



BEAULIEU HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

No. 31 February 2017

Editor's Column

Past Meetings

On 4 November 2016, Andrew Dun-can gave a talk on **Beaulieu River Sailing Club** at the Gins Clubhouse of the Royal Southampton Yacht Club on the lower reaches of the Beaulieu River.

The sailing club was founded in 1931, and Andrew focused on the 'leading lights' of Beaulieu who founded it and were members in its initial years. He presented a revealing insight into Beaulieu life in those times through portraits of these early members.



Unfortunately the number of society members who wanted to come was greater than Gins Clubhouse could accommodate. Many members are interested in coming to our meetings, and the society is rising to the challenge by seeking out larger venues for the future.

Given the interest in Andrew's talk, two extracts of his portraits of the early sailing club members have been made. The first is on page 4 of this newsletter, and the second will be published in a later newsletter.

After the **Annual General Meeting** on 24 February, I gave a talk on the history of **Ipley Manor**, my home just north of Beaulieu. The farm



was owned from the 13th to the 16th century by the monks of Beaulieu Abbey. It then passed through many generations of the ancestors

of the Montagu family of Beaulieu, before being sold into private hands in 1897. From the records over the centuries, it has been possible to construct a picture of the lives of a number of those who lived on the medieval farm.

A paper describing this history is present on the society's website www.beaulieuhistorysociety.org.uk. This presentation, along with many others, is in the Archive section. To access the Archive, it is necessary to be a member of the society. To join, see the inset box at the bottom right of this page.

Forthcoming Meetings

This year's visit to one of the houses of Beaulieu will be to **Gins Farmhouse** on the lower reaches of the Beaulieu River, adjacent to the Royal Southampton Yacht Clubhouse.



The evening in May will include a talk by society members John and Anne Coles on the long history of Gins, stretching back to medieval times. The visit is by kind invitation of the residents, Julian and Holly Chichester.

Details of the visit and how to make a reservation will be published a month before the event.

John Pemberton

Contents

	Page
Editor's Column	1
Local Artists Eurich & Cundall	2
Beaulieu River Sailing Club	4

Dates for your Diary

Friday 12 May 2017 6:30pm

Visit to and

Talk on the History of Gins

by John and Anne Coles
Gins Farmhouse, Gins Lane,
St Leonards SO42 7XG

by kind invitation of
Julian and Holly Chichester

Subscriptions

Membership fees of £5 per member were due at the start of the year. If you have not yet paid, you are encouraged to make an electronic bank transfer to Beaulieu History Society, sort code 20-53-53, account number 90157031. In the Reference box, please put your surname and what is being paid (membership, book, name of event), otherwise we may not know what the payment is for.

If available to you, this is a preferable alternative in cost and convenience to sending a cheque by post to the secretary Gillian Strathcarron at her address on the back page.

Local Artists Eurich and Cundall

In February 2016, David Moore-Gwyn gave a talk to the history society on the painting collection at Palace House, Beaulieu. Here he writes more about the collection's extensive range.

In my talk, there was so much earlier material that the twentieth century was inevitably left out - with the exception of Stanley Spencer and Patrick Proctor, both of great importance in the context of the collection but neither of whom had a significant connection with Beaulieu. I thought therefore that it might be of interest to write briefly about two other artists whose work is represented at Palace House and who worked in or around Beaulieu.

The two artists are Richard Eurich and Charles Cundall, both products of the celebrated Slade School in London and both very successful war artists in the Second World War. Eurich lived near Beaulieu from 1934 until his death in 1992, whereas Cundall's visit was brief, though more information about this is contained in an entry in my grandmother Pearl Pleydell-Bouverie's unpublished diaries, selected excerpts of which are due to be published in Spring 2017.

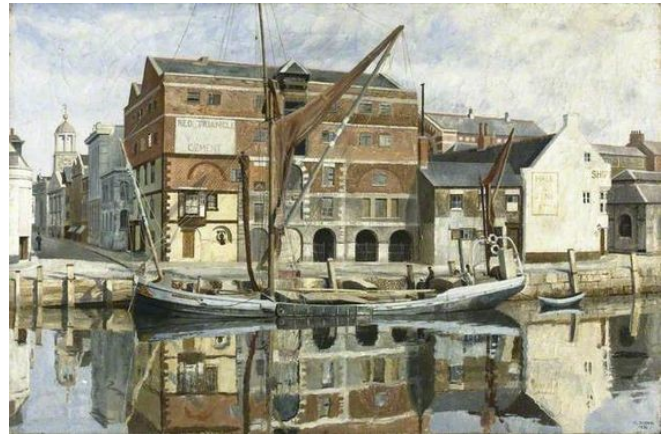
Richard Eurich was born in Bradford originally from German parentage (his grandparents had come over in the 1880s attracted by the wool trade in that city). His talent for drawing was obvious from an early age as was his love for the sea, encouraged by an art master in his school, and by trips to Whitby and later to Weymouth.

Following his time at Bradford School of Art he enrolled at the Slade, then under the formidable Henry Tonks. His time there was not altogether happy (he was particularly shocked by the disdain shown for Turner who had been "my hero" following a visit to Farnley Hall in Yorkshire) but his time there was not



Solent, Beaulieu River by Richard Eurich, 1966

wasted as he won several prizes and came to the notice of Edward Marsh, Winston Churchill's secretary and a notable patron of young artists. He recommended Eurich to the famous gallery, Goupil, where a one-man show was followed by a long series of shows at the celebrated Redfern Gallery.



The Blue Barge Weymouth by Richard Eurich, 1934
© Manchester Art Gallery

The successful sale of *The Blue Barge Weymouth* in 1934 led to his marriage to Mavis Pope, then an art teacher at Wimbledon and to their purchase of land at Dibden Purlieu where they built a house called Appletreewick on land given to them by her parents. Eurich's daughter Caroline has left a charming account of the cottage and the family's life there. There was a schoolroom at the back where Mavis ran an infants' school whilst Eurich worked in a small studio in the garden, with no electricity and heated only by a paraffin heater. Despite this he painted many of his major works there. The cottage was ideally placed as it was near the Solent and the ground was also elevated so that he could see movements in and out of Southampton docks. Eurich was a keen musician and talented pianist and often played the organ at evensong in Beaulieu Abbey Church.

Eurich was 36 at the outbreak of World War II and thus too old for active service. However he was keen to be involved despite his pacifist leanings, and volunteered as air-raid warden and part-time ambulance driver, and even apparently did some milking in a local farm. Everything changed when he was approached by the War Artists' Advisory Committee and he became one of only a relatively small number of fully-salaried war artists. His first triumph was *Withdrawal from Dunkirk* painted in only six weeks shortly after the event from eye-witness reports and photographs.

continued ...

... continued

Cundall also painted a larger picture on the subject, in some ways more spectacular in its treatment of the subject but less satisfactory as a composition - generally opinion tended to favour Eurich's picture. Eurich worked hard as a war artist painting incidents at sea including vivid depictions of survivors from torpedoed boats. It was these and possibly his greatest war painting, *Preparations for D Day*, which got him into trouble with the censors. His closeness to Southampton and particularly to the Beaulieu river must have helped with the D Day picture though, as he pointed out, most of it was the product of his vivid imagination and the censors need not have worried.

After the war he chose not to pursue a career as a painter in London but he needed money so took up a part-time teaching post at the Camberwell School of Arts, lasting from 1947 until 1968. It was during this period that he worked on some of the Shell guides and in 1960 he painted for Esso a picture of the new refinery at Fawley. It was at the end of his period at Camberwell that he was able to go back to his seascapes. He



Sir Francis Chichester's return to Bucklers Hard by Richard Eurich, 1967

visited Lepe beach most days and produced a series of atmospheric views around the Solent, three of which are at Palace House. In the summer exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1966 he exhibited *Solent, Beaulieu River* (see previous page), a picture which Edward Montagu bought, though with the proviso that the artist added his boat *Cygnets* to the right of the composition. The next year he also commissioned from Eurich two paintings to commemorate the return of Sir Francis Chichester to Bucklers Hard after his great solo voyage around the world, and Eurich used the same skills as were so evident when he was a war artist to bring vividly to life that great historic occasion.

Charles Cundall was also a Northerner, from Stretford in Lancashire. Like Eurich he trained at the Slade though he was older and had served in World War I. He was an enthusiastic traveler, probably the most travelled British artist in the twentieth century. The collection at Palace House includes a charming *Christmas Preparations at Beaulieu* on loan from Southampton Art Gallery, which is signed and dated 1932. We know also of two other Beaulieu subjects, a picture of skaters on the Mill Pond, *Skating at Beaulieu*, dated 1933 (in a local private collection) and a picture of the chef of the Montagu Arms dated 1934 (sold at Sotheby's in 1975). An entry in Pearl Pleydell-Bouverie's diaries for 9th December 1933 helps to clarify this - "Mrs Cundall and little Annabel aged 3 1/2 (she is wife of artist who painted the picture of Norris and Jack Hendy plucking geese last Xmas in the mill which picture was bought by the town of Southampton and is in the Christmas number of *The Tatler*) came to tea - also Fisher and Helen (from Lepe)". It seems that Cundall must have visited Beaulieu at Christmas 1932 and again for Christmas 1933. Perhaps the family stayed at the Montagu Arms - Eurich only moved down in 1934 so they will not have met then though Eurich later wrote that he remembered Cundall painting a "local man plucking a turkey".



Christmas Preparations at Beaulieu by Charles Cundall, 1932

© Southampton Art Gallery

continued ...

... continued

Skating on the pond was comparatively rare though we know from Pearl's diary that January 1933 was exceptionally cold (entry for 26th January - "Very cold, skating everywhere but wind not quite so biting to-



Skating at Beaulieu by Charles Cundall, 1933

day"). My mother saw the picture and confirmed that she remembered skating taking place on the Mill Pond, but added that there was always a pole in the centre of the pond which the artist has left out.

David Moore-Gwyn

Further Material

The society's website www.beaulieuhistorysociety.org.uk has a recording of David Moore-Gwyn's original talk on The Collection at Palace House and a slide set of the pictures featured in the talk. This presentation, along with many others, is in the Archive section. To access the Archive, it is necessary to be a member of the society. To join see the inset box at the bottom right of page 1.

Beaulieu River Sailing Club—Part One

Andrew Duncan's talk to the society in November 2016 was a glimpse, as he described it, of some of the Beaulieu River Sailing Club's notable early figures, and of life on and around the Beaulieu River in the 1930s, the BRSC's first decade. He concentrated on the club's earliest leading lights who were not only sailors, but long term promoters or organisers of sailing, locally or on a wider stage. The 1930s had more than its fair share of original people who ploughed their own furrow, and a remarkable number of those 1930s families still have descendants in the neighbourhood.

Andrew asserts in the 30s it was a privileged club. The entry ticket was an expensive house on the Beaulieu estate, titles were two a penny, and the regatta was reported in the Tatler magazine. The Tatler hasn't been interested in reporting the regatta since World War Two; it's long been a relaxed, friendly family affair.

Many attending the talk found Andrew's portraits of the leading lights fascinating. So here is a first extract from his talk allowing you to enjoy his portraits of two families, with a further extract in a later edition of the newsletter.

Sir Francis Dent - and his second wife Winifred, always known as Win Dent

Francis Dent was a Beaulieu resident from the 1920s, where he came to live at Dock House, Dock Lane probably soon after retiring. But he'd been a small boat sailor all his life...

...here he is as a young man sailing in tweeds, waistcoat and tie, as one did, in Holyhead Harbour where he was commo-



dore of not one but two sailing clubs at the same time - somewhat typical. The Dents have a family joke... 'in a single handed dinghy, how can you have one captain and two commodores? Answer, Francis Dent.'

He was a BRSC founder member, in fact it's likely that he, with Pearl Pleydell-Bouverie, co-founded the club.

continued ...

... continued

He would have prevailed on her to formalise what until around 1930 had been informal sailing meet ups. He would almost certainly have found it intolerable for the sailing not to be properly organised.

He took part in the first scow races, and sometimes gave children sailing lessons in a large clinker built boat. He was on the first committee and it's clear from the minute book that he and Fisher Dilke were the two people who made it happen in the first four years.

The son of an admiral (Dents had been on the navy list without a break since Samuel Pepys's time) Francis broke the mould and did his own thing by going into railway management. Sounds a bit grey? Perhaps not. As general manager of the South-East and Chatham Railway he masterminded WW1 troop transport to France... he clearly had a brilliant organising mind, if not for which the flow of men to the trenches would not have been smooth. This was the first total war in Britain's history and mass troop movements were of the essence... so for a year or two at the start of WW1 Francis Dent was a central figure. He was knighted for this in 1916 aged 47.

Here he is in court dress - possibly after being knighted? Not sure.



My aunt Bunny Borthwick, then a young teenager, remembers him at Beaulieu as rather a gruff old man. He was a very strong character indeed. He had married as his second wife Winifred Fremantle but by the end of the 1930s their marriage had come unstuck. Win was having an affair with Ad-

miral Hall, former director of naval intelligence in the First World War. Francis moved away, probably to Bosham and it seems likely that as part of the settlement he gave her a plot of land at the bottom of Dock House's grounds. Here, at Dock Head, overlooking Carpenter's Dock, Win and Admiral Hall built their love nest, but I don't think, as commonly supposed, Francis had to put up with Win and her lover cohabiting at the bottom of the garden while he was still at Dock House.

Nonetheless, this was the Beaulieu scandal of the 1930s, and Win the scarlet woman.

Here's Win while still married to Francis

I knew her in the 1960s by which time most people had forgotten about she and Admiral Hall. By then she was a respected local figure - a legend in fact - the woman with the three glass eyes - one to match her remaining eye, one a union jack for conservative association meetings and one a BRSC burgee for regatta days.



A couple of other Win Dent stories are irresistible - please excuse a short digression into the 1960s but they do sum up the spirit of Beaulieu and of the BRSC.

Win was a dog lover and when she got old instead of walking them on foot she put them on a lead and drove them scampering beside her open-top car. Fine if she got the speed right. One day on the airfield she was waved down by a man who happened to work for the RSPCA. He was told not to interfere: how dare he, she was a judge at Crufts.

She was also famous for her rowing skiff, a long sleek craft with a very low freeboard. One day in the early 1960s she was rowing it off Dockhead when the Bignalls sailing school children were doing a treasure hunt. One of the challenges was to get the signature of someone with a title. Most of the scows headed towards the green and Palace House, but the crafty ones were on to Win in her skiff. Too many crowded alongside and it started sinking. Lady Dent, faithful to naval tradition, went on signing as she sank.

Several of Francis Dent's descendants still live in the vicinity: Henrietta Reynolds and Janet Robjohn, his granddaughters; Robin Dent his grandson and Gus Reynolds, his great grandson. Gus and Gerard Downes built the new sailing hut in Factory Field. I think they're all in the audience. I am grateful to Robin for the photographs and other information.

continued ...

... continued

Ann Clerk and Dorothy Walker

My second characters are a pair of sisters.

Anne Clerk was another Beaulieu one-off, and a founder member of the BRSC. She bought Bignalls, Dock Lane in the 1920s and was the direct opposite of her near neighbour Francis Dent - not at all interested in bossing people around - but what she left behind was in local terms concrete.



She is in fact my great aunt - and likewise of Sara Steele, Ginna Gayner and Emma Tew. We've got her down as a mildly eccentric artist spinster - very quiet and withdrawn - with strong female friendships - not discussed - and mad on sailing. It was unusual for a single woman to run a yacht in those days -



own using watercolour as if it's oil - and the atmosphere is sometimes a little troubled, as if something dark was hanging over this little world.

This one looks from roughly the same spot as the last painting down river - in the distance is Francis Dent's Dock House beach with boats on it.



but here it is in the background, a Dutch barge named Vliehors, painted by a friend while moored at Eling Tidemill Mill off Southampton Water. Vliehors is a place - a large sandy plain and bird refuge on the Dutch island of Vlieland.



This is low tide in the same bit of river.

Anne was creative... she used her independent means to finance a life of painting, travel and sailing and we like to think that her Beaulieu and New Forest watercolours are interesting. It's not for me to big up the great aunt's talent, but our local expert David Moore-Gwyn says she is some notches above the average amateur water colourist.

Below is her view from Factory Field where the junior sail training now takes place... around 1930.



Anne sold her paintings, but around 30 local scenes are spread about the family and add up to a delightful visual record of Beaulieu and its river at this time. Her work is far from chocolate boxy - she has a style of her

continued ...

... continued

And here are large yachts racing in the Solent off Lymington - a bit sketchy, done in a hurry, I suspect, but still full of movement.



They reveal a landscape that's empty of human activity compared with ours now.

Something dark over Beaulieu? Possibly my imagination? Perhaps it was something dark hanging over her. Anne Clerk died young, of pneumonia in 1932, and left Bignalls to her sister Dorothy, my grandmother.

Dorothy Walker took over in the BRSC where Anne left off, she was another independent minded woman, a solo round the world traveler in her youth



Her elder two children were good BRSC Sharpie sailors through the 1930s. Her youngest daughter Bunny Borthwick was mainly crew - her time would come.

She was on the BRSC committee most of the time from the late 1930s to the 1950s, putting in a solid but low key contribution (club sec three times, and then mate) but of course doing the club a unique genetic service by producing Bunny, who as most people here know gave the club its new lease of life after the war by introducing sail

training. Hugely helped and enabled, it must be remembered, by her husband David Borthwick. Dorothy Walker was the first woman, apart from Pearl, to be involved in running the club. We think it may have taken a while for her to be accepted here - like her sister she was strange and withdrawn. And she had recently divorced her somewhat colourful husband. In those days divorce was still unusual and not easily accepted. In the end though, I think that people saw the point of her.

In 1943 the BRSC introduced a new class of boat, the Sharpie. This was a key event: now the racing really could mean something - the boats were identical, and fast compared with scows.

Dorothy Walker bought two, including the first one, made by Elkins of Christchurch - and this is it, M1, the photo taken incidentally by Francis Dent. The M on the sail means Montagu Sharpie. We think the flags dressed mast to stern might have been to announce the birth of the new class, or maybe they were a victory celebration. They did things stylishly then.



Andrew Duncan

Further Material

The society's website www.beaulieuhistorysociety.org.uk has the full text and illustrations from Andrew Duncan's talk on the Beaulieu River Sailing Club. This presentation, along with many others, is in the Archive section. To access the Archive, it is necessary to be a member of the society. To join see the inset box at the bottom right of page 1.

Committee Members

Emma Page (Chair) emma.page@lepe.org.uk
Peter Marling-Roberts (Treasurer) pmarlingroberts@hotmail.co.uk
Christina Dykes (Events) christina@exalon.net
John Pemberton (Newsletter) johnpemberton@compuserve.com
Mary Montagu-Scott mary.montaguscott@gravelly.com

Anne Coles anne@johncoles.plus.com
Ken Robinson krobisonlrt@gmail.com
Gillian Strathcarron (Secretary) gillian.s@mac.com
 whose details for contact are: 01590 612334
 Otterwood House, Exbury Road, Beaulieu SO42 7YS