



DAWLISH LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter

July 2011

Dear Members,

The recent outing organised by Tricia Whiteaway to Crediton Church was very interesting. Unfortunately the visit date had to be changed because contractors were working in the building on our pre-arranged date, however, we had a good time and it is hoped that we can arrange a further visit in the future.

Our last meeting featured Dr Todd Gray who lectured on 'War Memorials'. His presentation was very interesting, especially information on the different designs and the reasons for such variations of the memorials. It was also good to know that local councils never change e.g. arguments about costs, sitings, design etc., raged for months.

This month we are fortunate that one of our members has provided a short history of the Lawn in Dawlish. We would like to develop this further. Do any members have information? Can you help to produce a book?

Two of our members are currently working on the content of our next book "Shops and Trades of Dawlish". If you have any information, photographs or other data they will be pleased to receive your contribution... please call me on 888463 or Tricia on 866927.

Our outing this month is to Tuckers Maltings in Newton Abbot on 4th July. If you have not booked a place and wish to go, please contact Tricia as soon as possible...

Derek Wain

Visit to the Church of the Holy Cross, Crediton.

It was a smaller group than usual which met in Crediton in May, the date of the visit having been brought forward because of electrical work in the church. Apologies to those affected.

It is known that St. Boniface (original name Wynfrith) was born in Crediton between 675 and 680 AD but the diocese was not founded until 909 AD lasting until 1050 AD when Bishop Leofric moved the see to the walled city of Exeter. Boniface had been appointed bishop for all Germany by the Pope and was martyred in Frisia in 754 AD; he is also known as the Apostle of the Germans. There is a life-size wooden carving by Witold Kawalec in the church - see photo.

The present impressive building, built around the base of the Norman tower, is enormous and the result of a series of rebuilding projects and additions, notably in the 13th, 15th and 19th centuries. Many of the memorials were sadly damaged during the Reformation. The management of Church is somewhat unusual, being owned by the people of Crediton rather than the Church of England. Consequently it is managed by a group of Governors and financed from the parish of Crediton.

We were fortunate to be escorted around the church by Mr Langhorne, one of the twelve governors of the church, whose encyclopaedic knowledge and keen sense of humour contributed considerably to our enjoyment. Our tour concluded with a visit to the Governors' Room dating back to 1430 where we pored over Cromwellian clothing, a saddle, weapons and armour, and also a silver box decorated with 17th century silver coins.

We left the church in search of the traditional cream tea at a neighbouring garden centre knowing that there was much more

of interest in the church which would have to be reserved for a further visit.

Bob Thompson



A Brief History of the Lawn

The 1787 map from the Archives in Exeter Cathedral shows the river meandered down to the shore and was subject to tidal waves and it fed from streams from the Haldon Hills above Ashcombe.

In 1805 John Edye Manning had purchased most of the land on either side of the river from Old Town Street to the coast, first owned by the Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral.

It was Manning who undertook the building of the Strand and used soil from the cutting of Queen Street and Strand Hill to channel the

**Our next meeting is on
1st August**

**Michael Viner
on
'Tracks, Turnpikes & Toll-
Houses'**

meandering river to a straighter river, which he called a "canal" bank up to the marshy land on either side to raise it. His planning and foresight secured the wide open space down the centre of Dawlish.

In 1810 a lot of his work was swept away by a dreadful flood caused by heavy melting snow from the Haldons, destroying bridges, houses, property and soil. Nothing daunted, he quickly set to repair the damage, making a series of small waterfalls and making the cutting deeper with higher retaining walls.

By 1825 the preservation of the much admired Dawlish Lawn was under the control of a number of public spirited residents. It was leased by Robert Twose of Dawlish (draper) and Daniel Litton a Dawlish chemist.

In 1863 A Local Board obtained a loan for the purchase of the Lawn with a loan from the Secretary of State for £2000, spread over a period of 25 years. This allowed £1802-10s-0d to be paid to the leasees and £197-10s-0d for various improvements.

The plot of land between Jubilee Bridge and the railway was used by Tuck for his donkeys and donkey carriages and is still known as Tuck's plot or York Gardens.

Sheep were allowed to graze on the main lawn during the winter and can be seen in several pictures of the land in front of the mill.

By the late 1800s a bandstand had been built in a typical Victorian style and is shown on the picture. Bands were invited to perform during holiday times.



Bandstand 1906

In 1883 tennis courts were made at the bottom of the lawn nearer the sea and matches were very popular. Tuck's plot was developed with a fountain which was fed from an overflow from the leat into the brook, giving a sufficient head of water. In the 1900s the Bowling Green was put to the top of the lawn and is a great asset to the town.

In 1900 when the County produced their plan for Dawlish to indicate the future development of the Lawn, they created it a Conservation area of which the Lawn and its environs were the most important.

In January 1934 a possible new Bandstand was proposed and letters were put in the Dawlish Gazette. I do not think the bandstand which exists now was built until 1936.

According to Mr Jim Holman, "In fine weather during the summer season promenading was a favourite pastime on the Lawn in Victorian times. With the aid of subscriptions and the Local Board before the 1st World War music was played by either the Royal Italian Band or a German band

in the open sided Bandstand. After the war a small professional string band was employed to play from time to time."



After WW2 the bandstand was altered using the original roof and shape but making a substantial wall round three quarters of the sides. Consequently it is not ideal for band music and is mostly used for crowning the Carnival Queen or Princesses. A lot of the time it is used as a play area for skateboarders and ball games!

The present Conservation Trust has designed a new bandstand but so far nothing has been done to introduce it. It is essential that the lawn is preserved as an attraction for visitors together with the wild fowl and river. We are famed for our black swans and we have adequate cafes and an amusement park at the lower part of Dawlish, where the coaches deliver our visitors.

Compiled by Betty Roberts

Holcombe War Memorial

At an impressive service in the little Holcombe chapel on Saturday afternoon last, a tablet was unveiled and dedicated to the memory of the men of the picturesque hamlet who fell in the war and to commemorate the signing of the peace terms. The Rev. H C pratt conducted the service, the Vicar (Rev. F Simmons) dedicating the tablet and giving a short address.

The tablet, which is fixed to the north wall of the church, was designed and executed by Mr Hayman, of the Castle Inn, who is to be congratulated on his work. It bears the inscription:

This tablet is erected to keep in memory the men of Holcombe who gave their lives for their King and Country: also to commemorate the end of the great war and the peace of 1919.

*Lieut. Henry A. Brea, 4th Leinster Regiment
Private Herbert A. Garrett, M.T., A.S.C.
Private Bertram C. Honour, 2/4th Devons
Cpl R.A. Honour, M. M., Coldstream Guards
"Thanks be to God who giveth us the Victory"*

After the service "Peace Mugs" provided by the Holcombe Peace Celebration Committee, were distributed to the children of the village.

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