

Memories of growing up in Torquay in 1960s

Torquay Museum is exploring memories of Torquay with local artist Jean Pascall, who for the past three years has been volunteering at Torquay Museum as part of the Lantern Slide Project and is now digitising photographs.

The museum asked Jean about her memories of growing up and working in Torquay, and how the photographs she has been working on trigger so many memories.

One trigger was the photo of herself rowing a boat in the harbour.

She said: "All my life my father owned a boat that was moored in the inner harbour and it feels like we spent every spare hour going out fishing around the bay and particularly around Thatcher Rock, coming home with either none or dozens of mackerel -



Torquay harbour with Jean Pascall rowing the boat in the foreground, circa 1980s. (PR42320)

poor Mum having to deal with them!
"On Sundays the Salvation Army

Band used to play on the slipway blocking our way to tie up the tender, Dad used to get so annoyed - it made us late for our Sunday lunch!

"I learned to row when I was probably eight or nine and when dad was doing the boring stuff on the boat, would take myself off for a row in one of his homemade tenders, often not that watertight so you had to learn to row and bale at the same time!"

The museum's photographs also reminded Jean of her favourite pastimes.

"It has also been interesting to be reminded of how entertainment has changed here. Living in St Marychurch, we used to go to The Tudor Cinema (now Bygones) a great deal and I remember loving the Saturday morning show, which I got into free because my father did their display posters - he was a sign writer.

"Or you would catch the bus into town and go to either The Regal/ABC



View of Castle Circus with ABC cinema showing Quatermass and the Pit in 1967. (PR20548)

at Castle Circus - which in the early days actually had a guy playing an electric organ at the front before the film started. Halfway down through town there was also The Colony cinema and then, of course, The Odeon in Abbey Road a lovely old-style cinema.

"I just loved movies and still do and have recently fulfilled my childhood dream of actually appearing in one. I was lucky to be a supporting artist in the latest Fisherman's Friends One and All which was filmed in Port Isaac, a great film by the way.

"In my teens Torquay also hosted a lot of iconic bands that are household names now, my most memorable I think was seeing David Bowie in the town hall. My father also produced a lot of the posters for these shows, I have one that he did for The Who!

"On leaving school, I went to work in Lloyds Bank at Vaughan Parade (now Prezzo), the most beautiful building. No computers then, we manually typed the account ledgers and statements on large machines and if you made a mistake, they were ripped up and you had to start again.

"You couldn't go home until the day's transactions balanced to the penny and this often meant very long days. At the end of the year you had to get end of year figures and I remember at least once going straight from work to the pub to see the New Year in - the overtime was welcome though!

"It also now seems strange to remember that there were no smoking restrictions in offices. In the bank there was a sectioned-off area for the securities and investment department - all men, all smoked and there was always a cloud of smoke hanging over that area.

"Such a change in our local banks, too. As a junior, we used to exchange all local cheques between the relevant banks in town - we had Barclays, National Provincial (empty, next to Boots on the Strand), Westminster (now Boston Tea Party), Midland (empty still, I think), Martins (now Fleet Walk).

"It was hard work but we did have fun with a few dramas along the way especially when a drunk passed out in the revolving door and we had to close until he was removed - with difficulty!"



Lloyds Bank on Vaughan Parade in 1932.(PR20541)

300 bulbs, shrubs, grasses and perennials planted to create sensory garden

Regular readers of these features may well recall that some weeks ago I wrote about the new Torbay Civic Society blue plaque which we had placed at the newly replanted scented gardens at the old gasworks site at Hollicombe, Preston.

The new plaque courtesy of the society replaced an earlier stainless steel plate, which had been put in place by my predecessor chairman Ena Hocking to honour the National Year of the Disabled in 1981.

Eventually in 2005, we discovered that major public works were to take place when South West Water (SWW) would be digging up Hollicombe Park lower garden in order to install new sewage pipes from the Torbay main road down to Preston Esplanade.

This meant the loss of our scented gardens and so negotiations had to be held with SWW, through their Mr H Weatherly and which

The stories behind Torbay's blue plaques by Ian Handford, chairman of Torbay Civic Society. This week: Sensory garden at Preston Gardens

involved Torbay Council, to find a way forward.

Eventually, it was agreed a new site would be found and funded - named a sensory garden for the blind - which also meant that our scented garden would eventually also be restored once SWW had finished its work.

We also discovered the council were in negotiation with a grant funding agency who wanted to create a new cycle lane across Hollicombe which again ultimately determined the funding of both projects could be guaranteed.

With the authority in support of both concepts, it offered us a part of

the existing gardens site called Preston Gardens near to the Preston public car park.

Having involved my committee and our membership throughout, we now agreed to put in a new 'sensory garden' in the existing public park and that we would use the whole length of the west-facing border, which was substantial.

The new planting involved 300 assorted shrubs, bulbs, grasses and perennials, all of which were suitable for 'smell and touch' - sensory purposes.

The idea became a win-win situation for the society as eventually with the help of SWW,

the lost scented garden was re-established to complete for restoration.

The handover of our new sensory garden by SWW and Torbay Council, once the gardeners had completed their planting, came in time for a formal opening on Friday, November 18, 2005.

Having decided not to install a blue plaque on the wall, we nevertheless arranged a more suitable stainless steel plate carrying the explanation of why and how the garden had been created.

A rather large turnout then ensued with the public and our association members present, at the official unveiling carried out by vice chairman of Torbay Council, Councillor John Dunn before everyone was invited to some free refreshment in the nearby adjacent Conservative Club, Preston.

With speeches given, I finally gave a short history of this special event before thanking both South West Water and Torbay Council.

Today, you can still visit the

sensory gardens at Preston or indeed the scented gardens at Hollicombe and view either our stainless steel plate or the new blue plaque at Hollicombe.

Interestingly, because of this new commitment to the Preston Gardens site, we were eventually lucky enough to be able to return to the same garden site in 2006 when Torbay Council again offered us the opportunity to establish a permanent memorial to honour Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee celebrations of 2002.

Although, long after the formal date had passed, the committee had decided we ought provide a reminder of the Queen's special date when the idea of a 'Maritime Sundial Golden Jubilee Memorial' was adopted.

With the memorial having been designed and created by sculpturist Spencer Field Larcombe of Harbertonford, as previously featured the formal unveiling of this memorial took place on October 6, 2006.