



The Lost Buildings of Paignton

Considering lost buildings in Paignton inevitably brings us to Dellar's Café in Torbay Road. Probably the greatest loss to the town and its replacement an ugly concrete building containing shops and flats has long been considered a mistake. Dellar's Café built in 1911, was the place to be seen, with its elegant dinner dances and splendid afternoon teas. A popular venue for wedding receptions and a great place to hold a child's birthday party. Dellar's was versatile with something for everyone. However it was decided to demolish it in the 1960s and this unique Edwardian building was lost for ever,



Dellar's café ground floor

Another significant building on the corner of Victoria Street and Hyde Road Waycott's corner was partially damaged by fire in 1952. The roof and the upper floor had to be demolished and the rather splendid centre piece was replaced by something rather less splendid. However the rest of this Victorian terrace was saved and still remains.



Before and after the fire



Torquay Road has also seen some changes although much of it remains the same, originally Victorian houses with gardens these were converted to shops on the ground floor with living accommodation above. One notable building no longer with us can be seen in the picture. Roughly opposite the Gerston Chapel stood a house containing a dental surgery. Never a place to enjoy visiting, harrowing tales have been told by people who visited this dentist, Mr Bain, and maybe many people were not sorry to see this property demolished.



Dental Surgery Torquay Road

Further along Torquay Rd and stretching into Hyde Road, the recently demolished Crossway Shopping Centre was built on a site which had previously held several popular hotels, pictured the Croft Hotel and the Granridge Hotel. Similar to Torquay Road, Hyde Road was originally houses with front gardens.



Hyde Road 1914



Croft and Granridge Hotels Hyde Road

Many paigntonians will be familiar with the Marist Convent School. The original school in Fisher Street was owned and run by the Marist order of nuns. The school was relatively small at its inception and still stands, although now extensively enlarged. As the school expanded, a house, another Victorian villa, was purchased next to Oldway Mansion and in the 1950s this became the Marist Convent Junior School. An elegant house with a wide sweeping staircase (only used by the nuns) went from an impressive entrance hall to the first floor. The pupils used the back stairs (servants stairs) but the bedrooms on the first floor were turned into large airy classrooms. The grounds were large and included tennis courts where private lessons were available. In the 1980s the school was closed, the building demolished and a block of flats, Richmond Court, was built. Some of the grounds were incorporated into Oldway Primary School. The only picture of the school is shown alongside pictures of the school in Fisher Street.



The Marist Convent Junior school at Oldway is shown on the left of the picture above

PHS takes a keen interest in preserving old buildings wherever possible. The renovation of the Picture House in Torbay Road is a case in point and we are delighted to see the transformation taking place while all the original character and features have been retained. Baileys Hotel in Station Square is another old

building desperately in need of work, while much of this building may need to go, it is hoped that the façade can be retained for future generations to appreciate.

PHS conducts regular walks around Paignton visiting historic buildings and places of interest. The walks are led by Karen Chapman and Lee Hayward who both have extensive knowledge of the area and recently wrote a book on the history of Paignton for schools which has been widely acclaimed. The PHS is anxious to involve schools and young people in local history. Working alongside the Oldway school during the production of the Paignton Book has proved that there is room for a Junior Heritage Society where children can explore areas of local history that interest them.

We are delighted that Mrs Jo Tucker, one of our members and a former head mistress has agreed to start such a group to meet in the Library on Saturday Mornings, for further information on the JHS or the guided walks call into the Heritage Centre on the 1st floor of the library open 11-3 Monday Thursday and Saturday. Alternatively visit Kirkham House in Kirkham Street any Sunday afternoon in July and August between 1pm and 4pm where you will find someone ready to help.