

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

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

Website: www.gatsoc.org.uk Email: info@gatsoc.org.uk

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Sales Officer

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WE NEED NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

If you would like to know more about what is involved,
please have a word with any existing member

Annual Membership Subscriptions

Household £4 Single pensioner £3 Company, etc. £6

If you wish to join the Society, please send the appropriate subscription to the
Membership Secretary, David Phythian, 26 Primrose Road, Liverpool L18 2HE:
cheques payable to 'The Gateacre Society'.

*The Society's membership year ends on 31st October. If you are already a member,
your address label indicates the date when your next subscription payment is due.*

Our Book - Gateacre & Belle Vale: in old photographs -
is on sale at our meetings and events, price **£10** (bookshop price £12.99).

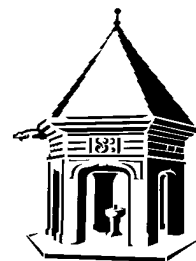
Our Tea-towel is also available, price **£4**.

Visit our website - or contact Beryl Plent or Pam Ball for further details.

DO YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS?

If so, and if you would like to receive your Newsletters by email
instead of by post, please let us know by sending a message to
membership@gatsoc.org.uk quoting your name and postcode

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The Gateacre Society

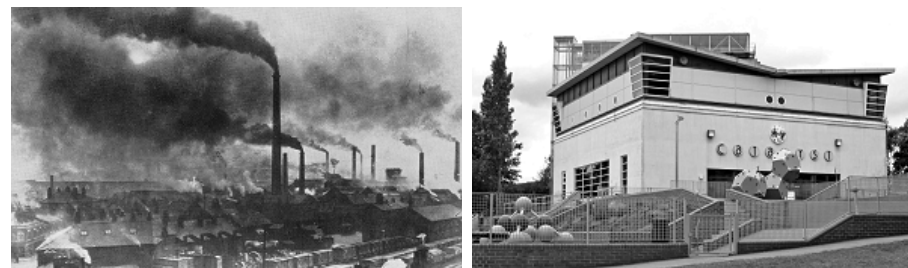
Guarding the Past - Safeguarding the Future

NEWSLETTER - January 2018

Our next meeting:

The Development of the Chemical Industry in Runcorn and Widnes

An illustrated talk by Diana Leitch
in Gateacre Chapel, Gateacre Brow L25 3PB
on Sunday 28th January at 2.30 p.m.



Dr Diana M Leitch, MBE, FRSC, is both a chemist and a local historian. She has been researching the history of the chemical industry on both sides of the River Mersey for many years. Born and brought up in Runcorn - at the thriving heart of an industry which developed in Runcorn and Widnes from the 18th century onwards - Diana is descended from Weaver flatmen, who brought the salt from Winsford up to Runcorn, and others who came from Oxfordshire to work in the growing chemical industry in the mid 19th century. She uses her extensive collection of photographs and personal knowledge in this talk. Diana is also a Trustee at the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre and Museum in Widnes (*pictured above right*), which is based in the old Gossages' soapworks building dating from 1855. She will be bringing some of her local history books for sale, and also greetings cards in support of Catalyst.

ALL WELCOME - Admission free - Donations invited

IS YOUR SUBSCRIPTION DUE?

We shall be issuing personalised Final Reminders with the NEXT Newsletter, but meanwhile please take a few moments to look at the date on your address label. If (but ONLY if) it reads '31/10/17', your membership of the Society has expired, and we hope that you will renew - for 1, 2 or 3 years - by giving or sending your subscription to our Membership Secretary - see back page for details.

LIVERPOOL HEROES

Our September 2017 talk – reviewed by Mike Chitty

Bill Sergeant, our speaker on 18th September, began by explaining that his 'Liverpool Heroes' were the men depicted on a sculpture group in Abercromby Square: a wounded soldier, a stretcher bearer and a doctor. The doctor was Noel Chavasse, whose father was Bishop of Liverpool, and most people refer to the sculpture as the 'Chavasse Memorial'.

The Chavasse family – including 7 children – moved from Oxford to Liverpool in 1900. The 16-year-old twins Noel and Christopher went to Liverpool College, which was regarded as the best school in the area and had a reputation for sport – in which the Chavasse twins excelled.

The two boys went on to Oxford University. On graduating, Noel decided to become a doctor, while Christopher followed his father into the Church. Noel qualified as an orthopaedic surgeon in Liverpool, and worked at the Royal Southern Hospital. He also joined the Territorial Force – predecessor of the TA. When WW1 broke out he joined the Royal Army Medical Corps, and was attached to the 10th Battalion of the Kings Liverpool Regiment – i.e. the Liverpool Scottish.

By June 1915, Chavasse was one of the few officers of the Liverpool Scottish not to have been killed or injured. He was on the front line, treating the wounded, but wrote to his parents "my blood is not the heroic type". He had been issued with a side gun, but never used it in his three years in the Army. At night he went out with a torch, looking for injured men. His religious background gave him the confidence that he'd survive.

In 1916, Chavasse was involved in the Battle of the Somme, and then in Guillemont. The Liverpool Scottish were almost destroyed, yet again. At the end of the battle, Chavasse was awarded the VC for treating the wounded while under gunfire, continuing through the night, and saving the lives of 20 severely wounded men while himself suffering a thigh wound.

In 1917, after collecting his VC from Buckingham Palace, Chavasse was back in France and then Flanders. In July, on the first day of the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, he was shot in the head but carried on treating the wounded. Then on 2nd August, while Chavasse was asleep, a German shell exploded and he suffered a serious wound to his stomach. Eventually he was taken to a Dressing Station – but not before crawling out and attempting to help his colleagues. Two days later he died. Chavasse was awarded a posthumous 'bar' to his VC – the first person to win two VCs in the same conflict.

Bill Sergeant was involved in the campaign to put up a public memorial to Noel Chavasse in his home city. It took two years to raise the necessary £120,000, and finding a suitable location for the sculpture was not an easy task. Eventually Liverpool University offered a site in Abercromby Square, close to the former Bishop's Palace where the family had lived. Unveiled in 2008, it is well-respected and well-used, being the venue for Liverpool Scottish Association anniversary services.

Bill's talk was followed by a lively question-and-answer session. He was warmly thanked for giving us such a vivid account of such a notable Liverpool hero, and those who served with him.

HUG A MUG IN GATEACRE BROW?

In our July 2017 Newsletter we described the plans for 28a-d Gateacre Brow, the black-and-white listed building on the corner of Sandfield Road. The new owners, Winter Melia Developments, were granted planning permission in November to convert the upper floors of the building, and the rear part of the ground floor, to five flats. The business use at the front was to continue, but shortly afterwards the tenants – the very successful Hair Fairy wig shop – moved out, having purchased 28 Gateacre Brow next door. Now the vacated space has been let to Emma Lahorgue and Natalie Myers, who are proposing to open a cafe called 'Hug a Mug'.

In their planning application (ref.17F/3169 & 17L/3398) they describe the proposal as a "cafe shop with sensory room to basement". They say that they will be seeking accreditation as "Autism and Dementia friendly". The sensory room, with soft padded walls and mood lighting, will give parents/carers an area for children to "let off steam and not be required to leave".

In our comments to the Planning Department, we highlighted the fact that the proposal will help retain the character of the listed building, and the presence of customers in the corner should help deter lorry drivers from hitting the overhanging timberwork, which has been a longstanding problem. We would not be in favour of alternative food and drink uses with longer opening hours (the currently-proposed hours being 8am-5.30 Mon-Fri, 8-3 on Saturdays) which might generate noise or cooking smells.

The Council's decision on the planning application is currently awaited.

FRIENDS OF GATEACRE RE-LAUNCHED

With charitable funding now harder to come by, the Friends of Gateacre have been reviewing their plans for the spring and summer of 2018. For 13 years now, Gateacre Village has been brightened-up by tubs and planters paid for by the Friends. If this is to continue, then more volunteers are needed to look after them, and in particular to keep the plants watered during dry spells. Local businesses are also being asked to contribute financially. If you would like to help in any way, please come to the next FOG meeting – at the Black Bull on 30th January, 4pm – or contact the Chair, barbaramace@mail.com

MORE PLANNING NEWS

Our Committee regularly examines the weekly lists of local planning applications, and submits comments to the Council's Planning Department when we consider it necessary. We rarely comment on proposals outside the Gateacre Village Conservation Area, unless they affect green spaces, trees or listed buildings. However two recent exceptions have been the following:

1. Application 17H/2902 for extensions to 'Treeside', 27 Acrefield Road.
2. Application 17H/3229 for new fence panels and gates at 82 Childwall Lane.

In both cases we submitted an objection, on the grounds that the proposals were out of keeping with the character of their surroundings, and approval might set a precedent for other parts of our area.

The first application (which also attracted objections from several local residents) was refused by the Council in November. The second application (which is for retrospective approval of black-and-gold panels already installed) is currently awaiting a decision.