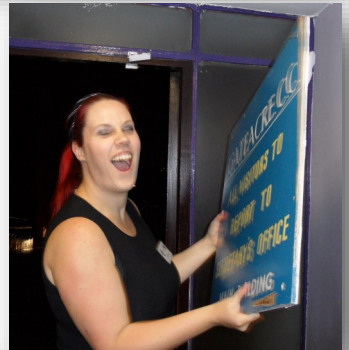


The Christmas lights switch on occurred on the 23rd November at 6pm. It is fantastic to not only see the Council investing in our community assets, but also considering its environmental sustainability of seasonal events at the same time. Over 300 people attended, as well as Father Christmas.



THANK YOU LISA!

We would like to wish Lisa Mitchell the best of luck as she moves on from Gateacre School. Lisa has played a pivotal role in putting Gateacre on the map as the Community Co-Ordinator. The many community events she has organised throughout her tenure include the 50th school anniversary party, the Demolition Discos and the permanent Big Little Library in Belle Vale Shopping Centre. Good Luck Lisa. You leave behind the most amazing legacy and some big shoes to fill!



TURNING BACK THE CLOCK

10 Years Ago...

40th Anniversary Time Capsule

The contents of our Time Capsule - installed courtesy of Aldi Stores Ltd in June, to celebrate 40 years of the Gateacre Society - will be the subject of a presentation at our A.G.M. on 26th October. They were inspired by the relics that were found in 2005, packed inside a glass bottle, when the Gateacre Hall Hotel was demolished. These had included a local newspaper, a railway timetable, a mail-order clothing catalogue and handwritten notes on some of the local residents and events of 1881; so our 2014 Capsule included a Liverpool Echo, a Merseymart, a Gateacre Journal, bus timetables, and an Aldi Special Offers booklet, along with contributions from local residents (who had been asked to recall happenings during the past 40 years) and from local schoolchildren (whose brief was to write or draw something about their life in 2014, and their ideas about life in the Gateacre of 2054).



20 Years Ago...

We're in the Final!

In early August the Friends of Gateacre received the good news that Gateacre Village has won through to the final stage of the North West in Bloom competition. The awards ceremony takes place on 24th September at Old Trafford Cricket Ground, and will be attended by representatives of the Friends' committee. Councillors Barbara Collinge and Barbara Mace have written to all supporters as follows: "Many congratulations go to everyone who has supported Gateacre's entry and especially to those who took an active part and worked tirelessly to improve the Village and achieve this prize. We have all seen how so many residents have joined together to make your bid a success and Gateacre has looked a picture throughout the summer. We feel sure your success will be a springboard for long term improvements for the Village in future years."



30 Years Ago...

Black Bull Cobble Saga

In response to our letters, the chairman of Allied Lyons has instructed the Regional Director of Tetleys to investigate the problem of the cobbles on the forecourt - both they and we are concerned about the danger which an uneven surface presents. The difference is that Tetleys feel the forecourt has been improved by the relaying of the cobbles, whereas we feel they would be better laid 'worn and flattish' side up, as they were originally



40 Years Ago...

Land at York Cottages - Those of you who pass along Grange Lane will have noticed that AT LAST work has started on this scruffy piece of land - in the centre of the Gateacre Village Conservation Area. Our very grateful thanks go to one of the Society's members - Mr. J.R. Kirkham, the coordinator of the Merseyside Conservation Volunteers who are sponsored by the Merseyside Council



for Voluntary Service - and to the Environmental Health Dept. who provided a skip. The volunteers, assisted by Mr. Green and Mr. Azzopardi - residents in York Cottages, the Hon. Sec. and one 'impressed' young lady from Grange Lane set to work early on the 29th December trimming bushes and trees, collecting dozens of bottles - spirit and milk - and other yuk and finally, as light was failing, erecting chestnut paling around the site.

50 Years Ago...

The Village Green and Jubilee Celebration

We are pleased to report that, after months of waiting, the Recreation and Open Spaces Department is starting on the renovation of the Green - in the week commencing March 7th. They have managed to find an unemployed Paver at last, and the setts, which were spotted by a member of the Woolton Society, are coming from the old Childrens Admission Unit in Acrefield Road. This means that the work will be completed in time for the Queen's Jubilee. It is hoped to involve Gateacre C. of E. School in our celebrations, but arrangements will have to wait until the appointment of a new Head, as Mr. E. Lunt is to retire at Easter - we would like to wish him well in his retirement. Our Chairman, Mr. Tim Brakell and Mrs. Lewis had a meeting with the Chairman of the Conservative Club - Mr. E. Woolley, and as a result a number of trees have been planted around the perimeter of the car park to act, eventually, as a screen. This will give an improved aspect to that corner of Grange Lane.

Memories of The Dairy

by Elizabeth Ann, daughter of Betty Guy

"Talking about the Dairy, I remember mum saying that her sister and herself were sent to an aunt and uncle in Scunthorpe, as Albert (*Betty's father*) had gone bankrupt and lost the dairy farming business, and he did not want the children to see everything being taken away. I don't know whether gran (*Ethel*) had cows again or not; mum did mention some horses when she was a girl, but by the time I came along all I can remember is chickens, ducks, pigs, I have the paperwork somewhere saying how much she got when they were slaughtered; and GEESE as I have still got the scar from when they bit my bum. Gran did not have guard dogs, she had geese instead; easier to look after, she would say. One used to have to take a yard brush for protection when going into the orchard, but I spent many a happy day in and around the Dairy".

"What I remember about the orchard & grounds outside the Dairy are the fruit trees that I had to climb up, or if I went up a ladder Uncle Arthur (*Betty's brother*) used to swing it back & forth with me at the very top - he thought it was amusing! and gran shouting up to me saying "twist them off, don't pull". They were lovely old tree types that you do not see today. And finding duck eggs in nests under bushes, and hens' eggs, and the geese which I have mentioned before.

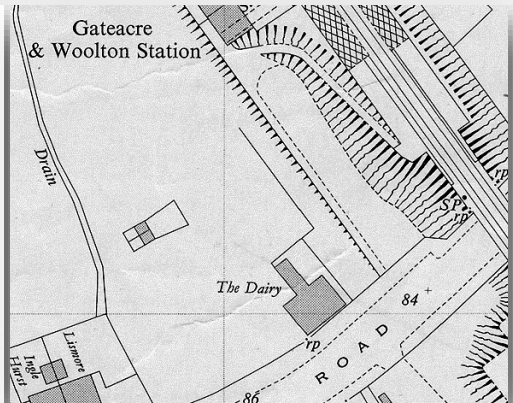
Down at the very bottom of the field (*behind the Dairy*) there was a pond; a willow tree had fallen half way across it, so it was great to sit on and watch the pond life. There were loads of raspberry canes, and foxgloves of every colour; I used to put the bell-like flowers on the end of my fingers till one day I got stung as I had not looked before I had put my finger inside one - ouch!

There was also a wooden-built chalet which the manager of one of the theatres in Liverpool (I can't remember the name of it) used to stay in the summer months, and we used to get free tickets to go to the pantomimes which were more or less the best ones in the house. Sometimes I used to carry one of his shopping bags from the road and down the field to his chalet, as you could not get a car down there. He would give me threepence, and he also let me take his empty pop bottles back to Davenport's, to get the coppers back on them."

"Inside the Dairy there were two side doors; straight in front of you was a slab, where gran used to have loads of turkeys hanging when it was near Christmas. Also in the corner was an incubator where I spent quite a lot of time watching ducks, geese, etc. hatching; it was also where gran had her gas cooker, but before she got that, there was a range in the back living room which she used to use to do her cooking etc., and there was another small room at the very back where there was a sink and a geyser for hot water. You went out the side door round the corner and that is where the loo was, one of those great big wooden seated ones, worth a few bob today, eh!".

"There was also a cellar off the hall where she used to store the elderberry wine that she made, and further up the hall was a sort of pantry, then a door which then brought you into the front hall where the shop was on one side, and another room opposite (the shop counter was on the side of the house nearest the station). Step back a bit and the stairs were there, with a landing where gran used to have her rifle propped up against the wall - she said it was to scare the foxes away! I had actually heard her fire it on occasion. Then further up there were four bedrooms and one box room; I can see it as if it was yesterday. I remember that when I was about 10 and we were living in Charlwood Road, mum would ask me to go and see gran - I always made sure it was on a bright day as the hall was so long and there was not a light; it could be quite scary!"

"My uncle Arthur used to help out in Gran's shop, and sometimes my mum would help on a Sunday, and I would get a bag of sweets if I helped as well. Before she had her shop the two front rooms were rented out as a surgery for Dr. Ellenbogen (*the local GP*). I used to live with my parents in one of the rooms upstairs for a while when I was a baby, and gran used to rent another room to a Tom & Emma, but I can't remember much about them. Gran always knew how to make a few bob, she even used to have day-old chicks in another room upstairs!"



Oakfield Manor and the MGM Movie Company - by Dave Singfield

When I was born in 1943 my parents were living in Oakfield Manor, on Cuckoo lane. We were there till about 1946 when the building was purchased by the Liverpool Corporation and turned into a girls boarding school. My father worked for MGM the big movie production company. Back during the war days movie films were highly flammable and MGM purchased the Manor to house the films. The City of Liverpool had ordered the company to get all the film storage out of the city centre because of the fire threat.



**WHY NOT INVITE A FRIEND TO JOIN THE SOCIETY?
We have included our membership form below.**

Please fill this form out IN PRINT CAPITAL LETTERS

Salutation: Miss Ms Mrs Mr Other: _____

Full Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

_____ **Post Code:** _____

Telephone/Mobile: _____

I consent to give Gift Aid: Yes No

Choosing Yes under GIFT AID DECLARATION means: "Please treat all my subscriptions and other donations to the Gateacre Society until further notice as Gift Aid. My annual UK income tax is more than the tax the Society will reclaim. I will notify the Society if I cease to pay sufficient tax in the future.

I consent to my personal information being held in accordance with the Privacy Policy as set out on the Gateacre Society's website: Yes

I DO NOT agree to being receiving updates by:

Post Telephone Email

My chosen subscription: (Payments can be taken by cash, cheque, or bank transfer)

1/2/3 year Household with emailed newsletters – £5/£10/£15

1/2/3 year Single Pensioner with emailed newsletters – £4/£8/£12

1/2/3 year Company with emailed newsletters – £10/£20/£30

Optional Extra: Posted newsletter via Royal Mail/Hand Delivered - £5 per year

**Send this form to: Lynn Ryder (Membership Secretary), 4 Roxborough Walk,
Liverpool, L25 5HN or hand it to any Committee member**

CONTACT US

Founded 1974. Registered Charity No.508024. A member of the British Association for Local History and the Merseyside Civic Society

Website: www.gateacresociety.co.uk

Email: thegateacresociety@gmail.com

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