

DAWLISH LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter

July 2014

Website: www.dawlishhistory.org.uk

Dear Members,

At the June meeting we decided, as an experiment, to try an alternative format for our meeting. In August the meeting will now start at 2:00pm with various group announcements and discussion of events and group activities. This will be followed by refreshments and an opportunity to chat. This period will be used to set-up for the speaker and the talk will start at 2:45.

This newsletter only exists because members contribute articles but currently, I have hardly any articles for the next edition - due out in September. Please can I therefore encourage members to "put pen to paper".

Regards, Mike Ralls - Chairman

The Criddle Family – Ian Thomson

The Criddle family has been traced back to Henry Criddle, born in St Decumans, Somerset around 1782. After a number of generations, my great grandfather Frank Criddle and his brother, William John Criddle settled in Dawlish.

Frank Criddle married Charlotte Voysey Mutters in Teignmouth in 1887. They had six children: the sons William John (1887-1914), Frank (1888 -1966), Edwin (b. 1891), James (b. 1893), Frederick (b. 1895) and their daughter Lillian (b. 1898).

My grandfather Frank grew up in Dawlish and left school at 14, the usual age in that generation. As far as I am aware he had visited the village school in Ashcombe. Around that time, the railway tunnels were being widened to accommodate an additional second track and he was employed on that.



Frank Criddle

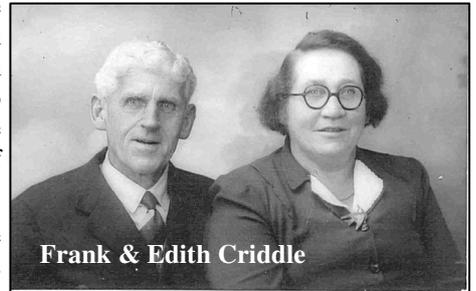
At some time prior to the First World War, work was scarce in and around Dawlish and he walked to South Wales where he worked for a time in the coalmines (as an

assistant timberman according to the census of 1911), as have many of the Criddle family (The family is mainly centred around North Somerset and South Wales to this very day).

He joined up quite early in the war (as did his three brothers) and it is his letter, written back from India, telling his account of his ship voyage through the straights of Gibraltar and the Suez Canal - to feature in the next newsletter.

After being de-mobbed and returning home, he married Edith Emily Haddrell from Seend in Wiltshire in 1920. She had been working in Service in Dawlish where they met. They settled here and had 3 children, daughters Eileen, my mother Margaret and son John, who emigrated to Australia.

My grandfather worked the rest of his days on the railway, finally becoming the ganger on the stretch reaching from Langstone Rock to Spray Point on the Teignmouth side of the Tunnels.



Frank & Edith Criddle

Because of the nature of the stretch, it was necessary to walk the length (the total distance) early every morning just to check that the line was in order for the day's trains.

I have a vague memory as a young child of him being called out twice in 24hrs to repair damage due to stormy seas. He hardly had time to freshen up before the next high tide had wreaked havoc yet again. This is something, all too familiar to us in very recent times. The seas may not have been quite so severe then, but it had to be done entirely manually - there were no mechanical diggers or heavy machinery at hand to ease the task.

My grandfather retired in 1953 and passed away at his home in Dawlish in 1966.

East Cliff Road (Final Instalment) - Tricia Whiteaway

OVERCLIFFE: had 11 rooms. Between 1861-76 Capt. William Pye, previously of Cornwall, and his son and daughter lived here. Capt. William was already 16 when he joined the Revolutionary in 1801 and later sailed on the Minotaur at Trafalgar. His story can be found in Chris Penn's book William's War. In 1863 his daughter Susan married William Withall James, a surgeon. The Captain died in 1876 and his elegant tombstone is in the churchyard. In 1878-80 the occupier was John King, in 1881-3 Thomas Morris, 1902 Miss Isabelle Collett, 1911 Henry Boswell Lee, 1923 the Misses Thomas and 1926-47 Arthur Burdick. In the 1950-60s chemist Mr Langdon lived here with his son Peter and his wife and children. Peter Langdon once lived in Church House. And as some stage, perhaps in the 1980s, it was converted into flats.

BELLE VUE - WHICKHAM LODGE (1910): Had 14 rooms. In 1861 Rear Admiral Thomas Henderson lived here, in 1866-71 Miss E Sage, then 1873-83 Henry Moss followed until 1891

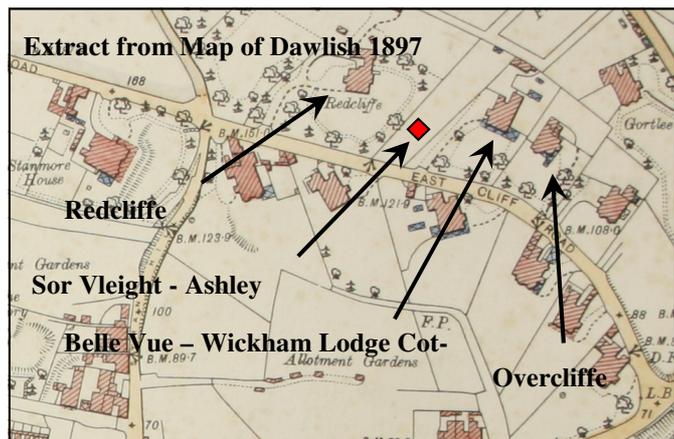
Our next meeting will be on

Tuesday 5 August 2014

2:00pm at The Manor House.

**Talk entitled "Tracing your Ancestors"
by Colin Roulston DFHS**

by his widow Mrs Moss. Then from 1900 it was Mary Wyles, then 1910-1 Major Gen J. Joseph Laye (with a butler) and in 1926-6 Fred Godwin. It seems by 1947 two families, Gibson & Palmer lived here, possibly as a hotel? By the



1980s it was a nursing home and in 2007 it was demolished for flats but the look of the building is very similar to the original house and in keeping with the remaining large houses in the road whereas others were replaced by box-type flats. There was a separate cottage to the rear.

SOR VLEIGHT - ASHLEY: This house does not appear on the early map so it is presumed it was built after the others, perhaps around 1900. I think either Redcliffe or Whickham Lodge gave part of their grounds for it to be built. The house has Dutch influence as shown by its name and its architecture; with such an unusual name to pronounce, certainly by the children, it was generally known as “Sore Feet”. In the 1930s Miss Kate Mello and Miss Williams lived here followed in 1951 by Dr Prentice of the Royal Western Countries Institution (Starcross) and for many years this has been a residential home for adults with special needs. In 2012 the doctor’s descendants from Michigan, USA visited Dawlish and walked up to see the old house and we had a chat.

REDCLIFFE had 12 rooms in 1911: Between 1861-71 Edwin Bouverie Luxmore was here followed in 1878-83 by Col. John Hughes. The Hobsons, John then Alf lived here from 1890 to 1923. In the 1930s it was Robert Street and towards the end of the decade Mrs Lawrence. In 1947-51 it was the Bouchiers, and for many years it seems to have been a quiet and mysterious house. It is owned by the D’Apice family and has the largest grounds in the road. Occasionally you hear the geese they keep that set up quite a noise once disturbed, loud and clear.

AC Ballard and Mount Everest – Sheila Ralls

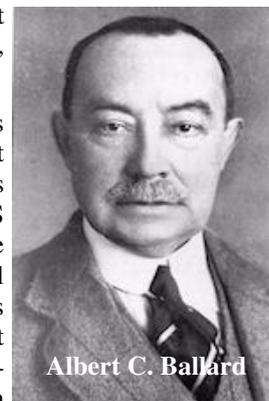
Albert Casanova Ballard was born in 1866 in Guernsey. A short man, under 5 feet and with a swarthy complexion. After making his fortune in India, Archie moved to Plymouth, Devon, where he was “*struck by the hooliganism and rough behaviour of boys, half of whom were fatherless, the men having been killed in the war*”. He founded the Ballard Institute, a home for 2000 boys in Milbay, Plymouth, as well as social clubs and scholarships. In 1923, Archie moved to Teignmouth. He bought “Treverven”, previously called Hennon, on the Exeter Road, renaming it Mount Everest. In 1935, he opened a new science block at Teignmouth Grammar School. In both Teignmouth and Dawlish, Ballard provided many scholarships to allow clever boys to attend Teignmouth Grammar school. One of these was Don Shorland, of Dawlish,

Don attended Dawlish Boy’s Secondary School. He was

bright and, when about to leave school aged 14, the headmaster, George Lamacraft told him he had been awarded a grant to carry on his education at Teignmouth Grammar School. The grants were given to several boys in Dawlish each year by the property millionaire.

Aged 17, in 1938 Don became secretary to Mr Ballard also acting as valet as well as accompanying the philanthropist on business trips. He was fitted for suitable clothes at Dole’s outfitters in Teignmouth. Mr Ballard had three Daimler cars, one of which had belonged to Queen Mary. Don left Mr Ballard’s service in 1939.

Mr Ballard died at Mount Everest Teignmouth aged 76, on 10th August 1942. He is buried at Efford Cemetery, Efford Road, Plymouth.



Albert C. Ballard

During World War II, Nissan huts were built in the grounds of Mount Everest and the house was used as a military hospital for the US Navy, which was billeted in the town. In 1941, several bombs fell near the house, demolishing its lodge. After the US military left for the D-Day landings, Haberdashers Aske’s Boy’s School in London, was evacuated there. In 1951, it became a boarding hostel for girls. The house was demolished in 2007.

Kent’s Cavern—Sheila Ralls

At our June meeting, we heard a talk on Kent’s Cavern by head guide, Alan Salsbury. Kent’s cavern is described in the Domeday Book as Kent’s Hole meaning hole in the headland or promontory.

Alan explained that the prehistoric cave system is found in Devonian limestone created 385 million years ago, when it formed part of the single land mass known as Pangaea more than three thousand miles to the south. By 200 million years ago, the land had moved to its present location. The caves are the only ones in the UK that can trace all stages of Man’s development.

During the last Ice Age, sea levels were very low and animals and people could walk across the Channel into England. Homo Erectus arrived here around 500,000 years ago. The animals included bears, lions, wolves, rhino, elk and large cats.

In 1820s, Father John MacEnery discovered flints and bones of extinct animals but his findings were discounted by the Church as they contradicted its views on the history of life on Earth. However, in 1865, William Pengelly began his Great Excavation. Working with only a few men and by candlelight, they removed many tons of rock and silt, finding over 80,000 artefacts and bones, most of which are now in the British Museum but also in Torquay Museum and at RAMM.

The caves were bought by Francis Powe in 1903 and have been developed by the Powe family over the past 110 years to become a family tourist attraction. In 1927, members of Torquay Natural History Society found the upper jaw bone of Homo Sapiens. This has now been calculated to be around 43,000 years old, meaning that he existed alongside Neanderthal man, who disappeared 5,000 years later. These are the oldest remains of Homo Sapiens in Northern Europe.

In 1953, Kent’s Cavern was made a Scheduled Ancient Monument. And it is still an active archaeological site.
