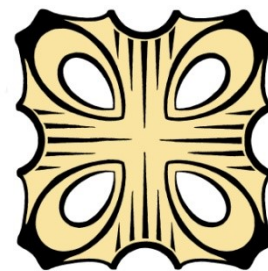


# THE WOOLTON SOCIETY

[www.wooltonsociety.org.uk](http://www.wooltonsociety.org.uk)

**ISSUE NO 359 June 2021**

THE WOOLTON SOCIETY - SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR NEARLY 50 YEARS



## NEWSLETTER



*The society's market stall in June. See page 3 New stock, old banner.*

### Newsletter contents:

*Society news: pages 2-5*

*Environment & planning news: pages 6-7*

*Woolton news: pages 7- 8*

# *Society News*

## **Recent talks and events**

The pattern of having exceptional guest speakers was repeated in April & May with David Hearn & Rob Kirby. Both talks were online via Zoom, with good audience figures in each case.

David Hearn's talk on 21st April was on some notable Liverpool architects who are responsible for the city's famous skyline. Liverpool has been fortunate in having so many architects with a distinctive vision, many of whom went on to design iconic buildings all over the world. This was an absorbing talk, with much new information on a fascinating subject.

Rob Kirby gave his much anticipated talk on the Dam Busters raid of 1943 on 19th May. This had been postponed from 2020, & it is known that some members have been disappointed as they have no internet access. Rob has now been booked by the Gateacre Society to give the talk on **Monday 15th November at 7.30pm** in the old chapel on Gateacre Brow. Those who missed the talk are urged to attend, as Rob is a considerable aeroplane enthusiast & kept the audience enthralled with the details of the famous raid on German dams in May 1943.

The quiz night on June 16th did not go ahead, as it was realised that committee members outnumbered members who had logged in. This was unfortunate as several of the committee members had been supplied with the quiz questions (& answers) in case of technical failure. After a check to see if anyone was waiting to log in it was decided to postpone the quiz until next year, when it is hoped that everyone will be able to meet in the hall with refreshments & bumper prizes.

## **The Woolton Society's programme of events for Autumn 2021**

It is hoped that by September the society will be able to return to the hall at St Mary's on Church Road, but it is known that there will be restrictions in place even if we are allowed to meet in person again. There could well be a limit on numbers in the hall, with all facilities having to be sanitised afterwards. If restrictions are not lifted as planned in July then Zoom meetings will continue for as long as is deemed necessary. Members will be kept informed as to where the meetings will be held as soon as word comes from the archdiocese. This will be by email as well as on the notice board.

### **Wednesday 15th September at 7.30pm: Chris Tigwell, The Rainhill Trials**

The Rainhill Trials of 1829 were held to test locomotive power for the Liverpool to Manchester railway which was then under construction. Five locomotives were entered in the trials, with Stephenson's Rocket the only one to complete the course. This was a pivotal moment in the history of transport. Chris Tigwell has spoken on BBC television on this subject, on Monkman & Seagull's Genius Adventure, where he explained the importance of the trials in locomotive history.

### **Thursday 21st October at 3pm, Stephen Guy: Forgotten Liverpool, aristocracy & merchants.**

The West Derby Society's Stephen Guy, a well-known local historian & writer will be speaking on the people who made Liverpool the second city of empire in the nineteenth century. More details will be in issue 360 of the newsletter.

### **Wednesday 17th November at 7.30pm: 49th Annual General Meeting of the Woolton Society**

There was no AGM held in 2020, so it is hoped that the 2021 AGM will go ahead at St Mary's hall, & that as many members as possible will be able to attend. Refreshments are planned!

The Woolton Society will be celebrating its 50th birthday in 2022, so an item on the agenda could well be suggestions from members on how best to mark the occasion. At the moment the society is considering planting a tree, or trees, & the council's tree officer has been approached for advice on this matter.

Full details of the AGM will be in issue 360 of the newsletter, out in September or October. At the AGM the officers & committee will be elected, & new committee members are always welcomed. All societies need an active committee; the WS the duties are not onerous & always interesting. If

anyone should be interested in standing please contact the society via the website or ask any current committee member. There are always several committee members at the market stall, all willing to talk about the society & its aims.

### **Plaques Project**

The plaques project is ongoing, with the society applying for listed buildings permission for Woolton House Medical Centre & the old school on School Lane. The third plaque in the current tranche will be on the former court house on Quarry Street, but this is not a listed building with only the permission of the owners needed to proceed.

There are already three Woolton Society plaques installed, at 38 Linkstor Road, the home of radio pioneer Edgar Menzies, the former library on Allerton Road, & the Mechanics' Institute on St Mary's Street. Previous newsletters have carried full reports of these plaques, & the unveiling ceremonies which followed.

Recently the owners of 45-47 Woolton Street, the home of the first nuns in Woolton, have given permission to place a plaque on the building. This will now be in the next tranche of applications later this year or in early 2022. The former convent was home to the sisters of Our Lady of Consolation who arrived in Woolton from France in 1793. The account of Woolton's first community of nuns is in pamphlet number 7, written by Dr Janet Hollinshead.

There will be a pamphlet listing all the plaques, plus a map, probably in 2022.

### **Farmers' Markets and merchandise.**

The markets are now operational again, with the WS taking part as they are useful for publicity purposes & invariably attract new members. The markets are also a source of revenue, as pamphlets, publications & the new range of tea towels are sold there.

The markets are held in the village on the second Saturday of each month, this year the dates are **10th July, 14th August, 11th September, 9th October, 13th November, 11th December.**

### **New stock, old banner**

Two new pamphlets have been added to our list of publications this year, both written by committee member Dr Janet Hollinshead. Pamphlet 6 is *Medical Matters in Woolton*, & records the provision of treatment in the village in the nineteenth & twentieth centuries. Pamphlet 7 is entitled *Woolton's First Community of Nuns*, & is an account of the nuns of the Benedictine convent of Our Lady of Consolation who arrived in Woolton from Cambrai in France in 1793. All pamphlets are priced at £1. A new design of tea towels was on sale at the market in June, & they have proved to be an instant success. The tea towels were always a steady seller, particularly around Christmas, & the previous design sold out last year. The new tea towels have been designed by WS member Jenny Brown, who has donated her services to the society which is much appreciated. The striking new design features images of the Woolton cross, the swimming baths, Woolton Hall, shop fronts & the dolphin lamp on Allerton Road, & also a pattern based on the gates of Strawberry Field. They are on sale priced at £6, & all forty taken to the market were sold in a few hours. More were sold to W.I. members at their recent picnic in Reynolds Park. A reprint has already been ordered.

This is a joint enterprise with Woolton in Bloom, with all expenses & profits shared between the two societies. The tea towels are also available at Brown's newsagent on Woolton Street (428 2408).

The designer of the tea towels, Jenny Brown, can be contacted at [stardesignbyjenny@gmail.com](mailto:stardesignbyjenny@gmail.com)

Earlier this year, with all meetings & markets cancelled, a new banner for the society was ordered. The old banner is deteriorating, & shows the logo which was discontinued in 2019. When it did not arrive after several weeks, the manufacturers apologised & offered a refund or a reprint. The latter was chosen. The second banner has now also failed to arrive, & the printers, Saxoprint, who produced our publication *Woolton Stone & Liverpool Cathedral*, investigated further. It would seem that both banners are a casualty of Brexit, as Saxoprint is based in Saxony, Germany. The banners have now been tracked as far as a customs warehouse & are probably awaiting clearance. It is hoped that eventually one or both of the banners will be delivered before the old one finally disintegrates.

## From the archives

Usually archive items are selected from past newsletters, but this article is from a copy of *Lancashire Life*, dated September 1972. It was sent by Gillian Williams (formerly Jones) whose childhood home was Willow Green, off Blackwood Avenue. Gillian is now resident in Perth, Scotland, & came across the article when sorting out. Fortunately she thought to contact the WS via the website to ask if we would be interested in the item.

### Des. res. dist.

You would never expect to find a suburb quite like Woolton in a city like Liverpool.

Situated seven miles south of the Town Hall it has been within the city boundaries since 1913. But despite this, & the fact that its population has risen from seven to twenty five thousand in the last fifteen years & the fact that it includes large Corporation estates, it remains *different*. Turn around one corner & you can find yourself in a tree-lined road with sandstone wall enclosed mansions; round the next might be a row of Victorian terraced cottages straight out of a Lowry painting. Two hundred yards further on you could come across ten to twelve thousand pound bungalows looking out upon tower blocks of council flats. Not distinctly segregated as in most places but all cheek by jowl.

There are luxury houses with sauna baths & swimming pool; there are houses without bathrooms. There are houses with all-American kitchens & infra- red cookers; there are houses without television because they have still got only gas.

The place is a mass of contradictions, a collection of contrasts- & full of surprises.

It is here that you will find a building dating from 1610 which was the oldest elementary school in Lancashire; the quarry which yielded (& is still yielding) stone to build Liverpool cathedral; the city's oldest pub, the Coffee House Hotel dated 1641; & the Bear Brand stocking factory. It was here that William Gladstone once lived, & it is here that both the Bishop of Liverpool & his Roman Catholic opposite number, the Archbishop, have their homes. It was once the home of Frederick Marquis who, on his ennoblement, chose to be known as the first Lord Woolton.

It was here that Robb Wilton made his debut in the old Mechanics' Institute; & where John Lennon once played a concert in the church hall. It is here that Cilla Black has housed her parents.

It is here too that many professional men & women working in Liverpool chose to live. If the traffic is not too heavy they can be down-town in a quarter of an hour & this is why it is a des. res. dist. with the price of houses on a par with those in Caldy & Heswall in Wirral.

For hundreds of years Woolton was a farming & quarrying area & when Liverpool was no more than a little fishing village it was as famous a centre for pig breeding as for its stone. So it remained in fact, until the middle of the nineteenth century when it was discovered by Liverpool's rich merchant families. They came & built large mansions on the slopes of Woolton Hill, living in the grand manner & employing large numbers of servants so that each estate became almost a separate community. They also provided good custom for the bakers, & the cabinet makers, & not least for the washer-women. At one time there were no fewer than sixty wash houses in the village.

There were also fifty pubs! By way of excuse, it is explained that the population of four thousand was swollen in Victorian times by a great influx of Irish land workers & navvies, the latter working on the building

of the railway & Garston docks. For all that, eleven pubs suffice for a twenty seven thousand population today.

Now these stately homes have nearly all gone, but signs of their influence remain. There are for example a number of old established family businesses still flourishing in the old village, & there is a Woolton Show, an annual floral affair which came into being to allow the gardeners from the big houses to show off their skills.

The Show is held every August Bank Holliday on Camp Hill, one of Woolton's many public open spaces & the fact that the area is blessed with more parks than most is a fortunate legacy of the age. Apart from Camp Hill there is Reynolds Park, Black Wood, Doe Park (now Woolton golf course) & Woolton Woods with its famous Old English garden & floral cuckoo clock.

Similarly, as the families declined & the houses became vacant they were put to community use as orphanages, convalescent homes, hospitals, schools & convents. So many, that the first time visitor even today might be forgiven for thinking that Woolton was a little self-contained welfare state.

The biggest & best of these one-time stately homes still stands but its fate is in the balance. This is Woolton Hall, built in the early eighteenth century in a fine dominating position over Woolton Woods. It has changed hands several times & various alterations were made by each of its occupiers, the most noteworthy being the extension designed by the famous architect Robert Adam. This is the only building in Lancashire with which he is associated, though much of his work has disappeared.

For almost thirty years the Hall was a hydropathic hotel, & during the last war it was used for a time by the army. It lay empty for a number of years until in 1950 it became the Roman Catholic Woolton Hall High School. Two years ago Notre Dame High School moved out of the city centre & merged with the Woolton school, & an attractive modern building has been built (& a new convent is being built) in the grounds to the side & behind the old Hall to house them.

The Hall itself, though the fabric of good Woolton sandstone is perfectly sound, is in great need of internal renovation & it was therefore decided to demolish it. However when this became known a petition was launched to prevent it, & in turn this has sparked off a move to form a Woolton conservation society to save the hall.

**Here the extract ends, just as the Woolton Society begins.**

We are grateful to Mrs Williams for sending us this article, & welcome any comments on Woolton in 1972.

### **Cash & Barclays bank**

The closure of the Woolton branch of Barclays on June 18th was a blow to many residents, including the WS as we have banked there for many years. This is not yet a cashless society & the market stall generates cash payments for merchandise & some members prefer to pay their subs in this way. However cash & cheques have to be banked. The society is now investigating the use of a card reader machine for market & other payments, which would cut down on the amount of cash, & members are urged to set up standing orders for subscription renewals.

# *Environment, Planning News & Applications*

## **Woolton Hall**

There is no fresh news about Woolton Hall, except that it is still standing, still for sale with an asking price of £4 million, & still with owners who show little or no interest in a Grade 1 listed building. It has been written about in the Liverpool Echo recently, as a group calling themselves *Urban Explorers* have been posting on social media about entering the building & “cleaning up” there. It is not known how the group manages to enter the building which is locked up. One post claimed that the group would clean the sandstone exterior by power washing it. Woolton residents with sandstone garden walls know that power washing is the worst thing to do to them as the stone is so soft. Fortunately as there is no electricity or water supply at the hall this intention cannot be carried out. More news as we have it.

## **Planning Applications**

*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:*

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

The majority of recent applications have been for tree works (without tree preservation orders) or single storey extensions. Of note are:

### **21F/1193      Land to rear of 14-16 Jeudwine Close L25 7TT**

To erect 1 dwelling house with associated parking & boundary treatments.

### **21F/1204      St Julie's Catholic High School Speke Road L25 7TN**

To erect single storey extension to provide tutorial rooms & sixth form café area.

### **21F/1296      61 Church Road L25 6DA**

To erect a new dwelling following the demolition of 61 Church Road

### **21F/1532      St Mary's RC church**

To install replacement access ramp to the side entrance of the church, with associated steps.

### **21H/1349      Rosemont, Church Road**

To erect single storey extension to rear.

### **21H/1108      Ashfield, Church Road L25 6DD**

To erect first floor extension to side, erect 2 glazed two storey gable/bay extensions to front, install new windows & apply new render to exterior of property, & reconfigure & increase height of roof in connection with loft extension.

### **21F/0647      114 Allerton Road**

To remove condition 2 attached to 18H/2473 (to erect 2 storey extension to rear & single storey extension to front) so as to allow obscured glass to clear.

### **21F/1199      Barclays Bank, 27-29 Allerton Road L25 7RA**

To carry out external alterations in connection with the removal of signage & ATM.



**20F/1540                    36 Woolton Street**

To carry out external alterations to shop front including repositioning of entrance & creation of new stepped access from footpath

**20H/2813                    2 Woolton Mount**

To erect temporary painted timber fence to provide screening while new willow hedging becomes established.

**21L/1353 & 21H/1186   120 Allerton Road L25 7RH**

To erect single storey extension to rear

**21PT/1440                    Central reservation opposite 17 The Heyes, Kings Drive L25 8TJ**

To install 20m 5G telecommunications mast with associated cabin equipment.

**21H/1205                    38 High Street L25 7TE**

To install replacement timber sliding sash windows.

## *Woolton News*

### **Woolton in Bloom**

Summer planting is going ahead, under the direction of horticultural manager Kerry Peacock. Volunteers are always needed, for such tasks as the repair & painting of planters as well as weeding & planting. Ask about volunteering at the market stall or by enquiry to any of the gardeners seen about the village.

There was a lengthy dry spell in April which meant that the water bowser was much in use to keep the plants alive. This is a considerable task as the planting covers a wide area of the village, & also time consuming as the bowser has to be refilled often. Thanks go to residents who allow WIB volunteers to use their water supply. If anyone could offer to be a filling station, or undertake watering duties themselves, please contact Kerry.

WIB takes a stall at the monthly markets which are now in operation again, with plants on sale plus fund raising activities such as tombola, a raffle, & the new tea towels. A pop-up plant stall opposite Reynolds Park gates raised over £100 last year when the markets were closed. A similar sum has already been raised this year, as one sale was held on the same day as the Women's Institute picnic in the park. All fund raising is vital, as WIB receives no money from the council, despite contributing greatly to the beauty of the village with their displays.

The new range of tea towels has been a joint venture with the Woolton Society, with expenses & profits shared between the two societies.

For more information & pictures go to the WIB site on [www.wooltoninbloom.wix.com/wooltoninbloom](http://www.wooltoninbloom.wix.com/wooltoninbloom)

### **Woolton's Yellow Book Gardens**

Although the WIB's own Open Gardens event will not take place this year, three of the gardens, at 71 Manor Road, *Green Ridges* in Runnymede Close, & 231 Speke Road are included in the Yellow Book, organised by the National Gardens Scheme. This lists gardens around the country which open for charity. The NGS is Marie Curie's largest single funder, & has donated nearly £10 million over the past 25 years. The open day is **Sunday 11th July**, from 12 noon until 5pm. Also opening on the day are gardens at 23 Hillside Drive & 89 Oakwood Road L26. This is a group opening, with a combined admission price of £5 for all five gardens.

The gardens at Manor Road, Speke Road & Runnymede Close take part in WIB's Open Gardens event, & are in the current calendar, with the spectacular moon gate at Manor Road featuring on the cover.

It is planned to hold WIB's own event in 2022, which will be the 21st anniversary of the founding of Woolton in Bloom.

### **Friends of Reynolds Park**

A very successful litter pick was held at the park on the morning of Saturday 5th June. The park has never had a serious litter problem, & after the volunteers had scoured every bush, bench & blade of grass it looked even better than usual.

The Friends will be repainting all the park gates over the summer, & celebrating Reynolds Day on **Saturday 11th September**. Look out for notices with further details which will be on the park gates & on the notice board. No meetings have been planned for now, but chairman Geoff Kendall will be reapplying for finance to redevelop the wildflower meadow.

The Imaginarium theatre group will be putting on a production of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* in the park on **Sunday 4th July**, at 2pm. Tickets available from their website

[www.imaginariumtheatre.co.uk](http://www.imaginariumtheatre.co.uk) or call the ticket hotline on 0344 8000 410

FORP may be found online at:

[www.friendsofreynoldspark.co.uk](http://www.friendsofreynoldspark.co.uk)

[www.twitter.com/reynoldsparkfrs](https://www.twitter.com/reynoldsparkfrs)

[www.facebook.com/friendsofreynoldspark](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofreynoldspark)

[www.instagram.com/reynoldsparkfrs](https://www.instagram.com/reynoldsparkfrs)

### **Woolton Community Life**

WCL was established by local GP George Kuruvilla, & is a network of volunteers offering befriending services to those who are lonely, housebound, or socially isolated. WCL is always in need of volunteers; anyone who would like to offer their services should contact their website on

[www.wooltoncommunitylife.org.uk](http://www.wooltoncommunitylife.org.uk)

### **Speeding traffic on Church Road**

Church road residents have received a letter from Councillors Kelly, Mace & Brown about the many incidents of speeding, despite the 20mph signs.

The councillors, working with the police, are setting up a community led scheme to monitor traffic speeds, & are seeking volunteers to be trained in the use of hand-held speed check devices.

Contact the councillors on:

[Malcolm.kelly@liverlibdems.otg.uk](mailto:Malcolm.kelly@liverlibdems.otg.uk)

[barbara.mace@liverlibdems.org.uk](mailto:barbara.mace@liverlibdems.org.uk)

[Kris.Brown@liverlibdems.org.uk](mailto:Kris.Brown@liverlibdems.org.uk)