

# The Clevedonian

Autumn 2011

Issue No. 04



## In this edition

- Page 2**  
A View from the Chair  
Group Report - Footpaths Group
- Page 3**  
Group Reports  
Environment Group  
Local History Group
- Page 4**  
Group Report - Conservation Group
- Page 5**  
Speakers' Corner
- Page 6**  
Coming Shortly
- Page 7**  
The Story of Bristol Cars
- Page 8**  
East Clevedon - Early Stirrings - 2
- Page 9**  
Bristol House  
Society Publications
- Page 10 & 11**  
Clevedon Flower Show
- Page 12**  
I.K. Brunel Slept Here
- Page 13**  
What's in a Name?
- Page 14**  
Alonzo Dawes - Auctioneer
- Page 15**  
Woodspring Bay Wrecks  
Notice Board
- Page 16**  
When We Were Very Young
- Page 17**  
Branch Line - Sylvia's Garden
- Page 18**  
Postcard from Clevedon  
Collector's Lot
- Page 19**  
Military Chest  
The Herring Bridge
- Page 20**  
Members' Photograph Gallery  
Artist's Attic

*The views expressed are those of the authors, and may or may not represent those of the Society.*



# A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR Report by Hugh Stebbing



Well here's another bumper edition of the Clevedonian and I must start by thanking Geoff Hale for gathering the harvest of stories and pictures and editing them into such a great magazine about our Society. And all our thanks are due, too, for the regular issues of the Clevedonian Supplement that keep us abreast of recent events and those to come across the range of our activities.

As is now usual for societies such as ours, the internet and web-site technology have transformed the ways we can communicate, exchange information

and research new information. It is for us to embrace these options for the benefits they offer whilst remaining aware that some choose more traditional approaches. Using the new technologies does give us all the means to access and share information and help manage our costs so that we can look ahead with confidence and seek out ways of building our Society for the future.

I'm now six months or so into my year as your Chairman. It's been a fascinating time during which I've truly seen the strength of our Society in action – working through the Special Interest Groups and involving so many of you, our members. Our various Groups really are at the heart of what this Civic Society is about and I'd encourage you all to consider very carefully how you can become even more involved to help us achieve more. That could

be by attending more and varied meetings across the range listed in the Programme, or by encouraging friends to join in. Remember guests are welcome and many members, perhaps the majority, joined after being encouraged to try us out by existing members!

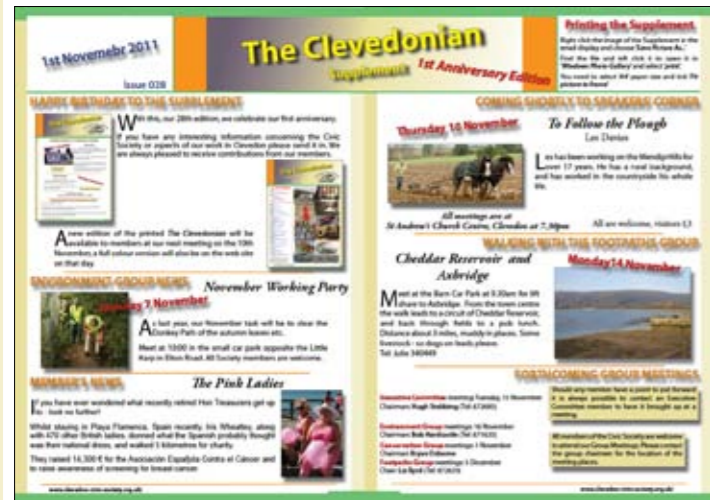
Finally, in thanking you all for the support you've given the Executive I'd like to ask you to:

Keep up your attendances at our meetings.

Make a determined effort to attend the AGM early in 2012. The new date completes the period of change in our governance of the Society.

Invite a friend or guest to join so that they, too, can enjoy all that this Civic Society has to offer.

I do hope you enjoy the contents of this Clevedonian. I'm sure it will give you, once again, a real sense that we can and are making a difference for the good of our town and its people.



## GROUP REPORT

The activities of the group continue to be varied. We explore details of Clevedon footpaths, such as East Clevedon and the Millennium Orchard, and continue to carry out the Clevedon Footpaths Survey walks. The intent is to transcribe the official council footpath notation into more accessible directions. Many thanks go to Paul Cronin for his meticulous work on three walks so far. The footpaths have been found to be in overall good condition.

Rural ambles further afield have included the Portbury nature reserve and coast path, Gordano Valley, Wrington, Goblin Combe, Pill and Regil. Southville and Bedminster, and Clifton provided more urban territory.

Four members took part in the 7 mile Bluebell walk in aid of Children's Hospice Southwest. It is planned to make participation in this fundraising walk an annual event.

Weather often influences the number taking part in walks and sometimes a mere brave 4 or 5 face bracing conditions (before the pub lunch).

Next meetings:  
5 December 2011 and 5 March 2012

## Footpaths Group

Report by Liz Byrd (Tel: 872633)



In August, we said goodbye to Jean Hannaford, with many thanks for her inspiring chairmanship of the group since 2006. Jean and the new chair, Liz Byrd, jointly led the coastal path walk to Portishead with a record number for the year of 24 walkers.

Several new members have joined the group, which continues to provide a convivial social arm of the Society as well as fulfilling its more official role of reporting on the Clevedon footpaths. Members suggest, carry out a reconnaissance, and lead the walks (usually 3 to 5 miles), mindful that some are distinctly seasonal.

The group is liaising with the Society Environment Group, North Somerset Council and the Transport Group of Transition Clevedon regarding the shared use of paths by both walkers and cyclists in south Clevedon. These provide a valuable route between several schools.

Information on all walks can be found on the Society website, the Clevedonian Supplement or in the local press.



Blagdon & Burrington walk 20 August 2011

## Environment Group

Report by Bob Hardcastle (Tel. 871633)



The Environment Group has been busy during the spring and summer months with its regular working parties. As in previous years we have concentrated on maintaining the projects that the Civic Society have initiated such as the drinking fountains, Pier Copse viewpoint, the Lookout and circular seat on Poets' Walk.

We also spent one morning clearing the steps and seating area on the Zig Zag off Hill Road. This was well received by local residents and resulted in several favourable comments to our Chairman.



Next meeting:  
16 November 2011

mobile phones. We understand that one box in Clevedon has not been used since 2009!



## Local History Group

Report by Rob Campbell (Tel. 877038)

Our first meeting after the summer break was so well attended that we thought we would run out of chairs! Professor Simon Haslett's reputation preceded him and his theory and presentation relating to the Somerset Tsunami of 1607 held everyone's attention. It was a truly wonderful evening and I'm pleased to tell you that Simon also enjoyed it and has offered a return visit.

During the summer break a small party of members visited the newly opened Somerset Heritage Centre. We all had success with our research and found that having a number of resources brought together under one roof was a real improvement. The new chairs



were also found to be a little less taxing to the parts they came in contact with! It is hoped that a visit to Colindale Newspaper Library in London can be arranged before they move to the dark suburbs of rural Yorkshire, sometime next year.

As I have now taken over the book sales it is very rewarding to report that

# GROUP REPORTS



Less successful was North Somerset Council's Heritage Lottery bid for the seafront area. As a result the Council is considering a revised bid to cover a more specific area of the sea front. The Society is considering how it can best help with any future bid, but in the meantime remains very concerned about the state of some aspects of the sea front, not least the Bandstand, which is in urgent need of repair.

We have also been concerned about the state of the traditional red K6 payphone boxes in Clevedon. We have contacted BT about this and at the time of writing the boxes in Old Church Road and Beaconsfield

Road have been repaired. BT have said that they will let us know what will be happening to the other K6 boxes in Clevedon.

Obviously BT have a problem with payphones generally as they are so little used these days because most people have

The Group is also looking for further projects in Clevedon, especially away from the sea front, which some people think is our only concern. Suggestions therefore would be gratefully received, together with any help with our working parties or as a member of the Group.

One member of our group has continued throughout the summer to tend the raised flower beds at the Pier Copse viewpoint. The perennial plants have established well despite the challenging weather conditions and appropriate summer bedding has added to the colourful display.

interest in our books continues unabated. This is wonderful news for the Society as a whole as it produces valuable income and of course is very rewarding to those who have put pen to paper. If anyone has the urge to become a budding editor then please let me know.

The programme for 2012 has finally been arranged with some new faces, as well as some familiar ones making welcome return visits.

2012 is also the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the History Group and to celebrate we have booked St Andrew's Hall during the afternoon of Saturday 19 May. The idea is to highlight the group's achievements with displays etc. Any other ideas would be very welcome.



Highdale Road Bridge - Today

English Heritage have provisionally approved the protection of the Grade II\* Listed Hall's environs, we understand. We are very concerned at the Government's proposals for "sustainable development" in the draft National Planning Policy Framework document, and we support the concerns of the National Trust and other bodies over the potential loss of green belt and agricultural land to developers.

At the time of the last edition of The Clevedonian, we thought we would see some movement on the Royal Pier Hotel site by now, but we can understand in the current economic climate that the developer is reluctant to start work without some certainty that he can sell the apartments. It is hoped that work will start in the New Year.

We are still waiting to hear whether the Pier trustees have been successful in obtaining the first phase of their Heritage Lottery bid to build the cafe, toilets and meeting room on the approach ramp. This is closely linked with the contractual work on the adjacent Royal Pier Hotel. It is disappointing that the Heritage Lottery bid by North Somerset Council, despite the contribution made by our Environment Group, has been unsuccessful, as funding is desperately needed to improve the whole seafront area.

The disused footbridge over Highdale Road is in a sorry state, the wooden handrail having been removed for safety reasons. It has always been a landmark for Clevedonians driving up the hill and will be sadly missed, but since Mount Elton was sold the bridge leads nowhere. The Conservation Officer has considered replacing it, but establishing ownership is a problem. [See also 'Postcard from Clevedon' on page 18].

The Convent on Marine Hill is to be developed as apartments, with five houses on the playing fields in Leagrove Road. Group members have met the developer and his architect to discuss their initial proposals and, following further consultations with interested parties, we await the final planning application drawings. The building started life as the York Hotel and has an interesting history. [See 'IK Brunel Slept Here' by Julia Elton on page 14].

The Clevedon Hall Estate owners are

looking to resurrect proposals to develop the park for housing and we have met them with their architect to comment on their initial thoughts. There are difficult problems to overcome to separate the Hall and its use as a wedding and conference venue from the residential areas as the two do not mix happily. Access and the road between Victoria and Elton Roads present problems and it would be undesirable to have a gated community in the middle of Clevedon.

The Framework, if enacted, will have a profound effect on the countryside. In Clevedon we are unlikely to be affected immediately, but who is to say in the absence of a development plan by our Councils that land towards Kenn and beyond could not be ripe for housing development? As part of the Consultation process we have expressed our views - one small voice in the crowd!



Clevedon Hall

Next meeting:  
13 December 2011

### Civic Society Executive Members

Chairman - **Hugh Stebbing**  
Secretary - **Wendy Moore**  
Treasurer - **Neil Foster**  
Membership - **John & Helen Bussell**  
Local Government Representative - **Carole Wring**  
History Group - **Rob Campbell**

Environment Group - **Bob Hardcastle**  
Conservation & Planning Group - **Bryan Osborne**  
Footpaths Group - **Liz Byrd**  
Publicity/Newsletter - **Geoff Hale**  
Newsletter Distribution - **Dave Long**  
Web Master - **Mike Wheatley**

Next Executive meetings:

**Tuesdays 15 November 2011, 21 February and 17 April 2012**

Should any member have a point to put forward it is always possible to contact an Executive Group member to have it brought up at a meeting.

When many people are thinking of taking things easy, Sue did the exact opposite. Having a fear of flying she volunteered for training as an aero evacuation nurse with the Royal Auxiliary Air Force. She mentioned during her talk that doing operational take offs and landings in both Iraq and Afghanistan very quickly cured her of any flying phobias. I can understand why, as I experienced them in 1967 during my time with 84 Squadron in Aden during the troubles there. Sue served with 4626 Squadron based at RAF Lyneham.

Formed in 1983, 4626 Squadron is the only aeromedical evacuation squadron unit in the RAF Reserves. They work closely with the regular RAF to help to

evacuate injured military personnel from operational theatres during conflicts. They also support the RAF in peacetime air evacuations of military and entitled civilian personnel from many locations around the world. They have been closely involved in a wide range of



Nailsea Council Chairman Rod Lees with nurse Sue Haggio MBE

operations, from the first Gulf War to the current deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Her wonderful talk had some harrowing moments as well as some very uplifting stories. The audience were at many times spellbound and many people said how much they enjoyed the evening. Sue had to retire when she reached 60, by which time she had risen to the rank of Squadron Leader. A remarkable lady whose modesty prevented her mentioning that she has recently been made an MBE and that in 2010 she received Nailsea's annual community award for outstanding service.

**Rob Campbell** (12 May 2011)

## Cheddar Cheese

Presented by John Page

With that somewhat innocuous but tastily tantalising title Civic Society members attending the Open Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> September were given a real treat by visiting speaker John Page.

John started his talk with a short quiz to see how we could say "cheese". We ended with quite a list:

Cheese paring - getting close to the rind of a cheese where quality is poorer.

Hard cheese (young fella) - hard and not very nice cheese.

Cheesed-off - too much cheese

The Big Cheese - the best.

So - a great start. But John then took us through the ancient history of cheesemaking linked to the Romans

and much earlier. And then there's a place called Cheddar. And we heard references, and saw on John's slides, examples of the earliest known records of cheese production and storage in this small town. Notably we heard and saw copies of documents stating that in 1586 Cheddar Cheese exceeded the quality of Parmesan Cheese, the then high quality benchmark for hard cheeses across Europe. And similar references continued through to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The excellence of Cheddar Cheese clearly was not short lived!

However it was Joseph Harding (1805 - 1876) who revolutionised the making of Cheddar Cheese through the simple expedient of separating the collection and delivery of milk from the production of the cheese itself. This early approach to hygienic processing immediately reduced contamination, improved

consistency and enhanced quality. The process was exported through Joseph's children as the Victorian British Empire extended around the globe. And so we have excellent cheddar cheese manufacturing in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. But none so excellent as that made in Cheddar itself and matured in the perfect and stable conditions of the caves. We know that because part of John's treat was to sample the "proper" Cheddar Cheese still being made in the town. Deeply flavourful, with a strong aftertaste and a dry consistency - just like a great Parmesan, only better!



**Hugh Stebbing** (8 September 2011)

## Police Air Operations

Presented by  
PC Richard Simms

The helicopter of the Western Counties Air Operations Unit, which is a consortium of the Avon and Somerset and Gloucestershire Constabularies, first became operational in August 1995.

Our talk was given by Police Constable Richard Simms, one of the young men who crew this aircraft (oh dear have you noticed how young the policemen are looking nowadays?).

Ten policemen are included in the Unit: one Inspector, one Sergeant and eight PCs. The flying is in the capable hands of three ex-military pilots each with many years of experience in this kind of work. At any one time there is a crew of three on board the helicopter: the pilot, the forward observer and the navigator who uses a very sophisticated

Satnav to guide them around their large operational area.

PC Simms explained the many duties he and his colleagues undertake with the helicopter. Among them are searching for missing people, tracking suspects, advising the police on the ground during large public events and, as we've all seen on TV, the spectacular car chases where the observers can guide the police cars on the ground to catch their quarry. The aircraft is also equipped to take the seriously injured to hospital.

Using photographs PC Simms proudly showed us around his helicopter. We were introduced to the Thermal Image and Video camera which 'sees' in the dark by detecting heat - perhaps from a human being or from a house where




cannabis is being grown. We were also shown the 'Skyshout' public address system, the 'NiteSun' search light and the sophisticated tracker system. We were left in no doubt that in PC Simms' opinion no-one could hide from the sophisticated detection equipment on his whirlybird.

After the break we were treated to some of the videos taken from the helicopter whilst on its local patrols. We watched as a car chase came to an end with the use of a 'stinger' - a spiked mat thrown under the wheels of the car to burst its tyres. We had a clear view of a man climbing perilously along the roofs of some three-storey houses in Montpelier, Bristol. The man eventually climbed down a drainpipe and was promptly arrested. Another video showed how the Thermal Imaging Camera was used to detect some thieves who had chosen to hide in three wheelie-bins.


**Geoff Hale** (13 October 2011)

History Group - 17 November 2011  
**All Saints' Church, Clevedon**  
Julia Elton




Our President, Julia Elton, tells the story of All Saints' Church which was built by her family 150 years ago.

Civic Society - 8 December 2011  
**Songs from the Shows**  
CLOC members




Members of the Clevedon Light Opera Club will be entertaining us with their kind of music and also, no doubt, encouraging a few rousing Christmas choruses from their audience!

Civic Society - 12 January 2012  
**Railway Station Halts of Bristol & North Somerset**  
Mike Oakley




Mike has written extensively about West Country stations and will bring a wealth of knowledge to his talk.

History Group - 19 January 2012  
**Somerset Vernacular Building Research Group**  
Denny Robins



A voluntary organisation which studies and records the traditional houses and buildings of the county.

Civic Society - 9 February 2012  
**Ashton Court Mansion, Past, Present & Future**  
Peter Weeks




Since 2005 Peter Weeks has represented the Bristol Civic Society on the City Council project for restoration and reopening of perhaps Bristol's greatest hidden treasure.

History Group - 16 February 2012  
**The History of Zinc The Bristol Connection**  
Bev Harris




When zinc ore was found nearby in the Mendip Hills, Bristol became the natural home of the British Brass industry.

Civic Society - 8 March 2012  
**A Talk by Vince Russett**




Vince Russett is our County Archeologist and is an active conservationist

History Group - 15 March 2012  
**A Queer Little Village**  
Elizabeth White



The village in question is Pill on the river Avon.

Civic Society - 12 April 2012  
**My Life as an Explosives Dustman**  
Graham Smith MBE



Graham Smith from Burnham has a fascinating story to tell about the countless dangers that he faced during his 30 years service in a bomb disposal unit.

History Group - 19 April 2012  
**Seasonal Festivals**  
Professor Ronald Hutton




Professor Hutton of Bristol University will talk about how our yearly festivals came about. Prof. Hutton is a leading historian of the ritual year in Britain and of modern paganism.

Civic Society - 10 May 2012  
**Experiences of a Wildlife Rescuer**  
Graeme Thompson



Graeme Thompson has many graphic tales of animal rescue inspired by his work at the Highbridge-based wildlife charity Secret World Wildlife Rescue.

History Group - 17 May 2012  
**The Land of Lost Content**  
Sandy Tebbutt



Sandy Tebbutt is a member of the Gordano Society and author of 'Posset Pieces'. She will be telling us about life in Portishead during World War One.



by Hugh Stebbing

An odd title in a magazine about Clevedon Civic Society? Well – Yes and No ... “Yes” because no Bristol Car was ever made in Clevedon; but “No” because some of our members worked on components for them, and “No” because your current Chairman owns one! So a little self-indulgence spurred on by the Editor of The Clevedonian! The photograph shows my 1985 Bristol Brigand.



So, where did it all start? Effectively towards the end of World War Two when the Bristol Aeroplane Company (BAC) started to consider what to do when the war ended and demand for warplanes would cease.

There are references in the mid-1930s to the possibility of building motor cars but these were no more than ideas and it was consideration of how to use a skilled workforce, experts in working aluminium and with great engineering capability that ultimately led to the decision to diversify into car production when the war was over. The idea was to make cars the way aircraft had been made. And that's exactly what happened. By that time discussions had taken place with Frazer Nash Cars where Colonel (H.J.) Aldington had links with BMW in pre-war Germany. This resulted, indirectly, in the new Car Division of BAC acquiring as war reparations designs, details and components from the pre-war BMW 326 and 327 models and also, significantly, the rights to the BMW 2 litre engine.

From this relatively advanced position the fledgling Car Division was able to move from a start in 1946 to production in 1947. That first model, the 400, looked very similar to those pre-war BMWs from which it was derived but it had a Bristol designed chassis that was to remain a key feature of all Bristol passenger cars up to this day. A totally redesigned and

aerodynamic teardrop body, with more space for the 4 passengers, was produced in 1949 as the 401 model. Further models followed in subsequent years with the general approach being to evolve the current model into an improved version with varying degrees of variation to the designs of the bodywork. This was all made possible through the use of a chassis and an aluminium body cladding, which originally covered ash frames but which later used the superleggera (superlightweight) approach. This involved attaching a light tubular metal frame to the chassis and cladding it with shaped aluminium sheeting, a format used among others by Ferrari and Aston Martin but also just like the aircraft!

Did you know:  
Bristol engines that derived from that first modified BMW design became a motor racing stalwart for many years? Do you remember the AC Ace Bristol, the Lotus Bristol or the Cooper Bristol grand prix car?

Bristol entered factory teams in the Le Mans 24 Hour race for several years with 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places in the 2 litre engine class in the 1954 event?

Bristol changed from the heavily modified ex-BMW engine in 1961? The extraordinary choice for a company that offered “Gentlemen's carriages to seat four in comfort with all their luggage” was a V8 engine made by Chrysler in the USA! That engine first appeared in the 407 model

but continues through many variations for use in the current Blenheim car. Some versions have been turbocharged and my Brigand is one of these variants with the 360 cu.in. capacity engine (that's 5,900 cc to you and me).

A feature of many Bristol models has been opening containers between each wheel arch and the door hinges. The near-side bin houses the spare wheel and car jack and the off-side one the battery, fuses and brake servoes. This is a very practical answer to the storage of these items, keeps the weight low and increases space in the boot and engine compartments.

Aluminium bodies have always been used on Bristol cars, though the most recent model, the two seater Fighter (V10 and 8 litres) includes large areas of modern composite material too. Just like the aircraft!

And so, what of the present? Bristol Cars was separated from the Aeroplane Company in 1955 with production subsequently relocated from the Filton aircraft works to nearby Patchway where it continues today. Head Office in Kensington High Street, London, also doubles as the only showroom with a service depot at nearby Hogarth Roundabout on the A4 road. Bristol Cars seldom created more than 100 cars each year and more often than not just one per week. All were and still are made to order. No cars have been made for stock, and with prices for the current Blenheim at around £160,000 and for the Fighter upwards of £250,000, volume production was never an option for these hand built cars.

Earlier this year Bristol Cars was put into administration and shortly afterwards the majority shareholding was acquired by Frazer Nash. So the wheels continue to turn as one of the founding ancestors of Bristol Cars returns to take it forward. It plans new vehicles with electrical propulsion alongside the continuing manufacture of the Fighter and Blenheim and the maintenance, restoration or recreation of models from throughout the history of the company.

The great majority of the relatively few cars ever produced are still on the road. You probably need to have an eccentric streak to want a Bristol but I feel privileged to own, drive and preserve one of these unique motorcars.



Hugh Stebbing

# EAST CLEVEDON - THE EARLY STIRRINGS

## Part Two

Research by Jane Lilly

In this, the second of two articles, local historian and Society member Jane Lilly takes us through the history of East Clevedon.

Local builders, William Hollyman and his half brother Thomas, led the way in the development of the Old Park (now Dial Hill). William was the Court Estate steward and land agent from 1815, an able and intelligent man. He built a pair of beautiful Regency houses at East Clevedon Triangle in 1820: Ilex House and Trellis House, with a bakery and shop attached. In 1823, Thomas, already landlord of the Old Inn, built the Rock House, now incorporated into the fabric of the Pier Hotel. This was a tea house among the rocks, so close to the sea at high tide that it was soon nicknamed The Ship Aground. The land between these two remained undeveloped until Elihu Durbin bought a house plot and built Prospect House in about 1824, the first house on the Hill. This is now 1 Highdale Road, opposite Christ Church.

William Hollyman followed this slender start with the magnificent Royal Hotel and Nightingale Villa at the seaward end of Hill Road and set the ball rolling merrily on. He also built Rose Cottages at East Clevedon Triangle, The Grove in Walton Road and the row of three cottages in Old Street numbered 139-143, as well as the first five houses in Wellington Terrace. He was instrumental in founding the Clevedon Agricultural Show, known for its excellence from the 1830s onwards and, like his employers the Elton family, seems to have had Clevedon's welfare at heart.

Also sited at 5 East Clevedon Triangle in 1830 was the first Post Office in Clevedon. These were still the times when a rider would collect the mail in a locked leather satchel and the recipient of the letter paid for it on delivery. From a letter of 1830 written by Maria Sturge



Cecil Sharp



Ilex and Trellis House

there is an excellent description of how the post worked - sorted at the house and then delivered on foot by 'the girl', walking over a few miles of rocky ground to The Beach where the Sturge sisters were staying. There have been many and various Post Office sites at East Clevedon Triangle, so much so that it could almost be called Post Office Triangle instead!

The founder of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, Cecil Sharp, married Constance Birch at All Saints' in 1893. His closest friend Charles Marson Junior, son of the Vicar of St Andrew's, performed the ceremony. From Marson's description of the wedding breakfast, we know that it was held in the Birches' garden at The Wilderness in Highdale Road. The little quarry within the garden, from which rock had been taken to build the house, formed an amphitheatre for the tables, while white clouds scudded past above the pines. Sharp and Marson produced 3 volumes of folk songs from south Somerset in the early 1900s. Further Clevedon associations with folksong collectors were established when the Hammond family moved to the town just as Sharp's volumes were appearing, and the two Hammond brothers cycled out into Dorset, collecting some 800 previously unrecorded songs.

The latest connection with the arts was provided when the painter, Doris Hatt, moved to Valley Road with her mother in the 1920s. A follower of the Vorticist movement, she had Littlemead built in later years, one of only two Art Deco houses in the entire town. After her mother's death, she and her companion Dorothy Mack-Smith lived contentedly

in Clevedon until the late '60s. Sadly, after they moved to Watchet in 1968 or 9, Doris died. Her work has a strong character and is much collected, both by those who knew and loved her, and the wider art world.

Interestingly, in 1812, permission was sought to hold non-Conformist meetings in a house belonging to Mr Powell in Carey's Lane. The site is now occupied by bungalows. This was the first time that a new place of worship had been established in Clevedon since the chapel of St Peter was consecrated at the Court in the 1320s. The church of All Saints was built in 1860 and a Sunday school attached to the church provided a firm basis for the establishment of East Clevedon School, opened in 1870.

From being a small community with a firm base in agricultural employment in the 1840s, East Clevedon had become almost autonomous by the 1880s. Women's lives, in particular, had changed dramatically in ways which to us would seem very ordinary. In 1841, most women listed their occupation as 'farm labourer's wife'. By 1880, they were shopkeepers, laundrywomen, straw hat makers, dressmakers and domestic servants - all changes that came about because of new requirements following the town's expansion.



Prospect House

Beatrice Stella Pedder was a gifted water colour artist who was born in Clevedon in 1875. In 1965 she wrote an account

Jane Lilly

Research by Jane Lilly

Looking at Bristol House today, it has the appearance of a house and shop never altered since it was built in a position commanding the East Clevedon Triangle. However, although this is in fact the case, there was an earlier Regency house on the site - Rose Cottage. This was a south-facing rectangular house shown on the Tithe Map of 1839, whereas on the 1903 OS map Bristol House is a square building positioned to face east.

William Coombes Collings had been the tenant since 1851 before he had the chance to buy the house and shop from Sir Arthur Elton in 1870.

His lease tells us what the previous owner had bought, and it's quite a surprise! It was Henry Wood who first opened a shop there in 1840, but he had in fact purchased half a house and cleared it away to put up the present handsome building.

Wood bought the site and the westernmost half of Rose Cottage, while the other half was knocked down to widen Highdale Road. He rapidly built Bristol House on the plot and opened for business in 1840 - pretty prompt work!

So what's the story of Rose Cottage? The Rate books reveal it for us: it was built for Ann Long on a plot owned by the Eltons in about 1831. In 1830 the site was still an orchard, but the house is rated in 1832. Ann Long was living there till 1835 when George Tilly moved in. George Tilly sold the house to the Eltons in 1838 and in the following year we come to its sad

demise for road widening. Traffic had increased to such an extent that not only Rose Cottage, but a further house at the beginning of Walton Road was rebuilt, and two cottages 'athwart the road' below The Grove were demolished and never rebuilt. And none of these were very old houses.

Jane Lilly



circa 1925

## SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

of her memories of living in the town for the Clevedon Mercury, who gave the Civic Society permission to re-publish it in this book.

Our town in the 19th century and its growth in Victorian times are the subjects of two further essays, written by L Murray. These are included along with an article by A Cook and J Birch telling the history of the Clevedon Fire Brigade from its early beginning in 1882, following the fire in the State Room and Library at Clevedon Court.

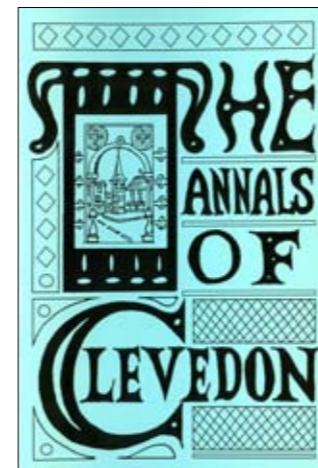
The history of the cinema featured in chapter eight is of course a trifle out of date now as much has changed at the Curzon since the publication of these Annals in 1988, but H Wilkins' article goes a good way to explain the early days of this, the oldest continuously

operating cinema in the country, which is set to celebrate its 100th anniversary next April.

The final chapter is an essay about ourselves. Two members, D F Appleby and G H Case, obviously felt that our eighteen year history was worth documenting, and yes I think they were right. It is a fascinating if brief history reflecting the work of some very energetic members who strove to put the Clevedon Civic Society on the local map. It makes a fitting end to this worthwhile publication - another essential purchase for anyone interested in the history of our town.

Geoff Hale

The book is available to Society members at a special price of £4.00



Seven years were to pass before the Society published its second book, in 1988, studying the history of our town. This publication followed the same basic plan as the first by inviting members to research various aspects of our history. It starts with an article by J Borrows about the Clevedon Violets grown by George Lee.

Our President, Lady Margaret Elton, contributed a piece entitled, *Chronicles of the Clevedon Cottage Hospital*, and Jane Lilly wrote two unrelated items: one about Highdale Farm (the Hide Hall of Clevedon Manor) and the other describing crime in Clevedon from Saxon times right up to the formation of the first Somerset police force in 1857.

Beatrice Stella Pedder was a gifted water colour artist who was born in Clevedon in 1875. In 1965 she wrote an account

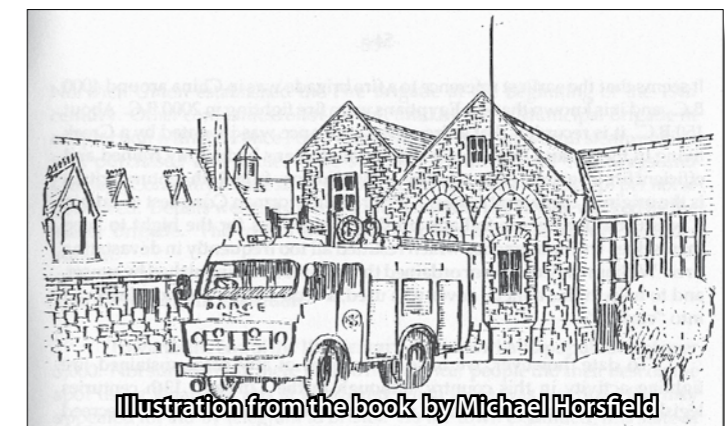


Illustration from the book by Michael Horsfield

# THE FLOWERING OF THE FLOWER SHOW

by Carole Wring

Clevedon Horticultural Society was formed in 1869, and over the years the society has organised 114 flower shows. Who better to give us an insight into the organisation behind the scenes than its President, Carole Wring.



Photography by Geoff Hale



I cannot claim to know exactly how Clevedon's wonderful annual Flower Show came into being towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but it is reasonable to assume that horticultural interest had been fostered by so many new and exotic plants being brought to these shores. It was an age of great exploration, in the heyday of the British Empire, when intrepid plant hunters roamed the world and returned with their carefully packed specimens, and wonderful illustrations. And with the railway here in the town there would also have been opportunity for people to visit the botanical gardens at Kew, or Birmingham, or closer to home at Bristol Zoo.

Thus popularity for all things

horticultural grew, encouraging a small group of people to gather together and stage the very first Flower Show, which was held in Herbert Gardens. Clearly this was successful, and each successive year it grew in popularity and attracted exhibitors and visitors in increasing numbers. The venue has changed over the years, probably according to need, and there must have always been hope for fine weather too!

This year the 115<sup>th</sup> Flower Show & Festival was staged on Salthouse Field – as indeed it has been for all the years I have known Clevedon. Understandably there were gaps during war years when the Show was not staged. It has grown and developed of course, but it is still

a small group of people who gather together as a committee to put together and run this major event during August Bank Holiday weekend each successive year.

I remember the 100<sup>th</sup> Show with the Band of the Royal Marines here for the celebrations, and how much everyone really enjoyed the music, the marching, and the high drama associated with a military band on parade – crowds flocked to see it all.

The weather each year is always a concern, especially in the days immediately before the Show. The marquee arrives on Wednesday, and then the next two days are hectic with setting up the exhibitors' spaces, trade

stalls, tables, power, water, catering areas, Show Secretary's tent, public address system, etc.

This year, from the moment the Show was officially opened on Saturday at 1 p.m. by BBC local weather forecaster Jemma Cooper, to the very end on Sunday at 5 p.m. there was much to see and enjoy.

Exhibitor entries were fewer than in previous years, but there were some wonderful vegetables, beautiful flowers – roses and dahlias really stood out for me – amazing pot plants, many intricate craft exhibits, delicious cakes, jams, and home-made wines judged by our local vicar. The photography classes have always been popular, and

it's incredibly interesting to see all the different interpretations within each classification.

Great highlights are the children's exhibits, which always draw interest from everyone, and it is so pleasing to see the children with their prize-winning certificates. There's so much to see outside in the arena too, particularly if the weather is bright and sunny: marching bands, dog agility, children's races, and lots of music – mainly from tribute bands. There are trade stands to browse, veteran, classic and military vehicles, and of course refreshments.

On Sunday afternoon, a large table laden with trophies is brought out in time for the final presentation. This is always

a highlight, and a pleasure to see the happy faces of the proud winners. With so long a history and trophies being given over all the years, the presentation can take some considerable time. During these past years we have been very privileged to have Julia Elton here with us to present the trophies, and this year doubly so as she was joined by her niece Lotte Elton in this happy task.

Organisation for next year's Show is already well underway, and so this is an excellent opportunity to pay tribute to the small band of committee members who spend so much time, energy, and effort to put together Clevedon's wonderful Flower Show each year.

Carole Wring

# I.K. BRUNEL SLEPT HERE

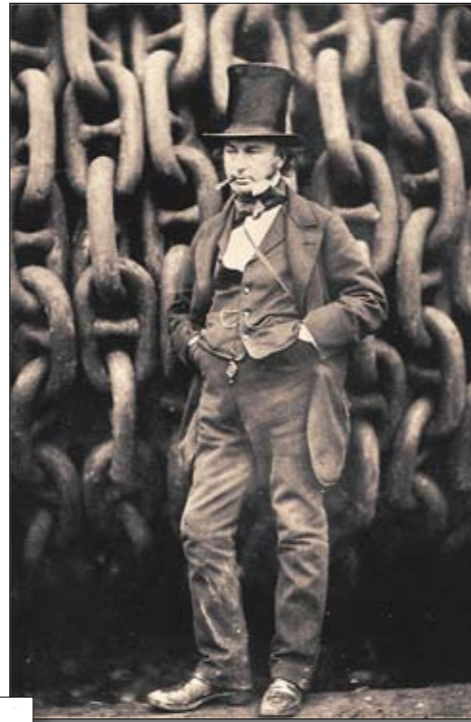
by Julia Elton

The building known by most Clevedonians as the Convent School on Marine Hill was built by George Fowler in 1834 as the York Hotel. Julia Elton tells of one of its famous guests.

the hotel building. Thus by 1843, when Brunel came to stay, the hotel was in full swing.

Some 15 years ago now I found myself standing in Christie's Auctioneers looking at I.K. Brunel's engagement diaries, which I was viewing on behalf of Bristol University Library (and which the library subsequently bought). I plucked a volume at random off the shelf and as it fell open in my hands I was thrilled to see the word "Clevedon" across the top of it. I eventually got around to writing up the story for the Brunel car rally in 2006. However, now that the York Hotel is being redeveloped, it is good to remind ourselves of its distinguished guest and his stay in Clevedon, as well as to look afresh at the building itself, which is exceptionally handsome and well built in the Italianate style.

In 1836 his first innovative ship, the SS Great Western, had been launched and in 1841 the main Great Western Railway line between Bristol and London had been opened throughout. Thus by 1843 he was well into the next phase of development, working on branch lines of the GWR and on its extension, via the Bristol & Exeter line, into the heart of the West Country, and his second ship, the SS Great Britain, was about to be launched in Bristol. He was immensely busy and he was not spending much time at home in London. During 1842 he stayed intermittently in Weston-super-Mare but nowhere else did he spend the long period of time he spent in Clevedon.



He arrived for the first time on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1843 as his diary notes, "12.00 train to Bristol [presumably from London]. Evening at Clevedon". He remained with only brief trips away until 27<sup>th</sup> August, a period of nearly 3 months, mostly commuting from Yatton station (then called Clevedon Road). Although the York Hotel is mentioned only twice it is reasonable to suppose he always stayed there, particularly since the diary is virtually all in the handwriting of Bennett, his clerk [i.e. secretary]. Thus it was probably written retrospectively with only the barest outlines of where Brunel was and what he was doing.

Brunel went several times to Beam Bridge station, opened 1<sup>st</sup> May 1843 as the temporary terminus of the Bristol & Exeter Railway while Whiteball Tunnel was under construction. The diary

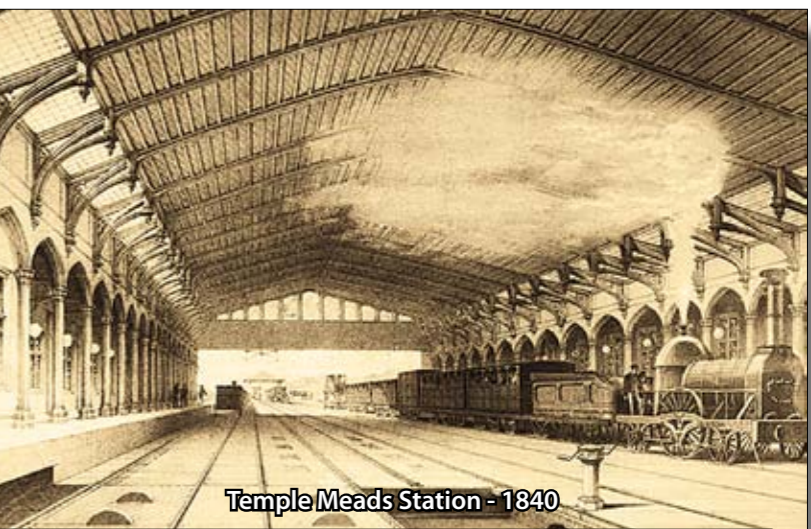
records that on 3<sup>rd</sup> July he left Clevedon at "7.15am to Ry station to Beam Bridge along line to Cullompton with Mr. Divett [Edward Divett, MP for Exeter] - thence to Exeter accompanied by Mr. Froude. Went to Exeter & Beam Bridge for mail train to Clevedon. York Hotel at 2.am". William Froude was the assistant engineer on this stretch of the B&ER.

Sometimes he went much further afield. On August 18<sup>th</sup> he was busy on the Cheltenham & Great Western Union Railway which links Cheltenham via Gloucester and Stroud with the GWR near Swindon. His diary records, "Clevedon. 5am to Bristol [by] chaise and p[ai]r, fir 7am train to Swindon & Cirencester & Stroud...Sapperton &c along the line to Brimscombe &c. back to Stroud and Cirencester. For 6.45 to Bristol. Posted to Clevedon". That he was prepared to go to the inconvenience of getting to Bristol by horse and carriage early in the morning rather than staying there argues an affection for Clevedon. Several days are left blank, just headed "Clevedon", and some record, "Engaged with Mr. Babbage on Genoa Ry". Herschel Babbage was the son of the famous Charles Babbage and was to be resident engineer on the Genoa & Turin line before Brunel eventually pulled out of the project.

On 18<sup>th</sup> July, the day before the launch of the SS Great Britain, Brunel left Clevedon at 9.30 for Bristol where he spent the day at Temple Meads and at the shipyard en route to London to meet Prince Albert and accompany him back to Bristol to perform the launching ceremony. He returned to Clevedon on 21<sup>st</sup> July, leaving for good at the end of August, though he was to come back briefly in 1844 and 1845.

Ten years later, in 1855, the York Hotel closed and its contents were dispersed. It was bought as a private residence by Dr. Theodore Davis, who renamed it Leagrove. In 1880 it was bought by Thomas Weld, who belonged to an old Catholic family and in 1889 established a French order of nuns there. They renamed it St Gabriel's and stayed until 1912. The building then had rather a chequered career, becoming again for a brief while a boarding house and hotel before being bought by the Sisters of Mercy in 1936. The sisters, who opened a boarding school and later a day school called St Anthony's, owned it until 2008.

Julia Elton



Temple Meads Station - 1840

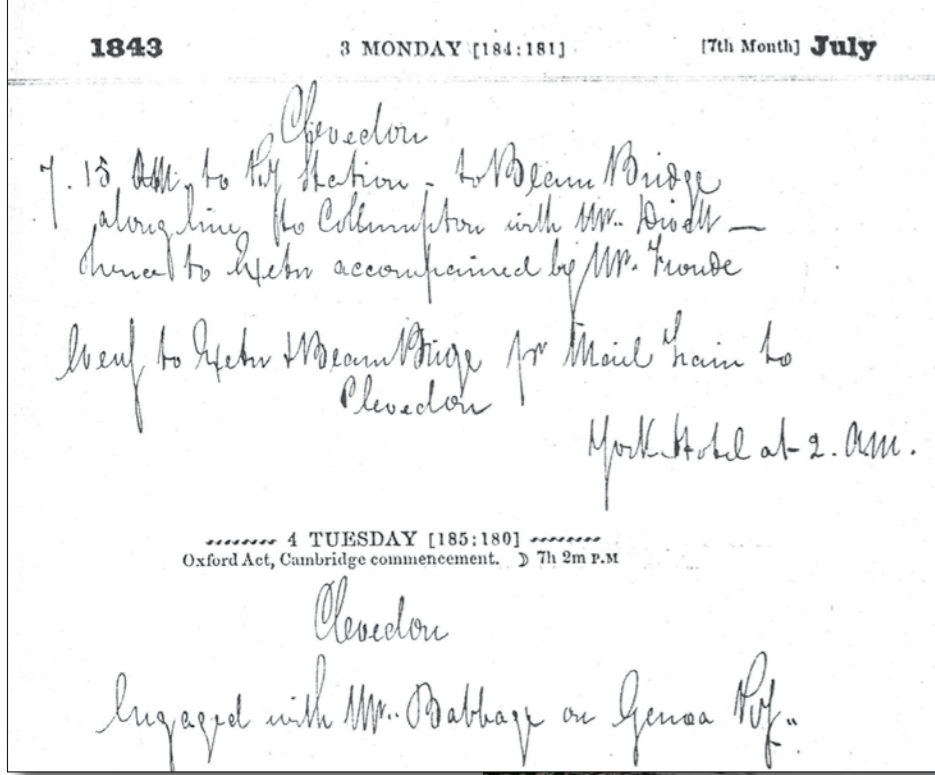


Royal Hotel on the left - York Hotel in the centre



Launch of SS Great Britain - 19 July 1843

I am grateful to Jane Lilly and Michael Huscroft for the information about the history of the York Hotel.



In 1827, the big block of land on which it stands was bought from the Eltons by George Fowler. He first built Marine Villas (now Whitsom Lodge and The Look Out), then Marine House (now The Cellar) and in about 1833 he built the York House & Family Hotel. There is no record of which architect Fowler employed but whoever it was he was clearly a man of some distinction. Fowler himself was the proprietor of the York Hotel and by 1836 had added "spacious coffee rooms with entrance separate from the hotel, good lock-up coach houses and superior stabling". The coffee room with handsome Egyptian features is now Marine Hill House, sited directly below



Where do the street names in Clevedon come from?



Dr George Pizey

A local GP and a leading campaigner for the building of the Cottage Hospital in 1875.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?



Dr George Macleod

Medical Officer to the Clevedon Urban District Council during the 1920/30s.

Dr Alastair Macleod

His son, also a popular local doctor in the 1950/60s with a surgery in Linden Road. He was president of the Clevedon Light Opera Club for a number of years.

# ALONZO DAWES - AUCTIONEER

Research by Geoff Hale

The name Alonzo Dawes dominated the Clevedon world of house sales and auctioneering for over a century, but who was this man and where did he come from? With the assistance of Jane Lilly we have been probing the archives.

Alonzo was not the first man called Dawes to appear on the scene in Clevedon. His cousin Samuel, who was his senior by 8 years, moved to the town from Portishead in 1856 and established a business in Station Road selling *Henri's Patent Horse and Cattle Feed*.

Alonzo Dawes was born in Coggeshall, Essex in 1842. His family lived in the Quaker House in Barking High Street where his father, William, was the house keeper. He later moved to Haverhill, Suffolk where he was apprenticed to Elizabeth Dix who ran an ironmongers and general dealers.

Alonzo arrived on the Clevedon scene in 1865, declaring his intension to establish himself as an auctioneer and valuer as well as to become a merchant of salt and particularly coal, which he intended to import from South Wales in his own sloop, Fancy, which had cost him £130. This project was short-lived however when the ship sank off The Pill. Another of his enterprises was the publication of the Clevedon & Portishead House and Estate Register, obtainable monthly for the sum of 3d (old pennies).

what stage during this period Alonzo took over managing the Waterworks from Samuel, but definitely by 1881 Alonzo was not only ensconced in the post but was also living in Anchor Lodge, situated close to the Water Works in Old Street on the site of the present day Clevedon Fire Station.

In December 1882, it was Alonzo who alerted the fire service in Bristol, by telegraph, that Clevedon was in urgent need of help to extinguish a fire that had broken out in the State Room at Clevedon Court, and that had then spread to the library below. Clevedon had no fire service at that time and it took 100 minutes for the horse-drawn fire engine to come clattering down the road from Bristol to help the good citizens of the town, including Alonzo, to douse the flames.

Within four days of that fire a letter from Alonzo Dawes was being read out at the Board of Health meeting suggesting that he write to the fire insurance companies



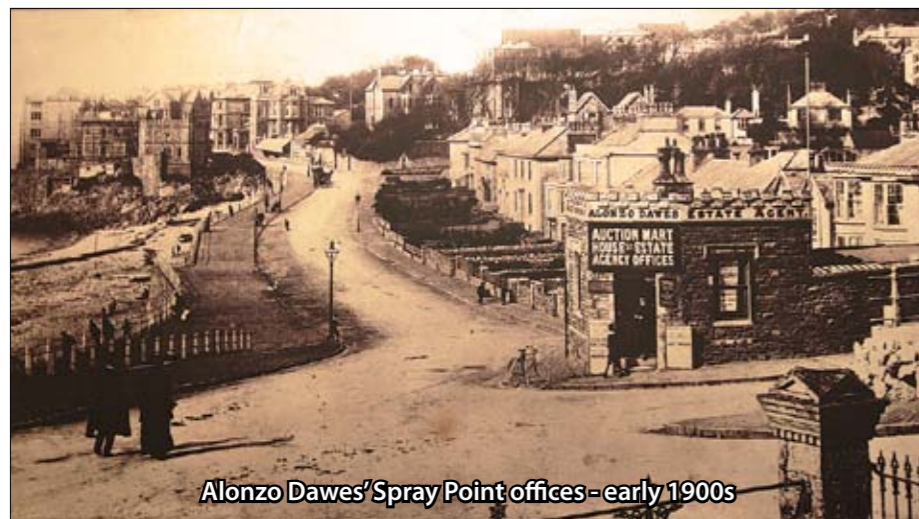
Frank Saunders Alonzo Dawes George Caple in 1884

to ascertain whether they would contribute to a fire engine for the town. At a meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> March, Alonzo was requested to canvas the town in order to see what he would be able to get towards the cost of the engine.

A new member of Alonzo Dawes' auctioneering team came on board in 1883 when his wife's brother, Francis (Frank) Saunders, joined him. The photograph of the two men with George Caple, the founder of the Clevedon Mercury newspaper, sitting outside Alonzo's offices is one of the few pictures that exist of these men today.

The Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Railway, locally known as the WC&P, also became one of Alonzo's 'good causes' when he attended another meeting of the Board of Health in 1884 with a petition to Parliament in support of the Bill for the proposed tramway to be built. The light railway was finally opened in 1897 and closed on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1940.

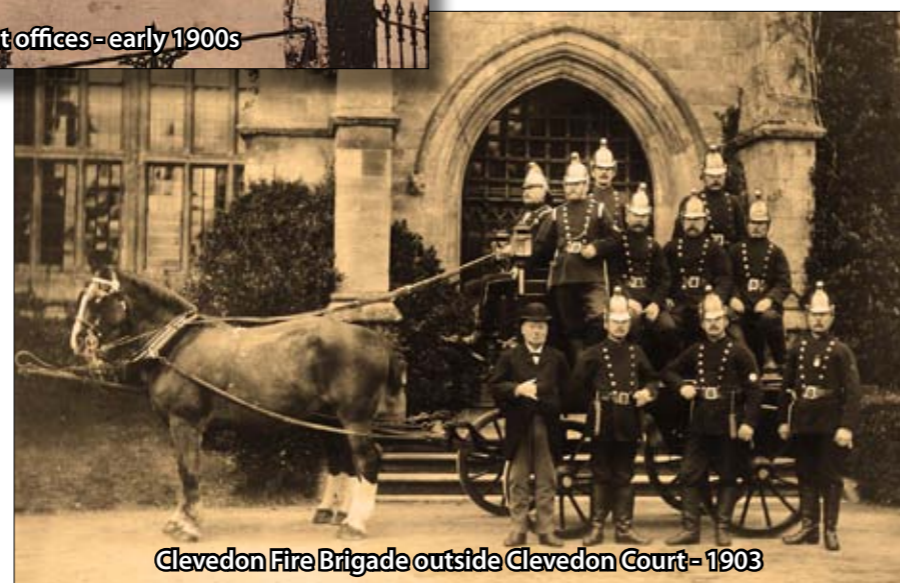
With the support of Sir John Elton, the Clevedon Fire Brigade soon became a reality as the minutes of the Local Board of Health held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1890 show: 'Mr Dawes applied for



Alonzo Dawes' Spray Point offices - early 1900s

A partnership was established between the Dawes cousins, but it was short-lived. On the 12<sup>th</sup> July 1867 it was announced that the partnership between the 'Dawes Brothers' had been dissolved. Just five months later, on Boxing Day 1867, Alonzo entered into another partnership, this time at St Andrew's Church, Clevedon, when he married Emma Saunders, a farmer's daughter from Puriton, Somerset.

By 1871 Alonzo seems to have concentrated his activities on auctioneering whereas Samuel had become the manager at both the Gas and the Water Works. It is not clear at



Clevedon Fire Brigade outside Clevedon Court - 1903

instructions as to his duties as Secretary to the Fire Brigade, he was directed to pay all small expenses of the Brigade & to pay over to the Board any fee he might receive for the engine.'

The Bristol Times & Mirror of Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November 1897 published an advertisement from Alonzo Dawes announcing the sale by auction of Oaklands, Elton Road, the estate of the late Frances Berryman. In the same column Alonzo advertised that he was also auctioning Berryman's 'household furniture and effects' which were to include a 'Landau Carriage, choice greenhouse plants, handsome collection of stuffed birds, moths and butterflies, wines &c.'

Before the First World War, Oaklands came into the ownership of a branch of the Wills tobacco family. During that



Yatton Market in the 1930s

war the family allowed Oaklands to be used as a Red Cross Hospital where many British and Allied servicemen convalesced. Later the house became St Brandon's Junior School.

Alonzo Dawes added the words '& Son' to the name of his business when, in 1898, his 19 year old son Edward (Teddy) joined him in his offices at Spray Point, Seavale Road. Within a year

Edward was expanding the business, first into salerooms in Herbert Road and later with a livestock market at Yatton. By the start of the 1939-45 war Edward had become the leader of the Clevedon Fire Brigade, and was instrumental in leading his men and engines into the wartime blitzes in Bristol.

Alonzo died on the 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1928 at the age of 86 and was buried four

days later at St Andrew's Church. His wife Emma died three years later on the 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1931.

All that is left of Alonzo's business now is the Clevedon Salerooms in Yatton Road, where the aim is to secure the highest prices at auction with the emphasis on customer service in the true Alonzo Dawes tradition.

Geoff Hale

## THE WOODSPRING BAY WRECKS

The History Group recently received a query regarding the wrecks of two vessels which can be seen in Woodspring Bay in an area called the Langford Grounds. Peter Gosson, editor of *'A Century of Sand Dredging in the Bristol Channel'*, has provided us with the following information.



SS Staghound

The two ships are 'Staghound', built in April 1894 by Ailsa Shipbuilding Co. of Troon, and 'Fernwood', built in November 1923 by Sir James Lang & Sons of Sunderland.

'Staghound' weighed in at 468 gross tons and measured 170 feet in length and 26 feet at her beam. She was owned by Kyle Shipping Co. Ltd of Glasgow and was sunk by enemy aircraft whilst moored at Torquay on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 1942. There was no loss of life.

'Fernwood' was the larger ship weighing in at 1892 tons and measuring 268 feet in length with a 38 foot beam. She was owned by Fenwick & Co. Ltd of London. She was also sunk by enemy bombing, this time at Dartmouth, with the loss of one crew member on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 1942.

Both vessels were inspected and declared to be beyond repair, and were

towed round to Cardiff and converted into Blockships. Later they were towed away and anchored where they lie today - just off Kingston Seymour - to be used by Royal Navy personnel based at Woodspring who were engaged in mining trials on behalf of H.M.S Vernon at Portsmouth.

The 'Staghound' and 'Fernwood' were finally sunk by overly enthusiastic Polish pilots using the gunnery range in Woodspring Bay. Peter Gosson tells us, 'This was not intended to happen.

Post war the wrecks were left to rot away, as there was no use for them and they didn't pose a hazard to shipping. However the site is very dangerous with untold numbers of unexploded shells and mines.'

Photographs from: <http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/livingontheedge/livingontheedge/magazine.htm>



## NOTICE BOARD

If you have any interesting information concerning the Civic Society or aspects of our work in Clevedon please send it in. We are always pleased to get contributions from our members. Your photographs, from both digital and film cameras, will be most welcome. Please send copy for the Spring 2012 edition by: 15 April

**Note:**  
A full colour version of *The Clevedonian* can be found on the Society's web site at: [www.clevedon-civic-society.org.uk/](http://www.clevedon-civic-society.org.uk/)

**Newsletter Editor**  
Geoff Hale  
185 Old Church Road, Clevedon  
Telephone: 01275 873974  
email: [geoff.hale1@btinternet.com](mailto:geoff.hale1@btinternet.com)



# WHEN WE WERE VERY YOUNG

A series where our members look back to their childhood in Clevedon.



Aged 18 months - May 1925

I was born about 3 o'clock in the morning on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1924. My father often remarked jovially that I had "Always been an awkward young devil." In the late 20s and early 30s Ken Road "south of the river" was almost a separate entity to the rest of Clevedon. By south of the river I mean not south of the Land Yeo near the triangle, but south of the Middle Yeo, now alas, culverted. Here that part of Ken Road - and you will see that I use the original spelling - consisted of Treefield Road, Hillview Avenue and that bit of Ken Road down to the present Hallswell Road.

We did not mix socially; yes, we had friends at school that came from other areas of Clevedon but after school that was a different matter. Stroud Roaders and Ken Roaders did not mingle.

Before my school days I was often out in front of my father's shop sitting on the doorstep, accompanied by Pete the cat. Content to sit and watch people going

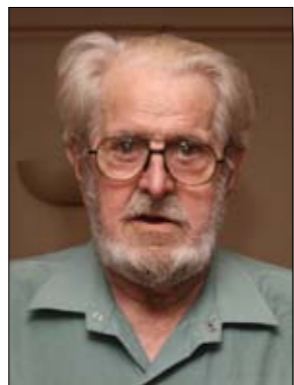


Middle Yeo - August 1931

up or down the road, also the occasional exciting motor car, and the normal horse and cart of the milkmen. Pete was the stump tailed son of "Judy" a black and white she-cat that spent many hours catching rats in the pit in the corner of Yeate's field where the domestic rubbish of Clevedon was deposited. I can remember that one month we recorded a total of over 40 rats brought back. My mother having died when I was only 4 years old I was more or less unsupervised. And didn't have to bother about anything except myself and my constant companion Pete. He was more like a Jack Russell dog than a cat and wherever I was so was Pete.

After school had started I entered a whole new world. I became an enthusiastic "cowboy" and school holidays were endless days of Cowboys and Indians in the field at the back of the gardens. This was always called "Yeate's Pitch" not to be confused with "Pugh's Pitch", a much smaller space, now the entry into Kennaway Road. I always think that this early enthusiasm with pistols was maybe the reason that many years later I became the captain of the Somerset Pistol team, a very proud moment in my life.

## Memories by Derek Lilly



Derek's father had a grocer's shop in Kenn Road. He also bought from a Mr Vincent in the Clevedon Triangle a household cleaner and oil round that used a pony and cart. When Derek's oldest brother Tom left school their father bought a 1917 ex-army Ford model T ambulance. There was an oil tank in the back and soaps and household cleaners etc. were carried in the front compartment. Galvanised items like baths, "dipping" bowls and watering cans were carried on the roof.

The other diversion in the summer months, when the water ran lower, was the Middle Yeo itself. Here 'redbreasts', 'minnows', and the occasional 'logger' - as we called the loaches that sometimes came within reach of our catching hands - together with tadpoles were the main attraction. The river was a great temptation during the summer months and "bankings," made generally by older boys, were used by us smaller kin for all sorts of entertainments. The other thing, still carried on in my older years, was 'jumping the river'. The bank to the south was always a little higher by maybe two feet than the north bank. It was possible



Aged 5 - 1929

for an energetic teenager to jump from the south bank to the north one, providing they had a good run up to it.

The catch was that after the successful run and jump, the victor could often easily be persuaded to try to jump back. This was an altogether harder attempt because not only were they jumping from lower to higher but the run up was very short, and it normally ended with the jumper up to his knees in the mud and water of the Yeo.

Derek Lilly



Sylvia Cotton

Alan and Sylvia Cotton moved to Clevedon with their family in 1980. Sylvia had a great love of gardening and trees and cherished her new garden at 12, The Avenue, which became a focal point for family and friends as well as for visitors under the Open Gardens Scheme. Her second deep interest was the welfare of children.

Sylvia's untimely death in 2007 due to cancer brought a flood of support to the family and this inspired Alan to set up two memorial funds: one to help the education of children in Madagascar (through a close family connection) and the other to plant trees in Clevedon. He pledged to match the



Turkey Oak - Salthouse Carpark

## BRANCH LINE

by Angela Slotte

The inspiration behind Sylvia's Garden has reached out and taken root beyond its walls to enhance the streets and open spaces of Clevedon and bring pleasure to many.

funds himself, pound for pound.

The then North Somerset Tree Officer, John Flannigan, was delighted to facilitate the selection and planting of trees donated by North Somerset Councillor Alan Cotton in his wife's memory, and the first batch of trees, bought with around £1000 from the Sylvia Cotton Memorial Fund, was planted in the winter of 2007/8. Four years on, these saplings, which include Oaks at Salthouse Fields and Rowans off Central Way, have



Crab Apple - Central Way

themselves over the coming years. North Somerset Council is committed to taking care of the trees after planting and also has a policy to replace trees if damaged.

Sylvia's Garden in The Avenue is now tended by Alan himself, and is still opened to the public once or twice a year, raising as much as £150 a time. Other donations continue to come in, and the Cotton family members are themselves major subscribers. Their comfortable Victorian house is home to three generations, all of whom share in doing a paper round from which all income goes directly into the Sylvia Cotton Memorial Fund.

Written and Photographed by Angela Slotte



Dawn Redwood - Kenn Moor Drive

become sturdy young trees.

A new batch has been planted each winter - each new tree costing £70-£80 - and the 2011/12 planting will bring the total number of trees to well over 50. The present Senior Tree Officer at North Somerset Council, Ian Monger, has chosen many interesting and sometimes unusual species of trees, but which are all well suited to our Clevedon weather conditions. Even along our wind-swept promenade, his young Whitebeams and Hawthorns are managing to survive and will hopefully establish



Alan Cotton with his favourite Rowan tree

# POSTCARD FROM CLEVEDON

Posted by Jane Lilly and Dave Long

In 1896 Commander Shore decided to build a bridge across Highdale Road linking Mount Elton with the land on the opposite side, which had been bought by his aunt, Mrs Saxby, in 1888.

There were a great many objections from the Council on the grounds that the appearance of the road would be spoilt. A year later he applied again, only to be met with further refusals on the grounds, among others, that 'if we give you permission other people will want to build a bridge'!

George Case found much humour in this comment when he wrote up the history of Mount Elton in 1981 in the Local History Group's first book, *Clevedon: from the Village to the Town*. Commander Shore eventually gained consent for the bridge, and had in the meantime written to the Council concerning the erection of a small outhouse for a pony. 'It is proposed to



construct this edifice of stone, brick, wood and possibly mortar... it may in time be used for a pony or other quadruped.'

The bridge was finally built in 1898 –

since when it has been, until recent years, a joy to behold and the subject of many postcards and photographs.

Words by Jane Lilly  
Postcard by Dave Long

# COLLECTOR'S LOT

## Miner's Tobacco Box From the Dave Long Collection



This box has the name of William Vowles of Clevedon Som. 1902. The 1901 census lists 97 William Vowles but only one from Clevedon, who was aged 54, and born in Tickenham. His occupation was a Day Labourer, and he was deaf, possibly from working in the mines. He was married to Sarah Vowles, aged 49, a Charwoman born in Kenn. They lived at 16 Moor Lane, Clevedon.

Dave Long



These brass boxes are often, wrongly, referred to as snuff boxes. Because of their construction they would not be suitable for snuff being too large, subject to splitting at the hinge and liable to falling open due to rough usage. They were almost certainly made for a twist of chewing tobacco, as smoking tobacco would not have been permitted in coal mines due to the risk of explosions.

They are usually found in South Wales, but can occasionally be found from the South Gloucestershire and Somerset coal fields. They are normally made of brass and crudely stamped with the miner's name, town, year and a decorative pattern.

# OUR CHRISTMAS PARTY

Thursday 8 December

The Society's Christmas Party will be a ticket only affair and the closing date for purchasing tickets is **1st December**.

Priced at £6 they are available from Wendy Moore or Christine Stebbing.

Entertainment will be provided by members of the Clevedon Light Opera Club.



# Sergeant Arthur Martin MM 20<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry

Arthur was born in Clevedon in 1885. In the early 1900s along with many other Clevedonians he took advantage of the Canadian Pacific's recruiting drive and moved to Canada. Railway work was not his forte and so he joined the Mounted Police. When war was declared in 1914 he immediately joined the army. His time in France was nothing short of terrible as he was severely wounded on two occasions and also badly gassed. He was awarded the Military Medal for bravery during an attack on enemy trenches 15-19 August 1917. On 15 August, Arthur Martin pushed out into No-Man's Land, got himself into a good sniping position and accounted for 14 of the enemy, adding a further 3 to his tally in the evening. This was during the famous Canadian battle for Hill 70.



Military Medal 1914-15 Star British War Medal Victory Medal Canadian Memorial Cross

The second gun shot wound that he received in August 1918 resulted in his being casualty evacuated back to the UK where, at Woodcote Park Hospital, Richmond, he was looked after by Ellen Thacker, a Forewoman in the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps. It is interesting to note that Ellen was



# MILITARY CHEST

Researched by Rob Campbell

awarded the Medal of the OBE for her services in 1920. She became his wife and in the early 1930s they moved into "Oxney", Old Church Road, Clevedon, which is the second of the two houses after Tennyson Avenue. The house was renamed "Woodcote" in their memory and it is still known as that today.

Arthur received a pension from the Canadian government because of his wounds and he died as a result of them in 1935. The Canadians then awarded his family with the Memorial Cross.

Research and Photograph by Derek Lilly

# THE HERRING BRIDGE

The Herring Bridge despite its name has nothing whatever to do with fish. One of the oldest river bridges in Clevedon, the name comes from a corruption of Heron or Hurn. The name was derived from the shape of a heron's leg, at what we would now call a "dog-leg" bend in the river.

The earliest reference to the bridge is in a deed of 1432 as *le Busshehyron* when it occurs in leases incorporating work on both the seawall and the moor wall. The name appears again in 1630 in the land survey made for Elizabeth Wake – now in the Record Office at Taunton. Another bridge that was originally of the same

period is the bridge in Old Street at the sawmills. The latter was a service bridge enabling access to the fields of Hydall Farm lying to the south of the Land Yeo.

The Herring Bridge in its turn allowed Westend Farm, Brocks and Burriots farms entry to their parts of the Great

Ham that lay to the south of the river here. On the Tithe map of 1841 it is marked as owned by William Hollyman and occupied by Samuel Day. Mention is made of the "Hurn Lane 3 acres." The age of the bridge can be seen by the use of stone keying on the arch and stone work on the bow of the bridge behind it. Later bridges have brick keys and arches. On the tithe map for Clevedon drawn in the early 1800s, it can be clearly seen that both Stroud Road and Ken Road had fords across the Yeos, as well as bridges. The old bridges have been replaced in both instances with brick bow bridges.



Derek Lilly

# MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY by Mike Wheatley



*The Bread Line*

*Out to the Sea*



## ARTIST'S ATTIC

by  
Hugh Stebbing



*Behind the  
Community Centre,  
Clevedon*