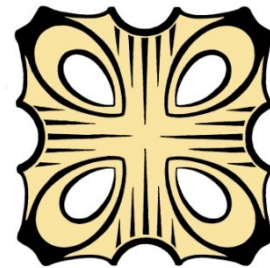


THE WOOLTON SOCIETY

www.wooltonociety.org.uk
Instagram: @thewooltonociety



ISSUE NO 369: Winter 2024

THE WOOLTON SOCIETY : SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 50 YEARS

NEWSLETTER



See page 2 for details of the latest plaque to be installed.

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WS QR code

Society News

Annual General Meeting

The 50th AGM was held on 15th November, with the business of the evening followed by a convivial social gathering. The officers & committee are as follows:

Chairman: Jean Davies

Hon. Secretary & Vice Chairman: Paul Wilkie

Hon. Treasurer: Charles Davies

Membership secretary: Jean Bates

Environment secretary: Janet Hudson

Committee: Bob Collins, Jenni French, Viv Hicks, Janet Hollinshead, Rob Kirby,

Talks in September & October

The society was saddened in September to hear that Dave Joy, who was booked to speak on the cow keepers of Liverpool was unwell, & later died very suddenly. Condolences were sent to his family.

The news came after the newsletter had been sent out, with members informed by email with details of the new speaker, Gary Lunt of Reel Tours. Gary had already been pencilled in for 2024 but was able to fit us in at short notice to give his very entertaining talk on filming in Liverpool. Gary runs tours of the city taking in the many sites where major blockbusters such as the Batman series are filmed. Liverpool is a major force in the movie industry & he was able to take us behind the scenes on many films & television programmes shot here. Liverpool was also part of the birth of the cinema, with the Lumiere brothers filming scenes along the river in the early years of the twentieth century. This was probably the first known instance of a tracking shot, as the camera was mounted on a carriage of the overhead railway, taking a moving image of the docks & waterfront. Gary has several other talks on movie making in his repertoire & will be returning on October 17th to give his talk on music in the movies. Not to be missed!

October saw a talk from Dr Janet Hollinshead, on the nuns of Woolton. This was fortuitously timed, as the plaque to be installed on the former convent had been made that week, & was on display at the talk. The Benedictine nuns had arrived in Woolton in 1795, after being offered sanctuary here. They had been imprisoned in France as they were British, with all foreigners being suspect after the revolution of 1789. They made their home in 45-47 Woolton Street, becoming the first community of nuns in what was then Lancashire. The plaque was installed on the house later in the month, with an image on the front cover of this issue. Dr Hollinshead's talk was full of interest, with her pamphlet *Woolton's First Community of Nuns* selling out. It has since been reprinted & is available at talks & on the market stall.

Plaque on 45-47 Woolton Street

The plaque on the former convent was installed on October 27th, after a lengthy application for Listed Buildings Consent. It is the eighth plaque in the society's project to commemorate people & places of note in Woolton, with several more under consideration. The first seven are detailed in *Pamphlet 8: A Guide to Woolton Society Plaques*, available priced at £1 at talks & on the market stall.

Programme of talks for 2024

The talks in February, March & October will be held on Thursday afternoons, starting at 3pm, so avoiding the dark evenings. The talks in April, May, June & September, & the AGM in November will be on Wednesdays starting at 7.30pm. All talks are held in St Mary's hall, off Church Road. The hall has step-free access & a large adjacent car park, with bus stops nearby on Church Road. Complimentary refreshments will be served at the afternoon talks.

Fuller details of talks later in the year will be in newsletters 370 (March) & 371 (June), on the website & Instagram & on the notice board in the village centre beside Coast café.

Thursday 15th February at 3pm, Ronan Mooney: The practical conservation of pre-1919 buildings
Ronan is a conservation expert who has worked on many houses in Woolton. He will be giving his talk on the importance of care for such buildings.

Thursday 21st March at 3pm, Ken Pye: A matter of life & death!

Very popular local broadcaster Ken Pye will be speaking on the many fascinating graveyards to be found in the city. He will also be bringing a selection of his books for sale.

Wednesday 17th April at 7.30pm, Chris Tigwell: The Rainhill Trials

Chris had been booked to speak to the WS pre-lockdown, & we are very pleased to welcome him back to our programme. He will be speaking on the Rainhill Trials of 1829, when George Stephenson's *Rocket* was first tested.

Wednesday 15th May at 7.30pm, Tony Banks: The History of the RNLI

Tony is Water Safety & Community Presenter for the RNLI & will be speaking on the vital work carried out by this well-loved national institution.

Wednesday 19th June at 7.30pm, Quiz night

The sixth annual quiz night will see the 2023 champions The Fantastic Three defending their title. All members are invited to take part & challenge the current holders of the coveted Quiz Cup. There will be prizes!

Sunday 14th July coach tour

North Liverpool is uncharted territory to many residents of the southern suburbs, but the tour aims to change this. With a commentary from Blue Badge guide Marie Passey we will set off from Woolton & through the Georgian Quarter towards Everton Park. With a stop to see the stupendous river views from this vantage point on Everton Heights, we will then visit St George's church on Beacon Lane, a Grade 1 listed building. It is the first cast iron church in the city, being slightly older than St Michaels in the Hamlet. There will be a commentary on the church from Mrs Passey as well as Dr Janet Hollinshead, & tea & biscuits will be provided.

An additional snippet of information which may appeal to members is that the churchyard at St George's is the final resting place of Anne Sharp. She is featured in the book *Gomersham Park* by Gill Hornby, & was a friend & correspondent of Jane Austen. How she arrived in Everton from Surrey is the subject of some mystery.

As the coach tours are hugely popular & oversubscribed bookings will be taken as soon as this newsletter is published. The cost will be £10 for WS members which is more than is usually charged, though still subsidised by the society, but will include a donation to St George's church. Non members may join the tour but will pay the full price of £17.50.

Summer break in August

Full details of the talks on **Wednesday 18th September & Thursday 17th October** will be in issue 370 of the newsletter. The Annual General meeting will be held on **Wednesday 13th November**.

Please note that the society has the use of St Mary's hall from 2.30 to 4.30 on Thursdays, & from 7 to 9 pm on Wednesdays, to allow for setting up & clearing away. Early attendance by members is appreciated to enable to allow the talks to start promptly at 3pm or 7.30pm.

Subscriptions

All subs became due on 1st September, with the majority of members now paying by standing order. This is much appreciated by the treasurer & membership secretary as banking up cash is a very laborious business, with the nearest branch of Barclays being on Allerton Road L18. The society now has a card reader, which will be in use at markets & meetings.

The society has not raised subs for many years, as membership numbers are sufficient to cover all costs incurred. With membership starting from £4 a year, this is very good value for money.

Adult (single) £6

Adult (joint) £9

Over 60s /student (single) £4

Over 60s (joint) £6

Copies of the newsletter are emailed to all members as part of their subs. A paper copy may be supplied at an extra charge of £8 to cover printing & postage charges.

Good Works continue

During our Jubilee year in 2022 the society started a programme of good works, with surplus funds in the account used to the benefit of the community as well as members. All the recent coach trips & walking tours have been either free to members or heavily subsidised, with complimentary refreshments offered at all the afternoon talks.

The thousand daffodil bulbs bought for Woolton in Bloom were planted in the dual carriageway central reservation & will be blooming in Spring.

A mini Christmas tree in the village was funded by the WS, & placed on Lake House, which is part of the former Barclay's Bank. As the bank is closed there was no power source for the tree so the lights were battery powered, & on a timer. It is hoped that the tree will have mains power next Christmas as the society has pledged to fund the initiative for the next two years. Other trees were funded by the various traders & shop owners, not the council, with the village being beautifully illuminated during the Christmas period.

The latest plaque was installed in October on the former convent at 45-47 Woolton Street, with several more in the pipeline. All the society's plaques have been manufactured by Photocast, a nationally renowned company based in Speke.

The Jubilee tree, a mountain ash, was planted in Reynolds Park in January 2023, & is thriving, with a brave display of golden berries last Autumn.

Markets and merchandise.

The society usually takes a stall at the local market which is on the second Saturday of each month. The dates for 2024 are:

13th January, 10th February, 9th March, 13th April, 11th May, 8th June, 13th July, 10th August, 14th September, 12th October, 9th November, 14th December.

The markets are an excellent way of publicising the society, with many new members joining after chatting with the committee members manning the stall. Merchandise as well as information is available, with the society's two books & nine pamphlets on sale, as well as a tea towel (£6) showing images of the village, & designed by WS member Jenny Brown. There are also a few high-quality cotton aprons still available, now reduced to £6, with a design by local artist Sandra Hepworth.

The publications list comprises:

The definitive *History of Much Woolton* (£3) written by WS founder Janet Gnosspelius; *Woolton Stone & Liverpool Cathedral* (£5) edited by Dr Janet Hollinshead

The pamphlets are 1. Who Lived at Woolton Hall; 2. Who was Lord Woolton; 3. Hillfoot Villa

4. Woolton Walks; 5. Woolton's Convalescent Home; 6. Medical matters; 7. The Nuns of Woolton;

8. A guide to Woolton Society plaques; 9. Woolton Heyes

All the pamphlets are priced at £1, with numbers 1-3, 6-7 & 9 written by Dr Janet Hollinshead, numbers 4 & 8 by Jean Davies & number 5 by Dr Hollinshead with Paul Wilkie.

The books & tea towels are also on sale at Brown's newsagent on Woolton Street (428 2408). The book on Woolton's contribution to the building of the Anglican cathedral is on sale at the cathedral shop.

From our archives. We print here some extracts from newsletter 245 of January 1999, twenty five years ago. The chairman at the time was Ken Mort, with Clare Maybury as secretary,

Gordon Nickson as treasurer, Terry van Eker as vice chairman, & Janet Gnosspelius as environment secretary.

Keeping up the standard

Young people, so we are told, tend to regard Societies such as ours as havens for ever complaining old fogeys who have nothing better to do. It may not have occurred to them that there is usually ample justification for the complaints we make. Perhaps no one has yet explained that to them the necessity for maintaining standards; that a village can become a shanty town if nobody cares.

Maybe they would begin to see our point of view if a neighbour chopped down their favourite chestnut tree, built a tin shack on his front garden & mounted a flashing neon sign over his door. They might even get a little upset if-as is quite likely-the local authority ignored their letter of complaint.

Of course, this is an extreme example. But that is not to say it couldn't happen if no one cared. And so, we care. Furthermore, we would like the rising generation to help us in our campaign. Old fogeys have a habit of disappearing from the scene & there is a danger that eventually there will be no one to carry on caring. How often do we hear the cry of "Oh yes, I lived there years ago but the whole place went down the nick & so I had to move up here." Fortunately, there was a "here" to solve their problem. Let's not become a "there".

If you are reading this newsletter & are not a member of the society you might like to give a little thought to the benefits of adding your voice to ours. Nobody wants to live in a shanty town.

Two Cheers for Conservation

The new Tesco superstore dominates its neighbours like some latter-day Taj Mahal & it is apparent that, apart from the pastiche "village house" at the entrance, it makes no concessions to its immediate surroundings nor does it use any of the traditional materials, or colours, which characterise the village. Once again, we are stuck with a standard building which could be built in any industrial estate in the UK. We know that the company when pressed by public opinion has done much better elsewhere.

The City Council has recently established an Urban Design & Conservation Panel to advise the Planning Committee on urban design & conservation strategy, & to provide comments to the Development Control Sub-Committee on the design of major applications.

Too late in this case, unfortunately.

Friends and Neighbours

Our friendly & neighbourly British Telecom seems to reserve its most obsolete telephone boxes for Woolton Conservation Area. The design selected for the village must be the most vandal-prone & least sympathetic among their selection of telephone boxes, some of which we are told are suitable for conservation areas. The Society wrote some time ago asking BT to consider better designed replacements.

We still await a reply!

Issue 245 went on to advertise a talk on Charles Rennie McIntosh given by Christina Clarke, & then a page of planning applications. The collation of these was a very time intensive task, involving a personal visit to the planning office by Janet Gnosspelius, who then went through all the applications

individually, making notes on those relevant to our area. It is slightly easier 25 years later, as the applications are sent out by email, although the list for the whole city is received by our environment secretary. It is apparently not possible to filter the list by area.

Environment, planning news & applications

Woolton Hall

There has been much comment on social media recently about Woolton Hall, with various groups asking how & why the hall is in its current state of dilapidation. It should be remembered that the WS was founded in 1972 by two local architects, Janet Gnosspelius & Sue Carmichael when the hall was threatened with demolition by the city council. Not only was the hall saved from the bulldozers but Janet & Sue secured Grade 1 listed status for the hall soon afterwards, thus protecting it from many threats. The hall was in active use as a social venue for over thirty years but was bought by a consortium of businessmen in 2006 & since then has stood empty & unused.

The hall is currently for sale, asking price £4 million, with Orme Associates, but no offers have been received to our knowledge. Sadly, the owners turned down an offer of £3 million in 2015, from a company wishing to transform the hall into a wedding venue. This would have been an ideal use as there is no land to the rear of the property with the new St Julie's school very close to the hall's back wall. However there is a grand sweeping drive to the front & the hall itself is spacious, with an Adam fireplace & an imposing entrance hall. In the past few years the hall has deteriorated badly, with a leaking roof, & has suffered from vandalism & several fires in the grounds & outbuildings. The owners have been uncontactable in all this time, not answering to requests for meetings from the WS, or local councillors or concerned residents.

A history of the hall can be found in Woolton Society pamphlet number 1, *Who lived in Woolton Hall?*

The WS has received many enquiries about the hall, & the Woolton Cinema, but we have heard nothing for many months. We will keep members informed if there is anything to report.

Recent planning applications of note

Please note that the development description is the one provided by the applicant/agent & is subject to change by a planning officer when the application is validated. The progress of each application can be checked online using the Planning Explorer at:

www.liverpool.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control

Most recent applications in Woolton have been for tree works, single storey extensions or roof lights. Others of note are as follows:

23H/2630 15 Hightor Road L25 6DJ

To erect a part two storey, part single storey extension to rear, with external garage conversion.

23H/2690 24 Bower Road L25 4RQ

To demolish existing single storey rear extension, conservatory & existing attached side garage. To erect a double storey front porch with feature glazing, double storey rear extension & a single storey side extension, alterations to the roof to allow for rooms in the roof & the erection of a single storey detached pool house with gym & associated landscaping to garden.

23H/2764 26 Bower Road L25 4RQ

To erect two storey extension to front, part two storey/ part single storey extension to rear, alter first floor extension to side, remove one chimney. Replace roof, install one rooflight, alter patio to rear & apply render to property (retrospective).

23L/2658 3-5 Woolton Street L25 5NH (Former Lloyds Bank premises)

To erect a second floor extension including three front dormers, a three storey steel framed glazed rear extension, install a first floor terrace & second floor balcony to rear, carry out internal alterations in connection with use of ground floor as two retail units, & create two one bedroomed flats on the first floor with one two bedroomed flat on the second floor with associated parking & bin & cycle stores.

In issue 366 of the newsletter, in Spring 2023 we reported on application **22F/2554 Springhill Runnymede Close L25 5JU**. There is now a new application, for a far more scaled down scheme than that which was first proposed. This had been for an apartment block, with access from Woolton Park rather than from Runnymede Close. The new application, for a detached house, has divided opinion amongst neighbouring properties, with some opposing the new plan, with others seeing it as the *least worst* that can be expected.

Woolton News

Woolton in Bloom

The very popular Open Gardens event will take place this year, with **Sunday 7th July** to be put in diaries. There will be up to twelve local gardens open to view, with the hub being the Bishops Lodge on Woolton Park. Teas will be provided there by the Women of Woolton W.I, with other entertainments being planned. Brochures with all details & a map will be on sale later in the year, with more details in the next newsletter.

There are still a few copies of the 2024 WIB calendar available, at the market stall & at Brown's newsagent on Woolton Street (428 2408).

Work parties of volunteers go out on Wednesdays & Saturdays, planting & weeding, led by horticultural manager Kerry Peacock. Their work keeps Woolton blooming, as no financial aid is received from the council. Those wishing to take part should meet at the lock-up opposite the car park on High Street at 10am on those days, or enquire at the WIB stall on market days.

For more information & pictures go to the WIB site at www.wooltoninbloom.wix.com/wooltoninbloom

Friends of Reynolds Park

The support of the Friends has never been more crucial as the working hours of chief gardener Peter have been greatly reduced because of drastic spending cuts throughout the city. Peter now has to spend much of his time at other parks, & it is to his credit that the walled garden is still a hidden gem in the city. The council is now committed only to mowing grass & removing dangerous trees in the parks, which is a recipe for decline & degeneration. This reinforces the case for putting all parkland in Liverpool into trust, so that none can be sold off for development. FORP supports Fields in Trust in their work on this, & has made a donation of £164 to their funds.

SFX pupils have been working in the wildflower meadow as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award, picking up litter & tidying. It is hoped that the boys will be able to continue with this project.

The sundial is still awaiting repair. The Friends hope that this will be done soon as the site is currently fenced off.

There will be a Spring Clean in the park on **Saturday 16th March**, all welcome. FORP volunteers will be on hand to give out litter pickers, bin bags & gloves. More details on the notice board in the park.

FORP meetings are held in Woolton Tesco's café at 7pm on the following dates:

13th March, 8th May, 11th September, 13th November. All are welcome to attend.

FORP may be found online at:

www.friendsofreynoldspark.co.uk

www.twitter.com/reynoldsparkfrs

www.facebook.com/friendsofreynoldspark

www.instagram.com/reynoldsparkfrs

Woolton Society members are not known for being shy, retiring or unadventurous so why not try something new in 2024? Here are a few options to try, in & around the city. Membership details can be found on the relevant websites.

The Arts Society

This meets monthly at Bridge Chapel on Heath Road L19 4XR. The next talks are on **Wednesday 17th January** at 2pm, with Martin Strauss speaking on Andrea Palladio: his journey into neo-Classicism. The talk in February will be given by Ghislaine Howard, speaking on L.S. Lowry. This will be on **Wednesday 21st February** at 2pm. March will see Janusz Karczewski-Slowikowski speaking on The Golden Age of English furniture. This will be on **Wednesday 14th March** at 2pm. Arts Society membership costs £50 a year, with talks free to members. Visitors may attend a lecture for £6.

The 1918 Club

This was formed by Eleanor Rathbone in 1918, to provide a discussion & lunch club for women. (Sorry chaps). After an excellent lunch at The Athenaeum Club members hear a wide range of speakers. These include Dr Natalie Kenny on **Tuesday 23rd January**, speaking on Biograd, of which she is founder & CEO. Maria Breslin, editor of The Liverpool Echo will speak on **Friday 9th February**, with Dr Margaret Emsley speaking on her life as a civil engineer on **Tuesday 27th February**. For more information go to the1918club.org.uk or email the1918club.org@gmail.com

The Gateacre Society

After the sudden & unexpected loss of founder Mike Chitty in June, The Gateacre Society has elected a new committee to carry on his work. The chairman is now Sandra Sandland. There is a new website, which can be accessed on www.gateacresociety.co.uk with email enquiries on thegateacresociety@gmail.com The first talk of 2024 will be on **Sunday 4th February** at 2pm in Gateacre Chapel, with Roger Browne speaking on The Great American Songbook. The talk is free to Gateacre Society members, with non-members asked for a donation.

The Reader organisation

The Reader is based in the Mansion House at Calderstones Park, & offers a wide range of activities. From relaxed reading groups for parents with babies to discussions on poetry, there is something for everyone. The Mansion House also houses craft sessions where sewing skills can be honed, Knit & Natter, upcycling furniture, & wood turning. A Burns Night supper is planned for **Thursday 25th January**. There is an excellent book shop, an ice cream parlour & a café where light refreshments can be found. The Reader is always in need of volunteers for a variety of positions, from greeting visitors at the welcome desk to manning the heritage room where the history of the park & the famous Calder Stones are on display. All this is set within the beautiful grounds of Calderstones Park, with its Old English & Japanese gardens, a lake & acres of rolling fields. Enquire at the welcome desk or on www.thereader.org.uk

Clean up days in the village

The Rubbish Friends of Woolton will meet on the last Saturday of each month, at 11.00 beside the Lodes pond. Organisers Councillors Kelly & Brown will be on hand with litter pickers & bin bags for volunteers. The next dates will be: **27th January, 24th February, 30th March, 27th April** For more details go to www.facebook.com/RubbishFriendsofWoolton

Issue 370 of the newsletter will be published in March 2024.