



DAWLISH LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter

November 2011

Dear Members,

Hello everybody.

Our last meeting for 2011 is the Christmas social event. Hopefully Angela Marks will have a very interesting visual quiz which we can all attempt to win! As usual the committee will prepare food etc for the meeting but if you wish to contribute a dish it will be most welcome...

This year Tricia and colleagues have been working on a new book and it is planned to make it available at the Christmas meeting. Featuring shops, trades and businesses within Dawlish and surrounds it covers all streets in town plus Holcombe, the Warren and Cockwood etc. There are many photographs and trade adverts too! Please bring your money for this interesting publication.

On the subject of books, next year's project is the development of The Lawn, from when it was marshy ground to the current day. If you have any information or contributions, they will be most welcome early in the new year. Please contact Tricia or myself.

Any thoughts and effort on subjects for future books will be most welcome.

Also short articles and photos for the newsletter will be helpful.

Finally I must state that we are looking for a new Chairman. Whilst Bob Thompson is managing to open each meeting he would really like to hand over to new volunteer...

Derek Wain

Teignmouth & Shaldon Heritage Centre visit

Monday 5th September was the date of the last outing of the year – twenty plus members met at the Teignmouth & Shaldon Heritage Centre, more usually known as Teignmouth Museum. For most of us it was a first visit to the recently opened new building. The maritime history was displayed to great effect – from artefacts salvaged from the mystery wreck off the north end of the beach, to the more personal story of Admiral Pellew who fought with Nelson. The local lifeboat crews were also mentioned; also the Morgan Giles ship building yard which is now a housing complex. The building still has a very new feeling compared with the dark and cramped old museum area. The staff were very welcoming to us all and were interested to know how Dawlish Museum was doing this season. After touring the displays on the lower floors we went up stairs where a very nice cream tea was laid out for us – some went out on to the roof to observe Teignmouth from a different angle. As usual, thanks were due to Tricia who organised it all for us and who we were pleased to see there. Plans are already in hand for next year but in the meantime we do have some interesting talks to look forward to...

Mavis Stuckey

A Blue Plaque 'goes up' in Dawlish

On 21st September 2011 members of the Local History Group, Dawlish Museum and other local people were invited to the unveiling of a plaque to the famous ballet dancer JOHN GILPIN who, although not born in Dawlish, spent much of his boyhood in the town. The unveiling of the plaque was performed by Mr Derek Ledbrooke, a boyhood friend and neighbour who had some very interesting memories. This is the first 'Blue plaque' in Dawlish although, a little off the beaten track Penfield Gardens is quite easy to find. After the unveiling we enjoyed a pleasant reception in the garden of the house which was built on the site of an old orchard – a very old apple tree was in pride of place – if only it could talk not only about John Gilpin but also about the orchard which was built upon in the 1930s. John's career is well documented and Dawlish is very proud of it's 'adopted' son.

Mavis Stuckey

Mary Ann Thorn story continued from September... William Short's Sister and Brother

William Short, the Strand wine and spirit merchant had a sister, Mary, who kept house for her other brother, Caleb, until he married. She then also moved to Dawlish, where she became 'mistress of the Public Baths', as she appears in the 1861 census. By 1871, while living at the same address, 8 Marine Parade, she had become a lodging house keeper, evidently the baths had ceased their original function by then. Mary died unmarried in 1873, and probate was granted to her brother William, described as a 'spirit merchant'.

William and Mary's brother, Caleb, succeeded their father as parochial schoolmaster at Chagford. Before that, he taught at Fullands House School, Taunton, where one of his pupils was Charles Gordon, later to become General Gordon of Khartoum. The school, later to become part of Kings College, Taunton, was effectively the birthplace of Somerset County Cricket Club, being the venue for the first

**Our next meeting is on
5th December
at The Manor**

**Christmas Social
with
Quiz by Angela Marks**

matches ever played by the team.

In 1854, Caleb married Susannah Scott, daughter of one of Chagford's more prominent farmers, Henry, whose own father, Gilbert, had changed his name from Scut. Susannah's sister, Anna was Mary Ann Thorn's mother.

After Caleb died, Susannah moved to Dawlish to live with her brother-in-law, William in the Strand, bringing her daughter, Eleanora, who also trained to be a teacher, and after a spell of teaching in Broadclyst, by 1901, she had moved back to Dawlish, where, by 1911, she had become headmistress of the Elementary School. She died at her home, Lawn House, in Brunswick Place in 1929. Eleanora's brother Frederick, a chemistry teacher in London, also retired to Dawlish, he lived in Stockton Hill and died in 1935.

Mary Ann Thorn and Thirza Cann – Drapers and Milliners, Albert Place

Susannah Scott's sister, Anna, had married Richard Thorn, accountant, farmer and registrar of births and deaths in Chagford, in 1841. Their eldest surviving daughter, Mary Ann was born in 1843, and in 1861, aged 18, she was a draper's apprentice, living with her uncle Caleb and aunt Susannah in Chagford. At some time in the 1860s, she, too, moved to Dawlish, and became an assistant to John Lloyd, draper of 4 The Strand, next door to Lloyd's Bank. A fellow assistant there was Thirza Cann, who was distantly connected by marriage to the Thorn family.

Thirza was born in Moretonhampstead in 1835, the daughter of William Cann, master wheelwright. Her aunt by marriage, another Thirza, was second cousin to Richard Thorn, Mary Ann's father. In the 1861 census, Thirza is recorded as being a milliner, assistant to John Lloyd, and she was still there in 1871.

Some time in the 1870s, Thirza and Mary Ann went into business on their own account at 5 Albert Place, next door to the White Hart Inn. In the 1881 census, Mary Ann is recorded as a dressmaker, Thirza a milliner. The business of Cann and Thorn lasted until Thirza's death in 1890, and seems to be a successful one, for her will records that Thirza left just over £1,000, a considerable sum then.

Mary Ann continued to run the business on her own, though by 1891 she had taken on her fourteen year old niece, Lucy Painter, as an assistant. Lucy had been born in Chagford in 1847, the daughter of Mary Ann's sister, Susanna, and William Painter, a master mason in Chagford. She was to spend the rest of her life living with her aunt, and was ultimately buried with her in Dawlish cemetery.

By 1901, Lucy's sister, Ellen, had joined the business as an apprentice, but she married Albert Smith, a postal clerk in 1909 and went to live in South Wales.

The 1911 census shows Mary Ann, then 67, still very much in charge of the business, her niece Lucy still her assistant, and her sister, Susanna Painter visiting. The census shows that 5 Albert Place had five rooms beside the kitchen and shop.

Lucy's brother, Scott Painter, kept the Cleave Hotel at Lustleigh, and it was here in 1916 that their mother, Susanna died.

Mary Ann was still running the business in 1914, she probably retired in about 1915, when she was 72, and went to live at 4 Barton Villas with her brother Richard Thorn, a supervisor with the Inland Revenue, who retired to Dawlish. Lucy Painter was then still in her thirties, and whether or not she

continued to run the business is unclear.

Mary Ann Thorn died in 1928 aged 85. Her brother Richard moved to Winscombe, Oak Hill where he died aged 81 in 1933. Lucy Painter also lived to be 85 and died in 1962.

From Angela Marks

Dawlish Wives Club

Recently, I met a Dawlish resident who used to belong the Dawlish Wives Club and was loaned some club programmes outlining various meetings and events through out the period 1969 - 1974. They certainly had some interesting activities and not all of them attributed to the ladies only. They included: a Suede party; two Brass Rubbing meetings, a visit to the new Junior School in Westcliff Road, a talk by an RAC representative; an explanation of mis-use of drugs, and advice on family planning... Also a Pippa-Dee Underwear presentation; a visit to the Police HQ at Middlemore, Exeter; various Tupperware parties and hints & tips on making your own lampshades; a talk on Danish and Swedish films; SWEB electrical equipment applications and many hair, make-up and beauty demonstrations. They certainly seemed to have a varied programme...

Sheila Wain

Rev John Rashdall; Vicar 1864 - 69

Rev. John Rashdall was Vicar of Dawlish from 1864 to 1869. He had a brother-in-law James Loftus Marsden who was a 'water-cure' doctor from Great Malvern. In 1852 the by-then widowed Doctor was about to remarry; he sent his five daughters to Paris under the care of a governess. The girls were badly mistreated and two of them died. The governess faced trial in Paris and the Rev. Rashdall was an important prosecution witness. When rumours of cruelty first arose the Doctor sent John Rashdall (then unmarried and vicar at Great Malvern) to Paris to investigate. Unfortunately Rashdall could not decide whether the rumours were true (it was all very complicated) and made the fatal mistake of not removing his nieces from the governess's care. He felt dreadfully guilty about this for the rest of his life.

John Rashdall married Emily Hankey at St George, Hanover Sq., London in 1857; they had 3 children, Hastings b. 1859, Edward b. 1860 and Agnes b. 1862.

Emily was much younger than her husband (21y) and survived him by 54 years; she had the pulpit in St Gregory's established to honour his memory. Their graves are side-by-side in the churchyard. Can find no records of the family living in Dawlish after John died in 1869, they first moved to Cheltenham then back to London to the parish where they were married.

Fortunately Emily Rashdall preserved her husband's diaries, which are now at the Bodlian Library, Oxford. They cover the tragic events of 1852/3 and the subsequent trial in Paris in 1855.

The Reverend John Rashdall's son Hastings went on to become a highly respected theologian, historian and philosopher.

Initial information received from a history researcher based in Australia enquiring about a public monument erected in Dawlish re J Rashdall.

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