

DAWLISH LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter

May 2014

Website: www.dawlishhistory.org.uk

Dear Members,

For those who were unable to attend the AGM in April, I am pleased to say we have been able to fill the committee vacancies so we have some new faces—but of course we have lost a few. As some of you will know, Tricia Whiteaway stood down as Chairman for health reasons and as no nominations were forthcoming, I agreed to take on the role for a year until someone with a more appropriate background is willing to stand. In addition, I will continue to be Newsletter and Website Editor. Both Angela Marks and Derek Wain also stood down. So we now have David Allanach as Secretary, Sheila Ralls as our new Treasurer, Ray Bickel as our Speaker Secretary and Book Sales Manager and David Gearing as our Book Editor. In order not to lose Tricia's invaluable knowledge of the history of Dawlish, at the first meeting of the new committee, we agreed to create the non-committee role of Group Historian.

Mike Ralls Chairman/Newsletter Editor

Our 2014 AGM

As Tricia was unable to attend, Sheila Ralls presided over proceedings. In her report, she highlighted the range of talks and visits, as well as other activities such as the WWI project, which will involve us in events over the next two years. We have published Tricia's latest book on the Grand Houses of Dawlish. The website has brought in queries over the year, some from far flung parts, and Tricia has been providing information in response. In addition, she has also written her concise History of Dawlish to which Mike added pictures and this is now published on our website.

The project to digitise and document old photographs and other images of Dawlish is now starting to mature. The images were initially only taken from the Museum's collection, but now includes History Group photos and those from other individuals, including Bernard Chapman, who has kindly given our group custody of his glass plate negatives to be used for the benefit of the town. As part of this project, we - DLHG - were granted £250 by Dawlish Town Council to buy a large computer screen which, together with a newer computer we have lent to the Museum to provide an image search and display facility for its visitors.

On behalf of members Sheila finished by thanking all retiring committee members Tricia, Derek and Angela for

their significant contribution to the group over the years and looked forward to an interesting year ahead.

East Cliff Road (3rd Instalment) - Tricia Whiteaway

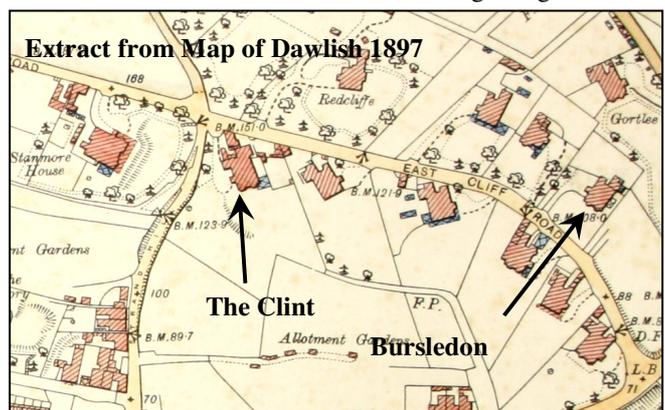
HIGH FIELD (OR CLIFFE) – THE CLINT 1913: Either name was used originally and both were used by the printers of the directories. The first occupier/owner was Charles Turner, County magistrate, between 1861-1883, then his widow Mariane Turner until 1892. The next twenty years it was William Wy-



brow then a Mr McWilliam. From 1916 Edward Hope Waterfield (known as Odo), the son of the family who had lived at Eastdon House, lived for a while at The Knowle, (the Dawlish Museum). He returned to India and on his return in 1913 bought this house and it seems it was he who re-named the house The Clint. He leased it out for ten years until his return in 1923 and following his death in 1925 his widow lived here for only a while. However in 1926 it seems Albert Amos lived here before moving into Cairmona, which took the name High Cliffe once Highfield became The Clint. In 1946 after Clyde's School returned to Sussex (see 2nd Instalment), a new school opened at the Clint known as St Timothy's School run on the Froebel principle by Miss Sheena Stookes. It also had a kindergarten including boarding facilities for boys from four to ten years old. The school lasted only a few years.

Houses on right up East Cliff Road

BURSLEDON: The first occupier found in 1861 was Lady Martha Elizabeth Douglas, (nee Rouse) born in 1812 in Middlesex, London. She said she was the widow of an officer on one census who it seems was Sir Robert Andrews Mackenzie-Douglas, 2nd Baronet of Glebervie, (20 miles north of Montrose). They had two sons, Sir Robert the 3rd baronet, Kenneth born in 1842 who married in New Zealand and fathered the 4th baronet, also Kenneth, there. Martha must have followed him around on his army duties as her daughter, Lady Elizabeth, was born in 1840 in Mauritius and she married a presumed descendant of Sir Francis Drake – Sir Francis George Augustus Fuller



Our next meeting will be on

Tuesday 3 June 2014

2:00 for 2:30pm at The Manor House.

**Talk entitled "Kent Cavern"
by Alan Salisbury**

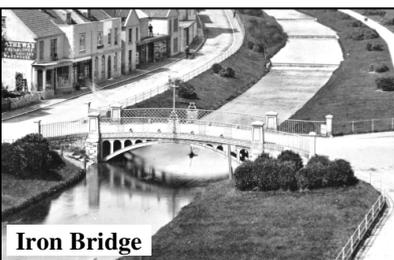
Elliott Drake and died at Buckland Monachorum. Their daughter Lady Elizabeth Beatrice Fuller Elliott Drake was born in 1862 and lived at Buckland Abbey until her death in 1937. Martha lived here, sometimes with a butler but always with a lady's maid, until her death in September 1899. It was she who built the large retaining wall bounding the Exeter Road built in 1885 that included a fountain. After her in 1910-11 it was Dep. Insp. Gen Matthew Coates MD.RN, followed in 1923-6 by Rev. Gill, then in 1938 Fred Woodgates. The gardens to this house were extensive and a report in Dawlish Gazette of February 1939 wrote that this site was suggested for a new hospital for Dawlish by the owners, although Sir Peter Hoare had suggested another (unmentioned) site but of course WWII stopped all plans. Finally in 1947-51 it was the residence for the nurses working at the Royal Western Counties Institution (Starcross). But around 1980 it was two block of flats that were built, whilst the house was converted to flats.

Update on WWI Project - Sheila Ralls

The Project has received £7000 grant from HLF to fund events over the coming two years. It also involves the Museum, the Library, the British Legion, Churches Together, Shaftesbury Theatre and the Town Council. As part of the project, the Museum has a programme of WWI related displays, such as the story of William Criddle, who died soon after the outbreak of war. The Museum will join with us in putting on an exhibition in Summer 2015. The Museum is also researching Letters Home from the front written by local men. The Town Council will be mounting small exhibitions in the Manor House: one on Daisy Fortescue, the nurse whose ship was torpedoed at the start of WWI; and another on the Jackson Family, who were living at the Manor House during WWI. Our group also has a Names project, researching the names on the war memorial, which will produce a booklet of the findings. If anyone has any artefacts, souvenirs or family stories about World War One that have a connection to Dawlish, please contact one of the Committee.

DAWLISH BROOK and its BRIDGES 2nd Instalment – Muriel Bradshaw

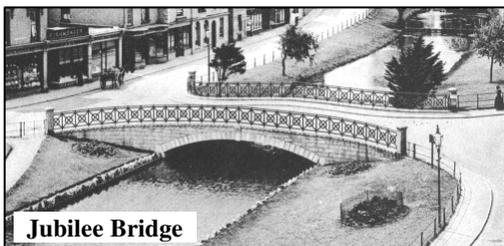
As you may remember from the last Newsletter, John Manning had a plan to make the town healthy and pleasant place. 8 new plank footbridges were built and an arched wooden bridge was built in 1810. But late in 1810 disaster struck. Three months' worth of



Iron Bridge

rain fell on the hills in a few hours and **The Great Flood** came roaring down our narrow valley. It washed away Manning's turf river banks, and several houses in Brunswick Place crumbled into the floodwater; the new plank bridges and the arched wooden

bridge were swept away. It was reported that farm carts and even a haystack were washed right

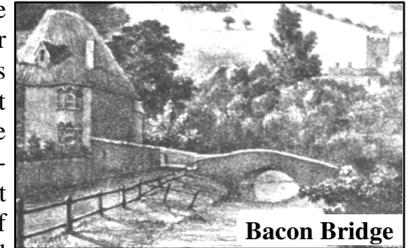


Jubilee Bridge

out to sea. Restoration began very soon, for Manning's plan was a good one, and this time the stream banks were stoned, and the series of waterfalls which we all love today,

was installed to break the ferocity of the stream in spate. **The arched wooden bridge** was replaced with one able to carry wheeled traffic, (horse-drawn carts at this time). In 1844 wood gave way to iron: a fine new bridge complete with a lampstand in the centre of the arch, but still very narrow. This was succeeded in 1887 by the present, wider, **Jubilee Bridge** marking 50 years of Queen Victoria's reign.

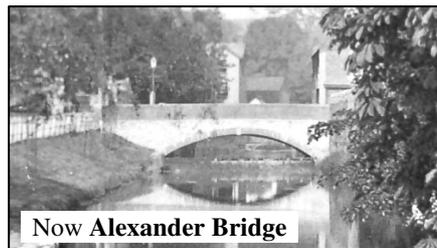
Moving upstream to the head of the reclaimed marshland, we come to **Bacon Bridge**. We all love a play on words—this was a narrow but quite substantial bridge built in 1825



Bacon Bridge

and adjacent to the premises of butcher William Tripe. It was alleged that he bought the property next to the 'canal' (the newly configured Brook) so that he could dispose of unwanted offal and trimmings from his shop into the brook! The bridge was improved and widened in 1889 when Alexandra terrace was built, and was then more elegantly named as **Alexandra Bridge**.

Further up, we come to **Dawlish Old Bridge** in Church Street. This afforded the relatively safe crossing of the Brook, and it was built in stone in the 17th century, carrying traffic along the ancient trackway from the north to Holcombe and Teignmouth. It became a County Bridge in



Now Alexander Bridge

1690, but Dawlish had to contribute to its upkeep. Traffic needs led to its widening in 1864, as is recorded on a stone plaque facing the road. But it doesn't surprise us

to learn that in 1875 a flood came down which damaged the Church Street bridge and caused the tragic death of one John Radford who was trying to save the stonework. He fell and was washed away, his body being recovered from the beach next morning.

The re-building was in the hands of civil engineer John Carpenter, his name is inscribed on the new plaque of 1876, hence the bridge's alternative name of **Carpenter's Bridge**. Next upstream is **Weech or Stonelands Bridge**. This was formerly a plank structure duly washed away in the Great Flood (1810) and its stone replacement survived only until **The Great Gale** of 1824 when seawater was forced right up to Alexandra Bridge and 10ft waves broke against the London Hotel. Havoc to buildings and bridges all over again.

Weech Bridge renewed in 1827, this time in good Portland stone. It was named **Dawlish New Bridge**.

There are of course many **footbridges**: have you ever tried to count them? (2 along the lawn, 1 below Brook Street, 2 in the Manor grounds, 2 in Brook House garden, 1 in Bridge House grounds. In the Newhay there used to be a plank bridge used by the vicar when the old Vicarage was in Weech Road. Much used now is **Brown's Bridge** over the tributary stream from the lake in Luscombe territory which also fed the mill leat powering Town Mill and Strand Mill. (This has recently been blocked off so that the leats are now sadly empty or just soggy in wet weather: what a pity efforts to re-instate the supply to Strand Mill have not been successful).