



Paignton Heritage Society

Newsletter March 2024

www.paigntonheritagesociety.co.uk

Message from our Chair

As there is a lot of information in this Newsletter, I am going to keep my message brief! I just wanted to say how pleased I am that so many members attend the monthly talks and would like to thank you for your continued support of the Society. We have lots of interesting speakers and also some visits planned this year and hope you will be able to join us on these occasions.

Iris Butler, Chair

Committee Members

Chair	Iris Butler
Vice Chair/Secretary	Karen Chapman
Treasurer	Maggie Loates
Committee Members	Eileen Donovan
	Christine Watts
	David Coaker
	Jim Milne
	Lesley Drew
	Lee Hayward
	1 vacancy

Membership

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

Kirkham House

2024 Opening Times are 13.00 – 16.00 on Bank Holidays and Sundays in July and August.



We have to own up to a bit of an 'oops' re the pewter on display at Kirkham House. Unknown to the present Committee, our late Chair, Tony Moss, signed a loan agreement with Torre Abbey in 1999. This loan was for 5 years.

In 2006, Tony renewed the loan for another 5 years. Fast forward to 2024 when English Heritage were doing a check of the items on display at Kirkham, and realised the pewter was nothing to do with them. They found a copy of the original loan agreement, and brought it to our attention – we have had it on loan for 25 years. If it were a library book, we would owe £££s!

The decision was taken to return the pewter to Torre Abbey for their safe keeping, as it is now quite valuable.

Diary Dates

Our monthly Thursday meetings are as follows, all commencing at 7.00pm at The Gerston Chapel (opposite the Post Office):

- **21st March** – Brenda Loosemore – well known local actress and entertainer Brenda looks at life in Devon and asks "Is Devon Funny".
- **18th April** – Phil Badcott – Frederick Stockdale: Devon's Forgotten Artist
- **16th May** – Dr Penny Starns – Plymouth in the Blitz
- **20th June** – Nick Powe – Kent's Cavern

An Audience at the Palace

The winter programme of talks is:

14th March - John Tomkins – “Bringing the English Riviera to life through film”

25th April – Dr Todd Gray – Devon History Matters

16th May – Maureen McAllister – From Couch Potato to Pilgrim

13th June – Ali Marshall – Torre Abbey’s Potent Plants Garden

Doors open at 10.00 for a 10.30 start. Tickets for the talks are £5 for PHS members - £6 for non-members.

PHS website

Our Web Administrator, Jim Milne, is busy with regular additions to the website. Have you had a look at it lately?

<https://www.paigntonheritagesociety.co.uk/>

New material for the website is always welcome.

PHS Archives

An e.mail popped into our inbox in December – would we like to have three albums of photos and cuttings relating to World War 1 in our Archive? They were put together by Daisy Fellowes, the granddaughter of Isaac Singer. Well we jumped at the chance and didn’t have to be asked twice! We will be scanning the albums, then getting a translation as most of the text is in French. Folders will be made of the photographs and information, which will be added to our collection for display at Heritage Day and other events.

If we have any fluent French speakers in our membership, who would like to help with the translation, please let us know. Merci.

Another gift to our archives is from Mr McNought, who has done a wonderful job of transcribing the following Paignton Parish Church records –

- Register of Baptisms

- Register of Marriages
- Register of Burials
- Tithe Apportionments

These will be very helpful research tools for local historians.

Preston Tram Depot

In January, we joined forces with Torquay History Society and 40 of us went to see what remains of the Preston Tram Depot in Orient Road. It is now an MOT Centre, and the very kind owner, Paul, opened it up for us to have a look around.



Paul very generously said if anyone wanted to see what is left of the Depot, providing they are not too busy, he would be pleased to allow them to call in.

Torquay Tramways Co. ran trams between the Strand, Torquay, and the end of Hyde Road from 15th April 1907 until 14th January 1934. Recent roadworks at the Strand have unearthed some remaining track, and efforts are being made to preserve them and perhaps make some sort of feature of this piece of history.



Did you know that the bus shelter in Preston at the junction of Preston Down Road with

Torquay Road is not a bus shelter – it is actually a tram shelter!

After the Tram Depot visit, we offered those who wanted a guided tour of Kirkham House. 29 took up the offer, and it was lovely to show off the House – a practice run for our first open day of 2024, which is on Good Friday. We can also arrange private tours for groups – e.mail us on:

Paigntonheritagesociety@gmail.com

Oldway update

The Tearooms have been closed since mid December for safety reasons, as work needs to be done on the roof over the lower half of the room. Torbay Council hope to have this work completed by Easter, but whether or not the Tearooms will re-open is uncertain at the moment.



Does anyone have any photographs of aeroplanes in Paignton around 1910-1930, or perhaps stories of family members in the RAF, or Spitfires in World War 2, or the various Hotels in Paignton requisitioned for Air Force training – in fact, anything historically related to Paignton and airplanes. We have been invited to put up a display showing Paignton's historical connection with the skies. If you have anything you could share with us please e.mail:

Paigntonheritagesociety@gmail.com

Photographs would be scanned and returned to you immediately.

Sidney H. Beard (1862 – 1938)

Until recently I had never heard of Mr Beard, but by pure accident, I found an article online and discovered this gentleman's connection to Paignton.



Sidney with his first wife Pattie, in Salvation Army uniform

Sidney Hartnoll Beard was born in Putney, London, in 1862. At the age of 32, Sidney became a vegetarian, and the following year he set up the 'Order of the Golden Age', with headquarters in Ilfracombe, where he lived with his wife, Annie Patterson (pictured left), and their children. In early life, Sidney and Annie were members of the Salvation Army, later moving to the Spiritualist Church.

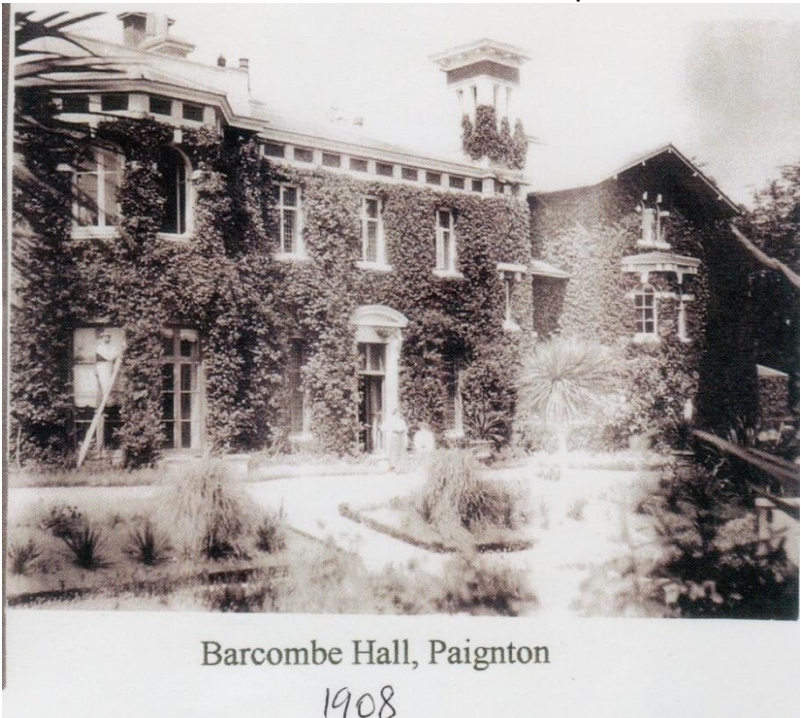
In 1904, the Beard family moved to Barcombe Hall in Paignton, together with the Headquarters of the Order of the Golden Age. The Order published a journal, edited by Beard, called the Herald of the Golden Age, and its purpose was to promote "a fruitarian system of living, and to teach its advantages". Beard was a staunch Christian, and he believed it was the moral duty of a man to follow the humane treatment of animals as part of a Christian belief system. The Prospectus of the Order on the next page outlines this belief system:

Barcombe Hall, pictured here in 1908, was later in 1927 to become Montpelier School.

A Newsletter dated 3rd April 1987, of the Devon Buildings Group, records:

"We have renewed our request for the listing of Barcombe Hall in Paignton, a stylistically eclectic villa built in 1837-38 and of considerable architectural and historical interest".

The Newsletter goes on to say that the House was designed by Edward Davis, but despite protests, unfortunately English Heritage refused to list the building, and it was demolished in 1985 to make way for a housing estate.



Barcombe Hall, Paignton

1908

THE ORDER OF THE GOLDEN AGE.

HEADQUARTERS :
PAIGNTON, ENGLAND.

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Founded 1895.

To proclaim a message of Peace and Happiness, Health and Purity, Life, Spirituality, and Power.

To hasten the coming of the Golden Age when Love and Righteousness shall reign upon Earth—by endeavouring to promote universal benevolence, by protesting against all social customs and ideas which hinder its advance, and by proclaiming obedience to the laws of God—*physical and moral*—as a practical remedy for the misery and disease which afflicts mankind.

To advocate the adoption throughout Christendom of a bloodless and natural diet, because the practise of eating the flesh of animals is :—

1st.—A violation of one of the most important Physical Laws which govern man's being, and the cause of a large proportion of the disease and depravity with which our Race is cursed.

2nd.—A transgression against Moral Law, because it involves the massacre of millions of sentient creatures, and the infliction of an appalling amount of cruelty which is *totally unnecessary*.

To plead the cause of the weak, defenceless, and oppressed, and to deprecate cruelty, and injustice, and all that is opposed to the true spirit of Christianity.

All Members of The Order are pledged to seek the attainment of these objects by daily example and personal influence. They are divided into two classes—*Companions and Associates*—the former being abstainers from flesh, fish and fowl, as food ; the latter from flesh and fowl only. Members do not receive any remuneration from the Funds of The Order for any service or literary work that may be rendered. The Society is composed of disinterested men and women who are actuated by altruistic motives. They contribute towards the work and they invite the co-operation of other kindred souls.

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A copy of the Prospectus will be forwarded, together with any information that may be desired, upon application to The Council.

Beard and his friend and fellow fruitarian, Physician Josiah Oldfield, lectured on the benefits of fruitarianism at the Cambridge Guildhall Council Chamber in 1908. Similar to Oldfield, Beard's type of fruitarianism was not strict and included dairy and eggs. Beard defined fruitarianism as "systematic living upon the various fruits of the earth, instead of upon the products of the shambles". He stated that fruits of the earth included all kinds of cereals, seeds and every variety of nuts, all fruits and every kind of vegetable and this could be supplemented by dairy and egg products. Beard argued that fruitarianism helped one to live a humane and hygienic life with freedom from the butchery of animal flesh.

The Vegetarian News published an epitaph of Sidney following his death in 1938:

Sidney Hartnoll Beard (1862-1938)



One more link with the early days of vegetarianism, as an organised movement, in this country has gone with the death, which we regret to record, of Mr. Sidney H. Beard, at the age of seventy-six, after a week's illness, at his home in Putney on October 20th. Besides horticulture, Mr. Beard was keenly interested in metaphysical and scientific research, and he became an honorary member of the Psychical Research Society in 1882. Like Mrs. Beard, he was an ardent spiritualist. However, his chief interest, to which he devoted his life, was the Order of the Golden Age, and of this he was founder and president. A ready writer, and also a lecturer, on health and religious topics, Mr. Beard was editor of the *Herald of the Golden Age* (the official organ of the organisation just mentioned) from 1896 to 1918. He was also the author of numerous articles, pamphlets and booklets. Among the last mentioned may be cited "Is Flesh-eating Morally Defensible?" and "A Comprehensive Guide-Book to Natural, Hygienic and Humane Diet." In November, 1894, a series of lectures held in Devonshire under the auspices of the Exeter Vegetarian Society was the means of Mr. Beard adopting the vegetarian diet. Subsequently, he and the society's hon. secretary, Mr. J. I. Pengelly, decided to resuscitate the practically defunct Order of the Golden Age, and headquarters were established at the residence of Mr. Beard, "The Beacon," Ilfracombe. Soon afterwards, in January, 1896, the first number of the *Herald of the Golden Age* made its appearance. In 1904 headquarters were transferred to Paignton, Mr. Beard occupying the offices of president and hon. treasurer. Among its objects, as set out in its literature at that time, were "to proclaim and hasten the coming of the Golden Age, when humaneness and peace, righteousness and spirituality shall prevail, and when kindness towards every fellow-creature shall reign in the human heart." In the year 1909 headquarters were removed to London. Since then, countless thousands of leaflets and brochures have been distributed in many parts of the world, branches of the organisation being established in Pietermaritzburg and Bombay, as well as in Burma.

D.B.A.

The Vegetarian News, December 1938.

Karen Chapman, September 2023

Sources: Wikipedia
Devon Buildings Group Newsletter
Vegetarian News
Paignton Heritage Society archives