



DAWLISH LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter

July 2009

Dear Members,

This newsletter is somewhat hastily compiled as it must be published and delivered to you all before the end of this month or at least before Mr. Jenkinson gives his talk so you will have no excuse for missing it. Why all the haste ? Well I have been furiously busy writing our history of climate change in Dawlish, in the middle of which I was asked to write a short history of Dawlish St John Ambulance Brigade which celebrates its 100th anniversary in November. I had forgotten all about the newsletter Doesn't time flash by when you are enjoying yourself ?.... and am leaving to visit family in Wilmslow on Friday of this week. Tricia very kindly reminded me suggesting in a cool but firm voice that I ought to get my skates on. And so I have. And here is the newsletter or most of it because I retaliated by requiring Tricia to produce a leading article by the following day. Did she make it ? Too early for me to say but if the article opposite is about Sea Lawn House, then she did !

Don't miss the outing on September 7th. Where are we going ? Well it is a secret (actually I have no idea) but Tricia deserves your support. See over the page for an account of our hilarious visit to Countess Weir Village which turned out not to be where I expected. But the cream teas at Powderham were excellent.

Work on the story of Schools in Dawlish is proceeding I understand, with Tricia and Sheila looking more and more harassed by the day. We hope to have it out in time for you to buy it as a Christmas present for everyone you know.

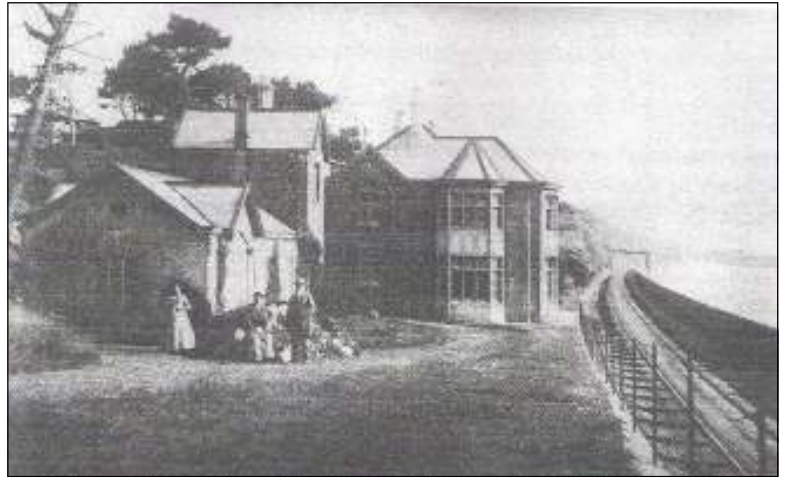
Do you enjoy the newsletter ? If so, how about making a contribution ... no... not money but of an article or two on a topic you know something about ? This would greatly ease the pressure on your editor.

Bob Thompson

The next meeting will be held on August 3rd at the Manor House at 2.30 p.m..

Mr. Tim Jenkinson of the Milestone Society will talk about Milestones

Sea Lawn House and Sea Lawn Terrace



Sea Lawn House was built circa 1825 by an unnamed architect for James Powell who had moved to Devon, it is said, to get away from the ever growing railway system. Here he lived quietly, enjoying the wonderful sea views, but little did he know that within a few years the railway would build the track within a few feet of his property, although he did manage to get the railway to lower the footpath along the seaward side so he could get some privacy. He was horrified by the intrusion and took them to court, winning his case as the South Devon Railway bought his property for some £8000. He died soon after in 1846 and his widow remained there for only a short time. The 1851 census shows 36 year old Agnes Jane Baetham was probably leasing it.

In 1856 a William Fripp is listed in the Trade Directory as living here but the property was offered for sale in 1857 in the Exeter Flying Post: *"Chinnock & Galsworthy are instructed by mortgagees to sell by auction Sea Lawn Freehold Marine Mansion, occupying a charming position close to Dawlish, conveniently approached from the high road and commanding an uninterrupted series of views including Teignmouth, Exmouth and Portland. The building has been erected at impressive cost in the most substantial manner in Tudor style. Suite of drawing and dining rooms, morning room, library, vestibule and handsome conservatory, 8 bedrooms, servants rooms and excellent domestic offices, double coach house, 3 stall stable. Pleasure grounds are of the most charming description leading out to terrace walks, parterres and shrubbery. Well stocked fruit garden attached. 5 acres."*

It remained unsold and was offered again in 1863. Mr Fripp the tenant, died in Teignmouth in 1874. The property was then purchased by a family who lived in London but had family connections with the Dawlish Splatts and Martins, previous publicans of The Swan and The Red Lion. A James Williams died in 1886 and was described as "of Sea Lawn" and the property and land were sold to George Hirtzel by Ann Williams (and others) for £1075. It is said that Sea Lawn House was demolished about

1878 but, as James Powell was living there until he died in 1886, it must have been demolished by George Hirtzel. In August 1888 a covenant was drawn up on the intended replacement houses "to be built £350 each in good hard Wellington brick, mortar of third lime, two thirds clean sharp sand, seasoned Baltic timber, Port Madoc slates" with the added provision "No wearing or bedding apparel to be exposed to view for airing or drying. No houses to be lodging."

I do not know how long the last covenant lasted but I think certainly by 1900, some did in fact become lodging houses. As soon as the new Sea Lawn Terrace was built (1887-9) George Hirtzel occupied No. 1 and Sam Dobell a Dawlish architect and surveyor lived in No. 3. The Lodge next to Exeter Road must also have been replaced and enlarged at the same time, as is evident in the pale yellow bricks which were used.

Hirtzel then bought the land adjoining and developed San Remo Terrace probably with local builder Richard Early.

Nos 1 and 2 Sea Lawn Terrace caught fire in December 1908 (there is a photograph in the Museum of this) unfortunately with the death of an old lady and two young children. The houses were rebuilt but not in the same style.

Tricia Whiteaway

No this is not Sea Lawn Terrace on fire. It is another place entirely. A gentleman, Mr. Richard Holaday, sent them to me to discover where it was and when. I know the answer but do you, and if not, why not? Baffled? Contact Betty Roberts, our current specialist in this field. Or look more closely at the photographs.



Visit to Countess Wear



All ears for the Red Coat lady

Eleven members of DLHG had a great treat when on 4th July they met at Countess Wear. A lady who had been a Red Coat in Exeter was waiting to show us around this little hidden gem of a village. The Churchyard of St Luke's had a few surprises such as an unusual grave of a husband and wife named Sladen. He had pre-deceased his wife but when she died years later their identical side-by-side graves were linked by a stone chain. Another grave was that of a female descendant of Flora MacDonald. Another grave told of a 22 year old policeman who died trying unsuccessfully to save a young girl from drowning. Leaving the church behind we came to a little area of very pretty thatched cottages, a lovely secluded riverside village green and then some larger houses, now converted into apartments, one of which had been owned by the Bentall family of retail fame and later by the family of Chris Martin, the lead singer of 'Cold Play'. Another house retaining characteristics of an impressive past was now a youth hostel. Modern houses blocked the views of these houses somewhat but they must have been spectacular when first built.

We then retraced our steps towards the old paper mill which is in the process of being converted and renovated, passing little country lanes, now somewhat overgrown but it was easy to imagine how busy they would have been in the heyday of the mill. Our tour of the village ended **outside** the local pub, the 'Tally Ho' which had until recent times been owned for many generations by the same family who had carried the hunting theme throughout the hostelry by providing saddles as bar seating.

Most of the group moved on to Powderham Castle to discuss the outing with a delicious cream tea. Tricia had found us yet another little local gem to explore so we offer our thanks to her and also to the drivers who enabled others to enjoy the afternoon.

Mavis Stuckey