



Paignton Heritage Society Newsletter March 2022

www.paigntonheritagesociety.co.uk

Message from our Chair

As I am writing this Storm Eunice has passed through and, as I look out of the window at the daffodils in my garden, I am heartened that spring is on its way. What a time we have had over the last two years but, thankfully, we are now returning to some kind of normality and I am looking forward to celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June.

We have had a busy few months; 'The Peintona Paladin - Local History Quiz' held in the Palace Theatre was a great success and this was followed by our own Christmas social in December when Nick Pannell (our President) gave us a presentation on the history of the Heritage Society.

In January we were entertained by Jo Loosemore (from the BBC) who was responsible for the 'Mayflower Exhibition' held at The Box in Plymouth. Jo took us on a journey from the time she was first approached to take on this project to the day it finally closed.



We were very lucky in February to have 'An Audience with the Lady Katherine'.

This was a first for the Society and The Lady Katherine delighted us all by walking amongst us and telling us her story. We learnt that she was the daughter of a Devon family (during the time of King Henry VIII) and, as a girl lived at Greenway Court. She told us about her marriages and her children, one of whom was Sir Walter Raleigh. It was a shame that, because of the very adverse weather, so few members were able to come along. Following our "audience" - Rosemary Griggs gave us the opportunity to talk to her about her book "A Woman of Noble Witt" If you would like to find out more about her, please visit Rosemary's website www.rosemarygriggs.co.uk

Our next talk is on 17th March when Colin Vosper will be telling us "The Story of Harry Hems".

We are planning to hold our AGM on Thursday, 31st March at 7.00pm and, this year, we will again be holding the meeting via Zoom. We will send out the paperwork nearer the time and hope that many of you will be able to join us on line.

Iris Butler, Chair

Committee Members

Your Committee members are:

Chair	Iris Butler
Vice Chair/Secretary	Karen Chapman
Treasurer	Maggie Loates
Committee Members	Eileen Donovan
	Christine Watts
	Keith Masters
	Anne Pentney
	John Pentney
	David Coaker
	Jim Milne
Co-opted Member	Lee Hayward

If you want to contact any of us, just e.mail
Paigntonheritagesociety@gmail.com
and your query will be forwarded.

Membership

Lee Hayward is our Membership Secretary.
If you wish to contact her, please e.mail –
paigntonheritagesociety@outlook.com

Parish Church Choir



This 1954 photo of “Parish Church Choir, Paignton” turned up the other day, with some choristers named on the back, but it is not clear who is who. I wonder if any of our members can identify anyone:

Rear Row: Frank Baker, Leslie Dillon Cox, Godfrey Farrant, Norman Elliot, Donald Wood, Billy Coysh, Fred Underhay, Colin Fielding, John Forth(?), Finch Snr.

Boys: Derek Webber, ? ?

Organist & Choir Master: Ernest Winship

Heritage Open Days - Kirkham House

Not long now till opening time! Kirkham will be open to visitors on Good Friday, 15th April, and Easter Monday, 18th April.

Thank you to our new volunteers – we are putting together information packs and will be in touch shortly. If anyone else is interested, please phone David Coaker on 01803 553392.

Trail Booklets

Available on-line and payable by cheque or Paypal at:
<http://www.paigntonheritagesociety.co.uk>

The full range now includes -

Paignton - Harbour - Goodrington	£1.50
Paignton - Old Town (updated)	1.50

Paignton - Sea Front	1.50
Paignton – Oldway (updated)	1.50
Paignton - Medieval Paignton - Four Old Buildings	1.00
Paignton - New Town (Victorian/ Edwardian)	1.00
Preston - The Original Hamlet	1.00

There is a charge of £2 to cover postage and packaging.

Torbay Heritage Forum

The poet John Donne famously said “No man is an island” – and on that note, some good news:

A new Forum has been set up to bring all the heritage groups of the Bay together. For a long time, heritage groups have been trundling along on their own, but now it is hoped that by talking and sharing information at quarterly forums, we can work together more effectively. Torre Abbey hosted the first Zoom meeting on 17th February.

English Riviera Walking Festival

We have been invited to take part in a Walking Festival, which will offer visitors guided walks of Paignton, Torquay and Brixham. The Festival will take place in October.

We will be covering Paignton by offering two walks packed with information - ‘Maritime Paignton’, led by Karen Howes, and ‘Hidden Paignton’ led by Karen Chapman.

Each walk will be limited to 10 walkers, and there will be a charge of £7.50 per person. Places can be booked via:
<https://www.englishriviera.co.uk/whats-on/featured-events/english-riviera-walking-festival>

PALACE
THEATRE PAIGNTON

An Audience at the Palace

In December, Iris Butler and Karen Chapman hosted a local history quiz as part of the ‘Audience at the Palace’ programme of talks.



7.00pm at The Gerston Hall, (behind the Gerston Chapel, opposite the Post Office)

- 17th March – Colin Vosper – ‘The Story of Harry Hems’
- 21st April – John Risdon – ‘A History of Brixham Fishing’
- 19th May – Jill Farrant and Wendy Caplan – ‘The Bijou Theatre’

Congratulations to the winner, Pat Kerswell, who scored an impressive 70 of a possible 91 points.

The Spring programme of talks is:

- 10th March – ‘The Churchill Girls’ – Rachel Trethewey
- 7th April – ‘The Gilberts of Compton Castle – the family that founded the Empire’ – Phil Badcott
- 12th May – ‘Squidbox’ – Robert Garnham

Doors open at 10am for a 10.30 start. From 1st April, the ticket price will increase by a very modest £1, so the talks will be £5 for PHS members - £6 for non-members. This will continue to include a cup of coffee.

PLEASE NOTE – to obtain the concessionary price when booking, members need to quote the **new** password

PHS website

New stock of photographs is being added all the time – if you have anything interesting, such as Paignton landmarks or events, please share!

Diary Dates

Our monthly Thursday meetings are as follows, all commencing at the NEW time of

The Paignton Market Charter of 1295

Whilst going through some papers in our archives, I found the following which I believe was researched by our own Peggy Parnell for the 700th Anniversary of the Paignton Charter in 1995. Much of the information was presented in a leaflet, but I found it so interesting I thought it was worth sharing with you – thanks to Peggy!



Paignton was one of Devon's earlier towns to be granted a market charter and fair (or fyre). Open air markets are of very ancient origin – in fact, it was the Romans who enjoyed fairs and probably encouraged outlying peasants and tradesmen to bring their surplus cattle and produce into nearby towns, and who may well have introduced certain trading standards. However, it was the Normans who created 'Market Charters'.

On the 2nd August 1294, Edward 1 granted to the Bishop of Exeter (Thomas Bytton) permission to hold in perpetuity a weekly market every Thursday at his Manor in 'Pynton' together with an annual fair in the same Manor to last three days on the vigil feast and morrow of 'Trinity Sunday' of which the first fair took place within the bounds of St Johns' Church, at the entrance to the Bishop's Palace. Today a plaque marks the spot (pictured). Trinity Sunday is the Sunday following Pentecost (the 50th day after Easter) – the earliest the date it can be is 17th May and the latest is 20th June.

The ancient Manor and Borough of Paega's People (Paignton) was different from other borough towns, such as Totnes and Dartmouth, in that it was owned by the Bishop of Exeter, who benefited from all tolls and fines within the Manor. Consequently, the town gained little in the way of municipal privileges for its people. Following the reformation (around the Act of Supremacy in 1534), the need for a market and fair declined, although several attempts were made to revive the custom.

Charter dates, once given, were rarely changed but in Paignton's case the fair eventually became involved with the annual Regatta, and on completion of the promenade (1870 – 1901) it was moved onto the new Green where it has since remained every August.

Trading and Medieval Law Traders and merchants travelled from market to market all over Devon and even came from the continent selling wool, cloth, spices and wine. There were special codes of practice regarding entering and trading within a town.

By 1331, strict Guild Laws, intended to keep trade within the town and in the hands of their members, were introduced. The Lord of the Manor was enforced by the Crown to proclaim at the start of each fair or market, how long it would last and that any sales

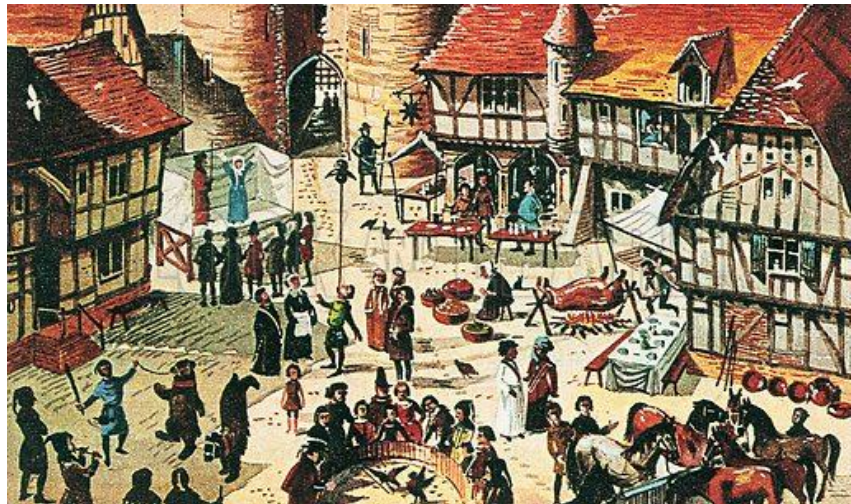


made after its closure meant the trader had for forfeit to the Crown (or in the case of Paignton, the Bishop), double the value of any sales made.

With little coinage in the medieval period, the exchange of goods was usually secured by conducting bargains in the presence of a witness, who in a dispute would be called upon to clarify the transaction. Paignton's market stall holders were charged a fee of 10/- (50p) called 'stallage'

Profits were a subject of Christian morality. It was considered unchristian to push up prices in times of scarcity, but equally wrong to let them drop in a glut. It was also strictly illegal to trade goods on entering or leaving a town.

From a dais at the west door of St John's Church, Paignton's Reeve (servant of the Lord of the Manor), or his 'Bruitier' (the town crier), would have announced conditions for keeping the peace and probably warned traders that the Ale and Bread Tasters would be checking the weight and quality of goods for



sale; also the manor's agent would be present and that the 'Court-cum-Ale House' in Crown and Anchor Way would deal swiftly with any offenders lest they leave town before justice could be administered, assuring them of heavy fines and/or a spell in the stocks for an misdemeanors. The fair would then be officially declared open, most likely by the showing or parading of a glove or a wooden hand on a decorated staff. This was the signal for outside merchants to enter the town, knowing they could trade without fear of arrest. Once secured in a prominent position, the glove or wooden hand remained in place until its removal indicated the fair was closed. This custom is thought to be of ancient Saxon origin. It began when permission had to be gained from the local judge and ratified by the King, who then sent one of his gloves to approve the arrangement. At the Lammas Fair in Exeter, an enormous decorated, stuffed glove was taken through the streets before being secured to the Guildhall roof. In addition, a shower of heated pennies was thrown from a window above to a crowd of excited children below. In Totnes, there is a record for the repair of gloves against the October Fair of 1555, costing 4d.

As well as traders, the Fair would attract astrologers, musicians, acrobats, jugglers, dancers and magicians – with plenty of Devon cider, it would have been a merry and boisterous event.

When the Charter was first given to the Manor or Paignton, the townspeople responded by presenting a token payment to the King in the form of a "white-pot" – a medieval form of pudding made with cream. This resulted in the people of Paignton being known as "pudden eaters". Local legend has it that it took seven years in the making, seven years in the baking and seven years in the eating – a total of 21 years,

which almost certainly represented the term of the Charter. Over time, the period of the Charter lengthened to 50 years, and instead of being sent to the reigning monarch, the pudding was distributed amongst the poor of the Parish.

The custom of presenting the pudding gradually died out, but amongst the people of Paignton, it was not forgotten. In 1819 an effort was made to revive the custom, and a local bakery produced an enormous pudding containing 400lbs of flour, 170lbs of suet, 140lbs of raisins and 20 eggs. It took four days to boil in the Crown and Anchor Inn's brewing copper.

Fifty years later, in 1859, the custom was again revived to celebrate the grand opening of the railway from Torre to Paignton. This pudding bore no resemblance to the original "white-pot". The 1859 pudding contained huge quantities of meat and flour, and weighed over a ton. It was intended as a thank-you to the railway workers, with any "left-overs" being given to the town's poor. It was drawn through the town by a team of eight horses to the sea shore, where thousands of visitors, who had poured into the town on excursion trains, joined with the residents and railway navvies (workers) in the excitement of the day. Unfortunately, the assembled crowd soon realized that, despite its size, the pudding would not feed everyone, and so those at the back began to press forward to seize a share of the pudding. The event quickly became a riot, with everyone scrapping like fiends to grab a piece of pudding. By the time order was restored, the pudding was gone – mostly trampled under-foot by the rioters.

The custom was revived again in 1930, 1954, 1968 and 1995 (pictured) but never again on such a grand scale.



Karen Chapman
February 2022