



Paignton Heritage Society Newsletter June 2024

www.paigntonheritagesociety.co.uk

Message from our Chair

I would like to express my appreciation to those members who attended our Annual General Meeting in May. As I said at the time, it is a great privilege for me to be the Chair of your Society and I was delighted to be reelected. I was pleased too that all the committee members were re-elected, as we have a busy year ahead and some exciting plans for the future.

As well as producing a book on the History of Paignton for Key Stage 2 Pupils (see article later in this newsletter), we are working towards gaining Charity Status - which will help secure our future. We are also hoping to move our archive to a room in Paignton Library and are currently awaiting a Heads of Terms for our lease. None of this would be possible without input from our members – so thank you for continuing to support the Society.

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

At Easter, we opened the House for the first time this year and, thanks to excellent publicity, we were delighted to welcome 70 visitors over Good Friday and Easter Monday.

Guided Walks

We took part in the English Riviera Spring Walking Festival again this year, and took a group around “Paignton’s Hidden History”. As well as showing off the history of Palace Avenue, Winner Street and the area around the Parish Church, we are able to offer walkers the chance to actually go inside The Clink and The Tower.

In May we took a party of HSBC Pensioners around old Paignton, and the response was the usual – “I had no idea there was so much to learn about Paignton”.

If you are a member of any Group that would like a private tour of old Paignton, please let us know. We do not make a charge, but we do appreciate donations if the walkers enjoy their visit.

Diary Dates

Our monthly Thursday meetings are as follows, all commencing at 7pm at The Gerston Chapel (opposite the Post Office):

- **20th June** – Nick Powe – Kent’s Cavern
- **18th July** – An afternoon visit to The Brixham Battery - £5 per person
- **August** – no meeting
- **19th September** – John Tomkins – Bringing History to Life through Film

PLEASE NOTE – at the AGM it was agreed that the cost of entry to our monthly talks be raised to £4 for members, £5 for guests.

An Audience at the Palace

The summer programme of talks is:

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

11th July – Jenny Davy – An Introduction to the Alexander Technique

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.paigntonheritatesociety.co.uk/>

New material for the website is always welcome.

PHS Archives

Our archives continue to grow – sometimes it is a wonderful photograph album, sometimes it is just a menu card from a celebration of a Paignton event. Great or small, we are always very grateful when someone passes on a memory to us for safe keeping.

In March, we were delighted to receive a stunning collection of books and papers on behalf of the late Paul Forsey, who was an avid collector of information concerning Paignton.

We have also been offered maps, ledger books and other records belonging to the Paignton firm of Architects, W G Couldrey Son & Partners. This firm was set up by Walter George Couldrey (1856-1950), and in 1908 he was joined by his son, Walter Norman Couldrey. Works by the firm include the School of Art & Science, Lloyd's Bank Dartmouth, Park House School, Waddeton Court, Brixham War Memorial and the Brixham Housing Scheme to name but a few. Walter Jnr died in Paignton on 1st March 1970.



The above shows part of the sgraffito that adorns the side wall of the School of Arts & Science – sadly now in a poor state of repair.

Oldway update

Regrettably it is confirmed that The Tearooms will not re-open.

However, Torbay Council have issued a press release recently advising that £8 million has been awarded by the Levelling Up Partnership Fund for the first phase of the refurbishment of the Grade II listed Oldway Mansion.

What wonderful news!



Thanks to Tony Hill and Karen Chapman, we will have lots of history of flying over the skies of Paignton to show at the June Airshow. We will be in a marquee on the South Green at Paignton Seafront – near the Paignton Club – both days. Please come along and support us.

History of Paignton

Earlier this year, an idea was put forward to produce a history book of Paignton aimed at Key Stage 2 school pupils (7/11 year olds). The idea was to whet the children's appetite for what has happened around them, how Paignton people lived, how they died, and to give the children a sense of pride in their home town. We are delighted to advise you that our bid to the Heritage Grant Scheme has been successful. We have been awarded £7,500 and with this money, we will

produce a book on the history of Paignton which will be donated to the Libraries of every primary school in Paignton.

We will be working with Oldway, Roselands and Kings Ash Primary Schools and other schools in the area to ensure the book meets the teaching needs and the interests of the children. We will also work with Paignton Library.

We are really fortunate to have found an illustrator amongst our members to help with the project – Paul Snowden has produced his own local history books, and has offered to make drawings which will help the children to visualise a scene at a time when there was no photography to record it. Below is Paul's image of our ancestors looking from Broadsands across the Bay to Torquay.



This really is our chance to leave a legacy to the children of Paignton.

Wetherspoons

You may have seen the scaffolding around the Talk of the Town, on Torbay Road (first opened in 2010). The pub is being extensively refurbished and extended to include numbers 50 and 52 Torbay Road. The project has cost £2.3 million, and the pub is re-opening on 4th June

We have been working with the company INNGEAR, who are dealing with the decoration of the pub, and we have been able to supply them with images of old Paignton.

We wish the Talk of the Town well for the future.

Wear with pride! Thanks to an anonymous donor, we now have a small supply of polo shirts with the PHS logo, which will be worn with pride by Kirkham guides, volunteers at the Airshow etc.



For June and July, we are offering these very good quality polo shirts for just £13 (normal price £15). This leaves a small profit which will go towards our archiving project. Our minimum order is three shirts, so we do need to meet this before we can accept an order.

Sizes are:

XS – to fit 33/34"

S – to fit 35/37"

M – to fit 38/40"

L – to fit 41/43"

XL – to fit 44/47"

XXL – to fit 48/50"

The logo is in yellow, but you can order your shirt in a range of colours. The shirts we have now are navy – very smart! We will accept payment by cash, cheque, PayPal or bank transfer via our SumUp card reader. If you are interested, please email Paigntonheritagesociety@outlook.com Or speak to Lee Hayward, Membership Secretary.

Helen Bultz

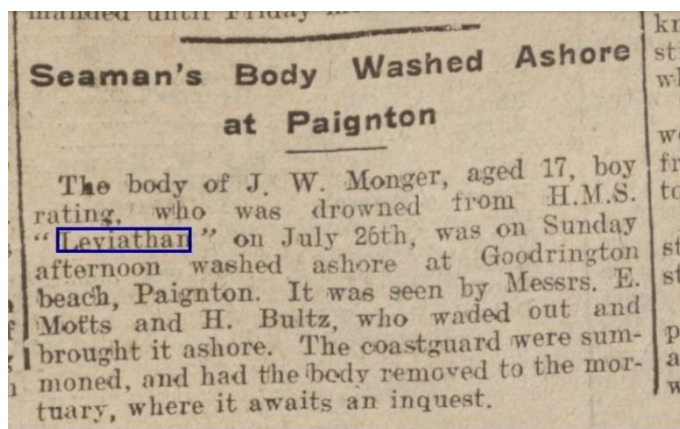
We are very grateful to Frankie Hewett, grand-daughter of Helen Bultz, who has donated a life-saving medal awarded to her grandmother for our archives. With the wonders of the internet, we were able to find out the story behind the medal, and hope you find this interesting.

Helen was born in Paignton in 1895, and by 1910 she was making a name for herself as a very strong swimmer. The following are just a sample of the reports that appear in local newspapers of the day:

- August 1910 – Dartmouth Regatta – 100 yards Scratch Race for Ladies – 2nd Miss H Bultz
- August 1910 – Paignton Regatta – 110 yards Open Swimming Scratch Race – held off Paignton Pier – 2nd Miss H Bultz
- August 1913 – Paignton Regatta – 110 yards Open & Scratch Race for Ladies – winner Miss Helen Bultz

Indeed, her grand-daughter tells us Helen was considered for the Olympic swimming team, but Helen's strict Victorian father was very much against his daughter taking part. The 1916 Summer Olympics were due to be held in Berlin, but were cancelled due to the outbreak of World War 1, so Helen would not have been able to compete anyway.

The history of the medal was passed down the family, and it was told that Helen had rescued a swimmer off Paignton Pier, and the medal was awarded for this. However, we may have discovered a much more grizzly story.



A newspaper report in the Western Times dated Tuesday 16 August 1910 is headlined "Seaman's body washed ashore at Paignton" and goes on to record that J W Monger, aged 17, was a boy rating aboard HMS Leviathan. The ship had anchored in Torbay, and following an accident as he tried to climb back onboard the ship from a small boat, Monger had fallen into the water and drowned. Several days later, his body was washed ashore at

Goodrington Beach, Paignton. It was seen by Mr Motts and H Bultz, who waded out and brought it ashore.

A report in the Western Morning News of Wednesday, 17th August, 1910 records the Coroner's Inquest:

PAIGNTON - Naval Seaman's Body Recovered. - When the fleets were recently in Torbay a first class naval boy, aged 17, named WILLIAM JAMES MONGER, was drowned from H.M.S. Leviathan. The body was not recovered at the time, but last Sunday afternoon it was seen floating in the surf at Goodrington sands, and brought ashore. The Inquest was opened yesterday by Mr S. Hacker at Paignton. The Admiralty was represented by Lieut. A. H. J. Gye, H.M.S. Bellarophon. - The body was identified by deceased's father, THOMAS JAMES MONGER, tin-worker of Abertillery. - Dr Cosens who made a superficial examination, said the remains were extremely decomposed and had evidently been in the water some time. There

was an extensive fracture across the back of the skull at the back of the left ear, but it was impossible to say whether caused before death or after. The fracture was sufficient to cause death and was probably caused before death. - Mr Ernest N. Motts said that at 2.30 on Sunday he was with Messrs. Clyne and Dults [*presumably this is a reporting error which should read Bultz?*] at Goodrington, when he saw the body floating in the wash of the tide, and assisted in getting it ashore. - P.C. Abrahams said he took charge of the body, which was dressed in trousers, jumper and silk scarf marked "W. J. MONGER." The purse was marked with his name and mess number. - The Coroner, in the absence of material witnesses from the ship, said he should have to adjourn the Inquiry. - Lieut. Gye mentioned that the Leviathan was now cruising around the North of Scotland and the Coroner fixed the adjourned Inquest for Tuesday, September 6th. The funeral took place yesterday afternoon at Paignton Cemetery with full naval honours, a band and firing party from H.M.S. Bellarophon, which is in the bay and a gun-carriage party from the Dido attending. The funeral party was under the command of Lieut. Gye., R.N., and Mr Johnson, of the Coastguard Station, was also present. Rev. R. Tebb, Wesleyan Minister, conducted the service. Three volleys was fired at the close of the service and "The Last Post" was sounded.



This picture of the grave of Monger, which is in Paignton Cemetery, was found on the website Find A Grave

Later update reports on the Coroner's Inquest record:

PAIGNTON - The Inquest on WILLIAM JAMES MONGER, a seaman drowned from H.M.S. Leviathan on July 26th, in Torbay, which was opened at Paignton on August 16th, was adjourned until yesterday for witnesses from the ship to give evidence; but it was stated that the ship would not arrive in Torbay until Saturday, and the Inquiry was therefore further adjourned until Tuesday at three o'clock.

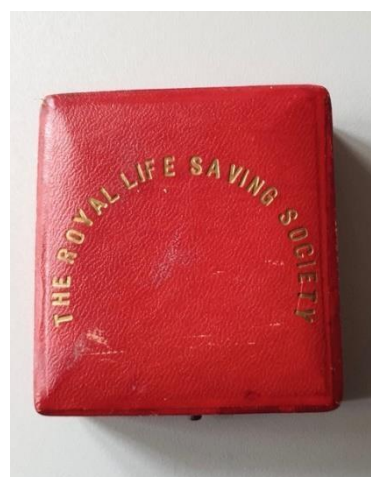
PAIGNTON - Drowned Naval Seaman. Inquest At Paignton. - The Inquest, which has been twice adjourned, on the body of WILLIAM JAMES MONGER, first class boy, R.N., who was drowned in Torbay on July 26th was concluded yesterday at Paignton by Mr Hacker. - James Egan, leading seaman in the Leviathan, said deceased was one of the crew of witness's boat. On the evening of Tuesday, July 26th, the Leviathan was in Torbay. He was waiting to get the boat hoisted, when he received orders to send the crew to supper. The crew climbed up the rope to get aboard. Three boys preceded deceased safely, but he slipped and fell into the boat, striking his head against the gunwale, and then fell into the water. Witness jumped overboard, but the boy sank and he could not recover him, although he had him between his feet for half a minute. There was a good deal of blood in the water. Several others dived in, but nothing was seen of deceased. He fell 24 feet before striking the gunwale. - Arthur W Turner said he was in the bow of the boat and saw deceased go up the rope, but, missing his grip at the davits, he fell with his head against the gunwale. Deceased had been up the rope

several times before. - Saml. Malcolm, a boy, gave similar evidence. - An officer of the ship said there had never been a similar accident on board. The boys were taught this exercise in the training-ship and were quite used to it. - The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death," and attached no blame to anyone. They expressed their admiration of Egan's attempt to save the deceased.

Helen Bultz was awarded a medal by The Royal Life Saving Society for the part she played in bringing Monger's body in from the sea – it must have been a very grizzly and distressing sight for a young eighteen year old girl.



The Latin inscription appears to be "Quem cunque miserum videris hominem scias" which the internet translates to "Whatever miserable man you see, know him" (no responsibility taken for the accuracy of this translation!!). The inscription goes on to say "Awarded to Helen K S Bultz – Aug 1913"



HOWEVER! There is a PS to this story. A lovely member of our Society, who is now no longer with us, used to tell me amazing stories of Paignton, until one day his friend whispered to me "he loves to talk, and he never lets the truth spoil a good story".

I contacted the Life Saving Awards Research Society who tell me: "the medal was issued by the Royal Life Saving Society and was awarded for swimming proficiency - it was not an award given for saving (or attempting to save) life.

The medal was awarded in 1913 and Helen Bultz would have needed to be an accomplished swimmer (as evidenced by the newspaper reports) to have been able to qualify for the award."

Helen's father was also named "H Bultz" and it is likely that it was he who pulled the body of William Monger ashore at Goodrington.

Well – let's not waste a good story!!!

Researched by Karen Chapman & Lee Hayward

September 2023