

THE WOOLTON SOCIETY

www.wooltonsociety.org.uk

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THE WOOLTON SOCIETY - SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR 47 YEARS



NEWSLETTER



Chief Constable Andy Cooke unveiled the plaque to Inspector Edgar Menzies

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Society News

Annual General Meeting

The 47th AGM of the Woolton society took place on Wednesday 20th November 2019. The business of the evening was concluded efficiently & was followed by a lively social gathering with refreshments provided by the society. The committee & officers for the next twelve months are as follows:

Chairman: Jean Davies

Vice chairman & secretary: Paul Wilkie

Treasurer: Charles Davies

Membership Secretary: Jean Bates

Environment secretary: Janet Hudson

Committee members: Bob Collins, Mike Cullen, Alan Grant, John Hibbert, Viv Hicks Janet Hollinshead, Rob Kirby.

Donna Jackson & Bernard Krasner retired from the committee, & were thanked for their years of service. Alan Grant was elected at the AGM.

Talk of October 17th.

Val Jackson, archivist at Liverpool's Anglican cathedral gave a very well received talk on the Chavassee family on the afternoon of Thursday 17th October. Bishop Francis Chavassee oversaw the very beginning of the cathedral in 1904, & his son Noel was a hero of the first world war, being awarded VC & bar before his death in 1917. Chavassee Park in the city centre is named for the family. Complimentary refreshments were provided before the talk.

All Woolton Society talks are now held in St Mary's hall, off Church Road, starting promptly at 7.30pm, or 3pm for the afternoon talks. St Mary's has its own adjacent car park, step free access to the hall, & disabled toilet facilities.

Non-members are welcome to attend talks, which are all free of charge. Membership forms are available from committee members.

Programme of talks for 2020

The programme for 2020 has been drawn up, with a list given to members at the AGM. Fuller details of all talks will be in subsequent newsletters, in email reminders sent to members & on the notice board in Woolton village.

Thursday 20th February at 3pm: Anna Alexander: the history of Speke Hall

Anna Alexander is a tour guide, & will be speaking on the history of the Tudor mansion very close to Woolton, now owned by the National Trust.

Please note that this is an afternoon talk, starting at 3pm. Refreshments will be available from 2.45pm.

Wednesday 18th March at 7.30pm: Marie Passey: Duke Street & its environs.

Marie Passey is a Blue Badge Guide who has led several walks around the city for members. This talk centres on the historic Duke Street in the city centre, together with the surrounding area.

Wednesday 15th April at 7.30pm: Elaine Allen: The little red box.

Blue Badge guide Elaine Allen will be speaking on the history of the iconic red telephone box, designed by the architect of Liverpool's Anglican cathedral Giles Gilbert Scott.

Wednesday 20th May at 7.30pm: Rob Kirby: the Dam Busters raid of the 16th & 17th May 1943

Wednesday 17th June at 7.30pm: Quiz night

July: Date to be confirmed, **a visit to the Daniel Adamson.** This steam tug was the subject of a fascinating talk in September 2019.

There will be no talk or event in August 2020.

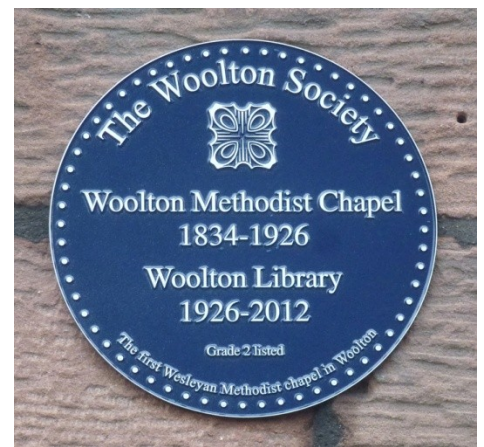
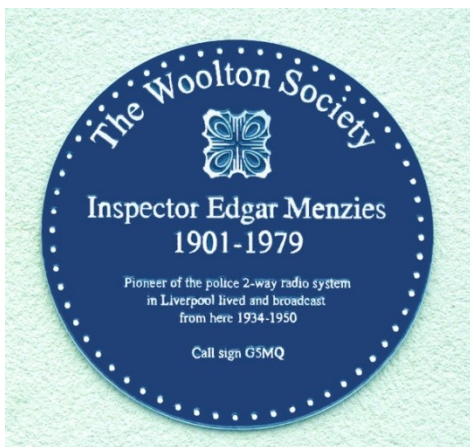
Thursday 15th October at 3pm: Stephen Guy: Liverpool's forgotten aristocracy & merchants.

Wednesday 18th November at 7.30pm: the 48th AGM of the Woolton Society.

No talks will be held in December 2020 or January 2021. Details of the programme for 2021 will be in newsletter 357.

Plaques for Woolton

The Society commissioned three plaques in 2019, from the nationally known company Photocast, based in Speke. All three plaques (below) have now been affixed to the buildings, with handovers to the house owners now complete.



In November Chief Constable Andy Cooke unveiled the plaque to Inspector Edgar Menzies at 38 Linkstor Road. Inspector Menzies was a pioneer of the police 2-way radio system, working from a purpose built, & allegedly bomb-proof building on the edge of Allerton golf course. He was also an amateur radio enthusiast, & bought the bungalow on Linkstor Road as it is one of the highest points in the city. He built a radio mast in the garden, & broadcast from Linkstor Road from 1934 until 1950, using the call sign G5MQ. Chief Constable Cooke praised the vision of Inspector Menzies, who was known to his family as The Woolton Wireless Wizard, & spoke of his pioneering work in establishing the police communication system.

In January the plaques on the former library on Allerton Road & the Mechanics' Institute on St Mary's Street, both listed buildings, were formally handed over to the owners. Several former librarians attended on the day, with June Travis, who worked in the building for 29 years speaking of her memories. As the building had been built as a Wesleyan Methodist chapel the current incumbent at St James, Peter Hughes, was invited & spoke of the need for the chapel when it was built in 1834. After being in use as a place of worship, a Sunday school & a day school, records suggest that the chapel was unused when bought by the council in 1926 & converted into a library. Sadly this closed in 2012, an early victim of the council cuts, & the building was bought by a developer. Fortunately it was then bought by the current owners who have renovated the building sympathetically, & joined the Woolton Society at the first opportunity.



The plaque handover to the owners of the former Woolton library

The Mechanics' Institute was in a very poor condition when bought in 1995 by the present owners, architects & WS members, who have taken endless pains to restore the building which is now a spectacular family home. Visitors were shown the bullet hole in one window, a reminder of when the locals shot pigeons flying around the derelict building. The Institute (for mechanic read working man) was built with funds raised by public subscription in 1848, led by Unitarian ministers Lewis Lewis & William Shepherd, & has been over the years a night school, a day school, a soup kitchen, a court house, a dance academy & a lending library. The current pastor at the Unitarian Chapel on Gateacre Brow, Clare Williamson, attended the handover event, & spoke of the tradition of free thinking which led to the founding of the institute.

There will be a pamphlet with a description of all the buildings published later this year, when the next tranche of plaques will be commissioned. The Mechanics' Institute deserves a pamphlet of its own, which may well appear too.

Both events were covered by Radio Merseyside, which sent reporter Jimmy McCracken to find out more. The broadcast in January is still available on BBC Sounds. The Liverpool Echo carried a short feature on the plaques in their edition of Wednesday 22nd January.

Library owner Matt has notified the WS that he has a quantity of sandstone left over after their building work. This is offered free to members, with a donation to the society which can be left at the library. The stone can be found in Chapel Place which is between the former library & number 86 next door.

Future plaques

The WS committee has been discussing people & places of note in Woolton where the next plaques could be sited. Any members with a suggestion for the list should contact us on the website www.wooltonsociety.org.uk

Society merchandise & Farmers Markets

The society has published five pamphlets & two books in recent years. The pamphlets are on Woolton Hall (number 1), Lord Woolton (2), Hillfoot Villa (3), Woolton walks (4) & the convalescent home (5). Forthcoming pamphlets will be on the history of Reynolds Park, a Woolton walks part 2, & a guide to the society's heritage plaques. All pamphlets are priced at £1.

The definitive History of Woolton was first published in 1975 & reprinted in 2012, costing £3. The book Woolton Stone & Liverpool Cathedral describes the connection between the Anglican cathedral & Woolton's quarries, & was published in 2016, costing £5.

All publications are on sale at WS meetings, & at the market stall. The two books are also available at Brown's newsagent on Woolton Street, & the quarry book is on sale at the cathedral shop.

The very popular tea towels showing views of Woolton sold out before Christmas, & will be replaced with a new design. This will also be in high quality cotton, showing views of the village in full colour.

The markets for this year will be on **February 8th, March 14th, April 11th, May 9th, June 13th, July 11th, August 8th, September 12th, October 10th, November 14th & December 12th**. The WS aims to be present at all markets weather permitting. Several markets were cancelled at short notice in 2019, as high winds had made the canopies unstable.

Environment, Planning News & Applications

Woolton Hall

The Liverpool Echo has run several features recently on buildings at risk, & unsurprisingly Woolton Hall is in their list. The hall is described as "*not in the decrepit state of some buildings on this list*" which is a surprise to anyone who has seen the hall recently. The Echo gave a brief history of the hall which ignored the Woolton Society's role in saving the building from demolition in 1972, & also made no mention of the current owners. No action has seemingly been taken by the owners to conserve the fabric of the hall, despite council intervention after a multi-agency meeting attended by the Woolton Society's chairman in June last year. This was reported in issue 351 of the newsletter. As the council has no money to pursue a compulsory purchase order, & with the owners apparently lacking in care for this Grade 1 listed building, a stalemate has been reached. Councillor Malcolm Kelly has been diligent in working behind the scenes, investigating the financial aspects but there is no progress to report. The situation is dire, & has been so for years. The owners turned down an offer of £2.5 million five years ago, from a hotel group planning a wedding venue at the hall. This would have been an ideal use, as there is little land behind the building, backing as it does directly on to the new St Julie's school car park. The grounds in front of the hall could be landscaped to make an impressive setting for a wedding venue, & the hotel group had plans for conservation grade builders & decorators to move in, but the offer was turned down. The Woolton Society supported this bid, & will support any group which could save the hall from the ruin into which it is rapidly sliding.

Parking in the village

The society is contacted regularly by residents complaining about congestion in the village. The primary cause is cars parked selfishly & illegally across pavements & junctions, & on double yellow lines. A new resident in the village, who has bought a property on Speke Road recently asked a motorist not to obstruct his driveway & was threatened with having his windows broken. In 2018 several WS committee members together with then councillor Alice Bennett & a uniformed police support officer walked down Church Road at 3.30 pm. The road was in gridlock, with no motorist giving way, & the pavements partially blocked by cars. Anyone with a pushchair, or with mobility problems would have great difficulty in negotiating the pavement. The Magical Mystery Tour bus immobile in traffic was once a very common sight, but fortunately the bus has now varied its timetable & does not attempt Church Road at 3.30pm

At the most recent farmers market on 11th January several cars had been left overnight on the site of the stalls, despite three large notices advising of parking restrictions, so traders found difficulty in setting up. Many local authorities would have the cars towed away & a large fine imposed, why not this council? Why are traffic wardens such a rare sight? Answers to Mr J. Anderson please.

Campaign to Protect Rural England

The CPRE held a fund raising event at St Peter's in November, which raised over £1800 for the cause. The local CPRE representative is WS member Pam Leadbeater, who will be present when a government planning inspector will be in Liverpool in May to see the council's Local Plan. This shows the council's projections for all developments over the next decade, up to 2033, & covers transport, infrastructure, shops, heritage & green open spaces. CPRE hopes to have legal representation at the hearing, in their efforts to protect our remaining green wedge.

Donations can be made to CPRE Liverpool District Group, & delivered to either 18 Church Road, or 6 Church Road.

For more details see:

www.gofundme.com/f/saveallertonpriority & www.cprelancashire.org.uk/news/what-our-countryside-and-green-spaces-need-from-the-new-government/

Recent planning applications of note

Please note, the development description is the one provided by the applicant/agent and 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:

<http://www.liverpool.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/>

The bulk of recent planning applications in the Woolton L25 area have been for tree works & single storey extensions. Others of interest are:

19H/3029 at 2 Woolton Court, Quarry Street. The application is to replace timber sash windows with UPVC. The rules on replacement windows have now been relaxed, with an article on this subject in issue 352 of the newsletter.

20F/0141 at 29 Woolton Street. The application is to convert a single dwelling into three flats.

19F/3088 at Strawberry Field visitor centre, Beaconsfield Road. The application is to erect a bandstand structure.

19H/0942 & 19H/0943 at Bankside, The Mount. The applications cover work in the grounds & outbuildings as well as new entrance gates, alteration to the sandstone walls & landscaping works.

19F/3073 at 49a Allerton Road (The Loft). The application is to install new access ramps to front, new awnings to front & external safety lighting. Amended plans have been received.

The Loft has featured several times in recent months, as many residents have commented on the external seating & garish lighting installed. All this was removed before Christmas. It is to be hoped that any new features & installations will consider those living in the village centre who have suffered much late night disturbance from the many entertainment centres there.

19F/3218 at 2b Beaconsfield Road. The application is to build a new dwellinghouse.

Two storey extensions are planned for 45 Woolton Hill Road, application **19H/3240**, at 1 Cambrian Way, application **20H/0011**, & also at 12 Bower Road, application **20H/0009**

The Lodge, Hillfoot Road has received retrospective planning permission for the first floor extension, likened unfavourably to an alien space ship. This was application **19H/1040**.

There has been no news on application **19F/1748**, as reported in issue 352. This is an application to demolish Springhill on Runnymede Close & replace it with a three storey block of flats facing on to Woolton Park.

No news again on Rushton Properties plans for the land adjacent to Woolton Manor, although the developer has appealed against the council's failure to determine the application.

Woolton News

Woolton in Bloom

Spring planting goes on in the village, with volunteers led by WiB's horticultural manager Kerry Peacock. There are always tasks for volunteers, so those wishing to offer their services should contact WiB at the monthly farmers market, or ask any of the volunteer gardeners.

The very popular calendar for 2020 has nearly sold out, though Brown's newsagent on Woolton Street will take orders. A few may be available at the market stall.

The Open Gardens event will take place on **Sunday 12th July**, with several new gardens open to view this year. A programme giving full details of the gardens, together with a map, will be available later in the year.

Every penny raised by volunteers is spent on plants & gardening essentials, as no financial help is provided by the council.

See the Woolton in Bloom website for all the latest news & pictures:

www.wooltoninbloom.wix.com/wooltoninbloom

Friends of Reynolds Park

The Friends will be working with Abbot's Lea school again this year, with the pupils growing wild flowers from seed & planting them in the meadow in May. FORP aims to place solitary bee boxes in the walled garden, a small action but with a positive environmental effect. The Friends will also be applying for funding for professional help in the meadow.

FORP meetings are held in Tesco's coffee shop at 7pm. The next meetings will be on **Wednesdays 11th March, 13th May, 9th September & 11th November**.

FORP can now be found online at:

www.friendsofreynoldspark.co.uk

www.facebook.com/friendsofreynoldspark

Songs to Remember at St Mary's

On the last Friday afternoon of each month from 2 to 4pm St Mary's holds an informal friendship group & get together, with songs & music. Those living with memory problems & their carers are particularly welcome.

The dates for 2020 are **31st January, 28th February, 27th March, 24th April, 29th May, 26th June, 31st July, 28th August, 25th September, 30th October, & 27th November.**

Contact the parish secretary on 428 2256 for more details, or email stmaryswoolton@rcaolp.co.uk

Woolton Community Life

WCL aims to help those living locally who may be isolated or lonely. It provides support, advice & befriending to those in need of companionship. It was established by local GP Dr George Kuruvilla, who saw the need for befriending services in Woolton.

Those interested in volunteering with WCL should contact them on 07490 572344, or call at St Mary's Presbytery on Church Road.

Strawberry Field

The Salvation Army's national leader Commissioner Anthony Cotterill officially opened the new Strawberry Field Visitor Centre & Training Hub with a ceremony of dedication on November 12th.

The centre had opened to the public in September, with many local residents taking the opportunity to tour the exhibition & extensive gardens, all staffed by volunteers. A special guest on the day was Honorary President Julia Baird, a sister of John Lennon. Mission Director Major Kathy Versfeld, who spoke to the Woolton Society in September 2018 with Lieutenant Louise Brown hosted the event, & since then thousands of visitors, individuals & those on tour buses have visited the site on Beaconsfield Road. The café which overlooks the gardens has been very popular, & there is car parking on site.

The Reader at the Mansion House

The Reader organisation has been based in the coach house at Calderstones Park since 2013, & with the support of Heritage Lottery funds moved into the Mansion House last September. The house has been renovated to a very high standard, which has enabled The Reader to expand their work promoting reading in all age groups. Something is going on every day, with shared reading groups, knit & natter, Incy Wincy rhymers, science fiction Saturday, poetry readings, yoga sessions & much more. There is also a heritage room which explains the history of the site & the Calder Stones, now resplendent in their own gazebo, a shop & a dog-friendly café.

For details of the daily programme call 729 2200, or visit www.thereader.org.uk/events

The 1918 Club

The club was established by Eleanor Rathbone to promote stimulating discussion for women, & is going strong 102 years later. Most meetings are held in The Adelphi Hotel, with lunch followed by a speaker.

The programme for Spring 2020 includes talks on the botanical collection at the World Museum, Jesse Harley & the Albert Dock, the Friends of St James Gardens, & the Osteoporosis Society. The talk in February will be held in the Athenaeum Club.

Details of talks & membership can be found on the website www.the1918club.org.uk

The Science & Art of Public Health, Challenging the Two Cultures

Woolton Society member Professor John Ashton will be delivering a lecture at the LJMU's school of art & design auditorium from 5pm to 6.30 pm on **Wednesday 5th February**. No booking is required.