

The Clevedonian



Spring 2012

Issue No. 05

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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



Welcome to this edition of *The Clevedonian*. I'm sure that once again you'll find stories and reports of interest. Hopefully, too, you'll be impressed by the range of topics and will be enthused to participate even more in the Civic Society's events.

I've observed previously that it is the very diversity of our activities that gives our Society the deep strength that has enabled it to be sustained when many elsewhere have fallen by the wayside. A brief look "behind the scenes" of our events calendar shows immense commitment, determination and purpose by those who lead our various special interest groups and the more social meetings. My thanks, and those of all members, go to



GROUP REPORT

Footpaths Group

Report by Liz Byrd (Tel: 872633)



The group continues to provide a pleasant social outlet for members which is much appreciated, and Variety is the keyword of the walks undertaken by the group since last autumn. Injuries to two of the group meant a rearrangement of the planned programme – many thanks to those who stepped in to offer walks around Cheddar Reservoir, and the new Black Rock path at Kewstoke in November. Shorter winter walks also included a circuit of Felton Common (good for aircraft enthusiasts), and the Bristol Slave Trade Walk published in The Independent brought out 20 people eager to catch up on their history. The Christmas pudding burn off circuit of Poets' Walk and the Pill was undertaken by two overlapping groups who had mistakenly set off thirty minutes apart only to meet later and convivially in the Salthouse.

An equally enthusiastic 20 people and 3 dogs turned up for a stroll in the mist around the heights of Weston-in-Gordano, taking in a beautifully restored field owned by one of the members, before enjoying a pub lunch in the sun. In contrast, a mere 11 people braved the 5 miles, deep mud and long steep climb needed to include the Backwell Jubilee stone – but the views made it all worthwhile. Leafy Portishead next with

Next meetings: 11 June and 3 September 2012



the group looking forward to longer summer walks around Chew Magna, both Congresbury and Tickenham Cadbury Camps and the summer favourite coastal path.

On a more official note, the revision of the Footpaths Survey continued with a rainy 5 mile walk covering Court Wood, Clapton Lane, Walton-in-Gordano and the golf course. An apparently blocked or removed footpath between Clapton Lane and the B3124 is being investigated. Also the fallen fence and walls on the coastal path below the Walton Park Hotel has been reported to North Somerset Council (NSC) and copied to the Environment Group where the same issue had arisen. NSC has acknowledged the report and we are awaiting a working response.

Members are encouraged to arrive at the starting point of a walk by bus where possible – sometimes resulting in the bus being mobbed by our members! A recently established group "library" of walking books (kindly donated by

Jane Lilly) is hopefully encouraging more members to step forward and lead walks. The walk report written by each leader gives an opportunity for a vivid impressionistic view of each walk (and we are rarely disappointed!) as well as providing a useful factual record.

Links with other groups continue with our March group meeting at the Community Bookshop leading to approval of the venue despite some teething troubles. We also worked with the Environment Group and joined the April Litter Pick, liaising with Clevedon Pride to do so.

New members are always welcome, as well as family and visitors.



Environment Group

Report by Bob Hardcastle (Tel. 871633)

The Group started its working party season with a Big Litter Pick to improve the appearance of parts of the town before the Easter Bank Holiday weekend.



We were helped by all the other Group Chairmen and some of their Group members.

Although more than 20 bags of litter – and an old bicycle – were recovered we were pleased to report that there seemed to be less litter to pick up than in previous years.

We would like to think that this was because less litter was being dropped, but we suspect that it is

Next meetings: 16 May, 11 July
12 September 2012



Local History Group

Report by Rob Campbell (Tel. 877038)

excellent high tech display aids courtesy of fellow member John Rostrom. The evening proved to be very successful.

In March Elizabeth White talked about a 'Queer Little Village', in fact her home village of Pill. For someone who had only lived there for a short time the



Please remember that all members of the Society are welcome to attend any talk without an obligation to be a regular attendee.

The year got off to a very interesting start with an enlightening talk by Denny Robins and John Rickard from the Somerset Vernacular Building Research Group. The group is a voluntary one, but compiles very professional reports. We also had some interesting general history related queries on a number of other subjects, and Brian Austin, a well-known local historian, has asked me to thank all those who helped with his questions.

For our February meeting group member Bev Harris gave a very interesting talk on the history of zinc and his lifelong involvement with the process, aided by

We hope that the Bandstand can be restored in this current year as this was our intended Jubilee project when we contacted NSC about the repair work that was needed to this iconic structure.

However as it will not be possible to get this work done before the Jubilee weekend the Civic Society Executive have agreed to fund the erection of a new bench on the sea wall at Marshall's Field as a contribution to the town's Jubilee celebrations in June.

The seat and plaque have been ordered from North Somerset Council and we are waiting for them to give us an installation date.

We will continue our monthly working parties throughout the summer, concentrating as usual on looking after all the past Civic Society projects on the seafront area.

history she had uncovered was amazing.

Once again we helped to fill the coach on the annual trip to The National Archives at Kew, with the Weston-super-Mare Family History Society. We all came away laden with photocopies and information.

As a result of a talk I gave to a U3A group in Weston-super-Mare, a change to our programme has been made. I met and spoke to a very interesting gentleman who served as a navigator in Bomber Command during the Second World War. One of the many missions that he took part in was the famous 'Peenemunde Raid' and in July he will be telling us of his experiences during that raid. I was to be the speaker that evening and have therefore postponed my talk for the moment.

Book sales continue to impress with £1269.00 having been taken since last August.

GROUP REPORT

Conservation & Planning Group

Report by Bryan Osborne



From the start of 2012 there has been an increase in activity on the planning front, this despite the current economic restrictions, and I can report on some of these developments.

I am pleased to say that there is some movement on the Royal Pier Hotel Apartments, with initial clearance work taking place to enable further investigations to be carried out. It is still the intention, we understand, of Freemantle Developments to start work in the summer of this year.



Associated with the hotel site is the development of the café and other facilities on the Pier abutment, and the first stage of the Lottery bid has been successful. Fund raising is now in full swing to proceed to the final stage.



The proposal to convert the Convent in Marine Hill into apartments has been approved, but the building of five houses of "contemporary design" with flat roofs in Lea Grove Road has raised the question whether this choice is wholly suitable in this largely Victorian area of the Town.



In the "Village" the relocation of the long established Staddons Timber Yard came as a surprise and I'm afraid the Group is not happy with the proposed development of seven houses and four flats on the wedge of land between the Land Yeo and Arundel Road. We feel the site, close to the Town Centre, deserves a more imaginative design. Jane Lilly is concerned that the building used by Staddons is the original barn built in 1742 forming part of the farmstead in Lime Kiln Lane. Although not listed, this building should deserve some recognition.



The Highcliffe Hotel in Wellington Terrace is also up for conversion into fourteen apartments with a new extension linking the two Victorian Villas, having failed to find a buyer as a hotel. The proposed design incorporating extensive zinc cladding, together with the parking arrangements for the flats are both far from satisfactory in the context of Wellington Terrace and the Conservation Area, as currently included in the planning application.



One piece of encouraging news, received from NHS North Somerset, is that the new Community Hospital on the old Kwik Save site is still on track and, subject to one last hurdle, could still be completed in 2014.



It is very sad to see the Town Centre in decline with more empty shops, but we do not consider the increase in the number of hot food take-aways to be contributing to the regeneration of the area to encourage traders to open new businesses.
I wish you all a happy summer with plenty to look forward to, particularly if you are interested in the Olympics and our Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Next meetings: 22 May, 3 July,
14 August and 25 September 2012

All meetings are held at St Andrew's Church Centre
All are welcome, visitors £3

COMING SHORTLY...

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.

History Group - 21 June 2012
The Finzel Family
Jane Ferentzi-Sheppard

As one of Britain's leading family history tutors Jane will bring her expertise to tell us about this family of Sugar importers who lived in our town.

History Group - 19 July 2012
WW2 Peenemunde Raid
Arthur Spencer DFC

Arthur served as a navigator in Bomber Command during the Second World War. One of the many missions that he took part in was the famous 'Peenemunde Raid'.

Civic Society - 13 September 2012
Parliament and You
Naomi Kent

Miss Kent works as a South West Parliamentary Outreach worker and her role is to spread awareness of the work, processes and relevance of the institution of Parliament.

History Group - 20 September 2012
George Reed & Burnham-on-Sea
Pat Hase

In the 1800s George Reed was a local resident who was a benefactor of Burnham and Squire of East Brent.

Civic Society - 11 October 2012
Know Your Place - Historic Bristol
Peter Insole

Bristol's Archaeological Officer talks about a web-based tool that enables people to explore their neighbourhoods through historic maps, images and linked information.

History Group - 18 October 2012
Family History Forum
The Groups

An evening of contributions from members of the various groups that make up the History Group.

Civic Society - 8 November 2012
Bristol Airport
Mike Littleton

Mike is the Community Relations Manager at Bristol International Airport.

History Group - 15 November 2012
The Baedeker Blitz on Bath
John Penny

The Baedeker raids were conducted by the German Luftwaffe during two periods between April and June 1942. They targeted strategically unimportant but picturesque cities in England.

Civic Society Executive Members

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

Next Executive meetings:

Tuesdays 19 June, 18 September and 20 November 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.

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

REDEVELOPING CHRISTCHURCH

by Hugh Stebbing

Many will have seen the demolition and construction work going on at Christchurch and wondered why the work is necessary and what changes will actually be taking place. Hugh is the Project Manager and has the answers.



The background to the programme of work, known as the Regen (regeneration) Project, lies in a mix of the historic evolution of Christchurch coupled with a desire for it to be equipped for the next 50 years and beyond.

The project will involve the reconfiguring of the interior of the church itself. Though designed by significant architect Rickman and built through the late 1830s very little of the original interior remains. The external shell of the building continues to be true to Rickman's design but over the years since 1837 pews have been installed and replaced, oil fired heating provided, a pipe organ introduced and then relocated on at least two occasions. Meeting rooms and a hall extension together with a kitchen and toilets have been added over a period of 100 years or so but they were poorly configured with

difficult access and many differing floor levels. Looking to the future the layout did not suit the needs of the church or others who would like to use its facilities.

The work now underway will enable



the magnificent and open space in the church nave to be used to the full. The pews have been removed and will be replaced by stackable chairs. New flooring will include underfloor heating

and give a totally flat surface throughout. The organ has been removed and will be replaced by an improved digital instrument with three manuals rather than the previous two.

The objective is that the area of the church can be multi-functional offering options for layout for concerts, drama and a range of other activities in addition to the key church based needs. The acoustic is excellent and we want the church used every day of the week for church and community purposes. When work is complete the church building will offer one of the largest clear auditorium spaces in Clevedon.

Linked to the church through two new entrances at the eastern end of the nave will be a new hall and meeting room complex with kitchen and facilities accessed from a single floor level (the same as the church), as well as a new lobby and circulation area to connect for the first time in its history the whole building into an integrated and coherent layout. Meeting rooms and halls can be used simultaneously with each having

access to the catering and toilet facilities. There will be five halls/meeting rooms of differing sizes in addition to the church nave itself. A small external terrace will offer views across the valley towards the Mendips. The flat roofed part of the hall complex will have a living Sedum 'grass' roof and the whole new hall area a very high energy saving specification.

Christchurch is a very unusual church. It may occupy a historic site with a Victorian church building, but in 2005 it became an "Ecumenical Partnership" (EP). This is a legal term reflecting the formal merging of Linden Road Methodist Church with



Christ Church Anglican Church.

By early 2010 agreement had been reached about a preferred design and formal applications were made for planning consent and other statutory and church approvals.

By the spring of 2011 the architects, Chedburn Dudley, were seeking competitive tenders for the construction work, which commenced on 27 November 2011. We had already moved church activities to a temporary home at St Nicholas Chantry School, transferred

church fittings and equipment to secure storage and removed and sold all the pews. The contractors, C.S. Williams, took possession of a site cleared for action!

Regular progress photos can be seen on the church website under the Regen tab at www.christchurch-clevedon.org.uk.

They are updated most weeks and also show the history of the site work.

Planning is now well advanced towards the return to Christchurch this autumn after completion of construction work and fitting out, installation of

church equipment and the testing and commissioning of new systems including lighting, audio-visual and underfloor heating kit, as well as the new digital organ.

We then move to the truly important stage, which is to use the new facilities to the full, every day, for the furtherance of Faith and the benefit of the wider community of Clevedon and surrounding area.

Hugh Stebbing

A FISHY TALE

Derek quashes the often repeated story that 'Clevedon was a little fishing village until the craze for sea bathing was started by the Prince Regent'.

Prior to 1825 there were no houses north of Highdale farm on the hills overlooking the village or along the coast line of the present Wellington Terrace, The Beach, and Elton Road. The exception to this being the solitary building now known as Old Park House. This was the building for the warrenor and park keeper for "Clevedon Park" that was situated on the Dial Hill.

True there was a fisherman, his name was Richard Hewlett and he lived in Vine Cottage, Old Church Road. The sea fishing rights were rented from



Mrs Ford sets nets at Blackstone

Research by Derek Lilly

Clevedon Court for £7 15s per quarter. The cottage was an early building originally called Dirricks Tenement. When Jane and myself viewed it some years ago we found traces that showed that the roof had been raised and suggestions of a dating as early as the Wake Survey of 1630.

In 1833 Thomas Lilly my G.G.G. Uncle came to Clevedon from Portbury and went into partnership with Hewlett [his uncle]. We know that Thomas' father William married a Mary Williams so the relationship probably came through Thomas' wife. All that we know of her is that her Christian name was Eliza

so presumably she was "Nee Hewlett".

The partnership consisted of Thomas supplying the labour and Hewlett providing the equipment. This went on for a few years until Hewlett retired and his son William took his place. William lasted for around 2 years but probably found the job a little too harsh. Thomas then took on the full work aided later on by his son Charles (more of him in later issues perhaps). As well as the fishery they also rented from

the Court the bathing machine rights on the two beaches.

In 1863 Sir Arthur Elton wished to legally ensure that the Court Estate owned the foreshore rights and the following document: — CRES 58 758 Testimonies 12th October 1863. attached to 10/470 in the Kew Record Office contains interesting information about the fishing and foreshore rights. Unlike many places it seems that along those parts of the Somerset coast that risked flooding the crown did not claim the rights but put it to the landowners abutting the shore.

Derek Lilly



Vine Cottage - Old Church Road



FAREWELL - CLEVEDON MERCURY

by Geoff Hale

In our Spring 2011 edition we marked the publication of the last local paper in Clevedon with the word 'Mercury' in the title. Just one year has passed and in this edition we mark the demise of its replacement newspaper, the clevedonpeople.co.uk.



printer's devil. I had no help whatsoever. I sold 300 copies to shopkeepers myself and got a number of subscribers. Although I had been working all night I was a young cyclone that morning.

A year later George Caple bought out his rival, the **Clevedon Courier**. He moved to a house in Woodlands Road and installed a new printing press and soon an eight page paper was being printed entirely in Clevedon. Then came a mark of real progress, the building of an architect-designed printing office in Alexandra Road, where a gas engine was installed to run the printing presses. He continued to produce his **Clevedon Mercury** for a further 21 years.

Caple was said to be a character and an individualist, and had a great sense of humour. He led his paper to campaign for improvements in the town and was in some way responsible for its piped water, the market hall, the seafront amenities, hotels, and the pier arriving in Clevedon.



In 1885 Caple sold out to the first of a succession of new owners. In 1894 the paper's headquarters was moved to another purpose-built building in Six Ways where they remained for over half a century. The final resting place of the **Clevedon Mercury** in its home town was in the old Public Hall in Albert Road where it remained until 2009 when production was moved into the Bristol offices of the Daily Mail and General Trust. Here it suffered from a terminal decline and died silently in April 2012. RIP.

Geoff Hale



The first **Clevedon Mercury** appeared on 24 January, 1863, and was produced by a young 17-year-old entrepreneur called George James Caple from his father's coach house in Copse Road. Later he wrote about that first edition, 'I was about 17 years of age, with little experience, but I fought hard, and was a proud young man on that auspicious Saturday morning when I read my name on the head of the paper and felt myself to be a full-fledged proprietor, editor, reporter, compositor, pressman and

WHAT'S IN A NAME?



Edwin Hazell

Local photographer in the early part of the 20th century.

Where do the street names in Clevedon come from?



Percy Daniel

Organ builder who started manufacturing his instruments in the brick-built village hall in East Clevedon before moving to his own factory nearby.

by Jane Lilly

Older people in East Clevedon will remember the artist Doris Hatt, and her companion, Margery Mack Smith. Jane meets with some of those who knew her.

Doris was a Christian Communist who sold the Communist newspaper in the Old Inn and gave parties at Christmas for the local children. She and Margery were lifetime companions.

Doris moved to Clevedon in about 1922, having trained at the Royal College of Art and travelled in France, working with Ferdinand Leger, who had a great influence on her. She was born in Bath in 1890, and died in 1969 in Clevedon.

The house in Valley Road, Littlemead, was built in 1938, replacing the wooden chalet which Doris had inhabited till then. The architect was N H N Darby of Weston-super-Mare, who had built Sunway on Dial Hill Road in 1934. The

two houses comprise Clevedon's sole Art Deco domestic architecture.

The interior was open plan and simple, with a kitchen for Doris and another for Margery. Doris' studio could be curtained off from the large living space, while Margery worked at the loom in her annexe, added a few years after the main house was built.

Dr Denys Wilcox is working on an illustrated biography of Doris, to be published in 2014 with an accompanying exhibition at the RWA in Bristol. I have three watercolours by Doris, and my aunt's mementoes of her. I was lucky enough to meet Doreen Cooke, who was also a friend of the artist.

Doreen has over a dozen of Miss Hatt's oils, watercolours and prints, so when the chance arose we arranged a meeting at my house with Denys Wilcox, who photographed the pictures we had. Fortunately I had recently been in touch



Fish Stall - 1951

Jug and Shell - 1957

DEREK LILLY'S WORD SEARCH

Word List

ARUNDEL
SUNNYSIDE
EDWARD
CAMBRIDGE
WELLINGTON
ALEXANDRA
ALBERT
HALLAM
HERBERT
HIGHDALE
COLERIDGE
VICTORIA

No prizes - just for fun.

Find the 12 Clevedon roads

D	D	Z	Z	O	W	W	N	P	C	P	L	D	O	Q
E	G	D	I	R	E	L	O	C	J	N	R	R	D	M
M	E	N	A	B	A	L	A	L	E	A	X	A	N	D
J	L	B	O	M	V	E	T	P	W	A	O	G	N	N
T	Z	C	A	M	B	R	I	D	G	E	W	W	Y	T
B	C	Q	W	J	P	L	E	G	A	D	E	N	L	W
H	D	H	Y	Y	V	N	E	J	I	I	L	E	E	O
A	L	B	E	R	T	V	D	Z	R	S	L	O	P	
L	R	B	Z	Q	D	Z	I	Q	O	Y	I	G	A	N
L	G	U	E	D	W	R	S	Z	T	N	N	B	D	O
A	A	D	N	T	T	A	Y	Z	C	N	G	Z	H	T
M	L	S	N	D	V	Y	N	Q	I	U	T	A	G	D
J	Y	H	A	M	E	Y	N	C	V	S	O	R	I	Y
V	D	L	O	W	H	L	U	J	B	J	N	D	H	W
T	R	E	B	R	H	S	G	N	P	E	V	O	G	

DORIS HATT - LOCAL ARTIST

with Andy Littlejones, who brought along two more paintings and a lot of ephemera kept by his uncle Mr Dyer, who knew Doris as a personal friend.

Having assembled a sizeable sample of 'Hatts' in one place, we found the range of colours and styles startling! In addition to her preferred palette of greens and reds, Doris had also experimented with blue and greys, magenta and oranges and pinks and pastels. Much of the subject matter was local, but there were also West Country places featured. Still lifes were often depicted against a window, as she loved to look out on the world.

If you have memories of Doris Hatt, or have any of her paintings, Denys Wilcox would love to hear from you – phone 01984 639969.

Jane Lilly

Around Clevedon are many volunteer groups. We feature five groups whose main aim is to improve the environment of our town.

VOLUNTEERING FOR CLEVEDON'S ENVIRONMENT

Friends of Poets' Walk

The aim of the Friends of Poets' Walk, a volunteer action group established in September last year, is to increase the variety and quality of the various natural habitats on Church Hill and Wain's Hill, as well as to make the area a more enjoyable and informative Nature Reserve for the visiting public.

One of their first tasks has been to clear many years' worth of scrub from the ramparts of the Iron Age Fort on Wain's Hill. Another task on their list was to clean up the seats on the popular coastal walk and to improve the view from those seats by cutting the hedge on the sea-ward side of the path.

Above Salthouse Woods, near the popularly named Sugar Lookout, the volunteer group has discovered a zig-zag path that climbs right up to the top of Church



Church Hill Zig Zag



Clearing the scrub on the Wain's Hill Ramparts

The group of around a dozen volunteers has now exposed these steps and the concrete based pathway by scraping away compacted earth and cutting back vegetation. They have also cleared scrub from the area at the top making the whole place accessible for all of us to enjoy the magnificent view once more.

The Friends of Poets' Walk have so far spent over three hundred and eighty hours in working parties and are keen to meet new members who would like a challenge and a chance to really make a difference to this popular Local Nature Reserve. They say that this is an opportunity to enjoy some good team spirit in the open air coupled with the sense of a job well done.

Ladye Bay

The Ladye Bay area is now monitored by local residents, one of whom is a member of the Clevedon Civic Society. The area is patrolled on a twice weekly basis through the winter and on an almost daily basis from spring to autumn. All rubbish is removed to bins supplied by North Somerset Council and located in Bay Road and at the top of the steps leading down to the beach itself.

The two bins are emptied regularly by



the Council but if the beach has been heavily used during prolonged fine weather they tend to overflow, in which case a quick call to Simon Banbury leads to a speedy removal of litter. The additional control of the beach also tends to minimise the anti social activities taking place in the area in the late afternoon. All in all a great template for community involvement in these cash strapped times.

One disappointment is the amount of dog faeces still being found on the grassed lawn area towards the town adjacent to the Walton Park Hotel and on the coastal footpath in the area. Why do dog owners allow their own dogs to foul an area which presumably they regularly use?

M.S. Anderson

Land Yeo Friends

Events of recent months have added to the quality, depth and flow rate of the Land Yeo River.

Culverts have been cleared, and a desilting operation has been carried out by the Environment Agency upstream of the town.

In the last few years the culvert under Queen's Square has been cleared, and a large willow tree, which was hugely obstructing flow, was removed. As a result of all these improvements, the winter flow rate through the town has been the best for many years, and the significant increase can be seen tumbling out of the outfall at the Pill.

All being well, when the summer levels return at the beginning of April our river should be in



The Glebe Community Project

The field is situated next to St Andrew's Church. It consists of 1.4 acres with Poet's Walk and cliffs on one side and the old St Andrew's Church and graveyard on another. It was once home to the donkeys who gave rides on Salthouse Field and during that period had suffered general degradation.



The Woodland Trust's aim is to plant six million trees during the Queen's Jubilee year and so far they are on target with over a million safely in the ground.

During the following week a team of St Andrew's volunteers formed a production line, some unwrapping,

some planting, and some fixing rabbit guards until all four hundred and twenty had been safely planted.

Along with the four hundred and twenty saplings, the Woodland Trust had also included a sapling oak tree which the vicar of St Andrews, the Reverend Terry Baillie, was invited to plant at the entrance to the Glebe.

The team had also managed to sell a large number of the burnable logs, from which the income went to finance the project. But a huge pile of thin branches were left, so the next task was to engage a man with a shredder to clear all the unsaleable off-cuts. The resulting wood chippings were to be used to create the various woodland paths designed to take the visitor on their journey into nature.

St Andrew's Church is actively encouraging the whole community of Clevedon to support this Glebe project, and on its completion most of the site will be available for use by all comers.

Now the donkeys have left and with community support it was proposed to construct a nature trail through specially planted native trees and to establish a 'nuttery' to include cob, hazel and walnut. Seating will be placed in strategic positions to enjoy the tranquillity of a beautiful place.

Work progressed through the winter and by the middle of March a large amount of tree felling had been undertaken by the team from the church, whose attention now turned to obtaining and planting a hedge along the boundary fence by Poet's Walk.

Their leader, Eric Holdsworth, turned to the Woodland Trust and made a claim under their Jubilee Woods project for four hundred and twenty free saplings.



All Saints Church

The congregation and passersby in the area of the All Saints Church in East Clevedon will have noticed that the churchyard has been the subject of a major clean-up: aged and dying trees removed, self seeded unwanted trees removed and graves restored. This provides for an uninterrupted view of this splendid Gothic church, built by the Elton family, from the roads in the area. The spoil area from former grave diggings has now been removed, the area levelled and grass seeded, and a new notice board in the East Clevedon livery installed - all in time for Easter. All paid for by the congregation where the



Council has responsibility for the closed churchyard.

These upgrades have already led to an increased enquiry rate for Marriages Ceremonies at the Church.

M.S. Anderson

During a three month holiday in Australasia, member Paul Kite couldn't resist a visit to a town like 'home'.



We are not alone! There is another Clevedon, diametrically opposed to us, tucked nicely in the Hauraki Gulf away from the South Pacific Ocean. Sounds romantic? It is. This Clevedon is close to the city of Auckland on the North Island of New Zealand. It has a history, being first settled in 1853 by the McNicol and Hoye families who bought land on the banks of the Wairoa river that heads north east to Hauraki Gulf. You can read its history for yourself at www.clevedon.co.nz and try Google Maps with the location Clevedon NZ.



We were attracted to it by its name and the fact that it's close to where we stayed, another historic village called Howick. These early New Zealand towns have a rich history and because of their isolation from Europe, and everywhere else for that matter, give rise to the Kiwi's fascination for things old (175 years in their terms) and for never throwing anything away. Small museums are rich with memorabilia, most of which we have discarded into landfill. An OXO tin for example is a treasured item, a reminder of "home"!

As places go, there is not much to Clevedon's main street - it ain't Hill Road or the Triangle. It is more like Kenn. What it has that made it so important to

the settlers is the river Wairoa with access to the gulf and up the coast to Auckland. So many NZ small towns used their rivers to supply farming communities with much needed supplies. See their website. These rivers are mostly no wider than our canals. From Google maps you will see leisure yachts moored in the lower reaches of the Wairoa.

Whilst in Clevedon I did find a gravestone that commemorated the settlers - the Matheson family whose longevity is recorded on the stone but no date of arrival. Oddly the Mathesons are not mentioned in the history on their website. It would be interesting to see whether any of the names connect with our Clevedon. Are there Mathesons in our town? McNicol and Hoye sound Scots or Irish to me?

The first settlers sometimes had a dual purpose, as occupiers of the land and as a militia called "Fencibles", drawn from skilled men in the British Army and transported with their families. Carpenters, butchers, farriers, most retired on grounds of ill health, usually rheumatism. It was their job to guard the coastal areas against invasion. Dad's Army springs to mind. There was a threat from the Russians c. 1885, which never materialised, and from the Maori up until the time of the Peace treaty in 1840 as well as the inevitable local land disputes. Try Google: Images of the Maori Wars

The photos of the Main Street give it a sleepy rural air which is true. The surroundings of woodland and farms are like the Walton in Gordano I remember as a youngster in the 1940s and '50s.

It was December 21 2011 when we passed through Clevedon, hence Santa breaking into the Community Centre and Police Station (which was open!) via the chimney. It was the first really fine weather after nearly a month of torrential rain, which had kept us housebound. Heavy rainfall of 60 and 70 cms over a period of 24 hours made a nonsense of our claim to rainy weather. The locals reckoned it their wettest summer ever. Clevedon Pier (see photo) is about 5 miles from the village and whilst not Victorian architecture, does get plenty of use by local people.



The High Street

The rest I leave up to you and urge you if possible to visit New Zealand (Aotearoa, land of the Long White Cloud). It can be done quite cheaply if you are prepared to hire a small car and self cater in one of the thousands of camp sites, all of which have tent sites or cabins and a central communal kitchen. Or you can go upmarket and have a self contained cabin with large double bed, shower room and fitted kitchen. Hiring a camper van is expensive - touring can be done much more cheaply. We toured in a 1300 Dihatsu Sirion Automatic - £14.50 a day with unlimited mileage and covered well over 5300km with petrol at £1.00 per litre and diesel even cheaper. Tolerably, petrol prices are the same throughout the whole of the country. Why don't they do that here?

Paul Kite



Clevedon Pier

Moving picture shows were first staged in Clevedon in the early 1900s, and one of the early cinematic entrepreneurs had been the local stone mason called J.N Cox, who hand wound the projector while his son, Victor, accompanied the silent films on the piano.

So popular were these performances that Victor and his father soon formed a company called the Clevedon Cinephone Company and set about building the first of the three picture houses to stand on the Old Church Road site. It was called The Picture House.

On the afternoon of Saturday, 20 April, 1912, the new Picture House was opened and the first film to be shown was a short newsreel showing the ill-fated Titanic setting sail from Southampton just six days previously. The proceeds from that show were donated to the Lord Mayor of London's Fund.

The 200-seat cinema was so well supported that within a year the building was expanded without a single performance being missed.

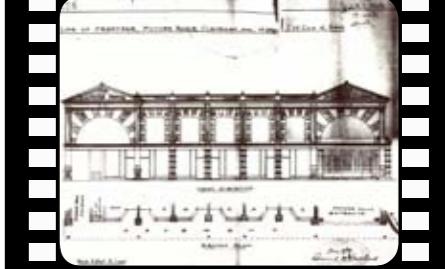
The major improvements commenced on the first of June 1913. They included an enlarged auditorium, a sliding roof to improve ventilation, more exits and, most importantly, an increase of seating from 200 to 349.

Below the screen, which was at the Old Church Road end of the building, was an orchestra pit with an upright piano upon which stood a gramophone to provide musical accompaniment. Contemporary reports claimed that the new cinema had comfortable tip-up seats upholstered in red leather, perfect ventilation and a flickerless picture.

This new form of entertainment proved such a success that in 1920 Victor Cox announced that the Picture House was to be once again enlarged, and again without closing for a single performance the old building was magically transformed into the one we know today. And the workmen got a bonus of a free charabanc outing to Cheddar!

A local paper suggested that in the new Picture House 'Clevedon will have a structure of which it will have every reason to be proud.'

Geoff Hale



CLEVEDON'S WEATHER STATION

by Mike Wheatley

The Civic Society webmaster wonders how many readers have "googled" this fascinating local website, or accessed it via the useful link <http://www.clevedonweather.co.uk> provided on our own Society website?

I added this link a couple of years ago after discovering the weather station myself when checking how much snow would be greeting me in Clevedon upon my imminent return from warmer climes.

Ian, the weather station's founder and webmaster, launched the project in April 2007 and has continued enhancing its facilities ever since. It utilises sophisticated specialist equipment and software to measure temperature, humidity, solar radiation, wind speed and direction etc. Go to <http://www.clevedonweather.co.uk/station> to learn more of the geeky stuff about the weather station.

A dedicated web-server and video equipment makes these measurements and video clips freely available over the internet in "real time". It gets about 100 different internet visitors each day but the number really depends

on the weather and when it is either very hot or very cold the numbers can increase by a factor of 10.

The visitors are from all over the world but, as you'd expect, the majority are from the local area. In the first three months of this year there have been over 17,500 page-views from people in 68 countries - which include Kazakhstan, Albania, Vietnam and Bangladesh. This is nearly three times the volume of activity on the Civic Society's own website - which itself attracts significant interest.

Ian does occasionally get emails from some of the more distant visitors explaining that they have either lived in, or near, Clevedon or they have relatives or friends in the town. He did once come home from work to find a note posted through the door from a person from

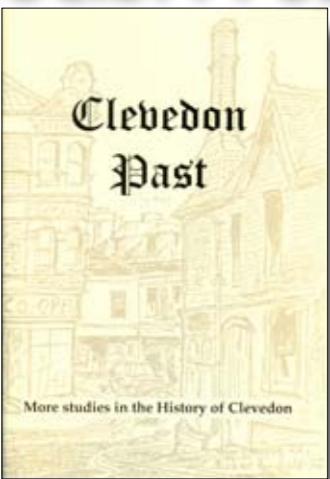


Ottawa in Canada who was visiting his son in Clevedon. They had tracked down the house from the view from his weather cam!

As hobbies go, Ian's is a commendable success and benefits the community greatly - yet another instance of Clevedon accomplishment.

Mike Wheatley

SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS



With this publication in 1993 the Society completed its study of Clevedon's history. Once again the format was to invite members to write articles, while the illustrations were again provided by Michael Horsfield.

Lady Margaret Elton, the president of the Society at the time, provided the foreword in which she noted the opening of the Clevedon Heritage Centre the year before and regretted the loss of so much of our local historical knowledge, particularly about our many producers and processors of wool and the craftsmen who supported our local industry.

The new book was dedicated to Gray

Usher who was not only a local journalist writing in the *Clevedon Mercury* as 'Moorman' but also contributed a regular column in the *Bristol Evening World*. Gray Usher was also a prominent local archaeologist and a founder member of the Clevedon Archaeological Society.

The current president of that Society, Jean Dagnell, appropriately supplied the first item for *Clevedon Past* – an article called *The Archaeology of Clevedon* starting way back in prehistoric times and ending with the building of roads and houses in the 19th century.

Starting with a quote from the Complete Clevedon Guide of 1879 saying that 'Art has done much to render Clevedon a desirable residential place', Margaret Elton's excellent article detailing the

artists, poets, novelists and potters of the town, along with the music and architecture, is alone well worth the price of the book. This item is followed by a page listing the history of the town's drama societies.

Geoff Hale

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

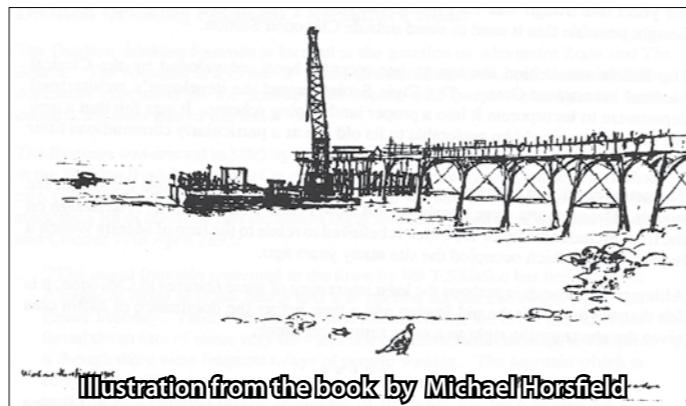


Illustration from the book by Michael Horsfield

CLEVEDON'S WEATHER STATION

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Mike Wheatley

SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Clevedon has four amateur entertainment groups. In this edition we look at the history of the two musical groups and next time the drama groups will be in the spot light.

ENTERTAINMENT IN CLEVEDON

The CLOC is Still Ticking!



CLOC - Trial by Jury - 1950

Baron, and from that year onward they turned their back on the British duo.

Since then CLOC has averaged two shows a year. Nowadays their junior section are also performing full scale shows so as one production schedule has finished another one has started.

Their most recent production was *Fiddler on the Roof*, staged at the Princes Hall last March.

Geoff Hale

We have a Song to Sing, O!



the arrangements had the very active support of the Headmaster, Bill Body, who believed strongly in the development of School and Community relations. Between 40 and 50 people took part in the shows at the school in the early years accompanied by an orchestra of about 20. They continued to put on annual performances at the school until 1994 when members decided it was time to break the links with the school and move the performances to the Princes Theatre.

The Society has competed in local Gilbert and Sullivan competitions and has received nominations for Rose Bowl awards, in one of which their leading lady won 'The Most Outstanding Musical Performer' award for her performance in *Ruddigore*.

The Society has always been pleased to put on concerts during the summer months for the benefit of charities and for fund-raising. In February 2000 it held its first Gala Night at the Princes Theatre, including a successful performance



CG&SS - Trial by Jury - 1972

of *The Zoo*, with music by Sir Arthur Sullivan.

It has been the Society's aim to support activities in the town and this we normally do in appropriate costume of the Gilbert and Sullivan era. We were proud to be invited to sing at the end of the Pier at the grand re-opening on 23 May 1998 as the crowd came down to board The Waverley paddle steamer. On the same day we supported the traders in Hill Road with a concert in the afternoon.

Throughout their forty year existence the Society has remained faithful to their original aim which was to perform only operas written by Gilbert and Sullivan.

Doris Ellis

WHEN WE WERE VERY YOUNG

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

I was born at Osborne House, Bay Road on 17th September 1942. My parents were renting the top floor flat at Rydal, Albert Road. Dad used to tell me that the black out screens saved my life. He was working at The Bristol Aeroplane Company at Filton 12 hours a day 6 days a week and, as he had his own car, he also had to take in three other workers, which meant leaving home early to collect them and getting home late after dropping them off. After such a long day he needed all the rest he could get, especially a good night's sleep, which was when I decided to exercise my lungs. He said if the screens hadn't been there I would have been out the window.

We moved to 22 Highdale Avenue not long after I was born. I had a friend, Graham, who lived up the road on the other side. We used to get up to quite a bit of mischief like raiding the allotments that were across the road. I can also remember having a pedal car that Dad had made for me, and we would go down Highdale Avenue at frightening speeds. There was a pig bin on a lamp post on the corner where the road turned down to Old Street in which we would look for things like pea pods to eat (mangetout is nothing new).

My sister Barbara came along in June 1945. I don't remember much about that event but I can remember seeing Dad in his R.A.F. uniform when he came home on leave. The only other time I saw him in uniform was when I went with my mother to Accrington to stay with Auntie Amy in May 1944. This was close to where he was stationed at the time. I don't remember anything about it though.

When the war ended Dad was able to restart his building business with his brother, Donald. As they had started a house in Lower Knowles Road when war broke out they were able to get a licence to complete it. This house became my



Aged 18 months



Aged 3 years



Aged 9 years

Dave Long



With Barbara and Stephen on H.M.S. Indefatigable at Weymouth



Aged 9 Months in the garden at Rydal



Aged 20 months Auntie Amy's Accrington



With Barbara on the drive at Barda 1947



Memories by Dave Long

home for the next sixteen years. We moved into it in 1947 and my parents named it Barda, using parts of my sister's and my name. In December of 1947 my brother Stephen was born. Not long after we moved here Westbourne Estate was developed and that was where a lot of my friends lived. As there were large areas of land left around the houses these made a good playground for us until we were old enough to venture further afield. From Westbourne we could walk across the fields to the seawall and follow it all the way to the River Yeo where the W.C. & P. railway bridge used to stand. Church Hill and Wains Hill were places we would also spend a lot of time playing all sorts of games. It was a good place to go bird nesting as well, which was before we knew better.

I went to school at St John's, now the library, where Mr. Buxton was our head master. We always walked or rode our bikes to school. Parents didn't take us as they were too busy with other things. From St John's I went to St Nicolas School in Herbert Road. This was a small preparatory School in a converted stone built house, run by Dennis Fry. My grandparents on mother's side wanted me to go to St Brendan's in Bristol like my Uncle Stan had done. I did not like this idea as you had to go on Saturday mornings, which clashed with Saturday morning pictures at the Maxime, so I made sure I did not pass the entrance exam.

Eventually I had to decide on a career. I had no idea what I wanted to do so Dad suggested I tried one of the trades in the building industry. So in the school holidays I worked alongside his plumber and I found it suited me, so instead of going back to school in September, I started work on my fifteenth birthday as an apprentice plumber, working on the last house to be built in Russell Road.



With Barbara and Stephen on H.M.S. Indefatigable at Weymouth

Holm Oak – Boon or Bane?

Angela, who is Tree Warden for Clevedon Town Council, would like to put in a good word for the much maligned Holm Oak.



Leaves and acorns of *Quercus ilex*



BRANCH LINE

by Angela Slotte

shiny leaves make it not only resistant to urban pollution but also to damage by salty sea spray. An individual tree can lend considerable architectural value to an urban or park landscape while a row of large Holm Oaks provides an effective, all year round screen against prevailing winds.

The acorns produced by the Holm Oak are able to germinate in the relatively warm conditions of southern England, and climate change is favouring its natural spread into grassland and other habitats, especially near the coast. The tree's dense, evergreen canopy deprives the soil below of light and water, preventing other plants from growing, and a large population of Holm Oak eventually changes the nature of the landscape to the detriment of wildlife. The Avon Gorge is one of several sites already threatened with colonisation by Holm Oak.

The species' prodigious capacity for re-growing from cut stumps, which makes it ideal for hedging, poses a serious problem when trying to eradicate it from nature reserves.

However, although Holm Oak is not a native of Britain and is often condemned, many wildlife specialists recognise that it provides an important link in the food chain for many animals, as well as a place

The key to the Holm Oak challenge, both in towns and in the natural environment, is good management.

The Greeks and Romans held this mighty tree in high regard. So could we. If 'global warming' arrives, we might be very glad of its cooling shade!

Written and Photographed by Angela Slotte



Architectural neighbourhood asset or garden nightmare?



Twenty five years ago, this Holm Oak hedge in Greville and Shirley Beale's garden on Dial Hill Road was an overbearing row of trees. Since reducing the growth to 4-foot stumps (and feeding the branches to elephants and giraffes at Bristol Zoo), the resulting hedge has been trimmed once a year



This carnival float is waiting for the carnival procession to start and is standing roughly where Clevedon Garages, Tickenham Rd are situated today.

It is the float for T.C.Binding Carriers of Clevedon. It has a nice lot of information on the various boards etc. as part of the display. The large long board says T.C.Binding and Sons Ltd. Carriers Haulage Contractors and Furniture Removers Clevedon Est. 1884 Tele 34.

Another one informs us Luggage collected from or delivered to any part of Bristol, Clifton, Redland, Fishponds, Brislington. The other boards are on an angle and cannot be read.

Below the long board is a model of a horse drawn pantechnicon. On its side it has T.C.Binding and Sons Ltd. 40 Kenn Road Clevedon and on the end, Binding Kenn Road Clevedon. In front of the model there is also a small wagon made

from Meccano with the words Clevedon Bristol on its side. Note that the basket on the wagon is for The Clevedon & Portishead Laundry as is the box beside it.

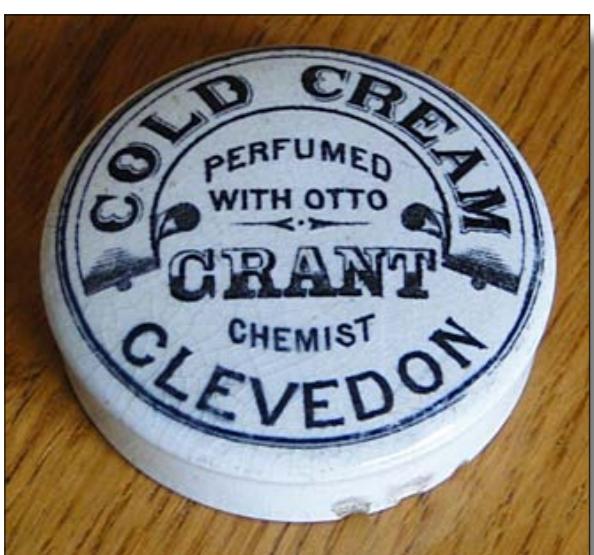
It is difficult to date this card but I believe it is around the 1910s and is an Edwin Hazell photo [see 'What's in a Name' on page 9].

Dave Long

COLLECTOR'S LOT

During the late 1800s chemists sold tooth powder, cold cream, ointments, salves and even bear's grease in ceramic pots with under-glazed transfer printed lids.

Cherists around the country would have pot lids produced with their names



and sometimes their address and town printed on them. Thomas Grant appears to be the only Clevedon chemist to have had his own lids printed.

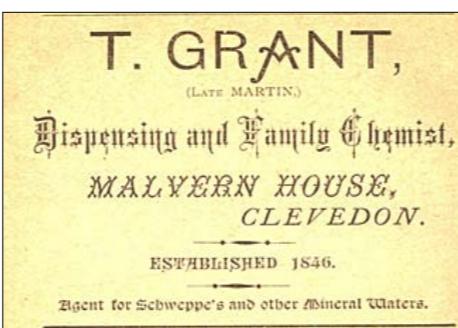
He had two sizes produced with the same design, the larger size having a decorative pattern around the edge. As far as I know only three of the small lids have survived: one found on a tip in Bath and two dug at the Clevedon tip, one of which was found in four pieces and has since been restored.

There is only one, to date, of the larger sized found, and this was also dug at Clevedon. Under-glazed transfer printed lids stopped in the early 1900s when paper labels became a cheaper option.

Thomas Grant was in business at Malvern house, 16 Hill Road circa 1883-1899. Before him was a Mr. Martin, a self owned chemist. From 1903 to 1931 it was Henry James Shepherd.

The last people to run a chemists from this address were Boots. The property is now occupied by the Junior Poon Chinese Restaurant and Wine Bar.

Dave Long



With the sad demise of the *Clevedon Mercury*, Rob thought it would be interesting to publish accounts of one of its former editors, William Frederick Sercombe, who was a journalist on the paper prior to enlisting at the start of the First World War. At that time his father was the editor. William wrote many letters home and his father published a number of them. In our next newsletter we will publish a copy of his letter relating to the terrible carnage that was the First Day of the Battle of the Somme. This time we see his medal group and the report that appeared in the edition of the *Clevedon Mercury* dated 15 June 1918

King's Birthday Honour for Clevedonian

We note in the Western Daily Press of Saturday last that the King has been pleased, on the occasion of his Majesty's birthday, to give orders for the following award, for valuable services rendered in connection with military operations in Italy.

Meritorious Service Medal S/Sgt W F Sercombe

This is the second honour conferred upon Sergeant Sercombe during the war, he having been Mentioned in Despatches in the New Year's Honours List 1917. From a patriotic sense of duty to his King and Country, with two other Clevedonian boys, one of whom has unfortunately been killed in action and the other is home from Italy for the purpose of taking a commission, he joined the army voluntarily in September 1914, following the outbreak of war the previous month, he enlisted in the 6th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment (the Old Brags), in which he soon rose to the rank of Corporal. He proceeded



1914/15 Star

British War
Medal

Victory Medal
with MID emblem

Meritorious
Service Medal

NOTICE BOARD



Important Notice

An Extraordinary General Meeting will be held before the main meeting on Thursday, 13 September with the sole purpose of approving the Society's accounts for the year ending on 31 December 2011.



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/www.clevedon-civic-society.org.uk/)



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MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY

by Bryan Osborne



ARTIST'S ATTIC

by John Tranter



*Clevedon Court
painted on a reclaimed
wood panel*