

THE WOOLTON SOCIETY

www.wooltonociety.org.uk

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THE WOOLTON SOCIETY - SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 40 YEARS



NEWSLETTER



A view of the wall blocking the public right of way adjacent to Byron Court. For report see page 5.

Newsletter contents in full:

Society news: pages 2-4

Tales of old Woolton: pages 4-5

Environment & planning news: pages 5-6

Woolton news: pages – 6-7

Photo image of Prize Certificate: page 8

Society News

Annual General Meeting

At the AGM on November 16th 2016 officers & committee for the next twelve months were elected, & reports given by officers of the society. An announcement on the future of the newsletter was made by the chairman, for which see the paragraph later on this page.

The officers & committee for 2017 are as follows:

Chairman: Jean Davies

Secretary & vice chairman: Paul Wilkie

Treasurer: Charles Davies

Membership secretary: Jean Bates

Environment secretary: Janet Hudson

Committee members: Bob Collins, John Hibbert, Viv Hicks, Janet Hollinshead, Bernard Krasner, Tommy Tewkesbury

Refreshments & an informal gathering followed the AGM.

The newsletter

Since its formation in 1972 the society has provided members with a paper copy of the newsletter, hand delivered to those who live within the L25 area, or posted to those outside. Some years ago an e-mail version was introduced, & new members have had only this option for some time.

The paper copy has been possible because of a very advantageous printing arrangement, which has now come to an end. The committee has made the decision to end the hand delivery system, which is very labour intensive, & give all members the option of either e-mail or a paper copy sent through the post for which a printing, post and packing charge of £8 on top of the standard membership subscription will be levied.

The hand delivery system will continue for the rest of this membership year, & forms will be available for members who wish to opt for a newsletter to be sent through the post. This will cost £8 for four newsletters per year. The membership forms from July 2017 will reflect this change, to cover the 2017/18 period. Membership subscription rates will be unchanged.

Please note that this is an opt-in system. Members will receive only the e-mail newsletter after Autumn 2017 unless we are informed otherwise. For any members without e-mail the options will be by post or arrangements can be made to send the e-newsletter to a friend or family member. The e-newsletter can, of course be printed out if a home printer is available.

There will be reminders about this change in future issues of the newsletter.

October talk

Simon La Frenais was our speaker on Wednesday 19th October, with the life & work of Charles Darwin as his subject. Dr La Frenais was a very entertaining speaker, telling us much about the family life of Darwin, as well as the explorations & publications which made him famous. Dr La Frenais asked for his speaking fee to be donated to the Galapagos Preservation Trust.

Dates for your diary

The first talk of 2017 will be on **Wednesday 22nd February**, when Cliff Passey will speak on metal detecting. He is a member of the South Lancashire Metal Detectorist Society, & will bring some of his finds to the talk. These include a Roman floor tile, & a hand axe believed to be thousands of years old.

On **Wednesday 15th March** Richard McDonald will have as his topic *Important Women in Liverpool's History*. He is a Blue Badge Guide who also writes a blog: beneaththebeat.blogspot.co.uk. He will be speaking on the women who have influenced the development of the city.

The speaker on **Wednesday April 19th** will be Dr Janet Hollinshead, author, historian & lecturer, who will ask *Who was Lord Woolton?* Woolton Society pamphlet number 2, of the same title & written by Dr Hollinshead will be on sale at the talk.

On **Wednesday 17th May** the speaker will be Dr Tom Preston, with *Frederic Waldron & The Wayfarer, engineer extraordinary* as his subject.

As a change, the meeting on **Wednesday 21st June** will take the form of a quiz on Woolton & its history.

There will be a guided walk with Blue Badge guide Marie Passey on **Sunday 30th July**.

September 20th will see Bill Sergeant speak on the nurses of World War One.

On **October 18th** Tom Murphy will speak on the work of Liverpool's Victorian Society.

The 45th Annual General Meeting will be held on **November 15th**.

Fuller details of the talk in May, the quiz in June & the guided walk in July will be in issue 342, on our noticeboard & website www.wooltonociety.org.uk Issue 342 will be published around Easter. The Autumn talks & AGM will be described in issue 343, out in the Summer.

After each talk we are introducing an open forum for members to air their views on local matters. Committee members will be on hand to comment, where appropriate. This will be after a short break at the end of each talk, giving the speaker time to pack up, & members to seek refreshment, if needed. The first open forum will be after the talk on February 22nd.

All Woolton Society talks are free, & open to non-members as well as members. We have the use of a downstairs room at the Village Club, with talks starting at 7.30pm.

Visit of the North West Association of Civic Trusts

The NWACTS, the umbrella organisation to which the Woolton Society is affiliated, had chosen Woolton Hall as its *Building at Risk* of 2016. Their committee members visited Woolton on Saturday 19th November with a talk by Dr Janet Hollinshead on the hall's history before a look at the hall. We are awaiting feedback from NWACTS, but it is to be hoped that the visit will prompt action from the current owners, as the hall has lain empty & unused for many years now.

After Woolton Hall the visitors were treated to a tour of the village, led by committee members and also visited the Mechanics Institute which was opened by the owners Debbie & Paul Gregory. The visitors were greatly impressed by the conversion of the former school into a spectacular private home & were full of praise for their vision & expertise. The NWACTS team were also very taken with the village, & its Beatles connections.

Society Publications

The society now has an increasing list of publications to its name. *The History of Much Woolton*, first published in 1972, reprinted in 2012, is a steady seller priced at £3. Our new book in 2016 *Woolton Stone & Liverpool Cathedral* is selling well at £5 and is also in stock at the cathedral shop.

Woolton Society pamphlets are a new venture, instigated by committee member & author Dr Janet Hollinshead. Pamphlet One, *Who lived at Woolton Hall?* has been reprinted three times. Pamphlet Two, *Who was Lord Woolton?* will be on sale at the talk of the same title in April.

It is anticipated that future pamphlets will be on education in the village, & *The Beatles in Woolton*. The latter is to be written by Dr Donna Jackson, author, historian, WS member & speaker, & winner of Pointless.

All pamphlets are priced at £1, & available at talks, as well as at our stall at the farmers market. The two books are also available at Brown's newsagent on Woolton Street

The Janet Gnosspelius Archive

The last boxes of items left to the WS by co-founder Janet Gnosspelius have now been removed from storage. Many of her papers are now with the Liverpool Record Office, or at the library of the University of Liverpool which also received the bequest of several million pounds.

The society has been sorting through her papers for some years. Many slides have been digitally copied, & now the hundreds of photographs & maps are being painstakingly examined by committee members. It is hoped that the material will be available for all members & students of local history.

Page 8 of this issue shows an image of a school certificate dating from 1915, one of the many fascinating items found in the boxes of material left to the WS. Issue 335 of the newsletter held a report of the signed first editions of the *Swallows & Amazons* books which were found in box 6, one of 36 left to the society. The author Arthur Ransome had been a friend of the Gnosspelius family, & the children in the books were based on Janet & her cousins. The books are now in the special collections section of the university library, as the will was clear that only items relevant to Woolton were to be bequeathed to the society.

Tales of old Woolton

We have been contacted by Dot Holden of Telford, Shropshire, with a report of her father's time in Woolton from the 1930s to the 1950s. While not from our own archives it is a fascinating story.

She writes "My father, Edgar Menzies, was the inventor of the first police radio wireless system when he worked for Liverpool Police, he was also the first person in Woolton to be issued with a TV licence as he had built a home-made TV set which was inspected by the BBC team of engineers. I have copied below some of the information relating to dad and wondered if it would be possible to nominate his home at 38 Linkstor Road, Woolton, for a blue plaque to commemorate his work? I have also emailed the Blue Plaque Society to enquire if this would be possible.

Dad was also a lifelong radio ham, his call sign was G5MQ and he transmitted from Linkstor Road using this call sign which changed to GW5MQ during the few years he lived in Wales before returning to Liverpool.

Weekly News dated 31.1.1974 entitled "25 years Ago". The paper report said "Television in Liverpool" Two of the BBC television engineers who are on the television unit now touring the country, and which was in Liverpool during the early part of the week, telephoned London to tell their colleagues that they had watched a home-made television set in a Liverpool house. The owner of the set was Mr. Edgar Menzies G5MQ, who had made the set himself out of ex-radar equipment for about £10. The engineers had with them a commercial receiver, but reception, though intermittent, was better on Mr Menzies set."

For the record, here are the various addresses of Edgar Menzies G5MQ and GW5MQ.

1927 (from QSL card): School House, Fazakerley, Liverpool.

1950 callbook: 38 Linkstor Road, Woolton, Liverpool.

1957 callbook, as GW5MQ: Bryn Celin, Berth Ddu, Rhosesmor, Mold, Flintshire (Wales).

1962 and 1963 callbooks: 33 Tynwald Hill, Liverpool 13.

When he joined the Liverpool City Police Force in January 1921, Edgar realised that the wireless was going to play an important role in police work, so he devoted all his time and money to its study. His efforts led to the opening of a wireless station at Old Swan transmitting to three special police cars fitted with his equipment. In 1936 Edgar, now promoted to sergeant, saw three more cars added to the fleet and two-way communication established, initially using morse code.

Edgar had moved to Linkstor Road, Woolton in 1934 and, after conducting experiments using his own radio equipment, he managed to convince his superiors that it would be to the police's advantage to open a radio workshop on high ground in the vicinity of Woolton where a better signal could be transmitted.

In 1938 G.T.M. a new police wireless station, situated at the corner of Allerton Golf Course, was opened at a cost of £2,000. It was staffed by sergeant Menzies and five men and boasted two 120 foot high masts with a transmitting range of thirty miles, a poison gas decontamination room and was also, reputedly, bomb-proof. On a map in the control room coloured electric light bulbs indicated every beat in Liverpool on which there was a radio-fitted car or motor cycle. A red bulb denoted a car, a green bulb indicated a motor cycle. When G.T.M. transmitted a bulb on the dashboard of each car was illuminated and some of the cars could respond in morse code. There were also 200 pushbike patrols fitted with tiny receiving sets, another of Edgar's inventions, and the forerunner of the walkie talkie. This invention, which took Edgar two years to perfect, was one of his greatest triumphs and was patented throughout the world. Typically, and despite the possibility of substantial financial rewards, he presented his invention freely to the police “

We are grateful to Mrs Holden for this report. Any comments should be addressed to the society via our website & will be passed on to her.

Environment, Planning News & Applications

Planning Applications

We have been unable to access the planning register for this issue of the newsletter as the **filter by ward** facility is still not operative. This means that finding anything relevant to the Woolton area is extremely difficult as all the thousands of city-wide applications have to be examined. This has been the case for over a year now, & the WS has commented on the situation several times, to no avail. We shall put in another complaint, & hope to publish the Woolton planning applications in future newsletters.

Public Right of Way, Glenacres/Byron Court

The Woolton Society has urged members to write in support of adding the footpath between Acrefield Road and Woolton Park to the city council's Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way. The argument is that this is not a new right of way but it has been so since around 1970, when the flats in Glenacres were built and that its omission from the Definitive Map, when compiled in 1999-2004, was a mistake.

Our aim is that by proving people were able to use this path without hindrance in the 1980s and 1990s, then it was a PROW in 2000 by virtue of Common Law. As members & residents have written that they were able to use this path and did so regularly without hindrance between March 1996 and March 2016 when the wall was built, then the case is strengthened by virtue of the Highways Act 1980.

A photograph of the wall which is blocking the footpath is on the cover of this issue. This was built in March 2016, without, as the society understands, the permission or knowledge of the freeholder of the land on which the development stands.

The deadline for submissions was January 21st. We will notify members of all developments.

St Julie's school

The new school buildings, currently shrouded in purple cladding, are all too visible from every aspect in the village. It is to be hoped that when the brickwork is completed & the trees are in leaf this view of the school will be camouflaged & we shall be spared the sight of it squatting on what was once public open space protected by covenant.

We await news as to how the access to Woolton Woods will be affected by the development.

St Gabriel's site, Church Road/Beaconsfield Road

We have been notified that building work will begin at the site in March or April, as the fire late last year damaged only the German Wing which had already been scheduled for demolition.

The WS has seen the plans for the development, & they are considerably more in tune with the landscape than the retirement mega complex which was planned some years ago.

Former HSBC bank

The building has seen some activity recently, as workers have been inside, stripping out the bank fittings. The building is advertised for sale, but no planning applications have been found. Rumour has it that Costa Coffee is interested in the site. Just what the village needs.

Site of Lower Lee school

The site of the former school on Beaconsfield Road is now being cleared. A planning application has been put in by Redrow for a housing development. A further report will be in issue 342.

Woolton News

Woolton in Bloom

Kerry Peacock the Horticultural Manager of WIB was awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Years Honours List. This is a richly deserved honour for Kerry, who has been at the forefront of WIB's success in RHS competitions for many years. She was awarded a Community Champion award in 2013, & will receive her new honour from Dame Lorna Muirhead, the Lord Lieutenant later this year.

Planting will continue in the village, although WIB no longer enters the RHS competitions. Volunteers are always welcome & should see the website or approach anyone at the WIB stall at the monthly farmers markets.

A few copies of the very popular WIB calendar are still available, featuring photographs of the Open Gardens event held in June 2016. The calendar can be found at Brown's newsagent on Woolton Street as well as at the farmers market stall. See the new Woolton in Bloom website for more news & pictures: www.wooltoninbloom.wix.com/wooltoninbloom

Ticket to Read

TTR, Woolton's free community library, has bought many new books recently, with the aid of a grant from the Woolton Educational & Recreational Charity. Browsers are always welcome, though there is quick choice section for those in a hurry. Crime is always popular, & there is also a large selection of audio books & large print volumes.

TTR is based at the Simon Peter Centre on Church Road, with opening hours 1.30 to 4pm, Mondays & Wednesdays.

TTR will be marking its fourth anniversary in February, being founded when Woolton's own library was closed in March 2012 after the first round of council cost saving measures.

Women's Institute

The W.I. now meets on the first Tuesday of each month, at The Quarry (formerly the British Legion) on Allerton Road. This is a very popular group, with a waiting list for membership. The programme of talks for 2017 includes Roger Phillips from Radio Merseyside giving anecdotes about his phone-ins, a tour of Speke Hall in words & pictures, & a talk on musical theatre in the West End.

This is as well as theatre visits, days out & weekends away. The Woolton W.I. also has a walking group, golf & bowls sessions, Tai Chi & painting classes, a prize winning quiz team, & a very dynamic chairman in Jan Gray.

See the website for more details: www.wooltonwi.co.uk

Friends of Reynolds Park

In November FORP chairman Geoff Kendall attended the Parks Forum at Croxteth Hall, where discussions were held concerning the future of the city's parks & open spaces. The contract with Glendale will run until October 2018, after which parks will be managed by trusts which will be set up. The financing of these trusts has yet to be announced.

In April & May FORP will be working again to increase the numbers & diversity of the species in the wildflower meadow, with the help of pupils from SFX & Bishop Martin schools.

FORP holds its meeting at the coffee shop in Tesco, at 7pm on the following dates: **March 8th, May 10th, July 12th, September 13th, & November 8th (AGM).** All are welcome to attend.'

St Peters Anniversary: 5th to 9th July

In July, St Peters will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the seminal meeting of John Lennon & Paul McCartney in their church hall. Events are still at the planning stage, but it is anticipated that many of the local groups & organisations, including the Woolton Society, will take part in what will be a very large celebration with international publicity.

Fuller details will be in issue 342 of the newsletter, or go to the website www.beatlesatstpeters.co.uk for ongoing news.

From the society's archive

The prize certificate reproduced on page 8 was awarded to Florence Lawton of Much Woolton C of E Girls School for "Good conduct, perseverance, & proficiency". It dates from Christmas 1915, & was discovered amongst papers which been in storage for some years.

If any reader should know more about this certificate, or the Lawton family, please contact the society.

We aim to bring members photographs & articles from our archives whenever possible, as we have found that they generate much interest & correspondence from readers of the newsletter.



THE GREAT WAR

PRIZE CERTIFICATE AWARDED TO

Florence Lawton

OF *Much Woolton C. E. Girls' School*

FOR *Good conduct, perseverance, & proficiency*
Christmas, 1915.

GREAT BRITAIN ENTERED ON THIS WAR IN DEFENCE OF THE LIBERTIES OF BELGIUM, VIOLATED BY GERMANY DESPITE ALL TREATY OBLIGATIONS. SHE THREW IN HER LOT WITH FRANCE, RUSSIA AND SERBIA, IN THE STRUGGLE FOR RIGHT AGAINST MIGHT. JAPAN AND ITALY JOINED THEM; AND ALL IN THE SACRED CAUSE OF LIBERTY SHOWED THEMSELVES READY FOR GREAT SACRIFICE.

SCHOOL CHILDREN TOOK THEIR PART IN MANY WORKS OF DUTY AND CHARITY. SOME VOLUNTEERED TO GIVE UP THEIR PRIZES THAT THE MONEY MIGHT BE DEVOTED TO PUBLIC PURPOSES. THE LIVERPOOL EDUCATION COMMITTEE NOW ASK ALL, DURING THE WAR, TO FOREGO THEIR PRIZES, AND TO ACCEPT THIS CERTIFICATE INSTEAD. MAY THIS WAR STRENGTHEN THE RESOLVE OF CHILDREN TO FEAR GOD AND HONOUR THE KING! MAY LOVE OF COUNTRY AND THEIR FELLOW-MEN SINK DEEP INTO THEIR HEARTS, AND WHEN THEY THINK OF WHAT THEY OWE TO THE BRAVE SAILORS AND SOLDIERS, OF WHOM SO MANY HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES, MAY THEY REMEMBER WHAT A GREAT BELGIAN HAS SAID OF THE SOLDIER WHO DIES TO SAVE HIS BROTHERS:—"CAN WE WHO REVERE HIS HEROISM DOUBT THAT HIS GOD WELCOMES HIM WITH LOVE?"

BUT, ABOVE ALL, AS THEY GROW UP IN HAPPIER DAYS, MAY THEY SEEK PEACE AND ENSUE IT!

James W. Alsop

CHAIRMAN OF THE LIVERPOOL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

