

The Clevedonian

Summer 2010

Anniversary
40 | Clevedon
Civic
Society

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I admit my heart sank a bit when the date of the 40th anniversary dinner was changed to 9th July, the night before I was due to go on holiday, leaving at 6am. On the other hand I always enjoy CCS events and I'm perfectly capable of whizzing up and down the motorway in one day; done it plenty of times before. This time the sun was shining, the road was clear and when I arrived Clevedon was looking even more beautiful than usual. This reminded me powerfully of what the Civic Society does for Clevedon and what the celebration was all about. Dinner, with its happy combination of good friends and good food, was excellent but what made the evening even more memorable was the magic lantern show which followed.

With very Victorian flourishes on the piano and some beautifully sung atmospheric parlour songs, the lanternist Keith Utteridge, his wife Jennifer, and the musicians transported us back to the pre-television age. The show started soberly enough with charming

views of old Clevedon and pictures of life in Somerset a hundred years ago. Children at play or going to school were interspersed with hay-making, apple picking and cider making. But then we moved on to a lurid moral tale. Oh, the horrors of the demon drink and the child plucking bravely at the coat-tails of her drunken father. We all sang along to a temperance song, just to make the point more clearly. Not that I noticed anyone pouring their drink down the sink but perhaps I was unobservant. Audience participation continued with the scrunching of plastic bags, which produced a very convincing sound of crackling flames as a gorgeous hunk of fireman rescued a young lady from a burning building with predictable results. The scene dramatically changed to a church and the wedding march. Then we were given a friendly warning: never snore with your mouth open lest you swallow a rat. The technology of the day required much skill from the lanternist in order to manipulate the slides in such a way as to produce realistically moving images. Judging by the rat alone this is clearly a skill which is still alive and well but it was also demonstrated in many of the other examples we saw. We ended the evening with a rainbow of colours.

I intended to leave at 10pm but actually it was 11pm before I could drag myself away and there was a minor glitch on the motorway when I suddenly saw a sign saying "Chepstow" instead of "London", which entailed a bit of back-tracking. But it was all worth it. At the end of its first 40 years the Civic Society is clearly in terrific form and well able to tackle its second 40. Personally, I am looking forward to the 50th anniversary dinner!

Julia Elton

CHAIRMAN'S PIECE

Report by Rob Campbell



As I'm writing this I'm looking back on the first half of our anniversary year and what a period it's been! Geoff Hale started the ball rolling with his wonderful DVD which is selling worldwide and becoming a favourite gift for all those with a Clevedon connection. It's a great achievement and something that he and the Society as a whole can feel proud of.

The Environment Group scheme to refurbish and enhance the Pier Copse Viewpoint has been a model of co-operation. Working closely with North Somerset Council, the Town Council and contractors Wyevale, they came up with a scheme that is both simple but very beautiful at the same time. Also hopefully being rather vandal proof! A cautionary warning: one of the benches is so comfortable that if you are not careful it's very easy to close one's eyes and drop off. I caught the sun there the

other day!! Haven't we had a lovely June and early July? With features such as the Viewpoint, why go abroad?!

The Anniversary Dinner was well attended and I felt that those present enjoyed the evening. The Magic Lantern Show was both fascinating and thought provoking at the same time. Keith Uttridge and his team were so professional that on occasion they brought a tear to the eye. Thanks go to all who were there for making it such a memorable affair.

Finally, I'm sure you will have realised by the change to the format that we have a new Newsletter Editor in Geoff Hale. Derek Lilly has decided to stand down after loyal service for half of the Society's life. Yes, ladies &

gentlemen, Derek has been the Editor for 20 years. In that time Derek has adapted the newsletter and of late co-ordinated and embodied the recent changes. Derek, all I can say on behalf of us all is a big 'Thank You' and long may you continue to contribute in your own indomitable way.

Civic Society Meetings

14 October - GINA MERRETT SMITH

'Marianne North - The Remarkable Victorian Floral Artist'

11 November - D. PACKHAM

'Bristol Zoo'

9 December - JEAN ROUTLEY

'Musical Memories' and Christmas Party

All are welcome, visitors £3

Civic Society Executive Members

- Chairman - Rob Campbell
- Vice Chairman - Hugh Stebbing
- Secretary - Wendy Moore
- Treasurer - Iris Wheatley
- Membership - John & Helen Bussell
- Local Government Representative - Carole Wring
- History Group - Rob Campbell
- Environment Group - Bob Hardcastle
- Conservation & Planning Group - Bryan Osborne
- Footpaths Group - Jean Hannaford
- Publicity/Newsletter - Geoff Hale
- Newsletter Distribution - Dave Long
- Web Master - Mike Wheatley

Next meetings:

Tuesdays 21 September & 16 November 2010

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.



Extracts from the report to the AGM on 4th May 1971

During the year the Committee made representation to the Somerset County and Area Planning Officers, to the Road Construction Unit responsible for the motorway and the Clevedon U.D.C. on matters concerning planning etc, and assuring the Clevedon U.D.C. of co-operation if and when plans were made to rebuild the pier.

A Working Party was set up under the chairmanship of Mr. John Chase to organise an Exhibition at St John's Hall, June 26th - July 3rd, 1971. (The Chairman of Clevedon U.D.C. opened the Exhibition).

Many thousands of sheets of duplicating have been produced at practically no charge. Individuals and business houses have been most generous in their cooperation but it is unreasonable to expect this to continue.

There is a very good need for a room or office in the Town which could be used as a home and office for the Civic Society and this, with a duplicator, would make the load of the officers very much lighter. Will members please accept this as an urgent appeal?

Anniversary 40 | Clevedon Civic Society

The Clevedon Civic Society was formed in May 1970 to work with the Council to preserve the Town's character. We have to thank our first chairman, Dr H E Bracy, a leading economist at Bristol University, for guiding the Society in its early days. On his death a commemorative bench seat was set on the green adjacent to the Catholic Church with a view over the pier.

Five committees, later to be named groups, were formed to assist the Executive, namely Conservation & Planning, History, Footpaths, Education and Trees. The last two have disappeared along the way, replaced by Environment.

The Society was formed at a time of political and physical change in the Town where there had been little development since the war. The population was then about 14,000 and the authority responsible for our needs was the Clevedon Urban District Council.

A plan for the development of the Town was published by Somerset County Council in 1971 and entitled 'Clevedon, a Town for 22,000 People.' Following the drainage of the land

THE SOCIETY 40 YEARS ON

Report by Bryan Osborne

north of the Land Yeo this seemed an excellent time to influence development and preserve Victorian Clevedon. We saw the demise of the CUDC a year later in 1972 with the creation of the new County of Avon and Woodspring District Council and that brought about a new set of problems dealing with the unknown. (A further change occurred in 1996 when the North Somerset Unitary Authority was created.)

The Society's aims are still the same as they were then - "To Preserve the Best and Improve the Rest" - and whilst it has seemed that we were not always at one with the Local Authority of the time, overall the Society has achieved many successes but some regrettable failures. A history of the society in its early days can be found in our 1988 booklet "The Annals of Clevedon".

Since then the four groups have held regular meetings. The Conservation and Planning Group established the annual Environment Award in 1989, on the wish list of the first Executive, and up to the year 2000 has presented 24 Awards and Highly Commended Certificates to developers and owners of projects the judges considered enhanced the

environment. The Group continues with its main function of viewing and commenting, where necessary, on hundreds of planning applications each year.

The Environment Group continues to look at the Clevedon environs and works with the Council to improve the Town and has been instrumental in the restoration of many landmarks that have fallen into disrepair, from the Poets' Walk lookouts, the Green Beach Victorian Shelter and lately the Pier Copse Sensory Garden.

The History Group flourishes with increasing numbers at the meetings, arranging outings and the publication of books, which provides major funding for the Society. Within the Group are members with dedicated interests such as researching family trees to collections of objects.

The Footpaths Group continues to organise invigorating walks throughout the year both in Clevedon and the surrounding areas.

Long may the Society continue to work for the community and ...

"To Preserve the Best and Improve the Rest"

Editor's Farewell by Derek Lilly



In the 20 years that have gone by we have progressed from a four page A4 duplication issue, using stencils cut on my old dot matrix printer. The late Mary Thomas for many years toiled at working the duplicator until it was almost worn out. We then got the newsletter produced by one of the churches and benefited from the latest technology and could have pictures as good as those printed in newspapers in our pages.

When I retired in 1989 nine months before my 65th birthday I thought that I would have plenty of time to do all the little things that I had put on one side. As well as that in 1980 I found myself taking on the job of editing the Civic Society Newsletter.

Now under the stimulus of our chairman Rob Campbell we have got a colour printed centre folded and - dare I say it - a really professional looking newsletter that can hold its

Thanks for the vote of confidence Derek, I will do my best. It's good to know that 'Old Crotchety' will still be with us in every edition - where would we be without him? Geoff Hale

TIME GOES BY

own with any produced by a civic society.

However as I said in the heading to this article - 'Time goes by' - and so at 86 I hand over the editor's job to Geoff Hale. I have enjoyed every moment of the time but now I not only *am old* but at times I am beginning to *feel old* as well.

Geoff worked for many years as a B.B.C. Picture Editor and I know that he will bring an expert touch to the job and I welcome the chance to retire from it knowing that it will go to good hands.



Local History Group Report by Rob Campbell

As the first half of our Anniversary comes to a close it's time to look back at the meetings that we have all enjoyed so much. The year started with a very atmospheric presentation by Stuart Peachey and his assistant Gilly, in period costume. This proved to be so popular that a trip was arranged by Jane Lilly to visit Bullace Hill Farm. Thanks Jane for organising such a fascinating day.

Further talks by Roger Angerson, Penny Deverill, Bob Porton and Nick Goff, manager of W-s-M Museum,

were all enjoyed by an ever growing audience. The highlight for me was Grev Beale's talk to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Bristol Aeroplane Company; it's always especially rewarding to listen to a Society member. As ever John Penny enthralled the group with his Old Films of Bristol and John is to be congratulated on all his hard work to digitalise the Bristol Records Office's collection of films, many of which are available for sale.

As always the summer months are the time the future year's programme is organised. Hazel Pedder & I work closely together to ensure that no double ups occur.



Next History Group meetings

16 September - ROB CAMPBELL
'Brave Rescues in North Somerset'
21 October - STEPHEN WILLIAMS MP
'Bristol's Parliamentarians'
18 November - PAT HASE
'WSM Worthies' and Christmas nibbles



Footpaths Group Report by Jean Hannaford

So far this year the Group has followed a wide variety of routes which were planned at regular quarterly meetings.

2010 began with a Sea Front walk taking in the Pier. This was followed by a route which took in the majority of the Churches and Chapels found in the town. Other

trails included a circular walk at the top end of Clevedon, Court Wood – one of the suggestions taken from *Ten Clevedon Walks* – an historical walk in Nailsea, a circular walk in the Easton-in-Gordano area, and another historical walk in Weston-super-Mare. The Group was also represented by two members who took part in the annual Granny Trek for Children's Hospice South West.

July, August and September will see

the group walking in Clevedon and Portishead, Dolebury Warren and Brent Knoll.

The Clevedon walks are designed, as always, to check that lanes, public footpaths and other walkways remain clear and accessible. Leaders do, however, try to discover little known paths. Our walks can be found on the Society website, the local press and by calling 01275 875878.



Next meetings
6 September & 6 December 2010

GROUP

REPORTS

Environment Group Report by Bob Hardcastle



The Environment Group has been very busy in the last few weeks with the Pier Copse Viewpoint project and their regular monthly working parties.

Slotte from the Environment Group who did so much to ensure the success of the scheme.

Work on the refurbishment of the Viewpoint started at the end of May and was completed in time for the official opening on 9 July to coincide with our 40th Anniversary Dinner. The project is the subject of a separate article in this Newsletter so I will not go into detail other than to say a special thank you to John Tranter and Angela

The Environment Group is now looking at further improvements to Pier Copse including upgrading the toilets, replacement fencing and seats and improved access and signage.

I hope that you will all take the opportunity to have a look at the Viewpoint, if you have not already done so, as I am sure that you will

agree that it has transformed this area. Any suggestions about further improvements to the Copse gratefully received.

The working parties have also been busy tidying up the Peace Memorial Garden at Spray Point, the Lookout and circular seat at Poets' Walk and the Marine Hill drinking fountain, all previous Civic Society schemes. We will now have to add the Viewpoint to our list of areas to care for!

Anyone interested in joining the Group or the working parties please contact me.



Next meetings
15 September & 17 November 2010

Conservation & Planning Group Report by Bryan Osborne



Since my last report in January, the Conservation & Planning Group has continued to meet and despite a reduction in the number of new applications, presumably due to the recession, there have recently been a number of interesting developments, the most important of which is concerning the Royal Pier Hotel.

submitted in September and all being well we could see work starting in the Spring of 2011 - what a joy that would be.

The hotel was withdrawn from the auction and purchased by Mr Nick Warfield of Freemantle Developments. We have met him on two occasions and at the end of July he kindly presented the preliminary designs, with his Architect, showing his proposals for the change of use into fourteen apartments. This is far fewer than the previous scheme and we appreciated the fact that the alterations will be sympathetically carried out, retaining more of the existing listed building. It is planned that the final proposals will be

Work on the design of the new Community Hospital on the old Kwik Save site is progressing well, the site having been purchased and outline planning obtained. We recently attended a consultative meeting of interested parties to view the proposed design and trust our comments were constructive. The facilities being proposed will be of great benefit to Clevedon's residents and we hope that funding will still be available in these austere times for building work to proceed. The detailed planning application should be made in September.

A decision on the application for enlarged community facilities at Christ Church, in place of the existing meeting

rooms, has been deferred for further discussions with English Heritage. They have expressed concerns about the extension towards Highdale Road and the effect this will have on the character and significance of the church. On the basis of the present design the officers have recommended refusal.

It was with sadness when we saw that fire had severely damaged the rear of the old Market Hall in Alexandra Road, designed by Hans Price. Restoration work has yet to start and it appears that it will be some months before the Health Club and Cafe can reopen.

There has been no progress on the development of the apartment blocks at 22 Marine Parade as far as we are aware, the planning officer not having been requested to determine the access requirements, despite a local estate agent offering the apartments for sale.

Please contact me if you have any planning queries of interest to the Society.



Next meetings
28 September, 9 November & 14 December 2010

PIER COPSE VIEWPOINT

Report by Bob Hardcastle

The Civic Society's 40th anniversary celebrations included one special event which marked a new beginning for a sad and neglected part of Clevedon - the Pier Copse Viewpoint.

The seating area in the Copse, which overlooks the Pier and included a former sensory garden, had seen better days. Broken seats, worn out tarmac and tired and dilapidated fences greeted visitors and the whole area was screened by a particularly unattractive high curved wall cutting off those wonderful views.

It was time for the Civic Society's Environment Group to come to the rescue. They had the viewpoint in their sights.

First of all a concept for rebuilding the area was drawn up. All that had to be done next was to raise the finance and convince the owners of the site, North Somerset Council's Parks and Open Spaces Department, of their plans.

Thanks to a financial contribution from Wyevale Grounds Maintenance, North Somerset Council was able to



commission the scheme. Work started in May this year to enable the project to be finished in time for the public opening on July 9 by the chairman of the Clevedon Town Council, Cllr Colin Hall, and Cllr Carl Francis-Pester of North Somerset Council.

In addition to Wyevale and North Somerset Council's funding, Clevedon

Town Council paid for the construction of disabled access to the seating area while the Civic Society paid for the sunflower feature.

What a difference a few weeks make. Now the whole area has been repaired. Smart new stainless steel seats and tables have been installed; the sensory garden has been replanted; the screen



Pictures by Geoff Hale

L to R
Bob Hardcastle
Cllr Carl Francis-Pester
Cllr Colin Hall
Rob Campbell



wall has been lowered; gorgeous granite pavers replace some of the tarmac and the new disabled access has become a welcome facility.

As a visual attraction a four-metre high sunflower feature, which also shows the four points of the compass, watches

proudly over the whole seating area.

Within hours of the work finishing people were using and admiring the new viewpoint area.

So what is next for the Environment Group?

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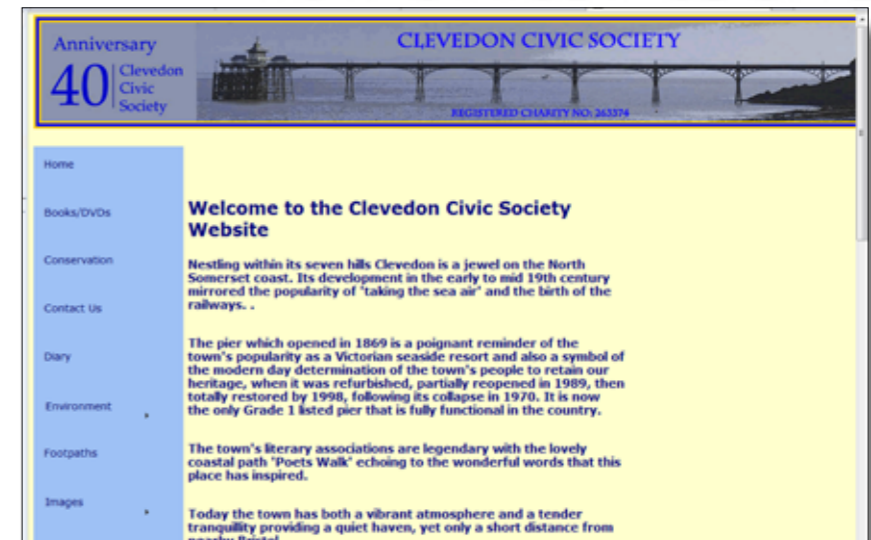
Phase 2 improvements in the Pier Copse are now in their sights. This will include the upgrading of the toilets and possibly other plans. Watch this space (or park) as they say!

NEW-STYLE WEB SITE

The Civic Society web site has received a make-over. Gone are the overlapping text blocks to be seen on some browsers and in its place there is a simple, clean display which includes all the original information in an easy-to-navigate format.

Our Webmaster, Mike Wheatley, explains, 'It is still imperfect and a work-in-progress in a number of respects, but I'll progressively mop up the problems as we go along.'

Mike asks that if you see any howlers please let him know by email and he will correct them.



Contact: webmaster@clevedon-civic-society.org.uk/



Our stall on the Pier
May 2010

**Are you interested in Clevedon?
Why not join the Clevedon Civic Society?**

£12 per year subscription, eight public meetings and ten History Group meetings per year. Automatic membership of the four Society groups. Contact the membership secretaries:
John & Helen Bussell
33 Tennyson Avenue. Clevedon
Phone 01275 875528

40TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

Friday 9 July 2010 at the
Walton Park Hotel

Pictures by Geoff Hale

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BULLACE FARM VISIT



On July 6th thirteen of us enjoyed a fascinating tour around the farm where the Green Valley series had been filmed for Channel 4 some years ago.

The farm near Chepstow is run by Stuart Peachey and his associates as though they were living in the 17th century, with animals of the nearest possible breeds to that century, and fruits and food ditto.

Report by Jane Lilly



Pictures by Geoff Hale



We were able to see spinning, dyeing, cottage life, shepherding, haymaking, pack ponies, cooking, dairy work and the herb and vegetable garden, all in the space of an afternoon and for the princely sum of £5! Everyone had questions to ask about life in those days and the running of the farm.

Jane Lilly hopes to arrange another visit next year, as these open weeks are an annual event – do let her know if you'd like to join in, on 01275 794381. Many thanks to our drivers, who made it all possible!



BRANCH LINE

by Angela Slotte



tree on Salthouse has a broad trunk with a distinctive twist, and, like many of our sea-front trees, leans away from the prevailing winds.

An aerial photo of Salthouse taken in 1966 shows this Ashleaf Maple as a mere sapling, so it must now be at least 45 years old (the average life-span of this species is

around 60 years). It would have been planted for shade, and because it is fast growing and tolerant of harsh conditions including periodic flooding.

The Ashleaf Maple comes from the eastern and central United States, where it is a common shade tree, a source of maple syrup, and grows so vigorously and abundantly in its wild habitat that it is considered to be invasive. It was first introduced to Britain in the seventeenth century. There are now a number of cultivars which have

attractively variegated leaves, and these can be found in parks and gardens in Britain.

Unlike other maples, an individual Ashleaf Maple tree is either male or female. Our Salthouse tree appears to be female but in the absence of a mate we can't expect the patter of tiny winged seeds.



Growing near the donkey stand on Salthouse Fields you'll find a humble, but interesting, tree - a lone Ashleaf Maple, or Box Elder (*Acer negundo*). Having walked past it many times, I only stopped to look at it early last spring when I noticed clusters of greenish-yellow flowers hanging from its bare boughs. I was later able to identify it from its leaves. Unlike most other maples, which have palmate leaves that typically display good autumn colour, the Ashleaf Maple has light green compound leaves, each leaf having 3, 5 or 7 leaflets. Our

MBE FOR LOCAL MAN

Researched by Laurie Eager



In October 2009, Clevedon-born Terry Short received an MBE from H.R.H Prince Charles for his years of public and voluntary service.

Terry was born in 1944. His father was a well known Clevedon Insurance Agent and his mother worked for the Urban District Council.



His early experiences of being rescued from several ships during 24 years service in the Fleet Air Arm, including a period in the Falklands, persuaded him that on returning to civilian life he would become a rescuer himself.

In 1984 he moved up to the Shetland Islands and became a search and rescue air crewman where he carried out a large number of rescues. For the last 21 years he has been based in the Solent covering the southern coast from Hastings to Bournemouth.

Terry reminisces that the scariest moments were during extreme hostile weather conditions with gusting winds.





Posted by Dave Long

The Marine Lake was constructed in the late 1920s largely thanks to the efforts of Councillor F.R.Nutting.

It solved two problems: it gave the public somewhere to swim and go boating at any state of the tide and it also got rid of 'Stinking Corner', an area where flotsam from the tide would collect and remain to rot until the next Spring tide would wash it out ready to start over again.

This photograph was taken in 1931-32. It shows only a three tier diving stage - the spring board, club hut and bandstand came later. All have now disappeared.

MILITARY CHEST

Medal of the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire

Researched by Rob Campbell

The medal was awarded to Constable William John Brooks for his actions on the 19 December 1932 in Bristol.

Born on the 8th June 1901 in Highbridge, Somerset, William Brooks joined the Bristol Police in 1924 and was pensioned in 1954. During his service he was commended 6 times and reprimanded 7 times. He sat the Sergeant's examination on 6 occasions and failed each time. His other medals are the Defence medal and the LSGC medal, which sadly I do not have. He also had the RLSS medallion and bar.

He made front page news in the local press but the following account which appeared in the Bristol Evening World is the most precise.

HEROIC RESCUE BY BRISTOL CONSTABLE

The award was made in recognition of the heroic rescue of an aged man from the top room of a house in Oxford Street, Totterdown, on December 19.

Brooks was walking along St. John's Lane, when he saw smoke and flames raising from the house. He found the upper storey alight, and sent a boy to telephone the brigade.

Brooks heard a woman shout, "Save him: my father is in there," and pulled himself

up by the ledges of the windows until he reached the bedroom where the fire was raging.

He entered the room, which was full of smoke and flames, and groped about for the man. He was nearly overcome and had to go to the window for air.

He returned and found Mr. George Mockridge, aged 72, the occupier unconscious on the floor.



Brooks found a pair of trousers which he wrapped around the man's waist, and then with his belt he lowered him to the ground.

The lower portion of the premises were destroyed by fire while Brooks was performing his heroic action.

The Lord Mayor, before pinning the medal on Constable Brooks's tunic, said

"I am performing this duty in the name of the citizens of Bristol. We are proud of you and also of the police force as a whole. Bristol is wonderfully served by its police."

"You saved a man from certain death."

"The physical fitness of the police force of today enables its members under stress of circumstances to rise to the occasion, and at the call of emergency are willing to risk their lives to save others."

Ok, I know this isn't strictly a 'military' story, but I hope you will agree that it fits the military requirements of bravery and heroism. Ed

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 Winter 2010 edition by: 30 November

The Curzon Story

Presented by Gareth Negus

The Chairman thanked all those who had braved the cold and icy conditions for attending the first public meeting of the year. They were well rewarded by a very interesting presentation from Gareth Negus about the Curzon Community Cinema.

Founded in 1912 by Victor Cox one of its first events was a film show to raise money for the Titanic disaster victims.

The first building showing "moving picture shows" had seating for 200 people. Such was its popularity that it was quickly enlarged to nearly 400 seats.

The building was then extended again in 1920 and is the building we know today. The enlargement to 600 seats was done without a single day's films being lost!

In the 1970s a false ceiling was installed and the balcony area closed off as attendances fell during that decade due to the increased



popularity of television and the delay in showing new releases.

In 1996 the then owners went into receivership and the Curzon was only saved by the efforts of Jon Webber and others who created a Charitable Trust to buy the building and run it as a community cinema.

Applications have recently been made for funding to repair the fabric of the building and create display areas for the Curzon Collection of cinema memorabilia.

We wish them every success for the future of this unique Clevedon attraction.

For further details see their website www.curzon.org.uk

Bob Hardcastle (14 January 2010)



Somerset Orchards

Presented by Les Davies

In orchard champion Les Davies' own words, "Orchards are a living catalogue of our rural social history".

For many, the thought of an old orchard conjures up peaceful pastoral scenes of apple blossom and grazing sheep, or perhaps brings back memories of apple scrumping as a child!

Unfortunately, the orchards of Somerset have declined dramatically in number over the last few decades, having often been grubbed up to make way for more rural housing, or simply through age and neglect. Les Davies is committed to reversing that trend.

Somerset born and bred, Mr Davies worked at the former Long Ashton Research Station, and for the fruit juice and cider producers, Showerings and Coates. More recently he has been a Senior Mendip Warden, and now runs an extensive programme of talks, walks and courses on orchard management, as well as carrying out contract work in orchard planting and maintenance.

An accomplished speaker with an

infectious mix of enthusiasm and humour, he shared with us his wealth of knowledge and experience with a selection of slides illustrating orchard pastures, propagation of apple varieties by budding and grafting, pruning, and even village cider production. He emphasized the value of orchards as an environment, rich in biodiversity.

He included some fascinating facts. The tradition of grazing domestic animals under fruit trees dates back to Saxon times. The Romans practised apple grafting and knew a hundred

different apple varieties. Apple pips germinating by chance in the countryside have led to the discovery of new cider varieties with quaintly descriptive names, such as Sheep's Nose, Brown Snout, and Slack-ma-Girdle.

Les Davies advocates, and can advise on, the planting of new community orchards, where local people can not only enjoy the resulting amenity but also be involved in fruit juice production for village fund raising. The benefits of orchards are clearly many and varied.

Les also reminded us of the usefulness of cider in cooking and I was so inspired that I sought out a recipe for pork with apple and cider - scrumptious!

Angela Slotte (11 February 2010)



Tutshill Farm Orchard, Kingston Seymour

All Quiet on the Weston Front?

Presented by Graham Quick

A stroll along the promenade in Weston-super-Mare will show the casual visitor not only that the rebuilding of the Grand Pier is gaining pace, but that much other building work is also in progress. Graham Quick, Local Planning Team Leader at North Somerset Council, told us that this work is all part of the Weston Civic Pride Initiative, which includes the development of Knightstone Island, the seafront enhancement and sea defence scheme and a pedestrian signage and information system.

The main thrust of Mr Quick's talk however was an explanation of the Regional Spatial Strategy as it affects North Somerset. He told the meeting that this national plan requires 17,750 more dwelling places to be built in our area – but he was quick to reassure his audience that Clevedon is safe from the developers as it is considered to be about the right size already.

We were told that in Weston the main development work would be on the old Weston airfield and the nearby

RAF Locking sites, both of which have lain dormant for many years. We were shown maps illustrating how the area would be developed with housing, schools, commercial outlets, cycleways and a new link road out of Weston that would bypass the M5 at junction 21 by bridging the motorway to the south, thereby relieving the junction of its many traffic jams.

Unfortunately Graham was unable to offer any good news for the development of the Birnbeck Island and the old swimming pool (the Tropicana), but he did say that many other development areas in the town were under consideration.

Indeed it was clear that all is not quiet on the Weston front!

Geoff Hale (11 March 2010)



OLD CROTCHETY MOANS AGAIN

As you probably know, for some years I have been an enthusiast of taking close-up flower pictures. Now in Salthouse fields we had a rather unusual hawthorn tree. It was the species called 'Midland Hawthorn' and was the only one I know of in our area. It bore beautiful pink flowers rather than the normal white ones. I thought of this when April came around and I went down Old Church Road to look for it. At first I wondered if I had parked at the wrong place but when I searched I found the stump of all that was left of the tree that used to show a mass of deep pink flowers to brighten up our Spring. There was no sign of rot in the wood that was

left and I could only conclude that it had been cut down because it got in the way of the grass cutters.

Rather disgruntled I made my way back to Ken Road. In the following month I was conscious of something missing when I went down to the Hand Stadium to visit the car boot sale. On my way back I realized what it was. Vandals had cut down the two crack willows that used to be on the grass verge about opposite Dawes Close. I use the term 'vandals' deliberately; have our "Parks and whatever" officers never heard of 'pollarding'? That, like coppicing, is a practice well known in Somerset and

many other country areas. Once again the stumps showed no sign of rot. I can only think that it was done to save the effort of shunting the grass cutting machines about, or having to use a strimmer to shave around the tree boles.

I think our Environment Group will have to keep their eyes sharp before the powers-that-be decide that the trees of the copses in our town must be cut down for convenience sake.



COMPUTER JIGSAWS

One way to while away the cold winter evenings is to 'do' a jigsaw, but how annoying it is when you find that pieces are missing after you have worked so long and hard.

Derek Lilly has the answer to this problem – Computer Jigsaws – and what is more he makes and sells them himself using his own photographs.

He has made four types of CDs so far using pictures of Steam Trains, Clevedon District, Somerset and Wells, and Vintage and Classic cars.

They are on sale at the Pier, price £4.95, but members of the Civic Society can buy them for £3.50. Derek says he will donate £1 to the Society's funds from every sale he makes.



Clevedon, Medieval Manor to Victorian Resort

Edited by Rob Campbell

The discovery of four Medieval Manorial Rolls relating to Clevedon, which were stored in the British Library, caused much excitement among local historians. However, the translation of the Medieval Latin text posed a problem. Thanks to funding from Clevedon Civic Society as well as from the Elton Family of Clevedon Court, the Alan Youde Memorial Fund and the Town Council, the rolls have now been expertly transcribed and are published here for the first time to form the first half of this fascinating book.

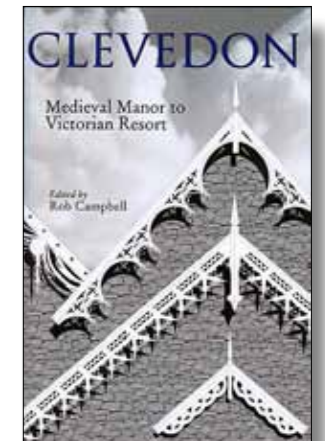
Rob Campbell writes, 'There are few surviving records of Clevedon between the compiling of the Domesday Book

in 1086 and the Wake survey of 1630. So these four parchment documents, which contain the detailed records of four manorial courts held during 1321, provide a fascinating glimpse of life in 14th century Clevedon.'

The book also contains previously unresearched material about the area's many farms documented by local historian Jane Lilly, as well as a survey of local 19th and 20th century builders by Derek Lilly and an illustrated description by Ron King of the striking Victorian bargeboards that adorn many of the town's dwellings.

Geoff Hale

The book is available to Society members for £12.50.



Clevedon - The Gem of Sunny Somerset

Video Produced by Geoff Hale

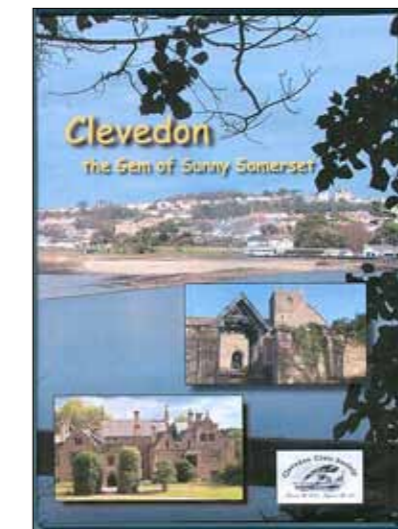
Would you like to view the town of Clevedon from the comfort of your armchair? Now Clevedon Civic Society can make that dream come true.

A new and amazing DVD has just been launched which shows Clevedon in all its glory. On two discs it is the culmination of many months' filming work by Society member Geoff Hale. He has photographed and produced this immensely detailed view of our town, its people, its history, its clubs and its proud heritage.

I will highlight just some of the myriad subjects covered by Geoff that I found particularly interesting.

One of my very favourite places in the whole town is the Great Hall of Clevedon Court and this is filmed beautifully by Geoff complete with a polished introduction to the Court by Clevedon Civic Society president Julia Elton. According to her the Court's passages may be some of the coldest places in the town in winter but I still love the history of the house and its inhabitants which have played such a pivotal role in Clevedon's development.

Geoff traces the meandering route of the Land Yeo which completes its journey through the town passing many sites of great historical interest and finishes at the Old Church of St Andrew. This picturesque church is special to our family and I think it is this special



significance that will make this DVD appeal to many people.

Did you know that there are 16 miles of official footpaths in Clevedon and I'm sure I have walked all of them with generations of family dogs over the 38 years I have lived in the town. Geoff films nearly all of these walks with their wonderful views and we glimpse the Society's Footpath Group walking the most famous of the routes – Poets' Walk.

Talking of poets it seems that the late poet Sir John Betjeman said that Clevedon without its Pier was like a "diamond with a flaw". So thank goodness the Pier was restored and Geoff shows this process in fascinating detail.

As I now live opposite St Peter's Church the section about Clevedon Churches caught my attention. St Peter's was originally a wood and iron structure until Dame Violet Wills gave money for the building of the church you see today. The metal bell is the only remaining link to the former building and is still rung on Sunday mornings for the 11am service.

Wonderful old photos of the shops in Hill Road are contrasted nicely with views of the busy shopping area today. I can remember the shop so clearly in the early 1960s when my father and mother, Horace and Lilian Trueman, moved to the town to take over the fishmongers and game merchants shop in Hill Road.

Other subjects which come under the scrutiny of Geoff's camera include the trains and troops, the youth, sport, entertainment and of course a stroll along the prom.

The detailed filming and the research work that Geoff has put into this wonderful DVD is truly amazing. This is a worthy record and a unique snap shot of Clevedon – the Gem of Sunny Somerset – which we can feel so proud to be part of.

Frances Hardcastle

The DVD is available at a member's discount price of £9.



Mary was spared hanging and was transported to Tasmania with other criminals from this area. There, she married again, a Nailsea man called William Hawkins, and had several children with him.

Jane Seery, one of those descendants, came to the UK for a holiday and contacted three of her step-cousins, who were descendants of the children Mary had to leave in the care of her family in England.

On Good Friday we had the good fortune of a visit from several descendants of Mary Wall, whose husband William was hanged in Kenn in 1830, along with John Rowley and Richard Clarke. This event was highly significant in that it was the last time criminals were hanged on the site of their crime.

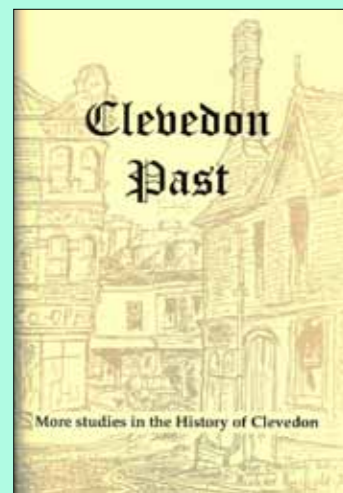


Jane Seery Carolyn Seely Stephanie Barfield Amanda Seely

Stephanie Barfield and her sister and niece, Carolyn and Amanda Seely, travelled from Sussex to meet Jane, Kenn villagers and members of our Local History Group.

Derek and I spoke briefly about the events of 1830 after we were treated to tea and cakes at Yew Tree Farm by Lise and Robert Willcox and the excellent cooks of Kenn. Then, thanks to Cyril Willcox, we were all able to see the spot where the hangings took place 180 years ago.

Pictures by Dave Long



For more information regarding the Kenn Hangings in 1830 see the Clevedon Civic Society's booklet, *Clevedon Past*.

Available to members at the discount price of £4

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