

THE GATEACRE SOCIETY

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

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Executive Committee 2018/19

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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 **£9** (bookshop price £12.99).

Our Tea-towel is also available, price **£4**. See our website for 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

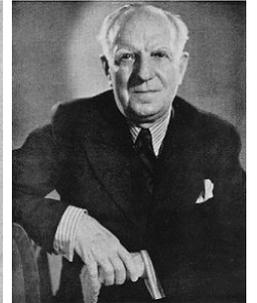
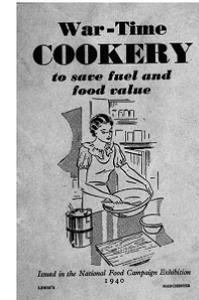
Guarding the Past - Safeguarding the Future

NEWSLETTER - January 2019

Our next meeting:

WHO WAS LORD WOOLTON?

An illustrated talk by Janet Hollinshead
in Gateacre Chapel,
Gateacre Brow,
Liverpool L25 3PB
on Sunday
3rd February
at 2.30 p.m.



Lord Woolton may be known to some through lending his name to 'Woolton Pie' in wartime recipe books. He was closely associated with food acquisition, distribution and rationing during, and after, the Second World War.

This talk examines how it was that someone came to have such a local title and, indeed, how that title has been inherited by his son and then by his grandson. Hillfoot (which no longer exists) was Lord Woolton's house - just off School Lane in Woolton. But who was he? And why did he have the title of Lord Woolton?

Dr Janet Hollinshead retired some years ago as head of history at Liverpool Hope University. Her main research interests have been early modern history and local history. She has published several books and articles. For many years she has been an officer of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, and is now a committee member of the Woolton Society. Recently she has written a series of publications for that society - including pamphlets on Lord Woolton and Hillfoot which will be on sale (price £1 each) at this meeting.

ALL WELCOME - Admission free - Donations invited

THE STORY OF THE BRIDGEWATER CANAL

Our October 2018 talk – reviewed by Mike Chitty

Our Chairman, Brian Doman, spoke to us on 1st October about the history and features of the Bridgewater Canal. It was originally created by Francis Egerton, Duke of Bridgewater, to transport coal from his mines at Worsley to the growing town of Manchester. Before the canal was built, coal had to be transported by packhorse to the navigable River Irwell, and its price in Manchester was 7d/cwt (sevenpence per hundredweight). After it was built, the price dropped to 4d/cwt.

Drainage of the mines had always been a problem, and a long tunnel – Massey's Sough – had been constructed as long ago as 1729 to take the water away. When Francis Egerton went on the Grand Tour, he saw the boats on the Canal du Midi, and had the idea of building navigable channels to transport his coal. He engaged James Brindley to design the Bridgewater Canal, with its associated tunnels and bridges. In 1760 Brindley went to London to obtain Parliamentary approval, taking with him a large piece of Cheshire cheese which he used to demonstrate some of his engineering ideas!

The new canal, which opened in 1763, had to cross the River Irwell. There was already a road bridge, and the canal bridge arches had to be at least as wide and high. Brian showed us a colour drawing of Brindley's aqueduct, and also some photographs of the rock face at Worsley from which the canal emerged. The canal tunnel was 8ft high (4ft above and 4ft below the water level) and very soon a second tunnel had to be built to relieve the traffic congestion. We saw a picture of the 'Packet House' from which passenger boats departed for Manchester (a 3-hour journey) or Runcorn (8 hours). As the photographs showed, the canal water is ochre-coloured owing to the presence of iron ore. We saw a map of the mine workings and tunnels. The layout was very complicated, with different navigable levels underground, connected by an 'inclined plane'. All the loading and moving of the barges would have been done by candlelight.

Brian then took us on a pictorial journey along the canal, looking at some of its other features. We saw a lighthouse (to warn of a sharp right turn), a railway station (Patricroft, from where Queen Victoria and Prince Albert had a canal trip to Worsley Hall), and a video of the very unusual Barton Swing Aqueduct (which replaced Brindley's original bridge when the Manchester Ship Canal was built).

The underground canal at Worsley was only navigable until 1877, but remained in use for drainage until the coal mine closed in 1968. Nowadays the main use of the canal is for pleasure cruising and towpath walking. We saw pictures of the marina at Stretford, converted warehouses, and Greyfriars Quay which handled stone for the Liverpool Docks and Chester Cathedral. We also saw several of Brindley's original bridges which, unusually, are named rather than numbered. Brian explained that a tunnel at Preston Brook links the Bridgewater Canal with the Trent & Mersey Canal.

Brian's talk and pictures brought the story of the canal to life, and no doubt encouraged some of those present to go and take a look for themselves at some of the places featured.

THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY CONFIRMED

On 19th December, the Inspector Mr Martin Elliott issued his decision. The path linking Acrefield Road with Woolton Park via Glenacres and Byron Court is, as we had argued, a Public Right of Way. His decision was made on the basis of the Highways Act 1980. The evidence we had put forward of 20 years unhindered use from 1996 to 2016 (until a brick wall was built by the Byron Court management company) was accepted. The Inspector explicitly rejected claims by Byron Court residents that the evidence presented was the result of "over exuberance" or "collusion" instigated by the Gateacre Society.

Liverpool City Council has confirmed that it will now request the management company to remove at least part of the wall, so as to allow pedestrian access along the line of the public right of way. If the company declines to remove it, then the Council will issue an enforcement notice, undertake the removal of the wall itself, and look to reclaim the costs from the company.

UPDATES IN BRIEF

THE MISSING PHONE BOX. BT claims that a 'notice of intended removal' was pasted on the kiosk at the corner of Grange Lane and Belle Vale Road in September 2016, and that Liverpool City Council was notified at the same time. However, we did not see the notice, nor do Council officers recall being consulted by BT. Investigations are continuing. If you remember ever seeing a notice on the box, please let us know as soon as possible.

GRANGE LANE VERGES. Most of the 'missing' grass verges we identified have now been inserted by Countryside Properties. However, the originally-proposed verges either side of Chantry Road have not as yet been put in. The City Council apparently thinks that they would be damaged by turning traffic; but we are asking for this decision to be reconsidered.

GATEACRE PARK DRIVE ZEBRA. City Council officers are still examining what can be done to improve the crossing outside Aldi, how much it will cost, and how it might be paid for.

NEGLECTED BUILDINGS. We have contacted the owners of two prominent local buildings, which were the subject of questions at our A.G.M. in October. These are the former Gorsey Cop/Grange Manor/Crying Tree in Grange Lane, and the former Post Office/Garfields shop (now a house) at 3 Gateacre Brow. We hope to be able to report progress in a future Newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Two-thirds of Gateacre Society members are paid-up for the current membership year. We shall be issuing personalised Final Reminders with the NEXT Newsletter, but meanwhile please take a few moments to check the date on your address label. If it reads '31/10/18', please give or send your subscription to our Membership Secretary – see back page for details.