

Memories of Old Dover

Athol Terrace

(From the transcript of a conversation with Mrs. Violet Calton of 1 East Cliff).

In those days I knew all the people in Athol Terrace and East Cliff. I don't think there's anyone left, not of my age, any more. They've all gone.

In 4 Athol Terrace there was a titled lady - she used to come down and stay for six weeks in the year and she kept that house going all the year. It was next door to my mother's - we lived at number three - Lady Clifford she was. She used to come down and bring her butler and her lady's maid and then she had local staff for the washing and general work of the house.

The sea used to wash into Athol Terrace, right up to the road and we used to stand there and look down and see the sea and all along Athol Terrace there were wooden stumps and chains in between to stop you from going too near the sea. And I remember my mother

ATHOL TERRACE c1850

and the East Cliff Jetty (as it was then called)



always taking my hand. She wouldn't allow me to go out without help in case I fell into the sea. Well, when the harbour came, Sir Whitman Pearson, I think it was, started to build the harbour. He wanted the ground, so somehow or other he forcibly bought it. He gave compensation to each house. My mother had a cheque for £60. In those days it was quite a lot of money. They took all that road away, built it all up and then the next thing we knew we had nothing much left. They left one place, which we used to call the cutting, where you could sit out and it was quite nice and the children used to play cricket. And then, before we knew where we were, when they were building the docks, they took that piece of ground, but they didn't pay anything out and just put a rail around it and took it and that was that.

The footpath up the cliffs - that was always there and when I was eight years old I went up there with my brothers - my mother said I wasn't to go - but we heard about this man going to fly the channel and it was Bleriot and I heard my brothers getting up in the morning, because they were in another bedroom, the two of them, and I thought, I'm jolly well going. So anyway, I thought I'd go with them. The plane had landed and

we saw Bleriot in the distance and he stayed in the prison house on top of the hill.

There was a prison house there on the top of the hill and they used to bring the prisoners to Athol Terrace and they used to make them walk up the hill, handcuffed: a policeman was with them. They would have gone Castle Hill way but that was a long way

round, so they made those prisoners walk up that hill and it was very steep in those days (it still is steep). When the cabs carrying the prisoners came along I used to run indoors because they were big prisoners and you'd see them chained to the policeman.

Now the whole place is so different. It's so altered. But Athol Terrace houses are much the same. I think my family owned No.1, No.3, No.7, 8, 11, 12, 13, and 14 at one time.

I didn't want to leave my house, I liked it up there. We had a lovely view of the channel, you know, from the drawing

room bay window. I didn't want to leave there, but my brothers – one was a bachelor and one was a widower – they said come for a month. So I said "Alright, I'll come for a month, I can't stay any longer", because I knew what I was in for – two brothers – so I stayed for a month and I said "I think you'll be alright now." And they said "We can't manage without you. You'll have to stay." I said, "I can't. I really can't." Because I didn't want to leave my house. Anyway, being a sister, I suppose I gave way. And that's where I am now, at Number 1. And when they died they left me the house.

Dover Regatta

A. F. DYER, Member No. 153)

When I was a young lad, I used to spend a lot of time on the beach at Dover. I used to talk to the local boatmen and play between the many boats parked up-turned along the beach.

I became friendly with Mr Amos, who was a photographer and had a studio in Snargate Street. He owned a whaler and used to take me with some of his friends around the harbour, sailing.

I used to look forward to the Regatta, as Mr Amos used to enter into the Carnival

spirit and entered his boat as a "Viking Ship". It was always decorated with shields and flags. We used to row along the shore, singing and larking about to the amusement of the crowds on the beach. Of the crew, I can only remember a Mr Sedgewick and his son, who was a signwriter.

To add to the fun, we lads used to buy confetti to put down the girls' necks as they walked along the promenade. They all used to enjoy the happy fun. In the evening coloured lights were switched on along the promenade and there was always a firework display on the Prince of Wales Pier.

They were the Good Old Days ! ! ! !

AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY THE PROMENADE PIER WAS THE 'GRAND STAND' FROM WHICH TO WATCH THE REGATTA

