

THE WOOLTON SOCIETY

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THE WOOLTON SOCIETY - SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR NEARLY 40 YEARS

NEWSLETTER

Baths & Library: the campaigns go on. (see pages 3 to 6)



Handing over the Save Woolton Library Petition



Save the Pool site meeting

Woolton in Bloom

The judging date for this year's North West in Bloom awards is to be **Monday 1st August**. We urge all our members to do their bit to keep Woolton blooming & litter free to ensure yet another gold medal success.



Society News

Our next Speaker. Mr Frank Smith will return to speak to us on Wednesday 20th July, when his talk will be on amateur & gentleman William Lassell. After making his fortune in brewing, Lassell devoted his time to astronomy, discovering several planetary satellites. He was to become President of the Royal Astronomical Society & when Queen Victoria visited Liverpool in 1851 William Lassell was the only local notable she specifically asked to meet.

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 28th September: Kerry Peacock, the horticultural manager of Woolton in Bloom will be speaking to us on preparing our village for the visits of the North West in Bloom & Britain in Bloom judges.

Wednesday 26th October: the Woolton Society AGM will be followed by an Open Forum when all our members will have an opportunity to air their views on Society matters. Refreshments will follow.

Wednesday 23rd November: Anthony Moscardini will be Looking at Liverpool .

Fuller details on all talks will be in later issues of the Newsletter, & on our noticeboard beside the HSBC bank.

All meetings are held in the Village Club, Allerton Rd, starting at 7.30pm.

Recent Talks

Our speaker in May was Professor David Dunster, who gave us a lively & thought provoking talk on the development of cities, with Paris, Rome, New York & Berlin cited as examples. It is worth noting that our November talk will bring similar scrutiny to bear on the city of Liverpool.

Membership Secretary: the search goes on.

Any person willing to take on this position should contact any committee member at the next meeting, or e-mail the Newsletter at jeanldavies@talktalk.net The duties are not heavy but computer skills would be an advantage.

Subscriptions

All subs will be due at the AGM in October. Please note that in this harsh economic climate we shall have to charge extra to those few members who live out of the area, & so need a postal delivery of the Newsletter. Further details in issue 320.

Farmers Market

The Society took a stall at the farmers market last November, which resulted in considerable interest in our activities, & 18 new members. We hope to take a stall at the market in September or October, which will be an ideal opportunity for members to renew their subs, or perhaps buy a gift membership of The Woolton Society for that *person with everything* in your life.

Conservation area map

Following the printing of the conservation area map in issue 318, please note that all those who live within its boundaries should notify the City Planning Office *before*, not *after*, any external alterations to their property are done.

Woolton News

Baths campaign update

A concerted campaign has been quietly underway over the last few months with Woolton Village Residents Association, Woolton Swimming Club and the Woolton Society jointly supporting the SAVE WOOLTON POOL FUND, in our efforts to secure the pools future, restore its fabric and re-open the facility for the Community.

Part of the Council's statutory process in reaching a decision to deal with coalition government spending cuts involves consultation with the Community on its views over provision of services. To that end a site meeting was held in Woolton Swimming Pool at 11 am on Thursday 28 April with the representative Community groups, Councillor Wendy Simon, Cabinet Member for Culture & Tourism, senior council officers, Ward Councillor Barbara Collinge, and local resident Mary Aspinall who has been instrumental in developing the very welcome support from the City Council.

We are happy to say the first stage agreement reached will provide the following:-

- (1) Woolton Pool has been lifted from the list of potential pool closures for a period of 6 to 9 months to give volunteers time to put a heritage listing and grant application together.
- (2) Senior Council Heritage and experienced HLF grant officers will help to mentor and advise volunteers in constructing the applications.
- (3) Senior Culture/ Leisure officers will assist volunteers in creating the new business and management plan for the pool.
- (4) The Council and community volunteers will work together to help protect the building and pool fabric from damage, as much as is practicable, during the closedown.

The agreement provides the beginning of a real opportunity to solve the financial problems faced from spending cuts and secure the swimming pool's future.

Supporters wishing to help with this project and contribute to the fighting fund should send cheques to SAVE WOOLTON POOL FUND, c/o WVRA, 63 Allerton Road, Woolton Village, Liverpool L25 7RF, England.

The Woolton Society is organizing a draw to support the fighting fund. So far 11 restaurants in the village have signed up to offer meals for two or vouchers. Further details in issue 320 or at the next meeting.

Woolton Baths- getting the building Listed- the story so far.....

Why was the building not already Listed?

Woolton is probably the oldest and possibly only surviving village size of public swimming pool in the UK, is appropriate to its location and has also been described as '*miniature*'. It is not pretending to be on a great scale even if the somewhat over blown architecture of its grand entrance tries to suggest this, but this does make it a powerful local landmark at the crossing of Quarry Street and Allerton Road.

So many people, including Dr Ian Dungavell, Director of the Victorian Society, have been surprised to discover that while Woolton Baths is in the Woolton Village Conservation Area it was never included among its many Listed Buildings; there are said to be as many as 150 within half a mile, second only in number to those in the city centre. Dr Dungavell, like Simon Inglis and Dr Ian Cordon, the co authors of *Great Lengths- Historic Indoor Pools of Britain*, all enthusiastically support the case for Listing; Simon Inglis also edited Ray Physick's '*Played in Liverpool*' book in which Woolton is featured."

The Listing application is being made on behalf of the *Save Woolton Pool Fund, Woolton Residents Association and The Woolton Society*; but the Listing decision is not made on the basis of a lobbying campaign, however high profile the support. English Heritage has its own rigorous, objective evidence based system; the basic criterion for listing a building is that it must hold '*special historic or architectural interest.*' and this is a national system so it is a national benchmark against which any application is measured.

Research process: from dusty files to 'Google'

When Woolton Baths closed and the Save Woolton Pool campaign was set up, I offered to assemble evidence for a Listing application. Little did I then realise how long this would take, but also what a fascinating journey it would prove to be.

I was somewhat daunted by the fact that as Much Woolton was in Lancashire until 1913, early records would have been in that distant Record Office. However I was assured that everything was transferred to Liverpool in 1913; I am not completely convinced that Liverpool has inherited all records; certainly there is a total absence of any photographic images.

I have initially focussed on the building's architectural merit, using a part of the description for the exterior, from the late Janet Gnosspelius's *Woolton Walk Three* dated 27th August 1983 (*kindly supplied by B Mackenzie*), but also on its wider historic and social interest. It is this latter aspect which has had me '*Googling*' endlessly and visiting the temporarily re-located Liverpool Records Office both in NML in the city

centre and also on a business park near Sandhills station; how enormously helpful the staff have been in enabling documents to be sourced. I have also been to Widnes Library and to Catalyst, Museum of The Chemical Industry.

I am sure that Janet would have thoroughly approved of my more traditional form of research, but would, I suspect, have looked at me very disapprovingly about my internet indulgences! As part of my traditional research I have a copy of a long article (approx A2 size) in *The Garston and Woolton Reporter* dated 1st July 1893 'Opening of the New Baths at Woolton- generous gift by Mr Holbrook Gaskell JP'. I am having this typed up to make it more legible and for wider distribution; it's a really riveting read. There is a description of the building; a list of those at the opening; speeches made to thank Holbrook Gaskell and his modest response together with the story of the many swimming events that took place in celebration.

Who were the architects for the building?

I had hoped that it was a lesser known building by a nationally known architect, but this was not to be the case. However Horton and Bridgforth of Manchester had at least already designed both Widnes Baths (1879) and the Grade 2 Listed Victoria Salt Water Baths (1871) in Southport as well as the Grade 2 Listed former Conservative Club in central Manchester.

Social history discoveries:

The Victorian village context is the start of this important theme; the centre of Woolton still retains its village qualities which I believe are even more significant today with the greater value placed on local communities and localism. I have noted the existence of many local public buildings, most of which were built during the Victorian era when the population grew fast. Did you know that during the winter from 1910, the pool had a wooden floor covering and the space was used for entertainment, including showing films? It was a forerunner of our Woolton Cinema which opened in 1925. Woolton Swimming Club is believed to be the oldest club nationally still in the same building or at least until late last year when the building closed); WSC celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1995. Don Robinson, the current WSC Chair, actually taught Steve Parry, Olympic Bronze medallist to swim at Woolton.

I have also explored the important links to water supply and therefore to Woolton Reservoir whose tower is already Listed! The vital links to Liverpool's nationally pioneering public health movement is also important; while Much Woolton was a rural village it still suffered overcrowding and poor sanitation so the wash houses (including at No 63 Allerton Road, next to the Baths building) and the laundry at the rear of the Woolton Baths, together with the private baths, the slipper baths and plunge pool will all have been crucial in helping to maintain health and hygiene among the local population.

We are all familiar with Woolton's many quarries from which our local buildings derived their sandstone, the most famous being the quarries from which most of the sandstone for Liverpool's Grade 1 Anglican Cathedral was obtained. Did you know that the quarry workers who would inevitably be covered in stone dust, used the baths, followed by a plunge in the swimming pool? We have some oral history of four generations of quarry workers which relate this.

It was a complete surprise to hear that Much Woolton's 'fire service' was based in the building (along Allerton Road) next to the Baths; I now have a photo of the Much Woolton 'firemen' with their hand drawn cart taken (c1910) in the rear yard.

The link to the local philanthropist Holbrook Gaskell who lived in Woolton Woods and not only funded Woolton, but also the old Widnes Baths, a chair of botany and new chemistry labs at Liverpool University as well as a convalescent home in the Wirral. *The Garston and Woolton Reporter (10th October 1891) referred to 'Mr Holbrook Gaskell's exceedingly generous offer. Few places the size of Woolton can boast public baths; but if such men as the large hearted donor of the Village Club and Mr Holbrook Gaskell have their way, Woolton will be made a model village. Mr Gaskell's firm built the baths at Widnes; and what he has since observed there leads to his present large hearted promise. He confers a boon on the people of Woolton that they could scarcely have hoped to secure in any other way'*

Is there now a local philanthropist who might generously provide financial help in getting our Woolton Pool open once again for the benefit of the local community?

Holbrook Gaskell was also a well known chemical industrialist and through his son and grandson of the same name his company eventually merged with others to become Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) which gives the baths another interesting national dimension.

Last but not least is the Lennon and Mc Cartney connection; both swam regularly at Woolton. With their respective homes being Mendips and Forthlin Road, it was their local pool. This kind of popular culture connection, is yet another strand providing extra social history interest to Woolton Baths.

What are the next steps?

The application backed by copies of documents and photographic images will shortly be sent to English Heritage in York. A member of the listings team will then come to visit and make their own report. I understand that a decision would be reached in approximately two months from submission

An Appeal to members: I am sure that there must be photographs of the building's exterior and interior at different stages; in the case of the latter, incidental shots of swimming teams with part of the interior visible. There must also be countless memories of both bathing in the private baths and swimming in the pool. Also any information about *any* of the other related themes I have mentioned would be most welcome

Did you know?

Did you know that the blue and white tiles around the water line are Minton, with Anthemion and Palmette motifs?



Have you noticed the crank lever operated ventilation system along the edges of the roof lantern inside the building?

Have you noticed the different patterns on the terracotta panels high along the external walls: lion faces along Quarry Street South; foliage pattern along Allerton Road?

Listing article by Sue Carmichael, a founder member and first Hon. Sec. of the Woolton Society

If you can help with pictures, etc. Sue can be contacted at: **suec_cfutures@btinternet.com**

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## **Woolton Library update - Meeting with councillors to present the petition.**

5,358 local residents signed the Save Woolton Library petition strongly opposing the closure of Woolton Library. Councillor Wendy Simon, the Cabinet Minister for Leisure & Tourism, visited Woolton Library on Thursday 28th April to receive the petition as the Leader of the Council, Councillor Joe Anderson, was ill. Councillor Simon was accompanied by Councillor Ann O'Byrne, Council Minister for Community Safety, and Chris Briggs Assistant Executive Director for Leisure & Culture. About 40 members of the public attended the meeting including young children from the Friends Nursery who presented the petition to Councillor Simon.

Shadow spokesperson for culture & tourism Councillor Barbara Mace told us "Woolton Library is still undergoing the consultation process, along with all the libraries in the city. We will be keeping a close watch on the progress of this."

Sadly, soon after the meeting three long serving librarians at Woolton, June, Jan & Carmelina applied for early retirement & left on May 31<sup>st</sup>. They will be missed.

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## *Planning News and Applications*

### **ALLERTON PRIORY. Application 11L/0591 and 11F/0592.**

The application is described as the land to the east of Allerton Road and Woolton Road and forms part of the Green Wedge. The former application reference is to 'carry out works to boundary walls to create 2 new access points to serve equestrian centre (i) vehicular access to Woolton Road and (ii) access to bridleway at north east corner. The latter application reference is to erect detached 'zero carbon' house, garage, sunken garden with associated driveway hard and soft landscaping works, creation of ecology pond following demolition of existing derelict sports pavilion.

It is worth pointing out that the Liverpool UDP – Unitary Development Plan advises that any application on 'Green Wedge' sites, 'offer uses and activities which with their open character, particularly those that secure the continued use of sports grounds surplus to the owners requirements for open space purposes'.

Both the Liverpool Echo and Post submitted articles in regard to this proposal and we have paraphrased these to give a better picture of what has been proposed.

Liverpool Daily Post – Liverpool's First Zero Carbon Home and Equestrian Centre. 28/2/2011

Maghull Developments want to build the project on the former Allerton Priory Home Farm. Occupying 36 acres the company hopes to create stabling for 40 horses. Maghull operates Formby Golf Resort. The firm has set up Liverpool's Stabling and Equestrian Centre Ltd to run the centre.

The scheme would maintain the sites open aspect through grazing and ecological grass land and would link into the existing bridleway network which passes the site. Planning consultant Richard Gee said ' An equestrian Centre fully meets the desire to retain the green and open nature of the site while bringing it back into regular use and providing a high quality facility which will be a significant and welcome resource for the City.

Work could start in Spring 2012 if approved. Mr Gee said that the Centre had been designed to minimize its impact. It will be concealed within the external tree belt which surrounded Home Farm.

The 'zero carbon' House would sit in the foot print of the dilapidated sports pavilion on the site, although with less overall volume since a significant portion would be below existing ground level. The luxury home would have four bedrooms and gym.

Reid Lewis of architects RG Partnership Ltd which designed the scheme said the aim is was to create a sustainable development that was respectful of its surroundings. These two applications express the overacting commitment to create an exemplar for sustainable development which fully respects the character

and setting of this important and sensitive site. In making these applications, the sites heritage has been used as a starting point for the design process. Our overall aim is to create sustainable and complementary developments that enhance the sites ecological value.

The following planning applications have been received by the City council since our last newsletter. See <http://northgate.liverpool.gov.uk/PlanningExplorer17/GeneralSearch.aspx>

Contact the Society at [wooltonsociety@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:wooltonsociety@hotmail.co.uk) re planning matters.

| Applic'n Number          | Site Address                                       | Development Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Status         | Date Registered | Decision                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 11H/0914                 | Walnut Cottage 30 Sandfield Road Liverpool L25 3PE | To erect 2 storey extension to the side incorporating a porch, single storey extension to the rear and carry out loft conversion                                                                                                               | REGISTERED     | 28-06-2011      |                                     |
| 11A/1381                 | 24 Woolton Street Liverpool L25 5JD                | To install externally illuminated fascia sign and projecting sign.                                                                                                                                                                             | REGISTERED     | 22-06-2011      |                                     |
| 11F/1380                 | 24 Woolton Street Liverpool L25 5JD                | To change use of shop to building society (Use Class A2) and install new shop front.                                                                                                                                                           | REGISTERED     | 22-06-2011      |                                     |
| 11LP/1374                | Richmond Courtenay Road Liverpool L25 4RL          | Application for a lawful development certificate for proposed single storey extension to the rear, garage conversion and porch                                                                                                                 | FINAL DECISION | 21-06-2011      | Certificate of Lawfulness - Granted |
| 11T/1372                 | 52 Hornby Lane Liverpool L18 3HH                   | To carry out tree works                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | REGISTERED     | 21-06-2011      |                                     |
| 11H/0960                 | 31 Kenilworth Way Liverpool L25 7XH                | To erect single storey extension to the rear, first floor extension to the side, single storey garage to side, and raise patio area to the rear.<br>**Additional paperwork received**                                                          | REGISTERED     | 17-06-2011      |                                     |
| 11H/1332                 | 22 Elmsfield Close Liverpool L25 4SF               | To erect single storey extension to the side and extend decking to side.                                                                                                                                                                       | REGISTERED     | 16-06-2011      |                                     |
| 11H/1170                 | 8 Mount Park Liverpool L25 6JW                     | To erect dormer extension to the side                                                                                                                                                                                                          | REGISTERED     | 16-06-2011      |                                     |
| 11H/1321                 | Charnwood 9 Hillside Drive Liverpool L25 5NR       | To erect two storey extension to the side                                                                                                                                                                                                      | REGISTERED     | 15-06-2011      |                                     |
| 11H/1305                 | 30 Cherry Vale Liverpool L25 5PX                   | To lay out replacement hard standing to front side and rear                                                                                                                                                                                    | REGISTERED     | 13-06-2011      |                                     |
| <a href="#">11F/1297</a> | 2 Beaconsfield Road Liverpool L25 6EE              | To erect 2 storey dwelling house following demolition of existing dwelling.                                                                                                                                                                    | REGISTERED     | 13-06-2011      |                                     |
| <a href="#">11H/1257</a> | 47 Beaconsfield Road Liverpool L25 6EQ             | To remodel and extend dwellinghouse, incorporating first floor extensions at front and side, porch at front, single storey extension at rear, conservatory at rear, swimming pool at rear and new hipped roof together with dormer extensions. | REGISTERED     | 03-06-2011      |                                     |
| <a href="#">11H/1234</a> | 16 Gipsy Lane Liverpool L18 3HL                    | To erect single storey and first floor extensions to side and porch to front.                                                                                                                                                                  | REGISTERED     | 02-06-2011      |                                     |

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------|-------------------------|
| <a href="#">11H/1235</a> | 79 Quarry Street<br>Liverpool L25 6HA               | To erect glazed entrance porch                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | REGISTERED     | 02-06-2011 |                         |
| <a href="#">11H/1217</a> | 1 Baddow Croft<br>Liverpool L25 7DB                 | To erect single storey extension to the rear with balcony over.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | REGISTERED     | 01-06-2011 |                         |
| <a href="#">11H/1069</a> | 48 Gateacre Park<br>Drive Liverpool L25 1PF         | To erect single storey extension to side/rear and install velux windows to front and rear in connection with loft conversion.                                                                                                                                                                              | REGISTERED     | 01-06-2011 |                         |
| <a href="#">11H/1203</a> | 19 Meadow Oak<br>Drive Liverpool L25 3SZ            | To erect first floor extension over existing garage to the front, convert garage into habitable accommodation and erect part single/part two storey extension to the side.                                                                                                                                 | REGISTERED     | 31-05-2011 |                         |
| <a href="#">11H/1018</a> | 91 Wallgate Road<br>Liverpool L25 1TP               | To erect single storey extension to the front.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | REGISTERED     | 27-05-2011 |                         |
| <a href="#">11H/1128</a> | 44 Ridgetor Road<br>Liverpool L25 6DQ               | To erect part single/part two storey extension to the side/rear, incorporating porch to the front, and two storey extension to the rear.                                                                                                                                                                   | REGISTERED     | 23-05-2011 |                         |
| <a href="#">11H/1111</a> | 90 Barnham Drive<br>Liverpool L16 5ES               | To erect external vertical lift shaft and carry out internal alterations for RDP                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | REGISTERED     | 20-05-2011 |                         |
| <a href="#">11H/1115</a> | 29 Ridgetor Road<br>Woolton Liverpool L25 2DG       | To erect part two storey/part single storey extension to the rear and single storey extension to the side/front.                                                                                                                                                                                           | REGISTERED     | 20-05-2011 |                         |
| <a href="#">11T/1096</a> | 2 The Beeches<br>Liverpool L18 3LT                  | To fell 1 no. tree at front.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | FINAL DECISION | 19-05-2011 | Approve with Conditions |
| <a href="#">11L/1064</a> | Newstead Farm<br>Quarry Street<br>Liverpool L25 6DY | To carry out internal and external alterations in connection with the refurbishment of the existing dwellinghouse, erection of car port and glazed link following removal of external wc, erection of conservatory at rear following removal of existing lounge and erection of replacement steps at side. | REGISTERED     | 16-05-2011 |                         |
| <a href="#">11F/1063</a> | Newstead Farm<br>Quarry Street<br>Liverpool L25 6DY | To carry out external alterations in connection with the refurbishment of the existing dwellinghouse, erection of car port and glazed link following removal of external wc, erection of conservatory at rear following removal of existing lounge and erection of replacement steps at side.              | REGISTERED     | 16-05-2011 |                         |
| <a href="#">11H/1057</a> | 14 Castle Street<br>Liverpool L25 7SW               | To erect single storey extension to the rear                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | FINAL DECISION | 13-05-2011 | Approve with Conditions |
| <a href="#">11H/1048</a> | 3 Hornby Park<br>Liverpool L18 3LL                  | To erect part single storey/part two storey extension to the rear.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | REGISTERED     | 12-05-2011 |                         |
| <a href="#">11F/0965</a> | 179 Grange Lane<br>Liverpool L25 5JY                | To install new shop front and widen door to the rear                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | FINAL DECISION | 03-05-2011 | Approve with Conditions |
| <a href="#">11T/0963</a> | 7 Bishops Court<br>Liverpool L25 5HR                | To carry out treeworks.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | FINAL DECISION | 28-04-2011 | Approve with Conditions |