

### *The start of the intensive shop development*

A peek at the early census reports for Clevedon throws up a 'travelling' tea dealer. He is listed in the 1861 census as John Walker - lodger - Tea Dealer, whose place of birth was Clerkenwell. He was lodging with Henry Catford a watchmaker living at number 5 Station Road.

At that time Station Road was that part of the Triangle from Lloyds Bank down to the house, named Brookvale House, now gone, where the present Conservative club now stands. On the righthand side stood only two properties, Rose Cottage, the home of Miss Macey, now the site of the Post Office and Bank and the station building itself. Southview Terrace was not built by Thomas Hartree until 1870 and Ken Road started with Kensington Terrace. The Board of Health minutes of December 1868 mention that Plans of the new buildings for Mr John Walker were laid before the Board but not being in accordance with the Bye Laws were returned for amendment.



Mr Walker a man of enterprise started the row of shops that ran from the present Triangle Club along to the bottom of Marson Road. In the 1871 census he is listed as a Draper and Grocer in Amphill House, with a son Ernest

who was born in Clevedon and a wife Susanna who came from North Cromley. Next door to him was Mr Edwards in Berkely House, and a little further along was a Mr Broad, Chemist. However, mention in the Local Board of Health minutes suggest that Mr Walker had expanded too quickly and run out of money.

6th October 1886

Several letters were read to the Board in respect of a distress warrant which had been levied by the collector on the goods of John Walker for rates, alleging that such goods were the property of Mrs Walker and requesting their return. It was decided that there was not sufficient proof that the goods belonged to Mrs Walker and the collector was directed to sell the goods if the rate was not paid within 14 days.

5th January 1887

The collector reported that John Walker had not paid his rate arrears. He was directed to summon him at the next petty sessions if not paid before.

In the 1890 directory we find Mr H E Jones and family resident in Amphill House



## **Chairman's Report**

The summer break is now with us, or is it! Once again, as I write this report, it is raining for about the 9<sup>th</sup> day in succession!

Although we do not have meetings during the summer months, many of the members remain busy continuing with various on-going projects. Geoff Hale is videoing as many events in the town as possible. The original idea of a Society Video has now evolved into a 'Double Album', we hope to have on sale in the spring of next year as part of our 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations.

The book to mark those celebrations has now been proofed; many thanks go to Frances Hardcastle and Jane Lilly. We hope to launch it in late September of this year, it will be our first hardback volume, with 280 pages and priced at £14.95 it will make a wonderful Christmas present. I hope you will all buy multiple copies and send them worldwide!

The Environment Group have produced a very attractive free leaflet entitled 'Discover Clevedon's Victorian Parks', pick one up and enjoy the two short walks that it describes. It will be available to the general public both local and visitors alike and will give the Society some welcome publicity.

On the subject of walks, I seem to have gained a reputation for not walking, and I really do not know how that has come to be!! However, Norma & I did enjoy the mid-summer walk arranged by the Footpaths Group although it was mentioned that I probably only managed the 3 miles or so because of the food and drink that was kindly laid on by Wendy & Geoff Moore after our exertions!

Finally, just a quick thought to the programme organiser, Hazel Pedder, our Newsletter Editor, Derek Lilly and to Bryan Osborne of the Planning Group whose work continues during the summer break. Bryan and his wife Joan have both recently celebrated a special birthday, greetings from us all to you both.

Rob Campbell

## **Could it happen over here?**

An elderly Floridian called 911 on her cell phone in a complete panic, to report that her car had been broken into. She was hysterical as she explained her situation to the police dispatcher: 'They've stolen the stereo, the steering wheel, the brake pedal and even the accelerator!' she cried.

The dispatcher said, "Stay calm. An officer is on the way, he will be there very soon"

A few minutes later, the officer radiod in "Disregard." he said. 'She got in the back-seat by mistake.'



## **Conservation & Planning Group Report**

The number of Planning Applications being made is greatly reduced compared with this time last year and we are not having to consider any major developments, no doubt due to the recession.

There are still a number of house extensions being planned, where residents either do not wish to go to the expense of moving to a larger property, or the difficulty of obtaining a mortgage? With the recent relaxation of the regulations concerning rear extensions to residential properties, formal applications for these will not be required.

The Royal Pier Hotel is once again in limbo as the Receiver did not accept any of the bids made for the site. The Town Council requested that North Somerset should consider seeking the de-listing of the property to aid its sale, but they declined to do this. This we feel was a wise decision.

The current planning approval for the flats development on the site runs out in September so we shall wait to see what happens then?

We notice that the Regent Hotel in Hill Road has been boarded up, indicating that there are no plans by the brewery to develop the site in the near future. This is such a blot on the otherwise attractive and thriving shopping road.

For those of you who did not attend the AGM on 14th May, the presentation of Certificates for the Environment Awards for 2008 were made to representatives of:

Clevedon Community School - for their New Science Block

And

Luna, 73 Hill Road - for the sensitive re-development incorporating the old stables.

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the next General meeting on 10th September to start the Winter season of talks.

Bryan Osborne, Group Chairman

## **History Group Report**

In recent months we have enjoyed some very interesting talks. In May, Pat Hase, one of our regulars, gave us a fascinating insight into the life and works of Edwin Long RA who was possibly related to her. In June, a new comer to the Society Peter Skrine gave a talk on the poet and writer T E Brown who although born in the Isle of Man had a great love of Clevedon. I am including one of his poems in this report as I have often read and enjoyed its gentle words.



*In Norton wood the sun was bright,  
In Norton wood the air was light,  
And meek anemonies,  
Kissed by the April breeze,  
Were trembling left and right.  
Ah, vigorous year !  
Ah, primrose dear  
With smile so arch !  
Ah, budding larch !  
Ah, hyacinth so blue,  
We also must make free with you !  
Where are those cowslips hiding ?  
But we should not be chiding  
The ground is covered every inch  
What sayest, master finch ?*

Another regular to the Group, John Penny talked about the RAF in the West Country during World War 2 for the July meeting, sadly I had to miss the talk as we had German guests arriving, this time on a friendly mission. We all did manage to make the now traditional summer supper, so that's another reputation I shall have to live with!!

Rob Campbell Group Chairman

## **Environment Group Report**

Since the last report Mike Graham has had to resign as Chairman due to other commitments.

We would like to thank him for all his hard work as Chairman, especially with the rebuilding of The Lookout on Poets Walk, and wish him well in his new ventures.

I have been asked to be Chairman for the remainder of the year and look forward to an active year in advance of the Society's 40th Anniversary next year.

With this in mind we have prepared a report on the sea front area from the Pier to Poets Walk identifying the problems and opportunities as we see them.

This report was presented to North Somerset Council last month and we await their response to our suggestions for improving the area.

One location identified as needing improvement is the seating and sensory garden area at the front of Pier Copse overlooking the Pier.

We hope to draw up a scheme for this location and implement it as the Group's contribution to our 40th Anniversary.

## Clevedon Civic Society Summer 2009



We have also produced a new leaflet highlighting two walks through the Victorian Parks in the Beach Conservation area. A trial run of 200 leaflets were printed and are available at the Pier, the Heritage Centre and various shops and cafes.

I am indebted to John Tranter of the Planning and Conservation Group for his help with the leaflet and to Viper Communications who prepared the graphics. John also helped with the report on the sea front area.

We have also formed a monthly working party and so far have cleaned all the drinking fountains the Society restored some years ago, painted the railings on Marine Parade and also weeded and painted the area around the circular seat and The Lookout on Poets Walk.

Volunteers are welcome to join us on a Monday morning and if you are interested in helping please contact me ( 871633). I am grateful to those members of the group who have been able to help maintain and improve Clevedon's heritage by joining the working party - and we finish with a cup of coffee too!

Bob Hardcastle Chairman Environment Group

### **Footpaths Group Report**

The group is at present in the midst of its summer programme. We have already walked on Brean Down and in the Rickford and Burrington area. These two walks were both well attended, with good weather and interesting routes.

In August we are following walk 7 in 'Ten Clevedon Walks' and also taking a path from Yatton to Cleeve which includes the Iron Mines in King's Wood.

In September we are hoping to walk the Coast path from Clevedon to Portishead. After rewarding ourselves with a Pub lunch we shall make the return journey by bus. The Clifton Suspension Bridge and environs is the destination for our final walk of the summer.

At the beginning of September we shall be planning our walks for the autumn and also discussing any areas within Clevedon which we think require some attention by the North Somerset Council. We aim to make contact from time to time as we feel this is important with regard to keeping the town an attractive place to live.

All walks information is regularly advertised in the local press and can also be found on the Civic Society website.

Jean Hannaford

Group Chairman.

**Talk to Civic Society, Thursday 12 March 2009**  
**Mr James Bond 'The Knights Templar'**

Mr Bond commenced with an apology – he was sorry if we were expecting Pierce Brosnan or Daniel Craig to appear, but he assured us he was indeed James Bond and although he wasn't 007 he was in fact a landscape archaeologist and a part-time university lecturer.

The Knights Templars had, according to Mr Bond, received a bad press over the years, but he liked to look upon them as knights who were licensed to kill!

In a lecture packed with illustrations and intriguing facts, we were taken right back to the start of the Knights Templar – 1099 – and the first crusade to the Holy Land, which resulted in a blood-bath the Moslems never forgot. The Knights' first headquarters in Jerusalem was the Al Aqsa Mosque believed to be built on the ruins of King Solomon's Temple, hence the name of the new movement. Their original task was to defend the route from the coastal town of Jaffa to the gates of the Holy City and to protect the Christian pilgrims from the frequent bandit attacks.

As the order expanded so it diversified into land ownership, farming and the building of communities. Using photographs and maps, Mr Bond spent some time pointing out the many Templar villages and towns spread throughout England, many containing the word 'temple' in their title, such as Temple Combe and Temple Cressy. A distinctive feature of these communities was their churches with a characteristic round tower. Famous amongst these is Temple Church in London, near to today's legal centres of the Inner and Middle Temple. We were also told about the Temple Church in Bristol; although now a ruin, there is still evidence of the original round tower in its foundations.

The end came for the Knights Templars in 1307 when, at the instigation of King Philip IV of France, scores of Templars were arrested by the Inquisition. They were charged with numerous heresies and tortured to extract false confessions, and although they later retracted these confessions they were still executed for blasphemy.

James Bond ended by refuting many of the erroneous legends that now surround the Knights, including the claim that they are the guardians of the Holy Grail and that the order formed the basis of the modern day Masonic Movement.

Geoff Hale



***The Royal British Legion Clevedon Branch***  
Chairman: John Hulse Tel. 878448

A warm welcome awaits anyone who would like to attend our meetings, to help in anyway, or just to meet up with old friends & comrades. We meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month, 7.30pm at the Community Centre. The RBL is now open to all, you do not need to have served.

## Talk to Civic Society, Thursday 9 April 2009

### Mr Gary Gowans 'Stately Homes of Roman Britain'

During this illustrated talk we were taken on a fascinating tour of the Roman villas in the south of England. We were told that the villa represented the economic engine room of the local community, the owners being men of status and wealth.

Our tour started in Bradford on Avon at a villa which was built on the profits of the wool trade and like many other villas of the period contained a mosaic floor. Gary Gowans described to us how this flooring was painstakingly assembled from tiny ceramic tiles called tesserae; on this occasion the resulting design featured drinking vessels and dolphins, both symbols of the wealth of the owner.

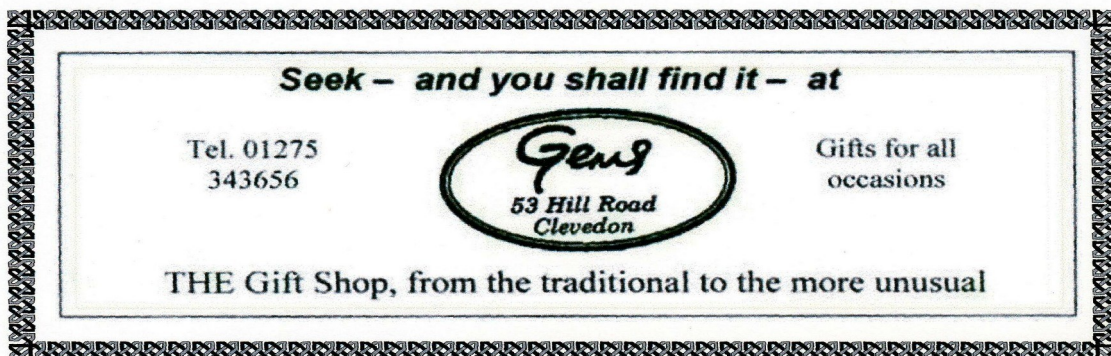
I must confess to having a personal interest in our next port of call on this journey around Roman Britain as my father was very much involved in the Roman Palace at Fishbourne in West Sussex. Mr Gowans told us that building started in 78AD and that it was the largest villa in Britain, covering some 10 acres in total. He told us how the villa was built for a man called Togidubnus and, using many slides as illustrations, he described the building in great detail, including the part of the site that is now buried under modern houses and a main road.

The mosaic floor depicting Cupid riding on a Dolphin was featured and Gary told us that it was made from no less than 360,000 tesserae. As Fishbourne also contained a hypocaust heating system, we were given a quick guide to this amazing Roman invention that was a feature of so many of these buildings, as were the baths in which the Romans were said to bathe every day.

Bignor, also in West Sussex, came next; this building was not only a Roman dwelling place but a working farm. It also featured some first class mosaic flooring including a picture of Ganymede being carried off by an Eagle because, according to Mr Gowans, he took a fancy to Venus.

After the interval, Mr Gowans went into more detail about the luxurious day to day life of the occupants of these villas whom he described as the Richard Bransons of Roman Britain! With the help of many photographs of models, he gave us an entertaining tour of a Roman villa, walking us through the lounge, the bedroom, the kitchen and, yes, the toilet – just like our modern homes in fact.

Geoff Hale



## Talk to Civic Society, Thursday 14 May 2009

### Mr Derek Lilly 'A Small Game Safari'

As the title suggests, this was no 'Big Game Safari'. In fact the 'Game' our friend and fellow member, Derek Lilly, had been stalking was so small that most of us would be inclined to swat it if it landed near us! Flies, of many species – butter, crane, dragon, hover and horse – were his objective and his mission was to obtain some of the clearest photographic images I think I have ever seen of such small subjects.

Derek's hunting grounds were the 'droves' around Nailsea and Claverham and, as he put it, he felt a sense of achievement if he could successfully sneak up on a fly and get his picture before the fly saw him.

Some of Derek's information was clearly gathered from personal experience like the fact that the male Horse Fly doesn't bite – but the female does. He showed us a photograph of a Deer Fly, '...a nasty bit of work,' was how he described it, 'as it doesn't just take blood but takes a huge bite of flesh as well.' He also suggested that the Downlooker Fly, which always lands facing down towards the ground, probably originated in Australia.

Tiny wild flowers were also the focal point of Derek's camera lens, and on several occasions he suggested that if these tiny blooms, such as the Cotoneaster measuring no more than 5 mm across, were to be the size of a rose they would take pride of place at any horticultural show. Being a Somersetshire man, Derek knew the local names for many of these plants: the Great Hairy Willow Herb, for instance, was known locally as Codlins and Cream.

At intervals during the talk Derek attempted to explain to the uninitiated just how he was able to take such detailed close-up pictures of these tiny creatures. It was all to do with 'dioptries', it appears.

Unfortunately Derek had to admit that a few of his subjects had got the better of him over the years, like the Frog Hopper. Because this bug – the one that produces 'cuckoo spit' – landed on his camera bag as he was walking back to his car, he was unable to take a photograph of it, as his camera was in the bag!

Oh well, Derek, better luck next time.

Geoff Hale

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### *Random Rovings*

Harry Belafonte used to sing a song that went "Where have all the flowers gone?" My thoughts at this time are "Where have all the characters gone?" We used to have some marvellous folk around and about in Clevedon and the surrounding area.



“Snailer” Staples of Kenn who always entered the Clevedon Carnival driving his old horse brake, decorated with rabbits and other stuff that he auctioned off in the Herbert Gardens at the conclusion of the parade. Ben Knight the taxi driver with his perfect rendering of a cuckoo that used to take folk in the Triangle by surprise and have them looking around for that elusive bird.

A habituee of the Waggon and Horses, who shall be nameless, who, when one of the men at the bar was talking about needing a chicken for the week-end told him, “I can get you one cheap” He came back a little later with a bird plucked and cleaned. It was taken home by the other drinker only for him to find that he was missing a hen from his own chicken run.

This vein of thought was started by mention of John Walker the tea dealer and his family on the front page of this issue. Ernest his son became a jeweller and clock repairer. A very slightly built man with a gnomish sort of face. He used to wear a shiny black raincoat and always wore a ‘pork-pie’ style trilby hat. Riding a bicycle he used to travel out as far as Barley Wood at Wrington as he was the only person who was judged fit to regulate the clocks there. Should it be raining, he would ride his bike whilst at the same time holding up a large black umbrella. Even after he had retired he still cycled out to Wrington once a month to see to the clocks at the Wills’ family residence. Alas the conformity of today’s Clevedon doesn’t permit any characters like, that more’s the pity

*And now for something completely different  
as they used to say on Monty Pythons Flying Circus*



In this square how many words of six letters and over can you find. Remember, the letter V must be included in all words, and each letter can be used only once.

The nine letter word, suggests the motto on the Clevedon Coat of Arms. There are also some eight letter words, one of which when taken with the nine letter word implies splitting attention. All of the words can be found in the The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1998 edition. A couple of them are hyphenated.

Have a go and see how many you can find. You will see the ones suggested by the dictionary further on in the newsletter pages. Can you find any we have missed?

Unlike the newspaper puzzles, we have allowed a proper name to slip into the list, mainly because it shows up in the dictionary. We have made the six letter stipulation because we just didn’t have the time to wade through the numbers that showed up on the four letter words they normally set in the papers. (It makes it a bit harder too doesn’t it?)



## I was surprised

In the early spring, I was very surprised to find a mass of both bees and hoverflies circulating around my cotoneaster bush. There was it is true, plenty of buds showing; but there were no open flowers. Then I noticed that they were probing into the partially open buds. This early fertilization meant that instead of the normal small white flowers showing they turned off into premature berry forms.

I would imagine that at times there were as many as 40 or 50 flies and bees busy at work. "Well" I thought to myself "no shortage of bumbles this year." However, to my astonishment, as the year went by, there were very few around the flower sprays on the Buddleia - although I did see a couple of Painted Lady butterflies there for a very short visit.

So; where have all the bumblebees gone? Of course, many bumblebees build nests underground so it is quite likely that some could have been destroyed by the heavy rains we have had at times. Should there also be a shortage of wasps this autumn I shall take it that this was the cause.

## Great oaks from little acorns grow

When the Civic Society was formed in 1970 one of the first branch groups was the Local History Group. A small group, the numbers attending the monthly get-togethers rarely exceeding 10, or at the most 12 folk. Eventually talk began about getting a book published. The biggest difficulty was financing the publication.

The society at that time had no reserves of cash, the yearly subscriptions being the only source. However by the late 70s enough essays had been gathered and under the editorship of George Case, the History Group Chairman at that time, funds were gathered and the first batch of "Clevedon from the Village to the Town" was printed by Marion Rosson who ran Special Office Services in the basement of Weavers House Gardens Road.

To say that the book was a success would be a gross understatement. Sales rocketed and it has been in print ever since, selling steadily. By the time the group had assembled enough information for the next one, 7 years had passed. The year 1988 saw "The Annals of Clevedon" printed by Noel Hetherington of the Woodspring Resource Centre, Locking, who had been handling the reprints of the first book for the group. In 1993 the two constant sellers were joined by "Clevedon Past" and by this time steady sales had contributed the profits to the coffers of the Civic Society, enabling the society to fund several improvement schemes. We were very lucky for the

## Clevedon Civic Society Summer 2009

first three books to have the aid of Mike Horsfield a well-known Clevedon artist who drew the chapter headings and designed the front covers.



In 1998, “Clevedon’s Social and Industrial Heritage” – nicknamed ‘The Red Book’ came out, edited by Roy Girling. This book with the references to the Penicillin production at the Royal Navy medical branch laboratories at Eastington in Elton Road, drew attention outside of the town and there was a great deal of interest raised both by historians from other places and also from people that had worked there. It was the eventual cause of the plaque being placed on the gatepost of the building commemorating the fact.

With the illness and death of George Case, Roy Girling took over as chairman of the History Group, followed shortly after by Rob Campbell who set about editing “Clevedon, Clubs Cakes and Quarries”, that was published in the year 2002. Rob followed this by his own book “Clevedon’s Own” in 2004, an account of Clevedon’s forces in the Great War 1914 -1918. The royalties of this book he donated later to the society.

Then in 2006 “Clevedon at War 1939 -1945” comprising of happenings and events that occurred during that period including in it, a roll of honour of Clevedon’s casualties and an inserted folder of those that served during the war.

Now for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Civic Society a hardback book that will be on sale nationally as well as locally is being produced. “From Medieval Manor to Victorian Resort” will contain the first publication of the translation from the original Latin, of the rolls for which the Civic Society donated money to help. Looking back through the years, I wonder just how much these books will have raised and how much the townsfolk have benefited from the various works they have funded.

It is with great sadness that I have to report the recent passing of Muriel Kneale, aged 95, the lovely lady in the picture above, whose strength of character we all came to admire.

## Window Shopping

Filling an odd moment early one morning, I glanced into the window at Seeleys’ shop on Hill Road I was both surprised and pleased when I saw that they had a new book in the window covering the Stephens’ car. From some of the flysheets that were there the book author must have had access to some pictures that were previously unpublished and unseen – at least to your editor – and there were ample illustrations of engine types and one of Mr Stephens and his family. I must eke out my housekeeping budget and try my best to purchase one.

Mr Stephens although not a Clevedonian by birth, was surely one in spirit. He and Sir Edmund Elton between them had many patents granted them, from a system of better braking to railway improvements. I am certain that the book will have something about that and maybe other surprises.

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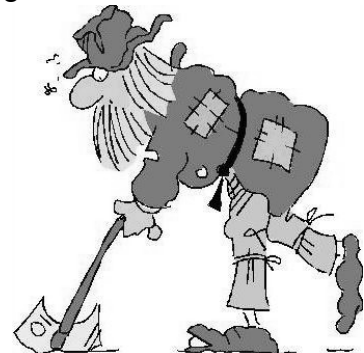
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## Old Crotchety Means Again

Yes, for once not a whinge, but a compliment, from the words of this seemingly perpetual grumbler. How good to see the changes made in Queens Square by the hard working ladies of the group formed to smarten the appearance of the place. Almost every day whilst shopping I have observed them with their extending pincers popping drink cans and papers thrown down by the public into litter bags.

It seems a shame that despite their hard work the next day shows their work to have been in vain and all to do over and over again. Nevertheless girls, this old codger does recognise the work that you are doing and also likes the flower tubs and the show they make to help brighten up the place.

It just seems to be a shame that the owners of the site cannot or will not do their part to help. In this I am not writing of the part that belongs to North Somerset Council, I am talking about the section behind the brass strip.



## Word Puzzle answers.

Here are the sixteen words that were suggested by the Oxford Dictionary. How many did you get?

ALEVIN CALVIN CALVING CAVE-IN CAVING CLEAVING GLAIVE LEAVING  
LIVE-IN LIVING VALINE VEILING VENIAL VICINAGE VICINAL VIGILANCE

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